

*Charter Township of Orion*  
**PARKS & RECREATION  
MASTER PLAN**

---

**2024-2028**



**Adopted  
January 2, 2024**



**ORION  
PARKS**

Consultation and plan assistance provided by:



With special assistance from:

**Ann Conklin**  
Former executive director of mParks





# Acknowledgments

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- Ryan Lopez

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- Jessica Gingell
- Don Gross
- Scott Reynolds
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# Chapter 1: Executive Summary

The 2024 - 2028 Orion Township Recreation Master Plan articulates a vision for parks and recreation in the community. Parks & Recreation used the planning process to re-evaluate the recreation needs of Township residents, obtaining resident input through multiple channels to guide their decision making. Updated demographic data and current recreation trends also helped to inform their decisions.

The purpose of this Plan is to guide recreation planning and development efforts in the Township over the next five-year period, through December 2028. Once adopted, the Plan is the official document to be used by the community to guide decisions regarding parks and recreation. This Plan is also intended to meet the State's standards for community recreation planning that are necessary to gain eligibility for grant programs.

For purposes of brevity, Orion Township is referred to as "Orion" or "the Township" in this plan. References to the Village of Lake Orion are specifically indicated as "the Village" or "Lake Orion".

## Key Plan Findings

Orion residents are fortunate to have access to one of the top local park systems in southeast Michigan. Orion's parks provide a well-balanced mix of active and passive use amenities and facilities at their disposal. Residents have a strong desire to see existing facilities maintained at the highest possible level, and continued maintenance and management of existing facilities and programming is a top priority. Access to paths and trails and protecting natural resources were also identified as top priorities by participants in an areawide survey.

While residents are generally happy with their parks and feel that the Township's parks are adequate to meet most of their recreation needs, there is definite interest in the a recreation center for indoor exercise and increased programming opportunities. Included in the recreation center discussion was a strong desire to see an indoor pool. In an exciting development, the Township addressed these desires by acquiring the Great Lakes Athletic Club on November 9, 2023. The acquisition was accomplished using existing monies from the General Fund and Parks & Recreation millage dollars; no new taxes were required to complete the transaction. A further discussion of the acquisition and recreation center analysis is provided on page 49.

A summary of community needs can be found in Chapter 4 on page 36. A full set of survey data and other community input can be found in Appendix E on page 142.

## What The Plan Contains

The Recreation Master Plan follows the format suggested by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) in the Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plans (IC 1924, revised 4-26-2021).

- The plan begins with this **Executive Summary** and a description of the processes used to prepare the plan.
- **Goals & Objectives** were obtained by compiling input from community members, staff, and Parks Commission members. They provide a broad set of values which drive recreation development in the Township.
- The **Action Program** provides steps and strategies for implementing the Plan.
- The **Public Participation** portion of the Plan presents the input received from local officials, staff, and residents of Orion, which helped the Parks Commission formulate the Plan's goals and objectives.
- A detailed **Recreation Inventory** describes the existing parkland and recreational facilities of the community as well as those of the region and state.
- A description of the community's **Administrative Structure** follows, including information on funding and budgets.
- Next, the Plan presents a **Community Description**, providing information on both the social and physical characteristics of the community.
- Finally, the appendices include supporting materials, such as a copy of the public input survey, and resolutions and notices that document the Plan's adoption by the Parks Commission.

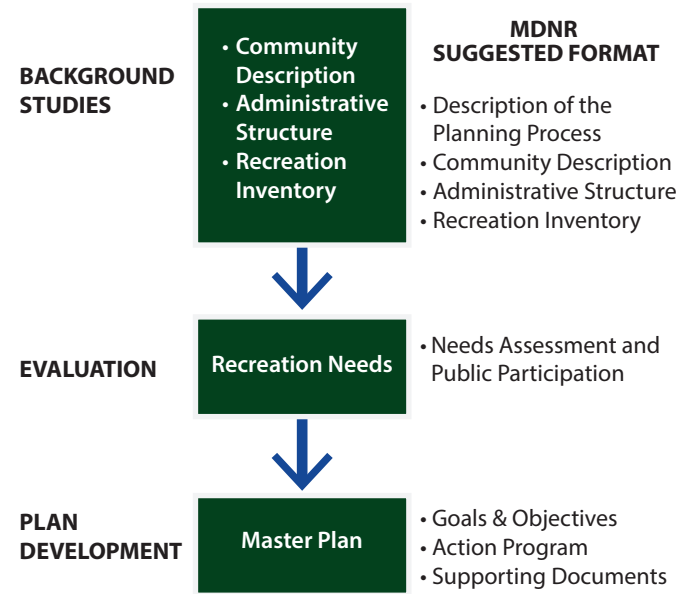


## Planning Process

The process used to draft the Plan consists of three phases: background studies, evaluation, and plan development. Each is described more fully below:

- **Background Studies.** This phase involved gathering and updating data from the U.S. Census, existing documents and plans, and from field observations. The data is organized into two main categories: *Community Description* and *Recreation Inventory*.
- **Evaluation.** The second phase in the planning process evaluated and analyzed the data compiled to determine recreation facility deficiencies and needs. Public input to assess recreational needs was also sought at this level. A written survey and regularly scheduled Parks Commission meetings were used to identify residents' opinions and ideas for the park and recreation system. Input from Parks staff and the Parks Commission representatives were also used. A public hearing held towards the end of the planning process provided one additional opportunity to receive final comments and suggestions.
- **Plan Development.** The last phase in the process involves Plan development and adoption. Based on the deficiencies and needs, goals and objectives were formulated and a specific action plan developed. Strategies to implement the Plan were also discussed.

The following diagram illustrates the planning process and how it corresponds to the MDNR suggested format described earlier:



This Plan was developed with input from local officials, staff, and residents. An online survey was made available to gather input on needed improvements to the community's recreation facilities and programming. The survey was also available in hard copy form by request.

A Public Hearing was held in front of Board of Trustees on January 2, 2024, after which the plan was officially adopted by the Board. The Master Plan was available for public review and comment electronically via the Parks & Recreation website and by request in hard copy at the Orion Center and Township Hall for one month prior to the public hearing.

- Community Background
- Administrative Structure
- Recreation Inventory
- Needs Assessment & Public Participation
- Action Plan
- Goals & Objectives
- Executive Summary
- Table of Contents

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# GOALS & OBJECTIVES



## Chapter 2: Goals & Objectives

Orion Township Parks & Recreation has formulated a broad set of goals and objectives which encompass the needs expressed by the public, Township officials and staff, while addressing the observed deficiencies in the recreation resources of the community. They consider demographics, current and anticipated growth and development, and the area's physical resources and recreation trends. They also correspond to the department's identified core values as identified in the Department's Mission Statement which is provided in the text box to the right.

The goals and objectives are then utilized to establish more concrete action items which are provided in the next chapter.

### MISSION STATEMENT

We create community through people, parks, and programs by providing recreation experiences, promoting health & wellness, protecting natural resources, fostering human development, strengthening safety and security, increasing cultural unity, facilitating related community problem solving, strengthening community image and sense of place, and supporting community development.

**Goal 1: Provide the highest possible quality recreation experience for Orion Township residents and park visitors through proactive maintenance and upkeep of each of the Township's parks and recreation facilities.**

#### OBJECTIVES

- A. Continue to maintain parks and facilities to keep them in good working condition and to ensure the safety and enjoyment of park users.
- B. Perform regular periodic inspections of all equipment and structures to confirm that they remain safe and functional, and replace or upgrade aging equipment as it reaches the end of its functional life.
- C. Continue to evaluate and upgrade park and recreation facilities as necessary to ensure that park amenities meet or exceed the Americans with Disabilities Act standards so that facilities are accessible to all Orion Township residents regardless of abilities.
- D. Provide good stewardship practices through control of invasive species in natural areas, maintenance of facilities, and general upkeep practices.
- E. Implement studies as required to evaluate capital intensive amenities and effectively communicate the scope and potential locations for such projects, as well as anticipated short- and long-term costs and ongoing maintenance requirements.

## Goal 2: Provide a system of readily accessible, interconnected recreation opportunities

### OBJECTIVES

- A. Continue to work towards a fully connected trail network of parks, paths, and recreation facilities by participating in planning of the Township's safety path/trail system.
- B. Continue to foster relationships with Orion Public Schools, the Village of Lake Orion, the Orion Township Planning Commission, the Orion Township Board of Trustees, and other interested stakeholders to ensure that local connections between facilities are considered and implemented.
- C. Continue to participate in regional pathway collaborations including the Polly Ann and the Paint Creek Trail Commissions, and with regional planning and utility organizations such as the Road Commission of Oakland County, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), Oakland County Parks & Recreation, and the State of Michigan, to further discussions and planning of multi-jurisdictional trail planning efforts.

## Goal 3: Continue to provide exceptional recreation programs and special events

### OBJECTIVES

- A. Seek and identify new recreation programming options which reflect the needs of an evolving community and enhance the physical, mental, and emotional well being of Orion Township residents.
- B. Continue to expand and revise programming options including days and times of offerings to improve programming access for the widest possible audience..
- C. Increase the number and variety of program offerings to attract residents to program offerings.
- D. Continue to foster relationships with other recreation providers to reduce duplication of efforts, and give residents access to a wide variety of cost effective programs.
- E. Seek input from residents regarding program times, locations, and quality to ensure high satisfaction levels, access, and increased participation rates.
- F. Evaluate opportunities to utilize outdoor spaces for more program offerings.

## Goal 4: Evaluate the future recreation needs of the community and dedicate new parkland and facilities as warranted.

### OBJECTIVES

- A. Evaluate options for parkland acquisition and dedication, including working with housing development projects to provide small pocket parks in denser population centers or in underserved areas.
- B. In coordination with the Board of Trustees and Township Planning Commission, identify and preserve sensitive natural areas and important local rural, historic, educational and cultural resources.

## Goal 5: Continue to ensure effective administration of parks and recreation services

### OBJECTIVES

- A. Enhance communications between Parks, residents, program participants, and Township officials through regular outreach.
- B. Assess communication platforms and seek to utilize a combination of outreach techniques to ensure the greatest possible reach.
- C. Create and seek input from special advisory councils representing specific stakeholder groups (teens, seniors, special needs, etc.) to provide input and participate on Parks & Paths Advisory Committee.
- D. Provide a comprehensive, easily read series of maps and wayfinding signage. Online maps should include geolocated markers for all park amenities and trails. Paper brochures should also be available for distribution at Orion Center, Township Hall, and other Township locations.
- E. Develop and implement a cost recovery program to ensure the highest possible level of fiscal responsibility and effectiveness.
- F. Continue to foster relationships with regional and neighboring recreation authorities to yield more effective recreation services and maximize the area's recreation potential.
- G. Aggressively pursue grants and other sources of funding to sustain the Township's parks and recreation facilities and programs.
- H. Seek innovative funding sources such as the establishment of public / private partnerships for facility improvements and programming.





# ACTION PLAN



# Chapter 3: Action Program

The action program details the manner in which goals and objectives will be met. It includes a list of specific projects, as well as a schedule with suggested capital improvements along with a sequence and strategies for implementation. The Township’s Action Plan sets standards for maintenance and park facility costs, and proposes a recreation policy for future developments.

## Action Plan

The following outline lists specific actions and projects which are recommended to be considered and accomplished as feasible during the planning period. Plans showing the proposed parks improvements are also included to illustrate the projects.

### Action 1: Maintain and Upgrade Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities to Ensure a Quality Park System

This action includes replacing aging equipment which is in a state of disrepair, outdated, or dangerous as well as improving the appearance of parks, properties, and buildings through appropriate landscaping and maintenance. All upgrades must be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and efforts should be taken to remove all existing barriers to universal access.

Proposed projects include:

#### All Parks

- A. Ensure that all Orion Township parks and recreation facilities are accessible to residents regardless of abilities. Parks and recreation facilities must meet the guidelines established by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as is reasonably feasible;
- B. Repair and/or replace aging park infrastructure to ensure facilities remain safe and available for use;
- C. Install benches, shade structures, drinking fountains, bike repair stations, and similar amenities wherever possible to encourage walking, biking, and other forms of non-motorized transportation in and to area parks;
- D. Add wayfinding kiosks, trail markers, or other signage near major amenities and pathway intersections; and
- E. Add trees, rain gardens, bioswales, and other landscaping elements to provide stormwater mitigation, add shade, provide habitat, and provide aesthetic benefits.

Figure 1. Typical bench configuration

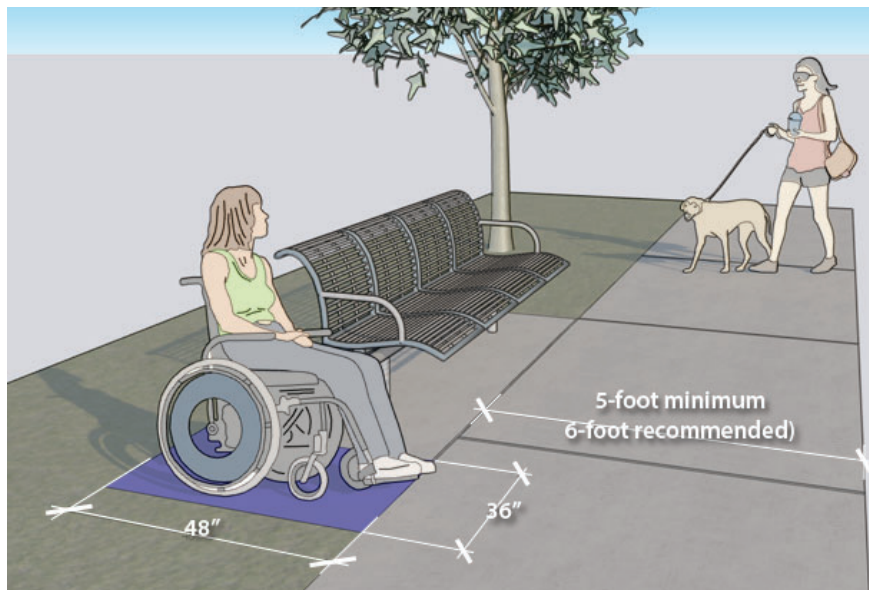
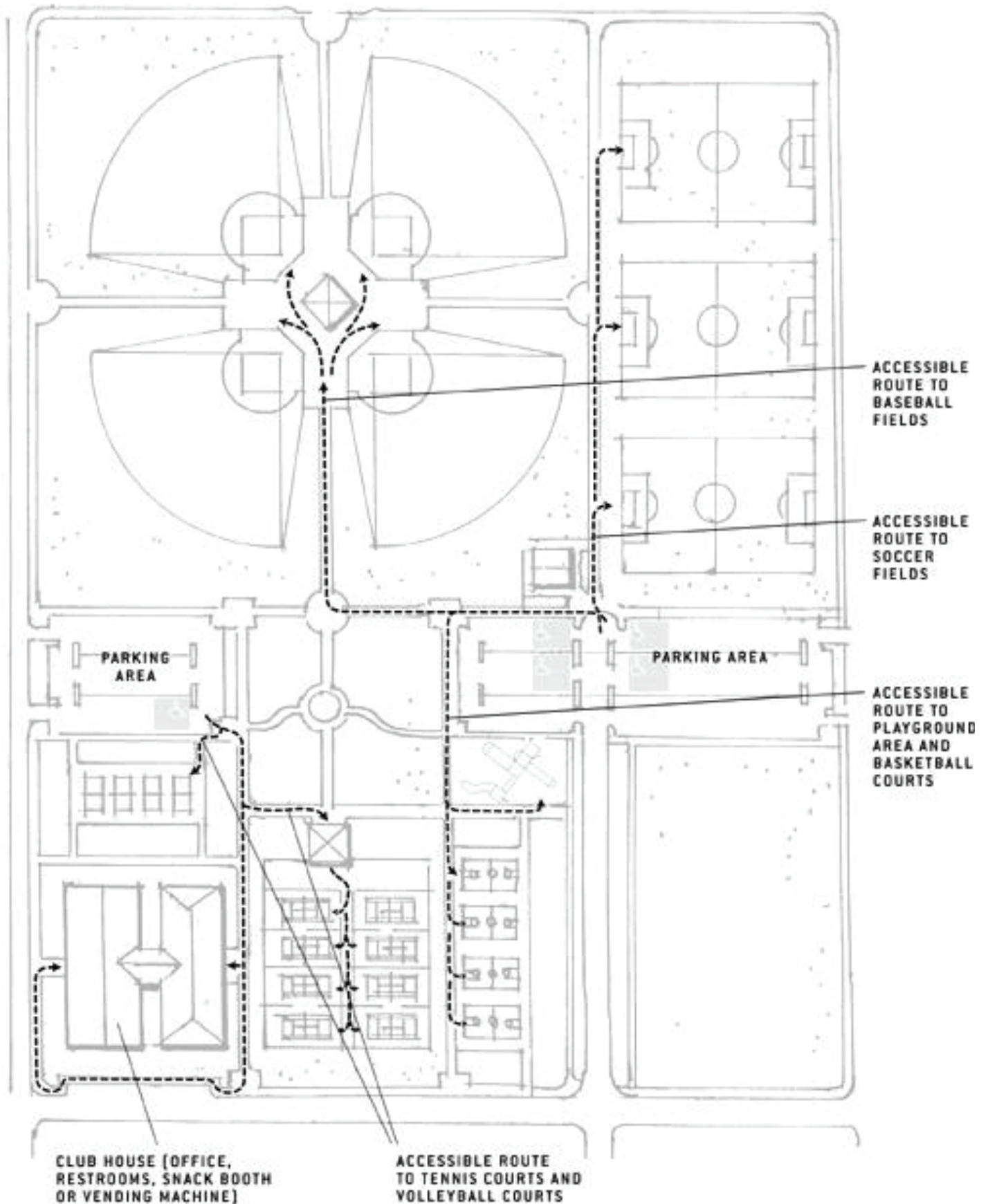


Figure 2. Accessible Route Configuration for Multi-Use Facility



Source: U.S. Access Board

- Community Background
- Administrative Structure
- Recreation Inventory
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### **Civic Center Park & Wildwood Amphitheater**

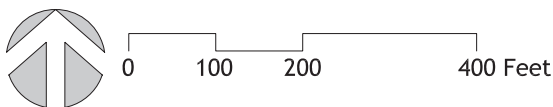
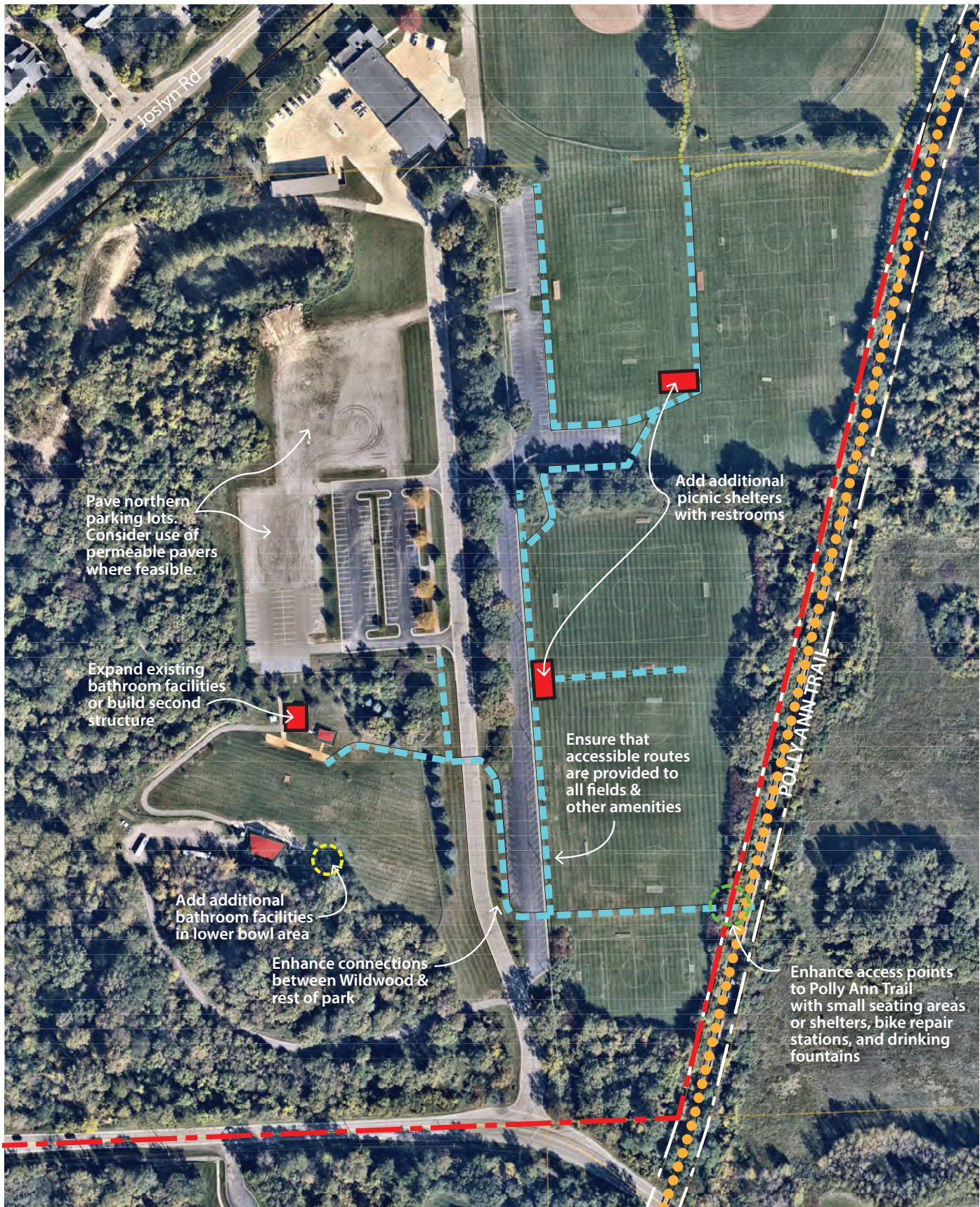
- A. Add connecting paths and/or trails to provide a continuous, accessible pathway to all park amenities within the park. Pathways may be asphalt or concrete for primary alignments or compacted limestone as appropriate;
- B. Pave northern and western Wildwood parking lots. Consider use of permeable paving to help reduce ecological impact;
- C. Expand restroom/concession stand near main entrance to Wildwood to accommodate more patrons during large events. Add additional restrooms near lower areas by stage;
- D. Add picnic pavilions or shelters near soccer fields and evaluate potential for permanent restrooms with potable water;
- E. Provide accessible seating areas at ballfields and soccer fields; and
- F. Enhance the visibility of the Polly Ann Trail access points through improved signage, wayfinding kiosks, pavement markings, or other methods. Add small seating areas or shelters, bike repair stations, and drinking fountains where feasible.

### **Friendship Park**

- A. Expand northern tennis and pickleball courts. Upgrade parking area and add pavilion;
- B. Add basketball courts
- C. Consider the addition of turf volleyball court to expand the universally accessible offerings in the park;
- D. Add large pavilion near playground area;
- E. Ensure that accessible routes are provided to and between all park amenities;
- F. Pave access drive and parking lots; and
- G. Evaluate potential for splash pad.



Figure 3. Civic Center Park Concept Plan



# Civic Center Park Concept Plan

Community Background

Administrative Structure

Recreation Inventory

Needs Assessment & Public Participation

Action Plan

Goals & Objectives

Executive Summary

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Figure 4. Friendship Park Detail



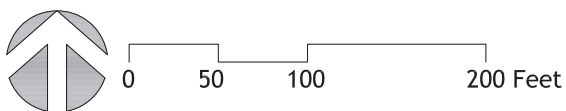
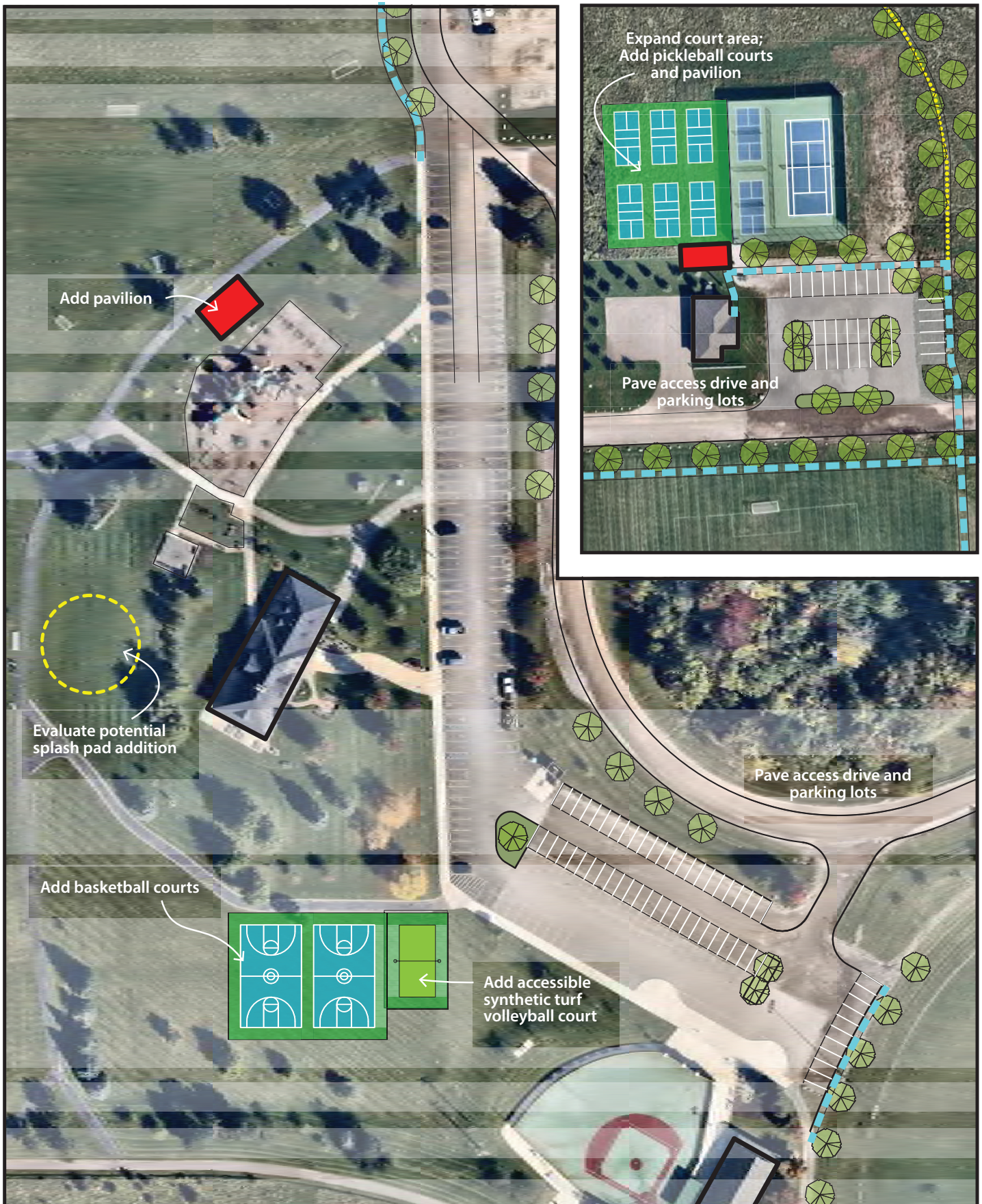
0 200 400 800 Feet

# Friendship Park

## Concept Plan



Figure 5. Friendship Park Detail



# Friendship Park

## Concept Plan Details

- Community Background
- Administrative Structure
- Recreation Inventory
- Needs Assessment & Public Participation
- Action Plan
- Goals & Objectives
- Executive Summary
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### **Jesse Decker Park**

- A. Replace aging play equipment with structures for both toddler and 5 to 12 age groups;
- B. Add exercise station;
- C. Add pavilion adjacent to tennis courts;
- D. Stripe multi-use field for lacrosse use and add bleachers;
- E. Add accessible routes to all park amenities;
- F. Cover dugouts; and
- G. Pave parking lot and access drive.

### **Camp Agawam**

- A. Add wayfinding kiosks and trail markers, especially for disc golf course and between primary park attractions (beach/lodge, fire pit, etc.);
- B. Upgrades to all facilities (Birch Grove, Alberici, and Peterson Lodges) to allow for greater rental and event use while improving overall accessibility;
- C. Improve parking lot near main lodge. Consider use of permeable pavers to reduce ecological impact;
- D. Upgrade select trails to improve accessibility. Alignments between lodge, fire pit, and the Fort Pontiac / play structure area should be clearly designated; and
- E. Add an accessible canoe/kayak launch, and consider the addition of a canoe livery for rental purposes.

### **Pasadena Park**

- A. Implement concept plan.

### **Playful Dragon Park**

- A. Add benches or permanent picnic tables with shade structures along pathway or a small, covered pavilion; and
- B. Add a drinking fountain.

### **McConnell Field**

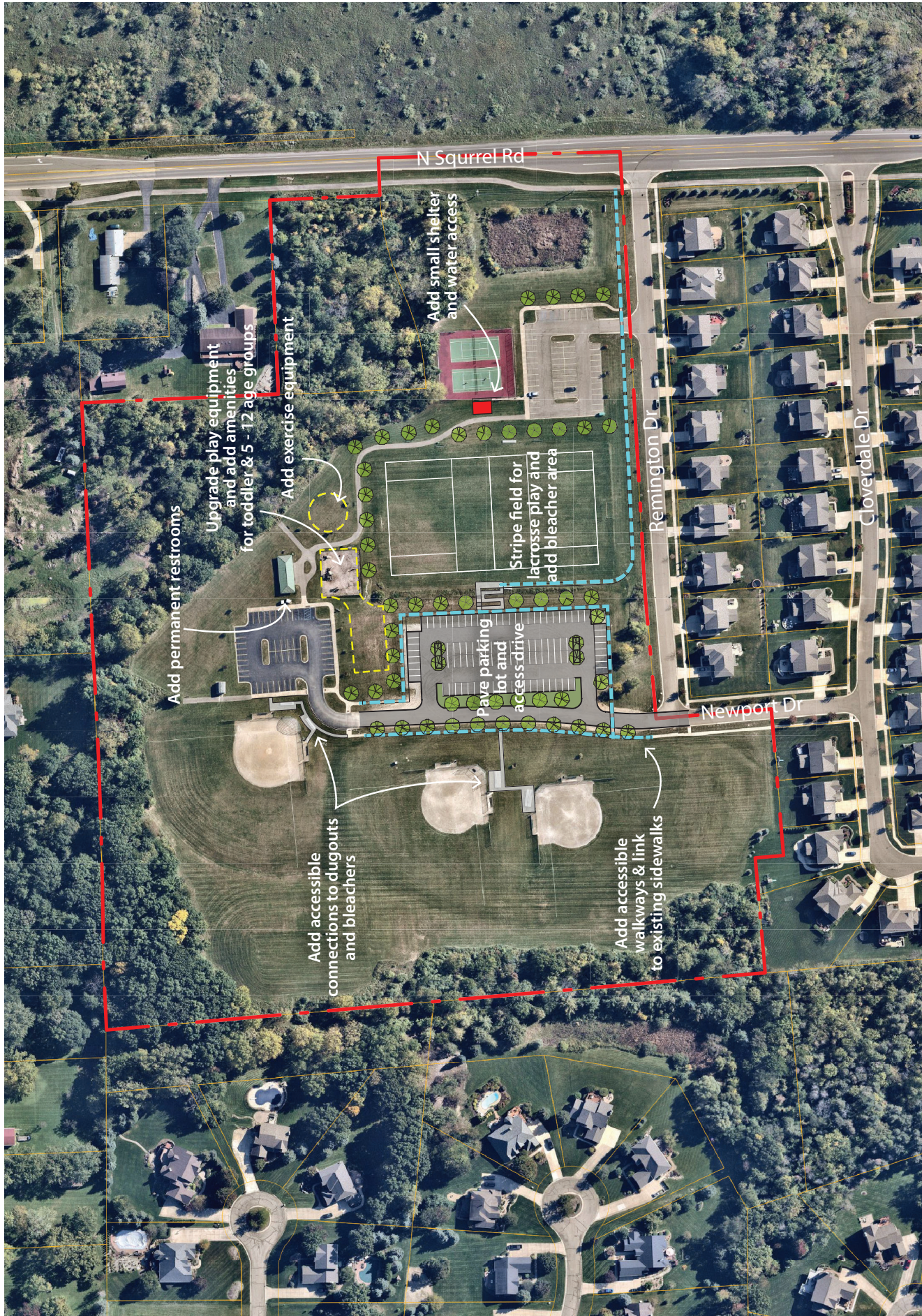
- A. Work with neighbors and other stakeholders to completely re-imagine the park, adding passive-use elements such as a gazebo and small play structure, a bocce ball court, and low impact permanent recreation amenities such as cornhole pits, chess boards, and ping pong tables; or
- B. Consider the possible disbursement of the property, with revenues used to fund future land acquisition and development.

### **Gingell Nature Center & Heron Springs Park**

- A. Evaluate the potential for the addition of a boardwalk with a viewing platform into the wetlands.



Figure 6. Jesse Decker Park Concept Plan



# Jesse Decker Park Concept Plan

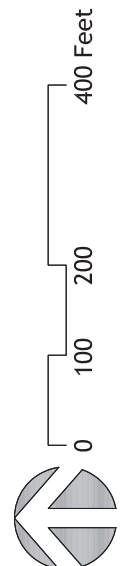


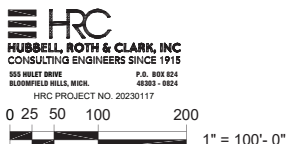
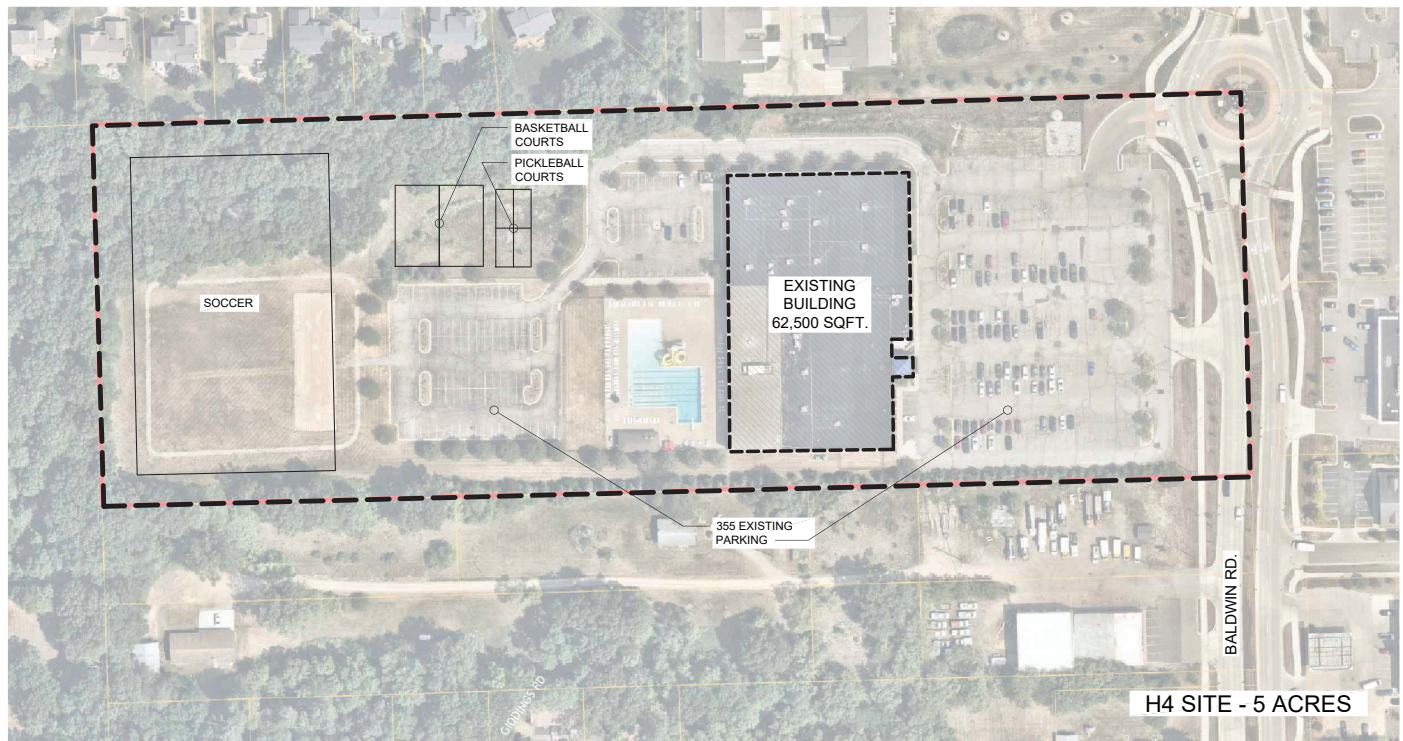
Table of Contents	Executive Summary	Goals & Objectives	Action Plan	Needs Assessment & Public Participation	Recreation Inventory	Administrative Structure	Community Background
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## Great Lakes Athletic Club GLAC

- A. Perform a full building evaluation and make necessary changes including:
  - Complete an accessibility audit and make necessary changes to bring building into compliance with ADA requirements;
  - Develop specific senior, teen, and special need spaces to accommodate special user groups;
  - Install an emergency generator to allow the GLAC to be used as an emergency warming or cooling space;
  - Repair or replace parking lots to improve accessibility, and incorporate bioswales, rain gardens, or similar features to help mitigate stormwater runoff;
  - Replace/repair roof; and
  - Upgrade lighting and HVAC systems to more efficient models;
- B. Add outdoor gathering spaces and include low impact, permanent recreation features such as cornhole pits, chess boards, and ping pong tables;
- C. Add a splash pad;
- D. Add play structures;
- E. Add pickleball courts;
- F. Add basketball courts;
- G. Evaluate the potential for field sports including a possible domed facility;
- H. Rebrand the facility to better represent the club's role as a community recreation center. Consider allowing naming rights as a source of revenue for the building; and
- I. Explore potential land acquisition to allow for inclusion of expanded outdoor recreation programming, streamlined traffic flow into and out of the complex, and improved land buffers between the complex and adjacent homes.

Figure 7. McConnell Field Concept Plan



ORION TWP. RECREATION CENTER H4 SITE PLAN

SCALE: 1" = 100'

H4  
0



## Action 2: Future parkland/recreation facility acquisition and development

Orion Township Parks & Recreation should continue to seek properties to supplement their existing recreation portfolio and help to meet the recreation needs of a rapidly growing community. Candidate sites are ideally located near population clusters and offer opportunities for gathering points for a neighborhood. Parcels adjacent to existing parks which would allow expansion of recreation offerings are also highly desirable.

Continue to work with the Township Board and Planning Commissions to ensure parkland needs are considered during the review of new developments. Encourage the development of regulations which will require developers to set aside land for park and open space facilities. It will also be important to work with Oakland County Parks, area land conservancies and other organizations to encourage the acquisition and preservation of highly sensitive ecological parcels or historic sites if they become available.

## Action 3: Continue to provide exceptional recreation programs

Continue to evaluate and broaden the variety of activities offered for all age groups with the goal of responding to the changing recreational needs of residents and users. This may include:

- A. Continue to evaluate and monitor recreation programs regularly to assess their value to the department. Participation numbers, cost, and required resources should be evaluated.;
- B. Work to broaden program participation and overall support with increased marketing and public awareness of Orion Township Parks and Recreation;
- C. Encourage stakeholder participation through the development of key demographic advisory groups (teens, seniors, special needs, etc.). Representatives from each council should be provided the opportunity to present to the Parks & Path Advisory Committee on a regular basis and help to influence ongoing programming requirements.
- D. Coordinate with area recreation providers such as Oakland County Parks, Lake Orion Community Schools, and private recreation entities such as Indianwood Golf Club or Canterbury Village to help reduce duplication of efforts and enhance recreation offerings; and
- E. Continue to enhance the program registration process, marketing materials, and other platforms that will help to attract and inform Orion Township residents.

## Action 4: Continue to develop and expand a community-wide pathway/trail system

There is a strong desire for more trails and walking paths in Orion Township. Emphasis should be placed on the development of trails and safety paths connecting the parks to form a continuous park system tying community facilities, schools, neighborhoods, the Village of Lake Orion, and Township and regional recreation facilities.

Ongoing communication and coordination with regional recreation authorities including the Road Commission of Oakland County, Oakland County Parks & Recreation, Huron-Clinton Metroparks, and the Michigan DNR will be critical to ensure that major trail plans are considered and implemented. Discussions with neighboring townships will also be crucial to ensure that planned activities are coordinated.

Priority segments include:

- Indianwood Road between Joslyn Road & M-24;
- Heights Road between Pine Tree Road & M-24;
- Cedar Key Drive between Joslyn and Baldwin Roads;
- Dutton Road;
- Gaps along M-24;
- Joslyn Road south of Silver Bell; and
- the Polly Ann Trail extension west from Joslyn Road to the Township border

## Action 5: Administration and funding of Parks & Recreation services

Facilitate communication and partnerships to promote the shared-use of the area's parks and recreation resources including the state, schools, private recreation providers as well as Township and Village facilities by community groups.

Generating operational costs and increasing revenues where possible must continue to be a priority to support the improvements mentioned in this plan, and to maintain the existing park facilities to a high quality standard. Development and implementation of a cost recovery plan will be critical to the ongoing success of the department. Seeking grants and support must also continue to be a priority.

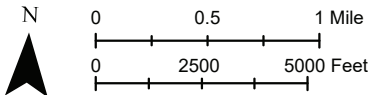
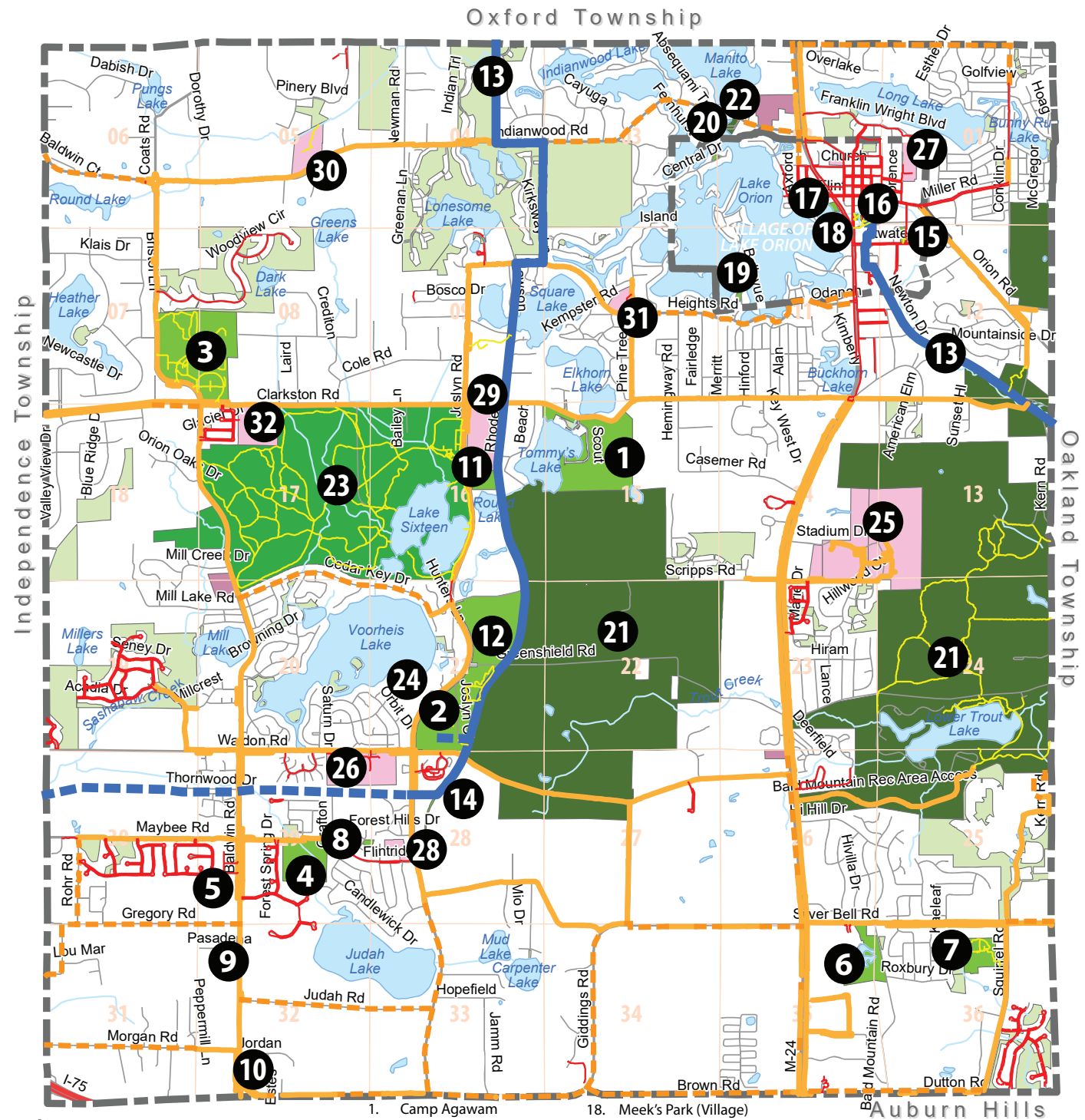
Staffing levels should be continually evaluated to ensure efficient operation of maintenance, program operation, and other activities under the purview of Parks & Recreation. Promotion from within the department and ongoing mentorship of new hires will help to continue institutional awareness as well as develop a sense of pride and accomplishment within staff.

Orion Township Parks & Recreation must continue to promote and advocate the social, economic and environmental value and benefits of parks and recreation by reaching out to the community and the region. Gathering support to maintain or increase the current park millage should continue to be a priority.

## Action Items Justification:

The aforementioned action items respond to national, regional, and economic trends, observed conditions, resident comments and suggestions, and the expertise, experience, and input of Park & Paths Committee members and Parks & Recreation Staff.

Figure 8. Orion Township Pathway Plan



- Trail
- Sidepath
- Park Path
- Sidewalk
- Dashed = Proposed
- Township or Village Park
- Oakland County Park
- State of Michigan Park/Rec Area
- Schools
- Private School
- Private Facility

1. Camp Agawam
2. Civic Center Park
3. Friendship Park
4. Gingell Nature Area
5. Great Lakes Athletic Club
6. Heron Springs Park
7. Jesse Decker Park
8. McConnell Field
9. Pasadena Park
10. Playful Dragon Park
11. Orion Center
12. Municipal Complex
13. Paint Creek Trail
14. Polly Ann Trail
15. Atwater Park (Village)
16. Children's Park (Village)
17. Green's Park (Village)
18. Meek's Park (Village)
19. Unger Park (Village)
20. Swiss Village Park (Village)
21. Bald Mountain State Park
22. Lake Orion Boat Launch (DNR)
23. Orion Oaks County Park
24. Voorheis Lake Wetland Preserve
25. Lake Orion HS/Scripps Middle/ Stadium Elementary
26. Waldon Middle School
27. Blanche Sims Elementary
28. Carpenter Elementary
29. Orion Oaks Elementary
30. Paint Creek Elementary
31. Pine Tree Elementary
32. Webber Elementary

## Pathway Plan

Orion Charter Township  
 Oakland County  
 Data from  
 Oakland County GIS

June 2023  
 Carlisle/Wortman Associates, Inc.  
 Ann Arbor, Michigan

- Community Background
- Administrative Structure
- Recreation Inventory
- Needs Assessment & Public Participation
- Action Plan
- Goals & Objectives
- Executive Summary
- Table of Contents

## Project Schedule

Table 1 lists the individual projects along with the specific tasks the Township would like to accomplish, a cost estimate, and potential funding sources. These projects are not prioritized, and will be implemented as funding and/or resources are available. However, to guide implementation, each project is assigned a time frame for completion.

It is important to remember that this schedule is aspirational. It is not expected that all projects will be completed in the next five years, but instead establishes priorities for the community to be developed as circumstances and funding allow. A rough schedule has been assigned to the desired projects, with projects having a more pressing need for development being completed within one to two years, while less critical or more expensive/complex projects planned for five years or beyond. Ongoing (OG) items are activities that are not necessarily project-related but instead are part of standard daily practices or which can be implemented on a staggered basis across several years.

Cost estimates are based on 2023 levels. Estimates are dependent upon a number of variables and are therefore represented as a range. Unexpected circumstances may increase or decrease the projected values.

**Table 1. Improvement Schedule**

Description	Cost Estimate	Funding Source*	Time Frame**
<b>All Orion Township Parks</b>			
Benches (per bench)	\$1,500 - 2,000	LF, D, G	OG
Add drinking fountains (per fountain)	\$2,500 - 4,000	LF, D, G	OG
Add bike repair stations (per station)	\$1,000 - 2,000	LF, D, G	OG
Add wayfinding kiosks (per kiosk)	\$4,000 - 10,000	LF, D, G	OG
Add trees (per tree)	\$600	LF, D, G	OG
<b>Civic Center Park</b>			
Add connecting pathways (decomposed granite/limestone)	\$ 14,000 - 25,000	LF, D, G	MT
Add connecting pathways (asphalt or concrete)	\$ 35,000 - 74,000	LF, D, G	MT
Pave Wildwood parking lots - asphalt or concrete	\$ 250,000 - 400,000	LF, D, G	LT
Pave Wildwood parking lots - permeable pavers	\$ 770,000 - 2,310,000	LF, D, G	LT
Expand Wildwood concession stand/restrooms	\$ 250,000 - 400,000	LF, D, G	LT
Add picnic pavilions (per pavilion)	\$ 35,000 - 50,000	LF, D, G	LT
Add restrooms & drinking fountains to pavilion (per pavilion)	\$ 150,000 - 200,000	LF, D, G	LT
Add accessible seating areas to ballfields, per area	\$ 3,000 - 4,000	LF, D, G	MT
Add secondary access to Polly Ann Trail, with gazebo, bike repair station, and drinking fountain	\$ 15,000 - 26,000	LG, D, G	LT
<b>Friendship Park</b>			
Expand pickleball courts	\$ 280,000 - 375,000	LF, D, G	MT
Develop parking lot at pickleball/tennis courts	\$ 154,000 - 220,000	LF, D, G	MT
Add basketball courts (per court)	\$ 28,000 - 37,500	LF, D, G	LT
Add synthetic volleyball court	\$ 42,000 - 60,000	LF, D, G	LT
Add accessible routes to all amenities (decomposed granite)	\$ 12,000 - 20,000	LF, D, G	MT
Add large picnic shelter near playground	\$ 60,000 - 70,000	LF, D, G	MT
Add accessible routes to all amenities (concrete/asphalt)	\$ 26,000 - 54,000	LF, D, G	MT
Pave access drive	\$ 2.5 - 3.6 million	LF, D, G	LT
Pave remaining parking lots	\$ 378,000 - 540,000	LF, D, G	LT
Evaluate potential for splash pad	\$ 250,000 - \$400,000	LF, D, G	LT

\* LF = Local/Parks Fund, D = Donations, G = Grants, TBD = To Be Determined

\*\* ST = Short term (1 - 2 years), MT = Medium term (3 - 4 years), LT = Long term (5 years or longer), OG = Ongoing

Table 1. Improvement Schedule (continued)

Description	Cost Estimate	Funding Source*	Time Frame**
<b>Jesse Decker Park</b>			
Upgrade play equipment for toddlers and 5 - 12 years	\$ 250,000 - 400,000	LF, D, G	ST
Add exercise station	\$ 50,000 - 75,000	LF, D, G	LT
Add pavilion with drinking fountain	\$20,000 - 30,000	LF, D, G	MT
Stripe field for lacrosse use	\$ 1,000 - 4,000	LF	OG
Add access ramp to field and seating area	\$ 20,000 - 30,000	LF, D, G	MT
Cover dugouts	\$ 30,000 - 48,000	LF, D, G	LT
Add connecting pathways (decomposed granite/limestone)	\$ 8,000 - 14,000	LF, D, G	ST
Add connecting pathways (asphalt or concrete)	\$ 20,000 - 40,000	LF, D, G	ST
Pave access drive	\$ 105,000 - 150,000	LF, D, G	LT
Pave parking lot	\$ 322,000 - 460,000	LF, D, G	LT
<b>Camp Agawam</b>			
Add wayfinding kiosks and markers	\$ 40,000 - 65,000	LF, D, G	ST
Upgrade trails from lodge to fire bowl and Camp Pontiac	\$ 5,000 - 10,000	LF, D, G	ST
Add accessible canoe launch	\$ 25,000 - 30,000	LF, D, G	MT
Upgrade main lodge	\$ 800,000 - 1.2 million	LF, D, G	LT
Upgrade lodge parking lot - asphalt	\$ 126,000 - 180,000	LF, D, G	LT
Upgrade lodge parking lot - pavers	\$ 180,000 - 540,000	LF, D, G	LT
<b>Great Lakes Athletic Center</b>			
Complete accessibility audit	\$15,000 - 20,000	LF	ST
Develop senior, teen, and special need spaces	TBD	LF	MT
Install an emergency generator	\$ 10,000 - 25,000	LF	MT
Repair and replace parking lots	\$ 400,000 - 700,000	LF, D, G	MT
Replace/repair roof	\$ 476,000 - 680,000	LF, D	ST
Upgrade lighting	TBD	LF	MT
Upgrade HVAC	\$ 1.9 - 2.4 million	LF	MT
Add outdoor gathering space with permanent recreation features such as cornhole pits, chess boards, and ping pong tables	\$ 40,000 - 60,000	LF, D, G	LT
Add a splash pad	\$ 200,000 - 300,000	LF, D, G	LT
Add play structures	\$ 150,000 - 250,000	LF, D, G	LT
Add pickleball courts	\$ 160,000 - 200,000	LF, D, G	LT
Add basketball courts	\$ 80,000 - 120,000	LF, D, G	LT
<b>Playful Dragon Park</b>			
Add permanent picnic tables with shade structures (each)	\$ 10,000 - 15,000	LF, D, G	MT
Add small picnic shelter	\$ 15,000 - 20,000	LF, D, G	MT
Add drinking fountain	\$ 2,500 - 4,000	LF	ST
<b>McConnell Field</b>			
Work with neighbors to re-imagine park	TBD	LF	ST

\* LF = Local/Parks Fund, D = Donations, G = Grants, TBD = To Be Determined

\*\* ST = Short term (1 - 2 years), MT = Medium term (3 - 4 years), LT = Long term (5 years or longer), OG = Ongoing



Table 1. Improvement Schedule (continued)

Description	Cost Estimate	Funding Source*	Time Frame**
<b>Gingell Nature Center &amp; Heron Springs Park</b>			
Evaluate opportunities to add boardwalk & viewing platform	TBD	LF	ST
<b>Safety Path Segments</b>			
Indianwood Rd from Joslyn Road to M-24	\$ 2.0 - 2.6 million	LF, D, G	ST
Heights Road between Pine Tree Road & M-24	\$ 2.5 - 3.0 million	LF, D, G	LT
Cedar Key Drive between Joslyn and Baldwin Roads	\$ 1.6 - 2.0 million	LF, D, G	LT
Dutton Road	\$ 4.0 - 5.0 million	LF, D, G	LT
Gaps along M-24	TBD	LF, D, G	ST
Joslyn Road south of Silver Bell	\$ 1.6 - 1.9 million	LF, D, G	ST
Polly Ann Trail extension west from Joslyn Road to the Township border	\$ 1.25 - 1.5 million	LF, D, G	MT

\* LF = Local/Parks Fund, D = Donations, G = Grants, TBD = To Be Determined

\*\* ST = Short term (1 - 2 years), MT = Medium term (3 - 4 years), LT = Long term (5 years or longer), OG = Ongoing



## Implementation Strategies

In order to accomplish the recommended actions during the next five years, it will be necessary to secure adequate funding. The current budget provides only a limited amount of funds for park development and improvements. The amount is well short of the projected expenses involved in the project schedule. Therefore, the following strategies are recommended to proceed as planned.

### Apply for Local Funding

Oakland County Parks (OCP) **Community Park and Trail Capital Grant Program** provides assistance to local communities with planning, preliminary engineering, and construction costs related to park improvements and trail projects. Requests for proposals are released in March with applications due by late April. OCP awarded over \$600,000 in grants to eleven communities in 2023.

More information can be found at <https://www.oakgov.com/community/oakland-county-parks/get-involved/community-outreach-grant-programs/community-grant-program>.

OCP allocates millage funds to high-priority invasive species removal projects as part of their **Community Habitat Improvement Grant Program**. Candidate projects demonstrate best practices, treat high priority species, increase community awareness and/or improve habitat. Funds are not distributed to recipients, but instead are paid directly to contractors for services rendered. Contact Patrick Canniff, Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability Outreach Coordinator at [canniffp@oakgov.com](mailto:canniffp@oakgov.com) for more information.

**Recreation Assistance Partnership Program (RAPP)** is an initiative that creates improved access to recreation experiences for all Oakland County residents by providing mobile recreation units, bus transportation, nature education programming and other services to more than 250,000 participants each year who may not otherwise have had access to these activities. The RAPP programs can supplement existing programming offerings and encourage users to more frequently utilize area parks.

### Apply for Federal Funding

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) funds **Transportation Enhancements (TE)** activities for community-based projects that expand travel choices and enhance the transportation experience by improving cultural, historic, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of the transportation infrastructure. To be eligible, a project must fall into one of the TE activities. Activities which may apply to Orion include:

- Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles such as walkways, curb ramps, bike parking, off-road trails, bike and pedestrian bridges and underpasses;
- Educational programs for pedestrians and bicyclists designed to encourage walking and bicycling by providing potential users with education and safety instruction through classes, pamphlets, and signage; and
- Preservation, conversion, and use of abandoned railway corridors for acquisition, development, planning, design, and construction of multi-use trails, as well as purchasing unused railroad property for reuse.

A minimum 20 percent local match is required for proposed projects and applications are accepted online on an on-going basis.

The *Safe Routes to School (SR2S)* program is a national movement to make it safe, convenient, and fun for children to bicycle and walk to school. When routes are safe, walking or biking to and from school is an easy way to get the regular physical activity children need for a healthy lifestyle. In Michigan, the program is sponsored by the Michigan Governor’s Council on Physical Fitness and has gained momentum over the past few years. With the passage of the federal transportation legislation in 2005, Michigan’s SR2S program made schools eligible for transportation enhancement funds, providing for infrastructure improvements and education campaigns. The purpose of the program, as defined in the federal legislation, is to:

- Enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school;
- Make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age; and
- Facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in school areas.

