

OLENTANGY TRAIL - ARENA DISTRICT CONNECTOR

Columbus, Ohio

Accelerating Central Ohio's Economic Growth

PROJECT DESCRIPTION



Design rendering for Olentangy Trail Arena District Connector

The “Arena District Connector” is a planned project by the City of Columbus, Ohio, to create a safe walking and bicycling connection over the Olentangy River between the existing 17.5-mile Olentangy Trail and the downtown Arena District. Currently connecting Worthington to Confluence Park by way of Ohio State University, the Olentangy Trail will ultimately extend across the river to a new park at W. Nationwide Blvd. Construction of the connector bridge and park is set to begin in spring 2020.

A significant component of Columbus’ ongoing revitalization plans for the downtown area, the trail extension/bridge will help spur new opportunities for economic development and tourism by creating a much-needed, direct active-transportation link from the west side of the river (just north of Spring Street) to major entertainment and cultural venues—including Nationwide Arena (home to the Columbus Blue Jackets) and Crew Stadium—as well as major job centers, shopping, nightlife, parks and residential areas.

Via the development of Confluence Village Park, a new green space (complete with bike share station) at the trail’s future eastern terminus, the project will create direct access points to the Olentangy River for kayaking and watersports, as well as access to local walking paths. The park will also provide vital green infrastructure to help mitigate flooding along the river.

The Arena District Connector is a segment of an effort coordinated by Central Ohio Greenways to complete a regional trail network spanning over 730 miles in the Central Ohio region.¹ The Olentangy Trail is the most heavily used trail in the network, and it is anticipated that 150,000+ people will use the new connector each year upon its completion, estimated to be in 2021.

CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

LEAD AUTHORITY:	City of Columbus Recreation and Parks
TOTAL PROJECT COST:	\$22,549,700
FUNDING PLEDGED TO DATE:	\$5,500,000
FEDERAL:	\$0
STATE:	\$1,660,000
LOCAL AND PRIVATE:	\$3,840,000
SHOVEL-READY:	At present
TYPE:	Urban

TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT

JOB CREATION

An estimated 500 jobs are anticipated to be created by the adjacent Crew Stadium and other businesses surrounding the new trailhead at Confluence Village Park trailhead; 37 jobs will be directly created by the trail extension project.²

TRANSPORTATION

The trail extension is set to seamlessly connect over 126 miles of regional trails by filling a critical network gap with the planned east-west connection between the Olentangy and Downtown Connector trails.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

The trail will serve the more than 6 million people that visit Downtown Columbus’ many attractions each year and will aid in building connections around the city by closing gaps in the existing active-transportation system.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Confluence Village Park, the planned eastern terminus of the Olentangy Trail connector, will provide green infrastructure along the Olentangy River to aid in flood mitigation.

SOURCES

¹ “Trail Development Updates.” Central Ohio Greenways, published May 9, 2019, <http://centralohiogreenways.com/2019/05/09/trail-development-updates>.

² Estimated at 17 jobs per \$1 million spent, according to a study commissioned by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) on American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) job creation; jobs in terms of full-time equivalents.