



# 2024 PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

GEORGETOWN CHARTER TOWNSHIP



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# Acknowledgments

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# Introduction

**Parks**, Recreation, and Open Space are important elements of all communities and provide many recreational, social, and environmental benefits that contribute to a high quality of life. Georgetown Township has recognized the importance of recreation planning and has chosen to take an active role in the delivery of recreational opportunities by updating the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Recreation planning is an exercise engaged by local governments to anticipate change, and to promote the development and expansion of recreational facilities and services for the benefit of its community. Parks and recreation facilities provide many benefits to the community and the natural environment. Parks provide people with a place to gather, be active, socialize, and connect with the environment and community.

Green infrastructure also enhances the livability of a community by increasing property values and connecting the community. Having the ability to recreate has also been shown to improve the quality of life by contributing to overall mental and physical health and reducing obesity brought on by inactivity. As the community continues to grow and change over time, the township continues to dedicate themselves to improving recreational offerings for its citizens. This plan represents the culmination of the planning efforts of the community and local officials; and reflects the township's desire to blend the available recreational resources and activities with the environmental and cultural elements of the community.

## PLAN PURPOSE

The 2024 Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a guide for the future of recreation facilities in Georgetown Township. It is an adaptive tool to help the leaders of the township prioritize future park improvements in a way that elevates the role of the parks and recreation system in the daily lives of all Georgetown residents in the years to come. Driven by community priorities and the mission of the township, the Master Plan will serve as a guiding document for policy decisions, prioritizing and balancing demands and opportunities, and providing a framework for evaluating future land acquisitions, park improvements, and recreation programs.

The plan also provides recommendations for park facilities, programs, and services; maintenance operations; administration and management; and capital improvements. The Township recognizes the significant role that recreation plays in providing a high quality of life and improved physical health of its citizens. This appreciation has been manifested in this effort to update the Parks and Recreation Master Plan with the hopes of improving park systems and public trails, promoting the preservation of natural areas, and establishing a strong commitment to strengthening a sense of community. This Plan provides the data and direction to ensure that parks and recreation offerings are aligned with the community needs and values. The plan addresses current recreation issues and identifies and prioritizes future needs of the community and the means for meeting those needs over the upcoming five-year period.

In addition, the Master Plan aligns with the statewide planning process. Every five years the Township is required to submit a master plan to the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) to become eligible



for recreation grant funding. The planning process incorporated community feedback toward the development of all MDNR plan components and was submitted to the State on February 1, 2024.

## PLAN SCOPE

The scope of this Plan includes suggestions for the management, improvement, and expansion of the recreation system within Georgetown Township. The Plan also considers recreational facilities within the county and neighboring townships, that are available to citizens of the larger community. Key planning issues are identified, a clear set of goals and objectives are outlined, and specific implementation strategies are delineated.

The scope will include all of the township's recreation facilities, undeveloped open space, trail systems, and recreational programming. The scope of the planning effort is limited to the township boundaries. However, consideration is also made of regional facilities that influence use patterns. The use of township facilities by residents living in the surrounding communities, which may have limited recreation facilities of their own, is also a consideration of the planning process. In terms of an implementation time line, the Action Program section of this document covers development over the next five years.

## PLANNING COORDINATION

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan recognizes the importance of other Township-wide planning efforts that also invest in community health and equitable access to natural resources. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan builds upon the following recent planning efforts that have established a strong framework for the future of Georgetown's community:

### 2021 Township Master Plan

Georgetown Township is a fast-growing and dynamic community that places a significant emphasis on the community planning process. The most recent township master plan was developed and adopted in 2021 and is envisioned to enhance, preserve, and improve the township over the next 20 years. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan will be an informative tool that plugs into the greater Community Master Plan for how township leaders approach public green space in the future.

### 2015 Parks and Recreation Plan

The most recent parks and recreation plans were updated in 2009 and 2015. This updated 2024 Parks and Recreation Master Plan considers aspects from the previous updates including physical assets and community needs within the township. Some elements and goals from the previous plans may be relevant when considering improvements to today's park system. This updated plan maintains and expands upon these components from past plans where appropriate. The 2015 plan documented conditions and trends at the time and contained many ideas for improvements; some of which have been realized. However, the township has seen significant growth both in population and development over the last 10-15 years which continues to grow. In addition, recreational trends have

evolved, in part due to the global pandemic which has shifted how we see and use public space. The 2024 plan builds on the previous plans but mainly looks forward to addressing the recreational needs of the growing community.



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# Community Description

## Plan Jurisdiction

This section is intended to describe the jurisdiction and focus of the plan, provide a brief overview of the community, and identify important community based factors that should be considered in parks and recreational planning. This Parks and Recreation Master Plan has been prepared to serve Georgetown Township and is planned to focus on all aspects of the township's parks and recreation facilities and programs. Recreational facilities and programs that serve adjacent communities have also been considered and incorporated into this planning document. The plan is intended to contribute to the quality of life for the residents and visitors of the Georgetown community, but also provide recreational experiences to the residents in adjacent communities within the county.

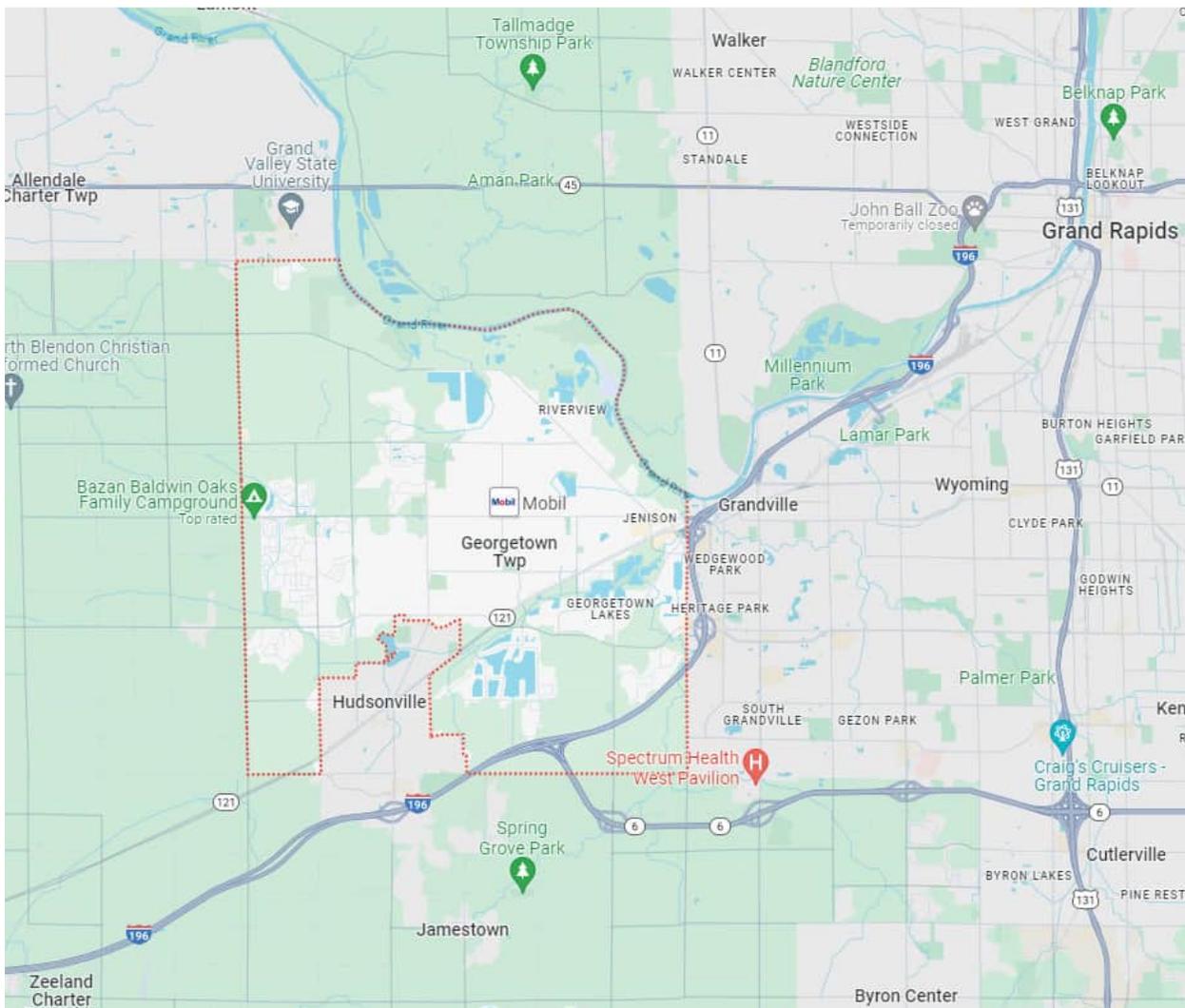
## Regional Setting

Georgetown Charter Township is located on the eastern edge of Ottawa County and contains approximately 34.1 square miles of land and water area. Georgetown Township is the largest political unit in Ottawa County and is adjacent to both Kent County and the western edge of the Grand Rapids metropolitan area. Georgetown is mostly bordered by the Grand River to the north, the city of Grandville (Kent County) to the east, the city of Hudsonville and Jamestown Township to the south, and Blendon Township to the west. The location map on page 6 (Figure 2.1) shows the township's location in relation to neighboring communities. Regional accessibility to the community is provided by several interchanges along the I-196 and M6 expressways.

## History

Georgetown Township was established in 1840 and originally included the present day communities of Jamestown, Zeeland, and Blendon Townships. The township began as a lumber community with the arrival of the Jenison family in 1836. With the abundance of hardwood and pine trees and access to the Grand River many sawmills began to appear and the settlement began to grow. Another lumberman George Ketchum built sawmills along Rush Creek in 1837 and the area became known as “George’s Town”. By 1870 farming and merchandising began to replace lumbering as sawmills were converted to flour mills and cleared land became farms. The L & L Jenison Mill was built in 1864 with flour in high demand and operated until 1953. During the early 20th century and after the second World War, residential development boomed and the Township evolved into a suburban community and became a charter township in 1965.

**Figure 2.1 - Location Map**



## Physical Characteristics

The township's natural features play a significant role in planning for the future use of land and park development in the community. Natural resources contribute to the suburban character of the township by providing recreational opportunities, habitat for plants and wildlife, pollution reduction, aesthetics, and economic value. The land encompassing the Township was formed during the last ice age by glacial meltwater traveling from the Huron Basin to Glacial Lake Chicago in the Lake Michigan Basin. The topography within the township is primarily flat and low lying in nature, characterized by numerous lakes, creeks, and drainage ditches. A ridge runs north/south along the west edge of the township. The topography varies between approximately 710 feet above sea level in the western area to approximately 590 feet above sea level in the northern, eastern, and southern areas of the Township.

## Climatology

Lake Michigan, which is about 30 miles west of Georgetown Township, has a significant influence on the climate of the region. The lake temperature, together with the prevailing westerly winds, moderates seasonal temperature extremes. The frequent and sometimes rapid changes caused by storms traveling across the lakes from the west and southwest are typical of a humid continental climate. The township gets some kind of precipitation (snow, rain, sleet, hail), on average, 128 days per year and gets 37 inches of rain and 63 inches of snow, on average, per year. The township is considered to have a low humid continental climate based on its seasonal precipitation and temperature patterns (warm summers and cold winters). The average temperature in Georgetown is 47 degrees Fahrenheit with the average low of 18.7 degrees and the average high of 82 degrees.

## Soils

The characteristics of the majority of soils within the township impose minor constraints on development. In general, loam, sandy loam and loamy sand soils are most common (see figure 2.4). Loamy soils are found primarily in the northwestern area of the township, sandy loam most commonly in the southeast quadrant and loamy sand soils predominately in the township's north, central, and southwest sections. There is also a swath of muck soils at the southwesterly area of the township around Hudsonville, and a few small pockets that dot the southeast and northern areas of the township. These areas are undeveloped and primarily used for agriculture. Severe limitations are attached to development on muck soils due to poor drainage, low bearing capacity and frost action commonly exhibited.

## Water Resources

Georgetown Township falls within in the Lower Grand River Watershed and has over 240 acres of ponds, rivers and streams within its boundaries with the principal water feature being the Grand River (see figure 2.5) The Grand River occupies approximately 55 acres within the Township and stretches just under a mile on the northern border of the township. Other water features in the township include Bass Creek and Rush Creek which are tributaries of the Grand River. The Grand River runs along the north/northeast boundary of the township. Bass Creek nips the northwestern area of the township, Rush Creek runs in the south central area of the Township. The north central area of the township is within the Direct Drainage area to the Grand River.

### Grand River

The Grand River is the longest river in Michigan running 252 miles from its headwaters in Hillsdale County on the southern border north to Lansing and west to its mouth at Grand Haven on Lake Michigan. The Grand River is the largest body of water in the township at approximately 55 acres within the township limits. The Grand River is one of three major tributaries of Lake Michigan and falls in elevation from 1,260 feet in the highlands of its headwaters to 577 feet at its mouth at Lake Michigan. Its watershed is the second largest in the state, draining an area of 5,572 square miles and contributing 13% of Lake Michigan's drainage basin. The river's network of wetlands and marshes, lakes and bayous, gurgling streams, and powerful rivers support a wide range of wildlife which includes native fish species and numerous species of birds and mammals. In addition, the Grand River provides an enormous amount of recreational opportunities to the residents of Georgetown for a variety of water and nature based activities.

### Lower Grand River Watershed

The township lies within the Grand River Watershed, which includes a large area covering nearly 3,000 square miles stretching from just west of Lansing to Lake Michigan, as far north as Newaygo County and as

far south as Barry County. The watershed includes an extensive network of streams, creeks, drainage-ways, and inland lakes. The watershed offers opportunities for recreation like fishing, swimming, canoeing, and paddling, and provides vital habitat to plants and animals. There are three sub-watersheds within the township that are included in the Lower Grand River Watershed which include: Bass River, Direct Drainage to the Lower Grand River, and Rush Creek (see figure 2.6).

The Bass River sub-watershed drains 32,020 acres, of which 561 acres cover the northwest side of the township. The overall watershed includes land that is considered high quality agriculture land, has 102.5 total stream miles and 1.7 miles of State Designated Trout Streams.

The Rush Creek sub-watershed drains 38,041 acres, of which 1,967 acres cover the southern half of the township. The watershed is mostly comprised of urban and agricultural land with small amounts of forest, lakes, and wetlands. The main branch of Rush Creek flows through the watershed and includes 61 miles of stream, that is mostly channelized. This tributary flows directly to the Grand River.

The Direct Drainage to Lower Grand River sub-watershed covers 275,237 acres, of which



1,252 acres cover most of the northeast area of the township. The sub-watershed is considered a high priority area for restoration and includes the following land uses: 33% agricultural, 26% forest, 24% urban, 9% wetlands, 4% lakes, and 4% open land. It also includes 820 total stream miles that drain within the watershed.

### Wetlands

Wetlands are a critical component to water resource and watershed health, as they improve water quality by trapping pollutants and serving as natural detention areas. Georgetown Township is home to approximately numerous types of wetlands, a majority of which are located along the Grand River and classified as palustrine by the National Wetland Inventory. Palustrine wetlands are associated with streams, creeks, swales, or are separate wetland features in the landscape. Other types of wetlands in the township are riverine, associated with river systems, and lacustrine, associated with or adjacent to lakes. Wetlands types range from forested wetlands with mature trees, to emergent vegetation such as cattail marshes. Many shrub -scrub wetlands are also present due to low areas that collect water. The natural features of these wetland complexes, some of which contain rare or threatened plant and animal species, are important to local groundwater recharge, as well as critical wildlife habitat.



### Floodplain

Floodplains are important natural features that provide wildlife habitat, water storage and conveyance, protection of water quality, and recharge of groundwater. The township contains large areas of land designated by FEMA as “Zone A” which includes areas of the 100-year flood. Most of this land is along the Grand River along the northern border of the township. The floodplain is a riverine system which varies in steepness, width, and flow and is defined by the flood way. This type of floodplain typically floods in the spring, but is subject to periodic flooding due to extensive rainfall and snowmelt. Riverine systems provide feeding and breeding habitats for a variety of fish, reptiles, vegetation, and fur-bearing wildlife.



### Fish and Wildlife

The Grand River Watershed supports a varied array of wildlife. The Grand River is long and diverse, supporting trout and salmon for much of its length as well as attracting a great variety of bird species. A diversity of aquatic and terrestrial habitats can be found throughout the township that harbors various amphibian, reptile, avian, mammal, and fish species. Many of these species are important from a recreational and economical perspective. Many organizations and outdoor sporting groups exist in the area to help protect and enhance habitat for animals such as whitetail deer, wild turkey, pheasants, and many species of fish.

## Socioeconomic Characteristics

The review of trends in population growth is helpful in developing an understanding of the township's recreational needs. Also reviewing other demographic indicators such as age, education, income, and employment trends can assist in determining the type of recreational facilities that may be needed or desired and will allow facilities and programs to keep pace with demand.

### Population Trends

Demographic information was gathered from the 2020 US Decennial Census. As of 2020, Georgetown Township has a population of 54,091 which represents a 29.7% increase from the 2000 Census. The township has more than doubled its population since 1980 and has maintained steady growth over the last twenty years. Table 2.1 delineates population growth in the township over the last 40 years.

Year	Population	# Change	% Change
1980	26,104	-	-
1990	32,672	6,568	25.1%
2000	41,685	9,013	27.5%
2010	46,985	5,300	12.7%
2020	54,091	7,106	15.1%

To put the Township's rate of growth into perspective, it is important to compare growth comparisons with other adjacent communities. This is useful in attempting to forecast areas of future growth in the area as well as future demands on the township's park system. Table 2.2 illustrates population growth comparisons with adjacent communities as well as the County and State. The table shows the growth rate in Georgetown Township over the last 10 years has been slower than Blendon and Jamestown Township, but stronger than the adjacent cities of Hudsonville and Grandville. As the population continues to grow in Georgetown Township as well as in adjacent townships, the township is faced with the challenge of providing additional park facilities to keep up with the growth trends. Strategic acquisition of park land, continued enhancement of current parks and trails, and collaboration with Ottawa County Parks should continue to be a focus.

