

# NEW DOWNTOWN TRAIL SYSTEM PRESENTED IN KALISPELL WORK SESSION

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Details of Kalispell's new pedestrian trail system will be presented at the City Council work session tonight.

One of the biggest components of the plan to revitalize the city's core area is a continuous paved walkway along the corridor where railroad tracks are slated to be removed. The Trail & Complete Streets Concept Design Report offers a look at the vision forged by city planners with the help of Alta Planning & Design and partially funded by a \$10 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The first phase of the project was the construction of Glacier Rail Park, a 42-acre industrial park on the east edge of the city with CHS Mountain West Co-op and Northwest Drywall and Roofing Supply as its first tenants.

The next phase will involve removal of the existing railroad infrastructure, replacing it with almost two miles of concrete urban trails linking parks, businesses and the downtown area. The trail is set to start at Meridian Road on the west, with a major gateway located across from the Great Northern Historic Rails to Trails entrance. The new trail will run along Kalispell Center Mall to the north, with a crossing on Main Street highlighted by two major gateways on either side.

The trail will follow the north side of Woodland Park and extend to a pedestrian rail bridge spanning U.S. 2. Another major trail entrance will be just east of the bridge.

A number of public amenities are on the wish list for areas adjacent to the trail, including a splash pad/ice rink, a fitness course, interpretive signs and public art installments. Navigation of busy street crossings is another key part of the proposal, with six existing and one future roadway incorporated into the route.

The right-of-way easement from BNSF Railway Co. is only along the trail route, giving the city no control over adjacent properties. Kalispell will, however, be encouraging high-quality mixed-use construction of residential and commercial projects and building refurbishments along the trail.

City planners gathered feedback from more than 1,000 people throughout the summer and fall of 2018 to create the current plan document, which is subject to change.

The work session begins at 7 p.m. at City Hall, 201 First Ave. E. A time for public comment will be offered following the trails plan presentation. No formal decisions may be made during a work session.

*Reporter Heidi Gaiser may be reached at 758-4438 or hgaiser@dailyinterlake.com.*

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