

CROSSING: County studying Great Western Trail system

Continued from Page 1

resident Don Kirchenberg, of the newly formed Friends of the Great Western Trail.

"They are putting in water fountains and park benches," he said. "And more people are starting to use the path. So let's make it safer to use."

The path, officials said, comes from the old Great Western and Chicago Railroad line. The county acquired the land in the mid-1980s and finished the path in 1991.

It extends from Villa Park to West Chicago, where it intersects with the Illinois Prairie Path, then continues as far as Sycamore.

Like other towns, Lombard has invested a great deal of money into improving both the Great Western Trail and the Prairie Path.

Just last year, the village spent \$97,000 to install planters, trash receptacles, park benches, lamp posts and drinking fountains along both east-west paths.

Village President William Mueller says Lombard is taking steps to improve the safety of the rail crossing at St. Charles and Grace.

The village is seeking a \$40,000 grant to help fund a study of the crossing and St. Charles Road. One issue the study would look at is the feasibility of a pedestrian bridge.

In the meantime, Mueller said, the area is marked with directional signs guiding walkers and cyclists over the crossing and to the Great Western Trail.

Still, Kirchenberg said, more should be done.

He wants pedestrians to be able to change the traffic signals at the

intersections on the north and south sides of the tracks.

Kirchenberg also wants signs erected alerting motorists of the pedestrian crossings.

"There's bike crossing signs all over Lombard," he said. "They put them at small streets. But there's nothing on one of the busiest roads in DuPage County."

In addition to changes at the Lombard crossing, the Friends of the Great Western Trail also want more crossings added to North Avenue.

Right now, there are no pedestrian or bike crossings on North Avenue from Route 53 to past Gary Avenue. The Great Western Trail is south of North Avenue.

"It's terrible," Kirchenberg said. "You can't cross North Avenue on your bike. So you have to load your bike into your car and then drive across North Avenue."

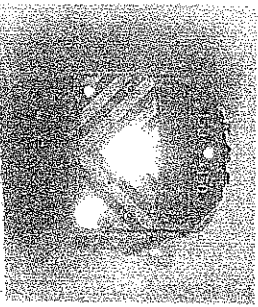
Kirchenberg says the lack of crossings was an oversight by the Illinois Department of Transportation, which oversees North Avenue.

"IDOT sent us a pass-the-buck letter that said the villages never asked for any crossings," he said. "The villages say they didn't think about it."

IDOT officials could not be reached Friday for comment.

DuPage officials say they are conducting a study of the county's 52 miles of bike trails. One of the recommendations might be that the state add crossings to North Avenue, officials said.

"We want people to be able to get to the trail system," said Deborah Fagan, DuPage County's trail coordinator. "So we are looking at ways to make it easier for people to get to the trail system."



Saturday's TALK AROUND TOWN
What people are talking about in DuPage County

Bikers asking for safer Great Western Trail

'Dangerous' crossing leads to call for improvements

By ROBERT SANCHEZ
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Tony Vicario needed an errand to convince himself to bike across the Lombard railroad crossing at St. Charles Road and Grace Street.

"I only came this way because I had to get air in my tires," said the Lombard man after pedaling

across the unique crossing, which took him over two intersections and the Union Pacific tracks.

"This is dangerous even for cars," Vicario said of the crossing, which averages about 12,100 cars each weekday. "I just avoid it because it's so dangerous."

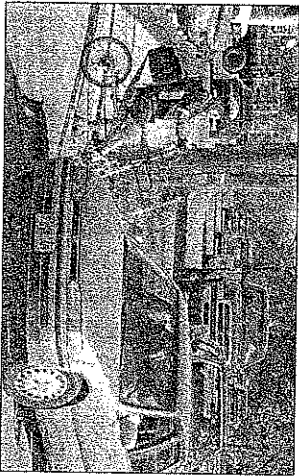
While some cyclists steer clear of the crossing, others must use it when they ride on the Great West-

ern Trail through Lombard.

That has prompted one group of Great Western Trail users to form a grass-roots effort pushing for safety improvements along the path.

