Steering Committee Meeting #2

April 28, 2021

FRIENDS OF BERRIEN COUNTY TRAILS

ABONMARCHE

Berrien County Trails Master Plan

Introductions

Welcome

Gary Wood, President, Friends of Berrien County Trails

Leadership Team

Gary Wood, Friends of Berrien County Trails

Marcy Hamilton, Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

Dawn Marie Smith, Be Healthy Berrien

Mike Huber, Abonmarche Consultants

Agenda

Master Plan Process Overview (30 min)

- Steering Committee Member Role
- Vision, Purpose & Goals
- Master Plan Content Outline

Public Engagement Activities (15 min)

- Project Communications
- Public Engagement Activities
- Stakeholder Engagement/Focus Groups

Existing Conditions (25 min)

- Current Facilities
- Destination & Demand Drivers
- Community Assessment Process

Next Steps

Process Overview

Process includes 4 primary components.

Existing Conditions Report (On-Going through 1st Quarter 2022)

- Facilities Inventory
- Destinations & Demand Drivers
- Community Assessments

Public Engagement (1st Quarter & Late 2nd Quarter 2022)

- Community Survey
- Key Stakeholder Interviews & Focus Groups
- Community Workshops

Analysis & Facilities Planning (2nd Quarter 2022)

- Gap Analysis (Do trails connect to destinations?)
- Route Options

Implementation (3rd & 4th Quarter 2022)

- Priority Route Recommendations
- Maintenance
- Policy Recommendations
- Best Practices
- Local Jurisdiction Plan Adoption

Public Engagement

What did the people have to say?

Public Engagement Overview

Community Survey

- Measure trail use frequency and preferences, identify barriers to trail use
- Goal is to get beyond trail user population and measure broader community activity and preferences

Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups

- Conduct 10-15 Interviews and 2-3 focus groups
- Identify primary opportunities and issues related to trail development

Community Workshops

- Facilitate up to 5 public workshops spread throughout County
- Present preliminary findings on demand analysis and route possibilities to gather public input

Municipal Questionnaire Findings

Response Rate

100% RESPONSE RATE

- All Berrien County Municipalities completed at least a portion of the questionnaire
- Eleven Municipalities uploaded files into the shared drive (maps, plans and policies)
- Fifteen Municipalities completed Walk Friendly Assessments
- Nine Municipalities completed Bike Friendly Assessments

Municipal Questionnaire Findings

Key Takeaways

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Comprehensive list of municipal trail contacts and champions
- No Communities are members of State or National Walk or Bike Friendly Organizations
- No Communities have obtained any level of State or National Walk Friendly or Bike Friendly Designations
- Community Master Plans are increasingly incorporating bike/pedestrian components in transportation planning
- Community Parks & Recreation Master Plans include information related to local park-based trails

Community Survey Findings

Distribution & Response

DISTRIBUTION & RESPONSE

- Survey launched 2/8 and closed 3/6
- Survey distribution was 100% online
- Link to survey was distributed via email and social media posts
- Total response of 1,924 completed surveys
- Responses received from every municipality in Berrien County

SURVEY FOCUS AREAS

- Demographics
- Bicycling Behaviors
- Walking Behaviors
- Other Trail Behaviors
- Value of Trails

Demographics Summary

Respondent Characteristic Summary:

- Older than County population
- Higher percentage of Female respondents
- Respondents were highly educated
- Under-representation of:
  - populations of color
  - population without access to vehicles
  - incomes below $75,000
- Plan to Supplement through Focus Groups

Q4 - What is your age?

Median	Census	Difference	
52	42.1	9.9	Younger is Underrepresented

Q5 - What is your gender?

	Responses	Census	Difference	
Male	35.55%	48.39%	-12.84%	Underrepresented
Female	63.98%	51.60%	12.38%	Overrepresented

Q6 - Hispanic/Latino

Responses	Census	Difference	
3.15%	5.97%	-2.82%	Underrepresented

Q7 - Race

	Responses	Census	Difference	
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.68%	0.05%	0.63%	Overrepresented
Asian	1.62%	1.56%	0.06%	Overrepresented
Black or African American	1.20%	15.33%	-14.13%	Underrepresented
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.26%	0.07%	0.19%	Overrepresented
White	94.08%	78.31%	15.77%	Overrepresented
Other (please specify)	3.67%	1.80%	1.87%	Overrepresented

Q8 - Education

	Responses	Census	Difference	
Some High School, but no degree	0.36%	9.70%	-9.34%	Underrepresented
High School Graduate/GED	4.89%	27.20%	-22.31%	Underrepresented
Some College, but no degree	14.14%	25.40%	-11.26%	Underrepresented
Associate's Degree (2 year degree)	8.37%	10.70%	-2.33%	Underrepresented
Bachelor's Degree (4 year degree)	36.43%	15.90%	20.53%	Overrepresented
Post Graduate College (Master's, Professional or Doctoral degree)	35.81%	11.10%	24.71%	Overrepresented

Q12 - Access to a Vehicle

	Responses	Census	Difference	
No	1.46%	7.50%	-6.04%	Underrepresented

Q13 - Income

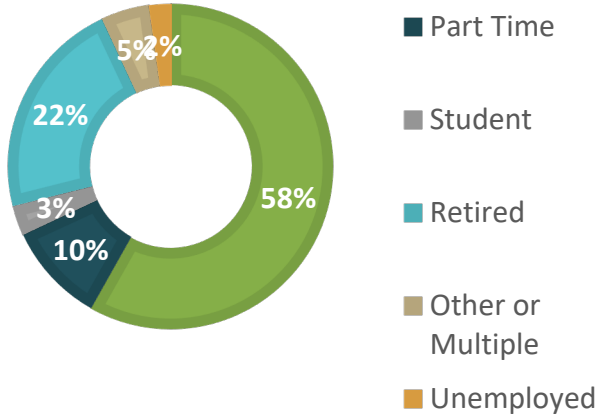
	Responses	Census	Difference	
Under $25,000	3.08%	13.70%	-10.62%	Underrepresented
$25,000 - $49,999	10.17%	25.60%	-15.43%	Underrepresented
$50,000 - $74,999	13.72%	15.60%	-1.88%	Underrepresented
$75,000 - $99,999	16.22%	12.50%	3.72%	Overrepresented
$100,000 or more	41.21%	32.50%	8.71%	Overrepresented

Demographics Summary

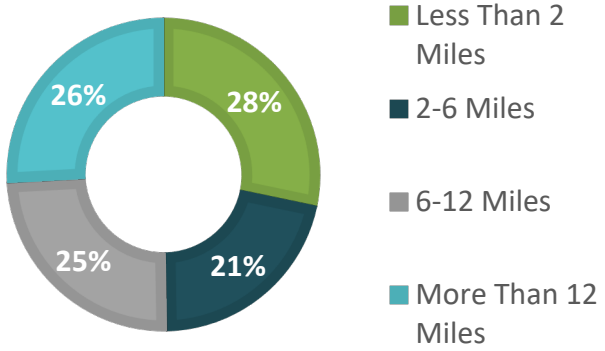
Respondent Characteristic Summary:

- Employed (Full or Part Time) or Students
  - Account for 75% of Responses
  - 75% Live Less Than 12 Miles From Work/School
  - Over 80% Drive Alone
  - Almost 15% Walk/Bike

