

INDIANA



Indiana's Cardinal Greenway | Photo by Tony Valainis, courtesy Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

ROUTE

RTC met with Indiana state officials early in the Great American Rail-Trail process, recognizing that the route through Indiana would have a significant impact on the potential routes through its neighboring states. Two routes were presented: a shorter one across the north of the state and a longer diagonal one from Richmond, Indiana, toward the Chicago metropolitan area. Officials from the Indiana Department of Transportation were so excited about the potential of the Great American Rail-Trail that they asked RTC to consider including as many miles as possible in Indiana by using the longer diagonal route. In September 2018, Governor Holcomb announced the Next Level Connections program, a \$1 billion investment in infrastructure projects including trails. So far, the program has provided funding for several projects along the Great American Rail-Trail. October 2021–October 2022 was designated as the Year of the Trails in Indiana by the state's bipartisan legislative trails caucus with the intention of showcasing the critical value that the state's trails deliver and the need to guarantee funding to connect and maintain the state's trail system.

TABLE 12 GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL MILEAGE IN INDIANA

Total Great American Rail-Trail Existing Trail Miles in Ind. (% of Total State Mileage)	119.0 (55.4%)
Total Great American Rail-Trail Trail Gap Miles in Ind. (% of Total State Mileage)	95.7 (44.6%)
Total Trail Gaps in Ind.	9
Total Great American Rail-Trail Miles in Ind.	214.7

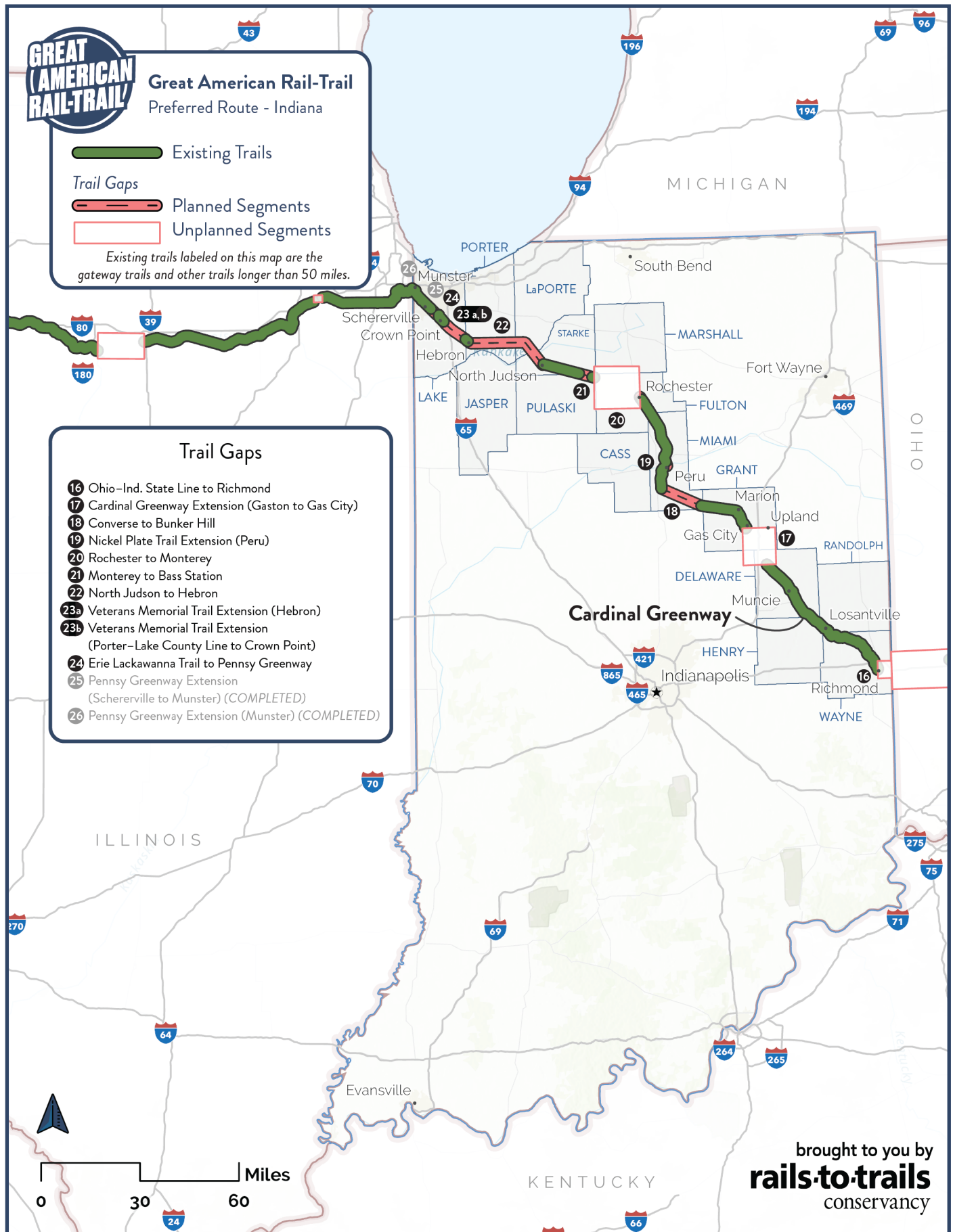
GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL ROUTE ASSESSMENT
INDIANA

