

Cass County Recreational Trails Plan 2022



RESOLUTION # 2022-015

ADOPTING THE 2022 CASS COUNTY TRAIL PLAN

WHEREAS, the County of Cass County, Iowa is committed to enhancing the quality of life for residents and attracting visitors by enhancing amenities; and,

WHEREAS, Cass County has acknowledged the need for trails within their area and recognizes the importance of trails for physical and mental health and recreation to enhance economic development in the region; and,

WHEREAS, the current Cass County Trail Plan was completed in 2008 and does not accurately express the current goals and visions of trail development within Cass County today; and,

WHEREAS, county stakeholders partnered with Southwest Iowa Planning Council to facilitate meetings and public engagement and complete the necessary updates to the 2008 Cass County Trail Plan; and,

THEREFORE, be it resolved, the Cass County Board of Supervisors adopts the 2022 Cass County Trail Plan in an effort to support trail development within Cass County, Iowa.

Roll Call Vote:

Steve Baier	<u>Yes</u>
Bernard Pettinger	<u>Yes</u>
Stephen Green	<u>Yes</u>
John Hartkopf	<u>Yes</u>
Mark O'Brien	<u>Yes</u>

Resolution adopted this 12th day of April, 2022.

Steve Baier

Steve Baier, Chair

Sara Harris

Attest, Sara Harris, Auditor

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Planning Committee

Name	Organization
Dani Briggs	SWIPCO
Leslie Wright	SWIPCO
Dave Chase	Nishna Valley Trails
Lora Kanning	Cass County Conservation
Brigham Hoegh	Cass County Wellness Coordinator
Bryant Rasmussen	Atlantic Parks and Recreation
Dave Jones	Atlantic Mayor
John Lund	Atlantic City Administrator
Lance Brisbois	Golden Hills RC&D
Scott Suhr	Iowa DOT
Brian Leaders	National Park Service

Plan prepared by:



In conjunction with:



Current Conditions

Introduction

Trails have become key amenities for communities around the country. They not only attract visitors and new residents but help to increase the quality of life for current residents as well. Cass County has many attractive features and a high quality of life, but the local trails infrastructure is very limited. This plan addresses this shortcoming and offers suggestions to improve the trail infrastructure throughout the county. Existing and proposed trails in and around Atlantic, Anita, Cumberland, Griswold, Lewis, Marne, Massena, and Wiota are discussed.

This plan was developed to meet the trails needs in Cass County in four focus areas;

- Areas for residents to pursue healthy physical activity to increase the overall quality of life.
- Trails as economic development tools to bring visitors into the county.
- Safe routes for children to go to school and play.
- Alternative, active mode of transportation for residents.

The plan outlines the many findings of the trails planning groups, the goals for the trails system, as well as the routes identified for new trail construction. Above all, this plan demonstrates that a comprehensive recreational trails system will be a major asset to the county, in terms of economic development, community health, and social well-being.

Need For Trails

Uses of trails extend much farther past the recreational aspect that many people acknowledge first. Trails can play a vital role in physical and mental wellbeing of residents, transportation needs and the connectivity of people to each other, amenities, employment and places of interest, and economic development of the region.

The most well-known benefit of trails is that to the user's physical health. After the initial effects of the COVID-19 pandemic were felt, people became very aware of the mental health benefits of trails and outdoor recreation spaces. During the pandemic, trail usage increased as they provided safe, accessible areas for people of all ages to enjoy physical outdoor activity.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), physical activity can boost mood, sharpen focus, reduce stress, and improve sleep. Over time, physical activity can help people live longer, healthier lives by lowering the risk of diseases like type 2 diabetes, controlling blood pressure, and maintaining at a healthy weight. In addition, spending time outdoors also has positive effects on health. Time spent outdoors is known to reduce anxiety, improve sleep, boosts immune system, and improves mental focus.

The CDC recommends adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity a week. Moderate intensity physical activity is anything that increases one's heart rate and include activities people enjoy on trails, such as bicycling and brisk walking. According to 2020 County Health Rankings from [CountyHealthRankings.org](https://www.CountyHealthRankings.org), 22% of adults aged 20 and over in Cass County report no leisure time physical activity. A comprehensive trails system can help address remove the barriers that prevent many people from participating in outdoor exercise and is a positive addition to the overall quality of life.

Trails can provide a vital link in the transportation network by connecting places of interest via off road infrastructure. This allows for an active form of transportation at a much smaller cost than that of owning and driving an automobile. A network allowing for this type of active transportation allows users to commute while gaining health benefits and while having less of a negative impact on the environment.

Studies have shown that trail development has a positive effect on the local economy. Businesses in cities along trails often report increased revenues due to increased visitors coming off the trail. The "Great Allegheny Passage Economic Impact Study" from 2008 showed that users of the trail who stayed overnight spent an average of \$98 per day in communities along the trail while those that didn't stay overnight spent \$13 per day. In addition to the influx of revenue to businesses, trails are shown to increase tax revenues in communities where they are located and increase values to nearby properties.

County Profile

Cass County is located in Southwest Iowa, approximately 50 miles east of the Omaha/Council Bluffs metropolitan area. The county is well connected to transportation infrastructure and is crisscrossed with major highways such as Interstate 80, US Highway 71, US Highway 6, and Iowa Highway 92. The Iowa Interstate Railroad operates a mainline through the northern part of the county.



Roughly half of the population of 13,091 lives in the county seat town of Atlantic. The rest of the population is distributed in small towns and rural residences. Anita and Griswold are the largest of these towns, both with populations around 1,000. Massena and Lewis are each approximately half that size and the other rural communities; Cumberland, Marne, and Wiota have populations between 150 and 250 people. The total population of the county declined during the 1980s and 1990s, which was typical of rural counties in Iowa. Since then the population has stabilized and is anticipated to grow slightly between 2015 and 2025. Although rural flight has slowed with improvements in the local economy, the population is aging and the median age of 44.9 is significantly higher than the national median age of 35. Many young people leave the county to pursue higher education or job opportunities

Cass County by the Numbers

Total Population	13,091
Under 5 years	665
5 to 19 years	2,498
20 to 44 year	3,392
45 to 64 years	3,582
65 to 84 years	2,428
85 years and over	526
Median Age	44.9 years
Cost of Living	
Median Monthly Mortgage	\$987
Median Monthly Rent	\$646
Average Travel Time to Work	18.3 minutes
Median Household Income	\$50,187
Poverty	
Food Insecure Population	12.60%
Housing Cost Burden	20.32%
Population Receiving SNAP	14.59%
Below 100% Poverty Level	11.55%

Source: ACS 2019, Health Indicators Report

and a significant portion of them end up permanently relocating. Quite often, the young people that leave the county return once they have families of their own.

Agriculture is the driving force behind the local economy. The vast majority of the land area is devoted to crop production or the pasturing of livestock. Corn and soybeans are the dominant crops. Beef, pork, milk, and egg production is considerable. Agricultural production is becoming more consolidated with fewer producers working larger farms—in line with national trends—but family farms are still prevalent throughout the county. Although agriculture is the base for the local economy, the majority of workers are employed in manufacturing or service positions.

Existing Trail Groups

An asset to future trail development within Cass County are the existing trail groups in the region. Trail groups are often comprised of stakeholders who are passionate and knowledgeable about trail development. These groups are often able to assist with fundraising (including grant writing), providing volunteers, and acting as a connection to the public.

The Frontier Iowa Trail (FIT) Network, based out of Oakland, is a group of western Iowans who are working to develop a regional multi-use trails system. The coalition includes representatives from county trail organizations, conservation boards, planning agencies, nonprofit trail groups, and more. FIT meetings are coordinated by Golden Hills RC&D. The group works to establish connections between existing and planned trails across jurisdictional boundaries like counties and cities. Information about FIT partners, trail plans, and more can be found at goldenhillsred.org/fit.

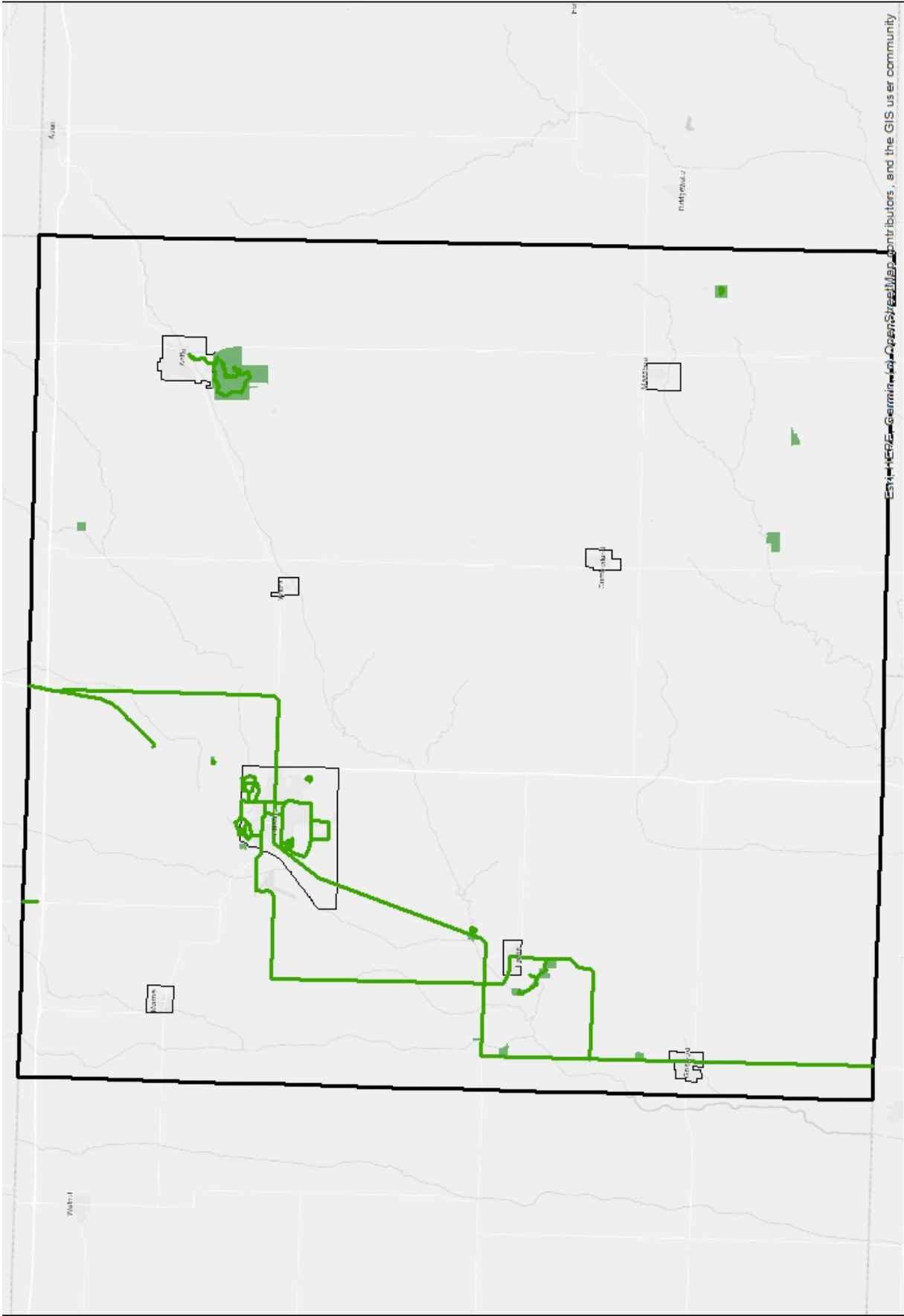
Nishna Valley Trails, Inc. (NVT) is a non-profit corporation organized in 1991 as a recreational trails advocacy group. It has tax-exempt status under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. It is governed by a Board of Directors which identifies opportunities to develop and fund recreational trails in Cass County, Iowa, and the surrounding area. NVT has no paid staff and efforts are carried on by non-paid volunteers. It's financial support comes from individual and business donations, government and foundation grants. It's completed projects include the Lake Anita State Park Bike/Pedestrian Trail, the T-Bone Trail, and the Schildberg Quarry/Atlantic Municipal Utilities Wellhead Connector Trails. The organization has successfully raised over \$750,000 for its projects since its inception. Its fundamental strategy involves forging public-private partnerships to accomplish the purposes of the group, which are to identify, design, develop, construct and fund recreational trails in and around Cass County.

Countywide Recreational Trail System

Cass County has little public land available for trails construction and what is available is often in small tracts and does not lend itself to long distance trails. The majority of the potential trails identified in the next section are shorter and would be developed within the city limits of a community and take advantage of public right of way. It is understood that to achieve long distance trails in Cass County, utilizing shared road connections may be required. When feasible, from an engineering and financial standpoint, off road connections should be encouraged to improve the users experience and safety.