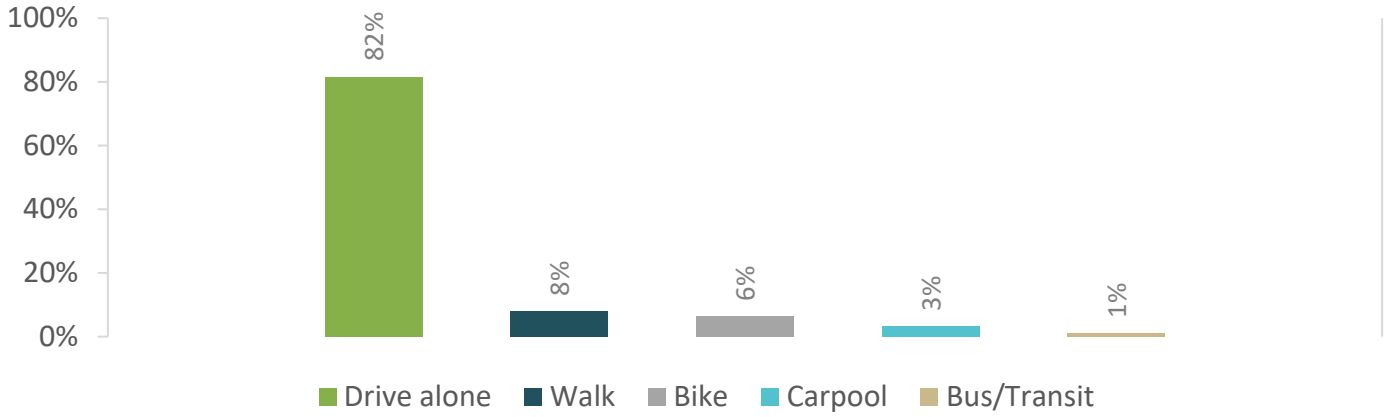
EMPLOYMENT



DISTANCE TO WORK/SCHOOL



TRANSPORTATION TO WORK/SCHOOL



Cyclists & Walkers Are Active

Cyclists:

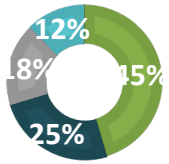
- Confidence – 70% Casual or Confident
- Frequency – 44% ride at least once a week
- Distance – 59% ride more than 5 miles

Walkers:

- Confidence – 78% Casual or Confident
- Frequency – 80% walk at least once a week
- Distance – 60% walk more than 2 miles

Biking

CONFIDENCE



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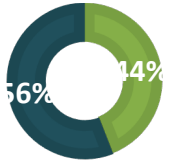

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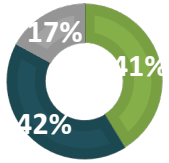
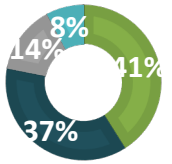


Walking

CONFIDENCE



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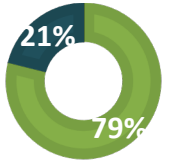

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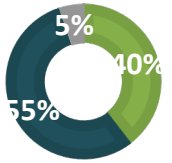


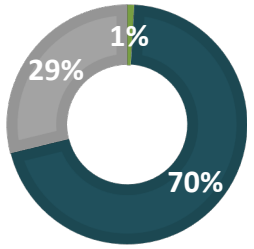
Purpose Is Mostly Recreational

Cyclists:
- 70% Recreation Use Only
- 29% Recreation & Transportation Use
- Top Destinations
  - Parks & Trails
  - Visit Friends
  - Restaurant
  - Grocery Store
  - Work
  - Medical

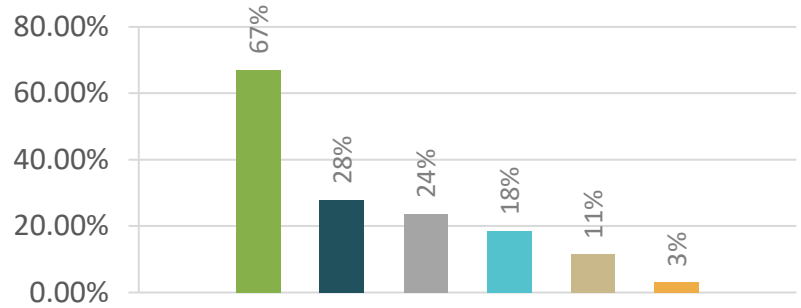
Walkers:
- 70% Recreation Use Only
- 29% Recreation & Transportation Use
- Top Destinations
  - Parks & Trails
  - Visit Friends
  - Restaurant
  - Grocery Store
  - Work
  - Medical

