

# *Highland Park / Canalway Connector Trail Study*

## *Executive Summary UPWP Task #6520*

*City of Rochester  
Town of Brighton*

**Qualifying Statement : The following recommendations are conceptual only in nature and do not reflect the exhaustive and thorough analysis required for implementation of the plan. They do reflect the desires and wishes of Town of Brighton and City of Rochester staff, and the knowledgeable volunteers on the Project Advisory Committee and others for the location and configuration of the proposed trail. We offer these recommendations with the full knowledge that some may undergo modification or prove to be unworkable or unnecessary when placed under the scrutiny of more thorough analysis. Specific elements of the recommendations that fall under the jurisdiction of the Monroe County Department of Transportation such as the configuration of road crossings at Westfall Road and Elmwood Avenue, the introduction of traffic signals at those locations, road widening, restriping and the addition of bicycle lanes on city streets from Highland Park to the Genesee River all must receive the appropriate attention and scrutiny when this project moves into the next stages of design and implementation.**

### **Project Purpose**

The purpose of the Highland Park/Canalway Neighborhood Connector Trail Study is to develop a recommended concept plan and design for a multi-use trail between the Erie Canal Heritage Trail (the “Canalway Trail”) and Brighton Town Park, north to Highland Park and the Genesee Riverway Trail near Mt. Hope Cemetery. The trail would provide connections from neighborhoods in the Town of Brighton and the City of Rochester to both the Canalway Trail and Genesee Riverway Trail as well as provide access to several important parks and open space resources in both communities. A PAC (Project Advisory Committee) was assembled consisting of representatives of the City of Rochester, Town of Brighton, The University of Rochester, the Genesee Transportation Council, and relevant City and Town neighborhood organizations. This group was active throughout the course of the project guiding the study process, reviewing and evaluating alternatives, and providing input on key decisions.

### **Project Objectives**

The project objectives are to:

- Develop an understanding of the function and likely users of the proposed trail;
- Explore alternative locations for the trail;
- Select a recommended trail route;
- Produce a concept design and cost estimate for the recommended trail, and
- Develop an implementation plan that identifies issues involved in implementing the trail, such as land ownership, at-grade crossings, wetland mitigation, and project funding.

The trail design needs to satisfy two interrelated objectives, first as a transportation facility and second as a recreational facility. It is expected that pedestrians (walking and jogging), in-line skaters, bicyclists, skateboarders, and non-motorized scooter riders will be using the trail and are accounted for in the overall design philosophy.

## **Background**

The construction of a Connector Trail linking the Canal to Highland Park to the Genesee River has been discussed for several years now by the various concerned parties in the Town of Brighton and the City of Rochester. It was identified in the Town of Brighton 2000 Comprehensive Plan, Open Space and Recreation Plan as a route and has been reinforced by Town planning guidance related to the development of St. John's Meadows, the proposed 'Mansions at Brighton' development, and Brighton Meadows Office Park. The City of Rochester is interested in developing this connection as part of its Genesee Riverway Trail corridor. The Genesee Transportation Council has also listed it as a priority project in its Regional Trails Initiative - Phase I Action Plan (completed in 2002).

## **Project Location**

A **Project Map** illustrating the route of the proposed connector trail in relation to the Town of Brighton and the City of Rochester is shown in **Figure 1**.

## **Recommendations**

The proposed Trail route utilizes both public and private lands, including existing streets that will require signing and other upgrades. As the Trail continues north and westward, the proposed route follows existing city streets including Goodman Street, Highland Avenue, South Avenue, Robinson Drive, Mt. Hope Avenue, and McLean Street. Adjacent land uses along the proposed project route, which includes residential, office, and institutional developments and zoned lands, were explored for recommendations for potential trail linkages.

The project would involve two road crossings between the Erie Canal and Highland Park - Westfall Road and Elmwood Avenue. A Traffic Report has been prepared as part of the study that addresses the road crossings and the use of city streets and intersections for the on-street portion of the trail route. Suggestions are included for reconfiguration, re-striping, signage, and other improvements to make those areas safer for the trail users.

A memorandum addressing the wetlands and environmental issues has been prepared and is included as an appendix to the report.

