Irondequoit Bay Park System

Trail User Survey Findings

OCTOBER 2025



Acknowledgements

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ii Irondequoit Bay Park System

Introduction

Monroe County manages 22 parks that provide residents and visitors opportunities for hiking, bird watching, boating, fishing, biking, and much more. Irondequoit Bay is one of the County's most popular hubs for outdoor recreation and scenic views. Located just five miles east of the City of Rochester, the bay is part of what makes the Rochester metropolitan area truly unique. The south end of Irondequoit Bay is surrounded by five parks, including Abraham Lincoln Park, Irondequoit Bay Park West (IBPW), Lucien Morin Park, Tryon Park, and Ellison Park. These parks are collectively called the Irondequoit Bay Park System (IBPS) and comprise 1,232 acres of land and offer over 30 miles of multipurpose trails, many of which can be used year-round.

Project Background

The Monroe County Parks
Department sought to develop
an understanding of the
needs and concerns of trail
user groups within the IBPS to
determine priorities for future
investments and programming.
To achieve this, the IBPS Trail
User Survey was designed
to gather information about
how people use the trails
within the IBPS. The survey
was distributed digitally and in
hard copy, and project team

representatives conducted outreach at different trailheads throughout the IBPS. The survey drew responses from a variety of user groups, including the off-road cycling community, birders, walkers, and equestrians. Participants in the survey provided valuable insights regarding the experience for individuals along the trails and suggestions for needed improvements that would benefit trail users.

What's in this Report?

This report provides an overview of the Irondequoit Bay Park System Trail User Survey, beginning with the process that connected key populations with the survey and ending with findings and recommendations for potential actions that Monroe County Parks can take to improve the IBPS.

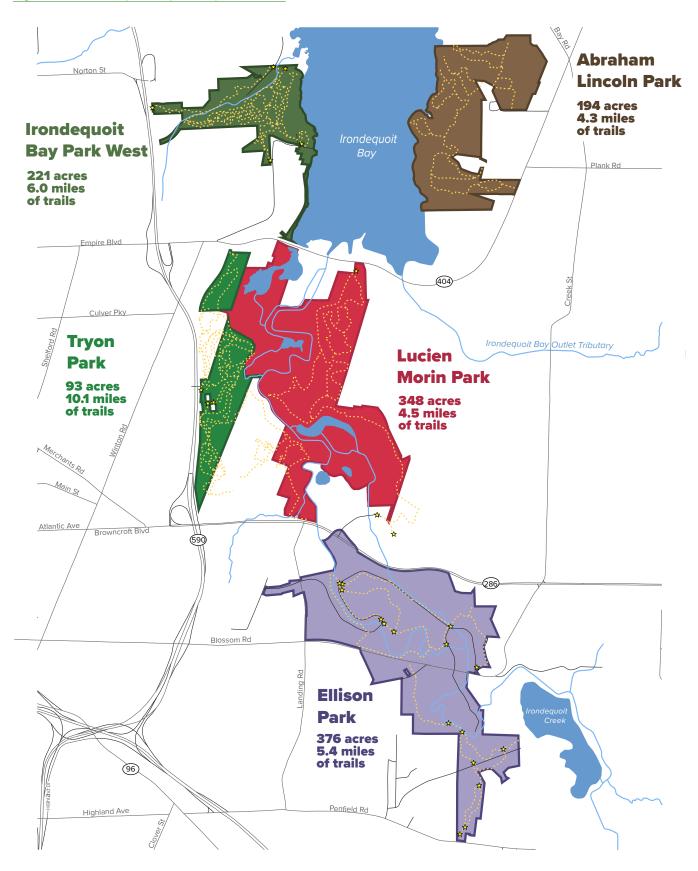
Public Engagement Methods details the four outreach methods designed to reach a wide array of trail users and gather information about their experiences.

Results and Key Findings
highlights the contributions
of survey participants and
organizes the input that
was received to emphasize
important themes, geographic
concerns, and areas of
strength within the IBPS.

Preliminary
Recommendations and
Actions provides preliminary
recommendations for future
projects and initiatives based
on the results of the survey.
The content in this section is
meant to guide the Monroe
County Parks Department
in prioritizing investments
in trail amenities, new trail
connections, existing trail
expansion, and user safety
enhancement throughout the

park system.

Figure 1 The Irondequoit Bay Park System



Irondequoit Bay Park System

Abraham Lincoln Park

Abraham Lincoln Park is located along the southeastern shoreline of Irondequoit Bay. The Park offers beautiful walking trails and waterfront views from the Abraham Lincoln Park Lodge.

Ellison Park

Ellison Park, located on the southern end of the Irondequoit Bay flood plain, has many amenities (i.e. disc golf course, tennis courts, playground, etc.) and trails with historical ties to the Seneca Nation. Its multi-use trails feature ponds, forests, and wetland overlooks.

Irondequoit Bay Park West (IBPW)

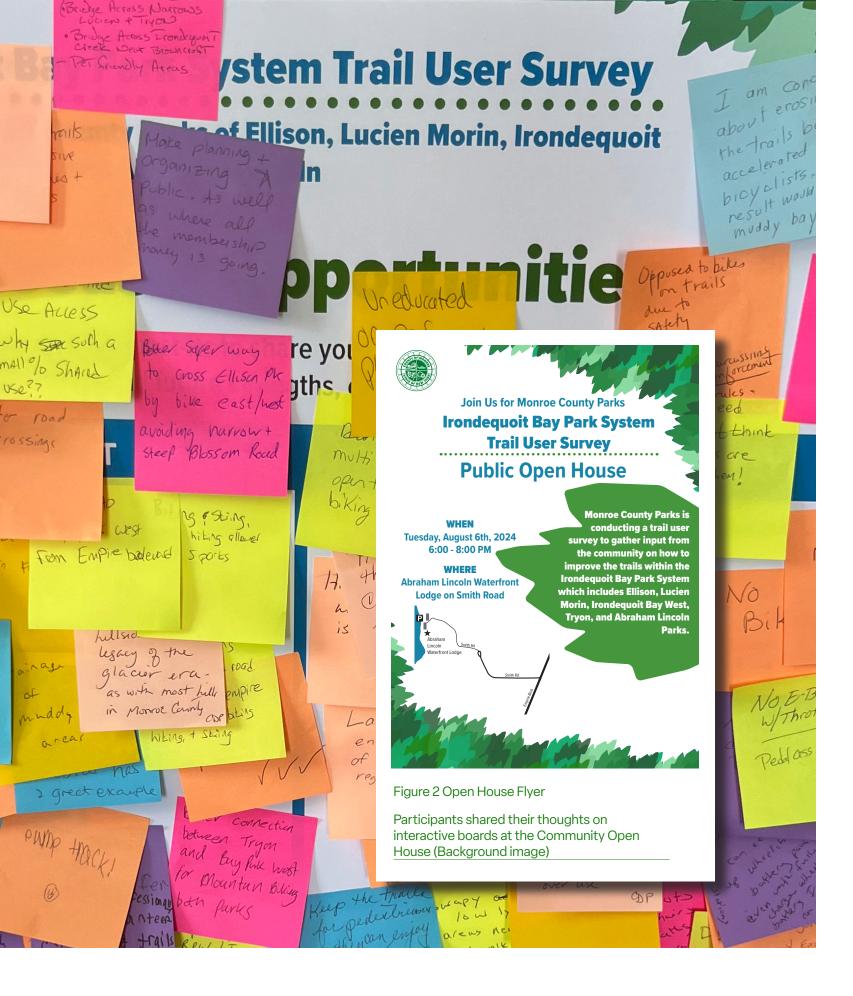
IBPW, on the Westshore of Irondequoit Bay, offers a variety of mountain biking and hiking trails, approximately 2,000 feet of frontage along Irondequoit Bay, and fishing access.

