



Oakland County Trails Advisory Council

Oakland County Parks and Recreation Administration Office
2800 Watkins Lake Road, Waterford, Michigan 48328

March 24, 2010 9:00 a.m.

The meeting was called to order by Dot LaLone, Vice Chair in the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission Room.

PRESENT:

Andrew Mutch	City of Novi
Mark Spencer	City of Novi
Merrie Carlock	City of Southfield
Sue Julian	Headwaters Trails, Inc.
Dot LaLone	Headwaters Trails, Inc.
Jennifer Frederick	Highland Township
Chris Doozan	Huron Valley Trail
Jeff Edwards	MDOT
Todd Scott	MTGA
Jacy Garrison	O.C. Water Resources Commissioner's Office
Merle Richmond	Oakland Equestrian Coalition
Kristen Wiltfang	OC Planning and Economic Development Services
Donna Folland	OCPRC
Stephanie Marchbanks	OCPRC
Chris Moshier	OCPRC
Taylor Reynolds	Orion Township Safety Path Advisory Committee
Mike Brinkmann	Orion Township Safety Path Advisory Committee
Julie Brinkmann	Orion Township Safety Path Advisory Committee
David Evancoe	Road Commission for Oakland County

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of minutes from January 27, 2010 was moved by Dot LaLone and seconded by Kristen Wiltfang. The motion passed on voice vote.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

- Updates from Todd Scott on Michigan Airline Trail and National Bike Summit
- Introduction of Donna Folland, Project Advisor with OCPRC

TRAIL NETWORK UPDATES

Paint Creek Trail

Report not available from Kristen Myers.

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Polly Ann Trail

Report not available from Troy Farwell.

Clinton River Trail

Brian Marzolf reported that Pontiac is going out to bid for construction for the bridge over Telegraph. The bridge is scheduled for completion by this fall. Parts of the bridge will be pre-fabricated for installation.

Their strong Friends group is working to ensure a consistent look and feel along the trail. They are working with a consultant and OCPEDES on this project to help elevate the presence and image of the trail throughout the region.

The City of Auburn Hills has planned their Paddlepalooza event on June 5, and a Fishing Derby on June 12. Oakland County Community Corrections Division's WWAM (Weekend and Weekday Alternative for Misdemeanants) crews are being used to clear the trail a few times a year in Auburn Hills.

West Bloomfield Trail

Todd Scott indicated he met with Dan Navarre (W. Blmfld. Twp.) and Michael Reuter (American Cycle and Fitness) regarding concerns with a lack of AASHTO-approved bike facilities (e.g. bike lanes not side paths). West Bloomfield Township may include plans for 'Complete Streets' (a concept to include bike lanes on streets) and on-road bike facilities in their Master Plan Update. Lansing has a complete streets policy in place, and Detroit is working on one.

Headwaters Trail

Dot LaLone indicated their trail group received a \$1,000 Kodak grant toward installation of metal railings on a pedestrian bridge over the Shiawassee River. They've had trouble in the past with wooden bridges being burned by vandals.

Their challenge is to find matching funds for grants like these. Dot announced their Canoe Race starting in Holly on June 6th. They are also having a Fishing Derby in Holly the following weekend. A fundraiser dinner be held at O'Malley's Galley in Fenton every 3rd Thursday. The river requires continuous cleanup/maintenance. The group has ambitious plans to eventually link to Saginaw Bay!

Sue Julian, President of HT spoke about connecting through different counties and working within the different master plans. They are not just about water trails.

I-275 Metro Trail

Jeff Edwards stated this group has many projects going:

- M-14 to Maple Road (planned M-5 extension):

13-14 Mile Road construction in April/May. Using CMAQ \$.

14 Mile to Maple Road – funding for design/ROW phase. Using CMAQ \$. Met with Commerce Twp. regarding this section and interaction with the railroad. If railroad is acquired, will be looking for funding soon!

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Plans for future construction of pedestrian bridge across M-5; could be \$3 to \$3.5 million

- M-14 to Meadowbrook (Wayne and Oakland Counties) – construction starts in the spring for pavement replacement, drainage improvements and wayfinding signage. An open house will be held March 30, 6-8 pm, at the Plymouth Twp Hall regarding plans for this segment of the pathway.

- Heinz Drive to US12: Design done in spring 2010. Reconstruct in the future.

- Sibley to US12: plan to connect to Metroparks is being re-evaluated due to money constraints.

A question was asked about the Haggerty connector. Pathway and sidewalk are city's responsibility.