### Canalway Trail to Highland Avenue - - Off-Street Multi-Use Trail.

A 10-foot wide (minimum) dedicated asphalt paved trail is recommended to connect the Canalway Trail to Highland Park. The southern connection point of the proposed Connector Trail is at the terminus of an 8 ft. wide asphalt paved trail installed as part of the Brighton Meadows Office development.

- **Sawgrass Drive/Brighton Meadows Section.** Widen the existing asphalt paved trail to 12 feet minimum where required from the Canalway Trail to Sawgrass Drive. Provide a designated 12 ft. wide minimum asphalt paved trail located on the east side of Sawgrass Drive separated from the road by a 10 ft. wide minimum tree lawn.
- **Westfall Road Crossing.** Installation of a new traffic signal (if warranted), sidewalk ramps, high-visibility crosswalks, signage improvements, and possibly a refuge island, as approved by MCDOT.
- **Monroe Developmental Center Section** - The route identified shows a jog to the east property line immediately after crossing Westfall Road and entering the property. A 12 foot-wide minimum asphalt paved trail would then continue north along side of and 15 to 20 ft. from the MDC east property. A 10 ft. wide asphalt paved trail would follow the north MDC property line and an existing berm westward to Buckland Creek. At this point, the trail would cross the man-made ditch and onto Rochester State Hospital lands. A landscape buffer would be provided along the west side of the Trail to screen the trail from residences in the complex and to screen views of MDC buildings and parking areas from the Trail. A 6 ft. wide asphalt paved trail connection would be provided to connect the existing paved and wood-chip trails at St. John's Meadows.
- **Rochester State Hospital (RSH) Section** - The proposed Trail would proceed north/northwest through a 7.35 acre Rochester State Hospital (RHS) parcel, through designated wetlands and a wooded (undergrowth) area continuing to the proposed "Mansions at Brighton" development. The trail will be raised off the ground on a 14 ft. wide boardwalk where it crosses the man-made ditch and designated wetland areas.
- **The "Mansions at Brighton" Section** - A 12 ft. wide minimum asphalt paved trail follows the west property line of the 'Mansions' property veering west onto Rochester State Hospital property as it nears Elmwood Avenue to a point directly opposite the Goodman Street intersection with Elmwood.
- **Elmwood Avenue Crossing** - Installation of a new traffic signal (if warranted), sidewalk ramps, high-visibility crosswalks, and signage improvements as approved by MCDOT. An existing curbed median would be modified with ramps and special pavement material to better accommodate the Trail traffic and provide a crossing refuge if traffic is busy - also as approved by MCDOT.
- **Goodman Street/Highland Park Section** - The Trail would continue with a 12 ft. wide minimum asphalt paved trail through this property along the east side of, and parallel to, Goodman Street. The trail would be separated from the roadway by a 15 ft. wide tree-lawn strip

planted with trees. Also recommended are improvements to Goodman Street that would include 11 foot wide vehicle lanes, new curbing, and 6 ft. wide paved shoulders to accommodate on-street bicycle traffic and enhance roadway safety for motor vehicle traffic as well. A kiosk feature would be located at the southeast corner of Goodman Street and Highland Avenue with appropriate signs and interpretive information. Any future realignment of Goodman Street to create the ‘parkway’ design suggested by the early Olmsted plans should include the bike trail and widened shoulders in the new configuration. A second alternative would include a 6 ft. wide asphalt trail with a 6 ft. wide tree lawn in place of the 12 ft. trail and the 15 ft. tree lawn to preserve more green area within the park. In this alternative, bicyclists would use the paved shoulders on the street.

