

Oakland County Environmental Stewardship

Trail / Path Planning



CHECKLIST

OAKLAND COUNTY PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
L. Brooks Patterson – County Executive

Revised January 2003

INTRODUCTION

Oakland County Planning & Economic Development Services has established a vision for a linked trail/path system throughout the county. The vision includes a hierarchy of trails and paths. Some trail segments will be found separate from road corridors within parklands, or along abandoned rail lines, utility corridors, and dedicated conservation easements. Other facilities will incorporate segments of side or safety paths within road rights of way. The vision's successful implementation is dependent upon the participation of many interests. Municipal officials, park and recreation agencies, planning consultants, equestrians, bike clubs, land conservancies, watershed councils, the business community and individual citizens (to name a few) each have role. The following ten step process will help to get you started in the establishment of a trail/path network in your community. Use this checklist to guide your planning efforts and measure progress.

Trail/Path Planning Checklist

1. Have you.... developed a base map with pertinent information?

In order to conduct a thorough analysis it is important to assemble as much pertinent information as available. Assemble a base map with as many of the items listed below as possible.

Checklist Items – Information Gathering:

- Recreation Lands
- Trails/Paths/Routes – existing and proposed.
- Natural Features
- Lakes, Rivers, Streams, Wetlands
- Historic Sites
- Schools/Churches
- Surface Topography/Slopes
- Views and Vistas
- Utility Corridors
- Town Centers/Convenience Centers
- Road Network
- Land Uses

2. Have you.... identified existing and future populations locations to be served by the trail/path system?

The regular use of trails/paths are dependent, in part, upon the proximity of the population served and the ease of access to the system. Population centers may reside within the municipality to be served or beyond it's borders in adjacent communities. Local land use and master plans identify existing and potential populations within each municipality.

Checklist Items – Population.

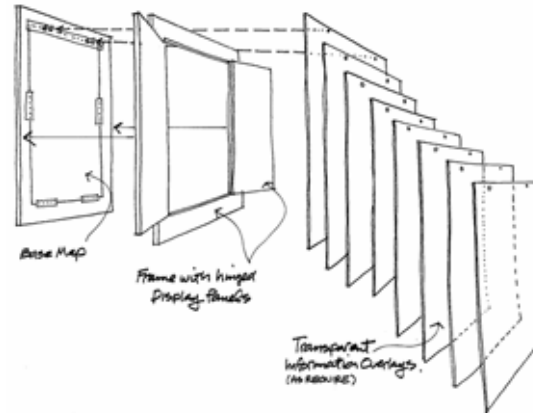
- Existing residential populations
- Proposed residential populations



Tools, Tips & Contacts

Tools 

See if your community has a Geographic Information System which may help you in compiling the necessary map sets a common scale and format.

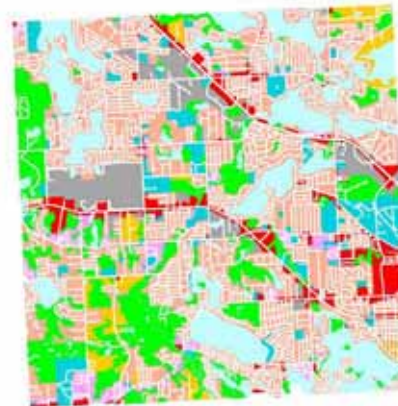


Tools 

Oakland County Planning has developed overlay map display systems for numerous communities in Oakland County. Check with your community or the County Planning to see if your community has one for reference.

Tools 

Check your community's existing and proposed land use plans to determine population centers locally.



Community Master Land Use Plan

Contact 

Oakland County has composite land use and master plan maps which present a broader picture of land uses and residential population locations.

Contact Oakland County Planning & Economic Development Services – Phone: 248-858-5438

**3. Have you....
identified the types of use the system will
accommodate?**

Trail/path corridors can accommodate a variety of uses if designed with these uses in mind. It is important to define the desired uses early in the planning process as they will play a role in corridor selection.

Checklist Items – Trail/Path Uses

- Biking
- Hiking
- Cross Country Skiing
- Equestrian
- Nature Interpretation
- Roller Blade
- Nature Interpretation
- ADA
- Other

**4. Have you....
Identified important community features to be
linked by the trail/path network.**

The interest and function of a trail system is dependent upon its destination features. Parks, natural areas, schools, churches, town centers, historic sites, cultural features and job centers (to name a few), all provide purpose and interest to the trail user. The higher the quality and diversity of features linked by the trail system, the richer the quality of the users experience.

