

The VYBE KYLE

Trail-Oriented Development

As the City of Kyle continues to grow at unprecedented rates, the demand from its citizens for quality of life has grown exponentially. In particular, the demand for a robust trails network has continued to grow as evidenced in the annual household survey report. Additionally, the City has a unique opportunity to be part of the Great Springs Project which connects the Emerald Crown Trail from Austin to San Antonio. With development occurring so rapidly, it is imperative that the City accelerate the planning and construction of its Citywide trail network. The City has worked with the Great Springs Project, the private sector, state departments, and others to pave the way for the adoption and implementation of this Trails Master Plan. The City has also held open houses and other forums to collect resident input, and a task force was created to identify best practices that have helped shape this plan as follows.

The City of Kyle Trail's Task Force and Kyle City Council have thoroughly investigated world-class trails systems to bring together best practices in the development of the Kyle Trails Master Plan. This succinct Trails Plan forms the living framework of an incredible trail system which is anticipated to define the future of the City of Kyle.

Our research suggests that the best urban/suburban trail systems bring people together while offering a variety of experiences and entertainment. The best trails also provide as many opportunities as possible for recreation, exercise, and even transit.

The Kyle trail system is an extension of the City's park system, and is meant to connect people to recreation, commerce, and neighborhoods. Every resident of Kyle should be able to access the trail from a trailhead that is close to them. Every resident should have access to commercial nodes, or Vybes, that offer a unique experience of shopping, dining, relaxation, and fun. This connection to Vybes has led to the recommended name of the trail system as The Vybe Kyle.



The Vybe employs a new term labeled *TOD: Trail-Oriented Development*. In other words, shopping centers, restaurants, neighborhoods, parks, and other areas along the trail should be oriented toward the trail rather than the automobile. Indeed, we believe that foot traffic equals retail sales and proximity to people equals experiences. Developments along the Vybe are encouraged to face the trail as well as to provide destination placemaking activities. These Vybes can include a, etc. In a nutshell: destinations. Kyle residents deserve the highest quality of life

which they will be able to obtain via The Vybe.

The Vybe is greater than the sum of its parts. It's a living system that continues to grow with more individual Vybes and greater use. To encourage as much use as possible, the built trail will be constructed 12' in width to accommodate golf carts and other neighborhood electric vehicles. This width provides plenty of safe space for all to enjoy the trails. The trail will have 2' clear zones on each side for additional safety and utility placements.

The attached Exhibit shows The Vybe including proposed locations for individual Vybes. Multiple developments along The Vybe are already working on plans to incorporate TOD in their designs. These unique Vybes make the trail a destination for locals and visitors alike and may form the basis for the City's future branding efforts. The Exhibit also shows proposed locations for trailheads which include bathrooms, parking, and charging stations.

Vybes

Individual Vybes should be unique to the developments where they are located. Much latitude is provided to each development to encourage variety and attraction, but each Vybe is encouraged to include: decorative pavers in the herringbone configuration, raised speed tables, grand entry signage, sufficient golf cart and vehicular parking, and charging stations. To encourage continuity along The Vybe and avoid visitor confusion, all Vybes should include activities throughout the day until 9 PM. Certain restaurants and other retail may open early and close later.



The City of Kyle has a unique architectural style that should be incorporated as much as possible throughout the City. In particular, developers should consult the City's outsourced architectural firm to ensure cohesion of design while remaining unique to the Vybe. Developers wishing to build Vybes can approach the City of Kyle for special district financing. Restaurants within Vybes may also be eligible for the City's restaurant incentive program.

Look and Feel

The Vybe will feature multiple distinct environments such as urban, natural, wooded, residential, commercial, etc. Vybes may also include unique signage, raised speed tables with the herringbone brick pattern (Kyle Style), art installations and other features to differentiate themselves from other Vybes. Along The Vybe certain features may include community gardens, enhanced landscaping, benches, swings, ponds, fitness stations, etc. To encourage visual variety as well as to enhance safety, long sections of trail should be built with a slight serpentine design.

Built trail segments through wooded areas or close to landscaping should be installed with a 2' root barrier to avoid future heaving of individual panels. Plantings should be kept at least 2' from the trail to avoid branches and root intrusion. Areas throughout Kyle where additional trail space is available should also include natural walking trails as much as possible. These trails may be made up of other surfaces such as crushed granite or natural surfacing. Natural areas should be cleared and maintained to minimize root, branch, and other hazards. Natural trail segments should also be planned with enough distance from the built trail to maximize enjoyment on each trail type.

The Vybe will keep signage and pavement markings to a minimum. However, it will feature smart light poles every 100'. These poles will include charging ports, wi-fi, security cameras, and LED lights. Power for each pole is made available via an electrical conduit that is installed during trail construction. A second conduit will also be installed for middle-mile fiber optic cables. A third conduit should be installed for future utilities. Where needed, the trail easement will also be utilized for reclaimed water and other utility needs.



