

EVERGREEN PARK TRAIL IMPROVEMENT PROPOSAL

SHEBOYGAN, WI | June 2025



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PREPARED FOR:

THE CITY OF SHEBOYGAN PUBLIC WORKS



PREPARED BY:

SHEBOYGAN COUNTY CYCLING



**BASED ON COMMUNITY INPUT AND TRAIL ASSESSMENT
AND CONCEPT PLAN PREPARED BY:**

INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN BICYCLING ASSOCIATION -
TRAIL SOLUTIONS



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IMBA TRAIL SOLUTIONS

The spring 2024 trail assessment and Evergreen Park Concept Plan (Resolution 156-24-25) were prepared by IMBA Trail Solutions. Sheboygan County Cycling (SCC) prepared this updated proposal based on IMBA's assessment and concept plan, **incorporating subsequent community feedback**. The following page provides an introduction to IMBA as an organization, and pages 2 through 5 document IMBA involvement in this project including their site visit.

IMBA Statement: “**IMBA Trail Solutions** is the international leader in developing trails, with experience in over 1,000 projects in North America, Europe, and Asia. Our staff excels at planning, design, and construction of trail systems that provide high-quality experiences for local riders and destination visitors while simultaneously minimizing environmental impacts.

IMBA Trail Solutions is a fee-for-service arm of the **International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA)**, a **501(c)(3) nonprofit** organization. IMBA's mission is to create, enhance, and protect great places to ride mountain bikes. Based in Boulder, Colorado, and with staff distributed across the country and the world, IMBA meets its goal to create great mountain bike experiences through its Trail Solutions program. **IMBA Trail Solutions employs approximately 20 professional trail planners and builders.** In addition to being industry professionals and exceptional mountain bike riders, IMBA Trail Solutions staff hold a broad base of applicable skills and knowledge from planning, landscape architecture, and environmental sciences to GIS systems, CAD, and graphic design.

Our wealth of experience has allowed us to develop the gold standard guidelines for the creation of both sustainable and enjoyable singletrack trails. **These guidelines have influenced all major federal land management agencies and a large number of state and local parks departments.** We pride ourselves on the positive experiences IMBA Trail Solutions has provided to the millions of active trail users around the world and on the economic independence that communities have achieved through the development of destination trail systems.”



PROJECT BACKGROUND

Desktop Analysis

Prior to the on-site visit, IMBA Trail Solutions staff worked with the City of Sheboygan and SCC to collect **geospatial data** for basemap development and desktop analysis. Datasets included:

- Digital Elevation Models (DEM)
- Aerial Imagery
- Park Boundaries and Infrastructure
- Hydrology and Wetlands Data
- Soil Data
- Trail Alignments

IMBA Trail Solutions processed high-resolution DEM data to produce two-foot contours and a slope analysis map to gain a better **understanding of topography**. Utilizing these datasets, IMBA Trail Solutions staff generated custom georeferenced maps and loaded them into Avenza Maps for fieldwork.

Field Data Collection

IMBA Trail Solutions staff rode and walked each trail in Evergreen, Maywood, and Quarry Parks, making frequent stops to assess trail conditions and collect GPS point data with detailed field notes. **Each trail was given a qualitative rating for Condition and Character on a one-to-five scale**, one being poor, and five being exceptional.

Condition ratings are based on the assessment of factors such as trail grade sustainability, degree of erosion, proper drainage location, quality of feature construction, and ease of wayfinding. **Character ratings** are evaluations of trail experience tailored to each trail type and skill level.

[Notes and images record assessment findings; each of these were grouped into general categories and post-processed for ESRI StoryMaps, printed maps, report documentation, and trail database refinement. All assessment data is geospatially referenced and available via ESRI shapefile or KML.]



Contours and slope maps were generated to visualize and analyze park terrain.



All shared-use trails in Evergreen Park and its two neighboring parks were assessed by IMBA Trail Solutions staff.

TRAIL NETWORK OVERVIEW

A trail network assessment was performed on **October 4-6, 2023**, with a review of the trail amenities, trailhead, signage, and **nearly 15 miles of trails in Evergreen, Maywood Environmental, and Jaycee Quarry Parks**. During the time of assessment, there were few other users on the trails. The local National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) group held afternoon practice sessions, which brought nearly 20 riders to the trails. Hikers and dog walkers were occasionally encountered on the trails throughout the three-day visit. Weather conditions were excellent for the full duration of the visit with mild temperatures and no rain.

