



Fred Meijer Grand River Valley Rail Trail

The 17-mile Fred Meijer Grand River Valley Rail Trail was completed in 2020 when the final 7-mile section between Saranac and the city of Lowell was surfaced with finely screened and compacted recycled asphalt. The trail surface is smooth and firm, and best suited for bikes with wider tires.

The first 8.25 miles of trail from Saranac to Ionia was completed in 2013. In 2015, the paved trail was extended east from downtown Ionia to the Prairie Creek bridge, connecting with the Fred Meijer Clinton-Ionia Shiawassee (CIS) Rail Trail. The project included construction of a pedestrian bridge over busy M-66 in downtown Ionia. This exceptionally scenic section of trail travels along the edge of the Grand River and through the Ionia State Recreation Area, with no road crossings, for a peaceful, serene commune with nature. It also includes an amazing five restored railroad bridges, including one towering bridge spanning 466 feet across the mighty Grand River. Trail users have reported a lot of wildlife sightings along this stretch of trail, including whitetail deer, turkey, great horned owls, bald eagles, a wide range of waterfowl, and even the rare pine marten.

The trail surface consists of about one mile of asphalt pavement through Saranac, and about 3.75 miles of pavement through the city of Ionia, with the rest of the trail in between surfaced with finely screened and compacted crushed limestone. A new trailhead in Saranac was completed in 2019 next to the river, across the street from the Saranac depot and historical museum, offering a great spot to relax or enjoy a picnic. In downtown Ionia, public parking is available on Adams Street, one block east of the M-66 bridge. Saranac and Ionia offer plenty of stores and eating establishments near the trail.



Both sections of trail, from Lowell to Owasso, are open to cross country skiing during the winter season.

Photo by Mandi Raimer

Fred Meijer Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee (CIS) Rail Trail

The 42-mile Fred Meijer Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Rail Trail was completed in 2015. It gets its name from the three counties it spans on the former Central Michigan Railroad line. The abandoned rail corridor was acquired by the state of Michigan in 2007 and developed by the DNR through a broad coalition of federal, state and local organizations.

Perfect for day rides of just about any distance, the trail goes through the center of several quaint farming towns where you will find easy access to local stores, eateries and ice cream shops. It also runs parallel to highway M-21, offering convenient access. The trail was developed with a railway design concept where the “Town & Village Zones” were paved with asphalt and the “Rural and Natural Zones” were surfaced with finely screened and compacted limestone.

The trail officially begins at the Prairie Creek bridge east of Ionia and crosses over the Maple River east of Muir. It then travels through the heart of Michigan farm country before it crosses the headwaters of the Maple River in Ovid on its way to Owasso. A thick hedge of trees shelter the trail most of the way. At Smith Road, west of Owasso, a signed, designated bike route guides you into downtown Owasso. Trail planners envision future rail trail extensions to downtown Owasso and east to Durand.

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