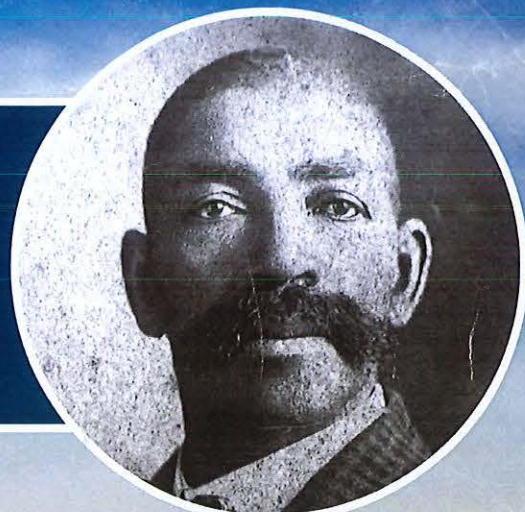


City of Fort Smith, Arkansas

BASS REEVES LEGACY LOOP GREENWAY INITIATIVE

FY 2024 RAISE Grant Application



Overview

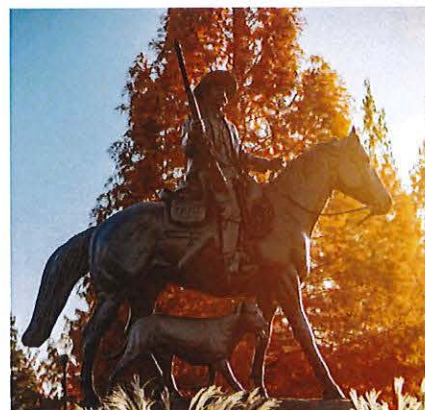
Fort Smith, Arkansas, was founded in 1817 as a western frontier military post. Today, around 89,576 people call Fort Smith home, making Fort Smith the third-largest city in Arkansas. Like many other former manufacturing cities across the United States, Fort Smith has experienced significant hardships over the past several decades. The grit and adaptability of Fort Smithians has started a trajectory of growth for the city, but significant disparities remain. A lack of equitable transportation alternatives in Fort Smith has exacerbated issues of public safety, accessibility, and mobility, particularly for low-income residents with health disparities.

The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative aims to build a safe, connected, and equitable transportation system by reducing transportation and economic barriers through bike and pedestrian infrastructure. The project will serve Fort Smith residents living in Historically Disadvantaged Communities and Areas of Persistent Poverty by adding 9.3 miles of greenways, sidepaths, and bicycle lanes to the city's active transportation network, completing a 14 mile loop encircling the core of the city. When complete, 22% of Fort Smith residents (20,218 people) will live within 1/2 mile of the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop. The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop will connect schools, parks, jobs, public transit, neighborhoods, grocery stores, healthcare facilities, and other essential services.

It is fitting that this project celebrates the life and legacy of Bass Reeves, whose remarkable story epitomizes resilience, justice, and progress. Bass Reeves journey from enslavement to becoming one of the first Black law enforcement officers in the American West is a powerful inspiration for overcoming adversity. By honoring his legacy through the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop, we not only pay tribute to his contributions to Fort Smith but also reaffirm our commitment to creating a more equitable community for all people, regardless of background or circumstance. This initiative symbolizes our collective dedication to building a city where everyone has the opportunity to thrive and succeed.

Fort Smith will soon be welcoming foreign military allies through the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) Program, a national security assistance program authorized by the Arms Export Control Act. Last year, Ebbing Air National Guard Base in Fort Smith was selected to be a F-35 and F-16 pilot training center for United States allies such as Singapore, Germany, and Switzerland. These international visitors, accustomed to bike and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure in their home countries, will greatly benefit from infrastructure that is both comfortable and familiar.

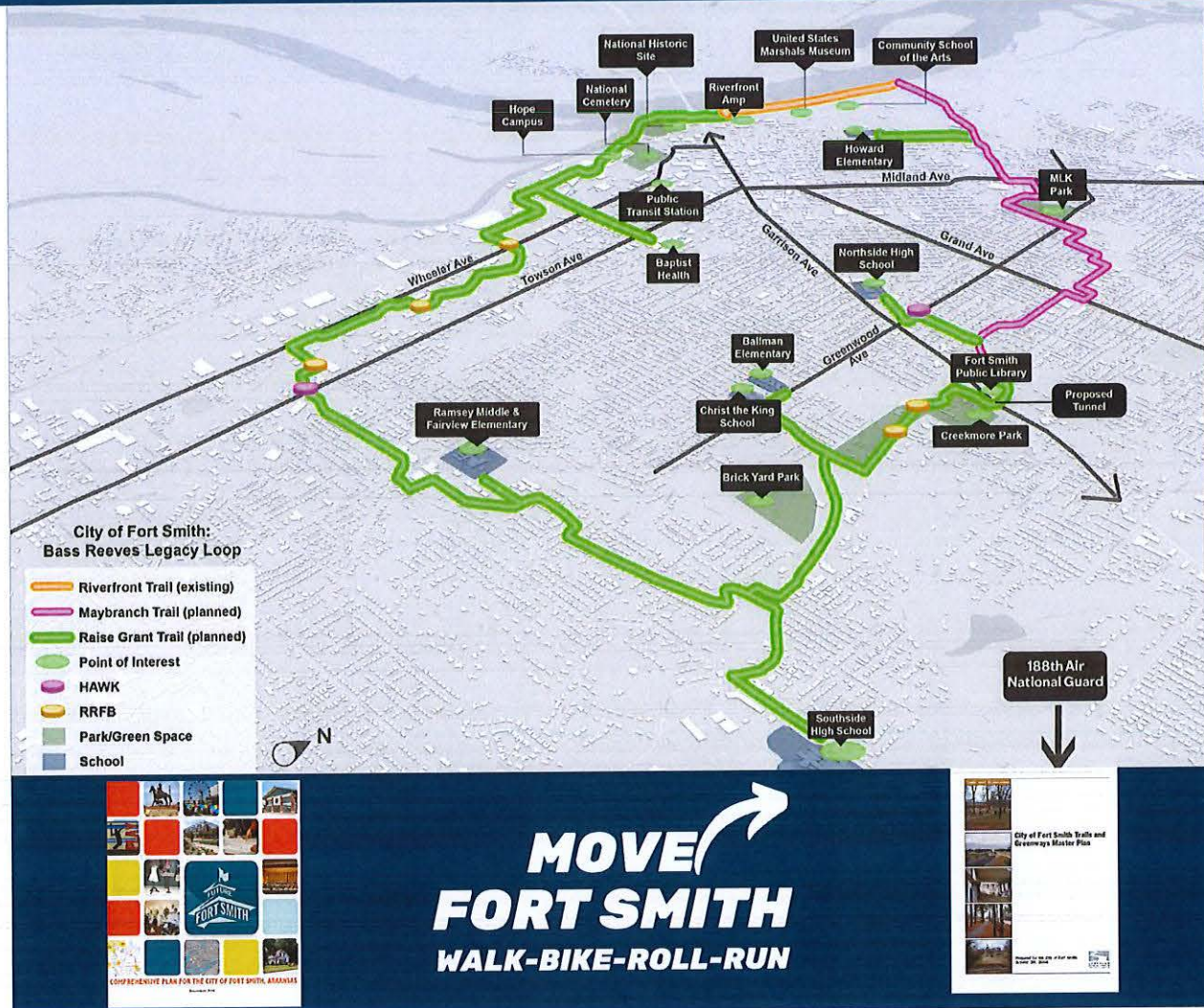
The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop will be a catalyst for improved public health and an increased social cohesion within Fort Smith. The City of Fort Smith is requesting \$24,987,098.00 to build the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop. This project will serve as a benchmark for similar rural and post-industrial cities facing the dual challenges of economic revitalization and the need for more inclusive infrastructure. Infrastructure projects are more than just physical constructions; they can also be instruments of social change, economic development, and community empowerment.



Statue of Bass Reeves at Pendergraft Park, downtown Fort Smith



Portrait of Bass Reeves



Project History

The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop was born from several city-wide initiatives: the Future Fort Smith Comprehensive Plan (2014), the City of Fort Smith Trails and Greenway Plan (2004), the Move Fort Smith Active Transportation Plan (2024), and multiple citizen surveys. The Future Fort Smith Comprehensive Plan, which serves as the visioning document for the City of Fort Smith, places a heavy emphasis upon improving community mobility through policies and action items such as:

- ACTION FLU-3.4.2 Build Maybranch Trail for connectivity.
- ACTION ED-6.1.1 Invest in the provision of trails and alternative transportation choices to all business areas.
- POLICY TI-1.2 Make major destinations highly accessible by all modes of transportation.

The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop follows the guidance of the City of Fort Smith Trails and Greenway Plan by connecting the existing Riverfront Trail with the budgeted Maybranch Trail. Sections of the Maybranch Trail will be built later this year (2024) through a combination of grants, private donations, and city funds. With a matching investment, the 14 mile Bass Reeves Legacy Loop will spur a better life for a more connected Fort Smith.

Challenge

The City of Fort Smith grapples with a series of challenges that have major implications for the well-being of its residents. One issue that must be met urgently is the high number of injuries and fatalities resulting from vehicular collisions on the city's roads. Fort Smith experienced 37 roadway fatalities from 2020-2022, 7 of which were vulnerable roadway users (pedestrians and bicyclists). Fort Smith's high-injury networks include roads that are important to the vitality of the city such as Grand Avenue, Garrison Avenue, Rogers Avenue, and Towson Avenue. It is critical that the City of Fort Smith continue to pursue comprehensive solutions for safer streets.

Addressing the limited transportation options available for Fort Smith residents poses an additional challenge. The current lack of safe and accessible trails leaves many Fort Smith residents feeling that they must own a personal vehicle. The economic burdens of car ownership (car payments, insurance, fuel, and maintenance) places a financial weight upon Fort Smith's low-income residents who could benefit the most to save expenses. This challenge should be met by a solution that gives residents the option to save money or traverse the city as they are able.

Significant opportunities for development exist along the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop route. There is a total of nearly 200 acres of developable land directly adjacent to the location of the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop. Future growth presents an opportunity for developments that are walkable, livable, and economically accessible.

Solution

The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative offers a comprehensive approach to tackle the critical transportation issues confronting Fort Smith. Through enhancing safety measures, expanding transportation choices, and stimulating economic growth, this initiative promises to significantly uplift the living standards of its residents, especially for those residing in Areas of Persistent Poverty and Historically Disadvantaged Communities.

The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative is Fort Smith's effort to empower the community to build an environment that better serves their needs. With the establishment of dedicated paths for walking and biking, the initiative aims to reduce the dangers tied to roadway incidents. This approach is particularly vital for enhancing safety on Fort Smith's high-injury roadways, including Rogers Avenue, Towson Avenue, Wheeler Avenue, and Garrison Avenue. The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop addresses the safety concerns of each of these roadways by introducing new traffic control technology to the city and implementing grade separation techniques to avoid roadway conflicts. This will allow the public to better access key destinations around the city, and approach Vision Zero 2050, a city goal for zero roadway fatalities by 2050 or sooner.

Establishing a greenway network with a high degree of connectivity will allow residents a way to get to outside, get active, and to access what they need beyond their neighborhood. When the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop is complete, 22% of Fort Smith residents will live within a half mile of the trail. Residents will be able to choose walking or cycling as an affordable and sustainable means of commuting to many destinations. The recreational and health benefits of trails and greenways in the area is well documented.¹

As Fort Smith's economy diversifies with exciting new opportunities from the FMS program, the U.S. Marshals Museum, and outdoor recreation, the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop is poised to provide the connections that will ensure a prosperous future for Fort Smith.

Statement of Work

The majority of the route utilizes shared-use greenways (off-road and sidepath) along with a few short segments of protected bike lane. Street crossings will be protected with Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB's), modification of existing traffic signals, High-intensity Activated crossWALK (HAWK) traffic signals, and underpasses utilizing existing bridges and a new tunnel.

Primary construction activities will consist of the following:

- 8.8 miles of 10'-wide multi-use path
- 0.6 miles of bike lane
- 0.2 miles of sidewalk
- 5 RRFB crossings, 2 HAWK crossings, 7 modified existing traffic signals, 1 existing bridge underpass, and 1 new tunnel underpass
- 17 railroad track crossings (includes multi-track crossings in 7 different locations).
- 3 12' wide bike and pedestrian bridges over existing channelized drainage ways
- 3,300 feet of Segmental block retaining walls

Current Design Status

The preliminary design and route alignment of the project is currently complete. These initial plans have been developed, incorporating feedback from stakeholders and considering factors such as safety, accessibility, connectivity, existing infrastructure, and environmental impact.

The route alignment, including key connections, was selected to optimize usability and minimize disruptions to private and public property throughout the corridor. Additionally, preliminary designs for amenities such as bridges, tunnels, underpasses, and crossing treatments have been proposed to enhance the user experience and promote active transportation.

Multiple iterations of the route were studied and analyzed to ensure the safest route possible, increased connectivity to destinations such as schools and other amenities, minimize the construction challenges, and maximize the budget.

The RAISE Grant will fund the development of the BRLL, consisting of approximately 9.28 miles of 10' ADA-accessible multi-use trails or 10' sidepaths, which include pedestrian lighting, significantly increasing the mileage of multi-use trails in Fort Smith. The proposed trail will safely cross current barriers including two state highways; three major city arterial roads, seventeen railroad crossings a new pedestrian and bicycle tunnel under Rogers Avenue (a four-lane state highway). This route will create safe and comfortable connections to seven schools.

The BRLL project includes several connector trails creating access to the Baptist Health Center and four schools (Northside High, Southside High, Ballman Elementary and Howard Elementary). As the project moves forward, further refinement and input from the community will ensure that the greenway fulfills its purpose of providing a safe and enjoyable route for cyclists and pedestrians alike.

Tunnel and Bridge Underpasses

There are two underpasses planned for the project. A 100' long, 14' wide by 9' tall tunnel is planned for the highly trafficked Roger's Avenue (Arkansas State Highway 22). The crossing of Wheeler Avenue (Arkansas State Highway 255) will modify the Mill Creek bridge abutment to provide an underpass. The City and its engineers will need to coordinate with FEMA, ARDOT, and the Army Corps of Engineers to construct the trail within an existing floodway and to obtain airspace and other approvals.

Statement of Work

Safe and comfortable bicycle and pedestrian crossings:

The project team has identified several areas along the project corridor that will benefit from the addition of signalized bicycle and pedestrian crossings.

Proposed HAWK crossings (2 total):

- a. Towson Avenue-Towson Avenue is a four-lane, high-speed, high-volume roadway and is a designated Arkansas state highway. The alignment of the BRLI is proposed to cross Towson Avenue south of Fresno Street and North of Independence Street. A HAWK system will require all traffic to stop when the signal is activated ensuring safe passage for pedestrians and bicycles.
- b. Greenwood Avenue- Greenwood Avenue is a three-lane, high-speed, high-volume city arterial road. The installation of a HAWK system will allow users to navigate this roadway safely and efficiently. This HAWK system will service users of the Northside High School connection to the BRLI.

Proposed RRFB crossings (5 total):

Navy Road, South Y Street, South M Street, South O Street, and South E Street. RRFBs have been identified for installation on these streets due to the lower volumes and speeds present.

Initial scoping, alignment study, and budgeting have been completed. Full Design and engineering will be required to finalize the alignment, and budget and to determine the required right-of-way and easements anticipated along the route. Existing right-of-way will be primarily utilized for portions of the route where sidepaths are proposed. The City has considerable experience acquiring property consistent with the Uniform Relocation Act through our interactions with the United States Army Corp of Engineers and is willing to use eminent domain, as necessary. Please see the Preliminary BRLI Alignment Analysis document for more details regarding the scope of the project.

