The Indianapolis Cultural Trail: A Legacy of Gene and Marilyn Glick (the Trail) is an eight-mile urban bike and pedestrian pathway that serves as a linear park in the core of downtown Indianapolis. Originally conceived by Brian Payne, President and CEO of the Central Indiana Community Foundation (CICF), to help create and spur development in the city’s cultural districts, the Trail provides a beautiful connection for residents and visitors to safely explore downtown. Completed in 2012, the Trail connects the now six (originally five) cultural districts and provides a connection to the seventh via the Monon Trail. The Trail connects every significant arts, cultural, heritage, sports, and entertainment venue in downtown Indianapolis as well as vibrant downtown neighborhoods. It also serves as the downtown hub for the central Indiana greenway system.

The $63 million Cultural Trail was created through a public-private partnership between the city of Indianapolis and CICF, which raised $27.5 million in private and philanthropic support for the Trail’s construction, including a lead gift of $15 million from Eugene and Marilyn Glick. An additional $35.5 million came from federal transportation grants. There were no city of Indianapolis funds budgeted to construct the Trail. In 2008, Indianapolis Cultural Trail, Inc., was created to manage the Trail once construction was complete.

The Trail is expected to make a wide range of contributions to the quality of life and economy of central Indiana. In an effort to begin to quantify the benefits, the IU Public Policy Institute used a multi-faceted approach to evaluate the Trail’s impact.

The goal of this assessment is to establish a baseline for future evaluations. The following represents the key findings from the assessment:

**The Indianapolis Cultural Trail is having a measurable economic impact.**
Property values within 500 feet (approximately one block) of the Trail have increased 148% from 2008 to 2014, an increase of $1 billion in assessed property value.

The Trail has increased revenue and customer traffic for many businesses along Massachusetts and Virginia Avenues. Business surveys reported part-time and full-time jobs have been added due to the increases in revenue and customers in just the first year.

Users are spending while on the Trail. The average expected expenditure for all users is $53, and for users from outside the Indianapolis area the average exceeds $100. In all, Trail users contributed millions of dollars in local spending.

**The Indianapolis Cultural Trail is valued by locals and visitors.**
Indianapolis visitors are attracted to the Cultural Trail; 17 percent of users surveyed were from outside the Indianapolis area.

With a strong emphasis on exercising and healthy living, the Trail provides an excellent opportunity for users to exercise. Results from a survey of users indicate that exercise and fitness is the primary reason for Trail usage.

**Trail users feel safe and the Indianapolis Cultural Trail is helping to create a sense of community.**
Users feel the Trail is safe and welcoming. When surveyed, 95 percent of the Trail users stated they felt safe and secure while on the Trail.

The sense of safety shows in the Trail usage numbers. The Cultural Trail usage estimates exceed usage estimates for most other Indianapolis trails and greenways.

The Trail has helped create a sense of community for the Fountain Square and Fletcher Place neighborhoods. Business owners are now enjoying a steady flow of Trail users into their neighborhoods.

“\[Photo credit: IU Public Policy Institute\] This amenity makes the entire downtown a better place to work, play and live!”
Focus on Economic Impact
Property values along and near the Cultural Trail have increased.

Using GIS software, an analysis of property parcels (Map 1) located within 500 feet of the Trail was conducted. Gross assessed property values from 2008 and 2014 were used.

There are two factors to consider when reviewing these data. The first is that some of the increase in value is due to properties returning to pre-recession values.

Second, while there were projects that were planned before the construction of the Trail, the impact of the Trail could have led to increased rents, changes in marketing plans to highlight proximity to the Trail, increased property taxes that Marion County collects from the properties, and encouragement for existing property owners to make improvements that can increase the assessed value.

The assessed value of the 1,747 parcels within 500 feet of the Trail increased 148 percent. The total change in value was $1 billion. The largest increase in property value was $63.3 million. The 25 properties with the largest increases in assessed value accounted for 68 percent of the total increase. These properties are a mix of commercial, residential, and lodging establishments, including some of the largest downtown property and development projects.

At least 5 percent of the increase in assessed values comes from new condominiums that have been constructed within close proximity to the Trail. There were over 90 new condominium parcels established from 2008 to 2014.

