



OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 04
2088 SOUTH ARLINGTON RD. • AKRON, OH 44306 • 330-786-3100

Environmental Document

for

SUM Rubber City Heritage Trail B PID 113160

Environmental Document Level: C2

Approved: 8/10/2022

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The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by ODOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 14, 2020, and executed by FHWA and ODOT.

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C2

PID:	113160
Project Sponsor:	Akron, City of
ODOT District:	4
Funding Source:	Federal
Private Funding:	No

Project Description:

The city of Akron proposes to convert the abandoned Akron Barberton Belt (ABB) Railroad into a multi-use commuting and recreational trail from 3rd Avenue to Exchange Street in an urbanized/industrialized area of the city of Akron, Summit County. The project will construct 4,680 feet of 10-foot wide asphalt trail with two former rail bridge conversions. See the project mapping, plans and photographs in the Project File/General section.

This project is the first phase of the Rubber City Heritage Trail. The former rail line provided service to many of the former tire and rubber companies in Akron, including Goodyear and Firestone. The full trail will run approximately 6 miles from 3rd Avenue in the East End neighborhoods to the Wilbeth Road Trailhead of the Ohio & Erie Towpath Trail. The Heritage trail will connect the neighborhoods of East End, Kenmore, Downtown, Ellet, and the University of Akron with grocery stores, doctor's offices, retail centers and each other. The Heritage Trail will serve as the bike network backbone to Central and East Akron.

The Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition and various partners, including the city of Akron, Summit Metro Parks and the Summit County Engineer's office, produced the 2018 Feasibility Study that outlined the preferred alignment, conflict zones and possible improvements. Numerous public outreach efforts occurred in 2017 and 2018 to produce the Feasibility Study. See the Feasibility Study in the Project File/General section.

The proposed improvements to the abandoned rail corridor required to build Phase 1 of the Rubber City Heritage Trail include: multimodal trail pavement, wayfinding signage, two rail to pedestrian bridge conversions, trail lighting, interpretive signage, fiber network extension and street crossings.

The proposed trail starts with a pedestrian crossing at 3rd Avenue to make the connection to the existing Middlebury Run Park and a gateway arch welcoming users to the Rubber City Heritage Trail. The section between 3rd Avenue and the SummaCare parking lot north entrance has an existing sidewalk that will be replaced with full width trail pavement. The existing signaled crossing at Kelly Avenue will receive signage and pavement markings. The next section between the parking lot entrance and the first bridge will need existing vegetation trimmed to make room for trail pavement. A retaining wall is needed to detour around the overhead pedestrian bridge footings.

The first former rail bridge (Structure File Number (SFN) 7762534) will become the highpoint of Phase 1 with a new 800-foot rot resistant hardwood deck, decorative railing, lighting, interruptive signage, and local art.

The next section from the first bridge to Case Avenue will involve aggressive vegetation trimming and possible retaining walls to create space for trail pavement. This section will have two points to access the trail: the corner of Ackley Street and Hart Street and the crossing at Johnston Street. Johnston Street will receive signage and pavement markings.

The second former rail bridge over Case Avenue (SFN 7760264) will also get a new rot resistant hardwood deck, decorative railing and lighting.

The last section of Phase 1 from the Case Avenue Bridge to Exchange Street will get the existing vegetation cut back, trail pavement and interruptive signage highlighting the local Akron Waterways Renewed projects. Phase 1 ends at Exchange Street with another welcome gateway arch.

Wayfinding signage, interpretive signage and trail lighting will be strategically placed along the trail alignment.

The abandoned rail corridor is owned by Akron. All construction will occur on Akron land, except for one area where 0.1207 acre of permanent right-of-way is needed from one property owner to construct the trail next to an existing sidewalk.

Fiber optic conduit and network cable will be added for the entire length of the trail alignment. Existing utilities within the project study area will not be impacted/relocated to construct the project.

A Cultural Resources Records Check was performed by district environmental staff using the SHPO GIS online database. A portion of the former railroad borders the western boundary of the National Register-listed Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company Headquarters at 1144 East Market Street (NRHP 13000683). The rail line is outside the boundary of the historic site and not



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contributing. The abandoned bridges in the project are common early 20th century simple beam girder and pony truss structures. None of their structural elements will be altered by the trail construction. The presence of intact archaeological deposits is unlikely due to the disturbed industrial landscape.

