The Treeline
Allen Creek Urban Trail

The Treeline Conservancy

2021 Annual Report
Dear friend of the Treeline,

As I write, “normal life” has not resumed. Nevertheless, because of you, we had a successful year in all the ways that matter. You’ll read about those in these pages.

Significant events for the Treeline in 2021 affirmed two big reasons why we’re working on this project: It’s terrifically important to connect with people. And it’s especially wonderful to be together outdoors.

For the first time in a long time, Treeline board members, staff, and volunteers were able to see many of you face to face.

The Mayor’s Green Fair brought a stream of environmentally committed neighbors to our information table. We met biking enthusiasts, avid runners, octogenarian walkers, and families in the stroller stage. Every question about the Treeline recharged our enthusiasm.

Two Family Days generated conversations with folks who were curious about our Test Trail across 415 W. Washington. Some had been using that experimental stretch of the Treeline regularly and appreciating the improvements. (We appreciated meeting their great dogs!)

We got to mark out and clean up the Test Trail site with a talented corps of volunteers, describe the genesis and future of the Allen Creek Berm tunnel to a group of planners, verify our map of the Treeline’s connections to the expanding bikeway network, orient ourselves and others to the challenges of traffic, topography, floodplains, and brownfields that the Treeline will overcome and even redeem.

As always, our progress is thanks to you. We had help from skilled, generous collaborators and contributions of indispensable in-kind services. We received not only some extraordinary financial gifts in 2021, but also the new and continued support of so many people who believe that the Treeline will improve their lives and the lives of those they care about.

We are deeply thankful for all these investments in the vision for a safer, cleaner, healthier Ann Arbor for all of us—whether we ride our bikes, push our strollers, run at 7 miles an hour, walk a half a mile an hour, or take a break in the shade of a tree—especially together.

Gratefully,

Nan Plummer
Executive Director
The Treeline Conservancy exists to foster the creation and sustainable maintenance of an urban trail that becomes an integral connector of people and places in Ann Arbor. The trail will:

- Bring access to Ann Arbor’s river and park system through the heart of downtown along the alignment of historic Allen Creek.
- Provide safe passage and recreation from the Border-to-Border Trail at Argo Dam to the UM Stadium area.
- Invite community gathering and engagement with natural and cultural features.
- Benefit current and future generations by providing positive economic impact, improved aesthetics, enriched community engagement, and improved stormwater quality.

The Alignment Study for the northernmost end of the Treeline was completed in 2021. The Treeline Conservancy and the City of Ann Arbor partnered with SmithGroup to examine how to move trail users safely from the Border-to-Border Trail at Argo Dam to 721 N. Main Street, on the west side of this busy thoroughfare. The study was funded by the City and the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission.

The study was guided by principles established in the Treeline Master Plan: a transformative, unique user experience; continuity; accessibility and safety; connectivity to assets; sustainability; and feasibility and adaptability. Assessment criteria included user comfort, points of access, engineering complexity, property access, trail views and aesthetics, and cost and time frame.

Two routes emerged as equally feasible and challenging. Option A would include a spiral ramp structure over Argo Pond and a signature bridge over N. Main and the MDOT/Amtrak railroad. Option C would utilize the pedestrian tunnel under the railroad created in 2020, ramp up to a bridge parallel to N. Main Street, and then cross the road just south of Summit Street.

Following the study’s recommendations for further investigation, the Treeline and the City of Ann Arbor are conducting environmental and property title investigations for key properties and continuing to engage with relevant stakeholders regarding property access for both routes. The Treeline Board prefers Option C based on its merits, with the understanding that the continuing analysis may reveal another route to be optimal.
Programs

Test Trail at 415 W. Washington

Over the summer, we created an experimental segment of the Treeline at 415 W. Washington Street, giving neighbors a safer, enhanced connector to enjoy between Liberty and Washington near the YMCA. Currently a parking lot managed by our partners at the DDA, this parcel will be part of the eventual Treeline route. What we are learning here will be valuable for other segments of the trail that will pass through similar brownfield landscapes. Treeline board member and urban planner Greg Holcombe led the team that delineated a 15’ wide trail and began the management of invasive Ailanthus altissima and other non-native plant species. Staff member Francesca Cassara applied her skills as a landscape architect and Master Gardener to create informational signage and keep the trail in trim through the summer and fall. Our terrific volunteer corps (see page 10) provided construction know-how, research, writing, and teaching skills, and muscle to make the Test Trail a successful and useful experiment. We’ll continue work in 2022 to improve the soil and introduce beneficial native plants.

