



MT Trails Foundation, Inc. Highland Road Bike Spur Informational Packet

March 14, 2023

MT Trails Foundation, Inc Background and Vision

MT Trails Foundation, Inc (MT Trails) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization formed in 2022 after initially being conceived in 2021 by a group of citizens in the Mequon-Thiensville community. MT Trails is an all-volunteer group led by our current board of directors.

Two key goals in the MT Trails Foundation by-laws are:

- To develop and support a system of family-friendly bicycling and walking connecting off road trails throughout the Mequon and Thiensville communities.
- To provide non-motorized alternatives for transportation, recreation, personal health and well-being.

To achieve these goals, MT Trails Foundation vision is:

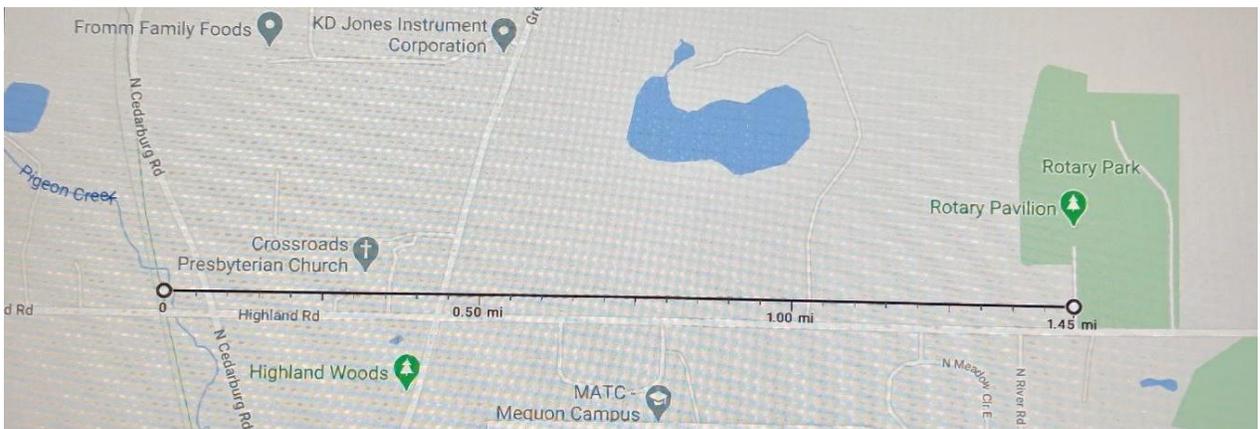
1. Focusing on creation of specifically off-road shared-use trails for health, recreation and safety, including securing contractors for surveys, feasibility and cost estimates, solicitation of bids, and through ultimately breaking ground and the creation, completion and maintenance of the trails themselves.
2. Connecting more of the community to the Ozaukee Interurban Trail.
3. Working toward a vision of a 20+ mile loop around the community with “spokes” connecting to the loop.
4. Creating pedestrian and bicycle friendly connections between green spaces in the community.
5. Creating pedestrian and bicycle access between subdivisions and businesses in the community.
6. Aligning with the goals of the Joint Mequon-Thiensville Bike and Pedestrian Way Commission and working with the Commission to support their plans for off road paths.
7. Ensuring that each portion of the project has utility in and of itself, serving a specific purpose.
8. Funding bike racks so that bikes can be securely locked while riders take to the pedestrian only trails, frequent local businesses and enjoy the many area parks.
9. Maintaining a fund for maintenance involving our projects that is not funded through other means, to ensure proper upkeep.

Efforts to date include:

