

EAGLE CREEK GREENWAY

OVERVIEW

The 22.4-mile Eagle Creek corridor is located in the northwest portion of Marion County. The creek enters Marion County from Boone County and flows into the White River just south of downtown Indianapolis. Included in the Eagle Creek study area are the portions of the creek above and below Eagle Creek Park. The area within Eagle Creek Park is not included as part of this study since a Master Plan for Eagle Creek Park is already in place.

The dissimilarity between the land use and development patterns found in the two portions of the corridor is striking. The northern segment above Eagle Creek Park is essentially rural in character. Land uses found in the area are low-density residential, agriculture, and open space. The southern portion is more densely developed, with large residential developments, commercial areas, and a heavily industrialized district near the confluence with the White River. Numerous parks and recreation facilities lie within the Eagle Creek corridor. Although not part of the study area, the 4,500-acre Eagle Creek Park offers linkage opportunities to a wide range of recreational facilities. Other recreation facilities include Thatcher Park and Golf Course and schools and parks in both Indianapolis and Speedway. Excellent access to the Eagle Creek corridor is afforded by the existing street network and levee system along the creek. Since the corridor is crossed by 1-65, 1-74, and 1-465, the corridor is accessible to the entire region. As with the B&O Rail corridor, portions of the Eagle Creek corridor lie within the town of Speedway.

A comprehensive project development report for the entire Eagle Creek Greenway was completed in early 2000. This report outlines the proposed trail routes and phases of construction as well as recommended design standards for the entire Eagle Creek Greenway. This report will be instrumental in obtaining funding for the future development of the trail. The goal established by this planning document is to connect the large recreational resource of Eagle Creek Park to neighborhoods, other parks and destinations along the way. About 70,000 people reside within one mile of the Eagle Creek Greenway. By creating proximity to and connectivity with open space resources, this large population base of the west side will realize relief from urbanization, gain nearby access to recreation, achieve a connection to natural systems and be provided with safe alternative transportation modes.

Section 1 of this plan will include development of the trail from 56th Street and Eagle Creek Park to Dandy Trail just north of 38th Street. The initial section of trail built will be located along the east side of Reed Road from 56th St. to 46th Street. From there it will be located along Dandy Trail with overlooks of the reservoir planned.

Additional sections of development await funding opportunities. During the Greenways Master Plan public input process much interest was expressed in making connections to various facilities and locations along the Eagle Creek Greenway. Connections to the

future B&O Greenway and the Indianapolis Motor Speedway were emphasized. Desire for a loop trail around Eagle Creek Park and identifying a location for mountain biking was also expressed. Connection to Lafayette Road via 34th Street was also mentioned as a possibility for future linkages.

MASTER PLAN UPDATE RECOMMENDATIONS

2001 to 2006

1. Complete Section 1 of the Eagle Creek Greenway Trail according to the comprehensive project development report.
2. Identify funding for the remaining sections of greenway trail development.
3. Assist in the preparation of a community access plan to identify bike routes and alternative means of access from neighborhoods to community facilities and greenways.

2007 to 2012

1. Continue to implement greenway trail development and provide upgrades to existing trail.

1994 Public Vision Statements

Because the land uses along this corridor vary from rural to urban, the public's vision for greenway functions also varies. The careful coordination of developed recreational areas, conservation, and linkage was a great concern of the corridor team.

Given the rural character of the northern section of this corridor, a variety of uses is appropriate including fishing, hiking, biking, horseback riding, environmental conservation, and cross-country skiing in the winter. Canoeing on the creek could be a recreational activity with the addition of canoe launches at the DCAM garage, at the county line (96th Street), and in Eagle Creek Park. This corridor should be linked with Eagle Creek Park.

As Eagle Creek flows to the south, the character of the surrounding land changes to a more developed environment. The corridor trails could connect with existing fitness trails between Dandy Trail and Waterfront Drive. Public access to the corridor could occur at the Girls School site, on the north side of Washington Street, at Ross-Claypool Park, and at the southeast corner of Minnesota Street. In the segments of Eagle Creek where there are levees, trails should be constructed on top of the levees. Recreational activities could occur in the vicinity of 21st Street. Other recreation facilities in the vicinity include local parks, such as Thatcher Park, and golf courses that could be linked to the greenway corridor. Wildlife observation could occur on Department of Public Works (DPW) property south of Raymond Street.

In the more urban areas of the corridor, commercial and industrial neighbors like the town of Speedway need to be full partners in the development and operation of the

corridor. This cooperation needs to extend to the local environmental organizations as well. Cooperative efforts could include education programs, public relations, and security. In areas along the creek that are developing, the city should coordinate the location of trails with homeowner associations. Activities that cause pollution south of Washington Street should be monitored, and a clean-up of the area should be organized to make the area safe for public use. Water pollution south of Morris Street creates water quality problems that should prohibit water-related activities until the CSO problem is resolved. Water quality is a prime concern since the town of Speedway's water intake is at Mickley Avenue and 10th Street.