Friends of the Clinton River Trail has identified one of its top priorities is getting improved CRT/road crossings at key points. Urban trails and major roads eventually have to cross. When they do, the critical issue is to insure that trail users have the safest reasonable way to get from one side of the road to the other. Those on the trail are almost universally slower than vehicular traffic and therefore need a relatively long time to go a fairly short distance. Angular crossings, such as the one pictured above at Orchard Lake Rd., compound the problem since the diagonal distance is much longer than a simple perpendicular crossing would be. Further, with multiple lanes of traffic in each direction, finding adequate gaps to allow safe crossing can be frustrating.

The original CRT Master Plan identified potential engineering solutions for each of the major road crossings that CRT encounters. “Grade separated” crossings -- where the trail passes either above or below the road (i.e. over a bridge or through a tunnel) -- are clearly the best solutions. They are also the most expensive to construct. For example, the new Telegraph Rd. bridge cost over $2 million. The next best solution is to make the trail cross at a 90 degree angle to the roadway and to put a safety island, sometimes called a refuge island, between opposing directions of traffic.

As part of its mission to make the trail “... a safe and enjoyable recreational feature...” FCRT continues to work with each of the municipalities and Oakland County to implement improvements at all major crossings.
More Safety Islands Planned

Frequent CRT users are familiar with the safety islands already in place at Avon Rd., Livernois Rd. and Adams Rd. Number one on FCRT’s priority list for future improvement is the Orchard Lake Road crossing pictured at the start of this story. The cost of repositioning the roadway, adding the safety island, putting up proper signage and cleaning up the landscaping is estimated at $150,000. Funding to complete this project is nearly in place. The majority of the roadway improvement cost will be covered by Tri-Party funds, i.e. jointly provided by Oakland County, the Road Commission of Oakland County, and the City of Sylvan Lake. The Friends group has committed $13,500 toward the project. FCRT, with help from Oakland County, continues to seek grant funding to cover the pedestrian safety island and allow the complete project to proceed. It is planned that construction will begin as soon as the funding gap is resolved.

This summer, the Road Commission of Oakland County has a project that will widen Crooks Rd. where it crosses CRT to five lanes. During that construction RCOC will also be adding a new safety island on Crooks. (Check the FCRT website for construction updates over the summer.)

Rochester’s City Council has established the CRT crossing at Dequindre Rd. as their next priority and has committed significant funding to begin to address this long standing concern. A major difficulty is the number of governmental entities that must agree to a resolution. Ownership of the trail splits at the centerline of Dequindre Rd. The City of Rochester owns the CRT portion while Macomb County has ownership of the Macomb Orchard Trail side. The roadway is under Road Commission of Oakland County jurisdiction even though the east half is actually in Shelby Twp. There is also an easement where Detroit Water and Sewerage plans to run an eight foot diameter water line. To further complicate the issue, a developer has filed a site plan to build condos on the north edge of the Shelby Twp. side. The turning lanes into the condo complex will impact the trail crossing as well.

The governmental entities all agree on the critical need to address the crossing -- resolving exactly how to do so and who pays for what part is not easy. Rochester and Oakland County Planning hosted a meeting of the key stakeholders to document concerns and alternatives. The CRT Master Plan identifies either a pedestrian safety island or a tunnel solution. While a tunnel would be ideal, the cost would be several times more than an on-grade crossing. Design, funding and permitting could take years for a tunnel while a pedestrian safety island could be finalized fairly quickly. Watch the CRT website for announcements on progress.

The as-yet unresolved Dequindre Rd. crossing can be a challenge to get across, particularly on weekend days. With the long downhill roadway, vehicle speeds are often well in excess of the posted 45 mph limit making traffic gaps particularly short.

The Trailhead

conjunction with several downtown businesses, is working on plans to improve all forms of transportation within the “Loop” area. CRT is high on their list of valuable assets.

O.K., so you might be wondering about the sub-title above: ‘Just Passing Through’ When I agreed to take over from Dan, I made it clear that my husband and I planned to be moving up north sometime this year... assuming we could sell our home. Well, it sold faster than we expected. Therefore, my tenure as president with FCRT is going to be short lived. Come this October when FCRT files its annual paperwork with the State, it looks like the steering committee will again have to identify a new president. If things continue as planned, I will be a part-time Rochester Hills resident and although I will still be involved with FCRT, I won’t be able to take a leadership position. Thank you to all for your confidence in making me president. It is truly a pleasure to work with so many dedicated and passionate folks. Thanks also to all you trail users... without you there would be no point in FCRT’s efforts! See you on the trail!

— Mimi Zwolak, President (for now)
A Welcome Addition to the CRT

Developing and improving trail systems frequently requires a joint effort by individual trail supporters, governments, ‘friends’ groups and local businesses. One such business owner, Robert Schulte, has become a special benefactor of the Clinton River Trail in recent years.

Through his Rochester Hills-based company, Hi-Tech Mold & Eng., Inc., Robert (pictured below with FCRT President Mimi Zwolak) has adopted the Leach Road trailhead, across from the Walmart on Adams Road. As with most projects, he started off small a few years ago by putting in landscaping and doing some clean-up work. This past fall, he donated the brand new restroom building, certain to become a welcome sight for many a trail user in years to come.

