

# Cedar Rapids Czech & Slovak Heritage Fairytale Trail

Submitted to: The National Czech & Slovak Museum and Library

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The National Czech and Slovak Museum in Cedar Rapids seeks to connect people from every background to Czech and Slovak history and culture. Cedar Rapids is currently home to many Czech residents, some descendants from immigrants seeking to build a better life for themselves in America. The National Czech and Slovak Museum wishes to celebrate the rich culture and history of Czech immigrants and the area they settled by creating a Heritage Trail around the NewBo and Czech Village neighborhoods. The inspiration for the trail stems from a storybook written by Peter Sís, an acclaimed and internationally recognized children's storybook author from Brno, Czech Republic. Along the trail, residents and visitors will discover historical markers marking significant sites, shopping, dining, natural amenities, art displays and playgrounds. The storybook's whimsical components will be incorporated throughout the journey, contributing to a strong sense of place and encouraging connections to the local Czech and Slovak heritage.

The intention of the Czech & Slovak Heritage Fairytale Trail (or FTT) is to create a unique family- friendly attraction that will not only be an amenity for Cedar Rapids residents, but will also be a regional, national and international destination. The trail is unique because it is the only urban 1 historic trail in Iowa, and because it is designed around a children's storybook. This approach to engaging the public with local history and culture through literature will contribute meaningfully to the Eastern Iowa Corridor celebration of literature – most noted through Iowa City's designation as a UNESCO City of Literature. By incorporating a storybook into this new historic trail, Cedar Rapids will create a new family-friendly and locally-relevant amenity, increase awareness of the unique history of the Czech Village and New Bo district, increase foot traffic in this part of Cedar Rapids, strengthen the corridor's reputation as a historically important literary destination, and add to local outdoor opportunities for physical activity.

This plan proposes two trail routes, a long and shorter one, lists points of interest along the routes, proposes a template for a brochure and online app. It also specifies trail design, width, material, marking, on street intersections, as well as signage, trail markers at the trailhead and along the route, and proposes ideas for public art along the route. The design takes into account ongoing development in Cedar Rapids along the river and at the old landfill. It is our hope that this plan can serve as a starting point for future ideas, community engagement, and the development of this whimsical and family-oriented amenity for Cedar Rapids.