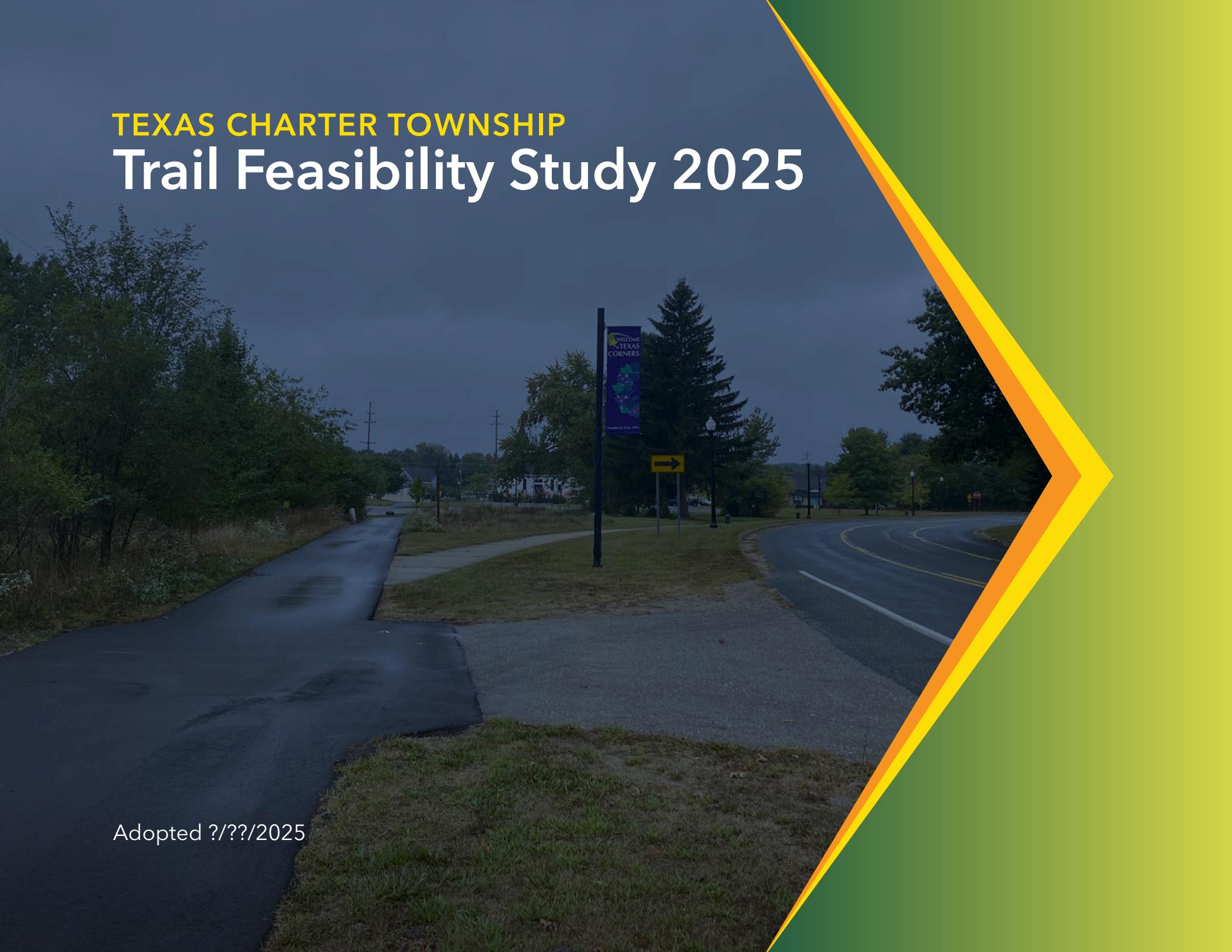


# TEXAS CHARTER TOWNSHIP

# Trail Feasibility Study 2025



Adopted ??/??/2025

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## STEERING COMMITTEE

Kelly McIntyre, Planning Director  
Michelle O'Neill, Trustee & Road Committee Representative  
Emily Beutel, Clerk, Parks & Trails Committee Representative & Texas Township Friends of Parks & Trails Board Member  
Tricia Keala, Parks & Trails Committee Representative  
Wendy Mazer, Kalamazoo County Commissioner & Kal County Parks Representative  
Larry Loeks, Planning Commission Representative  
Seth Ganton, Downtown Development Authority Representative

## TOWNSHIP BOARD

JoAnne McFarland O'Rourke, Supervisor  
Emily Beutel, Clerk  
Emily Meinema, Treasurer  
Lisa Koop, Trustee  
Don Boven, Trustee  
Barb Hammon, Trustee  
Michelle O'Neill, Trustee

## TOWNSHIP STAFF

Brooke Hovenkamp, Superintendent  
Jill Quemada, Executive Assistant

## PREPARED BY:

**williams&works**

# CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1. Introduction.....	4
CHAPTER 2. Existing Conditions .....	8
CHAPTER 3. Community Engagement .....	16
CHAPTER 4. Route Evaluations .....	24
CHAPTER 5. Recommendations .....	50
APPENDIX. Community Engagement	



# CHAPTER 1

# Introduction

## Chapter 1 Introduction

### PURPOSE

Texas Charter Township has a segmented sidewalk and trail system. Through previous planning efforts, including the 2020 Master Plan and the Parks and Trail Plan 2020 - 20204, the need for further study and planning for the Texas Township trailway was established.

The purpose of this study is to identify and evaluate nonmotorized route options within the study area shown on Map 1 with public input as a key component of the evaluation process.

The specific routes studied are:

- 1. 6th Street Park to the Farmers' Market Route** - Texas Corners Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to 6th Street Park, 6321 S. 6th Street
- 2. W Q Avenue Route** - Texas Corners Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to 12th Street via West Q Avenue
- 3. 10th Street Route**
  - a. 10th Street from Texas Drive to Q Avenue
  - b. 10th Street from Q Avenue to Swallow Ave
- 4. 12th Street Route** - 12th Street from Queen Victoria Lane to Q Avenue

### SCOPE

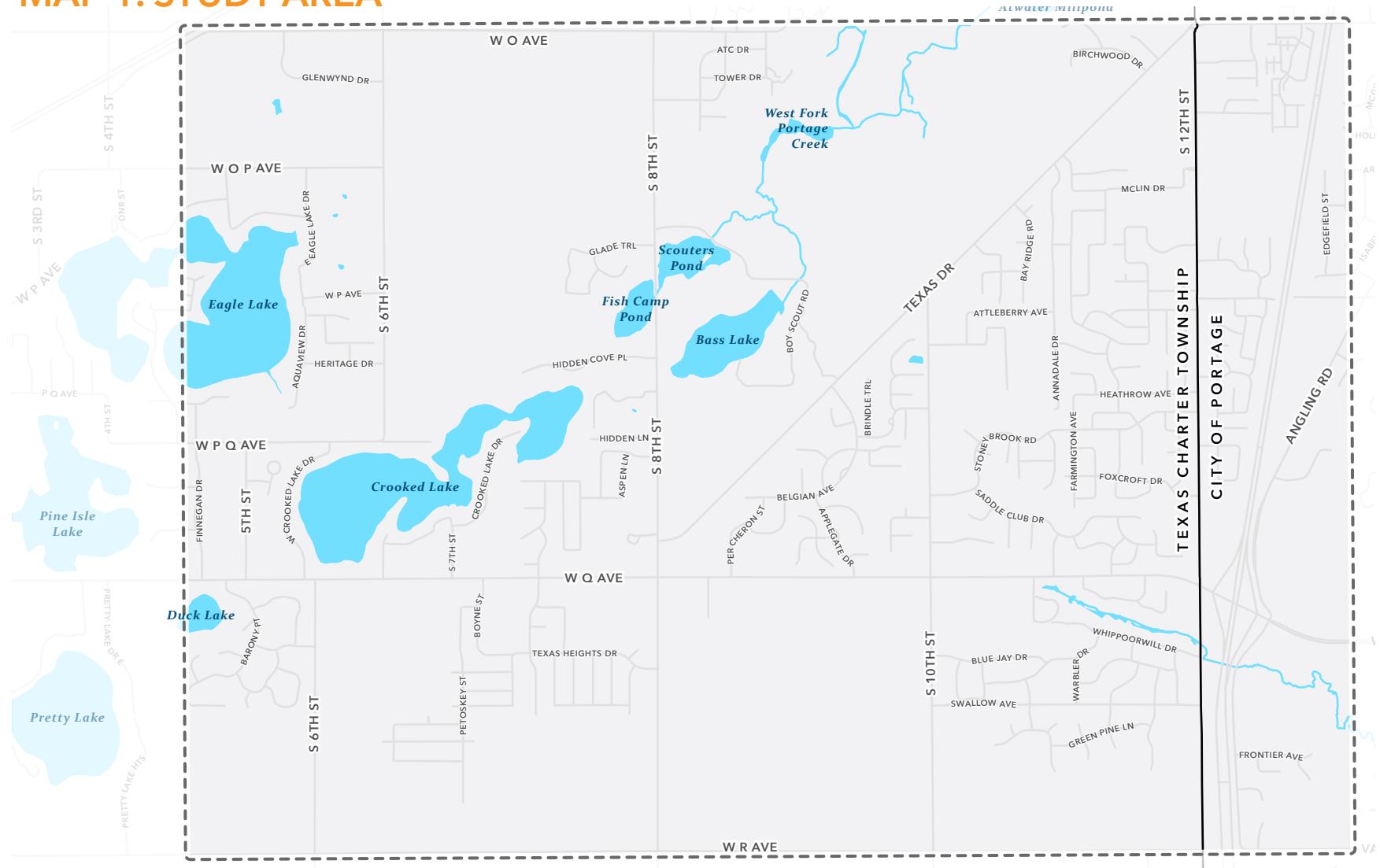
Based on the nonmotorized plan identified in the Parks and Trail Plan 2020 - 2024, an in-depth analysis of nonmotorized connections between the identified destinations was the key driver to this study. A system of connected trails and sidewalks does not exist within the Township. Various segments and loops can be found along some roads within the Al Sabo Nature Preserve and within some residential neighborhoods. Roads are designed for vehicles that are typically driving between 40 - 60 miles an hour and residential streets for vehicles traveling faster than 25 miles an hour. Existing trails are used by residents and noncommunity members, and are seen as an asset to Texas Charter Township.

This study sought to identify routes along three major roads and between two important destinations that provided connectivity, recreational value, and safety improvements within the study area and just west of 5th Street/Eagle Lake.

### STUDY AREA

The study area was loosely defined as the northwest quadrant of the Township, south of I-94, north of W R Avenue, 12th Street, and just west of 5th Street. The area includes the commercial area known as Texas Corners, the Township Hall and Fire Department, the Farmer's Market, Al Sabo Nature Preserve, Arthur & Mildren Woollam Nature Preserve, 6th Street Park, and Texas Drive Park. The Portage 12th Street Elementary School also lies just east of the study area, but is an important destination that should also be acknowledged.

# MAP 1. STUDY AREA



## Legend

Project Boundary

Lakes

Streams

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



## PROJECT CONTEXT

The purpose of the Texas Township Trailway is to connect area residents to community assets, including parks, natural areas, local businesses, schools and neighborhoods via nonmotorized infrastructure and to continue to establish the existing nonmotorized system within the Township. The connected trail system intends to provide safe nonmotorized connections from the Texas Corners DDA to the City of Portage, Oshtemo Township, and the Village of Mattawan, connecting the Township to regional trail systems, including the Kal-Haven Trail and Kalamazoo River Valley Trail.

The Trailway connects the Texas Corners DDA, centered at the intersection of 8th Street and Q Avenue, to the roundabout at 12th Street and Milham Avenue, a local commercial node at the Township's border with the City of Portage. The route passes through Texas Drive Park, one of two Township-owned community parks, and Al Sabo Land Preserve, a 741 acre preserve owned and maintained by the City of Kalamazoo. The trail also connects to Portage Public Schools' 12th Street Elementary School and the Arthur and Mildred Woollam Preserve, a Kalamazoo County park. The 8-foot path is approximately four miles long.

The existing trailway was funded through a variety of sources, including grant monies from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Texas Township General Funds, donations from the Friends of Texas Township Parks and Trails, and the Laugh Out Loud 5K Run. Constructed in two phases, the most recent phase was completed in 2016.





## CHAPTER 2

# Existing Conditions



## Chapter 2 Existing Conditions

### HYDROLOGY & WETLANDS

Within the study area, Texas Charter Township has many bodies of surface water and a high-water table, as shown in Map 2. There are also a notable amount of wetlands, especially within the Al Sabo Land Preserve. The wetlands within Al Sabo have been deemed to be of highest environmental priority for Texas Charter Township and other regional governments. The wetlands that are within the preserve help clean runoff and recharge the aquifer.

Texas Charter Township covers three different major watersheds, all of which drain into major rivers which flow into Lake Michigan. Multiple areas around the Township, particularly around Eagle and Duck Lakes, which are both within the study areas, are within federally-designated (FEMA) flood hazard areas. These areas are particularly prone to flooding because of the high-water table and a lack of natural outlets. Due to the lack of wetlands combined with the higher number of residential houses around Eagle Lake and the location of FEMA flood hazard areas, household in these areas have been affected by flooding in recent years.

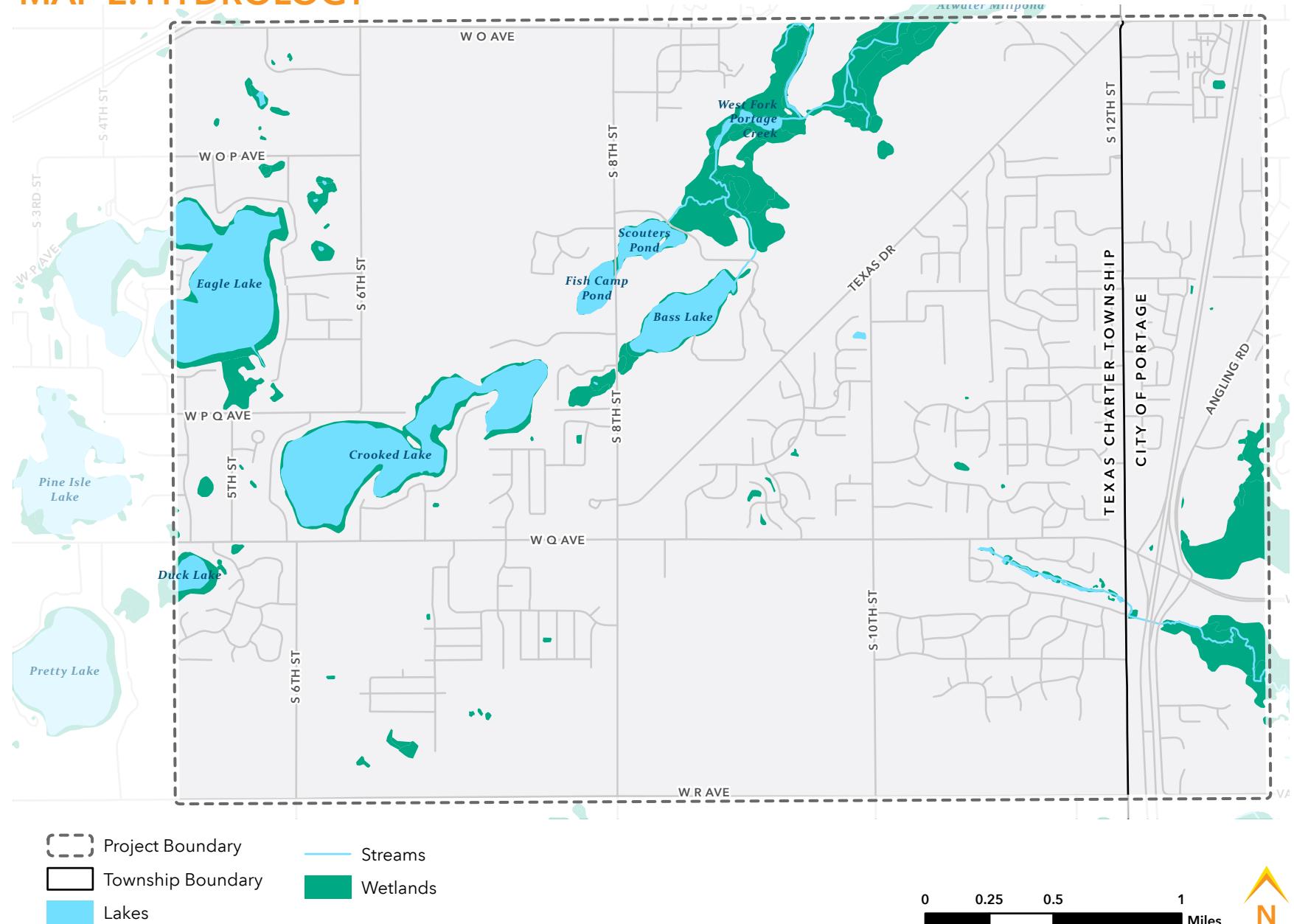
Another important natural body of water within the study areas is the West Fork of Portage Creek. This stream rises above the Al Sabo Land Preserve and drains the northeast part of the Township, including Bass Lake, Scouters Pond, and Atwater Millpond, ultimately into the Kalamazoo River.