Woodward Corridor Trail

Todd Scott reported that the non-motorized plan for the Woodward Corridor (from 8 Mile to Birmingham; coordinated by the Woodward Avenue Action Association) calls for bike lanes in Ferndale. However, the rest of the corridor is proposed for a mix of side paths. Todd heard that the design of this plan has been revised.

Todd indicated that Royal Oak will be completing a non-motorized plan with some Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant funds (Feds have not released yet). The city is hiring Active Transportation Alliance of Chicago to complete the plan. It will include a grassroots focus to get community involvement/input. Aim to get started in next few months.

Part of the right-of-way belonging to the Canadian National (CN) active railroad (parallels Woodward Avenue) is being considered by Royal Oak for a potential "Rail with Trail" project. A Royal Oak City Commissioner is taking the lead on the project. In contact with CN and in "data collection mode" now. Rails-To-Trails Conservancy says they must come up with a plan and reduce CN's liability. Royal Oak can take out insurance and indemnify CN.

Lakes Community Trail

Report not available from Deanna Magee.

Huron Valley Trail

Chris Doozan stated that MDOT recently met with them regarding reconstruction of two bridges on I-96, east of Milford Road.

One is the I-96 bridge east of Milford Road. The freeway and trail will have closures in the summer of 2011 or 2012. A 200' long tunnel with culverts and LED lights inside (maintained by MDOT) will be constructed where the Huron Valley Trail goes under the freeway. The tunnel will have a 16' free span interior.

The other project is on the west side of Lyon Township where the trail goes under the freeway. The bridge will be reconstructed and there will be intermittent closures of the trail.

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Other Trail Information Updates:

Todd Scott attended the National Bicycle Summit in Washington, D.C. He met with legislators to discuss biking/funding issues. Many Michigan representatives including Gary Peters and Candice Miller were very enthusiastic.

He talked about Michigan Airline Railroad [not affiliated with an actual airline (planes) but created as an 'air' or 'express' rail line). The entire abandoned rail line, some of which has been converted to non-motorized trail, across the state from Lake Michigan to Lake Huron. Of the approximately 230 miles of the route, 132 miles have been converted to trail.

Working for MTGA, Todd serves as an Ambassador for the eastern portion of the Michigan Airline Railroad Trail. He is working to help communities bridge gaps in the rail line. There is a gap in St. Clair County; Norm Cox has presented options for completing these gaps. Pontiac (Clinton River Trail) and the Commerce Twp/Walled Lake/Wixom area also represent gaps in the trail system. Scott indicated his plans are to meet with Pontiac and discuss alternate uses to sidewalks and safety paths. He is also working with the MDNRE and City of Wixom to extend the Huron Valley Trail (east of Old Plank Rd for an additional estimated 1.8 miles) and connect to the proposed Michigan Airline Trail.

Other MTGA reps. are working on trail development from South Lyon to Jackson, and in the Kalamazoo-Battle Creek area. MTGA is looking to complete a plan and apply for funding for closing the gaps in this cross-state corridor.

The Macomb Orchard Trail is basically completed; just needs resurfacing of materials in one section and a bridge replacement.

Todd also discussed some of what he found out while meeting with the government representatives at the National Bicycle Summit:

- The new Transportation Act Bill is to be renewed by the end of the year. Hope to get in the "ACT" Act – a competitive grant program for alternative transportation such as bicycles and walking to get people out of automobiles. Emphasis more on transportation than recreation purposes. Applicants must have a plan and outline of project. If passed, won't be effective until next year.
- The new TIGER grant will be a smaller program this time – only \$600 million. \$2 million is the minimum requirement but will consider lower requests. County or MDOT would have to apply. Very competitive – some major cities, like Detroit, can also apply.
- Ray LaHood, Secretary of Transportation is pushing for "livability" – going beyond the minimum design standards. Basically calling for Complete Streets at the local level.
- Google is working to include bike trails with their map programs. Not totally accurate; relies on user input. Google notices if users change routes, etc.
- Earmarks are being phased out. David Evancoe, Road Commission for Oakland Cty., said Congressman Levin is the only one in Oakland County that supports earmarking in FY 2010.
- MTGA is working on a grant for "bike friendly" designated communities. Detroit received a \$15,000 grant. Must document investments in bike infrastructure, businesses, etc.

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PRESENTATION: Implementing Trail Signage on the Shiawassee River Heritage Water Trail – Kristen Wiltfang and Sue Julian

This very natural water trail is 7 miles long and follows the flow of the river from Holly to Fenton.

