

**SECTION VI. ACTION PROGRAM.....**

- Appendix \_X\_: Cost Estimates for Basketball Court at Alpine Estates Park..... \_\_\_\_\_
- Appendix \_X\_: Community Park Schematic Master Site Plan..... \_\_\_\_\_
- Appendix \_X\_: Cost Estimates for Community Park Improvements..... \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION VI. ACTION PROGRAM**

This Action Program is based on, and directly linked to, the Goals and Objectives noted in Section V of this plan. The Goals and Objectives were, in turn, largely developed based on the public input and planning processes described in detail in Section IV of this plan.

This Action Program focuses on reducing park and recreation deficiencies and making facility improvements to meet present and future community needs. Justification for short- and long-term decisions can be carefully developed by contextually applying all of the previous Sections of this plan.

The following Action Program identifies the preferred course for parks, recreation, fitness and trail improvements to be undertaken over the next five to ten years. Admittedly, this limited time period will not be sufficient to accomplish all of the items noted in this Action Program. However, this Action Program should serve as a reference document when prioritizing projects and developing the City of Walker Capital Improvement Plan and the annual line item budget. The public input and planning processes undertaken to date suggest that the sites and topics **highlighted in yellow are top priorities.**

**The 2014 Walker Parks and Recreation Master Plan *Action Program***

**Note: Goals & Objectives are herein referenced by abbreviation (for example, G1) and are fully described in Section V of this plan.**

Site 1: English Hills Park

GOALS: G1, G2, G5, G6, G8, G9, G10, G13, G14

Note 1: The adjacent and privately-owned English Hills Golf Course property has long been proposed for redevelopment. The last plan showed a new park on the golf course property with links to the adjacent subdivision.

Note 2: The property to the east, owned by Loeks, is wooded and heavily sloped. A vehicle / pedestrian link to Alpine Avenue has been planned but the possibility is remote.

Note 3: City officials should meet with local residents to develop a list of desired site improvements before finalizing any new equipment or facility plans.

Note 4: Based on public comment received, older people are moving out of the local neighborhood and being replaced by younger families with children. The park will be used more by neighborhood children in the near future.

Note 5: This is an isolated neighborhood park / open space and is very important to those living nearby.

## **ACTIONS**

- Eliminate the Port-A-John and install an ADA-compliant restroom building.
- Update existing playground equipment.
  - Ensure existing playground equipment meets the State of Michigan Playground Equipment Safety Act.
  - Any new equipment must be ADA compliant.
  - New playground equipment should be “thematic” and not just a traditional swingset / slide.
- Formalize the basketball court by separating the court from the parking lot and installing ADA compliant features.
- Work with adjacent property owners (English Hills Golf Course and Loeks) to formalize and improve trail connections to the park.
- Either upgrade the existing ball field or remove it entirely, based on present and projected use.
  - If the ball field is removed then a professionally-designed programmatic site plan should be developed for the new features and facilities.
  - Keep the ball field and add electrical service for a pitching machine.

## Site 2: Fairview Elementary School Site – Currently Vacant

GOALS: G1, G2, G3, G4, G6, G8, G13, G14

Note 1: Neighborhood is likely deficient in public park facilities and is one of Walker's "urban core" areas.

Note 2: Property has been sold and redeveloped by Feyen Zylstra, a local electrical contractor firm.

Note 3: City officials should meet with local residents to develop a list of desired site improvements before finalizing any new equipment or facility plans.

### **ACTIONS**

- Work with Feyen Zylstra to "share" use of the parking lot and playground and ball fields as a "public-private partnership" park.
  - Any new equipment and facilities must be ADA compliant.
  - New playground equipment should be "thematic" and not just a traditional swingset / slide.

## Site 3: Alpine Estates Ravines – LOW PRIORITY SITE

GOALS: G1, G5, G8, G9, G13, G14

Note 1: Neighborhood is likely deficient in public park facilities and is one of Walker's "urban core" areas.

Note 2: Terrain is sloped and a drainage easement / route / pipes / manholes might be in place along the valley floor.

Note 3: All property is currently owned by the City of Walker.

Note 4: City officials should meet with local residents to develop a list of desired site improvements before finalizing any new equipment or facility plans.

### **ACTIONS**

- Construct trail system to link Harding Street and Glenaire Drive. Install mileage signs. (See trail link in Alpine Estates Park.)

#### Site 4: Alpine Estates Park

GOALS: G1, G2, G5, G6, G8, G9, G13, G14

Note 1: The neighborhood is likely deficient in public park facilities and is one of Walker's "urban core" areas.

Note 2: This is a large but neighborhood-type park.

Note 3: City officials should meet with local residents to develop a list of desired site improvements before finalizing any new equipment or facility plans.

Note 4: MDNR grants were obtained for park improvements in 1991 (\$60,000) and 2000 (\$280,422.)

#### **ACTIONS**

- Update existing playground equipment.
  - Ensure existing playground equipment meets the State of Michigan Playground Equipment Safety Act.
  - Any new equipment must be ADA compliant.
  - New playground equipment should be "thematic" and not just a traditional swingset / slide.
- Install ADA compliant basketball court in the currently underutilized area past the baseball diamond outfield fence. Cost estimates shown in Appendix \_\_\_\_\_.
- Add, loop and connect walking trails. Install mileage signs.
- Add electrical outlet near home plate for pitching machine.

