

Vasa Pathway Bartlett Trailhead 30% Concept Public Input Survey Summary

On October 8th, 2024, Grand Traverse County, TART Trails, and Prein & Newhof hosted a public input meeting to review the 30% completed Vasa Pathway Bartlett Trailhead concept. Public surveys were distributed to the 20 in-person attendees.

Following the meeting, TART Trails created and shared an online version of the survey to garner as much public input as possible. The survey was accessible from October 11th to November 1st, 2024. The survey summary is as follows:

- 66 individuals completed the survey

- Individuals use the trailhead predominantly for cross-country skiing, biking, and walking.

- When asked how we can improve accessibility at the trailhead, the most common responses were addressing the parking lot and driveway, improving signage, creating connections to the TART Trails and the Vasa Pathway, providing greater amenities (e.g., a fire pit and benches), and increasing access for all abilities.

- Participants currently find amenities such as the restrooms, changing rooms, water access, picnic tables and benches, existing signage, the first aid kit, and the bike repair stand helpful during summer use. A fire pit, a bike wash station, and a vending machine would all be helpful in the future.

- Participants currently find the following amenities helpful in the winter season: the warming hut for restrooms, changing rooms, water access, signage, and picnic tables. Access to a ski rack, wax bench, temporary personal item storage, and an overhead pavilion would all be helpful in the future.

- 80% of the participants typically drive to the trailhead, while 14% bike and only 3% walk to access the trailhead.

- For parents with children who recreate at the trailhead, participants shared that a playground, fire pit, and greater parking lot safety would increase the quality of this public space.

- To facilitate better community gathering and social connections, participants endorsed a pavilion, fire pit, picnic tables, seating, a grill, and more events.

-Looking at the 30% conceptual design, participants appreciated the following elements: the driveway and parking improvements, connector trails, the gathering areas, and the blend with the natural character

-Looking at the 30% conceptual design, participants did not like the increase in asphalt, the lack of connection to the snowshoe trail, and the small parking space sizes. Some shared their concerns about too much change at the trailhead. Others mentioned the lack of building improvements.

-The final question allowed folks to share any other priorities for the trailhead. These comments included: making the trailhead more inviting, not changing the character of the trailhead, creating safe bike connections to Traverse City, improving the maintenance of the trailhead and trail, and providing a bike wash station.

Vasa Pathway Bartlett Trailhead 60% Concept Public Meeting Summary

On December 2nd, 2024, Grand Traverse County, TART Trails, and Prein & Newhof hosted a second public meeting to review the changes and updates made to create the 60% conceptual design. 15 people attended and shared their input.

-Prein & Newhof shared results from the previous surveys, including approval of the fire pit, increased accessibility with additional pavement, and the sitting areas.

-The surveys showed participants did not approve of the natural material play areas and the fire pit's proximity to the large maple right outside the warming hut.

-The 60% design shifts the fire pit to in front of the warming hut with ledge stones to protect the fire pit and trail users, improves signage for folks who have never been to the trailhead before, creates designated points of entry for different modes, and increases the number of parking spaces.

-During the discussion period, the attendees shared important points about widening the parking spaces to accommodate retrieving skiing, biking, and hiking gear. The spaces are currently the standard 9 feet wide, fitting 62 spaces at the trailhead. Prein & Newhof will explore larger spaces (either 10 or 11 feet wide). The snowy conditions reminded all of the attendees about the slipping and sliding that occurs in this trailhead parking lot. More room would be appreciated.