

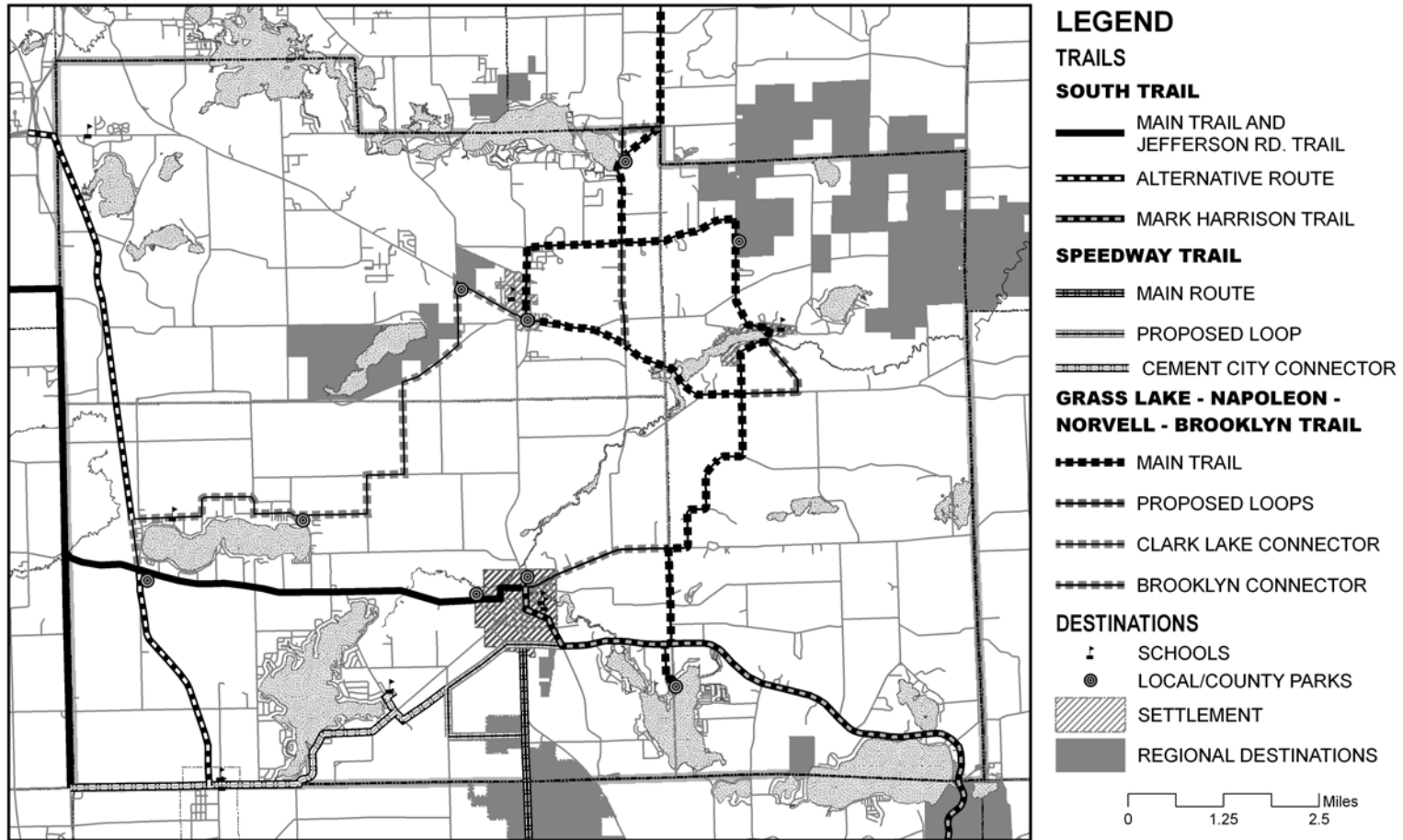
**Chapter 6**

**Action Program**

Heart of the Lakes Area Recreation Plan

## Action Program

1. Design and construct the following trails (please see the following map):
  - a. the **Speedway Trail** —
    - 1) **primary pathway** — the main trail
    - 2) **secondary pathway** — the proposed loop
    - 3) **tertiary pathway** — the Cement City connector
  - b. the **South Trail** —
    - 1) **primary pathway** — the Mark Harrison Trail (M-124)
    - 2) **secondary pathway** — the Jefferson Road trail
    - 3) **tertiary pathway** — the main trail along US-127 or the alternative route along the abandoned railroad
  - c. the **Grass Lake-Napoleon-Norvell Trail** —
    - 1) **primary pathway** — the main trail
    - 2) **secondary pathway** — the proposed loops
    - 3) **tertiary pathway** — the Clark Lake connector
    - 4) **tertiary pathway** — the Brooklyn connector
2. Upgrade and connect existing sidewalk systems (and other non-motorized facilities) located within developed areas and parks to the proposed trail system:
  - a. the Village of Brooklyn — a 3-tier approach (please see the following map)
  - b. Napoleon (please see the following map)
  - c. the Clark Lake Spirit Trail
  - d. other unidentified opportunities



**LEGEND**

**TRAILS**

**SOUTH TRAIL**

- MAIN TRAIL AND JEFFERSON RD. TRAIL
- - - ALTERNATIVE ROUTE
- - - MARK HARRISON TRAIL

**SPEEDWAY TRAIL**

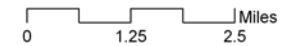
- == MAIN ROUTE
- - - PROPOSED LOOP
- - - CEMENT CITY CONNECTOR

