



Big Walnut Trail



THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS
ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

RECREATION AND PARKS
DEPARTMENT

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Big Walnut Trail – Cherrybottom Park to Morse Road

Questions and Answers

The public outreach event on July 9 to discuss Phase 1 Planning had a group of 45 attendees with a lot of comments and support. As well, 69 total survey responses were received. Due to the number of comments and how they fell into similar topics, we have combined comments and answers by topic. For the full, unfiltered comment set — including every open-ended comment and individual selections — the complete survey export is available for download at:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Tyhq48aNlmJuosbLWtm4v_WM6bui-FjSBMqfFdmexY/edit?gid=1055300026#gid=1055300026.

Columbus Recreation and Parks Department, HNTB and Lawhon & Associates will use these findings to inform the recommended design options ahead of the next round of stakeholder review.

Phase 2 will begin in early 2027 and focus on specific design criteria for the Big Walnut trail.

Trail Location

- **Will the proposed bike trail be directly on Morse Road or off the road (behind the curb)?**
 - **Response:** The bike trail will not be on Morse Road where the cars travel. The trail will be located along Morse Road, behind the curb.
- **Morse Road has a lot of traffic. Can an underpass to cross under Morse Road be considered?**
 - **Response:** Yes, a feasibility study is being conducted to look at whether an underpass is feasible.
- **Can the trail be extended south of Morse Road on North Stygler Road and north of Morse Road on Cherry Bottom Road?**
 - **Response:** Columbus released a Bike Plus Plan in December 2024 where future bike paths were proposed. The City of Columbus Biking web page is located at <https://www.columbus.gov/Community/Getting-Around/Biking>. While the Big Walnut project boundaries can't be extended, the Bike Plus Plan proposes shared use paths that will benefit the area when they are built. The proposed locations are:
 - i. On North Stygler Road from Morse Road south to Wendler Boulevard
 - ii. On Cherry Bottom Road from Morse Road north to Broadview Road



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- iii. On Broadview Road from Cherry Bottom Road east to North Hamilton Road. This will connect to an existing shared use path.
- **Appian Way is a narrow road where cars and truck haulers (from car dealership business) park on the road, and there are no sidewalks. Will sidewalks or traffic calming devices be included in the trail work?**
 - **Response:** Appian Way from Morse Road up through the cul-de-sac will have a trail built (behind the curb and not on the road) to accommodate the bike trail needs but also to create a safe space for families in the area to walk. The team is evaluating how to connect into the neighborhoods on Appian Way.

Trail Features

- **It would be helpful to have amenities included in the bike trail design.**
 - **Response:** Amenities are still under evaluation for this project.
- **Will parking be added in the area for trail use or kayaking?**
 - **Response:** Parking is being evaluated for appropriate placement based on land available and how the trail will be used.
- **Will the trail be designed with a connection down to the creek for users interested in kayaking or other water activities?**
 - **Response:** A connection between the trail and the creek is being evaluated.
- **Can you consider different trail materials to limit motorized vehicles?**
 - **Response:** Trail materials are still under development. Trail material decisions will be made using the Americans with Disabilities Act's requirements and will take into consideration multiple user types, e.g. pedestrians, bikes, wheelchairs and strollers. Deterrents for motorized vehicles are also under consideration.
- **Trees are expected to be removed. Can this be minimized, and can they be replaced?**
 - **Response:** Yes. The City of Columbus regulates policies around public trees under City Code Chapter 912 (https://library.municode.com/oh/columbus/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT9STPAPUPRCO_CH912TRSHCOTRSU) and through the leadership of Columbus Recreation and Parks Department. The department hosts a webpage located at <https://columbusrecparks.com/nature/urban-forestry/tree-technical-manual/> dedicated to sharing information about this topic, and as of May 2026, has an updated Tree Technical Manual, which outlines responsibilities related to the care, maintenance and growth of public trees. This trail project wants to minimize the removal of trees and will follow the



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requirements of the Tree Technical Manual, including conducting a tree survey and a plan for planting new trees to compensate for the loss.

- **Do we need a new trail? This will disrupt wildlife, and all wooded areas don't need to be developed.**
 - **Response:** Columbus Recreation and Parks Department balances developing public access to nature and connections to existing bike trails with the effects of the development. The design team has been asked to minimize the footprint necessary to create the bike trail to preserve as much of the existing park and wildlife as possible.
- **Comments were received on how to include unique or historical features in the design including trees, landscape and hardscape.**
 - **Response:** All of these will be evaluated as trail design is completed.

Trail Safety

- **We are concerned with how a new trail would affect safety and future quality of life in the area (not traffic related). Concerns mentioned were unhoused populations, trash, environmental issues, potential crime, loud music, crowds and off-trail trespassing.**
 - **Response:** Safety is of paramount importance to the team. Trail design will be done with safety and privacy of area residents and future users in mind. The team will continue to evaluate safety options throughout each design phase.
- **What about problems that exist in the area today? Concerns mentioned include illegal dumping is occurring on Appian Way, driver sight lines leaving Cherrybottom Park are unsafe and there are unpleasant smells in the area.**
 - **Response:** The City wants to hear about issues affecting residents today. For illegal dumping, please contact the City through 311 at 614-645-3111 or email at 311@columbus.gov so location descriptions and pictures can be shared. For any criminal activity, call 614-645-4545 for non-emergency situations and 911 for emergency situations.
 - i. The project team is sharing the concerns received with relevant departments but is asking residents to contact 311 with more specific information.