

# **Linn County Trails Association**

## **Board Meeting**

### **Monday March 10, 2014**

The monthly meeting of the Linn County Trail Association's Board of Directors was held on Monday March 10, 2014 at the United Way of East Central Iowa. A quorum was present. Those who attended the meeting were the following:

#### **LCTA Board Members:**

Steve Hershner (President), Paul Fiegen (Vice President), Keith Sutherland (Treasurer), Brad Mullin (Secretary) Sarah Barber Michelle Barker John Ernst Vicky Evans Leland Freie Rex McCright Dick Mundy Gary Palmer Eric Penne Larry Scott Mindy Sieffert John Wauer Mike Wilson Dan Biechler Randy Burke Dennis Goemaat Kesha Billings Brandon Whyte.

Guests

Kyle Lundberg John Hager Kevin Kirchner Irv Mussman

#### **Call to Order:**

President, Steve Hershner called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

#### **Approval of the Minutes:**

The minutes for the February board meeting were distributed electronically. The minutes were approved unanimously.

#### **Treasurer's Report:**

On the March treasurer's report, Keith Sutherland reported current assets of \$80,634.

#### **Presentation: Dennis Goemaat Linn County Conservation, Cedar Valley Nature Trail Paving (Schultz Rd. to Center Point) :**

Linn County Conservation was notified that they were not awarded a grant with their recent application for paving the Cedar Valley Nature Trail to Center Point (Phase 4). As an alternative to grant funding, the County is working to identify local funding for the project. The County will continue to apply for grants as opportunities arise. The County would like the LCTA to raise funds for the project. The project has an estimated cost of \$1.2 million dollars.

Proposed budget at this time:

1. \$750,000 - Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) funds
2. \$290,000 – ITC funds
3. \$60,000 – Conservation Board Reserve Funds
4. \$100,000 – LCTA Contribution

Assuming the budget is approved, the County projects the following timeline:

Fall 2014 – Develop RFP for design and engineering

Winter 2014/15 – Trail engineering and design

Spring 2015 – Bid

Summer 2015 –Construction

This timeline would mean that we would need LCTA funds sometime in early to mid-2015.

### **Regional Trails Network:**

In February 2014, Johnson, Linn, and Black Hawk County officials asked the state Transportation, Infrastructure, and Capitals Appropriations Subcommittee for \$8.2 million to help connect a network of trails to help create recreation, tourism, economic development, and workforce development. The route would extend from Cedar Valley Nature Trail in Cedar Falls to Iowa City's Hoover Nature Trail, as well as to Solon and West Branch toward Muscatine. Linn County Conservation distributed and discussed and the following document summarizing the project:

*-Begin-*

### **A Trail Vision for Eastern Iowa:**

#### ***Connecting Eastern Iowa Communities as Part of the American Discovery Trail***

This proposal envisions a connection between metropolitan communities in Eastern Iowa with Iowa's beautiful countryside and rural communities. A tremendous recreation and tourism opportunity will be created by upgrading existing trail segments and completing community connections as part of the American Discovery Trail. The Cedar Valley Nature Trail is already in place, but is in need of some upgrades. The Hoover Trail is partially complete and efforts are being made to connect the communities of Ely, Solon, North liberty, Coralville and Iowa City along this route. A natural extension is to continue the Hoover Trail to West Branch - home of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library. This trail system would provide a backbone of 113 linear miles of trail with well over 200 miles of connecting trails and loops within the metropolitan areas.

This plan includes hard-surfacing existing segments of trail that are currently gravel, upgrading several deteriorated bridges and structures and constructing missing segments to complete the linkage. Once completed, this trail system would link the communities of Cedar Falls, Waterloo, Evansdale, Gilbertville, La Porte City, Brandon, Urbana, Center Point, Robins, Hiawatha, Cedar Rapids, Ely, Solon, North Liberty, Coralville, Iowa City and West Branch. This trail system would directly serve communities with over 356,000 people. If you consider the zone of Influence to include the impacted counties, the total population swells to over 522,000 people. In addition to serving the local people, a robust trail system has been shown to become a destination and has attracted tourism as well as other economic development.

