

Mill Creek MetroParks Bikeway Phase III
ODOT PID #80655 & #85005
Public Open House - Information



Project Purpose

The purpose of the project is to extend the existing MetroParks Bikeway by constructing a bikeway from Western Reserve Road in Canfield Township to High Street in the Village of Washingtonville (near State Route 14, the Columbiana County line). The existing MetroParks Bikeway spans the northern two-thirds of Mahoning County, while the southern one-third of the county has no dedicated bikeway facility. Completion of this 6.4-mile section (Phase III) of the MetroParks Bikeway will provide local and regional users with a safe, uniformly-designed, multi-use, off-road bikeway facility for transportation and recreational purposes.

Project History

Mill Creek MetroParks constructed 10.6 miles of bikeway through Austintown Township, the City of Canfield and Canfield Township in the years 2000 and 2001. These respective phases, I and II, were constructed on an abandoned railroad line with the property purchased directly from the railroad company. Around the same time, a feasibility study was conducted to determine the alignment for Phase III. Several options were identified and ranged from utilizing the former railroad corridor for a dedicated bikeway, constructing a trail with bike lanes along Washingtonville Road, as well as solutions incorporating components of each of the first two options. With numerous factors considered in the study, the option to align and construct Phase III of the bikeway along the former railroad corridor was determined to be the preferred alignment.

Since the completion of the feasibility study, Mill Creek MetroParks has completed preliminary steps to reach the current status of the project. These steps include programming and securing funding for project stages, environmental studies, aerial surveying, geotechnical testing, site analysis, drainage studies and conducting individual meetings with property owners along the corridor. The MetroParks conducted separate consultant selection processes and, in turn, selected two consultants to complete various stages of this project. GPD Group was selected to complete several project components including developing the bikeway alignment, developing right-of-way plans, and conducting property acquisition. GPD Group has completed the first two components and is beginning the acquisition component. Environmental Design Group (EDG) was selected as the consultant for the design and engineering portion of the project. EDG's scope of work includes existing conditions studies, environmental analysis and reporting, geotechnical studies, bridge and infrastructure analysis, aerial mapping, design work and development of construction plans.

Regional Significance

The current and proposed expansion of the MetroParks Bikeway is one section of an expansive, regional facility named the Great Ohio Lake-to-River Greenway (GOLRG). Envisioned over two decades ago, this greenway facility will stretch approximately 110 miles from Lake Erie in Ashtabula County to the Ohio River near East Liverpool in Columbiana County. Each county has organizations responsible for development of that county's section of bikeway. Mill Creek MetroParks is responsible for the entire Mahoning County section. Currently, the GOLRG has over 75 miles of bikeway already constructed, with only one "gap" present in the trail in each county! With sections of bikeway in Ashtabula, Trumbull, Mahoning, and Columbiana Counties in Ohio, and Beaver County in Pennsylvania, completion of the GOLRG will create an opportunity to connect the Great Lakes region with the Atlantic Ocean near Washington D.C.

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Regional Significance (cont.)

The multi-state connectivity has been formalized by a new initiative named the Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition, or "I Heart Trails." This coalition is a conglomeration of trail builders, funders, and organizations with a shared vision: A network of over 1,450 miles of multi-use trails throughout a 4-state, 48-county region...the Industrial Heartland. Nearly half of the miles have been constructed throughout this network, which has been tagged as the largest bikeway initiative in North America! The GOLRG, along with the Ohio River Greenway Trail, are two regional trails comprising the Ashtabula-Pittsburgh Mega-Corridor. Completion of the MetroParks Bikeway is critical to the success of both the Great Ohio Lake-to-River Greenway and the Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition.

Several recent construction projects have linked or extended bikeway connectivity throughout the region. The 4.5-mile Niles Greenway was constructed adjacent to the northern terminus of the MetroParks Bikeway. This facility completes the connection between Mahoning and Trumbull Counties. Also, Columbiana County extended the Little Beaver Creek Greenway from Leetonia to Washingtonville, the proposed southern terminus of the MetroParks Bikeway. These connections, along with completion of Phase III of the MetroParks Bikeway, will connect 35 miles of trails!

Alignment

The decision to construct Phase III of the bikeway on the former railroad property will allow users to remain on an off-road, dedicated multi-use bikeway facility with similar design and safety standards as other contiguously constructed bikeways. This project will stretch from Western Reserve Road approximately 6.4 miles through Green Township to High Street in the Village of Washingtonville, connecting to a previously constructed ODOT District 11 intersection improvement project. The intersection project improved vehicular and pedestrian safety conditions by adding a traffic signal, turn lanes, signage and pavement markings, as well as constructing a widened concrete sidewalk from SR 14 to High Street. This location will be the southern terminus for the Mill Creek MetroParks Phase III project, physically connecting the MetroParks Bikeway to Columbiana County's Little Beaver Creek Greenway.

The alignment for the Phase III bikeway project was recently adjusted at two locations to utilize two existing MetroParks properties and one existing Green Township property, which helps minimize private property and environmental impacts. The alignment adjustments were considered for several reasons, including elimination of the bikeway alignment along Calla Road, reduction of the number of adjacent private properties and associated easements, elimination of several stream crossings, reduction of impacts to wetland complexes, and the provision of a safer and more scenic bikeway experience.

Environmental

Environmental studies are being conducted and reports are being compiled for final submittal to and approval by ODOT. Through these studies, it has been determined that various environmental features may be "impacted" through implementation of this project. Potential impacts include wetland alteration, culvert and bridge repair or replacement, soil stabilization, and similar activities. All impacts on the project will be addressed through restoration, rehabilitation, construction and regulatory mitigation practices.

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Environmental (cont.)

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried-out by ODOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 11, 2015, and executed by FHWA and ODOT. The proposed project will not impact any cultural resources, suspect hazardous waste sites or result in substantial impacts to ecological resources. The project will not result in substantial impacts to the environment either individually or cumulatively. In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (codified as 36 CFR 800), ODOT requests information regarding the presence of any known cultural resources in the vicinity of the project. Cultural resources include prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, historic bridges, historic buildings, sites and districts.

Project Schedule

Mill Creek MetroParks is working with GPD Group and EDG to complete the final planning and design stages of this project. Based on the consultants' work completed to date, the following items remain to be completed:

- Property acquisition utilizing the standard federal acquisition process
- Final design and engineering
- Final environmental studies and reporting
- Completion of construction drawings and contract documents
- Construction of project

The MetroParks has secured significant funding for all stages of the project. Completion of all planning and design work is anticipated by the end of 2017 and construction may begin in the spring of 2018.

Public Comment

Written comments can be furnished to the MetroParks at the public meeting or submitted to the MetroParks by Monday, June 6, 4:30 PM. A summary of public comments received during the public comment period and responses to comments will be prepared and posted on the Mill Creek MetroParks website within 60 days of the public comment period closure date. Go to www.MillCreekMetroParks.org and click "Public Information" under the "About Us" menu.

Comments may be submitted at the meeting or sent by Monday, June 6, 4:30 PM via US mail, fax, or email to the addresses below:

Mail: Mill Creek MetroParks
Attn: Justin Rogers
PO Box 596
Canfield, Ohio 44663

Fax: 330.702.3000

Email: Justin@MillCreekMetroParks.org

