



Adams Trail
Public Information Meeting – December 14, 2011
Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the purpose of the project?

The Adams Multi-use Trail Project will provide a safe route for non-motorized transportation and recreation connecting commercial and other public use areas in and around Granger with residents, schools, and the Harris Township Library. The trail also enhances connectivity to other community multi-use trails in Granger and St. Joseph County while promoting healthy lifestyle activities.

2. What Public Involvement Occurred?

Federal funding was secured in 2009, and St. Joseph County received INDOT authorization to proceed in May, 2010. Projects using Federal Funds follow federal guidelines for Public Involvement.

In accordance with the current INDOT Public Involvement Procedures approved by FHWA, Notice of Entry letters to perform survey work were sent to potentially affected property owners on May 19, 2010. Additionally, Notice of Entry letters to perform archaeological reconnaissance were sent to potentially affected property owners on July 23, 2010.

The Environmental Review Process also began at this time. Once the cultural resource investigation was complete and FHWA issued a finding, the Section 106 document was open for public comment. To meet the public involvement requirements of Section 106, FHWA's finding of "No Adverse Effect" was advertised in the South Bend Tribune on July 1, 2011 and provided a 30 day public comment period. The public comment period closed on August 1, 2011. No comments were received from the public.

Upon Approval of the Draft Environmental Document, Legal Notices offering the opportunity to request a public hearing were published in the South Bend Tribune on September 14th and September 28th, and the public was invited to comment prior to October 14th. The notices informed the public of the planned improvements and provided 30 days and 16 days, respectively, to provide comment or request a public hearing.

Also, letters containing the text of the legal notices were sent on September 13th to property owners located within the project limits. These letters asked for a response prior to September 30th.

No responses to the published legal notices were received. However, three responses to the letters sent to property owners were received. Two of the three property owners formally requested a public hearing. The Troyer Group either met with the individuals or spoke with each of them and, in coordination with the St. Joseph County Engineer, reviewed the

responses and sent written responses to the three letters. The responses answered their specific questions and provided clarification regarding the improvements. Because the nature of the comments did not constitute a public controversy and did not require a public hearing, St. Joseph County committed to hosting a Public Information Meeting to provide the public more detail regarding the improvement, hear comments, gather input, receive feedback for consideration, and engage in a question-answer session. FHWA and INDOT found this process acceptable.

In addition to the involvement required for the use of Federal Funds, the Friends of Granger Paths (FGP) has also performed Community Outreach and Education on their efforts and this project. FGP began their community efforts in 2004. FGP conducted a Community Interest in Multi-use Paths Survey in 2005, have held 85 public meetings to date, and has sponsored the “Granger Paths 5k Run/Walk” since 2006, in addition to other efforts.

Various media outlets have covered FGP efforts, events, and the Adams Trail Project. Publications including the South Bend Tribune, Granger Gazette, and Inside Granger have published 16 articles collectively since 2005, plus various local television station coverage.

3. How wide is the multi-use trail?

The multi-use trail is 10' wide to accommodate safe multi-directional use and allow for passing. FHWA, INDOT and ADA guidelines state under most condition, a recommended paved width for a two-directional shared use path is 10 feet. In rare instances, a reduced width of 8 feet can be adequate. This reduced width should be used only where certain conditions prevail, such as low bicycle and pedestrian use.

The trail is 10' wide in order to maximize safety among the trail users.

4. Why is the trail being located on the north side of Adams Road?

Locating the trail along the north side of Adams Road provides safest route with the fewest conflicts within the right-of-way. The decision to locate along the north side also accounted for expansion of the trail west to Gumwood Road (*see question 8 for discussion of future phases*).

For Phase 1A, locating along the south side of Adams Road would have required removal of a quarter acre of wooded area east of Bridlewood Court, and relocation of a high tension power structure east of Sturdy Oak Lane. The cost to resolve these conflicts was significant when compared to the cost to resolve the conflicts that exist along the north side of Adams Road.

Regarding future phases, a safer trail network is achieved by mimicking area traffic patterns and minimizing unprotected road crossings. In this instance, this is accomplished by occupying a single side of the road as much as possible, which reduces busy roadway crossings. Therefore, future phases were also evaluated to determine which road side will better allow for the expansion of the trail. The Harris Prairie Cemetery between Elm and Fir would be a major obstacle for future expansion on the south side of Adams Road. For these reasons, the north side of Adams Road is preferred.

