

Ozaukee Interurban Trail Enhancement Project

What is the Trail Enhancement Project?

The Trail Enhancement Project is a momentous project to make a significant safety, transportation, and aesthetic improvement along a section of the Ozaukee Interurban Trail. **This project includes replacing approximately 2 miles of on-road designated trail with 1.3 miles of off-road trail, which includes the construction of a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over Interstate 43 in the Town of Grafton.** This improvement will take pedestrian/bicycle traffic off of a busy, high-speed County Highway and provide a safe and scenic trail that will pass near hardwood woodlands and several small wetlands between the Grafton and Port Washington.

The total cost of the project is estimated at \$1.25 million. However, **80% of the project cost has been raised through a CMAQ Grant** from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. The Ozaukee Interurban Trail Advisory Council has recently established a Sustainability Committee to develop a strategy to raise the \$250,000.00 that is needed to complete this trail improvement.

What is a CMAQ Grant?

The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program grants **are federal transportation funds specifically appropriated to address reducing emissions** (air quality) and auto traffic (congestion mitigation) in areas in the Country that are designated by the State and Federal government as "non-attainment" areas. Essentially, "non-attainment" areas do not meet State and Federal clean air rules for air quality. The federal government appropriates federal grant monies through the transportation budget available only to non-attaining areas to reduce emissions and auto traffic or more specifically congestion mitigation and air quality. This money is then provided to States to distribute/grant to projects that can show or address these issues.ⁱ

What types of projects can a CMAQ Grant fund?

The grants are typically available to several types of projects including bike/pedestrian paths or lanes, bus or mass transit routes, and sometimes educational or other programs such as promoting bike to work week, bike loan programs, etc. **These grant monies are restricted to these types of projects and therefore cannot be used towards other road construction projects, snowplowing, or maintenance issues.**ⁱⁱ

Why should Wisconsin communities apply for Federal Funds?

According to The Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS), "the sum of federal tax payments that Wisconsinites send to the nation's capital outpaces federal domestic spending within the state by a wide margin." **"On average, each Wisconsin citizen pays over \$880 more in federal taxes than they receive benefits from federal spending."** Where does the money go? It goes to other States! "In 1999, Wisconsin ranked 40th among states in per capita balance of payments."ⁱⁱⁱ Wisconsin communities applying for federal grants are one-way Wisconsin citizens can reverse this outflow of federal tax payments.

Who else received CMAQ Grants and how are they going to spend the money?

Ozaukee County is not unique in its grant proposal. Several other Metro-Milwaukee communities also received CMAQ funds for bicycle facilities. An example of what other communities received in funding includes:

- City of Kenosha received \$428,000 to construct a bike trail bridge
 - City of Milwaukee received \$637,200 for bike lane improvements
 - City of Racine received \$1,268,800 to construct a bike path
 - City of West Bend received \$520,000 to construct a bike trail
 - Milwaukee County received \$805,000 to construct an extension to an existing bike trail
 - Racine County received \$258,400 to construct a bike trail
 - Waukesha County received \$500,160 to widen a bike trail from 8 to 10 feet
- (This is not a complete list of all communities receiving CMAQ funding)

It is also important to consider that CMAQ funds can also be used for other projects, such as mass transit. Many of these same communities received funding for other projects. Ozaukee also received \$101,600 for a mass transit project (the County has turned the funding down for this project). Total CMAQ for several Metro-Milwaukee communities includes:

- City of Kenosha- \$1,340,000
 - City of Milwaukee- \$5,554,278
 - City of Racine- \$1,268,800
 - City of Waukesha- \$1,006,584
 - Milwaukee County- \$6,395,536
 - Ozaukee County- \$1,093,200 (\$101,600 has been turned down for transit project)
- (This is not a complete list of all communities receiving CMAQ funding)

Another way to compare community funding is by calculating the grant funding on a per person basis (based on the 2000 U.S. Census).

- City of Kenosha- \$14.83 per person
 - City of Milwaukee- \$9.30 per person*
 - City of Racine- \$15.50 per person
 - City of Waukesha- \$15.23 per person
 - Milwaukee County- \$6.86 per person
 - Ozaukee County- \$12.05 per person (without the transit project)
- (This is not a complete list of all communities receiving CMAQ funding)

*People in the City of Milwaukee benefit because they are also in Milwaukee County. By adding the County allocation to the City allocation, the City of Milwaukee increases to \$16.16 per person. **Ozaukee County received less funding on a per person basis than the other communities listed**, except for those communities in Milwaukee County (excluding the City of Milwaukee).

How will this project improve the Trail safety?

