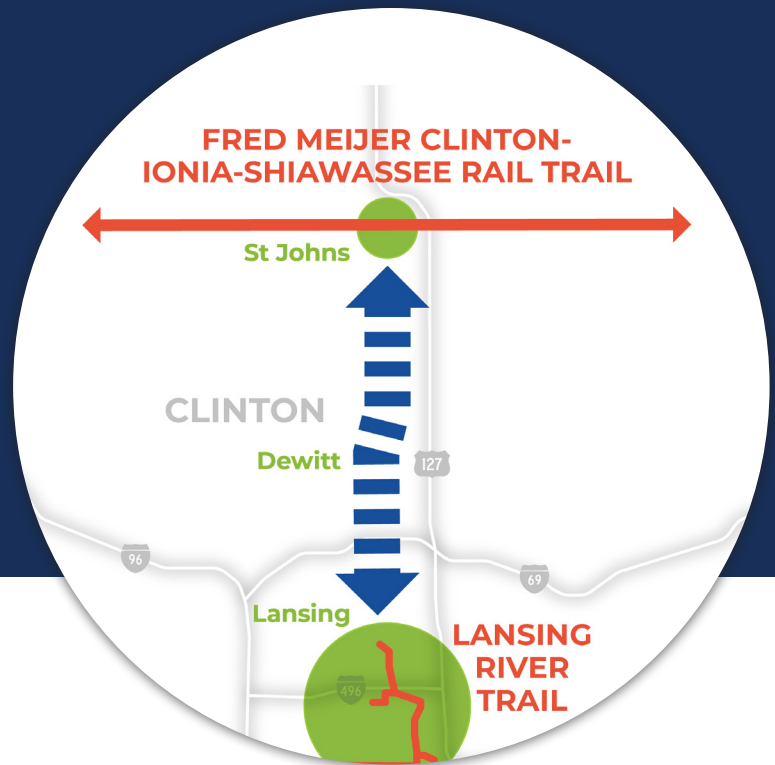


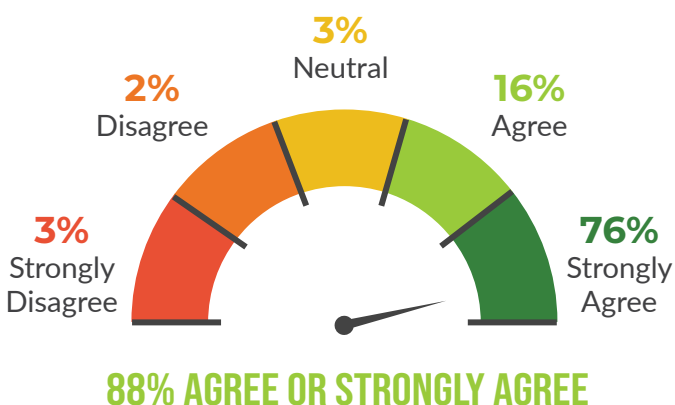
FRED MEIJER CLINTON- IONIA-SHIAWASSEE RAIL TRAIL TO LANSING RIVER TRAIL

COMMUNITY INPUT SUMMARY

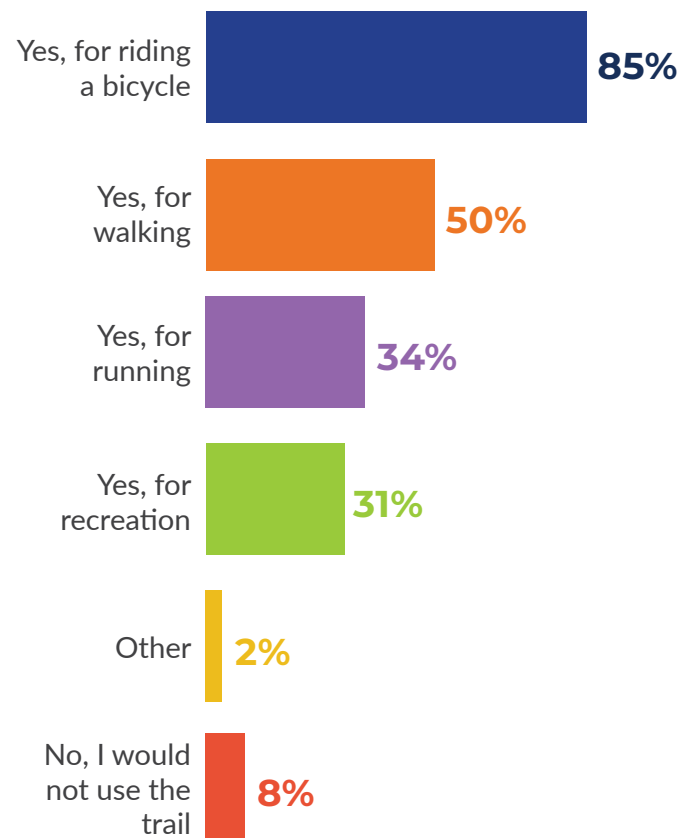
During April and May 2025, public engagement for the Tri-County Regional Trails Plan included six open houses across the region and an online survey to encourage broad participation. A total of 189 surveys were completed for the proposed Fred Meijer Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Rail Trail to Lansing River Trail connection, and 19 people attended open houses in St Johns and DeWitt Twp. Community members shared their opinions on the proposed route, including their support or concerns. This valuable feedback played a key role in shaping the final route. This document summarizes the input received during the process.



