

CASCADE TOWNSHIP

5-YEAR PARKS & RECREATION

MASTER PLAN



| 2023-2027 |

CASCADE TOWNSHIP

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(616) 949-1500

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Vice Chair..... Joe Engel
Member..... Windy Korstange
Member..... Grace Lesperance
Member..... Mike Reese

Township Board:

Supervisor..... Grace Lesperance
Clerk Susan Slater
Treasurer..... Ken Peirce
Trustee Tom McDonald
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INTRODUCTION

Development of a parks master plan is important for Cascade Township to ensure its parks support the goals of the township, meet the needs of its residents, and contribute to a high quality of life in the community. This Five-Year Master Plan will analyze the existing parks and context of the community, benchmark against other communities and state recreation standards, review public input, and provide recommendations to help the Cascade Township staff, Parks Committee, and Township Board make decisions over the next five years and beyond.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Cascade Township owns and manages seven parks that provide residents a variety of recreational experiences. Cascade Township Recreation Park includes sports facilities, a dog park, playground, sledding hill, and pavilions. Peace Park and Burton Park provide large natural open spaces with trail systems. Leslie Tassell Park and Virgil Nishimura Westdale Memorial Park give residents recreational opportunities near the village area. Recently acquired Wycliffe Trailhead Park includes a proposed trailhead with additional amenities.

The township is located in southeast Kent County about 10 miles from downtown Grand Rapids. The township has valuable natural resources including the Thornapple River, Grand River, and several inland lakes and wetlands. There are many forested areas with varied topography, as well as glacial till plains that provide a diverse and interesting landscape. Residents enjoy the large areas of preserved natural space and the ability to connect with nature in a family-oriented environment.

PROJECT PROCESS

In order to serve the current and future residents of the township, this master plan provides a blueprint for growth, maintenance, and policy over the next five years. This plan identifies the current and future needs of the township and provides a five-year action program for strategic implementation of goals and objectives.

The plan followed an information gathering process of inventory and analysis of existing conditions, various methods of public engagement, and benchmarking and discussions with adjacent communities. Public engagement efforts included a public input survey, open house, and integration of the Cascade Township Strategic Plan surveys and focus groups. Based on this information and collaboration between the Parks Committee and township staff, a mission statement, goals, and objectives were developed. An action item program prioritized the objectives to provide an implementation plan for the next five years.



PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY

The parks public input survey collected nearly 1,000 responses. Respondents indicated that their top priorities include maintaining existing parks and pathways, expanding the pathway system, and developing new parks and facilities. The most popular amenities and facilities included trails, trail head, restroom facilities, and nature-based play. About two-thirds of respondents were willing to financially support a parks millage, with about one-third of respondents willing to spend more than \$100 per year.

The strategic plan survey and focus groups indicated that parks and pathways were a very high priority overall in the township. It was evident that underserved areas such as the southern portion of the township strongly desire parks and pathways. Development of a defined village was a top priority, including integration of a green gathering space. Respondents also indicated that lake and river preservation is important along with increasing public awareness of related challenges.

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

After analyzing information gathered during the planning process, there were patterns and priorities that became evident. Additional capacity is needed to provide the necessary maintenance, improvement, and management for the parks and pathways. This could be accomplished by proposing a parks millage, hiring a Parks Director, and better leveraging available resources.

While maintenance was noted as a top priority, improvements to existing parks and acquiring new property for parks and open space was also identified as important. A property acquisition template has been created by the Parks Committee and should be used to analyze potential acquisitions. Improvements to accessibility should be made in all parks to better serve all residents. New and improved amenities should be considered based on the results of public input and community need.

Maintenance and replacement of existing pathways should be a top priority. Once improvement of the existing network has been accomplished, additional local connections and expansion to adjacent communities should be implemented.

MISSION STATEMENT

Cascade Township Parks protects and preserves its natural resources through strategic acquisition, stewardship, education, and management while providing accessible, quality recreational amenities and experiences to equitably enrich the lives of residents and future generations.

MASTER PLAN GOALS

Working closely with the Parks Committee and township staff, the following goals were created for the master plan:

- Ensure that existing parks and pathways meet the needs of the community they serve
- Identify and create future pathway routes connecting to existing community amenities and neighborhoods, adjacent communities, and regional trail systems
- Refine the township park's organization structure and support
- Identify and implement appropriate funding mechanisms to acquire property, improve and maintain parks, add amenities, and hire staff to support the parks and pathways system.
- Preserve natural resources and open space within the township
- Collaborate as appropriate to develop a central, green gathering space integrated with the downtown village development as outlined in the Cascade Township Strategic Plan
- Identify space for new community parks, recreation, and open space to serve growing population and to preserve natural features and character of the township
- Increase public awareness and use of parks, programs, and facilities
- Develop parks programming to provide greater opportunities for recreation, education, and experiencing nature.

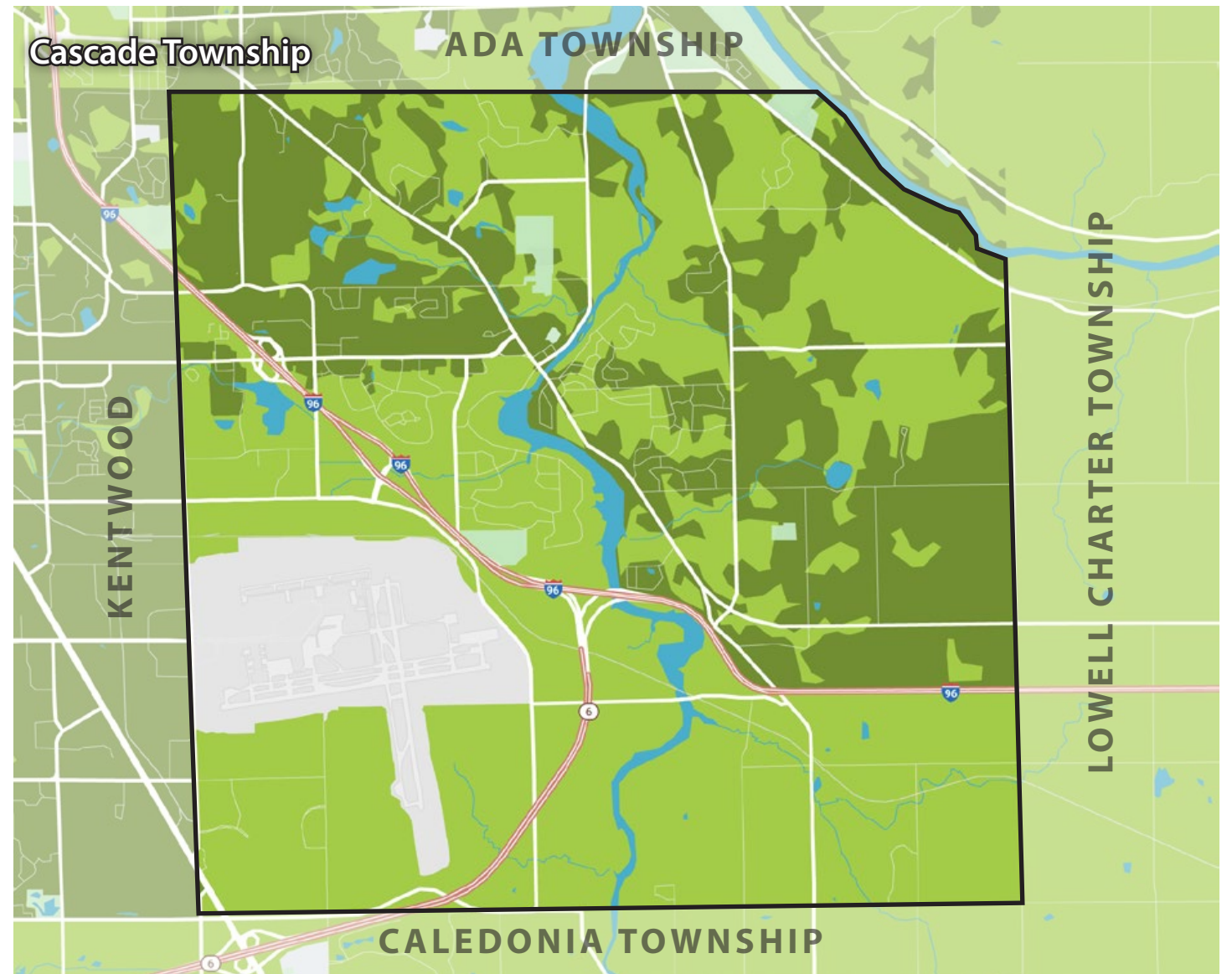
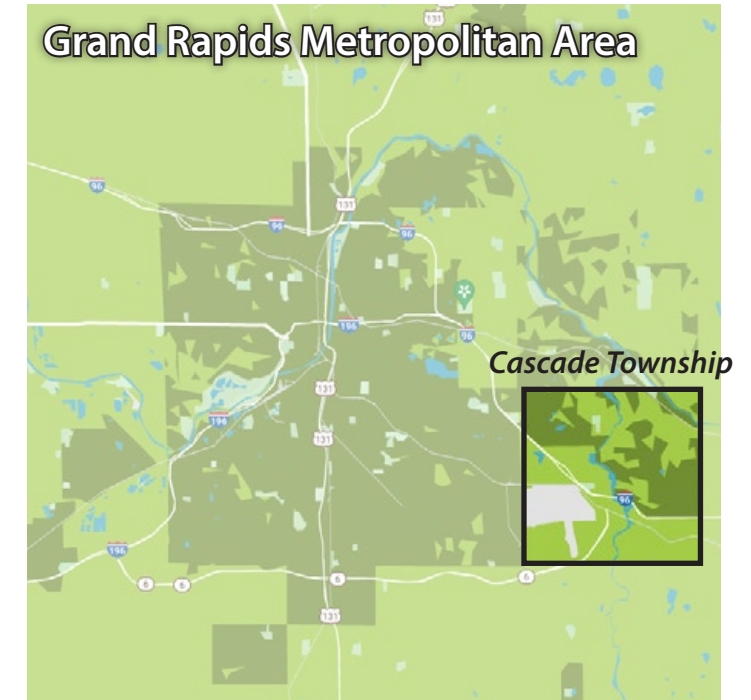
TOWNSHIP DESCRIPTION

CASCADE TOWNSHIP is one of the fastest growing areas in West Michigan, with nearly 15% population growth within the last decade (2020 Census). Residents and visitors to Cascade Township appreciate the vast areas of preserved natural space, and find it to be a great place to connect with nature in a family-oriented environment. In order to serve the current and future residents of the Township, this five-year master plan provides a blueprint for growth, maintenance, and policy to keep up with the changing needs of Cascade Township.



Cascade Township is located in southeast Kent County. The township is part of the Grand Rapids metropolitan area, and is approximately 10 miles southeast of downtown Grand Rapids. Cascade Township is bordered by Ada Township, Lowell Charter Township, Caledonia Township, and the City of Kentwood. Interstate 96 bisects the township from the northwest corner to the southeast side, and the Paul B. Henry Freeway (M-6) runs southwest from I-96. The Gerald R. Ford International Airport is located in the southwest part of the township.

The Thornapple River flows through the center of the Township and is a tributary to the Grand River. The Grand River, the largest river in the state, borders the northeast corner of the Township. Several lakes and reservoirs, including Laraway Lake, Walden Lake, Wood Lake, and Quiggle Lake are located in the township.



TOWNSHIP DEMOGRAPHICS

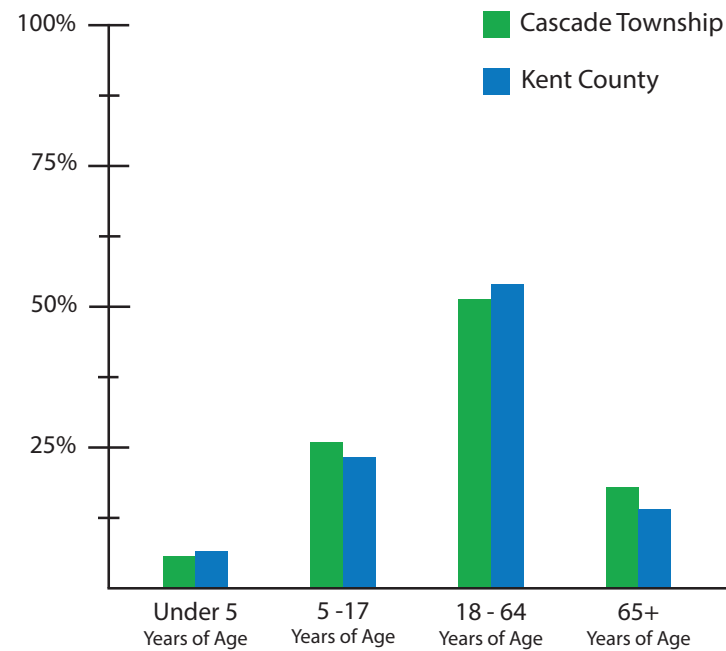
DEMOGRAPHICS

The population of Cascade Township as of July 2021 is estimated at 19,700 residents. The township serves a diverse age range. When compared to Kent County, the township has a slightly higher percentage of residents over the age of 65 and between the ages of 5-17.

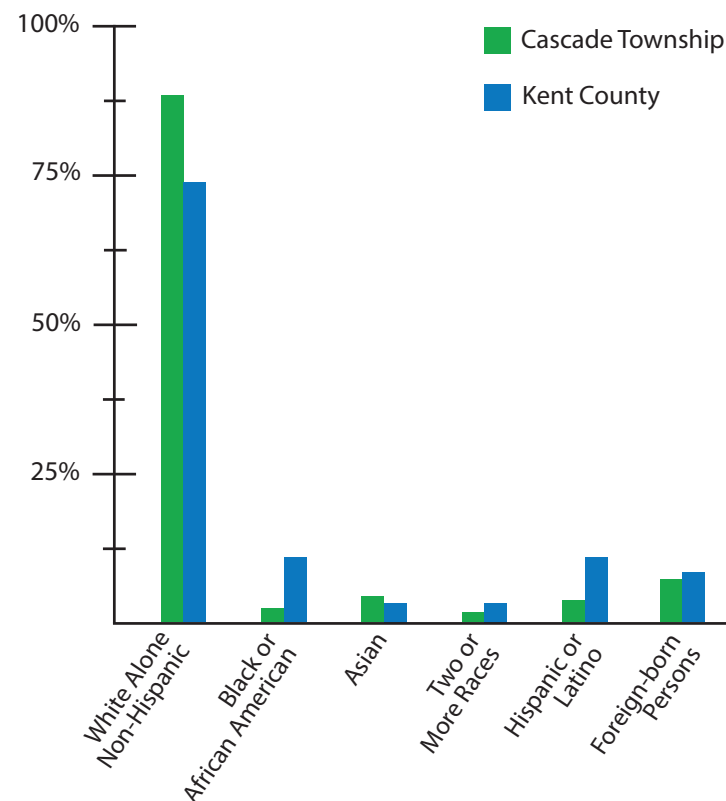
According to the census response, the majority of residents in Cascade Township identify as white alone (88%). About 5% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino, and 7.5% identify as foreign born. Promoting equitable outreach and services should always be integral to current and future planning and design efforts.

Compared to the overall demographics of Kent County, Cascade Township has significantly higher rates of household income and education attainment, as well as slightly higher rates of household technology access. These factors should be taken into account when it comes to communication, millage assessment, and outreach to community members.

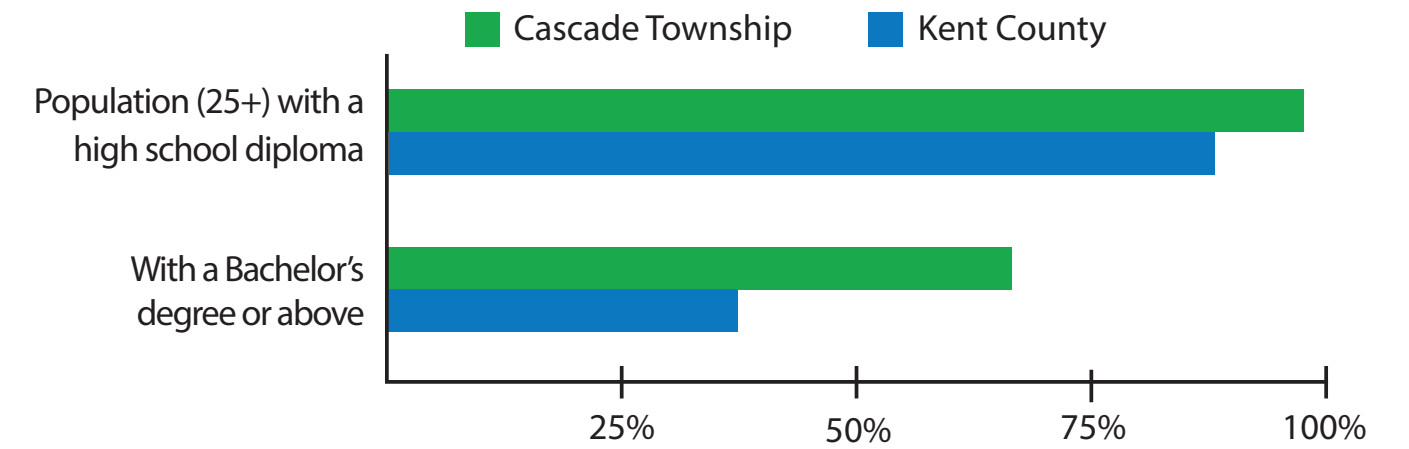
Age Demographics



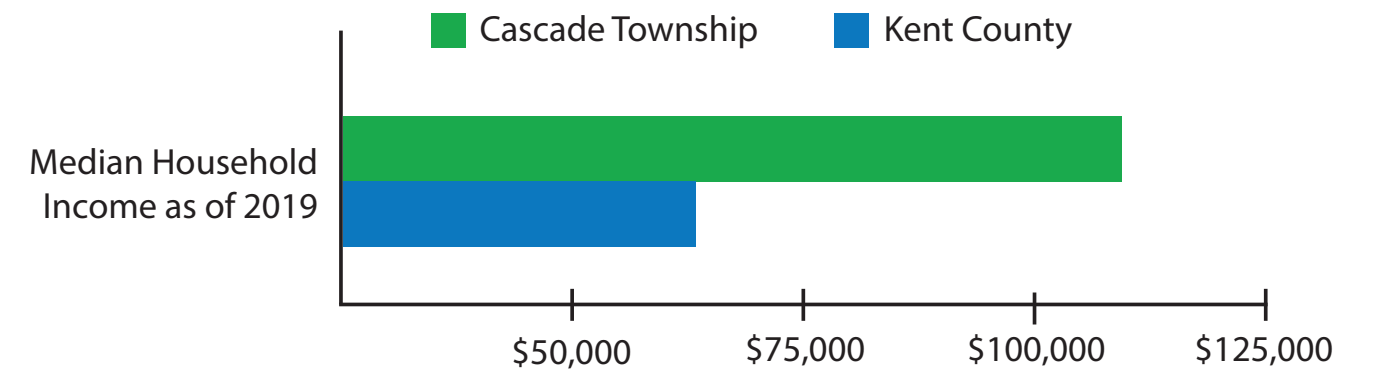
Racial Demographics



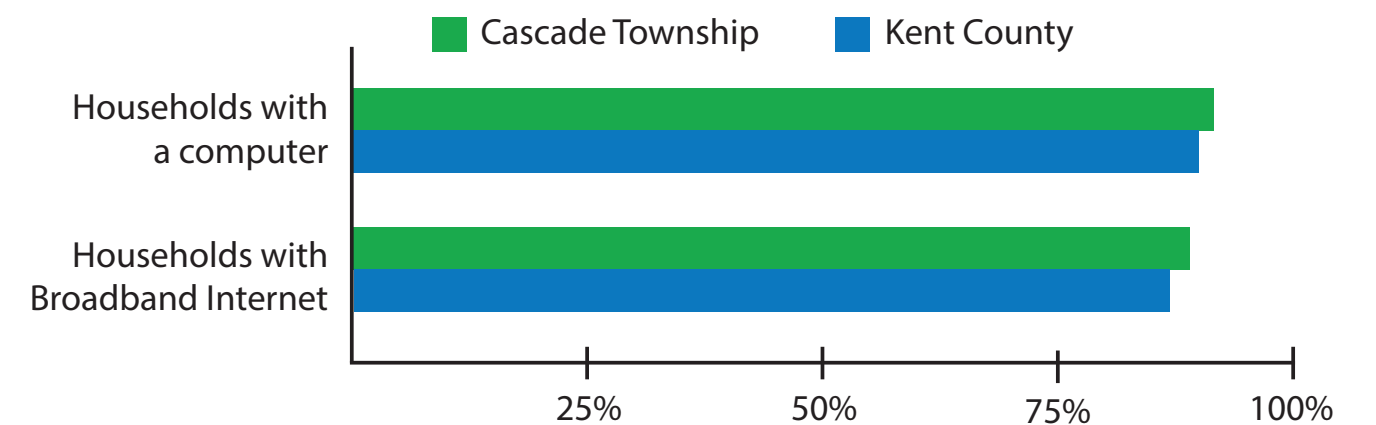
Education Attainment



Household Income



Technology Access



ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

TOWNSHIP STAFF & PARKS COMMITTEE

Governing Body

The Cascade Charter Township Board of Trustees is the elected body that functions as the governing body representing citizen interests. The Township Parks Committee is a board of volunteer citizens appointed by the Township Board, who meet monthly and serve in an advisory role to the Township Board. The Parks Committee concentrates on acquiring and managing land, overseeing maintenance of existing properties, and providing recreational opportunities for residents.

A Township Pathways Committee was recently formed and held their first meeting in September of 2022. Similar to the Parks Committee, the Pathways Committee is a board of volunteer citizens appointed by the Township Board, who serve in an advisory role to the Township Board. While not focused directly on parks, the Pathways Committee will concentrate on overseeing maintenance and expansion of the pathway system.

