



Fairfield County Trails

Volume 1, Issue 1

The Fairfield Heritage Trail Association

June 2002

Who or What is FHTA?

The FHTA Case Statement

The Fairfield Heritage Trail Association (FHTA) is a grass roots organization of concerned members who support the development of trails. The term, trail, is used throughout our literature to describe a system of greenways for use by non-motorized vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Other names or concepts may include bike path, hiking trail, nature walk, jogging trail, greenway or linear park. The goal of FHTA is to bring together existing and potential users of trails with civic leaders to facilitate the creation of a trail system for Fairfield County, Ohio.

In addition to being an excellent place to reside, Fairfield County contains natural, cultural and historical sites that make it a high-quality tourist destination. Visitation is currently limited to travel by automobile, bicycle or foot, all using the same busy highway system, creating unsafe conditions for non-motorized travel.

The establishment of trails will create a safe, peaceful and effective environment for providing important recreational opportunities for young and old alike. The actual benefits of physical activities such as walking, bicycling, skating, horseback riding and cross-country skiing on cardiovascular health and weight control are well documented in the professional literature.

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City of Lancaster Plans for Multi-use Trails

Original article by Carl Burnett Jr.

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While area motorists may be looking forward to the completion of the Lancaster by-pass, cyclists can start hoping for a new inter-city bike trail for Lancaster.

The state has agreed to provide more than \$100,000 for start up costs for the bike trail.

"It's a \$130,000 grant and awarded on a 80-20 percent basis," said Lancaster Law Director Terre Vandervoort, who helped draft the grant application. "Which means we have to come up with approximately \$26,000 to use it"

The new bike trail is being spearheaded by the Lancaster Parks and Recreation Department in conjunction with the Fairfield Heritage Trail Association.

"The master plan is for the new trail to connect public sites, parks and the existing trails together," said Lancaster Parks director Dave Bogear. "It's a three phase project. When its done it will go from the Ohio University-Lancaster area to the River Valley Mall."

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FHTA meets with local landowners

By Rick Holt

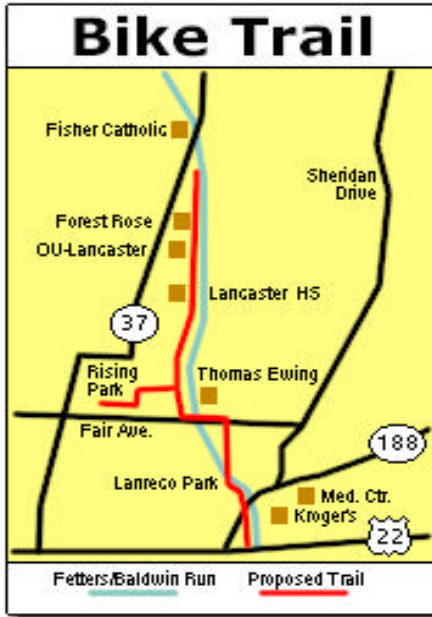
Raholt@sherwin.com

On Thursday, March 21, 2002 members of the FHTA met with some local landowners to discuss the proposed railtrail from Delmont Road to Stoutsville. The owners had received personal invitations from FHTA to attend an informational meeting and discussion for the purposes of

- (1) providing all available information on the project
- (2) dispelling rumors and/or false information
- (3) working with area landowners to address their concerns.

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Phase I of the Lancaster City Trail



The Fairfield Heritage Trail Association has received the endorsement of the following groups:

Adventure Cycling Association
Amanda-Clearcreek Board of Education
Amanda Village Council
Bremen Area Historical Society
Bremen Mayor Toni Harper; Village of Bremen
Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hamburg
Dum-Ford House Bed and Breakfast, Amanda
Fairfield County Commissioners
Fairfield County Historical Park Commission
Fairfield Union Board of Education
Hocking Township Trustees
Lancaster Board of Education
Lancaster City Council
Ohio University - Lancaster
Progressive Referrals Group of Lancaster
Rushcreek Township Trustees
Fairfield County Mental Health
& Recovery Service Board
The Friends of Clear Creek
The Friends of the Hocking River

A community has to have the capacity to envision the future they want, and not just the future they are likely to get.

