



Mayor Michael B. Coleman

Downtown Columbus Bikeway Connector

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How did this project come about?

- For many years, Columbus residents and tourists have used the regional trails along the Scioto and Olentangy River. One of the biggest obstacles to getting to and through downtown has been the lack of an east – west route. This connection, from North Bank Park to the Columbus State Community College area, will safely navigate through the core of downtown Columbus.

Why was this alignment selected?

- This route provides a direct and convenient connection between the Scioto and Olentangy trails and the I-670 trail, which leads to the Alum Creek Trail system.
- This route includes significant points of interest (Nationwide Arena, offices, jobs, Convention Center, restaurants, hotels, etc.).
- From a design standpoint, on this particular alignment, the width between the street and the right-of-way limits is relatively wide (on the north side of Nationwide Boulevard and Mount Vernon Avenue). This area provides an opportunity to provide a safe and aesthetically pleasing separate trail.
- Among the several options considered for this facility over the years, this route provides the most access to the trail, and can be developed cost effectively.
- This alignment provides for convenient access and possible future connections to North Market, Victorian Village, and the Discovery District.

Why pursue a separate trail adjacent to the street? Why not just let the cyclists use the street?

- Many users, such as children and young adults, are not comfortable riding in the street.
- Also, this trail is not intended only for cyclists. It will provide a facility for use by for runners, joggers, in-line skaters, etc. to stay out of the way of more casual sidewalk users.
- Additionally, the nationally recognized Ohio to Erie Trail, from the Ohio River to Lake Erie, will use this route; we wish to continue that type of facility as much as possible through the downtown area as a unique draw for visitors from around the country.

Why are on-the-street bike lanes only being proposed for a portion of the alignment?

- The streets and right-of-way are not wide enough to add bike lanes everywhere. Pursuing bike lanes for the whole alignment could make the project cost not feasible.
- Fortunately, in most sections of the route that do not have in-street bike lanes the street is fairly bike friendly (lower speeds and traffic volumes).

Will the trail be restricted to “bikes only?”

- Absolutely not. In fact, in-line skaters, walkers and joggers will be encouraged to use the trail. The presence of these other users will help promote lower cycling speeds on the trail.

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How are conflicts between pedestrians and bicycles being accommodated?

- “Slow Zone” signs and pavement markings will be used to indicate to bicyclists where they are expected to ride very slowly (5 mph speed limit) in areas of higher pedestrian volumes (i.e. near arena and convention center).
- “Dismount Zones” will be marked in some more critical areas with signs and pavement markings to indicate areas where the cyclists must stop and walk their bikes in very high pedestrian areas (i.e. arena plaza area, and at major intersections)
- Fortunately, in areas where pedestrian traffic at times is heavy, (along arena and convention center) there is enough width within the right-of-way to provide separate areas for both the trail and for a typical sidewalk.

How does this project deal with conflicts between bikes and cars at driveways and side streets?

- Like any transportation project, potential conflicts exist. Fortunately, the advantage of this route is there are only eight non-signalized crossings along the 1.4 mile alignment, most of which are not heavily traveled.
- Special signing and pavement markings will be used to warn trail users and drivers of these conflicts.
- Also, on-street parking and other sight restrictions may also be removed for a short distance on either side of the driveway or sides street to improve sight distance for bicyclists and drivers.
- This project will incorporate safety signage and design standards that have been successfully adopted and used for many years on a national and international basis.

What will happen when a big event lets out at the arena (like a hockey game)?

- Fortunately, most large scale events in the Arena District occur at night, when the volume of path use is very slight. When there are day time events, the path will become engulfed with pedestrians who will naturally “take over” the entire paved area. When this occurs, cyclists will use the street, or walk their bikes.
- Experience shows that the heaviest use of such a path by “leisure cyclists”, such as families, seniors, and tourists, will be during the weekends of the warmer seasons, when hockey is not in season.

Won't this trail be an eye sore?

- No. This project can be a unique amenity that will blend into the existing visual vibrancy of this segment of downtown. The design aesthetic of the path will complement and enhance the character of the distinct blocks along this route. The east end of the project travels through a somewhat blighted area between the Columbus State campus and the Convention Center and the multi-use trail can serve as a catalyst for revitalization and connectivity. The central and west end of the project will seamlessly incorporate the excellent visual cues and paving patterns of the Arena District and North Bank Park.
- The potential partnerships created by this urban project are unique. This trail can bring together corporate, commercial, academic, and city park interests along a diverse route. A small, cost effective means of adding a valuable way to get to work, play, classes, and the scenic beauty of Central Ohio.

When will the trail be built?

- A construction timeline has not yet been established.
- The planning study of this alignment will be completed in early 2007. If the concept and alignment is deemed feasible based on engineering feasibility and public response, detailed design would occur in 2007.
- The construction would occur when funds are identified. It is possible that a combination of public and private dollars may be utilized.

Will there be any amenities for trail users?

- Yes. Based on the available budget, some amenities will be included in the initial design such as rest areas with benches and bike parking racks. Additionally, we anticipate that both the City and private interests will add to the amenities year after year.