Parks and Recreation Programming

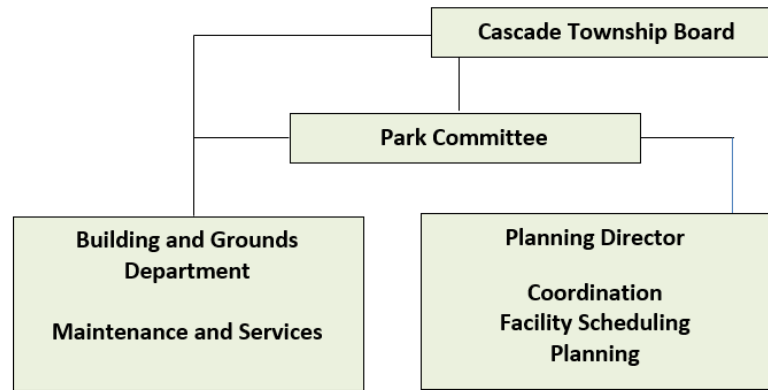
Responsibility for planning, developing, programming, budgeting, operating and maintaining the Township's recreational facilities and programs belongs to the township staff, with guidance from the Parks Committee. Township staff and seasonal employees currently handle park maintenance with some services contracted. The Township does not offer any formal recreation programs but cooperates in scheduling fields for organization use. Seven local organizations reserved time on Township fields in spring of 2022, while five organizations reserved time in fall of 2022.

School Districts and Other Public Agencies

Cascade Township families and youth benefit from area recreational offerings through regional school districts including Forest Hills Public Schools, Lowell Area Schools, and Caledonia Community Schools as well as programs offered through the Kent County Parks and Recreation Department. In addition, youth are provided the opportunity of organized sports through the YMCA and various athletics organizations.

Organizational Chart

An organizational chart illustrating current parks structure is shown below.



Volunteers

The Township has an agreement with the Kent Conservation District (KCD) for treatment of invasive species. As a result, KCD has hosted a number of volunteer work days at Township park properties. The Township has benefited from a number of local businesses and organizations that have staff who volunteered their time at these work days. These volunteer groups include local businesses, schools, Eagle Scout groups, and individual Cascade residents.

Annual Budgets and Funding

Each year, the Township Board of Trustees sets the General Fund appropriation for the Parks' operating budget through a comprehensive budgeting process. The Township Board oversees budgeting and allocates the appropriate funding amount based on projected needs.

Funding for parks in Cascade Township is allocated from the Township's general fund with the exception of the pathway millage and open space millage. The budget, expenditures and revenues for the township's parks for the past five (5) years are summarized in the appendix.

The Township receives revenues for the reservation of park facilities for large groups at Cascade Township (Rec) Park. In 2021, these payments amounted to \$8,230.

COMMUNITY GRANT HISTORY

Cascade Township's grant history includes funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (formerly known as the Michigan Land Trust Fund). The previous recreation grants received from the State of Michigan are shown below.

TOWNSHIP PARKS AND OPEN SPACE GRANT HISTORY

Program & Year	Grant Number	Amount	Project Location
Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and the Nature Conservancy (2008)	TF08-149	\$1.2 Million	Cascade Natural Area (Peace Park) 8900 Grand River Dr.
Land and Water Conservation Fund (1992)	26-01517	\$20,327	Township Park Shelter 3810 Thornapple River Dr SE
Land and Water Conservation Fund (1978)	26-01060x1	\$40,289	Cascade Recreation Park 3810 Thornapple River Dr SE
Land and Water Conservation Fund (1975)	26-00649	\$35,916	Cascade Recreation Park 3810 Thornapple River Dr SE

2

INVENTORY

This section describes existing parks and facilities within Cascade Township. Characteristics including walkability, amenities, natural features, and accessibility are analyzed for each park.



6 PARKS

407
ACRES OF PARK



17.3
MILES OF TRAIL

PARKS & PATHWAYS



3 LARGE NATURAL AREAS



1 PLAYGROUND LOCATION



1 DOG PARK



2 BASEBALL FIELDS



2 BASKETBALL COURTS



1 WATER PLAY FEATURE



2 MULTI-USE FIELDS



2 VOLLEYBALL NETS



1 AMPHI-THEATER



1 DISC GOLF COURSE



8 TENNIS + PICKLEBALL COURTS



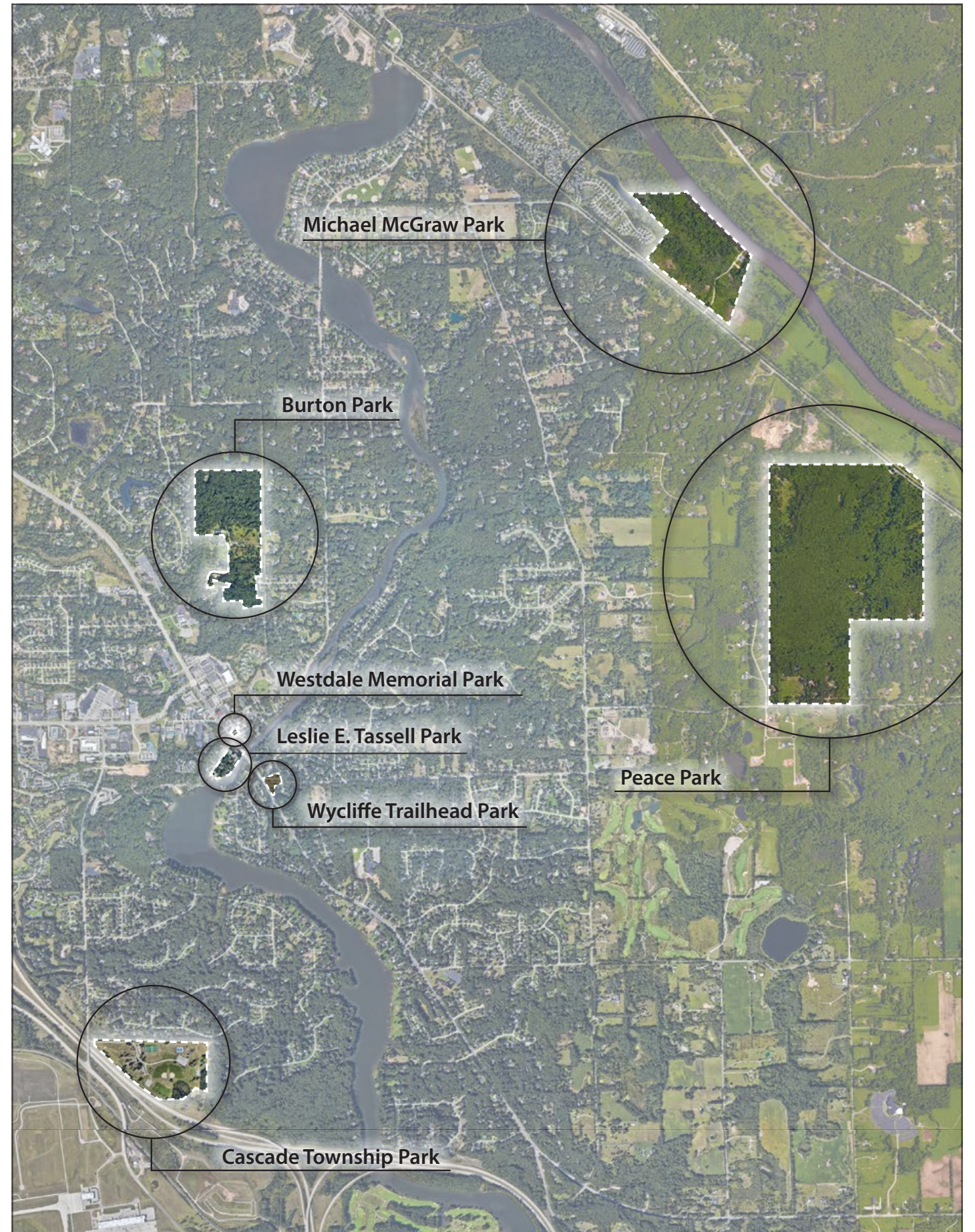
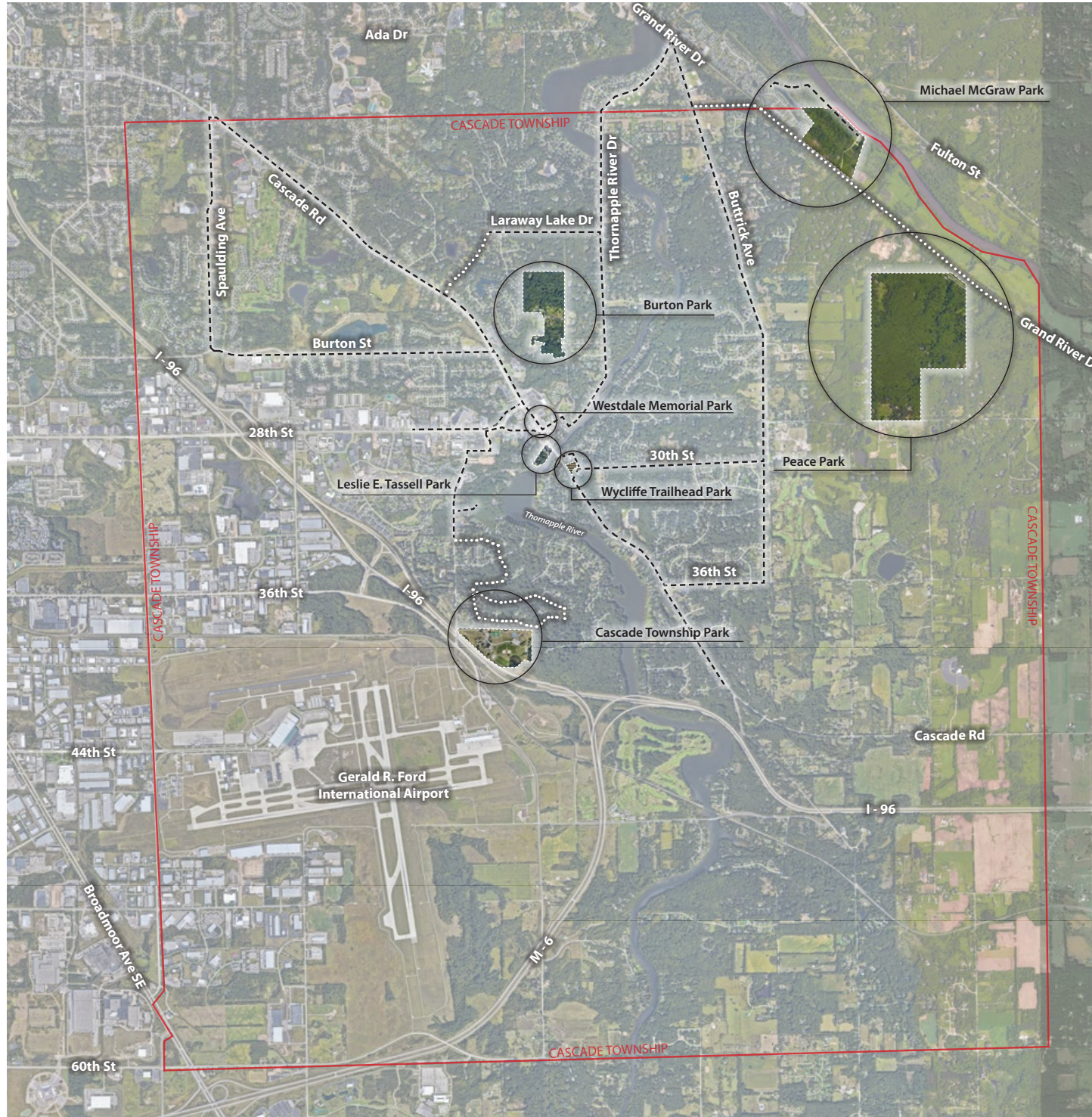
4 PICNIC SHELTERS

PARKS

CASCADE PARKS SYSTEM

The Cascade Township parks system is comprised of six parks spread throughout the township north of I-96. Peace Park, Michael McGraw Park, and Burton Park are larger natural wooded areas with trails that serve as passive recreation parks. Cascade Township Park, also known as Recreation Park, serves the

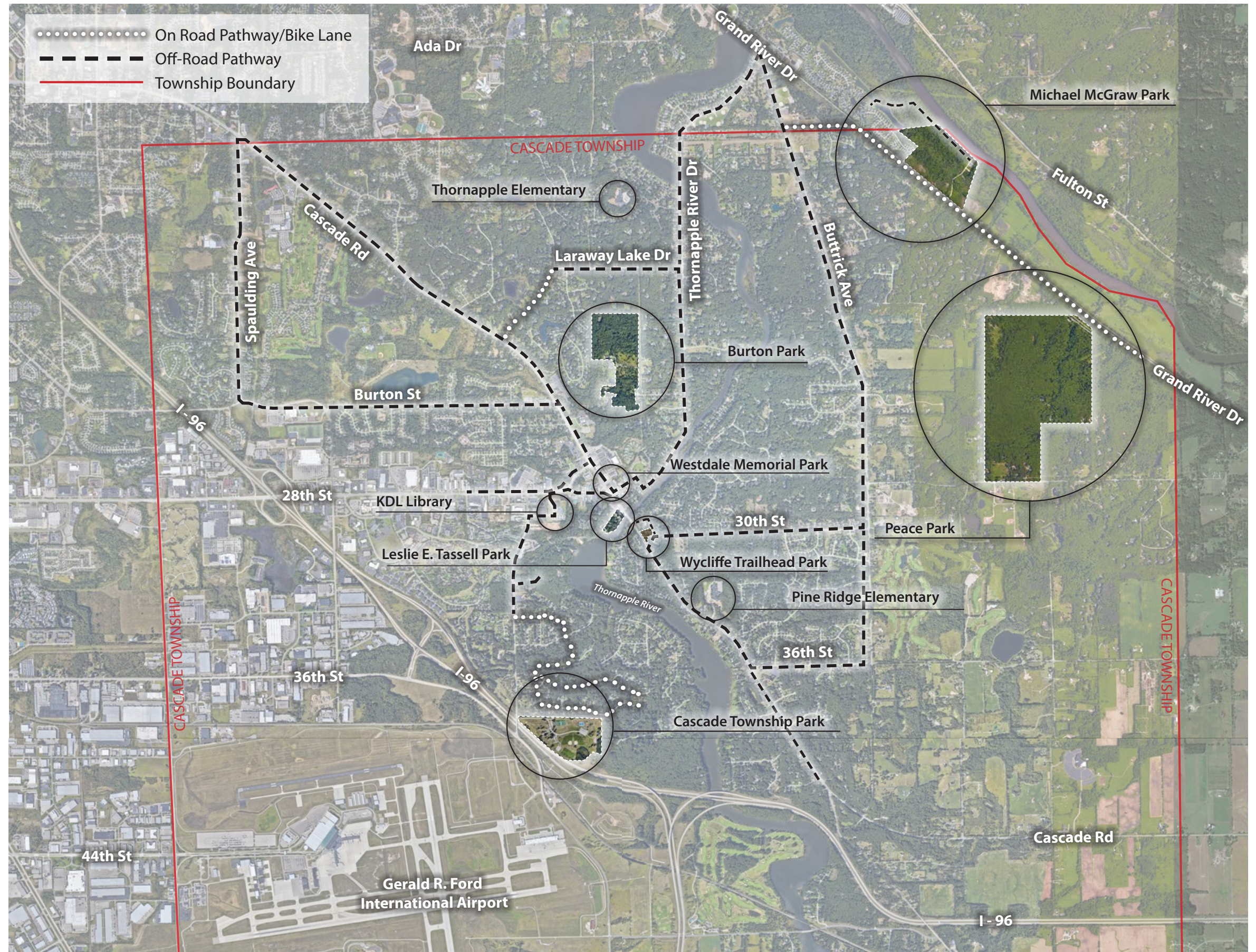
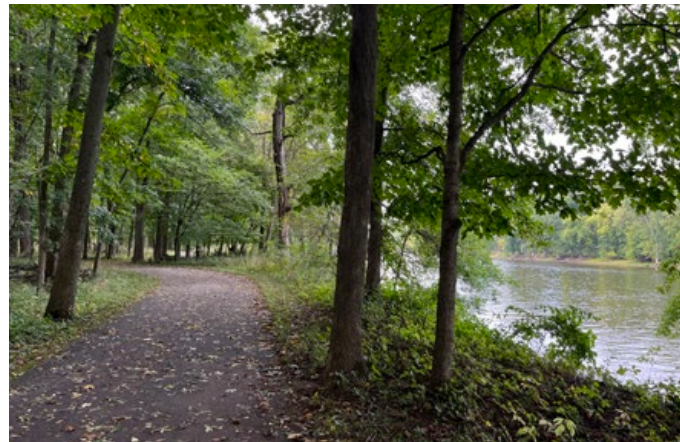
township's more active recreation uses with several outdoor sports facilities. Leslie E. Tassell Park and Virgil Nishimura Westdale Memorial Park are smaller green spaces located near the village area. Wycliffe Trailhead Park was recently acquired and is proposed to be a trailhead with additional amenities.



PATHWAYS

CASCADE PATHWAYS SYSTEM

The township is well connected through a system of pedestrian routes, including extensive paved pathways, public sidewalks, and low volume residential streets. Further development of these pathways is a priority for the township, with a goal of better connecting the parks, schools, and other community assets.



MICHAEL MCGRAW PARK

Michael McGraw Park

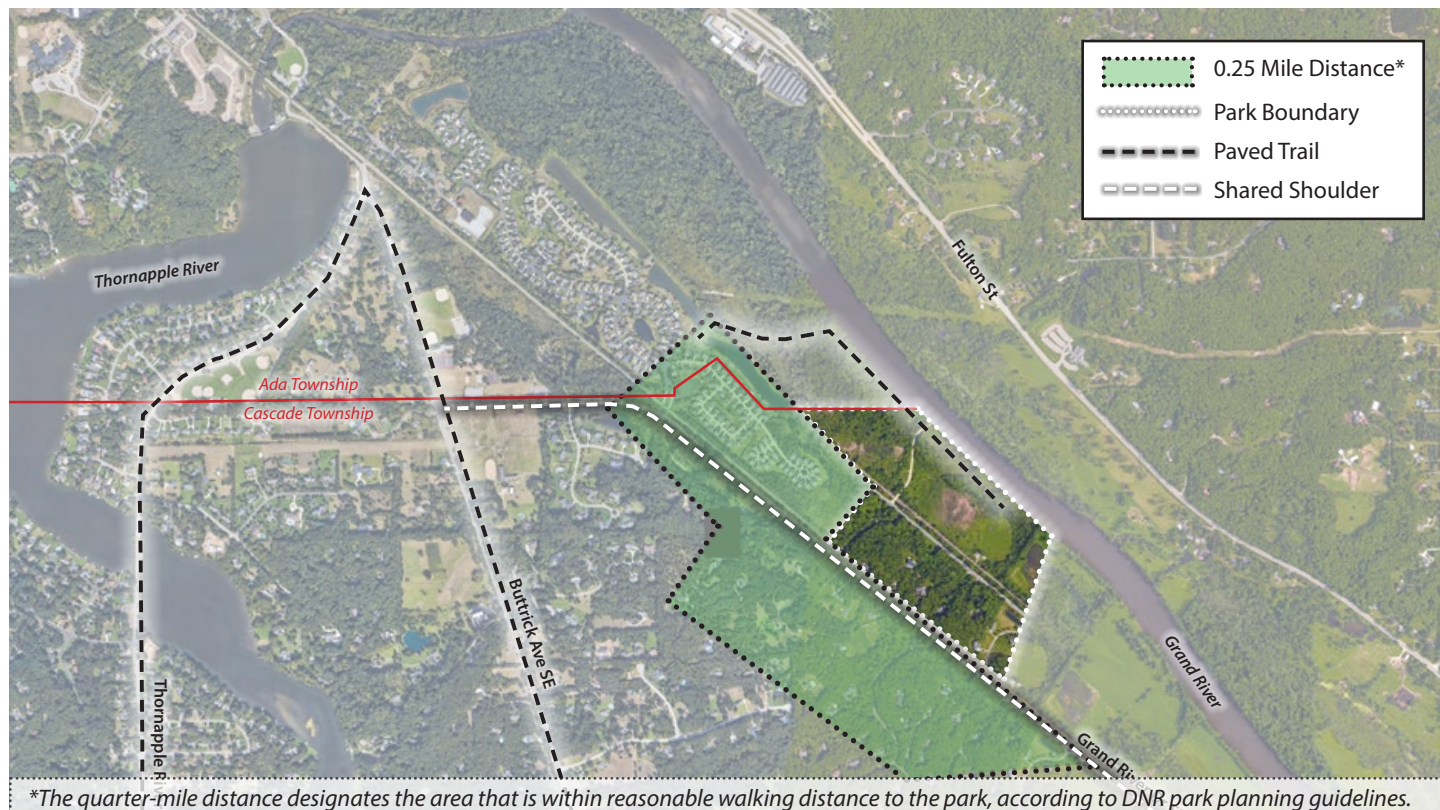
This 68.8 acre park property was donated in 2002 by Michael McGraw. The waterfront park borders a 120-acre parcel donated to Ada Township. The park runs along the Grand River, and lies mostly within the floodplain. McGraw Park contains a few hiking trails and a paved pathway. Hiking and passive recreation are the main uses of the park. A small two acre parcel owned by Forest Hills Public Schools is located on the south end of the park, and serves as the school's access to the Grand River for their crew teams.

Accessibility Assessment

The paved pathway through McGraw Park is well maintained and accessible through the Ada Township parcel. However, within the Forest Hills Public Schools parcel there is no accessible route from the parking area to the pathway, and the parking area is a gravel, non-accessible surface. Noted accessibility improvements would be to add accessible parking spaces, and a paved connection from the parking area to the pathway.

DNR Accessibility Grading System for Parks and Recreation Facilities	
Accessibility Grade	Definition
1	None of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines
2	Some facilities meet accessibility guidelines
3	Most facilities meet accessibility guidelines
4	The entire park meets accessibility guidelines
5	The entire park was developed using the principles of universal design

Amenity	Quantity/Size	Accessibility	Surface
Boat House	1	Y	N/A
Paved Trail	1	Y	Asphalt
Parking	1	N	Natural



*The quarter-mile distance designates the area that is within reasonable walking distance to the park, according to DNR park planning guidelines.



PEACE PARK

Peace Park

This 198-acre park property consists of extensive old growth forest. The park has a system of natural surface hiking trails, and is used for passive recreation.

In 1998, Cascade Township's open space study identified the land as having desirable features for preservation. In order to acquire the property the township worked with The Land Conservancy of West Michigan, The Nature Conservancy, The Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Disability Advocates of West Michigan, as well as local landscapers. The property was acquired with financial assistance by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund and The Nature Conservancy.

The park has two entrances, one off Grand River Drive and one off Bolt Drive. Gravel parking areas, litter receptacles and park signage are available at both entrances. The Grand River Drive entrance has a portable restroom and bike racks.

