



Glacier Rail Park Poised for Summer Groundbreaking

New 43-acre industrial yard in Kalispell will develop over two years, allow city to remove downtown rail tracks

BY [DILLON TABISH](#) // MAR 30, 2017 // [LATEST HEADLINES, NEWS & FEATURES](#)

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In April, prospective contractors will be able to bid on the development of a new 43-acre industrial rail yard off Whitefish Stage Road, with construction poised to break ground by July.

Officials with Flathead County Economic Development are preparing to accept bids on the

Glacier Rail Park project, which will include building water, road, sewer and other utilities, as well as a new rail line in the former gravel pit site. The park was originally estimated to cost \$21 million and will open up additional opportunities for rail-served businesses while freeing up downtown by removing the downtown tracks.

If everything goes according to plan, the new industrial yard could be completed by mid-to-late 2018, according to Kim Morisaki, business development manager with FCEDA. At that point, CHS and Northwest Drywall could also be moved into new facilities at the rail yard.

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Once the two businesses are relocated, the city will remove the downtown railroad tracks in 2019 and develop an extensive path system in their place. In January, the Kalispell City Council approved a resolution to request that BNSF Railway begin the abandonment process of 2.41 miles of track that slice through the heart of town.

City and business leaders hope these changes and others will spur private redevelopment and expansion in Kalispell's core area. By removing the rail tracks, roughly 40 acres of adjacent land would become primed for redevelopment, according to Kalispell Planning Director Tom Jentz.

The city will also reconnect disjointed streets in the core area.

The entire \$33 million revitalization effort is aided by a \$10 million federal transportation grant that was awarded in fall 2015. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has also awarded \$400,000 in Brownfields grant funding to Kalispell to aid in redevelopment. The grant funding will go toward environmental assessments at properties targeted for reuse and redevelopment.

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Ron Fisher

The way Mission Mountain Railraod is hammering Kalispell with the 50 car trains going thur town at prime traffic time..good deal of the new park. Also, the inept railroad seems to be stuck taking some rail cars back & forth too often an the large slow moving trains are hazardous to any medical/fire situation with them blocking major streets way too long while they figure out which way to go or not go?

Wed, Dec 14, 2017 10:05

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