The program provides mini grants for programming and major grants to help communities build sidewalks, crosswalks, and other infrastructure. Up to \$200,000 per school is available for infrastructure projects, and \$8,000 to build programming around the project. Communities must undergo an in-depth planning process prior to submitting an application. Deadlines are ongoing and awarded on a rolling basis. SR2S funding is 100 percent federal; no match is required.

### Apply for State Funding

At the state level, the *Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)* and the *Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF)* continue to be the primary funding sources for parkland acquisition and development.

The MNRTF provides funding for the purchase and/or development of parkland for natural resource based preservation and recreation. Goals of the program are to:

- Protect natural resources and provide for their access, public use and enjoyment;
- Provide public access to Michigan’s water bodies, the Great Lakes in particular, and facilitate their recreation use;
- Meet regional, county and community needs for outdoor recreation opportunities;
- Improve the opportunities for outdoor recreation in urban areas; and
- Stimulate Michigan’s economy through recreation related tourism and community revitalization.

Grant proposals must include a local match of at least 25 percent of the total project cost. There is no minimum or maximum for acquisition projects. For development projects, the minimum funding request is \$15,000 and the maximum is \$300,000. Applications are due in April and August for acquisition projects and April (only) for development projects.

LWCF is a federal appropriation to the National Park Service, who distributes funds to the Michigan DNR for development of outdoor recreation facilities. The focus of the program has been on trailway systems and other community recreation needs such as playgrounds, picnic areas, skate parks, ball fields, soccer fields and walking paths. Minimum grant requests are \$30,000 and maximum grant requests are \$500,000. The match percentage must be 50 percent of the total project cost. Applications are accepted throughout the year, but must be in by April 1 to be considered for the following years grant funds.

The *Recreation Passport* grant program offers funding for the development of public recreation facilities for local units of government. Minimum grant requests are \$7,500 and maximum requests are \$75,000. The local match obligation is 25 percent of the total project cost. Application are typically due on April 1st.





Local units of government may use the **Forest Stewardship** program to develop a management plan for a municipal forest which would include a component targeting outreach to private landowners. A total of \$2,000 may be granted with a 50 percent local match. Applications are due in September. Non-game **Wildlife Fund Grants** have also been offered in the past to identify, protect, manage, and restore native plant and animal species, natural communities, and other natural features.

The **Detroit Edison Tree Planting program** began as DTE joined the US Department of Energy's voluntary Climate Challenge Program to address greenhouse gas emissions. Cost-share funds are available to municipalities in the Detroit Edison's service area on a competitive basis for tree planting projects. A total of up to \$4,000 may be granted to eligible tree planting projects on public and school property with a 50 percent local match. Applications are typically due in February.

### Apply for Other Grant Funding

There are also a variety of smaller grant programs available for the establishment of greenways/pathways or greenway-related facilities such as **Bikes Belong Coalition**. The Bikes Belong Coalition is sponsored by members of the American Bicycle Industry. Their mission is to put more people on bikes more often. The program funds projects in three categories: Facility, Education and CapaTownship Building. Requests for funding can be up to \$10,000 for projects such as bike paths, trails, lanes, parking, and safe routes to school. Applications are reviewed on a quarterly basis.

**Access to Recreation** is a grant program available for universal access of people of all abilities to a wide variety of recreation opportunities, such as nature viewing and photography areas, hiking trails, scenic outlooks, waterfalls and water activities of all kinds, beaches, fishing and boating, playgrounds, picnic areas, campgrounds, and much more. There are two primary grant programs under this source of funding:

- **Recreation Access Matching Grant** provides up to 50 percent matching funds (up to \$10,000) for the purchase of universally accessible recreation equipment and materials such as all terrain hiking wheelchairs, pool lifts, accessible playground surface, transfer systems, beach access mats, trail surface enhancements, and accessible picnic tables that enhance recreation participation by people with disabilities; and

- **Accessible by Design Awards** is designed to stimulate the development of creative universally designed recreation experiences that invite, welcome, and support the inclusion of people of all abilities. Winning designs demonstrate how going above and beyond the minimum requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act can create greater access and usability for people of all abilities in the community. Winning designs are awarded cash prizes to build the projects up to \$250,000 with 25 percent minimum match.

### Increase Support for Parks

Public support for Parks & Recreation will be crucial in determining the level of services the Township will be able to provide in the future. A specific park or project millage over a limited period could be considered in the future for particular projects such as park or trail acquisition, development, or maintenance.

### Seek Other Sources of Funding

Orion Parks & Recreation should continue to search for additional sources of funding. Seeking donations, attracting sponsors, holding fund-raising events and seeking out other revenue sources are methods that should be pursued aggressively to raise funding for park acquisition and development.





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# **NEEDS ANALYSIS & PUBLIC PERCEPTION**

# Chapter 4: Needs Analysis & Public Participation

An essential task in the recreation planning process is to determine the needs of the community to formulate an action plan for parks and recreation improvement. Needs provide the rationale for goals and objectives and identify areas for capital improvements. To assess needs, a robust community outreach plan was developed, consisting of multiple focus groups meetings with stakeholder groups, completion of a statistically-significant survey, and distribution of a community-wide online survey, to receive opinions and desires from residents. Consideration was also given to current recreation trends to provide a benchline for facilities, programs, and other recreation amenities. This information helped to inform a strategic solution to meet the Township’s recreation needs.

## Comparison to National Standards

According to a 1996 National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) study, parks and open spaces are categorized as mini-parks/tot-lots, neighborhood parks, community parks, regional parks, and preserves or special use areas. The mini, neighborhood, and community parks are close-to-home parks, designed to satisfy the recreational needs of local communities within a service radius of up to two miles. Orion maintains nine parks and preserves that are considered close-to-home parks. According to NRPA standards, the amount of recommended close-to-home park land is 6.26 to 10.5 acres for every 1,000 residents. A comprehensive analysis of the Township’s recreation facilities begins on page 54.

Regional parks are parks that serve a broader area (one hour drive or about a 45 mile radius) than community parks and focus on meeting the recreation needs of the region as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces. For Orion, County and State parks fill this role, with Huron-Clinton Metroparks (HCMA) providing support to a lesser degree. The NRPA standard for regional parks is 15 to 20 acres of park land per 1,000 people.

Other types of parks include the following:

- Schoolyards are areas that can fulfill the space and amenity requirements which may be lacking in other types of parks by offering access to sports complexes or special uses. This plan includes public school facilities located in the Township;
- Greenways, areas that link parks together to form a continuous park environment such as multi-purpose pathways or regional trails including the Paint Creek and Polly Ann Trails; and
- Recreation facilities which are privately owned yet contribute to the Township parks and recreation system.

Per these standards, local parks exceed the recommended acreage for close-to-home park land. Using SEMCOG 2050 population estimates, the amount of existing parkland will continue to be adequate to meet the Township’s recreation needs. Acreage provided by regional and private facilities augment these options, ensuring that Orion residents have adequate access to recreation amenities. Table 2 shows the comparison of Orion’s properties to these acreage standards.

**Table 2. Suggested Parkland Acreage**

Type of Park	NRPA Standard (Per 1000 pop.)	Required (Based on 35,418 pop)	Existing	Deficiency / Surplus
Close-to-home Parkland	6.25 - 10.5 acres	221.4 - 371.9 acres	582.4 acres	210.5 acre surplus
Regional Parks	15 - 20 acres	531.3 - 708.4 acres	3,872 acres (within Township)	3,164.3 acre surplus
Private Recreation Facilities	n/a	n/a	428 acres	n/a

**Table 3. Facility Comparison - 2022 Metrics**

	Existing	Lower quartile	Median	Upper quartile
Number of residents per park	3,935.3	1,227	1,941	3,125
Acres of park land per 1,000 residents	16.4	5.4	10.6	17.2
Miles of Trails*	47+	4	8	18

\* includes side paths, Paint Creek, and Polly Ann Trail within Township limits

Source: <https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/research-papers/agency-performance-review/>.



The NRPA also provides data in a format that allows agencies to compare their facilities against those commonly seen in comparable jurisdictions. Users are able to evaluate a variety of factors including jurisdiction size, number of acres managed, population density, and more. When viewed through this lens, Orion’s park system is well above average in every metric; the number acres per resident, number of residents per park, and miles of trails provided all fall within the upper quartile. Table 3 shows the comparison to these standards.

NRPA’s metrics also suggest that the Township is well covered in terms of typical park amenities such as playing fields, playgrounds, and the like (see Table 4). Because the features in this list include facilities not under the control of the Township, some caution is necessary. Some amenities may not be available for the general public at all times (e.g. playgrounds on school properties). As a general reference, however, the data suggests that Orion offers a well balanced mix of uses.

**Table 4. Comparison to Facility Development Standards Based On NRPA 2022 Metrics**

Type of Amenity	% of jurisdictions with this amenity	# of residents per amenity	Calculated # of required facilities	Actual number of amenities in Township	Surplus/ Deficiency
Playgrounds	95	3,111	11	23	+12
Basketball courts	86	6,839	5	31	+26
Baseball - youth	79	4,858	7	10	+3
Tennis courts	78	5,000	7	11	+4
Multi-purpose fields	68	7,674	5	12	+7
Dog park	67	28,000	1	1	0
Softball field - adult	65	11,232	3	7	+4
Softball field - youth	62	8,509	4	10	+6
Baseball - adult	54	19,000	2	13	+11
Pool (outdoor)	53	26,281	1	1	0
Community garden	51	24,500	1	1	0
Soccer field - youth	50	5,011	7	19	+12
Multi-use court	48	14,807	2	8	+6
Tot lots	45	10,756	3	2	-1
Soccer field - adult	44	10,547	3	10	+7
Skate park	39	32,335	1	0	1
Football field	35	19,351	2	3	1
18-hole golf course	29	33,800	1	3	2
Driving range	26	23,238	2	4	2
Multipurpose synthetic field	22	24,665	1	2	1
Ice rink	18	13,123	3	1	-2
Pickleball courts	18	8,143	4	4	0

Source: <https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/research-papers/agency-performance-review/>.



## Ten Minute Walk Initiative

The NRPA, Trust for Public Land (TPL), recreation advocacy groups, and communities across the country have embraced the concept of the “ten minute walk”, or the idea that every American should be within walkable distance to a local park or recreation facility. Numerous studies have shown the psychological, health, and general quality of life benefits provided by improved access to green spaces, but the likelihood of utilizing these spaces decreases as distance to the facility increases. For planning purposes, the traditional NRPA service radius of 1/4 mile for neighborhood parks and 1/2 mile for community parks is frequently used to demonstrate the effective reach of park systems.

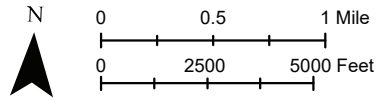
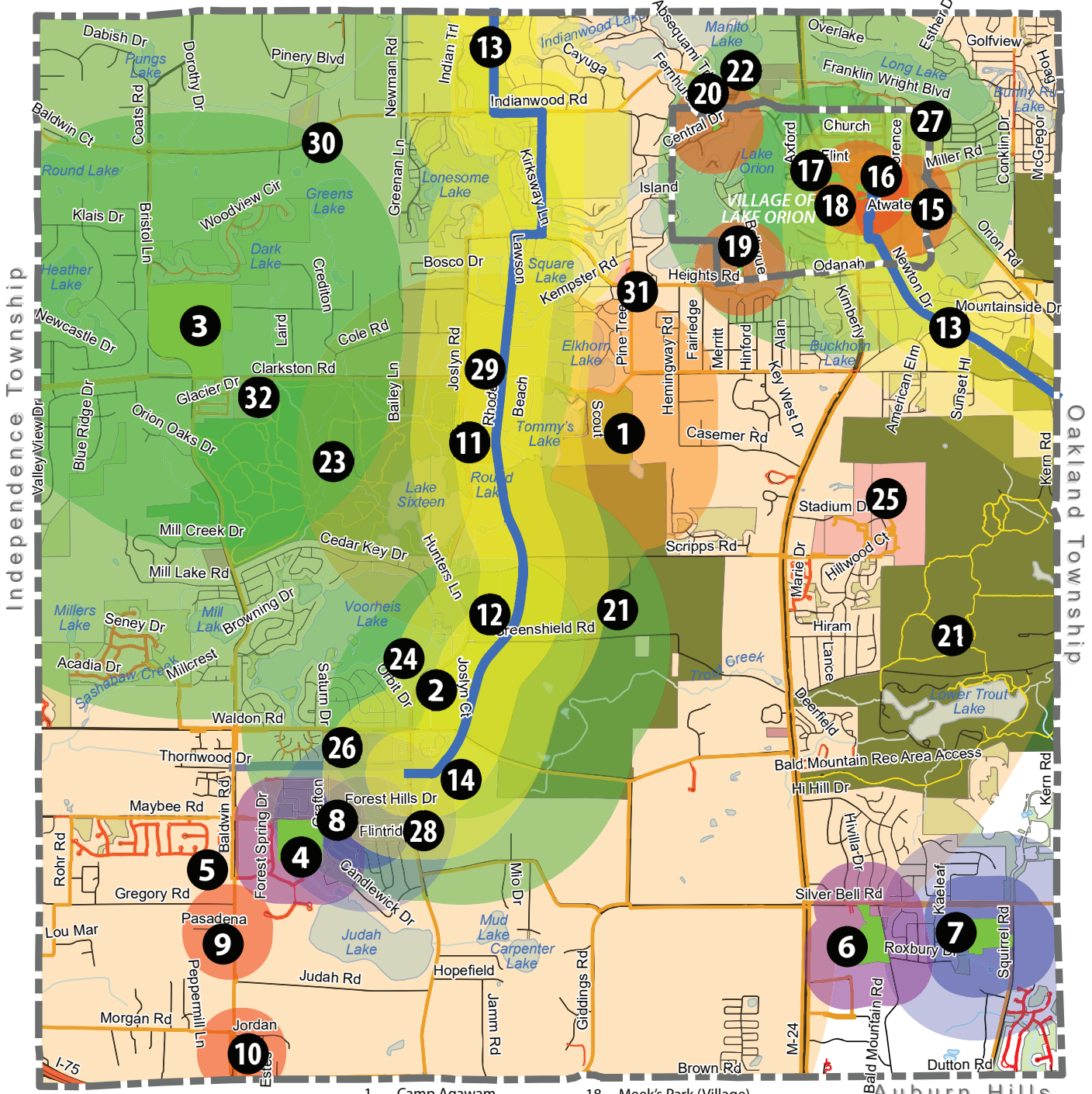
Map 1 on page 39 suggests Orion residents have good access to recreation facilities across most of the community, with the exception of the far southeastern corner of the Township. It should be noted that park designations and related service areas are somewhat arbitrary; Jesse Decker Park, for example, could be considered a community park, which would expand its service area to cover the entire southeast corner of the Township.

It is important to note that the map does not include regional park coverage, i.e. Bald Mountain and Orion Oaks, nor does it include coverage areas for parks in surrounding communities. The coverage area for the two state-run parks alone would extend well beyond the boundaries of the Township. While the addition of small pocket parks throughout the more densely populated areas of the Township would only strengthen the recreation offerings of the Township, there are no significantly underserved areas.

**Table 5. Park Categories**

Type of Park	Recommended Service Area	Typical Size	Usage description
Mini-parks or Tot Lots	1/4 mile radius	up to 1 acre	Specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population area, or that serve a specific function or age group. Examples of amenities found in mini parks include playground/tot lot equipment, benches, picnic tables, gazebos, ornamental landscape features, etc.
Neighborhood Parks	1/4 to 1/2 mile radius	5 to 10 acres, but are commonly larger or smaller	The basic unit of a park system, serving as the recreation and social focal point of the neighborhood. Typically provide a mix of informal active and passive recreation uses that serves neighborhood recreation needs, but rarely provide amenities designed for community-wide competition. Field games, court games, picnicking and playground areas are common components.
Community Parks	1 to 2 mile radius	25 acres or more, although special amenities may require less room	Diverse amenity offerings designed to attract users from across the community. They may include many of the same features as a neighborhood park, but typically are on a larger scale and include more specialized offerings.
Specialty Parks	1 to 3 mile radius	Varies significantly based on type of use	Golf courses, historical sites, community centers, water parks, dog parks, and similar highly specialized functions.
Natural Areas	Not defined	Varies	Open lands intended to preserve specific habitats or areas of high quality. A service radius is not defined for this type of park; properties which provide access through trails, boardwalks, or other features would be assigned a larger service area.
Regional Parks	Up to 1 hour drive/45 miles	Varies, but typically 100 acres or more	Regional parks are commonly operated by state, county, or other interjurisdictional organizations. They frequently offer amenities that are beyond the capabilities of a typical municipal recreation provider, such as hunting grounds, camping, boating, arenas, etc.
Linear parks/ greenways/trails	Not defined	Varies	Trails and pathways may include benches, overlooks, fitness equipment, or similar amenities. Service areas are not defined; a 1/4 to 1/2 mile radius corresponds to the 10-minute walk initiative guidelines.

Oxford Township



- Township or Village Park Footprint
- Mini-park / Tot Lot ¼ mile radius
- Neighborhood Park ¼ - ½ radius
- Community Park 1 - 2 mile radius
- Speciality Park 1 - 3 mile radius
- Natural/Open Space ¼ radius
- Trail
- Sidepath
- Park Path
- Sidewalk
- Major Trail ¼ - ½ radius

1. Camp Agawam
2. Civic Center Park
3. Friendship Park
4. Gingell Nature Area
5. Great Lakes Athletic Club
6. Heron Springs Park
7. Jesse Decker Park
8. McConnell Field
9. Pasadena Park
10. Playful Dragon Park
11. Orion Center
12. Municipal Complex
13. Paint Creek Trail
14. Polly Ann Trail
15. Atwater Park (Village)
16. Children's Park (Village)
17. Green's Park (Village)
18. Meek's Park (Village)
19. Unger Park (Village)
20. Swiss Village Park (Village)
21. Bald Mountain State Park
22. Lake Orion Boat Launch (DNR)
23. Orion Oaks County Park
24. Voorheis Lake Wetland Preserve
25. Lake Orion HS/Scripps Middle/ Stadium Elementary
26. Waldon Middle School
27. Blanche Sims Elementary
28. Carpenter Elementary
29. Orion Oaks Elementary
30. Paint Creek Elementary
31. Pine Tree Elementary
32. Webber Elementary

**Recreation Property Service Areas**

Orion Charter Township  
Oakland County  
Data from  
Oakland County GIS

June 2023  
Carlisle/Wortman Associates, Inc.  
Ann Arbor, Michigan

- Community Background
- Administrative Structure
- Recreation Inventory
- Needs Assessment & Public Participation
- Action Plan
- Goals & Objectives
- Executive Summary
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## National Recreation Trends

Recreation trends on a national and regional levels provide insights into recreation activities and demonstrate activities with the greatest growth in popularity. The National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) regularly conducts national surveys to measure participation in physical activities and track changes from previous years. Table 6 lists the top ten outdoor activities completed by persons aged seven years and older in the past year (2020).

The study shows a continued trend towards individual-based outdoor activities, with open water sports, outdoor activities, and snow sports all showing increases in participation. Team related sports, with the exception of soccer and lacrosse, have showed a steady decline in popularity in recent years, while trail related sports continue to grow in popularity.

These national trends are consistent with those observed in Michigan. According to the 2023 - 2027 Michigan Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), 86 percent of Michiganders participate in trail activities and “other” outdoor activities. A list of participation rates for the most popular activities in Michigan is listed in Table 7. Participation rates for the Detroit metropolitan area are provided in Table 8.

Other highlights from the most recent SCORP include:

- Four out of the top ten most popular activities involve walking or biking;
- 95 percent of Michiganders reported participating in at least one outdoor recreation activity;
- The total net economic value of outdoor recreation in Michigan was \$58,725,438,719, while the health benefits of outdoor recreation in Michigan.

The implication of the trends noted above along with the demographic and physical characteristics of the area can be summarized as follows:

- While future recreation development should respond to the expected increase in seniors, developments should also be designed to accommodate a variety of abilities and interests. Meeting or exceeding ADA standards for recreation uses will be critical.
- Residents expressed a clear desire for more walk/bike ways to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian recreation traffic and to contribute to a healthy and walkable environment. The Township should continue to close gaps in existing safety paths and sidewalks, and connect existing facilities with regional hike/bike systems.

**Table 6. Top Recreation Activities - 2020**

Activity	Participation (National)	Overall Rank	Participation (East North Central Region)	Overall Rank
Exercise walking	106.1 million	1	16.4 million	1
Exercise w/ Equipment	56.5 million	2	8.1 million	2
Hiking	46.4 million	3	6.2 million	6
Swimming	47.1 million	4	6.4 million	5
Aerobic Exercising	46.2 million	5	7.3 million	3
Running / jogging	44.2 million	6	6.0 million	7
Camping	40.7 million	7	5.9 million	9
Work out at a club	37.6 million	8	5.2 million	10
Bicycle riding	37.1 million	9	6.0 million	8
Weight lifting	36.5 million	10	5.2 million	11

Source: NSGA Sports Participation in the United States 2020

**Table 7. Top Outdoor Recreation Activities, Statewide**

Activity	Participation Rate
Going for a walk on local streets or sidewalks	80%
Going for a walk on local unpaved trails/paths	62%
Visiting the beach but not swimming	60%
Visiting parks or playgrounds	58%
Swimming at the beach	52%
Sightseeing and/or scenic driving for pleasure	47%
Day hiking on non-local, unpaved trails/paths	47%
Visiting nature centers or historic sites	41%
Motor boating, cruising	38%
Bicycling on paved streets, paths, or sidewalks	37%

Source: Michigan State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

**Table 8. Top Outdoor Recreation Activities, Detroit Metro**

Activity	Participation Rate
Going for a walk on local streets or sidewalks	79%
Going for a walk on local unpaved trails/paths	58%
Visiting the beach but not swimming	54%
Sightseeing and/or scenic driving for pleasure	52%
Swimming at the beach	51%
Visiting parks or playgrounds	43%
Motor boating, cruising	41%
Bicycling on paved streets, paths, or sidewalks	37%
Social gathering at park or natural area	37%
Visiting nature centers or historic sites	35%

Source: Michigan State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan



## Public Input - Survey Results

A random sample of Township residents was surveyed by Cobalt Community Survey beginning in May of 2023. The sample included 4,000 residents drawn from the Township voter registration, and was conducted using two mailings in May and June. Each participant was issued a unique ID number to ensure only one response per resident. Responses were provided either online or via postage-paid envelopes. Valid responses were received from 650 residents, providing a margin of error of +/- 3.7 percent.

1,058 individuals who were not part of the sample group also provided their input. The survey notice was provided in the Township's summer tax bill and advertised through the Parks & Recreation website and social media. An abridged summary of results is provided in Appendix E on page 142. Due to the voluminous amount of responses, unabridged responses have been compiled into a stand-alone document which is available upon request.

The results between the sample and non-sample groups were fairly consistent. In broad terms, the sample group were less likely to use parks or participate in programs, and was somewhat more reticent about spending tax dollars on recreation amenities. The differences were not large, however; with a few exceptions, the percentage differences between the sample and non-sample groups infrequently exceeded five percent. Desired amenities and actions for the two groups were usually similar in scope.

Both population groups were clear in their insistence that maintenance of existing parks and recreation facilities is a top priority. In a question asking participants to describe "How important are the following items to you?" (see Table 9), maintenance was the top priority by a wide margin for both the sample (84%) and non-sample (90%) groups. When asked "What would be the most important improvement?", the maintenance and cleanliness was the second-most mentioned item for the sample group, and most mentioned item for the non-sample group.

**Table 9. How important are the following...**

Topic	Not at all important			Somewhat Important			Very important		
	Sample	Non-Sample	Difference	Sample	Non-Sample	Difference	Sample	Non-Sample	Difference
Maintain existing parks & rec facilities	3%	1%	2%	13%	8%	5%	84%	90%	-6%
Protect natural resources	4%	2%	2%	18%	16%	2%	77%	78%	-1%
Access to paths & trails	6%	3%	3%	20%	18%	2%	73%	76%	-3%
Access to rental facilities (shelters, pavilions, etc.)	23%	23%	0%	52%	52%	0%	24%	24%	0%
Access to recreation programming	17%	11%	6%	46%	42%	4%	35%	46%	-11%
Access to active-use facilities	15%	12%	3%	38%	37%	1%	46%	51%	-5%
Acquiring/developing new park facilities	24%	16%	8%	44%	40%	4%	30%	42%	-12%

**Table 10. Rate Orion Township's facilities & programs**

Facility	Sample	Non-Sample	Difference	Average
Parks/facilities meet your needs	8.3	8.3	0	8.3
Parks/facility maintenance and cleanliness	8.5	8.5	0	8.5
Quality of recreational programs	8.1	8	0.1	8.05
Variety of recreational programs	8.1	7.8	0.3	7.95
Safety/security	8.4	8.6	-0.2	8.5
Access for people with disabilities/mobility challenged	8.2	8.4	-0.2	8.3
Location convenience	8.8	8.8	0	8.8
Communication of parks and recreation activities and offerings	8	8.1	-0.1	8.05
Feeling of being welcome/belonging	8.5	8.5	0	8.5
Affordability of participation fees	8.4	8.3	0.1	8.35



Communication and outreach was also frequently described as important to improving the impressions of the Township’s parks and recreation system. Communication was the top issue for the sample group, and the fourth ranked issue for the non-sample group. Survey participants preferred to receive their information via the Orion Living Newsletter (sample 54%, non-sample 57%), traditional mail (sample 57%, non-sample 42%), and/or via e-mail (sample 49%, non-sample 67%).

Several comments not directly related to communication highlighted a need for better communication by requesting amenities that already exist. Better communications could also help to clarify which facilities fall under the jurisdiction of Orion Township Parks & Recreation, as opposed to facilities owned and operated by the Village of Lake Orion, Michigan DNR, or Oakland County.

**“Maybe provide a map of all the local parks and picture examples and/or description (e.g. Park X is great for small kids ages 3-5, Park Y is great for people with disabilities, etc.)”**

**- Sample group participant**

**“Just continue to maintain the quality and cleanliness as doing so far. I think Parks and Rec are doing a nice job.”**

**- Sample group participant**

**“For me the biggest benefits from Orion Parks is preserve and provide access to green / natural space. The organized activity aspect of it no longer has much value to my family.”**

**- Non-sample group participant**

Protection of natural resources was viewed as very important by almost 80% of all participants (77% sample, 78% non-sample). Some participants expressed concerns about ongoing growth in the community, and highlighted the importance of preserving land while it was still available. Others simply expressed a desire to see more trees for shade and habitat.

Both groups were supportive of expanded access to paths and trails (73% sample, 76% non-sample). The Township’s trail system was highly rated by both sample and non-sample participants (8.45 average score), behind only Wildwood Amphitheater and Friendship Park (8.6 average for each). Safe walking/biking routes from neighborhoods was the top improvement suggested for parks. Improving crosswalks were frequently mentioned, and Indianwood Road was the most commonly mentioned route for the addition of a safety path.

Of the ten most requested improvements, five were directly related to trails and pathway development. Despite the general agreement in the types of amenities, there was occasionally some disagreement about how they might be implemented. For example, paving trails and parking areas was viewed by some as a way to address accessibility concerns, improve aesthetic issues, and reduce maintenance challenges. Others were wary of the ecological implications of more pavement.

**Table 11. Ten improvements that would most benefit your household**

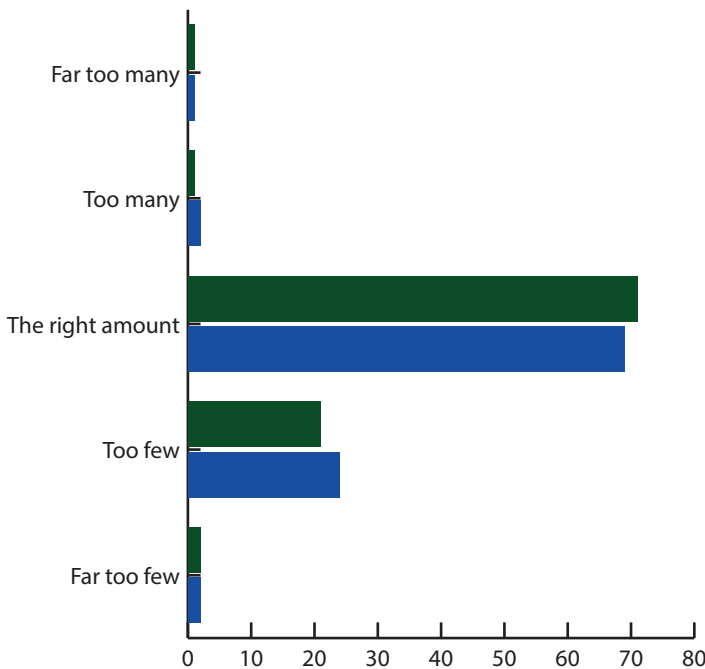
Requested Feature	Rank	
	Sample	Non-Sample
Safe walking/biking routes from neighborhoods	1	1
Permanent restrooms	2	1
Natural areas	4	4
Fitness/exercise trails	3	6
Outdoor swimming pool	5	3
Water bottle/drinking fountains	6	5
Nature centers	6	8
Rustic walking paths	6	8
Paved hiking/biking trails	9	7
Indoor fitness & exercise equipment	13	11
Splash pad	18	8
Driving range	9	19

More often than not, there was agreement on the general direction for park improvements and the impression of the park system as a whole. 71% of the sample group and 69% of the non-sample group felt the Township has the right number of parks, although there was a significant percentage of people who felt that the Township had too few facilities (sample 21%, non-sample 24%). Most participants (62% sample, 65% non-sample) felt that the Parks & Recreation Millage provides a good value for the average household, with roughly a quarter of participants (26% sample, 23% non-sample) stating they would need more information.

Participants were generally pleased with park facilities, program offerings, and the quality of the system. Table 10 on page 41 provides scores related to functions and features of the overall park system, while Table 13 on page 43 looks specifically at each property. Friendship Park, Wildwood Amphitheater, and the Township’s trail systems all scored very highly, while McConnell Field scored comparatively low.

**Table 12. Does Orion Township have the right number of parks?**

Rating	Sample	Non-Sample	Percent Difference
Far too many	1%	1%	0%
Too many	1%	2%	-1%
The right amount	71%	69%	2%
Too few	21%	24%	-3%
Far too few	2%	2%	0%



**Table 13. Please rate your satisfaction with Orion Township’s park facilities**

Rating	Sample	Non-Sample	Percent Difference
Camp Agawam	7.9	7.8	0.1
Civic Center Park	8.1	7.9	0.2
Friendship Park	8.6	8.6	0
Gingell Nature Area	7.3	6.9	0.4
Heron Springs	7.1	6.5	0.6
Jesse Decker Park	7.6	7.2	0.4
McConnell Field	6.7	5.8	0.9
Municipal Complex	8.4	8.1	0.3
Orion Center	8.5	8.3	0.2
Playful Dragon	7	6.8	0.2
Trail system	8.6	8.3	0.3
Wildwood Amphitheater	8.7	8.5	0.2

**“I think that Orion Parks does an excellent job with their programs and the maintenance of the public spaces. One of the best parts of living here!”**

**- Sample group participant**

**“A challenge everywhere, but accessibility is important for all abilities to enjoy parks. Orion does provide greater accessibility than most!”**

**- Non-sample group participant**

- Community Background
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As mentioned in the section on national recreation trends, walking and trail sports is far and away the most popular outdoor activity in Michigan and across the country. This trend holds true in Orion as well. Residents expressed a clear desire to have continued access to trails and pathways (sample group 73%, non-sample 76%), while improvements to and expansion of trails was frequently mentioned (sample group third highest, non-sample second highest). Walking and trail sports were the most frequently participated-in activity for both the sample (73%) and non-sample (68%) groups, and development of safe walking/biking routes from neighborhoods was the top requested improvement for both groups as well.

Outside of trail development, five main improvements were mentioned throughout the open-ended comments.

- Pickleball enthusiasts are vocal advocates for their sport, and their presence was felt throughout this survey. More pickleball courts was the fifth highest most requested item for the sample group, and third highest for the non-sample population.
- Swimming pools and splash pads are also traditionally popular items, and an outdoor pool was the fifth most requested item by the sample group, and third highest for the non-sample group. Splash pads did not make the sample group's top ten, but was tied for eighth for the non-sample group.
- Permanent restrooms are another traditionally popular request. The sample group showed restrooms as their second most requested improvement, while it tied for first for the non-sample group.
- A Nature Center scored sixth for the sample group, and tied for eighth with the non-sample group. This is in addition to the general "nature area" category, which was the fourth highest amenity for both the sample and non-sample groups, corresponding well with the demand for nature preservation and protection identified in earlier questions.
- Fitness or exercise trails were another popular item, finishing third for the sample group and sixth for the non-sample group. Several individuals mentioned the idea of exercise stations similar to the one at Civic Center Park.

Other amenities frequently mentioned include additional drinking fountains, benches, and shaded areas or trees. Lacrosse received a number of comments in the non-sample group, but did not receive as much attention in the sample population.

**"I am a huge fan of neighborhood parks. Although my family is getting too old for this specifically, I think that every kid should be able to ride their bike to a park with a playground."**

**- Non-sample group participant**

**"Trails and opportunities to engage with nature are the most important for my family. I'd love to see more 'nature' play opportunities for kids instead of plastic and metal playgrounds (the seven ponds nature center play area is a great example of what I'm thinking of!)"**

**- Sample group participant**



The sample and non-sample groups provided somewhat different responses regarding programming. Access to recreation programming was viewed as very important by 46% of the non-sample group, but only 35% of the sample group, an 11% difference. 17% of sample group participants felt programming was “not at all important”. Both groups felt that the quality of recreation programs were high (sample group 8.1 / non-sample 8.0), although the sample group was more satisfied with the variety of programming (8.1) than the non-sample group (7.8). Both groups felt a high level of being welcomed (8.5).

While affordability was frequently mentioned throughout the open-ended comments, both groups indicated that participation fees were reasonable (8.4 sample group, 8.3 non-sample group).

There was disagreement regarding which age groups should be targeted by new programming. Cobalt Community Research found that in the sample group, each respondent age category felt that their own cohort deserved more attention than the others. A comparison of the sample versus non-sample groups found significant percentage difference between the answers, with the non-sample group more focused on younger age brackets and the sample group more focused on older adults and senior populations.

Ultimately, both groups were similar in the improvements and additions they would like to see added to the Township’s programming portfolio. Concerts and shows (34% overall) and culinary/cooking programs (25% overall) were the clear top options, with fitness (23%), outdoor education (21%), and adventure recreation (20%) all receiving votes from more than one in five participants.

**Table 14. Ten improvements to recreational programming that would most benefit your household (ranks)**

Category	Sample	Non-Sample	Overall
Concerts & Shows	1	1	1
Culinary/cooking programs	2	2	2
Fitness classes	3	4	3
Outdoor education	4	5	4
Adventure recreation	12	3	5
Travel & excursions	5	9	6
Gardening/horticulture/tree management	7	9	7
Night/weekend programs	10	7	8
Enrichment classes	14	6	9
Music/theater/performing arts	5	16	9

**Table 15. Which age group should future programming improvements be focused on (comparisons)?**

Age group	Sample	Non-Sample	Percent Difference
Young child/toddler	23%	30%	-7%
Pre teen	20%	28%	-8%
Teens	24%	31%	-7%
Young adults	34%	34%	0%
Older adults	54%	51%	3%
Seniors	44%	34%	10%

**Table 16. Which age group should future programming improvements be focused on (Sample group only)?**

		Age group to focus on					
		Young children	Pre-teen	Teens	Young adults	Older adults	Seniors
Respondent age group	Overall	23%	20%	24%	34%	54%	44%
	Under 18	-	-	-	-	-	-
	18 - 24	8%	8%	20%	92%	64%	20%
	25 - 34	48%	19%	22%	71%	31%	9%
	35 - 44	49%	55%	49%	45%	41%	11%
	45 - 54	11%	22%	44%	51%	74%	20%
	55 - 64	18%	14%	17%	21%	75%	53%
	65 - 74	19%	14%	13%	14%	38%	80%
	75+	17%	15%	15%	12%	35%	83%

Source: Cobalt Community Research Analysis



60% of sample and 80% of non-sample group respondents have participated in at least one program offered by Orion Township in the past year. Increased program variety (24% sample, 29% non-sample) was the most mentioned item to help increase participation rates.

Per NRPA metrics, Orion’s program offerings correspond closely with programs provided by comparable parks & recreation departments across the country (see Table 17 and Table 18 on page 46).

### Public Input - Focus Groups

Four focus group meetings were held to receive stakeholder input on special areas of interest. The four groups included:

- Seniors;
- Teens;
- Special needs/adaptive programming; and
- Staff input

Input from sporting groups and active-use participants was also sought, but was never formally accomplished due to a variety of circumstances. The results from each of these groups closely mirrored the overall survey results. Reports for each group are included in Appendix E.

#### Seniors:

The individuals in the Senior focus group were generally pleased with Orion’s programming options, although some wished to see more options offered on weekends and evenings. Communications was a primary concern, with the group offering solutions for improving outreach both at the Orion Center and in other areas as well. Trips were a special focus for the group; they tended to feel that fees for program offerings were reasonable.

#### Teens:

The teen group participants emphasized the lack of a central gathering space. They noted that programming tended to center on more active-use activities such as mountain biking, while the group had an interest in more passive options such as cooking classes. The teens were satisfied with non-motorized access to the area parks, although their discussion highlighted the importance of ensuring connectivity throughout the Township. Interest in a community pool was also strong with this group.

**Table 17. Targeted Programs Offered Nationally by Parks & Recreation Department**

Program	Percent of jurisdictions with this program
Summer camp	61%
Specific senior programs	65%
Specific teen programs	46%
Programs for people with disabilities	36%
STEM programs	40%
After school programs	47%
Preschool	25%
Before school programs	16%
Full daycare	4%

Source: NRPA Agency Performance Review

**Table 18. General Programming Offered Nationally by Parks & Recreation Departments**

Program	Percent of jurisdictions with this program
Themed special events	83%
Social recreation events	83%
Team sports	85%
Fitness enhancement classes	67%
Health and wellness education	67%
Individual sports	64%
Safety training	62%
Racquet sports	60%
Aquatics	55%
Performing arts	40%
Visual arts	43%
Natural and cultural history activities	37%
Cultural crafts	40%
Trips and tours	43%
Martial arts	39%
Running/cycling races	41%
Golf	22%
eSports/eGaming	7%

Source: NRPA Agency Performance Review

## Special Needs / Adaptive Programming

Much like the senior group, the adaptive programming group highlighted the importance of communications and outreach. Like the teens group, the lack of a central gathering place was considered an issue. The group was particularly interested in social event programming and the availability of such options beyond just the teenage years. Improving overall accessibility at area parks was viewed as important, and served as a reminder that accessibility can affect people of all age groups and a wide variety of abilities.

Outside of the focus meetings, both the sample and non-sample groups showed strong interest in improving overall accessibility at area facilities. Access for people with disabilities was highly rated (8.2 sample, 8.4 non-sample), but both groups noted that improvements to park facilities would improve their overall ratings for the park (number 8 for sample group, number 6 for the non-sample group).

## Staff Input

Parks & Recreation staff offered a variety of programming and facility suggestions, many of which closely mirrored the options suggested by the general public. A recreation center was the most needed special facility mentioned by the group, with the introduction of a nature center close behind. Programming suggestions were broad in scope and included items like community events like bonfires and holiday events, sporting leagues, classes, and tournaments, and more passive activities such as tree plantings, food gardening, and mushroom hunting. Staff emphasized the need to provide a balance between active and passive use amenities and programs.

Of primary importance to this group was staffing levels. In order to provide effective programming options for the community, it is critical that adequate staffing be provided to manage scheduling and payment, oversee both paid and volunteer leadership positions, and provide general management oversight of all programming operations. Table 19 provides an overview of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staffing levels for similarly sized departments across the United States.

Table 19. Calculated Staffing & Operating Expenditures among peer institutions

Program	Lower quartile	Median	Upper quartile
Full time equivalent staff	18	34.2	70.8
FTEs per 10,000 residents	5.9	11.1	19
Annual operating expenditures	\$2.1 million	\$3.5 million	\$6.7 million
Operating expenditures per capita	\$70.12	\$110.32	\$206.80
Operating expenditures per acre of park	\$4,458	\$9,817	\$23,983

Source: NRPA Agency Performance Review

Table 20. Operating Expenditures Details

Distribution of Operating Expenditures	
Personnel Services	54%
Operating Expenses	38%
Capital Expenses not in CIP	5%
Other	3%
Operating expenditures per acre of park	\$23,983
Operating Expenditures Dedicated to Parks & Recreation	
Parks	45%
Recreation / programming	42%
Other	13%
Sources of Operating Expenditures	
General Fund	61%
Earned / Generated Revenue	23%
Dedicated Levies	8%
Other Dedicated Taxes	3%
Grants	2%
Sponsorships	1%
Revenues as a Percentage of Operating Expenditures (Cost Recovery)	
Lower Quartile	11.6%
Median	25%
Upper Quartile	47.4%
Five-year Capital Budget Spending	
Lower Quartile	\$1.2 million
Median	\$ 3.7 million
Upper Quartile	\$ 14.0 million
Targets for Capital Expenditures	
Renovation	56%
New Development	30%
Acquisition	7%
Other	7%

Source: NRPA Agency Performance Review



## Recreation Center Analysis

Fitness and exercise and swimming pools were frequently mentioned as part of a larger recreation center discussion. The Township has been approached by private developers in the past looking to form a partnership where a facility would be developed on a Township property which would then be operated by the developer. Survey participants were asked if they would support such a project, and there appeared to be qualified support for the proposal. 53% of sample group participants answered “Definitely” or “Probably yes”, compared to 57% of non-sample group participants. 22% of sample/20% of sample group participants said they would need more information. When asked if they would still support the project if Parks & Recreation was required to fund a portion of the development costs, the percentages of “Definitely” or “Probably yes” dropped to 42% for the sample group, 47% for the non-sample group, and the “Need more information” percentages increased to 29% for the sample group and 26% for the non-sample group.

Project cost and environmental impact were the two most frequently mentioned issues with the proposal. Proponents for the concept pointed to benefits for teens and youth, and the ability to participate in sports regardless of the weather.

As a component of the recreation plan, Carlisle/Wortman Associates (CWA) contracted Hubbell, Roth and Clark (HRC) to perform a high-level analysis of potential properties suitable to for recreation center development. Suitable properties were required to be ten acres or larger, ideally centrally located, and currently vacant. Heavily wooded areas or areas with significant wetlands were eliminated from consideration. After an initial evaluation, only four parcels were considered to have high potential for development, each of which are privately owned. Three Township-owned parcels had medium potential, but would require relocation of existing amenities which would have been overly burdensome and costly.

Of the four high-potential sites, only two were already slated for development, leaving only two realistic candidates. The first site, an undeveloped parcel located on M-24, is centrally located and could accommodate a custom-built facility with child care facilities, a running track, gyms, and possible future expansion. The study concluded that any new facility would require somewhere between 50,000 and 100,000 square feet to accommodate all of the desired uses. The candidate property also has an undeveloped forested area that could be preserved with new trails established through the woods. The trails would help to connect nearby neighborhoods to the center. As a privately owned property, there is no guarantee that the parcel could be acquired.

The second viable prospect was the Great Lakes Athletic Club (GLAC), located at 3800 South Baldwin Road. The 88,000 square foot building would require significant revisions to ensure that the facility meets Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, and some amenities would need to be converted to accommodate desired uses such as a teen center, senior facilities, and other uses. Overall, the building has been well maintained and has the potential to accommodate most if not all of the desired uses described by residents and staff. Space at the rear of the property could be developed into additional outdoor space, with new court sports or playing fields added as desired. Any required improvements to the building and/or grounds could be implemented over time without impacting the ability to utilize the club. The GLAC has the additional benefit of both an indoor and outdoor pool.

Shortly after completion of the recreation center study, GLAC was put into receivership and became available for purchase. On November 9, 2023, Orion Township successfully bid for the club. Funding for the bid came from a combination Parks & Recreation funds and General Fund dollars. The Township is also considering sale of the Orion Center to help offset the cost of the purchase. Critically, no new taxes were necessary to finance the acquisition. The winning bid is estimated to be approximately a third of the cost of developing a new center with similar amenities. The GLAC acquisition represents an exciting new chapter for Orion Parks, and will greatly expand recreation opportunities for the residents of the Township as a whole.

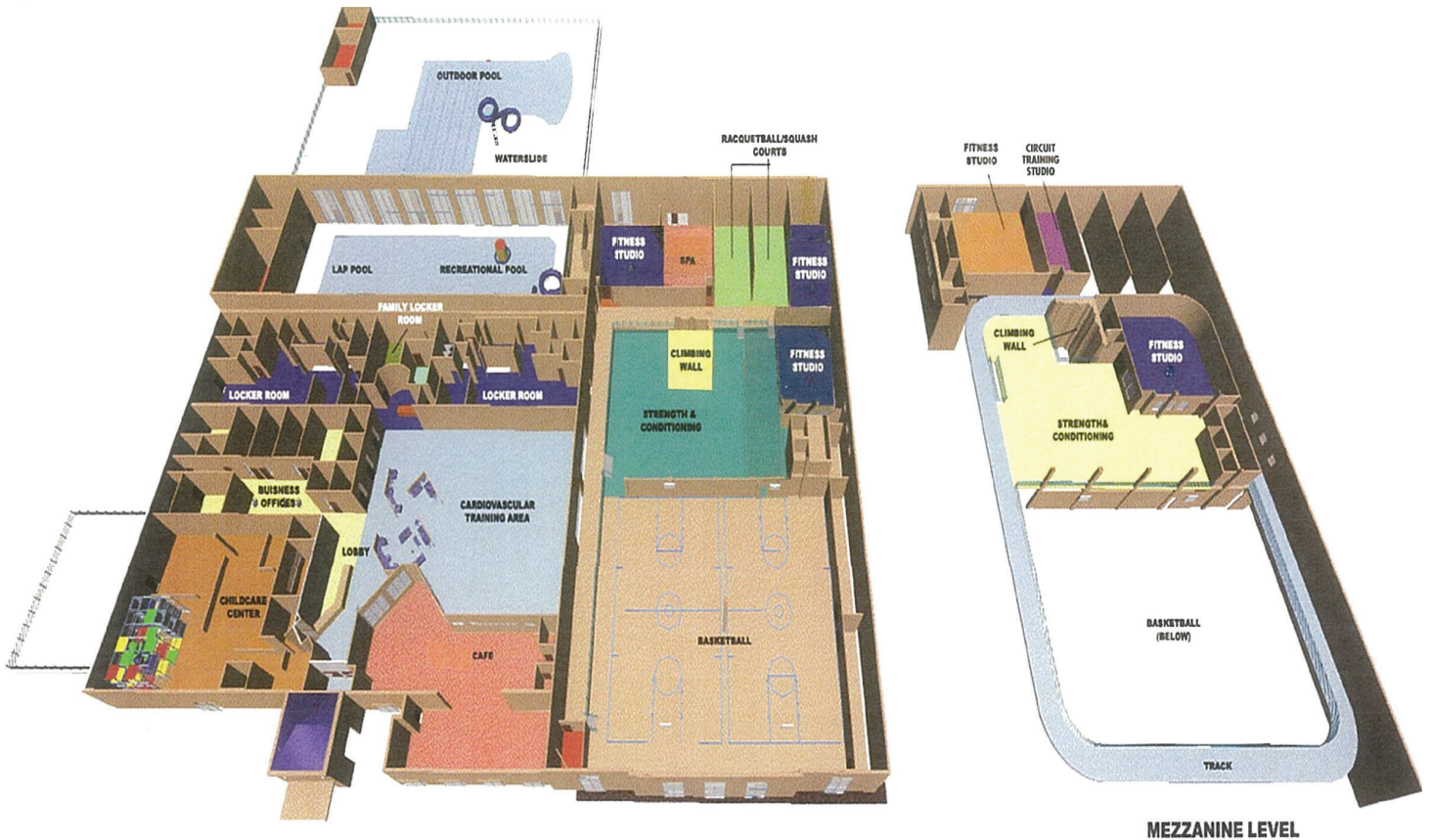
The results of the preliminary study are included in Appendix F beginning on page 183.



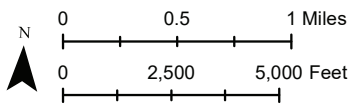
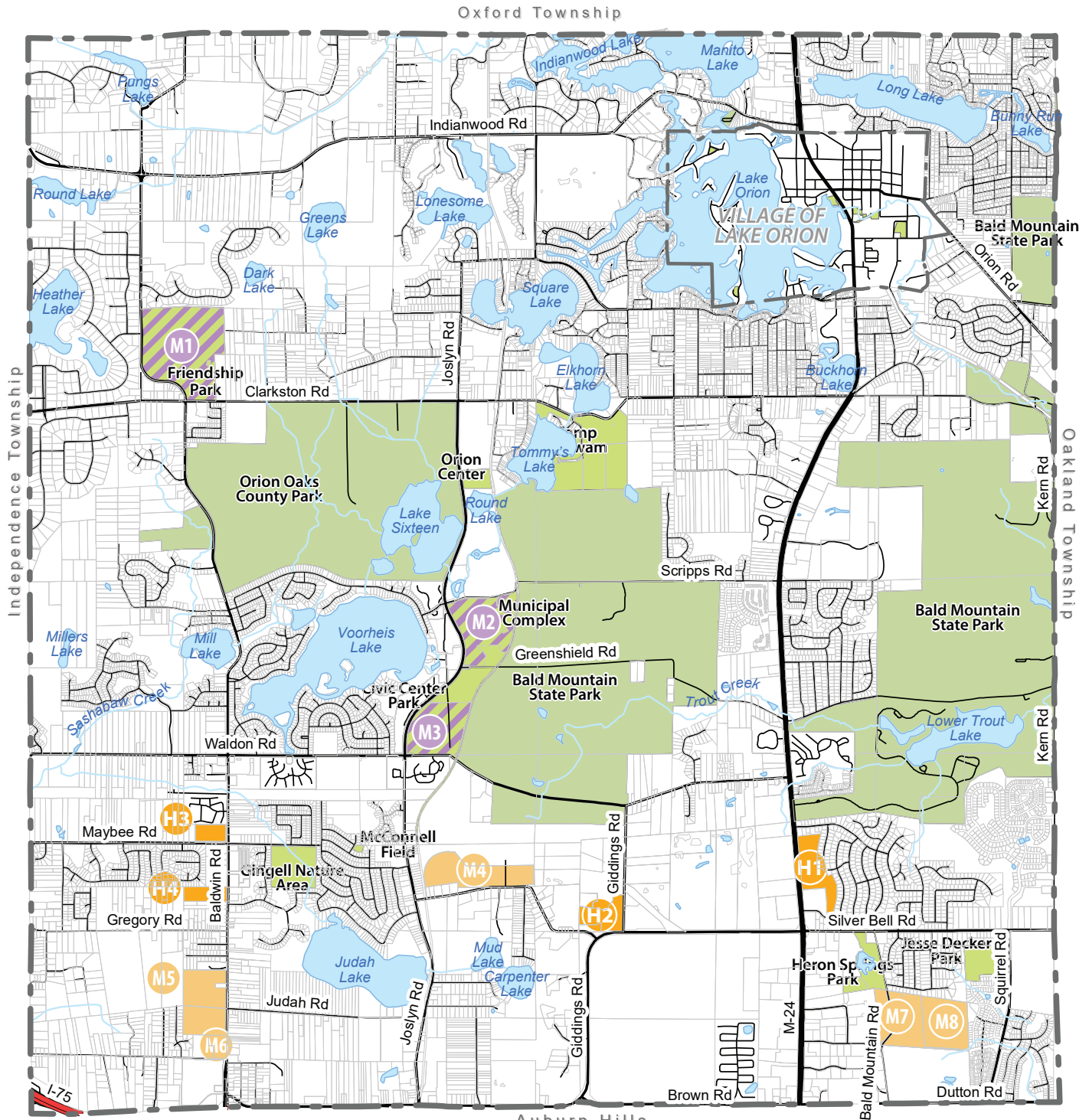




Figure 9. Great Lakes Athletic Club Existing Layout







- Private - Medium Potential
- Private - High Potential
- Township Owned - Medium Potential
- Township Recreation Properties
- State & County Recreation Properties

- | High Potential Sites | Medium Potential Sites |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. 09-26-451-002     | 1. 09-07-426-002       |
| 2. 09-27-301-051     | 2. 09-21-201-002       |
| 3. 09-29-104-001     | 3. 09-21-376-003       |
| 4. 09-29-301-036     | 4. 09-28-401-008       |
|                      | 5. 09-32-151-020       |
|                      | 6. 09-32-301-001       |
|                      | 7. 09-36-300-001       |
|                      | 8. 09-36-300-002       |

### Recreation Center Potential for Parcels 10 acres or greater

Orion Charter Township  
 Oakland County  
 Roads, Tax Parcel, and Rivers Data  
 from Oakland County GIS

August 1 2023  
 Carlisle/Wortman Associates, Inc.  
 Ann Arbor, Michigan



## Cost Recovery Model

Ann Conklin, former Executive Director of mParks and former director of some of Michigan’s most comprehensive park systems, was retained to provide guidance on a cost recovery model for Orion Township Parks & Recreation. The goal of the model is to provide affordable, relevant programs and services that are both inclusive and representative of the Township’s demographics. The proposed system will guide the Department in the financial decision making, ensuring that they are good stewards of millage dollars while keeping pace with the needs of a growing community.

The proposed model is scheduled to be refined over the coming month with a final product in place by August 2024. An electronic form to be used by staff will be completed December 2024, with implementation of the program to begin by January 2025. The final goal is for all programs to meet their cost recovery levels by December, 2027.

A strong cost recovery model can help to ensure the success of the Department in a number of ways. First, it enables the Director to effectively communicate financial performance levels and other requirements to both community leaders and the public at large. Second, the model ensures that adequate financing is in place to ensure effective operation and maintenance of existing and proposed facilities and programs. Finally, it requires facilities and programs to be closely monitored, ensuring that the needs of participants and other stakeholders are met, that all facilities adhere to safety and accessibility requirements, and minimizes duplication of efforts between the Township, neighboring communities, and other relevant recreation organizations.

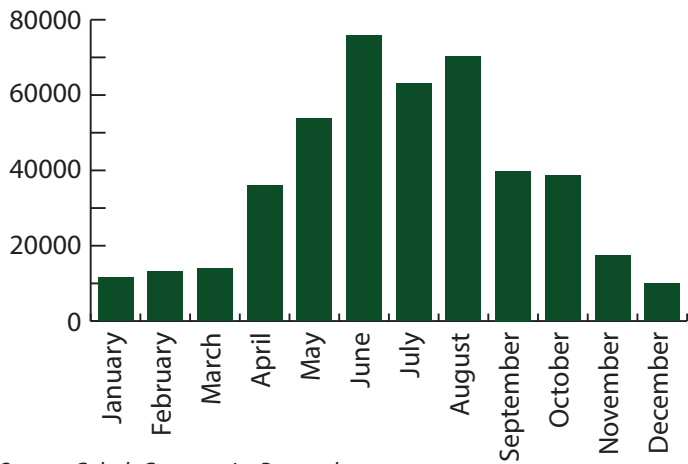
A preliminary draft of the Cost Recovery plan is provided in Appendix H. As the plan is updated and completed, it will be formally appended to this document and included in planning documentation on a go-forward basis.

## Park Visitation Rates

Cobalt Community Research provided a facility visitation analysis for the Township’s park system. The data derived from the statistically significant survey showed that from January 1 through December 31, 2022, 138,900 unique individuals visited Orion’s park facilities, with a total of over 443,000 visits during the study period. There were an average 3.19 visits per individual. Visitors must have remained in the point of interest for at least seven minutes to be counted, and are only counted once per day if they leave and return. Visitors were primarily from southeast Michigan (see Table 21), although ZIP Code data shows visits originating from as far away Florida, New York, and California. It should also be noted that these are visits specifically to Orion Township facilities; if state and county parks are factored into the discussion, the number of visits only increases.

The spending patterns of these visitors underscores the financial implications of a strong park and trail system. While a full analysis of spending patterns goes beyond the scope of this document, Cobalt has provided documentation to both Parks & Recreation and Township leaders for further review. It can be assumed that some percentage of discretionary income would be spent in or near Orion Township. As recreation facilities and programming options are enhanced, the potential spending of nearly half a million visitors could be expected to grow as well.

