FOX RIVER TRAIL STUDY

BROWN COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION DECEMBER 2001

Fox River Trail Study

Published by the Brown County Planning Commission December 28, 2001.

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Introduction

On May 19, 1999, the Brown County Board of Supervisors adopted the *Fox River Trail Development Plan* that was prepared by the Brown County Planning Commission. This plan established the trail's physical characteristics, identified access points, and addressed several other important aspects of the facility.

Once the plan was adopted, the Brown County Park Department and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR) worked together to rail bank the right-of-way and purchase the land from the Wisconsin Central Ltd. Railroad. Following several months of negotiations, the state purchased the right-of-way, and the trail was officially completed on May 26, 2001.

This study examines the Fox River Trail's impact on the area over its first six months of existence and summarizes several conclusions that were reached during the examination. The report also includes survey results, interviews, newspaper articles, statistics, and other information collected over the last several months that illustrate the trail's impact on the area.

Implementation of the Fox River Trail Development Plan

The Fox River Trail Development Plan was designed to serve as the blueprint for the development of the trail. In addition to identifying the trail's recommended physical characteristics, the plan addressed permitted and prohibited uses, lighting and marking, access points, maintenance, security, and other issues. The plan also included the results of a trail development survey that was distributed to every property owner along the 14-mile facility and several other groups of people in Brown County.

When the trail was officially opened on May 26, 2001, most of the plan's recommendations were in place. The few recommendations that had not been addressed before the trail was completed were generally programs that were expected to be started after the facility was finished. A complete summary of the trail plan recommendations and their current status is included in Appendix 1 of the study.

Paved trail in the urbanized area (De Pere)



Limestone trail in the rural area (Rockland)

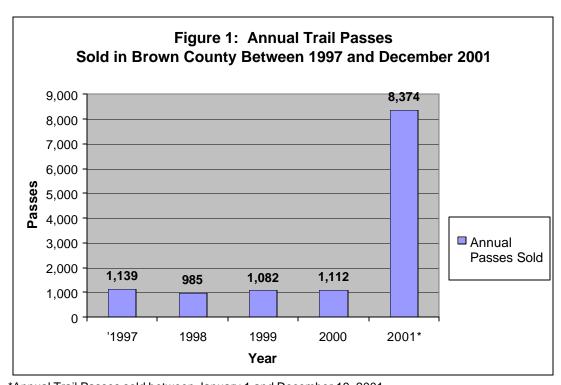


Trail Revenues

The Fox River Trail was built at no cost to Brown County or the local communities. The right-of-way for the trail was purchased from the Wisconsin Central Ltd. by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and the trail's construction was entirely funded by grants from the Statewide Multimodal Improvement Program (SMIP) and Wisconsin Stewardship Program. Brown County is, however, able to retain 70 percent of the revenues from its sale of annual trail passes for the Fox River and Mountain-Bay Trails. Brown County also keeps all of the money from the sale of daily trail passes and from donations directly to the Fox River and Mountain-Bay Trails.

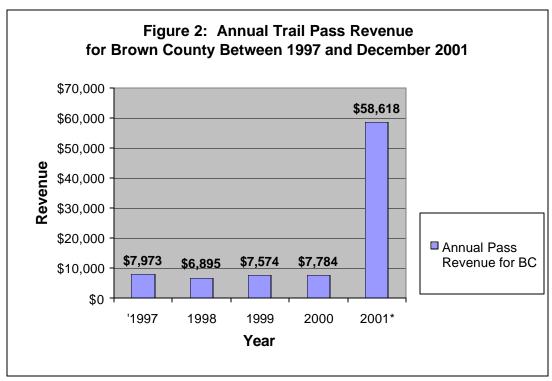
Annual Trail Pass Sales and Revenues

Between 1997 and 2000, Brown County sold an average of about 1,080 Annual Trail Passes each year. After the state's share was extracted, the county kept approximately \$7,560 annually to use for trail maintenance and other expenses. But after the Fox River Trail was built in 2001, Annual Trail Pass sales and revenues increased significantly. Figure 1 below and Figure 2 on the following page illustrate the dramatic increases in pass sales and county revenue that occurred in 2001 as a result of the Fox River Trail.



^{*}Annual Trail Passes sold between January 1 and December 19, 2001.

Source: Brown County Park Department.

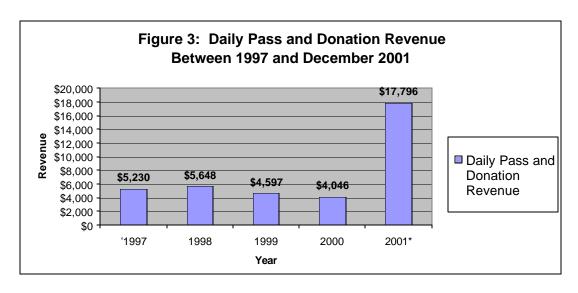


^{*}Annual Trail Pass revenue between January 1 and December 19, 2001.

Source: Brown County Park Department.

Daily Pass and Donation Revenue

Brown County collected about \$4,880 per year in Daily Trail Pass revenue between 1997 and 2000, and the county did not receive any donations to the trail fund during this four-year period. But Daily Trail Pass revenues and donations increased significantly after the Fox River Trail was opened in 2001. Figure 3 below shows how dramatically Daily Trail Pass and donation revenues grew as a result of the Fox River Trail.



^{*}Daily Trail Pass and donation revenues between January 1 and December 4, 2001.

Source: Brown County Park Department.

Figures 1 through 3 illustrate that the Fox River Trail is actually generating revenue for Brown County. In addition to paying for maintenance activities on the Fox River and Mountain-Bay Trails, the pass and donation funds have already been used to add benches, information centers, a small park, and other amenities along the Fox River Trail. The park department also uses a portion of these revenues to fund rangers that patrol the Fox River and Mountain-Bay Trails.

Use of the Fox River Trail

After the Fox River Trail officially opened in May of 2001, Brown County Park Department staff periodically recorded the number and types of users at different points along the facility. The park department also installed automatic counters near Porlier Street in Green Bay and the Fox Point Boat Launch in De Pere to record the number of people who use the trail at these two locations. Despite a few technical problems, the counters provided a reasonably accurate summary of trail users at these heavily traveled portions of the trail.

The manual and automatic user surveys found that the Fox River Trail was very heavily traveled by pedestrians, bicyclists, and skaters throughout the summer and fall of 2001. The manual surveys also found that people in wheelchairs, children in strollers, dog walkers, and several other types of uses were common on the urban (paved) portion of the trail. The trail's popularity was profiled in a November 27, 2001, Green Bay Press-Gazette article, which stated that it was the most heavily used facility in Wisconsin's 1,400 mile state trail system between May 1 and October 31, 2001. The entire article is included in Appendix 2 of the study.

