

Frequently Asked Questions

River Road Segment of the Milwaukee Trail

Why do we need a bicycle/pedestrian trail?

Because citizens have asked for it. As you know, the Emma Dickinson/River Road Neighborhood has been changing over the years from a mixed-use industrial neighborhood to a residential one. Lack of sidewalks, dead-end streets and cul-de-sacs have left neighbors with few options to bike or walk safely to school, work, or the rest of the City. While driving or walking around the neighborhood, you may have seen many people walking on the street in an unsafe manner due to the lack of sidewalks and trail connections. The River Road/Emma Dickinson Neighborhood Infrastructure Plan, adopted by City Council in 2003, recommends that the Neighborhood and the City incorporate the vision of the 2001 Non-Motorized Transportation Plan and the goals of Reserve Street Area Plan 1995 Update. Two goals of these plans are to achieve infrastructure that preserves neighborhood character and provide excellent non-motorized transportation and connectivity. The Comprehensive Master Park Plan for the Greater Missoula Area and the Missoula Open Space Plan both identify the Emma Dickinson/River Road Neighborhood as deficient in parks, trails and open space. The River Road Neighborhood segment of the Milwaukee Trail addresses many of these needs.

What will this trail do for me?

Trails create healthier places for healthier people by providing a convenient, healthy transportation option. Trails reduce vehicular traffic and help keep the air cleaner by allowing people to get from place to place without their cars. They also serve as wildlife conservation (primarily songbirds in this area) and historical preservation corridors, stimulate local economies by promoting local business, offer safe and accessible routes for work and school commuting, and promote active lifestyles for all ages.

Connecting People and the Community: This trail connects to the Milwaukee Trail at Russell and the bicycle/pedestrian underpass at Reserve—and will connect neighborhood residents to the Riverfront Trail System, Currents Aquatics Center, MOBASH Skatepark and the University of Montana to the east, and to Southgate Mall via the Bitterroot Branch Trail. To the west, the trail connects to Grove Street and the nearby Tower Street Conservation Lands. Eventually, we are hopeful that the trail will continue west along the old Milwaukee railroad bed to Mullan

Road and beyond into Missoula County. Locally, the trail will connect built-out neighborhoods with parks and open spaces. By bringing people together on greenways for their daily activities, trails unite people with their natural surroundings.

Recreation: This trail corridor is a flat grade, making it perfect for a variety of users, including walkers, inline skaters, bicyclists and people with disabilities. With a direct connection to the riverfront parks and trails, residents will have ready access to some of Missoula's best recreation facilities.

Increased Property Values: Studies have shown that property owners who are adjacent or near trails and greenways, often benefit from increased value of their property. People are often willing to pay more for a home or business with a multi-use trail in the neighborhood. Trails have become an important amenity that many look for when choosing where to live.

Healthy Living: Trails and greenways provide safe, inexpensive avenues for regular exercise. The U.S. Surgeon General estimates that 60 percent of American adults are not regularly active and 25 percent are not active at all. Additionally, childhood obesity is on the rise and Type II diabetes is increasingly affecting both adults and children. Studies show that easy access to trails increases physical activity and improves overall health.

Convenience and Transportation Options: Staying active in today's busy lifestyle is difficult when it takes extra time to schedule in exercise. People are more likely to get the exercise they need when they can easily work it into their daily routine. Trails provide the opportunity for people to be active while they transport themselves around town. People are given the option to ride a bike, walk, skate, jog, etc. instead of sitting in a car.

Environmental and Open Space Protection: Trails and greenways help improve air and water quality. Vehicle combustion engines emit pollutants into the air which can end up in people's lungs and in our streams, rivers and lakes. When more people walk or ride a bicycle for transportation, there are fewer vehicles on the roads which reduces these pollutants.

Why has this particular trail route been chosen?

The City reached out to dozens of property owners along the abandoned Milwaukee Road railroad bed. Some were more than willing to grant an easement for the trail, and some were not interested at this time. The City has ruled out the possibility of eminent domain or the "taking" of any private property for the trail. This is the most direct route from Russell to Reserve that could be obtained based on the City's current right-of-way holdings and partnerships with property owners.

The route, moving from west to east, begins on the east side of the Reserve Street pedestrian/bicycle underpass, at Bentley Park. The path heads through the park where it crosses Davis Street. At Davis, the trail heads east on public easements which are located just south of Classic Court and north of Lovegrove Lane. The path crosses Curtis St.,

turns south and then travels east on Trail St. At the apartments on the east end of Trail Street, the path jogs north, then heads east again through public easements out to Grant Street.

The path crosses Grant Street, and heads east along a public easement adjacent to apartments at 110 N. Grant. From there, the trail turns south and continues on-street to Justus Lane. At the intersection of Justus and Trail Street, the path continues on-street along Trail to cross Garfield Street. From Garfield, the path continues on W. Trail St. and through public easements to Catlin. The path crosses Catlin to an easement on the former Intermountain Lumber site. The trail continues to Russell and ends facing a connection to the Bitterroot Branch trail which originates at Hickory Street. Currently, there is a pedestrian crosswalk at intersection of Russell and the Bitterroot Branch trail. Future plans include a bicycle/pedestrian underpass as part of the Russell Street Corridor Transportation Improvement Project.

What’s it cost?

Funding

Federal and State Transportation Funds:	\$636,490
1995 and 2006 Missoula Open Space Bond Funds	\$213,510
Total:	\$850,000

Expenditures

Easements and Acquisition	\$266,127
Construction and Engineering	\$583,873
Total:	\$850,000

Why is it called the Milwaukee Trail?

In 1910, the Milwaukee Road railroad line ran from Chicago and traced a path through Montana and Idaho to reach Puget Sound, Wash. Tens of thousands of lives were deeply influenced by the corridor—travelers sought the beauty of the northwest canvas, people made a living off the railroad and its business, and families settled in the towns along its path. Today, the Milwaukee Road Corridor holds immense potential to become a long-distance multi-use trail linking several Pacific Northwest states. Already built on the corridor are the Kim Williams Nature Trail and the Ron MacDonald Riverfront Trail here in Missoula, the Route of the Hiawatha Trail at Lookout Pass, the 72-mile Trail of the Coeur d’Alenes in northern Idaho, and the 113-mile John Wayne Pioneer Trail in Washington State.