- Unknown

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Phase I would include the design and engineering for the entire project and construction in the first phase which would start in the OU-L area and go along Fetters Run, a creek, and end up south of Lanreco Park, near Main Street.

Latter phases would include following the Hocking River going by the Family Y, Olivedale Senior Center and ending up near the River Valley Mall.

Jeffrey Vandervoort said the Association would try to raise the local matching dollars through fund-raisers and with membership drives. Association memberships are \$20 and meetings are held at 7PM on the second Wednesday of each month at Olivedale on Boving Road.

A Safe Place to Walk, Jog or Cycle

"Our primary goal is to provide a safe place for children and adults to use non-motorized means to walk, jog or cycle around the city," said Jeffrey K. Vandervoort, a spokesman for the Fairfield Heritage Trail Association.

The safety factor also was on the mind of personal trainer Rhonda Robbins who lives in Lancaster.

"One of the problems with Lancaster is there really are few places to jog or ride a bike where you don't have to battle traffic and feel safe. As far as women go, we really don't have a place to jog outside where we feel safe. Newark has a great trail, but this would be in our community. This would be great."

"There's a great deal of beauty near the Hocking River and in our parks," Terre Vandervoort said. "I think when more people can access these areas and can enjoy them, it will also raise awareness and help keep the areas clean and free of debris."

Tammy Thomas, a jogger from Lancaster with two children younger than 7, said the project sounded great to her as well.

"There aren't a lot of places where a family can go and bike and walk or jog," Thomas said. "My parents love to ride their bikes and they go to Nelsonville to do it. With this path they could stay right here. It would be a "terrific addition to the community." ❖



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FHTA Vice President Jim Barrett opened the meeting and welcomed those in attendance before introducing each of the evening's speakers. Speakers included Dave Scheffler of FHTA, Nancy Lokai-Baldwin, president of the Simon Kenton Pathfinders trail group in Champaign County, Rhonda Border-Boose of the Ohio Rails to Trails Conservancy, Phil Crist of the Fairfield County Sheriff's office, Neil Shaw from the Ohio Horseman's Council, Ron Hinton, coach and educator at Amanda-Clearcreek High School, and Jeff Vandervoort, president of FHTA.

"We emphasize that we don't have the ability to raise taxes or go onto people's land who don't want us there," said Jeff Vandervoort. The FHTA is an advocacy organization and does not hold eminent domain or any other political powers.

Concerns raised by landowners included the pressure felt to surrender land, an increase in noise, litter and troublemakers from the Columbus area, and the loss of privacy a trail would cause.

The evening's speakers tried to address these concerns through examples of existing trails, slide show presentations and personal testimonies. Civil Services Director Crist assured everyone the Sheriff's department would willingly conduct regular policing of the area. The County Parks System under the direction of David Fey would likely handle maintenance issues.

"There were property owners who expressed concern about the people that would be in that area," said Baldwin of the new Simon Kenton Trail in Champaign County. "They were afraid there'd be a lot of noise and trash. After the trail went up, we talked to them again and they said they hadn't seen any of that."

Coach Hinton went on to say, "I like it because it's a family thing...This could be an educational tool for Amanda-Clearcreek. I think it'd be something beneficial."

At the end of the meeting, not everyone was convinced the trail was a good idea. But the meeting was a success in revealing how it will take a common vision and hard work to make multi-use trails a reality in Fairfield County. The surrounding counties all have a big head start.

We invite the residents of Fairfield County to join our efforts to improve the quality of life and recreation in our county as well. ❖

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The FHTA has established the following timeline concerning trail construction:

2001-2005	Thirty miles of trails will include the proposed Stoutsville-to-Bremen trail and seven miles of trail system within the City of Lancaster.
2006-2011	Thirty additional miles will further connect existing trail systems and the adjacent counties of Athens, Franklin and Licking, which have established trail systems.

Concerns or potential opposition about the trail may include: lack of awareness of the value of trails to individual and community, trail access, vandalism of adjacent property, litter, trail safety and maintenance issues, and the impact on property values.