Biking

PURPOSE

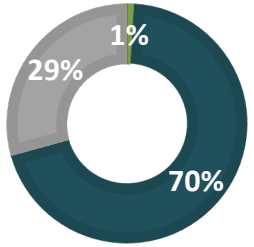


DESTINATIONS

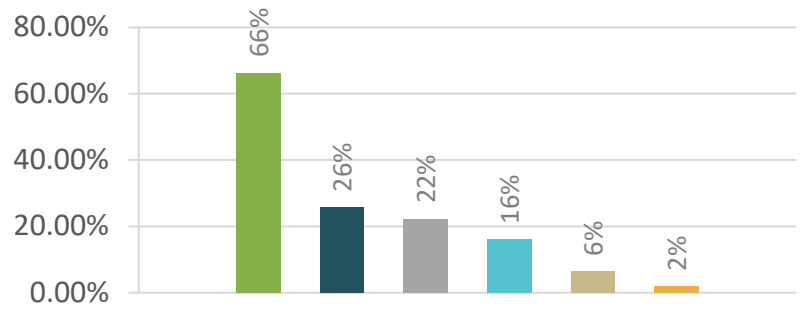


Walking

PURPOSE

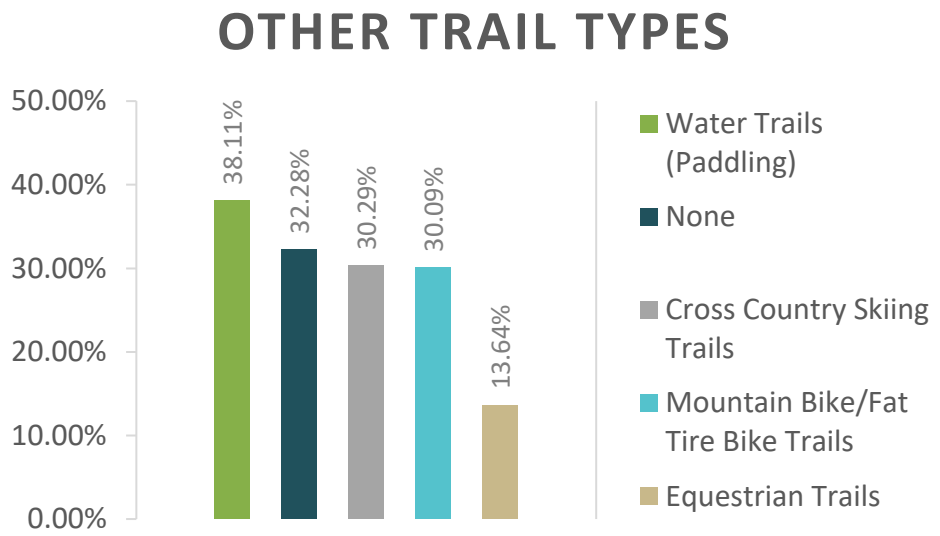


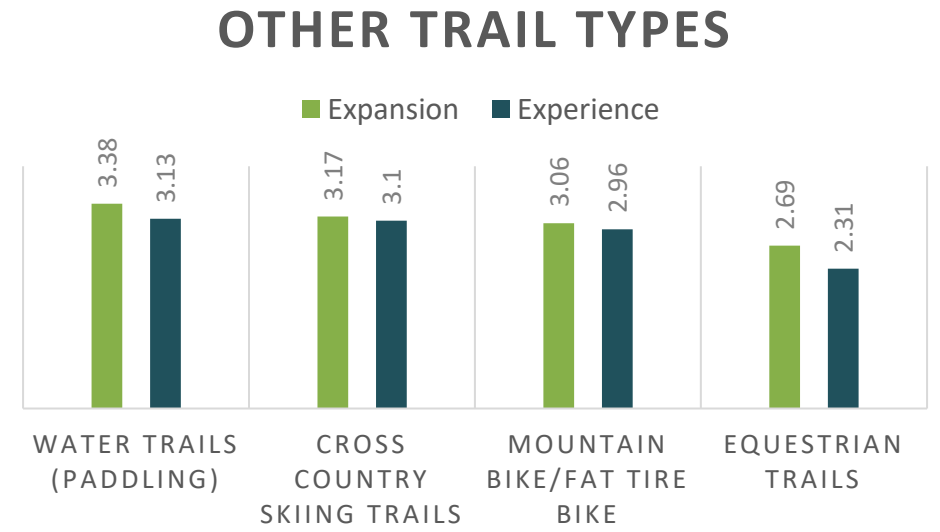
DESTINATIONS



Purpose Is Mostly Recreational

- **Overlap of use with other recreational trail types is somewhat common.**
- **Desire for expansion and user experience of other trail types is just moderate**





Demand For Transportation Use is High

Cyclists:

- 72% Desire to Use Their Bike More for Transportation Purposes

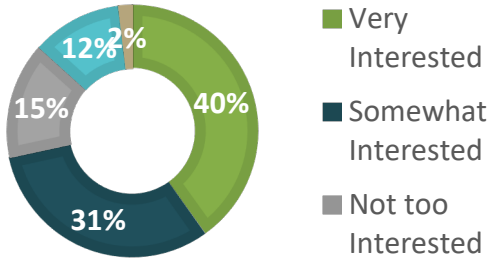
Walkers:

- 63% Desire to Walk More for Transportation Purposes

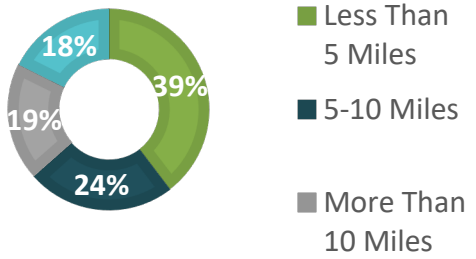
Connectivity, comfort, and safety have prevented more transportation use. Infrastructure has been focused on recreational use.

Biking

LEVEL OF INTEREST

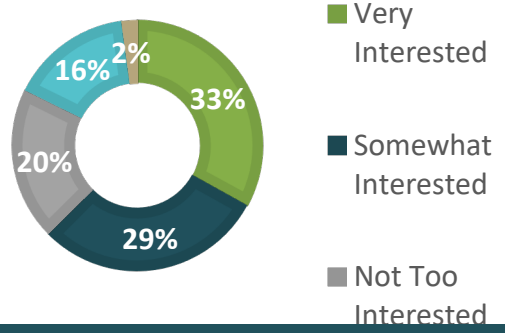


DISTANCE WILLING TO TRAVEL



Walking

LEVEL OF INTEREST



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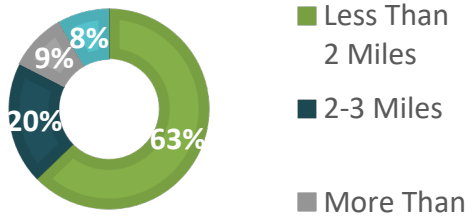


Trail Use Limitations

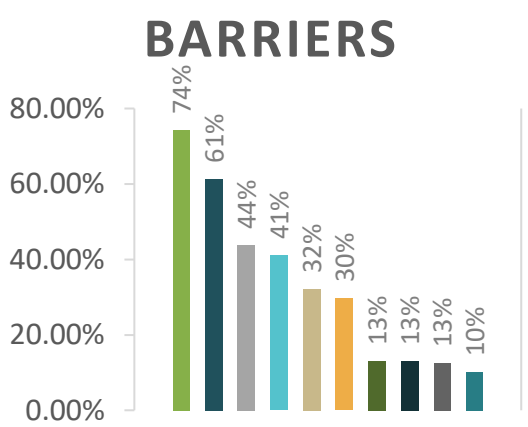
Cyclists:

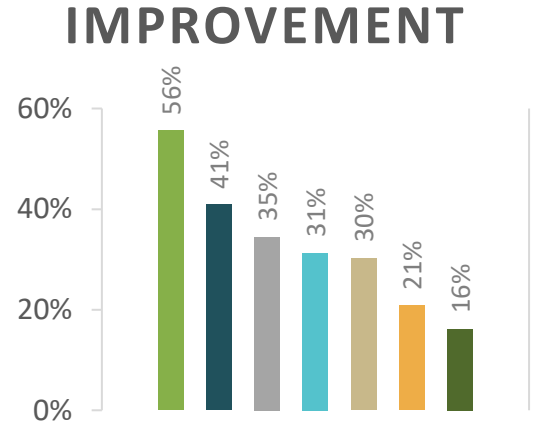
- Barriers
  - Safety
    - Vehicle Traffic/Speeds (74%)
    - Don't Feel Safe (32%),
    - Road Conditions (30%)
  - Connectivity
    - No/Few Bike Paths (61%)
    - Bike Lanes/Paths Abruptly End (41%)
    - Destinations Too Far (13%)
- Improvement Areas
  - Connections to Destinations (56%)
  - Trail Surface (41%)
  - Safety (35%)

Walkers:

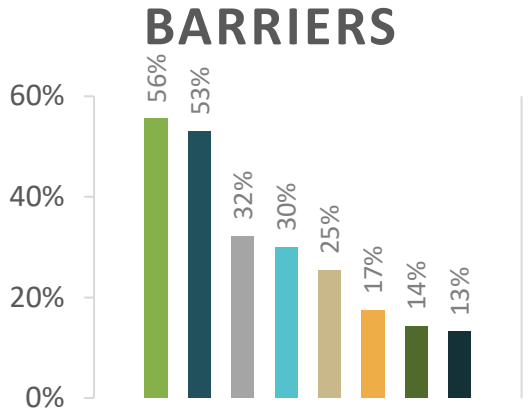
- Barriers
  - Safety
    - Vehicle Speeds/Traffic (53%)
    - Busy Street Crossings (32%)
    - Sidewalk Conditions (25%)
  - Connectivity
    - Sidewalks End/No Sidewalks (56%)
    - Destinations Too Far (30%)
- Improvement Areas
  - Connections to Destinations (50%)
  - Safety (36%)
  - Surface (34%)