Recent & Future Investments

Total Recent Active Transportation Investments			
Project Name	Project Type	Funding	Cost
Riverfront Trail	Multi-use trail	ArDOT, Walton Family Foundation, The City of Fort Smith	\$4,629,875
Chaffee Crossing Trail	Multi-use trail	ArDOT, City of Fort Smith, Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority	\$1,550,000
Sidewalk Improvements	Sidewalk Repair	City of Fort Smith	\$2,587,392
Total Recent Active Transportation Investments:			\$8,767,267
Total Future Active Transportation Investments			
Project Name	Project Type	Funding	Cost
Chaffee Crossing Trail System	Multi-use trail	The City of Fort Smith, Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority, Transportation Alternatives Program Grant	\$7,750,000
Tilles Park Improvements	Walking trail	The City of Fort Smith	\$1,550,000
Arkansas Colleges of Health Education Trail Contribution	Multi-use trail	The City of Fort Smith, Arkansas Colleges of Health Education, ArkBest	\$125,000
May Branch Trail	Multi-use trail	The City of Fort Smith, National Park Service Grant (Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership)	\$3,450,000
Carol Ann Cross Park Trail & Board Walk	Walking trail	The City of Fort Smith, Public-Private Partnership	\$600,000
Total Future Active Transportation Investments:			\$13,475,000

Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative Project Budget

FO

The City of Fort Smith requests \$24,987,098.00 in RAISE grant funding to design, p construct, inspect, and acquire right-of-way for the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Green Initiative. Preliminary route analysis, audit, and budgeting have been completed. No work has been completed as of yet. Project costs were determined by consultants Laneshift, LLC and Mickle Griffin Engineering in February of 2024.

Considerable local, state, federal, and private funds have been expended previously to build existing sections of the future Bass Reeves Legacy Loop (Riverfront Trail section). The City of Fort Smith plans to spend \$3,450,000 through 2026 to build over 3 miles of additional sections of the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop (Maybranch Trail) north of Rogers Avenue. Funding for these sections has been secured through various sources such as federal grants, city funds, and local contributions. This not only shows the City of Fort Smith's commitment to building the entire Bass Reeves Legacy Loop, but it also testifies to the City of Fort Smith's ability to work collaboratively with other governmental agencies, as well as the public, to complete necessary infrastructure projects that improve the quality of life for Fort Smith residents. The RAISE grant will create a significant impact in Fort Smith by providing the resources to close (connect) the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop south of Rogers Avenue before the end of the decade, marking tremendous progress towards a higher level of transportation equity in the city.

With the City of Fort Smith's designation as a rural community by the Department of Transportation, and as ~85% of the RAISE portion of the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop project is located in Areas of Persistent Poverty or Historically Disadvantaged Communities, the City of Fort Smith does not propose a match. The project budget has a contingency plan to address any potential cost overruns, with a 10% allocation to the overall construction budget. This will ensure that the project can be completed within the allocated budget and schedule, and any unforeseen challenges can be sufficiently addressed. The contingency plan will be evaluated continuously and updated throughout the project's various stages to ensure that any changes or challenges are accounted for and addressed appropriately.

Urban/Rural	Project Costs
Urban (2020 Census-designated urban area with a population greater than 200,000)	\$ 0
Rural (Located outside of a 2020 Census- designated urban area with a population greater than 200,000)	\$24,987,098.00

Preliminary Opinion of Probable Costs

Total RAISE Funding Requested	\$24,987,098.00
Non-federal sources	\$0.00
Other federal sources	\$0.00

Item No.	Quantity	Unit	Description	Unit Price	Total Amount
General Construction					
1.	50,915	LF	Erosion Control	\$6.00	\$305,490.00
2.	50,915	LF	Site Restoration	\$15.00	\$763,725.00
3.	2,000	LF	Streambank Stabilization	\$100.00	\$200,000.00
4.	1	LS	Construction Layout	\$32,000.00	\$32,000.00
5.	50,915	LF	Traffic Control	\$5.00	\$254,575.00
6.	6,775	LF	Utility Relocations	\$200.00	\$1,355,000.00
7.	14	EA	Stream Crossings - Small	\$10,000.00	\$140,000.00
8.	6	EA	Stream Crossings - Large	\$75,000.00	\$450,000.00
9.	1	LS	Wheeler Avenue Bridge Underpass	\$500,000.00	\$500,000.00
10.	37	EA	Street Crossing - Striped	\$5,000.00	\$185,000.00
11.	5	EA	Street Crossings - RRFB	\$15,000.00	\$75,000.00
12.	2	EA	Street Crossings - HAWK	\$175,000.00	\$350,000.00
13.	17	EA	Rail Crossing	\$20,000.00	\$340,000.00
14.	7	LS	Existing Traffic Signal Modification	\$75,000.00	\$525,000.00
15.	33,610	LF	Trail Lighting	\$10.00	\$336,100.00
16.	1	LS	Amenities	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00
17.	1,250	LF	Fencing	\$75.00	\$93,750.00
18.	46,535	LF	Concrete Multi-Use Sidepath	\$165.00	\$7,678,275.00
19.	3,160	LF	Bicycle Lane	\$5.00	\$15,800.00
20.	450	LF	Boardwalk Above Vertical Wall Channel	\$650.00	\$292,500.00
21.	1,000	LF	5' Sidewalk	\$50.00	\$50,000.00
22.	1,050	LF	Small Retaining Wall	\$250.00	\$262,500.00
23.	2,250	LF	Large Retaining Wall	\$1,000.00	\$2,250,000.00
24.	1	EA	Mill Creek Bridge	\$500,000.00	\$500,000.00
25.	2	EA	Small Bridge	\$250,000.00	\$500,000.00
26.	100	LF	100' 14'x9' Tunnel and transition approaches	\$20,000.00	\$2,000,000.00
27.	50,915	LF	Trail Striping and Signage	\$5.00	\$254,575.00
Subtotal Construction					\$19,759,290.00
Contingency (10%)					\$1,975,929.00
Total Construction					\$21,735,219.00
28.	574,225	SF	Right of Way Easement Acquisition	\$2.00	\$1,148,450.00
29.	17	EA	Railroad Permitting	\$7,500.00	\$127,500.00
30.			Design 6%		\$1,185,557.40
31.			Construction Administration 4%		\$790,371.60
TOTAL					\$ 24,987,098.00



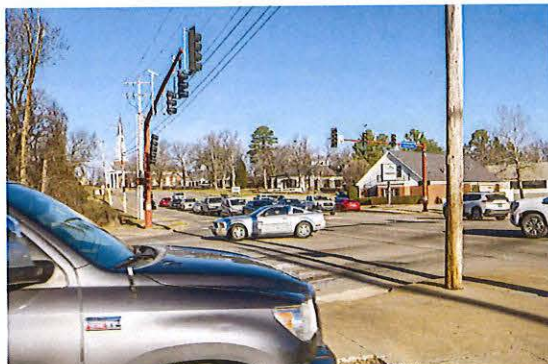
Safety

From 2020-2022, Fort Smith saw 37 roadway fatalities and 125 serious injuries resulting from vehicular collisions. Fort Smith's annual number of roadway fatalities is above average for comparably sized cities (see Table 1). Significant changes must take place on Fort Smith's streets to improve the safety and well-being of the community.

The City of Fort Smith is committed to eradicating roadway fatalities and serious injuries. In 2022, the City of Fort Smith Board of Directors adopted Vision Zero 2050: a policy with the goal of eliminating traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2050. Later that year, the City of Fort Smith was awarded \$280,000 through the Department of Transportation's Safe Streets 4 All grant program to fund the Safe Fort Smith Comprehensive Safety Action Plan. Safe Fort Smith will help Fort Smith reach its Vision Zero 2050 goal by providing a holistic, well-defined strategy to preventing roadway fatalities and serious injuries. This strategy follows six principles from the FHWA's Safe Systems Approach:

- Death and serious injuries are unacceptable.
- Humans make mistakes.
- Humans are vulnerable.
- Responsibility is shared.
- Safety is proactive.
- Redundancy is crucial.

The City of Fort Smith proposes the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative as a catalyst for a growing safety culture in Fort Smith. With the Safe Systems Approach principles as the foundation of the initiative, the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop reflects Fort Smith's efforts to commit to safety over other competing goals and demands. The infrastructure improvements will create a built environment that considers the well-being of all citizens as paramount to development. The City of Fort Smith sets its sights to a day when it can showcase safe, inclusive, and equitable infrastructure that measurably improves the quality of life for the community.



This busy intersection of Rogers Avenue, Greenwood Avenue, and Free Ferry will be avoided through the Rogers Avenue tunnel.

Fatality Comparisons



City	Population (2022)	Fatalities	
		2020	2021
Fort Smith	89,981	11	15
Springdale	85,884	12	13
Fayetteville	99,288	10	7
Edmond, OK	96,304	1	3
Franklin, TN	86,904	4	3

Table 1.

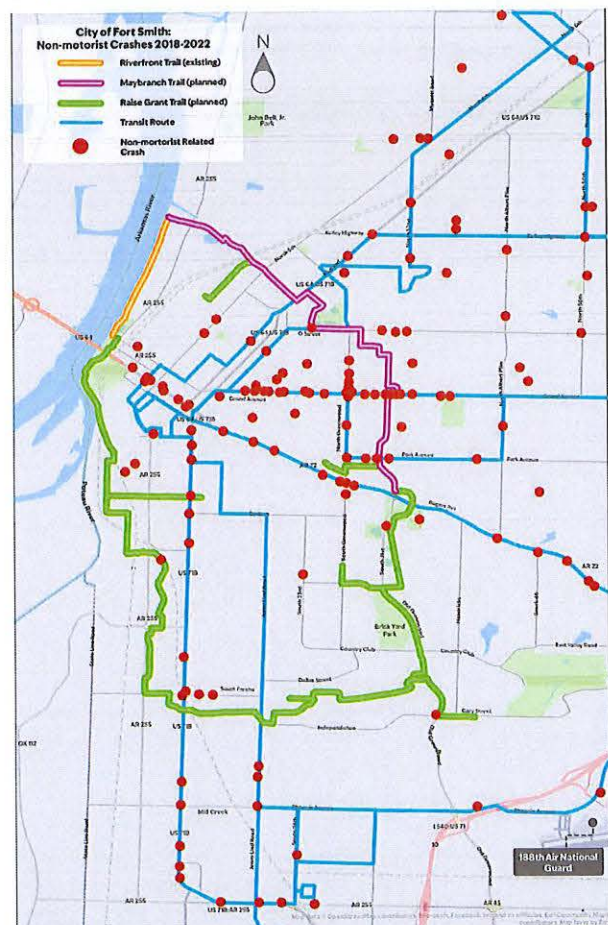


Table 2.



Safety

Safety strategies for the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop include separated bicycle and pedestrian facilities, grade separations at high-injury corridors, 5 RRFB crossings, 2 HAWK crossings, and 7 modified existing traffic signals.

Active transportation with a high degree of separation from vehicles (e.g., barriers or grade and horizontal separation) is associated with a substantially lower risk of crashing compared to cycling on major roads without any bicycle facilities.² The installation of fully separated active transportation infrastructure on specific corridors could prevent a significant number of injuries and fatalities over time, highlighting the benefits of such infrastructure in urban and rural areas.³ With 8.8 miles of separated multi-use paths, the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop will improve safety by using separation techniques to avoid vehicular conflicts.



This section of Towson Avenue (Arkansas Highway 71) has inadequate bicycle and pedestrian facilities despite its use. The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop creates an alternative route to this high speed corridor.

Improving Fort Smith's crosswalk technology is an additional safety component of the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative. The investment will fund Fort Smith's first HAWK signals, which will be installed at Towson Avenue (Arkansas Highway 71) and at Greenwood Avenue, a major arterial road. The effectiveness of HAWK signals is well-documented; a study by the United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (USDOT FHA) found that HAWK signals can reduce total crashes by 29%, and pedestrian-related crashes at HAWK sites by 69%.

The Community Participation Plan (CPP) will survey schools to assess whether cross walk guards are desired for drop off and pick up times. One study that indirectly relates to the benefits of crosswalk guards is an evaluation of crossing guard presence on the likelihood of children using safe active transportation methods. The study aimed to determine if an increased presence of crossing guards was associated with an increased number of children walking/biking to school, diminished parental safety concerns, an increased likelihood of parents allowing their child to walk/bike to school, and an increased number of children utilizing supervised routes. The study found significant differences in pre/post-program implementation in the number of children utilizing supervised routes vs. unsupervised routes, suggesting that increased crossing guard presence can influence safe behavior by increasing the numbers of children engaging in predictable pedestrian behaviors through their use of supervised routes.⁴



Environmental Sustainability

The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative is a major step towards better environmental stewardship for the City of Fort Smith. By promoting active transportation, reducing vehicle miles traveled, instilling eco-conscious habits in the community, and utilizing natural infrastructure, this initiative has far-reaching benefits for the environment.

One of the key aspects of the greenway initiative is the promotion of active transportation through the development of greenways, sidepaths, and bike lanes. Building infrastructure that encourages residents to choose these modes of transport over driving not only reduces carbon emissions, but also reduces vehicle miles traveled. Less trips taken by vehicles makes for less traffic congestion on Fort Smith's roads, leading to smoother traffic flow and reduced idling times for vehicles. The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative will specifically target reducing carbon emissions in Fort Smith through a modal shift from personal vehicles to active transportation, particularly during residents' commutes to school and to work.

The Move Fort Smith Committee has identified safe routes to schools as a top priority for active transportation infrastructure development in Fort Smith. One success metric established by the committee is to see less cars in the school drop-off and pick-up lines and more bikes on school bike racks. The traffic congestion caused by long drop-off and pick-up lines creates hazardous roadway scenarios and additional carbon emissions from idle vehicles.

In an effort to foster environmental sustainability by increasing the number of students who bike to school, the City of Fort Smith has partnered with the Fort Smith Public Schools to implement the All Kids Bike program, an 8-week course that teaches kindergarteners and first graders how to ride bikes in their P.E. class. By integrating biking into school curriculums and teaching bicycle safety, young people are learning sustainable transportation practices from an early age. As many of Fort Smith's public schools are located within residential areas, the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop will provide the necessary safety improvements that can help the city leverage its historic, transportation-efficient land use design.



The school drop off lines of Ramsey Middle School and Fairview Elementary School cause traffic congestion on Dallas Avenue.



A student wears a big smile learning how to ride a bike at school through the All Kids Bike Program. Photo courtesy of All Kids Bike.



Environmental Sustainability

Through RAISE, later stages of the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative, including the NEPA Environmental Assessment and the preliminary design stages, will allow the City of Fort Smith to evaluate Maybranch Creek and Mill Creek for riparian repairs using native vegetation and natural infrastructure. Stormwater runoff in Maybranch Creek has caused significant flood damage to properties on the north side of town. While a recent FEMA grant has allowed the City of Fort Smith to purchase several homes within the existing flood plain, it is important to take further action to mitigate future flooding risks and protect vulnerable properties.

Landscape architects and project engineers will be tasked with determining the feasibility of utilizing natural infrastructure and native vegetation to slow and absorb stormwater. Local partners, including Keep Fort Smith Beautiful and the Fort Smith Botanical Society, are committed to dedicating resources towards these endeavors in a collaborative effort to address these pressing environmental challenges.



Current erosion control methods on Maybranch Creek do not help to absorb and filter stormwater. Landscape architects and project engineers will be tasked with assessing the feasibility for using natural infrastructure to prevent erosion and slow stormwater. Natural infrastructure can also help to beautify this area.

