



Friends Of The Border To Border Trail

Spring 2017 Newsletter

www.bordertoborder.org - Also on [Facebook](#)

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.

News About The Friends of the B2B Trail

Please Consider Becoming A Friends Of The B2B Member

Memberships begin at \$10/year for individual memberships (\$25 for a family membership). Also new for 2017 are two-year memberships at \$15 for individuals and \$45 for families. In addition to merchant discounts (such as Wheels in Motion Cycle and Fitness, Ypsilanti Running Company and Tree Fort Bikes), the Friends are a federal 501c3 group so all memberships/donations are tax-deductible. Members can also nominate and vote for the Friends of the B2B Trail Board of Directors every November. For more membership information, including a list of merchants offering discounts to Friends members, visit www.bordertoborder.org and click on the “Join” link at the top of the page.

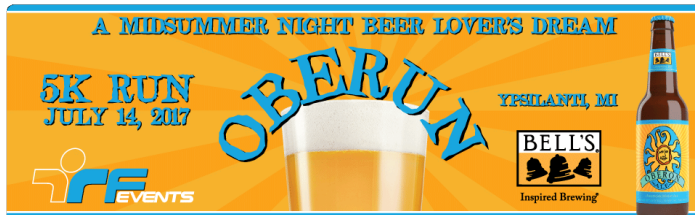
Karen's Trail

Last August the local outdoor community was shocked when world-class tri-athlete Karen McKeachie was killed by a motorist while riding her bike on Dexter-Chelsea Road. To honor Karen's life, her family and friends have set up Karen's Trail, a one-year fundraising effort to raise \$2 million to help complete the Border To Border Trail by 2021. The Friends of the Border To Border Trail, along with the Huron Waterloo Pathways Initiative, are members of the Karen's Trail Committee. The Karen's Trail project was also the subject of a story in the Ann Arbor Observer (http://annarborobserver.com/s/karen_s_trail_full_article.html). For more information about Karen and the Karen's Trail project, and to make a tax-deductible donation to Karen's Trail, visit www.karenstrail.org.



Oberun Run For Karen's Trail

The inaugural Oberun 5 kilometer run and festival will be held on Friday, July 14th at Wiard's Orchard and Country Fair (5565 Merritt Rd, Ypsilanti Township) with proceeds from this event being donated to the Karen's Trail project. Bell's Beer Garden will be serving up cold Oberon beer after the run, which takes runners into Rolling Hills County Park. The post-run festival will have lawn games, fire pits, sand volleyball and food trucks. Runners will also receive a bottle opener finisher's medal, a finisher's pint glass and a run t-shirt. The Friends of the Border To



Border Trail will be assisting the event with volunteers. If you can volunteer for the Friends (hours would be approximately 5pm to 9pm) please contact the Friends at b2btrail@gmail.com.

For more information on the Oberun, and to register (the event may sell out), visit <http://runoberun5k.com> or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/oberun5k>

Huron-Waterloo Pathways Initiative

The Huron-Waterloo Pathways Initiative (HWPI), with the support of the Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission (the main governmental agency behind the B2B) and the Friends of the Border To Border Trail, is spearheading efforts to raise the additional funds needed to take the B2B almost completely off road in the next five years. This involves an estimated \$15 million dollars of funding, with HWPI volunteers working to find private/public funding sources such as foundations as well as Karen's Trail. See the HWPI website for more information (<http://huron-waterloo-pathways.org/>)

Volunteers Needed – Friends Of The Border To Border Trail Membership Committee

A few volunteers are needed for the Friends Of The B2B Trail Membership Committee to help with a) mailing out new/renewing membership cards and b) once a month emailing out membership renewal requests. This is “at-home” volunteer work with no need to attend meetings! If you can help out please contact Bob Krzewinski at wolverbob@gmail.com or call 734-487-9058. Thanks for considering this!

Friends To Study Motorized Bicycle & Skateboard Use On Trails

Electric assist bicycles and even electric powered skateboards are becoming more and more popular, but do these devices belong on non-motorized trails, such as the B2B? Most regulations for non-motorized paths leave it at that: they are for non-motorized modes of transit only. However, nobody intends to ban electric powered wheelchairs for disabled users. Presently the State of Michigan requires any bike with a motor to be registered as either a moped or a motorcycle, including low speed electric bicycles (LSEB), regardless of what the Federal standards are.

With so many unresolved questions, the Friends of the Border To Border Trail will be working with the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission staff to research the issue of electric assist bicycles and electric powered skateboards, including current regulations in the County and state and policies and regulations used on other non-motorized trails around the U.S. The goal is to come up with recommendations to local governments for a B2B-wide standard across the trail. If you are interested in this effort, contact the Friends at b2btrail@gmail.com.

