

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. Why can't the trail be built next to the rail?**

Ans. Cost. An estimated 29 million dollars would be needed to bridge all of the steep slopes and drainage ditches alongside the tracks. Current grants (around \$4 million) were provided for a trail primarily separate from automobile traffic. Routing the trail around steep terrain next to the rails and on streets would violate the terms of the grant for one reason, and secondly, would provide a trail where less than 50% of the trail would be separate from automobile traffic. Further, the 4 million dollar grant has been pending for 10 years and will likely be lost if not used soon.

### **2. Who owns all the land, rail and ties of the Kellar Branch?**

Ans. The Village of Peoria Heights owns 2 miles and Peoria owns 6 miles of the land, ties and rails.

### **3. Who would build and maintain the trail?**

Ans. The Peoria Park District (PPD) would subcontract the construction, while PPD crews would be responsible for the maintenance of the trail.

### **4. What can I do to make this trail a reality?**

Ans. Check the website at [www.ritrail.org](http://www.ritrail.org) for the next monthly meeting of the Recreational Trail Advocates and volunteer to work on the many projects or call George M. Burrier at 309-266-5085. If you are a resident of Peoria contact Mayor Ardis and your council person to let them know of your support. If you reside in Peoria Heights contact Mayor Allen and your village trustees to let them know of your support. Contact Senator Durbin or Senator Obama's office. Contact Congressman LaHood's office.

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### **5. Will this trail have any effect on my property value?**

Ans. Take a walk just north of Alta and observe the size and number of houses that have been built since 1990 when the trail was first opened. The trail has improved the quality of life and is desirable. We believe the reactivation of the Kellar Branch will actually hurt chances for additional commercial and residential development in Junction City in Peoria and Peoria Heights. A multitude of studies from trails and communities

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across the country from the 1980's until today demonstrate the positive effects on property values and salability of homes near trails.

### **6. Why is this section of the Kellar Branch between Pioneer Parkway and Harvard Street so important?**

Ans. This section will link many population areas of Peoria and allow non-motorized traffic to reach the Peoria riverfront. Additionally, it links the 29 mile Rock Island Trail up with the River Trail Of Illinois in East Peoria and the Morton Community Trail allowing people to ride from Morton to Toulon with minimum vehicle contact.

11/12/07

**7. Why is Central Illinois Railroad Company (CIRY) restoring the Kellar Branch?**

Ans. In its discussions with the City of Peoria CIRY has failed to state its reasons for the restoration.

**8. Will the trail make my tax bill go up?**

Ans. Trail development dollars come primarily from development grants. The largest grant has a 20% local match, that is, PPD pays only 20% of the cost of development. All matching money has been set aside already. The PPD projects an annual maintenance cost of roughly \$15,000 per year based on current maintenance cost of the 2 mile completed trail section north of Pioneer Parkway. So the short answer is : Yes, by literally a few pennies.

**9. Is CIRY paying anything to Peoria or Peoria Heights for the use of the Kellar Branch or the newly built \$2.3 million Union Pacific rail from the west to Carver Lumber Company and the Pioneer Park area?**

Ans. Peoria demanded that CIRY pay it 12% of the appraised real estate value of the Kellar Branch which is permitted under the STB guidelines of the 6 miles of right-of-way it owns and to sign an operating agreement which was to be done by July 27, 2007. CIRY has refused to do either at this point. Peoria Heights has not yet made a formal demand for its portion.

**10. Can CIRY continue to store oil tank cars on the Kellar Branch?**

Ans. The attorney Peoria has hired feels that Peoria can put a stop to this practice.

**11. Are there any economic projects dependent on the conversion of the Kellar Branch to a trail?**

Ans. Mayor Allen feels that allowing rail cars to return to the Kellar Branch will greatly reduce the chances for the commercial re-development of the vacant Cohen's building. Also the potential trailhead grant for \$390,600 will be lost if there is no trail in place by January 1, 2010. Finally, the multi-million dollar commercial and residential plans of Junction Ventures at Junction City in Peoria are on hold until the trail becomes a reality.

**12. Will the issue of privacy be addressed by the Peoria Park District?**

Ans. Yes. The PPD will work with individual homeowners adjacent to the trail and will provide some form of landscape screening if requested.

If you have a question not answered, you contact George Burrier at [gburrier@mtco.com](mailto:gburrier@mtco.com) or you can call him at 309-266-5085.