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By:

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Above: East Lansing's Northern Tier Trail at sunrise (in warmer times).

East Lansing's Parks, Recreation & Arts Department is looking for citizen feedback as personnel work on a new *Five-Year Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Greenways Plan* set to be adopted in 2020.

The new plan will help guide the direction of East Lansing Parks & Rec in the coming years. Parks & Rec Director Tim McCaffery is urging residents to provide their input through an online survey or at one of two public meetings.

In order to qualify for grants from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Trust Fund, communities must have a current five-year plan on file. The MDNR Trust Fund is a \$500 million endowment funded by revenue from state-owned mineral resources, and it pays out over

\$20 million in grants of up to \$300,000 each to Michigan communities every year for improvements to local recreational facilities.

According to East Lansing's Parks & Rec website, "a significant portion of the City's existing park system exists today because of grant funding support from the MDNR."

East Lansing's most recent MDNR funded project is the upcoming improvements planned for the park adjacent to the newly renovated Bailey Center. That will include a walking path, nature gardens and a picnic pavilion.

Residents who would like to provide input on the five-year plan can attend meetings at the Hannah Community Center on February 6 and March 6 at 6:30 p.m. (You can view the current five-year plan here [2].)

"Input from residents at the two community meetings is very important to us," McCaffery told ELI via email. "The meeting format provides opportunities for us to gather information from our residents regarding our trail system, our parks and outdoor recreation areas, community events and festivals, recreation activities, programs and services, and the Community Center."

There is also a survey available online until February 11. The City says the survey should take about ten minutes to complete. Click here to take it. [3]

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