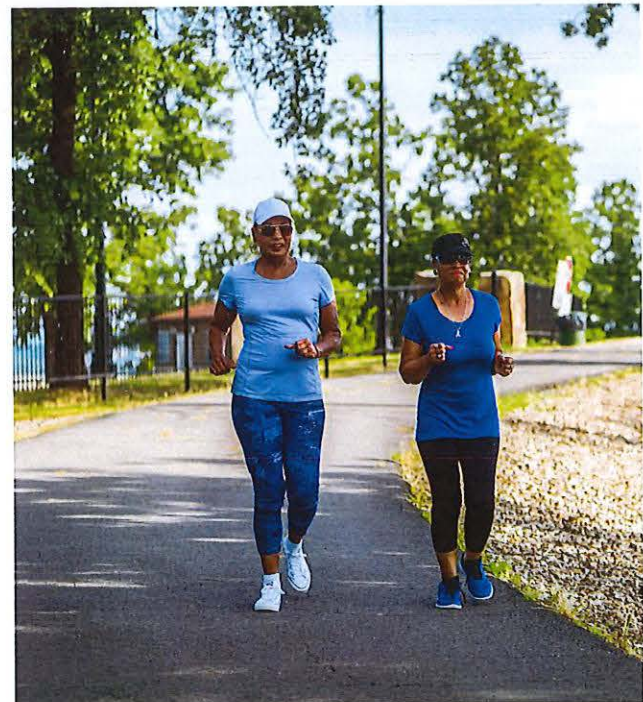
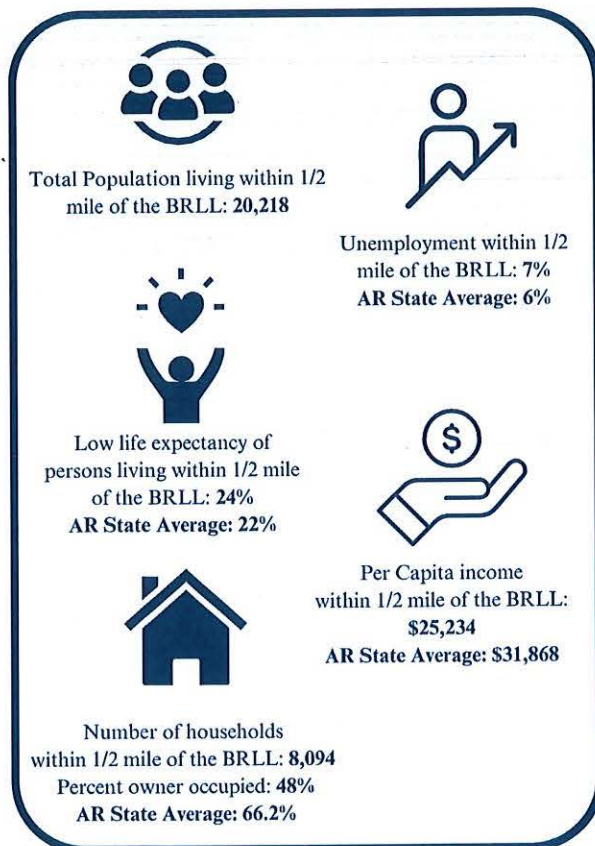


Quality of Life

The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative prioritizes enhancing the quality of life for Fort Smith residents through the creation of 9 miles of interconnected greenways, sidepaths, and bicycle lanes. The initiative is designed to improve access to daily destinations for Fort Smith residents such as schools, parks, jobs, healthcare facilities, grocery stores, public transit, and other essential services. The quality of life benefits of this initiative are manifold, touching on public health, transportation cost savings, equity, and the city's international relationships with our nation's foreign military allies residing in Fort Smith.

The direct connection between active transportation and public health cannot be overstated. By providing safe, accessible routes for walking, biking, and other forms of non-motorized transport, the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop encourages physical activity among Fort Smith residents. Of the 899 survey responses from the Move Fort Smith Active Transportation Community Input Survey (2022), 97% answered that they would use greenways more often if greenways existed in closer proximity to their homes. This is a promising indicator that the greenway initiative will help decrease the physical inactivity rate among Sebastian County residents from 30% (Aspire Arkansas, 2022).

Aspire Arkansas also reports that 43% of students and 72% of adults in Sebastian County are overweight or obese. The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop seeks to combat the health and morbidity issues in Fort Smith and the region by effectively transforming the built environment into a platform for daily physical activity.



The greenway initiative seeks to bring active transportation infrastructure in closer proximity to more Fort Smith residents, making the health benefits of active lifestyles accessible to a greater number of people.



Quality of Life

Another benefit of the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative is the reduction of transportation costs for Fort Smith residents. By prioritizing active transportation, the initiative offers an economical alternative to vehicle ownership, which includes costs like car payment, fuel, maintenance, and insurance. Eliminating or significantly reducing these expenses can make for significant household savings, freeing up income for other essential needs. Moreover, the reduction in vehicle dependency can decrease traffic congestion and air pollution, contributing to a healthier, more sustainable environment.



Equity is a core component of the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative. By connecting Fort Smith's diverse neighborhoods with essential services and employment opportunities, the greenway network ensures that all residents, regardless of their socio-economic status, have equitable access to what they need to thrive. This initiative will establish a greater degree of equity for Fort Smith's Areas of Persistent Poverty and Historically Disadvantaged Communities by removing transportation barriers to education, healthcare, recreation, and employment.

Fort Smith's unique position as the future host to foreign military personnel adds another layer of importance to the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop. The greenway network will serve as a gesture of hospitality and integration through the provision of infrastructure that supports the health, mobility, and well-being of international residents. By offering safe and scenic routes for recreation and transportation, the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop helps make Fort Smith a welcoming environment where the shared bonds with our allies can be strengthened.



Baptist Health-Fort Smith, a health system located downtown. The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative will help build a sidepath leading directly to this medical facility, ensuring Fort Smith residents will have safe access to the healthcare they need.



Mobility and Community Connectivity

The primary purpose of the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative is to enhance mobility and community connectivity through an alternative transportation system. This project will be a transformative investment in active transportation infrastructure and better multimodality in Fort Smith. Granting better access to schools, parks, jobs, neighborhoods, grocery stores, healthcare facilities, and other community services is at the heart of this initiative.



The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative will develop system-wide connectivity by improving access to nearly 30 bus stops. In 2022, the City of Fort Smith Transit Department purchased six CNG (compressed natural gas) buses, which currently operate seven fixed routes covering nearly 70 miles. Each bus is equipped with bike racks to meet rider's multi-modal transportation needs. The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop includes a direct connection to the downtown Transfer Station, making it easier to navigate the city and access daily destinations through public transportation. The City of Fort Smith has an excellent public transit system, and they will be happy to take on new riders.

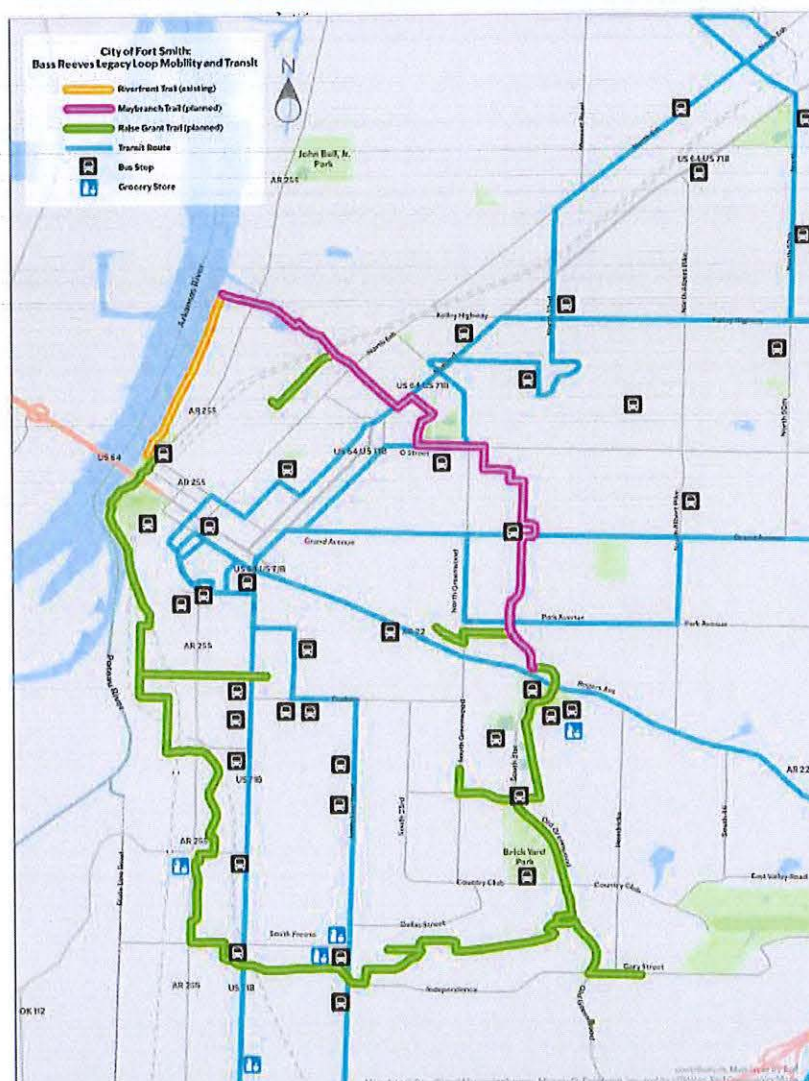


Table 3. Bus stops and grocery stores near the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop.



Mobility and Community Connectivity

Findings from the EJSreen Community Report show that the area within a ½ mile of the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop is a food desert. As shown by the map, the percentage of households in a food desert, as defined by houses over half mile from a grocery store, is evident. Ensuring safe connectivity is of paramount importance to address this issue effectively and provide a solution to the food desert problem.

Percentage of Households That Are Considered a Food Desert (% of Households)



Table 4. Map provided by the National League of Cities.

The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative will use innovative practices to improve mobility and sustainability in the River Valley. The project is timely as the City of Fort Smith is currently serving as a living laboratory for micromobility studies. In 2022, a \$1 million grant from the National Science Foundation's Civic Innovation Challenge was awarded to the University of Arkansas to study micromobility in a rural context. A partnership between the National Science Foundation, the University of Arkansas, and the City of Fort Smith led to the launch of Ride 4 Smilies, a bike-share program with 8 operational stations located throughout Fort Smith. Since May of 2022, Ride 4 Smilies has had 1,409 riders take e-bikes for a total of 9,500 miles.



The City of Fort Smith is proud to partner with the National Science Foundation and the University of Arkansas to study micromobility in rural areas.

While Ride 4 Smilies seeks to serve as a case study for sustainable micromobility in rural America, the program also aims to address gaps in Fort Smith's transportation network by offering an affordable mobility solution within the city's disadvantaged communities. Six of the Ride 4 Smilies bike stations are located within a quarter of a mile to the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop, and additional virtual stations will be added at key locations along the greenway.

Of the 5,288 total Ride 4 Smilies bike rentals, 74% started at stations located nearest to bike and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure (trails and greenways). This data aligns with the Move Fort Smith community survey where 76% of the 656 respondents answered that they preferred to ride bikes on greenways rather than sharing streets and roads with vehicles. By building infrastructure that is both comfortable and preferential, the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative will make bicycling a more viable mode of transportation for a greater number of Fort Smith's population.



Economic Competitiveness

The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative represents significant investment in the local and state economies of Fort Smith and Arkansas, leveraging the growing appeal of bicycle tourism. The initiative draws on the successful model of economic development through outdoor recreation in Northwest Arkansas (also known as NWA). NWA has experienced a notable economic boom attributed to the bicycling industry, with a study highlighting a \$159 million economic impact in 2022 alone,⁵ thanks to cycling-related jobs, tourism revenue, and taxes in Washington and Benton Counties. This boom traces back to the strategic investment of a \$15 million TIGER II grant from the Department of Transportation in 2010 for the Razorback Regional Greenway. The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop aims to replicate this success in Fort Smith by integrating into the regional network of trails, thereby positioning Fort Smith as a unique destination that combines cultural heritage with outdoor recreation.

The opening of the U.S. Marshals Museum on Fort Smith's riverfront in September 2023 acts as a cornerstone for this initiative. This nearly \$50 million facility not only enriches the community's cultural landscape but also serves as a pivotal educational resource about America's oldest federal law enforcement agency. The museum's focus on the history of law enforcement and justice, alongside Fort Smith's legacy as a frontier hub of law and order, provides a deep, nuanced narrative of American history.

The integration of the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop to the U.S. Marshals Museum is a strategic move to enhance cultural tourism and education. Through an outdoor experience that narrates the life and achievements of Bass Reeves, a former slave turned U.S. Marshal, the trail becomes a living museum. This not only enriches the museum experience but also promotes a deeper engagement with the historical and cultural context of the region. Interactive exhibits along the trail will encourage visitors to explore the landscape that Reeves once navigated, thereby adding a tangible, immersive dimension to the historical narratives presented within the museum walls.



The United States Marshals Museum in Fort Smith, Arkansas.



Economic Competitiveness

This initiative is poised to boost the museum's annual economic impact, which is estimated to be \$13 to \$20 million.⁶ By attracting a broader audience of locals and tourists to the trail and the museum, both can begin to thrive. The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative will not only enhance the cultural and recreational appeal of Fort Smith but also contributes to its economic vitality. Blending outdoor recreation and cultural education can be Fort Smith's way of sharing her story with visitors from around the world.

The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative will support the needs of the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program in Fort Smith. The FMS will bring a new job sector to Fort Smith with positions such as local defense contractors, high-skill jobs, and businesses for international collaborations. It is crucial for Fort Smith to develop infrastructure that elevates the River Valley's appeal. As an initiative focused on improving quality of life, the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop will help to retain and attract a talented workforce that will be essential to the growth and sustainability of FMS-related industries.

Promoting tourism and quality of life improvements will create a more dynamic and resilient local economy, prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. Investing in such infrastructure can create an environment where both cultural heritage and modern industry thrive side by side, leveraging the unique strengths of the River Valley to secure a prosperous future for its residents.



Arkansas Governor Sarah Sanders, U.S. Senators John Boozman & Tom Cotton, Congressman Steve Womack, City Administration and members of the 188th ANG Celebrate the official selection of the 188th as the F-35 Future Pilot Training Center



State of Good Repair

The City of Fort Smith's plan for the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop demonstrates a comprehensive approach to maintaining and enhancing active transportation infrastructure. By focusing on improvements that increase safety, accessibility, and environmental sustainability, the city aims to ensure that this infrastructure remains a valuable asset for the community. Here's a breakdown of the plan's key components and their benefits:

Improving Existing Surfaces: A section of the future Maybranch Trail route is currently laid with crushed gravel. While this surface is appropriate in many contexts, it will be a welcomed improvement to lay asphalt or concrete on this section. Hard surfaces are easier for bicycles, essential for wheelchairs and strollers to navigate, making the trail more inclusive. This change also reduces the need for frequent resurfacing, offering long-term cost savings.

Modernizing Crossings: Installing RRFBs (Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons) and HAWK (High-Intensity Activated crossWalk) beacons at crossings modernizes the trail's intersections with streets. These improvements significantly enhance safety by increasing visibility and alerting drivers to the presence of pedestrians and cyclists. Fort Smith's willingness to learn and adopt new innovative traffic safety technologies shows a growing culture of safety in the community.

Budgeting for Maintenance: The annual operating and maintenance costs of the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop segments are estimated at \$5,000 per mile. Given the 9.3 miles of new active transportation infrastructure, the City of Fort Smith will allocate \$50,000 annually for the maintenance that will ensure the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop's longevity. This budget covers routine maintenance, landscaping, signage, and patrol costs, which are essential for keeping the trail in good condition and safe for users. A dedicated budget line item ensures that maintenance is a planned and consistent effort rather than an afterthought.

Engaging Community Volunteers: Adopt-a-Trail programs are popular in many other municipalities. As Fort Smith works to expand its trail network, supportive community members help relieve some of the maintenance burden of these trails by adopting a section of the trail to maintain themselves or with a group through the Adopt-a-Trail program. Keep Fort Smith Beautiful currently works with the City of Fort Smith Streets Department on the Adopt-a-Street program. The group intends to expand to an Adopt-a-Trail program, with the goal of encouraging community involvement and creating a sense of responsibility for the local environment. This program will strengthen community ties and promote a culture of good environmental stewardship.

Using Low-Maintenance Native Vegetation for Landscaping: Incorporating native plants into the trail's landscape design not only reduces maintenance needs but also supports local biodiversity. Native plants are better adapted to the local climate and soil, requiring less water, fertilizer, and pesticides. This approach enhances the trail's aesthetic value and creates a sense of place that reflects the natural heritage of the area.



This section of Maybranch will be paved for the greenway.