Figure 10. Monthly Visitation Rates, 2022



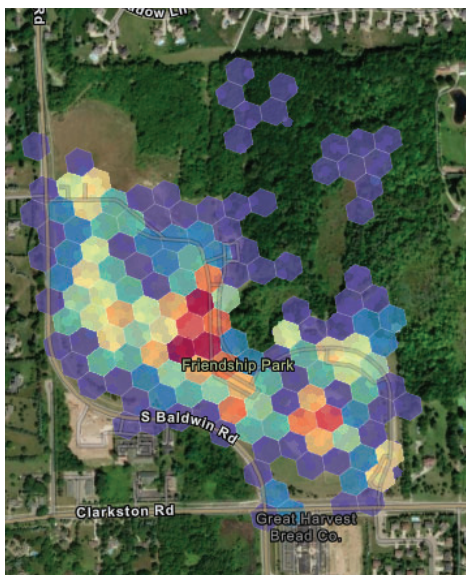
Source: Cobalt Community Research

Table 21. Top Ten Visitor Origins

Origin	Percentage	# of Visits
Lake Orion, MI	37.6%	166,499
Clarkston, MI	6.6%	29,263
Rochester, MI	5.9%	26,023
Oxford, MI	5.5%	24,318
Pontiac, MI	5.1%	22,723
Waterford, MI	3.8%	16,892
East Lansing, MI	2.2%	9,789
Auburn Hills, MI	1.6%	7,302
Ortonville, MI	1.5%	6,810
Macomb, MI	1.5%	6,782

Source: Cobalt Community Research

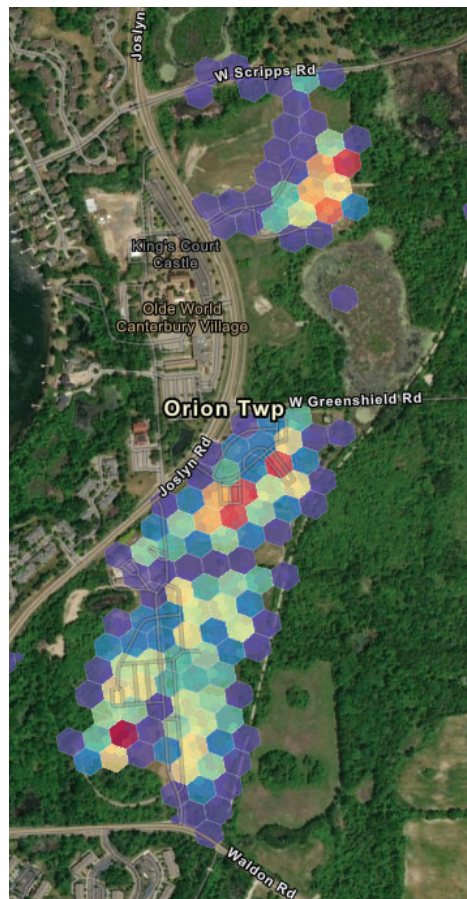
Friendship Park



total\_visits



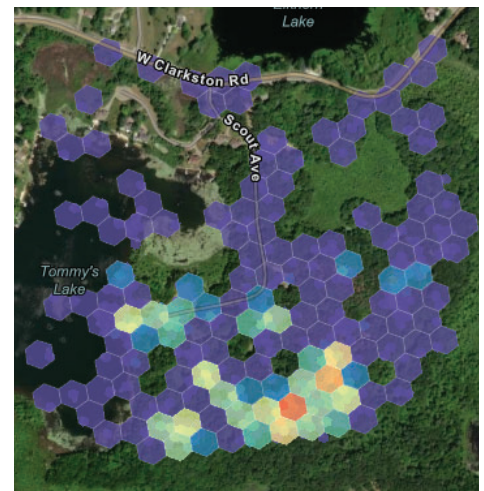
Municipal Center, Civic Center Park, & Wildwood Amphitheater



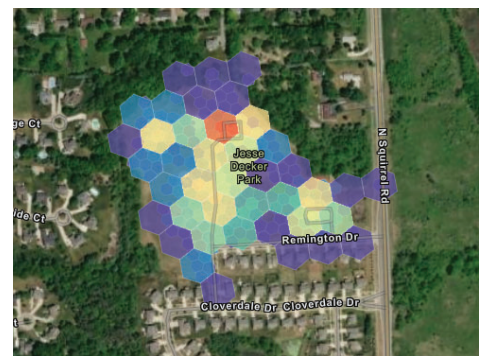
Gingell Nature Ctr. & McConnell Field



Camp Agawam



Jesse Decker Park



Orion Center



Time Period: Jan 1st - Dec 31st, 2022

Source: Cobalt Community Research





# RECREATION INVENTORY



# Chapter 5: Recreation Inventory

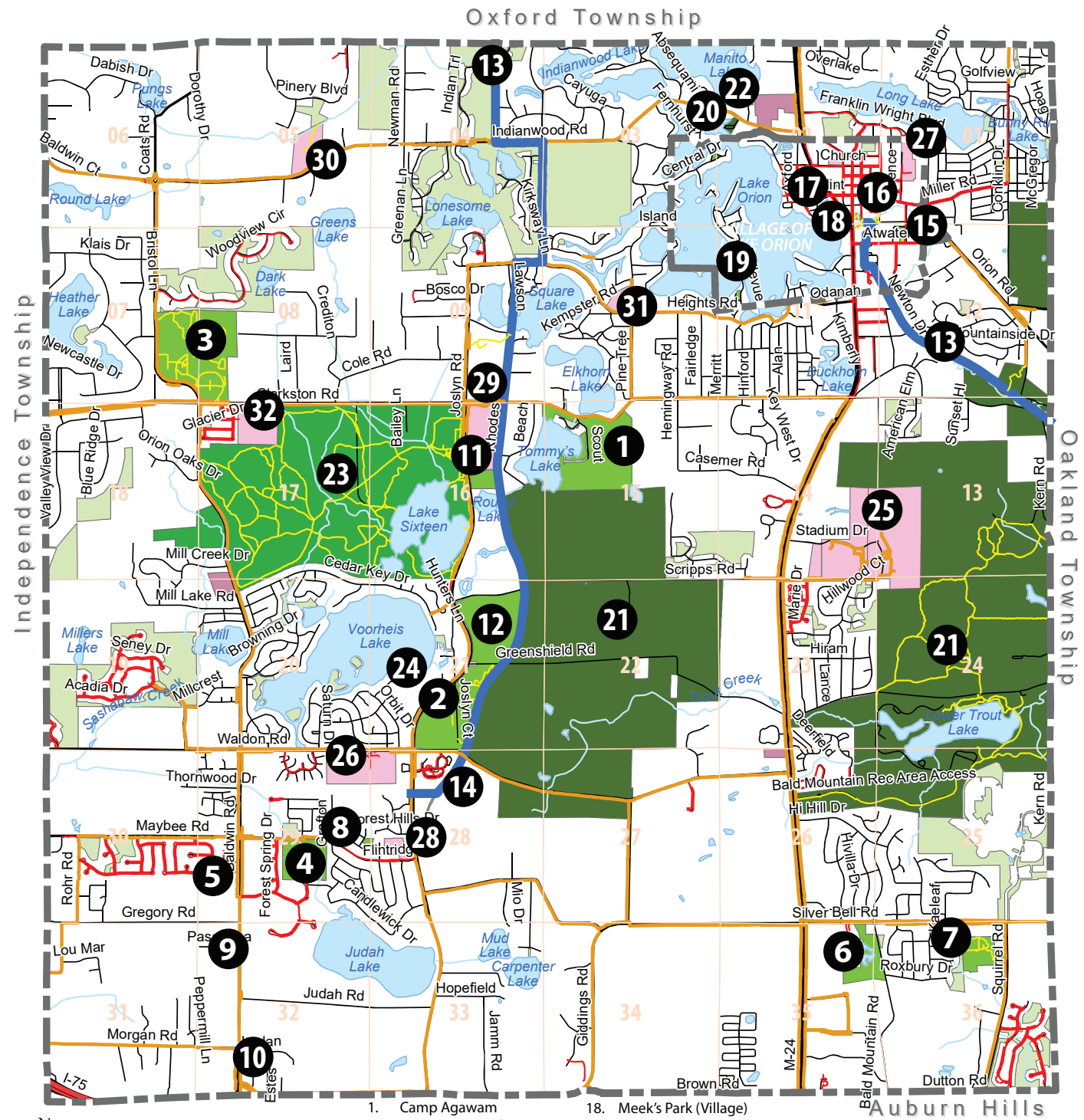
Orion residents have access to a wide variety of parks, trails, and open spaces. Over 580 acres of public parkland are provided by the Township and Village, while the Polly Ann and Paint Creek Trails, a major, multi-jurisdictional route travel through the Township and connecting with thousands of miles of trails across the state. The State of Michigan operates Bald Mountain State Recreation Area, offering over 4600 acres of recreation opportunities spanning two Townships, and the Lake Orion Boat Launch on the northern

end of the lake. Oakland County operates Orion Oaks, a 916 acre park and preserve, with one of the premier dog park facilities in the state of Michigan. Schools and private facilities supplement these recreation options, providing specialized offerings and serving important, close-to-home functionality. All told, Orion Township can boast of over 4,500 acres of parks and open space within the community, with Orion parks making up over 580 acres on its own.

**Table 22. Local Park Amenities**

- Township Park
- Village Park
- Multi-Jurisdictional Trail

		Access		Passive Use						Active-Use						Other Uses									
		Parking	Handicap Access	Play Equipment	Benches	Swings	Picnic Tables	Pavilion/Gazebo	Restrooms	Baseball/Softball	Tennis/Pickleball	Basketball	Volleyball	Disc Golf	Soccer / Multi-use Fields	Trails (asphalt/concrete)	Rustic Trails (dirt/mown grass)	Natural Area	Archery	Boat Launch	Swimming beach	Amphitheater	Camping	Gymnasium	Senior Center
Mini Parks/Tot Lots	Children's Park - 1.5 acre	•	•	•	•	•	•	•							•										
	Meek's Park - 1.7 acres		•		•											•									
	Pasadena Park - 0.6 acre		•				•	•																	
	Playful Dragon - 0.4 acre		•	•	•																				
	Swiss Village - 0.6 acres			•		•	•					•													
	Unger Park - 0.9 acres			•	•	•																			
Neighborhood Park	Atwater Park - 2.9 acres	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•														
	Jesse Decker Park - 136.3 acres	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•					•									
	McConnell Field - 1.3 acres									•															
Community Parks	Civic Center Park - 81.6 acres	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•			•	•									
	Friendship Park - 136.3 acres	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•					•	•	•								
	Green's Park - 2.2 acres	•	•	•	•	•	•	•												•	•				
Special Use	Camp Agawam - 136.6 acres	•		•		•	•	•						•		•		•	•	•	•	•			
	Great Lakes Athletic Club - 13.4 acres	•	•		•		•	•	•							•								•	•
	Orion Center - 11.0 acres	•	•		•		•	•	•							•								•	•
Natural Areas	Gingell Nature Area - 37.7 acres																	•							
	Heron Springs Park - 30.1 acres																	•							
Trails	Polly Ann Trail - 5.2 miles w/in Township, 16.9 miles total	•			•											•									
	Paint Creek Trail - 1.4 miles w/in Township, 8.9 miles total	•			•											•									



1. Camp Agawam
2. Civic Center Park
3. Friendship Park
4. Gingell Nature Area
5. Great Lakes Athletic Club
6. Heron Springs Park
7. Jesse Decker Park
8. McConnell Field
9. Pasadena Park
10. Playful Dragon Park
11. Orion Center
12. Municipal Complex
13. Paint Creek Trail
14. Polly Ann Trail
15. Atwater Park (Village)
16. Children's Park (Village)
17. Green's Park (Village)
18. Meek's Park (Village)
19. Unger Park (Village)
20. Swiss Village Park (Village)
21. Bald Mountain State Park
22. Lake Orion Boat Launch (DNR)
23. Orion Oaks County Park
24. Voorheis Lake Wetland Preserve
25. Lake Orion HS/Scripps Middle/ Stadium Elementary
26. Waldon Middle School
27. Blanche Sims Elementary
28. Carpenter Elementary
29. Orion Oaks Elementary
30. Paint Creek Elementary
31. Pine Tree Elementary
32. Webber Elementary

**Recreation Properties**  
 Orion Charter Township  
 Oakland County  
*Data from Oakland County GIS*

June 2023  
 Carlisle/Wortman Associates, Inc.  
 Ann Arbor, Michigan

- Community Background
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The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) categorizes parks by size and function. Each facility category has a desired size, service area, number of acres per 1,000 residents, and general characteristics.

Recreation facilities are broken into five primary park types:

- Mini-parks, pocket-parks or tot lots;
- Neighborhood parks;
- Community parks;
- Regional facilities; and
- Special Use Areas.

Linear parks, greenways, or trails would traditionally be categorized as a “special use” area. This Plan treats trails as a sixth category. For a full description of recreation facility types, see “Chapter 4: Needs Analysis & Public Participation” on page 36.

Park designations can be challenging, as facilities frequently fit into multiple categories. Based on an evaluation of the sizes and types of usage at each facility, Orion’s park system contains two mini-park/tot lots (Playful Dragon Park and Pasadena Park), two neighborhood parks (Jesse Decker Park and McConnell Field), two community parks (Civic Center Park and Friendship Park), three special use properties (Camp Agawam, Orion Center and GLAC), and two natural areas/open spaces (Gingell Nature Area and Heron Springs Park). Natural areas traditionally fall in the “special use” category.

As an example of the challenges of categorization, Jesse Decker has the necessary size to be considered a community park and therefore having a larger service area. Its uses are not necessarily intended to draw visitors from across the Township, however, and it therefore does not rise to the level of a community park designation. See Map 1 on page 39 for more information on the Township’s recreation service areas.

The Village of Lake Orion’s parks supplement recreation opportunities for Township residents. The six facilities are maintained and operated by the Village. Information on the facilities is taken from the Lake Orion Parks & Recreation Master Plan, and no attempt has been made to evaluate the accessibility or quality of individual amenities. Village parks are not under the control of Orion Township Parks & Recreation.

This information detailed in this chapter describes the variety of recreational opportunities available to Orion residents. Data is compiled from community recreation plans, websites, aerial photographs and field surveys. Program options are described beginning on page 89.

**Figure 11. Children’s Park**



**Figure 12. Meek’s Park**



**Figure 13. Swiss Village Park**



**Figure 14. Unger Park**





# Mini-/Pocket Parks

## CHILDREN'S PARK

**SIZE:** 1.5 acres  
**TYPE:** Mini Park (passive)  
**LOCATION:** 201 S Broadway Street  
**EXISTING AMENITIES:**

- 2 playscapes
- Paved parking
- Benches
- Gazebo/stage
- Public Restrooms
- Paint Creek

**Children's Park (Village of Lake Orion).** Despite its small size, Children's Park place an outsized role as a gathering point for the community, hosting multiple events and concerts. The park is crossed by the Paint Creek, which serves as the race ground for the Village's annual rubber ducky race.

## MEEK'S PARK

**SIZE:** 1.7 acres  
**TYPE:** Mini Park (passive)  
**LOCATION:** S Broadway St  
**EXISTING AMENITIES:**

- Pedestrian path
- Chess boards
- Artworks
- Paint Creek
- Scenic overlooks

**Meek's Park (Village of Lake Orion).** Meek's Park is a linear greenway, serving as a connector between Broadway and South Washington Streets. The park features a pedestrian pathway along Paint Creek, with seating areas scattered along the way.

## SWISS VILLAGE PARK

**SIZE:** 1.7 acres  
**TYPE:** Mini Park (passive)  
**LOCATION:** 320 Park Avenue  
**EXISTING AMENITIES:**

- Half basketball court
- Swing set
- Play structure
- Picnic tables
- Open area

**Swiss Village Park (Village of Lake Orion).** Swiss Village is located on the northwest side of Lake Orion, tucked at the center of a three street intersection on a peninsula on the lake. The park serves as an informal gathering place for the immediate neighborhood.

## UNGER PARK

**SIZE:** 0.9 acres  
**TYPE:** Mini Park (passive)  
**LOCATION:** S Broadway St  
**EXISTING AMENITIES:**

- Play structure
- Swings
- Chess table
- Seating
- Bike racks

**Unger Park (Village of Lake Orion).** Similar to Swiss Village, Unger Park is small, neighborhood-centric park tucked onto a peninsula on Lake Orion. The park features a newly constructed playscape.

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## PLAYFUL DRAGON PARK

**SIZE:** 0.4 acres  
**TYPE:** Mini Park (passive)  
**LOCATION:** 4805 Baldwin Rd

**EXISTING AMENITIES:**

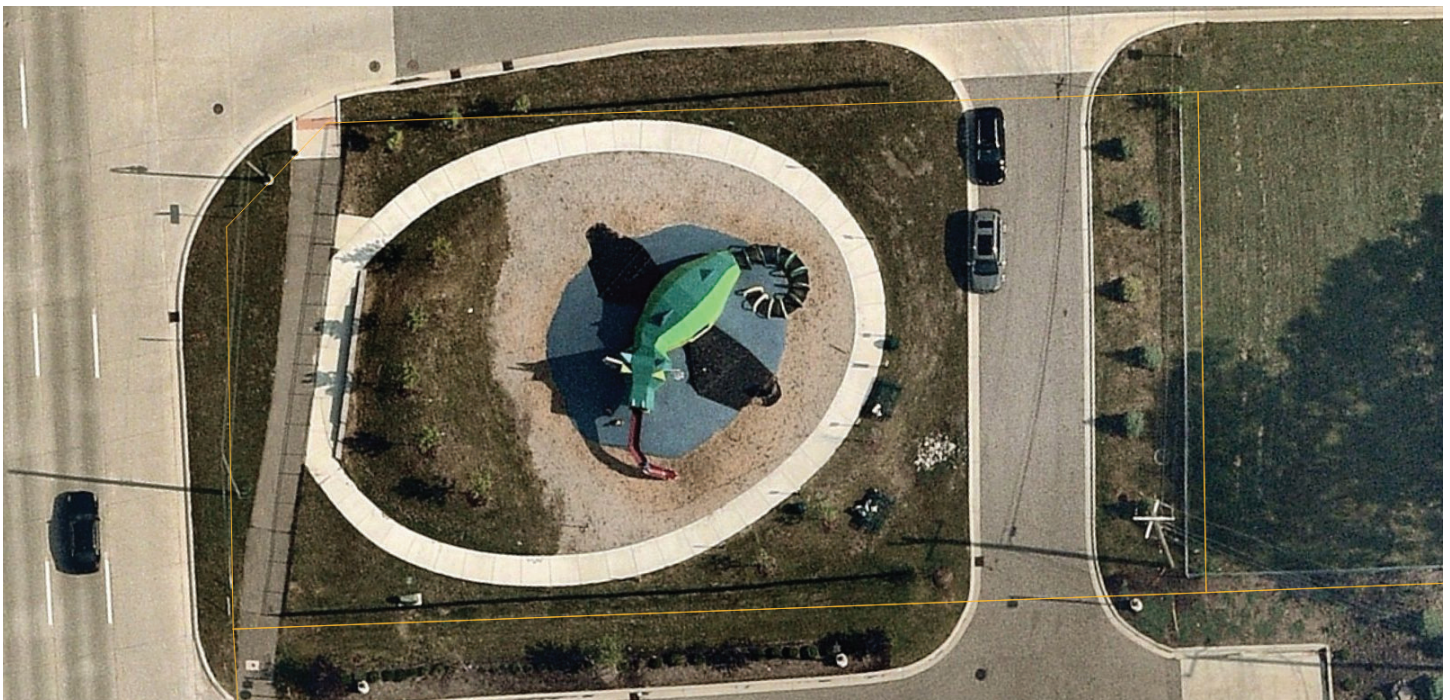
- Dragon play structure with slide
- Benches
- Landscaping

Constructed in 2020, **Playful Dragon Park** is one of Orion Township's newest recreation facilities. The park features a custom-designed play structure which encourages visitors to climb a dragon's tail and slide out of the creature's mouth to the ground below. A walkway with benches surrounds the dragon. An access gate is provided on Baldwin Road.

Figure 15. Playful Dragon Park



Figure 16. Playful Dragon Park Aerial





# PASADENA PARK

**SIZE:** 0.6 acres  
**TYPE:** Mini Park (passive)  
**LOCATION:** Pasadena & Baldwin Roads

**PLANNED AMENITIES:**

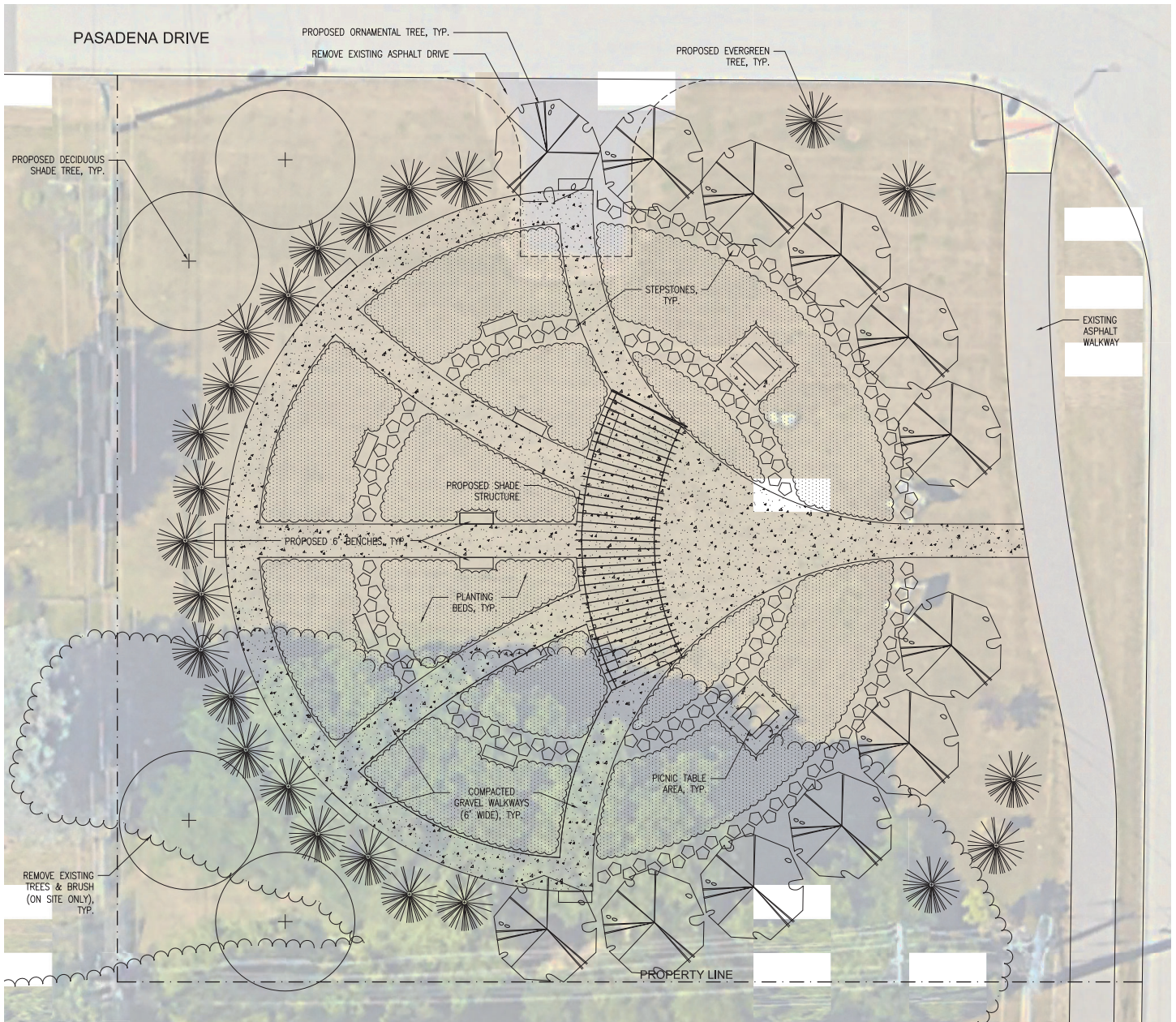
- Picnic tables
- Landscaping
- Benches

Scheduled for construction in the spring of 2024, **Pasadena Park** will serve as a respite along the busy Baldwin Road corridor. Designed as a passive-use facility, the park will feature landscaping, a shade structure, and picnic tables. Groundbreaking for the park took place on August 7, 2023.

Figure 17. Pasadena Park Groundbreaking



Figure 18. Pasadena Park Layout Plan





# Neighborhood Parks

**ATWATER PARK**

**SIZE:** 2.88 acres

**TYPE:** Neighborhood Park (mixed use)

**LOCATION:** 426 Atwater St

**EXISTING AMENITIES:**

- Baseball fields (2)
- Picnic tables
- Play structures (2)
- Bike racks
- Chess table
- Swings
- Benches
- Half basketball court

**McCONNELL FIELD**

**SIZE:** 1.3 acres

**TYPE:** Neighborhood Park (active)

**LOCATION:** 3361 McConnell St

**EXISTING AMENITIES:**

- Baseball field
- Portable toilet

**Atwater Park (Village of Lake Orion)** is a traditional neighborhood-style facility featuring a mix of active and passive uses. Two ballfields make up the northern portion of the park, while the southern portion features playscapes, picnic facilities, and a basketball court.

**McConnell Field** is located on the Township’s southwest side, roughly a block west of Carpenter Elementary School. The park features a youth-sized ball field with a dirt infield. Portable toilets are made available during summer months.

Located on the far southeast side of the Township, Jesse

Figure 19. Atwater Park



Figure 20. McConnell Field





Figure 21. McConnell Field



# McConnell Field

## Existing Conditions

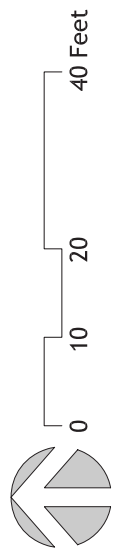


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**Decker Park** is large enough to be considered a community park. It is generally designed to serve as a neighborhood park, however, primarily attracting users from the immediate region..

The park’s rolling topography provides a highly popular sledding hill. This same topography provides accessibility challenges which are largely addressed by a paved walkway winding from the lower parking area up to a 1,250 square foot picnic pavilion. A playscape immediately south of the pavilion is somewhat dated and needs improvements to be considered ADA compliant.

The multi-purpose field on the south end of the park is frequently used for lacrosse. If the field were upgraded to fully meet lacrosse standards, it would become a unique feature in northeastern Oakland County.

## JESSE DECKER PARK

**SIZE:** 136.3 acres

**TYPE:** Neighborhood Park (mixed use)

**LOCATION:** 4080 N Squirrel Rd

**EXISTING AMENITIES:**

- Baseball fields (3)
- Multipurpose field
- Tennis courts w/ striping for pickleball (2)
- Parking (105 paved, ~120 unpaved)
- Play structure
- Little Library
- Picnic shelter
- Sledding hill
- Portable restrooms
- Asphalt & concrete pathways (~1,300 feet)



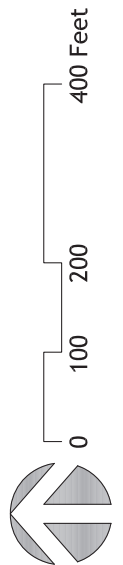


Figure 22. Jesse Decker Park



# Jesse Decker Park

Existing Conditions





## Community Parks

**Green's Park.** While small for a community park, Green's Park's access to Lake Orion ensures its place as a community gathering point. The park offers a u-shaped boardwalk which defines the swimming area, a kayak launch, and a concession stand. In all other respects, it acts as a typical neighborhood facility, offering standard amenities such as a playground, picnic tables, and basketball courts.

### GREEN'S PARK

**SIZE:** 2.2 acres

**TYPE:** Community park (mixed use)

**LOCATION:** 1397 N Lapeer Rd

**EXISTING AMENITIES:**

- Basketball court
- Restrooms
- Playground
- Drinking fountains
- Swings
- Concession/storage facility
- Picnic tables
- Public beach
- Bike racks
- Kayak launch
- Parking





**Civic Center Park.** Located in the heart of the community along Joslyn Road, Civic Center Park offers a variety of active and passive use amenities. Its playing fields are used by both organized sporting groups and casual users, and it is a popular destination for picnicking, hiking, and casual enjoyment. An exercise course was added to the park in 2023.

Of special note is the Wildwood Amphitheater, located on the south side of the park. Built in 2014, the Amphitheater is home to a number of special events, including the summer concert series, film festivals, and more. Wildwood is available to rent for special events. A concession stand and permanent bathroom is located at the top of the stands, and specially designed pathways and overlooks make the amphitheater fully accessible.

Civic Center is located just west of the Polly Ann Trail, and is one of three Township facilities connected by the pathway.

## CIVIC CENTER PARK

**SIZE:** 81.6 acres  
**TYPE:** Community park (mixed use)  
**LOCATION:** 2525 Joslyn Ct

### EXISTING AMENITIES:

- Wildwood Amphitheater
- Restrooms (2)
- Concession Stand
- Parking (482 paved, ~178 unpaved)
- Lighted ballfields (2), unlighted ballfield (1)
- Volleyball courts
- Soccer fields (8)
- Picnic shelter
- Exercise course
- Basketball courts (2)
- Play equipment
- Swings
- Paved and rustic walkways
- Access points to Polly Ann Trail



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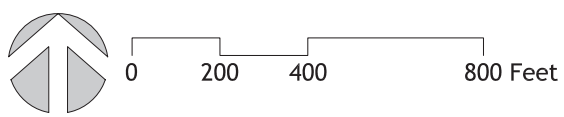
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Figure 23. Civic Center Park Overview

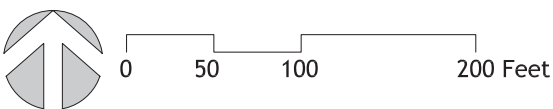
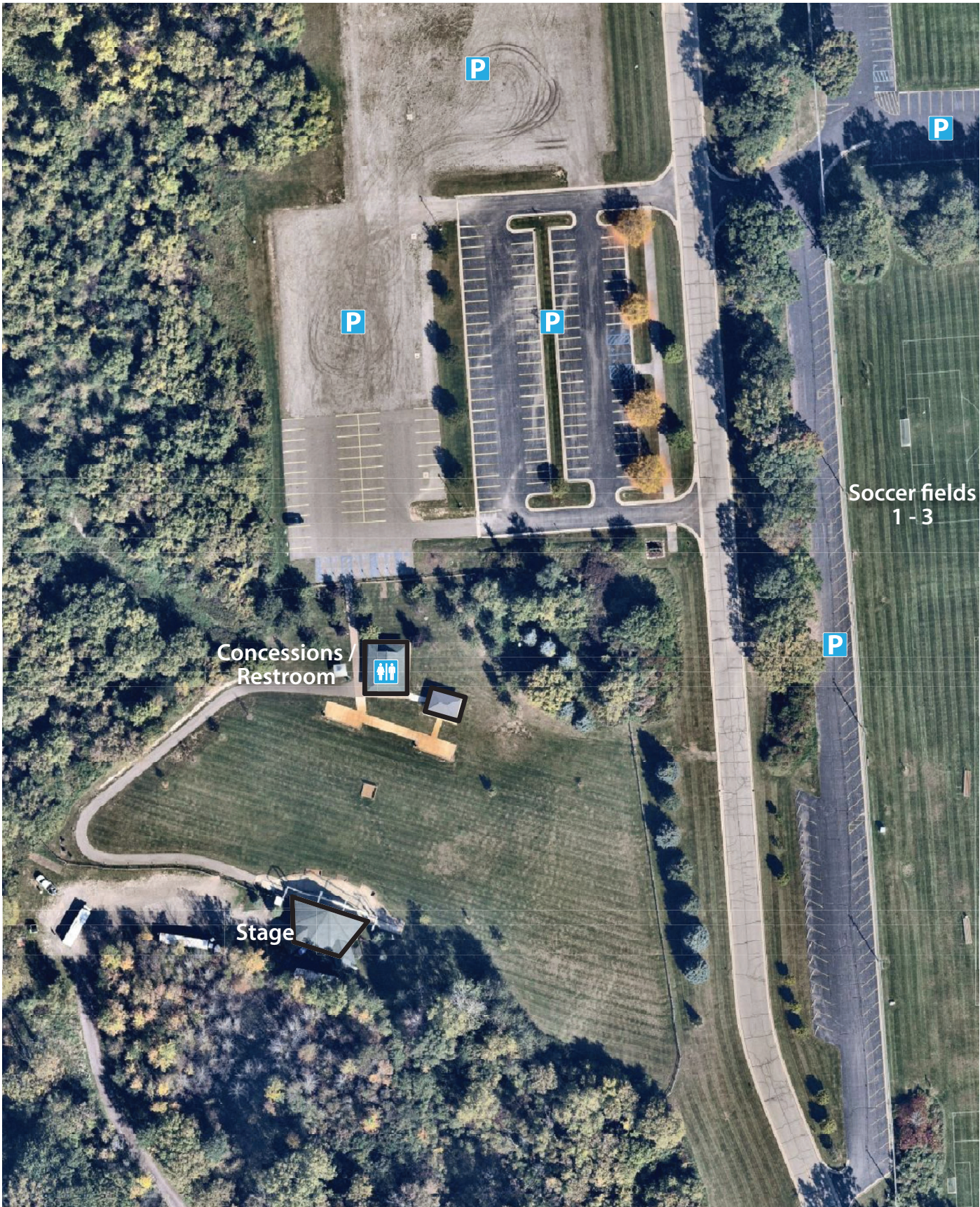


# Civic Center Park

Existing Conditions



Figure 24. Civic Center Park - Wildwood Detail



# Civic Center Park

Existing Conditions - Wildwood Detail

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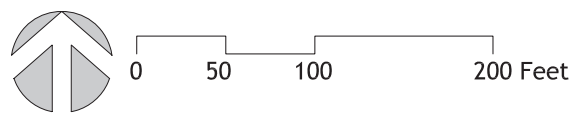
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Figure 25. Civic Center Park - North Detail



# Civic Center Park

Existing Conditions - North Detail



Orion Township's second-largest park is possibly the most diverse and inclusive of people of all abilities. Located in the northwest of the Township, **Friendship Park** offers a wide variety of active and passive use amenities from hiking and fishing to softball, soccer, and more. Friendship's accessible playgrounds and Miracle League field are outstanding examples of inclusive play, inviting users of all abilities to join together in play. The pavilion's meeting room is one of two facilities in the park system where visitors can enjoy indoor space for events year-round.

Pickleball courts and a community garden on the north side of the park are somewhat disconnected from the main activity centers to the south. Similarly, the historic structures near the center of the park remain inaccessible. While there is room for improvement, the park remains an outstanding example of how accessibility and inclusivity can bring a community together.



## FRIENDSHIP PARK

**SIZE:** 136.3 acres

**TYPE:** Community park (mixed use)

**LOCATION:** 3380 Clarkston Rd

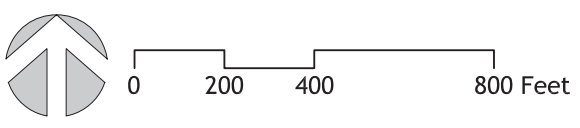
**EXISTING AMENITIES:**

- Baseball fields (lighted)
- Miracle League ball field
- Soccer fields (8)
- Accessible play structure, swings, and rockers
- Pavilion with meeting rooms & kitchen
- Concession stand
- Community garden
- Tennis court
- Pickleball courts (2)
- Hiking & mountain biking trails
- Historic Howard Schoolhouse & Porritt Barn
- Gazebo/shelter





Figure 26. Friendship Park



# Friendship Park

Existing Conditions





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## Special Use Parks

**Camp Agawam**, a former Boy Scout camp, nestled along the east side of Tommy’s Lake, truly brings the “up north feel” to this local park. The park is a former Boy Scout camp, and it still has the unique distinction of offering camping, boating, and fishing opportunities in a locally operated facility. The fire bowl and lodge are frequently used for weddings, photographs, and other private events. These camping facilities are the primary reason for the “special use” designation for the park.

While much of the facility remains very rustic and therefore is inaccessible, there have been improvements which keep inaccessibility in mind. A Kaboom! playground at the center of the park features poured-in-place rubber surfacing and accessible equipment, and the trail leading to the fishing dock has been improved with mobility challenged individuals in mind. As the park continues to evolve, accessibility will continue to be a priority.

### CAMP AGAWAM

**SIZE:** 136.6 acres

**TYPE:** Special Use (primarily passive)

**LOCATION:** 1301 Clarkston Road

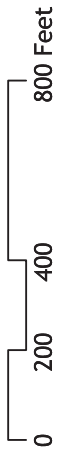
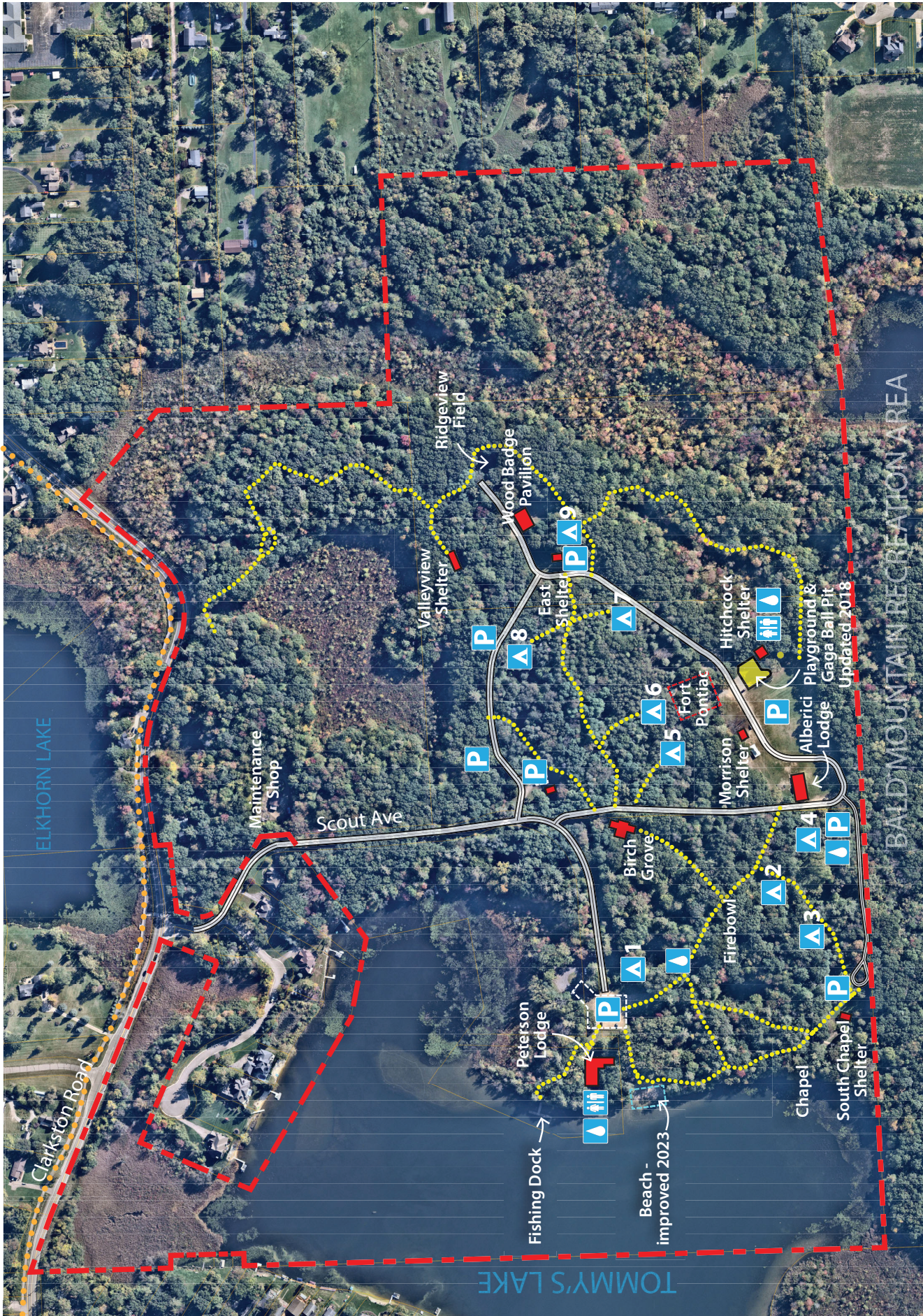
**EXISTING AMENITIES:**

- Beach and lake access
- Multiple lodges and camp sites for rent
- 2 lodges with restrooms & kitchen
- 5 pavilions for rent
- Pit toilets
- Fire bowl
- Kaboom! playground
- Outdoor auditorium
- 18-hole disc golf
- Hiking trails
- Fort Pontiac camp site
- Toilet & showers at beach





Figure 27. Camp Agawam



# Camp Agawam

## Existing Conditions

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Acquired in 2023, the *Great Lakes Athletic Club (GLAC)* is poised to become one of the most important properties in the Orion Parks & Recreation system. Even prior to anticipated improvements, the GLAC contains many of the features requested by residents including gyms, workout facilities, meeting rooms, and two swimming pools. It is located on the busy Baldwin Road corridor in Gingellville, making it easily accessible for most residents.

Orion Parks intends to transform the GLAC into a true recreation center for the entire community. The additional space makes it possible to include dedicated rooms for teens, seniors, and other groups. Ample space at the rear of the property offers potential for additional outdoor development, potentially housing new sports courts or playing fields. The building may also serve as a warming/cooling center in the future.

For additional information on the GLAC acquisition, see page 48.

## GREAT LAKES ATHLETIC CLUB

**SIZE:** 13.4 acres

**TYPE:** Special Use (recreation center)

**LOCATION:** 3800 South Baldwin Road

**EXISTING AMENITIES:**

- Banquet rooms (3)
- Mirrored fitness room
- Outdoor patio with gazebo
- Arts & crafts room
- Kitchen
- Polly Ann Trail access
- Multi-purpose room
- Outdoor fitness equipment
- Game room
- Orion Room
- Exercise Room (age 54+)





Figure 28. Great Lakes Athletic Club



0 50 100 200 Feet

# Great Lakes Athletic Club

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**Orion Center** is the current home to the Parks & Recreation Department and Orion Township Senior Services. The Center, built in 2011, is the second of three Township facilities built alongside the Polly Ann Trail. The building provides a variety of meeting and gathering spaces that are used for recreation programming purposes and can be rented for weddings and other functions. It also includes a small workout facility and a branch of the Orion Township Public Library which caters especially to senior citizens.

The building grounds offer a small open space at the rear of the building and outdoor workout equipment near the trail. Electric vehicle charging stations are also provided.

With the acquisition of GLAC, the long-term status of the Orion Center is in question. The Township is considering sale of the Center to help offset some of GLAC's acquisition costs and finance anticipated repairs and future development. For the short term, Orion Center remains a valuable asset and will continue to be an important gathering space for residents.

## ORION CENTER

**SIZE:** 11.6 acres

**TYPE:** Special Use (primarily passive)

**LOCATION:** 1335 Joslyn Road

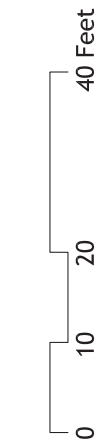
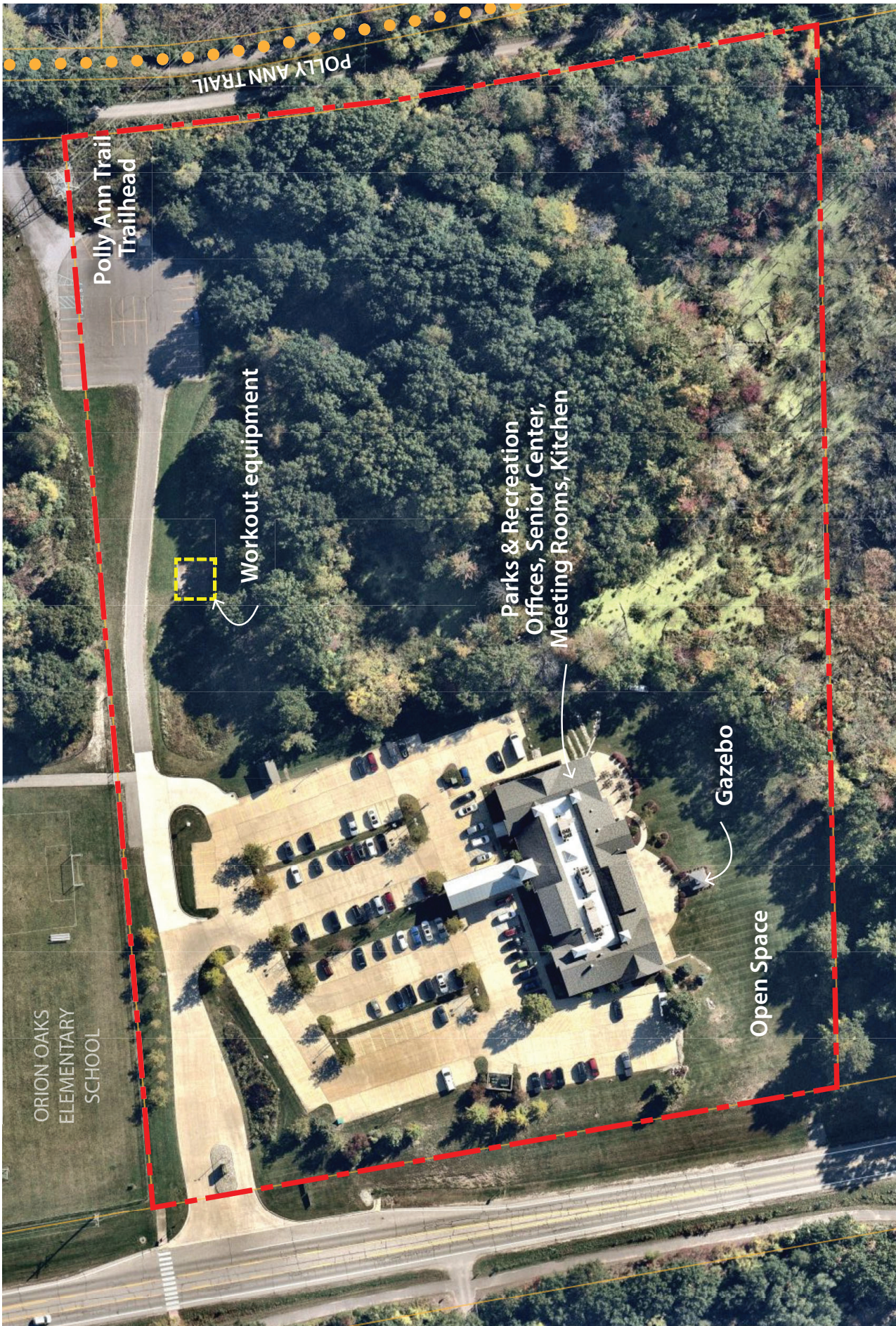
### EXISTING AMENITIES:

- Banquet rooms (3)
- Mirrored fitness room
- Outdoor patio with gazebo
- Arts & crafts room
- Kitchen
- Polly Ann Trail access
- Multi-purpose room
- Outdoor fitness equipment
- Game room
- Orion Room
- Exercise Room (age 50 and older)





Figure 29. Orion Center



# Orion Center

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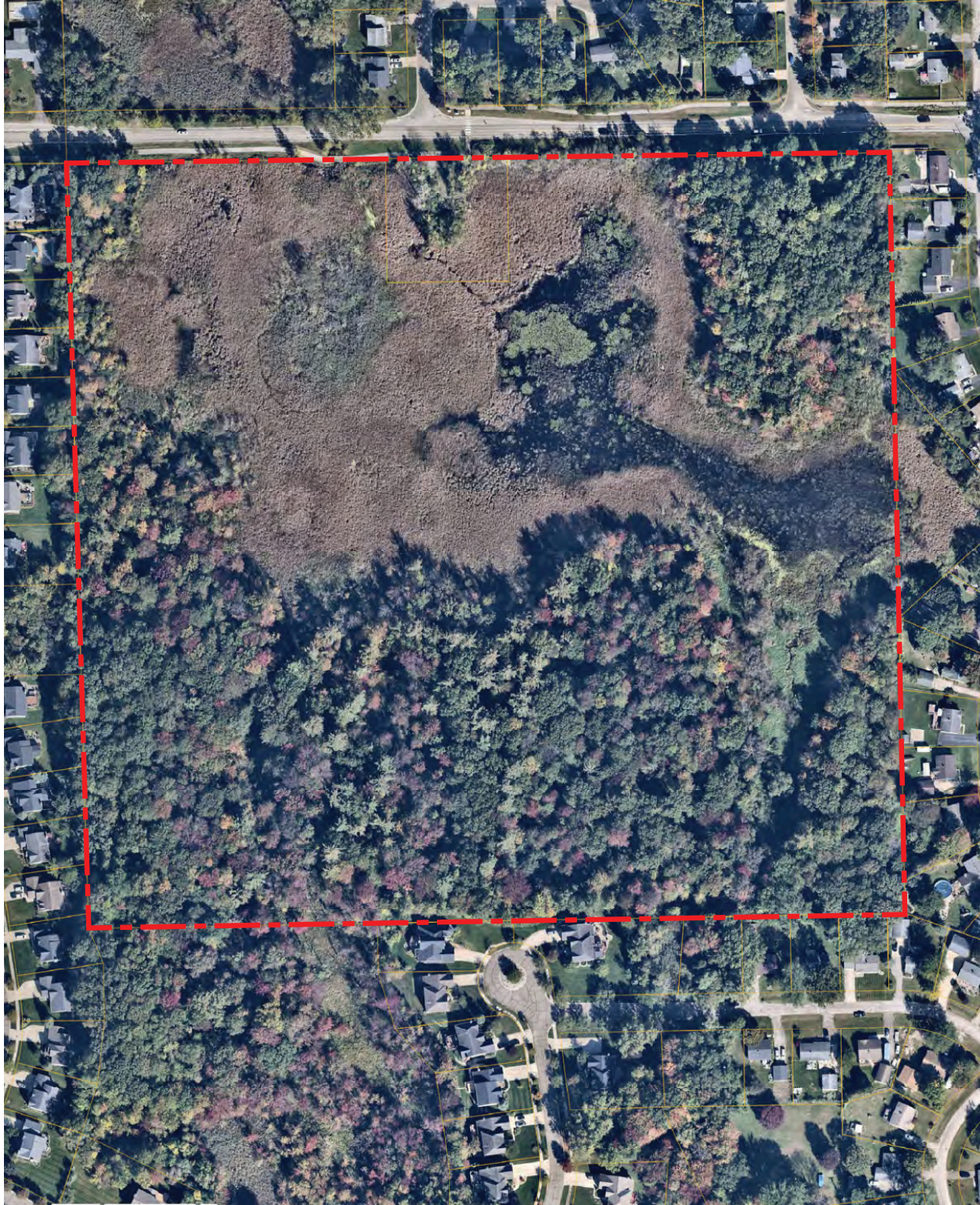
Community Background



## Open/Natural Spaces

Gingell Nature Center and Heron Springs Park are two open spaces located on the southern half of the Township. Both facilities are primarily wetlands, which drastically limit development potential.

Both present opportunities for nature interpretation and boardwalks. Steps should be taken to protect the properties from encroachment from neighboring properties. Invasive species, especially the invasive grass *Phragmites australis*, pose a significant challenges.



0 100 200 400 Feet

Gingell Nature Area  
Existing Conditions

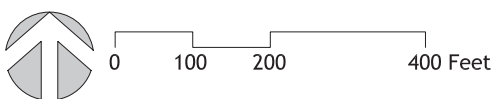
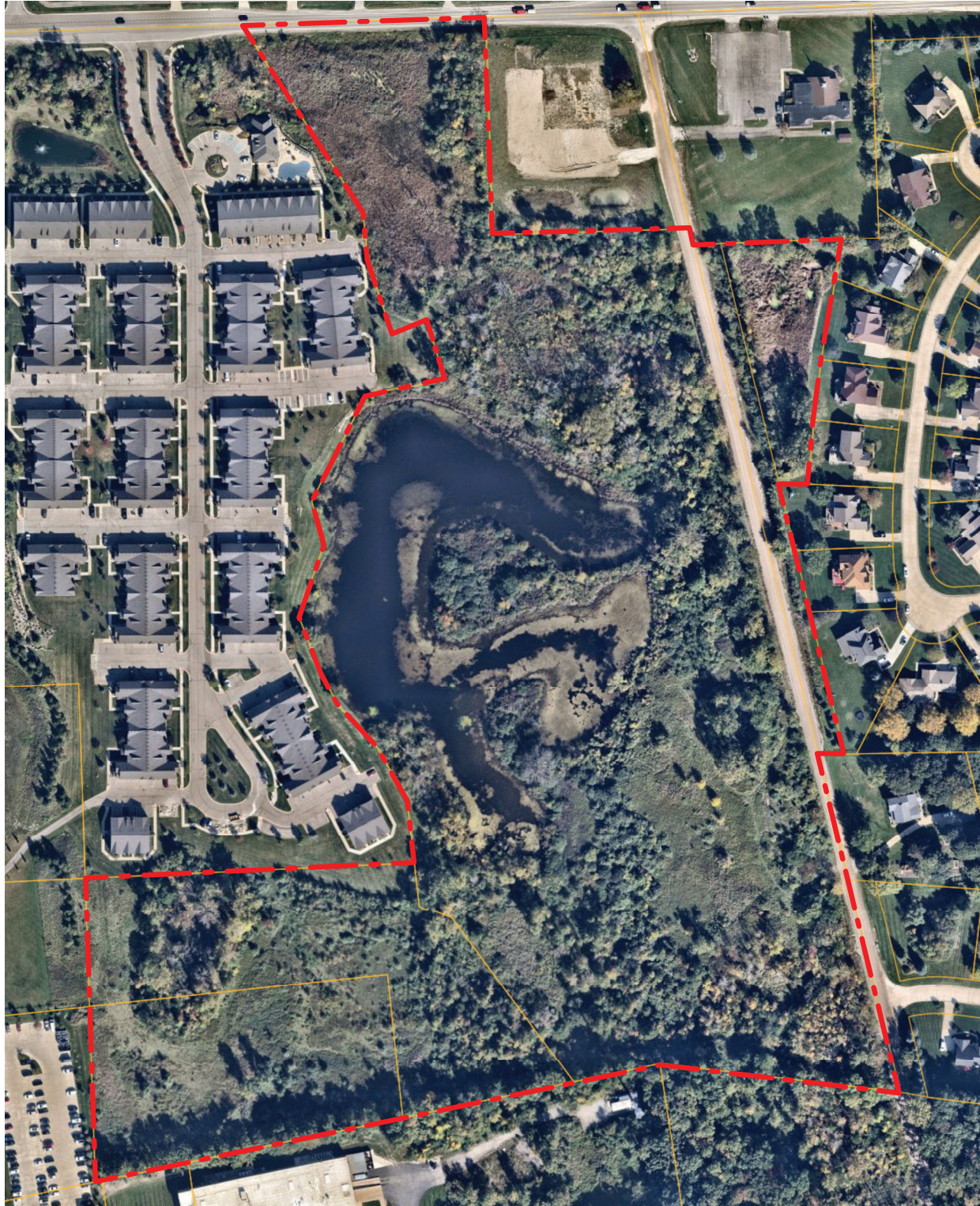


# GINGELL NATURE CENTER

SIZE: 37.7 acres  
LOCATION: Maybee Road between Forest Spring Dr & Grafton St

# HERON SPRINGS PARK

SIZE: 30.1 acres  
LOCATION: East Silverbell Rd & Bald Mountain Road



Heron Springs Park  
Existing Conditions

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## Trails

Orion Township residents are fortunate to have immediate access to two major multi-jurisdictional trails. The **Polly Ann** and the **Paint Creek Trail** are both rail trails providing multi-use non-motorized services for equestrians, hikers, joggers, bicyclists, and cross-country skiers in winter. While small portions of the trails in the more urban areas are paved, the majority of both trails employ a limestone surface.

The Polly Ann Trail is owned by MDNR and spans a total of 34 miles. The 14-mile segment in Oakland County is managed by the Polly Ann Trailway Management Council and the 20-mile segment in Lapeer is managed by Lapeer County. The Oakland County segment runs from Orion Township and continues northeast through Orion, Addison, and Leonard into Lapeer County. The trail connects to the Bald Mountain Recreation Area and the Paint Creek Trail in Oakland Township.

The Paint Creek Trail is owned and managed by the Paint Creek Trailways Commission, an intergovernmental agency consisting of members from Rochester, Rochester Hills, Lake Orion, and Oakland and Orion Townships. The trail was the first rail trail in the state of Michigan, and spans 8.9 linear miles in Oakland County. Approximately 1.4 miles are located in Orion Township.

Both the Polly Ann and Paint Creek Trails are part of network of trails collectively known as the **Iron Belle Trail**, a 2,000-mile long network that runs from Belle Isle in Detroit to Iron Mountain in the western Upper Peninsula. A further description of the network and additional connections is provided on page 126.

Orion Township's Safety Path Advisory Committee was combined with the Parks & Paths Advisory Committee in 2020. The Committee continues to make recommendations for the development of safety paths to the Township Board. The Township's existing and proposed pathway routes are illustrated Figure 8 on page 27.

## Other Township Recreation Properties

Orion Township's new 77-acre **Municipal Center** opened in 2021. Located at 2525 Joslyn Road, the Center is the third of three Township properties situated on the Polly Ann Trail, and a gateway and trailhead to the path are provided.

The **Orion Township Public Library** offers meeting and event space and hosts a variety of events throughout the year. Both youth and teen events such as game nights, escape rooms, book readings, and more.

## Subdivision Parks & Open Spaces

Subdivision parks and common areas in Orion Township are a valuable recreation resource, providing areas for the passive recreational use of the subdivision residents. They often include undevelopable or leftover land such as wetlands, and may offer protection for rare plant and animal species. They are typically owned and maintained by the subdivision which they serve. These areas are listed as private open spaces and are depicted in Map 3 on page 55.





## School Facilities

Public school grounds in Orion Township provide valuable recreation opportunities for residents. The schools only offer limited public access that is dependent on each individual school's policies. Lake Orion Community Schools includes seven elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school that are located in Orion Township. Map 3 on page 55 shows the locations of the schools and the following paragraphs describe the recreation facilities they offer.

- **Lake Orion High School, Scripps Middle School, and Stadium Elementary School** share a 160-acre campus on the eastern side of the Township. Located on Scripps Road, it includes about a variety of features including:
  - Playground equipment
  - Three basketball courts,
  - Three baseball and four softball fields,
  - Four soccer fields,
  - Two football fields
  - Eight tennis courts
  - Multi-purpose fields and courts
  - Indoor gymnasiums, and
  - Aquatic facilities.
- **Waldon Middle School** on Waldon Road includes nearly 50 acres of land with:
  - Three baseball/softball fields,
  - One football field,
  - Four soccer fields, and
  - Indoor gymnasium.
- **Blanche Sims, Carpenter, Orion Oaks, Paint Creek, Pine Tree, and Webber Elementary Schools** are well distributed throughout the Township. These properties have similar facilities, offering:
  - Multi-use fields,
  - Basketball half-courts,
  - Play structures and equipment, and
  - Indoor gymnasiums.



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## Quasi-Public & Private Recreation Facilities

In addition to Township- and Village-owned parks, several facilities provide recreation opportunities for residents on a pay or membership basis. Some of the larger properties include:

- **Paint Creek Country Club**, an 18-hole championship golf course, fitness club, and swimming facility with event rooms.
- **Indianwood Golf & Country Club**, a historic club dating to the 1920s, with championship caliber golf and event facilities.
- **Palazzo di Bocce**, an Italian restaurant and bocce facility.
- **Willow Creek Golf Center** in Lake Orion, offering mini golf, driving ranges and batting cages.
- **Canterbury Village**, on Joslyn Road offers a number of events throughout the year especially surrounding the holiday season.

*Indianwood Golf & Country Club*



*Palazzo di Bocce*



*Canterbury Village*





## Regional Recreation Facilities

In addition to the local recreation facilities, Orion Township includes a state recreation area and a lake access site owned by the State of Michigan, and a county park operated by Oakland County. Over 29,500 acres of parkland owned by the state, the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA) and Oakland County in adjoining townships. These facilities are considered regional recreational facilities, large facilities that provide opportunities such as camping, swimming, boating, hiking and golfing which are typically beyond the ability of a local municipality to provide. Map 4 on page 84 depicts the location of the regional parks and Table 23 on page 86 lists the recreational activities they offer. A detailed description of each regional facility located in and around Orion Township follows Table 5.

### Oakland County Parks

The Oakland County park system consists of 12 parks encompassing more than 6,000 acres of land. **Orion Oaks**, located at the heart of Orion Township, preserves more than 927 acres of environmentally sensitive wetlands. The primary features are a dog park and Lake Sixteen which offers a boat launch and wheelchair accessible fishing dock. Activities and facilities include:

- 14-acre fenced dog park, with drinking water and lake access for dogs to swim,
- 90-acre Lake Sixteen with accessible fishing pier at the Joslyn Road entrance and a boat launch for non-motorized boats,
- Over 10 miles of hiking trails, including a five-mile Achievement Trail and mountain biking trails, and
- Ice fishing and cross-country skiing.

