

3.5 Parks and Recreation Facilities

Evendale's park system is comprised of three primary facilities: Baxter Park, Gorman Farm and Griffin Nature Preserve. Each of these park's will be described in detail below with opportunities and constraints to developing bicycle facilities for recreation as well as connectivity.

BAXTER PARK & THE RECREATION CENTER

Baxter Park is the primary recreation site for the Village of Evendale. Amenities at this park are numerous and include sports fields, trails, an amphitheater, picnic areas, shelters, tennis courts and a swimming pool. Indoor facilities at the recreation center include two gyms, exercise/fitness room, sauna, spa and racquetball courts. The public survey indicated that this park is the number one destination residents would like to be able to access by bicycle.

There are several walking paths through the park with the primary purpose being access to park facilities. Some paths are paved while others are gravel. Paths are generally five feet in width. Locations are shown on Figure 3.5-1. Some sections of the paved paths are exceptionally steep, especially the connection to Margate Terrace where the grade is approximately 15%.



Existing paved path in Baxter Park

The existing path system in the park does not facilitate recreational walking or bicycling to a great extent because they do not form a continuous loop. During our field visit, residents using the park for walking and jogging were observed circling the parking lots and athletic fields for lack of a looped path



Outdoor amphitheater in Baxter Park

network in the park.

Bicycle access to Baxter Park and the recreation center is available on the existing street network either from Glendale-Milford Road at Kingsport or Reading Road north of Glendale Milford Road. There is also a paved trail connecting the park to Margate Terrace as noted above.

OPPORTUNITIES

A paved multi-use path network could be developed within Baxter Park to provide a safe location for residents to enjoy bicycling near the recreation center. Paths would need to be at least eight feet wide, preferably ten feet to accommodate bicycles and walkers/runners.

- A loop could be composed of paths along the Kingsport Drive entrance and along Reading and Glendale-Milford Roads. The existing sidewalks on Reading Road would need to be widened as would existing paths adjacent to portions of Kingsport Drive. There is no sidewalk currently on the north side of Glendale-Milford Road adjacent to the recreation center so this option would provide

an added benefit by completing the gap.

- Another smaller loop could be developed around soccer field # 4 where there is an existing gravel path surrounding the field.
- The path connecting Baxter Park to Margate Terrace could be improved by widening the path and reconfiguring it to reduce the grade.
- Additional paths could be developed in two parcels owned by the village north of and adjacent to Baxter Park. Although this land is not officially part of the park it is currently undeveloped.
- The two parcels noted above are also strategically located opposite the intersection of Exon Avenue with Reading Road. This could provide an opportunity to link Baxter Park and the Recreation Center with a potential trail along Sharon Creek and the Mill Creek via a multi-use path along Exon Avenue. A crosswalk would need to be added to the signalized intersection.



Path to Margate Terrace traverses a steep hillside in the background

CONSTRAINTS

The primary constraint to trail development in Baxter Park is topography. The eastern portion of the park consists of a steep hillside. Providing a path with grades of less than five percent (to accommodate those with disabilities) could be difficult. Access to soccer field # 4 and Margate Terrace specifically may be challenging.



Gravel path around soccer field # 4



Missing sidewalk segment on north side of Glendale-Milford Road west of Kingsport Drive



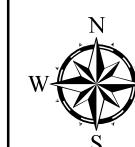
Legend

- Gravel Path
- Paved Path
- - - Potential Trail Location

Bicycle Master Plan

Figure 3.5-1

Baxter Park & Recreation Center



Scale
1 inch = 300 feet

August 30, 2011

Village of Evendale



GORMAN HERITAGE FARM

Gorman Heritage Farm is an historic 120 acre working educational farm located on the south side of Evendale. The land includes 30 tillable acres of farmyard and 40 acres of wooded hillside. The farm, originally purchased and operated by the Nature Conservancy after it was sold by its last private owner in 1996, is now owned by the Village of Evendale and operated by a non-profit group. This agricultural recreation facility was rated the second most popular destination for bicycling in the village.

The farm is bounded by Reading Road on the west, Cooper Road on the south and residential neighborhoods on the north and east. Vehicular access to the farm is from Reading Road but pedestrians can access the farm from Cooper Road, Kingsport Drive and Brinton Trail Drive via the farm's nature trail system.

Land use at the farm is divided into four distinct zones:



Main entrance and interpretive center

1. The main entrance to the farm off of Reading Road is the primary access point for most visitors. The farm's interpretive center is located here as well as administrative offices, picnic facilities, herb and flower gardens, and a small market where the farm's produce is sold to the public.

2. Behind the interpretive center is the primary working portion of the farm, the agricultural fields and pastures where the farm's crops and livestock are raised. Walking paths connect the interpretive center with the fields and historic farmhouse. Natural surface and gravel roads permit farm vehicles to access fields and pastures. Farm visitors are permitted to walk along these paths and roads but bicycling is generally discouraged because of conflicts with pedestrians.



Pastures and barns

3. The upper meadow is located in the northeast quadrant of the farm and is adjacent to residential neighborhoods. The level grassy meadow, which includes a small pond, is mainly used by the farm for grazing livestock. A stand of mature forest is located in the extreme northeast quadrant. Nature trails for hiking

have been constructed in this area connecting the open meadow with Kingsport Drive. Farm vehicles can access the upper meadow via a gate off of Brinton Trail. Pedestrians can also use this entrance to access the meadow and other areas of the farm. In the past, residents could walk a loop around the upper meadow but that is no longer possible because of a recently constructed fence.



Signage in the upper meadow directs visitors to attractions at the farm

4. The agricultural fields and pastures in the Mill Creek valley are separated from the upper meadow by a steep hillside comprised of emerging forest and an underbrush of invasive species such as honeysuckle. This area is used mostly for recreation although there are some pasture areas in the lower elevations. Several hiking trails traverse the hillside. Some trails are quite steep and these tend to be in poor condition from erosion. The steepness of this zone currently poses a barrier to connectivity between the upper and lower use areas of the farm.

Bicycle access to the farm is generally available only from the main entrance off of Reading Road. The trail entrances from Kingsport Road, Brinton Trail and Cooper Road could be

accessed by a mountain bike but this is currently not intended or encouraged. Additionally, the farm administration has concerns that bicycle use on the existing walking paths throughout the farm may be disruptive to visitors on foot.

The farm has a unique geographic location within the village. Residential neighborhoods abut the north and east sides while commercial interests exist on the south and west sides. Pedestrian and bicycle connectivity through the farm between these zones is mostly undeveloped except for primitive hiking trails. Bicyclists and pedestrians needing a firm and stable surface on which to traverse must use the existing street networks and adjacent sidewalks (where present) to move between the residential and commercial zones abutting the farm. The length of the street route from the Kingsport trail entrance to the Reading Road main entrance is approximately 1.6 miles following Kingsport Drive, Glendale-Milford Road and Reading Road. The distance between the same points going through the farm is less than a mile (following the route of existing hiking trails). The length of the street route coupled with the necessity of riding along the busy Reading Road corridor, is a formidable deterrent to residents choosing bicycle travel to access the farm or commercial interests near the farm.

OPPORTUNITIES

Gorman Farm is an important Evendale bike destination. It also has potential for providing recreational bicycling as well as fostering bicycle connectivity in the village.

- A paved loop path could be developed in the upper meadow providing a place for residents nearby to ride or walk.
- A paved path could be developed from Kingsport Drive to the Farm's main entrance on Reading Road. This path would have a number of significant benefits by

providing direct bicycle and pedestrian access from the residential area to:

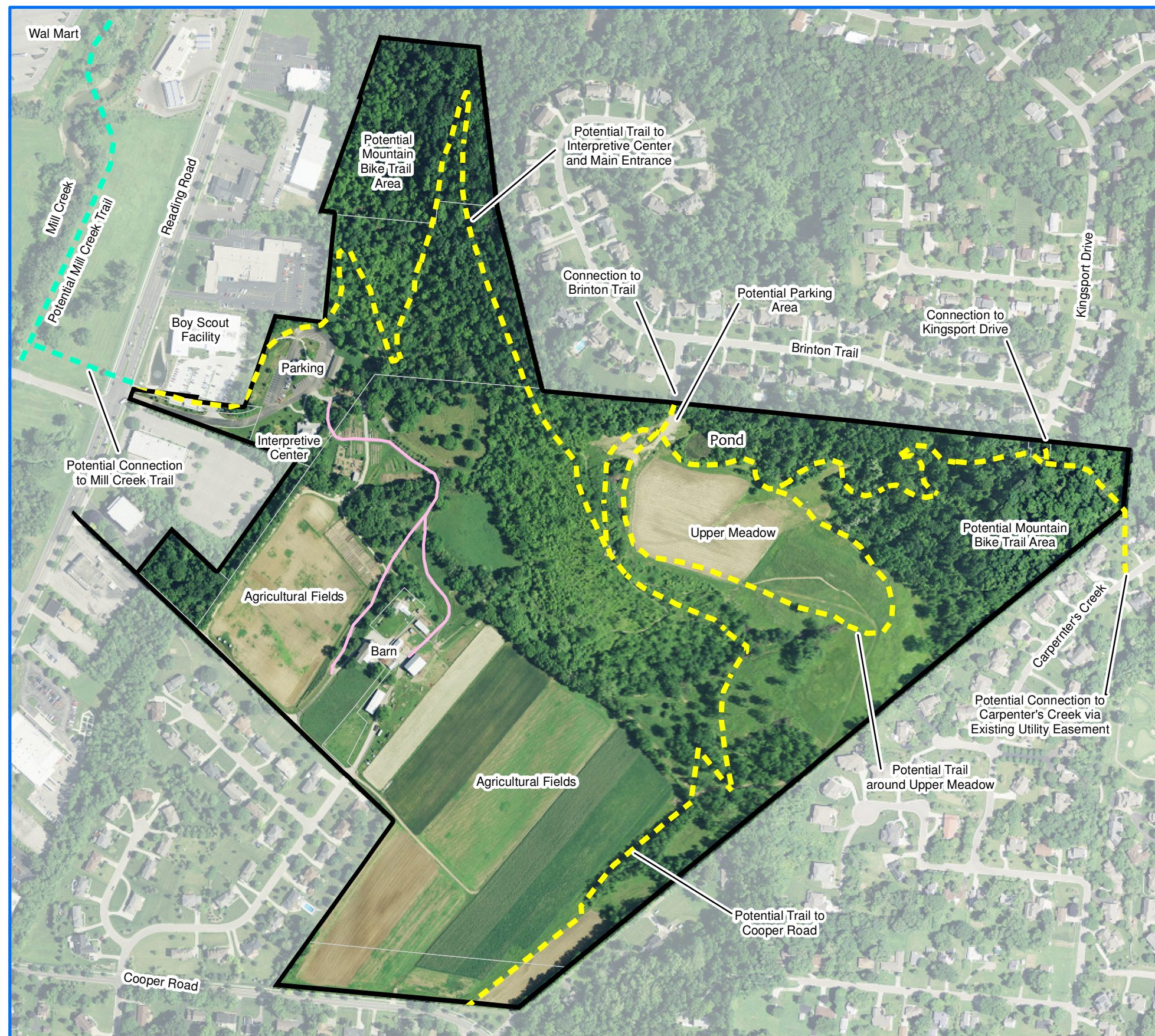
- the farm’s interpretive center and market
 - the Boy Scout Center on Reading Road
 - a potential trail along the Mill Creek (See Section 3.5)
 - commercial businesses along Reading Road
-
- A paved path could also be developed connecting Kingsport Drive with Cooper Road. This would provide residents living along Cooper Road a convenient way to access Kingsport Drive and the recreation center to the north without having to travel along Reading Road. This path would also provide direct bicycle and pedestrian access to Cooper Road for residents living north of the Farm. Cooper Road itself is a bikeable route from Evendale to Blue Ash (See Section 3.3).
 - An existing utility easement along the northeastern edge of the farm property could be utilized to connect the farm to Carpenter’s Creek with a trail. Agreements from the utility and adjacent property owners would need to be secured.

- Conflicts with farm patrons – the farm management has significant concerns regarding the interaction of bicyclists with farm patrons. Bicycle facilities may need to be separate from those used by farm patrons to avoid conflicts.
- Deed restrictions – certain restrictions in the property deed may limit development at the farm to “hiking and nature trails” only.

CONSTRAINTS

Constraints to development of bicycle facilities in Gorman Farm include:

- Topography – a steep hillside separates the upper meadow from all other areas of the farm. Paths from Kingsport Drive to the farm’s main entrance and Cooper Road would need to traverse this hillside.
- Farm operations – any paths constructed would need to avoid existing or planned agricultural fields, livestock enclosures and farm facilities



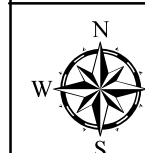
Legend

- Gravel Path
- Paved Path
- - - Potential Trail Location

Bicycle Master Plan

Figure 3.5-2

Gorman Heritage Farm



Scale
1 inch = 400 feet

August 30, 2011

Village of Evendale



GRIFFIN NATURE PRESERVE

In 1997, longtime Evendale resident Bob Griffin donated 15 acres to the Village of Evendale to be used as a nature preserve and recreational park. Located on the east side of Wyscarver Road just north of Glendale-Milford Road, the park contains hiking trails, paved and gravel paths, a fishing pond and a bird blind.

At the Wyscarver Road entrance, a 0.5 mile paved loop path for walkers and bicyclists has been recently constructed. Bicycle use is not intended in other areas of the park.



Paved path in Griffin Nature Preserve

OPPORTUNITIES

Griffin Nature Preserve's location is strategic to fostering bicycle and pedestrian connectivity.

- A paved path could be developed from the Wyscarver Road entrance to the eastern edge of the preserve at Horncastle Drive. This would directly link neighborhoods east of the park with neighborhoods west of the park and the recreation center/Baxter Park via Margate Terrace. Residents would be able to make this connection without using the significantly

dangerous Glendale-Milford Road corridor.

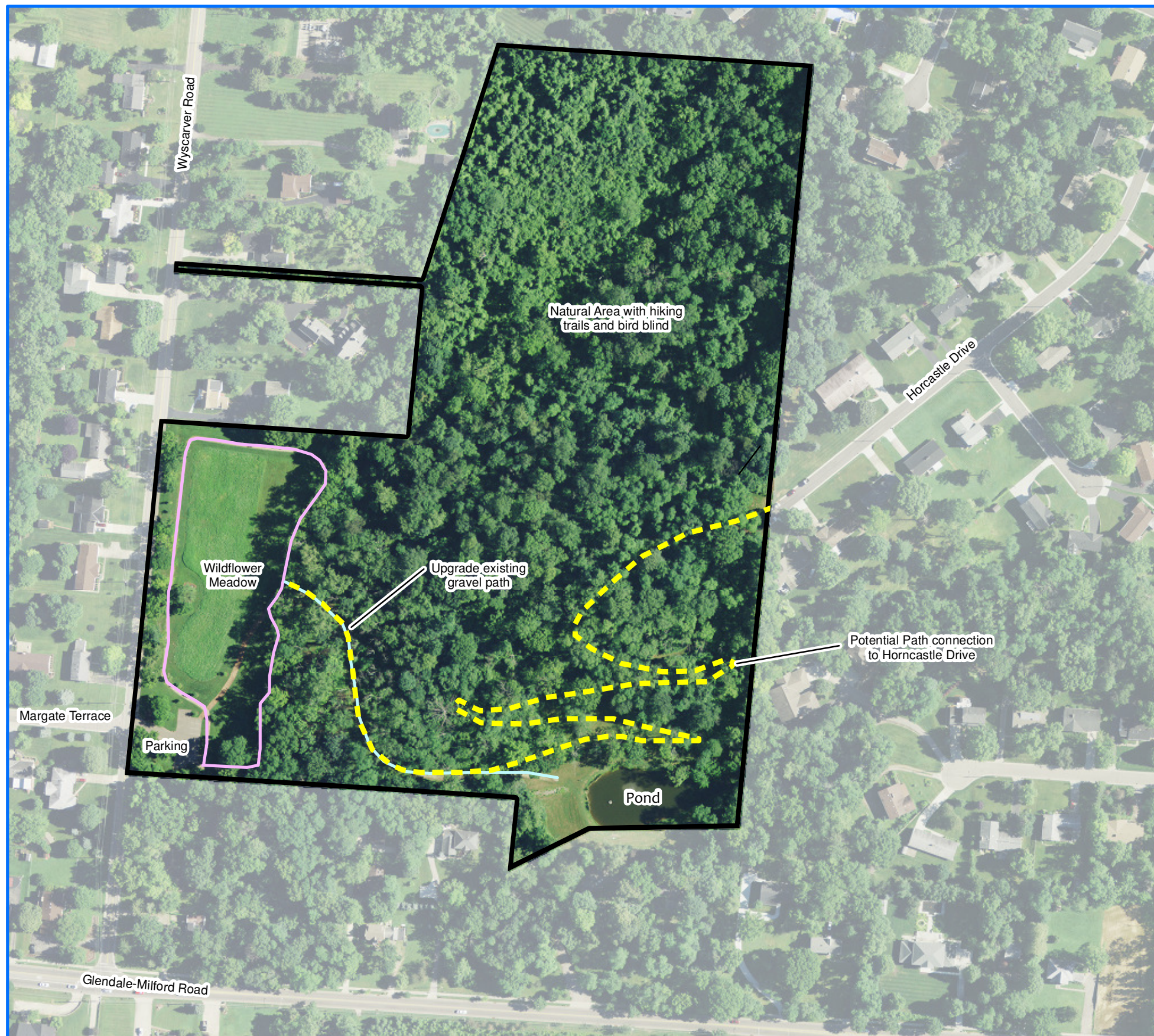
CONSTRAINTS

Constraints to bicycle facility development in Griffin Nature Preserve include:

- Topography – there is a significant hillside which would need to be traversed from the pond to Horncastle Drive.
- Deed restrictions – there may be restrictions to development of a paved path within the preserve.
- Degradation of natural setting – a paved path may increase the number of people traveling through the park which could spoil the natural habitats the park is intended to preserve.
- Deed restrictions – certain restrictions in the property deed may limit development at the farm to “hiking and nature trails” only.