Partnership and Collaboration

The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative seeks to prioritize partnerships and collaboration with diverse stakeholder groups to ensure the greenway will serve the entire community effectively and equitably.

As Bass Reeves was the first Black U.S. Marshal west of the Mississippi River, it is a natural fit for the City of Fort Smith to partner with the United States Marshals Museum (USMM) on the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop. The USMM has pledged to assist the City of Fort Smith with educational and entertaining exhibits along the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop. Furthermore, the USMM will work with the City of Fort Smith Community Mobility Department to start a public health-oriented trail-completion program, where participants will receive a token of completion for finishing the 14-mile loop. By incentivizing participation, the program could help Fort Smith residents to have a fitness goal to strive towards, regardless of whether it takes a day, a week, a month, or a year to complete. This partnership will stand to benefit both the USMM and the City of Fort Smith.

The Friends of Recreational Trails (F.O.R.T.) are a local trail advocacy group in Fort Smith. This group will serve as friends to the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop through their pledged donation of fixed bicycle and pedestrian counters. These counters will provide important data to the City of Fort Smith that will help to measure the project impact of the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop.

An Active Transportation Committee was formed to help incorporate community input directly into the planning and implementation process. This committee advocates for the transportation needs of all community members, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. By including representatives from organizations like the Community Services Clearinghouse, Fort Smith Boys and Girls Club, Sack Lunch Program, the Hamilton Center for Child Advocacy, and Adventurous Alternatives, the committee ensures a broad spectrum of perspectives and needs are considered.



Move Fort Smith Committee meeting



Move Fort Smith Public Input at Boys & Girls Club



Partnership and Collaboration

The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Community Participation Plan (CPP) is scheduled to start in the summer of 2024. The CPP will ensure that the project not only enhances active transportation infrastructure, but also strengthens community bonds, respects cultural heritage, and addresses the needs of all residents, particularly those from underserved communities. The CPP strategies are as follows:

1. **Establish clear objectives.** The committee will draft objectives for the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative with considerations to accessibility, inclusivity, equitable usage, community benefits, environmental improvements, and heritage conservation.
2. **Stakeholder identification and analysis.** Identify all potential stakeholders, including local residents, community groups, businesses, property owners, environmental organizations, and government agencies. Surveys and interviews will be conducted to help understand the needs, concerns, and aspirations of different community segments, particularly underserved groups.
3. **Community outreach and engagement.** The CPP will deploy various communication channels including social media, community meetings, local radio, and flyers to reach a broad audience. A series of inclusive meetings will be scheduled at various times and accessible locations. Virtual meetings will be held in an effort to increase participation. Materials such as distribution media and surveys will be made available in Spanish and Vietnamese, and interpretation services will also be offered at community outreach meetings.
4. **Partnership with community-based organizations.** Ongoing partnerships with community-based organizations (CBO's) will help to formulate and implement engagement strategies, with supportive capacity building efforts to resource and equip CBO's for involvement and leadership within the initiative.
5. **Feedback mechanisms.** Feedback mechanisms, such as public forums, websites and social media, phone lines, will be in place to establish clear, ongoing channels for feedback and project updates, ensuring community suggestions are considered and incorporated. A responsive design process will show how the community input has given shape to the project as adjustments are made based on residents' feedback.
6. **Equity-focused engagement activities.** Equity-focused engagement activities will include conducting targeted sessions with underserved communities to better understand specific concerns and solutions. Additionally, community ambassadors will be recruited from local residents to help foster trust and encourage wider participation from their communities.
7. **Monitoring and evaluation.** The CPP will establish metrics for measurable outcomes for participation, inclusivity, and equity. Engagement strategies will be regularly assessed to evaluate their effectiveness.
8. **Reporting and accountability.** Progress updates, challenges, and successes will be shared regularly in an accessible and transparent manner. An independent review panel consisting of local diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) professionals will oversee the project's equity goals and community engagement effectiveness.

The City of Fort Smith's Community Mobility Department has an allocated budget for community engagement activities, resources, translation services, accessibility accommodations, and other needs that will facilitate equitable participation in the CPP. In recent years, the City of Fort Smith has improved its community engagement capacity through hiring a Mobility Coordinator and allocating additional funds to the City of Fort Smith Communications Department.



Innovation

Utilizing innovative technologies, the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative aims to enhance user safety and comfortability on Fort Smith's greenway network. The initiative will provide the installation of two of Fort Smith's first High-intensity Activated crossWalk (HAWK) beacons. Additionally, community partnerships will help create an innovative project delivery that will improve Fort Smith's capacity to measure the impact of the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop.

HAWK beacons are designed to stop road traffic only as needed, which will allow residents to cross Towson Avenue and Fresno Street safely. The effectiveness of HAWK signals is well-documented; a study by the United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (USDOT FHA) found that HAWK signals can reduce total crashes by 29%, and pedestrian-related crashes at HAWK sites by 69%.⁶ In addition to enhancing street crossing safety, HAWK signals have been shown to significantly increase motorist compliance with yielding to pedestrians. With driver yielding rates averaging around 96%,⁷ these signals create a much safer environment for pedestrians and bicyclists, directly contributing to the reduction of potential conflicts between vehicles and non-vehicle road users. Using innovative technology to reduce accidents is a critical step towards Fort Smith's Vision Zero 2050 goal.

▼ *HAWK signals can
reduce total crashes by
29% and pedestrian-
related crashes at
HAWK sites by 69%.*



HAWK-Pedestrian crossing

The Friends of Recreational Trails (F.O.R.T.) are a local trail advocacy group in Fort Smith. Through fundraising events, private donations, and community engagement, F.O.R.T. has played a critical role in the development of Fort Smith's 18 miles of multi-use trails. As a sign of F.O.R.T.'s support of the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop, F.O.R.T. has committed to purchasing Fort Smith's first fixed bicyclist and pedestrian counters to be placed at key locations along the greenway.



The Friends of Recreational Trails (F.O.R.T.) have been a key community partner in the City of Fort Smith's efforts to expand its trail network.



Innovation

The bicycle and pedestrian counters will track real-time data that will contribute to reporting the community impact of the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop. These instruments give city planners and traffic engineers the information needed to communicate empirically with stakeholders, capture seasonal trends, plan for future active transportation infrastructure, and justify future greenway investments. Additionally, the counters' have the ability to determine whether people are biking or walking at a certain location along the greenway, which is data that can be used to determine additional amenities that cater to user groups. F.O.R.T.'s role as a community partner to the city underscores the importance of collaboration between local governments and volunteer organizations in creating, maintaining, and improving public amenities.

Through the Community Participation Plan (CPP), residents will help project managers determine locations for Fort Smith's first mobility hubs. Mobility hubs centralize various forms of transportation, including public transit, bike-sharing, scooter rentals, and car-sharing. Integrating these various forms of transportation makes it easier for people to switch modes seamlessly and reach their destinations, particularly for the first and last mile. This collaborative approach ensures that the hubs are strategically placed in areas where they will be most effective, considering local needs and traffic patterns. As mobility hubs will be a new concept for many in Fort Smith, the CPP will be important for facilitating a dialogue between the community and project managers where feedback and suggestions are considered and incorporated. The mobility hubs can then be tailored to the unique transportation needs and preferences of Fort Smith residents.



The Riverfront Trail in Fort Smith could soon be a part of a larger trail network: The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop.

Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Project Schedule

	2024				2025				2026				2027				2028				2029			
Description	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
RAISE Grant Award Selection																								
RAISE Grant Funding Obligation																								
ARDOT Notice to Proceed																								
CPP Launch																								
Planning and Environmental																								
NEPA-Environmental Assessment																								
Permitting																								
Preliminary Plans																								
Survey																								
Geotechnical Studies and Report																								
30% Plans																								
Develop 30% Plans																								
ARDOT Review and Approval																								
60% Plans																								
Develop 60% Plans																								
ARDOT Review and Approval																								
Citizen Advisory Committee																								
Design Public Hearing																								
Right of Way																								
Strip Map																								
ARDOT Review and Approval																								
Acquisition																								
ARDOT Certification																								
Final Design																								
90% Plans																								
Develop 90% Plans																								
ARDOT Review and Approval																								
100% Plans																								
Develop 100% Plans																								
Advertising/Bid Letting																								
Construction																								

Funds to be Expended by September 30, 2030

Table 5.

Environmental Risk Assessment

1. NEPA Class of Action and Status: An initial analysis of the project corridor has been conducted to determine environmental impact. The proposed improvements are anticipated to be designated as a Categorical Exclusion (CE) under National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) guidelines. No significant environmental impacts are anticipated. The City will begin the C2 level National Environmental Policy Act review process shortly after being awarded the RAISE Grant. The City estimates the NEPA process will take approximately six months, however, the City has conservatively estimated nine months in its planning and project timeline and schedule (see Table 5). The City does not anticipate challenges with obtaining the necessary environmental permits from regulatory agencies. The City will follow NEPA guidelines as directed by the State DOT.

The following is a summary of the assessment of the environmental risks along BRLC corridor.

a. Streams and wetlands: Throughout the 9.28-mile project sections of the route will be adjacent to or within the designated floodplain of several streams or rivers. Upon exiting the National Historic Site near Downtown Fort Smith the route will run parallel to the Poteau River. Some retaining walls will be required in this area, however, we do not anticipate significant impacts on the River or water quality during construction or upon completion. Near S. Y Street the project merges with Mill Creek and will utilize an existing drainage easement as well as some existing bikeway easements for the location of the trail. Along the route, Mill Creek is primarily a channelized drainage corridor with little to no environmental sensitivity. Placing a trail on the streambank of Mill Creek will have no environmental impact on water quality or the base flood elevation.

b. Wildlife: There are no known Wilderness Areas, as designated or proposed under the Wilderness Act, or wild or scenic rivers, as designated or proposed under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, that are located on or in the vicinity of the route corridor.

c. Historic and cultural resources: A short section of the identified route will navigate through property designated as a national historic site which is located in DT Fort Smith. The route is not proposed to come near historically or culturally sensitive sections of that site. Approval will be needed to construct a trail along the perimeter of the facility.

d. Land Use Impacts: Approximately 50% of the proposed route lies within industrialized areas with the remaining 50% being located within suburban areas. The presence of existing Fort Smith Public Transit System fixed routes is advantageous and will help to leverage and extend the accessibility and utility of the proposed route. The development of this project will enhance the ability of residents to safely and comfortably connect to employment centers, schools, and commercial areas. There appears to be little to no adverse effects on industry or existing neighborhoods.

Permitting process:

1. Local

a. Local approvals are also anticipated to be secured. This project is a priority project for Fort Smith's Mayor, City Administrator and the City Board of Director members. Given the level of community interest in the project, local approvals should not be a problem. Letters committing support from Mayor George McGill and City Administrator Carl Geffkin are attached in the Letters of Support.

b. Permitting

Fort Smith's typical construction permitting process is as follows: Permits will be acquired concurrently once design is complete, and include:

- General building permit (City of Fort Smith)
- City of Fort Smith Utilities Department Water Meter Permit
- City of Fort Smith Grading Permit
- City of Fort Smith Floodplain Development Permit

2. State DOT permits:

It is anticipated that ARDOT will review the construction drawings at 10%, 60%, and 90% design to ensure compliance with design and safety standards. Once design documents are completed and approved by ARDOT and the City will work to execute all required documentation to begin construction. ARDOT has provided a letter of support for this project, detailing their involvement and anticipated compliance with their requirements.

a. Specific ARDOT Approvals for the following areas:

- ARDOT approval will be required for underpass at Wheeler Ave.
- ARDOT approval will be required for the underpass at Towson.
- ARDOT approval will be required for the tunnel at Rogers Ave.

3. Railroad Crossing permits

The route crosses local short-line rail spurs in 7 locations. Each of these locations will require crossing permits from the Patriot Rail Corporation and the Arkansas and Missouri Railroad.

4. Environmental permits

The project will require environmental permits from the local floodplain administrator, Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality, FEMA, and the Corps of Engineers. The anticipated permits and approvals are outlined below (see Table 6).

Anticipated Permits and Approvals for the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop	
Name of Permit	Permitter
General Permit ARR150000	Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ)
Clean Water Act Section 404 Nationwide Permit	US Army Corps of Engineers
State of Arkansas Short Term Activity Authorization (STAA)– Section 401	Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ)
Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for large sites – Section 402	Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ)
Floodplain Development Permit	Local Floodplain Administrator/(FEMA)
No Rise/No Adverse Impact Certification	Local Floodplain Administrator/(FEMA)
Management of Airspace Agreement	Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Table 6.

Public Engagement

Though the Community Participation Plan has not yet been fully activated for the BRLL, targeted public outreach has occurred. Numerous stakeholder group interviews have been conducted with the Frontier MPO Policy Board, Frontier MPO Technical Committee, Parks Commission, Friends of Recreational Trails (F.O.R.T.), Future Fort Smith Committee, Park Partners, Active Transportation Committee, and Downtown Business Association. Each group had the opportunity to provide input on the BRLL ensuring that this facility is a beneficial addition to the community.

There has been extensive public engagement for the Move Fort Smith Active Transportation Master Plan, which included the development of a Move Fort Smith committee, online surveys, stakeholder group interviews, and community-wide input meetings. In October and December of 2023, four separate public input sessions were held in different parts of the city to receive valuable and comprehensive feedback on the walking and biking conditions in Fort Smith. Citizens completed exercises that asked about their top three priorities for the places they would like to walk or ride to, the types of facilities they would like to use, and their overall priorities for walking and biking in Fort Smith. The most prioritized places that citizens wanted to bike or walk to were parks, followed by schools and visiting friends and family. The most prioritized facility that citizens wanted to ride, walk, or roll on was a shared-use paved path “Greenway”, followed by a protected bike lane and neighborhood Greenway. The most prioritized answer for the top priority for walking and biking in Fort Smith was to enhance the safety of walkers and bike riders. Sample survey data from the online community survey:

“*I support improving bicycle conditions within our community whether I ride or not*”
Agree - 95.7%
Disagree - 1.8%
No Preference - 2.3%

“*How important to you is improving walking conditions in Fort Smith?*”
Very important - 76.6%
Somewhat important - 20%
Not important - 3.4%

“*What is the most critical step Fort Smith can take to help increase walking and biking in the city?*”
More sidewalks, paths, and facilities - 71.5%
Increase felt safety - 13%
Improve the culture-More widely accepted - 8.7%
Better planning - 6.6%



Project website & social media awareness



Gathering public input at “National Night Out”

Technical Capacity

The City of Fort Smith has extensive experience planning, designing, and constructing active transportation infrastructure using a combination of grants, public funds, and private donations. Recently, the National Parks Service awarded \$750,000 through the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership grant program to build phase I of the Maybranch Trail. Construction on Maybranch is anticipated to begin in the spring of 2024. The City of Fort Smith has also been awarded ArDOT's Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) grant multiple times to help construct the Riverfront Trail and sections of the Chaffee Crossing Trails. Other notable grants that have contributed to trail development in the community have come from the Walton Family Foundation and the Blue Cross and Blue Shield's Blue & You Foundation grant.

In 2018, the City of Fort Smith partnered with the Arkansas & Missouri Railroad and the Western Arkansas Planning and Development District (WAPDD) to apply for a TIGER grant from the Department of Transportation that would help fund the rehabilitation of a rail bridge crossing the Arkansas River. The DOT awarded \$8.5 million to the project. The City of Fort Smith has successfully received, distributed, and accounted for the grant money. The project is expected to be completed in April 2024.

Additionally, the City of Fort Smith places a high priority on compliance with federal regulations governing DOT grants. The city has implemented robust compliance mechanisms to ensure that all DOT-funded projects adhere to federal requirements, including environmental protections, labor standards, and the Buy America provisions. Regular audits, training sessions, and reviews ensure that every aspect of a project, from procurement to construction, meets or exceeds federal standards. By rigorously adhering to these regulations, the City of Fort Smith demonstrates its dedication to transparency, accountability, and the ethical execution of projects that benefit its community while upholding national interests.