Community	1990 Population	2000 Population	2010 Population	2020 Population	% Change 2010-2020
Tallmadge Twp	6,331	6,891	7,582	8,800	16.0%
Blendon Twp	4,771	5,734	5,789	7,081	22.3%
Jamestown Twp	4,076	5,081	7,059	9,630	36.4%
City of Hudsonville	6,170	7,160	7,116	7,651	7.5%
City of Grandville	15,619	16,316	15,378	16,083	4.6%
Ottawa County	187,768	239,559	264,114	294,635	11.6%
State of Michigan	9,295,297	9,938,444	9,883,640	10,077,331	1.9%

## Age

The median age of the township is 34, which is slightly younger than Ottawa County as a whole (35.5) and 17% younger than the State of Michigan (39.8). However, the median age of the township is 13% older than Hudsonville (30) and 9% older than nearby Grand Rapids (31.2). The median age represents the mid-point in the range of all ages within the township. This data indicates that a younger population desires the larger metropolitan city and the population starts to get older as you move out from Grand Rapids. Understanding the age demographics is useful in identifying the type of recreational facilities that may be needed, desired, or over provided. For example, a younger population may desire more active types of facilities while an aging population may desire more passive types of facilities. Table 2.3 illustrates the breakdown of population based on age (based on 2020 census).

<b>Age</b>	<b>Persons</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	26,775	49.5
Female	27,316	50.5
Under 18	14,605	27
18 and over	39,486	73
18-24	5,247	9.7
25-34	6,491	12
35-44	7,140	13.2
45-54	5,626	10.4
55-64	6,166	11.4
65 and over	8,816	16.3

A strong pattern for family oriented recreation is reflected in the age distribution with 25.2% of the population in the 25-44 range. About 27% of the population falls in the under 18 age group suggesting there may be a need for youth-oriented facilities. Conversely about 27.7% of the population is within the 55 and over age group suggesting the need for passive and senior based activities. The 18-24 group makes up the smallest portion of the population, likely due to the lack of higher education institutions located in the township as well as the young professional jobs available in Grand Rapids. These results reflect a need for a well-balanced park and recreation system that provides facilities for young, active families, as well as accessible facilities for the aging population.

## Persons with Disabilities

The proportion of the population with some type of disability should be considered when planning parks and recreational facilities and programs, as it is estimated that 1 in 4 adults in the U.S. have some type of disability. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 mandates that all public services, including park facilities, be barrier-free. As the population ages, the proportion with one or more disabilities generally increases, and this trend is consistent for the township. Disabilities include vision, cognitive, auditory, ambulatory, self care, and living independently difficulties. According to the U.S. Census data, it is estimated that approximately 9% of township residents live with a disability, which is lower than the State

of Michigan at 14.5% and lower than the national 27%. Approximately 6% of those individuals living with a disability in the township are 65 years and older and 4% are Veterans. These figures indicate that, while the disabled population is modest in the township, there still exists an important contingent of residents who rely on more accessible places to recreate.

**Income**

A successful parks and recreation system includes providing affordable, equitable recreational opportunities to all members of the community. It is important to understand the availability of disposable income for recreation within the community as household incomes vary within the region. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the amount of people living at or below the poverty line in the township is 7.1%, which is moderately lower than adjacent communities. In addition, the estimated median household income level in the township for 2020 is \$85,694 which is about a 45% increase from 2000 (\$58,936). The median household income in Georgetown Township is about 11% higher than Ottawa County (\$77,288) and about 36% higher than Michigan (\$63,202). Table 2.4 illustrates the median household income of the township, compared to other adjacent communities.

Per capita income measures the average income earned per person in a given area in a specified year. Per capita income is used to determine the average per-person income for an area and to evaluate the standard of living and quality of life of the population. Table 2.5 illustrates the Per capita income of the township, compared to other adjacent communities. Based on the level of income in the township, it may be possible to secure certain types of grants, but may not support the concept of a park millage.

Table 2.4 Median Household Income - Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau	
Georgetown Township	\$85,694
Blendon Township	\$85,815
Tallmadge Township	\$59,205
City of Hudsonville	\$79,167
City of Grandville	\$68,863
Ottawa County	\$77,288

Table 2.5 Per Capita Income - Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau	
Georgetown Township	\$36,232
Blendon Township	\$41,633
Tallmadge Township	\$38,107
City of Hudsonville	\$28,899
City of Grandville	\$33,646
Ottawa County	\$35,651

**Employment**

Approximately 67.5% of township residents over the age of 16 are employed in a range of employment categories. The most common employment sectors in the township include: manufacturing, retail trade, health care and social assistance, educational services, and professional, scientific, and technical services. The most common occupation groups, by number of people living in Georgetown, are management, business, science, and arts occupations, sales and office occupations, and service occupations. According to the U.S. Census the average commute time to work is approximately 22 minutes, which is lower than the national average of 25 minutes. The primary destination for employment for township workers is the city of Grand Rapids (33%). Approximately 25% of the township workforce are able to work in the township. Other destinations include Grandville, Wyoming, Hudsonville, Jenison, and neighboring Townships.

According to the U.S. Census, about 86% of the workforce drive automobiles to work (76% alone and 10% carpool), and 9% work from home. The remaining 5% use public transit, walk, bicycle, or use other means of transportation to get to work. Given this data was collected for the 2020 census and pre-pandemic, the percentage of the workforce working from home is likely currently higher and on the rise. According to the U.S. Census, the estimated rate of unemployment in the township is 7.7%. The relative strength of the employment picture in the township suggests that the local economy is stable and that residents should be able to continue to fund the parks and recreation budget.

### Households

Georgetown Township provides a variety of different housing opportunities based on both age and density. According to the U.S. Census data there are a total of 18,783 households in the township and approximately 2.8 persons per household. Of these households, 80% are married couples, 9% are single male or female households, and 11% are non-family. According to the U.S. Census data there are a total of 19,462 housing units of which 97% are occupied, 83% is owner occupied and 17% is renter occupied. Single family structures make up 83.5% of the housing units in the township with 16.2% multi-family units and 0.3% mobile homes. The number of housing units has increased approximately 38% since 2000, which indicates that the township has been steadily growing over the last 20 years and the need for additional park land may be needed to keep up with the growing community.

### Land Use

The land use distribution and development pattern of a community is important when considering the geographic distribution of parks and recreational facilities because

they should be placed where there are concentrations of residents and the related places of public gathering. Numerous single-family neighborhoods are located throughout the township, with the largest concentrations located in the west, central, and east areas of the township. These areas seem to be the higher populated areas and therefore important to ensure equitable park space is provided. Most of the northwest and southwest areas of the township are agricultural, rural residential, and industrial. The southeastern section of the township is predominately agricultural and rural residential along the I-196 corridor, with some single family neighborhoods mixed in.

### Transportation

The road network in Georgetown Township contains several major thoroughfares and transportation routes that are readily available to the residents of the township. Although the Grand River constrains vehicular traffic from the north, the Township is easily accessed from the interstate highway system to the east and south. I-196 cuts across the southeast corner of the Township and has entry/exit ramps at Baldwin St., 44th Street and 32nd Avenue in Hudsonville.



I-196 connects the township to Grand Rapids and Lansing to the east via I-96, and to U.S. 131 which provides access to the north and south. Additionally, M-6 provides connectivity to the southern metropolitan area from I-196, east of Hudsonville. Chicago Drive (M-121) crosses the Township from northeast to southwest providing connections to Grand Rapids to the north east and Zeeland to the southwest. The CSX Railroad is an active rail line that runs parallel along Chicago Drive between Grand Rapids and Holland. Other arterial and major collector roads include Cottonwood Drive, Fillmore St., Bauer Road, 28th Avenue and Port Sheldon Street.

Georgetown Township provides a bus transportation service for residents age 55 and older, disabled persons, and those with hardships or special needs. Rates are set by the Township Board. Transportation is available to or from the Senior Center, as well as to appointments or work. Rides are scheduled by calling the Senior Center.





# Administrative Structure

Georgetown Township operates under the Board/Superintendent form of government. The Board/Superintendent Plan is a system of local government that combines the political leadership of an elected Township Board with the professional managerial experience of the Township Superintendent. In order to understand how park and recreation functions are administered in the township, we must look at the administrative structure of the township (refer to Figure 3.1 for the Township Organizational Chart).

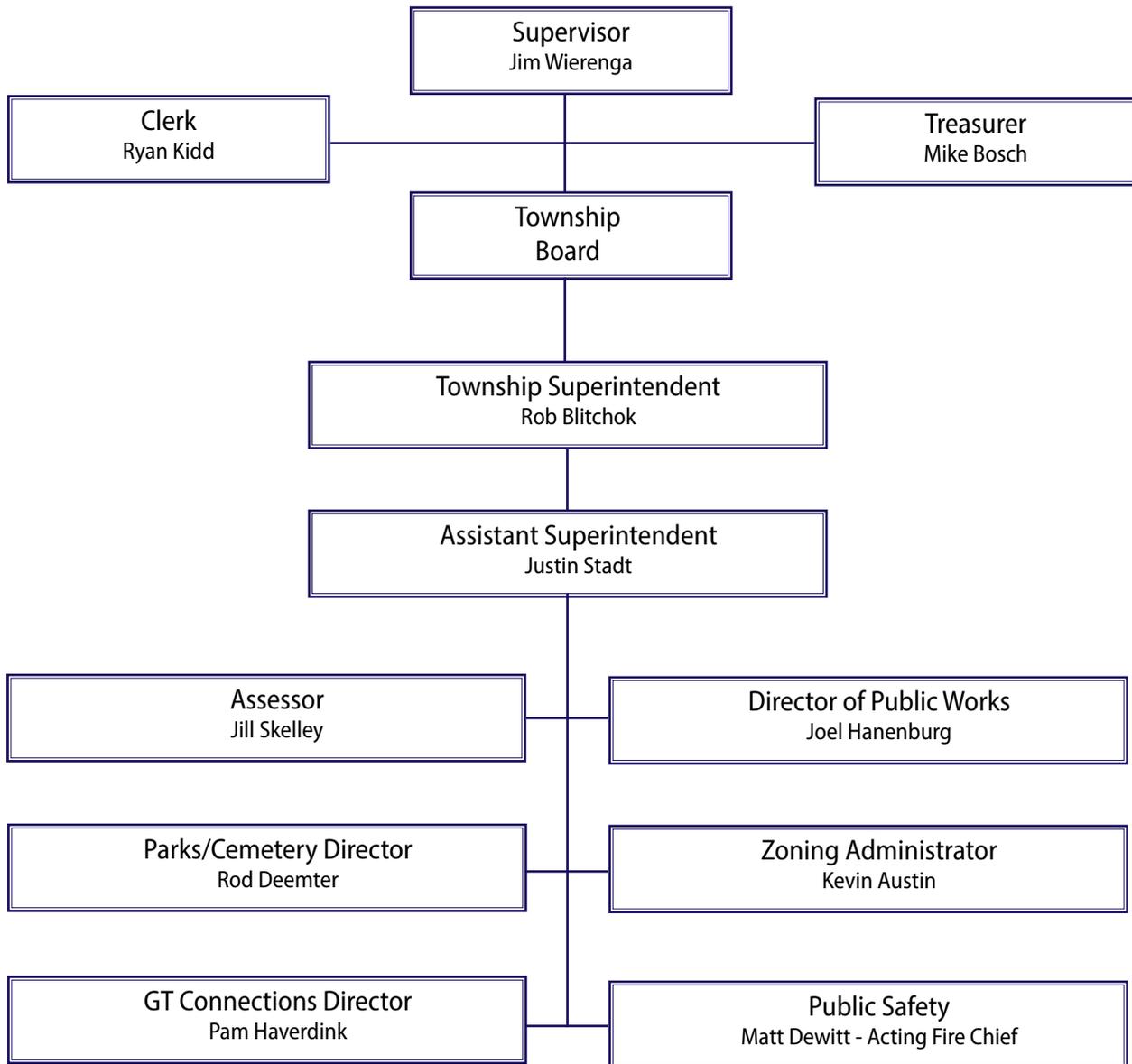
## **Township Board**

The Charter Township of Georgetown is governed by a seven (7) member board. Board members are elected every four years. The seven member board is made up of a Township Supervisor, Clerk, Treasurer, and four Trustees. The Board is the legislative and policy making body of the Township and is responsible for the performance of all obligations and duties imposed on the Township by the State of Michigan.

## **Township Superintendent**

The Township Superintendent is appointed by the Board of Trustees and is responsible for the day-to-day operations of Township departments, annual budget, oversight of public improvements, personnel administration, and the enforcement of Township ordinances, regulations, and policies. In addition, the Township Superintendent coordinates park maintenance and operations, while the Township Board make decisions regarding park budgeting, land acquisition, facilities, and program development.

**Figure 3.1 - Township Organizational Chart**  
**Township Departments and Directors**



### Departmental Organizational Structure

Under the direction of the Township Superintendent, four (4) township departments are actively involved in the administration, planning, and maintenance of the Township's parks, recreation, programs, and services.

- Cemetery Office
- Township Library
- GT Connections (Senior Center)
- Department of Public Works

### Cemetery Office

The Cemetery Office is staffed by a Parks/ Cemetery Director and a Sexton, and manages two township cemeteries and seven park sites.

### Township Library

The Georgetown Township Public Library offers a wide range of recreational activities and programs for residents. The library offers youth programs, after school hangout for teens, children's programs, art displays, adult yoga, book groups, holiday activities and many other activities throughout the year. The library also provides meeting / study space, available computers, and reading programs. The library is located on the same campus as the township offices.

### GT Connections (Senior Center)

The Georgetown Senior Center offers a variety of social, recreational, and educational activities for individuals age 55 and over. The Senior Center staff employs a director that oversees the entire facility, as well as a number of coordinators, assistants, and volunteers that manage programming, meals, maintenance, and transportation. The Senior Center is also guided by a six member Senior Advisory Board that meet regularly. In addition to recreational activities, the Senior Center also provides lunch for a small cost as well as transportation for those in need. Membership is required to participate in activities at the Senior Center. Membership is yearly and cost \$15 for township residents and \$35 for non-residents.

### Department of Public Works

The DPW manages and executes maintenance duties for all park facilities in the Township including trails, park sites, cemeteries, and the Township Hall Complex. In addition, the department is responsible for the maintenance of irrigation, landscaping, streetlights, leaf collection, pavement markings, signs, and snowplowing.



## Committees and Commissions

The Township relies on citizen participation on many committees and commissions to help serve the community. The citizens serving on the committees and commissions provide the talent and experience needed to meet the diverse challenges facing the community. The recommendations from these groups assist the Township Board in making decisions regarding parks and recreation. Two groups related to parks and recreation include the following:

- Services Committee
- Planning Commission

### Services Committee

The Services committee covers safety, cemetery, parks, crossing guards, law enforcement, fire, emergency services, seniors, and the library. The committee is made up of three members of the Township Board and meets on the fourth Monday of every month immediately after the Township Board meeting.

### Planning Commission

The Planning Commission is authorized by Michigan statute and consists of seven members elected by the community. The Planning Commission has as primary responsibilities the preparation and adoption of a Comprehensive Plan that guides decision-making related to future land use, community development and capital investments, and making recommendations and advising the Township Board on land use, zoning and related development matters of importance in the community.

### Budgeting and Funding

Budgets for parks, programs, services and maintenance are located in the Appendix of this document. Parks and recreation activities are funded primarily with general fund dollars; there are no separate millages. The budget includes Operation and Maintenance, Capital Improvements, and Programs and Services. In 2024 the township has budgeted \$2,172,930 for parks and recreation which includes capital outlay of funds of \$1,355,930 for park improvements and \$150,000 for repairs and maintenance. The basic sources for funding to support the operating and capital improvements budgets of the Parks and Recreation department are the following: taxes, fees and charges, government grants, and gifts or bequests.

Taxes – Consisting of property taxes, which are derived by assessing industrial or residential property within the borders of the municipality at a given rate.

Grants – Park development has benefited from a variety of grants as shown on the Park Development Grant Summary in Chapter 4.

Fees & Charges – Consisting of monies collected for program participation, park entry fees, and facility rentals. Fees and charges are reviewed annually to assure an equitable system to offset departmental operating costs and provide value to program participants and facility

users. Entry fees for 8th Avenue Community Park and Maplewood Park include \$5.00 per adult and \$3.00 per child. Park pavilion rental fees include \$75.00 per block of time for residents and \$175.00 per block of time for non-residents.

Gifts & Bequests – Included are gifts that come from private sources such as foundations, business firms or individuals. These are solicited when accompanying stipulations are such that the gift would be determined beneficial to Township responsibilities for the provision of park and recreational services.

### Recreational Programming

Recreational programming is predominantly run through the school district or by independent groups. Local groups that are active in the community include A.Y.S.O, Select Rangers Program, Georgetown and Hudsonville Little League, Georgetown Softball, Hudsonville Rocket Football and Rocket Cheer. Many of these groups help maintain the fields at 28th Avenue Soccer Complex and the Port Sheldon Sports Complex. The Senior Center offers a variety of social, recreational, and educational activities for those 55 and older. The Public Library also offers a wide range of recreational programming options to the residents of the community.



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# Recreation Inventory

To understand the Georgetown Township parks and recreation system, we first completed an inventory and analysis of existing park facilities. The intent of the analysis is to evaluate the character, performance, and accessibility of the diverse spaces in the park system, and provide a comprehensive perspective of the opportunities and challenges of the existing recreational facilities the township has to offer its citizens. The inventory is based on feedback provided by township staff and stakeholders, site inventories carried out by VIRIDIS Design Group, park accessibility review, and a review of the 2015 plan.

