



Lake Michigan Coastal Communities

Trail Towns Master Plan

LUDINGTON

**OTTAWA COUNTY
PARK TWP.**

HOLLAND

SOUTH HAVEN

ST. JOSEPH

BRIDGMAN

BUCHANAN

NEW BUFFALO



This Plan was funded in part by the Michigan Coastal Zone Management Program, Department of Environmental Quality Office of the Great Lakes and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce.



This Plan was also funded in part by contributions from each participating jurisdiction, the Michigan Quiet Water Society and the Pokagon Fund.



SoHa
Surf Shop

RENTALS

Paddleboards & Single Kayaks

1 HOUR	\$20
2 HOUR	\$35
4 HOUR	\$55

2 Person Tandem Kayaks

1 HOUR	\$35
2 HOUR	\$50
4 HOUR	\$70

269-872-3044

Find Our Store
Downtown 518 Phoenix St.

RENTALS

Lake Michigan Coastal Communities Trail Towns Master Plan

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Trail Systems & Community Profiles	3
What is a Trail Town?	9
Trail Town Design Issues	18
Economic Restructuring for Your Trail Town	38
Promoting Your Trail Town	41
Additional Recommendations	43
Appendix	
A. Public Act 210	
B. Accessibility Reports	
C. Site Plans	
D. Renderings	
E. Evaluation Form	
F. Trail Town Summary Sheet	
G. Universal Launch Fact Sheet	
H. Sign Template Array	
I. Complete Streets Sample Ordinance	



269.932.4575

GALLEN RIVER KAYAKING
& STAND-UP PADDLEBOARDING

THIRD COAST
SURF SHOP



RECREATION
PASSPORT

PURE MICHIGAN



Introduction

The human, health and community benefits associated with recreational trails have been widely studied and well documented. Trails can help encourage healthy lifestyles and active living by supporting recreational activities that are inclusive and accessible to people of all ages and abilities. Trails can help preserve the environment by protecting important human and wildlife corridors and reducing air pollution through alternative modes of transportation. Trails can help foster a strong sense of community and place, providing an opportunity for social interaction and access to community amenities such as parks, neighborhoods and schools.

Recreational trails can also have a significant impact on the local economy. Trails can help attract and support tourism and new business opportunities. Local residents also spend money on trail-related activities and related businesses. As the link between trails and economic development is better understood, many communities are looking for ways to capitalize on their current trail networks. This document is designed to discuss and illustrate how nine communities along the Lake Michigan coastline and its connecting waterways (Ludington, Park Township, Holland, Ottawa County, South Haven, St. Joseph, Bridgman, New Buffalo and Buchanan) can better leverage their existing and future water and non-motorized trail systems to maximize trail-based tourism and economic development opportunities — that is, to redefine their communities and their regions as “Trail Towns.”

Due to its primarily rural setting and relatively flat roads, the Lake Michigan coastline is an ideal location for bicycle touring. In fact, *U.S. Bicycle Route 35* passes directly through many of the nine participating communities discussed in this plan. Therefore, this document will also highlight ways these coastal communities can maximize bicycle tourism.

Trail Towns - A Michigan Perspective

The Trail Town concept is gaining traction in communities and along trails all over Michigan. In southeastern Michigan, the Clinton River Watershed Council and the

The Trail Town Concept

“Communities are realizing the economic potential of trails as highly desirable destinations that bring dollars into the places they serve...trails and greenways attract visitors from near and far — visitors who facilitate job growth in tourism-related opportunities like restaurants, local stores and lodging. Communities are increasingly utilizing this ‘Trail Town’ model of economic revitalization that places trails as the centerpiece of a tourism-centered strategy for small-town revitalization.”

Excerpted from a 2007 article published by the Rails to Trails Conservancy



Huron River Watershed Council have independent Trail Town initiatives. The initiatives are designed to help towns within each watershed develop inclusive universally accessible amenities that support trail users and leverage their riverside assets (e.g., restaurants, shops, hotels, campgrounds) for water-oriented community development.

Last year, St. Clair County, in partnership with several regional economic development agencies and Michigan State University Extension, developed formal Trail Town Master Plans for eight communities along Michigan’s Thumb coast.

In northern Michigan, the cities of Alpena, Atlanta, Grayling, Mackinaw City, Topinabee, Boyne City and Charlevoix have developed formal Trail Town plans.

The North Country Trail Association (NCTA), under the auspices of the National Park Service, also has a formal Trail Town Program. The program provides information and resources to local officials on how they can better promote their town to hikers of the North Country Trail. The NCTA has awarded official “Trail Town” status to 19 communities along the trail, including nine in Michigan.

In June of 2014, Michigan Governor Rick Snyder signed into effect Public Act 210, which states that upon petition from a local official, the director of Michigan’s Department of Natural Resources (DNR) may designate a city, village or township as a “Pure Michigan Trail Town,” provided the community meets certain criteria. As of this writing, DNR officials were still working to determine the extent of the criteria, but it is expected to become finalized by spring of 2016. A full copy of Public Act 210 can be found in Appendix A.

In an effort to better understand the Trail Town concept and develop useful strategies and recommendations for these nine coastal communities along Lake Michigan, a comprehensive literature review was conducted. The literature review found a number of resources for specific components of the Trail Town concept, such as downtown design guidelines, walkability tactics, accessibility standards and promotional strategies. However, only a handful of examples were identified that addressed how each of the specific components all work together to create a “Trail Town.” The

Huron River Watershed Trail Town Program

The Huron River Watershed Council manages a robust Trail Town Program in five communities along the Huron River under its *River Up!* Initiative.

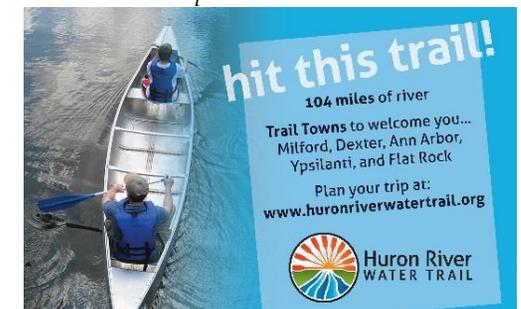


Image Provided By: Huron River Watershed Council

original source identified, *Trail Towns - Capturing Trail-Based Tourism, A Guide for Communities in Pennsylvania*¹ (published by the Allegheny Trail Alliance in 2005), and the *Trail Town Manual for Communities in Northern Michigan*² (published by LIAA in 2013) were used as the basis for this plan.

This document utilizes and summarizes portions of each Trail Town publication, applying specific concepts and recommendations to the nine project communities. However, in an effort to demonstrate or illustrate a specific point or suggestion, examples from other communities and trails in Michigan are highlighted and described throughout the document.

This document recognizes the significant efforts that local business owners, municipal staff members, local officials, governmental bodies (e.g., Downtown Development Authorities) and regional economic development agencies already provide in support of tourism, economic development and trail building in each of the nine communities studied for this plan. The strategies and recommendations outlined in this document are only meant to highlight new ideas and spark discussions about how these coastal communities could better utilize their trail assets to expand on and complement existing recreation and community development efforts. Furthermore, many of the strategies and recommendations outlined in this document support ongoing local, regional and even statewide efforts to capitalize and leverage local assets for community and economic development.

Trail Systems and Community Profiles

Due to its regional scope and connective qualities, the primary focus of this plan is to highlight ways in which the nine coastal communities can establish Trail Town strategies around the *Lake Michigan Water Trail* and designated water trails along connected inter-coastal rivers (e.g., St. Joseph Water Trail, Galien Water Trail, and Grand River Water Trail). However, most of the nine communities along the coastline

Community Development Efforts

The strategies and recommendations outlined in this plan are designed to expand on and complement existing community development efforts.



¹ Trail Towns - Capturing Trail-Based Tourism, A Guide for Communities in Pennsylvania. Allegheny Trail Alliance (2005)

² Trail Town Manual for Communities in Northern Michigan. LIAA (2013)

also have a well-used network of non-motorized terrestrial trails. As previously mentioned, most of the nine project communities are also connected by *U.S. Bicycle Route 35*, which runs the entire length of Michigan’s Lower Peninsula, ultimately connecting Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan to Mississippi. Ludington is also connected to *U.S. Bicycle Route 20*, which runs across the Lower Peninsula, ultimately connecting Marine City, Michigan to the Oregon coast.

Trail Systems (Water Trails)

Lake Michigan Water Trail

Michigan’s Lake Michigan Water Trail begins in the Upper Peninsula and traverses 760 miles to the Indiana border. The trail then continues around the western side of the lake to complete a 1,600-mile, four-state continuous loop. The Lake Michigan Water Trail passes by some of the most picturesque landscapes and beach communities in Michigan. Paddlers can directly access the Lake Michigan Water Trail in eight of the nine project communities by way of both formal (marina) and informal (road-ending) access sites.

St. Joseph River Water Trail

The 66-mile St. Joseph River Water Trail begins in Niles and meanders west, past the town of Buchanan and through thick forested areas before it finally empties out into Lake Michigan in the coastal town of St. Joseph.

Paw Paw River Water Trail

The 62-mile Paw Paw River Water Trail begins near the headwaters of the river in northeast Van Buren County. From there, the water trail flows through both Van Buren and Berrien counties where it joins the St Joseph River Trail in Benton Harbor.

Galien River Marsh Water Trail

The Galien River Marsh Water Trail begins at a DNR boat launch on U.S. 12 and flows for three miles into the coastal town of New Buffalo. Along the way, the water trail meanders through woodlands and protected wetlands, including the 86-acre Galien River County Park Preserve. The river is slow moving and easy to paddle both upstream and downstream.

Lake Michigan Water Trail

The Lake Michigan Water Trail traverses 1,600 miles around Lake Michigan.



Galien River Marsh Water Trail

The Galien River Marsh Water Trail meanders through woodlands and protected wetlands before arriving in New Buffalo.



Bangor to South Haven Heritage Water Trail

The 21-mile Bangor/South Haven Heritage Water Trail is located on the Black River. The water trail begins in the town of Bangor and weaves west through Van Buren County before finally emptying out into Lake Michigan in the coastal community of South Haven. Along the way, the water trail takes paddlers past historic American Indian sites, an old sawmill and a grist mill.

Grand River Heritage Water Trail

The 41-mile Grand River Heritage Water Trail encompasses nine distinct paddling routes along the Grand River in Ottawa County. The slow, meandering river averages about 3 miles per hour, making it an ideal river to see and explore the many natural and cultural assets along its shoreline. In addition, the water trail has three inclusive universally accessible launch sites, making the water trail accessible across the entire county.

Kalamazoo River Water Trail

The 130-mile Kalamazoo River Water Trail begins at the junction of its north and south branches near Albion and meanders west before spilling out into Lake Michigan in the coastal town of Saugatuck. The Kalamazoo River Water Trail has three universally accessible launches.

Lake Macatawa Water Trail (Future)

Concurrent to the development of this master plan, local officials, municipal staff and interested stakeholders from Ottawa County, Park Township and the City of Holland are exploring the development of a formal water trail around Lake Macatawa. The 6-mile water trail would pass by beautiful lakefront homes, connect to the City of Holland and nearby parks, and ultimately connect to the Lake Michigan Water Trail.

Bangor to South Haven Heritage Water Trail

The Bangor/South Haven Heritage Water Trail is located on the Black River. Soon-to-be-completed improvements to the Black River Park Canoe and Kayak Launch in South Haven will provide universal access to the water trail.



Lake Macatawa Water Trail

Local officials, municipal staff and interested stakeholders from the greater Holland Community are currently exploring the development of a formal water trail around Lake Macatawa.



Trail Systems (Non-Motorized)

Each of the nine coastal communities described in this master plan has a local network of non-motorized terrestrial trails. There are also a number of long-distance trails that connect to other communities throughout the region. Many of the more developed trails have inclusive universally accessible design features such as wide paved surfaces with gentle slopes making them “stroll-able and roll-able” meaning walkable side-by-side, roll-able for parent pushing strollers, roll-able for someone using a wheelchair or walker and bike-able for someone with a disability using a hand-cycle. Rather than listing every trail in each community, the following pages describe a handful of the most popular trails in each region.

Southwest Michigan

Harbor Country Trails

Harbor Country Trails is a 36-mile bike route through the towns of New Buffalo, Union Pier, Lakeside, Harbert, Sawyer and Three Oaks. One of the primary trailheads for the bike route is located in New Buffalo. Harbor Country Trails is directed by the Friends of Harbor Country Trails.

Backroads Bikeway

The Backroads Bikeway is a series of trails that follow secondary roads throughout Berrien County. The Bikeway connects to several coastal communities including New Buffalo.

Kal-Haven Trail

The 34.5-mile Kal-Haven Trail, on the former Kalamazoo & South Haven Railroad, runs from Kalamazoo to the coastal community of South Haven. A recent trail expansion and streetscaping project in South Haven now extends the trail into the heart of downtown, where trail users can enjoy downtown shopping and dining and connect with the Van Buren Trail via a scenic connector route.

Harbor Country Trails

Harbor Country Trails is a 36-mile bike route throughout southwest Lower Michigan.



Kal-Haven Trail

The Kal-Haven Trail is a 34.5-mile rail trail that extends from Kalamazoo into downtown South Haven, where it connects with the Van Buren State Trail.



Van Buren Trail

The 14-mile Van Buren Trail State Park runs from South Haven to Hartford on the former Toledo & South Haven Railroad. Most of the trail surface is unimproved grass and gravel, but nicely maintained and well suited for mountain bikes or bicycles with fat tires. In November of 2015, a 4.5 mile section of the trail connecting Van Buren State Park to the South Haven trail system topped with a 10-foot-wide asphalt surface (the City maintains a marked route that connects to a downtown trailhead). Equestrian and snowmobile use is permitted and popular along the entire length of the trail.

McCoy's Creek Trail

McCoy's Creek Trail is a 2.5-mile pathway that connects nearby woodland areas and the St. Joseph River to downtown Buchanan.

Greater Holland Community

The greater Holland Community is home to more than 150 miles of paved separate-use trails and off-road dirt trails. Several looped routes in Holland's bike path network incorporate popular city, township and state parks. Along the pathways, trail users experience scenic views of Lake Macatawa, Lake Michigan and the iconic DeZwaan windmill. A favorite route among bicyclists is the Lakeshore Connector Pathway that runs between Holland State Park and Grand Haven State Park.

Ludington

As previously mentioned, Ludington is the western terminus for U.S. Bicycle Route 20 in Michigan. The bicycle route passes through downtown Ludington on Rath Avenue, eventually heading north along Lakeshore Drive. U.S. Bicycle Route 35 also passes through Ludington on its way along the coastline.

Ludington

U.S. Bicycle Route 20 passes through downtown Ludington on Rath Avenue, eventually heading north along Lakeshore Drive.



McCoy's Creek Trail

McCoy's Creek Trail is a 2.5-mile pathway located in downtown Buchanan.



Holland Community Trails

The greater Holland Community is home to more than 150 miles of trails, connecting most of the area's most popular assets and attractions.



Communities

This Trail Town Plan focuses on eight coastal communities along Lake Michigan: Ludington, Holland, Ottawa County, Park Township, South Haven, Bridgman, St. Joseph and New Buffalo. A ninth community, Buchanan, is also included. Although Buchanan is not located along the Lake Michigan Shoreline, it is connected via the St. Joseph River Water Trail.

Together, the nine communities are home to about 80,277 people (Ottawa County was not included in this total). However, given their location on Lake Michigan, the population of each community increases significantly during the summer months. All but two of the communities have a traditional downtown layout, with historic buildings centered along a “main” street, sidewalks, numerous waterfront and outdoor dining experiences, boutique-style shops, and art galleries. Most communities also have a fairly large marina where paddlers can easily access the water.

Several of the nine communities work together to help shape the character and identity of their region. South Haven, St. Joseph, Bridgman, New Buffalo and Buchanan help define “southwest Michigan,” whereas Park Township, Holland and portions of Ottawa County help define the “Greater Holland Area.”

Key stakeholders and staff in each region and community — especially the Ludington Community Development Office, Ottawa County Parks and Recreation, and the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission — were instrumental in the development of this plan and will be central agents in both local and regional Trail Town implementation efforts.

While this concerted Trail Town Planning effort focused on the nine communities listed above, the applicability of the concepts, the process of evaluation, the basis of the recommendations, and the options for implementation serve as a model for other communities and trail systems throughout the state.

Project Communities



What is a Trail Town?

According to the Allegheny Trail Alliance, a “Trail Town” is:

A destination along a long-distance trail. Whether on a rail trail, towpath, water trail, or hiking trail, trail users can venture off the trail to enjoy the scenery, services, and heritage of the nearby community with its own character and charm. It is a safe place where both town residents and trail users can walk, find the goods and services they need, and easily access both trail and town by foot or vehicle. In such a town, the trail is an integral and important part of the community.³

A Trail Town is an active, attractive, and interesting place with accessible and comfortable spaces, hosting a variety of activities that promote social interaction and a strong sense of place. A Trail Town should meet both the needs of trail users and the residents of the community. A Trail Town has the physical amenities that support trail users and bicycle tourists such as bike/kayak racks, wayfinding signs, wide sidewalks, drinking fountains, and benches with shade. A Trail Town also has the business amenities to support day-trip trail users and bike tourists (such as a bike shop, kayak outfitter, casual restaurant and ice-cream shop) as well as overnight trail users and bike tourists (such as a hotel, restaurant and laundromat).

Each of the communities that were assessed as part of this planning effort already have many of the physical and business amenities that day-trip and overnight trail users and bike tourists are seeking. Many of the downtowns feature pedestrian-friendly streets, a variety of quality locally-owned restaurants, and outdoor seating. Most of the downtowns also have ice-cream shops, bars (some even have a brewery) and a coffee house where trail users and riders can casually spend an hour or two before getting back on the trail or the road. Many of the downtowns also feature a variety of boutique-style shops, with diverse and unique goods. Open, accessible and

Accessible and Comfortable Spaces

It is important to have restaurants with outdoor seating (see South Haven below), pedestrian-friendly streets and other quasi-public spaces within the downtown where trail users can get a good meal and spend a couple of hours before moving on to their next trail destination.



³ Trail Towns - Capturing Trail Based Tourism, A Guide for Communities in Pennsylvania. Allegheny Trail Alliance (2005)

inviting storefronts and pedestrian-friendly streets encourage trail visitors and bike tourists to casually stroll through the downtown.

All eight of the downtowns also have a number of physical amenities (public benches, bike racks, and parks) that allow trail users and bike tourists to rest, relax, or just hang out before getting back on their kayak or bike. For overnight trail users and bicycle tourists, there are a wide variety of accommodations (e.g., hotel, motel, bed-and-breakfast, and campground) within or in close proximity to many of the downtown areas.

Trail Town Strategy

It is important for local and regional trail advocates, economic development professionals and public officials to understand that these coastal communities are not isolated communities; they are linked together by the trails and biking routes, creating regional destinations for paddling, bike touring, horseback riding and other recreational activities. Typically, water trails tend to be used by people seeking a two-hour or half-day paddling excursion. However, some adventurous paddlers may be on the water trail for multiple days. Similarly, most bike tourists are seeking a half-day or entire day excursion. However, some bike tourists may be out for a couple of days and visit several communities, especially on weekends.

In addition, although vacationers may visit (often repeatedly) the trail located at their primary destination or “hub,” they may access different sections of the same trail or different trails when they visit nearby towns throughout the duration of their stay.

Long-distance trails and bicycle-friendly roadways attract tourists, especially trails and roads that pass by and through interesting towns, scenic areas or places of historic interest. Most trail users and bike tourists will require some degree of goods and services. According to the Allegheny Trail Alliance, *studies show that the longer the trail, the farther people will come to use it, the longer people will stay, and the more they will spend. A day-tripper will spend four times as much as a local user, and an overnight visitor will spend twice the amount a day-tripper will spend.*

Business Amenities

Trail users and bike tourists will find destinations such as breweries (see Bridgman below) in almost every project community, as well as overnight accommodations, shops, and eateries.



Trail Town Strategy

Most trail users and bike tourists will require some degree of goods and services. Making connections with local businesses is important in creating a friendly Trail Town community.



Photo Collected From:
Peddler Brewing Company, Seattle Washington

Coastal West Michigan is fortunate in that it is already popular with tourists, has many interesting towns and places to visit, and has a very active and expanding network of water trails, non-motorized trails and bike-friendly roadways. Local officials, economic development professionals, local business owners and trail advocates in each community and region should continue to work with each other to expand existing trails, make new trail connections, promote trail-based tourism activities, and support positive trail experiences for the entire region.

It will also be important for local community leaders, trail advocates, business owners and economic development organizations in each region to regularly communicate with each other, local businesses and participating state agencies about local road and trail conditions, safety concerns and trail/biking events. Regular communication can be especially useful when large paddle- or bike-themed events and/or tours pass through the region.

Ultimately, Trail Town communities need to be friendly places that support, celebrate and encourage paddlers, equestrians, bike tourists and other trail users to visit, and then welcome them with warm hospitality. The basic elements of a “Trail Town Strategy” are described below.

Basic Elements of a Trail Town Strategy

- Entice trail users to get off the trail and bike tourists to get off the road and into your town.
- Welcome trail users and bike tourists to your town by making information about the community readily available at the trailhead or key entryways into the community.
- Make a strong, accessible and safe connection between your town and the trail.
- Educate local businesses on the economic benefits of meeting the needs of trail and bicycle tourists.

Trail Town Strategy

Recruit new businesses or expand existing ones to fill gaps in the goods and services that trail users want and need.



- Recruit new businesses or expand existing businesses to fill gaps in the goods or services that trail users and bike tourists need.
- Support and promote the inclusive universally accessible “trail friendly,” “bicycle friendly” and “pedestrian friendly” character of the town.
- Work with neighboring communities to promote the entire trail corridor and bike-friendly roadways as a tourist destination.

According to the Allegheny Trail Alliance, it is also important to *understand that the Trail Town initiative must come from within your community. Becoming a Trail Town is as much about local attitude as it is about physical improvements.* Listed below are several considerations local officials, trail advocates and regional organizations should review to create a dynamic regional Trail Town environment.

Considerations in Creating a Trail Town Environment

- Local communities (and each region) can grow and thrive in new ways because of proximity to trails and a bike-friendly system of roadways.
- The more Trail Towns there are along a corridor offering hospitality and services, the more attractive the region will be for tourism; the success of one community is important to the success of all the communities.
- Leadership and initiative from within the community (especially the business community) will be necessary to turn each community into a Trail Town.
- A safe, accessible and well-maintained trail and roadway is the centerpiece, so it’s important to cooperate with and support local trail-building and maintenance groups and public safety agencies.
- A core bicycle/pedestrian-friendly philosophy should be adopted by local officials and business owners.

Considerations in Creating a Trail Town Environment

One way to establish a core bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly atmosphere in your town is to adopt a *Complete Streets* policy (resolution or ordinance). *Complete Streets* are streets designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians and bicyclists. *Complete Streets* should provide better mobility to citizens, trail users and road bikers, and safer trail-to-town connections. An example complete streets ordinance can be found in Appendix I.



- Trail users and road bikers should be accommodated both physically and socially within the downtown area.
- Goods and services for trail users and bicycle tourists will be appealing to other types of tourists and local residents.
- Local law enforcement agents can be important ambassadors in the town, along the trail and on rural roadways.

Getting Organized to Create Your Trail Town

In order to create, plan for and implement a successful Trail Town initiative, it is important to have the right team assembled from the community. The following sections describe some of the important roles and activities that will be needed to create and establish a Trail Town environment in each community. As local leaders, trail advocates, business owners and economic development professionals review these sections, it is important to identify where additional assistance might be needed. In some cases it will be imperative, at least initially, that regional agencies like the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission assist local leaders in some of these organizing and implementation efforts.

A. Define the Trail Corridor. Before any Trail Town initiative can get started, it is important that local leaders understand the physical and administrative structure of the trail(s). Local leaders and trail advocates should ask themselves a series of questions to better understand the trail system(s) located in their community. For example:

- What kind of trail is it?
- How long is the trail and where does it connect to?
- Who manages the trail and who is responsible for daily upkeep and annual maintenance?

Brief summaries of the physical and administrative structure of several trails in the nine communities are described on pages 3-7. It was fairly clear in meetings with local officials in coastal communities that many did not know about the physical and

administrative structure of the Lake Michigan Water Trail. In fact, some local officials were even unaware there is a water trail located in their community. It is imperative that local Trail Town supporters inform local officials (e.g., planning commission, city council) about their local trail systems. In some instances, it may be valuable to host “field trips” with government officials so they can get a firsthand understanding of the issues and opportunities associated with their trail system.

B. Assess Local Capacity. A Trail Town initiative could be part of the comprehensive community revitalization efforts directed by downtown merchants, a Downtown Development Association, a Main Street Program, a municipal community development department, or a combination of these organizations. Therefore, it is important to understand how well your local leaders are able to plan and implement new programs or ideas.

Some coastal communities already have very active and successful Downtown Development Authorities (DDAs), merchant groups, community development departments and civic-minded organizations. It will be important to tap into those agencies or groups of people who are eager and willing to participate. From a regional perspective, Chambers of Commerce and Convention and Visitor Bureaus (CVBs) can assist in providing support and capacity. However, creating strong local teams will be vital for the long-term viability of any local Trail Town effort.

Local officials and staff can utilize the following *Four Point Approach*⁴ to create a successful “Trail Town” environment in their community.

Organizing gets everyone working toward the same goal. The tough work of building consensus and cooperation among groups that have an important stake in the downtown area can be eased by using the basic formula of a hands-on, volunteer driven program and an organizational structure consisting of a board and committees to direct the program.

Understanding the Trail Corridor

It is valuable to host “field trips” with government officials to the local trail network so they can get a firsthand understanding of the issues and opportunities associated with their trail system.



⁴ National Main Street Center: <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/>

Promotion sells the image and promise of a Trail Town to all prospects.

Marketing the downtown's unique characteristics to local customers, investors, new businesses, and visitors requires an effective promotion strategy. It forges a positive town image through advertising, retail promotions, special events, and marketing campaigns carried out by the local volunteers.

Design gets a Trail Town into top physical shape. Capitalizing on its best assets, such as historic buildings and traditional downtown layout, is just part of the story. An inviting and accessible atmosphere created through attractive window displays, professional signage, well-maintained sidewalks, accessible parking areas, appropriate street lights, and landscaping conveys a visual message about what a Trail Town is and what it has to offer.

Economic Restructuring finds a new purpose for the town's enterprises. By helping existing downtown businesses expand and by recruiting new businesses to respond to today's market, the town can help convert unused space into productive property and increase the competitiveness of business enterprises.

C. Create or Enhance Your Local Organization. Everyone in the community has a stake in the future of their downtown. In order to be successful, local leaders must involve as many interested groups and individuals as possible from throughout the community. Citizens, paddlers, bicyclists, stakeholder groups, and local officials all need to support downtown revitalization efforts. Local leaders should also seek support from local civic groups, historical societies, financial institutions, religious institutions, business owners and civic organizations (both public and private) that have a stake in tourism and the downtown. Because of the residual health benefits trails provide to local residents, it can be helpful to seek support from local physicians or regional healthcare networks. In addition, it will be important to include people with disabilities as well as senior citizen and disability advocates.

D. Develop the Local Volunteer Base. A Trail Town initiative requires support from the entire community. In addition to mobilizing community organizations, it is important to mobilize local volunteers. Volunteers bring new and different ideas forward and can help carry out activities. In addition, volunteers can help promote the

Four Point Approach - Organizing

A hands-on, volunteer-driven program and organizational structure consisting of local officials and important recreational and economic development staff will be needed to establish a robust Trail Town effort. People who participated in the local assessment meetings under this planning project would make ideal committee members.



positive aspects of the Trail Town initiative through word-of-mouth. Local leaders in each community should make concerted efforts to ensure the volunteer base is as broad as possible.

E. Get the Message Out Locally. Marketing and advertising are essential to promote trail use and appreciation. A marketing committee can be helpful in organizing these efforts. A catchy name for the organization is also helpful, something that lets people know what the organization does and is easily remembered. The marketing committee will need to develop a relationship with the local media, explain to them what local leaders are doing, and let them know how they can help. It can also be helpful to submit articles (with photos) to local organizations in the community, speak at local civic and community service meetings (e.g., planning commission, city council, Rotary, Kiwanis), establish a social media platform, and have a presence at community events and festivals.

Local officials, friends groups, and the various Chambers of Commerce and Convention and Visitor Bureaus in West Michigan can assist in promoting each community and their surrounding region as Trail Town destinations. These organizations have the ability and capacity to not only promote Trail Town activities locally, but also throughout the State of Michigan and the Midwest.

F. Build Partnerships. As previously stated, implementing a Trail Town initiative requires support from the entire community. Building partnerships with existing community groups and stakeholders will help to develop broad-based local interest and buy-in as the initiative moves forward. Local leaders in each community should work to identify existing community groups, business owners and key figures, and discuss ways to unite the community around the Trail Town effort.

As previously mentioned, it will also be important for local Trail Town teams to work with and coordinate efforts with neighboring Trail Town teams, regional planning agencies, and economic and community development organizations.

Get the Message Out

It can also be helpful to submit articles (with photos) to local organizations in the community, speak at local civic and community service meetings (e.g., planning commission, city council, Rotary, Kiwanis), establish a social media platform, and have a presence at community events and festivals.



G. Find the Resources to Implement Your Trail Town Concept. Implementing a comprehensive Trail Town initiative will require funding. Funding through grants and other economic assistance programs can be secured for community and economic development initiatives from local, county, state and federal agencies. These financial aid programs may include Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grants from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) grants from the Michigan Department of Transportation, Rural Development grants from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), grants from Michigan’s Coastal Zone Management Program (CZMP), and grants from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). Local financing tools, like Tax Increment Financing (TIF), can also be utilized. In addition, tax credits are available to small businesses who make accessibility improvements that better serve customers with disabilities (information can be found at: www.ada.gov/taxincent.pdf)

Funding may also be secured from local and regional Community Foundations, regional trail and recreation advocacy organizations, friends groups, and local conservation groups. Municipal staff members, DDA staff members, interested volunteers, or even a professional grant writer can be especially helpful in researching and writing grants on behalf of a local Trail Town initiative.

Building relationships and partnerships with local businesses is also critical in securing funding for Trail Town initiatives. Local businesses (especially restaurants, breweries and hotels/resorts) may be willing to sponsor special trail-related events and promote Trail Town activities. Furthermore, local businesses may be willing to take on the cost of providing and building trail amenities and support services.

The more that local leaders can involve a wide variety of interest groups, stakeholders and individuals in the Trail Town Planning effort, the more likely it will be to secure funding from these different sources.

H. Take One Step at a Time. It is important to understand that a Trail Town initiative does not happen overnight; rather, it develops and evolves over time. This may be especially true in some of the nine communities where there is not a local organization already working on building trails or economic development initiatives.

Funding Resources

It is important to remember that most state and federal grants require a local cash match. For CZMP grants, in-kind services can also be used toward match. CZMP grant applications are typically due in December.

In addition, the DNR now allows communities to use Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) grants toward the match for Natural Resources Trust Fund grants. It will be important for each community to incorporate the findings and recommendations of this plan into their local recreation plan to be eligible for Trust Fund grants. Annual Trust Fund applications are due in April.