8th Street crosses over wetlands associated with Bass Lake and the water bodies of Fish Camp Pond and Scouters Pond. 6th Street has a southern terminus just north of Crooked Lake. Eagle Lake also impacts the roads running along its shore like Eagle Lake Drive and Aquaview Drive. Water crossings influence road and potential trail routes within the Township study area.

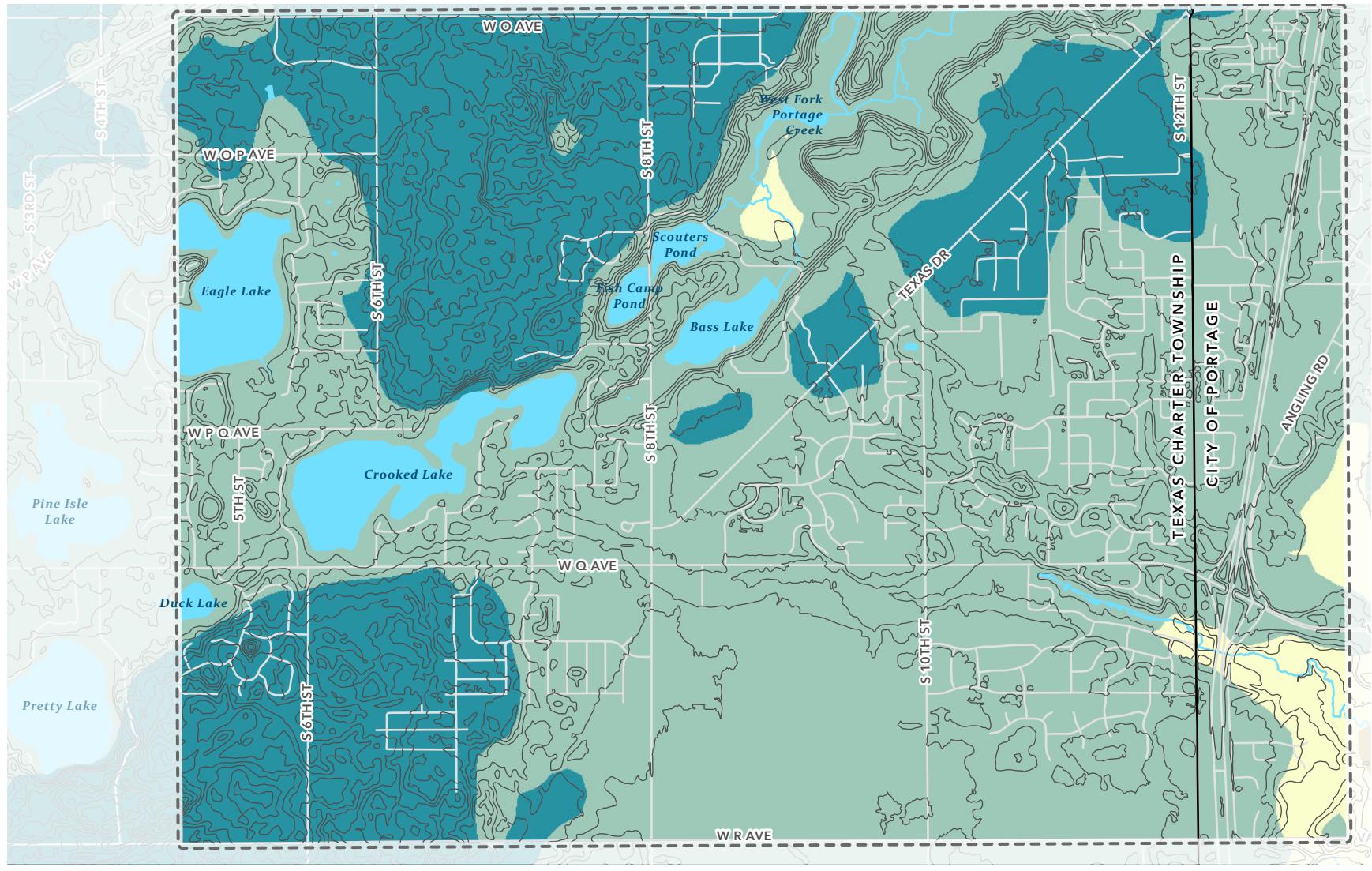
### TOPOGRAPHY

Some parts of the Township are hilly, and several major roads cross areas of uneven terrain. Particular steep grades are found along parts of major roads like W Q Avenue, 10th Street, 8th Street, and 6th Street. Notable elevation changes are also found within some of the residential neighborhoods. Map 3 shows the changes in the landscape using contour lines at 10-foot intervals.

## MAP 2. HYDROLOGY



## MAP 3. TOPOGRAPHY



Elevation (in feet)



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles





## SAFETY

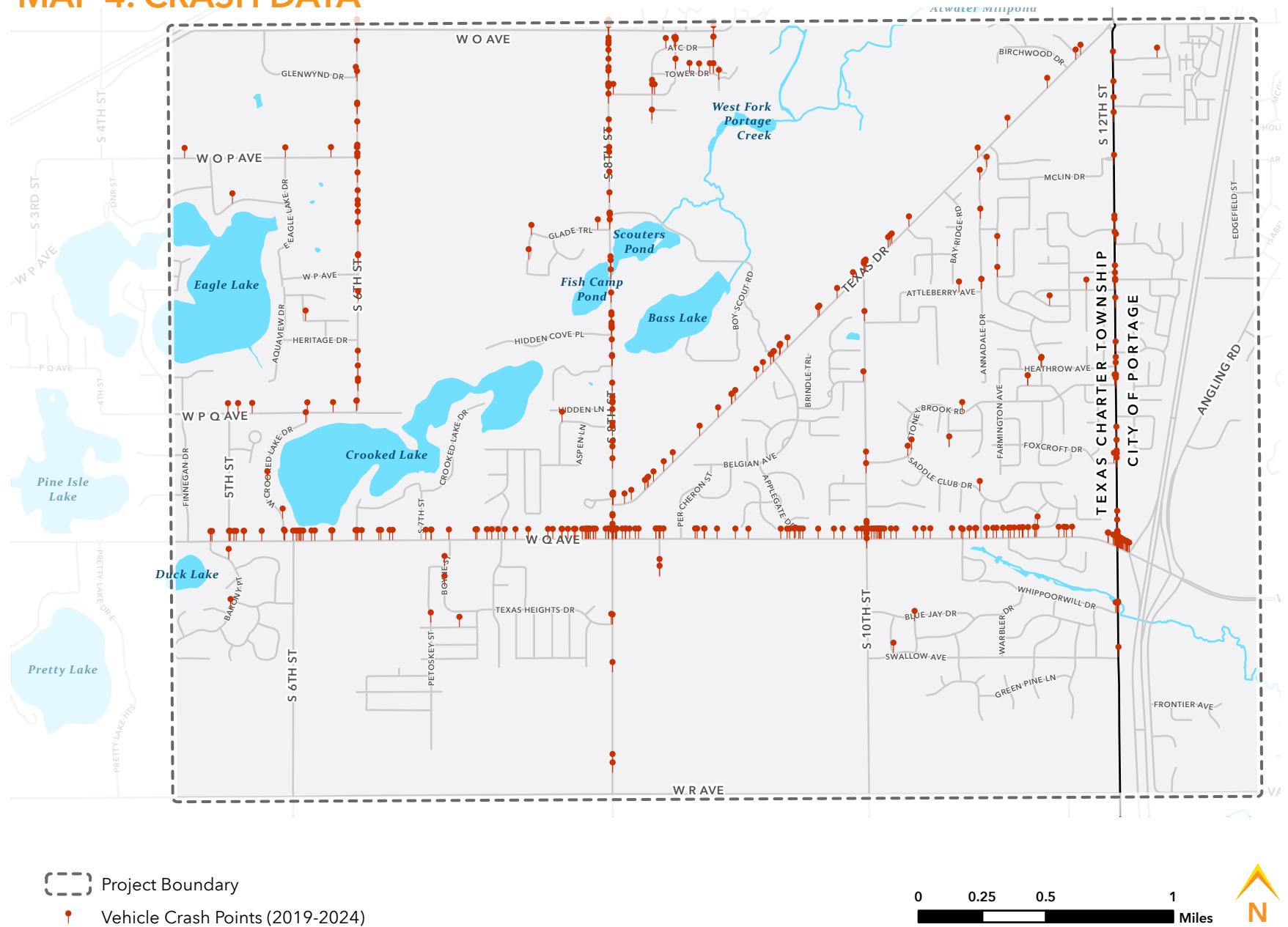
Through previous planning efforts, developing a system of nonmotorized facilities that are safe for people of all ages, abilities, and life phase has been a community goal. The Township identified that they are seeking to develop off-road facilities along some of the primary roads like W Q Avenue and 6th Street. Speeds and traffic volumes along W Q Avenue are particularly high. Posted speed limits along the roads studied varied from 25 miles per hour along streets like Eagle Lake Drive, Aquaview Drive, and Heritage Drive and up to 55 miles per hour along W Q Avenue. Observed speeds along these routes can be even higher.

Understanding that there are a high number of crashes along several of these corridors, it's important to understand the need for off-road infrastructure and to address improved road crossings. Map 4 shows vehicle crashes within the study area from 2019-2024 as documented on the Michigan Traffic Crash Facts website.

## COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS

One intention of the study is to examine and plan for future nonmotorized connections between the important community destinations. Within the study area there are several residential neighborhoods, a commercial district, one elementary school, several parks, a nature preserve, the Township Hall, the Township Fire Department, and existing trail routes. Providing pedestrian facilities to these important assets will provide additional ways for people to move around the community.

## MAP 4. CRASH DATA



## EXISTING NONMOTORIZED FACILITIES

### ***Wide Shoulders***

Some roads in the Township have widened shoulders for some or all their lengths. In most instances the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County has the authority to construct or approve the development and maintenance of this kind of facility.

### ***Sidewalks***

The Township has a few areas with sidewalks, primarily found in or near some residential neighborhoods. Sidewalks are defined for this study by a paved route separated from a road that is less than seven feet wide. Sidewalks may be publicly owned by the Township or privately owned by a subdivision.

### ***Trails***

Trails are found in areas throughout the Township. Some trails are paved like those along 12th Street, while others are unpaved like those in the Al Sabo Nature Preserve. For the purpose of this study, trails are defined as routes separated from a road that are seven feet or more in width. Trails may be publicly owned by the Township or privately owned by a subdivision.

### ***Signed Bike Routes***

The Road Commission of Kalamazoo County has labelled corridors within the Township as a "Signed Bike Route."

The existing nonmotorized facilities in the study area are shown in Map 5.

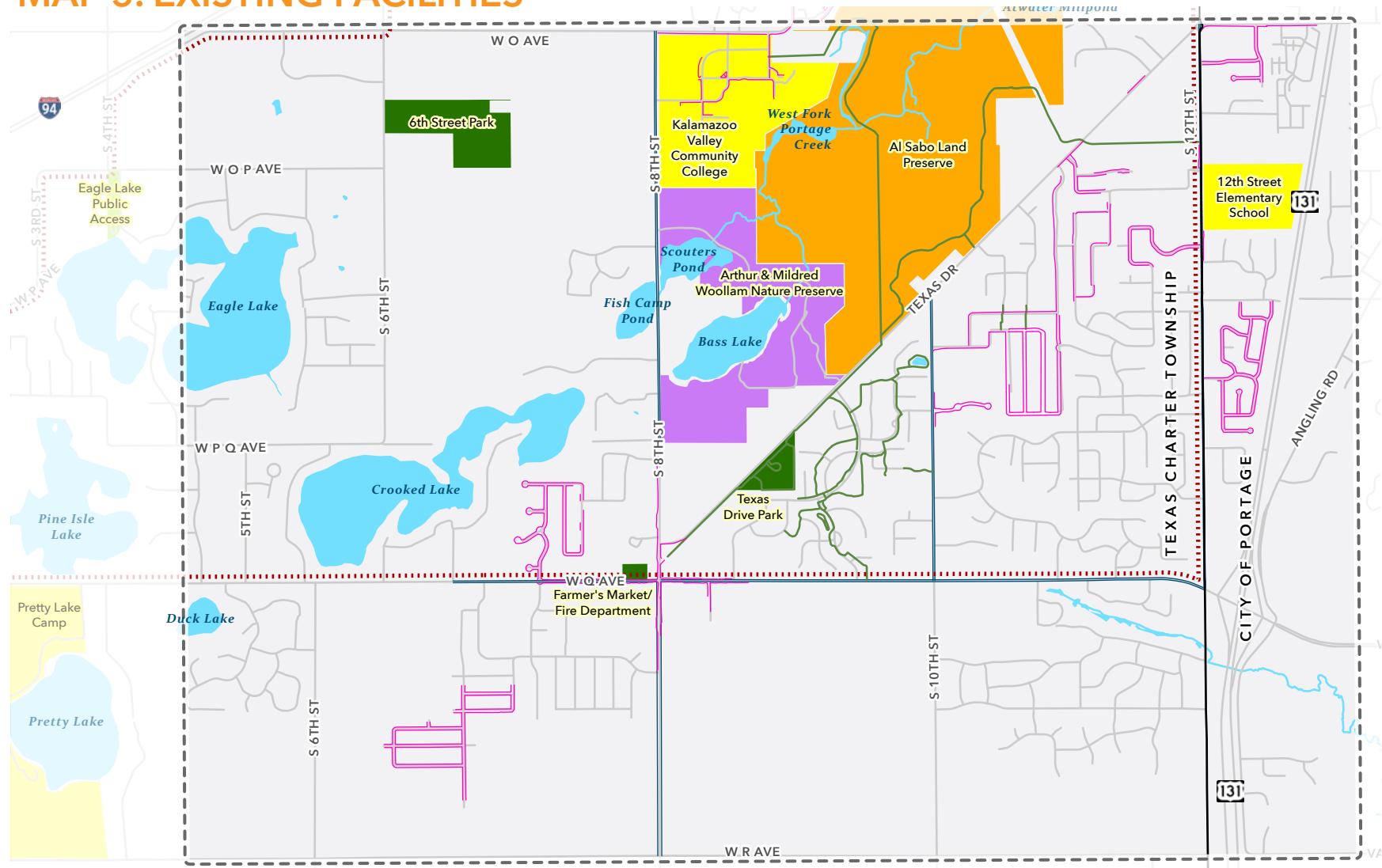
## EXISTING COMPLETE STREETS PHILOSOPHY

According to the 2020 Township Master Plan, Texas Charter Township subscribes to the Complete Streets philosophy, meaning that public streets should be safe and efficient for people of all ages, abilities, and modes of transportation. This further supports the development of trails as a part of the community's transportation system.

## RIGHTS-OF-WAY & EASEMENTS

Future nonmotorized facilities will need to be built within the public right-of-way (ROW) or places where there are an easement and permission from private property owners. ROWs also vary along many of the roads on a parcel-by-parcel basis. Viewing Kalamazoo County GIS parcel data, some property lines are shown extended to the center of the road while other parcels lines are set back respecting a dedicated ROW. The ROW information will need to be verified by survey data. There are not many places where trail easements exist along the trail routes. There are a few some areas that have utility easements like the Consumers Energy power line.

## MAP 5. EXISTING FACILITIES



Project Boundary  
Texas Charter Township  
City of Kalamazoo

Kalamazoo County  
Michigan DNR  
Semi-Public Facility

Existing Sidewalks  
Existing Pathway  
Existing Paved Widened Shoulder  
Existing Signed Bike Route (On-road)

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles





## CHAPTER 3

# Community Engagement



## Chapter 3 Community Engagement

This chapter contains an overview of the process and results of the community engagement phase. For more detailed information, please see the Community Engagement Report in the Appendix.

### PROCESS

The community engagement phase of the Trail Feasibility Study was held from January through August of 2025 and included six different events. There were two stakeholder interviews, three workshops, and one community open house. Residents also provided their feedback via physical and digital comment cards, letters, and emails. At least 223 people participated in the engagement phase of the project, and more than 108 written comments were received. This phase was designed to provide residents with multiple opportunities to learn about the project and share their feedback.

### STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Two stakeholder interviews were held to get specific feedback on the project. Each meeting had a different goal. The first stakeholder interview was with engineering staff from the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County to review the project routes and provide general feedback on the project. The

second stakeholder interview was a preliminary meeting that was held with a select group of large-parcel landowners from whom the Township would require easements to build a route that would connect 6th Street Park and the Farmers' Market on W Q Avenue. The objective was to introduce the project concept and gather initial feedback prior to initiating broader public engagement. Approximately ten landowners were invited to participate, and two attended the meeting. During the session, potential trail routes connecting the two destinations were presented.

### WORKSHOPS

Three different workshops were held to get input from specific groups of people. Each workshop was two hours long and held at the Township Hall. An introductory educational presentation was held to orient community members to the project and trail routes being considered at the beginning of each workshop. A brief question and answer period followed the presentation to address concerns and allow individuals the opportunity to voice their opinion regarding the project. Community members were then invited to participate in a digital activity using their phones or tablets that were provided. Following this, there were two separate mapping activities where attendees were encouraged to give feedback on potential trail routes.

## OPEN HOUSE

The community open house was held in June, as the final community engagement event. The public was invited through a broad marketing campaign that included printed and social media outreach. The open house was a two-hour event where people were invited to participate at their convenience. At least 73 people attended. Twice during the open house, an educational presentation was provided to give community members a chance to listen and ask questions about the project with Township officials and the consultant team. There were four stations set up around the room to provide an opportunity to learn about the project and solicit input.