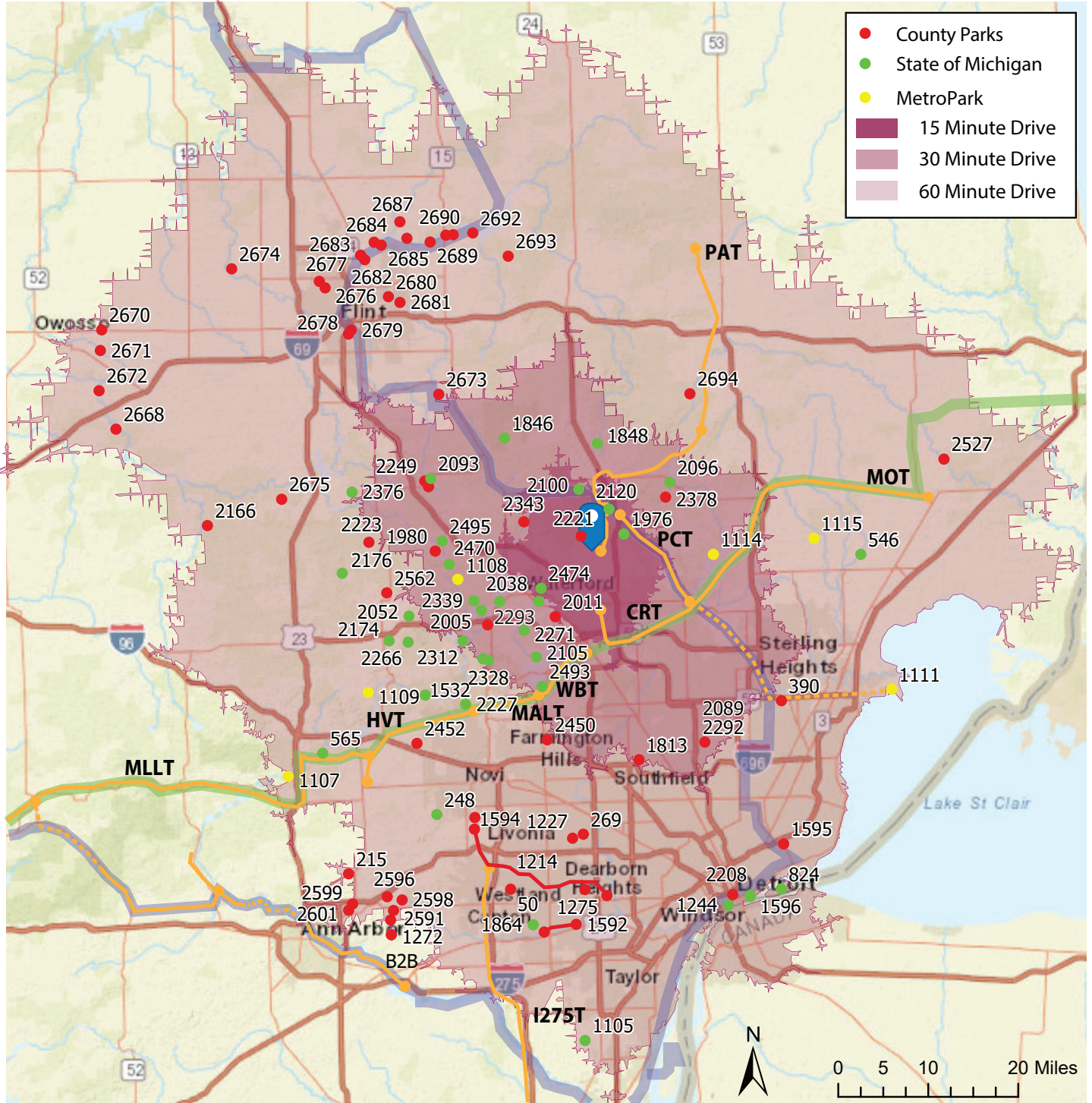
Annual Oakland County Park permits are sold to residents at the Township Treasurer's Office and the Orion Center. A 2020 voter approved millage initiative allows certain resident populations to receive a free vehicle permit, including seniors (62+), active military, veterans and persons with permanent disabilities.

Orion Oaks





Map 4. Regional Recreation Facilities



**MAJOR TRAIL NETWORKS**

- Iron Belle Trail
- Great Lake-to-Lake Trail
- Individual Trails

**MAJOR INDIVIDUAL TRAILS**

- |       |                          |      |                                   |
|-------|--------------------------|------|-----------------------------------|
| B2B   | Border-to-Border Trail   | MLLT | Mike Lavine Lakelands State Trail |
| CRT   | Clinton River Trail      | MOT  | Macomb-Orchard Trail              |
| HVT   | Huron Valley Trail       | PAT  | Polly Ann Trail                   |
| I275T | I-275 Metro Trail        | PCT  | Paint Creek Trail                 |
| MALT  | Michigan Air Lines Trail | WBT  | West Bloomfield Trail             |

# Regional Recreation Facilities

Orion Charter Township  
Oakland County, Michigan



## STATE PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES

### PARKS OR RECREATION AREAS

- 1977 - Bald Mountain State Recreation Area
- 824 - Belle Isle Park
- 250 - Brighton State Recreation Area
- 1244 - Detroit Riverwalk
- 2105 - Dodge Brothers State Park No. 4
- 2266 - Highland State Recreation Area
- 2093 - Holly State Recreation Area
- 565 - Island Lake State Recreation Area
- 248 - Maybury State Park
- 1596 - Michigan Outdoor Adventure Center
- 1846 - Ortonville State Recreation Area
- 2339 - Pontiac Lake State Recreation Area
- 1532 - Proud Lake State Recreation Area
- 2376 - Seven Lakes State Park
- 546 - Wetzel State Park
- 1244 - William G. Milliken State Park & Harbor

### GAME AND/OR WILDLIFE AREAS

- 1105 - Brownstown Prairie State Wildlife Area
- 2495 - Davisburg State Game Area
- 1848 - Horseshoe Lake State Game Area

### LAKE ACCESS / BOAT LAUNCHES

- 2470 - Big Lake
- 2312 - Cedar Island
- 2271 - Crescent Lake
- 2474 - Lake Oakland
- 2120 - Lake Orion
- 2096 - Lakeville
- 2038 - Maceday
- 2493 - Orchard
- 2100 - Paint Lake
- 2005 - Pontiac Lake
- 2176 - Tipsico Lake
- 2328 - Union Lake
- 2052 - White Lake
- 2227 - Wolverine Lake

## HURON CLINTON METROPARKS

- 1107 - Huron Meadows
- 1108 - Indian Springs
- 1109 - Kensington
- 1111 - Lake St. Clair
- 1114 - Stony Creek
- 1115 - Wolcott Mills

## COUNTY PARKS

### OAKLAND COUNTY

- |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| 2378 - Addison Oaks                        | 2452 - Lyon Oaks        |
| 1813 - Catalpa Oaks                        | 2221 - Orion Oaks       |
| 2450 - Glen Oaks Golf Course               | 2292 - Red Oaks         |
| 2249 - Groveland Oaks                      | 2223 - Rose Oaks        |
| 2552 - Highland Oaks & Holly Oaks ORV Park | 1980 - Springfield Oaks |
| 2343 - Independence Oaks                   | 2011 - Waterford Oaks   |
|  | 2293 - White Lake Oaks  |

## COUNTY PARKS (CONTINUED)

### GENESSEE COUNTY

- 2673 - Atlas County Park
- 2683 - Bluebell Beach County Park
- 2685 - Bluegill Boat Launch
- 2684 - Crossroads Village
- 2681 - Davison Roadside Park
- 2677 - Flint Lake Park
- 2674 - Flushing County Park
- 2680 - For-Mar Nature Preserve
- 2690 - Holloway Reservoir Park
- 2675 - Linden County Park
- 2676 - Max Brandon Park
- 2678 - McKinley Park
- 2687 - Mounds ORV Area
- 2689 - Richfield County Park
- 2682 - Stepping Stone Falls Cty Park
- 2679 - Thread Lake Park

### LAPEER COUNTY

- 2694 - General Squier Memorial Park
- 2693 - Torzewski County Park

### LIVINGSTON COUNTY

- 2165 - Fillmore County Park
- 2166 - Lutz County Park

### MACOMB COUNTY

- 390 - Freedom Hill County Park

### SHIAWASSEE COUNTY

- 2668 - Geeck Road County Park
- 2670 - Kerby County Park
- 2671 - Lytle Road County Park
- 2672 - Shiatown County Park

### ST. CLAIR COUNTY

- 2527 - Columbus County Park

### WASHTENAW COUNTY

- 2601 - Arbor Vistas Preserve
- 2599 - Goodrich Preserve
- 2591 - Kosch Headwaters Preserve
- 1272 - Meyer Preserve
- 215 - Park Northfield County Park
- 2596 - Staebler Farm
- 2598 - Weatherbee Woods Preserve

### WAYNE COUNTY

- 1227 - Bell Creek County Park
- 1594 - Bennett Arboretum
- 1214 - Hines County Park
- 269 - Lola Valley County Park
- 1592 - Lower Rouge Parkway
- 1275 - Middle Rouge Parkway
- 1595 - Wayne County Family Aquatic Center
- 50 - William P. Holliday Parkway



**Table 23. Regional Recreation Amenities**

Category	Name	Acres / miles	ACTIVE-USE ACTIVITIES										PASSIVE-USE ACTIVITIES													
			Baseball / Softball Fields	Basketball	Disc Golf	Golf	Horseshoes / Shuffleboard	Sand Volleyball	Skate Park	Soccer / multi-purpose field	Tennis & Pickleball	Zip Line	Banquet Facilities / Spec Events	Visitors Center	Community Center/ Indoor Fac.	Fitness Center / Equipment	Michigan State Park Explorer	Nature Programs	Geocaching	Metal Detecting	Dog Parks / Trial Course	Pet Friendly Area	Playground	Picnic Area	Picnic Shelter	Radio Control Flying
STATE PARKS	Bald Mountain State Rec Area	4,637			•													•	•			•	•	•	•	
	Belle Isle Park	982								•								•	•			•	•	•		•
	Detroit Riverwalk	5.5 mi										•	•	•							•	•	•	•		
	Dodge Brothers No 4 State Park	139																			•	•	•	•		
	Highland State Recreation Area	5,903												•					•	•			•	•	•	•
	Holly State Recreation Area	8,008			•											•			•	•		•	•	•		•
	Island Lake State Recreation Area	4,000																			•		•			•
	Maybury State Park	944																				•	•	•		•
	Michigan Outdoor Adventure Center	1											•	•	•				•							
	Ortonville State Recreation Area	5,431																	•			•	•	•		
	Pontiac Lake State Recreation Area	3,745														•						•	•	•	•	•
	Proud Lake Recreation Area	4,700														•					•	•	•	•		
	Seven Lakes State Park	1,434																				•	•	•		
	Wetzel State Park	900																							•	•
	William G. Milliken State Park	31														•							•	•		
METROPARKS	Huron Meadows Metropark	1,540				•												•	•	•		•	•	•		•
	Indian Springs	2,547	•			•	•	•											•	•	•		•	•	•	•
	Kensington Metropark	4,543			•	•															•	•	•	•		•
	Lake St. Clair Metropark	770	•	•		•	•	•													•	•	•	•		•
	Stony Creek Metropark	4,461	•	•	•	•		•							•						•	•	•	•		•
	Wolcott Mill	2,625					•	•													•	•	•	•		•
COUNTY PARKS	Addison Oaks	1,140			•		•	•													•	•	•	•		•
	Catalpa Oaks	24	•																•				•	•		
	Glen Oaks Golf Course	122				•							•													
	Groveland Oaks	361	•				•		•													•	•	•		
	Highland Oaks	302																					•			
	Independence Oaks	1,286	•				•														•	•	•	•		
	Lyon Oaks	1,041				•															•	•	•	•		
	Orion Oaks	916																			•	•	•	•		
	Red Oaks Golf Course	141				•														•	•	•	•			
	Rose Oaks	640																					•			
	Springfield Oaks Golf Course	333				•																				
Waterford Oaks	199					•	•														•	•	•		•	
White Lake Oaks Golf Course	195				•																					
TRAILS	B2B	40																								
	Clinton River	16																								
	Huron Valley	12																								
	I-275	40																								
	MALT	7																								
	Lakelands	34																								
	Macomb Orchard	24																								
	Polly Ann	36.5																								
	Paint Creek	8.9																								
West Bloomfield	6.8																									







## Michigan State Parks

Fifteen state parks and recreation areas are located within an hour drive of Orion, providing over 32,000 acres of state land for camping and exploration. Two facilities are located within the Township borders.

**Bald Mountain Recreation Area** offers 4,637 acres of land with some of the steepest hills and most rugged terrain in southeastern Michigan. Camping is limited to rustic cabins, but the extensive trails, inland lakes, trout streams and wild game provide recreation opportunities all year long. Bald Mountain Recreation Area includes the following activities and facilities:

- Rustic campsites,
- Metal detecting areas,
- Picnic shelters and areas,
- Beach house,
- Swimming on Lower Trout Lake,
- Playgrounds,
- Boat launch on several lakes,
- Hunting and Shooting Range,
- Fishing for trout, panfish, northern pike, and largemouth bass,
- Boat Launch,
- Canoeing and Kayaking,
- 15 miles of marked nature trails and cross-country skiing,
- Eight miles of groomed cross country skiing, and
- Seven miles of snowmobile trails.

The state also owns a 3.5-acre lake access site on the north side of Lake Orion. The facility, found on Indianwood Road just west of M-24, includes parking, rustic restrooms, and a boat launch.

Other parks located within a 15-minute drive of the Township center include:

Formerly known as Dodge No. 10, **Horseshoe Lake State Game Area** is located in Oxford Township on Oakwood Road. The facility offers covers 324 acres of land open for seasonal hunting and fishing. Also in Oxford Township, **Squaw Lake Boat Access** is located on Drahner Road and includes 10 acres of land with a 55-space parking lot, a pier and restrooms. The MDNR boat launch provides access to Squaw Lake and the chains of lakes located in the southwestern part of the Township.

**Ortonville Recreation Area** offers 5,400 acres with high wooded hills and a wide range of recreational activities. An equestrian campground is located at the trailhead on Fox Lake Road and is connected to equestrian trails meandering through Hadley Hills. The day use area at Big Fish Lake offers restroom facilities, a picnic area, two picnic shelters, a playground, horseshoe pits and a designated swim area. Activities and facilities include:

- 25-site equestrian campground,
- Swimming and Beach House on Big Fish Lake,
- Playground equipment,
- Boat launch,
- Shooting range,
- Hunting,
- Fishing,
- 3.5 miles of hiking and mountain bike trails,
- 6.5 miles of equestrian trails open to snowmobiling in winter, and
- 2.5 miles of cross country ski trail



Bald Mountain Recreation Area



## Huron Clinton Metropolitan Authority Parks

The Huron-Clinton Metropark system is a regional park system spanning Oakland, Wayne, Macomb, Washtenaw, and Livingston counties. Thirteen properties include over 24,000 acres, with a wide variety of both active and passive uses. Park amenities span a wide range of recreation opportunities and include features such as major splash parks, nature centers, marinas, and extensive trail systems. While there are no Metroparks within Orion Township, two parks are in relatively close proximity to the community.

**Stony Creek Metropark.** Located southeast of Orion Township in Oakland Township, Stony Creek Metropark encompasses 4,461 acres of parkland with hilly terrain surrounding Stony Creek Lake. Activities and facilities include:

- 13 miles of cross-country trails with a ski center,
- 14 miles of mountain bike trails and a mountain bike skills course,
- Fitness trail,
- Six miles of hiking trails,
- Hike-bike trail,
- A nature center,
- Nature interpretation and birding,
- Picnic shelters,
- Playgrounds,
- Field games including soccer, baseball, basketball court,
- Two beaches on Stony Creek Lake,
- Boat launch and storage, seasonal rowboat, canoe, kayak and pedal-boat rentals,
- Ice skating and sledding hills,
- 24-hole disk golf course, and
- An 18-hole golf course,

**Indian Springs Metropark,** southwest of Orion Township in Springfield Township, encompasses 2,215 acres of parkland at the headwaters of the Huron River. Much of the park space is dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of the natural environment. Park facilities include:

- A nature center,
- An environmental Discovery Center,
- Nature interpretation and birding,
- 12 miles of groomed cross-country trails,
- Equestrian trail,
- Eight miles of paved hike-bike trail,
- Picnic shelters,
- Volleyball, playgrounds and horseshoes pits,
- Spray 'n' play park,
- Sledding hill, and
- An 18-hole, par-71 regulation golf course with driving range.



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## Recreation Programs And Services

Orion Township a wide variety of programs and special events intended to appeal to the Township's diverse population. Programs are offered throughout the year, with events held at locations throughout the community. Many events are free; those that do require a fee offer separate levels for residents and non-residents. A partial list of program offerings is provided below

### Special Events

- Bunny Bop
- Flashlight Egg Hunt
- Light Up Orion
- Fall Festival of Family Fun
- Made in the Mitten Art & Craft Show and Pop up Market
- Game & Puzzle Swap
- Boo Bash
- Movie Night in the Park
- Car Bingo Spooktacular
- Blood Drive
- Cookies with Claus
- Breakfast with the Grinch
- Snow Dash 5K
- Orion Green Up
- Mother's Day Market
- Safety Path & Trail Cycle Challenge
- Dragon Dash 5K
- Community Garage Sale
- Concerts in the Park at Wildwood
- Antique, Toy, & Comic Expo
- Summer Sizzle
- Big Rig Gig
- Summer Break Car Bingo
- Fall Festival of Family Fun
- Dragon Wellness Festival

### Youth & Teen Enrichment

- Home Alone Training
- Babysitter Training
- Horseback Riding Lessons
- Draw & Get Drawn Caricature Workshop
- Sew a Button, Take a Sip
- Pumpkin Carving
- Cookie Decorating
- Take & Make DIY Birdseed Ornament
- Star Lab
- Movie Day
- Bubble Basics Workshops
- After School Theater Class for Kids
- Improv & Comedy Class for Teens
- 2023 Esports Leagues
- 6-in-1 Space Fleet Robot
- Parent & Child Class

### Youth Fitness

- Amazing Athletes Track, Baseball, Basketball, & Pickleball
- Amazing Athletes
- Amazing Tots
- Kiddie Kickers
- Youth Golf Lessons

### Youth Camps

- Chess Camp
- Amazing Athletes Camp
- Go Wild! Camp
- Play it Safe Camp
- Sports Camp
- Young Scientist Camp
- Kids' Sculpture Camp
- Junior Golf Camp
- Drawing 101 Kids' Camp
- Kids' Colorful Art Camp
- Archery Camp





## Adult Fitness & Wellness

- TaikoFit Cardio Drumming
- Hatha Yoga
- Zumba Gold
- MELT Method of Pain Relief
- Tai Chi
- Outdoor Open Pickleball
- Self Defense Seminar
- Heartfulness Meditation
- Beekeeping
- Coffee with Chris
- Mountain Bicycling
- Slow Row LO
- Adult Golf Lessons
- Pickleball Lessons

## Adult Enrichment

- Plant Based Eating Class
- Social Serenity
- Improv & Comedy Class for Adults
- Playwriting for Adults
- Township Talks
- CPR Classes
- Community Gardening



## Adaptive Programming

- Valentine's Day Dance
- St. Patrick's Day Dance
- Adaptive Softball League

## Leagues

- Youth Baseball & Softball
- Youth Soccer
- Junior Golf League
- Esports League
- Adult Summer/Fall Softball
- Adult Cornhole League



## Senior Programming

- Medicare One-on-One Appointments
- Ask the Attorney
- AARP Smarter Driver Tek Workshop
- Heart & Stroke Prevention
- Income Tax Preparation
- Let's Craft Together
- Pumpkin Carving
- Euchre Tournament
- Special event lunches
- Field Trips
- Silver Sneakers
- Knit/Crochet
- Chinese Mahjong
- Ham Radio
- Bingo
- Painting
- Spanish
- Hand and Foot/Cards
- Orion Center Library Book Club
- Walking Club
- Ukulele Club
- Euchre
- Movies
- Quilting
- American Mahjong



## Barrier Free Accessibility

The passage of the American Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) required all areas of public service to have barrier-free accessibility, including parks and recreation facilities. An evaluation of Orion parks and facilities was conducted as part of the inventory. In accordance with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) standards, facilities were evaluated to determine if those with limited sight, hearing, mobility and comprehension can safely and independently access and use the park or facility.

The ranking system ranges from 1 to 5 and is described as follows:

1. None of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines;
2. Some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines;
3. Most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines;
4. The entire park meets accessibility guidelines; and
5. The entire park was developed/renovated using the principles of universal design.

Each of the parks was evaluated using this ranking system. The specific elements reviewed included parking, paths of travel from parking to activity areas, activity areas themselves, and surfacing. Table 24 provides the result of this assessment.

**Table 24. Accessibility Assessment**

Park	Rank	Description
Playful Dragon	3	The dragon is technically accessible from the sidewalk off of Baldwin Road, but there is no accessible parking immediately adjacent to the structure.
Jesse Decker Park	3	Individual components are accessible, but there are gaps between amenities that cannot be reached. There are no accessible routes to the ballfields.
McConnell Field	1	The ballfield is not accessible.
Civic Center Park	3	Individual components are accessible, but are not always connected to parking or walkways. Wildwood Amphitheater as a separate entity would score a 4.
Friendship Park	3	Sections of the park are exceptionally well designed with inclusivity in mind. Gravel parking lots, disconnected amenities, and rustic areas that are completely inaccessible pull the rating down one point.
Camp Agawam	2	While there are some accessible features, the rustic nature of the park precludes a high accessibility score.
Orion Center	4	The building and most of the grounds are completely accessible.
Gingell Nature Center	1	The facility is not accessible.
Heron Springs Park	1	The facility is not accessible.
Great Lakes Athletic Club	3	The majority of the property complies with ADA requirements. A full analysis of the interior of the facility will be completed in the coming months to ensure and any deficiencies will be brought into full compliance as part of ongoing improvements to the building.



## MDNR Grants

Orion Charter Township has received seven Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) grants for parkland development since 1980. Table 25 presents a description of the MDNR grants received including the current use and condition of the grant-assisted parks and facilities.

Table 25. Grant History

Grant Number	Application Year & Source	Description	Grant Amount	Current Use / Condition
26-0110411	1980 LWCF	Civic Center Park pavilion & restroom	\$32,500	The pavilion and restrooms are nearing the end of their intended life but remain in fair to good condition.
BF89-389	1989 Bond Fund	Civic Center Park ball field lighting	\$40,500	The ball fields are heavily used and lighting functioning well.
CM99-084	1999 Clean Michigan Initiative	Friendship Park recreation support building	\$295,991	The building is in use and in excellent condition
26-01746	2014 LWCF	Friendship Park ball field lights	\$100,000	The ball fields are heavily used and lighting functioning well
TF15-0127	2015 MNRTF	Clarkston Road: 8- and 10-foot boardwalks to access Camp Agawam	\$300,000	The boardwalks are in excellent condition
TF16-0024	2016 MNRTF	Clarkston Road Regional Pathway Connection, Phase 1B: Develop section of Iron Belle Trail	\$300,000	The trail is incredibly popular and is a statewide resource
TF17-0116	2017 MNRTF	Rehabilitate section of trail along Joslyn Road	\$267,600	The trail is heavily used and an important connector
TF18-0055	2018 MNRTF	E Clarkston Road Pathway, M-24 to Paint Creek	\$300,000	The pathway is in place and helps to complete a critical connection between the Paint Creek and Polly Ann Trails.

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# ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE



# Chapter 6: Administrative Structure

## Administration

The administration of parks and recreation services in Orion Township is the responsibility of the Orion Township Board of Trustees, the elected group of seven officials who serve as the Township's legislative authority.

Parks, Recreation & Facilities is one of six departments falling under the leadership of the Township Supervisor. At the top of the organizational chart is the Township Board of Trustees (BOT), an elected group of seven officials who serve as the Township's legislative authority. The Board is not necessarily involved in the day-to-day happenings of the Township but is versed on department goals and desired future development. The Board relies on the recommendations of Township department heads and advisory committees before voting on an issue. The administrative structure shown in Figure 30 on page 97 shows the relationship of Parks, Recreation, & Facilities to other departments within the Township.

As suggested by its name, the Parks, Recreation, and Facilities Department is responsible for three basic areas:

- Park operation and maintenance;
- Recreation programming including senior services; and
- Facility management and maintenance, including activities such as snow plowing, lawn maintenance, and similar activities.

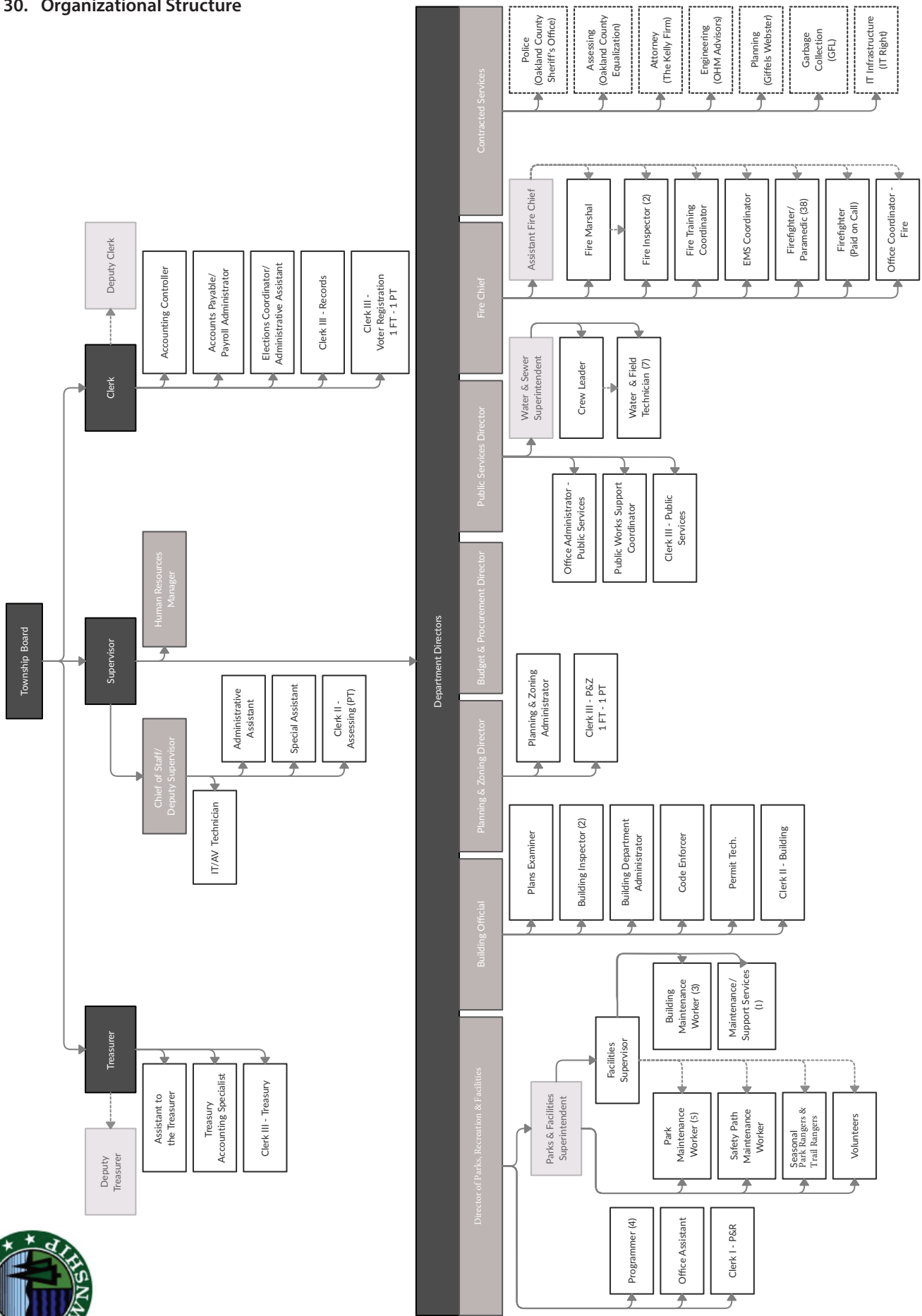
Parks and Recreation Department includes two teams: the Parks and Recreation Division and the Senior Services Division. The Parks and Recreation Division is comprised of a team of 1 park superintendent, 3 programmers, 1 office assistant, 4 park maintenance workers, 1 building maintenance worker and support staff, as well as seasonal workers and volunteers.

The Senior Services Division provides a network, events, classes, and resources geared to help both residents and non-residents aged 50 and over. Membership for 50+ adults is free at the Orion Center and hosts a range of social and educational clubs and programming for its members. To help run this division, personnel includes 1 programmer, 1 clerk, instructors and volunteers to plan and manage the variety of programming it offers.





Figure 30. Organizational Structure



Revised July 2021

The Parks and Recreation Department is a member of the Michigan Parks and Recreation Association (MPARKS) and the Michigan Association of Senior Centers (MASC). Staff members undergo training to receive organizational and professional certification from both organizations. These groups conduct research, plan strategically, and make recommendations on how to improve parks and recreation facilities, programs, and services to its residents. As a part of the Director's role, s/he oversees the following activities:

- Coordination and development of park facilities and recreation departments
- Manages the budget and payroll
- Hires and trains staff, and delegates responsibilities
- Creates park policy
- Pursues grants and outside funding sources
- Procures supplies, equipment, and land for recreation purposes
- Develops strong working relationships with community members and groups
- Assists with the development of programming and recreational leagues/activities

The Parks & Paths Advisory Committee provides feedback to the Director of Parks, Recreation, and Facilities Director and/or the BOT, providing recommendations on programming selection and coordination, facility development, land acquisition, staffing, funding, construction priorities, and all maintenance of recreation facilities including parks, paths, and trails. The Committee consists of seven voting members, one of whom is a BOT representative and all of whom are residents of Orion Township.

The Township is currently seeking members for a new Youth Advisory Council. This group will help to promote youth involvement in local government and establish a venue for youth influence within the community. The Council could be involved in a supplementary capacity to the Parks & Paths Advisory Committee.

## **Budget & Funding**

Funding for parks and recreation activities in Orion Township financed through a combination of funds from two millages, the Township's General Fund, user fees, and grants. It is distributed into several funds: Parks and Recreation, which combines both 50 and better Activities and Parks and Recreation, as well as Buildings and Grounds. Parks and Recreation revenues come from program fees, league participation charges, athletic fields, and facility rentals.

In November of 2022, voters overwhelmingly approved a 0.9357 millage renewal to fund parks operation, programming, equipment, facilities, personnel, maintenance, acquisition, and capital improvements through the year 2027. 60.73% of Township residents voted for the millage, surpassing the 57% who approved the original ballot in 2018. The millage generated \$2,020,953.49 in its first year of operation.

By an even wider margin (65% support), voters also approved the safety path millage renewal that was set to expire. Originally approved in 1988, the quarter mill safety path tax was re-approved by voters in 1998, 2008, and again in 2018 to run through December 2027. The funds will go to the Safety Path Fund and a General Capital Improvement Fund. The budget projects revenue and expenses out until year 2022.

Salaries and benefits account for the majority of departmental expenditures. Monies generated from the millage are spent on proposed capital outlay projects.

Table 26 on page 99 provides a summary of the Parks & Recreation and Safety Paths budgets.



Table 26. Parks & Recreation and Safety Paths Budget Summary

	2020 - Activity	2021 - Activity	2022 - Activity through 12/31/22	2023 - Adopted Budget	2023 - Amended Budget	2023 - Projected Activity	2024 - Department Requested Budget	2025 - Department Requested Budget
<b>PARKS &amp; RECREATION DEPARTMENT</b>								
<b>ESTIMATED REVENUES</b>								
TOTAL ESTIMATED REVENUES	2,814,131.99	4,617,065.90	2,505,106.86	4,235,812.35	4,235,812.35	2,518,400.59	3,130,493.48	2,906,803.62
<b>APPROPRIATIONS</b>								
TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS	2,292,166.95	2,340,046.79	3,371,079.65	6,145,680.26	6,145,680.26	537,940.11	3,325,261.97	2,685,473.43
NET OF REVENUES/APPROPRIATIONS - FUND 208	521,965.04	2,277,019.11	(865,972.79)	(1,909,867.91)	(1,909,867.91)	1,980,460.48	(194,768.49)	221,330.19
BEGINNING FUND BALANCE	245,387.16	767,352.20	3,044,371.31	2,178,398.52			(339,729.50)	(534,497.99)
ENDING FUND BALANCE	767,352.20	3,044,371.31	2,178,398.52	268,530.61	(1,909,867.91)	1,980,460.48	(534,497.99)	(313,167.80)
<b>SAFETY PATH BUDGET</b>								
<b>ESTIMATED REVENUES</b>								
TOTAL ESTIMATED REVENUES	1,302,579.09	789,113.78	583,708.79	519,297.75	519,297.75	462,199.96	507,242.69	518,973.76
<b>APPROPRIATIONS</b>								
TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS	1,297,506.33	744,728.17	250,200.71	555,221.23	555,221.23	69,969.73	377,524.22	352,567.16
NET OF REVENUES/APPROPRIATIONS - FUND 403	5,072.76	44,385.61	333,508.08	(35,923.48)	(35,923.48)	392,230.23	129,718.47	166,406.60
BEGINNING FUND BALANCE	355,179.85	360,252.61	404,638.22	738,146.30			(40,278.00)	89,440.47
ENDING FUND BALANCE	360,252.61	404,638.22	738,146.30	702,222.82	(35,923.48)	392,230.23	89,440.47	255,847.07

## Partnerships

Collaboration with other Orion Township departments, non-profits, neighboring communities, school districts, regional, and state agencies provides a network of resources and the capacity to carry out recreational programming and implementation. These organizations perform many important roles in the Township, adding value for residents in the way of hosting community events, managing sports leagues and musical classes, and giving legal and tax advice, among several other broad-serving activities. A sample of these organizations are listed in Table 29.

## Volunteers

As shown in the figure “Administrative Structure,” the Parks and Recreation Department relies on volunteers in addition to staff to carry out important tasks. The service clubs and community groups listed in the table “Volunteers” assist by donating their time, labor, and financial resources to support park facilities and programming.

**Table 27. Volunteer Organizations**

Group Name	Program(s)
Boy and Girl Scouts of America	Service days, Eagle Scout Projects, Silver Awards Projects
Friends of Camp Agawam	Fundraise and Promote Camp Agawam
Friends of Orion Parks	Fundraise and Promote the parks
You Before Me	Special Event Volunteers
Youth Advisory Council	High School Students



**Table 28. Sponsorships - 2023**

Group Name			Program(s)
• Counelis Agency Farm Bureau Insurance			Park Partner
• WestWynd Golf & Grille • Buffalo Wild Wings	• Orion Area Chamber of Commerce • Genisys Credit Union	• Munk Orthodontics • National Flag Football	Park Partner Plus
• Waste Management			Park Partner Plus, Events
• Lake Orion Lions Club • Liberty Way Realty • Lake Orion Police Association • Lake Orion Crush Baseball • Golden Meadows Photography • Turman's Tree & Landscaping • The Highlander Group • J&H Lawn Care	• Johnny Black's Lake House • Heartfelt Impressions • Mulberry Hills Golf Club • Eva's Diary Cafe • Act 1 Talent • Cookies & Cream • Orion Fire Fighter Association • Cieslak Law • KT Colman Photography	• Tool Sport & Sign • LGP Lawn Care • Skalnek Ford • Dick's Sporting Goods • Jim Douglas Auto Sales • Hungry Howies • Source 1 Metals • JST Events • Edward Jones • Caring Transitions of Oakland/Macomb	Youth League Sponsors (2023)
• Pomeroy • Lourdes Senior Living • Seniors Helping Seniors	• Montgomery & Sons • Dort Financial Credit Union • HAP	• United Healthare • Terraces at Lake Orion	Senior Sponsors (2023)



**Table 29. Partnership Organizations**

Group Name		Program(s)	
• Amazing Athletes	• Ascension	• Bub Balloona Chicks	Classes/Events
• Artist Apprentice	• Heartfelt Yoga	• XP League	Classes
• Times Square Riding Academy	• Mulberry Hills		
• Dana Wilson Attorney	• Chad Day		Legal, Financial Advise- Orion Center Members
• Frist Baptist Church of Lake Orion	• Orion Area Youth Assistance	• North Oakland Community Coalition	Events
• mParks	• Oakland County Parks & Rec	• Orion Art Center	Training, Event Grants and Promotion
• Orion Chargers Baseball Club	• Vadar Soccer Club	• Edge Fast Pitch	Athletics
• Lake Orion Men's Softball	• Challenger Sports	• Lake Orion Crush Baseball	
• Alliance Gold Soccer Club			
Group Name	Program(s)	Group Name	Program(s)
• Orion Neighborhood Television	Event Promotion/Filming	• Easterseals	Senior Resources
• Orion Township Library	Events, Orion Center Branch Book Club	• Alzheimer's Association	Senior Resources
• Orion.Events	Concerts in the Park	• Oakland County's Older Adults	Senior Resources
• Slow Row LO	Water Sports	• Forgotten Harvest	Senior Resources
• The Daisey Project	Inclusive Recreation/Events	• OLHSA	Senior Resources
• Versiti Blood	Blood Drives	• Lake Orion Community Schools	
• Walgreens	Events/Flu Shots	• Orion Area Chamber of Commerce	
• XP League	Esports	• The Village of Lake Orion	
• Soccer Assigning LLC	Soccer Referees	• AARP Tax	Free Tax Service for Seniors
• Golden Meadows Photography	Youth League Photos	• Metro Softball Umpires Association	Softball Umpires
• Dicks Sporting Goods	Sponsorship, League Discount Day	• North Oakland Transportation	Transportation of Seniors/ Field Trips
• Area Agency on Aging	Senior Resources	• Older Persons Commission	Meals on Wheels

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# COMMUNITY BACKGROUND



# Chapter 7: Community Background

This section of the Plan describes many of the area’s natural and built features, as well as a description of the community’s population characteristics. The purpose of the chapter is to provide readers with an overview of the physical components and demographic trends that directly impact Township recreation options, and identify the unique features and opportunities the community has to offer.

## Regional Setting

Located in the northeastern corner of Oakland County, Orion Township has retained much of its rural character in the face of high development pressures. The Township sits midway between the City of Detroit and the City of Flint (about 35 miles to each city), part of a green belt between two highly urbanized areas. A variety of state, county, Huron-Clinton Metroparks, regional trails, and local municipal parks form a loosely defined “emerald necklace”, roughly paralleling the path of the Huron and Clinton Rivers.

Orion Township borders primarily rural Townships to the north and east (Addison, Brandon, Oakland, and Oxford Townships), more suburban-styled Townships to the west and southwest (Independence and Waterford Townships), and denser suburban-urban cities to the south and southwest (Auburn Hills, Rochester, Rochester Hills, and

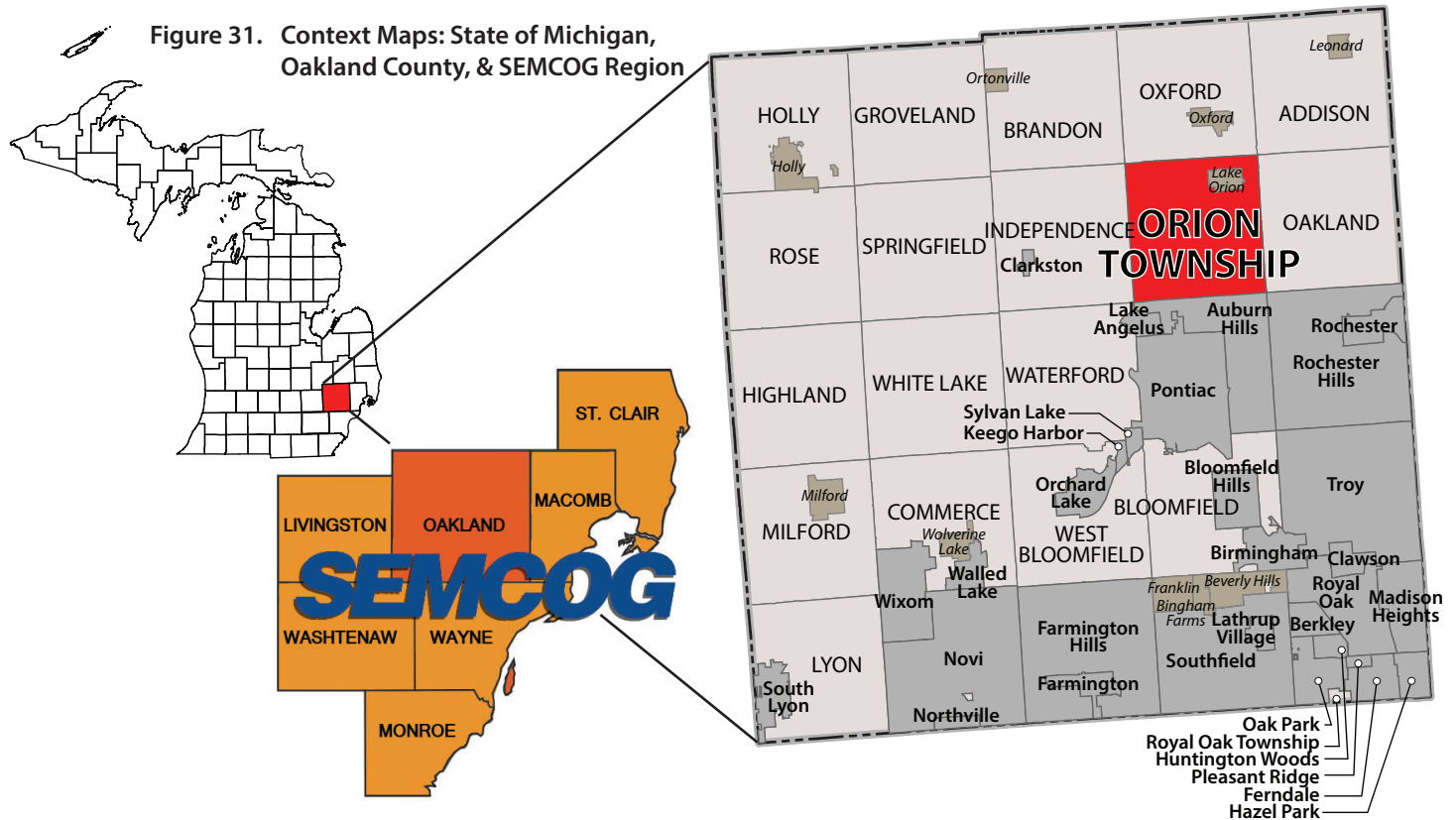
Pontiac). Several smaller villages and cities are found in the adjacent communities, including Leonard, Oxford, Ortonville, Clarkston, and Lake Angelus.

The Village of Lake Orion, located in the northeastern corner of the Township, plays a significant role in social and recreational activities for Township residents. Incorporated in 1859, Lake Orion maintains its own park system and has the highest population density of the area. The unincorporated village of Gingellville is located at the intersection of Baldwin and Gregory Roads, while Lake Orion Heights is positioned between Lake Orion, Square Lake, and Elkhorn Lake around the intersection of Heights and Pine Tree Roads.

Oakland County is bordered by the Lapeer County to the north, Macomb County to the east, Wayne County to the south, and Livingston County to the west. Oakland County a member of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) region. SEMCOG is the regional planning agency that conducts planning studies and maintains a comprehensive database of information about each community it serves. SEMCOG data is a source for some of the population and land use related information included in this report. Their research and publications are also described in the regional planning section of this chapter.

## Transportation

Figure 31. Context Maps: State of Michigan, Oakland County, & SEMCOG Region





Lapeer Road (M-24) is the primary thoroughfare, providing convenient access to its neighboring communities, including Oxford and Lapeer to the north and Auburn Hills to the south. In Auburn Hills, M-24 intersects with I-75, the primary freeway between Flint and downtown Detroit.

The arterial roads running through Orion Township are maintained by the Road Commission of Oakland County (RCOC). These roads tend to be two lane with speed limits ranging from 35 to 55 mph, and Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) counts ranging from a low 400 trips per day on Coats Road and a high of 47,800 on Lapeer Road between Clarkston and Heights Roads. Heavy traffic counts and high speeds underline the importance of providing sidewalks, trails, and safety paths, both for recreational purposes and as an alternative form of transportation.

SMART bus service offers several fixed and flexible routes in Pontiac, as well as nearby stops in Lake Angelus and Auburn Hills. The transit authority does not currently offer direct service to Orion Township, however. The North Oakland Transportation Authority (NOTA) provides bus rides for seniors, disabled, and low income riders in Addison, Orion, and Oxford Townships. Registration is required.

Lake Orion was historically served by trains on the Michigan Central Railroad (MCR), the Detroit United Railway (DUR) interurban system, and the Grand Trunk Western Railroad (GTWR). MCR maintained passenger service until 1950 and freight service through 1976. The GTWR "Polly Ann" line ran from Pontiac to Caseville, but all of the track north of the General Motors Orion Assembly plant was removed by 1985. The loss of the GTWR and MCR lines turned out to be a recreation benefit for the Township; the MCR alignment becoming the Paint Creek Trail in 1983, and the GTWR route transformed into the Polly Ann Trail beginning in 1993. See page 80 for a further description of the trail facilities.

Figure 32. Clarkston Road Pathway





## Housing

Originally founded as a lumber center, Lake Orion soon became known as a vacation destination for visitors from Detroit. As a result, dense housing tends to center around the Township’s water bodies, especially Lake Orion and Judah, Long, and Voorhies and Lakes, in the northeast and southwest corners of the community. The Village of Lake Orion itself sits on the northeastern border of Lake Orion in the northeast. 44% of the Township’s homes were built prior to 1980, and approximately 37% between 1980 and 1999. This contrasts with the Village, where 54% of houses were built prior to 1980, and 20% between 1980 and 1999. 3,083 new units have been constructed in the Township since 2000, the vast majority of which (73%) are single-family detached homes.

Nearly one-fifth of Orion Township’s residential units are renter occupied (18.8%). 4.6% of units are vacant, a decrease of just over 2% since 2010. According to the 2020 American Community Survey (ACS), almost nine out of ten residents (87.8%) live in the same home they had occupied the previous year.

Median housing values dropped from \$217,000 in 2010 to a low of \$182,600 in 2014, but have since roared back to a high of \$296,800 in 2021. The median gross rent has been rising at a similar rate, increasing from \$972 in 2016 to \$1,157 in 2021.



**Table 30. Building Permits 2000 - 2022**

Year	Single Family	Two Family	Attach Condo	Multi Family	Total Units	Total demos	Net Total
2000	168	72	0	0	240	7	233
2001	132	40	24	0	196	12	184
2002	102	8	0	8	118	11	107
2003	164	4	16	0	184	18	166
2004	164	2	8	0	174	18	156
2005	89	14	3	0	106	11	95
2006	64	0	10	0	74	11	63
2007	39	2	0	0	41	13	28
2008	14	0	0	0	14	0	14
2009	5	0	0	0	5	4	1
2010	22	0	0	0	22	11	11
2011	44	0	0	0	44	7	37
2012	75	0	0	0	75	10	65
2013	63	0	12	101	176	12	164
2014	148	2	0	156	306	2	304
2015	106	0	46	24	176	0	176
2016	119	0	59	0	178	0	178
2017	192	0	34	0	226	8	218
2018	128	6	65	0	199	7	192
2019	117	0	12	0	129	3	126
2020	105	0	17	0	122	0	122
2021	106	0	52	0	158	13	145
2022	81	0	39	0	120	4	116
2000-2023 totals	2,247	150	397	289	3,083	182	2,901

Source: US Census, SEMCOG



Commercial and industrial development along M-24 and new housing in the southeast corner of the Township reflect the heavy development pressures on the Township. Bald Mountain State Recreation Area and Orion Oaks County Park act as important open space buffers for residents, but as regional, pay-based facilities, they do not offer the same immediate recreational value as a local park. Newer housing developments typically include communal open spaces, parks, or pathways which help to meet local recreation needs, but they are not open for use by the general Township population. As available land becomes scarce, it will be important for the Township to evaluate parkland acquisition as opportunities present themselves.

### Population Characteristics

Orion Township saw a 9% population increase between 2010 and 2020, rising from 32,421 to 35,330. SEMCOG projections show a continued increase through 2040 to a high of 37,269 residents, before falling slightly in 2045. Orion's percentage growth is on par with rates seen throughout northern Oakland County, falling below Auburn Hills (16%), Rochester (11%), and Oakland Township (22%), but higher than all other neighboring communities. The Village of Lake Orion experienced a population decline of 1.5% during that same period.

Figure 33. Orion Population 1970 - 2050

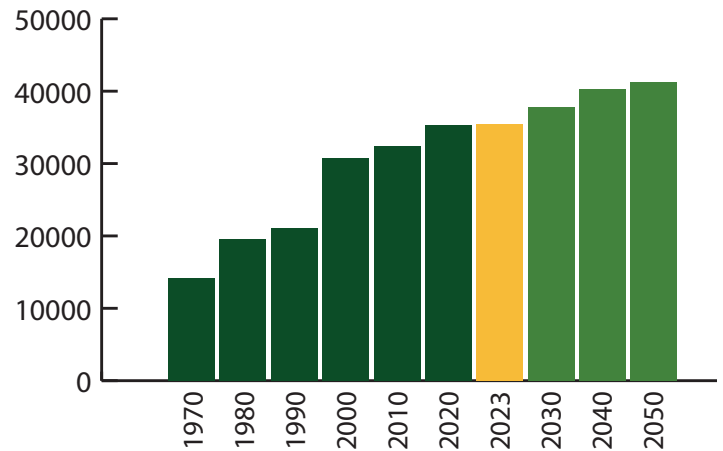


Table 31. Population Data, Orion Region

Community	1990 Census	2000 Census	2010 Census	2020 Census	2023 SEMCOG Estimate	% Change 2010 - 2023	2050 SEMCOG Estimate	% Change 2020 - 2045
Orion Twp	21,019	30,748	32,421	35,330	18,997	9.0%	41,222	14.1%
Lake Orion	3,057	2,715	2,973	2,876	3,480	-3.3%	3,794	22.8%
Addison Twp	4,785	6,107	5,948	5,879	5,782	-1.2%	6,260	7.6%
Auburn Hills	17,076	19,837	21,412	24,360	372	13.8%	28,863	13.7%
Brandon Twp	10,799	13,230	13,733	14,008	13,766	2.0%	15,151	9.1%
Independence Twp	23,717	32,581	34,681	36,686	1,376	5.8%	41,850	11.7%
Clarkston	1,005	962	882	928	36,963	5.2%	1,054	11.7%
Lake Angelus	328	326	290	287	931	-1.0%	323	5.0%
Oakland Twp	8,227	13,071	16,779	20,067	20,500	19.6%	25,111	18.4%
Oxford, Village of	2,929	3,540	3,436	3,492	35,418	1.6%	3,503	0.7%
Oxford Twp	9,004	12,485	17,090	18,927	2,929	10.7%	21,168	10.3%
Rochester	7,130	10,467	12,711	13,035	n/a	2.5%	14,255	9.9%
Rochester Hills	61,766	68,825	70,995	76,300	n/a	7.5%	83,089	7.3%
Waterford Twp	66,692	71,981	71,707	70,565	n/a	-1.6%	74,588	7.1%
Oakland County	1,083,592	1,194,156	1,202,362	1,274,395	1,270,513	6.0%	1,387,838	8.5%
SEMCOG Region	4,590,468	4,833,368	4,704,809	4,830,489	4,792,437	2.7%	5,104,922	6.1%
State of Michigan (7-1-22)	9,295,297	9,938,444	9,883,640	10,034,113	10,050,811	1.5%	10,608,242	5.3%

Source: US Census, SEMCOG

While Orion Township's population is growing, it is also aging. The Township's median age (42.1) surpassed Oakland County's median age (41.6) for the first time in 2021. The number of children in the Township age 19 and under decreased by 5.8% between 2010 and 2020, and while the number of older adults age 65 and up has increased by 74.6%. Young adults (20-44 years) increased 6.4%, slightly lower than the general population increase of 9%, while middle aged adults (45-64 years) increased by almost 16.9%. Looking forward, SEMCOG projects a continued shift to an older populace. As the demographic change progresses, a shift in priorities may be necessary to focus on recreational opportunities for older adults.

According to the 2021 American Community Survey, 9.3% of Township residents have some form of physical disability including 1,558 (4.3%) with an ambulatory difficulty, and 715 (1.9%) with a vision difficulty. These statistics underscore the need to accommodate individuals with disabilities when planning for parks and recreation facilities and programs.

The number of households increased by 17% between 2010 and 2020, but the average household size fell from 2.77 to 2.66. SEMCOG predicts the number of households to increase by an additional 1,433 units by 2045, but with a median household size of 2.51. These figures are consistent with an aging population; as the household ages and children move out, the number of residents per household drops. The trend is further borne out by ACS data showing that the number of households with seniors increased by 76.3% between 2010 and 2020, while the number of households with children fell by 6.2%.

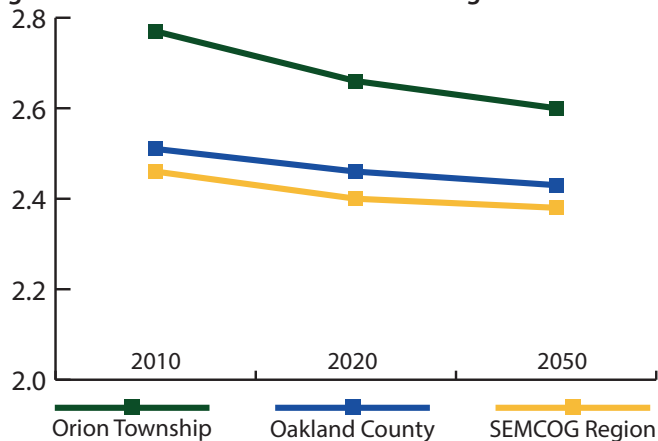
Orion Township is becoming more ethnically diverse. The percentage of white residents fell from 89.3% in 2010 to 81.9% in 2020. Multi-racial residents were the largest percentage growth category during that time period, rising by 1,171 residents, a 3.2% increase. Hispanic residents remain the largest minority population, followed by Asian and multi-racial groups. While the black population rose by 57 individuals, it fell by 0.1% in terms of the overall population percentage.

**Table 32. Household Size, Orion & Region**

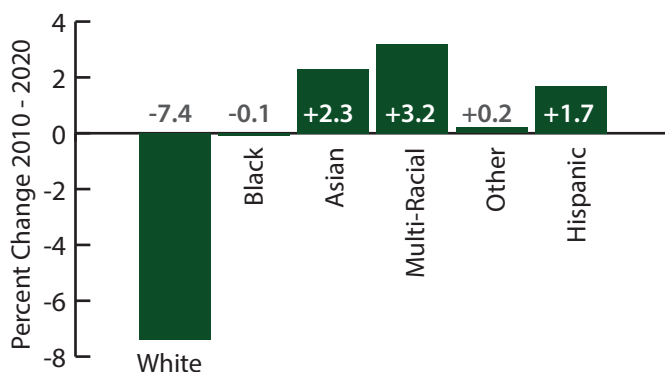
	2010 Census	2020 Census	2050 SEMCOG Estimate
Orion Township	2.74	2.72	2.4
Oakland County	2.39	2.36	2.35
SEMCOG Region	2.52	2.46	2.41

Source: US Census, SEMCOG

**Figure 34. Household Size - Orion and Region**



**Figure 35. Ethnicity Change 2010 - 2020**



**Table 33. Household Characteristics**

Household Types	Census 2010	2010 HH Percentage	ACS 2020	2020 HH Percentage	2010-2020 % change
With seniors 65+	1,263	20.8%	1,999	29.7%	58.3%
Without seniors	4,800	79.2%	4,723	70.3%	-1.6%
Live alone 65+	480	7.9%	707	10.5%	47.3%
Live alone, under 65	689	11.4%	654	9.7%	-5.1%
2 persons or more with children	2,538	41.9%	2,504	37.3%	-1.3%
2 persons or more without children	2,356	38.9%	2,857	42.5%	21.3%

Source: US Census, SEMCOG



## Socio-Economic Characteristics

Orion’s median household income increased by \$7,580 between 2010 and 2020. According to 2021 ACS estimates, the median income for Township households stands at \$104,676.

By most definitions, Orion Township is a wealthy community, and the trends point to a population that is becoming more affluent. Poverty rates for the Township fell from 6 to 4.5% between 2010 and 2021, and the number of households in poverty by 0.9% during that same period. Even so, 643 households, or 1,450 individuals, currently subsist below the poverty line. Other residents who may not technically live at or below the poverty line have little to no disposable income, and cannot afford even modest fees for recreation programming. A third population, representing individuals from underserved communities, enjoy Orion’s programming options, but would be unable to afford significant fee increases. It is critical that Parks & Recreation continue to consider these groups, and strive to control costs and perform in a fiscally responsible manner.

