



IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation for the High Cliff Connection will be an ambitious endeavor! The trail corridor is planned to connect the City of Menasha, the Village of Harrison, the Village of Sherwood, and potentially the City of Appleton and the Village of Fox Crossing, meanwhile traversing both Winnebago and Calumet counties. Additionally, many segments of the recommended route fall within the jurisdiction of Wisconsin DOT or Wisconsin DNR. ECWRPC has served as the primary point of contact for this planning study, as the regional planning organization, and will likely remain in a key role as further coordination among the myriad of agencies will be required to avoid piecemeal progress towards a continuous trail experience.

The planning process for this study expressly included a significant amount of involvement from agencies listed above to develop, review, and refine the plan. Additionally, local and regional multi-modal advocates, residents, and community stakeholders contributed insight to develop a plan. Continued collaboration over the next few years will be needed to steward the implementation of this ambitious project.





ACTION STEPS

What should we do now and in the near-term to make the High Cliff Connection a reality? What can we do to promote and complete a full network of connected bicycle and pedestrian connections throughout the Fox Cities? The following are identified as actionable next steps towards implementing the full plan for the High Cliff Connection.

A

FOX CITIES TRAIL COORDINATOR

Beginning with High Cliff Connection as a pilot or catalyst project (big visible project to start with), hire for the position of Fox Cities Trail Coordinator. This role will involve coordinating implementation of trails in the Fox Cities, serving as a liaison and program manager with the goal of facilitating build out of a connected bike and ped network throughout the region, and continue to implement the projects and ideas that came out of the 2020 Trails Summit. This position could include the following tasks, roles, and duties:

- Work individually with property owners to complete trail connection
- Organize voluntary trail easement pledge program to collect 'pledges' for trail easements throughout search corridor areas
- Maintain relationships with property owners
- Serve as a liaison between cities, counties and developers to advocate for implementation of trail, bike/ped connection and safety projects
- Coordinate construction and engineering
- Advocate for trail implementation and active living within the Fox Cities
- Write grants and facilitate funding and donations
- Facilitate Conservation or Trail Easement agreements
- Work with agencies to find events and partnerships to bridge trail implementation with other aspects of health, recreation, active living, natural resources, and education
- Manage a steering committee comprised of local experts in the fields of municipal leadership, agency affiliation, real estate, banking, development, cycling, special interest advocacy, recreation, and construction. This group could be a continuation of similar members from the Core Team and Stakeholder Group

CASE STUDY : SPARTANBURG, SC

Spartanburg County, South Carolina has successfully completed nearly 20 miles of a 55-mile planned trail network over the last 10 years and has cultivated community-wide support for trail construction. This accomplishment can be attributed to the foresight of the community to hire a trails coordinator early on after the adoption of the trail plan. To learn more about Spartanburg and their recent RAISE grant award, visit <https://www.palspartanburg.org/raise>



B FUTURE PLAN AND COMPLETE STREETS ADVOCACY

Plans tend to build upon each other and can support future grant applications. Examples of future plans that should consider including the High Cliff Connection route:

- City and Village Comprehensive Plans
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans
- CORPs (Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans)

Where possible, municipalities throughout the area should adopt and implement Complete Streets Policies in order to facilitate vital trail connections in the future as development and roadway projects occur. Complete Streets is “an approach to planning, designing, building, operating, and maintaining streets that enables safe access for all people who need to use them, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities” (Smart Growth America). When bike and pedestrian infrastructure is planned along with development projects it results in a much more streamlined approach to trail planning. As these communities continue to grow, so too will the need for infrastructure like sidewalks and trails that promote active living and provide alternate means of transportation.

C WAYFINDING AND BRANDING CAMPAIGN

This action step involves development of a trail wayfinding and branding design to clearly identify the High Cliff Connection and linked regionally-significant trails in the Fox Cities. This design should build from the Wayfinding Design Guidebook (ECWRPC 2017), and previous efforts by the City of Menasha, Village of Harrison, Village of Sherwood, and the Fox Cities Visitor and Convention Bureau. The branding campaign should be approached with a community-based design process, potentially with a public launch event, in order to build community awareness and enthusiasm for the project. This action step should also include design and commission of signage fabrication, assembly and installation of signage along the corridor route for both built trail segments and future or interim segments.

