

Minutes of Meeting
MULTI-USE TRAILS JURISDICTIONS COMMITTEE
September 23, 2015

ATTENDANCE

Committee Members

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Elliot McKinley, Chair	Springfield Park District
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lori Williams	City of Springfield
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Matthew Saner	Village of Chatham
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Brian Wright	Sangamon County Highway
<input type="checkbox"/>	Andrew Werner	Illinois Department of Transportation – District 6

Staff

Linda Wheeland – Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission
Neha Soni – Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission

Others

Steven Simpson-Black – at-large citizen
Vernon Lagesse – Friends of the Sangamon Valley
Jim Birge – Sangamon County Farm Bureau
Bill Donels – Springfield Bicycle Advisory Council

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Elliot McKinley called the meeting of the Multi-use Trails Jurisdictions Committee to order at 10:05 AM.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman asked committee members and others in attendance to introduce themselves.

III. PURPOSE OF COMMITTEE

Linda Wheeland introduced the purpose of the committee. The idea came from the public engagement part of the update of the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan when the Communities Advisory Committee recommended such a committee be created. The recommendation to SATS overall addressed developing consistency to the multiuse trail experience within the county. SATS did incorporate the idea as a strategy in the Long Range Transportation Plan. The Communities Advisory Committee recommendation and LRTP strategy were included in a handout at the meeting (see Attachment A).

The Planning Commission facilitated development of this committee. An invitation was sent out to all of the trail jurisdictions within the metropolitan planning area. City of Springfield, Sangamon County, Village of Chatham, Springfield Park District and IDOT-District 6 have assigned representatives to this committee. We have not heard back from Rochester or Sherman.

Public Comments: A concern was raised that as all of our trails are constructed by IDOT and federal funds following AASHTO guidelines, the original signage that is installed is lost through vandalism.

Brian discussed the purpose of the committee is to create a uniform atmosphere on the trails. One issue is to establish consistent and effective 9-1-1 addressing along the trails so in case of an emergency trail users can accurately report their location. Another issue is the access points on the trails, as some of these are pretty remote, especially on the Sangamon Valley Trail, e.g., the area going north towards Irwin Bridge Road. This is an important issue for emergency medical services to be provided at such areas. All the AASHTO guidelines are in place; this effort is to make the trails safer and more enjoyable for the community.

Elliott concluded the discussion by noting that more access points are needed for the community and neighborhoods as well as to further enhance emergency responder access. They could be designated as a point of entry and tracked through GPS and addressing that way. Coordinating mileage markers and 9-1-1 addressing would enhance the user experience as well as their safety.

IV. TRAILS ACCESS POINTS AND AMENITIES PLAN

Linda described the project started at the SSCRPC before the long range plan update which looks at documenting the official access points and also pathways created by people to get on these trails, identifying the need for additional access points. Also, amenities are noted in the plan and these have increased compared to last year especially with the installation of the bike repair stations.

The plan is under progress to show the existing access points and amenities with the potential new access points and proposed amenities. One example is on the Wabash Trail at Chatham Road where people have created a pathway to get on the trail, which is not an official entry point. This will be looked at for all four trails. Other potential amenities include mileage and directional signage. One suggestion is to allow businesses near the trails to post signage directing trail users to their stores.

Linda raised a question about identifying starting point of the trails, particularly the Interurban Trail and Lost Bridge Trail in Springfield. Linda asked for a consensus on where those trails start. Some people view the Interurban Trail starting at the parking lot where the Wabash Trail starts. Some people view that it starts at MacArthur and there is a wide sidewalk which is a connector between them.

Elliott stated that the Park District had viewed West Grand as the start of the Interurban Trail. However, as the trail was extended north and the wide sidewalk constructed along Junction Circle it became more convenient to have one central point to put the user on the Interurban Trail and the Wabash Trail. This method seemed to work well and it simplified things, but still have not heard feedback from the user groups.

Matt, who is a regular rider of the trail, viewed start of the trail from where the pavement and the post start and not from the Park Street parking lot.

Elliott suggested a holistic approach to the location of our trail connectors, mileage markers, and directional signage to look at the envisioned trail system together in these matters.

Public Comment: There should be two separate definitions for trailheads and access points. Trailheads could be at the parking lots and access points could be at other openings to the trail. Any trail needs a trailhead, either at one end or both.

Linda asked for a consensus on the trails starting points. Elliott suggested that the intersection of three trails – Interurban, Wabash and Lost Bridge trails can be a starting zero point marker for all three trails. The parking lot at the Park Street could be a trail head for all three trails.

Lori raised a question about starting the Lost Bridge trail as on road. The Stanford Avenue bike lanes

are a separate corridor. So, why would we extend the Lost Bridge trail all the way to the trailhead at Wabash? Lost Bridge trail has got two trail heads already, one is IDOT parking lot and the other is the parking lot in Rochester.

Elliott viewed that if one hops on Stanford and continues, and then one is going to end up on the Lost Bridge Trail as far as location and mileage marking. IDOT and Rochester have the access points but not necessarily the trail heads. This seems to be a great consistency to the envisioned trail system.

Linda commented that this concept does support a good inter-linked system, but the on road part should be given a different name. The concern is that the Lost Bridge trail is suitable for any rider. But if we throw in the Stanford bike lanes in the trail, that completely changes the character of the trail, as only the experienced riders are going to use those bike lanes.

