



## NEWS AND FEATURES

Home » News and Features

## Oak Leaf Trail extension links Milwaukee to Ozaukee County



*A 6.6-mile extension of the Oak Leaf Trail allows bicyclists and runners to travel from Milwaukee's lakefront to Sheboygan County. It connects the Milwaukee portion of the trail to the Ozaukee Interurban Trail. Photo By C.T. Kruger*

By Jeff Rumage  
Nov. 18, 2015

**Glendale** — A 6.6-mile extension of the Oak Leaf Trail allows bicyclists and runners to travel from Milwaukee's lakefront to Sheboygan County.

The result of more than 10 years of planning, the new trail extension connects the Milwaukee portion of the trail to the Ozaukee Interurban Trail, which runs through Ozaukee County and part of Sheboygan County. Previously, the Milwaukee portion of the trail spit northbound riders out onto Wilson Drive just south of Hampton Avenue.

The completion of the trail was celebrated Monday, Nov. 16, with a bike-chain-cutting ceremony attended by bicycle advocates, parks associations and Milwaukee County officials.

The extension of the trail will be a game-changer for bike commuters like Shorewood resident Mara Kuhlmann, whose ride to Johnson Controls in Glendale just got 10 minutes shorter. The trail provides a more direct route without the safety concerns and time delays that may come with riding in traffic.

"I ride at 6 in the morning, and I ride at 6 at night when it's dark," she said. "Getting away from the traffic is a great benefit to me."

The four-phase extension of the trail began in 2006, when Milwaukee County connected the Brown Deer Trail at Brown Deer Road to the Oak Leaf Trail at the northeast corner of Brown Deer Park near Bradley Road. The trail was also extended westward to Kohl Park in Brown Deer.

In the second phase of construction, the city of Glendale constructed a trail between Mill Road and Sidney Place, on the north side of Glendale's Crestwood subdivision. The third phase connected Mill Road and Bradley Road.

The final, and most difficult, phase was made possible when Milwaukee County acquired a 3.1-mile segment of unused railway corridor. The Union Pacific Railroad began formal proceedings to abandon the corridor in 2008, and in 2010, Milwaukee County secured a federal grant to acquire the segment.

The transfer of ownership was completed in June 2015, allowing Milwaukee County officials to connect the East Side Bike Trail at Estabrook Park to the Oak Leaf Trail at Mill Road near Sidney Place in Glendale.

The 3.1-mile segment of the trail can be accessed at Hampton Avenue, Lydell Avenue, Edgewater Lane, Milwaukee River Parkway, Heiser Ford, Johnson Controls and Sidney Place. Bridges along the corridor provide access over I-43, Port Washington Road, Silver Spring Drive, Milwaukee River Parkway and the Milwaukee River.

That 3.1-mile extension ended up costing more than \$3 million, which was offset by grants. The county received a federal grant in 2010 to develop a bike path within the old rail corridor. The county also received two DNR Knowles-Nelson Stewardship grants in 2013 and 2014.

Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele said county officials are tracking usage on the trail with counters, and they expect to see more traffic on the trails as more connections are made in the future. Additionally, bicycles are becoming more available throughout the city with the BublR bike-sharing program, which will continue to expand to new neighborhoods in the future.

"I look at this not as a finish but as a beginning," he said. "There's a lot more expanding to do. Right now we are sitting on one of the more heavily used trails anywhere, and it's going to get a lot more heavily used."

### Shorewood takes silver in bicycle friendliness

Shorewood is becoming increasingly friendly to bicycles, according to a new ranking from the League of American Bicyclists.

Shorewood was first named a bicycle-friendly community in 2011, earning a bronze-level ranking. This week, the league increased the village's ranking to a silver-level bicycle-friendly community. The only Wisconsin community with a higher ranking is Madison, which has achieved a platinum ranking.

Shorewood's ranking was increased due to the high percentage of village residents who use their bicycles as a primary means of transportation to work and school. Shorewood residents, government officials and businesses have also contributed to making the village a more bike-friendly community.

### Commenting Policy

We welcome reader discussion but strive to keep things civil. Please see our [discussion guidelines](#) and [terms of use](#) for more information. If you see a comment that violates our guidelines, please flag it for review. If you have any other issues with our commenting system, please [let us know](#).

### Suburban News Roundup

### E-mail Newsletter

Your link to the biggest stories in the suburbs delivered Thursday mornings.

### More from News and Features

- [Former legislator competing against political organizer for his old Assembly seat](#)
- [Glendale officials seek names for venues in Richard E. Maslowski Community Park](#)
- [Nicolet High School hires David Coyle as associate](#)

[principal](#)

- [North Shore Police Reports, July 28, 2016](#)
- [North Shore Police Reports, July 21, 2016](#)
- [Debbie Roesner appointed to Fox Point-Bayside School Board](#)
- [North Shore Police Reports July 14, 2016](#)
- [North Shore Police Reports, July 7, 2016](#)
- [North Shore farmers markets evolve with new offerings](#)
- [Jewish nonprofit leader passes torch after 13 years](#)

## MOST POPULAR

### Advertisement

**LOCAL CRIME MAP**

[View full map](#)

```
.widget-title {padding-left: 10px;background:#676767;color:#fff;font-size:16px;font-weight:bold;height: 29px; font-family: Trebuchet ms, sans-serif;}
```



### Advertisement