IT IS IMPORTANT TO PROVIDE A TRAIL CONNECTION BETWEEN THE FRED MEIJER CLINTON-IONIA-SHIAWASSEE RAIL TRAIL AND LANSING RIVER TRAIL



WOULD YOU USE THE TRAIL CONNECTION?



WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT THE PROPOSED ROUTE?



Connectivity and Integration — The route connects Lansing, DeWitt, St. Johns, and other communities, linking existing trails and regional systems like the Fred Meijer CIS trail to create longer networks for cycling and walking.

Safety and Separation from Traffic — The trail is mostly separated from busy roads, providing a safer environment for walking, running, and biking. Features like delineator posts, dedicated bike lanes and pedestrian routes are especially liked for enhancing safety.

Use of Existing Infrastructure and Scenic Routes — The route favors quieter roads like Turner and DeWitt Roads over busy Old US 27, incorporating wide shoulders and recent local paths for direct, convenient travel.

Local Access and Community Connections — The trail improves access to downtown areas, parks, schools, and public transit, encouraging non-motorized trips between neighborhoods and community hubs.

Promotes Outdoor Recreation and Healthy Living — The trail supports safe, accessible, outdoor activities like walking, jogging, biking, and family outings, particularly emphasizing safer spaces for kids and pets away from vehicle traffic.

Economic and Community Benefits — A connected regional trail system would boost local economies by attracting residents and visitors, enhancing the appeal of communities along the route.

Phased Implementation and Coordination — Trail development will be phased to align with road improvements and funding cycles to maximize efficiency and minimize disruptions.

WHAT DO YOU DISLIKE ABOUT THE PROPOSED ROUTE?



Avoid or Reduce Old US-27 Use — Old US-27 is seen as too busy, loud, and unsafe. Some opposed reducing lanes altogether. Consider alternate low-traffic routes like Turner, DeWitt, Airport, or Wood Roads, or explore options along the US-127 expressway.

Safety at DeWitt Road Interchange — The I-69/DeWitt Road interchange poses safety risks due to high-speed traffic, free-flow ramp, and unclear signage. Improved crossings and better bike lane indicators are needed.

Address Issues in Riverside Park — Flooding, crowding, and slippery boardwalks limit use. Reroute around flood-prone areas or upgrade and elevate surfaces for more reliable access.

Traffic Concerns — Users stressed the need for full separation from fast-moving traffic. Painted bike lanes and narrow shoulders were seen as unsafe. Prioritize protected paths, especially for families and new riders.

Trail Experience & Scenic Value — Aesthetics matter—trail users seek shade, scenery, and an enjoyable ride. Long, exposed stretches along the highway felt dull and stressful, with little shade or amenities. The combination of limited comfort, a lengthy route, and proximity to heavy traffic raises concerns about whether the trail will see regular use.

Maintenance Concerns — Clear responsibility is needed for year-round upkeep, including snow removal. Rural areas often lack the staff or funding to take on added maintenance without support.

**TELL US ANYTHING
ELSE YOU FEEL IS
IMPORTANT:**



Multi-Use Access and Everyday Mobility—

Prioritize trails with full separation from motor vehicles, particularly along high-speed roads and at interchanges. Avoid relying on painted bike lanes or narrow shoulders; instead, use protected paths with physical barriers to ensure safety. Trails should serve a wide range of users — walkers, runners, cyclists, and families. Design should minimize conflicts between different user types while supporting recreation, commuting, and daily mobility.

Use Quieter, Scenic, and Nature-Based Routes —

Select alignments that avoid major highways and prioritize rural, low-traffic, or wooded corridors. Roads like DeWitt, Turner, and Round Lake offer more appealing and comfortable alternatives to Old US-27.

Make the Trail Functional Year-Round — Plan for all-season use through regular snow removal, durable surfacing, and defined maintenance responsibilities. Address funding and staffing challenges, particularly in rural jurisdictions.

