

## **DOT to Help Fund Trails to Two Rivers High School**

Two Rivers received some very good news last week, with the announcement that the Wisconsin Department of Transportation will be awarding nearly \$1.2 million to fund construction of new pedestrian trails in our community.

The trail funding is being offered under DOT's Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program, which funds transit and non-motorized transportation projects in those areas of eastern Wisconsin that are air quality "non-attainment." Project plans will likely be developed in 2011, for construction in 2012.

The trails will connect to the Two Rivers High School campus from the east side of town (35<sup>th</sup> and Lincoln) and the north side of town (45<sup>th</sup> and Tannery). The north side trail will also include a sidewalk or trail extension along Riverview Drive from 45<sup>th</sup> Street/CTH VV south to the end of the existing sidewalk system, at Golfview Drive.

Completion of these trails will add about 2.5 miles of trails to our area's growing, popular trail network.

They will provide safe pedestrian access to the high school for students and faculty, and for community members making use of school facilities and attending school events.

They will provide a "green," healthy alternative for traveling to and from the school campus, Eggers Industries, and future developments in the northeast corner of town.

They will be a big step in more fully incorporating the "new" high school campus and surrounding areas into the fabric of the community.

## **Making Good on a Promise**

Securing these funds marks the fulfillment of a pledge made by the City Council and Board of Education over ten years ago, to "obtain State and Federal funding for trail connections to the new school along STH 42 and CTH VV."

That promise was made at a joint meeting of the two bodies on January 31, 2000 at Koenig School, where the City and the School District ironed out many details related to providing utilities and access to the proposed Lincoln Avenue site, if voters approved the building of a new high school there.

Ten years and several grant applications later, we're making good on that promise.

## **Pursuing TR's "Smart Growth" Comprehensive Plan**

Development of these new trail segments is also consistent with the City's new Comprehensive Plan, adopted earlier this year. That plan recognizes trails as a "quality of life" investment, and as a needed infrastructure improvement. Two Rivers is a very

walkable, pedestrian-friendly community—our plans envision keeping it that way, even as the City expands into new territory.

### **Local Matching Requirement: A Challenge We Can Meet**

Like all grant programs, CMAQ requires a local match, to demonstrate a local commitment to projects. The 20 percent match required for these two trail segments will be up to \$295,000, based on project cost estimates.

The School District has stated that it has \$73,000 in capital funds designated for this project, which will cover one quarter of the local match. Given the level of community support for these trails, I also expect that the City and District can successfully fund-raise for a portion of the local match. The City may also need to defer some other street and sidewalk projects, if we really want these two trails to happen.

As the project design is finalized, there may also be some opportunities for “value engineering,” to trim the overall cost of the trails.

Bottom line, these trails have long been identified as high priorities for our community, and the State’s recent grant award puts them within our grasp.

**Two Rivers City manager Greg Buckley can be contacted by calling 920-793-5532, or by e-mailing [grebuc@two-rivers.org](mailto:grebuc@two-rivers.org).**