

# Fred Bunn Trails at Manhattan Park

## Frequently Asked Questions

June 6, 2022

### 1. What are we planning to build?

The City of East Grand Rapids plans to sign a contract with Flowtrak trail builders to build a multi-use trail at Manhattan Park in partnership with the West Michigan Mountain Biking Alliance. The EGR Community Foundation is the fiduciary partner in this project, ensuring that all donations are routed through a single non-profit organization managed within the City of East Grand Rapids.

### 2. Have plans for the multi-use trails already been approved?

No. This project is currently in the design phase. The City and its partners at the West Michigan Mountain Biking Alliance (WMMBA) are still collecting public input before final plans are presented to the East Grand Rapids City Commission. In order for this project to move forward, the Parks & Recreation Commission and City Commission must approve of all aspects of the plan. The Commission takes resident feedback, especially that of effected residents, into great consideration when reviewing plans and making decisions. Any comments on the proposed plans can be sent to [input@eastgr.org](mailto:input@eastgr.org). All emails received for this project will be shared with the Parks and Recreation Commission and the City Commission.

### 3. When will the build begin?

The intent is to have a professional trail building organization contracted to begin work by August 2022 with a project completion timeframe of 4-6 weeks.

### 4. How long will the trail be?

The draft maps currently under review consist of an outer loop suitable for two-way traffic, and an inner singletrack loop of roughly 18" manicured with a mowed buffer that allows runners, bikers, and walkers to pass when traveling in opposing directions. The total mileage of the trail system is estimated to be roughly 3 miles.

### 5. What would the trails be made of?

The trails in Manhattan Park would be comprised of a natural surfaces such as dirt, gravel, and smooth rocks in areas where drainage is an issue.

### 6. Is the city conducting an environmental assessment of the property?

The city has solicited an outside consultant to perform an environmental assessment of the Manhattan Park property where the multi-use trails are proposed. The results of the assessment will be reviewed and considered prior to the final design being considered by the City Commission.

### 7. What does multi-use mean?

As with many other trails in the area including those at the Luton County Park, the Cannonsburg State Game Area, Ken-o-Sha Park, and others, the trails at Manhattan will be open for all non-motorized users excluding horseback riding. This means, as with the current trails on the site,

the new trails will be available for bikers, hikers, walkers with dogs on a leash 6ft. or less, runners, snowshoers, and other users as regulated by park rules and guidelines. Some features on similar trails are "bike-optimized" (e.g. a small pile of rocks called a "rock garden") but provide ample and obvious opportunities for walkers and runners to avoid them and stay on the dirt path.

**8. Will the high school cross country team have the opportunity to race on these trails?**

Yes, there is great potential for the EGR cross country team to use the trails once constructed. The team has a history in hosting smaller races as well as conferences within the existing trails; however, over time, the trails could no longer safely accommodate the number of teams using them. The enhancement of these trails will potentially allow the Pioneers to again host meets.

**9. Will there be races on these trails?**

While Manhattan Park has been used for cyclocross events in the past, the length of the new trail system does not lend itself to mountain bike races. The EGR HS Cross Country running team does hope to host small running events at the park. All park events within the City of East Grand Rapids (including Manhattan Park) are managed by the city through a permitting process that includes public hearings at the Parks & Recreation Commission meetings.

**10. What is the initial investment required to build this project?**

The city has contributed \$75k to the construction of this trail, and roughly \$100k has been raised through neighbors, EGR residents, and other local supporters.

**11. What will be the annual incremental maintenance costs for the city?**

There are little to no additional maintenance costs anticipated for the city above and beyond those already expended to maintain the greater Manhattan park. The WMMBA, an alliance of volunteers, has graciously offered to add this new trail system to the list of over 150 miles of trails in the area that they maintain. They will assign trail coordinators to assist with maintaining the trail system on a regular basis and will work in concert with the City to do so.

**12. Are there limits to when/times people can be out there riding?**

Park hours are posted and regulated by the city. No changes to these conditions are planned with the expansion of this trail system.