TABLE 13 GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL ROUTE THROUGH INDIANA

Existing Trail or Trail Gap Name	Length in Ind. Along Great American Rail-Trail (in Miles)
TRAIL GAP 16 – Ohio–Ind. State Line to Richmond	5.0
Cardinal Greenway (Richmond to Gaston)	50.5
TRAIL GAP 17 – Cardinal Greenway Extension (Gaston to Gas City)	15.1
Cardinal Greenway (Gas City to Sweetser)	10.4
Sweetser Switch Trail	4.0
Converse Junction Trail	2.6
TRAIL GAP 18 – Converse to Bunker Hill	13.1
Nickel Plate Trail (Bunker Hill to Peru)	6.6
TRAIL GAP 19 – Nickel Plate Trail Extension (Peru)	2.6
Nickel Plate Trail (Peru to Rochester)	21.3
TRAIL GAP 20 – Rochester to Monterey	16.5
Monterey Erie Trail	0.6
TRAIL GAP 21 – Monterey to Bass Station	4.2
Erie Trail	11.1
TRAIL GAP 22 – North Judson to Hebron	25.2
TRAIL GAP 23a – Veterans Memorial Trail Extension (Hebron)	1.5
Veterans Memorial Trail (Hebron)	1.0
TRAIL GAP 23b – Veterans Memorial Trail Extension (Porter–Lake County Line to Crown Point)	8.5
Veterans Memorial Trail (Crown Point)	0.6
TRAIL GAP 23b – Veterans Memorial Trail Extension (Porter–Lake County Line to Crown Point)	0.7
Great American Rail-Trail (Crown Point)	0.4
Erie Lackawanna Trail	1.2
TRAIL GAP 24 – Erie Lackawanna Trail to Pennsy Greenway	3.3
Pennsy Greenway (Schererville to Ind.–Ill. State Line)	8.7
TRAIL GAP 25 – Pennsy Greenway Extension (Schererville to Munster) COMPLETED	-
TRAIL GAP 26 – Pennsy Greenway Extension (Munster) COMPLETED	-
Total Miles	214.7
Existing Trail Miles	119.0
Trail Gap Miles	95.7

GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL ROUTE ASSESSMENT 2023

MAP 6: INDIANA



GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL ROUTE ASSESSMENT INDIANA

TRAIL GAP 16 – OHIO-INDIANA STATE LINE TO RICHMOND

Picking up from Trail Gap 15 at the Ohio-Indiana border, Trail Gap 16 encompasses the 5 miles from the state line to Richmond in Wayne County, Indiana. The city of Richmond’s 2015 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan illustrates a proposed greenway connecting Richmond to the Ohio border. The proposed greenway parallels the East Fork Whitewater River and connects to downtown Richmond through an unnamed existing trail.