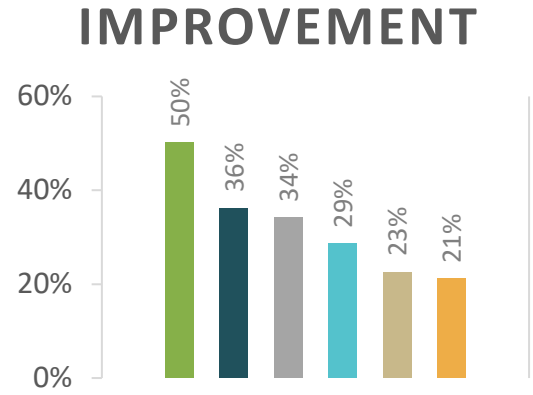
Biking





Walking





Dedicated Trails - Use Is Mixed But Preferred

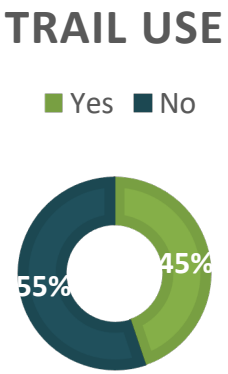
Cyclists:

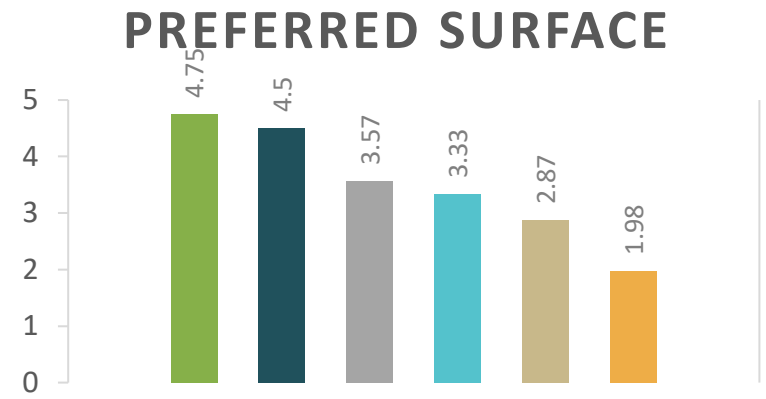
- Preferred Surface
  - Designated Shared Use Path - Paved
  - Separated Bike Lane
  - Designated Shared Use Path - Unpaved
  - Bike Lane Along Road
  - Wide Paved Shoulder
  - Signed Route – Shared Road

Walkers:

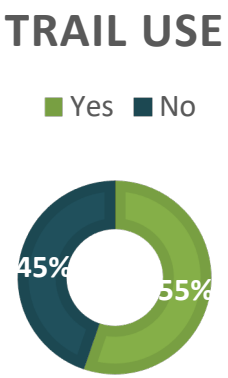
- Preferred Surface
  - Nature Trail
  - Sidewalk
  - Designated Shared Use Path - Paved
  - Designated Shared Use Path - Unpaved
  - Neighborhood Street
  - Paved Wide Shoulder

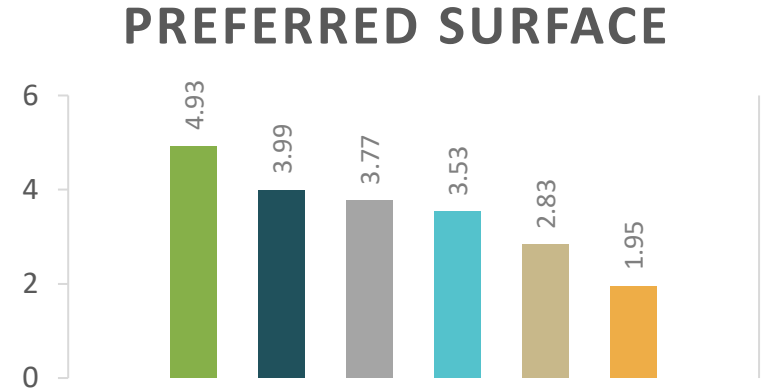
Biking





Walking

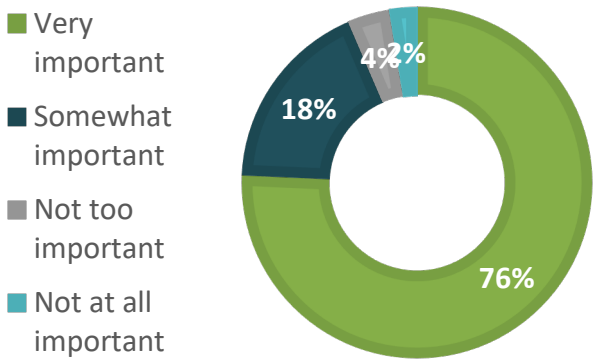




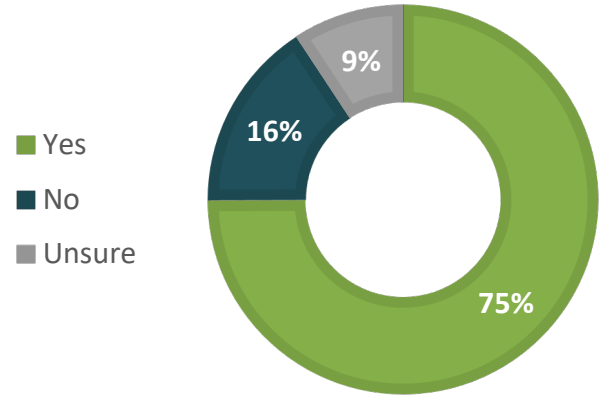
Trails Are Valued & Sought Out

- Over 75% feel safe and convenient access to trails is very important – 94% somewhat/very important
- 75% stated that access to bicycling and walking opportunities are important factors when deciding where to live and work
- Over 90% feel that local municipalities should increase their levels of funding toward bicycling and pedestrian infrastructure

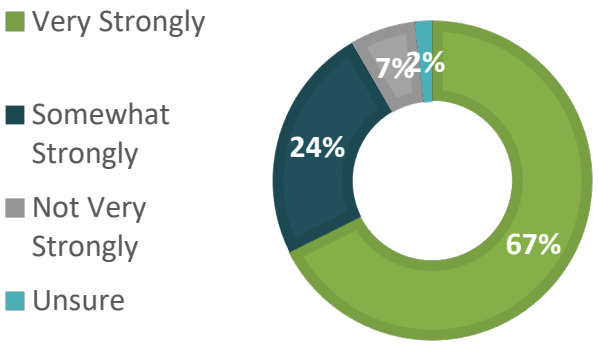
SAFE & CONVENIENT ACCESS TO TRAILS



FACTORS IN MAKING LIVE/WORK DECISIONS



INCREASED PUBLIC FUNDING FOR TRAILS



Survey Implications

Health & Recreation

Primary motivation for biking and walking in Berrien County is for health and recreation.

- Healthier resident outcomes relate to higher quality of life and lower medical costs
- Recreational trail opportunities are desirable for all resident demographics (empty nest, families, young professionals)
- Recreational trail opportunities are important tourism draws

Survey Implications

Transportation

Use of non-vehicular transportation to services is almost 30% for both bikers and walkers, with high levels of interest in increasing transportation trips.

