



NICKEL PLATE TRAIL FAQ

What is the current proposal for the Nickel Plate Trail?

The current proposal includes 9.2 miles of up to 14-foot wide paved trail connecting Fishers and Noblesville from 96th Street to Pleasant Street. The project fulfills both cities' dedication to connectivity for pedestrian and recreational activity across communities.

What will the Nickel Plate Trail cost?

The estimated cost to convert 9.2 miles from rail to trail from 96th Street to Pleasant Street is approximately \$9.3 M, assuming standard crossings at intersections. Additional construction of the Noblesville section of the Nickel Plate proceeding north from downtown has not been estimated.

Total costs are subject to change and value engineering for cost savings will be explored as part of the initial design phase.

How will the cost be split between Fishers and Noblesville?

The Fishers section (96th Street to 146th Street) is estimated at \$4.4 million.

The Noblesville section (146th Street to Pleasant Street) is estimated at \$4.15 million.

This is subject to change, and value engineering for cost savings will be explored as part of the initial design phase.

What is the process to convert the line from rail to trail?

The federal government adopted a program known as rail banking in 1983 as part of its National Trails System Act to facilitate the conversion of rail to trail. Rail banking allows the owners of the rail corridor to convert the railroad to a pedestrian trail, while preserving ("banking") the right to re-establish a rail service along the line should that ever be needed or desired.

The federal Surface Transportation Board (STB) oversees the railbanking process, which could take anywhere from six to 12 months, depending on response time of the STB. Once the entire corridor is approved by the STB, municipalities are free to begin work converting the rails to a trail on their own schedules.

What is the timeline?

Once the decision is made to pursue the Nickel Plate Trail, the process for rail banking will begin. The federal application process for rail banking should take six to 12 months to complete. Then, construction may begin. The actual construction timeline and possible phasing of the project will vary depending on design and budget approval.

What is the plan for trail crossings at intersections?

There are eight major intersections the Nickel Plate Line crosses between 96th Street and Pleasant Street. All design is conceptual at this proposal stage. Further input and design would be required to determine the most effective crossings for each street.

Fishers intersections include: Hague Road, 106th Street, Lantern Road, 126th Street, 131st Street, 141st Street, and 146th Street. Noblesville intersections include: 146th Street, Pleasant Street, and possibly others depending on the potential design of the Pleasant Street expansion project.

Will the trail run over the existing tracks or alongside them?

The trail will be constructed in place of the existing tracks, which will be removed and salvaged.

How will it affect neighboring properties?

While neighboring properties will experience increased pedestrian traffic, industry studies have shown that property values and economic impact increase with the development of quality trails such as the Nickel Plate Trail.

Two community listening sessions are scheduled to answer questions and provide the public with the opportunity to learn more about the trail. The listening sessions are scheduled for Tuesday, March 21 from 6-8 p.m. at Fishers City Hall Auditorium (1 Municipal Drive, Fishers, IN 46037) and Thursday, March 23 from 6-8 p.m. at Noblesville City Hall, 2nd Floor Conference Room (16 S 10th St, Noblesville, IN 46060).

Residents are encouraged to provide comments, ask questions or to request a meeting with staff via email at NPT@fishers.in.us or NPT@noblesville.in.us.

Will the trail be designated a dusk-to-dawn park, or a commuter trail available to use after dark?

This will be determined after community listening sessions have occurred in conjunction with both city's public safety and parks and recreation staff.

Will the trail follow paths that are already in existence, such as Cheeney Creek Natural Area, or run parallel to existing trails?

Based on feedback from listening sessions, certain sections of the Nickel Plate Trail may utilize existing trails.

In Noblesville, the Nickel Plate Trail would cross over Pleasant Street where pedestrians can then turn west onto the future and current sections of Midland Trace Trail, which will connect with the future Riverwalk and lead north to the White River Greenway trail heading to Forest Park.

Who owns the Nickel Plate Line?

In 1995, the Cities of Fishers and Noblesville acquired the Nickel Plate Rail line, which runs from Indianapolis to Tipton. The communities then formed the Hoosier Heritage Port Authority (HHPA) to manage the line as the rail operators and later allowed Hamilton County to become an equal ½ owner of the rail. More information on the Hoosier Heritage Port Authority [here](#).

What will happen to the Indiana State Fair Train and Polar Express?

In 2015, the Nickel Plate Rail's governing body, the Hoosier Heritage Port Authority, in partnership with rail line's operator, the Indiana Transportation Museum, discovered extensive repair to the rail was required to safely operate the line. As a result, both the Indiana State Fair Train and the Polar Express ceased operations indefinitely.

How can I learn more?

We want to hear from our residents and businesses! Please join city and county officials at the following Nickel Plate Trail Listening Sessions:

- Tuesday, March 21 from 6-8 p.m. at Fishers City Hall Auditorium (1 Municipal Drive, Fishers, IN 46037)
- Thursday, March 23 from 6-8 p.m. at Noblesville City Hall, 2nd Floor Conference Room (16 S 10th St, Noblesville, IN 46060)

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