

Big Walnut Trail

Little Turtle to Alum Creek Trail
Comments Responses



THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS
RECREATION AND PARKS



Big Walnut Trail—Little Turtle to Alum Creek Trail ODOT Project ID 116785

1: A temporary trail was cleared in 2024 on the Little Turtle side of Route 161. Is that part of this trail or was that just to allow access into where this trail will be installed permanently?

Response: The trail was surveyed and soil borings were conducted in 2024. As part of this, temporary clearing was done to access key places along the path. These temporary paths followed as closely as possible to the new trail's route. In cases where the temporary access was not able to follow the new path's route, the disturbance will be restored with native grasses, shrubs, and trees as part of the project.

2: Can the path location be changed? It looks as though my property will be effected.

Response: The City of Columbus is committed to minimizing impacts on private property throughout the course of any project. We work closely with property owners to ensure fair compensation and to address concerns. The plans have been refined to reduce the footprint wherever possible, and any necessary property impacts will be fully communicated and coordinated with any effected property owners.

3: I'm concerned about the trail impacting my business.

Response: Businesses and property owners will remain actively involved throughout the trail alignment and right-of-way discussions. The project team is committed to minimizing impacts to properties and businesses as much as possible, while ensuring the project benefits the broader community.

4: Will you clear invasives from the new trail? How will the trail be maintained?

Response: Columbus Recreation and Parks Department and Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks will be responsible for maintaining the trail. There is a coordinated Central Ohio Greenways trails maintenance program for regional greenways such as Big Walnut Trail. For many years, Columbus Recreation and Parks has been targeting efforts to remove bush honeysuckle, one of the most common invasives to affect City parkland. Invasive species removal will occur along the trail route.

5: Who is currently maintaining the existing multi-use path shown along Magnolia Trace apartment complex? It needs additional maintenance.

Response: Columbus Recreation and Parks Department currently maintains the existing trail segment near the Magnolia Trace Apartments. We are currently working with our staff to address your concern along this section of path.

6: Wildlife will be disturbed by this project.

Response: Recreation and Parks understands there is a delicate balance of providing nature-based experiences while also minimizing environmental impacts. Recreation and Parks intends to avoid and minimize impacts to environmental resources as much as possible. The construction impact of the trail will be temporary, and native trees, shrubs, and grasses will be planted along disturbed areas. The project will follow all local, state, and federal guidelines, mitigation measures, and necessary permitting.

7. I don't think people in the northern part of Columbus will use the trail to ride their bikes down to the Southern part of Columbus.

Response: While some trail users may not choose to travel the entire length of the trail, the primary goal of this connection is to provide accessible options for all ages and abilities. The trail will serve a variety of purposes, whether it's a short ride or walk to a nearby park or neighborhood, a commute to work, or connecting to another trail in the central Ohio trail network. Feedback from the public and previous planning studies has shown strong interest in creating connections across Columbus. This trail will provide active transportation for users to access the greater regional trail system. This project will enable connections to Blendon Woods Metro Park, Cherry Bottom Park, as well as over 14 parks along the 22-mile Alum Creek Trail. This project will also enable new connections to be added to Hoover Reservoir, Rocky Fork Metro Park, and the Gahanna trail system.

8: Bike trails bring crime to our neighborhood.

Response: There is little evidence to suggest that trails increase crime in surrounding neighborhoods. Several studies show that trails can often deter crime. It is well known that trail users can act as additional “eyes and ears” for the community, enhancing everyone’s overall safety. A comprehensive study conducted by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, in cooperation with the National Park Service, surveyed 372 trails across the United States, which reflected a diverse set of trail types, lengths and geographic locations. The study concluded that “trails are safe places for local residents and visitors to enjoy,” supported by letters from law enforcement, and comparisons to national crime figures. More recent studies have reaffirmed these findings, noting that trails are widely valued and often contribute to a better sense of community security. Additionally, the trail will be regularly patrolled by Franklin County Metro Parks bike rangers and CPD bike patrols to assist making this a safe environment for all users.

9: How soon will the trail be built?

Response: Construction is planned to begin in 2026. For updates on the project, please visit the project website: <https://columbusrecparks.com/connect/about/capital-improvement-projects/big-walnut-trail-little-turtle-to-alum-creek/>