Monthly Counts

The park department's trail user counts for May through November of 2001 are summarized below.

Month	Users
May 2001	34,163
June 2001	15,444
July 2001	15,000
August 2001	15,150
September 2001	13,394
October 2001	8,974
November 2001	14,264
Seven Month Total	116,387

Source: Brown County Park Department Adjusted Trail Counts

Using the information collected during several manual surveys throughout the summer and fall, the park department estimated that 56 percent of these users were bicyclists, 26 percent were pedestrians, 13.9 percent were roller bladers/skaters, 4 percent were dog walkers, and 0.1 percent were horseback riders. In addition to walkers, the pedestrian category included several people pushing strollers, people in wheelchairs, and other users who did not fit into the other categories.

Manual Count Samples

The park department also completed manual surveys at several points along the trail during the summer and fall. Some of these findings are summarized below.

User Samples at Porlier Street in Green Bay

(All trail traffic traveling south)

Day & Date	Time of Day	Weather	Total Users	Users Per Hour
Sat. June 23	1:00 – 2:45 p.m.	Sunny, 80 degrees	186	106
Wed. June 27	10:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Sunny, 88 degrees	72	41
Sat. July 21	9:00 – 10:00 a.m.	Sunny, 88 degrees	39	39
Fri. July 27	10:00 – 11:45 a.m.	Heavy rain, 74 deg.	7	4
Sun. Sept. 2	3:30 – 5:30 p.m.	Sunny, 84 degrees	41	20.5

Sample totals for the following modes:

Pedestrians: 89 (25%) Bicyclists: 206 (58%)

Roller Bladers/Skaters: 43 (12%)

Dog Walkers: 15 (5%)

User Samples at Mariner Street in Allouez

(All trail traffic traveling south)

Day & Date	Time of Day	Weather	Total Users	Users Per Hour
Tues. June 26	3:00 – 4:00 p.m.	Sunny, 85 degrees	32	32
Sat. July 14	6:05 – 7:05 p.m.	Sunny, 83 degrees	104	104

Sample totals for the following modes:

Pedestrians: 18 (13%) Bicyclists: 78 (58%)

Roller Bladers/Skaters: 33 (24%)

Dog Walkers: 7 (5%)

User Samples at the Fox Point Boat Launch in De Pere

(All trail traffic traveling south)

Day & Date	Time of Day	Weather	Total Users	Users Per Hour
Sat. June 23	8:00 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.	Sunny, 79 degrees	912	192
Wed. June 27	1:00 – 2:15 p.m.	Sunny, 88 degrees	35	28
Fri. June 29	5:45 – 6:45 a.m.	Sunny (? degrees)	20	20
Sat. July 7	8:20 – 10:20 a.m.	Sunny, 78 degrees	220	110
Sat. July 21	10:10 – 10:45 a.m.	Sunny, 88 degrees	12	29
Tues. July 24	10:20 – 11:00 a.m.	Sunny, 82 degrees	43	65
Fri. July 27	12:00 – 2:00 p.m.	Heavy rain, 74 deg.	25	12.5
Sat. Sept. 1	12:00 – 2:00 p.m.	Sunny, 80 degrees	182	91
Sun. Sept. 2	1:20 – 3:20 p.m.	Sunny, 84 degrees	69	34.5

Sample totals for the following modes:

Pedestrians: 324 (21%) Bicyclists: 902 (59%)

Roller Bladers/Skaters: 225 (15%)

Dog Walkers: 67 (5%)

User Sample at Voyager Park in De Pere

(All trail traffic traveling south)

Day & Date	Time of Day	Weather	Total Users	Users Per Hour
Sat. July 7	10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Sunny, 78 degrees	138	69

Sample totals for the following modes:

Pedestrians: 22 (16%) Bicyclists: 94 (68%)

Roller Bladers/Skaters: 20 (15%)

Dog Walkers: 2 (1%)

User Sample at Heritage Road in De Pere

(All trail traffic traveling south)

Day & Date	Time of Day	Weather	Total Users	Users Per Hour
Sun. Sept. 2	6:20 - 10:00 a.m.	Sunny, 84 degrees	32	9

Sample totals for the following modes:

Pedestrians: 11 (34%) Bicyclists: 19 (59%)

Roller Bladers/Skaters: 0 (0%)

Dog Walkers: 2 (7%)

User Sample at Midway Road in Rockland

(All trail traffic traveling south)

Day & Date	Time of Day	Weather	Total Users	Users Per Hour
Sun. Sept. 2	10:15 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Sunny, 84 degrees	44	16

Sample totals for the following modes:

Pedestrians: 18 (41%) Bicyclists: 26 (59%)

Roller Bladers/Skaters: 0 (0%)

Dog Walkers: 0 (0%)

The samples taken over the summer show that the paved portion of the trail between Porlier Street in Green Bay and Heritage Road in De Pere was heavily used throughout the week. The samples at Heritage Road and Midway Road found that the trail's unpaved portion was also well used even though it is situated in a lightly populated area and the crushed limestone surface discourages certain activities. Although nearly all of the samples were taken on sunny days that are typically the most popular for trail users, the surveys found that people also braved heavy rain, extreme heat, and high humidity to use the trail on the weekdays and weekends.

Real Estate Impacts

Before the Fox River Trail was built, some of the people who own homes along the Fox River were concerned that the trail would reduce their property values. Even though trails throughout the United States have actually enhanced the value of surrounding properties, these residents did not believe the Fox River Trail would have the same positive impact on their land. However, the Fox River Trail actually began improving property values along the river before it was paved and officially opened in May of 2001.

New Homes Along the Trail

As the trail was being built in 2000 and 2001, the two homes shown below were constructed on infill lots next to the new facility. In addition to improving the area's property value by approximately \$280,000,¹ these homes demonstrate that people want to live next to trails and that the facilities actually enhance areas instead of detracting from them.

New home on Riverside Drive in Allouez



New home on Vista Road in Allouez



Home Sales Along the Trail

Only a handful of homes along or near the Fox River Trail have been placed on the market since the trail officially opened in May of 2001, but nearly every advertisement for these homes has mentioned the trail as an amenity. The real estate agents who have listed properties along and near the Fox River Trail have learned that trails enhance property values and enable them to sell lots and homes quickly.

Brown County Planning Commission staff spoke to some of the real estate agents who listed properties along and near the Fox River Trail in the summer and fall of 2001 to find out how they feel about the impact of trails on property values. These interviews are summarized on the following page.

¹ Partial assessed improvement value according to Brown County and Village of Allouez as of December 2001. Complete assessments will be done for the finished homes in the future.

