

Michigan Built Environment Assessment

Appendices

February 2025

APPENDICES

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Appendix A: National Physical Activity and Built Environment Landscape

Background

Physical activity is one of the best things people can do to improve their health. It is vital for healthy aging, can reduce the burden and presence of many types of chronic diseases, and can prevent early death.¹ Traditional exercise programs are not enough to make sustained gains in chronic disease prevention. Community efforts to address physical inactivity must also include policy, system, and environmental (PSE) approaches where people live, learn, work, play, pray, and receive care. This includes enhancing the built environment so that regular lifelong physical activity can be sustained. Community environments and transportation systems are critical Social Determinants of Health and must be designed in ways that are inclusive by incorporating the priorities of residents.

Successful PSE approaches within community and transportation environments will lead to increased impact, reach, and sustainability. *“A well-designed environment that promotes physical activity would help reduce physical inactivity levels and promote public health.”²*

NATIONAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY/BUILT ENVIRONMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Federal health and transportation agencies provide funding and guidance documents for state and local entities to implement built environment strategies to promote sustained physical activity. Access to promising, evidence-, or practice-based approaches will assist state, regional, and local jurisdictions to

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [About Physical Activity](#), (2024).

² J Zong, W Liu, B Niu, X Lin, and Y Deng, [“Role of Built Environments on Physical Activity and Health Promotion: A Review and Policy Insights,”](#) *Frontiers in Public Health*, Issue 10 July. (2022): page 2.

build their capacity and align with national strategic and funding goals. The chart below summarizes recommended strategies from federal health and transportation agencies.

TABLE 5: FEDERAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY/BUILT ENVIROMNET APPROACHES

National Agency, Initiative, or Group	Recommended Physical Activity/Built Environment Approaches
Community Guide (Community Preventive Services Task Force)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian/Bicycle Transportation System Intervention Components (“Activity Friendly Routes”): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Street patter design and connectivity ○ Pedestrian infrastructure ○ Bicycle infrastructure ○ Public transit infrastructure and access • Land Use/Environment Design Intervention Component (“Everyday Destinations”): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mixed land use ○ Increasing residential density ○ Proximity to community or neighborhood destinations ○ Parks and recreational facility access
Active People, Healthy NationSM (Strategies to Increase Physical Activity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active People, Healthy Nation PSE Strategies to Increase Physical Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community Design for Physical Activity (Activity Friendly Routes and Everyday Destinations) ○ Access to Places for Physical Activity ○ Prompts to Encourage Physical Activity ○ Equitable and Inclusive Access
Federal Highway Administration Active Transportation ³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US DOT Policy Statement on Bicycle/Pedestrian Accommodation Regulations and Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider walking and biking as equals with other transportation modes ○ Ensure that transportation choices exist for people of all ages and abilities (especially children) ○ Go beyond minimum design standards for walking and biking facilities ○ Integrate bicycle/pedestrian accommodation on new, rehabilitated, and limited-access bridges ○ Collect data on walking and biking trips ○ Establish mode share targets for walking and biking and track these over time ○ Remove snow from sidewalks and shared-use paths ○ Improve non-motorized facilities during maintenance projects • Health in Transportation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promote safety ○ Improve air quality

³ Federal Highway Administration, [Active Transportation](#), (2024).

National Agency, Initiative, or Group	Recommended Physical Activity/Built Environment Approaches
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Respect the natural environment through Context Sensitive Solutions ○ Improve social equity by improving access to jobs, healthcare, and other community services ○ Create additional opportunities for the positive effects of walking, biking, public transportation, and ride- and vehicle-sharing ○ Conduct research on transportation's role in improve quality of life ● Transportation and Livability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enhance integration of multimodal transportation infrastructure and facilities ○ Expand opportunities for economic development and revitalization ○ Provide safe and adequate accommodations for all users ○ Increase community connectivity and cohesion ○ Capitalize on the value of existing (context sensitive) community amenities ○ Enhance access to jobs, schools, and other services ○ Integrate mobility services and automation to help improve overall quality of life ○ Decrease overall cost of moving people, goods, and services ○ Capture more short trips by walking and biking and improve health ● See FHWA Additional Information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Economic Growth ○ Environmental Justice ○ Micromobility ○ Recreational Trails Program ○ Sustainability Transportation ○ Transportation Alternatives
Healthy People 2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create Neighborhoods and Built Environments that Promote Health and Safety (<i>PSE-oriented objectives related to neighborhoods, built environment, upstream factors</i>): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ (General Neighborhood and Built Environment) Increase proportion of Schools with policies and practices that promote health and safety ○ (General Neighborhood and Built Environment) Increase the proportion of adults with broadband internet ○ (Housing and Homes) Reduce the proportion of families that spend more than 30% of income on housing ○ (Injury Prevention) Reduce deaths from motor vehicle crashes ○ (Physical Activity) Increase proportion of adults and adolescents who walk or bike to get places ○ (Transportation) Increase trips to work made by mass transit

FEDERALLY FUNDED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY/BUILT ENVIRONMENT STRATEGIES

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity (DNPAO) provides funding to state and local entities to advance PA/BE strategies in communities. These funding opportunities include the [State Physical Activity and Nutrition](#) (SPAN) Program, the [High Obesity Program](#) (HOP), and the [Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health](#) (REACH) Program. The chart below of PA/BE strategies for three funding programs mirror the national recommendations of the *Community Guide* and the *Active People, Healthy Nation* initiative and serve as the same PA/BE “menu” for all three funding programs.

TABLE 6: FEDERALLY FUNDED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY/BUILT ENVIRONMENT

CDC DNPAO Funding Program	Program Recipients
State Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN)	17 state departments of health, university research foundations, and/or public health institutes
High Obesity Program (HOP)	16 land grant universities
Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH)	50 local entities, including community-based organizations, city/county government, academia, local health departments, health councils, tribal councils, cooperative extensions, healthcare, rural health networks, YMCAs, cultural centers, etc.
Physical Activity/Built Environment Strategies (across programs)	
Activity Friendly Routes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street Pattern Design and Connectivity (convenient, connected, and accessible streets that create man route options, shorter block lengths, and shorter crossing distances) • Pedestrian Infrastructure (sidewalk networks that include trails, traffic calming, intersection safety, street lighting, benches, public bathrooms, shade, and landscaping) • Bicycle Infrastructure (bicycle networks that include slow/safe streets, protected bikeways, trails, traffic calming, intersection safety, street lighting, public bathrooms, shade, and landscaping) • Public Transit Infrastructure and Access (transit networks that include expanded services, times, and locations, and safe and accessible public bathrooms) Everyday Destinations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to Community or Neighborhood Destinations (homes worksites, schools, parks, grocers, healthcare facilities, pharmacies, etc.) • Mixed Land Use (neighborhoods that combine restaurants, offices, housing, shops, etc.) • Residential Density (variety of housing options through compact housing design and other approaches that reduce travel distances) • Parks and Recreation Facility Access (parks and recreational facilities close to homes and neighborhoods) 	

EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY/BUILT ENVIRONMENT EFFORTS

According to the American Institute of Architects (AIA)⁴, creating equitable communities “*requires removing physical and abstract barriers and burdens, as well as empowering people to gather, connect, and function to their highest potential.*” Active community design and environments not only improve health over the long term, but help communities thrive socially, environmentally, and economically. Achieving this is not possible if the active community design is not equitably and inclusively influenced by community residents. “*To change the current patterns of inequities in health and prosperity in our cities and communities, the planning process must be inclusive and focused on equity.*”⁵ Government agencies and other organizations responsible for community planning must adopt community engagement practices that normalize the input and inclusion of all community members into active priority setting and design processes. The following chart summarizes practical resources for community planners and their partners to support more inclusive and equitable engagement practices.

TABLE 7: RESOURCES FOR EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Resources for Equitable and Inclusive Community Engagement
<p>American Institute of Architects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity-Focused Resources details architects’ role, return-on-investment, and justice in developing equitable communities. • The Guides for Equitable Practice online resource contains best practices for making the moral, business, ethical, and societal case for equitable architectural community design.
<p>ChangeLab Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Planner’s Playbook is the most comprehensive and best-practice guide for planners in delivering a community-centered approach for improving health and equity. • Elements of An Equitable Planning Process ⁶ • Related Resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Long-Range Planning for Health, Equity, and Prosperity: A Primer for Local Governments ○ Planning for Healthy, Equitable Communities: How Can Public Health Practitioners Partner with Planners? ○ Planning: Prioritizing Health and Equity in Planning ○ Focusing on Equity in the Planning Process: How Planners Can Improve Their Everyday Practices ○ Exploring Equitable Planning Solutions through Mapping: Visually Representing the Impact of Policies Past and Present Can Help Us better Grasp the Causal Pathways between Policy Actions and Results.
<p>Equitable Cities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Arrested Mobility report explores obstacles that Black Americans face in walking, biking, and using micromobility in urban, suburban, and rural areas and how these obstacles reflect structural racism and White supremacy in policy, planning, design, infrastructure, and law enforcement.
<p>Michigan Public Health Institute</p>

⁴ American Institute of Architects, [Equity in the Built Environment](#), (2024).