Financial Completeness

The City of Fort Smith is committed to the responsible management of DOT-funded projects, ensuring that they are completed within budget, on schedule, and to the highest standards of quality. By proactively planning for and addressing potential cost overruns, the city safeguards the interests of its residents, maintains trust with federal agencies, and ensures the long-term success and sustainability of its infrastructure projects.

The City of Fort Smith requests \$24,987,098.00 in RAISE grant funding to design, permit, construct, inspect, and acquire right-of-way for the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative. This is expected to cover the entire cost of the project, with a 10% contingency allocated for unforeseen challenges.

While there are no known environmental risks at this stage, it is important to recognize the complexity of infrastructure projects and plan for scenarios that may present barriers to completion of the project. In the case that the project runs over budget despite the contingency, the City of Fort Smith claims responsibility for acquiring alternate sources outside of the Department of Transportation to complete the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop. Fort Smith's recent investments in active transportation infrastructure and budgeted allocations for additional greenway segments show the city's commitment to infrastructure projects to completion for the betterment of the community.



Office of the Mayor

George B. McGill

February 20, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing this letter as the Mayor of Fort Smith to express my wholehearted support for the grant application submitted by the City of Fort Smith to the FY24 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program. If awarded, this grant would build approximately 9 miles of surface infrastructure and create the first bicycle and pedestrian greenway within the city.

Fort Smith is at a pivotal juncture in its development, and this grant presents a unique opportunity to advance critical infrastructure projects that align with our city's commitment to sustainability, resilience, and equity. The proposed initiatives outlined in the grant application are integral to addressing the evolving needs of our community and fostering a more inclusive and environmentally conscious urban environment.


We believe that securing funding through the RAISE grant program will not only enhance the physical infrastructure of our city but also contribute significantly to our overarching goals of creating a sustainable and equitable community for our residents. The projects outlined in the application align seamlessly with our city's long-term vision, and the positive impact of these endeavors will resonate for years to come.

Our city's leadership is dedicated to embracing forward-thinking solutions that prioritize environmental stewardship and social equity. The RAISE grant will empower us to implement transformative projects that can serve as a model for other municipalities across the nation.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Department of Transportation for their consideration of the City of Fort Smith's application. The support provided through the RAISE grant program will undoubtedly contribute to the prosperity and well-being of our community.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and ongoing commitment to fostering sustainable and equitable urban development.

Sincerely,


George B. McGill

Mayor, City of Fort Smith, Arkansas



623 Garrison Avenue
3rd Floor, Room 315
Fort Smith, AR 72901

Phone: (479) 784-2201

Fax: (479) 784-2430

administration@fortsmithar.gov

February 27, 2024

The Honorable U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Pete Buttigieg.
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

RE: RAISE Grant - Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

It is with great enthusiasm that the City of Fort Smith supports the RAISE grant application for the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative. As a project that will prove to be a historic investment towards environmental justice and transportation equity in the River Valley, it is hard to understate the significance of the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop.

The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop will serve as a model for the kinds of infrastructure that Fort Smith is committed to building in the future. Our infrastructure must prioritize the safety of all roadway users. It must contribute to the economic prosperity of our community, particularly in Areas of Persistent Poverty and Historically Disadvantaged Communities. It must encourage sustainable practices, working to eliminate environmental harm. It must improve mobility, so that residents and visitors can access the community with efficiency and safety. Finally, our infrastructure must contribute to an improved quality of life for the people who call Fort Smith home.

With confidence that the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop can accomplish all of these things, we ask for the Department of Transportation's support to construct approximately 9 miles of dedicated bicycle and pedestrian friendly surface infrastructure within the heart of our city. We applaud the investments made by the DOT through the RAISE grant as communities across our nation are being positively impacted by improved transportation infrastructure. We welcome the DOT, through RAISE, to fund the plans for a project that will dramatically improve life in the River Valley.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carl E. Geffken".

Carl E. Geffken
City Administrator

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

February 14, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

We are pleased to submit this letter to express our strong support for the City of Fort Smith's 2024 RAISE grant application for the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop. If awarded, funds would support a 9.3-mile expansion of Fort Smith's connected trail system, providing new connectivity and alternative transportation opportunities for residents of Fort Smith.

In addition to fostering enhanced connectivity and opportunities, the project is set to redefine the urban landscape of Fort Smith. Residents and tourists alike will experience a transformative impact as alternative transportation options seamlessly weave through the fabric of the city, providing efficient access to employment, healthcare, and daily necessities. The connection of six schools, public parks, a major hospital, and diverse workforce opportunities will not only elevate the quality of life for the community but also position Fort Smith as a thriving hub of accessibility, vitality, and inclusivity. This visionary initiative is poised to shape the city's future, creating a dynamic and vibrant environment for all those who call Fort Smith home. As we understand, many of the census tracts served by the loop trail and its connectivity segments are considered a Persistent Poverty Census Tract or Disadvantaged Census Tract.

We hope you will share our belief that this project will provide great benefit to Arkansans. We ask that you give this application all due consideration as it progresses forward and that you keep us apprised of its status. We thank you for your continued service to the people of Arkansas.

Sincerely,



John Boozman
U.S. Senator



Tom Cotton
U.S. Senator



Steve Womack
Member of Congress

REPRESENTATIVE

Zachary E. Gramlich
2020 South T Street
Fort Smith, Arkansas 72901

479-785-2501 Business
479-831-8072 Cell
zach.gramlich@arkansashouse.org

DISTRICT 50

Counties:
Part Sebastian

COMMITTEES:

Public Health, Welfare and Labor
Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and
Military Affairs
Alternate,
Joint Committee on Energy

1st Alternate,
Joint Budget

2nd Alternate,
Legislative Joint Auditing Committee



STATE OF ARKANSAS

House of Representatives

February 22, 2024

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

We are writing to express our support for the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Project. This transformative initiative, aimed at building a 9-mile trail network in west-central Fort Smith, Arkansas, holds immense potential to uplift the community and foster positive change.

The scope of the project, covering nine census tracts marked by persistent poverty and historically disadvantaged communities, underscores its significance in addressing social and economic disparities. The trail's connectivity to six schools, including Northside High School, Southside High school, Ramsey Middle School, Fairview Elementary, Ballman Elementary, and Christ the King Elementary, as well as key landmarks like 4 public parks, Baptist Health, and others makes it a pivotal asset for the entire community.

The creation of a 10ft wide trail network off the road promises to be a catalyst for fostering a healthier, more active lifestyle within Fort Smith, Arkansas. Moreover, this project has the potential to serve as a much-needed boost for the local economy, attracting residents and visitors to explore the rich offerings of the area. The positive impact on recreational growth cannot be overstated. Such infrastructure additions can serve as symbols of progress and unity.

Secretary Buttigieg

02/22/2024

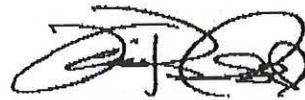
Page 2

We urge you to consider the long-term benefits that the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Project can bring to Fort Smith, Arkansas. By supporting this initiative, we are not only investing in the physical well-being of our community but also contributing to its social and economic vitality.

Sincerely,



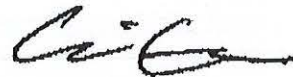
Zachary E. Gramlich
State Representative
District 50



Jay Richardson
State Representative
District 49



Ryan A. Rose
State Representative
District 48



Cindy Crawford
State Representative
District 51

ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION

DALTON A. "ALEC" FARMER, JR.
CHAIRMAN
JONESBORO

PHILIP TALDO
VICE CHAIRMAN
SPRINGDALE

KEITH GIBSON
FORT SMITH



P.O. Box 2261 • Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-2261
Phone (501) 569-2000 • Voice/TTY 711 • Fax (501) 569-2400
www.ARDOT.gov • www.IDriveArkansas.com

MARIE HOLDER
LITTLE ROCK

DAVID M. HAAK
TEXARKANA

LORIE H. TUDOR, P.E.
DIRECTOR

February 23, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, S.E.
Washington, DC 20590-0001

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Reference is made to the City of Fort Smith, Arkansas' application for the FY2024 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary Grant to construct a portion of the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative, which consists of approximately 9 miles of multi-use trails within the city, creating a greenway network and substantially enhancing the trail infrastructure in Fort Smith.

When completed, this project will improve the quality of life, economic competitiveness, and opportunity for the City of Fort Smith. It will create system wide connectivity and mobility improvements by removing physical barriers for pedestrians and bicyclists alike. Additionally, it will connect six schools, public parks, major economic centers, and health care facilities.

The Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) supports the City of Fort Smith's application for the FY2024 RAISE grant as a potential funding source to help implement this important project. Because some of the proposed trails follow or cross State highway rights-of-way, if RAISE funding is awarded ARDOT will coordinate with the City of Fort Smith through the permit review process.

If additional information is needed, please advise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lorie H. Tudor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lorie" being the most prominent.

Lorie H. Tudor, P.E.
Director

c: Highway Commission
Chief of Administration
Chief Engineer – Preconstruction
Assistant Chief of Administration
Assistant Chief Engineer – Planning
Assistant Chief Engineer – Program Delivery

Communications
Local Programs
Planning
Program Management
District 4
Mayor George B. McGill, City of Fort Smith



Steve Hotz

Sebastian County Judge
County Courthouse
35 South 6th Street, Room 106
Fort Smith, Arkansas 72901
(479) 783-6139
Fax (479) 784-1550

Thursday, February 15, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

As the County Judge of Sebastian County, Arkansas, I am reaching out to express my support for the City of Fort Smith's application for the FY 2024 RAISE grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation. In my role as Sebastian County Judge, I understand the importance of collaboration across regions and the potential benefits that extend beyond municipal and county boundaries.

My endorsement of the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop, a proposed 9-mile greenway project designed to improve community connectivity and mobility in Fort Smith, Arkansas, is deeply rooted in addressing poverty-level needs within the city. This underscores our commitment to serving those most in need and promoting quality of place.

The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop represents a substantial progression in elevating community well-being. As the top executive of Sebastian County, Arkansas, I acknowledge the crucial role of collaborative endeavors that surpass municipal and county borders.

While the project is centered in Fort Smith, its impact extends far beyond city limits. The proposed greenway will not only improve connectivity but also foster collaboration and unity between Sebastian County and the City of Fort Smith. By creating safe and accessible pathways, we aim to enhance the overall cultural landscape for residents and stimulate economic growth and opportunity.

The success of the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop relies on its ability to uplift communities and promote equity for all residents. As representatives of our citizens, it is incumbent upon us to support initiatives prioritizing safety, accessibility, and parity in transportation infrastructure.

Thank you for considering the City of Fort Smith's application for the FY 2024 RAISE grant favorably. Investing in projects like the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop is an investment in the future prosperity and well-being of our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Hotz".

Steve Hotz
Sebastian County Judge
Sebastian County, Arkansas



Museum Board

Terisa Riley, Ph. D.
Chairwoman
Fort Smith, AR

Claude Legris
Vice Chair
Fort Smith, AR

Christy Ivey
Treasurer
Fort Smith, AR

Philip Merry
Secretary
Fort Smith, AR

Mike Pearson
Exec. Comm.
Colonial Beach, VA

Dewaine Allen
Fort Smith, AR

Trace Andres
Fort Smith, AR

Doug Babb
Fort Smith, AR

Ashleigh Bachert
Fort Smith, AR

Geoffrey Deas
Washington, D.C.

Lenny DePaul
Lake Grove, NY

Catherine Foreman-
Gray
Tahlequah, OK

Lawson Hembree
Fort Smith, AR

Nancy McGillivray
Needham, MA

James Reilly, Ph. D.
Brambleton, VA

Charolette Tidwell
Fort Smith, AR

Dave Turk
Woodbridge, VA

Bennie Westphal
Fort Smith, AR

Scott Zuerker
Fort Smith, AR

February 22, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am pleased to submit a letter of strong support for the City of Fort Smith's 2024 RAISE grant application for the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop project. If awarded, these funds would provide more than 9 miles of added trail networks connecting our community like never before.

As the home of the national museum dedicated to the history and legacy of the U.S. Marshals Service, we are committed to enhancing public awareness and appreciation of the agency and its proud history. By honoring a quintessentially American hero such as the legendary deputy Bass Reeves, whose journey from slavery to federal law enforcement inspires generations, this project ensures that his legacy will never be forgotten.

We also acknowledge the critical impact a project like this will have on the broader socioeconomic development of our region. The U.S. Marshals Museum is committed to providing high quality experiences and programming to individuals and families throughout our region and actively works to eliminate all barriers to access for everyone. By providing a safe, accessible, and sustainable travel route throughout our community, the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop ensures everyone has access to the same venues and opportunities regardless of their socioeconomic status.

This project enables access, provides opportunities, and enhances the overall quality of life for everyone who lives in, works in, or visits our great community.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Johnson
President/CEO



February 13, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: City of Fort Smith, Bass Reeves Legacy Loop RAISE Grant Application

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Western Arkansas Planning & Development District (WAPDD) enthusiastically supports the City of Fort Smith's Bass Reeves Legacy Loop RAISE grant application. This project aligns with Frontier's regional vision and plans to improve the quality of life, health, and mobility through transportation equity projects that serve all users - from active transportation commuters to recreational bicyclists, pedestrians, and disabled persons. Moreover, the recognition of Bass Reeves, a historic member of the African American community in Fort Smith and one of the first African American U.S. Marshall deputies, celebrates our diverse heritage and promotes not only social connection, but also activates physical connectivity throughout the city.

The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop will construct approximately nine miles of multi-use trails within Fort Smith near historically disadvantaged neighborhoods and areas of persistent poverty; thereby creating a safe greenway network, reducing carbon emissions, lowering transportation costs, and significantly increasing the trail and active transportation infrastructure in Fort Smith. Regrettably, these vulnerable neighborhoods face higher rates of pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities and accidents. With the rapid acceleration of pedestrian and cyclist deaths across the United States, sound investments such as the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop saves lives. This project will enhance the overall welfare of our residents, provide economic competitiveness, and offer opportunity for the City of Fort Smith.

Additionally, the project targets a reduction of vehicular and active mobility interaction(s) and creates system-wide interconnectivity and mobility improvements by removing physical barriers for pedestrians, disabled persons, and bicyclists alike. Also, the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop will connect six schools, public parks, major economic centers, transit routes/stops, and health care facilities. The aim of the project is as follows:

- Protect non-motorized travelers and communities from safety risks.
- Increase affordable transportation usage by improving and expanding active transportation choices.
- Address gaps in the multimodal trail network to complete a greenway network within the city.

WAPDD emphatically and strongly supports the City of Fort Smith's application for the FY2024 RAISE grant to implement the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop. As Franz Muntefering stated, "**Mobility is one of the foundations of our prosperity.**" To prosper, the safety, health, and economic stability of our region, the state, and the nation depends on equitable access to mobility options, such as the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop.

Respectfully,

Sasha Grist
Executive Director

Serving Crawford, Franklin, Logan, Polk, Scott, and Sebastian Counties
1109 South 16th Street, Fort Smith, AR 72901
T: (479) 785-2651 | F: (479) 785-1964
www.wapdd.org



February 13, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: City of Fort Smith, Bass Reeves Legacy Loop RAISE Grant Application

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Frontier Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) enthusiastically supports the City of Fort Smith's Bass Reeves Legacy Loop RAISE grant application. This project aligns with Frontier's regional vision and plans to improve the quality of life, health, and mobility through transportation equity projects that serve all users - from active transportation commuters to recreational bicyclists, pedestrians, and disabled persons. Moreover, the recognition of Bass Reeves, a historic member of the African American community in Fort Smith and one of the first African American U.S. Marshall deputies, celebrates our diverse heritage and promotes not only social connection, but also activates physical connectivity throughout the city.

The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop will construct approximately nine miles of multi-use trails within Fort Smith near historically disadvantaged neighborhoods and areas of persistent poverty; thereby creating a safe greenway network, reducing carbon emissions, lowering transportation costs, and significantly increasing the trail and active transportation infrastructure in Fort Smith. Regrettably, these vulnerable neighborhoods face higher rates of pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities and accidents. With the rapid acceleration of pedestrian and cyclist deaths across the United States, sound investments such as the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop saves lives. This project will enhance the overall welfare of our residents, provide economic competitiveness, and offer opportunity for the City of Fort Smith.