Lucien Morin Park

Lucien Morin Park spans from the south end of Irondequoit Bay to Ellison Park. The park's wetlands provide easy canoe and kayak access to the bay and scenic trails that offer opportunities to experience native flora and fauna.

Tryon Park

Tryon Park is located on the western shore of Irondequoit Bay and offers naturally rugged and scenic trails for a variety of trail user groups.



Public Engagement Methods

Public involvement was essential to ensuring the voices of trail users were heard throughout the data collection process. The public engagement methods used by the project team presented several opportunities for users of the IBPS to share their input. Outreach methods included an online survey, an interactive webmap, trailhead outreach, and a community open house. Over 1,000 people shared comments, questions, and suggestions to help the Monroe County Parks Department better understand user preferences, conflicts, and ideas for improving the park system. The project team made a concerted effort to ensure that public participation included perspectives from a diversity of trail user groups.

Community Open House

An open house meeting was held on August 6, 2024, at the Abraham Lincoln Waterfront Lodge in Webster, NY, and welcomed over 100 attendees. The goals of the meeting were to explain the purpose of the Irondequoit Bay Park System Trail User Survey, to introduce the survey and interactive map to the public, and to gather input from trail users.

Attendees had the opportunity to complete the survey during the meeting on a

laptop or fill out a hard copy
Outreach materials featured
QR codes for the survey
using a mobile device. Other
avenues for feedback included
presentation boards on which
people could relay current
strengths and weaknesses
of the trails, improvements
they would like to see, and
their overall vision for the IBPS
(Figure 2).





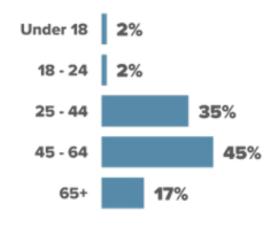


Figure 8 Percentage of Respondents with a Mobility Impairment

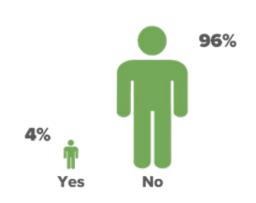


Figure 3 Example of Social Media Outreach

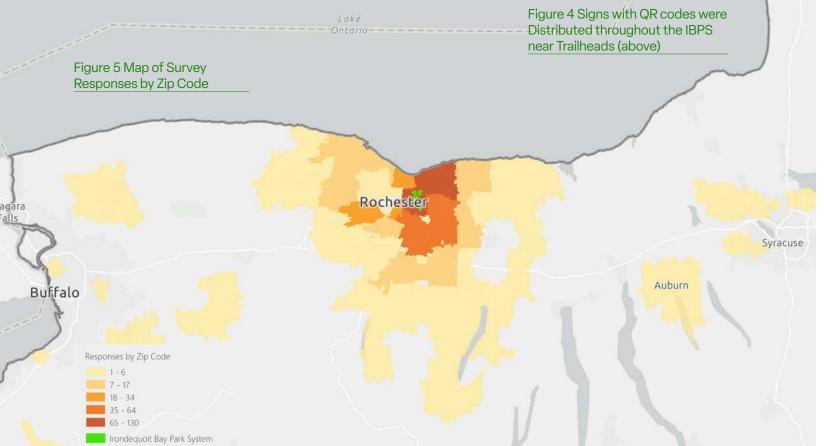
Monroe County Parks Department
Oct 2, 2024
Cut 2, 2024
Last chance to fill out the irondequoit Bay Park System
Trail User Survey if lose on October 6th,
2024. Click the link below to take the survey.

https://www.surveymonkey.com//
IrondequoitBayPark System

Trail User Survey

Elison, Lucien Morin, hondequoit Bay Park
West, Typen, and Abraham Lincies

TAKE THE SURVEY!



Online Survey

The online survey was active from August 6th to October 6th, 2024, and received 971 responses. The survey asked for information on trail user preferences and behaviors and basic demographic questions.

The survey was distributed to the public in hard copy and digital formats. Monroe County issued a press release on July 26, 2024 that several local media outlets covered. Hard copies of the survey were available at outreach events for trail users to fill out and drop off at the Monroe County Parks office.In addition, surveys were available at municipal library's / town halls in Irondequoit, Brighton, Penfield, and Webster. The Monroe County Parks Department also posted on its Facebook page to foster engagement from the broader community (Figure 3). Throughout the park system, lawn signs and flyers provided links and QR codes to the survey (Figure 4). Trailhead outreach was also conducted as part of this study, which is detailed below.

Survey respondents were able to identify the zip code where they live. Primarily, respondents identified as zip codes within Monroe County, but responses were received from other parts of Western and Central New York, as well as the Finger Lakes (Figure 5). The majority of survey respondents identified as being from the City of Rochester, and the towns of Brighton, Irondequoit, Penfield, and Webster (Figure 6). Approximately 80% of respondents were between the ages of 25 and 64, with the largest percentage (45%) being in the 45 to 64 age range (Figure 7).

Lastly, approximately four percent of respondents identified they had a mobility impairment of some kind (Figure 8).

Interactive Map

An interactive map was developed using Esri™ ArcGIS Reporter to allow respondents to place locationspecific entries. Participants contributed 336 entries. The webmap enabled trail users to identify specific trail aspects they enjoy or places where they had suggestions for improvements. Participants were able to respond to four categories within the webmap, including Add Trail Amenity, Add Trail Extension, Favorite Trail Amenity or Segment, and Area of Concern.

Trailhead Outreach

Trailhead outreach occurred at all five IBPS parks in late August and September 2024. Outreach occurred at several trailheads over four weekends and five weekdays to inform trail users about the project, provide access to the online survey and interactive map, and to encourage trail users to participate in the survey. QR codes on signage and business cards linked users to the survey and interactive map. Trail users also had the option to participate in the online

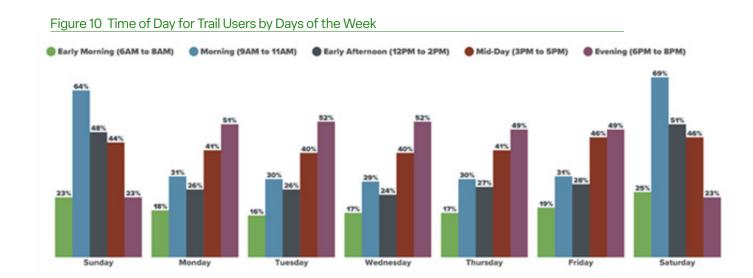
survey and web-map from the trail using iPads on-site, however, most participants opted to scan the QR codes and respond later. Some of the most common feedback from passersby related to the number and convenience of trash receptacles and doggy bag disposal sites along the trails.