Parking and Trailhead

Evergreen Park, Maywood Environmental Park (Maywood), and Jaycee Quarry Park (Quarry) **each have parking areas with trails connecting the parks:**

- Maywood has parking near its Ecology Center to the north of Pigeon River, where the trails are open to hiking only. A bridge crosses the Pigeon River to connect to the southern shared-use portion of the Maywood property.
- Evergreen Park has three main parking areas: one in the southeast corner near the playground and two adjacent to Calumet Drive along the paved perimeter loop. Some of this parking is closed leading up to the Making Spirits Bright holiday light show for park preparation.
- The Quarry parking lot is the largest among the three parks, and mountain bikers most commonly use this lot to access the trail system.

Although parking is ample, **the parks lack a central trailhead location, information kiosk, and trail map** for hikers, bike riders, and other users to learn about the trail network, plan routes, and gather for group outings. These amenities are key to trail network success.

Wayfinding and Signage

One of the most obvious shortcomings of the Evergreen Park trail network, as identified in the 2021 Evergreen Park Concept Plan, is a **lack of clear signage and wayfinding** throughout the tightly-packed, complex network of trails that span Evergreen, Maywood, and Quarry parks. This has caused the formation of many off-trail social paths, further complicating the trail layout. As reported in community surveys and anecdotal conversation, trail users, especially newcomers and those unfamiliar with the trail layout, **frequently get lost in these parks** due to the sparse signage in the trail network. This is not only frustrating for hikers and bike riders, but it also potentially dangerous, even in a suburban city park environment.

A main priority for SCC is establishing a designated route through the trail network with clear signage. **In Winter-Spring 2024, the group installed wayfinding posts and indicators along designated trails**, providing users with an easily navigable route through the park. Parking lot trailhead signs such as the one pictured below are still needed to inform users of where to go and trail etiquette while enjoying the park.



Example of a central trailhead with an informative kiosk and trail map in Heritage Park, Slinger, WI.

TRAIL ASSESSMENT

IMBA Trail Solutions staff performed on-site trail assessments for each of the shared-use natural surface trails in Evergreen, Maywood, and Quarry Park. Assessment **findings were grouped into the following six categories:**

Fall Line



Sustainable trail design includes a variety of researched and time-tested design and construction principles. One key to trail sustainability is working with the contours of the land and **avoiding trail grades that exceed half the grade of the hillside**. Trails that do exceed half the side slope are considered fall line trails, which introduce a host of potential issues. Fall line trails are susceptible to major erosion and rutting as water flows down the trail tread instead of sheeting across.

Duplicative Trails



Dense trail networks may further complicate user navigation and have more significant ecological impacts on fragile environments. In some parks, new trails emerge from the landscape seasonally as users – sometimes intentionally – forge new paths through the forest. Many of these trails parallel existing trails, adding **unnecessary complexity** to the trail network and causing greater environmental impacts.

Hazard



Trail hazards are things that are particularly **dangerous for trail users**. These may include fallen trees, broken bridges, or trail features in disrepair. Hazards are specifically called out in assessment maps.

Wet



Wet areas of a trail are caused by a variety of reasons, including tread drainage issues (tread cupping, lack of tread outslope, lack of grade reversals) and geological issues (seeps, wetlands, and poorly drained soils). **Wet areas result in trail widening** as users attempt to navigate around the water, causing additional erosion. Wet areas may be avoided by **locating trails on suitable terrain and constructing trails with proper drainage**.

Overgrown



Trails require **frequent maintenance**; the recommended maintenance interval varies by region, landcover type, and use intensity. Overgrown trails are sometimes simply past-due for a seasonal cleanup. In other instances, overgrown trails are the result of **infrequent use** and are all but closed to hikers, riders, and other users. In the latter scenario, the **trails should be considered for official decommissioning with a revegetation effort**.

