

COUNTYWIDE TRAILS SYSTEM PLAN

Trails System Plan for Trumbull County, Ohio

Through the inventory, analysis and citizen participation phases of this project, a number of potential trail sites have been identified and evaluated. Of the many possible sites reviewed, there are several hiking, canoe, bicycle and other types of trails, which have the best potential for development in the near future. These are sites with the slightest soil limitations, easiest accessibility, and that provide the most meaningful regional and local linkages between recreation areas and population centers.

In this chapter, those sites rated the highest, through the analysis by the Planning Commission staff and evaluation by the Countywide Recreation Council, will be prioritized for implementation. Also included will be various alternatives that can be considered by the county, state, local or federal government for development, as well as potential means to implement the plan, such as grants or donations. Recommendations for managing and maintaining the trails system will be made in the Conclusion Chapter to follow.

The plan for trails will be organized by type of trail, including a plan for hiking trails, canoe trails, bicycle trails, and plan for the remaining types of trails such as cross-country skiing, horseback riding and snowmobiles. Through the random sample surveys and discussions with local public officials, the hiking, canoe and bicycle trails have the greatest countywide support, and the largest potential usage. Potential sites for the remaining trails will be identified, and it should be noted that some trails can be multi-purpose (i.e. a hiking trail in warm weather used for snowmobiles in winter).

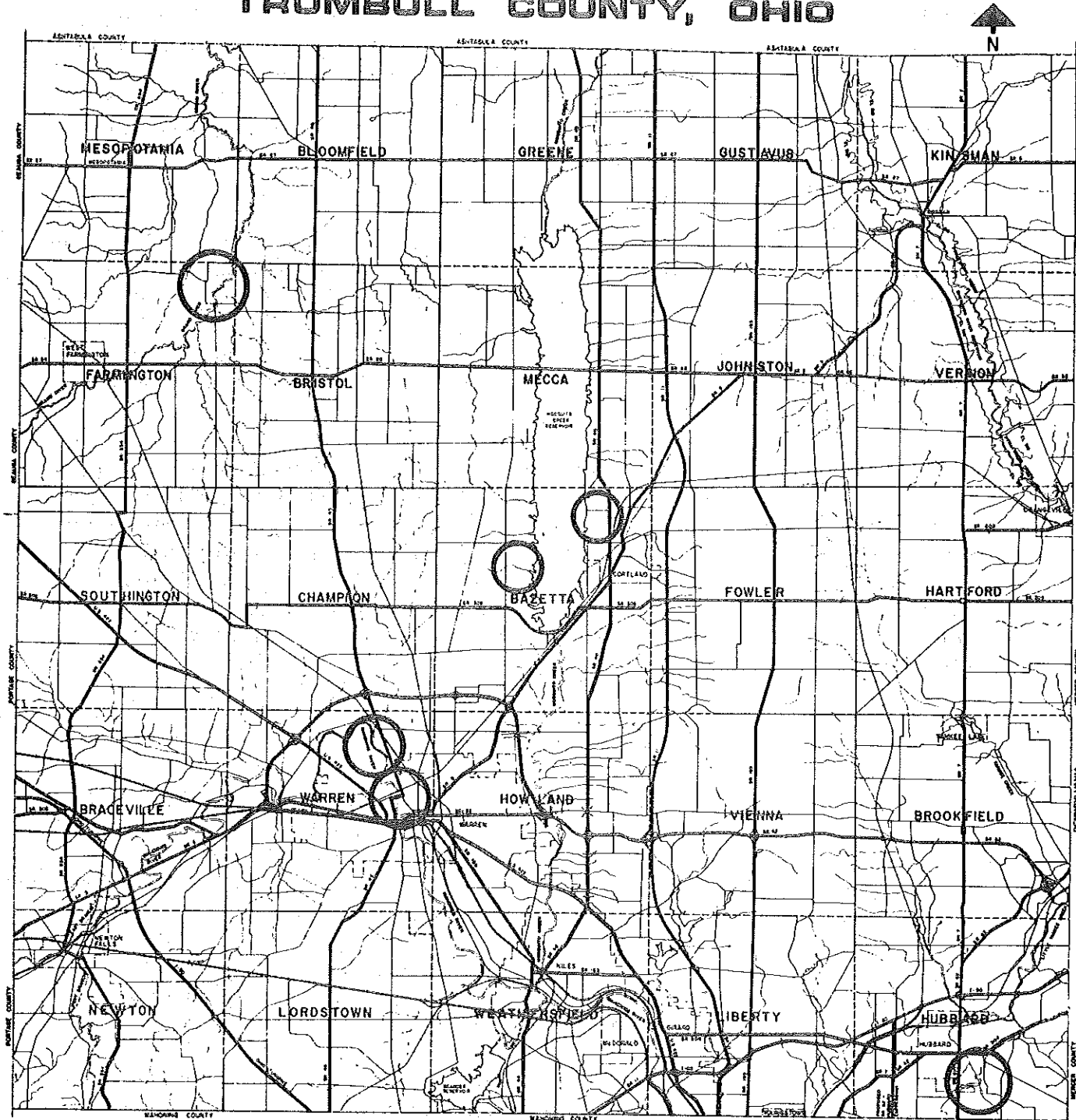
Plan for Hiking Trails

There are numerous natural scenic areas in Trumbull County where hiking trails are and can be provided for passive recreational opportunities, such as hiking, bird watching or nature photography. Since these paths require lineal corridors and open space areas, the better sites would be located along river or stream corridors, or along the shores of lakes. Of course, shorter walking trails have been proposed in local parks, and these should be developed as funding becomes available. However, there are five sites in the county where regional recreational possibilities exist, with good potential linkages between different land uses and with other types of recreational activities (i.e. bicycling, canoeing or camping).

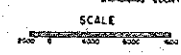
The sites considered most likely for the developing of hiking trails are: the Grand River Wildlife Area in northeastern Farmington Township, the east and west shores at the southern end of Mosquito Creek Lake in Bazetta Township and the City of Cortland, the Mahoning River Corridor through the City of Warren, the Mosquito Creek corridor through the City of Niles and the Mud Run corridor from Harding Park through the southwestern part of the City of Hubbard. Reasons for selecting these sites over the other potential sites, as well as a brief description of the potential trails that could be developed, will be included in the following profiles of these sites.

PLAN FOR HIKING TRAILS

TRUMBULL COUNTY, OHIO



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Grand River Wildlife Area - Farmington Township

This area is part of the Grand River State Game Reserve located along the Grand River in four northwestern Trumbull County townships and is used primarily for public hunting. This is one of three wildlife areas in the county managed by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife. The other two areas are along Pymatuning Creek in the northeast corner of the county, used for public hunting and the Waterfowl Area northwest of Mosquito Creek Lake, used primarily for wildlife propagation. There has been continuing debate between township officials in northwestern Trumbull County and the Department of Natural Resources over the use of these lands. The township trustees would like to open these areas up to other recreational uses, while the Division of Wildlife is responsible for protecting the wildlife in these areas.

However, a local game warden of the Division of Wildlife says that the state is favorable to other recreational uses in some of these areas, including the Grand River areas. Trails have already been blazed throughout the Grand River Wildlife area by hunters during respective hunting seasons. Additionally, there are several abandoned township roads in northwestern Farmington Township which could feasibly be used for hiking along the river. There are also canoe launch possibilities along the Grand River at several points. The Grand River, about fifteen miles downstream, is a popular canoe route, although there are obstacles, such as tree falls, beaver dams and multiple channels, upstream in Trumbull County.

The potential hiking trail site is located in a fairly wet area, as the huge Grand River floodplain covers much of Farmington, Mesopotamia and Bloomfield Townships. However, there are cleared trails which could be improved, or utilized during the dryer, summer months. This wooded natural area is very scenic, including wildlife, the river and a large wetland area north of Hyde-Oakfield Road. Access roads into this area, including Hyde-Oakfield and Hoffman-Norton Roads are not well-maintained, and may not be passable by cars in the spring. However, these abandoned roads could be used to hike up to more natural trails along the river.

Mosquito Creek Lake

In the random sample citizen surveys conducted in conjunction with the trails plan, the Mosquito Creek Lake was favored by more respondents than any other site in the county. The lake, owned by the Army Corps of Engineers and leased to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, offers a variety of recreational opportunities, including, swimming, fishing, boating, camping, hiking and picnicking. There are existing hiking and snowmobile trails on both sides of the southern shore of the lake, which could be extended or improved. On the western shore, there is a snowmobile trail around the campgrounds. On the eastern shore, there is a snowmobile trail looping northwards from a staging area south of the cemetery on W. Main Street, just west of the City of Cortland, which could also be used for hiking in the warmer weather months.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources, which operates the State Park on the southern end of the lake, is favorable to hiking and snowmobiling in these areas. The shore of the lake is very scenic and much open space is available for the enjoyment of leisure time activities. Other potential recreational uses proposed by the state include a second swimming beach, to be located on the eastern shore, west of the City of Cortland. Trails in this area could feasibly provide linkages between parking areas and proposed and existing recreation areas along the shore. This area is centrally located within the county, is readily accessible, and could easily serve regional recreation needs (i.e. snowmobiles).

Mahoning River Corridor - City of Warren

The Mahoning River corridor through the City of Warren has already been heavily developed for recreation, including several city and county parks along the river. There are either hiking trails or else hiking opportunities along the river in all of the parks. Burbank Park, located in the northern part of the city has natural hiking trails along the western bank of the river. Further downstream is Packard Park, with open space areas along the river's eastern bank and paved hiking and bicycle paths to the west, across the pedestrian bridge over the Mahoning River. These paths provide a linkage to the park from residential areas in the west side of the city. Although there are no dedicated paths in Perkins Park, there are open space areas along the river that can be hiked.

These hiking areas can be linked to downtown Warren along the river, via the Kinsman House Park and the trail which starts at the log cabin, west of the Courthouse Square. There is a worn path along the river through much of this corridor, although the banks of the river are frequently flooded during the spring of each year. It would be recommended that any trail improvements near downtown be made further up the bank to prevent damage from flooding or disruption of hiking opportunities. Such a trail could feasibly link the downtown retail and governmental center with residential and recreational areas upstream in the city.

Obstacles to linking these trails to the parks to the north include private ownership of riverfront land and steep banks in some areas. An alternative to the development of hiking trails in this corridor is the construction of a Class I Bikepath along the river, or a Class II Bikelane along Mahoning Avenue, which parallels the river to the east. Any new trail development would necessarily involve the cooperation of the city, the county, and private property owners. In addition, there is potential for the development of canoe trail facilities along the river at several points, including at Packard Park, just downstream of the foot bridge.

Mosquito Creek Corridor - City of Niles

This area has good potential for trails due to the available open space, public ownership of much of the corridor and the presence of existing paths in this area. Mosquito Creek, seasonally canoeable, flows through the city, north to south, and empties into the Mahoning River in the south part of the municipality. The City of Niles owns much of the land along the eastern bank of the creek, west of residential

areas and north of downtown. There are existing paths in this wooded corridor, leading from the residential areas used for hiking and motorbikes.

These paths could feasibly be improved or extended, linking residential areas to the creek or to retail areas downtown, or to the north, along the U.S. 422 "Strip."

It would be recommended that the trails be used for non-motorized uses, such as hiking or bicycles or that there be some separation between paths if motorbikes are allowed. The trails system could also be linked to potential canoe trail sites at U.S. 422 and at Falls park, near downtown Niles.

Mud Run Corridor - Harding Park - City of Hubbard

There are several potential trail areas in the Mud Run corridor from Harding Park to the downtown area of the City of Hubbard. There are existing paths around the lake at the park and north of the dam, which could be improved or extended. There is a large open space corridor surrounding the stream through the southeast part of the city which could be developed for trails, although this would require some clearing and grubbing. There is also potential for paths along a small tributary running from S. Main Street to Mud Run in the northern part of the park, paralleling Roosevelt Drive.

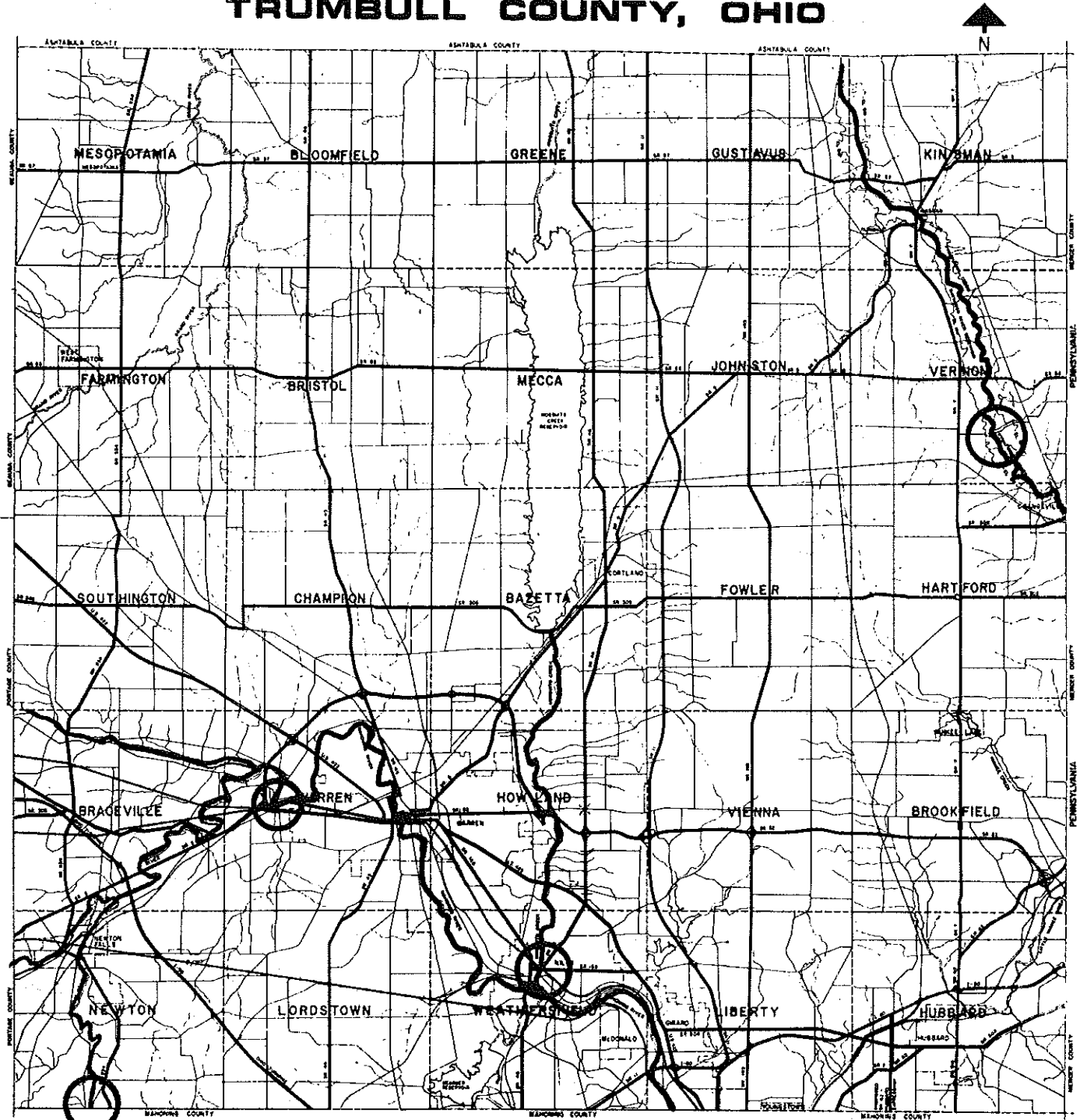
Alternatives to this linkage of downtown to the park include proposals to construct Class II bikelanes along S. Main Street between S.R. 304 and Roosevelt Drive. This would much improve the safety of young children bicycling to the park along S. Main Street, the major existing connection between residential areas to the north and the park. Class I bicycle paths could be constructed along the Mud Run corridor, although at much greater cost than the bikelanes along S. Main Street or natural hiking trails along that stream.

Plan for Canoe Trails

In Trumbull County, there are several opportunities available for canoeing currently and potential for more in the future. The major canoe trail in the county is the Mahoning River, which is canoeable all year round, except when covered with ice. Seasonally canoeable waterways include Mosquito Creek, Pymatuning Creek, Eagle Creek and the Grand River. Currently, there are few official canoe access sites along these streams, although local and regional canoeists utilize a number of sites not actually designated for this purpose. In 1984, the Canoe City livery started operating on the Mahoning River at Leavittsburg, and work is underway on the first public canoe trail park on the river at Pricetown on the countyline. Other canoe access areas are found in the public hunting areas and other publicly- and privately-owned lands.

PLAN FOR CANOE TRAILS

TRUMBULL COUNTY, OHIO



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The most popular canoe trail in the county is along the Mahoning River, from Pricetown to Packard Park in the City of Warren approximately 22 miles long. Canoeing downstream of Warren on the river presents less aesthetic surroundings, such as factories and sewage treatment plants. However, the water quality of the downstream portion of the river has been steadily improving over the past decade and provides a scenic buffer to the urban environment surrounding it. Increased usage of the river by canoeists, along with cautious development of support services, either privately or publicly, could very well create a new economic activity in this area, besides the recreational benefits.

Mosquito Creek has been cleared several times by the Trumbull Canoe Trails Club and is best canoed in the spring. Access onto the creek is available at several points, including the area below the Mosquito Creek Lake Dam and at U.S. 422. Canoeists can take out across from the mouth of the creek at city-owned property in Niles. Pymatuning Creek is best canoed downstream of S.R. 88 in Vernon Township to Orangeville Village on the stateline. A boat dock is provided at Andy Dorick Park at the stateline to take out canoes to avoid the dam on the Pennsylvania side of the border. Eagle Creek has been cleared by the Canoe Trail Club, but has fairly low water much of the year. The Grand River in Trumbull County is not as canoeable as downstream into Lake Erie, but has potential for future canoe trail development.

Mahoning River - Canoe City Livery at Leavittsburg

This site has historically been used for recreation, including an amusement park and a canoe livery. Canoe access at this site, located on a bend of the Mahoning River northwest of the junction of West Market Street and N. Leavitt Road, is essential since a dam just downstream by the electric substation has to be portaged. There is quite a drop from the top of the dam, even in high water. The land at this site is currently owned by the Ohio Edison Company and leased by the Canoe City Livery, which opened in 1984. Canoe trips upstream or downstream are possible, with transportation and canoe sales and rentals available.

Below the dam, under the N. Leavitt Road bridge, a natural canoe launching area is commonly used by canoeists. Canoes can be portaged from the canoe ramp upstream of the dam, using Meadowbrook Drive and Leavitt Road extension to a natural walking path leading to the river. Expansion of canoe facilities at this site could be difficult, due to severe soil limitations and the wetness of the areas south of the existing livery site. However, the continuation of existing operations is strongly encouraged and should increase the awareness of the recreation potential of the Mahoning River. Also recommended would be locating related canoe facilities at other points upstream or downstream, either privately or publicly, such as the Canoe Trail Park on the countyline at Pricetown.

Canoe Trail Park at Pricetown

This County Metropolitan Park is now being developed as a canoe launch area on the Mahoning River at Pricetown in the southwest corner of Trumbull County. The Trumbull County Planning Commission prepared a Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant application, which was funded by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. The Trumbull Canoe Trails Club staged a fundraising campaign to raise the local match for the grant. In July, 1984, the property was acquired by the Canoe Trails Club from the Newton Falls Sportsmen's Club, then donated to the County Metropolitan Park Commission. Work on clearing the scrub and brush on site is scheduled to begin in 1984, and should also include grading a canoe launch area and installing picnic facilities and a water well.

In 1985, a grant from the Park District Highway Fund will be used to construct an access road, parking lot and hiking trails at this site. Plans for Phase II of the park just south of this property on the countyline include a comfort station, camper pads and improved access to the canoe launch area. A Land and Water Conservation Fund application for Phase II is currently under review by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. The Canoe Trail Park site is located on the southwesternmost point on the Mahoning River in Trumbull County and could serve as a launching point for trips downstream to Newton Falls, Leavittsburg and Warren. It would be recommended that canoe facilities be provided in the City of Newton Falls, such as near the Waste Water Treatment Plant where a dam needs to be portaged.

Falls Park - City of Niles

This site is located along Mosquito Creek near downtown Niles, northwest of the junction of Robbins Avenue and State Route 46. Some clearing and grading work has been performed voluntarily by the Trumbull Canoe Trail Club. This is a unique site because the creek is partially blocked by a dam and a small island, leaving a narrow channel along the eastern bank, which is canoeable at high water. There is space available at the park for canoe facilities, including a ramp, portage trail or other amenities. The park can also be linked, via the creek and potential hiking trails, to a trails area on city-owned land along the creek to the north.

Another alternative for canoe facilities would include utilizing the small island in the creek as a rest stop for canoeists, with possible picnic facilities and canoe access. Also possible is linking this island with the park via a foot bridge, although access to the adjacent dam should be restricted for safety reasons. There are several other potential canoe trail sites on Mosquito Creek, including just below the dam on Mosquito Creek Lake, at Howland Township Park, and at U.S. 422. The creek is canoeable in the spring of each year, and the Trumbull Canoe Trails Club has done volunteer work on clearing treefalls and other snags.

Pymatuning Creek - Milligan East Road - Vernon Township

The Pymatuning Creek is also seasonally canoeable, especially downstream of S.R. 88 in Vernon Township to Andy Dorick Park in Orangeville Village on the stateline.

Much of the corridor is owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, leased by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife and used for public hunting. This area was once scheduled for inundation as part of the Shenango River Reservoir, just over the border in Pennsylvania and has been proposed as a site for a Piggyback Reservoir to meet future water supply needs.

A potential canoe access area, with parking available, commonly used by canoeists is Milligan East Road, running eastward from S.R. 7 to the creek. This road is fairly rough, but possible, and the bridge is closed to traffic, but can be traversed by foot. Soils in this area are generally wet, but canoe access is available and no intensive recreational facilities have been recommended for this site. Development of this site for canoeists was included in the original Master Plan for Shenango River Reservoir, prepared by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Plan for Bicycle Trails

There are many possibilities for designating or constructing bicycle trails in Trumbull County. These include all three classes, separate bike paths, bikelanes and signed bicycle routes along existing roadways. Currently, there is one existing bike route in the county. Bike Route J follows lightly-traveled rural roads from the Cardinal Trail, another Class III Bike Route in Mahoning County which goes to Lake Erie, near the Pennsylvania border. This route links a number of different recreational areas to each other and to population centers and signs will alert motorists to the possible presence of bicyclists using these roads as well as depicting the trail route.

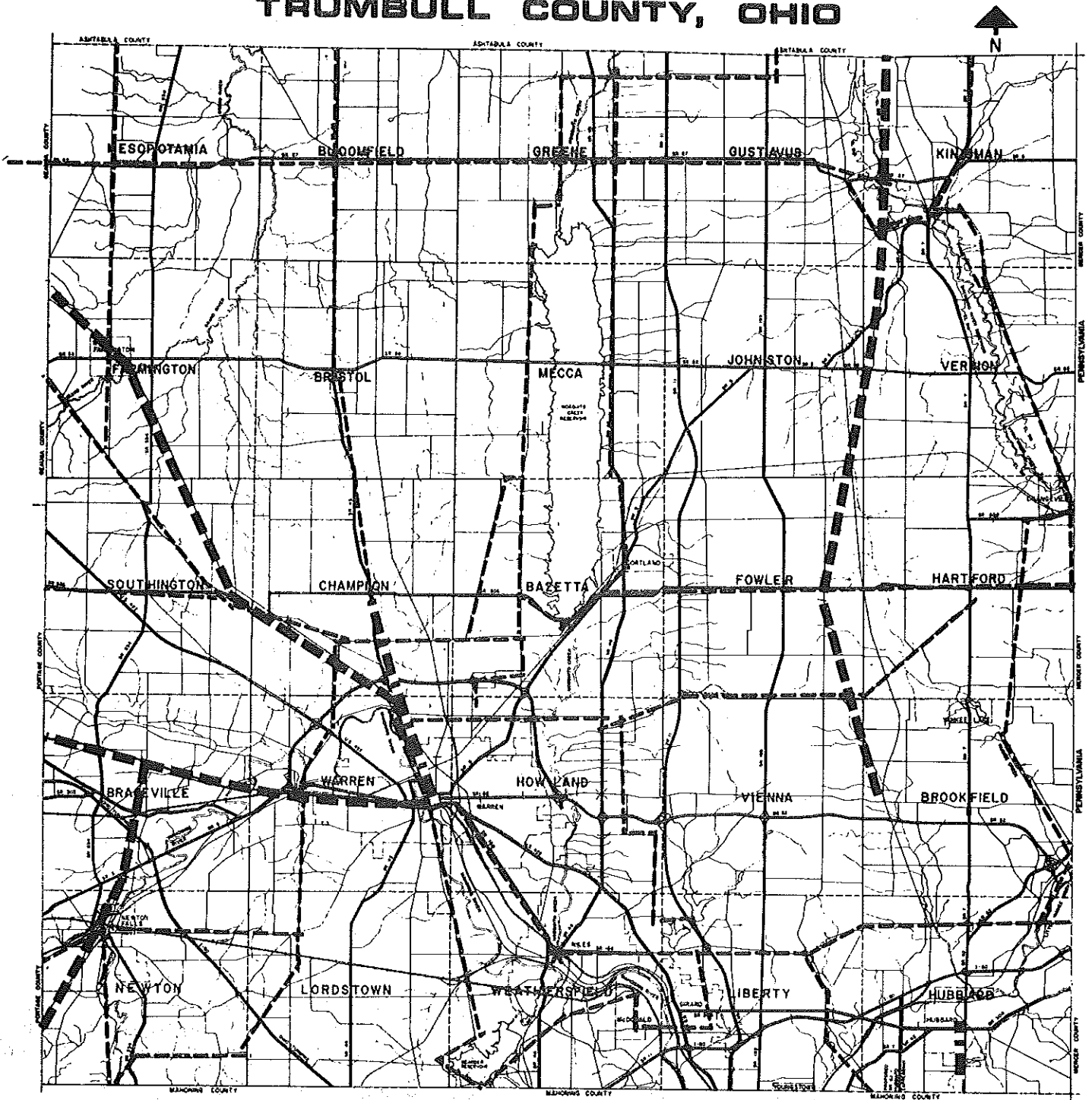
Other proposed bicycle routes include potential Class III bicycle routes linking local communities to each other, retail and recreation areas, and to Route J. Class II bikelanes along S. Main Street in the City of Hubbard, linking the downtown and residential areas to Harding Park, have also been approved by the Ohio Department of Transportation. Another potential Class II site is along Mahoning Avenue in the City of Warren, a busy road paralleling the Mahoning River and several local recreation areas. This corridor would also be suitable for Class I separate bike paths, as would abandoned railroad rights of way, linking local communities with other regional destinations.

Bike Route J

This Class III bike route was originally proposed to link Marietta on the Ohio River to Conneaut at Lake Erie near the Pennsylvania stateline. When funds became available in 1984 for bikeway projects in Ohio, through the Department of Transportation, the Trumbull County Planning Commission, in cooperation with Mahoning and Ashtabula County Planning Commissions and the local communities, proposed the signing and mapping of this route, between the Cardinal Trail in Mahoning County and Lake Erie in Ashtabula County a distance of approximately 100 miles. The Cardinal Trail, also a Class III bike route, runs across the state from the Pennsylvania border to the Indiana border, linking major urban areas and recreational areas.


PLAN FOR BICYCLE TRAILS


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Class I Bike paths 

Class II Bikelanes 

Class III Bike Routes 

There will be 100 Bike Route signs installed at 50 locations, mainly major inter-sections and turns in the route. In Trumbull County, the route enters the county at Pricetown, providing a linkage between canoe trail facilities and Newton Falls, via West River Road. The route crosses the historic covered bridge in Newton Falls, then heads eastward into Lordstown Village along Newton Falls-Bailey Road. At S. Leavitt Road, the route turns northward into the City of Warren, passing the Canoe City Livery at Leavittsburg, and continuing into Champion Township. The route follows Johnson-Plank Road towards Mosquito Creek Lake, then heads northeast on Durst-Clagg Road past the Trumbull County fairgrounds.

An alternative route to recreational facilities available at Mosquito Creek Lake State Park will be signed to provide access for camping, picnicking, swimming or other activities. The route resumes along Hoagland-Blackstub Road, paralleling the lake, into the Mosquito Creek Waterfowl Management Area. In Greene Township, the route turns eastward again on Rice-Mill-York Road to State Route 193, and into Ashtabula County. The route passes other recreational facilities in the other two counties, including Pymatuning Reservoir, Lake Erie, Berlin Reservoir and Lake Milton. The trail provides a direct connection to a Class III signed east-west bicycle trail in Ashtabula County. There is good potential for future linkages and extension to this trail along other lightly traveled roads.

Bikelanes - South Main Street, City of Hubbard

This project, proposed by the City of Hubbard, is designed to increase the safety for bicyclists, particularly children, along S. Main Street in Hubbard, between the downtown area and Harding Park, southeast of the city. Originally only one bike-lane was proposed, to be located on the east side of the road. However, upon review of this proposal, the Ohio Department of Transportation recommended bikelanes on both sides of the road from State Route 304 (Liberty Street) to Roosevelt Drive, the access road for Harding Park. As noted in the Plan for Hiking Trails, there are several potential trails throughout the Harding Park-Mud Run corridor which could be linked to the bikelanes.

South Main Street in the city is the most commonly used route to Harding Park from residential areas of the city north of downtown. Many children use the roadway to bicycle to the park for ball games, play opportunities and other activities available. The relatively high traffic volumes on this road make bicycling somewhat dangerous, especially for children. These bikelanes could also be feasibly linked to other proposed routes, especially a potential Class III route along Chestnut Ridge Road in the northern part of Hubbard Township.

Mahoning River - Mahoning Avenue - City of Warren

There are several possibilities for developing bikeways in the City of Warren in the Mahoning River corridor. As mentioned in the Plan for Hiking Trails, there is potential for linkages of existing paths along the river, between parks and the downtown area of Warren. Paved paths across the pedestrian bridge from Packard Park can be used by bicyclists, linking Tod Avenue and the western part of the

city to Packard Park and the central area of the city. These paths could feasibly be extended, although there are some obstacles, such as steep banks in some areas, flooding in the spring and private ownership of some of the riverfront land.

Another alternative for bikeways in this corridor include the construction of bike-lanes along Mahoning Avenue, N.W., which parallels the river. The widening of this road, part of State Route 45, between downtown Warren and S.R. 305 is included in the long range transportation plans for the region. Since bikeway construction is eligible under other Federal Highway Administration Projects, the construction of bikelanes could be accomplished at the same time as the road widening. The road provides good connections between residential areas and downtown, recreational facilities, and the Trumbull Branch of Kent State University and Clarence Darrow Park in Champion Township. There are several busy intersections along the avenue which are dangerous to traverse, even for adult bicyclists. A bikelane along this road would readily improve access for bicyclists in the recreational, retail, educational and residential corridor.

Potential Class III Routes

As per discussions with local bicycle enthusiasts and clubs, along with field reviews by the staff, potential Class III bicycle routes have been recommended to provide additional regional linkages. The bicyclists favor State Routes in the northern half of the county for east-west and north-south bike trips. State Road, one of NE Ohio's first transportation routes, which runs northwestward into Geauga County towards Lake Erie, is lightly traveled, scenic, and could link Route J to areas to the west. Other westward linkages could include routes between Newton Falls and West Branch Reservoir and into the Akron urbanized area.

In eastern Trumbull County, potential bike routes include Chestnut Ridge and Tibbetts-Wick Roads in Hubbard and Liberty Townships, and Yankee Run Road along Big Yankee Creek and Kinsman-Orangeville Road along Pymatuning Creek. Routes circling the Mosquito Creek Lake could include State Route 46, north of Cortland, and State Route 305, along the dam, in addition to Bike Route J. Also recommended would be signed routes within the City of Warren to provide safe bicycle trips across the city, to avoid the use of roadways with heavy motorized traffic, especially during rush hour.

Potential Class I Routes

The staff has explored the possibility of utilizing abandoned railroad rights of way and other linear open space corridors for Class I, separate bikepaths, modeled after such bikeways in the Akron area and in Wisconsin, among other places. Major obstacles to the development of these regional Class I linkages include the cost of acquisition, cost of construction, multi-ownership of some of these corridors and problems with maintenance and policing. However, several of the corridors

appear to be more suitable than others for Class I trails and would be recommended for implementation, pending funding availability.

Geauga County, to the northwest, has proposed using the abandoned B. & O. railroad right of way through the counties for recreational trails. This corridor which links the City of Warren to Lake Erie has been abandoned for several years, the tracks have been removed and the ballast has been contracted for removal. Another possibility for westward linkages are Conrail tracks abandoned between Mantua in Portage County and Leavittsburg and from Newton Falls into Portage County. Other possible routes would follow abandoned railroad rights of way to Lake Erie, through Ashtabula County and into Pennsylvania from the eastern part of the county. Pursuit of such projects by local communities along parts of these corridors is encouraged.

Plan for Other Types of Trails

The other types of trails that can be developed in the county include horse, cross-country skiing, jogging and snowmobile trails. Of the three types of trails, two are winter weather trails, requiring snow on the ground. These two, cross-country skiing and snowmobile trails, can be located on the same sites as warm weather trails, such as for hiking. Also, since the ground is frozen in the winter, soil limitations which may prevent the development of hiking or bicycle trails at a certain site, but would not necessarily prevent the development of winter sport trails there. Horse trails however, should be kept separate from other warm weather trails to avoid conflicts between trail users and horses and their riders.

Existing snowmobile trails are currently located on the western and eastern shores at the southern end of Mosquito Creek Lake. On the west, the trail runs between Hoagland-Blackstub Road near a cemetery easterly to just north of the State Park campgrounds on the lake shore. On the east, the trail starts at a staging area at a parking lot south of a cemetery on W. Main Street, then follows the lakeshore and looping northwards. It is possible that these snowmobile trails could be extended further up the lakeshore, although the northern end of the lake is reserved for wildlife propagation and trails are discouraged by the state. However, existing paths on either side of the creek are cleared and wide enough for this use, and snowmobile riders would be encouraged to use this trail, instead of along public roadways or other residents' backyards.

Cross country skiing trails can be located somewhat more flexibly since they are not as noisy or as potentially destructive as snowmobiles and they do not require as wide a path. In fact, these trails could be established in local parks, along river or creek corridors or at Mosquito Creek Lake. It would be recommended that cross-country skiers utilize publicly-owned areas in the county normally used for warmer weather recreation activities. There are many areas around Mosquito Creek Lake, the Grand River Wildlife Area and the Shenango Reservoir Flood Area along Pymatuning Creek, which are natural, wooded and have a variety of topography and scenery to provide enjoyable cross-country skiing opportunities.

Currently, horses are ridden in the rural areas of the county alongside roads or on private property. It would be possible to develop more formal horse trails, such as the Buckeye Trail, through the county, though such a trail should be kept separate from other types of trails, due to possible conflicts with other trail users. More horse barns have been proposed for the Trumbull County Fairgrounds and an existing horse trail links Everett-Cortland-Hull Road with S.R. 88 to the north. Potential horse trails in this area include the possibility of linking this trail to other Mosquito Creek Lake facilities and related recreational activities which could be established in cooperation with the state.

Alternatives

In the preceding plans for the various types of trails, several sites with the best potential for development have been identified. Remaining sites that were considered in the Analysis and Inventory for the plan were identified in those respective chapters. Although these remaining potential trail sites have not been prioritized for implementation in the Trail Plan, some of these trails could be developed in the future. However, many of these sites have severe soil limitations or other obstacles to development, which would add to the cost of implementation or which may have possible adverse effects on the environment.

In order to make the Countywide Trails System Plan as flexible as possible, the remaining trail sites should be considered as alternatives for future development. These would include trail sites not prioritized for either hiking, canoeing or bicycling, which are still feasible for development. The alternative sites that should be considered for future funding proposals or implementation will be briefly described, by type of trail, in this section. Of course, the no-action alternative also exists, whereby none of the trails would be pursued. In this case, potential trail users would be forced to find their own sites for the enjoyment of their particular trail activity, which may take them into other counties, or areas not specified for this purpose. Through the preparation of this study, it is clear that the no-action alternative is not appropriate, as there are many developable trails sites which should and can be established in the county.

Alternatives for Hiking Trails

As per the plan for hiking trails, sites recommended by the Planning Commission and approved by the Countywide Recreation Council include Mosquito Creek Lake, the Mahoning River corridor in the City of Warren, the Mosquito Creek corridor in the City of Niles, the Grand River Wildlife Area in Farmington Township, and the Harding Park - Mud Run corridor through the City of Hubbard. There are several alternative hiking trails that could also be considered in the future, in other parts of the county.

These alternatives include potential hiking trail sites at Clarence Darrow Park in Champion Township, at Willow Park in the City of Cortland, Howland Township Park near Mosquito Creek, Little Links Park in Lordstown Village, Woodland Park in McDonald Village and the Liberty Lakes area. For the most part, these would be local trail facilities, meeting recreational needs of individual communities, although Clarence Darrow Park and the Liberty Lakes area would have a broader, more countywide, usage. Also, there are existing hiking trails at several of these sites, as described in the Inventory and Analysis chapters, which could either be improved or extended. Such trail improvements in local parks are highly encouraged, and the county would be supportive of such proposals in any possible way. Of course, sites not identified in this plan should also be considered, as proposals are developed or opportunities become available.

Another consideration for developing hiking trails is a growing trend across the country and the world--volksmarching. This new leisure time activity, originated in Germany, involves mass community participation in walks along designated courses. Originally, awards were presented to those who walked the fastest or farthest, but this was changed to provide incentives for all workers in the form of a medal presented to each person who finishes. Existing or proposed hiking trails in the county could be used as courses for volksmarching. It would be recommended that local communities cooperate to sponsor these events, to promote health and recreational benefits for their citizens, as well as promoting the walking paths existing or proposed for such a use.

Alternatives for Canoe Trails

Recommended for implementation in the Plan for Canoe Trails are four sites, including Canoe Trail Park at Pricetown, Canoe City Livery at Leavittsburg, the Pymatuning Creek at Milligan-East Road and Falls Park in the City of Niles. Although improved facilities at each of these sites would greatly enhance canoeing opportunities along the Mahoning River, Pymatuning Creek and Mosquito Creek, it is clear that more sites should be considered to serve the needs of the canoeist. These alternative sites could be used in their existing state for canoe access, or could be improved through physical development of canoe ramps, parking lots, access roads and other facilities.

Alternative canoe trail sites proposed for future development include the Pymatuning Creek at S.R. 88, the area below Mosquito Creek Lake dam in Bazetta Township, the dam at the Waste Water Treatment Plant in Newton Falls, Mosquito Creek at U.S. 422, and land owned by the City of Niles between the mouths of Mosquito and Meander Creeks, along the Mahoning River. Other sites considered in the plan included Andy Dorick Park in Orangeville Village, where a boat dock is already provided, and the Grand River in Farmington Township, which is not as easily canoed as the river several miles downtown.

Although many of these sites are now informally used by canoeists for access, future development of canoe launch facilities should be considered. A more detailed study of potential canoe trail sites along the Mahoning River, including guidelines for the management of this major canoe trail, will be undertaken in 1984

and 1985, under a planning grant from the National Park Service. This Mahoning River Canoe Trail Development and Management Plan will identify more alternative canoe trail sites along the Mahoning River, which is canoeable all year round. As stated for the alternatives for hiking trails, other potential canoe trail sites not identified in the trails plan could be feasibly developed and should be encouraged to improve opportunities for local and regional canoeists.

Additionally, sites currently used for canoe access, that do not have official canoe ramps, such as the downstream terminus of the Mahoning River Canoe Trail at Packard Park, should be considered for future improvement. Currently, canoeists can land their canoes on the grass, just downstream of the foot bridge at the park, and parking is available. However, an improved canoe access facility at this site would do much for promoting this canoe trail. Also considered should be streams that are not canoeable, but can be used for inner tubes. There are annual tube races in the City of Hubbard along Little Yankee Creek from Coalburg Lake to N. Main Street that are becoming more popular and should be encouraged.

Alternatives for Bicycle Trails

In the Plan for Bicycle Trails, several Class I, II and III bicycle routes were recommended for implementation. Since bicycle trails are so flexible, due to possibilities of locating them on or near roadways and other linear corridors, there are many potential sites available for locating them. The bicycle trails prioritized for their development potential included Class III Route J, Class II bikelanes in Hubbard and Warren, and Class I bike paths along abandoned railroad rights of way. Extensions of and linkages to these proposed bikeways are possible along many roadways and other linear corridors, such as streams or rights of way, throughout the county.

As per discussions with local bicycle clubs and bicycle enthusiasts, several alternatives appear to be favored. These would include Class III signed bike routes along rural state highways, running east-west and north-south through the county, as well as signed routes within local communities to avoid the use of busy city streets. Class I and II sites are not as highly favored, although consideration of these alternative types of bikeways is important for safety and for regional linkages. It should be noted that these bike routes are more costly to implement and more difficult to maintain and police. However, in order to provide the greatest flexibility in this trails plan, these alternatives have been identified and future proposals for bikeways in the county are highly encouraged, but would be subject to the same scrutiny as for already identified bike trail sites (i.e. traffic volumes, road conditions, and cost of implementation).

Alternatives for Other Types of Trails

As noted in the Plan for Other Types of Possible Trails, many of these can be located conterminously with existing or potential hiking trail sites, since they would be used in the winter. Generally, the recommended sites were located in the central areas of the county, near Mosquito Creek Lake, although cross-county ski trails

could be established within local parks throughout the county. It is highly recommended that the existence of snowmobile trails at the lake be publicized to promote use of these vehicles in public, open areas, as opposed to roadways or backyards. Also recommended is the separation of potential horse trails from other types of trails to avoid conflicts.

Other alternatives for trail activities include use of scenic highways and other roadways for driving tours of rural areas of the county. Each year, the Soil and Water Conservation District sponsors a Fall Foliage Tour, which follows different roads each year, leading participants on a sight-seeing trip of the beautiful scenery provided in the fall when the leaves change colors. At the third Recreation Council meeting, it was recommended that the council become involved in this annual tour. This concept has been favorably received and would be a very appropriate project for the council to become involved in and participate.

Implementation

There are several means available to implement the Countywide Trails System Plan, including various grants, donations, volunteer labor, easements and others. The most favored means by far is the grant, which, however, often requires a local matching share. As with the Pricetown Canoe Trail Park project, a grant can spur local fundraising efforts by volunteers, in cooperation with local government. Other possibilities include acquiring easements along utility or abandoned railroad rights of way or through other private property. Donations of land, also used in the Canoe Trail Park, are also helpful in developing a trails site.

There are five types of grants that can be used to develop trail facilities in the county, including the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), the Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Program (UPARR), the Community Development Block Grants Program (CDBG), the Metropolitan Park District Highway Fund and Department of Transportation Bikeway grants. Of these, the LWCF and CDBG grants can be used for land acquisition and development, while the UPARR grants can be used for recreation rehabilitation and innovative programs. The Park District Highway Fund and Bikeway grants can be used to construct new trail facilities.

Land and Water Conservation Grants (LWCF) are 50 percent matching grants that can be used for land acquisition and development of recreational facilities for local communities. Donations of land can be used for local matching shares of these projects, administered by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). Local examples of this grant include the development of Howland Township Park and the current Canoe Trail Park project. For the Canoe Trail Park, a \$16,250 LWCF grant from ODNR was matched by \$8,000 raised by the Trumbull Canoe Trails Club and contributions by the Trumbull County Metropolitan Park Commission. The canoe trail park property was acquired by the Canoe Trail Club, then donated to the Metropolitan Park Commission.

Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) Program grants can either be used to renovate existing recreational facilities or create innovative approaches to the delivery recreational services. This can involve trails through the region of existing paths, or the development of new programs utilizing trail corridors (i.e. nature walks). These grants are 70 percent to 30 percent matching, and are designed to improve recreational opportunities for lower-income persons and minorities. However, most existing trails in the county are not in great disrepair and such a grant project would not be needed at this time.

Like the UPARR grants, Community Development Block Grants are also geared toward lower-income neighborhoods. In fact, according to state CDBG regulations, at least 57 percent of those benefiting from a grant project must have low- and moderate-incomes. Of the broad range of eligible activities for this program, recreation is included and trails could be developed through the program in local parks. These trails would have to benefit a lower-income target area. Also, acquisition of land for the purpose of developing trails or other recreational facilities is also an eligible CDBG activity.

The Park District Highway Fund is administered by the Ohio Department of Transportation and is funded through license tax revenues. These 100 percent grants can be used by Metropolitan Park Commissions to develop trails, roadways and parking areas in Metropolitan Parks. Trumbull County's 1984 - 1985 allotment, about \$64,000, will be used to develop a hiking trail, access road and 10-car parking lot at Canoe Trail Park. The last two-year allocation was used for similar roadway and trail improvements at Clarence Darrow Park. While these are currently the only two County Metropolitan Parks, extensions of trails at these parks in the future are possible, as are additions to the Park System, as local parks or other properties take advantage of this bi-annual grant.

One additional source of grant funds for trails is the Bikeway Grant Program, also administered by the Ohio Department of Transportation. Five million dollars is available over a five-year period for bicycle trail development. In Trumbull County, two projects were proposed, then approved for funding by ODOT. Bike Route J, between the Cardinal Trail in Mahoning County and Lake Erie in Ashtabula County, will be signed with 100 bike route signs at 50 locations, including turns and major intersections. In Hubbard, bikelanes will be constructed on both sides of S. Main Street, between downtown and Harding Park. There is potential for future proposals for new bikeways for later years of this program.

Another major implementation tool for trails is volunteer labor. The Trumbull Canoe Trails Club has been very active in this county, both clearing waterways of snags and improving access to canoe launch/land areas. The Club has cleared canoe trails along the Mahoning River, Eagle Creek, Mosquito Creek and Pymatuning Creek, as well as grading and clearing access roads, ramps, and trails at canoe launch areas in the City of Niles. The Club, as noted, was also responsible for raising the local match of the Canoe Trail Park project. Continued participation in trails planning and development by this club and other interested individuals and organizations is encouraged and appreciated.

Also used in the Canoe Trail Park project was a donation of land. This implementation tool can be very useful in obtaining needed property for trail projects. These donations can be used as the local matching share of LWCF grants, or as locations for future canoe trail sites or other types of trails. There have been several inquiries by local property owners on donating their land for trail sites, which have been duly noted for future proposals.

An implementation tool used in other areas for trails is the acquisition of easements or leases for linear corridors, including abandoned railroad rights of way and utility rights of way. The Akron Metropolitan Park District currently leases a right of way from Ohio Edison for its Bike and Hike Trail, and the State of Wisconsin has a bike trail system acquired at a very reasonable cost. In Trumbull County, there are several opportunities for utilizing abandoned railroad and utility rights of way for trails, although there are some obstacles. Through the Recreation Council and other contacts with local public officials, it is apparent that there may be problems with adjacent property owners and policing such corridors. Also, the costs of acquisition or leases, or negotiating easements along these corridors must be considered in developing trails proposals.

This is not a comprehensive list of all possible implementation tools, but should provide a guide for local communities. Of course, private enterprises can also establish trail facilities, such as canoe liveries, or hiking paths at local swimming facilities. Private initiative in establishing trails is encouraged, but should be coordinated with plans of local communities. Cooperation between private and public recreation providers should greatly enhance the provision of these services.

Zoning for Trails

Zoning and subdivision regulations are two of the tools available for regulating and implementing trails in the county. In Trumbull County, all cities and villages and 20 of the 24 townships are zoned with zoning boards in each of those communities. The county has established Subdivision Regulations to control and guide the division of land in the county, which are currently being updated by the staff of the County Planning Commission. Zoning can be used to define certain areas within a community as a particular land use, such as residential, commercial, industrial, or for open space uses. Many subdivision regulations contain provisions for reserving a percentage of subdivided land for recreational or other public open space uses.

Under local zoning codes, recreational trails can be a permitted use under all zoning districts. This means that a trail could be developed through a residential neighborhood, along a commercial strip or even alongside factories. Since many of these uses are also potential destinations of a trail (bikeway, hiking trail), this approach provides sufficient flexibility to locate new trails wherever needed or desired. Of course, trails would also be permitted in districts zoned for open space or recreation and linear rights of way.

Special zoning for trails or other recreational or open space uses can also be used to protect fragile ecological areas, such as floodplains and wetlands from urban encroachment. This type of open space preservation planning is highly recommended for several reasons. First, it will prevent these areas from being intensively developed, affecting flood levels, drainage and other local conditions. Secondly, it takes advantage of the natural scenic beauty found in river or stream corridors, wooded areas, and other open spaces. Thirdly, many of these areas are linear corridors which lend themselves to trail development. Of course, environmental factors such as soil limitations, slope and others should be considered for each potential trail site.

In Trumbull County, the waterways most likely to be used as trail sites include the Mahoning River, Mosquito Creek, Pymatuning Creek and the Grand River. Most of these streams are at least seasonally canoeable, and have large open space corridors surrounding them. Local communities where these streams run through could use zoning as a measure to protect these valuable recreation and open space resources and to allow for the eventual development of canoe, hiking, bicycle or other types of trails at these sites. Additionally, these streams all have 100-year floodplains, which are strictly regulated. Certain uses are restricted in floodplains, except by special permit. Recreational trails do not, by themselves, greatly affect flood levels and are a permitted use.

Zoning can also be used to regulate private recreational businesses, which could develop as recreational trails become more popular. This includes such businesses as canoe liveries, canoe rentals and sales, sporting goods shops, bicycle stores or other support services wishing to locate in an area designated for recreation or trails. This is an important land use tool because it can prevent the overdevelopment of natural scenic areas, as has happened to other private and public recreation

areas in the state and nation. Zoning can be used to limit the number of businesses, buildings, signs, docks, parking spaces and other uses to prevent the blight of commercialization on these natural areas. Of course, it is hoped that some businesses be permitted, following regulations strictly, to promote the use of these recreational resources by citizens of the county and tourists from outside.

In Trumbull County, there are only two private canoe liveries currently in operation, the Canoe City Livery on the Mahoning River at Leavittsburg and Orangeville Livery on the Pymatuning Creek on the Pennsylvania border. Other public and private canoe access areas have been proposed or developed along these and other waterways in the county. Local zoning can be used to regulate new businesses in these corridors, to guide trail development to sites which are suitable for it and to preserve the natural beauty of these scenic areas.

Additionally, zoning can be used to define what activities are permitted and what activities are not permitted on the trails. For example, certain trails could be designated for only non-motorized uses, such as hiking, jogging and bicycling. Other areas could be designated for motorized trails, including motorbikes or snowmobiles.

Likewise, separate paths could be provided for hikers and horseback riders, or bicycles since these activities are not always compatible. Such designation of uses will prevent many possible conflicts along the trails. In the same way, zoning can be used to specify what can or cannot be located on or near the trail, such as trees or other objects which would obstruct the flow along the paths. This provides some level of control for local communities in developing, maintaining and policing trails, while at the same time, provides the best possible recreational opportunities.

Another land use tool for developing trails or other recreational facilities is subdivision regulations. In many subdivision regulations, a developer is required to set aside a small percentage of land subdivided for a residential neighborhood as public open space or pay a fee in lieu of the land. In most of the subdivision regulations reviewed by the staff for this study, the percentage of land set aside for open space was five percent of the total land being subdivided. This five percent could be a small parcel, but if taken in a narrow, linear strip, could provide adequate space for a recreational trail, such as a hiking path for bicycle trail. Also, money accepted in lieu of land could be set aside in a fund for developing new recreational facilities, such as trails.

Sample Amendments:

Subdivision Regulations:

Open Space and Recreational Trails

In the interest of public welfare, at least five percent of the area of subdivision 20 acres or more, exclusive of roads, shall be set aside as open space, trails, or other recreational uses. Such land set aside shall be usable as a park, path or other recreational uses. Such land shall be dedicated for public use, or reserved for the common use of all property owners or tenants within the proposed subdivision.

Zoning -

Open Space, Trails, other Recreation Areas

Purpose and Intent

It is the purpose and intent of the open space, trails and other recreation area special use, to reasonably and properly regulate the location, relationship with surrounding land uses, associated commercial activity, setbacks, fencing requirements, parking requirements, minimum area and space requirements and other aspects of open space, trails and other recreational uses.

Additional sections can be added to define the types of trails desired and specifications for length, width, fencing, parking and other requirements.