



## ENVIRONMENTAL RISK

As part of the planning process for the Russellville Connected Trail System, preliminary environmental reviews have been conducted along various portions of the trail system. (Appendix 12) The purpose of these reviews is to identify and address any potential environmental concerns that may arise during the construction and operation of the trail system.

The reviews considered the trail alignment as well as the adjacent properties. The preliminary report focused on a range of environmental concerns, including impacts to biological resources, floodplains, historic and cultural resources, hazardous materials, equitable development, and construction impacts. This comprehensive approach ensures that all potential environmental impacts have been considered and addressed in the planning process.

One key aspect of the environmental review was the evaluation of threatened and endangered species, migratory birds, Bald and Golden eagles, and Monarch butterflies in the project area. These species may be at risk due to the construction and operation of the trail system, and therefore, mitigation measures may need to be put in place to protect them.

The City of Russellville aims to construct and operate the trail system in an environmentally sustainable and responsible manner by coordinating with relevant environmental government agencies and implementing best practices to minimize and mitigate impacts to resources.

Additionally, the project takes into account the historical and cultural resources within the trail alignment, including the Latimore Tourist Home, a property listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the only "Green Book" listed home standing between Little Rock and Fort Smith. By incorporating historical and cultural landmarks into the trail, the community will not only have access to nature but also have the opportunity to connect with the history of their community and those who fought for equity and inclusion.



We expect to undergo Section 106 review and collaborate with the City Historic Preservation Officer and State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to ensure compliance with historic preservation regulations. It is unlikely that any impacts beyond the existing street right-of-way will occur in these areas, and the city's historic preservation officer has been closely involved in the project's planning. This presents a chance to transform barriers into opportunities and provide intentional educational experiences.

Utility relocation and Right of Way challenges pose potential risks during the development of trail and transportation systems. The acquisition of easements may be necessary in some parts of the route, and there may also be a need for property acquisitions. The City of Russellville has substantial experience in effectively acquiring ROW, in accordance with the Uniform Relocation



# Russellville Connected Trail System Project Readiness



Act, as was necessary in our partnership with the United States Army Corp of Engineers. We have taken into account these issues when scheduling and budgeting the Russellville Connected Trails System Project.

Furthermore, the City has begun discussions with the ARDOT Planning and Policy Division to explore the inclusion of these features in future roadway improvements along this alignment. By coordinating with relevant agencies and planning ahead, we hope to minimize any potential disruptions or delays caused by utility relocation or right-of-way challenges.

The proposed trail route has been carefully planned to make use of the available excess right of way belonging to the Dardanelle and Russellville Railroad Company, with their permission. This approach will help to minimize the need for additional right of way acquisition and utility relocation, reducing potential costs and project risks. Additionally, there is only one pedestrian crossing planned along Arkansas State Route 7 Truck (S Knoxville Ave), which will feature pedestrian crossing gates at the existing signalized crossing to ensure safety for trail users.

The permits and approvals expected are listed in Table 1. The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program will add these improvements once selected and the project is funded according to conversations with the Arkansas Department of Transportation. A preliminary Environmental Review was completed. Upon notice to proceed, the NEPA Process will be started and is anticipated to take a little over a year. Other State and Local permitting processes are included within our project schedule below.

Community engagement has and will continue to be an integral part of the planning and design process for the project. The project has been guided by a generationally and racially diverse project Advisory Committee. Engagement efforts have included a visual preference amenity survey, consultation with the Advisory Committee, and guidance from the Trails Committee at their January 2023 meeting. Future community-wide input meetings and a walk audit will be conducted along with additional input from the Trails Committee and Citizen Advisory Committee. Planning has been conducted with particular emphasis on environmental justice impacts on Areas of Persistent Poverty and Historically Disadvantaged Areas within the project zone.