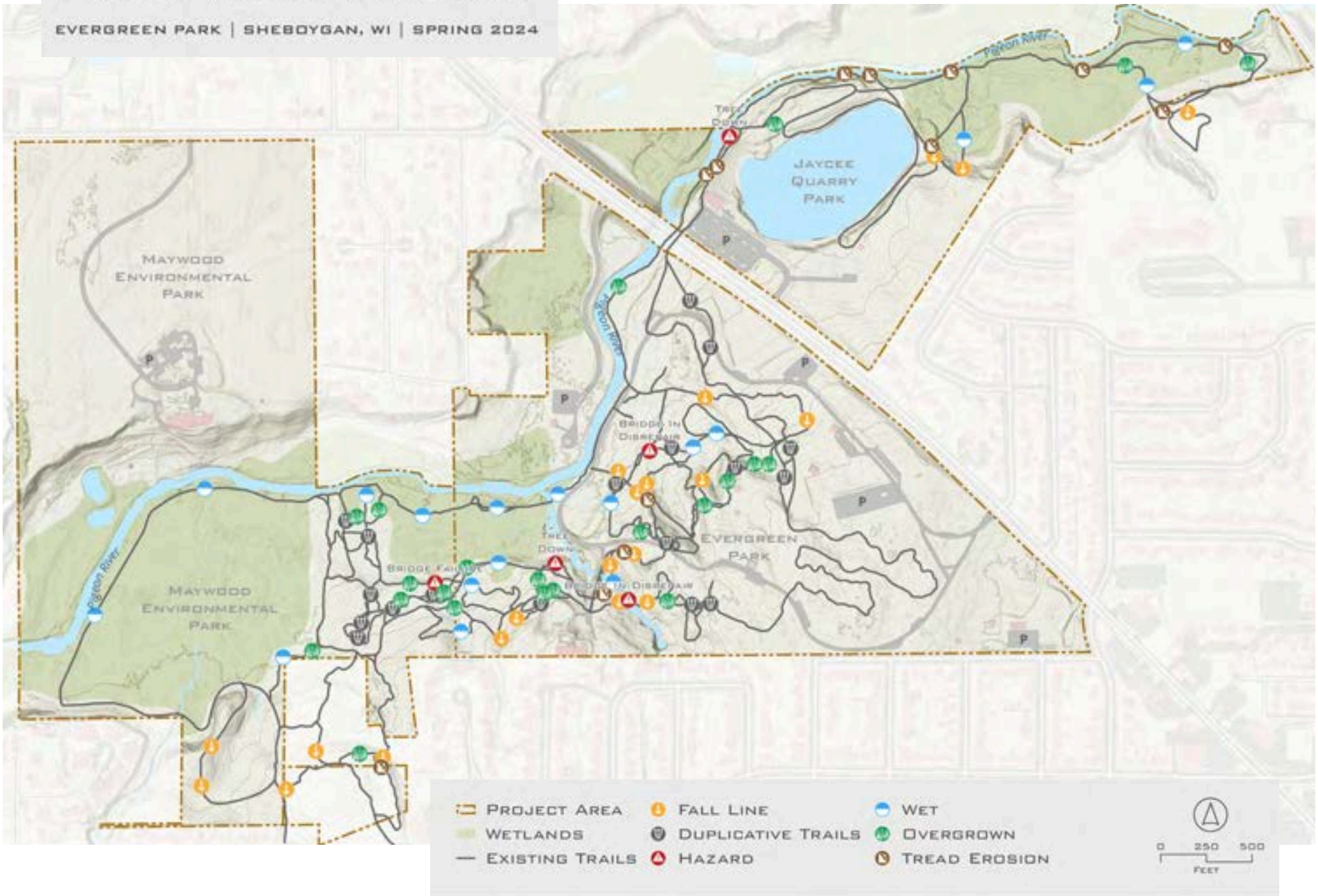
Tread Erosion



There are many **common symptoms of tread erosion** including tread cupping, significant rutting, and exposed roots that become more apparent over time. **Trails that traverse steep drainages or that are located along flowing bodies of water** are particularly susceptible to major erosion. In many cases, trail tread should be rock-armored if drainage crossings are unavoidable. Trails next to streams or rivers should be **strategically located** to avoid cut banks (the outer edge of a stream bend, which is expected to migrate further outwards over time). Trail tread located near a cut bank is likely to become undercut by the stream.

TRAIL ASSESSMENT

EVERGREEN PARK | SHEBOYGAN, WI | SPRING 2024



FINDINGS

Evergreen Park is considered a gem to Sheboygan, Wisconsin – home to diverse wildlife, beautiful trees, and some excellent terrain above the floodplains and wetlands of the Pigeon River.

The trails in this park are often **difficult to navigate** with many overlapping and crisscrossing trail alignments through the forest. Some of the segments are seemingly abandoned, but without clear signage, it is **difficult to decipher between closed and open trails**.

Fall line segments are common throughout Evergreen, which often correlated with **eroding trail tread**. Additionally, **wet segments** are mostly found in the low-lying wetlands or drainage crossings.

The **bridges** within the trail network are in great disrepair, and there are many downed trees as a result of storms in past years.



Duplicate trails as a result of standing water on trails.



