

La Porte County Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan

Public Meeting #2

March 25, 2024



Project Team



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Agenda

- **Project Overview**
- **Public Meeting #1 Recap**
- **Survey Results**
- **Existing Conditions Overview**
- **Activity 1**
- **Activity 2**
- **Next Steps**





Project Overview

Photo Cred: Tom Gill



Project Background



Bicycle and pedestrian trail needs and opportunities have emerged.



Urban areas within the County want to integrate with a County-wide trail network.



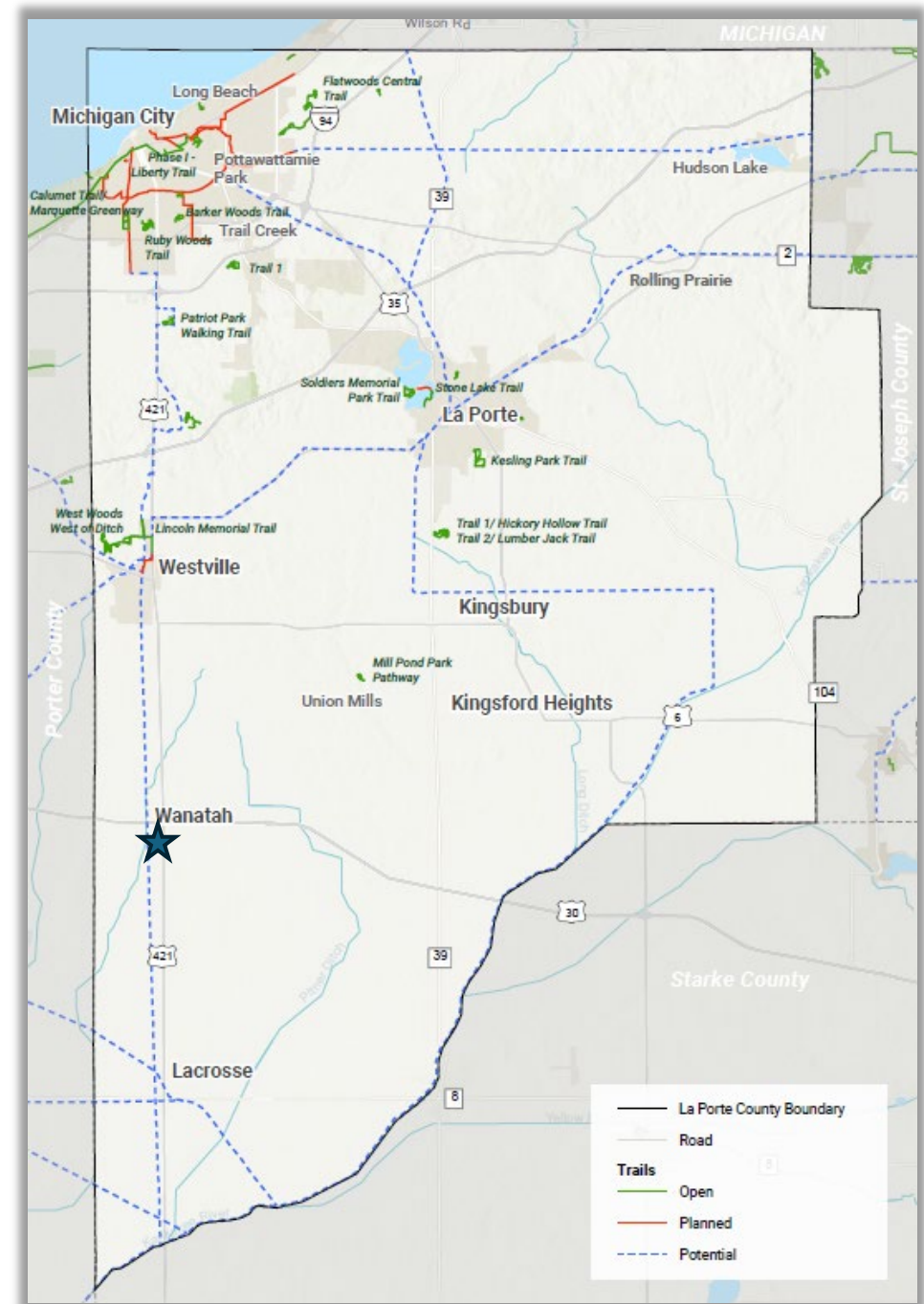
The plan will include shared roadways as part of the network.



The plan will identify areas for new trails and shared connections.



The plan will promote accessibility and connectivity.

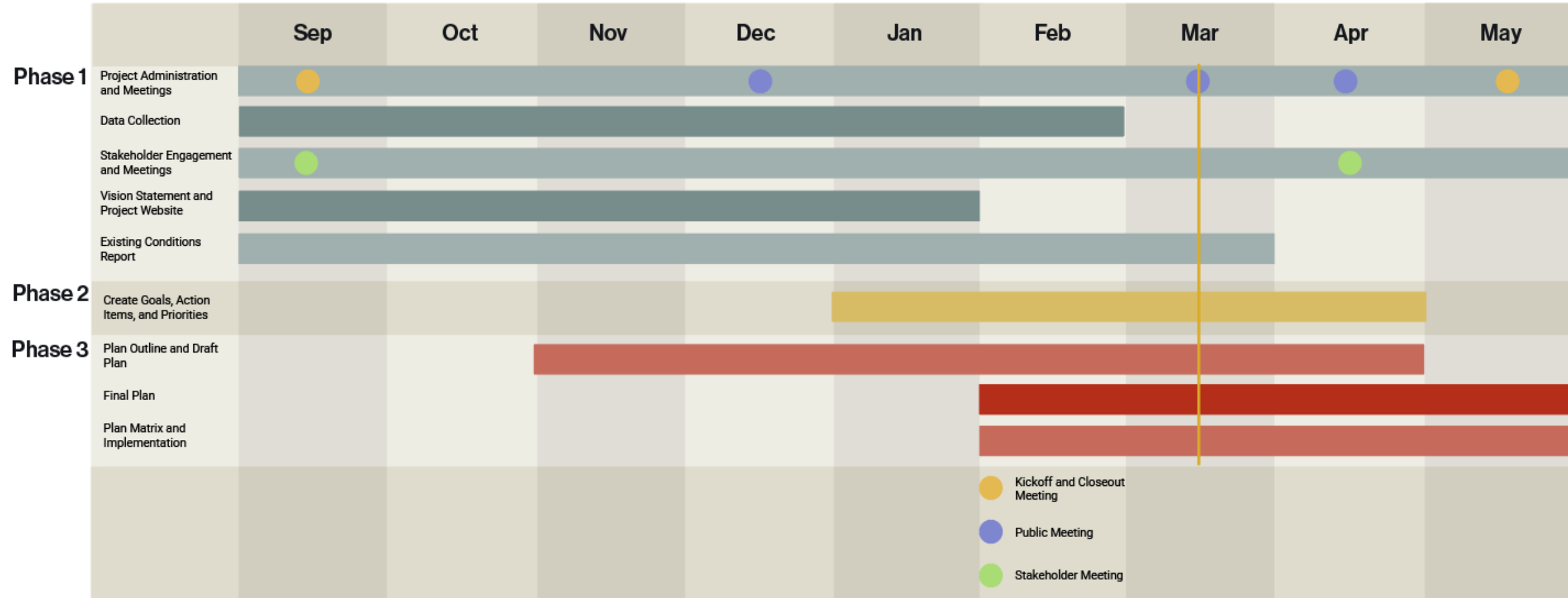


La Porte County Priorities



- Connections to La Porte County Parks
- Promote a healthy and active community
- Increase safety for all shared roadway and trail users
- Support environmental sustainability
- Complete a plan that is integrated with surrounding planned and future growth
- Plan for system gaps to common destinations and growth areas

