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Process to adoption into community and regional plans

This project has been drafted with the help of over two dozen local agencies throughout a multi-year process. The Mid-America Regional Council coordinated joint discussions among local groups and facilitated the regional distribution of this NPS report. Although the alignment and various trail elements within this document have been planned and agreed-upon by local communities, formal adoption of this NPS report by each city into their local comprehensive plans is strongly encouraged to ensure the long-term success of this effort.

Transportation funding programs

A number of regionally allocated funding sources are available to communities who wish to implement national historic trail, trailhead, or other trail elements related to this project. Priority for many of these funding sources, such as the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), Surface Transportation Program (STP), the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), and the Recreational Trails Program (RTP), is given to projects that align with existing regional plans or provide regional or national significance.

- Regional Significance: Future implementation of this project would link multiple places along a multi-jurisdictional trail, while crossing existing barriers for pedestrian and bicycle transportation. Improving regional transit options and encouraging alternative transportation corridors can increase the project’s importance at a local scale.
- National Significance: As a congressionally-designated part of the National Trails System, the implementation of a national historic trail segment would offer recognition on a national level.

In addition, transit-related FHWA federal funding may be applicable to some implementation projects related to this document.

Partnerships

In addition to these transportation funding programs, partnerships with regional, state, or national organizations could allow for greater funding opportunities. Although the list below is not exhaustive, it can be used as a starting point to identify key project partners.

- National Park Service: The NPS has been integral to the design off all trail elements associated with this project and should be involved in the implementation of them. See “Partnering with NPS” section below.
- Mid-America Regional Council: MARC has been integral to the facilitation between communities and the NPS during this project and can have an added benefit in future related efforts.
- Jackson County and Johnson County Parks and Recreation Departments: Both counties have regional trail plans they are working to implement. Existing county parks and trails could serve as future national historic trail segments, trailheads, and special feature sites.
- Kansas City Area Transit Authority/RideKC: The regional bus transit authority has already begun to work with the NPS on transit station trailheads within the City of Kansas City. Future bus stop trailheads could be coordinated with a similar partnership.
- Missouri Department of Conservation, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, and Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism: These government agencies are committed to the conservation of wildlife and natural resources. If national historic trail segments adhere to proper landscape guidelines and offer conservation benefits, partnerships may be viable.
- Santa Fe Trail Association, Oregon and California Trails Association, and Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association: All are non-profit organizations with local chapters committed to the preservation and development of the national historic trails. Several local trail elements have already been brought about with the help of these organizations.
- Partnership for the National Trails System: This non-profit organization serves as an umbrella organization and coordinator of the activities of non-profit scenic and historic trails organizations across the National Trails System. They are a resource of information and assistance for national trail projects.
- Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area: This non-profit organization partners with local historical sites to tell the stories and preserve the landmarks that run along the Missouri-Kansas border.
- Private developers and development projects could be required to assist in implementation of some trail segments or trail elements if a development plan falls along the corridor.
- Public libraries and school districts: As public, education-oriented places along the proposed trails, library grounds and school properties may in some cases be ideal locations for development of trails, trailheads, and interpretive sites related to the national historic trails. These entities could be ideal partners in the development of facilities on or near their properties.

Partnering with NPS on implementation and extension projects

National Trails Intermountain Region (NTIR-NPS), the office of the National Park Service which administers the Santa Fe, Oregon, and California national historic trails, intends to remain involved throughout implementation, and offer assistance to individual cities, counties, and partner groups with projects associated with the national historic trails, to the extent that funding and staff time allow.

In addition to assistance with trail and site design, NTIR-NPS is equipped to assist with:

- Interpretive products
- Resource protection
- Planning
- Research
- GIS and mapping

NTIR-NPS has limited opportunities to directly fund trail implementation, but can access a few NPS funding programs that may be applicable for components of this project. These include:

- Challenge Cost Share: requirements and guidance vary annually
- Connect Trails to Parks: projects that involve federal or state lands and one or more national trails
- Leveraging
- Trail association partnership sign funds: work with NTIR-NPS and primary trail association partners OCTA and/or SFTA for planning and purchase of road or pedestrian sign, or ground plane logo projects.