The Trail Improvement Project will replace approximately 2 miles of on-road designated trail with 1.3 miles of off-road trail. The current on-road section includes:

- Terminal Road- Town Road with no designated shoulder for biking/walking, poor visibility due to the road going over a hill
- County Highway W- posted speed of 45 and the adjacent land use includes industrial and manufacturing, which creates truck traffic on County Highway W
- Ulao Bridge- crosses over Interstate 43. This bridge does not have a designated shoulder for bike and pedestrian traffic.
- Ulao Parkway- Turning from Parkway to Ridgewood Road is a blind turn for bicyclists and pedestrians
- Ridgewood Road- the current road right-of-way does not allow for a shoulder for bike and pedestrian traffic. This road travels through a winding residential subdivision

The Trail Improvement Project will:

- Utilize a small portion of Terminal Road and then exit this road at the crest of the hill, which has good visibility
- Construct new off-road trail segment that would eliminate the use of County Highway W
- Construct a pedestrian/bike bridge over Interstate 43 that would divert traffic off of Ulao Bridge and Ulao Parkway
- Construction of new Trail east of Interstate 43 on the existing We Energies right-of-way which would eliminate the Trail traveling on Ridgewood Road.

It is believed that removing bicyclists and pedestrians from road-designated trail will improve the safety of the Trail for all users and especially children.

If I own property along the Ozaukee Interurban Trail, will its value go down?

No study has been conducted of the effect of the Ozaukee Interurban Trail on adjacent land value. “A 1998 study of the property values along the Mountain Bay Trail in Brown County, Wisconsin shows **that lots adjacent to the trail sold faster and for an average of nine-percent more than similar property not located next to the trail.**”^{iv}

Additionally, the National Association of Realtors and the National Association of Home Builders conducted a survey in 2002 of recent homebuyers. Trails ranked the second most important amenity out of a list of 18 choices.^v Ozaukee County staff has also observed a recent condo listing in Port Washington specifically stated that a condo amenity was that it is located near the Ozaukee Interurban Trail.

How many County residents use the Ozaukee Interurban Trail?

An official count of trail users has not been conducted. However, a recent survey commissioned by Aurora Health Care in partnership with the Ozaukee County Health Department found that **25% of the survey respondents reported having used the Ozaukee Interurban Trail.**^{vi} A survey conducted during the first anniversary celebration of the Ozaukee Interurban Trail found that 6% of the respondents use the

Trail daily, 45% of the respondents use the Trail weekly and 34% of the respondents use the Trail monthly.^{vii}

How is the Ozaukee Interurban Trail a public health issue?

“Obesity is the nation’s fastest rising public health problem. Obesity rates among U.S. adults increased by 75% between 1991 and 2001 and rates doubled in children and tripled in teens over the last 20 years.”^{viii} Increasing physical activity by using the Ozaukee Interurban Trail would reverse these trends. In order to provide safe and convenient places for physical activity, the Saint Louis University Prevention and Research Center constructed 17 walking trails throughout communities in Missouri. “Survey data showed that 42% of community residents use the trails and 60% of the trail users report that they have been more physically active since the trails were built.”^{ix}

The Wisconsin Public Health and Health Policy Institute recently ranked Ozaukee County as the healthiest county in the State of Wisconsin.^x Although this is a tremendous accomplishment, 59% of the adult population in Ozaukee County that were surveyed in 2003 reported that they are overweight. This is up from 56% in 2002.^{xi} **The health benefits of bicycling and walking are numerous.** These benefits include: “reduced risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, and other chronic diseases; lower health care costs; and improved quality of life for all ages.”^{xii} Increased physical activity is especially important for senior adults, which is the fastest growing population in Ozaukee County.^{xiii} These benefits include “a stronger heart, a positive mental outlook and an increased chance of remaining indefinitely independent.”^{xiv}

Additionally, research shows that **when trails are constructed people are more likely to use them for daily trips that they might normally use their cars for.** “46% of Americans would walk or bike to work or for errands if they only had facilities that were safe and convenient.”^{xv} This increased physical activity will assist all Ozaukee County residents decrease the health effects caused by physical inactivity.

What is the potential economic impact of the Ozaukee Interurban Trail?

Opening in September of 2002, the Ozaukee Interurban Trail is a new trail and may not reach its full economic potential for several years. An economic impact study of the Ozaukee Interurban Trail has not been conducted. However, research has been conducted on the potential economic impact of this Trail.

A survey was conducted during the one-year anniversary celebration of the Trail. Of the 158 responses, **70% responded that on average they spend money while traveling on the Trail.** Of these Trail users that spend money while using the Trail, 63% responded that they spend \$1-10, 29% responded that they spend \$11-20, 6% responded that they spend \$21-30 and 2% responded that they spend over \$31 while using the Trail.^{xvi} Although this may be a small sample of Trail users, it is evidence of economic activity along the Trail.