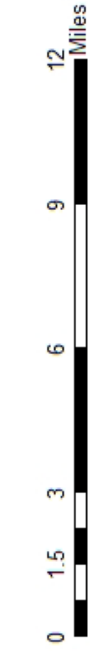
Cass County is currently connected to three long distance pedestrian/bicycle trails, the American Discovery Trail (ADT), Great American Rail-Trail and the T-Bone Trail. The ADT is the only non-motorized trail that traverses the entire lower 48 states from east to west. In Cass County, the trail follows the T-Bone Trail to Dunbar Road and then continues south on Great River Road which leads to the Atlantic Municipal Utilities' well field. The well field is connected to the Schildberg Recreation Area via an off-road trail. Once through the Schildberg Recreation Area, the ADT continues onto Buck Creek Road to Highway 83 and then to G-30 until the intersection of M-56. Headed south on M-56, the ADT travels through Lewis and Cold Springs State Park until it meets up with Highway 48 to Griswold and then continues out of Cass County. The trail is considered a non-motorized trail because portions of the system are closed to motor-vehicular traffic, however, the majority of the trail in Cass County follows public roads. The T-Bone Trail is a 20-mile rails-to-trails trail that goes from Audubon and stops three miles northeast of Atlantic. It follows the abandoned Iowa Interstate Railroad right of way entering Cass County at the Interstate 80/US Highway 71 interchange. There are two trailheads in Cass County. One is located ¼ mile south of the I-80 interchange and has parking and a covered shelter. The other is at the current southern terminus of the trail located at Dunbar Road and is 3 miles northeast of Atlantic. Efforts continue to identify and develop a feasible route to connect the Trail to Atlantic and the Schildberg Quarry Recreation Area. However, some of the old railroad right of way from the current trailhead into Atlantic has been lost to private farm development, and a section of the rail line is also still in use. Various alternatives to provide this connection in Atlantic are currently being explored.

The T-Bone Trail, American Discovery Trail and the Great American Rail Trail are great assets to the County. The latter two trails are trans-continental which makes it even more important that a connection be made into Atlantic. The current dead end of the T-Bone Trail 3 miles northeast of Atlantic discourages residents who wish to get out to the trail to enjoy it. A more connected trails system is needed in the County not only to act as a draw for tourism and economic development, but as a way for County residents and visitors to enjoy the health benefits associated with trails. Seeking out and establishing these connections, whether on or off road, is encouraged of local leaders utilizing this plan. Furthermore, future planning should consider connections in this manner to the regional trails systems currently being developed in Central and Southwest Iowa which are also integral to the trans-continental trails.



Legend

- Existing Trails
- Cities
- Public Lands



Goals

During public participation throughout the planning process, certain topics kept reemerging among participants regarding goals for future trail development. These goals will work to help Cass County prosper by promoting the county to surrounding areas while working to provide a higher quality of life for residents within the county. These included:

- Increase the number of safe, outdoor recreational opportunities for residents.
- Make our communities as attractive as possible to new businesses and residents.
- Increase the number of tourism opportunities in the county.

Plan Development

Planning Process

This plan was developed in four phases. The first phase involved gathering background information on the area, such as demographic information on the communities as well as information on existing trails assets. The second phase involved public input to gather information on their specific trails needs. The third phase involved developing the draft plan and submitting it to the local governments for their review, comment, and revision. The fourth phase included plan adoption and implementation.

Public interest in the plan and support for continued trail development was fairly strong from the beginning. Involvement from local groups such as Healthy Cass County, Nishna Valley Trails, and Golden Hills RC&D helped to boost the public's awareness about the plan and intentions for the future of trails in Cass County. Additionally, representatives from each of the five communities in Cass County were contacted regarding their current situation with trails and their wants/needs for the future.

Planning Timeline

September 30, 2020:	Initial meeting with steering committee
October 29, 2020:	Work session with steering committee
January-May 2021:	Cities contacted to provide updates on trail activities
February-March 2021:	Outdoor Recreation Survey open
April 2021:	Recreation Public Forum
May 21, 2021:	Meeting with steering committee
June 14, 2021:	Draft Presented to Healthy Cass group
October 2021:	Final draft presented to steering committee
October 23, 2021:	Final draft presented to Tour de Parks attendees
March 10, 2022:	Start public comment period on final draft
March 31, 2022:	End public comment period on final draft

Public Participation

Public participation has been central to the creation of this plan and public participation will be critical to the future success of the trails system. Engagement opportunities were designed to produce thoughtful and knowledgeable dialog but also mindful of the current pandemic and social distancing.

In the spring of 2021, the trails committee conducted a Cass County Outdoor Recreation Survey. Over 260 people from across the county participated in the survey. Here are some key findings:

- Of the approximately 30% of respondents who indicated they do not use county trails, the top reasons included: lack of time; lack of knowledge of trails; distance

- to the nearest trail; health/physical handicaps; and lack of trail amenities (such as water, restrooms, etc.). This group of respondents identified the following as “high needs” for Cass County: sidewalk improvements; map of county trails with information such as distance; more trail marking and signage; more rest areas (benches gazebos) and restrooms; and new or extended trails for biking.
- Of the approximately 70% of respondents who indicated they use county trails, the following were identified as “high needs” for Cass County: new or extended trails for walking/running and biking; map of county trails with information such as distance; more trail marking and signage; sidewalk improvements; more restrooms; and more water stations. Over 20% of respondents who use trails also indicated a high need for paved/widened shoulders on highways and more adult fitness equipment located along trails. Slightly fewer respondents indicated a need to clear trails during the winter and provide additional water trail access points.

In addition, members of the steering committee attended a public forum on recreation in April 2021 put on by the Nishna Valley Family YMCA. At this forum, a discuss was held on many different aspects of recreation including trails. This discussion touched on trail expansion and proposed routes. The public was allowed to provide input on future trail development at this time.

Recommendations

Each community in Cass County was evaluated to identify potential areas for trails development and those recommendations are detailed in the following sections of this plan. There are several recommendations, however, in addition to developing those specific trails routes that Cass County and the various cities in the county should address in order to meet the overall goals. These include:

- Coordinate with the Iowa Department of Transportation and regional/national trail groups to implement the state trails plan, as well as work directly with neighboring counties and local trail groups to develop regional trails.
- Support statewide legislation to protect counties from liabilities related to bicycle and pedestrian accidents on county roads.
- Identify and mark routes that are safe for bicyclists and pedestrians on existing infrastructure, place warnings where bicyclists and pedestrians are not safe.
- Assess county recreational areas for new and innovative uses, such as ATV and equestrian trails and where practical, adopt policies that allow for these uses.
- Pursue regional, state, and federal funding for local trails projects (see trail funding in appendix).
- Work with school districts to encourage children to walk or bike to school wherever possible.
- Support funding for Iowa Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund.

Overall, this plan not only recommends areas for new trails development in Cass County, but also encourages local governments to adopt policies that encourage trails development and use.

Trail Standards

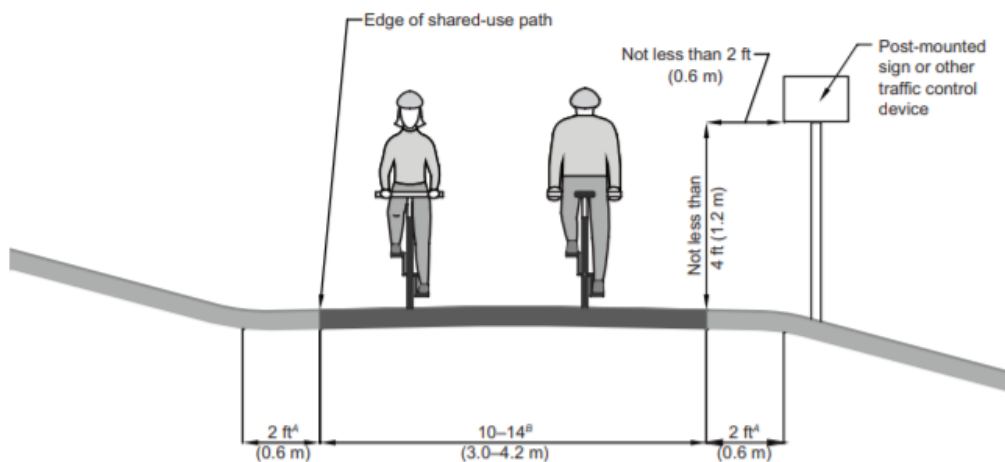
Trail Types and Uses

Trails can come in many different types and sizes depending on the purpose they need to serve. It is important to understand the various types and their functions to ensure the proper trail is constructed, otherwise, construction of a trail that is too large or too small for the area could occur or pedestrians could be put into dangerous situations.

Multi-Use Trail

Multi-use trails are typically the first type of trail many people think of. These two-way trails are separate from motor vehicle traffic and are used by non-motorized uses such as pedestrians and bicycles.

Development of this type of trail is often time consuming and costly due to the need to acquire land, engineering the base for the trail and provide surfacing for the required width. AASHTO guidelines recommend a minimum width of 10 feet, and they can have various surface types such as concrete, asphalt or crushed limestone.



Source: AASHTO Guide for Development of Bicycle Facilities 4th Edition

Rail Trail

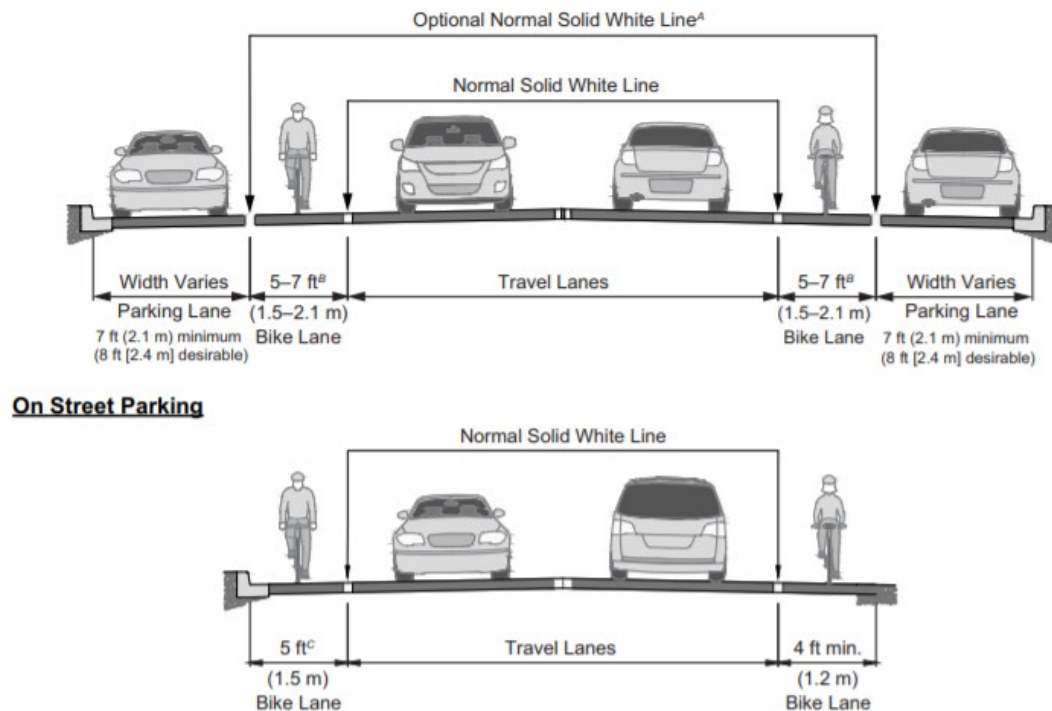
Rail trails are often a shared use or multi-use trail that take advantage of abandoned railroad right of way. This can reduce costs associated with engineering since the trail utilizes the existing railroad base and can streamline land acquisition.

Foot Trails

Foot trails are intended for use by pedestrians only and can be found in both rural and urban settings. In an urban setting, a foot path could be a sidewalk, alley or lane that prohibits bicycles. In a rural setting, these trails can be found in forests, parks, and other natural environments. Rural foot paths are often a natural surface and can have a varying degree of terrain, incline, and difficulty and may be used for hiking purposes.

Bike Lanes

Bike lanes are on road trails that allow bicyclists to travel alongside motorized traffic. These lanes can be designated by paint and signage or can be separated from traffic by physical barriers. Bike lanes are often found in urban settings where traffic speeds are slower. Urban streets that have higher traffic counts or speeds are more likely to utilize separated bike lanes with physical barriers.



Parking Prohibited

Source: AASHTO Guide for Development of Bicycle Facilities 4th Edition

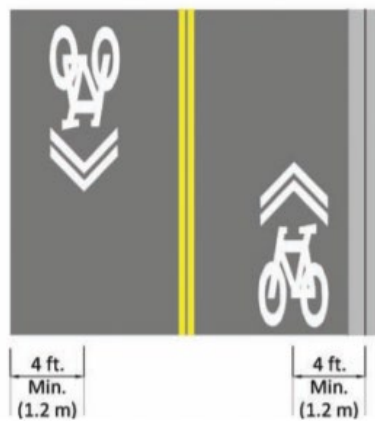
Paved Shoulders

Paved shoulders are the paved portion outside of the travel lane of a road designed for motorized traffic, typically a highway in a rural setting. Utilizing paved shoulders can be beneficial to bicyclists and motor vehicles. By paving the shoulders, bicyclists are able to travel throughout a more sparsely populated area that may not have the means to develop separated trails. Paved shoulders also provide a safe spot for motor vehicles to pull over during accidents or breakdowns.

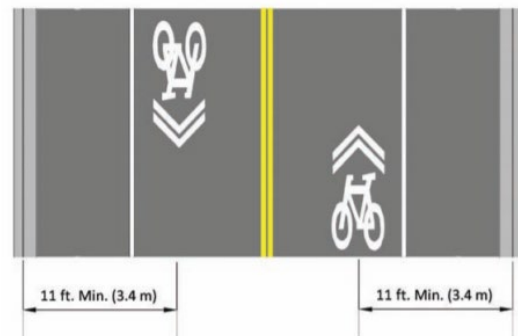
Shared Road

Shared roads can be utilized where traffic counts or speeds are low enough to allow bicyclists to travel comfortably alongside motor vehicles. Similar to paved shoulders, shared roads are often found in rural settings between cities but can also be found within cities. In rural settings, shared roads often feature signage stating that it is a shared road while urban settings may feature pavement markings for bicycles.

