

WHITE RIVER GREENWAY

OVERVIEW

The White River is the largest river that begins and ends in Indiana and one of the largest watersheds in the state of Indiana. The White River's headwaters are in Randolph County in the eastern part of the state, and the river flows through the central portion of Indiana to the southwest where it joins with the Wabash River at the Indiana/Illinois border. The White River bisects Marion County and flows south into Johnson County, eventually joining the Wabash River in Gibson County in southern Indiana.

North White River

The northern section of the White River corridor begins north of the I-465 overpass at 96th Street and ends at the I-65 overpass near Riverside Golf Course. This section of the river flows through parts of Indianapolis that range from highly developed commercial areas in the vicinity of 82nd Street to low density residential development south of Keystone Ave. and high-density, single-family residential development in the Broad Ripple area. The undeveloped area on the northern part of this corridor is located on the White River's wide floodplain. As the river meanders south, the development becomes denser with many single-family homes that have property abutting the river. The North White River corridor is the only corridor with direct access for motorboats from a boat ramp at Broad Ripple Park and Lake Indy and private docks that extend from private property. The river can also be accessed from local roadways including Westfield Boulevard and Michigan Road. White River flows by a number of public facilities such as Broad Ripple Park, Holliday Park, and the Indianapolis Museum of Art. In all, the northern section of the White River corridor contains 14 miles. Portions of the northern White River Greenway Corridor are being studied by the Army Corps of Engineers for potential new flood protection levee development. This work may impact any future greenway development in this area depending on the outcome of this study.

Neighborhood interest in changing the location and designation of the proposed trail between College Avenue and the Riviera Club has prompted a revision of the 1994 master plan to propose a nature trail designation along the levee in this area and the multi-use trail alignment to be proposed along Riverview Drive.

Towne Run Trail Park info-Off-road trails at 96th St....

Central White River

Development of the White River Greenway has occurred primarily in the central section. Through the efforts of the Army Corps of Engineers, the State of Indiana, the White River State Park Commission and the City of Indianapolis; the Central White River has been developed according to the Central White River Waterfront Master Plan which was prepared in 1994 by Sasaki Associates. The White River Promenade now exists along the east bank of the river from Washington Street to 10th Street and connects the Indianapolis Zoo, the White River State Park and its many amenities and the Canal Walk.

A trail and overlook area has also been developed on the west- bank adjacent to the Zoo and connects to the old Washington Street bridge which has been renovated for pedestrian use and also connects to the promenade behind the Zoo. Future development will include west bank improvements including a trail from the Zoo to 10th Street creating a downtown loop trail, riverbank improvements and bridge improvements. This section of the White River falls under the jurisdiction of the White River State Park Commission.

Indy Parks Greenways has developed a trail along the White River beginning at the Major Taylor Velodrome and proceeding south to 10th Street and Fall Creek. Major connections within this corridor are at Riverside Regional Park; Riverside, Coffin and South Grove Golf Courses; the Riverside Golf Training Academy, the restaurant and boat launch facility at 30th Street, connection to the Central Canal Greenway at 30th Street, connection to the White River Promenade and the future Fall Creek Greenway at 10th Street. At-grade crossings of 30th Street and 16th Street have proven to be difficult due to existing conditions and warrant further study. A major feature of this trail section is the Beurt Servaas Bridge, a cable-stay pedestrian bridge spanning Fall Creek just north of 10th Street. This pedestrian bridge was completed in 1999 and has become an appealing landmark in the downtown environment.

South White River

The Raymond Street overpass is the point where the South White River corridor begins. The corridor ends at the Marion County/Johnson County line. The southern segment of White River (from Raymond Street to the county line) is over 9 miles long. The northern part of this corridor is primarily industrially developed, and this, along with other land uses, is not aesthetically pleasing. The southern portion of this corridor is characterized by open space with a wide floodplain. There has not been much residential or commercial development in this part of the county. Southwestway Park and Winding River Golf Course are located along the west-side of White River at the Marion/Johnson County line. There are few existing opportunities for access to the river with the exception of occasional overpasses such as at Southport Road, at Southwestway Park, and at Harding Street.

This section of the White River Greenway contains a critical connection piece for the entire Greenway system. Trail development within this corridor is necessary to provide the link to downtown and the northern trail systems with the Eagle Creek Greenway and the Pleasant Run Greenway, which will both meet the White River Greenway at Raymond Street. Comprehensive planning for this segment is recommended to begin in the near future.

MASTER PLAN UPDATE RECOMMENDATIONS

2001-2006

1. Prepare and implement a comprehensive development plan for the South White River Greenway corridor from Washington Street to Raymond Street, acquire funding and proceed with development.

