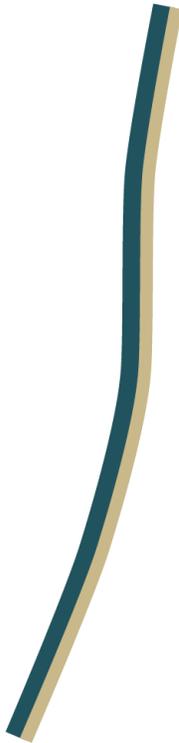


Steering Committee Kick-off Meeting

December 14, 2021



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



“Good meeting. I totally agree with everything you didn’t say.”

Planning Process

Berrien County Trails Master Plan

Why Do This?

Economic Benefits

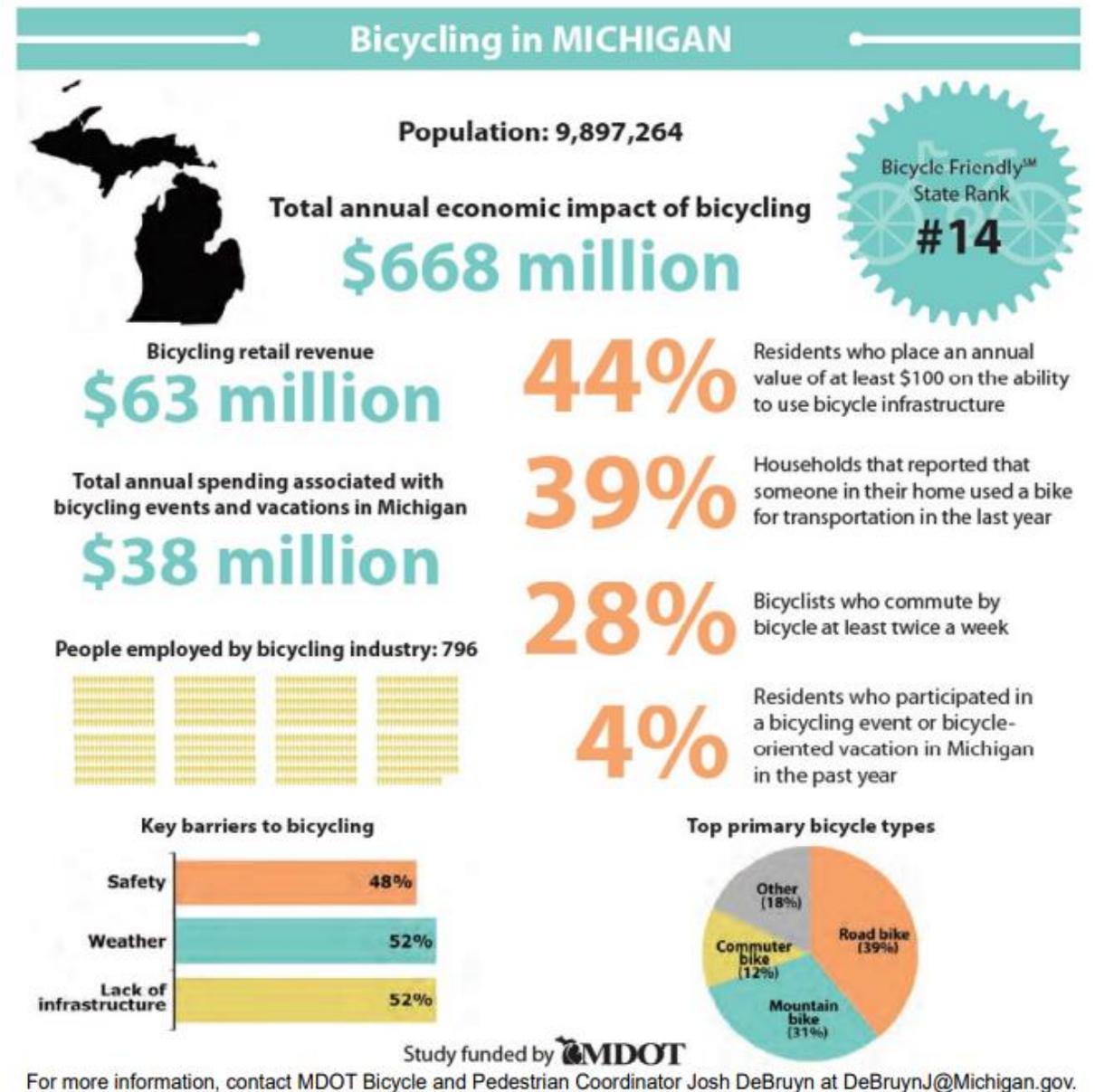
- Increased real estate values and tax base
- Attract and retain businesses and residents
- Attract Tourism Spending

Health & Quality of Life Benefits

- Encourage physical activity and reduce obesity
- Reduce air pollution and traffic congestion
- Enhances neighborhood and alternative transportation safety

Consolidate & Coordinate Activities County-Wide

- Coordinated community-based planning
- Increased efficiency in use of public resources



Process Overview

Process will include 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

Steering Committee Expectations

Convene

- The Steering Committee will convene periodically, approximately 2-3 times, to guide the planning process from March through October 2022.