⁵ ChangeLab Solutions, [The Planner’s Playbook – A Community-Centered Approach to Improving Health and Equity](#), (2020): page 7.

⁶ ChangeLab Solutions, [The Planner’s Playbook – A Community-Centered Approach to Improving Health and Equity](#), (2020): page 21.

Resources for Equitable and Inclusive Community Engagement

- The [Community Engagement and Collective Impact](#) report explores the practices and ideas that make community engagement work authentic, the role of people with lived experience of inequities in community engagement practices and provides the necessary information that should be considered and applied across different areas and populations, including urban, rural, youth, Black, Indigenous, and persons of color.

National Recreation and Parks Association

- [Elevating Health Equity through Parks and Recreation: A Framework for Action](#) assists park and recreation professionals in applying a racial equity lens when designing, implementing, and evaluating programs, services, and infrastructure to promote equity and advance community and well-being⁷. The framework comprises four parts (Self-Assessment, Agency Assessment, Health Equity Integration, and Committing to the Call) and uses the below guiding principles:
 - Center Health Equity
 - Parks and Recreation are a Pathway to Advance Health Equity
 - Reimagine Inclusion
 - Focus on Learning
 - Respect the Environment
- The [Active Parks!](#) implementation guide provides parks, recreation, and public health professionals with guidance for increasing physical activity through parks, trails, and greenways across the categories of park infrastructure improvements, access enhancements, community engagement, park and recreation programs, and public awareness.
- The [Community Engagement Resource Guide](#) provides resources and a strategy roadmap for park and recreation professions to implement equitable and inclusive community engagement strategies around planning, design, construction, maintenance, and activation of park projects and plans.
- NRPA operates across the three guiding pillars⁸ of Health and Wellness (pillar one), Equity at the Center (pillar two), and Conservation (pillar three). Additional pillar two equity resources include:
 - [Creating Equity-Based System Park Master Plans](#)
 - [Equity in Practice Resource Library](#)
 - [Equity in Parks and Recreation: A Historical Perspective](#)
 - [Equity Language Guide](#)
 - [Equity Action Plan](#)
 - [Parks for Inclusion](#)
 - [Parks Build Community](#)
 - [Park Improvements](#)

⁷ National Recreation and Park Association, [Elevating Health Equity through Parks and Recreation: A Framework for Action](#), 2024.

⁸ National Recreation and Park Association, [Our Three Pillars](#), 2024.

Appendix B: Interview Process and Interviewees

HPbD conducted 17 interviews consisting of 19 key informants. Each interviewee had experience in planning, managing, implementing, funding, evaluating, and/or providing technical support for BEIs. The interview pool included professionals in state, regional, and local roles including the following disciplines: transportation planning and management (n=3); land use and community planning (n=2); parks and outdoor recreation (n=3); public health (n=6); economic development (n=1); and philanthropy (n=4). Interviewee details are located below.

TABLE 8: INTERVIEWEES

Geographic Perspective	Location	Organization
State (nine individuals interviewed)	Michigan	Ashley Bradshaw, MPH Physical Activity Coordinator, MDHHS/MPHI
		Josh DeBruyn, AICP Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator, MDOT Bureau of Transportation Planning
		Nichole Fisher, CMP Executive Director, Michigan Recreation and Park Association
		Ebonie Guyton, M.Ed Consultant, Emergence Collective
		Jonathan Jarosz, MS Executive Director, Heart of the Lakes
		Amy Matisoff Deputy Director of Public Affairs, MDOT Office of Policy and Government Relations
		Nathan Murphy, MSES, PhD Senior Policy, Practice, and Government Relations Coordinator, Council of Michigan Foundations
		Sarah Panken, MS Senior Director of Community Impact, Michigan Fitness Foundation
		Colleen Synk, MSPH SRTS Senior Operations and Evaluations Coordinator, Michigan Fitness Foundation
Region (four individuals interviewed)	Northwest Michigan	Rob Carson, AICP Regional Director of Community Development, Networks Northwest
	Upper Peninsula	Megan Murphy, MPH Chief Executive Officer,

Geographic Perspective	Location	Organization
		Superior Health Foundation
	Southeast Michigan	Kari Pardoe, MPA Senior Program Officer, Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation
		JJ Tighe, MBA Senior Director Parks and Trails, Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation
Local (six individuals interviewed)	Kalkaska	Gayenell Gentelia Associate Director, Kalkaska Downtown Development Authority
	Detroit	Sigal Hemy, MBA Executive Director, Detroit Parks Coalition
	Saginaw	Demetra Manley Executive Director, Saginaw Area Transportation Agency
	Kent County/ Grand Rapids	Jill Myer Public Health Program Supervisor, Kent County Health Department
	Berrien County	Dawn Marie Smith Director, Be Healthy Berrien United Way of Southwest Michigan
	Flint	Cade Surface Urban Designer and Manager, The Crim Fitness Foundation

Appendix C: Built Environment Initiative Details

TABLE 9: KEY ORGANIZATIONS AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVES

Organization(s)	Related Findings
Michigan State Government Agencies Michigan state government agencies set policy, release planning and implementation funding, issue grants, and provide planning and technical support to local communities in creating healthy built environments. State agencies support BEIs in Michigan communities through a variety of opportunities, ranging from training, technical support, and direct aid through grant programs and other funding mechanisms. While the goals of these agencies' programs extend beyond physical health (e.g., transportation access, outdoor recreation, economic vitality), they are the primary sources of support for community environments that also support or hinder physical activity. For example, MDOT's mission is to "serve and connect people, communities, and the economy through transportation." Neither health nor physical activity are mentioned, but the department's impact on Michigan communities is significant.	
Michigan Department of Transportation	<p>Interviewees discussed MDOT policies and planning programs that create active transportation options for communities throughout the state: Complete Streets Policy, Context Sensitive Solutions, and Long-Range Regional Active Transportation Plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context Sensitive Solutions is a policy to influence transportation programs as collaborative projects in ways that reflect community priorities and environmental conditions. Each of the seven MDOT regions has a Regional Active Transportation Plan (also referred to as "multimodal plans" in several regions). These plans set goals and highlight the importance of non-motorized transportation in increasing mobility, safety, economic development, and health. <p>MDOT also administers the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), a competitive grant program that uses federal transportation funds to enhance the active transportation system and provide safe alternative transportation options. Safe Routes to School (SRTS) funding is part of TAP and administered in partnership with MFF (see Funding section for other MDOT funding opportunities and Appendix D for further TAP and SRTS details). MDOT and MFF provide detailed trainings and technical assistance for potential applicants to prepare for TAP, SRTS, and other funding options.</p> <p>In recent years, MDOT has elevated active transportation as a critical mode to contribute to better health. Michigan's first statewide Active Transportation Plan is a commitment and co-equal component of the MDOT's Michigan Mobility 2045 long-range plan, i.e., alongside roads, rail, transit, and aviation. <i>"Unlocking healthy behaviors and more transportation options depends on completing low-stress networks that safely accommodate users of all ages and abilities."</i> (Michigan Mobility 2045)</p>

Organization(s)	Related Findings
	<p>Stated MDOT active transportation priorities include: zero-focused traffic safety programs, Complete Streets, SRTS, and first- and last-mile connections.</p>
<p>Michigan Department of Natural Resources</p>	<p>MDNR is responsible for the conservation, protection, management, use, and enjoyment of the state's natural and cultural resources. In 2023, MDNR granted a historic \$37 million infusion of federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) infrastructure funding to Michigan communities through the SPARK program. As part of a significant public-private partnership, MDNR collaborated closely with the CMF to design, select, and distribute grants to 39 pre-designated “opportunity communities.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects include the development and renovation of public recreation facilities and the provision of recreation-focused equipment and programs at public recreation spaces; projects will be completed by October 2026. <p>While not universally embraced, SPARK was a model of collaborative grantmaking between state government (MDNR) and philanthropy (CMF), which was also required at the local level with community foundations as funding partners. A core component of the partnership was centering community voices and engaging a diverse array of community residents in all aspects of the visioning, planning and execution of local projects.</p> <p>MDNR also manages the Recreation Passport Program for Michigan residents and other park visitors, which generates income for local grants. (See Funding section for details about MDNR funding opportunities).</p> <p>In addition to managing funding opportunities for park facilities, MDNR coordinates the SCORP. The SCORP is the five-year strategic plan that shapes investment by the state of Michigan for outdoor recreation infrastructure, land acquisition, and programming. The SCORP is significant because certain DNR funding applications must align with the SCORP, e.g., Land and Water Conservation Fund. To be eligible to apply for Land and Water Conservation Fund, Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and Waterways grants, a community must have an approved five-year plan on file with the DNR.</p> <p>The SCORP clearly articulates the need to collaborate with MDHHS to help activate recreation resources for underserved youth as well as developing common metrics “to benchmark and track public health outcomes.” In addition, the SCORP devotes extensive narrative about creating equitable access to recreation resources. Emergence Collective assisted in the plan’s development process, conducting focus groups, and engaging residents to improve its equity framing. Similarly, MDNR’s Parks and Recreation Division has an extensive statement and goals related to equity.</p>
<p>Michigan Department of Health and Human Services</p>	<p>Over the past decade, the MDHHS has shifted its chronic disease prevention approach from focusing primarily on individual interventions to a broader, more systemic strategy. This evolution emphasizes enhancing built environments—such as accessible parks, sidewalks, and safe recreational</p>