#### Site 5: Springhill Park / Edison House

GOALS: G2, G3, G6, G7, G8, G9, G13, G14

Note 1: Terrain is sloped and a drainage easement / route / pipes / manholes might be in place along the valley floor.

Note 2: City officials should meet with local residents to develop a list of desired site improvements before finalizing any new equipment or facility plans.

Note 3: Walker Historical Committee is working on a draft site improvement plan and is seeking funding. Status of this plan is uncertain.

Note 4: Still a question if this site is a park, historical museum or something else.

Note 5: An unsuccessful MDNR grant application was made in 2003.

## **ACTIONS**

- Construct a sledding and snowboarding hill facility.
- Install theme-consistent landscaping to soften the industrial edges.
- Possibility of shared use for adjacent industrial parking lot?
- Examine the improvements as “Connor Prairie Park” in Indianapolis for programmatic and facility ideas.
  - Splash pad
  - Snack bar
  - Indoor play area
  - Native American themes
  - Historical perspectives.

## Site 6: Elmridge Pond Area – LOW PRIORITY SITE

GOALS: G2, G3, G4, G5, G8, G9, G10, G13, G14

Note 1: Kent County Parks / Road Commission have constructed a paved trail to the north of 3 Mile Road, called the Pioneer Trail, which will eventually link the regionally-important Musketawa Trail and the White Pine Trail.

Note 2: A past plan called for the construction of the “Grand Walk Trail” along the former railroad bed but that idea has faded.

Note 3: City officials should meet with local residents to develop a list of desired site improvements before finalizing any new equipment or facility plans.

## **ACTIONS**

- Acquire property and/or work with Royal Vista Apartments for regional trailhead and connector trail construction.
- The former train tunnel is a unique feature that might “brand” a future trail connection.

- The reconstruction of Elmridge Avenue might create design opportunities for non-motorized improvements.
- All equipment and facilities must be ADA compliant:
  - Install scenic boardwalk around pond west of Elmridge.
  - Install parking lot and permanent restroom facilities.
  - Install dog park.
  - Install picnic area.
  - Install community garden area.
  - Install trail links with barrier free info and way-finding signage.

### Site 7: Orchard Ridge Park

GOALS: G2, G6, G13, G14

Note 1: This is a prototypical “neighborhood pocket park.” As such, consider improvement funding via local Special Assessment District, given the localized benefits.

Note 2: Meet with local residents to develop a list of desired site improvements before finalizing any new equipment or facility plans.

Note 3: Previous MDNR / DTE grant funding allowed the original tree planting.

Note 4: This park land was acquired by the city of Walker via the subdivision approval process.

### **ACTIONS**

- Install additional professionally-designed landscaping that can withstand site conditions.
- All equipment and facilities must be ADA compliant:
  - Ensure existing playground equipment meets the State of Michigan Playground Equipment Safety Act.
  - Expand the playground area using “thematic” equipment.
  - Install gazebo and picnic area.
  - Install community garden area.
  - Install a walking trail along the park perimeter with mileage signage.
  - Maintain and update existing equipment but otherwise leave alone.

## **Site 8: City Central Park / Public School Grounds – PRIORITY SITE**

GOALS: G1, G2, G3, G4, G6, G8, G9, G10, G12, G13, G14

Note 1: Define what is city-owned and what is owned by KHPS. City has 99-year lease.

Note 2: This a community-wide park but might become a regional destination if certain improvements and connections are constructed.

Note 3: City officials should meet with local residents to develop a list of desired site improvements before finalizing any new equipment or facility plans.

Note: An MDNR grant for improvements was obtained in 1975 (\$35,919.)

### **ACTIONS**

- All equipment and facilities must be ADA compliant:
  - Ensure existing playground equipment meets the State of Michigan Playground Equipment Safety Act.
  - Update playground area using “thematic” equipment not typical swingset and slide.
  - Install rock climbing boulders for multiple user abilities.
  - Install splash pad near playground equipment and restrooms
  - Keep sand volleyball courts – dual use as sandbox for small children.
  - Repair tennis courts and consider including handball / pickle ball facilities.
  - Install paved trail mileage and way-finding signage.
  - Update soccer fields and ball fields by:
    - Splitting large soccer field into two or three smaller fields.
    - Adding portable bleachers.
    - Repurposing northerly small ball fields into small dedicated soccer fields.
    - Repositioning remaining ball fields to minimize summer evening sun glare.
    - Add electrical service for baseball pitching machines.
    - Pioneer League has invested in fencing and turf at ball fields.
    - One diamond is the only field that can be used by Pioneer League for 13-15 year old players.

## **Site 9: Walker Ice & Fitness Center (WIFC) – PRIORITY SITE**

GOALS: G1, G2, G3, G4, G6, G8, G10, G11, G12, G13, G14

Note 1: This is a city owned and city operated facility.

Note 2: City officials should meet with facility users and local residents to develop a list of desired site improvements before finalizing any new equipment or facility plans.

Note 3: WIFC is a regional destination and should be marketed, branded and updated with this in mind.

- Install additional professionally-designed landscaping near entrance.
- Staff should create 1-year, 5-year and 10-year capital improvement programs, plus a longer-term “wish list.” Implementation could help “brand” the facility.
- All equipment and facilities must be ADA compliant:
  - Construct an indoor pool with locker rooms.
  - Construct a field house or an indoor training field.
  - Expand and modernize the gym, track, training, wellness and fitness areas and the diversity of offered programs.
  - Expand services and facilities for seniors and children.
  - Expand locker room facilities.
  - Add an outdoor training area.
  - Add indoor “futsal court” or “ginga court.”