D TRAIL GRANTS AND FUNDRAISING

Identifying grants and funding sources will be key to implementation of the High Cliff Connection. The number of stakeholder communities and agency affiliation will serve as excellent leverage for future applications, in addition to the community support and process documented in this plan. See page 91 for trail funding and grant resources.



Complete Streets serve riders of all ages & abilities



Clear branding & wayfinding improves the trail user experience



E

PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING STUDY AND DESIGN

Develop and release an RFP to contract for civil engineering services to provide preliminary study to determine alignment and preliminary design (up to 30% construction documents) and cost estimates to implement recommended alignment for trail segments identified in the Menasha Urban Area and Harrison + Sherwood Areas of this master plan.

The scope of this work should include the following tasks/deliverables:

- Project Management
- Public Information to keep community members updated with study findings and recommended alignments.
- Agency Coordination and Permitting Review
- Survey Data
- Geotechnical Review
- Right-of-Way Review
- Environmental Documentation
- Public and Private Utility Identification and Coordination
- Trail Corridor Engineering (up to 30% design)
- Cost Estimation and Evaluation
- » Evaluate intersection design alternatives at Oneida St. and Lake Park Road for bike/ped safety.
- » Other traffic/roadway analysis
- STH 114 between Fire Lane 12 and Pigeon Road:
 - » Evaluate trail alignment alternatives on south side of STH 114
 - » Bituminous trail vs. boardwalk
 - » Inventory of required acquisition
 - » Identification of drainage/stormwater/utility challenges
 - » Other traffic/roadway analysis
- Manitowoc Road from Plank Road to Lake Park Road:
 - » Evaluate roadway reconstruction and trail alignment within existing ROW
 - » Widened paved shoulder (bike lane) with protected buffer vs. urbanized roadway section with raised trail
 - » Inventory of required acquisition (if needed)
 - » Identification of drainage/stormwater/utility challenges
 - » Other traffic/roadway analysis to understand best design for vehicle use

Areas to be evaluated within the study include:

- STH 114/US 10 between Oneida St. and Lake Park Road:
 - » Evaluate trail alignment for north and south side alternatives Bituminous trail vs. boardwalk
 - » Inventory of required acquisition
 - » Identification of drainage/stormwater/utility challenges

F

FINAL TRAIL CORRIDOR DESIGN

Complete full design (30% to 60% to 90% to Contract Documents) to implement preliminary design of route alignments as outcome of the Preliminary Engineering Study and Design. Consulting team should consist of landscape architects, civil engineers, and associated professionals to conduct community-based design process to integrate the following into the final design of the fully built out trail corridor: interpretive elements, seating, lighting, site furnishings, trailhead design, pathway design, stormwater management, and sustainable trail construction to reflect the character of the people, wildlife, and places of the area. Included in this scope of work should be construction administration services to oversee the construction of the project.

