



## Friends Of The Border To Border Trail Spring 2015

[www.bordertoborder.org](http://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.

### **B to B To Expand Further Northward**

More good news about expanding the Border to Border north from Hudson Mills Metropark (north of Dexter). The Michigan Legislature on March 5th approved a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant for \$75,000 to acquire land to expand Hudson Mills Metropark. This will allow the Washtenaw County Border-to-Border Trail to be extended north from Hudson Mills Metropark toward Livingston County and [Lakeland Trail State Park](#). A two-mile trail extension is planned. The Trust Fund grant will be matched by the Huron Clinton Metropark Authority. Funds from the Trust Fund come from mineral and oil leases on state land and can only be used, by law, for projects that provide for natural resource protection and outdoor recreation.

### **Friends of the Border To Border Trail Board Meeting**

The next Friends of the Border To Border Board of Directors meeting will be on Monday, June 22, 7pm at the Wheels In Motion bicycle shop ([3400 Washtenaw Ave, Ann Arbor](#)) conference room. The public is welcome to attend.

### **Ypsilanti Trail Segment**

B2B completion is moving along in Ypsilanti, but setbacks have also risen up. A few years ago the plan was established to have the Trail run from Riverside Park south to the Water Street area and then along the north shore of the Huron River to Grove Road. Included in the original plan was a non-motorized bridge over the Huron River but passing under the existing Michigan Avenue bridge. Grants were received and engineering studies performed only to find out that the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) would not approve an under-Michigan Avenue bridge due to River flow problems.

This news from the DNR resulted in “plan B” where a new design to route the B2B over the Huron from Riverside Park to the east end of the Michigan Avenue bridge and then a surface Trail crossing of Michigan Avenue to the Water Street property. Also included in the plan was a dedicated crossing of Michigan Avenue with a stoplight for Trail users. The “plan B” design then went to the DNR for approval and once that was done, to construction firms for bidding. As it turned out, the bids received were well over the money budgeted for the project so a slight redesign was done which help cut costs. This redesign too had to go to the DNR and once they approved it, out the plan went for bidding again. On this second round of construction bids, they again came back over budget by a lesser amount, but still over budget.

In mid-June, the Ypsilanti City Council will decide what B2B projects will receive City funds from what could be considered a “strained” City budget. Ypsilanti residents wanting to urge City Council to support B2B projects in the City can do so by attending either a June 9<sup>th</sup>, or June 16<sup>th</sup>, City Council meeting (7pm at Ypsilanti City Hall, 1 South Huron Street) and giving public comment in the beginning of the meeting, or email Council members at <http://www.cityofypsilanti.com/Government/MayorCityCouncil>. Updates to the Ypsilanti B2B situation will be posted on the Friends of the B2B Facebook page.

### **Ann Arbor B2B Off-Road Route Gaining Momentum**

Action is increasing (helped along by the [Washtenaw Bicycling and Walking Coalition](#) and the Friends of the B2B) to route the B2B off-road around the very busy Fuller Road/Maiden Lane intersection with Ann Arbor City Council poised to take action on a resolution supporting such a project on June 15<sup>th</sup>. The proposed routing would have the Trail route curve off from Fuller Road just east of Maiden Lane and then go under the Maiden Lane bridge heading west. To complete this segment there would be a new non-motorized bridge across the Huron River and in to Riverside Park. For more on this proposed segment, including a map of the proposed route, visit [http://www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/index.ssf/2015/05/ann\\_arbor\\_officials\\_set\\_sights.html#incart\\_river](http://www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/index.ssf/2015/05/ann_arbor_officials_set_sights.html#incart_river).

Also, if you are an Ann Arbor resident, please consider attending the June 15<sup>th</sup> Ann Arbor City Council meeting to speak in favor of the B2B Fuller Road plan or send an email to your Council members on the subject. Contact information for Council members can be found at <http://www.a2gov.org/departments/city-council/Pages/Home.aspx>. Also, please note that if you want to give public comment at a Council meeting you

must call the city clerk's office at 734.794.6140 beginning at 8 a.m. on the day of the meeting to reserve one of 10 public speaking times.