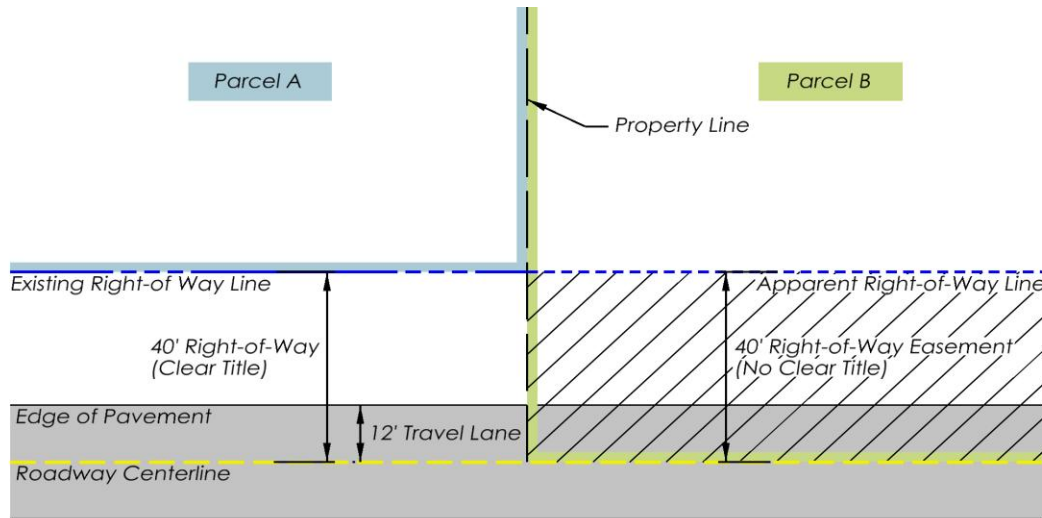
5. Why is the trail located so far from the roadway?

Separation from the roadway enhances pedestrian and bicyclist safety. Adams Road is an urban collector roadway through northern St. Joseph County and has an average daily traffic count of over 5,000 vehicles traveling at 45 m.p.h. The location varies between 0' and 10' away from Adams Road in order to maximize safety among the trail users and help minimize the impacts to adjacent property owners.

6. Why is the trail being located on my property?

The trail has been designed to remain within the existing apparent right-of-way. The Adams Road Corridor includes a 40-foot half right-of-way, meaning the right-of-way extends approximately 40 feet from the Adams Road centerline. Although residential lawns extend to the Adams Road pavement, the area within the right-of-way is reserved for the purposes of improving and expanding public services.

Most properties along Adams Road are deeded to the right-of-way line (Parcel A in the graphic below). However, some parcels are deeded to the center line of the road (Parcel B). In these instances, St. Joseph County maintains an easement inside of Revwhich they can expand public services. The County anticipates acquiring clear title at fair market value for these instances.



7.

The total construction cost for the trail and sidewalks is estimated at \$550,600.

8. How is this project being funded?

The 10' multi-use path between Elm Road and Cherry Road is being funded by 80% federal funds allocated through the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Transportation Enhancement program. The remaining 20% has been raised through fundraising efforts by the Friends of Granger Paths group. The TE program offers funding opportunities to help local governments expand transportation choices.

The 6' sidewalk along Adams Road and Cherry Road, east of Cherry is being funded by 100% federal funds allocated through FHWA's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program. The SRTS program has been created to assist communities in providing safe walking routes to schools.

9. When will the trail be open for use?

Construction of the project is estimated to begin in summer of 2012 and be open for use by November later that year.

10. What subsequent phases are planned?

This project represents Phase 1A of a three-phase master plan:

- Phase 1. The remainder of Phase 1 will extend west along Adams Road to Gumwood Road. The west end of Phase 1A will connect to the Harris Branch Library via an existing path along Elm Road.
- Phase 2. This phase will extend east along Adams Road to Ash Road, then south along Ash Road to Brummit Road, and west along Brummit to Beech Road. Phase 2 would connect Horizon Elementary to the trail network.
- Phase 3. This phase is planned along Anderson Road between Ash Road and Currant Road, along Currant Road between Anderson and Brick, and along Brick Road between Currant Road and State Road 23. A path along Elm Road will also be included to connect the Harris Branch Library to the path along Brick Road.

The subsequent phases will be constructed as fundraising allows.

11. Who will be responsible for the perpetual maintenance and repair of the trail?

Currently, St. Joseph County is responsible for maintaining sidewalks and/or multi-use paths within the public right-of-way as time, funding and personnel permit, unless handled through an independent written agreement with an outside entity, such as a homeowner's association. This policy is subject to change through County Ordinance revisions. The County may consider adopting an ordinance similar to the City of Mishawaka and/or City of South Bend, where property owners share responsibility for the repair and maintenance of the sidewalks adjacent to their homes. Any changes to the county ordinance will be county-wide and require public involvement prior to their adoption.

12. Who will be liable for the accidents occurring on the trail?

Please refer to the response to Question 9. The County accepts liability for sidewalks and multi-use paths located in the public right-of-way. However, if an ordinance were adopted that required homeowners to maintain the path adjacent to their home, then homeowners may also become liable for such accidents.

13. Will trail users be able to safely cross Adams Road at Elm Road to connect to the Harris Branch Library?

The trail project will incorporate new safety features at this intersection. A pedestrian crossing will be clearly demarcated across Elm Road with 24" thick white stripes, each 10' long, spaced 24" apart. Additionally, a flashing beacon assembly with push-button activation and a pedestrian crossing sign will be located on all four corners of the intersection. These measures are intended to form a single point of crossing for pedestrians, while directing drivers' attention to the crossing.