



## TART Trails Projects Spring Ahead

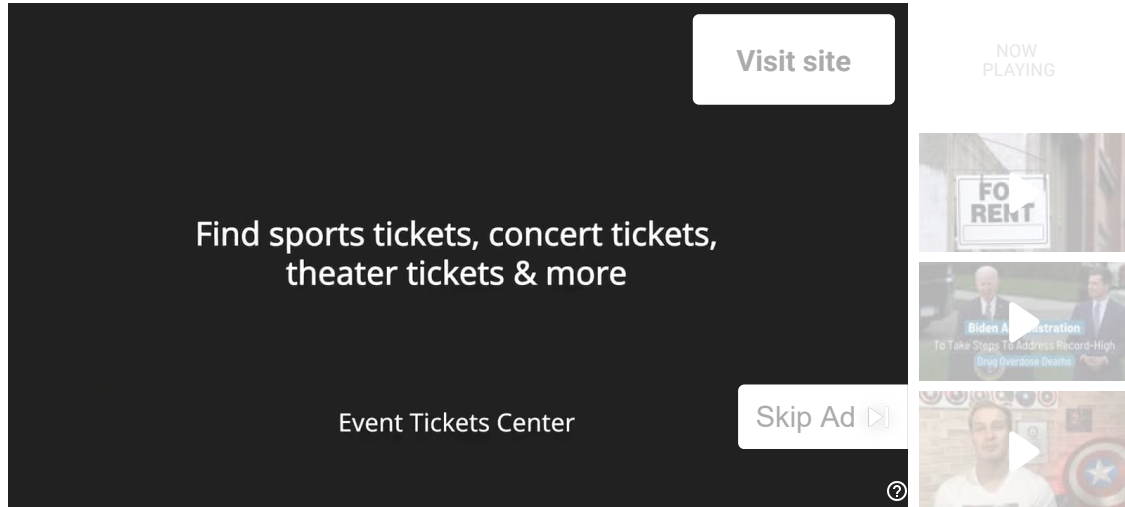
By Beth Milligan | March 29, 2022

Progress is springing ahead on three major TART Trails projects, including the extension of the Three Mile Trail from South Airport Road to Hammond Road, the construction of a new Acme Connector Trail between the Bunker Hill Road trail terminus and the M-72/US-31 intersection, and the completion of the Boardman Lake Trail loop. *The Ticker* has the latest updates on all three projects.

## Three Mile Trail Extension

A major boost of federal funding will help bring a planned extension of the Three Mile Trail from South Airport Road to Hammond Road one step closer to reality.

FEATURED VIDEOS



The office of U.S. Rep Jack Bergman (R-Watersmeet) notified TART Trails this month that \$900,000 had been secured for the Three Mile Trail project as part of a \$1.5 trillion bipartisan spending bill approved by Congress. The bill was signed by President Biden, with TART Trails now working with staff from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on funding distribution. The funding makes it possible to move forward with a project TART Trails says will be a “game-changer for our region and a life-changer for the residents of the Three Mile/Hammond corridor and the 2,400-plus students it will connect.”

Last summer, East Bay Township trustees unanimously approved a conceptual design for the trail extension (<https://www.traverseticker.com/news/east-bay-approves-elmbrook-rezoning-three-mile-trail-housing-resolutions/>). The nearly two-mile proposed route (<https://www.traverseticker.com/news/three-mile-trail-route-unveiled/>) uses a combination of asphalt and boardwalk sections to extend from a proposed new parking lot and trailhead on Three Mile just south of South Airport on a meandering route through Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy’s (GTRLC’s) Mitchell Creek Meadows Nature Preserve, continuing past Grand Traverse Academy up to Hammond Road. A second parking lot is planned further south on Three Mile to access the Mitchell Creek property, with designated road crossings at key junctures along Three Mile and Hammond. Renderings also note future possible sidewalk construction along Three Mile Road, new sidewalk and trail along Hammond, and a connection into the Oleson’s commercial center. Safe Routes to School funding could help with some of those sidewalk connections.

TART Trails Communications & Policy Director Brian Beauchamp says the next step is engineering – a likely lengthy and costly process given the trail's length and its extensive use of boardwalks through wetland areas. Once engineering is complete, TART Trails and its project partners – including East Bay Township, Norte, and GTRLC – can ramp up fundraising for construction. TART Trails is anticipating upwards of \$12 million in total project costs, with a phased approach likely needed for the trail buildout. Beauchamp notes that because TART Trails has received additional private funding to assist with engineering, some of the \$900,000 in federal funding could go toward initial construction projects. “We have a little flexibility, so we’re working on that,” he says.

### **Acme Connector Trail**

Construction is planned to break ground this spring on the new 1.8-mile Acme Connector Trail, which will connect the current TART Trails terminus at Bunker Hill Road with the intersection of M-72 and US-31 in Acme. Beauchamp says Acme Township recently signed a contract with Team Elmer's to manage the project work. “They’ve already begun surveying and flagging some of the property in the area,” he says. “We anticipate that construction on that important connector will be completed this season.”

The connector trail, which will also feature a segment running east toward the Acme Meijer store and Grand Traverse Town Center development, has a total price tag of \$1.5 million. Multiple funding sources are helping cover costs, including a \$300,000 Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund grant awarded to Acme Township, a \$75,000 township match, a \$27,500 donation (plus an easement) from the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, and \$875,000 in private donations, among other funds. In October, Grand Traverse County commissioners agreed to contribute \$50,000 to the project to help close the remaining funding gap

(<https://www.traverseticker.com/news/county-commissioners-approve-resolution-supporting-free-press-funding-for-acme-connector-trail/>).

According to TART Trails, when completed the Acme Connector Trail will feature asphalt and boardwalk trail segments, shared road segments, a culvert, a bridge, landscaping, wayfinding signage, and trailside amenities including benches and bike racks. The project includes a maintenance budget, with the trail expected to last 20-plus years with proper maintenance. It will serve as the southernmost segment of the Nakwema Trailway, a planned nonmotorized trailway linking Traverse City and Charlevoix.

### **Boardman Lake Trail Loop**

Winter isn't the easiest construction period in northern Michigan, particularly when waterways are involved, but work is progressing “incredibly well” on the final leg of the

Boardman Lake Trail loop between NMC's University Center and Medalie Park, according to Beauchamp.

Engineering firm Prein&Newhof has been posting regular construction and photo updates over the winter of the boardwalk buildout (pictured) on the firm's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/preinandnewhof/>). According to Prein&Newhof, as of last week bracing is now installed on almost all of the piles, and a secondary crew has started work on a stairway on city property off Sixteenth Street. This week, workers will continue to advance decking on the boardwalk and begin installing railing, including on two "eyebrow" overlooks. Stair work could also be complete by the end of the week. "As the weather warms and the ground thaws, Elmer's is working toward pouring the bridge abutments in the next couple of weeks," Prein&Newhof wrote.

According to Beauchamp, the final loop segment appears on track for a July public opening. "More to come on a ribbon cutting celebration that will certainly be planned for the community," he says. When complete, the segment will close the roughly five-mile trail loop around Boardman Lake.

*Photo credit: Prein&Newhof*

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