Review and Provide Input

- Review and provide input on the plan's goals and objectives.
- Review and provide input on the methods to engage stakeholders and gather public input.
- Review and provide input on implementation strategies.

Identify

- Identify potential major conflicts for public workshop sessions.

Assist

- Assist with local data collection.
- Assist with promoting community engagement activities.
- Assist with prioritization of proposed projects/routes.
- Assist with getting ALL Berrien County jurisdictions to pass a resolution supporting the final Master Plan.

Vision



The Friends of the Berrien County Trails envisions a future in which walking, paddling, and bicycling opportunities are easily accessible throughout Berrien County for people of all ages and abilities. Trails link people to destinations and services and connect where we live, work, and play.



Berrien County has numerous natural and community assets that uniquely position it to become a national leader in trail development and achieve benefits such as improved personal wellbeing and community health, reduced traffic congestion, better resident and talent attraction, and enhanced quality of life.



The Berrien County Trails Master Plan will provide the tools to achieve this vision, engaging a broad group of stakeholders in a process that will build community consensus on future project priorities and investments.



This plan will support the case for integration of trails as foundational to future overall transportation and recreation planning activities.

Purpose & Goals

Master Plan Goals

Guide future trail planning and implementation throughout Berrien County.

Serve as a comprehensive plan for non-motorized transportation and recreation opportunities.

Link the assets and communities in Berrien County.

Providing connectivity throughout the region.

KEY PLANNING THEMES



Master Plan Content

Existing Conditions

- Trails Inventory
- Community Assessment Data
- Community Survey Results
- Stakeholder Interview & Focus Group

Master Plan Content

Analysis and Route Criteria Development

- Demand and Use Analysis
- Gap Analysis
- Traffic, Crash and Comfort Analysis
- Route Suitability Criteria Development
- Route Option Creation and Prioritization

Master Plan Content

Implementation

- Route Prioritization
- Maintenance Recommendations
- Community Safety Programs
- Local Policy Recommendations
- State and National Certifications and Designations

Public Engagement

Berrien County Trails Master Plan

Project Communications

Project Communications Goals

Raise awareness of the project.

Drive community engagement equitably, especially through the community survey and public workshops.

Provide updates on progress throughout the planning process.

Final plan communication and distribution.

Communications Tools

Project website incorporated into friends of berrien county trails website.
www.berrientrails.org

Social media posts to support community engagement and key project milestones.

Steering committee members are essential for providing assistance in project communications.

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

Existing Conditions

Berrien County Trails Master Plan

Inventory Classification

National and Regional Significance

- Include both on-road and off-road shared use facilities
- Provide connections through multiple communities, counties and states
- Carry highest volumes of users and have reputations that attract users from within and outside the region.
 - US Bike Route 35
 - Marquette Greenway
 - IN/MI River Valley

Local Community Based Routes

- Include both on-road and off-road facilities
- Primarily stay within the boundaries of local communities
- Can be recreational or utilitarian in purpose
- Include on-road extended shoulder widths
 - Michigan State Routes
 - County arterial and collector roads

Park / Recreation Based

- Include facilities located within local parks.
 - Paved walking/biking trails
 - Unpaved hiking trails
 - Mountain biking trails
 - Water trails
 - Equestrian trails
 - Cross country ski trails