Fortunately, there is already a great deal of local and regional support and enthusiasm in most of these coastal communities, and local trail, paddling and bicycling advocates and supporters have long been very proactive. According to the Allegheny Trail Alliance, *the activities that the community undertakes should be evaluated by their outcomes, not outputs. You may want to start implementation with a small project with good potential, one that might have good “bang for the buck.” Use resources prudently on projects that are well thought out and their potential impact thoroughly evaluated.*

Trail Town Design Issues

An important step in preparing this plan was to assess the physical characteristics of each community’s central business district and its relationship to the nearby trail(s) — a *Trail-to-Town Assessment*. This assessment helps local officials, trail planners, business owners and economic development professionals better understand the physical challenges that trail visitors may encounter in their quest to visit the downtown. The results of the trail-to-town assessment for each community is summarized later in this document. The following pages describe the physical elements that were evaluated as part of the trail-to-town assessment.

Determine the Type of Trail in Your Community. The first item to evaluate in assessing the physical characteristics of a town is to determine the type of trail that runs through (or in close proximity to) the central business district. While a water trail primarily accommodates kayakers, most paved trails accommodate a wide variety of non-motorized uses (e.g., cycling, hiking, walking, observing nature, etc.). Although most of them are not groomed for such uses, in the winter months some of the non-motorized trails are often used by snow-shoers and cross-country skiers. It is important for local leaders and trail planners to understand which types of users are on the trail and at which time of year.

Understanding Trail Use

It is very important for local officials and trail planners to understand what activities are taking place on their trail systems and at what time of year so they can adequately provide supporting trail infrastructure (e.g., kayak launches).



Understanding how the trail is used during different times of the year will help local officials better provide for supporting trail infrastructure. For example, if a lot of people are paddling in the shoulder months (early spring and late fall), then perhaps local municipalities might consider installing kayak launch facilities earlier in the year (before Memorial Day) and taking them out later in the year (after Labor Day). Seasonal knowledge can also be helpful when planning specific trail-associated events or promotional activities, and can help local business owners better understand potential trail clientele.

Understand Trail Geography. As previously mentioned, another important item to assess is the physical relationship between the trail and the central business district (the *trail-to-town relationship*), which includes factors such as linear distance and elevation change. According to the *Allegheny Trail Alliance*, the linear relationship can be described in one of three ways: (1) Internal Trails; (2) Adjacent Trails; and (3) Removed Trails.

Internal Trails are located directly through the central business district.

Adjacent Trails are located immediately adjacent to the downtown, usually within a half-mile of the central business district.

Removed Trails are located up to two miles away from the central business district.

In each coastal project community, the Lake Michigan Water Trail is considered an “adjacent trail,” whereas some of the water trails on connecting waterways would be considered “internal.”

Understanding the elevation change or “grade” between the trail and the central business district is also very important. This can be especially important for trail users pulling kids in trailers, people with disabilities using wheelchairs or long-distance trail users who may be carrying heavy loads of gear. The grade between the trail and the central business district can also be important for paddlers, especially if they have to carry their kayak and gear to a lock-up area or their automobile.

Understanding Trail Geography

Due to its close proximity to the downtown, trails like the McCoy Creek Trail in Buchanan are considered “internal” trails.



Trail-to-Town Elevation Change

The elevation change between the trail and the central business district can be especially important to bicyclists or long-distance trail users who may be carrying heavy loads of gear.



Certainly, weather can play a significant role in the pace at which paddlers can move along water trails. High winds can create significant waves which can be treacherous to paddle through. In addition, a stiff headwind can slow the pace of a paddler tremendously, turning a relatively moderate hour-long paddle into an exhausting three-hour paddle.

Identify Key Connecting Elements. In addition to understanding the physical relationship between the trail and the central business district, it is also important to understand the function and inter-relationship of the six *connecting elements* — the physical components that make up and define the connection between the trail and central business district. The following pages summarize each of the connecting elements.

1. Trailhead. The Trailhead is the area where users can access the trail by road, providing parking and accessible amenities for trail users. In many instances, the Trailhead is the point at which the trail user may first come in contact with the community and the point at which trail user will decide whether or not to venture into the downtown. Therefore, it is imperative that local officials and trail planners in each community work to make the Trailhead a positive and welcoming place.

One of the most important items trail planners and local officials should provide at the Trailhead is information about the community. This might include a listing of area businesses, or a description of local attractions or historical information. Any description should include at least one photo of the downtown, preferably an image of the downtown bustling with lots of people.

By providing such universally accessible amenities as water and toilet facilities, the community welcomes visitors, showing hospitality and inviting them to visit the town. Whenever possible, these amenities (see more below) should be available to trail users all year round (or at least when the trail is being actively used). It is also important to consider providing amenities at the Trailhead for each potential user group.

Key Connecting Elements

1. Trailhead
2. Portal
3. Pathway
4. Gateway
5. Center
6. Nodes

Trailhead Amenities - Town Information

One of the most important amenities local officials should provide at the Trailhead is information about the downtown.



Universally Accessible Trailhead Amenities

- Bathrooms
- Water
- Benches
- Trash Receptacles
- Picnic Tables
- Shelter
- Parking (with shade)
- Wi-Fi
- Pop Machine
- Directional Signs
- Welcome Signs
- Trail Map
- Community Information
- Bike Rack/Kayak Rack

Trailhead Amenities - Bathrooms

One of the most important amenities for any Trailhead is a bathroom. Bathrooms not only provide toilet facilities, but often they are used by trail users to fill water bottles, freshen up, and change clothes. Most of the nine jurisdictions close their traditional brick-and-mortar bathrooms during the winter months, even if the trail is still being actively used all year round. If year-round access to bathroom facilities is not feasible, each jurisdiction should work to provide universally accessible portable bathroom facilities.

When building new brick-and-mortar bathrooms, consider installing at least one accessible “family bathroom” to accommodate parents with small children of the opposite sex and people with disabilities who may have a spouse or caretaker of the opposite sex.

Trailhead Amenities - Signs

Signs and markers are essential components on any trail system and should be incorporated into local and regional trail planning efforts. In researching best practices for Trailhead signs for this document, we found that the *Bikeway and Trail Design Standards and Planning Guidelines*⁵ from Fredrick County, Maryland, provided a comprehensive set of recommendations for information that should be included on Trailhead signs (see Figure 1.1 on the next page).

Trailhead Amenities - Bathrooms

Each jurisdiction should work to provide portable bathroom facilities during the time of year when their brick-and-mortar facilities are closed. Accessible portable toilets, like the one pictured below along the Pere Marquette Trail, are relatively inexpensive.



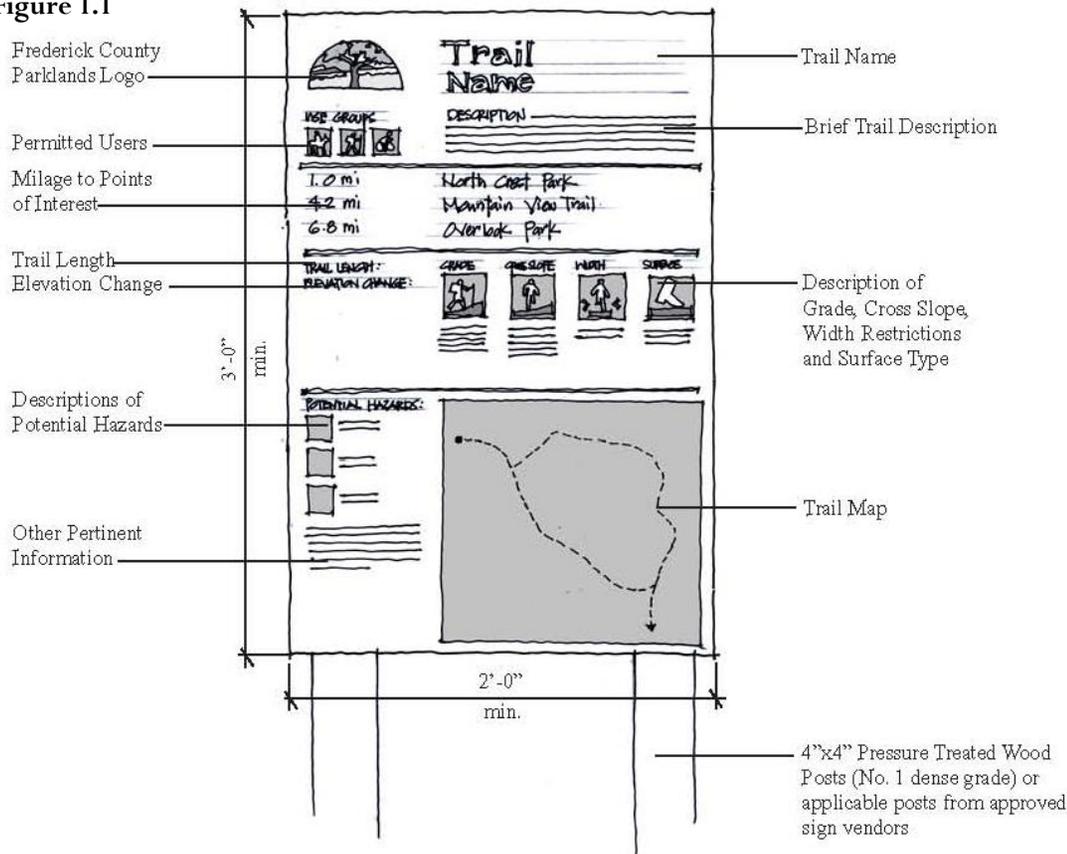
⁵ Bikeway and Trail Design Standards and Planning Guidelines. Fredrick County Parklands, Fredrick County Department of Parks and Recreation (2003)

Whenever possible, the style (design, color, materials) of the Trailhead sign should reflect the history and/or culture of the community. For multi-jurisdictional trails, the style of the Trailhead sign should be consistent in each community and reflective of the history and culture of the entire region. The consistent appearance of the Trailhead sign (especially if it includes a logo) can help to reinforce regional and local branding efforts. The Trailhead sign should also prominently include the word “welcome” somewhere on the sign. All trail signs should be located on accessible routes and surrounded by the accessible surfacing.

Trailhead Amenities - Signs

For multi-jurisdictional trails, the style of the trailhead sign should be consistent in each community and reflective of the history and culture of the entire region. The Iron Ore Heritage Recreation Trail has incorporated iron from a local mine into the frame of the trailhead sign kiosk in each community (Marquette below).

Figure 1.1



Trailhead Amenities – Safety Signs

Paddling on the Great Lakes, or any water body, should be taken very seriously. Local efforts should be made to include warnings, information and safety tips on trailhead signs or kiosk. Information should include links to the NOAA Great Lakes marine forecasts (www.mws.noaa.gov) and the USGS (waterdata.usgs.gov/mi/nwis/rt) for inland rivers.

Given the scope, geography and heavy vegetation of the Lake Michigan coastline, it may be quite difficult for paddlers (in the water) to determine where an access site is located without a formal map or GPS unit. Several water trail systems in Michigan employ identification signs along the coastline or river bank. Local officials in each of the nine jurisdictions discussed the implementation of a flag system that could be seen by paddlers from far-away distances and in both sunny and cloudy conditions. Despite several discussions, no formal template or agreement to use a flag system was agreed upon. However, a mock-up of a “Trailhead identification sign” for the Lake Michigan Water Trail was developed for this master plan (see right).

Other sign types include:

Informational signs to direct and guide users along trails in the most simple and direct manner.

Directional signs to inform the trail user where they are along the trail and the distance to specific destinations and points of interest. More information on directional or “wayfinding” signs can be found on page 31.

Interpretive signs to offer educational information about the trail and/or the surrounding area and community.

Warning signs to alert trail users to potentially hazardous or unexpected conditions.

Regulatory signs to inform trail users of the “rules of the trail” as well as other rules and regulations.

Trailhead Amenities - Signs

A mock-up of a “Trailhead identification sign” — a sign to direct paddlers from the water to the trailhead — was developed for this master plan.



Whenever feasible, a combination of all the sign types listed above (if needed) should be provided at each Trailhead and at major access points in the downtown to convey accurate and detailed information about existing trail conditions, available facilities, and nearby downtown amenities.

A sign array template (Appendix H) was developed by the Land Information Access Association (LIAA) that illustrates the size, appearance and content of identification, trailhead, directional, safety and mile marker signs that could be implemented in areas and communities along the Lake Michigan Water Trail. Implementation of such signage would require extraordinary, but achievable, cooperation with local units of government and other regulatory agents along the entire Lake Michigan coastline.

Trailhead Amenities - Business Amenity Signs

As previously stated, the Trailhead is the point at which the trail user may first come into contact with the community and the point at which the user will decide whether or not to enter town. Therefore, it is very important to include information about area businesses and attractions at the Trailhead. Photos of the primary shopping district, outdoor restaurants and other downtown amenities should be included in the description of the town. Whichever image is selected, be sure it includes people; images of a downtown devoid of people are not helpful. Good pictures help sell a positive image of the downtown and help convince trail tourists to enter the town.

Depending on the location of the trailhead and the size of the town, the sign may include a simple base map of the community with icons that identify the types of services the town offers (e.g., a fork and knife icon for restaurants). The sign could also include a more detailed map of the downtown with a comprehensive list of businesses and attractions. If the sign includes a map of the downtown, be sure to clearly mark the trail and where it connects to the downtown. If a formal sign kiosk is not possible, try to include information about the community (e.g., pictures, restaurant menus, hotel information) in other prominent places, like on the exterior of a restroom building or marina office. Business amenity signs may also be viewed by bicycle tourists at key entryways into the town.

Trailhead Amenities - Art

Trailheads can be an excellent place to display artwork that highlights the unique and cultural aspects of the community and trail system. The sturgeon sculpture located along the Blue Water River Walk in Port Huron highlights the unique spawning grounds of the ancient fish in the river.



Trailhead Amenities - Cultural Heritage Signs

Trailheads can also be an excellent place to display information about the unique historical and cultural aspects of your community. Local officials and trail planners in each community should consider how to incorporate the community’s historical or cultural aspects into new signs at the Trailhead or in downtown.

Trailhead Amenities - Art

Trailheads can also be an excellent place to display artwork that highlights the unique cultural aspects of the community and trail system. When considering the size and materials of the artwork display, be aware that it may be used for other unintended purposes — that is, trail users may sit on it to tie their shoe or kids may climb on it.

Water Trailheads

As previously mentioned, each of the nine project communities has access to at least one formal water trail. The quality of amenities at each paddling Trailhead often depends on its location. For example, a Trailhead located in a marina may include large areas for parking, restrooms, showers, and an accessible kayak launch, whereas a Trailhead at a rural road-ending may only have a small path from which paddlers can access the water. This document is not suggesting a minimum amenities standard at all paddling Trailheads. However, urban areas (near downtowns) should have at least one Trailhead with an accessible launch, a kayak rack/locker, and as many amenities as possible (see list on page 20).

In 2014, the National Park Service developed a guidebook, *Prepare to Launch*⁶, to assist in the development of canoe and kayak launches. The document provides a comprehensive summary of and recommendations for designing kayak launches.

Water Trailhead

Kayak racks (or lockers) provide an opportunity for trail users to secure their kayak and venture into town. The picture below shows a kayak rack along the Clinton River in downtown Rochester, Michigan. Some Michigan communities are considering installing kayak storage lockers that could be rented by residents each summer, much like a boat slip at a marina.



⁶ Prepare To Launch - Guidelines For Assessing, Designing And Building Access Sites For Carry-In Watercraft (2014) Prepare to Launch! is a joint project of the NPS Rivers, Trails, Conservation Assistance Program and the River Management Society

Universally Accessible Water Trailheads

ADA guidelines for newly designed, constructed and altered recreation facilities issued in 2002 require that all public boat launches (which include fixed and floating structures of all sizes) comply with ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). However, these guidelines represent *minimum* standards for boating facilities.

Paddlers of all abilities want to launch and land smoothly without capsizing or damaging their watercraft. They need firm surfaces that support their movement from their arrival place to the launch at the water's edge, and sufficient space to accommodate the length of their watercraft during transitions into and out of their vessel and into and out from the water. Therefore, it is important to consider *Universal Design* practices in the development of the complete water access facility, from car to launch. Simply put, universal design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without need for adaptation or specialized design. A few considerations of universal design are provided below. A more thorough description of universal design considerations and a formal accessibility report (and site plan) for each water trail access site studied in each of the nine communities can be found in Appendix B and C.

Universal Design Concepts - Launch Sites that are:

- For all people of all abilities
- For all ages
- For all skills
- For independent use
- Safe
- Intuitive
- Easier to use by everyone together

2. Portal. The Portal is the point at which users of the trail exit the Trailhead (or the trail) with the intent of visiting the nearby downtown. The Portal should be a welcoming point in which lighting, wayfinding signs, and accessible sidewalks and pathways clearly direct trail users into the central business district. In some instances, it may be more appropriate to place informational signs about downtown businesses (see page 24) at the Portal rather than the Trailhead. Local officials and trail planners should work closely with their downtown merchants or an organization like a DDA to develop signs

Universally Accessible Kayak Launch

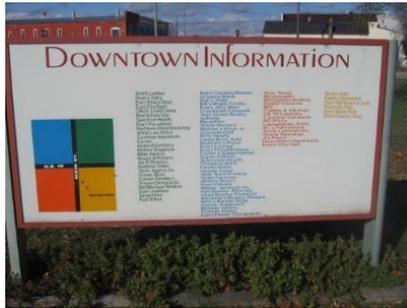
Local officials should always consider the installation of universally accessible kayak launches at key water trail access sites. Simple launches, like the self-manipulated launch pictured below, can be purchased for a few thousand dollars. The EZ Dock Company has installed accessible launches in many Michigan communities (www.ez-dock.com).



that are inclusive (that is, they include all businesses) and are of a size and design that is complementary to the surrounding landscape and character of the community.

Portal - Picture (A) is an example of a well-done portal sign in Evart, Michigan that has captured all the local businesses along the White Pine Trail. Picture B shows a less desirable example of a portal sign, exclusive to just one business, tacked up along the North Central State Trail in Gaylord, Michigan.

A. Inclusive Portal Sign



B. Exclusive Portal Sign



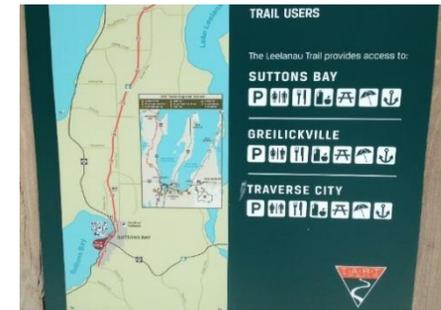
3. Pathway. The Pathway is the corridor that trail users follow from the Portal to the central business district. In some communities (e.g., Buchanan), the Pathway is just a few blocks, while in others (e.g., South Haven), the Pathway is about a mile. If the trailhead is several miles away from the central business district, the Pathway could include a combination of paved shoulders, bike lanes, and/or sidewalks or other pathways.

The Pathway may also pass through commercial areas or residential neighborhoods. Therefore, it is important to include wayfinding signs or trail markers at key intersections and connections. Wayfinding signs along the Pathway should include the distance to the downtown, displayed in blocks and/or minutes.

Wayfinding signs can also highlight places of interest along (or adjacent to) the Pathway, such as restaurants, shops, historical markers or a library. Local officials should continually assess the Pathway for cleanliness, safety, lighting, physical condition accessibility and interaction with traffic.

Portal

In some instances, it may be more appropriate and cost effective to include symbols (e.g., a fork and knife for restaurants) to identify general community assets rather than listing each individual business.



Pathway

Wayfinding along the Pathway should include the distance to the downtown in blocks or minutes (see sign in Rochester, Michigan below).



4. Gateway. The Gateway is the point at which trail users enter the business district of the community. The Gateway should be located at the edge of the central business district that is closest to the Trailhead along a well-developed accessible Pathway. It is important to note that points along each major road coming into the central business district will serve as the Gateway for bike tourists. The Gateway area(s) should welcome trail users and visitors into the central business district and be the starting point for directional signs to individual attractions and businesses within the district.

5. Center. The Center is the central business district or primary commercial area of the community. The Center serves as a hub of goods and services for the trail user. The Center should be regularly assessed for cleanliness, safety, lighting accessibility and physical condition. Window displays and building façades should also be regularly assessed for best practices (see *retail building form* later in this document). Additionally, the Center should be assessed on the availability of amenities that help trail users enjoy their experience (e.g., bike racks, outdoor seating at restaurants, ATM machines, free Wi-Fi, free air hoses for inflating tires, and public restrooms).

Communities like New Buffalo, St. Joseph, Ludington and South Haven have offices or storefronts within their downtown devoted to tourist information (often the Chamber of Commerce). Each of these storefronts should include trail maps, brochures about bike and kayak rentals/outfitters, and information about where trail users can eat, sleep and shop within the downtown. In some instances, these storefronts and adjacent areas could be used as a central depot for trail users and their gear (e.g., bike racks, restrooms, lockers, etc.).

6. Nodes. Nodes are points of interest along or near the Pathway or in the Center that will be visited or utilized by trail users. Nodes may include businesses that cater to the specific trail user (a kayak rental shop), lifestyle interests of the trail user (a hobby shop or an antique shop), the duration of time the user will spend on the trail (a public shower room or local lodging), or to all trail users (medical supplies, water, a casual dining restaurant, snack

Gateway

An examples of a Gateway point along the Little Traverse Wheelway into downtown Petoskey, Michigan.



Center: Offices and/or storefronts devoted to tourist information should include brochures and flyers about the local trail systems, where to rent bikes and kayaks, and places the trail user could eat, sleep and shop. In some instances these offices and the surrounding groups could be used as a central depot for trail users. Picture A is the visitor information booth in downtown New Buffalo. Picture B is the visitor center in downtown South Haven.



food, etc.). Local leaders in each community should continue to identify existing and/or potential nodes along each existing and potential Pathway into their downtowns.

Putting It All Together

Local officials, business owners, volunteers, municipal staff and other important stakeholders in each community should work to assess and map the connecting elements of their trail-to-town corridor (see example below, Gateway & Center not shown).

Connecting Elements Map (Ludington)

Trailhead Portal Pathway Gateway Center



Connecting Elements

As part of this planning effort, local officials in some communities worked to identify the preliminary location of each connecting element. A formal assessment with business owners, volunteers and other important community stakeholders should be conducted in each community.



Public Amenities

As previously mentioned, another important step in becoming a Trail Town is to have accessible public amenities that support both day-trip and overnight trail users and bike tourists. It will be important for each community to have amenities such as well-marked and accessible crosswalks, working pedestrian signals, bike racks, kayak lockers, drinking fountains, benches, bike stations (see right), and wayfinding signs within its downtown. Most of the coastal communities assessed for this document have a number of public amenities that support trail users and bike tourists, but gaps remain. Local leaders should continue to develop these types of amenities and resources as funding becomes available.

The responsibility of some public amenities fall under the authority of regional or state agencies. For example, the County Road Commission oversees and maintains road shoulders, and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) oversees crosswalks and traffic signals on state highways. It is imperative that local leaders in each community continually communicate with regional and state agencies about their local Trail Town planning efforts and improvements. One way to ensure their participation is to include their staff members in the local Trail Town steering committee.

In most instances, the local municipality is responsible for providing public amenities. However, the purchase, installation and maintenance of these public amenities is expensive. Local leaders should look for opportunities to partner with stakeholder groups, local business owners, non-profit organizations, and regional community development agencies to share in the cost of providing these essential amenities.

In addition, local officials in each jurisdiction should examine whether local zoning regulations inhibit the development of quasi-public amenities. For example, does the community have zoning regulations that prohibit restaurants from offering outdoor seating?

Public Amenities

A bike station is an important public amenity that gives trail users and bike tourists the opportunity to fix equipment that is not working or to pump up tires. At least one bike station should be located near the downtown or near the trail-to-town Pathway in each community.



Public Amenities - Wayfinding Signs. Wayfinding signs are one of the most important public amenities local jurisdictions can provide for trail users and bike tourists. Wayfinding signs direct visitors to the primary assets and features of the community, and the local trail systems should be treated as such. A comprehensive wayfinding signage system should include signs located along major thoroughfares directing drivers to the Trailhead, and pedestrian-mounted signs on sidewalks directing trail users through the downtown and to nearby Trailheads. Remember, if the wayfinding sign includes a map of the downtown, be sure to clearly mark the trail and where it connects to the downtown.

Wayfinding signs should also be placed on the trail, directing trail users to the central business district. As previously mentioned, LIAA developed a comprehensive wayfinding sign array for communities along the Lake Michigan Water Trail, which can be found in Appendix H.

If there are multiple trails in the community, each trail should be included on the local wayfinding sign. In addition, the name of the Trailhead and any identifying trail logo should be included on the local wayfinding sign. As previously mentioned, the distance to the Trailhead (or to the downtown from the trail) should also be included on the wayfinding sign. The distance to the trail in rural areas can be displayed in miles. However, wayfinding signs in urban settings should be displayed in blocks or even minutes.

Most of the nine communities included in this plan already have a very distinctive wayfinding system that includes both vehicular wayfinding signs and pedestrian wayfinding signs and maps. It will be important for local officials in each community to work with their local or regional MDOT office to include their trail systems on state wayfinding signs.

Public Amenities - Cultural Heritage. Local officials in each community should celebrate and incorporate the community’s unique cultural heritage at the Trailhead, along the trail-to-town corridor, and within the central business district. In addition, the trail itself should be celebrated in the central business district. One way to do this is with public art. A sculpture, symbolic of the community’s cultural heritage, could

Wayfinding Signs

The community wayfinding system should direct drivers to the downtown and trail system (picture A), pedestrians along the trail into downtown (B), and pedestrians through the downtown (C).



A.



B.



C.

be placed at the Trailhead. Another sculpture, symbolic of the trail, could be placed in the central business district or near the Gateway.

Picture (A) shows a sculpture of iron workers along the Iron Ore Heritage Trail in the Upper Peninsula. Picture (B) shows a sculpture of trail users near the Gateway into downtown Traverse City.



Interpretive kiosks can provide information about the culture and history (e.g., movements or influential figures) of the community at the Trailhead, along the trail-to-town corridor, or in the downtown. As previously noted, interpretive signs should incorporate a design reflective of a unique cultural aspect of the community.

Public Amenities - Bike Racks. Bike racks not only provide a secure place for trail users to store their bikes as they visit the town, but they also support local residents and bike commuters. In an effort to eliminate obstructing the pedestrian way and the chaining of bikes to trees, benches or light posts, it will be important for each community to strategically place bike racks at locations throughout the downtown.

Although sometimes they are less efficient, decorative bike racks (especially those that incorporate cultural themes into the design) further enhance the image of the community as a Trail Town.

Cultural Heritage

Interpretive kiosks at Trailheads, along the trail-to-town corridor, or in the downtown can help tell the story of the community to trail tourists.



Bike Racks

Strategically placed bike racks will help eliminate bike clutter within the downtown.



Sometimes, if a bike rack is too elaborate, it can appear to be public art, resulting in lack of use. Be sure to indicate a bicycle on the bike rack to denote that it is indeed intended to be used as such (see Boyne City example at right).

Bike Racks

Although they are less efficient, decorative bike racks like this one in Ludington further enhance the image of a Trail Town.



Bike Racks

Bike racks near water trail access sites may encourage local residents to bike to their kayak storage area.



Bike Racks

The artistic bike rack shown in downtown Boyne City is engraved with a bicycle, denoting its intended use.



Public Amenities - Public Transportation. For many trail users and bicycle tourists, time and distance may limit the likelihood of visiting other communities in the region. Some paddlers may only be comfortable paddling 10 miles over a two-day period, whereas bike tourists may only have enough endurance to pedal 30 miles over a two-day period. However, trail users and bicycle tourists may still like to recreate on other segments of the trail and visit other communities during their stay in the region. Local leaders should work with their local or regional transportation agency to explore opportunities to establish a seasonal “trail transportation” program in which the public transportation agency would transport trail users and their equipment to stops at Trailheads in communities throughout the region. For communities in which there is no public transportation agency, perhaps a local outfitter would be willing to provide that service.

Public Transportation

In Traverse City, the public transit agency (BATA) locates bus stops near Trailheads and transports trail users between Traverse City and Suttons Bay during the summer months.



Business Amenities

The local businesses that will be of interest to the trail user and bike tourist will be primarily service-based businesses. Trail planners, local officials and local/regional community development agencies can help local business owners in each community better understand the needs of the trail user and bike tourist. In addition to providing goods and services to trail users and road bikers, local business owners can incorporate simple trail-friendly and inclusive universally accessible amenities and trail-based hospitality into their business practices. For example, restaurants and bars could provide bike racks outside their establishments, accessible restrooms that are open to the public, and perhaps a “trail special” menu item or drink. Wait and host staff should be able to talk about the trail and describe how to get to the Trailheads. Gas stations near Trailheads should offer a free air pump. Motels should have trail maps in their lobby and offer bike cleaning stations and a secure bike storage area. Retail establishments should have friendly hours of operation, trail-related merchandise, and options to ship their merchandise to the trail tourist’s home.

It is also important that all downtown businesses, especially restaurants, accept credit cards; long gone are the days of “cash only.” It may also be helpful to host a “service industry trail day” in which community service workers are given tours of the trail so they can better describe and recommend it to tourists.

The enhancement of existing businesses and development of new business opportunities are important elements to becoming a Trail Town. Many businesses in the region already provide goods and services geared toward trail users and bike tourists. Hopefully, over time, more and more business owners will realize the value of this emerging market. Education, encouragement and financial incentives may be needed, especially to encourage participation by small businesses.

When Building Form Meets Retail

The look and feel of the downtown are important elements in creating a Trail Town. The density, size and architectural elements of the buildings, as well as the character

Business Amenities

Local officials can help local business owners in each community better understand the needs of the trail user.



Building Form

Attractive storefronts, historic buildings, outdoor cafés and wide sidewalks are essential elements in creating a pedestrian-friendly and thriving retail environment.



and pattern of the storefronts, tree canopy and sidewalks, all work together to create a pedestrian-friendly environment that attracts tourist and creates a thriving retail environment.

The following section highlights several “best practices” for the design of buildings, storefronts and sidewalks, as noted by Robert Gibbs in his book, *Principles of Urban Retail, Planning and Development*⁷.

These best practices can be implemented in the local zoning code or through the adoption of design guidelines. The following section highlights examples of building form elements within the nine communities that are contributing to the character of the downtown.

Building and Public Realm Elements

Awnings:

- Define the first-level storefront
- Reinforce brand
- Bring attention to the business

Awnings (Best Practices):

- Materials should be constructed from canvas, cloth, steel or glass but should reflect the overall character of the business brand. Awnings constructed of plastic and internally illuminated should not be permitted.
- Color should be limited to two colors.
- Lettering should be limited to eight inches in height and only allowed on the front flap rather than on the top-sloped awning.
- Awnings should complement the character of the building and should not cover architectural elements.
- Awnings should be no more than six to eight feet deep and have a pitch of no more than 25 degrees.

Awnings

Materials should be constructed from canvas, cloth, steel or glass, but should reflect the overall character of the business brand.



⁷ Gibbs, Robert. *Principles of Urban Retail Planning and Development*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. (2012)

Signs Should:

- Be well designed
- Be properly scaled
- Support continuity, but encourage individuality

Signs (Best Practices):

- Signs should be limited to one square foot of signage for each linear foot of storefront.
- Lettering should be no higher than 10 inches.
- Internally illuminated signs should be prohibited.
- Design materials should reflect the character of the building.

Windows and Doors:

- Help advertise goods
- Reinforce building form
- Add interests to pedestrians
- Draw people into the store
- Provide a sense of safety

Windows and Doors (Best Practices):

- At least 60% of first-level storefronts facing the primary sidewalk should be transparent glass.
- Keep displays simple, don't overcrowd.
- Keep the back of the display window open to allow the store's interior to be visible
- Primary doors should face the sidewalk.
- Doors facing the street should be recessed whenever practical.