**Table 34. Forecasted Jobs by Industry Sector**

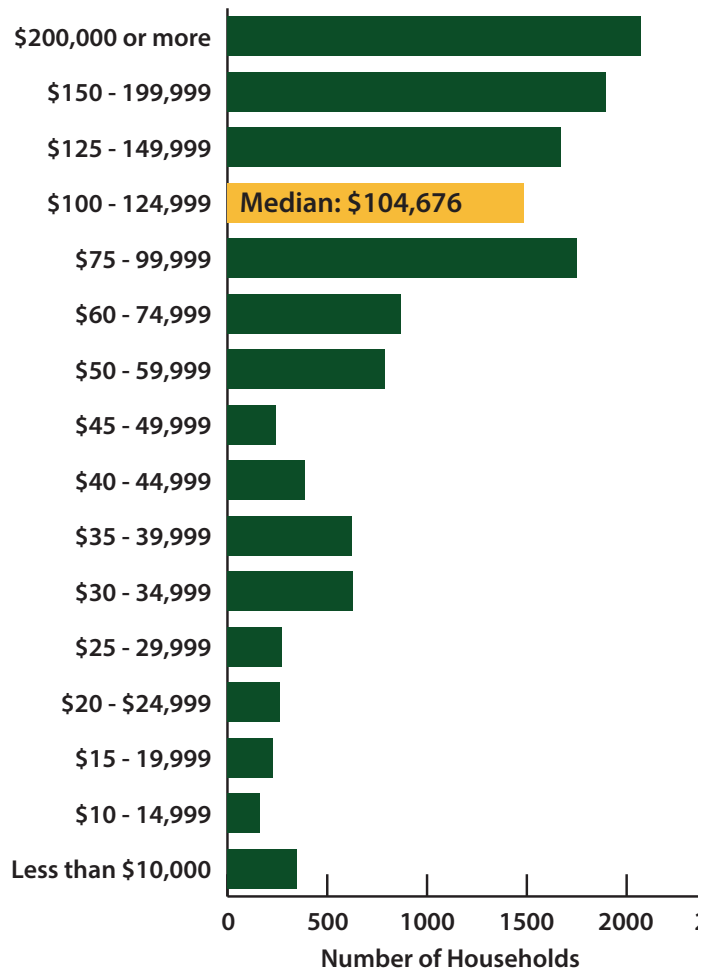
	2020	2050	% Change
Natural Resources, Mining, & Construction	880	1,152	26.20%
Manufacturing	2,194	4,192	73.20%
Wholesale Trade	792	923	10%
Retail Trade	2,088	1,989	-16.70%
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	1,018	1,201	16.20%
Information & Financial Activities	1,668	2,219	16.50%
Professional and Technical Services & Corporate HQ	1,231	1,909	48.20%
Administrative, Support, & Waste Services	1,243	1,714	13.40%
Education Services	985	1,137	7.70%
Healthcare Services	887	1,343	34.80%
Leisure & Hospitality	1,200	1,795	11.20%
Other Services	796	1,003	8.70%
Public Administration	206	224	4.20%
<b>Total Employment Numbers</b>	<b>15,188</b>	<b>20,801</b>	<b>21.60%</b>

Source: US Census, SEMCOG

Orion Township residents tend to work where they live. ACS data shows that 24% of the people working within the Township borders live in the Township, a rate more than double that of the next population set (Out of the Region workers at 11%). Conversely, of all Township residents currently employed, 17% work within the Township, followed closely by 16% of workers commuting to Auburn Hills.

According to the SEMCOG 2045 Regional Development Forecast, the largest employment sectors for Township workers are Retail Trade and Manufacturing. Retail Trade is expected to lose 399 positions by 2050, but Manufacturing is forecast to have major gains, with nearly 2,000 new positions, a 73% increase. Professional & Technical Services (621 positions, 48% increase) and Healthcare Services (347 positions, 35% increase) are also expected to see significant increases. See Table 34 for a comparison of existing versus forecasted jobs by sector.

**Figure 36. Median Income**



Source: US Census, SEMCOG

## Climate

Weather and climate have a major influence on the types of recreation a community can support. Southeast Michigan's seasonal changes allow a variety of outdoor activities throughout the year, from swimming in the summer to sledding in the winter. According to NOAA data, temperatures range from an average low of 17.1 °F in January to an average high of 82.3 °F in July. January has the highest average snowfall with 12.5 inches, with snow falling in seven of the twelve months of the year for an average total of 36 inches. May has the highest average precipitation rate with 3.81 inches and a total average of 33.88 inches and roughly 130 days per year with some form of precipitation.

These climate patterns have historically impacted recreation in a mostly positive fashion. The evenly spread precipitation has reduced the need for supplemental irrigation for playing fields, but has also meant the occasional postponement of sports activities due to rainy weather. Moderate temperatures throughout most of the year allow for extensive outdoor team sports participation in all but the coldest months, although training for some team sports start during winter months, meaning there is high competition for indoor training space. Those same cold temperatures and snowy conditions in winter months allow participation in winter sports, although the weather may not be consistent enough to allow provision of outdoor ice rinks on a regular basis.

Climate change will impact our traditional understanding of recreation in Michigan. According to the State of Michigan, the state has gotten warmer and wetter since 1900, with average yearly temperatures increasing by 2 to 3 °F since 1900. While precipitation has increased, rain has fallen in the form of extreme precipitation events, frequently followed by periods of extended drought in summer months. As the severity of droughts increase, the need for irrigation may be more critical. The reasons for preserving open spaces will likely shift from strictly aesthetics and recreation to a more functional consideration of mitigation and control stormwater runoff. The number of days available for outdoor warm weather sports may increase, but so may the number of severe weather events, including extreme heat days. Cold weather sports, on the other hand, may be relegated exclusively to indoor sporting facilities for the foreseeable future.

Orion Township facilities can serve as critical emergency resources for nearby underserved communities. Fire and park facilities take in residents from around the region in their heating and cooling shelters during extreme weather events. These services, although not traditionally under the purview of a park department, provide added benefits for both Orion Township residents and other individuals in need from across Oakland County.

*Flooding event in Orion Township, 2021*





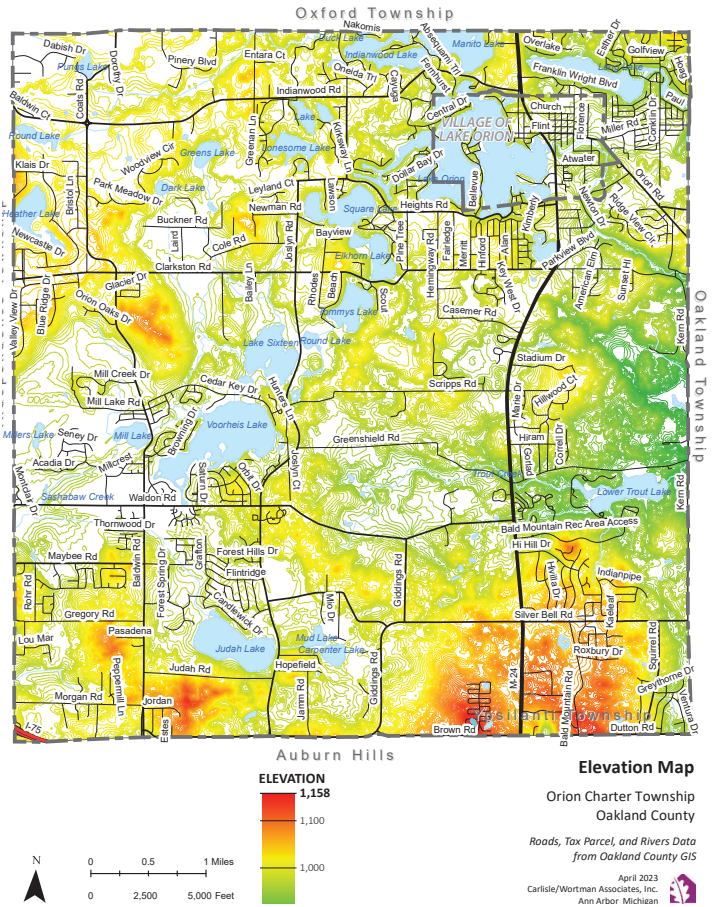
# Topography & Soils

Nearly all of the hills and lakes in Oakland County were formed by the retreat of the glaciers approximately 14,000 years ago. Like much of Oakland County, Highland Township is relatively flat, but has many areas with rolling topography. Elevations range from a low of 896 feet above mean sea level near Kern and Greenshield Roads to a high of 1,158 feet in west of M-24 and north of Brown Road. The steepest slopes tend to be found on the southern edges of the Township and east of M-24, although pockets of steep terrain can be found near Clarkston and Baldwin Roads. Remnants of an outwash plain correspond roughly with the chain of lakes traveling from Long Lake in the northeast corner of the Township to Judah Lake in the southwest.

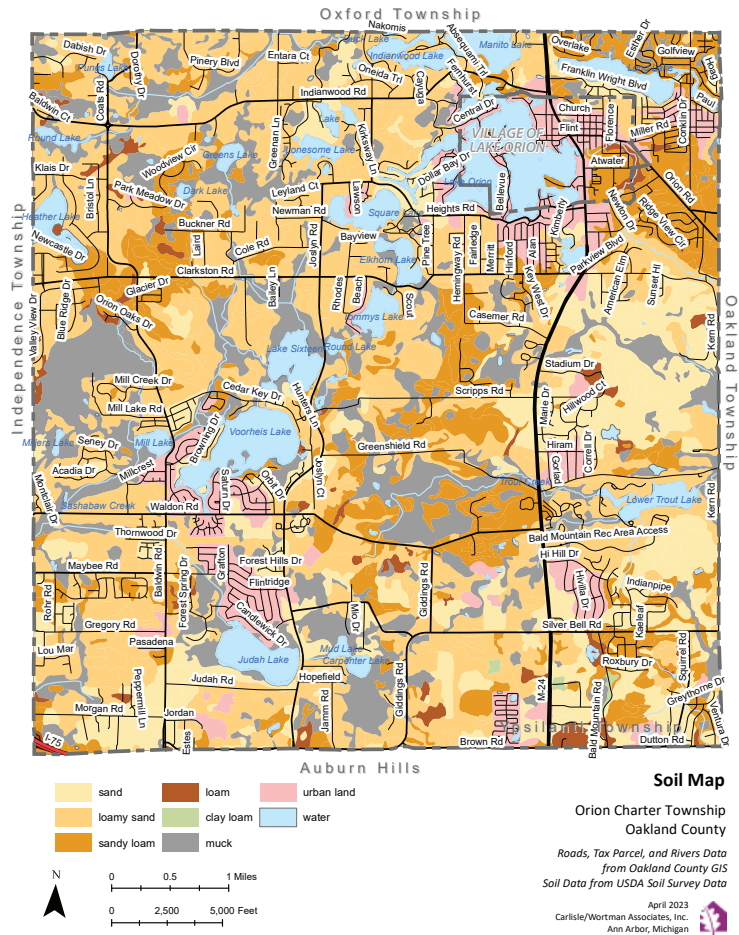
Soils can be categorized in a variety of ways. At the highest levels, Oakland County soils are generally described as alfisols, a gray to brown soil over a clay substrate which is one of the most fertile and productive soils in the country. The USDA defines twelve major soil texture classifications, ranging from sand to loam to clay; over a third (36%) of Orion's soils are considered loamy sand, with muck (16%), sand (15%), and sandy loam (15%) making up the next largest soil type categories.

Different soil types have significant impacts on recreation development. Over 5,270 acres (23%) of the Township soils are classified as muck or "urban soils" and are not rated for recreation suitability, while another 1,855 acres (8%) of the total Township area is covered by water. Of the remaining 15,879 acres, suitability varies depending upon the proposed use. For areas described as unsuitable, water saturation is frequently the primary challenge, with ponding, flooding, water erosion, and depth to saturated zone being frequently cited problems.

Map 5. Orion Topography

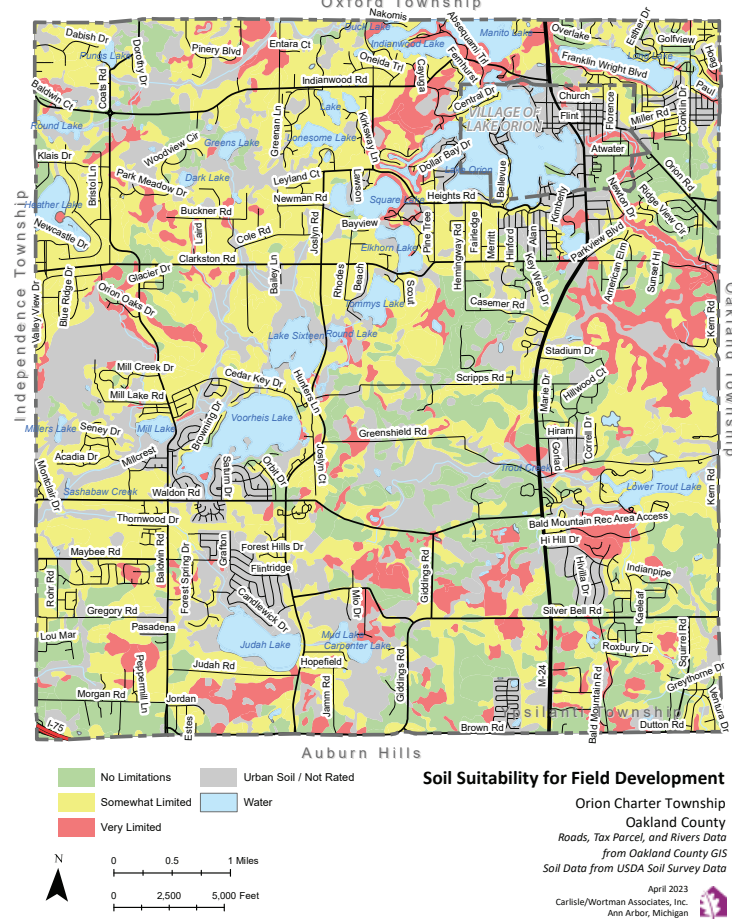


Map 6. Orion Soil Categories

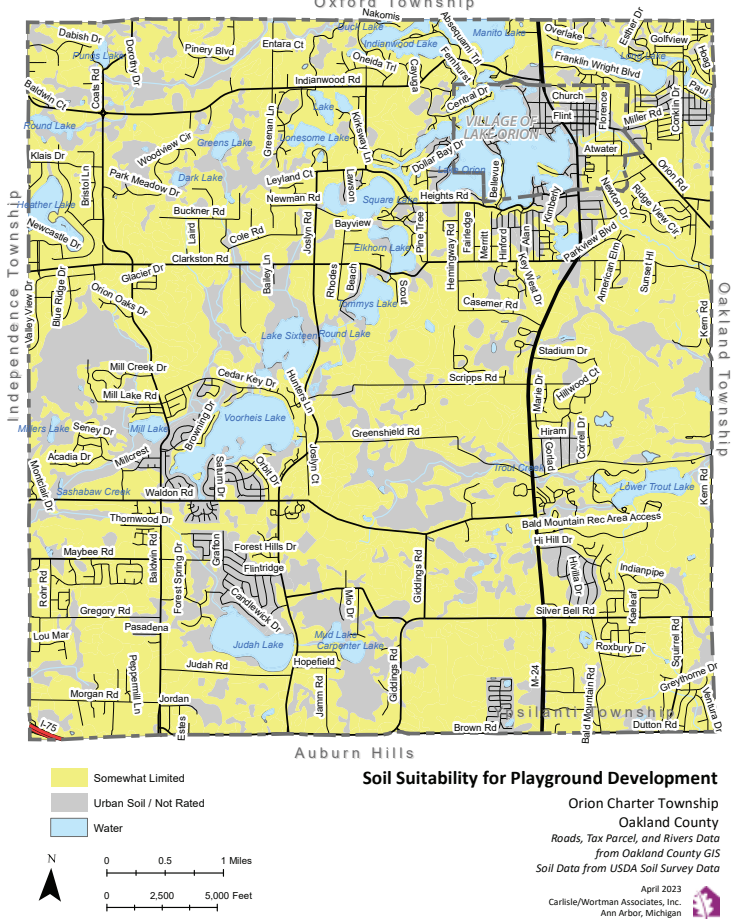




### Map 7. Field Development Soil Suitability



### Map 8. Playground Development Soil Suitability



### Map 9. Trail Development Soil Suitability

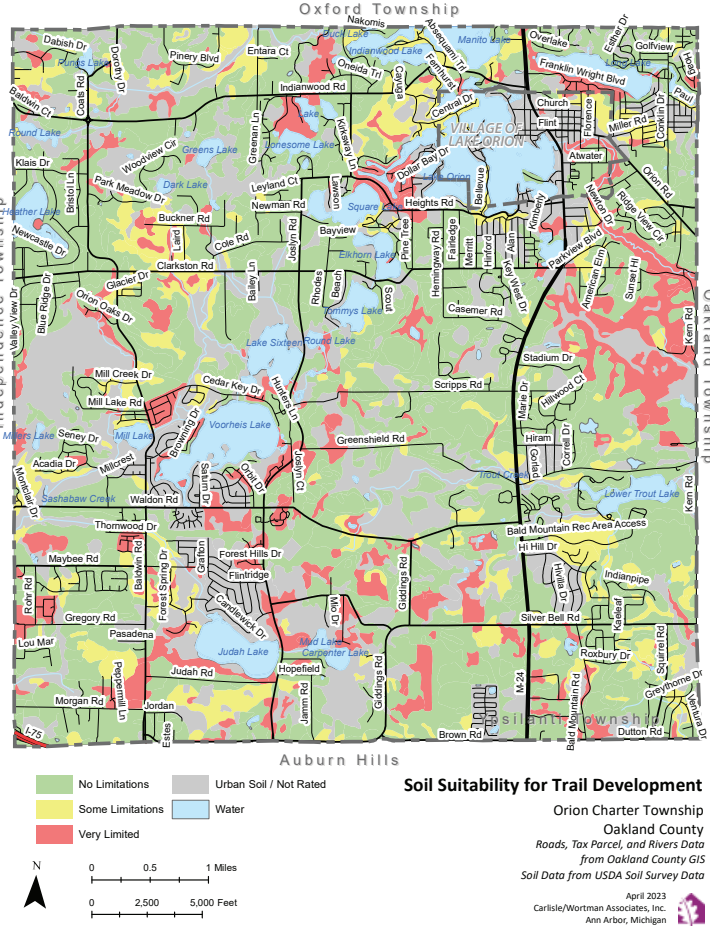


Table 35. Recreation Facility Development Limitations

Recreation Amenity Type	Not Limited	Somewhat Limited	Very Limited	Not Rated
Trails	48.8%	9.5%	10.7%	22.9%
Lawns & fields	19.7%	38.4%	10.9%	22.9%
Playgrounds	0.0%	69.0%	0.0%	22.9%

Source: USDA Soil Survey

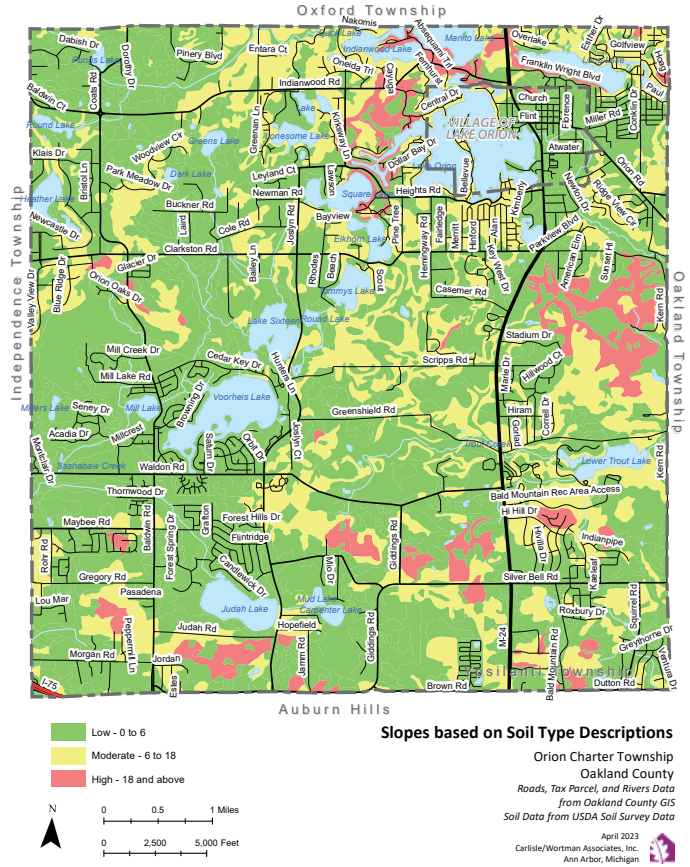


Roughly half (49%) of the Township area is described as having no limitations for trail development. Slopes play a lesser but still significant role, with roughly 7 percent of the area considered too steep for trail development.

“Lawn, golf fairway, and landscape development” data was used to evaluate suitability for playing field development (i.e. soccer, softball, etc.). Playing field construction is hampered by many of the same issues as trails, although on a micro level, slopes have a larger impact than water saturation. Large, relatively flat areas are considered prime real estate, and undeveloped parcels with these characteristics are rare. Because of these limitations, only 20% of Orion Township’s area is rated as “not limited” for playing fields.

Playground suitability is limited but possible for most of the community. 69 percent of the Township is described as “somewhat limited”, with the remaining acres either water or unrated areas. This rating suggests that as long as the necessary due diligence is applied, playground structures can be placed across most of the area.

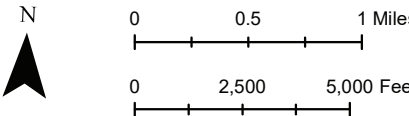
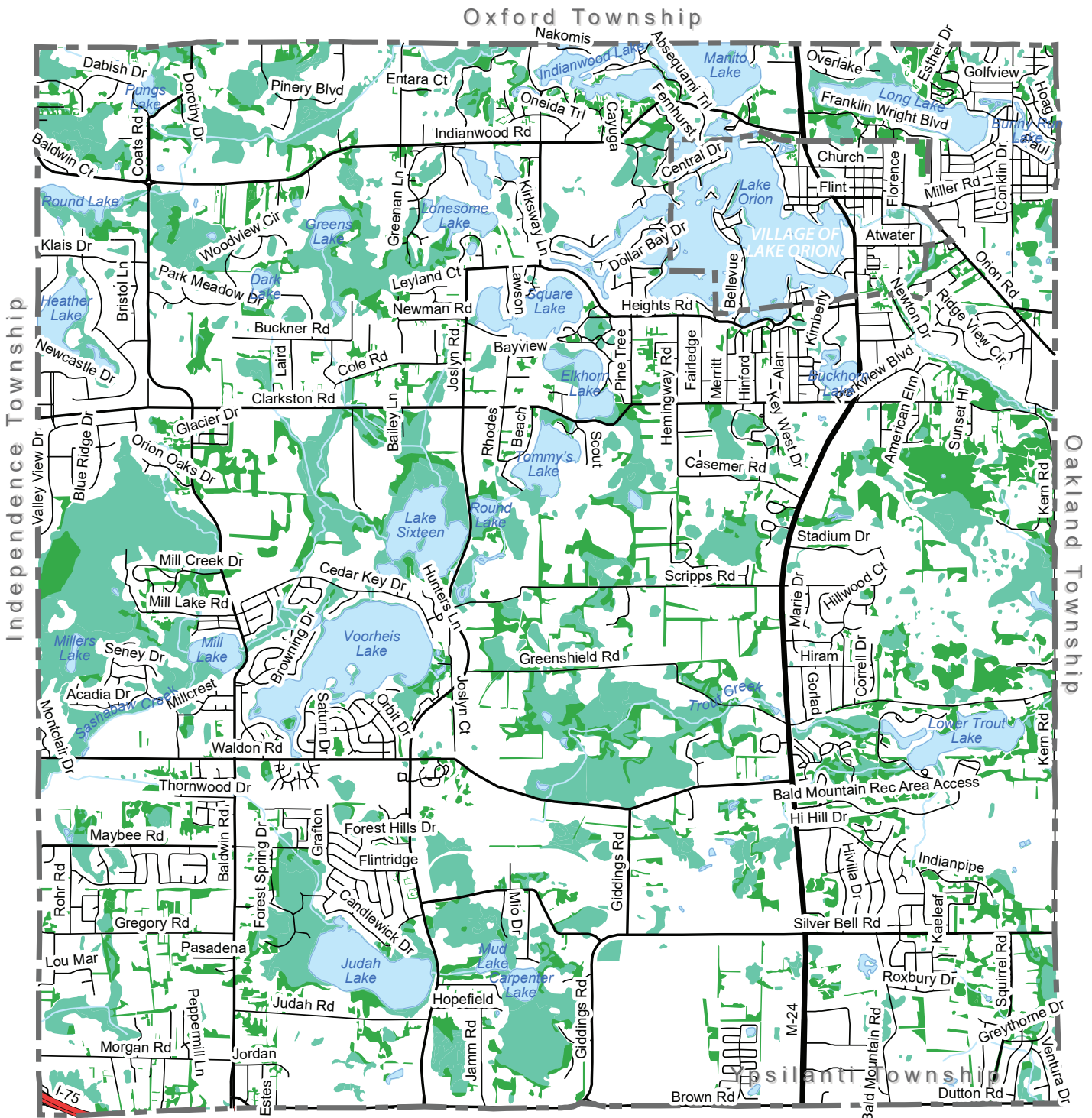
Map 10. Orion Slopes



Marsh marigold in bloom at Bald Mountain State Recreation Area







Auburn Hills

Tree Rows
  Wetlands

### Natural Features

Orion Charter Township  
 Oakland County  
 Roads, Tax Parcel, and Rivers Data  
 from Oakland County GIS  
 Soil Data from USDA Soil Survey Data

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 Ann Arbor, Michigan





## Water Resources

Water resources are one of the defining features of Oakland County and Orion Township in particular. Almost 1700 acres of Orion Township (8%) is covered by water, 42 natural lakes over five acres in size, including 25 named lakes and dozens of smaller ponds combining for over 1,900 acres of open water. Almost 15 miles of streams cross the area, with the Paint, Trout, and Sashabaw Creeks being the most notable. The entire Township falls within the Clinton River watershed, a 760 square mile watershed which drains into Lake St. Clair. The Clinton River itself passes just south and west of Orion Township, traveling from Maceday Lake in Waterford Township to Lake St. Clair at two points in Harrison Township. Major sub-watersheds include the Paint Creek and the Main-Clinton, while the Stony Creek covers a small portion of the northeastern corner of the Township.

These water resources are important amenities for residents, providing opportunities for a variety of activities ranging from swimming, boating, and fishing in the summer months to ice fishing and skating in the winter.

In addition to open bodies of water, Orion Township has a large network of wetlands which historically approached 5,000 acres. As the Township grows, development pressures threatens the existence of these important natural resources. Wetlands provide a variety of critical ecosystem services, including providing habitat, storing and slowing stormwater runoff, protecting water quality, and removing both air particulate matter and groundwater pollutants. Stormwater runoff is a major source of “non-point source pollution”, or pollution that cannot be traced to a particular discharge such as an industrial or wastewater treatment plan. Rainfall or snowmelt moving over and through the ground picks up and carries pollutants to lakes, rivers, and wetlands, or even to underground sources of drinking water. Pollutants found in stormwater runoff can include phosphorus and nitrogen, dirt and sediments, oils/greases, vehicle lubricants, herbicides and insecticides, metals, and garbage.

The Federal Clean Water Act has required communities to apply for and receive a stormwater permit to discharge stormwater runoff from developed areas into waters of the state. This requirement may have implications for recreation planning in the Township because parks and other areas used for recreation can either contribute to stormwater pollution, or be a model of how land development can be shaped to protect water resources. Protecting water resources helps to protect water supplies, provide healthy wildlife habitats, and offers the economic advantages derived from water-based recreation such as fishing, swimming and other activities.

**Table 36. Water Bodies**

Lakes	Acres	Lakes	Acres
Lake Orion	454.9	Buckhorn Lake	23.7
Voorheis Lake	221.4	Greens Lake	20.7
Judah Lake	124.8	Carpenter Lake	18.6
Manito Lake	121.3	Pungs Lake	18.3
Long Lake	103.8	Round Lake	18.0
Lake Sixteen	95.9	Dunblaine Lake	16.2
Indianwood Lake	88.3	Bunny Run Lake	14.0
Square Lake	82.9	Mud Lake	12.4
Lower Trout Lake	64.8	Round Lake	9.6
Heather Lake	64.6	Dark Lake	7.9
Tommy's Lake	52.3	Millers Lake	6.0
Duck Lake	46.8	<b>Streams/Creeks</b>	
Elkhorn Lake	45.2	<b>Name</b>	<b>Miles</b>
Lonesome Lake	35.0	Paint Creek	1.5 miles
Mill Lake	28.3	Sashabaw Creek	0.5 miles
		Trout Creek	0.4 miles

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines four primary types of wetlands:

- Marshes,
- Swamps,
- Bogs, and
- Fens.

The National Forest Service (NFS) further expands on those definitions, offering a highly detailed classification system which differentiates between vegetation types, inundation levels, and other characteristics. For simplicity's sake, Orion Township's wetlands would be classified as marshes and swamps by the EPA, and loosely classified as forested, scrub-shrub, or emergent swamps by the NFS. Map 11 on page 114 shows the location of existing wetlands within the Township, and Table 37 on page 116 shows the estimated acreage and characteristics of these features.

**Table 37. Wetland Characteristics**

Wetland Type	Acres	Characteristics
Non-tidal marsh - Freshwater emergent wetlands	678 acres	Frequently or continually inundated with water, characterized by emergent soft-stemmed vegetation adapted to saturated soil conditions. Tend to occur along streams in poorly drained depressions and in shallow water along the boundaries of lakes, ponds and rivers. Water levels vary from a few inches to two or three feet, and some may periodically dry out completely. Fresh-water marshes are one of the most productive ecosystems on earth, sustaining a diversity of life that is disproportionate with their size.
Swamps - Freshwater forested / shrub wetlands	(14% of total wetland area)	A swamp is any wetland dominated by woody plants, characterized by saturated soils during the growing season and standing water during certain times of the year. Swamps serve vital roles in flood protection and nutrient removal. Floodplain forests are especially high in productivity and species diversity because of the rich deposits of alluvial soil from floods.

## Vegetation

Orion Township’s historical vegetative cover was dominated by a variety of wetlands. Per the Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI), oak ecosystems were prevalent in upland areas, usually found in fire-dependent savannas such as oak barrens (14%) and oak openings (11%). These regions were quickly developed for agricultural and residential uses, to the point where only one small oak opening remains in the state.

Based upon MNFI research, Orion Township has five (5) areas identified as priority one preservation areas, numerous smaller areas ranked as priority two, and open water/wetland areas identified as priority three. Map 12 shows the location of these priority preservation sites.

SEMCOG’s 2022 Tree Canopy analysis shows that just over 50% of the Township area is covered by a “layer of tree leaves, needles, branches, and stems that provide tree coverage of the ground, viewed from an aerial perspective.” A robust tree canopy has important ecological, societal, and economic benefits. Oaks in particular are considered keystone species and are known to be a habitat for 2,300 wildlife species. These benefits underline the importance of maintaining a comprehensive recreation network, and suggest that recreation planning should consider both active- and passive-uses when developing a long-term vision.

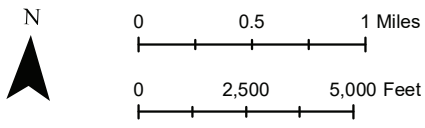
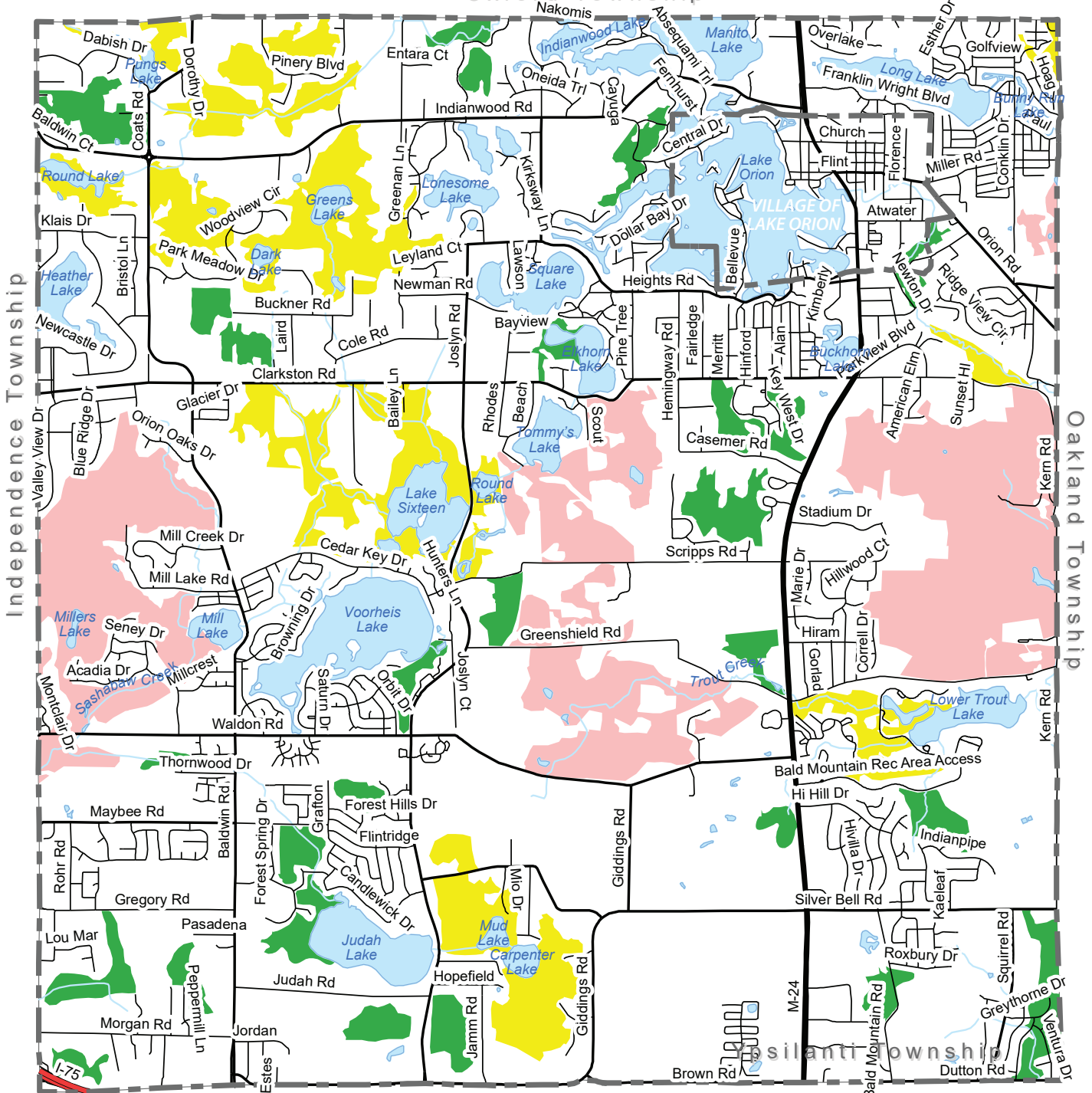
*Hiking at Camp Agawam*





Map 12. High Priority Natural Areas

Oxford Township



Auburn Hills

**PRIORITY**

- Priority One
- Priority Two
- Priority Three

**Potential Natural Areas**

Orion Charter Township  
 Oakland County  
 Roads, Tax Parcel, and Rivers Data  
 from Oakland County GIS  
 Soil Data from USDA Soil Survey Data

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- Community Background
- Administrative Structure
- Recreation Inventory
- Needs Assessment & Public Participation
- Action Plan
- Goals & Objectives
- Executive Summary
- Table of Contents

## Existing Land Use

From a planning and statistical geographic information standpoint, changes in land use can be difficult to evaluate. Minor changes in methodology and accounting can have significant impacts on how a property is recorded, both in terms of size and use. As data is updated yearly by the County, these small changes accumulate and can lead to unforeseen results. Because of this uncertainty, we evaluated multiple data sources to determine general trends in land use in Orion Township.

According to numbers reported SEMCOG, while land uses in Orion Township have remained relatively stable, there has been a trend towards residential expansion. Since 2015, Retail, medical, and hospitality uses fell by 128 acres, a 23% decrease, while residential uses (including single and multi-family housing and rural residential housing) increased by 175 acres, or roughly 2%. Increases in recreation and open space land (151.9 acres) were offset by the loss of the Bald Mountain Golf Course (195.7 acres), which has since been developed as a 338-lot housing development.

Official Oakland County GIS data paints a different picture. Parcel data indicates that single-family residential grew by almost 270 acres between 2010 and 2022, a 3.4% increase, while recreation and conservation land uses shrank by nearly 500 acres, an 8.4% decrease. Vacant parcels (480 acres/18% decrease), extractive (143 acres, 94% decrease), and railroad and road right-of-ways (100 acres, 4.8% decrease) also experienced relatively large decreases in area, while commercial (109 acres, 20% increase) and industrial (94 acres, 8% increase) saw significant increases. Some of the differences between 2010 and 2022 can be attributed to simple changes in reporting methods; for example, water increased by 49 acres, which is unlikely in a real-world setting. The macro-level trend is clear, however, and mirror the data reported by SEMCOG; single-family uses are increasing, while recreation and conservation land uses are falling.

**Table 38. Land Use Comparison - SEMCOG**

Land Use	2020 Acres	2015 Acres	Acreage Difference	Percent Difference
Single-Family Residential	5,280.4	5,398.1	117.7	2.2%
Attached Condo Housing	183.3	185.5	2.3	1.2%
Multi-Family Housing	208.5	191.5	-17.1	-8.2%
Mobile Home	73.2	73.2	0	0%
Agricultural/Rural Residential	2,511.9	2,598.6	86.8	3.5%
Mixed Use	14.6	0	-14.6	-100%
Retail	246.2	214.9	-31.3	-12.7%
Office	192.1	110.1	-82.1	-42.7%
Hospitality	53.8	61	7.1	13.3%
Medical	71.7	50.2	-21.5	-30%
Institutional	499.3	487.6	-11.6	-2.3%
Industrial	709.3	731.3	22	3.1%
Recreational/Open Space	4,349	4,501	151.9	3.5%
Cemetery	22.8	22.8	0	0%
Golf Course	684.3	488.6	-195.7	-28.6%
Parking	11.5	11.5	0	0%
Extractive	138	138	0	0%
TCU	638.7	638.7	0	0%
Vacant	3,094.8	3,124.5	29.7	1%
Water	1,475.8	1,475.8	0	0%
Not Parceled	1,719.2	1,675.5	-43.6	-2.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,178.3</b>	<b>22,178.3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>



As residential development increases in the Township, the availability of land for preservation and/or recreation uses will diminish. Orion Township is fortunate to have two large county- and state-owned parks at the heart of the community which help to buffer some of those development pressures, allowing the Township to retain much of its rural character. Newer residential developments tend to form in “cluster” development patterns, reducing lot size in exchange for large, communal open spaces and recreation features. These subdivisions frequently provide their own recreation amenities such as pools, walking trails, and small playgrounds for their residents. While these amenities do not serve the overall Township population, they do serve an important recreation role for neighborhood residents.

Commercial and office land uses remain primarily centered along M-24, with a secondary corridor along Baldwin Road in Gingellville. Industrial land use is primarily centered in southeastern corner of the Township in sections 27, 34, and 35. The M-24 corridor experiences high levels of traffic and acts as a central spur for Township residents. Ideally,

any large, regionally-oriented recreation projects would be positioned on or near this corridor. A few parcels classified as vacant still remain along M-24, and could offer potential for further development.

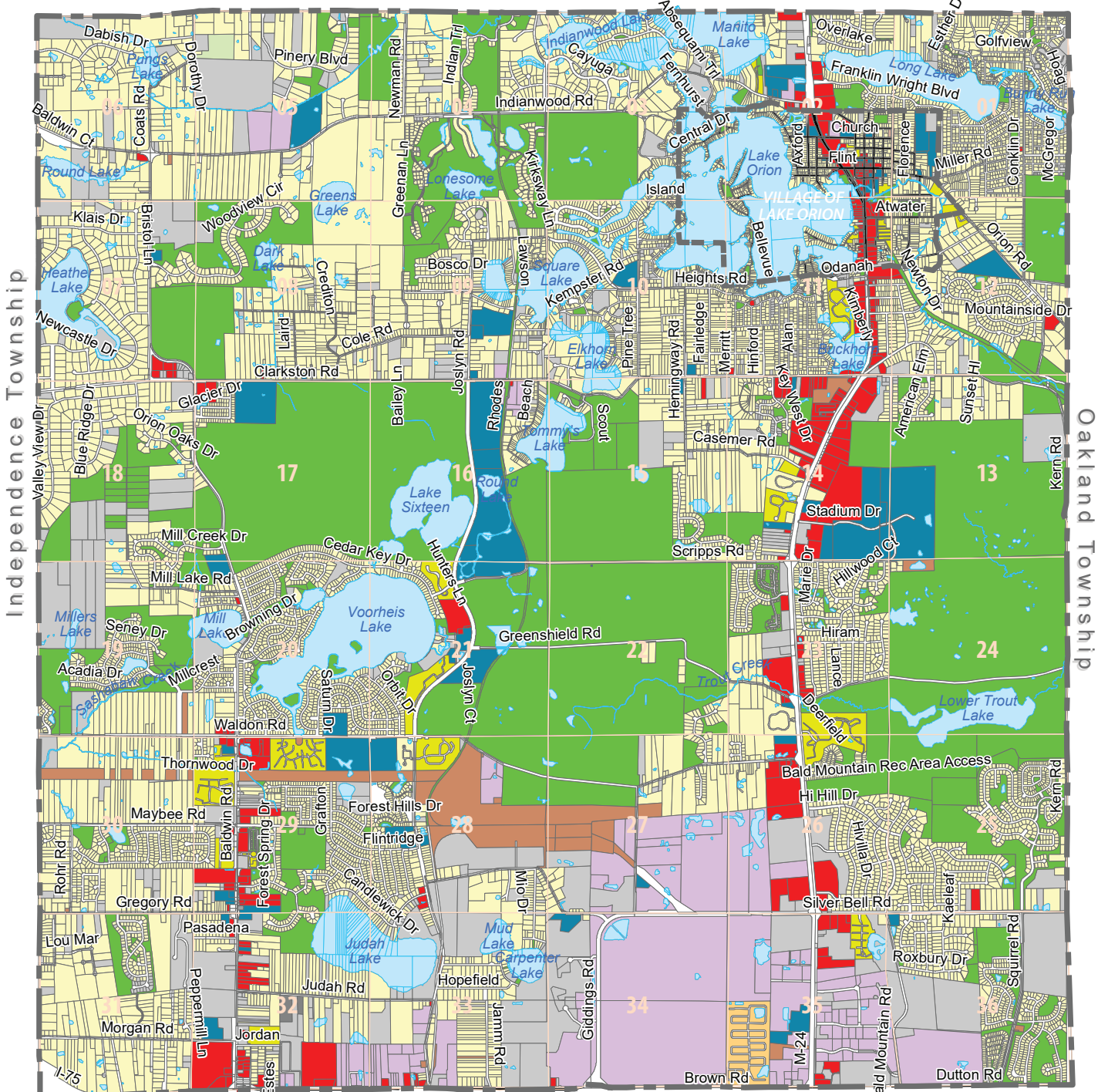
As previously mentioned, recreation and conservation use in the Township is dominated by Orion Oaks and Bald Mountain State Park. These two properties alone make up over 4,000 acres, or 17%, of Orion Township’s land area, and take up much of the middle third of the Township. On the north side of the Township, Friendship Park and two country clubs make up most of the available recreation/open space. On the southern end, Gingell Nature Area and Jesse Decker Park are the two primary open spaces. Comparatively speaking, the southern third of the Township has relatively little public open space.

The Existing Land Use map (Map 13 on page 120) illustrates the land use distribution in the Township.

**Table 39. Land Use Comparison - Oakland County GIS**

Land Use	2022		2010		Acreage Difference	Percent Difference
	Acres	%	Acres	%		
Single-Family Residential	8076.3	34.85%	7808.9	32.6%	267.4	2.22%
Recreation/Conservation	5430.5	23.44%	5926.0	24.8%	-495.5	-1.33%
Vacant	2194.6	9.47%	2675.1	11.2%	-480.5	-1.71%
Water	2144.0	9.25%	2095.3	8.8%	48.8	0.50%
Railroad/Road Right-of-Way	1961.6	8.47%	2061.5	8.6%	-99.9	-0.15%
Industrial	1347.6	5.82%	1253.2	5.2%	94.4	0.58%
Public/Institutional	656.1	2.83%	648.1	2.7%	8.0	0.12%
Commercial/Office	656.1	2.83%	547.3	2.3%	108.8	0.54%
TCU	340.3	1.47%	361.4	1.5%	-21.1	-0.04%
Multiple Family	282.5	1.22%	315.0	1.3%	-32.5	-0.10%
Mobile Home Park	58.7	0.25%	71.8	0.3%	-13.2	-0.05%
Agriculture	15.0	0.06%	15.0	0.1%	0.0	0.00%
Extractive	8.7	0.04%	151.3	0.6%	-142.6	-0.59%
	23929.9		23172.0			

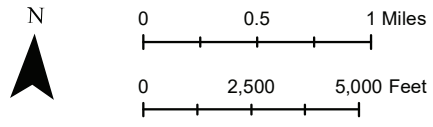
Oxford Township



Independence Township

Oakland Township

Auburn Hills



Single-Family Residential	Recreation/Conservation	Extractive
Multiple Family	Public/Institutional	Transportation/Utility/Communication
Mobile Home Park	Commercial/Office	Right-of-Way
Agricultural	Industrial	Vacant
	Water	

**Existing Land Use**  
Orion Charter Township  
Oakland County

2022 Land Use Data,  
Roads, Tax Parcel, and Rivers Data  
from Oakland County GIS

April 2023  
Carlisle/Wortman Associates, Inc.  
Ann Arbor, Michigan





## Planning Initiatives

Orion Township continues to grow and evolve as new residents are attracted to the community's beauty and amenities. While change is inevitable, it is important to look ahead and plan for the needs of new and existing residents. The Township's Master Plan and County planning initiatives address broad goals to direct future change for the benefit of the Township and County.

### 2021 Orion Charter Township Master Plan

The 2021 Master Plan Update provides a vision for future development in the Township, specifically seeking to prevent overcrowding while encouraging growth through innovative planning and foresight. Protection of open space and natural resources is a key component of the plan, as well as other features which, while not directly recreation-related, have an impact on recreation development in the Township.

- The Plan stresses the importance of incorporating sustainability and resiliency into land use plans. Protecting and enhancing the Township's natural features, improving storm water management techniques, minimizing pollution in area lakes and watersheds, and promoting sustainability concepts are all viewed as critical to the preservation of natural and historic resources.

- Encourages adoption of the "15 minute city" concept, which embraces housing density and the development of four small hamlet/village areas in Gingellville, Friendship Woods, Decker, and Lake Orion. The concept promote walkability and non-motorized transportation development, call for all basic household needs to be located within a 15 minute/one mile walk from home). The Plan also calls for the adoption of a complete streets policy and continued implementation of safety paths through the Zoning and Safety Path Ordinances.
- Recommends promotion of public spaces and development of community gardens and pocket parks.

Community input was sought as part of the Planning process, including an open house which discussed several topics related to the plan. For recreation-specific questions, participants expressed a desire to see heightened environmental awareness and planning in the Township. The group also discussed weaknesses in the current recreation system, expressing concern about a lack of adult beer leagues, volleyball, lake access, a youth recreation center, and basketball courts.

## Orion Township 2013 Safety Paths Plan

The 2013 Safety Path Map provided the basis for trail planning in the community, highlighting the Paint Creek and Polly Ann Trails, as well as the 45 miles of safety paths throughout the Township. At ten years old, the plan is somewhat dated, but still provides a strong framework for ongoing trail planning activities.

### Orion Township GIS

Alignments for existing and planned pathways and trails are now hosted on Orion Township's GIS platform. The platform includes local park trails in Orion Oaks and Bald Mountain, locations of parking lots, bike fix stations, and drinking fountains, and other key amenities. Local parks are notably absent from the map, and should be included in the future.

The platform is located at:

<https://orientwp.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=7fb6fb0aa212451cb7daf38c9b07df30>

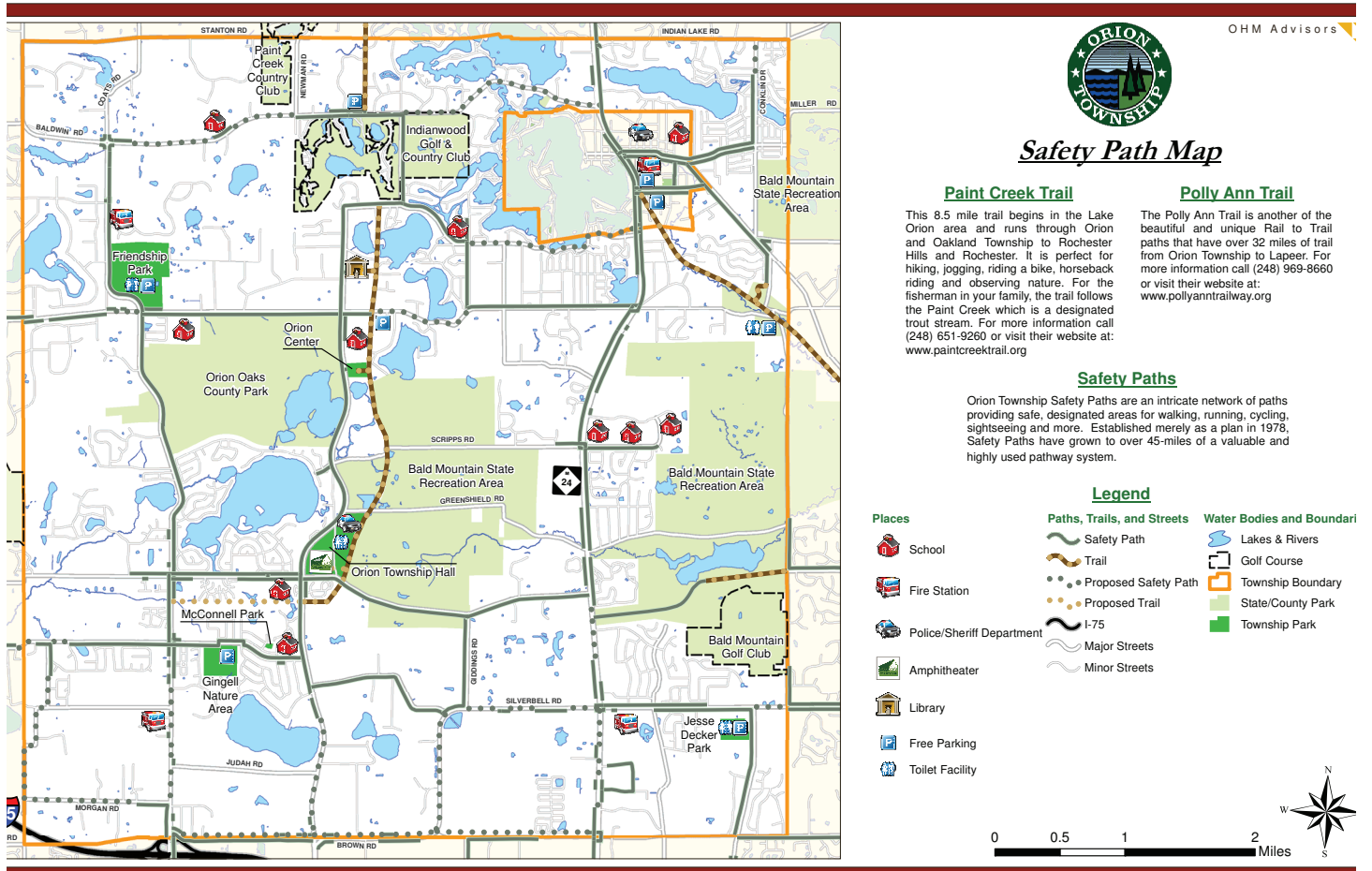
## Oakland County Trails Master Plan

The 2008 Oakland County Trails Master Plan and Oakland County Pathway Concept support for Township safety paths and regional trails through Orion Township. The Pathway Concept map shows a variety of routes beyond the Polly Ann and Paint Creek Trails, including proposed connections to Independence Township and Auburn Hills/Pontiac. Proposed routes include:

- West of Joslyn Road/Polly Ann Trail
- Clarkston Road to Independence Township
- The west extension of Polly Ann Trail, following a stream between Waldon Road and Maybee Road, to Independence Township East of Joslyn Road/Polly Ann Trail
- Waldon Road, through Bald Mountain State Rec Area, to Oakland Township/Kern Road
- Clarkston Road to M-24/Lapeer Road

At almost 16 years old, the plan is somewhat outdated and may include routes that are no longer considered optimal for trail development. The general concept remains valid, however, and can be referred to in future inter-jurisdictional trail development conversations.

Figure 37. Orion Township Safety Paths Plan





### 2013 Polly Ann Trail Master Plan

The Polly Ann Trail is a 16.9 mile linear park overseen by the Polly Ann Trailway Management Council (PATMC). The Council, made up of representatives from the five member communities, makes decisions on the day-to-day operations, maintenance, construction, and management of the corridor. The plan reaffirms the needs for and benefits of trails for transportation and recreation. Two stated goals of particular interest include:

- Expand and improve events. While Orion Township is not explicitly mentioned in this goal, it does open the possibility of creating or continuing special events on the trail such as 5K runs or other activities; and
- Develop and improve connections to area trails, parks, and attractions.

Additional goals such as enhancing safety require input from the member communities. Continued participation in the PATMC and promotion and outreach to community members will be critical to the ongoing success of the trail.

### 2020-2024 Paint Creek Trail Master Plan

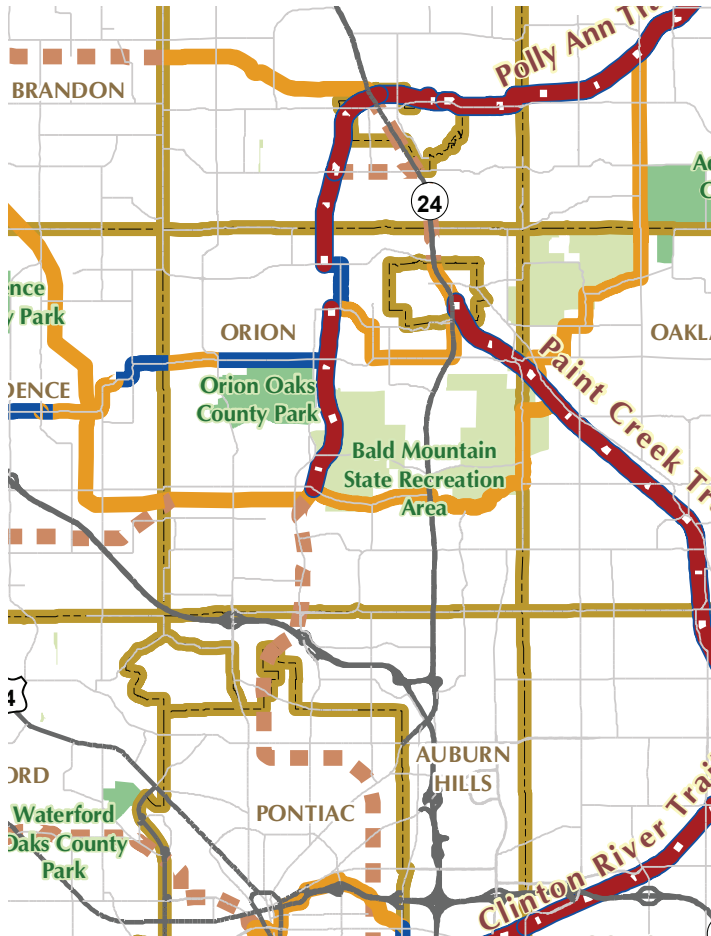
Established in 1981, the Paint Creek Trail is Michigan’s first rail-trail project and has become one of the most popular non-motorized facilities in the state. It was recently incorporated into the State’s Iron Belle Trail, and a connector path constructed in 2020 between the Polly Ann Trail and Paint Creek Trail completed means users now have access to over 65 miles of contiguous off-road pathways.

The 2020-2024 Master Plan includes several items of interest to Orion Township. In particular, action items associated with Goal #3, “Establish efficient connections with other trails”, specifically mentions cooperative agreements with Orion Township, including:

- Coordinate East Clarkston Road Pathway Project, bridge installation, and PCT connection.
- Design of a Bridge traversing the Paint Creek River to connect Bald Mountain South to Bald Mountain North;
- Work with Orion Township and the Village of Lake Orion to encourage active participation from the Village; and
- Design of connections utilizing the Township safety path system.

As with the Polly Ann Trail plan, continued participation and involvement in planning with the Paint Creek Trail Commission will ensure that Orion residents continue to have access to one of the highest quality trail networks in the country.

Figure 38. Oakland County Trails Master Plan Detail



## **Oakland County 2023 – 2027 Parks Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan**

The 10-member Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission (OCPRC) oversees 13 facilities totaling just over 200,000 residents visit the parks each year. Orion Oaks, located in the western-middle section of the Township, contains over 900 acres offering a wide variety of recreation opportunities for area residents, including boating, equestrian facilities, hunting, and a highly popular 24-acre dog park.

The OCPRC adopted the Plan on January 26, 2023. Some of the key concepts which are directly related to Orion Oaks include:

- Improving water access and new opportunities for kayak and canoe launches;
- Continue to implement the ADA Transition Plan;
- Invest in items which will help the system meet environmental sustainability targets; and
- Evaluate options for converting the dog park to a key fob system with annual subscription.

## **SEMCOG Parks and Recreation Plan for Southeast Michigan**

The SEMCOG plan, adopted in 2019, was developed to highlight available recreation resources and ensure that the region’s recreation system meets the needs of residents and visitors. The Plan notes that with over 2,300 parks covering 214,000 acres, over 400 miles of trails and greenways, and 450 miles of designated water trails, the region is well served by local, state, regional, and federal recreation authorities.

With almost 67,000 acres of parkland, Oakland County offers 56 acres of park per 1,000 residents. This level is higher than the region’s average of 43 acres per resident. In terms of pure park availability, Oakland’s acreage is almost double that of the next highest county (Washtenaw at 38,695).

The SEMCOG plan offers several policy recommendations to address recreation development on a regional level. Among the recommendations, prioritization of investment in land acquisition is viewed as necessary to address gaps in access to outdoor recreation facilities. Fostering collaboration among outdoor recreation stakeholders speaks to the need for ongoing cooperation between local and regional recreation authorities. Utilization of universal design principles ensures that facilities are accessible to residents of all abilities. Supporting conservation and stewardship of natural resources recognizes the value of open space and the desire of the region’s residents to have access to natural areas in reasonable proximity to their homes.





## Major Trail Projects

The State of Michigan and Oakland County in particular has seen a boom in non-motorized projects in recent years. The projects are frequently interconnected, and development of one segment can have a significant impact on existing and planned developments in other communities. Orion Township residents are fortunate to already be connected to two of the most important trails in the area. If regional planning efforts continue to progress as anticipated, the trail network available to Orion residents will expand exponentially.

The **Paint Creek Trail** continues south to the City of Rochester where it intersects the **Clinton River Trail**, a 16-mile long route running from Keego Harbor in the west to Rochester in the east. The trail is somewhat unique as it frequently parallels the **Clinton River Bluewater Trail**, a 72-mile long water trail running from Maceday Lake in Waterford Township to Lake St. Clair in Harrison Township.

The surface trail connects with several other major trails and pathways, including the **Macomb Orchard Trail** in Rochester, the **Shelby Township Trail**, the **West Bloomfield Trail**, and the **Michigan Air Line Trail**. This network in turn is part of the much larger **Great Lake-to-Lake Trail**, a 275-mile system which stretches from Port Huron to South Haven. The success of this route has led to planning for four additional routes running from Muskegon to Bay City, Charlevoix to Alpena, Manistique to Marquette, and Escanaba to the Porcupine Mountains.

