

## *Macomb Orchard Trail Phase II and III Design*

Progress Meeting  
October 13, 2005  
3:00 pm  
Washington Township Hall

### **Meeting Summary**

A progress meeting for the design and construction of Phases II and III of the Macomb Orchard Trail was held at Washington Township Hall with the following people in attendance:

- John Crumm                      Macomb County
- Gerard Santoro                Macomb County
- Anthony Casasanta            Macomb County
- Dennis Tipsword               Wolcott Mill Equestrian Trail/MOT Friends Group/Ray Twp
- Jon Moore                        City of Richmond
- Troy Jescke                      City of Richmond
- Chuck Mabley                   Friends of MOT
- Vince Ranger                    MDOT Enhancement Program
- Dave Anthony                  Wade Trim
- Dave Nummer                  Wade Trim
- Leah Groya                      Wade Trim
- Brian Woodworth               Wade Trim
- Bob Breen                        Wade Trim

The purpose of the meeting was to review findings from field work, discuss the project budget, and discuss design options and preferences. John Crumm opened the meeting, welcomed everyone, and thanked them for their continued interest in the implementation of the Macomb Orchard Trail. The Design Team presented recommendations on the concept design elements that need to be decided on before Final Design can begin. The stakeholders group was asked to provide feed back on each recommendation. This feed back will be used by the Design Team and County staff to prepare recommendations for the MOT Commission to take action on at their October 25<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **Overview of Project Budget**

Dave Nummer, WT, presented a preliminary overview of the project budget. He stressed that these estimates are very preliminary and are likely to change as survey data is collected and more detailed design is complete. The cost estimates for constructing the bare bones trail (gravel) is just over \$2 million. The preliminary estimate for rehabilitating the 7 bridges is between \$260,000 and \$317,000, depending on the ability to get design exceptions for the width of a few of the bridges. We have contacted MDOT and are waiting to hear back on the design exceptions. This leaves little to no County funds available at this time to do much more than get the trail corridor open.

## **Bridges**

Bob Breen, WT, reviewed a report entitled “Structure Study for Bridges B-01 thru B-07” that he prepared for the Trail Commission. The report is based on findings from field inspections in September 2005. The report includes an overview of the existing condition of each of the 7 bridges that are located within Phases II and III including typical cross-sections. The report also includes proposed alternatives for each of the bridges including:

1. Rehabilitate/Reconstruct existing structure at existing widths
2. Rehabilitate/Reconstruct existing structure at desired width (14-feet)
3. Replacement with new structure at desired width (14-feet)

The report analyzes each of these alternatives for each structure and provides a preliminary cost estimate for implementation. Proposed cross-sections are also provided. The recommended alternative included rehabilitation of all of the structures that would require design exceptions for bridge width from MDOT at Bridges 03 and 06. The recommended alternative also included exposed timber decking. The preliminary cost estimate for the recommended alternatives is \$261,500.

Discussion regarding the report took place and various questions and concerns were answered. It was noted that Bridge 01 is located in Washington Township and the Township plans on paving their portion. Washington Township may want to pave over Bridge 01 to allow for a continuous, smooth surface. If the bridge decking is exposed timber, it is then possible to lay down a water-proofing membrane and asphalt over that. This brought up the possibility of B-01 being replaced by a culvert. It can continue to be an option, however, it may be more time and cost consuming due to the need to then involve the MDEQ.

Discussion also took place regarding B-03, which is the bridge over the North Branch of the Clinton River. The group would like to see overlooks built into the north and south sides of the bridge at deck level. Many trail users will stop to see the view while on the bridge. Providing adequate space for this would reduce the number of traffic conflicts on the bridge. Bob didn't think this would be a problem, but would look into it further and revise the cost estimates.

Timber decking is preferred by the design team for several reasons: it helps to retain the feel of the former railroad bridges, also, since it's exposed, it will be easier in the future to identify and access any needed timber repairs.

Bridge Railing styles were also discussed. It was generally agreed that a timber railing construction is preferred with a mesh that is sized to allow for open views of the natural resources, as well as colored (black or dark green) to blend in with the surroundings. Several also liked the look of the vertical post rising above the top railing as it was reminiscent of agricultural fencing.

## **Trail Cross-Section**

The typical trail cross-sections were reviewed. They include a vegetation control fabric over the existing ballast, and under approximately 4" of crushed stone. This will assist in stabilizing the trail as well as prevent vegetation from growing up through the trail. A handout was also distributed that included an approximate distance of trail that is located within each community, as well as an estimate of \$10 to \$12 per/lf of asphalt.

The concept of designing a split-trail at a handful of the busier road crossings such as St. Clair (32 Mile) and North Avenue was presented. This concept splits the trail into two sections as it approaches the road crossing. This can help to slow down the bicycle traffic as well as make the trail crossing more visible and prominent to vehicular traffic. Various design issues were discussed such as height of materials, maintenance concerns, bollard locations, width of the landscaped island, height of the island (maybe raise so it can be bench height). The County also suggested looking into the possibility of providing a refuge area in the middle of the busier roads. This would be a traffic calming device as well as provide a safe, mid-street, area for trail users to wait for vehicular traffic to pass. The Design Team will meet with the RCMC to discuss these design elements.