Public Comment: Using Bike Route numbers to identify complete bicycle corridors may help clear the confusion on the bike lanes as part of the trail.

Lori commented that including the Stanford Avenue bike lanes, proposed sidepath, and existing connecting path and wide sidewalk along Ash Street might create confusion in terms of 9-1-1 addressing. This would also create the need for additional signage on the road. She liked the idea of Bike Route numbers which would be more descriptive.

Linda concluded the discussion asking for a consensus on the starting points of the trails. The committee agreed on the following:

- The Wabash Trail trailheads will be at the parking lot on Park Street and the parking lot on Robbins Road. The starting point for mileage measurement will be at Park Street.
- The Interurban Trail trailheads will be at the parking lot on Park Street and Walnut Street in Chatham. The starting point for mileage measurement will be at Park Street.
- The Lost Bridge Trail trailheads will be at IDOT and Cardinal Hill Road. The starting point for mileage measurement will be at IDOT.
- Once the on road and side path connections to the Lost Bridge Trail are finished, the corridor will be included as a connector with a name or number assigned to it.
- The Sangamon Valley Trail mileage measurement will start at Centennial Park.

V. **9-1-1 ADDRESSING ON TRAILS**

Linda said that the 9-1-1 Department had created a draft plan for addressing on the trails. Linda gave the draft copies to committee members to review and discuss at the next meeting and suggested that it might be a good idea to have someone from 9-1-1 at the next meeting.

Matt suggested that his wife, who works at 9-1-1 as a dispatcher, may be able to attend the next meeting. He shared her experience that many times people who call in do not have an idea where they are located or even what trail they are on. She and her supervisor have suggested that mileage markers should be at least every ½ mile and there should be signs with the nearest access points listed including specific names of the trails. Using a specific color along each trail could also help identify locations.

Matt also discussed another experience at the Boy Scout Camp which was in the middle of nowhere, but they had the 9-1-1 address posted which helped in providing a specific address when the need arose to call 9-1-1. A similar thing could be developed for trails, for example in the parking lot which could help people locate themselves when calling 9-1-1.

Public Comment: A concern was raised that bikers do not pay much attention to the mile markers.

Users pay more attention to the crossing streets. So, street locations and identification would be better than mile markers.

Elliott concluded the discussion suggesting reviewing the draft for the next meeting.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

1 – There is a great opportunity for education to go along with signage. For example, the public could be made aware of the Franklin Ground Squirrel habitat area along the Sangamon Valley Trail. Vern Lagesse offered to work with the committee to provide educational experiences along the trails.

2 –Corporate sponsorship of trails could be utilized for funding. Maybe space could be rented for commercial signage. One of the pitfalls for this idea would be the potential need to go out for public bidding as these are federally funded projects. There could be an Adopt-a-Trail program for clean-up of the trails.

3 – Similar to Interstate signage system, there can be system of signage on trails for mileage markers and direction signage.

VII. FUTURE MEETINGS

A. Meetings Schedule

Next Meeting Date – Tuesday, October 27th at 10:00 AM

B. Topics for Next Meeting

1. 9-1-1 addressing on the trails
2. Access and Amenities Plan
3. Advertising (Lori will do some preliminary research)

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Elliot McKinley called to adjourn at 11:10 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Neha Soni
Recording Secretary

ATTACHMENT A

Excerpt from the Communities Advisory Committee Recommendations to the SATS 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan

A. BICYCLE NETWORK

Recommendation 2: Develop consistency to the multi-use trail experience within Sangamon County.

Background: Four multi-use trails have been developed within the MPA over a span of two decades through the efforts of several jurisdictions. These trails are very popular, enjoyed by bikers, runners, walkers, and rollerbladers of all ages. Additional trails and trail expansions are planned. Each trail has been developed differently however. Coordinating all the trail jurisdictions to create a consistent approach to trail development and to share ideas would improve the trail experience and jurisdiction effort. Additionally, addressing the cost of maintenance through joint efforts could stretch limited upkeep dollars.

Action: Create a Sangamon County Trails Jurisdictions Committee to coordinate trail development, expansion, and maintenance by addressing the following issues:

1. Consistency in how mileage is marked including starting point position and signage.
2. Creation of a system to facilitate 9-1-1 emergency situation responses on the trails.
3. Continual marking along the Route 66 Bicycle Trail corridor.
4. Identification and mapping of trail bridges and weight limits.
5. Identification of access points that would serve residents and businesses, bicyclists and pedestrians (e.g. at apartment complexes, neighborhoods, commercial areas).
6. Consistency in uses, etiquette rules, and education efforts.
7. Development of an annual educational campaign regarding safety and rules of the road, partnering with bicycle, running, and walking clubs.
8. Working with utility companies to reduce the use of heavy equipment, that causes damage, on the trails.
9. Sharing trail maintenance equipment or entering into joint projects for trail maintenance and updates.
10. Innovative funding ideas for perpetual trail maintenance such as a bicycle tax.

2040 LRTP - Goal 7, Objective 4, Strategy 2

- Create a Multi-Use Trail Jurisdictions Group to coordinate messaging, rules, amenities, mileage marking, 9-1-1 addressing, access points, education, maintenance, and funding potential to create a consistent trail experience throughout the area.