The most comprehensive system in the state, however, is the **Iron Belle Trail (IBT)**, a 2,000+ mile network stretching from Belle Isle in Detroit to Iron Mountain in the far western Upper Peninsula. The IBT includes a 1,273 mile long hiking route which winds along the west side of the Lower Peninsula and borders Lake Superior in the Upper Peninsula, and a 791 mile long biking trail on the east side of the state and following US-2 in the Upper Peninsula. Since 2012, over \$68 million in grant and local funds and \$155 million in private donations have been collected to complete the trail. The Paint Creek and Polly Ann Trails are key segments of this larger system, both passing through Orion Township.

Finally, the IBT is, in turn, part of the larger **North Country National Scenic Trail** which travels from eastern New York to central North Dakota. The trail passes through seven states along the way, with the longest stretch found in Michigan. At approximately 4,600 miles, it is the longest of the eleven National Scenic Trails.

Figure 41. Great Lake-to-Lake Trails

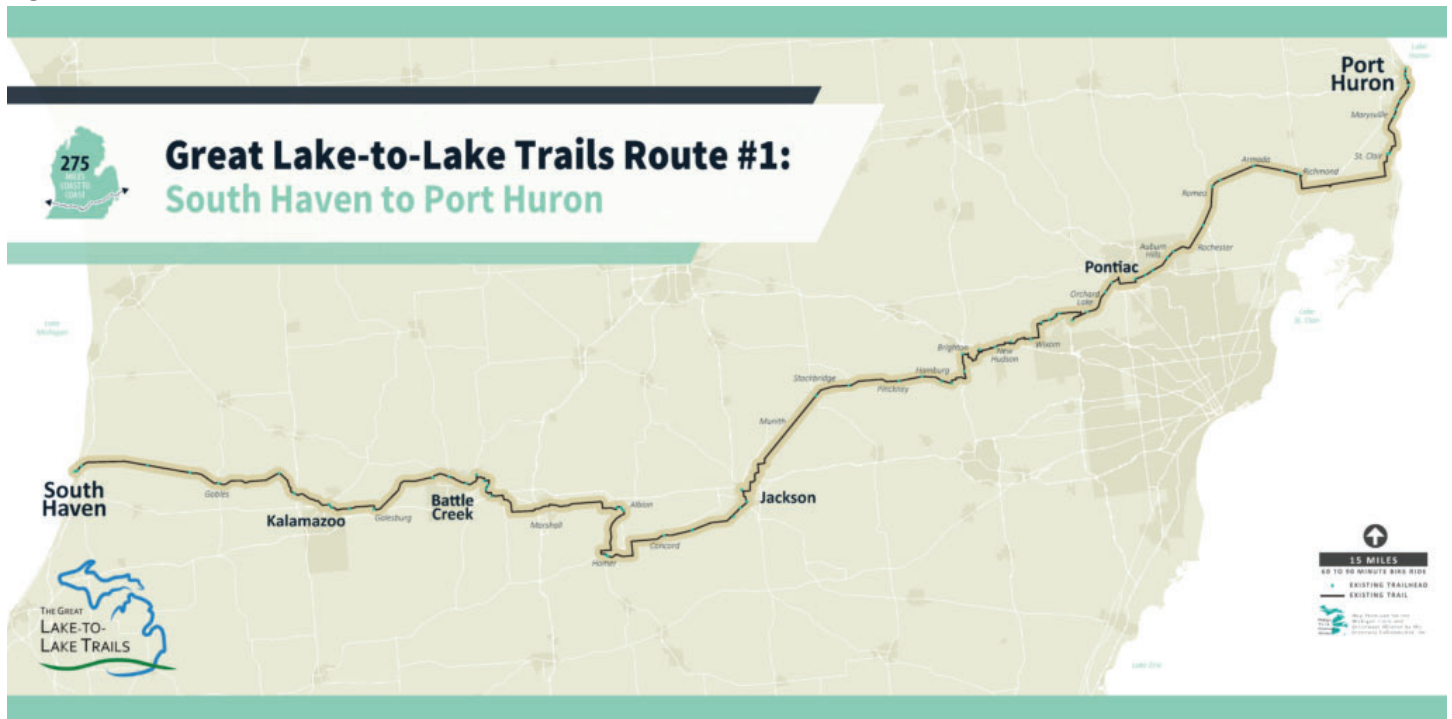
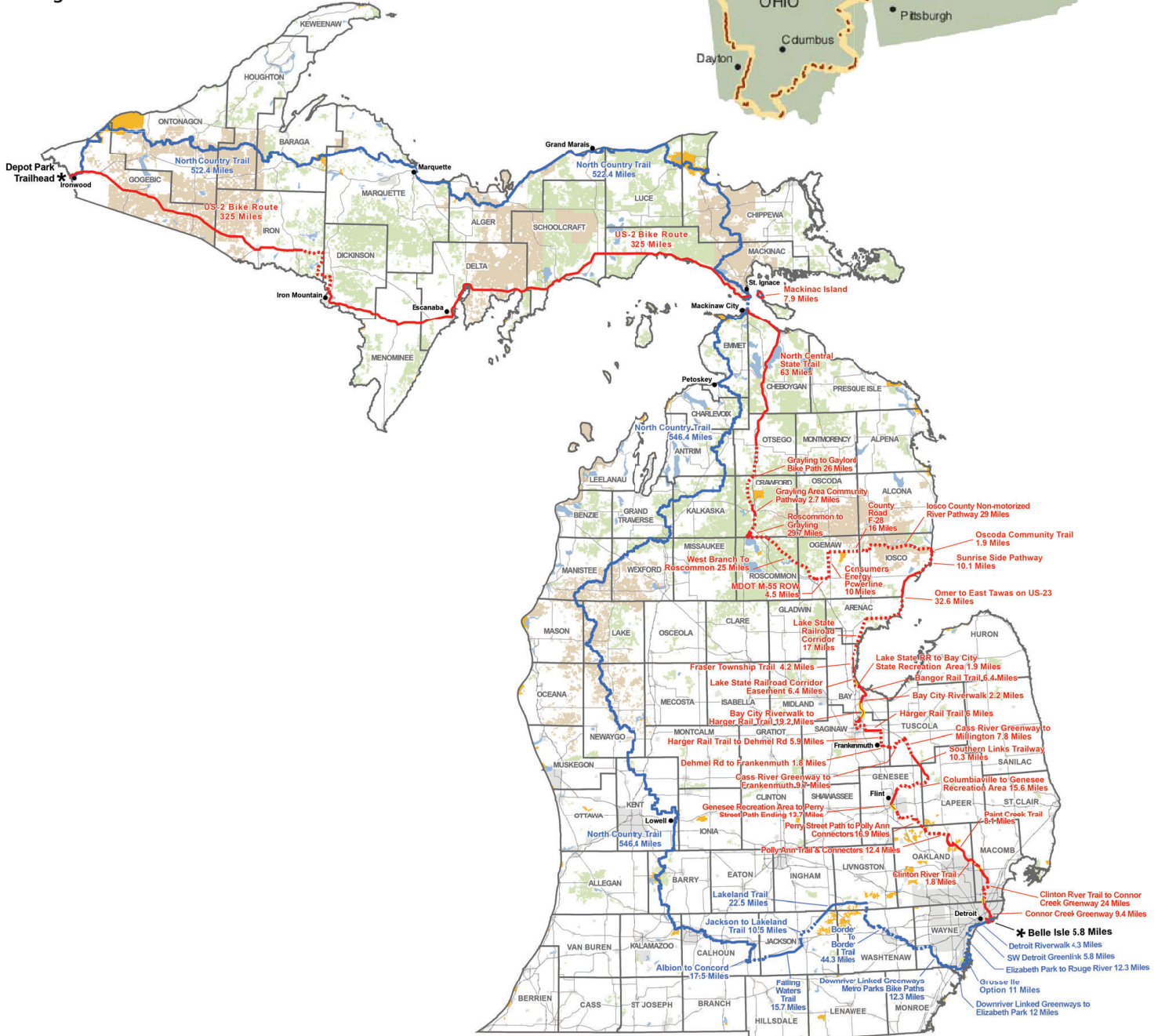




Figure 42. North Country National Scenic Trail



Figure 43. Iron Belle Trail



Community Background

Administrative Structure

Recreation Inventory

Needs Assessment & Public Participation

Action Plan

Goals & Objectives

Executive Summary

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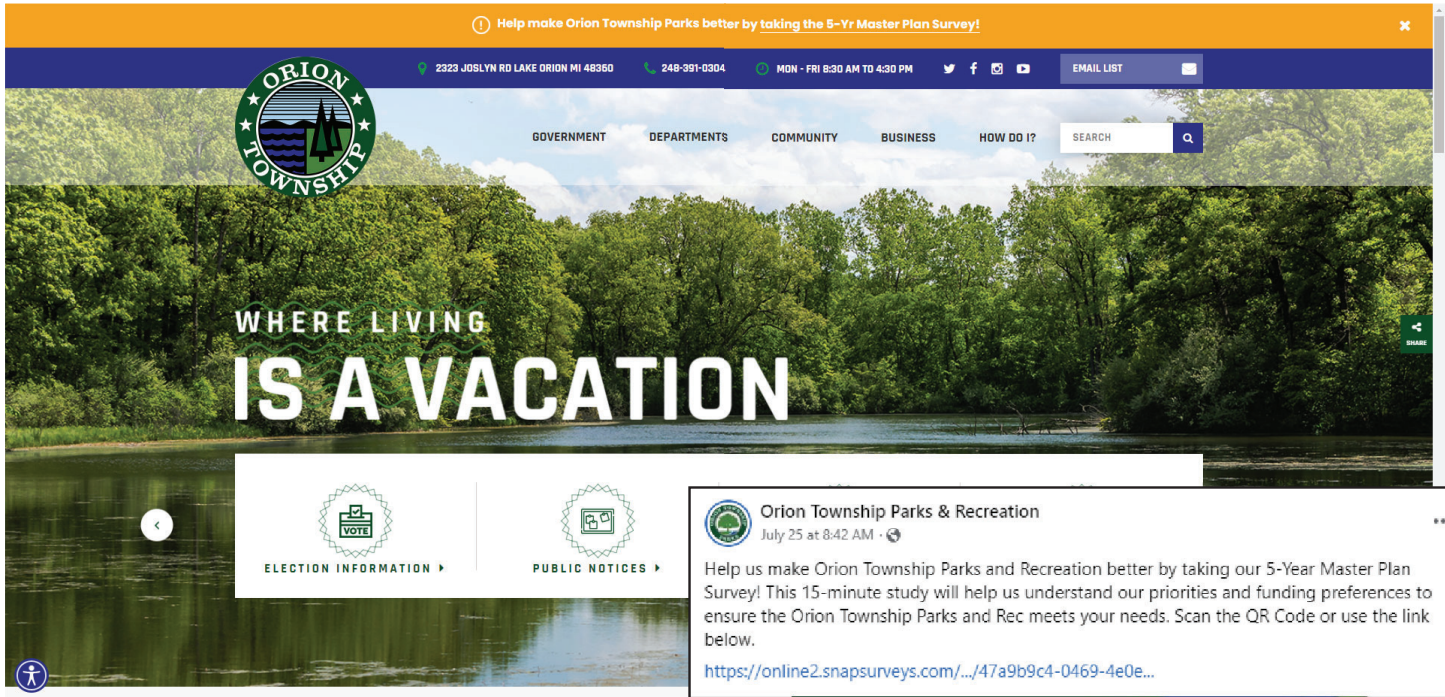




# APPENDICES



# Appendix A. Public Notices



Public input was sought through a combination of a statistically significant survey, an open, community-wide survey, and multiple focus groups. Notices were published on the Township and Parks & Recreation web pages, posted in the Orion Living magazine, and flyers sent with tax bills. See Appendix E for survey results. .

class (i.e. straps, blankets, or blocks). Classes will be under the covered structure, rain or shine. Instructor Heidi Cudney with Surya Yoga, LLC Drop in rate: \$11R/\$12NR



## 2024-2028 Master Plan for Orion Parks

Orion Township Parks and Recreation is currently in the process of creating our Master Plan for 2024-2028. The Recreation Plan will guide park development, recreation programming, and capital improvements for the coming five years. Please be on the lookout for community input throughout the summer.

A community-wide survey will be offered in June and July. Online hard copy versions of the survey will be available.

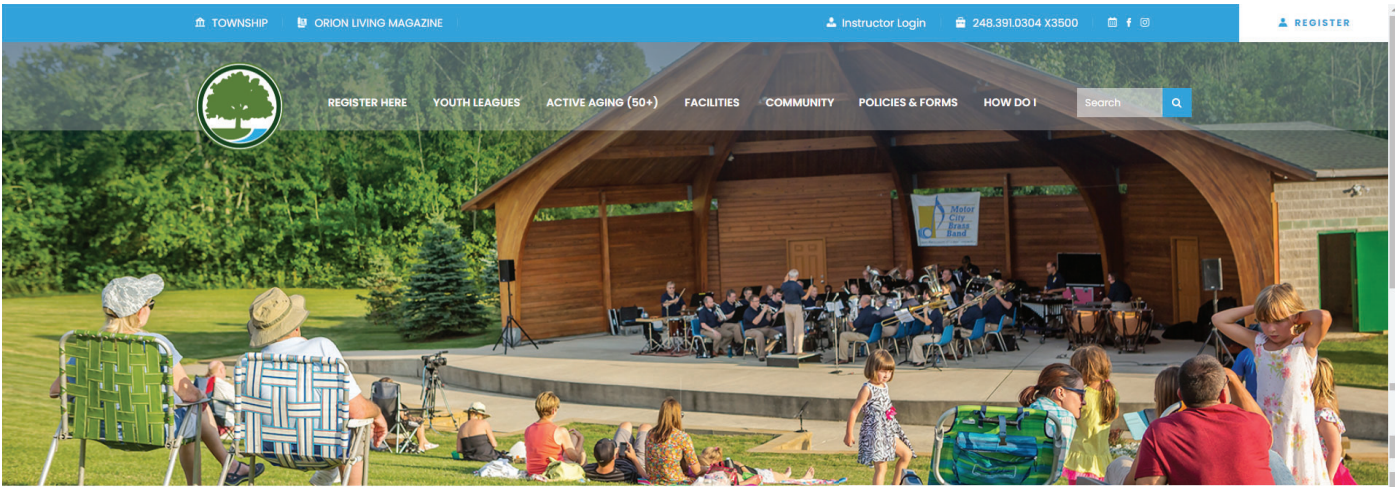
Information available through Sizzle Wild...  
Targeted focus groups will be held to receive input from different demographic categories.

Dates, links to surveys, and more information will be provided on our website at [orionparks.com](http://orionparks.com).



30 Orion Living | Summer 2023





HOME > MORE NEWS > 5-YEAR PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN DRAFT

### 5-YEAR PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN DRAFT

You can view the [5-Year Parks & Recreation Master Plan Draft](#) [here](#). Hard copies will be available at the Orion Township Municipal Complex, 2323 Joslyn Rd, and the Orion Center, 1335 Joslyn Rd.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Because the People Want to Know  
**ORION TWP.**

December 1, 2023

**ORION CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
NOTICE OF PLAN  
AVAILABILITY FOR REVIEW**

Orion Township Parks & Recreation is seeking public input regarding the Orion Township 2024 – 2028 Parks & Recreation Master Plan. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources requires a minimum 30-day public review process as part of the master planning process. A formal public hearing for adoption of the Plan will be held on January 2, 2024, as part of the regularly scheduled Township Board of Trustees meeting.

A hard copy of the draft master plan is available for review at the following locations:

- Orion Center, 1335 Joslyn Road, Lake Orion
- Orion Municipal Complex, 2323 Joslyn Road, Lake Orion

The draft plan is also available online on the Township's website at <https://www.orionparks.com/>, or can be directly accessed at <https://www.calameo.com/read/0051076733579d9e66a9c>.

For questions or comments, please call (248) 391.0304 extension 3500, or e-mail [parksrec@oriontownship.org](mailto:parksrec@oriontownship.org).

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G - Cost Recovery Plan - Draft

F - Recreation Center Study

E - Public Input Summary

D - Letters of Transmittal

C - Resolution of Adoption

B - Minutes of Public Hearing

A - Public Notices

# AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

STATE OF MICHIGAN } SS  
 COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

Claire Vernatter, being first duly sworn, says that (s)he is the Admin. Assistant of The Lake Orion Review, a newspaper published in the English language for the dissemination of local or transmitted news and intelligence of a general character and legal news, which is a duly qualified paper, and that annexed hereto is a copy of a certain order taken from said newspaper, in which the order was published

11/29/23 Claire

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
 Because the People Want to Know  
**ORION TWP.**

December 1, 2023

**ORION CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
 NOTICE OF PLAN  
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- For questions or comments, please call (248) 391.0304 extension 3500, or e-mail [parksrec@oriontownship.org](mailto:parksrec@oriontownship.org).

KASEY E TYSICK  
 Notary Public, State of Michigan  
 County of Lapeer  
 My Commission Expires 08-27-2027  
 Acting in the County of Lapeer

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 29th  
 day of November, 2023

Kasey E Tysick  
 Notary Public, \_\_\_\_\_ County, Michigan

My commission expires \_\_\_\_\_

Prepared by The Lake Orion Review  
 1521 Imlay City Rd  
 PO Box 220  
 Lapeer, MI 48446



# AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

STATE OF MICHIGAN } SS  
COUNTY OF

Claire Vernatter, being first duly sworn, says that (s)he is the Admin. Assistant of The Lake Orion Review, a newspaper published in the English language for the dissemination of local or transmitted news and intelligence of a general character and legal news, which is a duly qualified paper, and that annexed hereto is a copy of a certain order taken from said newspaper, in which the order was published

11/29/23 Claire Vernatter

KASEY E TYSICK  
Notary Public, State of Michigan  
County of Lapeer  
My Commission Expires 08-27-2027  
Acting in the County of Lapeer

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 29th  
day of November, 2023

Kasey E Tysick  
Notary Public, \_\_\_\_\_ County, Michigan

My commission expires \_\_\_\_\_

Prepared by The Lake Orion Review  
1521 Imlay City Rd  
PO Box 220  
Lapeer, MI 48446

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Because the People Want to Know  
**ORION TWP.**  
December 25, 2023  
**ORION CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
NOTICE OF  
PUBLIC HEARING**

Orion Township Parks and Recreation is seeking public input regarding the Orion Township 2024 – 2028 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The hearing will take place as part of the regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting at 7:00 on January 2, 2024, at the Township Municipal Center, 2323 Joslyn Road, Lake Orion.

A draft copy of the plan has been available for review since December 1 and will remain available through the date of the hearing. The plan can be viewed at the following locations:

- Orion Center, 1335 Joslyn Road, Lake Orion
- Orion Municipal Complex, 2323 Joslyn Road, Lake Orion
- The draft plan is also available online on the Township's website at <https://www.orionparks.com/>, or can be directly accessed at <https://www.calameo.com/read/0051076733579d9e66a9c>.
- For questions or comments, please call (248) 391.0304 extension 3500, or e-mail [parksrec@oriontownship.org](mailto:parksrec@oriontownship.org).

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- B - Minutes of Public Hearing
- A - Public Notices

## Appendix B. Minutes of Public Hearing

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF ORION BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES  
RESOLUTION TO ADOPT PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 2, 2024**

---

**1. CALL TO ORDER.** The Charter Township of Orion Board of Trustees held a public hearing on Tuesday, January 2, 2024, at the Orion Township Municipal Complex, 2323 Joslyn Road, Lake Orion, Michigan.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chris Barnett, Penny Shults, Kim Urbanowski, Julia Dalrymple, Mike Flood. **ABSENT:** Brian Birney and Matt Pfeiffer

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Chris Nordstrom Ben Kirby Amy Harris Scott Harris

Supervisor Barnett convened the public hearing at 7:05 p.m.

A Public Hearing was held to allow the public to comment concerning the Resolution to Adopt Parks & Recreation Master Plan.


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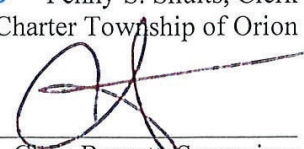
The Public Hearing was held from 7:05 p.m. to 7:06 p.m.

---

Seeing and hearing no citizens were interested in providing comments related to the Resolution to Adopt Parks & Recreation Master Plan, Supervisor Barnett adjourned the Public Hearing at 7:06 p.m.

Transcription: Lynnae Smith

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Penny S. Shults, Clerk  
Charter Township of Orion

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chris Barnett, Supervisor



**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF ORION BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES, REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY, JANUARY 2, 2024**

---

**1. CALL TO ORDER.** The Charter Township of Orion Board of Trustees held a regular meeting on January 2, 2024, at the Orion Township Municipal Complex Board Room, 2323 Joslyn Road, Lake Orion, MI 48360 at 6:00 p.m.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chris Barnett, Penny Shults, Kim Urbanowski, Julia Dalrymple, Mike Flood.

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Brian Birney and Matt Pfeiffer

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Chris Nordstrom Ben Kirby Amy Harris Scott Harris

**2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE:** Clerk Shults gave the invocation. All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. PUBLIC HEARING:**

**A. Resolution to Adopt Parks & Recreation Master Plan.** Public hearing was held from 7:05 p.m. to 7:06 p.m. to provide the public an opportunity to comment on the Resolution to Adopt Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

**4. PRESENTATION:**

**A. LOCS Millage Presentation.** Presentation was provided by Lake Orion Community Schools, regarding the Non-Homestead and Sinking Fund Replacement Proposals.

**5. APPROVAL OF BILLS.** Moved by Treasurer Urbanowski, seconded by Trustee Flood to authorize payment in the amount of \$1,138,295.57 and payrolls in the amount of \$407,934.57. Total disbursement of funds in the amount of \$1,546,230.14 as presented.  
AYES: Dalrymple, Flood, Urbanowski, Barnett, Shults. ABSENT: Birney and Pfeiffer  
NAYS: None MOTION CARRIED

**6. PUBLIC COMMENT:** Public comments were not heard.

**7. APPROVAL OF AGENDA.** Moved by Trustee Flood, seconded by Trustee Dalrymple to approve the agenda as amended, Public Hearing added. MOTION CARRIED

**8. CONSENT AGENDA.**

**A. Minutes – Regular Meeting, December 18, 2023 –** Approve as presented.

**B. Orion Community Cable Communications Commission 2024 Proposed Budget.** Receive and file the Township’s portion of the Joint Resolution of the Village Council of the Village of Lake Orion and the Board of Trustees of the Charter Township of Orion, as presented, and direct the Clerk to forward a certified copy to the Village of Lake Orion and the OCCCC.

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF ORION BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES, REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY, JANUARY 2, 2024**

---

- C. Audit – Financial Statements of the Orion Community Cable Communications Commission.** Receive and file the Auditor’s Report for OCCCC as of and for the year ending December 31, 2022.
- D. VC3 Contract Renewal.** Approve the Agreement between Orion Township and VC3 for the provision of IT Services to the Township and authorize the Township Supervisor to execute the same.
- E. Mill Lake Gardens Private Road Maintenance SAD #5 – Authorize Cost Estimate.** Authorize the Supervisor’s Office to proceed with the preparation of the work plan and cost estimate.
- F. 2024 Sewer Rehab Project.** Approve the Orion Township Sewer Rehabilitation Project for 2024 and authorize the Public Services Department with OHM Advisors to advertise for bids as presented.
- G. Pine Tree Rd. and Cushing Rd. Pump Station Rehabilitation.** Approve the advertisement for bids for Pine Tree Rd. and Cushing Rd. Pump Station Rehabilitation Projects.
- H. Resident Emergency Notification System.** Approve the Resident Emergency Notification System as presented.
- I. Purchase Computer Replacements.** Authorize the purchase of computer replacements as requested.
- J. Spending Limits & Bidding Policy.** Approve the revised Spending Limits & Bidding Policy effective January 2, 2024.
- K. Credit Card Usage Policy.** Authorize the position of Parks and Recreation Assistant Director to be added to the Credit Card Usage Policy list of positions issued a credit card in the name of the employee holding that position. And to authorize changes to the policy to update the position name Director of Parks, Recreation and Facilities, as well as Parks Superintendent.
- L. Resolution – Updated Fire Department Fee Schedule.** Adopt the Resolution to Approve Cost Recovery Fee Schedule and authorize the Clerk to execute and file the same.
- M. Agreement for Oakland County Assessing Services.** Approve the Resolution to approve the Oakland County Equalization Division Assistance For Real and Personal Property Assessment Administrative Services Contract between Orion Township and Oakland County and authorize the Township Supervisor and the Township Clerk to execute same.

Moved by Clerk Shults, seconded by Trustee Dalrymple to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. AYES: Barnett, Shults, Dalrymple, Flood, Urbanowski.  
ABSENT: Barnett and Birney    NAYS: None    MOTION CARRIED



**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF ORION BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES, REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY, JANUARY 2, 2024**

---

**9. PENDING**

- A. Action After Hearing – Resolution Adopting Orion Township Parks & Recreation Master Plan.** Moved by Clerk Shults, seconded by Trustee Dalrymple to approve the Resolution to Adopt the Orion Township Parks & Recreation Master Plan as submitted. AYES: Shults, Dalrymple, Flood, Urbanowski, Barnett. ABSENT: Birney and Pfeiffer NAYS: None MOTION CARRIED
- B. Liquor License Extension request – Sweet Amy’s Eating House.** Moved by Trustee Flood, seconded by Clerk Shults to adopt a resolution extending the Agreement regarding Honest to Goodness Breakfast and Smoothies, LLC d/b/a Sweet Amy’s Eating House’s approval of a Class “C” Liquor License for an additional six (6) months beginning January 13, 2024. AYES: Dalrymple, Flood Urbanowski, Barnett, Shults. ABSENT: Birney and Pfeiffer NAYS: None MOTION CARRIED
- C. Liquor License Extension request – Willow Creek.** Moved by Clerk Shults, seconded by Trustee Dalrymple to adopt a resolution extending the Agreement regarding Willow Creek Entertainment Center’s approval of a Class “C” Liquor License for an additional six (6) months from today’s date, conditioned upon the execution of an Agreement Regarding Issuance or Transfer of Class C Liquor License by February 1, 2024. AYES: Dalrymple, Flood Urbanowski, Barnett, Shults. ABSENT: Birney and Pfeiffer NAYS: None MOTION CARRIED

**10. REPORTS**

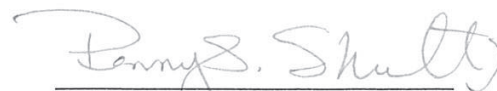
- A. Police/Fire Reports.** Moved by Treasurer Urbanowski, seconded by Trustee Flood to receive and file as presented. MOTION CARRIED

**11. PUBLIC COMMENT.** Public comments were not heard.

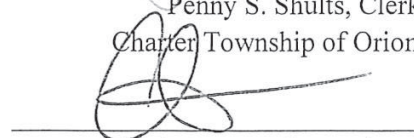
**12. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS.** Board member comments were heard.

**13. ADJOURNMENT.** Moved by Trustee Flood, seconded by Treasurer Urbanowski to adjourn. MOTION CARRIED. The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Transcription: Lynnae Smith



Penny S. Shults, Clerk  
Charter Township of Orion



Chris Barnett, Supervisor

## Appendix C. Resolutions of Adoption

ORION TOWNSHIP  
OAKLAND COUNTY, MICHIGAN

A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE  
ORION TOWNSHIP PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN

JANUARY 2, 2024

**WHEREAS**, the Orion Township Parks & Recreation Department has undertaken a planning process to determine the recreation needs and desires of its residents during a five-year period covering the years 2024 to 2028; and

**WHEREAS**, Parks & Recreation began the process of developing a Parks & Recreation Plan in accordance with the most recent guidelines developed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and made available to local communities; and

**WHEREAS**, Parks & Recreation has developed the plan as a guideline for improving recreation opportunities for Orion Township; and

**WHEREAS**, residents of Orion Township were provided with a multiple well-advertised opportunities during the development of the draft plan to express opinions, ask questions, and discuss all aspects of the Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the public was given a well-advertised opportunity and reasonable accommodations to review the final draft plan for a period of at least 30 days; and

**WHEREAS**, a public hearing was held on January 2, 2024, at Orion Township Hall to provide an opportunity for all residents of the Township to express opinions, ask questions, and discuss all aspects of the Orion Township 2024 – 2028 Parks & Recreation Master Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, after the public hearing, the Board of Trustees voted to adopt said Orion Township 2024 – 2028 Parks & Recreation Master Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the plan serves as a guideline for park land, open space, and recreation planning by Parks & Recreation; and

**WHEREAS**, the plan also serves as a planning tool for other Township boards and commissions, such as the Planning Commission, Board of Trustees, and Parks & Paths Advisory Committee; and

**WHEREAS**, the adoption of a five-year plan is mandated by the Department of Natural Resources for eligibility for DNR-administered grants; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Orion Township Board of Trustees hereby adopts the Orion Township Parks & Recreation Master Plan for the years 2024 – 2028.



**ORION TOWNSHIP  
OAKLAND COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

**A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE  
ORION TOWNSHIP PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN**

**JANUARY 2, 2024**

**CERTIFICATION STATEMENT**

I, Penny Shults, the duly qualified Clerk of Orion Charter Township, Oakland County, Michigan, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted at a regular meeting of the Orion Charter Township Board of Trustees meeting held on January 2, 2024, and that public notices of said meeting were given pursuant to Act No. 267, Public Acts of Michigan, 1976, as amended.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Penny Shults

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Certified

## Appendix D. Letters of Transmittal



**Carlisle | Wortman**  
ASSOCIATES, INC.

117 NORTH FIRST STREET SUITE 70 ANN ARBOR, MI 48104 734.662.2200 734.662.1935 FAX

---

January 25, 2024

Kristen Wiltfang  
Administrator Trails, Transportation & Environment  
Planning and Local Business Development Division  
Economic Development Department  
Oakland County, Michigan  
2100 Pontiac Lake Road  
Waterford, Michigan 48328

Dear Ms. Wiltfang:

The Orion Township Board of Trustees adopted the 2024 – 2028 Parks & Recreation Master Plan at a meeting held on January 2, 2024. The plan has been uploaded to the MDNR website for their review and approval. The plan will be subject to future review and updates as deemed necessary by the Board.

Please feel free to contact Aaron Whatley, Director of Parks, Recreation, & Facilities, or myself if you have any comments regarding this plan.

Thank you for your consideration,



**CARLISLE/WORTMAN ASSOC., INC.**

**Chris Nordstrom, PLA, ASLA**  
**Landscape Architect**

cc. Aaron Whatley  
Chelsie Petrusha

*Benjamin R. Carlisle, President John L. Enos, Vice President Douglas J. Lewan, Principal*  
*David Scurto, Principal Sally M. Elmiger, Principal R. Donald Wortman, Principal Craig Strong, Principal*  
*Paul Montagno, Principal, Megan Masson-Minock, Principal, Laura Kreps, Principal*  
*Richard K. Carlisle, Past President/Senior Principal*





**Carlisle | Wortman**  
ASSOCIATES, INC.

117 NORTH FIRST STREET SUITE 70 ANN ARBOR, MI 48104 734.662.2200 734.662.1935 FAX

- G - Cost Recovery Plan - Draft
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- A - Public Notices

January 25, 2024

Jaylyn King  
Regional Review Office  
Southeast Michigan Council of Governments  
1001 Woodward Avenue, Suite 1400  
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Dear Mr. King:

The Orion Township Board of Trustees adopted the 2024 – 2028 Parks & Recreation Master Plan at a meeting held on January 2, 2024. The plan has been uploaded to the MDNR website for their review and approval. The plan will be subject to future review and updates as deemed necessary by the Board.

Please feel free to contact Aaron Whatley, Director of Parks, Recreation, & Facilities, or myself if you have any comments regarding this plan.

Thank you for your consideration,

**CARLISLE/WORTMAN ASSOC., INC.**  
**Chris Nordstrom, PLA, ASLA**  
**Landscape Architect**

cc. Aaron Whatley  
Chelsie Petruscha

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David Scurto, Principal Sally M. Elmiger, Principal R. Donald Wortman, Principal Craig Strong, Principal  
Paul Montagno, Principal, Megan Masson-Minock, Principal, Laura Kreps, Principal  
Richard K. Carlisle, Past President/Senior Principal*

# Appendix E. Public Input Summary

## ORION TOWNSHIP 2024 - 2028 PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### Public Participation - Abridged Survey Results

A random sample of Township residents was surveyed by Cobalt Community Survey beginning in May of 2023. The sample included 4,000 residents drawn from the Township voter registration, and was conducted using two mailings in May and June. Each participant was issued a unique ID number to ensure only one response per resident. Responses were provided either online or via postage-paid envelopes. Valid responses were received from 650 residents, providing a margin of error of +/- 3.7 percent.

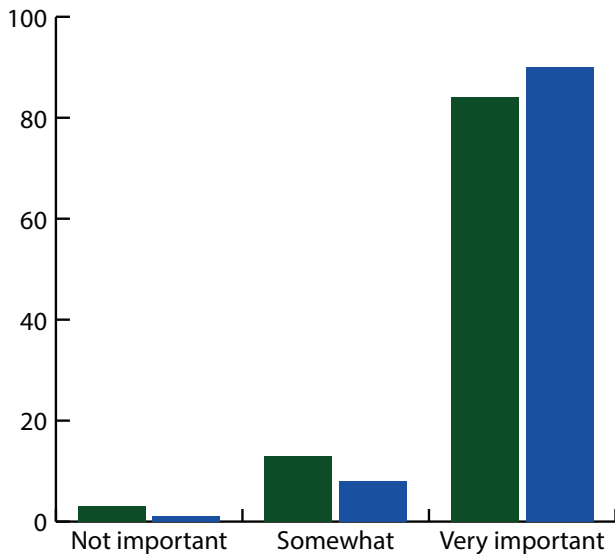
1,058 individuals who were not part of the sample group also provided their input. The survey notice was provided in the Township's summer tax bill and advertised through the Parks & Recreation website and social media.

The following pages is an abridged summary of the survey results. Due to the voluminous amount of responses received, open-ended "distribution" responses are not included in this report. Each response was reviewed individually and placed into general categories. Responses which met multiple criteria were counted in each appropriate category. This summary provides a comparison of the information received from both the sample and non-sample groups.

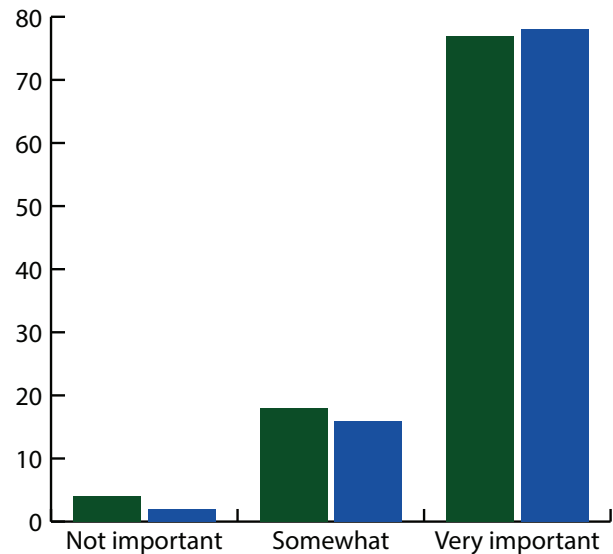
An unabridged version of this report is available upon request at the Parks & Recreation offices.

### Question 1. How important are the following items to you and your family?

Maintaining existing parks and recreation facilities



Protecting natural resources



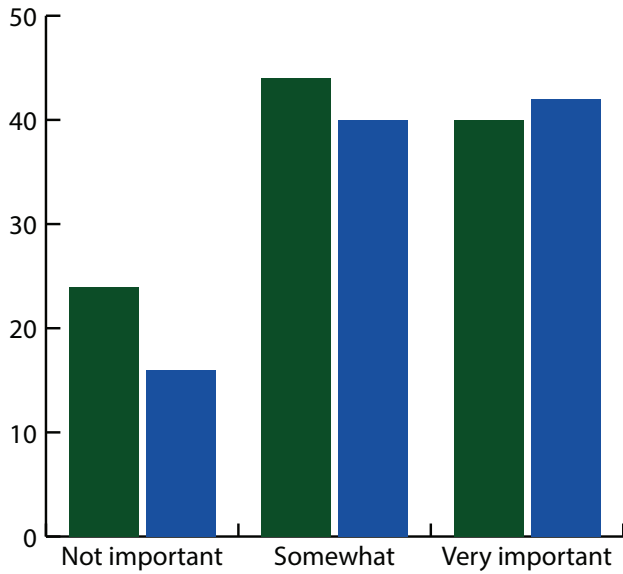
Rating	Sample Group	Non-Sample Group	Percent Difference
Not at all important	3%	1%	2%
Somewhat important	13%	8%	5%
Very important	84%	90%	-6%

Rating	Sample Group	Non-Sample Group	Percent Difference
Not at all important	4%	2%	2%
Somewhat important	18%	16%	2%
Very important	77%	78%	-1%

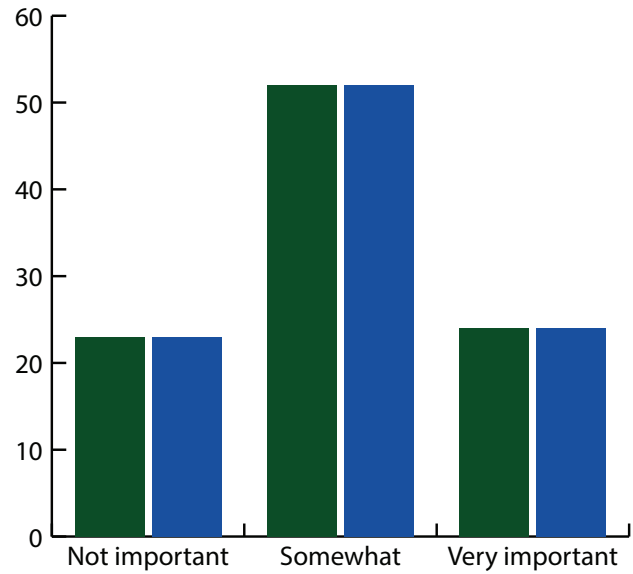


Question 1. How important are the following items to you and your family? (continued)

Acquiring and developing new parks and recreation facilities



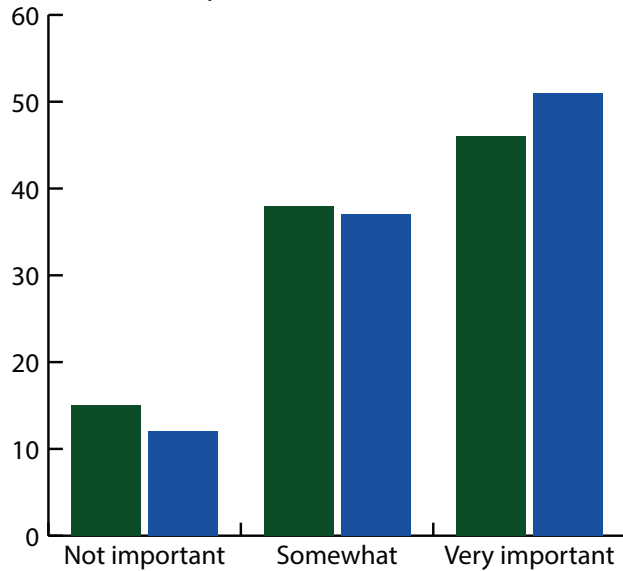
Access to rental facilities (shelters, pavilions, tent sites, indoor banquet rooms)



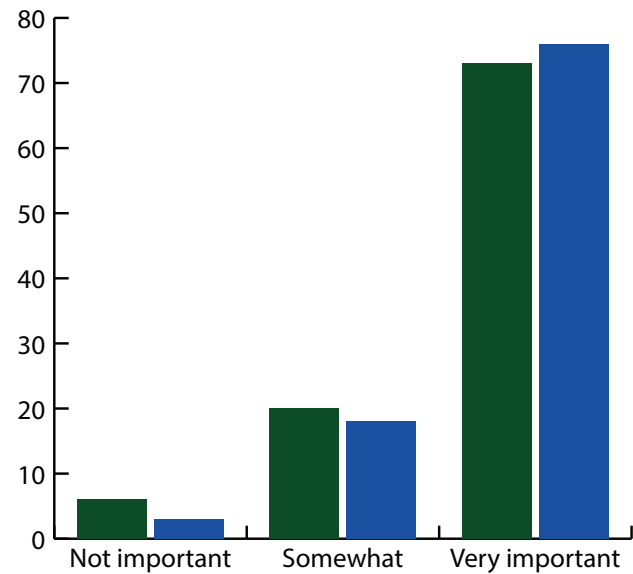
Rating	Sample Group	Non-Sample Group	Percent Difference
Not at all important	24%	16%	8%
Somewhat important	44%	40%	4%
Very important	30%	42%	-12%

Rating	Sample Group	Non-Sample Group	Percent Difference
Not at all important	23%	23%	0%
Somewhat important	52%	52%	0%
Very important	24%	24%	0%

Access to active use facilities (e.g. soccer, football, baseball, tennis, pickleball, etc.)



Access to paths and trails



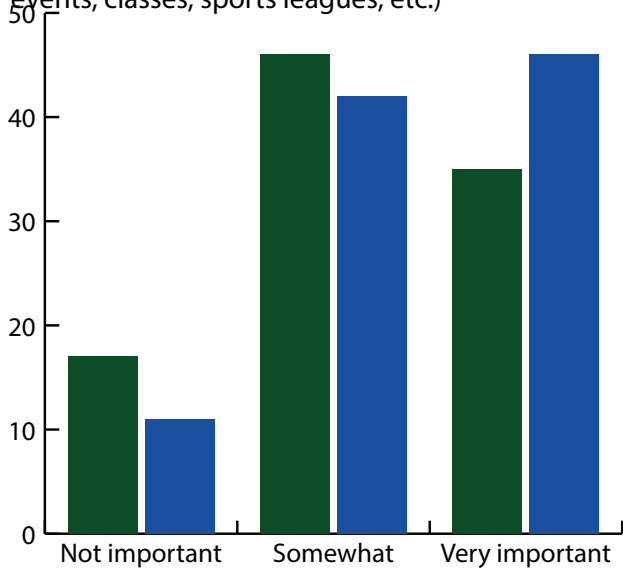
Rating	Sample Group	Non-Sample Group	Percent Difference
Not at all important	15%	12%	3%
Somewhat important	38%	37%	1%
Very important	46%	51%	-5%

Rating	Sample Group	Non-Sample Group	Percent Difference
Not at all important	6%	3%	3%
Somewhat important	20%	18%	2%
Very important	73%	76%	-3%

■ = Sample Group    ■ = Non-Sample Group

Question 1. How important are the following items to you and your family? (continued)

Access to recreation programming (e.g. special events, classes, sports leagues, etc.)

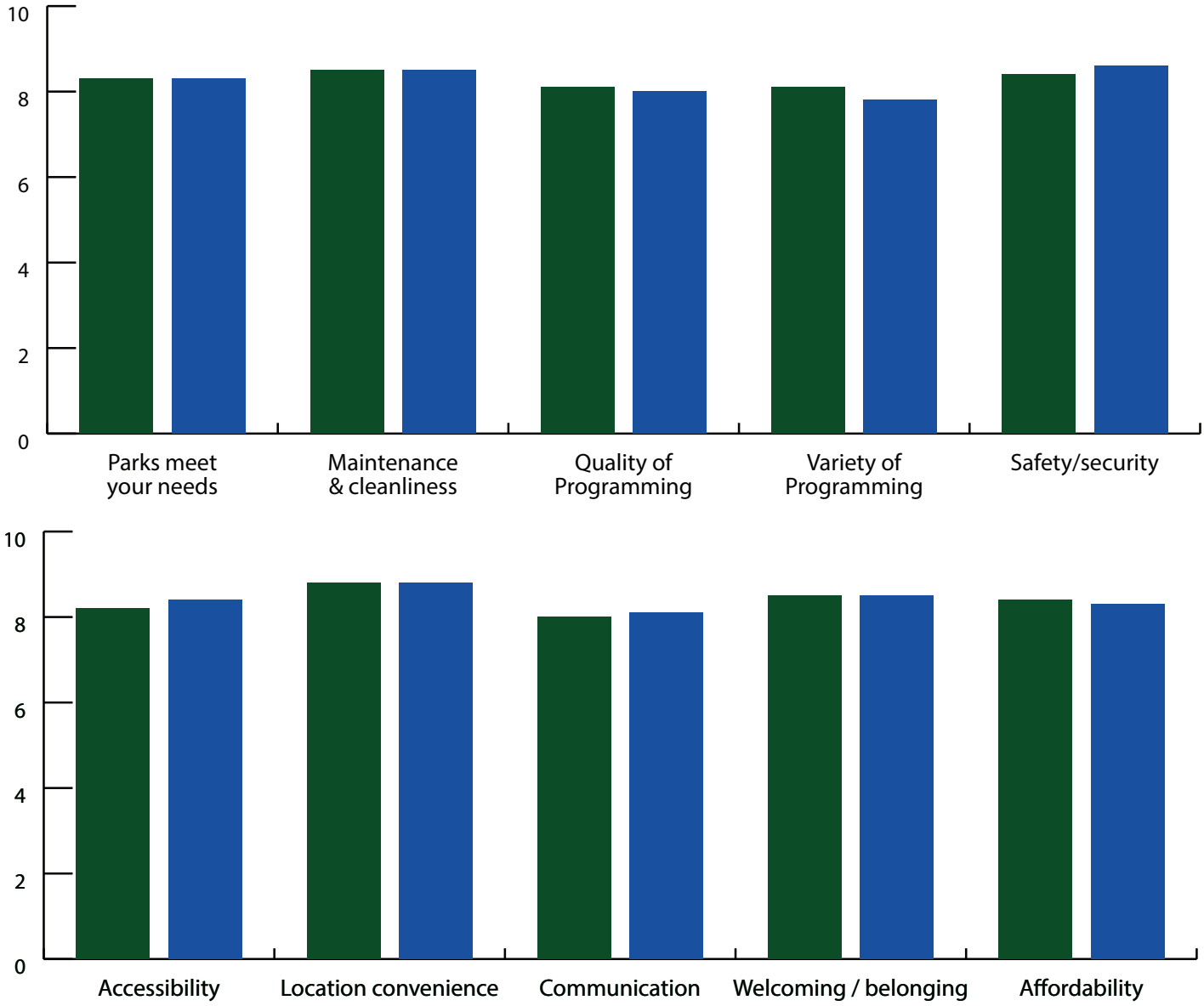


Rating	Sample Group	Non-Sample Group	Percent Difference
Not at all important	17%	11%	6%
Somewhat important	46%	42%	4%
Very important	35%	46%	-11%

= Sample Group      = Non-Sample Group



**Question 2. Rate Orion Township’s local parks and recreation facilities and programs on the following attributes using a scale where 1 means “Poor” and 10 means “Excellent.”**



Rating	Sample Group	Non-Sample Group	Difference	Average
Parks/facilities meet your needs	8.3	8.3	0	8.3
Parks/facility maintenance and cleanliness	8.5	8.5	0	8.5
Quality of recreational programs	8.1	8	0.1	8.05
Variety of recreational programs	8.1	7.8	0.3	7.95
Safety/security	8.4	8.6	-0.2	8.5
Access for people with disabilities/mobility challenged	8.2	8.4	-0.2	8.3
Location convenience	8.8	8.8	0	8.8
Communication of parks and recreation activities and offerings	8	8.1	-0.1	8.05
Feeling of being welcome/belonging	8.5	8.5	0	8.5
Affordability of participation fees	8.4	8.3	0.1	8.35

= Sample Group    
  = Non-Sample Group

### Question 3. Briefly, what would be the most important improvements to raise your ratings above?

#### Top Ten - Sample Group

1. Communication
2. Maintenance & Cleanliness
3. Safety paths/walking/biking
4. Safety / security
5. Pickleball
6. Natural areas / preservation
6. Pleased with local parks
8. I do not use parks
8. Adaptive programs & facilities
10. More parks

#### Top Ten - Non-Sample Group

1. Maintenance & Cleanliness
2. Safety paths/walking/biking
3. Pickleball
4. Communication
4. Restrooms
6. Adaptive programs & facilities
7. Pleased with local parks
8. Safety / security
9. Fees / Costs of events & facilities
9. Natural areas / preservation

#### Top Ten - Overall Ranking

1. Maintenance & Cleanliness
2. Communication
3. Safety paths/walking/biking
4. Pickleball
5. Safety / security
6. Adaptive programs & facilities
7. Pleased with local parks
7. Restrooms
9. Natural areas / preservation
10. Senior programs & facilities

Comment/Topic	Sample Group		Non-Sample Group		Combined Results	
	# responses	rank	# responses	rank	# of responses	Overall rank
<b>Facility Mentions</b>						
Camp Agawam	3	4	6	5	9	5
Civic Center Park	2	6	12	2	14	2
Friendship Park	4	3	16	1	20	1
Jesse Decker	3	4	8	3	11	4
McConnell Field	2	6	0	14	2	13
Orion Center	0	12	3	7	3	9
Playful Dragon Pocket Park	0	12	1	13	1	14
Wildwood	0	12	3	7	3	9
09 Paint Creek Trail	1	8	2	11	3	9
Polly Ann Trail	5	1	3	7	8	6
Atwater Park (Lake Orion)	0	12	4	6	4	7
Children's Park (Lake Orion)	1	8	2	11	3	9
Greens Park (Lake Orion)	1	8	3	7	4	7
Meeks Park (Lake Orion)	1	8	0	14	1	14
Orion Oaks (Oakland County)	5	1	7	4	12	3
<b>Topic Mentions</b>						
Additional fields	0	63	1	61	1	76
ATV/Motorized facilities	2	33	0	88	2	55
Banquet Facilities	0	63	1	61	1	76
Baseball	3	28	3	36	6	34
Baseball	1	46	1	61	2	55
Basketball	2	33	3	36	5	36
Benches	1	46	0	88	1	76
Better maps	2	33	2	43	4	41
Boat docks/rental	0	63	2	43	2	55
Bocce ball	0	63	1	61	1	76
Camping	1	46	0	88	1	76
Coaches	2	33	1	61	3	47
Communication	30	1	22	4	52	2
Concerts	1	46	1	61	2	55



Question 3. What would be the most important improvements to raise your ratings (continued)

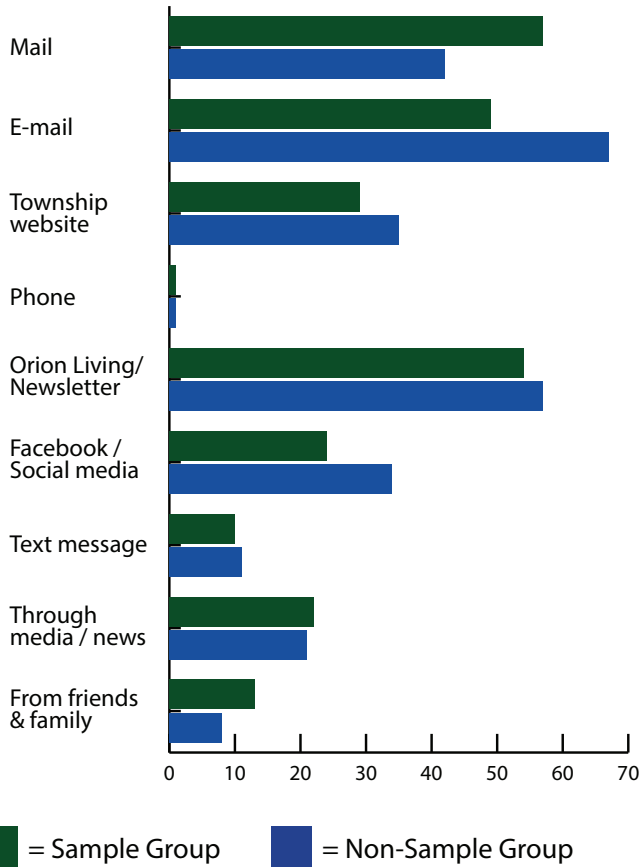
Comment/Topic	Sample Group		Non-Sample Group		Combined Results	
	# responses	rank	# responses	rank	# of responses	Overall rank
Concessions/food access	2	33	1	61	3	47
Cooling stations	0	63	1	61	1	76
Cooperation with other recreation providers	0	63	2	43	2	55
Cornhole	0	63	2	43	2	55
Covered dugouts/bleachers	1	46	2	43	3	47
Disc golf	2	33	1	61	3	47
Diversity of park programming	0	63	2	43	2	55
Do not use parks	12	8	0	88	12	19
Dog waste stations	0	63	3	36	3	47
Dogs/off leash/cleanup	3	28	6	21	9	25
Fees / cost of events & facilities	6	17	14	9	20	11
Fishing	0	63	2	43	2	55
Fitness trail	0	63	1	61	1	76
Fix roads	1	46	1	61	2	55
Flag football	1	46	0	88	1	76
Flooding/drainage	0	63	2	43	2	55
Free activities	0	63	3	36	3	47
Game stations / tables (chess, etc.)	0	63	1	61	1	76
Golf course	1	46	0	88	1	76
Gym	0	63	1	61	1	76
Hockey / ice rink	5	21	4	32	9	25
Hunting/shooting	2	33	2	43	4	41
Improved crosswalks	2	33	5	25	7	33
Indoor facility / rec center	2	33	9	15	11	21
Kickball	0	63	1	61	1	76
Lacrosse	0	63	10	12	10	24
Lake access/beach	3	28	5	25	8	29
Landscaping	1	46	2	43	3	47
Lighting/electricity	2	33	0	88	2	55
Maintenance/cleanliness	29	2	34	1	63	1
More parks	11	10	7	19	18	14
More sports fields	1	46	3	36	4	41
Mosquitos/ticks/insects	1	46	1	61	2	55
Mountain bike trails	2	33	3	36	5	36
Movie nights	1	46	0	88	1	76
Natural area / preservation	13	6	14	9	27	9
Park access to Orion Oaks	0	63	1	61	1	76
Pave/improve driveways and parking	10	11	5	25	15	16
Pavilion	1	46	0	88	1	76
Pickleball courts	14	5	29	3	43	4
Pilates / yoga	0	63	2	43	2	55
Playground - more/upgrade	1	46	8	18	9	25

Question 3. What would be the most important improvements to raise your ratings (continued)

Comment/Topic	Sample Group		Non-Sample Group		Combined Results	
	# responses	rank	# responses	rank	# of responses	Overall rank
Pleased with parks	13	6	17	7	30	7
Programming - nature	0	63	1	61	1	76
Programming - sports	0	63	2	43	2	55
Programming & Facilities - adaptive	12	8	19	6	31	6
Programming & Facilities - adults	6	17	9	15	15	16
Programming & Facilities - more/variety/general	10	11	9	15	19	13
Programming & Facilities - seniors	9	14	13	11	22	10
Programming & Facilities - teens	0	63	5	25	5	36
Programming & Facilities - times	3	28	2	43	5	36
Programming & Facilities - toddler	4	23	7	19	11	21
Programming & Facilities - youth	3	28	5	25	8	29
Rentals	1	46	1	61	2	55
Restrooms	8	15	22	4	30	7
Roller hockey	1	46	1	61	2	55
Safety paths & trails/walking/biking	19	3	30	2	49	3
Safety/security	17	4	15	8	32	5
Sand volleyball	0	63	1	61	1	76
Shade	0	63	2	43	2	55
Shuffleboard	1	46	1	61	2	55
Signage	0	63	5	25	5	36
Skate park	4	23	4	32	8	29
Skiing	0	63	1	61	1	76
Slow down/control community growth	4	23	2	43	6	34
Soccer	4	23	5	25	9	25
Special events	0	63	1	61	1	76
Splash pad	5	21	6	21	11	21
Staffing	2	33	1	61	3	47
Swimming pool	6	17	10	12	16	15
Taxes / economy / finances	8	15	6	21	14	18
Tennis courts	6	17	6	21	12	19
Track	0	63	1	61	1	76
Trash bins	1	46	3	36	4	41
Underserved areas/Park locations/Access	10	11	10	12	20	11
Updates (general)	4	23	4	32	8	29
Volleyball	2	33	2	43	4	41
Water activities	0	63	2	43	2	55
Water stations / fountains	0	63	1	61	1	76
Website / registration issues	0	63	2	43	2	55
Wiffle ball	0	63	1	61	1	76
Winter sports	0	63	4	32	4	41
Youth camp	0	63	2	43	2	55

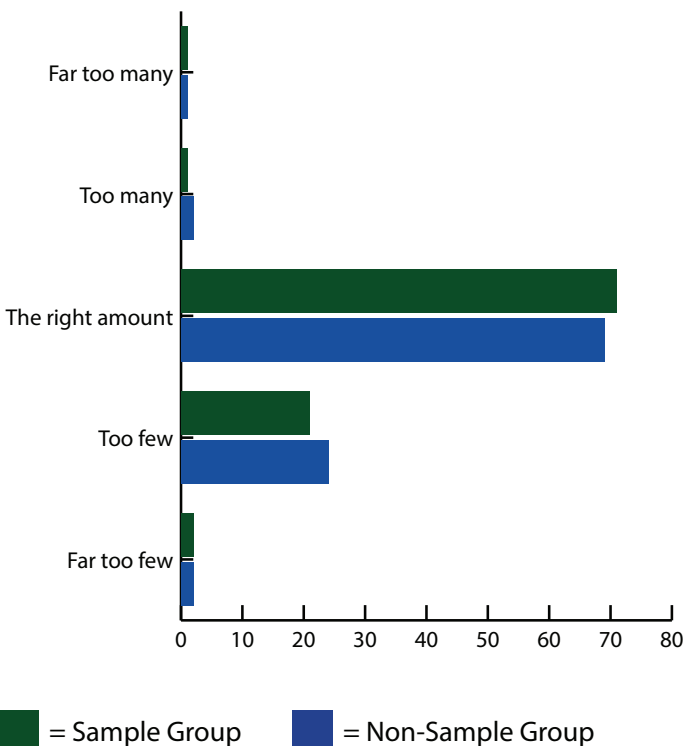


**Question 4. How do you prefer to receive information from the Township?**



Rating	Sample Group	Non-Sample Group	Percent Difference
Mail	57%	42%	15%
E-mail	49%	67%	-18%
Township website	29%	35%	-6%
Phone	1%	1%	0%
Orion Living/Newsletter	54%	57%	-3%
Facebook/social network	24%	34%	-10%
Text message	10%	11%	-1%
Through the media/newspaper	22%	21%	1%
From friends and family	13%	8%	5%