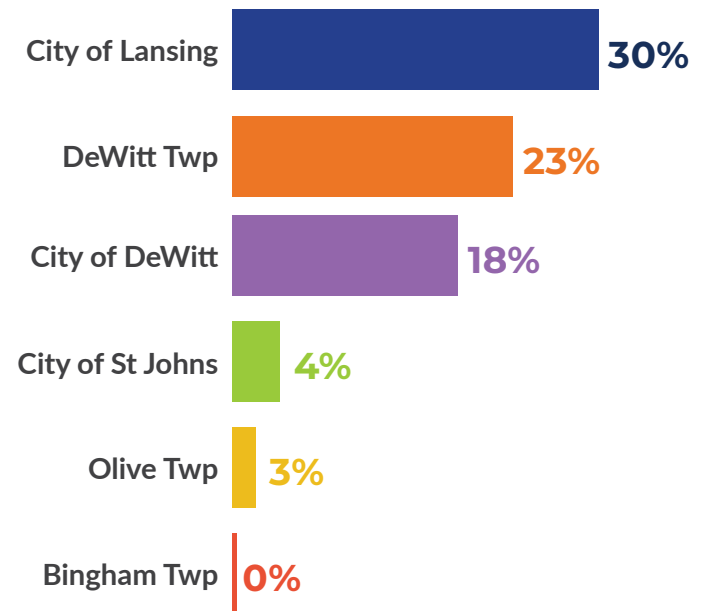
Include Amenities and Trailhead Facilities —

Add restrooms, water stations, benches, shade structures, and parking areas at key access points. Ensure basic infrastructure supports a wide range of users and trip lengths.

Strengthen Trail Network Integration — Link the trail to local communities, key destinations like downtown DeWitt and parks, and major non-motorized networks such as the Lansing River Trail, Northern Tier Trail, and Fred Meijer Trails. Add spurs or loops to boost local access and use, with potential extensions to Grand Rapids or the Detroit–Chicago corridor.

Excitement & Community Support — Some residents see this trail as a valuable addition and want to see it implemented quickly.

**SELECT THE AREA YOU LIVE IN OR ARE
MOST FAMILIAR WITH:**



Other areas represented 22% of respondents, including East Lansing, Watertown Twp, Essex Twp, Eagle Twp, Lansing Twp, Mason, Ionia, Haslett, Delta Twp, Delhi Twp, Owosso, Victor Twp, Vevay Twp, Riley Twp, Charlotte, City of Williamston, Meridian Twp and Ann Arbor.

HOW COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IS SHAPING THE TRAIL:

KEY ROUTING UPDATES BASED ON FEEDBACK



1

Turner Street

Preferred Over Old US-27

Between DeWitt and Lansing, Turner Street is preferred over Old US-27 due to lower traffic volumes and a more comfortable riding experience.

The route should also include a direct connection to the East Lansing trail network.

Upgrade existing bike lanes on Turner Street with greater separation for improved safety and comfort. Add sidewalks as needed to better accommodate pedestrians.

2

I-69 Interchange Improvements

Address safety concerns at the I-69 and DeWitt Road interchange with targeted infrastructure upgrades to improve bike and pedestrian crossings.

4

DeWitt Riverside Park Reroute

Reroute the trail within DeWitt Riverside Park to Market and E Washington St to avoid areas that frequently flood.

3

Short-Term Use of Local Roads

In the short term, local roads parallel to US-127 can serve as informal rural bike routes between DeWitt and St. Johns. In the long term, a shared-use path should be incorporated into future reconstruction plans for Old US-27. Expressway alternatives were considered but found less favorable due to concerns about noise, safety, and access—and lacked support from MDOT.

BROADER INSIGHTS AND KEY TAKEAWAY

Community engagement around the proposed regional trail revealed several emerging themes that offer direction for future trail planning and investment. These broader insights highlight not only where public support is strongest but also where focused planning is needed to ensure a successful and sustainable trail system.



Provide Key Infrastructure to Support Safe and Comfortable Trail Use

Participants emphasized the need for basic infrastructure to support trail use, especially on longer-distance routes. Key trailheads should be identified and improved with amenities such as parking, signage, restrooms, water stations, and seating areas. Provide wayfinding including location and destination markers to enhance the user experience. Incorporate current best practices for trail crossings appropriate for an all ages and abilities trail.



Define Maintenance Responsibilities and Funding

Ensuring the long-term maintenance of the regional trail is a priority for many, particularly in rural communities. Many rural areas lack the staffing, equipment, and budget capacity to support trail upkeep. To ensure safe, year-round access, a clear maintenance plan is needed that defines roles and secures outside funding. This will prevent local governments from being overburdened by an asset they cannot sustain on their own.



Prioritize Connections to Satellite Communities First

There is strong public support for expanding the trail outward from Lansing to connect with nearby towns. These segments are viewed as more feasible in the short term and align with areas of higher population and clear community backing. In addition, these routes are likely to be more competitive for grant funding due to the connections they provide, making them a strategic starting point for trail expansion.



Address Challenges with Remote Extensions

Trail segments extending farther from Lansing face more significant challenges. These include longer distances between points of interest, a lack of amenities or destinations along the route, and less visible community support — especially from rural residents. These realities suggest a need to reassess the pace and approach for these extensions and to consider how features, access, and local engagement could be improved over time.