#### **Site 10: Blandford Nature Center – PRIORITY SITE**

GOALS: G2, G4, G5, G7, G8, G9, G13, G14

Note 1: This is a Grand Rapids-owned facility that is partially contained in the City of Walker.

Note 2: Meet with local residents to develop a list of desired site improvements before finalizing any new equipment or facility plans.

Note 3: Annoesjka Steinman, former Executive Director of Blandford Nature Center, has partnered in the Walker zoning and master planning process. There is a separate site master plan for the Blandford Nature Center.

Note 4: Check the Blandford Master Plan to reduce duplication of services in City of Walker parks and to synergize our recreation programs, particularly those of natural, cultural and historical interest. Foster a ‘Walker – Blandford Brand.’”



## **ACTIONS**

- All equipment and facilities should be ADA compliant:
  - Construct bike and pedestrian connections through the construction of trails, sidewalks and on-street bike lanes.
    - Install barrier free info plus way-finding and mileage signage.

### Site 11: West Chesterfield Park

GOALS: G1, G2, G5, G6, G8, G9, G13, G14

Note 1: The city owns several lots in the area.

Note 2: City officials should meet with local residents to develop a list of desired site improvements before finalizing any new equipment or facility plans. The last meeting was in 1998 and there were concerns about linking neighborhoods via trails.

## **ACTIONS**

- All equipment and facilities must be ADA compliant:
  - Update and expand the playground area using “thematic” equipment, not typical swingsets and slides.
  - Ensure existing playground equipment meets the State of Michigan Playground Equipment Safety Act.
  - Install a seasonal walking trail with mileage signage.
    - Connect the adjacent neighborhoods via trails and sidewalks.
    - Use trail as environmental education feature, given the existence of wetlands, streams and ponds.
    - Include circuit training stations along the trail.
- This is a prototypical “neighborhood pocket park.” As such, consider improvement funding via local Special Assessment District, given the localized benefits.

## Site 12: Community Park – PRIORITY SITE

GOALS: G1, G2, G3, G4, G6, G7, G8, G9, G10, G12, G13, G14

Note 1: This is currently a neighborhood park. However, the proposed action program improvements might expand the user base to a community-wide park level.

Note 2: City officials should meet with local residents to develop a list of desired site improvements before finalizing any new equipment or facility plans. (An onsite community open house was held on 6-19-14.)

Note 3: The Standale Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is interested in the programmatic plan for this park and its potential synergy with Downtown Standale.

### **ACTIONS**

- All equipment and facilities must be ADA compliant:
  - Update and expand the playground area using “thematic” equipment, not typical swingsets and slides.
  - Ensure existing playground equipment meets the State of Michigan Playground Equipment Safety Act.
  - Install rock climbing boulders for multiple user abilities.
  - Install gravity-system splash pad.
  - Add two hoops to basketball court to allow half-court play.
  - Add portable bleachers for soccer field.
  - Construct a sledding / snowboarding hill and ice skating park with warming shed and equipment rental. This could be a winter festival focal point.
  - Construct an amphitheater into the hill for offsite acoustic impact control.
    - Provide shaded ADA and BF seating.
  - Install electrical outlet / service for pitching machines at all ball fields.
  - Add ball fields by purchasing private land to the south.
  - Lower speed limit on Cummings Avenue to 25 mph for family / pedestrian traffic safety.
  - Add a beginner-to-intermediate skate park.
  - Minimize mowing by restoring turf to native vegetation types.
  - Construct a walking trail system with seating areas in an organized manner similar to Blandford Nature Center.
  - Construct bike and pedestrian connections to the adjacent neighborhoods and “Downtown Walker” through the construction of trails, sidewalks and on-street bike lanes.
    - Install way-finding and mileage signage.
    - Add bicycle “park and lock” equipment.

- Brand park as part of “Downtown Walker-Standale.”

A schematic master site plan for Community Park is included in Appendix \_\_\_\_\_. Cost estimates based on the plan are included in Appendix \_\_\_\_\_.

### Site 13: Lincoln Lawns Park and Fred Meijer Standale Trail – PRIORITY TOPIC

GOALS: G2, G3, G8, G9, G13, G14

Note 1: City officials should meet with local residents to develop a list of desired site improvements before finalizing any new equipment or facility plans.

Note 2: The park was improved in 2007 with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding.

Note 3: The Standale Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is also interested in the programmatic plan for this park and its potential synergy with Downtown Standale.

Note 4: The Fred Meijer Standale Trail is both a local trail and a regional trail and should be signed, connected and branded as such.

### **ACTIONS**

- All equipment and facilities must be ADA compliant:
  - Update and expand the playground area using “thematic” equipment, not typical swingsets and slides.
  - Ensure existing playground equipment meets the State of Michigan Playground Equipment Safety Act.
  - Add a permanent restroom facility.
  - Consider re-programming soccer field.
  - Either acquire property or use city property to develop a trailhead for the Fred Meijer Standale Trail.
  - Install a short-term trail crossing using “refuge island” design features to move trail users across Lake Michigan Drive. New traffic light at Manzana?
  - Seek long-term funding for a bridge or tunnel crossing of Lake Michigan Drive for trail users. Land acquisition may be required.
- Lincoln Lawns Park is a prototypical “neighborhood pocket park.” As such, consider improvement funding via local Special Assessment District, given the localized benefits.

