

We have received many questions about the proposed Gates Mills Boulevard Multi-Purpose trail and recreational trails/sidewalks on our main streets. To best answer many of the frequently asked questions, we have put together a brief narrative that may address many of these questions, and then some additional questions that are not part of the general narrative.

Gates Mills Boulevard Multi-Purpose Trail:

Pepper Pike applied for a grant from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) to fund \$500,000 of a Multi-Purpose trail on Gates Mills Boulevard. As currently proposed for funding, the Gates Mills Boulevard Multi-Purpose trail would be a paved asphalt trail within the median of Gates Mills Boulevard. The width will be Ten (10) feet and the material will be a paved asphalt surface. The multi-purpose trail is designed to safely accommodate more users at one time, and cyclists will be able to travel comfortably at speeds of about 15 miles per hour without disrupting two people walking side-by-side in the opposite direction. This trail is well suited to be a continuous paved asphalt surface material, as there are no driveways crossing the trail, and limited intersection and utility crossings. It is an amenity that is entirely on city-owned land, connects to a larger multi-purpose trail system, and will be an end destination for other proposed recreational trails (i.e., Lander Road)

What is considered the public Right of Way (ROW), and how does that differ from the street?

The right of way is the entire width of land that has been dedicated to public use for vehicular and pedestrian traffic, along with public and private utilities. In Pepper Pike, the entire ROW of all public streets is owned by the City of Pepper Pike as shown on our Zoning Map and the County records. What we often think of as the “street” is the paved and/or curbed portion of the ROW. Beyond the pavement and/or curb, there is typically a grass lawn area on either side that contains various underground utilities (water mains, sewer mains, natural gas lines, and sometimes electric and telecommunication lines), above ground utilities on poles, signs, mailboxes, and driveways. Individual homeowners do not own property up to the street- their property stops well short of the pavement and requires permission to install individual utility connections and drive aprons to pavement and utilities within the ROW.

Are these sidewalks or recreational trails, and what is the difference?

- Pepper Pike can differentiate between what is traditionally called a “sidewalk” and provide a designation of a “Recreational Trail” for these installations. This would allow Pepper Pike to assume the cost of installation and long-term maintenance responsibilities for the trail and would also allow Pepper Pike to remove the seasonal maintenance obligations for snow removal that would otherwise be the responsibility of the adjacent property owners.



- The liability/insurance rates for a homeowner would be no different than they currently are (people are currently allowed to walk within the right of way on the grass).
- Pepper Pike can allow and/or prohibit certain specific uses (motorized bikes, for example).

Recreational Trails

Purpose:

Create safe pedestrian routes away from vehicular traffic on streets with higher traffic counts. Trails will be used primarily for walking, jogging and recreational bike riding for new/younger riders, and will be designed with access for all abilities, including those with mobility limitations. Trails will enhance recreational opportunities and improve neighborhood connectivity for both main and side streets, connect to parks and other paths, and allow a safe, healthy alternative to driving.

Width:

Five (5) feet is the recommended **minimum** width in the public right of way. It allows space for two people to walk side-by-side comfortably in the same direction and allows two people walking in opposite directions to pass without forcing someone to move off the path.

Color:

Concrete generally is a light grey color which varies somewhat based on the sourcing and natural variation of the raw materials (aggregates, sand, and Portland cement). It is not naturally “white” but gets sprayed with a curing compound when installed that contains a white pigment.

Concrete undergoes a chemical “curing” process that starts when water is added and mixed with the dry components. The curing process generates heat that needs to be properly regulated to maintain the structural integrity of the concrete. This white pigmented curing compound applied to the surface of the concrete is designed to seal the concrete and not allow water to escape too quickly while the concrete cures. The white color helps keep the concrete cool as it reflects light, which also keeps the concrete from curing too quickly and overheating, maintaining the integrity of the concrete. The white color fades a bit over time, but generally stays cooler than other surface finishes, and provides distinctive paved limits for visually impaired and/or reduced mobility users.

