

# Pontiac North Spur Trail Development Plan

## Background

The North Spur was once a railway bypass loop used by trains on a route passing through the City of Pontiac known as the Beltline Extension. Although it was created to reduce delays caused by congestion from heavy rail traffic, freight transportation has come to a halt and the tracks have been removed. The empty space now needs to be repurposed. With links of the Clinton River Trail to both the east and west, the North Spur's integration into the CRT is on the horizon.

The purpose of this practicum project was to complete an assessment and feasibility study for the North Spur as a link of the Clinton River Trail as well as provide insight to the City of Pontiac as they envisage developing the former rail right of way.

## Research & Methods

### Socio-Economic Profile

| Median Age – 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census |      |      |  |
|--|------|------|--|
|  | 2000 | 2010 |  |
| Pontiac                                | 30   | 33.4 |  |
| Oakland county                         | 36.7 | 40.2 |  |
| Michigan                               | 35.5 | 38.9 |  |

In order to have a better understanding of the characteristics of people in and around the City of Pontiac, the area's demographics were analyzed. The data was collected from the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census. As can be seen from the table above, the median age in Pontiac, Oakland County, and the state of Michigan has increased slightly.

### Trail User Profile

MOST Frequently Cited Survey Responses and their Corresponding Percentages: Michigan Trails Study

| Survey Question  | Most Frequently Cited Response                | Frequency (of 100% for 2007-2009) |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| Identify the physical activity the respondent is doing:  | *Walking                                      | 63%                               |
| Identify gender:   | Female  | 56%                               |
| Where are you usually coming from when you use this trail?   | Home  | 86%                               |
| How much time does it usually take to get to this trail from your home?  | Less than 15 minutes                          | 73%                               |
| How much time does it usually take to get to this trail from your work?  | Less than 15 minutes                          | 55%                               |
| How do you usually get to this trail?  | Walk  | 37%                               |
| What is your usual reason for using this trail?  | Exercise or do recreational physical activity | 89%                               |
| During the past 7 days (including today), how many days have you used this trail for the reason stated above (exercise or recreational physical activity)? | One   | 33%                               |
| What exactly do you usually do when you are on this trail for the reason stated above (exercise or recreational physical activity)?                        | *Walk   | 60%                               |
| How much time do you usually spend on the trail per visit when you use it for the reason stated above (exercise or recreational physical activity)?        | Between 1 and 2 hours                         | 29%                               |
| What is your age?  | 35+   | 75%                               |
| Are you Hispanic or Latino?  | No  | 95%                               |
| What is your race?   | *White  | 93%                               |
| What is the highest grade in school you have completed?  | College graduate                              | 30%                               |

| MOST Frequently Cited Survey Responses and their Corresponding Percentages: The Clinton River Trail |                                |           |
|---|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Survey Question   | Most Frequently Cited Response | Frequency |
| What is your age?   | 35-55                          | 50%       |
| How do you use the trail?   | Biking                         | 37%       |
| When on the trail, how long do you typically use it?  | 30 minutes - an hour           | 51%       |
| What distance do you typically travel per use?  | 10 miles or less               | 76%       |
| How important is a consistent trail surface throughout the different sections of the trail to you?  | Not important                  | 44%       |
| What type of trail surface do you prefer?   | Crushed limestone              | 45%       |

### Design Standards, Regulations, and Conditional Assessment

We performed a comprehensive trail design standards and regulatory review that allowed us to produce a set of assessment criteria. Additionally, our conditional assessment benefitted our team in generating trail development recommendations, which focused mainly on the following:

1. Trail Width
2. Trail Accessibility Improvements
3. Trail and Bridges Safety Improvements
4. Vegetation Cover

### Funding Options

Anticipated improvements to the North Spur prompted the practicum team to explore possible sources of funding. After combing through databases made available at the Michigan State University Law Library and the National Center for Charitable Statistics, a list of options emerged including both statewide and local alternatives.

## Trail Development Recommendations

### Section 1:

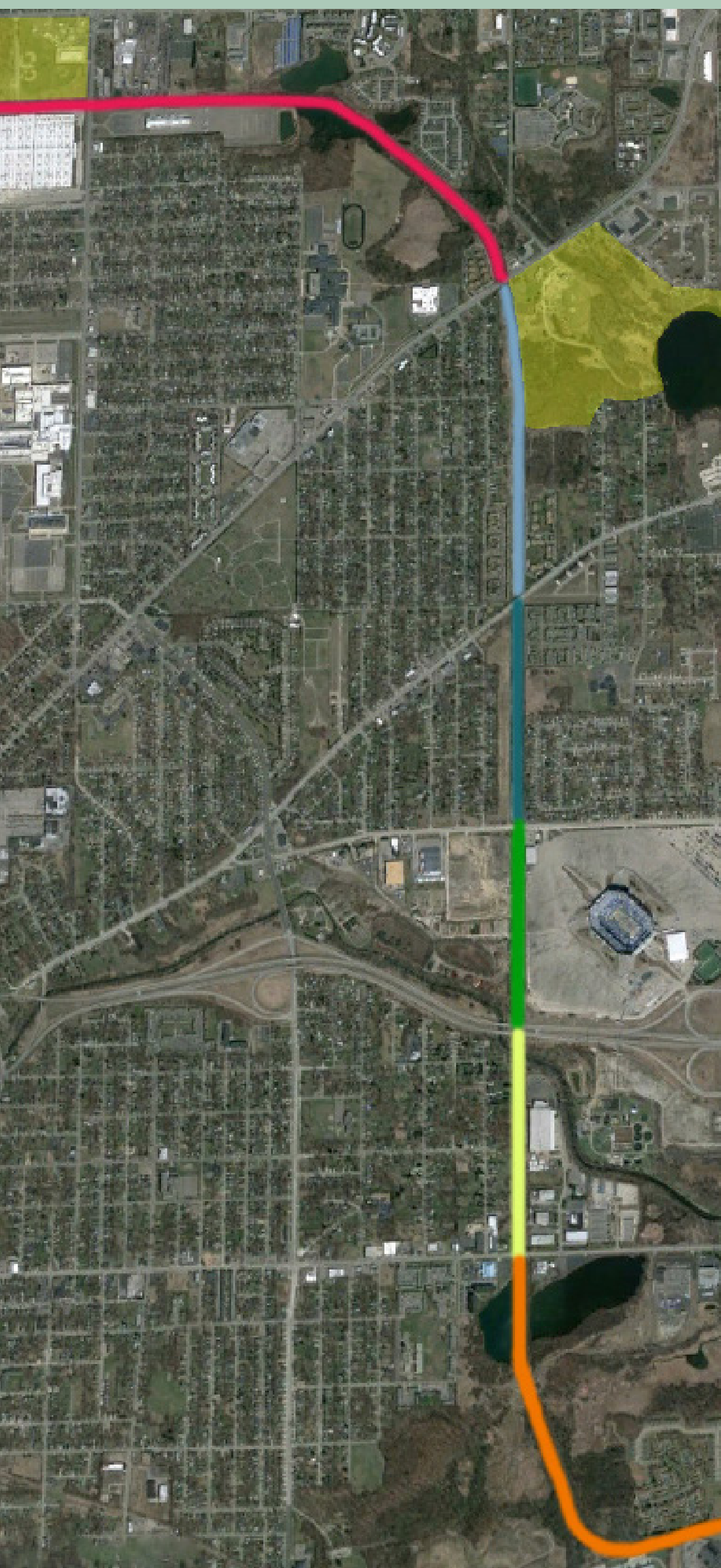
Jaycee Park provides parking and other recreational facilities along with fundamental amenities. Our recommendations focus on practices that will enhance visitor satisfaction.

1. A path should be constructed that connects the North Spur Trail and Jaycee park.
2. Informational kiosks that include route guidance and trail rules should be installed where the park meets the trail.
3. Warning signs indicating curves, steep slopes and the distance to the closest trailhead should be installed.

### Section 3:

The trail passes underneath a bridge, and it is vertically below the adjacent properties. The slopes on both sides of the trail require vegetation enhancements to satisfy future trail users' safety.

1. Emergency phone stations could be installed in the area located beneath the bridge.
2. Due to the lower elevation, deep rooting vegetation should be considered to enhance the soil firmness on the trail's adjacent slopes.
3. Bike racks, benches, and trash cans could be considered in future developments of the trail.



### Section 2:

The current amenities and parking availability at Galloway Park gives the area great potential. However, the renewal of the amenities would be necessary in order for the park's potential to be fully realized.

1. An accessible path that connects the North Spur Trail to the park should be constructed.
2. Informational kiosks and trail rules and etiquette signs should be installed at Galloway park where the park meets the trail.
3. Once the community center is updated, it could be used to host educational or community events to attract visitors from other cities.