Underpasses should be built with a minimum 12'x10' (12' wide by 10' tall) concrete box culvert. RGB LED lighting should be installed in each culvert and underpass. Bridges over the railroad and creeks should be built with steel and include decorative design elements. Engineering will be needed for culverts and bridges, as well as other areas which may need additional design work to accommodate waterways or ADA accessibility. The Vybe may be built through ephemeral creek channels and closed during rain events.

Depending on their location, trail segments may need to be built with reinforced steel. This is most likely needed in clay soils and waterways. Retaining walls may be built utilizing Redi-Rock or decorative jersey barriers.

Safety

Many modes of recreation are allowed on The Vybe, including golf carts, neighborhood electric vehicles, personal scooters, running, jogging, walking, cycling, skateboarding, and roller blading. Any motorized or electric vehicle must be governed at 20 MPH and be street legal to ensure safety. All vehicles must be permitted through the City of Kyle. Individuals 15 years old (with a valid learner's permit) and older may operate a motorized vehicle on The Vybe. Golf carts always yield to bikes and both to pedestrians.

In areas where motorized trail vehicles utilize the City's road network, all operators must hug the right edge of the roadway. These vehicles may not travel on roadways signed above 35 MPH. Vehicles may not drive on City sidewalks unless specifically authorized. ATV's and automobiles are not permitted on The Vybe.

The Vybe is being designed to minimize roadway crossings as much as feasible. Where crossings must occur, safety beacons such as HAWK Signals should be implemented. The Vybe has been planned along greenbelts, under bridges and culverts, along easements, etc. to minimize vehicle conflicts. However, in the event a trail segment cannot be feasibly constructed, motorized vehicles will be able to utilize local roadways at or under 35 MPH while pedestrians will take advantage of narrower sidewalks. Such utilization of existing roadways also reduces construction costs for trail construction. The Vybe is not intended to function as an alternate transportation network.

Policies/Ordinances

To ensure the success of The Vybe, the City of Kyle may need to amend certain ordinances and develop additional policies. Ordinance revisions may include altering the parking ratio for developments, allowing two golf cart stalls to substitute for every required vehicle stall. Golf cart parking should be encouraged closest to retail and dining establishments for both safety and convenience.

The Vybe should be included as a critical component of each of the City's master plans and be available as a public layer through the City's GIS and website. A navigable map should be developed and included as part of the City's mobile app. A registration fee should be required every three years for golf carts and neighborhood electric vehicles.

All individuals and vehicles utilizing The Vybe must comply with the City's noise ordinance. The Vybe should be marketed for economic development and tourism purposes, not only for Vybes but for complementary businesses.

Estimated Costs

This current Exhibit shows 51.3 miles of proposed golf cart trails with 12.1 miles of sidewalk connectors already in place and 9.2 miles of non-golf cart nature trails. As much as possible, the cost of engineering and construction should be placed on individual developments and Vybes. This can be achieved via special district financing.

It is recommended that the City hire a four-person concrete crew to begin work on The Vybe. This crew can also be utilized to build missing sidewalk connections throughout Kyle, as well as to replace damaged trail and sidewalk panels. The crew will also need a cement truck, a skid steer, and tools for forming, smoothing, and sawing. An estimated budget for personnel, equipment, and concrete, is \$500,000 per year.

City staff has been successful identifying and obtaining state funding for the trail through the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Additional state and federal funding has been and will continue to be sought as part of this initiative. The citizens of Kyle also approved a \$2 million bond for trail construction. The City has requested an additional \$2 million from Hays County.

Developments including Vybes can immediately incorporate recommendations from this plan into their designs and may begin construction without delay.

Maintenance

As the Vybe is continually developed, ongoing maintenance will be paramount to ensure safety and cleanliness.



Additionally, adjacent structures to The Vybe such as benches, equipment, signage, light poles, bridges, culverts, etc. should be routinely inspected. By utilizing concrete to construct The Vybe the trail will have much greater longevity than utilizing other surfaces. However, concrete panels may heave, spall or crack which will require panel replacement. An annual budget should be identified for ongoing maintenance and a Vybe maintenance crew should be employed for these purposes.

Sections of The Vybe through HOAs and Vybes should be maintained by the underlying property owners. The City should require and enforce ongoing maintenance to ensure all trail sections are level, clean and in good repair. The Vybe should be inspected continuously to ensure proper function and cleanliness. The City's Parks and Recreation Board should be involved in recommending policy and ordinance revisions to the City Council.

