

## Friends of the Jackson County Trails

The Jackson County Trails Committee was formed in the late 1990s to develop a trail system throughout Jackson County. The committee is committed to improving the way of life in Jackson County with dreams of bringing families, friends and communities together.

Our mission statement is to provide economic opportunity for our county, improve the quality of life, and provide a safer means of outdoor activity, including connecting communities in and outside of Jackson County, connecting the Jackson County Parks and the Minnesota State Parks when making plans.

The purpose of the Friends of the Jackson County Trails is to act as an advisory committee to promote an active partnership among landowners, schools, citizens and communities in planning Jackson County Trails.



### Jackson Trail Committee Members

- Joann Asa: President
- Lynne Anderson: Treasurer
- Luke Ewald: Secretary
- Jeff Johnson
- Dave DeJong
- Tim Stahl
- Jeremy Bartosh
- Sam Espy
- Matt Skaret
- Phil Nasby
- Phil Markman
- Gordy Willett
- Josh Schuetz

- Alyssa Anderson
- Jacqueline Knips
- Craig Rubis
- Shawn Haken
- Mary Anne Finstad
- Steve Handevitd
- Heidi Turner
- Cheryl Holte
- Kirk Dunlavey
- Paul Meium
- Wilma Pell
- Davin Amara
- Alisha Flemming
- Rosemary Schultz
- Thomas Nelson
- Jackson Chamber



Active Living videos were a common way to engage the community during COVID19.



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### Jackson Active Living Plan Update

The Jackson Active Living Plan was adopted in June 2015 as part of a partnership with the City of Jackson, Southwest Regional Development Commission, The Friends of the Jackson County Trails, and the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership. Active Living Plans are developed to promote physical activity and prevent obesity by modifying the built environment. Several goals have been accomplished since 2015 leading the way to update the plan in March 2020. Survey questions included:

- Create a safe environment for walking and biking.
- Enhance bicycling and walking education in Jackson.
- Install signage, markings, and safety interventions for bicyclists and walkers.
- Enhance community attributes to create an inviting atmosphere.
- Increase community awareness of benefits of physical activity/fitness.
- Collaborate with city on policy changes to encourage active living.
- Identify senior active living and basic needs.
- Identify youth active living and basic needs.
- Increase community healthy eating opportunities.

To view the survey results, please visit [Friends of the Jackson County Trails website](#).

# City of Jackson Active Living Plan June 2015

*This project was supported by a U-Care Foundation Community Grant.*

Prepared by  
the Southwest  
Regional  
Development  
Commission

HLD.SATS



### JCC Schools SRTS Implementation Grant

During 2012 and 2013, the JCC Schools were awarded a grant from MnDOT to implement a Safe Routes to School Plan. Minnesota has a healthy and growing Safe Routes to School movement. Since the first federal funds were allocated to MnSRTS initiatives in 2005, programs across the state have made a profound impact on a student's ability to walk and bike to school. JCC Schools have partnered with several organizations to complete identified goals including local public health, the Friends of the Jackson County Trails, and Southwest Regional Development Commission.

Plans will include an analysis of existing conditions, public outreach and identification of potential infrastructure and non-infrastructure solutions to help more children walk and bicycle safely to school.

The 2020/2021 JCC Schools Districts updated Safe Routes to Schools Plan will include the high school and new middle school. Even during COVID19, a dedicated group of school, public health, city, trail, and community advocates are working to complete the update by May 2021.



JACKSON COUNTY CENTRAL  
SCHOOL DISTRICT #2895



Even though the annual JCC Elementary Fun Run was cancelled this year, we always look forward to help in the years to come!



The JCC High School added new pedestrian facilities to help make crossing safer.

## COVID19 Active Living & Trail Response.

COVID19 doesn't discriminate—it has impacted everyone—in Minnesota and across the nation. Active living seems to be the “talk of the town” recently, as fitness centers have closed or restricted capacity. Whether or not indoor fitness center capacity restrictions led individuals to the great outdoors, there has been an unprecedented surge in outdoor recreation across the Minnesota and the nation. According to Rails to Trails Conservancy (RTC), some trail usage spiked to levels more than 200% higher in July 2020 than the same time last year. Local trail use also surged in the City of Jackson. During spring 2020 trail counts, there was a 37% increase in trail use compared to spring 2019 trail counts. The COVID19 pandemic has showing us that residents value the outdoors to explore new fitness opportunities, be active or get active, reduce stress, and improve mental wellness.

In response to the COVID19 pandemic, Community Wellness Partners the SHIP counties of Cottonwood, Jackson, and Nobles County, teamed up with the Friends of the Jackson County Trails Committee in April 2020 to develop an Active Living Promotion Campaign. This campaign paved way to increased public awareness of COVID19 active living education, PSE changes which focused on updating the Jackson Active Living Plan, updating the Jackson County Safe Routes to School Plan, trail engineering and future trail planning, enhancing the Adopt a Trail Program, encouraging usage of the Bike Jackson bike share system, developing an Active Living YouTube Channel to promote education, encouragement, engineering, engagement, evaluation, and equity, and active living amenities in Jackson. The goal of the Active Living Campaign was to build stronger relationships with residents and visitors in Jackson. The activities and PSE Changes will help develop a community where individuals want to live, learn, work, play, and age in place.



The new Bike Fix-It & Bike Rack are located in Ashley Park.

## COVID19 Active Living & Trail Response.

- Trail Counting: conducted manual and eco-counter box counts during April, July, August, September, October & early November 2020 had a record high of 3,109 total pedestrians/bicyclists.
- Active Living Video Promotion: 1,431 reaches and 334 engagements.
- Newspaper Promotion: 1,155 weekly circulations
- Radio Promotion: monthly radio FYI with KKOJ.
- New Trail Engineering: Dewey Street Trail (Completed 2020), North Highway Trail (Complete 2021), and Sunrise Estates Connection Trail (Planning phase).
- Adopt a Trail Program: revamped the program to include 14 total adoptees.
- Bicycle Amenities: added bike fix it station, bike share system, updated bike symbols, and new bicycle lanes (South Highway).
- Winter Snow Removal (policy to be implemented winter 2020).
- Trail Moments (photo contest).
- Trail Scavenger Hunter (Nelson Creek Trail).



Dewey Street Trail was completed in April 2020 as part of Transportation Alternatives Program grant through MnDOT.



Harley (left) and Bell (right) both participated in the Trail Moments Campaign during September-November 2020.

**Want to join the Friends of the Jackson County Trails Committee?** Contact Luke Ewald, Trail Committee Secretary at [luke.ewald@dvhhs.org](mailto:luke.ewald@dvhhs.org) or 612-597-0433

**Donations are welcomed to help continue expanding the trail system, maintenance, and other active living amenities in Jackson County! Please contact 507-330-1315**

#### **Trail Committee Meetings:**

Currently held virtually or at Jackson City Hall

Meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month online and at Jackson City Hall.

Time: 8am

#### **Check Us Out Online!**

Visit us on Facebook! "Friends of the Jackson County Trails" <https://www.facebook.com/Friends-of-the-Jackson-County-Trails-123340064400832/>

Visit our website! "Friends of the Jackson County Trails"  
<https://www.co.jackson.mn.us/?SEC=B46AEADB-7E11-4673-8B58-77D4C8276A4A>

#### **Check out one of other partners!**

<http://www.bikemn.org/collaboration/mn-bike-walk-leadership-network>

<https://www.parksandtrails.org/friends-groups/meet-friends/jackson-county/>