Signs

Signs should support continuity, but encourage individuality.



Windows

At least 60% of first-level storefronts facing the primary sidewalk should be transparent glass.



Sidewalks:

- Provide the first and last impression for visitors
- Should not distract from the storefront windows

Sidewalks (Best Practices):

- Sidewalks should be wide enough to allow pedestrians to pass one another comfortably as well as to accommodate limited outside displays and dining.
- Sidewalks should be 8 to 16 feet wide.
- Wider sidewalks should be located on the sunny side of the block.

Street Trees:

- Contribute to the perception that the downtown stores offer quality goods

Street Trees (Best Practices):

- Select native tree species.
- Avoid short bushy trees that block storefronts and window displays.
- Plant trees near or on common property lines.

Sidewalks

Sidewalks should be wide enough to allow pedestrians to pass one another comfortably while accommodating limited outside displays and dining.



Street Trees

Trees contribute to the perception that downtown stores offer quality goods.



Economic Restructuring for Your Trail Town

Economic restructuring refers to the functions of business expansion, business retention, and new business recruitment. It also deals with the key issue of market demographics. It is important for local officials and economic development agencies to understand how economic restructuring can capitalize on existing community assets to help establish a Trail Town.

A. Understanding Your Trail User - The Customer

According to the Allegheny Trail Alliance, *in any downtown development effort, understanding your customer is one of the most important and central activities local business leaders can undertake*. Often, local officials want formal metrics to justify their budgets or invest in capital improvements. Big cities, regional governments and state agencies across the country have spent millions of dollars trying to better understand customer habits and the economic impact of trails. This process is very costly and probably unrealistic for most communities. A better approach is to get a general sense of the economic impact of trail users by asking local business owners what trail users are buying, where they are staying, and where they are eating. A good story about the economic impact of just one trail user can go a long way.

Broad information on the social, economic and lifestyle preferences of trail users can be found in reports from trail user associations (e.g., International Mountain Biking Association). Another way to better understand the characteristics and spending habits of trail users is by surveying them. Several communities or trail systems (e.g., Kal Haven Trail) have conducted formal trail user surveys to get a better idea of who is on their trail and what kind of experience they are having in the community.

Local officials and community development professionals, could administer an online survey, or conduct a more thorough survey of trail users at the trail using volunteers. Once the socio-economic and lifestyle preferences of the trail customer base are somewhat better understood, local leaders, community development agencies and tourism organizations can begin to make decisions about how to best attract potential trail customers into the community.

Economic Impacts

A 2013 study by the Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development found that the Huron River Water Trail has roughly 103,000 annual visitors, which translates to almost \$50 million in regional economic activity.

Understanding Your Trail User

Once the socio-economic characteristics and lifestyles of the trail customer base is better understood, local officials and business owners can better make decisions on how to attract these potential customers.



Understanding Your Trail User - A Closer Look at Bike Tourism

In 2014, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources delivered a presentation on bike tourism that profiled three basic types of bike tourists, noting their demographics, biking tendencies and spending preferences.

1. The Shoestring Cyclist

Shoestring Cyclists tend to be younger and more self-contained. They will typically ride between 75 and 100 miles per day and prefer low-cost options for lodging and meals, spending no more than \$30 a day. When traveling, Shoestring Cyclists seek campgrounds near town and low-cost access to showers.

2. The Economy Cyclist

Economy Cyclists tend not to be age-specific. They will typically ride between 50 and 90 miles per day and prefer eating their meals in restaurants, spending no more than \$50 per day. The type of lodging preferred is typically dictated by the weather and location. When traveling, Economy Cyclists seek discounts for local tourist attractions, and campgrounds near town or other low-cost lodging options.

3. The Comfort Cyclist

Comfort Cyclists tend to be older (between 50 and 65) and highly educated. They will typically ride less than 50 miles per day and are looking to stay in communities that offer the full vacation experience (e.g., beach, shopping, restaurants, full-service hotel, and museums). The typical Comfort Cyclist has a high amount of discretionary income, on average spending over \$100 a day.

These three bike tourist profiles are just one example. Due to their proximity to the water, all of the coastal communities are also visited by paddlers and boaters. It will be important to try understand the needs, desires and spending habits of each trail user that travels to the community.

Understanding Your Trail User

According to a Michigan Sea Grant report, in 2008 kayakers in the United States:

- Made an average of 10 outings each
- 56% of kayakers are male
- 36% are between 25 and 44 and 30% are over 45
- 57% earn over \$75,000 per year
- 51% have a college degree or higher
- 14.1% live in the Midwest



B. Assess Basic and Long-Term Trail User Needs

There are a number of *basic* and *long-term* goods and services that most trail users expect in every community; a full list can be found in Appendix E. Local leaders should continually assess if and to what extent their community is providing these goods and services.

C. Encourage Related Business Opportunities

As previously stated, trail users and bicycle tourists will be interested in other activities and attractions in the community. Local business owners may wish to expand their offerings of goods and services to meet the demand of visitors using or visiting other attractions.

D. Assist the Local Business Community

Local community development offices, Chambers of Commerce and Convention and Visitor Bureaus should work with local business owners to explore ways to encourage economic restructuring around local and regional trail and recreational assets.

One way local and regional leaders can assist local businesses is to develop an “economic gardening” approach to business development issues related to the trail. According to the Allegheny Trail Alliance, *under the economic gardening approach, one or more members of the committee would develop an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of the trail-user customer base and the trends in the activity itself. Then, through informational bulletins and educational sessions, the Trail Town concept is nurtured and grown in the community. Businesses that cater to this customer base will also flourish. The committee may also wish to provide funding to ensure that magazines, books, and publications that provide current information about the trail activity are available in the business section of the local library.*

Business Opportunities

Local businesses may wish to expand their offerings of goods and services to meet the needs of trail tourists.



Promoting Your Trail Town

The Allegheny Trail Alliance recommends that communities utilize and implement three primary marketing strategies (as outlined in the *Main Street Four-Point Approach*) to create an effective promotional campaign for a Trail Town.

- Establish a Trail Town image for the community.
- Hold special events that highlight and celebrate the trail and the community.
- Conduct retail promotions to entice people into the downtown.

1. Establish a Trail Town Image. The first component of an effective promotional campaign is to convince local residents, the larger region, and then tourists that you have an active, universally accessible and welcoming Trail Town environment. Most of the Trail Town strategies described in this document are based on drawing in visitors from beyond the local market. However, the full potential of the Trail Town concept may not be realized unless the local and regional population base is aware of it and what it can offer. Local officials and trail/recreation advocates need to make sure local officials and residents (the “community ambassadors”) are aware of their local trail systems and the regional paddling and bike-touring opportunities. Hosting local trail tours and implementing programs like “smart-commute week” are just a couple of ways to build up the trail-friendly character of the community and garner local support. Local stakeholder groups and active volunteers can also help build awareness.

Local officials and economic development agencies can help “brand” their community and the region as a Trail Town by developing attractive print marketing materials such as brochures, maps, billboards and advertisements. Digital marketing pieces, including videos, can be developed for the online outlets.

2. Hold Trail Town Events. The second component to an effective promotional campaign is to hold special events within the downtown or near the trail. Special events, especially events that tie into the community’s history and cultural identity (or even the trail corridor’s history), can attract both local residents and visitors.

Promote a Trail Town Image

Local communities could incorporate Trail Town promotional pieces into streetscape features, like this banner in Boyne City, Michigan.



Promote a Trail Town Image

Local stakeholders can help brand their community (and region) as a Trail Town by developing uniform and attractive marketing materials.



The Allegheny Trail Alliance notes that annual events held just before trail season can attract potential trail users into your community. Presentations, displays and/or workshops, or a tour of the local trail are examples of activities that could be included in a local event.

3. Conduct Trail Town Retail Promotions. The third component of an effective promotional campaign is to conduct special retail promotions. Seasonal or special sale promotions backed by cooperative advertising can help drive trail-related revenues to local businesses. As previously mentioned, local officials and trail advocates should work with at least one local restaurant or bar to name a sandwich or drink special after the trail. A restaurant may also be willing to sponsor a weekly paddle/ride trail event.

As previously mentioned, it can be useful for local leaders to work with local groups like the DDA or just a small group of store owners to effectively plan for, conduct and promote special retail promotions. It should also be noted that *word of mouth* is crucial to the overall success of the trail and the community. Therefore, the business community and local residents need to understand that creating a welcoming and friendly environment is important.

Retail Promotions - Several local retailers in Suttons Bay, Michigan (picture A) have incorporated a bicycle theme in their storefront window displays. In Alpena, Michigan, local merchants sponsor decorative bike racks (picture B) throughout the downtown.



Trail Town Events

Local Trail Town stakeholders should consider holding special and/or annual events to raise awareness about the local trail system and Trail Town effort. For example, a local brewery could host an annual paddling festival. A special beer could be made for the festival, with all proceeds going to water trail development efforts (see the Paddle-N-Pour event in downtown Port Huron below). Other events could include a smart-commute week or weekly bike-ride around the community, ending at a local restaurant.



Additional Recommendations

Establishing an impactful Trail Town initiative in the communities along the Lake Michigan coastline will require cooperation and long-term commitment by local and regional planning agencies, community and economic development agencies, local officials, trail advocates, and business owners. Many of the recommendations and best practices outlined throughout this document will be implemented by local leaders or, ideally, a local “Trail Town Committee.” At the same time, many recommendations, especially those related to promotions, may be implemented by regional agencies with input from local leaders. Using the framework of the “four-point approach,” the following section outlines additional recommendations for each of the nine communities and the region, including agencies that might be charged with directing implementation. Formal site plans for local water access sites are also provided in Appendix C. We have also included photographic renderings of how some of the recommendations discussed in this document might appear in all nine communities.

Organizing

Trail Town Committee(s)

As previously mentioned, many of the recommendations and best practices outlined earlier in this document will be implemented by local leaders. Therefore, it is important that each community establish a local “Trail Town Committee.” The local committee will provide the administrative structure required to schedule and hold meetings, establish priorities, and get everyone working toward the same goals. The committee should consist of a broad spectrum of local officials, trail advocates, environmental stewardship organizations, public safety agencies, accessibility advocates, business owners and community stakeholders. If the community has an established DDA or merchants association, it is imperative that those members participate. In some instances, it may be appropriate to include the Trail Town Committee within the sub-committee structure of the DDA.

Trail Town Committee

The local Trail Town Committee will help to schedule and hold meetings, establish priorities and get everyone working toward the same goals.



In an effort to support and coordinate Trail Town planning and implementation activities on a regional scale, members from the local Trail Town Committees in New Buffalo, Buchanan, Bridgman, St Joseph and South Haven should convene a “Southwest Michigan Trail Town Advisory Committee.” The Regional Trail Town Advisory Committee could be organized and facilitated by the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, in cooperation with local Trail Town committee members, local Chambers of Commerce, Convention and Visitor Bureaus and local economic development officers who are already working on regional initiatives.

The Advisory Committee could meet as little as every quarter or as often as every month. The Advisory Committee will provide a venue for local and regional leaders to share ideas and information, discuss new initiatives, and talk about lessons learned. The Advisory Committee will also provide an opportunity to discuss regional promotional opportunities and other collaboration opportunities.

A similar regional advisory committee could be formed from Trail Town Committee members in Holland, Park Township and Ottawa County.

Safety

Paddling on the Great Lakes, or any water body, should be taken very seriously. In order to provide for a pleasant and safe paddling experience, local officials should consider implementing a formal safety plan for their community. This plan may include working with the Coast Guard and/or local or county public safety departments to make them aware of the trail and determine what safety measures should be used to protect paddlers. The plan may also include the development of safety tips and warnings to be placed on informational kiosks and promotional materials.

Promotion

Existing Print Materials

Just about every community has a number of brochures and pamphlets that highlight fun activities, a unique place or something to experience in their community. Some brochures might be developed by the local DDA, whereas others might be developed by local businesses. If the brochure is developed by the local municipality or DDA, it should include a description about the local trail system(s) and how the community supports trail users. It will be important to include pictures of trails users as well.

The Michigan Trails Magazine is the premier publication for trails in Michigan. Produced annually by the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance (MTGA), the magazine includes descriptions, photos and maps of each non-motorized trail system in Michigan. The magazine includes summaries of many of the trails in the nine communities discussed in this plan.

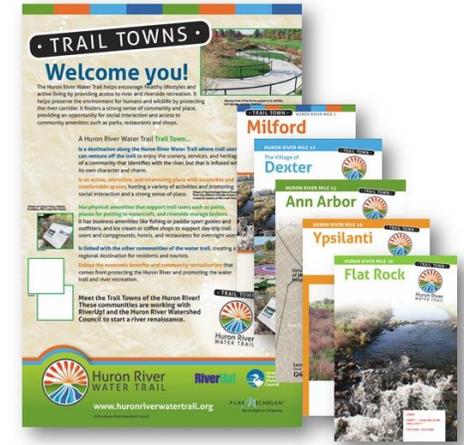
While water trails are not featured in the magazine, MTGA does allow trail organizations to place ads within their designated page. Local officials could place an ad for their section of the Lake Michigan Water Trail or inland water trail within the magazine. In addition, another ad and summary of the local Trail Town initiative could be included in the layout.

New Print Materials - Trail Town Rack Card

As previously mentioned, every community has a number of brochures and pamphlets (and even magazines) that highlight local assets. Some of these promotional pieces mention the local trail system or speak directly to trail tourists, but many do not. Each community, in partnership with other Trail Town communities in their region, should develop a Trail Town Rack Card Set. The set should include one card that describes the regional Trail Town initiative as well as a unique Trail Town card for each community. The format and design of each community-specific card should be similar, including a unique description of the community, things to do in the downtown (e.g., eat, drink, shop, and sleep), a description of the trail system, a map that shows how the trail, Trailhead and downtown are connected, links to local

Trail Town Rack Cards

The Huron River Watershed Council has developed an excellent Trail Town rack card set (see below) for their communities along the Huron River Water Trail. The cards are informative, well-designed and attractive, and should be emulated for each of the communities along the Lake Michigan coastline.



websites of interest, and contact information. Each card should also include vibrant pictures of the downtown and pictures of paddlers or road bikers engaging in the downtown (e.g., road bikers enjoying an outdoor restaurant). The border or dominant color of the card should be different for each community and consistent with the color of a Trail Town logo.

Advertisements

As previously mentioned, one of the first components to an effective promotional campaign is to convince local residents, the larger region, and then tourists that you have an active and welcoming Trail Town environment. One way to promote this message is through direct advertising on billboards, radio and television. Billboards can be great forms of advertising because they are relatively inexpensive, communicate simple and quick messages, and can be seen by a lot of people. Radio spots are advantageous in that they are relatively low cost and have the ability to reach a large audience segmented by demographics and geography. Television advertisements can be effective because they reach a large audience and are repetitive.

Promotional Merchandise

Another way to promote the local trail systems and Trail Town experience is through promotional merchandise. Promotional materials such as t-shirts, mugs, pins, stickers, car decals, and water bottles are relatively low cost and provide long-term contact with local residents and trail tourists. Local officials should work with business owners to develop a series of promotional materials that incorporate their logo. Initially, stickers and pins might be the most cost-effective promotional pieces because a high volume can be purchased for relatively little money and they can be easily distributed at events.

In addition, these same organizations should develop promotional merchandise that incorporates the trail activity and the name of each community. For example, “Paddle New Buffalo” or “Pedal South Haven” could be placed on sweatshirts and car decals. In many instances, local Trail Town leaders could work with local retailers who are already selling community-themed apparel to add these designs to their offerings.

Billboards

Billboards can communicate simple and quick messages about local and regional Trail Town efforts (see rendering below).

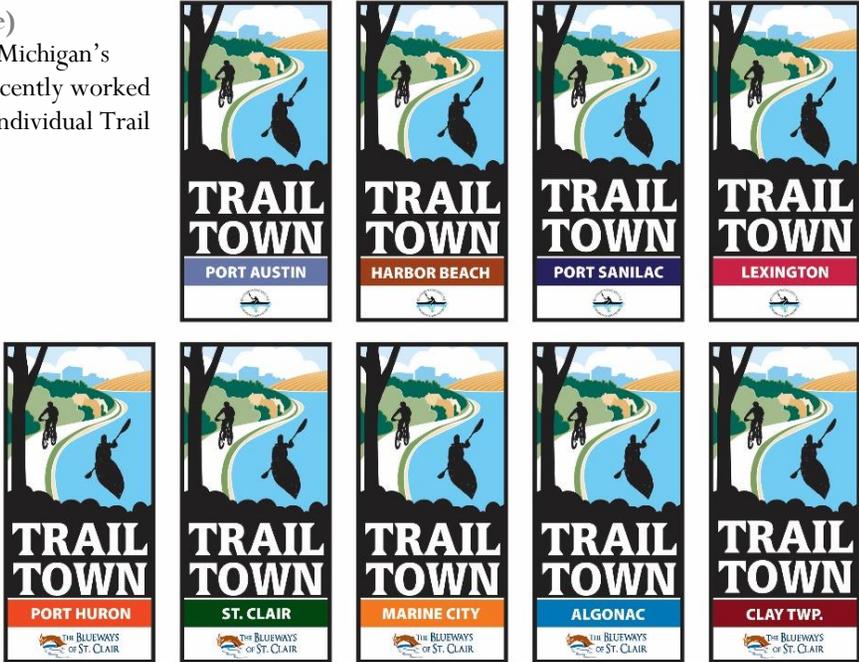


Logo and Identity

In an effort to build identity for the local and regional Trail Town initiative, a series of Trail Town logos for each community should be developed. The logos could then be incorporated into local and regional promotional materials.

Logo (Example)

Communities in Michigan’s Thumb region recently worked to develop nine individual Trail Town logos.



U.S. Bike Route

As previously mentioned, many of the project communities studied for this document are connected by an official U.S. Bicycle Route. Bicycle Route 35 runs the entire length of Michigan’s Lower Peninsula, ultimately connecting Sault Ste. Marie Michigan to Mississippi. Along the way its passes through New Buffalo, Bridgman St. Joseph, Sough Haven, Holland and Ludington. U.S. Bicycle Route 20 also passes through Ludington before it runs east across the Lower Peninsula, ultimately connecting Michigan to the Oregon coast.

These bike routes are unique in that they connect Michigan (including the six communities) to over 11,000 miles of bicycle routes across the United States. In addition, they support a vast number of state, national and international bike tourists. U.S. bicycle tourists can have a significant economic impact to the local economy. According to the Adventure Cycling Association, bicycle tourist spend between \$98 and \$223 dollars per overnight stay.

The Adventure Cycling Association notes that there are three significant ways in which communities can better accommodate touring bicyclists.

1. **Create Multimodal Connections.** Bicycle tourists often have difficulty getting their bicycle (and associated gear) from their home to their beginning or ending destination. Communities (and their associated transportation providers) can support cyclists by making it easier to transport their bicycle from one point to another. For example, the USS Badger has a reduced travel rate (\$12.00 round-trip) for people traveling to and from Ludington by bicycle. Amtrak is currently considering allowing travelers to bring their fully assembled bicycle on board. Local officials, especially in places like New Buffalo where the train station is directly downtown, should continue to talk to Amtrak about the benefits of allowing such cargo.
2. **Create a Network of Bikeways or Greenways.** Local officials in each of the six communities mentioned above should continue to explore ways to connect the US Bicycle routes with existing and future bikeways, trails and pathways. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) notes three resources that especially useful to planners and engineers:
 - *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities*, AASHTO
 - *Urban Bikeway Design Guide*, National Association of Transportation
 - *Design Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach*, Institute of Transportation Engineers

Create Multimodal Connections

Local officials, especially in places like New Buffalo where the train station is directly downtown, should continue to talk to Amtrak about the benefits of allowing such cargo.



3. **Provide Wayfinding.** As previously mentioned, providing consistent and easily navigable signage to and from the bike route as well as communities amenities (where to eat, sleep and shop) is immensely important. Please see the summary and recommendations on wayfinding earlier in this document. Local officials, in partnership with the Michigan Department of Transportation should continue to place U.S. Bicycle Route signs in prominent locations, clearly directing cyclists through the community. When bike routes are changed, local officials should inform the community through public outreach (press release) and the update of any non-motorized maps).

Provide Wayfinding

Local officials, in partnership with the Michigan Department of Transportation should continue to place U.S. Bicycle Route signs in prominent locations, clearly directing cyclists through the community.



Economic Restructuring

As previously discussed, economic restructuring refers to the functions of business expansion, business retention, and new business recruitment. It will be important for local and regional economic development agencies to work with local officials and business leaders to better understand the local and regional trail-tourist market and potential economic development opportunities.

Consumer Spending Habits

Consumers (especially younger consumers) are using credit cards or debit cards much more frequently than cash for both large and small transactions. In fact, a recent poll by creditcard.com cited in Bloomberg Business Week⁸ found that 51% of Americans under the age of 30 will use plastic even for purchases under \$5. Too many “cash only” signs in the downtown area can deter trail tourists — many of whom are already using credit cards because it’s easier to carry plastic rather than dollar bills and change — from spending their money in your community. It will be important for local and regional economic development agencies to encourage local business owners to accept credit card and debit card transactions.

⁸ <http://www.bloomberg.com/bw/articles/2014-08-27/plastic-beats-cash-among-young-adults>

Design

Public Amenities

As previously mentioned, another important step in becoming a Trail Town is to have inclusive universally accessible public amenities that support both day-trip and overnight trail users and bike tourists. In addition to the amenities described throughout this document (e.g., bike racks), it is important that each community install at least one bike station. The station could be placed at a prominent location in the downtown or at the primary Trailhead. The bike station allows trail users or road bikers to fill their tires with air or fix a broken chain. Renderings related to the design of access sites, the connecting elements and the downtown for each of the nine communities were developed for this plan and can be found in Appendix D.

Getting Started

The best management practices and recommendations outlined in this document might seem quite daunting to local officials. In addition, many of the capital improvement projects described in the Appendix D will require careful planning and funding. As each community moves forward with their local Trail Town Initiative, local officials should work on small achievable tasks first, including:

- 1. Establish the Local Trail Town Committee and Schedule a Meeting.**

Creating a Trail Town will require the input and time of community stakeholders. To keep people engaged, it will be important to establish a local Trail Town committee and meet on a consistent basis. The more formal the meeting (e.g., regular times and dates, an agenda, meeting minutes, report, etc.) the more likely that people will consistently attend and participate. Once the committee is formed, members should begin to identify priorities and assign responsibilities. A formal “Action Plan” should be created which: (1) outlines specific projects; (2) identifies the responsible party (e.g., trail town committee, DDA, local businesses, chamber of commerce); (3) determine the funding requirements; and (4) identify a timeline for implementation.

Bike Station

A bike station, placed in a prominent location, will help bolster the Trail Town image and provide a needed service to trail users.



2. Get Projects Adopted Into Other Local and Regional Planning Documents.

Once specific projects have been identified, the local Trail Town Committee should work with municipal staff to get each project placed within local planning documents like the Master Plan, TIF Plan and/or Parks and Recreation Plan. This will ensure that projects will be reviewed and considered in all future planning activities. In addition, projects listed in these planning documents are more likely to receive funding. For example projects listed within the Parks and Recreation Plan are eligible for Michigan DNR Trust Fund Grants.

3. Get Public Officials and Business Owners on the Trail and Help Them Understand the Economic Opportunities of the Trail.

Simply put, if local officials are not aware of the trail system and its associated amenities they will be less likely to allocated funding toward it. It will be important for the Trail Town Committee to host an orientation about their trail and associated trail amenities for local officials. It can also be helpful to explain to local officials how the trail fits into the recreational system and transportation network of the community. In addition, it will be important to educate business owners on the benefits of the local trail system and discuss how they could contribute to its success.

4. Add Trail Systems to Local Wayfinding Signs.

Most of the nine project communities already have a fairly comprehensive wayfinding signage program already in place. It will be important that when wayfinding signs get replaced or new wayfinding signs get erected, the local trail system (and trailheads) are included in the list of amenities.

5. Get Trail Images and Descriptions into Local and Regional Marketing Materials.

Many of the nine project communities already have developed and employ a comprehensive marketing campaign. Whereas other communities participate in regional marketing efforts. Whether the focus of the marketing materials is local or regional, it will be important to include a description of the trail system and the Trail Town theme within the web and print materials. Don't forget, a good picture can go along way!

Page Intentionally Left Blank

Appendix A. Public Act 210

Act No. 210
Public Acts of 2014
Approved by the Governor
June 26, 2014
Filed with the Secretary of State
June 26, 2014
EFFECTIVE DATE: September 25, 2014

**STATE OF MICHIGAN
97TH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2014**

Introduced by Senators Moolenaar, Hansen, Casperson, Meekhof, Green and Booher

ENROLLED SENATE BILL NO. 873

AN ACT to amend 1994 PA 451, entitled "An act to protect the environment and natural resources of the state; to codify, revise, consolidate, and classify laws relating to the environment and natural resources of the state; to regulate the discharge of certain substances into the environment; to regulate the use of certain lands, waters, and other natural resources of the state; to protect the people's right to hunt and fish; to prescribe the powers and duties of certain state and local agencies and officials; to provide for certain charges, fees, assessments, and donations; to provide certain appropriations; to prescribe penalties and provide remedies; and to repeal acts and parts of acts," by amending sections 72103, 72104, 72112, and 72114 (MCL 324.72103, 324.72104, 324.72112, and 324.72114), sections 72103, 72104, and 72112 as added by 1995 PA 58 and section 72114 as added by 2010 PA 45; and to repeal acts and parts of acts.

The People of the State of Michigan enact:

Sec. 72103. (1) The director may designate a trail in this state located on land as a "Pure Michigan Trail". A person may request that the director designate a trail as a Pure Michigan Trail. The director shall not designate a trail as a Pure Michigan Trail unless it meets, or will meet when completed, all of the following requirements:

- (a) The trail is a model trail for its designated uses and the designation of the trail as a Pure Michigan Trail contributes to a statewide trail network that promotes healthy lifestyles, economic development, recreation, and conservation of the natural and cultural resources of this state.
- (b) The land on which the trail is located is owned by this state or a governmental agency, or otherwise is under the long-term control of this state or a governmental agency through a lease, easement, or other arrangement. If the land is owned by a governmental agency, the director shall obtain the consent of the governmental agency before designating the land as part of a Pure Michigan Trail.
- (c) The design and maintenance of the trail and its related facilities meet generally accepted standards of public safety.
- (d) The trail meets appropriate standards for its designated recreation uses.
- (e) The trail is available for designated recreation uses on a nondiscriminatory basis.
- (f) The trail is, or has potential to be, a segment of a statewide network of trails, or it attracts a substantial share of its users from beyond the local area.
- (g) The trail is marked with an official Pure Michigan Trail sign and logo at major access points.
- (h) Where feasible, the trail offers adequate support facilities for the public, including parking, sanitary facilities, and emergency telephones, that are accessible to people with disabilities and are at reasonable frequency along the trail.
- (i) Potential negative impacts of trail development on owners or residents of adjacent property are minimized through all of the following:
 - (i) Adequate enforcement of trail rules and regulations.
 - (ii) Continuation of access for trail crossings for agricultural and other purposes.
 - (iii) Construction and maintenance of fencing, where necessary, by the owner or operator of the trail.

(114)

- (iv) Other means as considered appropriate by the director.
- (j) A trademark license is obtained by the department from the Michigan economic development corporation for use of the words "Pure Michigan".
- (k) Other conditions required by the director.
- (2) In designating trails as Pure Michigan Trails under subsection (1), the director shall consider all forms of permissible recreation uses equally in order to develop a Pure Michigan Trails network that is representative of the various trail uses.
- (3) The director may designate a water trail as a "Pure Michigan Water Trail". A person may request that the director designate a trail as a Pure Michigan Water Trail. The director shall not designate a trail as a Pure Michigan Water Trail unless it meets, or will meet when completed, all of the following requirements:
 - (a) The trail and its access points are open to public use and are designed, constructed, and maintained according to best management practices.
 - (b) The trail is located on a contiguous waterway or a series of waterways that are contiguous or are connected by portages.
 - (c) The trail is consistent with applicable land use plans and environmental laws.
 - (d) The trail meets the criteria of subsection (1)(a), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i)(c) and (iv), and (k).
 - (e) A trademark license is obtained by the department from the Michigan economic development corporation for use of the words "Pure Michigan".
 - (4) Prior to designating a Pure Michigan Trail under subsection (1) or a Pure Michigan Water Trail under subsection (3), the director shall refer the proposed designation to the natural resources commission, which shall hold a public hearing on the proposed designation. Within 90 days after receiving the referral under this subsection, the natural resources commission shall provide the director with its recommendation regarding the designation.
 - (5) The director may revoke a Pure Michigan Trail or a Pure Michigan Water Trail designation if he or she determines that a trail fails to meet the requirements of this section. Before revoking a Pure Michigan Trail or a Pure Michigan Water Trail designation, the director shall provide notice to all entities involved in the management of the trail. If the trail is brought into compliance with this section within 90 days after providing this notice, the director shall not revoke the designation.

Sec. 72104. (1) The director, upon petition by a person, may designate a city, village, or township as a "Pure Michigan Trail Town" if the director determines that the following conditions have been met.

- (a) The city, village, or township is easily accessible to users of a Pure Michigan Trail or a Pure Michigan Water Trail.
- (b) The city, village, or township has adopted a resolution in support of the designation.
- (c) The city, village, or township has adopted a plan for providing support services to trail users such as parking, sanitary facilities, restaurants, accommodations, grocery stores, bike shops, boat docks, or other services that may be needed or desired by trail users.
- (d) The petitioner demonstrates at least 3 of the following:
 - (i) There is community support for the designation as evidenced by creation of an advisory committee.
 - (ii) There has been an annual trail-related project or event within the city, village, or township.
 - (iii) A school board within the city, village, or township has endorsed a trail-based service learning educational component within its schools.
 - (iv) Land use plans, planning tools, ordinances, or guidelines are in place that recognize the relationship between the trail and other community assets, or that there is support to amend, change, or add these provisions.
 - (e) A trademark license is obtained by the department from the Michigan economic development corporation for use of the words "Pure Michigan".
- (2) Upon designation of a city, village, or township as a Pure Michigan Trail Town, the city, village, or township may erect and maintain along the Pure Michigan Trail or Pure Michigan Water Trail at a junction with the city, village, or township an official Pure Michigan Trail Town sign and logo designed by the department. The department shall only provide for the erection and maintenance of an official Pure Michigan Trail Town sign and logo when sufficient private contributions are received to pay for the cost of erecting and maintaining the sign and logo.
- (3) The director may revoke a Pure Michigan Trail Town designation if he or she determines that the city, village, or township has failed to meet the requirements of this section. Before revoking a Pure Michigan Trail Town designation, the director shall provide notice to the city, village, or township. If the city, village, or township is brought into compliance with this section within 90 days after providing this notice, the director shall not revoke the designation.

Sec. 72112. The department may promulgate rules as it considers necessary to implement this part.

Sec. 72114. (1) The department shall establish a statewide trail network that includes Pure Michigan Trails, Pure Michigan Water Trails, and other recreational use trails. The statewide trail network shall be designed to accommodate

a variety of public recreation uses and shall specify the types of uses that are allowed on each trail segment. The statewide trail network shall be in conformance with section 72115 and the determinations made under section 72115. Prior to the department establishing the statewide trail network, the department shall hold a public meeting to receive testimony from the general public.