G

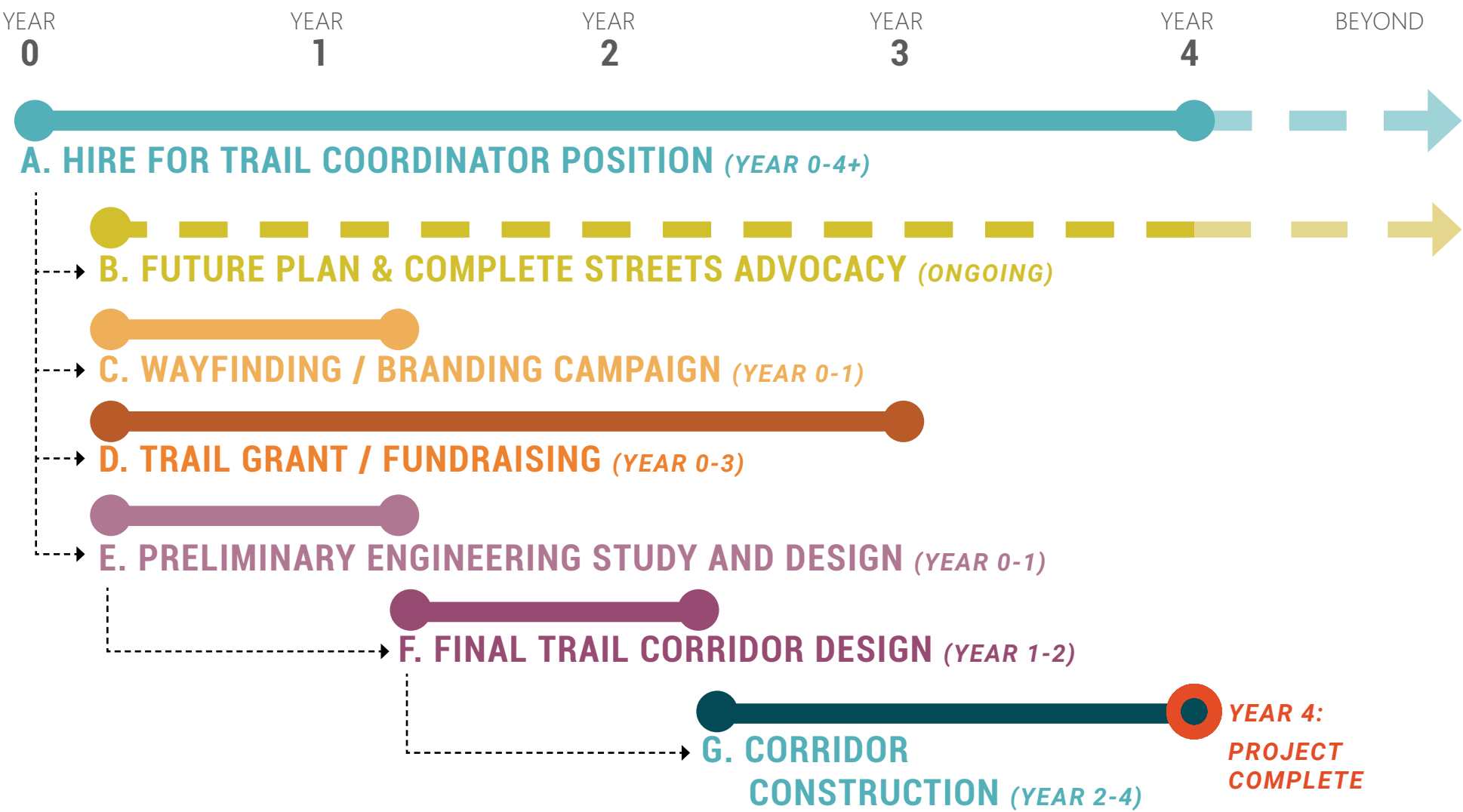
CORRIDOR CONSTRUCTION

Based on the outcomes of the preliminary engineering study, final corridor design, and secured funding sources for the project, the corridor construction may happen in phases or over the course of a few years. Ideally, the full project will be realized within a compressed timeline, which will likely result in efficient use of funds and a more consistent quality of work over the full corridor.

A planning-level estimate of capital costs for the construction of the full High Cliff Corridor is on page 90.

SEQUENCE OF ACTIONS

The seven action steps identified are intended to be performed sequentially, with the first step (hiring of a trail coordinator position) serving as a catalyst for the steps following. The schedule below demonstrates a reasonable (albeit ambitious) sequence of events, with the assumption that funding for implementation is available.





ESTIMATE OF COSTS

The table below elaborates on the action steps to identify lead organizations or agencies, the duration of each step, which professional services or consultants may be needed to perform the step, anticipated costs associated with the action step, and other notes for consideration that provide background for future reference. This sequence assumes that all funding is secured prior to action. This table is meant to serve as a planning-level guide. A more detailed estimate of costs can be found in the Appendix.

