

Circulation Plan

The Circulation Plan is a plan for pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular movement. An effective circulation system will be essential in maintaining and enhancing the overall health, safety, accessibility, and quality-of-life of the Grand Traverse Commons.

As part of the Master Plan update process, the Joint Planning Commission began to conduct an in-depth study of the street network, vehicular circulation, pedestrian circulation, and parking for the Grand Traverse Commons. At the same time, the City of Traverse City and Charter Township of Garfield Recreational Authority (Recreation Authority) initiated a public input process to engage road agencies, local governments, adjacent property owners, and the community on an effective design for a new south campus entrance (commonly known as the Franke Road Extension). At the same time, the Recreational Authority was engaged in the development of a conceptual site plan for the Barns property. In addition, the *Grand Vision*, a regional land use and transportation planning effort, identified Division Street as a “corridor of significance” - pledging to issue recommendations for improved access into the Grand Traverse Commons. In an effort to encourage consistency, these planning efforts were merged. In general, the circulation strategies outlined in this plan, including the design recommendations established under the Recreational Authority planning efforts, were guided by the following five principles:

Provide for Non-Motorized Access: Access to the Grand Traverse Commons for pedestrians and bicyclists is a priority. Safe and accessible crosswalks will link the campus with the surrounding community. Key areas of the campus will be connected with sidewalks, trails, and pathways.

Encourage Traffic Flow and Connectivity: There will be a predominant route for vehicles to access the Grand Traverse Commons. However, a series of secondary or limited, well-connected streets will provide access throughout the Grand Traverse Commons. Innovative street design and traffic calming measures will limit speeds and discourage cut-through traffic.

Preserve Historic Character: Streets and parking areas shall be unobtrusive and compatible in appearance and scale with the historical character of the surrounding buildings and landscape. Streets should reflect the unique features and history of the campus.

Connectivity - A series of well-connected sidewalks and streets will provide pedestrian and vehicular access throughout the Grand Traverse Commons.



Preserve Natural Features: Streets and parking areas shall be unobtrusive, compatible with, and protect the natural features of the Grand Traverse Commons. *Best Management Practices* will be utilized to protect wetlands, creeks, existing trees, and unique landscape. Pervious pavement and other sustainable materials will be encouraged.

Establish Distinctive Entryways: Entryways into the Grand Traverse Commons shall be clearly identifiable and distinctive. Upon entering the campus, visitors should recognize they are entering a special and unique place.

Non-Motorized Circulation

Current Non-Motorized Circulation Inventory

Non-motorized pathways connect the Grand Traverse Commons to the community for bicycle and foot traffic and tie together different elements within the campus. A series of nature trails loop through the wooded bluffs in the western portion of the campus. The trails are accessed by defined trailheads near the historic barns, the TBAISD building, behind the warehouse area and west of Parking Lot K (and other locations outside the campus). The men’s and women’s walks (nature trails) are located in the eastern portion of the campus. A crushed limestone trail cuts west from 14th Street to Silver Drive and north to Elmwood Avenue. These trails are accessed by a trailhead and parking area just south of the 11th Street and Elmwood Avenue intersection. A designated bike route is located on Elmwood Avenue. Sidewalks are located throughout the campus. However, in some areas, sidewalks end abruptly, dead end or are non-existent. Map 10 illustrates the current non-motorized circulation inventory of the Grand Traverse Commons.

Future Non-Motorized Circulation

As part of the proposed circulation plan, a number of new sidewalks, pathways, trails and bike-lanes will be added to the current non-motorized system to provide for safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle access throughout the campus and with the surrounding community. Map 10 also illustrates the proposed non-motorized facilities for the Grand Traverse Commons.

Best Management Practices - The Grand Traverse Bay Watershed Center has developed a Best Practices Manual that outlines innovative practices to protect water features.

Non-Motorized Circulation - There are several sidewalks throughout the campus that dead-end and lead to nowhere.