(2) After the statewide trail network is established, if the department is informed that additional trails should be added to the statewide trail network or that uses on particular trail segments should be modified, the department shall modify the statewide trail network to include additional trails or to modify the uses on particular trails as the department determines appropriate. However, any modifications shall be in conformance with section 72115 and determinations made under section 72115.

(3) Upon establishment of the statewide trail network, the department shall make the statewide trail network available on the department's website. If the department modifies the statewide trail network, the department shall make the updated statewide trail network available on the department's website.

(4) Within 1 year after receiving recommendations from the equine trails subcommittee as well as other interested trail users and shall make recommendations to the department for the establishment of the statewide trail network.

(5) The department shall work in cooperation with interested parties to facilitate the creation and maintenance of a current database of trail maps for all trails within the statewide trail network on the department's internet website. The database of trail maps shall specifically designate which of the trails are Pure Michigan Trails or Pure Michigan Water Trails. The database of trail maps shall allow trail users to download or print trail maps. In addition, the department shall work in cooperation with interested parties to facilitate the development and maintenance of a mobile software application of trail maps and other information related to specific trails that may be downloaded onto smartphones, tablet computers, and other portable electronic devices. The department shall work in cooperation with these interested parties to assure that the software application is updated to reflect current information from the database of trail maps.

Enacting section 1. Section 72113 of the natural resources and environmental protection act, 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.72113, is repealed.

Enacting section 2. This amendatory act takes effect upon the expiration of 90 days after the date it is enacted into law.

Enacting section 3. This amendatory act does not take effect unless all of the following bills of the 97th Legislature are enacted into law:

- (a) Senate Bill No. 875.
- (b) Senate Bill No. 876.
- (c) Senate Bill No. 877.
- (d) House Bill No. 5558.
- (e) House Bill No. 5559.

This act is ordered to take immediate effect.

Carol Morey Viventi

Secretary of the Senate

Sandy E. Randall

Clerk of the House of Representatives

Approved.....

.....
Governor

Page Intentionally Left Blank



Access Recreation Group, LLC

Cindy Burkhour, MA, CTRS, CPRP

2454 Lamplighter Drive, Jenison, MI 49428-9127

Phone (616)669-9109 Mobile (616)560-2378

AccessRecreationGroup@juno.com

Appendix B

Launch Site Accessibility Evaluation & Design Recommendations

Location: Ludington West End
Date/Time: September 2, 2015 / 1:00pm
Contact: Heather Tykoski
Phone: 231-845-6237
Email: htykoski@ci.ludington.mi.us

Access Recreation Group Volunteers:

Rod Ritchison

Gina Lago

Jim Lago

Additional Site Evaluation Notes:

Universal design concepts to guide the development of site amenities...

By defining spaces & directing human behavior we protect the environment and enhance accessibility for everyone!

Accessible route surfaces must be firm & stable...concrete, asphalt, boardwalk, well compacted crushed aggregate/fines (NOT woodchips or grass)

Accessible routes should be at least 10' - 12' wide to accommodate two person/two vessel carries

Accessible routes should have less than 5% running slope with less than 2% cross slope

Accessible routes should surround all amenities & be at least 4' wide surrounding the entire element

Accessible routes should be smooth with no changes of level at edges and connections to entry/exits & into/onto site elements/amenities

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>EZ Launch To the south of the beach pilings</p> <p>Water trail flag on the dune Concerned raised about ruining sunset photos from the location...</p>	<p>Large (due to wave action to keep it stable) one-way/left side EZ Launch tucked up as close to shore as possible</p> <p>Locate the water trail flag either on the launch itself or on the shore as high as possible</p>
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Accessible routes</p>	<p>Create accessible route from the EZ Launch to the paddlers welcome plaza/staging area using EZ Trail which is a trail surface that floats in high water & rests on the ground when dry so surface is always accessible.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Paddlers Welcome Plaza/staging area</p>	<p>Create a paddlers welcome plaza out of the same EZ Trial floating trail surface so the area stays level & accessible while the water can flow beneath from the drain</p>
	<p>Kayak/canoe storage lockbox</p>	<p>The kayak/canoe storage lockbox will be about 8' wide & 22' long. The paddler should be able to carry their vessel and slide it into the box without making a sharp turn, in other words parallel to the accessible route from the launch.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Information kiosk</p>	<p>Locate the kiosk on the paddles welcome plaza near the top of the accessible route from the launch across from the kayak/canoe storage lockbox. Place kiosk on accessible surface and include water trail information on one half and trail town information on the other. Make sure surface extends under the kiosk so someone can roll up for very close viewing without their front wheels dropping off.</p>
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Toilets</p> <p>There are not accessible toilets at the boat launch parking area...</p> <p>There are accessible toilets at the beach...</p> <p>Potable water source</p> <p>There is potable water on accessible route at toilet</p>	<p>Direct people via an accessible route to the toilets at the beach</p> <p>Renovate the existing toilets to be accessible if possible...</p> <p>Suggest adding a single user unisex accessible toilet room so opposite gender care givers can assist someone with a disability in a private & dignified manner. These family friendly single user toilet rooms with baby changers accommodate opposite gender parents to assist their child. These rooms are large enough to accommodate someone using a wheelchair or parents with strollers.</p> <p>Consider adding a water bottle fill type water source.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Accessible parking</p> <p>Boat launch parking area</p>	<p>Add accessible car parking as well as car/boat trailer parking spaces in the boat launch parking lot & connect lot via accessible route from paddlers welcome plaza</p>
	<p>Connect via accessible route</p>	<p>Route could also be of EZ Trail so it stays level with the plaza but will float in high water & can connect via transition plate to the parking lot</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Picnic tables & grills</p> <p>None are planned for the new pedestrian area which will replace the parking area</p>	<p>If added in the future consider universal design tables like the "Spider" by Wabash Valley.</p> <p>Grills should be designed to be reached from a seated position & grill height adjustment should be one hand operable to make it universally accessible as well as surrounded by accessible surface routes at least 4' wide</p>



Access Recreation Group, LLC

Cindy Burkhour, MA, CTRS, CPRP

2454 Lamplighter Drive, Jenison, MI 49428-9127

Phone (616)669-9109 Mobile (616)560-2378

AccessRecreationGroup@juno.com

Launch Site Accessibility Evaluation & Design Recommendations

Location: Ludington Municipal Marina
Date/Time: September 2, 2015 / 1:00pm
Contact: Heather Tykoski
Phone: 231-845-6237
Email: htykoski@ci.ludington.mi.us

Access Recreation Group Volunteers:

Rod Ritchison

Gina Lago

Jim Lago

Additional Site Evaluation Notes:

Universal design concepts to guide the development of site amenities...

By defining spaces & directing human behavior we protect the environment and enhance accessibility for everyone!

Accessible route surfaces must be firm & stable...concrete, asphalt, boardwalk, well compacted crushed aggregate/fines (NOT woodchips or grass)

Accessible routes should be at least 10' - 12' wide to accommodate two person/two vessel carries

Accessible routes should have less than 5% running slope with less than 2% cross slope

Accessible routes should surround all amenities & be at least 4' wide surrounding the entire element

Accessible routes should be smooth with no changes of level at edges and connections to entry/exits & into/onto site elements/amenities

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>EZ Launch</p> <p>Water trail flag</p>	<p>Large deck, one-way left side EZ Launch system</p> <p>Long gangway over rip-rap past pilings</p> <p>Large shore platform for staging gear & connecting to gangway to EZ Launch system</p> <p>Water trail flag located on the dock</p>
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Accessible routes</p>	<p>Park & marina have great accessible routes to amenities</p> <p>Launch will require a long gangway to maintain slope under 5%, ending in a shore platform to facilitate gear staging & turning onto the gangway to the launch</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Kayak/canoe storage lockbox</p>	<p>The kayak/canoe storage lockbox will be about 8' wide & 22' long. The paddler should be able to carry their vessel and slide it into the box without making a sharp turn, in other words parallel to the accessible route from the launch.</p> <p>Located across the sidewalk from the paddlers plaza at top of the long gangway to the launch</p>
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Information kiosk</p>	<p>Create a paddlers welcome plaza at the top of the gangway to the launch with arrival/launching gear prep space</p> <p>Locate the information kiosk at the corner by the sidewalk nearest the walk across to the kayak storage lock-box</p>

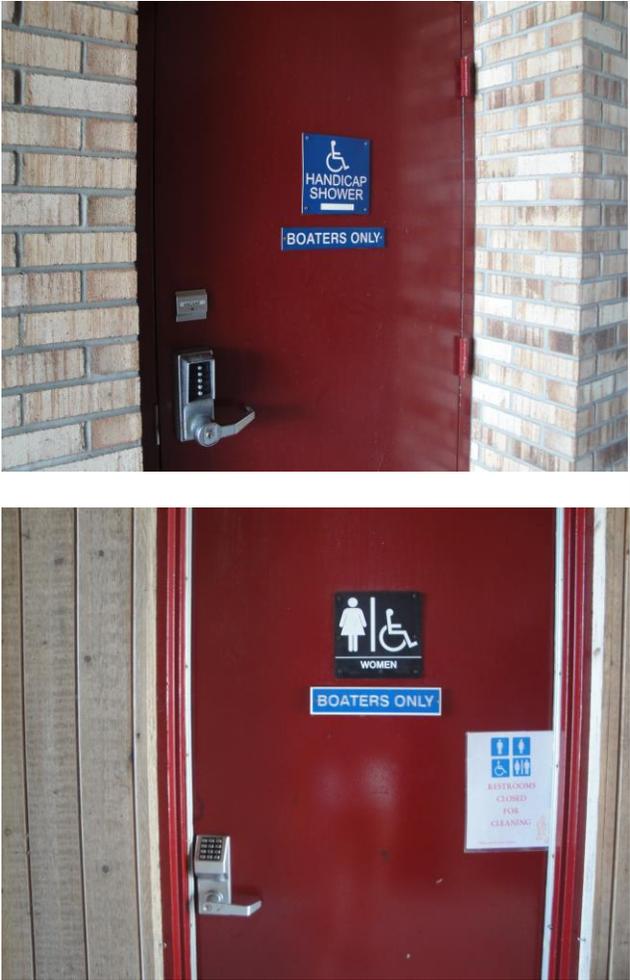
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Toilets</p>	<p>The marina has accessible toilets and showers. Currently only usable via code for marina slip renters...</p> <p>A system for acquiring the codes for paddlers would have to be noted on the kiosk</p> <p>Suggest adding a single user unisex accessible toilet room so opposite gender care givers can assist someone with a disability in a private & dignified manner. These family friendly single user toilet rooms with baby changers accommodate opposite gender parents to assist their child. These rooms are large enough to accommodate someone using a wheelchair or parents with strollers.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Potable water source</p>	<p>Available at the marina</p>
	<p>Accessible parking</p>	<p>Accessible car parking is available.</p> <p>Add one accessible car/boat trailer parking space across the end of the lot</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Picnic tables & grills</p>	<p>There is one old accessible design table. More would be needed near the arrival/launch paddler plaza</p>



Access Recreation Group, LLC

Cindy Burkhour, MA, CTRS, CPRP

2454 Lamplighter Drive, Jenison, MI 49428-9127

Phone (616)669-9109 Mobile (616)560-2378

AccessRecreationGroup@juno.com

Launch Site Accessibility Evaluation & Design Recommendations

Location: Ottawa County Black Lake Boardwalk East
Date/Time: July 31, 2015 / 9:00am
Contact: John Scholtz or Curt TerHaar
Phone: 616-738-4810
Email: jscholtz@miottawa.org
cterhaar@miottawa.org

Access Recreation Group Volunteers:

Rod Ritchison
Gina Lago
Jim Lago

Additional Site Evaluation Notes:

Universal design concepts to guide the development of site amenities...

By defining spaces & directing human behavior we protect the environment and enhance accessibility for everyone!

Accessible route surfaces must be firm & stable...concrete, asphalt, boardwalk, well compacted crushed aggregate/fines (NOT woodchips or grass)

Accessible routes should be at least 10' - 12' wide to accommodate two person/two vessel carries

Accessible routes should have less than 5% running slope with less than 2% cross slope

Accessible routes should surround all amenities & be at least 4' wide surrounding the entire element

Accessible routes should be smooth with no changes of level at edges and connections to entry/exits & into/onto site elements/amenities

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>EZ Launch</p> <p>Between existing park dock & Coast Guard station dock</p>	<p>One-way right side tucked as close to the shore as possible with a short gangway to shore anchoring</p>
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Water trail flag</p>	<p>Place the water trail flag on the launch so it is viewable for paddlers approaching from either direction from the west off Lake Michigan or from the east on Lake Macatawa.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Accessible routes</p>	<p>Create a gently curving accessible route 10' - 12' wide (this accommodates two person/two vessel carry down) with slopes less than 5% from the launch to the kayak/canoe storage lockbox and on to connect to the existing sidewalk to other park amenities.</p>
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Kayak/canoe storage lockbox</p>	<p>The kayak/canoe storage lockbox will be about 8' wide & 22' long. The paddler should be able to carry their vessel and slide it into the box without making a sharp turn, in other words parallel to the accessible route from the launch.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Information kiosk next to the Kayak/canoe storage lockbox</p>	<p>Locate the kiosk near the top of the accessible route from the launch next to the kayak/canoe storage lockbox. Create a paddles welcome plaza off the accessible route so those viewing the kiosk information are not in the accessible route. Place kiosk on accessible surface and include water trail information on one half (Curt's "W" side) and trail town information on the other (Chris's "T" side). Make sure surface extends under the kiosk so someone can roll up for very close viewing without their front wheels dropping off the concrete.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Toilets</p>	<p>Replace the existing inaccessible portable toilet with an accessible design similar to the one at Black Lake West.</p> <p>Consider replacing with the self-composting Clevis Multrum universally accessible toilet...</p>
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Potable water source & power</p>	<p>No potable water or power on site at this time.</p> <p>Add trail town side of information to kiosk directing to nearest potable water source.</p> <p>Consider adding a solar powered charging station</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Accessible parking</p>	<p>This site has adequate accessible parking, well signed & positioned.</p>
	<p>Picnic tables & grills</p>	<p>This site has all accessible designed picnic tables & no grills</p>



Access Recreation Group, LLC

Cindy Burkhour, MA, CTRS, CPRP

2454 Lamplighter Drive, Jenison, MI 49428-9127

Phone (616)669-9109 Mobile (616)560-2378

AccessRecreationGroup@juno.com

Launch Site Accessibility Evaluation & Design Recommendations

Location: City of Holland
Date/Time: July 31, 2015 / 11:00am
Contact: Andy Kenyon
Phone: 616-928-2457
Email: a.kenyon@cityofholland.com

Access Recreation Group Volunteers:

Rod Ritchison

Gina Lago

Jim Lago

Additional Site Evaluation Notes:

Universal design concepts to guide the development of site amenities...

By defining spaces & directing human behavior we protect the environment and enhance accessibility for everyone!

Accessible route surfaces must be firm & stable...concrete, asphalt, boardwalk, well compacted crushed aggregate/fines (NOT woodchips or grass)

Accessible routes should be at least 10' - 12' wide to accommodate two person/two vessel carries

Accessible routes should have less than 5% running slope with less than 2% cross slope

Accessible routes should surround all amenities & be at least 4' wide surrounding the entire element

Accessible routes should be smooth with no changes of level at edges and connections to entry/exits & into/onto site elements/amenities

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	EZ Launch	One way left side launch tucked up near the shore and connect to the shore anchor via gangway at the opening in the break-wall where the guys are standing

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Water trail flag</p>	<p>Place the water trail flag out on the end of the pier so it is viewable for paddlers approaching from either direction from the west off Lake Michigan or from the east on Lake Macatawa.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
 <p>The top photograph shows a paved parking lot with white lines, a concrete curb, and a grassy area leading to a body of water. Large trees are visible in the background. The bottom photograph shows a grassy area in the foreground with a paved parking lot in the background. Several people are standing near a dark car and a silver SUV. More trees and a clear blue sky are visible in the background.</p>	<p>Accessible routes</p> <p>It's about 105' from the parking lot to the waters edge</p>	<p>Create an accessible route 10' - 12' wide (this accommodates two person/two vessel carry down) with slopes less than 5% from the launch to the kayak/canoe storage lockbox, paddlers plaza with universally accessible picnic table, grill, information kiosk, parking and on to connect to the existing sidewalks to other park amenities.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Kayak/canoe storage lockbox</p>	<p>The kayak/canoe storage lockbox will be about 8' wide & 22' long. The paddler should be able to carry their vessel and slide it into the box without making a sharp turn, in other words parallel to the accessible route from the launch.</p>
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Information kiosk across the accessible route from the kayak/canoe storage lock box near the tree on paddlers welcome plaza</p>	<p>Locate the kiosk near the top of the accessible route from the launch across from the kayak/canoe storage lockbox. Locate on the paddles welcome plaza off the accessible route so those viewing the kiosk information are not in the accessible route. Place kiosk on accessible surface and include water trail information on one half (Andy's "W" side) and trail town information on the other (Harry's "T" side). Make sure surface extends under the kiosk so someone can roll up for very close viewing without their front wheels dropping off the concrete.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Toilets</p>	<p>Replace the existing inaccessible portable toilet with an accessible design and face opening to the side walk.</p> <p>Consider replacing with the self-composting Clevis Multrum universally accessible toilet...</p> <p>Include directional signage to the accessible route to the modern toilet facility, include a cross walk to the accessible walkway to the toilet building.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Potable water source & power</p>	<p>There are several potable water sources on site. Near the playground and the toilet building.</p> <p>If possible a potable water source at the paddlers welcome plaza would be great!</p> <p>Add information on the trail town side of the kiosk directing users to nearest potable water source.</p> <p>Consider adding a solar powered charging station!</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Accessible car parking</p>	<p>There are no accessible parking spaces at this time near the launch site.</p> <p>Add at least one car/van accessible parking space and locate next to the crosswalk entry to the accessible route to the launch & make the access aisle (drivers side) next to the cross walk.</p>
	<p>Accessible car/boat trailer parallel parking</p>	<p>Add an accessible (flush) crosswalk from the accessible route from the launch across the parking area (next to the access aisle of the accessible parking spot) to the access aisle for the accessible boat trailer parallel parking space. This creates a walkable/roll-able surface from the accessible boat trailer parking spot as well.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Picnic tables & grills</p>	<p>There are not accessible picnic tables or grills at the launch site.</p> <p>Create a paddlers welcome plaza across the accessible route from the kayak/canoe storage lockbox and add two universally accessible picnic tables and an accessible design grill. Locate all on accessible surface including an accessible route around the perimeter of the tables and grill at least 4' wide. The information kiosk will be at this same location.</p>



Access Recreation Group, LLC

Cindy Burkhour, MA, CTRS, CPRP

2454 Lamplighter Drive, Jenison, MI 49428-9127

Phone (616)669-9109 Mobile (616)560-2378

AccessRecreationGroup@juno.com

Launch Site Accessibility Evaluation & Design Recommendations

Location: Park Twp. South Shore Boat Launch
Date/Time: July 31, 2015 / 1:00pm
Contact: Jerry Hunsburger or Jerry Felix
Phone: 616-283-6460
Email: jhuuns@sbcglobal.net

Access Recreation Group Volunteers:

Rod Ritchison
Gina Lago
Jim Lago

Additional Site Evaluation Notes:

Universal design concepts to guide the development of site amenities...

By defining spaces & directing human behavior we protect the environment and enhance accessibility for everyone!

Accessible route surfaces must be firm & stable...concrete, asphalt, boardwalk, well compacted crushed aggregate/fines (NOT woodchips or grass)

Accessible routes should be at least 10' - 12' wide to accommodate two person/two vessel carries

Accessible routes should have less than 5% running slope with less than 2% cross slope

Accessible routes should surround all amenities & be at least 4' wide surrounding the entire element

Accessible routes should be smooth with no changes of level at edges and connections to entry/exits & into/onto site elements/amenities

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Water trail flag</p>	<p>Place the water trail flag out on the end of the launch so it is viewable for paddlers approaching from either direction from the west off Lake Michigan or from the east on Lake Macatawa.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Accessible routes</p> <p>about 105' from the parking lot to the waters' edge</p> <p>space appears to be 13.5' wide but hard to tell with the leaning fence & stuff behind it...</p> <p>need as much space as possible</p>	<p>Create an accessible route 10' - 12' wide (this accommodates two person/two vessel carry down) with slopes less than 5% from the launch to the kayak/canoe storage lockbox, information kiosk, accessible port-a-john & accessible parking space.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Kayak/canoe storage lockbox on route to launch parallel to the route opening at the launch end</p>	<p>The kayak/canoe storage lockbox will be about 4' wide & 22' long. The paddler should be able to carry their vessel and slide it into the box without making a sharp turn, in other words parallel to the accessible route from the launch.</p>
	<p>Information kiosk on the accessible route between the launch & kayak/canoe storage lock box</p>	<p>Locate the kiosk on the accessible route from the launch to the kayak/canoe storage lockbox. Place kiosk on the accessible route surface and include water trail information on one half (Rod's "W" side) and trail town information on the other (Cindy's "T" side). Make sure surface extends under the kiosk so someone can roll up for very close viewing without their front wheels dropping off the concrete. Back right up to property fence line to give as much clear space on the route to the launch</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Toilet</p>	<p>Place accessible design portable toilet and face opening to the accessible route to the launch & parking</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	Potable water source & power	<p>There is not potable water source or power at the site.</p> <p>Add information on the trail town side of the kiosk directing users to nearest potable water source.</p> <p>Consider adding a solar powered charging station!</p>
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	Accessible parallel car/boat trailer parking	<p>There are no accessible parking spaces at this time near the launch site.</p> <p>Add at least one car/van accessible with boat trailer parking space and locate parallel to the fence. (signed, surfaced, striped)</p>
	Designate car/boat trailer angle parking	Define other angle parking for car/boat trailer parking

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	Picnic tables & grills	<p>There are not accessible picnic tables or grills at the launch site.</p> <p>Due to space restrictions and traffic flow, none is recommended.</p>



Access Recreation Group, LLC

Cindy Burkhour, MA, CTRS, CPRP

2454 Lamplighter Drive, Jenison, MI 49428-9127

Phone (616)669-9109 Mobile (616)560-2378

AccessRecreationGroup@juno.com

Launch Site Accessibility Evaluation & Design Recommendations

Location: South Haven - Black River Park
Date/Time: August 12, 2015 / 1:00pm
Contact: Kate Hosier
Assistant City Manager/Harbormaster
Phone: 269-637-0775
Email: khosier@south-haven.com

Access Recreation Group Volunteers:

Rod Ritchison
Gina Lago
Jim Lago

Additional Site Evaluation Notes:

Universal design concepts to guide the development of site amenities...

By defining spaces & directing human behavior we protect the environment and enhance accessibility for everyone!

Accessible route surfaces must be firm & stable...concrete, asphalt, boardwalk, well compacted crushed aggregate/fines (NOT woodchips or grass)

Accessible routes should be at least 10' - 12' wide to accommodate two person/two vessel carries

Accessible routes should have less than 5% running slope with less than 2% cross slope

Accessible routes should surround all amenities & be at least 4' wide surrounding the entire element

Accessible routes should be smooth with no changes of level at edges and connections to entry/exits & into/onto site elements/amenities

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>EZ Launch on the proposed plan is a one-way parallel to the shore at about this location. Current design on the concept plan requires paddlers coming from upstream side of the river to pass the launch, turn around & paddle upstream into the launch...</p>	<p>I suggest a two-way launch (see drawing) because paddlers will be coming downstream from the Black River & upstream from Lake Michigan. A two way design helps paddlers approach from either direction.</p>
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Water trail flag</p>	<p>Place water trail flag on the universally accessible EZ Launch. Place the water trail flag on the launch so it is viewable for paddlers approaching from either direction from the channel to Lake Michigan or upstream from the Black River.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Accessible routes from parking to the new launch site on the plan are only 6' wide which can make a two person vessel carry down difficult</p>	<p>Consider widening the accessible routes on the plan to create a gently curving accessible route 10' - 12' wide (this accommodates two person/two vessel carry down) with slopes less than 5% from the launch to the kayak/canoe storage lockbox and both accessible parking areas.</p> <p>Routes connecting to other park amenities such as restrooms, picnic table, and information kiosks can remain 6' wide.</p> <p>Consider adding an accessible route to the water's edge where the sandy beach area is with something like a Bock Dock or Mobimat (see drawing)</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Kayak/canoe storage lock-up location indicated on the plan is not on accessible surface or connected to the accessible route...</p>	<p>The kayak/canoe storage lock-up will be about 8' wide & 22' long. The paddler should be able to carry their vessel and slide it into/onto the lock-up without making a sharp turn, in other words parallel to the accessible route from the launch. (see drawing for suggested location)</p>
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>On the new site plan, the relocation of the information kiosk is not located on an accessible route and has no accessible surface in the required clear space surrounding it.</p> <p>The kiosk itself is not accessible design, information is too high & not viewable from a seated position and the current kiosk information could be enhanced with the addition of trail town information.</p>	<p>At relocation spot indicated on the plan place kiosk on accessible surface and include water trail information on one half and trail town information on the other. Lower the kiosk so it is viewable from a seated position. Make sure surface extends under the kiosk so someone can roll up for very close viewing without their front wheels dropping off the concrete.</p> <p>Consider locating a second kiosk near the top of the accessible route from the launch next to the kayak/canoe storage lock-up. Create a paddles welcome plaza off the accessible route so those viewing the kiosk information are not in the accessible route. (see drawing)</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Toilets/showers</p> <p>Located at the marina and for marina use only? Will the use policy change so paddlers have access?</p>	<p>Make sure there is an accessible route from the launch to the nearest accessible toilets & provide directional information on the kiosk at the launch.</p> <p>Suggest adding a single user unisex accessible toilet room so opposite gender care givers can assist someone with a disability in a private & dignified manner. These family friendly single user toilet rooms with baby changers accommodate opposite gender parents to assist their child. These rooms are large enough to accommodate someone using a wheelchair or parents with strollers.</p>
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Potable water source</p> <p>Located at the marina?</p>	<p>Consider adding a water bottle fill type water source.</p>
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Accessible parking is addressed on the proposed plan and appropriately located in the free lot area and the paid lot area. Accessible car/boat trailer parking is also indicated on the plan.</p>	<p>None, the proposed plan looks good.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>The new plan does not indicate any grills or tables only benches...??</p> <p>Current picnic tables & grills are not accessible design and are not located on accessible routes or on accessible surface.</p>	<p>Suggest adding universally accessible design tables such as the "Spider" table (by Wabash Valley) and accessible design grills that can be operated with ease with one hand to raise and lower the grill surface. Locate all such amenities on accessible surface completing surrounding the element with an accessible surfaced route at least 4' wide around the entire perimeter of the element which will make it universally accessible.</p> <p>Make sure that each bench has adequate clear space at both ends & don't put a trash can there either.</p>



Access Recreation Group, LLC

Cindy Burkhour, MA, CTRS, CPRP

2454 Lamplighter Drive, Jenison, MI 49428-9127

Phone (616)669-9109 Mobile (616)560-2378

AccessRecreationGroup@juno.com

Launch Site Accessibility Evaluation & Design Recommendations

Location: St. Joseph Fisherman's Warf Marina
Date/Time: September 22, 2015 /12:00pm
Contact: Randy Rood
Phone: 269-876-1544
Email: rrood@sjcity.com

Access Recreation Group Volunteers:

Rod Ritchison

Gina Lago

Jim Lago

Additional Site Evaluation Notes:

Universal design concepts to guide the development of site amenities...

By defining spaces & directing human behavior we protect the environment and enhance accessibility for everyone!

Accessible route surfaces must be firm & stable...concrete, asphalt, boardwalk, well compacted crushed aggregate/fines (NOT woodchips or grass)

Accessible routes should be at least 10' - 12' wide to accommodate two person/two vessel carries

Accessible routes should have less than 5% running slope with less than 2% cross slope

Accessible routes should surround all amenities & be at least 4' wide surrounding the entire element

Accessible routes should be smooth with no changes of level at edges and connections to entry/exits & into/onto site elements/amenities

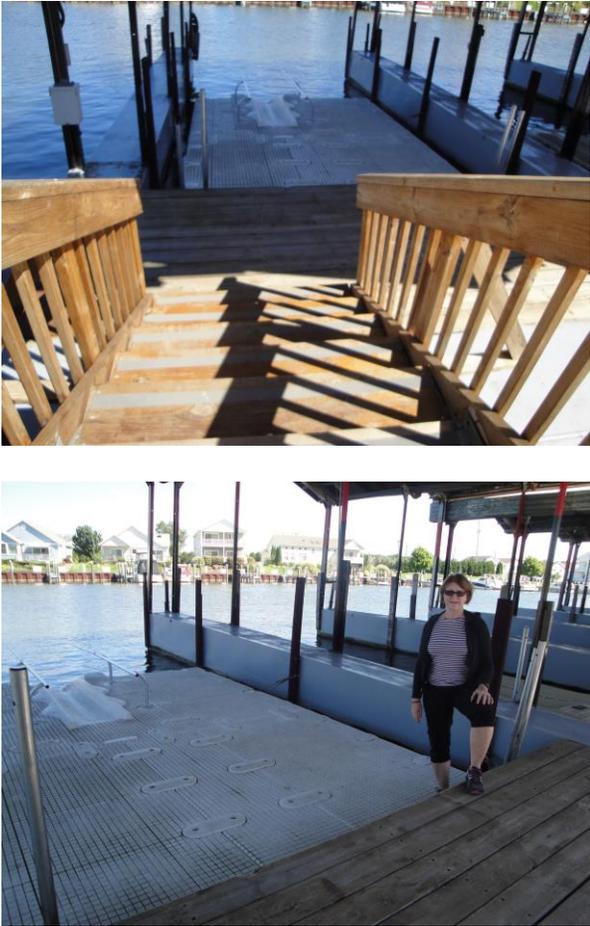
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
 The top photograph shows a group of people standing on a grassy area. One person in the foreground is holding a large blue map. In the background, there are utility poles, a concrete wall, and a building. The bottom photograph shows a view of a river with several boats docked. A concrete wall runs along the left side of the river, and a wooden beam is visible in the foreground. A person is walking on the grass near the river.	EZ Launch	The perfect spot for a one-way EZ Launch tucked up in between the sea walls. This gets users out of the flow of boat traffic while entering/exiting the river

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Water trail flag</p>	<p>Place the water trail flag as far out on the marina side sea wall to be visible for paddlers arriving from both up and down stream.</p> <p>Also place flags leading paddlers in off Lake Michigan along the channel and from the Paw Paw river merge as well.</p>
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Accessible routes</p>	<p>None existing at this time but there is plenty clear level space to create accessible routes from existing parking to the launch area.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Kayak/canoe storage lockbox</p>	<p>The kayak/canoe storage lockbox will be about 8' wide & 22' long. The paddler should be able to carry their vessel and slide it into the box without making a sharp turn, in other words parallel to the accessible route from the launch. The lockbox should directly connect to the paddlers' plaza and route to accessible parking and restrooms.</p> <p>Work with private land owners on each side for easement or shared use of the space.</p>
	<p>Information kiosk & paddlers welcome plaza</p>	<p>Locate the kiosk near the top of the accessible route from the launch across from the kayak/canoe storage lockbox. Locate on the paddles welcome plaza off the accessible route so those viewing the kiosk information are not in the accessible route. Place kiosk on accessible surface and include water trail information on one half and trail town information on the other side. Make sure surface extends under the kiosk so someone can roll up for very close viewing without their front wheels dropping off the concrete.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Toilets</p> <p>Potable water source</p> <p>Power</p>	<p>None existing at this time but may be on adjacent property. Consider property acquisition or working with land owner to access infrastructure for power & water so accessible toilet, potable water & power would be available.</p> <p>Suggest adding a single user unisex accessible toilet room so opposite gender care givers can assist someone with a disability in a private & dignified manner. These family friendly single user toilet rooms with baby changers accommodate opposite gender parents to assist their child. These rooms are large enough to accommodate someone using a wheelchair or parents with strollers.</p>
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Accessible parking</p>	<p>None existing at this time so add car and car/boat trailer parking next to the launch site on the marina side and connect to the accessible route to all amenities.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
 A group of approximately ten people are standing on a large, well-maintained grassy area. In the background, there is a long, low building with a light-colored roof, possibly a community center or a school. The area is surrounded by lush green trees under a clear blue sky. The people are dressed in casual summer attire, and some appear to be engaged in a group activity or conversation.	Picnic tables & grills	None existing at this time but consider adding some at the paddlers' welcome plaza area.

