

DOOR COUNTY

GREEN FUND MULTI-MODAL TRAILS TASK FORCE REPORT

**A collection of resources and maps to help Door County communities develop
a comprehensive and connected trail system**

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INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2022, Pamela Wattenmaker approached the Door County Community Foundation with an idea. She imagined a Door County in which it was easy for someone to walk from their home on the outskirts of town into the shopping areas downtown. She envisioned a system of trails that went from one village to the next, from one town to another. The challenge, of course, is how to bring that vision into reality.

As a result, under the auspices of the Door County Green Fund, a fund of the Door County Community Foundation, Inc., an ad hoc group of citizens, government officials, non-profit organizations, and local businesses began meeting to expand on that original vision and see if there were tangible steps that could be taken to move it forward. The team that formed had no defined membership roster, no formal standing, and no specific mandate. Rather, these were just people who shared the vision of an interconnected trail network for walkers, joggers, bikers, and the like. The team grew organically, as members identified and invited others who shared their enthusiasm for this work. Everyone was welcome.

The team began by looking at previous efforts to map out a multimodal trail system in Door County and even entered into discussions with several national consulting firms that could guide such a county-wide process. However, it was readily apparent that in other places in the country where such an interconnected system exists, the trails typically were located within a single municipality or involved just a small handful of units of government. That made it relatively straightforward when creating a shared vision. In Door County, such a county-wide interconnected multimodal trail network would likely require the coordinated effort of 1 county, 1 city, 4 villages, 14 towns, 4 school districts, and countless non-profit environmental organizations that control public lands.

Rather than try to define a shared vision, the team instead decided to collect and document the individual visions of all these public landowners in Door County. The goal is to help individual municipalities and organizations better understand what their neighbors are doing today, and what they plan to do in the decades ahead, in the hope that the players will come together themselves in a spirit of collaboration. If you know where your neighbor plans on building a new trail in the next decade, you might be more likely to alter your own future trail plans to enable them to connect.

The maps and other supporting materials can be found on the website of the Door County Green Fund at www.DoorCountyGreenFund.org. For more information about this work, please contact the Door County Community Foundation, Inc. at (920) 746-1786 or visit www.GiveDoorCounty.org.

The team's greatest hope is that this document will foster greater conversation and collaboration between those entities that control public lands on the peninsula. If Door County is ever going to truly realize an interconnected trail system up and down our peninsula, it will ultimately take the efforts of individual units of government, and their citizens, all working together.

— Bret Bicoy

Door County Community Foundation

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Our community is home to an abundance of dynamic trails used by walkers, hikers, and bikers alike. However, between 19 municipalities, 5 school districts, and countless non-profit organizations, coordinating the stewardship of our trails can be difficult. In 2022, the Door County Green Fund, a fund of the Door County Community Foundation, Inc., convened an ad hoc group of government officials, environmental groups, and trail enthusiasts, to foster better communication toward the ultimate goal of a seamless network of trails connecting the entire county.

The Green Fund contracted with Sophie Parr of Civic 4, LLC to reach out to municipalities and other major non-profit, government and individual trail property owners to document their existing trails and capture their future plans in a comprehensive map.

Our Goals

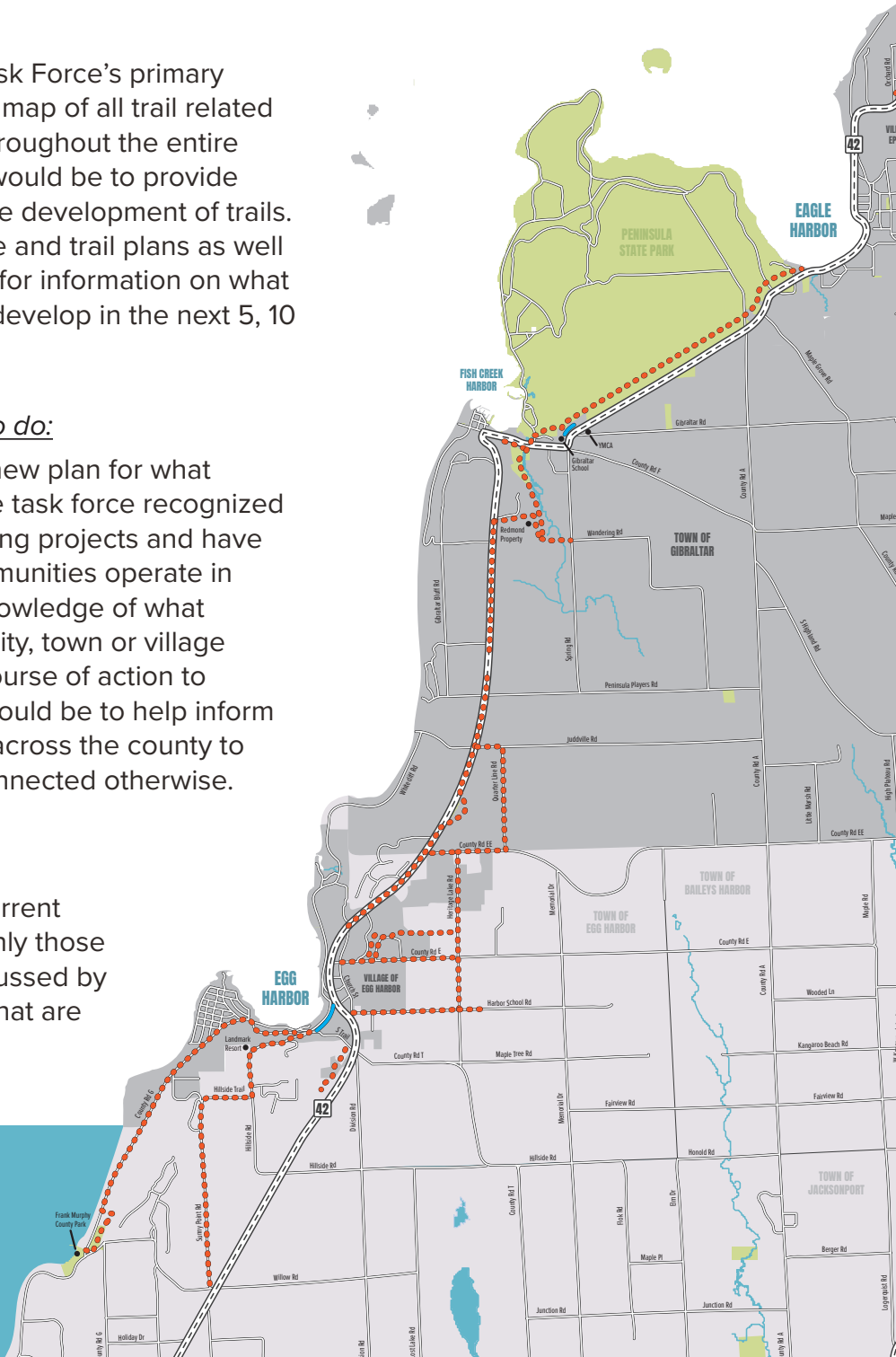
The Door County Multi-Modal Trails Task Force’s primary goal was to develop a comprehensive map of all trail related projects, both existing and planned, throughout the entire county. The purpose behind the map would be to provide information to communities to aid in the development of trails. This included reviewing all current bike and trail plans as well as reaching out to all 19 municipalities for information on what trails they maintain or are planning to develop in the next 5, 10 and 20 years.

What this project was NOT meant to do:

The project was not meant to be a new plan for what communities “should” be doing. The task force recognized that communities are already pursuing projects and have plans in place. However, many communities operate in silos, pursuing projects with little knowledge of what might be happening just past their city, town or village limit. The group decided the best course of action to provide support for trail initiatives would be to help inform all communities of what’s going on across the county to connect people who may not be connected otherwise.

Therefore, the maps that have been developed are consistent with all current plans that are in place and reflect only those projects that are actively being discussed by the municipalities or organizations that are responsible for pursuing them.

Egg Harbor - Fish Creek



Project Phases

1. Information Gathering

Included initial team meetings; review of all existing materials and plans; meetings with stakeholders, community organizations and members as deemed necessary by the task force.

2. Map Development

Included actual design and development of a county-wide multi-modal map including current, planned and potential new areas of trail.

3. Review and Revisions

Included meetings to discuss draft maps, collection of revisions from all municipalities and updates as necessary. Also included the development of additional maps as deemed necessary by the task force.

4. Future Planning

Included a write-up of the project and a 10-20 year outlook for pursuing the development of the proposed trail system. This included not only this document but also key messages for community members to aid in discussing the future of trails throughout the county.

PHASE 1 - Information Gathering

In the first phase of the project it was important to connect to all municipalities and relevant stakeholder organizations to not only inform them of the project but to understand what trails exist and what trails might be developed in the future. It was important to gather this information directly from those responsible for trail development. The following table shows all communities and organizations that were contacted and the responses they provided. This information was used as the basis for developing all maps.

Organization Type	Name	Response
City	Sturgeon Bay	Provided City's 2011 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
Village	Egg Harbor	Provided shapefiles of trails currently being planned with assistance from the National Park Service*
Village	Ephraim	Provided information on discussions regarding a trail/path on the north end of the Village*
Village	Sister Bay	Provided capital development outline which includes all trail initiatives*
Town	Baileys Harbor	Provided their 2010 Bicycle and Pedestrian plan
Town	Brussels	Confirmed the town does not currently maintain their own trails or have future trail developments planned at this time
Town	Clay Banks	Confirmed the town does not currently maintain their own trails or have future trail developments planned at this time
Town	Egg Harbor	Provided information on town recommended bike routes
Town	Forestville	Provided information on the Ahnapee State Trail
Town	Gardner	Confirmed the town does not currently maintain their own trails or have future trail developments planned at this time
Town	Gibraltar	Provided plans for trail development on the Redmond Property and connections into the Village of Egg Harbor and Peninsula State Park*
Town	Jacksonport	Provided plans for potential shoulder enhancement for cycling on Clark Lake Road
Town	Liberty Grove	Provided their 2010 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Organization Type	Name	Response
Town	Nasawaupee	Confirmed the town does not currently maintain their own trails or have future trail developments planned at this time
Town	Sevastopol	Confirmed the town does not currently maintain their own trails or have future trail developments planned at this time
Town	Sturgeon Bay	Provided a map of their recommended bike routes
Town	Union	Confirmed the town does not currently maintain their own trails or have future trail developments planned at this time
Town	Washington	Provided their 2012 Detroit Harbor Enhancement Initiative
Conservation Organization	The Ridges	Provided their 2023 Master Plan
Conservation Organization	Door County Land Trust	Provided information on development of trails on Door County Land Trust property
Government	Door County Land Use Services	Provided County's 2014 Bicycle, Pedestrian and Recreational Facilities plan and shapefiles
Government	Door County Parks	Provided County's 2014 Bicycle, Pedestrian and Recreational Facilities Plan
Government	WisDOT – Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning	Provided confirmation that the maps developed as a result of this project could be used for DOT grant applications from municipalities
Government	DNR/Peninsula State Park	Provided overview of park's progress in developing a trail along Highway 42*

*The Village of Egg Harbor, Town of Gibraltar, Peninsula State Park, Village of Ephraim and the Village of Sister Bay are working together to identify possible trail options to connect each community. More details can be found below.

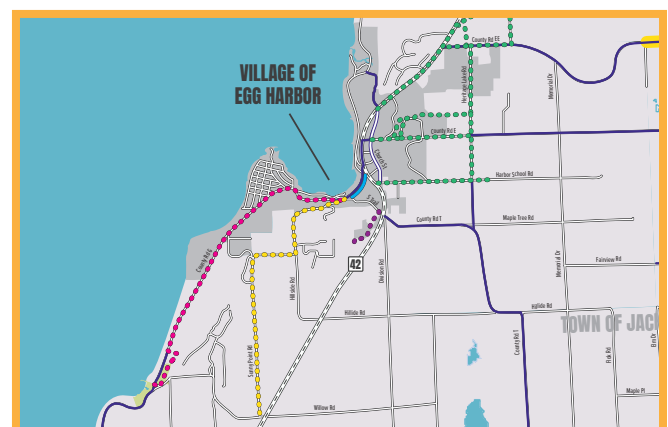
All the information that was gathered from stakeholders was reviewed for inclusion in a comprehensive map as well as individual maps of specific communities.

Key Information Collected

While all the information collected was important to the development of the comprehensive map, there were a few key trail initiatives that have begun within the last year that are described below. These initiatives really helped to showcase the dedication of many of the communities to the development of a comprehensive trails system.

Village of Egg Harbor

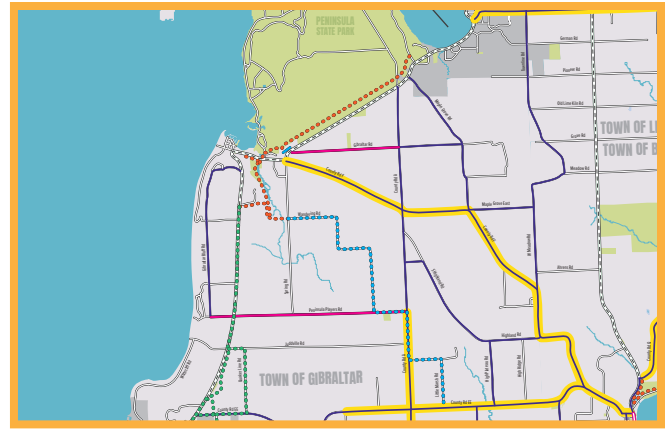
The Village of Egg Harbor has established a Trails Initiative with dedicated volunteer staff helping to pursue trail projects. Trails have been a big topic for the Village since their 2018 Comprehensive Plan and 2019 Outdoor Recreation Plan were developed. In 2023, The Village of Egg Harbor Trails Project was selected by the National Park Service (NPS) Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) to receive support in building a network of safe, off-road trails connecting the village to surrounding neighborhoods and municipalities.



Egg Harbor Section of Comprehensive Map

Town of Gibraltar

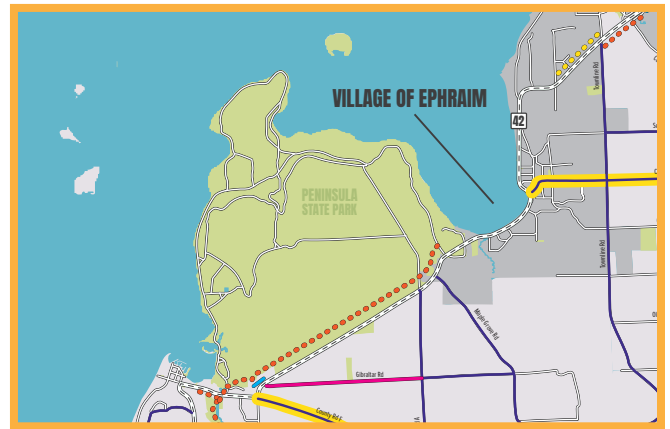
Through a recent acquisition of a property on the south end of Fish Creek, known as the Redmann property, the Town has begun pursuing trail development from that property into Fish Creek along the Niagara escarpment. In 2023, the Town receive funds to partner with Baylake Regional Planning Commission to conduct a feasibility study for the potential trail as well as connections with the Village of Egg Harbor's trail plans and into the Village of Ephraim.



Gibraltar Section of Comprehensive Map

Peninsula State Park

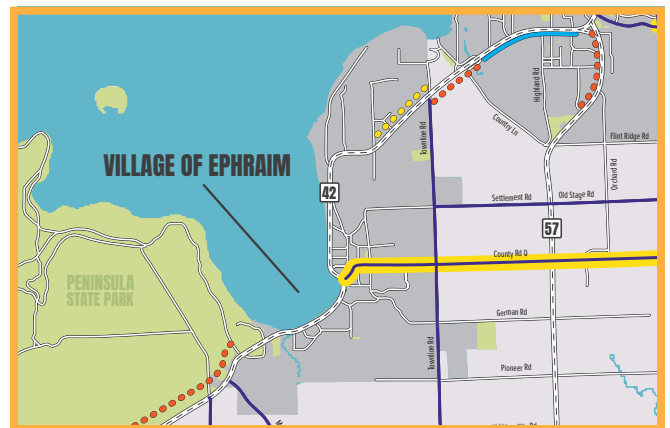
The Peninsula State Park 2020 Master Plan outlines a trail running along Highway 42 connecting the Gibraltar School area to the Village of Ephraim. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is working with the local municipalities to help develop this trail and include it within the feasibility study being spearheaded by the Town of Gibraltar.



Peninsula State Park Section of Comprehensive Map

Village of Ephraim

Discussions have been ongoing about the possibility of developing a shared use path along Highway 42 on the north end of the Village of Ephraim between Orchard Road and Townline Road. The village has invested some money in initial planning for a trail on the south side of the highway and recently has discussed options for developing the trail on the north side of the highway. While still in discussion, there is some momentum for a trail to be developed on the north end.



Ephraim Section of Comprehensive Map

Village of Sister Bay

The Village of Sister Bay has capital development plans within the next 5-10 years to develop extensions of the existing shared use path that runs along Highway 42 from Gateway Drive to Country Lane. The extensions would run south along Highway 42 to Ephraim and south along Highway 57 to Northwoods Drive. The Village is also looking at pathways behind the Fire Station and on the newly acquired Wiltse Property to provide better walking access to the Sports Complex and Woodcrest Road.



Sister Bay Section of Comprehensive Map

PHASE 2 - Map Development

Phase 2 began once enough information was collected to begin laying out the comprehensive map. The design came together using information from each municipality as well as base map layers acquired from stakeholders.

Key Base Map Contributions

Door County Land Use Services Department

The Door County LUS Department provided extensive GIS shapefiles of all the recommended cycling routes and existing trails that had been developed for the 2014 Door County Bicycle, Pedestrian and Recreational Facilities plan. These files include proposed roads for paved shoulder expansions to create more space for cyclists when riding on roads. These files include necessary map features such as county, town, village and city boundaries, road lines, trail lines and water features. These GIS files were used as the base for this plan's comprehensive map and all additional maps that were developed.

Village of Egg Harbor Trails Initiative

Through their work with NPS, the Village was able to provide GIS shapefiles of all potential trails being planned. These shapefiles were combined with the base map from the County.

The initial comprehensive map came together with all information collected and was presented to the task force in November, 2023. The task force was able to make suggestions for changes including additions based on new information received and removals for initiatives that had either changed or were no longer moving forward. The task force also outlined additional maps to be developed using the comprehensive map as a base. These included close up maps of each municipality as well as maps that showed a breakdown of trails vs. cycling routes for both Northern Door County and Southern Door County.

Door County Bicycle, Pedestrian and Recreational Facilities Plan

The bike routes, as shown on the map, took into consideration the 2014 bicycle planning process and its resulting recommended bicycle network. The 2014 recommended network was incorporated in its entirety into this new map and plan. The original recommended routes are identified in the map legend as "Recommended Bike Routes". In addition, the 2014 county plan had identified county highways that were recommended for shoulder improvements for cyclists. These highways are also identified in the map legend as "Shoulder Improvements". Since the 2014 plan was adopted some communities have moved forward with the development of new bike facilities as noted on the maps. All routes that are shown on any of the maps were identified using the County's 2014 plan, existing township plans and any other municipal planning documents that exist to date. The new maps are a snapshot in time of what existed at the time the comprehensive plan was adopted but will continue to evolve as work progresses.

PHASE 3 - Review and Revisions

Based on the task force's review of the initial comprehensive map there were multiple new maps to create that could be used by each municipality to pursue their own trail initiatives. The bulk of the new maps included close-ups of the following communities:

- City of Sturgeon Bay
- Village of Egg Harbor
- Village of Ephraim
- Village of Sister Bay
- Town of Gibraltar
- Town of Baileys Harbor
- Town of Jacksonport

Each of these close-up maps was sent to the appropriate contact or administrator for review and feedback. Feedback was received from all communities and edits were made to ensure that the information presented on each map was verified and correct. The review process also helped to ensure that each community was comfortable with the information that was presented on each map in regard to being able to speak to the map should questions or comments arise from community members in the future.

In addition to the close-up maps the task force wanted to see maps depicting the trail connections being planned from Egg Harbor to Sister Bay. A map was developed showing the four communities involved including: the Town of Gibraltar; and the Villages of Egg Harbor; Ephraim; and Sister Bay. The boundaries ranged from Frank Murphy County Park (located in the Town of Egg Harbor) to Waters End Road, just north of the Village of Sister Bay's northern limits.

Final Maps

The following list outlines the full set of maps provided:

Comprehensive Map:

The Comprehensive map shows all existing trails, bike routes and cycling facilities as well as all proposed projects. It provides a high level look at what each community has developed as well as what they hope to accomplish in the future.

Multi-Location Maps:

Maps were developed that break out shared use paths and bike routes for southern Door County and northern Door County. A map showing a more detailed outline of the connections between Egg Harbor and Sister Bay was also created.

Individual Maps:

Individual close-up maps were made for the communities that provided information about future trail development (noted above).

Section of Comprehensive Map



PHASE 4 - Future Planning

The maps that have been developed through the Door County Green Fund are resources for municipalities and community members to use in the development of the trail network. These resources can help each community plan for and move forward with trail development over the next 5-20 years.

As a part of the map development project, an overview of 5, 10 and 20 year future plans can be useful in outlining the projects that are being aggressively pursued and those that are at an earlier stage in both planning and discussions. The following outline can be used to categorize the information collected as part of the map project into a future vision.

5-Year Projects Plans that are currently being pursued and expected to be completed with the next 5 years.

Village of Sister Bay

- Extension of Shared Use Path from Gateway Drive to Northwoods Drive.
- Development of trail connecting Maple to Woodcrest behind the Fire Station.
- Extension of Shared Use Path from Country Lane to Townline Road.
- Development of trail on Wiltse Property.

Peninsula State Park

- Development of Highway 42 trail connecting Gibraltar to Ephraim.

Town of Gibraltar

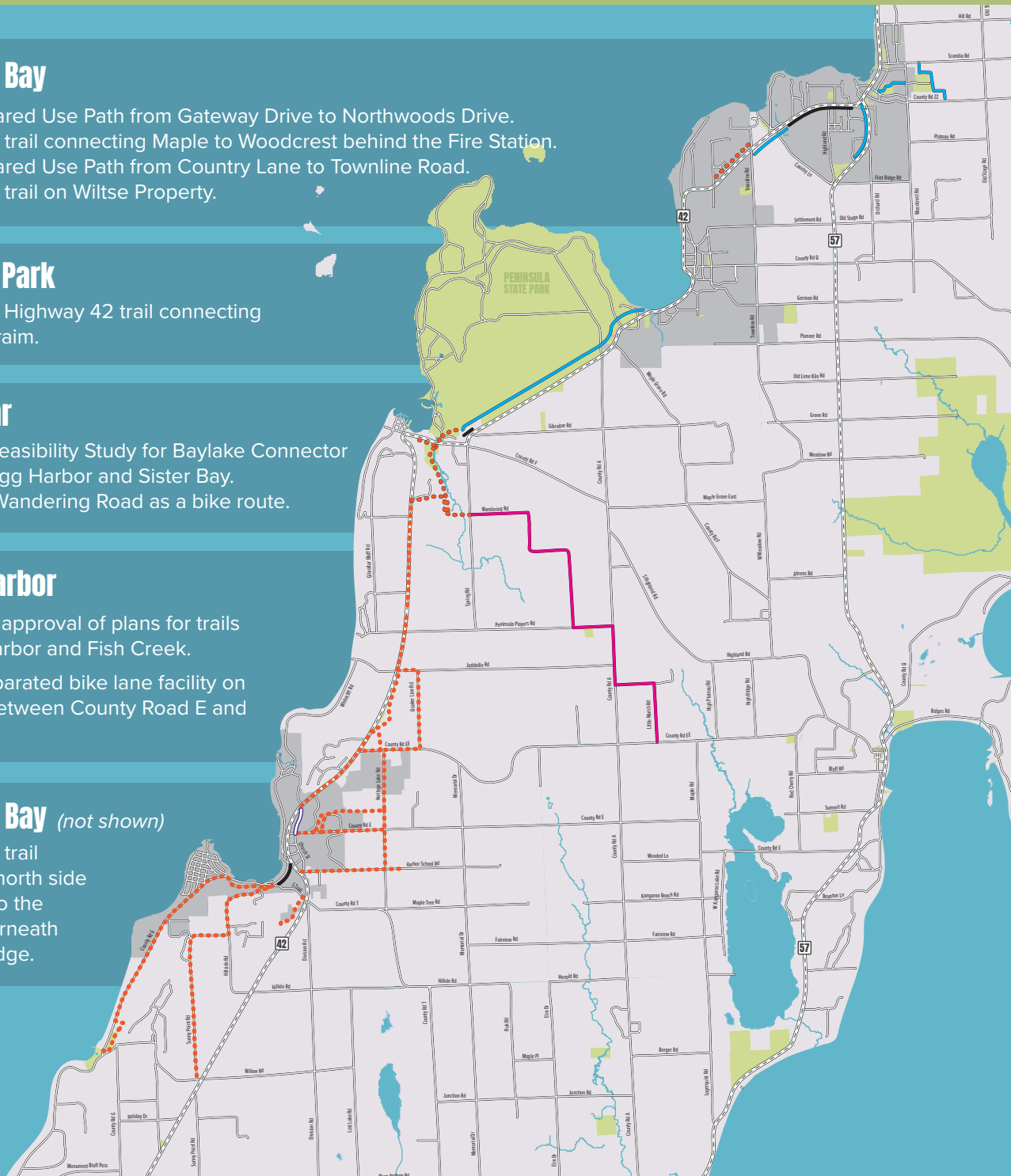
- Completion of Feasibility Study for Baylake Connector trails between Egg Harbor and Sister Bay.
- Designation of Wandering Road as a bike route.