Gravel path leading to pond



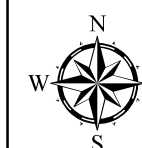
Legend

- Gravel Path
- Paved Path
- - - Potential Trail Location

Bicycle Master Plan

Figure 3.5-3

Griffin Nature Preserve



Scale
1 inch = 200 feet

August 30, 2011

Village of Evendale

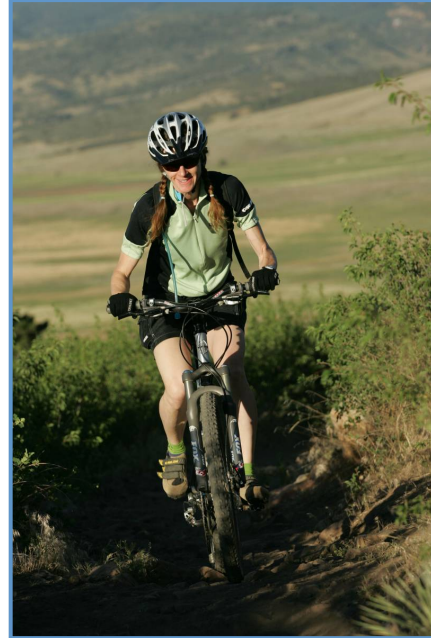


3.6 Mountain Biking

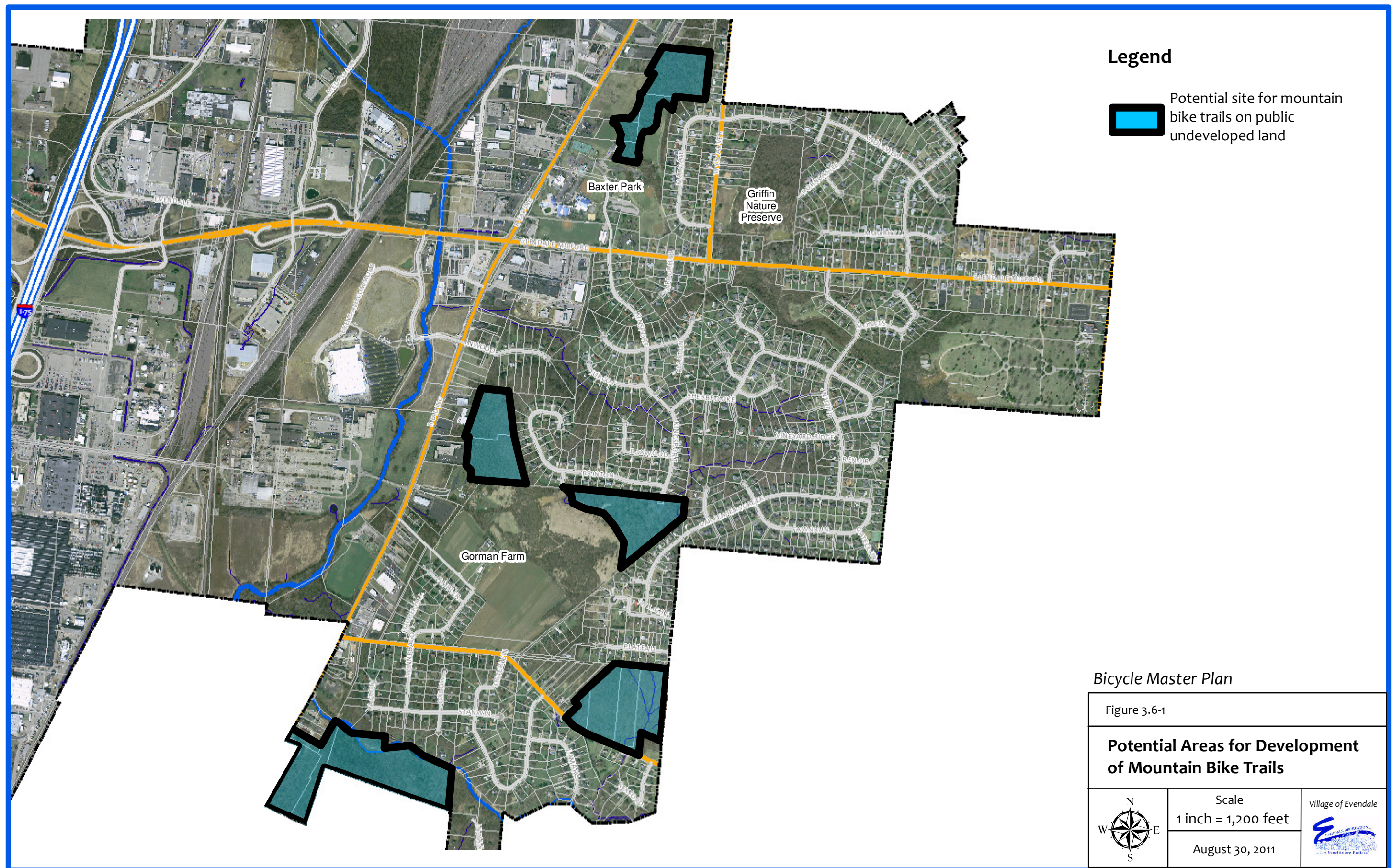
The public survey completed in the first phase of the master plan asked residents if they would support development of trails for mountain biking within the village. Nearly half of respondents indicated support. This section identifies locations where mountain bike trails could be developed within the village.

Trails for mountain biking are similar to trails for hiking. In fact, the two groups often share the trails. However, mountain biking trails do have some characteristics different from hiking trails. Turns may be wider to accommodate the turning radius of a bicycle and they may also be banked. Hills are desirable for swift downhill riding. And, unlike hiking trails which are more direct routes, mountain bike trails may ziz-zag back and forth across the terrain taking advantage of the space available. Mountain bike trails may also have technical features such as jumps and narrow bridges for cyclists to test their skills.

The Village of Evendale owns several large, undeveloped parcels where mountain bike trails could be developed. There are also locations within Baxter Park and Gorman Heritage Farm where trails could be built. Figure 3.6-1 shows the location of these opportunities.



(Source: Bikes Belong)



3.7 Mill Creek Corridor

Flowing through the central portion of Evendale is the region's primary watercourse, the Mill Creek. Draining the central third of Hamilton County and portions of southern Butler County, this creek is one of the area's most important natural resources. Although the creek was neglected for decades as Cincinnati's industrial economy boomed in its floodplain, recent efforts by groups such as the Mill Creek Restoration Project have begun to have a positive impact on improving the health of the creek and the natural habitat along its banks. Bank stabilization, removal of garbage and pollution, reduction of sanitary sewer overflows, re-establishment of natural habitats, removal of artificial channelization, and development of parks, greenways and trails are all significant recent and on-going projects to restore and preserve the Mill Creek at various locations along its 28 mile length.

Within Evendale, the Mill Creek meanders from the village's northern border with Sharonville to its southern border with Reading, a distance of approximately 3 miles. Several tributaries join the Mill Creek in Evendale including Sharon Creek and Cooper Creek. Although the Mill Creek looks more like an unsightly concrete ditch in some communities, within Evendale, the creek and its banks are mostly natural. Native trees such as sycamore and maple line its banks in many areas providing important habitat for birds and mammals. Pollution levels in the creek have made it difficult to support sensitive aquatic species but, nevertheless, some fish and water fowl do currently inhabit the creek's environs in Evendale. As restoration efforts continue, the number of species residing in or around the creek will continue to grow.

Despite the creek's historically negative image, many people recognize the creek's enormous natural and recreational potential. Evendale



Mill Creek near Evendale Commons

residents and stakeholders identified the Mill Creek corridor as one of the leading locations for development of recreational bicycle facilities in the village. A greenway trail on the banks of the Mill Creek has the potential of rivaling (and complementing) the region's other premier bicycle trail, the Little Miami Trail, which follows an abandoned railroad along the Little Miami River in eastern Hamilton County and beyond.

Since the Mill Creek flows throughout central Hamilton County all the way to the Ohio River just west of downtown Cincinnati, a trail along its banks with spurs along its tributaries would provide an unparalleled level of connectivity between many communities in Hamilton County for non-motorized transportation such as bicycling. A bicycle trip from Evendale to downtown Cincinnati along the banks of the Mill Creek would take approximately one hour and would be relatively safe, scenic and enjoyable as compared to the alternative of riding along Reading Road to downtown. Riding along the creek would also be fairly level, avoiding many of the hills traversed by automobile routes into the city.