- Integration of all facility types, including separated trails, dedicated lanes and sidewalks into a network that provides safer access to desired destinations
- Network should be intentional to connect populations with limited access to transportation resources
- Strong opportunities to connect employees and students to work and school
- Reduction of single occupant car trips for distances less than 10 miles will produce outcomes in reduced vehicle emissions/fuel demand and reduced traffic volumes/congestion on streets/roads

Survey Implications

Safety & Connectivity

Safety and Connectivity are highly critical factors in decision making for both walkers and cyclists.

- These factors were top barriers to increasing trail use
- Connectivity strategies should include both connections between communities and connections to destinations within communities
- Increase in bike and pedestrian travel will increase conflicts with vehicles, future planning and design decisions should incorporate mitigation
- On-going trail maintenance planning and funding is important factor in safety, as trail conditions were cited frequently as both being limitations and important factors users seek

Survey Implications

Promotion & Awareness

Better promotion and awareness of existing opportunities is needed.

- Increase in awareness through promotion, mapping and events will drive higher use by current residents
- Develop a story around trails and biking/pedestrian connectivity to be integrated into both community and regional tourism promotions and local economic development business and resident attraction efforts

Gap Analysis

Where should new active transportation infrastructure go?

Gap Analysis

Demand Analysis

- What areas of Berrien County generating demand for active transportation?
- What areas need connecting to create a cohesive and usable network?

Needs Analysis

- What areas exist where groups of residents rely on active transportation to live their everyday life?
- How can we better serve all residents of Berrien County?

Stress Analysis

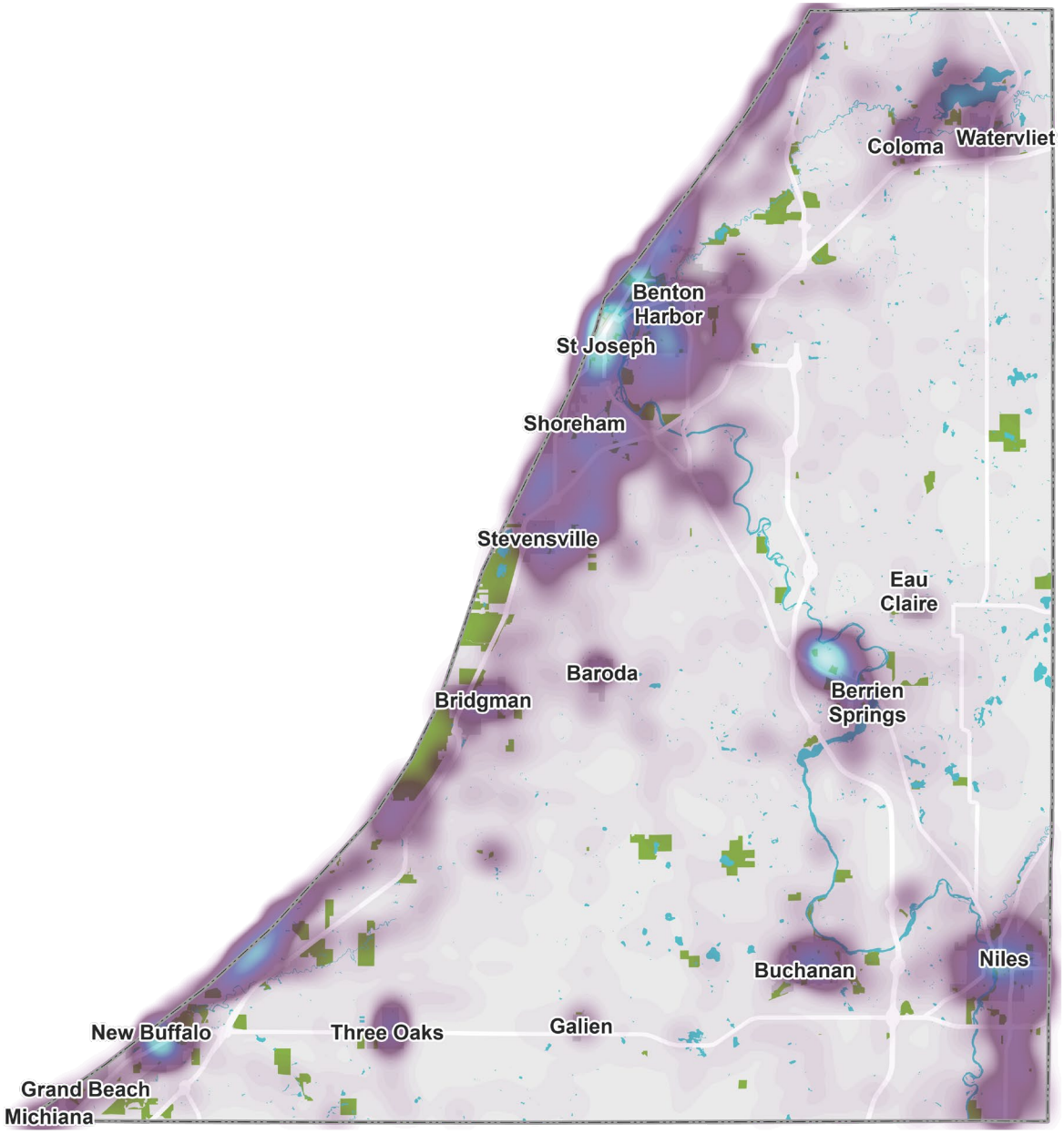
- What roadways are currently high stress for pedestrians and cyclists to use?
- What segments can become less stressful with active transportation improvements?

Demand Analysis

Live, Work, Play, and Learn were used to generate demand factors based on everyday life.

Demand Analysis was generated using the following factors:

- Population density, residents with income 200% and below poverty level, residents that walk, bike, or use transit to get to work, Strava data, and locations of schools, employment, retail, entertainment, and parks.

