

INDIANA



Cardinal Greenway | Photo by Tony Valainis

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. The program provided funding for several projects along the Great American Rail-Trail, some of which are still being completed.

TABLE 12: GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL MILEAGE IN INDIANA

Total Great American Rail-Trail Existing Trail Miles in Ind. (% of Total State Mileage)	128.3 (59.0%)
Total Great American Rail-Trail Gap Miles in Ind. (% of Total State Mileage)	89.3 (41.0%)
Total Trail Gaps in Ind.	9
Total Great American Rail-Trail Miles in Ind.	217.6

GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL ROUTE ASSESSMENT 2026

MAP 6: 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	4.5
Cardinal Greenway (Richmond to Gaston)	51.0
TRAIL GAP 17 – Cardinal Greenway Extension (Gaston to Gas City)	18.1
Cardinal Greenway (Gas City to Sweetser)	10.6
Sweetser Switch Trail	4.0
Converse Junction Trail	2.6
TRAIL GAP 18 – Converse to McGrawsville	8.1
Nickel Plate Trail (McGrawsville to Peru)	11.6
TRAIL GAP 19 – Nickel Plate Trail Extension (Peru)	2.6
Nickel Plate Trail (Peru to Rochester)	22.0
TRAIL GAP 20 – Rochester to Monterey	15.8
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	25.3
TRAIL GAP 23a – Veterans Memorial Trail Extension (Hebron)	1.1
Veterans Memorial Trail (Hebron)	1.0

Existing Trail or Trail Gap Name	Length in Ind. Along Great American Rail-Trail (in Miles)
TRAIL GAP 23b – Veterans Memorial Trail Extension (Porter–Lake County Line to Crown Point)	8.5
Veterans Memorial Trail (Crown Point)	0.6
Great American Rail-Trail (Crown Point)	1.0
Erie Lackawanna Trail	2.0
TRAIL GAP 24 – Erie Lackawanna Trail to Pennsy Greenway	1.1
Pennsy Greenway (Schererville to Ind.–Ill. State Line)	10.2
TRAIL GAP 25 – Pennsy Greenway Extension (Schererville to Munster) COMPLETED	-
TRAIL GAP 26 – Pennsy Greenway Extension (Munster) COMPLETED	-
Total Miles	217.6
Existing Trail Miles	128.3
Trail Gap Miles	89.3

TRAIL GAP 16 – OHIO–INDIANA STATE LINE TO RICHMOND

Planning Status	Unplanned
Funding Status	Unfunded
Construction Status/ Expected Completion Date	TBD

Picking up from Trail Gap 15 at the Ohio–Indiana border, Trail Gap 16 encompasses the 4.5 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 the one proposed along U.S. 40 to fill Trail Gap 15.

CARDINAL GREENWAY

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	62.0 / 61.6
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	Cardinal Greenways
Website	cardinalgreenways.org
TrailLink Map	traillink.com/trail/ cardinal-greenway

The Cardinal Greenway, the longest rail-trail in Indiana, stretches 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 is currently divided into two segments of existing trail with one gap between them:



Indiana State Representative Carrie Hamilton talks about the importance of trails in Muncie. | Photo by Brandi Horton

Segment 1 – 51 miles of trail between Richmond and Gaston.

Segment 2 – 10.6 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.

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

Planning Status	Partially planned
Funding Status	Partially funded
Construction Status/ Expected Completion Date	Some sections under construction and expected in 2026; remaining sections TBD

Cardinal Greenways is actively working on opportunities to complete the approximately 18-mile gap in the Cardinal Greenway between Gaston and Gas City. A 2-mile section of trail near Taylor University in Upland is slated for construction in 2026, thanks in part to funding from the Lilly Endowment. This construction is expected to jump-start fundraising and construction efforts for the remainder of Trail Gap 17.

SWEETSER SWITCH TRAIL

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	4.0 / 4.0
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Managers	Cardinal Greenways, Town of Sweetser
Website	indianatrails.com/sweetser-switch-trail
TrailLink Map	traillink.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.

CONVERSE JUNCTION TRAIL

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	2.6 / 2.6
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	Town of Converse
Website	in.gov/towns/converse/play/parks-and-recreation
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 Converse Junction Trail travels northwest across Pipe and Taylor creeks to reach downtown Converse.

TRAIL GAP 18 – CONVERSE TO MCGRAWSVILLE

Planning Status	Partially planned
Funding Status	Partially funded
Construction Status/ Expected Completion Date	TBD

In 2025, Nickel Plate Trail Inc. completed a 5.2-mile extension of the Nickel Plate Trail between McGrawsville and Bunker Hill, with a ribbon cutting in the spring of 2026. Property acquisition is underway for the remaining 8 miles of Trail Gap 18 between Converse and McGrawsville.