An important east-west connection to the adjacent county land and eventually to the state of Ohio is a proposed greenway along the East Fork of the White River. Although only a small portion of the greenway lies within the city limits, constructing this portion of the greenway could provide the catalyst needed to spur construction of the greenway to the state line. Building the greenway in this eastern direction will also provide connections to both Glen Miller Park and Hayes Arboretum on a more scenic route than what you would find along U.S. 40.

CARDINAL GREENWAY

Total Length (in Miles)	62.0
Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	60.9
Trail Type	Rail-trail
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	Cardinal Greenways
Website	cardinalgreenways.org
TrailLink Map	trailink.com/trail/cardinal-greenway

The Cardinal Greenway, the longest rail-trail in Indiana, stretches almost 62 miles along a former CSX Transportation railroad corridor. The Cardinal Greenway was the 2018 inductee into RTC’s Rail-Trail Hall of Fame. The trail is named after the Cardinal, a passenger train that once ran the length of the greenway. The Cardinal Greenway will host the Great American Rail-Trail from its southernmost endpoint in Richmond to Marion, just east of the greenway’s northernmost endpoint in Sweetser. The Cardinal Greenway has been championed by Cardinal Greenways, a nonprofit that aims to extend the Cardinal Greenway throughout eastern Indiana.

The Cardinal Greenway is currently divided into two segments of existing trail with one gap between them:

Segment 1 – 50.5 miles of trail between Richmond and Gaston.

Segment 2 – 10.4 miles of trail between Gas City and Sweetser.

The gap between the two segments of the Cardinal Greenway is discussed in Trail Gap 17, below.

A restoration plan for the Cardinal Greenway was developed in 2019 to keep the trail in excellent shape through 2040. The full cost of trail maintenance in this plan was estimated at \$20 million.

TRAIL GAP 17 – CARDINAL GREENWAY EXTENSION (GASTON TO GAS CITY)

An approximately 15.1-mile gap in the Cardinal Greenway currently exists between Gaston and Gas City due to private landowners acquiring the former rail corridor. The trail gap begins in Gaston and follows various county roads to reach Gas City. Cardinal Greenways expects to submit a grant application during the third round of Indiana’s Next Level Trails program for funding to acquire and construct 4 miles of trail within Trail Gap 17.

There is an active CSX Transportation corridor heading west from Upland to Jonesboro that could be helpful in bridging some of Trail Gap 17. Exploring trails along local county roads could also help fill the gap. Further exploration is needed to determine the best way to fill Trail Gap 17.

SWEETSER SWITCH TRAIL

Total Length (in Miles)	4.0
Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	4.0
Trail Type	Rail-trail
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	Cardinal Greenways, Town of Sweetser
Website	sweetserin.us/community-park
TrailLink Map	trailink.com/trail/sweetser-switch-trail

The 4-mile Sweetser Switch Trail is an important regional connector that follows the original corridor of the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad. The paved rail-trail connects to the Cardinal Greenway at County Road 400 West/North 400 West in Sweetser and joins the 2.6-mile Converse Junction Trail in Converse, making the Sweetser Switch Trail a key piece of north-central Indiana’s trail system.

The residents of Sweetser have championed this trail throughout the years. When residents explored the possibility of turning the right-of-way into a trail, they first had to create a park board because the small town did not have a parks and recreation department. Residents chipped in with donations and volunteer labor to complete the path’s first mile.