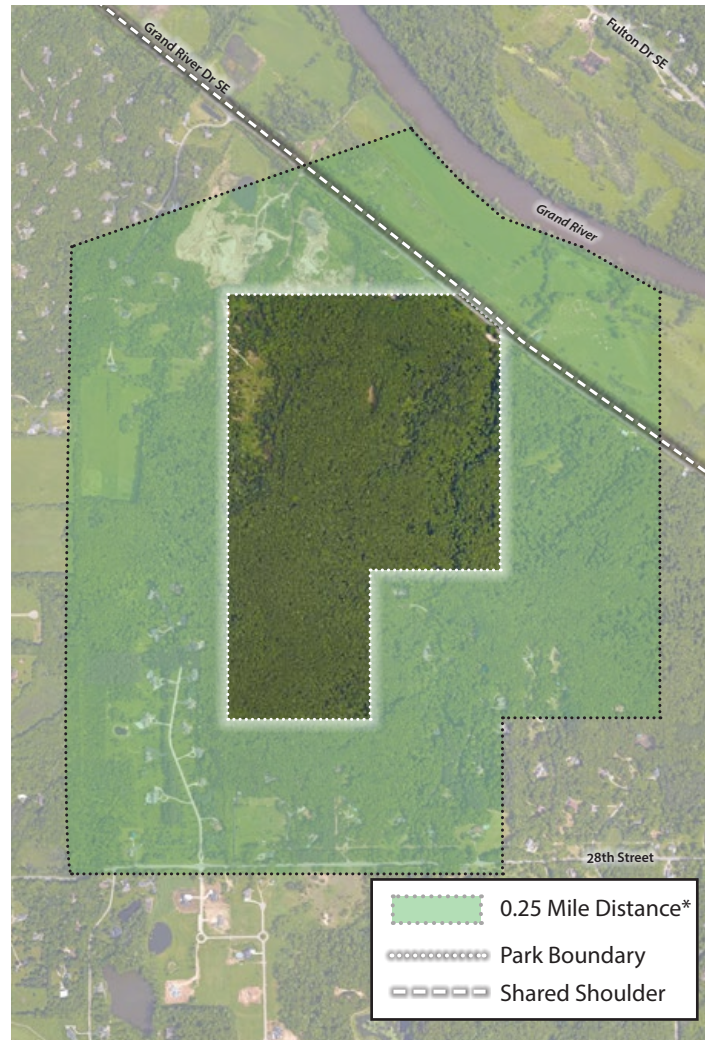
Two parcels, located to the east and northeast of current park property, are under consideration for potential additions to the park.

Accessibility Assessment

Peace Park is a natural area that includes several miles of natural surface trails. The trails in general do not meet trail accessibility guidelines. There are gravel parking lots at the entrances off Grand River Drive and Bolt Drive. The Bolt entrance includes a delineated accessible parking space, and the Grand River entrance includes one accessible portable restroom.

Future accessibility improvements should include paved accessible parking spaces in both parking lots and creating an accessible route to the restroom. An accessible trail at the Bolt Drive parking area should also be considered.

DNR Accessibility Grading System for Parks and Recreation Facilities	
Accessibility Grade	Definition
1	None of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines
2	Some facilities meet accessibility guidelines
3	Most facilities meet accessibility guidelines
4	The entire park meets accessibility guidelines
5	The entire park was developed using the principles of universal design



*The quarter-mile distance designates the area that is within reasonable walking distance to the park, according to DNR park planning guidelines.

Amenity	Quantity/Size	Accessibility	Surface
Trails	4 Miles	N	Natural
Bike Racks	2	N	N/A
Parking	2	N	Stone



CASCADE TOWNSHIP PARK

Cascade Township (Rec) Park

Cascade Township Park is the township's sports facility park and serves as the hub of recreational activity. The 55 acre park is used by residents and leagues for softball, baseball, soccer, football and lacrosse. Some of the organized leagues assist in improving the fields. The sports fields, pavilions, trails, playground and other facilities offered by the township require continuous maintenance to ensure recreational needs and services are met.

Accessibility Assessment

Most of the facilities are accessible and parking areas include accessible parking. However there are some areas that do not have accessible routes to them including the baseball/softball fields, volleyball court, horseshoe pits, or picnic shelter next to the playground. The playground was upgraded in 2015 and was built to meet accessibility and universal design guidelines.

Some suggested accessibility improvements include a paved trail connecting to the park entrance, and accessible routes to the ball fields, volleyball court, shelter by the playground, and horseshoe pits. Additional accessible restrooms should be considered.



DNR Accessibility Grading System for Parks and Recreation Facilities	
Accessibility Grade	Definition
1	None of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines
2	Some facilities meet accessibility guidelines
3	Most facilities meet accessibility guidelines
4	The entire park meets accessibility guidelines
5	The entire park was developed using the principles of universal design

Amenity	Quantity/Size	Accessible	Surface
Paved Trail	1 Mile	Y	Asphalt
ADA Parking	2	Y	Asphalt
ADA Van Parking	2	Y	Asphalt
Wifi	Park-wide	N/A	N/A
Playground	1	Y	PIP
Basketball Court	2	Y	Asphalt
Tennis	2	Y	Asphalt
Pickleball	6	Y	Asphalt
Mutli-use Field	1	N	Grass
18 Hole Disc Golf	1	N	Grass
Soccer Field	1	Y	Grass
Ball Fields	2	N	Dirt/Grass
Sand Volleyball	1	N	Sand
Horseshoe	1	N	Grass
Dog Park	1	Y	Grass
Pavilion	3	Y	Concrete
Grill	2	Y	N/A
Sledding Hill	1	N	Grass
Restroom	1	Y	Concrete
Drinking Station	2	Y	N/A



*The quarter-mile distance designates the area that is within reasonable walking distance to the park, according to DNR park planning guidelines.



LESLIE E. TASSELL PARK

Leslie E. Tassell Park

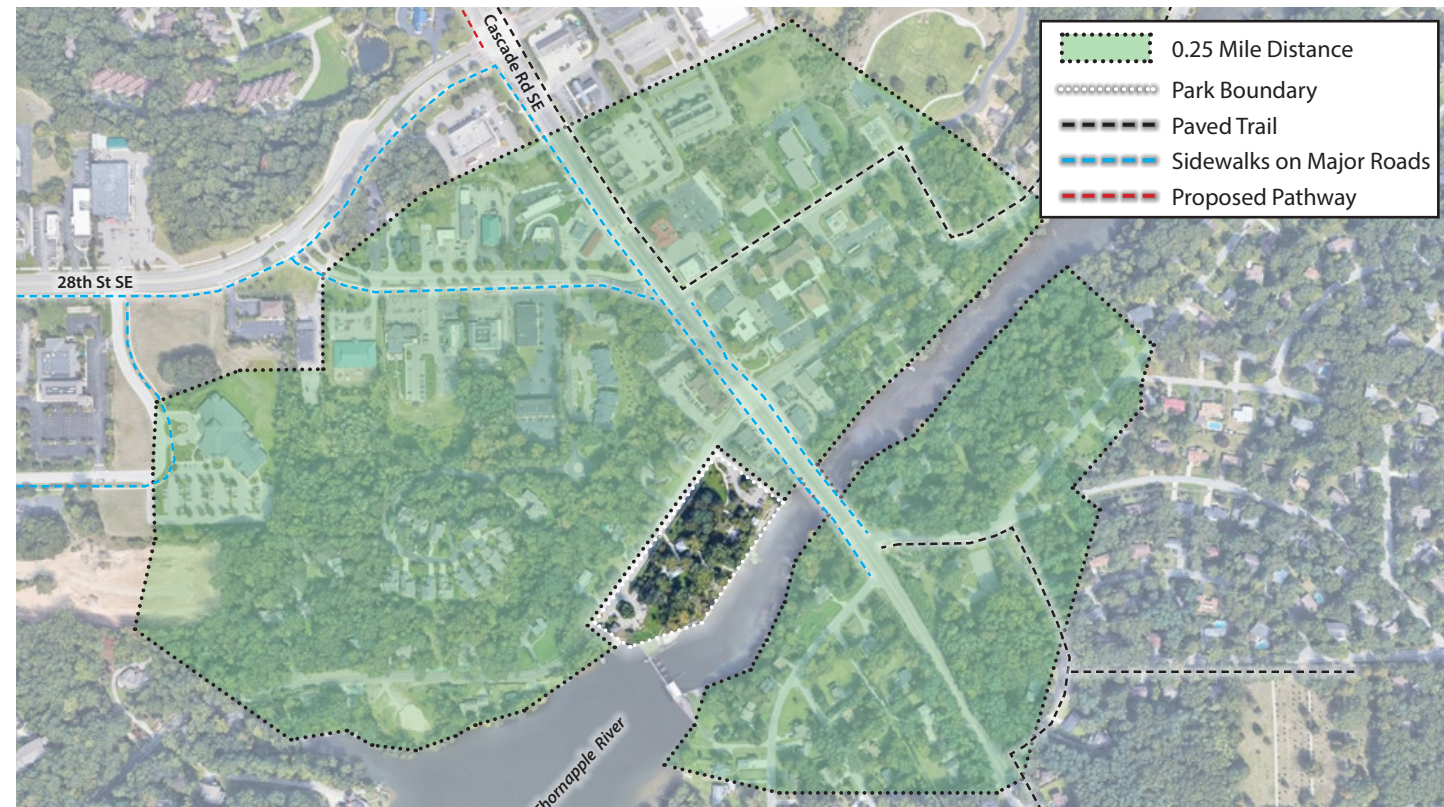
Tassell Park is located along the west bank of the Thornapple River, near the village area. The park serves Cascade Township as a community gathering place along the Thornapple River immediately below the Cascade Dam. The approximately 4-acre park's general purpose is to provide recreation opportunities and river access close to the village area. The Township owns the Cascade Dam adjacent to the south end of Tassell Park. The park's shoreline is primarily used for fishing and has a canoe portage for the dam.

Accessibility Assessment

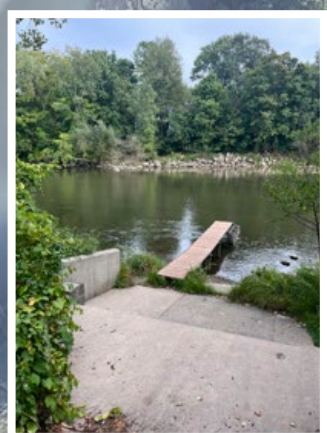
The park is almost entirely accessible, with the exception of the pathway along the riverfront. The park includes an accessible parking space in both the south and north parking lots. The entirety of the park is well lit with overhead and path lights. Suggested accessibility improvements include completing an accessible path to the dam viewing area and open space below the central pavilion, improvements to the boardwalk, and providing additional accessible parking spaces.

DNR Accessibility Grading System for Parks and Recreation Facilities	
Accessibility Grade	Definition
1	None of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines
2	Some facilities meet accessibility guidelines
3	Most facilities meet accessibility guidelines
4	The entire park meets accessibility guidelines
5	The entire park was developed using the principles of universal design

Amenity	Quantity/Size	Accessible	Surface
Paved Trail	N/A	Y	Concrete/Mixed
Sculpture Park	1	Y	Mixed
ADA Van Parking	2	Y	Asphalt/Concrete
Wifi	Park-wide	N/A	N/A
Fire Pit	1	N	Natural
Interactive Water Feature	1	Y	Concrete
Pavilion	2	Y	Concrete
Restrooms	1	Y	Concrete
Boardwalk	1	Y	Concrete/Wood
Emergency Call Post	1	Y	Concrete
Bike Rack	3	Y	Concrete
Riverside Trail	1	N	Natural
Kayak Launch	1	N	N/A



*The quarter-mile distance designates the area that is within reasonable walking distance to the park, according to DNR park planning guidelines.



BURTON PARK

Burton Park

The property consists of wooded and meadow areas with varied topography. The park has an extensive trail system, providing users an opportunity for hiking, bird watching, and enjoying natural areas within close proximity to residential areas. There are township pathways within a quarter-mile of the park boundary that provide connectivity.

The township purchased the 80 acre parcel of land through the Cascade Township Open Space Fund, which was established in 2009 as the result of a successful millage election in late 2008. The Township Board adopted a Master Plan for the park in November 2009 and then started the process to develop and open the park. According to specific millage language, the park is to remain a minimally improved site that encourages uses that are low-impact and environmentally sensitive.

Accessibility Assessment

Burton Park has accessible parking at the Windcrest entrance and within the park. There is one accessible paved path that runs through the park. However all other trails are considered non-accessible surfaces. Future accessibility improvements may include adding an accessible trail and access to the seating area near the park's Windcrest entrance.

Amenity	Quantity/Size	Accessibility	Surface
Trails	2.5 Miles	N	Natural
Paved Path	0.5 Miles	Y	Asphalt
Restrooms	2	Y	N/A
ADA Parking	3	Y	Asphalt



Accessibility Grade	Definition
1	None of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines
2	Some facilities meet accessibility guidelines
3	Most facilities meet accessibility guidelines
4	The entire park meets accessibility guidelines
5	The entire park was developed using the principles of universal design



WESTDALE MEMORIAL PARK

Virgil Nishimura Westdale Memorial Park

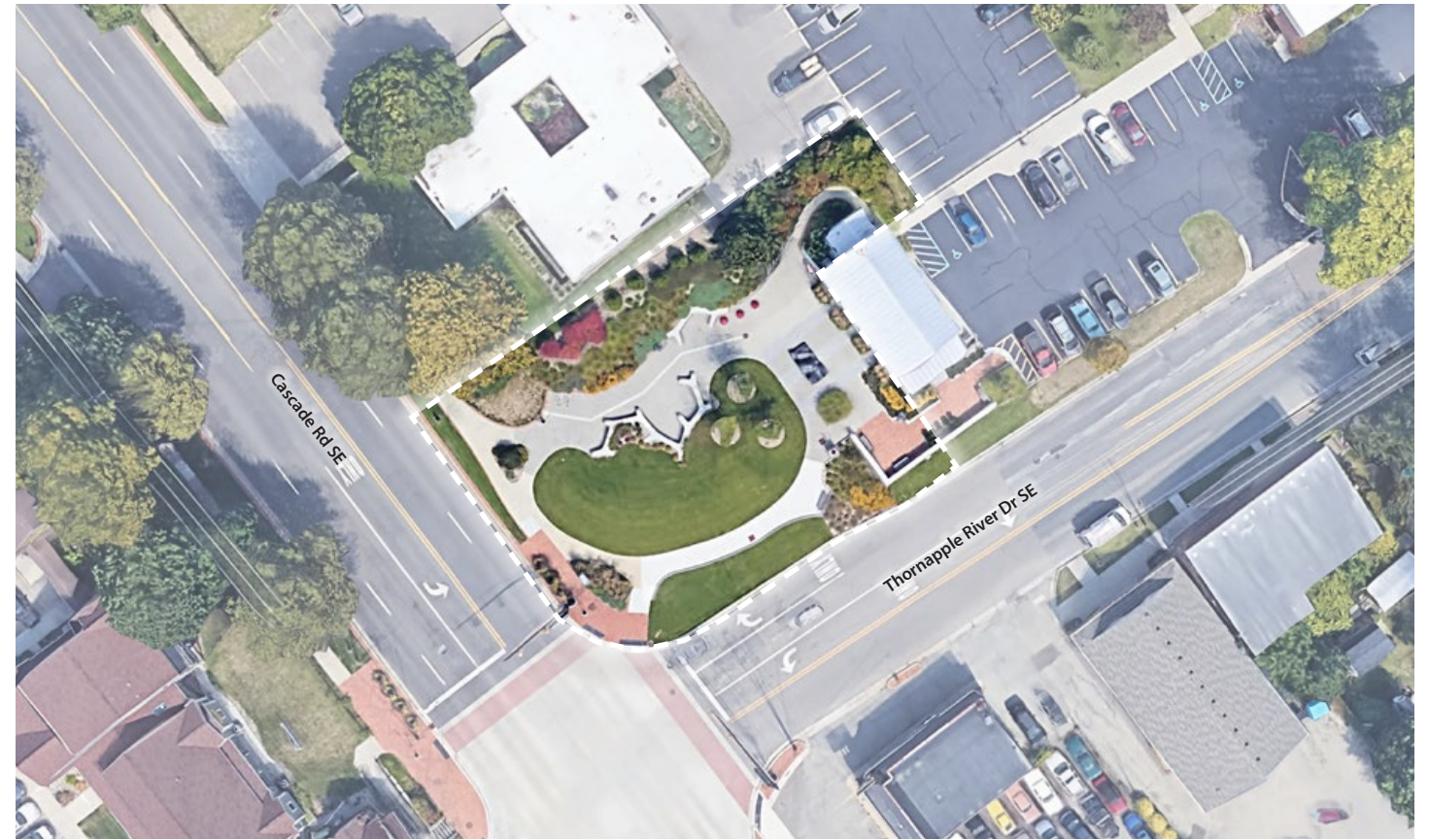
Virgil Nishimura Westdale Memorial Park (formerly Museum Gardens Park) was recently renamed to honor Virgil Nishimura Westdale, a local World War II veteran who passed away in February 2022. The park serves as a small passive recreation area and perennial garden in the downtown village area of Cascade Township. The 0.4-acre park consists of paved walkways, unique bench seating, planting beds, and musical play components. The park is located on the NE corner of Cascade Rd SE and Thornapple River Dr SE. The park is adjacent to the Township Museum building as well as several small local shops.

Accessibility Assessment

The site is fully accessible and is enjoyed by residents as a reflection of the areas local historic and cultural heritage. Accessible parking is located on the opposite side of the Township Museum building.

Amenity	Quantity/Size	Accessibility	Surface
Paved Path	N/A	Y	Concrete/Pavers
Bike Racks	2	Y	N/A
Sculpture Park	N/A	Y	N/A
Musical Play Features	2	Y	N/A
Drinking Station	1	Y	N/A
ADA Parking	1	Y	Asphalt

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2	Some facilities meet accessibility guidelines
3	Most facilities meet accessibility guidelines
4	The entire park meets accessibility guidelines
5	The entire park was developed using the principles of universal design



*The quarter-mile distance designates the area that is within reasonable walking distance to the park, according to DNR park planning guidelines.

WYCLIFFE TRAILHEAD PARK

Wycliffe Trailhead Park

The Wycliffe Trailhead Park property was recently purchased by Cascade Township. The 1.86 acre parcel is located immediately adjacent to the existing pathway system, and is within a quarter mile of Tassell Park and Downtown Cascade. The adjacent United Spiritual Community Church will share their existing parking lot with park visitors.

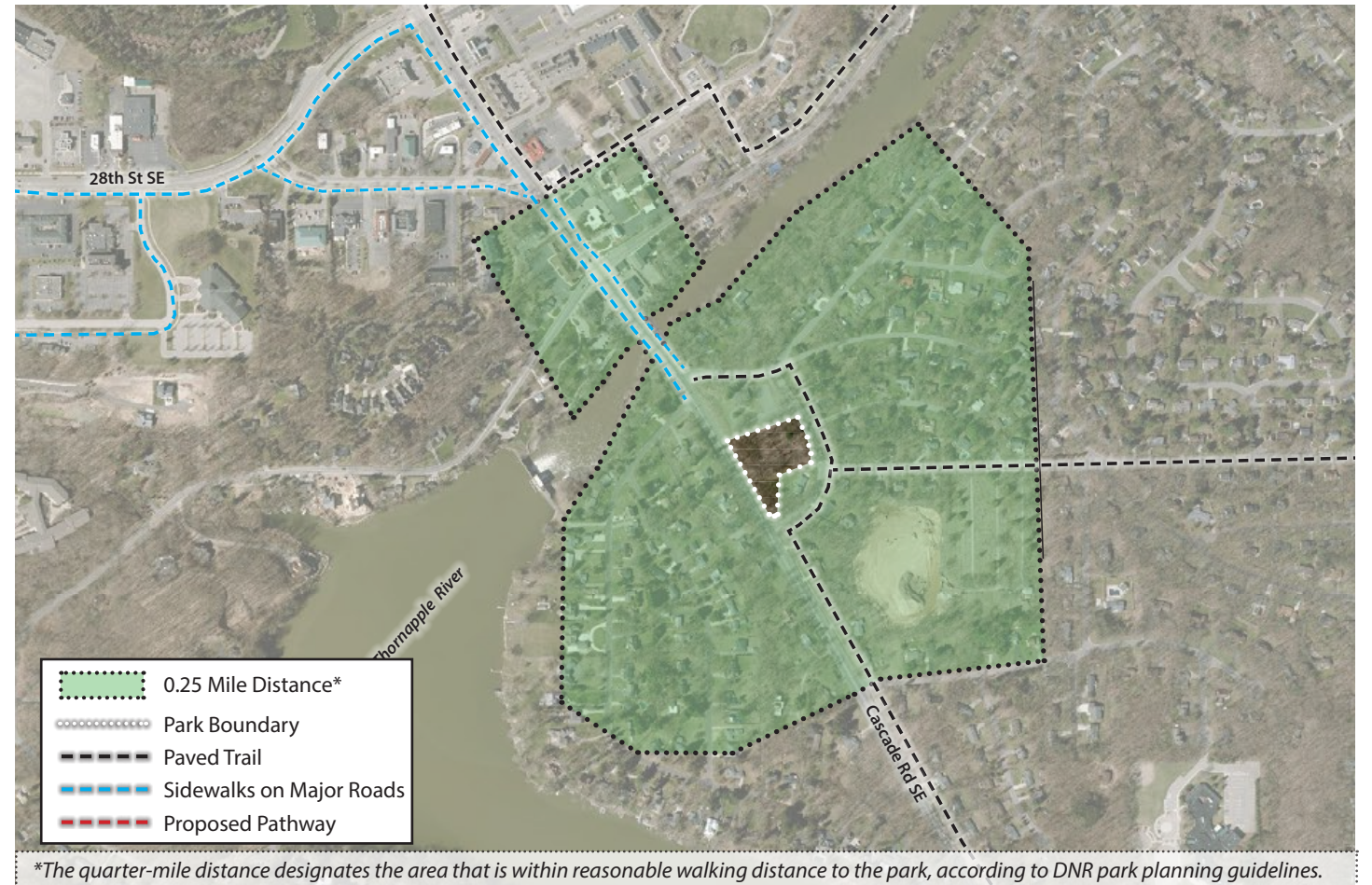
Wycliffe Trailhead Park is planned to be a trailhead with additional amenities. Preliminary development ideas include accessible and natural surface trails, wayfinding signage, restrooms, natural play features, and other pedestrian amenities such as picnic tables, receptacles, and bike racks.

