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**Park  
Commission**

Tajalli Hodge, Chair  
Dave Streeter, Vice Chair  
Brad Hine, Treasurer  
Jeff Neel, **Secretary**



**YPSILANTI  
TOWNSHIP**  
— WHERE YOUR FUTURE GROWS —

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Commissioners:  
Edward Burnett  
Darrell Kirby  
Star Smith

**Park Commission**

**YPSILANTI TOWNSHIP PARK  
COMMISSION**

**REGULAR MEETING**

Date: Monday, November 6, 2023

Time: 6:30 P.M.

**LOCATION**

1<sup>st</sup> board room  
Ypsilanti Township Civic Center  
7200 S. Huron River Drive  
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197

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Chairperson  
Tajalli Hodge  
Vice Chairperson  
David Streeter  
Treasurer  
Brad Hine  
Secretary  
Jeff Neel



**YPSILANTI  
TOWNSHIP**  
— WHERE YOUR FUTURE GROWS —  
**Park Commission**

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Commissioners  
Edward Burnett  
Darrell Kirby  
Star Smith

***REGULAR MEETING AGENDA***  
**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2023**  
**6:30 P.M.**

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Roll Call**
- III. Determination of Quorum**
- IV. Approval of Agenda**
- V. Approval of Minutes from the October 2, 2023 regular meeting**
- VI. Citizens Participation**
- VII. Reports**
  - A. Staff Reports**
  - B. Commissioner Reports**
- VIII. Unfinished Business**
- IX. New Business**
  - A. Parks and Recreation 5 Year Plan**
- X. Announcements**
- XI. Recommendations to the Township Board**
  - A. Approve and Adopt Parks and Recreation 5 Year Master Plan**
- XII. Adjournment**



**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF YPSILANTI  
PARK COMMISSION  
PROPOSED MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 2, 2023 REGULAR MEETING**

*Park Commission Agendas and Minutes are available on the township website at  
<https://ytown.org/park-commission>*

**I. Call to Order**

Commission Hodge called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. at the Ypsilanti Township Civic Center.

**II. Roll Call**

**Commissioners Present:** Jeff Neel, Darrell Kirby, David Streeter, Ed Burnett

**Commissioners Not Present:** Brad Hine, Tajalli Hodge, Starr Smith

**Staff Present:** John Hines, Robin Castle-Hine

**III. Determination of Quorum**

Quorum present.

**IV. Approval of Agenda**

Motion to approve agenda made by Kirby

Seconded by Burnett

Motion Carried Unanimously

**V. Approval of Minutes** –Approval of September 11, 2023 Regular Meeting

Motion to approve minutes made by Burnett

Seconded by Kirby

Motion Carried Unanimously

**VI. Citizens Participation**

Alyssa Welty, Clubview Drive. Concerned about proposed parking lot for pickleball court taking up green space from existing park. Would like more information shared about plans.

Megan Walquest, Harding Ave. across from Burns Park. Concerned that plans for park have not discussed with neighborhood. Sidewalk around park is in poor repair – roots, breaks in pavement present trip hazards. Met with John Hines who indicated that there aren't finalized plans yet.

Pickleball players takes up all residential parking. Signage needed about not parking in front of houses. There is lots of traffic now. Most park on south side of park nearer to courts. Concerns about porta-potty being added.

Eric Irish, 12-year resident of Burns Park neighborhood. Would like more transparency about how decisions are made.

Katelyn Zak, lives across from Burns Park. Reiterated pickleball concern. Wasps are a problem; weeds/thistles are issue for children. Shrubs are obstructing views for people leaving driveways. Overall maintenance is a problem.

**Discussion:** Commissioner Streeter visited Burns Park after last meeting; very crowded. Harding was packed but no one parked on Burns. Addressed citizens – input and feedback are important. John Hines, Municipal Services Director explained process – APRA funds to go for park maintenance, playground improvement, and parking solution (not parking lot.) Other projects – Ford Lake and West Willow - have been prioritized but plan to sit down with Spicer (Consultants) and neighborhood residents to create formal plan. Commissioner Burnett: how will residents be notified about ways to provide input? JH: put on website when meeting is scheduled but JH also has email addresses for those who have contacted him and will send personal emails. Also, have

addressed some issues already – wasps and weeds – have been submitted to parks maintenance. Wasps were sprayed 2 weeks ago but returned.

## **VII. Reports**

### **A. Staff Reports**

John Hines, Municipal Services Director.

1. Shelter roofs will be replaced at West Willow Park and Ford Lake Park (4 shelters). Went to Board for bid approval. Hope to receive bids by November and start work in December.
2. Community Center: Stantek have 2 bids out, hope to have submissions and decisions by November. Three areas of priority: Dance studio, Seniors room, and Head Golf Office. Sanitary line repair: have decided to dig new line - projected 1 year completion to include 6 bathrooms and new lines installed.
3. New positions requested from Township administration: 1) Assistant Municipal Services Director. 2) Recreation Specialist (entry level below Recreation Manager.) Recreation Services Manager already posted (John's former position.)
4. Green Oaks Golf Course: replacing bridge between Holes 15 and 16.
5. Lou Danner/Hamilton Bar's group looking to clean up Sugar Brook Park on Oct. 7. Need to have Township employee attend (currently only work M – F). Test case to see how many volunteers show up. Erik Irish asked if citizens can also volunteer to clean parks.
6. EMU Track Team asked to help clean up at Harris Park; date TBD.
7. Harris Park: Ypsi National Little League has contract for clean up. Did a great job last month.
8. Master Plan: final review of surveys and "cell phone" data for new 5 Year Master Plan will be distributed for November 6 meeting. Final plan to be decided upon/adopted at either the December or January board meeting and into effect Feb 1.

Robin Castle-Hine: Quality Assurance Specialist.

1. Parks are closed for the season. Need "openers" and "closers" for parks since summer employees have returned to school. This position will be a township employee. Limited to 2 parks during middle of winter.
2. Will have financials about park operations next month.

### **B. Commissioner Reports**

None.

## **VIII. Unfinished Business**

None.

## **IX. New Business**

None

## **X. Announcements**

None.

## **XI. Recommendations**

None.

