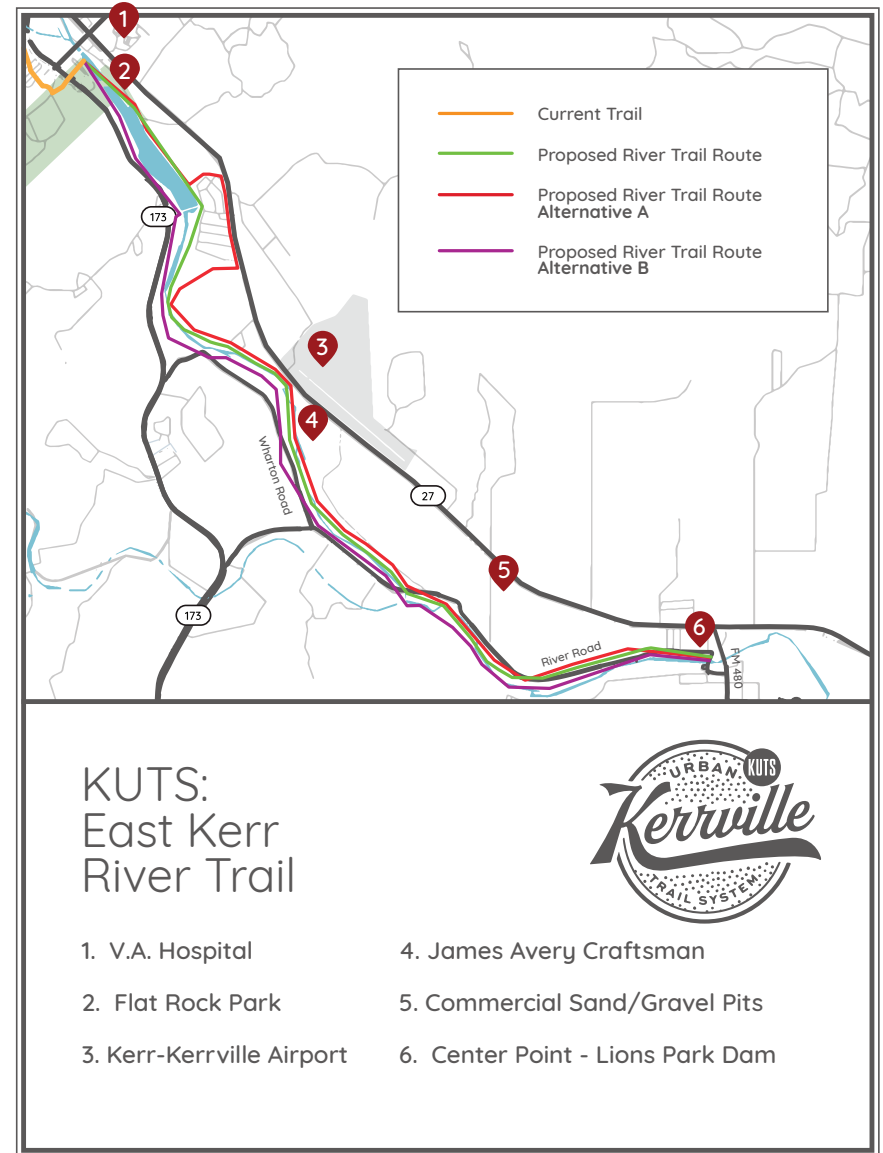


## A REGIONAL RIVER TRAIL.

The 6-mile trail that follows the Guadalupe River through the heart of Kerrville is a widely celebrated community asset. It provides access for people to nature, outdoor recreation, land conservation, an active transportation alternative, and a vector for economic development. But it can do so much more. It can become a regional asset - maybe even a segment of much greater Hill Country trail system.



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## **GIVE THE PEOPLE WHAT THEY WANT.**

In 2023, Texas voters created the Centennial Parks Conservation Fund with 76% of the vote. This \$1 billion fund will enable the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to buy land to create dozens of new state parks.

Voters in 9 Texas cities and counties approved another sum of \$823 million in bonds to support local parks and recreation facilities, including a \$20 million bond passed by our neighbors in Kendall County.

AND, in 2024 the Hill Country Headwaters Conservation Initiative secured \$20.8 million - the single-largest award ever for conservation easement funding in the Texas Hill Country.