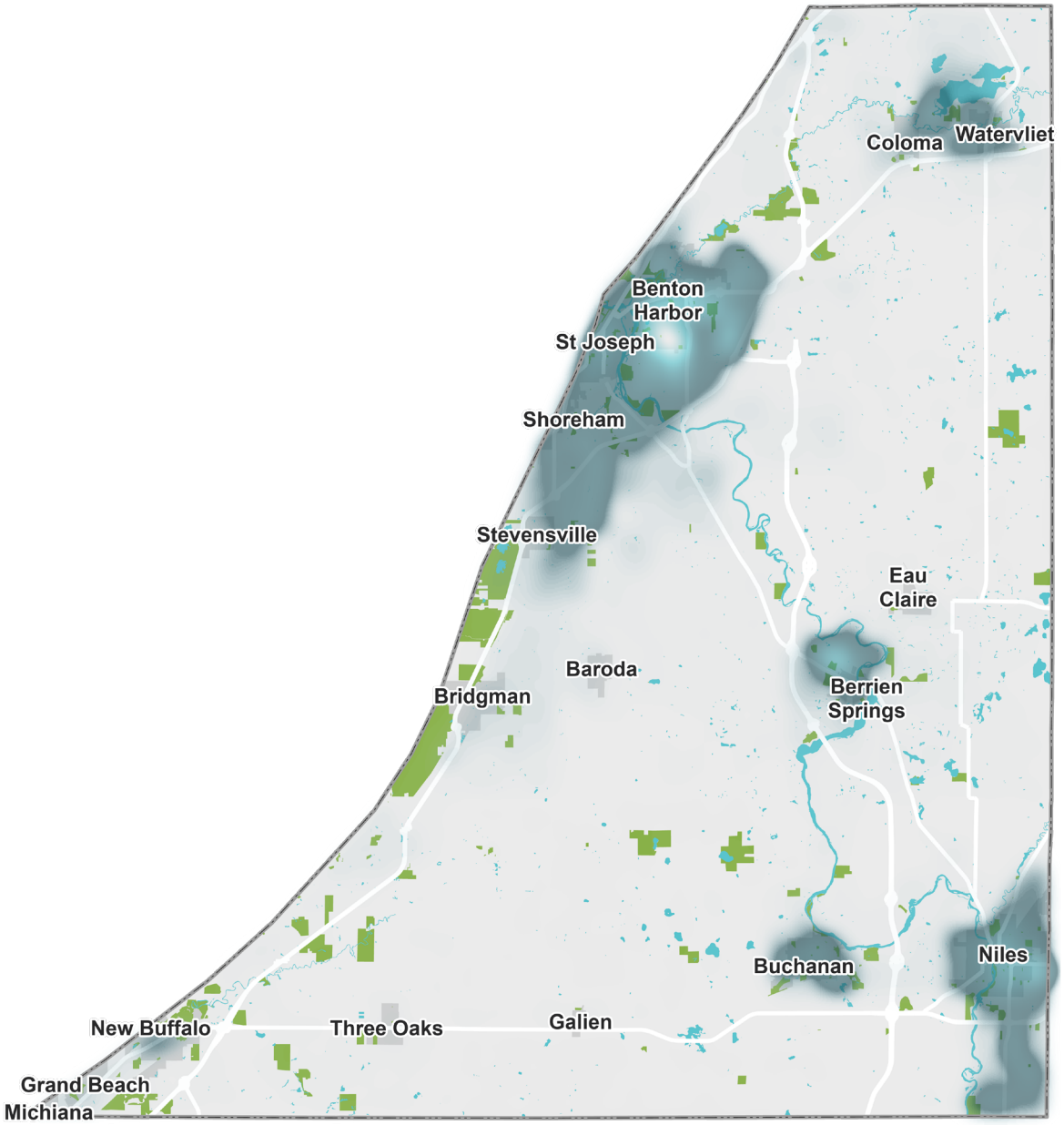


Needs Analysis

Certain factors increase the need for reliance on activate transportation to get to work, school, and do everyday tasks. Areas of high need should be prioritized for bicycle and pedestrian improvements, because it is likely that the residents in these areas rely more heavily on active transportation options for getting around.

Needs Analysis was generated using the following factors:

- Minority race groups, no high school diploma, no vehicle available, residents below the poverty line, youth, older residents, limited English speaking, and residents with a disability.

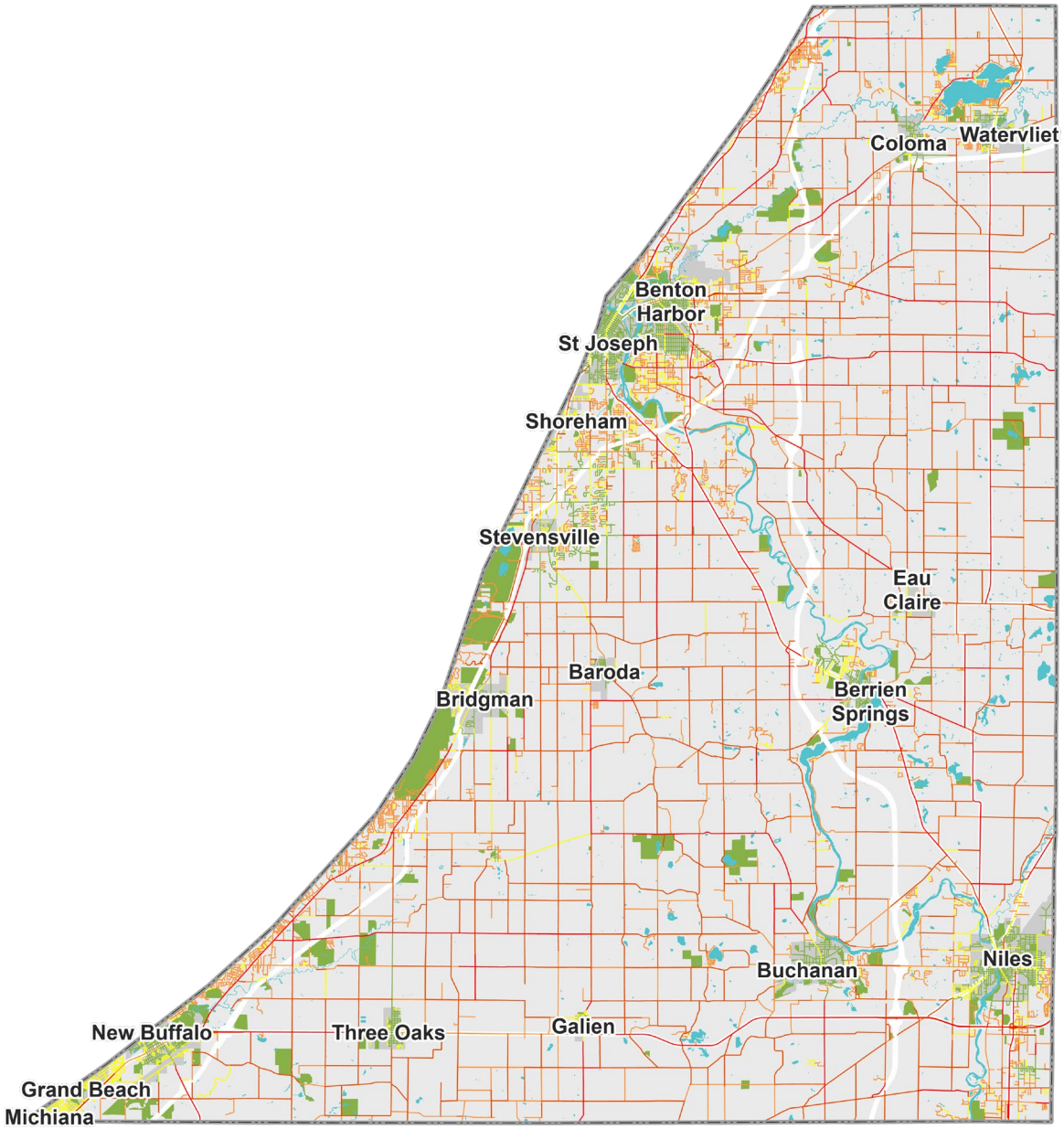


Stress Analysis

Stress is a measure of current conditions on roadways for pedestrian and cyclists.

