

Trails and their Potential as Economic Development Engines

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What We Do

Programs

Healthy Living & Active Communities

Overview

Sunflower Trails

Trail Finder

Sunflower Trails Profile:
Trail In A Box

Health Care & Access

Advocacy

Sunflower Trails



Helping Kansans live, move, play and explore

Trails are an integral part of our Kansas history and culture. The Oregon Trail, the Smoky Hill Trail, the Santa Fe Trail — each was a vital route toward the promise of a better life. Today, trails still hold a promise unique to each Kansas community.

“Trails add value to our lives in so many ways—increasing our mobility, improving our health, spurring economic development and job creation, protecting our environment and creating powerful connections within, to, and across communities.”

—Rails to Trails Conservancy



Cover photo: An aerial photo of Menninger Hill in Topeka, Kansas. The Sunflower Foundation will relocate to

Trail “Cred”

- Partnered/funded 200+ trail projects in 73 counties
- All types of trails: community, school, rail-trail, etc
- Partnership w/Kansas Trails Council for “Trail in a Box”
- Get Outdoors Kansas coalition, website, app
- Legislature report: Rail-Trails
- Education, networking & advocacy opportunities including Trail Appreciation Day at state capitol

Sunflower Trails:

Investing in the built environment since 2005

Top Five Benefits of Trails... more than just a great view!



#1 Physical Health Benefits
of Outdoor Activity/Exercise

#2 Positive Effects on Mental Health: Improved
Cognition, Enhanced Mood & Emotional Well-Being

#3 Community Pride, Quality of Life, Social Cohesion

#4 A Great Equalizer... (*mostly*) accessible to people
of all ages, incomes, abilities and backgrounds

<https://headwaterseconomics.org/wp-content/uploads/trails-library-overview.pdf>

Overall Benefits of Trails (*Headwaters Economics*)

#5 Economic Potential...
Attracting tourists, visitors and even new residents to your community!



User Benefits

- Health impacts
- Property Valuation
- Safety Benefits

Economic Benefits

- Economic Impacts
- Direct
- Indirect
- Induced

Social Benefits

- Environmental
- Connectivity & Access
- Community Engagement

Trails appeal to residents



Top 3 factors that homebuyers across all age groups want:

1. Access to walking/biking trails
2. Proximity to a park
3. Desire to live in a “typically suburban” neighborhood

Source: National Association of Homebuilders (2016)

And trails appeal to visitors

The
Outdoor
Recreation
Economy
Generates:

7.6 Million
American Jobs

\$59.2 Billion
In state and local tax revenue

\$887 Billion
In consumer spending annually

Outdoor Industry Association, 2018 Report
Accessed online at <https://outdoorindustry.org/>

And this appeal has accelerated due to COVID

2021 SPECIAL REPORT:

**THE NEW
OUTDOOR
PARTICIPANT**
(COVID AND BEYOND)

**OUTDOOR
INDUSTRY
ASSOCIATION**

NAXION
RESEARCH › CONSULTING

<https://outdoorindustry.org/resource/2021-special-report-new-outdoor-participant-covid-beyond/>

2021 SPECIAL REPORT: NEW OUTDOOR PARTICIPANT (COVID AND BEYOND)

- Among other key takeaways, the report reveals that:
- New participants are more likely to be female, younger, living in an urban area and slightly more ethnically diverse than existing participants.
- New participants primarily sought socially-distanced outdoor activities in order to spend time with loved ones safely, to exercise, stay healthy or to reduce screen-time fatigue.
- New participants are largely motivated by outdoor recreation opportunities with low barriers to entry that are available and accessible within 10 miles of their homes, including walking, running, biking and hiking.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO IMPROVE RETENTION OF NEW PARTICIPANTS?

1



Create more outdoor recreation opportunities close to home.

- Parks and open areas near where people live are a crucial part of growing participation. The pandemic has shown that there is a demand for close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunities (e.g., snowboard/skate/bike/paddle parks and nature centers).

2



Help new participants make their activities more social as restrictions lift.

3



Develop programs and services with the specific goal of diversifying the participant base.

4



Develop strategies for encouraging people to start small (e.g., walking, running, hiking, birdwatching).

5



Position outdoor recreation as...

- An antidote to the mental health consequences of the pandemic.
- A way to get out from behind the screens that have dominated pandemic life.
- A method to maintain the focus on what is important in life.



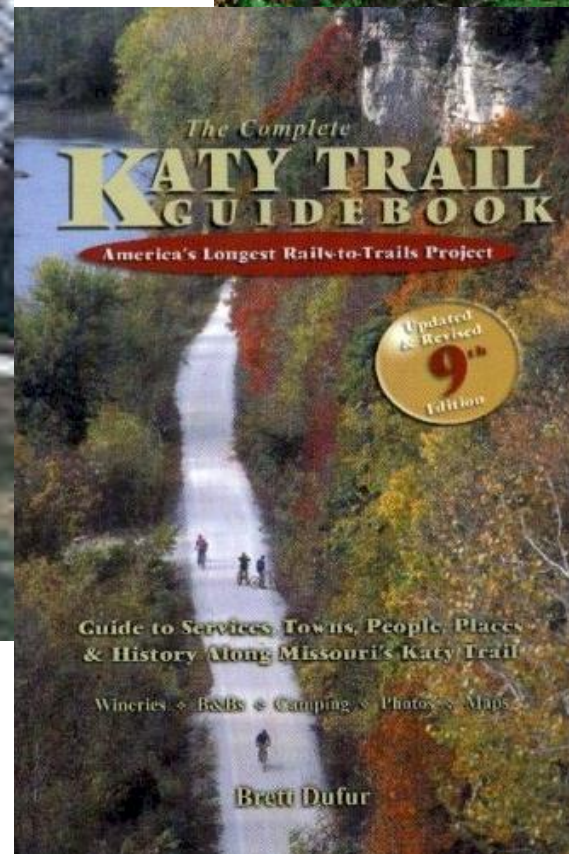


So national trends say the demand for trails and outdoor access is on the rise... what about closer to home?

We all know about THIS trail...



~ 400,000 annual visitors



“For every dollar spent by Missouri State Parks to operate Katy Trail State Park, Missouri’s economy saw an \$18 return on investment,”
(Missouri State Parks citing Economic Impact Analysis 2012)



And what about this one?

[Economic Development](#)
[Equity](#)
[Natural Hazards](#)
[Public Lands](#)
[Outdoor Recreation](#)



Economic and Health Benefits of Bicycling in Northwest Arkansas

BENEFIT	USE	REGION	YEAR
Business impacts Property value Public health	Cycling Mountain biking	South	
BACK TO RESULTS		LINK TO STUDY	

How to cite this study

BBC Research and Consulting. 2018. *Economic and Health Benefits of Bicycling in Northwest Arkansas*. Prepared for The Walton Family Foundation and PeopleForBikes. Denver, CO: BBC Research and Consulting.

And this one?

SAGE journals online Sign In
Search all journals Advanced Search

Health Promotion Practice
hpp.sagepub.com

doi: 10.1177/1524839903260687
Health Promot Pract April 2005 vol. 6 no. 2 174-179

A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Physical Activity Using Bike/Pedestrian Trails

Guijing Wang,
Caroline A. Macera¹,
Barbara Scudder-Soucie²,
Tom Schmid,
Michael Pratt³ and
David Buchner⁴

[+ Author Affiliations](#)