## Site 14: Harmon Park & 28-Acres – PRIORITY SITE

GOALS: G2, G3, G5, G6, G8, G9, G10, G13, G14

Note 1: Harmon Park is currently a neighborhood park but the programming of the adjacent 28-acres might expand the user base and city benefits to that of a community-wide park. The impact of regional trail interconnections and links to Kent County's Millennium Park might eventually raise these facilities to the level of a regional park.

Note 2: City officials should meet with local residents to develop a list of desired site improvements before finalizing any new equipment or facility plans.

Note 3: The City of Walker has recently acquired the vacant 28-acre parcel to the east for a very reasonable cost via the tax foreclosure process.

- Existing Harmon Park:
  - All equipment and facilities must be ADA compliant:
  - Ensure existing playground equipment meets the State of Michigan Playground Equipment Safety Act.
  - Update the playground area using “thematic” equipment, not typical swingsets and slides.
  - Construct a permanent restroom facility.
  - Add equipment to park and lock bicycles.
  
- Vacant 28-Acre Property:
  - Work with a professional landscape architect to carefully assess, program and design any development on the 28-acres property.
    - Ensure green space / buffer for adjacent residential lots.
  - Install ADA compliant equipment and facilities:
    - Install a dog park.
    - Test area for disc golf course.
    - Install a playground area using “thematic” equipment, not typical swingsets and slides.
    - Install tennis and basketball courts.
    - **Plan and construct trail link easterly to Mines Golf Course.**
    - Conserve the steeply-sloped southeastern portion of the property as a natural area. Preserve woods.

- Consider limited mountain bike course development in conjunction with local and regional rider groups.
- Gravel trails
- Nature Trails
- Mountain bikes / off-road

#### Site 15: Johnson Park and Millennium Park

GOALS: G2, G4, G5, G6, G8, G9, G10, G12, G13

Note 1: These parks are entirely or partially within the City of Walker, are owned by Kent County and are operated by the Kent County Parks Department.

Note 2: Meet with local residents to develop a list of desired site improvements before finalizing any new equipment or facility plans.

Note 3: Roger Sabine, Director of the Kent County Parks Department, has partnered in the Walker zoning and master planning process. There are separate site master plans for Johnson Park and Millennium Park.

- Check the Johnson Park and Millennium Park master plans to reduce duplication of services in City of Walker parks and to synergize our programs and facilities.
- Consider the following uses in Johnson Park and Millennium Park:
  - Archery league
  - Water sports lakes, similar to Okeehewee County Park in Florida
  - Dog park
  - Mountain bike trails.

#### Trails / Sidewalks / Bike Lanes – System Improvements – PRIORITY TOPIC

GOALS: G2, G4, G5, G6, G8, G9, G12, G13, G14

Note 1: City officials should meet with local residents to develop a list of desired site improvements before finalizing any new equipment or facility plans.

Note 2: The Standale Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is interested in the “non-motorized” plan and its potential synergy with Downtown Standale.

#### **ACTIONS**

- All equipment and facilities must be ADA compliant:

- Develop a Walker “non-motorized network” of trails, sidewalks and on-street bike lanes linking neighborhoods, parks, Blandford Nature Center, schools, businesses and downtown Grand Rapids.
  - Construct trail connector from Harmon Park easterly to Mines Golf Course area. Alternative route from O’Brien and Maynard easterly to Grand Rapids.
  - Construct on-street bike lanes on Leonard Street from Kinney easterly to Grand Rapids. Install mileage and way-finding signage.
  - Construct on-street bike lanes on Remembrance Road southerly to Leonard Street. Install mileage and way-finding signage.
  - Construct on-street bike lanes on Richmond Street easterly to create a non-motorized link to Blandford Nature Center. Install mileage and way-finding signage.
  - Link the Pioneer Trail to the Fred Meijer Standale Trail.
  - Link the Pioneer Trail to the White Pine Trail.
  - Construct a trail from Richmond Street at Maplerow northerly to the former railroad bed and easterly to Elmridge then northerly to the existing Pioneer Trail. Install mileage and way-finding signage.
  
- Construct “street calming / refuge island” type crossings for the Fred Meijer Standale Trail as it crosses Remembrance Road at Justin and at Leonard Street.
  
- Construct a bridge or a tunnel for the Fred Meijer Standale Trail as it crosses Lake Michigan Drive in Standale.
  
- Install signage at trail heads regarding distances, destinations and barrier free accessibility features.

## **FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

The City of Walker will continue to finance its parks and recreation programs with annual and capital funding. However, there are a number of other possible funding sources, which the City will explore:

### **Non-Motorized Transportation Funding Options**

Bicycle and pedestrian projects are broadly eligible for funding from nearly all major federal highway, transit, safety, and other programs. To be eligible for federal funding,

bicycle projects must be principally for *transportation*, rather than recreation purposes, and must be designed and located pursuant to the transportation plans required of states and Metropolitan Planning Organizations, such as the Grand Valley Metro Council (GVMC).

Bicycle and pedestrian projects may include the construction of shared-use paths, the restoration of historic brick streets and pedestrian areas, the construction of pedestrian bridges and similar types of non-motorized improvements and connections.

The following is a summary of potential funding sources available for bicycle and pedestrian projects.