## **XII. Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn: Neel

Seconded: Kirby

Meeting Adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

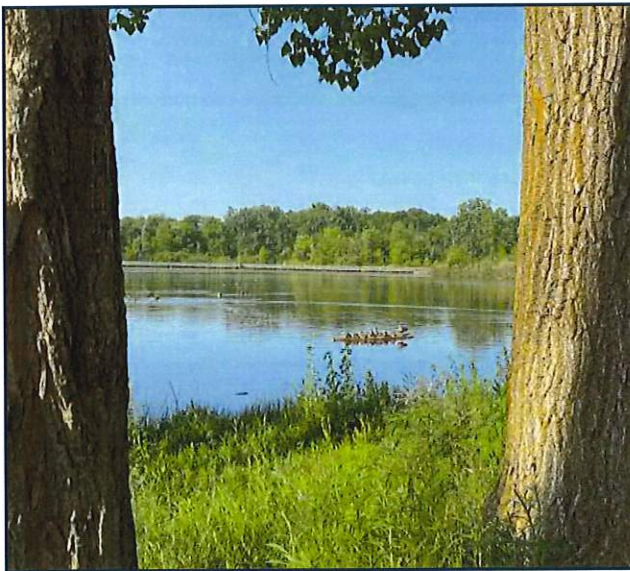
Minutes taken and prepared by Jeff Neel, Secretary





# Ypsilanti Township

## PARKS & RECREATION PLAN



NOVEMBER 2023 DRAFT





# Acknowledgements

## **YPSILANTI TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Brenda Stumbo, Supervisor  
Heather Jarrell Roe, Clerk  
Stan Eldridge, Treasurer  
Ryan Hunter, Trustee  
John P. Newman II, Trustee  
Gloria Peterson, Trustee  
Debbie Swanson, Trustee

## **YPSILANTI TOWNSHIP PARK COMMISSION**

Tajalli Hodge, Chair  
David Streeter, Vice Chair  
Jeff Neel, Secretary  
Brad Hine, Treasurer  
Edward Burnett, Commissioner  
Darrell Kirby, Commissioner  
Star Smith, Commissioner

## **STEERING COMMITTEE**

Heather Jarrell Roe, Clerk  
John Hines, Municipal Services Director  
Tajalli Hodge, Park Commission Chair  
Darrell Kirby, Park Commissioner  
Elizabeth Cuellar, Deputy Supervisor  
Robin Castle-Hine, Quality Assurance Specialist  
Michael Maans, Parks Staff  
Fletcher Reyher, Planning/Development Coordinator

## **List of Maps/Tables/Figures**

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*Ford Lake Park Jazz Festival*

Image Credit: Randy Mascharka

# 01.

## Community Description



The Charter Township of Ypsilanti has adopted a Parks and Recreation Master Plan following the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' (MDNR) standards and guidelines. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan will serve as a guide to influence Township officials' decision making for future parks and recreation development, preparing the annual budget, and applying for grants. This plan is intended to incorporate five-year goals and objectives, as outlined by the community, into an action plan that will aid the Township in how to spend financial and staff resources.

Since the COVID-19 global pandemic, the function of parks and recreation spaces has shifted as more people rely on outdoor recreation as a form of socialization, exercise, and entertainment. This plan will cover the change in the recreation landscape following the pandemic and how or if the current facilities, programming, and recreation goals will ensure outdoor recreation accessibility in a new reality.

## COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Ypsilanti Township sits on the eastern edge of Washtenaw County in southeast Michigan. It is approximately 10 miles from Ann Arbor and 35 miles from Detroit. The Township is a highly dense suburban area, and Eastern Michigan University, located in the City of Ypsilanti, regularly attracts students and faculty to the Township. Further, Ypsilanti Township is served by two heavily traveled thoroughfares, M-12 and I-94. These highways allow for easy vehicular access to and from the Township.

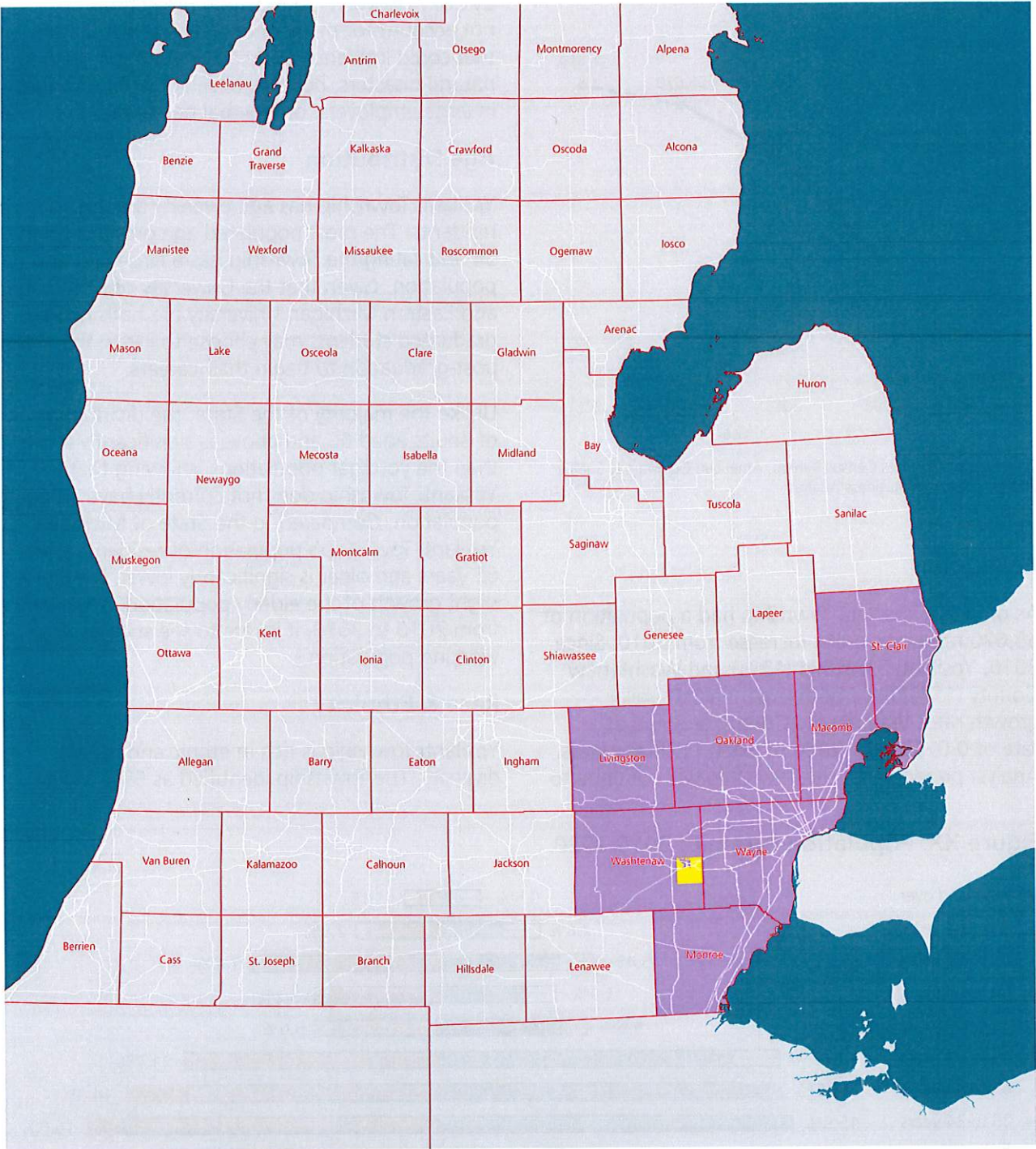
Washtenaw County borders several highly populated counties, with Wayne County to the east, Jackson County to the west, Livingston County to the north, and Lenawee and Monroe Counties to the south. Ypsilanti Township's location on the easternmost edge of Washtenaw County promotes accessibility to major cities around Southeast Michigan such as Detroit, Novi, Toledo, and Brighton. Additionally, Ypsilanti Township sits about 39 miles from the shores of Lake Erie, giving the Township easy access to one of the Great Lakes. Additionally, Washtenaw County is a part of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), a regional planning agency which covers Washtenaw, Livingston, Oakland, Wayne, Monroe, St. Clair, and Macomb Counties, outlined in purple on the map titled, "Regional Map."