**GRASS LAKE - NAPOLEON - NORVELL - BROOKLYN TRAIL**

- - - MAIN TRAIL
- - - PROPOSED LOOPS
- - - CLARK LAKE CONNECTOR
- - - BROOKLYN CONNECTOR

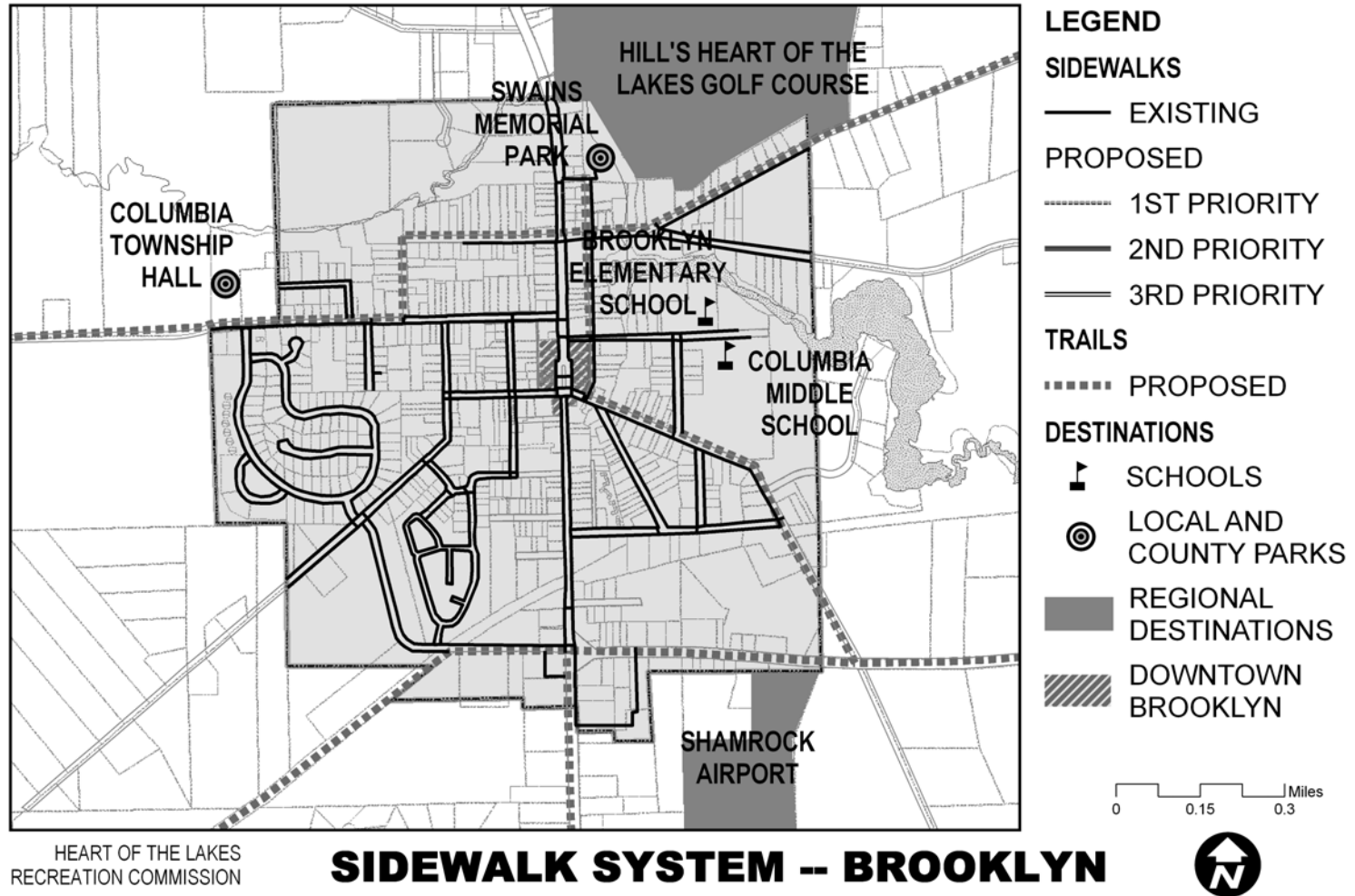
**DESTINATIONS**