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THEMES

In reviewing the extensive engagement feedback that was gathered during this process, common themes emerged. They are as follows.

### Themes in **Favor** of Trails in the Study Area

- **SAFETY**

The desire for safer transportation and recreation options emerged as a common reason cited in support of trail development. Individuals commented that existing roads and shoulders are not safe for biking, walking, or rolling (using mobility assistive devices like wheelchairs). The construction of additional trails would improve access to safer, dedicated facilities throughout the Township.

- **CONNECTING DESTINATIONS**

Comments expressed support for developing trails that offer pedestrian-friendly connections between neighborhoods, parks, and the Texas Corners area. Feedback received noted an appreciation for the existing trails and indicated a strong interest in expanding the network to improve access to key destinations throughout the community. There were also a number of comments suggesting additional places and subdivisions to connect into future trail routes.

- **ENHANCING QUALITY OF LIFE**

Individuals expressed that the existing trails contribute positively to the quality of life within the Township. Enthusiasm for the current trail system and a strong desire for its expansion, citing frequent use and the

value of convenient access within the community, were also ideas cited by project participants. Trails were viewed as a community asset, and the development of additional trails was seen as a beneficial expansion of important community recreation and public transportation infrastructure.

## Themes in **Opposition** to Trails in the Study Area

- **SAFETY**

Safety concerns were raised during the feedback process. Issues related to vehicle speed and the high volume of traffic on some of the roads were noted. Some individuals expressed the view that constructing trails adjacent to busy roads could pose safety risks. Additionally, some residents expressed that they would have to exercise increased caution when exiting their driveways due to the presence of trail users.

- **TRAIL ON PRIVATE PROPERTY**

Numerous public comments expressed opposition to the trail being placed on their private property, however the location of a future trail may actually lie within the ROW on an individual's property. Common concerns included the loss of privacy and large trees, disruption to personal landscaping investment, and the potential for increased litter. Comments also included that households had chosen to live in a rural area to avoid such disturbances and did not wish to have a public trail in their front yards.

- **COST**

Questions were raised concerning project cost. For some, this was the number one concern of the project even though routes, facility types, and infrastructure length had not yet been decided. Individuals sought clarification on how the project would be funded, with some expressing concern about the possibility of increased taxes to cover expenses. There was also uncertainty regarding the total cost of the project and whether the Township has the financial capacity to undertake an initiative. Additionally, a few individuals inquired whether property owners would receive compensation if a trail were to be constructed on their land.

- **MAINTENANCE**

Residents raised the issue of maintenance needs on future routes. There were questions raised on who will be responsible for keeping the routes cleared after snow and ice events. Others wondered if there will be increased litter due to pedestrian and bicycle traffic along the corridor. There was also uncertainty about what the cost for maintenance will be on and along the trail.

## ROUTE-SPECIFIC THEMES

### Mixed Opinions for W Q Avenue

Numerous comments were received in support of and opposition to the development of a trail along Q Avenue. Safety was the most frequently cited issue in discussions about trail development. Supporters emphasized that a trail would enhance pedestrian safety along this corridor, which currently lacks adequate infrastructure and serves as a key route within the community. Opponents also voiced strong opinions, indicating that this particular route would be next to a road with high speeds and heavy traffic volumes.

Another notable impact highlighted by residents regarding the W Q Avenue route was the proximity of some houses to the road. Houses along this route have a variety of setbacks from the road. In some locations, houses are located closer to the road and have a smaller right-of-way. This may present a challenge in locating a future trail route along the corridor.

### The 10th Street Connection

Numerous property owners along 10th Street north of the intersection of W Q Avenue expressed strong opposition to the proposed trail along this road. A significant number of comments centered on concerns about the potential loss of large, mature trees that contribute to the corridor's distinctive character. Many residents also opposed the idea of giving up portions of their yards for trail construction, citing fears of diminished rural character on the northern stretch of 10th Street. Additional concerns were raised about how a new trail would integrate with the existing sidewalks and trail segments along 10th Street. This proposed route elicited strong negative reactions from the community members who chose to provide feedback.

However, south of the intersection of 10th Street and W Q Avenue, there was less opposition. Additionally, a future residential subdivision is planned for north of Blue Jay Drive, and the route along 10th Street could be planned to connect into that development.

### Selecting a Trail Route to Connect the Farmers' Market to 6th Street Park

Determining a suitable trail connection between the Farmers' Market and 6th Street Park proved to be one of the most challenging aspects of the planning process, as no direct road or existing route links these two Township destinations. The Steering Committee initially evaluated seven potential trail alignments, ultimately identifying five as feasible options to present for public consideration.

Throughout the community engagement process, this proposed connection was discussed at every event. The Kalamazoo County Road Commission expressed support for identifying a viable route between these locations. Private property owners of large parcels along the proposed alignments were invited to engage in dialogue with the Township.

Participants in the three public workshops and the open house were given opportunities to review the proposed routes, provide feedback, and rank their top three preferences. While some participants did not want to participate in this activity, others took the opportunity to respond with their preference. The results of that ranking are summarized in the accompanying table.

Table 1. Ranking of Proposed Trail Route: Farmers' Market to 6th Street Park

	Route 1	Route 2	Route 2a	Route 3	Route 3a
<b>STAKEHOLDER GROUP</b>					
Workshop 1, Group 1	3			1	2
Workshop 1, Group 2			1		2
Workshop 1, Group 3		3	2		1
Workshop 1, Group 4	3	1		2	
Results			#2 (tie)	#2 (tie)	#1
<b>PROPERTY OWNERS WEST OF 8TH STREET</b>					
Workshop 2, Group 1	1		2		
Workshop 2, Group 2			x*		x*
Workshop 2, Group 3	1		1		
Workshop 2, Group 4			1		2
Results	#3		#1		#2
<b>PROPERTY OWNERS EAST OF 8TH STREET</b>					
Workshop 3, Group 1		1	3	2	
Workshop 3, Group 2		3	1		2
Workshop 3, Group 3		3	1		2
Workshop 3, Group 4			1		2
Results	#3		#1		#2
<b>Overall Preferred Route</b>			<b>#1</b>		

Route 2a was the preferred route based on feedback provided during the three workshops. This route has an off-road connection that parallels 6th Street.

\*This group placed an "x" on these routes, and did not indicate a preferred route.



## Opposition Along Aquaview and Eagle Lake Drives

Some residents living along these streets submitted comments expressing strong opposition to the proposed trail being routed through their neighborhood. Although the Steering Committee initially selected this area under the assumption that residents would welcome a pedestrian connection to the park and Farmers' Market, the feedback revealed notable resistance to the idea.

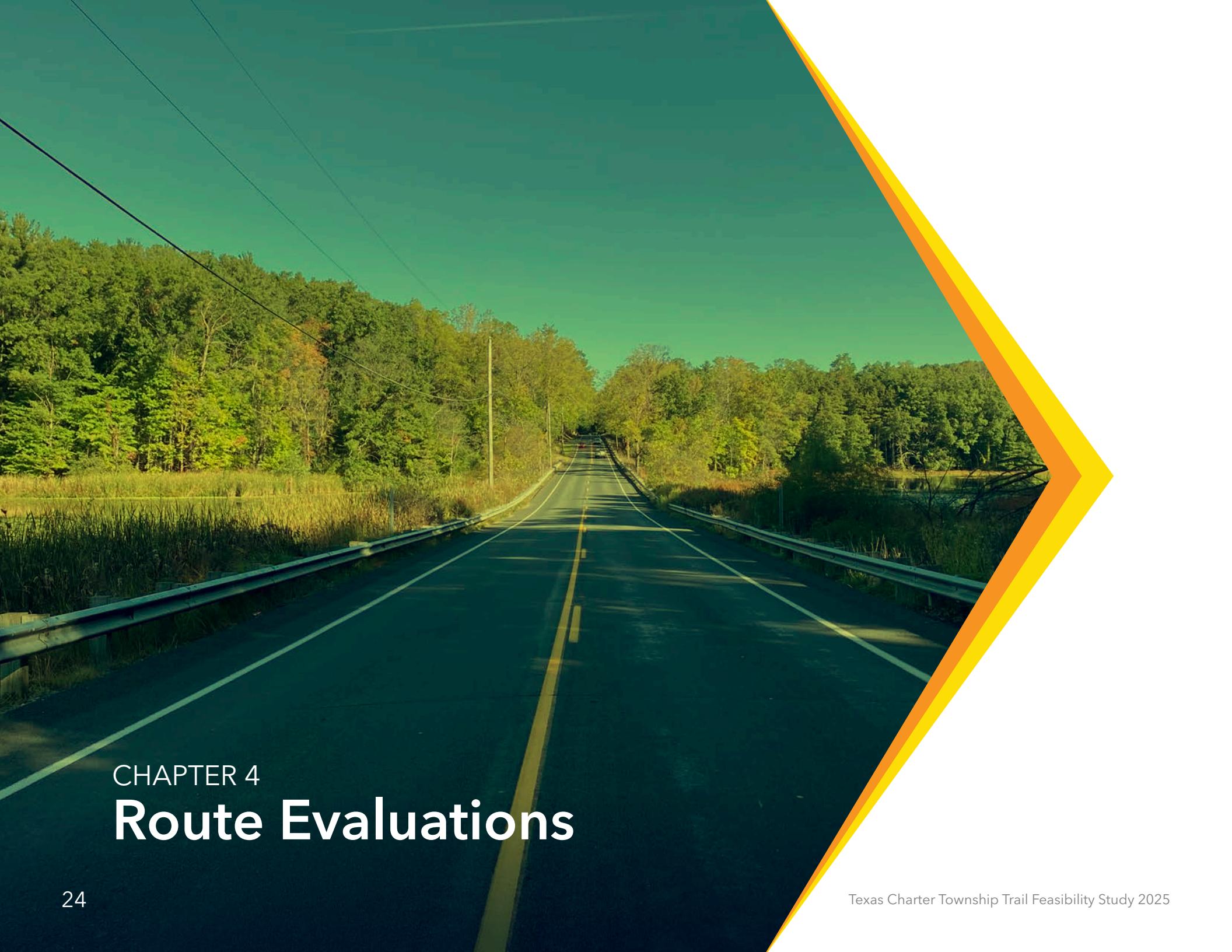
## TRAIL AMENITIES

Residents raised questions about the need for amenities like trailheads and parking spaces. People from within and outside of the Township sometimes drive to local trails and if the system continues to be built, there may likely be a need to accommodate more people who drive to access the new routes. Neighbors in residential subdivisions don't like people parking along the public roads. More may need to be done to address this potential conflict of interests and uses.

## THE SILENT MAJORITY

While there was a large effort to engage the community, not all Township residents provided input during the planning process. It is common for individuals with strong opinions on a particular topic to participate actively, while many others may choose not to engage for a variety of reasons. As a result, it is difficult to determine the views of every individual or household regarding the development of new trails within the study area. Nevertheless, the frequent use of existing trails—evident through daily activities such as dog walking, running, biking, and other forms of recreation—suggests that trails are a valued amenity within the community.

*This page is left intentionally blank.*

A photograph of a two-lane asphalt road curving through a dense forest. The road is marked with a yellow center line and white edge lines. On the left, there's a metal guardrail and some tall grass. On the right, there's another metal guardrail and a body of water. The sky is clear and blue. A large, stylized arrow graphic is positioned on the right side of the slide, pointing towards the text.

## CHAPTER 4

# Route Evaluations

## Chapter 4 Route Evaluations

The previous chapters provided an overview of the existing conditions within the Township and the community engagement activities and results. This chapter outlines the routes studied and summarizes the most feasible connections.

### METHODOLOGY

Route alternatives were identified using various data, including:

- Site-visits
- Desktop analysis using GIS, aerial imagery, and Google Street View
- Review and mapping of proposed trails within previous planning documents
- Meeting with the Steering Committee to identify potential alignments
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Stakeholder Workshops
- Community Open House

### CRITERIA

Routes options developed through the planning process were evaluated and compared to one another using the following criteria:

#### **Topography/grade challenges and natural features (mature trees)**

Grade changes were noted on GIS maps and verified by site visits. Some grade changes can be reasonably addressed during construction, while others will be too steep or costly to design to universal design standards. (This is especially important to consider if the facilities may be built in part with state or federal funds.) Mature trees were also noted during site visits. Their presence adds significant shade and character along a route. Cutting trees can detract from a corridor, and community members generally do not support these kinds of changes.

#### **Drainage challenges**

In many areas along the roads of the Township, stormwater ditches exist to help mitigate water after precipitation events or snowmelt. Ditches cannot be covered or filled without conferring with the County Drain Commissioner, and, in some instances, the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). The ditches are a part of a county-wide stormwater mitigation system, and they help prevent surface water from pooling on roads, trails, or on private property.

#### **Traffic speed (safety)**

Posted speed limits along the corridors were identified and compared to national standards for nonmotorized facility development, confirming the need to keep facility

development along high-speed and high-traffic corridors off-road. Anecdotal traffic speed information was also noted.

### **Connections to existing sidewalk or trail**

The location of existing sidewalks and trails in the Township and adjacent communities were identified and used to highlight where new connections to existing networks could be made.

### **Destinations**

The number and types of destinations along the routes were identified and noted. Connecting the important Township destinations of 6th Street Park to the Farmer's Market/"The Corners" was critical in developing one of the route recommendations for this study. Linking residential subdivisions/neighborhoods is another important factor, such as the neighborhoods on the east side of Eagle Lake, Applegate, Bentwood, and others. Other notable destinations included the Al Sabo Land Preserve, the Kalamazoo County Woollam Nature Preserve, and trails that connect to the 12th Street Elementary School.

### **Municipal ownership**

Most of the project boundary was within Texas Township, however, the eastern side of 12th Street is within the City of Portage. Preference was given to routes within the Township boundary.

### **Availability of right-of-way**

Right-of-way data was reviewed on the Kalamazoo County Parcel Viewer website. The information available on the website is not survey-level data, but does give a general approximation for where rights-of-way would be along a given corridor. Parcel-

level information would need to be reviewed and verified before construction plans would be developed.

### **Crashes (safety)**

The Michigan Traffic Crash Facts (MTCF) website was reviewed for all vehicle-related crashes that occurred within the project boundary from 2019 - 2024. The MTCF provides users with annual official Michigan crash data with statistics dating back to 1952. The crash data filters come from police officer crash reports, with support and funding from the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning, the U.S. Department of Transportation, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

### **Road Intersection (safety)**

The number of intersections were counted. Having a trail cross as few roads as possible helps make the route safer.

### **Conflicts with Utilities**

Utility and electrical poles, internet and phone cables, and other utilities exist along some portions of the corridors studied. Noting potential areas of conflict was important, as there may be some instances where utility relocation would be necessary if a facility were to be built.

## ROUTE ALTERNATIVES

Route alternatives were explored along 12th Street, 10th Street, W Q Avenue, and to connect 6th Street Park to the Farmers' Market with designated endpoints. The following section provides a summary of the routes considered.

### 12th Street Route Evaluation

A route along 12th Street was examined, initially running from the intersection of W Q Avenue to Victoria Lane but later extended north to McLin Drive. Trail nodes exist at McLin Drive, providing connections to an existing trail radiating north on 12th Street and into the trail system that exists on the 12th Street Elementary School campus and West Portage Little League fields.

A detailed analysis revealed that the **west side of 12th Street** was the **preferred route**. The similar topography and minimal drainage issues on both sides of the road meant these factors had little influence on choosing one side of 12th Street over the other for trail placement. Although the right-of-way varies by parcel along the corridor, neither side was significantly more impacted than the other. In some areas along the road utility relocation may be necessary to accommodate trail construction. The west side of the road has more intersections, but it also offers greater access to existing residential neighborhoods, some of which contain existing nonmotorized networks. Furthermore, there is some portion of 12th Street that has an existing nonmotorized facility built. Posted speed limits along the corridor are 45 miles an hour, although traffic has been observed at higher speeds along the residential street.

The Township's strong interest in expanding nonmotorized facilities in this part of the community played a key role in the

decision. Notably, the Township owns property on the west side of 12th Street. Since 12th Street forms the boundary between Texas Township and the City of Portage, selecting the east side for the trail would require coordination with the City of Portage or reliance on its decisions regarding trail development.

