



## Legislation Text

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### **Resolution to Recommend Planning Commission and City Council Initiate the Process to Adopt The Treeline-Allen Creek Urban Trail Master Plan.**

The attached resolution refers to The Treeline-Allen Creek Urban Trail Master Plan project that began in October 2015. The Treeline - a planned urban trail through the heart of Ann Arbor - is a transformative idea for connecting people and places across Ann Arbor. The Treeline will connect City-owned properties, neighborhoods, and downtown businesses while linking to the Huron River and the regional Border-to-Border trail (B2B Trail). The project extent connects the B2B Trail along the Huron River at the north end of the study to the South State Street and Stimson Street intersection at the south end.

Often referred to as the Allen Creek Greenway, the idea for an urban trail and improvements to the Allen Creek floodplain have been discussed for decades within the community. The Treeline Master Plan process - as directed by City Council - focuses primarily on identifying a non-motorized connection across the study area, while recognizing that The Treeline can provide a framework for additional improvements through parallel or future projects. The project team identified the following goals and objectives for the Master Plan, which describes a feasible approach for the future development of The Treeline and examines the critical factors influencing its feasibility and potential configuration:

- Enhance connectivity between neighborhoods, businesses, and the Huron River.
- Promote health and safety in our community.
- Protect and enhance environmental quality in the Allen Creek watershed.
- Strengthen Ann Arbor's character and identity.
- Support economic vitality in Ann Arbor.

The Treeline responds to a number of design principles and best practices. Many of these principles arose from the stakeholder and community engagement processes, reflecting the values and desires of key, future trail users:

- **Continuity:** Minimize the number of stops and breaks for trail users in order to provide a continuous experience. Additionally, design the trail so that it is distinct and identifiable within the urban context.
- **Safety:** Focus on an off-street alignment to the maximum extent possible and improve (or separate) street crossings to encourage a high level of safety. Minimize street crossings and discourage illegal trespassing on the railroad corridor and other private properties.
- **Accessibility:** Serve all users of all abilities, including pedestrians, cyclists, and other non-motorized travelers. Meet universal design and/or ADA design requirements.
- **Connectivity:** Provide frequent points of access to The Treeline. Provide direct connections to existing parks and natural areas, where possible. Link to the core of downtown and other economic, civic, and cultural assets. Provide an alternative to automobile use.

- **Sustainable:** Manage stormwater and run-off generated by the urban trail. Improve the water quality of the floodplain and consider feasible opportunities to manage off-site runoff. Employ design practices of sustainable material selection and plant materials that promote maximum water infiltration.
- **Transformative:** Be an amenity embraced by the community that promotes health, economic investment, tourism, and community identity.

The Treeline project, and the rich planning history informing it, have considered a number of additional opportunities that reach beyond the urban trail component. These include:

- Integration and connection to other open spaces within and proximate to the Allen Creek floodplain as part of the urban trail network and connected system of open spaces.
- Management of stormwater and/or flood waters within the Allen Creek floodplain.
- Connection to other non-motorized facilities, such as bike lanes, protected bike facilities, trails, and sidewalks.

The intent of this resolution is for the Environmental Commission to recommend that the Ann Arbor Planning Commission and City Council initiate the process to adopt The Treeline-Allen Creek Urban Trail Master Plan as an element of the City of Ann Arbor Master Plan.

Prepared by Connie Pulcifer, Systems Planning Unit

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor aspires to provide non-motorized transportation options to connect neighborhoods, businesses, parks, and the Huron River;

Whereas, The idea for an urban trail that roughly follows the floor of the Allen Creek floodplain and the alignment of the Watco Companies/Ann Arbor Railroad has been discussed for decades within the community;

Whereas, The Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan and the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, official planning documents for the City of Ann Arbor, recognize the future creation of the Allen Creek Greenway (now known as The Treeline-Allen Creek Urban Trail)

Whereas, In 2011, the Ann Arbor City Council passed a Resolution in Support of the Allen Creek Greenway (The Treeline) recognizing its ability to address existing inadequacies in non-motorized connections within the community and specifically to the Huron River;

Whereas, The Ann Arbor City Council directed staff to develop a scope of work for a “master plan approach” for The Treeline-Allen Creek Urban Trail;

Whereas, The Ann Arbor City Council passed a resolution to adopt the FY2016 budget which included funding for staff support and consulting services for development of a master Plan for The Treeline-Allen Creek Urban Trail;

Whereas, The project team identified various groups to be involved in the process, including a Project Management Team, Technical Advisory Committee, Citizen Advisory Committee, and Stakeholders/Community at Large;

Whereas, The planning process for The Treeline-Allen Creek Urban Trail engaged stakeholders,

community leaders and residents in shaping the scope, content, and direction of the plan during participation at 13 public meetings;

Whereas, Additional opportunities for public comment will be available as part of the City Master Plan approval process; and,

Whereas, The Treeline-Allen Creek Urban Trail Master Plan provides a framework for an essential non-motorized, north-south connection through Ann Arbor's richest cultural, recreational and economic assets, including surrounding neighborhoods and parks to the core of downtown Ann Arbor and University athletic facilities, while also linking to the Huron River, the regional Border-to-Border Trail and the state-wide Iron Belle Trail;

RESOLVED; The Environmental Commission supports The Treeline-Allen Creek Urban Trail Master Plan; and,

RESOLVED; That the Environmental Commission recommends that the City Planning Commission and City Council initiate the process to adopt The Treeline-Allen Creek Urban Trail Master Plan as an element of the City Master Plan.