Table 1 represents the changes in assessed values of the Census tracts that include the Trail segments along Massachusetts and Virginia Avenues and the changes for Center Township and Marion County.

During the 2008 to 2014 time period, the parcels in Center Township and Marion County had an overall increase of 37 and 8 percent, respectively. The increase in assessed value of the parcels within 500 feet of the Trail account for 43 percent of the increase in Center Township. While the Cultural Trail parcels account for less than 1 percent of the total parcels in Marion County, they account for 24 percent of the total increase in assessed value for the county.

Assessed property values along Virginia Avenue from South Street to the I-65/I-70 bridge increased 295 percent. The Census tract that includes this stretch of Virginia Avenue had an increase of 240 percent.

At the southern end of the Trail, there are 48 parcels that lie within 500 feet of the Trail and just south of Prospect Street. There is little doubt that the Trail had impact on these properties. Collectively, the assessed value of the parcels increased 30 percent. However, the Census tract that includes these parcels had an overall decrease in value of 1 percent. The total change for the 48 parcels was an increase of $880,700. The total change for the Census tract was a decrease of $817,000.

Table 1. Comparison of the change in total assessed value (AV) for parcels near the Cultural Trail to Census tracts, Center Township, and Marion County, 2008 to 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Virginia Avenue Census Tracts</th>
<th>Massachusetts Avenue Census Tract</th>
<th>Center Township</th>
<th>Marion County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Parcels in Region</td>
<td>3,279</td>
<td>2,080</td>
<td>7,253</td>
<td>348,743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in AV - Region</td>
<td>126%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Regional Parcels within 500 ft of Trail</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Regional Change Attributed to Parcels 500 ft of Trail</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Photo credit: IU Public Policy Institute

New Public Plaza along Alabama and North Streets
Map 1. Changes in total assessed values of parcels along or near the Cultural Trail, 2008 to 2014
Businesses report increases in revenues and customers, which have led to additional full- and part-time positions. Businesses play a key role in determining the fiscal impact of the Cultural Trail. Increases in revenues benefit not only the owners, but the city and state in collection of taxes and as an opportunity for additional jobs. To determine any potential impact, businesses along the Cultural Trail in the Mass Avenue, Fountain Square, and Fletcher Place neighborhoods were surveyed.

In total, 66 businesses participated in the survey, including retail stores, eating and drinking establishments, art galleries, real estate agencies, salons, dental offices, and nonprofits. Responses from retail stores and eating and drinking establishments accounted for 60 percent of the responses.

Of those responding, 56 percent indicated that the establishment had been open five years or less. Those who had been opened for greater than 20 years accounted for 15 percent of responses. In Fletcher Place, 73 percent of the businesses were established between 2010 and 2014.

Over half of the owners indicated they have seen an increase in customers since the Cultural Trail opened, and 48 percent indicated they have seen an increase in revenue. While Mass Avenue and Fountain Square report a larger increase in customers than revenue, Fletcher Place reports a higher increase in revenue than customers (Figure 1).

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“Had it not been for the Trail, I would have not visited the City Market and would have driven for errands.”
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Several operators indicated that the revenue and/or customer increases led to the creation of additional full-time and part-time positions (Figure 2). In total, based on business operator responses, a range of 40 to 50 full-time positions and 47 part-time positions were added. The added new employment opportunities increase the local option income tax (LOIT) collected in Marion County as well as Indiana income tax. Some of the new jobs created were from new businesses opening up, and based on the survey results, 25 percent of those businesses were established at that location because of the Trail. Other actions taken in response to the increases included expanding business hours and adding new products or services to their business offerings.

The survey asked owners if they planned to or were actively using any measures to attract Cultural Trail users to their businesses. Mass Avenue and Fountain Square businesses most often use signage along sidewalks and displays in the storefronts to increase visibility. Others mentioned their proximity to the Cultural Trail on their websites.

Two other options listed on the survey were displaying flyers at non-competing businesses and universities and offering special deals during peak Trail hours. Fountain Square and Fletcher Place had the most respondents indicate that they advertise with other businesses or universities as well as offering special deals to attract Trail users.