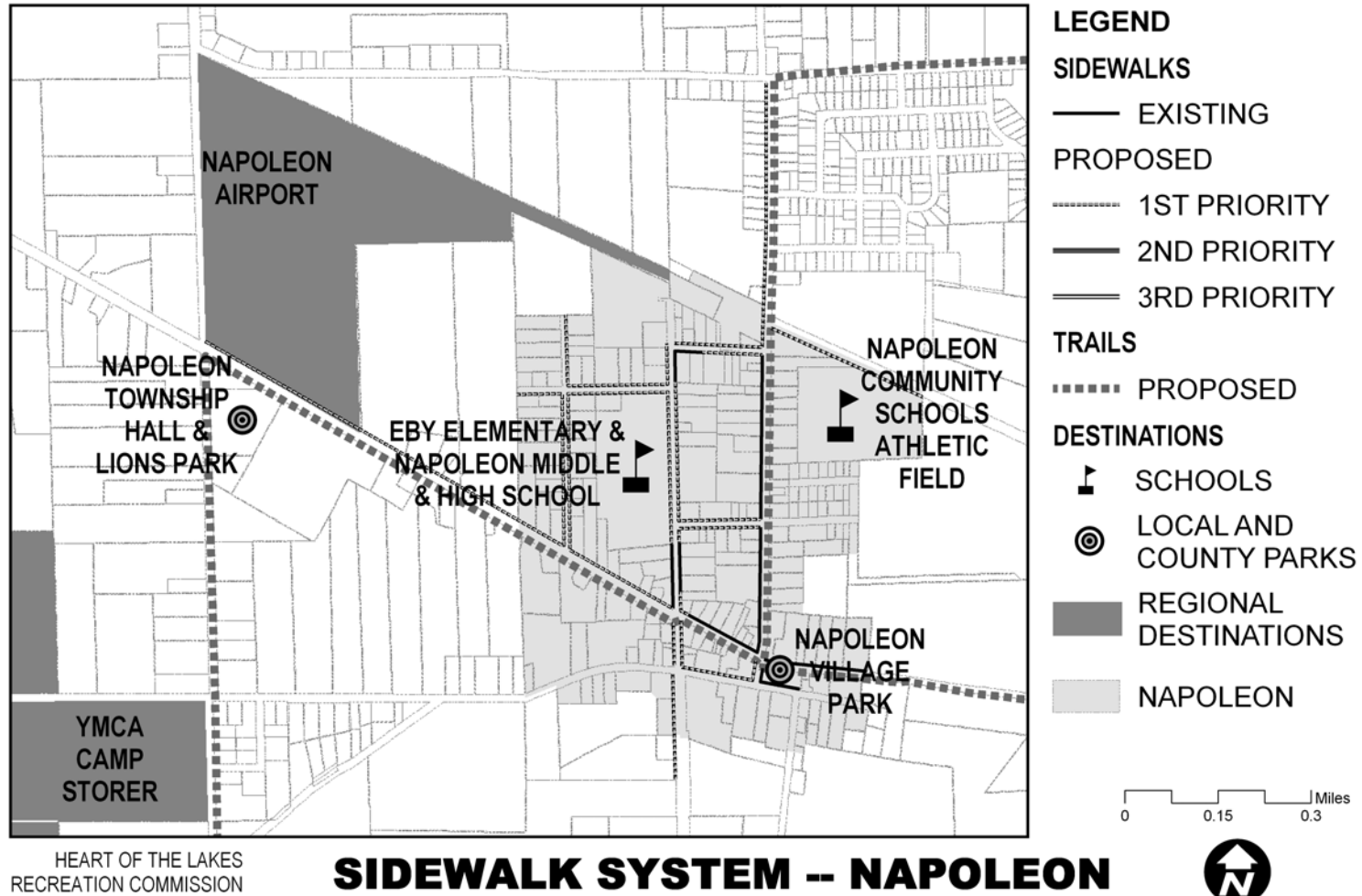
- ▣ SCHOOLS
- LOCAL/COUNTY PARKS
- ▨ SETTLEMENT
- REGIONAL DESTINATIONS