## Park and Recreation System Inventory

The park and recreation system inventory establishes a baseline understanding of the quantity, type, location, and quality of all park and recreation facilities in Georgetown Township. The project team visited each park facility and recorded its amenities, accessibility, and condition. The site inventory was supplemented by an aerial survey and verified against the county's GIS database. Overall, 7 parks and open spaces were inventoried through this process.

Georgetown Township has a variety of park spaces and other public recreational trails and facilities. Numerous county, private and non-profit facilities are also found within the community and county and are highlighted as part of the inventory. The township controls and manages approximately **233 acres** of land which include developed parks, undeveloped land, natural areas, and trails (Refer to Figure 4.1).

The NRPA has established generally recognized standards for classifying types of parkland based on size and function which provide a means for determining the primary purpose or use of existing facilities in a community. These designations have been adopted by the MDNR; and provide one method of defining the purpose and use of facilities.

Typically, smaller open spaces address localized needs, while larger parks and open space draw users from farther away for destination activities. Mini Parks are specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population of specific groups. Neighborhood parks are considered the most critical for local, walkable park access and community health as these types of parks provide a range of playground amenities and recreational opportunities for residents. Community parks are larger in size and often feature a greater concentration of sports fields and other recreation amenities to meet demand for a broader area. Regional parks or metropolitan parks include land set aside for preservation of natural beauty or environmental significance, recreation use or historic or cultural interest use.

When looking at Georgetown Township owned park land, approximately 77% is held in three community parks totaling 169.39 acres. Three neighborhood parks comprise 40.75 acres, one sports complex at 9.5 acres, and one 12.8 ac undeveloped property. The township does not have a mini park in the park system. In addition to Georgetown Township owned parks, four large natural resource county parks lie within the limits of the township, mostly on the north side of the township along the Grand River, totaling approximately 899 acres. A second sports complex is also located just outside the township, in Hudsonville, and includes 28.6 acres of park space owned by the county.

Per the NRPA guidelines, park and recreation categories include associated service areas for each park type that indicate a minimum standard for geographic balance and availability of each park type in the park system. Classifying parks ensures the entire community is served by a wide range of park and recreational activities. Service areas for park types are discussed in Chapter 5.



## Park Classifications

### NEIGHBORHOOD PARK



- 3 Neighborhood Parks
- 1 -10 acres
- Located in neighborhoods with family activities
- Walkable for residents
- Can provide active and passive uses

### COMMUNITY PARK



- 3 Community Parks
- 10-50 acres
- Meet broad community recreation needs
- May contain specialized recreation facilities
- Contribute to a connected system

### SPORTS COMPLEX



- 2 Sports complexes (one Township, one County)
- Varies based on demand, up to 80 acres
- Consolidates heavily programmed athletic fields and associated facilities.
- May contain specialized recreation facilities
- Strategically located within the community

### NATURAL RESOURCE PARK



- 4 Natural Resource Parks (Ottawa County)
- 200+ acres
- Serve several communities within one-hour drive
- Focus on recreation, historic, or cultural uses
- May preserve natural or sensitive areas

## Barrier Free Accessibility

Federal and State laws require all areas of public service to be accessible to all persons including those with limited sight, hearing, mobility, and comprehension. Developed park facilities must comply with barrier-free design standards. Park facilities in Georgetown Township have been reviewed to understand the need for improvements relating to barrier-free accessibility. In addition, as park development is considered in the future, barrier-free accessibility is a significant priority item to help ensure that recreation can be enjoyed by all residents and visitors of the township. Following is a ranking system in accordance with MDNR standards:

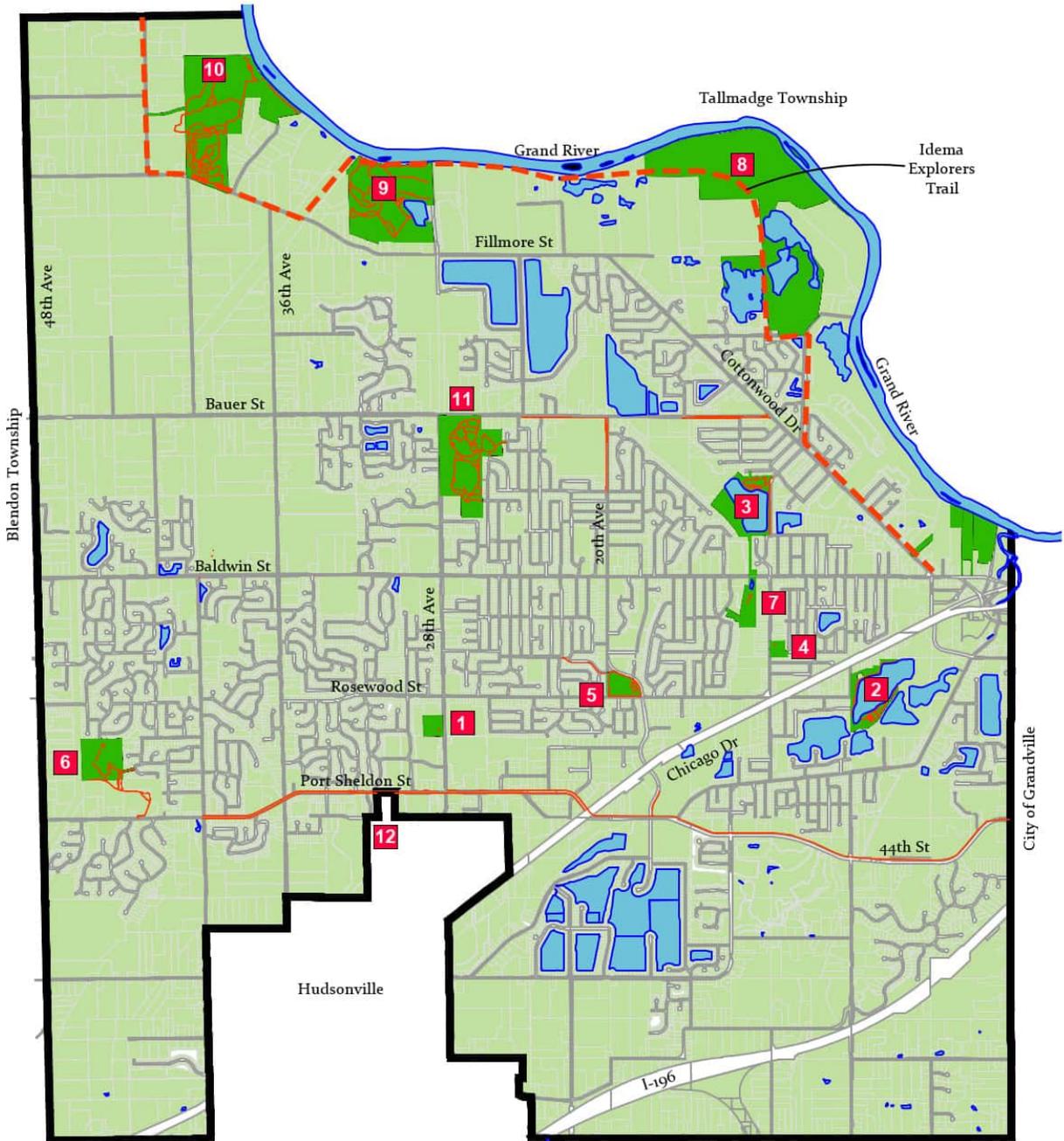
- 0 = Completely undeveloped, no paved surface, left in a natural state.
- 1 = None of the facilities in the park meet accessibility guidelines.
- 2 = Some of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines.
- 3 = Most of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines.
- 4 = All of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines.
- 5 = Universal design guidelines were used to design the entire park.

## Existing Parks

As part of the methodology of determining present-day and future needs of the township residents, the existing park facilities were examined. This combined with current trends, comparison to park standards, and community feedback (discussed later) will help the township anticipate and plan for future user needs. The design team visited each park to observe existing facilities to understand defining features, quality and condition of existing facilities, quantity of amenities, and level of accessibility. This field analysis was completed in July of 2023 (refer to table 4.1 for park amenity inventory).



Figure 4.1 - Recreation Areas and Facilities Map



**GEORGETOWN TOWNSHIP PARKS**

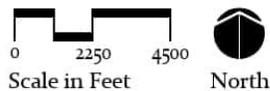
- 1** 28TH STREET SOCCER COMPLEX
- 2** 8TH AVENUE PARK
- 3** MAPLEWOOD PARK
- 4** PIONEER PARK
- 5** ROSEWOOD PARK
- 6** RUSH CREEK PARK
- 7** WOODCREST PARK

**COUNTY PARKS**

- 8** BENDS AREA
- 9** GRAND RIVER PARK
- 10** GRAND RIVER RAVINES
- 11** HAGER PARK
- 12** PORT SHELDON SPORTS COMPLEX

**LEGEND**

- PARKS PROPERTY
- WATER RESOURCE
- PAVED TRAIL
- TOWNSHIP BOUNDARY



# 8th Avenue Park

Address:	7096 8th Avenue	Accessibility:	3
Location:	East side of Township	Park Type:	Community
Size:	59.42 Ac	Service Area:	3 miles

## Description

8th Avenue Park is the township’s most popular facility due to the accessible swimming beach and water activities. Due to the heavy park usage there is a small entrance fee for non-residents. The Senior Center and Child Development Center are housed at the north side of the site, north of the lake. New pickleball courts are planned for this park in the next year.

Site features include: 3 overlook decks, gazebo, 2 boardwalk areas, lake, swimming beach, concrete spillway, playground equipment, basketball court, paved trails, loop walking trail around lake, fishing, 2 pavilions, restrooms, picnicking, paved parking, and grills.

## Opportunities

- Some of the paths and trails are aging and need repairs.
- Beach area needs maintenance to remove weeds and dress up the sand.
- Boardwalks are aged / weathered and in need of repair / maintenance.
- Some picnic areas are not accessible with a paved path. Consider providing access to these areas with paved surfaces and barrier free tables/grills.
- Parking lot on north side has concrete wheel stops that block pedestrian access.
- The beach would benefit from an additional shade structure.

## Grant History

- 1999 Clean Michigan Initiative



# 8th Avenue Park



# 28th Avenue Soccer Fields

Address:	6921 28th Street	Accessibility:	2
Location:	Central	Park Type:	Sports Complex
Size:	9.50 Ac	Service Area:	3 miles

## Description

This site is earmarked for future cemetery expansion but is currently used as a soccer complex and maintained by the Georgetown Rangers. The site is not considered dedicated park land but will remain a soccer complex until the existing Georgetown Cemetery, that is across the street, needs to expand. The Township’s maintenance facility is also on the property.

Park features include: paved parking, restrooms, concessions, storage for equipment, and large open green space that is set up for 12-15 soccer fields of varying sizes for different age groups.

## Opportunities

- This park has opportunities for the development of paved pathways to the fields, sidewalks along the parking lot, signed and marked barrier free parking, and bleacher areas for spectators. However since this park will be taken over by the cemetery in the future, these improvements are unlikely. The Township may consider maintaining and integrating some recreational elements, to the extent possible, for the site when the cemetery expands.

## Grant History

- None



# 28th Avenue Soccer Fields



# Maplewood Park

Address:	8049 12th Avenue	Accessibility:	4
Location:	Northeast	Park Type:	Community
Size:	69.17 Ac	Service Area:	3 miles

## Description

Maplewood Park is a heavily used park that features many different types of recreation. From active uses like court games and playgrounds to passive activities such as fishing and nature observation, Maplewood Park provides flexible and multi generational facilities. The Maplewood Park Trail loops around the lake and connects the park to Baldwin St. There is a small park entry fee for non-residents to use this park.

Site features include: Basketball court, sand volleyball court, 2 tennis courts, playground equipment, paved parking, restrooms, pavilion, splash pad, concessions, paved trails, picnic tables, grills, overlook decks, fishing, lake, informal fields, and picnic areas.

## Opportunities

- Tennis court surface needs a new color coating.
- There is one picnic table that is not accessible.
- The color coating on the basketball court is fading and could benefit from a new coat.
- Currently there is one overlook deck providing access to the lake. Consider adding additional opportunities to access the lake for fishing, nature observation, and educational signs.
- Sand volleyball court needs maintenance to remove weeds and dress the sand.

## Grant History

- 1977 Land and Water Conservation Fund.
- 2010 Trust Fund





# Pioneer Park

Address:	7226 12th Avenue	Accessibility:	2
Location:	East side	Park Type:	Neighborhood
Size:	6.15 Ac	Service Area:	1 mile

## Description

Pioneer Park is a small neighborhood park in a residential area south of Baldwin.

Site features include: baseball field, picnic shelter, playground equipment, paved parking, picnic tables, lighting, grill, open space for informal soccer fields, and a port-a-john.



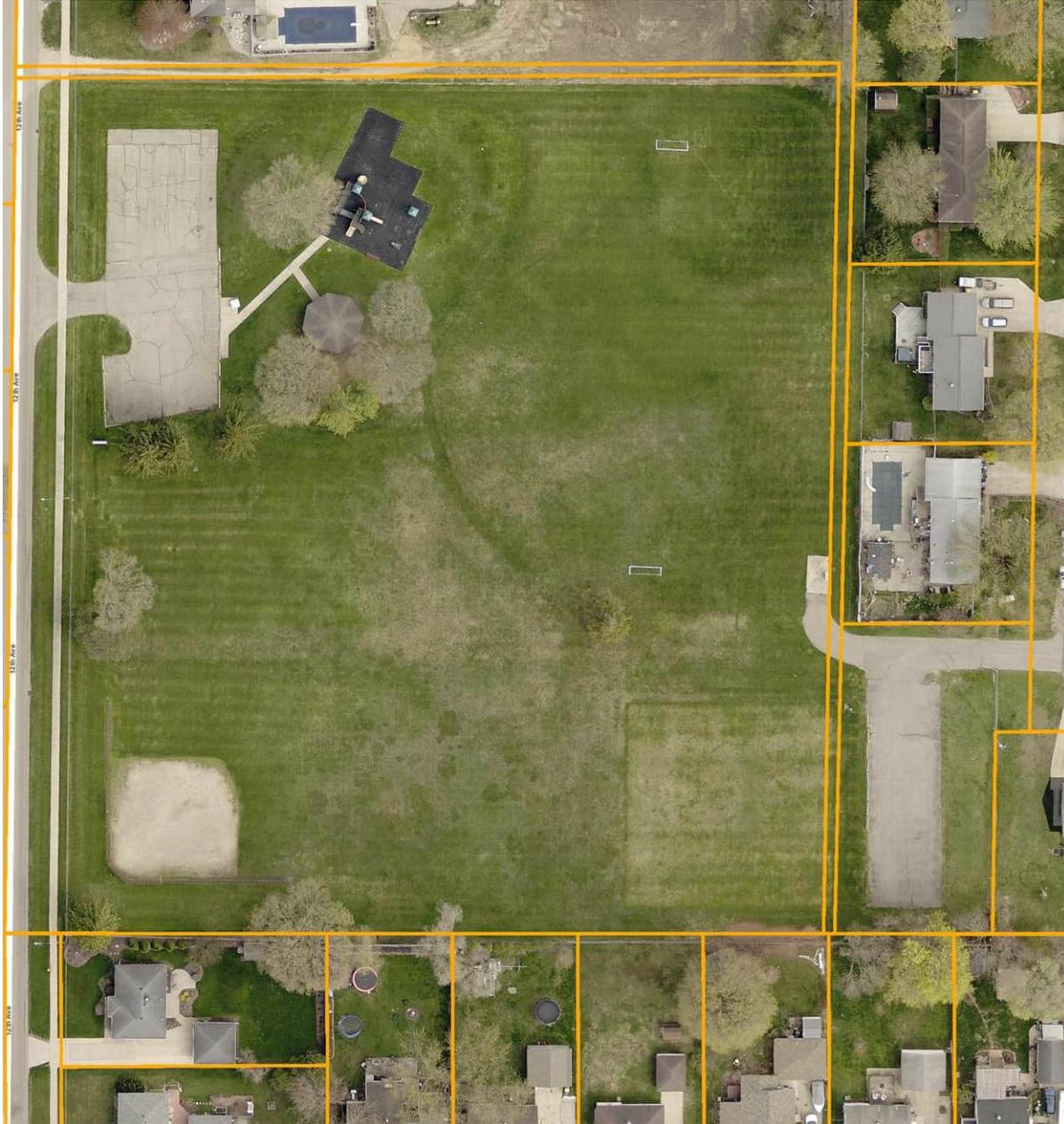
## Opportunities

- The baseball field lacks accessible surfaces benches, dugouts, bleachers, or bases.
- The baseball infield is in poor condition with erosion and weeds and needs to be regraded and new infield mix added.
- The fencing and gates around the ballfield are in poor condition and should be replaced.
- The parking lot does not have marked barrier free spaces, and the existing concrete wheel stops create a barrier between the parking lot and the sidewalk.
- Asphalt parking lot is cracking and needs repairs.
- The baseball field does not have an accessible path to it.
- Consider adding permanent restrooms.
- Consider adding accessible picnic tables, grills, and benches.

## Grant History

- 1975 Land and Water Conservation Fund

# Pioneer Park



# Rosewood Park

Address: 1869 Rosewood St  
 Location: East-central  
 Size: 8.54 Ac

Accessibility: 3  
 Park Type: Neighborhood  
 Service Area: 1 mile

## Description

Located at the corner of 18th Ave and Rosewood St, the park features many active family based recreational facilities. The playgrounds include modern equipment and features a large tower with multiple slides. The park also exhibits flexible space with the existing large county detention basin doubling as a soccer field and providing a sledding hill on the steep banks. The detention basin is dry most of the year allowing the space to be mostly used for recreation. There is also an undeveloped wooded area at the north side of the park.

Site features include: pavilion, 2 playgrounds, splash pad, restroom/concession building, picnic areas, paved parking, gravel path, disc golf, soccer field, open space, benches, grills, sledding hill, and a port-a-john.