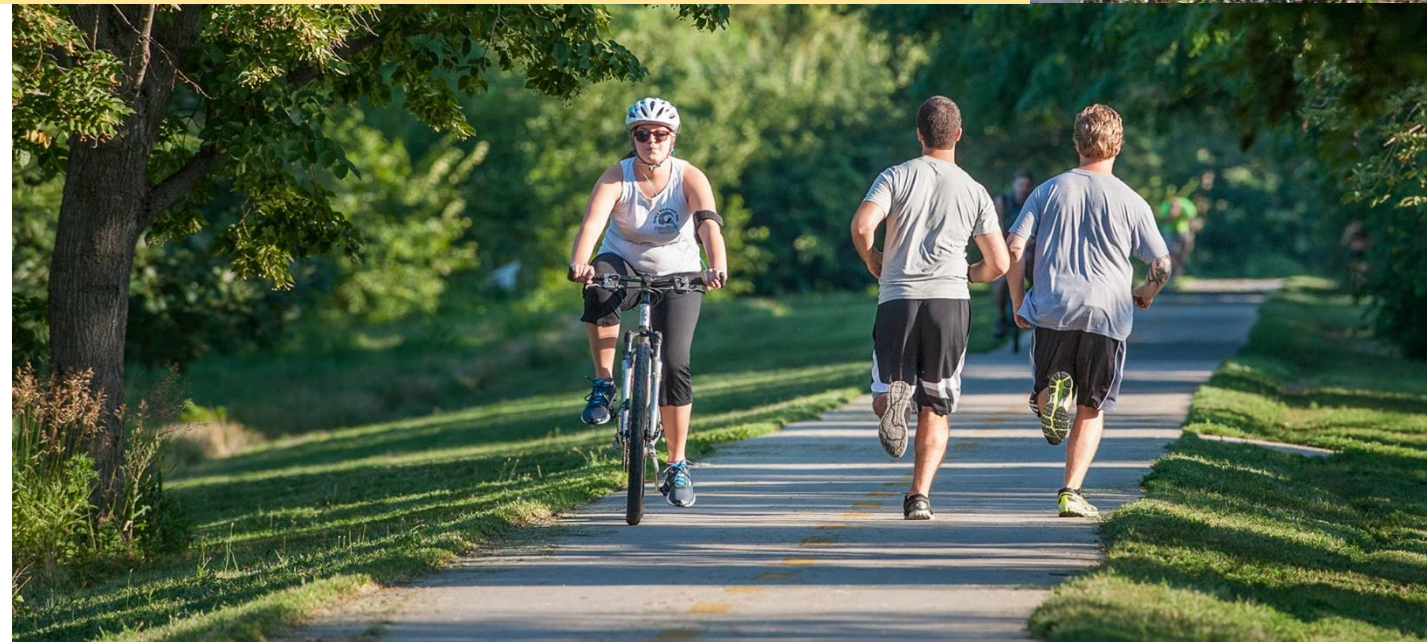
Abstract

From a public health perspective, a cost-benefit analysis of using bike/pedestrian trails in Lincoln, Nebraska, to reduce health care costs associated with inactivity was conducted. Data was obtained from the city's 1998 Recreational Trails Census Report and the literature. Per capita annual cost of using the trails was U.S.\$209.28 (\$59.28 construction and maintenance, \$150 of equipment and travel). Per capita annual direct medical benefit of using the trails was \$564.41. The cost-benefit ratio was 2.94, which means that every \$1 investment in trails for physical activity led to \$2.94 in direct medical benefit. The sensitivity analyses indicated the ratios ranged from 1.65 to 13.40. Therefore, building trails is cost beneficial from a public health perspective. The most sensitive parameter affecting the cost-benefit ratios were equipment and travel costs; however, even for the highest cost, every \$1 investment in trails resulted in a greater return in direct medical benefit.

[environment](#) [community](#) [inactivity](#) [economic analysis](#)



Lincoln, Nebraska & connecting trails



So... how do we get there in Kansas?



Trails



Health



and

Wealth



In your
community

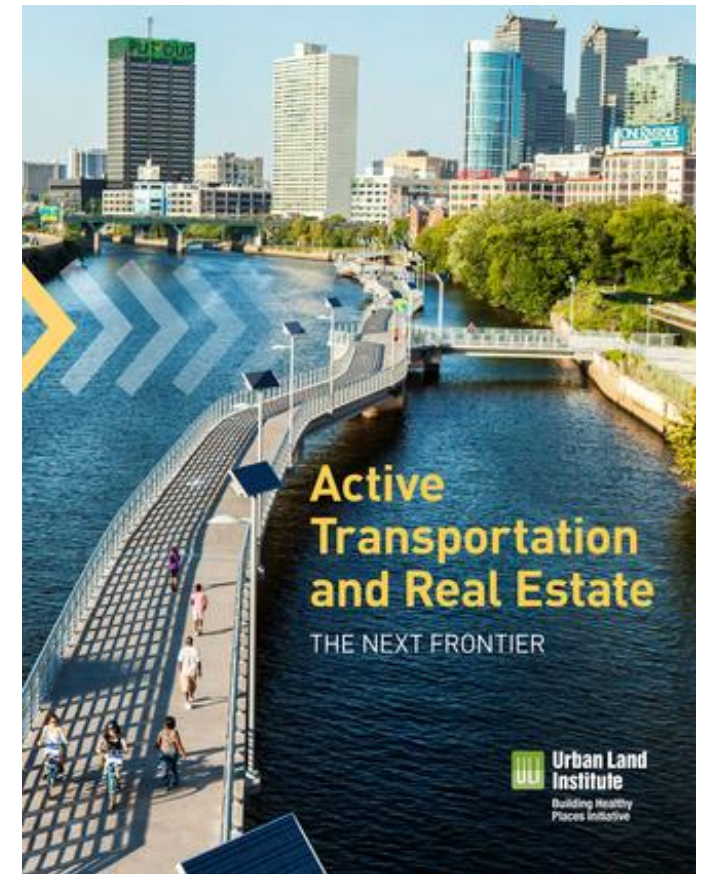
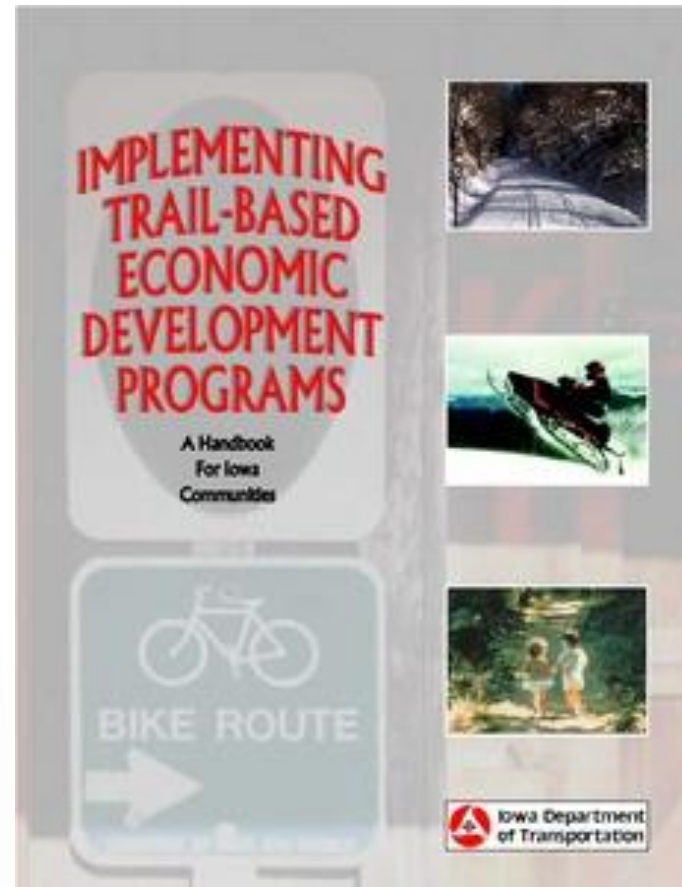
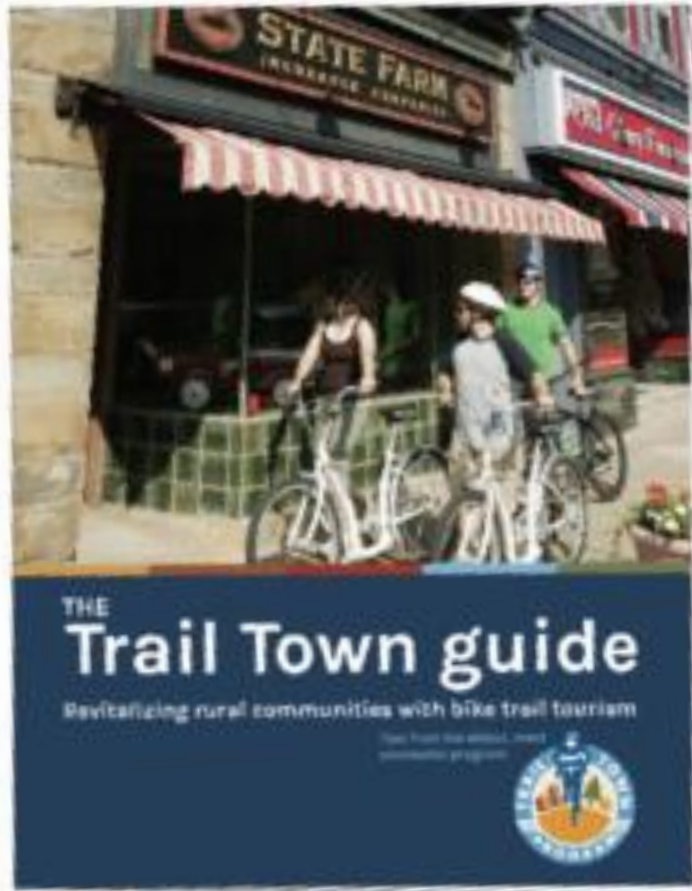
#1 mistake:
Thinking that if you
build the trail, they
will all just come.