Businesses adding or upgrading outdoor seating can also lead to an increase in property value assessments if the improvements are substantial. Increased spending to market businesses creates additional revenue for other Indianapolis businesses.

**Figure 2. Actions taken in response to increases in revenue/customers by business survey respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Added Part-time Staff</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Products</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening on Weekends</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Later Closing Times</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Added Full-time Staff</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earlier Opening Times</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open on Holidays</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"We opened the business with the intent of being in a building somewhere along the Cultural Trail. Doing this has been an advantage in attracting pedestrian and cyclist traffic."

Photo credit: Kelley Jordan Photography for Indianapolis Cultural Trail, Inc.

Cultural Trail along Washington Street
**Trail users report spending while on the Cultural Trail.**

All users surveyed were asked how much they planned to spend while participating in the following activities: staying in a hotel, eating at a restaurant, shopping at stores, attending a theater or cultural event, or other activities. From the 558 surveys collected, 32 percent indicated they would spend money while doing at least one activity. Ten percent of the users reported they would spend money participating in more than one activity.

The average expected expenditure for all users surveyed was $53, with hotel spending the highest and restaurant spending second. Out-of-town visitors had an average expected expenditure of $113.

The IU Public Policy Institute utilized a formula developed by Rails to Trails Conservancy to calculate the estimated user spending. The following formula is calculated in three steps.

\[
\text{Anticipated Economic Impact} = \% \text{Total Users Anticipating Spending} \times \text{Average Expected Expenditures} \times \text{Annual Users}
\]

The first step is to divide the number of users surveyed who indicated they anticipated spending money by the total number of users surveyed; this results in the \% Total Users Anticipating Spending value. The second step is to divide the total expected expenditures reported by the respondents by the number of users anticipating spending. This value is the Average Expected Expenditures. The final step is to multiply the two values from steps one and two by the Annual Users estimate, which is obtained from the usage counters.

The anticipated economic impact was calculated for all categories for which respondents were asked to estimate spending.

Over half (63 percent) of the respondents spending money indicated the spending would occur at a restaurant.

At this level of estimated spending, the anticipated economic impact that any segment of the Cultural Trail would achieve ranges from $1 million to $3.57 million.

Table 2 details the anticipated economic impact of the Cultural Trail for the high usage segments. Users were surveyed near the counter locations, rather than in the highly congested areas, therefore these estimates are conservative and the total economic impact is likely higher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated Economic Impact</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>$1,590,211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>$944,117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stores</td>
<td>$662,903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$369,223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>$3,566,453</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2. Anticipated economic impact of the high usage segments of the Cultural Trail by spending category**
There are two considerations when analyzing the anticipated economic impact of the Cultural Trail. The first concerns the timing of survey collection. Surveys were not conducted after dark, which, according to the usage estimates, is peak usage for Fountain Square and high usage for Massachusetts Avenue. Therefore, if surveys were conducted during peak usage, there may be higher reported spending.

The second consideration is that the delay in construction of the Swarm Street art installation impacted the usage counts at the Fletcher Place counter. The counter was placed in a location that would provide an estimate of users who are coming from or going to downtown. With the Swarm Street art installation complete, it can be expected that the usage counts for this counter will increase within the coming year.

To estimate the economic impact of evening spending, based on the findings of economic impact studies, a $60 price point was used. The anticipated economic impact of the Massachusetts and Virginia Avenue segments with evening spending is roughly $1 million.

Focus on Value

Visitors to Indianapolis are attracted to the Cultural Trail.

Seventeen percent of the users surveyed were visitors from outside the Indianapolis Metro Area. The largest number of these visitors were from other parts of Indiana. Two out-of-state travelers were from Washington state.

Users were asked whether they were aware that they were using the Cultural Trail. Eight-four percent of visitors were aware of the Trail, compared to 75 percent of Indianapolis residents.

When asked if they would like to see anything else along the Trail, the most common response was for more restaurants and shops (35 percent). More art displays, community and social programs, and benches were also among the top five suggestions for additional amenities for the Trail.
Exercise and recreation is the primary reason for use.