Checklist Items – Destination Features:

- Town/Community Centers
- Neighborhoods
- Recreation Lands
- Natural Areas
- Schools/Churches
- Library
- Historic Sites
- Convenience/Restroom
- Cultural Features
- Job centers
- Other

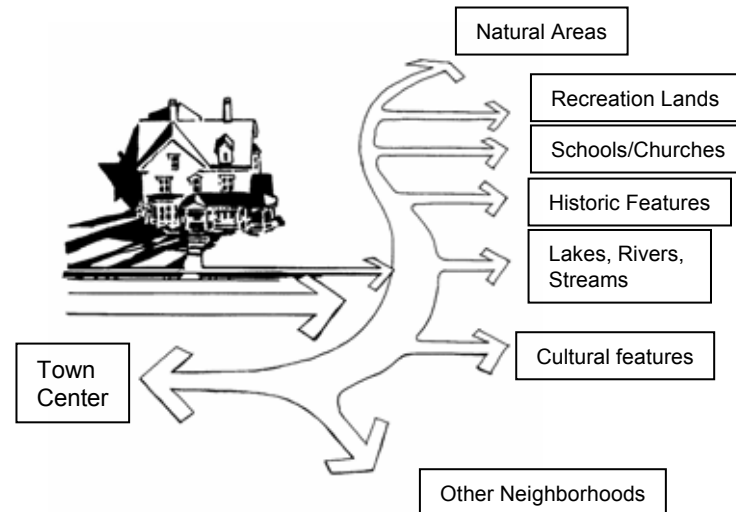


Tools, Tips & Contacts



Tip 

Certain types of trail/path uses are best accommodated on separate facilities within the same corridor - example: equestrians and cyclists. Check potential corridor widths to determine if there is adequate space to accommodate multiple trails within the same right of way.



Tip 

Involve representatives and interests associated with the destination features into the planning process. A broad base of support for the initiative will be needed to see the project through to a successful completion

**5. Have You....
Identified corridor options for a trail/path network?**

The range of corridor options available for trail/path development vary from community to community. Outline all the potential options available and then prioritize according to needs, function and cost .

Checklist Items - Corridor Options:

- Park and Recreation Lands
- Utility Corridors
- Rail Corridors (abandoned and active).
- Riparian/ Natural Corridors
- Road Corridors
- Other

**6. Have You....
identified and highlighted county and regional trail system routes?**

Oakland County has developed a vision for a linked trail/path system. The proposed system of primary trails and paths has two components - a cross county trail and a north county trail loop. It is envisioned that a secondary level of trails and paths will provide a network of links to of those Oakland County municipalities choosing to participate.

The county system of trails and paths will become part of a regional trails and greenways system throughout S. E. Michigan.

Checklist Items – County Trail/Path System:

- Location of county primary trail/path system corridors within your community.



Tools, Tips & Contacts



Park and Recreation Lands



Utility Corridors



Rail Corridors
(abandoned and active).



Riparian/ Natural Corridors



Road Corridors



Tip

Utilize a combination of trail corridor options to achieve your objectives. In highly developed areas, corridor options may be more limited, while undeveloped areas may offer the opportunity to work with land developers to establish a trail/path network in concert with new developments and shared property lines.



Tools

Establish or become a part of a multi-community workgroup to explore trail planning, development and management options. Granting agencies look more favorably on multi-jurisdictional efforts for funding.



Tools

Oakland County and the Southeast Michigan GreenWays Initiative have been coordinating efforts to establish a regional system of trails and greenways. Contact each agency to receive valuable information on trail routes and sources of funding.



Contact

Oakland County Planning & Economic Development services –
Ph: 248-858-5438
GreenWays Initiative
Community Foundation for SE MI
Ph: 313-961-6675

**7. Have You.....
Identified potential conflicts and constraints?**

Trail/path routes should be sited to minimize potential natural and social impacts. The proximity of a new trail/path to residential properties or other potentially sensitive land uses should be identified early on in the route analysis.

Checklist Items –Conflicts & Constraints:

- Road Crossings
- Adjacent property owners
- River, stream wetland crossings.
- Sensitive Natural Areas
- Steep Slopes
- Drive Crossings
- Other

**8. Have You....
Identified potential links to adjacent road
bounded cells, municipalities?**

Trail/path networking opportunities transcend local boundaries. Each road bounded cell or land unit has a potential relationship with the adjacent unit within the municipality. Likewise each municipality can benefit from seeking to link their internal trail/path system with adjacent municipalities. Take a systems approach to planning trail/path networks and seek to link beyond prescribed boundaries.

Checklist Items – Links:

- Potential trail/path corridor links with adjacent communities.