Board Minutes

To find out even more about what is going on with the Friends of the B2B, Board of Directors meeting agendas, meeting minutes, and financial reports are posted on the Friends web page at <http://www.bordertoborder.org> under the “Board of Directors” link at the top of the page. Board meetings are held bi-monthly in rotating meeting locations along the B2B route.

Border to Border and Other Trail Updates

Pavement B2B Directional Arrows



By late April, Border To Border Trail directional arrows should be appearing more and more where following the Trail can be a little confusing. This project of the Friends of the B2B Trail, done though volunteers, will have the letters “B2B” painted on the pavement, along with an arrow showing that a Trail user should turn left or right or proceed straight ahead. The markings will be renewed every spring and have been approved by the government entity that the Trail segment is on.

Dexter To Ann Arbor B2B Segment

Permitting and final engineering work is currently being done by the Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission on one of the next major B2B construction segments: Dexter-Huron Metropark to Zeeb Road. Actual construction is expected to begin later in 2017.

In addition to this project, B2B directional signs and signs with maps will be installed by this summer to help B2B users navigate through Dexter between Dexter Huron Metropark and Mill Creek Park North where the Trail continues north to Hudson Mills Metropark.

Chelsea to Stockbridge B2B Segment

The first section of this new segment of the B2B, made possible through the incredible work of the Huron Waterloo Pathways Initiative, will be an off-road paved path parallel to M-52 north of Chelsea, from Werkner Road to North Territorial Road. Construction on this segment is expected in 2017, with the eventual goal of having this segment go north to Stockbridge where it will connect to the Lakelands Trail.

Ypsilanti To Wayne County Line B2B Segment and Beyond

In Ypsilanti Township, the plan has been to route the B2B parallel to Bridge Road from Grove Road to Textile Road, then east parallel to Textile to the Washtenaw-Wayne County line at Rawsonville Road. A stumbling block, however, was crossing property on the north side of Textile Road owned by the Norfolk & Western Railroad. This problem was recently solved when the State of Michigan awarded a Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund grant to purchase a B2B Trail easement from the railroad.

With the B2B Trail being part of the statewide Iron Belle Trail, plans are to link the east end of the B2B Trail to Lower Huron Metropark with a new, 6-mile long non-motorized path in Wayne County's Van Buren Township. Trail currently exists through Lower Huron, Willow and Oakwood Metroparks. Van Buren Township was recently awarded a State Iron Belle Trail grant of \$30,000 for preliminary engineering of a 2.5-mile segment following Huron River Drive from Belleville to Haggerty Road.

Northern B2B Extension

The Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission, together with other government entities in both Washtenaw and Livingston Counties, is continuing to evaluate four possible routings to extend the B2B Trail from Territorial Road in Hudson Mills Metropark north to meet up with the Lakeland Trail (<https://www.traillink.com/trail/lakelands-trail-state-park/>), which will be part of the "Great Lake-to-Lake Trail" from South Haven to Port Huron. The four options generally follow: (1) Strawberry Lake Road, (2) power line easements, (3) Dexter-Pinckney Road or (4) McGregor Road.

At a meeting earlier this year, Livingston County's Hamburg Township Board of Trustees noted, "The preliminary study for the Iron Belle trail analysis has been completed, and will be forwarded to the Township shortly. According to the report, the most feasible route to link to the Lakelands Trail will be up Strawberry Lake Road and in through Manly Bennett Park. If the trail comes that way, the Township should still consider a smaller trail up Merrill Road."

City of Ypsilanti B2B Segment

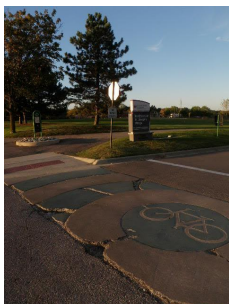
In the Water Street area, work to remove contaminated soil near the B2B Trail should be completed by the end of May and the Trail will then officially reopen. Once the Water Street B2B section reopens, a reroute of the B2B Trail is expected to take place that will place more of the Trail off-road on paved paths in Riverside Park, connecting to the Water Street area by a new bridge over the Huron River and a dedicated, signaled crossing of Michigan Avenue. The present street routing on Cross/River/North/Park Streets will be used as an alternate route when Riverside Park has events going on that would close the B2B Trail there.

Also this summer, more signs will be installed on the on-road segment of the B2B Trail from Depot Town to Eastern Michigan University, making it easier to navigate this section.