The focus of this planning study is to assess the preliminary feasibility of developing a trail along the Mill Creek. The planning team studied the topography, existing infrastructure and property ownership adjacent to the Mill Creek to make this assessment. The team also looked at existing or proposed trail developments in the adjacent communities of Reading and Sharonville to ensure connectivity outside of Evendale. Using GIS mapping and site visits, opportunities and obstacles to trail development were identified. The team then mapped out corridors of opportunity showing feasible locations for trail development. These “opportunity corridors” are shown in figures 3.7-1 through 3.7-3.

PROPERTY

There are approximately 20 properties bordering the Mill Creek within Evendale. The property types are primarily industrial or commercial. There are no residential properties adjacent to the creek. The ownership of each parcel, land use adjacent to the creek and potential for trail developments is described in Table 3.7-1 below starting on the southern border of Evendale and proceeding northward.

OPPORTUNITIES

- A parcel owned by General Electric on Evendale’s souther border is currently undeveloped. GE has expressed interest in selling or donating the property. A trail could easily be constructed within the woods along the creek’s banks.
- Because the undeveloped GE parcel extends from Reading Road to the GE plant, additional trails could be developed for employee access to the GE plant from Reading Road and the Mill Creek Trail.



Strip of land between Practice Tee driving range and Mill Creek

- The Practice Tee Golf center’s driving range is situated adjacent to the Mill Creek but there is a narrow strip of land between the driving range and the creek where a trail could be developed. As a recreation facility, pedestrian and bicycle access to the golf center from the trail would be beneficial.
- An undeveloped parcel owned by the Village of Evendale between the Practice Tee Golf Center and Formica could be developed into a small park and trailhead with parking, picnic tables and restroom facilities.
- The Formica property is undeveloped between the Mill Creek and Reading Road. A trail could easily be developed in the large grassy field.
- The bridge carrying the Formica main driveway over the Mill Creek appears to have



Vertical clearance beneath Formica driveway bridge

TABLE 3.7-1 – PROPERTY OWNERSHIP ADJACENT TO THE MILL CREEK

	Owner	Zoning & Land Use Adjacent to Creek	Trail Development Potential
1	The General Electric Company	Heavy industrial – Vacant land	Very high potential – land is vacant and wooded. Strategic opportunities to access GE plant.
2	Formica Corporation	Heavy industrial – Formica manufacturing plant located on west side of creek	High potential – undeveloped land immediately adjacent to the creek – potential security concerns for the business
3	Steven B. Etter	Parks and recreation - Practice Tee Golf Center – Driving Range	High potential – space available for a trail between the driving range and the creek – potential security concerns for the business
4	Evendale Commons, LTD	Commercial retail	Very high potential – land is reserved for trail development on the west side of the creek
5	Agile Pursuits, Inc.	Commercial – Mr. Clean Car Wash	Low potential – commercial development is very close to the creek limiting space for a trail
6	Security Holding Group, LL	Commercial – Savings and Loans	Low potential – commercial development is very close to the creek limiting space for a trail
7	Fifth Third Bank	Commercial - Banks	Low potential – commercial development is very close to the creek limiting space for a trail
8	SEC Holdings, LLC	Commercial – Office/Warehouse – Lawn Care Service Plus	Low potential – commercial development is very close to the creek limiting space for a trail
9	Caston, Fred	Industrial – Vacant land	Moderate potential – although land is vacant properties north and south are developed close to the creek limiting space for a trail
10	Caston, Fred T TR & Linda L TR	Commercial – Other retail structures – Cincinnati Pool and Patio	Moderate potential – space is available for a trail adjacent to the creek but it is currently occupied by a driveway used by the business to access the rear of the property – potential security concerns for the business
11	Charles Andrew, LLC	Light industrial – Norwood Hardware	Moderate potential – a trail could be developed atop a levee adjacent to the creek but there could be minor impacts to the loading dock area and security concerns for the business
12	Evendale Office Condominiums, LLC	Commercial Office – one story office condominiums	Moderate potential – office condominiums are close to the creek but space is available for a trail – possible security concerns for the businesses
13	Mankind Properties Two, LLC	Light Industrial – warehouse	High potential west of the creek – portion of parcels west of Mill Creek are inaccessible and undevelopable Moderate potential east of the creek – warehouse structures are close to the creek but space is available – possible security concerns for the businesses
14	Pennsylvania Lines, LLC	Public utilities – Railroad	Very high potential along Sharon Creek – land adjacent to Sharon Creek on the east side is the site of an abandoned rail line Moderate potential along the Mill Creek – the trail would need to pass beneath three railroad bridges – possible security concerns for the railroad – remaining property is wooded and could easily support a trail.
15	The Mill Creek Valley Conservancy District	Institutional – Land conservancy	Very high potential – land is vacant and held by an agency supportive of recreational development
16	Nexeo Solutions, Inc.	Industrial – Vacant land	Very high potential – land is vacant and wooded
17	Greulich, Friedhelm F. & Freia E.	Industrial – Light manufacturing – Watkins Manufacturing	Moderate potential – land is available adjacent to the creek – possible security concerns for the business
18	Neyra Properties, Inc.	Industrial – Vacant land	Very high potential – land is vacant on both sides of the creek
19	Norfolk & Western Railroad Company	Public utilities - Railroad	Very low potential – railroad is close to the creek and space for a trail is limited
20	R&S Properties, LLC	Heavy industrial	Moderate potential – space available for a trail adjacent to creek – possible security concerns

sufficient height to permit trail construction under the bridge.

- A spur trail to Gorman Farm could be constructed adjacent to the Formica main driveway. An existing traffic signal and crosswalk are already present on Reading Road, providing a safe and convenient crossing.
- Possible trails in Gorman Farm could provide additional connections to the Mill Creek Trail from Evendale's residential area.
- A trail adjacent to the Mill Creek would provide direct pedestrian and bicycle access to the shops in the Evendale Commons development including Wal Mart and Starbucks.
- Parcels on the west side of the Mill Creek in the Evendale Commons development were reserved for trail development.
- The bridge carrying Glendale-Milford



Vertical clearance under the Glendale-Milford Road bridge over the Mill Creek

Road over the Mill Creek has plenty of height to allow trail development under the bridge.

- Several parcels fronting Exon Avenue owned by Mankind Properties, LLC, straddle the Mill Creek and are not accessible (or developable) on the west side of the creek. A trail developed on the western portions of these parcels may have no impact on the property owner.

- An abandoned rail line along the eastern side of Sharon Creek could be converted to a trail that would provide a direct link from the Mill Creek Trail to planned trails in Sharonville that would connect to Sharon Woods – one of the primary bicycle destinations identified in the public survey. This trail would also provide direct access to The Sphere (formerly Sports Plus) which was also cited as a bicycle destination in the survey.

- A multi-use path could be constructed along Exon Avenue from the Sharon Creek trail to the intersection with Reading Road. This is a signalized intersection. A crosswalk does not exist today but could be added. The parcel of land on the east side of Reading Road directly across from Exon Avenue is owned by the Village of Evendale and is connected to Baxter Park and the Recreation Center. This link would provide a northern connection from the recreation center and the northern residential suburbs of Evendale to the Sharon Creek and Mill Creek Trails.

- Two parcels owned by the Mill Creek Conservancy District are located on the north side of Mill Creek on either side of Medallion Drive. The conservancy district works with Army Corps of Engineers to address flood control but they also work to restore the Mill Creek's natural habitat and support recreation adjacent to the creek.

- The Medallion Drive bridge appears to have sufficient space on the north side of the Mill Creek to permit trail passage beneath.

- Gold Medal Products, a company located on Medallion Drive near the Mill Creek has a paved path along the perimeter of their property. The path is within the public right of way adjacent to Medallion Drive. The other portions of the path are private. A spur trail could be developed from the Mill Creek Trail to connect with Gold Medal's trail.

- A stub track from the Norfolk Southern Rail line on the west side of the Mill Creek

crosses over the Mill Creek approximately a quarter mile south of Sharon Road. On the east side of the creek, the bridge extends over land for about 100 feet, likely to provide a sufficient floodway opening. A trail could pass beneath this portion of the bridge.

- North of Sharon Road in the city of Sharonville, the Mill Creek Conservancy district owns another parcel of land on the east side of the Mill Creek.
- The Metropolitan Sewer District has large sanitary sewers running along the Mill Creek. From Sharon Creek north, the district has replaced sewers located on the east side of the creek. A trail could be developed within this sewer's easement. Also, the district has plans to replace sewers in the southern half of Evendale (from Sharon Creek south to Reading) within the next ten years. MSD could be a partner in trail development in conjunction with sewer replacement. MSD has also constructed trails along the Mill Creek near Caldwell Park to satisfy the requirements of its consent decree with the US Environmental Protection Agency.

CONSTRAINTS

- On the east side of the Mill Creek south of Glendale Milford Road, businesses have developed property to the edge of the Mill Creek. Trail development on this side of the



Businesses on the east side of Mill Creek south of Glendale –Milford Road

Mill Creek may be impractical in this area.