Interview with Pat Kaster of River City Realtors

Ms. Kaster listed one property near the Fox River Trail in De Pere in the summer of 2001. She has also sold several properties along and near the Mountain-Bay Trail in Howard over the last five years. According to Ms. Kaster:

- Trails are definitely viewed as amenities by homebuyers and renters.
- Trails enhance the value of a property by at least \$5,000.
- Homes along trails sell faster and for more money than homes within the same subdivision that are not located along a trail.
- Her extensive experience with properties along the Mountain-Bay Trail makes her strongly believe that these benefits will also be realized by property owners along the Fox River Trail when they sell their homes.
- She will definitely continue to mention the Fox River Trail in advertisements for her future property listings along and near the facility.

Interview with Bev Lisle of Mark Olejniczak Realty

Ms. Lisle listed a handful of properties along the Fox River Trail in the summer and fall of 2001. She has been a real estate agent in Brown County for several years and she specializes in Fox River properties. According to Ms. Lisle:

- Trails are absolutely viewed as amenities by homebuyers and renters. She even lives next to the Fox River Trail in De Pere and uses it every day.
- She strongly believes that trails enhance the value of properties.
- She sold a vacant lot next to the trail in Allouez in the summer of 2001, and the buyer told her that the trail was the primary reason he purchased the property.
- She has sold several properties along and near the trail, and she always mentioned the trail in her advertisements.

Ms. Lisle also told planning commission staff that she plans to move from her home in the future and that her new home will have to be next to the Fox River Trail.

Interview with Barb Machon of Mark Olejniczak Realty

Ms. Machon listed a duplex near the Fox River Trail in De Pere in the summer of 2001 and mentioned the trail in the property's advertisement. According to Ms. Machon:

 The previous owner of the duplex believes the trail is an amenity and that it adds value to his property. The person who purchased the duplex thinks the trail is nice, but it was not the main reason he bought the property.

Interview with an agent for Realty Executives

Perhaps the most interesting property listing on or near the trail in 2001 was a home in Allouez on the east side of Riverside Drive (across the street from the trail). The home was listed for \$179,900 in August and September, and the advertisement in a local homebuyer's guide did not mention the home's proximity to the trail. After being on the market for several months, the home's price was reduced to \$174,900 in October.

At the end of October, planning commission staff contacted the real estate agent who listed the property to ask her opinion about the impact of trails on property values. The agent told staff that she believes trails are amenities for some homebuyers, but she does not believe that people buy homes strictly because trails are nearby. She also told staff that she assumes people prefer to live slightly off of trails instead of next to them.

A few weeks after talking with the agent, staff checked the November homebuyer's guide and found that the home's advertisement now mentioned the trail. Staff also noticed that the home's price had been elevated to the initial asking price of \$179,900.

The interviews with real estate agents who listed properties on or near the Fox River Trail in the summer and fall of 2001 found that the agents believe trails enhance property values and help them sell homes. Although the level of enthusiasm about trails varied from agent to agent, they all indicated that trails are definitely amenities for homebuyers.

Business Impacts

The Fox River Trail is lined with restaurants, convenience stores, and other businesses that typically benefit from trail traffic. Throughout the summer and fall of 2001, trail users were seen at several businesses in the urban area. On especially hot days, many businesses appeared to be overflowing with trail users seeking refreshment, and these businesses continued to be visited by trail users when the weather turned cool in the fall.

To estimate the business impact of the Fox River Trail during its first few months, planning commission staff developed and distributed a survey to 42 businesses on or near the trail (see Appendix 3 for a sample survey). After completing several follow-up interviews, staff was able to compile 32 completed surveys and one letter that yielded a significant amount of information. The survey findings are summarized below.

- 13 of the 33 responding businesses told staff that the Fox River Trail increased sales
 at their businesses during the summer and fall of 2001. The benefiting businesses
 were generally restaurants and convenience stores, but the managers of an antiques
 shop and a sporting goods store also believe their businesses benefited from the
 trail.
- The number of trail users who visited the 13 benefiting businesses ranged from as many as 200 per day at one business to as little as one or two at another. It also

appears that all of the businesses received more visits from trail users on weekends than on weekdays.

- Only one of the 33 responding businesses had mentioned the trail in its advertisements at the time of the survey, but 12 plan to mention the trail in future ads.
- Only one of the 33 responding businesses had asked for an advertising sign along the trail, but 14 plan to ask for a sign in the future.
- Eight of the 33 responding businesses indicated that their employees use the trail to travel to and from work, but none of them believe it has helped them recruit employees.
- Of the 33 responding businesses, four believe the trail's impact has been very
 positive on their businesses, eight believe its impact has been positive, and 21
 believe the trail has not had an impact (although one of the 21 realized an increase
 in sales). None of the respondents believe the trail has had a negative impact on
 their businesses.
- 20 of the 32 businesses that responded to the survey offered comments, and nearly all of these comments were positive. The comments are summarized in Appendix 4.
- One business owner who believes the trail has had a very positive impact on businesses was concerned about the number of people using the restrooms and wanting only a free cup of water. This owner also believes that businesses that sell Annual Trail Passes should be allowed to keep a small portion of the sale price to cover administrative costs. The letter from this business owner can be found in Appendix 5.

The Green Bay Press-Gazette also ran stories on June 4 and June 27, 2001, that addressed the trail's impact on businesses in the area. These articles can be found in Appendix 6.

One of the trail's primary benefits to users and businesses is that it enables people to reach many of the destinations along Riverside Drive (Highway 57) in Allouez without a motorized vehicle. Before the trail was built, people who wanted to travel to and from restaurants, work, and other destinations along Riverside Drive had to drive because sidewalks do not exist and bicycling on the high-volume street is difficult. But the trail now provides access to these destinations for people who cannot drive and who choose not to drive, which dramatically increases the customer base and employee pool for the businesses in the corridor.

The survey results prove that the trail has noticeably increased sales at many businesses in Allouez and De Pere and that it provides another means for employees to reach their jobs. The Fox River Trail's positive commercial impact during its first few months of existence also demonstrates how providing multi-modal access to all destinations benefits everyone.

New Community Facilities Along the Trail

New Brown County Library Branch in De Pere

In May of 2002, Brown County plans to begin building a new library branch at the intersection of Broadway Street and Cass Street in De Pere. This facility will face Cass Street, which will provide convenient access for people traveling to the library on the Fox River Trail. The library's site plan can be found in Appendix 7 of the study.

Heritage Hill State Park

Most of Heritage Hill State Park is currently located between Webster Avenue and Riverside Drive in Allouez, and the entrance is oriented toward Webster Avenue. However, the Fox River Trail runs along the west end of the park, and the park's board of directors is considering improvements near the trail.