2. Change designation of multi-use trail to nature trail within the segment of the North White River Greenway from College Avenue to the Riviera Club and identify the multi-use trail location as an on-road route along Riverview.
3. Study and improve the street crossing at 30th Street.
4. Study and improve the street crossing at 16th Street.
5. Explore potential of a trail connection to Municipal Gardens, which may involve work on the 16th Street bridge.
6. Coordinate trail standards, amenities, signage and trail connections with the White River State Park.
7. Assist in the preparation of a community access plan with links to community facilities.
8. Connect the Monon Rail Trail and the Central Canal Towpath with Broad Ripple Park via a White River Boardwalk.

2007 to 2012

1. Prepare a comprehensive development plan for the South White River corridor (Raymond Street to Southwestway Park) and implement portions of the plan where feasible.

White River

Public Vision Statements

North White River

Because of its length and pool depth, White River has a variety of environments and recreation opportunities. Along the length of the river, north of I-65, are areas that should be conserved, areas promising excellent recreation opportunities, and the potential for a trail system that could link much of northern Marion County.

The area east of the river, south of 96th Street, and some land south of I-465 provide good opportunities for a wildlife refuge. Several other sensitive natural areas along White River should be protected as conservation areas.

The width and depth of the river make it ideal for water-based recreation. Opportunities exist for both motorized and non-motorized boating as well as fishing over most of the river's length. Many opportunities exist for canoe access, such as along the west side of the river at 96th Street, below Broad Ripple Park at Cornell Avenue, at the Meridian Street access, and at Friedmann Park. An opportunity exists to expand the availability for motorboat enthusiasts by providing more public boat ramps in the backwater/lake areas north of Broad Ripple Park. Because of the potential for conflicts between canoeists and motorboats, the creek that flows through Marott Park could be used only by canoes. In some locations where the water level is too low, or where there is a dam, portage facilities are proposed.

The White River corridor provides many opportunities for biking and hiking trails. A number of trails with access to the river should be developed at various locations, such as the overpasses at Michigan Road, Meridian Street, and Old Westfield Road. These trails could connect many facilities along the river such as Holliday Park, Friedmann Park, Broad Ripple Park, Butler University, and the Indianapolis Museum of Art. A bicycle path that connects several neighborhoods and the IWC Canal, White River, and the Monon Rail corridor should be implemented. This path would create a large "loop" for bicyclists. The trail's proximity to the IWC Canal and Crooked Creek would provide opportunities for connections between all three corridors. In addition to creating paths along the river, the trail system in Marott Park needs to be upgraded, including construction of a footbridge over Williams Creek, which bisects the park. To provide variety along the river path, a fitness trail could be constructed within a new easement at the Riviera Club. The White River trail could be connected to White River Parkway West Drive. This trail would create a link with a proposed golf academy at the city tree nursery and with the Crooked Creek trail.

Erosion problems near Broad Ripple High School, wetlands across from Rocky Ripple, the Holliday Park shoreline, and several pools in the White River that provide good fishing access are areas that require protection.

Combined sewer overflows (CSO) at 56th Street and 64th Street present significant limitations to the development of the corridor for recreation. As a result, a long-term solution to the CSO problem on the North White River is needed.

Central White River

This section was not studied by the public corridor study teams since it was, at that time, being planned as part of the Central White River Waterfront Master Plan.

South White River

Public Vision Statements

The current conditions on the southern portions of the White River offer opportunities for trail development and improvements to existing parks.

Both sides of the White River south of Raymond Street to I-465 could be used for trails. These trails could link several natural areas and the Lilly Recreational Complex. To provide additional access to the South White River trails, a link should be created with the Pleasant Run trails. Boat launches could be provided at locations south of Raymond Street, South Harding Street, and the I-465 overpasses. These boat launch facilities could also include a small park.

North and south of Southport Road are wide, undeveloped areas that have the potential for horse trails and hiking trails. The wide floodplain in the vicinity of the Southport

Road overpass would allow the development of a boat launch and access point to the river trails. Southwestway Park should be improved to include a casting pond, a multipurpose facility, a fishing platform, and creation of wetlands with boardwalk access for educational purposes. Historic preservation should be addressed by preserving the Chief Big Fire Village Massacre site south of Southwestway Park.

As with North White River, CSO problems on the South White River severely limit human contact with the river water. A long-term solution to the problem is recommended before large public investment in the corridor is initiated. It should be noted that the public health problem is compounded by illegal dumping on the corridor.