

**ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN** – Ann Arbor is the sixth largest city in the Michigan, with a population of over 113,000 within the city limits, and close to 345,000 within the metro area as of the 2010 census. While just over 40 miles from Detroit, the presence of the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor gives the community its own unique identity. One of the largest and foremost research universities in the country, Michigan has a total enrollment of over 40,000 students, while employing close to 30,000 people. The school's presence creates not only ethnographic diversity, but also fosters an appreciation for creativity, intellect, and innovation. All of these features can be seen in what makes Ann Arbor a Runner Friendly Community.

Over 15% of Ann Arbor residents walk to work, more than six times the national average. As such, the city has created tremendous infrastructure to support the residents' desire to lead a healthy lifestyle. There are over 475 miles of sidewalks in Ann Arbor, and over 57 miles of shared-use paths. The Border Trail Project aims to create a contiguous, 35 mile long path along the Huron River, and almost the entire length of the river within city limits can be walked or run. Included in this stretch along the Huron is the 69-acre Gallup Park. Looped trails in the park allow for runs up to ten miles along flat terrain and some sections are posted with markers every quarter mile for speed training. Park facilities include drinking fountains and benches for taking a break or enjoying the scenery.

The local government repeatedly demonstrates its desire to make Ann Arbor runner-friendly. Since 2008, Ann Arbor has been recognized as a Gold-Status community in the Promoting Active Communities Assessment, a state initiative to promote active living in Michigan. A Gold award means that Ann Arbor "can document outstanding achievements in making it easy for people to be active." Ann Arbor is also committed to assuring the safety of walkers, bikers, and drivers with a Walk-Bike-Drive Program that include a Pedestrian Safety and Access Task Force.

Ann Arbor Track Club (AATC), an RRCA member club who submitted the application, has been in existence for over 50 years. AATC is an important pillar of the local running community; organizing training groups; providing scholarships for high school runners; hosting fundraisers; and using the sport to build partnerships with the city and local businesses. The AATC's signature event is the annual Dexter to Ann Arbor Run, which served as the 2014 RRCA National Half Marathon Championship. The race is held in coordination with the Taste of Ann Arbor, an annual food tasting event featuring many local restaurants. Other Ann Arbor businesses who support running in the community include Ann Arbor Running Company, PR Fitness, and several other running stores, coffee shops that allow runners to gather before group runs and fill water bottles are, world famous Zingerman's Deli, and many physical therapists who offer free clinics to runners.

"The City of Ann Arbor enjoys a positive relationship with the running," said Christopher Taylor, Mayor of Ann Arbor. "It offers numerous trails and paths, many of them close to the center of the city for runners to explore. It is truly a mecca for running enthusiasts."

*Community leaders providing support and letters of recommendation include: Diane Scarpace, member of the Board of Directors for the Ann Arbor Track Club; Christopher Taylor, Mayor of Ann Arbor; Mitchell Garner, President of the Ann Arbor Track Club; Jamie M. Phillips, Burns Park Run Race Co-Director; Trevor Step, Field Marketing Manager for Running Fit - Ann Arbor; Doug Goodhue, Dexter to Ann Arbor Race Director; and, John R. Carnsland, President of FootPrints shoe store.*

**MILFORD, MICHIGAN** - Located in Michigan's Huron Valley, approximately 40 miles from Detroit, Milford has a population of 6,280, but also serves as the central business district for approximately 25,000 people in the surrounding areas. This downtown district is a National Historic Landmark, established just before the turn of the century. Featuring many national retailers, along with local businesses, the downtown is busy and prominent enough to draw visitors from neighboring cities like Ann Arbor and Dearborn. Yet, Milford still manages to retain its small town charm. This combination of a bustling center with quaint surroundings is reflected in many of the attributes that make Milford a Runner Friendly Community.

In May 2009, the Milford Trail officially opened. At 3.6 miles long, the trail connects the downtown YMCA to the entrance of spacious Kensington Park. Kensington Park itself covers 4,481 acres of both hilly and flat scenic terrain. The park also contains multiple trails, including a 3 mile loop in its center, which crosses the Huron River. Another trail splits off from there, heading south for 4.75 miles, traversing wooded areas, wetlands, and prairie along the river. In addition to Kensington Park, Milford has beautiful rolling hills and extensive natural areas that make for ideal conditions for both beginning and more experienced runners.

Milford government is a strong ally to runners and the running community. Milford helps sponsor the Labor Day 30K festival of races, the town's biggest running event that has served many times as the RRCA Michigan State Championship. Additionally, the government has made sure there is a rich stable of pedestrian networks throughout the town, complete with water fountains, streetlights, accessible bathrooms, and ample parking. The town has also made efforts to place signs demonstrating how local trails connect to one another.

The Huron Valley Athletic Club (HVAC), the RRCA member who submitted the application, is the largest running club in Milford. They put on 13-24 events per year, highlighted by the Labor Day 30K festival. The HVAC also promotes running through healthy living by donating money to various organizations – Milford track team, community sharing, swim and dive team among others. The HVAC is joined in their efforts to help make Milford a healthy community by several other local entities. Shoe store Feet Sake sponsors and hosts several races in the community, while the Huron Valley Recreation Authority provides indoor tracks, pools, and community fitness centers.

“The Huron Valley region is a very active area, and it's easy to see why, because there is so much offered in every direction you go,” said Shannon Loso, Huron Valley Director of Recreation and Community Education. “We will continue to grow our offerings and are starting to put our resources in the right areas so we can focus both on the enrichment and recreational opportunities for our community.”

*Community leaders providing support and letters of recommendation include: Jennifer Barret, Huron Valley Chamber of Commerce; Shannon Loso, Huron Valley Director of Recreation and Commerce; Doug Klingensmith, Huron Valley Athletic Club President; Jerry Aubry, Milford Village President; and, Bartholomew D. Reed, Executive Director of the Carls Family YMCA.*