Brian Woodworth, WT, also reviewed conceptual trail alignments at Romeo Plank & 33 Mile Road and 33 Mile Road and Armada Ridge. It's likely that the trail will need to leave the railroad corridor at these locations in order to provide safe crossings at road intersections rather than mid-block. These will be reviewed with the Road Commission for their input and concurrence.

### **Bollards**

Brian Woodworth, WT, discussed the current issues with the bollards in Phase I and a potential solution. The existing bollards are occasionally hit by vehicles. When they are hit, the County indicates that the asphalt and bollard foundation gets damaged, making repair costly and inconvenient. Brian presented a potential option (there are many types of bollards) that is a collapsible bollard but has breakaway caps that keeps the foundation of the bollard from being damaged if struck. If the bollard is struck, only the caps break and then need replacing.

### **Signage**

Leah Groya, WT, reviewed various signage issues with the work group. The base signage package includes the regulatory signage at road crossings, road name signs at crossings (continued from Phase I), the Macomb Orchard Trail Signs (continued from Phase I), as well as private crossing signs. It's estimated that there are approximately 20 private crossings that currently existing across the trail corridor. The County indicated that the Commission is likely to allow the existing crossings to continue to exist, but will review additional crossings in the future on a case-by-case basis. WT indicated that at a minimum, two signs would likely need placed approaching each crossing to make trail users aware of the potential conflict.

The group also reviewed additional signage ideas that may not be implemented or considered until the future when sufficient funding is available. This included elements such as mileage markers, drain crossing signs (will be installed after construction as was done in Phase I), entering/exiting community signs, interpretive display signs, overhead banner signs, pillars at main entries, as well as share the trail and equestrian education signs if/when equestrians are permitted.

The County suggested reviewing the County's Tools & Techniques Booklet to ensure consistency.

John Crumm would like to get a cost estimate for the design of a standard interpretive sign so that they can be consistent as they are implemented over the coming years.

### **Trail Head Locations**

Leah Groya, WT, reviewed the potential trail head locations so that they could be confirmed with the group. Trail heads are planned every approximately 4 to 5 miles along the trail which is a good standard distance to maintain. An additional future trail head was added in Bruce Township (existing park).

### **Overlook Location**

Leah Groya, WT, also reviewed a potential future location for an overlook feature along the North Branch of the Clinton River. This would be in addition to the bridge overlooks. The idea was discussed to have a overlook extend down from the trail on the southeast side of the bridge and river and go down toward the river in order to get trail users closer to the resource. This location was discussed due to the possibility of the trail head going in the northeast corner, as well as the best location for quality views of the river and surrounding environment.

### **Equestrians**

Dave Nummer, WT, presented a typical cross-section graphic for a separated equestrian trail. This included a 4-5 foot equestrian trail with 12' high clearance. This would require brush hogging and selective clearing along the approximately 9 to 10 miles of corridor. A separated trail is the ideal situation to avoid user conflicts. It was estimated that this would cost approximately \$25,000 - \$30,000 per mile. This cost has not been included in the baseline trail construction cost estimates at this time. Potential MDEQ issues were also discussed, particularly as they relate to crossing wetlands as well as crossing streams, creeks, and drains. The idea of an equestrian trail adjacent to the primary trail was also discussed. Dennis Tipsword indicated equestrians would need 3 to 4 feet of area adjacent to the trail. Gerry Santoro indicated he believed there were AASHTO standards that required 14-feet of trail plus 2-feet on each side to have a shared trail corridor. This standard may be difficult to meet in many areas due to space limitations. The AASHTO requirements will be researched further and a cost estimate for a 14-foot wide area will be developed. Design Team will have to review the plans to identify areas where a 14'-wide trail is feasible given slopes and wetlands adjacent to the existing ballast.

It was suggested to extend the potential location of the equestrian trail east to Lowe Plank Road. This would get equestrians closer to Richmond, and would allow the equestrians in the area easier access to the trail system.

### **Stakeholder Involvement**

Leah Groya, WT, indicated that the project website was up and running. The address is [www.wadetrail.com/resources/orchardtrail/index.html](http://www.wadetrail.com/resources/orchardtrail/index.html). Everyone was encouraged to provide links to the project site on their respective websites and to check back on the site regularly. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Communication Brief was sent out at the end of September and is also posted on the project website.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be in front of the **Macomb Orchard Trail Commission** on **October 25<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m. at Rotary Park** on 29 Mile Road. At this meeting, WT will be looking for

a final determination on what will be included in the construction design drawings. This approval is needed in order to meet MDOT deadlines for plan submittal and review. The project continues to be on track for GI plan submittal in mid-December. The County indicated the presentation to the Commission should be 30 to 45 minutes in length.

The next stakeholder **Progress Meeting** will be held on **Tuesday, November 29, 2005 at 2:30 p.m. at Freedom Hill County Park.**