

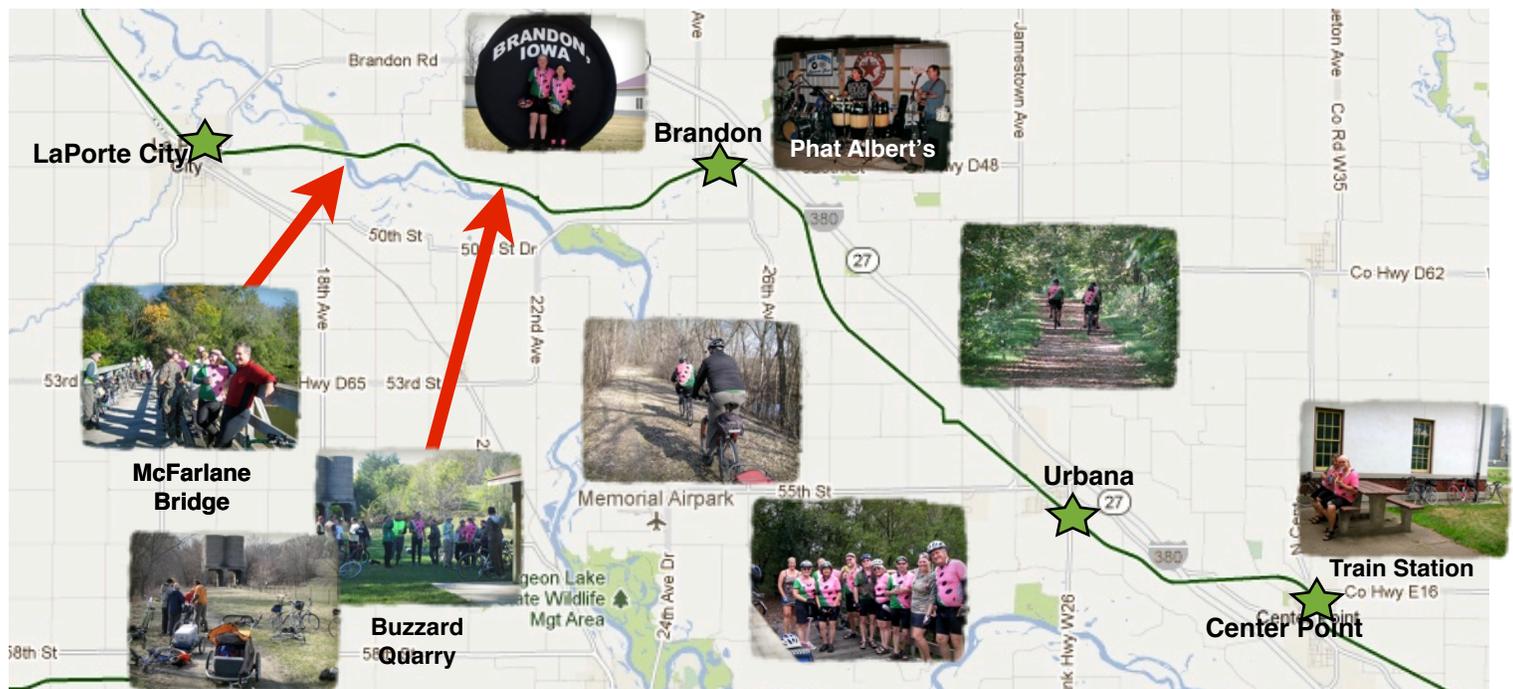
# Middle of [CVNT Trail](#) Ride - 58 miles

## Center Point, Urbana, Brandon, LaPorte City & back

There are many fall rides you can do, but few compare to the [Cedar Valley Nature Trail](#). The trail is a converted intercity commuter line between Cedar Rapids and Waterloo. Because it is an old rail bed, it is flat and for the most part has a canopy of trees covering the trail. It mostly follows the Cedar River and thus reflects that in its name. The entire trail is 52 miles in length from Cedar Rapids to Evansdale (near Waterloo). However, due to urban sprawl of those ending towns, the middle of the trail remains the most scenic part. Due to lower bike traffic, the middle part of the trail is still surfaced with crushed limestone, while the urban ends are paved. In dry weather...the limestone surface works just fine for a road bike.

You may begin your ride at any town; however, the train station (inset picture) in Center Point is a great start. Center Point is about 15 minutes north of Cedar Rapids just off of I-380. The restored depot was used by the inter-urban line and is now used for restrooms, information and rest area. Free parking is available.

About three miles into the ride you will pass through a long tunnel beneath I-380. Riding in it can get a little spooky during a night ride. In about 6 miles you will arrive in Urbana. Although Urbana has the O-Zone Bar and Grill, the owner does not keep it open during lunch hours. Best food option is the Casey's near the interstate exit. Great subs!



From Urbana, the trail goes through some open land before getting back into tree canopy. You will also cross many roadways along the trail in this area. Take caution while crossing. Look both ways. It is about a 10 mile ride to Brandon.

Arriving in Brandon, the trail is on south side of town. You will see what appears to be an old depot (not sure). From there take a right and head to Phat Albert's (inset picture) for a brew. They used to have free peanuts, but like all else, the economy ate them. There is also a small store in Brandon. No directions required. While in Brandon, get your photo taken in the World's Largest Cast Iron Skillet (inset picture). Located near community center it only adds two blocks to the ride.

Brandon to LaPorte City is the most scenic part of the trail; but was also the most damaged by the flood of 2008. Many repairs have been or are being made, including the McFarlane Bridge, which was recently finished.

About 5 miles from Brandon, you will come across Buzzard's Quarry (inset pictures). It is no longer used except as a fishing hole and trail rest stop. The old silos for filling rail cars are still there, but are mostly used as a latrine. There is also a covered picnic table and benches. This is a great rest stop, especially when riding the trail at night.

From here the trail get very scenic as it follows the Cedar River. You see evidence of the river's fury carved into the limestone bluffs. Take a break at the few remaining benches not damaged by the flood. Enjoy this section!

In about 4 more miles you will arrive at the McFarlane Bridge. This was severely damaged in 2008, but is now unofficially reopened. Officially in May 2013. About a 1/2 mile past the bridge is McFarlane Park. From this point forward, the trail is paved. If you want to make this a two day ride, there is [camping in McFarlane Park](#). Rent the cabin, if you wish.

In about 3 miles, you will arrive in LaPorte City. If you are a fried chicken lover, stop at Main St. Pizza downtown. I think the pizza is good, too! By the ball diamond along the trail, there's a large gazebo. A great place to eat your chicken. The paved trail continues from there to Gilbertville and eventually Evansdale (Waterloo).

There used to be a trail fee; however, trail conditions since the flood have not warranted it. Now with all the improvements, I expect the trail fees and tags to return. Purchase at any nearby convenience stores. We always pay trail fees...it is worth it!