

The existing Kiwanis Trail is a regional non-motorized recreational amenity that connects three communities, but it was left unfinished. There is an approximate 1.5 mile gap between the planned trailhead and the current dead-end terminus. Without a trailhead people cannot park to use the trail and it is dangerous to navigate on the roadways to get to the trail. Now, there is an opportunity to connect the Trail to Cal Zorn Park in the City of Tecumseh from its current terminus in Raisin Township at Ives Road and Green Highway. This project will finally close the gap that prevents the Trail from being accessible to many potential users. To help achieve this goal, four communities, Lenawee County and several not-for-profit organizations have come together to make this long-planned Tecumseh Connection a reality.

The Kiwanis Regional Trail Authority was formed under State law amongst the Cities of Adrian and Tecumseh and the Townships of Adrian and Raisin. The Authority has taken on as its first mission the completion of this project and the on-going maintenance and improvement of the Trail system. Lenawee County has stepped up to apply for a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant which brings \$300,000 to the project. The Kiwanis Clubs of both Adrian and Tecumseh have come together to help provide financial and volunteer support, and the Lenawee Community Foundation has committed to assist in facilitating the fundraising efforts. While there is already a great deal of community involvement, the project will create more opportunities for community organizations to get involved and come together to literally construct a physical connection between four communities. People will be able to bike, walk, run or skate all the way from Adrian to Tecumseh on a continuous pathway.

Many of the existing non-motorized trails projects across Michigan and the country have shown that trails can have a significant positive impact on local economies. The Land Information Access Association (LIAA) out of Traverse City has shown through their Trail Towns initiative the positive economic and social impacts trails have on their surrounding communities (http://www.liaa.org/trail_towns.asp). Academic research has demonstrated that trails have a significant positive impact on surrounding property values and people living near trails report a higher quality of life (Univ. of Delaware- Center for Applied Demography & Research). We need not look any further than neighboring Washtenaw County to see the tremendous recreational use and

value provided by the Border-to-Border Trail and Potawatomi Trail. Not only will this project improve a highly desirable recreation amenity for the almost 100,000 thousand residents of Lenawee County, it will provide an economic advantage by drawing visitors to the County, and most importantly it will physically and perceptually connect our communities. The primary goals of the project include the following:

- 1) Significant improvement of a highly desirable recreation amenity that will provide a regional draw and benefit.
- 2) Enhancement to local economy from a) creating a more sought-after location for prospective new residents and b) visitors to the area that will spend money at local restaurants and retail businesses.
- 3) Improvement in the health of individuals that now have much easier access to a recreational amenity for walking, running, biking, etc.

Success will first and foremost be measured by completion of the construction of the Trail extension. However, there will be several other measures of success that the Kiwanis Regional Trail Authority is looking toward tracking as that organization moves forward including, but not limited to, increasing number of users of the Trail, participation in volunteer maintenance events, participation in fun runs/walks/bikes on the Trail, and feedback from surveys regarding recreation that are conducted periodically by the individual communities and Lenawee County.

There will be a recognition board constructed at the Trailhead in Cal Zorn Park that will list donors, and the fundraising committee is planning a dedication ceremony when the project is complete to recognize donors. During the active fundraising efforts the participating communities have also committed to recognize donors on their websites and social media pages. Finally, a series of press releases is planned to encourage new donors as well as recognize existing donors