## Opportunities

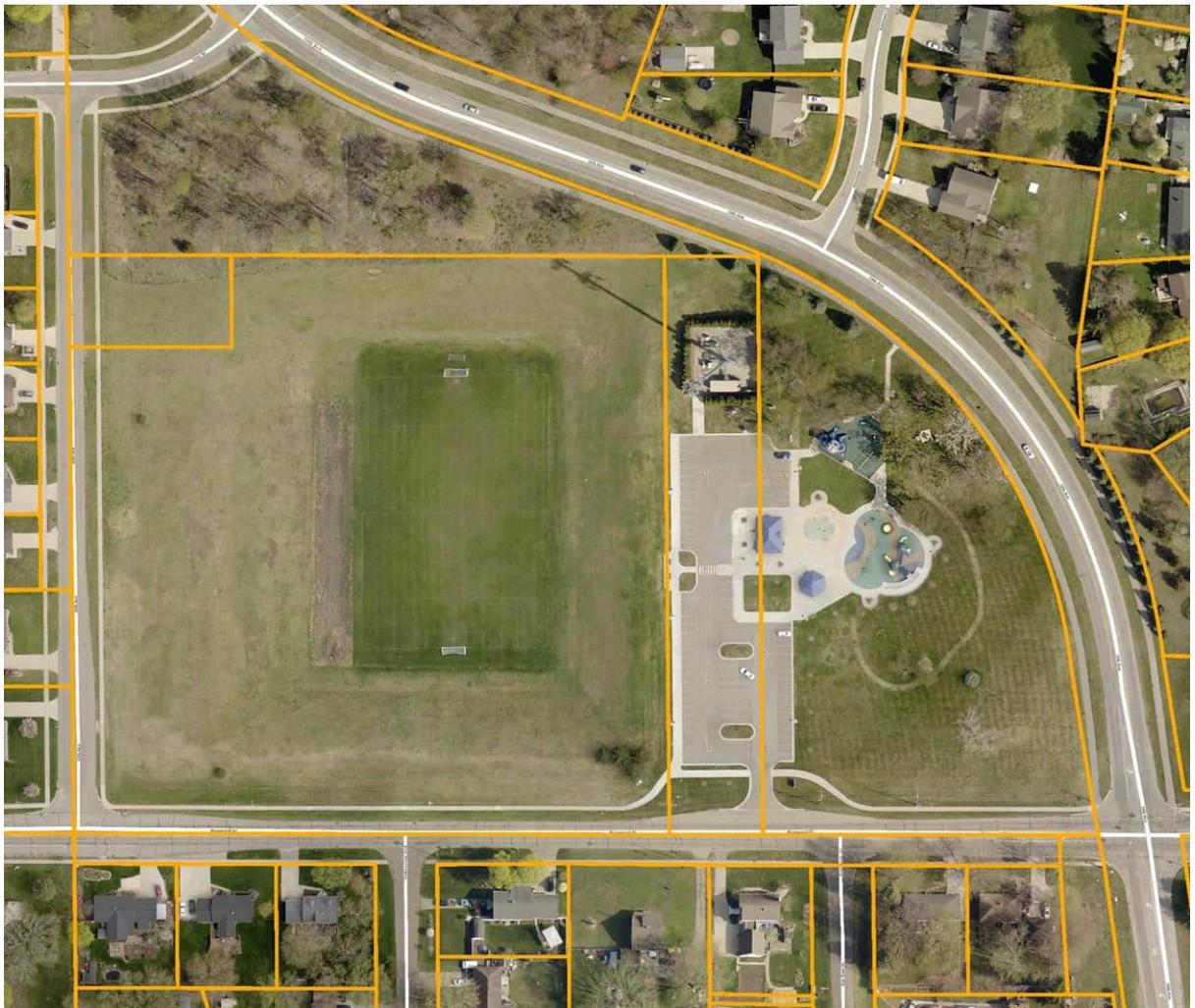
- The picnic table areas and some benches are not accessible with a paved pathway.
- The disc golf course does not have accessible pathways.
- There is no paved accessible path to the soccer field.
- Consider adding facilities for the soccer field including benches, bleachers, and viewing platform at the top of the slope.
- Consider developing the triangular shaped wooded area of the park at the north end .
- Consider paving the gravel walking path and widening for accessibility.

## Grant History

- None



# Rosewood Park



# Rush Creek Park

Address:	4551 Port Sheldon Street	Accessibility:	2
Location:	West side	Park Type:	Community
Size:	41.24 Ac	Service Area:	3 mile

## Description

Rush Creek is one of the larger parks in the township and is surrounded by a natural area containing two creeks, which connect into Rush Creek to the south of the park. The park is accessed through a residential neighborhood and includes a trail connection to the neighborhood to the east and to Port Sheldon St to the south.

Site features include: baseball field, tennis courts, 2 playgrounds, nature path, paved trails, pavilion, picnic areas and grills, basketball hoop in the parking lot, paved parking, open space for informal soccer fields, disc golf, and a port-a-john.

## Opportunities

- There are no marked barrier free parking spaces or paths from the parking. Consider marking barrier free spaces and adding path connections.
- Tennis court need to be resurfaced.
- Playgrounds need new surfacing, accessible ramps, and updated equipment.
- Consider adding paved paths to connect site features.
- Consider adding permanent restrooms.
- Consider adding barrier free picnic tables and grills.
- Some parking areas need resurfaced.
- Consider providing benches, bleachers, and accessible paving for the baseball field.

## Grant History

- None



# Rush Creek Park



# Woodcrest Park

Address:	1310 Baldwin Street	Accessibility:	1
Location:	East side	Park Type:	Neighborhood
Size:	17.3Ac	Service Area:	1 mile

## Description

Woodcrest Park has frontage on Baldwin Street, but is accessed from the residential neighborhood off Boulder Bluff Dr, and is challenging to find. The park has mature play equipment and large areas of open space. The main feature of the park includes a small pond that is mostly used for drainage purposes.

Site features include: playground, paved parking, open spaces that can be used for informal soccer field, narrow pathway, pond, and a port-a-john.

## Opportunities

- Parking lot does not have marked barrier free spaces, consider adding markings and signs.
- Existing path does not meet ADA standards and is in poor conditions. Consider widening and repaving.
- Provide barrier free path to existing playground.
- Consider adding barrier free picnic tables and grill.
- Consider adding benches, seating areas, and pond overlook.
- Consider adding restrooms and/or providing accessible path to port-a-john.

## Grant History

- 1978 Land and Water Conservation Fund



# Woodcrest Park



# GT Connections (Georgetown Senior Center)

Address:	7100 8th Ave	Accessibility:	4
Location:	East side of Township	Park Type:	n/a
Size:	10,044 sq ft	Service Area:	1 hour drive

## Description

Georgetown Connections is a community focal point on aging where older persons as individuals or in groups come together for services and activities which enhance their dignity, support their independence and encourage their involvement in and with the community.

GT connections is located on the north side of 8th Avenue Park and offers multiple recreational facilities, classes, social services, and programs to those 55 years old and above. The facility was built in 2016 and is fully owned and operated by the Township. The facility offers yearly membership for residents at \$15 per year and to non-residents at \$35 per year.



## Facilities

- Office Space
- Computer lab
- Conference Space
- Exercise room with lake views
- Multipurpose recreation Room
- Full service kitchen
- Exterior covered canopy
- Outdoor patio
- One-mile pathway
- Waterfront
- Nature observation



## Grant History

- None

# GT Connections (Georgetown Senior Center)





## Non-Motorized Trails

Non-motorized transportation, with facilities designed primarily for pedestrians and bicyclists, is a critical element of an integrated parks and recreation system. A connected system of non-motorized facilities could help promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles, relieve traffic congestion, reduce air pollution and fuel consumption, and improve quality of life. Trails, greenways and park systems provide important, carbon-free transportation options and link residents to popular destinations and to one another.

There are a number of different types of trails that can provide both transportation and recreation opportunities. Trails may be located within parks, on an independent right-of-way, or within the road right of way. Connector Trails are defined as “multipurpose trails that emphasize safe travel for pedestrians to and from parks and around the Community” (J.D. Mertes and J.R. Hall, Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, 1995). These trails are generally located within the road right-of-way and can be divided into two types. Type I has separate paths for different user types, such as pedestrians and bicyclists. Type II has mixed uses and is suited to lighter use patterns.



There are approximately 3.6 miles of township owned non-motorized trails within the Township limits. There is also approximately 8-miles of trail under county ownership known as the Idema Explorer’s Trail. In addition, there are many miles of paved trails within township parks, such as the loop trails in Maplewood and 8th Avenue Parks.

### Maplewood Lake Trail

The Maplewood Trail is an approximate 0.3 mile trail that connects the loop trail at Maplewood Park to Baldwin St.

### Trail from Rush Creek Park to Port Sheldon St

This 0.5-mile trail travels through drain property, crosses Rush Creek and connects Rush Creek Park south to Port Sheldon St. The trail also branches out to connect to an existing neighborhood to the east.

### 44th Street Trail

Approximately 2.8-miles to non-motorized trail alongside 44th Street from Chicago Drive to the east township boundary. The trail connects to the Kent Trail system via Kenoa Avenue in Kent County which connects to many other regional trails.



### **Baldwin Bicycle Trail**

The Baldwin Bicycle Trail is an access point near the Clean Water Treatment Plant. Parking is available on site. The trail connects to Millennium Park and can continue on to Kent Trails.

### **Idema Explorers Trail**

The Idema Explorers Trail is being constructed in phases along the south side of the Grand River. Once completed, the non-motorized, multi-use pathway will be 36.5 miles long (16 miles are completed). It will connect eight county and state parks in Ottawa County. It will also connect Millennium Park to Grand Haven; the Grand Valley State University campuses; and, hundreds of miles of regional trails, including a direct route to downtown Grand Rapids. Approximately 8 miles of the trail is completed within the Township.

### **Grand River Heritage Water Trail**

The Grand River Heritage Water Trail is a 41-mile water trail that encompasses nine distinct routes along the Grand River in Ottawa County. Paddlers can access the water trail at 18 different access points along the trail. The Grand River Heritage Water Trail provides basic information on places to access the river, educational explanations of natural features to be observed, descriptions of county parks and open spaces where stops can be made, and interesting historical points of interest to help explain the colorful and rich local history tied to the Grand River.



### **REGIONAL TRAILS**

The Georgetown Township is geographically positioned to access many of West Michigan's most popular regional trails and greenways that are located near the Township. The Fred Meijer Standale Trail, the Fred Meijer Pioneer Trail, the Musketawa Trail, the Fred Meijer Millennium Trail Network, and Kent Trails are located in close proximity to the Township in nearby Walker to the northeast.

### **Fred Meijer Millennium Trail Network**

The Fred Meijer Millennium Trail Network is located within Millennium Park and provides approximately 18 miles of paved and natural surface trails that wind throughout the park. At the north end of the park, the trails connect to the Fred Meijer Standale Trail. At the south end of the park, the trails connect to Kent Trails. The Fred Meijer Millennium Trail Network is maintained by the Kent County Parks Department.

### **Fred Meijer Pioneer Trail**

The Fred Meijer Pioneer Trail provides an east/west route through the north part of Walker and connects the Musketawa Trail to the Fred Meijer White Pine Trail. The Fred Meijer Pioneer Trail is maintained by the Kent County Parks Department.

### **Fred Meijer Standale Trail**

The Fred Meijer Standale Trail provides a north/south route through the nearby City of Walker. It runs from City Central Park to



the north side of Millennium Park. The trail is approximately 5.5 miles long and has a paved surface, wood boardwalks, and a landmark pedestrian tunnel. The trail connects area neighborhoods to parks, schools, a library, the Walker Ice and Fitness Center, City Hall, and the downtown Standale Business District. Parking for the Fred Meijer Standale Trail is available at City Central Park, Lincoln Lawns Park, and Harmon Field. The Fred Meijer Standale Trail is maintained by the City of Walker

### **Kent Trails**

Kent Trails is a regionally important, 15-mile long linear park which is owned and operated by the Kent County Parks Department. Kent Trails begins in Johnson Park and runs easterly on Veterans Memorial Drive into the City of Grand Rapids. A southerly leg crosses the Grand River into the City of Wyoming. Kent Trails also connects northerly into the Millennium Park trail system.

### **Musketawa Trail**

The Musketawa Trail is a regionally-important four season recreational trail that links the city of Muskegon to the city of Walker. The trail connects to the Fred Meijer Pioneer Trail in Ottawa County just outside the northwest city limits and travels north and west and connects to the Laketown Trail.

### **Buttermilk Trail**

The Buttermilk Trail is located in Hudsonville and is an approximate 1.2-mile non-motorized facility that extends from Elm Avenue in Hudsonville north to Port Sheldon Road, connecting Elmwood Lake and the Port Sheldon Sports Complex.

### **Cemeteries**

Cemeteries were some of the first American parks and were designed as places for contemplation and the enjoyment of nature.

Over time cemeteries changed from a park-like recreational space to a more isolated memorial type space to mourn. However it is still important to recognize the fact that cemeteries still provide green space for the community and can still act as a retreat from the fastness of modern life.

There are two (2) cemeteries located in the township that are maintained by the township. The two cemeteries include Georgetown Cemetery located on 28th St just north of Port Sheldon St, and Hanley Cemetery located at the corner of 4th Ave and Jackson St.

### **Fire Station 1**

Behind the Georgetown Township Fire Station 1 on 44th St, there is an existing soccer field that is used by the community. It was noted in the on-line survey that this field is heavily used by the community.

### **School Facilities**

Public school facilities, including playgrounds, sports fields and courts, can add tremendous recreational value to a community. Georgetown Township is served by three public school districts including: Jenison, Hudsonville, and Grandville. Since these facilities are beyond the jurisdiction of the township a detailed inventory of available



facilities are not available. Elementary school sites typically act as neighborhood parks for access to playgrounds and fields/open space and are often used for community recreation. In addition, middle schools and high schools generally contain the following outdoor recreational facilities that are open to the public: basketball, tennis, baseball/softball, soccer, playgrounds, football, track, and volleyball.

### Semi-Public Facilities

Some facilities exist that are available for public use but are not owned by the public. These facilities are owned through private-public partnerships or non-profit groups. The following are available to township residents:

#### Griffs Georgetown Ice Rink

Griff's Georgetown is formally known as the Georgetown Ice Center and is owned and operation by the owners of the Grand Rapids Griffins. The facility offers two ice rinks for public and private use as well as programs, leagues, lessons, camps, and parties. In the summer months Griff's offers roller hockey leagues. In addition to skating, the facility includes concessions, pro-shop, skate rental, locker rooms and showers.

#### Blandford Nature Center

Blandford Nature Center is a 264-acre nature and cultural center, of which approximately 88 acres are located about 20-minutes north of the township in Walker. Blandford includes over 8 miles of trails for walking, hiking, bird watching, wildlife viewing, and general nature enjoyment. Blandford offers seasonal camps, educational programming, wildlife experiences, rental space, and volunteer opportunities.

#### John Ball Park

The John Ball Zoo is a 103-acre park located 15 minutes northeast of the township, and



includes a 31-acre nationally recognized zoo, playground, picnic areas, band shell, ball diamonds, soccer fields, tennis courts, and basketball courts. The zoo is also considered a renowned conservation center and premier education facility that attracts over 600,000 visitors annually. The zoo also provides summer camps, educational programs, and conservation programs.

### Regional Facilities

Regional facilities may offer unique natural features that are particularly suited for outdoor recreation, such as viewing and studying nature, observing wildlife habits, fishing, boating, swimming, hiking, and trail use. They may also include active play areas and organized recreation as well as historical or cultural interest uses. While these parks are not controlled by or used for formal programming by the township, they are public facilities that provide recreational opportunities for the residents of the township. Given the close proximity to Grand Rapids and other adjacent urban areas, there are numerous recreational opportunities that surround Georgetown Township.

### State Facilities

State parks provide diverse recreational opportunities to Georgetown Township residents and the region. These facilities provide activities including camping,

picnicking, swimming, hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, hiking, cross-country skiing mountain biking, and horseback riding. State parks within an hours drive to Georgetown Township include:

- Allegan State Game Area - 51,355 ac
- Bass River State Recreation Area - 830 ac
- Blendon Twp State Game Area - 1801 ac
- Cannonsburg State Game Area - 1,363 ac
- Grand Haven State Game Area - 2,208 ac
- Middleville State Game Area - 4,583 ac
- Muskegon State Game Area - 15,733 ac
- Rogue River State Game Area - 6,200 ac
- Saranac-Lowell State Game Area- 2,334 ac

### County Facilities

Ottawa and Kent County provide many public park spaces that include a variety of passive and active recreational amenities. These facilities are located in or just outside the township and provide township residents with an enormous amount of recreational opportunities. Five large Ottawa County parks are located within the township limits on the north side of the township and are described below. Two large Kent County parks are located just outside of the township limits to the northwest and are also listed below.

### Port Sheldon Sports Complex

The 28.9 acre site is located south of Port Sheldon, just outside the Township boundary. However, this sports complex is managed by Georgetown Charter Township, in collaboration with A.Y.S.O., Hudsonville



Little League and Georgetown Softball. The site provides two (2) Little League Fields, three (3) softball fields and eight (8) soccer fields. Support facilities are limited to paved parking, with no modern restroom building or lighting.

### Bend Area

The Bend Area includes 405 acres located along the shore of the Grand River with access off of 12th Ave. The site features : Mixed floodplain vegetation including wooded areas, wetland, and former gravel mining lakes. The park is a popular site for hunting and fishing.

### Grand River Open Space

The Grand River Open Space is a 276-acre site located along the Grand River on the north side of the Township border. The site features : Mixed floodplain vegetation including wooded areas, wetland, and former gravel mining lakes. The site is mostly undeveloped with opportunities for fishing, hunting, and hiking.