Project Timeline

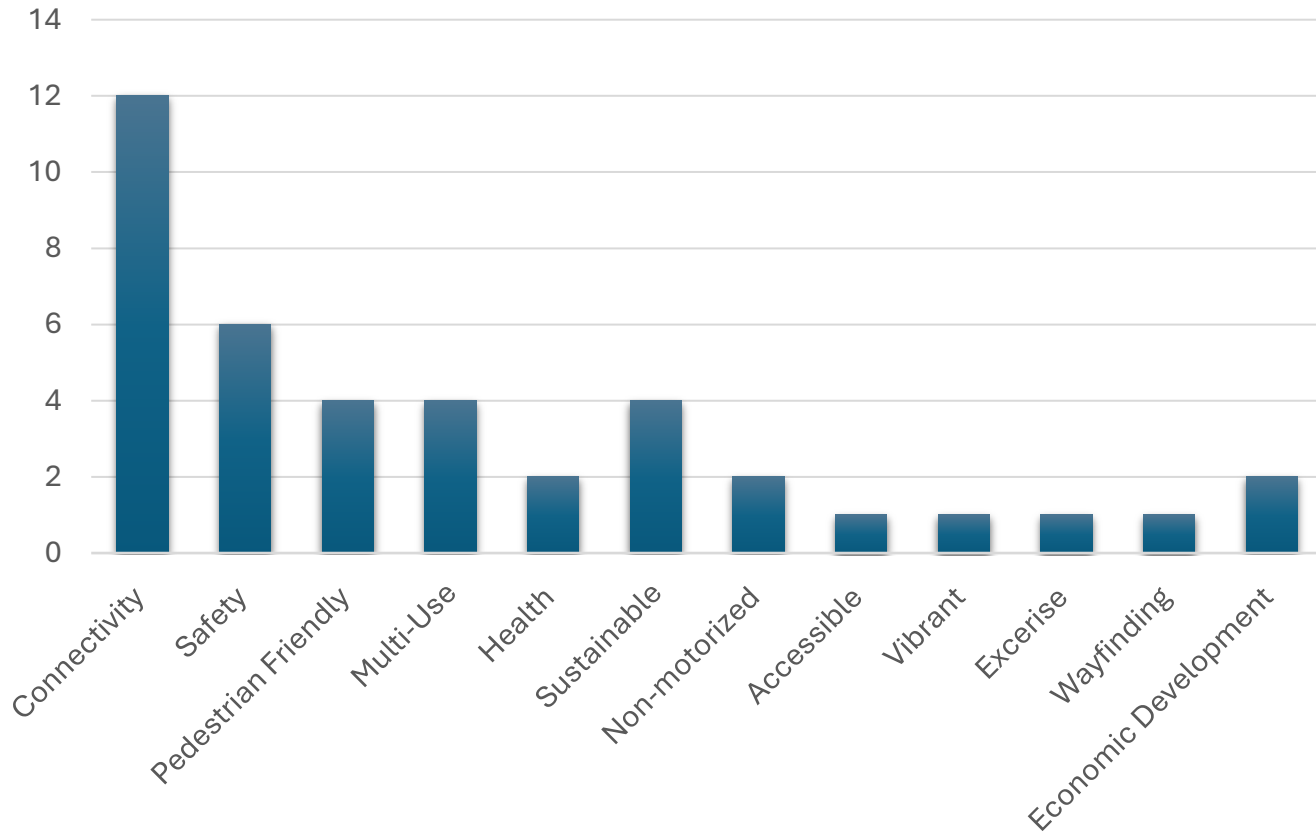




Public Meeting #1 Recap



Visioning Exercise Results



Top 5 Priorities

1. Connectivity
2. Safety
3. Pedestrian Friendly
4. Multi-use
5. Sustainable

SWOT Exercise Results



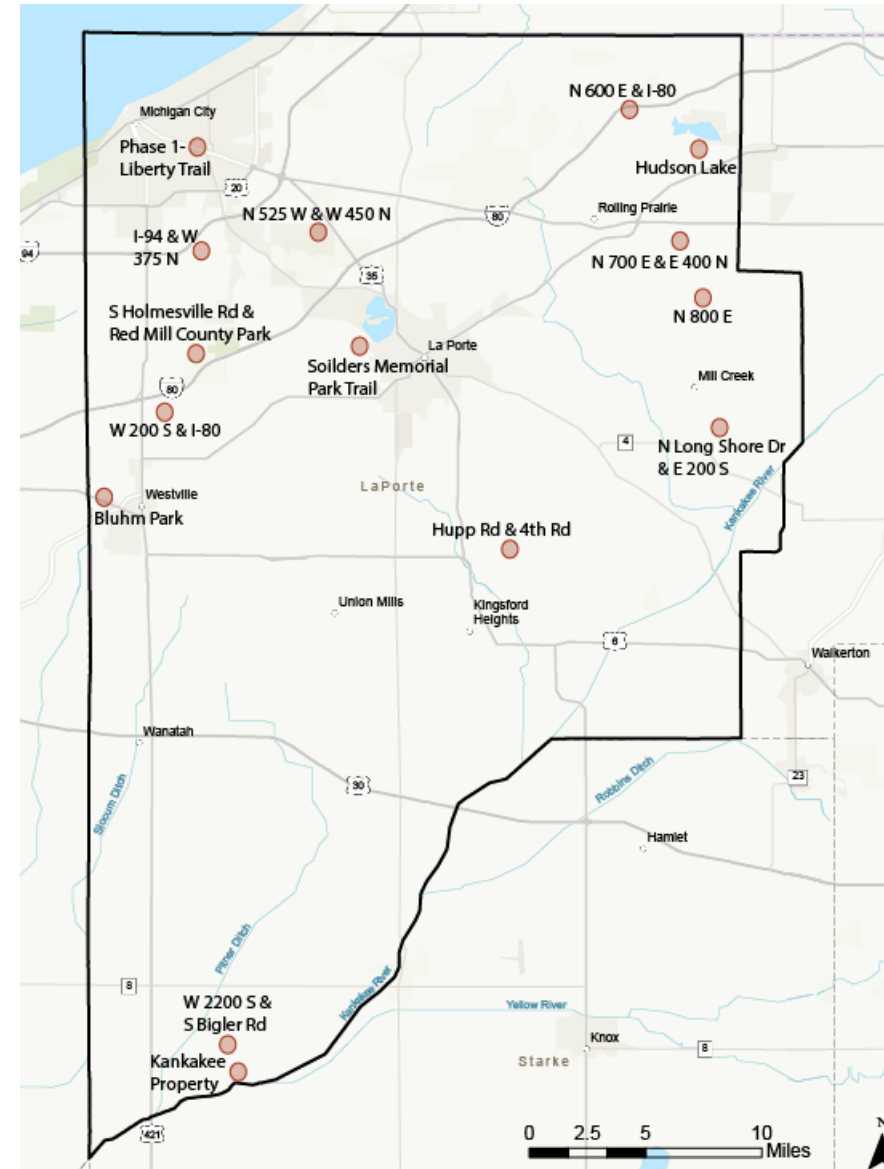
- 20 strengths, 20 opportunities, 3 weaknesses, 7 threats were identified
- Below are the top comments from each activity

Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
Existing County trails are well maintained	Lack of connectivity	More connection to smaller towns in the County	Roads may be difficult and unsafe for biking
Trails are in populated areas	Separated trails	More connections to parks	Railroads and large busy highways
Mountain biking trails	Funds available for development	New developments may lead to new trails	Environmental

SWOT Opportunity Areas



Location	Comment
Phase 1- Liberty Trail	Connectivity
I-94 & W 375 N	Shared roadway
N 525 W & W 450 N	Shared roadway, connectivity
S Holmesville Rd & Red Mill County Park	Make connection to MC
W 200 S & I-80	New trail opportunity, connectivity
Bluhm Park	New trail opportunity
Solider Memorial Trail Park	Trail around Stone Lake
N 600 E & I-80	Shared roadway
Hudson Lake	With industrial development, new utilities, and future housing are good planning opportunities to include trails
N 700 E & E 400 N	New park connection to St. Joe
N 800 E	Proposed trail
N Long Shore Dr & E 200 S	Connection to smaller towns
Hupp Rd & 4th Rd	Proposed trail
W 2200 S & S Bigler Rd	Connect to Starke County, through English Lake north to La Crosse
Kankakee Property	Proposed trail



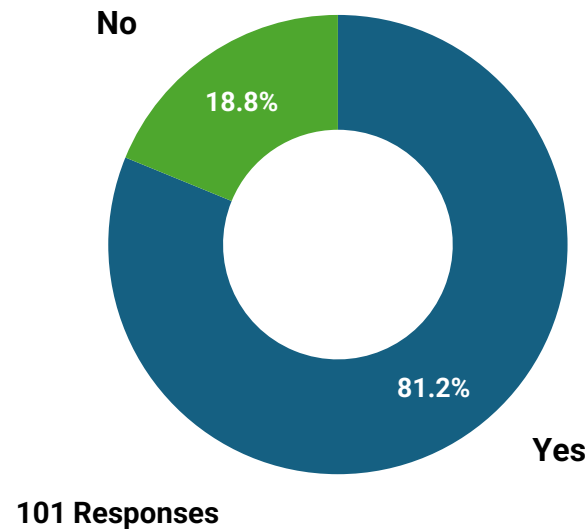


Survey Results

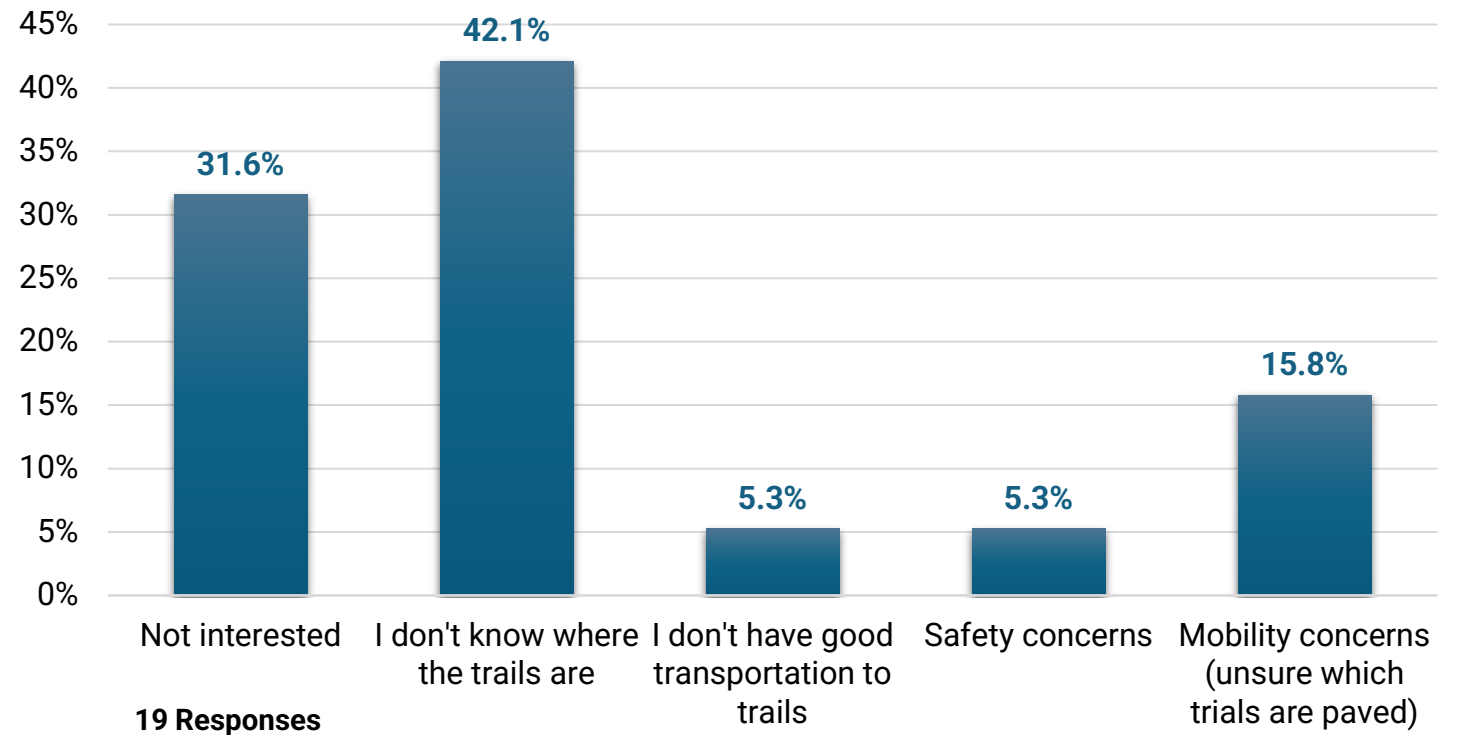


Survey: Hiking, Walking, or Running

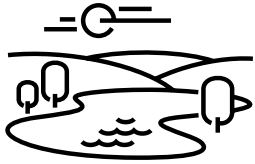
Do you hike, walk, or run on La Porte County trails?



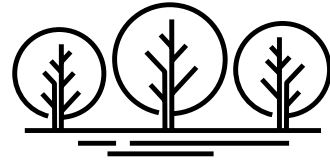
Why don't you use the trails in La Porte County?