Figure 9 Trailhead outreach in Lucien Morin Park in late August 2024



"As a walker, I feel unsafe and sometimes scared sharing the trail with bikers. I park at the Penfield trailhead where a sign says NO BICYCLISTS. Their treads seem to be increasing trail erosion. Sometimes they yell for me to move out of their way."

-Survey Comment



Results and Key Findings

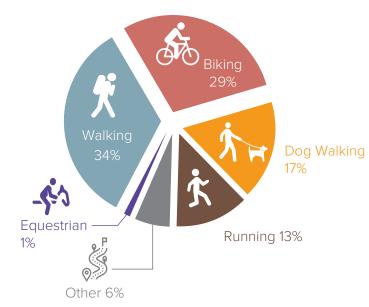
The project team reviewed the input from the survey and location-specific data from the interactive map exercise. Input was organized by geography and/or theme as appropriate. The results of this analysis are represented below.

Survey Results

As stated previously, nearly 1,000 (977) surveys were completed by the public with the majority of respondents (64%) indicating that they use the trails up to two times per week. The busiest days on the trails appear to be Saturdays and Sundays, during the hours of 9AM to 11AM. Weekdays share a similar distribution with evenings consistently showing more usage (6pm to 8pm), which likely reflects the availability of the daytime working population to participate in outdoor activities after the work day (Figure 10).

Survey respondents were asked to identify how they use the trails in the IBPS, with the majority identifying as using the trails for walking (61%), with biking a close second (52%), but dog walking (31%), and running (22%) were also significant. It is also clear from the survey responses that the parks system is a year-round destination for a broader variety of user groups, including horseback riding, cross-country skiing,





snowshoeing, birding,
nature observation, and
photography. Approximately
4% of respondents identified
that they have a mobility
impairment that might
influence the way that they
use the trail system. These
respondents identified a
variety of impairments related
to feet, joints, and recovery
from significant fractures
in their extremities. These
respondents also indicated that
they appreciate having trails

that are not multi-use (i.e., limited to walking/hiking) to reduce potential conflicts with fast-moving bicycles. IBPW was most frequently identified (629,65%) by respondents when asked which park trails they use most often within the IBPS. Tryon Park (566,59%) and Ellison Park (538, 56%) were second and third in identified usage.

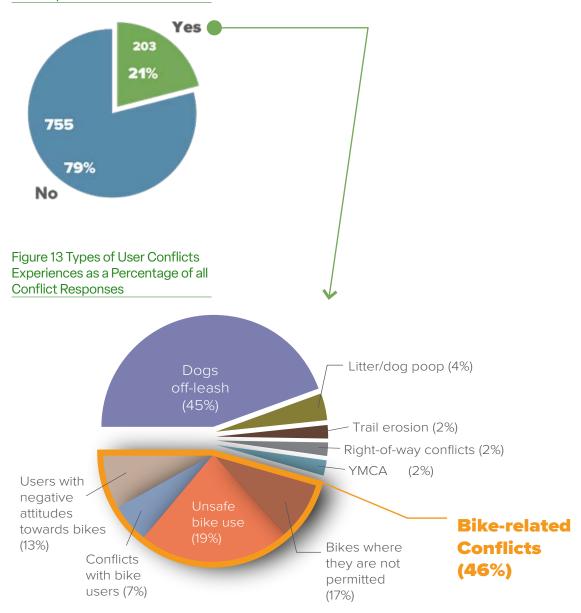
Trail User Conflicts

Just over 200 (21%) survey participants indicated they had experienced some sort of conflict with other users on the trails. These conflicts were centered around six themes: bike-related conflicts, dogs off leash, litter/dog poop, trail erosion, right-of-way, and the YMCA. Figure 13 shows the user conflicts identified by respondents. Bike-related conflicts (46%), are divided into four, more specific categories (e.g. bikes where they are not permitted, unsafe bike use, conflicts with bike users, and users with negative attitudes towards biking). Off-leash dogs were also identified as a significant conflict (45%). There are comments about the inherent conflicts between some trail uses, for example, mountain biking does not mix well with bird watching. Those who use the trails for walking and hiking to appreciate the

forest landscape comment that this landscape, and the habitat that it represents, can be harmed by bike traffic which can create deep ruts, contribute to erosion, and make the trails more challenging to navigate on foot (due to the deep ruts).

Survey data was further analyzed by grouping the responses based on the parks indicated as frequented, and the trail use types allowed in those parks. As bike-related conflicts were a significant issue for respondents, groupings were made based on Parks where biking is not currently allowed on trails (e.g., Abraham Lincoln, Ellison, and Lucien Morin) and those parks where trail riding (mountain biking) is allowed (e.g., Irondequoit Bay Park West and Tryon Parks).

Figure 12 Percentage of Survey Respondents Indicating that they have Experienced User Conflicts.



Abraham Lincoln, Lucien Morin, and Ellison Parks

In Abraham Lincoln, Ellison, and Lucien Morin Parks 86% of survey respondents indicated that they participated in allowed uses (i.e., walking, dog walking, and running), another 3% indicated that they were equestrians (i.e., horseback riding in Ellison Park) (Figure 14). Though trail biking is not permitted in these parks, 43% of all reported conflicts were bike-related. Bike-related conflicts in these parks include bikes where they are not permitted, unsafe bike use, and conflicts with bike users. While bike-related conflicts are the most common, a much smaller percentage of users indicated that they bike (6%) in these parks versus those that indicated that they walk (52%). Dogs off leash were the second highest source of conflict (38%).

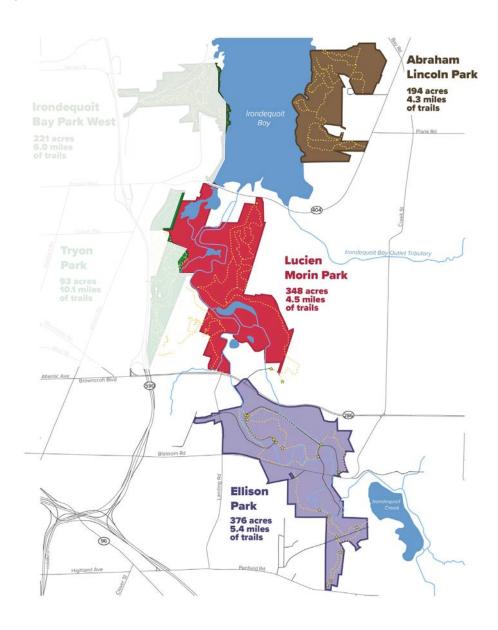


Figure 14 Trail Uses identified by Survey Respondents in Abraham Lincoln, Lucien Morin, and Ellison Parks

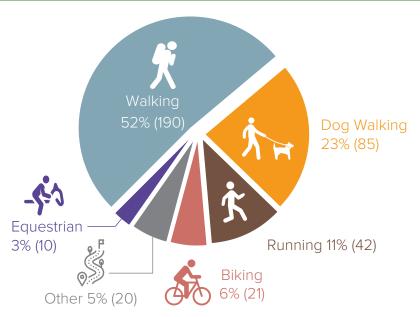
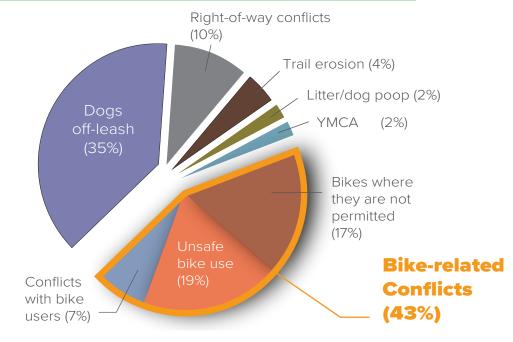