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Existing private marina in accessible launch</p>	<p>The existing private marina kayak launch area is not accessible. After meeting with the owners they stated they would be very interested in a joint venture to make an accessible launch area with the city if they too would be able to use it for launching vessels they rent. The enhancement at the end of their marina property would also get paddlers out of conflict with landing and launching motor craft. A win-win for both!</p>



Access Recreation Group, LLC

Cindy Burkhour, MA, CTRS, CPRP

2454 Lamplighter Drive, Jenison, MI 49428-9127

Phone (616)669-9109 Mobile (616)560-2378

AccessRecreationGroup@juno.com

Launch Site Accessibility Evaluation & Design Recommendations

Location: Bridgeman Weko Beach
Date/Time: September 2, 2015 / 9:00am
Contact: Tim Kading
Phone: 269-465-5407
Email: bridgmanwater@comcast.net

Access Recreation Group Volunteers:

Rod Ritchison

Gina Lago

Jim Lago

Additional Site Evaluation Notes:

Universal design concepts to guide the development of site amenities...

By defining spaces & directing human behavior we protect the environment and enhance accessibility for everyone!

Accessible route surfaces must be firm & stable...concrete, asphalt, boardwalk, well compacted crushed aggregate/fines (NOT woodchips or grass)

Accessible routes should be at least 10' - 12' wide to accommodate two person/two vessel carries

Accessible routes should have less than 5% running slope with less than 2% cross slope

Accessible routes should surround all amenities & be at least 4' wide surrounding the entire element

Accessible routes should be smooth with no changes of level at edges and connections to entry/exits & into/onto site elements/amenities

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>EZ Launch</p> <p>Water trail flag</p>	<p>No launch designs available to work in this big water environment at this time but... (EZ Dock is working on a land-based system that would be functional in large wave water!)</p> <p>But...there are still things to do to make the shore landing more accessible</p>
	<p>Paddlers welcome plaza</p>	<p>Create a paddlers welcome plaza using over the sand surface material (EZ trail, Brock Doc, Mr. Boardwalk, etc.) getting paddlers and beach goers as close to the waters' edge as possible. Have a hinged gangway at edge of the paddlers platform that provides access to the waters' edge & consider a beach to water transfer system out into the water from the paddlers welcome plaza that helps facilitate transfer access into and out of the water.</p> <p>Place the water trail flag as close to the shore on the welcome plaza so it's viewable for paddlers approaching from either direction.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Accessible routes</p> <p>From launch to parking lot</p>	<p>Create accessible route from the shore landing area (or EZ Launch for big water once it's develop) to the paddlers welcome plaza/staging area using over the sand surface such as EZ Trail which is a trail surface that floats in high water & rests on the ground when dry so surface is always accessible. And on to the parking area & accessible route to the pavilion and other amenities.</p>
	<p>From parking lot to amenities</p>	<p>Create an accessible walk way along the front of the parking spaces from the launch route to the accessible amenities at the pavilion.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Kayak/canoe storage lockbox</p>	<p>The kayak/canoe storage lockbox will be about 8' wide & 22' long. The paddler should be able to carry their vessel and slide it into the box without making a sharp turn, in other words parallel to the accessible route from the launch.</p>
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Information kiosk</p>	<p>Locate the kiosk on the paddles welcome plaza near the top of the accessible route from the launch across from the kayak/canoe storage lockbox. Place kiosk on accessible surface and include water trail information on one half and trail town information on the other. Make sure surface extends under the kiosk so someone can roll up for very close viewing without their front wheels dropping off.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Toilets</p>	<p>Direct people via an accessible route to the toilets at the beach pavilion.</p> <p>Suggest adding a single user unisex accessible toilet room so opposite gender care givers can assist someone with a disability in a private & dignified manner. These family friendly single user toilet rooms with baby changers accommodate opposite gender parents to assist their child. These rooms are large enough to accommodate someone using a wheelchair or parents with strollers.</p>

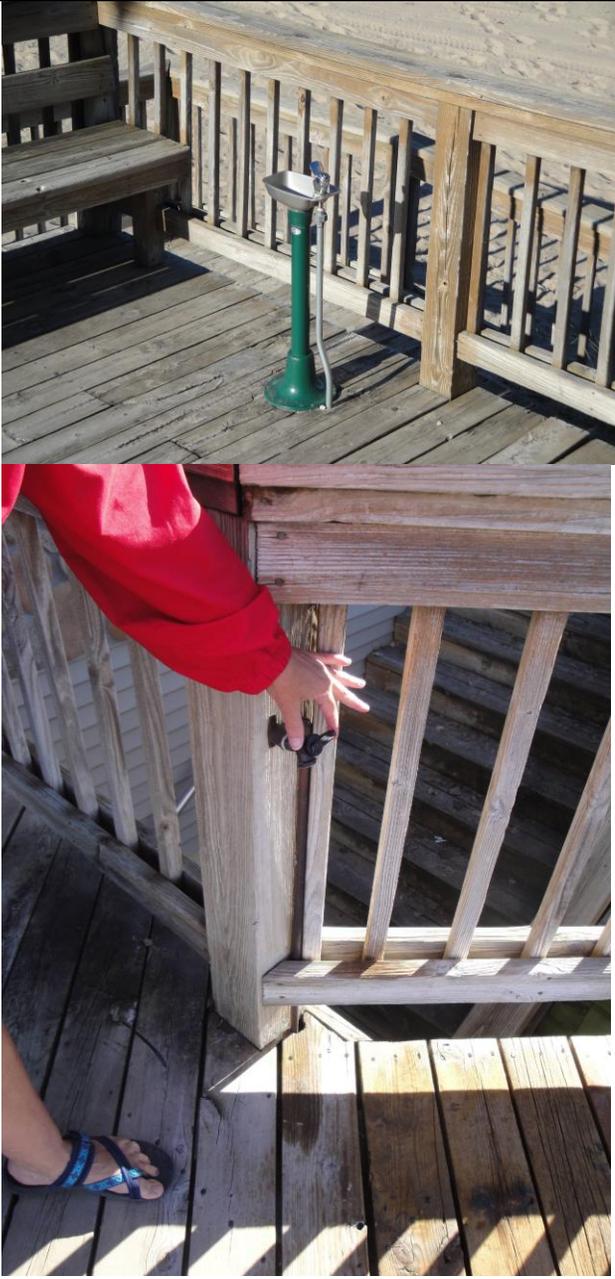
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Potable water source</p>	<p>Consider adding a water bottle fill type water source.</p> <p>Water spigot hardware is inaccessible design and requires pinch grasp/wrist twist to operate. Replace with accessible design hardware that can be operated with one hand with a fist or open palm.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Accessible parking</p>	<p>Add accessible car parking as well as car/boat trailer parking spaces in the boat launch parking lot & connect lot via accessible route to the paddlers welcome plaza and the accessible route to amenities.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Picnic tables & grills</p>	<p>Create several accessible picnic nodes along the walkway from the launch end of the beach.</p> <p>Consider adding some picnic nodes using universal design tables like the "Spider" by Wabash Valley.</p> <p>Locate all on accessible surface including an accessible route around the perimeter of the tables and grill at least 4' wide. The information kiosk will be at this same location.</p> <p>Grills should be designed to be reached from a seated position & grill height adjustment should be one hand operable to make it universally accessible as well as surrounded by accessible surface routes at least 4' wide</p>



Access Recreation Group, LLC

Cindy Burkhour, MA, CTRS, CPRP

2454 Lamplighter Drive, Jenison, MI 49428-9127

Phone (616)669-9109 Mobile (616)560-2378

AccessRecreationGroup@juno.com

Launch Site Accessibility Evaluation & Design Recommendations

Location: New Buffalo City Boat Launch
Date/Time: August 12, 2015 / 9:00am
Contact: Pat Donnelly
Phone: 269-469-3574
Email: recreation@cityofnewbuffalo.org

Access Recreation Group Volunteers:

Rod Ritchison
Gina Lago
Jim Lago

Additional Site Evaluation Notes:

Universal design concepts to guide the development of site amenities...

By defining spaces & directing human behavior we protect the environment and enhance accessibility for everyone!

Accessible route surfaces must be firm & stable...concrete, asphalt, boardwalk, well compacted crushed aggregate/fines (NOT woodchips or grass)

Accessible routes should be at least 10' - 12' wide to accommodate two person/two vessel carries

Accessible routes should have less than 5% running slope with less than 2% cross slope

Accessible routes should surround all amenities & be at least 4' wide surrounding the entire element

Accessible routes should be smooth with no changes of level at edges and connections to entry/exits & into/onto site elements/amenities

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>EZ Launch</p>	<p>One way left side launch tucked up in a newly created slip (up river to lot line) and connected to the shore anchor via gangway at shore end of the new slip (similar linear spacing to the other boat slip piers)</p> <p>This would require a new sea wall at the lot line and removal of the concrete pier and leveling of the hillside to the lot line and may require some retaining wall work at the lot line.</p>
	<p>Water trail flags</p>	<p>Place the water trail flag out on the end of the pier so it is viewable for paddlers approaching from either direction from upstream on the Galien River or coming in from Lake Michigan.</p> <p>Water trail flags also need to be placed</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. at the harbor opening, 2. about halfway in near the observation deck with the picnic table near the exit of the beach parking lot 3. at the river's exit into the harbor on the bridge 4. after the bridge to the left directing people up river (not into the boat slips to the right)

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Accessible routes from launch to existing parking</p>	<p>Create an accessible routes 10' - 12' wide (this accommodates two person/two vessel carry down) with slopes less than 5% from the launch to the kayak/canoe storage lockbox, paddlers plaza with universally accessible picnic table, information kiosk, parking and on to connect all other park amenities.</p>
	<p>From accessible parking to toilets & potable water</p>	
		

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Kayak/canoe storage lockbox</p>	<p>The kayak/canoe storage lockbox will be about 8' wide & 22' long. The paddler should be able to carry their vessel and slide it into the box without making a sharp turn, in other words parallel to the accessible route from the launch.</p>
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Information kiosk at the end of the accessible route past the kayak/canoe storage lock box on paddlers welcome plaza</p>	<p>Locate the kiosk near the top of the accessible route from the launch (where Harry's standing) just beyond the kayak/canoe storage lockbox. Locate on the paddles welcome plaza off the accessible route so those viewing the kiosk information are not in the accessible route. Place kiosk on accessible surface and include water trail information on one half and trail town information on the other. Make sure surface extends around all viewable sides of the kiosk so someone can roll up for very close viewing, at least 4' wide accessible route on all viewable sides.</p> <p>Alternate idea...if there is a retaining wall along the lot line use this as one border of the plaza area and place information on the wall...</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Toilets</p> <p>Connect via accessible route to the launch, parking, welcome plaza & information kiosk</p>	<p>Replace the existing inaccessible portable toilet with an accessible design and face opening to the accessible route.</p> <p>Consider replacing with the self-composting Clevis Multrum universally accessible toilet...</p> <p>Include directional signage to the accessible route to the modern toilet/shower facility, include a cross walk from accessible parking to the accessible walkway to the toilet building.</p>
	<p>Existing toilets</p>	<p>Remodel existing modern toilets to both be uni-sex universally accessible toilet/shower rooms.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Potable water source & power</p>	<p>Add information on the trail town side of the kiosk directing users to potable water source at modern toilet facility.</p> <p>Add a universally accessible water fountain with touchless bottle filler</p> <p>Consider adding a solar powered charging station!</p>
	<p>Accessible car/boat trailer parking</p>	<p>There are two accessible car/boat trailer parking spaces at this time near the launch site but both are in need of proper access aisles.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Picnic tables & grills</p>	<p>There are not accessible picnic tables or grills at the launch site.</p> <p>Create a paddlers welcome plaza on the accessible route beyond the kayak/canoe storage lockbox and add two universally accessible picnic tables and an accessible design grill (if grilling is allowed). Locate all on accessible surface including an accessible route around the perimeter of the tables and grill at least 4' wide. The information kiosk will be at this same location.</p> <p>Consider adding some type of shade/shelter structures for inclement weather</p>



Access Recreation Group, LLC

Cindy Burkhour, MA, CTRS, CPRP

2454 Lamplighter Drive, Jenison, MI 49428-9127

Phone (616)669-9109 Mobile (616)560-2378

AccessRecreationGroup@juno.com

Launch Site Accessibility Evaluation & Design Recommendations

Location: New Buffalo Twp. Red Arrow Hwy DNR Boat Launch
Date/Time: August 12, 2015 / 11:00am
Contact: Scott Nykamp
Phone: 269-426-1600
Email: PKDIR@newbuffalotownship.org

Access Recreation Group Volunteers:

Rod Ritchison
Gina Lago
Jim Lago

Additional Site Evaluation Notes:

Universal design concepts to guide the development of site amenities...

By defining spaces & directing human behavior we protect the environment and enhance accessibility for everyone!

Accessible route surfaces must be firm & stable...concrete, asphalt, boardwalk, well compacted crushed aggregate/fines (NOT woodchips or grass)

Accessible routes should be at least 10' - 12' wide to accommodate two person/two vessel carries

Accessible routes should have less than 5% running slope with less than 2% cross slope

Accessible routes should surround all amenities & be at least 4' wide surrounding the entire element

Accessible routes should be smooth with no changes of level at edges and connections to entry/exits & into/onto site elements/amenities

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>EZ Launch</p> <p>Option #1 At the current shore launching location to help protect the shore line degradation that is currently happening & it puts launching vessels downstream from drive in boat launching</p> <p>Option #2 On the "up-river" point next to the drive down boat launch</p>	<p>EZ Launch two way pull through with large deck due to the large amount of potential users. This is a river application on the Galien River. Tuck launch as close to the shore as possible to keep river corridor wide enough for vessels coming up river to take out at the drive-in launch.</p> <p>In either option #1 or #2 location, I would also recommend a very large staging platform made from EZ Trail which will float & remain level during high water times while protecting the shoreline from further degradation. (see drawing)</p>
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Water trail flag</p>	<p>Located on the launch viewable from both up-river and down-river.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
 <p>The 'Photo' column contains three vertically stacked images. The top image shows a grassy bank next to a river. The middle image shows a parking area with a sign and cars. The bottom image shows a wooden shed.</p>	<p>Currently there are no accessible routes on the entire site.</p> <p>Accessible routes to accessible launch site (option #1 or #2), accessible parking and accessible toilet.</p>	<p>Create an accessible route 10' - 12' wide (this accommodates two person/two vessel carry down) with slopes less than 5% from the launch to the kayak/canoe storage lockbox, information kiosk, accessible parking and on to connect to existing other launch site amenities.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Accessible parking None at this time</p>	<p>Add at least one car/van accessible parking space and one car/boat trailer parking space, locate both nearest the accessible route to the EZ Launch.</p>
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Toilets Accessible design but...not on accessible route and change of level at door</p>	<p>Add accessible route to existing accessible design toilet. Eliminate the change of level at the entrance with a transition plate.</p>
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
<p>none</p>	<p>Picnic tables & grills</p>	<p>None on site & really no space to add either</p>
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
<p>none</p>	<p>Potable water source / power</p>	<p>None on site & really no space to add either Consider adding a solar powered charging station.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Kayak/canoe storage lockbox</p>	<p>The kayak/canoe storage lockbox will be about 8' wide & 22' long. The paddler should be able to carry their vessel and slide it into the box without making a sharp turn, in other words parallel to the accessible route from the launch. (see drawing for suggested location for option #1 or #2)</p>
	<p>Information kiosk on the water trail exists but is not on an accessible route. Add trail town information.</p>	<p>Locate the kiosk near the top of the accessible route from the launch, near the kayak/canoe storage lockbox.</p> <p>Place kiosk on accessible surface, connected to the accessible route and include water trail information on one half and trail town information on the other.</p> <p>Make sure surface extends under the kiosk so someone can roll up for very close viewing without their front wheels dropping off the concrete.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p data-bbox="737 224 1199 253">Current vendor launch space/activity</p> <p data-bbox="737 630 1062 659">Not accessible operation...</p> <p data-bbox="737 1036 1062 1065">Major shore degradation...</p>	<p data-bbox="1264 224 1944 326">Vendors should be required to make their services accessible to guests with disabilities. This should be a requirement of the contract with the launch owner.</p> <p data-bbox="1264 370 2003 659">I suggest a conversation with the vendor regarding the shoreline degradation environmental issues being caused by the shore launching process. Maybe the vendor should provide some match funding for the addition of the accessible staging area & EZ Launch as these features would enhance the users experience, protect the shoreline environment and make the vendors operation accessible to guests with disabilities...</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Dead Ash trees...</p>	<p>There are a number of large dead Ash trees on site that pose a potential safety issue and should be removed before they fall on a parked car, into the river or onto a paddler...</p> <p>They are also potentially in the way of the accessible routes that need to be developed.</p>



Access Recreation Group, LLC

Cindy Burkhour, MA, CTRS, CPRP

2454 Lamplighter Drive, Jenison, MI 49428-9127

Phone (616)669-9109 Mobile (616)560-2378

AccessRecreationGroup@juno.com

Launch Site Accessibility Evaluation & Design Recommendations

Location: Buchanan above the dam take-out & portage site
Date/Time: October 13, 2015 / 9:00am
Contact: Jason Williams
Phone: 269-697-3264
Email: jwilliams@cityofbuchanan.com

Access Recreation Group Volunteers:

Rod Ritchison

Gina Lago

Jim Lago

Additional Site Evaluation Notes:

Universal design concepts to guide the development of site amenities...

By defining spaces & directing human behavior we protect the environment and enhance accessibility for everyone!

Accessible route surfaces must be firm & stable...concrete, asphalt, boardwalk, well compacted crushed aggregate/fines (NOT woodchips or grass)

Accessible routes should be at least 10' - 12' wide to accommodate two person/two vessel carries

Accessible routes should have less than 5% running slope with less than 2% cross slope

Accessible routes should surround all amenities & be at least 4' wide surrounding the entire element

Accessible routes should be smooth with no changes of level at edges and connections to entry/exits & into/onto site elements/amenities

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>EZ Launch</p>	<p>Add a one-way right side EZ Launch system off the up-river side of the existing dock system above the dam. Tuck it as close to the shore as possible which will require some encroaching vegetation trimming.</p>
	<p>Water trail flag</p>	<p>Place the water trail flag on the river side corner of the launch platform to draw paddlers to exit area.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
 <p>The top photo shows a wooden boardwalk with railings where several people are walking. The middle photo shows a paved path leading to a small bridge over a stream. The bottom photo shows a paved path on a grassy slope with trees in the background.</p>	<p>Accessible routes</p>	<p>There is an existing 384' long accessible route which includes accessible a wood ramp system 5' wide connecting to a 10' wide asphalt route up to the parking area. Slopes average 7% grade and range up to 9% (probably due to age of route and ground settling and frost heave)</p> <p>Routes could use some repair of cracks & heaves. When replaced regrade to lower the slope to under 5% on the asphalt walk.</p> <p>Improve and sign the portage walkway to keep paddlers portaging off the roadways between the above dam take out and the below dam put-in. Create an accessible route 10' - 12' wide (this accommodates two person/two vessel carry down) with slopes less than 5% from the above dam take-out all the way to the below dam put-in launch. Since this route is along two roadways funding for a multi-user ASHTO compliance bike/pedestrian route may be available.</p> <p>Another suggestion is to provide hand trollies for use to facilitate vessel and gear movement along the portage route which is 1600' (1/4 mile).</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Kayak/canoe storage lockbox Portage route</p>	<p>This is a portage and there for not storage is recommended...but information should be included on the information kiosk that tells paddlers there is storage just downstream on the other side of the below the dam put-in at the Red Bud North River Park where camping is also available and routes to town are available.</p> <p>The portage route is 1600'+ feet to the below the dam put-in launch. Signage is unclear & covered by encroaching vegetation. Walkway is intended to be on the road shoulder which is neither accessible nor safe.</p>

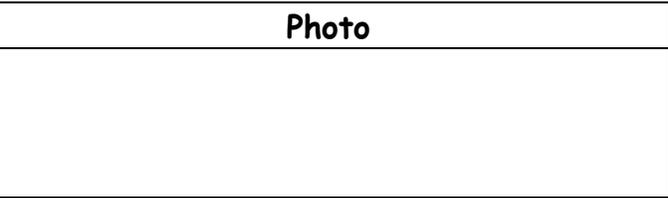
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Information kiosk</p>	<p>Locate the kiosk on the paddles welcome plaza near the top of the accessible route from launch. Place kiosk on accessible surface and include water trail information on one half and trail town information on the other. Make sure surface extends under the kiosk so someone can roll up for very close viewing without their front wheels dropping off.</p> <p>Recommend closing off the route end here and placing the kiosk here.</p>
	<p>Toilets Potable water source</p>	<p>None here or recommended, but include information that toilet is available at the below the dam put-in.</p>
	<p>Accessible parking</p>	<p>None existing, add one accessible car/boat trailer parking spot located right at the top of the accessible route. This accommodates paddlers with disabilities who would spot a car to facilitate movement for the portage.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	Picnic tables & grills	None here & none recommended as this is a take-out portage river exit. Provide info on the kiosk that there are picnic facilities at the below the dam put-in.
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	Get out sign	<p>Move the "get out here" sign to the end of the pier where the launch is.</p> <p>Post sign at this corner near the EZ Launch system.</p>



Access Recreation Group, LLC

Cindy Burkhour, MA, CTRS, CPRP

2454 Lamplighter Drive, Jenison, MI 49428-9127

Phone (616)669-9109 Mobile (616)560-2378

AccessRecreationGroup@juno.com

Launch Site Accessibility Evaluation & Design Recommendations

Location: Buchanan below the dam portage put-in launch site
Date/Time: October 13, 2015 / 9:00am
Contact: Jason Williams
Phone: 269-697-3264
Email: jwilliams@cityofbuchanan.com

Access Recreation Group Volunteers:

Rod Ritchison

Gina Lago

Jim Lago

Additional Site Evaluation Notes:

Universal design concepts to guide the development of site amenities...

By defining spaces & directing human behavior we protect the environment and enhance accessibility for everyone!

Accessible route surfaces must be firm & stable...concrete, asphalt, boardwalk, well compacted crushed aggregate/fines (NOT woodchips or grass)

Accessible routes should be at least 10' - 12' wide to accommodate two person/two vessel carries

Accessible routes should have less than 5% running slope with less than 2% cross slope

Accessible routes should surround all amenities & be at least 4' wide surrounding the entire element

Accessible routes should be smooth with no changes of level at edges and connections to entry/exits & into/onto site elements/amenities

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>EZ Launch</p> <p>Water trail flag</p>	<p>EZ Launch one-way right side launch would work the best with a short transition plate fright from the existing sea wall.</p> <p>Connected to an accessible route at less than 5% slope from the accessible parking spot</p> <p>Water trail flag on the launch.</p>
	<p>Accessible routes</p>	<p>Create an accessible route 10' - 12' wide (this accommodates two person/two vessel carry down) with slopes less than 5% from the launch to the kayak/canoe storage lockbox, paddlers plaza with universally accessible picnic table, grill, information kiosk, parking and on to connect to other park amenities.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Kayak/canoe storage lockbox</p>	<p>The kayak/canoe storage lockbox will be about 8' wide & 22' long. The paddler should be able to carry their vessel and slide it into the box without making a sharp turn, in other words parallel to the accessible route from the launch. Place where the existing metal bars are, these racks may be most used by local paddlers who would like to store their vessels for the season.</p> <p>If no storage is provided make sure paddlers know that there is storage across the river at the next launch site where the campground is located.</p>
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Information kiosk</p>	<p>Locate the kiosk near the bottom of the accessible route from the launch across from the kayak/canoe storage lockbox. Locate on the paddles welcome plaza off the accessible route so those viewing the kiosk information are not in the accessible route. Place kiosk on accessible surface and include water trail information on one half and trail town information on the other. Make sure surface extends under the kiosk so someone can roll up for very close viewing without their front wheels dropping off the concrete.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Toilets</p>	<p>Yes, existing toilet is accessible design but is not well placed on accessible surface. Suggest creating a concrete pad for placement of the toilet and connected to the accessible route to the amenities and the launch.</p>
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Potable water source</p>	<p>None here none recommended, but include information on the kiosk that indicates potable water at the next launch site at the campground.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Accessible parking</p>	<p>Yes, existing but needs re-striping and some surface repair to cracks from frost heave and ground settling. If possible rework the parking area to be more level and connect to the accessible routes to the launch and other amenities.</p> <p>Add one accessible car/boat trailer parking spot as well.</p>
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Picnic tables & grills</p>	<p>There are not accessible picnic tables or grills at the launch site.</p> <p>Create a paddlers welcome plaza across the accessible route from the kayak/canoe storage lockbox and add one universally accessible picnic table. Locate on accessible surface including an accessible route around the perimeter of the tables at least 4' wide. The information kiosk will be at this same location.</p>



Access Recreation Group, LLC

Cindy Burkhour, MA, CTRS, CPRP

2454 Lamplighter Drive, Jenison, MI 49428-9127

Phone (616)669-9109 Mobile (616)560-2378

AccessRecreationGroup@juno.com

Launch Site Accessibility Evaluation & Design Recommendations

Location: Buchanan Red Bud North River Park
Date/Time: October 13, 2015 / 9:00am
Contact: Jason Williams
Phone: 269-697-3264
Email: jwilliams@cityofbuchanan.com

Access Recreation Group Volunteers:

Rod Ritchison

Gina Lago

Jim Lago

Additional Site Evaluation Notes:

Universal design concepts to guide the development of site amenities...

By defining spaces & directing human behavior we protect the environment and enhance accessibility for everyone!

Accessible route surfaces must be firm & stable...concrete, asphalt, boardwalk, well compacted crushed aggregate/fines (NOT woodchips or grass)

Accessible routes should be at least 10' - 12' wide to accommodate two person/two vessel carries

Accessible routes should have less than 5% running slope with less than 2% cross slope

Accessible routes should surround all amenities & be at least 4' wide surrounding the entire element

Accessible routes should be smooth with no changes of level at edges and connections to entry/exits & into/onto site elements/amenities

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Option #1</p> <p>EZ Launch</p> <p>Water trail flag</p>	<p>EZ Launch two-way located downstream from the boat launch dock to avoid conflict with power boat launching. Water trail flag would be located on the launch viewable for paddlers coming down from the dam portage put-in.</p> <p>Option #1 location would take the least amount of earth moving to create the accessible route at less than 5% slope to the launch site at the waters' edge.</p> <p>Once the campground is developed it would be best to move the launch upstream and convert the option #1 location to a fishing pier.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Option #1</p> <p>Kayak/canoe storage lockbox</p>	<p>The kayak/canoe storage lockbox will be about 8' wide & 22' long. The paddler should be able to carry their vessel and slide it into the box without making a sharp turn, in other words parallel to the accessible route from the launch.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Option #1</p> <p>Information kiosk</p> <p>Paddlers welcome plaza</p> <p>Picnic tables & grills</p>	<p>Locate the kiosk near the top of the accessible route from the launch across from the kayak/canoe storage lockbox. Locate on the paddlers welcome plaza off the accessible route so those viewing the kiosk information are not in the accessible route. Place kiosk on accessible surface and include water trail information on one half and trail town information on the other. Make sure surface extends under the kiosk so someone can roll up for very close viewing without their front wheels dropping off the concrete.</p> <p>There are not accessible picnic tables or grills at the launch site.</p> <p>Create a paddlers welcome plaza across the accessible route from the kayak/canoe storage lockbox and add one universally accessible picnic table. Locate on accessible surface including an accessible route around the perimeter of the table at least 4' wide.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
 <p>The top photograph shows a dirt path leading to a riverbank. Several people are standing on the path, and a man in a grey jacket is pointing towards the river. The bottom photograph shows a wide view of the river flowing through a wooded area with trees displaying autumn foliage.</p>	<p>Option #2</p> <p>EZ Launch</p> <p>Water trail flag</p>	<p>Locate the same EZ Launch two-way system upstream from the boat launch dock to avoid conflict with power boat launching. Water trail flag would be located on the launch viewable for paddlers coming down from the dam portage put-in.</p> <p>Option #2 location would require some greater earth moving to create the accessible route at less than 5% slope to the launch site at the waters' edge and to keep it separated from the drive down launch road.</p> <p>Suggest a very large floating pier system that can also provide fishing and swimming access to the river for visitors as well as campers. The dock system would run parallel to the shore up stream and keep people out of conflict with power boats launching & moving down stream.</p>