### **Federal Highway Administration Funding Sources**

#### **National Highway System**

The National Highway System (NHS) is composed of 163,000 miles of urban and rural roads and highways serving major population centers, major travel destinations, international border crossings, and intermodal transportation facilities. The interstate highway system is part of the National Highway System.

Eligibility: Bicycle and pedestrian facilities within NHS corridors are eligible activities for NHS funds, including projects within interstate rights-of-way (23 U.S.C. 103(b)(6)).

Matching funds: 80 percent federal, 20 percent state, subject to a sliding scale.

Considerations: Shared use paths along interstate corridors are eligible for the use of NHS funds, as are on-street bike lanes, shoulder and sidewalk improvements on other freeways and major arterial roads that are part of the NHS, and bicycle and/or pedestrian bridges and tunnels that cross NHS facilities. Bicyclists and pedestrians can be expected to use NHS facilities, especially in urban and suburban areas, and thus should be accommodated in the design and operation of these facilities. Opportunities to improve conditions for the non-motorized modes should be taken whenever resurfacing, reconstruction, or expansion projects on NHS routes are undertaken. The NHS routes in Walker are I-96, US-131, and M-11. Note that Remembrance Road, Alpine Avenue (M-37), Lake Michigan Drive (M-45), Wilson Avenue (M-11), 3 Mile Road and Fruit Ridge Avenue are listed as a MAP-21 Principal Arterials.

#### **Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program**

The Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program enables states to replace or rehabilitate highway bridges over waterways, other topographical barriers, other highways, or railroads when those bridges are unsafe.

Eligibility: Highway bridges, located on any public road, that are either “functionally obsolete” or “structurally deficient” are eligible for replacement or rehabilitation using Bridge Program funds (23 U.S.C. 144).

In cases where a highway bridge deck is being replaced or rehabilitated with federal financial participation, and bicyclists are permitted to operate at each end of such bridge, and the safe accommodation of bicyclists can be provided at reasonable cost as part of such replacement or rehabilitation, then such bridge shall be so replaced or rehabilitated as to provide such safe accommodations (23 U.S.C. 217).

Matching funds: 80 percent federal, 20 percent state, subject to a sliding scale.

Considerations: Bicyclists and pedestrians are impacted greatly by diversions and obstacles which add even relatively short distances to a trip. The average walking trip is just half a mile, so the lack of access or safe facilities on a bridge can mean trips are not made or short trips are made by car instead.

The safety and convenience of bridge crossings of rivers, interstates, major highways, railway lines, and other corridors are critical for bicyclist and pedestrian mobility, as there are often limited opportunities to overcome these obstacles. Bicycle and pedestrian improvements on bridges are usually carried out as an incidental part of a larger replacement or rehabilitation project and funds can be used to provide a range of on-street, sidewalk, and trail facilities depending on the appropriate design for the bridge and the location.

## **Surface Transportation Program**

The Surface Transportation Program (STP) provides states with flexible funds that may be used for a wide variety of projects on any federal-aid highway, including the NHS, bridges on any public road, and transit facilities.

Eligibility: Bicycle and pedestrian improvements are eligible activities under the STP. This covers a wide variety of projects such as on-road facilities, off-road trails, sidewalks, crosswalks, bicycle and pedestrian signals, parking, and other ancillary facilities. The modification of sidewalks to comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act is an eligible activity.

As an exception to the general rule described above, STP-funded bicycle and pedestrian facilities may be located on local and collector roads that are not part of the federal aid highway system. STP funds are eligible to be spent on a wide variety of improvements for bicycling and walking including, but not limited to, on- and off-road facilities, bicycle parking, planning studies, state and local bicycle and pedestrian



coordinator positions, spot improvement programs, sidewalks, cross-walks, and traffic calming projects.

Matching funds: 80 percent Federal, 20 percent State, subject to a sliding scale.

NOTE: There is a set-aside program within the STP, funded with 10 percent of STP's total funding.

Considerations: GVMC policies currently favor spending STP monies on road construction/improvement/maintenance projects.

### **Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)**

- TAP was created by the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act (MAP-21) signed into law in July 2012.
- TAP is a competitive grant program that uses federal transportation funds designated by congress for specific activities that enhance the intermodal transportation system and provide safe alternative transportation options.
- Approximately \$23 million is available annually. Of this, approximately \$16.5 million is available through a competitive grant process administered by MDOT. \$6.5 million is available through a competitive grant process administered by Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO's) like the Grand Valley Metro Council (GVMC).

#### Eligibility:

- Safe Routes to School (SRTS) eligible activities

TAP provides funds to the states to substantially improve the ability of primary and middle school students to walk and bicycle to school safely. The purposes of the program are: 1. To enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school 2. To make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age; and 3. To facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity (approximately 2 miles) of primary and middle schools (Grades K-8).

Each state administers its own program and develops its own procedures to solicit and select projects for funding. The program establishes two distinct types of funding opportunities: infrastructure projects (engineering improvements) and non-infrastructure related activities, such as education, enforcement, and encouragement programs.

Infrastructure projects might include:

- Facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians, including traffic calming and other safety improvements
- Safe routes for non-drivers
- Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails
- Turnouts, overlooks and viewing areas
- Historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities
- Inventory, control or removal of outdoor advertising
- Vegetative management practices in transportation rights-of-way
- Archeological activities
- Environmental mitigation activities
- Boulevards in the right-of-way of former interstates or other divided highways.