Pathways

A new non-motorized pathway will be part of the new south campus entrance (as illustrated on page 73). The new pathway will cross Silver Lake Road and stretch north, along the east side of Silver Drive and around the Champion Willows. Separated from traffic, the new pathway will then connect at the current limestone pathway near the TBAISD entrance. The new pathway is part of a larger pathway and connectivity network that would link to the Traverse City West Middle School to the south and 14th Street and the Central Neighborhood to the east. The initial location of the pathway was established through a local *Safe-Routes-to-School Program*. Local advocacy groups have already applied for *Safe-Routes-to-School* funding to build the pathway.

Pathways - There are several sidewalks, pathways and trails that traverse the natural areas of the Grand Traverse Commons.



Sidewalks and Crosswalks

New sidewalks will be added to the existing sidewalk system. Sidewalks will no longer dead end or lead to nowhere. Formal crosswalks will also be added at important street crossings. The new crosswalks will establish a clear pathway for pedestrian movement at busy intersections. In an effort to tie into the historical character of the campus, crosswalks will incorporate the beige brick found on the historic buildings.

Crosswalk to Parking Lot K



Current

Suggested Approach

11th Street and Elmwood Avenue Intersection



Current

Suggested Approach

Trails

In an effort to minimize parking in the barns area and encourage shared parking with other areas of the campus, a new trail has been proposed along the west side of Red Drive to connect the proposed Botanical Gardens with the TBAISD parking lot.

Vehicular Circulation

Current Street Inventory

The Grand Traverse Commons is bordered by US-31 (Division Street) on the east, Silver Lake Road on the south and Long Lake Road on the west. The Munson Medical Center Complex and Medical Campus Drive comprise the northern border of the Grand Traverse Commons.

The primary entryway into the campus is from the east, via 11th Street. A dedicated city street, 11th Street has a paved width that is adequate for two traffic lanes and one lane of parking. Madison Street and Elmwood Avenue provide access to the campus from the north. Red Drive is a private street located behind the Munson Medical Center, connecting to 6th Street. Red Drive has a paved width that is adequate for two lanes of traffic. Elmwood Avenue is a dedicated city street and has a paved width that is adequate for two traffic lanes and parking lanes on each side of the street. Entry into the campus from the north via Elmwood Avenue requires drivers to travel through the Kids Creek Neighborhood and in front of the emergency access of the Munson Medical Center. Access from the west is via Medical Campus Drive.

A private street, Medical Campus Drive has a paved width that is adequate for two lanes of traffic. Medical Campus Drive is a long and winding street that bisects the wooded hillsides of the campus and provides access to a number of medical offices, the Munson Medical Center and the Grand Traverse Pavilions. Access onto Medical Campus Drive from Long Lake Road is controlled by a traffic light. Silver Lake Road is owned and maintained by the Grand Traverse County Road Commission. It is a major thoroughfare in the area and is three-to-four lanes wide.

Private Streets - Medical Campus Drive primarily serves the Munson Medical Center and the Pavilions. However, the street serves as one of the primary entryways into the Grand Traverse Commons.



Other streets within the Grand Traverse Commons (Red Drive, Brown Drive, Yellow Drive, Silver Drive, and Cottageview Drive) are typically two lanes wide. Portions of these streets are gravel and often in poor condition. Most of these streets are private streets, not publically maintained.

Future Street Categories

As part of the proposed circulation plan, most streets will be located in the “Development Zone” of the Grand Traverse Commons, with linkages through the “Natural/Park Zone” to the campus edge. Streets will be organized into three distinct categories - defined by the access they are intended to provide. Map 11 shows the proposed street categories and other features for the Grand Traverse Commons.

Major Streets - Streets intended to be the predominant traffic route within the Grand Traverse Commons. The street surface should be paved and accommodate two lanes of traffic. Pedestrians should be separated from motor vehicle traffic with walkways. Major Access Streets include: 11th Street, Elmwood Avenue, Medical Campus Drive, and Silver Drive.

Minor Streets - Streets intended to provide access to specific locations within the campus and alternative routes throughout the campus. The street surface should be paved and accommodate two narrow lanes of traffic. Pedestrians should be separated from motor vehicle traffic with walkways. Minor Access Streets include: Red Drive (near the barns and around the bocce-ball courts) and Cottageview Drive.