Dexter To Chelsea B2B Segment

Survey work is being completed and evaluated to take the B2B Trail off-road, roughly parallel to Dexter-Chelsea Road, mainly using a very old interurban railroad right-of-way easement that is owned by Washtenaw County. For news updates on this segment, visit the Huron Waterloo Pathways Initiative web page (and sign up for their newsletter when you do) at <http://huron-waterloo-pathways.org>. Updates are also on the organization's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/hwpathways>.

Pavement Alert - B2B Trail At St. Joseph Mercy Hospital



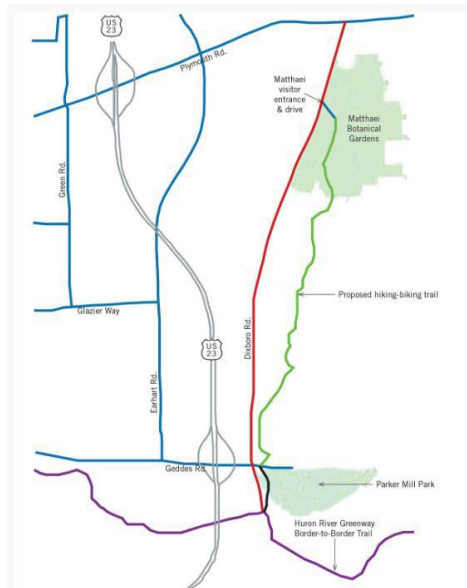
Please be alert for deteriorating pavement on the B2B Trail at St. Joe's Hospital northwest of Ypsilanti. The pavement at road crossings on the hospital campus that have "bicycle" symbols embedded in the pavement are deteriorating and have cracks and crevices in them that could catch a bicycle tire. These road crossing will be repaved in the near future.

Ann Arbor Allen Creek Greenway

The Allen Creek Greenway is a project to create a north-south park through central Ann Arbor, roughly following the long-buried Allen Creek, and connecting to the B2B Trail at the Greenway's north end. The push for this project to happen has come from the Allen Creek Greenways Conservancy - <http://www.acgreenwayconservancy.org> - but over the years, the City of Ann Arbor has come on board and formed an Allen Creek Greenway Citizen's Advisory Commission, of which Friends of the B2B Trail Board member Eric Boyd is a member.

At its April 19th meeting, the Allen Creek Greenway Citizen's Advisory Commission met to discuss the next step in the Greenway's master planning process. It was noted that the City of Ann Arbor is moving towards a draft route that mostly follows the Ann Arbor Railroad, but uses as little railroad right-of-way as possible. The City has also identified a series of private parcels that would allow them to build the greenway. To view the latest Allen Creek Greenway Master Plan (as per April 19th, 2017) visit http://www.a2gov.org/departments/systems-planning/programs/Documents/Allen%20Creek%20Greenway%20Master%20Plan%20Project/2017-04-19_ACG_CAC4_Presentation_Final.pdf. Also, for an Ann Arbor News photo "tour" (both air and ground) of the proposed Greenway, visit http://www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/index.ssf/2017/03/a_flyover_tour_of_ann_arbors_f.html#incart_river_index and http://www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/index.ssf/2017/03/a_walking_tour_of_ann_arbors_f.html#incart_river_index

Dixboro Trail Construction Starts



Construction has begun on non-motorized trail connecting Parker Mill County Park with Matthaei Botanical Gardens. The approximately 2 mile long path is expected to open by spring 2018. The first phase was tree removal, which was completed before the end of March to protect the breeding season of the Indiana Brown Bat, an endangered species that nests in trees, mostly Shag Bark Hickory. Construction and heavy equipment access will begin at the south end off of Geddes at the Parker Mill extension. As construction progresses north, there will be other temporary access points for equipment off Dixboro Road, but at completion user access will be only at either end with no entry/exit points between. Around 40% of this Pathway follows existing footpaths/trails. The single track/footpath along the stream/creek is not going to be disturbed, as the ground is too low and wet for the path to be routed there. No impact on traffic from construction is expected.

Note that parking in the Botanical Gardens requires payment. There is no plan for expansion of parking at either Parker Mill or the Botanical Gardens.

The trail will be maintained by U of M/Botanical Gardens. There will not be winter maintenance. The U of M Police will provide security on the Pathway. Hours of use will be dawn to dusk. It will not be lit with additional lighting.

At a pre-construction meeting earlier this year attended by Friends of the B2B Board member Bruce Geffen, the Friends inquired about a possible future extension of the Pathway from Ravine Court, where there is a sidewalk that dead-ends, to Whitehall Drive, in order to support commuting to Domino Farms, Arbor Lakes, and East Ann Arbor. The response was that there are no plans for the foreseeable future, as this extension would need to involve several additional entities, including Ann Arbor Township to negotiate with private landowners, and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) at the Dixboro/Plymouth Road intersection.

