



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



**Little  
Traverse  
Wheelway**  
*Michigan*



## Little Traverse Wheelway

Michigan

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Picture-postcard-worthy views of Lake Michigan and its shoreline greet visitors to the Little Traverse Wheelway in Michigan's northern Lower Peninsula. The paved trail rolls for 24 miles from Charlevoix to Petoskey to Harbor Springs as it follows the curve of Little Traverse Bay.

"Trail-to-rail-to-trail" describes the background of the Little Traverse Wheelway in this historic resort getaway. A section of trail dates to the 1880s when high-wheeled penny farthings were a popular, though risky, form of recreation and transportation. The Chicago and West

Michigan Railway and the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad adopted the corridor for rail traffic in the 1890s, but by the 1970s the surviving railroads were no longer using segments of rail bed. By the 1990s, the first 2-mile section of reclaimed trail opened in Petoskey with more to follow until 2009.

Beginning at Shanahan Field in Charlevoix, you'll go east for 0.4 mile on the shoulder of Waller Road to reach the trail that runs close by US 31 for the next 16 miles. (At the park, you can also opt to take the Charlevoix Township Bike Path connector into town.) You'll cross a 0.6-mile boardwalk in a nature preserve in the first mile and be gazing out toward a magnificent lake view at a roadside park by mile 3.

The trail rolls inland at about mile 6, but in another 5 miles, you'll arrive at the marina-resort community of Bay Harbor. Descending through East Park, you'll view Little Traverse Bay from a bluff for about 1.5 miles before arriving at the Magnus Park public campground.

In a mile you arrive at a marina and Bayfront Park in Petoskey. This is the path of the original wheelway, marked by the first of three replica arches announcing no teaming or driving, referring to prohibitions against riding horses or horse-drawn carriages on the original trail. The town's history is remembered at the Little Traverse History Museum, located in a circa-1892 railway depot at the park. A touristy shopping area is accessible through a US 31 underpass near the foot of Bay Street.

Leaving Petoskey, you'll pass a fishing pond left over from an old limestone quarry. It's only a few steps away from Little Traverse Bay, where the exposed cobble on the shoreline is a good place to look for Petoskey stones, pebbles containing designs from fossilized coral.

Soon after leaving the park, salmon-colored sidewalks signal your entry into the historic Bay View neighborhood. This community, dominated by Victorian homes, has long been a



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**States:** Michigan

**Counties:** Charlevoix, Emmet

Length: 26miles

**Trail end points:** Waller Rd & US 31

(Charlevoix) to Kosequat Park at Park Ln & E

Lake Rd (Harbor Springs)

**Trail surfaces:** Asphalt

**Trail category:** Rail-Trail

**Trail activities:** Bike, Inline

Skating, Fishing, Wheelchair

Accessible, Walking, Cross Country Skiing

## Parking & Trail Access

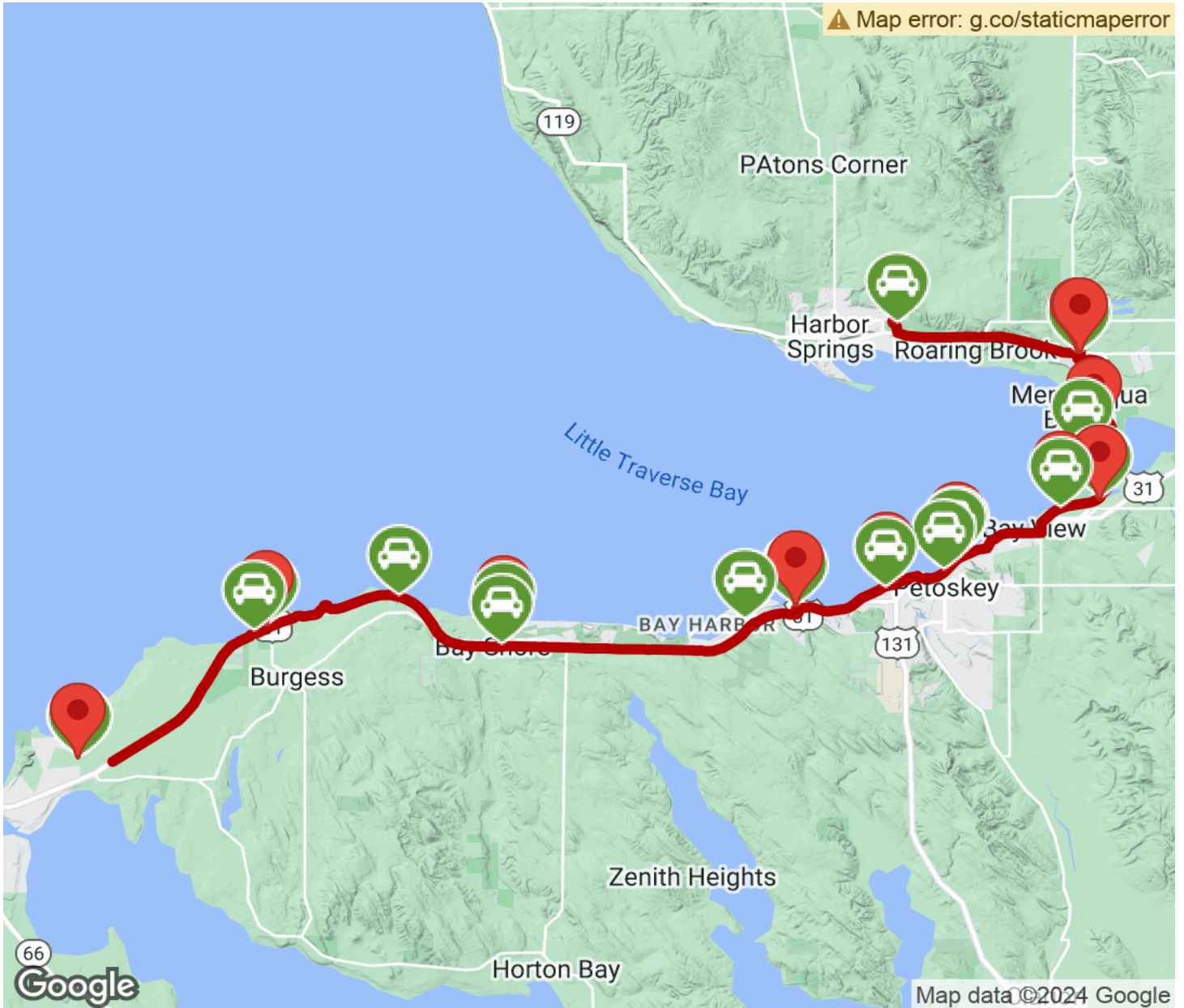
There are several parking options available along the trail. In Harbor Springs (northern endpoint), there is parking at 2728 E Lake St. In Petoskey, there is parking at Bayfront Park near 101 E Lake St. In Bay Harbor, East Park offers parking and restrooms (601 Quarry Dr).

See [TrailLink Map](#) for all parking options and directions.



# Little Traverse Wheelway

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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



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