Damaged bridge in need of repair.



Damaged and downed bridges were documented as part of the assessment process.

TRAIL NETWORK VISION

SCC built the following trail network vision based on:

- The trail assessment performed by IMBA Trail Solutions during October 2023;
- Community engagement throughout January 2024 and throughout spring of 2025; and
- Continued planning meetings with the City of Sheboygan and its Department of Public Works.

Collectively, this informed a conceptual trail network vision that suggests **improvements and new trail amenities** in Evergreen Park. The conceptual trail alignments are laid out to minimize soil erosion and environmental disturbance while providing an improved shared-use trail network for all users.

Conceptual additions include areas identified for beginner-friendly bicycle **skills features** and a **bicycle playground**. A one-mile **accessible perimeter** provides circulation through the park while bike-optimized **flow trails** take advantage of the park's elevation. **Hike-preferred** and traditional **shared-use singletrack** trails are drawn with sustainable grades and alignments that allow users to configure loops of various lengths and connect with existing trails at defined hub locations.

Improvements to the existing trails may be implemented on an as-needed basis to ensure proper drainage, minimize erosion, and improve the user experience. Additional details on potential issues can be found in the complete IMBA Trail Solutions assessment.

All of the new trails and amenities recommended in this plan are **focused within Evergreen Park**, which offers the best opportunities for sustainable trail alignments that also meet the goals outlined by stakeholders and the community. If implemented, **new trail development may result in some existing trail re-routes and closures** to accommodate the improved trail network alignments and reduce unsustainable trail. During this process, proper signage and re-routes should be prioritized to allow for cohesive trail experiences in the park during phases of new design and construction.



A bicycle playground with beginner skills features provides a progressive learning environment for newcomers.



Trails built to modern standards result in a more enjoyable shared-use experience for all trail users.

RECOMMENDED PHASING

Trail design and construction is commonly divided into **manageable phases of work** to help communities prioritize goals, raise funds, and develop projects over a reasonable timeline. The following phases* are recommended for implementing the Trail Network Vision for Evergreen Park. Subject to change based on results of the design phase, funding, and the need of Evergreen Park:

2

INITIAL IMPROVEMENTS PHASE

The initial portion of the project includes creating a new **one-mile accessible perimeter trail** that provides bidirectional circulation through the interior of the park for all users. This perimeter trail would be constructed in combination with:

- A **bicycle playground** near the existing Shaw playground;
- A beginner **skills area** with natural-material and/or prebuilt wooden skills features; and
- A progressive **flow trails area** that would establish 0.75 miles of bike-optimized trails.

3

MILEAGE PHASE

The following phase includes creating **hike-preferred trails**, an intermediate/advanced **skills area**, and constructing traditional **multi-use singletrack trails** that utilize modern, sustainable trail design techniques (incorporating existing segments where possible).

Finalizing **trail head maps** for the newly built trails as well as existing ski/hike and multi-use trails will be a key deliverable of this portion of the project.

**Phase 1 consisted of installing signage to establish a route on existing trails for user guidance and safety, which is complete.*