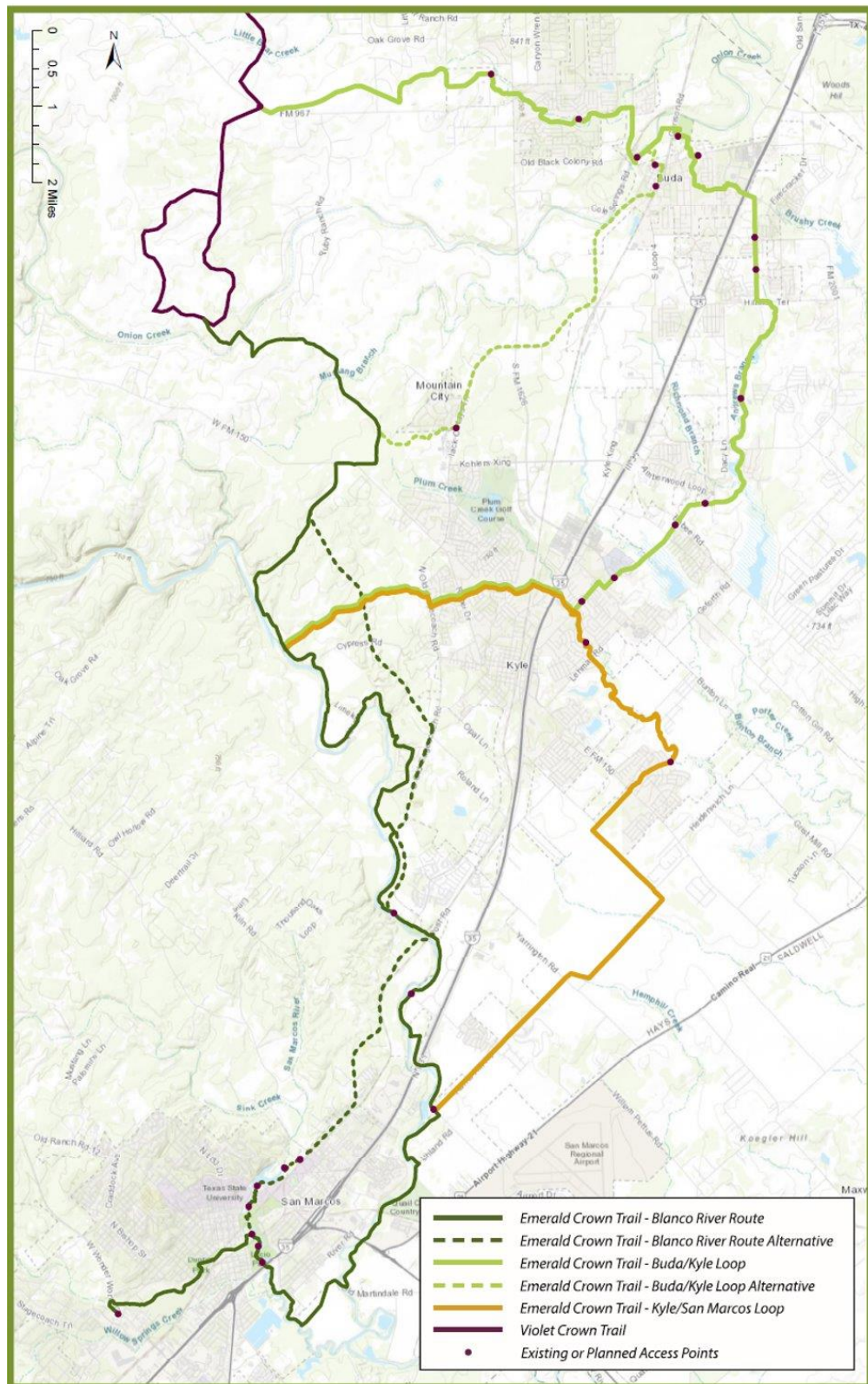
Benefits

No other single type of investment impacts as many aspects of our lives, including health, safety, mobility, recreation, environment, and economic development. More than 140 studies have shown the benefits of trails and greenways (<https://headwaterseconomics.org/trail/>).

In particular, findings include:

- Trails can generate business impacts and create new jobs by attracting visitors, especially overnight visitors.
- Local trail users often use community trails multiple times per week, and trails are a valuable part of residents' quality of life.
- Trails are often associated with higher property value, especially when a trail is designed to provide neighborhood access and maintain residents' privacy.
- Trails are associated with increased physical activity and improved public health, especially in rural places without other safe places to exercise.
- A recent study found that, on average, every \$1.00 of trail construction supports \$1.72 annually from local business revenue, sales tax revenue, and benefits related to health and transportation (<https://itre.ncsu.edu/focus/bike-ped/sup-economic-impacts/>).

Violet Crown / Emerald Crown Trail



City of Kyle Proposed Trail Network