Organization(s)	Related Findings
	<p>spaces—and fostering active communities that promote physical activity, healthy living, and well-being. By addressing the broader environment and community-level factors, MDHHS aims to create sustainable, long-term changes that reduce the prevalence of chronic diseases like obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This shift was reflected in the department's Building Healthy Places (BHP) Project. From 2016-2020, BHP funded 59 parks and greenspaces where over 186 greenspace improvement projects were implemented. <p>MDHHS was also instrumental in co-hosting and co-coordinating the 2023 Hybrid Walkability Action Institute (WAI)/Walkability Virtual Academy (WVA), which trained multidisciplinary teams from four Michigan communities: Kalkaska, Kent County, Muskegon County, and Saginaw. In collaboration with MDOT, plans are in place to deepen and extend the Hybrid WAI/WVA to eight additional communities in 2025.</p> <p>MDHHS also administers federal State Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN) funding, which builds public health capacity to connect pedestrian, bicycle, and/or transit transportation networks to everyday destinations.</p> <p>Most recently, MDHHS' community-centered Healthy Community Zones (HCZ) grant program elevates community voices in the decision-making process and provides resources to historically underserved communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funded by state dollars, HCZ addresses inequities through place-based initiatives which include, but are not limited to, food security, safe places for physical activity, social networks, and community support. • Three initial HCZ regions included City of Detroit, Chippewa County, and Saginaw County; nearly 40 community organizations applied for HCZ funding in 2024.
Nonprofits and Other Agencies/Organizations with a Statewide Reach Nonprofits and other agencies/organizations with a statewide reach provide important support to local communities through training, technical support, network building, and, in some cases, provide funding for BEIs.	
Michigan Parks and Recreation Association (mParks)	<p>“mParks” is a member-based organization with approximately 2,500 members and is known as the “voice” of parks and recreation in the state of Michigan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mParks offers professional development opportunities for member professionals, students, vendors, universities, nonprofits, and other parks and recreation service providers. • mParks also highlights specific policies related to the parks and recreation field, such as legislation that would impact the Recreation Passport grant program.
Heart of the Lakes	<p>Similarly, Heart of the Lakes is a statewide association of Michigan land conservancies that “conserve forests, farmland, coastline, and other extraordinary places for the benefit of generations to come.”</p>

Organization(s)	Related Findings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● They champion the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and serve the outdoor recreation industry to conserve and maintain the state’s accessible outdoor spaces. <p>Heart of the Lakes also advocates for the following state legislative priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assuring that revenues from state-owned mineral development are permanently dedicated to conservation purposes. ● State funding for the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program. ● Other public policies supporting Michigan resource and land conservation organizations.
Michigan Fitness Foundation	<p>MFF provides crucial support for Michigan communities through its three key focus areas: Activity, Food, and Places and is responsible for administering two significant funding mechanisms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed), in partnership with MDHHS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SNAP-Ed has evolved from its nutrition-only focus to become the single largest funding program for physical activity programming nationally. ○ Currently, MFF provides SNAP-Ed funding and support for PSE initiatives to 212 Michigan communities. ● In partnership with MDOT, SRTS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In FY2024, awarded \$449,845 in mini-grants to 34 schools across 12 communities to implement SRTS programs and awarded \$4,841,509 in major grants to 20 schools across five communities for infrastructure projects and SRTS programming in future years. MFF staff provided technical assistance to 81 schools across 38 communities seeking to develop SRTS action plans for future programs and grant applications. <p>MFF provides training and significant technical support to communities to prepare them for SRTS infrastructure applications (major grants) and programming applications (mini grants).</p> <p>MFF also supports local partners with two signature community-driven assessment, planning, and implementation tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promoting Active Communities Online Assessment Tool ● Rec-Connect Community Based Program <p>A subsidiary of MFF, the Michigan Trails Fund (formerly known as the Iron Belle Trail Fund Campaign), is charged with raising funds to develop trail corridors to create a seamless 2,019-mile trail across the state.</p> <p>MFF also coordinates the Pedestrian Education Safety Campaign in Detroit, Monroe, and Ypsilanti. This social marketing campaign aims to develop and pilot messaging that will support a reduction in fatalities of and serious injuries</p>

Organization(s)	Related Findings
	to Michigan pedestrians and make the campaign messaging available, at no cost, for cities and municipalities to implement this messaging in their local communities. This project is funded by MDOT with matching funds from Ralph C. Wilson, Jr Foundation.
Philanthropies, Foundations, and Other Funders Philanthropies, foundations, and other funders invest in and support local communities to create healthy built environments for physical activity and active living.	
Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation	Based in Detroit, The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation serves seven counties in Southeast Michigan (as well as Western New York) by investing in Parks, Trails, and Green Design to “connect people and communities to each other and provide recreation opportunities by getting people moving while connecting to nature.” The Foundation has invested in more than two dozen parks, recreation, and trail projects in Southeast Michigan since 2018. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition, Built to Play is a \$17 million initiative that has built 21 skateparks and 90 play spaces in Southeast Michigan. • The initiative also began in 2018 when the Foundation partnered with KABOOM! and The Skatepark Project. The Foundation is currently conducting an inventory of skateparks and playgrounds within its service area to identify gaps and inform future investments.
The Health Fund	Since 2017, The Health Fund has provided grants for physical activity programming as part of its Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyles funding area. Despite positive short-term results, the sustainability of community impact is a consistent challenge without supportive environments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2022 and 2023, the Health Fund shifted its approach by addressing the systemic factors influencing health outcomes and investing nearly \$470,000 and \$880,000 (respectively) for four community BEIs in Detroit, Flint/Genesee County, and Grand Rapids/Kent County. • Most recently, The Health Fund issued 10 two-year built environment grants focused on trails, pathways, planning, and engagement processes totaling \$1.6 million. While these grants cannot directly fund brick and mortar projects, they can position funded communities to access state funding for construction.
Community Foundations	Michigan communities are served by more than 60 community foundations that contribute significantly to BEIs. Their regional and hyper-local perspective enables community foundations to better understand local needs and opportunities and they have the potential to guide and invest in initiatives over the long run. Interviewees recognized their important role contributing to recreational assets, sidewalk improvements, crosswalks, farmers markets, and access to locally grown fresh produce. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the 2023 federal funding package enabling the SPARK grant program, \$24 million went to 29 “opportunity communities” hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Spark Grant program, a collaboration of CMF and MDNR, requires local community foundations to serve as Regional Collaborative Leads. Funds are dedicated to expanding access to healthy indoor and outdoor recreation opportunities and advancing

Organization(s)	Related Findings
	<p>transformative change in historically under-resourced and underrepresented communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviewees named United Ways and Rotary charities as other important local funders. Local philanthropies also contribute in ways that do not involve grants—they often convene community stakeholders, administer community needs surveys, fund advocacy groups, and may be able to advocate directly for health-supporting policies and systems.
Regional and Local Planning Agencies Regional and local planning agencies support their communities to create healthy built environments for physical activity and active living.	
Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs)	<p>All Michigan communities are served by an RPC, also known as Councils of Government, which view planning issues from a broader geographical perspective than counties and smaller units of government. Michigan's 14 voluntary Planning and Development Regions represent local governments, although membership may also include road authorities, nonprofits, and businesses.</p> <p>RPCs perform a broad range of planning and development services, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural transportation asset improvement Regional active transportation plans Trail inventories Broadband coverage Economic development plans <p>In addition to providing planning assistance for local governments with limited staff capacity, RPCs are also key collaborators in local government applications for built infrastructure and other related improvements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the SPARK program, 14 subrecipient grants were awarded to regional councils of governments for technical assistance totaling \$845,637.
Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)	<p>Metropolitan areas (of 50,000+ population) are served by 15 MPOs across the state of Michigan. They are important intermediaries in determining how federal transportation dollars are prioritized and allocated; MPOs control a significant portion of the state's annual TAP funding allocation. MPOs are critical transportation planning agencies for cities and urbanized regions and their staff often collaborate with municipal and county planners.</p> <p>Active transportation priorities and projects are among MPOs responsibilities as part of their long-range transportation planning and infrastructure funding roles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Typical projects include sidewalks and crossings, intersections, SRTS, transit stops, and recreational trails.