### Grand River Park

Grand River Park is a 162-acre site along the Grand River. The park features wooded hills, floodplain forest, wetlands, a small man-made lake, and restored native grassland areas. The park offers opportunities for hiking, mountain biking, and skiing on the nature trails, as well as fishing from a wooden dock/boardwalk or from the shore of the lake and the Grand River. The park also



features a boat launch and universally accessible kayak launch at the Grand River, overlook decks, a fully enclosed picnic building, 3.43 miles of trails, and a barrier-free children's playground.

### Hager Park

Hager Park is a 104-acre site with access off of 28th Ave. and is one of the County's most popular parks. The park features a former arboretum with 40 acres of trees and shrubs, two creeks, native grassland, and a mature hardwood forest. The park features a variety of activities including: picnicking, multi-purpose building, playground, restrooms, concessions, pavilions, and 3 miles of trails.

### Grand Ravines

The Grand Ravines is a 187-acre site located along the Grand River and accessed off of Fillmore St and 42nd Ave. The park features scenic and ecologically significant steep wooded ravines extending from the interior of site to the Grand River shoreline. Park amenities include paved parking, restrooms, dog park, hiking, historic barn, overlook deck, floating dock, kayak launch, pedestrian suspension bridge, and 5.5 miles of trails.

### Harry A. Johnson Park

Located in Kent County and just outside the northeast limits of the Township, more than half of Johnson Park consists of scenic woods covering hills, valleys, and lowlands. The park also offers 1.4 miles of frontage on the Grand River. Park amenities include: fishing, hiking, 1.5-mile paved trail, biking, playgrounds, sledding hill, disc golf, ball diamonds, picnic areas, pavilion, boat launch, restrooms, exercise station, winter sports, and shelter house.

### Millennium Park

Millennium Park, located in Kent County just northeast of the township, is an expansive park stretching over 1,400 acres and provides multiple recreational opportunities including 17.5 miles of trails, over 350 acres of extensive lakes and wetlands, six miles of Grand River shoreline, and restored natural areas. The park includes the following facilities: swimming beach and beach house, splash pad, boat rentals, multi-use trails, fishing, open shelters,



picnicking, playgrounds, restrooms, sand volleyball, basketball, and lawn amphitheater. The park also boasts an impressive network of paved and natural surfaced trails, which are collectively referred to as the Fred Meijer Millennium Trail Network.

### Other Local Facilities

Other municipalities adjacent to and in close proximity to the township provide many park amenities and recreational experiences that serve Georgetown Township residents. These facilities are listed below.

Ottawa County (closest)	Acres
Bur Oak Landing	263.0
Deer Creek Park	2.0
Eastmanville Farm	157
Grand River Open Space	279
Kuits Bayou	80
Pigeon Creek Park	282
Port Sheldon Natural Area	440
Ripps Bayou	173
Riverside Park	95
Spring Grove	16
Upper Macatawa Natural Area	612
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,399</b>

Grandville	Acres
Calvin Crest Park	9.0
Grand River Waterfront	15.0
Heritage Park	19.0
Lee Street Park	1.0
Little League Baseball Complex	13.0
Mill Race Park	23.0
Peck Street Park	2.0
Wedgwood Park	14.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>96.0</b>

Wyoming	Acres
40th Street Park	5.1
Battes Park	0.6
Buck Creek Nature Preserve	40.2
Ferrand Park	2.4
Frog Hollow	2.2
George P. Tilma Nature Preserve	34.0
Gezon Park	73.6
Hillcroft Park	12.5
Ideal Park	41.9
Jackson Park	23.0
Kelloggsville Park	8.9
Kimble Stadium	9.9
Lamar Park	81.4
Lemery Park	79.9
Lions Park	8.0
Marquette Park	27.8
Oriole Park	12.5
Prairie Park	32.5
Palmer Park Field	2.0
Pinery Park	62.3
Southlawn Park	1.8
Veteran's Memorial Park	1.5
Wyoming Senior Center	4.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>632.4</b>

Grand Rapids	Acres
The city maintains an extensive park system, including 85 parks and open spaces encompassing 2,030 acres as well as joint school-park sites totaling 244 acres. Details can be found in the city of Grand Rapids Park and Recreation Master Plan.	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,274</b>

Walker	Acres
Alpine Estates Park	18.0
City Central Park	45.0
English Hills Park	5.0
Harmon Field	5.4
Lincoln Lawns	5.0
Spring Hill Park	10.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>88.4</b>

Hudsonville	Acres
Hillside Park	3.7
Hughes Park	19.2
Hudsonville Nature Center	74
Sunrise Park	12.6
Veteran's Park	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>110.5</b>

Tallmadge Township	Acres
Tallmadge Township Park	27.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>27.0</b>

### Grant Status

Georgetown Township has been successful in obtaining some grants from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) in the past. All grant assisted facilities are still present and open to the public. Below is a summary:

**Figure 4.2 - Parks Grant Summary**

Year	Project No.	Project Name	Funding Source	Grant Amount	Status
1975	26-00621	Pioneer Park	Land and Water Conservation Fund	\$17,530.00	Closed
1977	26-00929	Maplewood Park	Land and Water Conservation Fund	\$80,490.85	Closed
1978	26-01060	Woodcrest Park	Land and Water Conservation Fund	\$26,945.27	Closed
1999	CM-99-068	Georgetown Community Park	Clean Michigan Initiative	\$104,580.00	Closed
2010	TF-10-054	Maplewood Park	Trust Fund	\$333,300.00	Closed
			<b>Total</b>	<b>\$562,846.12</b>	

## Private Recreation Facilities

Several privately-owned recreation facilities located in the area complement the public parks system. Although these facilities are privately operated and often charge a use fee or require membership, they are considered because they offer specific recreation needs. A list of other local private facilities is provided below:

### Church Facilities

The Fairway Christian Reformed Church on 44th Street has a soccer field that is used by the Hornet Soccer Club. It was noted on the on-line survey that this soccer field is heavily used by the community.

The Jenison Bible Church on 44th St. also has a soccer field and sand volleyball court.

### Bowling

AMFAMF Eastbrook Lanes  
Aurora Bowl  
Clique Lanes  
Hillcrest Lanes  
Hudsonville Lanes  
Northfield Bowling and Cocktails  
Paragon Bowling Center  
Park Center Lanes  
Rockford Lanes  
Spectrum Entertainment  
Wengers Bowling Center  
Westgate Bowl  
Woodrows Duckpin Bowling

### Camps

Base Camp  
Breakthrough Basketball Camp  
Camp Blodgett  
Dymo Camp  
Salvation Army Kroc Center  
Tillman Elite Basketball Camp  
Van Andel Education Institute  
YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids

### Campgrounds

Adventure Point  
Bazan Baldwin Oaks Family Campground  
Campground Connection

Conestoga Grand River Campground  
Drew's Campground  
Dutch Treat Camping  
Hungry Horse Farm Camp  
Jackson Island  
Indian Trails Camp  
River Pine RV Park Camp  
Silver Creek Country  
Steamboat Park Campground  
Woodchip Campground

### Golf Courses

Alpine Golf Club  
Boulder Creek Golf Club  
Cascade Hills Country Club  
Gracewil Country Club  
Glen Eagle Golf Club  
Indian Trails Golf Course  
Ironwood Golf Course  
Kaufman Golf Course  
Kent Country Club  
Mines Golf Club  
Quail Ridge Golf Club  
Sand Creek Golf Course  
Scott Lake Golf  
Stone Water Country Club  
Sunny Brook Country Club  
The Pines Golf Course  
Thornapple Pointe  
Thousand Oaks Golf Club  
Wallinwood Springs Golf Club  
Watermark Country Club  
Western Greens  
X-Golf Grand Rapids

### Gymnastics / Dance / Athletics

8th Day Gym  
DanceSpire  
EAU Dance  
Empowered Athletics  
For the Kidz Gymnastics  
Form Fitness Studio  
Grand Rapids City Gym  
Grand Rapids Gymnastics  
Grand Raids School of Dance  
Grand Rapids Trampoline Academy  
Get Empowered Fitness Studio  
Gymco  
Haus of Glass Dance  
Hearts in Motion Dance  
HIS Dance Academy  
Hit Fore Athletics  
Horizon Kids Complex  
Impact Dynamic Training Sports Club  
Imprint Dance Co.  
K Elite Dance Academy  
Kids Unlimited Activity Center  
Michigan Cheer Company  
Newton Aerial Academy  
Optimal Performance Training Center  
Over the Top Academy of Dance  
R-Athletics  
RAD Kids of Grand Rapids  
Redeeming Fitness  
Rising Starz Gymnastics  
Snap Fitness  
Social Dance Studio

### Museums

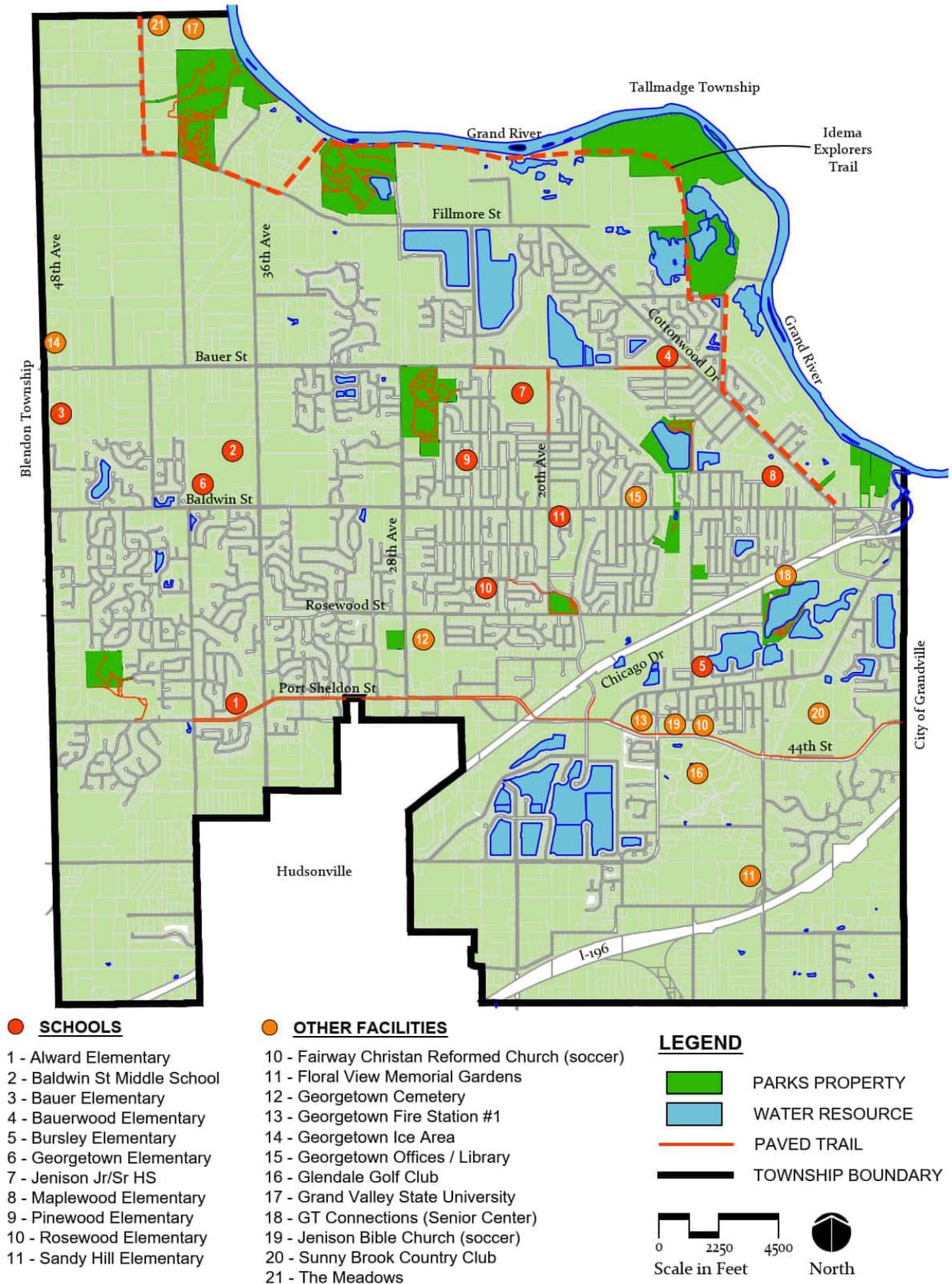
Byron Center Historical Society  
Center Art Gallery  
Frederik Meijer Gardens  
Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum  
Grand Rapids African American Museum  
Grand Rapids Art Museum  
Grand Rapids Children's Museum  
Grand Rapids Public Museum  
Grand Valley St University Art Gallery  
Jenison - Georgetown Township Museum  
Knowlton House Museum

The Sachi Barn  
Van Andel Museum Center  
Voigt House Victorian Museum  
Wyoming History Room

### Performance Venues / Theater

Aquinas Performing Arts Center  
Ambrosia Theater  
Broadway Grand Rapids  
Children's Creations Theater  
Circle Theater  
DeVos Performance Hall  
East Grand Rapids Performing Arts Center  
Forest Hills Fine Arts Center  
GLC Live at 20 Monroe  
Grand Rapids Ballet  
Grand Rapids Civic Theater  
Jenison Center for Arts  
Jewish Theater Grand Rapids  
Master Arts Theater  
Matthews Performing Arts Center  
Murder Mystery Company  
Peter Martin Wedge Theater  
Spectrum Theater  
The Intersection  
Van Andel Arena  
Wealthy Theater

Figure 4.3- Other Recreation Areas & Facilities



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## Description of the Planning Process

During the early phase of the planning process background data was gathered from site investigations and available reports in order to develop a current snapshot of the township and a comprehensive understanding of the needs of the community. This chapter looks to assess community need for parks and recreation facilities against facility availability and program offerings. There are a variety of methods for accessing community need for recreation services. This Plan uses the combination of the following methods to identify the recreational needs of the township:

1. Location and distribution of park space throughout the township
2. Quantity of park acreage and amenities
3. Analysis of demographic trends

### Level of Service Analysis

Level of Service Standards are guidelines that define service areas based on population that support investment decisions related to parks, facilities, and amenities. Standards may change over time as demographics, program life-cycles, and needs of the community change. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) maintains a database of park system data in the U.S. which, combined with a yearly agency performance review report, has taken the place of outdated park standards. VIRIDIS used information from the NRPA Park Metrics database as well as the 2023 NRPA Agency Performance Review to understand national

trends and metrics in park and recreation elements and to benchmark Georgetown Township with comparable communities. The NRPA Park Metrics and Agency Performance Review help inform conversations and policies about the role of parks and recreation planning, land acquisition, and development of park, recreation and open space property at the local level.

Building on data from the park and recreation system inventory, Georgetown Township was compared to similar systems (communities in the range of 20,000 – 49,999 people and communities in the range of 50,000-99,999) in the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA)'s park metrics database. We looked at both comparisons since the township population of 54,091 falls near the limits of each. The NRPA database contains self-reported information from parks and recreation departments across the country. This comparison allows the project team to benchmark the level of service in terms of park acreage and amenities per capita between Georgetown Township and peer communities nationally to evaluate the relative adequacy or inadequacy of the township's recreation system. It should be noted that these comparisons are to be used as a guide and should be interpreted according to local needs, trends, and current situations. The purpose of recreation planning is to address the specific needs of the community, based on its own particular resources and resident preferences/demands so that the plan best suits the community's desires for recreation.

### Service Area Analysis

NRPA guidelines classify parks, open space, and greenways in accordance with their size and the role they play in the overall park system. They include associated service areas for each park type that indicate a minimum standard for geographic balance and availability of each park type in the community. Classifying parks in the system ensures the entire community is served by a wide range of park and recreational facilities. Figure 5.1 delineates the service area for each park in Georgetown Township. Service areas for the parks types include:

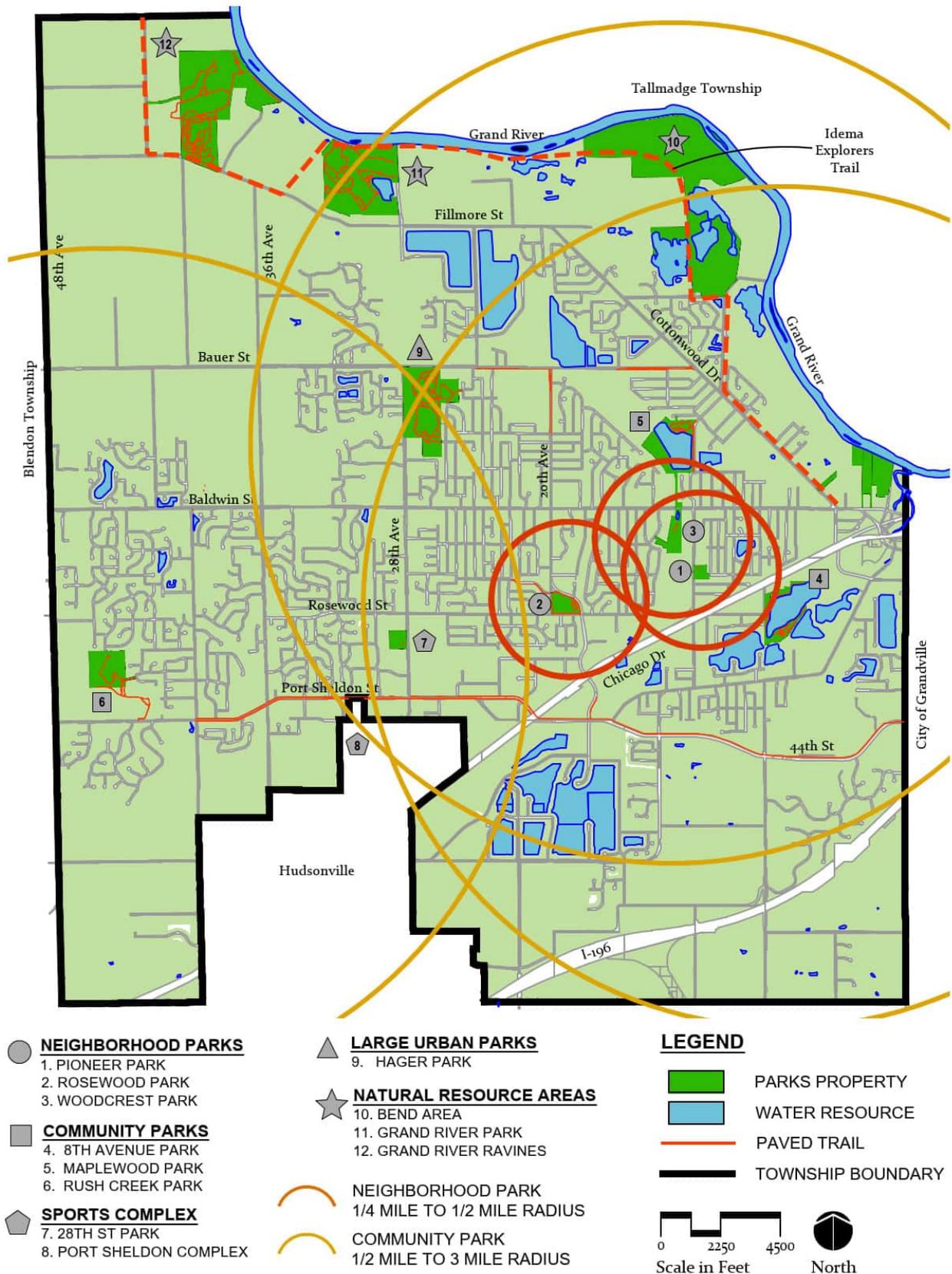
**Neighborhood Parks: 1/4 to 1/2 miles**  
**Community Parks: 1/2 to 3 miles**

### Evaluation

Analysis of the geographic distribution of park facilities throughout the township reveal that while overall park coverage is good, the township should consider addressing the following:

- The Township does not have any mini parks in the system.
- Neighborhood parks are clustered in the east end of the Township and not evenly spread out around the township.
- Community parks provide good coverage on the east and west side of the township but lacking in the northwest and south east areas.
- The neighborhoods on the west side of the township is not served by neighborhood parks.
- The north side of the township includes four large county parks along the Grand River.

