NAKWEMA

TRAILWAY

COMMUNITIES JOINING TOGETHER

THE VISION

The Nakwema (nah-KWAY-mah) Trailway, linking Charlevoix and Traverse City, will provide a vital, non-motorized connection between pristine freshwater shorelines, rolling dunes, and pastoral farmlands. The Trailway will provide critical foundational infrastructure for happy, healthy, resilient individuals and communities that make up the quintessential towns, villages, and rich cultural heritage that define northwest Lower Michigan.

THE STORY

The Nakwema Trailway will create an opportunity to share stories - of the people and places, past and present connected by this trail. The Trailway will illustrate the diversity of soil, topography, and climate that make food and farming a cornerstone of our regional identy. We invite you to discover the beauty, history, and communities connected by the Nakwema Trailway.

The name of the Trailway shares its history with the land it traverses. Nakwema, Ojibwe for “where paths connect,” is inspired by long-ago established routes through the waters and woods of the region. The entire trail will exist on the ancestral lands of the Anishinaabe people, who are today represented by the nations of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians and the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians. The Trailway honors these active nations, their ancestors who first traversed these lands, and the woods and water they continue to steward.

THE EXPERIENCE

The Nakwema Trailway will traverse through Traverse City, Acme, Elk Rapids, Eastport, Norwood, and Charlevoix. TART Trails and Top of Michigan Trails Council, together with Networks Northwest and in cooperation with local and state governments, are collaborating to close the 45+ mile gap between the Little Traverse Wheelway in Charlevoix and the TART Trails' networks in Acme. By closing this gap, the landmark trail will create a continuous 325-mile trail network, including the statewide Iron Belle Trail, helping Michigan lead the nation as “The Trails State.”

A year-round destination for outdoor recreation and transportation, the Nakwema Trailway will be accessible by individuals of all ages and abilities for work and play. The trail will connect over 25 protected natural areas, granting unmatched access to the region’s iconic shoreline. The Trailway will offer a safe, non-motorized option to move through communities and explore the beauty of northwest Lower Michigan. Community benefits and trail user experience will drive the design of the trail. Trail development will ensure the goals of elevating our region's rich cultural and natural resources, and providing important access in harmony with the natural environment. We invite you to explore the beautiful land, water, woods, and people connected throughout this corridor. Find your way on the Nakwema Trailway.

THE TRAILWAY

NAKWEMA TRAILWAY

BUDGET | $65.5 MILLION

DISTANCE | 45+ MILES

NORWOOD - CHARLEVOIX

DESIGN | 2023

CONSTRUCTION | 2025

BUDGET | $27 MILLION

ELK RAPIDS - NORWOOD

DESIGN | 2026

CONSTRUCTION | 2030

BUDGET | $18 MILLION

ACME - ELK RAPIDS

DESIGN | 2023

CONSTRUCTION | 2025

BUDGET | $19 MILLION

ACME CONNECTOR

DESIGN | 2020

CONSTRUCTION | 2021

BUDGET | $1.5 MILLION

Project timeline and budget approximations are based on design estimates as of August 2020

YOUR IMPACT

Collaboration is at the heart of this mission to construct and maintain over 45 miles of trail passing through eight townships and three counties. Local and state governments, community leaders, and engaged citizens are critical to the success of this project. Together we are working on a comprehensive strategy for funding, trail development, and maintenance.

The Nakwema Trailway will be built utilizing state and federal grants, contributions from local units of government, and private funding. We are uniting to reach our estimated $65.5M fundraising goal, with a projected 60/40 split between public and private sources. A long-term maintenance fund is included in our fundraising goal to ensure a premier trail experience for generations.

Investing in trails is investing in people. We’ve seen firsthand how trails can transform a community, serving as an economic development tool and becoming a source of identity and pride. Trails directly benefit those who use them by improving mental and physical health, and enhancing overall quality life. Even those who do not use the trails gain through the immense economic, environmental, and public health benefits that trails generate. We look forward to celebrating this landmark trail with you.

COMMUNITIES JOINING TOGETHER

The Nakwema Trailway will create connections between communities and deliver one-of-a-kind experiences, two outcomes 4Front Credit Union holds dear.

We cherish every opportunity to make a difference in a member's life and appreciate the financial paths they've traveled previously. Biking and banking are two very different activities, but they share the common goals of close connections and unique experiences. It was an easy decision for 4Front to participate in the Nakwema Trailway project, an effort that will further connect our region and offer one of the country's most unique and vibrant trail experiences.

Keith Carey | SVP, Marketing
4Front Credit Union

Non-motorized recreation and transportation infrastructure is invaluable to our region and the Nakwema Trailway is going to be a game changer for Antrim County! Providing residents and visitors non-motorized access between Traverse City and Charlevoix is a true investment in our community health and safety, and will provide a boost to our local economy year-round. There's so much to explore along this corridor, including roadside parks, farmers markets, fruit and vegetable stands, parks and beaches - making connections that one may never experience by car. I can't wait to hop on this trail with my family and explore more of what our region has to offer.

Joe Short | Founder
Short's Brewing Company

The economic benefits of a trail system go far beyond simply bringing visitors to our area. Having a place to live with quality recreational opportunities and amenities is a critical component for companies attracting and retaining great employees. It's a pretty simple formula: Great employees make great companies; great companies make great communities. The Nakwema Trailway is a terrific addition to our area that will help employers create and retain jobs.

Andy Hayes | President
Northern Lakes Economic Alliance

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act designed to remove barriers so that people with disabilities can live, work, and play like everyone else. Thanks to the dedication to safety and accessibility we see from organizations like TART Trails, our communities grow stronger and healthier for everyone. Disability Network is excited about the progress being made on the Nakwema Trailway. This trail will not only connect cities and villages, but will also connect to accessible parks along the way.

Jim Moore | Executive Director
Disability Network Northern Michigan

At Torch Lake Cafe, we know firsthand how beautiful it is in this part of Michigan. We feel lucky to be able to offer a welcoming place for Nawkema Trailway users to stop, relax, and grab a delicious meal on our porch or in our restaurant.

Jim Hettinger | Owner
Torch Lake Cafe

BRING THIS VISION TO LIFE

We need your help to get this trail on the ground. Join us on our journey to create a Trailway that honors the beautiful land, water, and people connected throughout this corridor. Learn more about this ambitious project, stay up to date on the latest developments, and make a financial contribution at nakwematrailway.org.

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Providing and promoting a trail network that enriches people and communities throughout the greater Traverse region.

traversetrails.org

Advocating for and facilitating the development and maintenance of a safe, multi-use, year-round recreational trail system in Northern Michigan; and promoting the maintenance and use of these trails for the benefit of all.

trailscouncil.org

NAKWEMATRAILWAY.ORG