The undertaking will not require land from or alter any contributing element of the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company Headquarters, or any other historic property. On September 14, 2021, ODOT-OES determined the undertaking has minimal potential to cause effects to historic properties pursuant to the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement (Agreement No. 19319) executed November 8, 2017 and amended July 11, 2019. No new permanent right-of-way from historic properties will be acquired and no contributing element of a historic property will be removed or altered by construction. In accordance with Stipulation V(C)(1) and Appendix B of the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement executed on November 8, 2017 (Agreement No. 19319), amended on July 11, 2019, ODOT-OES determined the project is a type of undertaking that has 'minimal potential to cause effects' to historic properties and is not a part of a larger undertaking. See the cultural resources documentation for the project in the Project File/Cultural Resources section and the Cultural Resources tab.

Based on the information contained in the RMR Form prepared for the project, further environmental site assessment or special materials management is not warranted for the project. Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) on the former railroad corridor, from 1999, were also examined in light of the proposed project. See the RMR and ESA documentation for the project in the Project File/ESA section.

Additionally, this project is considered ecologically exempt under the Ecological MOA (Agreement 19394). See the Ecologically Exempt ESR.pdf for the project in the Project File/Ecological/Reports subsection.

ODOT District 4 environmental personnel reviewed the FEMA FIRM mapping for the project study area and determined the proposed trail crosses over a designated Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) Zone AE floodplain. However, the proposed trail at this location will be constructed on first former rail bridge (SFN 7762534) that is elevated well above ground level. No fill related construction activities on the ground are proposed at this location and no fill will be added from this project within the designated floodplain. Therefore, floodplain coordination is not required for the project. See the floodplains documentation for the project in the Project File/Permits/Floodplains subsection.

The project will not impact any environmentally sensitive resources within the project study area.

In addition to the numerous public outreach efforts in 2017 and 2018 to produce the Feasibility Study, Akron conducted various public involvement activities for the project in 2021, including a news release and website posting. Multiple news articles were published about the project on local media websites. Four public comments were received involving requests for project information. Akron sent project information via email to commenters. See the public involvement documentation, including the received comments and responses to comments, for the project in the Project File/Public Involvement/Project Information subsection.

The environmental document and associated studies, as applicable, were approved using the Stage 3 Design plans for the project. A copy of the Stage 3 Design plans for the project is included in the Project File/General/Project Information subsection as Stage 3 Design.pdf.

The estimated total project cost specified in Ellis is greater than the total project cost specified in the ODOT State Fiscal Years 2021 - 2024 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). However, based on the estimated total project cost being less than \$3,000,000 and the additional project cost not exceeding \$1,500,000, a STIP amendment is not necessary for the project.

STIP Reference #:

113160: 21-24 STIP

Select the appropriate project type:

(26) Modernization of a highway by resurfacing, restoration, rehabilitation, reconstruction, adding shoulders, or adding auxiliary lanes (including parking, weaving, turning, and climbing lanes), if the action meets the constraints in paragraph (e) of this section. ***Examples include: Joint or limited use of right-of-way where the proposed use would have minimal or no adverse social (including highway safety), economic or environmental impacts; Installation of new noise walls and other new noise mitigation projects; Construction of highway safety and truck escape ramps; Construction of bicycle lanes and pedestrian walkways, sidewalks, shared-use paths, or facilities and trailhead parking that do not otherwise qualify for a C1 designation; Beautification or facility improvement projects (i.e. landscaping, curb and gutter installation and replacement, ADA ramps/curb ramps, installation of park benches, decorative lighting, etc.); Construction of alternative energy facilities (fuel tank farms, wind turbines, etc.)***

(28) Bridge rehabilitation, reconstruction, or replacement or the construction of grade separation to replace



existing at-grade railroad crossings, if the actions meet the constraints in 23 CFR 771.117(e). *Examples include: Railroad projects that close or relocate at-grade crossings*

In accordance with 23 CFR 771.117(e), the proposed project cannot be processed as a C2 CE, if it involves -