Translating Trails into Economic
Development does not happen by accident

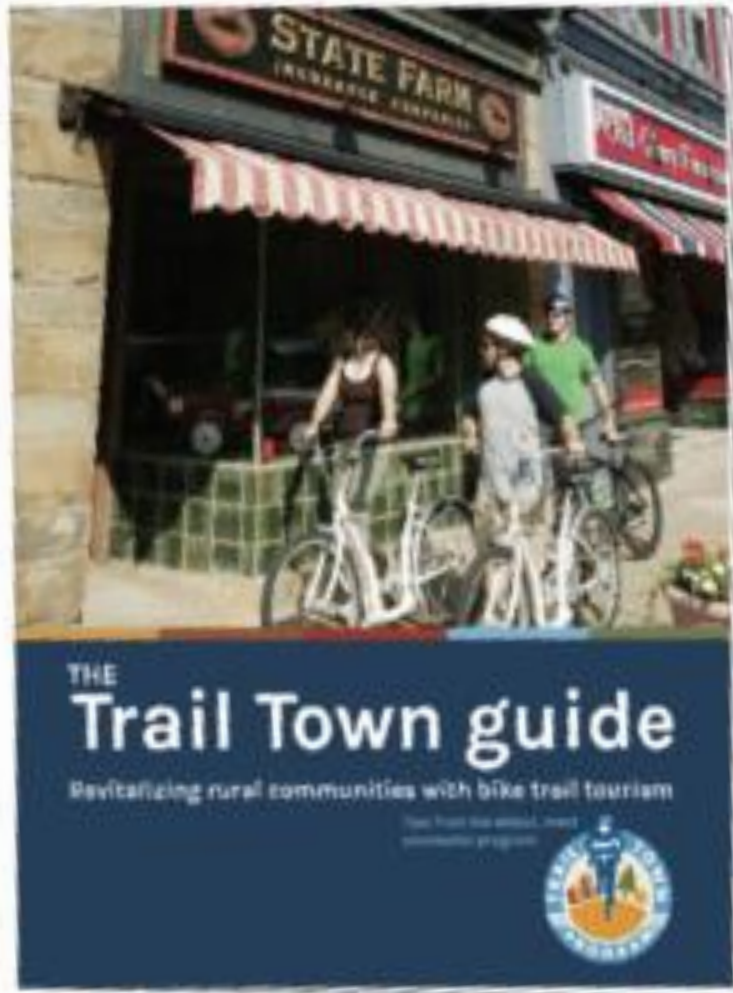


It takes research...



Links to these resources and many, many other on the Reference/Resource slide

It takes a realistic attitude



“There are no cash registers on the trail, so you have to make the link between the trail and the cash registers in your town.”

“The trail alone will not create new businesses. YOU must figure out what trail users need, want and desire in your town... and then offer it.”

“Although there are many types of trails, the needs of the trail users are quite similar, once they are OFF the trail and IN your town.”

It takes looking at your community and what it can offer with fresh eyes



The surprising story of
Belcastel, France



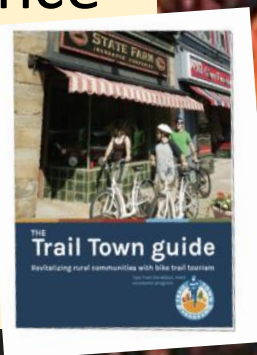
Top Ten Success Factors in Trail Towns

1. Connect to downtown and other points of attractions
2. Provide public amenities
3. Good design is good business
4. Engage anchor institutions
5. Engage artists to tell a story

Top Ten Success Factors in Trail Towns

- Create programming
- Take a systems approach
- Understand your users and their needs
- Provide an authentic, eco-tourist experience
- Tell the story of your town

Adapted from the Trail Town Guide by the Trail Town Program <https://www.trailtowns.org/guide/>



Another Top Ten “TOD” List

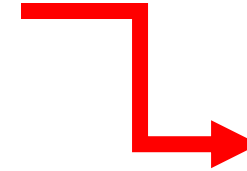
1. Trails are one element of a larger visitor experience, providing other opportunities (both recreational and non-recreational) draws a more diverse group of visitors. In turn, this allows for a greater variety of businesses.

2. Establishing a community as a viable trail destination mandates that individual businesses must take individual risks as entrepreneurs while simultaneously working together with other businesses to build critical mass.

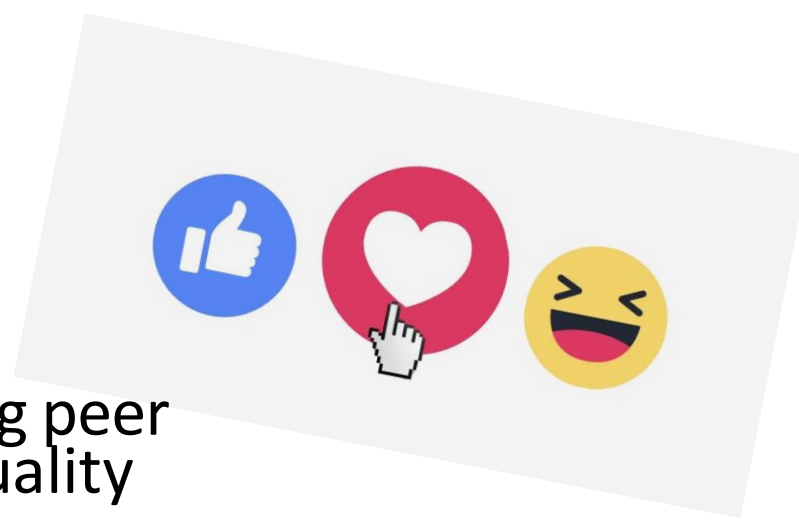
“TOD” – Trail Oriented Development

Also called Trail Oriented Economic Development and/or “TrOD”

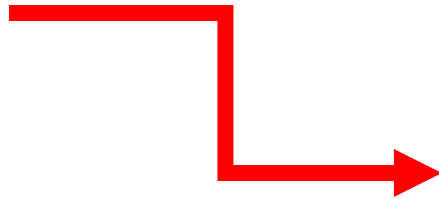
Top Ten List from this free downloadable book!



3. Trail users pass along knowledge to others by word of mouth, as well as learning about destinations from travel articles, Internet, *(social media!)* etc. To ensure outstanding peer recommendations, towns and businesses must provide a quality visitor experience to each individual trail user.



4. Year-round activity is crucial to the survival of many trail-related businesses. **Even if recreational trail use seasonal, communities can provide off-season attractions that provide different experiences.**



13

TUESDAY, APRIL 13, 2021 AT 7 PM CDT – 8 PM CDT

Trails of Kansas: Past, Present, and Future

Free · Online Event

The complex block contains a book cover for 'KANSAS TRAIL GUIDE' on the left, a photograph of a dirt path through a lush green forest on the right, a calendar icon with the number '13' below the book, and event details including the date 'TUESDAY, APRIL 13, 2021 AT 7 PM CDT – 8 PM CDT', the title 'Trails of Kansas: Past, Present, and Future', and the note 'Free · Online Event'.

5. Trail planning in urban areas (*or geographically large multi-county areas*) requires cooperation and coordination not only from different political jurisdictions, but also among various public and private entities within each jurisdiction.

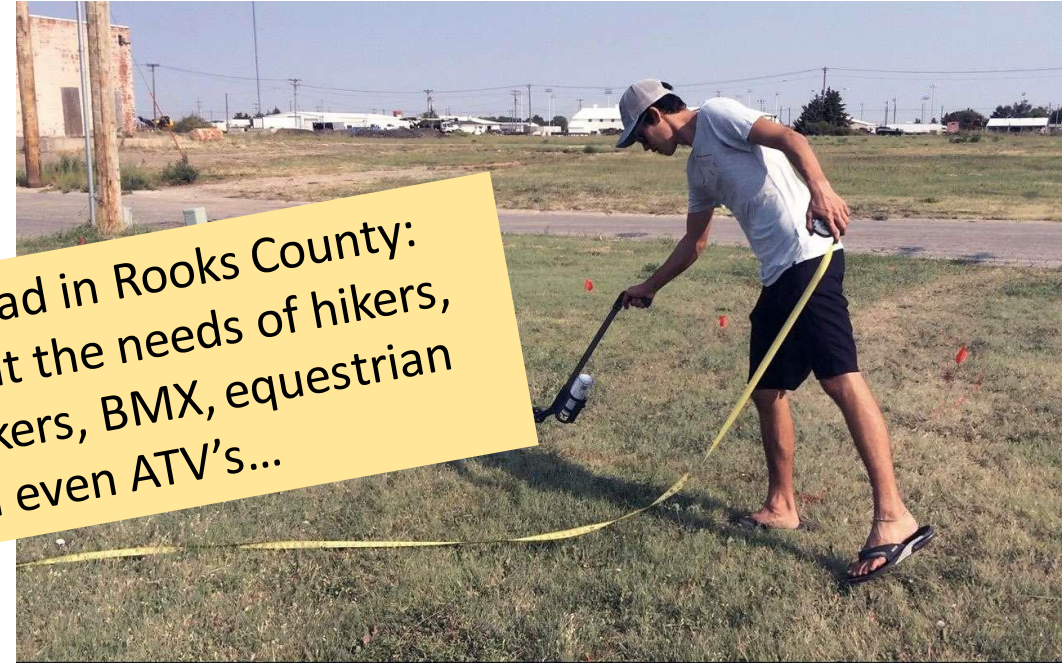
6. Slogans and marketing themes are meaningless unless the entire community buys into them. Building a true community identity requires the support of political leaders, businesspeople, and the public.



