

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

Monday, November 7, 2022 at 6:30 pm
Kirkbride Hall at The Village at Grand Traverse Commons
700 Cottageview Drive, Suite 200
Traverse City, MI 49684
Ph: (231) 941-1961

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 – October 3, 2022

4. Correspondence

5. Reports

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

6. Old Business

- a. Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan – Open House #3 Follow-Up
- b. PD 2022-101 – 2023-2027 Parks and Recreation Master Plan – Discussion Continued

7. New Business

8. Public Comment

9. Items for Next Agenda – December 5, 2022

- 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

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
October 3, 2022**

Roll Call of Commission Members:

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

Absent and Excused: Lynn Fricke

Staff Present: Deputy Planning Director Steve Hannon, Parks Steward Derek Morton

Call to Order: Chair DeGood called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance: Recited by all in attendance.

1. Public Comment (6:01)

None

2. Review and Approval of the Agenda – Conflicts of Interest (6:01)

Schmuckal moved and Bukowski seconded to approve the agenda as presented.

Yeas: Schmuckal, Bukowski, Hoort, Remy, Spence, DeGood

Nays: None

3. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – September 12, 2022 (6:02)

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

Yeas: Spence, Schmuckal, Bukowski, Hoort, Remy, DeGood

Nays: None

4. Correspondence (6:04)

Letter from Mr. Scott Rokos, originally shared with Planning Commission.

5. Reports (6:04)

a. Commissioner Reports

Schmuckal reported that the board held a budget meeting and the 2023 funds request for the Parks Commission was submitted.

b. Staff Report/Updates

The Planning Commission received a draft of survey results sent to a random sample of Township residents to gain comments for the Master Plan. Hannon indicated the Commons Design Plan will be distributed to Commissioners for comments soon, and Commissioners asked Staff to indicate a deadline to submit their comments.

i. Parks Steward Report

Morton stated that the cameras caught pictures of people defacing the Commons Natural Area and those pictures have been posted in hopes that they will be recognized. Some encampments have been cleaned up along the Boardman River and some boardwalks will need to be replaced at Miller Creek Nature Reserve. Portable toilets were removed for the season at Boardman Valley Nature Preserve. The pavilion at River East Recreation Area is complete. There will be a tree planting on October 7 in conjunction with DTE, and Releaf Michigan, along the Buffalo Ridge Trail.

6. Old Business

a. PD 2022-93 – Parks and Recreation Master Plan – Discussion (6:23)

The current Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan expires with the DNR on December 31, 2022. To be eligible for the DNR grant programs starting in 2023, a new plan would need to be submitted to the DNR by February 1, 2023. The updated plan should cover potential projects over the next five years in the parks including capital improvements, trails, potential property acquisitions, and other items. Hannon provided an overview of past projects in each park that were completed and reviewed some potential park projects in 2023. Commissioners discussed benches and the dredging of Oleson's Pond for Kids Creek Park, and a potential trailhead along Cass Road as part of Miller Creek Nature Reserve. Future trail connections were also discussed, and the Commissioners were favorable to many of them and would like to include them in the Plan, especially from Miller Creek Nature Reserve to the Mall Trail and along South Airport Road / LaFranier to the Boardman Lake Loop Trail. Staff will come back on December 5 with a proposed draft of the Parks Master Plan. Commissioners also indicated their availability to meet on November 7 if needed.

7. New Business

None

8. Public Comment (7:43)

None

9. Items for Next Agenda – December 5, 2022 (7:43)

- a. 2023-2027 Parks and Recreation Master Plan – Presentation of Final Draft and Commence 30-Day Public Comment and Review Period
- b. 2023 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Schedule

10. Adjournment

DeGood adjourned the meeting at 7:45pm.

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

Cleared trees off trails.

More staples pulled from tables.

Routine Park Maintenance (Tree bags, wind-blown trash, etc)

Working on Winter Sledding Site

Fixing times of bathroom door locks.

Scheduling a brush hog near meadows for sledding.

Commons

Open House scheduled and posted.

More trees cleared through park from wind damage.

Cleaned up graffiti.

Removed rogue trail jumps & reposted reminders.

Contact made with area mountain bike clubs, bike shops, and news.

Trimmed trails back & checked cameras.

River East

Contact with DNR over trapping issue. All parties recontacted and satisfied with outcome.

Contacted contractor about start date. Still have not locked down a date (fence materials still back ordered).

Caught two teens with CPO spray painting the train tunnels.

Boardman Valley

Cleaned up around Pickleball Courts.

Wind screens stored. Waiting on nets to be removed once weather changes.

Removed two down trees.

No encampments to date.

Miller Creek

Mowed and trimmed trailheads.

More encampments found off Cass Road. Contact made with CPO. Unoccupied. Bikes returned to CPO's bike shed.

Cleaned up wind-blown trash.

Cleared a couple trees on trails.

Prosecutor denied charges on two individuals camping in woods that left trash & threw food all over parking lot. Trespass warnings given.

Kid's Creek

Tree planting with DTE & Releaf Michigan went well. All trees doing well.

Scheduling tree planting in the Spring with Ecoseeds.

Hoping to plant a pollinator swath through the high ground in Spring.

Buffalo Ridge Trail

Working on plan for invasive species control (purple loosestrife & Autumn Olives).

Ideas for shade and sitting areas.

Additional

Working on Winter News Letter.