Figure 5.1 - Park Service Areas



**Needs**

- Addition of mini parks in the higher dense neighborhoods throughout the township.
- Addition of neighborhood parks on the northcentral and west areas of the township.
- Addition of a community park in the northwest and southeast areas of the township.
- Generally, most of the parks are clustered in the eastcentral area of the township, consider adding parks to other areas of the township that is lacking coverage.
- The south side of the township is lacking park facilities, consider land acquisition opportunities to expand park facilities.

**Park and Open Space Acreage**

A basic measure of the level of service is the amount of park and open space acreage available per resident. In this Master Plan, the analysis begins by considering “accessible”, usable acreage, which excludes golf courses, cemeteries, undeveloped land, school sites, and county parks. The analysis showed that “accessible” park acreage per capita in Georgetown Township is below comparable cities (see figure 5.2). The NRPA database demonstrated a median of 11.2 acres per 1,000 residents in similarly sized cities, and 10.8 acres per 1,000 residents in all communities. Georgetown Township measures at 4.2 acres of developed parkland per 1,000 residents. However, we must take into consideration that there are five large county parks located within the township that provide an enormous amount of recreational facilities to the community. Therefore, if you include the county park acreage in the calculation, then Georgetown Township would boast 16.2 acres per 1,000 residents which exceeds the acreage of all communities by almost 50%. In addition, there are many parks within close proximity to the township in the adjacent Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area, thus providing additional park acreage that is available to Georgetown Township residents.

Although having large county parks within the township positions Georgetown Township well with capacity for additional population growth, the township should consider increasing

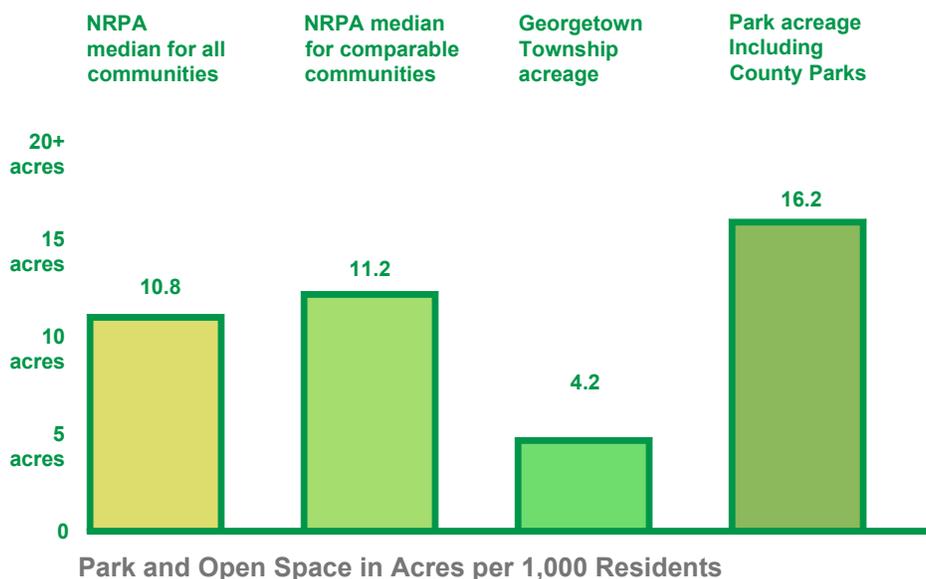
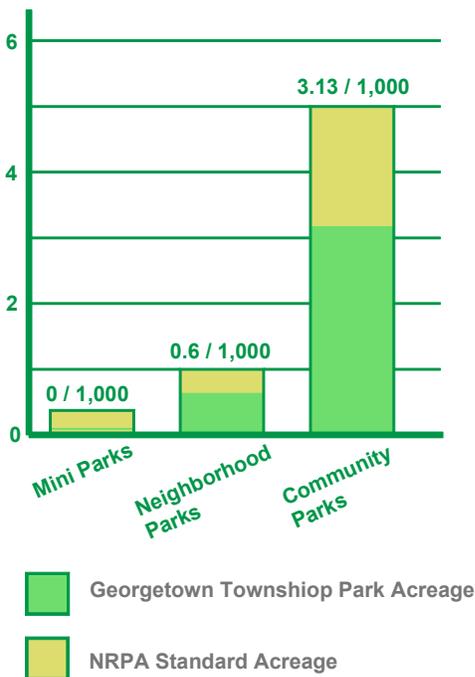


Figure 5.2 - Park Acreage

its own accessible park acreage with mini parks and neighborhood parks to service its local neighborhoods, and to not have to rely on other municipal park services. This also demonstrates an opportunity to expand park facilities within the township's own holdings, upgrade existing facilities, and improve general park maintenance.

In addition to overall acreage, NRPA metrics recommend a certain number of park acres per units of population for different types of park classifications. NRPA standards state that per 1,000 residents, 0.25 acres of mini parks, 1 acre of neighborhood parks, and 5 acres for community and regional parks is needed to meet the needs of the community. Georgetown Township is below the standard for all three park types (see figure 5.3). It should be noted that these standards are to be used as a guide and interpreted according to local needs, character, trends, and current Township capacity, and the demand may be greater or less than the national standard.



Park Types in Acres per 1,000 Residents

Figure 5.3 - Park Type

### Park Amenities

Park amenities are the built elements within the townships' parks that support various forms of recreation. Passive recreation and active recreation are the primary types of recreational uses. Passive recreation includes less intense activities that are more quiet and non-exertive for a limited numbers of users. Active recreation requires space and facilities capable of accommodating exertive activities. Examples include: sports fields, play apparatus areas, open areas, special facilities, such as pools and court areas, and areas for organized activities.

Recreation areas must provide for both types of use and preferably include a variety of opportunities for each to respond adequately to a wide range of interests and age groups. For many users these are crucial components that help them feel welcome and safe. It is critical that Georgetown's parks supply the right number and types of amenities to meet the needs of their users.

To understand gaps and surpluses among amenities in Georgetown Township, Level of Service metrics from the NRPA benchmarking database were used. The analysis showed that in the township's "basic" park amenities per capita, in categories with comparable NRPA benchmarks, are below both comparable communities and the average for all communities (except for soccer). However, if the school facilities are included in the analysis, then the park amenities per capita exceed the standards of both comparable communities and the average of all communities. Even though the school facilities are generally open to the public and provide residents of the township with recreational facilities, the township should consider adding facilities to increase their own offerings so they do not have to rely on the schools. Also not included in this analysis

**Figure 5.4: Park and Recreation Facilities - Population per Facility**

Facility	NRPA median for similar population	NRPA median for all agencies	Georgetown Township	Including Schools
Tennis	5,577	5,860	18,030	2,003
Playground	3,779	3,759	6,010	2,163
Baseball	7,237	6,863	27,045	3,606
Softball	17,078	11,384	27,045	3,606
Basketball (outdoor)	8,790	7,404	13,522	3,863
Volleyball	22,960	17,475	54,091	27,045
Soccer	7,207	7,228	2,847	2,112
Football	29,374	26,780	-	18,030
Dog Park	54,119	43,532	-	-
Senior Center	67,139	59,727	54,091	54,091
Swimming Pool	43,100	38,865	-	-
Community Center	53,331	29,494	54,091	54,091
Auditorium	60,495	67,862	-	-
Pickle ball	11,150	13,922	-	-
Skate Park	62,927	53,144	-	-
Outdoor Ice Rink	33,214	17,741	-	-

are the facilities provided by the county parks and private facilities within the township that also provide additional facilities including soccer fields, playgrounds, and ball fields but are not controlled by the township. Overall between Georgetown Township's facilities, the county facilities, and the school facilities, the township residents are adequately served with park amenities.

While the NRPA benchmarking analysis is limited by the availability of amenity categories in the database, discussions during the engagement process, revealed community interest in more specialized amenities such as a water based activities, pickle ball, winter activities, and nature based activities.

The combination of the benchmark analysis and public input give clear direction for the township. The township has done a good job of providing basic park amenities across the community. There is a desire however, for new, innovative and specialized amenities to add diversity to the system. At the same time, the community has demonstrated need for more trails, access to natural areas, and gathering spaces. Focusing on walking and biking trails within the system would provide the greatest benefit for the largest number of residents within Georgetown Township. Respondents indicated they were very supportive of expanding walking and biking trails and the community has also voiced that restrooms and outdoor facilities for fitness and sports are high priorities for the future. (Additional detail on public engagement is discussed within the following chapter).

## Trends Analysis

A number of recent reports and surveys exist regarding parks and recreation participation patterns within the United States. Inferences can be made about the township parks and recreation program and service needs by cross referencing the research data with Georgetown Township population demographics.



The numbers show that during the pandemic in 2020, over 260 million people visited a local park or recreational facility. Additionally, 70% of us either maintained or increased park, trail, and public space usage, with about 50% being parents, active adults, and those 25 and under. This trend is likely to continue post-pandemic and outdoor recreation options remain popular.

According to the Outdoor Participation Trends Report 2023, by the Outdoor Foundation, 55% of the U.S. population, ages 6 and over, participated in outdoor recreation in 2021, which in Georgetown Township would equate to 29,750 people. In addition, the report states that the Midwestern region of the US, which includes Michigan, has the second highest rate of outdoor participation in the country. This report also found the following trends:

- Since the COVID-19 pandemic was declared in March 2020, the number of

new outdoor recreation participants has increased by 26%.

- The most popular outdoor activities by participation rate include hiking, camping, fishing, running, and biking.
- The number of participants 65 years and older increased more than 16.8% since 2019 and those between 55 to 64 increased by 11.7%.
- More families are participating in outdoor recreation activities than ever with the participation rate for households with children at 61% vs. households with no children at 46.4%.
- Local neighborhood parks, playgrounds, and city parks are the most popular venues for outdoor outings, and the closer-to-home the venue is the more frequent the visit is.
- America's youth are spending more time outdoors, as just over 70% of kids aged 6-17 are participating in outdoor recreation, with the younger ages (6-12) being more active.
- The number 1 reason for participating in outdoor recreation was to be physically active.

According to the 2023 Participation Report by the Physical Activity Council, in 2022, 78% of the U.S. population ages 6 and over are active on some level which in Georgetown Township would equate to 42,191 active people. The Participation Report also found:

- Interest in outdoor recreation is on the rise due to people wanting to experience nature, join fitness classes, and participate in team sports.
- Fitness sports (67%), outdoor sports (55%), and individual sports (41%) show the highest participation rates.
- Team sports (23%), racket sports (16%), water sports (14%), and winter sports (8%) show lower participation rates.
- Participation in fitness sports and outdoor

sports are trending up over the last 5 years.

- Participation in individual sports are seeing declining rates over the last 5 years.
- Participation in team sports, racket sports, winter sports, and water sports has remained mostly even over the last 5 years.

According to the 2023 NRPA Americans' Engagement with Parks Report 62% of survey respondents visit a park at least once per month, 38% visit a park once per week, and 84% visited a park at least once in the last year. The report also indicates that 62% of respondents visit parks to be with family and friends while 54% visited parks for exercise.

Other key findings include:

- 84% of adults seek high-quality parks and recreation facilities when choosing a place to live.
- 7 in 10 U.S. residents have at least one park, playground, open space, or recreation center within walking distance to their homes.
- 3 in 4 adults agree that geographic equity should be an extremely important goal for local parks and recreation.
- About 9 in 10 people agree that parks and recreation is an important service provided by local government.



Taking these use patterns and transferring them to Georgetown Township, considering the following activities would capitalize on trends as they relate to outdoor recreation and population in the township:

- Non-motorized trail / sidewalk opportunities to connect parks. This aligns with desires noted in the on-line survey.
- Fitness equipment in parks.
- Expand team sport activities.
- Provide camping and fishing activities.
- Adventure sports such as BMX biking and cross-country skiing.

Age also plays an important role in recreation as it relates to activity and participation.

According to the 2023 Participation Report by the Physical Activity Council, the most active group (82%) is those 18 and under, followed by those 18-34 (76%), those 35-49 (72%), and those 50 and older (67%). The report also found the following:

- Outdoor sports and team sports have the highest participation rates for those 18 and under.
- Fitness sports and outdoor sports have the highest participation rates for those 18-49.
- Those 50 and older prefer fitness



activities, particularly low impact activities such as walking, cycling, or aquatics.

In addition, the 2023 NRPA Americans' Engagement with Parks Report reported the following:

- The 18 and under group are growing up in the age of technology. Nationally, the use of technology while engaging in outdoor recreation is high in this age group. Recreation participants in this group are more likely to use smart phones and other devices to engage in outdoor recreation.
- The top three factors that motivate youth/families to participate in outdoor activities and visit recreational facilities are to be with family and friends (50%), to have a break from day to day stresses (47%), and to exercise or be physically fit (46%).
- The top three factors that hamper youth/families from participating in outdoor recreation are lack of time (38%), lack of interest in available activities (20%), and safety concerns (17%).
- Most participants under the age of 18 are visiting parks with parents/families, and relying on family to get to park facilities.
- Proximity to at least one park increases the likelihood that people visiting these areas do so by "active" means (e.g., walking, biking, running). 64% of respondents with at least one park nearby say they walk to local parks. Conversely, 70 percent of U.S. adults who do not live within walking distance of parks or recreation opportunities drive to those amenities.
- Those in the middle aged group are more likely to visit parks to be closer to nature and for fitness exercises.
- Those in the 23-43 age group are more likely to visit parks to experience excitement and adventure. Family oriented recreational facilities will also be important to these groups.

Approximately 55% of the population in the Township is under 18 (27%) and over 55 (28%). The 18-34 age group makes up 21% of the population and the 35-54 age group makes up the balance at 24%. Although the 55 and over group makes up the largest group, all four age groups are close percentage-wise in township make-up and therefore providing recreational activities that appeals to all age groups in the township is critical. The following activities would capitalize on trends as they relate to these age groups:

- Develop programs and facilities that support adventure recreation.
- Continue to develop youth sports facilities and programs.
- Offer technology focused activities as an integral component to recreation programs and facilities.
- Offer family oriented programming and park amenities including team sports.
- Provide opportunities to experience and enjoy nature by providing nature trails, interpretive signage, boardwalks, and other passive based recreation.

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## Description of the Public Input Process

Georgetown Township encourages its residents to take an active role in planning for their community's recreational opportunities. The township appreciates the fact that recreation planning plays an important role in maintaining the quality of life in a community and therefore tries to be responsive to citizen needs and desires for parks and recreation.

Community outreach is one way of obtaining a perspective on the needs and desires of the community and engaging in a process that includes; developing realistic alternatives; formulating goals, policies, and recommendations for public and private decisions; developing criteria to measure change; and involving people in the planning, design and decision processes.

In order to ensure that the township's parks and recreation offerings are aligned with the needs of the community, and to understand the community perception of the level of service being provided, the township engaged in a public input process.

### Community Outreach

The community outreach process included the following: an on-line survey, a public input opportunity at a township event, a 30-day public review period, and open public hearings. The input and opinions received through this community outreach helped the administration and facilitator provide the basis for revising the goals and objectives from the previous plan.

### On-Line Survey

In July of 2023 the Township developed an on-line survey to solicit input and ideas from its residents regarding current use and future needs of the township’s parks, recreational programs, services, maintenance, and facilities. The survey was conducted over a 90-day period using an on-line survey tool (Survey Monkey).

The survey was promoted to the community using a number of methods including: newsletters and publications, posting at the Township Offices and Library standard press release notification, distribution to local businesses, and through social media platforms including the city website and Facebook page, both of which receives heavy user engagement.

Seven-hundred ninety-six (796) individuals elected to fully complete the survey. Respondents were 70% female and 29% male (1% chose not to answer). Eighty-nine (89) percent of the respondents were Township residents. Most of the survey respondents



were between 35-44 years old (47%) with 14% in the 18-34 age group, 17% in the 45-54 age group, and 21% in the 55 and over age group. Eleven (11) individuals skipped the age question. See Figures 6.1 through 6.3 for more detailed results of selected categories. The Appendix contains the full survey results.