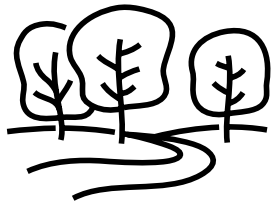
Survey: Trail Use



Over **80%** of the respondents use trails to **visit parks or public open space**



About **75%** of the respondents use trails on both weekdays and weekends

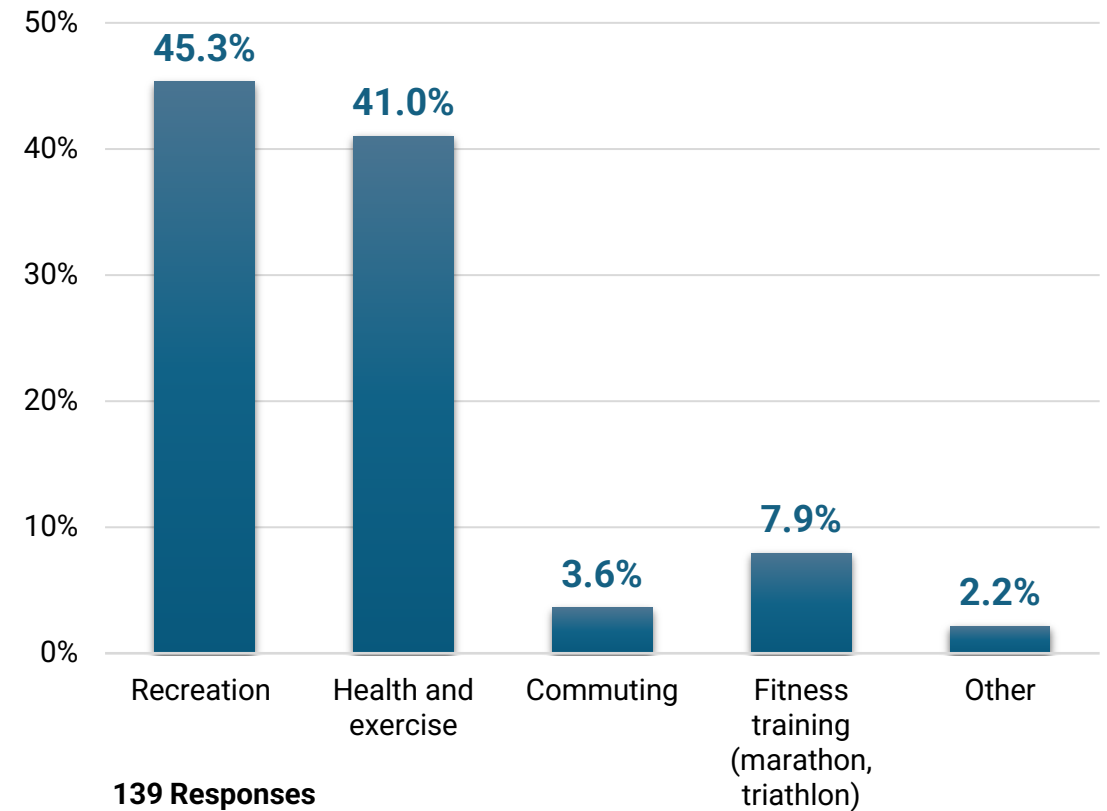


Over **55%** of the respondents spend **more than an hour** for each trail visit



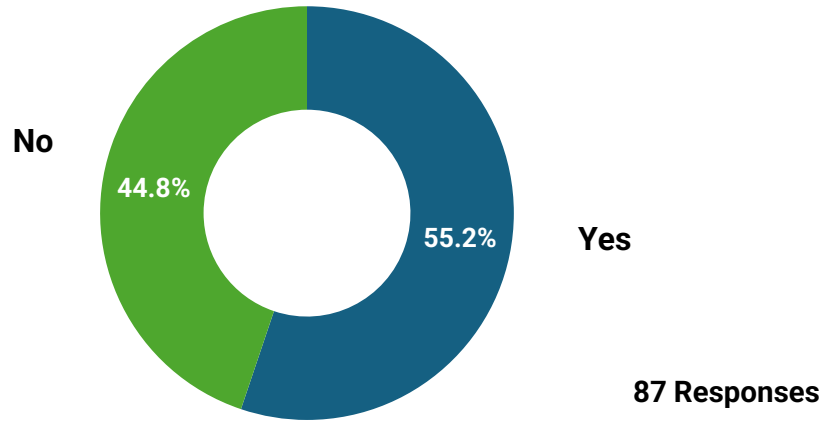
Over **46%** of respondents use the trails on a weekly basis

Would you consider your use of the trail to be for...



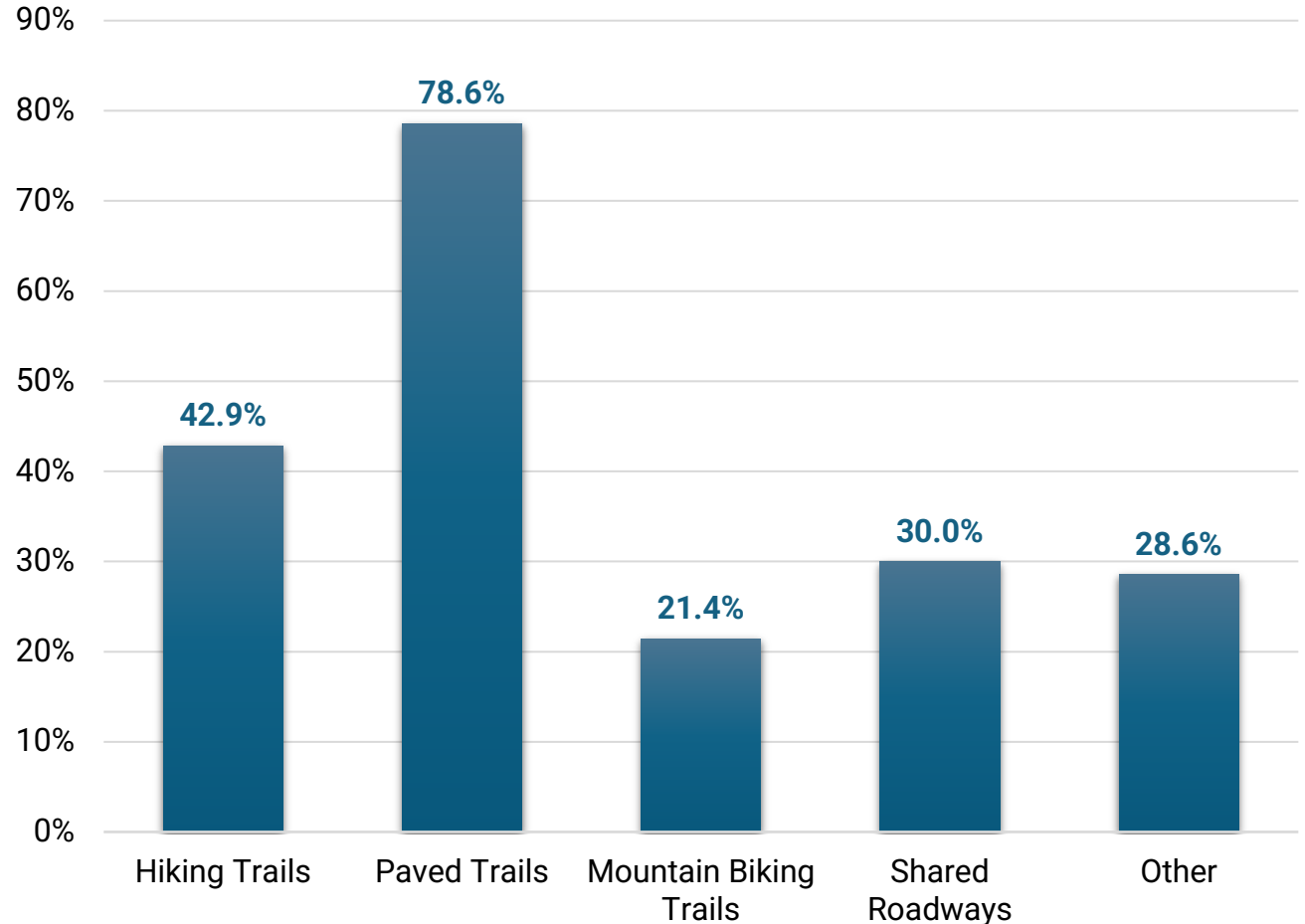
Survey: Cycling

Do you ride on shared roadways in La Porte County?



