

WMMBA

WEST MICHIGAN MOUNTAIN BIKING ALLIANCE

BUILT BY THE PEOPLE WHO RIDE IT.

2027 – 2032 Strategic Plan



OUR MISSION & VISION

OUR MISSION

We build, maintain, and advocate for mountain bike trails across West Michigan, and the communities that use them.

OUR VISION

Imagine a West Michigan where...

- ▶ Every rider, first-timer or life-long enthusiast, has good trail within a short drive of home.
- ▶ Trails are well-built and well-kept, supported by a robust membership base.
- ▶ Land managers see us as their most reliable partner, not just another user group.
- ▶ Kids who learn to ride here grow into the volunteers and leaders who keep it going.



WMMBA is a 100% volunteer-run nonprofit. There is no staff behind the curtain, the trails you ride were funded, built, and maintained by the people who ride them too.

WHERE THE DOLLARS MEET THE DIRT

2025 and 2026. Two Time Trials. Every dollar raised and put into action by volunteers.

\$186K

Raised across
two years

\$163K

Put back into
trails & community

96¢

Of every dollar
went to the trails

100+

Trail miles
maintained

17

Trail systems
we support

TWO YEARS, SIDE BY SIDE

WHERE IT WENT	2025	2026	2-YR. TOTAL	SHARE
Trails & Projects	\$19,268	\$68,630	\$87,898	54%
Events & Fundraising	\$15,893	\$17,978	\$33,871	21%
Tools & Equipment	\$11,253	\$13,626	\$24,879	15%
Community & Outreach	\$6,706	\$2,822	\$9,528	6%
Operations & Admin	\$3,350	\$3,713	\$7,063	4%
Total spent	\$56,470	\$106,769	\$163,239	100%



EGR Students joined WMMBA Board Members and Trail Coordinators for a trail day at Manhattan Park, East Grand Rapids

OUR VALUES

ADVOCACY

We speak up for trail access and sustainable land use, so riding here keeps getting better instead of quietly going away.

CULTURE OF OWNERSHIP

Membership funds the trails, volunteering builds them, paying in and showing up are two halves of one commitment. That's ownership, full circle.

ACCESSIBLE OUTDOOR RECREATION

Trails for every skill level and every background. Nobody should feel like they need permission, or the right bike, to belong out here.

RELATIONSHIPS

Riders, volunteers, and the land managers who host our trails. Every mile we've built rests on somebody trusting us.



The full circle: the kids who move dirt on Saturday are the riders who show up all season — and the volunteers we'll be leaning on in ten years.

HONEST ABOUT THE MOMENT

WMMBA has spent 20+ years building something genuinely good; Merrell, The Dragon, Yankee Springs, Cannonsburg, Luton, and now Johnson Park. That success is also the problem. The network we've built now threatens to exceed the volunteer capacity and funding model that built it. Getting to the next level means being honest about that gap and closing it on purpose.



HOW WE'LL APPROACH EVERYTHING THAT FOLLOWS

Intentional growth • Volunteer sustainability • Relationship-driven impact

With every rider, volunteer, land manager, and partner we work with.

HOW THIS PLAN WAS BUILT

On January 14, 2026, we put trail coordinators, board members, youth program leaders, event organizers, and the League of Michigan Bicyclists in one room for a facilitated SWOTT session. Small groups, real disagreement, honest answers. These discussions, plus what our members told us in the latest survey, informed this plan.

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

The same people are doing the work

A small core group of volunteers and board members carries an outsized share. It works right up until someone burns out or moves — and then a whole trail system is suddenly nobody's job.

Our funding rests on two legs

Roughly \$70,000 a year maintains 100+ miles across 17 systems — nearly all of it from one event and membership dues. One rained-out weekend or flat renewal year hurts more than it should.

The sport keeps changing

Riders now expect professionally built progression — flow, jumps, skills areas. It's also more durable and cheaper per mile long-term. Meeting that demand takes capacity we don't have yet.