## DEMOGRAPHICS

When planning for parks and recreation it is important to consider the demographic characteristics of Ypsilanti Township to ensure that all demographic groups are represented. The demographic information in this chapter was sourced from the following locations, in this preferred order:

- » **2020, 2010, 2000, and 1990 US Decennial Censuses.** The decennial censuses are the most accurate source of demographic information in the United States. Mandated by the United States Constitution the aim of the decennial census is to count 100% of the US population. Because the decennial census has been operating since 1790, it offers a valuable reference point to illustrate how populations have changed over time. While the decennial census has been administered for over 200 years, the questions have shifted to better capture modern populations' information.<sup>1</sup> Information collected in the most recent counts includes information about age, sex, race, the relationship between household members, and household tenure.
- » **American Community Survey.** The American Community Survey (ACS) replaced the "long-form" Census questions beginning in 2000, collecting the same types of information about social, economic, and housing conditions on a continual basis. Including these questions in the decennial census would be more resource-intensive and could reduce the response rate for the more critical decennial census. The ACS is a sample; a random selection of households receives the ACS every year, and the Census Bureau uses the responses to create estimates for the rest of the population. Because the ACS is a sample, smaller communities require multiple years of sampling to create accurate estimates.
- » **Esri Business Analyst.** Esri Business Analyst is proprietary software that presents privately generated market research data. In addition, it estimates Census and ACS data for geographic configurations other than Census-defined tracts, blocks, and places.

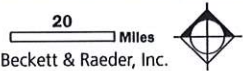
Map XX: Regional Map



# Regional Map

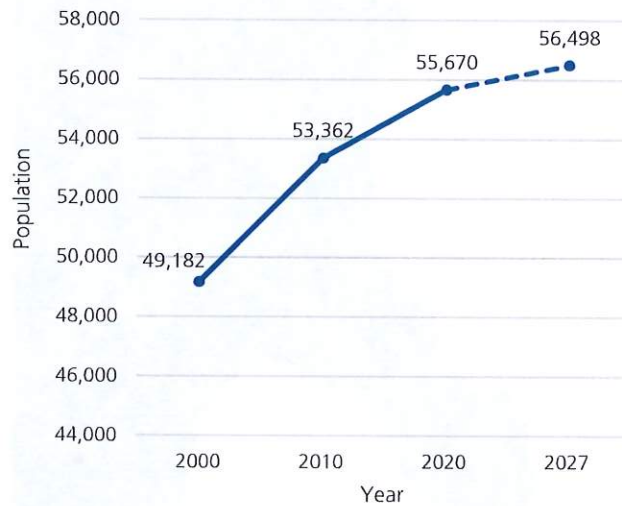
Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, Washtenaw County

- Michigan Counties
- Ypsilanti Charter Township
- Southeast Michigan Council of Governments Counties





**Figure XX: Ypsilanti Township Population, 2000-2027**



Sources: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2000 – 2020, ESRI Business Analyst

## Population

As of 2020, Ypsilanti Township had a population of 55,670 residents, a 4% increase from 2010. Since 2010, Ypsilanti Township (13%) and Washtenaw County (15%) have both experienced similar growth rates Washtenaw County growing at a rate of 0.07% from 2000 to 2020.<sup>2</sup> ESRI Business Analyst projects that the Township will continue to

grow with a slight population increase to 56,498 by 2027. However, population projections do not account for many difficult-to-predict factors that could influence population numbers, such as natural disasters, housing developments, changes in large employers, or a global pandemic.

## Age Distribution

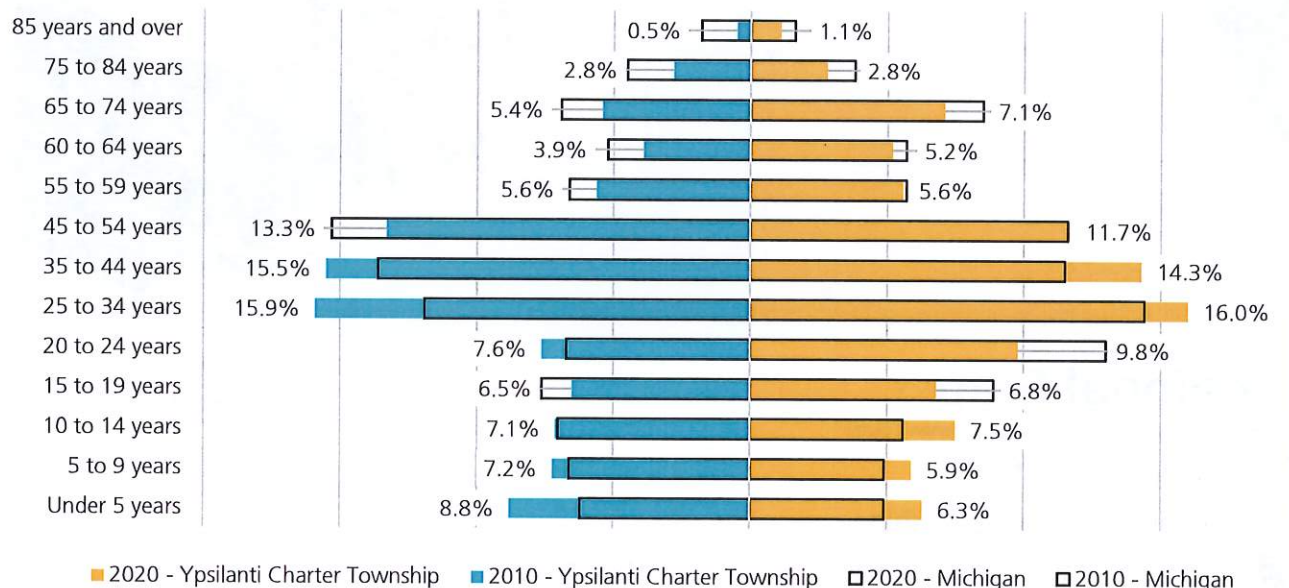
Ypsilanti Township has age diversity among residents. The most populated age group is 25 to 34, indicating the Township has a large working population. Given that the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University are both nearby, graduated students may choose to live in the area post-graduation to begin their careers.