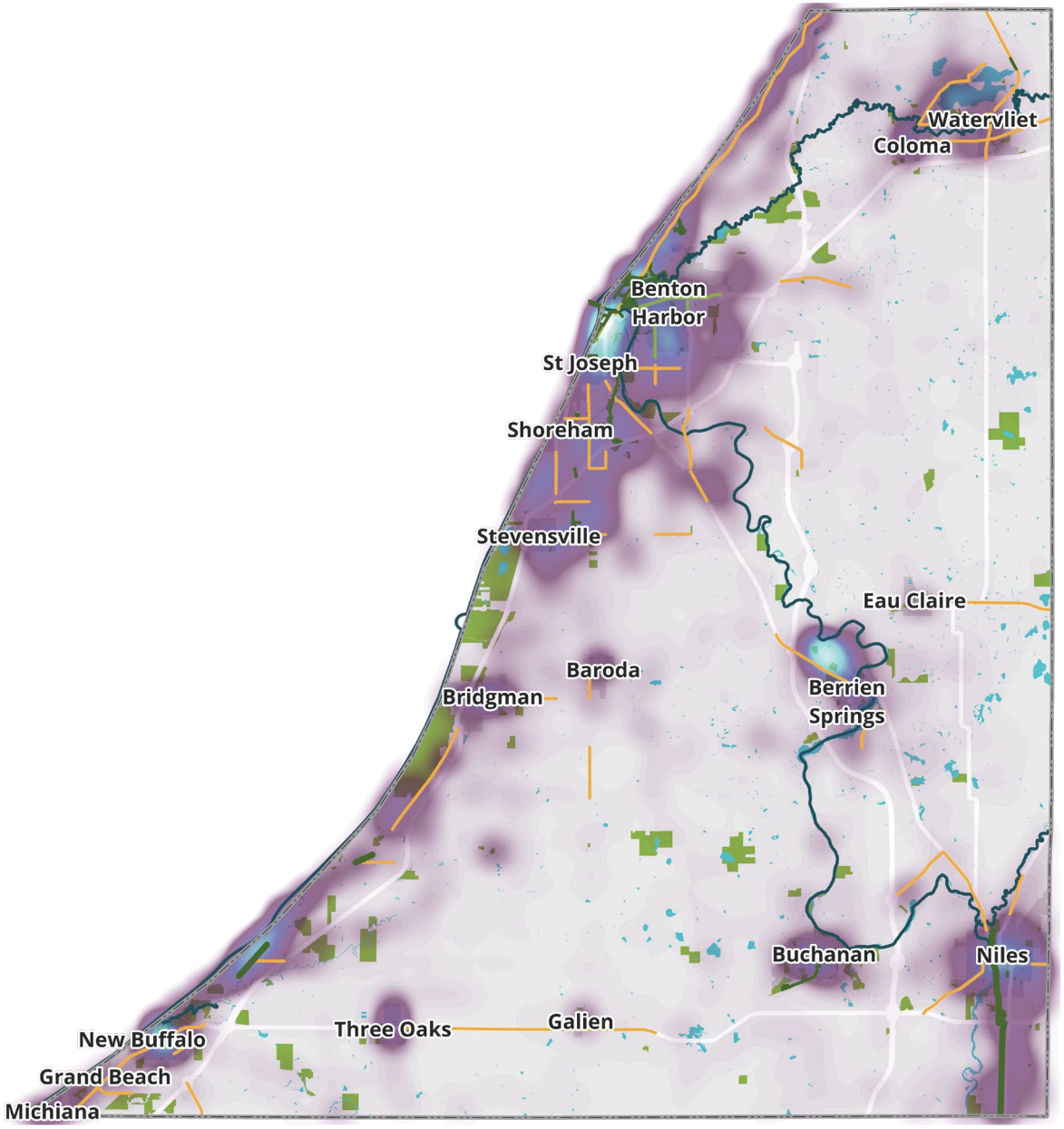
Stress Analysis was generated using the following factors:

- Traffic volume, lane number, speed limit, crashes, and if a sidewalk is present.



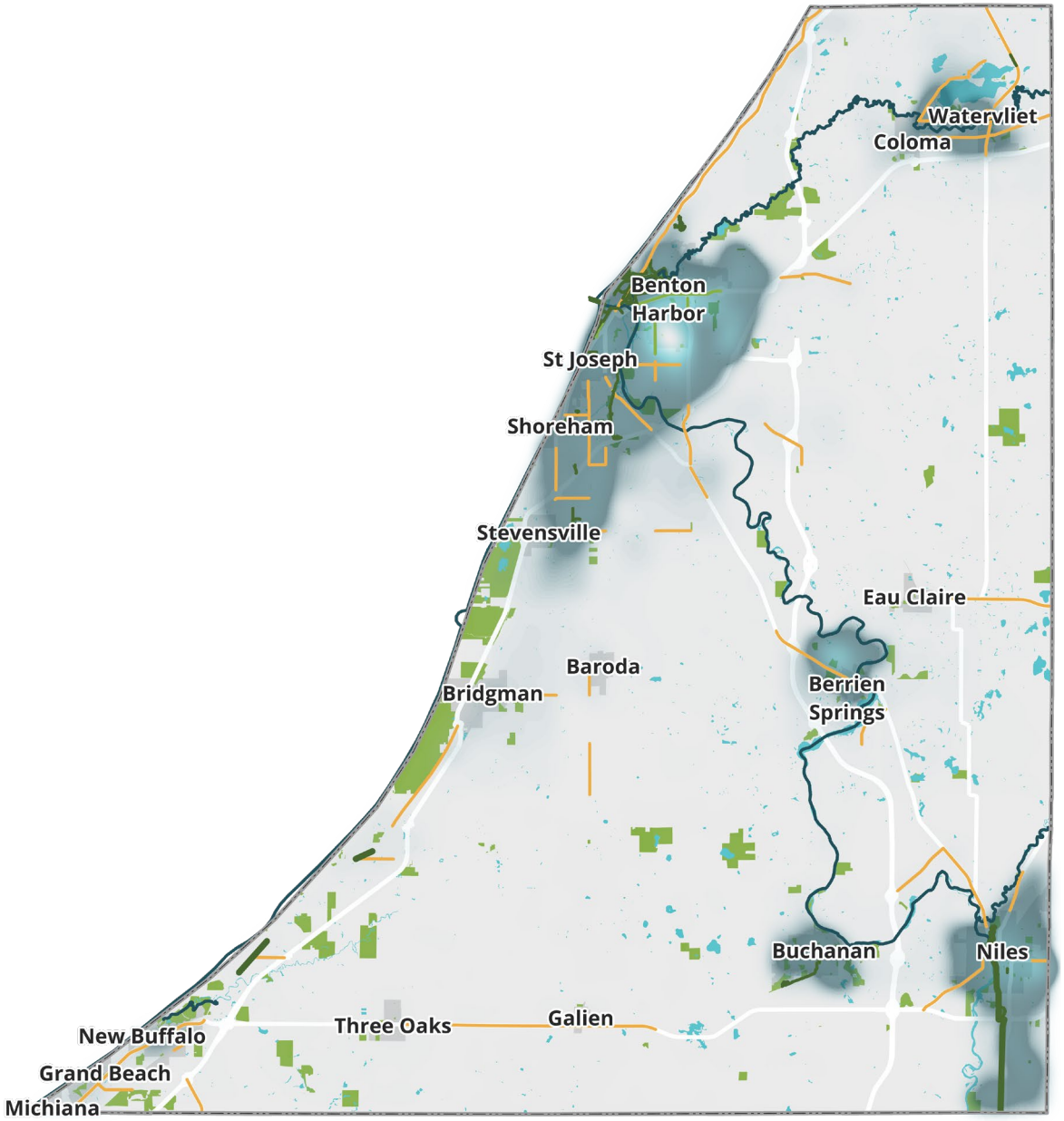
Demand with Existing Network

- Connecting high demand areas create a successful active transportation networks.
- The existing network serves to connect within communities, not between them.
- Proposed routes should be designed to serve both tourists and residents.