1. Created community awareness and support with our MT Trails Foundation pop-up tent/table staffed by committee members and volunteers. In 2021 the committee obtained letters of support from all facets of the community (Exhibit B). In 2022, MT Trails volunteers interfaced with the community at 12 community events utilizing 80 volunteer hours.
2. Sought input from the community regarding desires for trail placement. This work was begun with questionnaires distributed at our informative pop-up tables throughout 2022, and plans are being discussed to involve the presidents of the Home Owner's Associations (HOA's) of the numerous subdivisions in the community.
3. Sought funding for the creation of the Highland Road Bike Spur through grants and donations, including receiving a Federal Transportation Alternatives Program grant on 8/30/22 for \$988,000 as supported by the City of Mequon per resolution #3926 on March 8, 2022 (Exhibit C).
4. Developed an informational website for transparency. See www.mcfgives.org/bikepath/
5. Established our relationship with the Mequon-Thiensville Community Foundation (MTCF) to fund raise and collect donations in a Bike Path Restricted Fund and to hold related endowment maintenance funds. MTCF has been in the community since 1999 and is a significant supporter of enhancing the quality of life in Mequon and Thiensville, including the City of Mequon Police Department, Fire Department, K-9 Unit, Library, Parks and Recreation and Historical sites.
6. Formed a mutually supportive relationship with city and village government, community, business and citizen stakeholders as well as the Joint Mequon-Thiensville Bike and Pedestrian Way Commission.
7. Initiated Phase 1 of our Highland Road Bike/Pedestrian spur, including hiring an architectural firm to complete topographical surveys, wetland delineations, and path alignments for both sides of Highland Road, talking with significant landowners and the city of Mequon as to the best location and to raise significant funds through government grants and private donations.



Highland Road Bike/Pedestrian Spur



MT Trails' first project is to create a safe, off road two directional shared use 10 ft wide paved bike/pedestrian spur for approximately 1.5 miles on the north side of Highland Road from Rotary Park going west to Cedarburg Road. This will connect families and children on the Ozaukee Interurban Trail (OIT) to Rotary Park, one of our most active City parks. This also allows safer access for bikers and pedestrians to the Town Centers of Mequon and Thiensville. The paved spur is to be designed to be top quality, lasting 20 years, and 10 feet wide minimum to meet two directional standards. A 60% CADD design has been designed and revised after discussions with significant landowners. It is attached as Exhibit A. A final 100% design will be completed in conjunction with the Federal TAP grant, with design contract to be consummated by June 30th, 2023. Construction is to be consummated by August 30, 2024.

Following are the anticipated costs and funding of the project:

HIGHLAND BIKE/PEDESTRIAN SPUR COSTS*

Design	\$ 155,000
Construction	1,233,000
WisDot review	25,000
Endowment**	100,000
Total Anticipated Costs	<u>\$ 1,513,000</u>

FUNDING

Federal TAP Grant ***	988,000
Private donations to date	100,000
Planned fundraisers in 2023	425,000
Total Planned Funding	<u>\$ 1,513,000</u>

*Estimated Costs as of July 2022 60% Plan design

**Endowment held in a Mequon-Thiensville Community Foundation restricted fund to cover maintenance and snow removal for minimum of 10 years or longer

***Federal Government Transportation Alternative Program Grant received 8/30/22

Per the WisDOT State Municipal Agreement, which governs the TAP grant for this project, the project is the sole responsibility of the MT Trails Foundation and will not need the services of the City of Mequon. As such, MT Trails Foundation, Inc. will send out the request for proposal (RFP) for design architects per the TAP grant guidelines in March 2023 to consummate final design work by June 30, 2023. Once a 100% plan is received, MT Trails will come to the City for approval before proceeding to the construction phase, to be consummated by August 30, 2024.

Things to note:

- This spur will be a private path within the City of Mequon's right of way which will be completely funded at no cost to the City of Mequon, as will be outlined in a dedication agreement between MT Trails Foundation, Inc and the City of Mequon.
- MT Trails will be responsible for maintenance and snow removal of the spur through a designated endowment for a minimum of 10 years, at which time the Endowment will be assessed and future funding determined.
- This spur is in alignment with the Joint Mequon/Thiensville Bike Pedestrian Way Commission plans.