Submitted November 2, 2022

Derek Morton

Sean Kehoe

*Review the new design plan for the
Commons Natural Area*



Join Charter Township
of Garfield for an

OPEN HOUSE

November 7, 2022

from 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm at

Kirkbride Hall

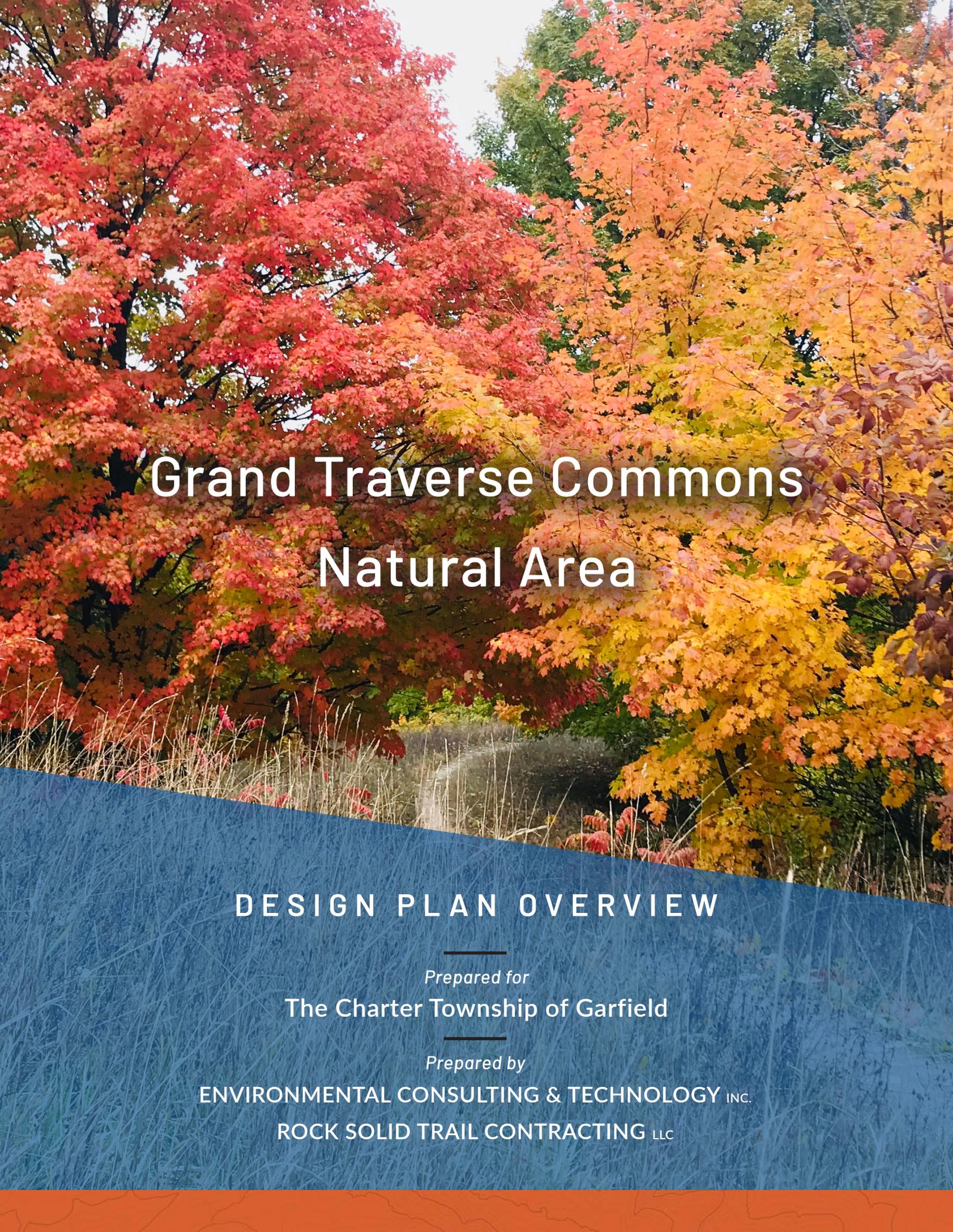
700 Cottageview Dr, Suite 200

Traverse City, MI 49684

- Review the new park design plan
- Comment on trails, trail heads, park amenities

For more information, go to:

<http://www.garfield-twp.com/designplan.asp>



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.

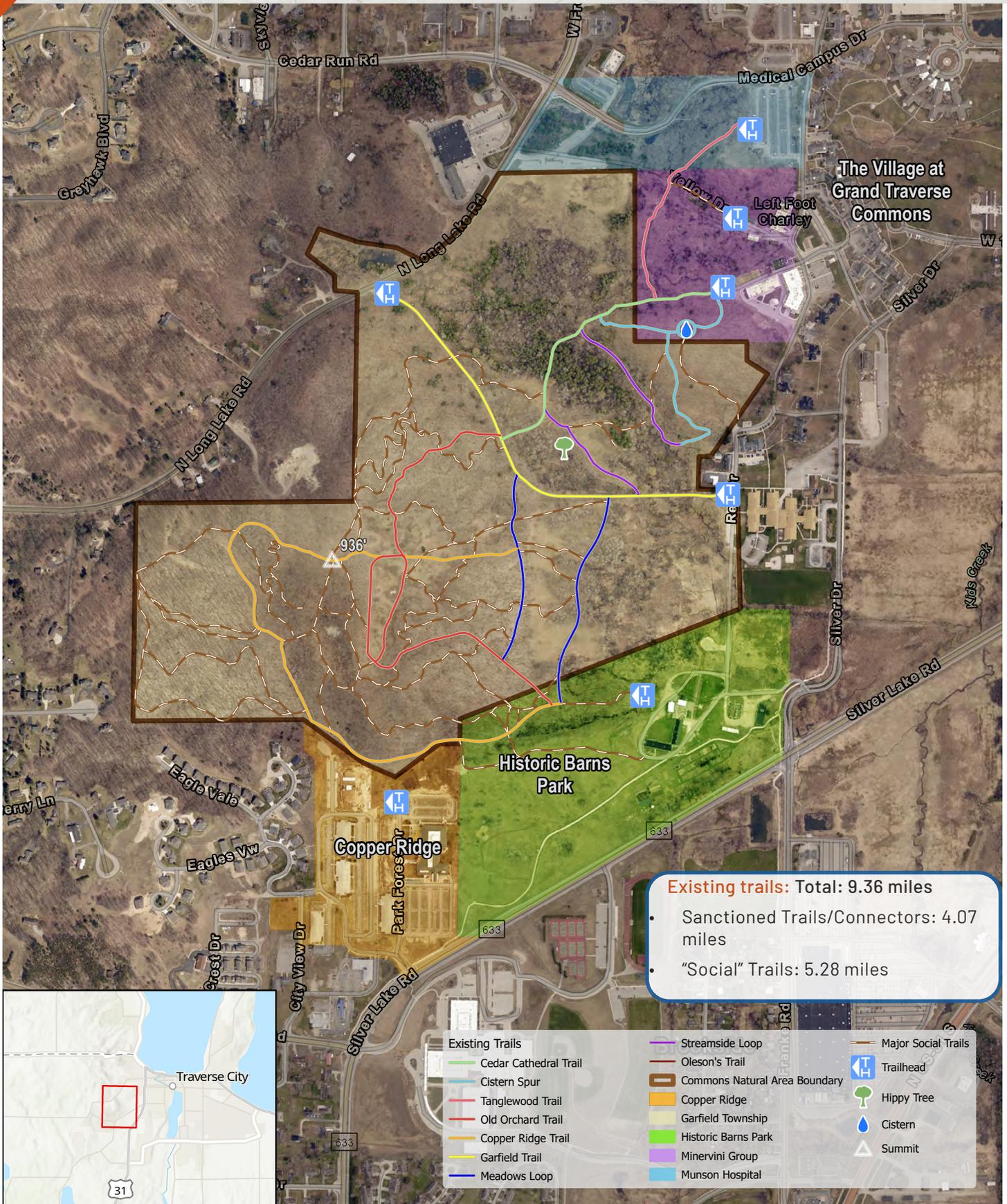
Sustainability:

- 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

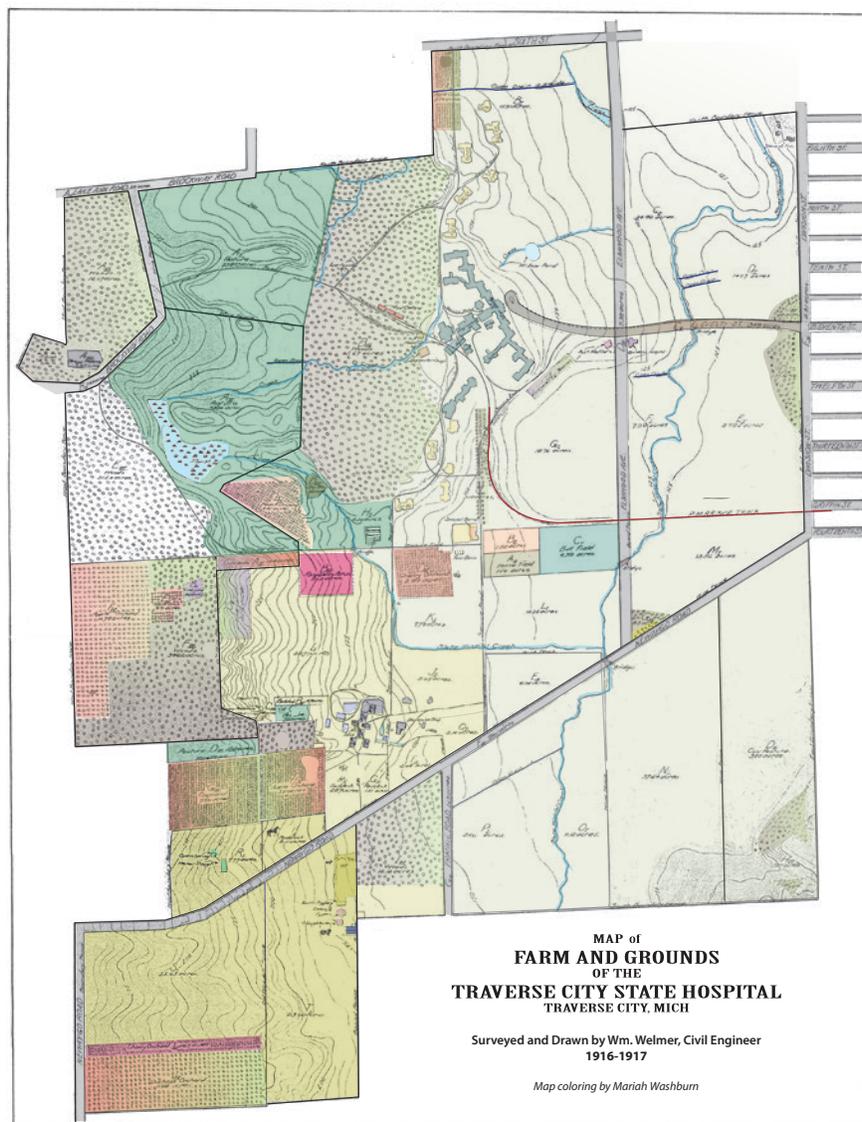
INTRODUCTION

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.

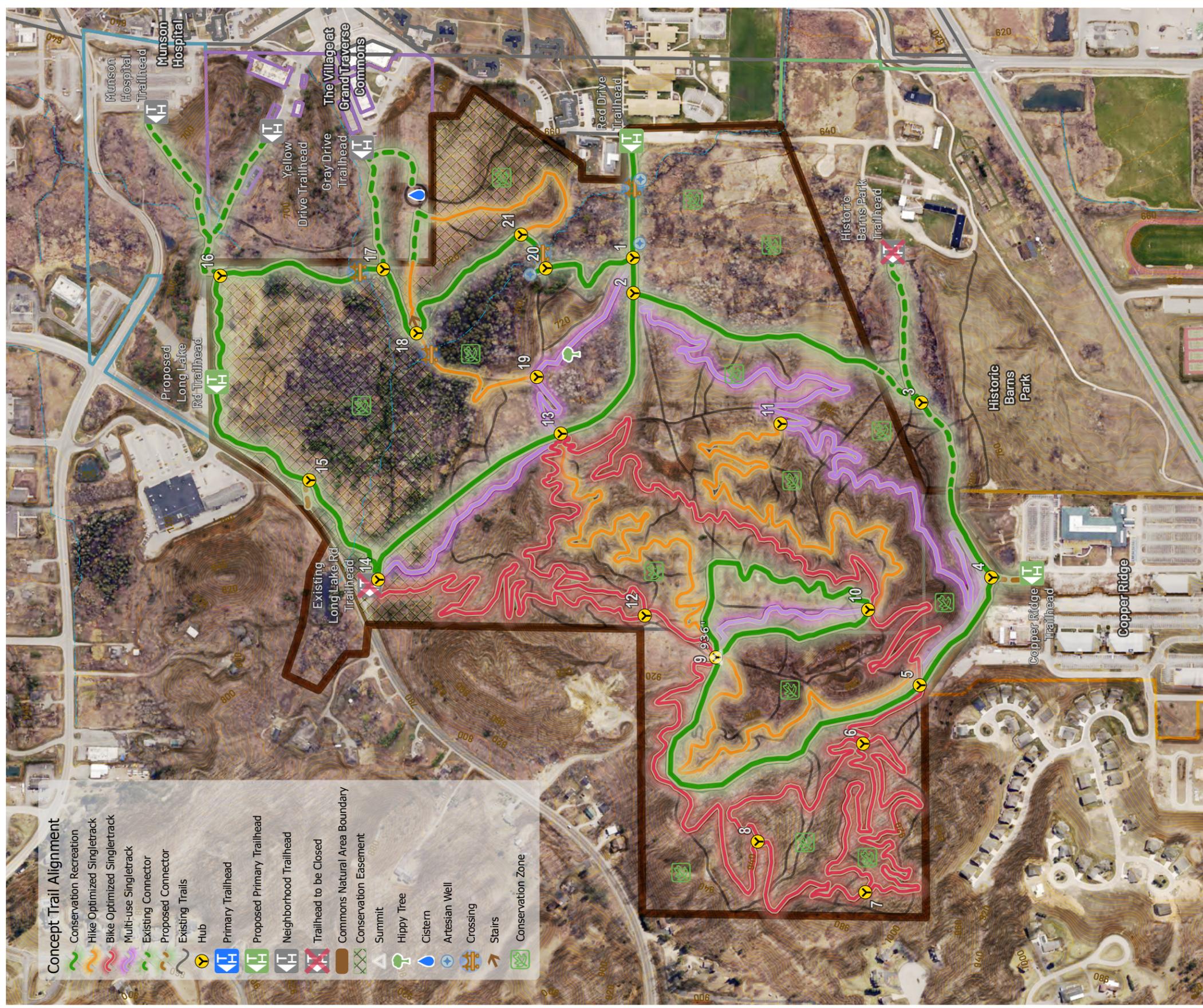
In 2021 a deed restriction alteration removed the restriction on bicycling and ultimately allowed for 'non-motorized public use'. This now allows the Township an opportunity to engage in a process to actively engage, and support, multiple user groups throughout the community.

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
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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

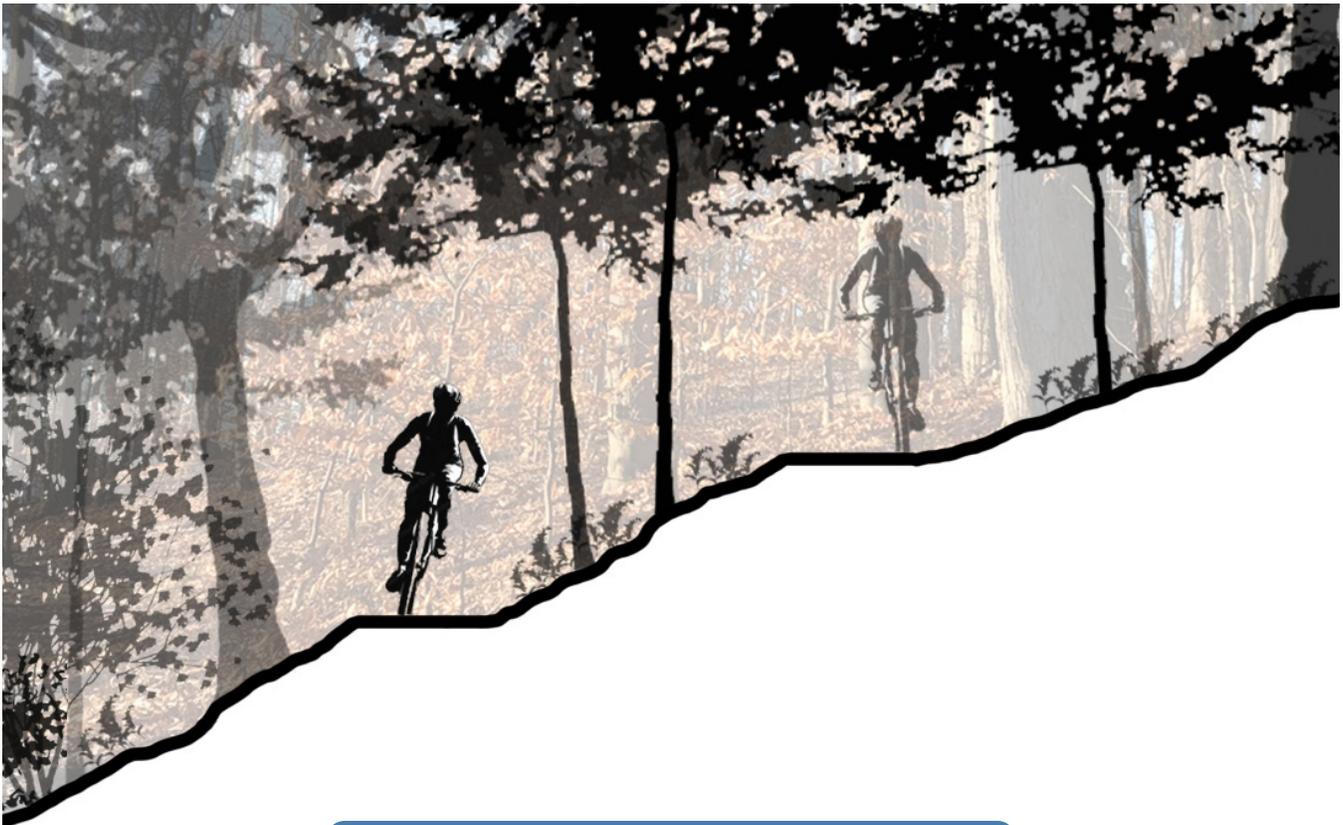
Targeted Users: Mountain Bike

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

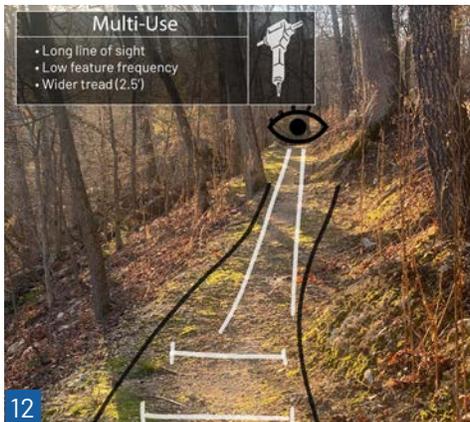
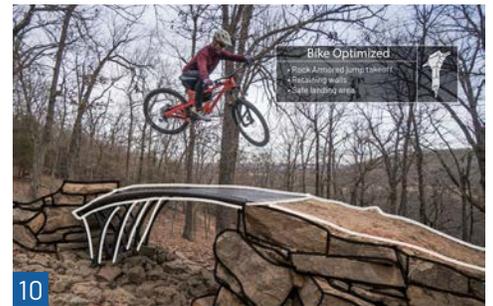
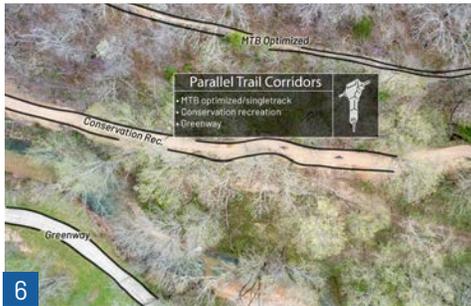


Schematic diagram of proposed multi-use trail

TRAIL TYPE COLLAGE



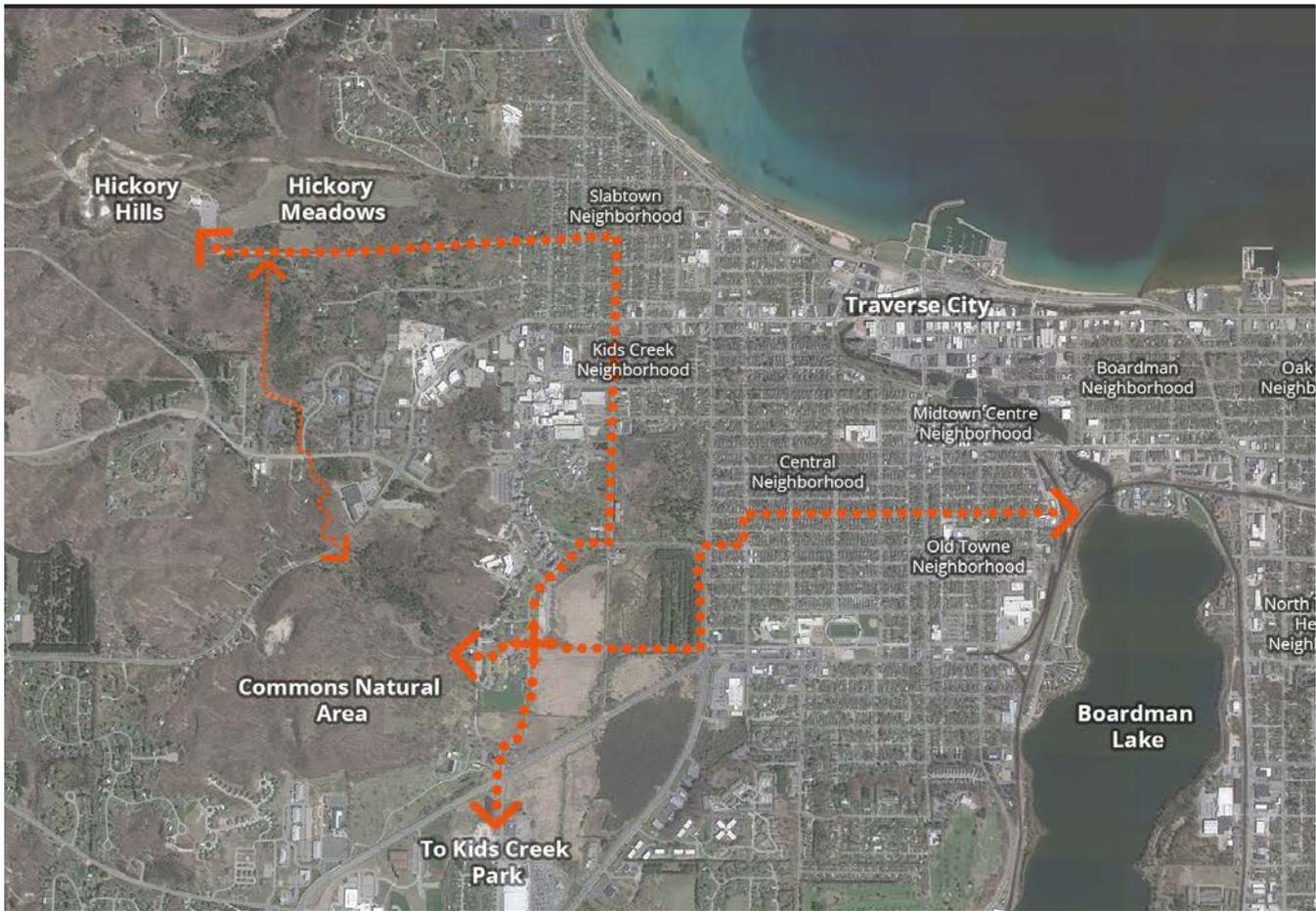
1. Bike Optimized - Blue Square
2. Conservation Recreation
3. Hiking Optimized - More Difficult
4. Bike Optimized - Very Difficult
5. Multi-Use Trail - Easy
6. Conservation Recreation, Bike Optimized and Greenway
7. Hiking Optimized - More Difficult
8. Bike Optimized - More Difficult
9. Conservation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



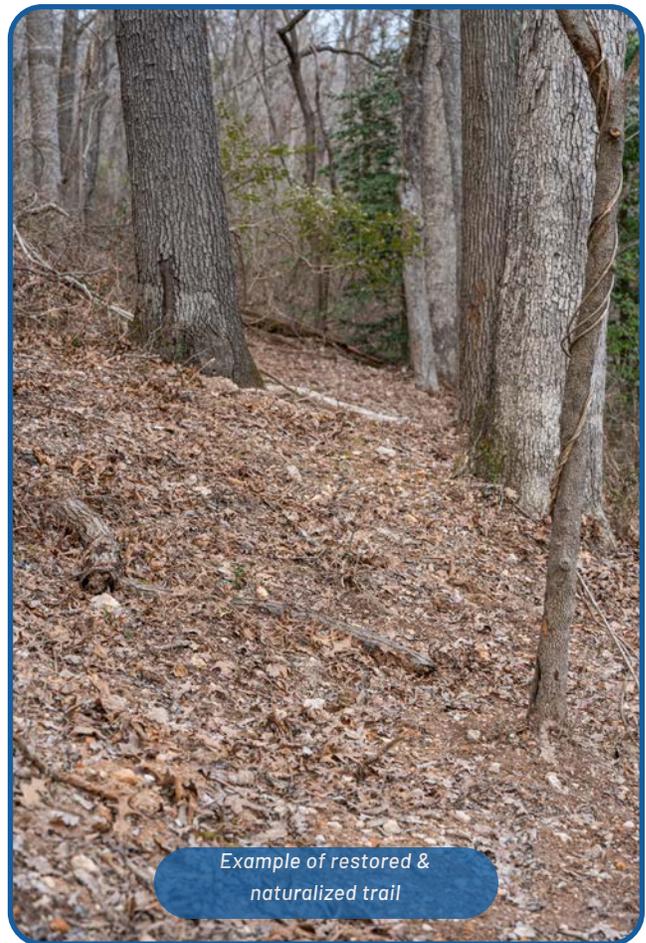
Commons Natural Area Future Connectivity Visioning
Not to Scale

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

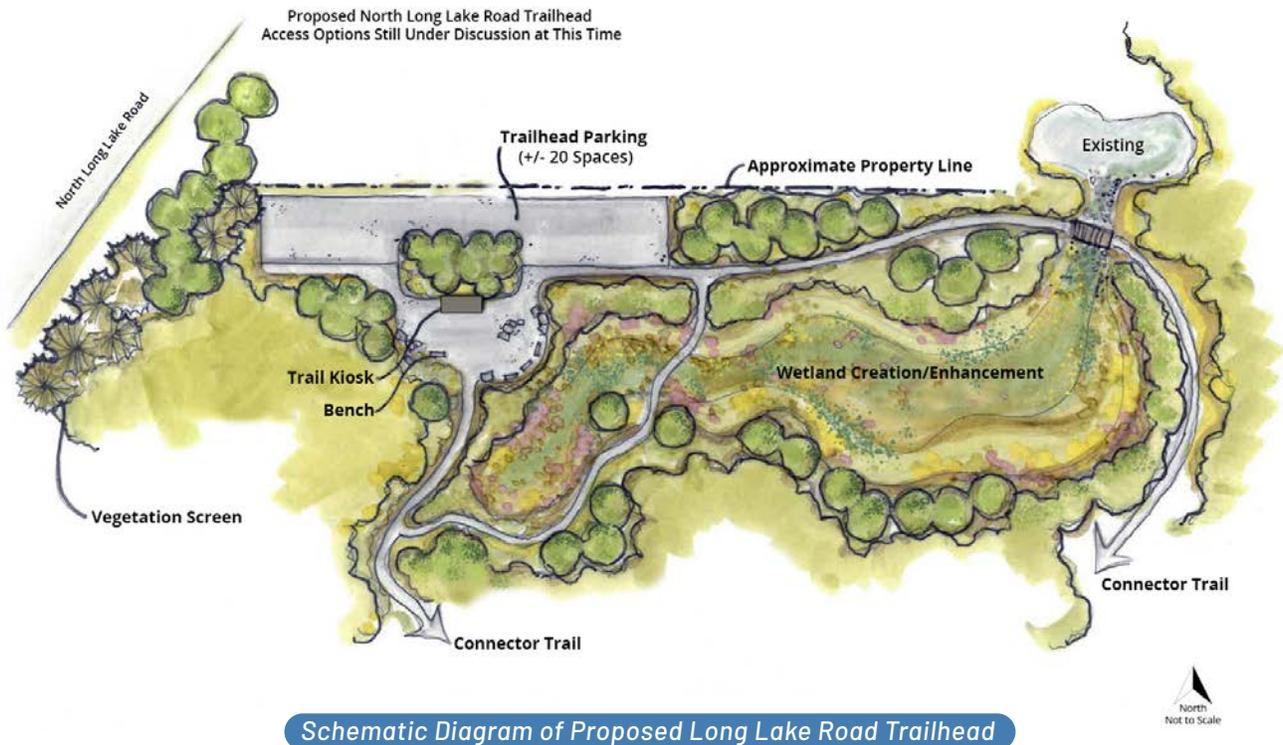
Yellow Drive Trailhead: This trailhead is located within The Village at Grand Traverse Commons at the western terminus of Yellow Drive. Recommended improvements are limited to support the existing parking and foot traffic capacity. Amenities would likely be limited to signage, wayfinding and benches.

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.

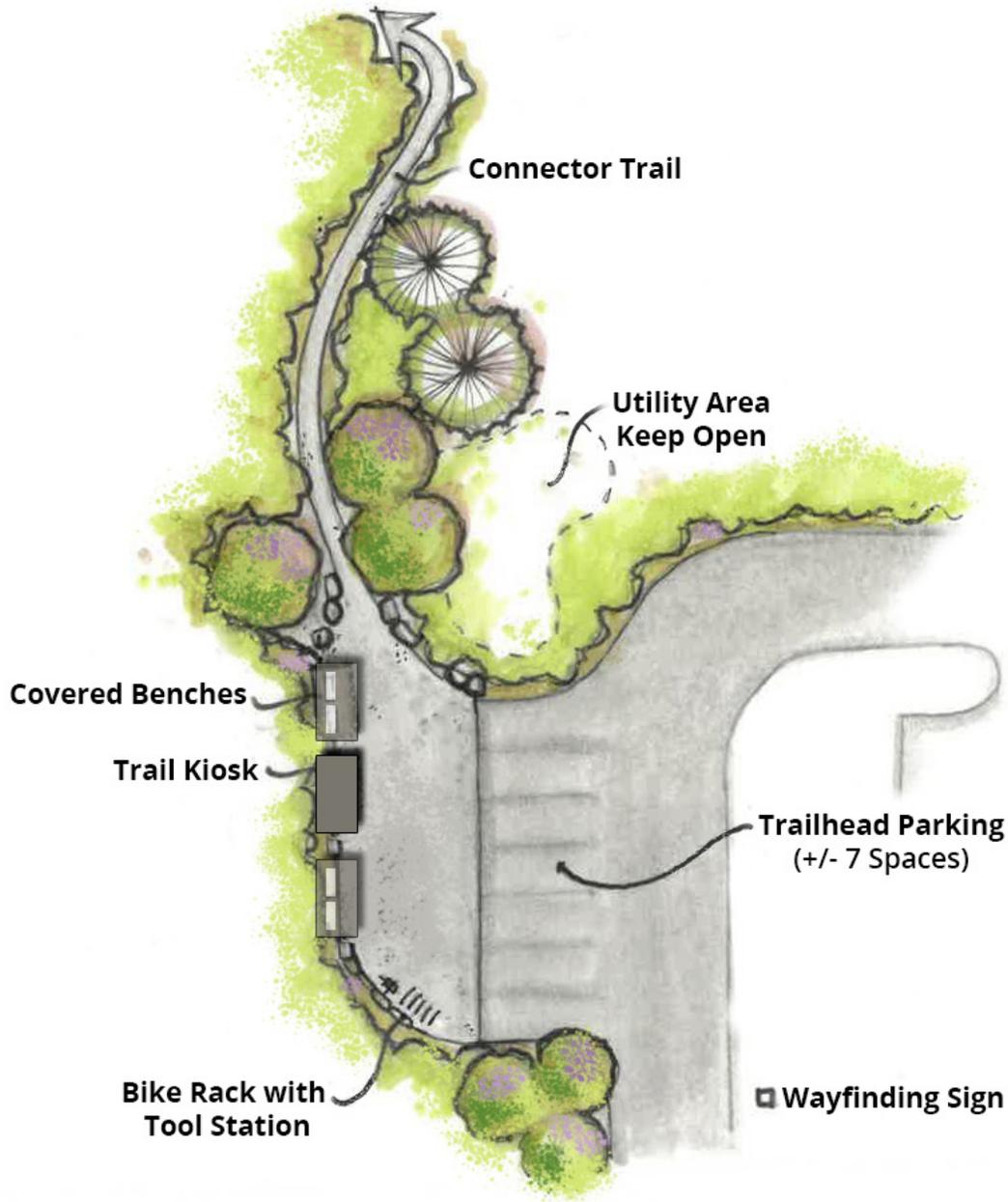
Closure of this trailhead is recommended due to safety and congestion concerns associated with the driveway to Long Lake Road and its limited size. Removal or replacement of existing kiosk and re-route to other trailheads can be considered during initial phases of the project.

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.



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.

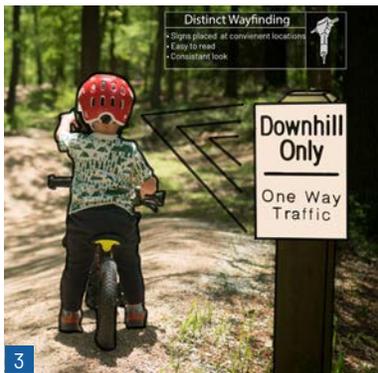


AMENITIES

Wayfinding System

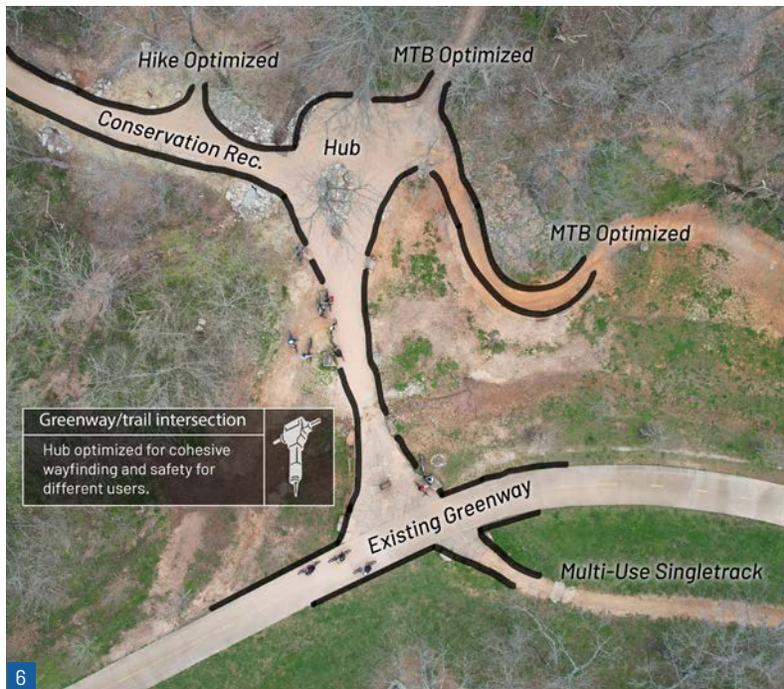
Signage and wayfinding are a critical component of implementing a successful trail system; serving to improve user direction and prevent overuse and social trail management concerns. It is important to have consistent signage placed at convenient locations that are easy to read and have a recognizable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

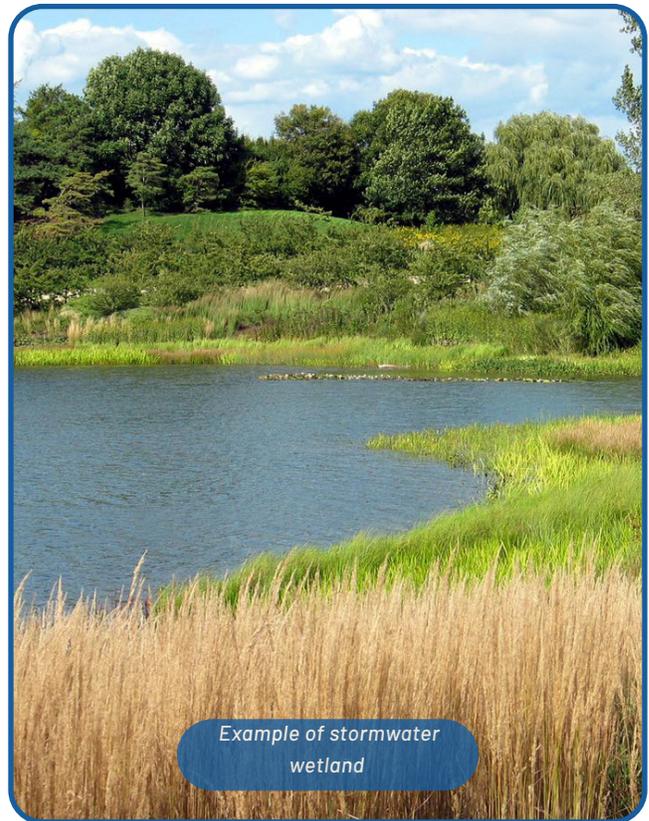
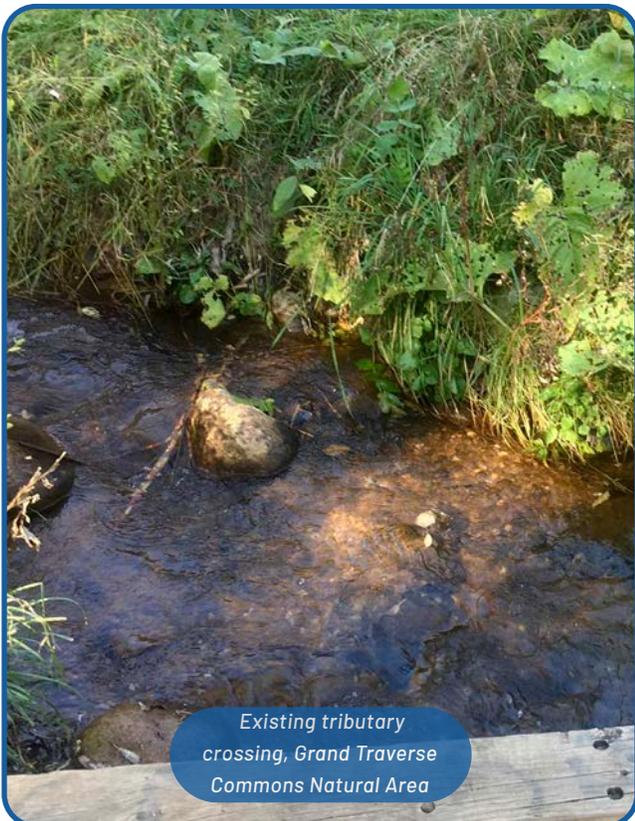


SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

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.

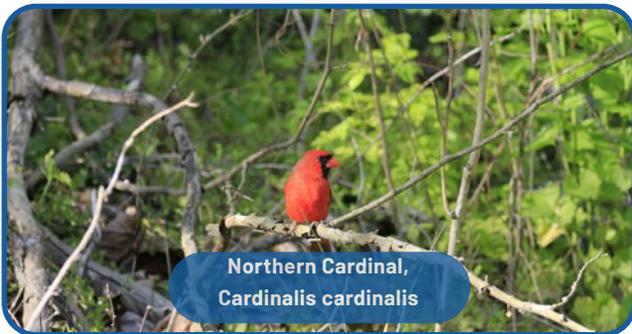
Other environmental considerations, such as creating or maintaining buffer zones adjacent to the trails, may be appropriate to protect sensitive species, nesting areas, or avoid spreading invasive species. Trail construction should seek EGLE permitting during the design stage.

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.



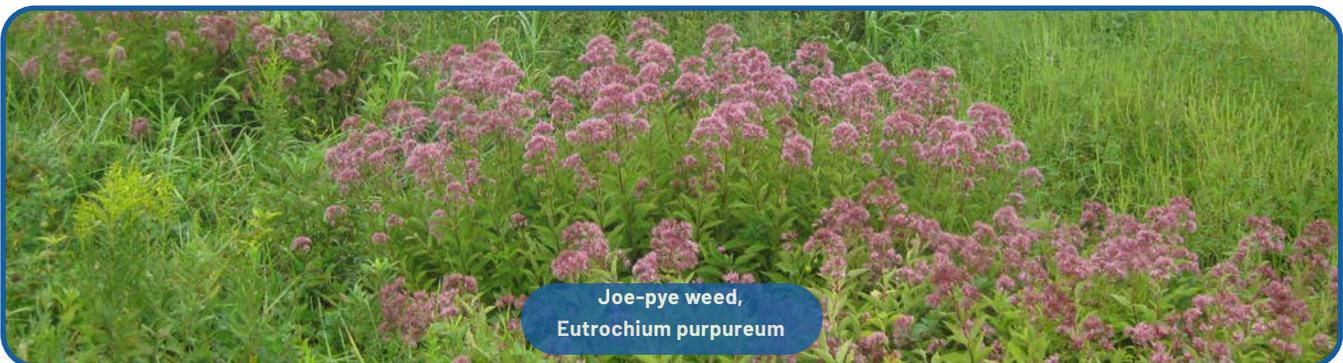
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, *Papilio glaucus*



Northern Cardinal, *Cardinalis cardinalis*



Pileated Woodpecker, *Dryocopus pileatus*



Joe-pye weed, *Eutrochium purpureum*

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Viewsheds

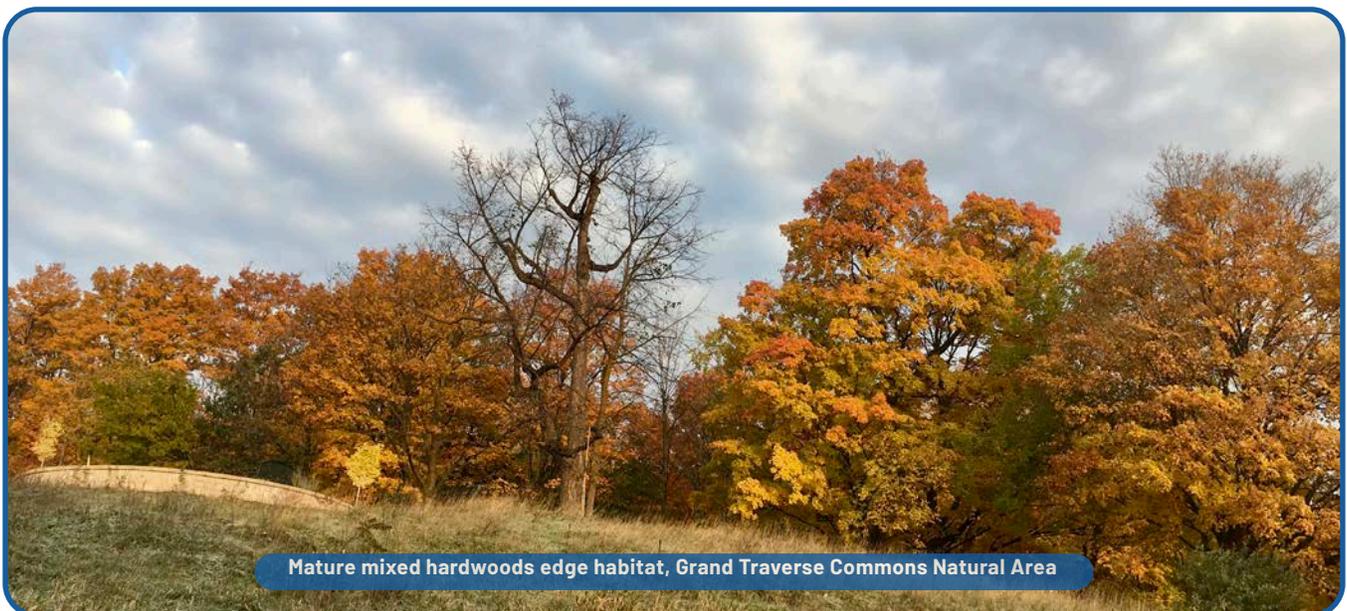
A defining feature of the property is the topographic relief in its southwest zone. This feature creates opportunities for trails to overlook Traverse City and the West Arm Grand Traverse Bay, which are taken advantage of by the proposed conservation recreation trail. Other overlooks along proposed single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

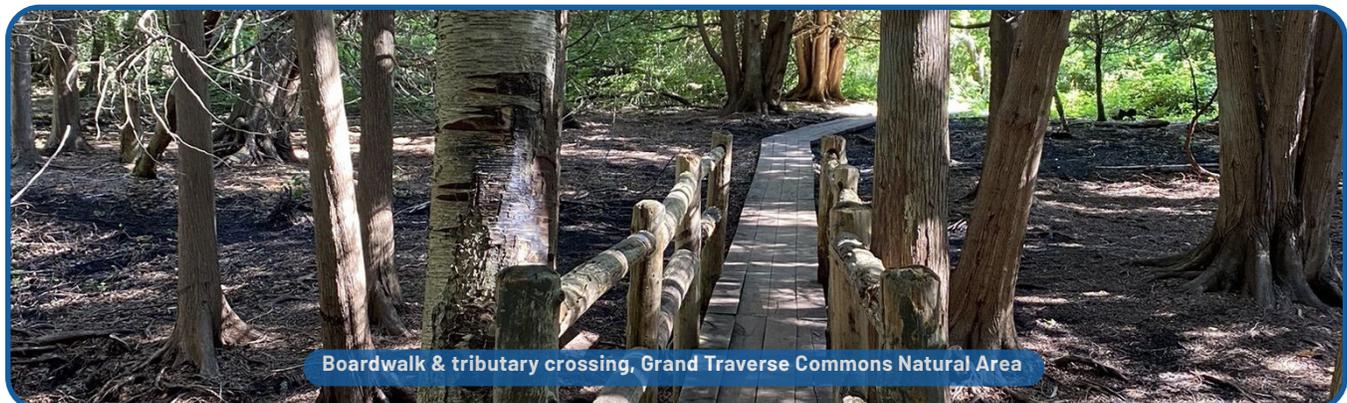
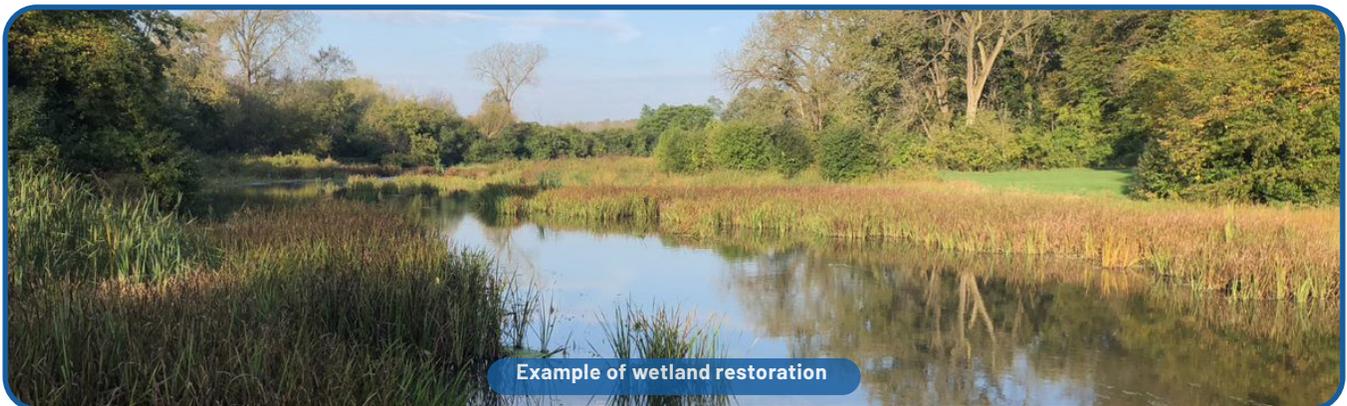
Emmet gravelly sandy loam or Emmet sandy loams and inclusions of Leelanau Kalkaska loamy sands (or similar) occupy the hilly, southwest portion of the project area. These solid types feature sandy loam or sand dominated soils to 24" or more. Native rocks and boulders are generally absent or erratic. 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 Planning Department Report No. 2022-101		
Prepared:	November 1, 2022	Pages: 4
Meeting:	November 7, 2022 Parks and Recreation Commission	Attachments: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Subject:	2023-2027 Parks and Recreation Master Plan – Discussion Continued	

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, trails, potential property acquisitions, and more. Specifically, the Plan will include the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan, including projects to implement the preferred design for the Commons Natural Area.

At their meeting on October 3, 2022, the Parks and Recreation Commission 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.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

For this report, Staff has compiled the Goals and Objectives in the existing Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Staff has also drafted updated potential Goals and Objectives for the new Plan for discussion.

CURRENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Goal 1: Improve non-motorized connectivity within the Township and to neighboring communities.

Objectives:

- Invest in non-motorized improvements and connections between existing parks and natural areas
- Identify and pursue funding for additional sidewalks, trails, and pathways
- Recognize the limitations of the existing built environment along major roads by providing pedestrian and bicycle paths that are separate from vehicular routes where possible, but which provide both recreation and transportation opportunities between areas serviced by major roadways
- Utilize natural feature areas and parks as connections where possible
- Work with project partners such as TART Trails and neighboring communities to provide regional trail connections
- Work with project partners such as TART Trails and neighboring communities to develop innovative and cost-effective approaches to long-term trail maintenance
- Invest in safe, family-friendly non-motorized crossings of major roadways
- Support a Complete Streets policy of including paved shoulders (bike lanes) and/or separated pathways on all road reconstruction projects as a means of “filling the gaps” between existing pieces of the non-motorized trail network

Goal 2: Continue to improve existing resources through regular maintenance and by providing a greater variety of active and passive recreational opportunities.

Objectives:

- Provide continuous improvements to existing Township parks
- Identify and provide funding for annual improvements to Township facilities that maintain or exceed current levels
- Develop annual maintenance plans to maintain park and recreational facilities to a high standard so that major repairs or complete replacement of a resource is rarely necessary
- Develop management plans for each of the parks
- Continue to improve safety at each of the parks
- Include a broad range of recreation facilities within each park where feasible, provided that the facility meets the spirit and intent of the park
- Develop amenities in park facilities to include those identified by the Township as well as by residents through the public input process
- Maintain a logical balance between active and passive pursuits in the parks
- Continue to collaborate with partners such as adjacent municipalities, the Grand Traverse Conservation District, Regional Land Conservancy, joint Recreational Authority, and the Parks and Recreation Network to provide broadly beneficial improvements to the active and passive regional recreation network
- Within all parks, the development of a self-guided nature education tour would be relatively simple, cost effective, and broadly beneficial
- Continue to let the Silver Lake Recreation Area Development Plan guide improvements to that park and evaluate the possibility of a seasonal ice rink

Goal 3: Explore opportunities and provide funding for the acquisition, protection, and preservation of natural areas, wetlands, habitat areas, and other similar resources.

Objectives:

- Identify important and recognized natural features and open spaces in the Township
- Enhance the green infrastructure network by expanding on and providing enhanced buffering to already protected areas
- Plant additional native vegetation and plants at all parks to protect water quality and improve habitat
- Continue to invest in water quality improvements such as stream bank stabilization and restoration projects
- Work with neighboring communities to identify and protect cross-jurisdictional natural areas which enhance the regional green infrastructure
- Encourage the Planning Commission and Township Board to develop and maintain Zoning Ordinance standards and Master Plan policy which encourage recognition and preservation of sensitive natural areas
- Identify priorities for acquisition as well as priorities for non-acquisition preservation. Priorities for acquisition should be areas that can also provide a recreational resource to Township residents, such as the opportunity for expanded non-motorized connections, or where the acquisition would protect and buffer already protected lands. Priorities for non-acquisition preservation (i.e. a conservation easement) should be identified where preservation is important, but acquisition is not critical to the recreational infrastructure
- Continue to work with the Grand Traverse Regional Invasive Species Network to prioritize and remove invasive species, prevent the spread of new invasive species, and educate the community about the stewardship of its natural resources

Goal 4: Provide a range of safe and convenient parks and recreation facilities to meet the needs of all segments of the population.

Objectives:

- Continue to develop and acquire additional land for future park development and to provide more uniform distribution of the facilities, in terms of both geography and population
- Develop facilities to meet the physical needs and ability levels of all park users
- Increase barrier-free accessibility at parks
- Provide facilities for park users of all ages
- Increase non-motorized access to parks
- Provide a variety of recreational opportunities, including active and passive recreation
- Improve recreational opportunities for underserved areas of the Township, particularly on the east side of the Township
- Continue to educate the public about leash laws for dogs in parks

Goal 5: Develop stable sources of funding and practice sound fiscal management of the parks and recreation system.

Objectives:

- Pursue all available funding sources for capital improvements and operations and maintenance, including local sources, a parks and recreation millage, state and federal grant programs, local business, and other sources
- Adopt policies that any money generated by the Park System, such as reservation and rental permits, shall be redirected towards park funding
- Explore the possibility of a regional recreational authority which will manage and maintain the regional trail network
- Coordinate efforts with local interest groups and recreation providers and create partnerships for providing these resources
- Encourage the Township Board to maintain a small millage to maintain consistent funding for the purpose of general maintenance, improvements, acquisition, and for local match purposes for grant opportunities

Goal 6: Increase public use, access to, and enjoyment of natural resources including the Boardman River, Boardman Lake, and Silver Lake.

Objectives:

- Invest in the restoration of bottomlands within former backwater areas as the three Boardman River dams are removed
- Invest in the acquisition of properties with Boardman River frontage, or properties that will buffer previously protected parkland within the Boardman River valley
- Plan for anticipated commercial pressures on the Township's parkland and natural resources, such as kayaking or canoeing liveries utilizing the Boardman Valley Nature Preserve for launch and recovery, or the potential to develop a whitewater park similar to the Bear River project in Petoskey. Consider permitting managed commercial pressure as a method of increasing public access to resources while incorporating a commercial fee structure to provide expanded Township-wide recreation opportunities
- Continue to seek funding and easements for the completion of the Boardman Lake Trail and Boardman Valley Trail. Incorporate water access elements with trail planning, such as fishing decks or swimming platforms
- Work with landowners, the DEQ, the DNR, and other stakeholders to manage the spread of invasive aquatic species within these waterbodies

Goal 7: Promote public awareness and usability of the park system.

Objectives:

- Continue to promote the park system via the Township website, Facebook page, newsletter articles, and by including information about the entire park network at trailhead kiosks
- Optimize the availability of mobile park information by taking advantage of technology such as Smartphone applications and Tag barcodes. For example, a Tag barcode (see example to the right) could be used to link users to digital park maps. On a more advanced level, an application could be developed to provide interactive directions to trailheads or even GPS-based trail guidance systems. Development costs could be shared through partnerships with other regional recreation providers who would also benefit from this technology



STAFF COMMENT:

The draft Goals and Objectives for the 2023-2027 Parks and Recreation Master Plan are attached to this report for discussion among the Parks and Recreation Commission. These include a mix of some Goals and Objectives carried over or slightly modified from those in the current Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and some newly proposed.

According to the “Guidelines for the Development of Community Parks and Recreation Plans” document 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.”

ACTION REQUESTED:

This item is for discussion to guide the development of the 2023-2027 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. No action is requested at this time.

Attachments:

1. Draft Goals and Objectives for the 2023-2027 Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Goals and Objectives

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

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

Objectives:

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

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

Objectives:

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

- Continue working with the Invasive Species Network (ISN), landowners, EGLE, MDNR, and other partners to prioritize and remove invasive species, prevent the spread of new invasive species, and educate residents about the stewardship of natural resources
- Require wetland delineations in Township processes including development review, and enforce Township Zoning Ordinance provisions to protect wetlands

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

Objectives:

- Prioritize new amenities which improve accessibility for all users and consider Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) design guidelines, barrier-free accessibility, and principles of universal design for all new parks and recreation projects
- Evaluate potential demand for new park features or amenities, especially those which are not currently offered at any Township parks, when creating park development plans for specific parks or considering projects

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

Objectives:

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

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

Objectives:

- Provide regular opportunities for residents to offer feedback on the Township parks and recreation system including focus groups, public meetings, surveys, or through feedback solicited at Township events
- Use the Township’s Public Participation Strategy to guide public engagement methods, identify key stakeholders, and evaluate the effectiveness of public engagement efforts
- Promote meetings of the Parks and Recreation Commission as an opportunity for people to provide input
- Utilize public input to help guide amendments to and implementation of this Plan

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

Objectives:

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

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

Objectives:

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