Additionally, the project targets a reduction of vehicular and active mobility interaction(s) and creates system-wide interconnectivity and mobility improvements by removing physical barriers for pedestrians, disabled persons, and bicyclists alike. Also, the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop will connect six schools, public parks, major economic centers, transit routes/stops, and health care facilities. The aim of the project is as follows:

- Protect non-motorized travelers and communities from safety risks.
- Increase affordable transportation usage by improving and expanding active transportation choices.
- Address gaps in the multimodal trail network to complete a greenway network within the city.

Frontier MPO emphatically and strongly supports the City of Fort Smith's application for the FY2024 RAISE grant to implement the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop. As Franz Muntefering stated,



"Mobility is one of the foundations of our prosperity." To prosper, the safety, health, and economic stability of our region, the state, and the nation depends on equitable access to mobility options, such as the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Reese M. Brewer", is written over a horizontal line.

Reese M. Brewer, Director
Frontier Metropolitan Planning Organization
1109 S. 16th Street
Fort Smith, AR 72901

Recipient of the NADO 2023 Regional Transportation Excellence Award
Recipient of the FHWA 2022 Environmental Excellence Award
Recipient of the 2022 AMPO Best Overall Achievement Award for a Non-TMA
Recipient of the 2020 Parsons Engineering Smart Intersection Award



Dear RAISE Grant Committee,

On behalf of the Parks and Recreation Commission accept this letter of support to the City of Fort Smith, Arkansas in their application for the **Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity, RAISE Discretionary Grant** program.

The City of Fort Smith made a presentation regarding the **Bass Reeves Legacy Loop** to the Parks and Recreation Commission at their February 14, 2024, meeting. This project will be catalytic in the advancement of trails and greenways within our community. Fort Smith is behind comparable communities in terms of connectivity with respect to nonmotorized transportation. In addition to offering an opportunity for active recreation, the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop targets an underserved, disadvantaged area of Fort Smith to provide an alternative means to access both major destinations within the project boundary and safely access public transit to travel throughout the city limits.

The Parks and Recreation Commission made a motion to "enthusiastically support" the City of Fort Smith, Arkansas in its application to the Department of Transportation's RAISE grant program. This motion was unanimously passed by all seven (7) Parks Commissioners.

On behalf of the Parks and Recreation Commission, I appreciate your consideration of the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop project to receive grant funds through the RAISE program.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (479)414-3367 or by email at c_raible@hotmail.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Raible".

Chris Raible

Chairman

City of Fort Smith Parks and Recreation Commission



February 6, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Sir:

I am writing to express my full support for the City of Fort Smith's application for the RAISE grant program. This is in direct alignment with the mission of the Chamber to foster growth and prosperity in Fort Smith and the surrounding region.

The concept of Quality of Place holds significant importance in attracting and retaining talent within any community across the country. Fort Smith's proactive initiative to develop an integrated trail system demonstrates a commitment to enhancing the quality of life for its residents and visitors alike. By investing in such infrastructure, Fort Smith not only enriches the experiences of its current citizens but also positions itself as an appealing destination for prospective residents and businesses.

As an organization dedicated to promoting job growth and retention in our region for over 137 years, the Fort Smith Regional Chamber recognizes the indispensable link between economic development and quality of place. We understand that a thriving community with well-maintained amenities, such as recreational trails, serves as a magnet for both individuals and businesses seeking an attractive environment in which to live, work, and invest.

The Fort Smith Regional Chamber supports the City of Fort Smith's pursuit of this grant. We are committed to collaborating closely with the city in realizing its vision for the enhancement of our shared environment.

Please feel free to contact me directly if I can help in any way.

Warmest Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Allen', written over a horizontal line.

Tim Allen

President/CEO

612 Garrison Avenue
Fort Smith, AR 72901
479-783-3111 • Fax: 479-783-6110
www.fortsmithchamber.com



Office of the Chancellor
5210 Grand Avenue • PO Box 3649
Fort Smith, AR 72913-3649
479-788-7007 • website: uafs.edu

February 14, 2024

The Honorable U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Pete Buttigieg
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: RAISE Grant – Bass Reeves Legacy Loop, Fort Smith, AR.

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

As Chancellor of the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith, I can testify to the transformative power the FY24 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant would have on our community by creating the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop.

The opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors is one of the distinguishing characteristics that leads many of our more than 5,500 students to choose UA Fort Smith. The purposed 9-mile Bass Reeves Legacy Loop would support an outdoor emphasis while greatly enhancing our student's access to the town in which they live and expanding upon our ongoing efforts to create a greater connection between our campus and our community.

Safe. Sustainable. Equitable. Accessible. The proposed creation of the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop aligns with the ideals expressed in the RAISE program and would be a significant contribution to the quality of place in our community and at our university.

Thank you for your consideration of this application and for your continued efforts to enhance life in America through improved transportation infrastructure.

Highest regards,

Terisa C. Riley, Ph. D.
Chancellor



ARKANSAS COLLEGES OF
HEALTH EDUCATION

February 22, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am honored to provide a strong letter of support for the City of Fort Smith's RAISE grant application for the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Greenway Initiative. This project provides the opportunity to blend the rich history and significance of Bass Reeves with current pedestrian transportation travel needs that are safe and that increase access and quality of life.

The City of Fort Smith, the community members and organizational partners are focused on addressing health disparities in our River Valley region and as such, continue to work on addressing built environment, safe sustainable projects that improve quality of life. Challenges in safe pedestrian and bicycle transit serve as barriers to access employment, healthcare, and healthy lifestyles, with the impact occurring with those in our community who are the most vulnerable due to socio-economic factors. Lack of transportation has been associated with delay of treatment and poorer patient outcomes due to delayed or missed medical appointments.

The project proposed by the City of Fort Smith has strong merit, employing a community-based approach to address accessible safe transportation usage and experience with the construction of the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop. This initiative aims to connect schools, healthcare facilities, and economic centers while providing recreational spaces for residents of all ages. By promoting active transportation, reducing traffic congestion, and prioritizing inclusivity, the project underscores the city's commitment to enhancing community well-being and sustainability.

As the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Arkansas Colleges of Health Education, I am committed to providing partnership and collaboration as needed in this project. ACHE and the City of Fort Smith have a well-developed supportive collaboration focused on improving lives in our region. Once again, I am honored to provide a strong letter of support for this project and believe it will have a positive impact on the Fort Smith community. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Kyle Parker
President & Chief Executive Officer

FORT SMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Terry Morawski, Ed.D.
Superintendent

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

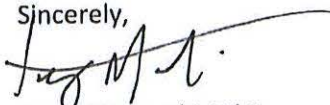
On behalf of Fort Smith Public Schools, I would like to express our unequivocal support for the City of Fort Smith and their application submittal to the FY24 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program. Successfully delivering this project will improve the safety, quality of life, economic competitiveness, and opportunity for our students and the residents of Fort Smith. It will also create system-wide connectivity and mobility improvements by removing physical barriers for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop creates a greenway network that can be built upon in the future, leaving a multi-generational impact on our almost 14,000 students, 2,000+ employees, and the broader community. It will establish connections between healthcare facilities, public and private schools, public parks, major economic centers, and other vital community resources, fostering a more interconnected and vibrant urban environment with a focus on equity, ensuring that all members of the community can equally benefit from improved access and connectivity.

Partnering with the City, the Fort Smith School District additionally looks forward to having outdoor classroom opportunities along the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop along with outdoor recreation opportunities for our students. Additionally, study after study continues to show that learning outdoors not only increases academic achievement, but also improves emotional, intellectual, and behavioral development. Teachers and students alike will also have access to utilize active transportation options when coming to and from school, helping them feel safer.

In conclusion, the Fort Smith Public School District fully supports the efforts of the City of Fort Smith and their application to the FY25 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program. It is our sincere hope that you will recognize the profound impact this initiative will have on our community's infrastructure, fostering sustainability, equity, and improved connectivity for the benefit of our students, families, and the broader Fort Smith community. Your consideration and support of this crucial endeavor are deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,



Terry Morawski, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Fort Smith Public Schools



February 23, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Mercy Fort Smith
Executive Office
2901 S 74th Street
Fort Smith, AR 72903
479-314-6102
fax 479-314-1770
www.mercy.net

RE: FY24 RAISE Grant-Bass Reeves Legacy Loop

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of Mercy Hospital Fort Smith, I write this enthusiastic letter of support in favor of the City of Fort Smith and its application submittal to the FY24 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program. If awarded, the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop will establish a 9-mile greenway network within the heart of Fort Smith where areas of persistent poverty and historically disadvantaged communities exist.

Mercy Health System was founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1986, but our heritage goes back more than 195 years in caring for those who need help. In Fort Smith, the Sisters of Mercy arrived on a steamboat in 1853 to open schools and care for the sick, and in 1905 they established the 30-bed St. Edward infirmary. Mercy Fort Smith today employs more than 3,000 area residents and has 348 patient beds, and in 2023 served a total of 239,717 patients. This demonstrates the impact that Mercy has on Fort Smith and shows the understanding that we have of the needs of our community. That need includes infrastructure that the city does not currently have that will be equitable and safe while promoting the well-being of all.

Dignity, excellence, justice, service and stewardship make up the core values of Mercy Health System and guide our co-workers on what to do and what direction to take. However, it is not just in the workplace we live those values, but outside our working environment among our families, friends and community. Establishing the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop within the City of Fort Smith will further strengthen our ability to live out our core values and leave an inalienable mark for future generations to come.



It is our earnest and sincere prayer that you will give the application submitted by the City of Fort Smith full and due consideration as it moves through the selection process. Thank you for your service to our great nation, the City of Fort Smith and all Arkansans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ryan Gehrig".

Ryan Gehrig
President, Mercy Arkansas

February 23, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

RE: RAISE Grant-Bass Reeves Legacy Loop

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of Baptist Health-Fort Smith, I'd like to show our support for the City of Fort Smith, Arkansas, and their 2024 application to the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program.

If awarded, this grant will add 9 miles of new greenways and complete a 15-mile loop of existing and planned infrastructure that will directly benefit Baptist Health employees and patients.

Baptist Health operates 12 hospitals and offers over 250 access points throughout Arkansas. In western Arkansas alone, we serve more than 350,000 people in a 5-county area. We are a healthcare system dedicated to health and wellness rather than a hospital system caring only for patients in a traditional hospital setting. As the first hospital in the state to open a public fitness center in 1988, we've been dedicated to helping community members reach their fitness goals for more than 30 years.

We couldn't be more excited for a trail system that will not only benefit our patients, but our employees. Many of our employees utilize their lunches and other break times to walk the campus weather permitting. The proposed loop includes a side path that will lead directly to Baptist Health, Marvin Altman Fitness Center and Baptist Health Walk-In Clinic.

It will ensure a safer route and crossings of busy roads in the city's footprint. The routes will give access to schools, parks, jobs, healthcare, and other key destinations in Fort Smith that will benefit health activities, healthcare access, and quality of living for all.

This proposal speaks directly to Baptist Health's mission to provide quality patient-centered services and respond to the changing health needs of Arkansans with Christian compassion.

It is our sincere hope that you will give the application submitted by the City of Fort Smith full consideration as it moves through the selection process.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Carrier, FACHE
Region President

February 23, 2024

ArcBest

P. O. Box 10048 (72917-0048)
8401 McClure Drive
Fort Smith, AR 72916
479.785.6000
arcb.com

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Judy R. McReynolds
Chairman, President &
Chief Executive Officer
p: 479.785.6281
f: 479.785.6124
jrmcreynolds@arcb.com

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of ArcBest, I would like to express our unequivocal support for the City of Fort Smith and their application to the FY24 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program. ArcBest is a multibillion-dollar integrated logistics company that leverages technology and a full suite of shipping and logistics solutions to help keep the global supply chain moving.

Established in 1923 as a local Arkansas freight hauler, our roots run deep in Fort Smith. The city is home to our headquarters and three other campuses, making us one of the largest employers in Fort Smith with over 2,000 local employees. We prioritize employee feedback and community involvement, giving us a deep understanding of the needs of both our workforce and the broader community and allowing us to tailor our initiatives to best serve the collective interests and well-being of all stakeholders involved.

As a company that has successfully kept freight moving for more than 100 years by providing innovative transportation and logistics solutions, we also understand the significance of strategic infrastructure investments.

We recognize the need for an established greenway network within the City of Fort Smith and the many benefits it will bring to our region. The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop will establish an active transportation and recreation corridor, improving accessibility to various essentials such as jobs, public schools, community parks, healthcare and public transportation. Demonstrating our commitment to environmental sustainability and well-being, we also recognize the substantial impact this project will have on decreasing greenhouse gas emissions, thereby fostering a healthier and more eco-friendly community.

This project exemplifies what the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program should be utilized for — building transportation corridors that are safe, accessible and equitable for all. This letter demonstrates ArcBest's full support in continued development and growth for the future of Fort Smith.

Respectfully,



Judy R. McReynolds



FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF FORT SMITH

Locally Owned Since 1872

Sam T. Sicard
President & CEO

February 16, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

At First National Bank of Fort Smith, we firmly believe in fostering an inclusive and sustainable community where transportation is safe, affordable, and accessible to all, regardless of race, wealth, gender, ability, or geographical location. It is with great enthusiasm that we express our full support for the City of Fort Smith's application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's grant program, Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE).

Biking and walking stand out as the most healthy and sustainable modes of transportation, aligning seamlessly with our commitment to environmental stewardship and community well-being. The proposed project, involving the construction of 9 miles of multi-use trails, resonates with our vision for a city where individuals can easily and safely navigate their surroundings, promoting a healthier and more active lifestyle.

We recognize the significance of the City of Fort Smith's endeavor to enhance transportation infrastructure through the RAISE grant program. The multi-use trail project, as outlined in the city's application, holds the promise of significantly improving safety, elevating the quality of life for residents, enhancing economic competitiveness, and creating valuable opportunities for our community members.

Improving safety is a paramount concern for our bank, and we are confident that the construction of multi-use trails will contribute to a safer urban environment. By removing physical barriers for pedestrians and bicyclists, the project not only ensures their safety but also fosters a sense of security and inclusivity, making our city more welcoming for all.

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
February 16, 2024
Page 2

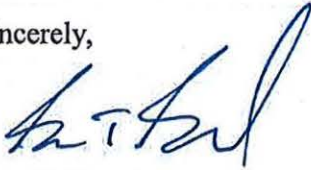
Quality of life is a cornerstone of community development, and the proposed multi-use trails promise to create recreational spaces that encourage outdoor activities, social interaction, and a stronger sense of community. This, in turn, contributes to the overall well-being of our residents, aligning with our shared goal of promoting a thriving and resilient community.

Economically, the project is poised to enhance Fort Smith's competitiveness by attracting businesses and stimulating local economic activity. Improved connectivity and mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists foster a vibrant urban environment, making the city more attractive for residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

The creation of system-wide connectivity aligns seamlessly with our commitment to sustainability and equity. We firmly believe that accessible and interconnected transportation options are essential for promoting economic growth, social equity, and environmental sustainability. By supporting the City of Fort Smith's application for the RAISE grant program, we are endorsing a project that embodies these values and contributes to the creation of a more sustainable and equitable community.

In conclusion, we wholeheartedly support the City of Fort Smith's application for the RAISE grant program and commend their commitment to advancing sustainable, safe, and equitable transportation infrastructure. We believe that the proposed multi-use trail project will not only benefit our community in the short term but will also leave a lasting positive impact on the well-being and prosperity of Fort Smith for generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "S. Sicard", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sam T. Sicard
President & CEO
First National Bank of Fort Smith

120 North 13th
Fort Smith, AR 72901-2746
tel 479-782-1311
fax 479-782-3505
www.unitedwayfortsmith.org



Thursday, February 22, 2024

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The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of United Way of Fort Smith Area, I am writing this letter in support of the City of Fort Smith's 2024 RAISE grant application for the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop. The funds would be utilized to support a 9.3-mile expansion to the City's trail system. This project is vital to providing alternative transportation for the residents of Fort Smith.

