

CITY of NOVI CITY COUNCIL

Agenda Item J
July 20, 2009

SUBJECT: Approval of a resolution of support for the Charter Township of Commerce, City of Walled Lake and the City of Wixom's Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund Air-Line Trail Grant Application.

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT: ^{Bach} Community Development – Planning

CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Charter Township of Commerce, the City of Walled Lake and the City of Wixom have formally created the "The Commerce, Walled Lake and Wixom Trailway Management Council" to acquire part of a rail corridor in those communities in order to construct an 5.45 mile stretch of non-motorized trailway. This section of the rail corridor is north of the City of Novi and runs from approximately Haggerty Road on the east, into the City of Wixom on the west. This section of rail corridor is considered a missing link in the Oakland County cross-county trails plan (see attached excerpt from the plan). The section of rail line under consideration is operated by the Michigan Air-Line Railway Co., part of Railmark Inc., which operates The Star Clipper Dinner Train and other rail entertainment attractions based in Walled Lake.

The Air-Line Trail would link the Huron Valley and West Bloomfield Trails. Novi will be linked to this trail by the proposed MDOT M-5 trail; the first link of this connection is planned to be constructed by MDOT in 2009-2010, extending between 13 and 14 Mile Roads.

The Trailway Management Council is applying for a Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund grant to fund the purchase of the route. West Bloomfield Township recently received a \$1.4 million grant to buy a two-mile portion of the railroad right-of-way located in their municipality.

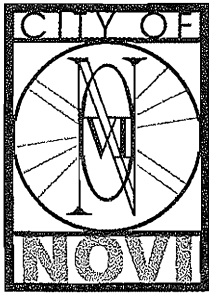
The City of Novi's Walkable Novi Committee has reviewed the proposed trail at their meeting of July 9th and recommends the City of Novi City Council pass a resolution in support of the trail. Please see attached resolution.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Approval of a resolution of support for the Charter Township of Commerce, City of Walled Lake and the City of Wixom's Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund Air-Line Trail Grant Application.

	1	2	Y	N
Mayor Landry				
Mayor Pro Tem Gatt				
Council Member Burke				
Council Member Crawford				

	1	2	Y	N
Council Member Margolis				
Council Member Mutch				
Council Member Staudt				



**City of Novi
Oakland County Michigan**

Resolution of Support of Charter Township of Commerce, City of Walled Lake and the City of Wixom's Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund Air-Line Trail Grant Application

At a meeting of the City Council for the City of Novi, Oakland County, Michigan held on the _____, day of July, 2009 at the City Hall, 45175 West Ten Mile Road, Novi, Michigan 48375.

CITY COUNCIL

Mayor
David B. Landry

Mayor Pro Tem
Bob Gatt

Terry K. Margolis

Andrew Mutch

Kathy Crawford

Dave Staudt

Brian Burke

City Manager
Clay J. Pearson

City Clerk
Maryanne Cornelius

Whereas, the proposed Michigan Air-Line Trail is a link in the State of Michigan's first proposed cross-state multi-use route, starting with the Kal Haven Trail in South Haven and ending with the Bay-to-Bridge Trail in Port Huron; and

Whereas, this trail will provide a connection between the existing Huron Valley Trail and the West Bloomfield Trail; and

Whereas, this trail will serve as a unique regional asset for a variety of purposes including: a place for a family friendly hike, bike or jog, service as a non-motorized transportation corridor, and providing a permanently preserved green space along its route; and

Whereas, this trail will provide a safe route for pedestrians, bicyclists, roller bladers, cross country skiers, etc. to transverse these communities with minimal interference from automotive traffic; and

Whereas, this trail will provide health benefits, economical family friendly recreational opportunities and low cost, hands-on learning opportunities for our school systems; and

Whereas, the proposed M-5 trail through the City of Novi, to be constructed by the State of Michigan, will provide a trail connection to the Air-Line Trail from the City of Novi which furthers the Walkable Novi Committee's recommended Master Plan implementation strategy of connecting the City's non-motorized facilities with regional destinations; and

Whereas, the City of Novi's Walkable Novi Committee has reviewed the proposed trail and recommends City of Novi support of the trail; and

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Novi, supports the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund Air-Line Trail Grant application because the trail will improve the quality of life of people in the region.

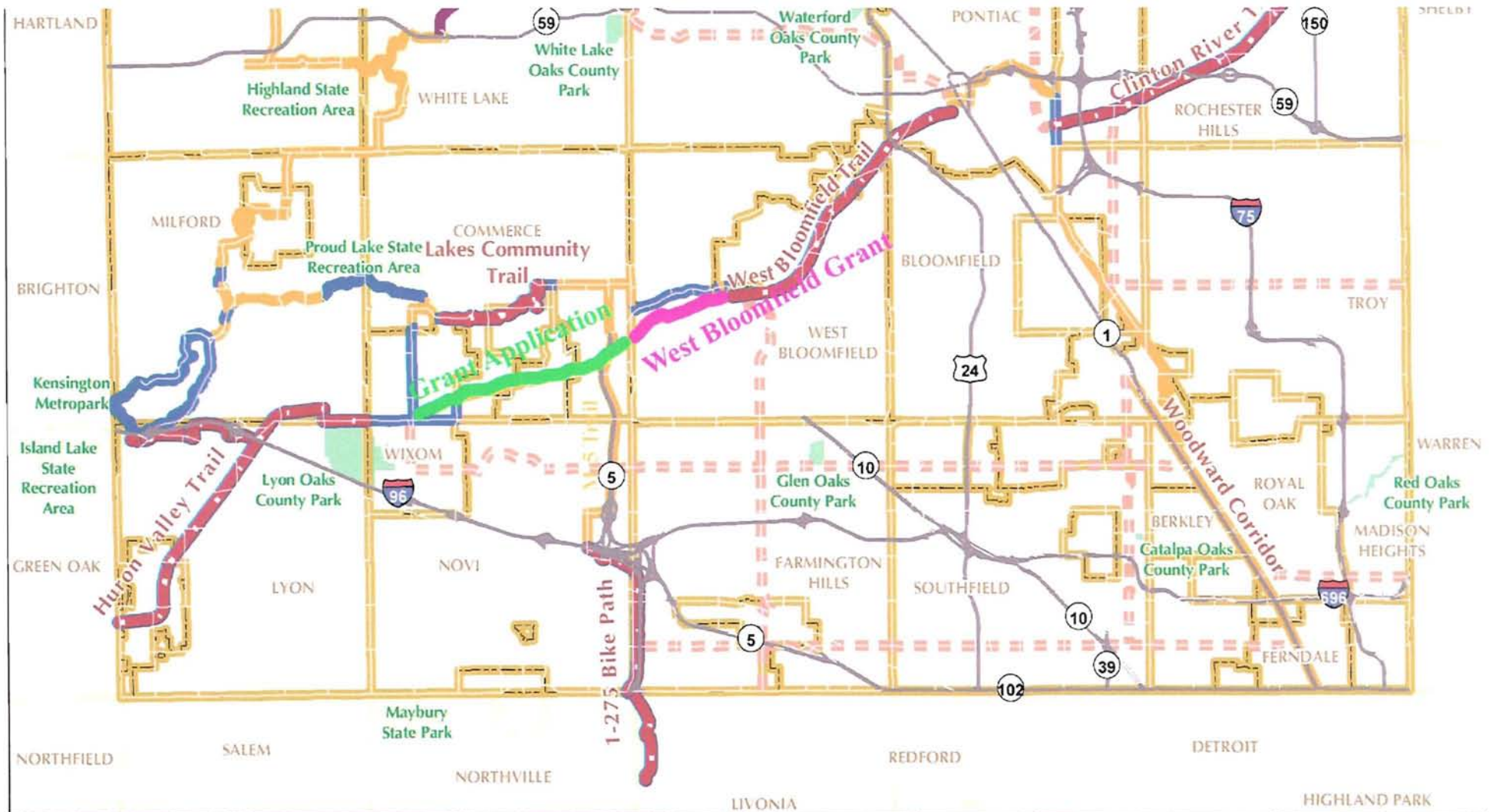
CERTIFICATION

I, Maryanne Cornelius, duly appointed Clerk of the City of Novi, Oakland County, Michigan, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted by the City Council of the City of Novi at a regular meeting held the _____ day of July, 2009.