Unlike the majority of the State, the distribution of adults aged 60 and above is significantly lower than the younger populations, showing that Ypsilanti Township does not currently have an aging population. Compared to the State of Michigan, Ypsilanti Township's population of residents aged 65 years and older is significantly lower. Despite a slight growth of the elderly population in Ypsilanti from 2010 to 2020, it is rare to see such a large working population.<sup>3</sup>

## Race & Ethnicity

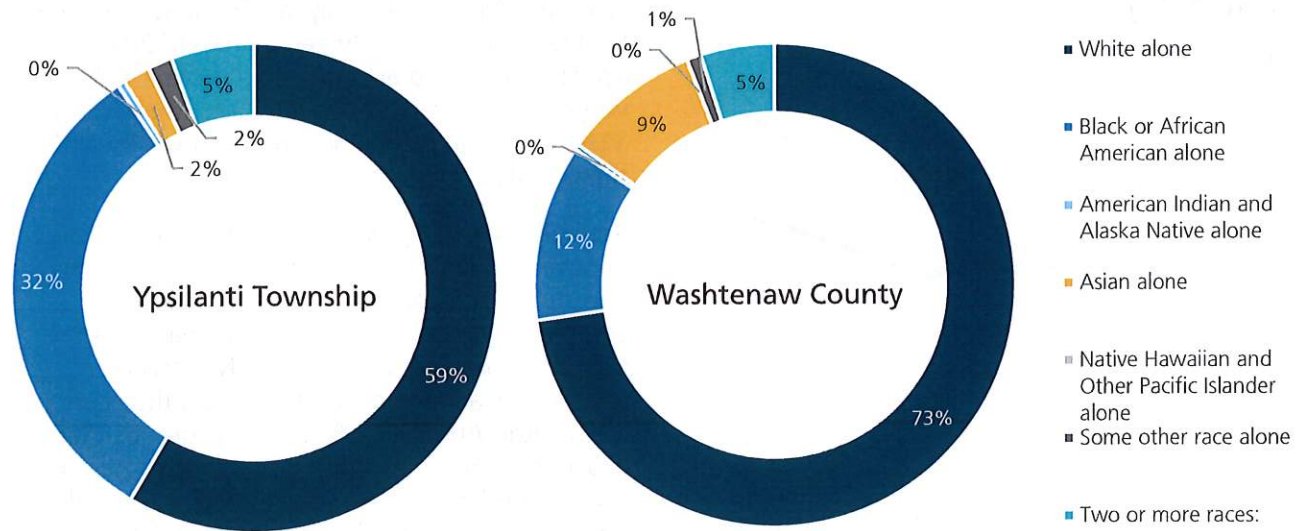
Ypsilanti Township is rich in ethnic and racial diversity. The Township identified as 55% White

**Figure XX: Population Pyramid, 2010-2020**



Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2010, 2020

Figure 2: Race & Ethnicity, 2020



Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2020

Table XX: Race by Age, 2020

Age	White Alone	Black / African American Alone	Native American / Alaskan	Asian Alone	Hispanic / Latino	Some Other Race	Two or More Races
14 Years and Under	16%	22%	4%	14%	30%	21%	42%
15-19 Years	6%	8%	4%	5%	5%	12%	12%
20-29 Years	18%	20%	4%	16%	20%	12%	14%
30-44 Years	24%	18%	50%	33%	28%	27%	17%
45-64 Years	23%	23%	31%	28%	15%	23%	11%
65 Years and Over	13%	9%	7%	4%	2%	5%	4%

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2020

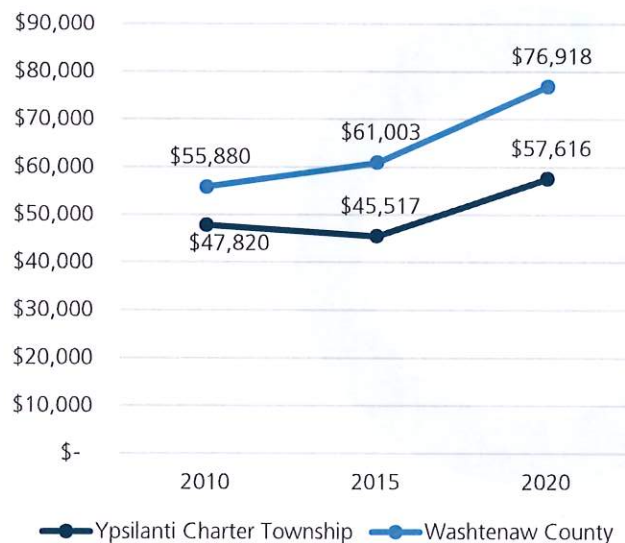
alone, 30% Black or African American alone, 2% Asian alone, and 11% identify as a combination of two or more races. Breaking down the combination category, Ypsilanti Township's residents identify as 1% two races including some other race, 2% some other race alone, 5% two or more races, and 5% two races excluding some other race, and three or more races. In comparison to Washtenaw County, Ypsilanti Township is notably more diverse with a White population of 55% and a Black/African American population of 30% compared to

Washtenaw County's White population (69%) and Black/African American population (11%).

When accounting for race by age, it is clear that the younger generations are more diverse than the older generations, which is consistent with national trends. The young adults (20 – 29) and adults 30 to 44 are the most diverse age groups, with a notable percentage of residents in those age groups who identify as black/African American alone (38%), or Hispanic or Latino (48%).<sup>4</sup>



**Figure XX: Median Household Income (2010-2020)**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year, Median Income In The Past 12 Months, 2010-2020

## Income & Poverty

Income and poverty are importance characteristics to consider when creating a Parks and Recreation Master Plan as some recreation opportunities may be income dependent. For example, some parks may charge a fee for daily entry whereas playgrounds are generally free to use. It is important to ensure that there are recreation offerings for residents of all income levels in Ypsilanti Township. The median household income level (MHI) in Ypsilanti is \$57,616, only 2.8% less than the state median household income of \$59,234, but 12% lower than the national MHI (\$64,994). Compared to Washtenaw County,

Ypsilanti has seen slower MHI growth over the last ten years. More specifically, as Washtenaw County's MHI level increased between 2010 and 2015, Ypsilanti Township experienced a decline of \$2,303 within the five-year period. By 2020, there was a \$19,302 gap in MHI between the Township and the County.<sup>5</sup>