### **Dexter-Huron Metropark To Ann Arbor B to B Segment**

The Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission is spooling up a concerted effort to take the B2B Trail off Huron River Drive between Ann Arbor and Dexter-Huron Metropark and place it off road. Recently the Commission submitted a request to the Michigan Iron Belle Trail for a grant to start a B2B alignment and engineering study for a 3.6 mile proposed segment between [Dexter-Huron Metropark](#) east to [Tubbs Road and Huron River Drive](#) (the Friends of the Border To Border Trail submitted a support letter to the State in favor of the grant request). The [Iron Belle Trail](#) is a statewide path that will go from the Detroit River to Ironwood in the Upper Peninsula and will pass through Washtenaw County using the B2B Trail.

It should be noted that an off-road B2B from Dexter-Huron Metropark to Ann Arbor will be a challenging project as rights of way have to be obtained, bridges may have to be built and marshy areas taken in account. Also, portions of this segment may have to be built close to an active rail line, which has its own challenges. Still, the project looks do-able and hopefully will become reality in a number of years.

### **Ann Arbor Gallup Park Repaving**

Over the years, the segment of the B to B Trail in Ann Arbor's Gallup Park has become eroded and in real need of repaving. Complicating matters, however, is that much of the land the Trail is on is really railroad property for which the City has an easement and "improvements" (like repaving) have to be coordinated with the railroad. This coordination is necessary as it would not make sense to for a any city to spend money to repave a trail and then find out the railroad wants to add a siding that would rip up a just-paved path.

The good news, however, is that the City of Ann Arbor has just concluded talks with the "railroad" (in the case the Michigan Department of Transportation which does not have rail locomotives or cars, but has bought the rail line property as a way of expanding high speed rail) and the repaving project is moving forward. The City of Ann Arbor is now soliciting bids for engineering work on repaving the Gallup Park B to B segment with construction tentatively planned for 2016 and go from the Geddes dam east to the center of Gallup Park. The rebuilding of this section is largely funded by a Federal Transportation Alternatives Program grant the City received.

### **Dexter-Huron Metropark To Dexter Segment**

Concerning the very short B2B unfinished segment that goes from the current west end of the Dexter-Huron Metropark path to Central Avenue in Dexter (about 2/10's of a mile) should be completed by the end of August or early September at the latest, with construction expected to start in June. For users heading west out of the Metropark, they will be using City streets (with prominent B2B signage to guide them) though Dexter to reach the off-road B2B segment at Warrior Park heading north into Hudson Mills Metropark.

### **B to B Neighborhood Connector Trail Discussed In Dexter**

Residents of the Huron Farm subdivision south of Dexter-Huron Metropark are seeking a direct link to the Border-to-Border Trail but due to costs, this may be a few years out. Full story at [http://www.heritage.com/articles/2014/06/13/dexter\\_leader/news/doc539228ca962a8106005512.txt?viewmode=fullstory](http://www.heritage.com/articles/2014/06/13/dexter_leader/news/doc539228ca962a8106005512.txt?viewmode=fullstory)

### **Historic Bell Bridge Could Be Used Again On A B to B Connector**

Built in 1881 to cross the Huron River northeast of Dexter, the bridge was used until 1992 when it was struck by a vehicle putting it out of action. Rather than scrap the structure, it was lifted off the River and placed on dry land with the thought that some day the bridge may be restored and used again. The Bell Bridge is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is reportedly the third oldest bridge built by Wrought Iron Bridge Company of Canton, Ohio and even has it's own [Facebook](#) page.

A few years ago, Scio Township began planning a non-motorized path along Zeeb Road between roughly I-94 and Huron River Drive (for a 2011 document on this project [click here](#)). This project had the problem of how to pass over the Huron River and thoughts turned to the idle Bell Bridge. The bridge, however, is owned by Dexter Township, but when asked by Scio Township if the bridge was available, they said "Let 'em have it," citing the significant cost of rehabilitation. At the present time the Bell Bridge is still sitting off Bell Road, but in a number of years it could be disassembled, moved and restored, giving it a whole new lease on life.

### **Border To Border Trail Night "Moonshadow" Bike Rides**

Celebrate the almost full moon with a car free ride along the Huron, on the newest Border to Border trail segment from Dexter's Mill Creek Park to Hudson Mills Metropark. Casual pace ride is 10-15 miles long. All riders are asked to have working front and rear lights. Park behind the Fire Station at [Mill Creek Park](#) in Dexter.

