

Gates Mills Boulevard Multipurpose Trail

City of Pepper Pike

The logo for the City of Pepper Pike, featuring the text "City of PEPPER PIKE" in a green box with white text. The word "City of" is in a smaller font above "PEPPER PIKE".

City of
PEPPER
PIKE

SLIDE 1:

Gates Mills Boulevard is a configuration of two dedicated roads and a wide median of public open space that runs in between the roadways. This open space provides a unique opportunity, through the Ohio Department of Natural Resources - **as part of their Recreational Trails Program and Clean Ohio Trails Fund**- for Pepper Pike to apply for a Multi-Purpose Trail grant. The trail could be placed within this wide median.

Gates Mills Blvd. – Looking Southwest



SLIDE 2:

A typical view of the Boulevard reveals the wide median (approximately 125' across) and the east and west-bound roadways. The homes on either side of the Boulevard sit back another one hundred feet from the curb, about 125' from the median. Much of the median is open grass, with some well-defined tree rows in certain areas, along with naturalized and more random tree installations in other areas.

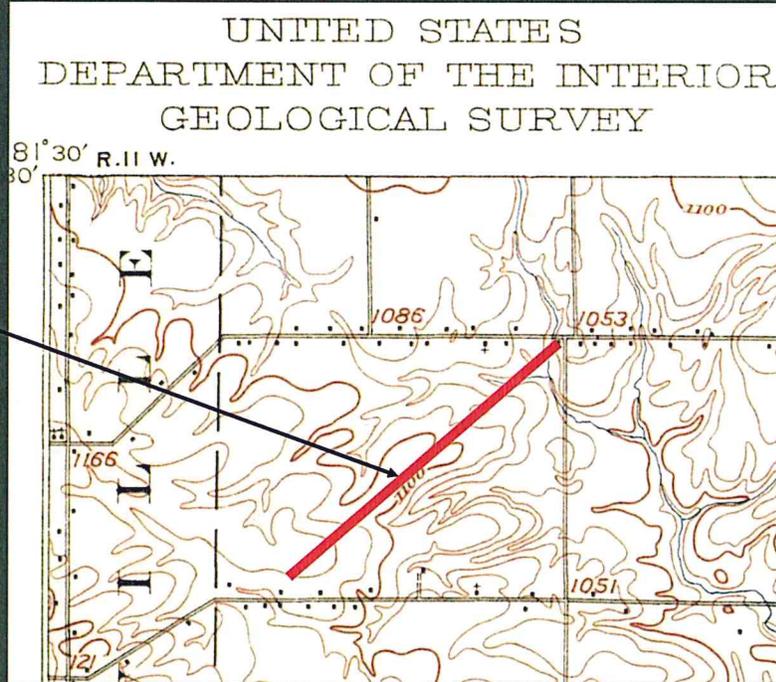
Gates Mills Blvd. at Kersdale – Looking Southwest



SLIDE 3:

Another view of the Boulevard near the intersection with Kersdale Road shows the sweeping, large and dramatic radius of the median, installed with segmented granite curb, from a bygone era. Here the trees are not planted in rows and are a bit younger than the previous location. A more densely wooded area where trees have filled in is visible to the west.