**Question 6. Does Orion Township have too many, too few, or about the right number of parks?**



Rating	Sample Group	Non-Sample Group	Percent Difference
Far too many	1%	1%	0%
Too many	1%	2%	-1%
The right amount	71%	69%	2%
Too few	21%	24%	-3%
Far too few	2%	2%	0%

### Question 5. What type of activities do you or your family regularly participate in?

#### Top Five - Sample Group

1. Walking & Trail Sports
2. Bicycling on paved surfaces
3. Nature activities
4. Outdoor park activities / playground
4. Farmers' market

#### Top Five - Non-Sample Group

1. Walking & Trail Sports
2. Bicycling on paved surfaces
3. Bicycling on gravel/dir trails
4. Outdoor park activities / playground
5. Nature activities

#### Top Five - Overall Ranking

1. Walking & Trail Sports
2. Bicycling on paved surfaces
3. Bicycling on gravel/dirt trails
3. Outdoor park activities / playground
5. Nature activities

Activity	Sample Group		Non-Sample Group		Combined Results	
	percent	rank	percent	rank	Overall percent	Overall rank
Field sports (baseball, football, soccer, etc.)	25%	14	33%	9	29%	11
Court sports (tennis, pickleball, basketball, etc.)	27%	13	30%	11	29%	12
Figure skating / hockey	7%	24	10%	22	9%	22
Golf	31%	9	29%	12	30%	10
Senior programs	17%	17	20%	19	19%	19
Walking and trail sports	73%	1	68%	1	71%	1
Cross country skiing	8%	23	9%	23	9%	23
Nature activities	47%	3	42%	5	45%	5
Swimming	29%	11	34%	8	32%	9
Picnicking	29%	11	27%	14	28%	13
Outdoor park activities / playground	43%	4	49%	4	46%	3
Skateboarding	3%	28	5%	26	4%	27
Dog park / dog walking	37%	7	33%	9	35%	8
Farmers' market	43%	4	37%	6	40%	6
Community gardening	9%	22	7%	24	8%	24
Painting or photography	11%	21	12%	21	12%	21
Paddling (canoeing, kayak, etc.)	34%	8	37%	6	36%	7
Geocaching	4%	26	6%	25	5%	26
Movie nights / concerts in the park	30%	10	26%	15	28%	13
Educational programming	14%	19	18%	20	16%	20
Sledding	14%	19	24%	16	19%	18
Horseback riding	6%	25	5%	26	6%	25
Hunting or fishing	22%	16	24%	16	23%	16
Bicycling on paved surfaces	54%	2	54%	2	54%	2
Bicycling on gravel/dirt trails	42%	6	50%	3	46%	3
Off-trail / rustic hiking	24%	15	28%	13	26%	15
E-sports	3%	28	3%	29	3%	29
Special events	17%	17	23%	18	20%	17
Other (please specify)	4%	26	4%	28	4%	27



**Question 7. Please identify the ten improvements/additions to existing parks that would most benefit your household?**

**Top Ten - Sample Group**

1. Safe walking/biking routes from neighborhoods
2. Permanent restrooms
3. Fitness/exercise trails
4. Natural areas
5. Outdoor swimming pool
6. Nature centers
6. Rustic walking paths
6. Water bottle/drinking fountains
9. Driving range
9. Paved hiking/biking trails

**Top Ten - Non-Sample Group**

1. Safe walking/biking routes from neighborhoods
1. Permanent restrooms
3. Outdoor swimming pool
4. Natural areas
5. Water bottle/drinking fountains
6. Fitness/exercise trails
7. Paved hiking/biking trails
8. Rustic walking paths
8. Splash pad
8. Nature centers

**Top Ten - Overall Ranking**

1. Safe walking/biking routes from neighborhoods
2. Permanent restrooms
3. Natural areas
4. Fitness/exercise trails
5. Outdoor swimming pool
6. Water bottle/drinking fountains
7. Nature centers
7. Rustic walking paths
7. Paved hiking/biking trails
10. Indoor fitness & exercise equipment

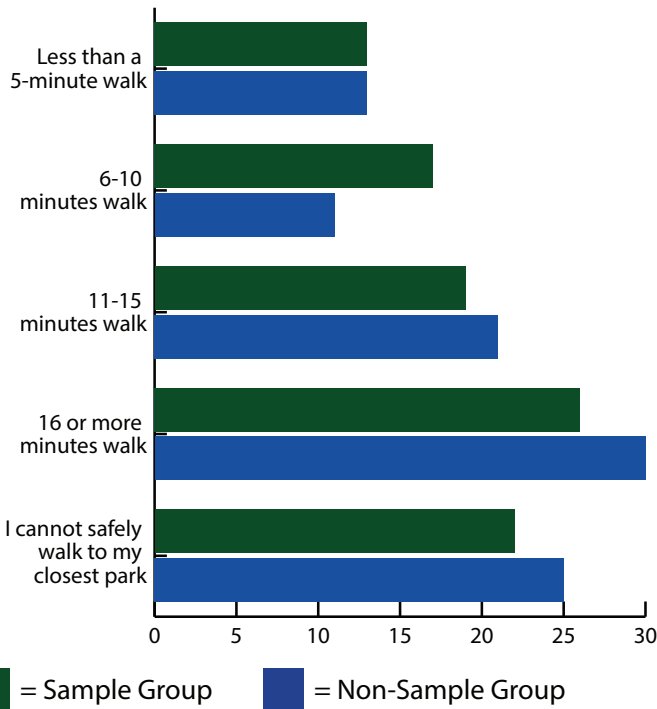
Activity	Sample Group		Non-Sample Group		Combined Results	
	percent	rank	percent	rank	Average overall %	Overall rank
Amphitheater / stage	16%	16	13%	27	15%	22
Archery/axe throwing range	7%	40	14%	25	11%	33
Baseball/softball batting cages	11%	28	14%	25	13%	26
Baseball/softball fields	6%	44	7%	44	7%	47
Basketball courts	5%	49	10%	36	8%	41
Bike racks	9%	34	12%	30	11%	34
Bike rental	6%	44	8%	39	7%	43
Boat ramps	10%	31	6%	50	8%	38
Boat rental	15%	18	16%	21	16%	20
Campground area	9%	34	12%	30	11%	34
Community garden/orchard	12%	23	11%	34	12%	30
Cricket fields	1%	63	1%	63	1%	64
Cross country skiing	7%	40	8%	39	8%	41
Disc golf	12%	23	12%	30	12%	27
Dog parks	15%	18	11%	34	13%	24
Driving range	21%	9	17%	19	19%	14
Electric vehicle charging stations	7%	40	7%	44	7%	43
Fishing docks	16%	16	18%	17	17%	16
Fitness / exercise trails	27%	3	26%	6	27%	4
Frisbee golf course	8%	36	8%	39	8%	38
General accessibility for people with disabilities	8%	36	8%	39	8%	38
General painting and repair	4%	52	6%	50	5%	51
Golf courses	19%	13	15%	22	17%	16
Hockey space	5%	49	5%	55	5%	51
Horseback riding	6%	44	7%	44	7%	47
Ice skating (outdoor)	12%	23	17%	19	15%	22
Improved directional signage	8%	36	6%	50	7%	43
Improved interpretive signage	1%	63	2%	62	2%	63

Question 7. Please identify the ten improvements/additions to existing parks that would most benefit your household

Activity	Sample Group		Non-Sample Group		Combined Results	
	percent	rank	percent	rank	Average overall %	Overall rank
Indoor fitness and exercise facilities	19%	13	21%	11	20%	10
Indoor fitness equipment rental	3%	55	4%	57	4%	58
Lacrosse fields	2%	62	8%	39	5%	51
Lighting on trails	19%	13	19%	15	19%	14
Mountain biking trails	13%	21	19%	15	16%	18
Natural areas	26%	4	28%	4	27%	3
Nature Centers	22%	6	24%	8	23%	7
Outdoor fitness equipment rental	3%	55	7%	44	5%	51
Outdoor swimming pool	23%	5	29%	3	26%	5
Parking	10%	31	7%	44	9%	37
Paved hiking/biking trails	21%	9	25%	7	23%	7
Permanent restrooms	32%	2	31%	1	32%	2
Pickleball courts	20%	11	20%	12	20%	10
Picnic areas and pavilions	10%	31	13%	27	12%	29
Plant/tree identification signs	11%	28	13%	27	12%	27
Playground equipment	8%	36	15%	22	12%	30
Playground equipment for people with disabilities	3%	55	4%	57	4%	58
Pollinator preserve	11%	28	15%	22	13%	24
Rollerblading	3%	55	4%	57	4%	58
Rustic walking paths (crushed limestone or wood chips)	22%	6	24%	8	23%	7
Safe walking/biking routes from neighborhoods	35%	1	31%	1	33%	1
Sand volleyball courts	6%	44	7%	44	7%	47
Sidewalk improvements	13%	21	18%	17	16%	20
Skateboarding park	5%	49	9%	38	7%	43
Sled hills	12%	23	20%	12	16%	18
Snowmobiling / ATV	4%	52	4%	57	4%	56
Soccer fields	3%	55	5%	55	4%	56
Splash pad	15%	18	24%	8	20%	13
Sports complex	6%	44	12%	30	9%	36
Squash courts	0%	65	0%	65	0%	65
Swimming beaches	20%	11	20%	12	20%	10
Tennis courts	7%	40	6%	50	7%	47
Volleyball courts	4%	52	6%	50	5%	51
Water bottle/drinking fountains	22%	6	27%	5	25%	6
WiFi access	12%	23	10%	36	11%	32
None of these	3%	55	1%	63	2%	62
Other (please specify)	3%	55	4%	57	4%	58

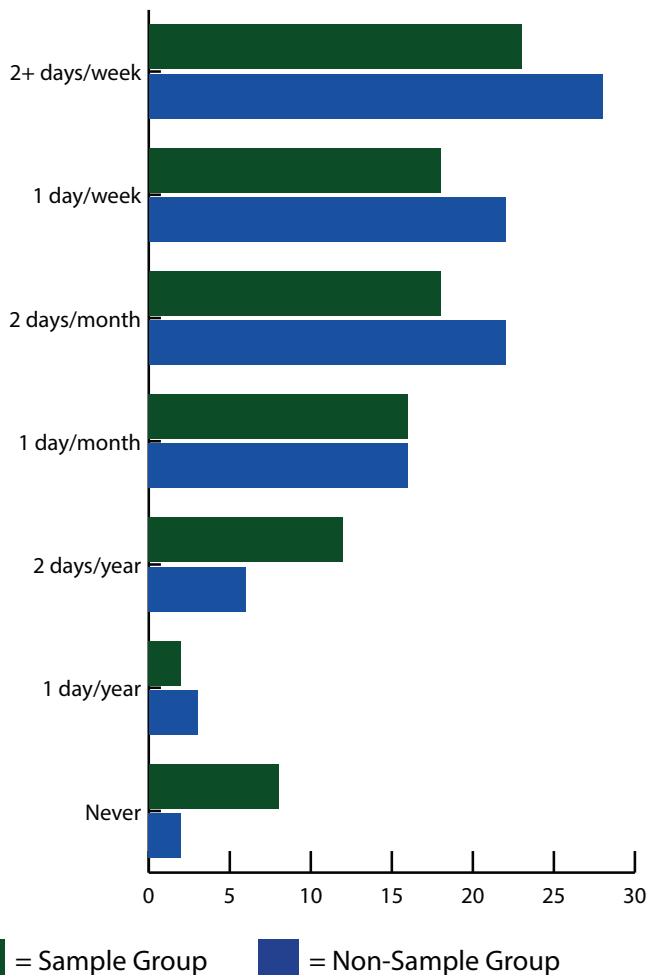


**Question 8. How far do you currently live from your closest Township park?**



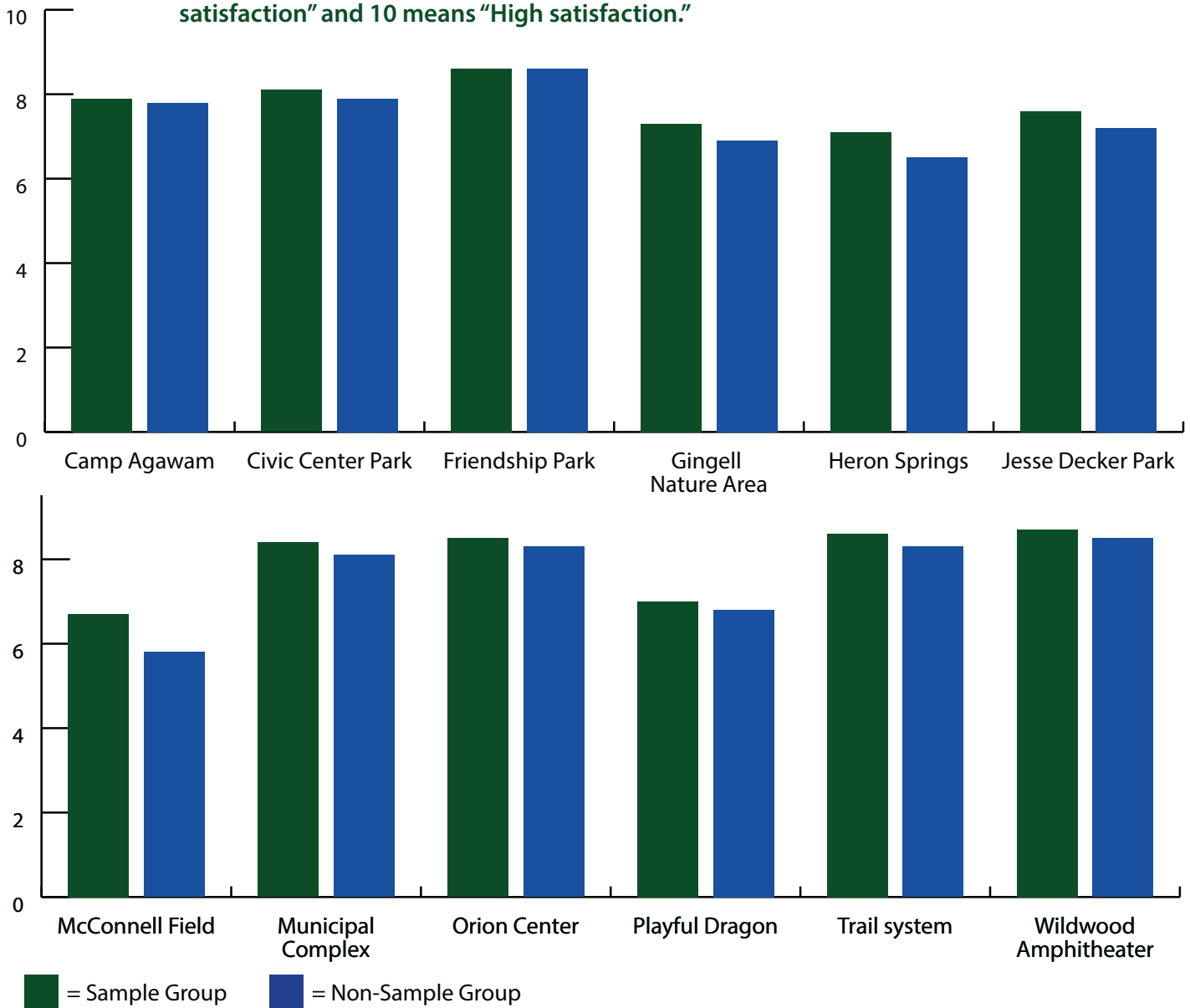
Rating	Sample Group	Non-Sample Group	Percent Difference
Less than a 5-minute walk	13%	13%	0%
6-10 minutes walk	17%	11%	6%
11-15 minutes walk	19%	21%	-2%
16 or more minutes walk	26%	30%	-4%
I cannot safely walk to my closest park	22%	25%	-3%

**Question 9. How often do you visit a Orion Township park?**



Rating	Sample Group	Non-Sample Group	Percent Difference
2+ days/week	23%	28%	-5%
1 day/week	18%	22%	-4%
2 days/month	18%	22%	-4%
1 day/month	16%	16%	0%
2 days/year	12%	6%	6%
1 day/year	2%	3%	-1%
Never	8%	2%	6%

**Question 10. Please consider the facilities below and rate your satisfaction with how each meets the needs of you and your household. Use a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means “Low satisfaction” and 10 means “High satisfaction.”**



Rating	Sample Group	Non-Sample Group	Difference	Average
Camp Agawam	7.9	7.8	0.1	7.85
Civic Center Park	8.1	7.9	0.2	8
Friendship Park	8.6	8.6	0	8.6
Gingell Nature Area	7.3	6.9	0.4	7.1
Heron Springs	7.1	6.5	0.6	6.8
Jesse Decker Park	7.6	7.2	0.4	7.4
McConnell Field	6.7	5.8	0.9	6.25
Municipal Complex	8.4	8.1	0.3	8.25
Orion Center	8.5	8.3	0.2	8.4
Playful Dragon	7	6.8	0.2	6.9
Trail system	8.6	8.3	0.3	8.45
Wildwood Amphitheater	8.7	8.5	0.2	8.6



**Question 11. Briefly, what would be the most important improvements to raise your ratings above?**

**Top Ten - Sample Group**

1. Pathway / Trail / Sidewalk / Bike lane access
2. Communications: outreach, maps, awareness, etc
3. Restrooms
4. Maintenance
4. Natural areas, access, programs, information
4. Safety / lighting
7. Pickleball
8. Amenities: variety, more options
9. No comment / N/A
10. Parking

**Top Ten - Non-Sample Group**

1. Pathway / Trail / Sidewalk / Bike lane access
2. Restrooms
3. Communications: outreach, maps, awareness, etc
4. Pickleball
5. Maintenance
6. Play equipment
7. Paving: pathways, parking
8. No comment / N/A
8. Parking
8. Parks - more, locations, distribution

**Top Ten - Overall Ranking**

1. Pathway / Trail / Sidewalk / Bike lane access
2. Restrooms
3. Communications: outreach, maps, awareness, etc
4. Pickleball
5. Maintenance
6. Safety / lighting
7. Amenities: variety, more options
8. Play equipment
8. No comment / N/A
8. Natural areas, access, programs, information

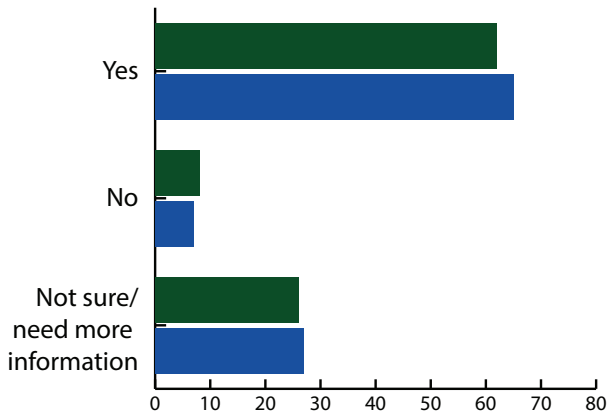
Activity	Sample Group		Non-Sample Group		Combined Results	
	percent	rank	percent	rank	Average overall %	Overall rank
ADA compliance, accessibility	2%	17	2%	13	2%	14
Adult programming	0%	44	0%	#N/A	0%	55
All ages	0%	61	0%	41	0%	47
Amenities: variety, expanded options	4%	8	3%	11	3%	7
Baseball, batting cages, dugouts	0%	44	1%	36	1%	43
Basketball	1%	36	1%	24	1%	29
Beach, lake access, boat launch	1%	23	1%	24	1%	21
Benches, grills, picnic tables, shelters	2%	17	1%	31	1%	27
Camping, cabins	0%	44	0%	41	0%	44
Communications: outreach, maps, awareness, etc	8%	2	7%	3	7%	3
Control development/Community growth	0%	44	0%	48	0%	47
Disc golf	0%	44	0%	48	0%	47
Do not use	2%	17	0%	48	1%	35
Dog - amenities, park, equipment	0%	44	0%	#N/A	0%	55
Dog parks, beaches	1%	36	0%	#N/A	0%	47
Drainage / water issues	1%	36	0%	#N/A	0%	47
Drinking fountains	1%	26	2%	20	1%	21
Electrical outlets, charging stations	1%	23	0%	41	1%	35
Events, programs	0%	44	0%	#N/A	0%	55
Exercise/fitness equipment	1%	26	1%	28	1%	29
Farmers' Market	0%	44	0%	#N/A	0%	55
Fees, cost	2%	11	2%	15	2%	14
Food/drinks, concessions	1%	26	2%	15	1%	18
Golf course, driving range	0%	44	0%	41	0%	44
Hockey / ice rink	1%	26	1%	36	1%	35
Hours	0%	44	0%	#N/A	0%	55
Hunting / fishing	0%	44	0%	41	0%	44
Keep as is	0%	44	0%	#N/A	0%	55

Question 11. What would be the most important improvements to raise your rating above? (continued)

Activity	Sample Group		Non-Sample Group		Combined Results	
	percent	rank	percent	rank	Average overall %	Overall rank
Lacrosse	0%	61	2%	20	1%	34
Leagues	0%	44	0%	#N/A	0%	55
Maintenance	5%	4	4%	5	4%	5
Mosquito control	1%	36	1%	24	1%	29
Motorized facilities, snowmobile, ATV	0%	44	0%	#N/A	0%	55
Mountain biking	1%	26	1%	36	1%	35
Natural areas, access, programs, information	5%	4	2%	20	3%	8
New to area	2%	17	0%	#N/A	1%	41
No comment / N/A	3%	9	3%	8	3%	8
Other - non recreation	2%	11	1%	36	1%	27
Parking	2%	10	3%	8	3%	12
Parkour / Adventure equipment	0%	44	0%	#N/A	0%	55
Parks - more, locations, distribution	1%	26	3%	8	2%	13
Pathway / Trail / Sidewalk / Bike lane access	10%	1	14%	1	12%	1
Paving: pathways, parking	2%	11	3%	7	3%	11
Pickleball	4%	7	5%	4	4%	4
Ping pong, cornhole, chess boards	0%	44	0%	#N/A	0%	55
Play equipment	2%	11	4%	5	3%	8
Programming, management, variety	1%	26	2%	13	2%	17
Recreation center / indoor sports	0%	61	0%	41	0%	47
Rentals	0%	61	0%	48	0%	55
Restrooms	7%	3	9%	2	8%	2
Rollerblade / roller hockey / skate park	1%	23	1%	24	1%	21
Safety / lighting	5%	4	2%	12	3%	6
Satisfied / happy with parks	2%	17	1%	36	1%	29
Seniors	2%	11	1%	31	1%	21
Shade	1%	26	2%	15	1%	18
Signage, wayfinding	2%	11	2%	20	2%	16
Skiing, alpine or cross country	0%	61	0%	48	0%	55
Sledding	0%	44	1%	31	1%	41
Soccer	0%	61	0%	48	0%	55
Splash pad	1%	36	1%	31	1%	35
Sports fields, reservations, general	1%	36	1%	31	1%	35
Swimming pool	1%	36	2%	15	1%	21
Tennis	1%	26	2%	15	1%	18
Toddlers	2%	17	1%	28	1%	21
Trees, landscaping	1%	26	1%	28	1%	29
Turf fields	0%	61	0%	41	0%	47
Volleyball / sand volleyball	1%	36	0%	#N/A	0%	47



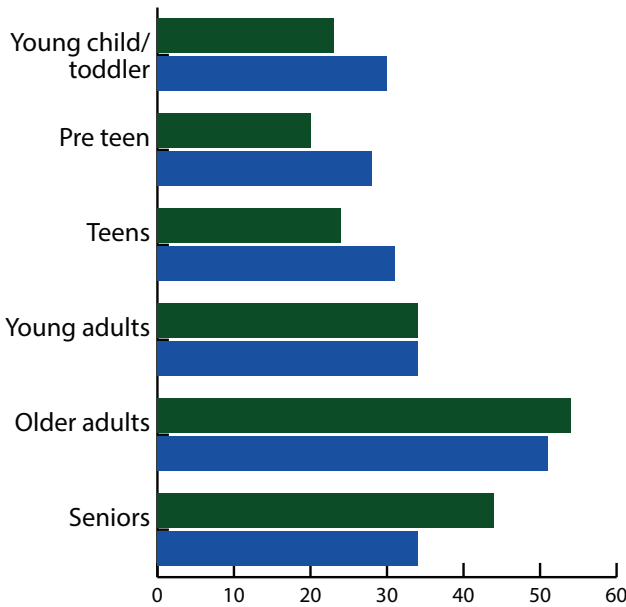
**Question 12. Orion Township's Parks & Recreation Millage collects approximately \$10 dollars per month for an average household. Does the Township deliver value in this area for the amount you pay?**



Rating	Sample Group	Non-Sample Group	Percent Difference
Yes	62%	65%	-3%
No	8%	7%	1%
Not sure/need more information	26%	23%	3%

■ = Sample Group    ■ = Non-Sample Group

**Question 13. As the Township considers improvements/additions to recreational programming, what are the age groups the Township should focus on to best meet the needs of you and your household specifically?**



Rating	Sample Group	Non-Sample Group	Percent Difference
Young child/toddler	23%	30%	-7%
Pre teen	20%	28%	-8%
Teens	24%	31%	-7%
Young adults	34%	34%	0%
Older adults	54%	51%	3%
Seniors	44%	34%	10%

■ = Sample Group    ■ = Non-Sample Group

### Question 14. Please identify the ten improvements/additions to recreational programming and skill building that would most benefit your household?

#### Top Ten - Sample Group

1. Concerts and shows
2. Culinary/cooking programs
3. Fitness classes
4. Outdoor education/nature-based programs
5. Music/theater/performing arts
5. Travel & excursions
7. Gardening/horticulture/tree management
8. Community special events
8. Mind-body classes
10. Night/weekend programs

#### Top Ten - Non-Sample Group

1. Concerts and shows
2. Culinary/cooking programs
3. Adventure recreation
4. Fitness classes
5. Outdoor education/nature-based programs
6. Enrichment classes
7. Night/weekend programs
8. Social activities
9. Gardening/horticulture/tree management
9. Sports leagues
9. Swimming activities
9. Travel & excursions

#### Top Ten - Overall Ranking

1. Concerts and shows
2. Culinary/cooking programs
3. Fitness classes
4. Outdoor education/nature-based programs
5. Adventure recreation
6. Travel & excursions
7. Gardening/horticulture/tree management
8. Night/weekend programs
9. Enrichment classes
9. Music/theater/performing arts

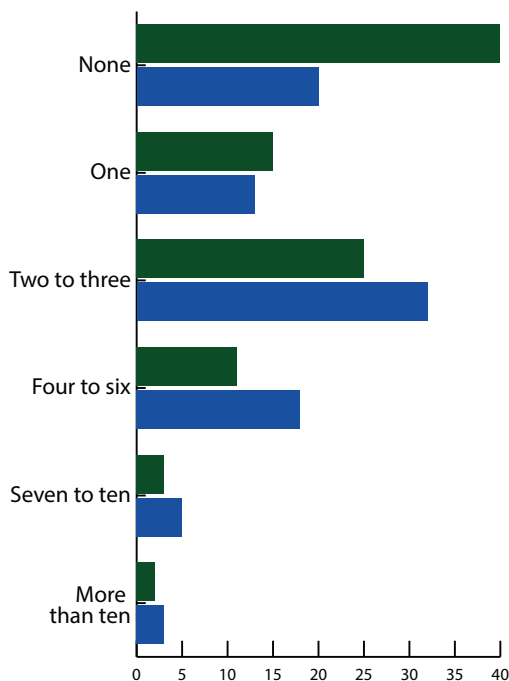
Activity	Sample Group		Non-Sample Group		Combined Results	
	percent	rank	percent	rank	Average overall %	Overall rank
Adaptive fitness classes	13%	14	11%	25	12%	18
Adventure recreation	14%	12	25%	3	20%	5
Archery/axe throwing	9%	25	14%	16	12%	20
Arts programs	15%	10	15%	14	15%	13
Augmented reality nature education	2%	43	3%	43	3%	45
Babysitting	2%	43	4%	38	3%	44
Before and after school care programs	8%	27	8%	31	8%	30
Childcare	5%	35	4%	38	5%	37
Community special events	16%	8	16%	9	16%	9
Computer/IT skills	8%	27	7%	33	8%	31
Concerts and shows	36%	1	31%	1	34%	1
Crafts	13%	14	11%	25	12%	18
Culinary/cooking programs	24%	2	26%	2	25%	2
Culturally specific activities	4%	39	3%	43	4%	40
Dances	7%	32	5%	34	6%	34
Enrichment classes	13%	14	19%	6	16%	9
Family fitness opportunities	8%	27	12%	20	10%	27
Family programs	9%	25	14%	16	12%	20
Fitness classes	22%	3	24%	4	23%	3
Football	2%	43	5%	34	4%	40
Gardening/horticulture/tree management	17%	7	16%	9	17%	7
Gymnastics	3%	41	5%	34	4%	38
Homeschoolers' programs	3%	41	4%	38	4%	40
Learn-to-swim programs	10%	22	12%	20	11%	23
Martial arts/self defense	8%	27	9%	30	9%	29
Mind-body classes	16%	8	13%	19	15%	14



Question 14. Please identify the ten improvements/additions to recreation programming and skill building that would most benefit your household (continued)

Activity	Sample Group		Non-Sample Group		Combined Results	
	percent	rank	percent	rank	Average overall %	Overall rank
Music/theater/performing arts	18%	5	14%	16	16%	9
Night/weekend programs	15%	10	18%	7	17%	8
Nutrition education	10%	22	12%	20	11%	23
Outdoor education/nature-based programs	20%	4	21%	5	21%	4
Pollinator programs	11%	19	15%	14	13%	17
Programs for individuals with disabilities	6%	34	5%	34	6%	36
Programs for veterans	7%	32	4%	38	6%	35
Social activities	14%	12	17%	8	16%	12
Sports classes	5%	35	10%	27	8%	31
Sports leagues	13%	14	16%	9	15%	14
Sports sampler (introduction to multiple sports)	5%	35	8%	31	7%	33
Summer camp	10%	22	12%	20	11%	23
Support groups	4%	39	4%	38	4%	38
Swimming activities	12%	18	16%	9	14%	16
Therapeutic recreation	8%	27	10%	27	9%	28
Travel & excursions	18%	5	16%	9	17%	6
Water fitness programs	11%	19	12%	20	12%	22
Water safety programs	11%	19	10%	27	11%	26
None of these	5%	35	2%	46	4%	40
Other (please specify)	2%	43	3%	43	3%	45

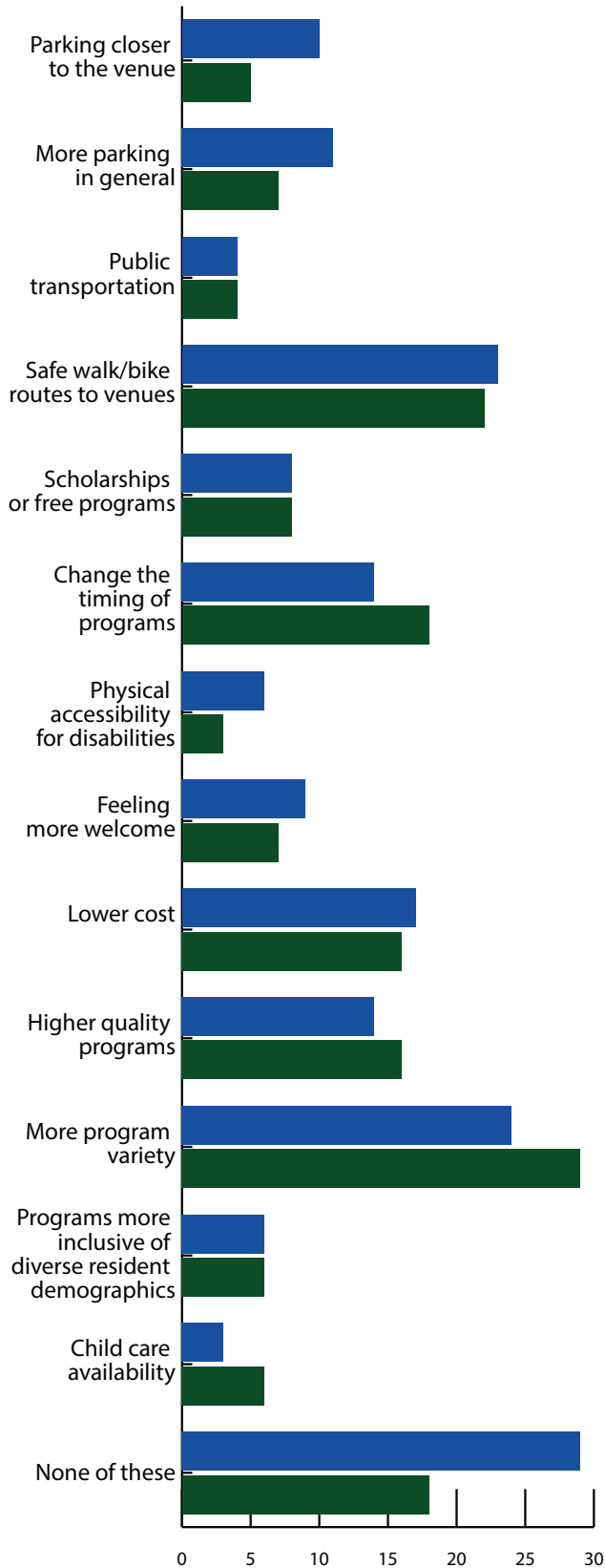
Question 15. How many recreation programs/events offered by Orion Township Parks and Recreation have you or other members of your household participated in during the past 12 months?



■ = Sample Group    ■ = Non-Sample Group

Rating	Sample Group	Non-Sample Group	Percent Difference
None	40%	20%	20%
One	15%	13%	2%
Two to three	25%	32%	-7%
Four to six	11%	18%	-7%
Seven to ten	3%	5%	-2%
More than ten	2%	3%	-1%

### Question 16. Which of the following would increase your household's use of recreational programs the most?



Rating	Sample Group	Non-Sample Group	Percent Difference
Parking closer to the venue	10%	5%	5%
More parking in general	11%	7%	4%
Public transportation	4%	4%	0%
Safe walk/bike routes to venues	23%	22%	1%
Scholarships or free programs	8%	8%	0%
Change the timing of programs	14%	18%	-4%
Physical accessibility for disabilities	6%	3%	3%
Feeling more welcome	9%	7%	2%
Lower cost	17%	16%	1%
Higher quality programs	14%	16%	-2%
More program variety	24%	29%	-5%
Programs more inclusive of diverse resident demographics	6%	6%	0%
Child care availability	3%	6%	-3%
None of these	29%	18%	11%

■ = Sample Group      ■ = Non-Sample Group



**Question 17. What activities, facilities, or amenities have you seen in outside parks/facilities (neighboring community, county, state,etc.) that you would like to see available here in the Township?**

**Top Ten - Sample Group**

1. Swimming pool
2. Pickleball
3. Splash pad
4. None / No Comment / N/A
5. Paths / Trails / Sidewalks
6. Ice rink / Ice hockey
7. Skate park
8. Programming - senior
8. Sports complex / turf fields
8. Water park / Aquatic center

**Top Ten - Non-Sample Group**

1. Splash pad
2. Swimming pool
3. Skate park
4. None / No Comment / N/A
5. Paths / Trails / Sidewalks
6. Ice rink / Ice hockey
6. Roller hockey
8. Pickleball
9. Beach / Water access
9. Restrooms

**Top Ten - Overall Ranking**

1. Splash pad
2. Swimming pool
3. None / No Comment / N/A
4. Pickleball
5. Paths / Trails / Sidewalks
6. Skate park
7. Ice rink / Ice hockey
8. Programming - senior
9. Rec Center / Community Center
9. Restrooms

Activity	Sample Group		Non-Sample Group		Combined Results	
	percent	rank	percent	rank	Average overall %	Overall rank
Agility course/Ropes course/Zip line	0%	62	1%	25	1%	40
All ages	0%	62	0%	78	0%	84
Aquatics/water aerobics/classes	2%	11	1%	31	1%	14
Art battle/fairs/exhibits	1%	19	1%	25	1%	23
ATV park/motorized trails/ORV	1%	34	0%	43	1%	40
Baseball/Softball fields & leagues/netting/dugouts	1%	25	1%	20	1%	23
Basketball	1%	34	1%	17	1%	23
Beach/Water access	0%	95	2%	9	1%	21
Beekeeping	0%	62	0%	78	0%	84
Billiards	0%	95	0%	64	0%	84
Boardwalks	0%	95	0%	64	0%	84
Boat rental/docks/kayak/canoe	1%	18	2%	12	2%	11
Bocce ball	0%	62	0%	43	0%	59
Camping	0%	45	0%	64	0%	59
climbing wall	0%	62	0%	78	0%	84
Communication/Welcome information	0%	45	0%	78	0%	69
Community events	0%	62	0%	43	0%	59
Community gathering space	0%	95	0%	43	0%	69
Community theater/choir	0%	45	0%	43	0%	53
Concerts	2%	15	0%	64	1%	28
Cooking classes	0%	62	0%	64	0%	69
Cornhole	0%	95	0%	43	0%	69
Crafts/sewing/photography/pottery	1%	25	0%	78	0%	53
Skiing/cross country/alpine/lessons/leagues	1%	34	1%	31	1%	37
Day trips/travel	2%	15	1%	25	1%	14
Disc golf	1%	19	1%	25	1%	23
Dog park/activities/waste stations	1%	25	1%	31	1%	32

Question 17. What activities, facilities, or amenities have you seen in outside parks/facilities (neighboring community, county, state, etc.) that you would like to see available here in the Township? (continued)

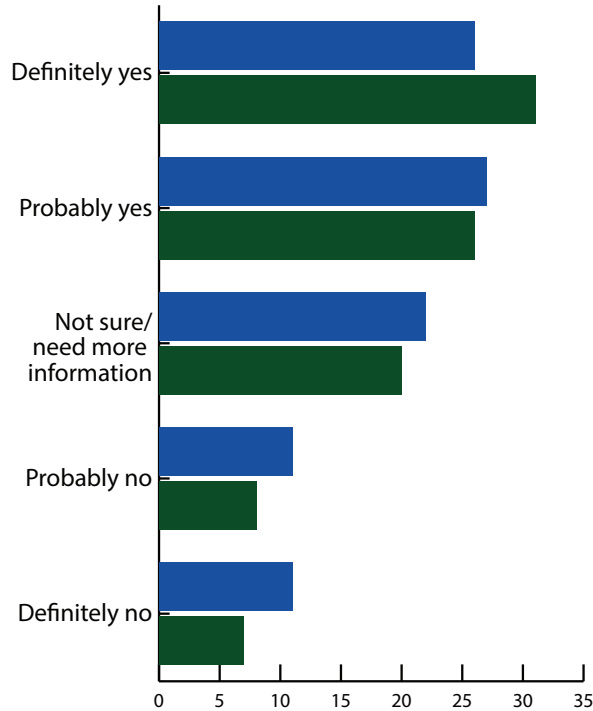
Activity	Sample Group		Non-Sample Group		Combined Results	
	percent	rank	percent	rank	Average overall %	Overall rank
Drinking fountains/Water stations	1%	34	0%	43	1%	40
Equestrian	0%	45	0%	78	0%	69
Expanded park times	0%	62	0%	78	0%	84
Farmers Market	2%	11	1%	31	1%	14
Fireworks/drone show	0%	45	0%	78	0%	69
Fitness facilities/gym	0%	45	0%	43	0%	53
Fitness station/fitness trail	1%	34	0%	43	1%	40
Food trucks/concessions	1%	34	1%	20	1%	28
Football	0%	62	0%	78	0%	84
Garden/Greenhouse	1%	34	1%	20	1%	28
Geocaching	0%	95	0%	64	0%	84
Golf course/driving range	2%	11	1%	31	1%	14
Group bike rides	0%	62	0%	78	0%	84
Gun range/archery	0%	62	0%	78	0%	84
Gymnastics	0%	62	0%	78	0%	84
Homeschool programming	0%	95	0%	43	0%	69
Horseshoes	0%	62	0%	78	0%	84
Hunting/fishing	1%	25	1%	31	1%	32
ice rink/ice hockey	3%	6	3%	6	3%	7
Lacrosse	0%	45	1%	31	1%	40
Lake access/beach	2%	15	0%	78	1%	32
Land preservation millage	0%	62	0%	78	0%	84
Lighting	0%	62	0%	78	0%	84
More parks - general	0%	62	0%	78	0%	84
More parks - large	0%	45	0%	78	0%	69
More parks - small/pocket parks	0%	62	0%	78	0%	84
Mountain bike paths	0%	45	1%	20	1%	32
Movies in the park/Movie night	1%	34	0%	43	1%	40
Natural/open spaces	1%	19	0%	43	1%	32
Nature Center/Trails	1%	34	2%	12	1%	21
Nature classes	1%	25	0%	43	1%	37
Nerf battle	0%	62	0%	78	0%	84
No comment/NA/None/Not sure	6%	4	5%	4	5%	3
Paddleboard	0%	95	0%	64	0%	84
Parking	0%	62	0%	64	0%	69
paths/trails/sidewalks/pedestrian/biking	5%	5	4%	5	4%	5
Petting Zoo	0%	95	0%	43	0%	69
pickleball	7%	2	3%	8	5%	4
Picnic area/grill/tables/benches	0%	45	1%	17	1%	28
Ping pong	0%	62	0%	64	0%	69
Play structures	1%	19	1%	17	1%	14



Question 17. What activities, facilities, or amenities have you seen in outside parks/facilities (neighboring community, county, state,etc.) that you would like to see available here in the Township? (continued)

Activity	Sample Group		Non-Sample Group		Combined Results	
	percent	rank	percent	rank	Average overall %	Overall rank
Programming - adaptive	0%	45	1%	31	1%	40
Programming - senior	2%	8	2%	12	2%	8
Programming - teens	0%	62	0%	43	0%	59
Programming - youth	0%	62	0%	43	0%	59
Programming - adult	1%	25	2%	12	1%	14
Programming - women	0%	95	0%	64	0%	84
Rec Center/Community Center	2%	11	2%	12	2%	9
Remote control cars/planes	0%	95	0%	43	0%	69
Rentals - general	0%	45	0%	64	0%	59
Restrooms	1%	19	2%	9	2%	9
Roller hockey	0%	62	3%	6	2%	11
Safety/Police presence	0%	62	0%	64	0%	69
Sailing courses	0%	62	0%	78	0%	84
Shade	0%	95	1%	31	0%	59
Shuffleboard	0%	62	0%	43	0%	59
Skate park	2%	7	6%	3	4%	6
Skills courses	1%	25	0%	78	0%	53
Sled hill	0%	45	0%	43	0%	53
Soccer	1%	19	0%	78	1%	40
Social activities	0%	45	0%	78	0%	69
Solar EV charging stations	0%	95	0%	43	0%	69
Splash pad	6%	3	14%	1	10%	1
Sports complex/turfed fields	2%	8	1%	25	2%	11
Sports tournaments/camps	0%	62	1%	25	1%	40
Stop/Stay same	1%	34	0%	78	0%	59
swimming pool	7%	1	11%	2	9%	2
Swings	0%	62	0%	78	0%	84
T-ball	0%	95	0%	64	0%	84
Teen center	0%	62	0%	78	0%	84
Tennis	0%	45	2%	11	1%	14
Toddler friendly	0%	45	1%	31	1%	40
Town square	0%	62	0%	78	0%	84
Track/indoor/walking	0%	95	1%	20	1%	40
Trash/recycle bins	1%	25	0%	78	0%	53
Trees/landscaping	1%	34	1%	31	1%	37
Volleyball/Sand volleyball	1%	25	0%	64	1%	40
Water park/aquatic center	2%	8	0%	78	1%	23
Water slides	0%	62	0%	43	0%	59
Weekend/evening events	0%	62	0%	78	0%	84
Yoga/Zumba	0%	45	1%	31	1%	40
Youth camps	0%	62	0%	78	0%	84

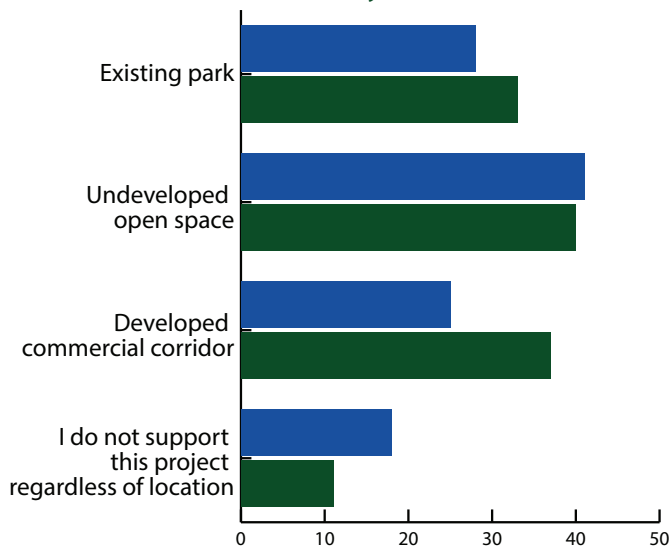
**Question 18.** Several groups in the community have expressed interest in developing an indoor sports complex to provide a climate controlled space for recreational activities. This would be a private/public investment to enhance the parks and recreation programming available to the community and placed on Township-owned, undeveloped property. If funding to develop and maintain this sports complex were provided entirely through grants, private investment, and user fees, would you support development of this facility?



Rating	Sample Group	Non-Sample Group	Percent Difference
Definitely yes	26%	31%	-5%
Probably yes	27%	26%	1%
Not sure/need more information	22%	20%	2%
Probably no	11%	8%	3%
Definitely no	11%	7%	4%

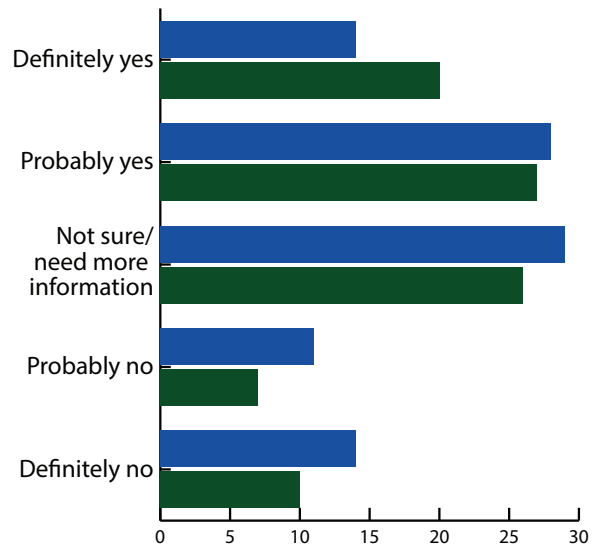
■ = Sample Group    ■ = Non-Sample Group

**Question 19.** Where would the ideal location be for this facility?



Rating	Sample Group	Non-Sample Group	Percent Difference
Existing park	28%	33%	-5%
Undeveloped open space	41%	40%	1%
Developed commercial corridor	25%	37%	-12%
I do not support this project	18%	11%	7%

**Question 20.** If additional enhancements to recreational activities required some funding from the parks and recreation budget, would you support this project?



Rating	Sample Group	Non-Sample Group	Percent Difference
Definitely yes	14%	20%	-6%
Probably yes	28%	27%	1%
Not sure/need more information	29%	26%	3%
Probably no	11%	7%	4%
Definitely no	14%	10%	4%



**Question 21. Briefly, regardless of your opinion above, what are the primary reasons to *oppose* developing an indoor sports complex?**

**Top Ten - Sample Group**

1. Cost / Taxes
2. Ecological / Loss of open space
3. Doesn't benefit me / lack of amenities
4. Traffic / Parking / Eyesore
5. Existing facilities nearby
6. Access to facility (user conflicts) or Location
7. Ongoing maintenance / staffing
8. No comment
8. No public demand for facility
10. Spend money on other needed items

**Top Ten - Non-Sample Group**

1. Cost / Taxes
2. Ecological / Loss of open space
3. Access to facility (user conflicts) or Location
4. Doesn't benefit me / lack of amenities
5. No comment
5. Traffic / Parking / Eyesore
7. Existing facilities nearby
8. Ongoing maintenance / staffing
8. Fees / Affordability
10. Undesirable / non-Township users

**Top Ten - Overall Ranking**

1. Cost / Taxes
2. Ecological / Loss of open space
3. Access to facility (user conflicts) or Location
4. Doesn't benefit me / lack of amenities
5. Traffic / Parking / Eyesore
6. Existing facilities nearby
7. No comment
8. Ongoing maintenance / staffing
9. Fees / Affordability
10. No public demand for facility

**Question 22. Briefly, regardless of your opinion above, what are the primary reasons to *support* developing an indoor sports complex?**

**Top Ten - Sample Group**

1. Winter / year round access
2. Community asset / improve home value / quality of life
3. Keep kids safe / active / healthy
4. Keeps us active / healthy
5. Expand variety of activities / rec opportunities / programs
6. Place for families / draw young families
7. Do not support
8. More sports access / leagues
9. No answer / none / N/A
10. Social / brings people together

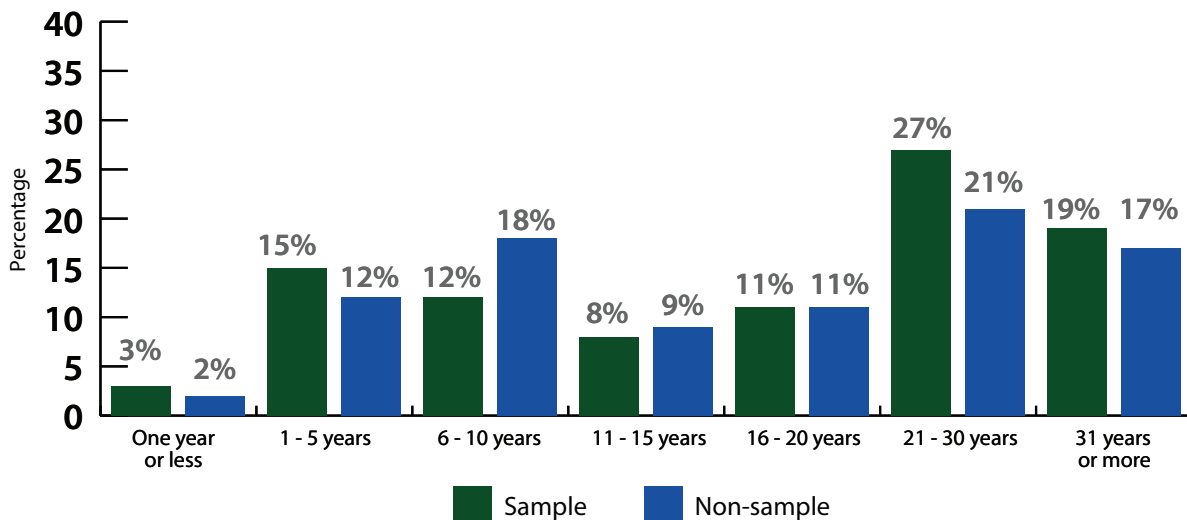
**Top Ten - Non-Sample Group**

1. Winter / year round access
2. Community asset / improve home value / quality of life
3. Keep kids safe / active / healthy
4. Expand variety of activities / rec opportunities / programs
5. Keeps us active / healthy
6. More sports access / leagues
7. Convenience / proximity to home
7. Lack of similar facilities / community need
9. Place for families / draw young families
9. Affordability

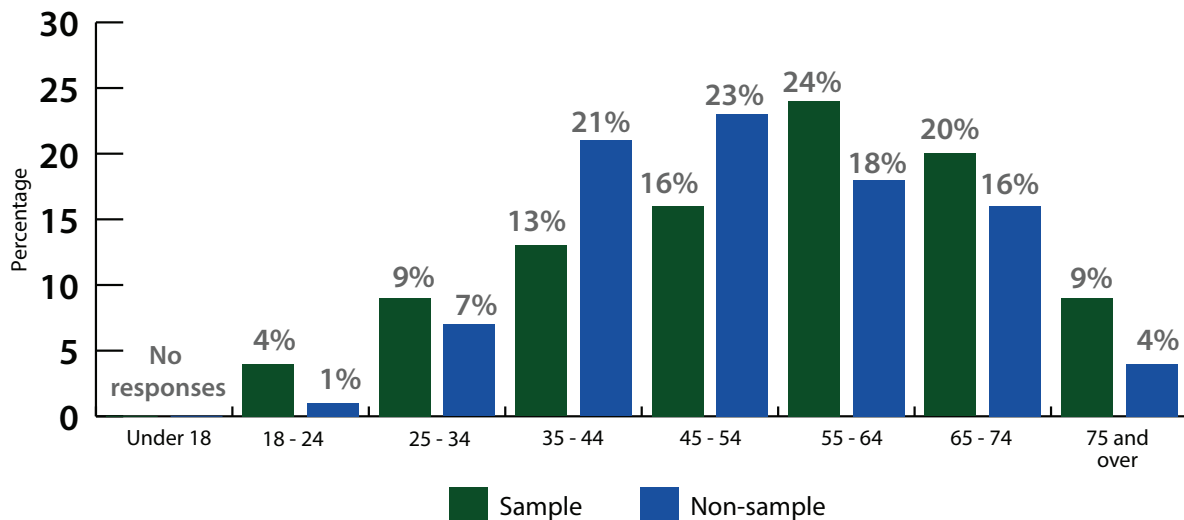
**Top Ten - Overall Ranking**

1. Winter / year round access
2. Community asset / improve home value / quality of life
3. Keep kids safe / active / healthy
4. Expand variety of activities / rec opportunities / programs
5. Keeps us active / healthy
6. More sports access / leagues
7. Place for families / draw young families
8. Do not support
9. No answer / none / N/A
10. Affordability

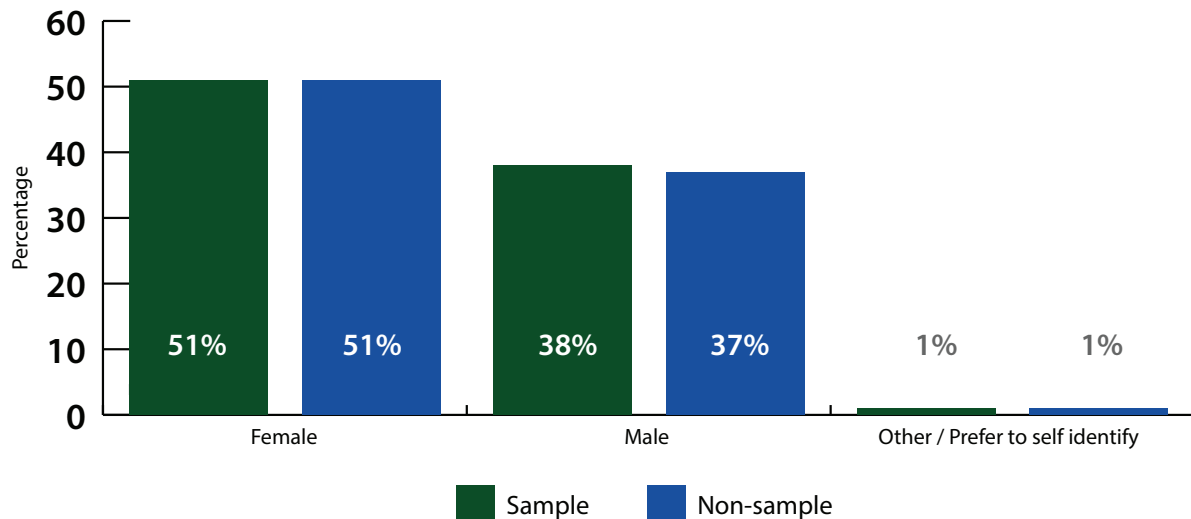
### Question 23. How long have you lived in Orion Township?