Counting B2B Trail Usage

The following article is from the Spring Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission by Commission Park Planner Peter Sanderson is reprinted with permission. For a subscription to the newsletter, go to:

http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/parks_recreation/administration/sub_lists/pr_newsletter_sub.html

National trends and local surveys consistently rate non-motorized trails a highly desired recreational amenity, but it can be difficult to quantify actual use. This past summer the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) partnered with the City of Dexter and Pittsfield Township to install permanent bicycle and pedestrian counters at three non-motorized trail locations. The results were impressive: between September 1 and December 31, 2016, the Dexter segments clocked 88,688 total uses, with an average daily use of 770.

In Dexter, one counter is located in Mill Creek Park and another on the newly opened trail section of the Border-to-Border Trail near Dexter-Huron Metropark. A third counter is located in Pittsfield Township on the Lohr-Textile Greenway, which registered 15,428 users during the same four-month period. In addition, WATS has purchased two mobile counters that can be placed at varying locations.

These counters help to employ a data-centric approach to measure the success, volume, and usage patterns of different types of non-motorized projects. For example, based on the time of day, what proportion of use is for recreation versus commuting? Or, which areas would benefit most from the installation of new non-motorized infrastructure?

As projects continue, these questions will be answered with greater accuracy because of the data provided. Washtenaw County Parks is excited to see what the first full year (2017) of data reveals about use of the B2B and other non-motorized trails around the county.

Michigan Governors Budget Request Includes Iron Belle Trail Funding

In February 2017 Governor Snyder submitted his executive budget recommendation for fiscal years 2018 and 2019 and recommended \$5 million to the Department of Natural Resources' Enhanced Challenge for Trail Development. This is targeted primarily towards the [Iron Belle Trail](#), his initiative to establish a parallel 774-mile biking route and a 1,259 mile hiking route stretching across the state from Belle Isle near Detroit to Ironwood at the Wisconsin border. In Washtenaw County, the Border To Border Trail is part of the Iron Belle hiking route and already has received some Iron Belle state funding. While these routes are more than 60 percent complete, the funds are critical to accelerate trail development in the gaps of this trail, to support preliminary planning, construction engineering, signage, and as a match for public funds for trail development.

The B2B Is Good For Selling A House

In April, just off the south side of the B2B Trail segment from Hewitt Road to Cornell Street, a "house for sale" sign was placed on a property on Collegewood Street backing onto the B2B. The real estate listing for this house stated that it was "Situated on spacious grounds in a park-like setting, and backing onto the Border-to-Border trail..." Clearly the real estate agent knows that homes next to non-motorized paths are an asset.

Across the U.S., often when non-motorized paths are proposed, opponents come forth with claims that such a path will "increase crime", "encourage trespassers", "create trash" and "lower property values". In reality, trails tend to bring about the complete opposite. Studies have shown that trails raise property values, discourage crime, and are kept clean by users who don't trespass on adjacent private property. The National Association of Realtors understands this too:

<https://www.nar.realtor/field-guides/field-guide-to-effects-of-trails-and-greenways-on-property-values>.

Outreach and Advocacy News

B2B Maps

Probably the best map of the Border To Border Trail is the Washtenaw County bicycle map (with separate Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti panels). Printed copies are available at Friends Of The B2B Trail outreach events (see below) and at the Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission offices at 2230 Platt Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48104 (map at <https://goo.gl/maps/RVV8V8HbToy>) during normal business hours (Monday – Friday 8:30am to 5pm). Maps will also start becoming available at area bike and running shops. The map can also be viewed online at http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/parks_recreation/greenways/maps/2015-washtenaw-county-ann-arbor-ypsi-bike-map.pdf

Friends Of The B2B Outreach

In 2017, the Friends of the B2B Trail is planning a number of outreach efforts to inform the public about the Trail and gather public input on what improvements are needed. The Friends already had an information table at the Washtenaw Community College Earth Day Festival on April 6th and will be at the Ann Arbor Green Fair on Main Street in Ann Arbor from 6pm to 9pm on June 9th. The Friends are also planning to have B2B Trail information tables at Dexter's Mill Creek Park, Argo Cascades in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti's Water Street area. Look for more details on these information and outreach efforts on the Friends web (www.bordertoborder.org) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/B2Btrail) pages

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](#). The Friends B2B Facebook page is updated weekly with news about the Trail.

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: what Michigan County the Trail is in.