History – Topography

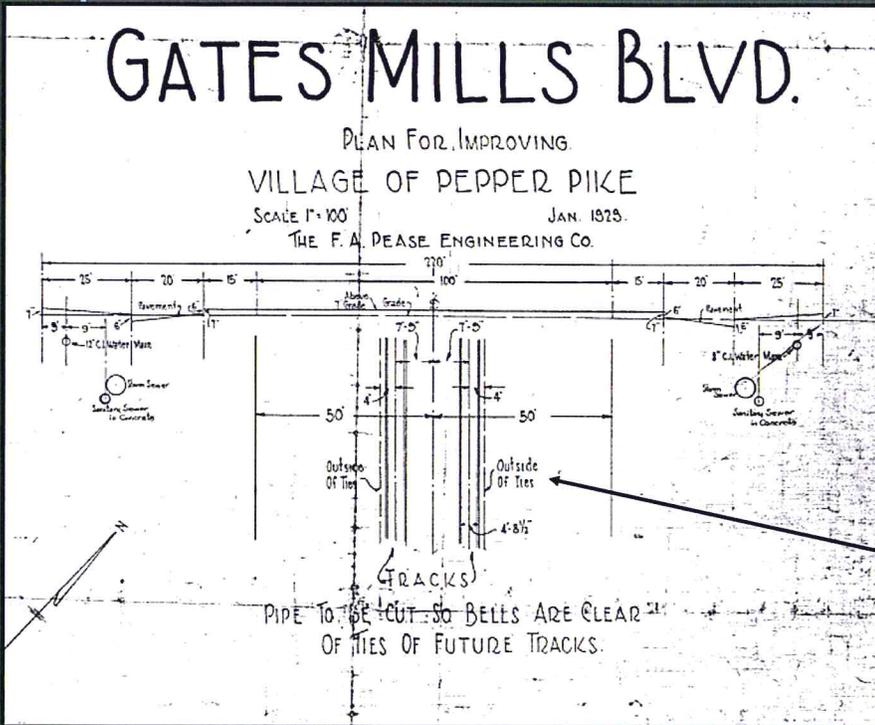


- 1906 USGS Topographic Map
- Original land use was mainly farmland

SLIDE 4:

A bit of history is helpful when thinking about any future planning for the median. An old topographic map from 1906 shows the area when it was farm property as part of Orange Township. There are no circles at either Shaker or Lander and the Gates Mills Boulevard transportation corridor had not yet been contemplated. The stream that flows into the Gates Mills Boulevard detention basin is visible on this early map.

History -Transportation



Original plan for Gates Mills Boulevard

- Multimodal transportation system
- 24' width light rail, similar to the Rapid transit

Original improvement plans show tracks

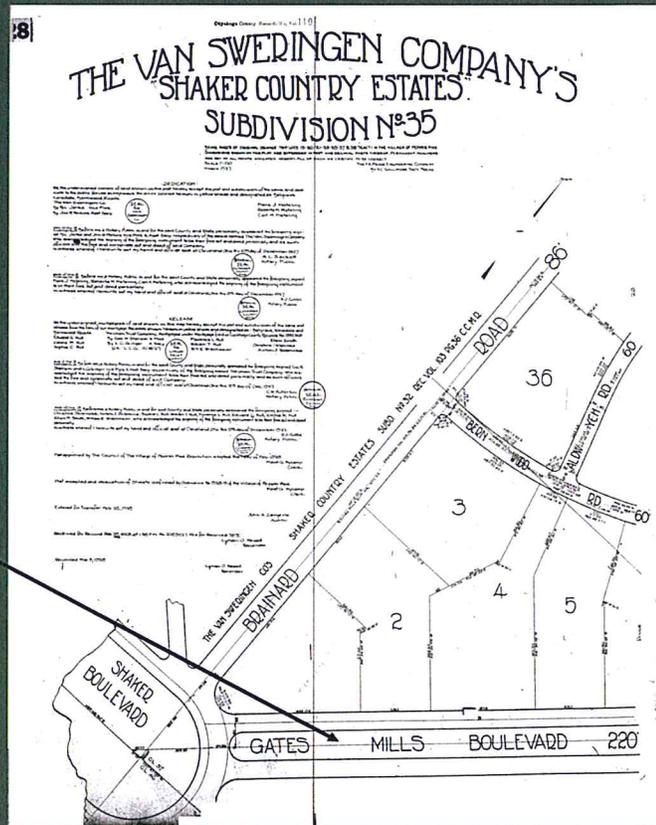
SLIDE 5:

In 1928, a bold plan for Gates Mills Boulevard is proposed, connecting Shaker Boulevard and running northeast to its easterly terminus at Old Mill Road near Mayfield Road. This new Boulevard will provide vehicular and light rail service to a grand "Country Estate" development as an extension of the massive Van Sweringen Real Estate empire. The light rail facilities were to run down the center of the median, with a set of tracks in each direction, like the Shaker Rapid that now ends at Green Road. The clearing, earthwork, sewers, pavement and curbs were all completed, but the light rail installation was put on hold as the Great Depression stifled progress on this and many other ambitious development projects.