There are examples in neighboring states where significant lengths of trails have connected communities and created economic benefits. Examples include the Root River Trail in Minnesota, the Katy Trail in Missouri and the Ice Age Trail in Wisconsin. These trails have become important vacation and tourism destinations and attractions. People travel with their families for long distances to spend time on the trails touring the respective areas and spending money in the area. Many businesses have been developed to provide services that support the trail activity. In addition, existing hospitality businesses have seen increased revenue as a result of the trail.

The American Discovery Trail (ADT) is a 6,800 mile trail linking the east and west coasts of the United States. The concept of the ADT is to link communities, cities, parks and wilderness areas to provide recreational opportunities. It is the recreational equivalent to the interstate system for vehicular

transportation. The American Discovery Trail traverses Iowa and uses segments of existing trails to provide the connectivity across the country. The Hoover Trail and Cedar Valley Nature Trail are currently identified as part of the ADT.

This vision is intended to be a starting point and is not meant to limit the long-term possibilities involving trail connectivity. There is significant long-term potential to use this trail system to continue to connect communities providing additional opportunities. The intent is to create a significant trail system that will attract interest from within these Iowa communities as well as outside the area.

-End-

In Linn County, the improvements to the Cedar Valley Nature Trail would be as follows *(the highlighted items were included in the \$8.2 million ask)*

Linn County Section of CVNT	Cost Estimate	State Request
Construct trail from Ely to the Linn-Johnson County Line	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
*Hard surface Shultz Road through Center Point approximately 4 miles	\$1,400,000	\$1,400,000
Linn County investments on Cedar Valley and Hoover Trails (past five years)	(already received) \$4,285,000	
Replace West Blue Creek Bridge	\$1,000,000	
Replace East Blue Creek Bridge	\$500,000	
Replace Bear Creek Bridge	\$500,000	
*Hard surface Center Point to Urbana approximately 5 miles	\$1,750,000	
*Hard surface Urbana north to Benton county line approximately 7 miles	\$2,450,000	
Straighten "S" curve Benton County mile marker 23.5	\$50,000	
Resurface Boyson Road to County Home Road - 3.5 miles	\$60,000	
Replace bridge railings - 456' total (\$100/foot)	\$45,650	
* Hard surfacing pricing based on \$350,000 per mile to include engineering, contract work involving grading, drainage, tree removal, rock and asphalt/concrete paving.		
<b>Total Linn County Major Capital Improvements to the Cedar Valley Nature Trail :</b>	<b>\$8,755,650</b>	

## **Reports for Standing Committees:**

### **A. Public Awareness and Support (Paul Fiegen):**

#### **1. Ride, Walk, Play CR:**

Gary Palmer reported that the Ride, Walk, Play CR event will occur on Saturday, May 24<sup>th</sup> from 10:00am to 2:00pm. Ten different organizations have agreed to participate. The one mile ride/walk will start National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library. The route will use the Cedar River Trail and visit the African American Museum of Iowa and the Cedar Rapids Art Museum. There will be a need for volunteers and route monitors from the LCTA.

#### **2. Linn County Trails Association Website:**

Paul discussed the fees charged by Cyber Innovation in regards to maintenance of the website. Paul mentioned the possibility of updating the LCTA brand with a logo redesign. Mindy Seiffert agreed to do some preliminary brainstorming.

#### **3. Trans-America Health Fair**

The Linn County Trails Association was invited to have a table at the annual Trans-America Health Fair. On Tuesday April 8th: 10:30am – 1:30pm at 6400 C St. SW, Cedar Rapids and Wednesday, April 9th: 4333 Edgewood Rd. NE (located on the corner of Edgewood Rd. and 42nd St.) 10:30am – 1:00pm. Any interested volunteers should contact Gary Palmer.