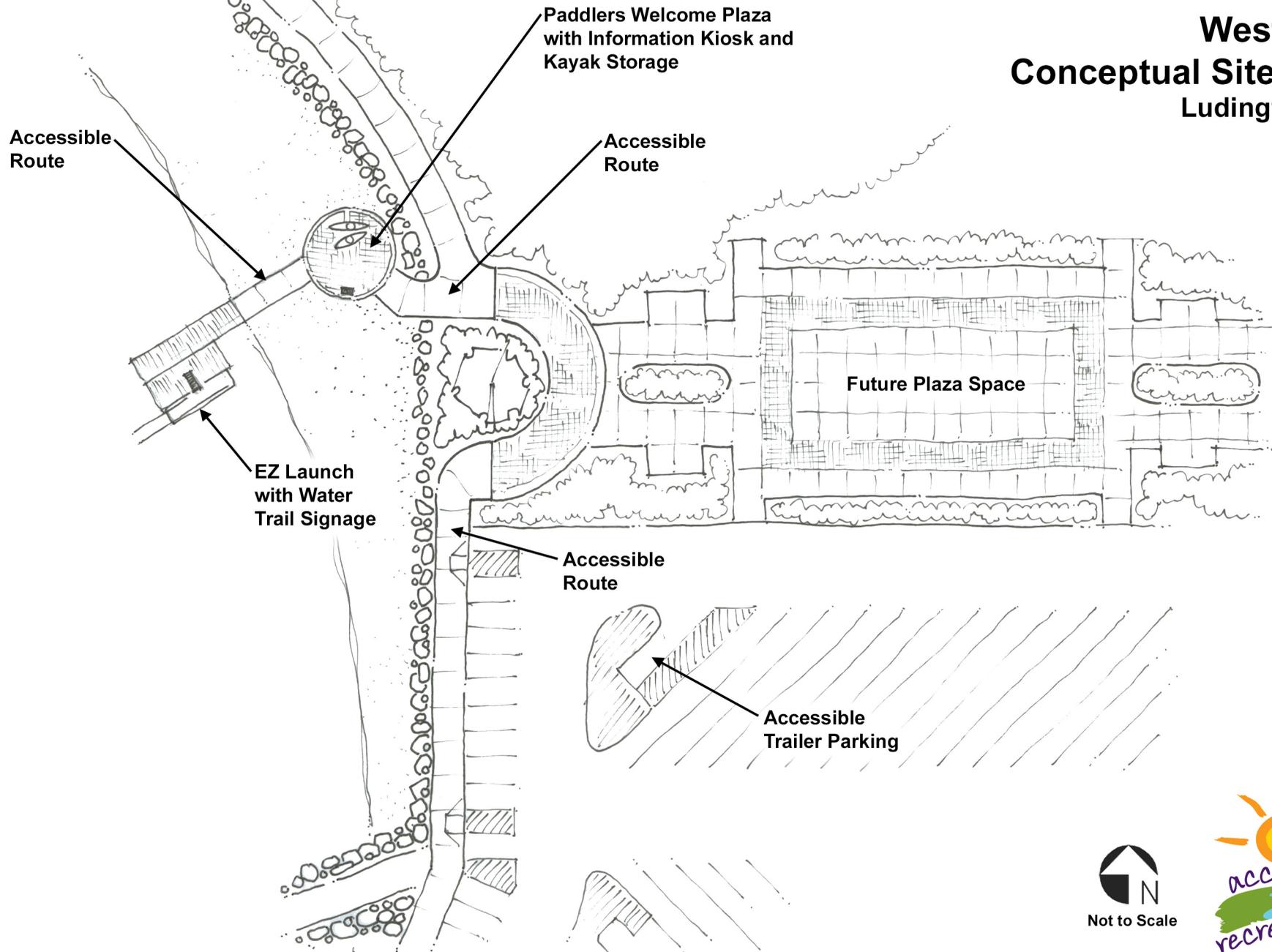
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
 <p>The first photo shows a dirt path winding through a forest with trees displaying autumn foliage. The second photo shows a group of people standing on a sandy bank next to a river, with trees and their reflections in the water. The third photo shows a dirt path leading to a riverbank with trees and a body of water.</p>	<p>Option #2 Accessible routes</p>	<p>Create an accessible route 10' - 12' wide (this accommodates two person/two vessel carry down) with slopes less than 5% from the launch to the kayak/canoe storage lockbox, paddlers plaza with universally accessible picnic table, grill, information kiosk, parking and on to connect to the existing sidewalks to other park amenities and the campground.</p> <p>Suggest the creation of an observation overlook in the shore area where there is significant shoreline degradation. Great place to watch the river, sun rise, boaters etc. while directing human behavior to stay off the bank at this location. Provide information on the large deck re shoreline environmental protection and direct fisherman to the fishing piers.</p>

Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Option #2</p> <p>Kayak/canoe storage lockbox</p>	<p>The kayak/canoe storage lockbox will be about 8' wide & 22' long. The paddler should be able to carry their vessel and slide it into the box without making a sharp turn, in other words parallel to the accessible route from the launch.</p>
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Option #2</p> <p>Information kiosk</p> <p>Paddlers welcome plaza</p> <p>Picnic tables & grills</p>	<p>Locate the kiosk near the top of the accessible route from the launch across from the kayak/canoe storage lockbox. Locate on the paddlers welcome plaza off the accessible route so those viewing the kiosk information are not in the accessible route. Place kiosk on accessible surface and include water trail information on one half and trail town information on the other. Make sure surface extends under the kiosk so someone can roll up for very close viewing without their front wheels dropping off the concrete.</p> <p>There are not accessible picnic tables or grills at the launch site.</p> <p>Create a paddlers welcome plaza across the accessible route from the kayak/canoe storage lockbox and add one universally accessible picnic table. Locate on accessible surface including an accessible route around the perimeter of the table at least 4' wide.</p>

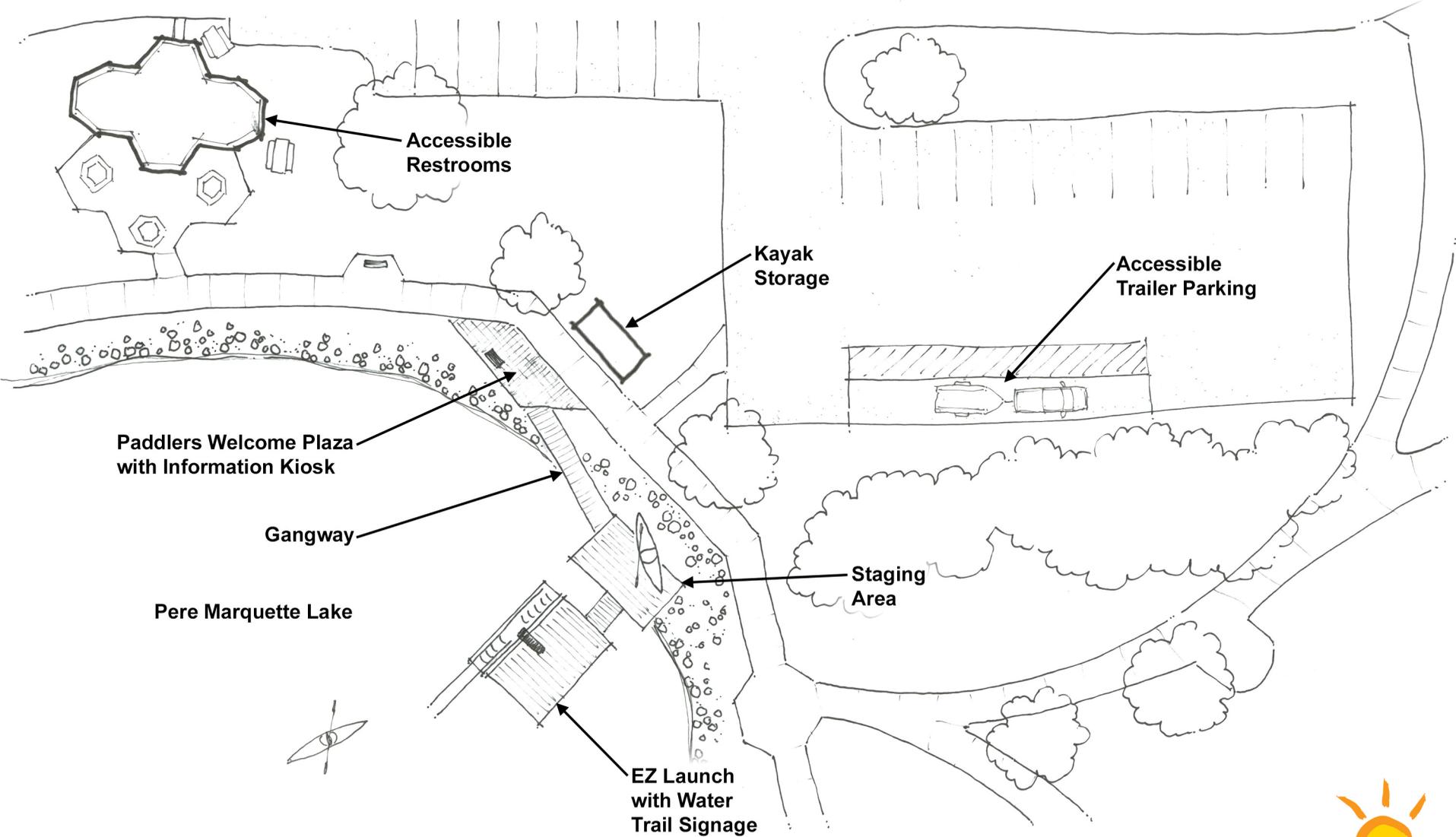
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Toilets</p> <p>Potable water source</p>	<p>Replace existing inaccessible porta-john with an accessible design toilet and locate on accessible surface close to parking.</p> <p>When the campground is developed suggest adding a single user unisex accessible toilet room so opposite gender care givers can assist someone with a disability in a private & dignified manner. These family friendly single user toilet rooms with baby changers accommodate opposite gender parents to assist their child. These rooms are large enough to accommodate someone using a wheelchair or parents with strollers.</p> <p>Consider adding a water bottle fill type water source when the water system is developed for the campground.</p>
Photo	Location Description	Accessibility Feature Design Recommendations
	<p>Option #2</p> <p>Accessible parking</p>	<p>No formal parking exists at this time.</p> <p>Create accessible car and car/boat trailer parking spaces and connect directly to the accessible route to the launch and all other park amenities.</p> <p>Remove the dead ash trees to create space for parking and the accessible route to the launch.</p>

Appendix C

West End Conceptual Site Plan Ludington, MI



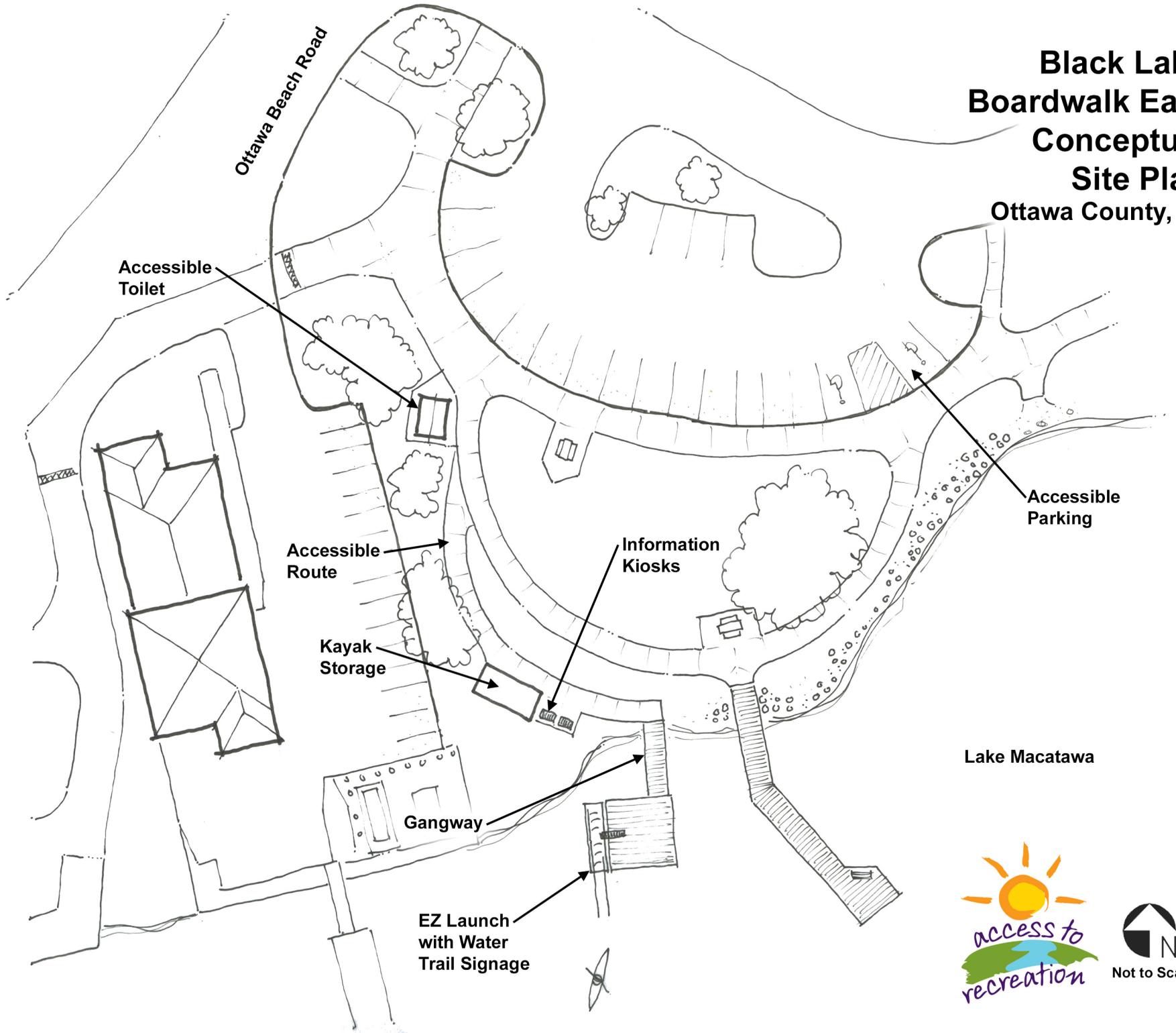
Municipal Marina Conceptual Site Plan Ludington, MI



N
Not to Scale



Black Lake Boardwalk East Conceptual Site Plan Ottawa County, MI

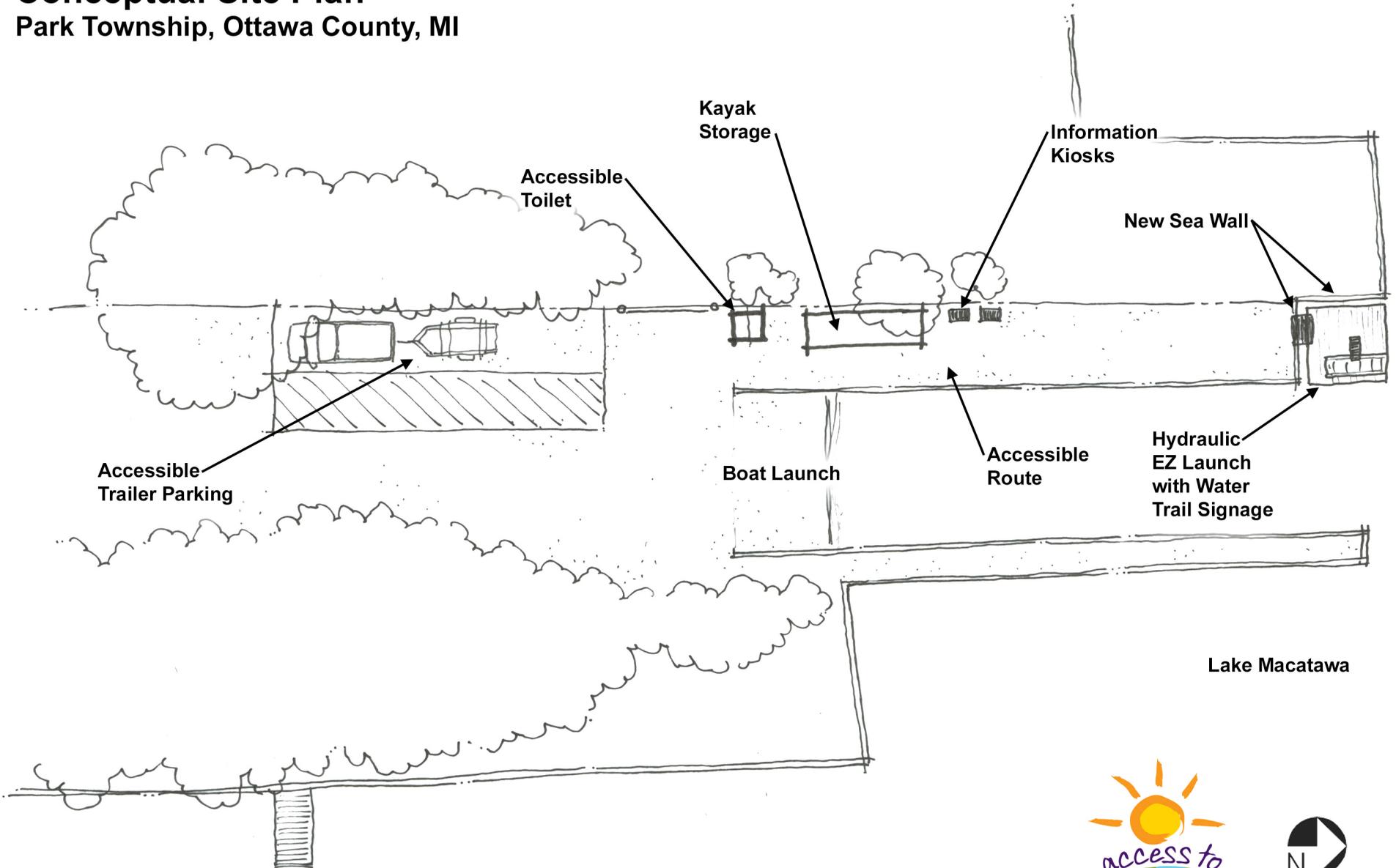


Lake Macatawa



South Shore Boat Launch Conceptual Site Plan

Park Township, Ottawa County, MI



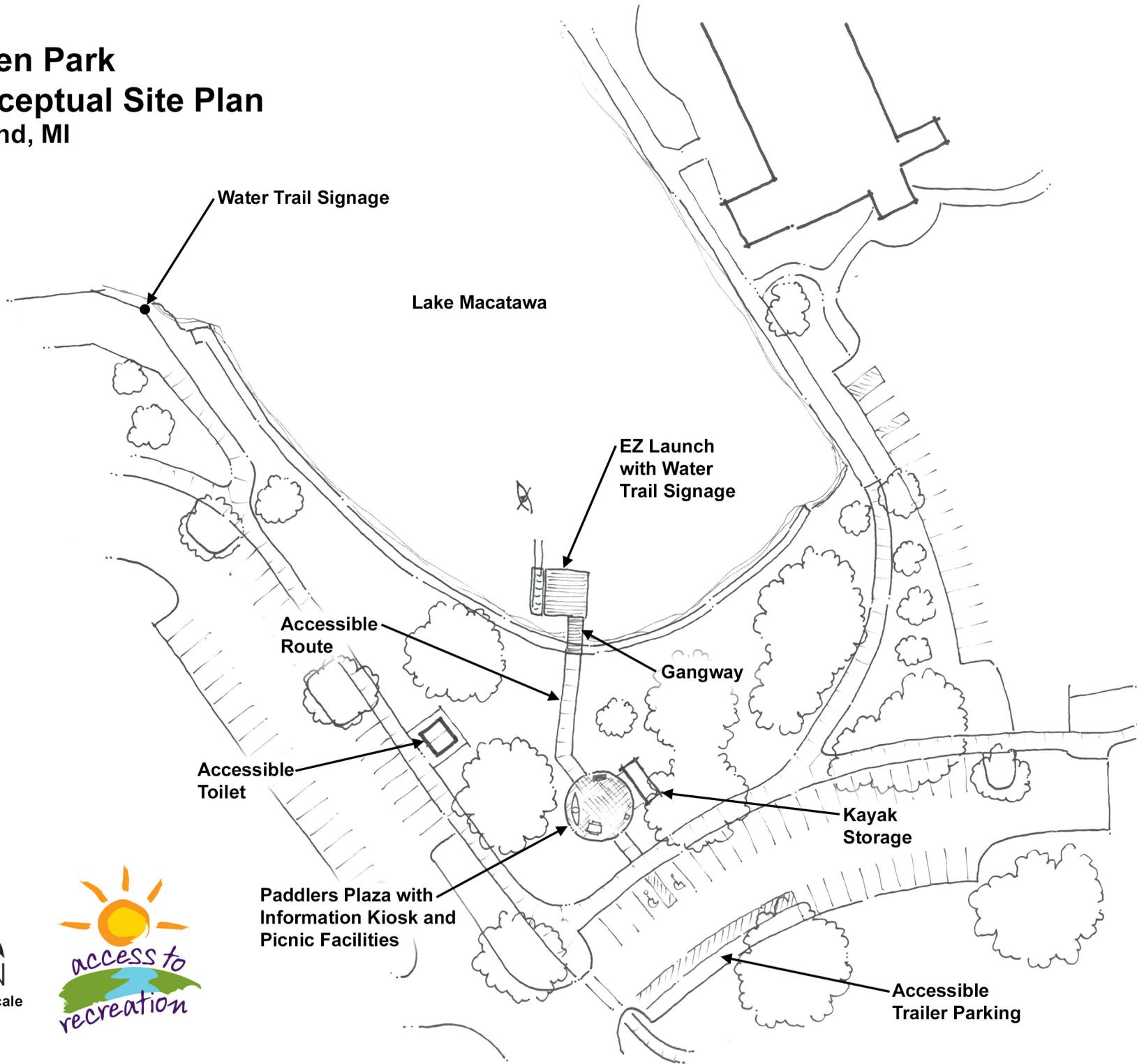
Lake Macatawa



Kollen Park

Conceptual Site Plan

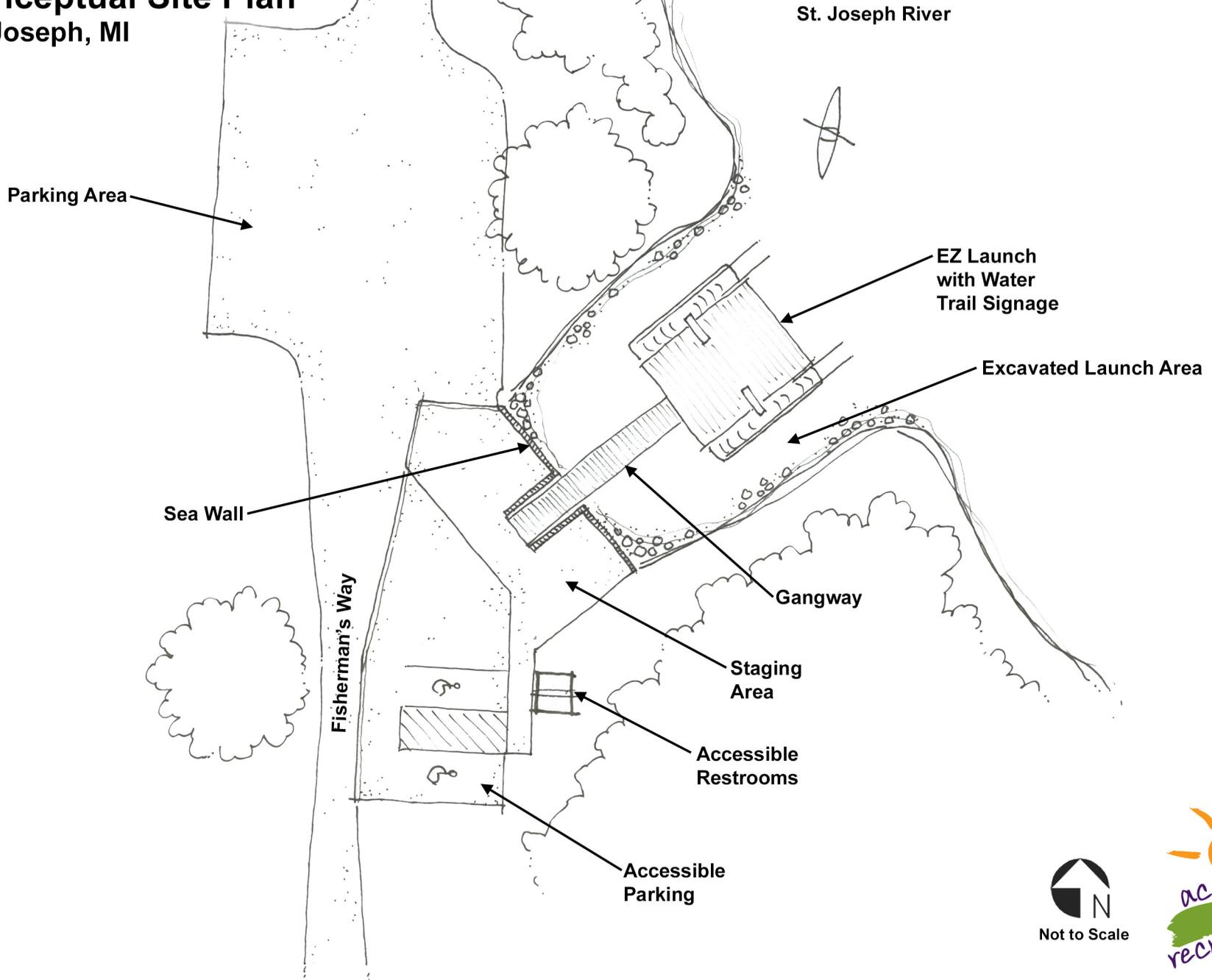
Holland, MI



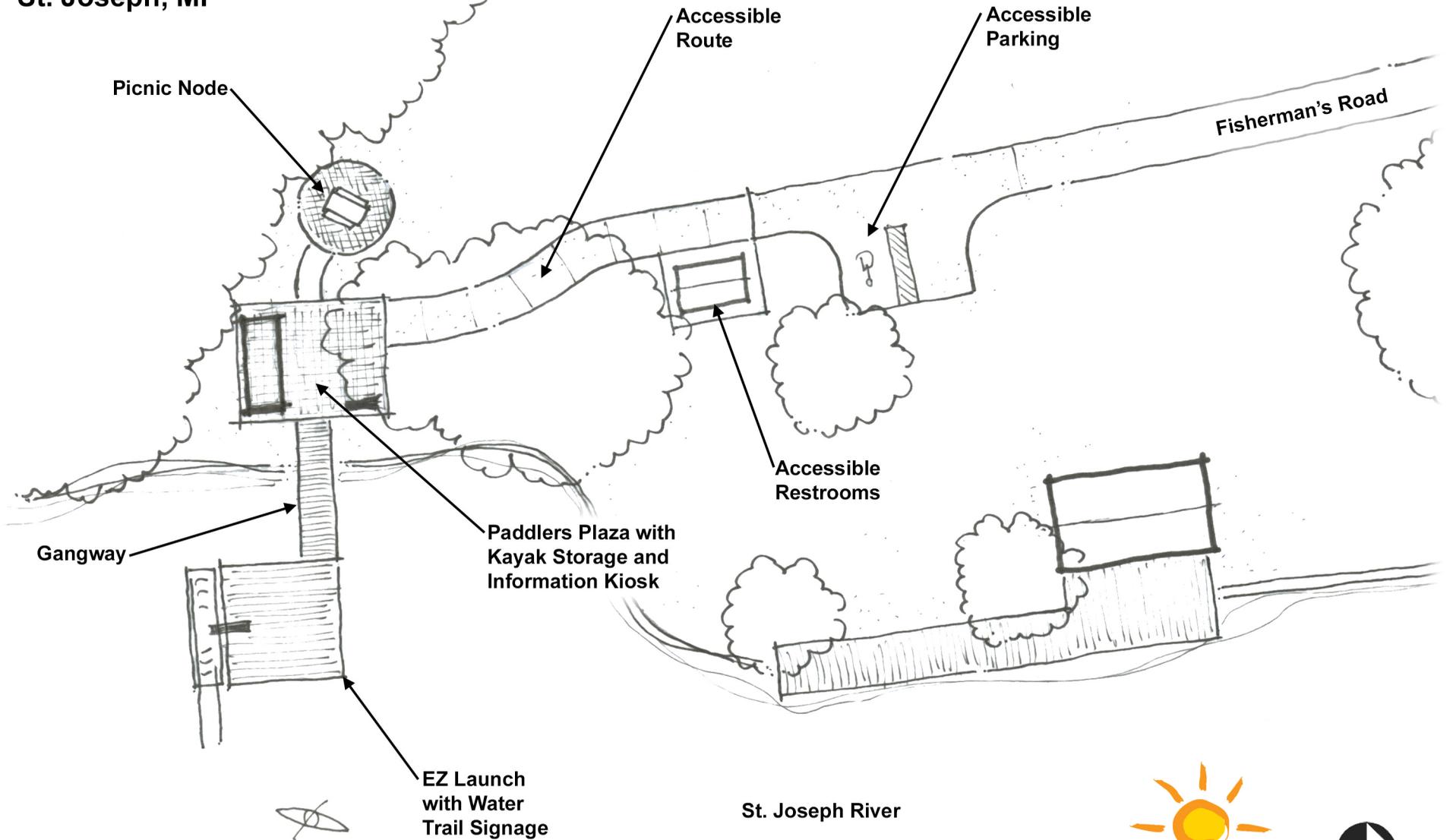
Not to Scale



Fisherman's Way Launch Conceptual Site Plan St. Joseph, MI



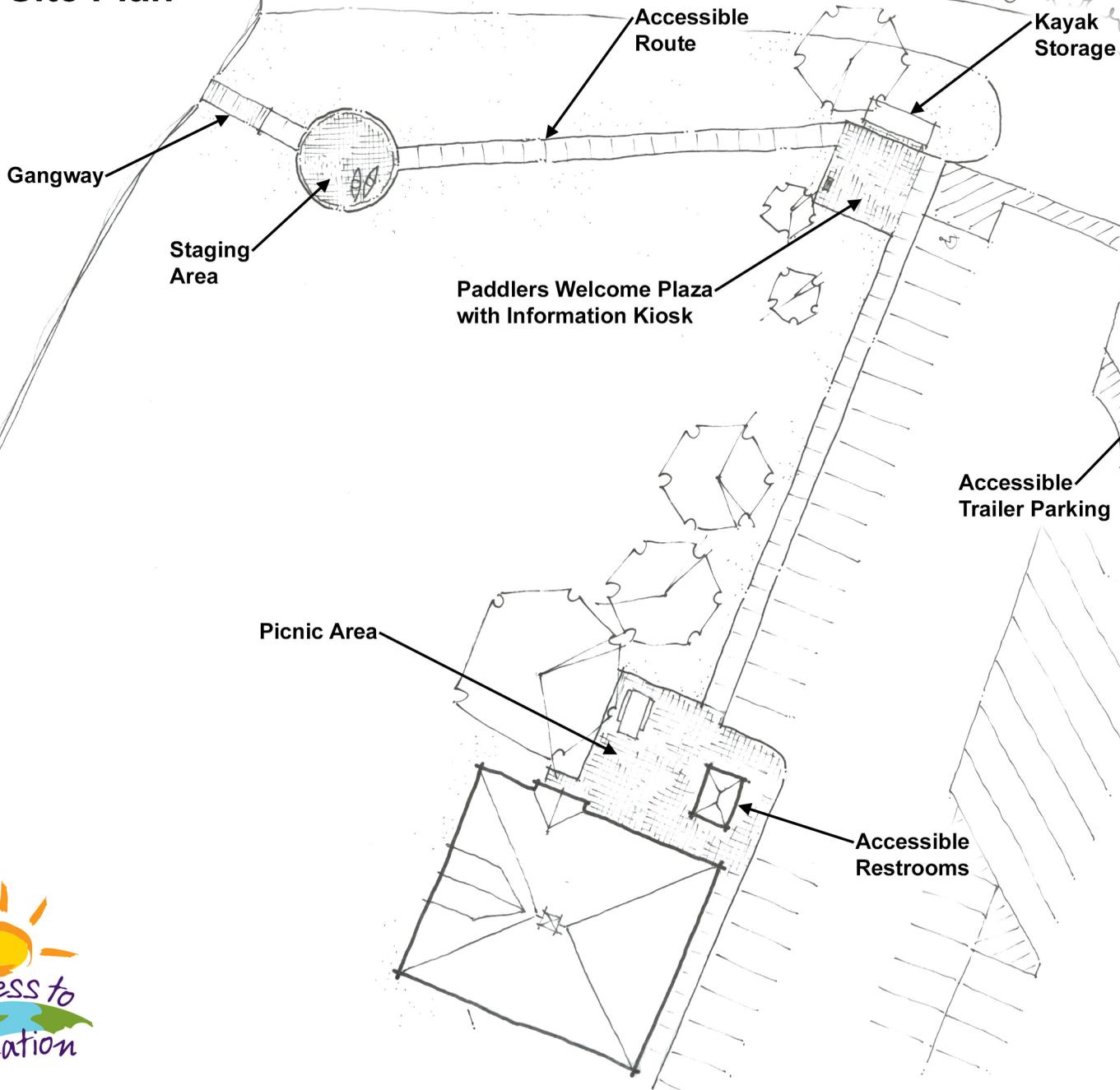
Fisherman's Wharf Marina Conceptual Site Plan St. Joseph, MI