- The strip center on the west side of the Mill Creek south of Glendale Milford Road containing Chipotle and Starbucks is also constructed very near the Mill Creek's top of bank. There is a narrow shelf of land behind the development where a trail could be developed but a retaining wall or boardwalk type structure may be required. Alternatively, the trail could be developed adjacent to Cunningham Drive but a disadvantage would be the necessity to cross over the entrance driveways.



Limited space for a trail behind Chipotle

- The Cunningham Drive bridge over the Mill Creek has limited vertical clearance beneath the bridge for a trail. While a trail could go under the bridge, its elevation may be low enough to be frequently impacted by flooding. An alternative trail could be constructed up to the Cunningham Drive intersection on the west side.
- A high embankment is located on the north side of the Formica property west of the Mill Creek. If a trail was constructed on this side of the Mill Creek, significant earthwork may be required.
- Favorable conditions for trail development switches from the east side of the Mill Creek at Formica to the west side at



Limited vertical clearance under the Cunningham Drive Bridge over the Mill Creek

Evendale Commons. A trail bridge crossing the Mill Creek may be needed in this location.

- If a trail is developed on the west side of the Mill Creek, a trail bridge would be needed across the Mill Creek to access the Sharon Creek Trail.
- A trail on the east side of Mill Creek would need to have a trail bridge over Sharon Creek at it's confluence with the Mill Creek.
- Both the Mill Creek and Sharon Creek traverse parcels owned by the Norfolk Southern Railroad (Pennsylvania Lines, LLC). Property negotiations with rail companies can often be complex and time consuming.
- Three railroad bridges cross the Mill Creek at the southern end of the Sharonville rail



Three railroad bridges over the Mill Creek
(Source: Bing maps)

yard. From aerial photography it appears that each of these bridges has three spans with the Mill Creek flowing through the central span. A trail may be developable in the tail spans but an agreement would need to be arranged with the rail company.

- Another major rail line, also owned by Norfolk Southern, is located on the west side of the Mill Creek. Just south of Sharon Road, the tracks are very close to the Mill Creek, limiting the space available for a trail on the west side of the creek in this area.
- A spur track from the Norfolk Southern rail line on the west side of the Mill Creek crosses over the creek to serve several industrial sites. The bridge abutment on the west side of the creek is very close to the creek's bank restricting a potential trail passage beneath.



Spur track over Mill Creek south of Sharon Road.
Limited space available for a trail on the west side.
East side can accommodate a trail under the bridge. (Source: Bing maps)

COORDINATION

READING

Reading has an existing trail on the east side of Mill Creek in Koenig Park. Trail advocates in the city have explored options to extend this trail to the north to Evendale. Unfortunately there

are several significant constraints to trail development in this area. The area contains heavy industrial plants and a sewage treatment plant operated by the Metropolitan Sewer District. Additionally, a railroad trestle across the Mill Creek may not support trail development beneath it.

The undeveloped General Electric parcel noted above within Evendale extends into the city of Reading. The parcel sits opposite the tee intersection of Cooper Road with Reading Road. One scenario being explored by Reading officials to foster development of this parcel includes extending Cooper Road to the west through the GE parcel, over the Mill Creek and the Norfolk Southern Railroad Tracks and then turning south to join Cavett Lane.

A trail could be developed in conjunction with this extension of Cooper Road. The trail following the road would be able to bypass the significant constraints noted above. It would also provide a bicycle and pedestrian gateway to the GE plant and connect with a planned trail system being developed by GE (see below). However, one disadvantage is that the trail would end up on the west side of Mill Creek while the existing trail in Koenig Park is on the east side. Another bridge would be needed to connect to the existing trail. One possible solution would be to combine the trail bridge with a new vehicle bridge to access an industrial site north of Koenig Park. Today this is the site of Container Solutions – Industrial Container Services, which can only be accessed via a small bridge connecting the site to Barret Paving's operation on the west side of the creek.

The most important issue for Evendale to coordinate with Reading is which side of the creek the trail should be located. If Cooper Road is extended with a trail as described above then the location of the trail in Evendale is irrelevant because it could connect with the Cooper Road trail on either side of the Mill Creek.

SHARONVILLE

Sharonville has already developed a trail master plan for their community. Trails are planned along the east side of Sharon Creek from the border with Evendale into Sharonville's downtown and continuing into Sharon Woods. As noted above, in Evendale, the east side of Sharon Creek is the site of an abandoned rail line from the Mill Creek to the border with Sharonville. A trail situated in this location would match perfectly with Sharonville's planned trails and provide direct access to Sharonville's downtown and Sharon Woods from Evendale.

GENERAL ELECTRIC

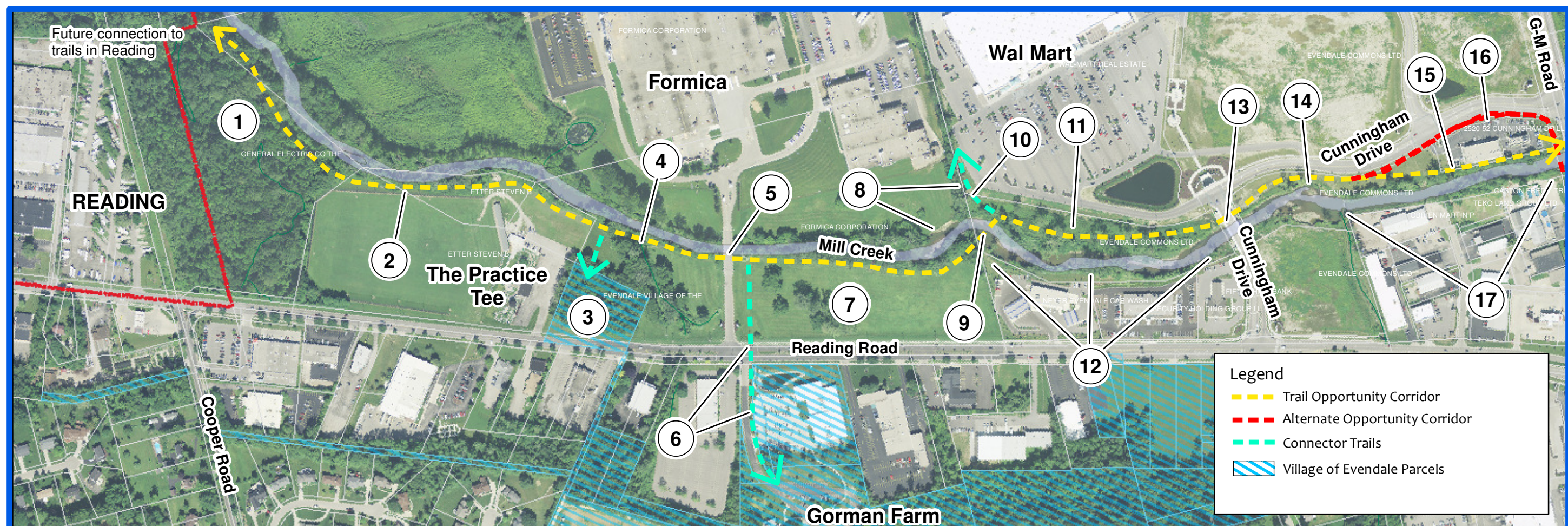
General Electric has been developing a trail plan for their Evendale campus to provide fitness opportunities for their employees. The company has also been supportive of providing bicycle and pedestrian access to the plant from the east via the undeveloped parcel adjacent to Reading Road. A trail along the Mill Creek would complement GE's trail plans and provide better bicycle and pedestrian access to the plant from Evendale, Sharonville and Reading.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Recreational trails can have an enormous positive economic impact on the surrounding community especially for regionally significant trails that connect communities and provide long distance opportunities for riding, walking or running. The Little Miami Trail on the eastern side of Cincinnati has brought many benefits to the communities through which it traverses such as Loveland, Milford, Yellow Springs and Xenia. Restaurants, cafes, coffee shops, sports and fitness stores, bicycle repair shops, and even hotels cater to the myriad trail users. Section 1.2 discusses the economic benefit trails have had on other communities.

Although an economic impact study has not been performed for a potential Mill Creek Trail

in Evendale, the Mill Creek Restoration Project did sponsor a study for a 13.5 mile section of the trail from downtown Cincinnati to Elmwood Place. That study, performed by the University of Cincinnati, found that the trail would create 445 jobs, have an industry output of \$52 million and increase local taxes by \$2 million. In Evendale, similar benefits may be realized in business development, job creation and increased tax revenue.



- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>1 Vacant land owned by General Electric consisting of an emerging forest with widely spaced relatively immature trees. Easement or acquisition required.</p> <p>2 The Practice Tee – Golf Driving Range. Strip of land between driving range and Mill Creek could be developed into a trail. An easement or acquisition would be needed.</p> <p>3 Vacant property owned by the Village of Evendale. This is a potential site for a trailhead with amenities such as parking and restrooms.</p> <p>4 Small stream crossing – embankment with culvert is already in place.</p> <p>5 Formica main entrance bridge over the Mill Creek. Bridge has sufficient clearance underneath for a path.</p> <p>6 Potential trail connection to Gorman Heritage Farm. Signalized intersection at Gorman Heritage Farm Driveway/Formica Driveway provides an opportunity for a signalized pedestrian crosswalk.</p> <p>7 Vacant land owned by the Formica Corporation consisting of a grassy level field. An easement or acquisition would be needed.</p> <p>8 Steep embankment adjacent to Mill Creek and Wal Mart. These embankments would be a constraint to trail development on this side of the Mill Creek.</p> | <p>9 Potential location for a bridge crossing the Mill Creek.</p> <p>10 Potential connection to Wal Mart.</p> <p>11 Vacant land set aside by Evendale Commons LTD for development of a Mill Creek Trail. Land consists of brush and scrubby trees.</p> <p>12 New development on the east side of Mill Creek has been constructed to near the banks of the creek leaving little or no space for a trail.</p> <p>13 Cunningham Drive bridge over the Mill Creek. A trail can be constructed under this bridge but it may need to be close to the bank of the Mill Creek to achieve the required vertical clearance. The trail may flood more frequently at the lower elevation. A bypass route could be provided around this area by constructing another path up to the crosswalk on Cunningham Drive.</p> <p>14 Additional vacant land set aside by Evendale Commons LTD for development of a Mill Creek Trail. Currently the land is maintained as a grassy field adjacent to Cunningham Drive.</p> <p>15 Potential trail alignment behind businesses. This alignment may have topographical and property challenges because there is limited space between the back of the businesses and the top of the Mill Creek bank. An easement may be needed.</p> | <p>16 Alternate alignment in front of businesses. This alignment could be pursued if solutions to the topographical challenges noted in 15 above are not feasible. This alignment would cross two driveways which could be a safety concern.</p> <p>17 Existing businesses on the east side of the Mill Creek are constructed immediately adjacent to the Mill Creek leaving little or no space for a trail.</p> |
|---|---|--|

Bicycle Master Plan

Figure 3.7-1

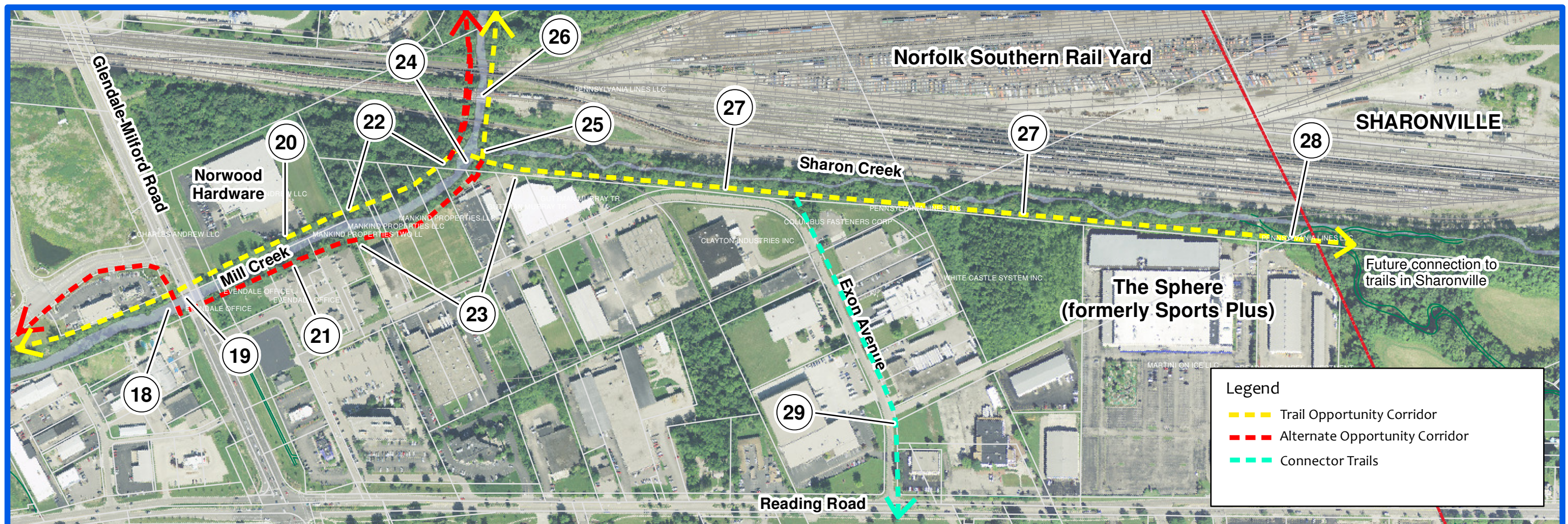
Mill Creek Opportunities Map 1



Scale
1 inch = 400 feet

August 30, 2011





- 18** Potential location of bridge across the Mill Creek for the alternate trail alignment.
- 19** Glendale-Milford Road Bridge over the Mill Creek. There is ample vertical clearance on both sides of the Mill Creek for a trail.
- 20** Trail atop levee on Norwood Hardware property. An easement or acquisition would be needed.
- 21** Alternate trail alignment adjacent to office condos. An easement or acquisition would be needed.
- 22** Trail on inaccessible portion of lots fronting Exon Avenue. An easement or acquisition would be needed.
- 23** Alternate trail alignment adjacent to rear of businesses fronting Exon Avenue. An easement or acquisition would be needed.
- 24** Potential location for bridge crossing Mill Creek to access trail following Sharon Creek.
- 25** Potential location for bridge crossing Sharon Creek.

- 26** Three railroad bridges crossing the Mill Creek. A trail may be able to be constructed under the bridges along the creek. **VERIFY!**
- 27** Trail on abandoned railroad beginning near the confluence of Sharon Creek and continuing to Sports Plus. An easement or acquisition would be needed from Pennsylvania Lines LLC.
- 28** Trail no longer on abandoned railroad. Sharon Creek meanders close to the property line in this area reducing the available space for a trail. A bridge may be needed here or the creek could be realigned.
- 29** Potential Multi-use path adjacent to Exon Avenue to connect to Baxter Park & Evendale Recreation Center. Parcels across Reading Road from Exon Avenue are owned by Evendale and connect to Baxter Park.