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CONVERSE JUNCTION TRAIL

Total Length (in Miles)	2.6
Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	2.6
Trail Type	Rail-trail
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	Town of Converse
Website	facebook.com/converse-junction-trail-1442126726034826
TrailLink Map	traillink.com/trail/converse-junction-trail

The Converse Junction Trail provides around 2.6 miles of smooth asphalt along a former Penn Central Transportation Company line, linking the small Indiana communities of Mier and Converse. The Mier trailhead is located on North 800 West 27, from which point the Sweetser Switch Trail extends eastward. The Converse Junction Trail travels northwest across Pipe and Taylor creeks to reach downtown Converse. The trail ends at County Road 1000 West/North 1000 West 27, which also serves as the western border of Marion County.

TRAIL GAP 18 – CONVERSE TO BUNKER HILL

Nickel Plate Trail Inc. is working to fill the 13.1-mile trail gap between the western terminus of the Converse Junction Trail in Converse and the town of Bunker Hill, near the southern end of the Nickel Plate Trail.

Three-fourths of the trail gap land has been acquired and three grants have been secured to complete Trail Gap 18, including a 2022 Next Level Trails grant for \$3.6 million, which fills the remaining funding needed for this gap. In 2023, 4.5 miles of this gap between McGrawsville and Bunker Hill will be completed and opened to the public.

NICKEL PLATE TRAIL

Total Length (in Miles)	36.9
Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	27.9
Trail Type	Rail-trail
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	Nickel Plate Trail Inc.
Website	nickelplatetrail.org
TrailLink Map	traillink.com/trail/nickel-plate-trail

The Nickel Plate Trail is currently divided into two segments of existing trail with one gap between them:

Segment 1 – About 15.6 miles of trail from Kokomo to Peru.

Segment 2 – About 21.3 miles of trail from Peru to Rochester.

The Nickel Plate Trail will host the Great American Rail-Trail, using 6.6 miles of Segment 1 (from Bunker Hill to Peru) and all of Segment 2 to travel between Bunker Hill and Rochester. The gap in the Nickel Plate Trail is discussed in Trail Gap 19, below.

TRAIL GAP 19 – NICKEL PLATE TRAIL EXTENSION (PERU)

The 2.6-mile trail gap in Peru utilizes an interim on-road connector. The interim connector heads east into downtown Peru before connecting back to Segment 2 of the Nickel Plate Trail. Nickel Plate Trail Inc. is leading efforts to complete this gap, including work to purchase the land between West 7th Street and East 100 North/East Lovers Lane Road, and is looking for funding to do so.

TRAIL GAP 20 – ROCHESTER TO MONTEREY

Nickel Plate Trail Inc. is actively working to connect the Nickel Plate Trail to downtown Rochester by extending the trail from its current terminus just south of Rochester to Rochester's city center.

The remaining 16.5-mile gap from downtown Rochester west to Monterey has not been discussed in depth. There is an abandoned rail corridor that begins north of Rochester and travels south of Leiters Ford that could form a potential route. More research needs to be done to develop a viable gap-filling strategy for Trail Gap 20.

MONTEREY ERIE TRAIL

The 0.6-mile Monterey Erie Trail occupies the same railbanked corridor as the Erie Trail (described below) to its west, and the two rail-trails are planned to be linked in the future. The towns of Monterey and North Judson once saw frequent freight service between the two communities, first by the Erie Lackawanna Railway and, later, by the Erie Western Railway, Tippecanoe Railroad and JK Lines. The 16-mile corridor was put up for abandonment in 2003, and the Hoosier Valley Railroad Museum stepped in to preserve the corridor for public use.

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TRAIL GAP 21 – MONTEREY TO BASS STATION

There is an approximately 4.2-mile gap between the western terminus of the Monterey Erie Trail in Monterey and the eastern terminus of the Erie Trail in the town of Ora. The Prairie Trails Club Inc., a volunteer group that oversees the Erie Trail, mentioned filling the gap in its 2016 Future Vision Phase Plan.