7. Recreation alone will not induce visitors to stay overnight. Communities must provide quality lodging, and dining activities to supplement the draw of recreation.

8. Different types of trail users behave differently. As a result, the types of users on a given trail will go a long way toward determining the character of a trail community. *Think about who will use your trails and how to accommodate their needs, including - what they will need/want to buy in your town! Also, think about possible conflict among users...*

Planning ahead in Rooks County: thinking about the needs of hikers, mountain bikers, BMX, equestrian and even ATV's...



9. A festival only creates economic impacts for a few days each year. To be effective economic development tools, festivals must become points-of-entry for year-round experiences.

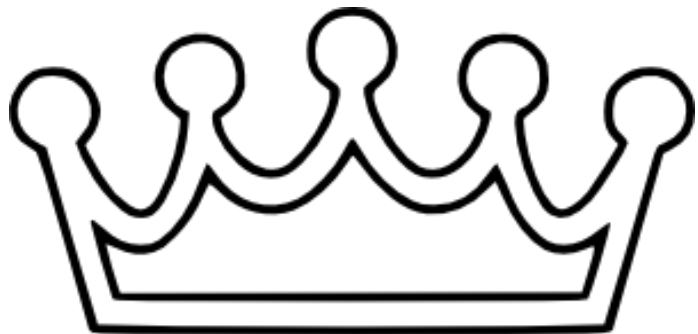


10. In the global economy, companies can locate just about anywhere and many will make location decisions based on quality of life. **A community with ample opportunities for trail recreation can leverage this advantage for economic development purposes.**



