

# BORDER-TO-BORDER TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

## at Bandemer Park + Barton Nature Area



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*03.20.2018 Parks Advisory Commission Meeting*





# Introduction

- The City of Ann Arbor in partnership with the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission, are looking to update a previous study of the **feasibility to construct a pedestrian/bicycle tunnel** beneath the Railroad tracks between Barton Nature Area and Bandemer Park.
- The goal of this study is to:
  - Update the tunnel study to **reflect changes over the last 13 years** in standards and ownership.
  - Determine the **preferred type of structure** and an **order of magnitude cost estimate** to evaluate the feasibility for funding construction before advancing with design & engineering.
  - Determine how to **connect the B2B trail through Barton Nature Area** and to the tunnel.



# Key Linkage of County Border-to-Border Trail

- The Border-to-Border Trail initiative is coordinated by the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission to provide a **non-motorized pathway through Washtenaw County along the Huron River.**
- This would be a **key linkage** on the B2B trail, as well as the statewide Iron Belle trail, and is one of the final hurdles to overcome connecting the City with the parks along the Huron River.





# Safety

- Huron River Greenway linkages were some of the **highest priorities** identified in the public process associated with the Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan.
- Currently, there is **no safe connection** for pedestrians and bicyclists between the B2B trail in Bandemer Park and Barton Nature Area or Huron River Drive.
- Many pedestrians and bicyclists choose to illegally cross the railroad tracks at this location showing that it is a **highly desired route**.
- This railroad is now a federally designated high speed rail corridor and they are **looking to increase train speed and frequency**.



# Not a new idea

- **In 2005, a feasibility study was conducted** to explore alternatives for crossing the railroad tracks, with the concrete trestle tunnel identified as the most cost efficient and user-friendly alternative.
- This connection has been **desired for more than two decades**, but due to insufficient funding and the difficulty of obtaining approvals from the railroad, progress has been delayed.
- Since then, the railroad has changed from private ownership to being **publicly owned by MDOT**.
- County has approached the city about a **partnership opportunity** to move this project forward, and this study will provide an **updated** feasibility study and cost estimate to inform next steps.

# County B2B Trail Overview

- Definition of the B2B expanded in 2017
- Private sector interest
  - Huron Waterloo Pathways Initiative (HWPI)
- Public Support
  - 4-year Road and Trails Millage (2017-2020)
  - ~375,000 sensor passes in Dexter (2016-2017)
- Iron Belle Trail
- 2018/19 Potential projects