Historical Plat

- Light rail to be installed in 1928
- Setup for estate lots of 5-10 acres

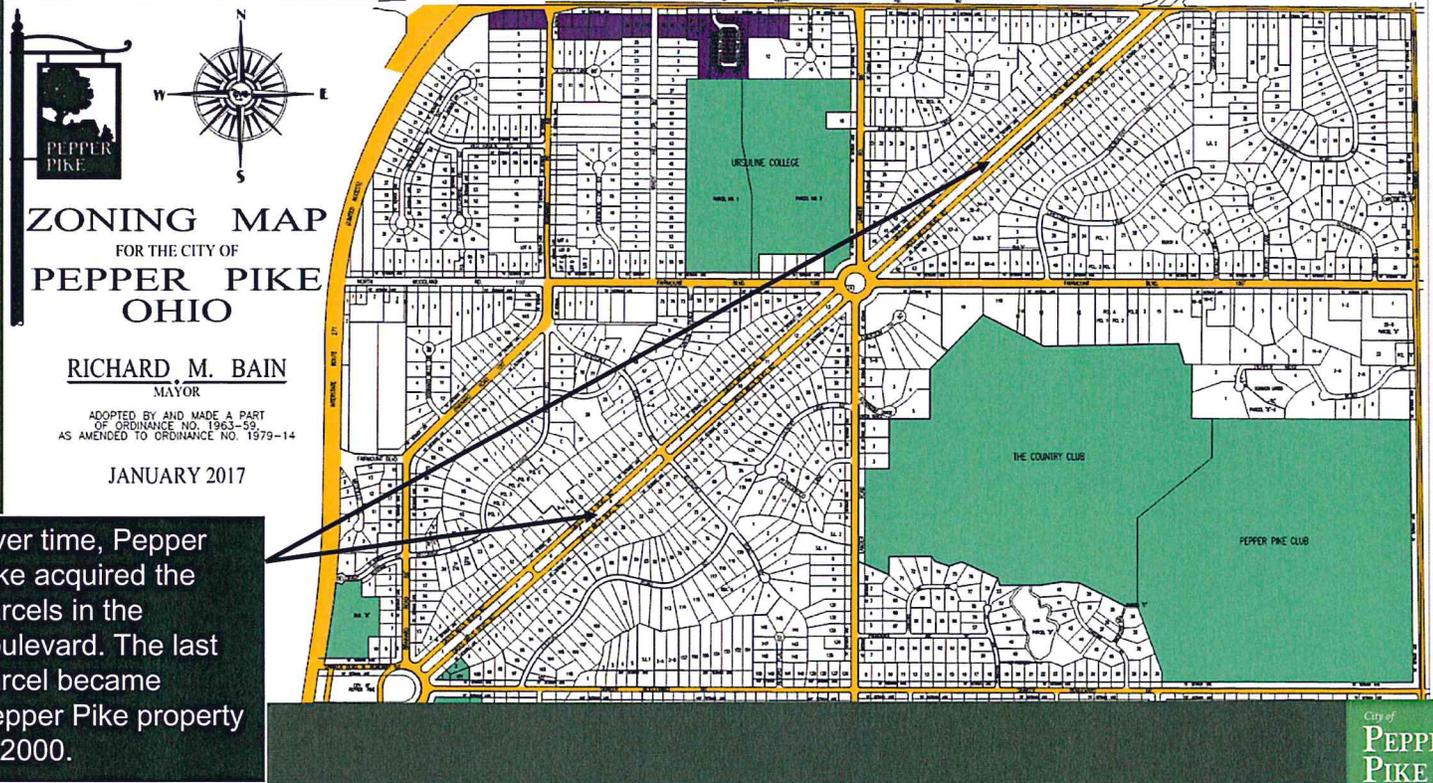
Boulevard center
property is
privately owned



SLIDE 6:

The Van Sweringen Company's Shaker Country Estates included exclusively large lot properties of about five to ten acres along the main roadway system, with Gates Mills Boulevard being an important leg of the proposed system. Some of the secondary streets in this area of Pepper Pike were originally designed to provide service entrance access to the proposed estate houses. On this page, we can see that the "circle" at Shaker is only a semi-circle, as this was to be a large turn-around for the light rail system. A similar large-radius turnaround is on the far eastern end of Gates Mills Boulevard in Gates Mills Village. This property in the center of the Boulevard was privately held by the developer when this land was originally developed.

Current Zoning Map - 2017



SLIDE 7:

A modern zoning map shows Gates Mills Boulevard and the adjacent properties as they are currently developed. The individual pieces of property within the median of Gates Mills Boulevard were acquired by the City of Pepper Pike over the last 50 years, with the last pieces of land being acquired about 20 years ago.