#### Program Requirements

- Eligible applicants include county road commissions, cities, villages, regional transportation authorities, transit agencies, state and federal natural resource or public land agencies, and tribal governments. MDOT may partner with a local agency to apply for funding and implement the project. Other organizations, such as townships or trail groups, may work with an eligible agency to apply. In partnership with an eligible applicant, schools or school districts may apply for Safe Routes to School eligible activities.
- In order to apply for funding to implement Safe Routes to School eligible activities, a school-based planning process must first take place in order to develop an action plan to make walking and biking safer for kids around a particular school.

Matching Funds: Minimum 20 percent match. Additional consideration is given to projects whose match exceeds the minimum requirements.

#### **Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)**

SAFETEA-LU established the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) in 2005. It replaced the previous set-aside of each State's STP apportionment for infrastructure safety activities. HSIP funds can be used for pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements. States may obligate funds under the HSIP to carry out the following:

1. Any highway safety improvement project on any public road or publicly owned bicycle or pedestrian pathway or trail; or
2. Safety projects, as provided under the Flexible Funding for States With a Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

### **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program**

The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program assists areas designated as non-attainment or maintenance under the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 to achieve and maintain healthful levels of air quality by funding transportation projects and programs. Since 1996, Kent and eastern Ottawa counties have been considered in “non-attainment” for air quality by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Program Requirements: Projects funded under the CMAQ program must be located in areas that were designated as a non-attainment area Section 107(d) of the Clean Air Act and classified pursuant to Sections 181(a), 186(a), or 188(a) or (b) of the Clean Air Act. Projects must be likely to contribute to the attainment of National Ambient Air Quality Standards (or the maintenance of such standards where this status has been reached) based on an emissions analysis.

Eligibility: The Federal Highway Administration’s 1996 Guidance on the CMAQ program identifies the following as some eligible projects: Construction of bicycle and pedestrian facilities; non-construction projects related to safe bicycle use; and the establishment and funding of state bicycle/pedestrian coordinator positions, as established by ISTEA, for promoting and facilitating the increased use of non-motorized modes of transportation.

Matching funds: The federal share for most eligible activities and projects is 80 percent, or 90 percent if used on certain activities on the interstate system, or up to 100 percent for certain identified activities such as traffic control signalization and carpooling projects.

Considerations: The CMAQ program has funded numerous bicycle and pedestrian improvements including bikeway networks in cities such as Philadelphia, Houston, and New York City; pedestrian and bicycle spot improvement programs; bicycle parking; bicycle racks on buses, sidewalks, trails; and promotional programs such as bike-to-work events. CMAQ funds have also been used to fund bicycle and pedestrian coordinator positions at the state and local level.

## **High Priority Projects (HPP)**

When congress drafted the last federal transportation legislation, SAFETEA-LU, some funding was set aside on a community-by-community basis for non-motorized transportation projects. This funding is not tied to any existing federal funding category

Eligibility: High Priority Project funds may be used only for the projects identified in the law.

## **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Funding Source**

State and Community Highway Safety Grant Program (Section 402). The State and Community Highway Safety Grant Program supports State highway safety programs designed to reduce traffic crashes and resulting deaths, injuries, and property damage.

Eligibility: States are eligible for these funds (commonly known as “Section 402 funds”) by submitting a Performance Plan, with goals and performance measures, and a Highway Safety Plan describing actions to achieve the Performance Plan. Grant funds are provided to states, the Indian Nations, and Territories each year according to a statutory formula based on population and road mileage.

Funds may be used for a wide variety of highway safety activities and programs including those that improve pedestrian and bicycle safety. States are to consider highly effective programs (previously known as National Priority Program Areas), including bicycle and pedestrian safety, when developing their programs, but are not limited to this list of activities.

Matching funds: Federal share is 80 percent.

Considerations: States may determine the kinds of activities on which they spend these funds. States are encouraged to consider bicycle and pedestrian safety initiatives, as these are areas of national concern where effective countermeasures have been identified. States have funded a wide variety of enforcement and educational activities with Section 402 funds including safety brochures; “Share the Road” materials; bicycle training courses for children, adults, and police departments; training courses for traffic engineers; helmet promotions; and safety-related events.

## **Federal Transit Administration Funding Sources**

### **Urbanized Area Formula Grants (transit)**

The Urbanized Area Formula Grants program provides transit capital and operating assistance to urbanized areas with populations of more than 50,000.

Eligibility: Capital projects are defined as including “pedestrian and bicycle access to a mass transportation facility.”

Matching funds: Federal share is typically 80 percent. However, bicycle projects may be funded at up to a 90 percent Federal share.

Considerations: Urban areas with more than 200,000 people, such as the GVMC MPO area, may not spend these funds on operating costs, but can cover the costs of preventive maintenance as well as other capital costs. These funds may be spent to provide stand-alone bicycle and pedestrian improvements such as bicycle parking and pedestrian access to transit stations, and on larger projects that include bicycle and pedestrian elements, such as the purchase of new buses with bicycle racks.

At least one percent of Urbanized Area Formula funds appropriated to areas with more than 200,000 in population must be used for transit enhancement activities, as described below.

### **Transit Enhancements**

One percent of the Urbanized Area Formula Grants apportioned to urban areas of at least 200,000 in population are set aside for a new category of transit enhancements. This program is distinct from the Transportation Enhancement Program.

Eligibility: Eligible activities under the Transit Enhancement Program include pedestrian access and walkways, and bicycle access, including bicycle storage facilities and installing equipment transporting bicycles on mass transportation vehicles.