Shared Lane with Parking Prohibited



Shared Lane with Parking

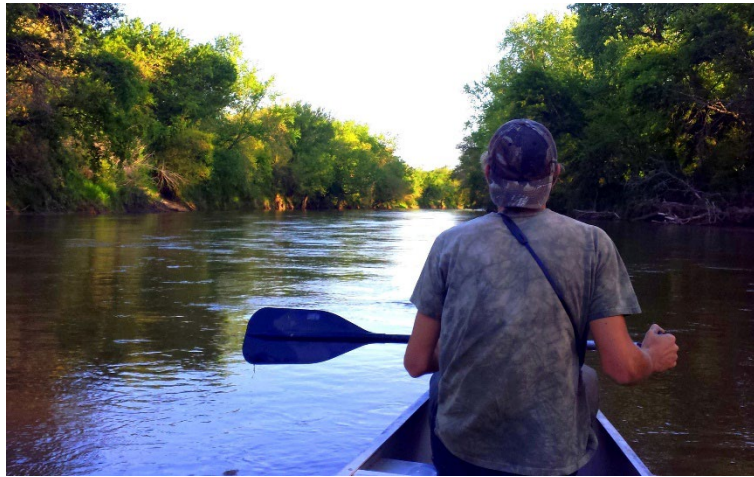


Source: AASHTO Guide for Development of Bicycle Facilities 4th Edition

Water Trails

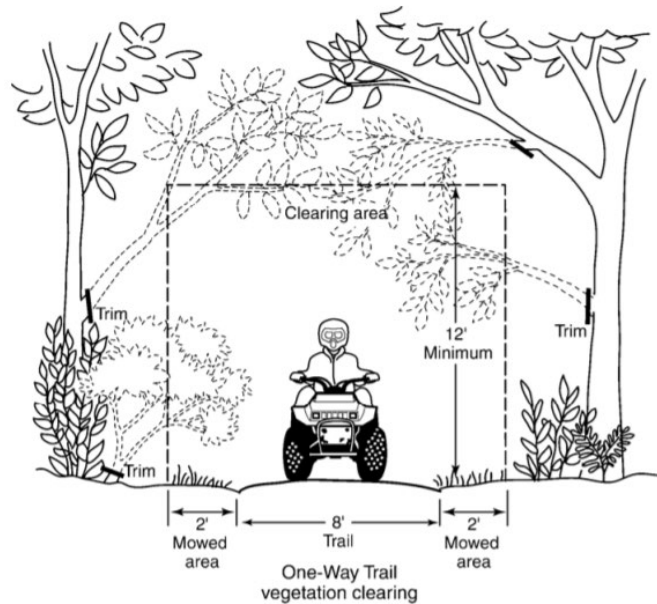
Cass County has a few water resources that can be utilized for recreational boating, such as kayaking and canoeing. Lake Anita and Cold Springs State Park allow boating at no-wake speeds. The Nishnabotna River is the primary navigable stream and a canoe ramp is located in Atlantic. The river depth can be inconsistent and the boating season can be short, but ample opportunities exist to capitalize on this resource. Easy access to the river is key for water trails and the existing boat ramp could be augmented by further ramps

downriver, particularly at Lewis and near Griswold. Water trail users tend to make longer trips than can be accommodated by the short stretch of the river that runs through Cass County, so coordination with other political jurisdictions as well as local rental and portage services are essential to capitalizing on Cass County's water trail resources. It is in the future plans of Cass County Conservation Board to complete a water trail plan for the county to aid in planning for and capitalizing on water trails.



Motorized Trails

Cass County currently has no public use motorized trails. Motorized trails often include facilities such as OHV (off-highway vehicle) parks and snowmobile trails. Off-Highway Vehicles, OHVs, or also commonly referred to as All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), are very popular in Cass County and the state as a whole. OHV riding also happens to be one of the least supported types of trails use in terms of the number of areas open to OHVs and the miles of trails available. OHVs use is often not compatible with other types of trails use because of the higher speeds at which OHVs operate and the noise and the dust often associated with their use. However, although OHV use may be incompatible with other types of trails use, that does not mean that OHV use should be ignored when designing trails systems. On the contrary, a properly designed OHV trail will attract users from much farther away than comparable walking trails. OHV trail users also tend to spend more money in the communities that they visit than do other trails users. Often times, funds that can help to construct typical multi-use trails, cannot be used to construct trails for motorized

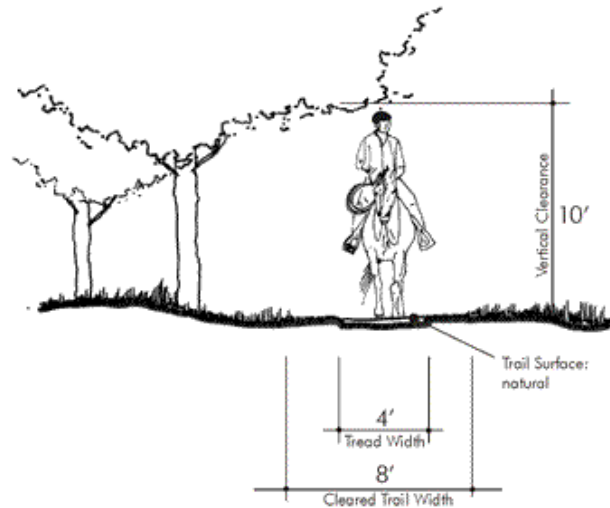


Source: Iowa Department of Natural Resources

vehicles. While there may be interest in adding motorized trails to Cass County, the Conservation Board is not currently prioritizing this development due to the lack of funding available.

Equestrian Trails

Equestrian trails have some unique requirements compared to hiking and biking paths. In many cases, pedestrians wish to be separated from horses for safety reasons. Hard paved trails are not necessarily the best surfaces for horses to walk. As with motorized trails, often times the money available for multi-use trail construction can't be used for equestrian trails. At this time, the Cass County Conservation board is not prioritizing equestrian trails due to lack of funding opportunities.



Walking

Walking (including hiking) is the number one activity on trails systems, according to the non-profit trails organization *America's Trails*. Walking is the most accessible form of exercise; it requires no special equipment and can be done virtually everywhere. Walking trails must take into consideration that people with a wide range of abilities will be using them, and therefore must include areas for users to stop and rest at appropriate intervals.

Biking

Biking comes in second in national surveys in terms of the number of people who participate. However, bicyclists tend to travel farther distances while using trails. National studies also show that bicyclists tend to spend more per year on equipment or trails related travel than other types of trails users. Bike trails have several special requirements because of the higher speeds involved in biking. The tightness of turns and the grade of the trail surface is an important factor, greater so than in walking trails. Bike trails also



require areas for safely storing bikes—such as bike racks—if users are to be encouraged to leave the trail and visit stores or other amenities.

Along with regular bicycles, e-bikes are becoming popular across the country. These bicycles have a motor along with traditional bicycle pedals allowing for a top speed of approximately 20mph. Regulations on e-bike usage will vary from trail to trail as some locations may prohibit their usage on trails labeled for non-motorized use.

Running

Trails designed for walking will in most cases be able to accommodate runners as well. One special accommodation to consider for runners is that runners often exercise either early in the morning or later in the evening in order to avoid higher temperatures during the day. Areas of lighted trail would therefore be more attractive to runners. Other safety precautions such as emergency call stations and a mileage marker system with E911 addresses would also encourage trails use and make the trails more convenient to users who can only access the trails in the early morning or in the evening.

Winter Use

Winters in Iowa can be inconsistent, to say the least. Some years the state is blanketed with snow and in other years, winter is a brown muddy mess. Most winter sports enthusiasts in Iowa recognize that if the conditions are right for their winter sport, then they should take advantage of the opportunity, and many people do. Cross country skiing and snow shoeing are popular winter activities and several survey participants indicated that they like to do them when conditions are suitable. Trails are often overlooked in wintertime, but with some minor upkeep, such as clearing parking lots, can be ideal for winter sports. The City of Atlantic's Parks and Recreation Department has cross-country ski rentals and Cass County Conservation has snowshoe rentals available during winter months to encourage winter use of parks and trails. Encouraging trail usage during all seasons is a priority for both organizations.



Trails Amenities

Trails amenities are just as important to the success of a trails system as the trails themselves. Amenities make the trail safer, more comfortable, and more accessible to a wider variety of trails users. These amenities can include items such as:

- Water stations
- Benches
- Pet waste stations
- Bike repair kiosks
- Wayfinding signage
- Gazebos/shelters
- Trashcans
- Lighting
- Restrooms
- Playgrounds

Even though the proposed trail systems make every effort to come within a reasonable distance of residents' homes, it is anticipated that the majority of trails users will drive to a trail head prior to using the trail. Parking at trail heads is therefore a very important amenity and will have a direct impact on the number of trails users. Likewise, trail heads also need to introduce trails users to the trail system through the use of maps and interpretive signs. Information can also be posted regarding emergency procedures, the location of storm shelters, and local festivals and businesses. It is a priority of the Cass County Conservation Board to improve signage in all parks within the next five years.

Where practical, trail heads should be located in areas where parking already exists and ideally, close to public restrooms and water. There are a number of trail head sites identified in the proposed trails map later in this plan. Existing parking and restrooms will not be available in all areas so some new facilities may need to be constructed. Temporary portable restrooms may also be an option in some locations, particularly during peak usage months.



There will also need to be areas to rest at regular intervals along the trail. These can be as simple as a bench or can be further developed to include butterfly gardens, picnic shelters, and other amenities. Dog walking is often a popular activity for trail users. Trash cans and dog waste stations, with plastic bags, should also be considered in any area that will experience high levels of dog traffic to cut down on the amount of waste on or near the trail. Trail lighting may also be desirable in some areas, though the input of adjacent landowners, as well as careful estimations of the cost of maintaining the lights, should be taken into consideration prior to any installation.

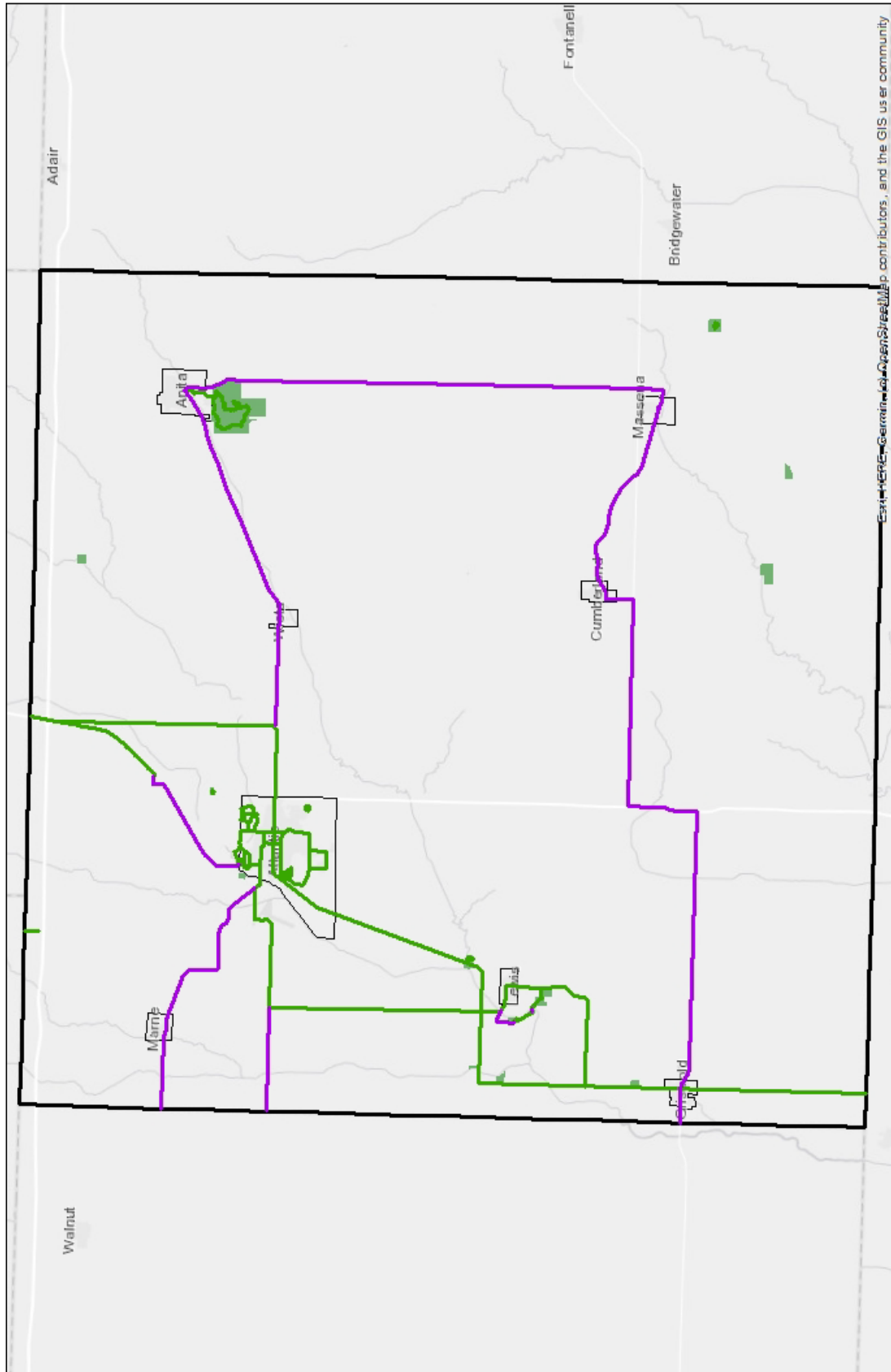


Every attempt should also be made to ensure that trail facilities, as well as the trails themselves, follow ABA/ADA accessibility standards where possible. Parking areas should accommodate vehicles with wheelchair lifts and access to the trail and facilities should be barrier free. Another consideration should include a description of the trail surface during certain times of the year or during different types of weather. If the trail surface has a tendency to be slippery during the winter from frost or during rain, this should be noted on signage at the trail head.

