



GREATER IRISH HILLS

Recreation Plan

2023 – 2027 Edition

Region 2
PLANNING COMMISSION

Serving Hillsdale, Jackson & Lenawee Counties

NOVEMBER 2023
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**Greater Irish Hills Region Recreation Plan
2023-2027 Edition**

Chapter 1:

Community Description & Administrative Structure



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Community Description

A priority of the Greater Irish Hills Region is to develop and implement a recreation plan which responds to the recreational desires of its citizens and plans for enhancements to its various parks and recreation programs. A sincere effort was spent in developing this plan which represents the projected needs for recreation facilities and services in the Greater Irish Hills. For example, the plan provides a clear picture of the recreational opportunities available to residents regardless of who provides them. Nontraditional recreation opportunities such as shopping opportunities are catalogued as well as traditional parks and recreation facilities.

Location

The Greater Irish Hills Region is located in south-central Lower Michigan, close to the border with North-west Ohio and Northeast Indiana. The Irish Hills —centered on the US-12 corridor—provides the identity to the region. However, the 52 lakes located in the Greater Irish Hills Region also draw residents and visitors. Races at the Michigan International Speedway draws many visitors to the Region, as do other special events held at the venue throughout the year.

The Jackson Urbanized Area is located to the northwest, extending into Napoleon Township. United States Highways US-127, US-12, and US-223 converge in the Greater Irish Hills. Michigan Highways M-50, M-52, and M-124 also traverse the Region. Those roads connect the Greater Irish Hills to Ann Arbor and Detroit to the east, Toledo to the southeast, Battle Creek and Kalamazoo to the west, and Lansing to the north.

The Greater Irish Hills Region has a total land area of approximately 360 square miles. The Region is comprised of 10 Townships and 4 Villages located in portions of 4 counties (see Appendix C for the Base Map):

- The Township of Somerset (Hillsdale County).
- The Townships of Columbia, Liberty, Napoleon, and Norvell and the Village of Brooklyn (Jackson County).
- The Townships of Cambridge, Franklin, Rollin, and Woodstock and the Villages of Addison, Cement City, and Onsted (Lenawee County).
- The Township of Manchester (Washtenaw County).

A Brief Socioeconomic Summary

The composition of the Greater Irish Hill's population has an effect upon its recreational needs. Pertinent demographic components are listed below along with a brief paragraph describing the local situation. Regional data is compared with its statewide counterparts. Each component is described in greater detail in Appendix A of this document.

- **Population History & Projections.** The 2019 population of the Greater Irish Hills was estimated to be 40,140 people. The population is expected to increase to 41,338 people by 2025 and 42,415 people by 2035.



- Age & Gender of the Population.** Baby boomers (33%) were estimated to comprise the largest generation in the Irish Hills region in 2019 (24% statewide). Generation X (25%) was the second largest generation nearly identical to the state (24%) average. Generation Z and younger generations (20%) comprised the third largest generation, compared to 24% statewide. Millennials (13%) were the fourth largest generation (20% statewide). The Silent and older generations (9%) were the smallest generation, slightly higher than the state's seven percent for the same cohort. Females comprised approximately 49% of residents in 2019 (compared to 51% statewide).
- Racial & Ethnic Composition.** The population of the Greater Irish Hills Region is fairly homogeneous with 96% of residents identifying as white in 2019, compared to an estimated 78% statewide. Black residents comprised one percent of the Region's population in 2019, compared to 14% statewide. Roughly two percent of the Region's residents were Hispanic in 2019, compared to five percent statewide.
- Disabilities of Residents.** The number of Greater Irish Hills Region residents that were disabled (15%) in some way in 2019, was nearly the same as the state's 14%. Seven percent of the region's and state's residents had an ambulatory disability in 2019. Older people were more apt to have a disability with an estimated 23% of Region residents 75 years old or older in 2019 having an ambulatory disability, compared to 29% statewide.
- Household & Family Composition.** An estimated 56% of Greater Irish Hills households were comprised of married couples —with or without children— in 2019, compared with 46% statewide. Cohabiting couples —with or without children— comprised and estimated 6% of households, compared to 7% statewide. Single parents with kids comprised an estimated 10% of households, compared to 17% statewide. Single people comprised an estimated 28% of all Regional households in 2019, compared to an estimated 30% statewide.

- **Group Quarters.** Less than one percent of Greater Irish Hills residents resided in group quarters in 2019, compared to two percent statewide.
- **Household Income.** Thirty-six percent of all Greater Irish Hills households had an income of \$50,000-\$99,999 in 2019, compared to 32% statewide. The share of the Region’s households (26%) with an income of \$100,000 or more in 2019, was identical to the state average, as was the region’s share of households (23%) with an income of \$25,000-\$49,999 in 2019. The region’s share of households (15%) with an income of \$24,999 or less in 2019, was less than the 19% statewide in this income range.

Administrative Structure

The local units of government comprising the Greater Irish Hills Region joined together in 2018 to create the Greater Irish Hills Region Intermunicipality Committee for the purpose of discussing development/governmental issues of general interest in the Region, including recreation. The following local units of government were actively involved in the development of the Greater Irish Hills Recreation Plan and have adopted it as their local recreation plan (organized by county):

- Somerset Township (Hillsdale County)
- The Townships of Columbia, Napoleon, and Norvell and the Village of Brooklyn (Jackson County)
- The Townships of Cambridge and Rollin and the Villages of Cement City, and Onsted (Lenawee County)

The authority to provide municipal public park systems and recreation programs is granted by the State of Michigan. The parks and recreation program for each of the local units of government listed above is established under the authority of Public Act 156 of 1917, *Recreation and Playgrounds* (MCL 123.51 et seq.). The act allows for the creation of the various township and village recreation commissions, under the control of their Township Board or Village Council.

Organizational Structure

The Greater Irish Hills Intermunicipality Committee serves as the recreation committee that developed this Greater Irish Hills Recreation Plan and recommended its adoption by participating Township Boards and Village Councils, through local recreation committees or directly.

Organizational Chart



The following members comprise the Intermunicipality Committee:

- The Villages of Addison, Brooklyn, Cement City, and Onsted
- The Townships of Cambridge, Columbia, Franklin, Liberty, Manchester, Napoleon, Norvell, Rollin, Somerset, and Woodstock

Parks and Recreation Budgeting

Each participating municipality oversees its own park system (if any) and maintains the following parks and recreation budget:

- **Village of Addison.** [TBD]
- **Village of Brooklyn.** \$21,475 for FY 2021-2022
- **Village of Cement City.** [TBD]
- **Village of Onsted.** \$25,945 for FY 2021-2022
- **Cambridge Township.** \$1,000 for the FY 2021-2022 (donation for Village of Onsted Park)
- **Columbia Township.** \$23,000 for FY 2021-2022
- **Napoleon Township.** [TBD]
- **Norvell Township.** \$14,540 for FY 2021-2022
- **Rollin Township.** [TBD]
- **Somerset Township.** [TBD]

Sources of Funding

There are a couple types of potential sources of revenue for recreation:

- Municipal general funds
- grants and donations awarded for specific projects

General Funds. Each Township and Village uses general tax fund dollars for recreation, including the cost of producing this document. The general fund is a government's basic operating fund and accounts for everything not accounted for in another fund. Special revenue funds are intended to be used to report specific revenue sources that are limited to being used for a particular purpose, such as recreation.

Grants and Donations. Grants are sought by each municipality from various state, federal, and philanthropic sources for the acquisition of parkland and the development of a specific park, facility, or program. Donations from the public and various service organizations for a specific park, facility, or program are also accepted. A portion of the local match required of most grants may come from the general fund or donations. Many grants for parks and recreational facilities are likely to come from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources through the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and the Land and Water Conservation Fund¹.

¹ This is a Federal program administered locally by the State of Michigan.
Greater Irish Hills Recreation Plan

Relationships with Other Public Agencies

The municipalities that comprise the Greater Irish Hills Region are not the only suppliers of parks and recreational opportunities to their residents.

Schools. Local school districts are significant suppliers of parks and recreational opportunities to their students and boosters as well as the general public. The following school districts maintain recreation facilities within the Greater Irish Hills Region (see Appendix C for the School Districts map):

- Addison Community Schools
- Columbia School District
- Manchester Community Schools
- Napoleon Community Schools
- Onsted Community Schools

The following school districts, which cover portions of the Greater Irish Hills, provide recreation programs to their students although they maintain no recreation facilities within the Region:

- Adrian Public Schools
- Clinton Community Schools
- Grass Lake Community Schools
- Hanover-Hortton School District
- Hudson Area Schools
- Jackson Public Schools
- North Adams-Jerome Public Schools
- Tecumseh Public Schools

Local, County, State, and Private Parks and Recreation Facilities. Many of the villages and townships within the Greater Irish Hills Region maintain parks, trails, and recreation programs. The same is true for some of the surrounding municipalities. The surrounding counties also maintain parks and recreation programs within the Region. The State of Michigan provides a variety of recreational facilities in the form of state game, wildlife, and recreation areas; state historic parks; and state parks in and around the Region. A variety of private entrepreneurs and quasi-public agencies also provide recreation facilities and programs in and around the Greater Irish Hills.

Please refer to Chapter 2 for a more detailed description of recreation facilities in Jackson County and the City of Jackson.

Public-Private Cooperation. Cooperation between the public and private sectors is also active. For example, the Greater Irish Hills Intermunicipality Committee —responsible for the development of this recreation plan— is administered/staffed by the Irish Hills Regional Chamber of Commerce.

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Greater Irish Hills Region Recreation Plan
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Chapter 2:

Recreation and Resource Inventories



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Recreation Inventory

In order to plan for future parks and recreation facilities it is important to prepare a complete inventory of existing resources and facilities. The following inventory is comprised of all known parks and recreation facilities and programs available in the Greater Irish Hills Region, not just those owned and managed by its municipalities. The parks, facilities, and programs were identified through local knowledge and review of current and historic documents and maps.

Municipal Parks and Recreation Facilities

The Townships of Columbia, Napoleon, Norvell, Rollin, and Somerset and the Villages of Brooklyn, Cement City, and Onsted provide municipal parks and recreation facilities in the Greater Irish Hills (please see the following table and the Recreation Facilities map in Appendix B).

Municipal Parks and Recreation Facilities in the Greater Irish Hills Region

Key	Name	Municipality	Description	BFA
1	Ahrens Park	Norvell Township	Two ball diamonds, a picnic pavilion, and playground equipment.	3
2	Cement City Historical Museum	Vil. of Cement City	Historical artifacts from the cement plant, fire department, general store, the old Cement City High School, and things from the Baptist Church that was established in 1848.	1
3	Cement City Village Park	Vil. of Cement City	Full basketball court, small pavilion with picnic tables, multiple pieces of playground equipment, portable park benches, and a lot of open space for games.	1
4	Clark Lake Township Park	Columbia Twp.	Swing set, slide, climbing bars and pavilion; 3 porta potties; grills and picnic tables; and 465 feet of beachfront.	1
5	Jack Tibbs Park	Rollin Township	Baseball diamond, playground equipment, picnic shelter, and open spaces.	2
6	McCourtie Park	Somerset Twp.	This Historical Park consists of 42+ acres of natural, yet maintained landscape surrounding a bubbling, winding creek which features numerous unique bridges crossing it.	
7	Napoleon Community Schools Walking Trail	Napoleon Twp.	Paved walking trail behind Ezra Eby Elementary School.	2
8	Napoleon Lions Club Ball Field	Napoleon Twp.	Two ball diamonds and a clubhouse with a kitchen..	2
8.5	Napoleon Township Ball Field	Napoleon Twp.	One ball field behind the Township offices/fire station.	2
9	Napoleon Township Park	Napoleon Twp.	Playground equipment and 2 picnic pavilions with grills, portable restrooms (seasonally).	2

Municipal Parks and Recreation Facilities in the Greater Irish Hills Region

Key	Name	Municipality	Description	BFA
10	Onsted Village Park	Village of Onsted	Seven ball diamonds, 2 picnic shelters, a playground, wooded walking trail, farmers market (Sundays).	4
11	Swain Memorial Park	Village of Brooklyn	Restrooms (open seasonally), pavilion, picnic tables, grills, artesian well (tested monthly), playground, basketball court.	3
12	Weatherwax Park	Village of Brooklyn	Weatherwax Park has restrooms (open seasonally), picnic table, grill and public parking.	3
60	Addison Village Park*	Village of Addison*	N/A	N/A

*Non-participating community

- Accessibility** — It is important that municipal parks and recreation facilities be accessible to people with disabilities. After all, an estimated 15% of Greater Irish Hills residents were disabled in some way in 2019 and an estimated 23% of residents 75 years of age or older had an ambulatory (mobility) difficulty. Accordingly, the municipal parks and recreation facilities are rated according to their level of barrier free access. The number listed under the BFA column in the above table equates to the barrier-free rating listed in the adjacent table.

Barrier-Free Access (BFA) Analysis

Key	Description
1 =	None of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
2 =	Some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
3 =	Most of the facilities/park area meet accessibility guidelines
4 =	The entire park meets accessibility guidelines
5 =	The entire park was developed/renovated utilizing universal design

- Past Grants** — The Michigan Department of Natural Resources has awarded municipalities in the Greater Irish Hills Region 10 recreation grants.

Past MDNR Grants

Park Name	Municipality	Project No.	Year	Improvements/Usage
<i>Waterworks Park</i>	Village of Addison	26-00839	1976	Develop less than 1 acres for restrooms, and LWCF sign, 2 tennis courts
<i>Waterworks Park</i>	Village of Addison	26-01104 H	1980	Picnic shelter, play and picnic equipment, bike rack, bleachers, LWCF.
<i>Ballfield Complex</i>	Village of Brooklyn	BF89-458	1989	New youth and adult baseball and softball complex.
<i>Onsted Park</i>	Village of Onsted	26-00337	1971	Develop 21 acres to include a picnic area, 2 ball diamonds, 1 basketball court, 3 shuffleboard courts, 3 horseshoe pits,

				lighting, 1 pit toilet, 4 sets of bleachers, backstops, trails, and fencing.
<i>Onsted Village Park</i>	Village of Onsted	26-00844	1977	Develop lighting for existing ball fields, picnic equipment, LWCF sign
<i>Stetler Township Park</i>	Napoleon Township	26-00847	1976	Develop shelter, entrance road parking, softball field, and LWCF sign
<i>Stetler & Napoleon Parks</i>	Napoleon Township	26-01023 H	1977	Purchase and installation of play equipment, LWCF sign.
<i>Ahrens Township Park</i>	Norvell Township	26-00701	1976	Playground, picnic area and LWCF sign.
<i>Jack Tibbs Park Improvements</i>	Rollin Township	RP12-408	2012	Development to include ADA picnic area in wooded section, wood barriers along drive, drive and parking improvements.
<i>Somerset Township Tennis Courts</i>	Somerset Township	BF89-167	1989	Construction of three tennis courts, 175 feet of entrance drive, and 24 parking spaces.

County Parks

The counties of Hillsdale, Jackson, and Lenawee provide the following county parks in the Greater Irish Hills Region.

County Parks in the Greater Irish Hills Region

Key	Name	Municipality	Description
13	Clarklake (Jackson) County Park	Columbia Township	Water access, swimming area, boat launch, green space, picnic area (including grills), playground equipment, 950 feet of beachfront, and portable toilets.
14	Kathe and Calli (Hillsdale) County Park	Somerset Township	Four ecosystems, several endangered species, 2 1/2 miles of walking paths, playground, tetherball, basketball hoops, sanded volleyball court, and picnic tables.
15	Little Wolf Lake (Jackson) County Park	Napoleon Township	Water access, swimming area, green space, picnic area (including a shelter), playground equipment, and portable toilets.
16	Ramsdell (Lenawee) County Park	Rollin Township	Pavilion with fireplace, grills, tables, and latrine; two small ponds, one with dock access and the other with primitive access from trail; and approximately 5 miles of maintained trails through both fields and woods.
17	Taylor Road (Lenawee) County Park	Franklin Township	A small pond with primitive access from the trail and approximately 1¼ miles of maintained trails through woods.
18	Vineyard Lake (Jackson) County Park	Columbia Township and Norvell Township	Water access, swimming area, boat launch, picnic areas (including grills and tables), playground equipment, and vault toilets.

State Parks

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources provides several state parks in the Greater Irish Hills Region.

State Parks in the Greater Irish Hills Region

Key	Name	Municipality	Description
19	Cambridge Junction Historic State Park	Cambridge Township	The Walker Tavern and a reconstructed barn focus on the 1840s and 1850s. The 1929 colonial revival Hewitt House Visitors Center tells stories of early auto tourism, including the Irish Hills' famous 20th-century roadside tourist attractions like the Prehistoric Forest, Frontier City and Mystery Hill.
20	Watkins Lake State Park and County Preserve	Norvell Township and Manchester Township	Defined by its scenic lake, which inspires the serene setting the park is known for, it features a popular 5-mile walking trail, excellent bird watching, and gorgeous views that keep photographers coming back.
21	W.J. Hayes State Park and Campground	Cambridge Township, Franklin Township, and Norvell Township	Located on the southern shore of Wamplers Lake and located in the heart of the Irish Hills, the park offers a modern campground, a large swimming area, two boat launches, a fishing pier, trails, a picnic shelter, interpretive programs, and more.

State Game Areas and other Preserves

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources and other public and private institutions provide a variety of state game areas and other preserves in the Greater Irish Hills Region.

State Game Areas and other Preserves in the Greater Irish Hills Region

Key	Name	Municipality	Description
22	Allen Lake DNR Boat Launch	Cambridge Township	Hard surfaced boat launch for medium watercraft, with 15 parking spaces
23	Grand River Fen Preserve	Liberty Township	Three separate areas of high-quality prairie fen are renowned for the diversity of butterflies and moths, including four globally rare species.
24	Hidden Lake Gardens (MSU)	Franklin Township	Its mission is to preserve and enhance its gardens and arboretum for educating and inspiring the public to the beauty of plants and the value of nature.
25	Iron Lake Boat Launch (LCRC)	Cambridge Township	Features a gravel boat launch and fishing on Iron Lake
26	Leonard Preserve	Manchester Township	Birdwatching, parking, trails (natural ground, unimproved), and water
27	MacCready Reserve (MSU)	Liberty Township	A 408-acre property designated for education, research, and outreach programs in wildlife and forestry management; 6.5 miles of

State Game Areas and other Preserves in the Greater Irish Hills Region

Key	Name	Municipality	Description
			trails, rolling terrain, towering hardwoods, natural springs, and colorful wildflowers.
28	Frances Broehl Memorial No. 1 Nature Sanctuary	Cambridge Township	Michigan Nature Association sanctuary. Forested, with a small two-to-three acre wetland.
29	Onsted State Game Area	Woodstock Township and Cambridge Township	Consists of 808 acres with access to the River Raisin, six lakes, and wetlands; with a seasonal trail, boat ramps, and fishing.
30	Roger's Reserve (MSU)	Liberty Township	Chestnut tree research farm.
31	Sharonville State Game Area	Norvell Township and Napoleon Township	Consists of 6,000 acres and offers hiking, hunting, canoeing, fishing and target shooting areas. Game hunting includes deer, squirrel, pheasant and wild turkey.
32	Somerset State Game Area	Somerset Township	Access to several lakes and wetlands; with a seasonal trail and wildlife refuge.
56	Lefglen Nature Sanctuary	Napoleon Township	Michigan Nature Association sanctuary. Two trails. The south trail is two miles in length and the north trail is 1.5 miles long
57	Columbia Nature Sanctuary	Columbia Township	Michigan Nature Association sanctuary. Southern hardwood swamp, emergent marsh and mesic southern forest
58	Goose Creek Grasslands Nature Sanctuary	Woodstock Township	Michigan Nature Association sanctuary. Prairie fen and wet prairie communities in one of Michigan's few grassland habitats
59	Devils Lake DNR Boat Launch	Rollin Township	Hard surfaced boat launch for medium watercraft, with 65 parking spaces
62	Sand Lake DNR Boat Launch	Franklin Township	Hard surfaced boat launch for medium watercraft, with 24 parking spaces

Private Camps, Campgrounds and Clubs

A wide variety of private camps, campgrounds, and clubs host recreation facilities in the Greater Irish Hills Region.