Headwater Trails, Inc. applied for, and was awarded, a \$25,000 Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative grant in 2007. OC Planning and Economic Development provided support for implementing this project.

They learned a lot working on this project! Thoughts to incorporate when doing signage such as this are the following:

1. Uniform Logo
2. Mile Markers. They have seven markers, 12 feet tall (5.5 inch x 7.5 inch). The markers are placed about 3' into the ground. Logos are attached to each mile marker also. The markers also indicate the boundaries for private property. They are made of composite lumber, not solid wood, and are secured with Quikrete. Cost for each ~\$200.
3. Emergency Rescue signs. These are yellow with red to show location of take out places for local police. Police were contacted and have agreed with these locations. Signs have GPS and emergency information on them.
4. Interpretive signs. They have 3-sided kiosks with easy-to-read information such as: Historical information, landmarks, and district specific information, such as: the historic wastewater plant; tips on sharing the area with nature; and how to properly cross a beaver dam in a canoe.
5. Keep text short! Bullets can pull out key points. More in-depth information can be included for those wanting & able to spend the extra time to study it.
6. Decide on a size and colors first
7. Send hard copy of what you want to have color matched to manufacturer.
8. Be patient! It takes time to coordinate everything!
9. Use materials that will last and hold up in the elements
10. Choose colors that will stand out in your environment

Gail Vandercook, a local graphic artist, completed the artwork for the signs. Blueprinted a draft, then added color. Consider top of sign must be readable; 1" of text is usually readable at a 10' distance. Graphic design costs: about \$9000.

Johnson Controls provided donations toward native plants; DDA beautification funds were also applied to the project.

Genesee County manufactured the signs for the road crossings, culverts and some of the safety signage.

About \$16,000 was spent on the materials for the project.

Kristen & Sue have put together a booklet of manufacturers and information which they will can provide to anyone wanting this information.

Because their communities had cooperated giving them some benefits such as in-kind items toward trail development, they wanted to make sure that their communities also received some benefits from the project through the signage.

Sue thanked Kristen and OC Planning for all of their hard work and assistance on the project.

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REVIEW OF OTAC DRAFT CONTACT LISTS

Stephanie Marchbanks distributed OTAC contact lists she created for this committee and for public distribution. She will email them. Please contact her with any changes or corrections.

OTHER BUSINESS

Donna Folland, OCPRC Project Advisor, introduced herself to OTAC. Donna will be working primarily on the Urban Parks Strategy and Land Acquisition projects for OCPRC – Park Planning Dept. She will also work with surrounding counties on the Clinton Corridor Project.

Chris Moshier, OCPRC User Support Specialist, gave a quick overview of the www.DestinationOakland.com portal which now includes an interactive trail map. Work has been done, and will continue to be done, to make the portal very user friendly. Users will be able to find and print a trail map. Information on non-Oakland County Parks is also provided. The goal is for the Destination Oakland portal to provide information on all things recreation and conservation-based in the County. Please provide any feedback on how to make the site better to moshierc@oakgov.com.

Todd Scott noted that MTGA has a similar map – the Michigan Trails Finder – which may be soon become obsolete. Their map info. may be transferred into the Google Maps interface.

IDEAS FOR OTAC BUS TOUR AND TRAIL SUMMIT

Discussion of traveling to Holly, the National Cemetery, and Wastewater treatment plant. Other ideas welcomed & contact will be made by email for more input. Tour will be approximately 2.5 – 3 hours.

Trail Summit – Planned for the 1st week in October. Stephanie talked briefly encouraging information and ideas from others. Presentations by the different groups can be offered at the Summit.

It was suggested to send OTAC outreach letters to the current municipal Planning Departments since many changes have occurred in staffing (trails/parks & rec) throughout the county.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kristen Wiltfang indicated PEDS created historical interpretive signage for Walled Lake.

Oakland County Planning has also produced a local food map for the county that indicates local food sources, organic farms, cider mills, etc.

Dot talked about the “On the Move” section in the Oakland Press on March 14, 2010. Different writers highlighting various parts of the county. It was well done!

City of Detroit is adding more trails/bike routes, including 30 miles of bike lanes.

The U.S. Social Forum is coming to Detroit with many people biking in from as far away as New York, Wisconsin, and even California.

ITC Transmission is in the process of revising their policy for trail usage in their utility corridors.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

The next OTAC meeting will be the Bus Tour on May 26, 2010 at 9:00 a.m.

Minutes taken by Nancy vonKoehnen, Administrative Services; and Stephanie Marchbanks, Parks Planning, with Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission.