

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GARFIELD PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Wednesday, April 26, 2023 at 7:00 pm
Garfield Township Hall
3848 Veterans Drive
Traverse City, MI 49684
Ph: (231) 941-1620

A G E N D A

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Call meeting to order
Pledge of Allegiance
Roll call of Board Members

1. Public Comment

Public Comment Guidelines:

Any person shall be permitted to address a meeting of The Planning Commission, which is required to be open to the public under the provision of the Michigan Open Meetings Act, as amended. (MCLA 15.261, et.seq.) Public Comment shall be carried out in accordance with the following Commission Rules and Procedures: a.) any person wishing to address the Commission is requested to state his or her name and address. b.) No person shall be allowed to speak more than once on the same matter, excluding time needed to answer Commissioner's questions. Where constrained by available time the Chairperson may limit the amount of time each person will be allowed to speak to (3) minutes. 1.) The Chairperson may at his or her own discretion, extend the amount of time any person is allowed to speak. 2.) Whenever a Group wishes to address a Committee, the Chairperson may require that the Group designate a spokesperson; the Chairperson shall control the amount of time the spokesperson shall be allowed to speak when constrained by available time. Note: If you are here for a Public Hearing, please hold your comments until that Public Hearing time.

2. Review and Approval of the Agenda – Conflict of Interest

3. Minutes – April 12, 2023

4. Correspondence

5. Reports

- a. Township Board
- b. Planning Commissioners
 - i. Zoning Board of Appeals
 - ii. Parks and Recreation Commission
 - iii. Joint Planning Commission
- c. Staff Report

6. Unfinished Business

7. New Business

- a. PD 2023-45 – Master Plan Update – Natural Resources and Parks and Trails
- b. PD 2023-46 – Master Plan Update – Community Engagement and Outreach

8. Public Comment

9. Other Business

10. Items for Next Agenda – May 10, 2023

- a. Oleson PUD Major Amendment – Public Hearing
- b. Hickory Forest and Hickory Meadows Rezoning – Findings of Fact
- c. Pine Grove Homes Special Use Permit – Findings of Fact
- d. Ligon Bed and Breakfast Special Use Permit Major Amendment – Findings of Fact
- e. Birmley Meadows Site Condominium – Introduction
- f. Ridge 45 Phase I-III and Ridge 45 Phase IV (South 22) SUP Amendments – Intro
- g. Nicolet Bank Landscaping – Site Plan Review

11. Adjournment

**Joe Robertson, Secretary
Garfield Township Planning Commission
3848 Veterans Drive
Traverse City, MI 49684**

The Garfield Township Board will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting to individuals with disabilities upon the provision of reasonable advance notice to the Garfield Township Board. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Garfield Township Board by writing or calling Lanie McManus, Clerk, Ph: (231) 941-1620.

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GARFIELD
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
April 12, 2023**

Call Meeting to Order: Chair Racine called the April 12, 2023 Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:00pm at the Garfield Township Hall.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all in attendance.

Roll Call of Commission Members:

Present: Molly Agostinelli, Joe McManus, Joe Robertson, Chris DeGood, John Racine and Robert Fudge

Absent and Excused: Pat Cline

Staff Present: Planning Director John Sych

1. Public Comment (7:01)

None

2. Review and Approval of the Agenda – Conflict of Interest (7:01)

Fudge moved and Robertson seconded to approve the agenda as presented.

Yeas: Fudge, Robertson, Agostinelli, DeGood, McManus, Racine

Nays: None

3. Minutes (7:02)

a. March 22, 2023 Regular Meeting

Agostinelli moved and DeGood seconded to approve the March 22, 2023 Regular Meeting minutes as presented.

Yeas: Agostinelli, DeGood, McManus, Robertson, Fudge, Racine

Nays: None

4. Correspondence (7:02)

Legal notices from Green Lake Township and Long Lake Townships for their Master Plans were included for correspondence.

5. Reports (7:03)

Township Board Report

Agostinelli stated that Networks North and Traverse Transportation Coordinating Initiative (TTCI) are looking at transportation in the urban area with a new Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) agreement. Payment in Lieu of Taxes housing developments (PILOTs) were also discussed, and the Board will try to keep the number of PILOT units at 15% of the Township's housing stock.

Planning Commissioners

- i. **Zoning Board of Appeals**
Fudge had no report.
- ii. **Parks and Recreation Commission**
DeGood reported that a grant was submitted for the Commons Area trail.
- iii. **Joint Planning Commission**
McManus stated that there was no meeting.

Staff Report

- i. **PD 2023-37 – Planning Department Monthly Report – April 2023**
Sych submitted his review in writing and noted that the South 22 project is in legal review at this time to determine if the SUP for South 22 and Ridge 45 can be combined.

6. Unfinished Business

a. PD 2023-38 – Hickory Forest and Hickory Meadows Rezoning – Public Hearing (7:05)

The Joint Recreation Authority is requesting the rezoning of the “Hickory Forest” parcel (#05-005-050-10) from the A-Agricultural district to the P-R Park and Recreation district via the Zoning Map Amendment process, without restriction.

Upon review by Staff, it was suggested to include the three “Hickory Meadows” parcels to create consistent zoning of parkland in this area. These four parcels total 179.03 acres. Three of the subject parcels constitute the Hickory Meadows parkland, and one is the site of Hickory Forest, which is in the process of becoming parkland. All these parcels either are or will be managed by the City of Traverse City & Charter Township of Garfield Recreational Authority. The most compatible zoning districts for the “Agricultural / Rural Land” future land use designation are the A-Agricultural and R-R Rural Residential districts, with R-1 One-Family Residential also being potentially compatible. Chair Racine opened the public hearing at 7:07pm and seeing no one wishing to speak, closed the public hearing.

Agostinelli moved and McManus seconded TO direct Staff to draft Findings of Fact for application Z-2023-01.

*Yeas: Agostinelli, McManus, Robertson, Fudge, DeGood, Racine
Nays: None*

b. PD 2023-39 – Pine Grove Homes Special Use Permit – Public Hearing (7:08)

This application is requesting to use an existing vacant site at 4030 Meadow Lane Drive for mobile home sales. This use is described in the Zoning Ordinance as “Sale of Prefabricated Structures” and this use is permitted via Special Use Permit in the C-G General Commercial district. The current Special Use Permit application is considered a new application and subject to all review standards for a new Special Use Permit application. Chair Racine opened the public hearing at 7:09pm and seeing no one wishing to speak, closed the public hearing.

Robertson moved and DeGood seconded TO direct staff to prepare Findings of Fact for application SUP-2023-01, submitted by Rick Newman for a Special Use Permit for the sale of prefabricated structures at Parcel 05- 032-001-20, subject to the following items being addressed by the applicant:

- 1. The aisle between the parking area on the south and the remainder of the parcel needs to be at least 20 feet wide. This can be accomplished for the southern access drive by moving one space from this parking area to the other near the dumpster.*
- 2. The existing evergreen along US 31 on the east buffer needs to be noted on the landscaping plan as either to be preserved or to be removed.*
- 3. Different plant species need to be proposed for the small trees to comply with the buffer requirements.*
- 4. All plant species on the landscaping plan need to comply with Section 530.F and the ISN Planting Guidelines.*

*Yeas: Robertson, DeGood, McManus, Fudge, Agostinelli, Racine
Nays: None*

c. PD 2023-30 – Ligon Bed and Breakfast Special Use Permit – Major Amendment- Public Hearing (7:11)

This application requests an amendment to a Special Use Permit (SUP) for use of an existing single-family residence at 5885 Hainey Lane as a Bed & Breakfast Establishment. The SUP was approved by the Planning Commission on February 10, 2021, to permit no more than four (4) guests at any one time. The amendment would add room for four (4) more guests for a total of eight (8) guests. Bed & Breakfast Establishments are permitted via SUP in the A-Agricultural zoning district.

Racine opened the public hearing at 7:12pm.

Garth Ward of Gray Road commented that he owns a bee sanctuary next door and claims that the applicants have excavated on neighboring properties and indicated that there may be issues with the easements between the properties.

Racine closed the public hearing at 7:20pm.

Commissioners discussed the application in light of the public comment. Verification of the easement could be a condition of approval. Staff will review and verify the easement in question.

McManus moved and Fudge seconded TO direct staff to prepare Findings of Fact for application SUP-2020-03-A for a Special Use Permit amendment for an existing bed and breakfast establishment at 5885 Hainey Lane, submitted by Matthew and Rebecca Ligon.

Sych stated the term “occupant” would be addressed in terms of the Bed and Breakfast definition.

*Yeas: McManus, Fudge, DeGood, Agostinelli, Robertson, Racine
Nays: None*

7. New Business

- a. PD 2023-41 – Oleson PUD Major Amendment – Introduction (7:31)**
Approved in 1997, the Oleson Planned Unit Development (PUD) is a commercial development, including a grocery store, offices, restaurant, service establishments, and a car wash. A request to amend the PUD is being considered according to Section 423.G of the Zoning Ordinance. By incorporating a residential use, Staff has determined that this amendment constitutes a major amendment which requires a public hearing, Planning Commission review and recommendation, and Township Board approval. The applicant proposes converting 6,960 square feet of second-floor office space into six apartments. There are to be 5 three-bedroom units and 1 two-bedroom unit. A revised floor plan has been submitted by the applicant. The PUD is located at the corner of North Long Lake and Cedar Run Roads and comprises 21.15 acres of land. Sych explained that there needed to be usable open space and recommended incorporating access to the Traverse Ridge trail developed on the Oleson PUD via sidewalks or chipped paths to count as the open space requirement. Developer Brad Oleson asked for flexibility on the layout of the apartments. After discussion, it was agreed that any potential additional apartments could be handled as an administrative amendment if incorporated into this plan review.

Fudge moved and Agostinelli seconded THAT application SUP-1997-06-F, submitted by Brad Oleson, for a Special Use Permit for amendment of the Oleson Planned Unit Development at Parcel 05-009-001-00, BE ACCEPTED, and SCHEDULED for a public hearing at the regular Planning Commission meeting on May 10, 2023.

*Yeas: Fudge, Agostinelli, McManus, DeGood, Robertson, Racine
Nays: None*

8. Public Comment (7:51)

None

9. Other Business (7:51)

McManus expressed concern about the BATA project now that Tony Lentych has moved on to a new position at MSHDA. Sych explained the issue with the MSHDA approval and said the project is moving in the right direction.

10. Items for Next Agenda – April 26, 2023 (7:56)

- a. **Master Plan Update – Environment, Water Quality and Energy; Parks and Trails**

11. Adjournment

Fudge moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:57pm.

Joe Robertson, Secretary
Garfield Township Planning
Commission
3848 Veterans Drive
Traverse City, MI 49684

Garfield Township Meeting

Why were all the easements from the Lee and Ligon properties moved without the property owners knowledge. What did this Senior Citizen and a Disabled Senior Vietnam Vet do to this township to deserve such treatment over the past three years. Someone should be ashamed.

Page 1 This is a screenshot of the e-mail sent back to the township once I realized what had been done to our properties.

The vertical yellow line is an easement, but as you can see has now been mysteriously relocated on the Howard property in violation of the Exclusive Dedicated Easement listed on their Quick claim Deed just above where they signed, and pages 2 &3. The X and arrow show where they attempted to illegally excavate the site.

The horizontal yellow line marked Hainey Ln. is also a misrepresented easement now located on MY property. If the black Hainey line was moved down it would reveal two separate easements. Note the Hainey lane layout at the bottom is in your files, what happened?

Page 2 This is a copy of my original survey clearly showing the easements on the entire Parent Property. The Barn shown on the survey in Violation of setback rules and blocking a dedicated easement.

Page 3 This is a township copy of the easements on both parent properties, so why did the township even produce this bastardized version of our easements?

Page 4 This page is an image from the township showing so many things.

The ^{DEED} ~~title~~ states 33' easement and you can see where that is labeled.

NOTE. Property owners removed all survey stakes, twice.

Then there is a 30' front setback in addition to the easement. You can see the 63' label so this barn is in violation by 22.7' and so close to the easement that the once drivable easement is filled with up to 84" of sand. (noted on the border) You can also see a 5th wheel trailer that has been there with people living there and in the living area of the barn for the past 3 years.

Page 5 Here you can see the remaining easement stakes they couldn't remove and the length of the easement. Since the townships walkthrough they found No evidence of Agricultural activities in the building or on site. Then about 3 days later they planted the easement with 30-40 trees

I HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN MY TOWNSHIP !

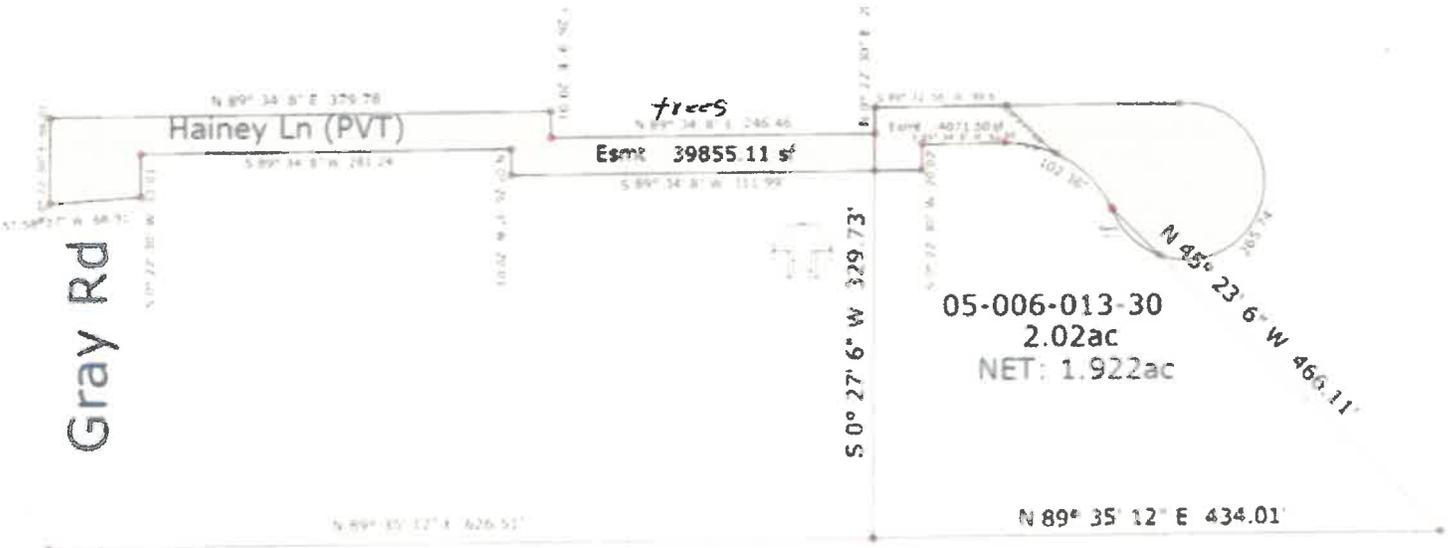
COPY OF EASEMENT TO ^{my} FWP



+

It appears the black line labelled Hailey Ln is in the wrong location on this map.

The Hailey Ln easement looks like this:



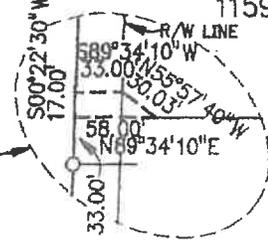
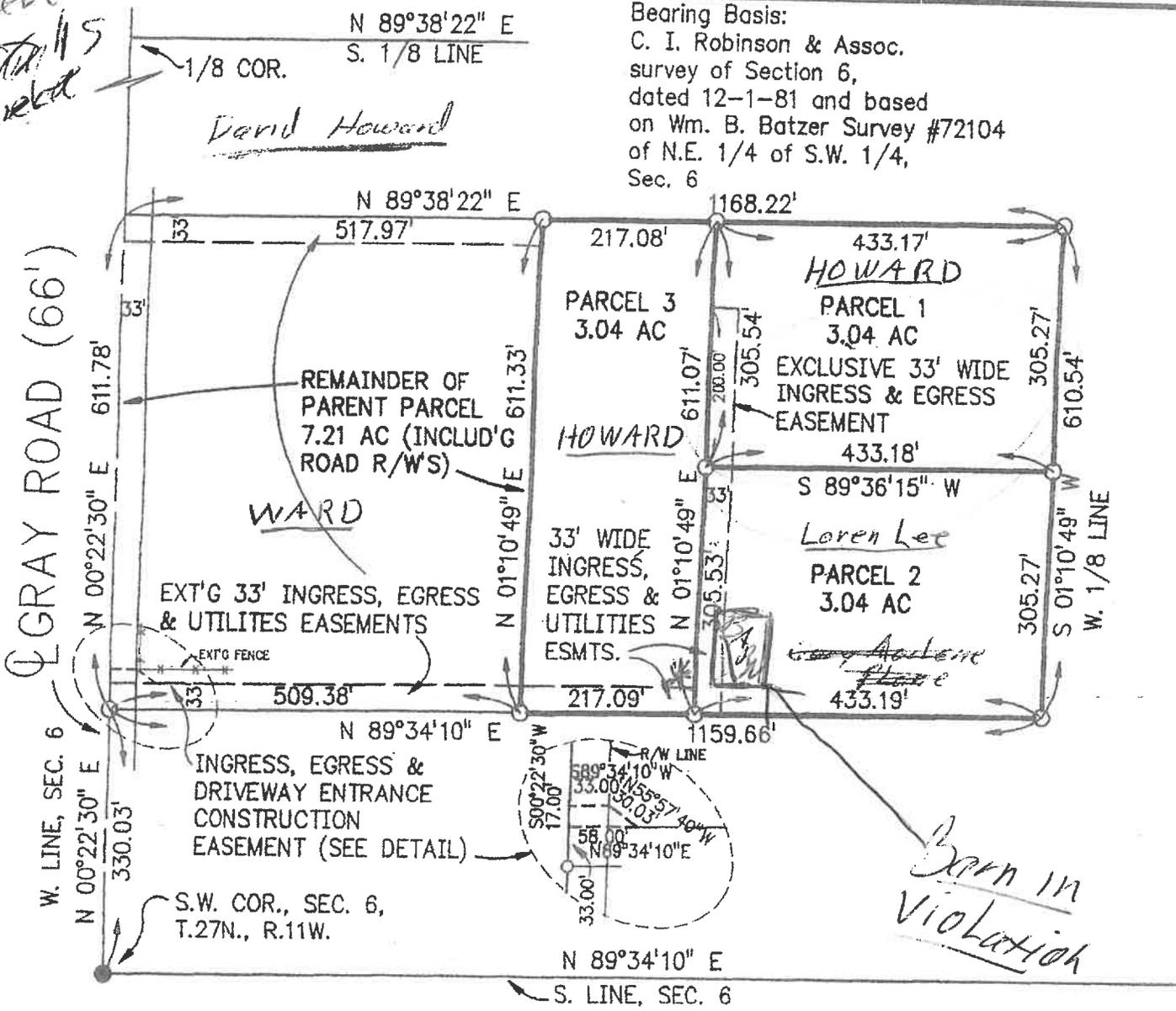
The Hailey Ln esmt crosses [006-013-20](#), [006-013-25](#), [006-013-30](#) and [006-013-50](#) and provides access to [006-013-08](#). It is a separate esmt from the one on yours and the Howard's property.

1998 - 1998 - NO EASEMENTS RECORDED

CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY

*state
CPTA #15
the state*

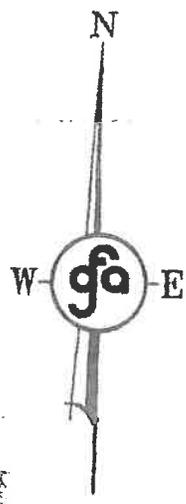
Bearing Basis:
C. I. Robinson & Assoc.
survey of Section 6,
dated 12-1-81 and based
on Wm. B. Batzer Survey #72104
of N.E. 1/4 of S.W. 1/4,
Sec. 6



Barn in Violation

12-29-98

[Signature]