While the majority of visitors indicated a reason other than the options provided in the survey for use of the Trail, 41 percent stated they were on the Trail for exercise and sightseeing. Given the continued emphasis on the need for increased physical activity, it is encouraging to see exercise and recreational usage as the primary use for those who were surveyed (Figure 3). As most users surveyed were walkers, these numbers underrepresent those running or biking on the Trail. For that reason, the number of users exercising on the Trail are likely higher.

In addition to understanding how individuals are using the Trail, frequency of use also is beneficial to understanding the impact of the Trail (Figure 4). Over half of the respondents use the Trail every day or several times a week. Those who use the Trail every day represent one-quarter of survey respondents. Using the Trail to commute to work was the second highest use for Indianapolis and metro area residents.

The majority of survey respondents indicated that they use the Cultural Trail between zero and 30 minutes (47 percent) per visit. Twenty-three percent indicated that they will use the Trail between 30 and 60 minutes.

While there are numerous benefits to exercising, the economic benefit is often overlooked. According to The Economic Benefit of Regular Exercise,1 employees who are active and exercise at least once a week will have lower health care costs than those who do not. These employees have 27 percent fewer sick days than co-workers who are sedentary.

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Focus on Community

Trail users feel safe on the Cultural Trail.

Regardless of the reason for using the Cultural Trail, feeling safe and secure while on it is vital. When asked, over 95 percent of respondents feel that the Cultural Trail is safe and secure. Business owners along Virginia Avenue have heard the same sentiment and are benefiting from this perception.

Comments from surveyed users supported the perception of safety. Several respondents mentioned the safety of the Trail, especially bike safety.

Trail usage along the Cultural Trail exceeds most other Indianapolis trails and greenways.

The sense of feeling safe and secure shows in trail usage. Usage estimates along the Trail exceed most other Indianapolis trails and greenways. Eight counters were deployed with at least one counter located along each of the main segments of the Trail (Map 2). Counter locations were selected in an effort to determine Trail usage and connectivity as opposed to counts at congested areas or at intersections. Therefore, these numbers are conservative estimates by segment; the actual usage is probably much higher. The lowest annual total (47,654) was recorded at Fletcher Place and the highest along Alabama Street (214,829). Table 3 shows the usage estimates at trail locations throughout Indianapolis.

Usage in Fountain Square is unique to all other segments of the Trail. Fountain Square has peak usage in the evening hours, between 6 and 7 pm, and many users after 11 pm. Other segments of the Trail have peak usage at 11 am and 5 pm. The number of eating and drinking establishments located directly on the Trail in Fountain Square may be the reason for the difference in peak usage along this segment.

Map 2. Cultural Trail usage counter locations, 2014

Table 3. Marion County Trail Usage Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trail</th>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>2014 Annual Usage Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Trail</td>
<td>Alabama Street</td>
<td>214,829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eiteljorg Museum</td>
<td>210,769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fletcher Place</td>
<td>47,654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fountain Square</td>
<td>129,097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Basile Corridor</td>
<td>78,875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IUPUI</td>
<td>164,892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mass Avenue</td>
<td>131,904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>North Street</td>
<td>110,681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monon Rail Trail</td>
<td>10th Street</td>
<td>134,605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>67th Street</td>
<td>471,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall Creek Trail</td>
<td>Bosart Avenue</td>
<td>42,189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Canal Tow Path</td>
<td>Butler University</td>
<td>48,696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasant Run Trail</td>
<td>Garfield Park</td>
<td>25,826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White River Trail</td>
<td>Michigan Ave Bridge</td>
<td>37,947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eagle Creek Trail</td>
<td>Reed Road</td>
<td>51,581</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“There is now a great deal of foot traffic and bicycles daily. We look forward to what the future holds!”
The Cultural Trail has increased the sense of community in the Fountain Square Cultural District.

Based on the responses from the business owner survey, 25 percent of the owners in Fountain Square and Fletcher Place indicated that the Trail did have an influence on their decision to locate in Fountain Square and Fletcher Place. Half of those establishments opened as construction on the Virginia Avenue segment of the Trail was beginning. Of the 14 eating and drinking establishments, 10 indicated that they had added or upgraded outdoor seating. Eight operators indicated that they have increased store hours to accommodate the increase in customers.