- Over **48%** of respondents who do not ride feel unsafe riding on the road with cars
- Over **35%** of respondents who do not ride feel unsafe riding on a road without marked or signed bike lanes

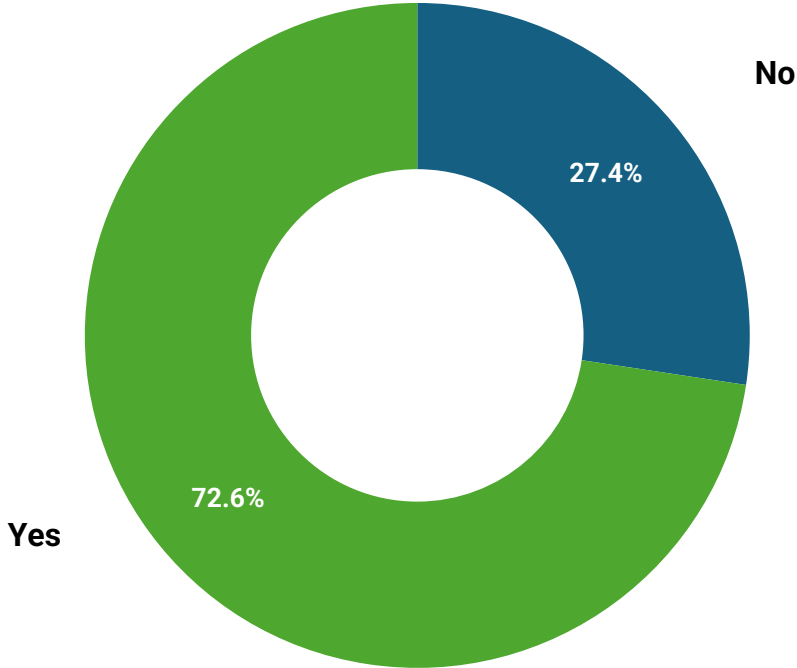
What kind of trails would you like to see more of?



70 Responses

Survey: Mountain Biking

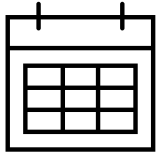
Do you mountain bike on the La Porte County trails?



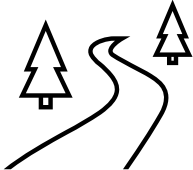
84 Responses



Over **39%** of respondents bike at least once a week



Over **68%** of respondents mountain bike on both weekdays and weekends



Mentionable Mountain Biking Trails:

- Bluhm County Park
- Red Mill County Park
- Soldiers Memorial Park



52% of respondents spend **more than an hour** on the trails

Public Survey

Of **101** survey participants:

- Over **76%** of trail user respondents use the trails for health and exercise or recreation.
- Over **48%** of non-shared roadway user respondents don't feel safe on shared roadways.
- Over **42%** of non-trail user respondents don't know where the trails are located.
- Respondents would like to see an **increase in paved trails**.
- Respondents report that there could be improvements with overall **trail connectivity**, specifically into rural La Porte towns.



Existing Conditions Overview



Trail Areas

Trail lengths vary from **0.2 to 6.8** miles, spanning approximately **37** miles

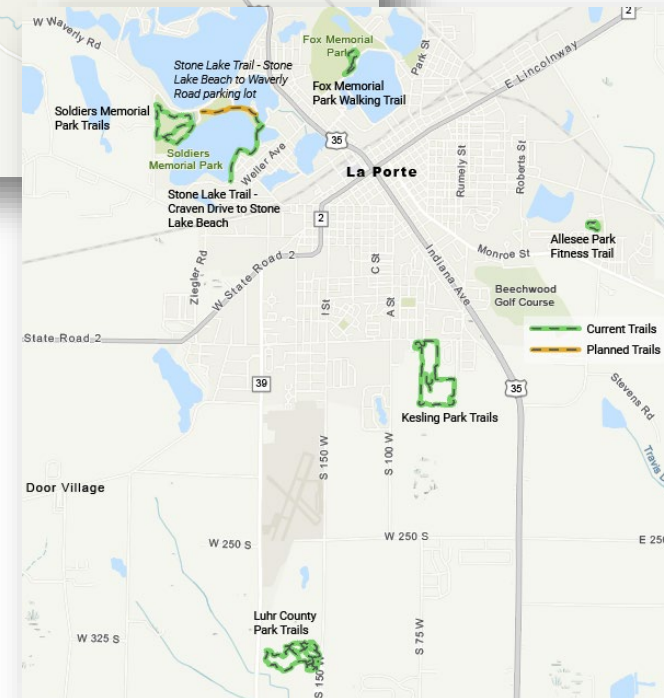
Michigan City Area

Urban areas like Michigan City and City of LaPorte have the longest, most developed trails.

Michigan City leads with extensive trail systems and planned expansions linking parks to a regional network.



City of La Porte Area



Trail Areas

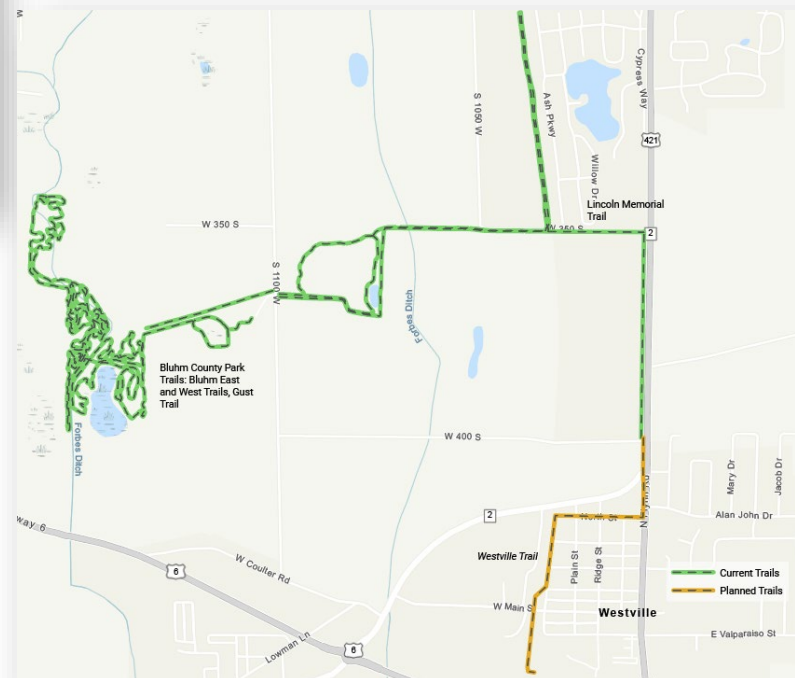
Holmesville Area



Holmesville area trails feature Red Mill Park and the Little Calumet Headwaters Nature Preserve

Westville area has a planned expansion of Lincoln Trail.