Sunset Park Access

Sunset Park is located between Vista Road and the Fox River Trail in Allouez. The park is not currently considered to be an official trail access point, but the village plans to establish an access point in the future.

Community Involvement with the Trail

Adopt-A-Trail Program

The Fox River Trail Development Plan recommended that an Adopt-A-Trail program be established for the trail after it was finished, and the Brown County Park Department established a program for the trail in the summer of 2001. By December of 2001, the park department had registered a total of 15 families and organizations to care for ten of the 13 trail segments between Green Bay and Greenleaf. A list of the segments and the families and organizations responsible for them is included in Appendix 8 of the study.

Friends of the Fox River Trail

The Friends of the Fox River Trail began during the period when the state was preparing to purchase the trail right-of-way from the Wisconsin Central Ltd. Railroad. Since the purchase of the right-of-way, this organization has created a website to promote the trail, participated in several trail landscaping and maintenance projects, and started a volunteer trail patrol to monitor rule violations and remind users of trail etiquette.

Bay Shore Bicycle Club

Like the Friends organization, the Bay Shore Bicycle Club has helped the Brown County Park Department with several trail improvement projects over the last several months. The club has also donated money for benches and other trail amenities.

Leadership Green Bay

Leadership Green Bay is a program offered through the Greater Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce that enables people to work as a team to create and implement community service projects. In 2001, a Leadership Green Bay team developed a plan to build an observation and fishing deck next to the Fox River Trail in Green Bay. The team also applied for and received a grant to implement the project, and the deck is planned to be built in the spring of 2002.

Equestrian Group

As the Fox River Trail was being built, a group of horse enthusiasts asked the Brown County Park Department to develop a parallel trail for horses south of Heritage Road. Using local donations and funds from the Wisconsin State Horse Council, the park department developed the parallel horse trail between Heritage Road and Greenleaf. The horse and regular limestone trails briefly merge to cross a waterway, but the rest of the horse trail runs parallel to the regular trail.

St. Francis Park

Prior to the completion of the trail, the Green Bay Catholic Diocese donated a parcel of riverfront property in Allouez to develop as a small park along the trail. The completed park includes several benches, a gazebo, and extensive landscaping that was installed by the Brown County Park Department and local groups.

Areas of Concern

Lazarre Avenue Crossing

Lazarre Avenue in Allouez is a great place to see beautiful scenery along the trail, but the street is difficult for many trail users to cross because the segment that intersects the trail is unpaved. The pictures below show how the trail is interrupted by the unpaved street.

Lazarre Avenue looking south



Lazarre Avenue looking north



This problem can be corrected by extending the paved trail across the street, but debris from the unpaved portions of the street could collect on the trail and continue to make it difficult for skaters and others to cross. If the street is not paved in the future and the trail is extended across Lazarre Avenue, the crossing must be kept clean to maximize safety.

Trail Cracking

Planning commission staff noticed that sections of the trail were starting to develop narrow cracks in the center during the fall of 2001. These cracks need to be filled immediately to prevent damage that could be caused by water freezing and thawing over the winter. The park department should also check the trail base to determine if settling is causing the cracks.

Conclusions

The following general conclusions were reached during this study:

- Nearly all of the Fox River Trail Development Plan's recommendations have been implemented by the Brown County Park Department.
- Revenues generated by donations and the sale of Annual and Daily Trail Passes have increased substantially since the Fox River Trail officially opened in May of 2001. These revenues have enabled the park department to add benches, scenic overlooks, a small park, and other amenities to the trail at no cost to Brown County taxpayers.
- Over 100,000 recreation and transportation trips were taken on the Fox River Trail between May and November of 2001, and manual surveys taken at several points along the trail found that the rural and urban sections were heavily used throughout the summer and fall.
- Two new homes have been built next to the trail in Allouez since the facility has been
 in place, and real estate agents who have listed properties along or near the trail
 strongly believe the trail is an amenity. One agent even believes that trails add at
 least \$5,000 to the value of a property.
- Several business owners believe the trail has increased sales and has generally had
 a positive impact on their businesses. One business owner is concerned about the
 number of trail users who want free products, but even this owner believes the trail
 has significantly benefited area businesses. Many businesses also plan to mention
 the trail in future advertisements and to request access to the trail.
- The trail will be a significant benefit to at least two new community facilities in the near future.
- Several individuals and groups have helped the Brown County Park Department with trail maintenance and security through the Adopt-A-Trail program and other volunteer efforts, and the Friends of the Fox River Trail organization was formed specifically to support this facility. The park department and volunteer groups have also added several amenities to the trail over the last several months.
- The Lazarre Avenue trail crossing is a problem because the street is currently unpaved, but this problem can be easily corrected.

The results of this study show that the Fox River Trail has had a very positive impact on the area. In addition to providing people a place to safely recreate and travel, the trail has spurred riverfront investment, improved sales at several businesses, and encouraged people to work together to make a great facility even better.

Appendix 1: Implementation of the Fox River Trail Development Plan's Recommendations

Permitted Metropolitan Area Uses

The trail plan identifies the following seven general uses that will be allowed on the paved portion of the trail north of Heritage Road:

- 1. Bicycling
- 2. Walking/jogging
- 3. In-line skating/roller-skating/skateboarding
- 4. Child mobility devices (strollers, tricycles, etc.)
- 5. Mobility aids and service animals
- 6. Pets on leashes (not to exceed five feet)
- 7. Authorized motorized vehicles

All of the recommended metropolitan area uses are currently allowed on the trail, and the Brown County Park Department has established several animal waste deposit stations along facility. These stations have been very effective in minimizing the amount of waste on the trail.

Permitted Rural Area Uses

The trail plan identifies the following eight general uses that will be allowed on the limestone portion of the trail south of Heritage Road:

- 1. Bicycling
- 2. Walking/jogging
- 3. In-line skating/roller-skating/skateboarding
- 4. Child mobility devices (strollers, tricycles, etc.)
- 5. Mobility aids and service animals
- 6. Pets on leashes (not to exceed five feet)
- 7. Snowmobiling (at the request of the affected communities)/cross country skiing
- 8. Authorized motorized vehicles

These uses are currently allowed on the rural portion of the trail.

Prohibited Uses

The plan identifies the following general uses that will not be allowed on the Fox River Trail:

- 1. Hunting
- 2. Camping
- 3. Fires
- 4. Non-authorized motorized vehicles
- 5. Horses (except in the rural area on a parallel trail)
- 6. Any other uses not listed as permitted

These uses are currently prohibited, and the new horse trail was appropriately constructed parallel to the regular trail in the rural area.

