



NEWS RELEASE

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Rail Trail primed and ready for expansion

With today's acquisition of the final easement for the Big-4 Rail Trail northern expansion, the Rail Trail is primed and ready for expansion construction to begin occurring.

"This is a monumental moment for our town," said Mayor Emily Styron. "Decades of planning, advocating and work undertaken by our Parks Board, staff and Town of Zionsville leadership has led to today's achievement. The Rail Trail forms the central spine of Zionsville's 20+ mile trail system and is an asset that benefits us in terms of health and wellness, the local economy and environmental stewardship."

The Town of Zionsville is extending the Big-4 Rail Trail in two directions: south to Zionsville Road and north from Heritage Trail Park to the common boundary with Whitestown. Much momentum has been made in recent years, especially with the southern portion of the Rail Trail. The construction project replacing the Starkey Avenue bridge is expected to be complete later this year, along with the paving and widening of the southern portion of the Rail Trail which will lead into the future Overley-Worman Park. A trailhead will be added to Zionsville Road.

With acquisition now complete, the Parks Department will next bid out the Rail Trail widening, southern trailhead and northern expansion project this spring.

"This project will widen the existing Rail Trail and extend it to the Whitestown/Zionsville border, at which point we will pass the baton for Whitestown to complete their segment and connect Zionsville to the rest of the 28-mile Rail Trail corridor through Boone County. This is an exciting time for all of Boone County," said Parks Superintendent Jarod Logsdon.

Acquisition for the expansion of the Rail Trail began in 1992 with a goal of creating a safe, recreation corridor through the heart of town. According to former Parks Board attorney Roger Burrus, turning the old railroad corridor into a trail was an idea that originated from a group of local middle schoolers. The class presented the idea to the Parks Board and the board members later took that idea to Town Council.

Last year, the Town was awarded a Next level Trail Round 2 grant of \$1.8 million that will assist with obtaining parcels of land along the rail corridor, clearing them of brush and debris and building a 12' wide paved shared-use trail.

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