After reviewing the surveys, key informant interviews were conducted to gain a better understanding of the impact in the Fountain Square and Fletcher Place neighborhoods. The interviews with survey respondents were conducted to assess the perception of the Trail from the point of view of community leaders, business developers, nonprofit leaders, restaurateurs, real estate professionals, and developers. All of the participants have played an active role in the revitalization of Fountain Square and Fletcher Place, including assisting other business owners with renovations, and buying and repairing vacant homes.

The participants agreed the Trail has increased activity in the area and they enjoyed seeing more people walking around Fountain Square, especially when they visited stores and restaurants along Virginia Avenue. They felt that the Cultural Trail offered greater connectivity to Eli Lilly and downtown, creating a more positive atmosphere and luring in more affluent visitors to the southern end of the Trail.

One business owner suggested that the connectivity increased business in the area because people use the Trail during the day to explore, then return in the evening for the restaurants and nightlife. First time visitors to the area come back because of the atmosphere and connectivity that the Trail has helped to create.

A couple of owners that opened businesses around the same time as the Cultural Trail, stated they have enjoyed growing with the Trail. Others commented that the increased pedestrian and bicycle traffic along the Cultural Trail

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Photos above represent the transformation of the vacant lot at McCarty Street and Virginia Avenue. Photo on left captured June 2011. In 2014, it became home to The Hinge, a mixed-use development with apartments, a business center, a brewery, and a restaurant.

Photos below represent a vacant building and lot at Virginia Avenue and Merrill Street. Photo on left captured June 2011. The Mozzo Apartments replaced the vacant building and lot.
provides a distinct advantage for those businesses located right along the Trail.

Community leaders and business owners felt that a stronger collaboration between the merchant’s associations and Indianapolis Cultural Trail, Inc., would be beneficial when marketing community and cultural events. They would like to see more events similar to the Cultural Trail Grand Opening and scavenger hunt, whether completely hosted by the Cultural Trail or in collaboration with the neighborhoods. This coincides with the sentiments of the users surveyed, who stated they would like to see more community and cultural events.

The overall sentiment from the business owners is that the Cultural Trail has provided a great amenity to the city and to the neighborhoods. Many felt that it has helped the neighborhoods realize their potential and has created a new sense of community in Fountain Square.

Furthermore, the community leaders, owners, and Trail users surveyed expressed interest in expanding the Trail to Garfield Park and the University of Indianapolis. Many commented that the expansion would be beneficial to the city and all the communities connected. Owners noted that runners from the University of Indianapolis run to Fountain Square on a daily basis. The expansion would have the potential to spur revitalization and a stronger sense of community in the Garfield Park area, much like it has in the Fountain Square Cultural District.

Overall, everyone expressed excitement about the future of the Cultural Trail.
An Eye on the Future of the Cultural Trail

By all indications, the Indianapolis Cultural Trail is a tremendous success. It is well-liked and utilized. Likely economic impacts are already being felt in the community. Yet, there is potential for more. At the time of this assessment, there were at least three establishments preparing to open in the Fountain Square neighborhood. There appears to be an opportunity for greater collaboration and coordination with neighborhoods and business owners along the various segments of the Trail. Members of the community have expressed interest in seeing the Trail expand to other neighborhoods. This is a community asset with potential for far-reaching impact. With construction complete, the focus may now shift to maximizing the capacity of this world-class amenity.

Photo credit: IU Public Policy Institute

Indiana Pacers BikeShare station in Fountain Square
(BikeShare reported over 108,000 trips in its first year of operation)

This report is produced in partnership with Central Indiana Community Foundation and the Indianapolis Cultural Trail, Inc.

The IU Public Policy Institute delivers unbiased research and data-driven, objective, expert analysis to help public, private, and nonprofit sectors make important decisions that impact quality of life in Indiana and throughout the nation. A multi-disciplinary institute within the IU School of Public and Environmental Affairs, we also support the Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (IACIR).

For additional information please see the full report on the Institute website (www.policyinstitute.iu.edu)

To learn more about the Indianapolis Cultural Trail visit www.indyculturaltrail.org

For details on the Indiana Pacers BikeShare visit www.pacersbikeshare.org