Private Camps, Campgrounds and Clubs in the Greater Irish Hills Region

Key	Name	Municipality	Description
33	Brooklyn Sportsman Club	Columbia Township and Village of Brooklyn	Clubhouse, various sport shooting ranges/events, canoe/kayak launch.
34	Camp Dainava	Manchester Township	Provides cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities for members of the Lithuanian community.
35	Camp McGregor (JISD)	Liberty Township	An 85-acre camp with woods, meadows and animals in their natural habitat on the shores of Crispell Lake. The Jackson County ISD

Private Camps, Campgrounds and Clubs in the Greater Irish Hills Region

Key	Name	Municipality	Description
			owns and operates the camp, which serves each division of the JCISD and all Jackson County schools.
36	Camp O' the Hills	Norvell Township	Owned by Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan, this camp is a water wonderland with three lakes as well as more than 109 acres of hills perfect for play and exploration.
37	Irish Hills Kampground	Woodstock Township	Offers hospitality, security, quiet and clean family camping; row-boats on a 40-acre fishing lake; and paddle boats on the pond, mini golf, hay rides and a train ride every Saturday (weather permitting).
38	Ja Do Campground	Franklin Township	Offers hospitality, security, quiet, clean, family camping. Stocked fishing pond set in the woods with a nature trail leading to it. On-site activities include horseshoes, a playground for the kids, a large grass volleyball court and a basketball hoop.
40	Killarney Lutheran Camp	Cambridge Township	An outdoor recreational ministry with a campground.
41	Northaven Resort	Norvell Township	Clothing optional, adult only, RV resort.
42	St. Francis Camp on the Lake	Somerset Township	Serves children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities with personalized day, residential and weekend camp experiences.
43	Somerset Beach Campground	Somerset Township	Free Methodist Church campground with youth camps and family and adult retreats.
44	YMCA Storer Camps	Napoleon Township	Youth camps with summer overnight camp, an outdoor school, and group retreats; canoeing/kayaking/sailing; swimming; a climbing tower; a ropes course; horses; and an archery/pellet range.
61	TED Ranch Campground	Cambridge Township	Swimming, fishing, hiking, race camping.

Golf Courses

Various golf courses operate in the Greater Irish Hills Region.

Golf Courses in the Greater Irish Hills Region

Key	Name	Municipality	Description
45	Clark Lake Golf Course	Columbia Township	A 27-hole golf course, open to the public, with a restaurant.
46	Deer Run Golf Course	Liberty Township	A 9-hole golf course, open to the public, with a restaurant.
47	Devils Lake Golf Course	Woodstock Township	An 18-hole golf course, open to the public, with catering services available.
48	Gauss' Green Valley Golf Course	Napoleon Township	An 18-hole golf course, open to the public.

Golf Courses in the Greater Irish Hills Region

Key	Name	Municipality	Description
49	Hills' Heart of the Lakes Golf Course	Columbia Township and Village of Brooklyn	An 18-hole golf course, open to the public, with a grill.
50	Lake LeAnn Golf Course	Somerset Township	A 9-hole golf course, open to the public.
51	Mighty Oak Par 3 Golf Course	Woodstock Township	A 9-hole golf course and driving range, open to the public.
63	Gauci Golf Resort	Cambridge Township	A 9-hole golf course, open to the public.

Racetracks

The Greater Irish Hills Region hosts the Michigan International Speedway.

Racetracks in the Greater Irish Hills Region

Key	Name	Municipality	Description
52	Michigan International Speedway (MIS)	Cambridge Township, Columbia Township, and Woodstock Township	Professional international racetrack with nearly 9,000 campsites. Hosts events other than racing throughout the year.

Private Airports and Services

Several private airports, and a skydiving service, are located in the Greater Irish Hills Region.

Private Airports and Services in the Greater Irish Hills Region

Key	Name	Municipality	Description
53	Napoleon Airport/Skydive Tecumseh	Napoleon Township	2,740 foot and 2,500 foot turf runways. An independent skydiving service with state-of-the-art equipment and friendly professional staff.
54	Brooklyn Airport	Columbia Township and Village of Brooklyn	Public airport with a 2,822 foot turf runway
55	Van Wagnen Airport	Napoleon Township	Public use airport with a 2,105 foot turf runway

Local School Districts

Schools also provide a variety of recreational facilities (please see the following table and the School Districts map, Appendix B). For example, elementary schools provide numerous playgrounds aimed at different age groups and sports fields. Middle and high schools provide football fields, ball diamonds and

tennis courts. Elementary, middle, and high schools provide gymnasiums. Because of those facilities, schools generally function as community parks.

The following school districts maintain schools and recreation facilities within the Greater Irish Hills Region:

- **Addison Community Schools (central campus)**
 - Addison Elementary School (Little Panthers Preschool and Child Care) – 219 N. Comstock Street
 - Addison Middle School – 219 Comstock Street
 - Addison High School – 219 Comstock Street
- **Columbia School District**
 - Columbia Elementary School (Pre K-2) – 320 School Street
 - Columbia Upper Elementary School (3-6) – 321 School Street
 - Columbia Central Junior High School – 11775 Hewitt Road
 - Columbia Central Senior High School (Fitness Center) – 11775 Hewitt Road
 - Columbia Options High School – 4460 N. Lake Road
- **Manchester Community Schools (connected campus)**
 - Luther C. Klager Elementary School (Manchester Early Childhood Center) – 405 Ann Arbor Road
 - Riverside Intermediate School (5-6) – 710 E. Main Street
 - Manchester Junior and Senior High School – 20500 Dutch Road
- **Napoleon Community Schools (partial central campus)**
 - Ezra Eby Elementary School – 220 West Street
 - Napoleon Middle School – 204 West Street
 - Napoleon High School – 201 West Street
 - Ackerson Lake High School and Community Center – 4126 Brooklyn Road
- **Onsted Community Schools (central campus)**
 - Onsted Elementary School – 10109 Slee Road
 - Onsted Middle School – 10109 Slee Road
 - Onsted High School – 10109 Slee Road

Various other school districts serve students in the Greater Irish Hills, but maintain no schools or recreation facilities in the Region:

- Adrian Public Schools
- Clinton Community Schools
- Grass Lake Community Schools
- Hanover-Horton School District
- Hudson Area Schools
- Jackson Public Schools

- North Adams-Jerome Public Schools
- Tecumseh Public Schools

Public Libraries

Public libraries provide access to books, films, and a variety of enrichment programs. For example, the Jackson District Library (JDL) maintains branches in the Villages of Brooklyn and Napoleon. The Lenawee District Library maintains branches in the Villages of Addison and Onsted. The Manchester District Library is located in Manchester. The Somerset Township Hall also contains a small library.

Local Colleges

There are several local college campuses in the area surrounding the Greater Irish Hills. Jackson College maintains its Central and Maher Campuses in the Jackson Area; Spring Arbor University and the local campus of Baker College are also located in the Jackson Area. Hillsdale College and the Hillsdale Branch of Jackson College are located in the Hillsdale Area. Siena Heights University, Adrian College, and the JC @LISD Tech Campus of Jackson College are located in the Adrian Area.

Many colleges provide access to collegiate sports and athletic facilities. For example, the [Adrian College Boathouse](#)—located on Devils Lake in the Greater Irish Hills— is home to the College’s men’s and women’s rowing teams. Greater Irish Hills residents can also avail themselves of the other recreational facilities and programs hosted by area colleges. The [Potter Center](#) (Jackson College) hosts “the most versatile and complete performing arts complex in the area.” The [Ganton Art Gallery](#) (Spring Arbor University) contains “the state’s largest, single-room gallery.”

Resource Inventory

In addition to recreation facilities, the Greater Irish Hills Region is also home to a wide variety of cultural and natural resources.

Recreation Events and Programs

Schools are the primary providers of recreation programs for children. Sporting teams, band programs, school plays, and other events provide recreational opportunities for the entire community.

- **Cascades Conference.** The Addison Panthers, Columbia Central Golden Eagles, Manchester Dutchman, and Napoleon Pirates are members of the *Cascades Conference* with the East Jackson Trojans, Grass Lake Warriors, Hanover-Horton Comets, and Michigan Center Cardinals.
- **Lenawee County Athletic Association.** The Onsted Wildcats are members of the *Lenawee County Athletic Association* with the Hudson Tigers, Ida Bluestreaks, Clinton Redwolves, Dundee Vikings, Hillsdale Hornets, and Blissfield Royals.

Transportation

The Greater Irish Hills Region has a well-connected roadway system (see the Roadway Network map, Appendix B). The backbone of the system is the network of state highways (i.e., US and M routes) that traverse the Region. For example, US-127 traverses the Region from north to south, providing access to Jackson and Lansing; it also provides direct access to Addison within the Region. US-223 provides access to Adrian and Toledo. US-12 traverses the Region from east-to-west, providing access to Clinton and Jonesville. M-50 traverses the center of the Region, providing access to Jackson and Tecumseh; it also provides direct access to Brooklyn within the Region. M-124 provides an additional connection between M-50 and US-12 within the Region. M-52 traverses the eastern border of the Region, providing access to Adrian; it also provides direct access to Manchester within the Region. County primary roads traverse the Region, connecting neighborhoods to the state highway network and providing routes between destinations; they also connect Onsted and Cement City to the highway network. Finally, county local roads connect with county primary roads and state highways, providing access to Region and beyond.

Water Resources

The River Raisin Watershed encompasses most of the Greater Irish Hills (see the Watersheds & Lakes map, Appendix B). However, the Upper Grand River Watershed and Tiffin River Watershed also take up significant portions of the Region. The Kalamazoo River Watershed extends into the western border of the Region. The River Raisin and Tiffin River Watersheds flow east into Lake Erie and the Upper Grand River and Kalamazoo River Watersheds flow west into Lake Michigan.

The Greater Irish Hills is blessed with more than 50 lakes (see the Watersheds & Lakes map, Appendix B). Major lakes in the River Raisin Watershed include Clark Lake, Lake Columbia, Stony Lake, Vineyard Lake, Wamplers Lake, Evans Lake, Sand Lake, Loch Erin and Lake Somerset. Major lakes in the Upper Grand River Watershed include Lake LeAnn, Crystal Lake, Ackerson Lake, Cranberry Lake, Center Lake, and Big Wolf Lake. Major lakes in the Tiffin River Watershed include Devils Lake and Round Lake. The major lake in the Kalamazoo River Watershed is also named Round Lake.

Topography

The Irish Hills provides the identity for the entire Greater Irish Hills Region. The Irish Hills proper follows the US-12 corridor from west of Cambridge Junction (i.e., the intersection of US-12 and M-50) eastward to east of Evans Lake. As the name describes, the area contains a series of hills, breaking the monotony of the flatter landscape that surrounds it. The majority of the Region is graced with a slightly rolling landscape, including some minor hills and low broad valleys.

Future Land Use

Each Township and village conducts its own planning and zoning and the Greater Irish Hills Region spans four counties. Accordingly, there is no comprehensive future land use map that covers the entire Region. However, staff was able to utilize property assessment data to develop an existing land use map (see the Land Use Patterns map, Appendix B). It shows high density residential development (i.e., par-

cells less than 5 acres in area) primarily around the various lakes and in the villages. Low-density residential development (i.e., parcels at least 5 acres in area) sprawls across the Region, interspersed with agricultural land. Commercial development is primarily clustered along state highways (please note that private recreational areas that produce income are categorized as commercial for assessing purposes). Industrial development is minimal in the Region.

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**Greater Irish Hills Region Recreation Plan
2023-2027 Edition**

Chapter 3:

Descriptions of the Planning and Public Input Processes



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Description of the Public Input Process

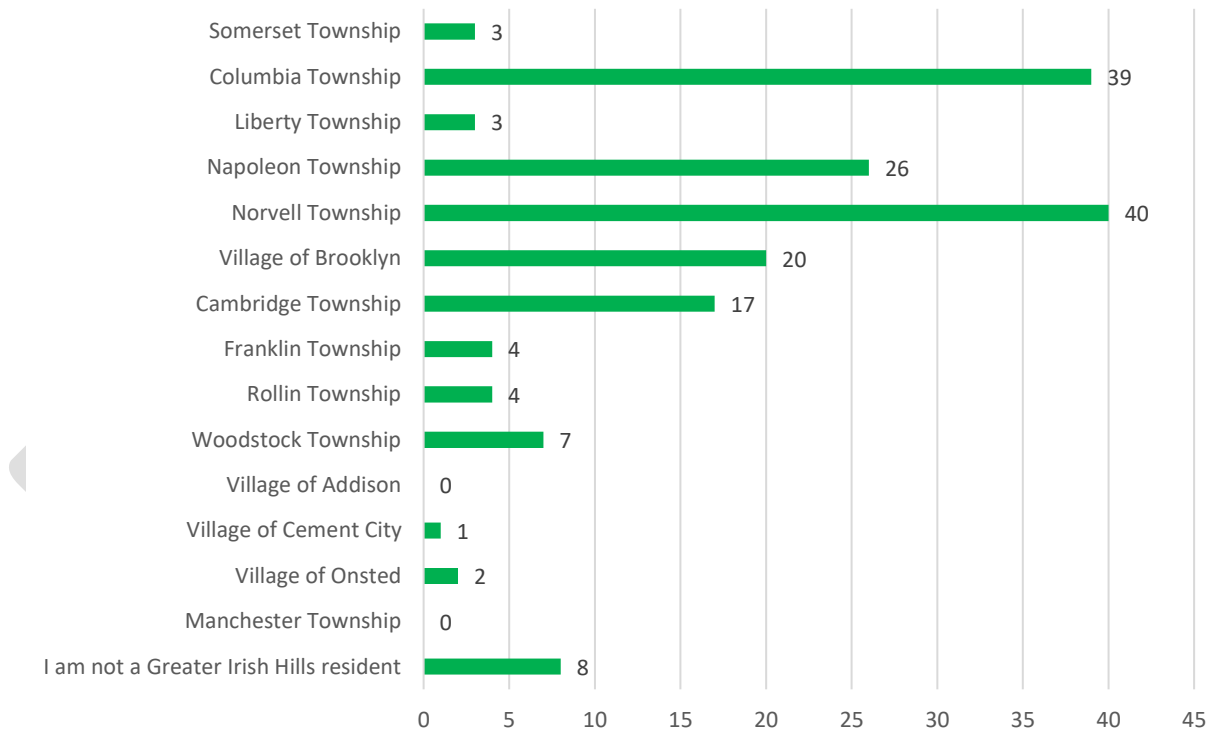
A variety of methods were employed to incorporate public input into the development of this Recreation Plan:

Recreation Survey

An online survey was conducted from March 18, 2022 through April 30, 2022. The 174 responses can be summarized as follows:

- Where do you live?**

Most of the respondents (81%) were residents of Norvell Township (23%), Columbia Township (22%), Napoleon Township (15%), the Village of Brooklyn (11%), and Cambridge Township (10%). Residents of the other villages and townships comprising the Greater Irish Hills involved 14% of respondents. Only 5% of respondents lived outside of the Greater Irish Hills Region. (n=174)



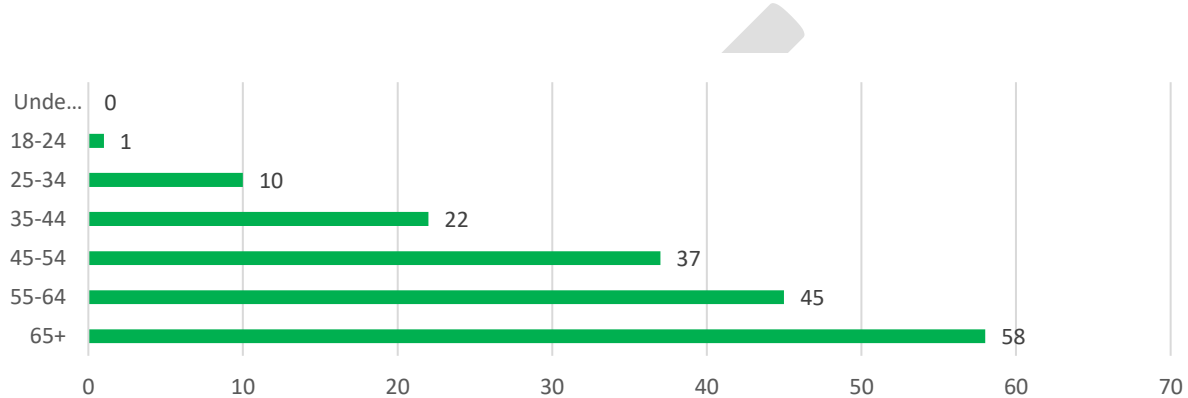
The following are the other communities in which respondents lived:

- Summit
- Leoni
- Live in City of Adrian but work in Village of Brooklyn
- Pittsford Township
- I was raised in Franklin Township and return frequently.
- Hillsdale, but I own a store in Brooklyn, Cairns Creations & VIPs