ERIE TRAIL

Total Length (in Miles)	11.1
Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	11.1
Trail Type	Rail-trail
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	Hoosier Valley Railroad Museum, The Prairie Trails Club Inc.
Website	hoosiervalley.org/visit/trail
TrailLink Map	traillink.com/trail/north-judson-erie-trail

The 11-mile Erie Trail occupies the railbanked right-of-way of the former JK Line Railroad. In May 2019, the Prairie Trails Club Inc. was awarded an Indiana Department of Natural Resources Next Level Trails program grant from the first round of applications to construct 2.1 miles of trail beginning at the eastern terminus of the Erie Trail at U.S. 35 in Bass Station and stretching toward Ora. The group completed this extension in 2021.

TRAIL GAP 22 – NORTH JUDSON TO HEBRON

There are two known options to connect the 25.2 miles from the western endpoint of the Erie Trail in North Judson northwest to the town of Hebron.

Option 1 – The first option is to develop a trail along the Kankakee River. While this potential route is not mentioned in any formal plans, discussions with the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission indicate that a trail connection along the banks of the Kankakee River is viable in the long term and would offer trail users a scenic ride through northwest Indiana.

Option 2 – The second option is to develop a trail along an abandoned rail corridor connecting northwest from North Judson to La Crosse, Indiana, then west to Hebron. This option is discussed in several local and regional plans, including LaPorte County’s 2008 Countywide Land Development Plan. As part of an effort to extend the Erie Trail, the North Judson Redevelopment Commission selected a buyer for

its short-line railroad that will provide an easement for a trail along the Starke County portion of the right-of-way as well as support the continuation of the Hoosier Valley Railroad Museum.

More research needs to be completed to identify the best option for connecting North Judson and Hebron via trail.

TRAIL GAP 23a – VETERANS MEMORIAL TRAIL EXTENSION (HEBRON)

The Veterans Memorial Trail is currently under development in northwest Indiana. The trail will begin in Hebron just west of Cobb Creek and will travel 1.5 miles through Hebron until reaching its first open section.

VETERANS MEMORIAL TRAIL

Total Length (in Miles)	1.6
Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	1.6
Trail Type	Rail-trail
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	City of Crown Point, Friends of the Veterans Memorial Parkway, Lake County Parks, Town of Hebron

The Veterans Memorial Trail will connect Hebron to the Erie Lackawanna Trail in Crown Point. The trail is being developed in phases, with acquisition and construction underway. The two open sections of trail encompass:

Segment 1: 1.0 mile in Hebron that was completed in 2020, using a grant from Indiana’s Next Level Trails program.

Segment 2: 0.6 mile in Crown Point.

Trail Gap 23b, described below, currently separates Segments 1 and 2 with an 8.5-mile gap, and Segment 2 and the Great American Rail-Trail (Crown Point) with a 0.7-mile gap.

The Veterans Memorial Trail will connect a series of memorials dedicated to those who have served our country in times of war and peace. Currently one memorial—the Lake County Korean Veterans Memorial—has been completed, with two more under development. These include the Lake County World War I & II Veterans and Holocaust Memorial in Crown Point and the Northwest Indiana Middle East Veterans Memorial in Hebron. The connection to the Erie Lackawanna Trail will go through the heart of Crown Point and be adjacent to property slated for a future city hall.

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TRAIL GAP 23b – VETERANS MEMORIAL TRAIL EXTENSION (PORTER–LAKE COUNTY LINE TO CROWN POINT)

Plans to fill Trail Gap 23b, the largest gap in the Veterans Memorial Trail—at 9.2 miles—are progressing. Traveling west from Hebron to Crown Point, the development of the Veterans Memorial Trail is anticipated to be as follows:

Porter–Lake County line to Iowa Street: The section of future trail from the Porter–Lake county line to Iowa Street is in the acquisition and funding stage. It is anticipated that the trail will be surfaced with asphalt and will include an adjacent equestrian trail.