Chimney Swifts

What do you call a fast-flying bird that hangs out in old smokestacks? A chimney swift, of course! Chimney swifts spend most of their lives flying. They travel, or migrate, between the US and South America, eating insects out of the air. They don’t perch like most birds but cling to rough, vertical surfaces. Before there were chimneys, these swifts used hollow trees to roost and raise their babies. But now both chimneys and hollow trees are getting harder to find. The loss of places to live, or habitat, means there are many fewer chimney swifts than 50 years ago. Climate change and pesticides are also reducing the numbers of these birds.

Here at 415 W. Washington in the summer and fall, you can see tornado-like flocks of swifts swoop into the chimney at dusk. The Treeline plan for this site preserves the chimney for swift habitat.

Family Days on the Test Trail

Two sunny mornings in October gave us the opportunity to share cider, Washtenaw Dairy donuts, nature activities, and conversation with people interested in the Treeline. (And dog biscuits with interested dogs.) We learned that many of them walked or biked through the lot at 415 W. Washington regularly and appreciated the improvements. We also got to answer questions about the Treeline—its origins, eventual route, and benefits. Looking forward to more Family Days in 2022!

Autumnal Green Fair

After a pandemic hiatus, the Mayor’s Green Fair returned to Ann Arbor as an autumn event for the first time. Nan, Francesca, and several members of the Treeline board greeted hundreds of environmentally conscious folks curious about how the Treeline will benefit water quality, carbon neutrality, and climate change preparedness efforts. We were so busy talking to visitors that no one had time to take a picture after the event opened! Thanks to all who came out.
The Treeline Conservancy

The Treeline is part of this network. This map shows how the Treeline connects to major existing and planned City/DDA routes.

This map is based on information from the Treeline Conservancy, the City of Ann Arbor Transportation Master Plan and Ann Arbor DDA People-Friendly Streets.

The City of Ann Arbor is the Treeline Conservancy’s primary partner in making the Treeline a reality. At the forefront of that effort is our liaison, Heather Seyfarth, Systems Planning Analyst and Community Engagement Specialist, and we are grateful for her patient help and expertise. Other City staffers who worked with us on the Treeline Build Team in 2021 include Derek Delacourt, Community Services Area Administrator and Raymond Hess, Transportation Manager. We also had help from Jerry Hancock, Stormwater and Floodplain Programs Coordinator, and Scott Spooner, Parks and Recreation Deputy Manager. Mayor Christopher Taylor and the City Council continue as strong advocates for the Treeline and nonmotorized transit in Ann Arbor. We thank them all heartily.

Even in his first few weeks in Ann Arbor, Interim City Administrator Milton Dohoney engaged with the Treeline, asked good questions, and kept our project on his agenda. We welcome him to the city and are grateful for his attention.

Special thanks are due to Public Services Administrator Craig Hupy, who has been a champion of the Treeline and a voice of wisdom for the Build Team. We will miss him sorely after his retirement in early 2022 and wish him a happy next phase.

The Downtown Development Authority is also a strong partner to the Treeline. Capital Projects Manager Amber Miller also serves on the Treeline Build Team, and Parking Services Manager Jada Hahlbrock was indispensable as we planned the Treeline Test Trail across 415 W. Washington. Thanks, too, to Ed Wheeler at Republic Parking, who oversees the day-to-day state of that lot.

We are also grateful to the Washtenaw Bicycling and Walking Coalition, Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development for their collaboration and support in 2021.
Many thanks to our volunteers!

With research and writing, live instruction, construction know-how, and general helpfulness, they made the Test Trail a reality and made our Family Days there fun and successful.