NICKEL PLATE TRAIL

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	36.9 / 33.6
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 22 miles of trail from Peru to Rochester.

The Nickel Plate Trail will host the Great American Rail-Trail using 11.6 miles of Segment 1 (between McGrawsville and Peru) and all of Segment 2 (between Peru and Rochester). A 0.7-mile extension of the Nickel Plate Trail into Rochester was completed in 2025. The gap in the Nickel Plate Trail is discussed in Trail Gap 19.

TRAIL GAP 19 – NICKEL PLATE TRAIL EXTENSION (PERU)

Planning Status	Partially planned
Funding Status	Partially funded
Construction Status/ Expected Completion Date	TBD

A 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 working to purchase the land between West 7th Street and East 100 North/East Lovers Lane Road. Fundraising is almost complete to finish this trail gap.

TRAIL GAP 20 – ROCHESTER TO MONTEREY

Planning Status	Unplanned
Funding Status	Unfunded
Construction Status/ Expected Completion Date	TBD

The remaining 15.8-mile gap to complete Trail Gap 20 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

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	0.6 / 0.6
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Managers	Hoosier Valley Railroad Museum, Prairie Trails Club, Inc.
Website	hoosiervalley.org/explore/ trails-and-recreation
TrailLink Map	traillink.com/trail/monterey- erie-trail

The 0.6-mile Monterey Erie Trail occupies the same railbanked corridor as the Erie Trail (described on page 51) 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.

TRAIL GAP 21 – MONTEREY TO BASS STATION

Planning Status	Partially planned
Funding Status	Unfunded
Construction Status/ Expected Completion Date	TBD

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 / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	11.1 / 11.1
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Managers	Hoosier Valley Railroad Museum, 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

Planning Status	Partially planned
Funding Status	Partially funded
Construction Status/ Expected Completion Date	Some sections under construction and expected in 2026; remaining sections TBD

Various efforts are underway to complete Trail Gap 22. Most recently, a Next Level Trails program grant was awarded in December 2023 to complete 3.1 miles of this gap. The trail will be called the Grand Kankakee Marsh Trail, and will encompass a paved trail from the public library in LaCrosse to County Road 2200 along the former railroad corridor. Construction is slated to begin in the next few years.

In addition, the Prairie Trails Club Inc. received an Indiana Trails Program grant in 2023 for a 1-mile section of trail in North Judson that will help fill in other parts of Trail Gap 22. The extension will continue the trail from Main Street in North Judson and extend northwest of town on the west side of South English Lake Road. Construction on this section is expected in 2026.

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

Planning Status	Partially planned
Funding Status	Partially funded
Construction Status/ Expected Completion Date	TBD

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 1.1 miles through Hebron until reaching its first open section.

VETERANS MEMORIAL TRAIL

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	1.6 / 1.6
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Managers	City of Crown Point, Friends of the Veterans Memorial Parkway, Lake County Parks, Town of Hebron
TrailLink Map	traillink.com/trail/veterans-memorial-trail-(in)

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 currently separates Segments 1 and 2 with an 8.5-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.

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

Planning Status	Partially planned
Funding Status	Partially funded
Construction Status/ Expected Completion Date	TBD

Plans to fill Trail Gap 23b, the largest gap in the Veterans Memorial Trail—at 8.5 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.

GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL (CROWN POINT)

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	1.0 / 1.0
Surface Type	Asphalt, concrete
Trail Manager	City of Crown Point
Website	crownpoint.in.gov/490/Bike-Trail

In 2025, a connection between the Veterans Memorial Trail and the Erie Lackawanna Trail through Crown Point was completed. 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 / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	17.7 / 2.0
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Managers	City of Hammond, Lake County Parks, Town of Schererville
Website	rtc.li/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 for nearly a century. 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 2 miles 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

Planning Status	Partially planned
Funding Status	Partially funded
Construction Status/ Expected Completion Date	TBD

About 2 miles of Trail Gap 24 were completed and opened in 2023, reducing the remaining length of this gap to about 1 mile. The remaining mile to be completed is expected to follow West 91st Avenue, and will be eligible for funding soon. Local partners will reapply for the remaining funding that is needed for this project.

PENNSY GREENWAY (SCHERERVILLE TO INDIANA-ILLINOIS STATE LINE)

Total Length / Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	14.4 / 10.2
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Managers	Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Lake County Parks, Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, Schererville Parks & Recreation
TrailLink Map	traillink.com/trail/pennsy-greenway

The Pennsy Greenway is currently open between Schererville, Indiana, and Calumet City, Illinois. The 14.4-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 10.7 miles (10.2 of which are in Indiana, and 0.5 of which is in Illinois).



Pennsy Greenway | Photo by TrailLink user tommyspan

~~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.