Proposed Route

Due to the lack of available land for trail development, a large portion of the trails shown in the proposed trail route below utilize existing roads through shared lanes or widened shoulders. It should be a priority of the county to move shared roadway trails off-road when possible and financially feasible. When establishing trail within Cass County, priorities should include the following:

- Connecting communities to long distance trails and completing gaps in the system
- Connecting to trails in neighboring counties
- Moving trails that utilize roadways off-road
- Implementing trails within communities to promote health and recreation for residents



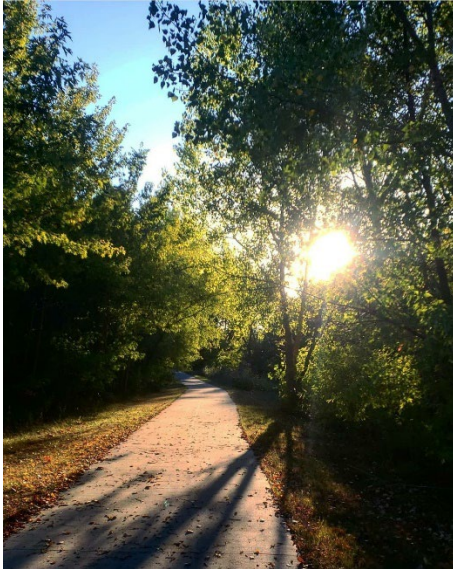
Legend

- Proposed Trails
- Existing Trails
- Public Lands
- Cities



Community Plans

Atlantic



Atlantic is the largest city in Cass County, it is the County Seat and offers a variety of amenities that appeal to a range of people. It offers approximately 230 acres for outdoor recreation, including 10 parks, numerous open spaces, Sunnyside Swimming Pool, Atlantic Sports Complex, 5 miles of hard surfaced trails, Schildberg Campground, and the Buck Creek Dog Park. Atlantic's trails are used daily with many different activities such as running, walking, biking, dog walking, and roller skating. Atlantic also hosts a wide variety of other outdoor amenities that draw visitors into the community, including playgrounds, a skate park, basketball courts, tennis courts, disc golf, camping, and fishing. Aside from outdoor recreation, Atlantic is home to an excellent school system,

state-of-the-art YMCA, renowned healthcare system, and a large, diverse downtown district. The diversity of businesses makes Atlantic a regional hub for shopping, healthcare, and outdoor adventure.

Additionally, the T-Bone Trail is a hard surface trail traveling approximately 20 miles starting in Audubon and traveling through Hamlin, Exira and Brayton before stopping in rural Cass County, just 3 miles northeast of Atlantic. It has always been the plan to continue the T-Bone Trail into Atlantic, connecting it to the Schildberg Recreational Area but issues with land acquisition and easements have delayed this goal. Several route options have been

identified to provide connection into Atlantic. The American Discovery Trail is a cross country trail comprised of various existing trails and connector routes such as shared roadways. Within Cass County, the ADT utilizes the T-Bone Trail before joining with Highway 71 until White Pole Road. The ADT then travels along White Pole Road (Highway 6) through Atlantic until joining Highway 48 south to Red Oak. Within Iowa, this trail utilizes 14 smaller trail systems, connects 4 parks including 3 State parks and several points of interest before continuing through Nebraska or Indiana. The large span of this trail makes it an economic asset full of potential.

Atlantic by the Numbers

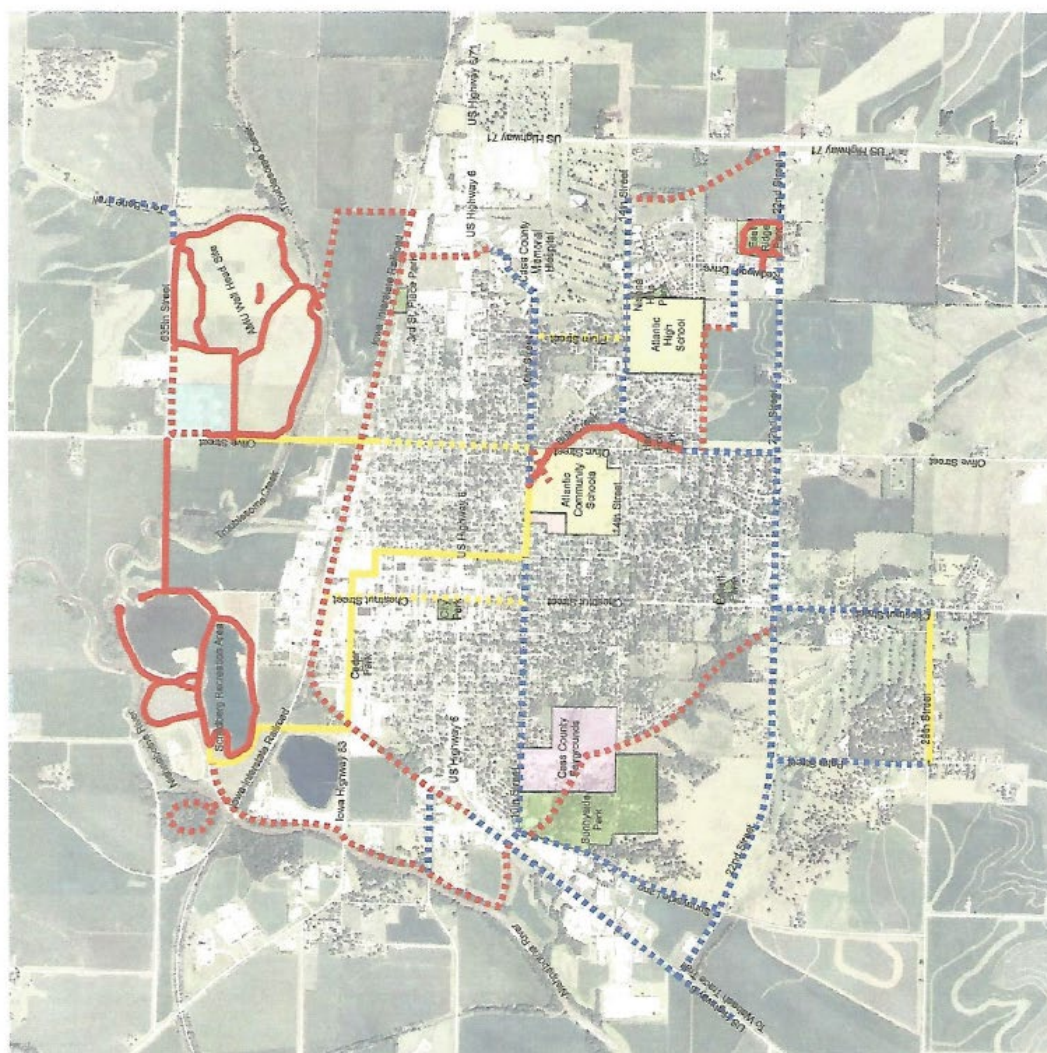
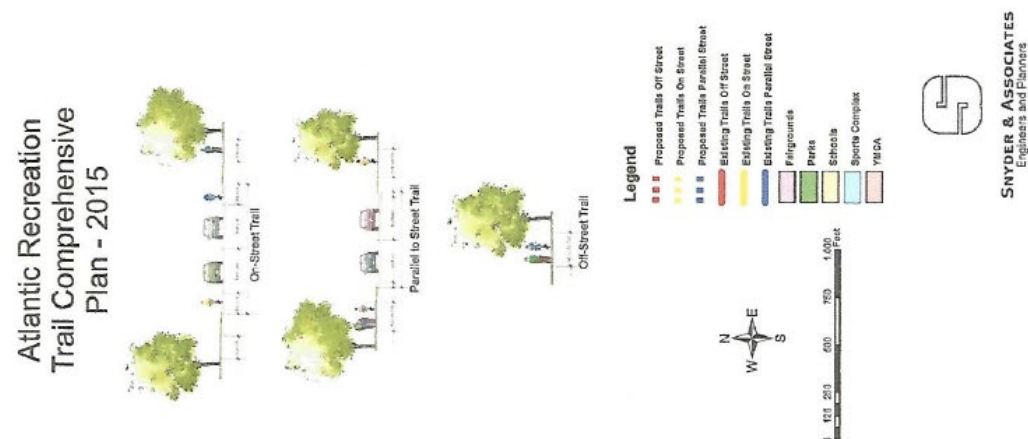
Total Population	6,669
Under 5 years	392
5 to 19 years	1,133
20 to 44 year	1,942
45 to 64 years	1,730
65 to 84 years	1,131
85 years and over	341
Median Age	43.8 years

Cost of Living

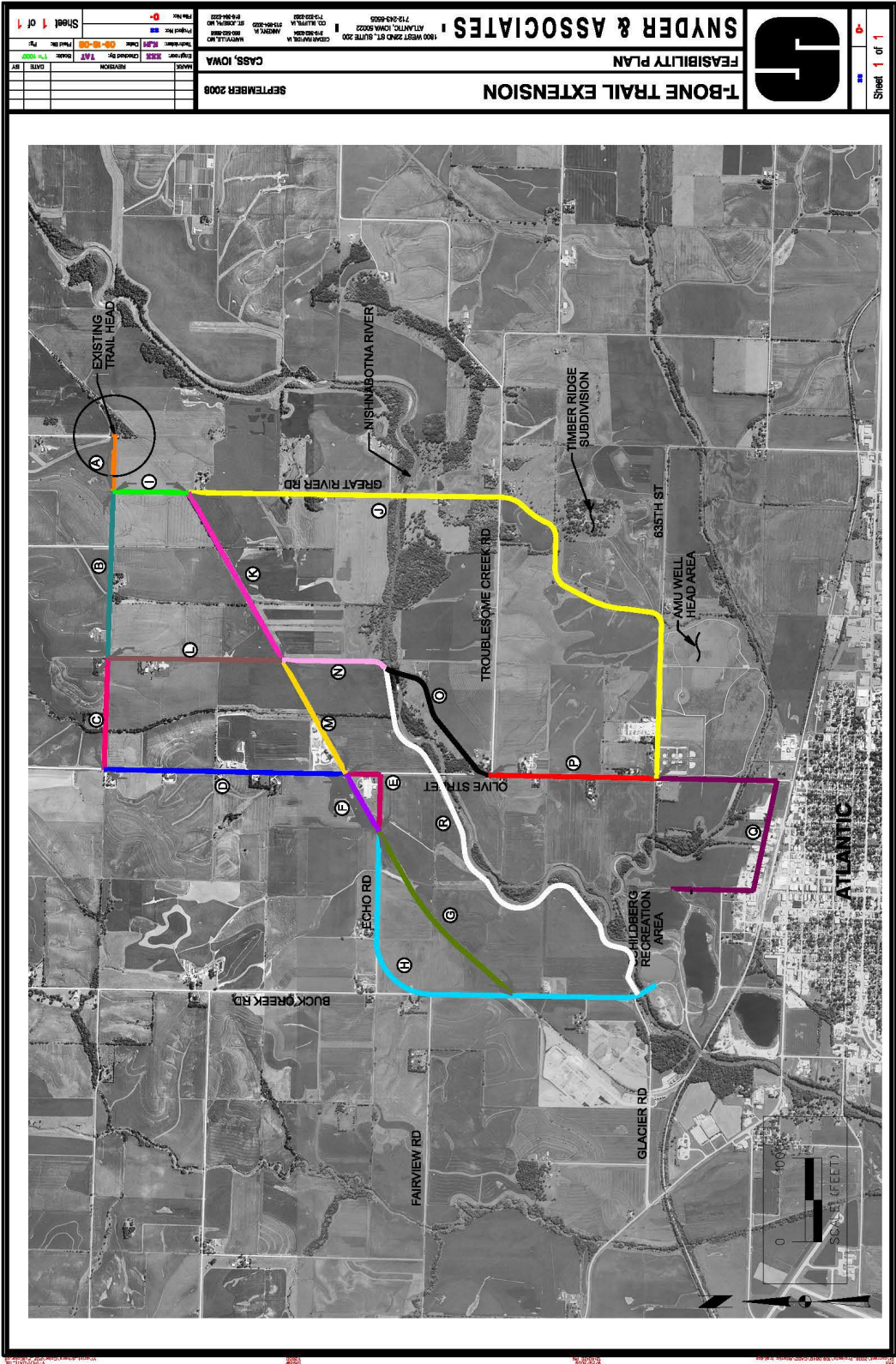
Median Monthly Mortgage	\$981
Median Monthly Rent	\$622
Average Travel Time to Work	15.4 minutes
Median Household Income	\$41,542

Source: ACS 2019

Proposed Trail Route



T-Bone Trail Connection Options



Anita



Anita has the benefit of an existing trails system running from Lake Anita State Park south of the city into town. In addition to Lake Anita State Park, which has numerous recreational opportunities as well as full-service camping facilities, Anita also has an 18-hole golf course, a grocery store, restaurants, a convenience store, an excellent library, art gallery, and many other amenities to entice trails users. During warm weather months, Anita sees an influx of visitors utilizing the Lake

Anita campgrounds. A safe, designated route through town would be enticing to those visitors to explore Anita and offer a potential economic boost to the community.

