



Marking the Mule Trail

PROJECT HISTORY

In 2015, Marks received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to commemorate the Marking the Mule Train historic civil rights event. The idea for a cultural trail was developed with the community to connect all the places Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. visited throughout Marks. To date, the trailhead *Welcome to Marks* sign has been built, and 11 temporary signs have been placed along the route. Phase 1 implementation of the project is the current development of the downtown walking and biking loops.

TOURISM & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Walkability in downtown retail centers is great for a community's economic health. This trail connects the Amtrak stop to downtown businesses, as well as the Interpretive Center. This connectivity encourages visitors to stop and shop or eat a meal as they travel the cultural trail.

PROJECT FUNDING + PARTNERS

The original funding for the development of the trail idea came from the National Endowment for the Arts Our Town grant. Funding for the current Phase 1 implementation of the project comes from an High Obesity Program (HOP) Grant from the Center of Disease Control and Prevention to Mississippi Office of Extensions. Additional funding from the National Park Service has been awarded to design and install permanent markers along the trail. MSU's Small Town Center has been a project partner since the beginning- writing grants, developing ideas, and helping implement the trail.

BEAUTIFICATION OF DOWNTOWN

The planters and reflectors along the trail serve to both beautify the downtown and to create a safer path for users of the trail. The planters physically separate bicyclists and walkers from vehicles in the roadway, and the reflectors help create visibility for the trail at night. The planters will be maintained by the Marks Garden Club.

INCREASED ROADWAY SAFETY + PARKING

The trail will increase roadway safety by slowing traffic in the areas where people walk most often. The narrower lanes encourage drivers to abide by the 25-35 mph speed limits in the downtown and residential areas where the trail is constructed. Parking spaces have been maintained, while removing minimal spaces.



Fred Carl Jr.
SMALL TOWN CENTER



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TRAIL ROUTE



PHASE 1: DOWNTOWN WALKING + BICYCLING LOOPS



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