Limited Streets - Streets intended to provide limited access to specific locations within the campus. The street surface should be paved and appear to be one-wide lane - while accommodating two narrow lanes of traffic. Limited Access Streets will function and appear very much like a typical Traverse City alley. Pedestrians and bicyclists will share the street with vehicles. Limited Access Streets include: Red Drive (near the TBA Building and around Building 40), Yellow Drive, Elmwood Avenue (south of 11th Street), 11th Street (in front of Building 50), and Brown Drive.

Entryways

The primary entryways into the Grand Traverse Commons are located at 11th Street and Medical Campus Drive. The Recreational Authority, in cooperation with the Joint Planning Commission, recently facilitated a public planning process to complete plans for a new south campus entrance at Silver Lake Drive. The current entryways into the Grand Traverse Commons are relatively simple and indistinguishable. The grand allée of Maple Trees that line 11th Street are quite striking. However, they do

Gravel Streets - There are several gravel streets within the Grand Traverse Commons, often in poor condition. (Below) - Silver Drive



Entryways - 11th Street is the primary entryway into the Grand Traverse Commons.



not frame the immediate entryway into campus. A relatively modest sign was only just recently placed at the 11th Street entryway. There is no formal sign acknowledging the Grand Traverse Commons at the entryway of Medical Campus Drive. Property owners and public officials have received numerous complaints about the lack of signage acknowledging the Grand Traverse Commons and some of the campus's important services (e.g. Munson Medical Center). Additional complaints have been recorded about the lack of lighting and associated safety risks of the entryways.

This plan proposes additional signs along with distinctive road treatments, structural amenities, landscaping, and lighting to be incorporated into new designs for the three primary entryways into the Grand Traverse Commons. The newly constructed entryways would tie into the historical character of the campus and compliment the surrounding landscape. Most importantly, the newly constructed entryways would exhibit a character that signals to visitors they are entering a special and unique place.

Private and Public Streets

Many of the Minor and Limited Access streets within the Grand Traverse Commons are privately owned. Although narrow private streets often provide a more aesthetically pleasing driving environment, access for pedestrians and use less land, there are a number of potential problems associated with these private streets. Poor maintenance of private streets can lead to limited emergency access, limited public access, dangerous conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists, and increased liability for property owners. As part of the proposed vehicular circulation plan, the Joint Planning Commission will work with private land owners to gradually transfer ownership of private streets to the City of Traverse City. This transfer of ownership could be initiated by the private land owner or as future re-development makes it necessary.

11th Street and Division Street Intersection

The primary entrance or “front door” to the Grand Traverse Commons is 11th Street, which intersects with Division Street - a state highway and one of the primary north/south corridors within the region. Fitting to its name, Division Street forms a barrier between the Grand Traverse Commons and the adjacent neighborhood due to the current multi-lane design, high speed, heavy traffic volume, and lack of continuous sidewalks along the corridor. Vehicles are often backed up along 11th Street as visitors attempt to leave the campus. Vehicles also back up along Division Street as visitors attempt to enter the campus from the south. Back-ups can be especially lengthy around the shift change of the Munson

Entryway Signs - Signs near campus entryways are minimal.



Private Streets - The Joint Planning Commission will work with private land owners to transfer ownership of private streets to the City. (Below) -Brown Drive



Medical Center. In addition, the lack of formal crosswalks makes this intersection one of the most intimidating intersections for pedestrians to cross in the City.

The Joint Planning Commission, city staff, city officials, property owners, and interested stakeholders have discussed the potential application of several different improvements to the intersection, including: marked cross-walks to allow for greater pedestrian crossings (and alert drivers), turn restrictions and dedicated turn lanes to provide for better traffic flow and safety, medians to improve safety, aesthetics and reduce speeds, and a traffic light to control the entire stream of movement at the intersection.

In response to additional discussion regarding the 11th Street and Division intersection during this master planning process, several residents living in the adjacent Central Neighborhood expressed concern that a traffic signal would increase the volume of traffic on the east side of 11th Street and throughout the Central Neighborhood. In addition, the *Grand Vision*, a regional land use planning process, identified Division Street as a “corridor of significance” - pledging to issue design recommendations for Division Street and improved access into the campus. However, as of this writing no recommendations have been provided.