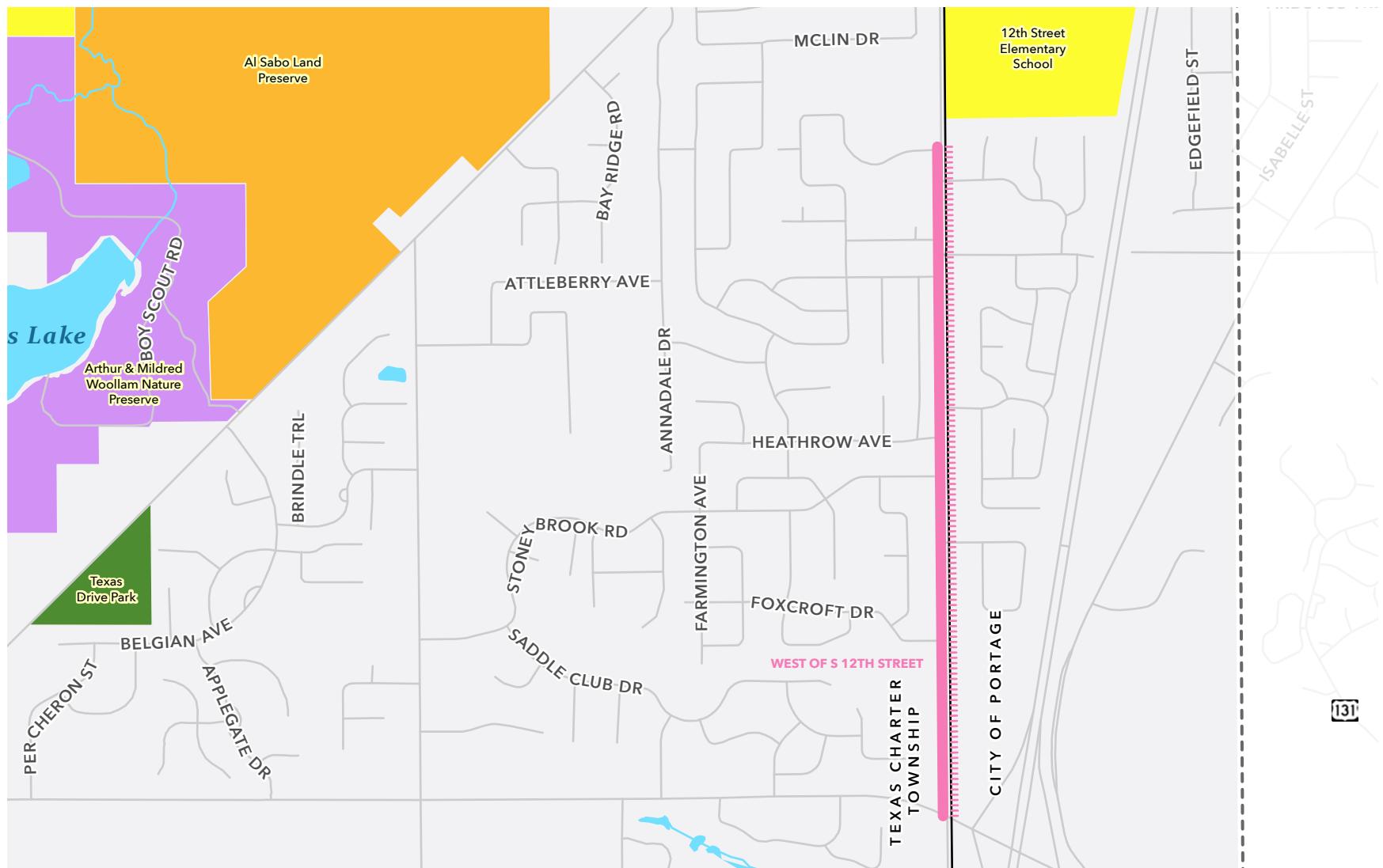
### 10th Street Route Evaluation - Section A

A route along 10th Street from the intersection with W Q Avenue to the intersection of Texas Drive. Later in the project an extension on the south side of Texas Drive to Bentley Drive and the crosswalk into Al Sabo was considered.

**At this time, the Township does not recommend the development of a nonmotorized route** along either side of 10th Street between Texas Drive and Q Avenue. However, **should 10th Street be reconstructed in the future, the feasibility of this facility should be reassessed** for either the west or east side of the street. The posted speed limit along this residential corridor is 55 miles an hour, though actual traffic speeds are often higher and site distance is limited due to the hills. Building an off-road facility here will be crucial for safety. There are some existing trails on both sides of the street, which means new facilities could connect into the existing infrastructure. Tree removal and utility pole conflicts were similar on both sides of the road, but a few areas on the east side of 10th Street have no mature trees, which may simplify construction.

Although the west side offers more space for trail construction, the east side requires crossing fewer total properties. Most of the corridor has similar topography on both sides of the road, however, a significant grading and drainage issue exists on the west side of 10th Street across from Boxthorn Trail. Furthermore, connecting into the Applegate neighborhood

## MAP 6. S 12TH STREET



Facility Ownership

- Texas Charter Township
- Kalamazoo County
- Other

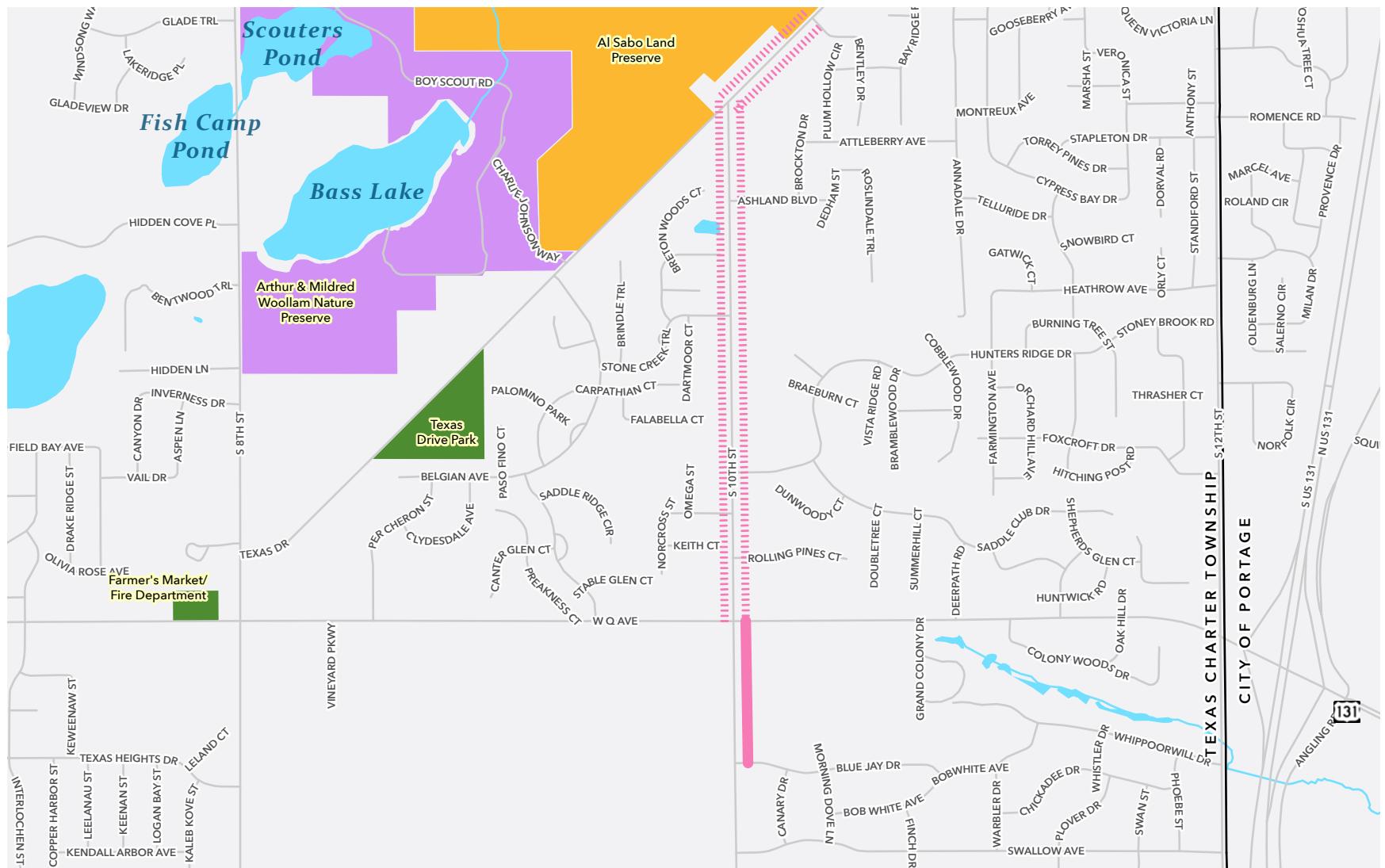
City of Kalamazoo

- S 20th Street (West Side) PREFFERED
- S 12th Street (East Side)

0 0.13 0.25 0.5 Miles



## MAP 7. S 10TH STREET & TEXAS DRIVE



on the east side of the corridor was seen as important by the Steering Committee. Notably, there was strong public opposition to placing the trail on the west side of 10th Street in this section.

### 10th Street Route Evaluation - Section B

A route along 10th Street from the intersection with Swallow Avenue to W Q Avenue was studied.

A detailed analysis revealed that the **east side of 10th Street (Section B) was the preferred route, but have the route end at Blue Jay Drive.** Again, the posted speed limits and observed speed limits were 55 miles an hour and higher, which strongly influences building an off-road facility. The similar minimal topography, drainage, and utility issues on both sides of the road meant these factors had little influence on choosing one side over the other for trail placement. Although the right-of-way varies by parcel along the corridor, neither side was significantly more impacted than the other. There are no existing nonmotorized facilities on the corridor in this section.

There are more intersections on the west side of this section of 10th Street, but it also offers greater access to existing residential neighborhoods. A new subdivision named Bradford Oaks is being proposed north of Blue Jay Drive, and a route along 10th Street could be built as that development is constructed. Fewer mature trees were observed on the east side of 10th Street south of W Q Avenue.

### W Q Avenue Route Evaluation

A route along W Q Avenue from the intersections of 8th Street to 12th Street was studied.

A detailed analysis revealed that the **north side of W Q Avenue** was the **preferred route**. Although much of the corridor has a similar topography on either side of the road, there are a few locations where there are more grade change challenges and drainage issues on the south side of the road. There are more opportunities to provide connections into existing larger residential neighborhoods on the north side of W Q Avenue. The existing trail facilities that exist on the north side of W Q Avenue at 8th Street extend further west than the south side. Furthermore, there are some areas on the north side where there is more area within the right-of-way to locate a trail.

Posted speed limits are 55 miles an hour along the residential corridor, and observed traffic speeds can be higher. There were similar amounts of issues related to tree clearing and utility pole conflicts.

### 6th Street Park to Texas Corners Downtown Development Authority (aka "The Farmers' Market") Route Evaluation

Thirteen different routes were examined during the study to develop a connection between these two township destinations. This was an important route at the outset of the study. A detailed analysis revealed that the Route 2a was the preferred route, however, there are caveats to consider.

An overview of how the routes were identified, evaluated, and the important factors to note for Route 2a is provided in this section.

## MAP 8. W Q AVENUE



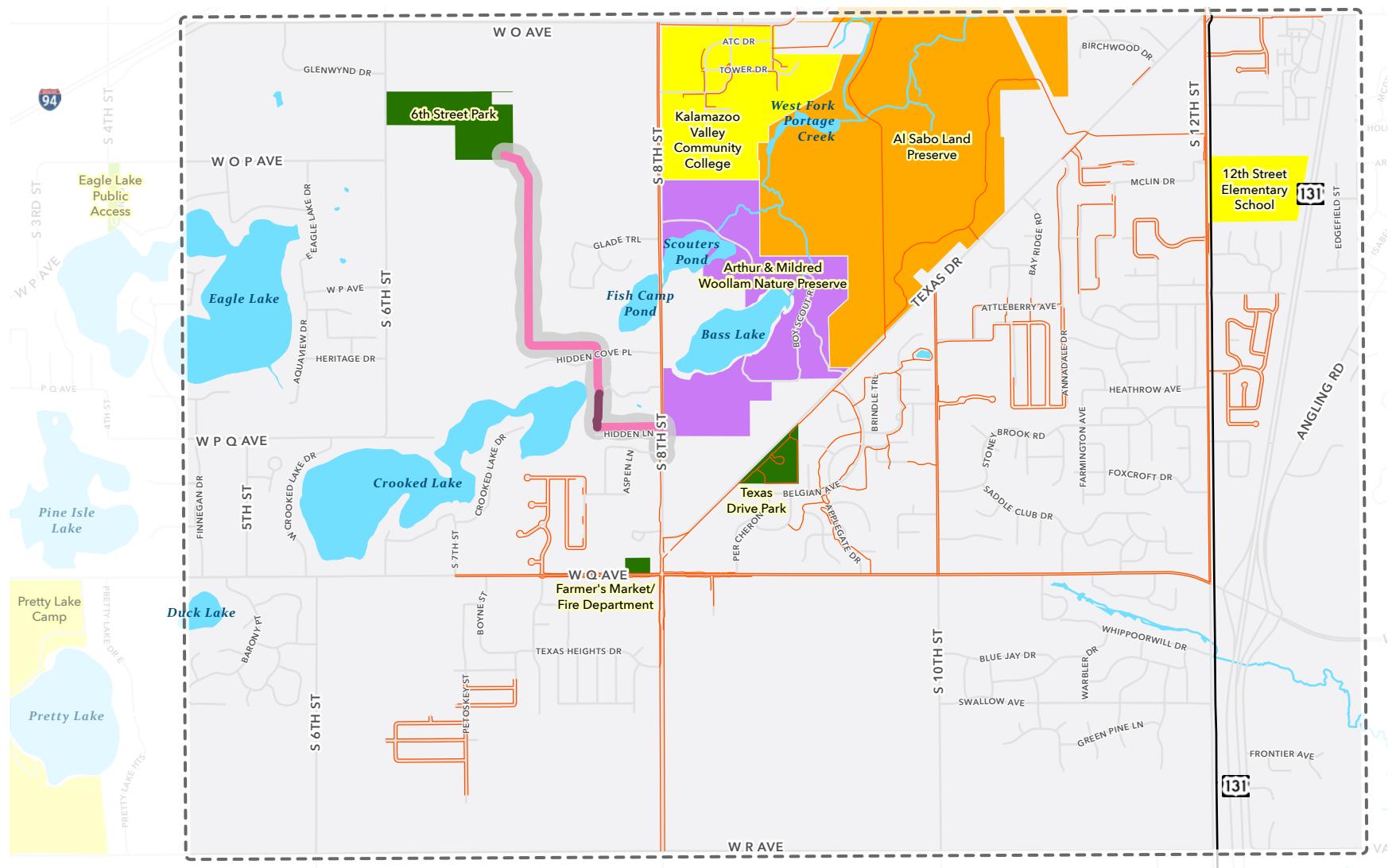
## PHASE 1 ROUTE EVALUATIONS

Initially, routes to connect the park and Farmers' Market via 8th Street were studied and reviewed by the consultant team and Steering Committee. Previous studies and plans had identified the Consumer Energy Power Line as a likely trail route to connect these two destinations. Additionally, trails on parts of 8th Street provided a clear connection to the Farmers' Market. Furthermore, due to the presence of large parcels where trails could be set back far from the road, an additional criterion—property owner support or opposition—was also included in review for these properties.

In total, 13 individual routes were identified and analyzed between the two destinations. To start with, eight routes were explored that used the existing trail to connect to the Farmers' Market via 8th Street. These routes became known as Route 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11. Route 4 provided access to 6th Street Park via woodland trail that would be on private property, followed a Consumers Energy power line to another portion of private property until reaching 8th Street where a connection would be made to the existing trail that led to the Farmers' Market. Route 5 provided access to the park via an off-road route along 6th Street until an abandoned right of way that could connect to Hidden Cove Place out to 8th Street. Both of these routes were advanced for additional analysis even though Route 4 had a low feasibility due to strong opposition from private property owners and contained a major grade change challenge. Route 5 also contained the same major grade challenge and a connection via Hidden Cove Place was ruled unlikely.

Routes 6 - 11 were found to be not feasible for a variety of reasons including current property owners' opposition to off-road trails on their property, topography challenges, and water-crossing challenges. Route 6 required partial construction on private property owned by parties opposed to trails. Route 7 and 8 included the challenge of private property opposition and a major grade change making construction difficult. Routes 9, 10, and 11 crossed onto private property that was owned by parties opposed to trails and the routes would need to include the construction of a bridge to cross Fish Camp and Scouters Ponds. Bridges cost roughly one million dollars per mile.