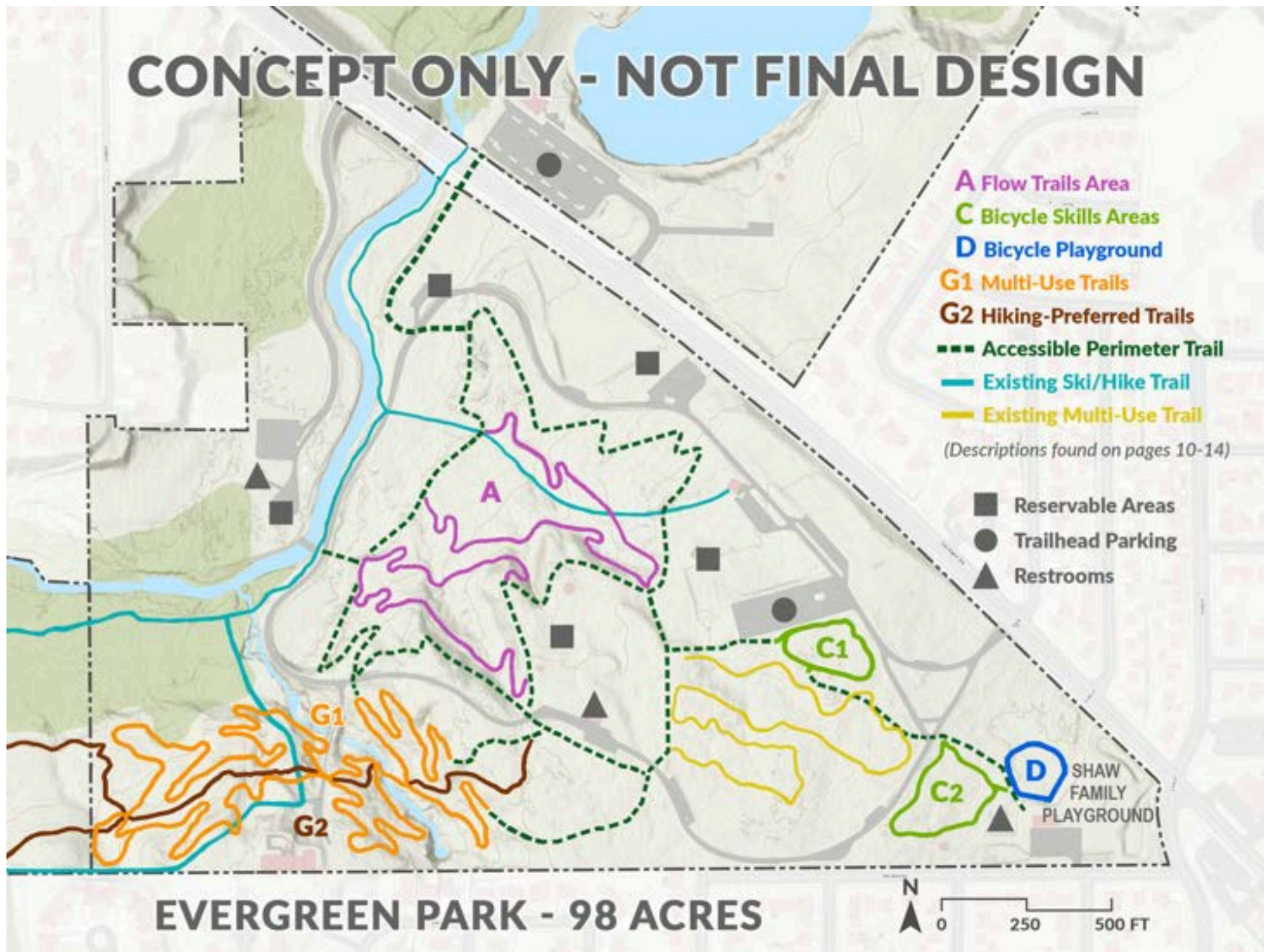


Sustainable trails provide immersive nature experiences, serving a wide range of activities and community members.



Well-designed trails minimize environmental impact by considering the local soils, hydrology, and biota.

CONCEPT ONLY - NOT FINAL DESIGN



PROPOSED TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

----- Accessible Perimeter Trail

Accessible walking & cycling trail, 60" wide tread for side-by-side use. Natural-setting option for all skill levels and ages.

- Surface: Packed dirt
- Width: 60"
- Length: 1.2 Miles
- Use: Multi-Use, two-direction
- Skill level: Novice / All Skill Levels



Note: Trail project areas B, E, and F are not included in this updated proposal, but labeling of project areas remains consistent with the previous IMBA concept plan for ease of reference.

A - Flow Trails Area

Approx. 0.75 mile multi-use trails, suitable for hiking, novice biker friendly, and optimized for bicycles.

- Surface: Packed dirt
- Width: 24-36"
- Length: 0.75 Miles
- Use: Multi-Use, user direction specified
- Skill level: Beginner / Intermediate



PROPOSED TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS (CONTINUED)

C1 & C2 - Bicycle Skills Areas

Multi-use trails with built & natural skills features for bicycles. Walk or ride-around of features will be available.

- Surface: Packed dirt with trailside features
- Width: 24-36"
- Length: 0.33 (C2) & 0.25 (C1) Miles
- Use: Multi-Use, user direction specified
- Skill level: Beginner (C2) & Intermediate / Advanced (C1)



D - Bicycle Playground

Beginner features in a safe, progressive learning environment for kids ages 2-12. Signage will provide safety and etiquette information, and direct older users to other areas of the park.

- Surface: Packed dirt with features
- Width: Variable
- Length: 350-450"
- Use: Kids ages 2-12
- Skill level: Novice



Note: Trail project areas B, E, and F are not included in this updated proposal, but labeling of project areas remains consistent with the previous IMBA concept plan for ease of reference.