	Implementation Action Steps	Lead Organization / Agency	Duration	Consultant / Professional Services	Anticipated Cost to Implement	Notes
A	Hire for Trail Coordinator Position	TBD	Year 0-4+	Communications / Real Estate / Trail Advocacy / Construction Admin / Grant writing	\$320,000	\$80K/year FTE with benefits, administrative costs
B	Future Plan & Complete Streets Advocacy	Municipalities, ECWRPC	Ongoing	Municipal / Regional Planning	\$0	Advocacy with municipalities
C	Conduct Wayfinding/Branding Campaign	Trail Coordinator, Fox Cities Greenways, ECWRPC	Year 0-1	Graphic Design/Wayfinding/Brand Lead	\$150,000	Work from ECWRPC Wayfinding Guidebook; includes construction/assembly/installation
D	Trail Corridor Grant/Fundraising	Trail Coordinator, Fox Cities Greenways, ECWRPC	Year 0-3	Trail Coordinator	\$10,000	Trail Coordinator task or grant writing support from ECWRPC
E	Preliminary Engineering Study and Design	ECWRPC, WisDOT, City of Menasha, Village of Harrison	Year 0-1	Civil Engineering Lead	\$450,000	Based on similar scope of Dakota County Greenways Accelerator (2022)
F	Final Trail Corridor Design	Trail Coordinator, ECWRPC	Year 1-2	Landscape Architecture/Civil Engineer Team	\$881,870	Generally 15% of construction costs. Dependent on outcomes of Preliminary Engineering Study recommendations; shown here based on preferred master plan options cost estimates
G	Trail Corridor Construction	Trail Coordinator, WisDOT, ECWRPC, WIDNR	Year 2 - 4	General Contractor(s)	\$4,997,262	Based on preferred master plan options cost estimates
				Year 0 -4 Total	\$6,489,132	Approx. 13 miles of constructed trail plus amenities + FT Trail coordinator position and capacity building for expanded regional network
				Year 0-4 Rounded	\$6.8M	Total anticipated project costs (2022 pricing)

Table 6.1 Implementation Table with Anticipated Costs

*Construction costs are based on preferred master plan options. Actual construction costs to be verified during engineering and design phases.

**Construction estimates reflect 2022 prices, based on similar projects in size/scope in the Upper Midwest.

***Timeline is an approximation, based on availability of funding and resources.

GRANTS AND FUNDING RESOURCES

The following is a list of applicable grants and funding resources for this project. Click on the heading of each section to link to more information.

WI-DNR RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM

A federal program administered in most states. Municipal governments and incorporated organizations are eligible to receive reimbursement for the development, rehabilitation, and maintenance of recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail uses. Eligible sponsors may be reimbursed for up to 80% of eligible project costs. Funds from this program can be used in conjunction with funds from other state grant programs that also fund trail projects.

STEWARDSHIP LOCAL ASSISTANCE – URBAN GREENSPACE

Administered by the WI DNR: Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, Urban Green Space (UGS) grants are intended to provide open natural space within or in proximity to urban areas; to protect from urban development areas within or in proximity to urban areas that have scenic, ecological, or other natural value; and to provide land for noncommercial gardening for the residents of an urbanized area. These grants may fund up to 50% of project costs.

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND (LWCF)

Established by Congress in 1964 to fulfill a bipartisan commitment to safeguard our natural areas, water resources and cultural heritage, and to provide recreation opportunities to all Americans. The fund invests earnings from offshore oil and gas leasing to help strengthen communities, preserve our history and protect our national endowment of lands and waters. The concept is take revenues from the depletion of resources – offshore oil and gas – and use them to conserve other resources: parks, wildlife refuges, forests, open spaces, trails and wildlife habitat. The State Side of the LWCF provides matching grants to States and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities.

RAISE GRANT

Grant funding available through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant program. This grant program helps communities around the country carry out projects with significant local or regional impact. The grants can be used for a wide variety of projects that make transportation systems safer, more accessible, and more sustainable for people across the country. RAISE projects are rigorously reviewed and selected based on merit. Projects will be evaluated on statutory criteria of safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, economic competitiveness and opportunity, state of good repair, partnership and innovation. This year the Department is also encouraging applicants to consider how their projects can create workforce development opportunities.

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM (TAP)

Administered by the Federal Highway Administration, this program provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.

