

The Indianapolis Star May 21, 2003 Wednesday City final Edition

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HEADLINE: New **Cultural Trail** is on the right track

BODY:

Our position: Indy Greenways' hike and bike trails can be greatest asset.

Indianapolis is looking at a proposal to transform some congested city streets into Downtown hiking, biking, jogging and roller-skating trails.

Officials may decide whether to move forward with the \$20 million **Cultural Trail** project by fall.


There are downsides in addition to the cost of building and maintaining this project. Several streets will be narrowed, with vehicle lanes converted to lanes for hikers and bikers. Some on-street parking, always at a premium, will be lost. Inclusion of cyclists and skaters on the existing Central Canal Downtown walkway could create conflicts. But the advantages far outweigh the drawbacks.

Construction of other hiking and biking trails in this area has proved enormously successful. The Monon Trail is expected to attract nearly 2 million visits this year. It also is luring development and restoration, as well as increasing adjacent property values. The **Cultural Trail** will surely provide a similar boost to Downtown residential and retail development.

If this project is done properly -- and Indy Greenways has a reputation for doing things right -- the loss of auto lanes and parking to the **Cultural Trail** easily could be more than offset by fewer cars on Downtown streets.

It is a project that the Crossroads of America should fully support. We do.

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