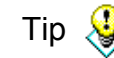
Tools, Tips & Contacts



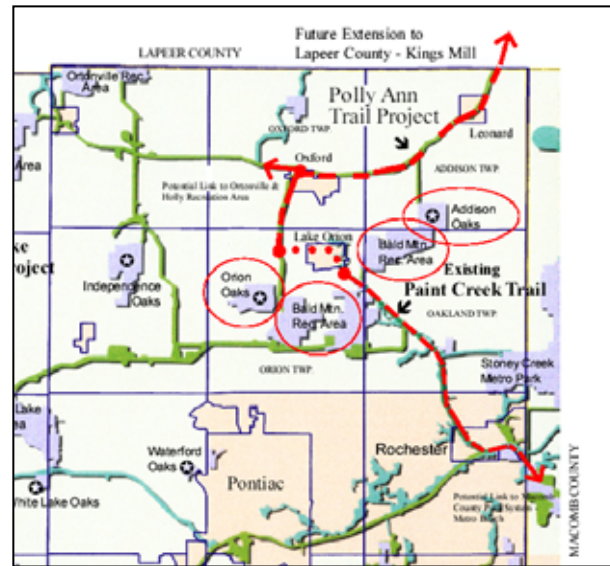
Conflicts



Commercial corridors with many entrance/exit drives can be dangerous to trail/path users. If possible it is best to avoid crossing drive locations when locating new trail/path facilities.



Trail/path planning and development should consider opportunities both within and beyond the local jurisdiction's borders. Partnerships between communities can reduce overall development, management and maintenance costs as well as providing access to a broader range of features within the locality.



**9. Have You.....
Identified potential trailheads/staging sites?**

Trail use is enhanced by strategically placed trail access points which accommodate parking, restrooms, potable water, map directory and possible food and beverage concessions. These facilities may be newly constructed or may take advantage of existing facilities where appropriate.

Checklist Items – Potential Trailheads/Staging Areas Opportunities

- Town/Community Centers
- Park & Recreation Areas
- Schools
- Other

**10. Have You....
Developed a means to measure, track and report progress?**

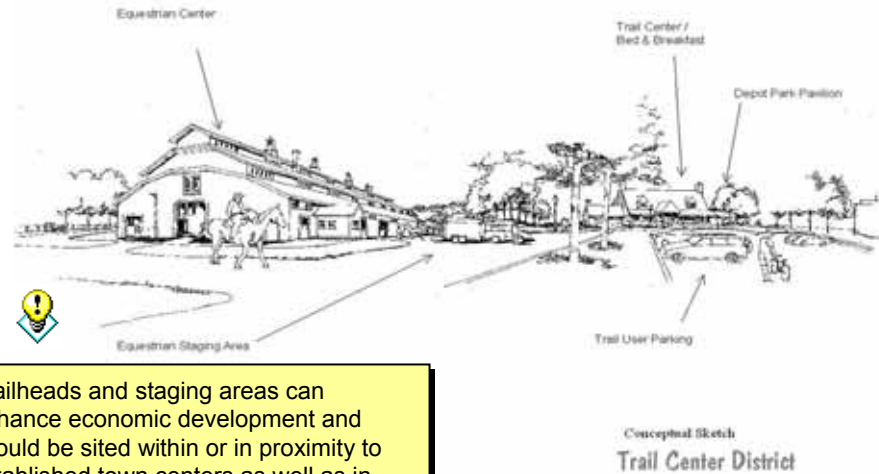
It is important to measure and report progress in the various stages of the path system's development and operation. Important milestones should be reported to stakeholders and the public and celebrated as accomplishment of the action plan.

Checklist Items – Measuring & Reporting

- Annual Report
- Tracking Map
- Marketing Brochure
- Website

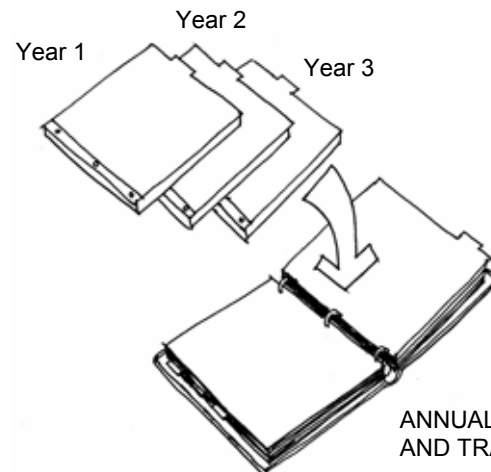


Tools, Tips & Contacts



Tip

Trailheads and staging areas can enhance economic development and should be sited within or in proximity to established town centers as well as in less developed settings such as parks and natural areas.



**ANNUAL REPORTS
AND TRACKING MAPS**

Tools

Annual reports can be utilized to measure progress, market the trail, and determine needed adjustments to the development/management plan. Establish a reporting and tracking mechanism early on in the planning & development process.