Existing Property



Pepper Pike now owns all the parcels within the boulevard.

After assuming full ownership, the boulevard underwent tree planting, landscaping, sewer installation, and the addition of a detention basin.



The original master plan dedicated this space to transportation, including a four-lane highway and light rail

SLIDE 8:

As Pepper Pike acquired this real estate, the City continued to utilize and enhance this City asset for public uses. It was no longer going to be utilized for a light rail system, and traffic on the Boulevard has stabilized where no additional lanes are needed for motorists. Instead, the uses have focused on other public projects, including tree planting, sanitary sewers and a storm water management basin. Pepper Pike allocates funds every year to maintain the lawn area and plant and maintain the trees within the median.

Current Access



- Primary transportation mode is motor vehicles
- Painted sharrows for bike access are marked on Gates Mills Blvd.
- Pedestrians use the roadway or walk in the grass, conditions permitting

SLIDE 9:

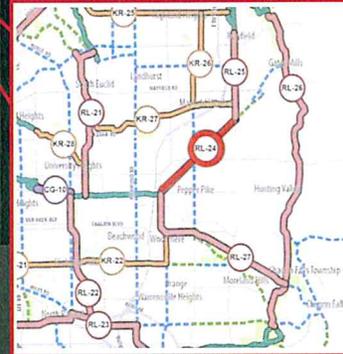
Minor modifications to the boulevard included a modest widening to bring the lanes up to current design standards, and the addition of “sharrows” – or specifically marked painted lanes and signage to heighten driver awareness and appropriate passing of cyclists in the roadway. Access for pedestrians is limited, as they often walk in the street or in the grass if conditions allow. Some additional modifications are under way now at the western end of Gates Mills Boulevard at its intersection with Shaker and Brainard.

Plan for a trail: Cuyahoga Greenways



Cuyahoga Greenways is a county wide initiative to envision, plan, and implement greenways and urban trails throughout Cuyahoga County.

Gates Mills Boulevard is identified as part of this plan. It can potentially connect to the Shaker Median Trail to the west and the SOM Center Trail to the east.



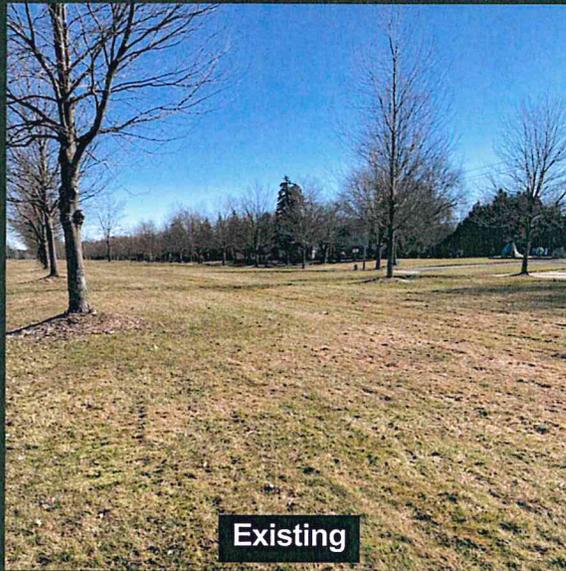
The trail can add a recreational and fitness aspect to the boulevard, while keeping existing trees and adding new ones.

SLIDE 10:

As recently as 2019, the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, along with the Cleveland MetroParks and the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (Federally Funded Planning Agency) had prepared a county-wide greenway vision plan for increasing access to trails and paths throughout Cuyahoga County. Gates Mills Boulevard is an important regional link on this

plan, as it provides connections to the existing Shaker median trail to the west, and other destinations to the east, including parks, places of worship and educational facilities. Providing access to trails provides healthy recreation and fitness opportunities to Pepper Pike residents, and the trails can be supplemented with additional landscaping to add shade, definition and further beautify the corridor.

What would the trail look like?