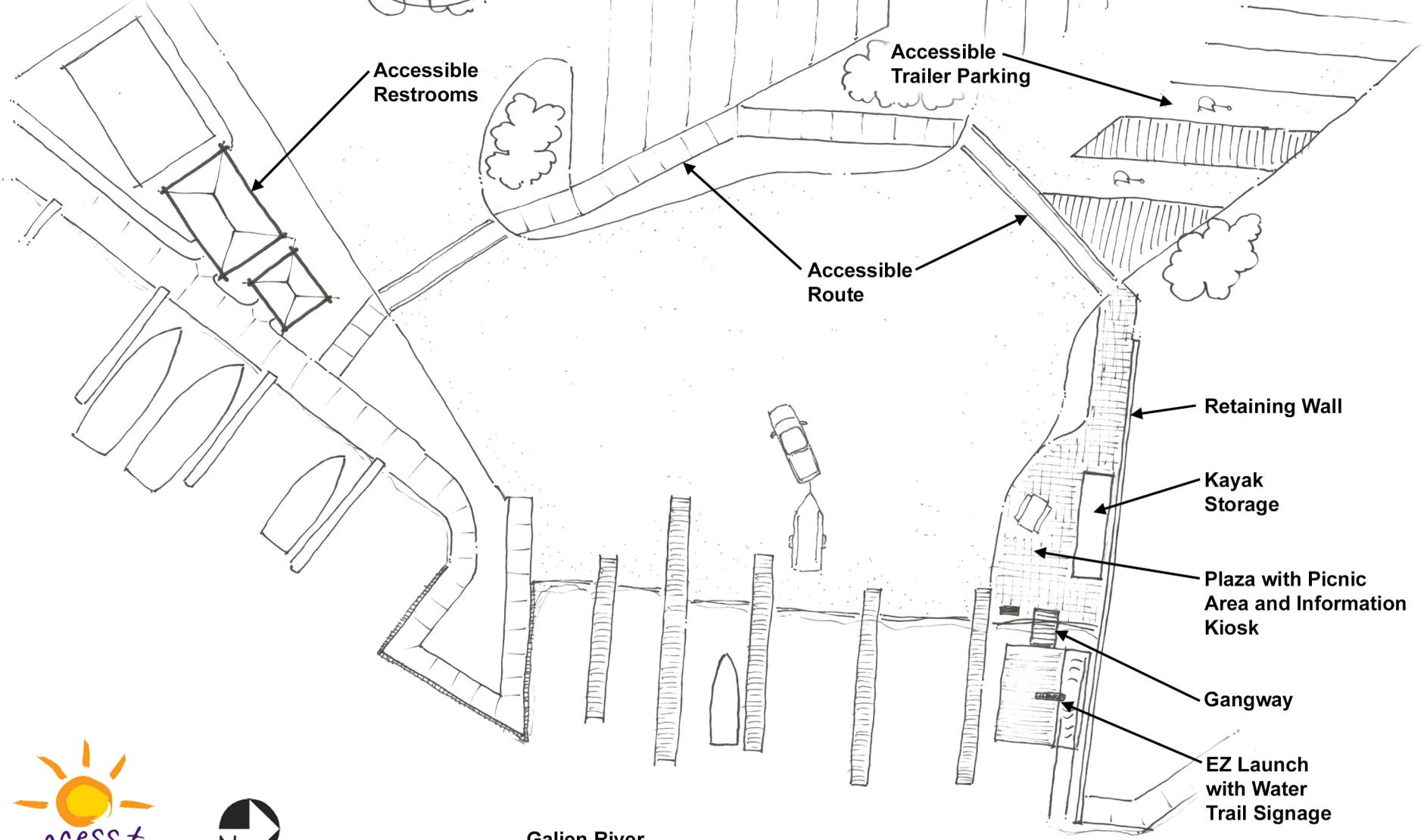
Not to Scale

Weko Beach Conceptual Site Plan Bridgman, MI

Lake Michigan



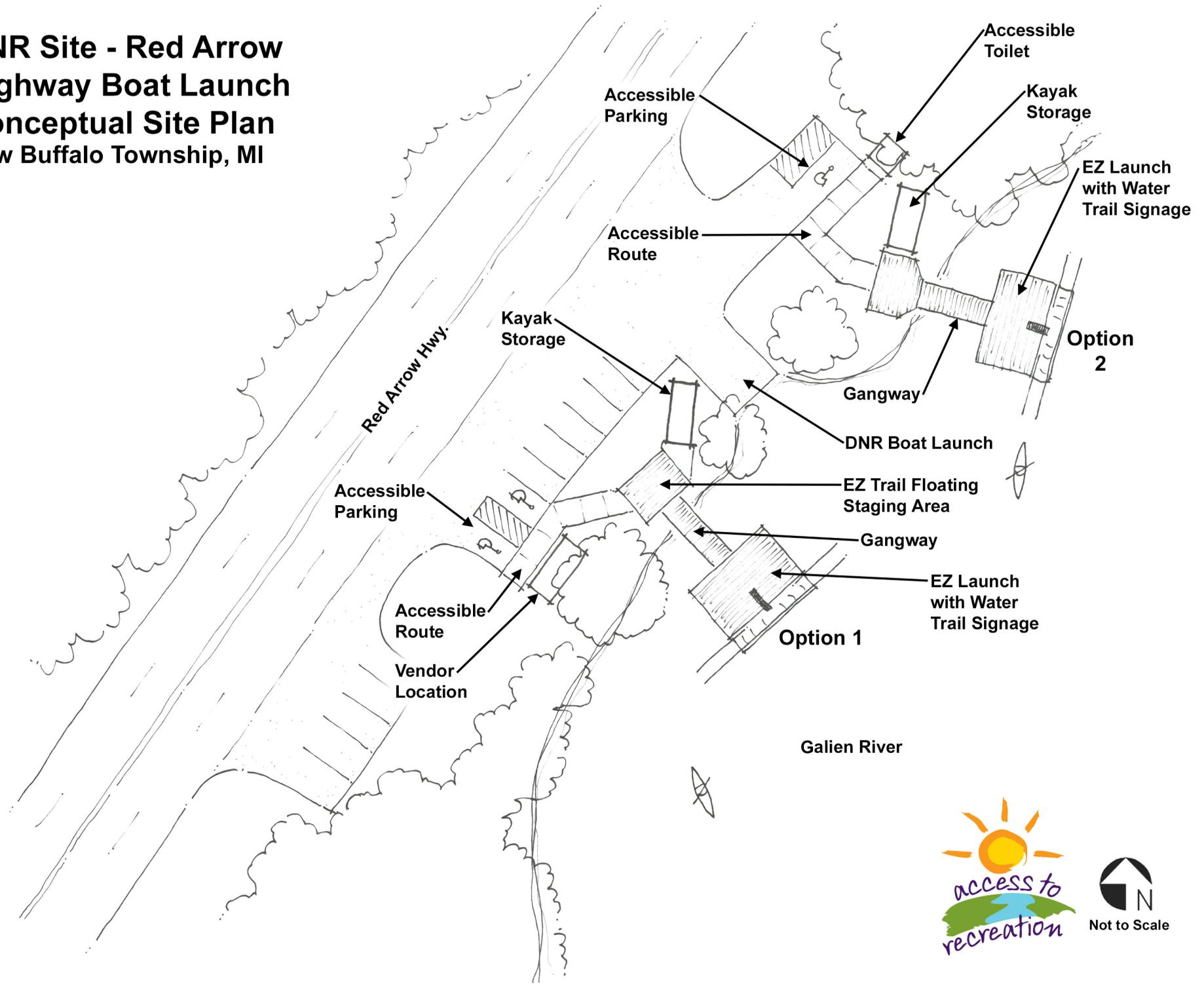
City Boat Launch Conceptual Site Plan New Buffalo, MI



Not to Scale

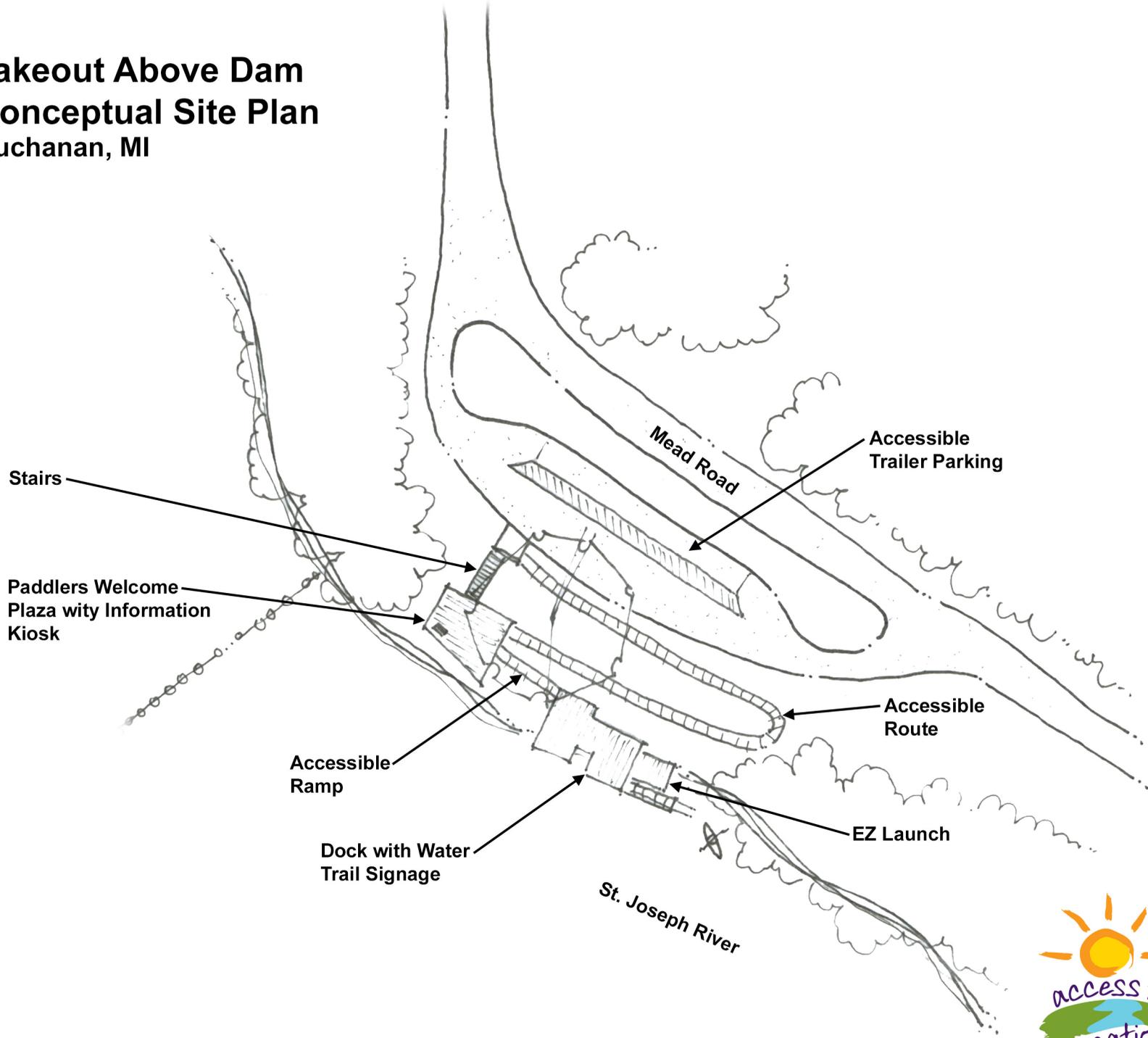


DNR Site - Red Arrow Highway Boat Launch Conceptual Site Plan New Buffalo Township, MI



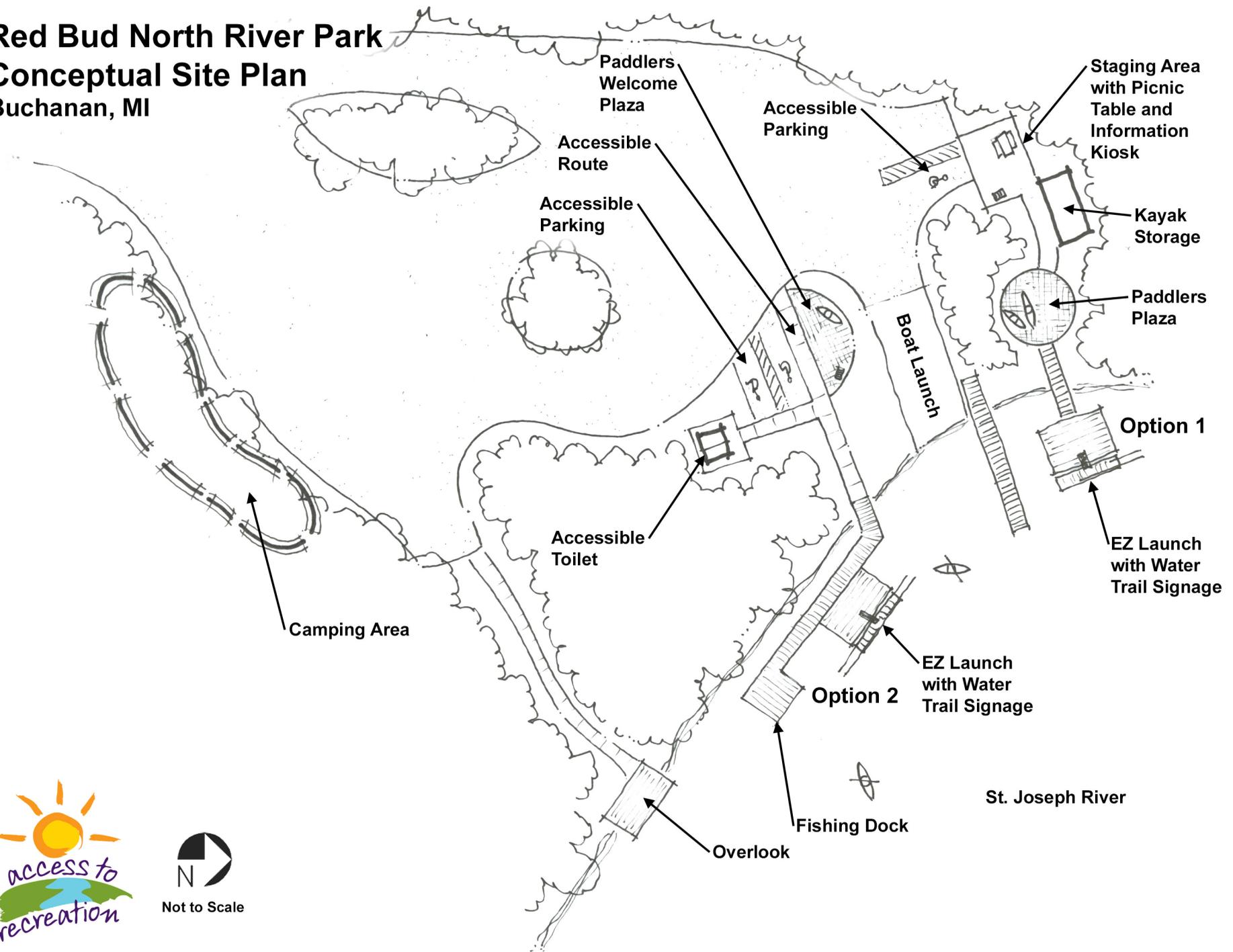
Not to Scale

Takeout Above Dam Conceptual Site Plan Buchanan, MI



Not to Scale

Red Bud North River Park Conceptual Site Plan Buchanan, MI

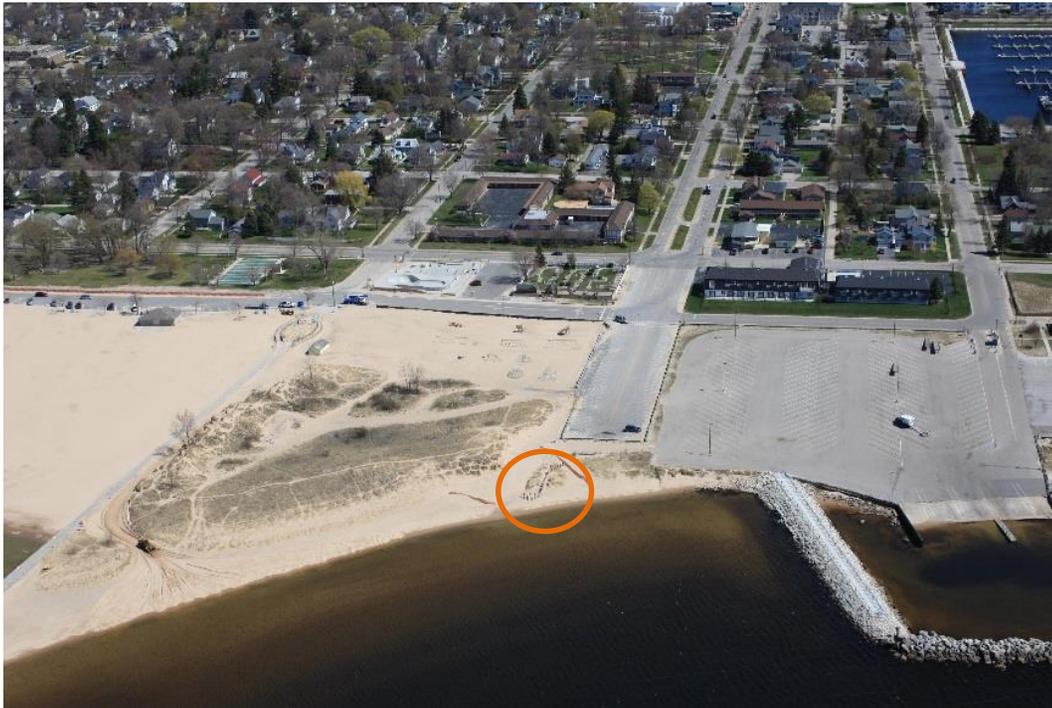


Appendix D. Design Recommendations and Renderings

The following design recommendations and renderings are meant to highlight new ideas, spark discussion and reinforce recommendations and best practices described earlier in this document. Not every image is designed to scale. Renderings are only meant to illustrate what improvements might look like. A full description of many of these recommendations and renderings can be found in the accessibility reports and site plans featured in Appendix B and C.

Ludington

The City of Ludington has identified West End Beach as the potential access site. The Beach is located adjacent to a large parking lot at the end of Ludington Avenue. This entire parking lot and the adjacent streets are expected to undergo a dramatic transformation in 2016.



Existing Site



Trailhead. The West End Beach could serve as a trailhead for the Lake Michigan Water Trail. Potential improvements include an accessible launch, kayak racks, a paddler’s plaza and wayfinding signage. These features should fit into and complement the improvements already planned for this road-end and parking area (see following page). Additional consideration and/or anchoring of the accessible launch will be required due to the potential of severe weather and high waves.

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



West End Beach Reconstruction with Accessible Launch Feature and Paddler's Plaza

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



The trailhead should also include accessible parking spaces that can accommodate a car with a trailer. The accessible parking spaces should connect to the paddler's welcome plaza via a signed accessible route. Once the new plaza is constructed and Ludington Avenue is reconstructed, wayfinding signs should be placed along the plaza to direct paddlers to the downtown.

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Trailhead. A small shoreline area adjacent to the Ludington Municipal Marina could serve as another trailhead for the Lake Michigan Water Trail and for paddlers in Pere Marquette Lake. This site would provide more protection for the accessible launch from inclement weather and high waves than the proposed access site at West End Beach. In addition, this site would provide paddlers more direct access to all the amenities at the marina (picnic area, showers, restrooms, parking, etc.).



Ludington Municipal Marina Trailhead

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Enhancing and Maintaining Pedestrian Amenities and Building Form

Providing for enhanced pedestrian connections and amenities along the trail-to-town route and within the downtown is important in creating a friendly pedestrian and trail-tourist environment. The wide sidewalks within the downtown encourage pedestrian activity and support window shopping. The primary street in the downtown is Ludington Avenue. Although there are several signal crossings and on-street parking that buffers pedestrians from the roadway, the four traffic lanes and one contiguous turn lane does not contribute to the pedestrian friendly atmosphere of the downtown.

The city should continue to explore opportunities to make Ludington Avenue more pedestrian friendly. This may include adding bump-outs and pedestrian islands near crosswalks, eliminating one traffic lane in each direction or adding bike lanes. Narrowing the street could allow for even wider sidewalks that accommodate outdoor cafes and public amenities. In addition, the city should examine its zoning ordinance to be sure it requires proper façade treatments (see Urban Form on page 35) and supports redevelopment that is complementary of the historical context and existing building form (building materials, height, etc.) of the downtown.

Enhancing and Maintaining Pedestrian Amenities

Before Treatment



After Treatment



After Treatment



Enhancing and Maintaining Building Form

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Wayfinding

Wayfinding signs are important features, enabling trail users to easily locate the downtown and the local trail systems.

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Gateway Experience

Once bike tourists (or any tourists) get off the S.S Badger Ferry, there is no sign or marker welcoming them into Ludington. Some type of welcome sign and/or landscape feature should be placed along James Street that welcomes tourists into Ludington and provides the gateway into the downtown.

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Ottawa County

Ottawa County, Park Township and the City of Holland each have the potential to develop new access sites for paddlers. These access sites could serve transient paddlers using the Lake Michigan Water Trail. However, the access sites are more likely to serve paddlers on Lake Macatawa. There is already an outfitter renting kayaks on the lake and local leaders are currently exploring opportunities to establish a formal Lake Macatawa Water Trail.

Ottawa County has identified the Black Lake Boardwalk East Park as a potential access site. The park has direct access to the lake, a large viewing platform, parking, and restrooms. The park is nestled between Holland State Park and the South Shore Village, a small shopping district with restaurants, retail stores and hotels. Both on-street bike lanes and non-motorized trails link the park with the State Park and South Shore Village.



Existing Site



Trailhead

New trailhead amenities at the Black Lake Boardwalk East Park would include an accessible kayak rack, accessible port-o-johns, a paddler's plaza, accessible parking spaces and wayfinding signage. These features should fit into and complement the park design and amenities.

Accessible Launch

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Improved Pedestrian Connections and Wayfinding Signage

Improving the pedestrian connections to the park will be important. These improvements could include more pronounced crosswalks on Ottawa Beach Road, more pronounced crosswalks and wayfinding near the entrance to the park, and more pronounced bike lanes along Ottawa Beach Road.

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Park Township

Park Township has identified the South Shore Boat Launch as a potential access site for the proposed Lake Macatawa Water Trail. The site has a dock and ramp for motorboat access to the lake. The site also has ample space for parking. Because the site is used to launch motor-boats, the accessible launch would have to be placed to the side with a newly constructed seawall. New trailhead amenities at the South Shore Boat Launch would also include accessible port-o-johns, kayak storage, accessible parking spaces, pedestrian connections to the surrounding neighborhood and wayfinding signage.



Existing Site



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment

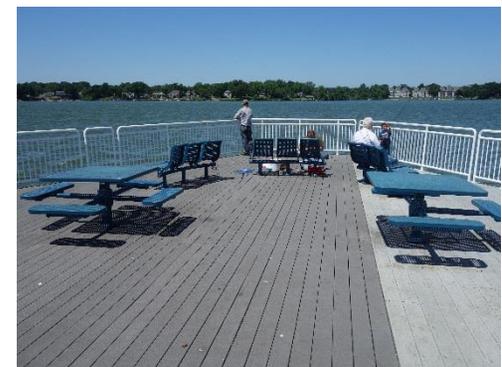


Holland

The City of Holland has identified Kollen Park as a potential access site for the proposed Lake Macatawa Water Trail. Kollen Park has ample parking, restrooms and picnic areas. The proposed access site would also be located along a non-motorized pathway that leads to downtown Holland and runs along the street in front of Boatwerks, a popular restaurant with expansive views of Lake Macatawa. Paddlers, docking at Kollen Park would have a very short walk to this popular restaurant. New trailhead amenities at Kollen Park would include an accessible kayak launch, kayak storage, a “paddler’s plaza” and interpretive and wayfinding signage.



Existing Site. The Boatwerks Restaurant lounging area (second picture down) is private and not a part of Kollen Park.



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Wayfinding

Because the proposed access site is tucked between Kollen Park and the Boatwerks Restaurant, a trailhead marker or flag should be erected off the boardwalk to direct paddlers to the access site. The access site should also include kiosks that describe the Macatawa Water Trail and the Lake Michigan Water Trail as well as provide information about downtown Holland. In addition, the accessible pedestrian route leading from Kollen Park into downtown Holland should include directional signs at key intersections along the trail.

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



The City should also consider placing the Lake Michigan Water Trail and proposed Lake Macatawa Water Trail on the existing wayfinding system.

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Gateway

A well-designed sign near the Farmers Market could denote the Gateway into downtown Holland for trail users. The City is in the process of developing a new plan for the Civic Center and Farmers Market, so any Gateway feature(s) would need to be in concert with the new plan.

Before Treatment



After Treatment



South Haven

The City of South Haven has identified two access sites for improvement. The first and primary access site for paddlers along the Lake Michigan Water Trail and the Bangor to South Haven Heritage Water Trail is located at Black River Park. In 2015, the city made substantial improvements to the park, including accessible parking spaces for trailers, picnic areas, improved routes from the parking lot to the kayak launch and a staging area. An accessible kayak launch is planned to be installed at the park in 2016.



Existing Site



Trailhead

New trailhead amenities at the Black River Park could include the access launch, a paddler's plaza, kayak storage, an interpretive kiosks and wayfinding signage.

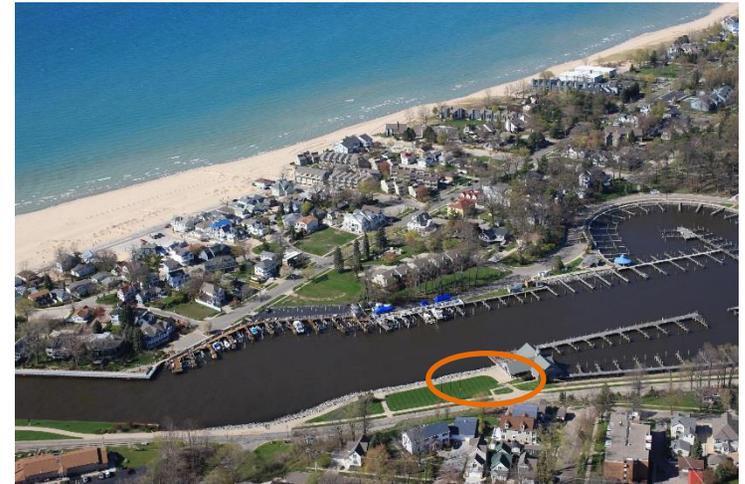
Before Treatment



After Treatment



The second access site for paddlers along the Lake Michigan Water Trail and the Bangor to South Haven Heritage Water Trail is the South Haven Municipal Marina. The Marina already has a small floating pad for dingy parking. This pad could be extended to allow for additional temporary kayak storage. Due to heavy motorized boat traffic near the marina, paddlers will be encouraged to use the Black River Park Canoe and Kayak Launch to access the water trails. To help alleviate kayak storage in this area during the busy summer months, a kayak storage locker could also be placed behind the marina office and away from pedestrian traffic.



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



The Kal-Haven Trail and the Van Buren Trail converge at a trailhead along Huron Street in downtown South Haven. The trailhead provides direct access to the downtown and features ample parking, bike racks, restroom facilities and wayfinding maps. Every effort should be made to direct trail users to this centrally located trailhead. An additional amenity could include a covered bike rack system, to protect bicycle from the elements. In addition, a mural welcoming trail users could also be placed on the exterior of the restroom.

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Gateway Features

Currently, there is no formal gateway feature (connecting element) into downtown South Haven from both the Kal Haven Trail and the Van Buren Trail. Conversely, there is no formal gateway feature at the trailhead of the two trail systems from the downtown. The city should work with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to develop gateway features that welcome trail users onto the trail and into the downtown.

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Wayfinding

The connecting pathway between downtown South Haven and the Kal-Haven trailhead meanders over a mile through the city. There are a number of signs along the way that direct trail users at key intersections through the city to the trailhead. In an effort to better inform the trail user about the distance to the trailhead, the city should place the distance in miles on the directional signs. The city should also include the Kal-Haven and Van Buren Trails, U.S. Bike Route 35, and the Lake Michigan and Bangor to South Haven Heritage Water Trails on the wayfinding maps and signs within the downtown.

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



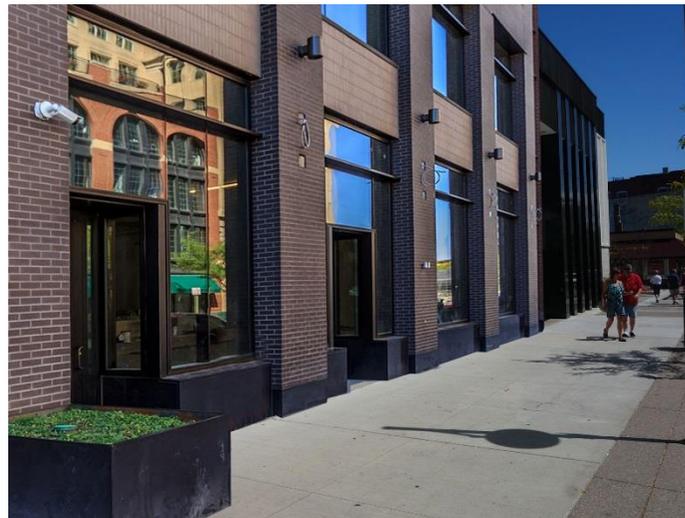
Enhancing and Maintaining Pedestrian Amenities and Building Form

Providing for pedestrian connections and amenities along the trail-to-town route and within the downtown is important in creating a friendly pedestrian and trail-tourist environment. The wide sidewalks within downtown South Haven, outdoor cafés, narrow streets, and intersection bump-outs support and encourage pedestrian activity. The city should continue to pursue redeveloping outdated buildings into buildings that add to the existing façade treatment and character of the downtown.

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Additional Recommendations

The city should develop the area adjacent to the South Haven Visitors Bureau into a central downtown depot for trail users and bicyclists. The Visitors Bureau provides great information about the community as well as public restrooms. New amenities could include bikes racks, a bike repair station, water fountain and trail/downtown kiosk.



St. Joseph

Local officials and community stakeholders in St. Joseph have identified two potential access sites for improvement along the St. Joseph River. Either one of these sites would primarily provide access to the St. Joseph Water Trail. Local officials and stakeholders considered potential access sites along the Lake Michigan shoreline, but ultimately determined that seasonal beach erosion and damaging waves would not support a developed access site. Paddlers along the Lake Michigan Water Trail could still arrive and deploy from St. Joseph via Silver Beach. However, paddlers wishing for more formal access site amenities would be directed to the St. Joseph River.



Existing Site - Option One



Trailhead - Option One.

The first trailhead option is located at a former boat ramp on Fisherman’s Road, adjacent to Fisherman’s Wharf. This location is currently under private ownership, so the city would need to acquire the property. However, access to the site and areas where the paddler’s plaza might be located are owned by the city. Fisherman’s Wharf LLC owns the large parking lot adjacent to the site and has expressed an interest in allowing paddlers to use it.

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Trailhead - Option Two.

The second trailhead option is located just down the road from Option One. The site is currently owned by the city. However, there are no facilities or amenities at this location and substantial excavation and vegetation removal would be required to accommodate an accessible launch or any other amenities. A site plan for the access site was developed in 2013 and is represented in Appendix C.

