



Frequently Asked Questions

Updated 12/8/2008

Traverse Area Recreation and Transportation (TART) Trails, Inc.

- 1. *What does TART Trails stand for and when was TART Trails formed?*** TART Trails stands for Traverse Area Recreation and Transportation Trails, Inc. and was formed in 1998 when the Boardman, Leelanau and TART Trail systems consolidated into one organization. The Vasa Pathway joined TART in 1999.
- 2. *What trails are included in the TART Trail system?*** Currently, our trails include the Boardman Lake Trail, Leelanau Trail, TART Trail, Three Mile Trail and the Vasa Pathway.
- 3. *Where is TART headed in the future?*** TART adopted a 5-Year work plan on January 12, 2005. The work plan prioritized projects and goals for the organization. The updated project scope includes: completion of the Boardman Lake Trail around the Boardman Lake; complete development of the Leelanau Trail from Traverse City to Suttons Bay, including paving and restroom facilities; extend the TART Trail to Williamsburg; and extend the Three Mile Trail to Hammond. TART also will add programs and projects that will enhance the trails and encourage trail use. Long-range plans include extending TART's reach into Antrim/Charlevoix, Benzie, Kalkaska and Wexford Counties.
- 4. *Besides trails, what else is the TART organization involved in?*** TART is involved in advocacy for pedestrians and bicyclists. TART works to ensure that sidewalks and bike lanes are added to the infrastructure in the greater Traverse City area. Our Transportation Initiatives committee works to assess the current and future non-motorized plans of the City of Traverse City and surrounding townships. TART hopes to work with townships on improving their non-motorized infrastructure.
- 5. *How much use do the trails get?*** A trail survey was conducted in 2002 and 2003 by volunteers and the data was analyzed by Michigan State University. The survey estimated that the Leelanau Trail had approximately 30,000 users from May to September of 2002, the TART trail had about 150,000 users during the same period, and the Vasa Pathway had about 11,500 users. An additional winter survey was done on the Vasa Pathway from January 12 to March 13, 2003 and it was determined that approximately 10,000 visits were made to the trail during that time. Anyone who has been using the trails regularly has probably noticed an increase in the number of users over the past few years and another survey is planned for 2008.
- 6. *Isn't the trail maintained by government entities?*** The TART Trail, Boardman Lake Trail and Three Mile Trails are maintained by the City of Traverse City, Grand Traverse County Road Commission and Grand Traverse County, with our volunteers helping to clean. However, the Leelanau Trail is completely owned and maintained by TART Trails, Inc. The Vasa Pathway is maintained and groomed by TART Trails

in cooperation with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources while Grand Traverse County maintains the Vasa trailhead.

7. *What are the benefits of trails?* Trails meet the community's need for safe and accessible transportation pathways; open space and wildlife habitat protection, historical and cultural preservation; increased recreational opportunities close to home; economic development; and the enhancement of a sense of place. Benefits of trails are well-documented nationwide – environmental, health, economic, and transportation benefits that enhance the quality of life for children, seniors, special populations, recreationists, and families alike.

8. *Why is it necessary to raise funds for TART Trails?* TART Trails is a non-profit organization dedicated to free and open access for everyone to all trails. As a financial supporter of TART Trails you make it possible for tens of thousands of people to enjoy and benefit from the trails.

Access, maintenance, expansion, connecting, way-finding, outreach and advocacy all require financial support. The efficient uses of gifts to TART are highlighted by our ability to often leverage them with matching funds from state and federal grants.

9. *Is there a tax advantage to making a gift to TART?* Yes, TART Trails is a 501(c)(3) organization and all contributions and donations are tax deductible.

10. *What is the annual operating budget for TART?* In 2007, TART has an operating budget of \$300,000 for many exciting projects, programs and events.

11. *How many members does TART have? What does membership include?* TART has about 800 members. We are working to increase our annual membership to 1000. All TART members receive a subscription to *TART Tales*, our quarterly newsletter with articles outlining our progress and our future. Membership helps to enhance our community, making it more distinctive and livable.

12. *Where is the TART office?* The TART office is located in downtown Traverse City. Our address is 415 S. Union Street. Stop by, we enjoy meeting our members!

13. *How can I become more involved with TART Trails?* Donate or volunteer! Contact the TART office to find out how you can become involved. 941-4300.

14. *Are dogs allowed on the trails?* Yes, however, they should be on a 6-foot leash and should be controlled by their owner. Dogs should not be allowed to weave from one side of the trail to the other. Please remember to clean up after your dogs!

