

CITY OF PEPPER PIKE
IMPORTANT ELECTION INFORMATION ENCLOSED

SHALL THE CITY OF PEPPER PIKE DESIGN, CONSTRUCT, AND MAINTAIN RECREATIONAL TRAILS IN THE RIGHTS-OF-WAY OF SHAKER BOULEVARD, SOUTH WOODLAND ROAD, AND LANDER ROAD, PROVIDED THAT SUCH DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, AND MAINTENANCE CAN BE FUNDED BY THE CITY WITHOUT RAISING ADDITIONAL TAXES OR ASSESSMENTS?

The city has put together a comprehensive guide to help you understand this issue and make an informed decision. We offer a range of resources to help you get your questions answered, including Frequently Asked Questions, detailed cost breakdowns, and three town hall meetings where you can connect with other concerned citizens and hear from public officials. Learn everything you need to know about this important ballot issue.

Town Hall Meeting Dates with Mayor Richard Bain and City Council Members: Mano Daga, Tony Gentile, Cathy Hwang, Jim LeMay, Scott Newell, Melanie Weltman, and Emmy Zatroch

Saturday, September 9, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

Monday, September 11, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, September 26, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Meetings will be held at the Orange High School Commons - 32000 Chagrin Blvd.

Dear Neighbors and Friends:

The City of Pepper Pike is considering a walkability plan, which would initially include the construction of 5 foot wide concrete recreational trails (also known as sidewalks) on one side of Lander Road, Shaker Boulevard, and South Woodland Road. Attached is a map showing the proposed trail locations.

Because installing the trails would be a significant change for the City, and our residents have expressed a wide range of views on the trails, City Council has decided to place this issue on the **November 7** general election ballot so that all of our residents can express their views by **voting**.

The purpose of this letter is to provide our residents with balanced information on the proposed walkability plan so that residents can make an informed choice. In addition to this letter, the City will be holding town hall meetings to discuss this proposal. The dates and times for these meetings are listed below. We encourage you to attend and participate.

In addition to the proposal to build trails on these major streets, City Council has already approved a distinct walkability project consisting of a 10-foot wide multi-purpose trail in the center median strip of Gates Mills Boulevard between City Hall and the Fairmont Circle/Lander Road intersection. For more information, including costs estimates, on this separate project, go to the City website www.pepperpike.org and see the information under the “Gates Mills Multi-Purpose Trail” tab.

In recent years, the City and its residents have had on and off discussions about improving City walkability. Following the results of the community survey earlier this year we have had eight City Council meetings at which walkways have been discussed. These meetings were well attended by residents who expressed many different points of view both for and against installing trails in the City. Links to these discussions as well as other information on the proposed walkability plan can be found on the City website at www.pepperpike.org.

The proponents of increased walkability in the City point to several benefits. These benefits include the increased safety of walking on trails as opposed to high traffic major roads, the health benefits of increased accessibility to walking (and having an alternative to driving), and the community building that is enabled by being able to easily and safely walk around the City and its neighborhoods as well as connect to other communities’ walkways.

Other residents have expressed concerns about installing trails. These concerns include the locations of the trails, the environmental impact of installing trails as it will require the removal of some trees, plantings, and other vegetation to be replaced by a concrete trail. Concerns have also been expressed about the effect trails will have on the long standing “semi-rural” character and look of the City.

Those residents who live on major streets and who may be directly impacted by trails in the front of their home have expressed both support and concern over trails. For some of these residents, trails are seen as a significant benefit because they will have direct access to more safely walk from their home and this will potentially increase their home values. Others who live on major streets have raised various concerns about trails including that the homeowner may have some future responsibility for the trail; privacy concerns (particularly for corner lots); and that a concrete trail and loss of trees and landscaping will negatively impact the appearance and potentially decrease their home value.

Many of the questions you may have about the proposed walkability plan are discussed in the next section of this document – “Frequently Asked Questions”. Please review it carefully.

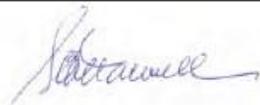
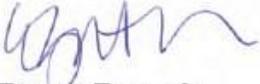
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Mayor and City Council

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
|  Richard Bain |  Scott Newell |  Tony Gentile |  Jim LeMay |
|  Mano Daga |  Cathy Hwang |  Emmy Zatroch |  Melanie Weltman |



Frequently Asked Questions.

1. Why are these walkways being called “trails” rather than “sidewalks?”

The proposed walkways will look like regular 5 foot wide concrete sidewalks that are common in many communities. Ohio law, however, has a specific provision that permits municipalities to designate a walkway as a “Recreational Trail.” If the City does so then: (1) the homeowner is protected from liability arising from the condition of the trail; (2) the City alone will be fully responsible for the cost of installation and long-term maintenance of the trail; (3) there will no homeowner seasonal maintenance obligations for snow removal or otherwise. As a result, the liability/insurance rates for a homeowner should be no different than they currently are (people are currently allowed to walk within the right of way on the grass).