Matching funds: Federal share for bicycle-related transit enhancements is 95 percent. Federal share for all other transit enhancements is 80 percent.

Considerations: Metropolitan Planning Organizations (GVMC), in collaboration with transit operators, like The Rapid, have the responsibility to determine how the funds in this new category will be allocated to transit projects, and to ensure that one percent of the urbanized area’s apportionment (as opposed to one percent of each transit agency’s funds) is expended on projects and project elements that qualify as enhancements. The one percent figure is not a maximum or cap on the amount of funding that can be spent on enhancement activities, except for those activities (in particular operating costs for historic facilities) that are only eligible as enhancement activities.

### **Miscellaneous Federal Funding Sources**

#### **Transportation and Community and System Preservation (TCSP) Pilot Program**

The TCSP is a competitive grant program designed to support exemplary or innovative projects that show how transportation projects and plans, community development, and preservation activities can be integrated to create communities with a higher quality of life.

The annual grant program is administered by the FHWA, in partnership with the FTA and Environmental Protection Agency, and may be used to fund state, MPO, or local government agencies. Bicycling, walking, and traffic calming projects are eligible activities that may be featured as an integral part of many proposed projects that address larger land use and transportation issues.

### **Safety Incentive Programs**

**Seat Belt Use:** An incentive program to encourage states to increase seat belt wearing rates rewards those States with higher than average rates with a greater percentage of funding from a \$500 million funding category created by TEA-21. The funds may be used for any project eligible for funding under Title 23. This includes a range of bicycle and pedestrian projects, both construction and non- construction.

### **State of Michigan Funding Sources**

Recreational Trails Program

### **Natural Resources Trust Fund**

The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) projects provide for natural resource protection and outdoor recreation. By law, no more than 25 percent of the Trust Fund revenues available for appropriation each year can be used for development, therefore the majority of funding is allocated for land acquisition projects.

Criteria: Applications are evaluated using criteria established by the MNRTF Board of Trustees. There are eight criteria for acquisition applications (nine for development applications):

1. Need for project
2. Applicant history
3. Site quality and Project quality
4. Natural Resource Protection and Use/Recreation Opportunities
5. Financial Need of the Applicant
6. Urban Area Recreation Opportunities
7. Local Match
8. Entrance Fees
9. Universal Design (development applications only)

Program Requirements: The state and counties, cities, townships, villages, school districts, the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority, or any authority composed of counties, cities, townships, villages or school districts, or any combination thereof, which authority is legally constituted to provide public recreation. Local units of government must have a DNR-approved 5-year recreation plan on file with the Department prior to application.

Dollar Amount(s) Available: Development project minimum/maximum grant amount: \$15,000 to \$300,000. No minimum/maximum limits on land acquisition grants.

Match: Local units of government must provide at least 25% of the project's total costs as local match.

### **Land and Water Conservation Fund**

Criteria: Applications are evaluated using four criteria: project need, applicant history, site and project quality, and alignment with the state's recreation plan. The fourth criterion is how well a project aligns with Michigan's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and is cumulative among the following categories: trails, community outdoor recreation, green technology in outdoor recreation, universal access or coordination and cooperation among recreation providers. This criterion was developed based on the 2013-2017 Michigan Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

Program Requirements: Any unit of government, including Native American tribes, school districts, or any combination of units in which authority is legally constituted to provide recreation. Local units of government, tribes, school districts, and local authorities must have a DNR-approved community five-year recreation plan to be eligible.

Dollar Amount(s) Available: The minimum grant request amount is \$30,000 and the maximum grant request amount is \$100,000.

Match: At least 50% of the total project cost in local match is required from local government applicants.

### **Local Public Recreation Facilities Passport Grant**

PA 32 of 2010 created the Local Public Recreation Facilities Fund to be used for the development of public recreation facilities for local units of government. The grant program may only be used for local development projects.

Eligible Activities: The program is focused on renovating and improving existing parks, but the development of new parks is eligible.

Criteria: Applications are evaluated using four criteria: project need, applicant history, site and project quality, and alignment with the state's recreation plan. The fourth criterion is how well a project aligns with Michigan's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and is cumulative among the following categories: trails, community outdoor recreation, green technology in outdoor recreation, universal access or coordination and cooperation among recreation providers. This criterion was developed based on the 2013-2017 Michigan Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

Program Requirements: A local unit of government, including cities, villages, townships, and counties, or any combination thereof, in which authority is legally established to provide public recreation.

Dollar Amount(s) Available: The minimum grant request amount is \$7,500 and the maximum grant request amount is \$45,000.

Match: Must be at least 25% of total project cost.

### **Michigan Department of Transportation Funding**

**Michigan Transportation Fund Act 51:** Section 10k Public Act 51 of 1951 governs state appropriations for most Michigan highway and transportation programs at the state and local level. It describes transportation revenue sources, transportation programs, and how revenues can be used.

Revenues from the Michigan Transportation Fund are generated from state gas and value taxes. The funding is divided among the Michigan Department of Transportation, county road commissions, cities, and villages. Each Act 51 agency is required by law to spend, at a minimum, 1% of the Act 51 dollars on non-motorized improvements. This funding may be used to provide the match for federal funds.

In 1972, Act 51 of 1951 was amended (P.A. 327) to allow road agencies to expend funds on non-motorized transportation facilities, and since 1972 Act 51 has been amended several more times, the latest being P.A. 82 of 2006. Section 10k of P.A. 82 states:

1. Transportation purposes as provided in this act include provisions for facilities and services for non-motorized transportation including bicycling.