On the Vasa Pathway, dogs are allowed, except in the winter when the trail is groomed for cross-country skiing. The 3K loop welcomes dogs year-round. In the winter, the 3K is commonly referred to as the "poop loop."

Programs and Events

15. What events is TART involved with?

- Smart Commute Week: June 4-8, 2007
- Tour de TART: July 27, 2007
- Trail workbees and clean-ups: April 21, July 21 and October 13, 2007
- Leelanau Harvest Tour: Sept 16, 2007
- Turkey TART: Nov 22, 2007
- Leelanau Trail Snow Day: Feb 24, 2007
- Ross Cogger Memorial TART Trail Trek: Oct 6, 2007
- Bayshore Marathon: May 26, 2007
- Iceman Cometh: Nov 10, 2007
- North American Vasa: Feb 10, 2007

16. What programs is TART involved with?

- TC-TALUS/ Land Use and Transportation Study: TART has a seat at the table to chart the future of the Traverse City region.
- Leelanau Scenic Trailway project: TART is part of a committee to plan and design a 25-mile proposed trailway through the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore primarily following highways M-22 and M-109.
- Safe Routes to School: TART is helping with a Safe Routes to School program for Traverse City West Junior High. Safe Routes to School is an international movement to make it safe, convenient and fun for children to bicycle and walk to school. When routes are safe, walking or biking to and from school is an easy way to get the regular physical activity children need for good health.

The Leelanau Trail

17. How long is the Leelanau trail? The Leelanau Trail is a 15-mile non-motorized pathway that extends from Traverse City to Suttons Bay. The trail is paved from Carter Road to Lakeview Road in Elmwood Township. The trail is a hard-packed two-track for 7 miles and is paved from Revold Road in Bingham Township to the depot in Suttons Bay.

18. Are there restrooms? In the summer, there is a porta john located along the trail at the Leelanau Conservancy's DeYoung Farm. A drinking water source will be added to the site in the spring.

19. When will new pavement be added to the Leelanau Trail? Two miles of pavement from Fouch Rd. to Lakeview Rd. were added in 2003. Two more miles were paved in the fall of 2006 from Suttons Bay south to Revold Rd. A campaign to pave the remainder of the trail and add amenities (toilet and drinking water facilities) will be launched in 2007 with a goal to complete the project by 2010.

20. Who pays for the paving? All paving is paid for by donations from individuals, organizations, foundations and grants.

21. How much does it cost to pave the trail? It depends on the topography, soil types, wetlands, etc. In general, it costs about \$20 a foot or over \$100,000 per mile.

The Vasa Pathway

- 22. How long is the Vasa Pathway?** There are several different loops on the Vasa Pathway with the longest being 25K. There is a 3K Meadows loop, a 5K Headwaters Trail and a 10K loop.
- 23. Are there restrooms?** Yes, there is a warming shelter located at the trailhead. It includes restrooms, picnic tables, drinking fountain and trail maps.
- 24. Is the Vasa Pathway going to be connected to the North Country Trail?** Yes. The Grand Traverse Hiking Club is working the Department of Natural Resources on connecting Sand Lakes Quiet Area, the Vasa Pathway and the North Country Trail.
- 25. Is the Vasa Singletrack part of TART?** No, the Vasa singletrack is a mountain biking trail that is accessed off of Supply Road. The trail shares the Pere Marquette State Forest, but is maintained by the Cherry Capital Cycling Club under an agreement with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

The Boardman Lake Trail

- 26. How long is the east-side trail?** The trail is about 2 miles. The northern mile is paved and the southern mile is crushed limestone. There are several decked boardwalks.
- 27. Are there restrooms?** There are restrooms at both Hull Park and Medalie Park, which are bookends to the trail on the north and south ends of Boardman Lake. The restroom at Hull Park is at the west end of the park in the pavilion building near the boat launch. The restroom at Medalie Park is also located in the pavilion.
- 28. When will the trail go all the way around the lake?** TART is working with the City of Traverse City and Garfield Township on attaining the final easements for the west-side trail. The City of Traverse City currently has a Natural Resources Trust Fund grant to assist with the construction of the trail around the north end of the lake. That project is currently in the planning and engineering phase. TART hopes to complete the loop within 5 years. It is estimated that the west-side trail project could cost \$3.5 million due to steep sloping terrain and includes 2 pedestrian bridges over the Boardman River.
- 29. Is the Boardman Lake Trail going to be connected to the TART Trail?** TART is currently working with the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation on an Access to Recreation project in cooperation with Traverse Area Community Sailing and the Grand Traverse Children's Garden. TART's role in the project is to connect the TART Trail to the Boardman Lake Trail. The desired route would take trail users behind the Traverse Area District Library, through the Children's Garden, over the railroad tracks to Hull Park. This project will be complete by 2009.