Trail Surface and Width (long-term recommendations)

- The asphalt portion of the trail will extend from the north terminus in Green Bay to Heritage Road in De Pere.
- The crushed limestone portion of the trail will extend from Heritage Road in De Pere to the trail's south terminus in Greenleaf.
- The paved segments of the trail will be 12 feet wide.
- The limestone segments of the trail will be 12 feet wide.
- Grassed shoulders will be created wherever possible along the trail. These shoulders will be clear of obstructions for five feet on each side of the trail, and signs will be situated at least two feet from the trail.
- Benches will be placed in turnout areas along the trail. These areas will be created in scenic areas along the corridor to serve users and will be located in a way that minimizes disturbances to property owners.
- The county will consider paving portions of the limestone trail as the area south of Heritage Road becomes more populous and the number of trip generators increases.

Most of these recommendations were implemented by the park department, but the shoulders are largely gravel along the trail.

Trail Fees

- People will be able to purchase Annual and Daily Trail Passes that can be used for the Fox River and Mountain-Bay Trails.
- The pass sales guidelines that were developed by the Brown County Park Department for the Mountain-Bay Trail will also apply to the Fox River Trail.

These recommendations were implemented by the park department.

Hours of Operation

• The trail will initially remain open between sunrise and sunset daily. However, extended hours should be considered in the future to enhance the trail's attractiveness as a transportation corridor.

The trail is currently open between sunrise and sunset, but longer hours will be considered in the future.

Lighting and Marking

The plan stated that the trail will not be lighted following construction. However, lights were recommended to be considered in the future if the trail's hours are extended to before sunrise and/or after sunset. If lights are installed, the plan recommended the following guidelines:

- The communities should install conventional street lights at all street crossings that
 do not already have lights. This type of light should also be considered for the other
 access points, but the lights might not have to be as bright as those used for street
 crossings.
- Low wattage light fixtures that concentrate light on the trail should be installed at various locations by the communities to illuminate the trail. These fixtures should be high enough so as not to shine in the eyes of bicyclists, in-line skaters, and other trail users. The lights should also point away from homes along the trail so they do not shine into the homes.
- Post lighting (bollards) should be installed at various locations by the communities to define the trail. These lights should also be low wattage and no more than three feet high to minimize neighbor and trail user inconvenience. The lights should also point away from homes along the trail so they do not shine into the homes.
- The outer edges of the trail's asphalt segment should be striped with reflective paint or tape to enhance trail visibility. If this is not feasible along the entire segment, reflective paint or tape should be placed along the edges in poorly lighted areas.
- Brown County should seek assistance from local utilities to purchase and install the trail lights. This approach was used to light trails in the Fox Cities and could be an appealing community outreach project in Brown County.

The trail is currently not lighted, but lighting will be considered in the future.

Parking Areas

Parking for the Fox River Trail was recommended to be available at the following locations:

- Adams/Porlier Streets (Green Bay)
- Fox Point Boat Launch (De Pere)
- Voyager Park (De Pere)
- Bomier Street Boat Launch (De Pere)
- Greenleaf

The only recommended parking area that does not currently exist is at Adams and Porlier Streets, but people are allowed to park along the west side of Adams Street. Additional parking areas will also likely be created along the trail in the future.

Public Access Points

The only public trail access point recommended in the development plan that has not been officially established is Sunset Park in Allouez. However, an official public access point will likely be created at the park in the future.

Entrance Barriers

• The trail access points should be constructed to keep out unauthorized motor vehicles. This can be accomplished by erecting barrier posts or gates on the trail's edges and removable posts in the center of the trail at each access point.

Many of the trail's urban access points have been equipped with entrance barriers, and the rural access points have been equipped with gates that prohibit unauthorized vehicles.

Private Utility Crossings

 The private utility crossings that existed before the railroad right-of-way was purchased by the Wisconsin DNR will be allowed to remain. However, requests for new private utility crossings must be submitted to the Brown County Park Department and Wisconsin DNR.

The Wisconsin Central Ltd. Railroad retained utility easement rights for 15 years.

Public Rest Rooms

• In addition to the existing public restrooms along and near the trail, restrooms should be made available at the trail's north end in Green Bay and the trail's south end in Greenleaf. The Greenleaf facility could be a port-a-potty if this is all that can be constructed, but it is recommended that the park at the trail's north end contain facilities that are connected to water and sewer.

The additional public restroom facilities recommended in the plan have not been established in Green Bay and Greenleaf, but a public restroom facility was recently added to the recently built St. Francis Park in Allouez.

Trail Maintenance

Adopt-A-Trail Program

• Groups and individuals should be encouraged to participate in the Adopt-A-Trail program offered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

This program is administered by the park department and is proving to be very popular.

Snow Removal

- Each metropolitan area community should remove snow from its segment of the trail. This will enable people to use the metropolitan area portion of the facility for transportation and recreation trips throughout the year.
- Snow should not be removed from the rural portion of the trail. This will allow people
 to ski in an area where the demand for a transportation facility is not as great and will
 minimize trail damage.

The communities along the trail will not likely remove snow from their portions of the facility during the winter of 2001/2002, but snow removal might be considered in the future if transportation demand is significant.

Trail Security

Trail Patrols

In addition to assigning a trail ranger to the Fox River Trail, the plan recommended that the county work with the communities along the trail to enhance security in the following ways:

- The county should work with local law enforcement agencies to develop a security management plan. This plan would discuss procedures for responding to emergency calls along the trail, patrol schedules, and other security details.
- The county should ask the communities that currently have bicycle patrols to periodically ride their portions of the trail.
- The county should ask each community and the Brown County Sheriff's Department to periodically drive past the trail access points and other points where the trail is visible from the street to deter criminal behavior.
- The communities and affected neighborhood groups should form volunteer patrols for their portions of the trail. The volunteer patrols would be similar to neighborhood watch groups in that they would monitor the trail and report violations to their local law enforcement agencies.

A formal security plan has not been developed, but local law enforcement agencies occasionally pass by the trail access points and the Friends of the Fox River Trail group has formed a volunteer patrol. The park department also provides security for the trail.

Access to Abutting Properties

This process was recommended to be handled in the following manner:

• The property owner will submit an access application to the Brown County Park Department.

- The park department will review the application and forward it to the Wisconsin DNR for its review. The final decision will be made by the DNR.
- If access is granted by the DNR, the construction of the access path will be the responsibility of the property owner. The access point will conform to DNR and Brown County Park Department standards.

Access applications are being handled by the Brown County Park Department.