## MAP 9. ROUTE 4



### Facility Ownership

- Texas Charter Township
- Kalamazoo County
- Michigan DNR

### Route 4

- Other
- City of Kalamazoo
- Existing Network

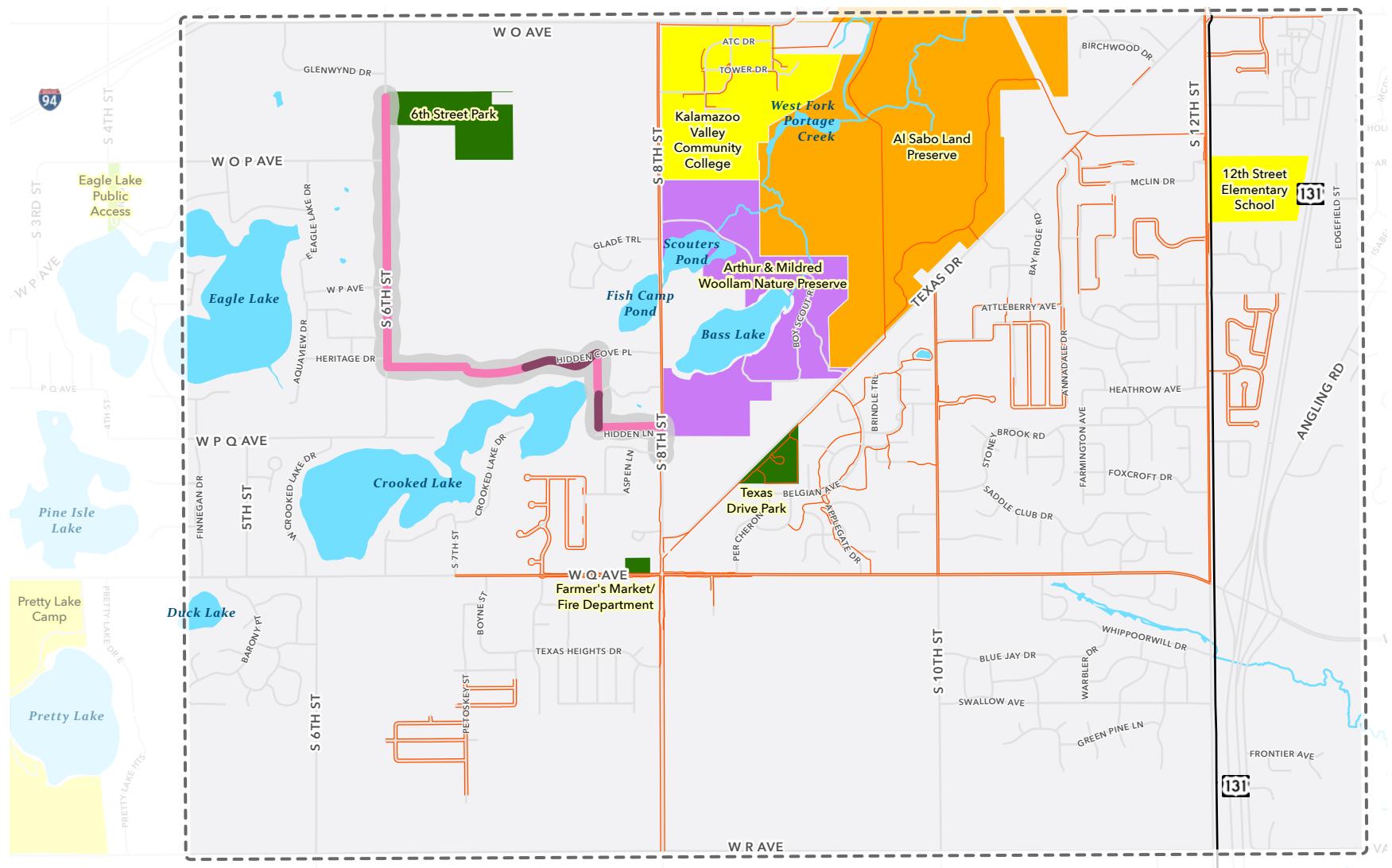
### Type

- Off-road
- On-road

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



## MAP 10. ROUTE 5



### Facility Ownership

- Texas Charter Township
- Kalamazoo County
- Michigan DNR

### Route 5

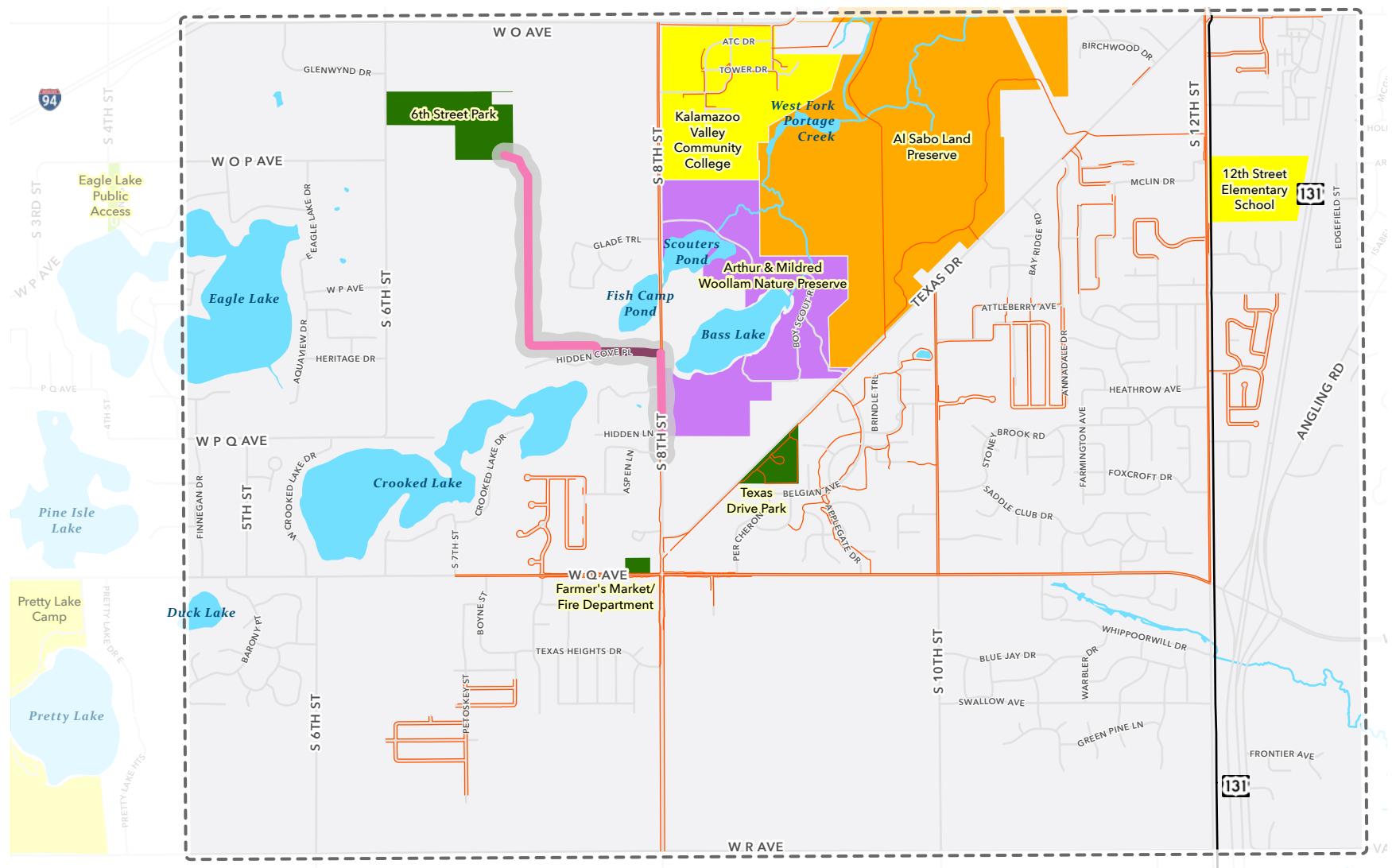
#### Type

- Off-road
- On-road

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



## MAP 11. ROUTE 6



### Facility Ownership

- Texas Charter Township
- Kalamazoo County
- Michigan DNR

### Route 6

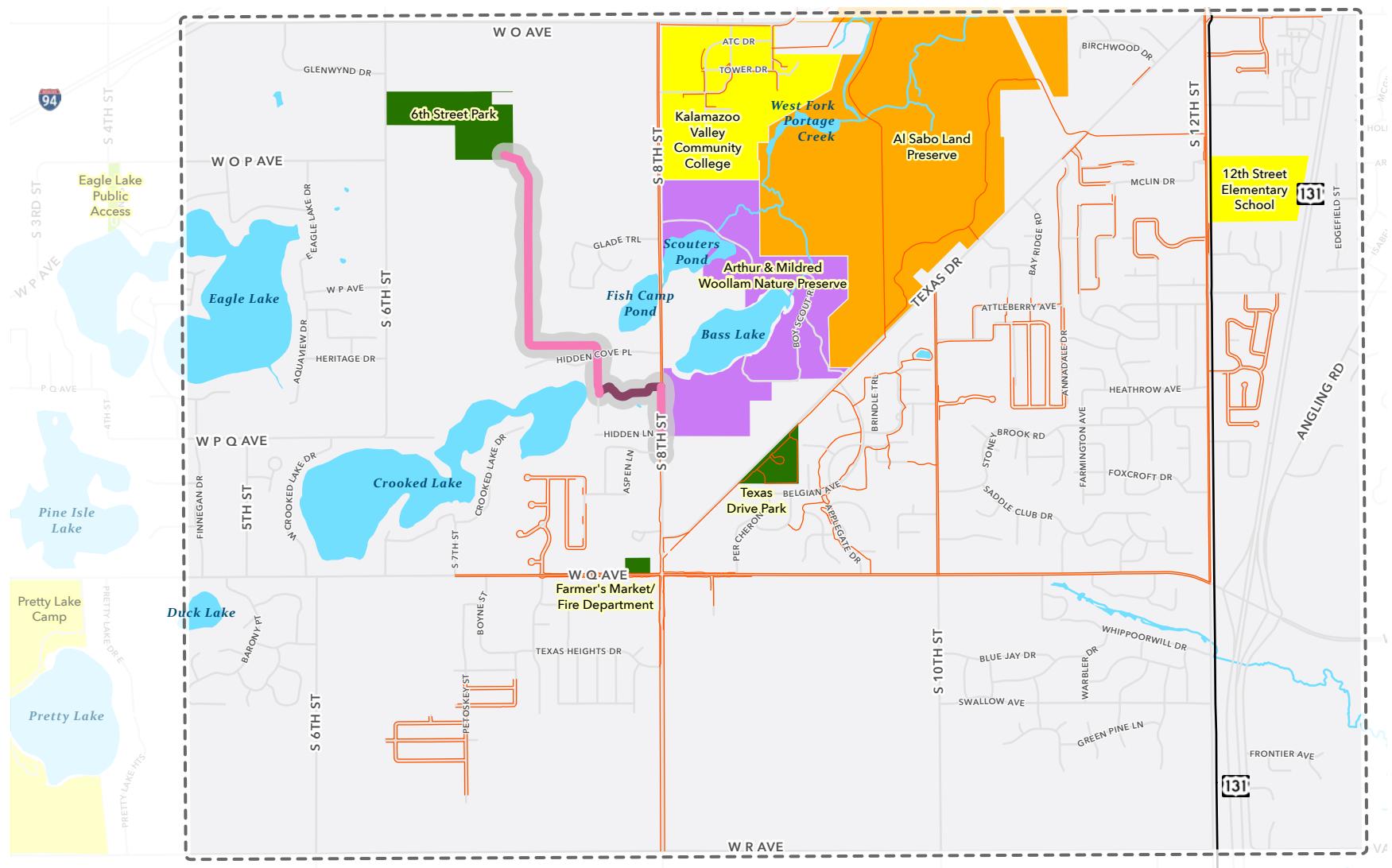
- Other
- City of Kalamazoo
- Existing Network
- Off-road
- On-road

### Type

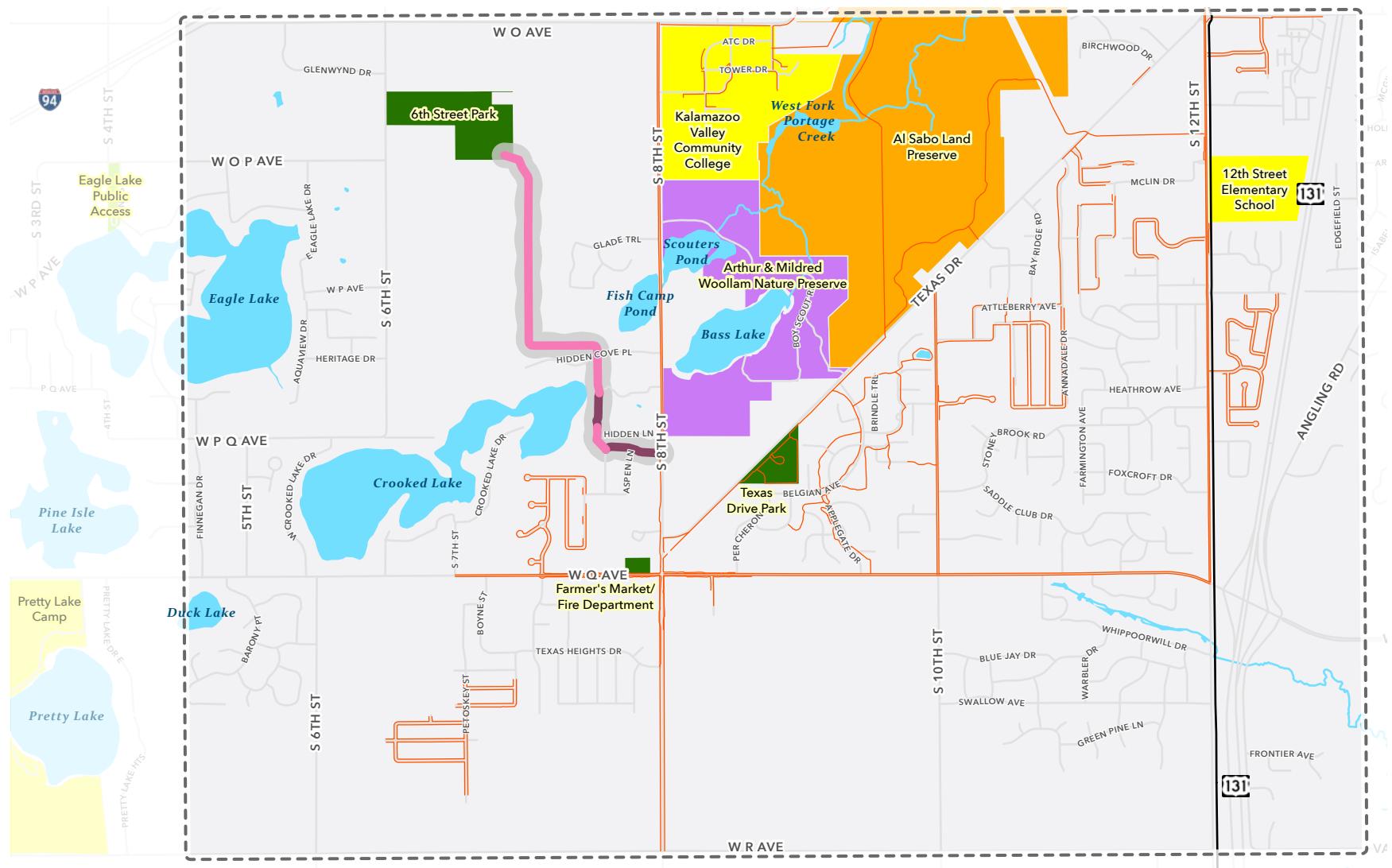
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