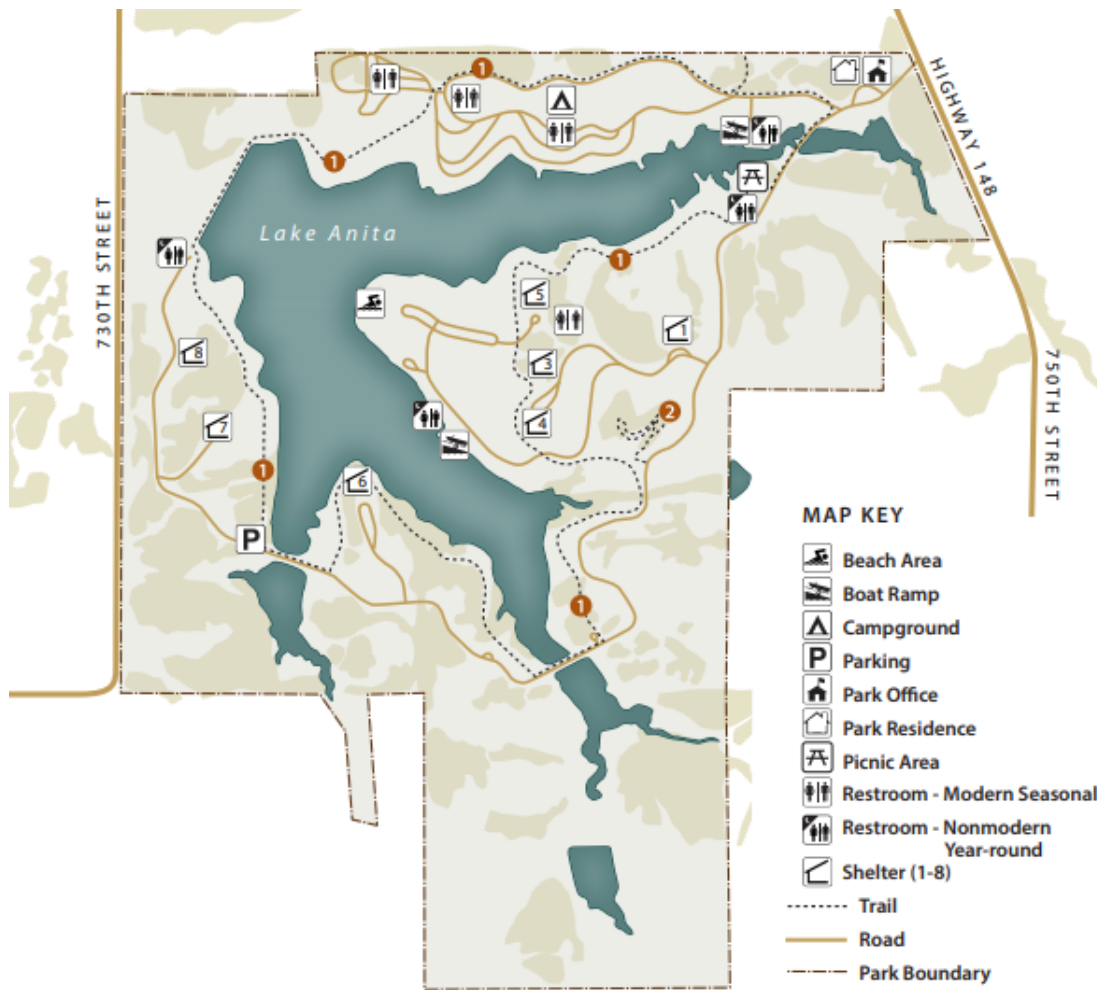
Anita's biggest trail issue currently is maintaining existing trails with their already tight budget. Because of this, the city is not currently looking at adding additional trails but rather improving and installing sidewalks throughout town. Additional sidewalks would provide safe walking routes for residents, including students walking to school, at a closer proximity than a trail would. Sidewalks would still work to connect trail users to amenities within the city while also extending into neighborhoods. Additional wayfinding signage may be needed in areas.

Anita by the Numbers	
Total Population	1,185
Under 5 years	54
5 to 19 years	191
20 to 44 year	251
45 to 64 years	355
65 to 84 years	287
85 years and over	47
Median Age	50 years
Cost of Living	
Median Monthly Mortgage	\$759
Median Monthly Rent	\$752
Average Travel Time to Work	19.3 minutes
Median Household Income	\$44,375

Source: ACS 2019

Additionally, the city has a desire to construct a rest area along the trail near Anita State Park. This area would provide seating and additional amenities for trail users on their way between the lake and city.

Lake Anita State Park

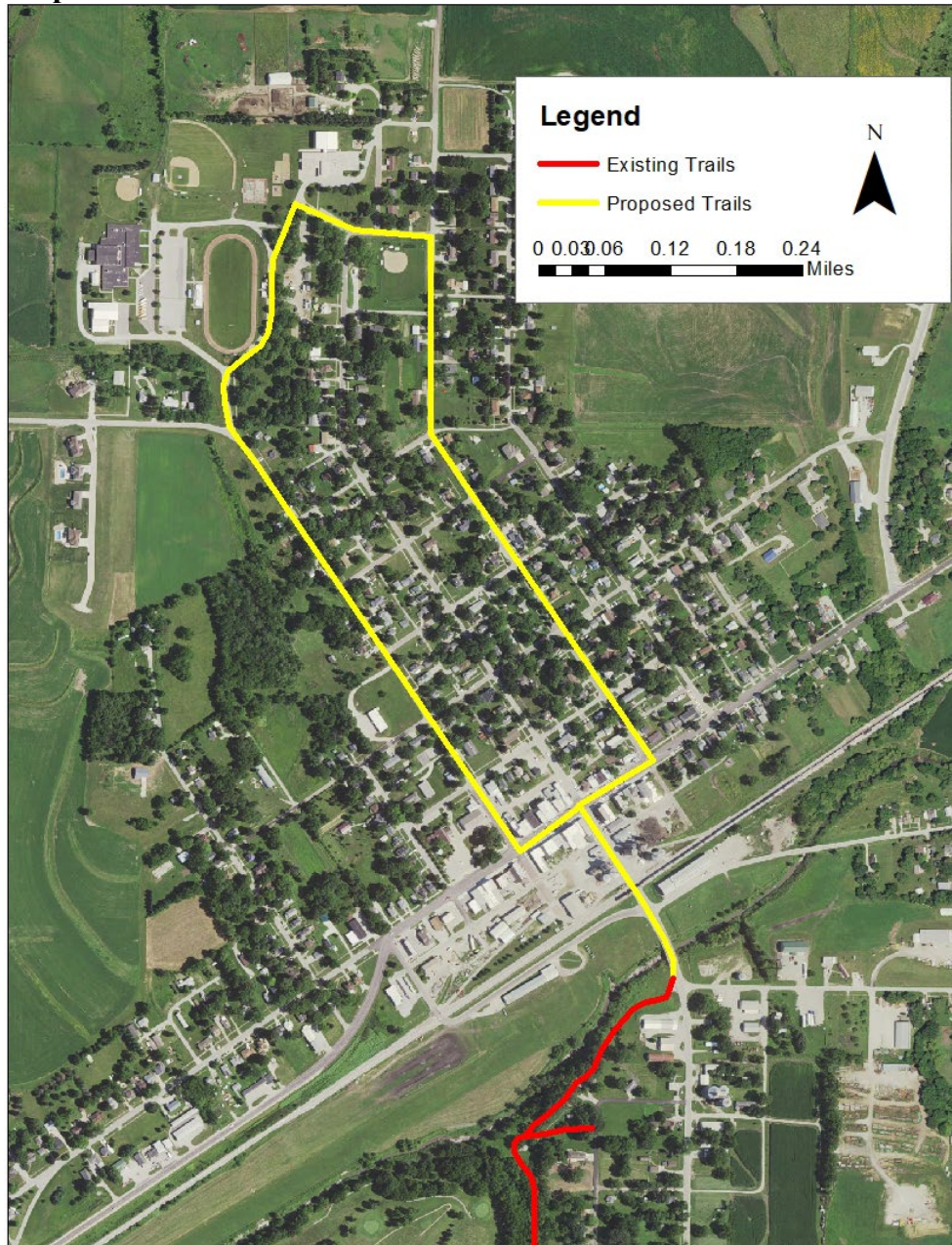


TRAIL INFORMATION

Trail Name	Trail Activity	Length	Level of Difficulty	Estimated Hike Time
1 Lake Anita Trail	Hiking, Biking	4.3 mi.	Moderate	1 hr 42 mins
2 Interpretive Trail	Hiking, Biking	.33 mi.	Moderate	8 minutes

Walking times are figured at a rate of 2.5 mph.
www.iowadnr.gov/Places-to-Go/State-Parks

Proposed Trail Route



Cumberland



Cumberland recently celebrated its 125th anniversary and many active young families have helped to energize civic life. At the same time, the realities of rural population decline are not on the city's side and the elementary school, a major hub of the community, recently closed and classes moved to Massena. The city has all of

the normal amenities that you would expect in a small town—a city park, ball fields, library, restaurant, gas station, bank, etc., but at this time has few attractions that draw visitors in from other communities on a regular basis.

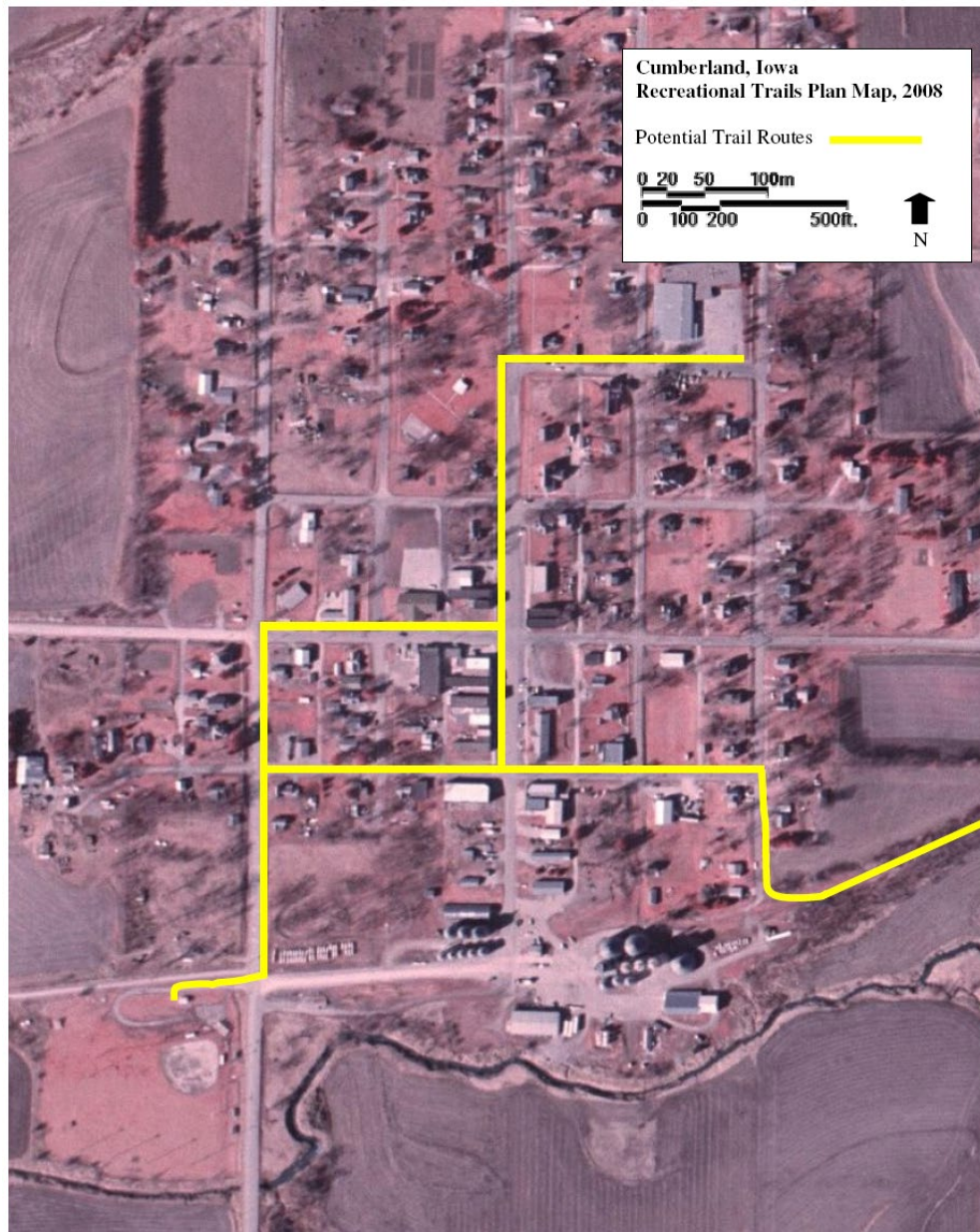
Trails draw visitors into communities and increase the value of real estate near them. In the 1980s the rail line from Cumberland to Massena was abandoned and its right-of-way was sold to adjacent property owners. There was talk at the time about developing a trail along the rail right of way, but that did not materialize. Today, there is much more information available on the benefits of trails in a community and every year funding is available for trails development. Now may be the perfect time to readdress developing the abandoned rail line between Cumberland and Massena as a recreational trail.