Existing

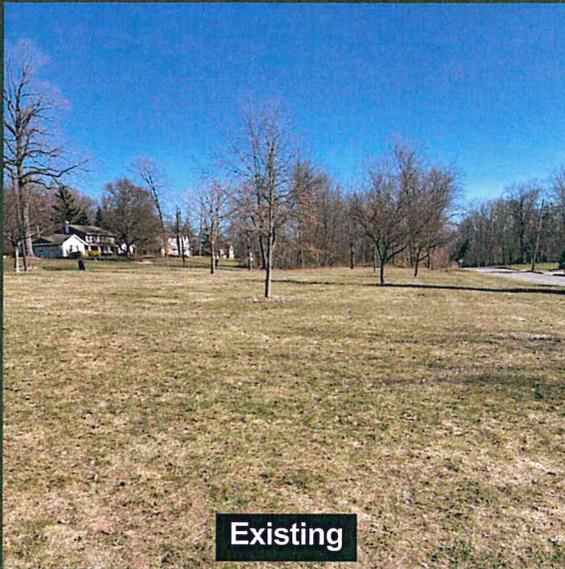


Meandering
Path with
landscape

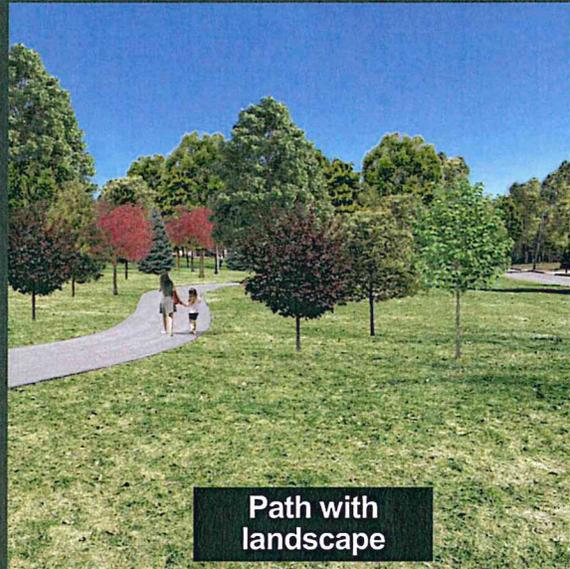
SLIDE 11:

Many residents want to know what this trail would look like once installed. We are only at the preliminary stage where we are applying for funding, and no detailed design process has occurred, but this can give a general idea of how the median can accommodate a trail. The picture on the left was taken this year before leaves were on the trees and the grass is still dormant. It provides an unobstructed view of the median and was a useful photo for our renderings. The picture on the right shows a superimposed trail, and the grass has been greened up, trees shown with foliage, and supplemental trees and pedestrians have been added. This is what the view could look like a couple years after the installation.

What would the trail look like?



Existing



**Path with
landscape**

SLIDE 12:

This is another view of the proposed path with a similar photo treatment on the existing and proposed views. The idea of the path meander is twofold: it allows us to work around terrain, features and trees that we want to protect, and it also softens and enhances the aesthetic of the path for both active users and those passing by. A wide variety of existing native tree species planted by our Service Department can also become a point of interest for the community.



LEGEND	
	PROPOSED MULTIPURPOSE PATH
	EXACT PATH LOCATION TO BE DETERMINED



SLIDE 13:

Where exactly will this path go? The short answer is it has not been designed yet- but we have provided a preliminary layout to show how the path would generally run near the center of the median while meandering a bit from side to side as we avoid existing trees and pick pathways through the more densely wooded sections. A more detailed design would involve a tree survey, topography and mapping of all existing features, with a trail designed to tread lightly on existing median features, including the existing detention basin that is being modified by Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District.



SLIDE 14:

Similar to the previous slide, this enlargement shows how the path might potentially meander around existing mature trees.

Community Asset



Benefits:

- Provides safe and reliable transportation options for bicyclists and pedestrians
- Connects residents to other trails and the Pepper Pike Park
- Environmental benefits – stormwater controls and new trees planted
- Contributes to community health through active living
- Enhances community identity and community recreation

SLIDE 15:

Why do we need this path? Pedestrians and cyclists would be able to utilize this path as a safe and reliable transportation option, much in the same way they are using the current trail at Shaker Circle. It provides homeowners with another link to other City assets, including the Pepper Pike park, other trails, places of worship and education. This type of installation encourages an active living lifestyle and enhances the identity of Pepper Pike by providing this healthy option to its residents. The new landscaping along this corridor can provide stormwater controls to enhance water quality and a healthy tree canopy to absorb carbon dioxide.