## MAP 11. ROUTE 7



## MAP 12. ROUTE 8



### Facility Ownership

- Texas Charter Township
- Kalamazoo County
- Michigan DNR

### Route 8

- Other
- City of Kalamazoo
- Existing Network

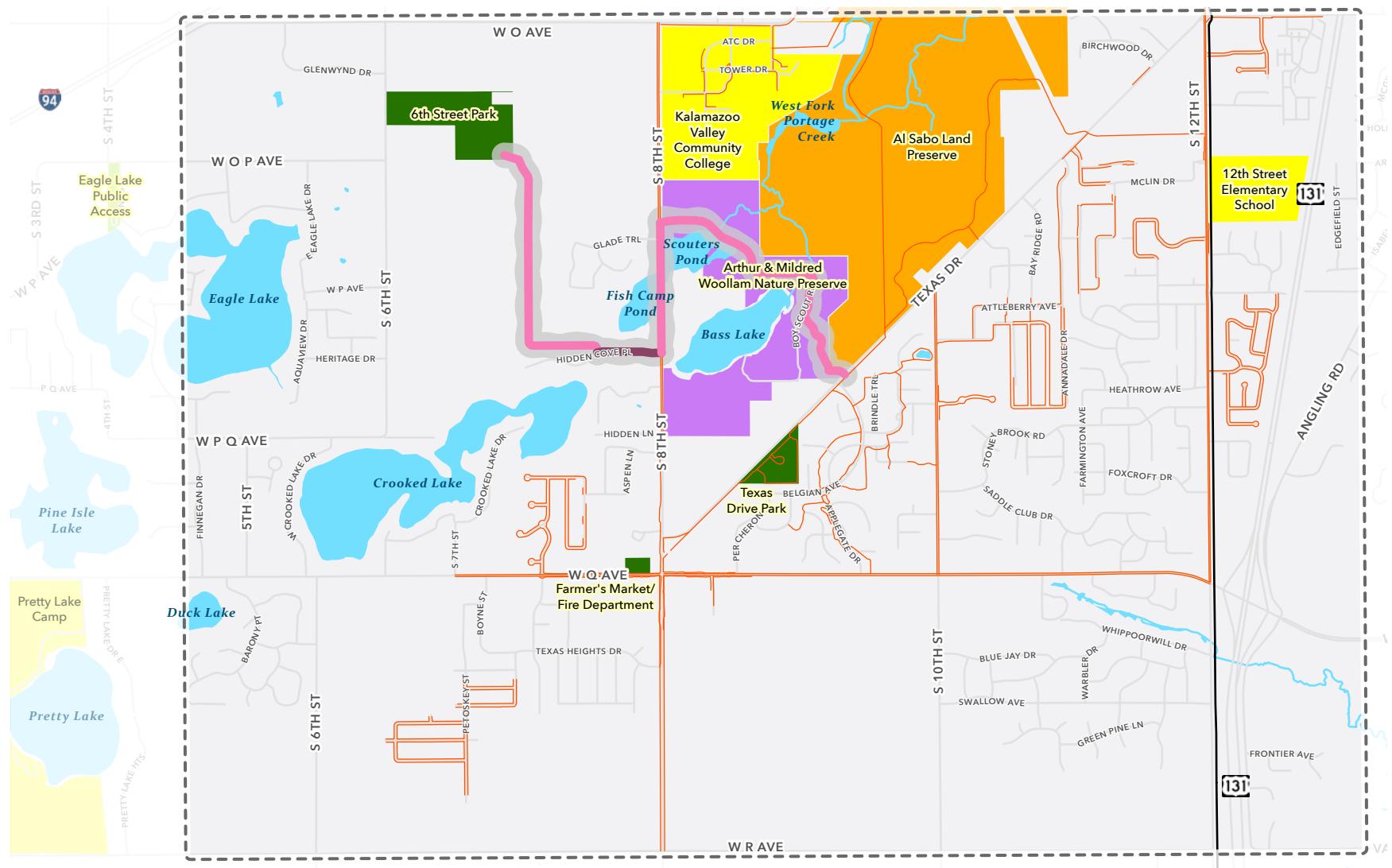
### Type

- Off-road
- On-road

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



## MAP 13. ROUTE 9



### Facility Ownership

- Texas Charter Township
- Kalamazoo County
- Michigan DNR

### Route 9

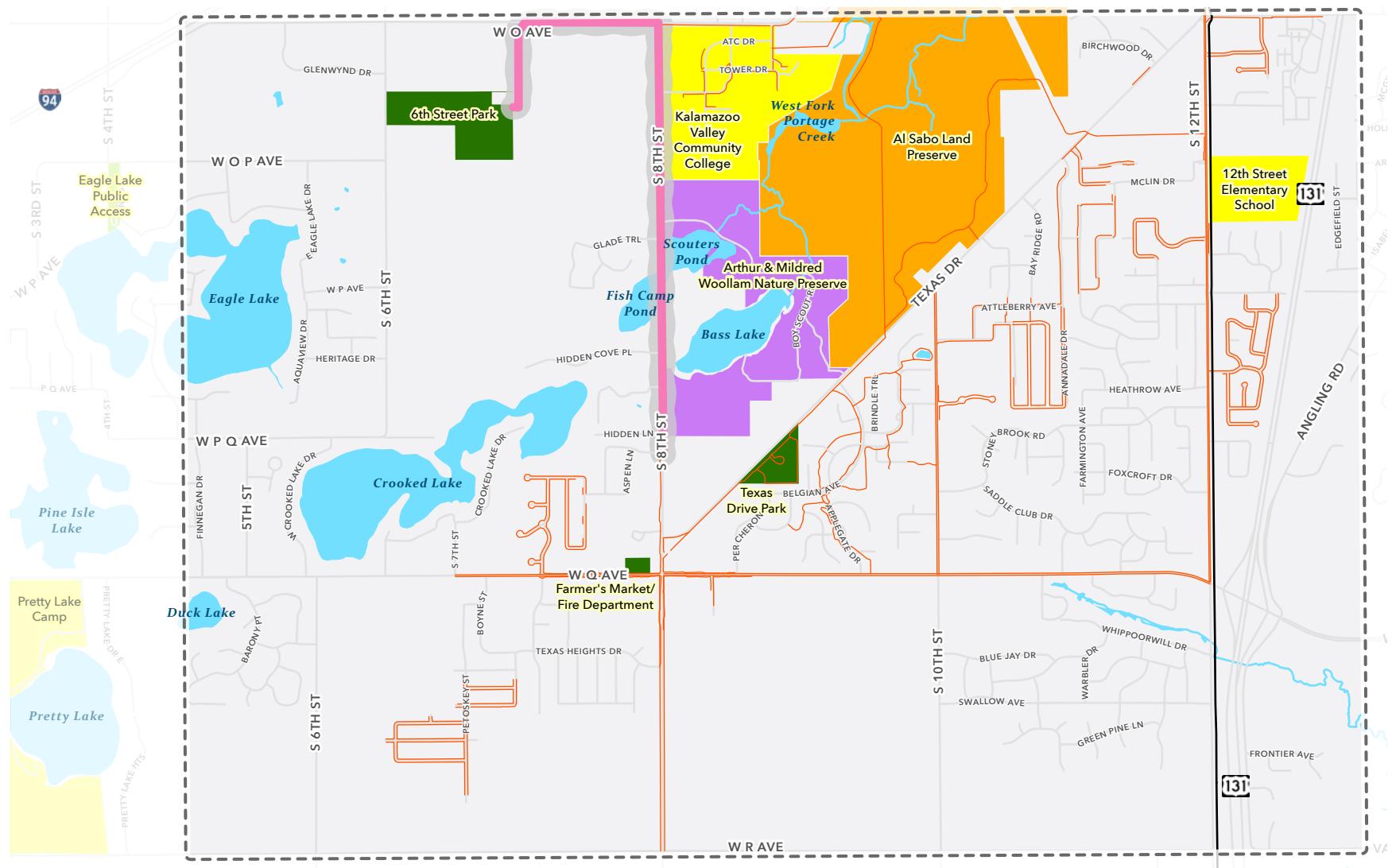
#### Type

- Off-road
- On-road

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



## MAP 14. ROUTE 10



### Facility Ownership

- Texas Charter Township
- Kalamazoo County
- Michigan DNR

### Other

- City of Kalamazoo
- Existing Network

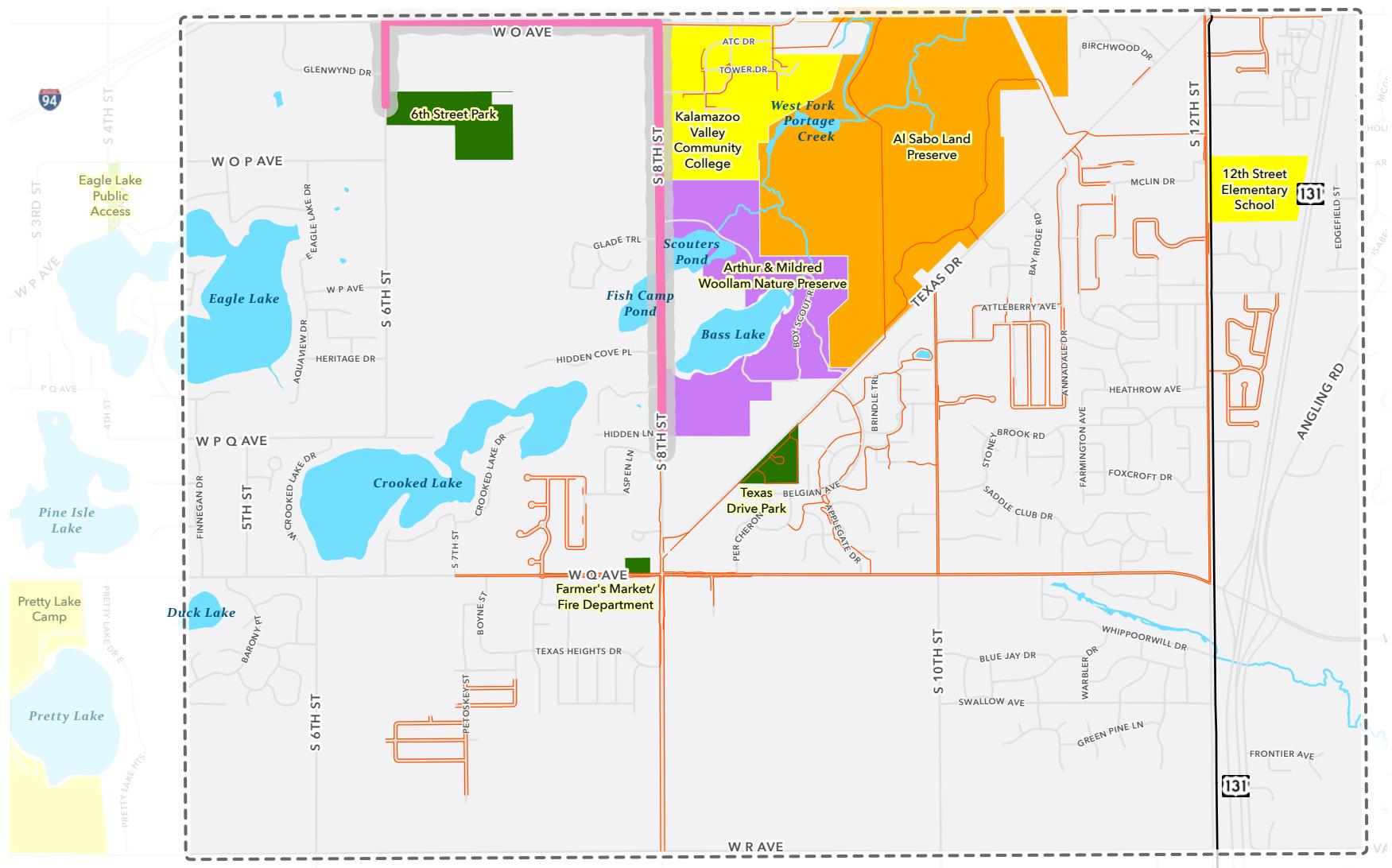
### Route 10

- Facility Type
- Off-road

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



## MAP 15. ROUTE 11



Facility Ownership

- Texas Charter Township
- Kalamazoo County
- Michigan DNR

Route 11

- Off-road
- Existing Network

Type

- Off-road

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



## PHASE 2 ROUTE EVALUATIONS

After the first phase of evaluations, the routes 4 and 5 were retained and compared to the development and identification of alternative routes along 6th Street. The alternative routes would bypass many of the challenges associated with the 8th Street options and provide nonmotorized access to the park and farmers' market for additional residential neighborhoods. As routes along 6th Street advanced, all connection to the Farmers' Market used a route along W PQ Avenue, Crooked Lake Drive, and W Q Avenue. Differences evolved around the accessing the northern portion of the route and into 6th Street Park. These different routes are named Route 1, Route 2, and Route 3.

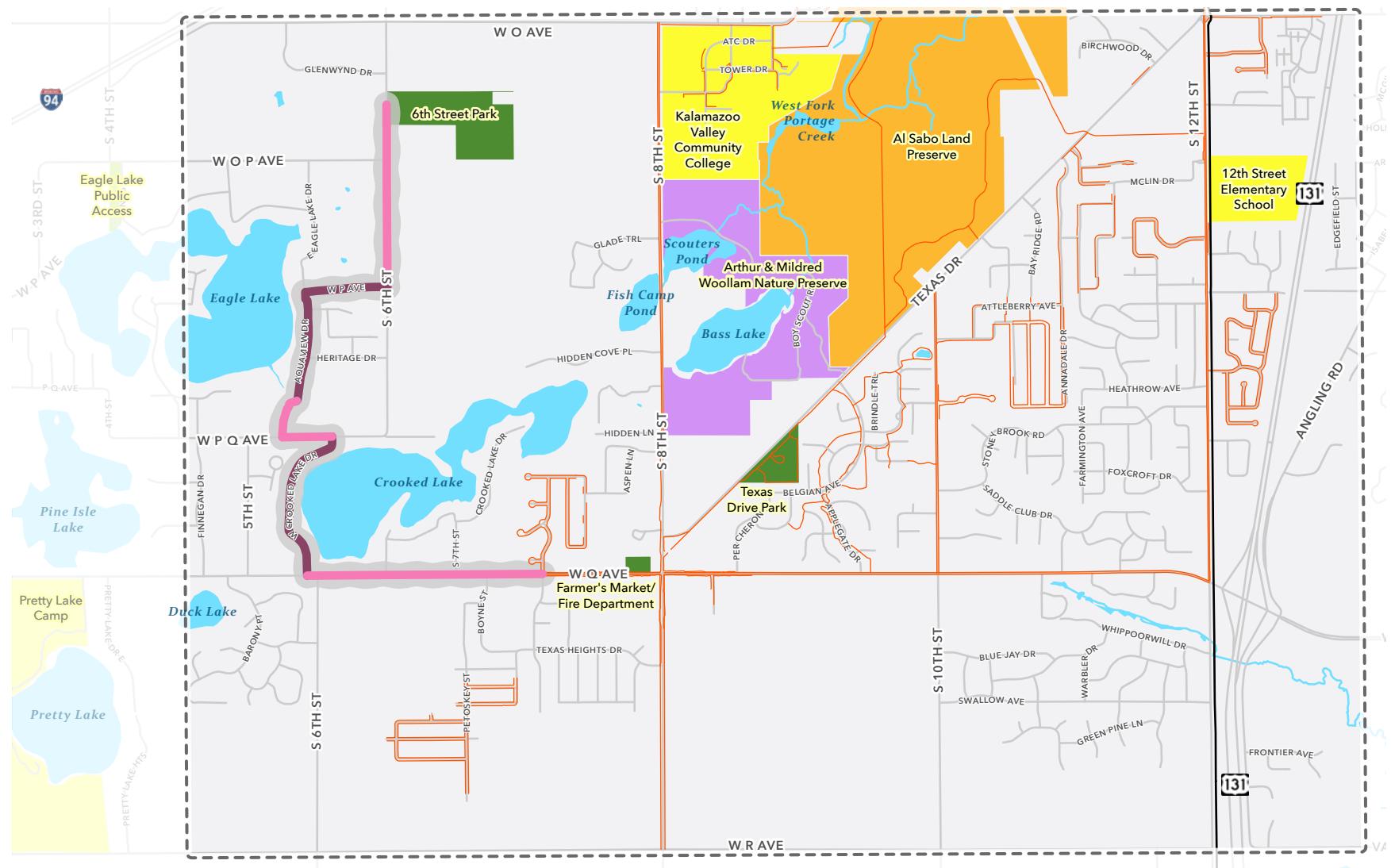
In comparing routes 1-5 to each other, the Steering Committee decided that routes 4 and 5 were less feasible than routes 1-3. Through conversation, additional routes identified as Route 2a and Route 3a were developed and advanced.

### Route 1

Access to 6th Street Park would be via a route on the east side of 6th Street until the intersection with the privately-owned W P Avenue. Along 6th Street, drainage, utility, and public right-of-way issues were the same on both sides of the road, rendering these criteria to have a minor impact on selecting the west or east side of the road. A cross slope near W OP Avenue presents a major grade challenge, pushing the more feasible route option to the east side of 6th Street. The nonmotorized facility would cross 6th Street at the intersection with W P Avenue and switch to an on-road facility on the private road. A large private property owner that owned most of the low-traffic, low-speed limit road and was in support of a the route being on the road. At the intersection of Eagle Lake Drive, the on-road route would continue on to Aquaview Drive until the end of the road since there is no room to put an off-road facility. The route would become off-road again along a utility easement reaching the north side of W PQ Avenue. The route would cross W PQ Avenue at Crooked Lake Drive, and become on-road again because of the lack of space. At the intersection of W Q Avenue the route would become off-road again, however, neither the north or south side was examined or selected for a future route due to project limitations.

Route 1 would allow an off-road connection for near 6th Street Park and additional neighborhood access near Eagle Lake. However, complications arise. Many residents in the Eagle Lake neighborhood were opposed to a route. Furthermore, Aquaview Drive falls into private ownership along the last several properties (per Kalamazoo County), and private property owners would have to allow the trail to be located on the street. Concerns about observed speeding traffic on Crooked Lake Drive were also raised.

## MAP 16. ROUTE 1



### Facility Ownership

- Texas Charter Township
- Kalamazoo County
- Michigan DNR

### Route 1

- Off-road
- Existing Network

### Route 1

- Facility Type
- On-road

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



## Route 2

Access to 6th Street Park would be via a route on the east side of 6th Street until the intersection of Heritage Drive. Along 6th Street, drainage, utility, and public right-of-way issues were the same on both sides of the road, having minimal impact on choosing the west or east side of the street. At the intersection of 6th Street and Heritage Road major grading and clearing will be needed. At this intersection, the nonmotorized facility would cross 6th Street and switch to an on-road facility on low-traffic, low-speed Heritage Drive. At the intersection of Aquaview Drive the on-road route would continue until the end of the road. The route would continue off-road along a utility easement reaching the north side of W PQ Avenue. The route would cross W PQ Avenue at Crooked Lake Drive, and become on-road again because of the lack of space for an off-road facility. At the intersection of W Q Avenue the route would become off-road, however, neither the north or south side was examined or selected for a future route due to project limitations.

Route 2 would allow an off-road connection for near 6th Street Park and additional neighborhood access near Eagle Lake. However, complications arise. Many residents in the Eagle Lake neighborhood were opposed to a route in their area. Furthermore, Aquaview Drive falls into private ownership along the last several properties of Aquaview Drive (per Kalamazoo County), and private property owners would have to allow the trail to be located on the street. Concerns about observed speeding traffic on Crooked Lake Drive were also raised.