Signs Along the Trail

Informational Signs

The following informational signs should be installed along the trail:

- Advance notice signs that identify intersecting streets and all other public access points.
- Signs that identify the location of bicycle facilities in the *Brown County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update* that do not intersect with the trail (e.g. Allouez Avenue in Allouez and George Street in De Pere). These signs should be installed at the public access points closest to the non-intersecting streets.
- Adopt-A-Trail signs (two per adoption segment).
- Signs that identify the location of payment stations along the trail.
- Signs that identify each community (at boundaries).
- Signs that identify hazards, bridges, farm crossings, stops, driveways, and curves.
- The signs' designs will conform to the standards in the WisDNR Trail Signing Handbook.

The trail currently has advance notice signs, Adopt-A-Trail signs, payment station signs, and hazard signs, but the other signs have not been installed. The existing signs also conform with WisDNR's guidelines.

Advertising Signs

 The installation of advertising signs should be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Brown County Park Department, and the department should develop criteria for determining if and where these signs will be placed along the trail.

These signs are currently being considered by the park department.

Additional Issues

 The trail should not be diverted to STH 57 in De Pere and Allouez or Vista Road in Allouez.

The trail was not diverted to these streets.

• The trail should not be diverted into Voyager Park in De Pere. However, the Voyager Park paths should connect to the Fox River Trail.

The trail was not diverted into the park, and the park paths provide access to the trail.

• The trail should not be diverted to the river behind 2020 Riverside Drive in Allouez unless the diversion from and reconnection to the rail bed can occur at an acceptable grade, the property owners are willing to cover the relocation cost, and the move is approved by the Wisconsin DNR.

This diversion occurred because all of the parties agreed to the new trail location.

• The trail should not be moved closer to the river north of Lazarre Avenue unless the reconnection to the rail bed can occur at an acceptable grade, the property owners are willing to cover the relocation cost, each property owner along the segment agrees to the diversion, and the move is approved by the Wisconsin DNR.

The trail was moved closer to the river because all of the parties agreed to the location.

 The trail should be developed along the existing railed near Heritage Hill Park and the Brown County Park Department should work with Heritage Hill representatives to establish a public access point and shoreline connection when the trail is constructed and the park's plans are finalized.

The trail was developed along the rail bed near Heritage Hill Park.

Appendix 2: November 27, 2001, Green Bay Press-Gazette Article About the Extensive Use of the Fox River Trail

27.11.2001

Fox River Trail may be state's busiest

More than 1 00,000 used path between May and October

By John Dipko jdipko@greenbaypressgazeffe.com

Six months of counting bears out what supporters of the Fox River Trail believed all along: If you build it, people will use it.

Between May 1 and Oct. 31, users took 102,125 trips somewhere along the 13.9-mile state trail between Green Bay and Greenleaf, making the recreational route likely the most heavily used trail in the state's 1,400-mile network, said Peter Biermeier, section chief for state trails and planning in the Wisconsin State Parks System.

"Those numbers are really large," Biermeier said. 'I'm sure there are urban segments in the state that are equal to that. But in the state's trail system, it's the largest."

Most of the state's trails aren't in heavily urbanized areas, though the new Hank Aaron State Trail along the Menomonee River in downtown Milwaukee is under construction, he said.

Trail walker, in-line skater and bicyclist Joyce Fritz of Green Bay said she used the Fox River Trail several times a week in the summer by herself, with her son or with friends. So, she didn't sound surprised by the six-figure usage number.

"Every time I used the trail, there have been tons of people, bicyclists, walkers, those in wheelchairs and in-line skaters," said Fritz, who hopes to try cross-country skiing on the trail this winter. "Seeing lots of people able to use it is, I think, very exciting."

Cross-country skiers are allowed, but Brown County won't groom the trail for cross-country skiing, said county Parks Director Michael McFarlane.

The trail's position near the Fox River makes it prone to snowdrifts and costly caretaking, and the asphalt melts snow more quickly than on other surfaces, he said.

The rural and urban trail, which is paved from Heritage Road in De Pere north to the trailhead in Green Bay, opened Memorial Day weekend under a management agreement with Brown County.

The county installed infrared counters at two points along the urban stretch, conducted surveys and double-checked machine counts by having staff take and compare sample in-person counts, McFarlane said.

Fifty-six percent of the users were on bicycles, about 29 percent were walkers or joggers and 14.9 percent rolled through on in-line skates, he said. The remaining 0.1 percent rode horseback on paths next to the rural portion.

Brown County's counting work is among the most concise user counts ever done in Wisconsin, said Gary Hanson, northeast region trails coordinator with the state Department of Natural Resources.

The trail's function as a recreational, scenic and commuting route makes it popular, he said.

"We expect it's one of the heavier-used trails because of its scenic nature and also because it runs through other neighborhoods, links parks and runs into rural areas," Hanson said.

Work is under way to extend the trail into downtown Green Bay. At the southern end, plans call to extend the rural portion on 13 miles of unused rail corridor into the Calumet County community of Hilbert.

Like many of the state's trails, the Fox River Trail is a former railroad corridor set aside, or "rail banked," as recreational pathways and preserved for future rail-line reactivation.

The rail-banking program, called Rails-to-Trails, is possible through a 1983 congressional amendment to the National Trails System Act.

Hugh Morris, research director with the nonprofit Rails-to-Trails Conservancy of Washington, D.C., said the trail's usage seems high compared with trails in similar markets.

"The numbers sound really good, particularly since the trail just opened," Morris said.
"Usually there's sort of a learning curve for the population, and usership builds up over time.
This says to me that Wisconsin has so many rail-trails in the state that the population in general didn't have to go through a learning curve on what these trails are all about."

Urban trails in Boston, Seattle and Washington, D.C., can each see 1 million users or more every year, according to the conservancy.

More users means more money for the trail. The county sold 6,170 annual state trail passes to bicyclists and in-line skaters as of Oct. 8, the most recent day statistics are available.

Each pass costs \$10, \$7 of which the county keeps and will use to pay for benches, signs and equipment along the trail, McFarlane said.

Users bought 4,015 daily passes at \$3 each as of Oct. 8, and the county keeps all of that for the trail, he said.

McFarlane said the user numbers are higher than the county ever could have imagined.

"We knew it would be popular, and if we had half of that, would have been pleased," he said. "And there are still users who we're missing, so the overall numbers are probably higher."

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Appendix 3: Fox River Trail Study Business Survey

The Brown County Planning Commission is beginning a study to determine how the Fox River Trail has affected the area since officially opening on May 26, 2001. One component of this study is the trail's impact on nearby businesses. To help the planning commission in this effort, staff asks that you take a few minutes to complete this survey and return it in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope before Friday, November 2, 2001. If you have questions, please contact Cole Runge at (920) 448-3400. Thank you for your assistance.

