

# *Blue Star Trail will be big win-win*

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To the editor,

Why has Saugatuck put up a blockade on the Blue Star Trail?

This proposed bike path is a fabulous addition to our community, supporting many of our shared values: health (exercise), recreation (tourism), safety (bike lanes are far safer) and environment (reduces car travel). Why a few people in Saugatuck have obstinately dug in their heels has us mystified.

My wife and I purchased a place in Douglas last year, for the usual reasons: we like the outdoors, the lifestyle, the community. We naturally started riding over to Saugatuck for dinner and events; our bikes didn't contribute to the automobile gridlock, didn't need a parking place and we loved it all, except for that short, really awkward transition from the lovely Douglas bikeway onto the small, fractured, dead-end sidewalk entering Saugatuck.

We then learned that an organization (Friends of Blue Star Trail) has done stunning work, paying for engineering studies, raising money and laying out a great route connecting South Haven to Holland.

Except Saugatuck put up a blockade. On 4/10ths of one mile.

This is really surprising. I've heard a concern about fire trucks (it is way easier to pass bikes than congested cars), and even one about the lane itself (separate bike paths are factually far safer).

At the same time, I now hear people say they don't want to go to Saugatuck anymore because the car over-crowding is so bad, while my wife and I tend to stay in Douglas more because of the unwelcoming attitude of a few.

This Trail would be a huge win-win for everyone involved: our citizens, our businesses and each municipality. Experts and governments everywhere in the world are strongly encouraging more bike travel, and our own State of Michigan is one of the best, leading the charge with more bike paths and routes.

I respectfully request Saugatuck release its blockade and allow to continue a great project that will benefit everyone.

Buzz Burrell - Douglas