

FAQs about the Indiana Bicycle Trails Task Force

What is the Indiana Bicycle Trails Task Force?

The Indiana Bicycle Trails Task Force is a group that was established by the Indiana Legislature through [Indiana Code 8-4.5-7](#) that took effect on July 1, 2017. The primary goal of the task force is develop actionable concepts to connect existing bicycle trails throughout Indiana. This includes looking into the feasibility of such concepts via estimating costs, presenting at least six innovative funding sources, and preparing a timeline for completion of these connections. Additionally, the task force will also recommend changes to Indiana law to increase bicycle safety on trails and roadways. The task force will prepare a report with their ideas and recommendations to the legislative council and governor no later than July 1, 2019.

Who is on the Indiana Bicycle Trails Task Force?

- Dr. Jerome Adams (Pete Fritz), Indiana State Department of Health
- Mitch Barloga, Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission
- Cameron Clark (Amy Marisavljevic), Indiana Department of Natural Resources
- Rep. Wes Culver, Indiana House of Representatives District 49
- Andrew Forrester, City of Madison
- Paul Grayson**, Indianapolis Zoo
- Vincent Griffin, retired from Indiana Chamber
- Rep. Carey Hamilton, Indiana House of Representatives District 87
- Mayor SuzAnne Handshoe, Mayor of Kendallville
- Kyle Hannon*, Elkhart Chamber of Commerce
- Rebecca Holwerda, Governor's Office
- Bruce Kimball, Carmel City Council
- Kara Kish, Vigo County Parks and Recreation
- Joe McGuinness (Roy Nunnally or Jeanette Wilson), Indiana Department of Transportation
- Mark Newman (Noelle Szydlyk), Indiana Office of Tourism Development
- Dean Peterson, Marian University
- Justin Schneider, Indiana Farm Bureau
- Jeffrey Smallwood, Hendricks County Trail Development

(designee)

*Chair

**Vice Chair

How was the Indiana Bicycle Trails Task Force Selected?

Pursuant to [IC 8.4.5-7](#), voting members of the Indiana Bicycle Trails Task Force consist of: a) members appointed by the governor and that serve at his pleasure, b) the director of the office of tourism development or the director's designee, and c) the director of the department of natural resources or the director's designee.

Individuals from across the state comprise the Bicycle Trails Task Force. With diverse backgrounds and expertise in areas such as economic development, transportation, recreation, tourism, health & safety, land use, government, and more, each member brings a unique perspective and set of resources to the task force. The diversity of the task force members along with their shared mission of connecting bike trails in Indiana will allow them to compile a thorough and innovative final report.

When and where does the Indiana Bicycle Trails Task Force meet?

Pursuant to [IC 8.45-7](#), the Indiana Bicycle Trails Task Force met on August 15, 2017 in Indianapolis for its first meeting. It is also required to meet once quarterly. Upcoming meetings will be on the following dates: September 20, 2017; December 6, 2017; March 21, 2018; and June 20, 2018. All meetings will start at 10:00 AM and will be on the Indiana Government Center campus in Indianapolis. Additional meetings or any public subcommittee meetings will be announced when they are determined. For more information, please visit: VisitIndianaTourism.com

Why should Indiana study connecting bicycle trails?

Currently, Indiana has over 1,500 miles of hard surface, off-road trails open to bicycles. Some communities have more miles than others, while others have none at all. Additionally, while some regions and organizations are working together on trail projects and connectivity, many are isolated. Finally, Indiana lags behind several other states when it comes to both trail miles and connectivity. The Bicycle Trails Task Force will take a more statewide approach and look at the feasibility of creating a larger, more comprehensive and connected trail network. Expanding the trail network would allow more Hoosiers and communities to enjoy the many benefits that trails and cycling provide. Additionally, it would help Indiana to better compete with other states in areas such as quality of life for residents, economic development, and tourism.

What are some of the benefits of bicycling trails?

There are many benefits to trails. The benefits can be for individuals, communities, local businesses, the environment, and more. Below is a list of the benefits that have been observed because of trail development. Not every benefit may be seen, and those benefits that are observed may range from slight to significant. Results vary because of the different contexts of each trail and community. However, all trail development leads to some level of positive impact.

