

## **KU KUTS Update September 2023**

An update on the slow and steady progress of KUTS. Two ongoing trail projects, one stagnant one, and one new one.

### **KUTS Clay South - Water/Clay**

A second KUTS mural was installed on the third floor of the parking garage this April - JUAN CARLOS - thanks to funding from the Kerrville CVB. This makes four murals within a half-block of the intersection. Festive.

KPUB and the City have started construction for improvements at the Clay/Water intersection. The plan is to bury overhead transmission lines, add a 3-way stop sign, repave the asphalt, upgrade the handicap ramps, add a custom crosswalk, and install string lights between the Voelkel Building and the Parking Garage.

We have a crosswalk design approved, cash in hand (thanks to grants from the Stevens Foundation and James Avery), and a contractor standing by for our portion. Anticipated completion date for this intersection is October/November/December of this year. We'll see.

### **KUTS Doyle**

Fabrication of the first KUTS DOYLE Trail marker is installed at the site of the Pleasure Garden, thanks to City of Kerrville Streets crews and Doyle Community Center.

This is the first site we are targeting on a 1.25 mile "music trail" connecting all 7 historic juke joint sites in Doyle.

Now that we've figured out how to install the first marker, we're working on landowner permissions and draft content for the remaining 6, maybe knocking out installation by the end of the year (maybe).

We're leaning on the City to allow a continuous purple stripe to be painted on the pavement for the length of the Trail, but they aren't convinced. Not yet. Maybe 75 voices in support of the stripe will help.

### **KUTS Singing Wind**

No progress on KUTS SINGING WIND. Many are the moving parts for this Schreiner University controlled easement between Singing Wind Drive and East Main, which could become the final puzzle piece to create a trail connecting Tivy High School to the River Trail.

### **KUTS Story Trees**

This one's growing legs, a testament that sometimes good things can sprout from tragedy.

First - a reminder of the idea that's been kicking around for a while, copied and pasted from the last update:

*Another opportunity is development of a downtown heritage tree trail. This idea was planted decades ago and would require coordination with at least 4 other groups. Ideas abound - execution is scarce.*

"Story Trees" - essentially Kerr County heritage trees - that are best suited to telling stories of cultural history, natural processes, human inspiration, or even tall tales. Told factually or in wild poetry. Selected trees would receive a specially designed marker, permanently installed in the ground near the tree.

KUTS will be installing markers at three heritage trees on the River Trail as it rises from Quinlan Creek onto Schreiner University campus - a Live Oak, a Red Oak and an American Elm. These will be our pilot trees to launch the Story Tree program - thanks to Schreiner University.

We're also working with Riverside Nature Center and others on trees in other parts of Kerrville.

KUTS would install and maintain the markers, and be responsible for graffiti or damage remediation. Markers may be removed by KUTS at landowners request. A template agreement between landowner and KUTS has been drafted by attorney John Carlson and is ready for use.

After markers for the initial trees are installed, we will invite the public and other entities to nominate trees and submit "stories" for consideration. The link, which is live cuz jumping the gun is underrated.

<https://kerrvilleurbantrailsystem.org/storytrees>

We will also be seeking funding partnerships with individuals and organizations interested in tree protection, community development, and historic preservation. Schreiner University is in. Holloway Plumbing is in. Pint & Plow is in. Who else.

In addition to funders, qualified volunteers may be enlisted to help maintain these trees - perhaps some trimming or supplemental watering. A village supports its elders.

Sometimes we don't even know that characters of our shared story need protection. Well, they do. Especially the living ones.

Stay true amigos,

Jeremy