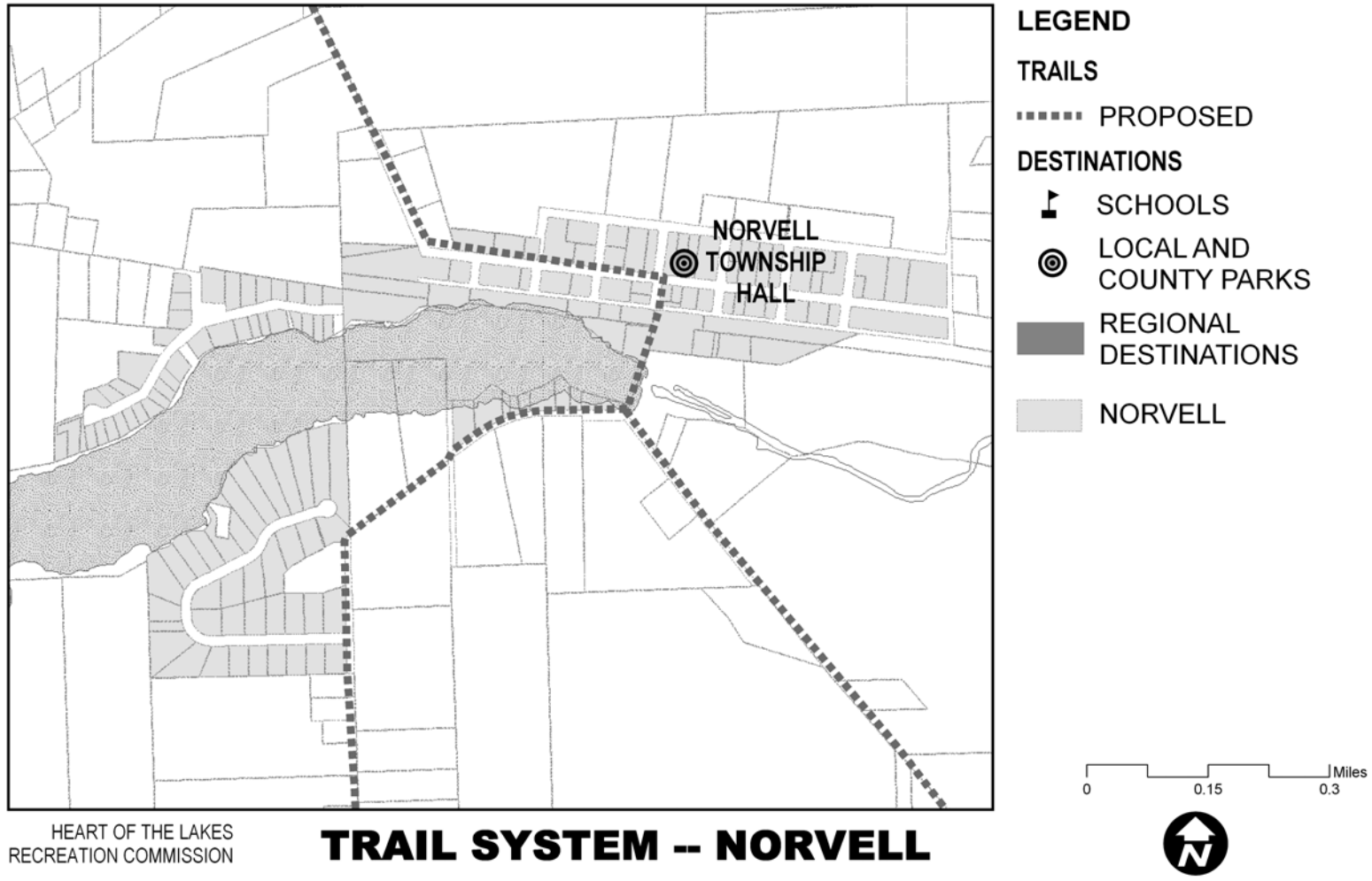


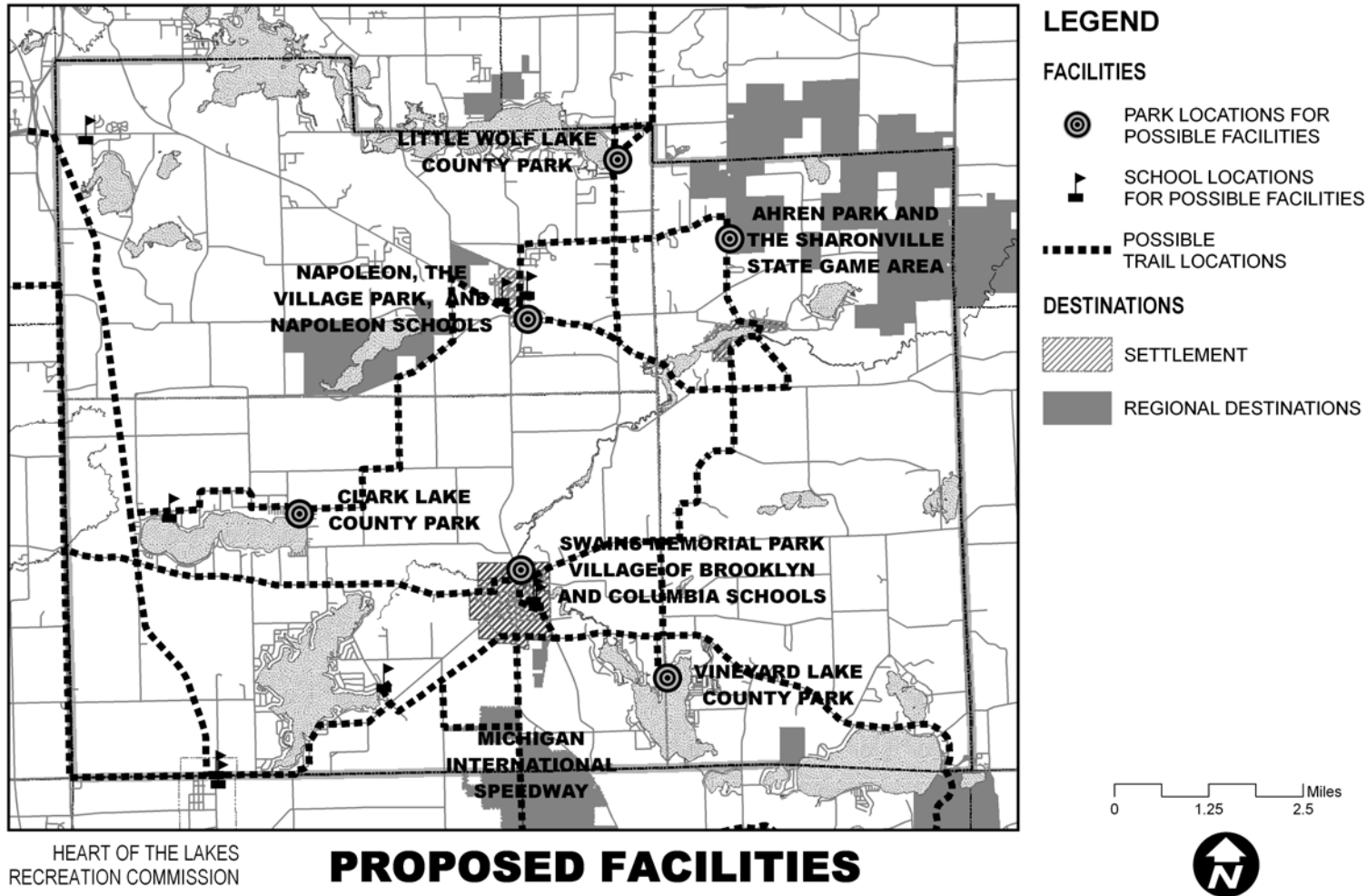
HEART OF THE LAKES  
RECREATION COMMISSION

