

# Executive Summary

This project was conducted by undergraduate and graduate students in the Urban & Regional Planning degree program at Michigan State University (MSU) as part of a capstone practicum project. The Eaton County Parks and Recreation department tasked the team with developing a report to guide the development of a non-motorized trail from the City of Charlotte to the City of Eaton Rapids. The MSU team completed this by reviewing the existing conditions for the region within the context of a potential trail's contribution to the area, reviewing the project area to decide on potential trail segments and then making planning recommendations to help the county with future implementation. The proposed trail begins at the ALIVE Center in Charlotte and connects to the downtown and Hayes Green Beach Memorial Hospital. It then follows the rail line to Crandell Park and later to downtown Eaton Rapids, adjoining many local businesses, scenic sites and a variety of land coverage along the way. The MSU team has also provided before and after imaging to help illustrate what the trail would look like at certain points within the project area. This report will help Eaton County garner public support for this trail project and will layout the steps needed to see to its completion. To conclude, the MSU team provides 16 recommended steps on how to implement the trail based on the team's analysis. These steps are categorized into three phases: Pre-development, Development and Going Forward. The MSU team recommends the following steps: identify trail route; work with property owners to purchase easements; ensure compliance with local zoning regulations; establish partnerships; solidify an upkeep/maintenance plan; develop the trail; name the trail; develop trailheads; provide trail user amenities; add wayfinding; include safety features; develop gateways; market the trail; add programming centered around the trail; connect the trail to the downtowns; and measure trail impact.



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