#### **4. Marion Uptown Farmers Market:**

LCTA has received a request from the organizers of the Marion Uptown Farmers Market to participate. The markets are the second Saturday of each month from June to August in Downtown Marion. The board discussed the possibility of attending.

#### **B. Trail Development (Steve Hershner):**

##### **1. Cedar River Trail Closure:**

Closure of the Cedar River Trail between Highway 30 underpass and Ely Rd. underpass is scheduled for Spring 2014. The closure is due to sanitary sewer improvements behind the Worley Warehousing facility. The closure is expected to last 30 days.

**1. Marion Master Trail Plan:** The city has approved the update of the Marion Master Plan. Plans include the creation of a steering committee. The first public input session was Tuesday, February 25th at the Lowe Park Arts and Environment Center (Marion) from 4-6pm. Following the Marion Master Trails Plan input meeting, a website and survey were created to collect additional feedback. Copies of the survey are available at: <http://linncountytrails.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2014/03/Marion-Master-Trails-Plan-User-Survey.pdf>. Surveys need to be completed by the middle of April 2014. Return surveys to Marion City Hall, or e-mail it to Kesha Billings at [kbillings@cityofmarion.org](mailto:kbillings@cityofmarion.org). The City of Marion also has a new online mapping tool for trail comments and input. This tool can be used to suggest new trails, safety improvements, or even general comments about the trails. The mapping tool can be found at this URL: <http://marion-soulside.dotcloud.com/>

##### **2.Linn County Conservation:**

- a. **Cedar Valley Nature Trail closure:** Linn County reported that repairs to the Apple Creek Bridge (just north of Center Point) will occur either in April or the Fall 2014 depending on the contractor. The closure is expected to last 20 consecutive working days.
- b. **Grant Wood Trail:** The Iowa Department of Transportation has relocated control of the project to the local office. The bid letting is scheduled for July 15<sup>th</sup>. Preliminary construction could occur in late Summer/Fall 2014. Creation of the a new parking at 62<sup>nd</sup> Street may start in Summer 2014.

**3. LAMBA:** The LAMBA Annual Winter Party will be held March 22<sup>nd</sup> at Eco Lips in the Cherry Building (329 10<sup>th</sup> Ave SE #213) from 6pm to 9pm has been postponed

#### **C. Government Support:**

##### **1. Corridor Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMPO):**

The Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) is reviewing projects for FY18 funding. The City of Cedar Rapids submitted an additional project not included in the priority list from last year. The Iowa Department of Transportation will not fund the trail component of the Collins Road Improvement Project. The city is submitting a \$1.6 million project with an underpass of Collins Road and a short section of trail for consideration. The board discussed the implication of funding such large projects at the expense of several smaller projects (that were included in the priority list and Fiscally Constrained Plan). Large projects would use the majority of the 80% of STP/TE funding allocated over the next 5 years. The next TTAC meeting is April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

**D. Trail Operations and Safety (Jeff Keiser):**

1. No Report

**New Business:**

1. **New LCTA Board Meeting location:** The current meeting location, Human Services Building, notified the LCTA that a \$25 a month fee will be charged for the use of the meeting rooms beginning March 2014. The board discussed the exploration of finding other meeting locations. One possible location is the Shores Event Center. The April meeting will be held at the Human Services Building.

2. **CVNT Capital Campaign:** Dean Barnum moved that the LCTA established a capital campaign to assist Linn County Conservation Board with Phase 4 of the Cedar Valley Nature Trail paving. The motion passed unanimously. The goal of the campaign is between \$75,000- \$100,000.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:41pm



**Linn County Trails Association**  
**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**



**LCTA Board Meeting**

Monday, April 14, 7:00pm

Location: United Way of East Central Iowa  
317 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE

**LCTA Board Meeting**

Monday, May 12, 7:00pm

Location: TBD