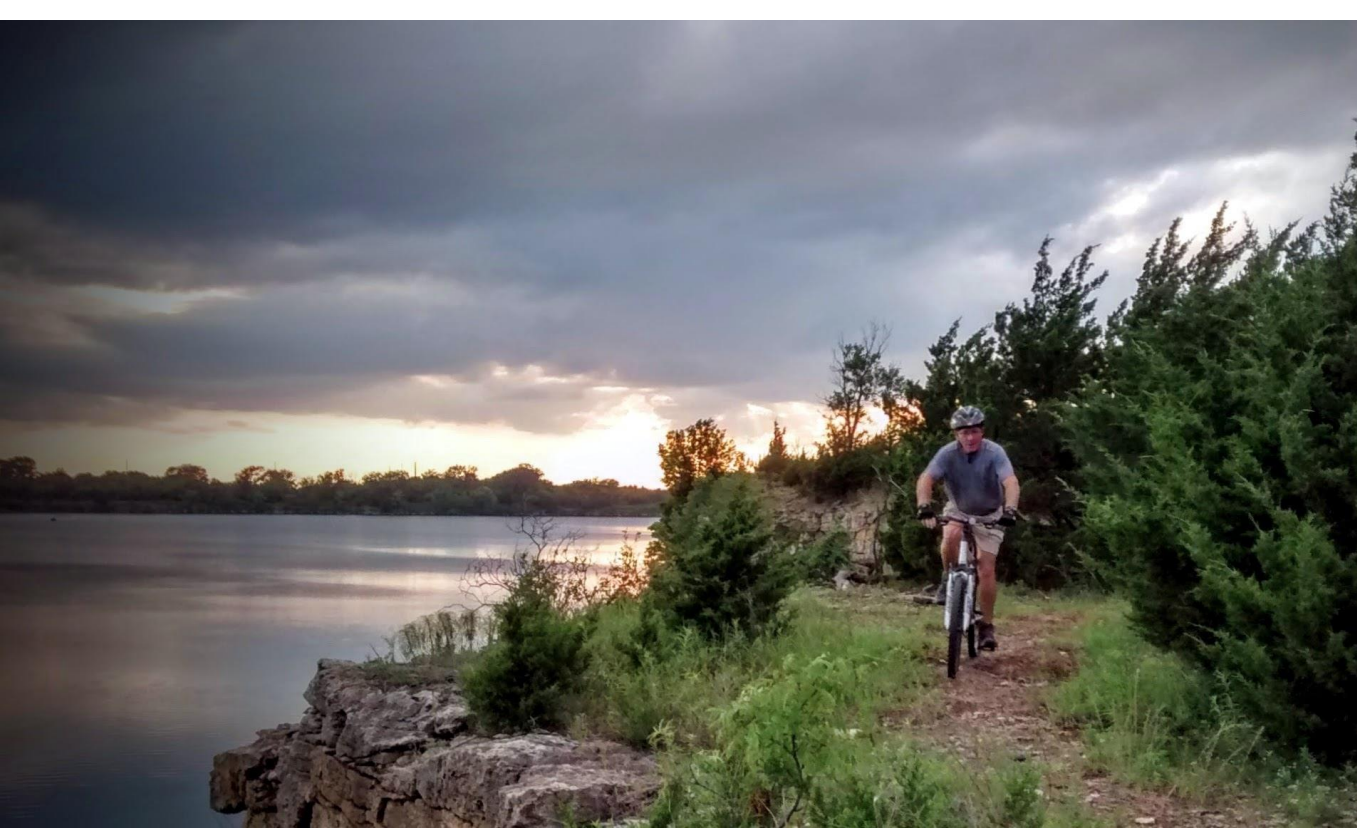


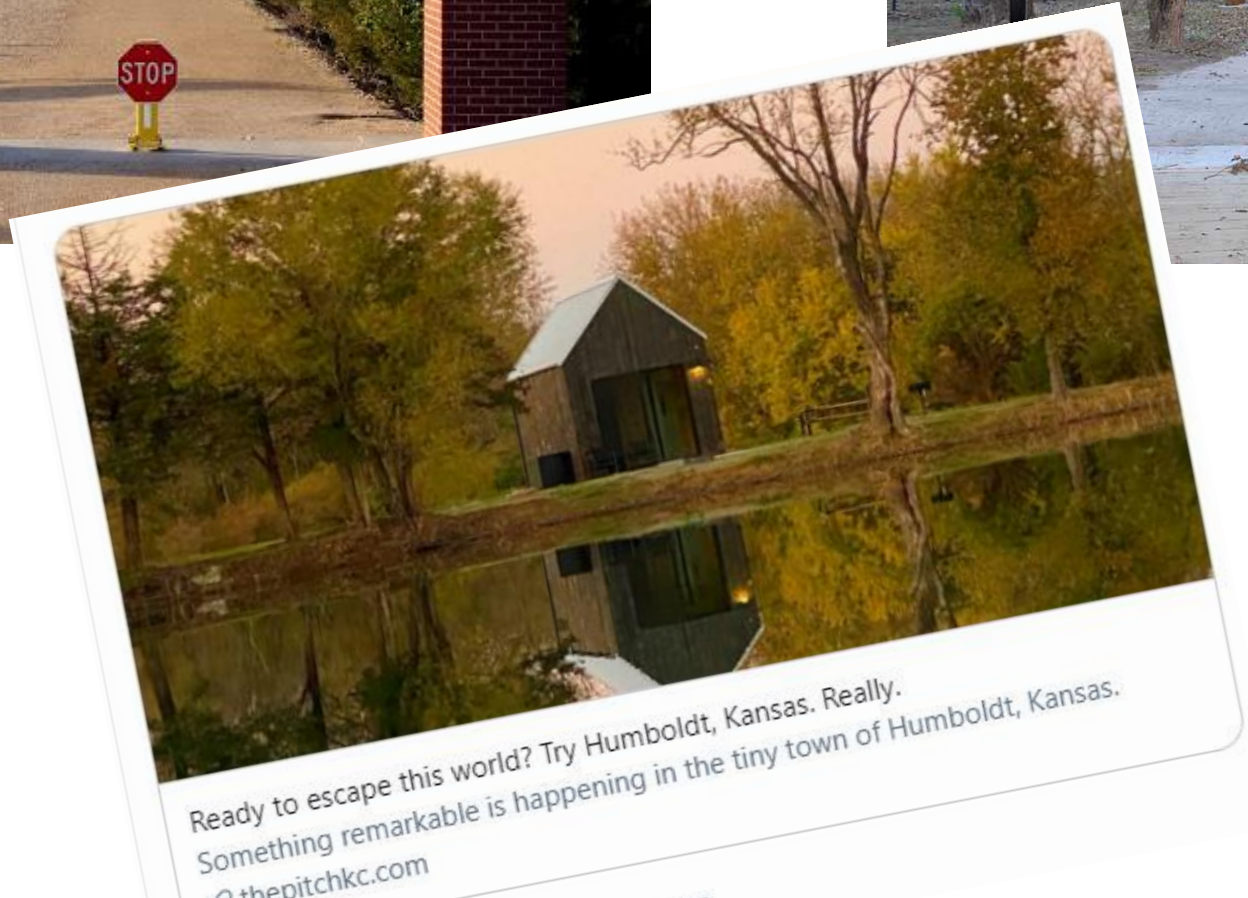
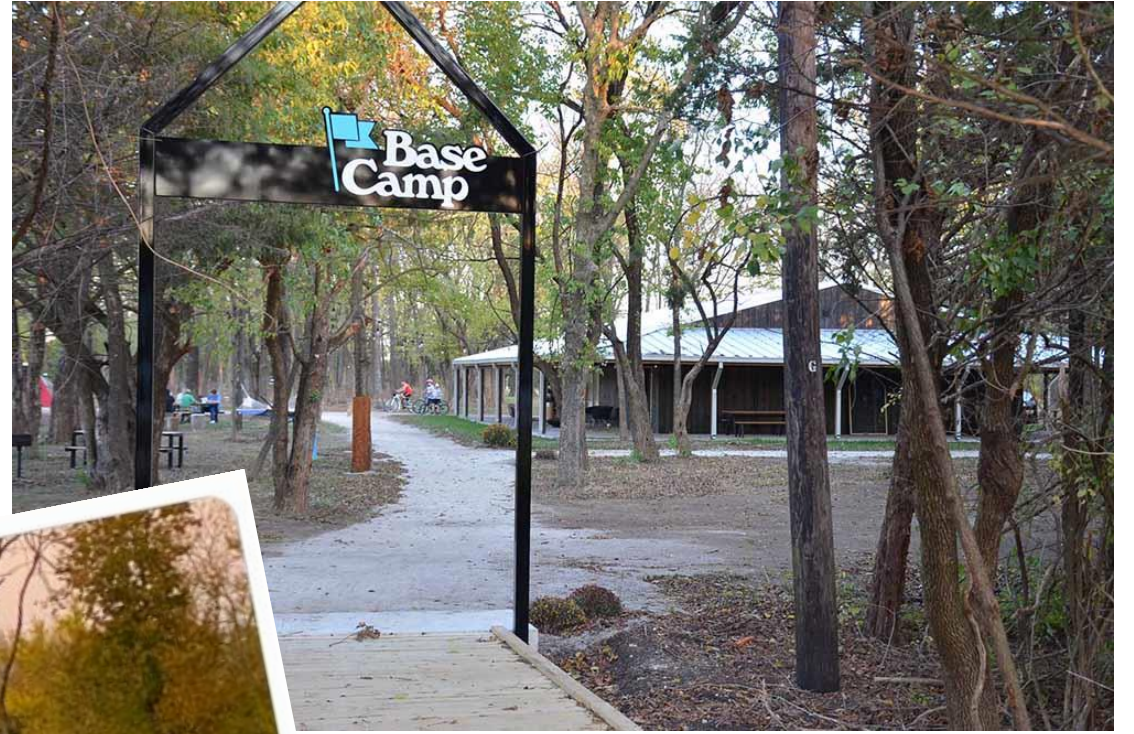
Iola & Allen County



KING OF TRAILS
ALLEN COUNTY, KANSAS
PRAIRIE SPIRIT • SOUTHWIND • LEHIGH PORTLAND • MO-PAC







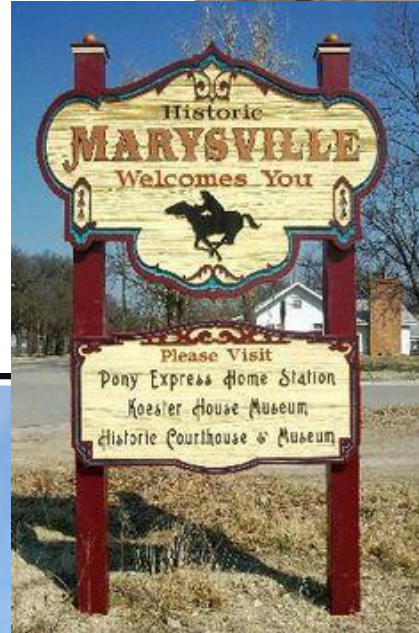
Ready to escape this world? Try Humboldt, Kansas. Really.
Something remarkable is happening in the tiny town of Humboldt, Kansas.
thepitchkc.com



Blue River  trail
Marysville, KS



Marysville & Marshall County





TRAILS -hiking, biking, & equestrian 



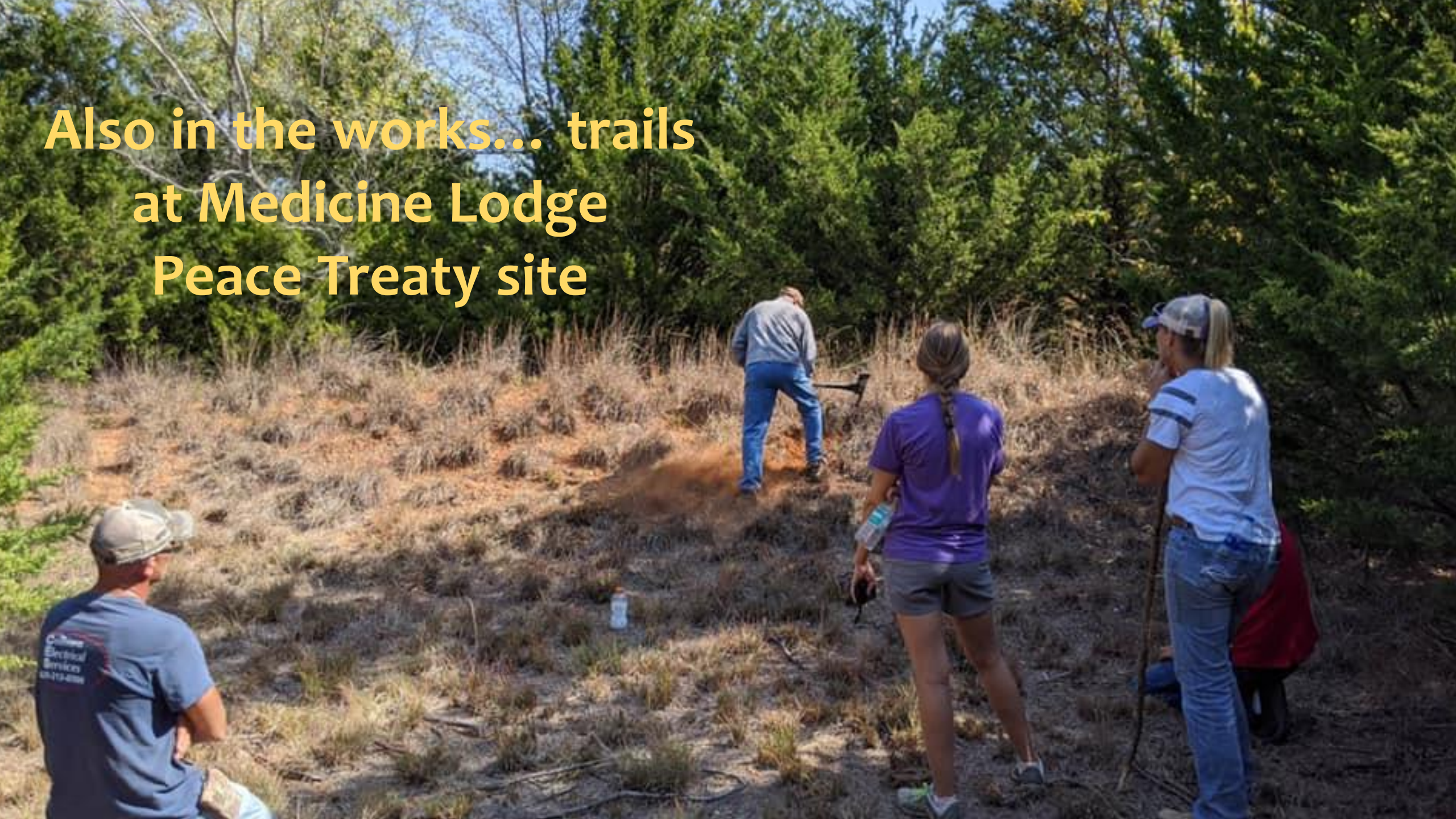
Indian Creek Trails (Johnson County)



**Keep this one on the horizon...
Development of “Destination Trails” underway
at Arkalon Park near Liberal**



**Also in the works... trails
at Medicine Lodge
Peace Treaty site**



Questions to Ask...