Local Agencies and Coalitions Local agencies and coalitions assess, engage community members, plan, and implement BEIs to advance physical activity and active living.	
Local/Regional Health Departments	<p>While their capacity varies across the state, local and regional health departments play a critical role in BEIs. Public health professionals can be essential conveners, who are mindful of the health impact of built environments and contribute their skills in needs assessment, community engagement, and evaluation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These agencies have been deeply engaged in collaborating with regional and municipal planners, participating in walk/bike audits, working with park and trail groups, activating public spaces, and contributing to land use, transportation, and park/trail master planning processes.
Downtown Development Authorities (DDAs)	<p>Downtowns are the social and economic centers of Michigan communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDAs contribute to the economic vitality of a community and region through walkability, infrastructure improvements, historic buildings, and public events, while also supporting small businesses. • DDAs prioritize revitalizing existing public assets and have experience accessing a variety of funding sources. <p>These funding sources may be unfamiliar to partners outside the economic development realm and include Revitalization and Placemaking grants, Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) Community Development grants, Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) Rural Readiness grants, and other sources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As an example, the Kalkaska DDA collaborated on local efforts to create a walking path and community gathering place in the downtown square. They also helped the village install a new ADA accessible trailhead and boardwalk connecting downtown to the North Branch Broadman River via a scenic pathway that runs throughout town.
Crim Fitness Foundation (The Crim)	<p>What began in 1977 as The Bobby Crim Road Race to raise money for the Special Olympics has grown into an influential nonprofit dedicated to the health of the Flint community and Genesee County. The Crim advocates for PSE changes that create equitable access to safe opportunities to be physically active.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A recipient of recent The Health Fund grants, and collaborator with MFF, The Crim coordinates SRTS programming in Flint, participates in local park system assessments, leads zoning code education, organizes community engagement activities, and participates in traffic data collection and distribution. • The Crim also coordinates Better Block demonstrations—building out versions of neighborhoods that reflect community desire for improved active transportation options. • They have also organized “See What’s Possible” site visits to peer communities to learn about promising policies, plans, and design practices.
Detroit Parks Coalition (DPC)	<p>Formed in 2010 in response to Detroit parks facing closure due to lack of city resources, DPC has become a respected nonprofit and unified coalition of residents and 40+ park stewardship groups.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DPC connects people to parks, shares learnings, supports its member organizations, advocates for parks citywide, raises funding for capital projects, and serves as an intermediary and partner to funders and city leaders. ● DPC's board is composed of leaders from Detroit's neighborhood park stewardship organizations.
Be Healthy Berrien	<p>Be Healthy Berrien is an example of a multi-disciplinary coalition of organizations working to reduce and prevent obesity with PSE changes. Increasing physical activity levels is a primary objective of the group, which is led by Berrien County Health Department, Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, YMCA of Southwest Michigan, and Corewell Health South.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The coalition offers an online guide to local places for physical activity and contributes to built environment projects, such as the Indiana-Michigan River Valley Trail and pedestrian and bicycle improvements in St. Joseph, Michigan.

Appendix D: Summary of Secondary Sources Review

TABLE 10: SECONDARY SOURCES

Source/Excerpts Related to BEIs	Brief Summary/Relevant Quotes
<p><u>MDOT Regional Active Transportation Plans</u> (8 PDFs)</p> <p>MDOT's Bicycling page provides links to eight regional active transportation plans for the seven MDOT regions: Bay Region (2019), Grand Region (2017), Northeast Michigan (2009), Northwest Michigan (2008), Southeast Michigan (2020), Southwest Region (2020), Superior Region (2022), University Region (2015). While they may be formatted differently, the plans are consistent in their contents, including existing facilities, planned routes, future priorities (by county), maps, summaries from outreach meetings, and other considerations, e.g., universal design.</p> <p>Each plan generally provides a vision that emphasizes the continual development of transportation facilities to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians, identifies regional and local corridors, identifies gaps in trail development, and identifies potential funding sources for future development, as well as new policies/guidance, procedures and/or programs. The plans are used by the Michigan Department of Transportation and local officials to identify potential active transportation project elements in larger road and bridge projects based on the input collected and the analysis conducted, identify funding sources and guide investment in the region's non-motorized transportation system. In addition, local officials may use or adopt any portion of the plan as their own. Plans are updated as time and resources allow.</p>	<p>These plans document the specific active transportation vision, goals, strategies, needs, and opportunities of communities as a region. MDOT staff reference them as a part of the project scoping process. The plans are largely informed community input and active transportation network analyses.</p> <p>TAP is the largest active transportation construction funding source in Michigan and prioritizes funding projects that have excellent master planning, such as a proposed project being identified as part of the region's master AT plan, not only a local or county plan. MDOT and local agencies use the regional AT plans when they have planned or unplanned major projects like road and highway bridges, either new or being reconstructed, or repaired.</p>
<p><u>Michigan Mobility 2045 - A Transportation Plan for a Connected Future (Michigan's State Long-Range Transportation Plan SLRTP)</u> (PDF)</p> <p>The first long-range transportation plan for all modes across the state, Michigan's State Long-Range Transportation Plan (SLRTP), Michigan Mobility 2045 (MM2045), informs the transportation investments that drive Michigan's social and economic prosperity, including MDOT's Five-Year Transportation Program (5YTP) and the statewide, rural and metropolitan transportation improvement programs. The plan informs transportation stakeholders, elected officials, and the public of investment priorities, needs, and trends that will affect Michigan. In addition to other modes, the document also incorporates Michigan's first statewide active transportation plan.</p>	<p>MM2045 is the state's highest level transportation plan and it incorporates AT as a high priority mode, alongside roads, transit, rail, aviation, and ports. Active Transportation, which is newly used language replacing Multimodal Transportation, is represented as an equal priority among other plans, such as the LRTP, rail, and others.</p> <p><i>"Unlocking healthy behaviors and more transportation options depends on completing low-stress networks that safely</i></p>

Source/Excerpts Related to BEIs	Brief Summary/Relevant Quotes
<p>MM2045 articulates active transportation investment needs with common investment need categories, including, but not limited to: sidewalk, bikeways, and trails asset inventory; expand active transportation network through complete streets and rural shoulder widening; expand low-stress bike and pedestrian facilities and safety countermeasures; Active transportation activity counts; first- and last-mile connections; and ADA-compliant sidewalks and curb ramps.</p> <p>The plan also includes six goals that articulate broad priorities for Michigan’s multimodal transportation system over the next 25 years: Quality of Life, Mobility, Safety and Security, Network Condition, Economy and Stewardship, and Partnership. Quality of Life, Mobility, and Partnership articulate community engagement or equity concepts/priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create opportunities for safe physical activity, equitable transportation choice, and community engagement • Pursue community-supportive transportation outcomes • Provide accessible and equitable modal options for the movement of people • Strengthen community engagement and open decision-making processes offered through a combination of inclusive traditional and innovative methods. <p>Challenge: Michigan’s transportation system will require significant additional investment to meet the present and long-term needs of residents and businesses. Without additional, sustainable funding, Michigan’s transportation infrastructure will continue to deteriorate, exacerbating delay and safety issues, increasing disruptions, and inhibiting access to jobs, schools, and medicine.</p> <p>Challenge: The least developed system is active transportation. There is currently not a clear understanding of the statewide coverage of active transportation facilities (e.g., trails, sidewalks, bike lanes, shoulders). As a result, the path to the MM2045 vision cannot be fully mapped out. Therefore, before the active transportation mode can identify future needs and costs, it needs an inventory of existing locations and the conditions of those assets.</p>	<p><i>accommodate users of all ages and abilities. Michigan’s first Active Transportation Plan represents a renewed commitment by MDOT and partners throughout the state to expand the active transportation network, improve safety, and improve multimodal connections.”</i></p>
<p><u>MM2045 Active Transportation Plan: A Bold Vision—Executive Summary</u> (PDF)</p> <p>MDOT developed this Active Transportation Plan as a standalone document to be integrated into and support MM2045’s vision of</p>	<p>As noted above, the language has shifted from multi-modal to active transportation. For the purposes of this plan, “active transportation” is defined as</p>

Source/Excerpts Related to BEIs	Brief Summary/Relevant Quotes
<p>the transportation future in Michigan across all modes, recognizing active transportation as a vital form of transportation.</p> <p>The plan sections include: vision/goals, existing network, policies/practices/programs, performance measures, funding. This executive summary reviews the four policy areas, while the full Active Transportation Plan report provides additional detailed information and analyses for each.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero-Focused Traffic Safety Programs include Road to Zero, Toward Zero Deaths, and Vision Zero. • Complete Streets are streets designed, operated, and maintained to enable safe use and support mobility for all users. • Safe Routes to School is a program that reduces the barriers that limit or hinder children who commute to school via active transportation. • First- and Last-Mile Connections are multi-modal types of transportation that get commuters from their starting (first-mile) or ending (last-mile) locations to and from a transportation transfer point. <p>The full report also highlights Michigan case studies of communities that have successfully implemented these policies, practices, or programs. In addition, a detailed design guidance list and summary is provided in the appendix of the full report that can be used as a resource toolbox for agencies in planning and designing for active transportation.</p> <p>The plan aligns 8 AT strategies with the overarching goals of the MM2045 plan: Mobility; Safety and Security; Economy and Stewardship; Network Condition; and Partnership. Two of the 18 strategies mention collaborating with MDNR and MDHHS through strengthened communications channels.</p>	<p>human-powered transportation that engages people in physical activity while they travel.</p> <p><i>“Local governments and road agencies have many potential options for local funding, including special dedicated millages, general fund allocations, special assessments, bonds, interlocal agreements, and public- private partnerships.”</i></p> <p><i>“Public-private partnerships and philanthropic funding have increasingly been the foundation of funding for major active transportation projects that cross multiple jurisdictions or for major projects that accomplish many community goals. Funding maintenance of shared-use pathways and trails has historically been challenging for communities and cross-jurisdictional organizations; philanthropy has increasingly filled this void.”</i></p>
<p>MDOT Transportation Alternatives Program Website and Applicant Guide (PDF)</p> <p>TAP is a competitive grant program for projects such as bike paths, pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements, and preservation of historic transportation facilities that enhance Michigan’s intermodal transportation system and provide safe alternative transportation options. These investments support place-based economic development by offering transportation choices, promoting walkability, and improving quality of life. The program uses federal transportation funds designated by Congress for these types of activities.</p>	<p>The applicant guide provides a very useful description/checklist of the steps needed to prepare for a TAP application, such as meeting with a regional grant coordinator (to verify <u>first</u> if a proposed project is viable), holding public input meetings, passing a resolution, and completing an engineering analysis.</p>