Figure 15 User Conflicts identified by Survey Respondents in Abraham Lincoln, Lucien Morin, and Ellison Parks



Irondequoit Bay Park West and Tryon Park

In Irondequoit Bay Park West and Tryon Park, where trail riding is permitted, 59% of survey respondents indicated that they participated in biking, while 40% indicated that they were walkers, dog walkers, or runners (Figure 16). Survey respondents indicated that 35% of all reported conflicts were bike-related. Dogs offleash were identified as a slightly greater concern (36%) than bike-related conflicts. Bike-related conflicts in these parks include trail users with negative attitudes towards bikes, bikes where they are not permitted, unsafe bike use, and conflicts with bike users. Survey respondents noted unsafe conditions on the trails due to bike use such as, "bikes passing way too fast" and "bikes on narrow trails with low visibility."

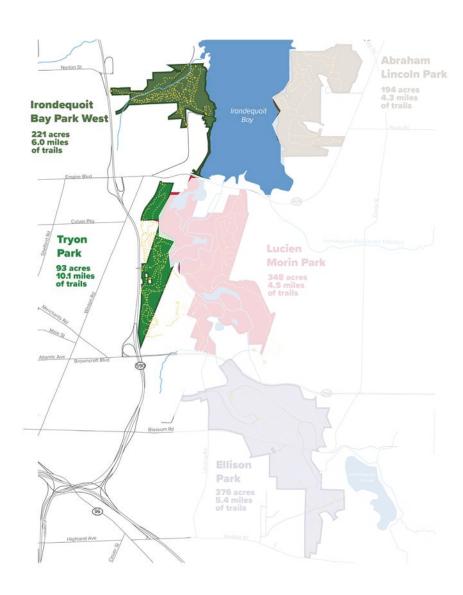


Figure 16 Trail Uses indicated by Survey Respondents in Irondequoit Bay Park West and Tryon Park

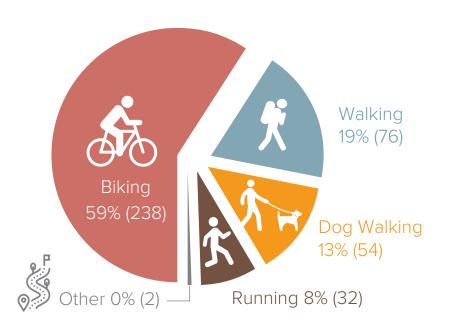
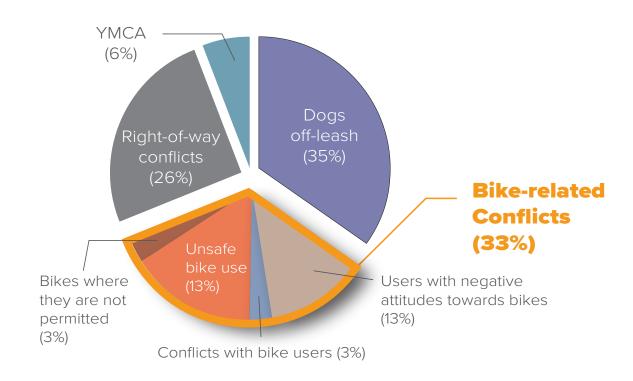


Figure 17 User Conflicts identified by Survey Respondents in Irondequoit Bay Park West and Tryon Park



Suggested Trail System Improvements

Survey respondents were asked if they thought there were amenities within the parks that could be better connected to the trail system. Nearly 40% (38%) of respondents indicated "yes". If they indicated "yes," participants could identify specific suggestions. Comments covered a range of categories, including: patron facilities (i.e., bathrooms, trash receptacles, benches, picnic tables, and water fountains), signage and wayfinding (i.e., improved marking of trails, maps), improvements to trail facilities (i.e., connectivity between parks and trails, waterfront access, and boat and boat launches for hand-powered watercraft), and increased trail connectivity between parks (e.g., improved road crossings, bicycle infrastructure on connecting roadways).

Patron Facilities

- » Need bathrooms and water fountains
- » Fresh water located at trailheads
- » Bathroom near Ellison dog park
- » Need garbage cans to handle dog poop
- » Need trash cans at trail heads and by parking lots.
- » Places to "hang out" after rides, picnic tables
- » Benches for the white trail in Abraham Lincoln park, especially during the steep climb back up. Good path to a viewpoint for viewing the Bay Area.
- » Playground areas
- » Kayak launches Kayak access at disc golf Ellison Park entrance

- » Add a bike pump track
- » Bar/restaurant
- » Access to creek shoreline for fishing
- » Bike repair stations
- » More parking options for Abe Lincoln Park - the playground lot gets full on weekends
- » picnic area/shelter with tables

Signage and Wayfinding

- » Trail intersections need clear marking to reach desired destination.
- » Online maps need more detail/clarity.
- » Need clear indicators at trail intersections re: what trail uses are allowed on the intersecting trails.

- » Need to improve signage and mapping that helps trail users navigate between parks
- » Add "You are here" maps at trailheads

Improvements to trail facilities

- » Recommendation for connecting the former Odenbach Quarry, through easement with RIT to create a trail along the creek into the southern area of Ellison Park.
- » Concerns raised re: the Coyote Den Trail as this runs through a narrow and wet gulley with steep hills and fragile soils.
- » Connecting trails from one park to another



- » Adding mountain bike trails to all parks
- » Strengthen connections to surrounding neighborhoods
- » Regular maintenance of trails, including trail clearing.
- » Old rifle range remains in Morin are unmarked and lack trails
- » Rebuild the bridge in Ellison across Mill Trace

Increased trail connectivity between parks

- Crossing at Browncroft/ Atlantic by Irondequoit Creek is dangerous
- Would like to see connections between Tryon and Lucien Morin
 add new crosswalk to

Browncroft.

- » Establish trails that link the individual parks
- » Paved greenways
- » Develop connections to the Seabreeze trail.
- » Add a bridge connecting Tryon Park to Lucien Morin Park. There's a place where they are only separated by a few feet of Bay Creek.
- » Add bicycle infrastructure to the roads leading to the parks.
- » Better connectivity to the Erie Canal and Genesee Greenway trails would be welcomed

Interactive Map Results

Responses from the interactive map was similar to the survey results, with geographic data to pinpoint the feedback. The responses are summarized below in narrative form and represented by park in the illustrative maps that follow.

Favorite Trail Amenity or Segment

The Favorite Trail Amenity or Segment map received 40 entries. Many trails in the IBPS, particularly IBPW and Tryon, have progressive trail features like jumps, drops, and technical sections, allowing riders to challenge themselves and develop skills. Trails designed to leverage natural features, including scenic views along the bay, creek, and wetlands are favored by users. Ruins, bridges, and gazebo viewpoints also enhance the trail experience. Unique Trail Segments provide mountain bikers with varying difficulty levels and fun technical challenges.