Name of your business

1.	Do you believe the Fox River Trail has increased sales at your business?
	Yes No
	If Yes, please estimate the percentage of this sales increase%
2.	Please estimate the number of trail users who visit your business on a typical weekday
3.	Please estimate the number of trail users who visit your business on a typical Saturday
4.	Please estimate the number of trail users who visit your business on a typical Sunday
5.	Have you mentioned the trail in advertisements for your business?
	Yes No
	If No, do you intend to mention the trail in future advertisements?
	Yes No
6.	Have you asked the Brown County Park Department to place an advertising sign for your business along the trail?
	YesNo
	If No, do you intend to ask for an advertising sign in the future?
	Yes No

Fox River Trail Study Business Survey (continued)

7. Do your employees use the trail to travel to and from work?	
Yes No	
8. Has the trail helped you recruit or retain employees? Yes No	
9. Overall, do you believe the trail's impact on your business has been:	
 Very Positive Positive The trail has had no impact on my business Negative Very Negative 	
Do you have additional comments?	
	_
	_
	_

Appendix 4: Business Survey Comments

- General support for the trail (12 comments).
- We intend to use the trail in marketing our motel in the future. We are new owners!
 The motel has not been in operation since the trail opened. Although the trail hasn't
 affected our business yet, I assume it will in the future. I think it is a great resource
 for the community.
- Our landlord would not let us put a sign on his property. Trail users have been very positive and excited about the trail.
- Please forward signage information since my business ties in with the "nature" of the trail. Thank you.
- I suppose it didn't help me either that when they did the map no one came to my business for support as in advertising.
- I see a lot of the same people from the bike trail. People are riding and walking instead of driving.
- In one full year (two seasons) we'll be able to tell more!
- I believe that the trail is a great benefit to our area. Because of the nature of our business (corp. management), it will have no impact on our company.
- Employees like having the trail to take walks at lunch.

Appendix 5: Letter from Fox Point Amoco

3630 Riverside Drive Green Bay, WI 54301

December 4, 2001

Cole Runge Brown County Planning Dept. 100 N. Jefferson Street, Room 608 Green Bay, WI 54301

Dear Mr. Runge;

In reply to your questionnaire, I feel that the Fox River Trail has been a very positive improvement for the businesses along the trail. We are seeing many walkers and bike riders from other parts of the state that we would not normally have for customers. Many times, passes were bought for visiting family members that wanted to see the beautiful river area that is inaccessible otherwise.

Many people bought passes in order to begin an exercise program for the first time. It is wonderful to see so many elderly people start a walking or bike riding program. We saw them for the whole season, not for one time only. The comments we have heard always include how well the trail is maintained and how lucky the people in this area are to have the scenery.

The only draw back we have experienced is the amount of people who come in to use the bathroom facilities and want a free glass of water. This may sound trite, but it was costing over \$75.00 a week for just the cups. I had to stop buying the better quality cups for my coffee sales and switch to an inexpensive cup that has an inexpensive lid that isn't as nice for coffee and cappuccino. Fox Point offers Madison's Victor Allen's coffees. I tried to explain to these people who bought nothing, but wanted free water, that the volume of requests for cups and water were really adding up and I would appreciate other purchases in order to offset this expense. I was usually verbally abused at that point. I will probably provide bathroom Dixie cups for next year. I don't mind giving a glass of water to someone who has made a purchase of some kind at the store, but I need sales in order to stay in business.

Overall, the trail has been a wonderful addition to our community. It would be even better if you paid the businesses a percentage of the trail passes. Even 50 cents a pass would be great. It would help pay for the employees it takes to write them out and the time it takes to reconcile the account.

Sincerely,

Martha and Dave Peters Fox Point Amo co

Appendix 6: Green Bay Press-Gazette Articles Addressing the Impact of the Trail on Area Businesses

Businesses profit from Fox River Trail

Exercisers buy food, utilize services

BY MELLODY E. PARCHIA Press-Gazette

Sunday's sparse business at Zesty's Frozen Custard on the Fox River Trail isn't representative of the rise in customers' custard cravings since the trail was paved almost three weeks ago.

'The first weekend the trail opened, business increased about 30 percent," said Darlene Fink, who co-owns the business with her husband, Rick. "What we've seen is a lot of kids at the store, bladers and people sifting at the patio area.

The 13.9-mile trail from Green Bay to Greenleaf formally opened May 26, although bicyclists and walkers have been using the trail for longer. But the mid-May paving of a 5.4-mile section of the trail from Heritage Road north to the trailhead at Porlier and South Adams streets in Green Bay has brought out more outdoor enthusiasts.

The Finks already planned to get new patio furniture for the deck adjacent to the popular shop on Riverside Drive near the Fox Point Boat Launch, and the trail business just provided confirmation.

"We wanted to really make the patio a feature because it looks out over the Fox River, Darlene Fink said.

Next door to Zesty's at the Fox Point Amoco Gas Station, more bicyclists now stop in during the morning to get water, snacks or trail passes, said Sabrina Kelly, an attendant at the station.

Pass purchases have picked up in the last month, she said. Even Sunday's unseasonably cool weather didn't keep people away.

"Today we went through probably five books of passes already,' Kelly said about noon Sunday. That's 50 passes sold since the station opened at 6 a.m.

A \$3 day pass is required for bicyclists and in-line skaters 16 years old or older, or horseback riders. A \$10 yearly pass also can be purchased.

"We've sold out of them like three times already, and had to call the DNR to get some, and they didn't even have any,' said Kelly. "They had to go to Madison to get some."

Jamie Schoenborn, a Green Bay resident who was in-line skating along the trail near the Fox Point Boat Launch, said she goes either to Zesty's or Dairy Queen when she gets hot on the trail. "But you have to take off your Rollerblades or get off your bike and rack it," she said.

For that reason, her friend, Duane Klemp, said more vending machines, or vendors should be closer to the trail.

Lynn and John Gaus of De Pere got their passes from Amoco on Sunday morning before stopping in at Zesty's. They both said they are pretty much satisfied with the number and types of businesses near the trail and don't think more will improve or detract from it.

"I don't have a preference either way,' said John Gaus.

Mary and Rick Stevens, Green Bay, were trying to decide where to lunch after hours of

biking. "Can we make it to Greenleaf or should we turn around and go to Titletown?"

Mary Stevens asked her husband.

"We're going to see how far we can go,' said Rick Stevens, who added the ideal location for an eatery along the trail would be near the St. James Inn in downtown De Pere.

Mary Stevens also said a store that handles bike repairs would be helpful.

Toward the northern end of the trail, in downtown Green Bay, Joey Nowak, owner of Stan and Ollie's Boat House, said it's "too early" to tell whether the trail has spurred business at his tavern.

"I guess we're starting to increase," said Nowak. "It's like anything else, if I see you come off the path, I know you came from the path, but if I don't see where you came from, I don't know if you came off the path or the street."