As a non-profit agency whose mission is connecting people to resources, transportation is one of the greatest needs and hardships among the clients United Way serves each year throughout our community. The 9.3-mile expansion to the City's trail system is essential to Fort Smith as it will connect individuals and families to schools, parks, medical facilities, employers, and so many other vital resources. The Bass Reeves Legacy Loop will lower a barrier that many face every day in not having additional means of navigating throughout the City.

Additionally, with the expansion of Interstate 49 and the newly awarded Foreign Military Sales (FMS) Project at the Arkansas Air National Guard's 188th Wing in Fort Smith, we anticipate a population growth over the next decade. Creating a greater quality of life for both existing and future residents of Fort Smith is essential to the overall health of our community. With this expansion we will be able to promote and encourage more outdoor activities such as running, walking, and biking along the trail system throughout Fort Smith. This project will truly create a more vibrant and inclusive community.

I appreciate your consideration in funding this project and for understanding the benefits it will have on the residents of Fort Smith and surrounding communities.

If you have any questions or want to further discuss, I have listed my contact information below.

Yours in Service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shea Foldvary".

Shea Foldvary
President and CEO
United Way of Fort Smith Area
(479) 782-1311



The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

My name is Chris Joannides and I am the Executive Director of the Riverview HOPE Campus, a local homeless shelter. I am writing this letter to show full support for the City of Fort Smith and their application process for the FY24 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program.

The Riverview HOPE Campus is an overnight emergency shelter that houses 145 individuals each night, most without transportation options. With the possibility of the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop, that would open up a new possibility of connecting parts of the community, especially those with barriers.

Thank you so much for the consideration and we look forward to bringing our community closer to the 6 public schools, 4 public parks, and being placed in an area that is historically disadvantaged.

Sincerely,

Chris Joannides
Executive Director



The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

My name is Heather Sanders and I am the Executive Director of the Community Rescue Mission. I am writing this letter today to convey my strongest support for the City of Fort Smith and their application to the FY24 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program. If awarded, the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop would serve as a catalytic project that would transform Fort Smith for decades to come and impact our organization by fostering community engagement, promoting healthy lifestyles, and advancing our shared mission of sustainable and equitable development.

The Community Rescue Mission is a faith-based organization that instills hope and empowers the lives of families in crisis due to homelessness. We provide safe shelter, meals, case management, and spiritual enrichment to prepare families to acquire jobs and live successful, independent, productive lives. One of the biggest hurdles that our families face in trying to move from crisis to stability is transportation. Currently, being able to freely move from one place to another within Fort Smith is difficult without a vehicle which many of our clients do not have. Having the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop would have a powerful and immediate impact on our community, organization, and clients.

Many would see this loop as a luxury to our citizens, one that they can enjoy a leisurely stroll or bike ride on. But we see this project as a pathway out of poverty and dependence, to a place of stability and financial security. It is noteworthy that this project is named after a man who was born into slavery, freed by the Emancipation Proclamation, and went on to become the first Black U.S. Deputy Marshal and one of the greatest frontier heroes in our nation's history. His true grit and resilience are a testament as to what one can overcome with the right resources and support. We ask that you take this opportunity to give those same opportunities to our clients through the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop.

Thank you for your dedicated service to Fort Smith, Arkansans, and all Americans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "HS", followed by a long horizontal line.

Heather Sanders
Executive Director



The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
United State Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

February 28, 2024

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

10 years ago I was a college student attending the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, AR. At that time I had very little resources. By necessity, I began to bike along the Razorback Regional Greenway to get to school, work, parks, and anywhere else the greenway would take me. After a while, I began to notice a number of changes as a result of my time on the greenway. I started to get in shape, I was focusing better at school, I was saving money on transportation expenses, and I was actually enjoying my morning and evening commute!

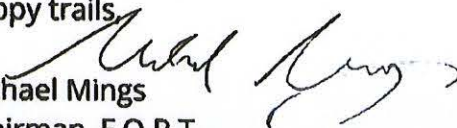
When I moved back home to Fort Smith, I was disoriented by the lack of bike friendly infrastructure. It saddened me that my city didn't have any greenways that could take me to the daily destinations I wanted to access by bike. I was hit by a car on my bike in the summer of 2019, and since then, I have been an advocate for safer streets for all roadway users in Fort Smith.

The Friends of Recreational Trails (F.O.R.T.) are proud to support the City of Fort Smith's efforts to build a safe, enjoyable, and well-connected greenway network through the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop. This project will transform the way the people of Fort Smith move around the city, which can have far-reaching benefits, especially for the city's large populations of low-income residents suffering from health disparities.

To support the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop and other future trail initiatives, F.O.R.T. pledges to purchase 3 bicycle and pedestrian counters to be used along the BRLL. We trust this technology will help to measure the positive impact the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop will have on the City of Fort Smith throughout the years.

Thank you for investing in trails and greenways in America. Infrastructure such as the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop is vital to the future of the United States.

Happy trails


Michael Mings
Chairman, F.O.R.T.

FEBRUARY 26, 2024

City of Fort Smith, Arkansas
ATTN: Michael Mings, Mobility Coordinator
623 Garrison Avenue
Fort Smith, AR 72901

Our reference: MG-24-0226-JM-02 BCA Report Fort Smith Bass Reeves Legacy Loop

Subject: Benefit-Cost Analysis Methodology & Findings, Bass Reeves Legacy Loop Separated Greenway RAISE 2024

Project Description

A Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) was conducted for the City of Fort Smith's proposed construction of a 9.4-mile separated pedestrian/cycling path, known as the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop (the Project). Fort Smith is a medium-sized city in western Arkansas situated along a bend in the Arkansas River with a population of approximately 89,000 according to the 2020 Census. The city's demographics reflect a diverse community, with a 35% minority population city-wide. The proposed Loop aims to address the transportation and health needs of a specific segment of the population residing within a half-mile radius, classified as rural and experiencing persistent poverty.

The City is seeking \$24.9M in funding through the U.S. Department of Transportation's 2024 RAISE grant program to complete final design and construct the Project. This funding will go towards constructing a paved 10-foot wide separated pedestrian/cycling path to connect underserved residents of midtown Fort Smith with the Central Business Improvement District, the Towson/Wheeler economic centers, and numerous schools/parks. The new pathway is categorized as critical infrastructure by the City's planning team, as it will provide a safe transportation alternative for existing residents to traverse between areas of work, school, commercial activity, and recreation. The Project is also anticipated to induce additional users to walk and cycle between the numerous community connections and spurs created.

The project is intended to be implemented for initial operational commercial activities in 2028, with full activation in 2029. The conservative project timeline assumes funding to be secured in H2 2024, permitting and environmental assessment (if required) in 2025-26, final design and right of way acquisition in 2027, and construction in 2028-29. Timeline for activation may be improved by 12-24 months if the anticipated categorical exclusions are granted for environmental surveys along the route.

With a conservative Benefit-Cost Ratio of 2.6, the Project will meet/exceed the goals of the 2024 RAISE grant program by:

1. Creating critical infrastructure to enable safe transit between community pillars;
2. Inducing economic benefits through connections to places of work, education, and commerce;
3. Promoting increased use of healthy active transportation alternatives;
4. Positively impacting our environment and improving sustainability;
5. Retaining and creating American jobs; and
6. Improving and enhancing the regional environment and community livability.

Modelling & Assumptions

The BCA was completed per Department of Transportation's Benefit-Cost Analysis Guidance for Discretionary Programs, December 2023, and based on the following assumptions:

1. Infrastructure benefits and costs are estimated for a 9.4-mile segment of new construction only. The Project intends to connect 5 miles of additional existing and underway trail in the City to create a 14.3 mile loop, which will further improve the economic impact of this project and the existing infrastructure. However, this BCA only considers benefits and costs based on the RAISE grant portion of greenway construction.
2. Comparison made against a base case assuming no improvements are made to the City's existing infrastructure.
3. Costs have been provided by the resident design engineer in 2024 dollars, and are modelled in 2022 dollars. A summary of costs is included in Appendix I. Costs include permitting, environmental permitting (if required), remaining engineering design, project management, contract administration, construction, and 10% project contingency.
4. All costs and benefits are represented in 2022 dollars using a 3.1% discount rate, per USDOT's Benefit-Cost Analysis Guidance for Discretionary Grant Programs released in December 2023.
5. A 30-year operating life is used for BCA calculations. This project consists of new, horizontal civil infrastructure that will be ADA compliant and built to City standards with an assumed operating design life of 30 years. While the City intends to regularly maintain the infrastructure with a goal of extending its usable life beyond 30 years, the BCA has not included residual value as a calculated project benefit for conservatism.
6. Annual operations and maintenance costs of \$5,000 per mile of greenway are assumed for the life of the project due to the permanent nature of the infrastructure and low maintenance design. These costs were compared against actual costs incurred for similarly sized municipalities in the region. (City of Fayetteville, Arkansas reported approx. \$4,000 per mile for O&M costs in 2022.) Rounding up, total cost for O&M was estimated at \$50,000 per year for the 9.4-mile trail.
7. 5-years of historical crash data for non-motorist incidents only is utilized for safety baselines. Crash data from within ¼ mile of the proposed route is sourced from the Arkansas Crash Analytics tool (ACAT). Figure 1 shows the historical KABCO security severity results of this analysis.



Figure 1: 5-year KABCO Historic Crash Map & Data within ¼-mile of Route, Source: AR Crash Analytics Tool



8. The population immediately affected by the proposed greenway route is modelled using Census data and the EPA's EJScreen Tool, with example results shown in Figures 2 & 3 below for analysis area and population demographics within ½-mile of the proposed route. Similar data is utilized for persons within ¼-mile of the route and 1-mile of the route.

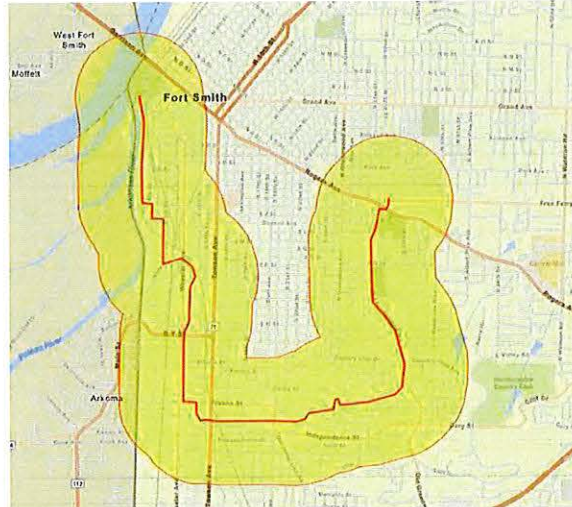


Figure 2: ½-mile Area Analyzed for Route Demographics, Source: EPA EJScreen Tool

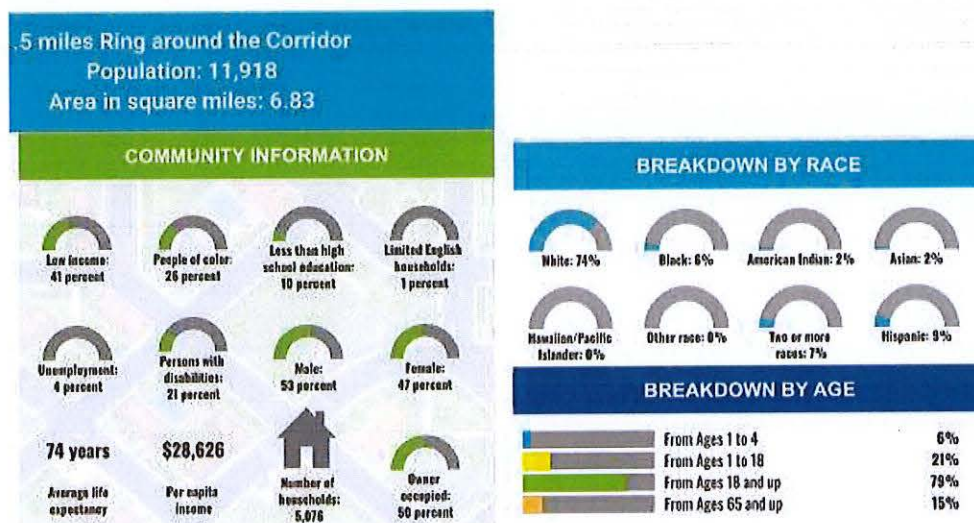


Figure 3: Route Demographics within ½-mile of Route, Source: EJScreen Tool

9. A population growth rate of 0.5% is assumed for the BCA period. This figure is supported with Census data for the City for the previous 30-year period.
- Alternative forecasts performed by the City via water rate studies conducted in 2023 modelled a 1.0-1.5% anticipated population increase for the next 10 years, citing economic development projects with planned I-49 Arkansas River bridge crossing and the F-35 Foreign Military Sales Training Mission that will be housed at Fort Smith's Ebbing ANG Base; however, the 0.5% historic population growth is utilized for benefit calculations for further conservatism.



10. Safety benefits are calculated using USDOT guidance for KABCO level monetization factors and utilizing the appropriate crash modification factor (CMF) to estimate risk reduction. The CMF's modelled align with the proposed separated bike path and the proposed crossing improvements:

ID	Countermeasure	CRF	CMF	Crash Type	Area Type
2911	Install a pedestrian hybrid beacon (PHB or HAWK)	29.8	0.712	All	Suburban/Urban
9024	Install rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB)	47.4	0.526	All	Suburban/Urban
4034	Install cycle track 2-5m from side of main road	45.0	0.55	All	Suburban/Urban

While the utilized CMF's are for an Area Type of Suburban/Urban and the Project demographics are listed as Rural, they are deemed applicable for the Project due to:

- average daily traffic volumes similar to or exceeding those in the reference studies, especially at critical crossing locations (see below); and
- lack of highly rated CMF data for similar pedestrian/bike infrastructure in rural areas.

Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volumes per ArDOT 2022 data:

Crossing	2022 ADT
US Hwy 71 (Towson)	19,000
Hwy 255 (Wheeler)	12,000
Hwy 22 (@dtwn)	27,000
Hwy 22 (@library)	19,000
Old Greenwood Rd (@ CC)	5,900

11. The projected number of active transportation trips anticipated to be induced by the new infrastructure is estimated utilizing population data (Item 8 above) and NCHRP Report 522 Guidelines for Analysis of Investments in Bicycle Facilities. Generally, this method assumes that a new cycling facility will induce the most ridership from the persons that reside within an extremely close proximity (i.e. less than ¼-mile) from a newly constructed cycling path. The induced ridership figures were compared against the City's available cycle-share totals for the completed segment of the future bike/ped loop, and found to be the most conservative approach to estimating uptake.

The figure below shows total estimated ridership, new build versus base case:

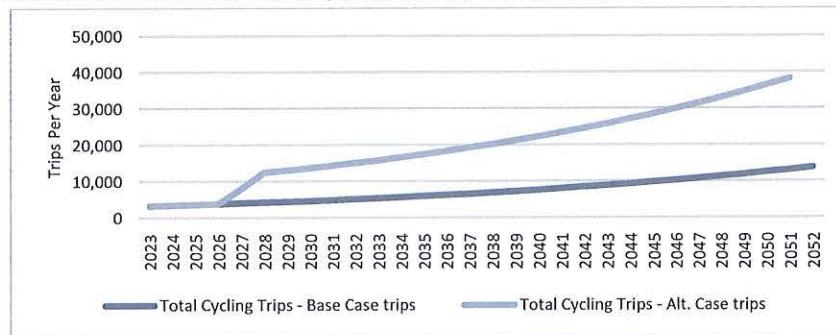


Figure 4: Estimated Trips Induced Per Year From New Infrastructure, Compared to Baseline

12. Despite a Project length of >9 miles, total number of induced miles travelled is calculated as the number of trips times the average trip length of 2.38 miles per BCA guidance.