Accessibility Assessment

Current plans include accessible shared parking and access to the paved pathway system along Wycliffe Road. Accessibility and universal design principles will be applied to the development of the property.



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4	The entire park meets accessibility guidelines
5	The entire park was developed using the principles of universal design



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3

THE PLANNING PROCESS



OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process for this Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan for Cascade Township was primarily conducted through the Parks Committee, consisting of members Ginny Wanty, Joseph Engel, Grace Lesperance, Mike Reese, and Windy Korstange. The Planning Director, Brian Hilbrands, provided oversight for committee meetings.

Meetings to discuss continuous steps within the planning process were held in conjunction with the parks committee meetings on the third Tuesday of every month.

During the planning process, several developments occurred including completion of the property acquisition template, the township's acquisition of the Wycliffe property, and the formation of the Pathways Committee. These new developments were accounted for in the goals, objectives, action items, and future recommendations.

The online survey, developed by the Parks Committee, was open from August 2021 to January 2022 to collect public input. The survey collected nearly 1000 individual responses, a significant increase from the public feedback collected for the previous Township Five-Year Parks Master plan. A public open house was also held on August 31, 2021.

Public engagement for the Cascade Township Strategic Plan was conducted during the same time period as the development of this plan. The strategic plan public engagement helped provide secondary data for parks, pathways, and recreation related topics. The consultants for the strategic plan conducted a parks and recreation focus group session that was attended by Parks Committee members as well as the Troyer Group consultants, and the themes and feedback from that focus group session is included in the engagement summary of this plan.

The 30-day public comment period for the draft plan will be available from October 27, 2022 through November 25, 2022. During this time, a Public Open House will also be held to obtain further public feedback. Plan adoption by the Township Board is anticipated in December 2022 once updates are made following the public review period.

**Parks and Recreation Plan
Online Public Survey**

Aug. 2021 - Jan. 2022

**Parks and Recreation Plan
Public Open House**

August 31, 2021

**Strategic Plan Parks & Rec
Focus Group Session**

March 29, 2022

**Parks & Recreation Master
Plan Public Comment Period**

Oct. 27, 2022 - Nov. 25, 2022

**Parks & Recreation Master
Plan Adoption**

December 2022



COMMUNITY BENCHMARKING

	Cascade	Ada	Lowell
Number of Ballfields	2	3	4
Miles of Non-motorized Trails	17.3	15.5	16.8
Number of Playground Locations	1	2	4
Number of Restroom Facilities	2	2	2
Number of Pavilions/Shelters	4	2	3
Number of Pickleball Courts	6	6	0
Number of Tennis Courts	2	4	0
Number of Basketball Courts	2	1	2
Number of Volleyball Courts	2	1	1
Number of Soccer/Multi-use Fields	2	2	8
Community/Senior Center	N	N	Y
Dog Park	Y	N	Y
Skate Park	N	N	Y
Disc Golf Course	Y	N	N
Amphitheater/Performance Stage	Y	Y	N

	Cascade	Ada	Lowell
Population	19,700	14,412	6,289
Size (Sq. Mi.)	34.86	37.11	33.32
Population Per Sq. Mi.	565	388	189
Number of Parks/Preserves	7	6	8
Total Acreage of Parks	407	445	203
Total Acreage Per 1,000 Residents	20.66	30.88	32.28

BENCHMARKING DESCRIPTION

Cascade Township compares fairly well with similar surrounding communities in terms of recreational amenities and facilities. The township provides extensive pathways throughout the community which also connect to adjacent pathways systems to the north. Cascade falls short in park acreage compared to population size, with about 35% less acreage per 1,000 residents than Ada and Lowell. Many similar communities provide programming for residents, and currently the township does not offer this service.

Benchmarking comparisons should be analyzed contextually, recognizing that each community has different attributes that shape park statistics. For example, some communities have non-municipal recreation and athletics facilities, partnerships with schools, or other ways of providing residents recreational opportunities. Other communities may have county parks or state recreation areas that provide additional acreage of parks and open space.

MEETING WITH ADJACENT COMMUNITIES

During the planning process, meetings were held with adjacent communities to discuss their parks, staffing, programs, funding, trail connections and potential collaborative opportunities. This included meetings with Grand Rapids Parks, Kent County Parks, Lowell Township, Kent County Parks, and Ada Township. While Grand Rapids, Kentwood, and Kent County have much larger parks systems, and Lowell Township is smaller, each discussion was helpful in learning about how they operate and address future opportunities. Some of the key takeaways from the meetings include:

- Leveraging resources is critical for progress and growth, whether through volunteers, donors, parks foundation or “friends of” groups, and community partners.
- Communities that have passed a millage create greater capacity for maintenance capabilities and capital improvement projects. The more detailed and transparent the proposed millage is, the better the chance for success.
- Sharing resources within township government departments such as maintenance staff, engineering, programs, and events creates greater capacity and efficiencies.
- Acknowledging and tapping the passion and expertise in staff and committee members impacts the direction of parks and programming (i.e. natural resources vs active recreation/athletics)
- Strategies to pursue trail planning and funding should include collaboration between communities
- Continuing collaborative discussions with neighboring communities and discussing ideas with parks peers is a beneficial process and should continue.

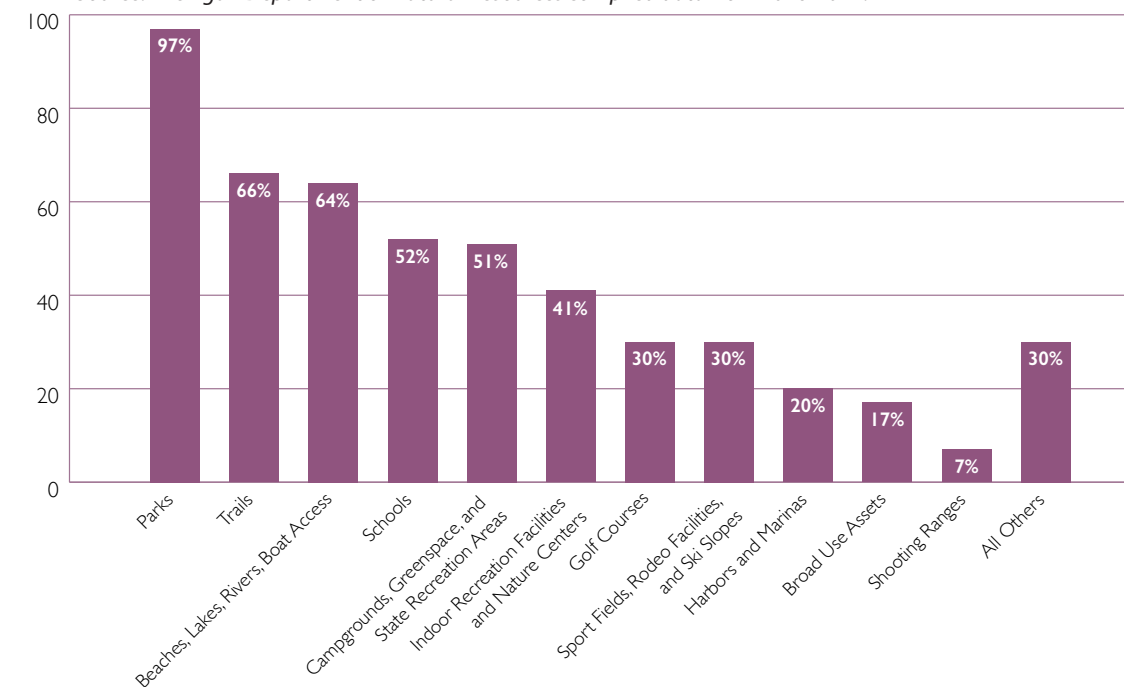
STATE LEVEL BENCHMARKING

Compared with state level recreation facilities identified in the 2018-2022 Michigan Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreational Plan (SCORP), Cascade Township falls short of the state average of Park/Preserve acreage for its residential size. With an overall state population of 9,974 million, and 103 state park and recreation areas totaling 306,000 acres, Michigan provides approximately 31 acres of parks and open space per 1,000 residents. Cascade Township provides about 21 acres per 1,000 residents.

The recreation inventory recorded by the Michigan SCORP indicates relaxing outdoors, walking, visiting parks or playgrounds, birdwatching, and sightseeing are the top recorded activities for participation from Michigan residents. Cascade Township does well overall in providing these popular passive recreation activities. However, there are opportunities to increase available parks and recreation areas throughout the township and increase options, accessibility, and equity for its residents. When looking at recent trends, the largest increase in participation is in stand-up paddleboarding, cross-country skiing, fat tire biking, and mountain biking. Improving and providing additional facilities for these activities should be considered.

When looking at other community’s five-year recreation plans, 64% list beaches, lakes, rivers, and boat access as part of the inventory or continued recreation plans. The Thornapple River and Grand River provide Cascade Township an opportunity to further develop amenities that contribute to water recreation and access. Additional information on recreational assets mentioned in statewide master plans is shown below.

2018-2022 Michigan Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreational Plan
Percent of Five-year Master Plans that Include Lists of Outdoor Recreation Assets
Source: Michigan Department of Natural Resources compiled data from 2016-2017.

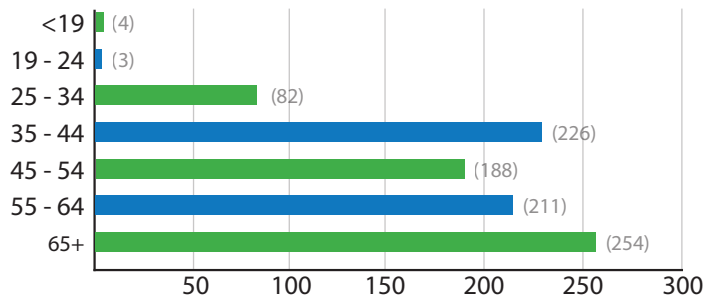


PUBLIC SURVEY

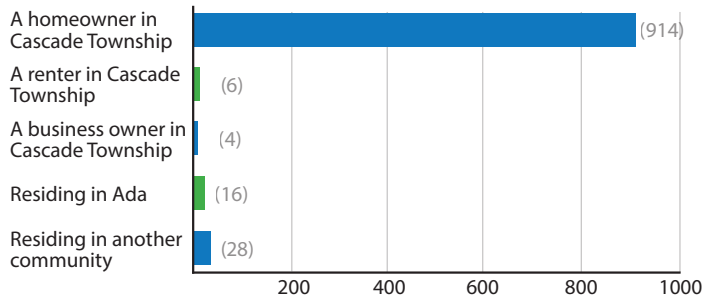
CASCADE PARKS SYSTEM

A public survey was conducted in late 2021/early 2022 regarding the parks and trails within Cascade Township. The following pages contain the graphic results of the survey data collected.

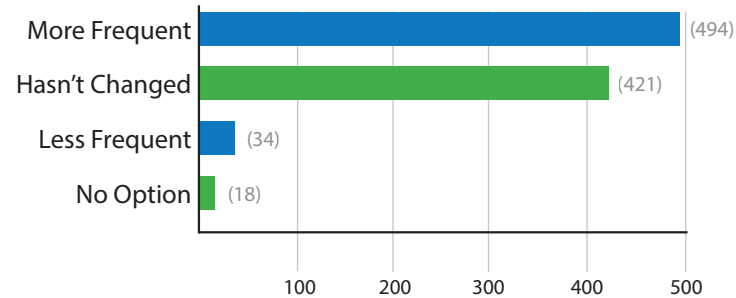
What is your age?



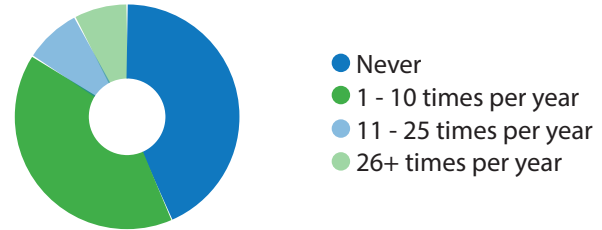
I am currently:



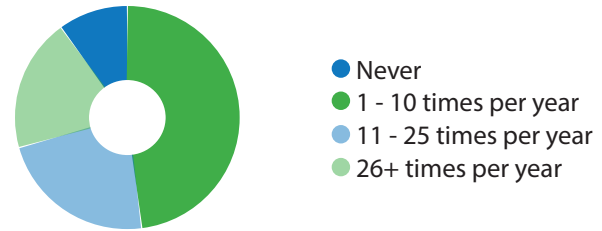
Have you used parks, trails, and open space more frequently since the onset of the pandemic?



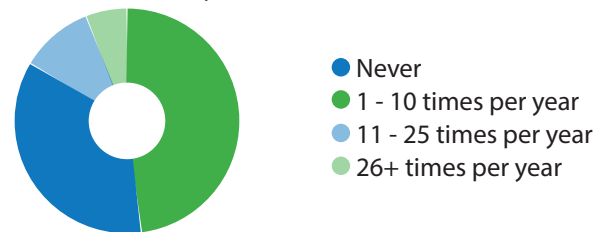
How often do you visit Burton Park?



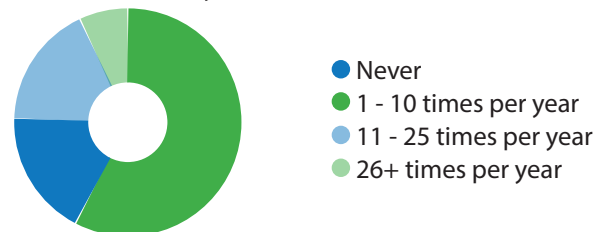
How often do you visit Cascade Township (Rec) Park?



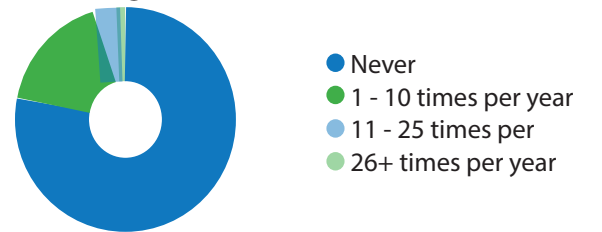
How often do you visit Cascade Peace Park?



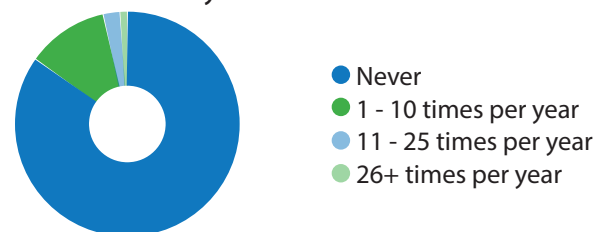
How often do you visit Leslie E. Tassell Park?



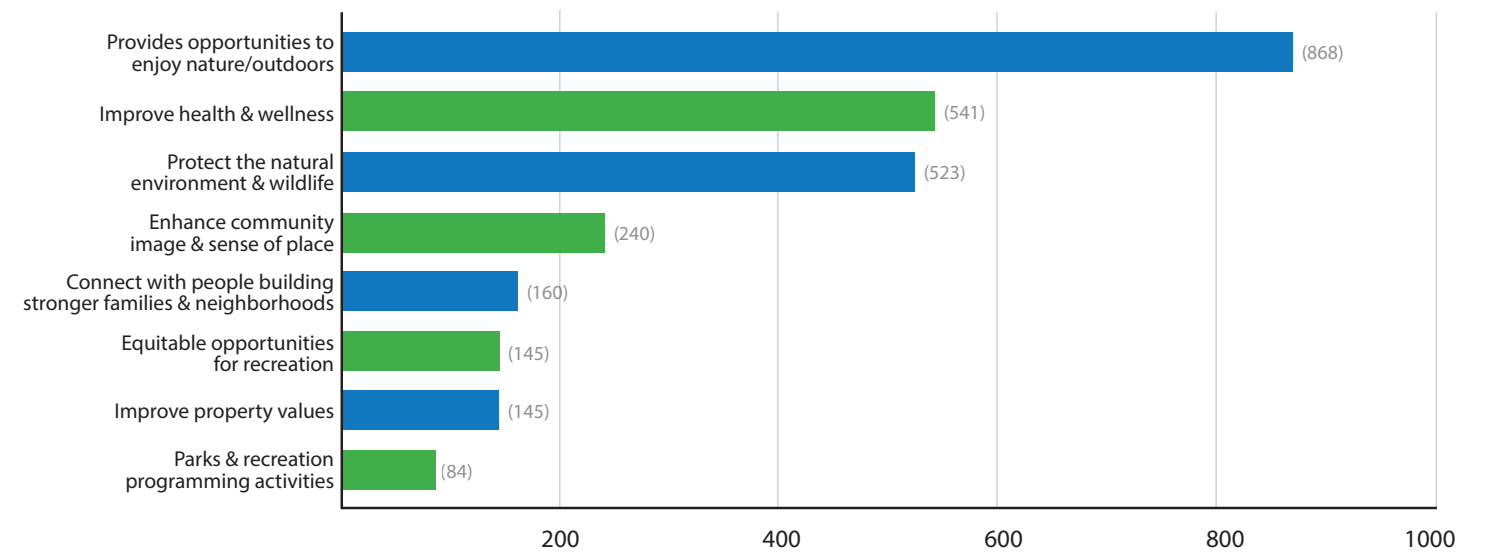
How often do you visit Museum Garden Park? (Now Virgil Nishimura Westdale Memorial Park)



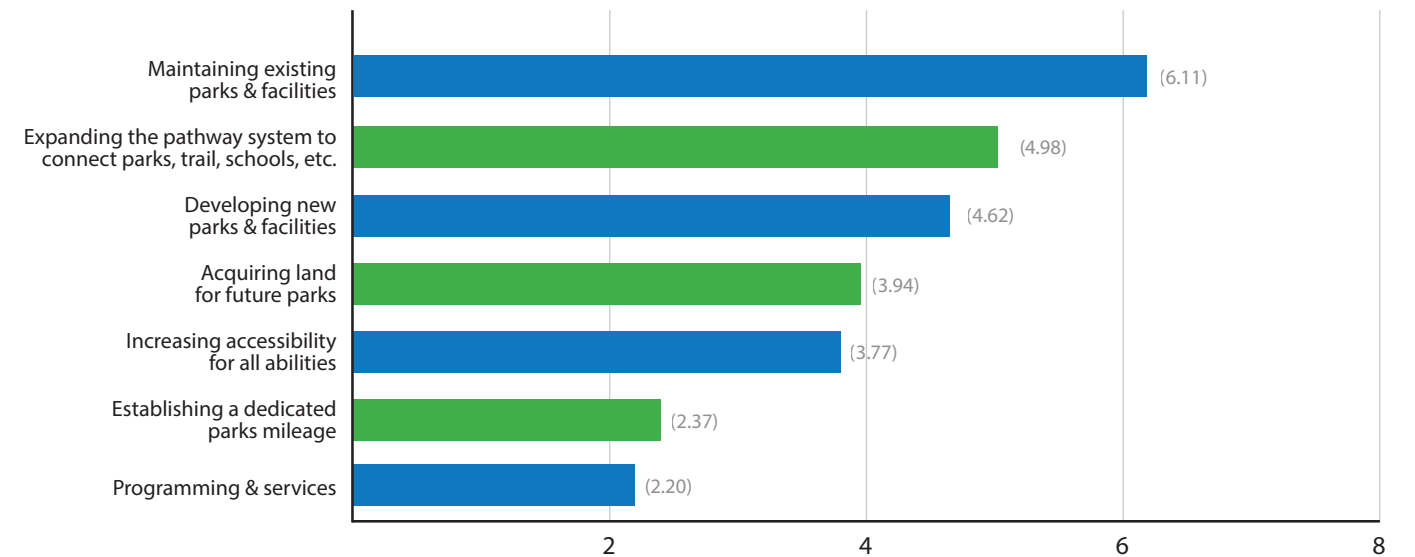
How often do you visit Michael McGraw Park?



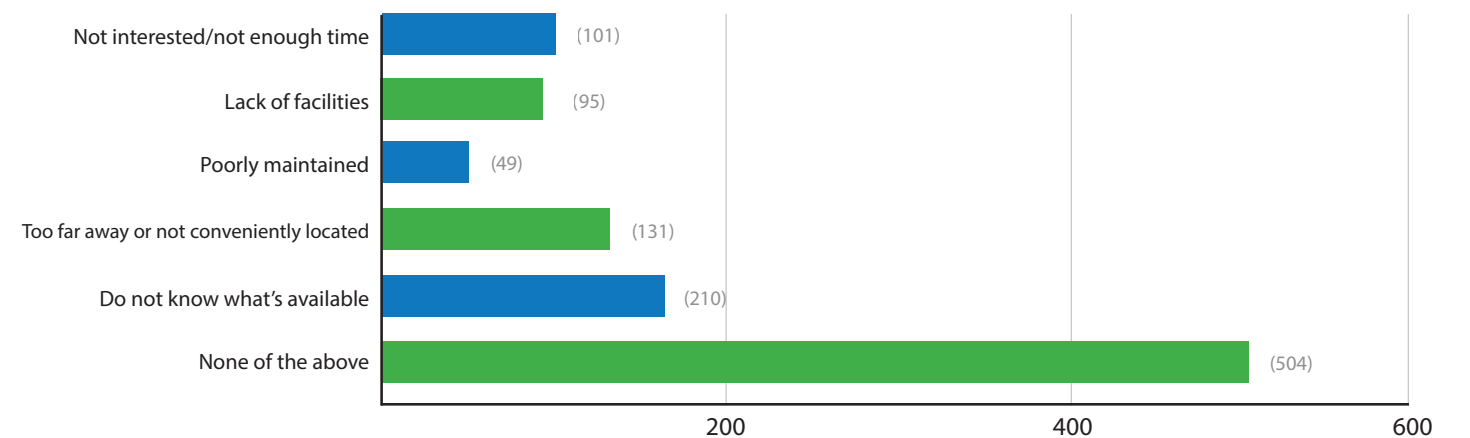
Which of the following benefits of parks and recreation are most important to you? (Select Top 3)



How important are the following in improving parks and recreation offerings in Cascade Township?