**PROPOSED TRAIL SYSTEM**









3. Add various improvements to Area parks as opportunities arise including, but not limited to:
  - a. a community center in or around the Village of Brooklyn,
  - b. designing and constructing a skateboard park in Brooklyn's Swains Memorial Park,
  - c. designing and constructing aquatic recreational facilities for all seasons,
  - d. improving local access to the east side of Little Wolf Lake County Park, and
  - e. sports facilities (i.e., basketball/softball, tennis, volleyball, soccer, field hockey, and football) in various parks.
  - f. improvements to the Napoleon Village Park such as removal of the pirate ship (to the Napoleon Community School's athletic field) and the installation of playground equipment, street lights, and spotlights on the pavilion.

### **Background Information for the Action Program**

The following sources impacted the development of the Action Plan for the 2005-2010 Recreation Plan for the Heart of the Lakes Area:

- ✘ Several pathway and sidewalk systems are proposed for the Heart of the Lakes Area. Once completed, they will develop a local non-motorized trail network which meets the objectives of the Recreation Plan's trail goal:
  - ✘ Develop a local network which fits into the proposed countywide system and connects to other local networks:
 

***The South Trail (proposed in the Jackson County Regional Trailway Study 2002 and the 2005-2009 Recreation Plan: Jackson County, Michigan), including the *Mark Harrison Trail* (which currently consists of paved shoulders along M-124), provides the backbone of the local trail system; all other trails connect with the South Trail. An opportunity to link into trails proposed for the Grass Lake Area is also included.***
  - ✘ Improve, augment, and upgrade existing trails and other non-motorized facilities (i.e., sidewalks and bike lanes in urbanized areas) within the Heart of the Lakes Area where needed:
 

**An assessment of the Village of Brooklyn's sidewalk system was made as part of its recent comprehensive planning effort; that analysis was used to develop a prioritized program to construct new sidewalks where gaps exist in the existing system (please see the map). The improved sidewalk network will connect neighborhoods together within the Village and provides non-motorized access to other attractions in the municipality as well as**

to the proposed trail system; this approach provides a transportation benefit as well as a recreation facility). A similar effort is also underway in Napoleon (please see the map).