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## **EXTEND THE RIVER TRAIL TO CENTER POINT.**

The eastern portions of Kerr County face the greatest pressures of growth and development within the Kerrville Micropolitan Area. Water resources, including ground water and our Guadalupe River and its tributaries, are at risk of depletion and irreparable damage due to development. Extending the River Trail to the eastern reaches of the county can provide a rare tool to help mitigate damage from growth that is difficult to control.



Shelby Cox Loveland



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## IT MIGHT BE MORE DOABLE THAN YOU THINK.

Starting at Flat Rock Park on the north side of the Guadalupe River and connecting to the recently installed Veterans Pathway, a new trail extension to Lion's Park dam in Center Point would add an additional 8 miles to the existing River Trail system. Rising above the floodplain to hurdle Flat Rock dam, dropping back down behind the Hwy 27 gravel pits and James Avery, then rising again to follow the right-of-way of River Road, the proposed route traverses 25 land parcels controlled by only 15 individual landowners, including Kerr County.



Jeremy Walther



## HOW DO WE MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

By convincing 15 landowners along 8 miles of the Guadalupe River to commit a small strip of their land to a conservation easement, a publicly accessible “blue corridor” can be preserved in perpetuity, forever protecting a continuous trail between Kerrville and Center Point.

This voluntary investment eliminates land purchase costs, and expands a vital resource and connection between two established communities.





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## TRAILS ATTRACT CREATIVE YOUTHFUL PEOPLE.

The share of teenagers with driver's licenses in the 16-19 age group declined from 64 percent in 1995 to just under 40 percent in 2021, according to the Federal Highway Administration. The downward trend in driving extends beyond the teen years, spanning Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012, and reaching into the millennial generation<sup>1</sup>. Many young people would rather bike or walk than pollute their planet. As these young people move away from car ownership and prefer to live in a walkable environment, it is likely that walkability and public transport will start to become one of the main factors driving property value.



<sup>1</sup> <https://thehill.com/policy/transportation/4119244-american-teens-are-driving-less/>



Jeremy Walther



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## TRAILS CAN PAY FOR THEMSELVES.

Because of its magnitude, a creative approach and broad reach of investment will be required for this trail project. Similar regional trail systems in other parts of the country have had success in leveraging local, state, and federal funding with private investment. These types of projects also generate high annual economic returns on investment, creating continued value for local communities. Raising an initial investment from multiple local funders demonstrates wide community support in state and federal funding applications.



Shelby Cox Loveland



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## TRAILS HELP PROTECT THE RIVER.

Extending the River Trail to Center Point expands protected lands along the Guadalupe River. Peripheral efforts that support the trail, such as tree planting and preservation, can help intercept run-off, increase soil retention, enhance biodiversity, and reduce peak flows during flood events. These improvements not only enhance the user experience, but also reduce flood mitigation costs.



Aaron Yates





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## TRAILS ARE GOOD FOR BUSINESS.

Outdoor assets like trail systems can help places recruit top talent and, in turn, attract business. According to the publication Small Biz Survival, there are several rising trends that make moving to a small town and growing a business a great opportunity.<sup>1</sup> There is also a documented trend of young creatives (often entrepreneurs) relocating from urban areas to vibrant “micropolitan areas” - places with both rural qualities and urban amenities<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.forbes.com/sites/bernhardschroeder>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.texasmonthly.com/the-culture/high-rents-rural-renaissance-new-generation-is-reviving-small-town-texas/>



Shelby Cox Loveland



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## TRAILS AS WILDLIFE COORIDORS.

Trails that join one natural landscape to another allow animals to migrate between habitats for breeding purposes, to access food, water and shelter, or to escape extreme weather conditions. By preventing habitat fragmentation, cooridors can help reduce the incidence of animal/vehicle collisions and urban encroachment.



Sean Mecredy



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## **TRAILS MITIGATE THE IMPACTS OF GROWTH.**

Building an 8-mile trail extension will add acres of land into a permanent conservancy. This 'seed land' could grow into a network of private land along springs, tributaries, and rivers throughout Kerr County. Under centralized management, this ever-growing network of protected land will never be bulldozed, depleted, or degraded in any way that harms the Guadalupe River or the ecosystem that surrounds it.



Kurt Griesbach



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## WHAT IT WILL TAKE.

It takes a village. Based on construction costs of recent River Trail extensions, anticipated budget for this segment is \$10MM assuming a significant percentage of donated conservation easements and utilization of existing rights-of-way. In addition to an initial capital fund, a trust would be established to develop and execute both recurring and long-term management plans to ensure a robust and vibrant River Trail system lives for generations to come.



Shelby Cox Loveland