The July 2<sup>nd</sup> Moonshadow ride starts at 10pm and the July 30<sup>th</sup> ride starts at 9pm. For more information call Jim & Jennifer Bryson at 734-424-2802. Sponsored by the Ann Arbor Bicycle Touring Society ([www.aabts.org](http://www.aabts.org)). You do not have to be a member of the AABTS to participate in the ride.

### **2015 Huron River Drive Improvements**

At the present time, the B2B Trail between Ann Arbor and Dexter-Huron Metropark is routed on Huron River Drive which has mostly has good pavement for cycling yet has sections in need of improvements. For 2015 Huron River Drive will see a number of improvements, which are best described in an article by Ted Green in the latest issue of the Ann Arbor Bicycle Touring Society's ([www.aabts.org](http://www.aabts.org)) newsletter available at [www.aabts.org/newsletters/AABTSNewsMayJune2015.pdf](http://www.aabts.org/newsletters/AABTSNewsMayJune2015.pdf) ("Washtenaw County Road Commission Coming Road Improvements" on page one). It should also be noted that twice, the AABTS has actually raised a substantial amount of funds to contribute to helping repave Huron River Drive, \$45,000 in 2011 and another \$40,000 in 2014.

### **Take Action! – Ask Congress To Support The Federal Transportation Alternatives Program**

It always happens. When Congress starts debating national transportation program funding, out come opponents of any program helping fund non-motorized projects.

To counter the negativity of non-motorized opponents, S. 705, the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Improvement Act, has been introduced in the U.S. Senate and is written by Senator Thad Cochran (Republican-MS) and Ben Cardin (Democrat-MD). This legislation ensure that our federal transportation system continues to provide funding for bicycling and walking projects, such as sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, trails and more. Locally a number of B2B projects coming up for construction are the result of TAP grants, including the Gallup Park pathway repaving in 2016 and Grove Road improvements in Ypsilanti. Also a number of national organizations are supporting S.705 with a listing at <http://saferoutespartnership.org/sites/default/files/pdf/TAPIA-groups-letter.pdf>.

Please urge our two Michigan Senators to support S.705 and continue the Transportation Alternatives Program. To send a message to Congress on this issue, it's incredibly easy. Just go to the League of American Bicyclists web page of <https://www.votervoice.net/link/target/bikeleague/J8GPM2MyG.aspx>, enter your name and address and email address and this will be attached to a pre-written message. It takes about two minutes at most. Thanks in advance for sending a message that Federal non-motorized funding is important and needed.

### **Friends Of The Border To Border Board Of Directors Formation**

At a January 2015 meeting, Friends of the Border To Border Trail acting Board members chosen, these being Ryan Bowles, Ashley Fox, Bruce Geffen, Bob Krzewinski, Laura Shiltz and Tom Leone. Of these individuals, acting Officers will include Bob Krzewinski as Chair, Ashley Fox as Secretary and Tom Leone at Treasurer. Also at the January meeting, by-laws for the organization were approved (view them at [http://bordertoborder.homestead.com/Approved\\_By\\_Laws.pdf](http://bordertoborder.homestead.com/Approved_By_Laws.pdf)). At it's June 22, 2015 meeting, the Board is expecting to concentrate on membership development (a Friends membership drive will kick off shortly) and the organization having information tables at local events). To view Friends Board meeting agendas and meeting minutes, visit [www.bordertoborder.com](http://www.bordertoborder.com) and click on the "Board" link box.

If you are interested in becoming a Friends Of The Border To Border Trail Board member, or just helping with tasks/projects of the Friends, please attend Board meetings (the next meeting is on Monday, June 22, 7pm at the Wheels In Motion bicycle shop conference room- [3400 Washtenaw Ave, Ann Arbor](http://3400WashtenawAveAnnArbor)) or contact Bob Krzewinski at [wolverbob@gmail.com](mailto:wolverbob@gmail.com) or call 734-487-9058.

### **Volunteers Needed To "Adopt" Trail Segments**

The Friends of the Border To Border Trail is still looking for 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 (links are to maps of each segment)...

- Grove Road (Ypsilanti Township) - [Bridge Road west to Harris Road/Loonfeather Park](#)
- Grove Road (Ypsilanti Township) – [Harris Road/Loonfeather Park west to Grove Road I-94 bridge](#)

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

### **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

Acting Chair

Friends of the Border To Border Trail

[www.bordertoborder.org](http://www.bordertoborder.org)

[wolverbob@gmail.com](mailto:wolverbob@gmail.com)

734-487-9058