Roughly 14% of Ypsilanti Township residents are in poverty, which is on par with national (13%) and state (13%) poverty rates and is close in comparison to surrounding urban areas like the City of Detroit (14%). Comparably, Ypsilanti experiences a lower poverty rate than the nearby City of Ann Arbor (20.5%). Specific groups that experienced more concentrated poverty rates are children under 18 (20%), more specifically, children under 5 (22%), as well as the Black or African American demographic group (20%).<sup>6</sup>

Another measure of financial hardship comes from ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained (Employed) which studies the households that earn more than the federal poverty line but earn less than the basic cost of living in the United States. The ALICE report of Michigan found that Ypsilanti Township experiences a high rate of residents below the ALICE threshold. In total, 44% of households in Ypsilanti are struggling to make ends meet compared to the state average (25%).<sup>7</sup>

Using ESRI's Business Analyst, a software package that estimates consumer spending patterns, a comparison can be made between the average amount spent on recreational goods by Ypsilanti Township residents compared next to national averages. The table titled, "Recreation Expenditures," outlines that residents in Ypsilanti Township, on average, spend the most on TV/

**Table XX: Recreation Expenditures**

Recreation Category	Average Amount Spent	Potential Spending Index
TV/Video/Audio	\$1,145.17	86
Entertainment/Recreation Fees/Admissions	\$677.09	80
Toys/Games/Crafts/Hobbies	\$119.36	91
Recreational Vehicles and Fees	\$90.06	70
Sports/Recreation and Exercise Equipment	\$171.69	84

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, Recreation Expenditures 2022



Table XX: Disability Characteristics by Age

Age	Hearing Difficulty	Vision Difficulty	Cognitive Difficulty	Ambulatory Difficulty	Self-care Difficulty	Independent Living Difficulty
Under 18 Years	1%	1%	6%	1%	0%	X
18-35 Years	1%	1%	5%	2%	1%	3%
35-64 Years	3%	2%	6%	10%	3%	6%
65 Years and over	15%	5%	7%	23%	8%	13%

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2020 5 Year Estimates, S1810

Video/Audio equipment with the average amount spent in 2022 being \$1,145.17. The second largest expenditure for Ypsilanti residents is Entertainment/ Recreation Fees and Admissions, with residents spending \$677.09 on average in 2022. This category includes fees such as tickets to parks or museums, fees for participant sports, fees for recreational lessons, and membership fees for social/recreational/health clubs. ESRI's Business Analyst also calculates the spending potential index (SPI) which measures how much Ypsilanti residents spend compared to the national average. An SPI of 100 indicates that Ypsilanti residents spend exactly like the national average. Ypsilanti residents spend less than the national average in every major recreation category.<sup>8</sup>

## Disability

Disability is another vital demographic characteristic to account for in parks and recreation planning because it is important to have accessible parks and recreational facilities for all backgrounds and ability levels. The table titled "Disability Characteristics by Age" indicates the disability status of Ypsilanti Township's population.

The largest concentration of residents with varied disabilities is within the 65 years and over age category. Additionally, 10% of residents aged 35 to 64 years old live with ambulatory difficulties. It is imperative to accommodate these individuals through Universal Design. Universal design is a practice of designing and constructing facilities and amenities that are accessible to all people regardless of age, disability, or other factors. Implementing this design practice is one way to increase the overall accessibility of parks and recreation facilities and amenities so all residents in Ypsilanti Township may enjoy the local recreation options.<sup>9</sup>

## PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

### Built Systems

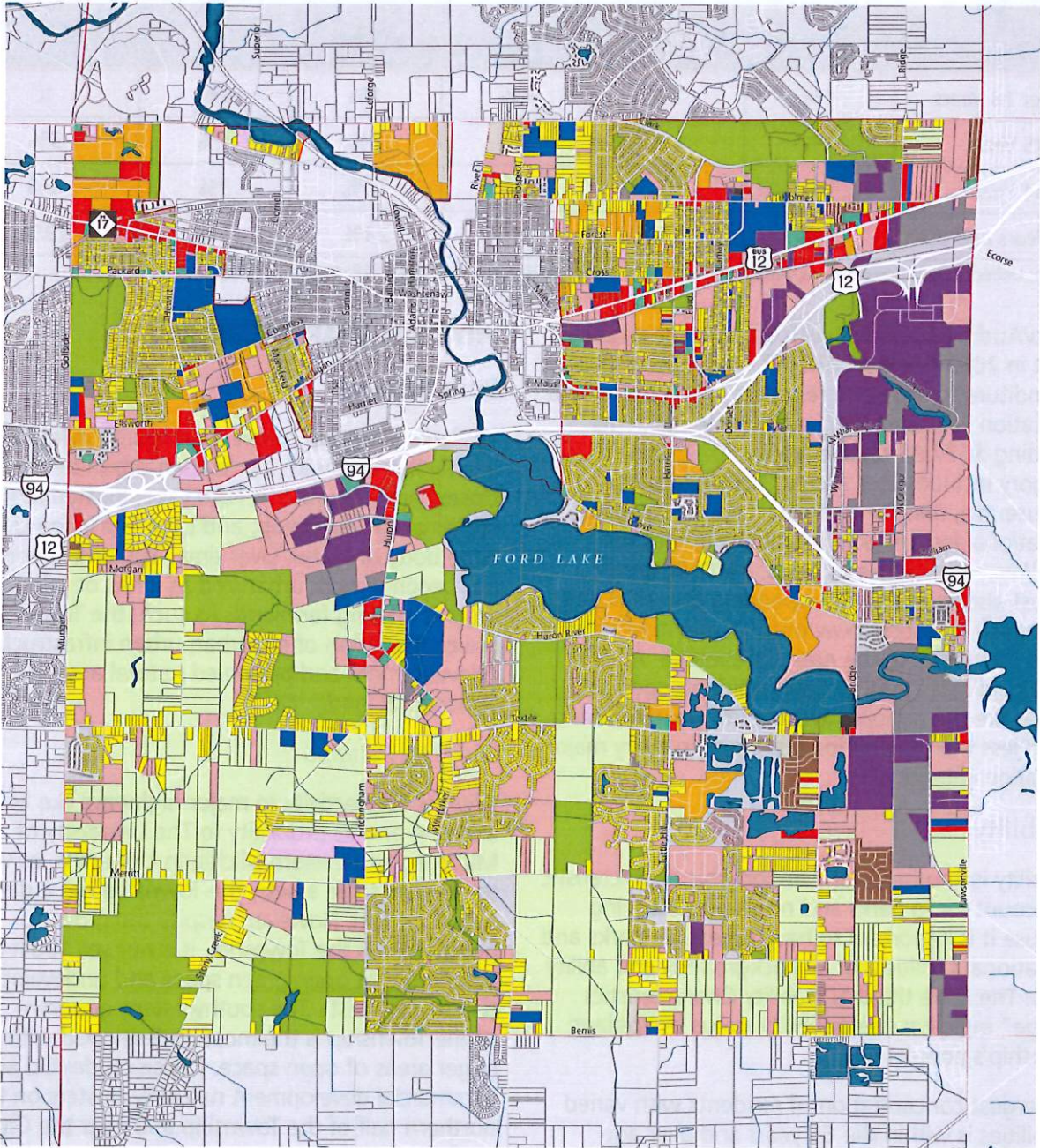
Ypsilanti Township covers 31.8 square miles of mostly flat land with a suburban-urban density. The closest body of water is Ford Lake, located in the center of the Township, and Lake Erie is the closest large body of water. Over time, Ypsilanti Township has become more urbanized as it has developed around existing farmland. As such, the Township is a combination of suburban-urban infrastructure / development and preserved natural areas / agricultural land.