Trails need advocates, not just users

As more people discover the outdoors, land managers face more pressure and more competing asks. The organizations that show up prepared are the ones that keep their access.



Left: riders want progression. Right: the volunteer pipeline that makes it possible. Both need investment.

TRAILS ARE REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

When we ask a land manager for a partnership or a sponsor for a check, this is the case we're making. Trails are more than a hobby line item or an enthusiast user group, they're part of how Michigan's economy and public health actually work.

\$13.9B

Michigan's outdoor recreation economy in 2023 — up 8.1% in a single year.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

\$224M

Generated annually in Michigan by bicycling: retail, manufacturing, and event tourism.

Source: MDOT / BBC Research

\$256M

Estimated annual healthcare costs avoided through bicycle commuting alone.

Source: MDOT / BBC Research

Michigan's SCORP (2023–2027) tracks two things funders care about: what outdoor recreation is worth beyond what people spend on it, and the healthcare costs it prevents. West Michigan is broken out as its own region — which means we can make this case with local numbers.

FIVE PILLARS

Everything in the 1-, 3-, and 5-year plans that follow ladders up to one of these five.

1**SUSTAINABLE VOLUNTEER & LEADERSHIP CAPACITY**

Intentional succession — defined board rotations and bylaws that keep governance strong past any one person.

2**INCREASED & SUSTAINABLE FUNDING**

Revenue that doesn't live or die by one event and one renewal cycle.

3**STRONG LAND MANAGER & COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS**

Being the partner land managers call first, not the group they hear from when we want something.

4**HIGH-QUALITY, ACCESSIBLE & SUSTAINABLE TRAILS**

Trails that hold up, and that give every rider somewhere to progress to.

5**MEMBERSHIP GROWTH, ENGAGEMENT & ADVOCACY**

More riders who understand what membership actually pays for, and thus act on it.



MEMBERS & TRAIL OPERATIONS

MEMBERSHIP & OUTREACH

Make it obvious what membership pays for, and make joining easy at the moment someone's standing at a trail.

- Get on a real communications rhythm; newsletter, socials, events, direct member engagement.
- Standardize trailhead kiosks with membership, volunteer, and TrailForks QR codes
- Pilot live trail-user surveys at events, where people will actually answer

HOW WE'LL KNOW IT'S WORKING 430 → 530 members (stretch: 630) • Measurable lift in email, event, and social engagement

TRAILS & OPERATIONS

Raise the floor on maintenance quality everywhere, with safety and planning first.

- Focus on proactive trimming and preventive maintenance.
- Prioritize safety training for anyone running a work day
- Audit projects and maintenance needs monthly
- Publish trail days far enough ahead that people can plan around them
- Build a preventative-maintenance program for our equipment

HOW WE'LL KNOW IT'S WORKING Fewer trail days requiring a director on site • Steady or growing volunteer turnout

GROW ON PURPOSE

With capacity steadier, we grow deliberately, and deepen the partnerships that make growth possible.

VOLUNTEER & ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH

Turn a group of dedicated individuals into an organized system that outlasts any of us.

- Rotate board director roles so knowledge spreads instead of concentrating
- Grow the trail-adopter and chainsaw-certified volunteer pool
- Adopt real volunteer management tools for scheduling and hour tracking
- Grow functional-area leaders into future board members

HOW WE'LL KNOW IT'S WORKING Volunteer engagement up year over year • Less dependence on a handful of top contributors

FUNDING DIVERSIFICATION

Build revenue we can count on before the year starts.

- Secure multi-year corporate sponsorship agreements
- Build a grant-readiness package: trail counts, impact data, and stories worth funding
- Grow signature events into reliable revenue
- Identify the projects worth a major gift, and who might make it

HOW WE'LL KNOW IT'S WORKING Balanced mix across events, sponsors, grants & donors • Operating reserve at 6 months (down from 12)

PARTNERS & TRAIL EXPERIENCE

LAND MANAGER & PARTNER RELATIONSHIPS

Be the partner land managers trust with their property and their reputation.