# Border-to-Border Trail: Overview and Phasing



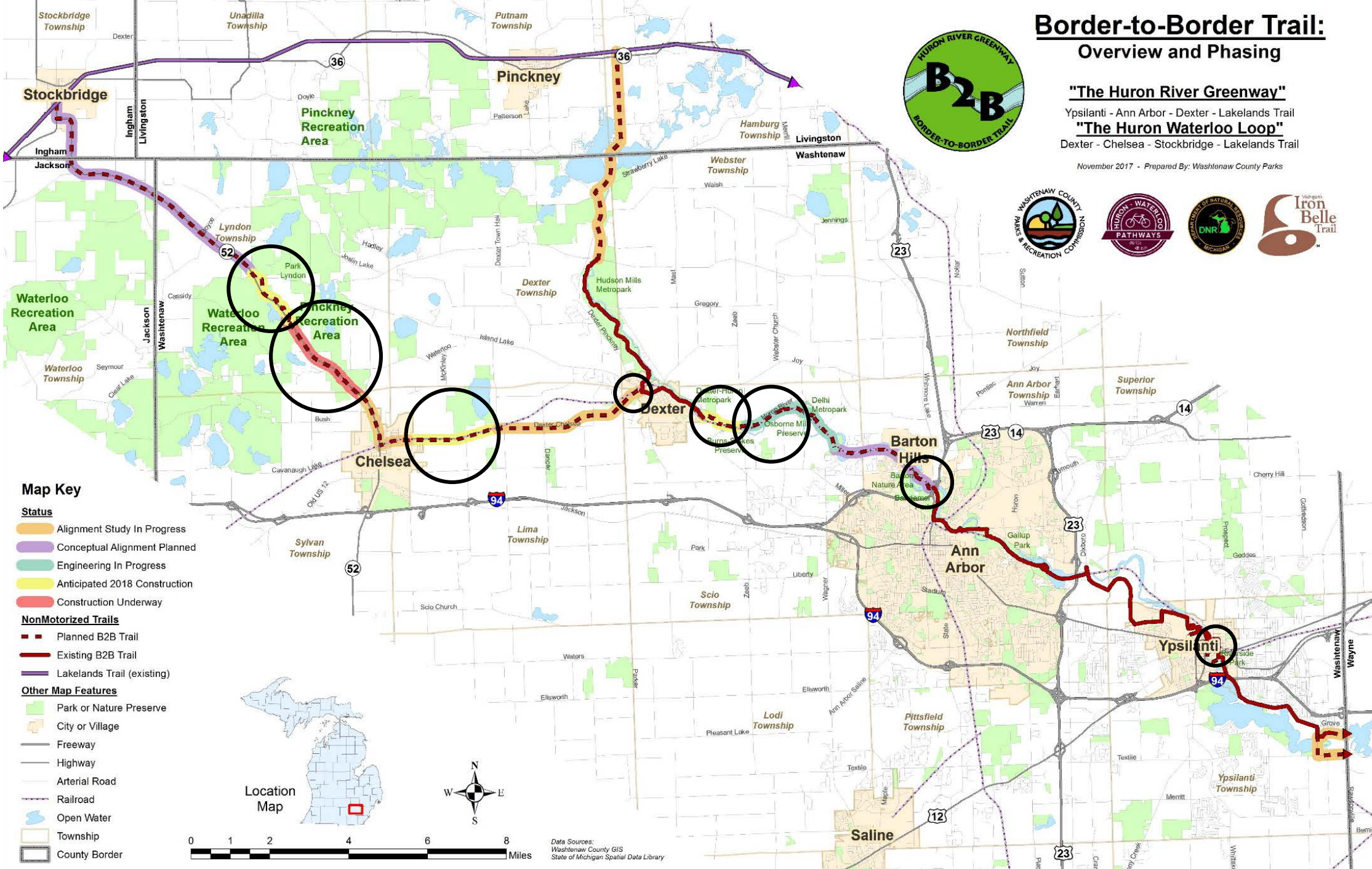
## "The Huron River Greenway"

Ypsilanti - Ann Arbor - Dexter - Lakelands Trail

## "The Huron Waterloo Loop"

Dexter - Chelsea - Stockbridge - Lakelands Trail

November 2017 - Prepared By: Washtenaw County Parks



### Map Key

#### Status

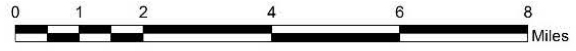
- Alignment Study In Progress
- Conceptual Alignment Planned
- Engineering In Progress
- Anticipated 2018 Construction
- Construction Underway