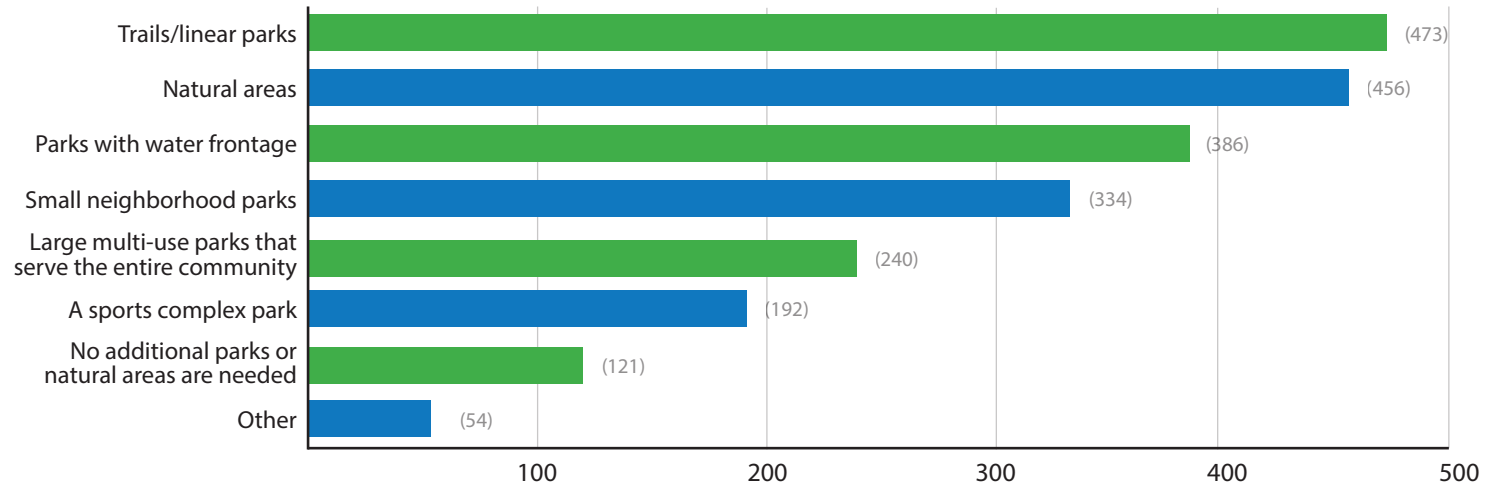


Which of the following, if any, create challenges to your current use of parks in Cascade Township? Please select any that apply.

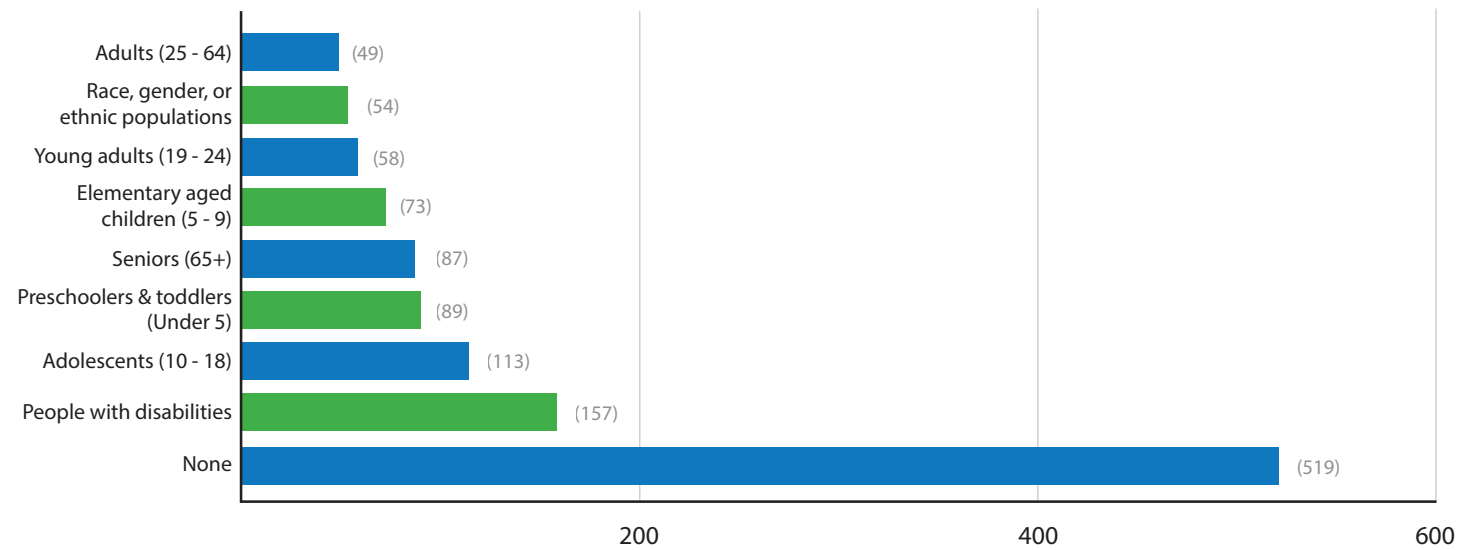


PUBLIC SURVEY

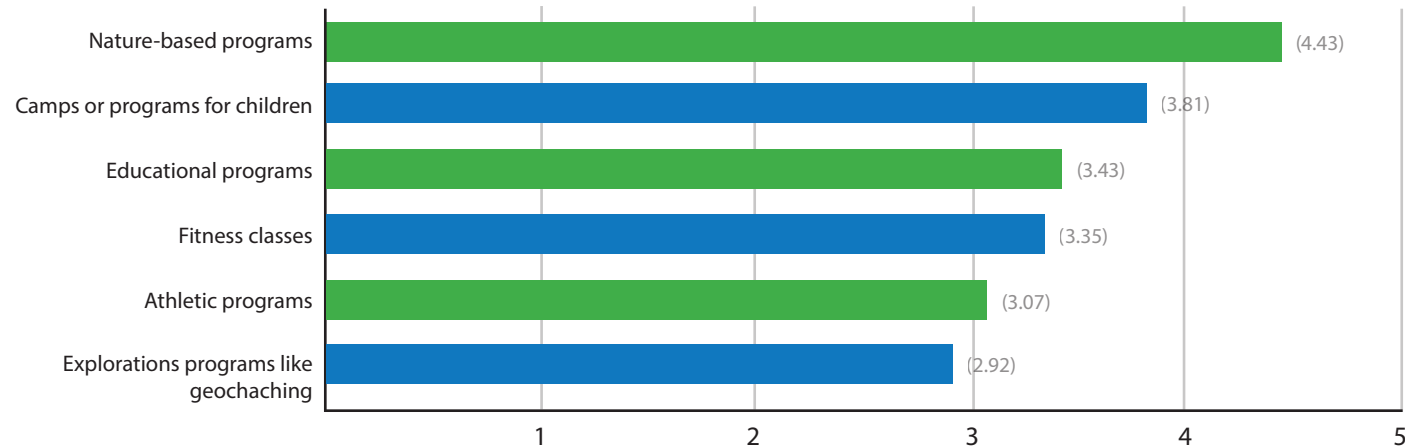
What types of parks are most needed in Cascade Township? Please select any that apply.



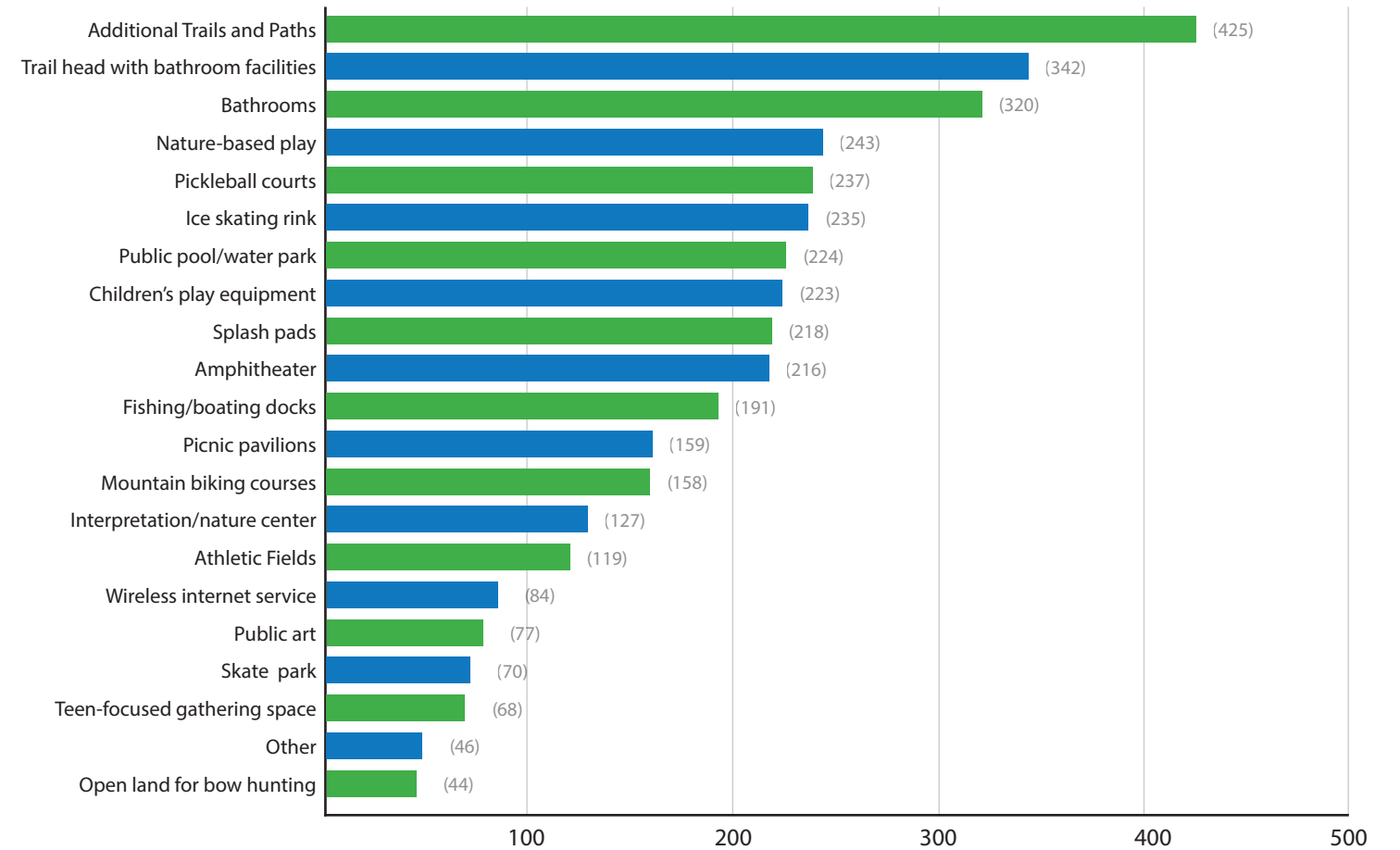
Do you think any groups are under-served by current recreation services and amenities? Please select any that apply.



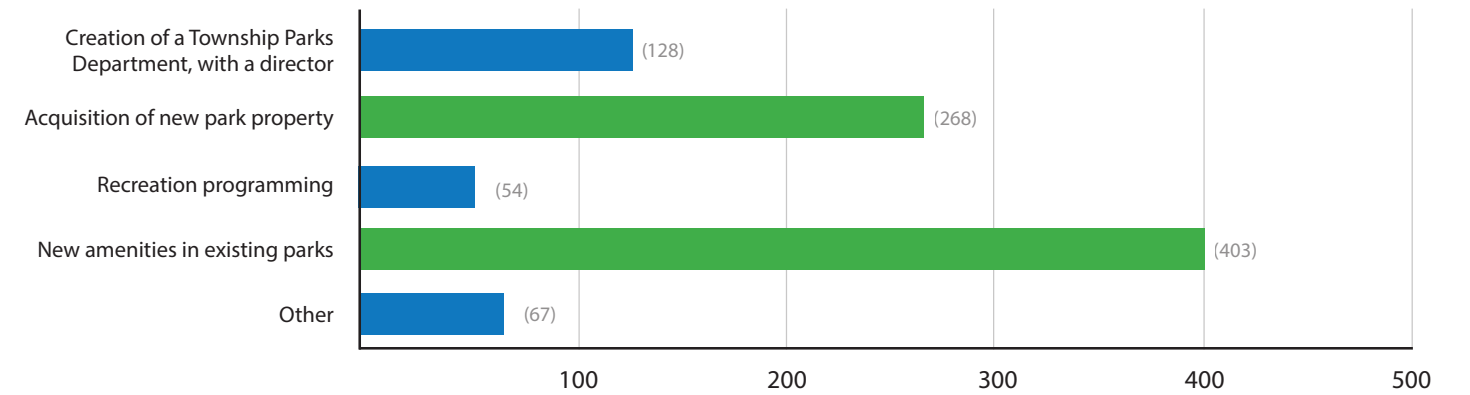
What types of programming would be a priority?



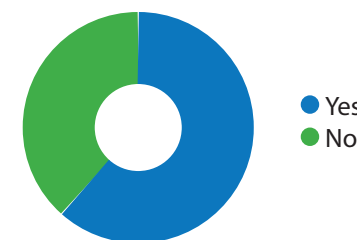
What parks and recreation amenities and facilities are you most interested in? Please check your top 5 choices.



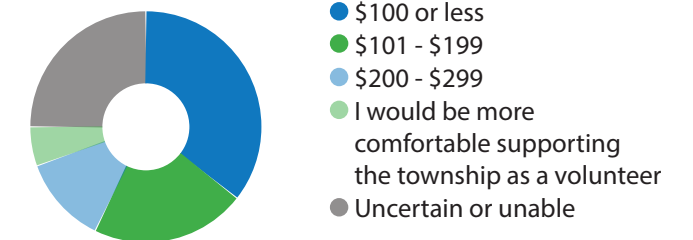
If the Township made additional funding available to parks, what would you like the money used for? (Please rank in order with one being the highest)



At present, most recreational programming in Cascade Township is provided by FHPS or other private organizations like the YMCA, AYSO etc. Would you be supportive of the Township expanding its offerings in this area?



Are you willing to support a parks millage? If so, how much is your household willing to spend per year to support your priorities from the above question?



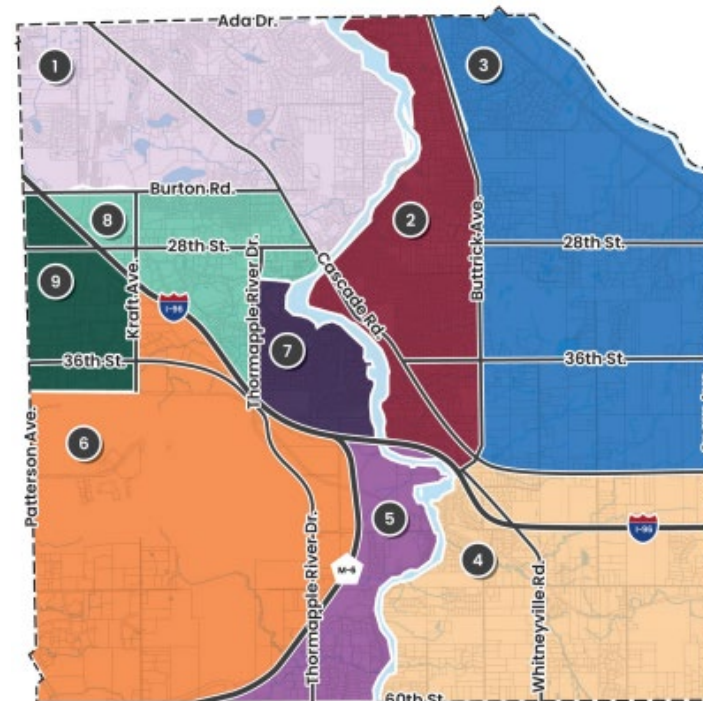
STRATEGIC PLAN ENGAGEMENT

STRATEGIC PLAN SURVEY

The public engagement process for the township's strategic plan overlapped with the public engagement process for its parks and recreation plan. The strategic plan survey garnered about 1,890 responses, with demographics similar to the parks and recreation survey. The survey helped determine concerns and priorities within the community, and broke them down by age demographics as well as geographic location. Looking at the parks-related concerns and priorities from this survey, we were able to further identify the age and geographic groups within the community that may be under-served in these areas. Some of the key take-aways from the strategic plan survey regarding parks and recreation are listed below.

- Lake and river preservation is critically important, especially for those that live in areas near the Thornapple River. It is also a concern for the younger respondents.
- Not having enough parks is a concern of younger respondents and is of particular concern for those south of I-96 and east of the Thornapple River.
- Pathway maintenance is a larger concern for residents who live west of the Thornapple River.
- Neighborhood parks would benefit under-served areas, promote residential growth, and serve as gathering space.
- Areas 5 and 6 (south and east) are under-served by existing facilities and should be a priority for new development.
- Respondents ages 18-49 tend to rank parks, public space, and pedestrian pathway maintenance and development as higher priorities than older ages.
- While the survey indicated taxes are a concern for most residents, the parks survey indicated the majority of respondents (67.5%) were willing to financially support a parks millage, while 33% indicated they were willing to spend over \$100/year on a parks millage.

- Creating a defined village is the number one or two priority across all age and location demographics. Integrating a green gathering space into downtown village developments can accomplish multiple goals.
- Area 5 respondents indicated the greatest desire for more parks improvements and had the lowest overall concern about raising taxes. This under-served area should receive consideration for new facilities.
- Maintenance of existing trails and parks rated higher in the parks survey than the strategic plan survey.
- Acquisition of additional parks and making parks improvements should be targeted in areas that are under-served based on geographic response.
- Increasing awareness of the need to improve and protect the Thornapple River was important to most respondents.



STRATEGIC PLAN PARKS FOCUS GROUP

The Strategic Plan consultants conducted several focus group workshops, one of which specifically focused on Parks and Recreation.

PARKS & RECREATION FOCUS GROUP THEMES

More pathway connections	Better signage & parking around Burton Park	New park and pathways in SE part of the township
More restrooms & parking at parks	More signage & restrooms along the pathways	Separated pathway on Laraway Lake
Improved pathway on Cascade Rd across the river	Added pathway connections to Rec Park & Peace Park	Added/Improved sports complex



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

SURVEY RESPONSES

2014 Parks Survey: 170 responses
2021 Parks Survey: 970 responses
Strategic Plan Survey: 1,887 responses

Similar demographics of respondents were found across each of the three surveys.

THEMES FROM STRATEGIC PLAN ENGAGEMENT

Preservation

Lake and river preservation is critically important, especially for those that live in areas near the Thornapple River. It is also a concern for the younger respondents.

Maintenance

Pathway maintenance is a primary concern for residents, especially those who live west of the Thornapple River.

Equity

Neighborhood parks would benefit underserved areas, promote residential growth, and serve as gathering spaces. Areas 5 and 6 (south and west) are underserved by existing facilities and should be a priority for new development. Areas 3 and 4 (east) are also underserved and would like to see further improvements of existing facilities as well as the development of new facilities. Area 5 respondents expressed the greatest desire for more parks improvements. This area of the township should be a priority for planning and development.

Parks as a Priority

Respondents aged 18-49 ranked parks, public space, and pedestrian pathway maintenance and development as a high priority. Not having enough parks is a concern of younger residents and is of particular concern for areas south of I-96 and east of the Thornapple River.

Community and Identity

Community identity should be a focus of future parks and recreation development and improvements. Creating a village is the number one or two priority of respondents regardless of location or age.

THEMES FROM PARKS SURVEY ENGAGEMENT

Least utilized parks: McGraw, Westdale Memorial Park
Moderately utilized: Burton, Peace Park

Most utilized: Township (Rec) Park & Tassell Park

Maintenance

Maintaining existing parks and pathways was the top priority recorded during the public engagement efforts. Residents prioritize current amenity maintenance and improvements before adding new amenities. More personnel and resources were identified as necessary to continue proper maintenance of parks and pathways.

Types of parks

Pathways and other connections between the parks are clearly desired. Natural areas, small neighborhood parks and waterfront parks are most desired and will be considered when acquiring spaces.

Amenities & Facilities

Increased trails, pathways, and restrooms are the most requested facilities. Youth-targeted facilities are also highly desired, including playgrounds, nature-based play, athletic fields, splash pad, public pool, and ice rink.

Millage

Most survey respondents are in favor of expansion of Township recreational program offerings, and the majority of those respondents said they would support a millage. While many oppose raising taxes in general, the parks survey indicated the majority of respondents (67.5%) are willing to financially support a parks millage and half of those respondents indicated they are willing to spend more than \$100/year for the millage.

Pathway Expansion

The most noted areas for increased pathways included Thornapple River Drive, Laraway Lake Drive, Buttrick Avenue, Burger Drive, 28th Street, Whitneyville Avenue, Burton Park, Cascade Road, and Peace Park.

Additional Comments

- Pathway maintenance, expansion, and upkeep
- Invasive species management
- More park amenities and spaces for children
- Pedestrian travel across the river
- Public kayak launches & increased water access
- Biking trails
- Small neighborhood parks and open spaces
- More pickleball courts, wind shields, and restrooms
- Dog Park maintenance
- Safe space for teenagers
- Stewardship and volunteer programs

DRAFT PLAN PUBLIC FEEDBACK

The draft plan was made publicly available on the township website from October 27th to November 25th. Hard copies of the plan were also available for public review at the Township Offices. A public open house was held at the Kent District Library Cascade Township Branch on November 10th from 4:30 to 6:30 pm. Township staff, Parks Committee members, and 16 residents attended the open house. Park maps, goals, objectives, and action items were displayed for review and discussion.

Summary of comments received

- Cascade Recreation Park should have a screening along I-96, a splash pad, upgraded/new athletic fields, shade for seating at the playground, and security cameras.
- Burton Park should utilize the Windcrest entrance only, add wayfinding and interpretive signage, and add benches.
- There should be a joint effort with parks and cemeteries to provide a place for solace and reflection, utilize native plantings, and control invasive species.
- Option B was generally preferred for Wycliffe Trailhead Park with the seating area moved further away from the church property. Restroom(s), nature play and interpretive signage along the trail was well-liked.
- There is a need for an aquatics facility to provide aquatics access for all residents.
- There is a shortage of multi-sport fields in the area. Adding multi-sport fields should be a priority for park improvements and expansion.
- The sale of the Forest Hills Admin Building property is an opportunity for the township to add park space and multi-purpose fields.

USING THE ENGAGEMENT IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

Public engagement informs the planning process and helps provide clear direction for goals, objectives, and action items for the next five years. Since it was noted as a priority, maintenance of facilities and proper maintenance planning were built into the goals and action items of this plan. A focus on under-served areas will continue to inform the parks acquisition process and pathway connection planning efforts. Desired amenities and generational needs will guide capital improvement planning and development. While taxes were described as a community concern, the majority support a parks millage indicating that the community is willing to financially support parks improvements and maintenance. The goals and objectives are designed to provide guidance on how efforts and funding should be utilized, and the annual action plans provide a checklist to help achieve those goals and objectives over the next five years.