Add Trail Amenity

The Add Trail Amenity map received 121 entries. Several people recommended adding professionally built skills areas for mountain biking, like asphalt pump tracks and jumps, to make trails more accessible to all skill levels. Many comments requested permanent restrooms or port-a-potties for trail users' convenience. Respondents suggested clear signage with maps at intersections, trail difficulty indicators, and better trail markings to help users navigate the IBPS. Safer pedestrian crossings and traffic calming measures near popular entrances were frequently mentioned to improve park access and safety. More people in the community would be able to enjoy the parks with the addition of more adaptive, ADA-approved trails. Boardwalk structures could reduce trail erosion and allow access to all, even during wet periods. Additionally, water refill stations and more trash receptacles were requested to support hydration and reduce littering. Adding benches and small gazebos at scenic viewpoints, especially areas with bay views, was also popular. These suggestions reflect a strong desire for facilities that enhance trail usability and user comfort for all.

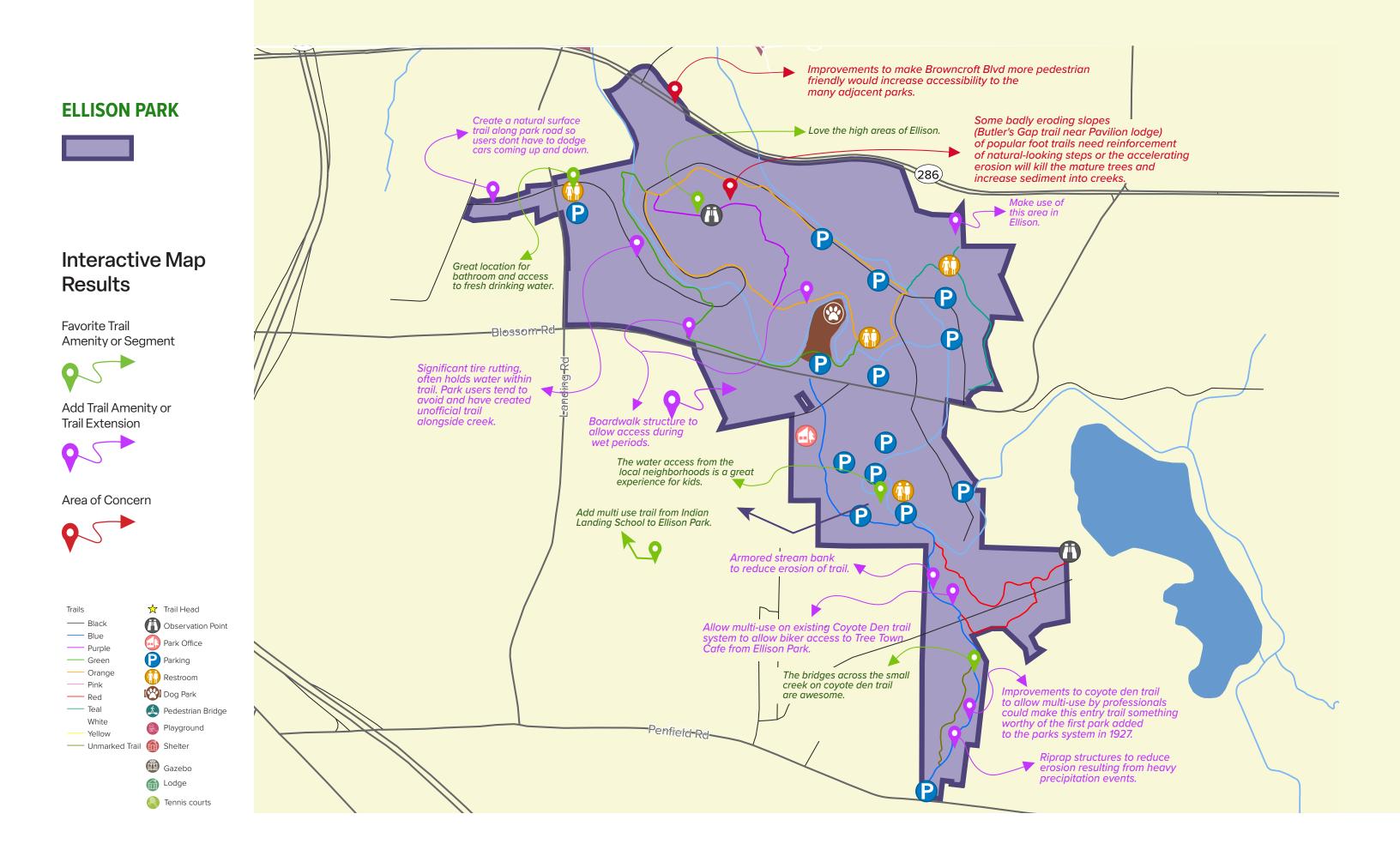
Add Trail Extension

The Add Trail Extension map received 91 entries. Comments in this category indicate a lack of official trail connections that allow shared use travel between most parks in the Irondequoit Bay Park system. Numerous suggestions emphasize connections between parks via bridges and multi-use trails for better access without the need to navigate busy roads like Empire Boulevard. Protected bike lanes or a designated natural surface alongside roads would make users feel safer by eliminating the need to avoid fast-moving vehicle traffic.

There is strong interest in expanding multi-use trails to accommodate both bikers and hikers across various parks, including parks in which biking is not currently permitted. This includes formalizing existing unofficial trails in areas like the northern part of Abraham Lincoln Park, where users expressed that the removal of overgrowth on "secret" trails would reveal a nice section of the park. In Ellison Park, one user circled an unused area between the Orange Trail and the park boundary as a place for new trails. In Tryon Park, directional, "lap-able," intermediate and advanced mountain biking trails are in high demand. Other map suggestions included adding a trail from Indian Landing School to Ellison Park, adding a trail along the Irondequoit Creek to Ellison Park boundary to connect to Shadow Pines, and better overall access for surrounding communities without having to drive to the parks. There is also interest in integrating unused parcels or vacant lots, especially near Lucien Morin, Tryon, and IBPW; multiple responses expressed the desire to expand IBPW to an area with "untouched potential" west of the bay. Several comments recommend trail surface enhancements across parks to create more sustainable paths. Adding weather-resistant surfaces would be beneficial for beginner mountain bike trails and pump tracks. These popular responses focus on connectivity and trail diversity to create a cohesive, multi-use network that supports both recreational and commuting needs.

Area of Concern

The Area of Concern map received 84 entries. Some members of the public pointed out specific concerns, while others shared overall suggestions that could be applied to all parks. Respondents expressed significant concerns about trail erosion due to heavy foot and bike traffic. Suggestions included adding boardwalks over wet areas, installing armored stream banks, and professional trail building on frequently muddy paths. There are several requests for better connectivity between parks and additional trails, including multi-use trails. Many users advocated for increasing trail accessibility and creating safe crossings over busy roads. Some trails feel unsafe as pedestrians due to fast-moving bikes. User conflicts between hikers and bikers arose as an area of concern. Some hikers are concerned about bikes causing additional erosion, while most bikers feel trails should be shared. Additionally, a lack of clear trail markings and inadequate signage makes navigation challenging, especially in densely wooded or overgrown areas. Addressing these areas of concern will continue to improve user experience and strengthen the IBPS user community.