**Figure 6.1: On-Line Survey Results - Demographics of Survey Respondents**

Gender	Survey Respondents
Male	29%
Female	70%

Resident of the City	Survey Respondents
Yes	89%
No	11%

Age	Survey Respondents
0-17	0.51%
18-34	14.27%
35-44	46.88%
45-54	17.20%
55-64	12.61%
65+	8.54%

Ages in Household	Survey Respondents
<5	29.53%
5-9	48.27%
10-14	35.82%
15-19	21.18%
20-24	9.50%
25-34	17.59%
35-44	48.52%
45-54	21.57%
55-64	15.28%
65-74	8.99%
75+	1.80%

### Touch A Truck Community Input

In addition to the on-line survey, the township also sought and received input during its annual Touch-A-Truck fall event which is very well attended and provided an opportunity for many families to provide feedback. The event took place on Saturday, September 9, 2023 at the Township Library. VIRIDIS set up a table at the event that included dot polling and an idea board. The dot polling included images related to park amenities, programs, and activities and attendees were asked to place dots on their top priorities for each. Refer to Figure 6.4 for a brief summary from this event.

In addition, an idea board with park based questions was presented and attendees were asked what is most important to them regarding parks, in terms of safety, priorities, programs, and accessibility. The idea could be an improvement to current facilities, an idea for new facilities, or any other suggestion related to the improvement of the park system. **The top five ideas included: trails, accessible playgrounds, restrooms, pickleball, and outdoor concerts and festivals.** Refer to the appendix for all feedback results from this event.

**Figure 6.2: On-Line Survey Results - Patterns of Park Use**

Facilities with Highest Importance	Survey Respondents
Restrooms	68%
Playgrounds	49%
Preservation of Natural Areas	48%
Connect Parks w/ Trails	44%
Paved Trails in Parks	43%

Reason Preventing Park Use	Survey Respondents
Too Busy	46%
Not sure what is offered	32%
Not sure where facilities are located	25%
No / poor restrooms	16%
Program not offered	16%

Top Activity Participation	Survey Respondents
Soccer	57%
Pickleball	41%
Golf	37%
Baseball/Softball	34%
Basketball	33%

Top Trail Activity Participation	Survey Respondents
Walking for Exercise	88.52%
Bike Riding	65.70%
Hiking	59.77%
Nature Observation	58.01%
Jogging/Running	34.68%

Most Visited Georgetown Park (Monthly)	Survey Respondents
Rosewood Park	39.97%
Maplewood Park	35.86%
8th Ave Park	25.33%
Rush Creek Park	11.80%
28th Ave Fields	11.67%

Most Visited Non-Georgetown Park (Monthly)	Survey Respondents
Hager Park	43.02%
Grand River Ravines	38.58%
Grand River Park	30.51%
Port Sheldon Complex	16.25%
Bend Area	13.96%

**Figure 6.3: On-Line Survey Results - Satisfaction Levels**

Highest Performance Rating	Survey Respondents
Playgrounds	30.45%
Proximity to Home	30.12
Large Natural Areas	28.27
Variety of Facilities	24.27%
Trail System	23.83%

Essential Actions to Improve Park System	Survey Respondents
Cleanliness	50.26%
Safety and Security	44.81%
Maintenance	35.67%
Upgrade Facilities	29.88%
Quality of Courts	23.92%

Top Desired Community Events	Survey Respondents
Concerts	31%
Festivals	22%
Family/Kid Events	17%
Pickleball	14%
Special Events	14%

Lowest Performance Rating	Survey Respondents
Staffing	12.20%
Field Conditions	14.08%
Posted Maps	16.69%
Safety and Security	16.93%
User Fees	17.19%

Overall Satisfaction with Township Parks	Survey Respondents
Very Satisfied	34.69%
Somewhat Satisfied	51.53%
Neutral	10.59%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	2.68%
Very Dissatisfied	0.51%

**Figure 6.4: Touch a Truck Results**

Most Important for Future Park Investment
Splash Pad
Trails
Water Based Activities
Pickleball
Restrooms

Top Desired programming ideas
Fitness Classes
Outdoor Music
Winter Activities
Kayaking / Paddle Board Rentals
Adult Classes

Top Desired Amenities
Restrooms
Trail connections
Water Based Activities
Winter Activities - Cross Country Skiing
Activities for Teens

Top Safety and Accessibility Ideas
Barrier Free Playgrounds
Barrier Free Fishing Areas
Cleanliness
Maintenance
Seating areas with Shade

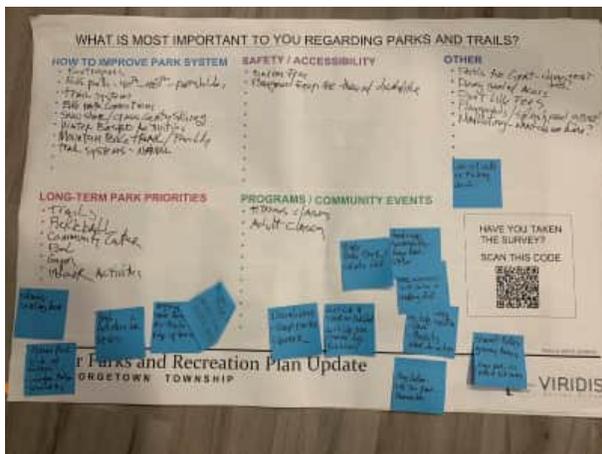
Top Long Term Park Priorities
Expand Trail System
Pickleball Complex
Community Center for all ages
Indoor activities
Pool / Gym

### 30-Day Public Review

Once the draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan was complete, citizens were provided with a 30-day period to review and comment on the plan. A copy of the plan was made available at the Georgetown Township Library and on the township’s website for review by the public on December 13, 2023. To notify the residents that a draft of the plan was available for review, a notice was published on the township website and social media, posted at the Township Hall, and noticed in the local newspaper, describing the purpose of the 30-day review period. A copy of the notice that was published/posted is included in the Appendix.

### Public Hearings and Meetings

On December 11, 2023, the Township Board of Trustees reviewed and discussed aspects of the plan at its regularly scheduled meeting. This meeting was open to the public and presented the opportunity for the public to review and comment on the plan and make recommendations. On January 22, 2024, the Township Board of Trustees held a public hearing to review the plan and accepted input at its regularly scheduled meeting prior to adoption. This meeting was noticed and open to the public and presented the opportunity for the public to review and comment on the plan and make recommendations. Meeting minutes, meeting notices, and recommendations can be found in the Appendix.

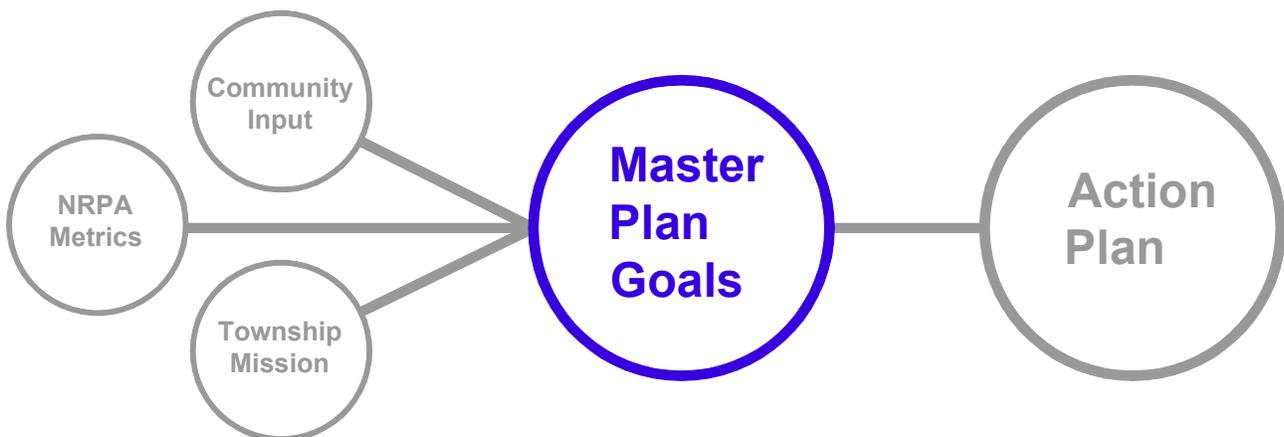


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# Goals and Objectives

As a result of the recreation inventory, public input, survey results, and trends, Georgetown Township has developed the following goals and objectives in order to guide the management and development of recreation opportunities for the next 5 years. Goals and objectives are meant to guide the intent of the actions to be taken, but flexible enough to reflect changing attitudes and opportunities. A degree of flexibility is essential for the township to be responsive to its citizens. The goals are long-range in nature and intended to be broad in scope to accommodate future change. The objectives are short-range in nature and intended to direct specific program and development decisions to be made in the next five years. The goals are listed in no particular order.



## GOAL 1



Enhance existing recreation facilities to provide a high quality, accessible, year-round, and safe recreational experience at all township parks.

- Provide access to all users by meeting or exceeding barrier-free standards.
- Update existing playgrounds to meet current safety and ADA guidelines.
- Evaluate security measures such as emergency call boxes, security systems, lighting, and park visibility.
- Work with enforcement agencies and community organizations to provide a safe environment for park users.
- Maintain park facilities by providing adequate staff, equipment, and response systems.
- Incorporate low maintenance products and equipment that save energy, reduce wear, reduce environmental impact, and reduce demands on staff.

## GOAL 2



Preserve, protect, and improve historic, natural, and environmentally sensitive areas for appropriate public use and enjoyment and habitat protection.

- Develop management / maintenance strategies for natural areas including eradication of invasive species, enhancement of natural areas, and protection of water quality.
- Identify land acquisition opportunities to preserve environmentally sensitive areas.
- Provide programs and interpretive facilities that educate the public about the environment.
- Provide programs and facilities that support the conservation, protection, and preservation of the natural environment.
- Explore opportunities for, and incorporate certifications within new and existing infrastructure such as LEED certification.

## GOAL 3



Expand the diversity of recreation facilities available at new or existing recreation facilities to offer year-round opportunities for individuals of all ages and abilities in order to meet current and future demands.

- Identify new innovative equipment and/or facilities.
- Provide playground equipment for all ages.
- Integrate technology into parks and public spaces.
- Provide wide range of active and passive recreation facilities and programs with four season activities for all ages.
- Acquire property as it becomes available to ensure recreational opportunities keep pace with the needs of the community.
- Promote healthy and active lifestyles through fitness programs, four season recreation, and activities that encourage healthy habits.

## GOAL 4



Encourage community partnerships and joint ventures with groups and organizations that have a supportive relationship.

- Identify organizations with similar goals that can be collaborative and share costs for activities and events.
- Collaborate with local agencies, adjacent municipalities, and other public organizations.
- Coordinate with local school district and non-profit organizations to identify synergistic programs and activities.
- Explore opportunities to partner with private organizations to encourage philanthropic investment in township park and recreation facilities.
- Facilitate partnerships that support venues for sports, and recreational activities.

## GOAL 5



Provide non-motorized and way finding connections between parks, neighborhoods and community facilities, and municipalities.

- Identify potential opportunities for regional non-motorized trail connections to adjacent communities.
- Provide non-motorized connections to connect users with facilities throughout the community.
- Develop a way finding system to assist users locate facilities more easily and locate their proximity within the park system.
- Explore opportunities for easement acquisition for future trail connections.
- Explore opportunities to connect trail systems to local businesses.
- Develop a funding mechanism for long term trail maintenance.

## GOAL 6



Acquire property as it becomes available to ensure recreational opportunities keep pace with the needs of the community.

- Plan for long-range needs to develop existing township owned land, expansion of existing park facilities, and acquire new park property.
- Provide a geographically balanced park system throughout the township.
- Encourage new residential projects to include parkland and/or open spaces to serve future residents.

## GOAL 7



Increase community awareness of available park facilities and programs through communication, promotion, and branding.

- Promote volunteer opportunities and other methods of citizen support for programs and parks.
- Encourage public engagement in park facility development and programs through community out reach projects, stewardship programs, and interpretive programs.
- Continue to publicize park events, facilities and programs through social media, newsletters, press releases, web site, promotional events, and other media outlets.
- Increase resident awareness of the Township's park goals, events, and accomplishments to get the community involved in programs and increase use of park facilities.

## GOAL 8



Promote healthy and active lifestyles through park and recreation facilities and programs.

- Promote awareness of fitness programs that support healthy lifestyles.
- Provide four season recreation opportunities.
- Provide recreation facilities that encourage healthy habits.
- Target programs for specific age groups based on current trends.

**GOAL 9** Explore sustainable funding opportunities for future park development and maintenance.



- Explore partnerships with local corporations.
- Develop a fundraising arm or friends group for trail maintenance.
- Continue to seek funding opportunities from grants, foundations, millages, and donations.

**GOAL 10** Identify opportunities for place making and public space development.



- Integrate technology into parks and public spaces.
- Provide space for public art display.
- Provide for the display/use of sustainable technologies in public spaces.
- Use public space to promote the branding and identity of the park system.





## Action Plan

While the Master Plan sets out a vision for the future of Georgetown Township’s parks and recreation system, realizing this vision will require a carefully considered implementation plan with clear, actionable steps. The Action Plan and Capital Improvement Plan of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan states the proposed course of development or improvement that will be considered over the next five years. The Goals and Objectives, from the previous section, serve as guidelines for the development of the Action Plan. The Capital Improvement Plan, which follows, will focus on the needs identified in the Action Plan and will project potential expenditures for the five-year action period on a park by park and project by project basis. The five-year period will begin in 2024 and extend through 2028. This time period will not be sufficient to accomplish all of the goals and objectives, but begins to prioritize those projects that may be achievable within the initial five years.

The Action Plan focuses on reduction of deficiencies, and expansion and improvements of facilities in a manner that not only meets current needs, but also diversifies the type and quality of recreational opportunities within the township. These needs were recorded during the public input process and were identified during the review and comparison of park standards and demographic/population trends.

The Action Plan describes specific priorities to be taken to address these needs; and the Capital Improvement Plan specifically itemizes those projects which will be most feasible

during the next five years. The proposed schedule will allow for flexibility as funds become available and as opportunities are presented. The priorities and action plan items for the 2024 Parks and Recreation Master Plan are as follows (not listed in particular order):

**Action A: Expansion of non-motorized trails**

The development of non-motorized facilities including sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and off-road pathways were strongly supported by the results of the community outreach process. Projects that include transportation/recreation trail planning and development are a priority including projects that enhance greenway corridors, connect parks and lakes, support existing trail extensions, eliminate barriers, adds sidewalks, and enhance the overall trail system.

Non-Motorized Transportation / Walkability

The township will look for and capitalize on opportunities to implement non-motorized trail facilities to connect parks, schools, residential areas, regional trails, and commercial hubs to each other and to neighboring communities. In addition, the township will encourage the development of pathways within existing parks to facilitate universal accessibility and promote a healthy lifestyle.

- Collaborate with Ottawa County and other stakeholders to identify opportunities to add new non-motorized facilities that can connect to the Idema Explorers Trail.
- Consider the development of a Township Non-Motorized Transportation Master Plan.
- Look for opportunities for trail heads at existing park sites.
- Provide safe pedestrian crossing facilities where existing trails cross roadways.
- Make new bike lanes and signage part of future roadway reconstruction projects.
- Consider collaborating with the County to establish a Township Complete Streets Policy.
- Consider trail or bike lane connections to major points of interest within the Township.

**Action B: Improvements to existing facilities**

The most efficient use of township resources is to focus on projects that improve existing facilities and maximize the potential of township owned property. Projects that renovate or re-use existing facilities are considered a high priority. This may include improvements that eliminate barriers to increase accessibility for all users, renovations and upgrades to existing equipment and features to ensure modern and clean facilities, and redevelopment or expansion of existing parks to eliminate redundancy and maximize the potential of the site.

28th Street Park

This park ultimately will be taken over by the cemetery expansion, and therefore no future development is expected for the park. Since this facility provides numerous soccer fields for use by the community, the township may consider identifying potential land acquisition opportunities to replace this facility. In addition, the township may consider maintaining some level of park facilities in combination with the cemetery expansion including restrooms, trails, pavilions, landscaping, and benches.

8th Avenue Park

This park facility is mostly developed and improvements may be centered around maintenance and upkeep. The township is planning to build pickleball courts at this facility

and the design is underway. Some of the existing facilities need replacement or repair including the following: resurface the basketball court, resurfacing of asphalt trails and north parking area, replacement or repairs to the boardwalks, and maintenance to the beach area to remove vegetation/weeds and add new clean sand. There are a few areas where barrier free pathways are needed to connect facilities such as the picnic areas and north parking lot. Other improvements may include additional shade at the beach, addition of benches and barrier free fishing areas, native landscaping and removal of invasive species.

#### Maplewood Park

This highly used park is also mostly developed but has opportunities for improvements. The tennis courts and the basketball courts need a new color coating surface. There is one picnic table that needs a barrier free connection with a paved path. The existing lake provides a huge opportunity to consider the development of both active and passive water based activities. Proposed activities may include: kayak/canoe launch/rentals, additional decks for fishing and observation, native landscaping, and nature based educational signage. This park could be a good location for the addition of a dog park and large rental facility.

#### Pioneer Park

This is a mature park that could benefit from the upgrade of current facilities. The parking lot area needs marked barrier free spaces, and the curb stops need to be removed to allow for barrier free access to the park. Consider resurfacing the aging parking lot and adding curbs and barrier free ramps. This park currently utilizes a port-a-john and the township may consider the addition of permanent restrooms for the park. The existing picnic shelter is aging and is in need of maintenance or replacement. The baseball field needs improvements to upgrade the infield and general facilities. Baseball field improvements may include, new fencing and backstop, player benches, bleachers or spectator viewing area, paved pathway to connect the field to the rest of the park, irrigation for the outfield, new infield material and removal of weeds. The existing play equipment is older and in need of replacement due to sharp edges and compliance issues. This park would be a good location to include new playground equipment for both tots and older kids. This park could benefit from the development of a new master plan design.