### Land Use Patterns

With its connectivity to major highways like M-12 and I-94 and its proximity to The University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University, as well as other notable assets, the Township has a dense, suburban feel. However, despite the growing population in the Township, it is not yet "built out," meaning that open green space and undeveloped parcels still exist. The southwestern quadrant of the Township is the most undeveloped with larger areas of open space. Dense residential and commercial development naturally clusters on the northern half of the Township and near the City of Ypsilanti; however, there are residential subdivision-style developments scattered throughout the Township. Industrial development clusters on the eastern side of the Township, and the most concentrated area of commercial land use is in the northeastern quadrant of the Township along M-12. Additionally, the map titled, "Existing Land Use Map," shows that there is a notable number of parcels characterized as "vacant" throughout Ypsilanti Township, showing both the development and preservation potentials in the Township.



Map XX: Existing Land Use Map



# Existing Land Use Map

Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, Washtenaw County

3,000 Feet  
Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightgreen; border:1px solid black;"></span> Agricultural | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:yellow; border:1px solid black;"></span> Single-Family Housing       | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:blue; border:1px solid black;"></span> Institutional                           |
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:teal; border:1px solid black;"></span> Office             | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:orange; border:1px solid black;"></span> Attached Condo Housing      | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightgreen; border:1px solid black;"></span> Parks, Recreation, and Open Space |
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightpink; border:1px solid black;"></span> Medical       | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:darkorange; border:1px solid black;"></span> Multiple-Family Housing | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:gray; border:1px solid black;"></span> Transportation/Communication /Utility   |
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:red; border:1px solid black;"></span> Commercial          | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:darkgray; border:1px solid black;"></span> Parking                   |   |
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:purple; border:1px solid black;"></span> Industrial       | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightcoral; border:1px solid black;"></span> Vacant                  |   |
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightgray; border:1px solid black;"></span> Cemetery      | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:brown; border:1px solid black;"></span> Mobile Home Park             |   |



### Motorized Transportation

Ypsilanti Township sits in between M-12 and I-94, just southeast of Ann Arbor. These major highways make it a popular route for vehicular traffic looking to get from highway to highway. Additionally, Ypsilanti's proximity to the Detroit-Wayne Airport, Willow Run Airport, and to major cities like Detroit also yields vehicular traffic through the area.

### Non-Motorized Transportation

There are several trail systems that run through Ypsilanti Township. The largest trails include the Underground Railroad Trail which runs a 2000+ mile route from Alabama to Ontario. Additionally, the Iron Belle Trail runs through Ypsilanti Township, a 791-mile, multi-use trail that runs from Belle Isle in Detroit to the western edge of the Upper Peninsula. The Border-to-Border Trail also runs directly through Ypsilanti Township, connecting to nearby cities like Ann Arbor, Pinckney, Chelsea, and Stockbridge. Additionally, the Township also has boat and kayak launches in North Hydro, Ford Lake, and Lakeside parks, which provide access to the Huron River Water Trail—a 104-mile long blueway that passes through several counties and municipal parks.<sup>10</sup>

### Natural Systems

#### Wetlands

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency defines wetlands as areas where water covers soil or is present near the surface of the soil year-round or for shifting periods during the year.<sup>11</sup> Because Ypsilanti Township is not in a coastal area, it has inland/non-tidal wetlands. This type of wetland is most commonly found in floodplains, along rivers and streams, often referred to as riparian wetlands, or in isolated depressions like basins and potholes, and along the borders of lakes and ponds. Under the general "inland wetland" category, there are several smaller wetland classifications. The types of inland wetlands in Ypsilanti Township are freshwater emergent wetlands and freshwater forested/shrub wetlands. There is a total of 782 acres of wetlands within the Township with 222 acres of freshwater emergent wetlands and 559 acres of freshwater forested/shrub wetlands.

Currently, Ypsilanti Township follows State of Michigan regulations for wetland protection. While the Township has hired services from Niswander



*The County-wide Border-to-Border trail runs directly through Ypsilanti Township.*

Source: [www.b2b.org](http://www.b2b.org)



## Types of Wetlands

**Freshwater Emergent:** characterized by year-round standing water with moss and lichen vegetation – common names for emergent wetlands include a marsh or a fen.

**Forested/Shrub:** characterized by vegetation including hydrophilic tree species like willow, black spruce, and white cedar. Forested wetlands also have less or shallower standing water and may be characterized as a swamp rather than a marsh.

Environmental for wetland mitigation in 2007, it is imperative that wetland preservation strategies are updated with the current times.<sup>12</sup> Wetland preservation is important to acknowledge in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan to in ensure protection of the ecological benefits they promote such as stormwater management, clean drinking water, and ecological habitat for many local species.

### Forests

Tree canopy coverage is relatively low-to-moderate in Ypsilanti Township. The most concentrated areas of tree coverage are in the western and southwestern corners of the Township and along Ford Lake where coverage can reach up to 97%. There is also a denser pocket of tree canopy coverage in the northeastern corner of the Township.

Trees can provide a variety of positive effects including urban cooling, air purification, and erosion control to name a few. Having limited existing tree canopy coverage even further emphasizes the importance of maintaining and preserving the trees that the Township has

while also prioritizing an increase in tree canopy coverage. Using existing park land to both preserve and increase tree canopy coverage can be a good starting point.