For these reasons, we will use the word “**trail**” in this letter, but from a size, construction, and visual standpoint you can think of these walkways as regular concrete sidewalks.

2. How wide will the trails be?

They will be 5 feet wide. Five feet is the recommended **minimum** width 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.

3. Will the trails be built on City owned land (“right of way”)?

Yes. All public roads in Pepper Pike are located with a “right of way” of City owned land. This “right of way” is always wider than the roadway itself. For example, the width of the Lander Road “right of way” is 86 feet, but the Lander Road pavement (including the curbs) is only 30 feet wide. This means the City owns 28 feet of unpaved additional land on either side of Lander road. Similarly, the City owns 35 feet of unpaved land on each side of South Woodland and 17.5 feet of unpaved land on each side of Shaker Boulevard. The trails will be built within these strips of City owned land.

4. Will the trails run parallel with the street, or will they meander?

In general, the trails will run parallel with the street. However, in certain instances where there is sloping topography or a fixed object (such as fire hydrants, larger trees, or above or below ground utilities/infrastructure) the trail will include a gentle curve (meander) to avoid that obstacle without requiring a sharp change in direction.

5. How far inward from the street will the trails be placed?

For both safety and aesthetic reasons, there will be a grassy buffer between the street and the trails. In general, the streetside edge of the trail will be about 5 to 10 feet from the street curb. However, there may be circumstances in which the trail will meander slightly beyond these guidelines to avoid fixed objects or to address sloping topography as discussed in Question #4.

6. What color will the trails be?

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. This white pigmented curing compound is designed to seal the concrete, reflect heat, and not allow water to escape too quickly. This helps the concrete maintain structural integrity while it cures. This white color fades a bit over time.

Other communities have required and implemented tinted concrete programs (including color matching repairs) for aesthetic reasons so that walkways blend in and look more like natural stone. Doing this would cost more and would be more technically challenging to install and repair. The City is investigating the cost and technical feasibility of this option.

7. Why were these three streets selected for trails?

Lander, Shaker, and South Woodland are the three major streets spanning the City. They connect to numerous side streets that would provide direct access (without walking in or alongside a major road) to the trails for about 65 to 70% of the City’s residents. Additional trail branches to connect other neighborhoods would not make sense unless these major routes are installed first. After these major streets are completed, the City may consider trail extensions on other major roads that connect to other City neighborhoods.

8. How will the City decide on which side of these major streets to build the trails?

Choosing the best side of the road for the trails takes into consideration a number of factors, the first of which is safety. Safety is a key factor for those locations where pedestrians utilizing the trail need to cross a street or interact with motor vehicle traffic. These locations require ample space and good visibility for the safety of both pedestrians and motorists. Safety is also a factor where existing residential driveways cross the proposed trail. This favors construction on the side of the street that minimizes these crossings. We also look at existing drainage patterns, severe grades, substantial trees, utility poles, fire hydrants, signs, and other obstacles above and below ground to choose the route that accomplishes our safety objectives without substantial alteration to the existing landscape or interference with existing utilities.

9. What is the cost of installing the trails?

Lander Road: Preliminary construction cost per section:

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| North end of Chagrin Circle to S. Woodland: | \$145,000 |
| S. Woodland to Shaker: | \$465,000 |
| Shaker to Fairmount: | \$500,000 |
| Fairmount to Cedar: | <u>\$350,000</u> |
| | \$1,460,000 |

Shaker Boulevard: Preliminary construction cost per section:

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Brainard/Gates Mills Circle to Lander: | \$550,000 |
| Lander to Pepper Creek Drive: | <u>\$380,000</u> |
| | \$930,000 |

South Woodland Road: Preliminary construction cost per section:

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| New Brainard to Lander: | \$780,000 |
| Lander to Pinetree: | <u>\$570,000</u> |
| | \$1,350,000 |

Total Estimated Cost: **\$3,740,000**

10. Can the City afford to pay for the trails and maintain City services without new taxes?

Yes. Due to prudent financial management and a growing tax base over the past few years the City has rebuilt its cash reserve for contingencies to an appropriate level and, in addition, has accumulated some additional funds that can be used for discretionary purposes such as recreational trails.

To keep Pepper Pike on a solid financial footing, the City would budget and fund the trails over several years. If there was an unexpected and extraordinary financial event (or opportunity) that required an excess amount of our cash reserve then the City could slow the pace of trail development until the City had rebuilt its financial cushion.

11. Will homeowners who have trails in front of their homes have responsibility for the trail?

For the reasons discussed above in FAQ Question #1, by designating the walkways as “Recreational Trails” under Ohio law the homeowner is protected from maintenance obligations and from liability arising from the condition of the trails.

12. 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 sign pavement marking on side streets.

13. Will the trails change crime rates or door to door solicitation?

The Pepper Pike Chief of Police does not anticipate any increase in crime rates or door to door solicitation.