Existing Facilities - National and Regionally Significant



U.S. Bike Route 35



Indiana Michigan River Valley Trail



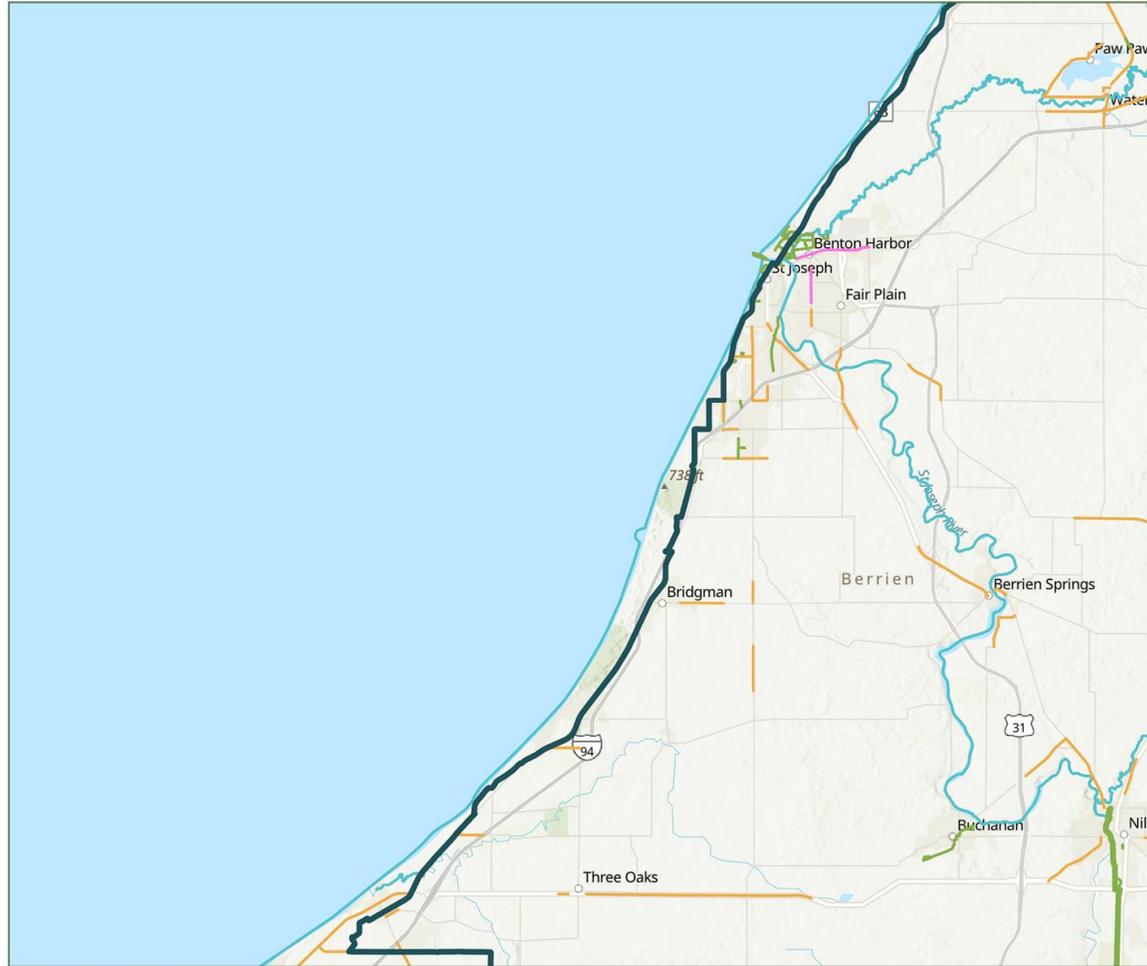
Marquette Greenway

Existing Facilities - Local Community

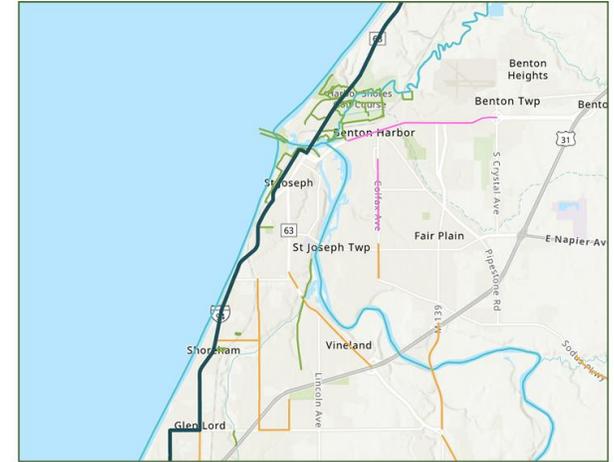
Existing Trail Network

Type and Master Plan Significance

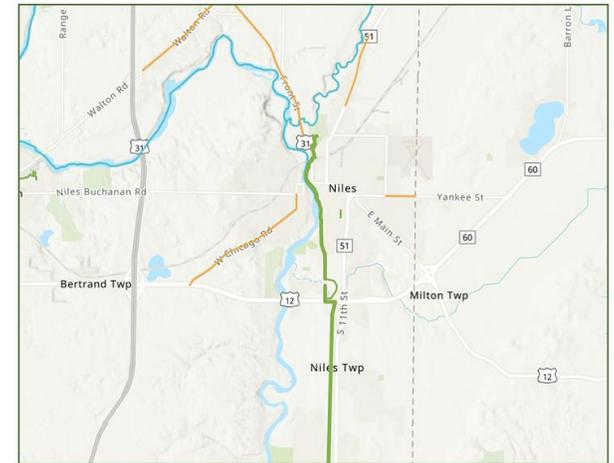
- Bike Lane, Local Community Connector
- Bikeway, National and Regional Connector
- Multi-Use Path, Local Community Connector
- Multi-Use Path, National and Regional Connector
- Water Trail, Local Community Connector
- Wide Shoulder, Local Community Connector



Berrien County



St. Joseph / Benton Harbor



Niles

Existing Destinations & Demand Drivers

Destinations will support the key themes including Connectivity, Accessibility, Equity, Economic Impact and Talent Attraction.