Source/Excerpts Related to BEIs	Brief Summary/Relevant Quotes
<p>Approximately \$43.5 million is available annually. Of this, \$29.3 million is available through a competitive grant process administered by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Office of Economic Development (OED). The other \$14.2 million is available through competitive grant processes administered by the metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) in urban areas with populations greater than 200,000. TAP applications may be submitted online at any time. Minimum Construction Grant Amount: \$200,000. There are no maximum grant request amounts for Michigan TAP funds. TAP requires a minimum cash match of 20 percent of the construction cost.</p> <p>The revised TAP Applicant Guide is available. The guide consolidates TAP information for the overall Michigan TAP program, including the MDOT TAP program, six metropolitan planning organization (MPO) TAP programs, and the MDOT Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program. The guide includes a focus on how to be competitive in the MDOT TAP program. It is highly recommended that any potential TAP project be discussed with a TAP grant coordinator or any potential SRTS project be discussed with a SRTS grant coordinator before beginning an application.</p>	
<p>MFF Safe Routes to School Process & Funding Overview Website</p> <p>The Michigan SRTS program is managed by MDOT with support provided by MFF, and seeks to: (statutory purposes of the federal SRTS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable and encourage students in grades K-12, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school. • Make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation choice, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age. • 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 of elementary and middle schools. <p>The Michigan SRTS program offers communities two kinds of opportunities to receive Federal funding for a SRTS program: Mini grants for programming and Major grants for infrastructure (up to \$300,000). Mini-grant applicants are eligible to receive up to \$15,000 per school, with a maximum of \$120,000 per applicant for 8 or more schools. At least \$7,500/school should be set aside for a Program Coordinator and/or personnel work. The grants are intended to support active transportation programs to and from school. Schools with students in grades K-12, or affiliated nonprofits, are eligible to apply.</p>	<p>MFF provides training and significant technical support to communities in preparing them for SRTS infrastructure applications (Major grants) and programming applications (Mini grants). MFF works closely with MDOT, which has essentially outsourced this aspect of the TAP program, which aligns closely with MFF's overall mission to <i>"inspire active lifestyles and healthy food choices through education, environmental change, community events, and policy leadership."</i></p>

Source/Excerpts Related to BEIs	Brief Summary/Relevant Quotes
<p><u>Michigan Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP, DNR) 2023-2027</u></p> <p>Michigan’s SCORP is a five-year strategic plan, required to access certain federal grants, that shapes investment by the state of Michigan and local communities in priority outdoor recreation infrastructure, land acquisition and programming. It is designed to evaluate ongoing and emerging outdoor recreation trends, needs and issues, and to establish priority strategies for achieving outdoor recreation goals. The state and its local outdoor recreation partners use the SCORP as an ongoing framework and action plan for guiding their outdoor recreation management and policy decisions.</p> <p>The SCORP identifies four goals: Improve collaboration; Improve and expand recreational access; Enhance prosperity; and Enhance health benefits, which includes two objectives.</p> <p>Objective 1. Model public-private partnerships and collaborations to activate and steward recreational assets and engage underserved youth in outdoor activity. Funding, construction, and activation of recreation spaces is supported by public agencies, private philanthropic sources and private businesses. Examples of this abound, including a new pilot program sponsored by MDHHS in partnership with the Michigan Office of Outdoor Recreation Industry and mParks.</p> <p>Objective 2. Improve interagency collaboration to measure and deliver public health benefits from additional investment in infrastructure and programs supporting outdoor physical activity. State agencies, including the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and Michigan Department of Transportation, are key partners in supporting the development of infrastructure and programs to support outdoor physical activity (such as sidewalks, bike lanes and paths and educational programs). To make smart investments, these agencies need to review survey data, better understand and collaborate to overcome common barriers to outdoor access, such as a lack of transportation, wayfinding signage, or critical gear and equipment, like accessible wheelchairs and kayak launches. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources, along with other state and local partners, will work with the Department of Health and Human Services over the next two years to develop common metrics to align programmatic goals and to benchmark and track public health outcomes resulting from these types of investments.</p>	<p>The SCORP is significant because certain DNR funding applications must align with the SCORP, e.g., Land and Water Conservation Fund. To be eligible to apply for Land and Water Conservation Fund, Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and Waterways grants, a community must have an approved five-year plan on file with the DNR.</p> <p>The SCORP clearly articulates the need to collaborate with MDHHS to help activate rec resources for underserved youth as well as developing common metrics “to benchmark and track public health outcomes.”</p> <p>The SCORP devotes extensive content/narrative to create equitable access to recreation resources. Emergence Collective was part of the plan development process, conducting focus groups. Similarly, DNR’s PRD division has an extensive statement and goals related to DEI.</p>

Source/Excerpts Related to BEIs	Brief Summary/Relevant Quotes
<p>DNR had six regional grant coordinators to assist communities in applying for DNR funding opportunities.</p> <p>MDNR Trails Plan (2022-2032) - The DNR Trails Plan guides the direction of more than 13,400 miles of Michigan’s diverse trail opportunities and lays out key goals to ensure these valuable assets are sustained and remain relevant into the future. The plan’s four goals include: sustainable trail maintenance and development; funding; planning and collaboration; and marketing, promotion and education. Outcomes of the plan include quality trail experiences, public stewardship, and community and economic prosperity.</p> <p>Equity: DEI is one of seven principles of the SCORP. “The DNR is committed to the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion in administering and managing our public lands. The people of Michigan are diverse, dynamic and ever changing, and the lands and facilities we steward must reflect the wide range of experiences, geography and communities we serve. Diversity is represented by lands and facilities that are geographically dispersed across the state to provide opportunities close to where people live and work.</p> <p>The DNR strives to remove barriers and embrace adaptive equipment and technology that create opportunities to use and enjoy public lands and provide recreational experiences to people of all abilities.”</p>	
<p>Michigan's Roadmap to Rural Prosperity (PDF)</p> <p>The ORP led the development of this Roadmap to Rural Prosperity Report (the Roadmap) with extensive engagement from rural community leaders to illustrate the trends impacting rural Michigan and uplift the priorities of rural communities for achieving long-term prosperity. Each section of the Roadmap highlights a priority issue area for rural Michigan, discussing the factors that impact rural prosperity, and presents strategies to help all rural areas thrive.</p> <p>The report identifies three strategies, two of which relate to BEIs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build and Maintain Resilient Infrastructure BEI: Support comprehensive planning and implementation of a variety of transportation options, including regional transit services and improvements to non-motorized transportation infrastructure, to ultimately reduce cost, build ridership, and provide travel options for those without a vehicle or transit) 	<p>The Roadmap is particularly helpful in understanding the constraints faced in many rural communities that underlie their aspirations for accessing funding and prioritizing BEIs.</p> <p>The guidelines below are included as grant-making recommendations for The Health Fund.</p> <p>Grant Application and Administration Guidelines to Increase Accessibility to Funding for Rural Communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailored eligibility, scoring, and expectations for ‘Return

Source/Excerpts Related to BEIs	Brief Summary/Relevant Quotes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Local and Regional Capacity to Deliver Services – BEI: Develop additional flexible funding resources to support place-based investments within and outside of traditional downtowns, including commercial corridors. • Enhance Regionally Driven and Place-Based Economic Development Efforts <p>Quotes: <i>“Rural prosperity means resilient, connected rural residents, businesses, communities, and natural environments.”</i></p> <p>Rural Challenges <i>“Limited and declining revenue exacerbates another central challenge; the lack of organizational capacity to respond to short-term needs and plan for long-term change. Without adequate local funding for routine maintenance and services, and with few tools available outside of local millages to raise public revenue, local governments are often reliant on grants as a revenue source, which are inconsistent and difficult to access due to administrative capacity limitations. Even when grant funding is available, most rural local governments have limited capacity to plan proactively for projects that grant funding could support, and to apply for or administer grants. Grant applications are completed in administrators’ ‘spare time’ and compete with more urgent priorities.”</i></p> <p>Room for optimism - <i>“Through creative and innovative partnerships, rural communities have invested in place – enhancing parks, building attainable housing, improving access to childcare – to make their communities desirable and sustainable places to live and do business. At the same time, they are using place-based assets like agriculture and food, forestry, freshwater, and other outdoor amenities, to build economic clusters and opportunities for innovation and business growth. Their success can be seen as population trends in some rural counties begin to reverse, with new growth occurring in some rural counties since 2020.”</i></p>	<p>on Investment’ specific to rural areas, accounting for fewer amenities, smaller and more dispersed populations, and smaller budgets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural set-asides to ensure that resources are deployed across a spectrum of community sizes and types. • Streamlined application processes and reporting requirements to accommodate capacity burdens, including shorter application forms and forms standardized across programs and agencies to eliminate redundant data entry and application information. • Expanded timelines to allow for planning and implementation with reduced staffing resources. • Lowered or eliminated financial match requirements, allowance of in-kind matching, and inclusion of administrative or indirect costs in grant awards, to allow communities or organizations with limited resources to compete in grant programs. • Programming and processes that allow communities and organizations to design flexible approaches that achieve desired program outcomes. • Cooperative grant agreements that feature strong funder engagement