Hanover township
Toledo

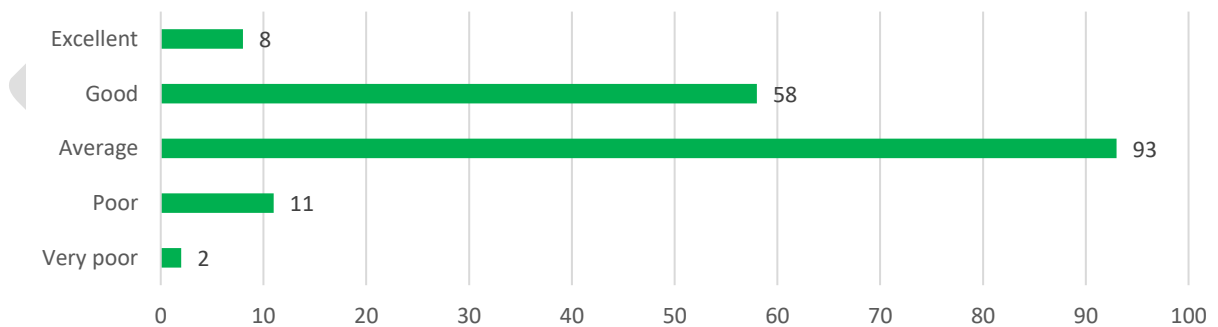
• **What is your age?**

Survey respondents tended to be older. Approximately 60% of respondents were at least 55 years old. Approximately 34% were 35 to 54 years old. Only approximately 7% of respondents were 18 to 34 years old. No respondents were under the age of 18. (n=173)



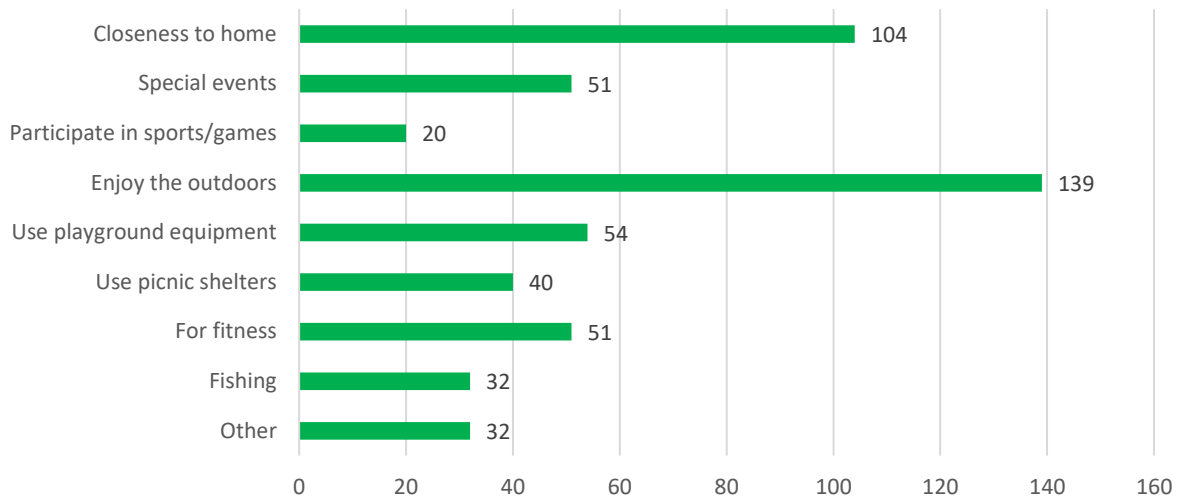
• **How do you rank the township and village parks in the Greater Irish Hills Region?**

Approximately 39% of respondents ranked township and village parks excellent (5%) or good (34%). Approximately 54% ranked them average. Only approximately 7% ranked them poor (6%) or very poor (1%). (n=172)



• **Why do you visit a park/recreation facility?**

“Enjoy the outdoors” was a reason selected by approximately 80% of respondents. “Closeness to home” was selected by approximately 60% of respondents. “Use playground equipment” was selected by approximately 31% of respondents. “Special events” and “For fitness” were both selected by approximately 29% of respondents. “Use picnic shelters” was a reason selected by approximately 23% of respondents. “Fishing” was selected by approximately 18% of respondents. “Other” was also selected by approximately 18% of respondents. (n=173)



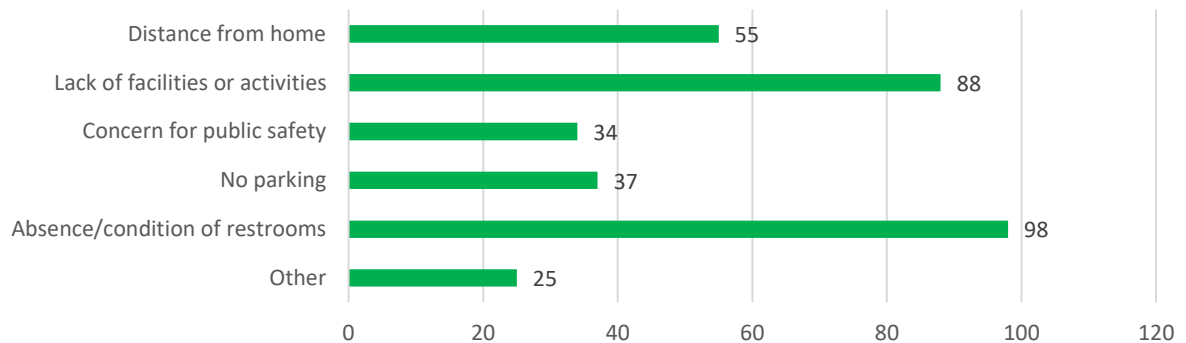
The following are the “Other” reasons respondents gave for visiting a park/recreation facility:

- We enjoy being outside in our friendly neighborhood.
- Exercise my dog; we used to use the playground equipment when my kids were young
- Kayaking
- Kayaking
- Access water
- Lake access
- Farmers market
- Dog walking
- Photography
- I haven't I just moved here
- Hunting, hiking, foraging
- Hiking, dog walking
- Hike and bike. Birdwatching, socialization, observe plants, trees, insects and animals.
- Walking dogs
- Kayaking, boating, outdoor walking
- Launch my canoe.
- Kayaking/boating, nature programs
- Walking my pups
- Walking, biking, cross-country skiing, picnicking, kayaking, canoeing.
- Restroom facility
- Meeting friends
- Water
- Spend most my time in Hayes State Park and the surrounding areas. Worked at most of the old haunts, Mystery Hill, Stagecoach Stop, Prehistoric Forest, etc. Love the lakes Sand, Devils, Wampers.
- Walk trails but none free nearby.
- Paved Walking Trails
- Exploring

Dog walking
On Deep Lake
Nothing more
Grandkids sports
Concerts
Swimming

• **What discourages you from visiting a park/recreation facility?**

“Absence/condition of restrooms” was a reason selected by approximately 57% of respondents. “Lack of facilities or activities” was selected by approximately 51% of respondents. “Distance from home” was selected by approximately 32% of respondents. “No parking” was selected by approximately 22% of respondents. “Concern for public safety” was a reason selected by approximately 20% of respondents. “Other” was selected by approximately 15% of respondents. (n=171)



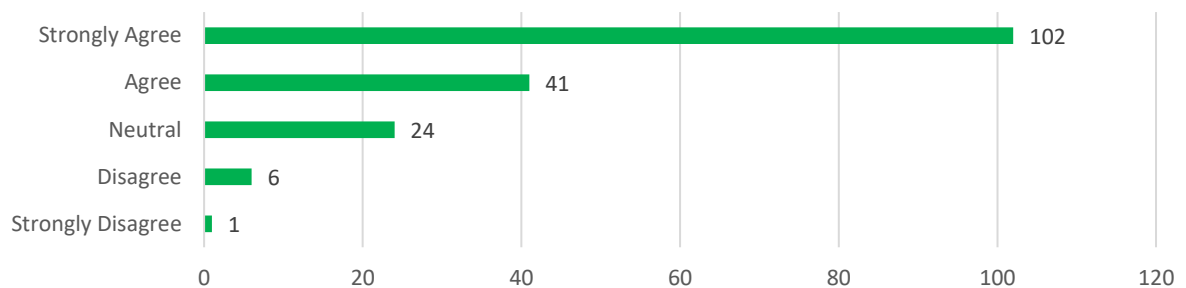
The following are the “Other” reasons respondents gave for not visiting a park/recreation facility:

- Trashed out parks
- Trails not well maintained - allows for ticks and other safety related issues
- Lack of cleanliness -too many hard surfaces without trees is uncomfortable in summer.
- At times - they are so enjoyable - very crowded & busy. Thank You - in advance for your interest!!
- Hidden Lake Garden's hours are erratic. They close before anyone's home from work.
- Nothing
- I live at the lake and don't often visit parks.
- Lack of wheelchair accessible facilities or activities
- Lack of things to do.
- If sketchy characters are loitering.
- It would be nice to have a pet friendly area
- Sports areas and playscapes are old and outdated. Could use better/updated launch areas for kayaks.
- Lack of off designated walking/biking trails that connect communities.
- None of the above, I am not discouraged to visit them
- N/A
- When it's packed with people.

Lack of MTb trails
I tend to avoid parks with a high volume of visitors. Prefer more natural settings with low traffic.
Nothing discourages me
Don't really have much of a desire to go to the parks.
Nothing but lack of restroom facilities deter my parents from joining me.
Nothing, except time!
No Walking Trails
Lack of safe walking or hiking trails

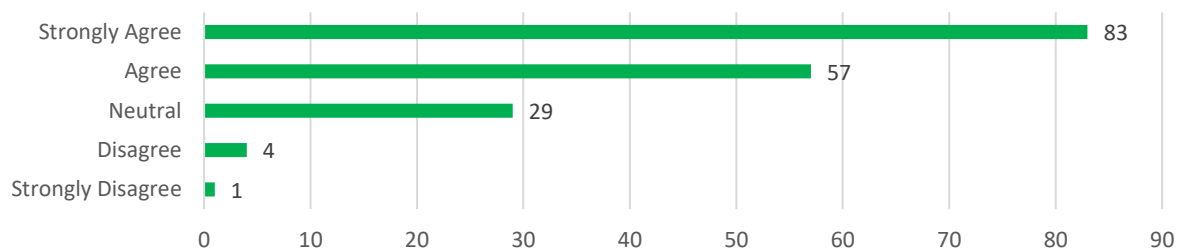
- Additional trails should be developed in the Greater Irish Hills Region.**

Overwhelmingly (83%) respondents strongly agreed (59%) or agreed (24%) that additional trails should be developed in the Greater Irish Hills Region. Approximately 14% were neutral regarding the statement. Only approximately 4% disagreed (3%) or strongly disagreed (1%) with the development of additional trails in the Greater Irish Hills Region. (n=174)



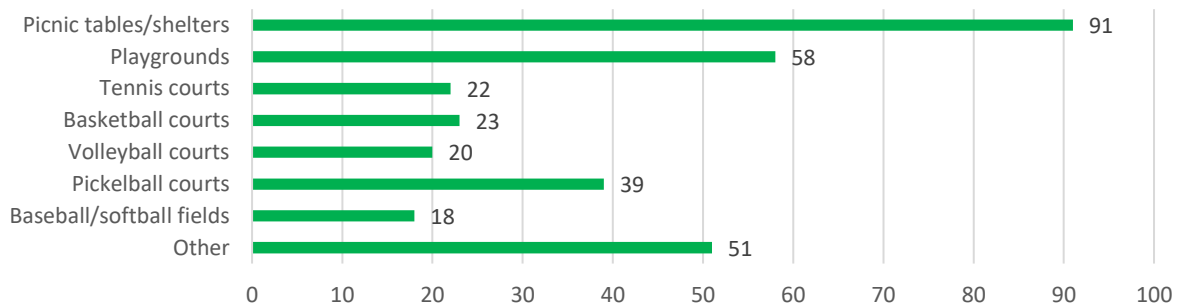
- Additional canoe/kayak launch sites should be developed in the Greater Irish Hills Region.**

An overwhelming share (81%) of respondents strongly agreed (48%) or agreed (33%) that additional canoe/kayak launch sites should be developed in the Greater Irish Hills Region. Seventeen percent of respondents were neutral regarding the statement, while only three percent disagreed (2%) or strongly disagreed (1%) with the development of additional canoe/kayak launch sites in the Greater Irish Hills Region. (n=174)



- **Is there a facility that you would like to see more of in the Greater Irish Hills?**

“Picnic tables/shelters” was a facility selected by approximately 57% of respondents. “Playgrounds” was selected by approximately 36% of respondents. “Pickelball courts” was selected by approximately 25% of respondents. “Basketball courts” and “Tennis courts” were both selected by approximately 14% of respondents. “Volleyball courts’ was a facility selected by approximately 13% of respondents. “Baseball/softball fields” was selected by approximately 11% of respondents. “Other” was selected by 32% of respondents. (n=159)



The following are the “Other” facilities identified by respondents:

- _____ Dog Park
- _____ Nature play, play equipment that incorporates natural products vs all the plastic
- _____ Trails
- _____ Thank you AGAIN for your interest & service. Older Mike :-)
- _____ Exercise trails. More varied topography--not just flat terrain, something more challenging.
- _____ Dog park
- _____ Since I do not use these options, I do not know what is needed.
- _____ Bike trails
- _____ Boat ramps
- _____ Skate park, there is absolutely nothing/nowhere for our youth to gather and participate in
- _____ Playground for older handicapped kids
- _____ Pool
- _____ Restrooms and paved walking paths
- _____ Bicycling /walking trails
- _____ Recreational center with swimming pool and fitness classes
- _____ Riparian Access
- _____ None
- _____ Frisbee golf is so much fun... are there any courses in the Irish Hills?!?
- _____ Swimming areas and kayak launches
- _____ Dog park, shuffle board, other leisure activities
- _____ Connecting hiking and biking trails
- _____ None of the above
- _____ Bike and walking trails
- _____ Walking trails

Water/Splash Pad. Skatepark. Disc Golf. Dog Park/Section.

Kayak launches, soccer goals, better playground areas

Splash parks and pools

Bathrooms, kayak launch, at the Norvell Dam. Actually a whole park along the river on the mill side in Norvell.

Kayak launches

They all sound good. A variety of facilities to get people outside to enjoy the outdoors.

Boat wash facility to prevent spread of invasive species.

For my wife and I, the parks are fine now.

Food vendors

Facility for community gatherings/meetings

Dog parks, hiking/walking trails.

No comment on the above

Just trails and open space

Grassy areas to just sit, picnic and read a book

No opinion.

Trails, dirt and paved for recreation connecting to other communities.

None of the above. I believe they are well represented

Would love to see some walking/bike trails even if it had to have boardwalks! Difficult to walk due to poor shoulders on roads and high semi traffic.

I don't know if the population warrants an increase in recreational activities and facilities

Bike paths

Nothing more

Bike trails, walking trails

Soccer fields

Ice skating or community pool

Walking trails

Dog park

Walking and biking trails!!!

- **What have you seen at parks and recreation facilities in other regions that you would like to see in the Greater Irish Hills?**

Pickelball courts, paved biking trails

Camera surveillance

As mentioned above naturescapes where play features are crafted from natural material (tree trunks hollowed out for tunnels, half logs for jumping, natural teeter totter) and shallow recreated streams that can be played in and around with circulating pump. I've seen them at municipal parks out of state, but also a neat one at Kalamazoo Nature Center and to lesser extent at Dahlem. Less mowed areas and more native grasses interspersed especially along lake shorelines where limited access points for swimming/water entry would help reduce erosion created from land-side entry and also erosion from wave action. Native plant buffer strips along shorelines would naturally help eliminate/reduce goose poop problem and help filter

out some debris that would ordinarily go straight into the lake. These can be managed with prescribed fire also to thin out invasives such as mint and purple loosestrife.

Trails

I believe - you will read our answers & determine what may be added.

Kayak launches.

Dog Park!

I do not have enough information to answer this question.

Connection through accessible trails

Workout areas

Drinking fountains for people and pets, biking trails, disc golf, paddle board

Festivals

Actual sand at the beach

Free activities/sports. Not all our residents have the funds to put their children in organized sports or extra-curricular activities. We have to invest in our kids!

Splash pad

Larger playground areas. Hiking trails.

Workout rooms, swimming pools, exercise classes

Connecting bike trails. It would be great to have one connect to the Spirit Trail to Brooklyn, or around Lake Columbia.

My favorite park is Kensington, and we drive in to Cascades quite often. There are always things to see and do, a place to sit and rest, and a real bathroom. Fewer but better parks would be my preference. It's not like there are any parks that all of us country folk can just walk to, so once I'm in the car, it doesn't matter if I drive 1 mile or 20.

Groomed/maintained beaches

Pools, fitness classes, outdoor recreation, child care

Riparian access sites, plenty of trash cans!

None

Would love to see a good dedicated bike trail (peddle bike) through one/many of the parks... More restrooms and running water, even if basic (like campground use?).

Trail maps.

Trails. Both paved and gravel

Boat launch

Connecting trails, informational signage, gravel parking at a minimum. NO paper maps etc. Let people use their phone to copy maps. Pet friendly areas.

Pavilion for live music.

Splash pad. Bike trails

Water pads for kids. Updated playground equipment.

Splash pads and docks for fishing

Trails, better playgrounds

Walking trails

Swings for babies.

Water/Splash Pad. Skatepark. Disc Golf. Dog Park/Section.

Water fun for kiddos

Clinch Park playground and splash pad in Traverse City, Tecumseh Park Kayak Launch in Lansing, Play area at Dow Gardens includes nature elements, Riverwalk areas in Adrian, Lansing, Blissfield. Trail systems for walking or riding like Falling Waters in Jackson
Disc Golf
Interpretive and educational information displays. Drinking water access.
Splash parks and pools and more pavilions for special occasion parties etc.
Volley ball, disc golf, ice skating
Quality restrooms
Splash pads, musical toys, launches for kayaks and canoes
Mirror what they have done with Waterloo recreation area. Groomed/marked trails, dedicated boat launches, nature programs, facilities & play scapes.
Splash pads for kids and dog parks and dog beach
Community connecting trails that keep riders and pedestrians off the roads, inclusive playgrounds for different abilities and ages.
Updated equipment
Fitness equipment. Clearly marked path. Longer distances
Shuffleboard, Pickle ball, bike/walking trails, outdoor entertainment settings for music, drama, etc.
Permanent restroom facilities that are maintained daily. Adequate boat launch and retrieval docks.
Pickleball, walking trails, more playground equip. for children.
None
Walking and biking trails
Nothing of significance.
Bathrooms
Bike paths and lots of them! Fishing piers and special days for kids to fish w/o a license. Kayak rentals/launch and organized races
Pretty much comparable
Interpretive signage to highlight natural features
N/A
Platform for fishing, handicap access
Signage throughout the trail
None
N
MtB trails
Bocci ball, volleyball, basketball, pickle ball courts, horse shoe pits, walking trails, dog parks.
Fitness stations
Better maintenance, restrooms.
Nothing comes to mind
Hiking trails, well-groomed grass
Regular maintenance
Splash pad
Water toys, trampoline, slide, etc. for parks on the lake.
Haven't visited any others.