- × Connects parks, recreation facilities, and other attractions (e.g., schools, libraries, and other municipal buildings as well as commercial and residential areas) within the Heart of the Lakes Area together:

The following interconnected systems of multiuse paths comprise the proposed trail network:

- × **The Speedway Trail —**

- × The *primary pathway* connects the grounds of the Michigan International Speedway to the Village of Brooklyn, including its sidewalks. The pathway provides a needed transportation facility during race weekends and a valuable recreational resource the rest of the year.
- × A *secondary pathway*, proposed for the M-50 portion of Brooklyn Road, interconnects with the primary pathway and forms a loop which creates a circuit useful for strolling as well as more vigorous exercise.
- × A *tertiary pathway* provides a connection to Columbia Central High School, the Village of Cement City (including Miller Elementary School, and the *South Trail*, providing non-motorized access to those destinations as well as another opportunity for recreation and exercise.

- × **The South Trail —**

- × The *primary pathway* (at least from a local perspective) is the transformation of the paved shoulders along M-124 between the Village of Brooklyn and the Walter J. Hayes State Park (known as the *Mark Harrison Trail*) into a separate multipurpose pathway paralleling the highway connecting the 2 destinations and providing opportunities for recreation and exercise.
- × A *secondary pathway* (at least from a local perspective) provides a trail along Jefferson Road to the west, connecting the Village of Brooklyn and the Heart of the Lakes Area with the proposed countywide system of trails, thereby providing infinite opportunities for recreation and exercise.
- × A *tertiary pathway* (at least from a local perspective) provides a trail along US-127, taking advantage of its underutilized right-of-way and bridges. This pathway is an important component of the proposed countywide system of trails, thereby providing infinite opportunities for recreation and exercise.

× **the Grass Lake-Napoleon-Norvell Trail —**

- × The *primary pathway* connects Napoleon and Norvell (in a loop) with Vineyard Lake County Park and Brooklyn to the south as well as Little Wolf Lake County Parks to the north; it also provides an opportunity for connecting with trails proposed in the Grass Lake Area. The pathway provides an important non-motorized connection between settlements, access to a variety of recreational facilities, and opportunities for exercise.
- × A *secondary pathway* creates a couple of additional trail loops in the vicinities of Napoleon and Norvell, thereby providing circuits useful for strolling and more intensive exercise.
- × A *tertiary pathway* provides a connection to Brooklyn and an additional trail loop, thereby increasing non-motorized access to the Village as well as providing circuits useful for strolling and more intensive exercise.
- × Another *tertiary pathway* creates a connection to Clark Lake County Park and the South Trail, providing a longer circuit useful for more intensive exercise.

- × Provides opportunities for a healthier lifestyle through exercise.

The trail systems are designed to provide opportunities for meaningful exercise via the trail loops, or circuits, located next to settlements and the integration of local sidewalk systems into the non-motorized trail network.

- × The Recreation Plan also promotes locating new recreational facilities on existing parkland within the Heart of the Lakes Area, regardless of the ownership of the land wherever and whenever that makes sense.

Possible scenarios include, but are not limited to the following:<sup>1</sup>

× **Columbia and Napoleon Schools —**

Columbia Schools host the *Columbia Community Fitness Center* and Napoleon Schools host the Napoleon High School weight room, facilities open to the general public. A project proposed in this plan calls for moving the 'pirate ship' from the *Napoleon Village Park* to the Napoleon Community School's athletic field. It is assumed that many Area children utilize playground equipment within the schoolyards provided by both

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that the cooperative ventures summarized in this section of the Plan, with the exception of current agreements/facilities, are presented as examples. No agreements are in place guaranteeing the projects will be constructed.

school districts during the summer and other non-school hours of operation. The installation of other recreational equipment in schoolyards also makes sense, especially where non-motorized facilities skirt them.

× **Jackson County Parks —**

Clark Lake, Little Wolf Lake, and Vineyard Lake County Parks are all located within the Heart of the Lakes Area. There may be opportunities to site local recreation facilities within those parks. If an agreement could be worked out between the Heart of the Lakes and Jackson County Recreation Commissions, new facilities will be available to both Area residents and county park visitors.