Highland Avenue to the Genesee Riverway Trail - On-Street Trail)

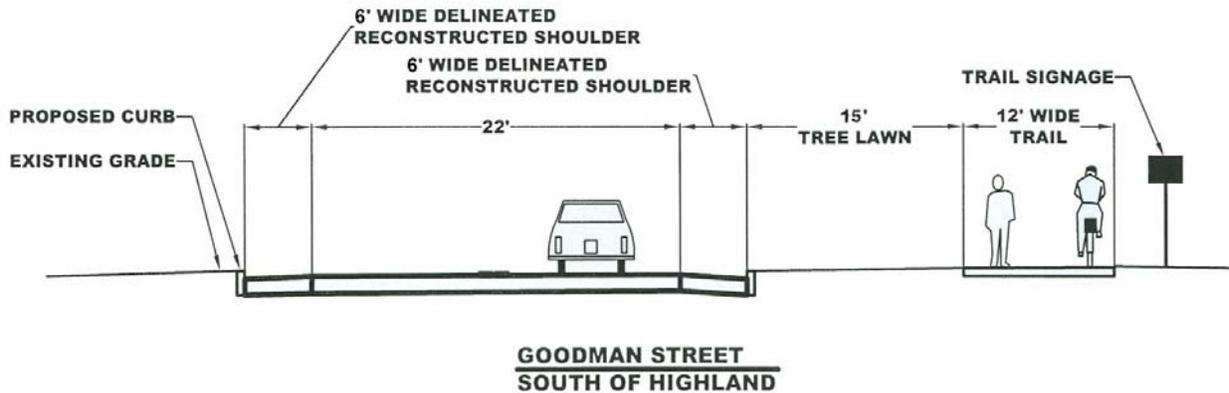


Figure 17

Upon reaching the intersection of Highland Avenue and Goodman Street, Trail users will use existing sidewalks and streets to continue west and north toward the Genesee Riverway Trail:

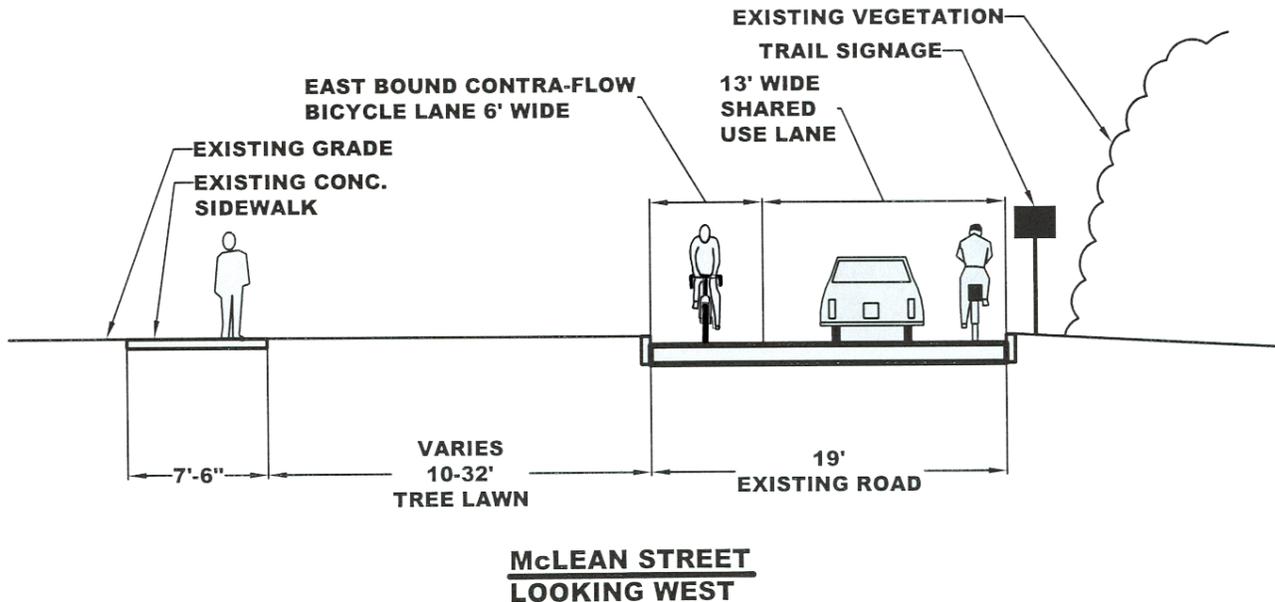
- **Highland Avenue Section** - Highland Avenue is the recommended route for the trail because the road is wide enough from Goodman Street west to nearly South Avenue for delineated six-foot wide shoulders on each side to accommodate bicycle traffic. Vehicular lanes would need to be reduced from 4 to 3 on Highland Avenue west of the intersection. Alternatively, if lanes cannot be eliminated due to traffic volumes, bicycle traffic would share existing lanes with vehicles. Signs will be required to alert west-bound bicyclists where they will be required to shift to a vehicle lane to go around parked cars for about 300 ft. just west of the ‘Lilac Crossing’.