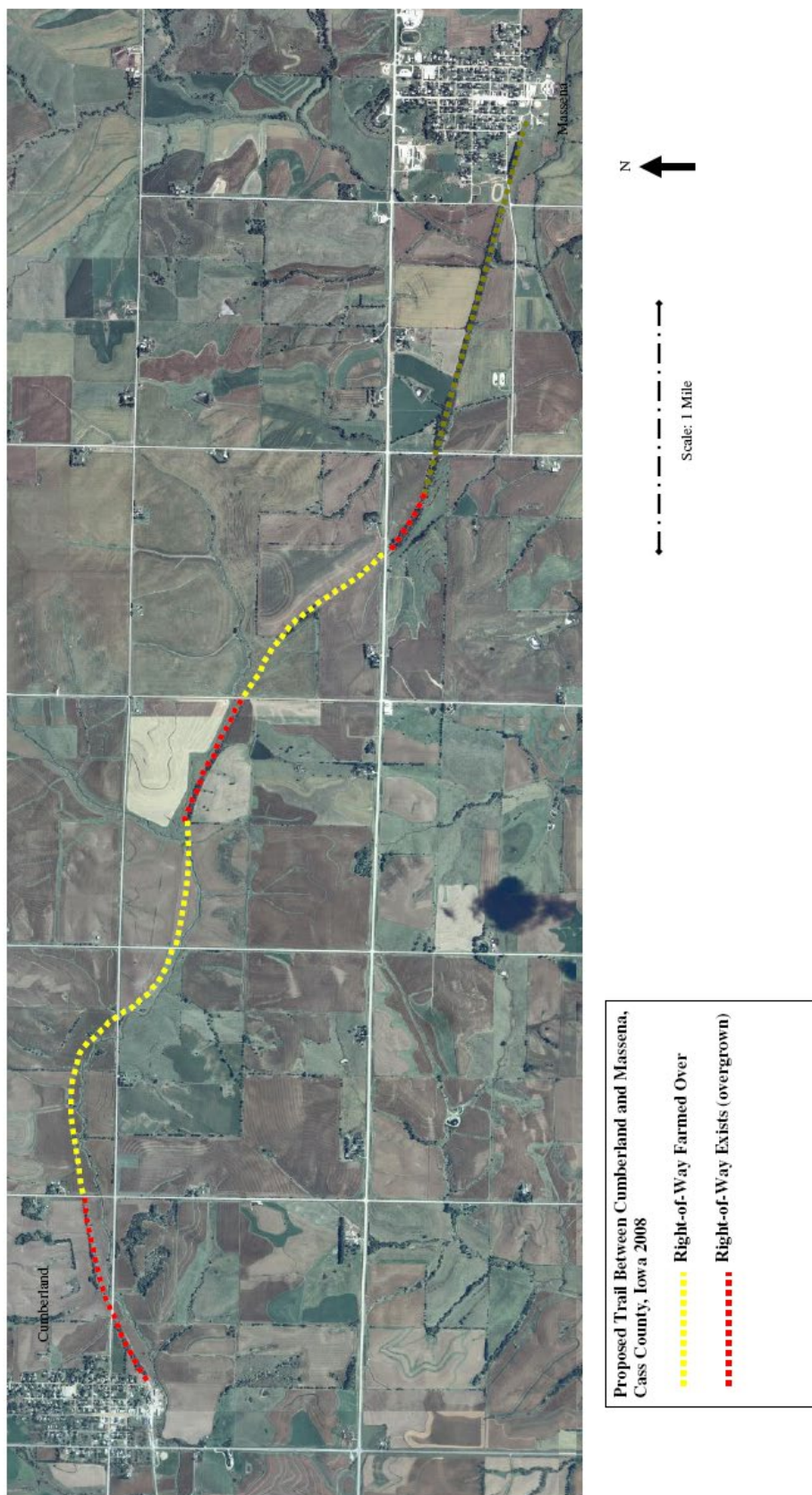
Cumberland by the Numbers	
Total Population	190
Under 5 years	9
5 to 19 years	33
20 to 44 year	49
45 to 64 years	67
65 to 84 years	28
85 years and over	4
Median Age	45.8 years
Cost of Living	
Median Monthly Mortgage	\$867
Median Monthly Rent	\$482
Average Travel Time to Work	23.4 minutes
Median Household Income	\$31,667

Source: ACS 2019

This potential trail—some potential names include the *Rocket Trail* for the former Cumberland-Massena school mascot and the *Rose Trail*, for the name of the train that used to travel the route—traverses a distance of approximately 5 ½ miles. For approximately half of that distance the railroad bed is still visible, though overgrown. The other half of the length of the trail has been farmed over and in places is difficult to discern. These sections would be the hardest to re-acquire and in some circumstances alternate routes to the original rail line may be more easily developed.

Proposed Trail Route





Griswold



Griswold is large enough to offer a wide range of services for residents and visitors, while at the same time is a small, close-knit community. Griswold recently completed a downtown streetscape project and has an outstanding community center and park facilities. The downtown area houses an extensive mix of services that would be helpful to trails users, including two convenience stores, repair shops, restaurants, a library, a doctor's office, and other amenities.

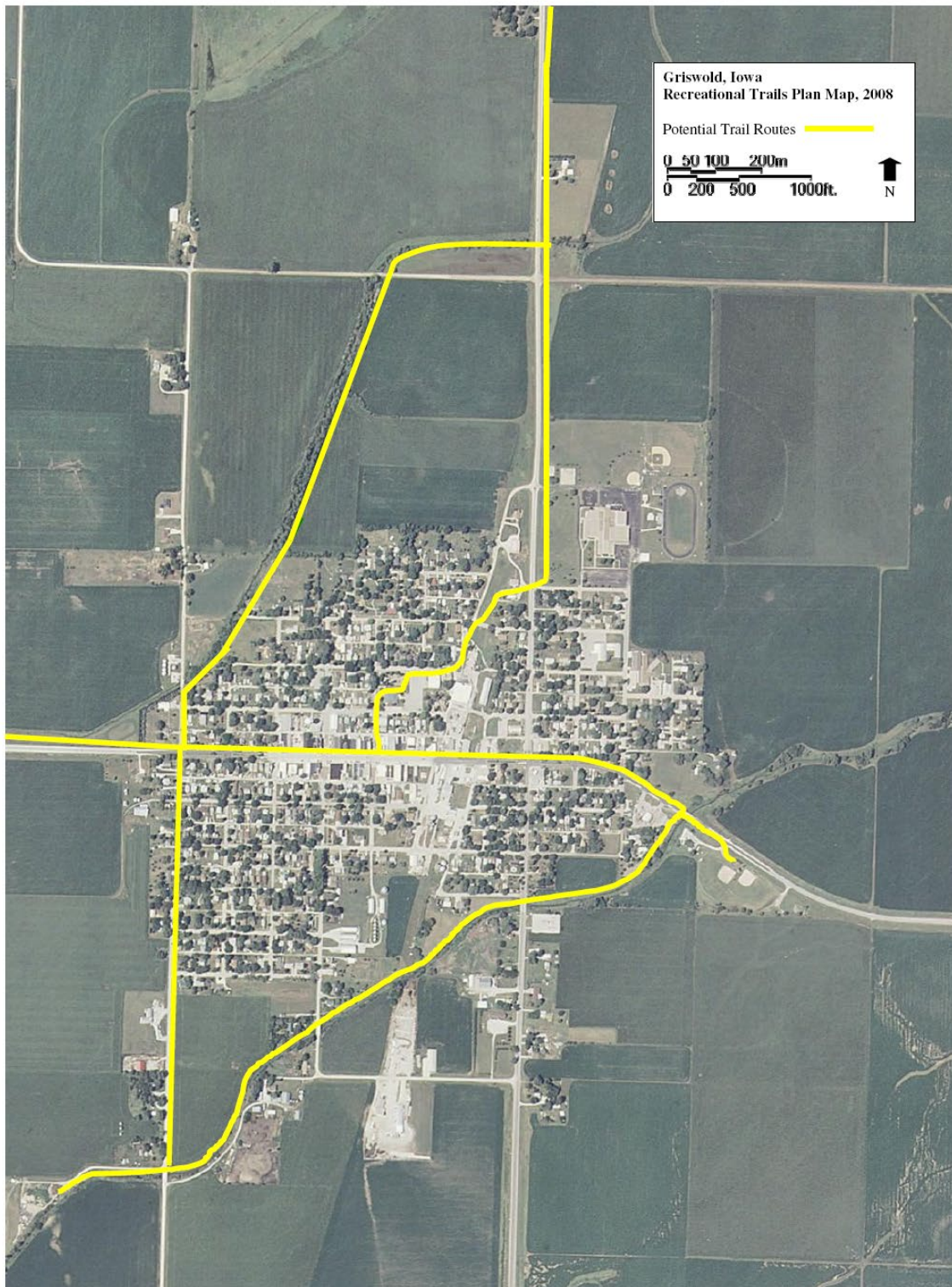
Griswold is also close to the Nishnabotna River, which lies West of the city along Highway 92. A canoe access near the highway bridge could be linked to the city by a trail running parallel to Highway 92 in the extra wide highway right-of-way, which would tie the city to this water resource.

To the north of Griswold along Highway 48 is Conklin's Fish Farm, a county park with a small lake and camping facilities. There has been an increased interest on how to make Highway 48 more bicycle friendly for those biking to Conklin's Fish Farm. A trail running north of the city could lead past the Griswold School and connect to the county park providing a safe area for recreational uses and a safe route to school for students. Two creeks run north and south of Griswold. Several community flood control projects are in the initial planning stages for Griswold at this time, and any new earthwork along these streams would be an excellent opportunity to open up right-of-way for trails.

Griswold by the Numbers	
Total Population	1,191
Under 5 years	56
5 to 19 years	341
20 to 44 year	301
45 to 64 years	270
65 to 84 years	161
85 years and over	62
Median Age	37.8 years
Cost of Living	
Median Monthly Mortgage	\$860
Median Monthly Rent	\$683
Average Travel Time to Work	24 minutes
Median Household Income	\$49,375

Source: ACS 2019

Proposed Trail Route



Lewis



Lewis owes its existence to trails. The town was the site of an early ferry across the Nishnabotna River that was key to the movement of early pioneers. West of Lewis is also the site of the Hitchcock House, a documented stopping point for fugitive slaves seeking freedom on the Underground Railroad. Lewis is also home to one of the oldest recreational

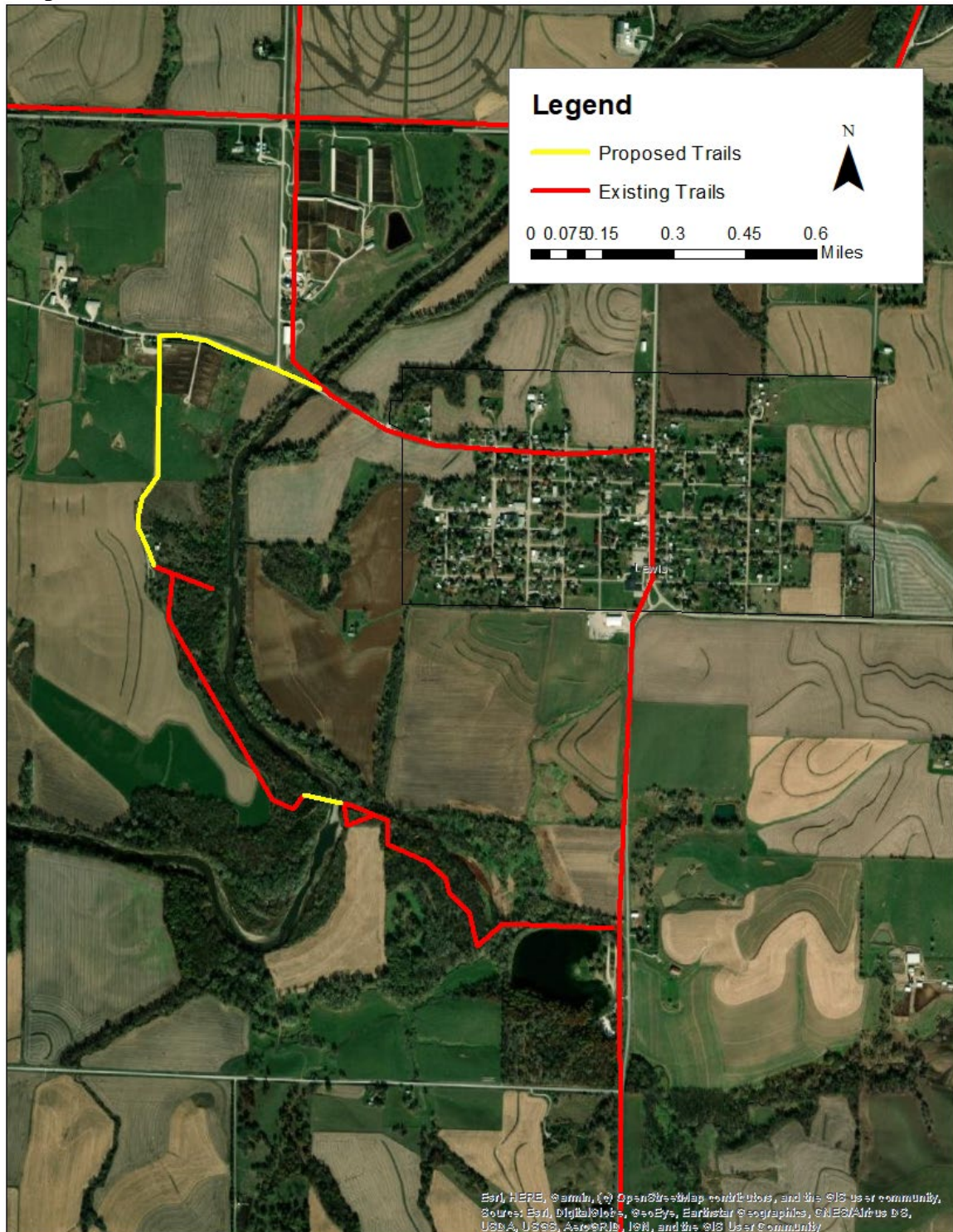
areas in the county, Cold Springs State Park. The park was built at a bend in the Nishnabotna River and in its earlier days boasted a pavilion, beer garden, roller rink, and large slide into the lake. Today the park still caters to swimmers and anglers, and features modern camping, showers, and picnic facilities. A short nature trail leads back from the lake to the Nishnabotna River, in an area known as The Rock Cut. The Rock Cut was formed when the Army Corps of Engineers used dynamite to blast a new channel for the Nishnabotna River in an effort to straighten it.

