What are Safety Paths & Trails?

Oakland Township Safety Paths and Trails include Township-owned non-motorized travel systems that are located in Oakland Township, but are not within Township Parks. 32 miles of proposed pathways and 16 miles of proposed trails fall under the jurisdiction of Oakland Township’s Safety Paths and Trails Committee (SPTC).

TRAILS are multiple-use, 8-10’ wide crushed stone or asphalt-paved trails not located within or adjacent to road right-of-way. Trails are primarily intended for recreation/transportation use by walkers, bicyclists, runners and equestrians.

SAFETY PATHS are multiple-use, 8-10’ wide asphalt-paved paths located parallel to the road right-of-way. Safety paths are intended for recreation/transportation use by walkers, bicyclists and runners.

Not all paths and trails in Oakland Township are operated by the SPTC. The Paint Creek Trail and paths and trails within Oakland Township’s park system are developed and maintained by separate entities and receive their funding from different sources.

Oakland Township’s Parks and Recreation Department maintains a variety of trails and paths throughout its eighteen facilities.

The Paint Creek Trail, Michigan’s first “Rail-to-Trail” project, is a multi-jurisdictional trail stretching from Rochester to Orion Township. The 5.3 mile segment running through Oakland Township is maintained and operated by the Parks and Recreation Department.
The Safety Paths and Trails Committee (SPTC) serves as an advisory committee to the Board of Trustees. It includes a representative from the Board of Trustees, Parks and Recreation Commission and the Planning Commission. SPTC also includes up to four citizen members with knowledge of the Township’s trail system and specific interests, such as biking, hiking, and horseback riding. Using their Strategy Plan and established criteria as a guide, the SPTC reviews and recommends to the BOT trails and pathways that will best serve the needs of the Township by providing links between destinations such as residential areas, parks, regional trails, churches, schools and shopping.

- Libby Dwyer, Chairman,
- Alice Tomboulian, Vice Chairman & Parks and Recreation Commission Representative
- Jeanne Langlois, Secretary & Board of Trustees Representative
- Ron Hein, Planning Commission Representative
- Craig Blust
- George Ingram
- Laurel Johnson

**Goals**

1. Create a non-motorized transportation system providing greatest benefit to township residents at lowest cost.
2. Preserve, protect and interpret natural areas in conjunction with trail/path improvements.
3. Provide trails/paths connections in variety of areas across the township where there is a desire and need for them.
4. Provide more trail-orientated recreation opportunities; connecting to a network of trails including local, regional and state parks and trails.
5. Provide multi-use trails/paths where appropriate and feasible for combined uses, which could include walking, running, cycling, horseback riding, roller-blade, dog walking and/or cross-country skiing.
6. Promote safe non-motorized transportation opportunities that address the needs of a full spectrum of users including children, elderly and disabled.
7. Research residents’ individual and collective desires and concerns and address them whenever possible and feasible.
8. Respect property ownership rights – concerning land or amenities planted or constructed on their land – to the fullest extent possible.
9. Ensure long-term maintenance, which protects path and trail users, and financial stability for this system.
10. Analyze the need for and feasibility of transferring responsibility for the maintenance of existing privately-owned safety paths to the township.

**Keep Informed**

The Safety Paths and Trails Committee generally meets on the first Wednesday of the month at the Township Hall at 5:30 pm. Citizen comment is always welcome and encouraged. Remember to check the township website to confirm SPTC meeting time and place.

Most meetings are televised live on Comcast Channel 17, and recordings of past meetings and meeting minutes can be found on the Township website, www.oaklandtownship.org. The SPTC is always looking for informed citizens to serve on the Committee.
SPTC is pursuing additional connections to the Paint Creek Trail and is working with MDNR, Oakland County, and Orion Township for a connection through Bald Mountain Recreation Area from Kern Road east to the Paint Creek Trail. This would afford opportunities to link the south end of Oakland Township to Lake Orion, Bald Mountain north, Marshview Park, Addison Oaks and Cranberry Lake Park.

SPTC is also actively investigating options for linking the township trail system from the Silverbell/Gunn/Gallagher Road area to the Paint Creek Trail.

**Addison Oaks to Cranberry Lake Park Connection**

A trail connection along the south side Romeo Road from Addison Oaks to Cranberry Lake Park was part of Oakland township's original 2006 Safety Paths and Trails Master Plan. This strategic connection was satisfied beyond our expectations with the 2012 completion of the "Connector Trail" in Addison Oaks County park. This 2 1/2 mile network of paths and boardwalks stretches from Lake George Road through Addison Oaks' East and West units to the Romeo Road crosswalk into Cranberry Lake Park. Funded through Oakland County with a Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant, this important trail system links the natural and historic resources of 3 parks; Bald Mountain Recreation Area, Addison Oaks and Cranberry Lake and exemplifies how strategic partnerships can satisfy the need for trail and park connections.

**Eagle Creek School Boardwalk**

Completed in July of 2010, this link connects two pathways on the east side of Adams Road, between Dutton and Silverbell. It is an excellent example of how private citizens and SPTC can work together for the betterment of the community. John and Mary Modetz saw that users of the subdivision-built pathway on either side of their property had to veer into Adams Road to continue on the safety path. Recognizing an unsafe situation, they generously offered the easement for a safety path.

**Cider Mill Connector**

This new trail provides a safe alternative to walking across a very busy bridge on Gallagher Road at Orion. The "Cider Mill Connector" runs from the Paint Creek Trail at Flagstar Bank to the new pedestrian bridge on Orion Road and then to the Paint Creek Cider Mill. Many thanks to Flagstar Bank for their generosity in donating this important easement!

**Silverbell/Brewster Link**

This new path at the southeast corner of Silverbell at Brewster Rd. connects about 6 1/4 miles of existing safety paths in one of the highly-populated areas of the township. SPTC thanks the property owners, Steve and Laura Benaquisto, for allowing the easement on their property and recognizing the need for safe routes for their neighbors.

**Modetz/Adams Connection**

The Mackley family, recognizing the need for a north/south connection between Township parks, has contributed this easement for future path development.
There are many steps involved in planning and building a safety path or trail:

- Choose the best route and construction techniques economically
- Obtain easements & permits
- Use due diligence in following established guidelines (ASHTO, ADA, municipal and local government requirements, WRC, Road Commission, DNR, utilities, HDC, tree ordinance, etc.)
- Obtain funding (grants, millage, developer contributions to Safety Paths Fund)
- Choose contractor and monitor construction
- Maintain existing routes

Challenging terrain such as hills and wetlands often demand structures beyond a simple trail or safety path such as:

- **Boardwalks**
- **Retaining walls**
- **Fencing**

### Types of safety paths & trails

The "classic" **Shared Use Path** offers separation and protection from traffic and accommodates a wide variety of uses. Receiving access permission from all affected homeowners can be challenging, and the cost for building the path can be high, especially in difficult terrain.

A paved **Walking Path** is essentially a sidewalk. While wide enough to meet Americans with Disabilities Act requirements, a walking path cannot accommodate a high volume of users.

The **Hybrid Walking Path and Bike Sharrows or Paved Shoulder** system allows a wide variety of users and is less expensive than shared use paths. A disadvantage is that cyclists may be reluctant to share the road with automobile traffic.

**Paved Shoulders and Bike Sharrows** are intended for roads with speeds up to 30 mph and can often use existing configurations. These options are typically less expensive, but do not account for pedestrian traffic and may not offer the same level of safety as other options.
Oakland Township Millage
• Major funding comes from the OT Safety Paths and Trails Millage, voted in 2006 at a tax rate of 25 cents per $1000 of property value.
• Millage can pay 100% of costs for land for paths and trails, plus construct and maintain a township-wide network of paths and trails.
• Safety Paths and Trails 10-year millage renewal will be on the November 8th ballot, REDUCED from 24 to 17 cents per $1000.
• Paths/trails in OT PARKS are built and managed by OT Parks & Recreation Commission, and are not within the township network.

Grants to Oakland Township
• The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) offers funds for acquisition and development of paths and trails.
• The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) offers funds for the development of non-motorized paths/trails along highways.
• In both cases, a mix of federal and state funds are awarded to communities on a project-by-project basis, with communities providing a matching amount of 25 to 50% of the total cost.
• Safety paths and trails are in the Township Master Plan, and this SPT Strategy Plan qualifies the Township for state and federal grants.