If a body of water is present, a public access/swimming area.
More active (manned facilities) This helps with security and when issues evolve.
Walking/biking trails
Maintain the trees better. We seem to let them get to where storms damage them then remove them rather than regular pruning. Which is why I feel additional paths are wasteful as we don't properly maintain what we have
Up by Jackson Falls there are amazing walking /biking trails and lots of people are out pushing strollers, walking dogs, etc!
More playgrounds and things for kids to do
Vegetable gardens
Splash pad for children during the summer months. I drive to Tecumseh for a small version splash pad and Toledo. Perhaps others would visit Onsted and local businesses before/afterwards?
New restrooms
Bike trails
Unique Playground Equipment. Splash Pad. Paved Trails That Take You Somewhere
Kids playground equipment
N/A
More events for public. A good number to contact to rent picnic shelters.
Larger updated bathroom facilities. Paved walking paths.
More trails and courts to support large variety of sports.
Community, bathrooms, safety, outdoor classes - ie yoga
Various playground equipment for greater age range
More trails
Bike/walk trails
Nice bathrooms
More trails
Event areas for small concerts, splash pads, off the road hiking and biking trails that could be used for cross country skiing
Better picnic areas, restrooms, walking trails
Off leash dog rec areas
Lighting, water, safety, dining area
Trails...that are paved and safe
We really have no walking/bike trails besides spirit trail. I think this would be a real draw to our community.
Snack or food stands



**Greater Irish Hills Region Recreation Plan
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Chapter 4:

Goals and Objectives



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Value Statements

Values represent the desired quality and character of outdoor recreation as well as the foundational elements necessary to achieve that character. The following statements describe values that serve as guiding principles for recreation in the Irish Hills.

Environmentally & Economically Sustainable

The environment is the primary asset for outdoor recreation activities and attractions in the Irish Hills. A healthy environment provides numerous ecosystem services upon which the regional economy ultimately depends. Healthy economies, in turn, enhance quality of life and provide the resources necessary for stewardship and long-term thinking. By considering both the environment and the economy simultaneously, we can use the highest levels of sustainability to provide the best quality of life for the residents of the Irish Hills, support economic development, protect the area's natural resources and promote consistent delivery of recreational services.

Inviting

An authentic culture of hospitality invites people to engage with their environment and with each other. Outdoor recreation in the Irish Hills is inclusive and reflective of our resident population and invites everyone to participate in outdoor recreation. It physically connects communities and invites cooperation towards greater opportunities.

Unique

The landscapes and culture of the Irish Hills are distinguishing characteristics celebrated through outdoor recreation. By reflecting what is unique at the local level we can realize economic and environmental benefits.

Organized

Facility and program operators demonstrate professionalism and intentionality by providing a high level of service, cleanliness, maintenance, security, and safety to ensure high-quality recreation experiences. Participants will only continue to engage in outdoor recreation activities if they have positive safe experiences.

Connected

Projects that are impactful at regional scales often require intentional coordination or collaboration among multiple partners. They are operationally and physically connected to leverage the assets of all partners and achieve a larger scale that attracts funders and users looking for more robust or comprehensive experiences.

Goals and Objectives

The following Goals and Objectives define core actionable strategies for delivering outdoor recreation services that incorporate the ideals articulated in the above Value Statements.

GOAL 1: PROMOTE THE CONSERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP OF THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES OF THE IRISH HILLS

The Irish Hills' natural environment and cultural resources are some of its greatest assets for recreation, entertainment, and economic development. Their preservation and conservation ensure today's investments will have a positive long-term economic impact for the area. These resources serve as the foundation for many initiatives that align with contemporary economic and community development practices.

Conserving and enhancing the Irish Hills' abundant natural resources including its lakes, rivers, wetlands, woodlands, and rolling topography will provide opportunities for connection, transportation, and enjoyment for residents and visitors.

Objective 1.1: Preserve and enhance the surface waters of the Irish Hills, including the lakes, rivers, and River Raisin Watershed by supporting and promoting initiatives that maintain and/or improve water quality; promote the preservation and expansion of recreational shoreline and other water-oriented opportunities for recreation; and encourage the development of water trails and their requisite infrastructure.

Objective 1.2: Prioritize funding for projects that incorporate low-impact or restoration practices in the design, construction, and operation of recreation infrastructure that protect sensitive cultural and/or natural resources.

Objective 1.3: Prioritize funding and support for projects that acquire and permanently protect cultural and/or natural resources, including priority wetlands in the Irish Hills.

Objective 1.4: Adopt and implement best practices and standards for sustainable design, construction, and operation of outdoor recreation facilities.

Objective 1.5: Enhance public awareness, appreciation, and stewardship of natural and cultural resources through the development and distribution of high-quality education and outreach materials and programs that promote these ideas.

Examples & information sources for conservation and stewardship of natural and cultural resources:

Leave No Trace

A well-established national nonprofit organization, the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics protects the outdoors by teaching and inspiring people to enjoy it responsibly through delivering cutting-edge education and research. For more information and to request resources, visit:

<https://lnt.org>

National Park Service's Sustainable Trail Guidelines

<https://www.americantrails.org/resources/sustainable-trail-guidelines>

GOAL 2: INCREASE PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY TO OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES THROUGH UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Most people in their lifetime will experience either a temporary or permanent physical disability. Therefore, physical accessibility to outdoor recreation facilities is an issue that affects everyone. An important aspect of enhancing the delivery of outdoor recreation services to all Irish Hills residents is providing facilities that are not only accessible, but invite the participation of all members of the public regardless of their ability.

Universal Design principles are an important guiding philosophy in the planning and design of facilities that invite everyone into outdoor recreation to the greatest extent possible, without separate or segregated access for people with disabilities. The following are the seven Universal Design principles, as defined by the National Disability Authority's Center for Excellence in Universal Design:

1. The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.
2. The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
3. Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration levels.
4. The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.
5. The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
6. The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.
7. Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

Designing each outdoor recreation facility to be as accessible as practical should be the ultimate goal of each project, and the tactics required will vary depending upon the project setting.

Objective 2.1: Prioritize funding for projects that achieve universal accessibility or that achieve the highest level of accessibility practicable for that given program or site.

Objective 2.2: Update existing facilities and programs within the Irish Hills to remove architectural barriers and incorporate Universal Design principles to the greatest extent practicable.

Objective 2.3: Utilize Universal Design principles in the design and operation of new facilities and programs.

Examples & information sources for Universal Design:

Universal Design Guidelines from the National Disability Authority's Center for Excellence in Universal Design:

<http://universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/The-7-Principles>

Architectural Barriers Act Standards:

<https://www.wbdg.org/FFC/USAB/ABAstandards.pdf>

Best Practices and Case Studies in Universal Recreation Design:

<http://universaldesign.com/recreation>

GOAL 3: ENHANCE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF AND ENGAGEMENT IN OUTDOOR RECREATION

A persistent challenge for communities is a lack of awareness of and information about outdoor recreation facilities and programs. In the Irish Hills the information and marketing outlets for outdoor recreation opportunities are scattered across multiple platforms that are typically under-funded. We need to tell the Irish Hills story in compelling ways that create a sense of interest and that will inspire local residents and out-of-the-area visitors to discover the Irish Hills' special outdoor spaces. Marketing and outreach programs should complement education and interpretive programs to invite everyone to enjoy the outdoors.

Outdoor recreation partners can efficiently leverage their financial resources and efforts to maximize awareness by partnering with each other to collectively develop a centralized communications infrastructure that includes design standards, one or more websites, social media marketing and purchasing, and other tools. These communications tools should be designed in a manner that is accessible, engaging, and inviting to everyone. They should also empower community members, professionals, and elected officials to discuss the positive benefits of outdoor recreation to public health, the economy, and quality of life.

Marketing strategies should expand beyond traditional advertising and include branding, awareness, and educational campaigns that invite new users and create new opportunities for existing users. A divergent set of mechanisms including social media, in-person events, TV, radio, and other outlets will introduce new users to the variety of activities and places in the Irish Hills.

Objective 3.1: Implement durable marketing and outreach programs to invite all members of society to engage in outdoor recreation in the Irish Hills, particularly traditionally underserved groups and first-time recreation participants.

Objective 3.2: Share information with elected officials about the economic and quality-of-life benefits of outdoor recreation through well-designed and researched materials and presentations. Empower elected officials to deliver the message to their constituencies.

Objective 3.3: Enhance marketing of outdoor recreation opportunities in the Irish Hills to both local and out-of-the-area audiences.

Objective 3.4: Develop a centralized mechanism for producing and maintaining communication tools around outdoor recreation opportunities in the area through the creation of an Irish Hills recreation brand to increase awareness of the region's natural assets or partner with the Region 2 Planning Commission's Southern Michigan Outdoors initiative for brand awareness.



Examples & information sources for enhancing public awareness and engagement in outdoor recreation:

Region 2 Planning Commission's Southern Michigan Outdoors Initiative:

<http://southernmichiganoutdoors.com>

Outdoor Recreation Information Center – Colorado:

Colorado's Outdoor Recreation Information Center is a source for all types of information related to outdoor recreation in Colorado and nearby states. Users can use the site to plan trips, find out about user groups, events, and training, and how to become involved as a volunteer.

<https://oriconline.org>

Outdoor Recreation Tourism Information – West Virginia:

West Virginia's tourism department maintains a website for statewide outdoor recreation tourism information to help residents and visitors plan trips.

<https://wvtoursim.com/things-to-do/outdoor-adventures>

GOAL 4: CONNECT OUTDOOR RECREATION ASSETS AND COMMUNITIES

Outdoor recreation projects that fully maximize economic and quality of life benefits to multiple communities are those that create physical, thematic, and programmatic linkages between outdoor recreation assets and between communities and across regions. Long-distance trails can provide physical connections that link assets and communities. Such trails create off-road connections to recreational destinations and provide alternative transportation options linking people to where they live, work and recreate. Communities can create thematic or programmatic linkages through interpretive and marketing programs that highlight multiple recreation activities in a given area.

When a region has multiple marketable outdoor recreation destinations or one or more long-distance recreational trails, they have an opportunity to take advantage of outdoor recreation as a driver of economic development. The Irish Hills region has an opportunity to leverage its existing outdoor recreation assets, along with its resident's desire for more interconnected trails, to utilize these current and potentially future assets as a major quality of life draw for residents and out-of-area visitors. This opportunity

should motivate recreational leaders in the Irish Hills to work collaboratively to facilitate a public planning process to create an interconnected Irish Hills trail network, to include components such as:

- Priority Corridor Identification, Analysis and Mapping
- Trail Design and Operating Standards
- Irish Hills Trail Network Branding and Wayfinding Standards
- Identification of Successful Implementation and Operations Models
- Program Implementation Strategies
- Economic Impact Analysis

Such a plan would provide an implementation roadmap for achieving physical connections between communities and outdoor recreation assets throughout the Irish Hills.

Objective 4.1: Prioritize funding for projects that incorporate safe multi-modal physical connections within and between communities, and their assets, across the Irish Hills and/or that involve thematic or programmatic connections that heighten awareness of regional assets.

Objective 4.2: Develop a conceptual and programmatic plan for an interconnected network of Irish Hills recreational trails including requisite amenities such as maps, benches, trash receptacles, mile markers, bike racks, and wayfinding for such a network.

Objective 4.3: Develop a conceptual and programmatic plan that includes the identification of routes and requisite infrastructural amenities to encourage gravel and road biking throughout the Irish Hills.

Objective 4.4: Study the benefits and feasibility of developing mountain bike trails and requisite infrastructural amenities including skills tracks and/or pump tracks to encourage and expand mountain biking throughout the Irish Hills.

Objective 4.5: Develop recreation events utilizing the natural amenities of the region to increase awareness of the Irish Hills and generate positive economic impact for its communities.

Examples & information sources for connecting outdoor recreation assets and communities:

The Iron Ore Heritage Trail:

The Iron Ore Heritage Trail is a 47-mile, year-round, multi-use, interpretive trail that crosses the Marquette Iron Range in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

<http://ironoreheritage.com>

Florida Trail Town Program:

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Greenways and Trails created the Florida Trail Towns Program to guide and support the development of communities along Florida's long-distance trails as host towns for trail tourists. For more information, visit:

<https://floridadep.gov/parks/ogt/content/trail-town-program>

Community Bike Share Programs:

There are a number of different models for increasing accessibility to cycling in communities, ranging from checking out bikes from libraries, to bicycle coops and collectives, to public bicycle systems. For a directory of bike programs in the United States, visit:

<http://www.ibike.org/encouragement/community/directory>

GOAL 5: IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PARTNERSHIPS TO DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES

The outdoor recreation projects that have the greatest positive impact on quality of life and economic development are those in which multiple organizations communicate, connect, and collaborate with each other. Such partnerships often exchange ideas, identify greater opportunities, and create excitement. Public and private agencies and organizations within the Irish Hills should actively pursue partnerships to achieve high-impact outdoor recreation projects.

Objective 5.1: Prioritize funding for projects that incorporate partnerships among multiple Irish Hills organizations and jurisdictions that achieve higher-impact outdoor recreation projects that positively impact multiple communities.

Objective 5.2: Facilitate greater local, regional, and state inter-agency and private sector collaboration to achieve higher-impact outdoor recreation projects within the Irish Hills.

Objective 5.3: Develop best practices guidelines for local and regional public-private and volunteer partnerships to build, operate, and maintain recreation facilities.

Examples & information sources about building partnerships:***Mountains-to-Sea Trail:***

The Mountains-to-Sea Trail is North Carolina's state hiking trail, connecting dozens of communities and leveraging a creative partnership between multiple groups. For more information, visit:

<https://mountainstoseatrail.org>

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**Greater Irish Hills Region Recreation Plan
2023-2027 Edition**

Chapter 5:

Action Plan



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Action Plan

The action plan details the manner in which the goals and objectives will be met. It includes a list of specific improvement projects as well as strategies for implementation.

The following outlines a list of specific projects and actions which are recommended for accomplishment during the planning period. They are based on the needs identified in the previous section and by observation of the Irish Hills region.

1: PROMOTE THE CONSERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP OF THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES OF THE IRISH HILLS

- Coordinate with the River Raisin Watershed Council on preservation of the surface waters and creation of water trails.
- Create best practices and standards for sustainable design, construction, and operation of outdoor recreation facilities
- Fund infrastructure built with Universal Design principals
- Prioritize funding for projects that align with the objectives in Goal 1
- Build a public awareness campaign to educate people about the value of the watershed

2: INCREASE PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY TO OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES THROUGH UNIVERSAL DESIGN

- Incorporate Universal Design in all new construction and apply the principles in all refurbishment projects
- Apply for grants that to help with construction
- Partner with all related agencies to ensure shared Universal Design goals and principles

3: ENHANCE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF AND ENGAGEMENT IN OUTDOOR RECREATION

- Create a unified advertising structures with all stakeholders
- Create an Irish Hills brand logo and campaign
- Execute an advertising campaign, both digital and traditional, to educate everyone about the outdoor opportunities
- Ensure designs are usable across a variety of uses, from website to signs

4: CONNECT OUTDOOR RECREATION ASSETS AND COMMUNITIES

- Prioritize funding for projects that incorporate safe multi-modal physical connections within and between communities, and their assets, across the Irish Hills and/or that involve thematic or programmatic connections that heighten awareness of regional assets.

- Develop a conceptual and programmatic plan for an interconnected network of Irish Hills recreational trails including requisite amenities such as maps, benches, trash receptacles, mile markers, bike racks, and wayfinding for such a network.
- Develop a conceptual and programmatic plan that includes the identification of routes and requisite infrastructural amenities to encourage gravel and road biking throughout the Irish Hills.
- Study the benefits and feasibility of developing mountain bike trails and requisite infrastructural amenities including skills tracks and/or pump tracks to encourage and expand mountain biking throughout the Irish Hills.
- Develop recreation events utilizing the natural amenities of the region to increase awareness of the Irish Hills and generate positive economic impact for its communities.

5: IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PARTNERSHIPS TO DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES

- Prioritize funding for projects that incorporate partnerships among multiple Irish Hills organizations and jurisdictions that achieve higher-impact outdoor recreation projects that positively impact multiple communities.
- Facilitate greater local, regional, and state inter-agency and private sector collaboration to achieve higher-impact outdoor recreation projects within the Irish Hills.
- Develop best practices guidelines for local and regional public-private and volunteer partnerships to build, operate, and maintain recreation facilities.



**Greater Irish Hills Region Recreation Plan
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**Appendix A:
Demographics**



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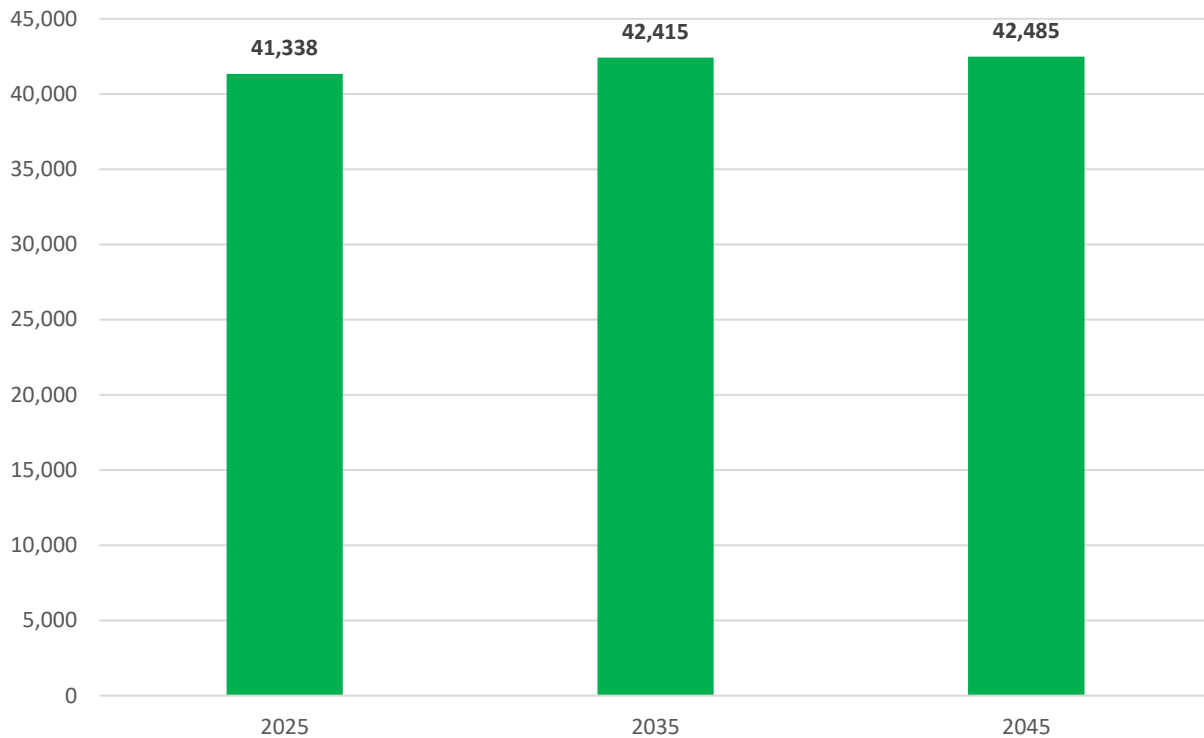
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Population Estimate

- The American Community Survey (ACS) estimated that the population was 40,140 in 2019.