When asked why he chose the Clinton River Trail to be the recipient of his philanthropy, Robert offered a few key reasons. First, he is an avid trail user himself. Twice a week, weather permitting, he bikes from his home in Lake Orion near the Paint Creek Trail to the Hi-Tech headquarters on Crooks Road, just south of M-59. (In fact, he was very pleased to see that the recent re-construction of Crooks Road included bike and pedestrian paths over M-59.) Second, like so many business owners today, he seeks ways to engage his 206 employees in community outreach and fitness and exercise opportunities. Some Hi-Tech employees volunteered their time to plant shrubs and wildflowers and perform other landscape work last spring. Finally, Robert is also a member of the City of Rochester Hills Business Council, so he prefers to donate and support things close to home that will be seen and enjoyed by many.

Robert and Hi-Tech are not done! In the future he hopes to sponsor more trail amenities, perhaps something from the master Look and Feel guidelines. It’s even possible that the design department at Hi-Tech may help with the construction of some signage.

“The FCRT is really excited to have the wonderful support of a local business such as Hi-Tech in implementing amenities along the trail,” said Mimi Zwolak, head of the FCRT.

“Initially, all the communities along the trail participated in defining the “Look and Feel” for CRT. Now, having a local business help to make it real is just fantastic!”

FCRT thanks Robert Schulte and Hi-Tech Mold & Eng. for their generous support of the CRT.

JOIN THE FRIENDS OF THE CLINTON RIVER TRAIL

membership application

There is no membership fee, however, donations are greatly appreciated and increase the effectiveness of our activities. All donations are tax-deductible through the Community Foundation of Greater Rochester, a 501(c)(3) organization, which has exclusive legal control over the contributed assets.

Name ____________________________________________
Address __________________________________________
City/State/Zip ______________________________________
Phone ____________________________________________
email ______________________________________________

Donation: $10 $20 $50 $100 $200 other ______
(Circle one)

Credit Card:
Visa MC Account #: ________________________________
Signature: ________________________________________ Expires: __________________

Make any checks payable to “Community Foundation—FCRT” and mail to FCRT, PO Box 81971, Rochester Hills, MI 48308-1971.

No map? No worries. Just scan and go!

Look for this new sign on the CRT mapboxes alongside the trail:

TRAIL MAP MOBILE VERSION
SCAN WITH SMARTPHONE

Get the free mobile app at http://gettag.mobi

It’s a mobile tag that will allow all smartphone users to grab a virtual map and identify points of interest along the trail. This is in addition to the existing CRT app on the Android market.

In addition to adding us to your smartphone, don’t forget to find us on Facebook and follow FCRT on Twitter @ClintonRivTrail.
2011 in Review, Season to Season

2011 was a big year for the Clinton River Trail. Enjoy a few milestones of the past trail year.

Pontiac Mayor Leon Jukowski, on left, commemorated the opening of the Clinton River Trail bridge over Telegraph Rd. Along with the mayor are Cheryl Gregory of Spalding-DeDecker (bridge designers), Allan Schneck & John Balint (City of Pontiac DPW & Engineering). Riders were on the bridge even before the ceremony was completed.

In January, FCRT hosted an open house to report on current initiatives and solicit input for new endeavors. Over 50 members of the trail community, many new to FCRT, made the evening a smashing success.

Every year the American Hiking Society proclaims the first Saturday in June as National Trails Day. In 2011 there were over 2000 trail events held nationwide. Friends of the Clinton River Trail celebrated National Trails Day with an informational booth at the trail’s intersection with Paint Creek.
Trail stakeholders met several times over the summer to refine the design for trail amenities and establish a coherent “Look & Feel” for the trail. The kickoff meeting was supported by Oakland County Planning with Deputy County Executive Doug Smith reiterating the critical nature of trails to the success of the County. Trail users, municipal representatives, County Planning and the FCRT all worked with guidance from the consulting firm of Landscape Architects and Planners from Lansing, MI to create design elements to represent the CRT throughout its length. Check the FCRT website shortly for the complete report.

The 7th Annual Fall Classic brought out over 300 participants, sponsors and volunteers. More info about this year’s event on Page 6.

Cross country skiing the CRT is a great experience, when Mother Nature cooperates and delivers enough snow. This winter was a little short on snow, but brave cyclists were out all season riding. Of course, the trail is always open for bird watchers and nature photographers. Or, to simply enjoy a crisp winter’s walk.
SAVE THE DATE! SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29  

FALL CLASSIC RIDE and 5K WALK

FALL CLASSIC RIDE/WALK RETURNS IN SEPTEMBER 2012

The annual Fall Classic ride continues to grow in popularity since the first event in 2005. In 2010 we included a walk option for the first time and plan to retain that option for our 2012 event. Last year we experienced our largest and most spirited attendance with growth in riders, walkers, sponsors & volunteers.

Our 8th Annual Fall Classic is scheduled for September 29, 2012. Riverside Park in downtown Auburn Hills will be the start/finish point with registration, lunch, sponsor displays and exhibits. This year some new and exciting route possibilities, both west and east, will be presented. The new CRT Bridge over Telegraph Road will open up the western end of the trail providing access to the newly-lengthened West Bloomfield Trail, and the Macomb Orchard Trail, now newly-paved all the way to Richmond will provide options for distance riders headed east. Detailed descriptions of routes will be available at registration.

The Fall Classic is non-competitive and family friendly. It is a great opportunity to meet like-minded enthusiasts, learn about the trail and its connections. The trail also provides the opportunity to enjoy nature, green spaces and fantastic scenery hidden in our urban environment. As always a Fall Classic T-shirt will be provided, as long as you register by September 10. Hope to see you in September.

OUR THANKS TO LAST YEAR’S PRESENTING SPONSORS:

meijer. ❄️ BEST BUY 🌞 AMERICAN ❄️ VOLKSWAGEN ☀️ ITC Walmart ✔ UPS