### Section 4:

The trail in this section includes the Silverdome, which is currently vacant. The establishment of future access points is dependent on the redevelopment of the Silverdome.

1. Signs that explain the history of the Silverdome could be included.
2. Creating a "wall of green" could separate trail users from the unwanted scenery.
3. The bridge over M-59 in this section poses a threat to the passing vehicles below. The bridge should be renovated to include high fences and a different surface material.

### Section 5:

The recommendations on the development of Section 5 emphasize the old wooden bridge stretching across the Clinton River.

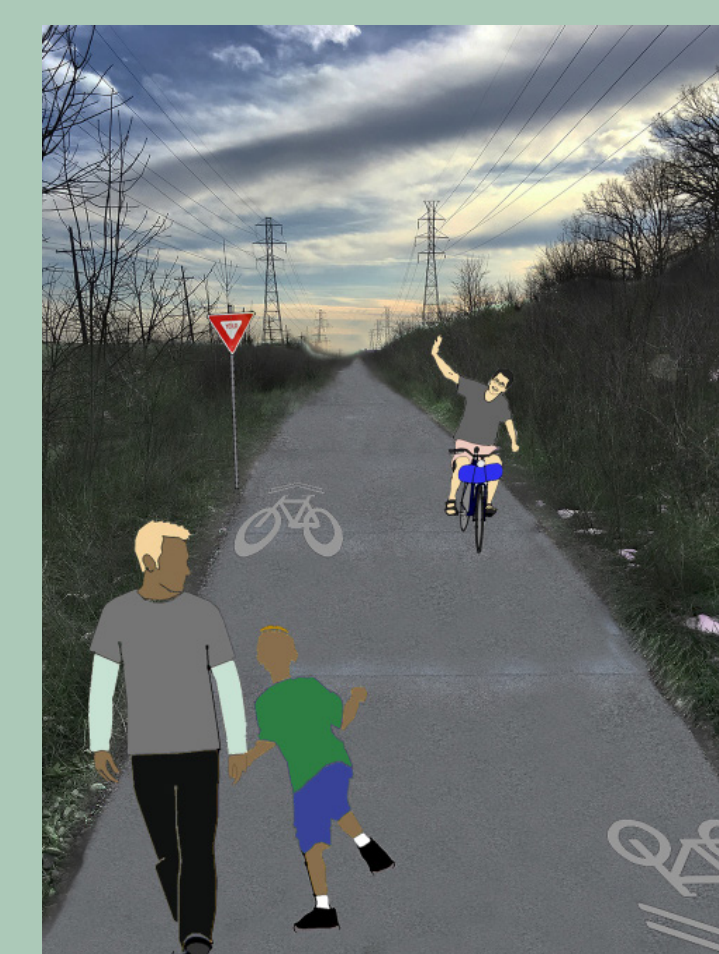
1. The bridge will need to be renovated for safety reasons. However, we suggest that the bridge's architectural style is kept due to its character and relation to the trail's history.
2. Structure renewal - either the current materials will need to be reinforced, or the bridge will need to be rebuilt.

### Section 6:

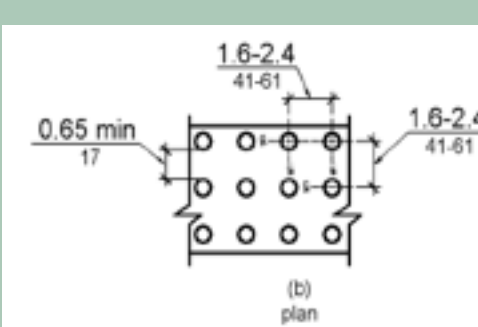
Section 6 is the southern trailhead that connects with Opdyke Road and the Clinton River Trail in Auburn Hills. Design standards in this section should be consistent with the CRT's look and feel. The recommendations for this section highly prioritize the connection between the two trails as well as the trail user's safety at the crossing.

1. Introducing a Continental Crosswalk equipped with audible accessories
2. Refuge Island and other signs should be established on the motor way to enhance visibility and safety

### Trail Necessities



Rendering of Trail: Proposing surface material and signs installed



### Parks Amenities



On our first site visit, we recognized the local demand of the sporting venues. Updating the amenities at the parks will attract more local visitors.

### Opdyke Road Crossing



We value public safety, so a continental crosswalk and refuge island could alert drivers to operate with caution. Paired with curb ramps and audible crosswalk accessories, the Opdyke Road crossing would enhance the accessibility of the trail.