



# RED CEDAR RIVER CORRIDOR TRAIL

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## BACKGROUND

As part of their senior capstone project, six urban & regional planning students were tasked to create a plan that outlines the feasibility and strategies needed to build a trail along the Red Cedar River. Under the guidance of university faculty, along with the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, and Williamstown Township staff, the students have conducted research and formulated recommendations on how a river trail could become a reality along the Red Cedar River near Lansing, Michigan.



The Red Cedar River Corridor



The Red Cedar River in Williamstown

### Red Cedar River Corridor

The Red Cedar River flows westward through the cities of Fowlerville, Webberville, and Williamston before making its way through the campus of Michigan State University in East Lansing, and eventually joins the Grand River in Lansing. There are some existing river trail sections in the Greater Lansing Area, but connecting a trail to the outlying communities, like Williamston and Webberville, would exploit a new potential source of economic and recreational growth.



A section of existing trail along the Red Cedar River in Williamston.

## FINDINGS



At a community meeting in March, Pardeep Toor explains the benefits of a river trail to local citizens and stakeholders.

### Community Meeting

In March, the team held a public meeting in Meridian Charter Township to talk about the river trail plan. A handful of area residents showed up, along with local place-makers to learn about our proposed trail, and to express their opinions and concerns. Some attendees feared the trail would devalue their homes, and some knew that the trail would actually increase their property value; others provided constructive input.

### Challenges and Mitigation

Several parcels have been identified along the river that would pose a challenge to the construction of a trail. Parcels with permanent structures, such as houses, so close to the riverbank that a creative solution must be found to continue the trail. One option would be to simply route the trail around the structure (detour). Another option would be to build a cantilevered platform over the water, and avoid the structure altogether.



A cantilevered platform along the Lansing River Trail

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Proposed Trail Route

A 6.4-mile route has been suggested, spanning Meridian Road to Putnam Street. The highlighted route was chosen based on existing river access and crossing points, and avoidance of parcel density and rough or steep terrain. The route features 3-4 access points, with parking, signage, and a place to launch a small watercraft. The trail itself would be approximately 10 feet wide, and be made of crushed stone. The trail would connect the City of Williamston to the Okemos area for non-motorized travellers.



### Immediate Next Steps

- 1-2 Years - Organizational Infrastructure and Developing Township Property
  1. Form a Friends of the Red Cedar River Trail group made up of area stakeholders in Williamstown Township and Ingham County.
  2. Commission landscape architect students in the School of Planning, Design, and Construction at Michigan State University to explore the design opportunities at three trail-head locations.
  3. Improve bicycle and pedestrian signage and road markings on Zimmer Road and Putnam Street
  4. Conduct a traffic study from Grand River Avenue to Sherwood Road (south to north) on both Zimmer Road and Putnam Street to determine techniques to create a safer and more bicycle friendly environment.
6. Call a special meeting with all parcel owners along the Red Cedar River in Williamstown Township to share the opportunities for the desired trail.
7. Perform an engineering study to determine the exact cost of purchasing easements, clearing brush, and constructing a 10-foot wide, crushed rock trail as outlined in this plan.
8. Develop a marketing and communication strategy for the Red Cedar River Trail.
9. Conduct a market analysis to determine the potential cost of easements or parcel acquisition depending on negotiations with individual property owners.
10. Explore and apply for funding opportunities for Phase I of the Red Cedar River Trail - Williamstown Township Community Park.