- **Economic:** Direct jobs, indirect jobs, increased property values, business retention, business attraction, increased tourism, increased revenue from trail user spending, increased tax revenue
- **Quality of Life:** Increased access to recreational opportunities, increased access to nature, higher bikeable/walkable scores, increased work and school performance, increased sense of place and connectivity, accommodate more special cultural, recreational, or social events
- **Environmental:** Preserved green space, reduced CO₂, protects habitats from development, improved air and water quality
- **Health:** Lower obesity and obesity-related disease rates, increased amount of physical activity time, increased wellness, individual healthcare savings, more affordable exercise options that can accommodate variety of ages, abilities, and interests, fewer bike/pedestrian accidents
- **Transportation:** Less congestion on roads, increased bicycle and pedestrian commutership, safer cycling infrastructure, infrastructure can accommodate a larger variety of people, increased first and last mile connections

What trails or communities might be included or effected?

At this time, the task force is in the initial stages of studying trail connectivity. A list of actionable concepts that will include communities and trails will be found in the final report. Please check for any updates or the final report at: VisitIndianaTourism.com

Hopefully, all trails and communities can benefit from the task force's final report regardless if they are specifically included. The findings in the final report will include several recommendations for safety, ideas for funding, innovative ideas, and best practices. Even if these are not implemented on a state level, aspects of the report can be adopted at a local or regional level to positively impact their trails or community.

Will my property be affected by or purchased for trail development? The Indiana Bicycle Trails Task Force is only studying the feasibility of connecting existing bike trails for their report. All recommendations from their final report will be for broader corridors, not specific routes and parcels, to connect existing trails. The Bicycle Trails Task Force will not be acquiring land or developing any trail.

Can I participate in the Bicycle Trails Task Force?

Only members appointed by the governor or named in the legislation (IC 8-4.5-7) are on the Bicycle Trails Task Force and can vote. However, members of the public are allowed to attend Bicycle Trails Task Force meetings if they are interested. Feedback and comments are allowed, but only during appropriate portions of the meeting. Additionally, the task force may decide to hold specific meetings, town halls, or design charrettes to gauge public opinion as a part of their process to generate a final report. In this case, interested members of the public would be encouraged to come and provide feedback. All information on public meetings associated with the Bicycle Trails Task Force will be posted on:

VisitIndianaTourism.com

Where can I find out more about the Bicycle Trails Task Force?

Information on meetings, members, and updates of the report, can be found at:

VisitIndianaTourism.com. If you have a question that cannot be answered from the FAQs or on the website, please contact Noelle Szydyk at nszydyk@visitindiana.com or 317-232-0600.

What are Members Saying about the Indiana Bicycle Trails Task Force?

“As Gov. Holcomb has stated along with a recent IUPUI economic report, Indiana needs to see more of an influx of skilled workers in coming decades,” Kimball said. “There is a declining youth in many of our small cities. These communities have been hit hard by the new economy. Quality of life will be a key component in attracting new businesses and employees. Trails have shown to be a very low-cost but effective way to improve quality and economic life in many cities and towns. I’m looking forward to working with officials and commission members across the state to create a trail network that will be an asset and serve all Hoosiers.”

– Bruce Kimball ¹

“I’ve been involved with statewide tourism council for the last five years, and I’ve seen things that bring income to the state through tourism. One of those is bike trails, or really any kind of trail, because those are becoming more and more popular. So the idea behind forming the task force was to get together people from around the state to work on a number of things, one of which is connectivity. Right now, a lot of communities and counties are building trails, but there are kind of independent. Everybody is doing their own 10-mile or 15-mile trails, and they don’t really work for the entire region or state.”

-Representative Wes Culver²

“Communities in Indiana are becoming aware of the positive economic impact of these recreational opportunities. They’re starting to see the trails as quality of life amenities that people are interested in and assets that can be used to attract people to their communities, and I think that’s only going to continue and increase. So the question really at this point is, how can we work together and how can we make the entire statewide endeavor better?”

-Kyle Hannon, Chair³

“I think there’s the real potential here to create something that’s distinctly Hoosier, unlike anything in the country. I also believe it could be created in such a way that it becomes a real bucket list for folks to experience. So I’m really looking forward to working with all the creative and thoughtful minds that have been placed on the task force to see what we can cook up in the next two year.”

-Paul Grayson, Vice Chair⁴

¹ Aasen, Adam. “Carmel City Councilor appointed to state’s Bicycle Trails Task Force.” *Current in Carmel*. Current Publishing, 29 July 2017. Web. Accessed 15 Sept. 2017. <http://currentincarmel.com/2017/07/29/carmel-city-councilor-appointed-to-states-bicycle-trails-task-force/>

² Kline, John. “Task Force sets sights on statewide trail connectivity.” *The Goshen News*. Goshen News, 26 August 2017. Web. Accessed 15 Sept. 2017. http://www.goshennews.com/news/local_news/task-force-sets-sights-on-statewide-trail-connectivity/article_f778ad73-f16a-5355-ab32-e4b75e182e72.html

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.