13. Health Benefits, such as improved cardiovascular health and other positive outcomes for users, are calculated utilizing USDOT BCA guidance for monetization factors.
14. Amenity Benefits resulting from construction of a new dedicated cycling facility are calculated utilizing BCA monetization factors for a Cycling Path construction.
15. Right-of-way costs have been estimated with a SF price for acquisition/easement based on recent local figures within the City for similar projects.
16. Despite their anticipated additional benefits, the factors listed below have been left non-monetized and have NOT been included in BCR calculations:

Non-monetized Benefit	Benefit Description
1. Economic impact from connectivity	The Project enables access to active transportation for underserved residents by providing critical links between places of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Work (Mainstreet, Wheeler & Towson Industrial corridors, etc.); and b) Education (2 high schools + 4 other schools + Main Public Library); and c) Medical Center (1 hospital + STEM middle school); and d) Commerce (grocery, retail, dining, transit stations, etc.); and e) Recreation (flagship Creekmore Park, Brick Yard, Amp, Skate Park, and more.
2. Benefit multiplier for "Loop" connection	Multiplier for the above economic impacts with additional connects for 4+ miles of existing and funded projects to complete the Loop.
3. Job Creation	Project is estimated to create 303 in-state jobs through the design and construction of new infrastructure.
4. Increases to Property Values	Increased accessibility or attractiveness of nearby land parcels, resulting in increased property values.
5. Community Pride & Historical/Cultural Connection	The Bass Reeves Legacy and the cultural ties of the community to its frontier heritage are honored by the dedication of this project and the planned historical references along the route. This fosters a sense of community pride and potential impacts from tourism.

Benefits

Benefits from this project are primarily driven from safety improvement, health benefits, and amenity benefits derived from the new construction of a separated pedestrian and cycling path. The Project provides new infrastructure alternatives to an underserved population, allowing residents an active transportation alternative to safely traverse between work, school, and play.

The primary quantifiable benefit of this project is the projected savings from reduced instances of non-motorized crash events. There have been 67 incidents involving pedestrians or cyclists within ¼-mile of the proposed route in the last 5 years, including 3 fatalities. By providing a safe alternative for non-motorized transit, and even after applying a conservatism factor of 1/3 to benefits, the Project is estimated to reduce 3.6 pedestrian/bicycle collisions per year, resulting in savings of \$34M in injury avoidance and \$28M in fatality reduction over the life of the project.

Collision Type	Number of Collisions (2018-2022)	Pedestrian + Bike crashes	Avg. Annual Crashes (Ped+Bike)	CRF Reduction Factor (Ped+Bike)	Modeller's Conservatism Factor	Total Expected Annual Crash Reductions (Pedestrian+Bike)
O – Property Damage only	9	9	1.8	40%	33%	0.48
C – Possible Injury	11	11	2.2	40%	33%	0.59
B – Non-incapacitating	24	24	4.8	40%	33%	1.29
A – Incapacitating	20	20	4	40%	33%	1.07
K - Killed	3	3	0.6	40%	33%	0.16
All Collisions	67	67	13.4			3.59

Benefit	Project Lifecycle (\$M)	
	Undiscounted	Discounted (3.1%)
Fatality Reduction	\$56.28	\$34.00
Injury Reduction	\$45.93	\$27.75
Property Damage Reduction	\$0.07	\$0.04
Total Safety Benefits	\$102.28	\$61.78

Additional monetized savings are drawn from improved health benefits and amenity benefits as described in Project's BCA narrative. Cycling uptake will be most substantial from residents living and working within ¼- and ½-mile of the proposed route, as they will have the most unencumbered access to the new amenity. The model estimates that 8,300 additional cycling trips per year will be generated by the new infrastructure. The additional ridership over the 30-year life of the project is estimated to yield \$6.1M in health and amenity benefits.

Benefit	Project Lifecycle (\$M)	
	Undiscounted	Discounted (3.1%)
Health Benefits	\$6.2	\$3.3
Commuter Mobility Benefits	\$4.8	\$2.8
Recreational Benefits	\$0.0	\$0.0
Total Health and Recreation Benefits	\$0.0	\$6.1

Value of time savings (VTS), emissions savings, and Residual Value have been excluded from benefits calculations. Modeler has been unable to provide sufficient confidence in VTS and emissions assumptions, and has elected to exclude accordingly. Residual Value is excluded in accordance with Item 5 in the previous section.

BCA Results

The Benefit Cost Ratio of the Bass Reeves Legacy Loop project is 2.69 with a net present value of \$42.2M in 2022 dollars. Table I summarizes the BCA findings. Appendix II includes a copy of the final workbook used to calculate the BCA results.

Discounted Cost, present value		
Capital Costs	\$24,987,098	2022\$ in 2022
	Ref App I	
Discounted Benefits, present value		
Travel Time	-	2022\$ in 2022
Emissions	-	2022\$ in 2022
Safety	\$61,784,746	2022\$ in 2022
Auto/Truck O&M (includes fuel)	-	2022\$ in 2022
Pavement Damage	-	2022\$ in 2022
Noise	-	2022\$ in 2022
Amenity Benefits, Cycling Facility	\$2,766,785	2022\$ in 2022
Health Benefits	\$3,324,245	2022\$ in 2022
Residual Value	-	2022\$ in 2022
Change in O&M / R&R Costs	(\$676,538)	2022\$ in 2022
Total Discounted Benefits	\$67,199,238	2022\$ in 2022
Summary		
Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR)	2.69	ratio
Net Present Value	\$42,212,140	2022\$ in 2022



Sensitivity Analysis

The Benefit Cost Ratio was analyzed for sensitivity to various assumptions for the 3 utilized benefit categories by modifying critical variables that affected model assumptions. Safety benefit was analyzed for sensitivity to the modeler's self-applied conservatism factor. For the Likely scenario, anticipated benefits were reduced by 1/3 while the High scenario took no reduction on CRF and the Low scenario took a 1/2 reduction.

Health and Amenity benefits were based on assumed additional trips taken on the new infrastructure, modelled per NCHRP Report 522. The model guidance recommends 3.72 trips per year, which was utilized for the Likely scenario. The Low scenario reduced this to only 1 trip per rider per year, while the High scenario assumed monthly trips (12/yr).

The BCA yielded net positive results for all three scenarios (LOW, LIKELY, and HIGH) providing additional confidence in the net benefits of the project. The LIKELY scenario is selected as the most likely and utilized throughout this BCA technical report and Project narrative.

Scenario:	LOW	LIKELY	HIGH
Discounted Benefits, present value			
Travel Time	-	-	-
Emissions	-	-	-
Safety	\$46,108,020	\$61,784,746	\$92,216,039
Auto/Truck O&M (includes fuel)	-	-	-
Rail/Bus Fuel Consumption	-	-	-
Pavement Damage	-	-	-
Noise	-	-	-
Amenity Benefits, Cycling Facility	\$2,486,190	\$2,766,785	\$3,620,948
Health Benefits	\$893,614	\$3,324,245	\$10,723,370
Residual Value	-	-	-
Change in O&M / R&R Costs	(\$676,538)	(\$676,538)	(\$676,538)
Total Discounted Benefits	\$48,811,286	\$67,199,238	\$105,883,820
Summary			
Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR)	1.95	2.69	4.24
Net Present Value	\$23,824,188	\$42,212,140	\$80,896,722
		Used for BCA	



APPENDIX I: ENGINEER'S OPINION OF PROBABLE COST, dated 02/16/2024

Costs shown in 2022 dollars.

Preliminary Opinion of Probable Costs
Fort Smith DOT Raise Grant "Bass Reeves Legacy Loop"
February 2024
Page 1



Item No.	Qty.	Unit	Description	Unit Price	Total Amount
GENERAL CONSTRUCTION					
1.	50,915	LF	Erosion Control	\$ 6.00	\$ 305,490.00
2.	50,915	LF	Site Restoration	\$ 15.00	\$ 763,725.00
3.	2,000	LF	Streambank Stabilization	\$ 100.00	\$ 200,000.00
4.	1	LS	Construction Layout	\$ 32,000.00	\$ 32,000.00
5.	50,915	LF	Traffic Control	\$ 5.00	\$ 254,575.00
6.	6,775	LF	Utility Relocations	\$ 200.00	\$ 1,355,000.00
7.	14	EA	Stream Crossings - Small	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 140,000.00
8.	6	EA	Stream Crossings - Large	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 450,000.00
9.	1	LS	Wheeler Avenue Bridge Underpass	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 500,000.00
10.	37	EA	Street Crossing - Striped	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 185,000.00
11.	5	EA	Street Crossings - RRFB	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 75,000.00
12.	2	EA	Street Crossings - HAWK	\$ 175,000.00	\$ 350,000.00
13.	17	EA	Rail Crossing	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 340,000.00
14.	7	LS	Existing Traffic Signal Modification	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 525,000.00
15.	33,610	LF	Trail Lighting	\$ 10.00	\$ 336,100.00
16.	1	LS	Amenities	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
17.	1,250	LF	Fencing	\$ 75.00	\$ 93,750.00
18.	46,535	LF	Concrete Multi-Use Sidepath	\$ 165.00	\$ 7,678,275.00
19.	3,160	LF	Bicycle Lane	\$ 5.00	\$ 15,800.00
20.	450	LF	Boardwalk Above Vertical Wall Channel	\$ 650.00	\$ 292,500.00
21.	1,000	LF	5' Sidewalk	\$ 50.00	\$ 50,000.00
22.	1,050	LF	Small Retaining Wall	\$ 250.00	\$ 262,500.00
23.	2,250	LF	Large Retaining Wall	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 2,250,000.00
24.	1	EA	Mill Creek Bridge	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 500,000.00
25.	2	EA	Small Bridge	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 500,000.00
26.	100	LF	100' 14'x9' Tunnel and transition approaches	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 2,000,000.00
27.	50,915	LF	Trail Striping and Signage	\$ 5.00	\$ 254,575.00
SUBTOTAL CONSTRUCTION					\$ 19,759,290.00
TOTAL CONSTRUCTION				Contingency (10%)	\$ 1,975,929.00
					\$ 21,735,219.00
28.	574,225	SF	Right of Way and Easement Acquisition	\$ 2.00	\$ 1,148,450.00
29.	17	EA	Railroad Permitting	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 127,500.00
30.			Design 6%		\$ 1,185,557.40
31.			Construction Administration 4%		\$ 790,371.60
TOTAL					\$ 24,987,098.00



MICKLE GRIFFIN
ENGINEERS - SURVEYORS

3434 Country Club Ave.
Fort Smith, Arkansas 72903

479.649.8484

micklegriffin.com

APPENDIX II: BCA WORKBOOK

BCA Model - Fort Smith Bass Reeves Loop_vFinal.xlsx



BCA Model - Fort
Smith Bass Reeves L

EJScreen Community Report

This report provides environmental and socioeconomic information for user-defined areas, and combines that data into environmental justice and supplemental indexes.

Fort Smith, AR

5 miles Ring around the Corridor
Population: 20,219
Area in square miles: 10.13



COMMUNITY INFORMATION



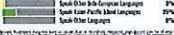
BREAKDOWN BY RACE



BREAKDOWN BY AGE



LIMITED ENGLISH SPEAKING BREAKDOWN



LANGUAGES SPOKEN AT HOME

LANGUAGE	PERCENT
English	82%
Spanish	10%
Vietnamese	7%
Other Asian and Pacific Island	1%
Total Non-English	18%

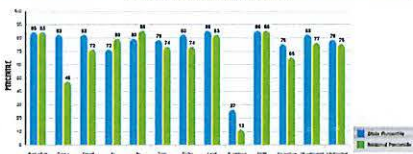
Environmental Justice & Supplemental Indexes

The environmental justice and socioeconomic indexes are a combination of two statistical per capita measures. These are further broken down into supplemental indexes, which are further broken down into 12 supplemental indexes. The index is a statistical measure for the selected area, in the state, or nation. For more information and additional details, see the EJ and Supplemental Indexes, EJ and Supplemental Indexes, and EJ and Supplemental Indexes.

EJ INDEXES

The EJ index is a statistical measure for the selected area, in the state, or nation. For more information and additional details, see the EJ and Supplemental Indexes, EJ and Supplemental Indexes, and EJ and Supplemental Indexes.

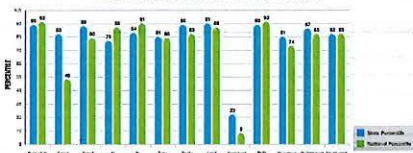
EJ INDEXES FOR THE SELECTED LOCATION



SUPPLEMENTAL INDEXES

The supplemental indexes are a statistical measure for the selected area, in the state, or nation. For more information and additional details, see the EJ and Supplemental Indexes, EJ and Supplemental Indexes, and EJ and Supplemental Indexes.

SUPPLEMENTAL INDEXES FOR THE SELECTED LOCATION



EJScreen Environmental and Socioeconomic Indicators Data

SELECTED VARIABLE	VALUE	STATE PERCENT	FEDERAL PERCENT	PERCENTILE	PERCENTILE
ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS					
Particulate Matter (PM10)	5.14	8.07	18	1.28	64
Ozone (ppb)	58	213	69	415	24
Lead Particulate Matter (PbPM10)	6.21	8.03	76	1.20	56
Air Toxics Cancer Risk* (lifetime risk per million)	30	30	14	25	57
All Toxics Respiratory IQ*	6.1	6.27	42	6.25	76
Toxics Exposure to Air	140	8.40	72	1.60	58
Traffic Proximity (city block nearest to road)	140	55	58	2.0	65
Lead Paint (Pb, PbO2) Housing	63	6.0	63	6.3	13
Superfund Proximity (city block nearest to site)	6.21	8.03	76	1.20	56
ERF Proximity (city block nearest to site)	12	6.47	50	6.45	57
Aluminum Proximity (city block nearest to site)	6.21	8.03	76	1.20	56
Underground Storage Tanks (nearest to site)	1.2	1.1	68	1.1	65
Maximum Discharge (nearest to site)	6.21	8.03	76	1.20	56
SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS					
Demographic Index	4%	39%	23	26%	79
Supplemental Demographic Index	27%	17%	62	14%	64
People of Color	4%	27%	30	20%	58
Low Income	54%	47%	72	37%	64
Unemployed Rate	7%	4%	70	4%	70
Limited English Speaking Households	2%	8%	66	9%	63
Low High School Graduation	27%	17%	62	12%	64
Under Age 5	7%	6%	67	6%	68
Over Age 65	14%	13%	30	13%	40
Low Life Expectancy	24%	27%	67	22%	66

Sites reporting to EPA within defined area:

Airport	0
Major Airports, Terminals, Storage and Support Facilities	0
Major Airports	0
Major Airports	0
Major Airports	0
Major Airports	0

Other community features within defined area:

Schools	1
Hospitals	2
Places of Worship	0

Other environmental data:

Are the following reported?	No
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Selected area is within 1/4 mile of Interstate Highway	No
Selected area is within 1/4 mile of Interstate Highway	No
Selected area is within 1/4 mile of Interstate Highway	No

Report for 5 miles Ring around the Corridor

EJScreen Environmental and Socioeconomic Indicators Data

SELECTED VARIABLE	VALUE	STATE PERCENT	FEDERAL PERCENT	PERCENTILE	PERCENTILE
HEALTH INDICATORS					
Low Life Expectancy	24%	27%	67	22%	66
Heart Disease	13	13	44	61	77
Cancer	5.8	6.8	26	61	61
Persons with Disabilities	21%	18%	63	13%	67

SELECTED VARIABLE	VALUE	STATE PERCENT	FEDERAL PERCENT	PERCENTILE	PERCENTILE
CLIMATE INDICATORS					
Flood Risk	7%	6%	40	12%	61
Upland Risk	10%	8%	63	14%	61

SELECTED VARIABLE	VALUE	STATE PERCENT	FEDERAL PERCENT	PERCENTILE	PERCENTILE
CATAGORICAL SERVICES					
Unemployed Rate	20%	27%	62	16%	64
Lack of Health Insurance	20%	27%	62	16%	64
Homeless Rate	6%	6%	61	6%	61
Unemployment Rate	6%	6%	61	6%	61
Food Desert	6%	6%	61	6%	61

Report for 5 miles Ring around the Corridor

References

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