Source/Excerpts Related to BEIs	Brief Summary/Relevant Quotes
	<p>and partnership in program implementation, to help communities and organizations build greater administrative expertise and capacity to successfully plan, implement, and manage.</p>
<p>CMF/DNR SPARK Program Partnership Fact Sheet (PDF) This two-page fact sheet is itself a summary of the SPARK program. Administered by the Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF) in partnership with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and through the CMF Statewide Equity Fund, the CMF/DNR Spark Grants Program partnership was established to equitably guide resources to communities and expand access to healthy indoor and outdoor recreation projects where there has been little or no previous parks and recreation investment. A core component of the partnership, designed and brokered by the Governor’s Office of Foundation Liaison, is centering community voices and engaging a diverse array of community residents in all aspects of visioning, planning and executing the parks projects. Twenty-nine Michigan communities whose economic opportunities and public health were hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic are benefitting from \$24.2 million in Michigan Spark Grants funding to date. All projects are scheduled to be completed by the end of September 2026.</p> <p>Embedding Equity Principles in Grantmaking (from SPARK grantmaking experience)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public data and demographic information were used to pre-identify underrepresented and underserved opportunity communities for a targeted pool of grants, ensuring that applicants aligned with the program’s goals and focus on equity. • Significant technical assistance (TA), including support for community engagement, budget scoping, and grant writing ensured grants were awarded based on the merit of the proposed parks rather than a community’s ability to craft an application. • All TA providers received equity training to ensure their support was culturally responsive and inclusive of all communities. • The grant evaluation criteria prioritized deep community engagement and emphasized involving voices that 	<p>In describing local snapshots of SPARK grants, community engagement is highlighted for each example. The document includes has a list of Embedding Equity Principles in Grantmaking.</p>

Source/Excerpts Related to BEIs	Brief Summary/Relevant Quotes
<p>historically were under-represented in decision-making processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No local match was required. • Grant recipients received a communication toolkit and customized draft press releases to ensure they were well supported and equipped to share the news of their projects. • A project prime request for proposals template was provided to all communities, ensuring equitable access to professional services, regardless of their prior experience with procurement processes. • A curated list of women-, veteran-, and people of color-owned business contractors was shared to encourage equitable inclusion in the bidding process, promoting diversity and fairness in project implementation. • The distribution of funds was structured to allow communities to request advanced capital throughout the grant period, removing the financial strain of up-front costs often caused by reimbursement-only funding models. 	
<p><u>SPARK Grants - Council of Michigan Foundations and Department of Natural Resources</u> (Grant Announcement Website)</p> <p>CMF, in partnership with MDNR, announced in July of 2024 it awarded \$24.2 million to date through the CMF/DNR Spark Grant program to 29 Michigan communities whose economic opportunities and public health were hardest hit by COVID-19.</p> <p>Community foundations were a catalytic component of this program, working alongside local leaders to develop and execute strategies that advance equitable outcomes by way of elevating community voices, providing or connecting opportunity communities with technical assistance opportunities, making considerations of local capacities and providing a statewide network of partners to problem-solve collectively.</p> <p>This grant opportunity is possible because of the Building Michigan Together Plan, signed in March 2022, which included a historic infusion of ARPA funding in our state and local parks. The DNR received \$65 million in ARPA dollars to be distributed through the Michigan Spark Grants program. A portion of those funds were awarded through two initial Spark Grant rounds that were open to all communities across the state. The DNR committed the remaining \$27.5 million to this CMF/DNR Spark Grant program. The majority of the resources (\$25 million) were designated for a grant distribution process available to 39 pre-designated opportunity communities while the remaining \$2.5 million was committed to providing technical assistance and needed support</p>	<p>Using time-limited federal funding, SPARK was a model of collaborative grantmaking between state government and philanthropy, which was also required at the local level with community foundations as funding partners.</p> <p>CMF/DNR Spark Grant program partnership was established to equitably guide resources to communities and expand access to healthy indoor and outdoor recreation projects where there has been little or no previous parks and recreation investment. A core component of the partnership was centering community voices and engaging a diverse array of community residents in all aspects of the visioning, planning and execution of the parks projects.</p>

Source/Excerpts Related to BEIs	Brief Summary/Relevant Quotes								
<p>services to expand community capacity to successfully manage and implement transformational recreation projects. Beyond the ARPA funding, \$1.1 million in philanthropic resources has been committed to support the program through CMF's Statewide Equity Fund.</p> <p>Projects included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development, renovation or redevelopment of public recreation facilities. • Provision of recreation-focused equipment and programs in public recreation spaces. • Indoor recreation opportunities. 									
<p>Safe Routes National Partnership, Advancing Equity Goals in TAP (memo)</p> <p>To support Michigan's development of equity scoring in the TAP - this memo highlights examples of how other states are advancing equity goals in their TAP from a process standpoint... This memo is intended to provide background information for work with MDOT to incorporate equity into the Transportation Alternatives Program scoring and process.</p> <p>MDHHS and Emerging Equity goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Get more communities who have not applied for TAP to apply. Overcoming barriers small/rural communities have to apply at all (capacity to apply, let alone implement projects) and communities awarded funding are able to complete projects. 2. Over barrier caused by requiring a local match 3. Utilize data to drive decision-making, including identifying and implementing scoring criteria that account for demographics and systemic disadvantage. 4. Solidify relationships between DOT and DHHS <p>For each of these goals, Safe Routes Partnership details 19 strategies in total, which is the bulk of the memo.</p> <p>The table below demonstrates the high cost that must be taken on by local applicants, a burden to many small communities, which includes 20% for construction costs and up to another 20% for design, engineering and inspection costs.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="203 1703 980 1845"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="203 1703 980 1738">Costs for Hypothetical \$500,000 Project</th></tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="203 1738 646 1774">Expenditure Items</th><th data-bbox="646 1738 980 1774">Cost</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="203 1774 646 1810">Local Construction Cash Match</td><td data-bbox="646 1774 980 1810">\$100,000 (20 %)</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="203 1810 646 1845">Federal Contribution</td><td data-bbox="646 1810 980 1845">\$400,000 (80%)</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Costs for Hypothetical \$500,000 Project		Expenditure Items	Cost	Local Construction Cash Match	\$100,000 (20 %)	Federal Contribution	\$400,000 (80%)	<p>SRNP is a respected national organization, which issued this memo as part of a separate project. The document articulates the range of systemic challenges faced by local communities in accessing funding needed for BEIs.</p> <p><i>"To truly engage communities that have been historically or currently left out of the Transportation Alternatives Program, it is insufficient to change one piece of the program alone. It is most helpful to comprehensively review the barriers to communities successfully implementing TAP projects and implement a suite of strategies to overcome these barriers. If we encourage people to apply without changing the system, they won't be awarded. If we help them apply, but then don't help them figure out how to implement, projects will not get built. It is necessary to change the process and system at several points to support communities to be successful winning and implementing Transportation Alternatives</i></p>
Costs for Hypothetical \$500,000 Project									
Expenditure Items	Cost								
Local Construction Cash Match	\$100,000 (20 %)								
Federal Contribution	\$400,000 (80%)								

Source/Excerpts Related to BEIs	Brief Summary/Relevant Quotes
<p>Approximate Design Costs \$50,000 (~10% of total)</p> <p>Approximate Construction \$50,000 (~10% of total)</p> <p>Engineering & Inspection Costs</p> <p>Total Local Cost \$200,000</p>	<p><i>project. It can be used for staffing to administer the program or provide technical assistance, or it can be contracted out “to other State agencies, private entities, or nonprofit entities.”</i></p>
<p>Safe Routes National Partnership, Prioritizing High-Need Communities in TAP (memo)</p> <p>This memo outlines how states currently define and prioritize high-need communities as part of their TAP application processes and the variety of opportunities states can use to prioritize and support them.</p> <p>The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law included a new requirement within the TAP that states define high-need communities and prioritize them in TAP project selection...Michigan already identifies and prioritizes communities using median household income, there are opportunities to more clearly target communities that have been disproportionately negatively impacted by policy and funding decisions.</p>	<p>The quote included validates approaches that go beyond merely using points to prioritize high need communities. For example, education and outreach are mentioned as well as engineering assistance, which MHEF is now providing grant funding for.</p> <p><i>“Provision of funding match and awarding point priority in project scoring were the most frequent strategies reported by states that were successfully funding low-income communities. However, multiple approaches can help prioritize high-need communities. Education and outreach can encourage people to apply, grant writing and engineering assistance can help them produce competitive applications, and project administration and engineering support can help ensure implementation goes smoothly.”</i> (From a 2017 study from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health)</p>
<p><u>Statewide Equity Fund - A Guide for Philanthropy on Partnerships to Equitably Shape Public Funding</u> (PDF)</p> <p>The Statewide Equity Fund (SEF) launched as a \$2 million CMF member-driven pooled fund aimed at providing the infrastructure needed to help shape the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds and other federal dollars toward equity-centered approaches. SEF helped to catalyze opportunities to address systemic challenges laid bare by the COVID-19 pandemic. Funds were made available</p>	<p>This guide articulates the expanded role and influence funders can have in advancing BEIs and other community priorities through an equitable approach.</p>