Colors or colored aggregates can be added to concrete- these are costly specialty items and generally do not work well in larger installations: they are difficult to keep a consistent color during the installation, are susceptible to heating up and cracking due to the darker color, and any occasional repair or replacement to the installed concrete will need to be



color-matched, which is almost impossible to do correctly as color batches and aggregates change over time.

Colored paint, stain and/or tinted sealers can be placed on a concrete surface. There are issues over time with these finishes, as they can peel, flake, or wear off unevenly, and can create slippery surface issues where the material pools or glazes over portions of the surface. They create an expensive and unnecessary maintenance cycle on a surface that would otherwise be very low maintenance. This approach is typically used in very small applications for ornamental patios or other decorative applications, and not on a larger scale project.

Trail Layout:

A trail can be placed at a **fixed uniform distance** from the curb. This would create the appearance of a “straight” trail that would generally appear to be parallel to the curb over the entire length of the trail. This type of installation is best suited to “new” construction, where there are few obstacles in conflict with the proposed trail. It does not work well in established neighborhoods, where conflicts with fire hydrants, power poles, topography, drainage patterns, larger trees, driveways, landscaping, mailboxes, and underground utilities can all contribute to making the straight trail nearly impossible to install without significant disruption to these existing features. We would not typically recommend this approach unless the existing conflicts were few and the desired look once completed had a very linear appearance.

A trail can be placed with **substantial meander** to avoid virtually all landscape features and utility conflicts. In this scenario, the trail location is secondary to trees, poles, hydrants, topography, driveways, and most other conflicts. It creates an undulating and very wavy path that can be unpredictable, visually confusing, and occasionally unattractive. It is not necessarily unsafe but may have locations where sight distance or trail slope creates challenges for users, especially those with limited mobility or other physical constraints.

A trail can be designed with a **modest meander** to avoid difficult conflicts without appearing to take any harsh or excessive changes in direction or elevation and appear to be more a more natural fit to the surrounding landscape. Some utility, driveway and other conflicts will need to be addressed, but these are chosen based on a combination of factors to minimize excessive costs and landscape disturbances. Generally, this method is preferred when adding a trail feature to an established neighborhood, as it works to avoid and minimize disturbances when possible and does not create difficult accessibility issues or unattractive aesthetics.

Picking which side of the street, the specific offset from the curb, and the methodology for this process is site specific, and will be a decision that will protect public safety while balancing the least amount of disturbance and/or conflicts with existing infrastructure and topography.



RECREATIONAL TRAIL LOCATIONS:

Preliminary order of projects is suggested as follows:

1. Lander Road

- Right of way is 86 feet, with approximately 29 feet of open lawn on either side of the roadway, which allows space for meander, grading, and landscaping.
- Land use is a combination of residential drives and open spaces, which allows for reasonable trail layout options.
- Connects retail/commercial, residential, larger subdivisions and institutional uses.
- Current roadway is striped with an enhanced berm of four feet, which sees regular pedestrian and cycle traffic.

Preliminary construction cost per section:

North end of Chagrin Circle to S. Woodland:	\$145,000.00
S. Woodland to Shaker:	\$465,000.00
Shaker to Fairmount:	\$500,000.00
Fairmount to Cedar:	<u>\$350,000.00</u>
	\$1,460,000.00

2. Shaker Boulevard

- Right of way is 60 feet, with approximately 17 feet of open lawn on each side of the roadway- somewhat limiting a trail location and working around existing landscape features, hydrants, etc. May require modest meander in some areas.
- Land use is primarily residential driveways on both sides of the street.
- Connects institutional uses/City Hall complex and City Park, along with larger residential subdivisions.
- The current roadway is approximately 25' in width, which is less accommodating to current pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

Preliminary construction cost per section:

Brainard/Gates Mills Circle to Lander:	\$550,000.00
Lander to Pepper Creek Drive*:	<u>\$380,000.00</u>
	\$930,000.00

**Not recommending extending the path to SOM Center Road currently.*



3. Chagrin Boulevard

- Unique location within the existing right of way (varies from 60-100 feet) as a possible re-use of existing pavement can increase green space and change the function of the corridor.
- Potential to connect limited residential, a small public park, commercial/retail areas and institutional uses (County Library, senior center and K-12 Orange School campus)
- Reclaiming greenspace will reduce traffic speeds and enhance safety, along with providing an alternative to driving between these various destinations.