The existing 5-ft.-wide concrete sidewalk along the south side of the road is continuous and can accommodate pedestrian traffic. As an alternative, a second sidewalk, 5 ft. wide on the north (or ‘Lilac Collection’) side of Highland Avenue should be investigated with a 6 ft. wide minimum tree lawn to additionally accommodate pedestrian traffic. The delineated shoulders would end before reaching South Avenue due to existing traffic lanes and pavement width constraints.

- **South Avenue Section** - The recommended improvements to the Highland/South

intersection include re-striping for left turn lanes on South Ave. Where lanes can be reduced from 4 or 3 (varies) to 2 on South Avenue just north of the intersection, we recommend delineation of 6 ft. wide shoulders for bicycles. Alternatively, if lanes cannot be eliminated due to traffic volumes, bicycle traffic would share existing lanes with vehicles or trail users would walk bicycles on the concrete sidewalks for the area near the intersection. The delineated 6 ft. wide shoulders would continue north (with 2-14 ft. wide drive lanes) to where a left turn lane is recommended just south of and onto Robinson Drive. The paved shoulder width would narrow to 4 ft. to allow for the three vehicle lanes within the existing road cross section. The existing 5 ft. wide concrete sidewalk along both sides of the road are continuous and are sufficient to accommodate pedestrian traffic. Pedestrian traffic following the trail would be encouraged with appropriate signs to cross at the Highland Avenue, signalized, intersection.

- **Robinson Drive Section.** Due to the lower traffic volumes and park setting along Robinson Drive, no changes are recommended to the road. The road's current configuration can accommodate 2-way vehicular traffic and the proposed trail traffic in the existing two lanes - without any improvements to the road itself. The existing 5-foot wide concrete sidewalks along both sides of the road are sufficient to accommodate pedestrian traffic.
- **Mt. Hope Boulevard Section** - Mt. Hope Boulevard is already striped with 3.5 to 4.5 ft. wide shoulders, which do not meet the minimum width for adequate bicycle accommodation according to the NYSDOT Highway Design Manual or the AASHTO *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Trail Facilities (2000)*. This study does not propose any roadway improvements at this time due to the existing confined right-of-way parameters and the relatively recent reconstruction of Mt. Hope Avenue in this area. Additional signing and pavement marking are recommended at this time. However, future major improvements to Mt. Hope Avenue should consider improving bicycle accommodations on-street. The existing concrete



sidewalks along the both sides of the road are continuous and 5 ft. wide and are sufficient to accommodate pedestrian traffic. Pedestrian crossings at either Robinson or McLean are without benefit of a traffic signal although one should be considered with any future reconstruction of the road.

- **McLean Street Section** - McLean Street is a 19 ft. wide pavement section curb to curb and currently operates one way (west-bound). This study recommends re-striping of the road to introduce a 5-foot wide contra-flow east-bound bicycle lane separated from a shared use 14 ft. wide lane by a 12 inch wide double yellow stripe. An existing 7.5 ft. wide sidewalk owned and maintained by the University of Rochester, can accommodate pedestrian traffic.

### **Implementation**

The study estimates a total project cost (both on-road and off-road) of \$780,000 (2004 dollars), not including costs for design of facilities, Town of Brighton and City of Rochester administration, and other contingencies that must be taken into account. Costs also do not identify property and/or easement acquisition costs that may be necessary to construct certain segments of the trail. The cost estimate also does not include funding and/or other resources needed for trail maintenance, operations, and enforcement.

Reviews and approvals of projects on lands over which the Trail is to be built or on adjacent lands should consider the recommendations of this study. Contributions to the design and/or construction of this trail should be solicited from the developer(s).

The City of Rochester and the Town of Brighton should actively pursue sources of funding for the project. The proposed action plan assumes the recommendations of this plan should be implemented over the next five years through State of New York and federal sources and/or allocation of local capital funds.