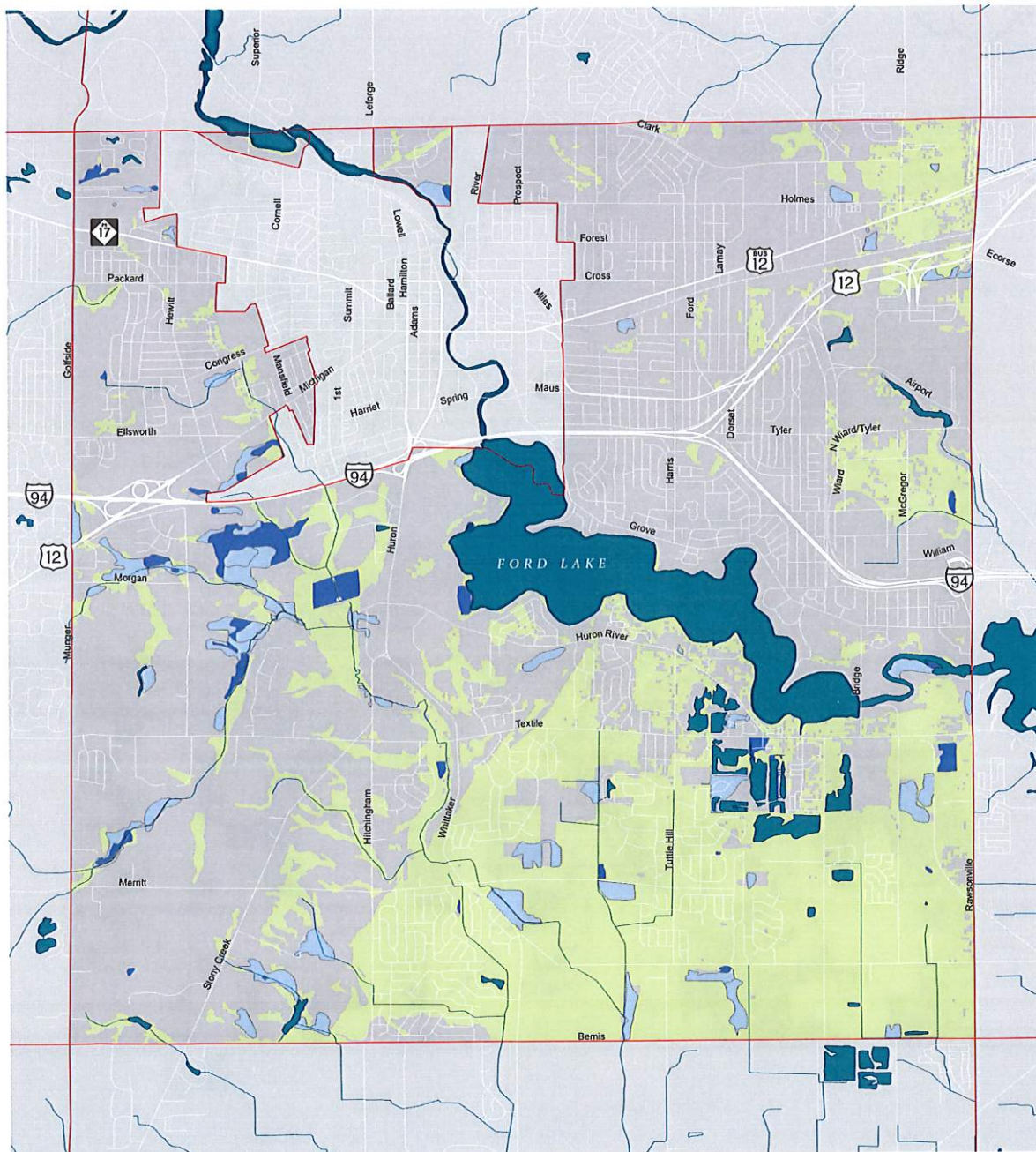
It is especially important to consider how tree canopy coverage relates to vulnerable populations. Nationally, low-income neighborhoods and communities tend to have lower tree canopy coverage, meaning that low-income communities do not proportionally experience the benefits of trees. To understand if tree canopy coverage is concentrated in areas of the Township with higher incomes, the tree canopy coverage was plotted against median household income for each census block group in the Township. The figure titled “Tree Canopy Coverage and Median Household Income” shows the distribution of all the census block groups. While at first glance, there seems to be a cluster of low-income and low-tree canopy coverage block groups, when all of the data is synthesized, no discernable trends emerged. This indicates that there is no substantial relationship between median household income and tree canopy coverage in Ypsilanti Township.

## CONCLUSION

Compared to the rest of the State, Ypsilanti Township currently has a high population of young-adult and working-aged residents. Over time, this population will age, which is an important consideration when planning for parks and recreation in order to ensure that residents of any age may access recreation activities. Furthermore, providing low- and no-cost recreation options, both outdoors and indoors, for residents from all socio-economic backgrounds is a priority for such a diverse community. Finally, the limited wetlands and forests in Ypsilanti Township show the importance of preserving the natural features that remain, with the opportunity to combine natural features preservation with future recreation planning.



Map XX: Wetlands



## Wetlands

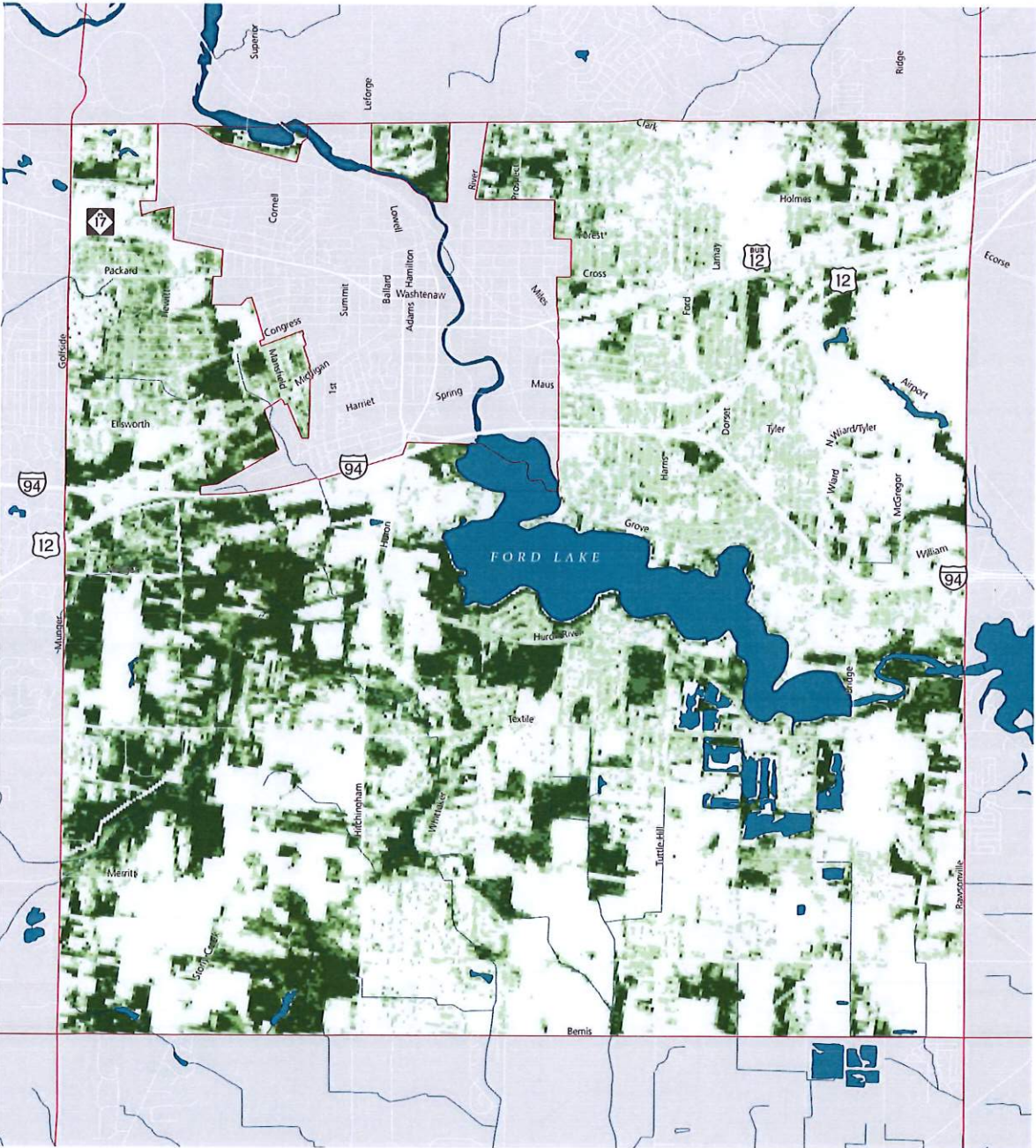
Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, Washtenaw County