IRONDEQUOIT BAY PARK WEST



Interactive Map Results

Favorite Trail Amenity or Segment



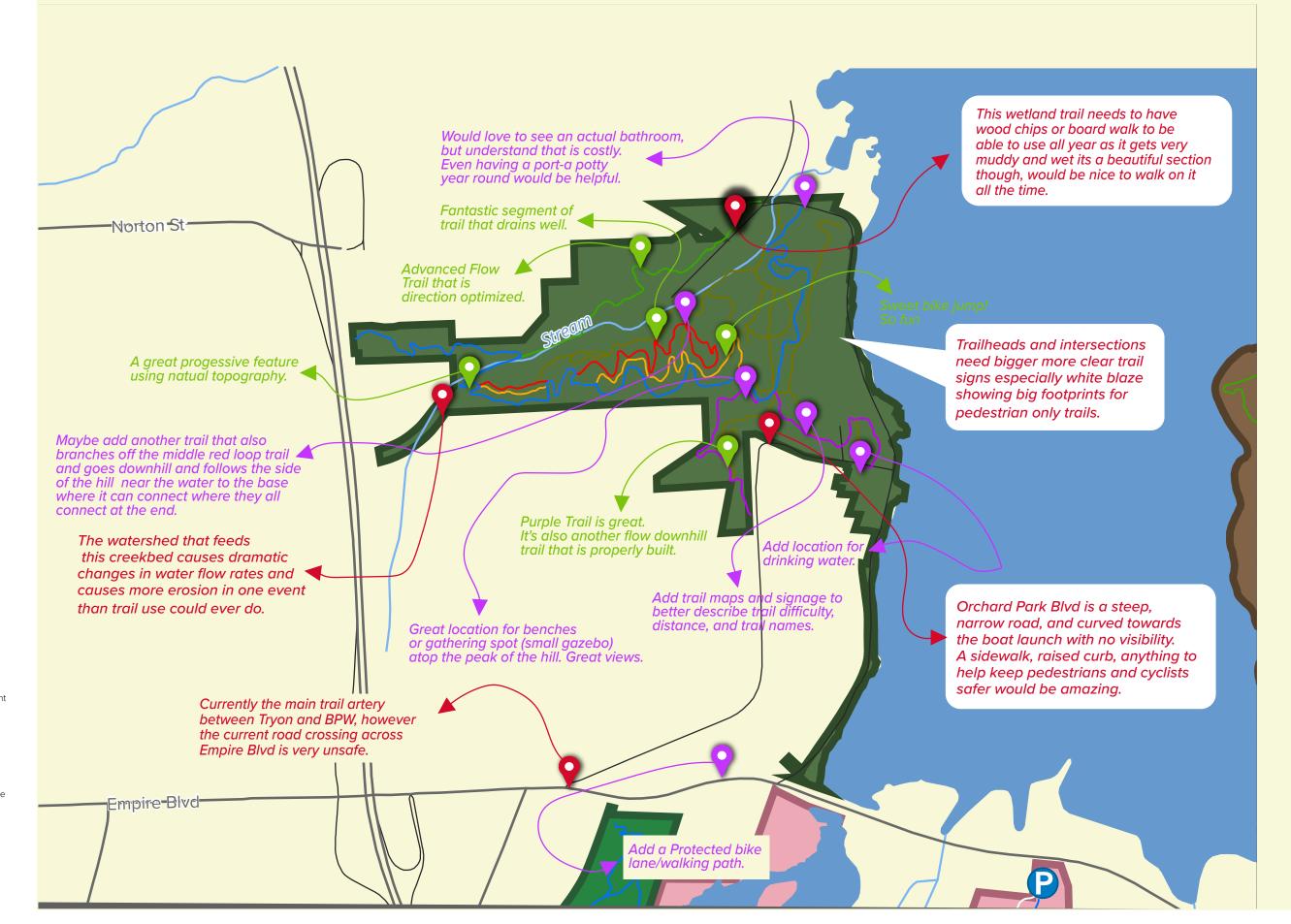
Add Trail Amenity or Trail Extension



Area of Concern







ABRAHAM LINCOLN PARK



Interactive Map Results

Favorite Trail Amenity or Segment



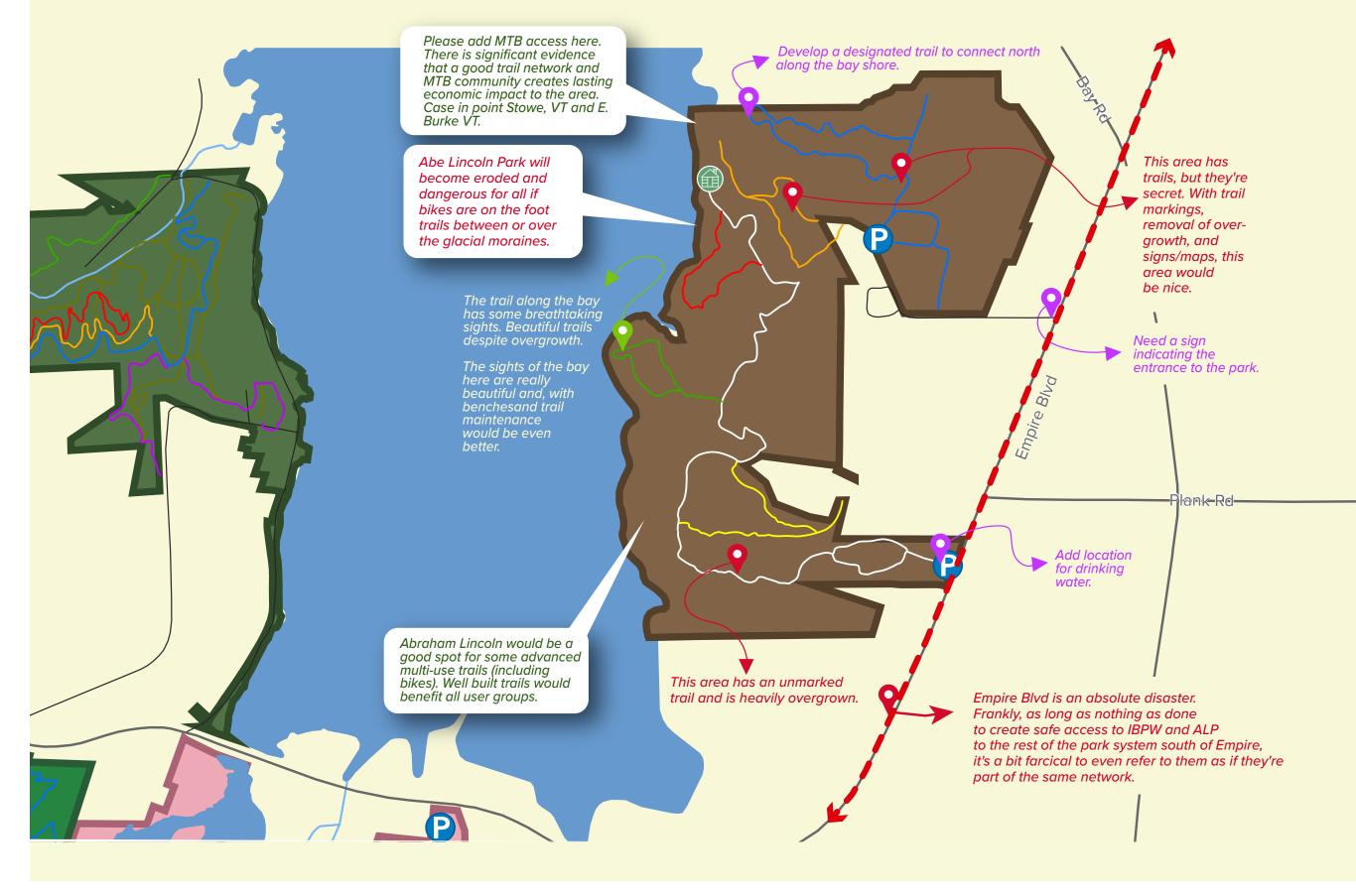
Add Trail Amenity or Trail Extension



Area of Concern







TRYON PARK



Interactive Map Results

Favorite Trail Amenity or Segment

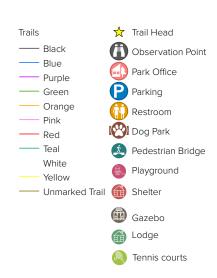


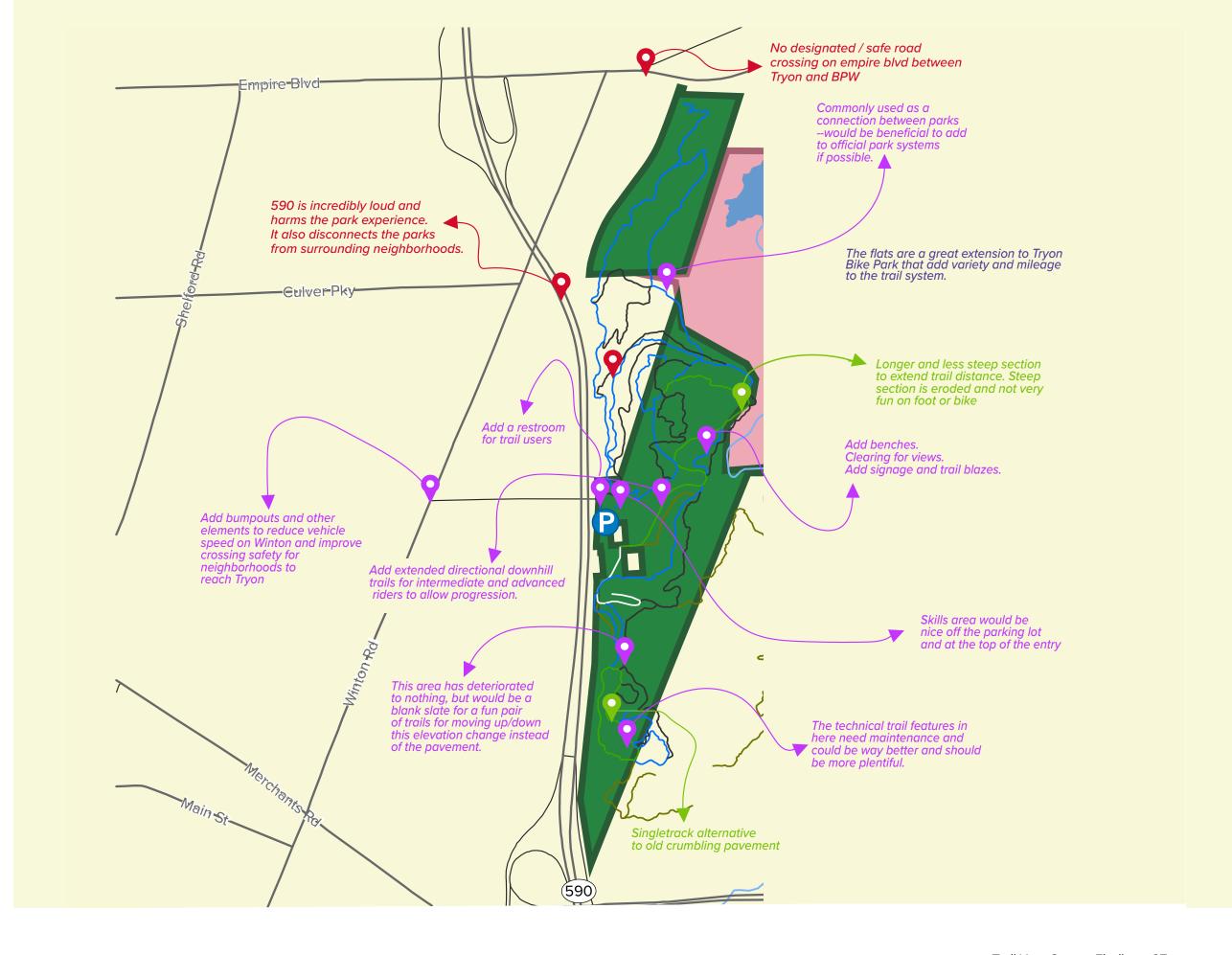
Add Trail Amenity or Trail Extension



Area of Concern







LUCIEN MORIN PARK



Interactive Map Results

Favorite Trail Amenity or Segment



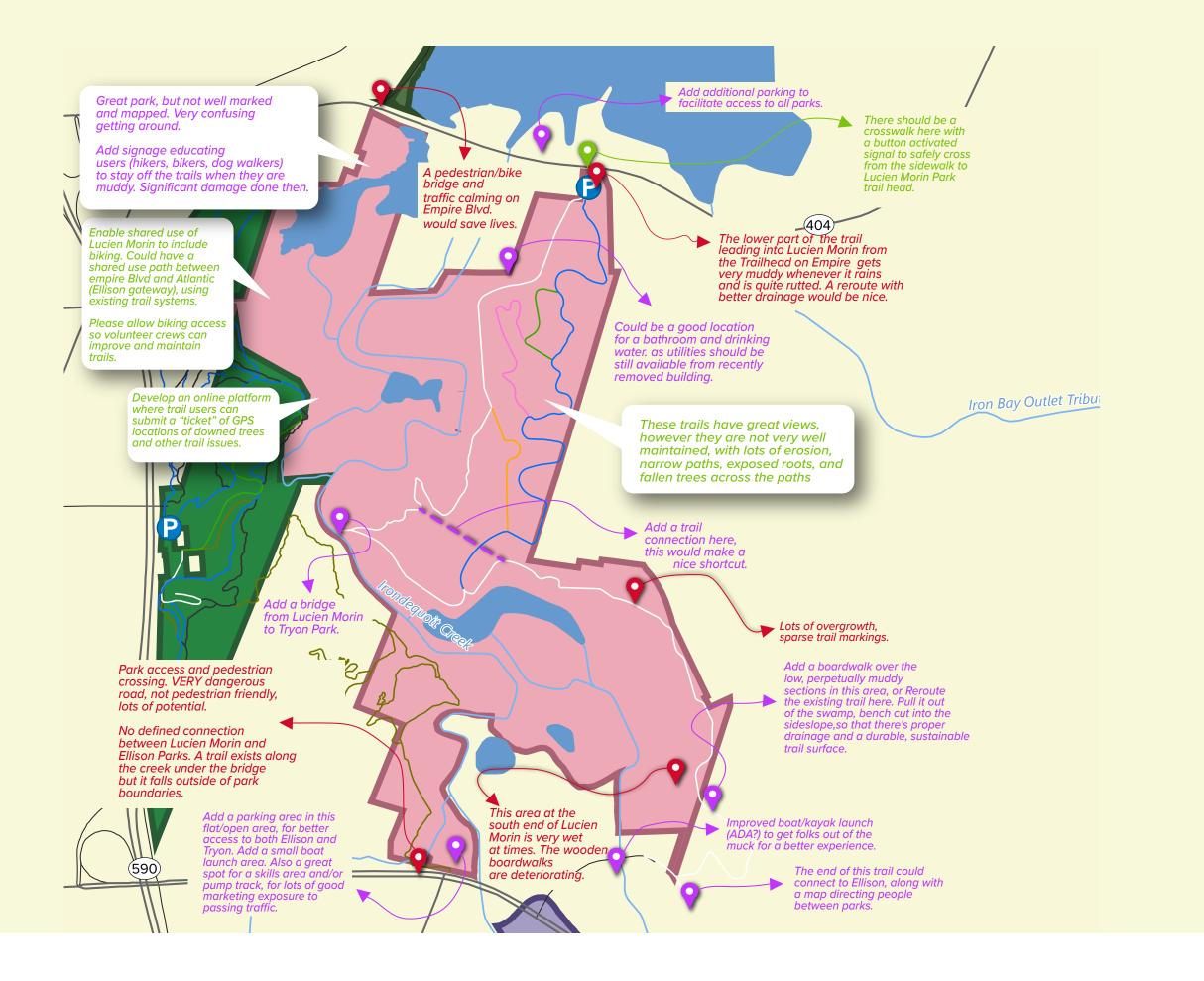
Add Trail Amenity or Trail Extension



Area of Concern







Preliminary Recommendations and Actions

Based on the findings from the open house, community survey, and interactive map, several preliminary recommendations and associated action steps are outlined below. Each recommendation is accompanied by a description of the perceived need as evidenced from community input, as well as several recommended action steps.

Proactive management of user conflicts

Trail users identified two primary conflicts within the IBPS: bikes in areas where bikes are not allowed and dogs off-leash. Addressing these concerns will require coordination and communication with user group communities. Other user comments identified a need for improved trail signage and wayfinding. Wayfinding could help to clarify for users where they are and are not supposed to be (i.e. designated mountain biking, hiking, and dog walking areas), wayfinding can also help users to understand park policies such as dogs not being allowed off-leash except in designated off-leash areas. This could also help users to help "police" themselves.

In addition, the initiatives like the Genesee Regional Off-road Cyclists (GROC) Mountain Bike Patrol program, staffed by 20+ volunteers, offer support along existing mountain bike trail routes including those within the IBPS. Monroe County Parks could focus on the development of an expanded mountain bike patrol program in order to help inform mountain bike trail users on appropriate etiquette, trails where they are allowed to be, and help to identify trail maintenance needs.