Population Projections

The population projections utilized in this plan were developed for the Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT's) travel demand models. The 2025-2045 projections are grounded on Regional Economic Models Inc. (REMI) forecasts. Utilizing that information, it is reasonable to expect that the population will increase 6% between 2019 and 2045.

- The adjacent figure shows that:
 - The 2025 population was estimated to be 41,338 people, an increase of approximately 3% between 2019 and 2025.
 - The 2035 population was estimated to be 42,415 people, an increase of approximately 3% between 2025 and 2035.
 - The 2045 population was estimated to be 42,485 people, an increase of approximately <1% between 2035 and 2045.

American Community Survey (ACS)

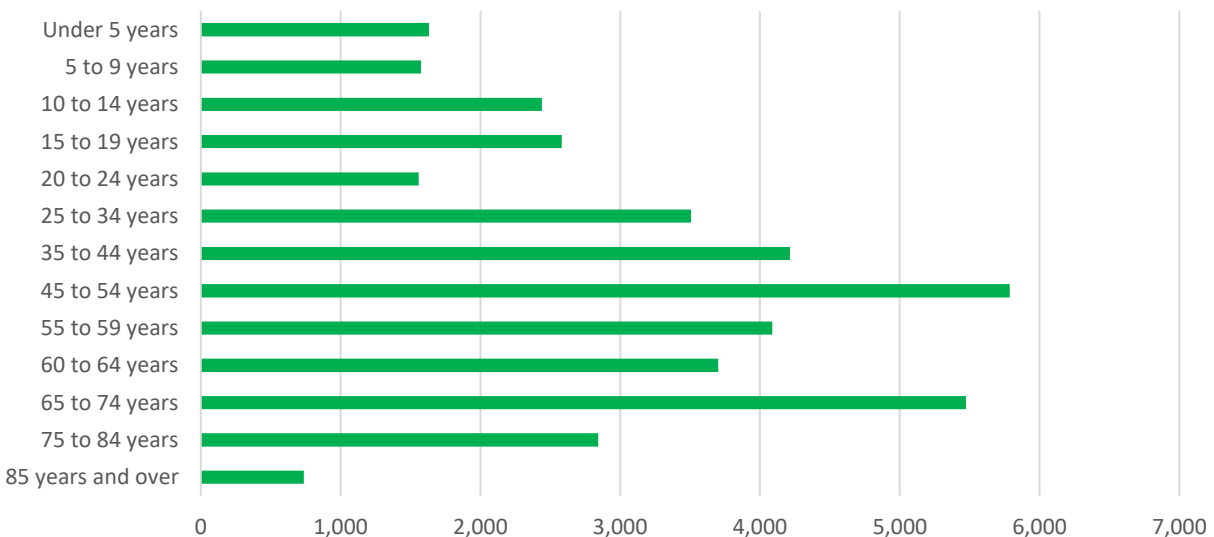
According to the U.S. Census Bureau, [t]he American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey designed to provide communities a fresh look at how they are changing. The ACS replaced the decennial census long form in 2010 and thereafter by collecting long form type information throughout the decade rather than only once every 10 years. The reporting period utilized for this plan is 2019.

General Notes

- **Rounding Errors.** Any totals that do not add up to 100% are caused by rounding errors.
- **Ambulatory Difficulties.** The ACS does not compile information on ambulatory difficulties for the population less than 5 years of age.
- **Hispanic.** Please note that ‘Hispanic’ is an ethnic rather than a racial description. Each Hispanic person is also a member of one or more races.

Age and Gender

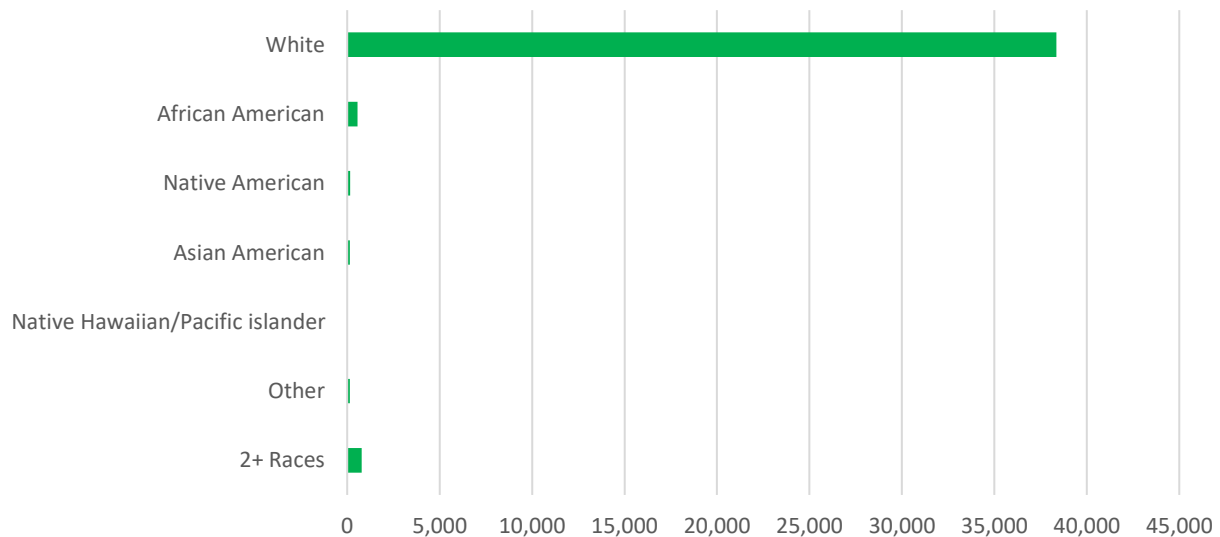
- The adjacent figure illustrates the generations to which residents belonged in 2019:
 - ‘Generation Z’ & younger generations (i.e., people ≤19 years old) — 20% [24% statewide].
 - The ‘Millennials’ generation (i.e., people 20-34 years old) — 13% [20% statewide].
 - ‘Generation X’ generation (i.e., people 35-54 years old) — 25% [24% statewide].
 - The ‘Baby Boomers’ generation (i.e., people 55-74 years old) —33% [24% statewide].
 - The ‘Silent’ and older generations (i.e., people ≥75 years old) —9% [7% statewide].
 - Finally, it is estimated that females comprised approximately 49% of residents in 2019 [51% statewide].



Race and Ethnicity

The population of the Greater Irish Hills region was largely homogenous in 2019.

- The adjacent figure illustrates the races to which those residents belonged in 2019:
 - White — 96% [78% statewide].
 - Black — 1% [14% statewide].
 - Native American — <1% [1% statewide].
 - Asian — <1% [3% statewide].
 - Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander — 0% [<1% statewide].
 - Some Other Race — <1% [1% statewide].
 - 2+ Races — 2% [3% statewide].
 - An estimated 2% of residents were Hispanic in 2019 [5% statewide].



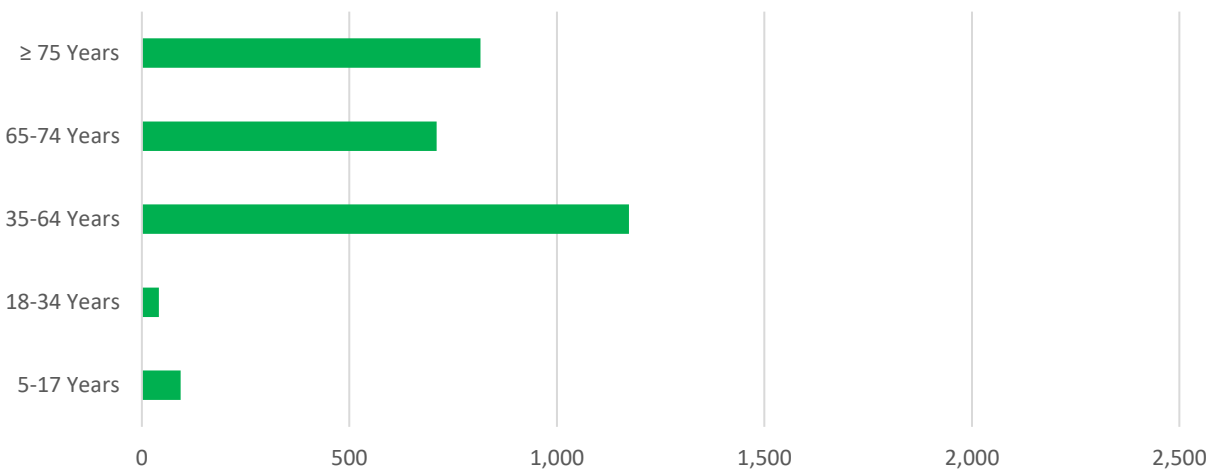
Disabilities

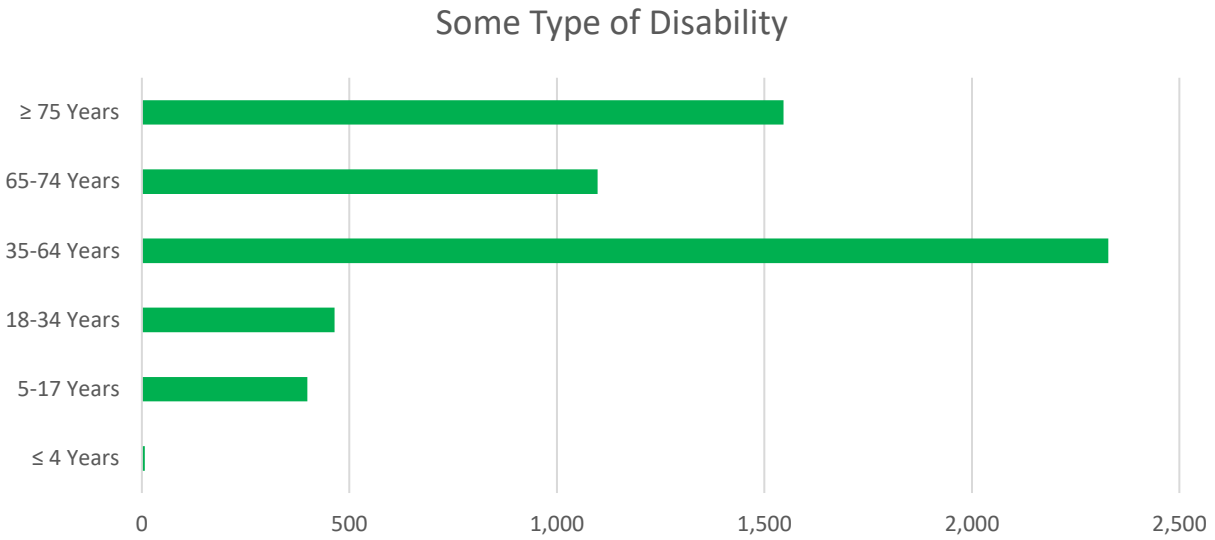
Disabled residents were a significant component of noninstitutionalized civilian residents in 2019.

- An estimated 15% of residents were disabled in some way (i.e., hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, or independent living) [14% statewide] and 7% had an ambulatory disability [7% statewide]. *It should be noted that an ambulatory disability is not determined for residents ≤4 years old.*

- ≤4 years old:
 - Disabled in some way — <1% [1% statewide].
- 5-17 years old:
 - Disabled in some way — 7% [6% statewide].
 - Had an ambulatory disability — 2% [1% statewide].
- 18-34 years old:
 - Disabled in some way — 8% [8% statewide].
 - Had an ambulatory disability — 1% [1% statewide].
- 35-64 years old:
 - Disabled in some way — 13% [15% statewide].
 - Had an ambulatory disability — 7% [8% statewide].
- 65-74 years old:
 - Disabled in some way — 20% [24% statewide].
 - Had an ambulatory disability — 13% [15% statewide].
- ≥75 years old:
 - Disabled in some way — 43% [46% statewide].
 - Had an ambulatory disability — 23% [29% statewide].

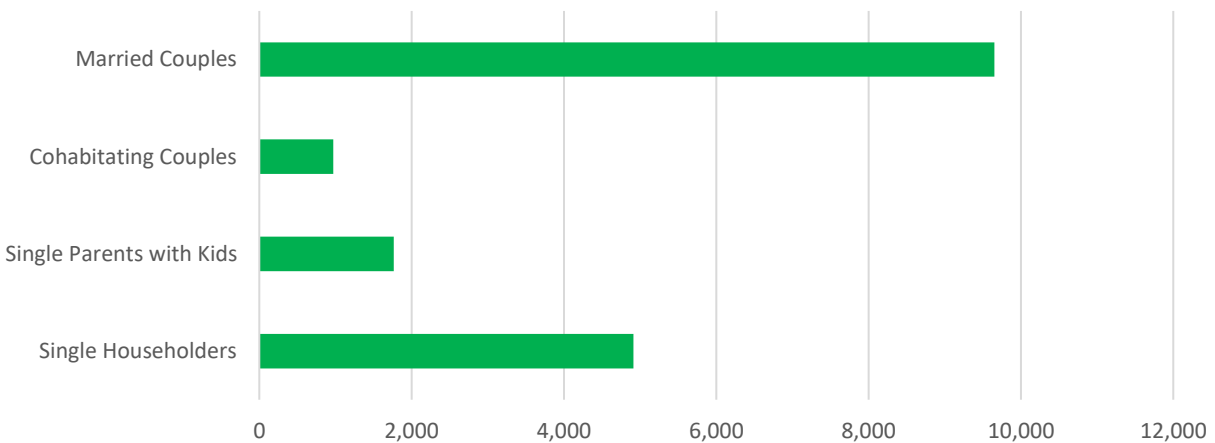
Ambulatory Disability





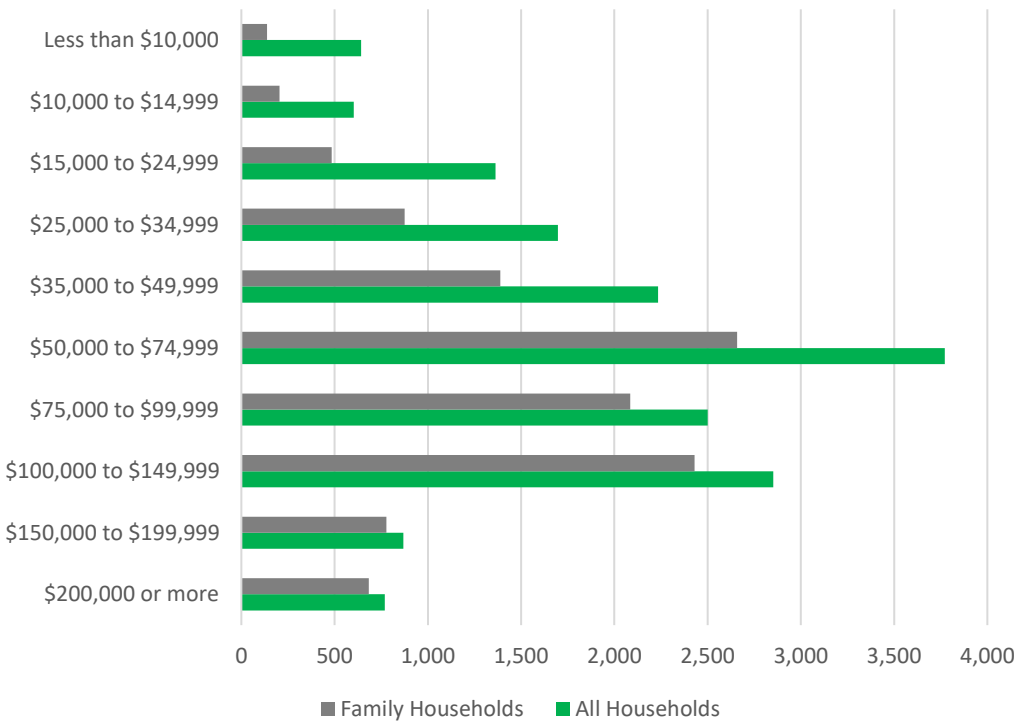
Households and Families

- Most residents lived in households in 2019.
 - Married couples—with or without children—comprised an estimated 56% of those households [46% statewide].
 - Cohabiting couples—with or without children—comprised an estimated 6% of those households [7% statewide].
 - Single parents with kids comprised an estimated 10% of households [17% statewide].
 - Single householders comprised an estimated 28% of households [30% statewide].
- Group quarters (e.g., nursing homes, etc.) were home to an estimated <1% of the population [2% statewide].



Household and Family Income

- All Households (HHs) with an income of:
 - ≤\$24,999 comprised an est. 15% of HHs [19% statewide].
 - \$25,000-\$49,999 comprised an est. 23% of HHs [23% statewide].
 - \$50,000-\$99,999 comprised an est. 36% of HHs [32% statewide].
 - \$100,000 or more comprised an est. 26% of HHs [26% statewide].
- Family Households (FHs) with and income of:
 - ≤\$24,999 comprised an est. 7% of FHs [11% statewide].
 - \$25,000-\$49,999 comprised an est. 19% of FHs [19% statewide].
 - \$50,000-\$99,999 comprised an est. 40% of FHs [35% statewide].
 - \$100,000 or more comprised an est. 33% of FHs [35% statewide].





