

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GARFIELD
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**

Monday, December 5, 2022 at 6:00 pm
Garfield Township
3848 Veterans Drive
Traverse City, MI 49684
Ph: (231) 941-1620

AGENDA

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 Parks and Recreation 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 Board Rules and Procedures: a.) any person wishing to address the Board 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.

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

3. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – November 7, 2022

4. Correspondence

5. Reports

- a. Commissioner Reports
- b. Staff Report / Updates
 - i. Parks Steward Report

6. Old Business

- a. PD 2022-107 – Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan Public Comments
- b. PD 2022-109 – 2023-2027 Parks and Recreation Master Plan

7. New Business

- a. PD 2022-108 – Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan Implementation
- b. 2023 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Schedule

8. Public Comment

9. Items for Next Agenda – February 6, 2023

- a. Election of Officers

10. Adjournment

Garfield Township 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 Garfield Township. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact Garfield Township by writing or calling Lanie McManus, Clerk, Ph: (231) 941-1620, or TDD #922-4412.

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GARFIELD
PARKS and RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
November 7, 2022
Kirkbride Hall at the Village of Grand Traverse Commons**

Roll Call of Commission Members:

Present: Denise Schmuckal, Fern Spence, Andy Hoort, Chris DeGood, and Chris Remy

Absent and Excused: Lynne Fricke and Art Bukowski

Staff Present: Deputy Planning Director Steve Hannon, Planning Director John Sych

Call to Order: Chair DeGood called the meeting to order at 6:33pm

Pledge of Allegiance: Recited by all in attendance

1. Public Comment (6:34)

None

2. Review and Approval of the Agenda – Conflicts of Interest (6:34)

Schmuckal moved and Remy seconded to approve the agenda as presented

Yeas: Schmuckal, Remy, Spence, Hoort, DeGood

Nays: None

3. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – October 3, 2022 (6:35)

Hoort moved and Schmuckal seconded to approve the minutes of September 12, 2022

Yeas: Hoort, Schmuckal, Spence, Remy, DeGood

Nays: None

4. Correspondence (6:35)

None

5. Reports (6:36)

a. Commissioner Reports

Schmuckal reported that the board has not yet finalized the 2023 budget. DeGood stated that the Planning Commission will begin to engage in the Master Plan process soon.

b. Staff Report/Updates

i. Parks Steward Report

Park Steward Derek Morton submitted his report in writing.

ii. Planning Department

Sych stated that the Township submitted applications to Grand Traverse County for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, including some parks and non-motorized transportation projects.

6. Old Business**a. Grand Traverse Commons Natural Design Plan – Open House #3 Follow-Up (6:39)**

Representatives from ECT were present to discuss the differences in the Commons Natural Area Design Plan since the previous review by Commissioners. Changes were made to the Cedar Swamp Forest area and there will be a one-way traffic and loop throughout the trail system. Trailheads were fine-tuned and more trails were added. ECT talked about the phased plan for the Commons property. Commissioners discussed the comments collected at the open house and feel that they could engage the crowd who want trail jumps and rougher trails by allowing them to voice their opinion about the Plan. Commissioners agreed that these trails will be shared by all citizens and no one trail will be for the exclusive use of any one party.

b. PD 2022-101 – 2023- 2027 Parks and Recreation Master Plan – Discussion Continued (7:09)

At the October 3, 2022 meeting, Commissioners reviewed an overview of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and discussed upcoming potential projects for each park to include in the Action Program of the Plan. Staff compiled seven Goals and Objectives for discussion. These include some Goals and Objectives carried over or slightly modified from those in the current Plan, and some newly proposed. According to guidelines from the MDNR, "Goals should be broad enough and have one or more objectives associated with them. Objectives will be more specific actions to help accomplish the goal." Goals include the improvement of non-motorized connectivity; protecting and preserving natural resources; providing safe parks and recreation areas to meet the needs of the public; promote responsible stewardship of the parks system; encourage continued public involvement in evaluating and improving the parks system; develop stable sources of funding; and evaluating the parks and recreation system on a regular basis. Hannon reviewed the draft Plan with Commissioners and presented the timeline for approval of the Plan. Staff will send out a draft for Commissioners to comment on by November 17.

7. New Business

None

8. Public Comment (7:36)

None

9. **Items for Next Agenda – December 5, 2022 (7:36)**
 - a. **2023-2027 Parks and Recreation Master Plan**
 - (i) Finalize Draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan
 - (ii) Notice of 30-Day Public Comment and Review Period
 - (iii) Recommend Adoption of Plan to the Township Board
 - b. **Finalize 2023 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Schedule**
10. **Adjournment**

DeGood adjourned the meeting at 7:38pm.

Chris Remy, Secretary
Garfield Township Parks & Recreation
Commission
3848 Veterans Drive
Traverse City, MI 49684



Charter Township of Garfield
Parks Report

Silver Lake Recreation Area

Everything is winterized.

Working next 2–3-year lawn care quotes.

Working on door locks and timer.

Need to replace men's countertop.

Roping off parking lots once snow is here to stay.

Contacted contractors of drop site for snow and sledding hill.

Commons

Pulled trail cameras

Pruned a few trails back.

Cleared down trees weekly from winds and rain.

Minor graffiti.

Walked property listed off N. Long Lake Rd.

Assisting with Master Plan and Planning Dept.

River East

Status quo and River East. More dog walkers getting the word out of the trails there.

Boardman Valley

Clearing multiple trees.

Replacing board walk boards.

Managing a beaver problem dropping trees.

Damaged kiosk roof. May relocate kiosk closer to trail head off parking lot.

Winterizing pickleball courts.

Miller Creek

More trees down. Cleared trees and fixed boardwalks.

Cleaned wind-blown trash after thaw.

Kid's Creek

More trees down on trails. Cleared trees.

Cleaned up one older encampment found in woods.

Buffalo Ridge Trail

Further talks with Ecoseeds and tree plantings in Spring.

Submitted November 30, 2022

Derek Morton

Sean Kehoe

		Charter Township of Garfield	
		Planning Department Report No. 2022-107	
Prepared:	November 29, 2022	Pages:	1
Meeting:	December 5, 2022 – Parks and Rec Commission	Attachments:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Subject:	Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Draft Design Plan – Public Comments		

BACKGROUND:

On November 7, the final open house for the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan was held at Kirkbride Hall. The event allowed for the public to first see the final draft Plan and start a two-week review and comment period for the draft Plan. The Plan was available at the Township Hall and on the Township website. The public was encouraged to provide comments via email to the Township.

36 emails were received by the end of the review and comment period which concluded on November 21. To summarize the comments, the most frequently mentioned issues are noted below with the frequency in parentheses:

- Concern about altering existing trails/restricting access to certain areas (24)
- Protect the natural environment/wildlife (13)
- Support for the overall design plan (10)
- Keep bikers and hikers separated/separate user trails (5)
- Too many new trails/interfering with desired areas (5)
- Protect/expand the freeride biking terrain/features (5)
- Provide connection to Hickory Hills/Meadows (1)
- Keep trailheads open for walkers/bikers accessing park not by car (1)
- Impact of developed Red Drive trailhead on school (1)
- Concern about homeless population (1)

STAFF COMMENTS:

Staff read all the comments and have the following initial comments:

- There were many emails from students at the Greenspire School. The students have utilized Commons Natural Area as a classroom and value the natural environment. While there will be change in the trails, access to the natural features and locations within the park will remain. Some of the trail materials and design will help to “heal” certain areas of the park as well as create more sustainable trails (i.e., less erosion).
- The management and interaction of walkers/bikers will continue to be a primary focus during implementation of the Plan and management of the park.
- While the Plan provides an overall development path for the park, specific details and construction designs have yet to occur. When portions of the park are constructed in accordance with Plan, those details and designs will be made in a way that intrudes least on the natural environment and creates a safe experience for all users.
- It is important to note that the comments show that there are passionate voices for all aspects of the park. The intent will remain to balance all the varied interests as we go forward with implementation.

Attachments:

1. Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Draft Design Plan Public Review Comments

Charter Township of Garfield
**Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area
Draft Design Plan**

Public Review

*Emailed Comments
Received as of November 21, 2022*

From: Douglas Spence <dougspencejr2@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, November 8, 2022 10:32 AM

To: Parks <Parks@garfield-twp.com>

Subject: Trailhead and entries to commons

From the ticker:

The plan recommends possibly closing the Munson Parking Lot Trailhead, Historic Barns Trailhead (though leaving the connecting trail to the property in place), and the existing Long Lake Road Trailhead due to congestion and safety concerns. Instead, a new Long Lake Road Trailhead is being considered near the overflow lot on Munson property; a new Copper Ridge Trailhead is also proposed.

Input:

While I understand the need to limit car arrivals to park and parking in the proposed areas to be closed, I think it would be important to acknowledge and keep open access for walkers and bikers in those areas. A good portion of people do not drive a car to access the park.

Doug Spence

From: MARK RICKEY <merickey@msn.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 15, 2022 10:32 PM
To: Parks <Parks@garfield-twp.com>
Subject: New Design Plan for the Commons Natural Area

I read the article in The Ticker and thought I would pass along some information that you may deem useful.

My family lived in Colorado Springs, Colorado for about 16 years. During that time, we became hiking enthusiasts, given all of the wonderful trails that were available to us. One such trail is behind Cheyenne Mountain High School. My wife and I hiked this and other trails on a frequent basis (3-4 times/week) and thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to get our exercise in such a great atmosphere.

The concern I have with the proposed trail plan in Traverse City is the intended use of the multi-use trail. While the intent is good and useful, and appears to be the link among the other trails, there is an element of danger that needs to be considered, based on our experience on Cheyenne Mountain.

This trail was also made available to hikers and bikers. The trail varied in width, with short and long runs. A majority of bikers were courteous to those who were hiking, which quite often included families with small children and others who were senior citizens. However, some bikers viewed this trail as their racetrack and rode their bikes at very high speeds. Many had a total disregard for others and assumed those on foot would certainly scurry to get out of their way so they wouldn't collide. It was far from a pleasant experience for many hikers and forced them to no longer hike that trail. In some cases, there were severe accidents, and both the bikers and hikers were seriously injured; medical personnel and their equipment had to be brought into the trail system to provide assistance. Many of the bikers were belligerent and screaming for people to get off the trail, as they deemed this was "their trail". There were a handful of times that my wife and I nearly escaped injuries due to these out-of-control bikers.

As a result of these documented issues and injuries, the "trail division" of Colorado Springs had to address the issue. Obviously, the very clear signage that was displayed at the beginning and throughout the trail system wasn't enough to educate those about using the trail in an appropriate manner. Therefore, the city had no choice but to reassess the trail system by providing a "biker-only" trail as well as hiker-only trails. To my knowledge, this resolved the issue.

The Ticker article indicates the mountain bike trail would be 2.78 miles long and the multi-use trail would be 1.8 miles long. I can guaranty you, there will be some mountain bikers who would view this as a 4.5 mile trail just for them.

I provided you with this information from a trail user perspective. I encourage you to contact the appropriate office in Colorado Springs to gather more of the facts about their issues/solution and compare it to the proposed trail system here. It's interesting to note that the design plan for this trail system is provided by the country's largest mountain bike trail builder, who should be able to provide their facts and assurance about safety. Their plan and information could be compared to the actual situation in Colorado Springs, thereby giving the Township an opportunity to assess the potential for pedestrian injury and safety.

I hope you find this helpful.

Mark Rickey



PO Box 1807
TRAVERSE CITY, MI 49685-1807
cherrycapitalcyclingclub.org

November 17, 2022

John Sych, AICP
Planning Director, Garfield Charter Township
3848 Veterans Drive
Traverse City, MI 49684

Dear John:

On behalf of the Cherry Capital Cycling Club, we would like to comment on the proposed trail improvements for the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area. The report, by ECT and Rock Solid Trail Contracting, is quite thorough and considerate of the significant public outreach program conducted by the Township.

The overall plan is well thought out, and will do much to provide good trail experiences for both hikers and mountain bikers. As many of our members use the Commons area for both outdoor activities, we appreciate separate trails where practicable. This will make trail use safer and more enjoyable for both groups.

We agree with the proposed trailhead locations, including main trailheads at Red Drive, Copper Ridge, and Long Lake Road adjacent to the Munson overflow lot. Hopefully this last trailhead can also be used as a jumping off point for a future trail to the Hickory Meadows/Hills area.

There will be challenges keeping hiker/biker interactions safe on the joint multi-use and conservation & recreation trails. The theory of "courtesy, caution & control" will be needed on the joint use trails, with faster moving users yielding to slower trail users.

The Cycling Club would like to stay involved during the planning, design and construction phases of this great project. When the time is right, Garfield Township should apply for grant funds during our annual grant application period every February and March. We commonly fund bicycle service stations and other types of trailhead improvements. Please refer to our grant application page on our website, at www.cherrycapitalcyclingclub.org.

Many thanks to Garfield Township and its staff for taking on this important project for the greater Grand Traverse community.

Regards,

Cherry Capital Cycling Club

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Danly".

Bill Danly, CCCC Board
Email; wbdanly56@gmail.com

Cc: Stephen Hannon, Deputy Planning Director
Jim Pecott & Rick Venner, CCCC Board

From: Jean Schramm <jean.schramm@greenspireschool.org>

Sent: Sunday, November 20, 2022 9:29 PM

To: Parks <Parks@garfield-twp.com>

Subject: Letter re Trails at Grand Traverse Commons

] TC Commons Trail Proposal - Letter
November 20, 2022

Did you know that a cyclist died on the rouge trails of GT Commons? Not only are the trails dangerous, but they cause erosion. The new design plan for GT Commons would close the dangerous trails and let the land heal and restore it to its natural state. They're also going to have a storm water management system to help with the rainwater so that it doesn't get polluted and run into the bay.

The rouge trails have affected the plants and animals. The new design plan would close off those trails and also make more paths for the hikers and bikers. This would let the land return to its natural state. The plants would be restored, animals would be able to make their homes, and make it sustainable again.

little bit about the design plan would also include a storm water management system that would help prevent pollution in the bay. Right now there is nothing to help with the rainwater.

Some people may argue that the new trail system will bring in too many people. I believe that this is not a big enough issue and that there are bigger issues like the ones mentioned before.

Some people may think there is better use for the money. I think that the new trail system is a good use because it helps the environment and it will last longer and people can continue to enjoy it.

Some people might even like the rouge trails but there will be many new trails with the new biking system. In addition to erosion and sustainability, they're dangerous. Someone passed away and people have fallen and got hurt.

So in conclusion, I think the new trail system is better than what is there now because the new trails will be better for the environment, more safe and it includes a storm water management system. I believe in this new trail system to make it a safe place and a thriving park!

By G. Buron
Greenspire Middle School Student

From: Jean Schramm <jean.schramm@greenspireschool.org>
Sent: Sunday, November 20, 2022 9:50 PM
To: Parks <Parks@garfield-twp.com>
Cc: Erin Fitzpatrick <erin.fitzpatrick@greenspireschool.org>
Subject: Letter re Trail System at the Grand Traverse Commons

To Whom It May Concern,

I have read about the proposed upgrades to the trail system at Grand Traverse Commons. I am a teacher at The Greenspire School directly next to the trailhead on Red Drive. Our students use the trail system on a daily basis and it is a wonderful resource and an essential part of our curriculum. The trails through the woods are an integral part of what Greenspire is and what attracts families to our school.

I think many of the upgrades mentioned in The Ticker article are great ideas and are badly needed for safety, access for all and to avoid further erosion in many places.

However, I am very concerned about the increased foot and bike traffic in and around our school that will affect our outdoor program and that could impact the safety of our students.

In addition, an increase in hikers and bikers would bring with it an increase in parking on Red Drive. There are not a lot of parking spaces there already because faculty and families for Greenspire School and NorthwestEd already use the parking places right at the Red Drive trailhead.

Furthermore, I think toilets, increased signage and benches at that trailhead will take up way too much space. I would suggest only one pit toilet such as those at the Beitner, Schumsky or Brown Bridge Canoe take-outs. Just keep the signs and maps that are already at the Red Drive trailhead.

I appreciate the opportunity to voice my opinion and concerns and I hope they will be taken into consideration.

Thank you,
Jean Schramm
Teacher at the Greenspire School

To the Planning Commission at Garfield Township:

I have spent so much time in the Commons that it is basically like a second home to me. I would like to say that if you add lots of gravel throughout the Commons, it will never be the same. I really support you making the Commons more wheelchair and stroller accessible. But if you add lots of mountain bike trails that will take so many special places away. And all I am trying to say is that you should not add unneeded trails when mountain bikers can just ride other places in the area.

~~Nettle B.~~

Nettle

Dear Planning Commission,

I am very upset about what I've heard. I spend at least six hours a week out on these trails, and when I heard what you were doing to them, I was very sad. Many trails that I've spent my childhood on are being changed and even blocked off. This makes me very sad and upset.

Sincerely,

Matilde Grace Ruth Killian Welch

matilde welch

To the Planning Commission at Garfield Township,

I am a Greenspire Middle School student and as a student who spends about 216 hours a year outside in the Commons, I feel that I have a big opinion on changing the Commons. I do like the idea of crushed gravel paths so that people who have wheelchairs or strollers can enjoy the trails that I hike every single day. However, I don't think that we need to make so many of them.

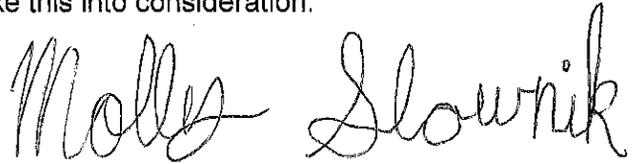
Sincerely, Ava Hartley

Ava Hartley

Dear Planning Commision at Garfield Township,

I would like to make my voice heard about the new trail plans for the Commons. I like the plans to make trails accessible for people with strollers and wheelchairs, but the plans to forbid people to walk on various trails is quite upsetting. We spend at least six hours a week on these trails, and making it so we cannot walk on them is discouraging for our school and the individuals who come to the Commons. Please take this into consideration.

Thank you,
Molly Slawnik

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Molly Slawnik". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

To the Planning Commission at Garfield Township:

I have gone to Greenspire for the past almost-three years. We use and enjoy the Commons pretty much every day. We estimated that we spend at least six hours a week on the trails and oftentimes go off-trail to admire the beauty of the natural landscapes and the animals that inhabit them. Your plan for closing off trails or changing them makes me worried. The trails you're planning on closing or changing are some of the trails that we use most, and I am nervous that we won't have the same experience on the trails we've used for so long. Additionally, the idea of paved or crushed-gravel trails is bothersome. I'm all for the trails being accessible to everyone, but there *are* other hiking sites people can use if they need other accommodations, like the Pelizzari natural area. I also need to talk about the trailhead, it's right next to our school.

Sincerely,

Maggie

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maggie".

Dear Planning Commission at Garfield Township,

I love your efforts to make the Commons a better place for everybody to enjoy, but I disagree with some of these plans. As a Greenspire student, I love being outside, hiking and being active. The Commons is like my second home to be totally honest, so having a lot of the main trails we use ripped out and replaced is kind of a lot to take in. While I do agree that we should add some paved trails for more accessibility for people who use wheelchairs and other medical accommodations, I think that the amount of biking trails added is more than enough, as you can bike on the walking trails (as long as you're being safe around others), and we already have some bike trails for mountain bike usage.

It's a big change for us, and we love the Commons how it is. Being unable to go to our favorite spots is kind of sad. However, I do also agree with some of the conservation spots such as the south east corner of the Commons natural area for a conservation location. However, the cedar forest is my favorite place to do many activities such as, looking for rocks, taking pictures, and just hiking through the cedar trees and feeling a sense of safety and happiness. I also love to play games in the cedar forest, and I think many of my friends and classmates would agree with that as well.

We also have to take a moment to think about the wildlife that lives in the Commons, such as deer, squirrels, red tail hawks, woodpeckers, coyotes, mice, porcupines, and so much more. More trails means more people and more injured animals. That's not a good thing. In fact, it's horrible. Some endangered animals live in the Commons, and having more people to accidentally hurt them or ruin their habitat is something that we don't want happening.

Sincerely, Josie Williamson

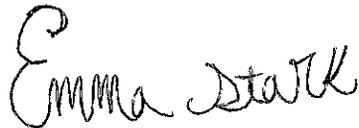
Dear Garfield Township,

I hike in the Commons six hours a week, every week.

I have begun to love the rustic charm of the Commons, but with the new trail plan, it will be destroyed. It will hurt animals, making them flee out of their homes. Accessibility is great, but when it's hurting our wildlife it is not worth it. Some of my favorite places in the Commons will be destroyed as well, one example being the rope swing. I love the Commons, it makes me feel at home and at peace.

Sincerely,

Emma

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emma Stark". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the printed name "Emma".

To the Planning Commission,

I think the new map idea is cool, but it's also sad to not be able to walk on some of the trails anymore. It might also disturb the wildlife, like squirrels and other animals when the trees get cut down. However, I do think it's a cool idea to put down gravel for wheelchairs, but I'm glad that there are some paths for bikers and walkers. I just think that there should be fewer or no trails for only bikers because they can already bike in some spots, and they have so many more places to bike than the areas we walk in very often. There are also spots that we like to go to and hang out in, and they are going to be very different in the new map.

– Mischa O.

Mischa

To the Planning Commission at Garfield Township,

People like to go on hikes, and now they are putting crushed gravel in the Commons, so it is not going to be the same hike anymore.

From,
Renella

Renella

Dear Planning Commission at Garfield Township,

I am a kid at Greenspire, and we spend a lot of time in the Commons trails, hiking and playing around. It would be sad to me if all the trails that I hike every week for 6 hrs were all paved and separated for traffic. For my 3 years at Greenspire, I will spend around 648 hours on the trails. We go on hikes in the woods, and you are planning to make it all so that we can't anymore. We also go on the trails in the mud and have fun. I will be sad if nature gets chased out of their home. We go on a lot of the land that is going to be conservation land, and we won't be able to go on them. We hope you change your mind for us.

Sincerely,
Edgar W. B.

edgar

Edgar

To the planning commission at Garfield Township,

When I first heard about the new trail plan for the Commons I didn't have any exemplary thoughts about it. I was upset, of course, but I only thought about it for a short time. After I saw the plans, I couldn't stop thinking about them. I spend an average of 6 hours a week on those trails, and now when I look around me all I can think about is how different it will be, and I won't even be around to see it.

But I was around to see the hikes, the leaf piles, the grasses, and the birds.

I was around to see my entire class rain drenched and freezing and I believe I've experienced the very best of the Commons and I think that taking that away from anyone would be a mistake that most wouldn't understand the depth of.

- Bella

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bella" followed by a small mark that appears to be "CW".

To the Planning Commission at Garfield Township:

In the three years I will spend at Greenspire, everything will change. I've wanted to go to Greenspire since I was in second grade because of all the stories my older sister and brother brought back to me. Now that I am here and out on the trails 6 hours a week, 216 hours a year, I have fallen in love with the trails I know today. If all of that changed, the places my sister loved, the places my brother explored, and the places I would have known will disappear. I'm all for widened trails and crushed gravel, but rerouting most of the trails and reconstructing the uses of the paths will alter my life. The cons of innovating the Commons are much larger than the pros, so please take my voice into consideration before you put this into motion.

Sincerely,

A Greenspire student

Dear Planning Commission at Garfield Township,

Greetings, I'm Addie Deik from Greenspire Middle School. I am writing in regard to the new proposal for the Traverse City Commons. At Greenspire I spend, at the very least, 6 hours and 45 minutes in the Commons Trails a week. That adds up to about 216 hours a year and 684 hours in the three years I will be on the trails for my middle school experience. Being in 8th grade, I have spent about 492 hours on the Commons trails so far. I believe that the middle schoolers and I have spent the most time out of anyone on the trails, and know them better than anyone.

The changes that you are planning to make completely change the Commons into something I don't recognize, don't know, and don't cherish. I know the trails by heart. I have had experiences and have special places that will be destroyed by the new paths that you are planning to create.

The new graveled paths are strange to me, being that it is significantly harder to walk on gravel than it is on plain dirt. The new trails also would destroy billions of plants and animals habitats. Those habitats won't be saved by making conservation areas. The new trails have so many twists and turns that, judging by the new map, a new person would be completely lost. I think you choose two new trails to put in place instead of adding far too many.

The new trail idea for the meadows loop will ruin many experiences and classes that we have at Greenspire. We hike into the meadow and go off-trail down the hill, where we see deer trails and circles in the grass. That is where we talk, do team exercises, and play games in Outdoor Education. The old orchard trail is known as a vigorous challenge for the Greenspire children, but the new plan for the trail makes the old orchard into a simple, low-scale trail. While this trail change is one of my least concerns, I love going up the hill as a challenge. My peers dread going up this hill, so if you are to make any trail changes, I would say this is the best one to change.

Some of the conservation areas that you are planning make me feel so tearful. One of them is the Cedar forest. I have had many, many memories of being in mud, looking at ice crystals, feeling and hugging the trees, having sit spots, and going far back in the forest where there are no signs of human life. To have that be taken away from me and being forbidden to go off-trail to have those experiences brings me to tears.

Another area is the wetlands directly west of the ISD. That is what we at Greenspire call Coyote Alley. Just recently, I went to Coyote Alley and I spent almost all of my time trying to memorize everything about it, because I felt so sad that it could be one of my last times there. We watch for deer, hawks, voles, and many other animals and plants in that area. To have the cedar forest, Coyote Alley, or any other area like the old orchard area forbidden to walk through would be devastating to any Greenspire kid's experience.

I think that paving or using dirt to level the existing trails would be better and more cost effective. Though, since there is a liability problem for the off-trails, I think you could choose some of the more heavily traveled off-trails and find small ways to make them safer.

The mountain-bike-only trails are a different subject. You are planning to make tons of the trails biker-only. I think it is good to make them biker-only for the safety of non-bikers, but I believe that you are planning to make far too many trails for bikers only. There are tons of places where mountain bikers can go to for bigger and better biking experiences. My last

concern is the restroom and visitors center for the Commons. I think it is a great idea to add this, but for you to build this you should build a better parking lot to suit the amount of people that travel the trails.

Thank you for reading my comments and concerns, have a great day.

Sincerely, Addie Delk

To the planning commission at Garfield township,

I am writing to you to see if I could persuade you to rethink your plan for the Commons in the upcoming 5 years. The trails in the Commons are definitely used and appreciated. Greenspire students alone spend over 6 hours on the trails a week, and we know the trails and know what should and what shouldn't happen. Although paving a portion of the trails will make it more inclusive to handicapped people, it isn't a big issue. There are paved trails just down the road near the historic barns. Even though the addition won't change the Commons extremely, it will still have an effect, especially for the Greenspire community.

To add an opinion to the other changes, the bike-only trails are not a great idea. There are lots of bike trails already, and to only expand them is a great idea, but to close them off to the public except mountain bikers is wrong. People who come to walk the trails should have access to all of them. Me and my class have walked on the current bike trails multiple times, and we have been mindful of the bikers using it.

Why spend 4 million dollars to critique the Commons trails that don't need it, when you could spend it on so many other things that can actually help and improve Traverse City? You could use a lot of that money to fix up the other buildings in the Commons and even gain profit from that. This is not a direct or big issue. Our trails don't need fixing, so why don't you put the 4 million dollars you're willing to spend toward something that needs it.

Sincerely,

Violet

Dear Planning Commision,

I just wanted to start off by saying that, although having trails for wheelchair users, strollers, and mountain bikers is a great idea, Greenspire Students love The Commons so much, and to see that we are not able to go to some of our most loved trails and spots breaks our hearts. We use The Commons for about 6 hours every week. Almost every time we go hiking, we go on Yellow Trail, and now to see that it's getting graveled for other uses, it's very sad. We also do Sit Spots. It's where we go to a spot and we sit there for about 20 minutes, and it's been carried on as a tradition for Greenspire. Most times we use Aspen Meadow for Sit Spots, but now it's going to be used as a mountain bike trail.

Also, in some places you're cutting down trees, and we need trees for good oxygen, food processes, reducing erosion, and helping with the pollution of the waterways. In addition, mountain bikers could leave their trash all around, and littering would definitely hurt The Commons. Another sad thing is that we always go to the rope swing, and although

most trees are dead, it's one of our most treasured places to stay. We try not to go on the hill because of erosion, and we don't want to hurt The Commons. We also spend a lot of time at the little waterfall, and to see it go makes me want to cry. Also, the new trails wouldn't just affect us. There are so many more people who go out in The Commons to spend their time. Greenspire Students have three years at Greenspire Middle School, and they'd love to visit places that we used to go last year such as the rope swing, sandhill, Aspen Meadows, and Baple Hill.

Sincerely,

Alexa

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alexa". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent loop at the end of the word.

To the Planning Commission at Garfield Township:

You should not make the changes you are planning to make to The Commons. I have been hiking since I was six years old, and my friends, family, and I would all miss the trails. Please reconsider or make the trails allow foot traffic.

From,
Sam

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "SAM". The letters are stylized and connected. The 'S' is a simple curve. The 'A' has a small loop at the top and a horizontal bar. The 'M' has a sharp peak and a long tail that curves back up.

To the Planning Commission at Garfield Township,

I am a student that attends The Greenspire Middle School. We hike the trails behind the Commons everyday, and I am very unhappy with your decision to change the trails. Some of our favorite places will disappear because of these decisions. The aspen meadow, the cedar forest, the rope swing, and much, much more will be gone. We hike these trails for almost every P.E. and Outdoor Education class, and we love them so much.

If these trails disappear, where will we hike? What will we do for Outdoor Education? Just sit around on our computers? I don't know about you, but I think that sounds pretty boring. Think about it: if you were in our shoes, would you want the trails to go?

Please reconsider changing The Commons, for all of our sake.

Sincerely,
Addison McGurn

Addison M^cGurn

To the Planning Commission at Garfield Township,

My name is Poet Shore. I have been a student at the Greenspire Middle School for two years, and this is my third and final year. Before I came to Greenspire, both of my siblings had attended and they would come home covered in mud with a smile on their faces. They would talk about how great this school was, and until I went I never understood just how amazing this school was. The trails give you a place to be quiet and unbothered. In this new world filled with technology and cars you can hear from a mile away, this gives young people such as myself a chance to just go out and not be surrounded by those things. While I know this new project idea won't fully take away the Commons, by changing it you are taking away the memories embedded in the trails.

I know that these changes are meant to be more inclusive to those in wheelchairs, but these trails are meant for hiking, so those people should know that it might not be the thing for them. We have plenty of other places where they can get the outdoor experience without changing our trails. Also, if this project will take over \$4 million, is it worth it? We could be putting that into so many other things in the Commons and get a profit from it. Now being a student at the Greenspire School, I go out on the trails about 6 hours a week. That is more than almost anyone else that uses those trails. The trail holds memories that other things just can't, so why take that away? I know I'm just a young person, but please, let my voice be heard and take my thoughts into consideration.

Sincerely,
Poet Shore

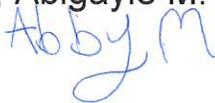
Poet Shore

To The Planning Commission:

I like the idea of the trails where there's going to be a crushed gravel trail, because then there's a spot where there can be wheelchairs and strollers. But I don't really like the idea of building new trails, because you're going to have to cut down trees. This is going to disturb the wildlife and could harm them, because they need to hide and they need trees.

We also need trees for good breathing air and some trees the animals need for food. And mountain bikers have other trails to go on. And we could keep the trails that are like hiking trails because again the bikers have other trails to go on.

Sincerely, Abigayle M.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Abigayle M." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "A" and a long, sweeping "M".

Hello,

My name is Madeline Peckenpaugh and I go to school at Greenspire. We spend almost six hours a week on the trails, and I fear that the trail upgrades will affect our ability to play games and walk along the trails like we used to. While I enjoy the fact you all want to make the Commons more accessible to people in wheelchairs and preserve the Commons, the fact that we won't be able to explore, run around in the cedar forest, or enjoy the wildlife there up-close (but not too close, of course), makes me and the rest of Greenspire feel frustrated. This whole thing seems really, probably way too expensive as well.

Sincerely,

Madeline

Maddie P.

Dear Planning Commission at the Garfield Township,

My name is Abigail J. Lee. I am a twelve year old that goes to Greenspire. I am currently going through my seventh grade year here. I recently have heard about your plans for the new trail system for the Commons.

I believe that this change you are planning will affect my school greatly, because, in case you are unaware, my school has a class specifically based on the outdoors, where we usually go into the Commons. Though it would be amazing if people with disabilities could also enjoy nature as I do, you are going to be making it so future Greenspire generations will not be able to experience what I've experienced because you are banning my school from some trails. I would like to request that you talk some things over with my school so future students and your descendents can fall in love with nature as I have, which they probably won't if you ban my school from all the trails. We will follow the rules to stay on the right side of the trail. I know that won't be enough, so please at least talk it over with my school.

I'm talking all about experiences I've had, but one simple example won't be enough, so I'll tell you some magical experiences I've had in the Commons. Once, while on a mud hike, a boy with a white hoodie lost his boot in the mud, and he had to reach down in the mud to try to grasp it. Afterwards, half of his white hoodie was black. I learned after that to always dress appropriately. Another experience I had was when I was doing sit spots. (Sit Spots is where we have to find a spot in an area and we have to sit there for an hour or more.) I was lying in the grass resting when I felt that I was being stared at. I sat up, and maybe ten feet away were two female deer, staring directly at me. It felt like 20 minutes, but it probably was just 2-5 minutes. I was shocked and forgot what deer do. Because it was huffing at me, I thought it was going to charge. I got scared, so the deer got scared and ran away. It was amazing! Another time during sit spots, I was resting in the grass and closed my eyes. I heard the birds chirping and the forest coming alive with noises and sounds, like a lullaby. Then I woke up with my whole class staring down at me. It was hilarious.

If you ban us from all the trails, the future generations of Greenspire won't be able to experience spectacular moments like these.

Sincerely,

Abigail Lee

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Abigail Lee". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent loop at the end of the word "Lee".

To the planning commission at Garfield Township,

I have been informed that you are planning to change most of the trails in the Grand Traverse Commons. I go to Greenspire, and I spend at least 6 hours a week on those trails. We as a school probably spend more time on the trails than anyone else.

We play games at cedar forest, and that's one of our favorite places to play capture the flag. With your changes, we will not be able to hang out and enjoy the beautiful area.

Another place we love to hang out is the rope swing. I don't know what we will do without it. It's like a symbol for Greenspire .

There are many more places that we love in the Commons. Without them, it's not really Greenspire. Most of my fellow students know the trails like they know the back of their hand . Those places, those trails, are the reason we all love this school.

Sincerely,
Devyn Lester

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Devyn Lester". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Hello,

I would just like to say that graveling the Commons will affect a lot of people. The Commons is supposed to be a place where people can come and enjoy the beauty of the woods and hike, but if we have gravel it, it's not going to be like that anymore. Aren't we supposed to be helping the environment by not destroying animals' natural habitats? Right now we are doing the opposite. The Commons is a really pretty, calming, quiet place, but if we have all these bike trails and cemented walkways, it's not going to be so quiet, pretty, and calming anymore.

I am a part of the Greenspire middle school, and we go into the Commons about 6 hours each week. The Commons is a BIG part of our school, and if we have people biking and graveled trails, we aren't going to be able to be a part of nature as much. This is really important to me and everyone at Greenspire that we get at least the same amount of property that the bikers get. Do they really need that much space? I'd say the Greenspire school goes into the Commons more than anyone, we use it the most. It may not be affecting you as much, but it's really affecting us. If we have paved walkways, it's not going to be so forest-y. It's going to be like any other "woods," and we don't want that. The Commons has been our special place for 10 years now, and hopefully we can keep it that way.

I can tell you, the people that bike in the Commons, don't go there as much as the Greenspire school does. Our outdoor teachers are outside hiking around in the Commons with different classes for 6 hours and 30 minutes each day! We would really appreciate it if we get to have more walking paths/space in the Commons.

With bathrooms and graveled trails, there are probably going to be a lot more people right next to our school. I'm sure that makes a lot of us very uncomfortable. There will probably be some crimes around our school, and don't you want to keep the students here safe?

Thank you for your time.

- Esme (Greenspire student)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Esme Juapp". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Dear Planning Commission of Garfield Township,

My name is Mena. I'm a student at the Greenspire school, and as you probably know we use the Commons trails daly. When we found out about the changes, we were both excited and, if I'm being honest, a little upset. Personally, I thought that the the graveled trails seemed nice, but when I saw how many there were, it seemed too much.

Sincerely,

Mena

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mena".

Hi,

I want to suggest some ideas or changes to this plan. I know there are going to be some changes, but I am worried about how drastic and overly expensive these plans are now. I think there should be some paving to make this more accessible for wheelchair users, but I would think, as a Greenspire student who uses the trails for six to seven hours a week, the number of crushed gravel paths you are planning to put in is a little absurd. I would put in just enough to get to some of the good spots, but I would still cut it down to about a mile.

I would also like to comment about the mountain biking trails now, due to the death of a biker. There is a very definite need for biking trails, but some of the places should not really be touched - like cedar forest and the southeast corner of the Commons. The amount of trail you are going to add will impact wildlife like red-tailed hawks and other species that should be cherished. They should be saved.

The clear cut I really think should just not be, the amount of damage you would have to do to the trees and bird/squirrel nests would be immeasurable. Just no. I have put in my word and I respect the words of others so please change your plans a little.

- Hendrix

Hendrix W. Jitte.

November 21, 2022

Garfield Township Parks Commission

3848 Veteran's Drive

Traverse City, MI 49685

Re: Comment on proposed Commons park plan

Dear Park Commissioners:

I am writing to provide history, context, and suggestions as the Parks Commission considers its recommendation of approval of the new Commons Master Plan for adoption by the Township Board.

First and foremost, the user group that this plan most directly (and potentially negatively) affects is the freeride mountain bike user group. I feel that it is important to continue to reference this group so that the future of freeride at the Commons does not get locked into limbo via an overly specific park plan. After all, the "social trails" at this park have been used and enjoyed by the more advanced mountain biking community for over 3 decades. Goal 4 of the Parks and Rec Master Plan (page 38) includes an objective to "Develop facilities to meet the physical needs and ability levels of all park users." Certainly, this goal is intended to provide recreational resources for beginners, but it was also intended to provide opportunities for advanced park users, which are certainly what the (sometimes near-pro) CRRA are.

The existing park plan describes the partnership with the Copper Ridge Riders Association (CRRA) on page 46. Notably, the park plan envisions the CRRA as a key stakeholder in the future of this park. This section was written following preliminary planning efforts years ago, when it was understood that the nature of some trail building efforts at the Commons (much predating Township ownership) could be troublesome, but possible. It was written to provide future flexibility in trail design. In short, the trails were recognized as a potential hot spot, but this was written to continue to involve the CRRA in future trail building efforts. This is a large user group, drawing riders from all over the state, and should not be ignored.

Furthermore, page 47 of the Parks and Rec plan describes the "North Parcel" near Oleson's on N Long Lake Road, including the pump track. This was always intended to offer an element of progression at the park, particularly when combined with the traditional XC mountain bike trails and then the flow/freeride trails.

I am concerned that the overly specific language of the proposed plan will limit the ability of the Township and the freeride community to work together in the future to develop advanced trails. These trails can and do get built safely across the state, but always including ride-arounds. These features can include skinnies (a.k.a. log rides), constructed wooden features, table tops, and jumps that are safely

constructed. These features are optional until the rider builds up the confidence to tackle the more difficult features (e.g., progression).

There are multiple examples of successful bike parks with more advanced features throughout the state, such as Copper Harbor, the Marquette trail network, DTE Foundation Trail near Chelsea, Palmer Woods in Leelanau County, Merrell Trail near Grand Rapids, and advanced downhill trails at Crystal Mountain and Boyne Mountain, to name a few. This is just a sampling and by no means an exhaustive list. These types of trails can be safely implemented. In fact, Rock Solid Trails itself builds some of the more sustainable, safe, advanced trails throughout Michigan and the entire country.



My specific suggestions on how to not lock the door on future advanced freeride opportunities at the Commons are as follows:

Page 11 of the proposed plan, which describes the Mountain Bike Trail Type, should include reference to the history of the CRRA group. I would suggest retaining language that reflects more advanced features may be permissible on the State 40 following proper dialogue between the trail group and the Township.

Secondly, I feel that the “State 40” section should be more explicitly called out on the map to the right. The red trails here are simply listed as “bike optimized singletrack.” My assumption of this map is that it is still conceptual in nature. It seems that the historic use of the State 40 as a social freeride park could be more clearly identified here, as well.

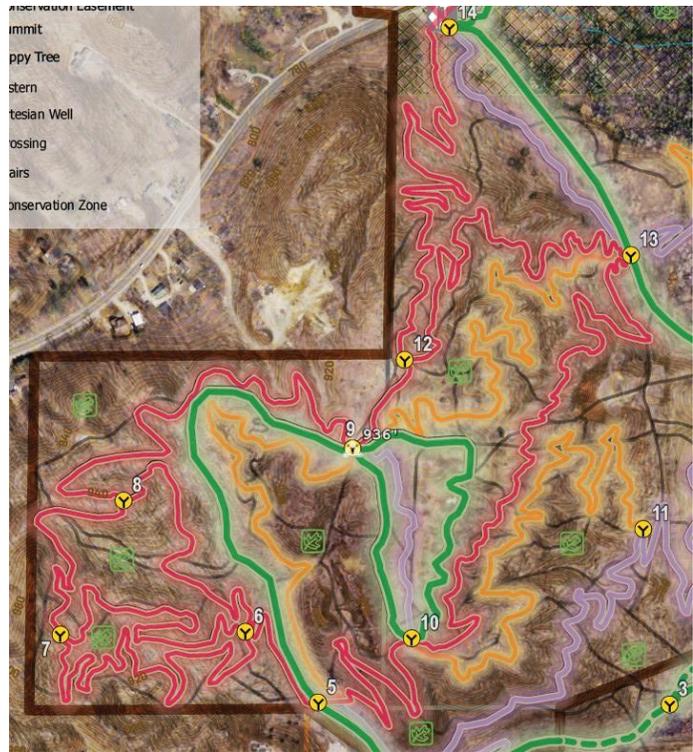
In closing, the CRRA user group has been enjoying the unique terrain of the Commons area for generations. I encourage the Township to recognize this historic user group and area as a freeride zone on the map to the right to give future flexibility to expand trails and features. As noted above, the current Parks and Rec plan was written in order to not shut the door forever on this user group.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this information. I would be happy to chat with the park commission if any questions remain.

Respectfully,

Brian VanDenBrand

Township Deputy Planner 2008 – 2017



From: andrew@earthenales.com <andrew@earthenales.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 17, 2022 4:13 PM
To: Parks <Parks@garfield-twp.com>
Subject: Support for Commons Natural Area Plan

I'm emailing to share my support for the new trail plan for the Commons Natural Area. As a frequent user of the natural area, I appreciate more thoughtful trail design, increased separation by use, and better protection of the area's natural features. As the owner of a business at the Commons, I also support these improvements to make the natural area more accessible to a wider demographic, as well as specifically maintaining the Gray Dr. access (while recognizing of course that it is privately-owned). Overall, it makes sense that as the Commons matures as a redevelopment project, that the Commons Natural Area should mature alongside it as a amenity for those that live, work, and recreate in this neighborhood.

Cheers,
Andrew Kidwell-Brix
Earthen Ales

Andrew Kidwell-Brix (he/him)
Earthen Ales andrew@earthenales.com
earthenales.com [instagram.com/earthenales](https://www.instagram.com/earthenales)

From: Anonny Mouse <genericjustkidding@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, November 10, 2022 12:01 PM

To: Parks <Parks@garfield-twp.com>

Subject: State Hospital

I note the recent article in the ticker fails to mention the homeless population taking up residence at the commons. Its dangerous, its unhealthy, its unsightly.... (pooping in the woods)... leaving garbage, drug paraphenalia. begging from nearby cars, lying in the road, cuttng down trees... (anyone else would be arrested for cutting trees down on public property). What is the plan for the homeless population and removing them from this area and enforcing it?

From: Zac Lakritz <zakritz619@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 21, 2022 4:07 PM
To: Parks <Parks@garfield-twp.com>
Subject: Copper ridge mountain bike trails

Hello! Just putting input on the trail plans for the mountain bike side of copper ridge. Would really like to see some one way use trails with jumps and gaps. Single track with rocks and roots and some flowy sections as well. Really looking for a place to progress our skills as bikers to maybe even make it a profession one day with the right places to train. Thank you for listening to us and hope to see something happen sooner than later.

-----Original Message-----

From: levi26forlife@gmail.com <levi26forlife@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, November 21, 2022 4:38 PM

To: Parks <Parks@garfield-twp.com>

Subject: Commons trail system

Hello, I am writing about concerns over the plan for the trail system at the commons. The commons and copper ridge have for a long time been the most progressive and exciting places to ride mountain bikes and get in the air. The recent closing of trails there with no plans to replace them until 2027 is extremely disappointing. I was expecting a big crazy master plan, instead we were presented with basically what we have already with signs and parking lots. Actually we are presented with less trails and a huge concern that there will be nothing worth traveling to ride (tourism). I am really proud of the room full of teenagers that showed for the meeting to reveal the "master plan". They shouldn't be without trails till 2027. I also am disappointed that as far as I know not one mountain biker that represents the "freeride" community was involved in the process so far. We want huge jumps and crazy trails. Not brown sidewalks in the woods "safety trails" no thanks!

Yours truly, concerned citizen

Levi Kyser

Sent from my iPhone

From: Hudson Lubbers <hudsol22@hollandchristian.org>

Sent: Monday, November 21, 2022 7:22 PM

To: Parks <Parks@garfield-twp.com>

Subject: Copper Ridge Trails

Hello,

I think we are all excited that there is still a plan in store for the property on Copper Ridge. It's been a big free ride spot for over 20 years and the big jumps and fast trails are what captured the hearts of all of us. Some people have been riding there for their entire lives. I just wanted to say that I hope you have a plan for some bigger more expert level jumps as it would be sad for it to become just another mellow XC trail system like the loads of them that Michigan already has. Copper Ridge is something very special and dear to a lot of us riders and I hope it can stay that way.

Thank You,

Hudson Lubbers

From: Stephanie Musil <stmusil2020@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, November 21, 2022 9:38 PM

To: Parks <Parks@garfield-twp.com>

Subject: New trail plan

Hello,

I lost my husband at Copper Ridge on 10/15/2022. He went up there to ride trails, to work on his technical skills, he went there to do what he loved and that was ride bikes. I always strived to be the best and always wanted to ride and practice on more difficult trails and that's what Copper Ridge offered. I stand with a biking community and I personally do not want to see the technical difficulties removed. That would be a dishonor to my husband, that would be a disservice to the youth who ride those trails. If you take away the technical and the difficulty of those trails, then you'll be like every other trail system around and you will lose tourism. While working on the trails I also suggest you leaving some of them open for people to continue to ride not shut the whole trail system down.

I also think given the circumstances a way to honor my husband would also be to name a trail or the park after him with my approval before doing so.

I hope you take what I have to say, and those of the biking community into serious consideration.

Please feel free to call me anytime.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Musil

 Charter Township of Garfield Planning Department Report No. 2022-109		
Prepared:	November 30, 2022	Pages: 2
Meeting:	December 5, 2022 Parks and Recreation Commission	Attachments: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Subject:	2023-2027 Parks and Recreation Master Plan	

BACKGROUND:

Garfield Township has adopted the Parks and Recreation Master Plan to guide future improvements and investments in parks and recreation, and to make the Township eligible to apply for certain grant funding programs to help finance parks improvement projects. The Township adopted the most recent Parks and Recreation Master Plan on January 22, 2018 and adopted an amendment to this plan on May 14, 2019; the current Plan on file with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) expires on December 31, 2022 for its eligibility for MDNR grant programs.

The Township is currently updating its Parks and Recreation Master Plan with the goal of submitting it to the MDNR by February 1, 2023 to be eligible for MDNR grant programs starting in 2023. This updated Plan will cover potential projects over the next five years including capital improvements, trail projects, potential property acquisitions, and more. The Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan will be included as part of the Plan, which will guide future projects to implement the preferred design for the Commons Natural Area.

REVIEW OF PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN:

Parks and Recreation Commissioners first reviewed an overview of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan at their October 3, 2022 meeting and discussed upcoming potential projects for each park to include in the Action Program of the Plan. At the November 7, 2022 meeting, Commissioners reviewed draft Goals and Objectives. Since then, Commissioners have also provided individual feedback on a full draft of the Plan. Changes incorporated into the draft Plan since this previous draft include the following:

- Community Description – adding Green Lake Township for comparison and population data
- Administrative Structure – indicate Park Stewards’ role in coordinating with law enforcement
- Role of Volunteers – add information on United Way “Born Learning” Trail signs
- Recreation Inventory – improve readability of summary tables
- Park Descriptions – tweak some descriptions to add information
- Maps – tweak some information and add page numbers to all maps
- Accessibility Assessment – show accessibility grade for each park in this section
- Planning Methods – reference 2022 NRPA Agency Performance Review for comparisons
- Early Public Input – include additional information from 2021 Park User Survey
- Demographics – indicate the high share of population over 65 compared to the county and state
- Physical Characteristics – include maps and details on major roadways and watersheds
- Goals and Objectives – include additional information based on Commissioner feedback
- Action Program – include park development plans (River East, Silver Lake) as appendices
- General formatting and editing throughout the entire document

The full draft of the 2023-2027 Parks and Recreation Master Plan is attached to this report, including all appendices. This meeting is intended to review the full draft before noticing the public review period for the Plan and recommending adoption of the Plan to the Township Board.

ACTION REQUESTED:

If, following discussion, Commissioners are satisfied with the draft Plan, then the next steps would be to motion to notice the 30-day public review period and to recommend adoption of the Plan to the Township Board. The following draft motions are provided for consideration:

MOTION THAT the draft 2023-2027 Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan attached to PD Report 2022-109 BE MADE AVAILABLE for public review for a 30-day period and that a notice BE PUBLISHED for the public review period.

MOTION THAT Resolution #2022-1-PR, RECOMMENDING THAT the Township Board ADOPT the 2023-2027 Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan attached to PD Report 2022-109 and following the 30-day public review period, BE ADOPTED.

Any additional information deemed necessary by Commissioners should be added to these motions.

Attachments:

1. Full Draft of the 2023-2027 Parks and Recreation Master Plan
2. Resolution #2022-1-PR

 Charter Township of Garfield Planning Department Report No. 2022-108		
Prepared:	November 29, 2022	Pages: 1
Meeting:	December 5, 2022 – Parks and Rec Commission	Attachments: <input type="checkbox"/>
Subject:	Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Draft Design Plan – Next Steps	

BACKGROUND:

Once the adoption of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is complete, implementation of the Plan for the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area will be a primary focus for the Township. The Parks and Recreation Commission can provide guidance and feedback on implementation activities.

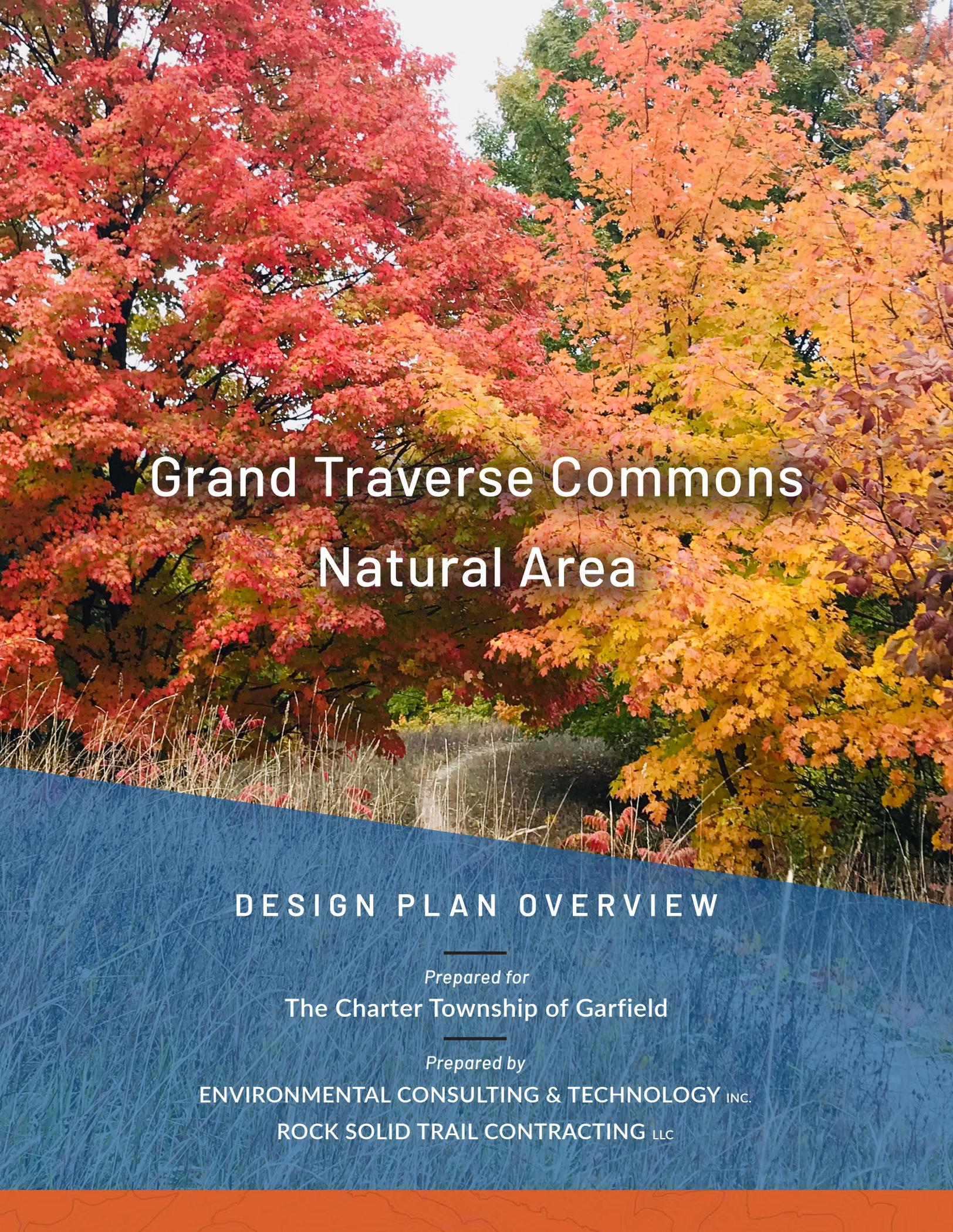
DISCUSSION:

Initially, staff believes the subjects listed below will be important for discussion. There may be additional subjects.

- Funding Sources. Identifying funding sources to support construction of plan elements is an important first step. While grants will certainly need to be identified, there should also be consideration for other means of funding such as donations.
- Volunteers/Further Public Engagement. The Commons Natural Area has a wide array of visitors with a variety of interests. Encouraging the public in implementation efforts helps to create buy-in and further support for the park. How do we engage them and have them become a part of improving the park?
- Final Designs, Construction and Maintenance. The Plan provides the desired layout of trails and facilities, however, there will be more details needed in the final designs, construction, and ultimately maintenance.
- Policy Development. The Plan identifies several policy subjects requiring further study, including e-bikes/e-sports, public safety, events, and conservation easements/deed restrictions. Additional policy subjects may be identified. The Parks and Recreation Commission may study these subjects and provide recommendations to the Township Board.

ACTION REQUESTED:

No action is needed. This is for discussion only.



Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area

DESIGN PLAN OVERVIEW

Prepared for

The Charter Township of Garfield

Prepared by

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING & TECHNOLOGY INC.

ROCK SOLID TRAIL CONTRACTING LLC

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The Charter Township of Garfield



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Charter Township of Garfield (Township) hired Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc. (ECT) and Rock Solid Contracting (Consultant) to conduct park planning and design services for the improvement of Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area. The Township sought to develop design scenarios and a final design that builds upon the Township's Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the Grand Traverse Commons Master Plan, but also recognized the Natural Area's relationship to surrounding properties and neighborhoods.

Primary goals for the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area:

1. Create a multi-user park that meets the year-round needs of residents and visitors for passive recreation opportunities;
2. Create access between the park, adjacent neighborhoods, and other parks;
3. Incorporate native landscape materials; and,
4. Protect and enhance the park's natural resources and wildlife habitat.



This Plan is the result of a yearlong public outreach and design process and provides the following recommendations to help the Township reach Project goals:

Public Outreach and Input

Goal - Gather input from stakeholders, neighboring property owners, community leaders and trail users to better understand the communities desired way forward with trail improvements and focus areas.

Online and Surveys:

- The Commons Natural Area Questionnaire – 82 responses
- The Commons Natural Area Property Owner/Stakeholder Questionnaire – 14 responses

Paper Surveys:

- The Commons Natural Area Questionnaire – 26 responses
- The Commons Natural Area Property Owner/Stakeholder Questionnaire – 3 responses

Open House:

- Open House #1 – 75+ attendees
- Open House #2 – 54+ attendees
- Open House #3 – TBD

In-Person Interviews:

- Over 17 one-on-one interviews conducted with Stakeholders

Site Walks/Visits with Adjacent Property Owners:

- 5 visits conducted

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Trail System Improvements

Goal – Improved safety and functionality of use for a variety of user-groups within the trail system. Respect existing environmentally sensitive areas, improve conservation and habitat throughout.

Existing trails: Total: 9.36 miles

- Sanctioned Trails/Connectors: 4.07 miles
- “Social” Trails: 5.28 miles
- The overall length, configuration, style and density of social trails suggests existing sanctioned trails are not meeting the needs of current users.

Proposed trails: Total: 9.65 miles

- Conservation Recreation: 2.84 miles
- Mountain Bike Focus: 2.78 miles
- Multi-Use Trails: 1.80 miles
- Run / Hike Focus: 1.77 miles
- Existing Connector: 0.26 miles
- Proposed Connector: 0.22 miles
- While the total existing length of trail is similar to what is being proposed, the intentional use and density of proposed trails is lower, particularly in respect of the conservation easement areas.

Trail Material Improvements:

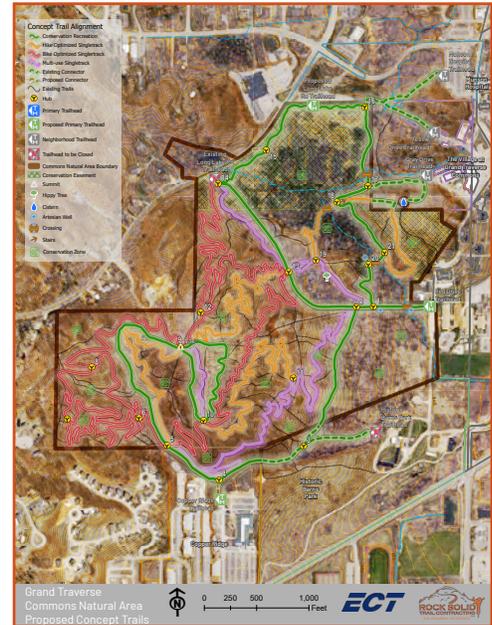
- Proposed trail design works with the natural grade, topography and fall line of the Natural Area to reduce erosion potential.
- Material types will be conducive to the trail user and topography
- Natural materials will be preferred including crushed limestone

Hubs:

- Addition of 9 trail intersection hubs to allow for safe management of shared trail areas for a variety of user groups.

Signage and Wayfinding:

- Create access between the park, adjacent neighborhoods, and other parks with consistent and recognizable signage/wayfinding.
- Consistency with The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways (MUTCD), Traverse Area Recreational Trail (TART) and other signage/wayfinding standards.



Proposed Concept Trails



Conceptual Conservation Recreation Trail

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Trailhead Improvements

Goal - Improved visibility, intentional entrance and improved amenities for trail users.

Trailhead Locations:

- Red Drive – primary, most modern with restroom trailhead
- Copper Ridge – small, bike-amenities available
- Long Lake Road – largest, habitat and environmental improvements

Amenities:

- Restrooms, seating areas, educational signage, bike racks, and wildlife viewing areas.

Habitat and Environmental Recommendations

Goal - Protect and enhance the park's natural resources and wildlife habitat while maximizing opportunities for viewing and education of these areas.

Restoration:

- Allow the land to heal in areas where currently eroded or otherwise degraded from prior use.

Protection:

- Protection of environmentally sensitive and/or habitat areas.

Enhancement:

- Identify opportunities to enhance existing environmentally sensitive or habitat areas.

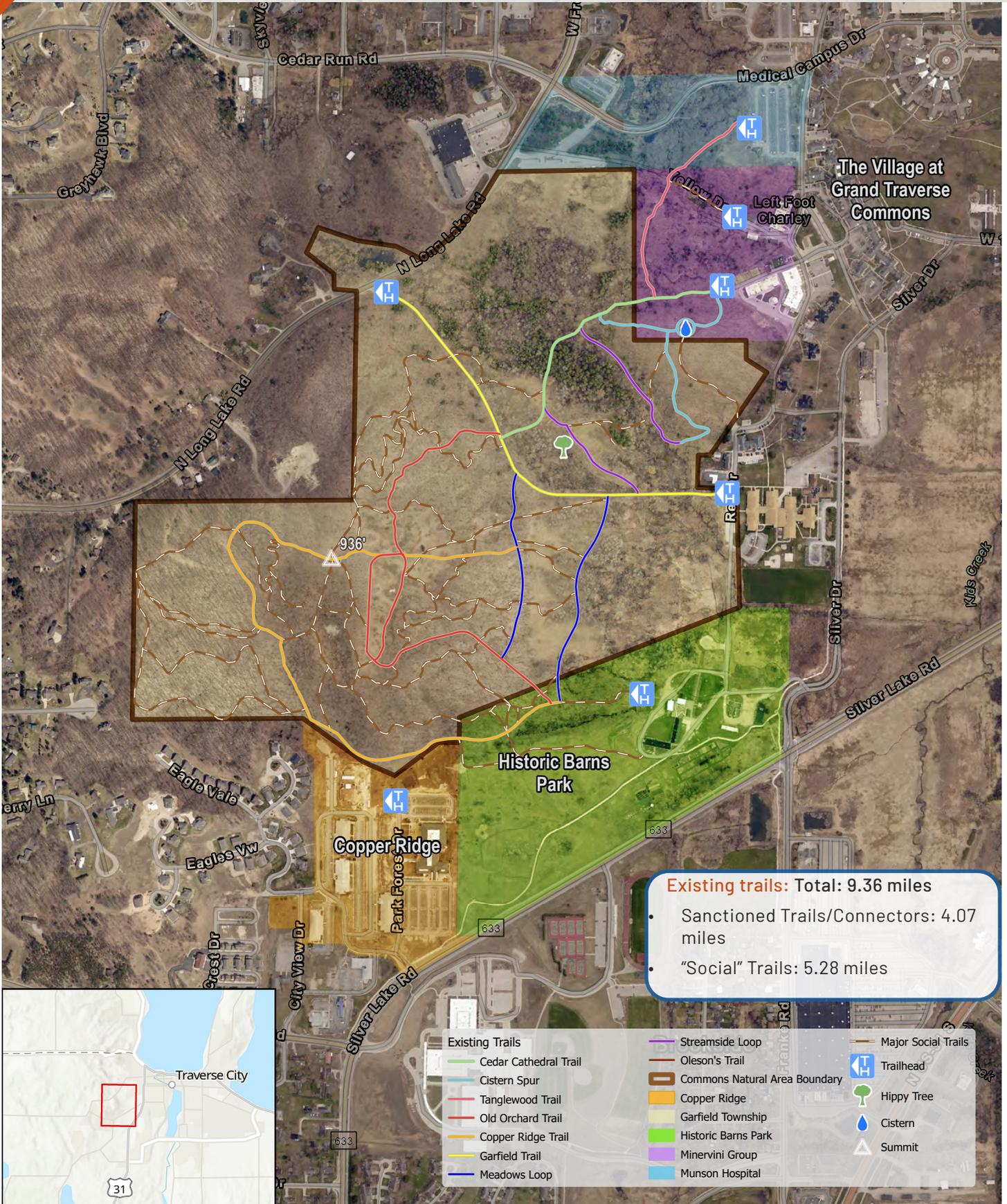
Sustainability:

- Put planning efforts in place to ensure long-term sustainability of the proposed improvements.



Meadows Trail, Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area

EXISTING CONDITIONS



Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area



0 250 500 1,000 Feet



INTRODUCTION



Spring ephemerals in a mixed hardwood forest

Overview

Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc. (ECT) & Rock Solid Trail Contracting, LLC. (Rock Solid) are pleased to present this report summarizing the recommended configuration of new trails and amenities at the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area (the Commons) in Garfield Township/Traverse City, MI.

The purpose of this report is to outline a plan that builds upon the Township's Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the Grand Traverse Commons Master Plan, while recognizing The Commons' relationship to surrounding properties and neighborhoods.

After reviewing the Existing Conditions Report, completing a desktop analysis and conducting a field review of The Commons, ECT and Rock Solid engaged in a robust outreach process to gather input and feedback from a wide range of stakeholders. Outreach included private meetings with project proponents and key stakeholders, such as adjacent landowners, special interest user groups, and Garfield Township Board, in addition to hosting three open house meetings to share the plan with the public and present opportunities for individuals and groups to provide feedback.

Observations & recommendations received during this process are carried forward throughout this report. The final plan, which went through multiple stages of revisions, largely calls for a full redesign of natural surface trails, in addition to new trails and amenities to accommodate a wide variety of users.

INTRODUCTION

Location & Topography

The Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area currently consists of four parcels totaling approximately 185 acres in the Northwest corner of Garfield Township, in Grand Traverse County, MI. Private parcels along the eastern border of the Commons are in Traverse City, which include Munson Hospital, the Village at Grand Traverse Commons (owned by the Minervini Group), Traverse City School District Administrative Offices, and the Greenleaf Charter School. The western boundary is formed by Long Lake Road and residential housing developments. The northern boundary is formed by an overflow parking lot owned by Munson Health. The Historic Barns Park and the Copper Ridge Medical Park border the Commons to the South.

The Commons Natural Area is an envelope of parkland, bordered by these developments.

This parkland area includes most of the trails, a variety of forest ecosystems, and other key natural features such as scenic overlooks, wetland areas and artesian springs. The landscape form is the result of glacial activity and consists of hilly terrain with a 300' vertical relief to the southwest and low lying wetlands that run northwest to southeast. The topography influences several other aspects of the site such as wetland locations, stormwater runoff patterns, and more.

Only two existing trailheads, Long Lake Road and Red Drive, are located on property owned by Garfield Township. These trailheads are relatively small and lack amenities such as bathrooms, drinking water, welcome/wayfinding kiosks and gathering space. Due to more developed amenities and their proximity to the urban core of Traverse City, many users of the Commons Natural Area access the area from trailheads located on private property. These include the Village, Munson Medical Center and Historic Barns park.

There are other nearby properties owned by others which extend the park or have park amenities such as trails or trailheads. Properties under consideration in this report are Historic Barns Park, Minervini Group, Copper Ridge and Munson Medical Center.



Meadow at Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area

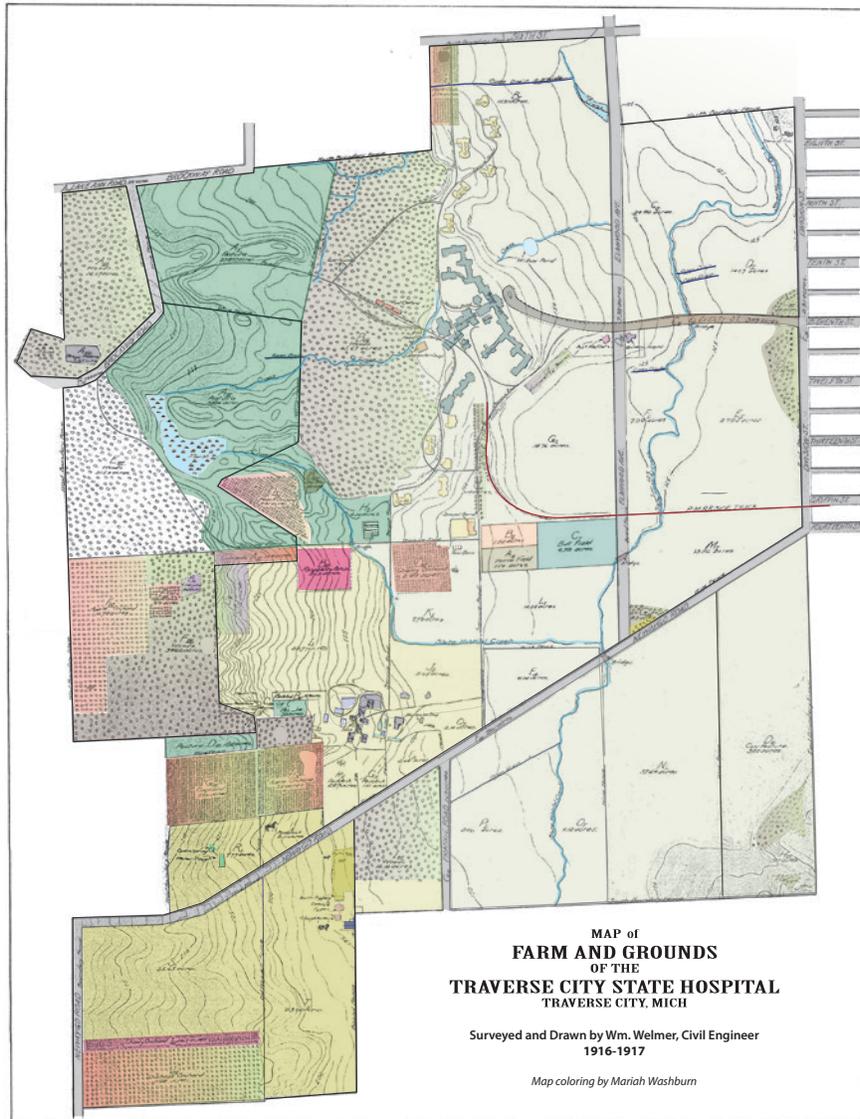
INTRODUCTION

Use History & Background

Until 1989, the Grand Traverse Commons was host to the Traverse City State Hospital. The hospital is stated as offering patients an environment with light, sunshine, fresh air, and access to nature as part of the philosophy of "beauty is therapy" espoused by the hospital. Since 1993, when the Township acquired the land, this philosophy has continued, as the park is a significant recreational asset to the surrounding community. This history, coupled with the central location/proximity to other parks makes Commons Natural Area a popular destination, so easements were put in place to preserve the natural and historical elements of the property. However, due to the popularity of the park hiking & biking trails have begun to form outside established trails. Over time, a spiderweb of (approx.) 6 miles of social/rouge trail has formed to meet the needs of different users. Social trails have contributed to destruction of sensitive habitat, soil erosion, and negative user interactions, in addition to presenting safety, liability and wayfinding challenges.

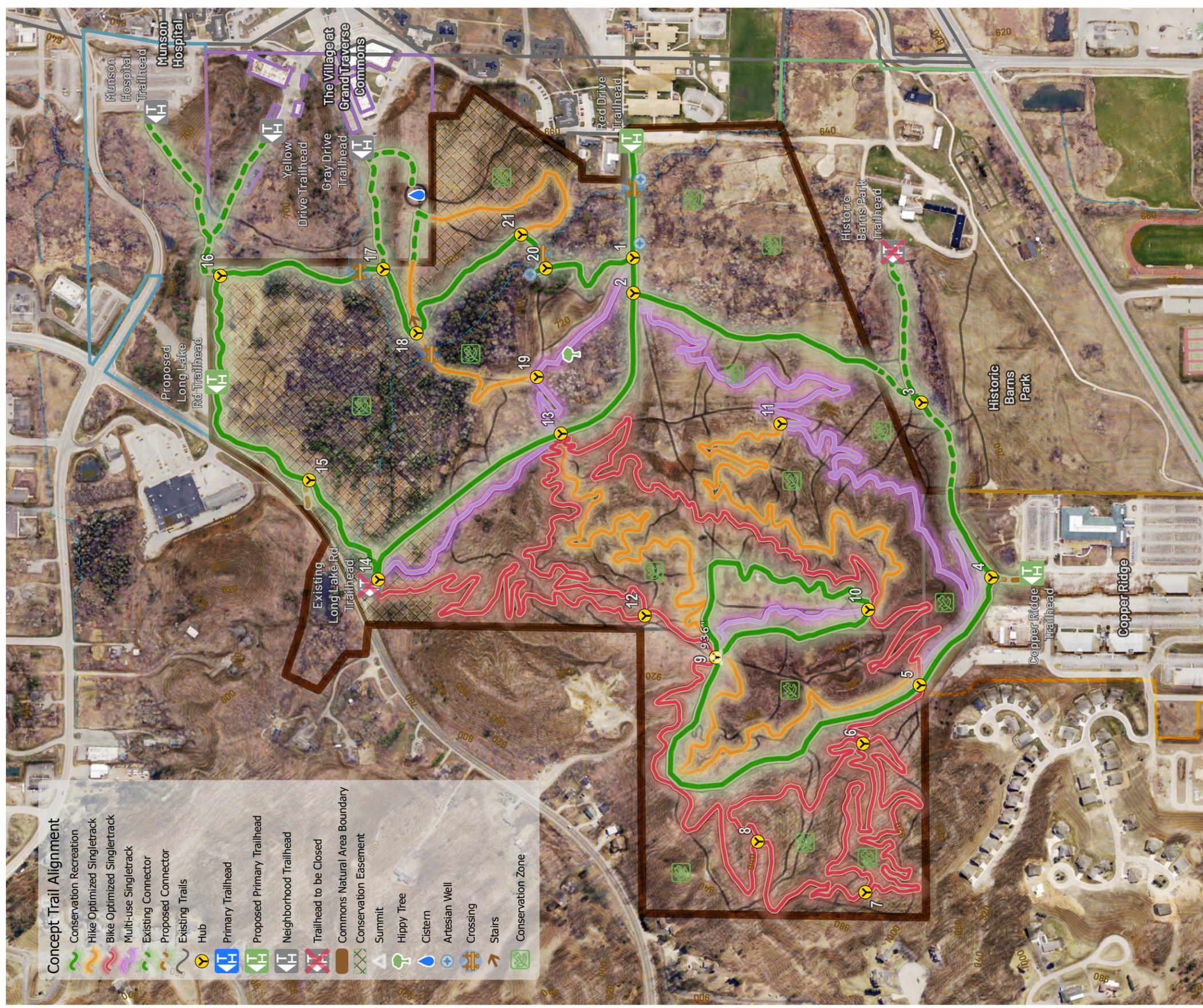
In 2021 a deed restriction alteration removed the restriction on bicycling and ultimately allowed for 'non-motorized public use'. This now allows the Township an opportunity to engage in a process to actively engage, and support, multiple user groups throughout the community.

The findings in this report are carried out to reflect the need for a cohesive plan to mitigate issues and wisely use the land for continued recreation, protect/restore natural & historical and cater to different users.



Historical Map of Grand Traverse Commons & Surrounding Parcels

TRAIL MAP



Concept Trail Alignment	
	Conservation Recreation
	Hike Optimized Singletrack
	Bike Optimized Singletrack
	Multi-use Singletrack
	Existing Connector
	Proposed Connector
	Existing Trails
	Hub
	Primary Trailhead
	Proposed Primary Trailhead
	Neighborhood Trailhead
	Trailhead to be Closed
	Commons Natural Area Boundary
	Conservation Easement
	Summit
	Hippy Tree
	Cistern
	Artesian Well
	Crossing
	Stairs
	Conservation Zone

Grand Traverse
Commons Natural Area
Proposed Concept Trails



- Proposed trails: Total: 9.65 miles**
- Conservation Recreation: 2.84 miles
 - Mountain Bike Focus: 2.78 miles
 - Multi-Use Trails: 1.80 miles
 - Run / Hike Focus: 1.77 miles
 - Existing Connector: 0.26 miles
 - Proposed Connector: 0.22 miles

Suitability & Design

The vast concentration of trails are best suited for the hilly terrain to the west/southwest park. Trails will take advantage of topography, grade and soils to best suit trail type and user experience. This terrain is especially suited for multi-use, hike and bike optimized trails AKA soft surface trails. Soils consist of sandy loam which is well drained and particularly suitable for the soft surface trail construction. Soft surface trails typically have a smaller footprint than Conservation Recreation therefore stormwater run-off poses less of a threat. Conservation Recreation trails in this portion will be routed in areas that take advantage of low angle grades to suit users and mitigate stormwater run-off.

The northeast portion of the park is less hilly with wetlands and creeks making it less suitable for a concentration of trail types especially with the goal of natural restoration in mind. Development in this portion will mostly consist of Conservation Recreation, connector trails and hike/multi-use. With the overall goal of restoration in mind a large portion will be left undeveloped and existing trails to be reclaimed.



Schematic diagram of proposed trail types (not to scale)

Trail Types

To appeal to a wide variety of users different trail types optimized for each user group are recommended. Different trail types help facilitate ease of use while satisfying the recreational needs of a multitude of users. We target four trail types to best suit this; Conservation Recreation, Mountain Bike Optimized, Hike Optimized and Multi-use. Upon implementation of the above recommended trail types, the Township team will continue to monitor and assess potential future user concerns such as speed, etc. Should the need for additional trail features such as traffic calming features be necessary, they may be implemented at a future date.

Conservation Recreation

Conservation Recreation trails will accommodate a wide variety of users, including walkers, strollers, balance bicycles, some wheelchair users and those unable to access biking or hiking single track trails. Trails will be wide enough to easily accommodate passing groups of foot traffic and feature subtle grade reversals and insloping. Grades will be gentle and generally not exceed 5%, except in areas where steeper grades may be required due to landscape or property boundary constraints. Trails will have a natural crushed rock surface. This trail will also allow for potential emergency vehicle access where possible in the system.

Location: Northeast loop, southern 'lollipop' out and back loop

Targeted Users: Walkers, hikers, sightseers, strollers, cyclists, children, disabled, elderly, wheelchairs, other

Overview:

- Suits the broadest range of users
- Easiest
- Promotes connectivity and ease of use
- Central catch-all for easy wayfinding.
- Create opportunities for novices to progress on basic trail skills

Characteristics:

- Smooth wide tread 5-7 feet wide
- Long line of sight
- Gentle grade
- Raised tread/culvert drainage
- Erosion control
- Natural winding feel
- Distinct wayfinding
- Higher area footprint
- Crushed rock



Schematic diagram of proposed conservation recreation trail (not to scale)

Mountain Bike

Mountain Bike Trails refer to bike-optimized singletrack trail that has been constructed to optimize the experience of a mountain bike rider. Grades are typically lower than hiking trails and obstacles are constructed to be rollable or otherwise passable by bike. Important elements of mountain bike trails, include insloped turns, frequent grade reversals such as rollers, berms and technical trail features such as skinnies or tabletop jumps. Mountain bike trails can be flowy like a roller coaster or technical which are narrow and challenge a users bike handling skills. Gravity oriented trails focus on utilizing the grade of a hillside to generate momentum while, XC or cross country trails rely on human power to generate momentum and tend to meander through the landscape.

Location: West, Southwest

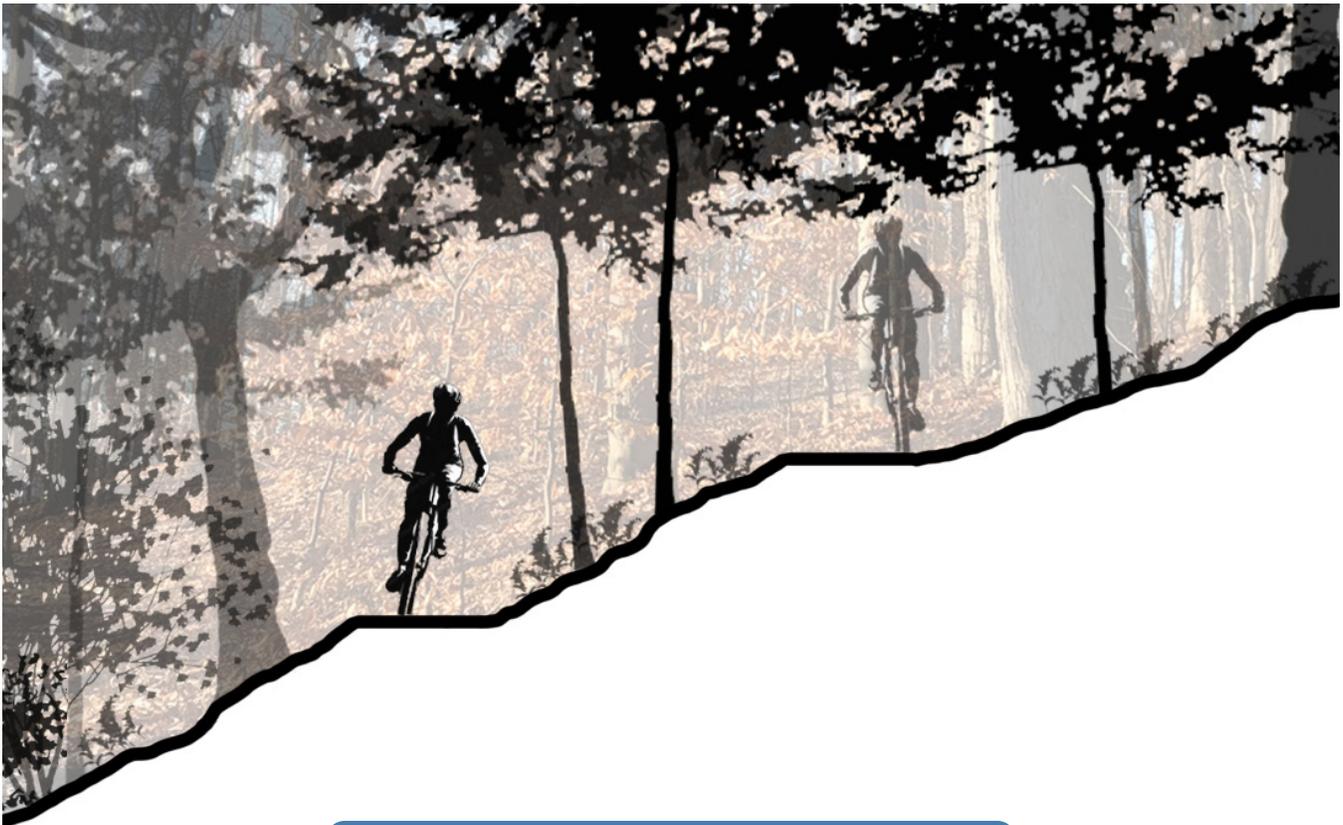
Targeted Users: Mountain Bike

Overview:

- Suit the user objectives of mountain bikers
- Promote challenge, fun, exercise, variety, nature, etc
- Constructed with insloped corners, berms, rollers and technical trail features
- Use of opportunistic landscape features
- Oriented for one or two way travel
- Opportunity to progress skills

Characteristics:

- Narrower tread (1-3')
- Optional lines
- Technical or flowy sections
- Frequent grade reversals, outsloping, naturalizing, hardening tread and raised tread
- Medium footprint
- Constructed with native mineral soils & rocks
- Culverts may be used for drainage
- Wood or steel bridges may be used
- Indirect route to destination



Schematic diagram of proposed mountain bike trail

TRAIL TYPE

Hiking Trails

Hike optimized trails are intended for foot traffic only and typically are of two-way direction. They tend to be narrower and have higher grades than mountain bike trails. Trail tread is often outsloped. Associated with a destination or points of interest along the trail, they lead directly to that point versus a mountain bike trail, where travel may be more indirect. They may contain obstacles, such as steps, over 12" high using native landscape opportunities.

Location: East, West, Southwest

Targeted Users: Hikers, Naturalists, Sightseers

Overview:

- Foot traffic only
- Two way direction
- Narrower
- Higher grades
- Associated with a destination or points of interest along the trail
- More direct to destination

Characteristics:

- Less frequent grade reversals
- Obstacles over 12" high
- Flat corners
- Low footprint
- Uses native rock, soil, existing trees



Schematic diagram of proposed hiking trail

Multi-Use Trails

Hike optimized trails are intended for foot traffic. Multi-use trails are intended to host both hikers and bikers. Characteristics of multi-use trails include in sloped-turns and frequent grade reversals. Berms and technical trail features are infrequent and constructed in consideration of both user types. Berms are generally restricted to switchbacks with a wide tread. Technical trail features are often on side trails. Multi-use trails lack steps and features that are challenging to roll over with a bike. Sight lines are long to ensure users have an opportunity to detect on-coming traffic as early as possible.

Location: East, Central, South

Targeted Users: Hikers, Bikers, variety of recreationalists

Overview:

- Use between groups
- Ease of connectivity
- Shared points of interest
- Spatial constraints
- Controlling speed
- Max grade does not exceed 10%
- Wider tread or passing areas

Characteristics:

- Long line of sight
- Gentle grade
- Low feature frequency
- Wider tread
- Medium footprint
- Uses native rock, soil, existing trees

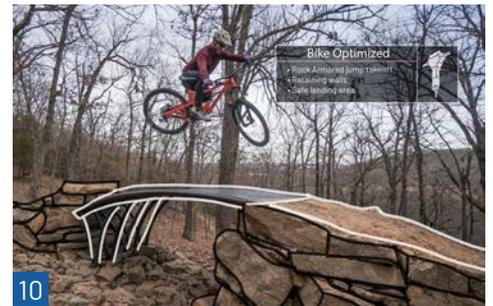
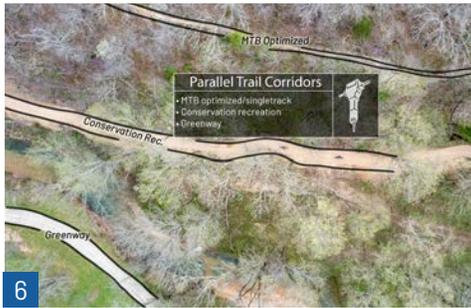


Schematic diagram of proposed multi-use trail

TRAIL TYPE COLLAGE



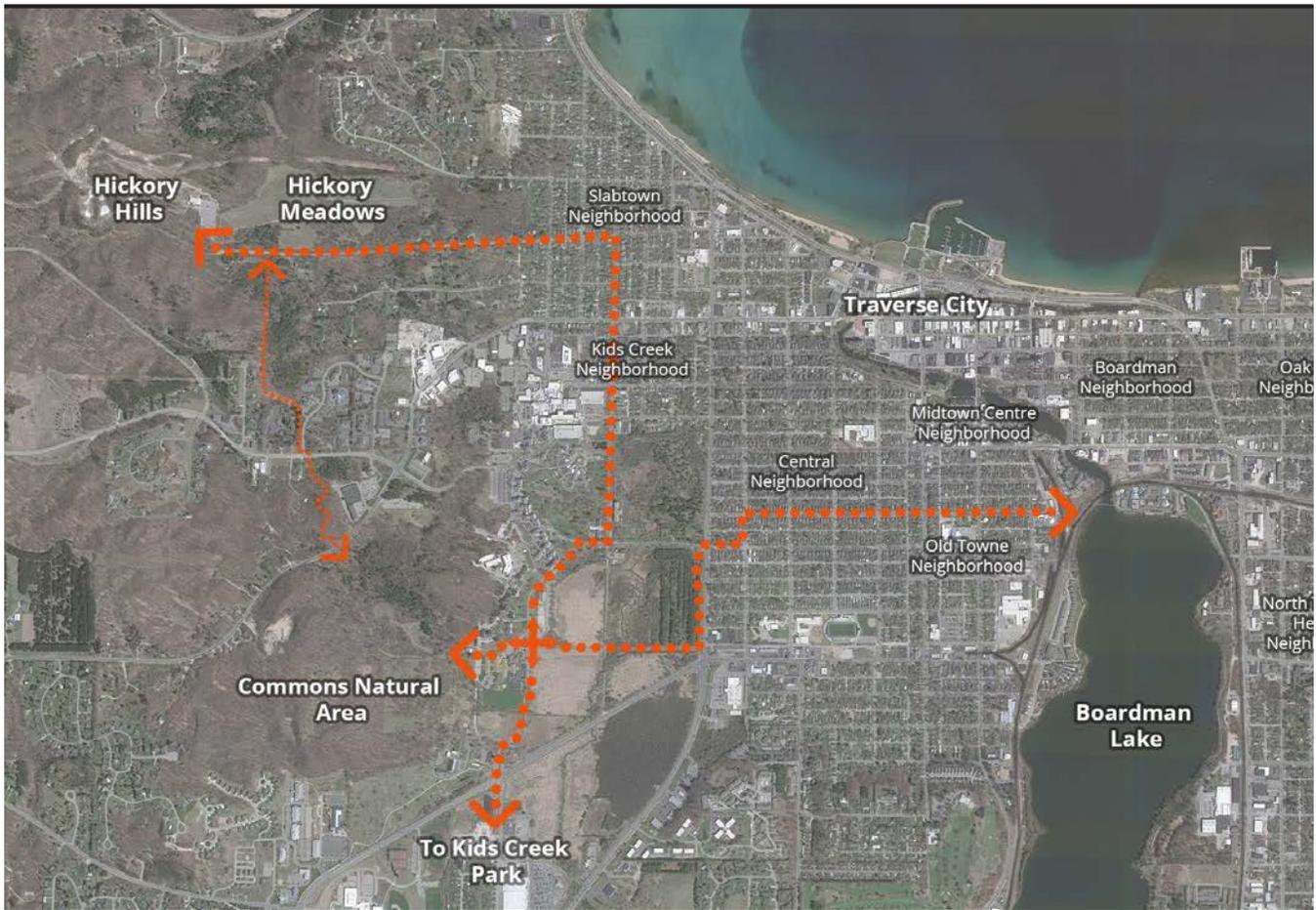
1. Bike Optimized - Blue Square
2. Conservation Recreation
3. Hiking Optimized - More Difficult
4. Bike Optimized - Very Difficult
5. Multi-Use Trail - Easy
6. Conservation Recreation, Bike Optimized and Greenway
7. Hiking Optimized - More Difficult
8. Bike Optimized - More Difficult
9. Conservation Recreation
10. Bike Optimized - Very Difficult
11. Conservation Recreation
12. Multi-Use Trail - More Difficult
13. Conservation Recreation



Connections-Conceptual

The Commons Natural Area offers a unique location and relationship to surrounding properties and neighborhoods. Providing connectivity to, and through, the Commons property in connection to existing community trail systems, parks, and adjacent neighborhoods is important for long-term user engagement and accessibility. As a part of this planning effort, Garfield Township has identified several key connection locations to these existing trails and conceptually laid out future connectivity options. It is important to acknowledge that connection to these trail systems will require additional conversations with adjacent/other property owners. This document is intended to start the thought process for future consideration to assist with these important conversations. Some key future connections as shown on the schematic below include:

- Boardman Lake Trail
- Traverse Area Recreation Trail
- Slabtown/Downtown Connections
- Hickory Hills Recreation Area
- Buffalo Ridge Trail



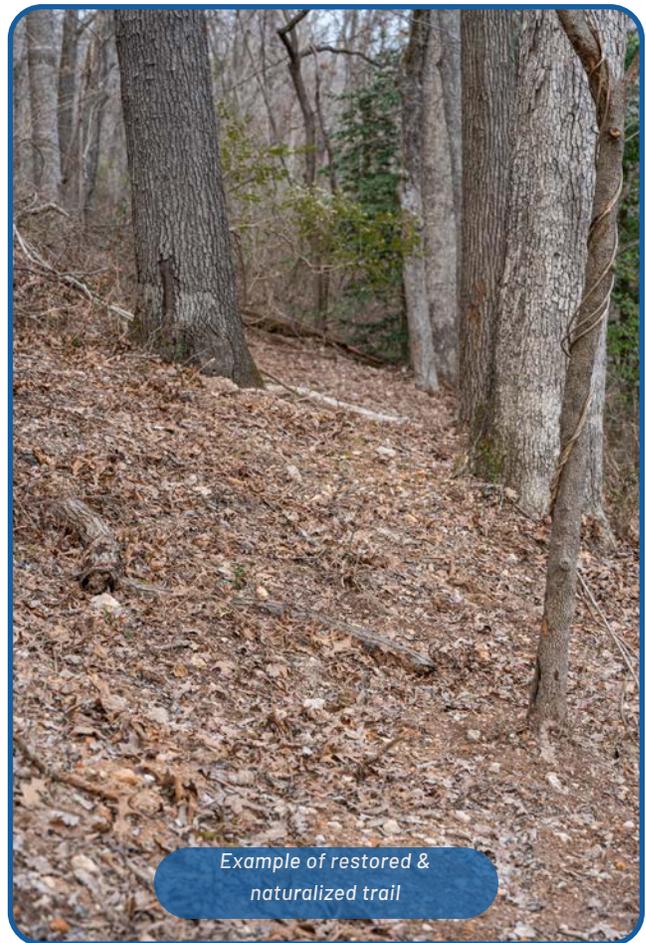
Commons Natural Area Future Connectivity Visioning
Not to Scale

Closures

Organic popular demand for natural surface trails by hikers and off-road cyclists lead to the development of an extensive network of social trails. Social trails make use of old road corridors and game trails, but have also been purpose built in some instances without permission. Many of the existing trails do not comply with modern & sustainable trail building practices. Many sections are too steep or not properly armored. Combined with the sandy soils found throughout the project area, erosion is taking place on many existing trails, especially on the single-track style trails that do not follow old roads or two-tracks. Compounding environmental concerns are safety concerns surrounding initial build quality, maintenance of bike trail features, and uncontrolled intersections.

The proposed concept plan captures many segments of existing two-track within the conservation recreation trail network. Many of these sections follow old road cuts, so placing them in alternative locations is not always logical, however, some meandering to soften the grades may be required in some areas. Relatively few sections of existing single track are captured by the proposed trail plan. Many sections of existing trails exceed sustainable grades or lack proper drainage and cannot be captured within the alignment of new trails.

Physical closure of existing trails is typically completed during the construction phase of new trails. Closure involves raking native duff and topsoil over the tread and placing woody debris and seedlings cleared from new trails onto the old trail corridor. Trail entrances have larger brush piles to discourage users from entering the trail. Jute netting or other erosion control methods may be appropriate in some instances to secure topsoil and promote revegetation of the trail.



Maintenance

Keeping a trail system clean and well maintained is critical to the ongoing success of a trail system. A well-designed trail minimizes impacts to surrounding landscape and requires little maintenance, however eventually all built trails and bike facilities will require some level of upkeep. Dirt erodes and nature is always working hard to take back what's been built, so the trail maintenance process is on-going. Quite often, maintenance strategies develop as a by-product of lack of forward planning combined with negative feedback from trail users. Developing a maintenance strategy is highly recommended.

Budget: A recommended maintenance budget is typically 5-10% annually of the initial construction cost. For example, if the trail system cost \$1,000,000 to plan, design, and build, a suggested annual maintenance budget would be in the \$50,000 - \$100,000 range.

Personnel: Based on Budget.



Professional Contractors

Professional trail building firms can be hired on an as-needed basis or under an annual maintenance contract. Hiring on an as-needed basis can be challenging since firms may or may not be already booked when you need them. Having a maintenance contract ensures that the professional firm will have the work scheduled and staffed. Just be sure to identify and agree to fixed maintenance schedule items (Spring & Fall, for example) as well as the process and potential timelines for responding to unscheduled work. Having these discussions up front can help to avoid misunderstandings and ensure all parties have the same expectations.

Staff

Hiring employees to execute maintenance needs can be a very cost-effective option to hiring professional contractors. In addition, having permanent staff makes it possible to quickly respond to issues as they arise, and provides a permanent set of eyes on the property to hopefully stay ahead of issues before they become bigger issues. Having dedicated staff also provides a good opportunity for ongoing public engagement and an informal (or formal) feedback loop for hearing what the community does and doesn't like about the trail system.

Volunteers

Volunteers can be a great asset to a community trail system. Many trail systems around the country are currently maintained by local volunteer organizations. Volunteers are very cost effective and provide a good avenue for establishing a sense of pride and ownership in the local community. Volunteers typically need direction, so be sure to have appropriate staff to help guide and oversee volunteer activities. In communities with large, successful trail volunteer organizations, the majority of maintenance can be delegated to the volunteer group, as long as there is a solid history of performance and a desire of the volunteer group to shoulder that type of responsibility.

TRAILHEADS

Trailheads are the points where users enter the Natural Area Trails. Final locations, configurations and amenities offered at each trail head will be determined during early phases of the Final Design to ensure consistency with trail layouts and a holistic approach to traffic flow within the property. When appropriate, Garfield Township will continue to coordinate with adjacent landowners during this process.

Red Drive Trailhead: This trailhead is located entirely within the Natural Areas Parcels owned by Garfield Township. Existing parking spaces are paved or gravel and access the existing Garfield Trail directly from Red Drive. This trailhead is recommended to be developed as a primary trailhead since it is the only access point owned by the Township. Amenities will include modern bathrooms, drinking water, benches, a welcome kiosk, wayfinding and potential wildlife overlooks with educational signage.



Schematic diagram of Red Drive Trailhead

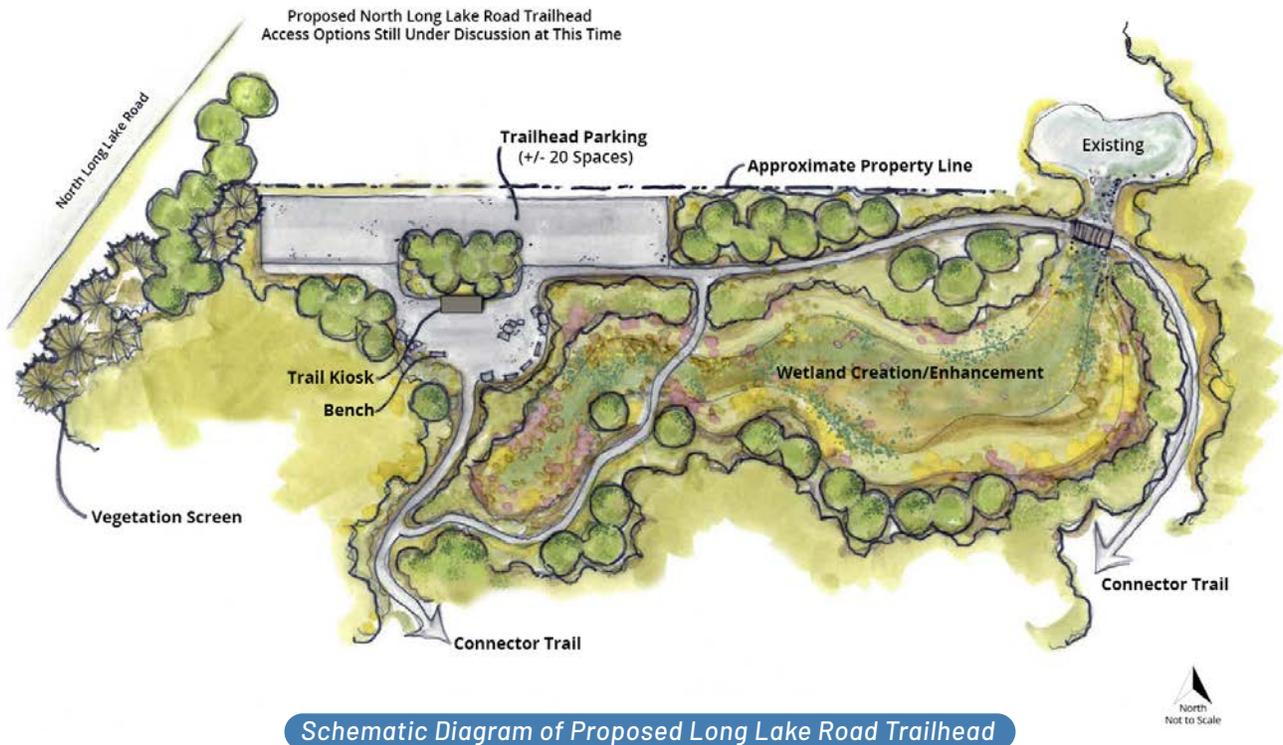
Yellow Drive Trailhead: This trailhead is located within The Village at Grand Traverse Commons at the western terminus of Yellow Drive. Recommended improvements are limited to support the existing parking and foot traffic capacity. Amenities would likely be limited to signage, wayfinding and benches.

Gray Drive Trailhead: This trailhead is located within The Village at Grand Traverse Commons at the western terminus of Gray Drive. Recommended amenities would be limited and should consider proximity of residential housing to the trailhead and desire to reduce additional vehicle traffic. This trailhead is known to attract users after park hours which is disruptive to existing owners. Extra signage presenting rules alongside conspicuous surveillance equipment is recommended. Occasional private security patrols may be appropriate to enforce rules on private property.

TRAILHEADS

Munson Parking Lot Trailhead: This trailhead is located on the west side of a staff and patient parking lot. Recommended amenities would be limited due to safety concerns with access and shared parking constraints with Munson. Future discussions around the possibility of closing the existing trailhead.

Proposed Long Lake Road Trailhead: This trailhead would be located adjacent to the existing overflow lot on Munson property. This trailhead would be developed as a primary trailhead. Amenities will be determined in coordination with the Grand Traverse Conservancy (conservation easement holders) and likely to consist primarily of natural materials, limited build out, and proposed wetland/habitat enhancements. Access to this proposed trailhead is still under discussion, considerations include new access off Long Lake Road or shared access with Munson. Safety is the primary factor given existing traffic patterns and cross-road access at Oleson's Plaza.



Close Existing Long Lake Road Trailhead: This existing trailhead is located on Garfield Township property. It is accessed from Long Lake Road and can accommodate approximately 6 vehicles.

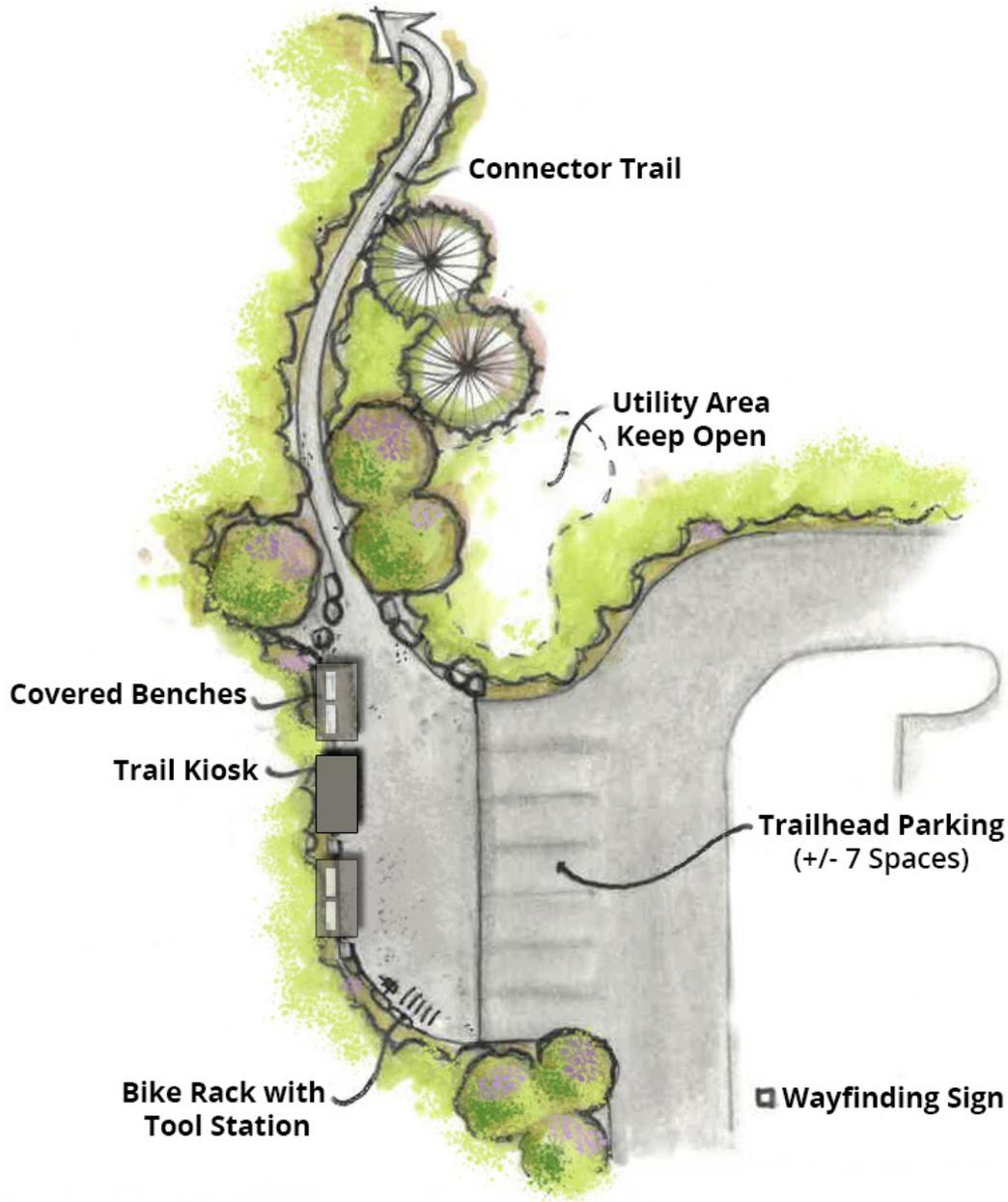
Closure of this trailhead is recommended due to safety and congestion concerns associated with the driveway to Long Lake Road and its limited size. Removal or replacement of existing kiosk and re-route to other trailheads can be considered during initial phases of the project.

Close Existing Historic Barns Trailhead: This trailhead is located on private property owned by the Historic Barns Park. Due to limited parking capacity and increased use of the Park, this trailhead is recommended for closure to the general public. However, to support programming at Historic Barns Park, the existing connection trail will remain.

TRAILHEADS

Proposed Copper Ridge Trailhead: This proposed trailhead is slated to be located on private property owned by Copper Ridge but the parcel includes an easement for a small trailhead.

Development of a small trailhead is recommended here to support approximately 7-10 cars. Given the proximity to the proposed mountain bike trails, this trailhead would be focused on cyclists. Amenities would be limited to include signage, wayfinding, benches, small pavilion, bike racks and tuning station.



Schematic Diagram of Proposed Copper Ridge Trailhead



TRAILHEAD AMENITIES

Restrooms

Restrooms require maintenance and staff management in public spaces. As such, most of the Natural Area trailheads will not include a modern restroom. The exception to this is the Red Drive trailhead, as this will be the primary trailhead until another primary trailhead can be developed on the northern boundary of the property. This trailhead will have amenities not found at other trailheads, including a full restroom. To accommodate year-round use, the bathroom will be heated. The bathroom will be only open during park hours, with Township staff managing traffic and use. Conspicuous surveillance equipment is recommended for user safety and to prevent vandalism.

Shared Parking Provisions

Ensuring adequate parking near proposed trailhead areas is an important consideration to ensure user accessibility. Understanding that the bulk of trail user traffic will occur in the “off” business hours, evenings and weekends, the Township is hopeful to provide shared parking scenarios where possible to limit proposed impervious parking areas. Several trailheads are located on private property, including Munson Hospital, Yellow Drive, Gray Drive and Copper Ridge. The size, configuration and parking spaces allocated to visitors to The Commons will be coordinated between Garfield Township and landowners during future constructability discussions with adjacent property owners.

Benches/Tables

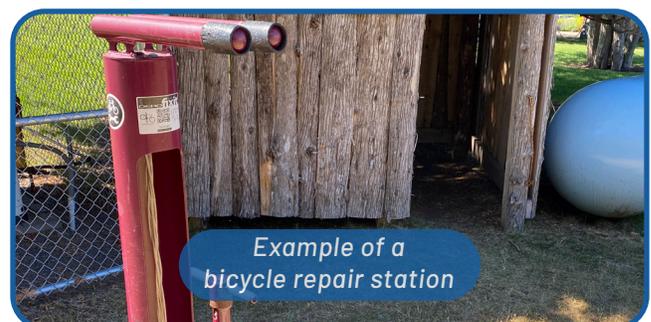
To provide users opportunities for rest or leisurely relaxation, benches and tables are recommended to be installed at key locations. In general, to confine the footprint of trail facilities and amenities, these benches and tables will largely be associated with trailheads or major hubs/intersections within the park. Locations for benches or tables not associated with trailheads or hubs, could include scenic overlooks or other points of interest, and will be identified during Final Design phases.



Example of bench & information kiosk

Bicycle Service Stations

The Commons is popular with recreational and off-road cycling enthusiasts alike. Many cyclists will access the Commons by riding their bicycles and not by car. To accommodate cyclists in need of routine bicycle service or repairs, Bicycle Service Stations are proposed at the Red Drive Trailhead and at the proposed Copper Ridge Trailhead. Common amenities included in a bicycle repair station include (but are not limited to), a place to hang or mount a bike during repair, allen and torx wrenches, screw drivers, tire pumps, shock pumps, spoke wrenches, and chain tools. Local bike clubs or bike shops may be interested in sponsoring Bicycle Service Stations.



Example of a bicycle repair station

AMENITIES

Waste Management

Any publicly available and utilized area needs provisions for waste to ensure it is handled appropriately. The Township will manage waste cleanup and disposal areas to ensure safe for the public. Animal proof waste receptacles will be installed at trailheads and at key intersections. Receptacles will be made available to accommodate trash and recycling. Containers for returnables will not be provided.

Waste & recycling receptacles will likely require daily removal during the spring, summer and fall.

Artesian Wells

At least three artesian wells spring freshwater onto the surface. Two of the wells, along Garfield Trail, have concrete caps and a third has seen un-approved improvements by people seeking to use it as a water source. Each is in a degraded state.

These springs provide a novel opportunity for recreation, education and sustenance. Artisanal spring water is sought out for the natural minerals it often contains, or for its taste. Other visitors may be interested in learning about the natural processes which make these wells flow. During the design phase, improvements to these springs will be identified and finalized. A desirable concept to pursue includes natural landscaping around the spring which would include a spot for filling water jugs.



Erosion at artesian well site, Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area



Conceptual improved artesian well

Interpretive Signage

The history of the Grand Traverse Commons and Natural Areas is important to capture in the planning and design looking forward. In an effort depict the unique confluence of nature and history, interpretive signage will be incorporated into trailheads, intersections and along conservation recreation trails. Appropriate topics would include local flora and fauna, hydrogeology of artesian wells, glacial geology, history of indigenous people to the area and how they may have used the natural area, post settlement history/history of early Traverse City, history of the hospital. The proposed trail system design will also include viewing areas where appropriate to allow opportunities to appreciate all the Natural Area has to offer, in a low-impact viewshed, with educational signage for users.



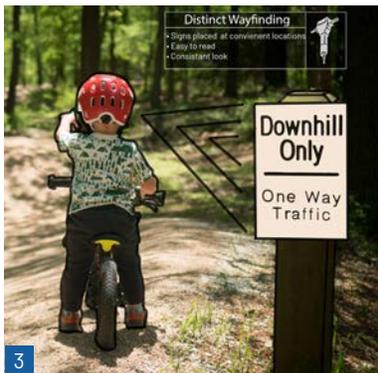
Hiker interacting with an interpretive sign

AMENITIES

Wayfinding System

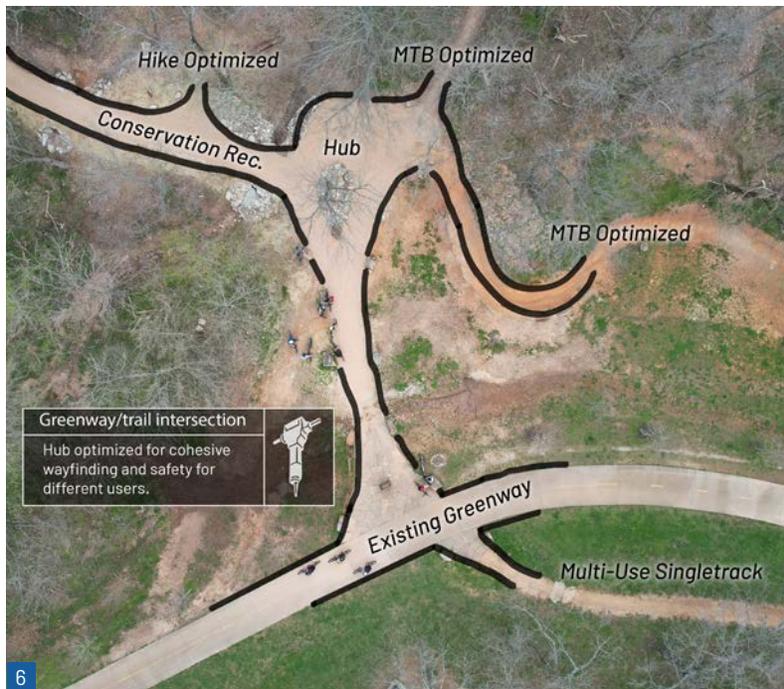
Signage and wayfinding are a critical component of implementing a successful trail system; serving to improve user direction and prevent overuse and social trail management concerns. It is important to have consistent signage placed at convenient locations that are easy to read and have a recognizable look or brand.

Trail experiences are classified into different ratings based on difficulty. Providing the difficulty symbol, trail length, and average grade on signage provides valuable information to the riders. Rate trails relative to other trails in the region so that riders can reasonably expect some similarity in difficulty levels of trails within the same region. For more information on the NSAA trail difficulty ratings and signage programs, please visit the following web page. <http://www.nsaa.org/safety-programs/mountain-bike-code-trail-signage/>



WAYFINDING

1. Elevated Trail Hub
2. Hub & Intersections
3. Trailside User Education
4. Trailhead Sign & Logo
5. Bike Rack with Facilities
6. Conservation Recreation, Hike and Bike Optimized with Hub
7. Trailhead Map Kiosk
8. Simple Elevated Hub
9. Trailside Rider Education
10. Trail Marking & Wayfinding
11. 'Natural' Trail Flyover

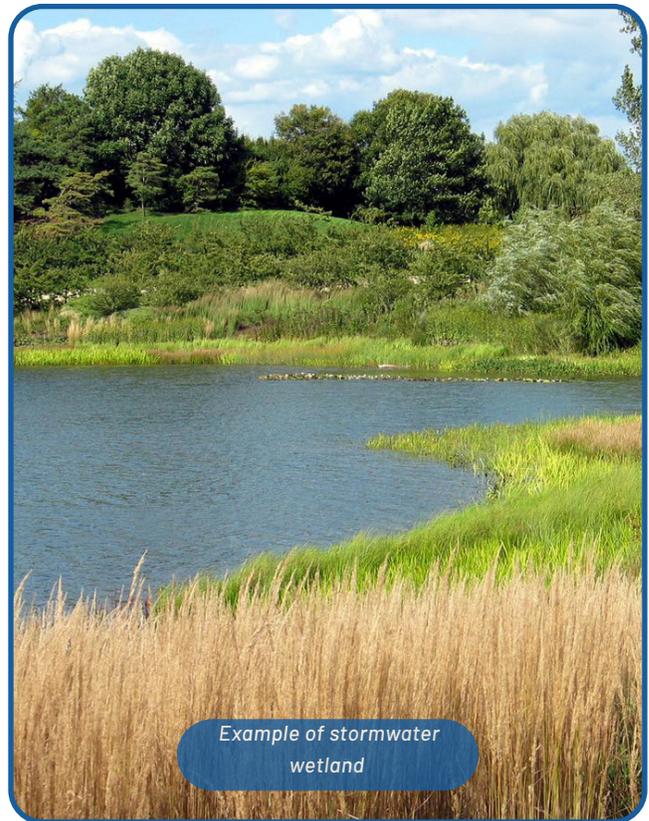
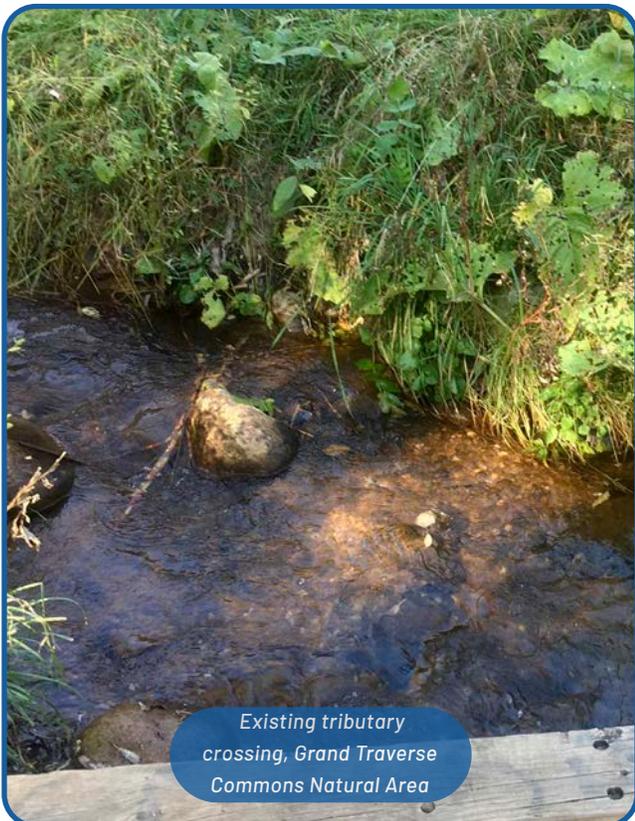


SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Stormwater Management

The Natural Area includes over 185 acres of unique land and watershed given the diverse topography, soils, and vegetation throughout the site. Stormwater moves expeditiously throughout much of the site given the steep gradient, causing severe erosion in many areas. This erosion is a safety hazard to users, and not sustainable for long-term protection of this valuable resource and its down gradient to historic neighbors. Currently, there have been little to no stormwater management features implemented throughout the trails to help properly manage the water flowing off this large plot of land. In addition, rogue trail building and neighboring property developments upstream of the Commons property, some of which include impervious areas, further exacerbating the erosion, stormwater peak flows and sedimentation entering the trail and tributary waterways throughout. Ultimately, this water flows out of the Natural Area via existing waterways and/or the trail pathways, and into downstream neighboring properties such as the Commons, Historic Barns Park, and Munson properties. The waterways flowing within the Natural Area eventually connect to Kids Creek, a recognized impaired waterway, then out to the Boardman River and ultimately Grand Traverse Bay. Garfield Township recognizes the importance of better protecting these valuable water resources through improved stormwater management techniques throughout the trail system.

As part of the proposed way plan for the Natural Area, final design will include green infrastructure and stormwater management features to reduce stormwater runoff utilizing decentralized systems to allow water to naturally infiltrate within the Township property where possible. Proposed management systems should include: vegetated buffer zones, rain gardens, wetland enhancement, supplemental tree plantings, natural trail materials, and new trail alignments working with the topography and fall lines to minimize erosion.



NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Conservation/Ecological Restoration

Revitalizing and refreshing the trail network within The Commons Natural Area presents a unique opportunity to conduct landscape scale restoration. Invasive species are a primary concern, along with stripping of topsoil and suitable nutrients to support native plant growth.

Areas not disturbed by trail construction would likely benefit from more active restoration and management.

Flora and Fauna

The Commons natural area is habitat to an ecosystem of native & invasive species typical of eastern North American deciduous forests and savannah located within an urban environment. The cover types can generally be described as mature northern hardwoods, densely stocked pine plantation, wetlands, and open fields. To ensure this ecosystem remains intact, conservation recreation trails follow the alignment of existing trails to the extent practicable. Where new trail alignments are proposed, trees greater than 6" DBH will be identified during the design stage. No trees greater than 6" DBH will be taken without permission.

Other environmental considerations, such as creating or maintaining buffer zones adjacent to the trails, may be appropriate to protect sensitive species, nesting areas, or avoid spreading invasive species. Trail construction should seek EGLE permitting during the design stage.

Impacts associated with trail development will be limited to individuals disturbed during active construction.

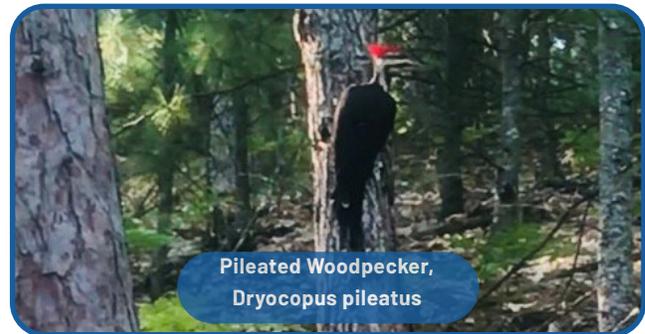
Management strategies to enhance wildlife and forest health include limiting access in sensitive areas, and preserving edge habitat to the extent possible. Leaving standing dead trees, creating brush piles, thinning around seed producing trees, following an invasive species control plan, and introducing native plant species should also be considered to improve wildlife habitat and forest health. It is recommended that the current Forest Management Plan be updated and followed.



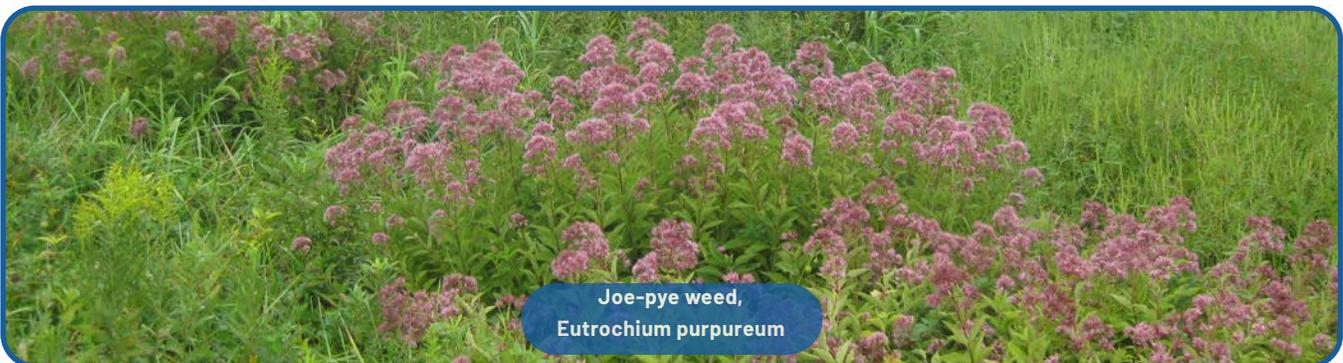
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, *Papilio glaucus*



Northern Cardinal, *Cardinalis cardinalis*



Pileated Woodpecker, *Dryocopus pileatus*



Joe-pye weed, *Eutrochium purpureum*

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Viewsheds

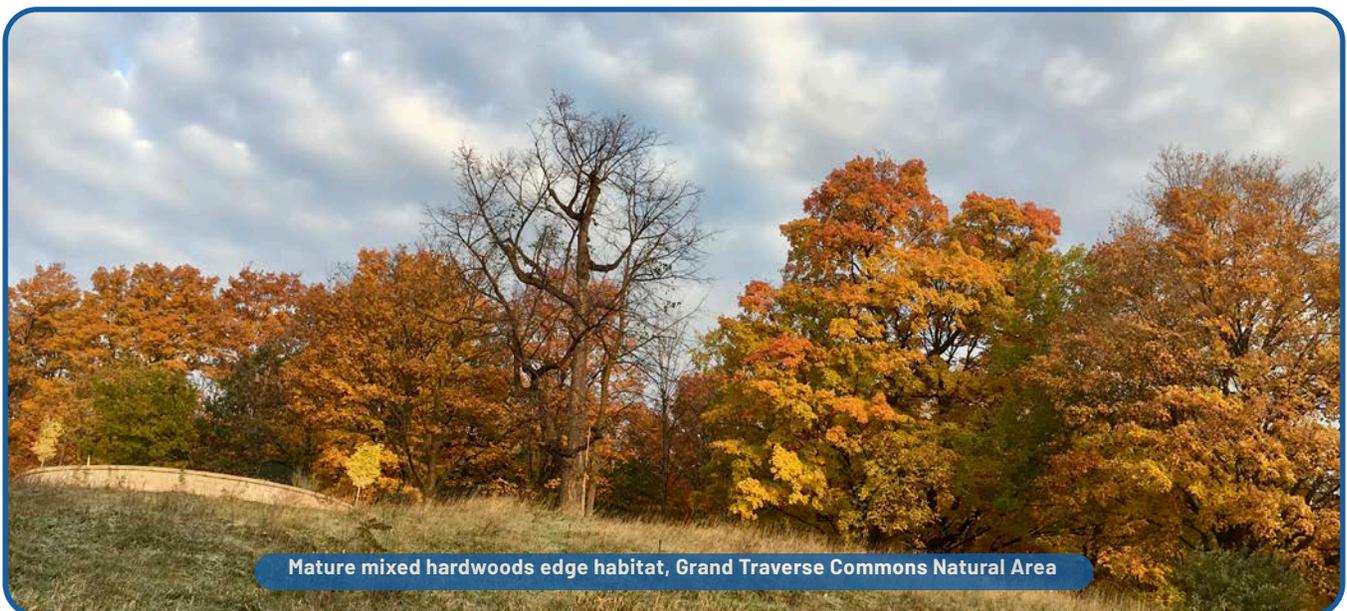
A defining feature of the property is the topographic relief in its southwest zone. This feature creates opportunities for trails to overlook Traverse City and the West Arm Grand Traverse Bay, which are taken advantage of by the proposed conservation recreation trail. Other overlooks along proposed single track will be opportunistically captured during the design phase.

A secondary consideration of viewsheds is how the proposed trails will appear from locations in Traverse City. Proposed trails are largely located within forested areas and are relatively narrow, reducing their visibility at long distances. Parcels adjacent to the Commons may be able to see trail corridors, especially during the leaf-off period, but local site lines are limited by topography.



Update to Forest Management Plan

It is recommended the Township consider a careful review of the current Forestry Plan to ensure it meets the needs of the Natural Area improvements. Suggested management actions should be implemented as part of the Final Design and implementation within the Natural Area.



NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Soils

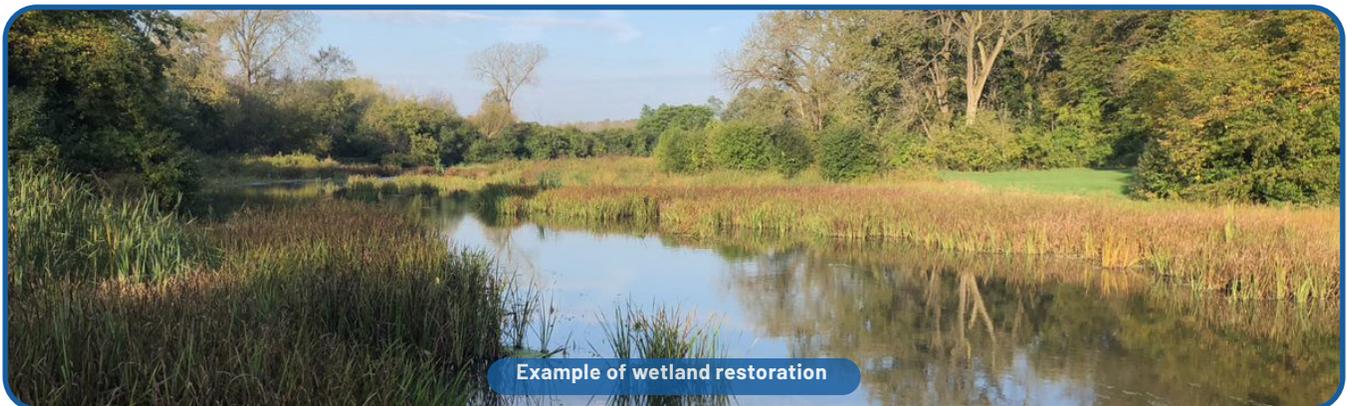
Emmet gravelly sandy loam or Emmet sandy loams and inclusions of Leelanau Kalkaska loamy sands (or similar) occupy the hilly, southwest portion of the project area. These solid types feature sandy loam or sand dominated soils to 24" or more. Native rocks and boulders are generally absent or erratic. While excessively well drained, these soils often lack binding capacity required to form durable tread, often limiting the maximum grade of the trail and features that can be constructed. Max trail grades exceeding ~10% may not be sustainable, and would be constructed at the discretion of the builder. Some segments of planned trail will require advanced erosion control drawings to be prepared during the design phase. Jute net erosion control blankets may be required to stabilize back slopes or fill slopes. In addition, to erosion control plans, constructing flowy trails greater than 36" wide may present sustainability challenges. It is likely that sections of flowy trail will require capping to at least 12" in depth, especially where routed through Leelanau Lakdaska soil types. Trail features such as tabletops will likely require imported fill, capping and/or armoring.

The northern portion of the project area is relatively flat and occupied by mucky soil types. Trails routed through or near areas of mucky soil may require raised tread or turn-pike trails with equalization culverts or boardwalks if they are deemed to also be wetland areas.

Soil types will be a major consideration when determining the build techniques appropriate for a given section of trail. This will occur during the design phase.

Wetlands

Concept trails avoid wetland areas to the extent practicable. If wetland crossings are unavoidable, the shortest crossing location will be identified during the design phase. The MDNR prefers the use of open-pile boardwalks to cross wetlands, not only because they provide access from one upland area to another (or to a watercourse) with minimal impact to the wetland, but also because they allow users to come into better contact with wetlands. Four-foot (48") wide cedar boardwalks with non-slip coating and supported by twin stringers to span wetland crossings are cost effective and are relatively long lasting. Wetland crossings will likely require a permit.



HISTORICALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

Several environmentally sensitive areas exist within the Natural Area. These areas have been historically utilized in unique ways and require special consideration looking forward in the design of the proposed trail system. Many of the prior uses for the sensitive areas are not consistent with the proposed improvements and use of the trail system. As such, the proposed Natural Area trail system has been thoughtfully designed around them.

Areas identified and included in this Plan:

- Gravel Mining - areas to be restored back to natural state.
- Shooting Range - area to be restored back to natural state.
- Hippy Tree - monitor for appropriate behavior to reduce spread of tree/vegetation impacts.
- Landfill - monitor as appropriate and in compliance with closure report and regulations.



CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Trail Development/Phasing of Construction

> Anticipated Project Timeline - 5 Years
GT Commons Natural Area Improvements

PHASE	OCT- DEC 22	JAN- MAR 23	APR- JUN 23	JUL- SEP 23	OCT- DEC 23	JAN- MAR 24	APR- JUN 24	JUL- SEP 24	OCT- DEC 24	JAN- MAR 25	APR- JUN 25	JUL- SEP 25	OCT- DEC 25	JAN- MAR 26	APR- JUN 26	JUL- SEP 26	OCT- DEC 26	JAN- MAR 27	APR- JUN 27	JUL- SEP 27	OCT- DEC 27			
	2022				2023				2024				2025				2026				2027			
PHASE 1: 2023																								
Funding Opportunities																								
Final Trail Systems and Signage Design & Permitting																								
Red Drive Trailhead Final Design & Permitting																								
Stakeholder / Public Engagement																								
Restoration Activities																								
PHASE 2: 2024																								
Funding Opportunities																								
Red Drive Trailhead Implementation																								
Conservation Recreation Trails Implementation																								
Copper Ridge & Munson Trailhead Final Design & Permitting																								
Operation and Maintenance																								
Restoration Activities																								
PHASE 3: 2025																								
Funding Opportunities																								
Multi-Use & Single Track Trails Implementation																								
Copper Ridge and Munson Trailhead Implementation																								
Amenities Final Design & Permitting																								
Operation and Maintenance																								
Restoration Activities																								
PHASE 4: 2026																								
Amenities Implementation																								
Future Connection Trail Systems & Wayfinding Final Design																								
Wetland Management																								
Operation and Maintenance																								
Restoration Activities																								
PHASE 5: 2027																								
Stakeholder / Public Engagement																								
Trail Connectivity Implementation																								
Wayfinding Implementation																								
Wetland Management																								
Operation and Maintenance																								
Restoration Activities																								

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Costs

> Estimate of Costs

GT Commons Natural Area Improvements

SCHEDULE OPTION #1	QTY	UNITS	UNIT COST RANGE	TOTAL \$ ESTIMATE
Construction Activity				
Conservation Recreation Trail	2.80	Miles	\$160,000-\$250,00	\$448,000-\$700,000
Existing Connector Trail	0.65	Miles	\$80,000-\$150,00	\$50,000-\$97,500
Proposed Connector Trail	0.03	Miles	\$80,000-\$150,00	\$2,400-\$4,500
Mountain Bike Optimized Trail	3.48	Miles	\$42,000-\$80,000	\$142,800-\$278,400
Multi-use Trail	1.59	Miles	\$50,000-\$80,000	\$79,500-\$127,200
Run/Hike Trail	2.14	Miles	\$40,000-\$75,000	\$85,600-\$160,500
Bridges/Crossings	12	Each	\$15,000-\$50,000	\$180,000-\$600,000
Hubs	10	Each	\$10,000-\$50,000	\$100,000-\$250,000
Stormwater Management	1	LS	\$200,000-\$350,000	\$200,000-\$350,000
Vegetation Improvements	5	Year	\$50,000-\$100,000	\$250,000-\$500,000
Red Drive Trailhead	1	Each	\$300,000-\$550,000	\$300,000-\$550,000
Copper Ridge Trailhead	1	Each	\$250,000-\$400,000	\$250,000-\$400,000
Long Lake Road Trailhead	1	Each	\$500,000-\$750,000	\$500,000-\$750,000
Artesian Well Improvements	3	Each	\$20,000-\$50,000	\$60,000-\$150,000
Signage / Wayfinding	20	Each	\$2,500-\$10,000	\$50,000-\$200,000
Restoration of Existing System	3	Year	\$2,000-\$10,000	\$6,000-\$30,000
Other Amenities (benches, overlooks, hippy tree, etc.)	1	LS	\$25,000-\$200,000	\$25,000-\$200,000
Total Construction Estimate				\$2,979,300 - \$5,898,100
Total Construction Estimate - Average				\$4,400,000
Engineering Services (10%)				\$440,000
Construction Oversight (5%)				\$220,000
Contingency (20%)				\$880,000
Long-Term Management & Restoration	1	Year	Budget for 5% Improvements Cost	\$220,000
Future Trail Connectivity Improvements	1	LS	\$500,000-\$750,000	\$500,000-\$750,000

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Costs

> Budgetary Estimate of Costs - FY 2023 Only GT Commons Natural Area Improvements

YEAR 1 COSTING - Year 1 of 5 Year Plan	QTY
PHASE 1: 2023	
Funding Opportunities	\$5,000
Final Conservation Recreation Trail Systems and Signage Design & Permitting	\$85,000
Red Drive Trailhead Final Design & Permitting	\$40,000
Stakeholder / Public Engagement	\$12,000
Restoration Activities	\$8,000
2023 TOTAL - Option #2	\$150,000

FUNDING OPTIONS

The proposed overall project phasing is intended to help relieve the funding burden to spread the need out over a 5 year period. This gives the Township the ability to identify potential funding sources, apply, leverage local staff time and resources, as well as exploring potential volunteer groups for long-term management of the new system. Possible funding mechanisms for consideration include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Township funding
- Local stakeholder and/or adjacent property owner contributions
- Feature specific Federal grants (i.e. – stormwater, habitat, etc.)
 1. United States Forest Service (USFS)
 2. United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- State of Michigan grants
 1. Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)
 2. Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE)
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds allocation
- Creation of volunteer groups (i.e. – “friends of..” group) - long-term maintenance/management

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Given the expected increase in use and variety of users utilizing the Natural Area following the proposed trail improvements, the Township recognizes the value in generating policies to help reduce the risk of future issues. It is advised the Township further consider policy creation/update related to:

E-Bikes & E-sports

Ensure policy language supports safe use of E-bikes and other electric motor devices in conjunction with other user groups.

Public Safety

Thoughtfulness around Park hours, amenities protection and possible surveillance to protect all users.

Events

Given existing use constraints and the potential strain large events can have on the Park; access points and trails, determine what type of events make sense for this property.

Conservation Easements/Deed Restrictions

Bring awareness to Park users regarding existing conservation easements and/or deed restrictions that have helped inform this Plan and future design development.



Children exploring tributary,
Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area



Example of event historically
held at the Grand Traverse Commons

PUBLIC PROCESS AND INPUT



The Township recognizes the future success of the Natural Area is dependent upon support of the community. As such, this Plan was developed following a rigorous public outreach and input effort over the course of one year. Thoughtfulness around accessibility and use of different outreach mechanisms was utilized to ensure community members, nearby residents and local organizations were well informed and able to provide their input as the Township worked through various stages of planning and design development for this Plan. The following efforts led the direction of the proposed trail system design and future considerations included within this Plan:

Public Input and Meetings

In total, over 200 members of the public participated in the visioning for The Commons Natural Area future design. The public was given numerous opportunities to provide input and weigh in on the proposed way forward with the Natural Area design.

Online and Paper Surveys

The Township utilized both online surveys and paper surveys to help public provide feedback. Online survey were made available via link on the Township website as well as via QR code with signs hung around the Park to allow ease of completion.

Nearly 100 online surveys were completed, responses compiled and reviewed for meaningful take-aways to be included.



Open Houses

The Township also hosted a total of three Open Houses inviting the public in to review various stages of the design while in-process, including options for amenities, trail types, trailheads, etc. - to allow for review and comment prior to finalizing. Open House attendees were able to ask questions of the Township staff and consultants present at the events. Public comments were collected via sticky notes on the Boards and compiled for consideration in design.

Open House #1 - 75+ attendees

Open House #2 - 54+ attendees

Open House #3 - TBD

Stakeholder Discussions and Interviews

Over a dozen stakeholders were identified and consulted by the Township. Stakeholders were asked to complete a survey for the future visioning and priorities for the property, provided the opportunity for a one-on-one follow up discussion with the Township to elaborate on survey responses.

Over 17 one-on-one interviews conducted with Stakeholders in follow up to survey responses. Participants were given the opportunity to elaborate on specific points of interest and design priorities moving forward.

Site Visits

Adjacent property owners and easement holders were given the opportunity to walk the Natural Area with Township representatives, engage in a one-on-one interview with the Township, and provide input on interaction with the Natural Area property.

During development of this Plan, 5 site visits were conducted and informed design.

TRAIL MATRIX

The Commons Natural Area Concept Trail Type Matrix

Trail Type	Difficulty Rating	Difficulty Symbol	Status	Trail Type	Directional	Targeted User	Surface Type	Width	Proposed Distance	Notes
Conservation Recreation Trail	Easiest	White Circle	Concept Trail	Recreational multi-use	Two-way	Foot Users & Wheeled Users, Access Optimized	Natural Crushed Rock (appropriate surface type will likely vary by segment)	3'-8'	3.90 miles total	Wide 'stroll & roll' style trail. Manage runoff and erosion using catchment basins, erosion control blankets, sediment control logs. Frequent grade reversals incorporated into trail will limit volume and inenisty of runoff received by each 'drain'
Connector Trail	Easiest	White Circle	Concept Trail	Recreational multi-use	Two-way	Foot Users & Wheeled Users, Access Optimized	Natural Crushed Rock (appropriate surface type will likely vary by segment)	> 8'	0.92 miles total, incl. 750' segment passing across Historic Barns Park and a 150' segment connecting to Copper Ridge Trailhead	Existing trail corridor connecting the Natural Area to trailheads on neighboring parcels. Proposed connector trails will extend to Copper Ridge Trailhead and link with existing single track on the north side of Long Lake Rd. Manage runoff and erosion using catchment basins, erosion control blankets, sediment control logs. Frequent grade reversals incorporated into trail will limit volume and inenisty of runoff received by each 'drain'
Bike Optimized	Easy, More Difficult, Very Difficult	Green Circle, Blue Square, Black Diamond	Concept Trail	Singletrack	One-way	MTBers, aMTBers, Bike Optimized	Imported clay and/or fine crushed rock mixed with native sandy soil	2'-5'	3.80 miles total	Imported clay or crushed rock will likely be required for most single track. Imported materials will be mixed with native soils or compacted & capped to a depth of 4". Features would need to be constructed from imported rock or fabricated trail features.
Hike Optimized	Easy, More Difficult	Green Circle, Blue Square	Concept Trail	Singletrack	Two-way	Hikers, Hiking Optimized	Imported clay and/or fine crushed rock mixed with native sandy soil	2'-4'	2.10 miles total	Imported clay or crushed rock will likely be for some sections, especially where the trail is steep or has switchbacks. Imported rock may be nescessary to construct sustainable steps in steep areas. Imported materials will be mixed with native soils or compacted & capped to a depth of 4". Tighter corners, steps and off camber corners are characteristic of hikiq trails
Multi-Use	Easy, More Difficult	Green Circle, Blue Square	Concept Trail	Singletrack	One-way Bike, Two-way Hike	Foot Users & Wheeled Users, Bike Optimized	Imported clay and/or fine crushed rock mixed with native sandy soil	4-6'	1.73 miles total	Imported clay or crushed rock will likely be required for most single track. Imported materials will be mixed with native soils or compacted & capped to a depth of 4". Use of imported rock would be minimal. Wider corners, rollable features and banked/inslope turns are characteristic of bike optimized trails. Bike optimized trails may contain side hits or optional lines which cater specifically to MTB riders, but not interfere with the main tread path

TRAILHEAD MATRIX

The Commons Natural Area Concept Trailhead Matrix

Trailhead Name	Land Owner	Recommendation	Proposed Facilities	Parking Spaces	Targeted User	Notes
Red Drive Trailhead	Garfield Township	Primary Trailhead	Heated/Locked Restroom, Trail Kiosk, Benches, Bike Rack, Interpretive Signage, Wetland/Wildlife Observation Area	30+	Foot Users & Wheeled Users, Access Optimized	This will be a main trailhead. Coordination with neighboring landowners may be appropriate to optimize traffic along Red Drive.
Yellow Drive Trailhead	Minervini Group	Neighborhood Trailhead	Trail Kiosk, Security Cameras	12	Foot Users	Trailhead located in area under consideration for future development by Minervini Group.
Gray Drive Trailhead	Minervini Group	Neighborhood Trailhead	Trail Kiosk, Security Cameras	8	Foot Users	Trailhead is out of site and adjacent to residential lofts. Extra signage may be required to inform users of rules/hours. Private Security may be required to enforce rules/hours.
Munson Parking Lot Trailhead	Munson Hospital	Neighborhood Trailhead	Trail Kiosk	20+	Foot Users	This trailhead is on the western side of a large employee and patient parking lot. It is not highly visible.
Exiting Long Lake Road Trailhead	Garfield Township	Close	None	0	None	This trailhead is small (~6 spaces) and its configuration is not optimal for parked vehicles to turn around. Vehicles entering this parking lot when it is full must back out into Long Lake Road. Sight lines at the intersection are limited by the curves of the road and change in elevation. Eliminating this trailhead will increase traffic safety on Long Lake Road.
Historic Barns Park Trailhead	Recreation Authority	Close to parking general public, maintain access for programming	Bike Rack at intersection with Conservation Recreation Trail to prevent bikes from entering property	0	Barns Programming Participants, Foot Users	This trailhead will be restricted to participants in Historic Barns Park programming and pass through foot traffic. This is because Barns Park often lacks parking capacity to support its own programming. Public parking for users of the Natural Area will not be allowed.
Proposed Copper Ridge Trailhead	Copper Ridge	Proposed Primary Trailhead	Trail Kiosk, Covered Benches, Bike Rack, Bicycle Tool Station	7+	Bikers, Runners	An easement grants Garfield Township permission to develop a small trailhead on private property owned by Copper Ridge. This trailhead is located nearest the bike-optimized trails and will cater to these users by including a bicycle tool station
Proposed Long Lake Trailhead	Garfield Township & Munson Hospital	Proposed Primary Trailhead	Trail Kiosk, Bench, Vegetation Screen, Wetland Restoration	20+	Foot Users & Wheeled Users, Access Optimized	This trailhead would be a main trailhead. Development will require coordination with the Grand Traverse Land Trust to ensure developments fall within the conservation easement which encompasses the northern part of the natural area. This trailhead would take advantage of an existing intersection on Long Lake Road to improve safety in addition to having a large capacity.

APPENDIX

Referenced Documents

- Existing Conditions Report
- Forestry Plan
- NSAA site information

Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area





Charter Township of Garfield

Grand Traverse County

3848 VETERANS DRIVE
TRAVERSE CITY, MICHIGAN 49684
PH: (231) 941-1620 • FAX: (231) 941-1588

2023 PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING DATES

The Charter Township of Garfield Parks and Recreation Commission has scheduled the following meeting dates for 2023. All meetings begin at 6:00 PM and are held in the Meeting Room (2nd floor) at the Garfield Township Hall, 3848 Veterans Drive, Traverse City, Michigan.

The 2023 meeting schedule is as follows:

Regular Meeting

February 6, 2023
April 3, 2023
June 5, 2023
August 7, 2023
October 2, 2023
December 4, 2023

Chris Remy, Secretary
Township Parks and Recreation Commission
3848 Veterans Drive
Traverse City, MI 49684

Garfield Township 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 Township. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact Garfield Township by writing or calling Lanie McManus, Clerk, Ph: (231) 941-1620.