



# City of New Castle, Indiana

Greg York, Mayor

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February \_\_, 2018

Honorable Eric Holcomb  
Governor of Indiana

Mr. Cameron Clark, Director  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources

Ms. Elaine Bedel  
President, Indiana Economic Development Corporation

A regional project worthy of support – the Mounds Greenway

Governor Holcomb, Mr. Clark, and Ms. Bedel:

It has been my great pleasure to serve as the Mayor of New Castle -- my hometown -- since 2012. Born and raised here, I have witnessed both the successes and struggles of our community and the region. While our city, like all communities, has had its share of challenges, our city's -- and our region's -- assets are many. As such, I believe that New Castle and our neighboring cities and towns in East Central Indiana have a real opportunity to come together as a region to leverage the tremendous assets found within our respective communities and thrive once again in the new economy. In New Castle, those assets include our historic downtown, our expanding network of parks and trails, the presence of a nearby state park and quality fish and wildlife area, and a variety of passionate community organizations working towards the common goal of making New Castle a better place to live, work, and do business.

As Mayor, I have long recognized the importance of building a strong quality of life for our residents. Projects like our New Castle Arts Park and Pavilion, efforts to improve pedestrian connectivity in our downtown core along with general efforts to improve the walkability of our community, the revamping of our historic downtown pursuant to our excellent downtown development strategy, and the great work of Healthy Communities Henry County to expand trails in both New Castle and Henry County, including work to connect New Castle to the Cardinal Greenway via the Wilbur Wright Trail, are all projects that contribute to enhanced quality of life and quality of place here in New Castle.

While things are trending upward for our community, New Castle has not been immune to the economic forces of the past several decades, namely the decline of the American manufacturing sector and the subsequent population loss being experienced by many of Indiana's rural communities as people move to places that are perceived as offering a higher quality of life. It is with this backdrop that the Regional Cities Initiative was first proposed. While the East Central region was not chosen for funding in the initial round of Regional Cities, I commend the state's effort to incentivize regional thinking and look forward to continued collaboration between New Castle and our neighboring communities in East Central Indiana!

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That is why I write you today to urge your support of an excellent project that will further build regional quality of place while connecting us to our neighboring communities in East Central Indiana and further abroad. That project is the Mounds Greenway, a linear park and trail following the West Fork White River from Muncie to Anderson, and, ultimately, Indianapolis. New Castle recognizes the value of projects that contribute to cities that are forever beautiful and green, so I particularly appreciate that the Mounds Greenway would conserve the free-flowing White River, its forested floodplain, and the historic resources found along its path, meanwhile connecting communities and contributing to economic well-being on a regional scale. Projects like the Mounds Greenway are critically important for not only economic vitality, but also for ensuring that our region's wonderful natural areas remain intact for the enjoyment of current and future generations. What's more, completing this fifteen-mile "missing link" between Anderson and Muncie sets the stage for a regional trail network of remarkable dimension.

Consider the possibilities: from New Castle, one could travel along the Wilbur Wright Trail from its origin at the Henry County YMCA to its eventual terminus at the Cardinal Greenway – the state's longest hard surface trail -- near Losantville. From this juncture, one has two options: turning south and taking the Cardinal to its southern terminus in Richmond or heading north to Muncie. Assuming the latter, upon reaching Muncie, the intrepid adventurer would either continue on to the Cardinal's northern terminus in Gaston or turn southwest from Muncie traveling along the Mounds Greenway through Delaware County to Madison County and Anderson. From Anderson, the traveler would continue south and west on the Mounds Greenway passing through both Madison and Hamilton Counties before reaching the Mounds Greenway's southern terminus at the White River Greenway in Indianapolis. Put simply, with its connection to the Cardinal Greenway – and to other local trail projects -- the Mounds Greenway fills a gap in an existing trail network and connects a regional system of several hundred miles. Notably, the project would provide a trail connection between the East Central Indiana communities of New Castle, Anderson, Chesterfield, Daleville, Yorktown, Muncie, Gaston and Richmond, and the Central Indiana communities of Noblesville, Carmel, Fishers, Westfield (via the Midland Trace trail), and Indianapolis.

The Mounds Greenway *Economic, Health and Environmental Benefits Analysis* forecasts that the Anderson and Muncie segment alone would produce \$13 million in annual economic, health and environmental benefits, boost neighboring property values by nearly \$33 million, and lead to over \$10 million in construction spending. These forecasted benefits are in line with the actual economic outcomes being produced by existing greenway projects throughout the U.S, and given the ultimate goal of a fully connected Muncie to Indianapolis Mounds Greenway along the West Fork White River, the potential future impact would be far greater.

Recognizing its potential as a regional outdoor recreation, economic, and quality of life project of substantial scope for New Castle and the East Central and Central Indiana regions, I am declaring my support for the Mounds Greenway and urge you to join in making this proposal a reality. Thank you.

Very truly yours,

  
Greg York,  
Mayor