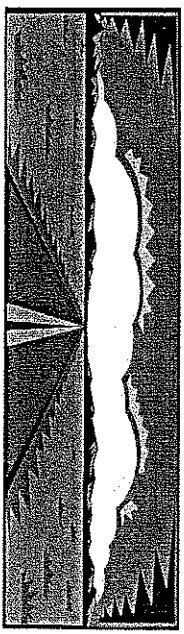
"Local towns have put hundreds of thousands of dollars into this path," said Glendale Heights resi-

See CROSSING on Page 4



Don Kirchenberg of Glendale Heights waits to cross St. Charles Road and Grace Street in Lombard, an intersection trail users say is "pedestrian unfriendly."
Daily Herald photo/Scott Sanders

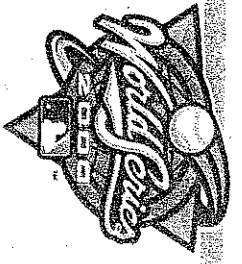
Please make copies & pass them on to other trail users and interest parties. Thanks!



FRIENDS of the Great Western Trail
Email: FrndsGrtWstnTrl@aol.com

Daily Herald

DUPAGE COUNTY NEWS COMPILER DATE: NEWS PAPER: PADDBOOK: PUBLICATIONS: 231 W. VAN BUREN ST. CHICAGO, ILL. 60601-2000 9 Sections



SPORTS
New York in the spotlight: It's Mets vs. Yankees

Details
Time: 6:30 p.m.
TV: Ch. 32, WFLD

Bike and Hike Trail SAFETY CAMPAIGN started by a new group

The Friends of the Great Western Trail (FrndsGrtWstnTrl@aol.com) started 9/2000 to improve the safety to/from and on the trails. As the roads in DuPage and Kane Counties are being designed and expanded into multilane highways we must have the needs for the pedestrians and bicyclists taken into consideration. An example of this problem is North Ave/Rte 64. It has been expanded from 5 to 8 lanes at intersections. From Rohlwing Rd on the East to past Gary Ave on the West, NO pedestrian or bike crossings have been provided for in the new design. For these several miles there is no safe access for pedestrians or bicyclists across North Ave. With multiple turn lanes and the new highway design, traffic is always moving at the intersections. We must all work together to get the State of IL, DuPage County and local villages to solve the problem of no bike crossings at North Ave. We need safe access to the Great Western trail.

Now that hundreds of thousands of tax dollars have been invested in improving these trails and in encouraging their use, let's work together to make it safe for all trail users to get to these trails. The Friends of the Great Western Trail encourages everyone to contact their state legislators, county board members and local villages to help us get safe access now across North Ave. and in all future road expansion projects.

The Friends of the Great Western trail are also working to improve the safety of the crossings at Grace St., the UP train tracks and St Charles Rd on the Great Western Trail. The multiple crossings are poorly marked in a high traffic volume corridor in Lombard. Be careful when crossing these streets. We want the State of IL, Village of Lombard and DuPage County to install bike crossing signs and painted crosswalks on St Charles Rd and Grace St. and improved trail map signage until a bridge can be installed to ensure the safety of the trail users.

CONTACT the Village offices and agencies noted below to **voice your support for safer roads for bike riders & hikers to travel on and cross:**

Elmhurst 630-530-3000	Villa Park 630-834-8500
Lombard 630-620-5700	Glen Ellyn 630-469-5000
Glendale Hts. 630-260-6000	Carol Stream 630-665-7050
Wayne 630-584-3090	Wheaton 630-260-2000
Winfield 630-665-1778	Kane Cty. 630-232-5980
Warrenville 630-393-9427	West Chgo 630-293-2200
DuPage Cty. Trail Coordinator-Deborah Fagan 630-682-7230	

Call your Village Ofcs. Leave a message for the Village President and send them a note about getting street and trail safety improved for bicyclists and pedestrians to/from and on all trails. Your village hall can tell you the names and contact info. for the County and State legislators that represent you. Contact the County and State Legislators with the same message. This is an election year so please contact them now. Thanks!

Friends of the Great Western trail Send us an email: FrndsGrtWstnTrl@aol.com