



# MICHIGAN SENATE

## Appropriations Requests for Legislatively Directed Spending Items

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Date Submitted: 04/10/2026

**1. Sponsoring legislator's full name:**

Senator Sue Shink

**2. Cosponsoring legislators' names (if applicable):**

N/A

**3. Intended legislatively directed spending item recipient:**

Huron Waterloo Pathways Initiative (HWPI)

**4. Physical address of legislatively directed spending item recipient and the intended location of the project or activity:**

339 E. Liberty, Suite 320, Ann Arbor, MI 48104, Washtenaw County, specifically focused on the most expensive segments between Dexter and Ann Arbor along the Huron River and completing the connection between Dexter and Chelsea.

**5. The recipient's employer identification number:**

821605735

**6. Requested amount of the legislatively directed spending item:**

\$3,500,000.00

**7. What is the purpose and how does the legislatively directed spending item provide a public benefit that is an appropriate use of taxpayer money?**

To further develop the Border-to-Border Trail (B2B Trail), a paved, ADA accessible non-motorized pathway throughout Washtenaw County and connecting into surrounding counties in all directions. This trail was originally a concept started by Washtenaw County in the late 1990s without a clear plan or expectation of completing a full trail network. Over the past 8 years, HWPI's public-private partnership with the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission (WCPAR) – who own and maintain a majority of the trail – has turned that concept into a reality, having raised \$25 million in private dollars, advocated for multiple county millages to support trail development, and built over 20 miles of new trail – including

6 bridges, 2 tunnels (one under a major roadway and one under a train line), multiple trail heads, a comprehensive wayfinding system, and 19 new segments of trail. Fewer than 6 miles now remain to complete the 45-mile, in-county trail, and work has begun on various out-county connections. Nearly 4 of the last 6 miles, however, will likely cost well over \$30M due to their location along the Huron River, proximity to a rail line, and the associated complicated engineering and construction needs. Along the nearly 4-mile corridor adjacent to the Huron River, HWPI anticipates building 4 bridges, thousands of feet of boardwalk, and a rail crossing. HWPI has yet to receive formal construction bid prices for any of these miles (although we anticipate part of them later this year) but is budgeting for \$8-15M per mile (some miles higher than others). While matched by significant private funding sources and local taxpayer dollars, the expensive nature of these final miles necessitates state funding in order to complete the remaining trail connections in the coming years. Despite all the other sources of funding, a lack of state money would significantly delay completion or make a fully connected trail impossible. HWPI's work is grounded in the idea that people of all ages, abilities, income levels, and interests have the right to safely access nature and enjoy the outdoors. HWPI believes that recreational trails support both physical and mental health, provide safe commuting options, benefit local economies, and reduce our carbon footprint. In furtherance of these principles, HWPI has worked to create a very successful public-private partnership with the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreational Commission to develop and complete the Washtenaw County-wide Border to Border Trail (B2B Trail) and connect the B2B Trail to surrounding trail networks in all directions. Through this partnership, HWPI augments local funding from the county and taxpayers by securing state and federal grants and significant private donor contributions to accelerate construction of the B2B Trail. The B2B Trail is a 45-mile non-motorized pathway that runs through cities, towns, metroparks, urban and rural areas, over 20 nature preserves, major universities and hospital systems, and more. It provides tremendous benefits to the public and the communities through which it runs. Not only does it allow for unique and exciting outdoor recreational activities, but it provides a host of benefits ranging from improved health and wellness for community members; an economic boost to the local cities and towns through which it runs; nature access for people who do not have easy access to the outdoors; and safe and efficient non-motorized transportation options for residents; among other benefits. A fully-connected 45-mile trail through Washtenaw County – connecting to trail systems in all surrounding counties – will be a truly unique community asset for all residents and visitors to this part of the state. This is made more relevant due to the B2B Trail's connection to the Iron Belle Trail, originally envisioned by former Governor Rick Snyder, which when complete, will extend over 2,000 miles from Ironwood to Belle Isle to complete the longest state trail in the United States. The B2B Trail lies on the Iron Belle's route and is proud to be a crucial connector of this trail, which will serve to further boost state tourism from outdoor recreation enthusiasts everywhere. Because of the incredible benefits non-motorized trails have for taxpayers and communities. The scale of the funding needed to develop and maintain large regional trails such as the B2B Trail necessitates both public and private funds. Prior to HWPI's formation and contribution to the trail, B2B Trail

development was funded solely by local millage dollars that allowed for less than 1 mile of trail to be built per-year. Since the inclusion of HWPI's private contributions to the trail, construction has increased to over 3 miles per year, showing the power of private funds in public projects. Since 2000, the B2B trail has received a total of \$56 million between federal, state, and local dollars. Since 2025, it has received \$4 million from the State. State funds are now needed in addition to private and local funds in order to complete the project (and many connecting trail projects) in a timely manner. Despite fewer than 6 miles remaining to complete the main county-wide trail, the cost of engineering and construction for those final miles will likely total over \$30M, meaning that a combination of both significant public and private funds are needed. Once built, a combination of taxpayer funds and private dollars can also help to maintain the trail throughout the many communities it runs through, ensuring safe and accessible trail access for decades to come.

**8. Has the legislatively directed spending item previously received or been awarded any of the following types of funding in the past 5 years? If so, how much? Check all that apply:**

Federal, State, Local

**Amount**

\$4,000,000.00

**9. Estimated time frame for completion of the legislatively directed spending item project:**

Start: Summer/fall 2027 End: Summer/fall 2029

**10. Is the recipient a nonprofit corporation?**

Yes

*Additional Information for Nonprofit Corporations (if applicable)*

*The answer to questions 1 to 3 must be "Yes" for the nonprofit corporation to qualify for a legislatively directed spending item.*

**1. Has the nonprofit corporation continuously operated in this state for the preceding 36 months?**

Yes

**2. Has the nonprofit corporation had a physical office in this state for not less than the preceding 12 consecutive months?**

Yes

**3. Does the organization have a board of directors?**

Yes

**4. List all of the officers and active members on the board of directors:**

Board Officers: Christine Stead, Board Chair; Erik Stalhandske, Vice Chair; Larry O'Connell, Treasurer; Allan Newman, Secretary Board of Directors: Charles Borgsdorf, Larry Deck, Paul Dimond, Lew Kidder, Susan Lufkin, Kirk Profit, Peter Sanderson, Meghan Bonfiglio, Matt Wixson, Lisa Wozniak

*Certification By Sponsoring Legislator*

*"I certify that my immediate family members, legislative staff members, and I have no direct or indirect pecuniary interest in the requested legislatively directed spending item."*

*"I certify that the intended recipient of this legislatively directed spending item is not a for-profit entity."*

*"I certify that the information in this form is true to the best of my knowledge."  
Senator Sue Shink*