1. a. Acquisition of more than a minor amount of right-of-way
2. b. Residential or non-residential displacements
3. c. A Coast Guard, Individual Section 404 and/or a Section 10 permit
4. d. A Section 106 finding of *Adverse Effect*
5. e. A Section 4(f) Programmatic or Individual Evaluation
6. f. A finding of *May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect* to Threatened and Endangered Species
7. g. Construction of temporary access, or the closure of existing road, bridge, or ramps, that would result in major traffic disruptions
8. h. Changes in access control
9. i. Floodplain encroachment other than functionally dependent uses (e.g., bridges, wetlands) or actions that facilitate open space use (e.g., recreational trails, bicycle and pedestrian paths)
10. j. Construction activities in, across or adjacent to a river component designated or proposed for inclusion in the National System of Wild and Scenic Rivers
11. k. No minor public or agency controversy on environmental grounds (no opposition from any organized groups or agencies and no unresolved environmental coordination)
12. l. If an EJ Analysis Report is required, the project must be processed as a D-level CE or higher level document

For certification purposes, documentation is required to illustrate no significant impacts will occur to the following environmental resources and that no unusual circumstances exist that would warrant a higher level of NEPA document. Upload all supporting documentation to the project file.

Waterways:	Not Present
Will any wetlands be impacted?	No
Endangered Species:	No Impacts to Protected Species and Critical Habitat
100-Year Floodplain:	No Encroachment Within a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA)
Section 4(f):	Not present
Section 6(f):	Not present
Cultural Resources:	Present; No Finding of Adverse Effect
Cultural Resources Coordination:	Minimum Potential to Cause Effect Appendix B
Cultural Resources Coordination - ODOT Approval/SHPO Concurrence Date	09/15/2021



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Since no Tribe was interested in this project based on their customized preferences, no further Tribal consultation was conducted.

Projects that meet C2 criteria are not anticipated to have impacts to the following environmental resources. If resources are present, documentation is only required if there is a potential for impacts.

Air Quality:	Studies Not Required
Air Quality - Coordination with OES:	No
Noise:	Studies Not Required
Noise Coordination - OES Approval Date:	
Hazardous Materials - ESA Screening Conducted	Yes
Hazardous Materials - OES Approval Date:	07/29/2022
Phase I ESA Warranted Based on Coordination with OES:	No Further Studies Warranted
Farmland:	Urbanized Area; No Impacts in Accordance With the Farmland MOU and 7 CFR 658
Scenic Rivers	No National Wild and Scenic River Within 1000 Feet of the Proposed Project Area

Projects that meet C2 criteria must be in accordance with ODOT's UP Guidance and activities conducted for Public Involvement are commensurate to the project's type and scope of work.

Underserved Populations Present; No UPIAR Required, Does Not Exceed UP Guidance Criteria, and No Issues Raised During Public Involvement

Identified Underserved Populations

Census Block Group #	% Minority	% Low Income	% Older Adults	% Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
391535036001	18	57	13	0
391535034001	82	61	10	2

Underserved Populations Remarks

The undertaking is a new trail project with no buildings removed, no residential or business relocations, and no changes to access. The project will increase community access. The proposed project will have no disproportionately high and adverse effects to minority or low-income populations or disparate impacts to a Title VI population. No concerns related to impacts on Environmental Justice or Title VI populations were raised as a result of public involvement activities conducted as part of the proposed project. Therefore, in accordance with the protections of Executive Order 12898, FHWA Order 6640.23A and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, no further analysis is required. Further, the proposed project will have no impacts to Limited English Proficiency, Older Adults, and Individuals with Disabilities Populations. No concerns related to impacts on these Underserved Populations were raised as a result of public involvement activities conducted as part of the proposed project. Therefore, in accordance with the protections of the Age Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Discrimination Act of 1975, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Executive Order 13166, no further analysis is required.

Public Involvement: Minimum PI Requirements Met; No Minor Public or Agency Controversy on Environmental Grounds



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Preparers and Approvals

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Supporting Form Preparer(s): Lorie Feudner
Robert Lang

Approvals & Electronic Signatures

Approved & Electronically Signed By:	Approval Date:
Edward Deley (PROGRAM ADMIN 3)	8/10/2022



Appendix

General

Aerial Map.pdf

General Photographs.pdf

USGS Quadrangle Topographical Map.pdf

Cultural Resources

Minimal Potential to Cause Effect - Appendix B

Records Check.pdf

Ecological

ODNR Scenic River MOA Conditions

Underserved Populations

Census Mapping.pdf

Public Involvement

Akron Website Posting.pdf

News Article Cleveland.com Plain Dealer.pdf

News Article News 5 .pdf

News Article.pdf

Press Release RCHT Phase 1 .pdf

Public Meeting Presentation.pdf

Response to Public Comments .pdf

Permits

FEMA FIRM.pdf