Maryanne Cornelius, City Clerk

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Novi, Michigan 48375
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248.347.0577 fax

cityofnovi.org



- Trail
- County Trail Concept***
- Complete
- Design/Development
- Under Consideration
- Under Review

- Municipal Boundary
- County Parks
- HCMA Recreation Land
- State Recreation Land

*The county pathways system is comprised of a vision to link pathways and greenways throughout Oakland County and Southeastern Michigan. The county concept envisions a hierarchy of pathways consisting of primary and secondary

June 2008



Sources
 Roads: Oakland County GIS, 2008
 Trail Network: Oakland County GIS, 2008
 Recreation Lands: Oakland County GIS, 2008



AKLAND COUNTY TRAILS MASTER PLAN

Wixom joins council seeking acquisition of rail corridor

Leslie Shepard-Owsley

June 03, 2009 - The city of Wixom has joined forces with Commerce Township and Walled Lake to move forward in an attempt to acquire portions of the Michigan Air-Line railroad corridor formerly known as the Coe Railroad.

The Wixom City Council approved the measure at its Tuesday, May 26 meeting.

The communities have formally created a trailways alliance called the Commerce, Walled Lake and Wixom Trailway Management Council. Each municipality appointed one voting member to act in its best interests. Wixom City Manager Mike Dornan will represent Wixom, with Assistant City Manager Tony Nowicki serving as an alternate.

According to Nowicki, the formation of the trailway council is the first step toward acquiring railroad corridor property that spans from Haggerty Road to the western city limits of Wixom. That stretch is considered part of a missing link in a cross-county trail traversing the county limits and connecting into a cross-state corridor connecting one side of the state to the other.

"The council's powers are limited to the acquisition and maintenance (of the rail corridor land), and for the purchase of railway right of way," Nowicki said. "It doesn't have the authority to levy any type of taxes.

Nowicki is currently preparing grant applications to seek funding to acquire the rail corridor.

"There are a number of grants we're looking at such as a Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant (NRTF) and a Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Category A enhancement grant," he said. "We will continue to seek out others, as well. The NRTF's submission deadline is coming up soon, but I believe other applications can be submitted at any time. From our perspective, we want to leverage as many grant dollars as possible to fund the acquisition."

The trailway management council intends to join West Bloomfield Township in acquiring part of the rail corridor operated by the Michigan **Air-Line** Railway Co., part of Railmark Inc., which operates The Star Clipper Dinner Train and other rail entertainment attractions based in Walled Lake.

The Star Clipper Dinner Train resumed operations on May 10, five days after the Walled Lake City Council approved participation in the trailway management council. The train made what was billed as its final run on Dec. 31, 2008. It was previously reported that the train's owner had made a decision to relocate the train to another locale. At the same time, the owner enter into negotiations with Michigan Trails to discuss a possible transfer of the railroad property to local communities.

Since then, West Bloomfield, Walled Lake, Wixom, and Commerce officials have been working toward purchasing the 8.08 miles of rail corridor and converting it into a non-motorized trail to complete the Huron Valley and West Bloomfield trails.

West Bloomfield has been awarded a \$1.45 million state grant to acquire 2.5 miles of the railway corridor that would connect to an existing West Bloomfield trail at Arrowhead Road.

While the opportunity to acquire the 8.08 miles of rail corridor to bridge one part of the state to the other is desirable, Dornan said that the acquisition price must be right in this economic climate.

"We'll have to see where this leads us," he said. "Acquiring this railway corridor is an important opportunity we can't pass up, but at the same time and in the advent of this economy, we must maintain fiscal responsibility to our taxpayers and prioritize things. In a state ripe with property values declining and unemployment rising, Wixom hopes that 100 percent or nearly all the cost of the acquisition and construction can come through two grant sources. If not, the time may not be right to acquire the path system. It would be unfortunate to pass up on the missing link from Lake St. Clair to Lake Michigan. It benefits a larger region than just our three communities."

The trailway council members plan to meet on a regular basis.

Leslie Shepard-Owsley is a staff writer for the Spinal Column Newsweekly