In 2009, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) was scheduled to resurface Division Street from Grandview Parkway to South Airport Road. City officials convinced MDOT officials to postpone the resurfacing work between Grandview Parkway and 14th Street - acknowledging that pedestrian circulation needs to be incorporated into any new road project along Division Street. In addition, MDOT officials agreed to wait for the recommendations of the *Grand Vision*.

As part of the proposed vehicular circulation plan, the Joint Planning Commission will continue to work with the City Engineering Department, city officials, MDOT, and other stakeholders to discuss and explore innovative design solutions for the 11th and Division Street intersection. At a minimum, any future design solutions should improve pedestrian access, provide for smoother traffic flow, improve aesthetics, and reduce speeds. The design solutions will also be coordinated with other formal entryway improvements.

Division Street - Heavy traffic volumes on Division Street make it difficult to enter and exit the Grand Traverse Commons. Traffic often backs up at the 11th Street and Division Street intersection.



South Campus Entrance

As part of a 2004 millage, the City of Traverse City and Charter Township of Garfield Recreational Authority (Recreational Authority) is providing a portion of the funding for an entrance from Silver Lake Road as a southern ingress/egress to the Grand Traverse Commons. In an effort to establish an effective design for the new entrance, the Recreation Authority initiated a public input process to engage road agencies, local governments, adjacent property owners, and the community to provide input on the most effective design. The Recreational Authority also engaged in the development of a conceptual site plan for the Barns property. As previously mentioned, in an effort to encourage consistency, these planning efforts were coordinated with the master planning process prepared by Otwell Mawby, P.C. for inclusion in this Master Plan.¹ Please note, the final road design and location will depend upon additional field data and surveys, traffic engineering, and aesthetic and functional factors including reasonable and prudent alternatives to minimize environmental effects, with appropriate review and approvals as necessary by local, state, and federal agencies.

South Campus Entrance Area- Silver Drive and Silver Lake Road.



South Campus Entrance Background

An important stipulation of the transaction of property from the State of Michigan to the former *Grand Traverse Commons Redevelopment Corporation* was the requirement to provide a southern entrance to the property from Silver Lake Road. The recorded deed for the multiple parcels transferred from the State of Michigan to the former Grand Traverse Commons Redevelopment Corporation included, as part of the Declaration of Restrictive Covenants, the *Road Development Plan for the Traverse City Regional Psychiatric Hospital*. Agreement of the Road Development Plan by the State and the Grand Traverse Commons Redevelopment Corporation was a condition of closing. The Road Development Plan included three stipulations for the South Campus Entrance:

1. A 66 foot wide strip of land will be conveyed to the City by the Grand Traverse Commons Redevelopment Corporation after the Grand Traverse Commons Redevelopment Corporation has acquired Parcel RR’ (a parcel previously recognized by the Redevelopment Corporation)
2. The road shall serve as a dedicated public road access from Silver Lake road to the northeast corner of the TBAISD property
3. Any conveyance of Parcel RR’ shall include the legal description of the Road, which is subject to modification by City Engineering and approval by the City Commission

¹ Final Design Plan Language was developed by Otwell Mawby, P.C. in cooperation with Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects, the Grand Traverse Commons Joint Planning Commission and the City of Traverse City and Charter Township of Garfield Recreation Authority

In 1995, the State Administrative Board conveyed the 66 foot easement, not a fee simple conveyance, to the Grand Traverse Commons Redevelopment Corporation through a quit claim deed. The deed stipulated that the State will convey the 66 foot parcel upon the development of a final road design, and upon request by the City. The street designs and recommendations outlined in the following pages intend to satisfy the requirements of the transaction between the State of Michigan and the former Grand Traverse Commons Redevelopment Corporation to transfer the 66' road easement in fee simple.

Silver Lake Road Intersection

The intersection, from a major regional thoroughfare transitioning to a park road with significantly slower speeds, road width, and design features represents a design challenge. Crosswalks are recommended to provide pedestrian and non-motorized access from the south into the Commons. A consistent design theme for the South Campus Entrance was that there should be a strong sense of the historic, natural, and recreational place reflected in the entrance, reduction of traffic speeds and cut-through traffic, and strong provisions for pedestrian and non-motorized access.