NAME OF PERMIT	PERMITTER
General Permit ARR150000	Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ)
Clean Water Act Section 404 Individual Permit	US Army Corps of Engineers
State of Arkansas Short Term Activity Authorization (STAA) – Section 401	Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ)
Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for large sites – Section 402	Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ)
Floodplain Development Permit	Local Floodplain Administrator/(FEMA)
No Rise/No Adverse Impact Certification	Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
Letter of Map Revision	Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
Management of Airspace Agreement	Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Table 1: Permits and Approvals



# Russellville Connected Trail System Project Readiness



Russellville PROJECT SCHEDULE																												
	2023				2024				2025				2026				2027				2028							
DESCRIPTION	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
RAISE Grant Award Selection																												
ARDOT Notice to Proceed																												
Planning and Environmental																												
NEPA-Environmental Assessment																												
Permitting																												
Preliminary Design																												
Surveys																												
Geotechnical Studies and Report																												
30% Plans																												
Develop 30% Trail Plans																												
ARDOT Review and Approval																												
60% Plans																												
Develop 60% Trail Plans																												
ARDOT Review and Approval																												
Citizen Advisory Committee																												
Design Public Hearing																												
Right of Way																												
Strip Map																												
ARDOT Review and Approval																												
Acquisition																												
ARDOT Certification																												
Final Design																												
90% Plans																												
Develop 90% Trail Plans																												
ARDOT Review and Approval																												
100% Plans																												
Develop 100% Plans																												
RAISE Grant Funding Obligation																												
Advertising / Bid Letting																												
Construction																												

Funds to be Expended by September 30, 2032

## TECHNICAL CAPACITY TO DELIVER

The City of Russellville has a proven track record of successfully planning, designing, and constructing projects with federal and state grants/partnerships that benefit the community. In collaboration with the Arkansas Department of Transportation, the city is currently working on several multimillion-dollar projects, including the installation of a multi-lane roundabout at the entrance of Arkansas Tech University and Arkansas State Route 7 (N Arkansas Ave), as well as the widening of Arkansas State Route 331 (S Elmira Ave) near the industrial park, which



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involves intersection improvements and a Railroad Overpass. These projects require partnerships with multiple entities and demonstrate the city's ability to manage complex projects.

Furthermore, the city is currently partnering with the United States Army Corp of Engineers for a Flood Risk Mitigation Project worth 18 million dollars. This project involves channel improvements and bridge replacements in the downtown corridor of the city, which will help to mitigate the risks associated with flooding in the area.

Over the past two decades, the City of Russellville has invested considerable resources in developing the Russellville Connected Trails System. The project has been funded with state grants and local funding, and the financial risks associated with the project have been carefully considered. Drawing on their experience in developing similar projects, the city is well-positioned to ensure the success of the Russellville Connected Trails System.

### FINANCIAL COMPLETENESS ASSESSMENT

The City of Russellville has experience in planning, designing, and constructing projects administering federal and state grants/partnerships for the community. The city has partnered with the Arkansas Department of Transportation for the installation of a multi-lane roundabout at the entrance of Arkansas Tech University and Arkansas State Route 7 (N Arkansas Ave) and the widening of Arkansas State Route 331 (S Elmira Ave) near the industrial park which includes intersection improvements and a Railroad Overpass, which were multimillion-dollar projects with multiple partnerships. In addition, the City has partnered with the United States Army Corp of Engineers for a Flood Risk Mitigation Project (18 Million Dollars) including channel improvements and bridge replacements in the downtown corridor of the city. Over the last 20 years, Russellville has put considerable resources toward developing the Russellville Connected Trails System with state grants and local funding. The financial risks of the Russellville Connected Trails System have been taken into account, and utilizing expertise in developing similar projects will greatly help the development of the system.

The preliminary engineering analysis for the Russellville Connected Trail System Project has been completed, and plans are currently at the 10% stage. The project has requested funding in the amount of \$24,987,758.48, which will cover the entire cost of the project. The project budget includes a contingency plan to address any potential cost overruns, with a 15% allocation to the overall construction budget. This will ensure that the project can be completed within the allocated budget and timeline, and any unforeseen challenges can be adequately addressed. The contingency plan will be continuously evaluated and updated throughout the project's lifecycle to ensure that any changes or challenges are accounted for and addressed appropriately. Contracts with consultants, engineers, and contractors will specify penalties for failing to meet project timelines and the project team will work closely with funding agencies and contractors to ensure that the project stays on track and within budget.