



Friends Of The Border To Border Trail

Fall-Winter 2013 Newsletter

www.bordertoborder.org

"Timeline" Disclaimer – Please note that dates of construction are often mentioned in the news items below. It should be taken in account that these dates often change due to design changes, construction delays and other situations.

Dexter Border To Border Trail Update

In October, the long awaited segment of the B to B Trail opened up between Dexter and Hudson Mills Metropark. There will be a formal grand opening ceremony of the Trail segment in the spring of 2014. For a local newspaper story on the opening of this segment visit

http://heritage.com/articles/2013/11/17/dexter_leader/news/doc5285313864847619744828.txt?viewmode=fullstory/.

Another Dexter area B to B project is the segment from Central Street, east along the north side of the Huron River, to Dexter-Huron Metropark. This portion of the B to B is just about complete except for a 1/8th mile segment just east of Central Street. Problems on this segment came up dealing with routing and easements, but it appears that details have been worked out and construction on this link will begin in the spring of 2014.

Dexter To Ann Arbor

At the present time, from Ann Arbor to Dexter-Huron Metropark, the B to B routing is presently on-road using Huron River Drive. The long term goal is to move the Trail off-road, but this goal is filled with challenges that involve Trail easements and terrain. Still, the lead agency of the Border To Border Trail, the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission, is continuing to actively explore placing the Trail off-road in this central part of the County.

And again, while the B to B is mainly on Huron River Drive from Ann Arbor to Dexter, there is one horrible segment for cyclists filled with potholes between Foster Road and Barton Dam. With this in mind, the largest bike club in the County, the Ann Arbor Bicycle Touring Society (AABTS), has started a campaign to raise funds to help repave this segment, which will be backed by the Washtenaw County Road Commission. You may be thinking that this is fantasy, but in 2010 the AABTS started a campaign to repave another section of Huron River Drive and had a goal of raising \$30,000. In the end, they raised \$45,000 in donations which did result in another poor section of the road being repaved, including road shoulders for cyclists.

If you would like to make a contribution (even \$10 is appreciated) to help repave a segment of Huron River Drive (again, a present-day B to B segment), visit www.aabts.org/repaving2013, or send a check payable to the Washtenaw County Road Commission (with "AABTS HRD" in the memo line) care of... Road Repair Projects, C/O Theodore Green, 2773 Holyoke Lane, Ann Arbor, MI 48103. For more on this project, visit http://www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/index.ssf/2013/11/ann_arbor_bicyclists_raising_m.html.

Ypsilanti Trail Segment

While the original intent was to start construction in 2013 on a new B to B bridge from Riverside Park south to the eastern end of the Michigan Avenue bridge across the Huron River, numerous complications are now leading to a spring 2014 start date.

Two of the biggest problems that had to be sorted out were a Michigan Avenue Trail crossing and a bridge easement. On the Michigan Avenue crossing, a key component was user safety and the desire to have a High-Intensity Activated crossWalk beacon (HAWK) signal installed. A HAWK signal is basically a stoplight for motorists to give non-motorized a way to cross a road. For a short video on how a HAWK light works go to <http://youtu.be/ReNk2T5ay1c>.

For the new B to B bridge from Riverside Park to Michigan Avenue, the plan is for the structure to come out at the east end of the existing four lane vehicle bridge across the Huron River. The property for this bridge right of way is owned by Fisher Honda which was willing to sell the land for a price. As with any kind of real estate transaction, negotiations took place which took longer than usual.

By early November, however, permission was received from the Michigan Department of Transportation for the HAWK crossing, and so was a negotiated price for the new Trail bridge from Fisher Honda. The final approval

that was needed was from the Ypsilanti City Council, which gave its approval on November 5th (more on this at http://www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/index.ssf/2013/11/ypsilanti_land_purchase.html).

It should also be noted that besides the B to B Huron River bridge and HAWK crossing, Ypsilanti has another funded Trail project for a permanent, hard-surfaced Border To Border Trail segment along the north shore of the Huron River from Michigan Avenue south to Grove Road (for a map of the proposed trail, [click here](#)). This permanent trail, which construction is planned to begin also in the spring of 2014, would replace an existing temporary trail that exists now. Both of these projects funded in large part by the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Trust Fund grants with major assistance from the Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission and the Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority.

B To B “End Pieces”

Work is continuing to try and plan and continue two “end” pieces of the B to B Trail, namely the far eastern segment (Ypsilanti Township bordering Wayne County) and the far northwest segment (north of Hudson Mills Metropark to the Livingston County line).

On the east segment, the original intent was for the B to B Trail to go east on Grove Road to Bridge Road, south on Bridge to Textile Road, then east on Textile to the county line at Rawsonville Road (visit <http://goo.gl/maps/jAqZk> for a map of this area). This would put the B to B Trail ending at Textile and Rawsonville, with a possible future trail going east from there along Wayne County’s Huron River Drive for six miles to the north end of the Lower Huron Metropark trail system, which can take you off-road to Lake Erie Metropark through a connector path system. Unfortunately, the company that owns the land along the north side of Textile Road has shown a reluctance to vacate land for the trail, but the Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission staff are still talking with the landowner, as well as looking at other alternate routings.