#### NonMotorized Trails

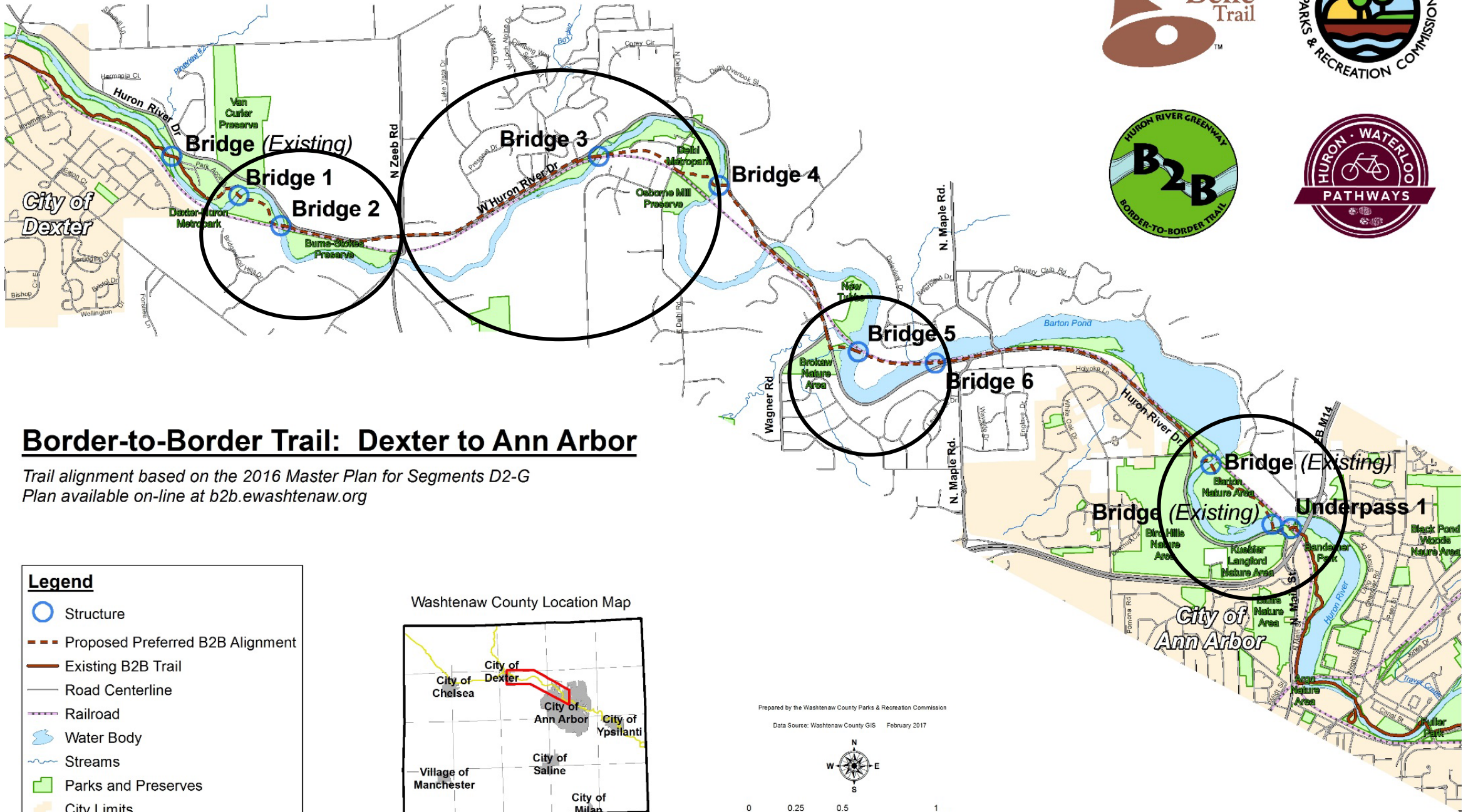
- Planned B2B Trail
- Existing B2B Trail
- Lakelands Trail (existing)

#### Other Map Features

- Park or Nature Preserve
- City or Village
- Freeway
- Highway
- Arterial Road
- Railroad
- Open Water
- Township
- County Border



Data Sources:  
Washtenaw County GIS  
State of Michigan Spatial Data Library



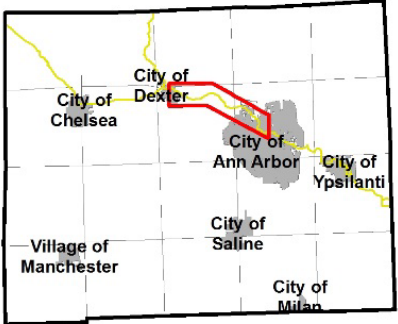
## Border-to-Border Trail: Dexter to Ann Arbor

Trail alignment based on the 2016 Master Plan for Segments D2-G  
 Plan available on-line at [b2b.ewashtenaw.org](http://b2b.ewashtenaw.org)

**Legend**

- Structure
- Proposed Preferred B2B Alignment
- Existing B2B Trail
- Road Centerline
- Railroad
- Water Body
- Streams
- Parks and Preserves
- City Limits

Washtenaw County Location Map



Prepared by the Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission  
 Data Source: Washtenaw County GIS February 2017



# Proposed City-County Collaboration

- **Project Area:**

- Bandemer Park & Barton Nature Area
- Proposed end point: parking area south of Barton Dam

- **Goals:**

- Improve non-motorized safety around the N. Main/M-14
- Create a non-motorized gateway into/out of the City of Ann Arbor
- Extend the B2B in the City of Ann Arbor

- **Criteria:**

- Universally accessible pathway (10' wide, asphalt or boardwalk)
- Safe/legal crossing of High Speed Railroad
- Avoid disturbance to high quality portions of the nature area
- Superior user experience
- Use existing infrastructure where possible



# Project Proposal

Two Primary Components / *Public process for both can overlap*

## 1. Updated Tunnel Feasibility Study

- Similar to Allen Creek Berm Opening project
- Coordination with railroad, permit agencies, and stakeholders
- Concept design, materials, methods
- Cost sharing (County, City, Private)

## 2. Comprehensive Design/Engineering for the trail through Barton Nature Area

- Coordination with railroad, permit agencies, and stakeholders
- Cost sharing (County & Private)