Village of Egg Harbor

- Completion and approval of plans for trails between Egg Harbor and Fish Creek.
- Extension of separated bike lane facility on Church Street between County Road E and Highway 42.

City of Sturgeon Bay (not shown)

- Development of trail connecting the north side of Highway 42 to the south side underneath the Bayview Bridge.



10-Year Projects Plans that could be accomplished within 10 years (includes 5-year projects)

Projects may be completed earlier. The inclusion of projects in the 10 year category is based on where community conversations currently stand, funding available and complexity of the project.

Village of Ephraim

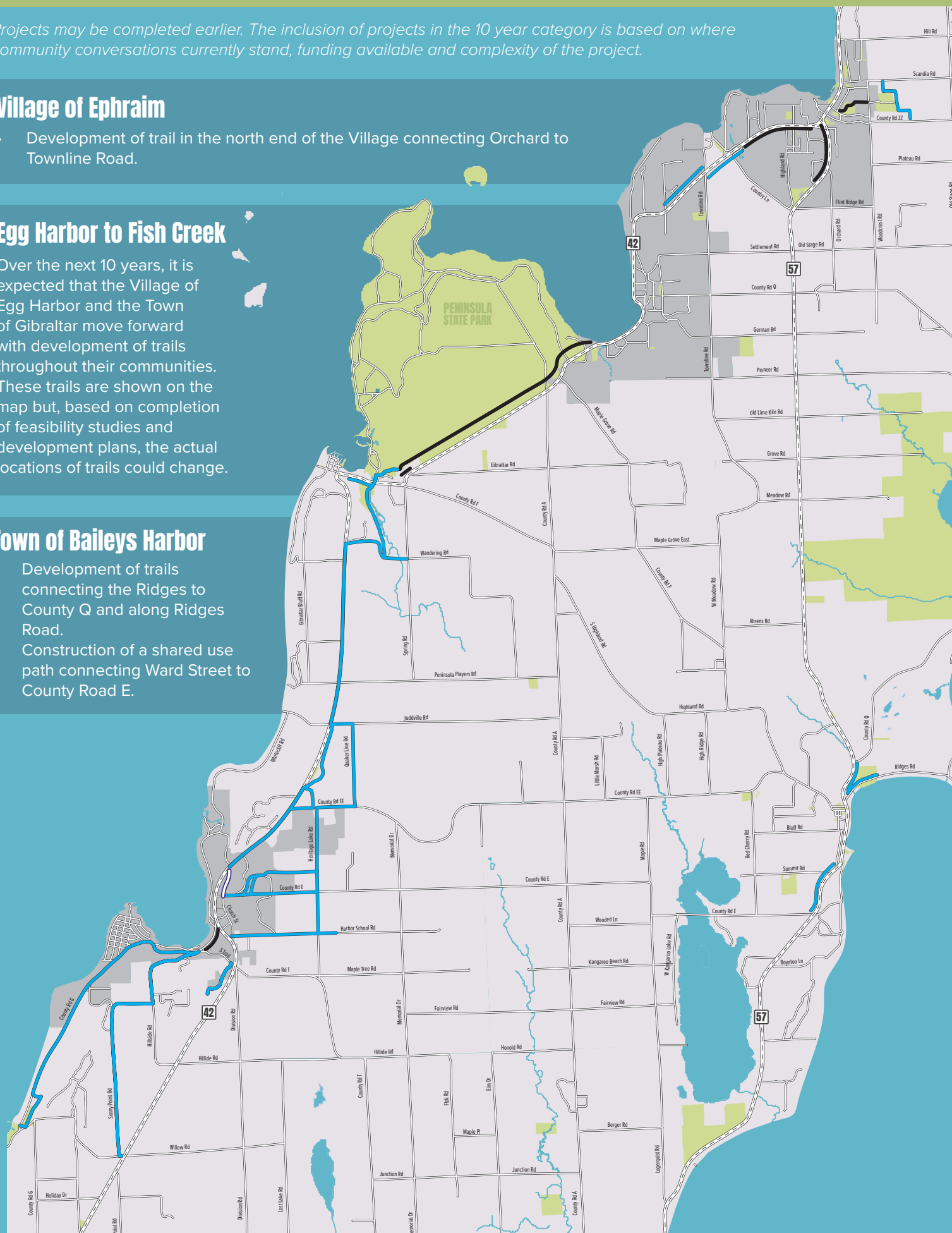
- Development of trail in the north end of the Village connecting Orchard to Townline Road.

Egg Harbor to Fish Creek

Over the next 10 years, it is expected that the Village of Egg Harbor and the Town of Gibraltar move forward with development of trails throughout their communities. These trails are shown on the map but, based on completion of feasibility studies and development plans, the actual locations of trails could change.

Town of Baileys Harbor

- Development of trails connecting the Ridges to County Q and along Ridges Road.
- Construction of a shared use path connecting Ward Street to County Road E.



A 20-year vision for trails throughout Door County means moving forward with all current plans in place including this plan and county and individual community plans. It also means moving forward with development of trails that come out of feasibility studies which include the projects currently underway in the Village of Egg Harbor and the Town of Gibraltar.

A 20-year vision is the creation of the Door County Multi-Modal Trails Task Force as a go-to for all trail related resources throughout the county. This means developing the contacts, resources and relationships needed to successfully support and implement trail related projects in all municipalities.

KEY MESSAGES

About the Door County Multi-Modal Trails Task Force

- In 2022, the Door County Green Fund, a fund of the Door County Community Foundation, Inc., convened an ad hoc group of government officials, environmental groups, and trail enthusiasts to foster better communication toward the ultimate goal of a seamless network of trails connecting the entire county.
- The group pursued a project to identify all existing and future planned trails throughout the county which included developing multiple maps that consolidated all existing plans from both the county and individual municipalities.
- The goal was to gather information from all communities and put it into a visual form as an easy-to-reference, easy-to-understand guide for what's going on with trails throughout Door County.
- The resulting project provides visual resources for all government, municipalities and individual stakeholder organizations to help board members, planners, engineers and residents see how individual projects can contribute to a larger network of connections.

About the Maps

- The maps were developed by Sophie Parr of Civic 4, LLC.
- Each municipality and government agency responsible for trail development were contacted and provided the opportunity to share plans and information on existing and future plans for trail development.
- All 19 municipalities participated, as well as the Door County LUS Department and Parks Department and the Department of Natural Resources and the Door County Land Trust.
- The maps were developed to help communities apply for grant funds, communicate goals to constituents, and generate support for projects that improve the lives of residents and visitors.
- The projects outlined in the maps are representative of municipal plans already in place.
- The maps are not intended to tell a community what they should be doing, rather they showcase what has already been done, what is in the works and what might be possible based on what each municipality is currently pursuing.
- The maps are meant to serve as a starting point to help initiate productive conversations and ideas that fit the goals of individual communities and our larger Door County community.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

There are multiple funding sources available for bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The following list is a high-level overview of programs that could be available to municipalities and local governments.

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

With certain exceptions, projects that met eligibility criteria for the Safe Routes to School Program, Transportation Enhancements, and/or the Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities Program are eligible TAP projects. All TAP projects require sponsors to pay 20% of approved project costs.

Transportation Alternatives Data Exchange (TrADE)

Communities across America have access to Transportation Alternatives (TA) funds from the federal government to expand travel choice, strengthen the local economy, improve the quality of life, and protect the environment. Eligible activities include most activities historically funded as “Transportation Enhancements,” the Recreational Trails Program, and the Safe Routes to School program.

Recreation Trails Program (RTP)

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) provides funds to the States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. The RTP is an assistance program of the Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Federal transportation funds benefit recreation including hiking, bicycling, in-line skating, equestrian use, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle riding, four-wheel driving, or using other off-road motorized vehicles.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Act (CMAQ)

The primary purpose of the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Act (CMAQ) Improvement Program is to fund projects and programs that reduce travel and/or emissions in areas that have failed to meet air quality standards for ozone, carbon monoxide (CO) and small particulate matter. Bicycle and pedestrian projects are eligible for CMAQ if they reduce the number of vehicle trips and miles traveled. Approved projects are reimbursable at 80% of the cost, and a local match of 20% is required.

Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Local Assistance Grant Program

Projects can get up to 50% funding assistance to acquire land and easements and develop trails, facilities, etc. for nature-based outdoor recreation purposes.

Community Investment Fund at the Door County Community Foundation

The Community Investment Fund, created in partnership with Destination Door County, uses a portion of the room tax dollars paid by visitors to offer grants to projects that meaningfully improve the quality of life for those who live and work in Door County.