30. *Once the trail goes around the lake, what's next?* TART hopes to build a trail along the Boardman River valley to Kingsley and beyond to Cadillac. The trail would follow the railroad (former Dinner Train route) to Kingsley.

The TART Trail

31. *How long is the TART Trail?* The total trail distance is 11 miles. The TART Trail is 9 miles from Carter Road in Elmwood Township to Bunker Hill Road in Acme Township. There is a 2-mile extension of the TART Trail from Lautner Road to M-72 in Acme.

32. *Are there restrooms?* Yes, there are restroom facilities at West End Park, Clinch Park and the Traverse City State Park.

33. *Who designed the sculpture in Clinch Park?* The sculpture was designed and built by local sculptor, Verna Bartnick. The life-size bronze sculpture depicts a parent teaching a child to ride a bike. For TART, the sculpture represented the culmination of our "Pathways to the Future" capital campaign. The brick plaza that surrounds the sculpture includes donor recognition on a bronze plaque and inscribed in some of the bricks.

34. *When will the TART Trail at Bunker Hill be connected to the trail that begins at Lautner Road?* The TART project is stalled due to the ongoing lawsuits over the proposed Village at Grand Traverse development. For the TART Trail to connect through the parcel, we need an easement to leave the railroad right-of-way to cross Acme Creek to avoid disturbing wetlands.

35. *When will the TART Trail connect to Williamsburg? Are there plans to extend to Kalkaska?* It is in our master plan to extend our reach to Williamsburg and extend our trail to Kalkaska.

36. *Is the TART Trail going to connect to Elk Rapids?* We are working with the Elk Rapids Rotary Club to connect TART with Elk Rapids. Once we get to Elk Rapids, we will try to connect to Charlevoix (which is already connected to Petoskey via the Little Traverse Wheelway).

The Three Mile Trail

37. *How long is the Three Mile Trail?* The Three Mile Trail is a non-motorized pathway that is located along Three Mile Road on the east side of Traverse City. Phase I of the Three Mile Trail project was complete in 2006. It is a 2-mile north-south trailway that intersects with the existing TART Trail at Parsons Road. The trail starts at US-31 (near the State Park beach) and ends at South Airport Road.

38. Are there restrooms? There are restrooms located at the State Park Beach situated off US 31.

39. When will the trail be extended to Hammond Road? We are currently working with the Grand Traverse County Road Commission on phase 2, which would extend the trail to Hammond Road. The Road Commission is currently working on some planning and engineering.

40. Once the trail reaches Hammond Road, will there be an effort to connect the schools to the trail? Yes, there is a group of parents and community individuals who are planning a Safe Routes to School program in East Bay Township that will consider connecting the schools with the new Three Mile Trail.

TART Grooming

41. Who grooms the Vasa trail for skiing? TART has a contract with the Michigan DNR for grooming the Vasa Trail. TART hires the groomers, maintains the equipment, and purchases new equipment as needed to perform the grooming.

42. Who pays for the grooming? The Michigan DNR pays a portion of the costs. The North American Vasa Race and other organizations that hold events on the Vasa Trail also contribute. Grooming badges are sold to skiers who use the trail to help defray the costs. TART also collects money from fee pipes located at the trailhead.

43. How much does it cost to groom the Vasa Trail each season? Expenses vary from year to year depending on fuel costs, amount of snowfall etc. TART budgets \$30,000 per year to pay for grooming.

44. How often is the Vasa trail groomed a week? It depends on the weather. If we get a lot of snow we may groom several days in a row. If we have a warming trend where temperatures do not go below freezing, we can not groom without causing damage to the snow base. Usually we try to groom on Friday or Saturday morning and Monday and Wednesday or as conditions warrant.

45. How can I find out when the Vasa trail has been groomed? Anyone who purchases a grooming badge can sign up to have a grooming report emailed to them. Grooming reports are also available on the TART Trails website.

46. Are any other trails groomed for cross country skiing? TART grooms the Leelanau Trail when conditions allow. The entire 15-mile Leelanau Trail is usually groomed on Fridays when enough snow is available. The Boardman Lake Trail may also be groomed when conditions are favorable.