2. Allocates not less than 1% from the Michigan transportation fund for construction or improvement of non-motorized transportation services and facilities.
3. Improvements which facilitate non-motorized transportation shall be considered to be a qualified non-motorized facility for the purposes of this section.
4. Units of government need not meet the provisions of this section annually, provided the requirements are met, averaged over a period of 10 years.

Fundable projects include on-road facilities, off-road facilities, and non-motorized planning and educational materials.

## **Michigan Department of Housing and Urban Development**

### **Community Development Block Grants**

Overview: The Kent County Community Development Department implements the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program in all Kent County communities except Grand Rapids, Cedar Springs, and Wyoming. Funds are distributed from the federal government to the County on a formula basis. The formula considers extent of poverty, population, housing overcrowding, age of housing, and population growth lag in relation to other metropolitan areas.

The Community Development Department awards funding to local projects based on the following requirements:

1. Meets a need identified in an established action plan;
2. Not less than 70% of funds must be used for activities that benefit low and moderate income persons; and
3. The activity meets one of the CDBG national objectives (i.e., benefits low and moderate income persons, prevention or elimination of slums or blight, or a particular urgency because existing conditions pose a serious and immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community).

The Kent County Community Development Department is also responsible for implementing the Shelter Plus Care program, which contracts with non-profit housing corporations to provide rental units as permanent housing for homeless individuals and families.

## Goals:

- The conservation and expansion of Kent County's housing stock in order to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for all persons, but principally those of low and moderate income.
- The provision of a more rational utilization of land and other natural resources and the better arrangement of residential, commercial, industrial, recreational and other needed activity centers.
- The reduction of the isolation of income groups within communities and geographical areas, and the promotion of an increase in the diversity and vitality of urban and rural communities.
- The restoration and preservation of properties of special value for historic, architectural or aesthetic reasons.

Kent County has used this program on a limited basis for non-motorized facility development in areas where the criteria fits. Grand Rapids, Wyoming, and Cedar Springs have similar programs that are administered at the municipal level rather than the county level. The same basic regulations would apply.

## **Non-Profit Organization Funding Sources**

### **West Michigan Trails & Greenways Coalition (WMT&GC)**

The West Michigan Trails & Greenways Coalition (WMT&GC) is a non-profit group of donors, organizations and volunteers dedicated to developing non-motorized trails and greenways into a linked system connecting wilderness areas, parks, historic landmarks and cultural sites throughout West Michigan. Their vision is to develop a regional trails and greenways network to connect communities with each other and to the natural areas, parks, historic landmarks, cultural venues, and civic destinations throughout the region.

Formed in May, 2000, some of WMT&GC activities include:

- Addressing over 585 miles of regional connections
- Providing a forum for local trail groups
- Establishing networking opportunities with partners

- Assisting “friends” groups with funding assistance for local projects.

In 2007, the West Michigan Trails & Greenways Coalition completed a \$6 million capital campaign that funded 28 miles of trails. WMT&GC provides leadership and support for several on-going area trail projects.

### **American Hiking Society National Trails Fund**

The National Trails Fund, sponsored by the American Hiking Society, provides support to grass-root non-profit organizations working toward establishing, protecting, and maintaining foot trails in America. Grants help give local organizations the resources they need to secure access, volunteers, tools, and materials to protect America’s public trails. Support is provided for projects that increase trail lands, including the cost associated with the acquisition of trails, trail corridors, and conservation easements.

### **Other Miscellaneous Funding Sources**

**Millage:** A millage is a tax on property owners based on the value of their home. Millages are use-specific and approved by a vote of the residents. Millages can be utilized to hire staff, engineers, and construction firms, provide maintenance to facilities, or form the basis of a bond issue to provide capital for the construction of non-motorized facilities. For example, in November 2006, Ada Township residents approved a dedicated millage for a period of 15 years to be used exclusively for expansion, operation, and maintenance of the township’s non-motorized trail system.

**Special Assessment:** A special assessment is a special kind of tax on a subset of a community. Special assessments are placed on those adjacent land owners who will receive the greatest benefit from a project to be funded using a special assessment. Special assessments are a common way cities fund sidewalk construction and improvements.

**General Funds:** A community’s or road agency’s general fund dollars have no restrictions placed on them preventing them from being used for non-motorized improvements. Indeed, general funds are among the most unrestricted funds at a community’s discretion. The improvements do, however, need to be approved by a community’s governing body such as a board of commissioners or city council. Locally, Grand Rapids Charter Township has made exceptional use of general funds to leverage

Transportation Enhancement grants for shared-use path development in the township. Additionally, communities may repay bonds with general funds or with dedicated millages.

**Private Sources:** Thanks to the generosity of private donors in West Michigan, several of the largest and most successful trail projects have been funded in large part by grants from private benefactors, notably Frederik Meijer. Additionally, some communities hold fund drives to raise private funds or other grants of labor and materials in small increments from the community.

**Foundations:** Community and private foundations may also provide an important funding source for non-motorized transportation development. For example, MDOT Transportation Enhancement grants will pay for the construction of shared-use path but not for any feasibility studies or engineering work. Foundations can play an important part in filling the gaps left by other funds. Other facility amenities such as picnic grounds or boardwalks may also be paid in part with grants from foundations.