**Greater Irish Hills Region Recreation Plan
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Appendix B:

Irish Hills Maps



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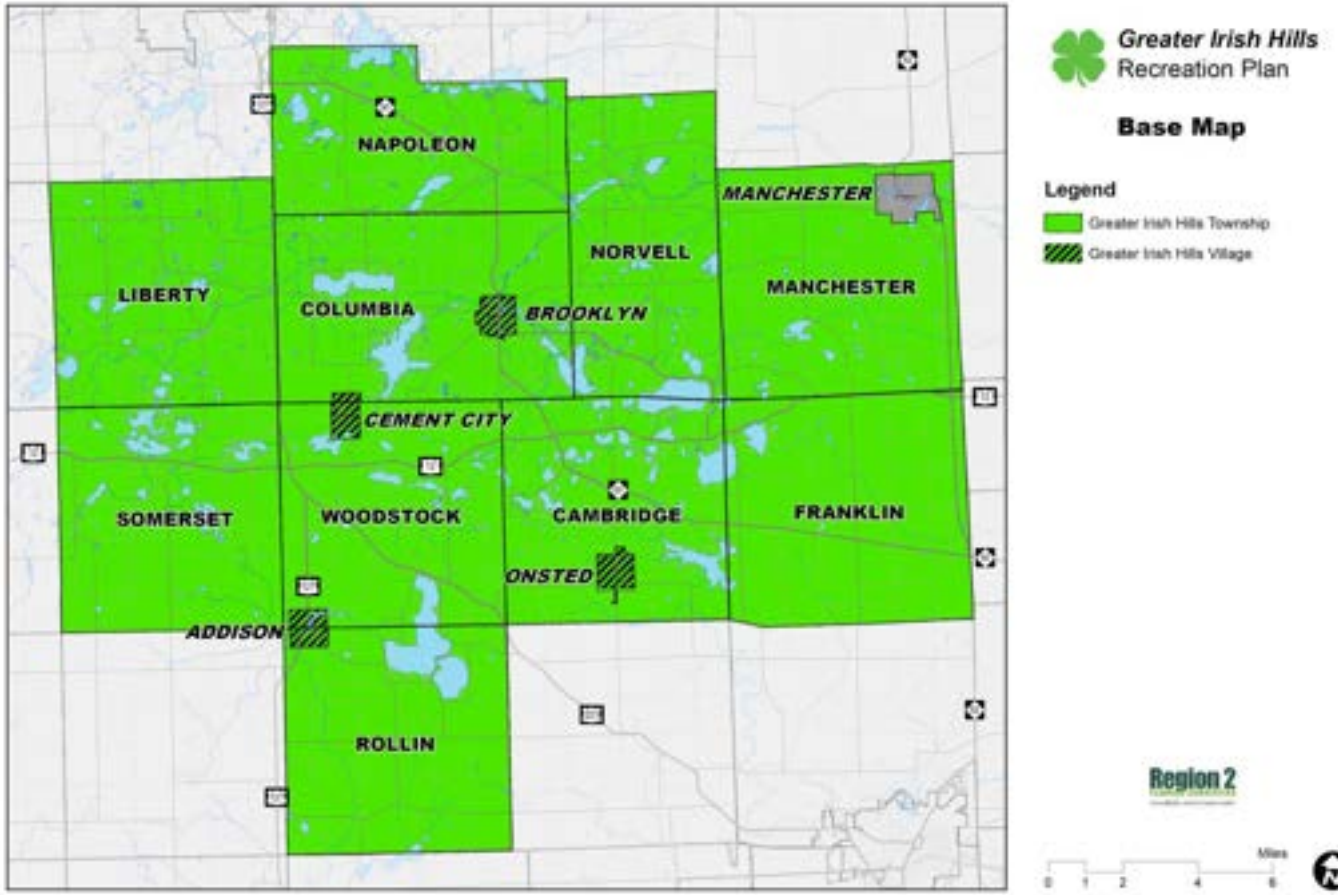
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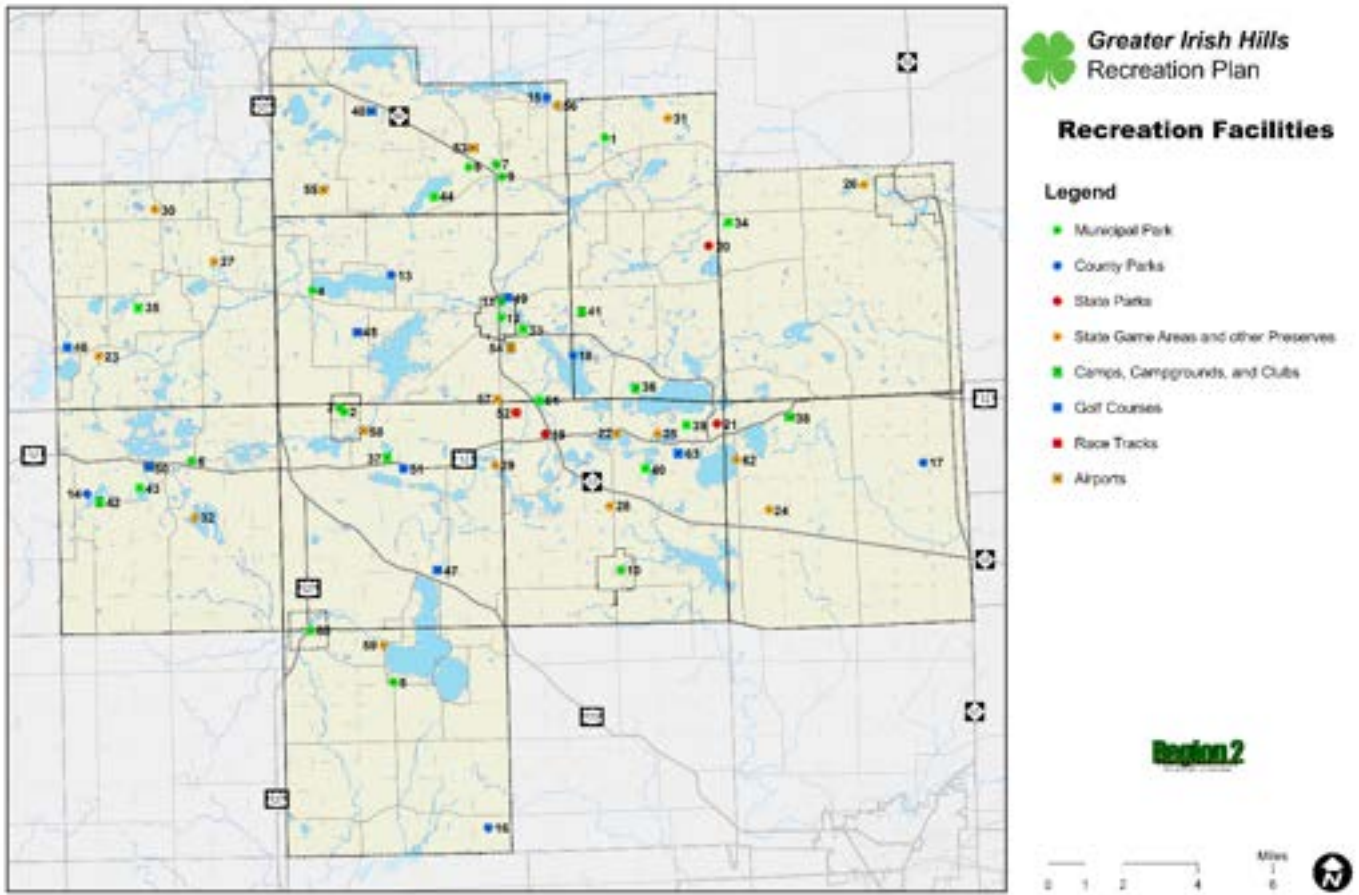
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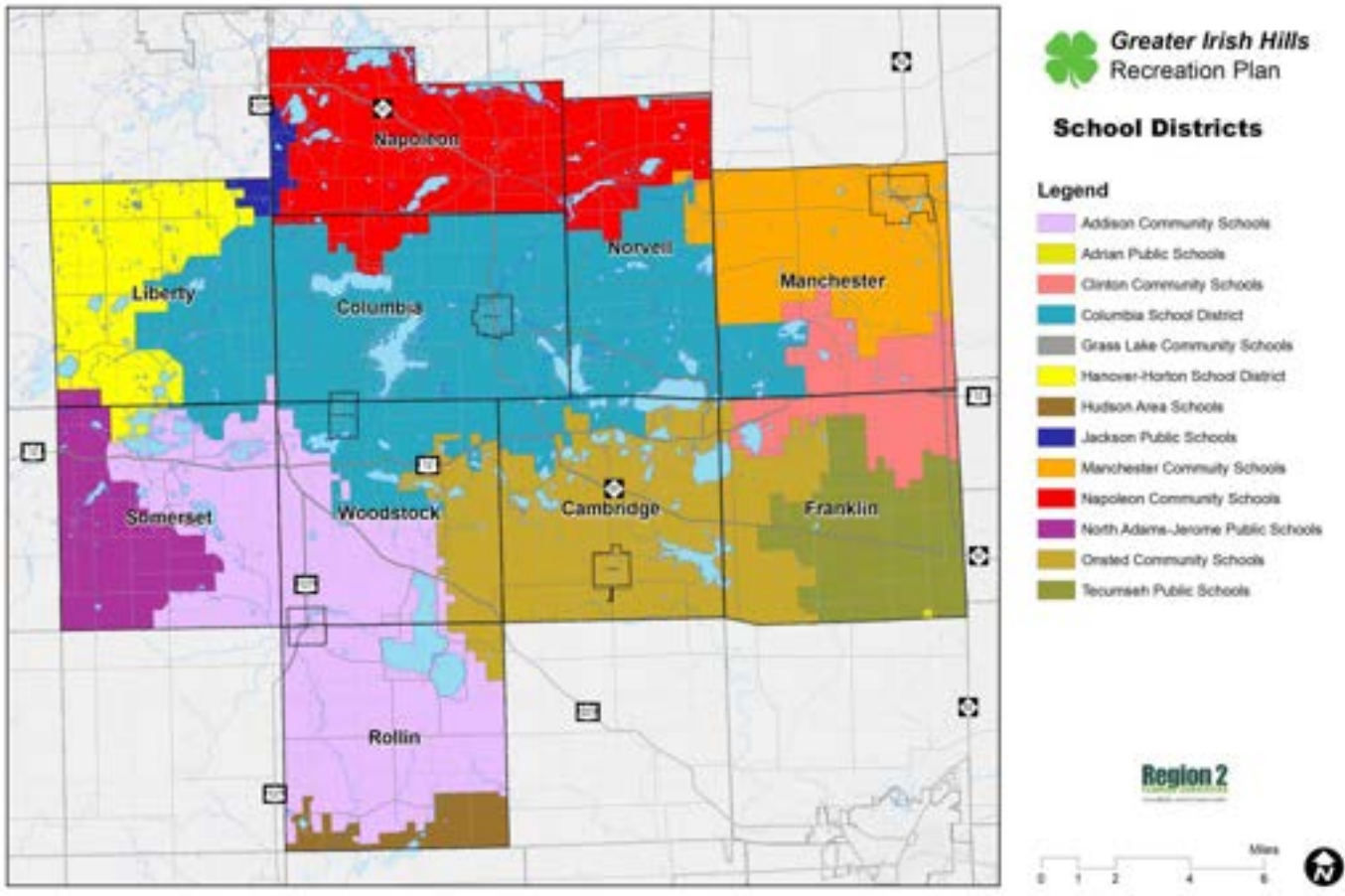
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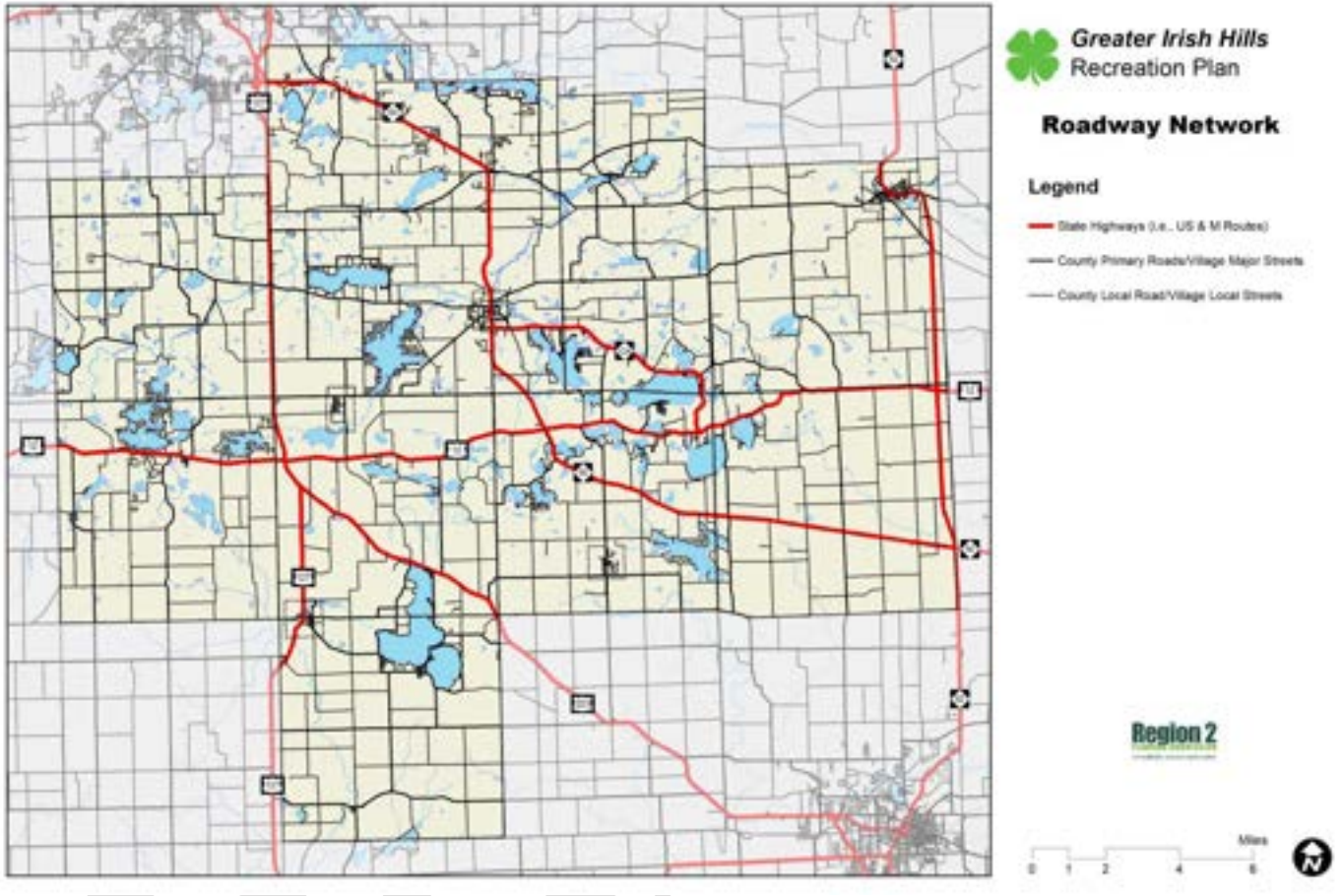
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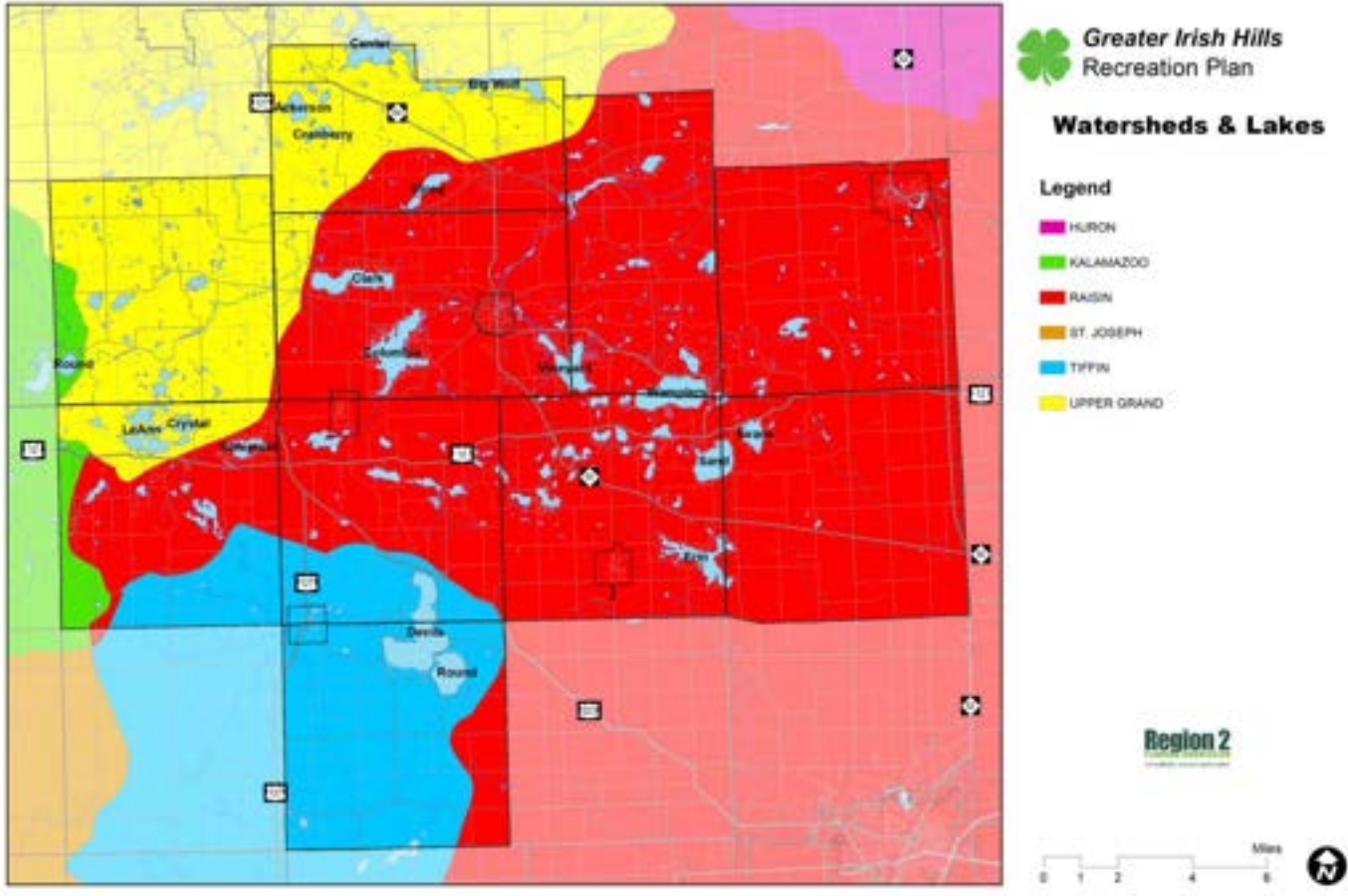
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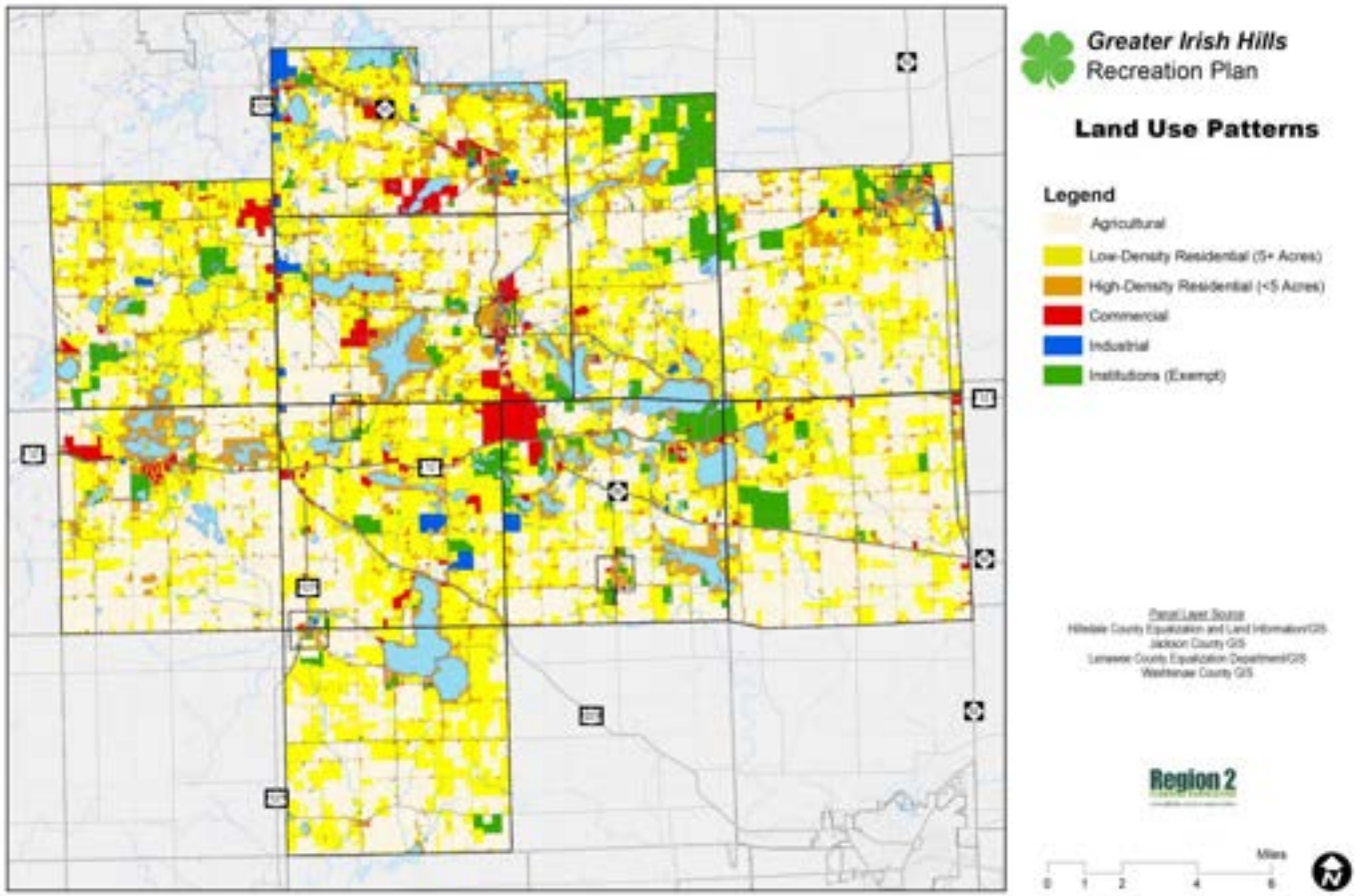
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**Greater Irish Hills Region Recreation Plan
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Appendix C:

**Jackson City-County 2020 Nonmotorized Trail Plan:
Proposed Irish Hills Trails**



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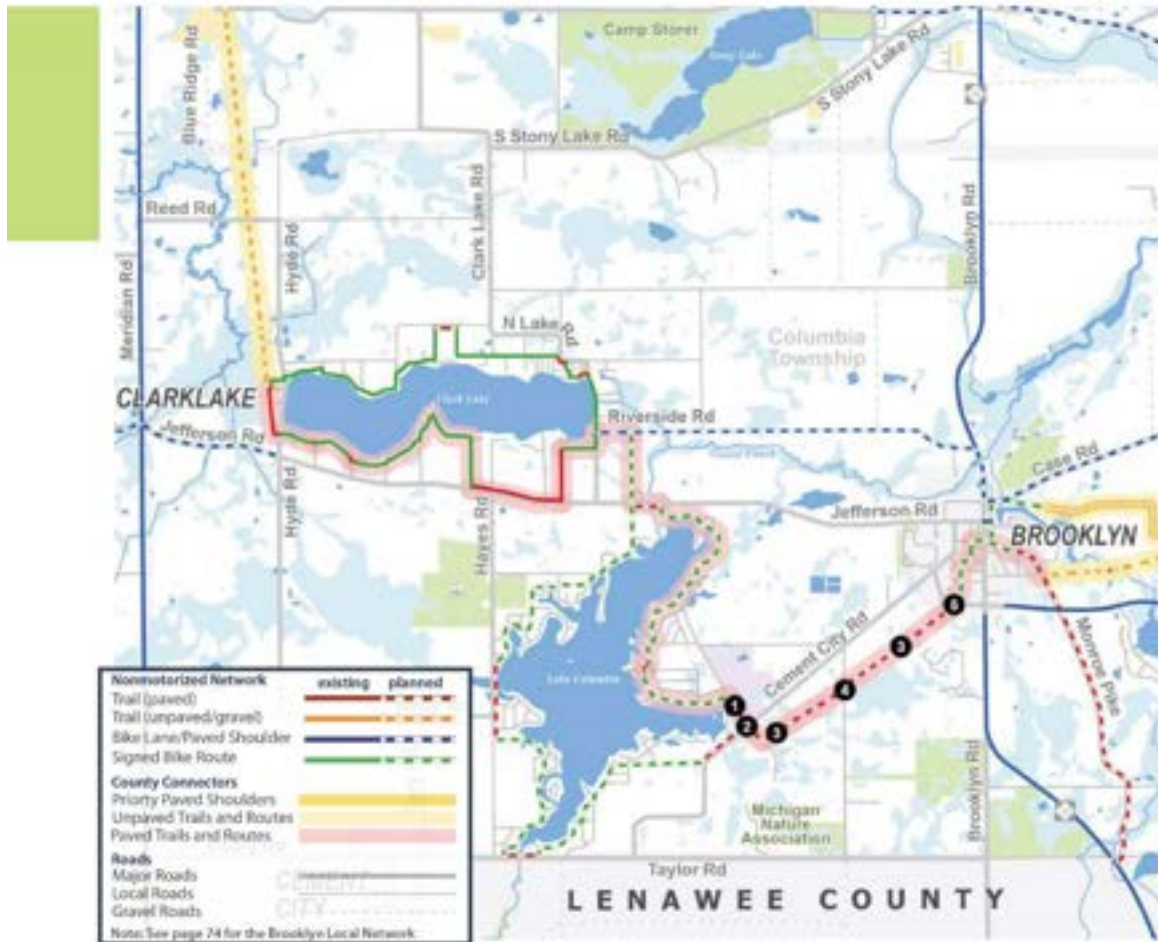
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Columbia Township

Rail Trail


A paved off-road trail connection between the Village of Brooklyn and Columbia Central High School following former rail corridor; requires easements from numerous property owners with one home directly adjacent to corridor.

Length	2.1 miles
Surface	Paved off-road trail
Right-of-Way	Former Rail Corridor
Public Input	High Priority. Local stakeholders actively working on trail alignment.
Ownership	Village of Brooklyn and 1 private property owner
Topography	Assume a graded rail corridor
Bridges + Boardwalks	Minor. Near some wetlands.
Road Crossings	Minor
Existing Structures	Property owners' home near corridor
Magnitude of Cost	<u>\$1.61 Million (Further evaluation needed. Price could vary considerably due to easements.)</u>
Route Alternative	Turk Road



Columbia Township Rail Trail Considerations

- 1 Pathway along east side of Hewitt Road connecting to Columbia Central High School
- 2 Rectangular rapid flash beacon crossing Cement City Road
- 3 Easement required along abandoned rail corridor in private property; owner home adjacent to trail corridor
- 4 Marked crosswalk at Dearmyer Road
- 5 Marked crosswalk at Constitution Avenue



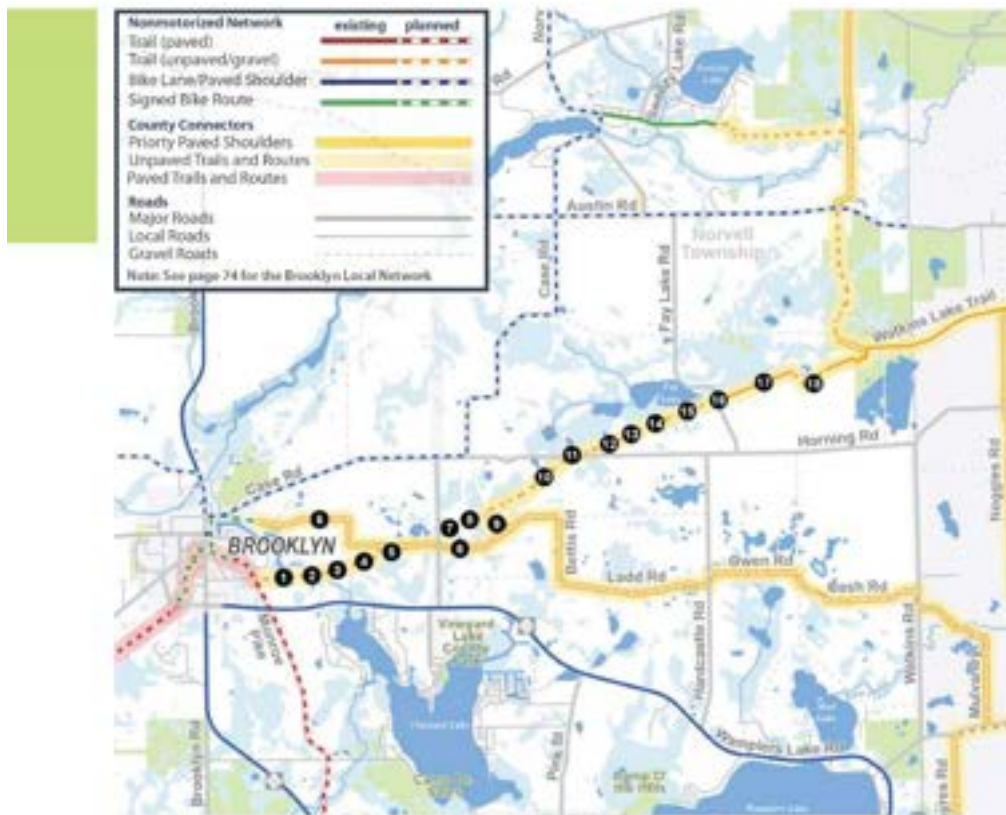
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Watkins Lake

Rail Trail

Unpaved off-road trail following former rail corridor mostly in private ownership. Would require numerous easements with 3 homes directly on corridor. May need to use parallel gravel road for connection.

Length	4.6 miles
Surface	Unpaved off-road trail (option to pave later if desired)
Right-of-Way	Former Rail Corridor and existing trail segment in Watkins Lake State Park
Public Input	High Priority. Local stakeholders actively working on trail alignment.
Ownership	12 private property owners. Talks with Sportsman Club in Brooklyn have taken place.
Topography	Assume a graded rail corridor
Bridges + Boardwalks	Minor. Some wetlands nearby.
Road Crossings	Minor
Existing Structures	3 homes directly on corridor
Magnitude of Cost	<u>\$1.59 Million (Further evaluation needed. Price could vary considerably due to easements + bridge)</u>
Route Alternative	May need to use Waterman Road right-of-way (gravel) to by-pass homes on corridor.



Watkins Lake Rail-Trail Considerations

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Easement required through Brooklyn Sportsman's Club, while trail can be located in safe location, signs would be required to warn trail users to expect sound of gun fire 2 Bridge required over River Raisin 3 Easement required through private property 4 Easement required through private property 5 Easement required through private property 6 Gravel road bike route on Waterman provides alternative if easements can not be obtained 7 House in middle of corridor, easement required 8 Corridor runs parallel to clothing optional resort | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 Connect to Waterman Road using existing right-of-way and easement through private property 10 Easement required through private property 11 Marked crosswalk at Harning Road 12 Easement required through private property 13 Easement required through private property 14 Easement required through private property 15 Easement required through private property 16 Marked crosswalk at Fay Lake Road 17 Existing Trail 18 Complete gap in trail |
|--|---|

Priority Gravel Road Routes

Some of the most scenic areas of Jackson County are best explored via gravel roads. In the northeast part of the county, Glenn, Maute, Green, Loveland, and McClure Roads provide a 10-mile east-west transect of the Waterloo State Recreation Area and are among the most beautiful stretches of road in Southeast Michigan. This route is already favored by gravel road riders and is part of the Waterloo Grit & Gravel Race which kicks off the Michigan Gravel Race Series. With the recent extension of the Mike Levine Lakelands Trail State Park, existing gravel roads, and a few new single-track connections, it is possible to create an over 30-mile loop trail. This, in combination with the wildly popular DTE Energy Trail, will make this area of the county a destination for bicyclists.

In the southwest part of the county, gravel roads may be used in conjunction with the Falling Waters Trail to offer loop routes. In the southeast part of the county, gravel road routes in combination with trails along abandoned railroad corridors are proposed to provide a link between Brooklyn, Watkins Lake State Park, and Manchester. Along the eastern boundary with Washtenaw County, a gravel road route is proposed to connect Waterloo State Recreation Area, Sharonville State Wildlife Management Area, Watkins Lake State Park, and Hayes State Park.

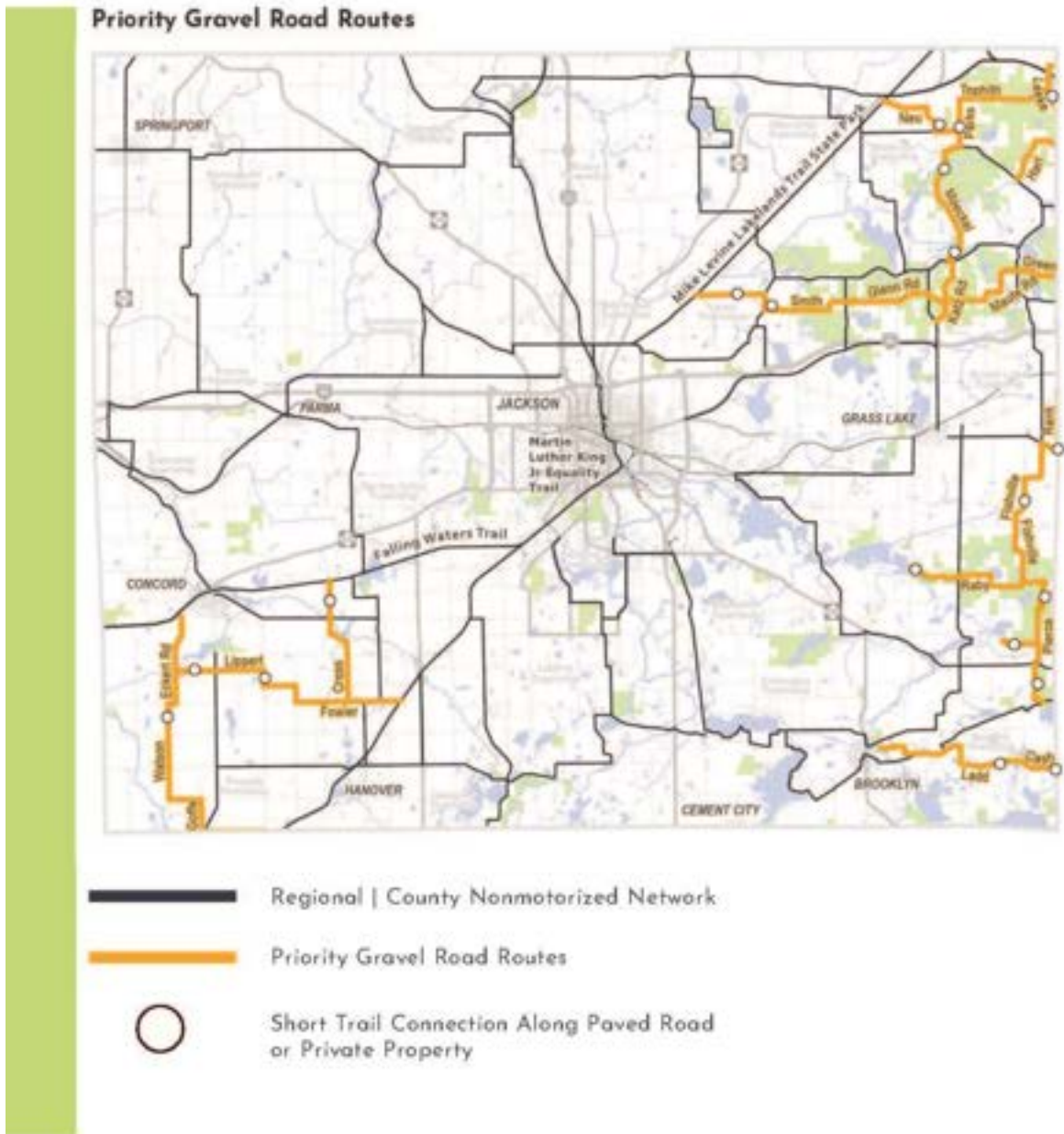
Hostings, Michigan, home to the Barry-Roubaix gravel road race that attracts thousands of riders each year is an excellent model of a community embracing gravel road riding. The County Road Commission installed permanent bike route signs marking the race routes as many bicyclists would come to train or just casually ride the routes.

Public Would Like to See Built First:

- + Connection to Falling Water Trail using North Cross Rd
- + Connection to Hayes State Park from Brooklyn (Waterman Rd, Bettis Rd, Ladd Rd, Owen Rd, Cash Rd, Mulvaney Road, Wellwood Rd, and Ayes Rd)
- + Gravel Road Route through Waterloo State Rec Area including multiple loops following in Jackson and Washington Counties (Tophith Rd, Leeke Rd, Harr Rd, Parks Rd)

Jackson City - County Nonmotorized Plan





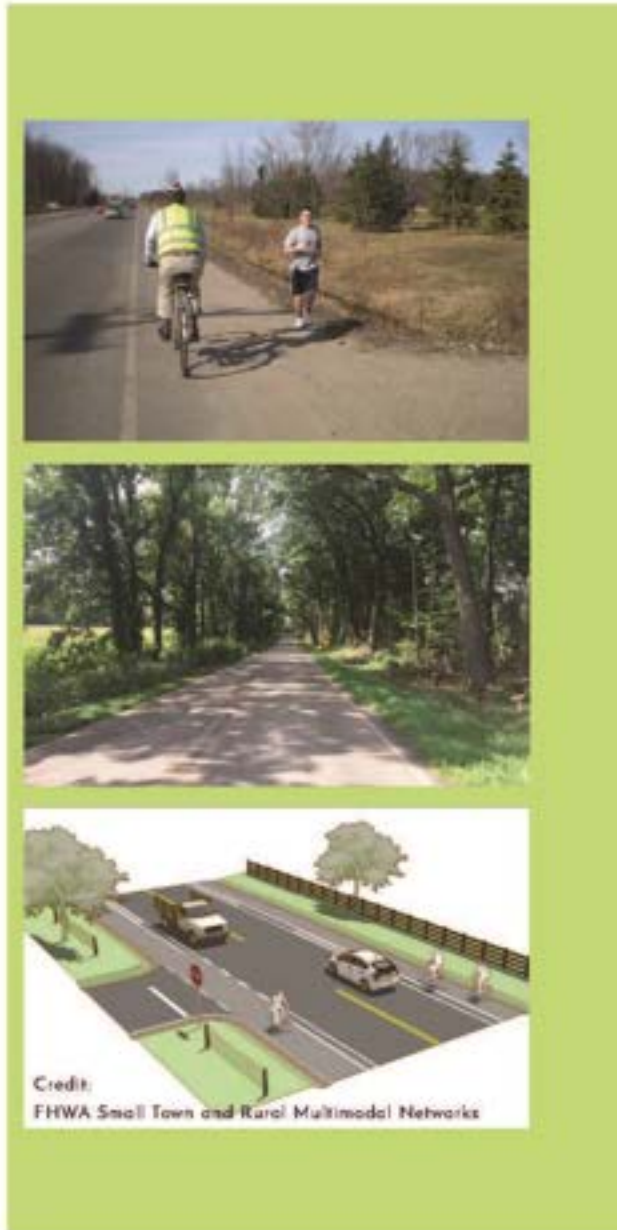
Priority Paved Shoulder Routes

Bicyclists riding between communities in rural areas seek routes that strike a balance between directness of route, the amount of traffic, topography, scenery, and the presence of a paved shoulder. The Priority Paved Shoulder routes identify the locations that meet those criteria and would benefit most from the addition of a wide paved shoulder. Given the default speed on rural roads is 55 mph, the speed differential between bicyclists and motorists is substantial and a crash between the two will almost always result in a fatality or serious injury for the bicyclist. For pedestrians, a paved shoulder is the only place in most cases to walk along the road. Thus paved shoulders should be viewed as important lifesaving safety features of a roadway.