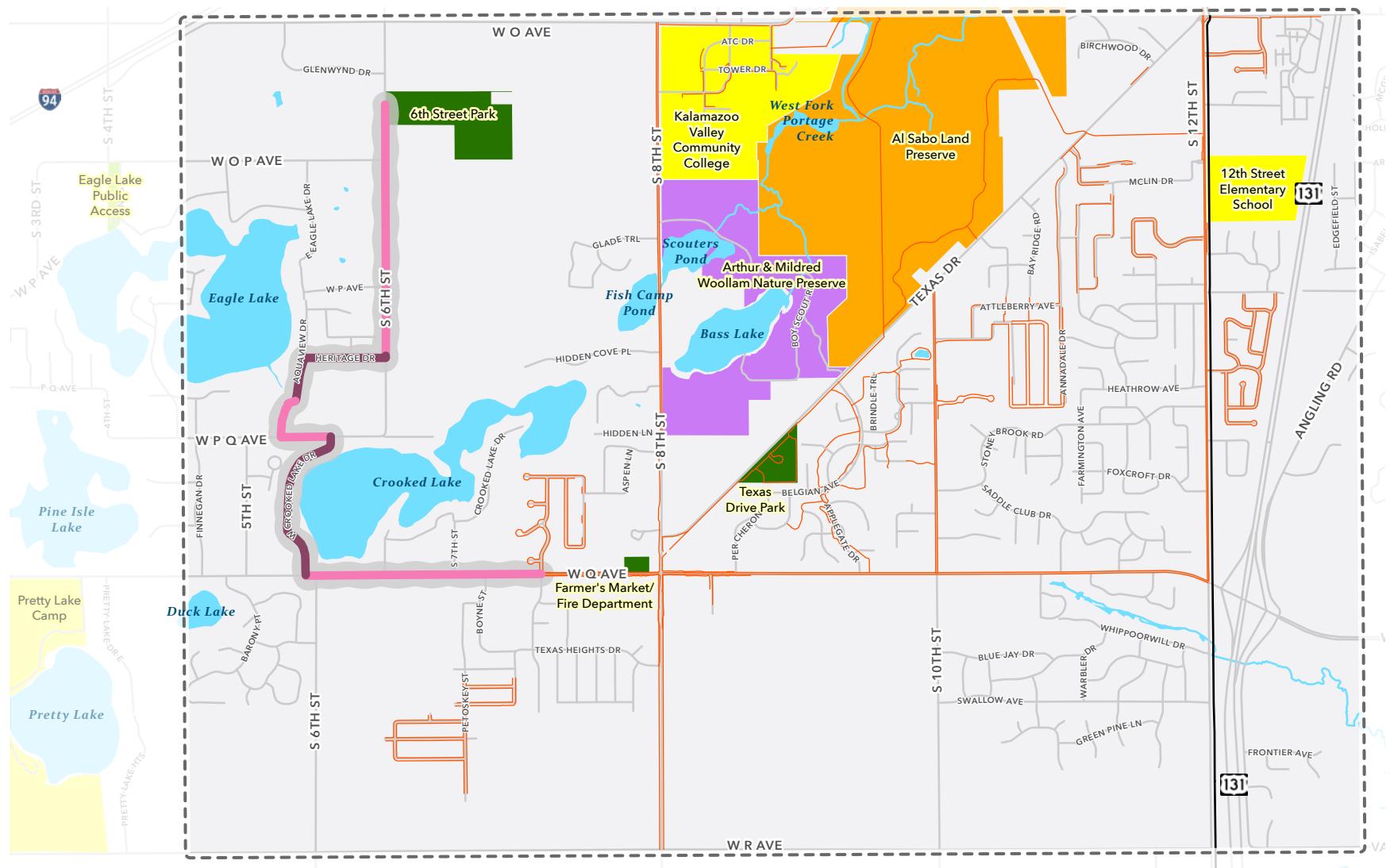
## Route 2a

Access to 6th Street Park would be via a route on the east side of 6th Street until the intersection Heritage Drive. Again, along 6th Street, drainage, utility, and public right-of-way issues were the same on either side of the road minimally impacting the selection of the west or east side of the street. At the intersection of 6th Street and Heritage Road major grading and clearing will be needed. The route would switch to the west side of 6th Street at that intersection, continuing to be off-road along W PQ Avenue. The route would cross W PQ Avenue at Crooked Lake Drive, and become on-road again because of the lack of space. At the intersection of W Q Avenue the route would become off-road, however, neither the north or south side was examined or selected for a future route due to project limitations.

Route 2a would allow an off-road connection for near 6th Street Park. Eagle Lake neighborhood residents would not be immediately impacted by a direct route through their area. Concerns about observed speeding traffic on Crooked Lake Drive were also raised.

The detailed analysis revealed that **Route 2a** was the **preferred route, however, there are caveats**. Project limitations prevented this study from examining alternatives to the route being on Crooked Lake Drive. The safety concerns along W Crooked Drive were raised by community members and staff of the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County. Future studies should consider examining route alternatives that would include 5th Street and Finnagen Drive as potential connections in between W PQ Avenue and W Q Avenue.

## MAP 17. ROUTE 2



### Facility Ownership

- Texas Charter Township
- Kalamazoo County
- Michigan DNR

### Route 2

- Off-road
- Existing Network

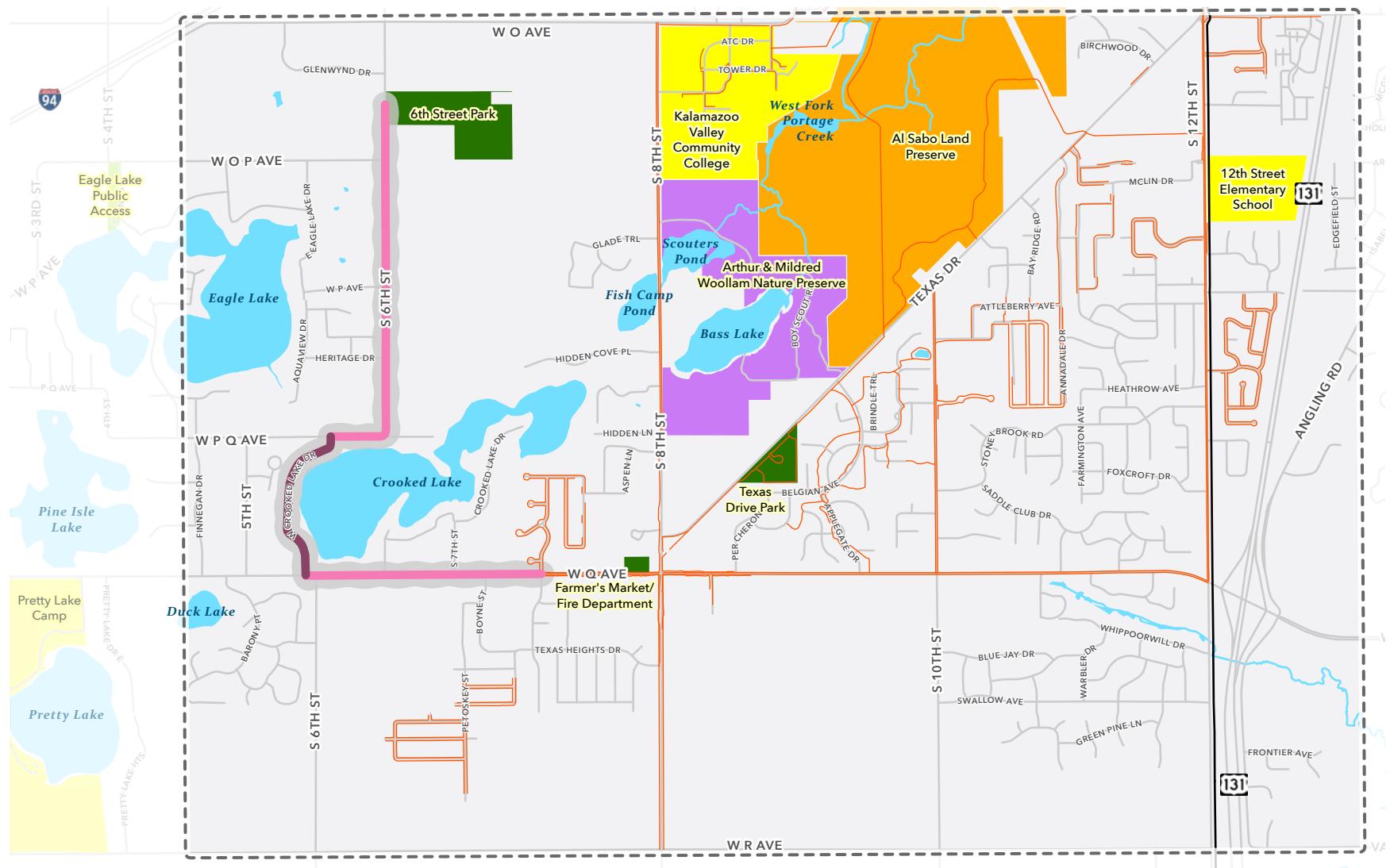
### Route 2

- Facility Type
- Off-road
- On-road

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



## MAP 18. ROUTE 2A



### Facility Ownership

- Texas Charter Township
- Kalamazoo County
- Michigan DNR

### Other

- City of Kalamazoo
- Existing Network

### Route 2a

- Facility Type
- Off-road
- On-road

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



### Route 3

Access to 6th Street Park would occur via a trail along the south side of the park onto private property with extensive wood and natural environment characteristics. The trail would continue south, and then reach towards 6th Street, staying on the east side of the road. The nonmotorized facility would cross 6th Street at the intersection of W P Avenue, and switch to an on-road facility in the low-traffic, low-speed environment. A large private property owner that owned most of the road was in support of the route on the road. At the intersection of Eagle Lake Drive, the on-road route would continue on to Aquaview Drive until the end of the road. The route would continue off-road along a utility easement reaching the north side of W PQ Avenue. The route would cross W PQ Avenue at Crooked Lake Drive, and become on-road again because of the lack of space. At the intersection of W Q Avenue the route would become off-road, however, neither the north or south side was examined for feasibility due to project limitations.

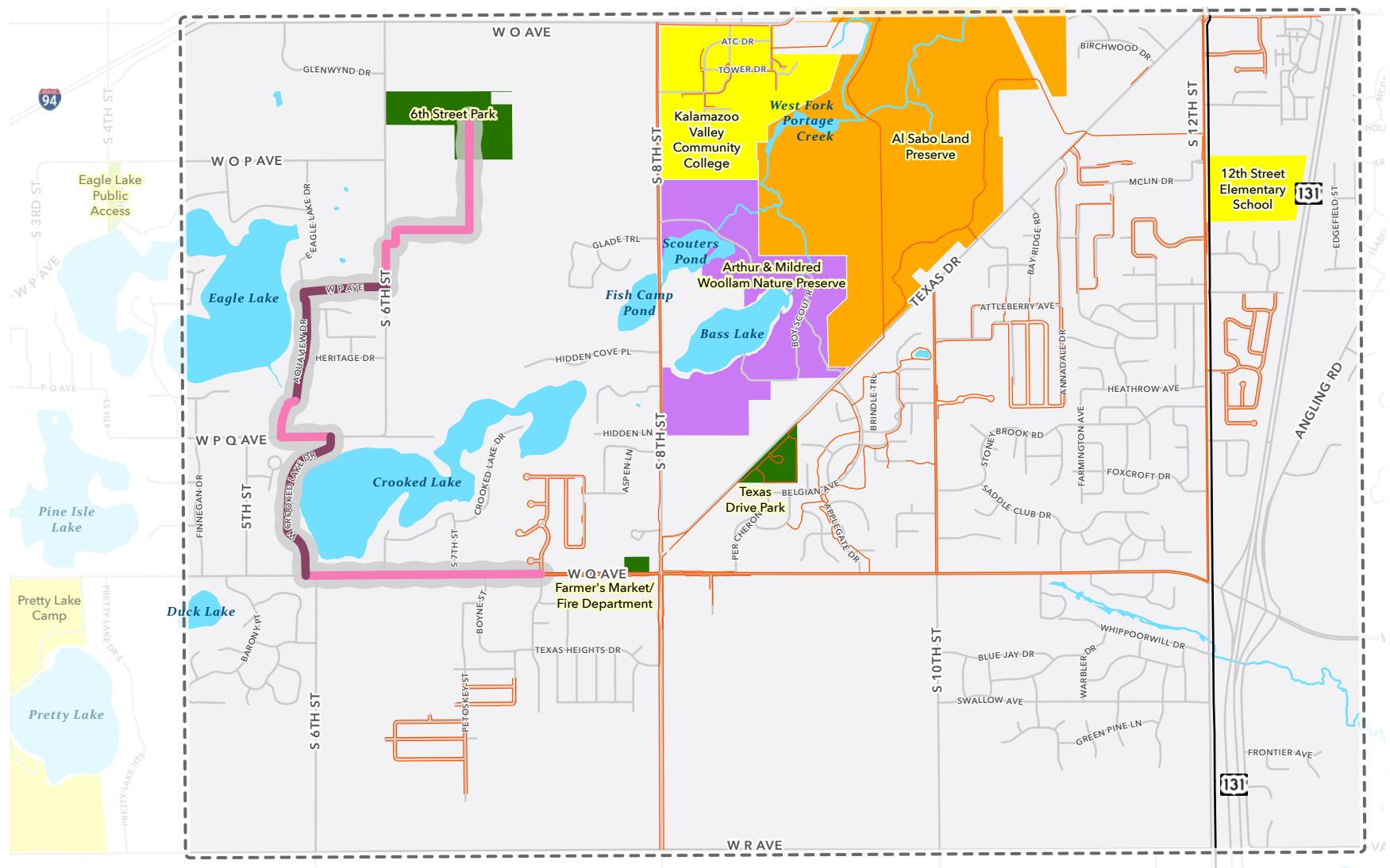
Route 3 would provide a significant off-road trail experience south of 6th Street Park and provide nonmotorized access to additional neighborhoods near Eagle Lake. However, large private property land owners did not respond to the Township's inquiries. Furthermore, complications arise because the road falls into private ownership along the last several properties of Aquaview Drive (per Kalamazoo County), and private property owners would have to allow the trail to be located on the street. Many residents in the Eagle Lake neighborhood were also opposed to a route in their area. Concerns about observed speeding traffic on Crooked Lake Drive were also raised.

### Route 3a

Access to 6th Street Park would occur via a trail along the south side of the park onto private property with extensive wood and natural environment characteristics. The trail would continue south, and then reach towards 6th Street, staying on the east side of the road. At the intersection of 6th Street and Heritage Road major grading and clearing will be needed. The route would switch to the west side of 6th Street at that intersection, continuing to be off-road on W PQ Avenue. The route would cross W PQ Avenue at Crooked Lake Drive, and become on-road again because of the lack of space. At the intersection of W Q Avenue the route would become off-road, however, neither the north or south side was examined or selected for a future route due to project limitations.

Route 3a would allow for a pleasant trail experience south of 6th Street Park. Eagle Lake neighborhood residents would not be immediately impacted by a direct route through their area. However, concerns about observed speeding traffic on Crooked Lake Drive were raised.

## MAP 19. ROUTE 3



## Facility Ownership

Texas Charter Township

Kalamazoo County

Michigan DNR

Other

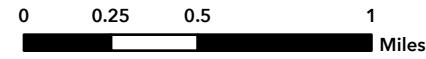
City of Kalamazoo

— Existing Network

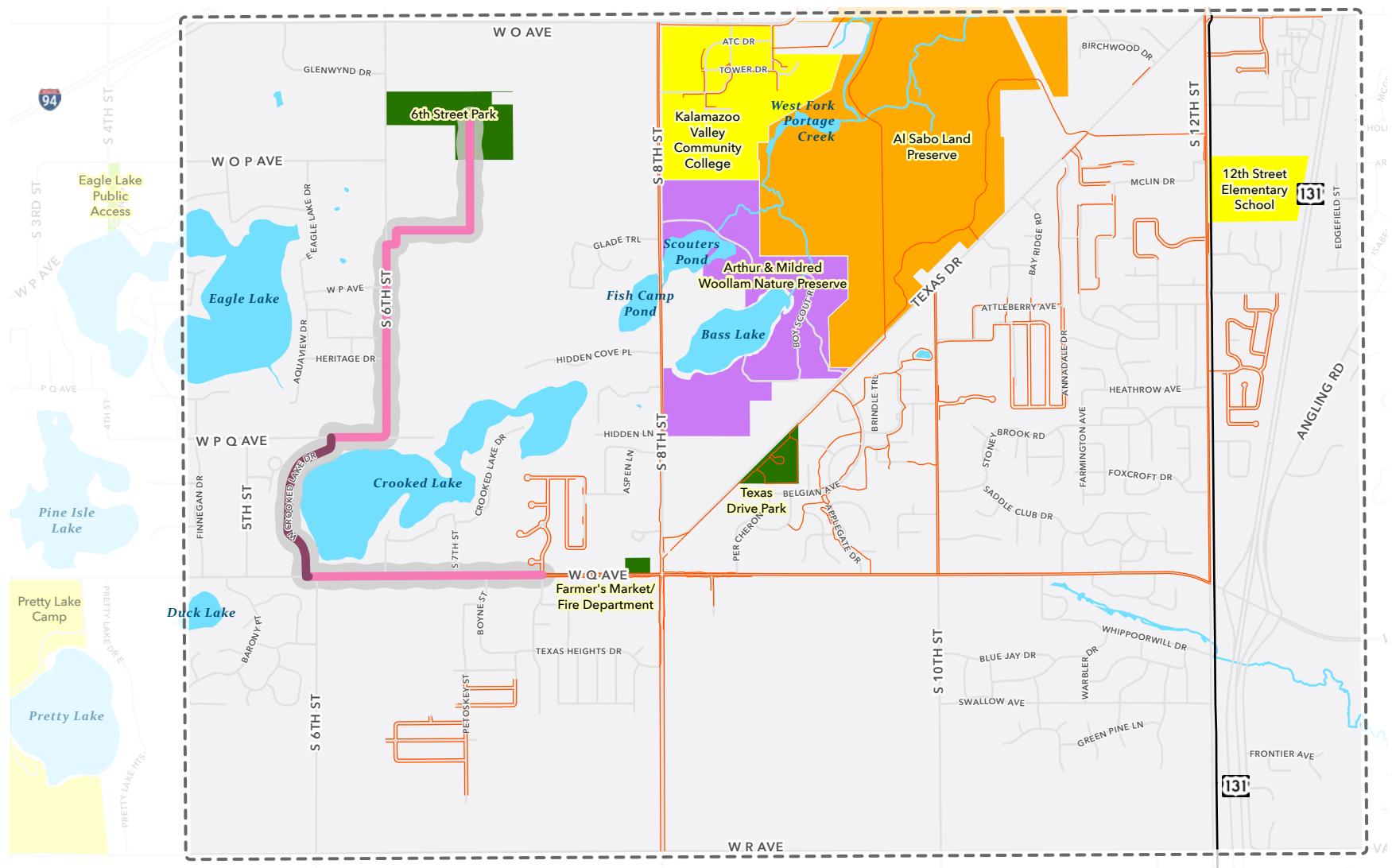
### Route 3

### Facility Type

- Off-road
- On-road



## MAP 20. ROUTE 3A



### Facility Ownership

- Texas Charter Township
- Kalamazoo County
- Michigan DNR

### Route 3a

- Other
- City of Kalamazoo
- Existing Network

### Route 3a

- Facility Type
- Off-road
- On-road

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



*This page is left intentionally blank.*



## CHAPTER 5

# Recommendations



## Chapter 5 Recommendations

### RECOMMENDED ROUTES

This project resulted in the recommendation of five routes along the three corridors and between two distinct Township destinations. The recommended routes along 12th Street, 10th Street, W Q Avenue, and between 6th Street Park and the Farmers' Market are shown on Map 21.