South Campus Entrance - Franke Road and Silver Lake Road intersection.



Design Features

- Two southbound egress lanes; one right turn and one straight and left turn - one northbound ingress lane
- Aggressive turn angles into the south campus entrance to reduce traffic speeds
- Pathways are separate from road, on east and west side with west split to enter barns property, keeping width of road narrow
- Significant landscaping at south campus entrance
- Best Management Practices to provide for natural water flow and manage stormwater runoff



South Campus Entrance - South Section

The section between Silver Lake Road and the existing Silver Drive and Red Drive is a new section of the transportation corridor and will be designed to respect the natural features and create a sense of place.

Design Features:

- Pathways meander separately from the road to respect existing trees and create an experience
- Median provides separation of traffic and differential features
- Bicycles can travel on road as commuter or on pathway
- Consideration of entrance feature at southern portion or northern portion of this section

South Campus Entrance - Looking south from Silver Drive.



South Campus Entrance - Silver Drive - Red Drive Intersection

The intersection of the South Campus Entrance at Silver Drive and Red Drive will direct traffic to the east along Silver Drive as the primary ingress route into the Commons. For those travelers entering into the Barns property, there will be a sharp left turn into a narrow “driveway” that distinguishes the entrance to the Barns property.

Design Features

- Primary route is to the east along Silver Drive up to the Commons property
- Turn radius is tight to reduce traffic speeds
- Access to Red Drive and barns property is at angle of curve and appears as a driveway into the Barns property
- An interim connector is provided until Red Drive improvements are completed



Red Drive

Upon turning into the narrow “driveway” that distinguishes the entrance to the Barns property, Red Drive will meander from its current location around the existing tree stand to a three-way intersection. Travelers may then either turn north and continue along Red Drive to the TBAISD Building, the Garfield Township trailheads and other areas of the campus, or turn south to the main drop-off centered on the proposed Botanical Garden and Service Court. Until improvements are completed, the “interim connector” or current configuration of Red Drive will be used.

Design Features

- Meandering “park-like” road
- 15 mph speed limit
- No more than a 20’ wide road surface
- Consideration of different road surfaces at the entrance of Red Drive and Red Drive intersection.
- Stormwater will be managed with Best Management Practices

South Campus Entrance - Silver Drive, looking north to Red Drive



Silver Drive East - North

This section of the South Campus Entrance is characterized by the significant open space and wetland features of the Barns property and City parkland, as well as the Champion Black Willow tree on the east side of Silver Drive. The Black Willow on the west side of Silver Drive is in advanced decline and could be removed, according to the President and Co-Founder of the Champion Tree Project International.

Cuttings have been taken from these trees and the Champion Tree Project International recently organized an Arbor Day project that planted around 1,200 Black Willow clones around the Commons, with many near Silver Lake Road and Silver Drive.

There are significant wetland features and easement issues with a west route or east route around the Willows. Additional assessments are necessary to determine the most effective treatment to extend the life of the Willows and other environmental factors. As a result, the recommended route for Silver Drive north is to narrow the road to the maximum extent possible and provide for two lanes between the Willows.

Design Features

- Provide tight turn radius at the east north juncture to slow traffic speeds
- Narrow road and provide for two lanes between the Willows
- Use area as traffic calming measure
- Improve Kids Creek stream flow



Champion Black Willow Trees - Champion Black Willow trees and their existing condition.



Silver Drive

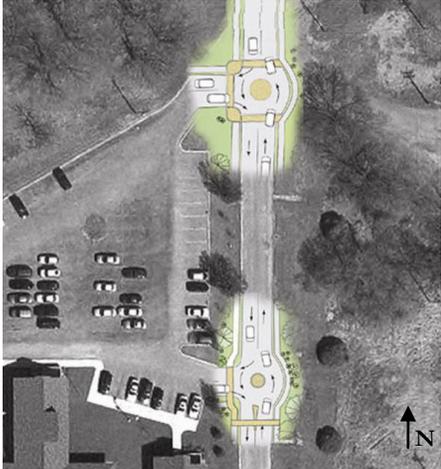
Once north of Kids Creek and the Champion Black Willow, the major feature is the TBAISD New Campus School, an active educational facility for students with special needs in grades 6-12. Approximately 12 buses per day come into and out of the east side of the TBAISD building to transport students. Measures will need to be taken to accommodate bus traffic and also reduce speeds along this relatively straight stretch (picture is Silver Drive looking north).