Recommended Action Steps

- » Develop and implement a wayfinding program for the IBPS
- » Develop an expanded mountain bike patrol program

Prioritize Maintenance of Existing Trail System

Users repeatedly identified the conditions of the trails within the park system as in need of maintenance. Monroe County Parks could develop an objective trail conditions rating system in partnership with trail user groups to help prioritize trail maintenance needs. Identification of specific trails and facilities that are in need of investment would help Monroe County Parks to target limited resources, develop maintenance partnerships with trail user groups, and pursue outside funding opportunities.

Recommended Action Steps

- » Conduct a trail conditions inventory to prioritize maintenance needs
- » Partner with trail user groups complete trail maintenance activities
- » Identify and pursue outside funding opportunities





Improve Trail Connectivity Between IBPS Parks

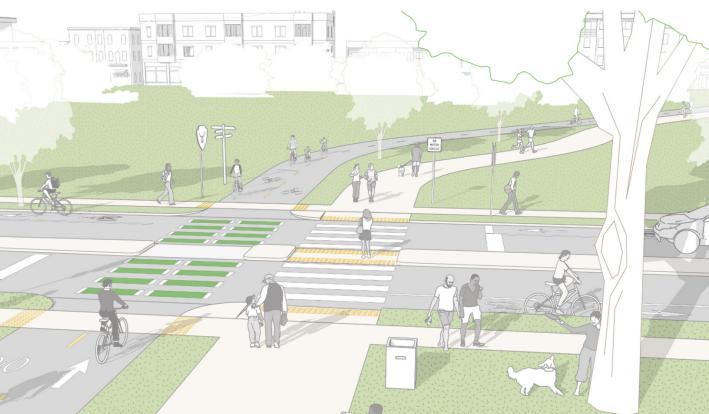
Users repeatedly identified the need for improved connectivity between the parks within the IBPS. Monroe County Parks could develop an overall trail connectivity study informed by public input from this trail user survey to review the feasibility for potential trail connections. Public input also suggested that Empire Boulevard, Winton Road, and Browncroft Road present significant barriers for trail users due to high traffic speeds, lack of adequate sidewalk and bike lane infrastructure for bicyclists and pedestrians, and absence of safe crossing areas. Improvements to these areas will need to be pursued in partnership with the road owners, which could be studied in conjunction with the Genesee Transportation Council and informed by the Monroe County Active Transportation Plan.

Recommended Action Steps