14. If I live on a major road how would the trails impact my landscaping, pavers, flowerbeds, sprinklers, invisible dog fence, etc.?

Many residents spend time and money keeping their front lawn looking great all the way to the street! We understand that and where feasible the City will attempt to minimize disturbances to existing features. That being said, landscaping 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 away from the path of the proposed trail whenever feasible. 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, rails, and ornamental boulders are not supposed to be placed in the right of way and may need to be removed or relocated so that they are not in or near the path of the proposed trail.

15. Will this affect mail delivery?

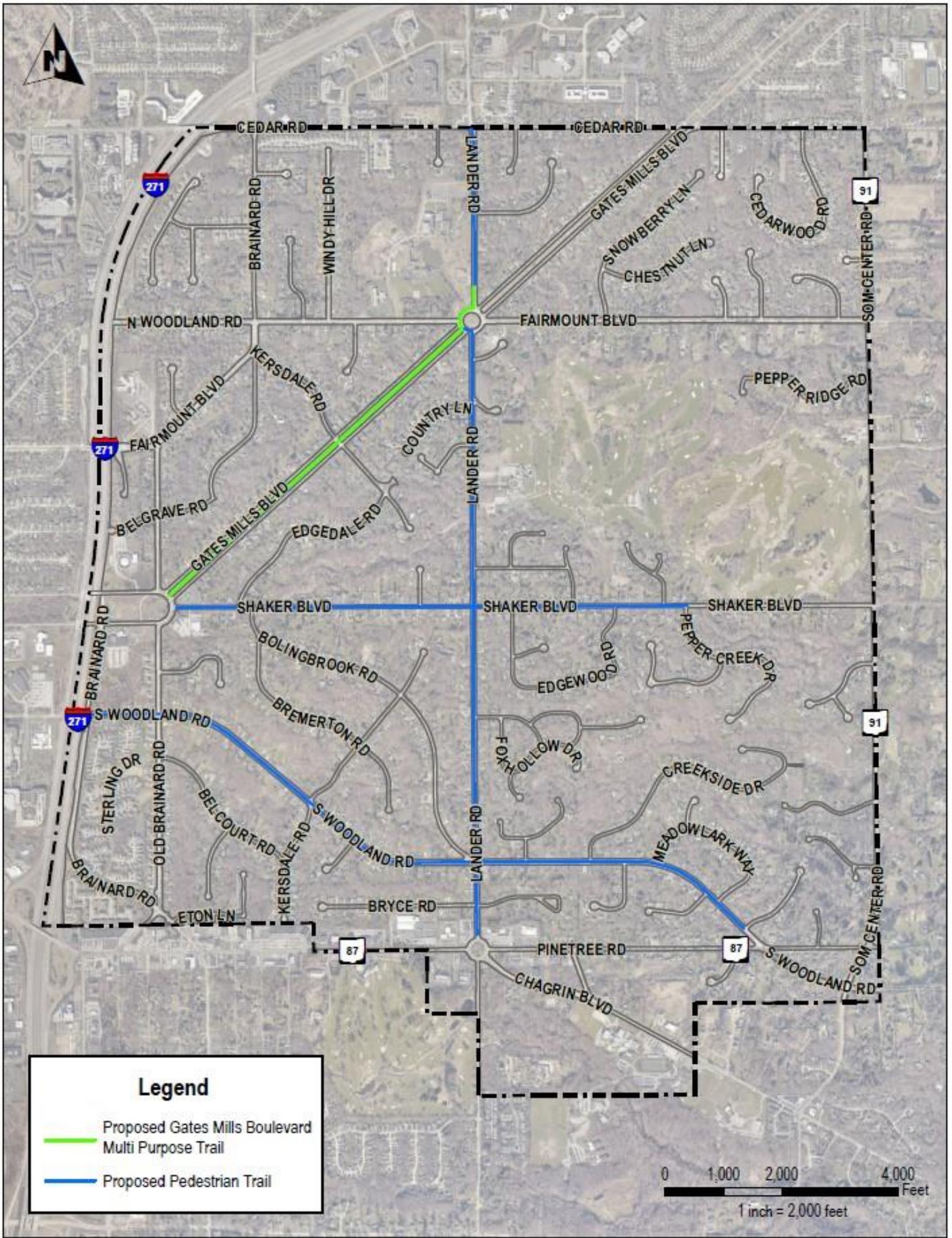
No change in service or mailbox location is anticipated.

16. I am replacing my driveway and it is on a street being considered for a trail. What should I do?

Discuss your proposed work with the Building Department and the City Engineer 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.

17. What is the timeline for all of this?

If this proposal is approved by voters and construction authorized by Council in 2023, the Gates Mills Multipurpose Trail and at least one portion of a major road trail could be completed in 2024. After that, the City would anticipate completing one or more sidewalk segments each year subject to budget, construction cost and similar considerations.



Legend

- Proposed Gates Mills Boulevard Multi Purpose Trail
- Proposed Pedestrian Trail

