

Appendix D. Public Comments Received During Comment Period

One formal comment (reproduced below) was received during the period. Other comments and corrections informally obtained from private individuals were also incorporated as appropriate.

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Mr. Robert L. Peterson, Village Manager
Village of Elk Rapids
315 Bridge St.
Elk Rapids MI 49629

Re: Input for 2006 Community Recreation Plan - Draft

Dear Bob,

As you are aware the Elk Rapids Rotary Club has made significant initial steps toward establishing a paved bike path from Elk Rapids south connecting to the TART Trail at Acme. The Club however feels that they are stretched too thin with all of their other projects to be able to devote the necessary time and energy that would be required to properly complete the bike trail project. At this point their president has asked that I accept the chairmanship of a new citizen's committee to be formed to see this goal through the lengthy process to completion. I have agreed to be volunteer chairman of this independent trails committee, and anticipate working closely with the Elk Rapids Rotary Club.

The preferred trail route recommended by the Northwest Design Group study as commissioned by the Elk Rapids Rotary Club is along the east side of US-31 from Elk Rapids south to Acme. Where public lands are available in several locations the trail will most likely be routed a slight distance away from the highway to enhance its scenic and non-motorized nature.

I have briefly reviewed the draft of the 2006 Community Recreation Plan, and offer my congratulations to the persons responsible for its excellent preparation.

I would like to offer the following comments where the 2006 Draft could possibly use some slight rewording or revision to enhance the likelihood of obtaining the necessary M-DOT funding grants to build this non-motorized trail:

1. **Recreation Goals** - The Table E-1 on page 51 of the draft lists seven recreation goals. The goal that is most specific to non-motorized trails is goal #5 which advocates using trails to link open spaces. It might be helpful if it is possible at this late date to slightly re-word this goal to advocate linking not only open spaces, but *also linking with other trail networks, both existing and planned.*

2. **Upper Harbor Boardwalk** - My understanding is that successful M-DOT trail grants emphasize the connection the trails will provide to recreational, shopping, cultural, or other opportunities. Since the proposed trail will be on the east side of US-31, it is thought that the most logical method of having the trail cross US-31 to the west to access the Village of Elk Rapids is via the Upper Harbor boardwalk. Without connecting the trail to the Village, the success of any grant application could be diminished.

Therefore now is a good time to address the engineering requirements of the planned boardwalk improvement so that it complies with M-DOT or other regulations that might apply to using it for non-motorized purposes. I am not yet familiar with those exact engineering design specifications, but I note from biking the lengthy boardwalks on the Little Traverse Bay Wheelway north of Charlevoix, as well as the boardwalks on the TART Trail, that they seem to have common design features which we might need to include in the Upper Harbor improvements.

We also might wish to mention in the description of the proposed Upper Harbor Additions at page 58 of the draft that the boardwalk will be made compatible for use as a connecting part of the trail system.

3. **Rotary Park Access** - It is anticipated that the Rotary Park will serve as a trailhead providing trail access and parking. At the very least this will require signage as we see in Traverse City at the various TART Trail access/parking areas. This trailhead feature of the Rotary Park could possibly be included at page 70 of the draft.

The Recreation Plan Draft probably isn't the suitable place to include it, but I'll mention one other item. That is the US-31 Bridge which we anticipate using the east sidewalk portion of that bridge as part of the trail to cross the Elk River unless M-DOT prefers to build a cantilever bike sidewalk along the edge of the bridge. I just thought I'd mention this in case any bridge improvements are contemplated in the near future, so the bike path could be included at that time.

I don't have the e-mail addresses of all seven members of the Village Parks and Recreation Commission, so perhaps you could forward the e-mail version of this letter to them also.

Very truly yours,

Jim Datsko

sent via: US Postal, and e-mail