Westville Area



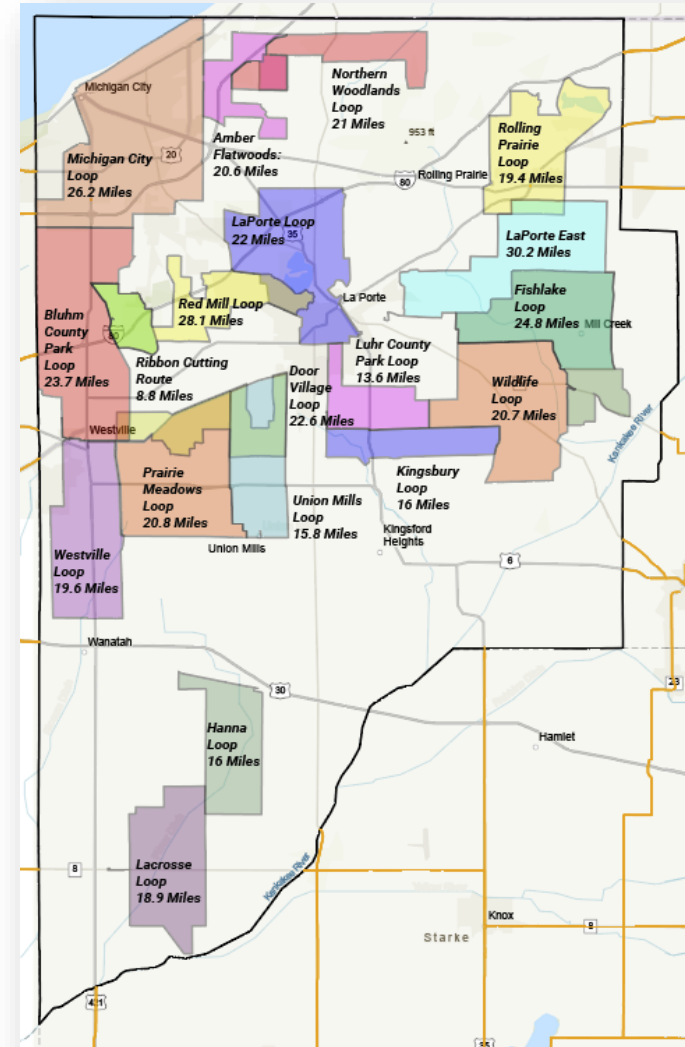
Union Mills Area



Union Mills features multi-use trails for hiking and mountain biking, along with fishing spots and picnic areas.

Shared Roadways

- La Porte County has 19 shared roadway routes covering nearly 400 miles.
- Cyclists can explore urban, suburban, and rural areas, with some routes marked by signage.
- Most routes use two- or four-lane roads shared with vehicles.
- Detailed route info is available on the La Porte County Parks website via the *Ride with GPS* app.

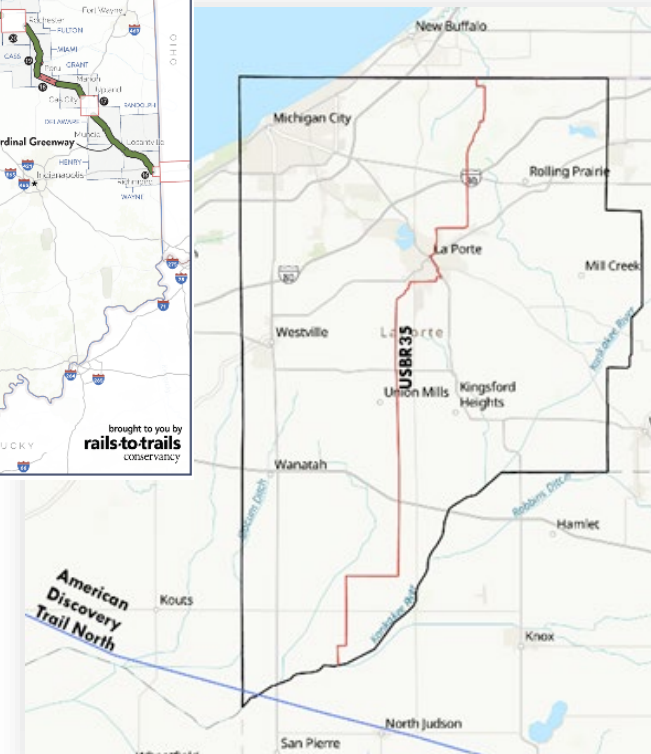


Regional Trail Systems

American Discovery Trail is a 6,800-mile coast-to-coast route from California to Delaware for hikers and cyclists, connecting urban centers, small towns, and wilderness areas.

USBR 35 is a 345.5-mile cycling route from Michigan City to Louisville, passing through La Porte County for 40 miles, offering diverse landscapes and convenient amenities for riders.

Great American Rail-Trail will span 3,700 miles from Washington State to D.C., with a planned segment in southern La Porte County connecting North Judson to Hebron via two potential routes.

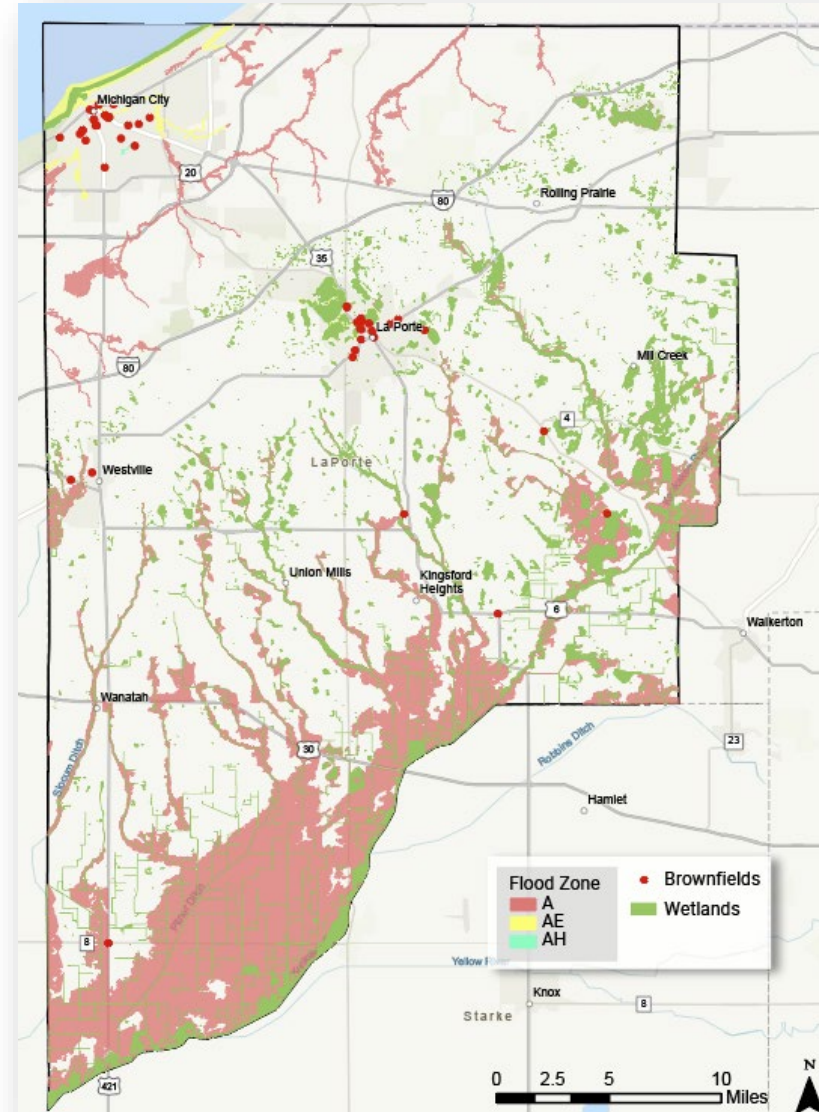


Environmental Impacts

Flood zones along the Kankakee River, may impact trail feasibility, with Zone A areas at 1% annual flood risk, Zone AE in Michigan City and City La Porte