- » Develop a trail connectivity study to identify opportunities for connectivity between the IBPS Parks
- » Department may prioritize actionable low-cost high impact
- Partner with the Genesee Transportation Council to study the potential for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure enhancements along Empire Boulevard, Winton Road, and Browncroft Road to improve safety and connectivity between the IBPS Parks

The NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide provides detailed recommendations for shared-use paths and road crossings

SOURCE: Nacto.org



Identify Opportunities for Adding Trail Amenities

Users repeatedly identified the need for additional trail amenities, such as bathroom facilities, potable water, trash receptacles, and benches within the IBPS. Monroe County Parks can conduct a facilities study, informed by public input from this trail user survey, to review the feasibility of additional amenities.

Recommended Action Steps

» Conduct a facilities study to identify opportunities for enhancements to existing or the addition of new trail amenities within the IBPS

Identify Opportunities for Adding Additional Multi-Use Trails within the IBPS

Users repeatedly identified the need for the addition/expansion of areas within the IBPS where multi-use paths are permitted. Based on community input, there are opportunities for the integration of multi-use trails that would allow for connectivity between the IBPW, Tryon, Lucien Morin, and Ellison Parks utilizing the existing trail network. These trail connections could be reviewed for potential development while also maintaining trails that do not permit bicycle usage. Given the concerns regarding conflicts between trail users, Monroe County Parks will want to carefully consider these opportunities along with improvements to trail user signage and creative enforcement actions that can help to reinforce the hierarchy within the trail system.

Recommended Action Steps

» Conduct a feasibility study to explore opportunities for adding additional multi-use trails within the IBPS.









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