Top tier, clockwise: Jim Spencer, Chris Tabor, Emily Cizmas, Nia Spongberg
Bottom tier, left to right: Matt Gudenau, Matt Olech

Omari Rush is executive director of CultureSource in Detroit and served as the governor-appointed chairman of the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs through September 2021. In both these roles he advances efforts to have creative expression thrive in diverse communities. Complementing that work, Omari chairs the board of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies in Washington, D.C. and serves on the boards of Arts Midwest in Minneapolis, and the Lewis Prize for Music. Prior positions in Ann Arbor include education manager at the University Musical Society, vice-president for strategic initiatives at the Ann Arbor Arts Center, and member of the Next Generation of Philanthropists of the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation. A lapsed clarinetist, Omari now uses his voice to co-host a monthly arts-focused radio show on NPR affiliate WEMU-FM, and he plays on a Rivendell Clem-L bicycle, which he rides daily on streets and trails.

Jayne Miller is certified as a Park and Recreation Professional through the National Recreation and Park Association. She returned to Ann Arbor in 2020 after serving as Superintendent of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and most recently as President and CEO of the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy. She served the City of Ann Arbor for seven years as Community Services Area Administrator during John Hieftje’s administration. She also chaired the Ann Arbor Housing Commission. Jayne is a Fellow of the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, and her current volunteer board service in her field includes World Urban Parks, City Parks Alliance, and the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies. Jayne is also an enthusiastic bicyclist.

Brock Hastie is Managing Partner at Retirement Income Solutions. He is one of nine advisors providing financial planning and retirement analysis for over 1,200 clients representing $2 billion under management. Brock joined the firm in 2005 after 11 years in senior financial-management positions with other financial and investment companies, including Intel Corporation, where he led the mergers and acquisitions team for six years. In 2012, he became a Retirement Income Solutions managing partner. Brock served on the board at Habitat for Humanity for six years and is currently a member of the City of Ann Arbor Employees’ Retirement System board. He enjoys tennis, skiing, and coaching, and considers himself an avid biker.

Jayne Miller

Omari Rush

Brock Hastie
The Treeline Conservancy is grateful for two significant anonymous gifts in 2021 that are building our organizational capacity and enabling us to plan for engineering and construction.

An anonymous $2.5 million challenge grant pledged in the fall of 2020 was the largest commitment made to the Treeline in its history. Its intent is to encourage others to begin or increase their support. In 2021, the Treeline raised $299,655 eligible for the match. The dollar-for-dollar challenge match runs through December 31, 2023.

A second anonymous donor pledged $250,000 in unrestricted funding for 2021-2022.

### Foundation Grants 2021
- Buhr Foundation Family Fund (multi-year gift)
- Harry A. and Margaret D. Towsley Foundation (multi-year gift)
- James A. & Faith Knight Foundation

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**Traveler**  up to $999
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- Kennedy Care Management, Inc.
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- O’Neal Construction, Inc.
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- Print-Tech, Inc.
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Monica and Fritz Kaenzig
Sally P. Kennedy
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Donna Zajonc
Smilka Zdravkovska
2021 Financial Statements

(Condensed Presentation from Audited and Reviewed Financial Statements)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2021 (Audited)</th>
<th>2020 (Reviewed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Assets: cash, cash equivalents, current pledges receivable, prepaids</td>
<td>$ 678,342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land</td>
<td>$ 217,769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other assets: pledges receivable net of current portion</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Assets</td>
<td>$ 896,111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS** |                 |
| Current Liabilities: accounts payable, accrued payroll expenses | $ 17,829 | $ 8,942 |
| Net Assets: Without donor restrictions | $ 503,627 | $ 393,311 |
| With donor restrictions | $ 374,655 | $ 30,000 |
| Total net assets | $ 878,282 | $ 423,311 |
| Total Liabilities and Net Assets | $ 896,111 | $ 432,253 |

| **STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES** |                 |
| Operating Support: contributions and in-kind | $ 696,628 | $ 214,716 |
| Operating Expenses: program and supporting services | $ 241,704 | $ 156,837 |
| Total operating support in excess of operating expenses | $ 454,924 | $ 57,879 |
| Interest Income | $ 47 | $ 70 |
| Net Assets, Beginning of Year | $ 423,311 | $ 365,362 |
| Net Assets, End of Year | $ 878,282 | $ 423,311 |

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The Treeline
Allen Creek Urban Trail

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
THE CITY OF ANN ARBOR

LAYOUT DESIGN: FRANCESCA CASSARA