Brownfield sites, mainly in Michigan City and City of La Porte, with some near Westville and rural areas

Wetlands concentrated near the City of La Porte, the Kankakee River, Mill Creek, and Kingsford Heights, are vital ecological resources but may pose challenges for trail development



Key Takeaways

- Connectivity between trails remains a challenge, areas like Kingsford Heights, Kingsbury, Wanatah, Rolling Prairie, and La Crosse lack trail infrastructure.
- Many trails accommodate a range of users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and ADA access.
- Shared roadways cover much of the County, but gaps remain in connectivity between the northern and southern regions.
- Connecting to larger regional trail systems is currently limited.
- Floodplains, brownfield sites, and wetlands may pose a challenge to trail development in some areas.



What are we missing?

- Are there any shared roadways or bike routes missing?
- Are there any trail or trail areas missing?

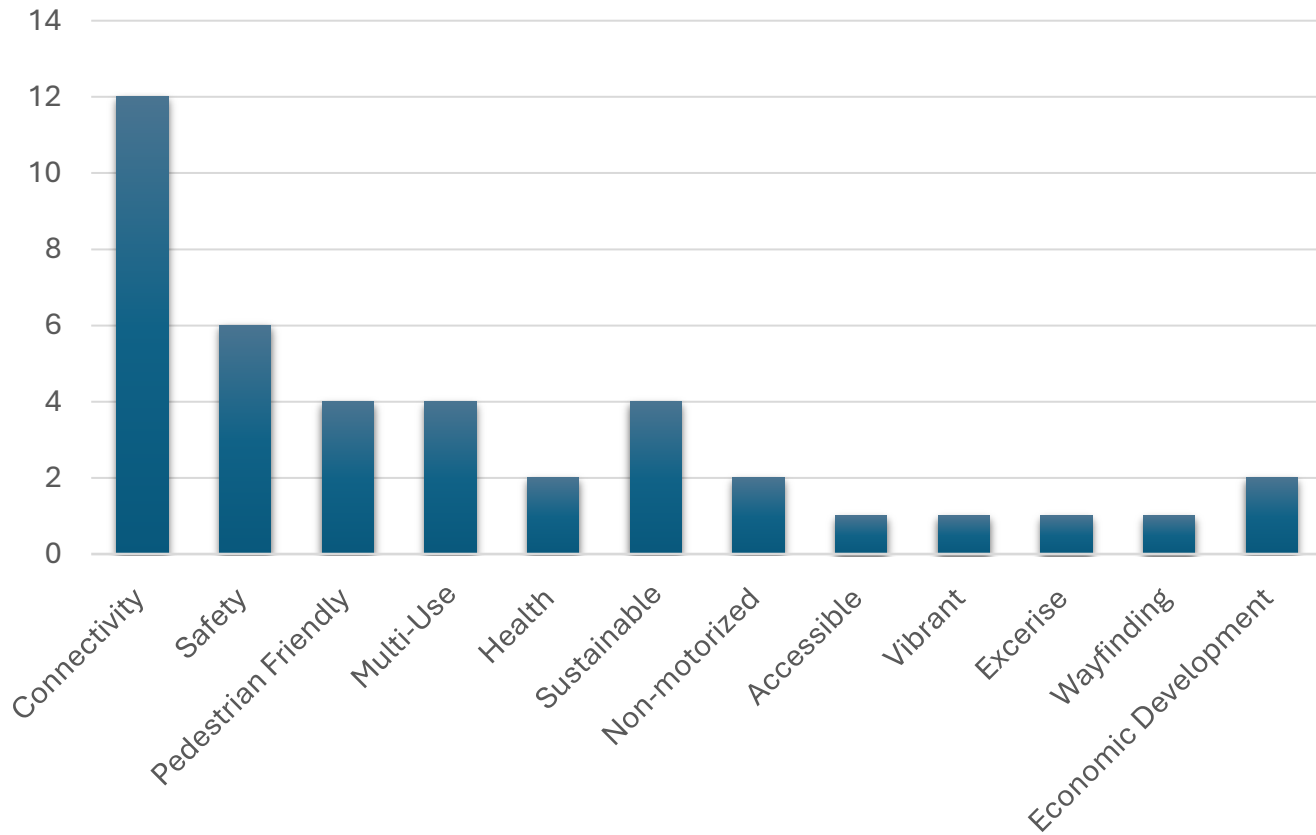




Activity 1

Visioning

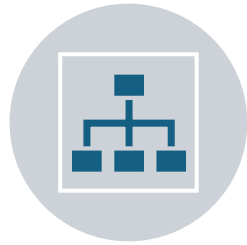
Visioning Exercise Results



Top 5 Priorities

1. Connectivity
2. Safety
3. Pedestrian Friendly
4. Multi-use
5. Sustainable

Vision Statement Activity



Please rank the vision statements from 1 to 3, with 1 being your top choice and 3 being your least preferred.



If there are any words, comments, or feedback you would like to share, feel free to write them in the space provided.





Activity 2

Trail and shared routes exercise

Activity Guidelines

In this exercise, we will begin brainstorming ideas for new trails and shared roadways across the County.

No Rules!

- **Money is not a concern**
- All ideas are welcome & avoid self editing
- Be future oriented
- **Think big and outside the box**