Comparisons may be made to another similar trail in the State of Wisconsin. The Fox River Trail in Brown County was completed in May of 2002 and also lined by

restaurants, convenience stores and other businesses that typically benefit from trail traffic. To estimate economic impact along the Fox River Trail, a survey was distributed to 42 businesses on or near the Trail. 39% of the responding businesses indicated increased business as a result of the Fox River Trail.^{xvii}

There are differences between these two trails. Whereas the Fox River Trail is a 14-mile trail, the Ozaukee Interurban Trail is 30-mile trail that travels through the downtown shopping districts of six communities. Another difference is that bicyclists, skaters and horseback riders 16 years and older on the Fox River Trail must purchase a pass before using the Trail. The Ozaukee Interurban Trail is a free trail, but does not allow horseback riding.

The Ozaukee Interurban Trail is also a tourism destination in Ozaukee County. The Trail is located in Milwaukee-Racine Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which includes 1,689,572 people.^{xviii} The 2002 National Survey of Pedestrian and Bicyclist Attitudes and Behaviors found that 27.3% of the U.S. population over the age of 16 indicated that they bicycled at least once in the summer of 2002.^{xix} Applying this to the Milwaukee-Racine MSA shows that there are 461,253 people over the age of 16 bicycled in the summer of 2002 in this MSA.

There are other significant sized MSAs that are within a four-hour driving distance from the Ozaukee Interurban Trail. This includes Chicago-Gary-Kenosha, Madison and Green Bay. These MSAs have a total population of 9,810,844^{xx} or 2,678,360 bicyclists. Adding this to the Milwaukee-Racine MSA shows that there are over 3 million potential Trail users within a four-hour drive of the Ozaukee Interurban Trail!

The Wisconsin Department of Tourism conducted research on the bike trails of western Wisconsin in the summer of 2000. This study found that the average per person per day expenditure for non-local trail visitors was \$27.48.^{xxi} **If only one percent of the 3 million potential trail-user market were to visit the Ozaukee Interurban Trail, they could have a total estimated visitor expenditure of \$824,400.**^{xxii} (This is not intended to be an exact measure of economic impact, but an example of the potential that exists.)

In addition, the proposed pedestrian/bicycle bridge over I-43 will act as a giant billboard for all of the vehicles traveling underneath it. In 2003, about **40,000 vehicles travel this section of I-43 per weekday.**^{xxiii} This unique bridge will truly catch the attention of people as they drive underneath and will hopefully attract future Trail users.



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- ⁱ Andrew Struck. Planner/Conservationist. Ozaukee County Planning Resources and Land Management Department
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- ⁱⁱⁱ Boyne, Shawn & Joel Rogers. A Snapshot of Federal Funding to Wisconsin. Prepared for The Center on Wisconsin Strategy. October 2002.
- ^{iv} Rails to Trails Conservancy. Economic Benefits of Trails and Greenways
- ^v Consumer's Survey on Smart Choices for Home Buyers. National Association of Realtors and National Association of Home Builders, April 2002
- ^{vi} Ozaukee County Community Health Survey. Commissioned by: Aurora Health Care. In partnership with: Ozaukee County Health Department. Prepared by: JKV Research, LLC. Summer 2003.
- ^{vii} Ozaukee Interurban Trail Survey. By: Paul Roback Fall 2003
- ^{viii} National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity. Obesity and Other Diet and Inactivity-Related Diseases: National Impact, Costs and Solutions. 2003
- ^{ix} National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity. Obesity and Other Diet and Inactivity-Related Diseases: National Impact, Costs and Solutions. 2003
- ^x Wisconsin County Health Report Cards: 2003. by: The Wisconsin Public Health and Health Policy Institute
<http://www.pophealth.wisc.edu/wphi/data/Wisconsin%20County%20Health%20Report%20Cards%202003.pdf>
- ^{xi} Ozaukee County Community Health Survey. Commissioned by: Aurora Health Care. In partnership with: Ozaukee County Health Department. Prepared by: JKV Research, LLC. Summer 2003
- ^{xii} Healthy People 2000. a report published by the U.S. Public Health Service
- ^{xiii} U.S. Census Bureau www.census.gov
- ^{xiv} Healthy People 2000. a report published by the U.S. Public Health Service
- ^{xv} Community Design, Active Living and Public Health. Paul Zykofsky, AICP, Local Government Commission..
- ^{xvi} Ozaukee Interurban Trail Survey. By: Paul Roback Fall 2003
- ^{xvii} Runge, Cole. Fox River Trail Study. Prepared for the Brown County Planning Commission. December 2001
- ^{xviii} U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census. www.census.gov
- ^{xix} Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center. www.bikinginfo.org Fact Sheets: Bicycling by the numbers
- ^{xx} U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census. www.census.gov
- ^{xxi} Wisconsin Department of Tourism. Profile of Visitors on The Bike Trails of Western Wisconsin. Summer 2000
- ^{xxii} 3 million * 1% * \$27.48
- ^{xxiii} Bob Beglinger. Chief Transportation Engineer. Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission