

Non-Motorized Transportation

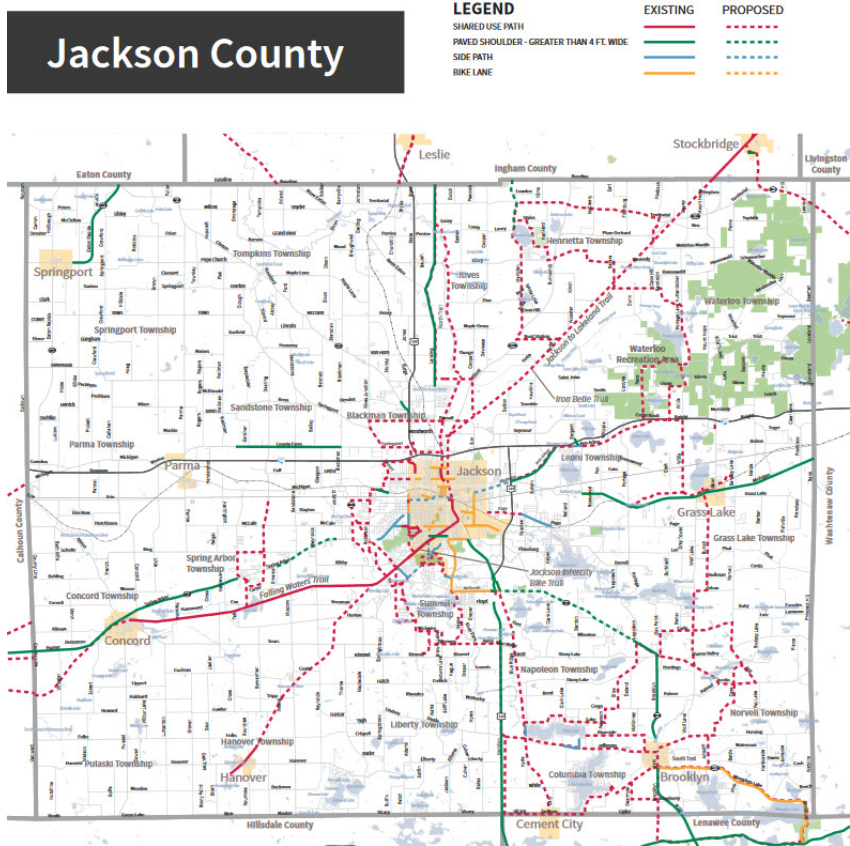
Non-motorized facilities are important components to the transportation system. They provide an environmentally-friendly, low-cost mode of travel. Some of the facilities can double as recreational assets. Jackson has invested a number of resources since 2002 to develop an impressive non-motorized network for a community of its means.

Existing Plans

University Region Non-Motorized Plan 2015

The Michigan Department of Transportation University Region led the development of the MDOT University Region: Regional Non-Motorized Plan in 2015. The region is comprised of 10 counties, including Jackson County. The focus of the plan is how developing a regional network of trails, paths and streets can provide connections between communities, counties and adjacent regions. The primary goals of the plan are to:

- Document the existing and proposed network
- Identify opportunities to enhance non-motorized transportation
- Help prioritize non-motorized investment
- Foster cooperative planning across municipal/county boundaries and continue to coordinate these efforts

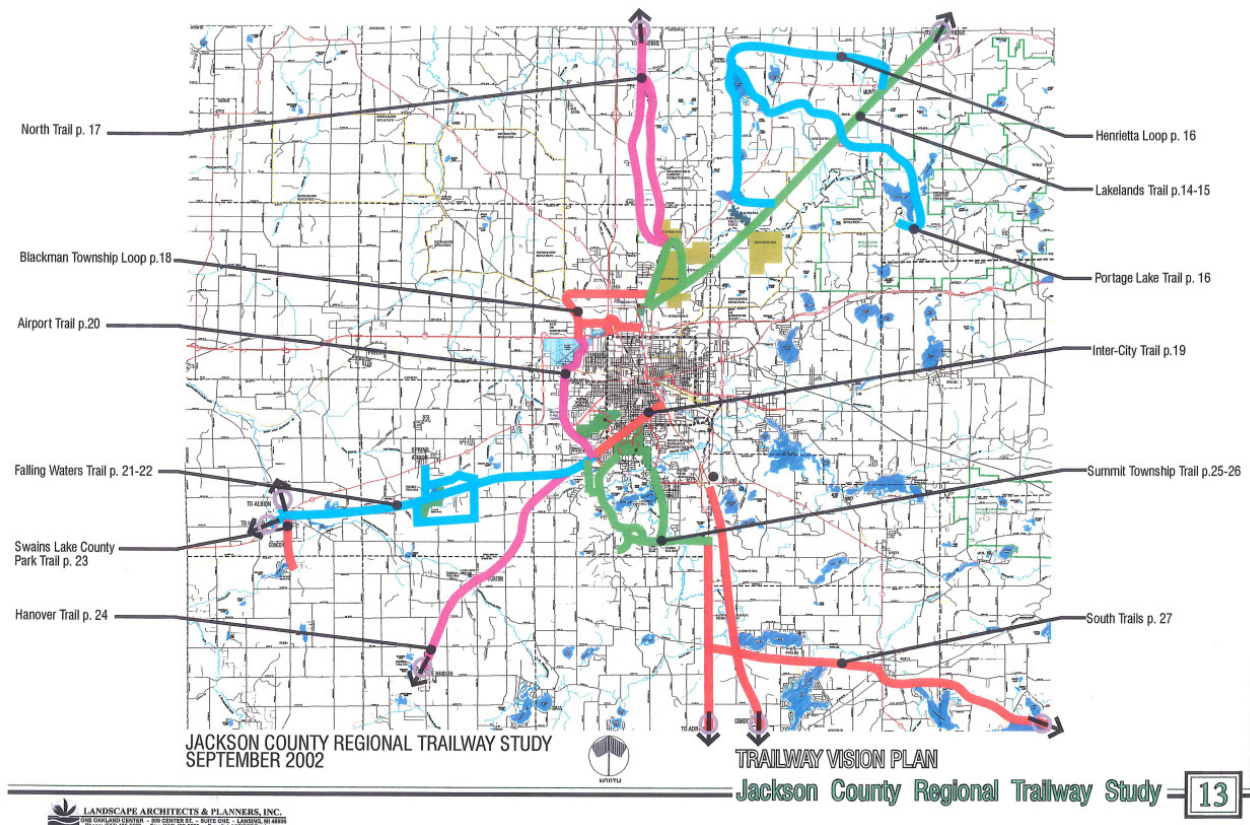


The plan provides a map of the existing and proposed non-motorized facilities for the 10 county region, including Jackson County. Stated priorities for Jackson County include the completion of trail routes that are on the Iron Belle and the Great Lakes to Lakes trails along with the development of connections to Brooklyn, Clarklake, and through the Heart of the Lakes Recreation Commission Plan area.

MDOT University Region 2015 Non-Motorized Plan

Jackson County Regional Trailway Study 2002

The 2002 Jackson County Regional Trailway Study was a county-wide non-motorized plan for local communities to build a trail network. Routes for more than twelve different trails are highlighted, and has served as the backbone for trail projects in the area that were developed from 2002 – 2017, including the Martin Luther King Jr. Equality trail and the Falling Waters trail. Local recreation plans and master plans have reaffirmed the recommendations from this study many times over since the plan's completion.



Jackson Trail Connector Feasibility Study 2017

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Michigan Department of Transportation, Jackson County and Blackman Township worked together on the Jackson Trail Connector Feasibility Study in 2017 to examine an extension of the Lakelands Trail to the Martin Luther King Jr. Equality trail. The study identified the location, benefits, and challenges for several routes, and identified a preferred trail option.

City of Jackson and Jackson County Joint Recreation Plan 2015 – 2019 Edition

A priority of Jackson County and the City of Jackson Joint Recreation Plan 2015 – 2019 Edition was to develop and implement a joint recreation plan that responds to the desire of the public and enhances local parks and programs. A Citizen Opinion Survey highlighted the strong support for non-motorized trails within the community. 88% of respondents showed support for developing a coordinated trail system. Impacts to the local transportation system include the support of developing a non-motorized trail network, including implementing the recommendations from the Jackson County Regional Trailway Study and encouraging local governments to plan for and develop additional non-motorized trails to supplement the Trailway Study proposed framework.

City of Jackson Community Master Plan 2016

The City's 2016 Master Plan highlights improvements for the non-motorized network. Non-motorized goals, recommendations and strategies from the plan include:

- Complete the non-motorized transportation network to connect downtown to all major areas of the City.
- Reduce dependence on the automobile for all transportation needs.
- Make connections on existing non-motorized routes to provide access throughout the City.
- Implement the recommendations from the 2010 Jackson Rail Passenger State Development Study, including consolidating local bus and bicycle services into a location easily accessible from the Amtrak node.

2003 City of Jackson Bike Route Map

The City of Jackson approved a Bike Route map to accommodate bicycle trips on low-volume roads between potential bicycle trip generators. These generators include park and recreational facilities, entertainment and shopping centers, large employers, and other areas. Specific facilities were developed with input from the Walkable Communities Task Force, bicycling organizations, traffic engineers, planners and the public. Most of these facilities have been implemented over the last 10 years.



Existing Non-Motorized Network

Sidewalks

Pedestrian movement is generally accommodated by the presence of sidewalks and non-motorized paths along with pedestrian crossing accommodations at major intersections. The City of Jackson has implemented pedestrian “countdown signals” that provide pedestrians with a safe timeframe to cross the street as well as Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements for sidewalk ramps at crosswalks and detectable warning surfaces within the sidewalk ramp. Pedestrian crossing islands and curb extensions have also contributed to improved safety features in some parts of the Jackson.

Bike Lanes

Dedicated bicycle facilities create opportunities for a range of users. Bike lanes are found on a number of streets near and within the City of Jackson. They provide a separated space for bicycles to operate, helping drivers understand where they can expect bicyclists to be in the roadway. Bike lanes discourage wrong way riding, and are useful on collector and arterial roads.

Trails

Trails also serve as a recreation facility and are a significant part of the non-motorized network. The following is a list of trails within the Jackson MPO area:

- Martin Luther King Jr. Equality Trail (formerly known as the Inter-City Trail): 3 mile paved trail that traverse the city from Weatherwax Drive through East Washington Street. The trail connects to the Falling Waters Trail. The Iron Belle Trail and Great Lakes to Lakes Trail routes align with the trail through the City.
- Falling Waters Trail: a 10 mile paved asphalt trail extending from the City of Jackson to the Village of Concord and connects the City of Jackson, Summit, Spring Arbor and Concord townships and crosses Lime Lake on an old Michigan Central railroad rail bed. The trail connects to Jackson’s Martin Luther King Jr. Equality Trail. The Iron Belle Trail and Great Lakes to Lakes Trail routes align with the trail through the County.
- Armory Arts Walk: a 1 mile paved trail from West Monroe Street to North Mechanic Street. The Iron Belle Trail and Great Lakes to Lakes Trail routes align with the trail through the City.
- Lakeland Trail: a 11 mile unpaved recreational trail that begins in the Waterloo State Recreation Area and extends to the Stockbridge area. Future plans include paving this trail.

- Sparks Foundation County Park: 2 miles of paved trails that runs through the park.
- PAKA Trail: a 1 mile paved trail that connects the Martin Luther King Jr Equality Trail to Ella Sharp Park.
- Spirit Trail: a 7 mile paved and unpaved trail around Clark Lake.
- Unnamed Trails: There are a number of unnamed trails, most of which parallel roads including Weatherwax Drive, Horton Road, Ann Arbor Road, Spring Arbor Road, Page Avenue and Probert Road

Other Facilities

The City of Jackson has a number of signed bike routes. They are identified by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) standard “bike route” green sign with white letters. Bicycle traffic is encouraged to follow these routes throughout the City. The signed bike routes do not have bike lanes nor are marked with any other indicator like a shared lane marking or “sharrow.”



Paved shoulders are another option that some bicyclists may feel comfortable to ride on. Paved shoulders are typically found on roads in rural areas and widths can vary from 4 to 8 feet. They may or may not be marked, and bicyclists are allowed to use them.

Bike parking is accommodated through bike racks that are located throughout the City and County. All of the Jackson Area Transportation Authority (JATA) fixed-routes buses have bicycle racks to help accommodate intermodal travel for its customers.




Jackson Bicycle Station

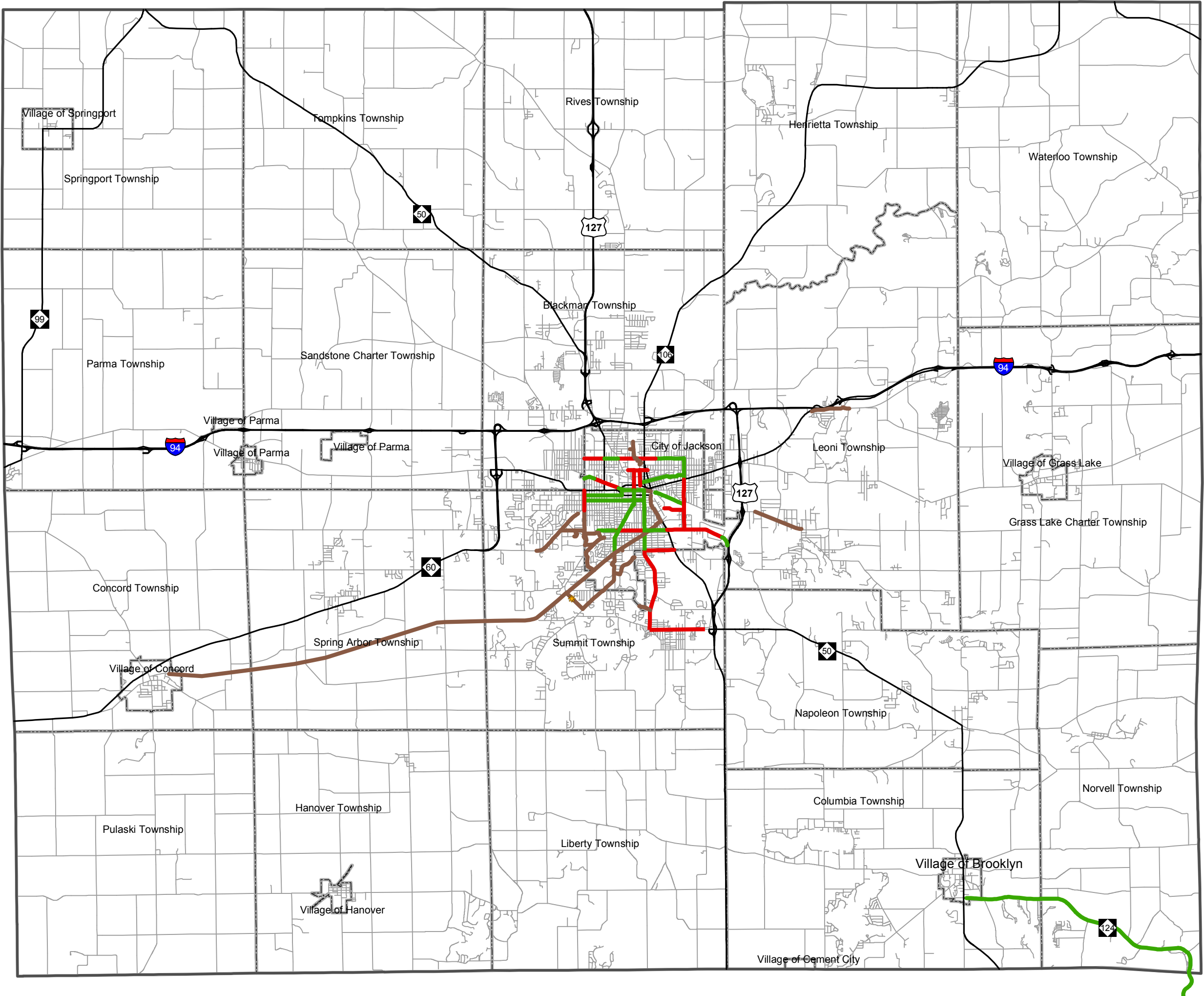
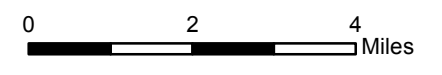
Jackson County supports one bike share station at the parking lot/trailhead where the Falling Water Trail meets the Martin Luther King Jr. Equality Trail on Weatherwax Drive. The BCycle bike share station was installed in May 2017. In the first four months after installation, there were over 600 bicycle trips taken. The program is generating modest revenue.

A map of the existing non-motorized facilities can be found on the next page.

Non-Motorized Facilities

Facility

-  Bike Lane
-  Signed Bike Route
-  Trail
-  Bike Share Station



Policies & Programs

The state transportation law requires that each local unit of government receiving Motor Vehicle Highway Funds (Act 51 funds derived from gasoline and car registration taxes) spend at least one percent of these funds each year for non-motorized facilities. The law also requires that each administering road agency prepare a five-year program for expenditure of available funds. The City of Jackson and the Jackson County Department of Transportation review the need for non-motorized facilities when programming future road paving and reconstruction projects. Both agencies also review future locations for the addition of non-motorized facilities that meet funding requirements through the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

Safe Routes to School

The City of Jackson began working on Safe Routes to Schools with some Jackson Public Schools in 2007. Over the last ten years, sidewalk improvements were made to the areas near Cascades Elementary School, Frost Elementary School, Northeast Elementary School and the School for the Arts. The City paid for the planning and engineering of the projects. Jackson County has begun meeting with some of the schools in the County in hopes of addressing the needs of the schools outside of the City.

JDOT has been active in the Safe Routes to School program. Several elementary and middle schools have received funding through this program and many others are developing their “walk to school” plans in order to secure funding. JDOT has assisted in the development of grant applications, and continues to be a resource to schools outside the City of Jackson that are in Jackson County.

FUTURE FORECASTS AND NEEDS

Future Planning Studies

An update to the 2002 Jackson County Regional Trailway Study is planned in the near-term. Many of the facilities have been implemented from the 2002 plan, and local leaders and the public are supportive of a new planning effort to consider the future of non-motorized facilities. Energy and interest continue to grow to support the development of these kinds of facilities for transportation and recreation. Proposed improvements from the 2015 MDOT University Region Non-motorized Plan will be considered along with the involvement of local villages, townships, the City of Jackson, Jackson County, and the Region 2 Planning Commission.

Iron Belle Trail

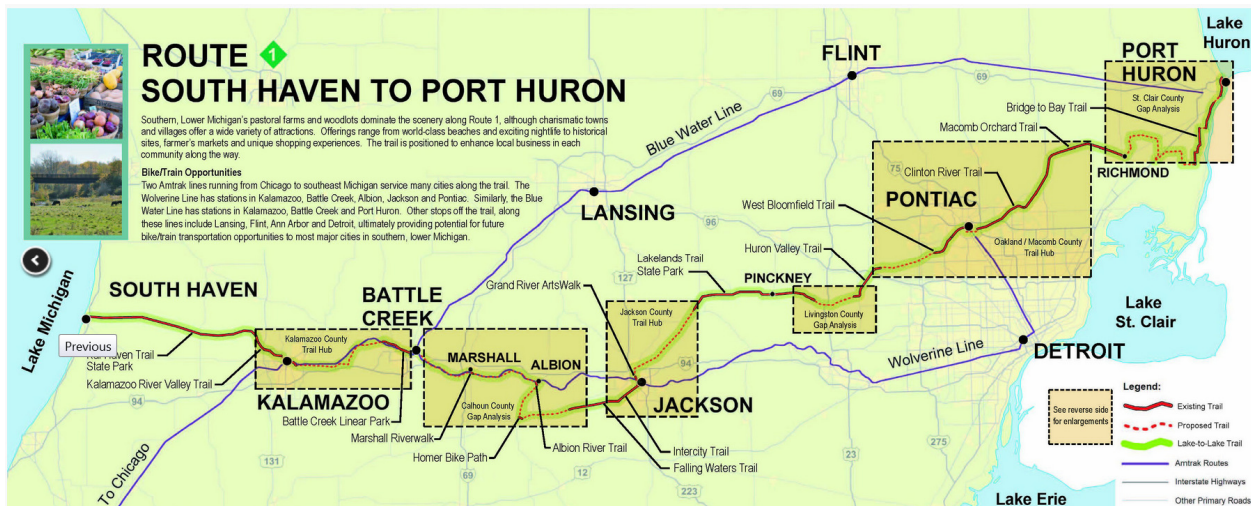
The Department of Natural Resources announced the plan for the Iron Belle Trail in 2015. The trail, which has two routes, one biking and one hiking, will run from Belle Isle Park in Detroit to Ironwood in the Upper Peninsula. The hiking route will follow the

existing unpaved Lakeland trail from Stockbridge, run along a proposed route into the City of Jackson. The route would follow the existing Armory Arts Walk, Grand River Walk and the Martin Luther King Jr. Equality Trail. From there, it would connect to the Falling Waters Trail, and continue along a proposed route to Homer in Calhoun County.



The Great Lake to Lake Trail

The Great Lake to Lake Trail is a collection of existing and proposed trails that will stretch 250 miles from the shore of Lake Michigan in South Haven to the shore of Lake Huron in Port Huron. The trail passes through Jackson County using the existing Falling Water Trail and the proposed Lakeland Trail, following the same corridor as the Iron Belle Trail would follow.



Policies

In the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan, policies to address improvements to non-motorized facilities in Jackson were included. Some of those policies that are still important to consider include:

- Strategies and actions in residential areas should be aimed at improving pedestrian safety and the overall quality of life. Projects that would limit undesirable vehicular activity on specific residential streets as a way of improving the pedestrian environment are encouraged.
- Special care should be given to address the removal of built-in barriers that limit access to pedestrian facilities
- Pedestrian safety in school zones should be considered through a coordinated effort involving school officials, parents, police, traffic engineers and planners.
- Identify specific routes that would act as connectors between existing non-motorized trails.
- Improve bicycle facilities including storage, shelters, comfort stations and trail heads at major generators and transit hubs.
- Improve safety issues such as drainage gate replacement, rail crossings, pavement markings, and signals.
- Promote access between non-motorized and other modes of transportation, including transit routes.