Sincerely,

Board of Directors on Behalf of MT Trails Foundation

Christopher Doughty, President

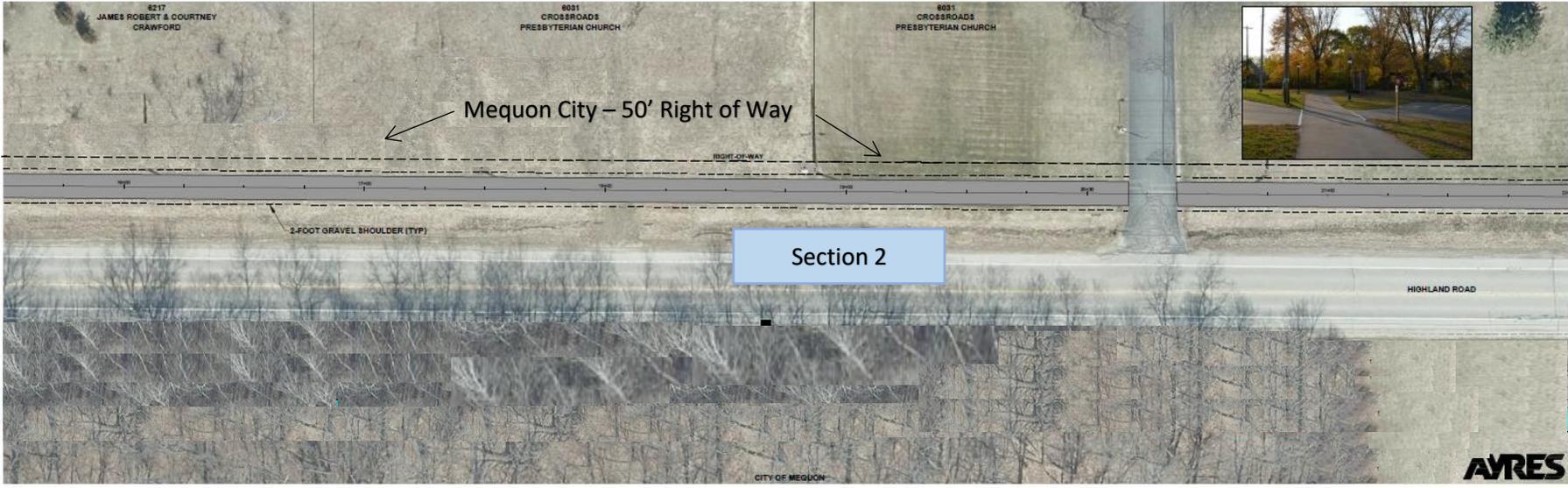
Sam Azinger, Vice President

Lori Lorenz, Sect/Treasurer

"Not every community has trails for people to easily and safely access—yet. According to the CDC, however, this is a priority: "access to safe places to play and walk, such as parks, safe streets, trails, and greenways, is important for physical activity. It is also important to be able to safely and easily walk, bike, or take transit to everyday destinations such as homes, workplaces, schools, parks, health care, and food outlets." By getting outside and using the trails where you live, you can help demonstrate the value of trails and grow appreciation for them, signaling the need to create and connect more trails in more communities."

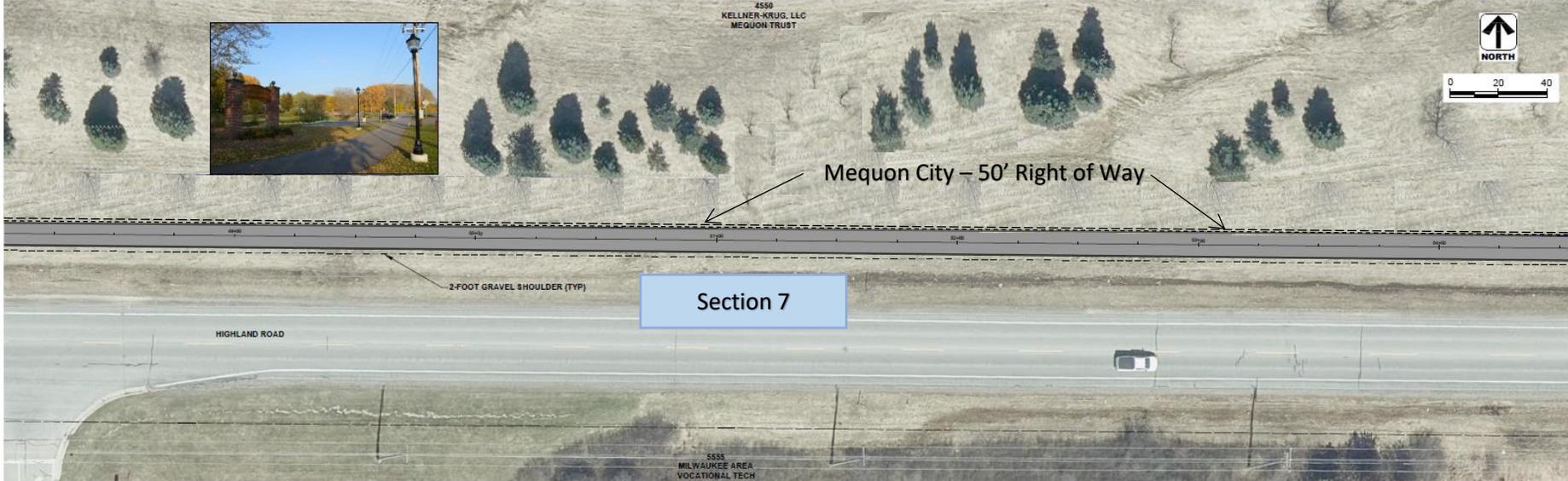
--Rails to Trails Conservancy February 2023

MT Trails – North Side Highland
Pedestrian/Bike Path









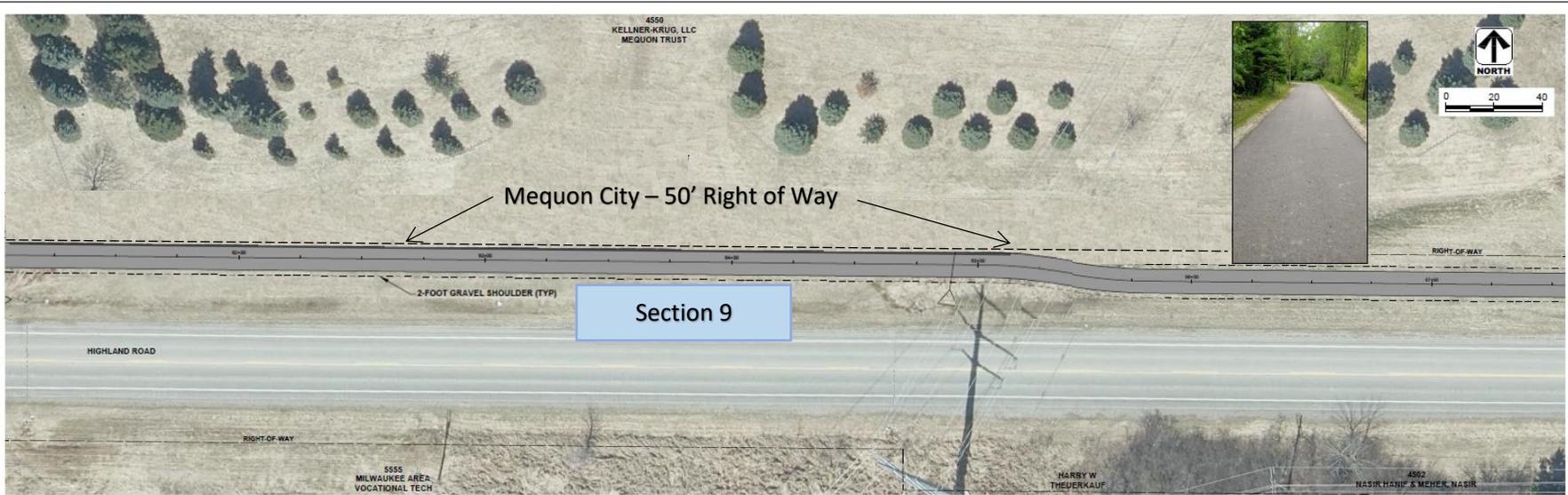




EXHIBIT B

M-T Trails Foundation, Inc. Highland Road Bike/Pedestrian Spur Quotes and Letters of Support for the project

Chair of Mequon/Thiensville Bike/Pedestrian Way Committee, resident and Rotarian: Sam Azinger -- *“Rotary Park is one of the many gems in our community. As a parent of small children, accessing our community on foot or on bicycles is important to keep our kids safe and to encourage healthy lifestyles for generations to come. An off road path connecting the Ozaukee Interurban Trail and Rotary Park would not only provide a safe route for families to access Rotary Park, but would also connect people in North Mequon to the Town Center District and Thiensville businesses.”*

Employee who walks Rotary park and rides OIT: Lisa Sheridan, Director of Client Operations, Gentian Financial *“I walk almost daily during my lunch hour from the Gentian Building over to Rotary Park and the Wooded trail. In fact, my total walk is 3 miles in 55 mins and part of that I have to walk on the side of the road on Highland Rd to get there. The path would be such a major improvement as I would not feel like I am about to get killed or have to be on constant alert for cars from both ways not seeing me. I also bike after work sometimes too and use the Interurban bike trail path but do NOT feel at all comfortable riding a bike on Highland Rd to get to the path. Having the path would be such an added benefit.”*