Lewis residents have been proactive in trails development and have already had the foresight to develop a community plan that includes a number of trails features. Together with Iowa's Living Roadways and the Iowa State University Extension, Lewis has identified several corridors within the community for beautification and trails development. Also, a trail linking the city with the Hitchcock House and Cold Springs State Park is proposed. These trails are detailed on the following page. Of special interest in Lewis is the fact that a bridge will need to be built to complete the trails system as proposed in the community visioning plan. This bridge, once completed, would span the Nishnabotna River and greatly enlarge the area accessible to trails users who currently must stay on one side or the other of the river.

Lewis by the Numbers	
Total Population	420
Under 5 years	22
5 to 19 years	86
20 to 44 year	74
45 to 64 years	140
65 to 84 years	88
85 years and over	10
Median Age	51 years
Cost of Living	
Median Monthly Mortgage	\$879
Median Monthly Rent	\$517
Average Travel Time to Work	18.4 minutes
Median Household Income	\$52,813

Source: ACS 2019

Proposed Trail Route



Marne



Marne is a very active community and its civic minded population continually works to improve the city. Marne gained national attention when it offered residential lots for free to anyone willing build a home in the community and live there.

A number of years ago the rail line from Marne to

Atlantic was abandoned. Unfortunately, a golden opportunity was lost at that time because the right-of-way was purchased and little of it exists today. In some areas homes have been built along the right-of-way, making it next to impossible to use that route for trails.

What Marne does have that is very unique from a trails perspective is an internationally renowned motorcycle shop, Baxter Cycle. Baxter Cycle specializes in British motorcycles and has built up an excellent reputation for their selection and service. Motorcycle enthusiasts regularly travel to Marne to go to Baxter Cycle, and a number of rides are held in Marne each year. With the ever growing popularity of motorcycle touring, Marne should continue to market itself as a hub for motorcycle tourists.

Marne by the Numbers

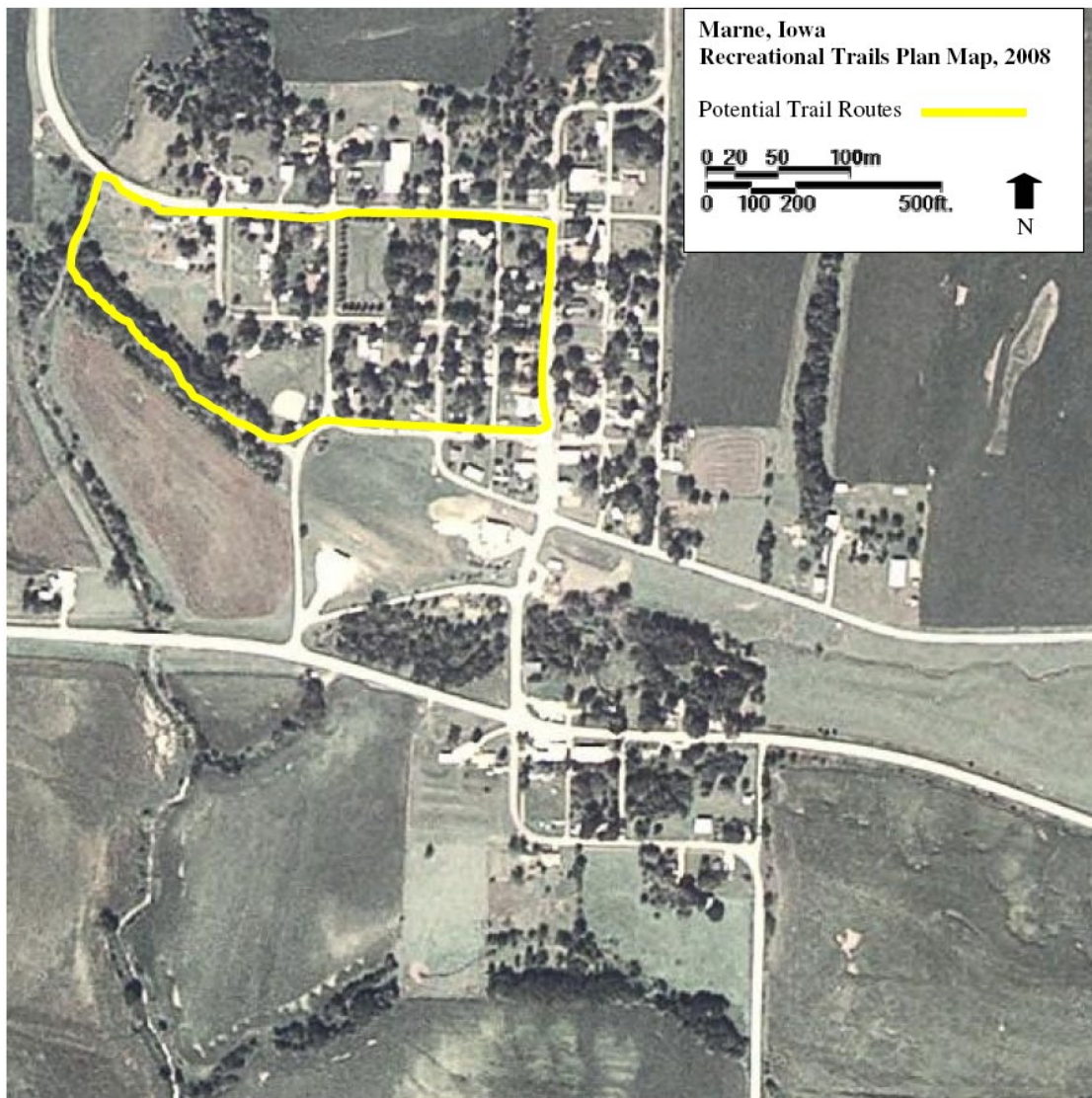
Total Population	144
Under 5 years	4
5 to 19 years	30
20 to 44 year	24
45 to 64 years	68
65 to 84 years	16
85 years and over	2
Median Age	48.5 years

Cost of Living

Median Monthly Mortgage	\$550
Median Monthly Rent	\$832
Average Travel Time to Work	21.1 minutes
Median Household Income	\$51,875

Source: ACS 2019

Proposed Trail Route



Massena



Massena's slogan is that it is the "Home of Friendly People," and the community has many things to make potential trails users feel welcome. A well-maintained city park, convenience store, grocery, restaurant, library, and other amenities make Massena a convenient hub for exploring the more rugged and less populated part of the county. Massena sits on the eastern edge of the abandoned rail line that originates in Cumberland and would be a natural trailhead and jumping-off point for a new trail.

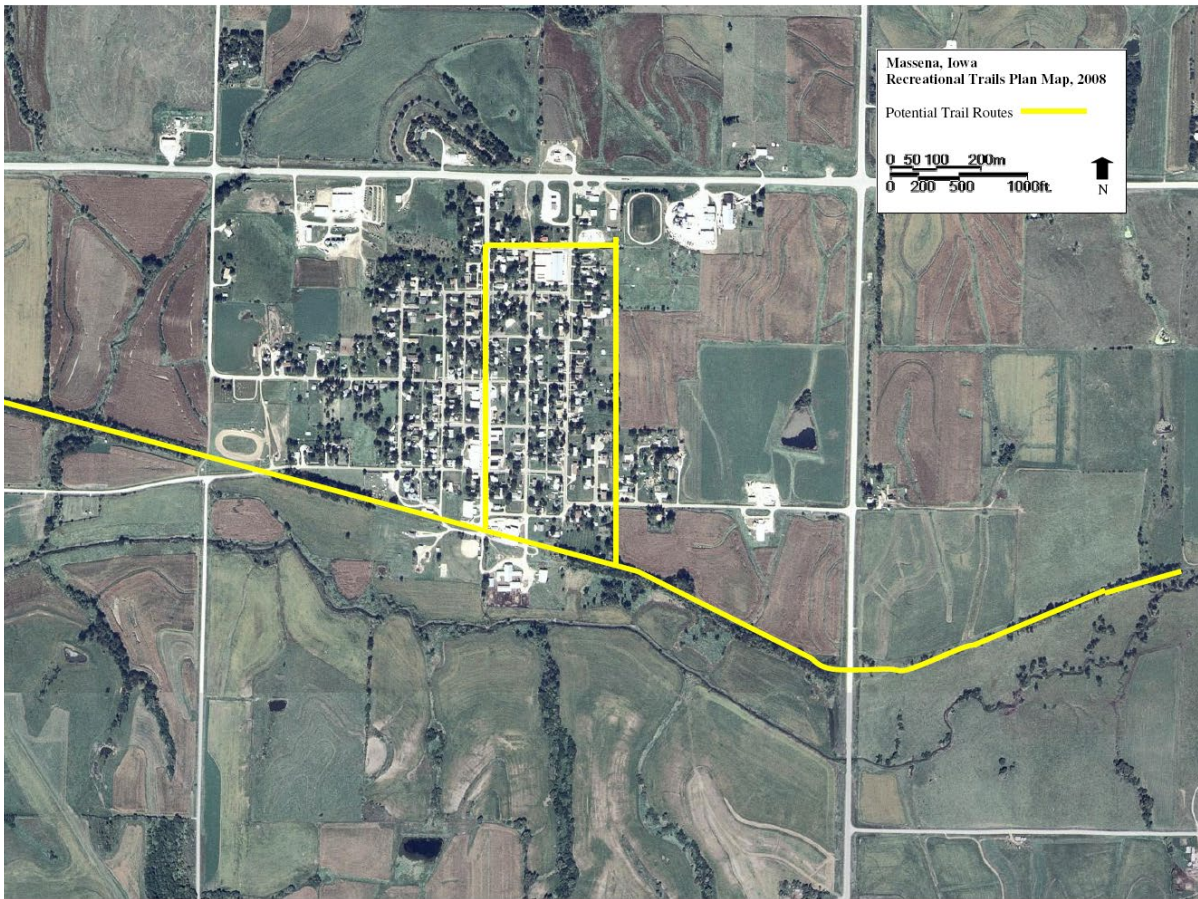
The City of Massena is currently working on a number of community improvement projects, one of which is a joint effort between the CAM Community School District and the City of Massena to bring a daycare facility to Massena. The City just completed the addition of a brand new handicap accessible restroom in the city park with continued improvements on the horizon.

Massena has a number of walking routes along city streets that are already in use by area residents. The city also possesses several areas of right-of-way, including platted streets that were not developed and abandoned rail right of way, that all could be put together to create one of the more comprehensive trails systems proposed for the county.

Massena by the Numbers	
Total Population	314
Under 5 years	17
5 to 19 years	70
20 to 44 year	88
45 to 64 years	61
65 to 84 years	67
85 years and over	11
Median Age	38 years
Cost of Living	
Median Monthly Mortgage	\$812
Median Monthly Rent	\$486
Average Travel Time to Work	24.7 minutes
Median Household Income	\$52,500

Source: ACS 2019

Proposed Trail Route



Wiota



Wiota is conveniently located between Atlantic and Anita on Highway 83. The community is small, and as such has few amenities that can be utilized by travelers. However, the town does see significant traffic through the city and could potentially take advantage of those numbers if a trail existed to draw people off of the highway.

Unlike many towns in Cass County, the rail line through Wiota is very active, meaning that there is no abandoned right of way to utilize for potential trails projects. The route that was identified in Wiota takes advantage of the existing street

infrastructure and is primarily an exercise route for residents. This route can be measured out and marked to help users keep track of the distance they have traveled and rest areas can be established along the way, particularly for the elderly residents of the community. In the future other amenities could be placed along the trail, such as flower gardens and sculpture areas.

Wiota by the Numbers	
Total Population	58
Under 5 years	0
5 to 19 years	0
20 to 44 year	2
45 to 64 years	27
65 to 84 years	29
85 years and over	0
Median Age	65.5 years
Cost of Living	
Median Monthly Mortgage	\$958
Median Monthly Rent	\$-
Average Travel Time to Work	18.4 minutes
Median Household Income	\$49,583

Source: ACS 2019

Proposed Trail Route



Moving Forward

Implementation

The implementation of the trails plan involves a number of steps. These include:

- **Adoption:** The first step toward completing the plan is its official adoption by the respective City Councils and the Board of Supervisors.
- **Lead Group(s) Formation:** A countywide group with representation from each community should be formed to take the lead on trails development, and work with city and county public officials. Non-profit organizations will be important assets to help advise the cities and county on trails issues, raise awareness in the public about trails, and help raise funds, construct, and maintain the trails.
- **Fundraising:** A wide range of fundraising activities is necessary to raise the money necessary to complete the plan. This includes government revenue, local fundraising, and grants. Of these, local fundraising and grants will make up the bulk of the trails funding. A list of various grants can be found in the appendix
- **Engineering:** The identified routes were developed with careful consideration to the topography of the land and each route's overall suitability for trails construction. However, detailed engineering work is necessary in most instances. The services of a licensed engineer will ensure that the trails system is soundly constructed and lasts for many years to come—as well as maximize the benefit and enjoyment of trails users. Plans and specifications developed by a licensed engineer are also a prerequisite for many grant programs.
- **Right-of-Way Acquisition/Construction:** In some instances, land will be acquired to construct the trails. Also, each segment of the trails system has its own unique construction challenges. Some routes require relatively little construction. Other routes require more extensive work.
- **Maintenance:** Each segment requires its own special maintenance. The majority of this work should be carried out by a non-profit trails organization or similar group, with assistance, as necessary, from the cities and county. Likewise, the trails plan needs to be periodically maintained. As circumstances change, modification to the plan is necessary.

