

Friends Of The Border To Border Trail

Fall 2012 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.

Good News For Ypsilanti B to B Trail Segment

The State Of Michigan Department of Natural Resources, right before Thanksgiving, published their standing for proposed 2013 projects funded by their Trust Fund grants. For the Water Street area Border To Border Trail paving application by the City of Ypsilanti, this project came in as #22 out of 102 projects. This was followed by news on December 5th, 2012 that the Trust Fund Committee had selected the [project for funding](#).

The grant application calls for constructing a permanent, hard-surfaced Border To Border Trail segment along the north shore of the Huron River from Michigan Avenue south to Grove Road. This permanent trail would replace an existing temporary trail that exists now. Besides being a recreational and non-motorized transportation improvement, this Trail segment could also make the Water Street development area more attractive to developers. For a map of the proposed trail, [click here](#).

The Land Trust grant funds come from oil and gas leases on state-owned land in Michigan and by law can only be used for recreational projects and land acquisitions. For more on the program visit http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-39002_16791-39513--,00.html.

Dexter Border To Border Trail Construction

Work is expected to be mostly completed on an off-road B to B segment from Dexter’s Central Street, east to Dexter-Huron Metropark along the south bank of the Huron River. This segment would include an already constructed new non-motorized bridge across the Huron at the Metropark. On the west end of Dexter, construction is expected to begin and be completed in 2013 that will connect the new B to B segment in Warrior Park north into Hudson Mills Metropark.

Ypsilanti B To B Bridge Design Change

Earlier this year it was learned, during more detailed design work, that both the Michigan Department of Transportation and the Department of Natural Resources had indicated that due to environmental factors, a permit to build a B to B bridge from Ypsilanti’s Riverside Park to the Water Street area under the Michigan Avenue bridge would most probably be denied. Rather than deal with years of lobbying for a permit (and maybe even litigation) the City of Ypsilanti and the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission decided to review other options.

At the present time, the new plan for a B to B crossing from Riverside Park to the Water Street area involves a non-motorized bridge over the Huron River from the south end of Riverside Park south to cross Michigan Avenue, at a surface level, at the east end of the Michigan Avenue bridge over the Huron River. In this design, there would be a dedicated non-motorized crossing of Michigan Avenue with a desire for stop signals for motor vehicle traffic (i.e. “HAWK” signals as seen in this link - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HAWK_beacon).

Once design work is done, actual construction on this Ypsilanti B to B link could begin in 2013. Funding for the project comes from a State of Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant, with additional grant from the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission and the Ypsilanti Downtown Development Agency (DDA).

Argo Dam B to B Segment Done

The new routing for the Border To Border Trail along the Argo Dam mill race in Ann Arbor is complete and a vast improvement the old "trail" there, which was unpaved and very narrow. For a map of the mill race improvement area, [click here](#). It should be also noted that a number of new B to B directional signs have been placed in the Argo area as in the past this was a very confusing area to navigate through.

Ann Arbor Maiden Lane-Canal Street Improvements

The City of Ann Arbor is expected to reconstruct the section of B to B Trail in Ann Arbor's [Riverside Park](#) area, roughly from Maiden Lane to the Broadway bridge, in 2013. As it stands right now, this segment of the B to B has very poor pavement.

Far Eastern Trail Setback

The Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission, along with Ypsilanti Township, had been planning on routing the eastern end of the Border To Border Trail along Bridge Road south to Textile Road, then along the north side of Textile to the Washtenaw County line at Rawsonville Road. A key to this routing was gaining an easement from the Norfolk Southern Railroad on property they hold on the north side of Textile Road. Despite numerous attempts, the railroad has refused to grant an easement, so Border To Border Trail routing in this area is now being reviewed.

Michigan "Support Trails" License Plate?

Maybe you have seen them in traveling through other states, license plates with a "support trails" message that people purchase with a part of the proceeds going to a states trail development program.

Here in Michigan, a resolution was introduced earlier this year in the State Senate establishing a "support trails" auto license plate. The legislation, know as Senate Bill 555, would create a "Michigan Trails and Greenways" license plate. The legislation was approved by the Senate Committee on Transportation and now is waiting action by the full Michigan Senate (for updates, click on this link - [SB 555](#)).

It is a little known fact that Michigan is first in the nation for the number of miles of rail-trails. When combined with other linear multi-use trails, Michigan has well over 3,000 miles. However, despite the number of miles, Michigan has much work to do to continue to connect trails together and incorporate the types of improvements, which make them inviting and user-friendlier.

In addition to the dedicated license plate, SB 555 would create a Michigan Trails and Greenways Fund within the Michigan Department of Treasury to receive specialty license plate revenue from the Secretary of State. From there, the State Treasurer would provide Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance the funding on a quarterly basis to further trail work in a variety of ways, including awarding small grants to communities for local trail projects.

The Michigan Trails and Greenways license plate would generate awareness of the vast trails network that our state has to offer and provides a much needed source of revenue to continue the mission of developing an interconnected network of trails and greenways across our state

Michigan Trails & Greenway Alliance Membership Donation

A sincere thanks goes out to Jan Stegemann who for the past few years has been renewing the membership of the Friends of the Border To Border Trail in the Michigan Trails and Greenway Alliance. The Alliance is dedicated to adding, improving and promoting non-motorized trails in Michigan and has offices in Lansing and Detroit. For more information on the Alliance, including information about trails you can use, visit <http://www.michigantrails.org>.

Wayne County Connection

Plans are for the Washtenaw County Border To Border Trail to “end” (or begin) at Rawsonville Road at the eastern County border, very near the intersection of Rawsonville and Textile Roads. At that intersection, Wayne County’s Huron River Drive continues east along the south side of Ford Lake and the Huron River for approximately six miles where at Haggerty Road and Huron River Drive is the north entrance for Lower Huron Metropark.

Over the years, low-level conversations have been held with officials in Belleville and Van Buren Township to make the Washtenaw County to Lower Huron Metropark link along Huron River Drive more bike-friendly. While most of this segment currently has wider shoulders (with the exception of Belleville), dedicated bike lanes, and better yet, an off-road non-motorized trail, would be great.

Quite frankly, the main reason that no real work has been done to make Wayne County’s Huron River Drive more non-motorized friendly is a lack of “boosters” (i.e. volunteers, especially from Belleville/Van Buren Township) willing to help work on this project. If you would like to see Wayne County’s Huron River Drive have bike lanes/paths and would like to help out with this project (an hour or two a month), please contact Bob Krzewinski at wolverbob@gmail.com.

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>.

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