Gathering on the Green Executive Director: Rob Kos: *“For decades Gathering on the Green has put on our flagship event in Rotary Park. The park is a jewel in our community and we love showing it off to those who come to our events. The possibility of a bike path that would connect Rotary Park to the Ozaukee Interurban Trail is a dream come true. It would enable many more people to safely discover and explore the fantastic asset of our park.”*

Principal of Christ Alone Lutheran School in Thiensville, Paul Berger: *“Christ Alone Lutheran School sees the Ozaukee Interurban Trail as an asset for teaching our students about healthy living. Because it is located on the western edge of our property, we have easy access to it. We use the trail annually for our Run/Walk benefiting Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. We see the potential of using the trail for teaching about biking. Having the trail connect to Rotary Park would give a great destination and turn around point for our trips”*

Mequon Police Chief, Patrick Pryor: *“The Police Dept supports the creation of defining a space for bicyclists to ride and pedestrians to walk, to foster a safer environment for the traveling motorists and bicycles.”*

Head coach of Homestead Highlanders Cross Country, Jay Fuller: *“Something additional like this path would definitely lure our cross country runners over there!”*

Project Manager for Route of the Badger and Rails to Trails Conservancy, Willie Karidis: *“The Rotary Park connection to the Ozaukee Interurban Trail along the north side of Highland Road is a game changing project for the City of Mequon. This forward thinking trail project will provide a seamless connection for all ages and abilities providing safe access where none had existed before to both of these important landmarks.”*

17 year resident of Mequon, Founder of Gentian Financial (on Highland Road), Chris Doughty—*“While living in the Ville Du Parc Subdivision, we have experienced several unfortunate incidents in which pedestrians have been hurt or worse yet lost their lives traveling on Highland road. I often hear families with small children tell us that they do not walk or bike on or near Highland Road due to the high rate of speed and distracted driving that occurs today. One such instance occurred while I was driving along a busy artery near Freistadt and Green Bay Road in Thiensville Wisconsin and we noticed a family of 3 trying to get to the Ozaukee Interurban Trail on their bikes to go to the Mequon Public Market. While driving behind the family, the child lost control of his bicycle and ended up in the MIDDLE of the road. If I had proceeded to pass them (as other vehicles had) that child would be seriously hurt or dead. In another instance there was a father of a resident standing in front of his mailbox on Highland Road to get the mail. It was late in the afternoon and the car did not see him and, in front of his granddaughter, he was killed instantly. I own the building on the corner of Highland and River Road (Gentian Financial) and can see the traffic that speeds along the road. Often much faster than the limit. In a growing, younger suburb, a trail that connects the parks and the existing infrastructure (IUT) would be a very valuable community resource.”*



11333 N. Cedarburg Road
Mequon, WI 53092
262-242-3100

www.ci.mequon.wi.us

Mayor John M. Wirth
mayor@ci.mequon.wi.us
2632-236-2944

January 28, 2022

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am writing in support of the grant request of M-T Trails Foundation.

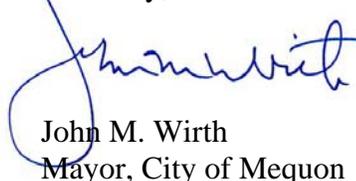
Mequon has a unique interest in bike paths and pedestrian ways. Paths are good in all communities. However, with over 46 square miles and a population of only about 25,000 people, people in Mequon are unusually spread out. Paths create connections and help build community.

Moreover, as a result of our low density, we have far fewer neighborhood streets that connect areas. Instead, bicyclists and pedestrians use arterial streets and highways to get from place to place. These higher traffic streets are often unsafe for bicyclists and pedestrians, including families with children. Paths resolve the safety concerns of those streets.

The M-T Trails Foundation hopes to first build a path along Highland Road, connecting the Ozaukee Interurban Trail with Rotary Park, Mequon's largest active park. Considering that the Ozaukee Interurban Trail bisects Mequon and Thiensville, much of the community will be able to take advantage of this connection to get to Rotary Park. Further, the 30-mile Ozaukee Interurban Trail connects Mequon and Thiensville to the rest of Ozaukee County. Therefore, the proposed Rotary Park/Highland Road connection will benefit bicyclists from multiple communities. There are a number of hurdles to get this path built, but a grant would go a long way to assist to make this happen.

I respectfully request that you give the M-T Trails Foundation request your greatest consideration.

