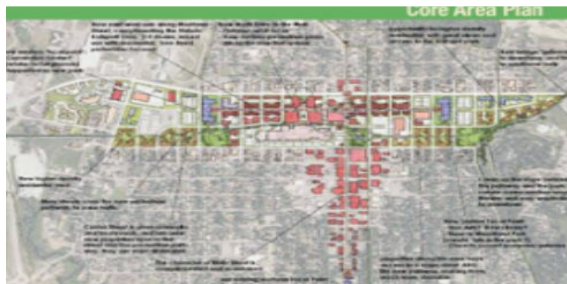


# From Old Railways to New Path

Developing the Critical Path Plan for **Kalispell, Montana**



## Project Summary

**Community:** Kalispell, Montana

**Technical Assistance:** Strategic Action Plan

**Former Use:** Freight Rail Corridor

**Future Use:** Multipurpose Rail-Trail

In northwest Montana, the small city of Kalispell is nestled within thousands of acres of scenic woodlands and lakes that provide visitors with year-round outdoor recreational amenities, like Glacier National Park.

Downtown Kalispell includes a 2-mile freight rail corridor that once served multiple industries such as lumber mills and oil/gas wholesalers. Land use around the tracks has shifted and now only two businesses use the line, which has left several neglected properties and a safety issue for pedestrian and bike crossings.



*Future trail will link Depot Park, shopping center, and new senior housing community in a live-work-play setting.*

Kalispell and its project partners developed a reuse plan for the downtown Core Revitalization Area under a grant from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Brownfields Area-Wide Planning program. Additional grants from U.S. EPA, U.S. Department of Transportation, U.S. Economic Development Administration as well as local and regional resources further supported their efforts to relocate the rail line and revitalize the industrially-oriented area into a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly neighborhood.

### The Community's Challenge

With such a large and complex project underway, Kalispell found they needed help navigating the trail conversion process.

### EPA's Land Revitalization Technical Assistance

In 2018, EPA's Land Revitalization Program provided contractor technical assistance to help Kalispell develop a plan for converting the rail line into a multi-purpose bicycle and pedestrian trail. After a one-day workshop and several work sessions with key stakeholders and Kalispell staff, EPA's contractors prepared a Critical Path Plan for the rail-to-trail conversion.

The Critical Path Plan included detailed action steps for each key phase of the project (Planning and Design, Acquisition, Construction, and Operation and Maintenance), with the goal of operating a fully functioning trail 4–5 years after acquiring the corridor.



*Overview of the key steps in Critical Path Plan for rail-trail development*

The Critical Path Plan is helping the City realize its vision for safe and enhanced pedestrian and bicycle access that connects the community to regional trail networks and spurs additional revitalization.

For more information, contact Stephanie Shen, EPA Region 8 Brownfields Program, at [shen.stephanie@epa.gov](mailto:shen.stephanie@epa.gov).