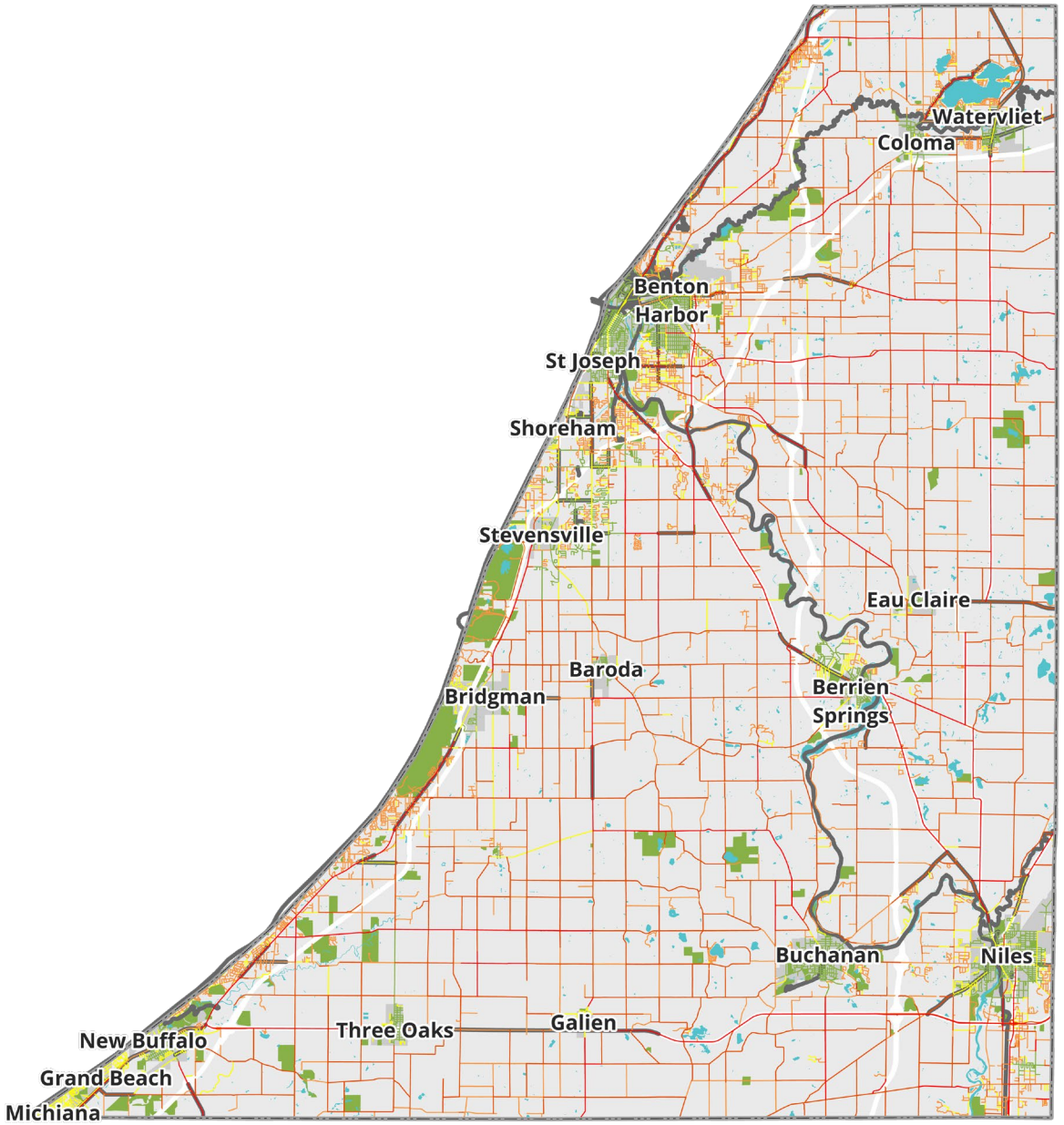
Needs with Existing Network

- People that rely on active transportation need a connected network that allows them to get to all their destinations.
- High need areas are concentrated and could be connected easily with an active transportation network.



Stress with Existing Network

- Stress shouldn't omit a specific route for active transportation connectivity since these factors can be mitigated with appropriate infrastructure design.
- Convenience and direct routes are more important for active transportation than cars.
- Stress should help inform what kind of infrastructure should be used to connect gaps in the network.



Explore These Maps and More

1. Visit the Friends of Berrien County Trails Website
2. Master Plan Tab
3. Planning Documents & Resources

berrientrails.org/bcmasterplan.asp

Interactive Exercise #1

Time to share your ideas.

Identify Potential Future Connections

Share your vision.

- Review accuracy of trail/park facilities
- Give input on desired/planned non-motorized facilities
- Prioritize Facilities

Facilities

On Road Facilities

- Paved Shoulder
  (4 foot minimum)
- Bike Lane
  (5 foot minimum)
- Bike Routes

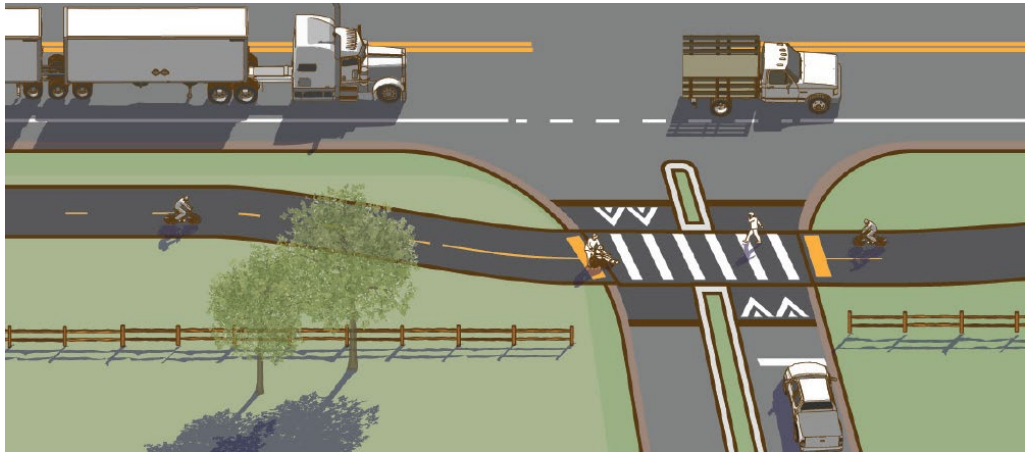
Facilities

Off Road Facilities

(10 foot minimum)

- Shared Use Path
  - Improved – paved or crushed fines
  - Unimproved – gravel or dirt

- Side Path



Marking on Your Maps

Existing Facilities

- Shared Use or Side Path – BLUE
- Paved Shoulder/Bike Lane – BLACK

Planned or Desired Facilities

- On Road - RED
- Off Road – GREEN

Priorities

- Sticky Note with details (timeline, progress, etc)