Regardless, Nowak said he would consider putting up bike racks near the tavern to accommodate trail customers, who might say, 'hey, we'll give our bikes a couple of runs and go and get cocktails."

Where to get trail passes

Daily passes are available at various access points along the trail.

Here are vendors that sell annual state trail passes near the Fox River Trail:

Amoco station, 3630 Riverside Drive, Allouez.

Brown County Park Department, 305 E. Walnut St., Green Bay.

The Bike Hub, 588 Redbird Circle, De Pere.

Lox Stock & Bagel, 1300 S. Webster Ave., Allouez.

Other Brown County locations that sell passes are:

Cenex C-Store, I 1 3 S. Wisconsin St., Pulaski.

Howard Village Hall, 2456 Glendale Ave.

In Competition Active Sports, 2439 University Ave., Green Bay.

JB Cycle & Sport, 2500 Glendale Ave., Howard.

Nordik Sports, 2436 Glendale Ave., Howard.

Pulaski Village Hall, 421 S. St. Augustine St., Pulaski.

27.06.2001

Trail brings added business

Nearby restaurants lure users with beverages, cool treats

BY SEAN SCHULTZ Press-Gazette

Like desert nomads, Fox River Trail travelers work up a powerful thirst.

How fortunate, then, that the sign behind Bugsy's Food and Spirits, a bar on Riverside Drive advertising bottled water and beer, is no mirage.

Bugsy's owner Bob Lepianka has relief on tap for bikers, walkers and joggers who traverse the 13.5-mile trail.

On a day like Tuesday when the mercury bumped 90, they came crawling in, looking for air conditioning, frosty beverages and a shady haven from the sun.

His sandwich board sign lures passersby with the promise of barbecue chicken, fries, a cool brew and those key words: "Water inside."

'I get 20 to 30 people in a day off that sign," Lepianka said. "We're so close to the trail, it's casual here and you can sit outside." That kind of curbside catering 'is a whole dimension I didn't even think of when I bought the place,' Lepianka said. He bought the former Christopher's Pub three years ago. The trail opened last month.

Doug Hartman, Brown County parks manager, said Lepianka had permission to advertise adjacent to the trail.

The department will be adding signage to the trail that is uniform and attractive. Businesses may pay a fee to have their names added to the signs, he said.

'I can see new businesses almost starting up because of that trail,' Hartman said.

Glenn Urban of Green Bay enjoyed the trail view from Bugsy's deck Tuesday and thinks Lepianka's entrepreneurial spirit is well founded.

"I think it's an excellent idea," he said. 'I wish they'd extend a boardwalk and have upscale shops along the trail.

Sheila Howes of Green Bay saw Bugsy's sign while she and sons Dylan, 8, and Alec, 7, rode their bikes along the trail.

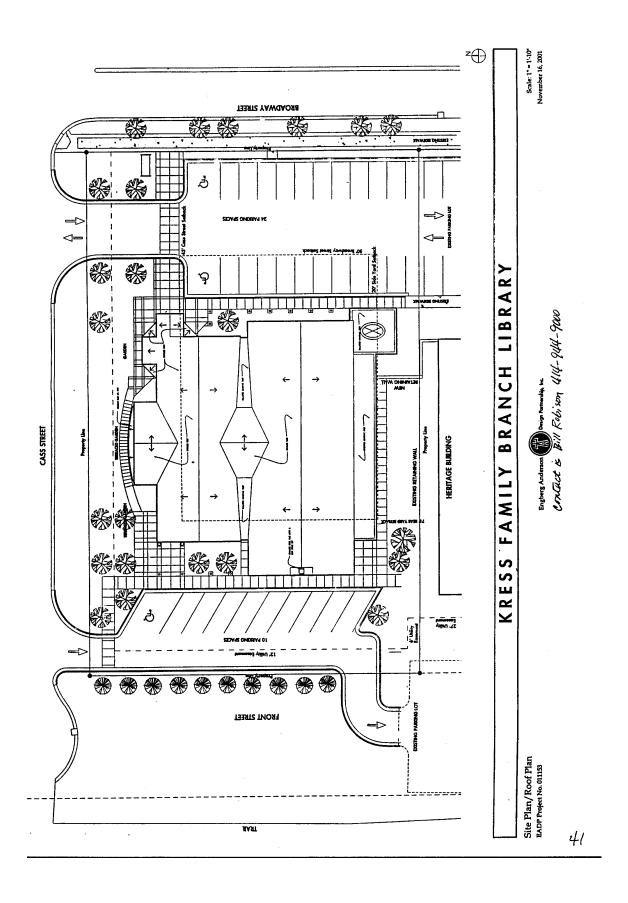
"I think the whole trail is awesome," she said. She likes the idea of signs like the one at Bugsy's "as long as we don't get too many."

Lepianka may be the first vendor to woo the trail crowd. Other businesses like the Dairy Queen nearby are drawing customers from the trail.

Neil Sweney, Dairy Queen's owner, said business has been down this season because the Fox River is low and the nearby boat launch isn't busy. Last Sunday there were not even 20 boats down there," he said.

Overall, trail trade "has its pluses and minuses," Sweney said. "I'm giving out a lot more water and the cost for bathroom supplies is going up.'

Appendix 7: Site Plan for the New Brown County Library Branch in De Pere



Appendix 8: Adopt-A-Trail Segments and Participants as of December 2001

Porlier Street to Marine Street (City of Green Bay)

Astor Neighborhood Association Aldo Leopold Community School Bellin Health

Marine Street to Lazarre Avenue (Village of Allouez)

Zeller Ski & Sports A&W Restaurants Boy Scout Troop 1018 SSP&P

Lazarre Avenue to Fox Point Boat Launch (Village of Allouez)

Segment Available

Fox Point Boat Launch to Fulton Street (City of De Pere)

Bay Shore Bicycle Club JB Cycle and Sport

Fulton Street to Bomier Boat Launch (City of De Pere)

De Pere Main Street

Bomier Boat Launch to Heritage Road (City of De Pere)

Segment Available

Heritage Road to Rockland Road (City of De Pere)

Pro Fitness, Inc.

Rockland Road to Old Martin Road (Town of Rockland)

Cub Scout Pack 4034

Adopt-A-Trail Participant List (continued)

Old Martin Road to Midway Road (Town of Rockland)

Ritter Family

Midway Road to Eiler Road (Town of Rockland)

Easy Living Pedicabs

Eiler Road to Wrightstown Road (Town of Rockland)

Smits/Beyer Family

Wrightstown Road to School Road (Town of Wrightstown)

Segment Available

School Road to Fair Road (Town of Wrightstown)

Community Effort

Msw: Fox River Trail/Fox River Trail study (final draft) – December 2001