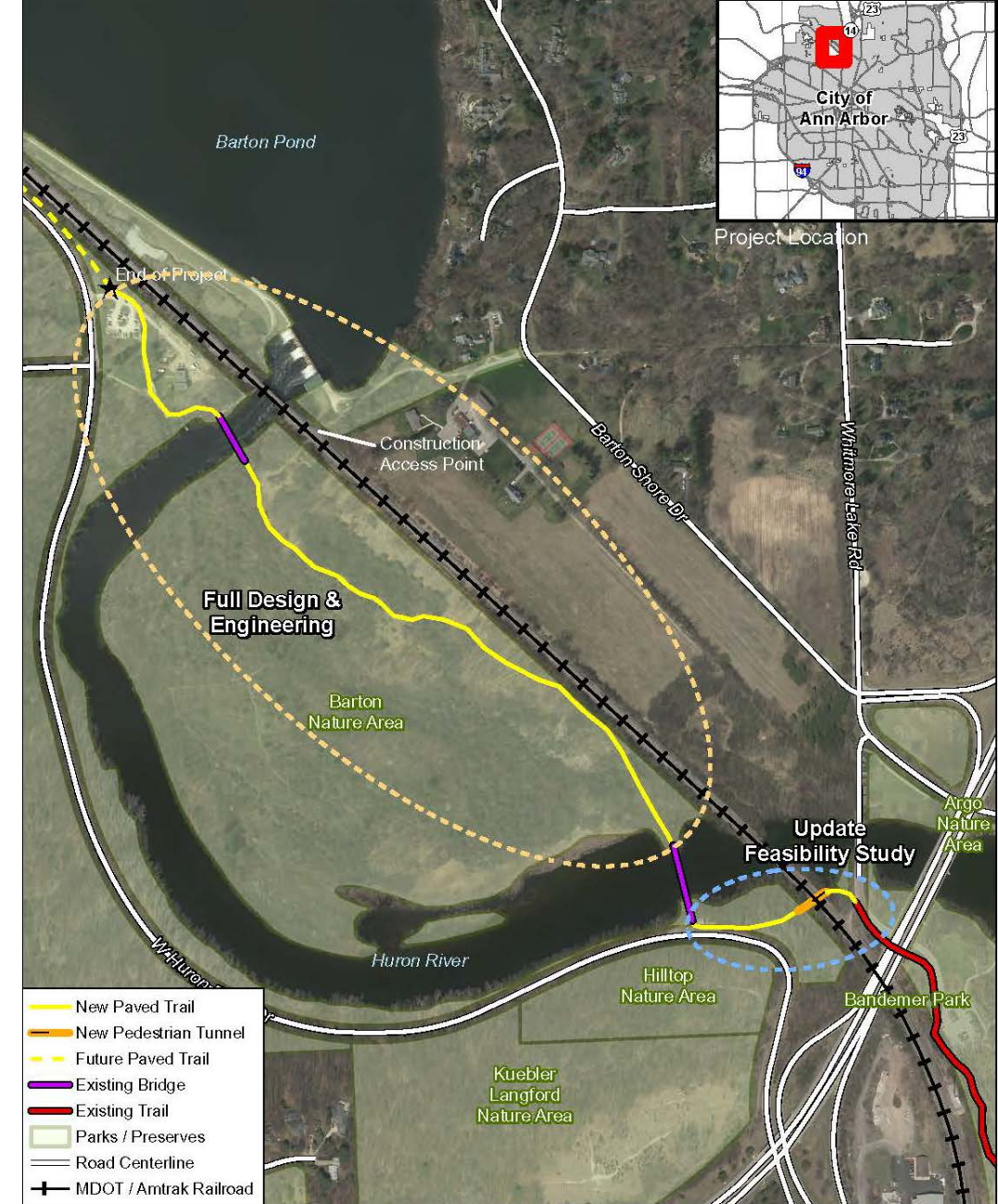
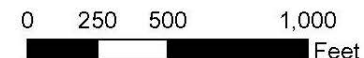


Exhibit A

Border-to-Border Trail

Barton-Bandemer Connection



# The Time is Now

- Partnership is the foundation of the B2B Trail
- WCPARC Commitment
- Public-Private Partnership with HWPI
- Recent Public Grant Success
- State (DNR) priority via the Iron Belle Trail: A critical gap in a regional trail



A long, arched tunnel with brick walls and a metal railing, illuminated by warm orange light. The word "QUESTIONS?" is overlaid in large white text.

QUESTIONS?