On the northwest segment, the Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission is currently exploring route options that could extend the B to B Trail north to Livingston County and then even further north to meet up with the east-west Lakeland Trail (www.hamburg.mi.us/lakelands_trail_state_park). The Lakeland Trail is intended to be at some time to become a part of the east-west cross-Michigan Great Lake to Lake Trail (<http://bicycletouringroutes.com/section.php?sectionid=1>).

Winter On The Border To Border Trail

Over the years the Friends Of The Border To Border Trail has worked to keep completed off-road segments of the Trail plowed and open to pedestrians and cyclists over the winter, a time of year when outdoor fitness activities should especially be encouraged. Over the winter of 2013-14 we hope to make further progress in keeping the Trail clear from snow.

The biggest goal is to consistently keep the Trail passable between Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti. Along these lines the City of Ann Arbor and Eastern Michigan University consistently clear their segments of the Trail on a timely basis. St. Joseph Mercy Hospital has a spotty record and Washtenaw Community College, as well as the Washtenaw County Road Commission, never seems to plow their segments. Part of the reluctance to plow may be a mistaken belief that nobody uses the Trail in snowy weather. However, a few days after a snowfall, a person can observe loads of footprints and bike tire tracks on unpaved Trail segments.

Eastern Michigan University B to B Improvements

Representatives of Eastern Michigan University (EMU), Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission, the City of Ypsilanti and the Friends of the Border To Border Trail met over the summer to discuss improvements to the Border To Border Trail on EMU property, as well as making other non-motorized improvements to the campus. Projects in the works include placing directional signs on a B to B “spur” trail that goes around the east side of the football stadium area, increased safety signage for Trail users and a potential new off-road Trail routing adjacent to Cornell Street. Further meetings between parties are expected over the winter.

New County Bicycle Maps In The Work

Starting this winter, the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission will partner with the main transportation planning agency for the County, WATS (Washtenaw Area Transportation Study) to come up with a new series of bicycle maps for the County. One thought is to have three sets on geographic-specific maps. All three would have a County-wide bike map on one side, then on the flip side would be either a more detailed map of either eastern Washtenaw County (i.e. Ypsilanti/Ypsilanti Township), Ann Arbor, or Dexter/Chelsea. Complete maps, ready for printing (and also online), are planned for the summer of 2014.

Long Term Regional Connector Trail Opens

In October, a connector path was opened between Wayne County’s Oakwoods Metropark and the City Of Flat Rock. This link now makes it possible to use interconnected off-road non-motorized paths to take you from the

north end of Lower Huron Metropark (just south of I-94 at Haggerty Road) all the way to Lake Erie Metropark, a distance of 30 miles.

The connection this segment has to the Border To Border Trail is that it could be possible in the future to bicycle from say, Ann Arbor, all the way to Lake Erie off-road, roughly following the Huron River. For more on the Oakwoods connector path, visit <http://www.downrivergreenways.org/home>. For a map of southeast Michigan greenways (completed and proposed) visit <http://tinyurl.com/k4smaxx>.

Volunteers Needed To “Adopt” Trail Segments

Starting in the spring of 2014, the Friends of the Border To Border Trail is looking at starting to set up a list of volunteers who would be willing to “adopt” a section of the Border To Border Trail. Volunteers, who routinely use a specific B to B segment on a regular (2-4 times a month) basis would be asked to perform the following...

- Pick up trash (although for the most part, the B to B stays remarkably trash-free).
- Report serious problems (potholes, major downed branches, missing direction signs, etc.).
- During the “green” months, trim back (with hand-tools) vegetation tending to obstruct the trail.

Currently, B to B segments needing “adoption” would include...

- Grove Road (Ypsilanti Township).
- St. Joseph Mercy Hospital/Washtenaw Community College area.
- Gallup Park (Ann Arbor)
- Central Ann Arbor (Riverside Park, Bandemer Park)
- Dexter (Dexter-Huron Metropark, Mill Creek Park to Hudson Mills Metropark)

If you would like to volunteer, please send an email to Bob Krzewinski at wolverbob@gmail.com indicating what segment you would like to adopt. Thanks in advance for any help on this.

Interested In Becoming A Board Member?

One goal of the Friends of the Border To Border Trail is to become on Federal 501(c)3 non-profit group. To do so, one requirement is for a group to have a Board of Directors as well as by-laws. If in the future you might be interested in becoming a Friends of The Border To Border Trail Board member, please contact Bob Krzewinski at wolverbob@gmail.com. Duties would be to attend quarterly Board meetings and a general desire to see the Border To Border Trail completed and enhanced.

Please “Like” Us On Facebook

The Friends of the Border To Border Trail has a page on Facebook and it would be appreciated if individuals could not only “Like” us, but also encourage others to do the same. To visit the Facebook Friends page, [click here](#).

Join The Friends of the Border To Border Trail Discussion Group

If you want to sign up for the Friends of the Border To Border Trail email discussion group, visit <http://groups.google.com/group/border-to-border>. Please note that to keep out spammers, we ask one question before you can be on the list, that being what Michigan County the Trail is in.

Bob Krzewinski
Coordinator
Friends of the Border To Border Trail
www.bordertoborder.org
wolverbob@gmail.com
734-487-9058