### Question 24. Which group best represents your age?

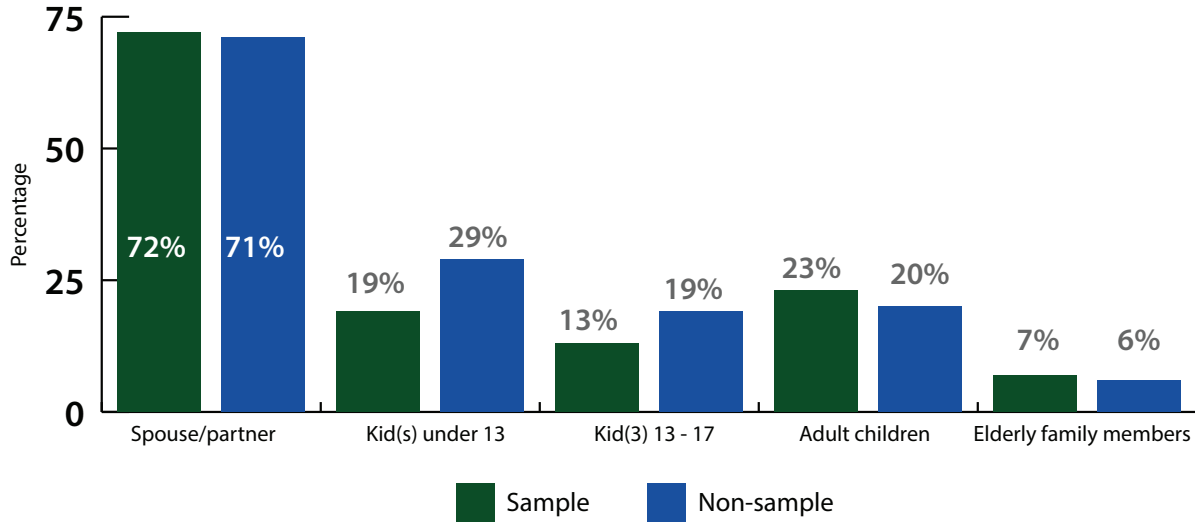


### Question 25. What is your gender?

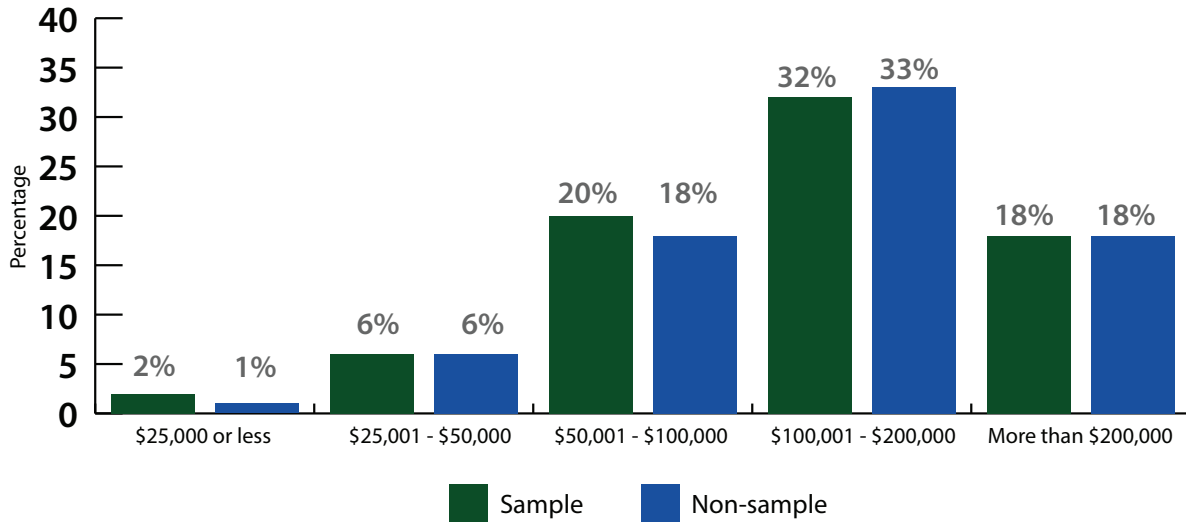




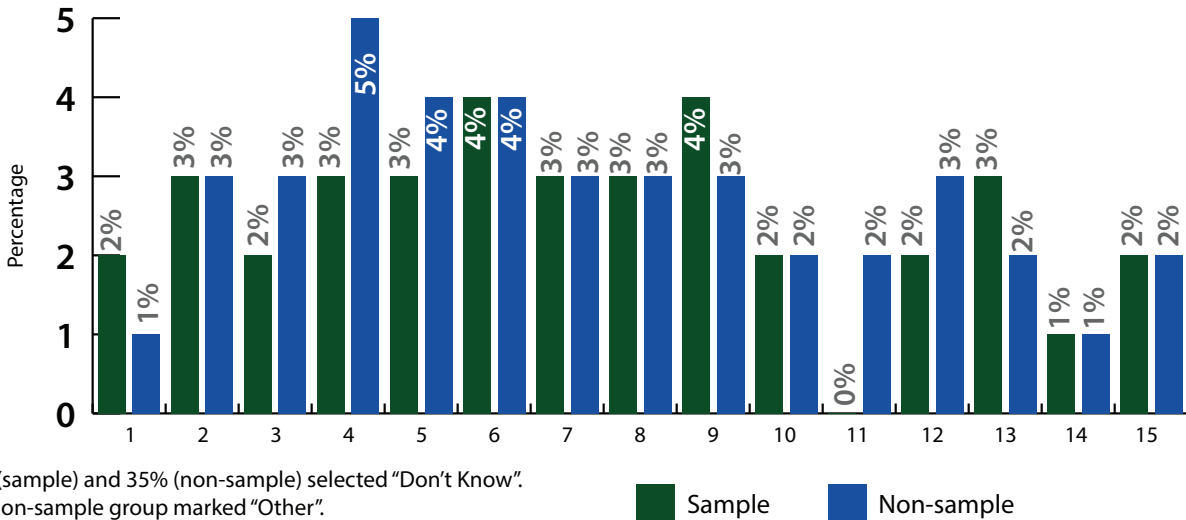
**Question 26. Mark the boxes that describe the people living in your house (other than yourself).**



**Question 27. What was your total household income last year?**



**Question 28. In which precinct do you live? (If unsure, please see the map at [www.cobaltcommunityresearch.org/Orion](http://www.cobaltcommunityresearch.org/Orion).)**



Note: 37% (sample) and 35% (non-sample) selected "Don't Know".  
2% of the non-sample group marked "Other".



## Carlisle | Wortman

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**Event:** Orion Township Parks & Recreation Plan Community Outreach  
Senior Focus Group

**Location:** Orion Center

**Attendees:**

- Jean Young, [bjeanyoung1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bjeanyoung1@sbcglobal.net)
- Marilyn Boyle, [boylejimmar@gmail.com](mailto:boylejimmar@gmail.com)
- Kurt Pfeiffer, [alpkop@aol.com](mailto:alpkop@aol.com)
- Rick Kalso, [orion99@flash.net](mailto:orion99@flash.net)
- Patty Kalso, [orion99@flash.net](mailto:orion99@flash.net)
- Mary Mansfield, [marymansfield177@gmail.com](mailto:marymansfield177@gmail.com)
- Ross Ensign, [ensign2415@comcast.net](mailto:ensign2415@comcast.net)

**Date:** July 10, 2023, 11:00 a.m.

The following is a transcription of the notes recorded at the meeting. The topics are listed as they were shown on the post-it notes, but in some instances are reworded and/or reorganized for clarity. Topics marked as important by participants (given a green sticker) are indicated by a bold number in parenthesis; the number represents the number of stickers the topic received. Observations that were not specifically indicated on the posters but were discussed at length are provided in italics.

### LIKES

- Kids Programming
  - Big Trucks
  - Parks
- Library
- Giving Table
- Communication **(2)**
  - Magazine (Orion Living) is superb
  - 50+ geared to seniors
  - Website
  - Facebook – Post-its
  - Lots of things we have that we did not know about **(1)**
- Field Trips **(7)**
  - #s could increase
  - Volunteer chaperone could have reduced fees and do more trips (*Note: Township acknowledged the desire for more trips but are limited by staff availability. Using volunteer chaperones would allow for expanded options. The chaperones would be compensated by have the cost for the trip waived.*)
  - NOTA (North Oakland Transportation Authority) helps with costs (*Note: NOTA provides free or reduced rates for transport to the field trips, but does not actually reimburse for the cost of the trip*)
- Parties **(1)**
  - Holidays

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Paul Montagno, *Principal*, Megan Masson-Minock, *Principal*, Laura Kreps, *Senior Associate*  
Richard K. Carlisle, *Past President/Senior Principal*



- Food
- Entertainment
- Park System as a whole / Parks in general **(1)**
  - Great baseball parks, especially if you have grandchildren playing there
  - Miracle League field
  - Cost to rent buildings is reasonable
- Trails **(1)**
  - Especially the one in Friendship Park
  - Paint Creek Trail – Can walk here from home
- Medical Events **(1)**
  - Doctors and nurse with Ascension Health, partners at Senior Center
- Concerts **(1)**

### DON'T LIKE / NEEDS MORE

- Mosquito spray on trails, need more **(1)**
- Trails not as well marked as it could have been (Camp Agawam specifically mentioned) **(3)**
  - Want to know where I am, how to get back, how much further
  - Trail markers with colors would be helpful, Orion Oaks may be good example
  - Offer trail maps on paper at trailheads
    - Boy Scout/Eagle Scout project could help
  - App for trails *(Note: Internet connectivity could be a problem for a trail app. The Township noted that all of the trails and other recreation facility locations are available online at the Township website)*
- Dust – when it is dry at the ball fields **(2)**
- Friendship Park – ants in classroom building (fireplace)
- Lake Orion – need more drinking fountains and public bathrooms
- Trips – would like more extended trips / trips to Europe
- Add birthdays to newsletters **(2)**

### PROGRAMS

- More programs at Orion Center on the weekends (Saturday a.m.) **(1)**
  - Would it be OK if the price went up? *(Note: participant said it would be OK if it went up a dollar or two)*
  - Hard to go two days without exercising
- Reinstate pool discount / pool pass at Great Lakes Athletic Club
- Yoga class at Great Lakes Athletic Club
- Help with seniors who have become isolated – bring folks to the senior center
  - Seniors helping seniors – list for general wellness checks
- Expand day trips **(5)**
  - \$100 range is appropriate
  - Casino in downtown Detroit
  - Trips to Canada
- Movie Night / lunch once a month **(1)**
- Overseas trips **(1)**
  - Some participants have gone with different groups *(Note: Township has tried partnering with Oxford and Independence on trips in the past with limited success)*

- Bean bag / Cornhole tournaments at Orion Center
  - Township currently has a league which meets on Mondays
  - Could be held indoors in exercise room
- Ping Pong table / convertible table at Orion Center **(2)**
  - Concrete tables in parks (*Note: these are being considered for Civic Center Park to replace underused shuffle board park*)
- Disc golf (*Note: Township has a disc golf course at Camp Agawam*)
- Bulletin Board, both virtual/online and physical board at Orion Center

## TOP VOTES BY CATEGORY

The categories discussed by the focus group frequently overlapped or were related to each other in some way. The following list includes all of the topics that received votes and, where possible, groups them into “buckets” to help identify the most frequently discussed issues.

- TRIPS – ALL – 13 votes
  - *Field Trips (7)*
  - *Expand day trips (5)*
  - *Overseas trips (1)*
- COMMUNICATION – ALL – 5 votes
  - *Communication (2)*
  - *Lots of things we have that we did not know about (1)*
  - *Add birthdays to newsletters (2)*
- PROGRAMS – ALL – 5 votes
  - *Parties (1)*
  - *Medical Events (1)*
  - *Concerts (1)*
  - *More programs at Orion Center on the weekends (Saturday a.m.) (1)*
  - *Movie Night / lunch once a month (1)*
- TRAILS – ALL – 4 votes
  - *Trails (1)*
  - *Trails not as well marked as it could have been (3)*
- PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS – ALL – 2 votes
  - *Ping Pong table / convertible table at Orion Center (2)*
- OTHER COMMENTS
  - *Park System as a whole / Parks in general (1)*
  - *Mosquito spray on trails, need more (1)*
  - *Dust – when it is dry at the ball fields (2)*





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G - Cost Recovery  
Plan - Draft

F - Recreation Center  
Study

E - Public Input  
Summary

D - Letters of  
Transmittal

C - Resolution of  
Adoption

B - Minutes of  
Public Hearing

A - Public Notices

**Event:** Orion Township Parks & Recreation Plan Community Outreach  
Teen Focus Group

**Location:** Orion Center

**Attendees:**

- Georgia P.
- Seth I.
- Aiden P.
- Ian P.
- Angelina B.
- Ann Conklin
- Aaron Whatley
- Chelsie Petrusha

**Date:** July 17, 2023, 5:30 p.m.

The following is a transcription of the notes recorded at the meeting. The topics are listed as they were shown on the post-it notes, but in some instances are reworded and/or reorganized for clarity. Topics marked as important by participants (given a green sticker) are indicated by a bold number in parenthesis; the number represents the number of stickers the topic received. Observations that were not specifically indicated on the posters but were discussed at length are provided in italics.

## Where do Teens currently hang out?

- Library
- Downtown Lake Orion
- Culver's
- Lake Sixteen
- Eva's
- Orion Oaks

## What features should there be in a Teen Center (as part of a larger Recreation Center or as a completely separate facility)

- Video consoles
- Pool
- Dance Room
- Pelaton / Biking Classes
- Pickleball
- Kitchen
- Rock Climbing
- Indoor Soccer / Multi-purpose fields
- Indoor lacrosse
- Batting cages

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Richard K. Carlisle, Past President/Senior Principal*

- Indoor bike track / velodrome
- Indoor mountain biking
- Cross country training track **(1)**
- Elevated track
- Room for cosmetics/prosthetics classes **(1)**
- Books / library
- Pool table/foosball
- Bigger place to come and relax
- Concessions / vending machines
- Picnic tables
- Bike stands

### **What features should be added to parks?**

- Create a little library aimed at teens
  - Paint/decorate it to differentiate it from typical little libraries
- Snow bike trails
- Skating rink
- More mountain bike trails
- Skate park
- Safe beach / access to water
- Batting cages
- Picnic tables
- Bike stands
- Community pools **(3)**
- Basketball courts

### **Programs (Especially as part of a Teen Center)**

- Create a Teen Advisory Committee **(1)**
- Movie nights
- Give-aways
- Scavenger hunts
- Dungeons & Dragons
- Table games
- Tournaments for different games
- Painting demonstrations/classes
- Cardboard boat making / contests
- Tote bag painting
- Tie dye classes
- Crochet
- Concerts at the center
- Clubs for specific activities / interests
- Taste testing events (specifically mentioned cheese tasting)
- Culinary arts
- Film classes **(2)**
- Make-up for films club



- Book club
- Skill / age appropriate gaming classes
- Golf camps / clinics
- Self improvement / health
- Chess club
- Baking class
- Football camps
- How to make videos (e.g. TikTok) classes
- Introductory sports camps aimed at teens/individuals who found a sport a little later in life (e.g. lacrosse) **(1)**
  - Non-competitive sports leagues
- Advanced Legos
- Music lessons
- Disc golf
- Hiking
- Mountain biking
- Arts & crafts
- Fishing

### Other Notes

- The group felt there was good connectivity between the facilities and felt comfortable walking or biking throughout the township
- Crosswalk at Baldwin & Clarkston Roads should be improved
- Should be a website with feedback options for programming and parks **(1)**
- Have QR code available at different facilities with brief survey about park experience
- Use community facilities to improve communications about programs/events
  - Use school and church bulletin boards

### TOP VOTES BY CATEGORY

The categories discussed by the focus group frequently overlapped or were related to each other in some way. The following list includes all of the topics that received votes and, where possible, groups them into “buckets” to help identify the most frequently discussed issues.

- FACILITIES – 5 votes
  - *More community pools (3)*
  - *Cross-country training track (1)*
  - *Room for make-up classes (1)*
- PROGRAMS & CLUBS – 4 votes
  - *Film classes (2)*
  - *Create a Teen Advisory Council (1)*
  - *Introductory sports camps (1)*
- OTHER – 1 vote
  - *Website with feedback options (1)*



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**Event:** Orion Township Parks & Recreation Plan Community Outreach  
Adaptive Programming Focus Group

**Location:** Orion Center

**Attendees:**

- Carol Z.
- Connor Z.
- Terry M.
- Kate A.
- Steve A.
- Melissa G.
- Ann Conklin
- Aaron Whatley
- Chelsie Petrusha

**Date:** July 26, 2023, 1:00 p.m.

The following is a transcription of the notes recorded at the meeting. The topics are listed as they were shown on the post-it notes, but in some instances are reworded and/or reorganized for clarity. Unlike other focus groups, the format focused on an open dialogue and did not include voting on topics. Observations that were not specifically indicated on the posters but were discussed at length are provided in italics.

### Programming opportunities and/or limitations

- Lack of programs for young kids.
- *Particularly interested in social programming & events.*
- Miracle League is the only opportunity for programming for many.
  - Miracle League's size and noise levels can be overwhelming for some participants.
- There is a drop-off in opportunities and participation as children progress from middle school to high school.
- Communication is an issue and participants noted a lack of publicity for some programs, specifically softball.
  - The Township noted that all adaptive programs are advertised in the Orion Magazine, but many not have been as clearly indicated as needed.
  - Direct mailing should be explored, similar to what Independence Township does now.
  - Advertise and promote through schools.
  - Electronic newsletters / e-blasts
  - Do a feature in the Orion Review
  - Reach out to local support groups, e.g. Down's Syndrome Guild of SE Michigan
- Special Olympics is an avenue for some participants.
- There are some social activities in neighboring communities including car bingo and scavenger hunts. *Independence Township was specifically noted as a destination.*

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- Can be difficult to arrange facilities for hosting programs at area schools. *Mentioned Pine Tree Center as an option.*
- Need programs that provide socialization opportunities.
- Need programs that meet people where they are already present.
- First Pick Sports hosts camps and workshops for special needs children.
- The group was open to travelling to other communities if necessary to have large enough classes/programs.
- *Have a buddy system where kids of different ages and abilities are paired. Acts well for both individual events and as a sort of ongoing mentor program.*

### Specifically requested programs / events

- Gymnastics
- Tennis lessons & leagues
- Pickleball
- Basketball
- Volleyball
- Archery
- *Obstacle courses*
- Bowling – *Currently offered at Collier Lanes*
- Bocce ball – *Currently offered at Pallazo di Bocce*
- Top golf
- Arts & Crafts
- Music Classes – instruments, etc., at a higher level than Kindermusik.
- Dancing
- Choir / singing
- Scavenger Hunt
- Concerts
- *Book club*
- Movie night with more age-appropriate movies (i.e. more than just Disney films).
- Field trips / outings, e.g. Henry Ford
- Night out at the ballfield, e.g. Jimmy John’s Field
- Host an event to bring parents together as well as kids. The parent’s night should be mirrored with another social event so the kids can be occupied while the parents meet/relax with each other.
- Offer a sibling support group.
- *Holiday events – Trunk or Treat mentioned as good example of truly inclusive event*

### Specifically requested physical amenities

- Communications boards at parks
- Improve accessibility to all fields; *consider spectators as well as participants.*
- Upgrade dugouts and bleachers especially at Hubbard Field / Civic Center Park. *Adaptive softball groups tend to meet at Hubbard because the Miracle League Field is too small, and many participants are consistently hitting the balls out of the park.*
- Improve bathrooms – include adult changing tables.
- Wheelchair mat/ramp at Camp Agawam beach.

- More adaptive swings / bucket swings. *Some discussion more intensive wheelchair swings and other rocking platforms.*
- Musical amenities such as drums, chimes, etc.
- Spinners / spinning equipment
- Provide quiet spaces for autistic children to retreat to.
- Wheelchair accessible sand box.
- *Add playscapes that allow wheelchairs to travel onto equipment, not just playscapes with a transfer platform.*
- *Shade structures*

### **Other Notes**

- Be cognizant of speakers at the Miracle League Field and other parks. Noise levels can be overwhelming.
- Offer special recreation opportunities, either separate or before other events, which allow more sensitive individuals to participate before it becomes too overwhelming.
- Events should be open to individuals with different conditions / diagnoses.
- Events should be open to siblings.
- Movie nights, concerts, etc., should be offered at a lower noise level with dimmed lights to reduce the stimulation levels.
- E-mails received from parents who were unable to attend the event are attached on the last three pages of this report.
- *Set up an advisory panel of parents and allies. All of the people at the event said they would be interested in participating.*



**From:** Carol [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 27, 2023 10:11 AM  
**To:** Chelsie Petrusha <[cpetrusha@oriontownship.org](mailto:cpetrusha@oriontownship.org)>  
**Subject:** RE: Adaptive/Special Needs Focus Group Wednesday, July 26

Hi Chelsie,

Thank you for hosting a focus group for families with disabilities. It's nice to feel heard. There were a lot of great ideas/suggestions. I do have a few more to add:

- Book club
- Cooking/baking class
- Sewing/knitting/crochet
- Trips to the Zoo or museums

Also, I know inclusion was mentioned. It is a challenge for all of us to try to find the right class or program where our kids feel included with their neuro typical peers. It would be great to see programs where our children are paired (as a team) with a neuro typical peer for things like bocce ball, bowling, board games, corn hole, etc., or arts & crafts classes where more individual help may be needed.

The challenge has always been finding someone who will spend time with our kids. I would like to suggest reaching out to:

- the ESETS (future teachers) Program at LOHS/Community service hours
- OU Cares and OU Education dept.
- Middle schools?
- Maybe student athletes could help coach a sport

Lastly, I can see that with some offerings it may be beneficial to add something like, “parents/grandparents/caregivers/sibling encouraged to attend”. It will all depend on level of disability or support that is needed for the individual. There is such a wide range of disabilities; from the severely disabled who need help with everything to the fairly ambulatory with more neurological challenges and varying levels of maturity.

Parents are always looking for something that will bring their kids up and forward not to remain stagnant or regress.

Feel free to reach out to me if I can be of any assistance.

Thank,  
Carol Z

**From:** Cheryl P [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 26, 2023 11:18 AM  
**To:** Chelsie Petrusha <[cpetrusha@oriontownship.org](mailto:cpetrusha@oriontownship.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: Adaptive/Special Needs Focus Group Wednesday, July 26

Hi Chelsie,

Unfortunately, I won't be able to make it to the session today due to childcare issues, but I wanted to share some ideas for some events/activities that could be great for special needs families. There is such a need in this area. When I look through the catalog at opportunities for my 10 year old without special needs there is every activity under the sun! Then I try to see what my 8 year old with special needs can do and it is next to nothing. Sports are too competitive even at this young age!

- Sensory-Friendly Movie Night: Host a private screening of a popular movie in a sensory-friendly environment, with lowered volume and dimmed lights, allowing kids to feel comfortable and relaxed during the movie.
- Sensory Playdate: Set up a sensory playdate with various stations, such as tactile bins, bubble wrap stomping, and calming sensory bottles, for children to engage and interact freely.
- Parent Support Group: Hold regular support group sessions for parents and caregivers to share experiences, resources, and provide emotional support to one another. Could invite speakers from organizations focused on special needs children.
- Family Swim Night at Aqua Tots: An evening at Aqua Tots, where families can enjoy a safe and inclusive swim environment, complete with specially trained instructors and sensory-friendly facilities.
- Family Fun Day at Lake Orion High School (or outside): A day filled with fun and laughter, featuring a bounce house, obstacle course, face painting, crafts, and various engaging activities suitable for all kids, whether outdoors or in the gym. Sponsorship from Companies/Organizations: Reach out to companies and organizations that offer therapy or other programs for special needs families to sponsor the event. Oakland University does a Family Fun Day like this.
- Adaptive Sports Programs: Organized adaptive programs like dance, basketball, soccer, and other sports tailored to meet the needs of special needs kids, fostering a sense of inclusion and physical well-being. (Clarkston has several adaptive sports)
- Social Group Gathering: Establish a social group where special needs kids can bond and have fun together, engaging in activities like board games and activities. Depending on how many enroll, this could be grouped by ages.
- Library Hour: Collaborate with the library to arrange a special hour where engaging stories are read to the kids, followed by craft activities.
- Bowling Day: Family bowling at Collier Lanes.
- Pontoon Boat Rides: Partnering with Oakland County to offer pontoon boat rides, giving kids a unique and exciting experience on the water. (This is done each summer through Oakland County for kids signed up for OU Cares Camp).

I look forward to hearing what the group comes up with and would be happy to be involved in future focus groups.

Thanks,  
Cheryl P [REDACTED]



From: Christine M [REDACTED]  
Sent: Thursday, July 20, 2023 11:57 AM  
To: Jennifer Vezina <[jvezina@oriontownship.org](mailto:jvezina@oriontownship.org)>  
Subject: Special needs

Hi Jennifer ,

I heard that you need input from the special needs dept. Well I have a few ideas .

Dug outs would be great if we could put over hangs on them so it's not so hot. Hard benches to put padding on and some kind of vynle on top that's waterproof . It's hard for them to sit. Maybe mister fans to add some coolness while it's hot.

This is idea I had after seeing one of our kids getting blasted on Fb for a post about traffic back up because she can write like we do. I've worked over a year to get her confidence built up because she was at very super low point in her life. I'm sure you can see the post Jessica [REDACTED] posted . But she's one of the most caring people that would help anyone of us out. I think it would be great to have a plaque with their name by miracle field and one by the civic center that had a special needs person of the year. It's very small things like this that build up their self confidence. You would not believe how excited they get . Maybe we could get Deanna to cover a story with Chris Barnet and make Jessica the first person to get it . 🙌😊

If you are around the area when we have our games you should stop in and introduce yourself because they hear your name .

Hawks is an amazing program for our special needs and I hope it stays for a long time .

Thanks

Chris M [REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone



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**Event:** Orion Township Parks & Recreation Plan Community Outreach  
Staff Input Session

**Location:** Orion Center

**Date:** July 26, 2023, 1:00 p.m.

The following is a transcription of the notes recorded at the meeting. The topics are listed as they were shown on the post-it notes, but in some instances are reworded and/or reorganized for clarity. Participants wrote down ideas and suggestions on Post-it notes which were then compiled into categories. At the end of the session, staff members “voted” by placing stickers on the top four items they liked. These votes are indicated below by a bold number in parenthesis.

### PROGRAMS & EVENTS

- Halloween Walk / Halloween Woods **(1)**
- Fall hayrides
- Holiday events
- Pumpkin drop
- Holiday lighted trails
- Tree plantings
- Community bonfires / pallet fires
- Community participation programs
- Winter events at parks
- Fishing
- Swimming lessons at Camp Agawam
- Adult / youth exercise
- More availability / expand hours
- Teen / tween programs **(1)**
- Pickleball leagues / tournaments / lessons
- Disc golf league
- Kayak classes
- Nature classes, e.g. tree identification
- Kickball league
- Wiffleball league
- Bowling classes
- Dodgeball
- Archery
- Extreme sledding at Jesse Decker Park
- More children programs
- Poker night
- Paddleboard
- Skating nights / lessons
- Volleyball leagues
- Dog walking club
- Flag / touch football
- Sports / outdoor activity lessons
- Food gardening
- Ice fishing
- Mushroom hunt
- Competitive tag
- Frisbee league
- Bocce ball
- Cross country skiing
- Sled races

### MISCELLANEOUS

- More staff **(2)**
- Balance passive and active amenities/activities

Benjamin R. Carlisle, *President* Douglas J. Lewan, *Executive Vice President* John L. Enos, *Vice President*  
David Scurto, *Principal* Sally M. Elmiger, *Principal* R. Donald Wortman, *Principal*  
Paul Montagno, *Principal*, Megan Masson-Minock, *Principal*, Laura Kreps, *Senior Associate*  
Richard K. Carlisle, *Past President/Senior Principal*



## TRAILS

- Improved trail head at Paint Creek Trail
- Trail maps – App **(1)**
- “You are here” maps on kiosks
- QR codes
- More safety paths
- Water stations for bikers / hikers **(2)**

## SPECIAL FACILITIES

- Recreation Center **(9)**
- Indoor basketball
- Historic structures / markers **(3)**
- Dog park
- Educational areas / Natural features markers or signage **(1)**
- Wedding gazebo
- Community gardens with raised beds
- Golf simulator **(1)**
- Splash pad
- Doggie waste stations
- Dog drinking fountains **(2)**
- Youth outdoor ninja **(1)**
- More fire rings
- Nature center **(7)**
- Bowling alley

## GENERAL PARK AMENITIES

- Basketball courts **(3)**
- Pickleball courts
- New recreation center at Civic Center Park **(1)**
- Farmer’s market
- Parking improvements
- Covered picnic facilities **(2)**
- Scoreboards
- Easy to read signage
- Sun dial
- Horseshoes
- Corn hole
- General park maintenance **(2)**
- Accessibility improvements
- Clean
- Covered dugouts
- More baseball fields **(2)**
- Shaded areas with benches on trails
- Improved signage **(1)**
- Access to water
- Skate park **(2)**
- Lighted soccer fields

## JESSE DECKER PARK

- Bathrooms **(1)**
- New playground

## **CIVIC CENTER PARK**

- Update Sheardy Pavilion

## **CAMP AGAWAM**

- Boardwalks **(3)**
- Pavilion
- Access to beach
- Universal kayak launch **(1)**
- Splash pad

## **FRIENDSHIP PARK**

- Covered picnic facilities / additional picnic structures **(6)**
- Scoreboards
- Lighted soccer fields
- Update bathrooms **(1)**
- Playground

## **VOTE TOTALS**

- Recreation Center **(9)**
- Nature center **(7)**
- Covered picnic facilities / additional picnic structures at Friendship Park **(6)**
- Basketball courts **(3)**
- Historic structures / markers **(3)**
- Covered picnic facilities **(2)**
- Dog drinking fountains **(2)**
- General park maintenance **(2)**
- Improved signage **(1)**
- More baseball fields **(2)**
- More staff **(2)**
- Skate park **(2)**
- Water stations for bikers / hikers **(2)**
- Bathrooms at Jesse Decker Park **(1)**
- Educational areas / Natural features markers or signage **(1)**
- Golf simulator **(1)**
- Halloween Walk / Halloween Woods **(1)**
- New recreation center at Civic Center Park **(1)**
- Teen / tween programs **(1)**
- Trail maps – App **(1)**
- Universal kayak launch at Camp Agawam **(1)**
- Update bathrooms at Friendship Park **(1)**
- Youth outdoor ninja **(1)**



## Recreation Center Analysis

### Background

Township residents have indicated a desire for a recreation center for many years, with requests for an inclusive fitness and gathering space mentioned in both the previous and current recreation plans.

Shortly before the inception of the 2024 - 2028 Recreation Plan efforts, a private entity had approached the Township regarding a potential public/private development for an indoor sports complex at a Township park. The proposed dome facility would have been built and operated by the private entity on public park land. While the dome offered the benefit of indoor fields for public use, it presented the pitfalls of eliminating existing outdoor fields, and the private aspect of the agreement would limit Parks & Recreation's oversight capability.

Recognizing the possible drawbacks of the arrangement and the potential for a negative reaction from their constituents, Parks & Recreation chose to reach out to the community to gather their feedback. Simultaneously, Carlisle/Wortman Associates (CWA) and Hubbell, Roth, & Clark (HRC) were asked to evaluate options and anticipated costs for construction of a new facility somewhere within the Township. This document represents the results of that research.

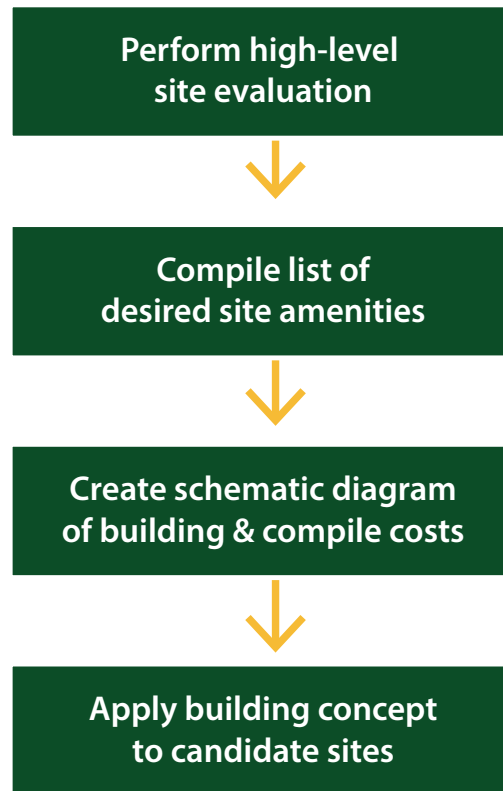
### Survey Results

Over 1,700 Orion Township residents participated in an online survey offered in 2023. 650 of those participants were polled as part of a statistically valid survey, offering a margin of error of +/- 3.7%. 1,058 individuals who were not part of the initial sample group were given the opportunity to take the survey. While not statistically significant, the results of the non-sample group closely mirrored those from the sample population. In the following paragraphs, the sample population is listed first, followed by the non-sample results.

Questions 18 to 22 revolved around the proposed sports dome. There was broad general support for the project, with 26/31% stating that they would definitely be in support, and another 27/26% stating they would probably be in support if the project were funded with private dollars. If Parks & Recreation money was used to develop a portion of the project, support dropped to 14/20% definite and 28/27% probable.

Survey participants were fairly evenly split on the preferred location for a sports complex. 41/40% preferred to see it on undeveloped open space, while 28/33% preferred an existing park and 25/37% wanted to see it on an existing commercial corridor. Cost and the loss of open space were

Figure 1. Evaluation Work Flow



the primary reasons for opposing the project, although a number of participants expressed concerns about access to the facility, fearing that sports leagues and teams would monopolize its use. Still others felt that while a facility would serve sporting groups, it would not necessarily fill the same function as a traditional recreation center, and it may not meet the needs of teens, seniors, or special needs individuals.

While there were no questions regarding a new recreation center, several participants specifically requested a facility throughout the open-ended questions. On question seven, which asked users to identify improvements to parks, indoor fitness (#10 overall) and swimming pools (#5 overall) were common responses. On question seventeen, users were asked to identify features from other communities they would like to see in Orion; swimming pool (#2 overall) and recreation center (#9 overall) were again frequently mentioned. While not necessarily falling within the top ten responses, options such as indoor tracks, teen and senior meeting spaces, climbing walls, and general space for expanded programming were frequent topics. A full set of survey responses is included in the appendices to the recreation plan.



## High Level Site Evaluation

CWA performed a preliminary analysis of all parcels capable of housing a recreation center. CWA, HRC, and Parks & Recreation staff discussed desired amenities at a meeting on July 26, 2023. Based on the desired amenity list, HRC recommended a minimum required lot size of 10-acres. 256 parcels met the minimum size requirement. Of the initial group of 256, 14 were owned by the Township, 23 were public properties operated by other municipal entities (e.g. schools or state parks), and the remaining 219 are privately owned.

CWA reviewed each parcel and utilized several basic criteria to apply a feasibility score. Properties with existing residential structures were immediately eliminated from consideration. Commercial parcels with viable businesses were also removed from consideration, with the exception of existing recreation properties (e.g. golf courses and the Great Lakes Athletic Club), landfills, and extractive sites (e.g. gravel pits).

Evaluation criteria included:

- Location: Parcels located near the center of the Township or in existing commercial corridors were given higher priority.
- Environmental: Properties with wetlands, poor soils, or which were heavily wooded were given lower consideration or eliminated from contention entirely depending on the extent of the natural features.
- Surrounding land uses: Parcels with surrounding residential uses were given lower priority.
- Existing Uses: Properties owned by the Township which had the necessary size but would require relocation or removal of existing amenities were given a lower score.

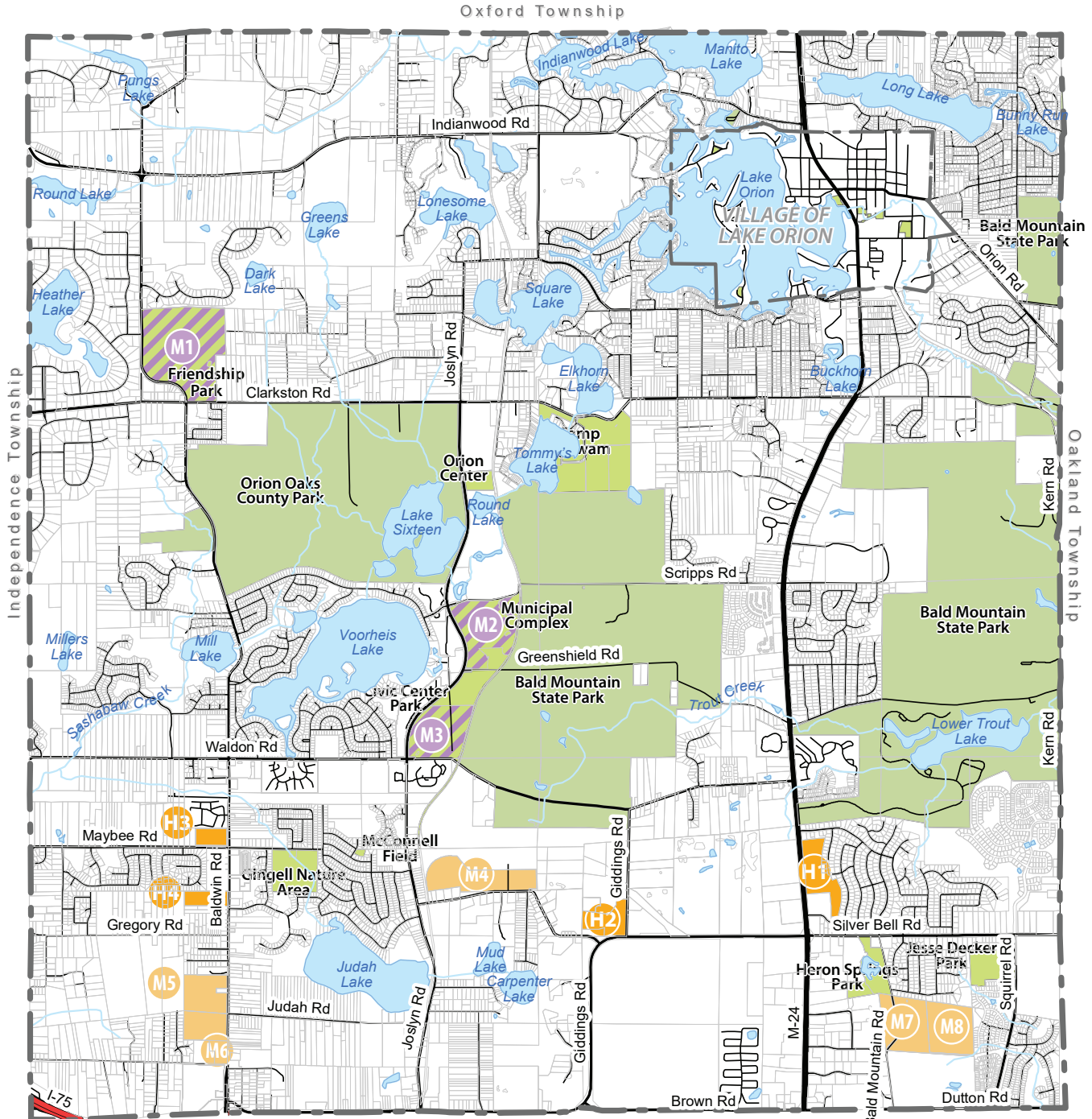
Ultimately only four parcels received a “high” overall score. Of those parcels, it was determined that two were slated for development and were eliminated from further consideration. Figure 2 shows the location of high and medium potential candidate sites. Table 1 provides some of the details related to each parcel.

**Table 1. Preliminary Parcel Evaluation Matrix**

Address (approx.)	Acres	Private or Twp	Primary/ Adjoining Use	Overall Potential	Notes
3677 S Lapeer Rd	30	PVT	Hi-Hill Village	High	Residential to north and east, commercial south. Parcel could be split?
Silverbell & Giddings	21	PVT	Vacant	High	Possible water issues, somewhat awkwardly shaped parcel
Maybee & S Baldwin	11	PVT	Vacant	High	open space for Orion Ridge Condos?
3800 S Baldwin Rd	13	PVT	Great Lakes Athletic Club	High	
3400 W Clarkston Rd	133	TWP	Friendship Park	Medium	Would require relocation of amenities
2323 Joslyn Rd	66	TWP	Township Offices	Medium	Potential space north of entry drive, possibly preserved?
2700 Joslyn Rd	57	TWP	Civic Center Park	Medium	Would require relocation of amenities
Silverbell & Linda Lee Ln	54	PVT	Vacant	Medium	lot split by access drive, wet to west. ~14 acres appear developable
S Baldwin west of Judah Rd	32	PVT	Vacant	Medium	Heavily wooded, possible water issues
S Baldwin west of Judah Rd	25	PVT	Vacant	Medium	Heavily wooded, possible water issues
Bald Mountain Road near Roxbury	50	PVT	Vacant	Medium	Heavily wooded, likely wet. Possible 33 acres available?
Bald Mountain Road near Roxbury	46	PVT	Vacant	Medium	Heavily wooded, appears drier than adjacent parcel



Figure 2. Candidate Sites



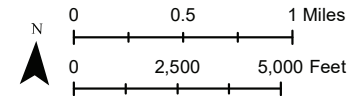
**Recreation Center Potential for  
Parcels 10 acres or greater**

Orion Charter Township

Oakland County

Roads, Tax Parcel, and Rivers Data  
from Oakland County GIS

August 2023  
Carlisle/Wortman Associates, Inc.  
Ann Arbor, Michigan



- Private - Medium Potential
- Private - High Potential
- Township Owned - Medium Potential
- Township Recreation Properties
- State & County Recreation Properties

**High Potential Sites**

1. 09-26-451-002
2. 09-27-301-051
3. 09-29-104-001
4. 09-29-301-036

**Medium Potential Sites**

1. 09-07-426-002
2. 09-21-201-002
3. 09-21-376-003
4. 09-28-401-008
5. 09-32-151-020
6. 09-32-301-001
7. 09-36-300-001
8. 09-36-300-002



## Desired Site Amenities & Schematic Design Preparation

HRC and Parks & Recreation developed a list of desired amenities for a new recreation center and anticipated space requirements (see Table 2 and Table 3). The list included many of the items identified by residents in both the sample and non-sample group surveys, and items suggested by staff.

Swimming pools were notably absent from the list. Swimming pools create significant cost implications for recreation centers, both in terms of initial construction costs and long-term maintenance and staffing expenses. While Parks & Recreation recognized the community's desire for a swimming pool, it was felt that the added expense would be overly burdensome to the project.

A schematic diagram of the proposed facility was prepared and a general site plan created for the remaining high potential sites (see Figure 4 and Figure 5 on page 6). Similar plans created for the remaining high potential properties were discarded due to existing development plans.

**Table 3. Acreage Requirements**

Site Components	Rough acreage required
50,000 SF Footprint Building	1.2
Greenspace/Circulation Around Bldg	1.6
200 Car Parking Lot	2.6
Two Basketball Courts	0.4
Four Pickleball Courts	0.4
Two Soccer Fields	1.3
Outdoor Playground	0.3
Additional Greenspace/Circulation Around Outdoor Amenities	2.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>

**Table 2. Desired Basic Site Amenities**

Space Needs	Area (square feet)
Gymnasium 2-courts	14,000
Gymnasium 2-courts	12,000
Walking Track (Assumes 10,000 sq. ft. on 2nd Level)	-
Locker Rooms	5,000
Multi-purpose Rooms (4), 150-200 people	4,000
Art Room	600
Full Commercial Kitchen, access to side parking lot	1,200
Café/ Coffee Bar	800
Storage (LOTS)	3,000
Senior Center Game Room/ Bingo Room	2,000
Senior Library	600
Fitness Center	4,000
Cycling Room	1,600
Group Exercise Room (30 people working out)	2,000
Teen Hangout Room / E-Sports Room	600
Childcare Area/ Indoor Playground	2,500
Health & Wellness Suite - Physician Room, Waiting, Office (Partnership/ w/ Hospital)	450
Medical Equipment Closet (Walkers, Wheelchairs, etc.)	350
Office Suite - 10 staff, assume 4 offices & 6 cubicles; staff kitchen, storage, restroom, & copier area	1,600
Staff Meeting Room	300
Athletics Garage for Sports Equipment	1,500
Circulation and Entry Area Open Space (30%)	17,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>75,600</b>
<i>Note: Assumes a building footprint of ~50,000 square feet with some amenities on a second level</i>	

**Table 4. Comparable Facilities**

Community	Building footprint	Acreage	Site Notes
Sterling Heights	58,000	6	Minimal Parking, No Sport Courts, No Extras (Dodge Park & City Hall Adjacent)
Lapeer	40,000	6 (+3)	Limited Parking, Some Small Sport Courts; Open Field Adjacent
Huntington Woods	32,000	3 (+3)	Inadequate Parking, Part of City Complex, No Sport Courts; Adjacent Lot for Ball Fields
Rochester (RARA)	58,000	5	Limited Parking, No Sport Courts, No Greenspace
Canton	87,000	15	Excellent Parking, Part of Large Park Complex; Multiple Sport Courts on Property Adjacent
St. Clair Shores	95,000	15	Excellent Parking, Multiple Sport Courts, Some Greenspace
Troy	120,000	18 (+9)	Excellent Parking, Separate Maint. Bldg.; Trails & Ball Diamond on Adjacent Open Lot; Near City Complex
Livonia	110,000	18 (+7)	Excellent Parking, Some Sport Courts, Separate Maint. Bldg.; Soccer Fields on Adjacent Lot



Figure 3. Schematic Building Layout

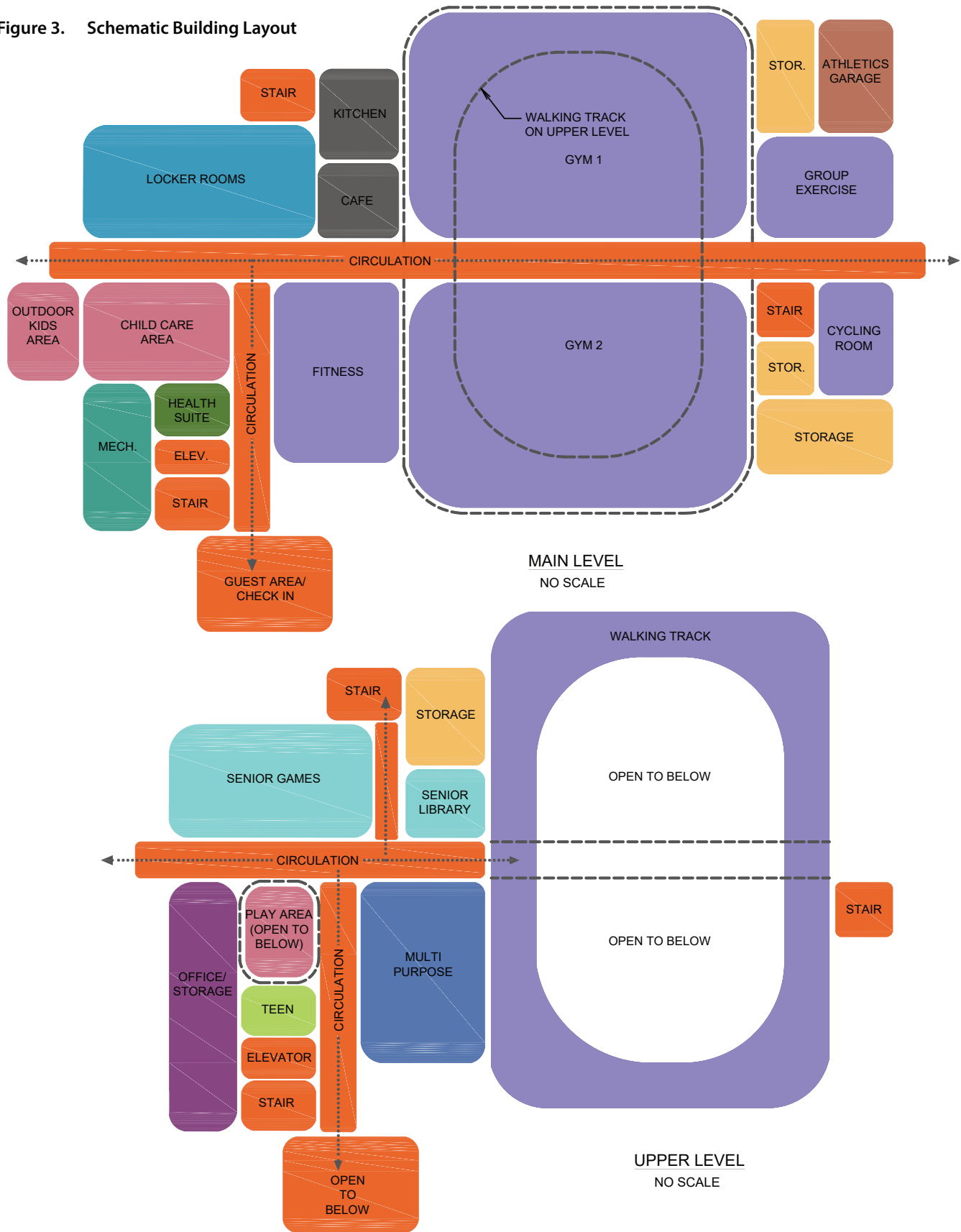
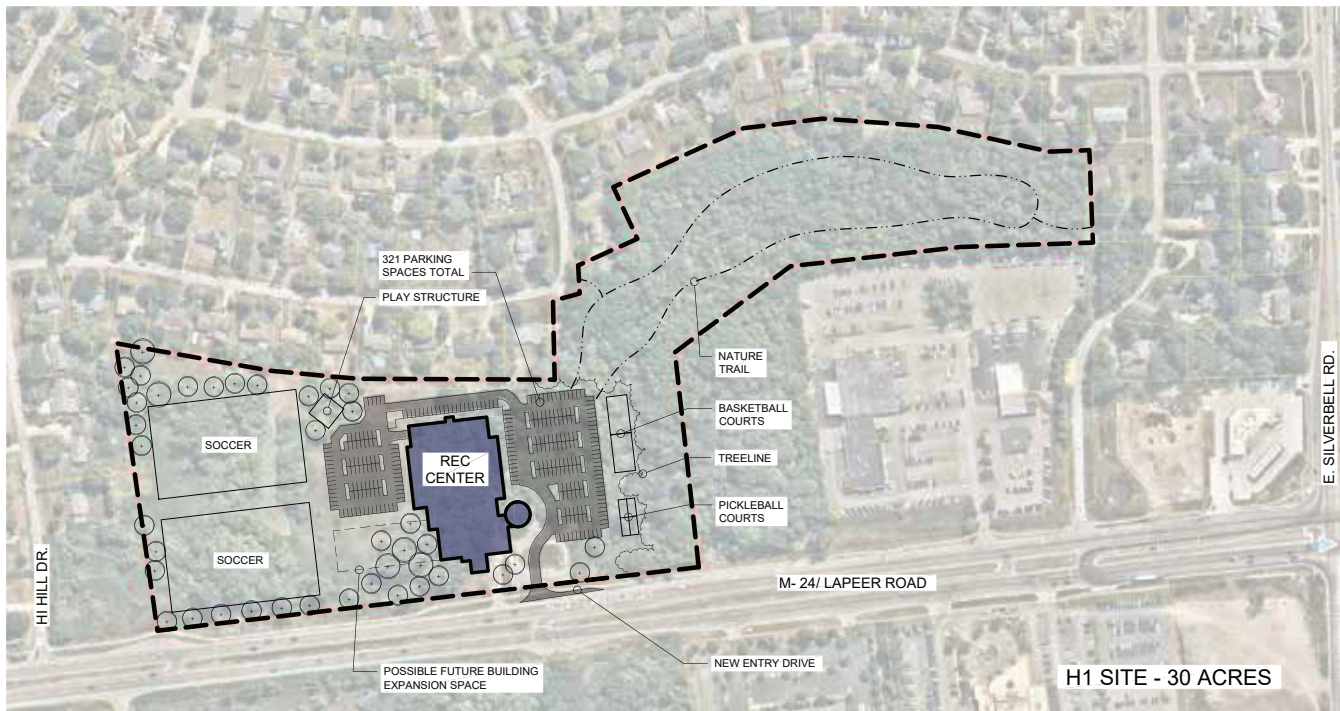


Figure 4. Concept Plan - Site H1



**HRC**  
**HUBBELL, ROTH & CLARK, INC.**  
 CONSULTING ENGINEERS SINCE 1915  
505 WILEY DRIVE BLOOMFIELD HILLS, MICH. P.O. BOX 824 48301-0824  
 HRC PROJECT NO. 20230117  
 0 50 100 200 400  
 1" = 200'-0"



ORION TWP. RECREATION CENTER H1 SITE PLAN

SCALE: 1" = 200'



Figure 5. Concept Plan - Site H4 (Great Lakes Athletic Club)



**HRC**  
**HUBBELL, ROTH & CLARK, INC.**  
 CONSULTING ENGINEERS SINCE 1915  
505 WILEY DRIVE BLOOMFIELD HILLS, MICH. P.O. BOX 824 48301-0824  
 HRC PROJECT NO. 20230117  
 0 25 50 100 200  
 1" = 100'-0"



ORION TWP. RECREATION CENTER H4 SITE PLAN

SCALE: 1" = 100'





## Site H1 - 3677 S Lapeer Road

While not exactly centrally located, the parcel's position along Lapeer Road and proximity to dense residential neighborhoods made this property a strong candidate. The property's unusual configuration was offset by its large size; at 30 acres, it was more than capable of housing a recreation center, playing fields, and parking, with ample room for future growth. A wooded area to the southeast offered intriguing possibilities for both natural area preservation and to provide connecting pathways to the adjacent neighborhoods.

Private ownership of the parcel was the main obstacle to development. Had the Township decided to pursue this property, negotiations with the property owners would have been required, and the acquisition costs were a significant unknown. Anticipated development costs ranged from \$20 to \$30 million, with the higher end estimate including a swimming pool.

## Site H4 - Great Lakes Athletic Club

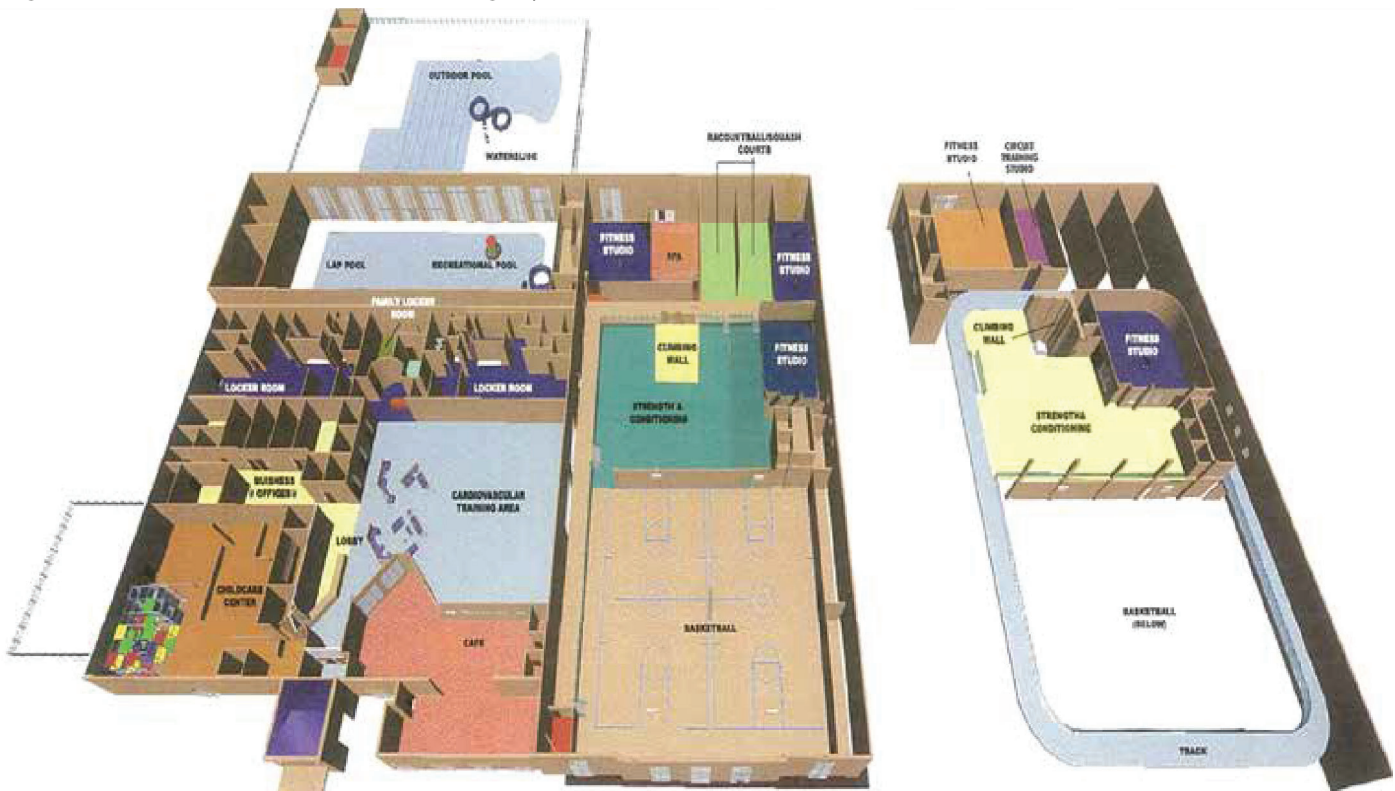
The Great Lakes Athletic Club (GLAC) is an existing fitness center located in the southwest corner of the Township on Baldwin Road. As an existing, operating gym, the 88,000 square foot building offered the potential for immediate impact for the Township. The GLAC included most, if not all, of the amenities requested by residents, with the added benefit of both an indoor and outdoor swimming pool.

The building would require significant revisions to ensure that the facility meets Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, and some amenities would need to be converted to accommodate desired uses such as a teen center, senior facilities, and other uses. Overall, the building has been well maintained and has the potential to accommodate almost all of the desired uses described by residents and staff. Space at the rear of the property could be developed into additional outdoor space, with new court sports or playing fields added as desired. Any required improvements to the building and/or grounds could be implemented over time without impacting the ability to utilize the club.

## GLAC Acquisition

Shortly after completion of the recreation center study, GLAC was put into receivership and became available for purchase. On November 9, 2023, Orion Township successfully bid for the club. Funding for the bid came from a combination Parks & Recreation funds and General Fund dollars. The Township is also considering sale of the Orion Center to help offset the cost of the purchase and to finance some of the needed improvements. Critically, no new taxes were necessary to finance the acquisition. The winning bid is estimated to be approximately a third of the cost of developing a new center with similar amenities.

Figure 6. Great Lakes Athletic Club Existing Layout



## GLAC - Development & Operation Recommendations

As described in the previous section, the GLAC is fully functional in its current state, but a number of improvements are required to ensure that the property functions as a truly inclusive community recreation center. The following provides a list of anticipated projects categorized by priority, with high-level cost estimates provided where possible.

### SHORT TERM (1 to 2 years):

- Complete a staffing audit to ensure adequate personnel are present for operation and maintenance of the facility
- Refine cost recovery model to reflect addition of the GLAC and ensure facility access to residents with a reasonable fee structure.
- Complete accessibility audit and correct any noted deficiencies (audit: \$15,000 - \$20,000, required improvements TBD)
- Repair roof (\$476,000 - \$680,000)

### MEDIUM TERM (2 to 5 years):

- Upgrade interior and exterior lighting as needed to high efficiency LED (total cost TBD)
- Repair driveway and parking lots (\$400,000 - \$700,000)
- Upgrade HVAC system (\$1.9 - \$2.4 million)
- Install emergency generator (\$10,000 - \$25,000)
- Develop senior, teen, and special need spaces (TBD)

### LONG TERM (5 years or longer):

- Add outdoor gathering space with permanent recreation features such as cornhole pits, chess boards, and ping pong tables (\$40,000 - \$60,000)
- Add splash pad (\$200,000 - \$300,000)
- Add play structures (\$150,000 - \$200,000)
- Add pickleball courts (\$160,000 - \$200,000)
- Add outdoor basketball courts (\$80,000 - \$120,000)

## Grant Considerations

Completion and submittal of a five-year recreation plan makes the Township eligible to pursue grant funding through three Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) grant programs. It is important to note that these grant programs are generally intended to fund outdoor recreation facilities; recreation center improvements are not typically considered. Improvements to active sport facilities such as gym floors or swimming pool upgrades may be considered, but it is strongly recommended that the Township reach out to their local grant coordinator before attempting to apply for funding for these sorts of improvements.

Outdoor improvements, most of which are described as long term goals in the previous section, are eligible for grant funding. The three primary grant programs administered by the MDNR include:

- Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF): up to \$300,000 available for development projects with a minimum 25% match required;
- Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF): up to \$500,000 available for development projects with a minimum 50% match required; and
- Recreation Passport: up to \$150,000 available for development projects with a minimum 25% match required.

A further description of the three grant programs is provided beginning on page 32 of the 2024 - 2028 Parks & Recreation Master Plan. Grant applications are due on April 1 of each calendar year, with grant awards announced in December.



# Appendix G. Cost Recovery Plan

The Cost Recovery Plan will be appended to the Parks & Recreation Master Plan upon completion. Anticipated completion date is late summer to early fall, 2024.