Trails Development Phases

Developing trails in Cass County will be a multi-organizational, multi-year effort. It will take time to fully develop the public support, technical knowledge, and funding necessary to implement the trails plan. With that in mind the implementation of this plan is divided into short, medium, and long term trail improvements. Each grouping is a rough estimate of how long it may take to work on each step and may change as circumstances change, but overall should act as a guide to the sequence of trails work. Some communities may take a more aggressive approach to trails development while others may be more conservative and need more time. The three phases are spread out over a fifteen-year period, which represents an ambitious timeline for trails development. Full completion of the trails system may take a longer period of time, depending on the continued level of public support.

Phase 1: Immediate to Short Term (0-2 Years)

- Adopt the trails plan.
- Organize trails volunteers to assist the cities and county with trails development, maintenance, and fund-raising.
- Develop a trail system brand and logo to use on all marketing documents, signs, etc.
- Map trail routes on existing paths, sidewalks, and streets.
- Prepare marketing materials, such as brochures, that introduce users to the trails system.
- Mark trails that can utilize existing infrastructure, such as bike lanes or pedestrian crossings on streets.
- Develop fund raising plans and proposals based on the trails plan.
- Adopt and enforce city and county ordinances conducive to trails, such as mandatory side walks or green space in new developments.

Phase 2: Medium Range (2-5 Years)

- Construct infrastructure at vital points necessary to connect existing trails.
- Move trail routes off of existing streets as much as possible to reduce safety hazards to pedestrians.
- Re-map and re-sign trails routes as necessary.
- Begin construction of trails systems in new residential developments when these areas are developed.
- Conduct a survey of trails usage and public meetings to determine any new trails needs and modify the plan accordingly.
- Add infrastructure to trails heads, such as map boards, parking, bike racks, water, and restrooms.

Phase 3: Long Range (5-15 Years)

- Construct new trails to complete the trails system.
- Conduct a survey of trails usage and public meetings to determine new trail needs and modify the plan accordingly.

Cost Estimates

The below costs were gathered from engineering firms in the area and are to be used strictly for preliminary planning purposes as costs change constantly. These cost estimates are for one mile of 12' wide trail for various surface types.

Surface Type	Cost
Asphalt	\$500,000
Concrete	\$700,000
Crushed Stone	\$200,000
Bike Lane (with ADA warning)	\$15,000

In addition to the physical trail, communities may choose to add amenities to their trail to enhance the user's experience. Below are cost estimates for various trail amenities. These numbers should be used only for preliminary planning purposes as costs for these items change constantly.

Item	Total Amount
Bicycle Rack	\$660
Bicycle Lane (1 mile)	\$135,000
Signed Bicycle Route (1 mile)	\$25,000
Bollard	\$660
High Visibility Crosswalk	\$2,450
Striped Crosswalk	\$770
Curb (linear foot)	\$21
Curb and Gutter (linear foot)	\$25
Gutter (square yard)	\$21
Curb Extension/Bump Out	\$13,500
Detectable Warning (square foot)	\$6.50
Wheelchair Ramp	\$810
Gateway Structure	\$15,000
Gateway Sign	\$1,500
Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon	\$60,000
Median Island	\$15,000
Fence (linear foot)	\$130
Gate	\$500
In-Pavement Lighting	\$17,500
Streetlight	\$4,850
Median (square foot)	\$750
Wooden Bridge	\$200,000
Pre-Fab Steel Bridge	\$300,000
Boardwalk (1 mile)	\$2,500,000
Advance Stop/Yield Line (square foot)	\$10
Island Marking (square foot)	\$1.90
Painted Curb/Sidewalk (square foot)	\$3.50
Pedestrian Crossing	\$360

Shared Lane/Bicycle Marking	\$180
School Crossing	\$470
Audible Pedestrian Signal	\$800
Countdown Timer Module	\$740
Pedestrian Signal	\$1,480
Crosswalk Push Button	\$350
Raised Crosswalk	\$8,100
Raised Intersection	\$45,000
Concrete Paved Shoulder (square foot)	\$7
Concrete Sidewalk (linear foot)	\$32
Stop/Yield Sign	\$210
Street Trees	\$350
Bench	\$850
Picnic Table	\$1,200
Restroom	\$40,000
Shelter	\$20,000
Bottle Fill Station	\$4,500
Trash Can	\$600
Pet Waste Receptacle	\$400
Wayfinding Signage	Varies
Bicycle Repair Kiosk	\$1,000
Adult Fitness Equipment (dependent on how many pieces)	\$12,000

Appendix A: Trail Grants

Federal Recreational Trails Program

Program Intent

To provide and maintain motorized and non-motorized recreational trails and trail-related projects (trailheads, kiosks, lighting, etc.).

Eligible Applicants

Public agencies, non-profit organizations and private organizations (and/or individuals) are eligible to sponsor. Private sponsorship will require a public agency co-sponsor.

Funding Qualifications

Minimum 20 percent match is required. Trails resulting from successful

Program's Annual Funding Level

Approximately \$1,000,000.

Application Deadline

October 1.

https://iowadot.gov/systems_planning/Grant-Programs/-Federal-and-State-Recreational-Trails

Contact:

Scott Flagg, Iowa DOT

Scott.flagg@iowadot.com

515-239-1252

State Recreational Trails Program

Program Intent

To fund public recreational trails.

Eligible Applicants

State agencies, counties or cities and non-profit organizations may sponsor applications.

Funding Qualifications

Minimum 25 percent local match is required. Volunteer services and other state grants are not eligible as matching funds. Proposed projects must be a part of a local, area-wide, regional or statewide trail plan. Trails resulting from successful applications must be maintained as a public facility for a minimum of 20 years.

Program's Annual Funding Level

\$1 million.

Application Deadline

January

https://iowadot.gov/systems_planning/Grant-Programs/-Federal-and-State-Recreational-Trails

Contact:

Scott Flagg, Iowa DOT

Scott.flagg@iowadot.com

515-239-1252

Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP)

Program Intent

The Resource Enhancement and Protection program invests money into the enhancement and protection of Iowa's natural and cultural resources. There are multiple categories under the REAP program and they include the following:

- Roadside Vegetation
- Historical Resources
- State Land Management
- City Parks and Open Space
- Soil and Water Enhancement
- County Conservation
- State Open Space

Eligible Applicants

Cities can apply for the City Parks and Open Space category while counties can apply for the County Conservation program.

Funding Qualifications

Grants are 100% so no matching funds are required. Projects that include passive recreation, parkland expansion, conservation and multi-purpose recreation developments are typically fundable under REAP. REAP will not fund projects such as ball fields, swimming pools, golf courses, etc.

Program's Annual Funding Level

The amount allocated varies annually based on how much the State Legislature sets aside. REAP may receive \$20 million per year. Most recently, the total budget was \$12.5 million. This money is split into eight different programs.

Application Deadline

August 15th

<https://www.iowadnr.gov/conservation/reap>

Contact:

Tammie Krasusman, Iowa DNR

Tammie.krausman@dnr.iowa.gov

515-402-8763

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

Program Intent

RPA-13 (Cass, Fremont, Montgomery and Page counties) receives annual funding allocations from the Iowa DOT to assist in funding alternative transportation projects.

Funding can be used for any of the following:

- Construction, planning and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists and other non-motorized forms of transportation.
- Construction, planning and design of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non drivers, including children, older adults and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs.
- Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails for pedestrians, bicyclists or other non-motorized transportation users.
- Construction of turnouts, overlooks and viewing areas.
- Inventory, control or removal of outdoor advertising.
- Historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities.
- Vegetation management practices in transportation rights-of-way to improve roadway safety, prevent against invasive species, and provide erosion control.
- Archaeological activities relating to impacts from implementation of transportation project eligible under this title.
- Any environmental mitigation activity, including pollution prevention and pollution abatement activities and mitigation to address storm water management, control and water pollution prevention or abatement related to highway construction or due to highway runoff.
- A construction or non construction project eligible under the Safe Routes to School program.
- A project eligible under the Recreational Trail Program as defined by section 206 of Title 23.

Eligible Applicants

- Local governments,
- Regional transportation authorities,
- Transit agencies,
- Natural resource or public land agencies,
- School districts and local education agencies,
- Tribal governments,
- A non-profit entity responsible for the administration of local transportation safety programs (such as a local program implementing construction, planning, and design of infrastructure related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs or a SRTS program.) and
- Any other local or regional government entity responsible for oversight of transportations or recreational trails.

Funding Qualifications

Applicants can apply for \$100,000 and must provide a 20% match. The project must cost a minimum of \$25,000. Project sponsors can be a city, county, public agency, private non-profit or an individual. The project sponsor must be willing to maintain the project for 20 years.

Program's Annual Funding Level

\$66,000 is allocated from the DOT annually for RPA-13

Application Deadline

End of February

<https://www.swipco.org/rpa-13/>

Contact:

Tammy DeBord, Southwest Iowa Planning Council

Tammy.debord@swipco.org

712-243-4196

Wellmark Foundation

Program Intent

Wellmark is working to improve the health of Iowans and South Dakotans by funding initiatives that promote healthy eating and physical activity.

Eligible Applicants

Must be classified as a Section 501 ©(3) tax-exempt organization or a government entity

Funding Qualifications

There are two grant levels; Large Match grants are up to \$100,000 and Small Match grants are up to \$25,000. The Large Match grant must be matched dollar-for-dollar with cash or in-kind contributions while the Small Match grant must be matched 50% with cash or in-kind contributions.

Program's Annual Funding Level

Application Deadline

Deadlines vary each year but approximate dates are February for Large Match and May for Small Match

<https://www.wellmark.com/foundation/traditional-grants.html>

Iowa Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund

Program Intent

The Iowa Natural Resource and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund is a sustainable, permanent funding source dedicated to enhancing Iowa's natural resources.

Eligible Applicants

Funding Qualifications

Program's Annual Funding Level

The trust fund is currently empty and requires a tax increase to fund it.

Application Deadline

<http://www.iowaswaterandlandlegacy.org/>

Appendix B: Trails Signage

One of the most important aspects of any trails system is the method by which the trail is marked. Without a clearly marked trail, users may not recognize the full extent of the trail system or they may lose confidence in the system if they have doubt about where to go.

Signage along a trail is the most common method for marking trails and is used in most trails systems in urban areas. In some wilderness areas, trails are marked by more primitive methods, such as piles of rock or dots of paint on rocks or trees. In areas such as Cass County where multiple trails types are proposed, from highly improved paved trails to water trails, a wide variety of signage types will be needed.

One of the simplest and most cost effective methods for marking a trail is to attach a sign to an existing feature, such as a street sign, or in the case of the sign pictured to the right, a tree. Since most of the trails identified in the first phase of this plan are on existing streets and sidewalks, the first set of signage will in most cases be affixed to existing sign posts, buildings, or natural features.



Stand-alone signage, such as that shown to the left, will be necessary in areas where there are no other options available for affixing a sign. Most new sections of trail, or those in areas with few trees or buildings near the trail, will need to have stand-alone signage. Stand-alone signage is more costly to install than those affixed to an existing structure because posts are required. Therefore, stand-alone signage should be durable in order to reduce the amount of replacement signs necessary.



Map kiosks/interpretive panels are important elements at major trail heads or at points of interest along the trails. Owing to their size and the large amount of information that they display, most trails will only have a few of these structures. Large kiosks can offer an introduction to the trail system and should therefore not only tell the route of the trail but should give the visitor background information on the trail's development and the surrounding area. Smaller

interpretive panels can be placed along the trail to provide more detailed information such as natural vegetation, wildlife, landmarks, and trail maps with current location.

Many of the trail routes identified in this plan, particularly in the early phases, will take place along existing sidewalks and existing streets. In order to accommodate pedestrians, these routes must be clearly marked with recognizable safety signs, such as pedestrian crossing signs and bike lanes. Controlled pedestrian crossing areas, such as pedestrian activated electronic signals, may be cost prohibitive to install, but additional signage and speed bumps can be an effective alternative to reduce the speed of motorists in areas frequented by trails users and draw motorists' attention to trails users. The sign examples below are signs available through the Iowa Prison Industries.



Although the main emphasis of this plan is on land based, non-motorized trails, Cass County does have an important water trail asset in the Nishnabotna River, which runs along the western edge of the county. Water trails require special signage considerations. Water trail signage must be able to withstand occasional inundation during flood events. Also, water trails signage must be visible from a distance since most signs must be placed away from the water's edge to avoid damage.



Appendix C: Helpful Websites

American Discovery Trail Society

<http://www.discoverytrail.org/>

American Trails and the National Trails Training Partnership

<http://www.americantrails.org/>

Cass County Conservation

<https://www.mycountyparks.com/County/Cass.aspx>

Golden Hills RC&D

<https://www.goldenhillsrca.org/>

Iowa Bicycle Map

<https://iowadot.gov/iowabikes/bikemap/home.aspx>

Iowa Bike Coalition

<https://iowabicyclecoalition.org/>

Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Trails Information

<http://www.iowadnr.com/trails/index.html>

Iowa Department of Transportation

www.dot.state.ia.us

Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation

<https://www.inhf.org/>

Iowa Rails to Trails

<http://www.trailsfromrails.com/iowa.htm>

Iowa Safe Routes to School

www.dot.state.ia.us/saferoutes/

Iowa State Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

<https://www.iowadnr.gov/About-DNR/Grants-Other-Funding/State-Conservation-and-Outdoor-Recreation-Plan>

Iowa Bicycle and Pedestrian Long Range Plan

<https://iowadot.gov/iowainmotion/modal-plans/bicycle-pedestrian-plan>

National Park Service

<https://www.nps.gov/index.htm>

Southwest Iowa Planning Council

<https://www.swipco.org/>

Wabash Trace Trail

<http://wabashtrace.connections.net/>