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Wayfinding

The pathway between the two alternative trailheads and downtown St. Joseph meanders almost two miles through the city. In an effort to direct trail users into downtown St. Joseph (and residents and trail tourists from downtown to the trailhead) the city should place directional signage at key streets and intersections. Directional signs should include the incremental distance in miles between the trailhead and downtown St. Joseph.

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Bridgman

Access to the City of Bridgman for paddlers using the Lake Michigan Water Trail will be provided at Weko Beach. Weko Beach already has a number of amenities that make it an ideal landing spot for paddlers, including: a long expansive beach, a large parking lot, picnic tables, restroom's and concessions at the Weko Beach House. In 2016, Weko Beach is expected to have bike rentals. Weko Beach is also home to a number of summer festivals and events. Sidewalks along Lake Street provide pedestrian access from Weko Beach into downtown Bridgman.

Warren Dunes State Park is just a few miles to the south of Weko Beach. In fact, the paddle from the State Park to Weko Beach is already very popular with both residents and tourists.



Existing Site



Trailhead

Due to the potential of severe storms and damaging waves, an accessible kayak launch at the beach would not be advisable. However, paddlers could be assisted by an extended, over-the-sand accessible route (e.g., EZ Trail, boardwalk, Mobi-Mat, etc.) that would lead to a large staging area, a paddler's plaza (with kayak storage), the parking lot and the Weko Beach House.

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



After Treatment – W/Kayak Rental



Before Treatment



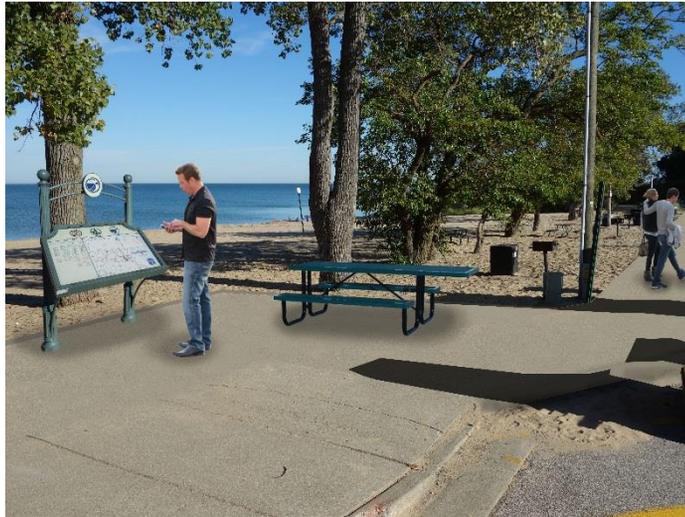
After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Wayfinding

The sidewalk along Lake Street, connecting Weko Beach and downtown Bridgman, is about 1.5 miles long. In an effort to direct trail users into downtown Bridgman (and residents and trail tourists from downtown to the trailhead) the city should place directional signage and other markers (e.g., banners) at the Red Arrow Highway and Lake Street intersection. Other directional signs could guide bicyclists to Bike Route 35.

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Enhancing and Maintaining Pedestrian Amenities and Building Form

Providing for pedestrian amenities within the downtown is important in creating a friendly pedestrian and trail-tourist environment. The city revised its zoning ordinance to allow for outdoor seating, and restaurants should be encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity. The city should continue to encourage and support redevelopment within the downtown and consider adopting design guidelines that address building form and façade characteristics.

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment

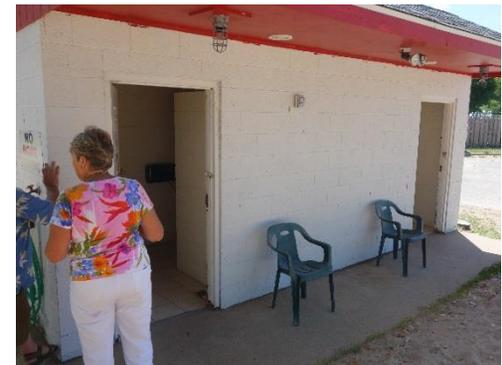


New Buffalo

The City of New Buffalo serves as a gateway for both the Lake Michigan Water Trail and the Galien River Marsh Water Trail. After careful consideration, local officials and community stakeholders determined that the City Boat Launch, would serve as the primary trailhead for both water trails. Local officials and stakeholders considered a potential access site closer to the mouth of the Galien River, adjacent to the New Buffalo Public Beach, but ultimately determined that heavy motorboat traffic would cause significant conflicts with paddlers. In addition, the City Boat Launch has adequate space to construct one additional slip with an accessible launch, a paddler’s plaza and kayak storage. In addition, the launch site has space to include two to three campsites for transient paddlers. Existing restroom facilities are in need of substantial universal accessibility improvements and new pathway infrastructure will be needed to link the site with sidewalk infrastructure leading to the downtown.



Existing Site



Trailhead

In an effort to maintain the integrity and use by motorboaters of the existing boat slips, it is recommended that the city construct a new slip, right up against the property line for the accessible launch. This effort would require significant excavation and the construction of a new retaining wall. However, the added space would allow for a paddler's plaza with kayak storage, a kayak staging area and picnic area. Areas near the launch could also be used for camping by transient paddlers.

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Accessible Routes

An extended pathway through the site will provide a clear and safe connection to restroom facilities, the New Buffalo Beach and sidewalks heading into the downtown.

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Trailhead

A second existing access site for the Galien River, off of Red Arrow Highway, was also identified by local officials and stakeholders for improvements. Third Coast Surf Shop rents kayaks, canoes and paddleboards during the summer months at the access site. However, heavy use has caused serious degradation and erosion of the shore line. In addition, the small access site has very limited parking. During the summer months, dozens of cars park along the side of Red Arrow, causing blind spots for drivers leaving the access site as well as drivers along the highway. Although the site is fairly small, it could accommodate an accessible kayak launch and formal staging area. These features would help improve and restore portions of the riverbank. Two alternative locations for the kayak launch are provided below.

Option One. Before Treatment



Option One. After Treatment



Option Two. Before Treatment



Option Two. After Treatment



Option Two. Before Treatment



Option Two. After Treatment



Wayfinding

In an effort to direct trail tourists to the proposed trailheads, the city should place the trailhead on all local wayfinding signs.

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Pedestrian Connections

If the city moves forward with plans to widen the sidewalks along the bridge over the Galien River, additional consideration should be given to creating a formal bicycle lane and/or “share the road” signs.

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Gateway

In an effort to welcome paddlers into New Buffalo, the city should place welcome signs and downtown wayfinding maps (kiosks) at the intersection of Whittaker Street and Water Street.

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Enhancing and Maintaining Pedestrian Amenities and Building Form

Providing for pedestrian amenities within the downtown is important in creating a friendly pedestrian and trail-tourist environment. Designing the downtown for pedestrians also increases the viability of the downtown retail market. The City of New Buffalo has discussed and considered formal streetscaping and redevelopment plans for the downtown for many years. This project did involve lengthy conversations with local officials and downtown business owners about the design and redevelopment options most suitable for New Buffalo. It should be noted that many of the building form guidelines and best practices discussed earlier in this document have been utilized and implemented in other project communities (e.g., South Haven) to great success. The following renderings are only meant to show how additional pedestrian amenities (e.g., wider sidewalks, mid-block crossings) and infill development might look like in New Buffalo.

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment - Infill



After Treatment - Public Space



Before Treatment



After Treatment



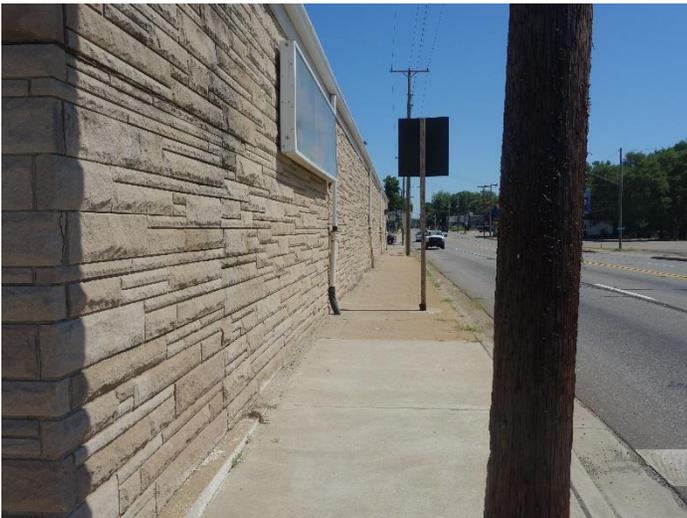
Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment

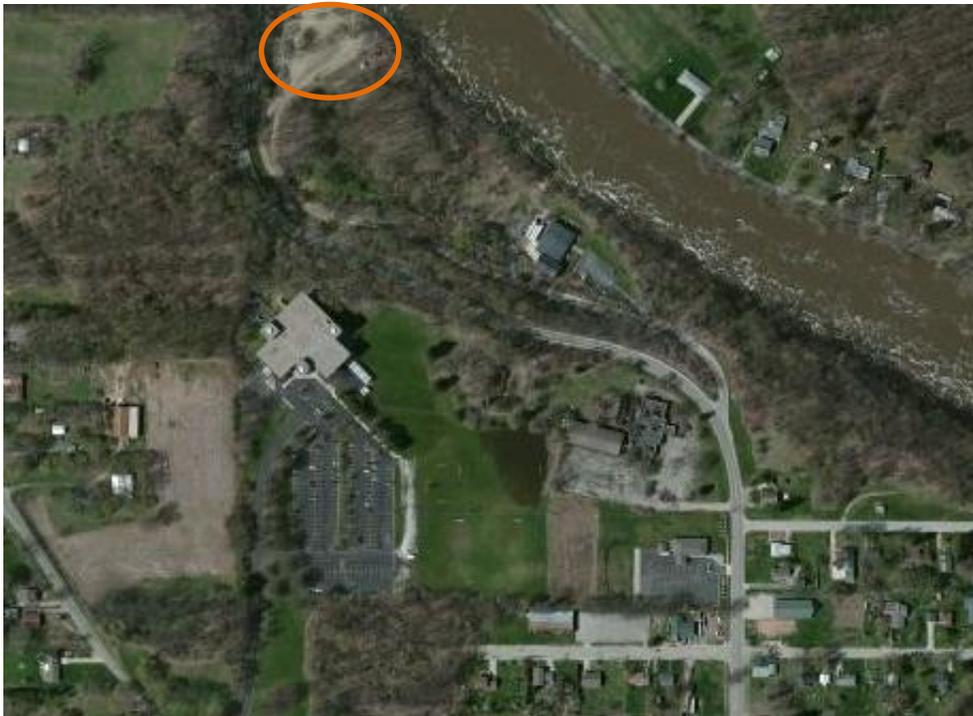


After Treatment



Buchanan

The City of Buchanan has three access sites along the St. Joseph River Water Trail that local officials and community stakeholders have identified for improvement. The first and closest access site to downtown Buchanan is commonly referred to as Redbud Riverfront Park. The park has a boat ramp and an expansive dirt parking area. The city recently ran power to the park and local officials have been considering developing a campground (with restrooms) in the park.



Existing Site



Trailhead

Depending on the configuration of future park amenities, local officials and community stakeholders identified two areas within the park in which an accessible launch, paddler's plaza and kayak storage could be located. In addition, areas within the park were identified that could accommodate camping by transient paddlers.

Option One – Left of Existing Boat Launch

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Option Two – Right of Existing Boat Launch (with added fishing dock)

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Camping

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment

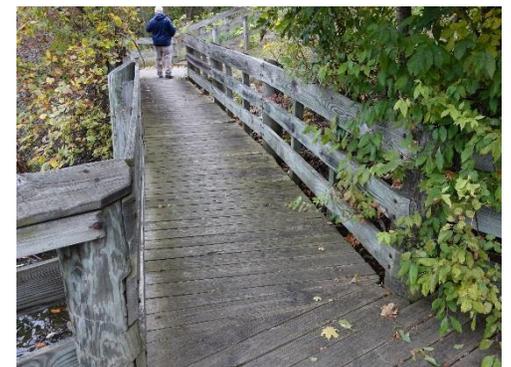


Trailhead

The second access site is located just above the Buchanan Dam, along Mead Road. The access site has a meandering pathway down to the river and a small dock. Many paddlers bypass the dock and exit the river along a narrow strip of beach just downstream. An accessible launch should be placed directly off the dock and the small beach area should be blocked off with new landscaping or signs.



Existing Site



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Trailhead

The third access site is located just below the Buchanan Dam, along East River Road. The access site also has a meandering pathway down to the river but no formal dock features. An accessible launch should be placed directly off the shoreline. In addition, a paddler's plaza and kayak storage could be placed at the site.



Existing Site



Before Treatment



After Treatment



McCoy's Creek Trail – Wayfinding & Pathway

The McCoy's Creek Trail traverses several miles through the heart of downtown Buchanan. Some segments pass along streets and through parks and neighborhoods. The city should place wayfinding signs at key intersections and road-crossings to clearly articulate the pathway of the trail through the downtown. This will be especially important along Dewey Street, where redevelopment plans are beginning to materialize.

Once the trail is in downtown Buchanan, it passes by the back façade of several restaurants and bars. The city should work with local restaurant owners to turn their back facades into outdoor seating overlooking the trail. In addition, the city should add benches and cultural kiosks in the plaza where the trail emerges from the back-side of the building to the front.

Wayfinding & Pathway

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Trail Frontage and Plaza

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Enhancing and Maintaining Pedestrian Amenities and Building Form

Wide sidewalks, narrow streets and crosswalks (with bump-outs) all work together to make downtown Buchanan very walkable. The city should continue to encourage and support redevelopment within the downtown and consider adopting design guidelines that address building form and façade characteristics.

Before Treatment



After Treatment



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Appendix E. Trail Town Short-Term & Long-Term Evaluation Form**Business Checklist**

Operations	Yes	No
Is the central business district easily identified?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do business hours match customer needs (i.e., open late and on weekends)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are downtown businesses clustered in a compact area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are customers greeted warmly when they walk through the door?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the merchandise and store clean and well kept?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do businesses cross-promote?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there window displays that show off the community's heritage?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do businesses encourage window shopping?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accommodations and Amenities		
Do businesses offer out-of-town shipping for large items?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there publicly-accessible restrooms in the businesses?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do businesses offer information on the town/region?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can employees answer questions about the town or region?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do employees answer questions in a friendly manner?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do shops carry souvenirs, especially related to the town?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there public universal accessible restrooms in the businesses?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix E. Trail Town Short-Term & Long-Term Evaluation Form

Signs

	Yes	No
Are business signs clearly visible and well designed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do the signs clearly state what is being sold?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do businesses clearly indicate that they're open?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are business hours posted on the front door or window?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Does your town have the following types of food service?

Outdoor vending machines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grocery or portable food	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coffee shop	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ice cream	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family-style restaurant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fast food or chain restaurant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Informal café with wait service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bar or tavern	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restaurant with liquor service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Does your town have the following types of services?

Bike rental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bike equipment and repair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Convenience store/quick stop	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drug store	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix E. Trail Town Short-Term & Long-Term Evaluation Form

	Yes	No
24-hour ATM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bookstore	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Laundromat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rental/outfitter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your town have these services and amenities?		
Hotel or motel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bed and Breakfast	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nearby camping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency medical service available	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family medical service available	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shuttling service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Taxi service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public park or green area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Calendar of events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to public email (e.g., library)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sufficient trash cans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Special events to encourage people to come into town?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do businesses use marketing tactics to invite people in?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a museum?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are places open on the weekend?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix E. Trail Town Short-Term & Long-Term Evaluation Form

Page Intentionally Left Blank

Trail Towns

What is a Trail Town?

A *Trail Town* is a community in which local officials have used their trail system as the focal point of a tourism-centered strategy for economic development and local revitalization. The Trail Town concept was originally developed by the Allegheny Trail Alliance, a coalition of seven trail organizations along the Great Allegheny Passage, a 150-mile multi-use trail running through Pennsylvania and Maryland. Many communities in Michigan are now working to develop their own local Trail Town Program. The basic Trail Town concept is simple: **ensure that communities along the trail are better able to maximize the economic potential of trail-based tourism.**



The local Trail Town effort can be centered around any type of trail (e.g., non-motorized, snow-mobile, equestrian and kayak). While the Trail Town concept is primarily geared toward cities and towns, the concept is very much applicable in rural areas that have at least one small center of commercial activity. Most Trail towns are not isolated communities — they are linked together by the trail, creating a regional destination for residents, trail users and tourists.

How Does a Community Establish a Trail Town?

While there are a number of different ways in which local communities can organize around an effort to create a Trail Town Program, the most common approach has been to use the “Four Point Approach” developed by the National Main Street Center of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

1. **Organization.** Establish consensus and cooperation by building partnerships among various groups that have a stake in the local trail system and the downtown.
2. **Promotion.** Sells the image and promise of a Trail Town to all prospects.
3. **Design.** Gets the Trail Town into top physical shape to create a safe and appealing environment.
4. **Economic Restructuring.** Helping existing businesses expand and recruit new businesses to respond to current trail activities and market forces.

What are the Benefits of Becoming a Trail Town?

Over the last several years, as the full economic potential of linking trails, recreation, tourism and business development has become better known, the Trail Town concept has caught on. According to an article from the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, “Communities around the country are increasingly utilizing the ‘Trail Town’ model of economic revitalization that places trails as the centerpiece of a tourism-centered strategy for small town revitalization.” In fact, studies from neighboring states like Wisconsin have shown that bicycle tourism supports more than \$900 million in tourism and residential spending each year.

Appendix G.



Access Recreation Group, LLC

Cindy Burkhour, MA, CTRS, CPRP

2454 Lamplighter Drive, Jenison, MI 49428-9127

Phone (616)669-9109 Mobile (616)560-2378

AccessRecreationGroup@juno.com

Inclusive Universally Accessible and ADA Compliant Water Trail Launch Site Features

Paddlers of all abilities want to launch and land smoothly without capsizing or damaging their watercraft. They need firm surfaces that support their movement from their arrival place to the launch at water's edge and sufficient space to accommodate the length of their watercraft during put-in and take-out. In addition, paddlers must be able to stabilize their watercraft during transitions into and out from their vessel and into and out from the water. It is important to consider universal design practices in the development of the complete water access facility, from car to launch. Simply put, universal design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

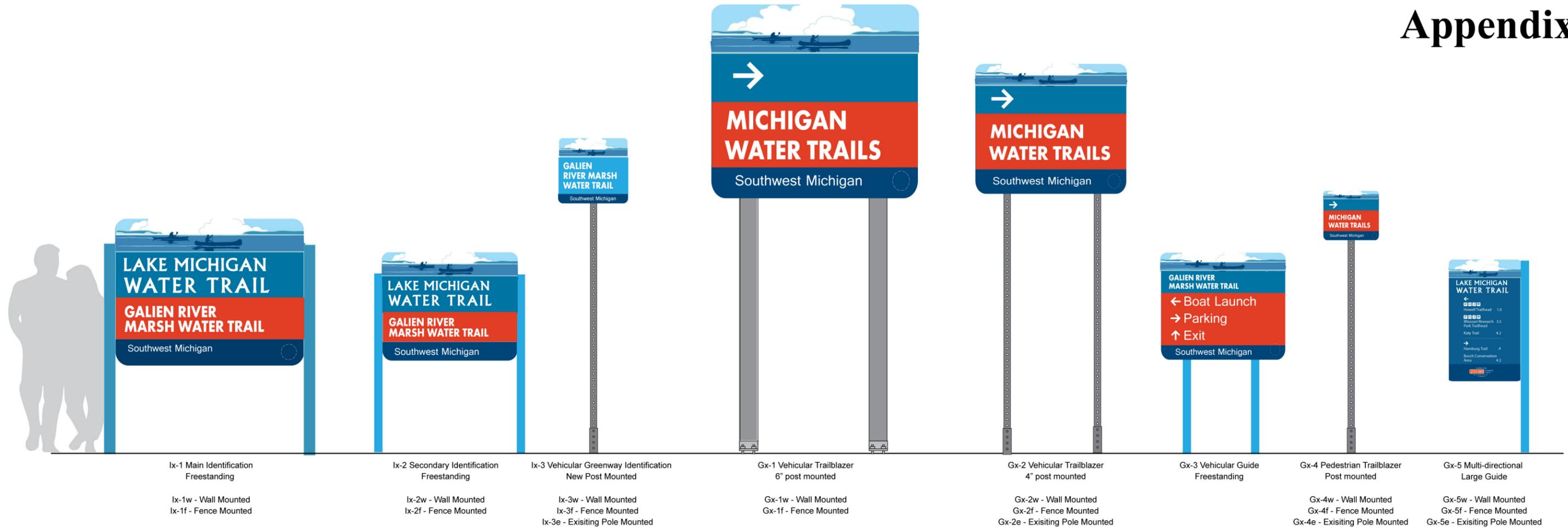
Launch sites that provide inclusive universal accessibility for everyone, including paddlers with disabilities, have the following site design features and amenities that are easy to use by everyone together:

- Improved surface accessible route with slopes no greater than 5% & at least 6' wide from parking to restrooms & water source, information kiosks, and to launch at water's edge. Route widths 6 to 12 feet wide best accommodate a two person watercraft carry and it provides enough space for two people to pass by;
- Routes that have switch back turns need level landings at every change of direction and the landing must be large enough to accommodate a two-person carry down w/vessel to make the turn without stepping off the route surface or encountering elevated barriers such as handrails or landscaping;
- Gangway and ramp slopes that are below 8.33%, which is the maximum slope allowed in the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessible Design Guidelines (and the hardest slope allowed by law);
- Accessible restrooms with at least one universally accessible single-user unisex restroom so opposite gender care givers can provide assistance, there is enough interior space for someone using a walker or wheelchair to maneuver &/or parents of young children have space for strollers & to assist kiddo's;
- Accessible potable water source that is approachable on all sides and that is operable with one hand, doesn't require pinch grasp or wrist twist, and requires less than 5#'s of force to operate. Water spigots for filling water bottles where the water flow stays on so you can fill a bottle with one hand;

- Kiosk information provided in accessible formats and approachable via accessible surface surrounding the kiosk;
- Accessible parking space(s) located nearest the accessible route to the launch at water's edge, including both car and car/trailer parking spaces;
- At least one accessible design picnic table, grill, etc. all of which are useable by everyone together and located on an accessible route;
- Universally accessible canoe/kayak launch system such as the EZ Launch that is connected to the accessible route; at least 25 feet long to allow paddlers "dry" access to entire length of their watercrafts when preparing to enter/exit the craft prior to launching; a means of transfer/boarding assistance such as boarding bench that centers the paddler over the craft to enter/exit; pull rails & rollers to assist moving the vessel into and out of the water on a surface that stabilizes the craft and doesn't damage the crafts bottom;
- Indicate accessibility features on maps, web-sites (this could be a drop down list with descriptions). Launch sites that meet all of the above could be identified by the Access to Recreation logo on the signs on the water trail and on information kiosks. Web-sites and maps could list features. Ex A2R logo = parking, restrooms, picnic, water, EZ Launch, etc.;
- If there is NOT an EZ Launch... a good description & photo(s) of the water's edge exit/entry point should be provided (so the paddler can decide if it's useable for them) along with information about any accessibility features at the location. This can be on the web-site to help paddlers planning. On maps indicate fully accessible sites with the A2R logo and indicate those sites that only meet minimal ADA access & provide a list of features that are;

We are currently working to put accessibility information on the greatlakeswatertrail.org web site which will identify the location of all EZ Launch locations in the great lakes region!!

Appendix H



Ix-1 Main Identification
Freestanding
Ix-1w - Wall Mounted
Ix-1f - Fence Mounted

Ix-2 Secondary Identification
Freestanding
Ix-2w - Wall Mounted
Ix-2f - Fence Mounted

Ix-3 Vehicular Greenway Identification
New Post Mounted
Ix-3w - Wall Mounted
Ix-3f - Fence Mounted
Ix-3e - Existing Pole Mounted

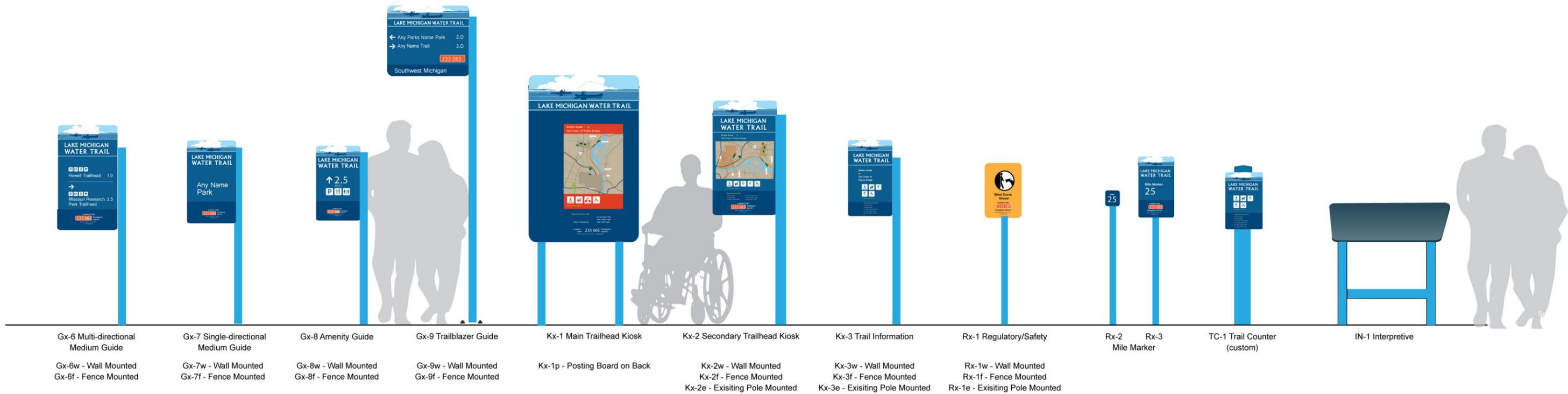
Gx-1 Vehicular Trailblazer
6" post mounted
Gx-1w - Wall Mounted
Gx-1f - Fence Mounted

Gx-2 Vehicular Trailblazer
4" post mounted
Gx-2w - Wall Mounted
Gx-2f - Fence Mounted
Gx-2e - Existing Pole Mounted

Gx-3 Vehicular Guide
Freestanding

Gx-4 Pedestrian Trailblazer
Post mounted
Gx-4w - Wall Mounted
Gx-4f - Fence Mounted
Gx-4e - Existing Pole Mounted

Gx-5 Multi-directional
Large Guide
Gx-5w - Wall Mounted
Gx-5f - Fence Mounted
Gx-5e - Existing Pole Mounted



Gx-6 Multi-directional
Medium Guide
Gx-6w - Wall Mounted
Gx-6f - Fence Mounted

Gx-7 Single-directional
Medium Guide
Gx-7w - Wall Mounted
Gx-7f - Fence Mounted

Gx-8 Amenity Guide
Gx-8w - Wall Mounted
Gx-8f - Fence Mounted

Gx-9 Trailblazer Guide
Gx-9w - Wall Mounted
Gx-9f - Fence Mounted

Kx-1 Main Trailhead Kiosk
Kx-1p - Posting Board on Back

Kx-2 Secondary Trailhead Kiosk
Kx-2w - Wall Mounted
Kx-2f - Fence Mounted
Kx-2e - Existing Pole Mounted

Kx-3 Trail Information
Kx-3w - Wall Mounted
Kx-3f - Fence Mounted
Kx-3e - Existing Pole Mounted

Rx-1 Regulatory/Safety
Rx-1w - Wall Mounted
Rx-1f - Fence Mounted
Rx-1e - Existing Pole Mounted

Rx-2 Rx-3
Mile Marker

TC-1 Trail Counter
(custom)

IN-1 Interpretive

CITY OF GLADSTONE

ORDINANCE # 586

ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 46, STREETS, SIDEWALKS AND CERTAIN OTHER PUBLIC PLACES, OF THE CITY OF GLADSTONE CODE OF ORDINANCES BY ADDING THEREOF ARTICLE I., COMPLETE STREETS INFORMATION, TO PROVIDE FOR AND REGULATE A DESIGN PRINCIPLE TO PROMOTE A SAFE NETWORK OF ACCESS FOR PEDESTRIANS, BICYCLISTS, AND MOTORISTS OF ALL AGES AND ABILITIES.

WHEREAS, walking and bicycling are non-motorized transportation options that enhance health through physical activity and help reduce air pollution;

WHEREAS, the "Complete Streets" guiding principle is to promote a safe network of access for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, motorists and users of all ages and abilities; and

WHEREAS, other jurisdictions and agencies nationwide have adopted Complete Streets legislation including the U.S. Department of Transportation, the State of Michigan (Bills HV 6151 and 6152), and numerous Michigan communities such as Lansing, Flint, Jackson, Midland and Houghton and

WHEREAS, the promotion of capital improvements that are planned, designed and constructed to encourage walking, bicycling, and transportation options increases the general safety and welfare for all of the City of Gladstone's citizens; and

WHEREAS, as a matter of policy, City officials should integrate and implement the "Complete Streets" guiding principle.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY OF GLADSTONE ORDAINS:

SECTION 1. That Chapter 46. Streets, Sidewalks and Certain Other Public Places, of the City of Gladstone Code of Ordinances is hereby amended by adding thereof Article I the following:

Sec. 46-1(a). Definitions.

"Complete streets" is defined as a design principle to promote a safe network of access for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists of all ages and abilities.

Sec. 46-4. Complete Streets Improvements.

The City of Gladstone will plan for, design, and construct all transportation improvement projects, both new and retrofit activities, to provide appropriate accommodations for bicyclists, pedestrian, transit users, and persons of all ages and abilities in accordance with the City of Gladstone Master Plan and the Capital Improvements Plan.

In furtherance of that policy:

(a) The City of Gladstone Master Plan and Capital Improvements Plan shall be referenced and its implementation considered prior to construction or reconstruction

within the City's rights-of-way.

(b) The Master Plan and Capital Improvements Plan will include, at a minimum, accommodations for accessibility, sidewalks, curb ramps and cuts, trails, pathways, signage, bike lanes, and shall incorporate principles of complete streets and maximize walkable and bikeable streets within the City of Gladstone.

(c) The accommodations shall also be designed and built using guidance from the most recent additions of the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities*, the Michigan manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MMUTCD) (MDOT), and the *American with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG)*. Methods of providing flexibility within safe design parameters, such as context sensitive design solutions and design, will be considered.

(d) The City of Gladstone Master Plan will be updated every five (5) years from the date of its initial adoption and the Capital Improvements Plan will be updated annually.

(e) It will be the goal of the City to fund the implementation of the Master Plan and Capital Improvement Plan, which shall include expending State Act 51 funds received by the City annually in accordance with Public Act 135 of 2010, as amended.

Sec. 46-152. Exceptions.

Facilities for bicyclists, pedestrians, transit users, and people of all ages and abilities are not required to provide in instances where a documented exception is provided by the City Manager and granted by the City Commission based on findings of one or more of the following conditions:

(a) Where their establishment would be contrary to public health and safety,

(b) Where the City Commission determines the cost would be disproportionate to the need or probable use,

(c) When the cost would result in unacceptable diminishing of other city services,

(d) Where there is no identified long-term need,

(e) Where the length of the project does not permit a meaningful addition to the non-motorized network, or

(f) Where reconstruction of the right-of-way is due to an emergency.