PROPOSED TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS (CONTINUED)

G1 - Multi-Use Trails

Approx. 1.75 miles easy to intermediate multi-use trails suitable for hiking and cycling.

- Surface: Packed dirt
- Width: 12-36"
- Length: 1.75 Miles
- Use: Multi-Use, user direction specified
- Skill level: Beginner / Intermediate



G2 - Hiking-Preferred Trails

Approx. 0.5 mile hiking-preferred trails connecting existing trails. User-created social trails are present in this area, indicating a desire for a path.

- Surface: Packed dirt
- Width: 12-36"
- Length: 0.5 Miles
- Use: Hike-preferred, two-direction
- Skill level: Beginner / Intermediate



Photo credit: Scott Hogen

Note: Trail project areas B, E, and F are not included in this updated proposal, but labeling of project areas remains consistent with the previous IMBA concept plan for ease of reference.

EXISTING TRAILS

Existing Multi-Use Trail

No changes proposed. Existing traditional multi-use singletrack trail that will be included on trailhead maps. Connects with proposed accessible perimeter trail.

- Surface: Packed dirt
- Width: 12-36"
- Length: 0.3 Miles
- Use: Multi-Use, user direction specified
- Skill level: Beginner / Intermediate



Note: Trail project areas B, E, and F are not included in this updated proposal, but labeling of project areas remains consistent with the previous IMBA concept plan for ease of reference.

Existing Ski / Hike Trail

No changes proposed. Existing trail that will be included on trailhead maps. Connects with the paved road loop and Maywood trails.

- Surface: Mowed grass, dirt, gravel (varies along length)
- Width: 10-14'
- Length: 0.75 Miles
- Use: Multi-Use, two-direction
- Skill level: Beginner



TRAIL SUMMARY

Phase 2				
Project Area	Length	Width	Use	Skill Level
D - Bicycle Playground	350 - 450 Feet	Variable	Bike, Play	Novice (ages 2-12)
C2 - Bicycle Skills Area	0.33 Miles	24-36"	Multi-Use, Dir.*	Beginner
- - -Accessible Perimeter Trail	1.2 Miles	60"	Multi-Use	Novice / All Skill Levels
A - Flow Trails	0.75 Miles	24-36"	Multi-Use, Dir.*	Beginner / Intermediate

Phase 3				
Project Area	Length	Width	Use	Skill Level
G1 - Multi-Use Trails	1.75 Miles	12-36"	Multi-Use, Dir.*	Beginner / Intermediate
G2 - Hiking-Preferred Trails	0.5 Miles	12-36"	Multi-Use	Beginner / Intermediate
C1 - Bicycle Skills Area	0.25 Miles	24-36"	Multi-Use, Dir.*	Intermediate / Advanced
Multi-Use Bridge	N/A	N/A	Multi-Use	All

Existing Trails				
Project Area	Length	Width	Use	Skill Level
Existing Multi-Use Trail	0.3 Miles	12-36"	Multi-Use, Dir.*	Beginner / Intermediate
Existing Ski-Hike Trail	0.75 Miles	10-14'	Multi-Use	Beginner

Current **total mileage of natural surface trails within Evergreen Park is estimated at 6.6 to 8 miles**. By implementing this proposal, the park would see the total trail mileage reduce to establish more sustainable, intentional, and enjoyable trail routing. Based on these conceptual project areas, **total proposed trail mileage is estimated to be 5.9 miles**** across all use types.



Directional Example

(**This estimate refers to natural-surface trails primarily in a wooded or vegetated setting, distinct from the approximately 1 mile paved road loop often used by hikers, dog walkers, and bikers. This proposal does not alter the existing paved loop.)

CONCLUSION

Evergreen Park is a **98 acre park and a treasure** for the City of Sheboygan, offering a diverse array of outdoor recreational opportunities for both residents and visitors. This park serves many purposes, attracting individuals in search of nature, exercise, tranquility, and exploration, all within the forested heart of the city.

Evergreen Park has been around for nearly a century and has witnessed eras of enhancement, decline, restoration and evolution. Now, with **renewed energy from the City of Sheboygan and Sheboygan County Cycling**, there is a great opportunity to breathe new life into the park's trail system, ensuring its enjoyment for generations to come.

This proposal showcases exciting additions to the park, such as flow trails, skills features, a dedicated bicycle playground, hike-only trails, and a revitalized traditional singletrack trails. Collectively, these enhancements provide **a more comprehensive and sustainable trail network**, fostering enduring recreational experiences for all who visit.



Photo credit: Hansi Johnson