Source/Excerpts Related to BEIs	Brief Summary/Relevant Quotes
<p>for project scale, innovations and unanticipated needs and opportunities to infuse equity in funding decision-making. CMF distributed funds to five community foundations.</p>	<p><i>“The resources that philanthropy has are more than just dollars. It’s networks, it’s relationships and it’s our responsibility to bring people around a table to solve problems alongside our community.”</i></p> <p><i>“Place-based foundations can play a role in not only shaping investments but also serving as accountability partners to government and community in ensuring that investments over the long term positively impact historically underserved populations.”</i></p>

Appendix E: Community Success Vignettes

The HPbD team uncovered a variety of examples of local Michigan BEI successes throughout the interview and scan processes. The full listing of community successes gathered from the assessment is detailed below and organized by state region.

EASTERN REGION

Bridge to Bay Trail (Macomb and St. Clair Counties)

The Bridge to Bay Trail is a nonmotorized trail that includes a diverse trail system of boardwalks, river walks, rail trails, paved shoulders, separated side paths, and bike lanes extending along the 54 miles of shoreline across Michigan's Thumb Coast in Macomb County and St. Clair County. Trail users experience picturesque views, charming towns, parks and benches, connections to other town-located trails, freighter watching, and the blue waters of Lake Huron, the St. Clair River, and Lake St. Clair. Communities situated along the Bridge to Bay Trail host annual festivals and events to boost trail tourism, use, and local economy. The trail connects users to downtowns and everyday destinations like neighborhoods, parks, museums, beaches, lighthouses, and more. The St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission provides assistance and expertise in planning and promoting the trail, while local entities are responsible for constructing and maintaining their respective section of the trail.

SOUTHEAST REGION

Belle Isle^{9,10,11,12} (Detroit)

Belle Isle Park is a 982-acre island park located in the Detroit River near downtown Detroit. With spectacular views of Detroit to the North and Canada to the south, park users can enjoy amenities such as the James Scott Memorial Fountain, the Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservancy, Dossin Great Lakes Museum, the Belle Isle Aquarium, Belle Isle Nature Center, Belle Isle Boathouse, zoo, and a golf course. Or park goers can enjoy activities like swimming, fishing, paddling, riding bicycles, hiking, and accessing the Iron Belle Trail via the Ralph Wilson Gateway.

Built to Play Initiative (Southeast Michigan)

The Built to Play initiative was born in 2018 due to the committed partnership between the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation, KABOOM!, and The Skatepark Project to help communities in Southeast Michigan and Western New York provide more safe, equitable, and imaginative places for children to play. The \$17 million dollar investment has yielded approximately 90 new play spaces and 20 new skateparks within both regions. Thanks to a [comprehensive report](#) by the Gehl consultancy group, these Built to Play projects are making positive and lasting impacts at each the individual, site, community, and systems level.

Chandler Park^{13,14,15} (Detroit)

⁹ Michigan Department of Natural Resources, [Belle Isle Park](#), (2025).

¹⁰ Belle Isle Conservancy, [Getting to the Park/What to Do and See](#), (2025).

¹¹ Visit Detroit, [Belle Isle State Park](#), (2025).

¹² Roost, [Belle Isle Park](#), (2024).

¹³ City of Detroit, Detroit Parks and Recreation, [Chandler Park](#), (2025).

¹⁴ Outlier Media, [Detroit Development Tracker](#), (2025).

¹⁵ [Chandler Park Conservancy](#), (2025).

Home to Detroit's east side, Chandler Park is Detroit's fourth largest park that boasts 200 acres of sports fields and courts, skate park, walking paths, aquatic center, and golf course. Sports enthusiast park users can participate in football, basketball, baseball, tennis, golf, soccer, lacrosse, and skateboarding, while other park goers can enjoy the onsite accessible walking path, fitness center, playground, and enjoy marshland and environmental education. With receipt of ARPA funds in 2022, new additions to the park location over the next few years will include the indoor Chandler Park Dome Recreation Center, the addition of new picnic shelters, and a new playground. The current and forthcoming park amenities are all part of Chandler Park's shared partnerships with the City of Detroit, the Chandler Park Conservancy, the Chandler Park Promise Coalition, and the Eastside Community Network.

Detroit International Riverfront^{16,17,18}

The Detroit International Riverfront, home to about 3,000,000 visitors annually include 5 ½ miles of Riverfront property, all operated and managed by the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy, Inc. The East Riverfront, part of the first phase of the Detroit waterfront transformation project completed in October of 2023, hosts attractions such as parks, plazas, pavilions, pathways, and open greenspace all connected by the widely used nonmotorized RiverWalk. On any given day and regardless of season, one will notice Riverfront visitors from all ages and walks of life relaxing, recreating, or patronizing the Riverfront's amenities. The Riverfront also connects two three urban greenways ([Dequindre Cut](#), [Dennis W. Archer Greenway](#), and [Southwest Greenway](#)), as well as serves as the future home of the [Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park](#).

Detroit International RiverWalk^{19,20}

The Detroit International RiverWalk consists of more than three miles of nonmotorized multiuse path that stretches from Rosa Parks Boulevard to the Bell Isle Bridge. Along the RiverWalk, guests may participate in walking, biking, splashing in the fountains and splash parks, enjoying designated nature areas, riding the carousel, eating at the RiverWalk Café, and taking in the views of both Detroit and Canada.

Joe Louis Greenway^{21,22,23} (Detroit)

The Joe Louis Greenway is a 27.5-mile planned biking and walking trail that will encircle the central part of the City of Detroit and connect Detroit's people, places, and parks to one another. Specifically, it will connect with the Detroit Riverfront, multiple parks, neighborhoods, additional trails and trail connectors, as well as to everyday destinations where community members can actively travel to and from places of interest. *"When completed, it will provide a place for people of all abilities to safely walk, bike, and run while connecting neighborhoods, parks, schools, jobs, historic sites, commercial corridors, and public transit."* Currently under construction for Phase 1 of trail development, the full pathway construction is slated for completion in 5-10 years.

¹⁶ Detroit Free Press, [Detroit Riverfront Ranks No. 1 on USA Today's 10 Best River Walks List](#), (2021).

¹⁷ Detroit Riverfront Conservancy, [Our Story](#), (2025).

¹⁸ Visit Detroit, [On the Waterfront – The Detroit Riverfront](#), (2025).

¹⁹ Visit Detroit, [Detroit International RiverWalk](#), (2025).

²⁰ Life in Michigan, [Detroit RiverWalk](#), (2017).

²¹ Detroit Greenways Coalition, [Joe Louis Greenway](#), (2025).

²² City of Detroit, General Services Department, [Joe Louis Greenway](#), (2025).

²³ Axios Detroit, [Joe Louis Greenway Trailhead Opens Near Detroit-Dearborn Border](#), (2023).

Rouge Park^{24,25} (Detroit)

Existing as Michigan’s largest urban park at 1,184 acres, the 100-year-old Rouge Park features robust recreation areas and activities for sports and outdoor enthusiasts. As the park’s centerpiece, the Rouge River winds and flows through the park’s amenities, such as the golf course, sports courts and fields, pool and splash pad areas, multiple paved and unpaved trails, marshes and nature areas, a butterfly garden, a campground, and an airfield. While sitting within the City of Detroit’s Parks and Recreation department, Rouge Park exists as a positive location in the community and is maintained by the nonprofit organization Friends of Rouge Park, which serves *“to protect, restore, and promote a natural, environmentally healthy, and culturally vibrant Rouge Park that engages the community for the benefit and enjoyment of all.”*

SOUTHWEST REGION

Berrien County Master Trails Plan^{26,27} (Berrien County)

With leadership from The Friends of Berrien County Trails, Berrien County municipalities, residents, and stakeholders came together to share their thoughts on the use and development of trails in Berrien County. From this process, the Berrien County Trails Master Plan was developed and will exist to help municipalities and trail organizations seek and secure resources and funding to advance a connected trail system for the county. The plan addresses development of trail facilities such as shared use paths, paved shoulders/bike lanes, sharrows, US bike routes, water (paddling) trails, and parks with hiking, mountain biking, cross country skiing, and equestrian trails onsite.