PREVIOUS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

TERM **PROJECT** **COMPLETION STATUS**

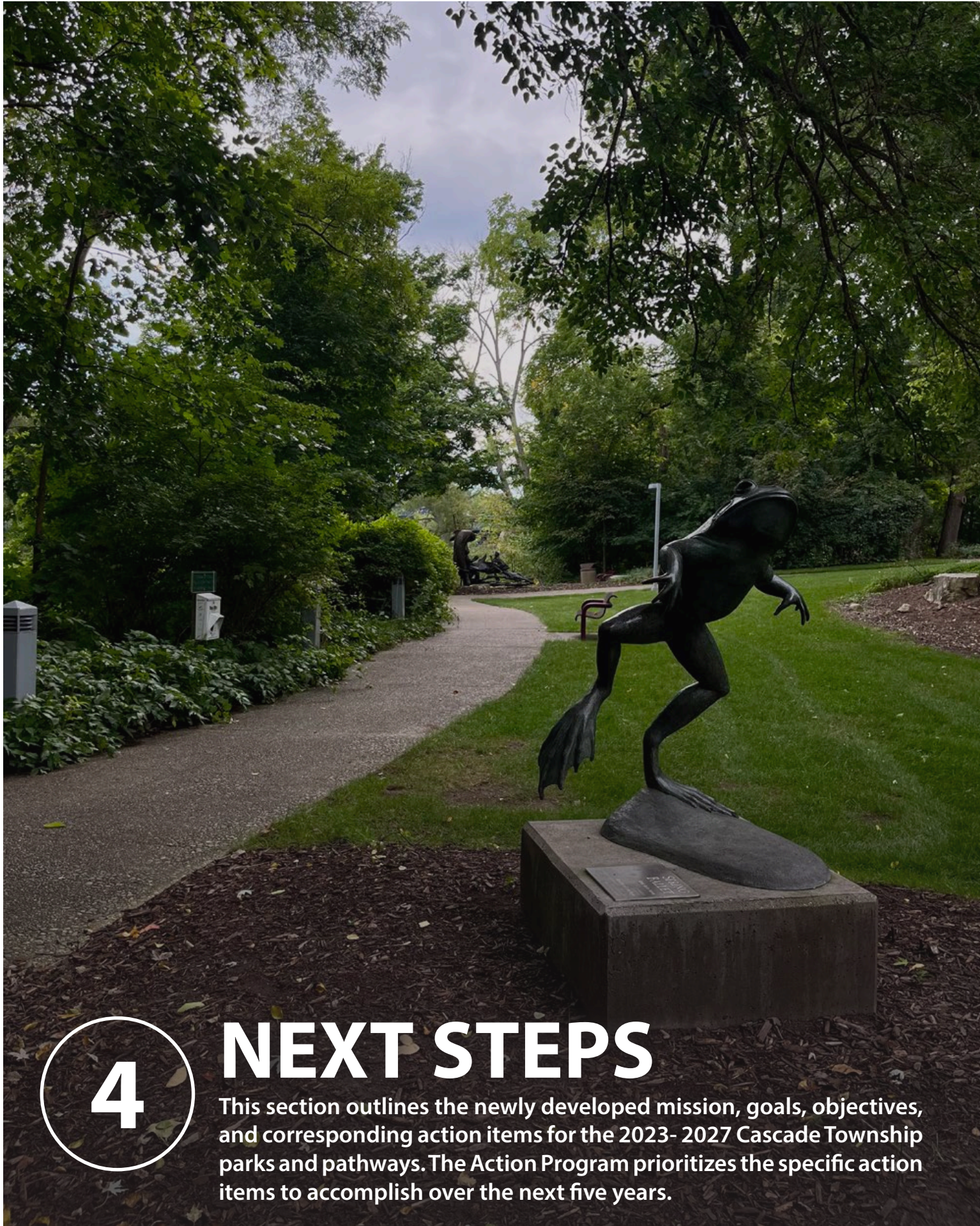
SHORT TERM	<p>GOAL: Increase park publicity and awareness for all parks. Tasks include quarterly parks updates in township newsletter, updated parks maps, improved way-finding signage, and digital tool development for park location information.</p> <p>STATUS: Some awareness and publicity efforts are underway, including website updates for the parks and facilities, regular newsletters, and improved park signage. Further signage updates are continuous. Online facility sign-ups and payment would be beneficial for the township.</p>	In Progress
	<p>GOAL: Host community focus group discussions to review the existing dog owner's policies and guidelines as they relate to individual parks.</p> <p>STATUS: Completed. Enforcement of guidelines and regulations needs management.</p>	Completed
	<p>GOAL: Establish essential pilot programs for youth outdoor education, organized sports, volunteer events, and stewardship organizations.</p> <p>STATUS: Some programs and organizations have been established. This could be further developed.</p>	In Progress
	<p>GOAL: Complete short neighborhood pathway connections in critical areas.</p> <p>STATUS: Some connections have been made, but more should be developed.</p>	In Progress
	<p>GOAL: Develop barrier-free handicap accessible, and universally designed children's play area in existing Cascade Township (Rec) Park as well as new properties such as the Village Center or Cascade Public Library.</p> <p>STATUS: The children's playground in Rec Park was completed in 2016 through Township and donor funds. Universal design will be continuously implemented in future developments across the township.</p>	Completed
	<p>GOAL: Organize Friends of Cascade Parks and Trails.</p> <p>STATUS: A Friends of Cascade Parks and Trails organization has not been established. This is something that would be beneficial to establish.</p>	Not In Progress
	<p>GOAL: Develop an off-leash dog park at Cascade Township (Rec) Park.</p> <p>STATUS: This project is completed.</p>	Completed

MID TERM

<p>GOAL: Develop basketball courts at Cascade Township (Rec) Park with transitional ice skating rink.</p> <p>STATUS: Basketball courts were implemented in Rec Park in 2015. The courts have not been utilized as a transitional ice skating rink. A location for a potential seasonal rink is being discussed.</p>	In Progress
<p>GOAL: Prepare preliminary engineering plans for a regional trail system that will connect Cascade Township recreation areas with adjacent communities including Lowell, Caledonia, and Grand Rapids.</p> <p>STATUS: Some preliminary conceptual trail planning has taken place.</p>	Not In Progress
<p>GOAL: Construct all-inclusive, barrier free playground.</p> <p>STATUS: This was completed in Rec Park in 2016.</p>	Completed
<p>GOAL: Implement Gateway Concept Plan at Museum Garden Park.</p> <p>STATUS: Some preliminary concepts were completed, but no implementation is currently underway. This park has been renamed Virgil Nishimura Westdale Memorial Park.</p>	Not In Progress

LONG TERM

<p>GOAL: Long term maintenance plan for pathways and trails extension.</p> <p>STATUS: A pathway maintenance analysis and plan was completed in 2022 with improvements prioritized. Pathway extensions are the next planning item.</p>	In Progress
<p>GOAL: Compile database of properties on the Thornapple River and Grand River to explore options for land acquisition and expansion of waterfront public park space.</p> <p>STATUS: Some properties have been identified by the Parks Committee for possible acquisition. An acquisition template was developed. No formal database has been completed.</p>	In Progress
<p>GOAL: Regional trail network connections to adjacent communities including Paul Henry Thornapple Trail and Fred Meijer M-6 Trail.</p> <p>STATUS: Connections to regional trail networks have not been planned or implemented.</p>	Not In Progress
<p>GOAL: Develop multi-use athletic field complex.</p> <p>STATUS: Potential sites are being analyzed as available, but no design or implementation has taken place.</p>	In Progress
<p>GOAL: Redevelop village area with focus on unique and diverse recreation amenities.</p> <p>STATUS: Village area is under planning and development and is a priority of the recently adopted Cascade Township Strategic Plan.</p>	In Progress



MISSION STATEMENT

Cascade Township Parks protects and preserves its natural resources through strategic acquisition, stewardship, education, and management while providing accessible, quality recreational amenities and experiences to equitably enrich the lives of residents and future generations.

4

NEXT STEPS

This section outlines the newly developed mission, goals, objectives, and corresponding action items for the 2023- 2027 Cascade Township parks and pathways. The Action Program prioritizes the specific action items to accomplish over the next five years.

GOALS, STRATEGIES, & ACTION ITEMS

1

ENSURE THAT EXISTING PARKS AND PATHWAYS MEET THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY THEY SERVE

- 1.1 Ensure sufficient resources in the annual budget for routine and long-term parks maintenance costs**
 - 1.1.1 Conduct a biannual meeting between township staff, parks committee, and maintenance director to identify critical maintenance needs, and develop a cost estimate recommendation devoted to parks maintenance from the appropriate funding sources.
- 1.2 Create long-term maintenance plan for parks, pathways, and parks trails extensions**
 - 1.2.1 Parks Committee to meet with Building & Grounds Supervisor on a biannual basis to identify short- and long-term maintenance needs and update an ongoing checklist.
 - 1.2.2 Pathways Committee to review pathway system condition and develop a pathway maintenance/replacement plan.
- 1.3 Allocate & obtain sufficient funding sources to assist with costs of parks and pathway maintenance and land acquisition purchases**
 - 1.3.1 Use funding determinations to create a parks millage proposal that will provide sufficient funds for maintaining and improving existing parks and acquiring new property.
 - 1.3.2 Pathways Committee to prioritize maintenance/improvements projects based on funding available through the remaining millage period (2027).
- 1.4 Add amenities, infrastructure, and support facilities to best serve the community**
 - 1.4.1 Parks Committee to have work sessions biannually to determine improvement priorities. Refer to the public engagement survey and focus group feedback from the 2023-2027 Parks Master Plan and Cascade Township Strategic Plan to identify desired amenity and infrastructure improvements and implement as applicable with future projects. (Trailheads, bathrooms, nature-based play, pickleball, ice skating rink, & splash pads, were the highest ranked amenities and facilities.)
 - 1.4.2 Collaborate with surrounding communities including Ada, Lowell, Kentwood, and Caledonia as needed to determine connections, shared resources, needed amenities, and programming.
- 1.5 Recommend capital improvement projects to the Township Board based on the master plan**
 - 1.5.1 Parks Committee to utilize the public input from the 2023-2027 Parks Master Plan to identify parks-related capital improvement projects most desired by the community to target over the next five years. Develop a corresponding plan of action and funding to present to Township Board.
 - 1.5.2 Complete a master plan for the Cascade Township Recreation Park.
 - 1.5.3 Implement improvements at Wycliffe Trailhead Park based on the master plan.
 - 1.5.4 Improve accessibility and universal design elements at all parks.

2

IDENTIFY AND CREATE FUTURE PATHWAY ROUTES CONNECTING TO NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES, REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEMS, AND EXISTING COMMUNITY AMENITIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS

- 2.1 Identify and plan for pathway connections to regional trail systems**
 - 2.1.1 Pathways committee to review existing Cascade Township Pathways map, Regional Trails maps, and State Trail Plan maps, and identify future potential connections for the pathways development plan.
- 2.2 Identify potential pathway routes that connect with surrounding communities**
 - 2.2.1 Pathways Committee to review existing pathway maps from neighboring communities including Ada, Lowell, Caledonia, Kentwood, and Grand Rapids, and communicate with neighboring pathway/parks committees regarding future development and pathway connections.
- 2.3 Plan for renewal of pathway millage to continue funding for pathway system needs**
 - 2.3.1 Pathways Committee to create a plan for maintenance, improvements, and future connections ensuring adequate funding for pathways when the current millage expires in 2027.
- 2.4 Identify and prioritize critical neighborhood pathway connections and projects with a particular focus on connecting the southern half of the Township**
 - 2.4.1 Identify neighborhoods where pathway connections and connections to parks are incomplete or nonexistent and develop an implementation plan with prioritization and phasing.
 - 2.4.2 Develop a pathways master plan that identifies connections and extensions for the pathways system.

3

REFINE THE TOWNSHIP'S PARKS ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE AND SUPPORT

- 3.1 Establish and maintain collaboration between the Parks Committee and newly formed Pathways Committee**
 - 3.1.1 Parks Committee to have member(s) attend Pathways Committee meetings as needed or have a member that is on both committees.
- 3.2 Hire additional township staff to assist with development of parks and recreation**
 - 3.2.1 Hire a Parks Director that will manage all efforts related to parks.
 - 3.2.2 Plan for additional parks staff such as a program director and seasonal maintenance staff.
- 3.3 Organize Friends of Cascade Parks to aid in planning, fundraising, maintenance, and volunteer opportunities**
 - 3.3.1 Parks Committee to help establish Friends of Cascade Parks and appoint a director of the group to coordinate volunteers and fundraising.
- 3.4 Establish a volunteer program to assist with parks efforts such as invasive species control, programming, and maintenance**
 - 3.4.1 Identify a township staff member to develop a database of volunteers utilizing online volunteering platforms or other appropriate tools and communicate volunteer opportunities.

GOALS, STRATEGIES, & ACTION ITEMS

4

IDENTIFY AND IMPLEMENT APPROPRIATE FUNDING MECHANISMS TO ACQUIRE PROPERTY, IMPROVE AND MAINTAIN PARKS, ADD AMENITIES, AND HIRE STAFF TO SUPPORT THE PARKS AND PATHWAY SYSTEMS

- 4.1 Collaborate between the Parks Committee, Pathways Committee, and Township staff to review funding needs and develop a plan**
 - 4.1.1 Committees to meet with township staff biannually to discuss needs and funding.
- 4.2 Develop a parks millage proposal that will provide necessary funds to acquire park property, improve and maintain parks, and amenities, and hire staff including a Parks Director**
 - 4.2.1 Create education materials for the parks millage that transparently describes what the funding will be used for and post to the township website, social media, and newsletter. Utilize various methods to engage voter base.
- 4.3 Identify and apply for applicable grant opportunities**
 - 4.3.1 Research grant opportunities available at the local, state, and federal level, and apply as applicable for desired improvements or land acquisition.
- 4.4 Explore opportunities for donors, volunteers, and fundraising**
 - 4.4.1 Engage with potential donors and volunteers to discuss parks needs. Partner with community organizations such as the schools, Eagle Scouts, Cascade Community Foundation, churches, etc.

5

PRESERVE NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE WITHIN THE TOWNSHIP

- 5.1 Continue Township green space preservation efforts through appropriate land acquisition**
 - 5.1.1 Create a database of properties that are desired for future acquisition utilizing the Parks Committee acquisition template. Target acquisition efforts based on the template, community needs and opportunity.
- 5.2 Establish Thornapple River clean up and preservation initiatives and raise awareness of impacts to the water quality**
 - 5.2.1 Parks Committee to work with Friends of Cascade Parks and/or Township personnel to establish an annual volunteer event focused on Thornapple River clean-up.
 - 5.2.2 Perform annual testing and analysis of water quality.
 - 5.2.3 Write articles for the newsletter regarding water quality and how people can help.
 - 5.2.4 Collaborate with adjacent communities and groups such as Plaster Creek Stewards
- 5.3 Contain and remove invasive and diseased species throughout the township**
 - 5.3.1 Work with conservation partners to identify invasive species within the township parks and organize eradication solutions and volunteer work days.
 - 5.3.2 Continue use of township newsletter to educate residents about the types of invasive species, their impact on the local environment, and best methods for eradication.
- 5.4 Establish a joint relationship with cemeteries for native plantings and control of invasive species**

6

COLLABORATE AS APPROPRIATE TO DEVELOP A CENTRAL, GREEN GATHERING SPACE INTEGRATED WITH THE DOWNTOWN VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT AS OUTLINED IN THE CASCADE TOWNSHIP STRATEGIC PLAN

- 6.1 Build consensus for the location for the gathering space**
 - 6.1.1 Township to create a subcommittee with representation from township staff, the Parks Committee, Planning Commission, DDA, and the Township Board.
 - 6.1.2 Township to organize appropriate leadership, partners, and funding for the proposed gathering space.
- 6.2 Implement gathering space project integrated into the village development process**
 - 6.2.1 Township to work with consultants to design the proposed central gathering space and lead a public engagement process.

7

IDENTIFY SPACE FOR NEW COMMUNITY PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE TO SERVE GROWING POPULATION AND PRESERVE NATURAL FEATURES AND CHARACTER OF THE TOWNSHIP

- 7.1 Identify areas that lack access to parks and analyze opportunities for land acquisition**
 - 7.1.1 Proactively compile and continuously update a database of potential properties for land acquisition and expansion of public park space and analyze potential benefit with the property acquisition template.
- 7.2 Identify potential sites for smaller neighborhood parks and parks with water frontage**
- 7.3 Encourage and incentivize open space, parks, or recreation areas in future residential developments**
 - 7.3.1 Parks Committee, planning director, and planning commission should review the zoning ordinance and requirements for developers to determine appropriate provisions for open space and parks.
- 7.4 Explore joint ventures with other entities to provide access to and use of open space, water frontage, and other recreational opportunities**
 - 7.4.1 Parks Committee and/or township personnel to analyze opportunities and collaborate with entities in the community such as schools, the library, sports leagues, neighborhood associations, etc.
- 7.5 Identify potential sites for development of multi-use athletic fields**
 - 7.5.1 Identify potential properties and collaborate with athletics organizations to plan and develop multi-use athletic fields

GOALS, STRATEGIES, & ACTION ITEMS

8

INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS AND USE OF PARKS, PROGRAMS, AND FACILITIES

8.1 Further develop the parks section of the township website to offer online facility scheduling and payments

8.1.1 Work with township staff to identify an existing position, or hire a new communications and scheduling position, to manage scheduling and payments of facilities online, including sports fields, courts, and shelters.

8.2 Increase the exposure of parks in township communications

8.2.1 Actively post parks content on township social media and website.

8.2.2 Include parks-related information in the township quarterly newsletters.

8.3 Conduct an annual review of parks maps and signage to confirm accuracy and quality

8.3.1 Parks and Pathways Committees to conduct an annual review of existing signage and maps, both at the parks and online. Coordinate updates as necessary.

8.4 Coordinate parks branding efforts to align with township branding, and emulate throughout new amenities and development

8.4.1 Township staff and/or its marketing consultant shall present and discuss marketing/branding annually at a Parks Committee and Pathways Committee meeting.

9

DEVELOP PARKS PROGRAMMING TO PROVIDE GREATER OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION, EDUCATION, AND EXPERIENCING NATURE.

9.1 Identify partnerships and leverage resources within the community

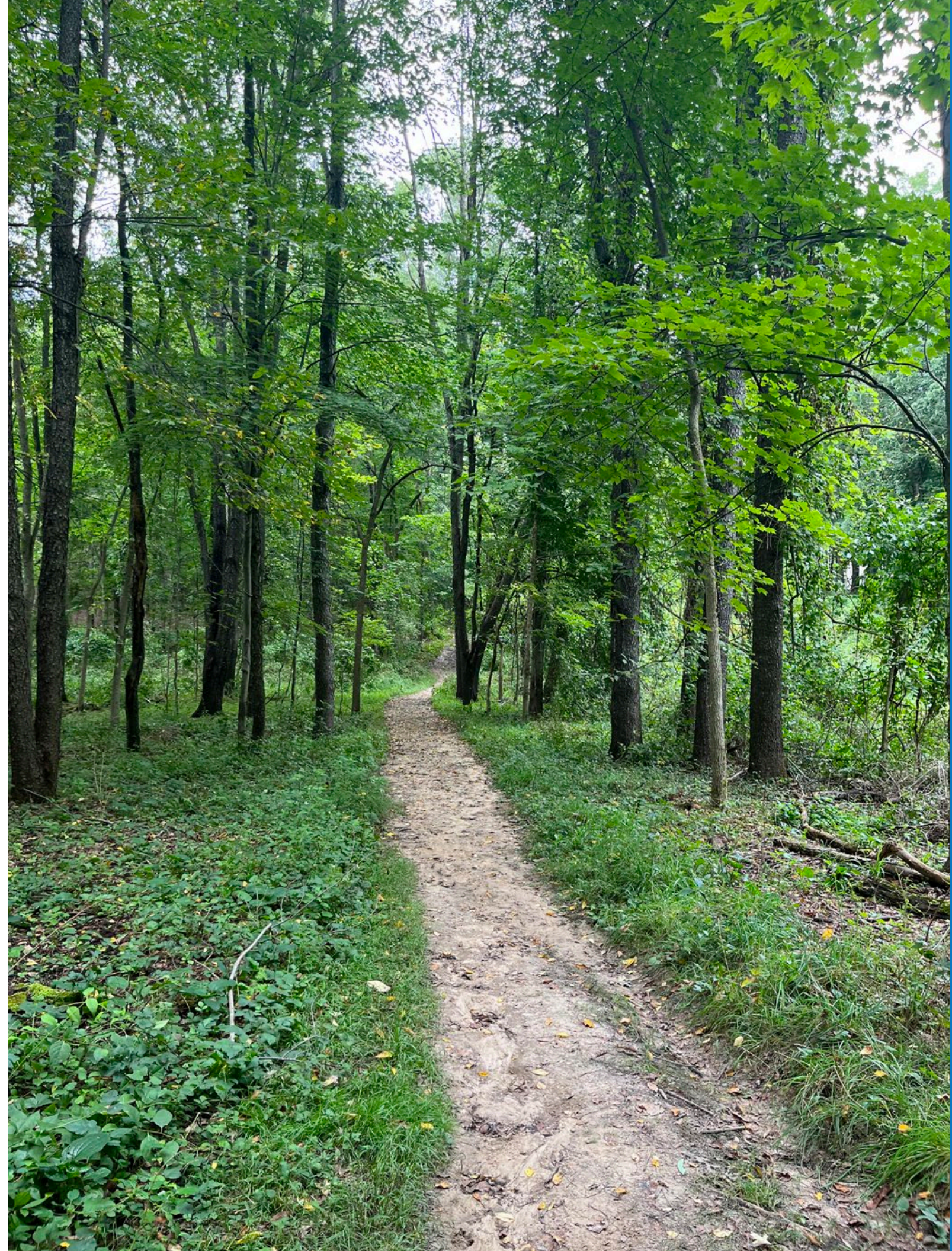
9.1.1 Parks Committee and township staff to analyze opportunities and make contact with entities in the community such as schools, the library, the YMCA, Ada Township Parks, sports leagues, etc.

