



## Information Sheet WRT Phase 1 - Lagro to Wabash

### Wabash River Trail, Inc. – Project Sponsor

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The Wabash River Trail Inc. is a not-for-profit organization formed to support the planning, design and development of the Wabash River Trail (WRT). WRT funds trail planning, design and development with private donations and grants.

### Wabash River Trail (WRT) Vision

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The vision of the WRT is to create a multi-use trail along the Wabash River corridor. The mission of the WRT is to provide a quality of life improvement designed to capitalize on the natural beauty of the Wabash River, boost economic development, and promote community wellness.

### WRT Route

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WRT conducted a study in 2015 to determine if it was feasible to construct a trail linking Peru, Wabash, and Huntington. The findings of the study indicated there were multiple viable routes where the trail could be constructed.

The Lagro to Wabash section was identified as the first phase of the WRT and planning for this phase commenced in 2016. This section was divided into two phases – Phase 1A in Lagro, and Phase 1B Lagro to Wabash. The preliminary design for Phase 1A is complete and the preliminary design for Phase 1B will commence in late summer/early fall 2017.

### Description of Lagro Section – Phase 1A Preliminary Plan

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Phase 1A is approximately 1.5 miles in length located in the Town of Lagro. Preliminary plans have been prepared and permit applications submitted. The May 8 Public Information session covered the details of the construction proposed as part of Phase 1A.

### Phase 1B Goals

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The Lagro to Wabash segment is approximately 5 miles long. It is proposed to extend from the west end of Basin Street in Lagro to a point of connection with the trail in Paradise Spring Park in Wabash. The goal is to design this section of the trail to avoid wetlands, sensitive habitats and minimize impacts to natural resources and adjacent property to the greatest extent possible.

### Local Coordination & Zoning

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The WRT has coordinated with the Town of Lagro, Duke Energy, Norfolk and Southern Railroad, the City of Wabash, and others in the development process to date. The WRT has attended several Lagro Town Council meetings to provide updates on trail planning and progress over the past 18 months. As an outdoor recreation facility, the trail falls into the land use category of linear park for zoning purpose. Based on this classification a zoning variance is not required for any portion of the Phase 1 trail.

### Property Acquisition

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**WRT will only build trail on property obtained from willing sellers.** WRT cannot and will not make any exceptions. If property owners along the preferred route decline to sell or donate their property, WRT will develop route around options (including the use of County Roads) to avoid these parcels. In instances where WRT is planning trail development on public property



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(i.e. Town of Lagro, City of Wabash, etc.) a Memorandum of Agreement with the City/Town will be executed permitting WRT to develop the trail on public property.

### Safety

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Safety is the top priority of WRT Inc. The trail will be designed to meet all federal safety standards. Emergency access along the trail, including improved access for river rescue, will be provided. Hours of operation will be from dawn to dusk. WRT has initiated coordination with the local Conservation Officer, Sheriff, and other law enforcement regarding development of a trail safety plan and program. When the WRT is routed along county roads, the route will be clearly marked for trail users and motorists.

### Maintenance

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WRT Inc. has a maintenance budget worked into the plan for future improvements and repairs.

### Insurance & Liability

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Indiana law protects adjacent property owners located along the WRT from liability for injury of someone using the trail. WRT Inc. will carry general liability insurance related to the long-term maintenance and operation of the trail.

### Fish & Wildlife

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The WRT will be developed to highlight river views and natural features. The trail will be designed to avoid impacts to sensitive resources. WRT has hired ecologists to conduct field studies and coordinate with IDNR and USF&WS to make sure the WRT is constructed in a way that does not impair the river corridor habitat. WRT will coordinate with local user groups to establish best management practices for WRT related to hunting, fishing, and other regulated outdoor recreation activities.

### Permits

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Different permits are required for different segments of the trail. IDNR Construction in a Floodway, County Floodplain, IDEM Rule 5, INDOT Encroachment, Duke Encroachment, and State Fire Marshall permits are required for Phase 1A. These permit applications have been submitted for the Lagro Phase, and some have been received with others pending final approval.

Permit applications for these and any other required permits for Phase 1B will be submitted after the final alignment for this segment is set.

### Benefits of the WRT

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Trails provide a myriad of benefits for local communities. Trash and debris is removed from the corridor and as a result illegal uses (drugs, dumping, vandalism, etc.) are exposed and eliminated. Close to home access to a trail has been shown to improve community health and local quality of life. Additionally, trails act as economic engines with trail tourism spurring local business development. In many communities, trails provide communities with a sense of pride and a newfound identity to help them jumpstart revitalization. **Many of these things have already started happening in Lagro!**

For more information, or to post a question about the trail, visit WRT's website at [www.Wabashrivertrail.org](http://www.Wabashrivertrail.org)