Rails to public trails conversion plan wheels towards state Senate approval

Cities and towns would have to be involved in planning rails-to-trails projects under bills moving through the state Senate.
"Nothing prevents the state from creating linear parks. But this set specific criteria," said an side to Sen. Robert Genke, R. Northville, sponsor of a key bill.
"Local units would have to be involved in plans for land use, law eit-forcement and facilities.

volved in plans for land use, low ei-forcement and facilities.

"There is liability protection for landowners (from suits by histers his-licyclists who cross their property):
"No general fund money would be used. The state would access feder-al trail money. Easements can be sold to utilities for fiber optics lines."

sold to utilities for fiber optics lines."

As rallroads and the state lawe chendoned tracks in Michigan, hikers, bleyellata, equestrians and even snowmhilers have sought to convert them to trailways.

One parallels Paint Creek in northeastern Oakland County, Another runs from Usingston County, Another runs from Livingston County, Lawe A third goes from Kalmanzo to Grand Haven.

Adjacent property owners in Green Oak Township of Livingston County have stymied trailway plans by nequiring former rallroad strips befure the state could do so.

Don't



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there for youl

At the same time it advanced Genke's bill, the Senate moved a companion measure to make it easier for the state Department of Transportation; to transfer unused all lines into the trail system. Spumour Jaines Barcia, D-Bay Cuny, cited had esperience-in Bay County where adjacent property owners bought property and extended their, lots before trailways could

be established.
Geake's, side cited a Penn State
University study showing trailways
enhance the value of adjacent private property.
Senate passage is due this week.
Geake's bill declares that a system of trailways will provide public
erijoyment, promote fitness, protect
open space and preserve the land
for future possible public use.

state trailways "only if potential negative impacts of trailway devel-opment on owners, or residents of adjacent property are minimized"

Promulgation and enforcement of rules.

Maintenance of crossings for



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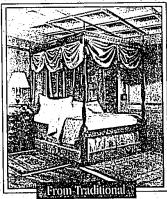
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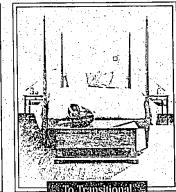


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