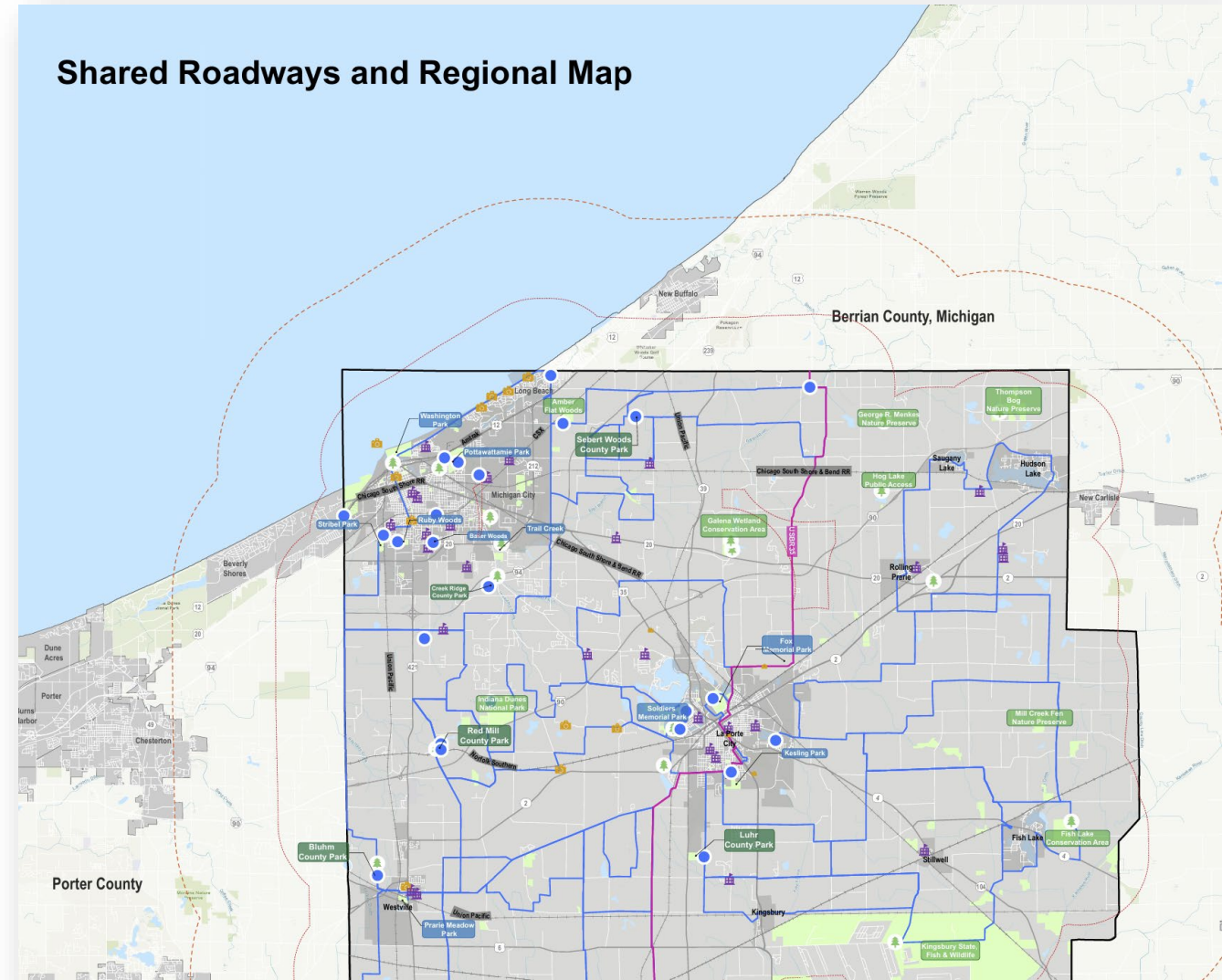


Trail and Shared Route Creation

In this exercise we will start drawing up ideas for new trails and shared roadways throughout the County.

We will split into groups.

- Each group will design five trails anywhere in the County and five shared routes where you'd like to see connections.
- Please place comments or speech bubble stickies on the routes.
- **Let's Discuss!**



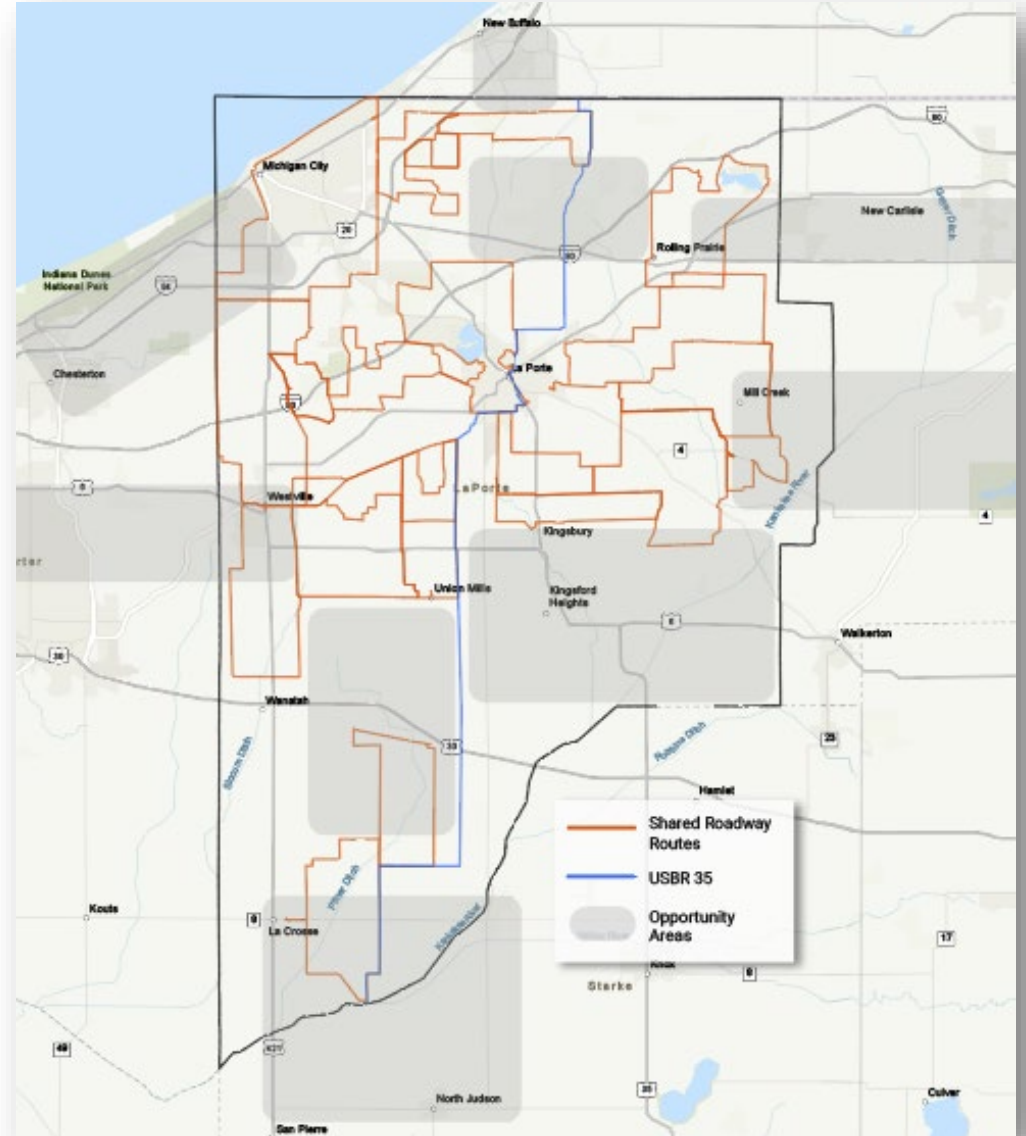
Potential Trail Areas

- Extend **Lincoln Trail** north and south towards **Michigan City** and **Westville**
- Create a trail with the abandoned rail corridor near **La Crosse** - supporting the Rail to Trail efforts
- Expand **Luhr Park** trail network with potential connections to **Kingsbury**
- Multi-Use trail opportunity connecting **Rolling Prairie to New Carlisle**
- Trail development in the **Fish Lake** area



Potential Shared Roadway Routes

- Connect to routes directly to and other active recreation areas
- Extend Shared Roadway loops to other areas in the County (**Kingsbury, Kingsford Heights, Wanatah, La Crosse**)
- Connect to regional areas like **New Buffalo, New Carlisle, Chesterton, and North Judson**
- Extend to **Valparaiso** from **Westville** and from **Michigan City** to **Porter** and **Chesterton**
- Connect to **Potato Creek State Park** from **Mill Creek** area





Next Steps

Next Steps

01

Finalize
Existing
Conditions

02

Stakeholder
interviews

03

Compile
feedback
from
stakeholder
and public
meetings

04

Draft
Recommended
Trails and
Shared
Roadways

05

Schedule
third
public
meeting
and Pop-
Up Event

Thank you!