Preliminary construction cost:

Lander/Chagrin Circle to School (west entrance) \$600,000.00*

Landscape and grading budget of \$150,000 is in this number. This estimate does **not include any modifications at the actual Lander/Chagrin Circle.*

4. South Woodland Road

- Right of way is 100 feet, with approximately 35 feet of open lawn on either side of the roadway, which allows ample space for trail meander, grading, and landscaping.
- Land use is virtually all residential driveways on both sides of the street.
- Connects to several large residential subdivisions.
- The current roadway is approximately 30 feet in width, and is striped for five foot bicycle lanes on each side of the roadway, which see frequent pedestrian and bicycle use.

Preliminary construction cost per section:

New Brainard to Lander:	\$780,000.00
Lander to Pinetree*:	<u>\$570,000.00</u>
	\$1,350,000.00

**Not recommending extending the trail to SOM Center Road currently.*

We can add other sections or areas to this list, but these areas create your core pedestrian access routes on our busiest streets. Branches to connect other neighborhoods or sections would only make sense if these routes were first installed, which would create additional opportunities for connectivity/extensions to other areas in town (i.e., a path addition on Fairmount from Lander to the Snowberry/Chestnut subdivision). This type of extension would not make sense to install as a stand-alone project but would be a good extension to Lander or the Gates Mills Boulevard Multi-Purpose path.



Frequently Asked Questions:

Will we need to install crosswalks?

Yes, crosswalks will be required. These will normally be simple white stripes connecting to ramps. Crosswalks are generally placed in front of the stop bar on side streets.

Will recreational trails change crime rates or door to door solicitation?

Pepper Pike does not anticipate any increase in crime rates or door to door solicitation.

What activities will be restricted on the recreational trails?

To Be Determined, but generally, Pepper Pike can control what is allowed or disallowed on these trails. Some recreational activities take up too much space to be safely performed on a five-foot wide trail (rollerblading, for instance). Other activities and uses cannot be prohibited (motorized wheelchairs, for instance). Frequent users will be walkers/joggers/stroller pushers, and some will be walking with their dog.

What about pet waste?

We have pet waste bags and receptacles at our parks and trails now, and they get used responsibly. We can add locations if needed, but people are required to pick up after their dogs.

What about my landscaping/pavers/flowerbeds/sprinkler /invisible dog fence?

Many residents spend time and money keeping that front lawn looking great all the way to the street! We understand that and do our best to minimize disturbances to existing features. That being said, landscaping beyond grass within the right of way is always in danger of being impacted by public or private utility maintenance and/or improvements. Unique features/plantings are difficult to match, and we encourage residents to relocate items that cannot be protected or saved.

We will re-install sprinkler heads and splice invisible fence wires, but residents often need to coordinate with their system maintenance company to ensure that all zones are functioning properly. Fences and large ornamental boulders are not supposed to be placed in the right of way and may need to be removed or relocated away from the street.

Will this affect mail delivery?



No change in service or mailbox location.

I'm replacing my driveway and it's on a street being considered for a trail-what should I do?

Let's discuss your work when your contractor obtains a permit for the work. There may be some coordination that can be done to plan for a future trail that limits the disturbance to your new driveway.

What's the timeline for all of this?

We are awaiting funding for the Gates Mills Boulevard Multi-Purpose trail. If funded, design would occur over the next six months, and installation would be in Summer- 2024.

Recreational trail design and construction is based on Council authorization. The design process will take place after authorization and will require 4-6 months per section. Timing on construction would be based on seasonal constraints, but most work could occur within an April-November window based on when plans are ready to bid. If authorization to start plan preparation is given before the end of the year, we could move forward with a street in 2024, and additional locations in 2025-2026.