What is my inventory of existing/potential trails?

- How will they appeal to different kinds of users?
- How will they connect, either physically or conceptually?
- Does it need to be a “trail” – how can we think outside the box (i.e., backroad biking?)

What is unique about the trail and my town?

- Location, landscape, natural beauty, “Insta-worthy” features
- Local history, culture and art
- Significant landmarks
- Potential for activities, events, festivals, competitions, races, etc?

Who are the partners?

- Trail volunteers, champions and local users
- Elected officials and city/county administration
- CVB for town, county, area
- Civic groups (Rotary, PRIDE, Chamber)
- Businesses/Entrepreneurs some may not realize yet how they could benefit
- Mission-aligned state agencies, funders, stakeholders
- Early trail visitors – especially those on social media!

What do you have, what you need? Do a SWOT analysis...

- **Strengths** – existing assets (time, talent, treasure and trail)
- **Weaknesses** – what do you lack? (time, talent, treasure and trail)
- **Opportunities** – Remember the rule: see your town with fresh eyes

“Be the Best at Being You” (*Marci Penner*)

- **Threats** – some are unique to trails and some are familiar to anyone who’s tried to improve their town. #thickskin!

**Finally, who else is out thinking about this?
Let's start connecting...**



A person is riding a bicycle on a gravel path that stretches into the distance. The path is flanked by tall, dry grass and some green plants. In the background, there are trees and a clear blue sky. The overall scene is bright and open.

I want to hear from you!

Elizabeth Burger,

785-232-3000

eburger@sunflowerfoundation.org

EMAIL IS BEST

But first, let's hear from a Mega Trail Town...



Ottawa Team does their presentation,
then back to Elizabeth slides at slide 42

Kansas Trail Resources

Sunflower Trail Grants

- Funding for Trails & some types of Trail Related Projects*
- Contact Elizabeth eburger@sunflowerfoundation.org to learn about future RFPs & criteria

NOTE: we love trail businesses but we can only grant to nonprofit entities!

Sunflower Foundation Learning Opportunities

- Get on the list for upcoming events: convenings, workshops
- Trail Appreciation Day: Advocacy/networking (Late Jan., statehouse)
- Support for *Trail in a Box* & similar TA efforts



Download the FREE app
under the name
getoutdoorsKS



Several ways to use it...

- * FIND a trail - **almost 5000 miles mapped!**
 - * LOCATE an outdoor event or place
 - * JOIN the online coalition
- * ADD & PROMOTE your trail, event, park, etc
 - * CONNECT to other towns & groups

There is no fee to join or use the website or app. The project is a partnership among the Sunflower Foundation, Kansas Trails Council & the Evergy Green Team



Trail in a Box...

“Just add Volunteers!”



SIX trailers in circulation across KS now. Local governments & nonprofits can borrow to work on **public** trails.



Trailer outfitted with everything needed to build/maintain a natural surface trail
BONUS: comes with technical assistance!



That's Mike Goodwin
State's #1 Trail Guru!

Go to kansastrailscouncil.org to learn more

References & Resources



Download the Trail Town Guide & other info at:

www.trailtowns.org OR

<https://www.railstotrails.org/resource-library/resources/the-trail-town-guide/?collection=Benefits+of+Trails>

Library of webinars on trail issues including economic development at Rails to Trails Conservancy website:

<https://www.railstotrails.org/build-trails/webinars/>

Great resource library (webinars & articles) at American Trails website:

<https://www.americantrails.org/resource-library>

Download the handbook for implementing economic trail-oriented strategies at:

<https://iowadot.gov/iowabikes/trails/web-pdf/EconHandbook/HANDBOOK.pdf>

Good presentation with handy references:

<https://communities.extension.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1301/2020/02/BROWN-IEDC-Presentation-Trails-as-Economic-Development-Engines.pdf>

References & Resources

Helpful data on economic value of trails/green space and real estate at:

<http://uli.org/wp-content/uploads/ULI-Documents/Active-Transportation-and-Real-Estate-The-Next-Frontier.pdf> also Urban Land Institute website in general (don't let name fool you)

Comprehensive library with hundreds of studies/data related to economic benefits of trails at:

<https://headwaterseconomics.org/trail/>

If you want more tips on actually building a trail/getting the process started, check out:

- <https://www.kansastrailscouncil.org/about/trail-building-101/>
- <http://www.sunflowerfoundation.org/user/file/SixStepsToSuccessfulTrailBuilding.pdf>
- [https://www.ksde.org/Portals/0/CSAS/Content%20Area%20\(A-E\)/Drivers_Education/Driver_Education_Resources/LTAP%20Fact%20Sheet%20Tips%20for%20Driving%20on%20Gravel%20Roads%20-%202018.pdf?ver=2019-08-02-125041-093](https://www.ksde.org/Portals/0/CSAS/Content%20Area%20(A-E)/Drivers_Education/Driver_Education_Resources/LTAP%20Fact%20Sheet%20Tips%20for%20Driving%20on%20Gravel%20Roads%20-%202018.pdf?ver=2019-08-02-125041-093)
- <https://www.facebook.com/marcipenner/videos/10223466593709857/> (video of Elizabeth Burger & Mike Goodwin talking to Marci Penner about “So ya wanna build a trail?”)



All Trails Lead to Ottawa

Presented by:

Wynndee Lee – Community
Development Director, City of Ottawa

John Coen – President/CEO, Ottawa
Area Chamber of Commerce

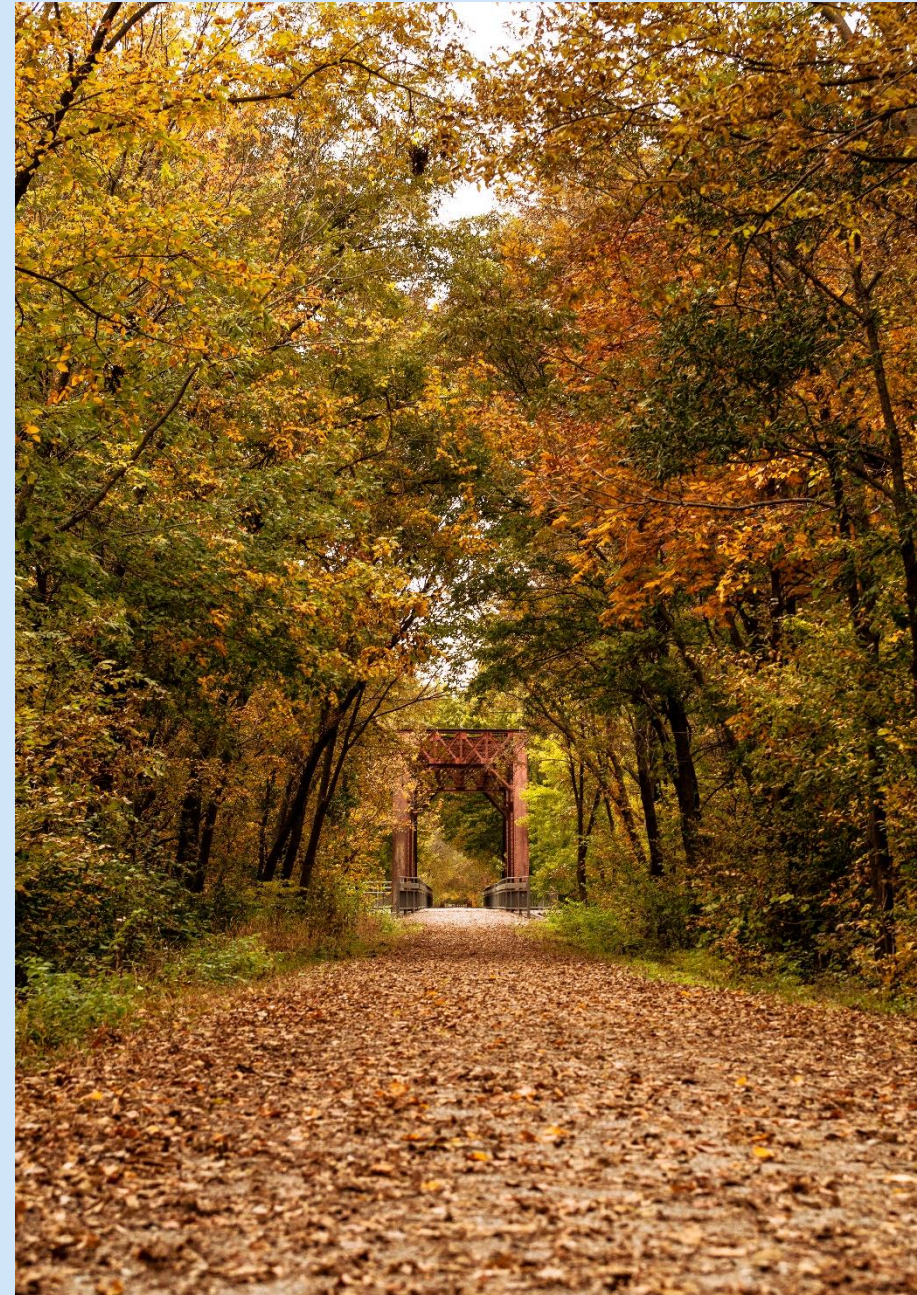


The History of the Railroad in Ottawa



- *Prairie Spirit Trail – 51 miles* ↑

- *Flint Hills Trail – 96 miles* →





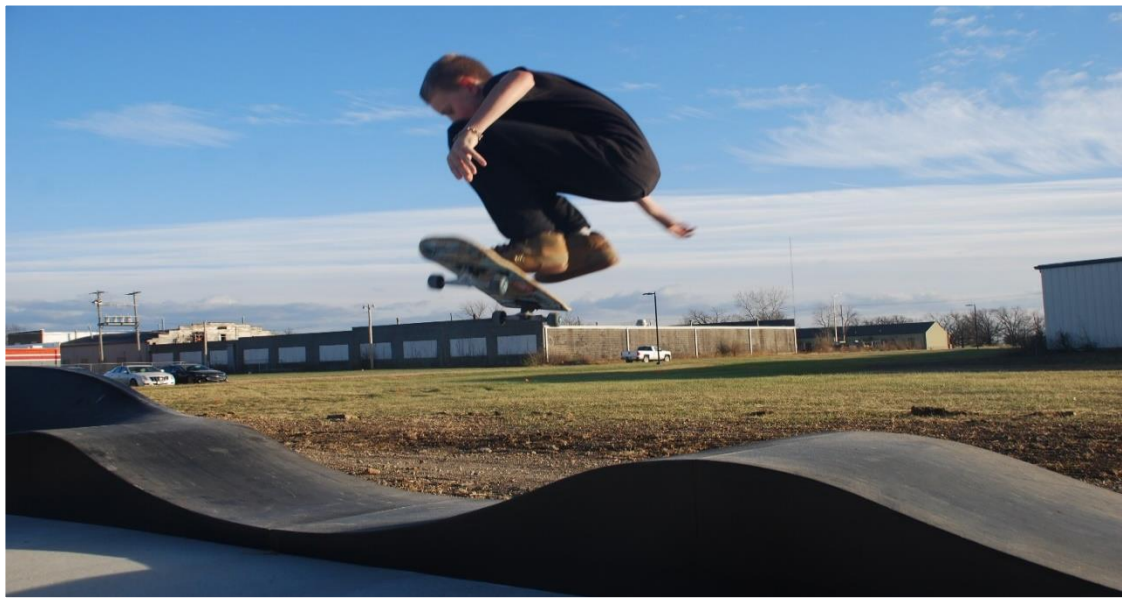
Above: Orlis Cox Ball Diamonds and City Utility facilities. Trail allows youth to follow trail to the ball diamonds for a safe travel route.

Below: Forest Park – home of disc golf, swimming, softball, horse shoes, and family recreation areas





Teen Park



Skate ramps & halfpipes



← Graffiti wall for artistic teens

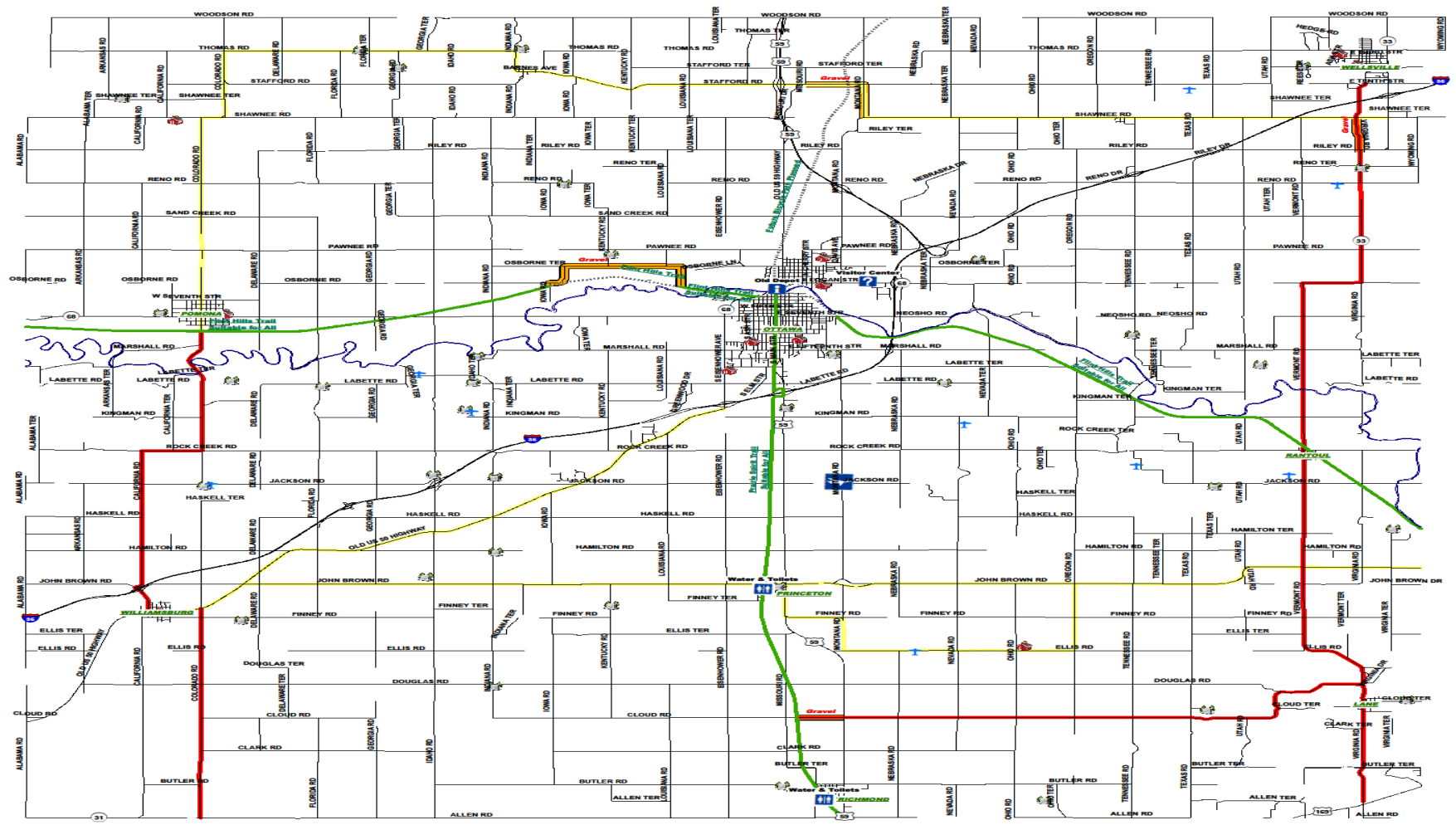


Amenities along Trails



Bike Rack Campaign





Legend

Rails to Trails Project

- Current Bicycle Path
- Future Bicycle Path Planned

Rider Experience

- Above Average Riders
- Experienced Riders
- Gravel on Trail

Points of Interest

- Old Depot
- Visitor Center
- Water & Toluca
- Airfields
- Ottawa Municipal Airport
- Schools
- Cemeteries