Bicycle Master Plan

Figure 3.7-2

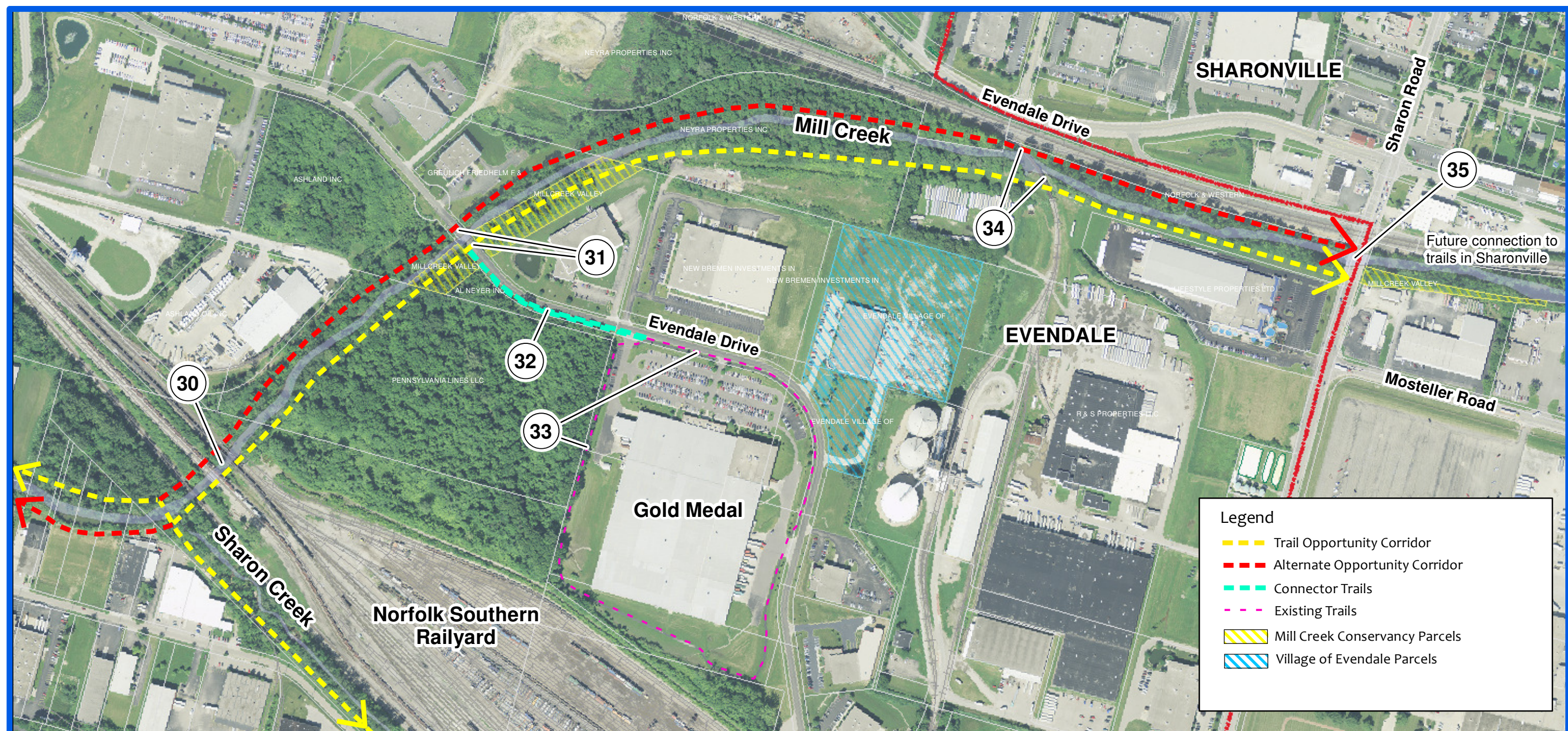
Mill Creek Opportunities Map 2



Scale
1 inch = 400 feet

August 30, 2011





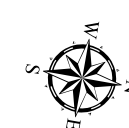
- 30** Three railroad bridges over Mill Creek. A trail may be able to be constructed under the bridges.
- 31** Existing Medallion Drive Bridge over Mill Creek. North side of bridge may have more space for a trail under the bridge than the south side.
- 32** Connector trail to existing loop trail around the Gold Medal plant.

- 33** Existing loop trail around the Gold Medal plant. The portion fronting Medallion Drive is within the Village of Evendale's right of way. The portion on Gold Medal property is private.
- 34** Existing railroad bridge over the Mill Creek. There may be more space on the east side for a trail under the bridge than on the west side.
- 35** Existing Sharon Road bridge over the Mill Creek. There may be more space for a trail under the bridge on the east side.

Bicycle Master Plan

Figure 3.7-3

Mill Creek Opportunities Map 3



Scale
1 inch = 400 feet

August 30, 2011



3.8 Coordination with Neighboring Communities

The Village of Evendale is bordered by the cities of Blue Ash, Sharonville and Reading and the villages of Glendale and Woodlawn. Most of these communities either have some existing bicycle facilities or have plans in place for future facilities. Coordination with these communities is essential to ensure the highest level of bicycle connectivity and efficient allocation of resources. There would be little point in investing in bicycle infrastructure along a certain route to reach a destination outside of Evendale if the neighboring community plans access from a different route. This section explores the facilities and plans of Evendale's neighboring communities with respect to identified bicycle destinations within those communities.

CONNECTING ACTIVE COMMUNITIES COALITION

Five communities in northern Hamilton County formed a multi-jurisdictional focus group in 2009 to coordinate non-motorized connectivity, such as bicycling and walking, between their communities. The original group included Blue Ash, Glendale, Evendale, Reading and Sharonville. Since then three additional communities have joined: Woodlawn, Wyoming and Montgomery. Called the "Connecting Active Communities Coalition", group members meet bi-monthly to coordinate their planning, design and encouragement efforts for active transportation as well as to learn about efforts in other communities. Additionally, the members seek to increase funding opportunities by promoting projects on a multi-jurisdictional level.

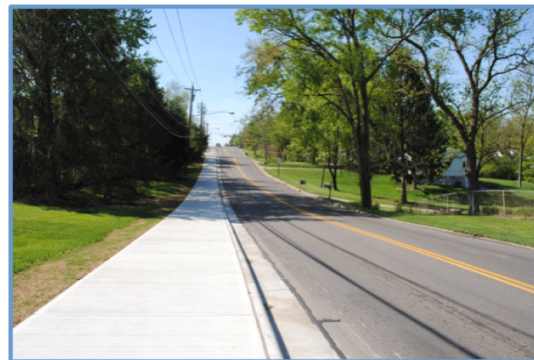
Currently, the CACC is working to develop a

master plan for non-motorized transportation covering all of the communities. Each community is identifying priority corridors and plotting these on a map. Evendale's current priorities are shown on Figure 3.8-1

BLUE ASH

The City of Blue Ash has been improving bicycle access for the last several years by widening sidewalks within their community. Sidewalks have been widened to eight feet or more to comfortably accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists. Near Evendale, wide sidewalks are either planned or already constructed on Plainfield Road and Cooper Road.

There were no specific bicycle destinations identified within Blue Ash, however the city, in general, was listed very high as a destination. A future development that was not planned at the time of the Phase 1 Public Survey but is sure to become a primary bicycle destination from Evendale is the Blue Ash Airport Park. This development will be located in the southeast quadrant of Glendale-Milford Road and Plainfield Road. Most residents of Evendale would likely find it easiest to get to this



Wide sidewalk along Plainfield Road in Blue Ash

proposed park via Glendale-Milford Road, especially if bicycle facilities such as bike lanes or a multi-use path would be available. However, absent those improvements, bicyclists may choose less traveled alternate routes such as Cooper Road to Plainfield Road from the South or Thornview Drive to Plainfield Road from the north. Bicycle improvements on Cooper Road such as a bike lane or multi-use path would tie in with Blue Ash's facilities on Cooper and Plainfield to ensure connectivity to this destination. Thornview Drive functions as a residential street and may not need any improvement other than signing or pavement marking.

SHARONVILLE

Sharonville is home to one of the most cited bicycle destinations for Evendale residents, Sharon Woods. The existing bicycle paths through the park and the beautiful natural setting are major attractions for recreational bicycling.

Sharonville has developed a downtown master plan that includes bicycle trails along Sharon Creek, through downtown and into Sharon Woods. A continuation of the proposed trail along Sharon Creek and the Mill Creek with connections to Evendale residential neighborhoods would provide the safe and efficient connectivity needed for Evendale residents to reach Sharon Woods.

Section 3.7, Mill Creek Corridor, addresses a potential trail along the Mill Creek and Sharon Creek, meeting Sharonville's planned trail at the Evendale border.

Besides Sharon Woods, there were no other specific bicycle destinations identified within Sharonville other than the city in general. Besides using the busy Reading Road corridor, residents of Evendale could also access downtown Sharonville and Sharon Woods via Wyscarver Road. There is a very steep grade on this route within Sharonville, however, and at

present the city has no plans for bicycle accommodations on this route. Other access points to Sharonville include Thornview Drive, Sharondale Drive and Plainfield Road. These routes are more residential in nature and may not require any bicycle improvements other than signing and pavement markings.

READING

The City of Reading currently has short segments of multi-use paths in Koenig Park and Voorhees Park. Both of these are adjacent to the east side of the Mill Creek. Reading is interested in connecting the pathways and extending them to become part of the future Mill Creek Trail. Extension of the Koenig Park path northward into Evendale is discussed in greater detail under Section 3.6, Mill Creek Corridor. Southern expansion would not only provide linkages for Reading into Cincinnati but would also provide connectivity to existing and proposed trails along the West Fork of the Mill Creek opening bicycle and pedestrian access to the communities of Wyoming, Woodlawn and Glendale as well as Winton Woods Park. Reading currently has no formalized plans for expansion of their Mill Creek Trail system but advocates are working to build support.

Besides the trail system, Reading has no other specific facilities for bicycling.



Multi-use path adjacent to the Mill Creek in Reading's Koenig Park

The City of Reading was rated as a minor bicycle destination from the Village of Evendale. The two communities share a border several miles in length but the only route between the two is Reading Road (excepting Interstate 75 and its collector route Neuman Way). Given the BLOS measured for Reading Road in Section 3.4, alternative routes to access the City of Reading, such as a trail along the Mill Creek, would provide safer and more efficient access.

WOODLAWN

Existing bicycle facilities in the Village of Woodlawn consists of multi-use paths adjacent to the West Fork of the Mill Creek and paths through Hamilton County's Glenwood Gardens (although bicycles are not permitted on some paths in the park). There are no specific on street facilities for bicycling. At this time, Woodlawn has not planned for additional bicycle facilities.

Woodlawn is separated from Evendale by Interstate 75. The only access between the two villages is Glendale-Milford Road. As noted in section 3.4, Evendale's portion of this route has



Paved path in Woodlawn near Glenwood Gardens

a paved shoulder which was recently upgraded to a bicycle lane. Unfortunately, just before reaching Woodlawn, the paved shoulder is discontinued and bicyclists must share a lane with motor vehicle. The Bicycle Level of Service drops to an E (low compatibility) once the paved shoulder ends.

The Village of Woodlawn was rated as a minor bicycle destination by Evendale residents. Glenwood Gardens was identified by some survey respondents as a bicycle destination. As noted above, development of the Mill Creek Trail system through Reading and along the West Fork of the Mill Creek would provide a safe and enjoyable route to Woodlawn and Glenwood Gardens.

GLENDALE

The Village of Glendale has no dedicated bicycle facilities within its borders although some streets such as State Route 4 have paved shoulders and others like Sharon Road are wide enough for bicycles and cars to comfortably share a lane. At this time, the village has no formal plans for developing bicycle facilities although interest is growing.