× **State of Michigan Parks and Game Areas —**

The Sharonville State Game Area extends into the Heart of the Lakes Area. State Game Area lands are acquired through the fees generated from selling hunting licenses; those lands must be utilized for hunting. However, this may not preclude the usage of land for other purposes.<sup>2</sup> For example, Ahrens Park, a 4-acre facility in Norvell Township, is surrounded on 3 sides by the Sharonville State Game Area. It may be possible to expand the effective 'border' of the park by utilizing state game area land. Norvell Township and the State of Michigan have already partnered on a shooting range.

× **Private Recreation Providers**

There also remains the possibility of utilizing private land for local recreation purposes. At the time of Plan adoption, a single private recreation provider has been identified as a potential partner:

× **Michigan International Speedway (MIS) —**

MIS currently hosts the Michigan High School Athletic Association's annual Lower Peninsula Finals for Boy's and Girl's Cross Country each autumn. The proposed *Speedway Trail* may be built, at least in part, on the grounds of MIS. There is also the possibility of locating ice skating and hockey facilities on the grounds.<sup>2</sup>

- × Develop additional facilities in the Heart of the Lakes Area to increase opportunities for meaningful recreational experiences and overall healthier lifestyles through exercise:

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<sup>2</sup> This possibility must be investigated before any proposals are developed.

The Recreation Plan identifies a number of recreation facilities (as well as potential locations) for the Heart of the Lakes Area based upon recreation surveys, existing facilities, and known opportunities.

× **Community Center in Brooklyn —**

The old Ford mill in the Village of Brooklyn, which is currently up for sale, could be utilized as a community center. The need for recreational opportunities for Area youth, especially during the summer, was identified by a resident responding to the survey prepared for this Plan; this assertion is supported by the 2000 Census which shows that 19% of the Area's population was between the ages of 10 and 24 that year (please see Appendix A). Acquiring the Ford mill property would also provide access to the mill pond, which would help to fulfill the need for aquatic facilities for all seasons (please see 'aquatic facilities,' listed below).

× **Skateboard Park in Swains Memorial Park —**

The desire for a skateboard park was identified during the development of the Village of Brooklyn's comprehensive plan (please see 'Chapter 3'). The Heart of the Lakes Recreation Commission also received a proposal for a skateboard park in Brooklyn's Swains Memorial Park. Finally, such a facility is aimed at serving the youth of the Area (please see 'Community Center in Brooklyn,' listed above).

× **Aquatic Facilities —**

The desire for all-season aquatic facilities was identified by respondents to the surveys conducted in Brooklyn as well as the Area (please see 'Chapter 3'). It is important to develop those facilities away from lakes surrounded by residential property, either in a single park or distributed among various Area parks. MIS has been identified as a possible location for an ice skating facility (see 'Michigan International Speedway (MIS),' listed above) and the mill pond adjacent to the old Ford mill could provide access for activities such as fishing and paddle-boating (please see 'Community Center in Brooklyn,' above).

× **Little Wolf Lake County Park —**

The portion of Little Wolf Lake County Park on the east side of Wolf Lake Road was identified as a possible location for recreational facilities to serve Area residents (please see 'Jackson County Parks,' listed above). Some of those facilities could be aquatic in nature (please see "Aquatic Facilities," listed above). Sporting facilities could also be provided in this park (please see 'Sporting Facilities,' listed below).

× **Sporting Facilities** —

The need for facilities such as basketball, tennis, and volleyball courts and softball, soccer, field hockey, and football fields was identified in the Area's recreation survey (please see Chapter 3). Many of these facilities can be located in parks provided by other agencies, such as:

- × Little Wolf Lake and other Jackson County Parks (listed above);
- × the Sharonville State Game Area (listed above); and
- × existing municipal parks and schoolyards.

However; all facilities will be considered if the opportunity arises, the need for them can be documented, and their location can be determined.

× **Napoleon Village Park** —

The installation of playground equipment within the Napoleon Village Park provides an active recreation opportunity for children living in the settlement as well as other young nearby residents and trail users.