Iowa Street to East 113th Avenue: Lake County Parks is actively working to complete right-of-way acquisition in this section. Construction is planned to begin in 2023 or 2024.

North Street to Summit Street trailhead: Lake County Parks received the final remaining funding for this section of trail as part of round 2 of the Next Level Trails program. Right-of-way acquisition is being finalized and construction is slated to begin in 2024.

GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL (CROWN POINT)

Total Length (in Miles)	0.4
Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	0.4
Trail Type	Greenway
Surface Type	Asphalt, concrete
Trail Manager	City of Crown Point

There is a brief section of trail through Crown Point that connects the Veterans Memorial Trail and the Erie Lackawanna Trail alongside existing city roads. The locals have declared it a piece of the Great American Rail-Trail and refer to it by this name.

ERIE LACKAWANNA TRAIL

Total Length (in Miles)	17.7
Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	1.2
Trail Type	Rail-trail
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	City of Hammond, Lake County Parks, Town of Schererville
Website	schererville.org/town-government/parks-and-recreation/erie-lackawanna-trail
TrailLink Map	traillink.com/trail/erie-lackawanna-trail

The Erie Lackawanna Trail travels 17.7 miles between Crown Point and Hammond—two former rail junctions along a route that carried goods and people in and out of Chicago. The paved trail is bordered by green space and crosses wetlands and parks along the way. The Erie Lackawanna Trail will host the Great American Rail-Trail for just over 1 mile in Crown Point, starting from its southern terminus at West Summit and North Court streets and ending at Veterans Lane.

TRAIL GAP 24 – ERIE LACKAWANNA TRAIL TO PENNSY GREENWAY

Trail Gap 24 is moving forward with the help of two grants through Indiana’s Next Level Trails program that will fully close this gap. In May 2019, the program awarded \$2.9 million to complete 2.3 miles of trail between Clark Road and Rohrman Park, including a new trailhead along Clark Road. This extension of the Pennsy Greenway will be completed in 2023. In March 2021, Gov. Holcomb announced funding that will complete the remaining approximately 1 mile of the Pennsy Greenway along Trail Gap 24. That project is slated for construction beginning in 2023.

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Wabash Bridge on Indiana's Nickel Plate Trail | Photo by TrailLink user ob

PENNSY GREENWAY

Total Length (in Miles)	12.5
Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	8.7
Trail Type	Rail-trail
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Lake County Parks, Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, Schererville Parks & Recreation
Website	indygreenways.org/pennsy-trail
TrailLink Map	trailink.com/trail/pennsy-greenway

The Pennsy Greenway is currently open between Schererville, Indiana, and Calumet City, Illinois. The 12.5-mile paved trail runs along the former Penn Central Transportation Company rail line and is planned to travel a total of 15 miles once complete. The Pennsy Greenway will host the Great American Rail-Trail from Schererville, Indiana, to Lansing, Illinois, totaling 9.2 miles (8.7 of which are in Indiana, and 0.5 of which is in Illinois). An additional 3.4 miles of the Pennsy Greenway between Schererville and Munster were completed in 2020, closing a key gap in the Pennsy Greenway and the Great American Rail-Trail.

~~TRAIL GAP 25 — PENNSY GREENWAY EXTENSION (SCHERERVILLE TO MUNSTER)~~ **COMPLETED**

Trail Gap 25 (Pennsy Greenway Extension – Schererville to Munster) is now a completed trail segment as part of the Pennsy Greenway.

~~TRAIL GAP 26 — PENNSY GREENWAY EXTENSION (MUNSTER)~~ **COMPLETED**

Trail Gap 26 (Pennsy Greenway Extension – Munster) is now a completed trail segment as part of the Pennsy Greenway.

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Prepping for a ribbon-cutting ceremony along a newly completed section of the Veterans Memorial Trail in June 2020 | Photo courtesy Chicago Tribune



Indiana's Penny Greenway, headed northwest toward U.S. 41 | Photo by TrailLink user tommyspan