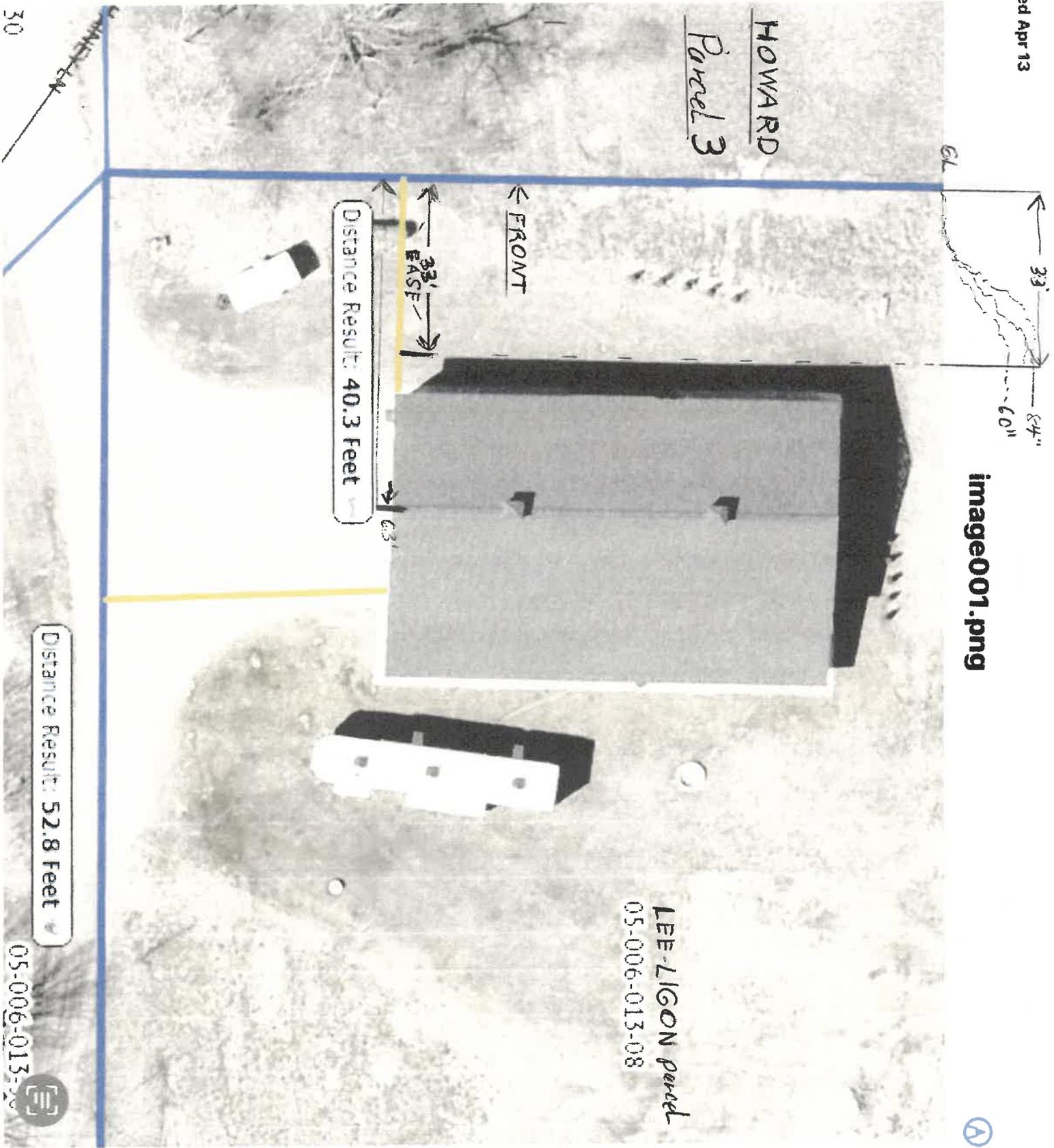


PREPARED FOR: **MARY I YOCKEV**



Done

image001.png



HOWARD
Parcel 3

← FRONT

Distance Result: 40.3 Feet

Distance Result: 52.8 Feet

30

05-006-013-08

LEE-LIGON parcel
05-006-013-08



 Charter Township of Garfield Planning Department Report No. 2023-45		
Prepared:	April 19, 2023	Pages: 1
Meeting:	April 26, 2023	Attachments: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Subject:	Master Plan Update – Natural Resources and Parks and Trails	

After reviewing various data and community input along with discussions on targeted issues and plan concepts, this study session is the first meeting to start reviewing subject chapters of the draft Master Plan. Each chapter will have a brief introduction, goal(s), and objectives.

The first two subjects for the April 26th Study Session are as follows:

1. Natural Resources. The Natural Resources chapter covers the natural environment, water quality, energy, and agricultural land.
2. Parks and Trails. The Parks and Trails chapter is supplemented by the Township’s Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Provided here are excerpts of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan that are pertinent to this chapter, including:
 - a. *Goals and Objectives*. The Goals and Objectives were developed using the information gathered during the planning process and public input process. The Goals and Objectives provide the basis for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan’s Action Program.
 - b. *Green Infrastructure Plan*. In the context of this Plan, green infrastructure refers primarily to the interconnected network of parks, natural areas, undeveloped land, and open space in Garfield.
 - c. *Non-Motorized Facilities and Connections to Parks*. These projects help to enhance the non-motorized system by providing greater connections to and between parks and trails. These connections are also envisioned as part of the Non-Motorized Plan within the Township Master Plan.

NEXT STEPS:

Forthcoming reviews are as follows:

Study Session Date	Subject
May 24, 2023	Transportation and Infrastructure
June 28, 2023	Housing, Economic Development, and Public Safety
July 26, 2023	Nodes, Corridors, and Districts
August 23, 2023	Future Land Use, Future Connections
September 27, 2023	Future Land Use, Future Connections
October 25, 2023	Implementation Strategies, including Zoning Plan

ACTION:

No action is required. This report and attachments are for review and discussion only.

Attachments:

1. Natural Resources Chapter – draft dated April 19, 2023
2. Parks and Trails Chapter – draft dated April 19, 2023
3. Goals and Objectives – excerpt from the Parks and Recreation Master Plan
4. Green Infrastructure Plan – excerpt from the Parks and Recreation Master Plan
5. Non-Motorized Facilities and Connections to Parks – excerpt from the Parks and Recreation Master Plan

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Boardman-Ottaway River Valley and Silver Lake are the most prominent natural features within Garfield. The Boardman-Ottaway River flows north through Garfield before flowing into Boardman Lake, which subsequently enters the City of Traverse City before emptying to the West Arm of Grand Traverse Bay. The River and Lake divide Garfield from east to west with roughly one-quarter of Garfield's geographic area lying to the east. Several tributaries in the river watershed located in Garfield include Miller Creek, Jack's Creek, and Kids Creek. Mitchell Creek in the east part of Garfield flows directly to the East Arm of Grand Traverse Bay. Located in southwest Garfield, Silver Lake is a 600-acre lake with an average depth of 23.4 feet.

Topographic elevations fall from a high point of about 1,100 feet above sea level in the west of Garfield, to roughly 600 feet within the Boardman-Ottaway River Valley, before rising once again to over 900 feet above sea level in the southeast corner of Garfield. Prior to settlement, Garfield land was covered in beech, sugar maple, and hemlock forest with wetland areas covered by conifers and cedars.

Garfield has extensive wetlands and hydric soils that provide community benefit but are often impacted by development. The wetlands provide natural water quality improvement, flood protection, shoreline erosion control, and opportunities for recreation and aesthetic appreciation. Wetlands are generally regulated by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy and buffer requirements by the Garfield Zoning Ordinance.

Michigan's energy system is comprised of generating plants, transmission lines, and distribution facilities. The Michigan Public Service Commission is responsible for utility regulation for generation and distribution functions in the state of Michigan. For Garfield, electric service is provided by Cherryland Electric Co-op and Consumers Energy while natural gas service is provided by DTE Energy. Private companies also provide propane gas service.

Growth and development present challenges toward protecting natural resources, including water, air, and preservation of open space and prime farmland. Garfield's policies and investments focus on protecting and restoring natural resources, building and site efficiency, agriculture land protection, and improving the resiliency of the community.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Goal: Promote natural environment protection in a planned and strategic manner.

Objectives:

- Make environmentally conscious decisions in review of development applications or zoning policy considerations.
- Create an interconnected network of natural areas and protect environmental assets through parkland acquisition or, when feasible, require developments to set aside lands that provide useable open space.

- Facilitate context-sensitive development and redevelopment through review processes that support a healthy balance between the built and natural environments.
- Collaborate with environmental interests to improve the health of the environment.
- Require the incorporation of native plantings in required landscaping for commercial, multi-family, and industrial developments.

WATER QUALITY

Goal: Make water system improvements and support environmental conservation efforts to protect water quality.

Objectives:

- Protect streams, wetlands, and water bodies from direct or indirect stormwater runoff or other encroachments through setback requirements, development review, and enforcement of the stormwater ordinance.
- Promote low-impact stormwater management design including infiltration planters, rain gardens, bioswales, permeable pavement, etc.
- Update stormwater ordinance and include green infrastructure incentives and requirements.

ENERGY

Goal: Support energy efficiency and conservation, and sustainable building practices and products.

Objectives:

- Improve municipal facility performance whenever possible.
- Support installation of energy generation from renewable resources, including wind, solar, and geothermal.
- Emphasize building re-use and flexibility of uses whenever feasible.
- Direct development towards areas with access to existing roads, pathways, water, sewers, and other infrastructure within or contiguous to existing development.

AGRICULTURAL LAND

Goal: Preserve prime and unique farmland and maintain agricultural character.

Objectives:

- Support farmers and agricultural landowner efforts to grow products.
- Encourage the preservation of agricultural land by encouraging infill development and promoting density in areas already served by public infrastructure.

PARKS AND TRAILS

Garfield owns and maintains seven parks comprising nearly 600 acres. The Garfield Parks and Recreation Master Plan provides a road map for parks and recreation decisions with the Parks and Recreation Commissions providing recommendations on improvements. In addition to Garfield parks, there are numerous other parks owned and managed by other entities, including the Charter Township of Garfield and City of Traverse City Recreational Authority, Grand Traverse County, the City of Traverse City, and the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy. Altogether, over 1,500 acres of public land is available for outdoor enjoyment, with many of these parks also serving a key function in the existing and planned non-motorized network.

Parks, trails, and easy access to the outdoors provide Garfield residents with peace of mind. Open space areas also provide relief from the hardscape-built environment and create rural elements in Garfield's character. Commitment by Garfield to its parks and open spaces remains a priority to retain a high quality of life for residents and visitors to the area.

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Goal: Foster a system of high-quality active and passive parks connected by trails.

Objectives:

- Fund, operate, and maintain parks in a way that gives people the amenities they need in a safe and clean park environment and that encourages a healthy lifestyle.
- Establish corridors of undeveloped land preserved for recreational use or environmental protection.
- Improve accessibility to parks by building a connected system including trails, bike paths, sidewalks, roadways, and transit.
- Continue to update natural resource inventories and maps to provide context in development reviews, zoning policy considerations, and planning efforts.
- Regularly update the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- Update and maintain a non-motorized transportation plan for sidewalks, bike paths, nature trails, and bike lanes.
- Update zoning requirements for pedestrian circulation and non-motorized transportation.
- Support conversion of rail lines to non-motorized trails.

Goals and Objectives

The following Goals and Objectives were developed using the information gathered during the planning process and public input process and guided by the Basis for the Goals and Objectives as described above. The Goals and Objectives of this Plan provided the basis for development of the Action Program.

Goal 1 – Expand and improve the Township’s non-motorized transportation system of trails, sidewalks, and pathways

Objectives:

- Invest in non-motorized projects identified in the Action Program
 - Identify and pursue additional funding sources for projects, including grants
 - Engage the public for input on priority non-motorized projects
 - Work with MDOT and GTCRC to include safe crossings for trails and sidewalks which intersect major roadways
- Collaborate with partner organizations, including TART and neighboring communities, on future projects for additional connections and expansions to the regional trail system
- Build out the trail system design as envisioned in the Commons Natural Area Design Plan including the different trail types, trailheads, and hubs
- Develop consistent maintenance standards for trails and sidewalks, including innovative and cost-effective approaches to long-term maintenance, and clarify responsibilities for each entity in the regional non-motorized system
- Work with regional partners to develop consistent wayfinding signage and information for the regional non-motorized system
- Work with MDOT and GTCRC to implement the Township’s Complete Streets resolution to incorporate Complete Streets design considerations and practices as a routine part of infrastructure planning and implementation
- Include Complete Streets considerations in Township processes including the Township Master Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and development review

Goal 2 – Protect and preserve natural resources such as wetlands, habitats, and water bodies

Objectives:

- Invest in projects identified in the Green Infrastructure Plan within the Action Program
 - Identify and pursue additional funding sources for projects, including grants
 - Evaluate property acquisitions or donations using criteria described in the Green Infrastructure Plan to determine their overall benefit to the Township, and review these criteria on a regular basis
- Inventory properties which are protected or preserved through other methods, such as a conservation easement, but which are not intended for acquisition
- Develop a planting and forestry management program for each park to identify invasive species for removal and vegetation for planting including native species

- Develop management plans for water bodies in parks including Kids Creek and Oleson Pond, monitor water quality, and pursue projects to improve water quality as needed
- Restore wetlands as envisioned in the Commons Natural Area Design Plan
- Continue working with the ISN, landowners, EGLE, MDNR, and other stakeholders to prioritize and remove invasive species, prevent the spread of new invasive species, and educate residents about the stewardship of natural resources
- Require wetland delineations in Township processes including development review, and enforce Zoning Ordinance provisions to protect wetlands

Goal 3 – Provide a variety of parks and recreation amenities and activities to meet the needs of all segments of the population

Objectives:

- Prioritize new amenities, improvements to existing amenities, and maintenance projects which improve accessibility for all users
- Consider accessible design elements in all projects including Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, barrier-free accessibility, and principles of universal design
- Add benches, rest areas, and shade areas where feasible to enhance usability of the parks
- Evaluate potential demand for new park features or amenities, especially those which are not currently offered at any Township parks, when creating park development plans for specific parks or considering projects

Goal 4 – Promote responsible stewardship of the parks and recreation system

Objectives:

- Utilize volunteer groups for stewardship projects and document all volunteer activities
- Encourage the public to contact Staff to report any issues at the parks, and document the type of issue, resolution, and other information for each report
- Educate the public on the parkland rules as defined in the Township Parkland Ordinance and spread awareness of any major issues, such as vandalism or off-leash pets
- Publicize parks and recreation information via the Township website, Facebook page and other social media, newsletter articles, and by posting at trailhead kiosks, and make the information accessible digitally using QR codes or other technology

Goal 5 – Encourage continued public involvement in evaluating and improving the parks and recreation system

Objectives:

- Provide regular opportunities for residents to offer feedback on the Township parks and recreation system including focus groups, public meetings, surveys, or through feedback solicited at Township events
- Use the Township’s Public Participation Strategy to guide public engagement methods, identify key stakeholders, and evaluate the effectiveness of public engagement efforts

- Promote meetings of the Parks and Recreation Commission as an opportunity for people to provide input
- Utilize public input to help guide amendments to and implementation of this Plan

Goal 6 – Develop stable sources of funding and practice sound fiscal management of the parks and recreation system

Objectives:

- Maintain consistent parks funding for general maintenance, improvements, acquisition, and as a local match for grants
- Pursue additional funding sources for the park system including state and federal grants, local nonprofits, local businesses, and other sources
- Generate revenue for the park system through appropriate fees for pavilion reservations, hunting permits, or other activities, and review fees annually

Goal 7 – Evaluate the parks and recreation system on a regular basis

Objectives:

- Update annual maintenance and management programs to anticipate major projects and repairs needed for each park in the upcoming year
- Guide improvement projects for specific parks by utilizing park development plans, such as the River East Recreation Area Park Development Plan and Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan, and review development plans as projects are completed
- Gather information on the use of the parks and recreation system from public input, trail counters, and other sources to determine ongoing needs
- Create an implementation matrix to track progress on meeting the Goals, Objectives, and Action Program and to identify responsible parties, funding sources, partnerships, and timelines, and review the matrix annually

Green Infrastructure Plan

In the context of this Plan, green infrastructure refers primarily to the interconnected network of parks, natural areas, undeveloped land, and open space in Garfield. The goal of such a network is to conserve regional ecosystem values and functions to benefit both the environment and the community. Some benefits of maintaining green infrastructure include improved water quality, preserved habitats, and enhanced recreational opportunities.

The foundation of a green infrastructure network are woodlands, wetlands, rivers and streams, grasslands, and similar elements. The network is anchored by “hubs” or large areas of protected lands, which are then linked by a series of natural resource corridors. Garfield has worked with stakeholders including Grand Traverse County, GTRLC, and other entities to establish a green infrastructure network including the Township’s parks, the County’s Natural Education Reserve, GTRLC’s Mitchell Creek Nature Preserve, and more.

The proposed green infrastructure action plan identifies criteria for Garfield to consider for the acquisition of parkland and other green infrastructure parcels. The action plan also supports the protection and preservation of lands not intended for acquisition through other methods, such as conservation easements. Criteria to consider for acquisition of parcels include the following:

- How would the acquisition enhance the current park system?
- Does the parcel abut or connect to existing Township parkland or natural areas?
- Would the acquisition create greater access to Township parkland, including additional non-motorized connections?
- Would the acquisition help provide better distribution of parkland resources to residential areas and neighborhoods in Garfield?
- Would the acquisition help protect water quality in the Boardman River, Boardman Lake, or Silver Lake, by preserving wetlands or other natural features?

Garfield requires wetland delineations as a part of development review. Garfield may consider evaluating other green infrastructure standards, including low-impact development (LID) design practices, to encourage preservation of natural features on individual sites and at smaller scales. Conservation easements should also be encouraged as a tool to protect sensitive natural features.

For each park, a planting and forestry management program would help inventory the existing vegetation, determine planting needs including native species, and identify invasive species and other plants to remove. Garfield worked with a forestry consultant on a forest management plan in 2012 and a hazard tree assessment in 2014 for the Commons Natural Area. Management plans can help protect the landscape and vegetation at the other Township parklands.

The Township Board maintains the parks system budget and approves procurement of contracts for services. Budget appropriations for staff and contracted maintenance services are expected to remain consistent with overall park development and maintenance needs. Outside sources of funding including grants and donations will help support specific capital projects.

Policy Development

The Township recognizes the value of generating policies to help reduce the risk of future issues. Park policies are developed by the Parks and Recreation Commission and recommended to the Township Board as appropriate. The following have been identified as potential policy subjects for review by the Parks and Recreation Commission:

- Accessibility and ADA-compatible amenities
- Planting and forestry management programs, including invasive species removal
- Fee schedule including pavilion and multi-purpose field rentals, and other activities
- Park lighting
- E-bike usage on trails
- Updates to park rules

Non-Motorized Facilities and Connections to Parks

One goal for this Plan is to expand and improve Garfield's non-motorized transportation system of trails, sidewalks, and pathways, and the Strategic Plan also includes a goal of fostering a system of high-quality active and passive parks connected by trails. The following projects would help to enhance the non-motorized system over the next five years and beyond by providing greater connections to and between parks and trails. These connections are also envisioned as part of the Non-Motorized Plan within the Township Master Plan.

The non-motorized system benefits the community by giving people transportation options other than automobiles and by providing recreational opportunities. Sidewalks and trails provide an amenity for neighborhoods which is reflected in the value they provide to property owners.

The following projects have been identified through discussions with the Parks and Recreation Commission, residents, and key stakeholders, and all represent potential additions to Garfield's non-motorized system. These projects would link existing parks and natural areas, commercial areas, neighborhoods, schools, and areas of concentrated employment with non-motorized trail and sidewalk connections. Garfield should continually evaluate opportunities and priorities for advancing these projects. Corridors for potential trails are highlighted in white on the maps on the following pages.

LaFranier Road / Barlow Road – Boardman Lake Loop Trail



In 2022, the Boardman Lake Loop Trail was completed, and this loop trail can become a key hub connection for other trails into the regional system. This project envisions a connection from the Boardman Lake Loop Trail to the east side of Garfield on South Airport Road, Barlow Road and LaFranier Road. These corridors connect to dense residential areas including Kings Court mobile home park. This area is served by Traverse Heights Elementary School in Traverse City; a recent Safe Routes to School grant provided for upgraded sidewalks in nearby neighborhoods.

The project would include about 0.3 miles along South Airport Road and about 0.75 miles each along Barlow Road to Boon Street, and along LaFranier Road to the County Health Department. This project was identified as part of the MSU Urban Planning Practicum student project in 2022. The Township also applied for grant funding from Grand Traverse County for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, which was supported by partners including TART.

Challenges for this project include the intersection crossing at South Airport Road with Barlow Road and LaFranier Road, acquiring easements, and curb cuts and existing developments along these roads. LaFranier Road also has a steep grade immediately south of the South Airport Road intersection. Alternative connections, especially to the west, may be explored if the steep grade prevents a trail from feasibly being constructed there.

Miller Creek Nature Reserve – Boardman Valley Nature Preserve



This trail would connect Miller Creek Nature Reserve and Boardman Valley Nature Preserve by filling in a gap of about 0.4 miles between these two parks. This project was listed in the Action Program of the previous Parks and Recreation Master Plan but has not been pursued with other projects taking priority.

From Miller Creek Nature Reserve, the trail would continue east along the site of the Sabin Data Center, a former elementary school owned by TCAPS. The trail would need to cross Cass Road and then continue along Dairy Square to property owned by Four Seasons Storage LLC. Garfield acquired an access easement on one of the Four Seasons Storage sites in 2011 to access Boardman Valley Nature Preserve.

The crossing of Cass Road is a challenge because of the high speed and its proximity to the major intersection with Hartman Road. Garfield should coordinate with GTCRC to ensure safe crossing of this trail.

Miller Creek Nature Reserve – Mall Trail



South Airport Road presents an opportunity to connect the Mall Trail with Miller Creek Nature Reserve. A trail of about 0.6 miles would provide access to several businesses including those in Grand Traverse Commerce Centre and Traverse Square and connect to the Miller Creek Nature Reserve trailhead behind Traverse Square.

This project was identified as part of the MSU Urban Planning Practicum student project in 2022. One key challenge for this project is topography, with a steep slope from South Airport Road to the adjacent Miller Creek Nature Reserve. The Township should work with GTCRC to find the most ideal location for this trail project and coordinate work on any portion in the South Airport Road right-of-way.

Miller Creek Nature Reserve – Boardman Lake Loop Trail



This project would fill an approximately one-mile gap between Miller Creek Nature Reserve and the Boardman Lake Loop Trail. The trail would provide enhanced access to the park, the regional trail system, the NMC University Center, and many businesses. TART had previously acquired trail easements for most parcels on Cass Road, except for Good News Automotive, on behalf of Garfield in anticipation of future connections to the Boardman Lake Loop Trail.

Challenges for this project include crossing Cass Road and South Airport Road, potential grade issues, and acquiring additional easements including behind properties on the west side of Cass Road, south of South Airport Road.

Kids Creek Park – Silver Lake Recreation Area (Buffalo Ridge Phase 3)



The Buffalo Ridge Trail is currently a 1.5-mile connection between the Grand Traverse Commons and the Grand Traverse Bay YMCA West. The first phase was a 0.5-mile connection between the Commons and Traverse City West Middle School completed in 2011, and the second phase was a 1-mile connection from the Middle School to the YMCA completed in 2016.

Future anticipated extensions of this trail include a roughly two-mile segment along Silver Lake Road and East Silver Lake Road. This segment would provide approximately 300 homes with a connection to the park, schools, commercial businesses, and the greater trail system. This project was envisioned in the previous Parks and Recreation Master Plan and received support from the public and TART. Challenges include a steep grade along Silver Lake Road, wetlands, easement acquisition, and intersection crossings.

Traverse Ridge Trail (Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area – Hickory Meadows)



The Traverse Ridge Trail is part of a long-term vision to connect the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area and Hickory Meadows. TART is working with volunteer groups on constructing a single-track mountain biking trail behind Oleson Plaza near the North Long Lake Road entrance for the Commons Natural Area.

The trail is planned to be a single-track for now but may offer future opportunities for additional non-motorized access. Further connections are also possible to other neighborhoods and trails, including the trail system at Hickory Hills that is currently being updated. Total trail length from the Commons Natural Area to Hickory Meadows would be about 1.5 miles.

North Long Lake Road and Cedar Run Road are both major roadways with high speed and low visibility in some places. TART has had discussions with GTCRC about a safe crossing of North Long Lake Road and future safe crossings will be marked and signed. Other challenges for this project include space limitations for providing pedestrian amenities especially along Cedar Run Road, potential grade issues, and acquiring easements.

TC West Middle School – TC West Senior High School (Wyatt Road-Westchester Commons)



This non-motorized route would include both trail and on-road segments providing for a 2-mile connection between West Middle School and West Senior High School. A segment of trail was recently completed at the Meadow Valley senior living complex, building a connection that was envisioned on the Township’s Non-Motorized Plan within the Master Plan. The on-road portions would connect with neighborhoods along Westchester Commons and Wyatt Road.

One key challenge for this project is that while a portion of Wyatt Road is a public road, the rest of Wyatt and all of Westchester Commons are private roads. The crossings of Zimmerman Road and Silver Lake Road also present a challenge with the high speeds. The Township should work with the GTCRC to express the desire for these safe crossings and gather information from traffic studies or other sources to determine their feasibility. There are potential opportunities for cost sharing between GTCRC and Garfield on ADA-accessible ramps, painted crosswalks, signage, or other aspects of these crossings.

Mall Trail – Silver Lake Recreation Area



A trail from Silver Lake Recreation Area to the existing Mall Trail would need to be coordinated with future development on a site west of the existing Sam’s Club on US 31. A future trail would connect a 2-mile gap through this site and along South Airport Road west of US 31.

There are no current development proposals for this site. Discussions with future developers will help determine the ultimate location of a trail. If any public roads are built, the Township should work with GTCRC to ensure that a trail is part of the overall design considerations.

Boardman-Ottaway River Trail

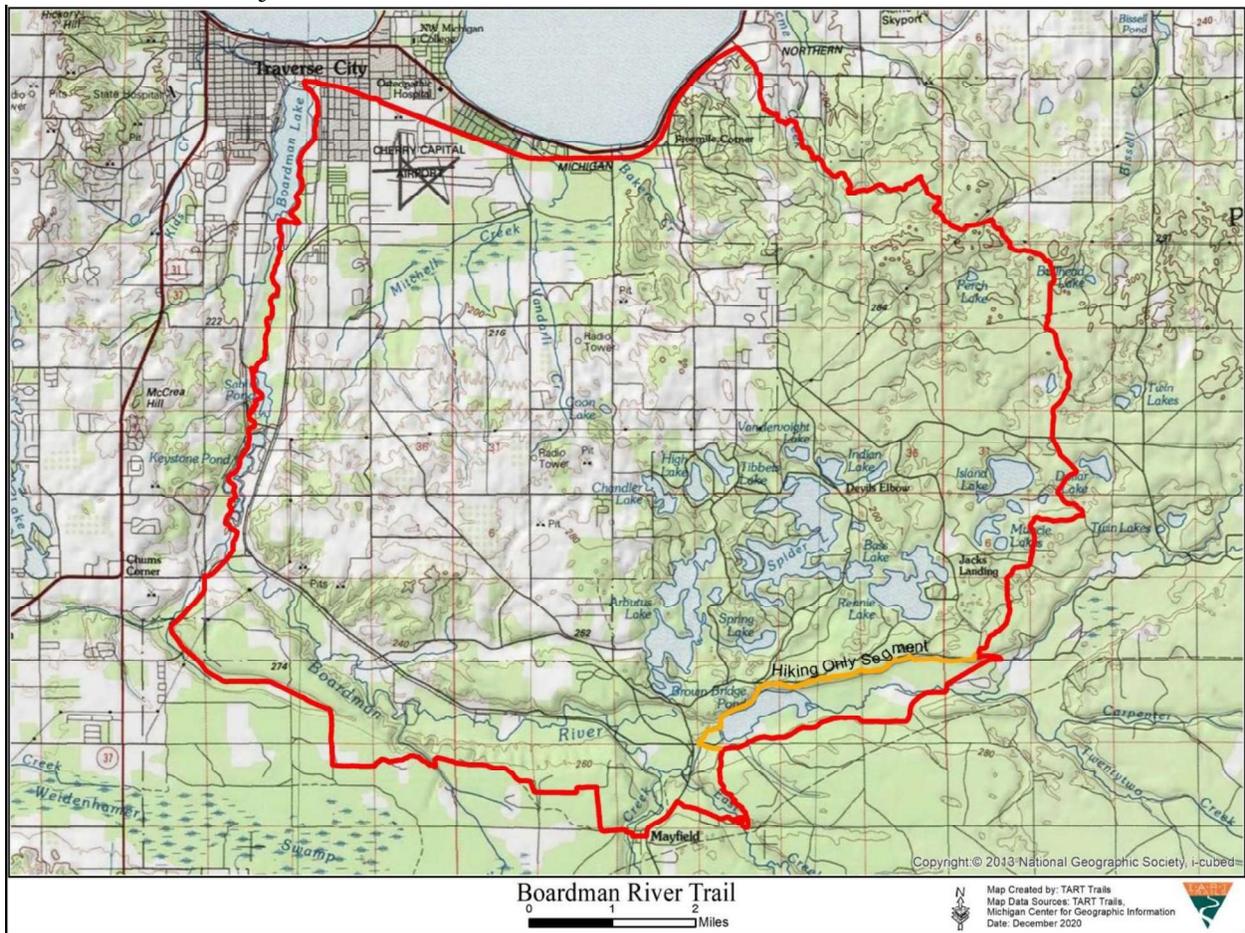


Image Source: TART Trails, Inc.

This trail includes land and water trails which connect the Boardman-Ottaway River with other natural areas. A 42-mile loop connects parts of the Boardman Lake Loop Trail, Boardman Valley Nature Preserve trails including the Peace Trail, Boardman-Ottaway River Trail, Brown Bridge Quiet Area, North Country Trail, Vasa Pathway, and the TART Trail. Removal of the three dams on the river in the 2010s also offers greater possibilities for a water trail.

Future projects for this trail include a potential improved connection between the Boardman Lake Loop Trail and Boardman Valley Nature Preserve. South Airport Road is currently carried over the river by two culverts. Future improvements may include a bridge over the river allowing for safe crossing under South Airport Road and further water navigation between the river and lake. Potential connections to this trail include access to other recreational areas including River East Recreation Area and Keystone Soccer Complex. Garfield should work with stakeholders such as the GTCRC, TART, and private property owners on connections and improvements to this trail.

Other Trails

Trail connections and expansions offer opportunities for greater non-motorized access for people in the Township and the region. The rail corridor from the Boardman River Nature Center south to Blair Township and Interlochen may potentially provide access for those areas and would also connect with Boardman Valley Nature Preserve and the Boardman-Ottaway River Trail. Utility corridors may be explored to provide connections in the southeast part of Garfield, such as from the Spring Hill neighborhood to Keystone Soccer Complex.

Maintenance

Maintenance of trails in Garfield is shared by public and private entities. Several stakeholders in the area have explored the feasibility of a regional entity for parks and trail network maintenance and development. This entity could include Garfield, City of Traverse City, the Joint Recreational Authority, Grand Traverse County, private property owners, TART, and others. Garfield should continue discussions with these groups to evaluate different maintenance scenarios.

Regardless of which entity is performing maintenance, Garfield may consider establishing a set of consistent maintenance standards including times for snow blowing, snow clearing, and lawn mowing, and for dealing with major issues such as erosion. Garfield could also coordinate with volunteer groups including the TART Ambassador Network on maintenance projects.

Data Collection

Garfield should collect data on trails usage to understand demands on the system and to inform future planning efforts. Trail counters determine the number of users at specific points. TART has used trail counters on the Boardman Lake Loop Trail and other places. Garfield could work with TART or another entity on gathering data from trail counters or acquire its own. Data can also be gathered through applications such as Strava, which publishes a publicly available heat map of user activity. Such data helps inform planning efforts by showing the frequency of usage on existing trails and where unofficial connections (e.g., desire paths) have occurred.

Wayfinding

Public feedback has found wayfinding to be a key issue on the trail system and within the parks. Garfield should ensure consistent wayfinding and signage within the trails on its parks. TART has a consistent branding for signs on the regional trail system and has shared signage at parks such as the City of Traverse City's Clinch Park and Hull Park. Garfield anticipates having TART signage along any additional regional trails in the Township and at major trailheads, with signs in the parks having Garfield branding.

 Charter Township of Garfield Planning Department Report No. 2023-46		
Prepared:	April 19, 2023	Pages: 1
Meeting:	April 26, 2023 Planning Commission Study Session	Attachments: <input type="checkbox"/>
Subject:	Master Plan Update – Community Engagement	

BACKGROUND:

In 2022, the Township conducted a random sample community survey as a part of the public input process for the Master Plan. A summary of this input, including key findings, was compiled in October 2022 and is posted on the Township website.

Additional community engagement will be part of the Master Plan update process in 2023. The Planning Commission has discussed potentially doing “pop-up” style events later this year to help gather feedback from people where they are already congregating, and to help provide awareness of the Master Plan update process. A pop-up event would involve Township Staff and other interested officials having a table at a community gathering location to gather feedback on specific land use issues. People can offer their input at their convenience. Potential locations for pop-up events include the dog park at Silver Lake Recreation Area, Meijer, Oryana West, Lucky Jack’s, and Boardman River Nature Center.

DISCUSSION:

Staff offers the following for discussion regarding the next public input for the Master Plan update process:

- What type of feedback should be sought at these public input events?
- What types of public input events should the Township organize?
- If “pop-up” style events are desired, are there any other or different locations than those listed above which would be good locations for such an event?
- Any community engagement events could be publicized on the Township website and newsletter. The next newsletter will be prepared in June, sent with summer tax bills, and received by property owners in early July.
- To allow for promotion in the July newsletter, these public engagement events could be scheduled from late July through September.

ACTION:

No action is required. This report is for review and discussion only.