Sincerely,



John M. Wirth
Mayor, City of Mequon

January 27, 2022

Travis Houle
Statewide Local Program Manager
WI Department of Transportation
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison WI 53705



To Whom it May Concern:

I am pleased to write this letter in support of the Highland Bike and Pedestrian Path project. While bicyclists will undoubtedly enjoy the increased trail-riding opportunities this project would bring to Wisconsin's Lake Michigan coast, the far-reaching enhancements this connection will bring to the area's local economies, tourism industries, and residential health and well-being make this a worthwhile project for our state to invest in.

The Highland Bike and Pedestrian Path would connect the Mequon Rotary Park with the Ozaukee Interurban Trail via a 1.5 mile long paved path. The interconnectivity between Mequon/Thiensville area trails this project would bring is well-supported by community members, law enforcement, local advocates, and affected homeowners. I have been impressed by the dedication these motivated stakeholders have to getting this project completed and am confident that with proper funding, the project will be a success.

The importance of trails for our Wisconsin communities cannot be understated. While the obvious impacts of increased community recreation opportunities are clear, trails do so much more for the communities they serve, including bettering public health, increasing economic and transportation benefits, enhancing environmental and conservation efforts, and even establishing a sense of identity within the community. By investing in trails, we invest in our residents, our communities, and our state.

The Highland Bike and Pedestrian Path will serve as a great opportunity for interconnectivity throughout southeast Wisconsin. I offer my full support for the project and will happily work to advocate on behalf of this important community connection.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kirsten Finn'.

Kirsten Finn, Executive Director
Wisconsin Bike Federation
187 E. Becher St.
Milwaukee, WI 53207

EXHIBIT C

COMMON COUNCIL
OF THE
CITY OF MEQUON

RESOLUTION 3926

A Resolution Supporting the M-T Trails Foundation, Inc. Application for a Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant and Pending Memorandum of Understanding/Donation Agreement for an Off Road Path on Highland Road from the Ozaukee Interurban Trail to Rotary Park

RECITALS

A. M-T Trails Foundation, Inc. applied for a Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Project grant (Grant).

B. The Grant requires the City to pass a local resolution of support for the proposed project, executed by a governing body that has the authority to make financial commitment on behalf of the project sponsor.

C. The Grant application terms requires a resolution will be required for an application to be eligible, which means a copy of the resolution should be submitted to the Region Local Program Manager no later than 5:00 PM April 18, 2022.

D. The City has no financial responsibility for the project.

E. If the Grant is awarded, M-T Trails Foundation, Inc. and the City of Mequon will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and/or Donation Agreement to provide a framework for administrating the Grant and to provide an understanding about M-T Trails Foundation, Inc.'s commitment to provide matching funds for the Grant.

F. M-T Trails Foundation, Inc. will provide all required project sponsor match funds and any additional project costs not covered under the Grant agreement and the MOU/Donation Agreement.

G. If intended to be dedicated to the City as a public off road path, the design must adhere to the Standard Specifications for Land Development, current edition and meet ADA requirements.

H. If ultimately dedicated to the City, the M-T Trails Foundation, Inc. acknowledges that the City will establish the terms and conditions for the operation and maintenance of the path, including snow removal and future replacement, as defined in the Donation Agreement.

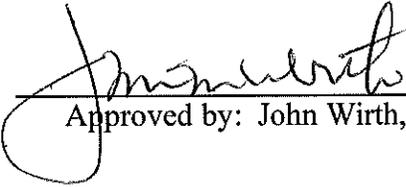
BASED UPON THE FOREGOING RECITALS, IT IS RESOLVED by the Common Council of the City of Mequon, Wisconsin, that:

1. This resolution shall serve as the resolution required for the application to be eligible for the WisDOT TAP grant.

2. Following the grant award, the M-T Trails Foundation, Inc. shall populate the Donation Agreement template document and work with staff for a recommendation for further Common Council consideration and approval.

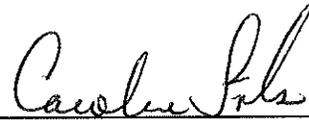
3. The Common Council will act on the Donation Agreement, including review and approval of the terms and conditions, at a future meeting in accordance with the City's Financial Policies.

4. The Mayor and City Clerk are authorized and directed to execute any necessary documentation to effectuate the purposes of this resolution subject to review and approval of the City Attorney.


Approved by: John Wirth, Mayor

Date Approved: March 8, 2022

I certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Common Council of the City of Mequon, Wisconsin, at a meeting held on March 8, 2022.


Caroline Fochs, City Clerk