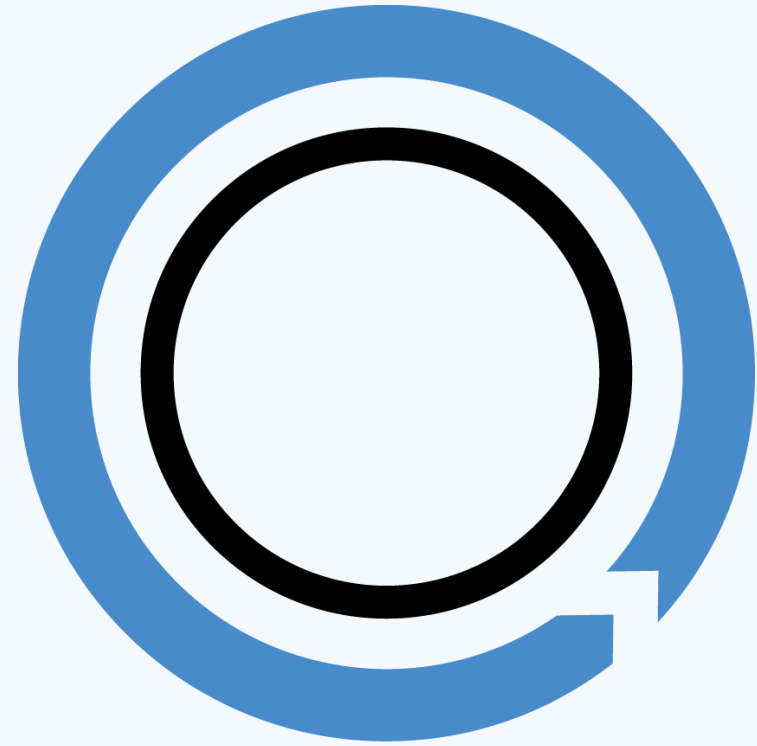
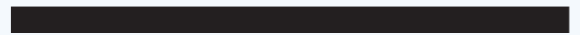
Franklin County, Kansas Bike Trails 2017

Projection	Kansas State Plane NAD83 South
Drawn By	Roy S (Cad Man) Baker
Date Drawn	8/3/2017

BASED ON VARIOUS INFORMATION SOURCES



L E G A C Y
S Q U A R E



O N W A R D
O T T A W A



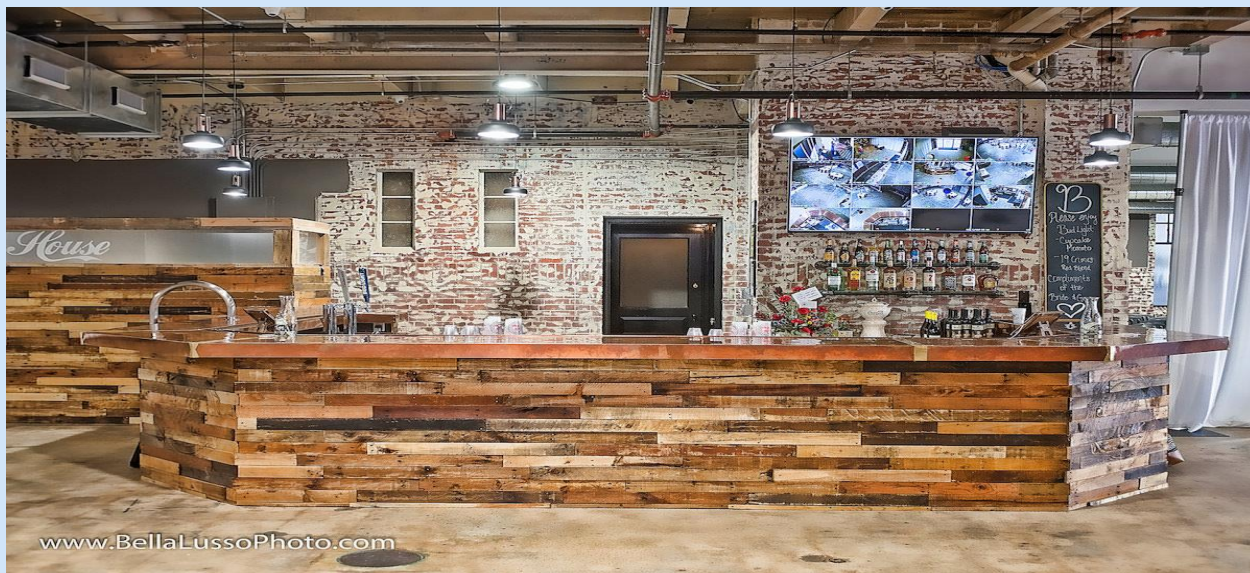


MUNSON

AO Architect One







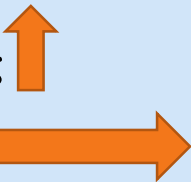
Business Along the Trail:

- Mug Shot Coffee
- The Bottle House
- Ottawa Bike and Trail
- Not Lost Brewery
- The Gun Guys



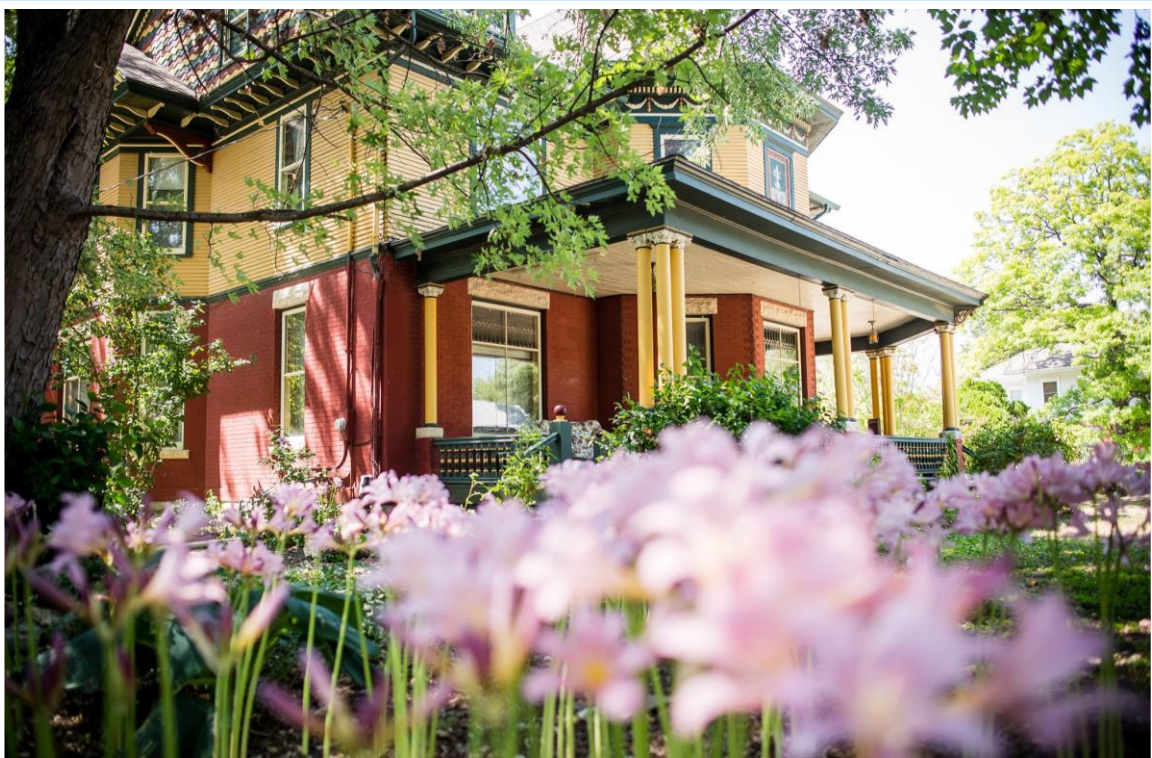


Maggie's Popcorn & Nuts
Not Lost Brewery



The Gun
Guys -
indoor
shooting
range





← The Painted Lady B&B



Housing:

- Unique bed & breakfast
- Air B&B
- New Housing developments

Old City Hall—downtown apartments and Air B&B

Early Local Trail Advocacy:

- 4 early grants: KDOT for lighting PSRT, 2 from Sunflower Foundation and one from Wildlife, Parks & Tourism to improve the trail-beds through Ottawa for Flint Hills Trails
- Committee to establish and complete a City Bike Plan
- Study performed "Connecting Ottawa" with KDOT grant
- Franklin Co. Health Dept. formed an Active Transportation committee
 - ❖ Received money from grant to buy bike counters for trails and county roads
 - ❖ Developed the Franklin County Bike Plan
- Franklin County "Bike Rack" campaign
- City of Ottawa Bike Lanes and Road Diet

Significant Grants:

- *Transportation Alternatives Grant*
 1. *Connect North Ottawa bike & walk way to downtown and trails*
 2. *Improve entryway to City via K-68*
- *Kansas Wildlife, Parks & Tourism Attraction Grant*
 1. *Further develop the crossroads of 2 State Park trails*
 2. *Added restrooms and showers accessible to both trails*
- *BCBS Pathways Grant*
 1. *Develop a children play area at the intersection of both trails*
 2. *Allowed us to make Legacy Square smoke free facility*
- *Federal Recreational Trail Program Grant*
 1. *Improve/complete the Flint Hills Trail from Hickory to Walnut Street*
 2. *25 directional signs; 6 interpretive signs; and 12 traffic signs*



All Trails Lead to Ottawa

Questions?