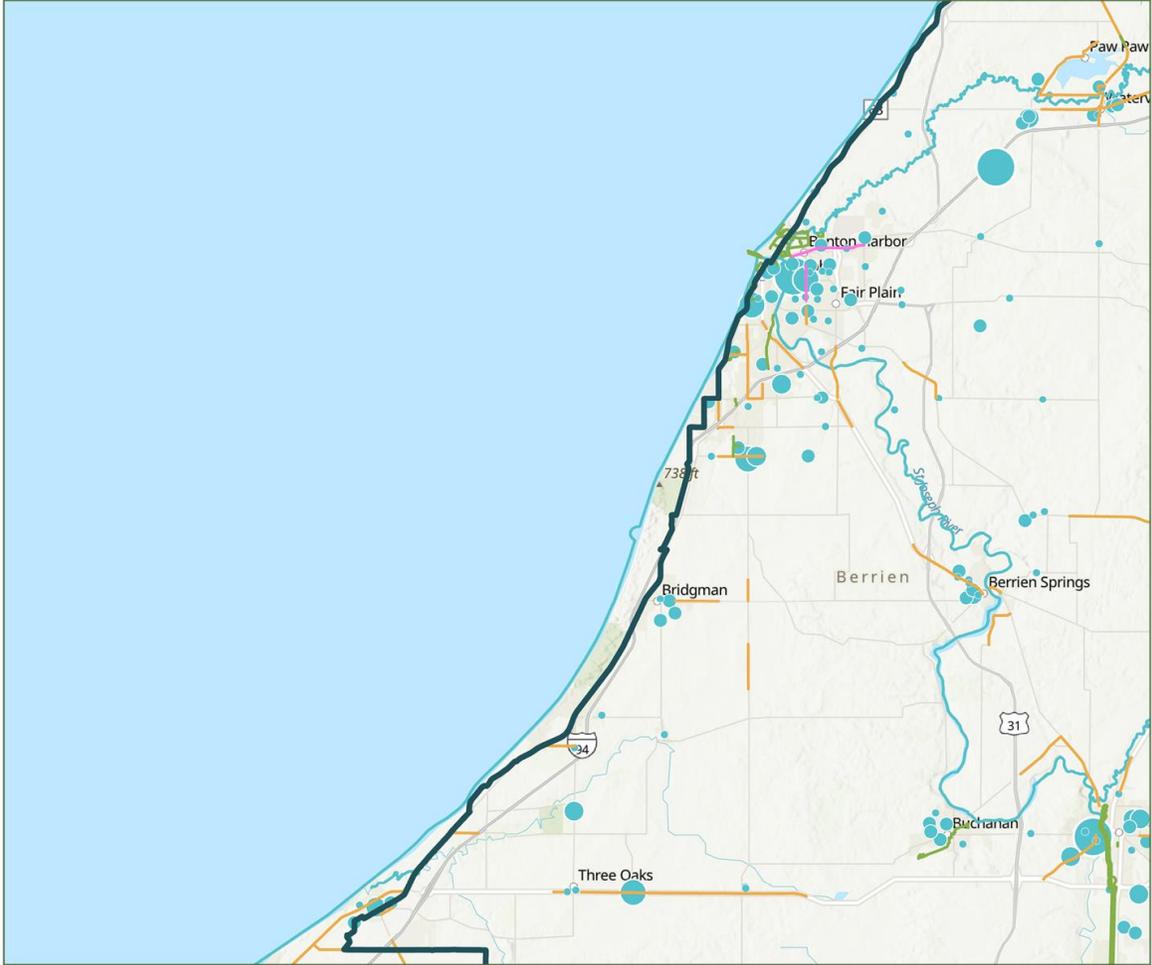
1. Downtowns
2. Schools/Universities
3. Medical Facilities
4. Employment Centers (Other than Downtowns)
5. Retail Centers (Other than Downtowns)
6. Parks/Beaches
7. Significant Businesses/Attractions
8. Transit

Overlay Map - Existing Trails & Schools

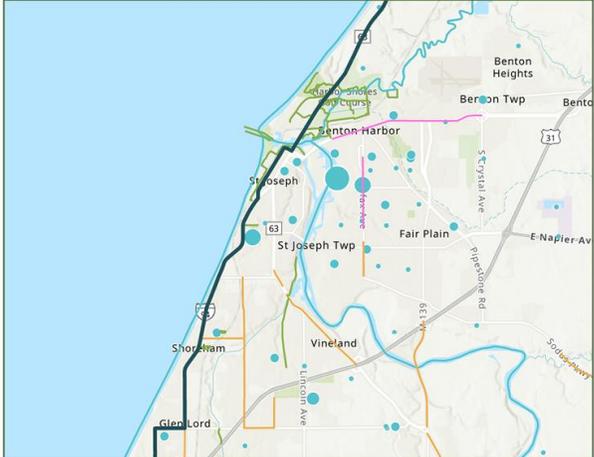
Existing Trail Network with Schools by # Students

- Type and Master Plan Significance
- Bike Lane, Local Community Connector
 - Bikeway, National and Regional Connector
 - Multi-Use Path, Local Community Connector
 - Multi-Use Path, National and Regional Connector
 - Water Trail, Local Community Connector
 - Wide Shoulder, Local Community Connector

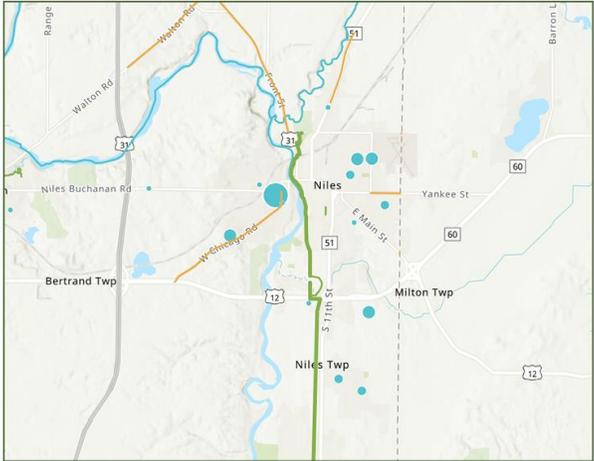
- Schools by Number of Students
- ≤250.0
 - ≤500.0
 - ≤1000.0
 - ≤2000.0
 - ≤5251.0



Berrien County



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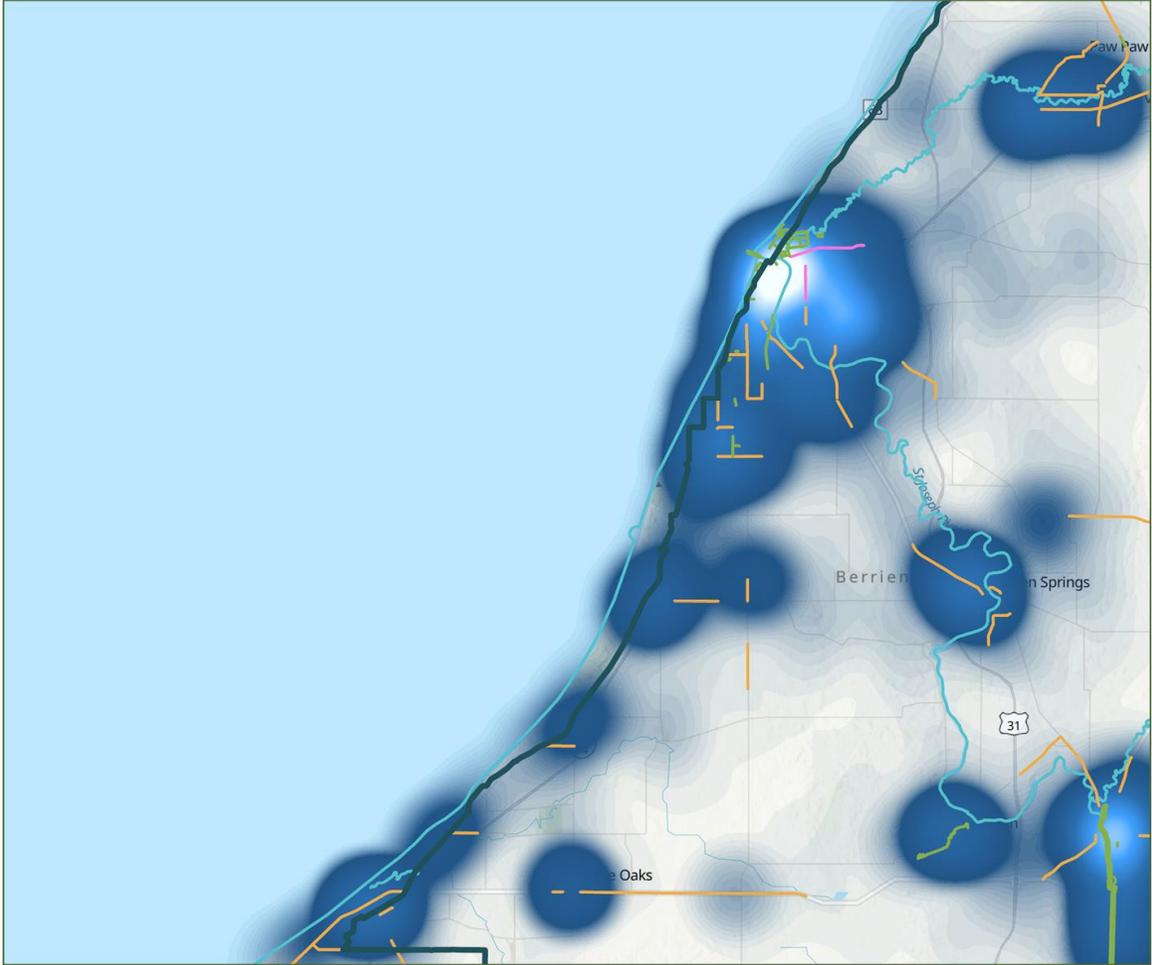


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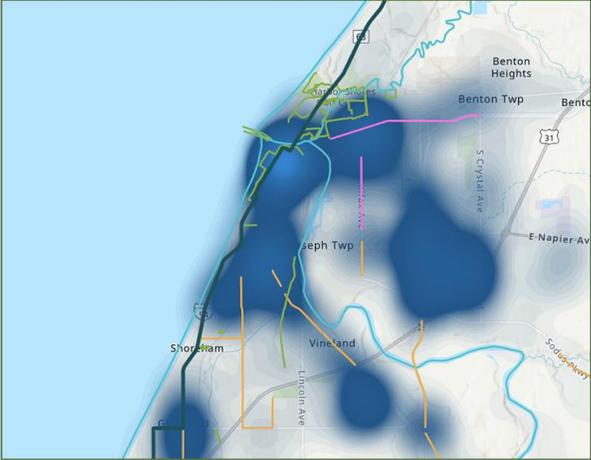
Overlay Map - Existing Trails & Businesses

Existing Trail Network with Business Density

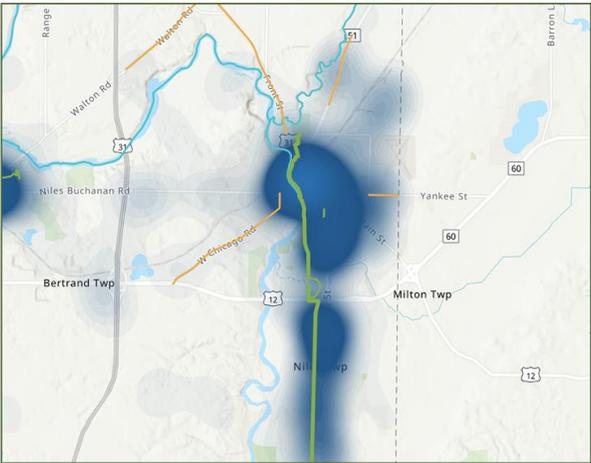
- Type and Master Plan Significance
- Bike Lane, Local Community Connector
 - Bikeway, National and Regional Connector
 - Multi-Use Path, Local Community Connector
 - Multi-Use Path, National and Regional Connector
 - Water Trail, Local Community Connector
 - Wide Shoulder, Local Community Connector
 - Sparse
 - Dense



Berrien County



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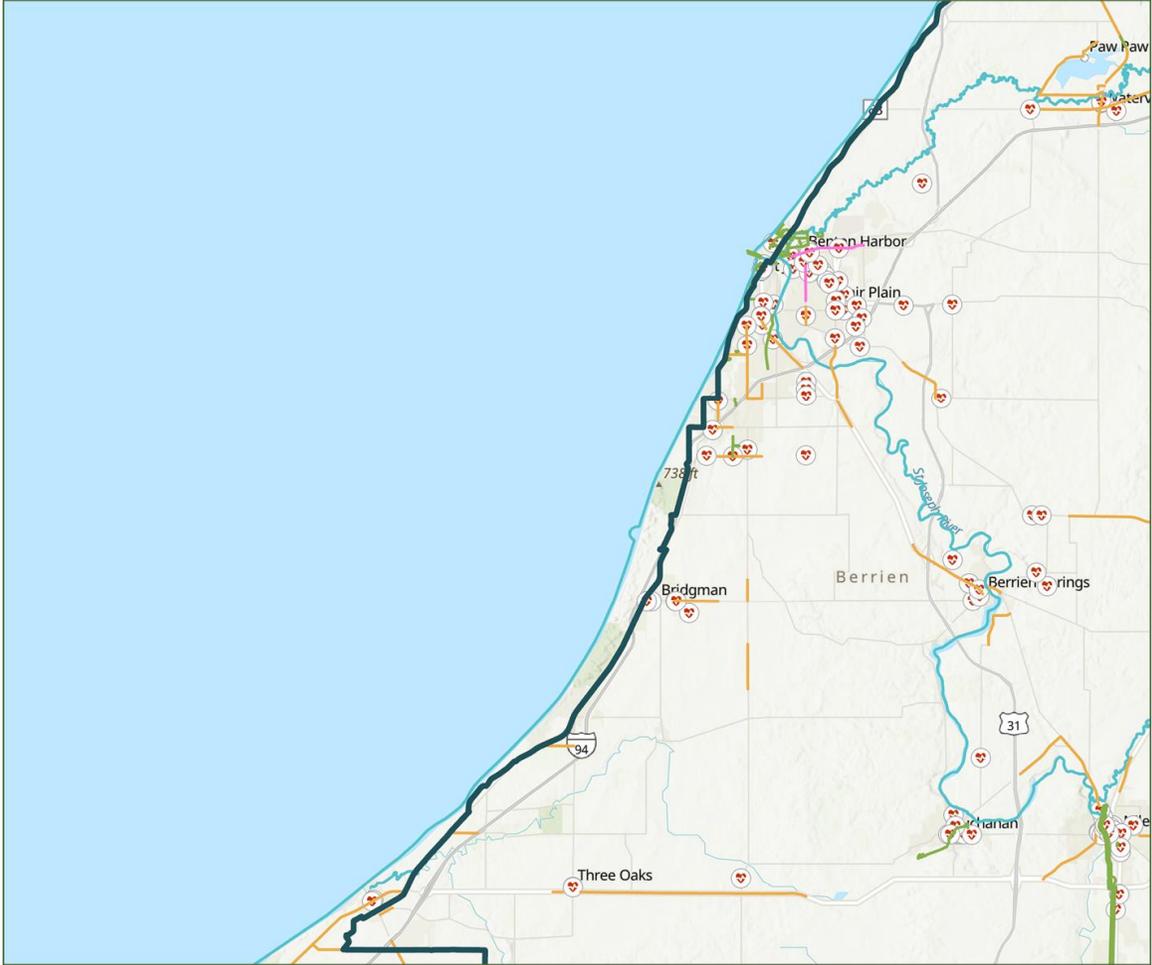


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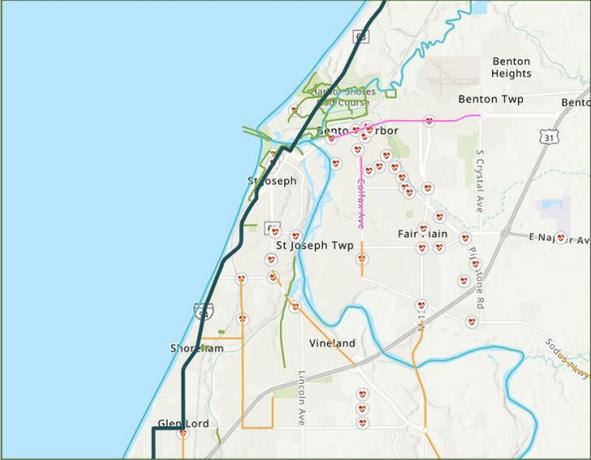
Overlay Map - Existing Trails & Healthcare

Existing Trail Network with Health Facilities

- Type and Master Plan Significance
- Bike Lane, Local Community Connector
 - Bikeway, National and Regional Connector
 - Multi-Use Path, Local Community Connector
 - Multi-Use Path, National and Regional Connector
 - Water Trail, Local Community Connector
 - Wide Shoulder, Local Community Connector
 - Health Facilities