Where applicable, NTIR-NPS may also be able to offer letters of support or other expressions of support for applications for public or private grant funding for national historic trail development projects.

For more information, please see www.nps.gov/ntir or contact NTIR-NPS directly at: 505-988-6098 or ntir_information@nps.gov

Use of the national historic trail logos

The national historic trails logos are federally protected marks and as such require the review/approval of National Trails Intermountain Region before use. This includes uses for signage and other trail marking, as well as use in print and digital publications. Often this will take the form of NTIR-NPS review of a final plan for or draft of an NHT related project that uses the logo. Please contact NTIR-NPS with questions.
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Historic trail review

As described in the Trails KC Plan, within the city of Kansas City, Missouri, all new national historic trail construction projects require the review and approval of the National Park Service.

“Trail design/construction drawings for segments of the Trails KC system that are a part of a historic trail must be reviewed and certified by the National Park Service, as these trails may have more specific design standards.”

New trails constructed based on this document—or any trail renovation project which includes the addition of the NHT logos to identify a segment of trail as part of the Santa Fe, Oregon, and/or California national historic trails—should also follow this standard. See sample construction cover sheet from a project in Kansas City, Missouri, this page. For assistance with how this can be easily observed, contact NTIR-NPS.

Other applicable NPS resources (Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance program)

The National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program supports community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects across the nation, including projects along national historic trails. Their national network of conservation and recreation planning professionals partners with community groups, nonprofits, tribes, and state and local governments to design trails and parks, conserve and improve access to rivers, protect special places, and create recreation opportunities.

Unlike National Trails Intermountain Region, RTCA assistance operates on a yearly schedule, with one application period each spring/summer for assistance in the following federal fiscal year. However, also unlike NTIR-NPS, their assistance is not limited to NHT-related projects, or may be a good fit for projects with both NHT and non-NHT components. NHT-related applications to RTCA for assistance should be coordinated both with RTCA and NTIR-NPS. Please see www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/ for more information or to contact regional RTCA representatives to discuss a potential project.

Sample cover sheet from a City of Kansas City trail construction project along the three national historic trails. Note signature line on final plans package for National Park Service- National Trails Intermountain Region. (Cover sheet shown smaller than original size.)

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Historic resource preservation and protection

While NTIR-NPS and project partners do not expect these alignment choices to adversely affect any historic properties or trail sites, the safety and preservation of these historic resources is a central concern for all involved with the NHTs. Under certain circumstances, development activities at a trails site may require environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and/or Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. These reviews are triggered only if the project is federally funded, federally licensed or permitted, on federal land, or have some other significant federal involvement. The reviews can be a simple paperwork exercise, or they can require archeological survey and testing, survey for sensitive and endangered species and habitat, etc., depending on the nature of the proposed development. Typically NEPA and Section 106 review is handled by the federal agency that is involved. Non-federal partner agencies or organizations would not be expected to do that work themselves, but should be aware that review could potentially add to project costs and timelines.

For more information on the Section 106 process, see www.achp.gov/106summary.html. For more information on the NEPA process, see www.npi.org/NEPA/process.

Recommendations on preservation best practices

NTIR-NPS production of this conceptual strategy document alone does not trigger a legal requirement to comply with NEPA or Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. However, the NPS encourages partners to learn about and follow the NEPA and Section 106 processes (in addition to any applicable state, and local historic preservation laws) before beginning any project groundwork. NTIR staff will, as time and resources allow, be available to provide technical assistance or consultation on resource protection to project partners should they choose to implement this plan.

Minor Park trail swales, Kansas City, Missouri. Photo: NPS