Glendale was cited as a minor bicycle destination by Evendale residents although there were no specific locations identified. A small section of Evendale west of I-75 shares a border with Glendale. The only access to this area from the main body of Evendale is from Glendale-Milford Road or Sharon Road. Both have low bicycle level of service and any improvements would need to be coordinated with Sharonville and Woodlawn.

CINCINNATI

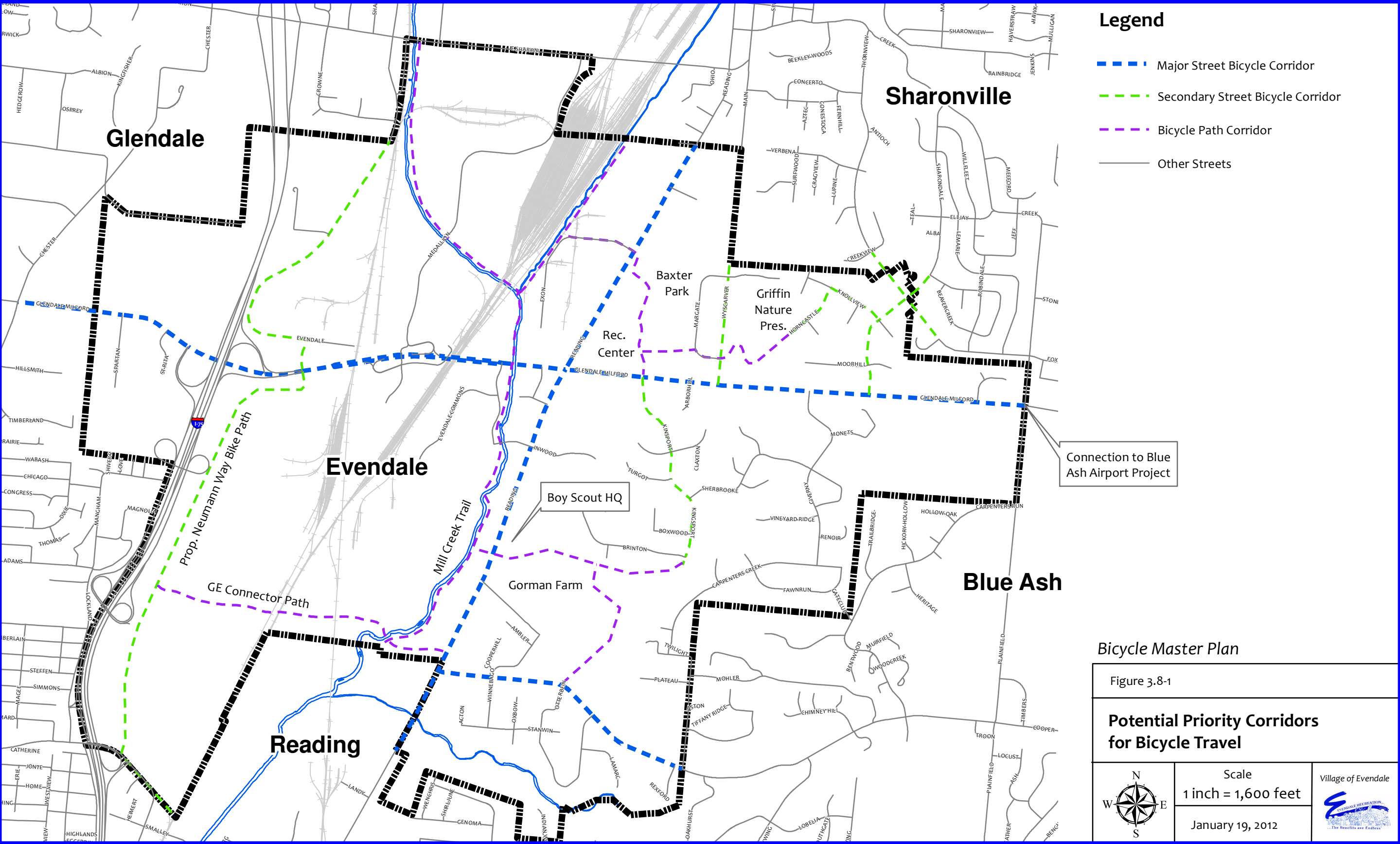
Although Evendale and Cincinnati do not share a common border, the communities do have two common features, Reading Road and the

Mill Creek.

Cincinnati recently completed a bicycle master plan which addressed bicycle access on Reading Road. The existing route is very urban, narrow, hilly and heavily traveled by motor vehicles. The plan calls for bicycle lanes to be added within the city's borders which should significantly improve the bicycle level of service and attract more cyclists.

The Mill Creek corridor poses an alternative route to Reading Road to reaching downtown via bicycle from the northern suburbs of Cincinnati. The Mill Creek Restoration Project, a non-profit group working to restore the Mill Creek's natural habitat, promote recreation and create greenways within the creek's corridor, has planned trails for the entire length of the Mill Creek including its tributaries. A 3.4 mile segment between Mitchell Avenue and South Cumminsville is currently under development with some portions completed. The Mill Creek corridor is covered in more detail in section 3.7.

Evendale residents listed downtown Cincinnati as a bicycle destination. The improvements planned on Reading Road and the Mill Creek within Cincinnati will provide bicycle access for this destination but coordination with the City of Reading will be needed to ensure connectivity from the Cincinnati border to Evendale.



3.9 Stakeholder & Public Involvement

Stakeholder and public involvement meetings were held in the fall of 2011 to review the existing conditions, opportunities and constraints relating to bicycle travel in the Village of Evendale. The comments received were used by the project team to refine the work of this phase. The feedback will further be used to guide the project recommendations identified in Chapter 4.

STAKEHOLDER MEETING SEPTEMBER 15, 2011

Existing Conditions, Opportunities and Constraints to bicycling in the Village of Evendale was presented to the project stakeholders at the Evendale Recreation Center on September 15, 2011. The following is a summary of the stakeholders' recommendations:

1. Mill Creek – Represents significant opportunity corridor (long term goal), however little likelihood that Evendale will act alone. Need to partner with other communities, most notably Reading and Sharonville (also GE, Anchor Properties, Mill Creek Restoration Project, Railroad, to name a few). West side of Mill Creek is preferred in general, although it is recognized that this may not always be feasible due to physical and commercial constraints. Determine if there is room under railroad bridge to add path.
2. Village Road Improvement Projects - Interface with road projects (such as Margate Terrace and Thru the Valley) as a cost effective way to incorporate bike facility (and pedestrian) enhancements. However, no road improvement projects have been budgeted in 2012. Ensure completion of bicycle improvements along Glendale Milford Road (west of Reading Road) as previously delineated by URS.
3. Airport Park in Blue Ash – Significant future destination of interest for Evendale residents, therefore BMP should consider plans for connectivity. Explore feasibility of potential corridor from Park Hills through Rest Haven Cemetery to Airport Park as a safer/more attractive access alternative to that of Glendale Milford bicycle travel.
4. Griffin Nature Preserve – Consider east linkage from Griffin to Horncastle to Evendale Elementary, as well as west connection from Griffin to Recreation Center. Explore option for mountain bikes. Examine potential need to request Mr. Griffin's consideration of deed modification.
5. Recreation Center – Possible opportunity to loop Churchill property to Recreation Center for bike path. There may be interest of seniors for path to accommodate 3-wheeled bikes. Looped paths around Baxter Park/Rec Center vicinity may be of secondary importance to planning routes to key destinations. Bicycle count data represents a critical outcome measure to gauge current use (as well as assess BMP effectiveness following community bicycle facility enhancements).
6. Gorman Heritage Farm – Add a bike rack. The non-farm portion of GHF (northern part) may represent an area for trail development. Deed restrictions and GHF Master Plan (in development) are important considerations.
7. General Electric – Include GE as a destination to facilitate connectivity for residents to bike to GE from their homes in Evendale. In addition, follow up discussion

with GE regarding their plans for Mill Creek loop (2.2 miles), Multi-purpose loop (2.8 miles) and potential land acquisition should be coordinated.

8. Schools – UC Blue Ash should be added as a destination with special consideration for safe accessibility of youth given plans for expansion (most notably CCM Preparatory Department). Little interest from Evendale Elementary officials/parents for improved accessibility south of Glendale Milford (Park Hills) due to safety concerns given young age of students e.g. K-5.

PUBLIC MEETING NOVEMBER 15, 2011

The meeting for the general public was held on November 15, 2011 at the Village of Evendale Recreation Department. The following is a summary of the public comments collected at the meeting:

1. Ensure that the plan includes a schedule that considers priorities, fundraising and implementation.
2. Pursue funding partnerships with businesses along the Mill Creek, such as Anchor, for trail construction.
3. A trail easement from Formica may be difficult to obtain.
4. Actively pursue acquisition of the GE parcel along the Mill Creek and adjacent to Reading Road. Perform due diligence to ensure environmental quality prior to acquisition.
5. Address concerns of trail flooding on the Mill Creek.
6. Consider future trail maintenance needs.