- Assign board-level liaisons so every land manager has a name and a face, year round
- Deliver an annual impact report to each land manager showing what happened on their land
- Deepen partnerships with youth organizations already bringing kids outside

HOW WE'LL KNOW IT'S WORKING More fully-funded improvement approvals • More joint and co-branded projects

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT & EXPERIENCE

Close the progression gap so riders don't have to leave the region to level up.

- Develop dedicated skills areas and pump track(s)
- Build advanced features into future projects from the start
- Plan connectivity with greenway partners instead of around them
- Take an honest look at every existing system: what it costs, what it returns, whether it's sustainable

HOW WE'LL KNOW IT'S WORKING New progression options on the ground • Positive feedback across beginner through advanced riders

BE THE GROUP OTHERS LOOK TO

The long game: an organization that runs well enough to outlast whoever happens to be on the board.

ORGANIZATIONAL & FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

A leadership and funding model that survives transitions.

- Fully implement and test executive succession plans
- Keep succession plans current across the board and committees
- Explore funded staffing; part-time or contracted; when volunteer capacity genuinely runs out
- Build an operating reserve that covers every system we're responsible for
- Secure long-term sponsors capable of supporting paid capacity

HOW WE'LL KNOW IT'S WORKING Leadership transitions that nobody outside the board notices • Trail work funded before it's needed

TRAILS, ACCESS & COMMUNITY

Be the recognized voice for riding in West Michigan and a genuinely welcoming one.

- Show up as an active voice in local trail-access decisions
- Lead or support regional trail-connectivity initiatives
- Host visible, beginner-friendly events that don't require knowing somebody
- Grow youth, adaptive, and women-focused programming
- Partner across the wider outdoor-recreation community, not just the bike world

HOW WE'LL KNOW IT'S WORKING Expanded project opportunities • Participation growing across every rider group, not just the fast ones

HOW WE FUND THE WORK

Right now most of what we do is paid for by one event and membership dues. That's dependable at our current size, but it caps how much we can take on, and it concentrates risk in a single weekend each year.

TODAY — CONCENTRATED



WHERE THIS PLAN TAKES US — DIVERSIFIED



■ Signature event ■ Membership dues ■ Sponsors ■ Grants & major gifts

Illustrative target mix, exact percentages to be set by the board with the treasurer.

Membership is the other half of this picture: 430 today, 530 by year-end, 630 if we push. Every member helps support this mission.

OPEN QUESTIONS FOR THE BOARD

These came out of the January session and don't have answers yet. We're publishing them rather than pretending the plan is finished. These are the conversations ahead of us.

- 1 Should we broaden our mission statement to speak to year-round recreation, community health, and economic impact; the language foundations and major donors respond to?
- 2 What should our long-term funding model be: memberships, an annual rider drive, trail sponsorships, corporate partners, grants, major donors, or some blend?
- 3 Who owns fundraising? A board member, a committee chair, a volunteer leader, or eventually a paid role?
- 4 Should we build a formal trail or section sponsorship program, with levels, recognition, and naming rights?
- 5 When does a fully volunteer-run model stop being enough, and which function gets paid first?
- 6 Which trails should we retain, share, transition, or hand off, and what criteria decide that, rather than whoever speaks loudest?
- 7 What's the minimum maintenance standard for a system, and how do we know when we're not meeting it?

TOGETHER, WE BUILD MORE THAN TRAILS.

Healthier communities. Protected natural space. Places where anyone can ride, connect, and belong.

GET INVOLVED

Ride with us. Join. Give. Show up to a trail day. Tell a friend about your trail experience and tell a land manager we're worth having around.

WMMBA.ORG

A THANK YOU

To the trail coordinators who make the calls nobody sees, the volunteers who show up in the heat, rain, and snow, the land managers who keep saying yes, and every member past and present— thank you. This plan is a promise to you.

Shaped by the January 14, 2026 SWOTT session with the WMMBA board, trail coordinators, youth program leaders, event organizers, and the League of Michigan Bicyclists, and by our members' survey responses.