9.2 Assign recreation programming and coordination role with the existing township staff or hire a Recreational Programming Director to facilitate growing township recreation opportunities if the need is justified

9.2.1 Parks Committee to meet with township personnel to discuss the role and responsibilities of a staff position to handle programming.

9.3 Develop programming for nature education, invasive species management, recreation, and other parks and recreation activities

9.3.1 Develop pilot programming events for different topics and review effectiveness.



ACTION PROGRAM SUMMARY

2023 - 2027 GOALS

- 1 Ensure that existing parks meet the needs of the community
- 2 Identify future pathway routes
- 3 Refine the township's parks organization structure & support
- 4 Identify and implement appropriate funding mechanisms
- 5 Preserve natural areas and open space
- 6 Develop a gathering space with planned downtown village
- 7 Identify space for new parks and preservation
- 8 Increase public awareness of parks
- 9 Develop parks programming

RESPONSIBLE ENTITY

- PC = Parks Committee
 BGS = Building & Grounds Supervisor
 TS = Township Staff
 DDA = Downtown Development Authority
 PWC = Pathways Committee
 TB = Township Board
 PLC = Planning Commission

Note: See appendices for annual action items programs

ACTION ITEMS	YEAR	GOAL	PARK/SITE	RESPONSIBILITY
Create a parks maintenance plan	2023	1	All	BGS, PC
Review of maintenance checklist/plan (biannual)	Annual	1	All	BGS, TS, PC
Review of maintenance & improvements budget (biannual)	Annual	1, 4	All	BGS, TS, PC, TB
Implement Wycliffe Trailhead Park improvements	2023	1, 7	Wycliffe	PC, TS, TB
Plan, design, construct Township Rec Park improvements	2023-2025	1, 5	Rec Park	PC, TS, TB
Peace Park erosion repair & improvement	2023	1	Peace	PC, TS, TB
Parks accessibility improvements	Annual	1	All	PC, TS, TB
Create a pathways maintenance plan	2023	1, 2	Pathways	PWC, TS
Review regional pathways connections/opportunities (ongoing)	Annual	2	Pathways	PWC, TS
Identify proposed local pathways connections	2023	2	Pathways	PWC, TS
Engineering & construction of highest priority pathway connection	2024-2025	2	Pathways	PWC, TS
Engineering & construction of next highest priority pathway connection	2026-2027	2	Pathways	PWC, TS
Resurface or reconstruct high priority sections of existing pathways	Annual	1, 2	Pathways	PWC, TS, TB
Prepare plan for upcoming renewal of pathways millage	2026	2, 4	Pathways	PWC, TS, TB
Engineering & construction of regional trail connection	2025-2026	1, 2	Pathways	PWC, TS, TB
Review staff roles and responsibilities for parks, identify needs	Annual	3		PC, TS, TB
Hire a Township Parks Director	2023-2024	3		PC, TS, TB
Organize a volunteer program	2024	3		PC, TS
Organize a Friends of Cascade Parks & Pathways group	2025	3		PC, PWC, TS
Develop materials & support for parks millage, propose millage	2023-2024	4	All	PC, TS, TB
Create/update list of properties scored with the land acquisition template	Annual	5, 7	All/Acquisition	PC, TS
Acquisition of park & open space property	As Available	1, 5, 7	All/Acquisition	PC, TS, TB
Identify property and develop multi-use athletic fields	2023-2025	1, 7	Acquisition	PC, TS, TB
Educate public about invasive species and tree diseases	Annual	5, 8		PC, TS, TB
Hold invasive species eradication work days	Annual	5	Burton, Peace	PC, TS
Thornapple River clean-up day and water quality testing	Annual	5		PC, TS
Joint effort with cemeteries for native plantings & invasives control	Annual	5		PC, BGS, TS
Write articles for newsletter regarding resource preservation	Annual	5, 8		PC, TS
Explore options for and potentially complete a deer cull	2023	5		PC, TS
Plan, design, construct downtown gathering space	2023-2025	6	New Site	PC, TS, DDA, TB
Review and update zoning ordinance for open space requirements	2023	7		PC, TS, PLC
Establish/maintain partnerships for use of open space & programming	Annual	7, 9		PC, TS
Update Township Parks website	Annual	8		PC, TS
Increase parks presence through Township social media	Annual	8		PC, TS
Review of signage and maps for parks and trails	Annual	8	All, Pathways	PC, PWC, TS
Review of parks and township brand/marketing/communications	Annual	8		PC, PWC, TS
Develop pilot parks programming	2024	9		PC, TS

FUNDING SOURCES

GRANTS

This plan has been developed both to reflect the needs and goals of the community and to meet the Michigan Department of Natural Resources requirements for eligibility for federal and state funding. Potential grant opportunities include:

- Land and Water Conservation Fund
- Natural Resources Trust Fund
- Recreation Passport Grant Program
- Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program
- Michigan Spark Grants

Additional grants are available for trails and pathways such as the Michigan Trails Fund, Recreation Trails Program (RTP), Safe Routes to School and other alternative transportation funds.

PARKS MILLAGE

Many surrounding communities rely on a parks millage to provide funding for maintenance and capital improvements. The township should develop a plan with identified funding needs and propose a millage to voters.

TOWNSHIP FUNDS

Current funding for parks, pathways, and recreation improvements and maintenance throughout the township includes the general fund, parks budget, and pathways millage.

Cascade Township received \$2 Million in ARPA funding. The disbursement will be considered by the Township Board and a portion of this funding could be utilized for park improvement projects.

OTHER RESOURCES

Other funding partners could include Cascade Community Foundation, schools, private entities and donors. Other resources can provide assistance including local groups like neighborhood associations, Eagle Scouts, and volunteers, as well as groups for specific activities such as the West Michigan Mountain Biking Alliance. Also, the township should determine strategies to produce parks revenue through facility rentals and programming.





5 APPENDICES

PUBLIC INPUT MEETINGS NOTICES

The first public input meeting was held on August 31, 2021 at the Wisner Center in the Kent District Library Cascade Branch. The township provided notice through the township website, calendar on the township website, and multiple Facebook posts. A parks and trails focus group public meeting was also held on March 20, 2022 as part of the township's strategic planning process. This was advertised on the township's website, calendar, and social media.

July 2021		August 2021							September 2021					
S	M	T	W	T	F	S		S	M	T	W	T	F	S
4	5	6	7	8	9	10		5	6	7	8	9	10	11
11	12	13	14	15	16	17		12	13	14	15	16	17	18
18	19	20	21	22	23	24		19	20	21	22	23	24	25
25	26	27	28	29	30	31		26	27	28	29	30		

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 ● Planning Commission 7:00pm @ Kent District Library - Cascade - Wisner Center	3 ● Planning Commission Roundhill Subcommittee 2:00pm @ Kent District Library - Cascade - Wisner Center National Night Out 4:30pm - 7:30pm @ Mary Free Bed YMCA	4 Infrastructure Committee - Cancelled 8:00am @ Cascade Township Office	5 Historical Committee 9:30am @ Township Museum Building	6	7
8	9	10 ● Zoning Board of Appeals 5:30pm @ Kent District Library - Cascade - Wisner Center	11 Finance & Personnel Committee 9:00am @ Cascade Township Office ● Township Board 7:00pm @ Kent District Library - Cascade - Wisner Center	12	13	14
15	16 ● Planning Commission 7:00pm @ Kent District Library - Cascade - Wisner Center	17 ● Planning Commission Roundhill Subcommittee 10:00am @ Kent District Library - Cascade - Wisner Center Downtown Development Authority - Cancelled 5:30pm @ Kent District Library - Cascade - Wisner Center	18 Public Safety Advisory Committee 9:00am @ Cascade Township Office	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 Governance Committee 9:00am @ Cascade Township Office Planning Commission Roundhill Subcommittee 10:00am @ Kent District Library - Cascade - Wisner Center ● Township Board 7:00pm @ Kent District Library - Cascade - Wisner Center	26 Cascade Metro Cruise Warmup 4:30pm - 8:30pm @ Fowling Warehouse Parking Lot	27	28
29	30	31 Parks Plan Open House 3:00pm - 6:00pm @ Kent District Library - Cascade - Wisner Center				


Legend: ○ General ● Planning Commission ● Township Board ● Zoning Board of Appeals

Cascade Charter Township
August 24, 2021 · 🌐

The parks and recreation open house is one week away.

Join us 3-6 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 31 to help update the Township's parks and recreation master plan. During the event, you'll be able to share ideas for how to shape the future of Cascade parks, recreation and open spaces.

You can also provide feedback via our online survey here: <https://bit.ly/3yW8FbW>. The survey ends Sept. 20.



Help Shape the Future of Cascade Parks and Recreation

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN OPEN HOUSE


TUE, AUG 31, 2021

Cascade Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan Open House

Grand Rapids, MI
62 people interested

Interested

Cascade Charter Township created an event.
March 4 · 🌐



Strategic Planning Focus Group Parks and Trails

6-7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 29
Wisner Center

TUE, MAR 29

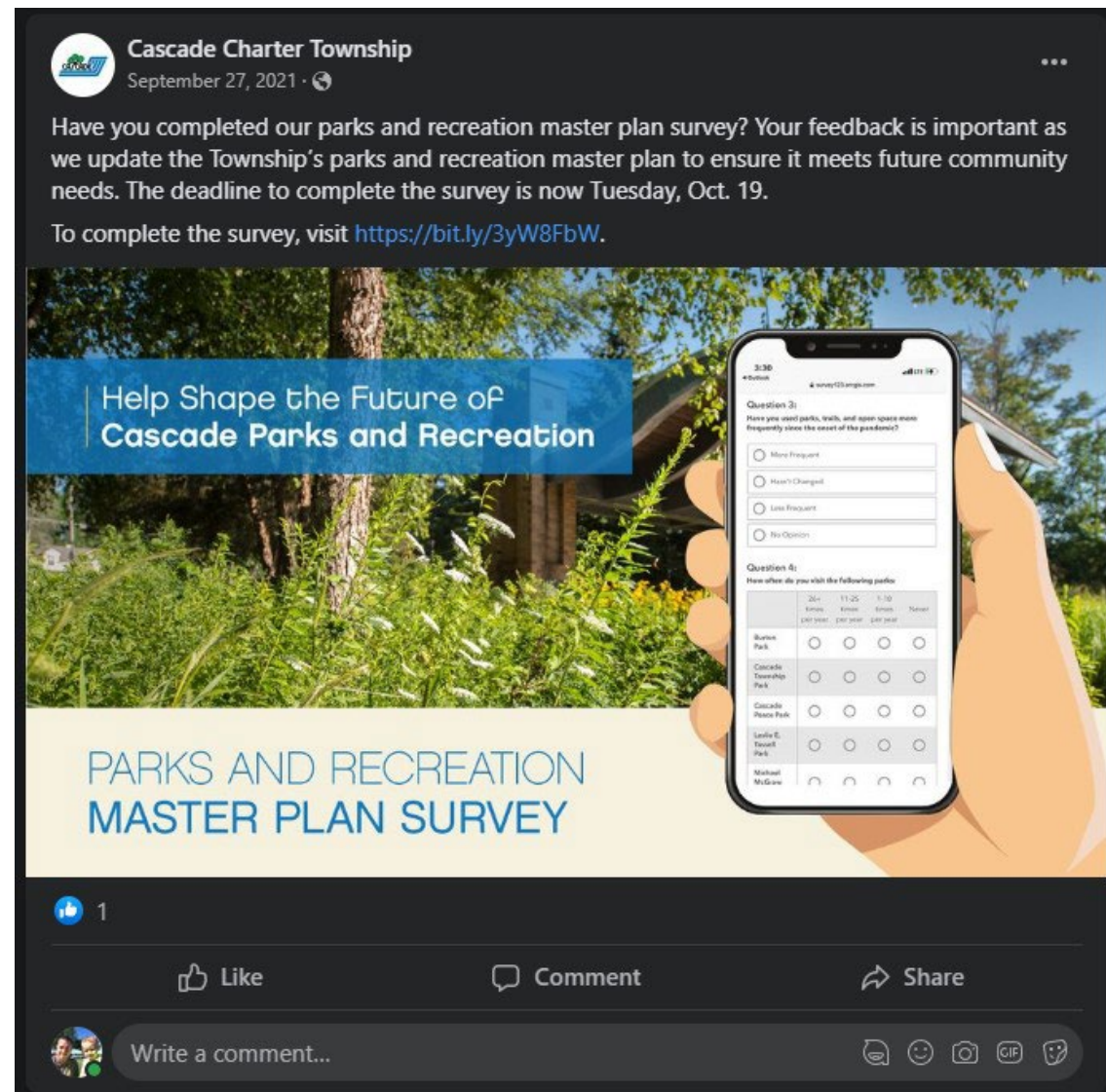
Cascade Township Strategic Planning Focus Group: Parks and Trails

Grand Rapids, MI
1 person went

Interested

PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY NOTICE

The public input survey was open from August 31, 2021 through October 15, 2021. The township provided notice through the township website, calendar on the township website, and multiple Facebook posts.



NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD & HEARING

NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD AND PUBLIC HEARING

Cascade Township 5-Year Parks & Recreation Master Plan Update

Cascade Township will be accepting comments on the draft Parks and Recreation Plan from October 27 until November 25. The draft plan will be available to review at the Cascade Township office located at 5920 Tahoe Drive SE, as well as on the Township website at <https://www.cascadetwp.com/>.

An open house is also planned to be held at the Wisner Center at 2870 Jacksmith Dr on Thursday, November 10, to allow residents to review and comment on the draft plan. More information regarding the open house will be available on the Township website.

In order to document your comments, it would be appreciated if you would send any comment you have to Brian Hilbrands, Planning Director, at bhilbrands@cascadetwp.com. If you have any questions regarding the plan or the process you can call Brian at 616-949-0224.

The Cascade Charter Township Board will then hold a public hearing at a regular meeting to consider the new plan.

PUBLIC HEARING DATE: Wednesday, December 14, 2022

TIME: 7:00 pm

LOCATION: Cascade Library – Wisner Center
2870 Jacksmith Dr, SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

All information relative to this request may be reviewed in the office of the Planner (949-0224) located at 5920 Tahoe Dr, SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49546 during regular business hours. Written comments concerning the request may be submitted to the Township Planning Director, Brian Hilbrands, 5920 Tahoe Dr, SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546 before the start of the meeting. The meeting packet will be available on the Township website a few days prior to the meeting - <https://www.cascadetwp.com/reference-desk/meetings>.

Cascade Charter Township
5920 Tahoe Dr SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
Township Board

Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services who are planning to attend the hearing should notify Township Clerk Susan Slater at sslater@cascadetwp.com within a reasonable time in advance of the date of the hearing.


NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD & HEARING

Cascade Charter Township
November 6 at 5:21 PM · 🌐

Have you reviewed our draft parks and recreation master plan? Your feedback is important as the Parks Committee works to finalize the plan to ensure it meets future community needs.

To review the plan, visit <https://bit.ly/3NEGwi2>. To submit feedback on the plan, email Cascade Township Planning Director Brian Hilbrands at bhilbrands@cascadetwp.com. The community feedback period ends Friday, Nov. 25.

You can also provide input at our Nov. 10 open house. Join us 4:30-6:30 p.m... [See more](#)



We Want to Hear From You


PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

👍 2


Cascade Charter Township
November 9 at 6:17 PM · 🌐

We hope to see you Thursday, Nov. 10 at our parks and recreation master plan open house. During the open house, you'll be able to review the draft parks and recreation master plan and provide feedback to Township staff and members of the Parks Committee. There will also be two design concepts for the new Wycliffe Trailhead Park.

Can't attend the open house? You can provide feedback by emailing Cascade Township Planning Director Brian Hilbrands at bhilbrands@cascadetwp.com. T... [See more](#)



Help Shape the Future of Cascade's Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN OPEN HOUSE 

THU, NOV 10
Cascade Parks and Recreation Master Plan Open House
Grand Rapids
2 people went

☆ Interested

DRAFT PLAN PUBLIC REVIEW ARTICLE

This article was published in the Grand Rapids Business Journal

Cascade Township seeks parks and rec feedback

By [Kayleigh Fongers](#) · November 8, 2022



Courtesy Cascade Township

Cascade Township is seeking community feedback on a draft of a five-year parks and recreation master plan.

Cascade Township is seeking community feedback on a draft of a five-year parks and recreation master plan.

A public comment period is in effect through Friday, Nov. 25, for township residents to review and submit feedback on the draft prior to the parks committee's finalization for the township board's consideration.

The parks and recreation master plan is designed to serve as a blueprint for parks, pathways and green spaces in the township and will help ensure the township meets the needs of residents and contributes to a high quality of community life.

"Cascade is home to many wonderful parks, quaint green spaces and scenic pathways, and we're grateful for the residents who have shared their thoughtful feedback on how to make these features even more enjoyable for all," said Brian Hilbrands, planning director for Cascade Township. "The input we have received so far has shaped a solid blueprint, and we hope community members will continue to share their feedback as we work to bring the plan to life."

In addition to submitting comments in person at Cascade Township Hall or emailing Hilbrands at bhilbrands@cascadetwp.com, residents also can provide feedback at an open house from 4:30-6:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 10, at the Wisner Center, 2870 Jacksmith Ave. SE.

After the public comment period ends, the township board will hold a public hearing before considering the plan's adoption during its Dec. 14 meeting.

In December 2021, township staff and the parks committee partnered with local design and engineering firm Troyer Group to help develop the master plan. In August 2021, the project group collected community input from nearly 1,000 residents, businesses and other stakeholders through a survey and open house.

Community stakeholders indicated their top priorities, include maintaining existing parks and pathways, expanding the pathway system and developing new parks and facilities.

More details on the parks and recreation master plan are [here](#).

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

October 18, 2022
Facsimile letter – 222-5206

Display Advertising
The Grand Rapids Press
Press Plaza
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Please publish the enclosed Notice of Public Hearing in The Grand Rapids Press –
on:

Thursday October 27, 2022

This display ad is attached as a Microsoft Word document.

Please furnish my office with an affidavit of publication. Thank you for your cooperation and attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to give me a call at 616-949-0224.

Sincerely,

Brian Hilbrands
Planning Director

Attachment

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD AND PUBLIC HEARING

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The Cascade Charter Township Board will then hold a public hearing at a regular meeting to consider the new plan.

PUBLIC HEARING DATE: Wednesday, December 14, 2022

TIME: 7:00 pm

LOCATION: Cascade Library – Wisner Center
2870 Jacksmith Dr, SE
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Cascade Charter Township
5920 Tahoe Dr SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
Township Board

Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services who are planning to attend the hearing should notify Township Clerk Susan Slater at sslater@cascadetwp.com within a reasonable time in advance of the date of the hearing.

MINUTES OF THE CASCADE CHARTER TOWNSHIP REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, December 14, 2022

Wisner Center
2870 Jacksmith Dr SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
And Virtual Zoom Meeting
7:00 P.M.
HYBRID FORMAT

- Article 1.** Supervisor Lesperance called the meeting to order.
Present: Supervisor Lesperance, Clerk Slater, Trustees Koessel, McDonald, Shipley and Noordhoek
Absent: Treasurer Peirce (excused)
Also Present: Township Manager Swayze, Township Engineer Thorne, Planning Director Hilbrands, Deputy Clerk Brott, and those listed in the Supplement
- Article 2.** Supervisor Lesperance led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Article 3. Approval of Agenda**
Motion by Trustee Shipley, seconded by Trustee McDonald to approve. Motion carried unanimously.
- Article 4. Presentations**
None
- Article 5. Public Comments-Anything on the Agenda not scheduled for a public hearing. (limit comments to 3 minutes)**
1. Ginny Wanty-6255 Heathmoor Ct-A deer was killed in Burton Park yesterday with a bow-and-arrow. Hopefully the cameras will give more information.
- Article 6. Approval of Consent Agenda**
- a. Receive and File Minutes
 1. Township Board – 11/16/2022
 2. Township Board Budget Work Session - 11/29/2022
 3. Township Board Budget Work Session - 12/06/2022
 4. Planning Commission – 10/03/2022
 5. Planning Commission – 10/17/2022
 - b. Receive and File Reports
 1. Treasurer’s Department Report – September 2022
 2. Building Department – November 2022
 - c. Receive and File Education Requests
None
 - d. Receive and File Communication
None
- Motion by Trustee Koessel, seconded by Trustee Shipley to approve the Consent Agenda.
Motion carried unanimously.

- Article 7. Financial Actions**
- a. Consider Approval of October 2022 Financial Reports
 - b. Consider Approval of November 2022 Payroll, Payables and Transfers
 - c. Consider Approval of November 2022 Financial Reports
 - d. Consider FY 2022 Budget Amendments
- Motion by Trustee Koessel, seconded by Trustee Shipley to approve Article 7, a through c. Motion carried unanimously.
Motion by Trustee McDonald, seconded by Trustee Shipley to approve FY 2022 Budget Amendments Resolution, Article 7, d. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.
- Article 8. Unfinished Business**
None
- Article 9. New Business**
- 092-2022 Consider Special Assessment Warrant Resolution for the Year 2022 (Roll Call)**
Motion by Trustee Shipley, seconded by Trustee McDonald to approve. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.
- 093-2022 a.) Public Hearing – Consider Approval of New 5-Year Parks & Recreation Master Plan**
Motion by Trustee McDonald, seconded by Trustee Koessel to open the Public Hearing. Motion carried unanimously.
1. Rik Brown-Cascade Woods Neighborhood-Frustrated with erosion problem. Complimented Parks Chair Ginny Wanty for her work. Supports the idea of a Parks Director who will encourage utilization of parks.
- Motion by Trustee McDonald, seconded by Trustee Shipley to close the Public Hearing. Motion carried unanimously.
- b.) Consider Approval of Resolution to Adopt the 2023-2027 Cascade Township 5-Year Parks & Recreation Master Plan (Roll Call)**
Motion by Trustee Shipley, seconded by Trustee McDonald to approve. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.
- 094-2022 Consider Amendments to the FY 2023 Township Fee Schedule**
Motion by Clerk Slater, seconded by Trustee Koessel to approve. Motion carried 5-1 by roll call vote. In favor-Clerk Slater, Trustees Koessel, McDonald, Noordhoek, and Shipley. Opposed-Supervisor Lesperance.
- 095-2022 Consider Resolution of General Fund Support to the Fire Fund (Roll Call)**
Motion by Trustee McDonald, seconded by Trustee Shipley to approve. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.
- 096-2022 a.) Public Hearing – FY 2023 Operating and Special Fund Budgets**
Motion by Trustee McDonald, seconded by Trustee Koessel to open the Public Hearing. Motion carried unanimously.

