

For 3/18/13 Niles Township Board meeting

Build It And They Will Come.

Build it and they will come. Bike the Bend is the vision of Louise Addicott for families and friends to ride side by side enjoying each other and their community. Our first year was 2010 and we had no idea how many riders to expect. We had over 1,700 riders. Our third ride in 2012 had over 2,000 riders and brought family and friends from 8 states and 19 Indiana counties into our area. Close to 10% of those riders came from Michigan. Registration for the 2013 Bike the Bend has been open for just over 1 month and 14% of those registering are from Michigan.

Conclusions:

1. People want a safe place to bike ride and will travel distances to do so.
2. Michigan residents love to ride bikes.

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With this trail, you have the opportunity to make our area a mecca for bicyclists whether they are looking for recreational opportunities or wanting to live in an area where commuting to work and for errands is a reality. Apple Cider Century sells out months before the event, Amishland and Lakes and the Fat and Skinny Tire Festival are multi-day events that attract people from throughout the Midwest. Bike the Bend is new to the bicycling calendar and growing.

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The proposed at grade crossing at US12 has been designed by experienced experts and approved by experts. Why are we questioning whether it will be safe? More common than bicycles and walkers crossing a busy street are bicycles and walkers crossing driveways and parking lot entrances. Motorists backing out of driveways or pulling out of

parking lots create a dangerous situation because motorists are not expecting to see a walker and bicyclist at the entrance to a driveway or parking lot. But we don't hear safety experts proposing overhead crossings or pedestrian tunnels at shopping center entrances. The proposed US12 crossing will be well marked with signage and lights. Motorists will be aware of the crossing and awareness is the key for safety in all matters. The expression "There is Safety in Numbers" is especially true to bicycling. As more people use their bikes for recreation and transportation, the safer the roads and streets become because motorists become accustomed to seeing bicyclists.

We believe the proposed crossing at US12 will be a prime example of this and I encourage you to support the trail as it has been designed.