**13. Are there any plans or potential to increase the length of the trail in the future?**

The original target was to integrate ~3 miles of trail within the system in total to accommodate a "5k" distance for running events and otherwise. Any extension of the first build will need to be considered later and coordinated with the city.

**14. What will the trails look like after they are completed?**

Each segment of trail is unique depending on the existing conditions of the site. The intent for the multi-use trail at Manhattan Park is to construct them like other multi-use trails in the area that are designed to fit into the natural topography of the site, and to also provide recreational opportunities in combination with access and respect for the environment. Displayed below are photos from the Merrell Trails in Rockford and Luton Park in Rockford, both of which are multi-use trails through wooded properties that were built with construction practices that match the proposed method of construction for the multi-use trails at Manhattan Park.

Merrell Trails- Rockford, MI



Luton Park- Rockford, MI



**15. Is there a website to get more information or an email address to provide my input?**

Details can be found at <https://www.eastgr.org/547/Manhattan-Park-Development>. The City Commission approved the general concept plans on May 17, 2021; however the specific layout and features of the trail are still being finalized. Interested individuals are encouraged to submit their questions and comments to [input@eastgr.org](mailto:input@eastgr.org).

**16. Is this trail going to be for advanced riders only or good for beginners/children as well?**

Trails are generally not officially "rated" in this fashion and use of the trail is completely left to the individual to decide based on their skill level and comfort, keeping their personal safety in mind. As a multi-use trail, the trail will be built to accommodate a wide range of users.

**17. I'm concerned about trail etiquette. Will the trails be wide enough for bikers and pedestrians? How do I know walkers will feel safe without getting run over?**

The multi-use trails will be designed so that those on foot and bike can utilize them simultaneously. The WMMBA and potential contractors are specialized in designing trails that accommodate multiple parties. Appropriate signage will be utilized to alert users of the various persons using the trails and spell out expectations. For example, single file use will be encouraged. Depending on the level of difficulty, some trails may be more appropriate for running or biking than leisurely walking. The biking community takes trail etiquette very seriously as is demonstrated throughout the trails in West Michigan. Additionally, bikers who reside in EGR, such as high school students and/or those involved with clubs, are specifically trained in navigating trails in a respectful manner so all can safely enjoy them. Parents are encouraged to have discussions with their children regarding trail etiquette before they utilize the trails at Manhattan Park.

**18. Where will riders be able to enter and exit the trail?**

The primary entrance to the trail system will be to the left and right of the top of Manhattan Park sledding hill. Secondary access for foot traffic and mountain bikers exists via the established entries to the park along the Reeds Lake Trail.

**19. Has a parking/traffic study been done to see if we can accommodate the added demand?**

Given the limited distance of the trail (approximately 3 miles), it is highly unlikely this will become a "destination" trail in the manner other longer trails have become within the West Michigan area. While we do not expect significant growth in traffic or parking as a direct result of the trail project, city staff have solicited the services of a professional engineering firm to develop an implementation plan for Manhattan Park, and the process will include evaluating layout options for planned park improvements as well as identifying opportunities for additional parking on site.

**20. What about added noise (e.g. music) due to increased use of the trail?**

Park rules are posted and regulated by the city. No changes to these conditions are planned with the expansion of this trail system.

**21. Is there increased liability for the city by allowing these trails to be developed?**

User safety is being considered throughout the trail design process and will be at the forefront of the rules and policy discussion, but injuries are reasonably foreseeable in any recreational

activity, including walking, hiking, biking, pickleball, etc. As a result, since this proposed use is similar to other recreational uses in the city and because similar trails are present in communities across the country, the city does not expect any unique liability increases related to the addition of the proposed multi-use trail.

**22. If an issue with the trail design arises after completion, or there needs to be an update to policies and procedures related to the use of the trails, how will that be resolved?**

If changes to the trails or the rules and/or operation of the trail system is needed, the city will work with our residents and partners at the WMMBA to develop proposed solutions. The city will ultimately have final authority on trail modifications or any changes in policies or procedures related to the operation of the trail system.

\*This FAQ page will be updated as additional information becomes available.