1. John Driscoll-7341 Cascade Terrace-What is the residential occupancy rate?
Manager Swayze responded.
2. Rik Brown-Spoke about diversification of tax base.

Motion by Trustee McDonald, seconded by Trustee Shipley to close the Public Hearing.
Motion carried unanimously.

b.) Consider a Resolution to Adopt the FY 2023 Cascade Charter Township General and Special Fund Budgets (Roll Call)

Motion by Trustee Shipley, seconded by Trustee Koessel to approve. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

097-2022 Consider Resolution to Approve the Intent to Levy the 2023 Millage Rates (Roll Call)

Motion by Trustee Shipley, seconded by Trustee McDonald to approve with the option to review mid-year. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

098-2022 Consider the 2023 Pathway Repair and Maintenance Program Bids

Supervisor Lesperance thanked Township Engineer Thorne and the Pathways Committee for their hard work.

Motion by Trustee McDonald, seconded by Trustee Shipley to approve. Motion carried unanimously.

099-2022 Consider a Resolution to Adopt Amendment No. 2 to the Agreement for Township Law Enforcement Services at the East Precinct (Roll Call)

Motion by Trustee McDonald, seconded by Trustee Shipley to approve. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

100-2022 Consider the 2023 Meeting Schedule

Motion by Clerk Slater, seconded by Trustee Shipley to approve. Motion carried unanimously.

101-2022 Consider Appointments to Boards and Commissions

Considerable discussion.

Motion by Trustee Shipley, seconded by Clerk Slater to approve the resident committee appointments. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Motion by Clerk Slater, seconded by Trustee Noordhoek to approve the Township Board standing committees. Motion failed 3-3 by roll call vote. In favor-Supervisor Lesperance, Trustees Noordhoek and Shipley. Opposed-Clerk Slater, Trustees Koessel and McDonald.

Article 10. Discussion
None

Article 11. Public Comments – Any comments...whether it is on the Agenda or not. (limit comments to 3 minutes)

1. Rik Brown-Appreciates responsiveness of current Supervisor.
2. Jeff Coffey-3990 Buttrick-Would like to see the pathways extended to rural areas.

3. Brian Holcomb-3415 Glenstone Ct-Re speed limit sign: Requested it be placed on Thornapple River Drive between Thornhills and 36th St. Manager Swayze will follow up with Deputy Dieppa. Requested an update on EGLE communication. A report will be given in January.
4. Ken Van Der Kolk-7200 Leyton-Where will increased park fees go? Where does the Building Department revenue go? Would like to know where all the fees collected from other municipalities go. They are overcharging for the time spent.

Article 12. Manager Comments

1. Fire Station #1 construction is three (3) weeks ahead of schedule, per the information communicated at the most recent biweekly Fire Station #1 meeting.

Article 13. Board Member Comments

1. Trustee Shipley-Thanked everyone in attendance.
2. Supervisor Lesperance-Requested a status report on the replacement of trees cut down during construction at Whitneyville.
3. Trustee Koessel-Wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Article 14. Adjournment

Motion by Trustee Shipley, seconded by Clerk Slater to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.
Meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Krissi Brott
Deputy Clerk

Approved by:

Grace Lesperance, Supervisor

Susan B. Slater, Clerk

PARKS COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

Cascade Charter Township
Kent County Michigan
Resolution 1 of 2022

RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT TO ADOPT THE CASCADE CHARTER TOWNSHIP 5-YEAR PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN 2023-2027

Whereas, a current plan is beneficial for developing and maintaining our recreation resources in the Township and a current recreation plan is required to qualify for State and Federal funding; and

Whereas, an updated Recreation Plan has been prepared by the Parks Committee with the involvement of Cascade Township citizens; and

Whereas, this updated plan will replace the 2014-2019 Recreation Plan.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Cascade Charter Township Parks Committee recommends the 2023-2027 5-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan for Cascade Charter Township be forwarded to the Township Board for their adoption.

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

Dated: December 6, 2022

TOWNSHIP BOARD RESOLUTION

Cascade Charter Township
Kent County Michigan
Resolution #26 of 2022

Whereas, a current plan is beneficial for developing and maintaining our recreation resources in the Township and a current recreation plan is required to qualify for State and Federal funding; and

Whereas, an updated Recreation Plan has been prepared by the Parks Committee with the involvement of Cascade Township citizens; and

Whereas, this updated plan will replace the 2014-2019 Recreation Plan; and

Whereas, the Parks Committee recommended adoption of the new plan at their December 6, 2022 meeting.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Cascade Charter Township Board adopts the 2023-2027 5-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan to become effective January 1, 2023.

The foregoing Resolution was offered by Board Member Shipley, supported by Board Member McDonald. The roll call vote being as follows:

YEAS: McDonald, Noordhoek, Shipley, Koessel, Slater, Lesperance

NAYS:

ABSENT: Peirce

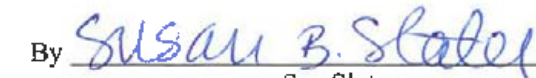
RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.



Sue Slater
Township Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify the above to a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Cascade Charter Township Board at a regular meeting held at the Cascade Library – Wisner Center on the 14th day of December, 2022 pursuant to the required statutory procedures.

By 

Sue Slater
Township Clerk

TRANSMITTAL LETTERS TO THE COUNTY/ REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCIES



CASCADE CHARTER TOWNSHIP

5920 Tahoe Drive SE Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546-7123

January 18, 2023

Dan De Looff
Kent County Parks Superintendent
1700 Butterworth Dr SW
Grand Rapids MI 49534

Dear Dan:

Attached to this letter is a copy of the new Park and Recreation Plan for Cascade Charter Township. The Township Board adopted this plan on December 14, 2022. This plan is being submitted to you in order to be in compliance with DNR requirements.

Sincerely,
Cascade Charter Township

Brian Hilbrands
Planning Director

TRANSMITTAL LETTERS TO THE COUNTY/ REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCIES



CASCADE CHARTER TOWNSHIP

5920 Tahoe Drive SE Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546-7123

January 18, 2023

Dave Bee
West Michigan Regional Planning Commission Director
1345 Monroe Ave NW; #255
Grand Rapids, MI 49505

Dear Dave:

Attached to this letter is a copy of the new Park and Recreation Plan for Cascade Charter Township. The Township Board adopted this plan on December 14, 2022. This plan is being submitted to you in order to be in compliance with DNR requirements.

Sincerely,
Cascade Charter Township

Brian Hilbrands
Planning Director

ACTION PROGRAM

2023

ACTION ITEM	CORRESPONDING GOAL	PARK/SITE	RESPONSIBILITY
Create a parks maintenance plan	1	All	BGS & PC
Review maintenance checklist/plan (biannual)	1	All	BGS, TS, & PC
Review of maintenance & improvements budget (biannual)	1 & 4	All	BGS, TS, PC, & TB
Implement Wycliffe Trailhead Park Improvements	1 & 7	Wycliffe Property	PC, TS, & TB
Create master plan for Township Rec Park	1 & 5	Rec Park	PC, TS, & TB
Peace Park erosion repair & improvement	1	Peace Park	PC, TS, & TB
Create a pathways maintenance plan	1 & 2	Pathways	PWC & TS
Review regional pathways connection/opportunities (ongoing)	2	Pathways	PWC & TS
Identify proposed local pathway connections	2	Pathways	PWC & TS
Establish Parks Committee collaboration with Pathways Committee	2 & 3	Pathways	PC & PWC
Resurface or reconstruct high priority sections of existing pathways	2	Pathways	PWC, TS, & TB
Begin process to hire a Parks Director	3	All	PC, TS, & TB
Review staff roles and responsibilities for parks, & identify needs	3	All	PC, TS, & TB
Research parks millage needs for improvements, maintenance, & funding	4	All	PC, TS, & TB
Build information, materials, & support for parks millage	4	All	PC, TS, & TB
Create list of properties scored with the land acquisition template	5 & 7	All/Acquisition	PC & TS
Educate public about invasive species & tree diseases	5 & 8	N/A	PC, TS, & TB
Hold invasive species eradication work days	5	Burton & Peace	PC & TS
Thornapple River clean-up day & water quality testing	5	N/A	PC & TS
Cemeteries native plantings & invasives control	5	Cemeteries	BGS, PC & TS
Write articles for newsletter regarding resource preservation	5 & 8	N/A	PC & TS
Explore options & opportunities for a deer cull	5	N/A	PC & TS
Begin planning efforts for downtown gathering space	6	New Site	PC, TS, DDA, & TB
Review & update zoning ordinance for open space requirements	7	N/A	PC, TS, & PLC
Establish partnerships for use of open space	7 & 9	N/A	PC & TS
Update township parks website	8	N/A	PC & TS
Increase parks presence through township social media	8	N/A	PC & TS
Annual review of signage & maps for parks & trails	8	All, Pathways	PC, PWC, & TS
Annual review of parks & township brand/marketing/communications	8	N/A	PC, PWC, & TS

2023 - 2027 GOALS

- 1 Ensure that existing parks meet the needs of the community
- 2 Identify future pathway routes
- 3 Refine the township's parks organization structure & support
- 4 Identify and implement appropriate funding mechanisms
- 5 Preserve natural areas and open space
- 6 Develop a gathering space with planned downtown village
- 7 Identify space for new parks and preservation
- 8 Increase public awareness of parks
- 9 Develop parks programming

2024

ACTION ITEM	CORRESPONDING GOAL	PARK/SITE	RESPONSIBILITY
Review maintenance checklist/plan (biannual)	1	All	BGS, TS, & PC
Review of maintenance & improvements budget (biannual)	1 & 4	All	BGS, TS, PC, & TB
Apply for DNR grant for Rec Park Improvements	1 & 7	Rec Park	PC, TS, & TB
Recreation Park Infrastructure/Maintenance Improvements	1	Rec Park	PC, TS, & TB
Acquisition of water frontage or neighborhood park/open space property	1 & 5	N/A	PC, TS, & TB
McGraw Park accessibility improvements and trail resurfacing	1	McGraw Park	PC, PWC, TS, TB
Update the pathways maintenance plan	1 & 2	Pathways	PWC & TS
Review regional pathways connection/opportunities (ongoing)	2	Pathways	PWC & TS
Preliminary engineering for top proposed local pathways connection	2	Pathways	PWC & TS
Resurface or reconstruct high priority sections of existing pathways	2	Pathways	PWC, TS, & TB
Hire a Township Parks Director	3	N/A	PC & TS, & TB
Organize a volunteer program for the parks	3	All	PC & TS
Propose a parks millage	4	All	PC, TS, & TB
Update list of properties scored with the land acquisition template	5 & 7	Acquisition	PC & TS
Educate public about invasive species and tree diseases	5 & 8	All	PC & TS
Hold invasive species eradication work days	5	Burton, Peace	PC & TS
Thornapple River clean up day & water quality testing	5	N/A	PC & TS
Write articles for newsletter regarding resource preservation	5 & 8	N/A	PC & TS
Design of the downtown gathering space	6	New Site	PC, TS, DDA, & TB
Establish new and continue existing partnerships for use of open space	7 & 9	N/A	PC & TS
Annual review of signage & maps for parks & trails	8	All, Pathways	PC, PWC, & TS
Annual review of parks & Township brand/marketing/communications	8	N/A	PC & TS
Develop pilot parks programs	9	N/A	PC & TS

RESPONSIBLE ENTITY

PC = Parks Committee

BGS = Building & Grounds Supervisor

TS = Township Staff

DDA = Downtown Development Authority

PWC = Pathways Committee

TB = Township Board

PLC = Planning Commission

ACTION PROGRAM

RESPONSIBLE ENTITY

PC = Parks Committee

DDA = Downtown Development Authority

BGS = Building & Grounds Supervisor

PWC = Pathways Committee

TS = Township Staff

TB = Township Board

PLC = Planning Commission

2025

ACTION ITEM	CORRESPONDING GOAL	PARK/SITE	RESPONSIBILITY
Review maintenance checklist/plan (biannual)	1	All	BGS, TS, & PC
Review of maintenance & improvements budget (biannual)	1 & 4	All	BGS, TS, PC, & TB
Begin design/implementation of Recreation Park improvements	1 & 4	Rec Park	PC, TS, & TB
Update the pathways maintenance plan	1 & 2	Pathways	PWC & TS
Peace Park accessibility improvements	1	Peace Park	PC, PWC, TS, & TB
Review regional pathways connection/opportunities (ongoing)	2	Pathways	PWC & TS
Construction of top proposed local pathways connection	2	Pathways	PWC & TS
Resurface or reconstruct high priority sections of existing pathways	1 & 2	Pathways	PWC, TS, & TB
Preliminary Engineering for regional trail connection	2	Pathways	PWC, PC, TS, & TB
Review Parks Director role and Township staffing needs for parks	3	N/A	PC, TB, & TS
Organize a Friends of Cascade Parks and Pathways group	3	N/A	PC & TS
Update list of properties scored with the land acquisition template	5 & 7	Acquisition	PC & TS
Educate public about invasive species and tree diseases & hold eradication work days	5 & 8	All	PC & TS
Cemeteries native plantings & invasives control	5	Cemeteries	BGS, PC & TS
Thornapple River clean up day & water quality testing	5	N/A	PC & TS
Write articles for newsletter regarding resource preservation	5 & 8	N/A	PC & TS
Planning and design of multi-use athletic fields	7	New Site	PC, TS & TB
Establish new and continue existing partnerships for use of open space	7 & 9	N/A	PC & TS
Annual review of signage & maps for parks & trails	8	All, Pathways	PC, PWC, & TS
Annual review of parks & Township brand/marketing/communications	8	N/A	PC, PWC, & TS
Continue successful parks programs and initiate new programs	9	N/A	PC & TS
Construction of the downtown gathering space	6	New Site	PC, TS, DDA, TB

2023 - 2027 GOALS

- 1 Ensure that existing parks meet the needs of the community
- 2 Identify future pathway routes
- 3 Refine the township's parks organization structure & support
- 4 Identify and implement appropriate funding mechanisms
- 5 Preserve natural areas and open space
- 6 Develop a gathering space with planned downtown village
- 7 Identify space for new parks and preservation
- 8 Increase public awareness of parks
- 9 Develop parks programming

2026

ACTION ITEM	CORRESPONDING GOAL	PARK/SITE	RESPONSIBILITY
Review maintenance checklist/plan (biannual)	1	All	BGS, TS, & PC
Review of maintenance & improvements budget (biannual)	1 & 4	All	BGS, TS, PC, & TB
Complete construction of Recreation Park improvements	1 & 4	Rec Park	PC, TS, & TB
Update the pathways maintenance plan	1 & 2	Pathways	PWC & TS
Tassell Park accessibility improvements	1	Tassell Park	PC, TS, & TB
Review regional pathways connection/opportunities (ongoing)	2	Pathways	PWC & TS
Preliminary Engineering of next highest ranked local pathways connection	2	Pathways	PWC & TS
Resurface or reconstruct high priority sections of existing pathways	1 & 2	Pathways	PWC, TS, & TB
Construction of regional trail connection	2	Pathways	PWC, PC, TS, & TB
Prepare plan for upcoming renewal of pathways millage	2 & 4	Pathways	PWC, TB, & TS
Analyze Township staffing for parks	3	N/A	PC & TS
Analyze funding from millage and maintenance/CIP expenses	4	All	PC & TS
Update list of properties scored with the land acquisition template	5 & 7	Acquisition	PC & TS
Educate public about invasive species and tree diseases & hold eradication work days	5 & 8	All	PC & TS
Construct multi-use athletic fields	7	New Site	PC, TS & TB
Hold Thornapple River clean up day	5	N/A	PC & TS
Write articles for newsletter regarding resource preservation	5 & 8	N/A	PC & TS
Establish new and continue existing partnerships for use of open space	7 & 9	N/A	PC & TS
Annual review of signage & maps for parks & trails	8	All, Pathways	PC, PWC, & TS
Annual review of parks & Township brand/marketing/communications	8	N/A	PC, PWC, & TS
Continue successful parks programs and initiate new programs	9	N/A	PC & TS
Construction of the downtown gathering space	6	New Site	PC, TS, DDA, TB

ACTION PROGRAM

2023 - 2027 GOALS

- 1 Ensure that existing parks meet the needs of the community
- 2 Identify future pathway routes
- 3 Refine the township's parks organization structure & support
- 4 Identify and implement appropriate funding mechanisms
- 5 Preserve natural areas and open space
- 6 Develop a gathering space with planned downtown village
- 7 Identify space for new parks and preservation
- 8 Increase public awareness of parks
- 9 Develop parks programming

2027

ACTION ITEM	CORRESPONDING GOAL	PARK/SITE	RESPONSIBILITY
Review maintenance checklist/plan (biannual)	1	All	BGS, TS, & PC
Review of maintenance & improvements budget (biannual)	1 & 4	All	BGS, TS, PC, & TB
Burton Park accessible trail and accessibility improvements	1	Tassell Park	PC, TS, & TB
Update the pathways maintenance plan	1 & 2	Pathways	PWC & TS
Acquisition of water frontage, neighborhood park or open space property	1, 5 & 7	New Site	PC, TS, & TB
Review regional pathways connection/opportunities (ongoing)	2	Pathways	PWC & TS
Construction of next highest ranked local pathways connection	2	Pathways	PWC & TS
Resurface or reconstruct high priority sections of existing pathways	1 & 2	Pathways	PWC, TS, & TB
Propose renewal of pathways millage	2 & 4	Pathways	PWC, TS, & TB
Update list of properties scored with the land acquisition template	5 & 7	Acquisition	PC & TS
Educate public about invasive species and tree diseases and hold eradication work days	5 & 8	All	PC & TS
Cemeteries native plantings & invasives control	5	Cemeteries	PC, BGS & TS
Thornapple River clean up day & water quality testing	5	N/A	PC & TS
Write articles for newsletter regarding resource preservation	5 & 8	N/A	PC & TS
Establish new and continue existing partnerships for use of open space	7 & 9	N/A	PC & TS
Annual review of signage & maps for parks & trails	8	All, Pathways	PC, PWC, & TS
Annual review of parks & Township brand/marketing/communications	8	N/A	PC, PWC, & TS
Continue successful parks programs and initiate new programs	9	N/A	PC & TS

RESPONSIBLE ENTITY

- PC = Parks Committee
 BGS = Building & Grounds Supervisor
 TS = Township Staff
 DDA = Downtown Development Authority
 PWC = Pathways Committee
 TB = Township Board
 PLC = Planning Commission

PARKS BUDGET

GENERAL FUND

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Revenues						
Park Income	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$8,400	Rental of Parks & Amenities
<i>Totals</i>	<i>\$7,000</i>	<i>\$7,000</i>	<i>\$7,000</i>	<i>\$7,000</i>	<i>\$8,400</i>	
Expenditures						
Full Time Wages	\$207,722	\$272,176	\$286,887	\$297,711	\$350,637	Buildings & Grounds FT Wages (Shared w/other departments)
Seasonal Wages	\$50,589	\$65,920	\$25,560	\$57,600	\$57,600	Seasonal Wages (Shared w/other departments)
Parks Operating Supplies	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	Consumable Parks Supplies
Parks Electricity	\$5,800	\$5,800	\$5,800	\$6,000	\$6,900	Park Electricity
Parks Phones	\$900	\$900	\$1,920	\$1,920	\$1,000	Emergency Phone Service
Parks Water/Sewer	\$3,200	\$3,200	\$3,200	\$3,200	\$2,800	Water/Sewer
Parks Maintenance	\$40,000	\$55,000	\$86,000	\$61,000	\$60,000	Maintenance Supplis, Contracts & Projects
Parks Small Equipment	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	Parks Maintenance Small Equipment
Parks Capital Improvements - FFE	\$45,000	\$103,000	\$45,000	\$36,000	\$33,000	Vehicles & Equipment (Shared w/other departments)
Parks Capital Improvements - Land	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$310,000	\$10,000	Purchase of Park Land
Parks Capital Improvements - Land Imp	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$100,000	Improvements to Park Land
Parks Capital Improvements - Building	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	Purchase/Construction of Parks Buildings
Parks Capital Improvements - Bldimp	\$250,000	\$150,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	Improvements to Park Buildings (Shared w/other departments)
<i>Totals</i>	<i>\$614,211</i>	<i>\$666,996</i>	<i>\$465,367</i>	<i>\$784,431</i>	<i>\$632,937</i>	

OPEN SPACE FUND

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Revenues						
Tax Levy	\$306,700	\$320,265	\$333,604	\$347,090	\$359,161	Real Property Tax Revenue
Personal Property Tax	\$22,600	\$23,433	\$23,590	\$24,623	\$23,054	Personal Property Tax Revenue
Delinquent Taxes	\$1,500	\$2,000	\$1,500	\$1,000	\$1,000	Delinquent Personal Property Tax Revenue
Abatement Taxes	\$2,500	\$2,604	\$2,814	\$4,102	\$3,479	IFT Tax Revenue
Community Stabilization Share	\$24,035	\$10,300	\$10,000	\$13,666	\$15,753	State Revenue for PPT Replacement
Interest	\$4,000	\$2,400	\$4,000	\$500	\$2,500	Interest on Fund Balance
Interest on Homeyer Fund	\$1,800	\$8,000	\$9,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	Interest on Fund Balance Dedicated to Homeyer Fund
Donations	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	Donations
<i>Totals</i>	<i>\$364,135</i>	<i>\$370,002</i>	<i>\$384,508</i>	<i>\$391,981</i>	<i>\$405,947</i>	
Expenditures						
Electricity	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,500	\$2,800	\$3,000	Open Space Park Electricity
Heating/Utility	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$0	\$2,000	\$2,000	Open Space Park Gas
Water/Sewer	\$500	\$500	\$750	\$1,000	\$1,000	Open Space Water/Sewer
Parks Maintenance	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	Open Space Marks Maintenance Materials and Service
Tax Refunds	\$100	\$100	\$0	\$250	\$250	Tax Tribunal Refunds
Capital Outlay - FFE	\$0	\$0	\$24,000	\$0	\$0	Vehicles/Equipment Dedicated to Open Space
Bond Principal	\$254,000	\$265,000	\$274,000	\$279,000	\$284,000	Debt Service on Bond to Purchase Open Space
Bond Interest	\$71,725	\$56,605	\$49,237	\$43,843	\$38,412	Interest on Bond to Purchase Open Space
<i>Totals</i>	<i>\$349,825</i>	<i>\$345,705</i>	<i>\$370,487</i>	<i>\$348,893</i>	<i>\$348,662</i>	