Trail Statistics

- A professionally conducted telephone survey of Cuyahoga County residents showed that 71.2% of residents visit Cleveland Metroparks annually.
- Accessibility and convenience increase likelihood of trail use
- Even if a resident never visits a trail, property value still increases – one study found increases of 5.7% and 12.2% for properties with nearby trails or parks



- Rails-to-Trails Conservancy study results indicated that trails are a safe place to be – crime rate on trails in suburban areas were lower than overall suburban area crime.

From "The Economic benefits of Cleveland Metroparks" by The Trust for Public Land, September 2018

SLIDE 16:

Most residents visit the Cleveland MetroParks at least annually. Having a trail within Pepper Pike will get regular use by our residents, with a goal of keeping some from driving in a car to go for a walk. Trails can inspire and challenge people if they are convenient to get to. During the COVID lockdown, many people re-discovered how the simple act of taking a walk can clear your head and lift your spirits. Renewed enthusiasm for other forms of outdoor activity as an alternative to the gym (or doing nothing) like running and cycling have also shown the benefits of having convenient access to outdoor trail facilities.

Trails do not reduce property values- in fact, the opposite is true -they have been found to increase home values for properties with trails or parks nearby.

Trails are safe- there is no incidence of increased crime rates on trails and this location will be as safe as any other area of Pepper Pike.

Costs

- Main work items required: Clearing, excavation, compaction, aggregate base, and asphalt
- Approximate construction costs for an asphalt path: \$780,000
- To compare, construction costs for a gravel path would cost approximately \$600,000
 - Eliminating the asphalt items would only save about 20% of the cost



SLIDE 17:

What does this cost? Why is it asphalt instead of gravel?

OK, let us talk about costs:

For a preliminary estimate, we used \$1,200,000 and requested the maximum amount allowable under this program, which is \$500,000. The calculation we used is a high side estimate, and has contingencies built in for things like utility conflicts, encountering bad soils, material price inflation and other construction items that could increase the cost of the project. We are hoping to keep the cost under \$1,000,000, which would be about a 50/50 split for this program.

Breaking out just the installation of the asphalt path- we estimate this at about \$780,000 and is the single biggest cost of the project. Some have inquired about other surfaces- installing just a gravel path would still cost about \$600,000 and would not provide the same level of access and safe footing (generally not handicap accessible), would not be of the same reliability and quality as a paved surface, and would require more maintenance to repair washouts and tracking ruts.

Some have inquired about installing a 6' concrete sidewalk instead of the asphalt path. There would be some modest savings on the material quantities- perhaps 15-20%. Most of the other items remain the same, as we still need to develop construction vehicle access to the proposed path, with clearing, grading, soil stabilization and some additional labor involved with placing concrete. However -the narrowness of the sidewalk would eliminate the project from the Recreational Trails Program funding, as it would not be wide enough to safely provide access in both directions.

Funding

- Clean Ohio Trails Fund grant – applied for in 2021
 - Assistance requested: \$500,000
 - Total estimated project costs at time of application: \$1.2 million
- Building the multipurpose trail provides the opportunity to apply for more grant money for trees and beautification
- The city and engineer will work to keep costs down, for a total project cost less than the initial estimate
- If Pepper Pike is awarded the Clean Ohio Trails grant, the City would fund the remaining costs



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SLIDE 18:

Right now, the only source of outside funding for this grant is the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Currently, any remaining cost would be paid for by the City. While there is currently no other immediate source for project funding, the City will continue to seek other funding sources to offset the City costs. We will continue to find creative ways to control the cost of this project and hope to keep the overall cost well below the initial grant application estimate.

Maintenance and Safety



- Maintenance – Pepper Pike Service Department will handle maintenance with existing personnel and equipment
- Safety – Pepper Pike Police Department will include customary law enforcement and active police presence in pathway areas

SLIDE 19:

How will this be maintained? The Pepper Pike Service Department currently coordinates and performs similar maintenance on the other public facilities throughout the City. They have a staff of knowledgeable and capable personnel along with the needed equipment to maintain this proposed trail in the same way they maintain all the other City assets.

How safe will it be? If this path is installed, it will be part of the normally patrolled areas for police. This is a route frequently travelled by police cruisers and they will continue to maintain an active presence if the path is installed.