Progressive community leaders recognize that Fairfield County must promote the construction of an interconnected trail system adjacent to designated open space, passing through residential and rural areas alike. The economic benefits of multi-use trails for Fairfield County include increased visitor and tourist traffic, increased sales of food and recreational equipment, and increased property values. People want to live near clean, safe recreational opportunities.

The FHTA is a tax-exempt organization, recognized with letters of support from local village, city, township and county government agencies as well as civic and fraternal organizations. For a list of trail endorsers, see page 2 in this newsletter. ❖

A-C High School meets the FHTA

FHTA members Dave Scheffler and Claude Ford were invited to speak at Amanda-Clearcreek High School on May 23, 2002. They gave presentations to 7 different classes on the benefits and challenges of building multi-use trails, also known as linear parks, in small and medium-sized communities. Connecting these communities via recreational trails is a long-range goal of the FHTA. The FHTA appreciates this opportunity to share their vision. More presentations were requested which indicate local interest in developing rail-trails is definitely growing.

Interesting statistics from a recent conference

25% of the trips we make are less than 1 mile
 75% of those trips are currently made by car!
 36% of the US population is overweight; 22% are obese
 Our children are at risk – very little daily walking
 Studies show with urban sprawl comes obesity
CONSIDER: Are there safe places to walk or exercise in your neighborhood?
 Can your children safely walk or cycle to school?
 To the park? To the store?

The Fairfield Heritage Trail Association is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 corporation.

President Jeff Vandervoort
 Vice-President Jim Barrett
 Secretary Ira Weiss
 Treasurer Dave Scheffler
 Public Relations Rick Holt

Website: www.Lancaster-oh.com/heritage
 e-mail us at Heritage@Lancaster-oh.com
 Membership applications available on the website, along with meeting times, minutes and all relevant information. We welcome your comments.

FHTA to serve GOBA riders

The 14th annual Great Ohio Bicycle Adventure will set up their colorful tent city the day of June 17th at the Fairfield County Fairgrounds. The FHTA plans to be there with ice cream sandwiches from Weldon's of Millersport to meet the cyclists' (and non-cyclists'!) need for refreshment. The next morning the GOBA riders will head for Chillicothe. On the way they'll stop in Amanda for a break, and the FHTA along with the Amanda United Methodist Church will be there to serve the riders food and snacks for the long day of riding ahead.

GOBA is a weeklong bicycle tour during which some 3000 cyclists visit a series of 6 towns in Ohio, riding 40-60 miles each day.

GOBA's unofficial motto is "Ride to Eat and Eat to Ride!" Each year towns across Ohio compete for the opportunity to host GOBA because of the economic benefit, and the chance to encourage on-going, year-round tourism.

"Our figures indicate the riders average spending about \$30 a day in the communities they stay in," said tour director, Julie Mills. That's a \$90,000 direct boost to the local economy.

Any members of the FHTA who can help with setting up and serving on June 17th or 18th should contact Anna Ford at 740-969-3010. ❖

Membership Application (Please mail to: FHTA, c/o Plante & Moran, PO Box 765, Lancaster, OH 43130-0765)

First Name		Last Name	
Address 1			
Address 2			
City	State – Zip	County	
Home Phone	Work Phone	E-Mail	
Have you ridden an existing rail-trail? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Which?	Which?	
Do you know any political office holders? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Who?	Who?	
Do you belong to a service club? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Which	Are you willing to do public speaking? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	

Please list any ideas you have related to accelerating the development of the Fairfield Heritage Trail.

Membership Level

Individual - \$20.00/year Household - \$30.00/year Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Tee shirts? We've got Tee shirts! Be the first on your block to sport the new Fairfield Heritage Trail Tee shirt - with our stylish logo strategically placed close to your heart, where it belongs! Only \$10.00 each - order one for each member of your household.

Enter quantity of each size: S ____ + M ____ + L ____ + XL ____ + XXL ____ = Total # of shirts ____ x \$10.00
 Grand Total: \$ _____