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Riders enjoy Riverside Trail in South Bend



By **MEG MIRSHAK** *Tribune Staff Writer*



Cyclists, walkers and joggers can go to new lengths to enjoy St. Joseph County's greatest natural resource.

Recent improvements and additions to

For more information

- Visit www.macog.com for more detailed bicycle and pedestrian maps and safety tips at the Web site of the Michiana Area Council of Governments.

- To discuss area bike routes and resources in a blog format, visit www.bikemichiana.org. The Bike Michiana Coalition compiles the Web site.

- Join other cyclists for rides in Michiana by joining the Michiana Bicycle Association. Visit www.mbabike.com for an application, ride schedules and maps.

pedestrian pathways in South Bend and Mishawaka provide almost 10 miles of nearly continuous trails along the St. Joseph River.

The recently completed Riverside Trail, along Riverside Drive, and other projects through and near the Indiana University South Bend campus received funding from different sources.

The 10-foot wide multipurpose asphalt paths along Riverside Drive were city works projects administered on behalf of the Indiana Department of Transportation, said Carl Littrell, South Bend's city engineer.

About 80 percent of the cost for Riverside Trail was covered by state and federal money, Littrell said.

"In 2002, we held a series of public meetings to see what citizens along the Riverside Drive area wanted," Littrell said. "We got the idea for improved walking and safety."

The trails provide access to fishing areas, boat launches and nearby parks, Littrell said. They also feature benches, landscape beds, lighting and river overlooks, he said.

Southeast of the Riverside Trail, the Michiana Area Council of Governments and the Indiana Department of Transportation partnered to add to existing trails near and on the IUSB campus, said Ken Baierl, director of communications and marketing for the university.

"The trails give access to campus," Baierl said. "It provides the recreational options we wanted for students and the community."

Along Northside Boulevard, the city extended the riverwalk path system through the IUSB campus, Baierl said.

The city demolished an abandoned store across from the Martin's Super Market on Ironwood Drive to create the trail head, Baierl said.

IUSB student Chloe Lawrence, of Elkhart, was recently walking along the trails after finishing her lunch.

"I think the trails are definitely a good idea for the city," Lawrence said. "This part of the river valley is put to good use."

Still, more remains to be done, she said.

"I would like to see people pick up their own trash," said Lawrence, who frequently collects enough trash to fill several bags.

Future expansion of trails and the riverwalks could be limited by the lack of city-owned river frontage on Northside Boulevard between IUSB and the Mishawaka riverwalk, Littrell said.

Many private homes occupy that land on the Northside Boulevard riverbank.

"We don't expect to buy real estate," Littrell said. "We need to be mindful of our budget when proposing different features and amenities."

Three miles of multipurpose trails in Mishawaka were completed in the last decade using a combination of federal, state and local sources, said Ken Prince, Mishawaka city planner.

Beginning in the early 1990s, Mishawaka acquired more than a dozen properties along Mishawaka Avenue to build its riverwalk trails, Prince said.

Construction began this summer on a new section behind the wastewater treatment plant. That section will open in November, Prince said.
