



Statement Regarding Draft 2023 PROS Plan

January 8, 2023

In the draft 2023 Ann Arbor Parks Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan, the four Huron River Greenway maps that were in the 2016 and earlier PROS plans have been removed. Walk Bike Washtenaw (WBW) believes that the maps need to be restored to the plan.

The greenway vision

The Huron River Greenway -- the system of parks and trails along and near the river through the city -- is the jewel of Ann Arbor's park system. This vision has been developed over decades by many people. The four maps capture that vision. They show what exists and what is needed to fulfill the vision. Text alone is not sufficient, and the text in the draft is incomplete.

Funding applications

The greenway includes part of what is now the countywide Border to Border (B2B) Trail, which in turn is part of the statewide Iron Belle Trail system. Investments in closing gaps and building connections to this major trail system are attractive to funders. There are three annoying gaps in the B2B Trail in central Ann Arbor alone. The inclusion of maps in the plan is likely to improve prospects with funders.

Example of needs

An example of the needs is the area of the Fuller / Maiden Lane intersection. This area has heavy pedestrian and bicycle traffic. When in the 1980s the roads and four bridges in this area were rebuilt, concrete pads were built under all four bridges with the intent to connect trails, including what is now the B2B Trail. In the almost 40 years since, the trails have not been built. Both the 2016 PROS Plan and the city's 2006 Non-motorized Transportation Plan had maps showing these long-envisioned facilities. City Council reaffirmed the concept in a 2015 resolution.

Timing problem

The short time between the end of public input on December 23, 2022, and the vote on the draft by the Park Advisory Commission on January 3, 2023, gave little time for consideration and incorporation of the input provided regarding the maps. Park staff says that the plan must be adopted by the city and submitted to the Michigan DNR by February 1 to allow timely funding applications. Council must consider how to retain the knowledge embodied in the maps without jeopardizing funding.

Action requested

WBW would prefer to have the maps incorporated into the 2023 PROS Plan. If there is not time to do this, WBW requests that City Council:

1. Pass a resolution that adopts the four Huron River Greenway maps that are in the adopted 2016 PROS Plan as ongoing city policy unless and until they are updated.
2. Direct park staff to incorporate those maps in any amendments to the 2023 PROS Plan and in any subsequent plan, with any updates that are appropriate (for example, to reflect current conditions).