Marquette Greenway^{28,29} (New Buffalo)

With Phase 1 construction underway and with almost all necessary funding secured, the Marquette Greenway will exist as a regional non-motorized greenway and will span 58 miles of uninterrupted trail along the Lake Michigan southern shoreline from New Buffalo, Michigan to Chicago, Illinois. This interstate regional greenway is a product of several different funding sources and public and municipal partners within the three states of Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois.

Roosevelt Park Neighborhood Association (Grand Rapids)

Located in Grand Rapids, the RPNA consists of neighbors and business owners investing of their time and talents into the neighborhood and surrounding locations to make it a great place to live, work, and do business. Specific goals include building and maintaining a better Roosevelt Park, preserving historical significance while embracing a lively, dynamic, and growing present culture, investing in the areas in and around the Grandville Avenue Corridor, and maintaining neighborhood programs that are critical to neighborhood togetherness and vibrancy, such as the neighborhood’s Annual Meeting, clean-up events (Weeks of Hope, Dumpster Day, and Neighborhood Clean-Ups), National Night Out, and Block Leaders. Additionally, the RPNA maintains community resource systems for residents and business owners, upholds two crime prevention organizers dedicated to neighborhood and public safety, and manages one Tool Lending Library to assist residents with tackling home projects.

²⁴ City of Detroit, Detroit Parks and Recreation, Parks and Greenways, Regional and Riverfront Parks, [Rouge Park](#), (2025).

²⁵ [Friends of Rouge Park](#), (2015).

²⁶ Friends of Berrien County Trails, [Berrien County Trails Master Plan](#), (2025).

²⁷ WNDU 16 News Now, [Berrien County Adopts ‘Master Plan’ to Bring Recreational Trail Network to the Area](#), (2022).

²⁸ Friends of Berrien County Trails, [Marquette Greenway](#), (2025).

²⁹ Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, [Marquette Greenway](#), (2020).

NORTHERN REGION

Craig and Sue Meredith Day-Use Park and Walking Trail³⁰ (Weldon Township)

Officially renamed as the Craig and Sue Meredith Day-Use Park and Walking Trail, the park is situated adjacent to the Betsie River and is surrounded by large, forested areas of undeveloped property owned by the Michigan DNR. Park goers can enjoy a new quarter-mile walking and nature observation trail, as well as an accessible walkway to the Betsie River to the kayak/canoe launch site where they can partake in activities like hiking, snow shoeing, kayaking, and canoeing. Wildlife populations are abundant, and one may see and/or encounter wood turtles, various bird species, butterflies, deer, and bear. The park is within easy bicycling range of the Betsie Valley Trail, the Village of Thompsonville, and the Crystal Mountain Resort and Spa.

Gaylord Gateway Trailhead^{31,32,33} (Gaylord)

The new Gaylord Gateway Trailhead, located on the east side of the railroad tracks between Main and Mitchell Streets in Gaylord, serves as the main access point to Michigan's Iron Belle Trail. The downtown Gaylord Iron Belle Trail location is a favorite pitstop among summertime hikers seeking a nonmotorized trail and also among winter snowmobilers looking for a snowy route to ride. This new trailhead offers a covered pavilion, covered restrooms, a courtyard with a gas-powered firepit, bike racks, bike repair station, landscaping, decorative lighting, interpretive displays, and car and trailer parking. As a bonus, an additional 1.75 miles of new trailway was included with the construction of the trailhead. The new trailhead is owned by the MDNR and leased to Otsego County for operation.

Grayling Main Street Program (City of Grayling)

Known as Michigan's "Most Colorful Rivertown," Grayling's certified, and award-winning Master Level Main Street revitalization program has made a lasting and positive difference in economic development, arts revitalization, and recreation tourism. With goals to increase downtown residential density, improve the physical built environment, and increase arts and recreational business opportunities, residents and visitors alike can drive, ride, or paddle in for their fill of outdoor and artisan inspired goods from the city's friendly retailers and restaurants. Recreational highlights include a downtown nonmotorized boat launch in the AuSable River, the AuSable River Canoe Marathon, and New Year's canoe drop.

Great Lake to Lake Trail^{34,35} (Statewide)

Spurred by an idea to connect one Great Lake to another by use of a nonmotorized trail system within the state of Michigan, the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance (MTGA) envisioned the Great Lake to Lake Trail. This trail system will consist of five interconnected routes (two in the Upper Peninsula and three in the Lower Peninsula) that connect trail users from one Great Lake to another. Bringing this vision to reality is a collaborative effort of the MTGA and many collaborative state and local partners and municipalities. While trail development is still underway, the five routes will total 815 trail miles

³⁰ Weldon Township, [Craig and Sue Meredith Day-Use Park and Walking Trail](#), (2024).

³¹ C2AE Architecture and Engineering, Otsego County, [Gaylord Trailhead](#), (2024).

³² C2AE Architecture and Engineering, [Facebook Page](#), (2021).

³³ Otsego County, Capital Projects and Grants, 2020 Projects, [Gaylord Gateway/Iron Belle Trailhead](#), (2025).

³⁴ Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance, Initiatives, [Great Lake to Lake Trails](#), (2025).

³⁵ Michigan Trails, [Great Lake to Lake Trail – Route 1](#), (2024).

once completed. Route 1 of the five trails is presently 78% complete, exists along the old Michigan Air Line Railroad, and is deemed to be the most ambitious and challenging at 275 miles long.

Railroad Square^{36,37} (Kalkaska)

Once as an abandoned lumberyard and now as the placemaking center in the heart of downtown Kalkaska, the new Railroad Square serves as a cultural and economic center for community gatherings and the catalyst for downtown development. Railroad Square includes an all-season pavilion with restrooms, an incubator kitchen, façade improvements for the historical museum, a new clock tower, a food truck court with a fire pit, an event lawn with bench seating, a pedestrian trail, storm water runoff improvements, landscape additions, and newly available street parking.

Universal Trail Access^{38,39,40} (in and around Traverse County)

Thanks to the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, people with mobility challenges can now access breathtaking views of Lake Michigan, explore rare birds and plants, enjoy coastal dunes and forests, and easily access several trails in and around the Traverse City area for recreation and physical activity. Universally designed so that people of all abilities can participate in trail use, the new or improved universal access trails and platforms were constructed in a way that protected the natural resources, such as working the trails around mature trees and ensuring that rare plants were preserved. Gaining the perspective of people with disabilities and/or disability advocates like the Disability Network of Northern Michigan is the key to successful universal trail design and access. Universal trail access is now in place at the following locations:

- Grand Traverse Natural Education Reserve
- The Overlook Trail at Arcadia Dunes (C.S. Mott Nature Preserve)
- Arcadia Marsh Nature Preserve
- Pyatt Lake (Bill Carls Nature Preserve)
- Timbers Recreation Area Universal Access Trail
- Acme Bayside Park
- Mary Behrens Sorrell Trail (St. Clair Lake-Six Nature Preserve)
- Mitchell Creek Meadows (Don and Jerry Oleson Nature Preserve)
- Traverse Area Recreation Trail
- Betsie Valley Trail
- Ransom Lake Natural Area
- Michigan Legacy Art Park
- Michigan Legacy Art Park
- The Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail

³⁶ C2AE Architecture and Engineering, Village of Kalkaska, [Railroad Square](#), (2024).

³⁷ Up North Live ABC, [Kalkaska Community Unveils Railroad Square](#), (2021).

³⁸ University of Michigan, Michigan News, [Happy Trails: Conservancy Brings Universal Access to Seven Trails in Northwestern Michigan](#), (2024).

³⁹ Traverse City, [Accessibility in Traverse City](#), (2025).

⁴⁰ Traverse City, [Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail-Sleeping Bear Dunes](#), (2025).

Upper Manistee Headwaters Milock Family Preserve^{41,42} (Kalkaska County)

Thanks to the successful and multi-year fundraising efforts of the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, the former 1,288-acre Boy Scouts Camp Tapico was purchased and protected as a nature and wildlife preserve, e.g., now named as the Upper Manistee Headwaters Milock Family Preserve. This preserve contains six trail miles ideal for hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and “cruiser” style biking. The preserve also includes a 130-acre spring-fed lake, multiple types of wetlands, several kettle-hole ponds, as well as northern mesic forests and fields.

UPPER PENINSULA REGION

Keweenaw Land Trust (Keweenaw, Houghton, and Baraga Counties)

The Keweenaw Land Trust primarily serves Keweenaw, Houghton, and Baraga Counties in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula and exists as *“a community partner protecting land, water, and quality of life through conservation, stewardship, and nature connections.”* With a vision of empowering landowners and citizens to create landscapes that are forever beautiful, healthy, and diverse, the Keweenaw Land Trust uses effective strategies to protect, steward, and restore natural areas, watersheds, heritage lands, farms, forests, and family lands that enhance quality of life and foster personal connections. In doing so, these efforts sustain native wildlife, strengthen local economy, and provide numerous recreational opportunities.

⁴¹ Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, [Upper Manistee Headwaters Milock Family Preserve](#), (2025).

⁴² Michigan Live, [1,288-Acre Former Michigan Scout Camp to Open As A Public Nature Preserve](#), (2020).