Donations of Land & Easements
• Critical to growth of the path & trail system is a landowner’s donation of an easement permitting the Township to use needed land to locate a path/trail - OR actual donation of the required land.
• Your donation of an easement or land may qualify as a charitable donation for income tax purposes, in addition to serving your community by providing a safe route for walking, cycling and riding.
• If you are interested in donating land or an easement, contact Township Manager, Dale Stuart, at dstuart@oaklandtownship.org.

Subdivision Development
• Oakland Township’s design standards require subdivision developers to include “Adequate pedestrian and bicycle circulation... including external on the border of the development adjacent to road rights-of-way.”
• This standard supports growth of a path/trail system, linking subdivisions with schools, parks, other residential areas, and allows the SPTC to work with developers in creating a community benefit.
• Paths in subdivisions are typically maintained by their Homeowner’s Association.
Candidates for Oakland Township trails are put through a vigorous vetting process to ensure that the trail meets the needs of residents, provides valuable linkage to existing local and regional trails, and is as cost effective as possible.

**How are trail routes selected?**

Desirability/Feasibility Worksheets are used as a starting point for prioritizing trail routes and for identifying known issues. They are constantly being updated by the SPTC as new information and trail opportunities become available due to circumstances such as road improvements, subdivision development or new easement opportunities.

Scoring criteria for the Worksheets was established by studying previous Township Master Plans, the 2013 Feasibility Study, the Township’s planning consultant and SPT Strategy Plan Subcommittee’s recommendations.

A high score does not automatically mean a route will be built. More in-depth studies on high-scoring routes could reveal additional feasibility challenges that would prohibit progress. Conversely, a low-scoring path may rise to higher priority due to new circumstances.

Samples of the Feasibility Worksheets are available for review on the table below.
Oakland Township’s Regional Trail Connections

Our Township’s strategic location offers many opportunities for travel beyond our boundaries.

SEMCOG Region Primary Trail Networks
- Iron Belle Trail
- Major Trail
- Minor Trail
- System Gap
- Water Trails
- Recreation Facilities
- Oakland Twp
- Lakes and Ponds
- Rivers and Streams

Map source: Michigan DNR

Data Source: Michigan DNR, SEMCOG
September 2nd, 2016
Carlisle/Wortman Associates, Inc.
Ann Arbor, Michigan
YOUR INPUT IS VERY IMPORTANT!
Please indicate your preferences for high, medium, and low priority trails and note any destination points you feel are important (e.g. stores, schools, neighborhoods, etc.) on the map.

Oakland Township
Path System
Oakland Township
Oakland County, Michigan

August 15th, 2016
Carlisle/Wortman Associates, Inc.
Ann Arbor, Michigan
1. VOTE!! Safety Paths and Trails in Oakland Township are funded through a millage established in 2006. **This millage will be up for renewal in the November 8, 2016 election.**

2. Get Involved The Safety Paths and Trails Committee generally **meets on the first Wednesday of the month at the Township Hall at 5:30 pm.** Citizen comment is always welcome and encouraged. Always check the township website to confirm SPTC meeting time and place. Or, email your comments to Libby Dwyer, SPTC Chairperson, at oaklandSPTC@comcast.net.

3. **Donate or offer an easement:** A donation of land or easements for trails or paths enables the Township to use a greater amount of the millage for their construction. In addition to serving your community by providing safe opportunities for walking, bicycling and horseback riding, your donation may qualify as a charitable donation for income tax purposes. If you are interested in donating land or an easement, please contact Township Manager Dale Stuart, dstuart@oaklandtownship.org, or (248) 218-6591.

**Safety Paths & Trails Millage Renewal**

**VOTE NOVEMBER 8**

The Oakland Township Safety Paths and Trails 10-year millage renewal will be on your November 8th ballot. **REDUCED** from .2406 to .17 mill, this millage will fund the acquisition of property and the construction and maintenance of a township-wide trail network.

We urge all citizens to vote November 8 on this important millage renewal.