



500 West Big Beaver  
Troy, MI 48084  
troymi.gov

## CITY COUNCIL REPORT

Date: October 15, 2020

To: Mark F. Miller, City Manager

From: Robert J. Bruner, Assistant City Manager  
Kurt Bovensiepe, Public Works Director  
Dennis Trantham, Facilities and Grounds Operations Manager

Subject: Phillip J. Huber Park Trail Report

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Phillip J. Huber Park is adjacent to the Troy Family Aquatic Center and includes 27 acres of natural area. The natural area was dense with Ash trees before the Emerald Ash Borer, which caused most all of the Ash trees to fall creating opportunity for lower growth vegetation to germinate. Through the wooded area is a 1.4-mile unimproved trail consisting of a wood chipped walking base. Improving the trail with asphalt was discussed through the redevelopment of the Civic Center property, however many residents and users of the trail voiced concern and preferred to keep the trail as natural as possible. Wood chips naturally decompose and create drainage issues as the material is all organic. This causes constant scheduled maintenance and has become both a reactive and proactive approach. The Grounds Division responds to concerns presented by users for fallen trees, encroaching vegetation, and areas that are not draining properly. The proactive approach includes refreshing the wood chips every 2-3 years, which is normally done in the winter months when other higher priority services are not needed. The Grounds Division uses a variety of equipment including tractors, work carts, and wheel barrows to accomplish this task. The frequency of maintenance used to be much higher when the Grounds Division had 14 full-time staff members and over 50 seasonal employees in the warmer months, which is compared to its current 6 full-time staff members and 14 seasonal employees.

The Grounds Division became aware of volunteers assisting with the maintenance of the trail through Huber Park when the wood chips placed in the abutting parking lot for an Eagle Scout project began to decrease. It was soon after this that the volunteers were identified through a local newspaper article. The Facilities and Grounds Operations Manager has since been in contact with Mr. Kerr and Mr. Kelly to develop a formal partnership. In the coming weeks, the Grounds Division will transport mulch further into the pathway to reduce the distance of travel for Mr. Kerr and Mr. Kelly and will continue to work with the volunteer group in maintaining Huber Park.

The Department of Public Works has experienced an increase in these types of volunteer efforts in the last six months. The department appreciates and encourages these types of partnerships and is currently working on methods to formally announce opportunities and create an easy method for volunteers to communicate their efforts with the City of Troy.