SURFACE DISCRETIONARY GRANT PROGRAM (STP-D)

This program's purpose is to encourage projects that foster alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips, such as facilities for pedestrians and bicycles, development of bicycle/pedestrian plans, purchase of replacement vehicles for transit systems, and other transportation demand management (TDM) projects. Funding is comprised of 80% federal dollars and 20% local dollars.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM (STBG)

The Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) promotes flexibility in State and local transportation decisions and provides flexible funding to best address State and local transportation needs. The Federal Highway Administration is directed to apportion funding as a lump sum for each State then divide that total among apportioned programs.



TRAIL EASEMENTS AND ACQUISITION

SAFE STREETS AND ROADS FOR ALL (SS4A) IMPLEMENTATION FUNDS

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) established the new Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) discretionary program with \$5 billion in appropriated funds over the next 5 years. These funds are intended to support the National Roadway Safety Strategy and the Department's goal of zero deaths and serious injuries on our nation's roadways.

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

A public-private partnership is an alternative funding procurement method in which a public agency partners with a private-sector entity in order to leverage private resources and expertise through the transfer of risk. P3s are agreements that allow private companies to take on traditionally public roles in infrastructure projects, while allowing the public sector to continue to ensure accountability to the public.

MUNICIPAL CONTRIBUTION

To support the implementation of the High Cliff Connection, there are also potential funding opportunities through municipal contribution, at the discretion of each community. If desired, contributions could be planned for by each community through consideration for and inclusion of project funding in their individual Capital Improvement Plans or other budgeting procedures.

Of the route recommendations being made several portions will likely require some land acquisition or trail easements to move forward due to a lack of sufficient right of way in the areas under consideration. In general, there is one primary way that land can be acquired for public projects of this kind:

- Through public easements, which grant legal rights to cross or otherwise use someone else's land for a specified purpose.

In Wisconsin the application fee for processing an easement is \$2,000 and covers costs of reviewing the application and preparing the easement. In addition to that the entity acquiring the land pays a negotiated amount of money to the property owner for the use of that land.

Likely, easements required to complete the High Cliff Connection will be needed along US 10/STH 114, as well as potentially through the trail search area identified in the Villages of Sherwood and Harrison. An easement will not typically have a negative effect on property value unless it severely restricts the use of the property. Property owners in these proposed areas will need to be contacted to determine their level of willingness to participate voluntarily in creating a permanent easement on their property to provide space for the trail. Potentially, temporary easements for the construction process will be needed alongside the trail easement. Of the various easements available for exploration, there are three that are likely applicable to this project:

- **Public easements**, which grant use of an area of privately-owned property for public use
- **Conservation easements**, which grant use of privately-owned property for natural resource management and natural-resource based recreation

- **Appurtenant easement**, which applies to the land in perpetuity; if the landowner sells the land, the easement remains with it.

Other examples of easements might include:

- Utility access for water, power lines, septic systems
- Right-of-way access to a neighboring property
- Public access for hunting, fishing, or other recreational use

In order to implement the High Cliff Connection, it is very likely that several **permanent public easements** will be required. These easements will need to be through voluntary participation in private property acquisition, especially for the Harrison and Sherwood segment of the connection.

PROJECT EXAMPLE

Examples of other projects that have followed a similar trajectory that can be used as models include:

THE ICE AGE TRAIL

This is a trail that is still in progress but currently covers about 1,200 miles. The trail is managed by a partnership among the National Park Service, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the Ice Age Trail Alliance. The Ice Age Trail crosses over many ownership types, including private land, city parks, state parks, county forests and national forest. The Ice age trail uses easements to add sections to the trail.

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/parks/iceagetrail>

TRAIL EASEMENT RESOURCES

<https://www.dewittllp.com/news-education/posts/2021/04/15/the-most-important-things-to-know-about-easement-rights-in-wisconsin>

<https://conservationtools.org/guides/140-trail-easements>

<https://www.iceagetrail.org/land-protection-iata/>

<chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://wisconsin.gov/rdw/fdm/fd-12-01.pdf>



Ice Age Trail Plover River Segment Photo Credit: wiscosin-explorer.blogspot.com

