MEMORANDUM

TO: Park Advisory Commission

FROM: Colin Smith, Parks & Recreation Services Manager

DATE: June 16, 2020

SUBJECT: Resolution to recommend that the City grant a pathway easement and a grading permit to the Charter Township of Ann Arbor in Marshall Nature Area

The Charter Township of Ann Arbor is requesting a pathway easement from the City of Ann Arbor to complete the Matthaei Botanical Gardens Trail, a critical north-south connector to the B2B Trail. This portion of the trail will connect Marshall Nature Area and Matthaei Botanical Gardens to Parker Mill and the B2B Trail, which goes through Gallup Park. Phase 1 of this trail, completed in October 2018, connects Matthaei to Parker Mill County Park. It won the SEMCOG Regional Showcase award and is widely used.

The trail is designed to provide two safe non-motorized crossings of busy roads:

- mid-block on Dixboro Road, near the Botanical Gardens and the Fleming Creek subdivisions, and
- signalized on Plymouth Road at the intersection with Dixboro Road.

The trail is designed to minimize environmental impacts and provides universal access. It is funded in part by Transportation Alternative Program funds, so it must meet MDOT standards. That means it will be an ADA-compliant, 10-foot-wide, paved trail with 2-foot-wide shoulders. This wider trail design makes it safer for multiple users.

The easement is needed to allow the trail to be routed along the southeastern corner of Marshall Nature Area, adjacent to Dixboro Road, because there is not sufficient room within the existing road ROW to locate the trail there. This is due to the planned addition of a right turn lane on southbound Dixboro Road at Plymouth Road. The pathway easement and grading permit are requested to allow for the creation of the new trail on park property. The design team is making every effort to minimize the environmental impact and use of the park and will also address drainage issues where the trail connects with the Marshall Nature Area driveway.

The trail will be complete in fall of 2021, with construction beginning in either fall 2020 or spring 2021.

The lead on this Phase 2 project is the Charter Township of Ann Arbor. The project is managed by the Washtenaw County Road Commission. It has received funding from the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission, SEMCOG, Superior Township, corporate neighbors, the Ralph Wilson Legacy Fund, and the Charter Township of Ann Arbor. Routine maintenance will be provided by the Fleming Creek neighborhood, University of Michigan, and Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation Services.

City Park staff is supportive of granting this easement and grading permit to the Charter Township of Ann Arbor for Phase 2 of the Matthaei Botanical Garden Trail.

RESOLUTION TO RECOMMEND GRANTING TWO EASEMENTS AND A GRADING PERMIT TO THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF ANN ARBOR IN MARSHALL NATURE AREA

Whereas, the Charter Township of Ann Arbor would like to complete Phase 2 of their popular Matthaei Botanical Gardens Trail, a critical north-south connector to the B2B Trail, that would connect Marshall Nature Area and Matthaei Botanical Gardens to Parker Mill and the B2B Trail; and

Whereas, insufficient space exists to construct this trail within the existing Dixboro Road ROW, due to a planned new right turn lane on southbound Dixboro; and

Whereas, in order to construct the trail along the eastern edge of Marshall Nature Area, the Charter Township of Ann Arbor requests a pathway easement and a grading permit from the City of Ann Arbor; and

Whereas, the Park Advisory Commission supports creating new trail linkages to City parks, and between the City and the surrounding area; and

Whereas, the portion of Marshall Nature Area that would be impacted is already impacted by, and kept clear for an overhead utility easement; therefore

RESOLVED, That the Park Advisory Commission recommend granting the requested easement and grading permit between the City and the Charter Township of Ann Arbor for the construction of Phase 2 of the Matthaei Botanical Garden Trail.