Berrien County



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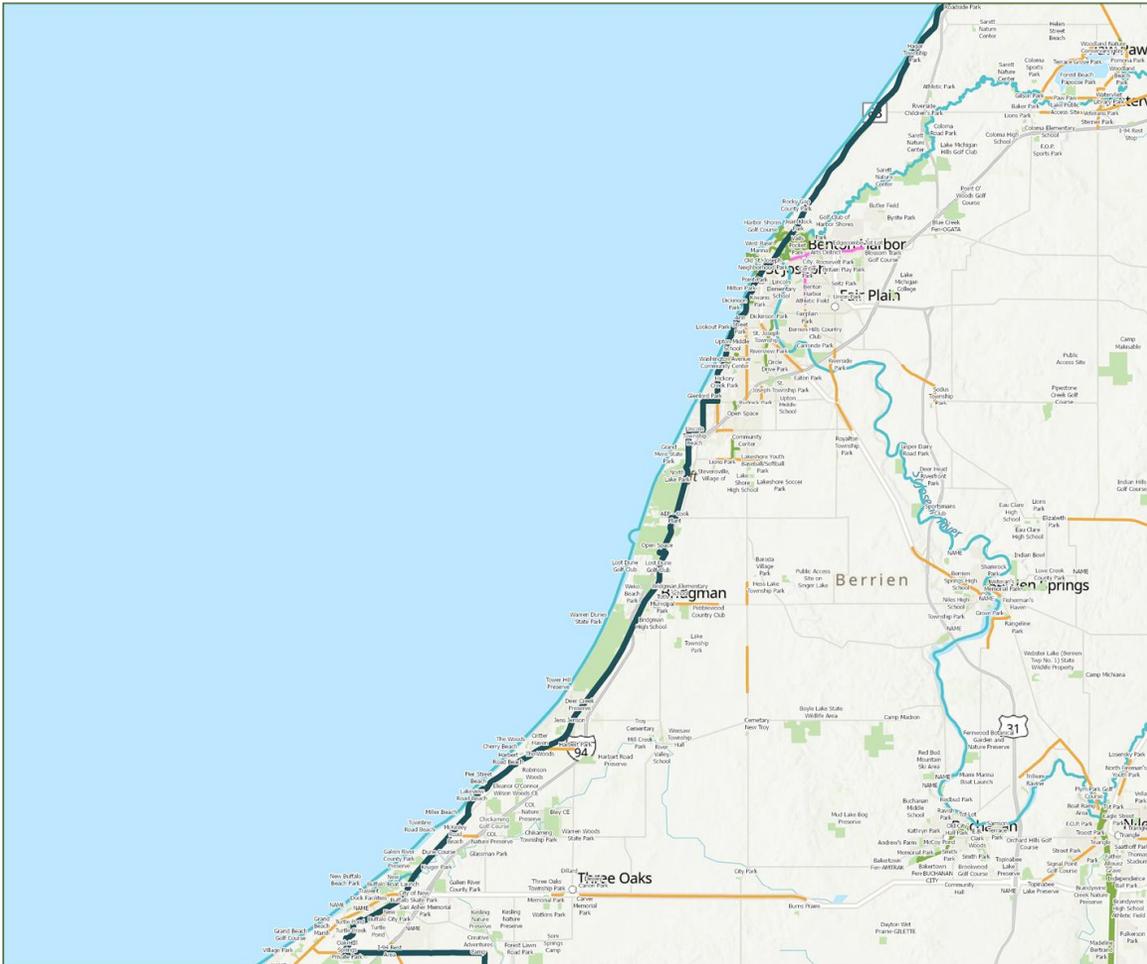


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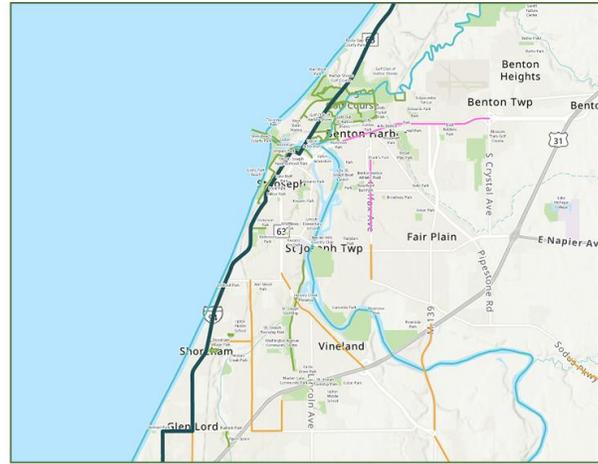
Overlay Map - Existing Trails & Parks

Existing Trail Network with Parks

- Type and Master Plan Significance
- Bike Lane, Local Community Connector
 - Bikeway, National and Regional Connector
 - Multi-Use Path, Local Community Connector
 - Multi-Use Path, National and Regional Connector
 - Water Trail, Local Community Connector
 - Wide Shoulder, Local Community Connector
 - Parks



Berrien County



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Niles

Community Assessments

Supplement the existing trail inventory to be included in the plan. Communities will be asked to identify the following facilities, including GIS shape files where possible.

- Bike lanes/Sharrows (shared lane markings)
- Park Based trails
- Sidewalks

Community Level Bike/Pedestrian Plans/Policies that support the goals of the Master Plan, including specific documents that would include the following information.

- Community Policies/Ordinances related to bike/ped safety
- Local Community Bike/Ped plans that would include proposed routes, future investments
- Capital Improvement Plans that support future trail or bike route investments

Aspirational State/National Designations - integration of Assessments/Criteria related to these goals to establish initial community benchmarks

- League of American Bicyclists - Bike Friendly Community Assessment
- Walk Friendly Communities – Walk Friendly Community Assessment
- Michigan DNR - Pure Michigan Trail Designation Criteria
- Michigan DNR - Pure Michigan Trail Town Designation Criteria

Next Steps

Berrien County Trails Master Plan

Next Steps

Community Aspirational – collective effort to have a healthier community. (Why are we doing this?)

Public Engagement

- Stakeholder Interviews/Focus Groups
- Promote Website and Community Survey
- Complete Community Assessments

Next Steering Committee Meeting