### ADDRESSING COMMUNITY IMPACTS

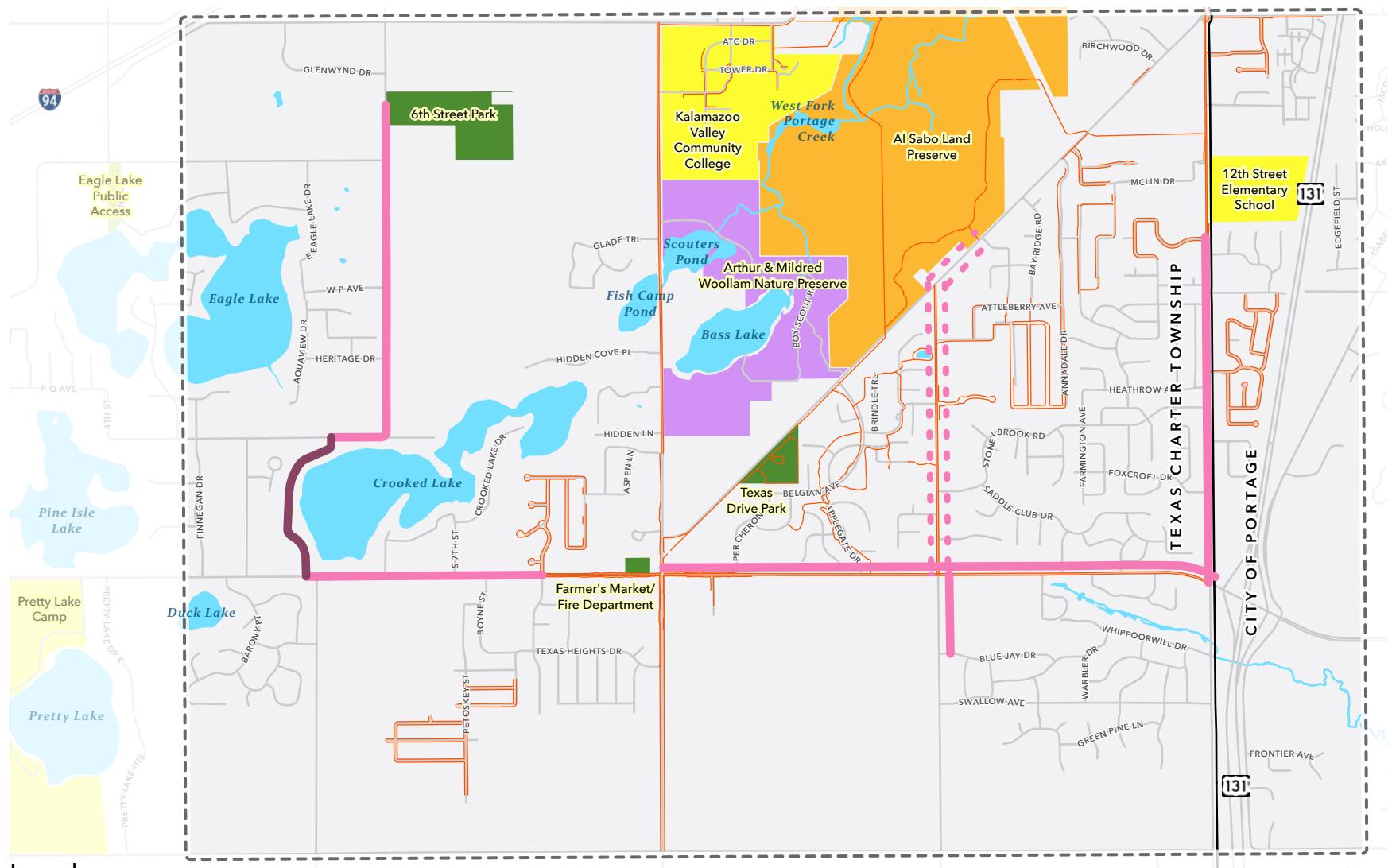
Community members were engaged in this project, and spoke about wanting to stay informed as these projects move forward over time. The Township should strongly consider a long-term perspective or strategy in developing these routes and building positive relationships with private property owners whose land will be impacted. Get input from property owners. Consider what is open for compromise and negotiation. Take time to build relationships. Remind the community that previous publicly-developed and adopted plans outlined these routes.

### FACILITY DESIGN STANDARDS

Although constructing off-road facilities for all the routes is not feasible, a combination of facility types could be used to provide a safe, continuous development of the nonmotorized network in Texas Charter Township. Execution of a consistent design standard as much as possible with things like lighting (where appropriate), thoughtful wayfinding and interpretive signage would unify multiple facility types and provide a cohesive experience along the various routes. Careful design consideration should be given to transitions between facility types during the engineering process. Careful design consideration should be given to road crossings and intersections during the engineering process.

Off-road facilities should be built to AASHTO Design Standards following the most current version of the Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities. The NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide is another helpful resource when building out infrastructure, particularly when considering intersections.

## MAP 21. ALL PREFERRED ROUTES



### Facility Type

— Off-road

On-road

Off-road (Side To Be Determined)

Kalamazoo County

Michigan DNR

Other

 City of Kalamazoo

0      0.25      0.5      1

Miles



## FACILITY TYPES

There are two types of facilities that would be likely to be built - off-road and on-road facilities. Below is a brief glossary to help the community understand the potential infrastructure that would be used along these routes. Having this section acts as a touch point that will help local leaders, staff, and the public ensure that they are talking about and building a network of facilities that everyone understands.

### Off-Road Facilities

- **Sidepaths**

This is a term commonly used by MDOT. A path located immediately adjacent to a road separated from motor vehicle traffic by an open space or barrier, either within the highway ROW or an independent ROW. Most sidepaths are designed for two-way travel and are at least 8 - 10 feet wide.

- **Paved Trail**

Off-road infrastructure that may be used by people walking, rolling, and/or biking and is paved with material such as concrete or asphalt. Most are designed for two-way travel.

### On-Road Facilities

- **Separated Trail**

Separated by bollards and/or pavement markings, the separated trail would be located on the edge of the pavement.

## PHASING PLAN

Although the implementation of the routes identified in the study is a long-term project, small, low-cost improvements are

possible in the short-term that would have positive impacts on developing an expanded, connected trailway system.

## GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Implementation and phasing may take time. Specific recommendations along the various routes are important, but understanding some critical general recommendations may help the Township to be nimble and prepared to take advantage of opportunities when they arise. Specifically:

- Keep communications open with the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County to stay informed of future road and intersection projects, including those planned out years in the future. This helps the Township be prepared with "shovel ready" projects before road construction occurs.
- Focus on easy wins early on to build momentum and trust with the community. Residents were appreciative for the ample community engagement that occurred during the study. The six months spent listening to and dialoguing with groups and individuals was important to help build a sense of "being heard" during the development of this study. As there was opposition to the route locations in some instances, focusing on building the network where there are mutually positive outcomes will help increase trail support.
- A major component should be outreach to landowners to determine the possible changing level of support for constructing routes on private property and to gauge potential easement/acquisition costs. As there were a number of residents who own property along the proposed routes in opposition to the project or had questions, spending time listening and responding to their questions will help.

## ROUTE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are to consider on a street by street basis and do not reflect a priority order.

### 12th Street

- As the of ROW varies along the corridor, surveys will need to be completed to determine where the right-of-way exists to be able to build trails. This will be an important first step.
- Seek opportunities to connect to existing trail nodes, like near McLin Drive or Queen Victoria Lane. In areas where houses are being built but have not been bought or occupied, see if negotiations can be made to build trails within the available ROW.

### 10th Street

- As the ROW varies along the corridor, surveys will need to be completed to determine where the right-of-way exists to be able to build trails. This will be an important first step.
- Section A
  - » Consider building off of the existing facilities to connect to Gavin Lane or Boxthorn Trail.
  - » Consider building where are fewer trees set back from the road south of Stoney Brook Road
  - » Further study a connection from 10th Street onto Texas Drive, into either Bentely Drive and/or Al Sabo Nature Preserve.

- Section B

- » Over 900 linear feet of an eight-foot-wide trail will be constructed along the 10th Street frontage of the recently approved Bradford Oaks site condominium development, per Planning Commission approval Case 25-09, Tentative Preliminary Plan, Step One approval, dated October 14, 2025.

### W Q Avenue

- As the ROW varies along the corridor, surveys will need to be completed to determine where the right-of-way exists to be able to build the route. This will be an important first step.
- Keep in communication with MDOT regarding potential impacts at and near the W Q Avenue and 12th Street intersection, likely through the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS). The US 131 off ramp in the City of Portage on Center Avenue, which becomes W Q Avenue, has been listed for potential future changes. If these were to occur, traffic patterns, and therefore infrastructure, may change.
- Following that, determine the space MDOT would potentially need regarding the impacts those changes and locate the routes accordingly.
- If MDOT were to move forward with plans to reconstruct the intersection, consider the opportunity to build the trail along this portion of W Q Avenue (and/or 12th Street).
- Seek opportunities to connect to existing trail ends, like those near Percheron Street.

## 6th Street to the Farmers' Market (Route 2a)

- As the ROW varies along the roads within this route, surveys will need to be completed to determine where the right-of-way exists to be able to build trails. This will be an important first step.
- If a development is proposed for the area along the corner of W PQ Avenue and 6th Street, recommend route development.
- Conduct a feasibility study that would focus solely on the connection between 6th Street Park and the Farmers' Market, giving further opportunity to study potential route alternatives that include 5th Street and Finnegan and to determine the feasibility of a route along W Q Avenue.

## PLANNING-LEVEL OPINION OF PROBABLE COST

Providing an estimate for the cost of building infrastructure can be helpful. Table 5.1 shows the planning-level opinion of probable cost for the preferred routes in 2025 dollars. The cost of building different types of infrastructure varies.

Off-road facilities like trails and sidepaths include similar construction cost like engineering, grading, clearing, slope restoration, drainage, project contingency, and other items. The total cost for these items depends on the length of each trail section. Some sections also include added costs for things like retaining walls, environmental concerns, or property acquisition.

The biggest differences between the routes come from retaining wall needs and drainage issues. The 12th Street and 10th Street Section B routes include budgets for potential retaining walls, while the W Q Avenue and Farmers Market routes have the highest drainage costs due to off-road drainage that may need to be relocated or re-routed. The largest amount of property acquisition anticipated will be for the W Q Ave and the Farmers Market Route.

**Table 5.1 Opinion of Probable Cost Summary**

Route	Approximate Cost	On-Road (in feet)	Off-Road (in feet)	Total Length (in feet)
12th St	\$1,200,000	8,000	0	8,000
10th St - A*	\$750,000	5,280	0	5,280
10th St - B	\$500,000	2,500	0	2,500
W Q Ave	\$1,500,000	10,560	0	10,560
Farmers Market Route	\$1,800,000	13,300	4,200	17,500

Table 5.1 show a planning-level opinion of probable cost for various routes in no particular order of priority.

\* The cost for 10th St - A was provided as a guide, and does not infer that a particular side of the street was selected for route construction.

## FUNDING SOURCES

### Act 51 Funds

Texas Charter Township should pursue working with several entities to help fund the development of the nonmotorized network. The Township can work with the Road Commission to identify network improvements that are on County-owned roads and ask that Act 51 Funds be used to fund nonmotorized improvements. County Road Commissions are required to use a minimum of 1% of Act 51 Funds based on a 10-year average for nonmotorized transportation. Such facilities can be in conjunction with or separate from a road.

### KATS

Texas Charter Township is within the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) Metropolitan Planning Organization's boundaries, and should consider seeking resources from this agency. KATS is a public planning agency serving all of Kalamazoo County and the four townships of Almena, Antwerp, Waverly, and Paw Paw within Van Buren County. They receive funding from the State and Federal government for certain kinds of transportation projects, including nonmotorized infrastructure. The Transportation Improvement Program (also called "The TIP") is the region's short-range capital improvements program for roads, nonmotorized infrastructure, public transit, and other transportation enhancements in the Kalamazoo region. The list includes the federally funded projects planned within these communities in a four-year cycle. The TIP is a living document, and periodic changes are made to include new projects, updated timelines, removal of projects, and changing project costs through meetings of the Technical Advisory Committee and Board of Commissioners.

### Safe Routes to Schools/Michigan Fitness Foundation

Safe Routes to School program can be used to design and construct any nonmotorized infrastructure that provides a connection from a school to a neighborhood. The Michigan Fitness Foundation runs the statewide program, and helps students bike, walk, and roll to school safely, unites neighborhoods, and increases students' ability to learn. Through infrastructure improvements, safety education, and incentives, kids are encouraged to get to school by means other than riding in a car. The Township can work with local schools, members of the community, and the Michigan Fitness Foundation to develop a united approach to develop nonmotorized facilities in the community.

### Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund

If developing a recreational off-road paved or unpaved trail, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Trust Fund Grant is a viable alternative program. Local units of government are eligible to peruse the program for outdoor recreation projects provided that they have an approved and up-to-date 5-Year Parks and Recreation Plan on file with the DNR. Contact a DNR State grant coordinator for more information. Trust fund grants can be used for land acquisition or construction if the land has already been acquired.

The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) projects provide for natural resource protection and outdoor recreation. By law, no more than 25 percent of the Trust Fund revenues available for appropriation each year can be used for development, therefore the majority of funding is allocated for acquisition projects. Final grant recommendations are made by the MNRTF Board to the State Legislature for final approval.

Applications are evaluated on established criteria such as natural resource access and conservation, proximity to population clusters, applicant's committed matching funds, applicant's financial need, and priority projects of the Trust Fund Board, such as trails, regional significance, public access to lakes and rivers, wildlife habitat, and hunting access. At least 25 percent of the cost of the project is required as match from local government applicants.

A DNR-approved five-year recreation plan is required to be eligible. Development project minimum/maximum grant amount: \$15,000 to \$400,000. No minimum/maximum limits on land acquisition grants.

### **Michigan Department of Transportation - Transportation Alternatives Program**

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is a competitive grant program that uses federal transportation funds designated by Congress for specific activities that enhance the intermodal transportation system and provide safe alternative transportation options.

TAP is a competitive grant program for projects such as bike paths, pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements, and preservation of historic transportation facilities that enhance Michigan's intermodal transportation system and provide safe alternative transportation options. These investments support place-based economic development by offering transportation choices, promoting walkability, and improving quality of life.

Approximately \$24.5 million is available annually. Of this, \$17.6 million is available through a competitive grant process administered by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Office of Economic Development (OED). TAP requires

a minimum cash match of twenty percent of the construction cost. There is a \$200,000 minimum and no maximum grant amount for Michigan TAP funds.

### **Local Millage**

The Township can also consider pursuing a local millage. A millage is a way a local community can fund improvements. A mill levy is the assessed property tax rate used by local governments and other jurisdictions to raise revenue to cover annual expenses. A millage rate increase could be passed by local voters to help pay for and support the development of the facilities listed in this plan. In Meridian Township, the local trails are funded through the Meridian Township Park Millage and Pedestrian/Bicycle Pathway Millage. The development and maintenance of these facilities are paid for by the millage. Having a local mechanism to support the development and maintenance of the facilities show how the community is invested and can inspire support from other entities.

APPENDIX

# Community Engagement Report





TEXAS CHARTER TOWNSHIP

# Trail Feasibility Study 2025