



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



Fred Meijer Heartland Trail

Michigan



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The paved Fred Meijer Heartland Trail rolls for 42 miles through farmland and forests in central Michigan as it links a half-dozen rural towns with recreational opportunities. Its route follows the corridors of two Pere Marquette Railroad branches that crossed in Edmore with connections to Grand Rapids in the south and Saginaw in the east. In 1947, the railroad merged into the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway, later to become the Chessie System. CSX Transportation ended up with the rail lines in 1986, and they fell into disuse by 1994.

Midwest grocery-store magnate Fred Meijer, who got his start working in the family store in Greenville, and his wife, Lena, helped buy the former rail bed, which Rails-to-Trails Conservancy held until a citizens group could take over the trail's development and operation in 2000.

Another purchase in 2005 completed the trail from Greenville to Edmore to Alma.

The trail meets both the Fred Meijer Flat River Trail and the Fred Meijer Flat River Valley Rail Trail in Greenville. The three trails, along with the Fred Meijer Grand River Valley Rail Trail and the Fred Meijer Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Trail farther south, are components of the Fred Meijer Mid-West Michigan Trail Network, which will eventually stretch 125 miles from Owosso to Alma.

Technically, the trail begins on the north side of East Washington Street, just north of Jackson's Landing Park, but note that parking near the endpoint is available only on the south side of East Washington Street. Here, the trail meets with the northern endpoint of the Fred Meijer Flat River Valley Rail Trail, which heads south to Lowell and crosses the Fred Meijer Flat River Trail, which circles Greenville. Heading north, you'll pass an old railroad depot at East Grove and North Court Streets and cross the Flat River on a restored trestle. Here, at Water Works Park, you'll find Little League fields and more public parking.

A trail interruption creates a 2.1-mile detour on bike lanes on Peck and South Lake Roads until you regain the trail for a peaceful stretch through prime farmland, woods, wildlife areas, wetlands, and small historic towns. A side trip on Sidney Road visits the Heritage Village at Montcalm Community College, where a cluster of 28 historical buildings depict life at the turn of the 20th century.

Before arriving in Stanton, you'll cross Fish Creek on an 1880 trestle that was relocated here from Greenville. You'll find a variety of eateries in Stanton and McBride, and in between you may be surprised by roaring dragsters at the Mid Michigan Motorplex.

The railroad crossroads town of Edmore is roughly halfway. You'll find more places to eat here, as well as eclectic



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States: Michigan

Counties: Gratiot, Montcalm

Length: 41.8 miles

Trail end points: Prospect Ave. between W. Center St. and Mechanic St. (Alma) to E. Washington St. between Flat River and S. Cedar St. (Greenville)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike, Inline Skating, Wheelchair Accessible, Walking, Cross

Parking & Trail Access

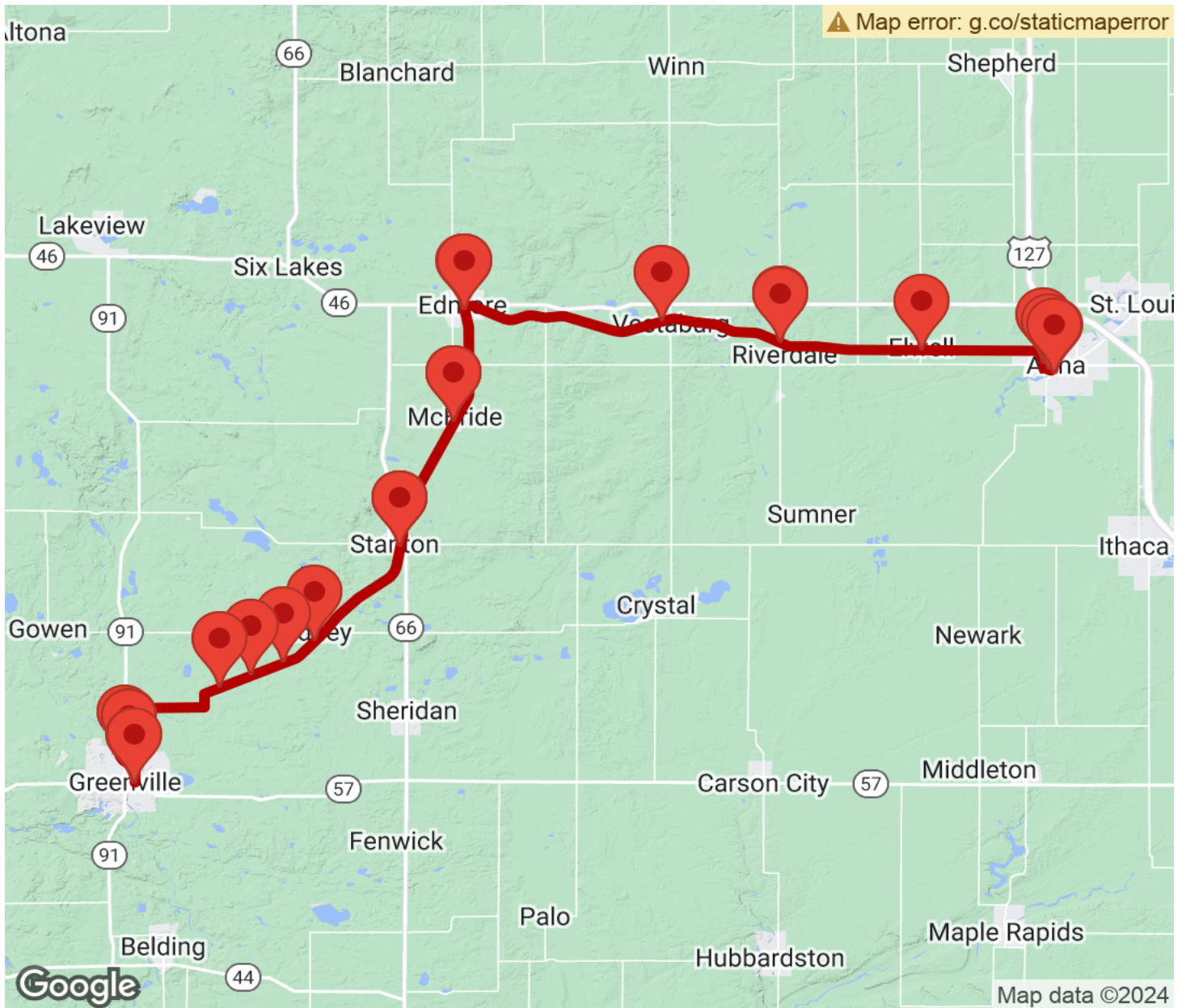
To reach the southern trailhead at Jackson's Landing in Greenville from US 131 in Cedar Springs, take Exit 101 for MI 57 toward Kent B72/Greenville/Sparta, and head east on MI 57/14 Mile Road NE/E. Washington St. for 16.9 miles. Turn right into Jackson's Landing Park, which is just before the intersection with the Fred Meijer Heartland Trail.

To reach parking at the northern endpoint in Alma from US 127, take Exit 123 in Alma, and head west on Bus. US 27/E. Lincoln Road. Go 2.9 miles, and turn left onto N. State St. Go 2 blocks, turn right onto Mechanic St., and then go 2 more blocks and turn right onto Park Ave. Turn right into the parking area.



Fred Meijer Heartland Trail

Michigan



Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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