#### Rosewood Park

This park offers a high quality park experience with many family friendly facilities. Potential improvements to the park may include: facilities for the soccer field including a barrier free path to the field, benches, and spectator viewing areas. There is also a undeveloped section of land to the north that could be developed with trails and picnic areas. The park features a disc golf course and picnic areas that are in need of barrier free access. A new loop path throughout the park would provide access to all existing facilities. This park would be a good location to add adult exercise equipment and a skate park for teen activities.

#### Rush Creek Park

This is a large park with an abundance of open space and activities, many of which are in need of replacement and maintenance. Improvements may include: barrier free marked parking spaces, paved pathways to existing activities, ramps to the playgrounds, and updated

playground equipment and surfacing. Other improvements that may be considered include: resurfacing of the tennis courts, adding permanent restrooms, extend disc golf to 18 holes and add tee pads, adding picnic tables, grills, and benches, and new facilities for the baseball field including benches, bleachers, and paved access. This park would be a good location for the development of a large rental structure as well as a trail head location for the existing pathways that connect to the east and south. In addition, adding activities for teens such as basketball courts, and adding pickleball courts for seniors would make this park a hub of multi-generational users.

#### Woodcrest Park

This park also includes large areas of open space that is currently underused due to lack of facilities and access. Barrier free accessibility improvements may include: mark barrier free parking spaces, provide access to the playground, and improve the existing pathway with a wider paved path that traverses the site. Other improvements may include restrooms, new playground equipment for all ages, picnic tables and grills, additional pathways, pond improvements and clean up, and native landscaping. The township may consider a new master plan be developed for this park to assist with future development.

#### **Action C: Reduce or minimize operating costs**

With budgets getting tighter and grants becoming more competitive, projects that can help reduce operating costs are a priority. Examples include: projects that increase efficiency in operations and reduce maintenance, removal or replacement of equipment or features that are costly or inefficient to maintain, projects that consider the use of alternative energy sources and use of recycled materials, and projects that could generate revenue.

#### **Action D: Preserve and enhance natural features and environmentally sensitive areas.**

During the community outreach process, the community expressed a strong desire to further utilize and protect the township's natural areas and features, and to implement environmentally sustainable maintenance practices. This includes invasive species management, nature programming, additional trails including soft trails, use of native species, interpretive signage, using recycled materials and alternative sources of energy, and employing environmentally sustainable design and maintenance practices; which includes a reduction of manicured lawn areas and consideration of an environmentally-friendly system of turf management.

#### **Action E: Planning for future parks and recreational needs**

As the community continues to grow and change over time, the Township continues to dedicate themselves to improving recreational offerings for the community. The township understands that in order to continue to ensure that park and recreation offerings adapt to and meet the needs of the growing community, they must be willing to continually invest in and look for new opportunities in parks and recreation programs, facilities, and services. This makes planning for future parks and recreation facilities a high priority. This is reflected in projects that spark or are a part of economic development, projects that seek opportunities for land acquisition, and the pursuit of additional funding mechanisms. The following are examples of projects the township may consider to meet this focus:

### Land Acquisition

The township will look for opportunities to purchase additional land for recreational or preservation purposes as it becomes available within or adjacent to the township limits. Future land acquisitions are planned to grow current parks and trails for neighborhood connections to recreation and natural areas and increase park land. Other opportunity land acquisitions may include easements for trail development, environmentally sensitive areas, or other land adjacent to existing parks.

### Winter Recreation

Public feedback indicated that winter recreation is a high priority for programs to add to the township park system. Such activities include cross-country skiing, sledding, ice skating, and snowmobiling.

### Pickleball

Results of the on-line survey strongly indicated that there is a need for developing pickleball courts, with an emphasis on courts dedicated to pickleball (not line markings on tennis courts). The Township is currently in the process of designing pickleball courts at 8th Avenue Park, but may consider additional courts in the future at other parks to provide a balance of access.

### **Action F: Develop diverse, balanced, and innovative park facilities**

Given that some of the Township's parks are mature facilities, developing diverse park facilities and incorporating new innovative park features may be a priority for the township to consider. In addition, during the community engagement process, it was conveyed that the residents desire a balanced park system with newer features. The following are examples of projects the township may consider in response to resident needs:

#### Mountain Bike Trails

As an addition to the outdoor experiences found in the parks system, a mountain bike trail could be developed that will appeal to bikers of all levels from gentle grades through a peaceful forest setting to trails for the more adrenaline charged. This area may include programs on bicycle safety and building cycling skills.

#### Outdoor Gym

An Outdoor Gym could be developed and feature fitness equipment available all year for adult, children and the disabled. Fitness areas may also be set within a forested area and encourage stretching and strength exercises to accompany walking and biking experiences.

#### Kayak/ Canoe Rentals

During the public engagement process, many residents indicated a desire for the township to provide kayaking and canoeing opportunities.

#### Community Gardens / Edible Trail

Creating edible forest landscapes of fruit and nut trees, berry bushes, and more along existing trails to encourage stops along the route to pause and enjoy nature, while enjoying

some of what nature provides. An Edible Trail project could provide learning opportunities on nurturing the ecosystem while increasing access to local, sustainable food. In addition, providing space for community gardens can provide many benefits to the community including stress relief, promotion of healthy lifestyle and wellness, education, environmental stewardship, and landscape beautification.

#### Other Items

The following items listed below were mentioned as being desirable concepts worth further exploration during the public engagement process:

- Splash pad / outdoor ice rink combo
- Additional Disc Golf
- Skate Park
- Dog Park
- Swimming pool / community center
- Wifi in parks
- Increase park marketing and awareness
- Interpretive signs for historic, cultural, and environmental education
- Habitat Restoration
- Wildlife viewing platforms
- Nature based activities

#### **Action G: Continue to provide a diverse slate of programs for all ages and seasons**

In addition to providing cutting edge park facilities, it is equally important to provide exciting programs and activities. This need was discussed during the community outreach process and the township recognizes the need for diverse programs that cover all ages and seasons.

### **Capital Improvement Plan**

As stated in the Action Program, improvements and development will occur as funds and opportunities evolve. Assistance will be solicited from all available sources and will include both physical and financial support. Local businesses, service organizations, land developers, and governmental agencies will be solicited for monetary and material support. The township will also seek funding assistance from all available sources such as trusts, charitable foundations, and all Federal and State funding programs. The Capital Improvement Plan shows a breakdown of the anticipated projects, priorities, estimated costs, and projected funding sources for the next five years. All projections are based upon year 2023 costs and will be refined as the program progresses. It should be noted that changes in the program may occur if projected funding levels increase or decrease, but it is anticipated that the changes would be related more to adjustments in the time schedule rather than specific projects.

#### **Potential Funding Sources / Resource Partners**

A variety of funding sources and resource partners may exist to assist with the implementation of proposed recreation projects. A summary of the primary sources are listed below:

#### **Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund**

The MNRTF can provide assistance for the Township's outdoor recreation projects, including

Figure 8.1 - Action Plan - Potential Future Projects

Georgetown Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan				
2024 - 2028 Action Program - Potential Future Projects				
	Project	Estimated Cost	Relates to	
			Action	Goal
<b>PARKS</b>				
8th Avenue Park	Add pickleball courts with benches and shade structure	\$600,000	B, E	1, 3, 8
	Resurface basketball court, and areas of paths and parking that need repair	\$175,000	B, C	1, 3
	Replace/improve the beach sand and remove weeds	\$50,000	B, C	1
	Repair the aging boardwalks with new decking and hand rails	\$125,000	B, C	1, 3
Maplewood Park	Resurface basketball and tennis courts and replace fencing	\$150,000	B, C	1
	Add barrier free fishing dock at the west end, native plantings, and nature based interpretive signs throughout the water front	\$150,000	B, C, D	1, 2, 3, 7
	Add barrier free kayak launch with pathways to parking lot	\$100,000	B, E, F	1, 2, 3
Pioneer Park	Develop master plan for future park improvements	\$15,000	B, F	1
	Add restrooms, barrier free parking, and accessible paths within park	\$300,000	B	1, 3
	New tot lot and playground to replace existing equipment	\$300,000	B, E	1
	Pave area around baseball field backstop, replace fencing, add benches and bleachers, extend accessible path to ball field	\$150,000	B	1
Rosewood Park	Add viewing platform, benches, and accessible paths for the soccer field	\$200,000	B	1, 3
	Add picnic pavilion, picnic tables, grills and accessible pathway in the northern undeveloped section	\$300,000	B, C	1, 3, 5
	Add a paved loop path throughout the park connecting all features and picnic pads.	\$200,000	B, F	1, 3, 5
Rush Creek Park	Replace playground equipment and surfacing and add accessible ramps	\$500,000	B	1, 3
	Baseball field improvements: fence, turf, infield, seating	\$300,000	B, C	1
	Add a new restroom building and picnic pavilion	\$600,000	B, F	1, 3
	Add 4 pickle ball courts, 2 basketball courts, and resurface the tennis courts	\$800,000	B, E	1, 3
Woodcrest Park	Add restrooms, barrier free parking, and accessible paths within park	\$300,000	B, F	1, 3
	Replace playground equipment and surfacing, add picnic shelter tables, grills	\$300,000	B, F	1, 3
	Improvements to the lake for fishing, nature observation, native planting	TBD	B, D	1, 2, 3
All Parks	Removal of invasive species, add wayfinding signs and park maps, branding and marketing of facilities	TBD	B, D, F	1, 2, 7
<b>LAND ACQUISITION</b>				
28th St Park	Look for land acquisition opportunities to add land to replaces the soccer fields that will be lost when 28th St is taken over by the cemetery	TBD	E	3, 6
8th Avenue Park	Adjacent 128.7 acre parcels to the east to expand park	TBD	D, E	2, 6
Township-wide	Seek opportunities to add new "Mini Parks" within dense residential neighborhoods	TBD	E, F	3, 6
<b>TRAILS</b>				
Woodcrest/Maplewood	Provide a trail connection between Woodcrest Park and Maplewood Park across or under Baldwin St	TBD	A	1, 5, 8
Connect to Jenison Mill Trail	Connection from 8th Street Park east to Jenison Mill Trail	TBD	A	1, 5, 8
Connect to Jenison Mill Trail	Connection from Maplewood Park northeast to Jenison Mill Trail	TBD	A	1, 5, 8
Hager Park to Grand River	Connection from Hager Park north to Grand River Park	TBD	A	1, 4, 5, 8
Hager Park to Hudsonville	Connection from Hager Park south to Buttermilk Trail in Hudsonville	TBD	A	1, 4, 5, 8
Township-wide	Fill in gaps where sidewalks are missing, provide micro connections from neighborhoods to existing trails, and provide connects to Idema Explorers Trail	TBD	A	1, 4, 5, 8

land acquisition and physical development of park facilities. This assistance is intended to bolster existing facilities, protect critical natural resources and establish new parkland. Development project grants may range between \$15,000 and \$300,000; there is no limit to acquisition requests. The minimum required local match is 25%.

### **Michigan Natural Resources Passport Grant**

The Passport grant fund program is primarily focused on renovating and improving existing parks, however the development of new parks is considered eligible. The Minimum grant request is \$7,500 and the maximum grant request is \$150,000. The minimum required local match is 25%.

### **Land and Water Conservation Fund**

The LWCF is similar to the Trust Fund grant described above, in that it is meant to help fund land acquisition and park development. The minimum grant request amount is \$30,000 and the maximum grant request amount is \$300,000. The minimum required local match is 50%. Natural feature preservation has historically been the primary award criteria; and as such, this opportunity should especially be taken into account when planning for new passive recreation facilities. In addition, the LWCF now places emphasis on trails, “green” technology in outdoor recreation, universal design and coordination among recreation providers.

### **MDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)**

The TAP fund is a grant program that funds non-motorized paths and streetscapes that enhance the community’s inter-modal transportation system and provide safe alternative transportation options. The program uses federal funds to promote walkability, alternative transportation options, and place based economic development to improve the quality of life for communities. The minimum required local match is 20%.

### **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Funding**

The State and Community Highway Safety Grant Program supports State highway safety programs designed to reduce traffic crashes and resulting deaths, injuries, and property damage. Grant funds are provided to states, the Indian Nations, and Territories each year according to a statutory formula based on population and road mileage. Funds may be used for a wide variety of highway safety activities and programs including those that improve pedestrian and bicycle safety. The minimum required local match is 20%.

### **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)**

The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program assists areas designated as non-attainment or maintenance under the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 to achieve and maintain healthful levels of air quality by funding transportation projects and programs. Projects funded under the CMAQ program must be located in areas that were designated as a non-attainment area. Construction of bicycle and pedestrian facilities; non-construction projects related to safe bicycle use; and the establishment and funding of state bicycle/pedestrian coordinator positions, as established by ISTEA, for promoting and facilitating the increased use of non-motorized modes of transportation. The minimum required local match is 20%.

### **Clean Michigan Initiative Local Recreation Grants**

The program provides funding for the development and renovation of indoor or outdoor public recreation facilities and infrastructure. The goal of the program is to enhance or develop recreational opportunities by improving or replacing an existing public facility, by meeting the recreational needs of the local residents, or by attracting tourists. Grants are awarded for non-acquisition projects in amounts between \$15,000 to \$750,000, based on the need for the project, capability of the local community to operate and maintain the improvement, and quality of the site and project design.

### **Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)**

HSIP funds can be used for pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements. States may obligate funds under the HSIP to carry out any highway safety improvement project on any public road or publicly owned bicycle or pedestrian pathway or trail; or Safety projects, as provided under the Flexible Funding for States With a Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

### **Michigan Natural Resources Tree Planting Grants**

Through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), there are two tree planting grant programs that will assist in funding park landscape enhancements and reforestation projects. Applicants must provide at least 50% of the total project cost.

- **Arbor Day Mini-Grants.** This mini-grant program is designed to provide information and technical assistance to municipal governments and volunteer groups for urban and community forest activities related to Arbor Day. Applications are due in July with maximum grant request of \$20,000.
- **Urban Community Forestry Program.** This program provides the same services as above plus management plans, inventories and maintenance activities. These activities do not have to be related to Arbor Day. Applications are due in July with maximum grant requests of \$20,000.

### **Wetland Program Development**

The goals of the Environmental Protection Agency's wetland program and the Clean Water Action Plan are to increase the quantity and quality of wetlands in the U.S. by conservation and increasing wetland acreage, and improving wetland health. State, tribal, and local governmental agencies, interstate, intertribal, and local government associations are eligible to receive grant funds. Applications are due in the fall with a required 25% minimum local match. For more information, visit their website at: [www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/grant](http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/grant) guidelines.

### **Community Development Block Grant**

The Ottawa County Community Development Department implements the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program in all Ottawa County communities. Funds are distributed from the federal government to the County on a formula basis. The formula considers extent of poverty, population, housing overcrowding, age of housing, and population growth lag in relation to other metropolitan areas. The funded activity

must meet one of the CDBG national objectives (i.e., benefits low and moderate income persons, prevention or elimination of slums or blight, or a particular urgency because existing conditions pose a serious and immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community).

### **Baseball Tomorrow Fund**

This fund, which is provided through a joint partnership between Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association, awards annual grants to projects aimed at increasing the number of youth participating in and improving the quality of baseball and softball programs. The program is specifically aimed at children ages 10 to 16, and to those using innovative approaches or providing opportunities to minorities and women. Tax exempt and 501(c)3 organizations are eligible, and Baseball Tomorrow strongly encourages at least 50% matching funds.

### **People for Bikes**

The People for Bikes Grants Program strives to put more people on bicycles more often by funding projects that leverage federal funding and build momentum for bicycling. They seek to assist local organizations, agencies, and citizens in developing bicycle facilities projects. Bikes Belong Coalition accepts applications for grants quarterly for up to \$10,000 each, and will consider successor grants for continuing projects.

### **West Michigan Trails and Greenways Coalition**

The West Michigan Trails & Greenways Coalition (WMT&GC) is a non-profit group of donors, organizations and volunteers dedicated to developing non- motorized trails and greenways into a linked system connecting wilderness areas, parks, historic landmarks and cultural sites throughout West Michigan. Their vision is to develop a regional trails and greenways network to connect communities with each other and to the natural areas, parks, historic landmarks, cultural venues, and civic destinations throughout the region.

### **American Hiking Society National Trails Fund**

The National Trails Fund, sponsored by the American Hiking Society, provides support to grass-root non-profit organizations working toward establishing, protecting, and maintaining foot trails in America. Grants help give local organizations the resources they need to secure access, volunteers, tools, and materials to protect America's public trails. Support is provided for projects that increase trail lands, including the cost associated with the acquisition of trails, trail corridors, and conservation easements.

### **Local Fundraising**

The Georgetown Township community is full of active, community-minded residents. Businesses, corporations, private clubs, community organizations, and individuals often contribute to recreation and other improvement programs to benefit the communities in which they are located. Private sector contributions may be in the form of monetary contributions, the donation of land, the provision of volunteer services, or the contribution of equipment or facilities.

### **Foundations**

A foundation is a special non-profit legal entity that is established as a mechanism through which land, cash, and securities can be donated for the benefit of parks and recreation services. The assets are disbursed by the foundation Board of Directors according to a predetermined plan.

### **Township Funds**

The general fund, a special millage, the parks budget, bonds, and the parks capital improvement account are possibilities to help fund new and improved facilities in the township.

### **Park Millage**

A special millage can help the township generate funds for development, acquire park land, or to use as leverage for grant applications.

### **Special Assessment**

A special assessment is a special kind of tax on a subset of a community. Special assessments are placed on those adjacent land owners who will receive the greatest benefit from a project to be funded using a special assessment. Special assessments are a common way communities fund sidewalk construction and improvements.



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# Appendix

- Parks Budget
- Documents from Public Hearings and Public Meetings
- On-Line Community Survey Results