Silver Drive - Silver Drive, looking north



Design Features

- Install measures that will allow bus traffic and calm ingress - egress traffic
- Provide pedestrian access across Silver Drive



South Campus Entrance Design Plan (please note compass orientation at bottom right of picture)



Silver Drive - North

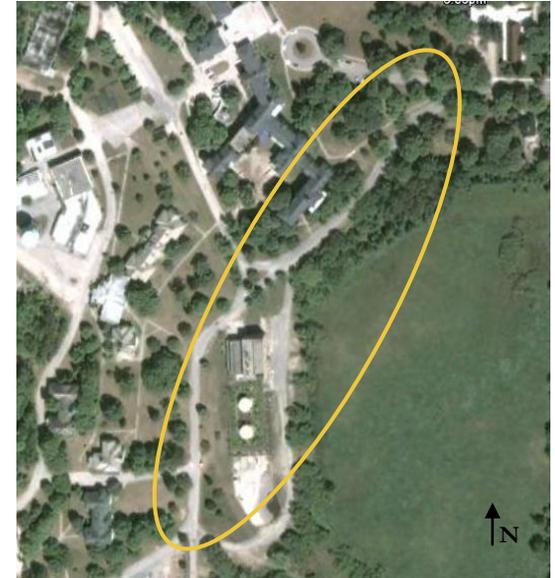
In 2007, the City of Traverse City and the Minervini Group entered into a letter of understanding to clarify the intent, use and design of a 66 foot road easement that would connect the south campus entrance to the main campus. This section of Silver Drive (between the TBAISD property and 11th Street) takes travelers into the historical center of the Grand Traverse Commons. The letter of understanding calls for a design that provides for pedestrian and bicycle access, on-street parking, and traffic calming.

An initial evaluation of this stretch of Silver Drive by the City of Traverse City Engineering Department revealed a number of issues regarding the Cottageview Drive and 11th Street intersections. These issues were also identified by citizens during the public input process.

Due to a lack of stop signs and a relatively straight stretch of road, drivers speed through the Cottageview Drive intersection, on Silver Drive. The design and layout of the large vegetative island at the intersection does nothing to discourage fast, cut-through traffic. In addition, the awkward road configuration around the vegetative island also makes it difficult for drivers to see traffic before they turn left or right from Cottageview Drive onto Silver Drive. The 11th Street intersection has similar sign and road configuration issues.

As part of the proposed vehicular circulation plan, the intersections of Cottageview Drive and 11th Street would be reconfigured to provide for pedestrian crosswalks, sight lines that decrease speeds, and stop signs to improve safety, calm traffic, and reduce speeds. In addition, on-street parking would be added in front of Buildings 28, 22, and 40. (see proposed design features on next page.)

Silver Drive - Silver Drive will be the primary north/south route within the Grand Traverse Commons. (Below) - Cottageview and Silver Drive intersection



Silver Drive Proposed Design Plan (please note north arrow orientation at bottom right of picture)



Public Transportation

Public Transportation in Traverse City is provided by the Bay Area Transportation Authority (BATA). BATA has three stops within the Grand Traverse Commons as part of its “Olesons West Route”:

- 1) Elmwood - in front of the All Faiths Chapel,
- 2) Medical Campus Drive - near the parking deck, and
- 3) Brook Street - near the north cottages.

Inbound Buses arrive every 10 and 40 minutes after the hour. Outbound buses leave every 4 and 34 minutes after the hour. The Grand Traverse Joint Planning Commission is committed to working with BATA to evaluate the need for additional stops within the campus and innovations in bus-stop infrastructure.

Public Transportation - BATA provides bus service to the Grand Traverse Commons. There are three stops within the campus - (Below) Elmwood Avenue BATA stop.