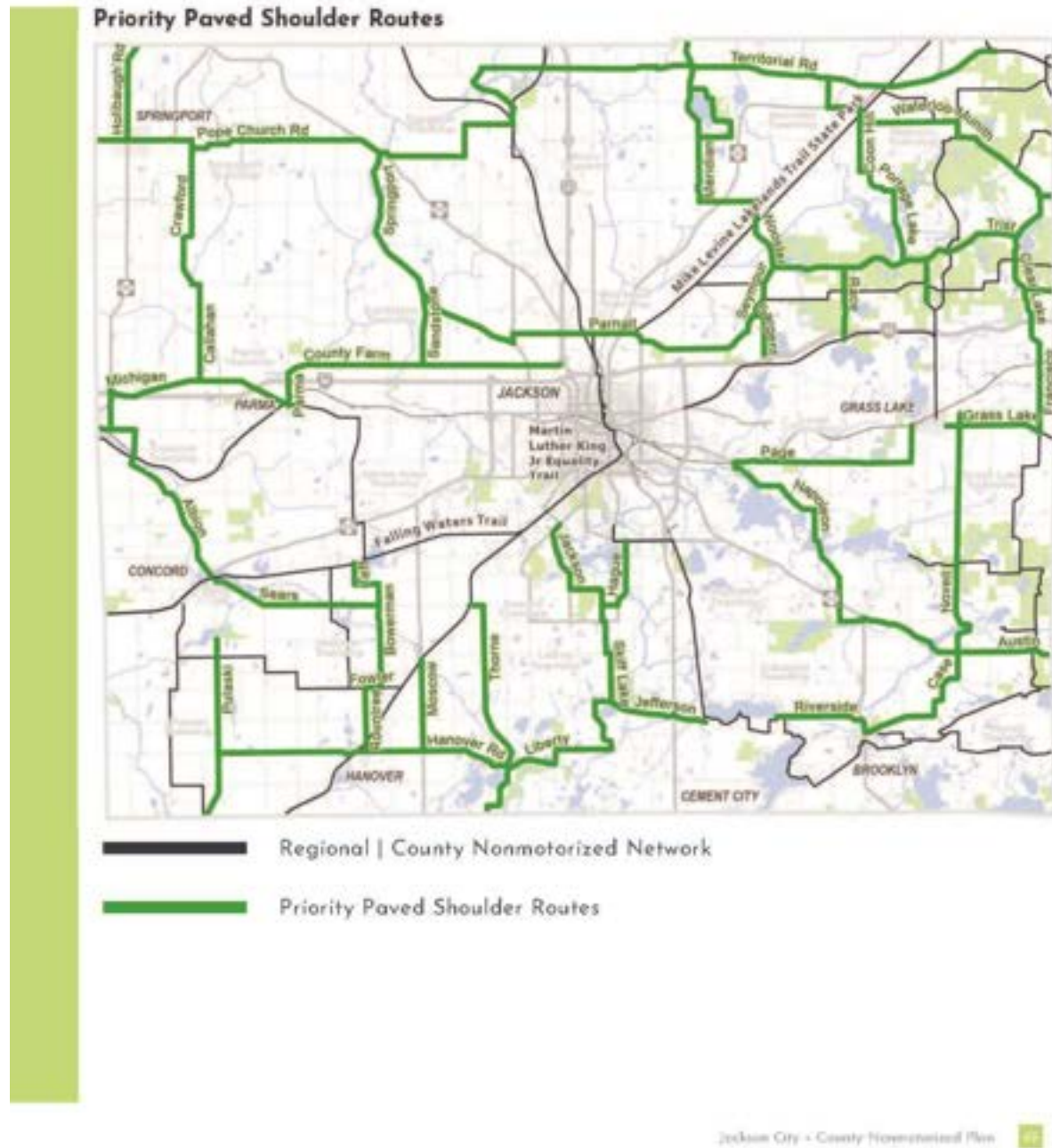
Beyond the safety benefits for pedestrians and bicyclists, the paved shoulders provide benefits to road longevity and motorized user safety. Federal Highway Administration's design guide for Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks provides excellent guidance on how paved shoulder widths, markings at intersections, incorporation of rumble strips, etc. The minimum width for a paved shoulder is 4' wide. Michigan Department of Transportation and other federal agencies do not recognize a 3' wide paved shoulder as a bicycle facility.

Public Would Like to See Built First:

- + Popular road route for cyclists (Seymour Road, O'Leary Rd, Clear Lake Road and Trist Road, Race Road)
- + Connection to Jackson College and Dahlem Nature Center (Jackson Road, Browns Lake Road and Wickwire)
- + Albion Road between Concord/Falling Waters Trail and Albion Connection to Meridian-Baseline State Park (N Meridian Road, Coonhill Road, Wooster Road)
- + Popular road route for cyclists between Hanover and the Falling Waters trail (Roundtree Road, Bawerman Road, Sears Road and Thorne Road)



Jackson City - County Nonmotorized Plan



Coordination with Water Trail Routes

Water trails were not part of the scope of this planning process. However, it's recognized that coordination between land trails and water trails is beneficial. Particularly, there are often opportunities for shared trailheads and trailhead amenities such as parking, restrooms, drinking fountains, signage, etc. There are also opportunities for coordinated multi-activity events such as paddle-bike-run. Water Trails are a designated route on a navigable waterway primarily for kayaking, canoeing and stand-up paddle-boarding.

A Development Plan was created in 2017 for the Upper Grand River Water Trail by Land Information Access Association (LIAA), Region 2 Planning Commission, and The Upper Grand River Watershed Alliance. The goal of the Plan is to outline the activities, process and framework to establish a water trail along the Upper Grand River. The Plan includes the desire to have several access points that may also be able to be coordinated with land trails and trailheads including:

- Vandercook Lake County Park
- Ella Sharp Park in Jackson
- High Street East Bridge in Jackson
- Riverfront Park in Jackson
- Jackson County Fairgrounds
- Parnall Road in Blackman Township
- Maple Grove Bridge in Rives Township

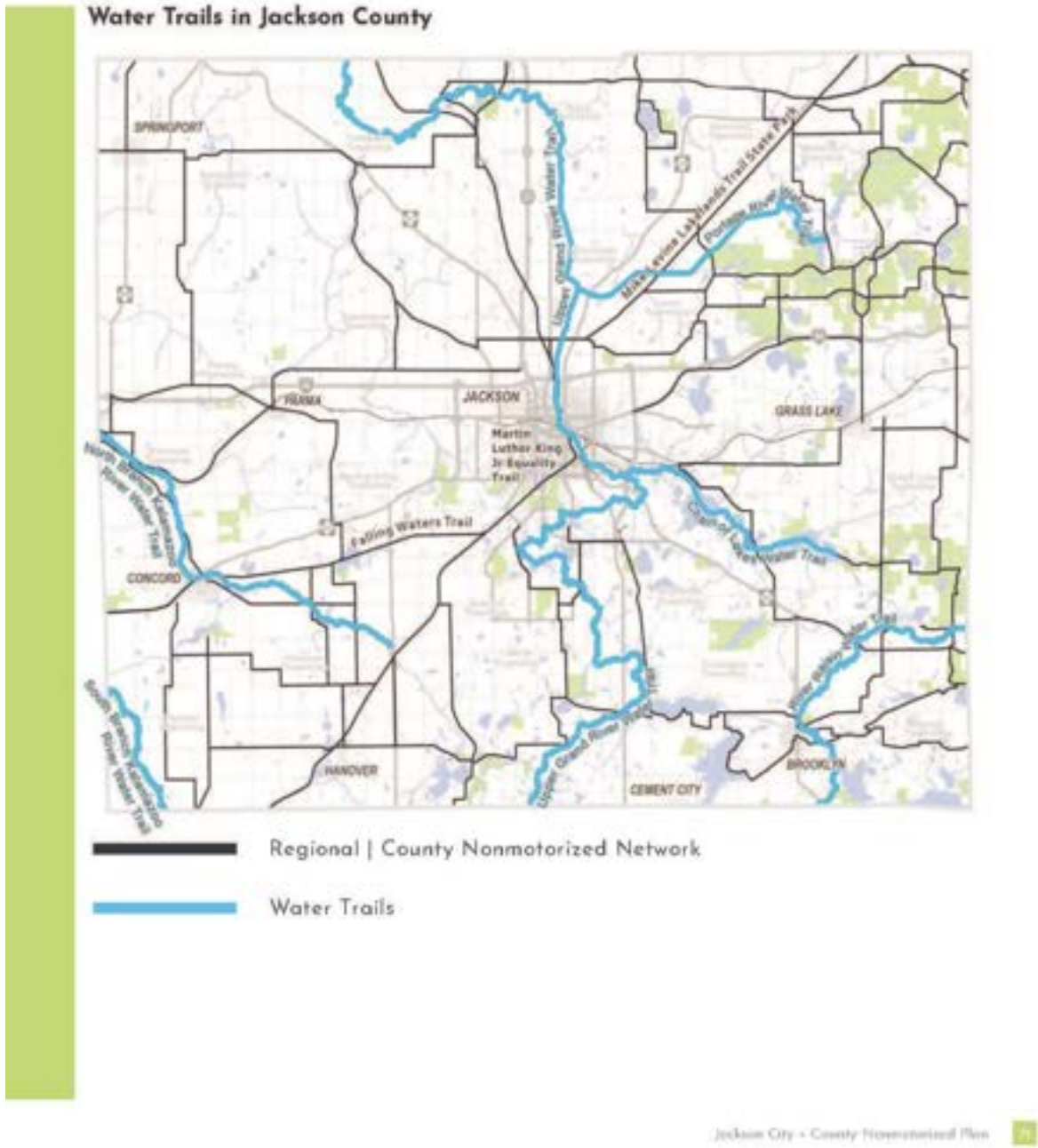
Groups in the region are also working to advance water trails along the Kalamazoo River and the River Raisin.



Credit: Ken Price



Credit: Ken Price



Brooklyn

The Brooklyn area is an important anchor in the Greater Irish Hills region with a walkable downtown. It is within biking distance to Watkins and Hayes State Parks, Columbia Central High School and MIS.

Priorities

- Complete sidewalk gaps
- Improved crosswalks so they are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and provide safe routes to schools
- Provide trail connections to Watkins Lake State Park, Hayes State Park, Columbia Central High School/Columbia Lake, Clark Lake Spirit Trail and the Michigan International Speedway
- Provide trail connection to Lake Columbia and Clark Lake Spirit Trail



Main Street in Brooklyn

- 1 Complete sidewalk gaps on Mill, King, Marshall, Tiffany, Constitution, Water and S Main
- 2 Paved shoulder on Mill St/Case and Riverside
- 3 Trail following abandoned rail corridor, in private property, connecting to Columbia Central High School and Lake Columbia
- 4 Unpaved trail following abandoned rail corridor, in private property, connecting to Watkins Lake State Park
- 5 Bike route on local roads
- 6 Bike route on local roads
- 7 Sidepath along Monroe Pike connecting to the Michigan International Speedway
- 8 MDOT plans to provide enhanced paved shoulders on Wampplers Lake Road
- 9 Improve crosswalk - rectangular rapid flash beacon with in-road pedestrian signs
- 10 Improve crosswalk - detectable warning, curb ramps, high visibility markings, signs
- 11 Improve crosswalk - detectable warnings and in-road pedestrian signs
- 12 New crosswalk with in-road pedestrian signs



Priority Trail Implementation Strategy


ID	Priority Trails	Miles	Total Cost	Proposed Funding Strategy					
				Federal (TAP)	State	Local	Private		
A	Parma to Albion Rail-with-Trail \$ 308,386 Per Mile \$ 20,009,728 Potential Extras Evaluate wetlands prior to programming	8.3	\$ 2,352,940	\$ 255,294 10%	\$ 1,276,470 50%	\$ 765,882 30%	\$ 510,588 20%		
B	Michigan Avenue Chapel Road Pathway \$ 892,967 Per Mile Potential Safe Routes to School Project	5.8	\$ 5,179,668	\$ 2,589,834 50%	\$ 517,967 10%	\$ 1,553,901 30%	\$ 517,967 10%		
C	Hamover Horton Rail-Trail \$ 361,073 Per Mile	8.7	\$ 3,151,443	\$ 315,144 10%	\$ 1,575,721 50%	\$ 630,289 20%	\$ 630,289 20%		
D	Summit to Clark Lake Rail-Trail \$ 192,237 Per Mile \$ 7,079,745 Potential Extras Evaluate wetlands prior to programming	6.7	\$ 1,283,290	\$ 256,658 20%	\$ 384,987 30%	\$ 384,987 30%	\$ 256,658 20%		
E	Columbia Twp Rail-Trail \$ 763,315 Per Mile	2.1	\$ 1,608,102	\$ 482,431 30%	\$ 482,431 30%	\$ 482,431 30%	\$ 160,810 10%		
F	Watkins Lake Rail-Trail \$ 306,443 Per Mile \$ 15,698,189 Potential Extras Evaluate wetlands prior to programming	5.2	\$ 1,593,562	\$ 318,712 20%	\$ 796,781 50%	\$ 318,712 20%	\$ 159,356 10%		
G	Ann Arbor Road Pathway \$ 726,450 Per Mile	8.7	\$ 6,285,204	\$ 3,147,602 50%	\$ 629,520 10%	\$ 1,888,561 30%	\$ 629,520 10%		
H	Rives Rail-With-Trail \$ 445,421 Per Mile \$ 21,296,850 Potential Extras Evaluate wetlands prior to programming	8.0	\$ 3,577,739	\$ 715,548 20%	\$ 1,079,322 30%	\$ 1,079,322 30%	\$ 715,548 20%		
I	Mount Hope Road Sidepath \$ 1,297,362 Per Mile	3.7	\$ 4,856,835	\$ 2,428,418 50%	\$ 485,684 10%	\$ 1,437,051 30%	\$ 485,684 10%		
Total Project Costs		57.2	\$ 30,098,794	\$ 10,309,641 35%	\$ 7,222,882 24%	\$ 8,555,315 28%	\$ 4,066,410 14%		
20 Year Plan - Annual Costs		2.9	\$ 1,504,919	\$ 525,482	\$ 361,344	\$ 427,737	\$ 203,321		

Priority Trail Cost Opinion

The following pages provide planning level cost estimates for the 9 priority trail segments.


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E Columbia Twp Rail-Trail					
Preliminary Cost Opinion					
Paved shared use path on abandoned railroad corridor and crosswalks					
Notes:					
a Path on private property					
b Total Length 11,124 LF 2.1 Miles					
					
Description	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Cost	
1 11' Wide Asphalt Path, Base, and Grading	11,124	LF	\$ 75	\$	834,267
2 Crosswalk Signs and Pavement Markings	2	EA	\$ 5,000	\$	10,000
3 RRFB Ped. Crossing w/ Advanced Warning	1	EA	\$ 50,000	\$	50,000
4 Landscaping and Site Amenities	11,124	LF	\$ 20	\$	222,471
Subtotal of Construction Costs				\$	1,116,738
Contingency				20%	\$ 223,348
Construction Total				\$	1,340,085
Engineering & Design				10%	\$ 134,009
Construction Administration				4%	\$ 53,603
Construction Observation				6%	\$ 80,405
Subtotal of Total Soft Costs				\$	268,017
Total Project Cost				\$	1,608,102

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F Watkins Lake Rail-Trail				
Preliminary Cost Opinion				
Grade existing railroad ballast, gravel road route, and crosswalks				
Notes:				
a	Path on private property			
c	Total Length	27,457 LF	5.2 Miles	
				
Description	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Cost
1	11' Wide Graded Existing RR Balast	21,291 LF	\$ 20	\$ 425,820
2	Crosswalk Signs and Pavement Markings	3 EA	\$ 5,000	\$ 15,000
3	14' Wide Concrete Deck Pedestrian Bridge	60 LF	\$ 4,000	\$ 240,000
4	Landscaping and Site Amenities	21,291 LF	\$ 20	\$ 425,820
Subtotal of Construction Costs				\$ 1,106,640
Contingency				20% \$ 221,328
Construction Total				\$ 1,327,968
Engineering & Design				10% \$ 132,797
Construction Administration				4% \$ 53,119
Construction Observation				6% \$ 79,678
Subtotal of Total Soft Costs				\$ 265,594
Total Project Cost (use existing bridge)				\$ 1,593,562
Potential Additional Cost for Boardwalks Based on Adjacent Wetlands				
Note: this is unlikely unless the railroad grade has been removed				
14' Wide Concrete Plank Boardwalk 11,124 LF \$ 1,000 \$ 11,124,000				
Reduction of 11' Graded Existing RR Balast 11,124 LF \$ (20) \$ (222,480)				
Subtotal of Potential Boardwalk Construction Costs				\$ 10,901,520
Contingency				20% \$ 2,180,304
Potential Boardwalk Construction Total				\$ 13,081,824
Engineering & Design				10% \$ 1,308,182
Construction Administration				4% \$ 523,273
Construction Observation				6% \$ 784,909
Subtotal of Total Soft Costs for Boardwalks				\$ 2,616,365
Potential Additional Boardwalk Costs				\$ 15,698,189

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**Greater Irish Hills Region Recreation Plan
2023-2027 Edition**

**Appendix D:
Supporting Documentation**



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