- Ypsilanti Charter Township
- Potential Wetland Restoration
- Freshwater Emergent Wetlands
- Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetlands
- Lakes/Ponds

3,000 Feet  
Beckett & Raeder, Inc.



Map XX: Tree Canopy Map



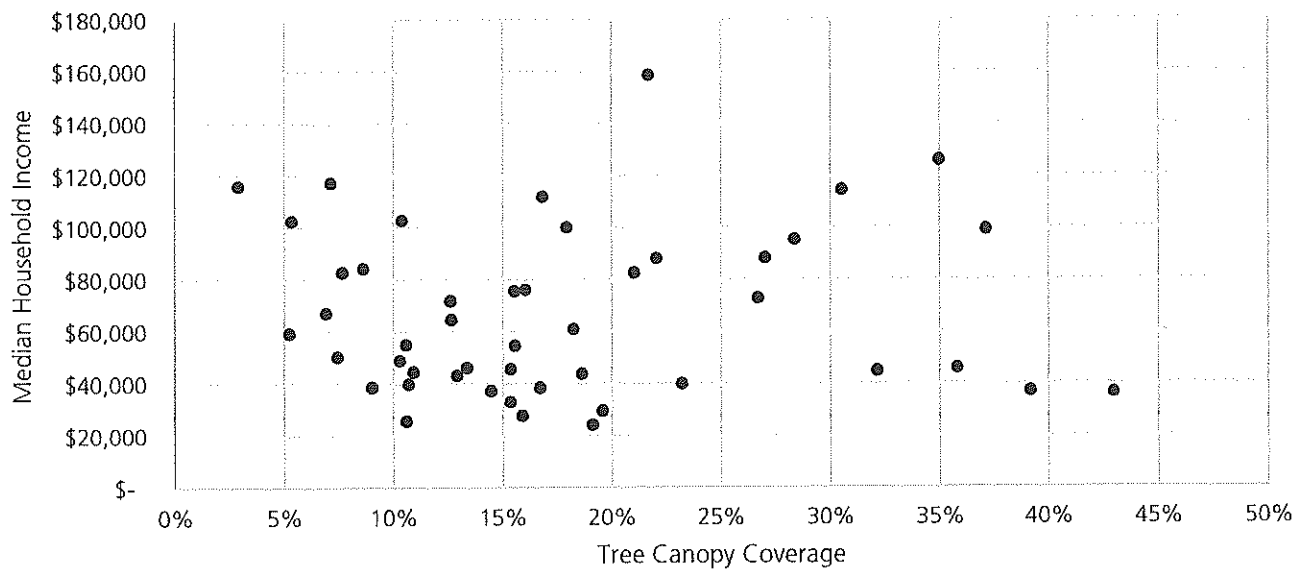
# Tree Canopy Map

Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, Washtenaw County

- 0 - 8%
- 9 - 25%
- 26 - 46%
- 47 - 68%
- 69 - 97%

3,000 Feet  
Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

Figure XX: Tree Canopy Coverage and Median Household Income



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year, Median Income In The Past 12 Months, 2010-2020

## Sources

- 1 United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2000 - 2020
- 2 United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2000 – 2020
- 3 United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2020 5 Year Estimates DP05
- 4 United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2020 5 Year Estimates B01001 A-I
- 5 United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year, Median Income In The Past 12 Months, 2010-2020
- 6 United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2020 5 Year Estimates DP03
- 7 United Way, ALICE Research Center – Michigan, <https://www.unitedforalice.org/state-overview/Michigan>
- 8 ESRI Business Analyst "Recreation Expenditures" 2022
- 9 United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2020 5 Year Estimates, S1810
- 10 Ypsilanti Parks and Recreation Plan, 2019, pages 18-22, <https://ypsilantitownship.org/images/Boards-And-Commissions/Park-Commission/Ypsilanti-Township-Recreation-Master-Plan-Adopted.pdf>
- 11 United State Environmental Protection Agency, What is a Wetland? <https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/what-wetland>
- 12 Niswander Environmental, Ypsilanti Township Wetland Services – Seaver Farm, <https://niswander-env.com/ypsilanti-township-wetland-services-seaver-farm/>

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*Ypsilanti Township youth soccer programming.*  
Image Credit: Randy Mascharka

## 02.

# Administrative Structure



## ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The Park and Recreation system and programs of Ypsilanti Township are governed and/or directly managed by three primary entities: Township Board of Trustees (Elected), Park Commission (Elected), and Township Administration (Hired). The figure titled "Administrative Structure" shows the current organizational structure of the Township's parks and recreation system.

### Board of Trustees

The Ypsilanti Township Board of Trustees is comprised of seven elected officials that oversee the use of Annual Operating Budget allocations and Capital Improvement Funds for Township parks. The Township's Supervisor, Clerk, and Treasurer are Board members that are responsible for supervising day-to-day operations. The four remaining Trustees serve on the board part-time.

Collectively, the Board works to uphold the health, safety, welfare, and financial well-being of the community, simultaneously facilitating and maintaining partnerships to improve infrastructure and expand the Township's recreational offerings.<sup>1</sup> Although the Park Commission is an elected body with its own responsibilities, it depends on the approved budget of the Board of Trustees to accomplish its objectives. The Board of Trustees both approves the submission of grant applications and adopts the parks and recreation master plan.

### Park Commission

The Ypsilanti Charter Township Park Commission represents Ypsilanti Township residents in all matters pertaining to Township parks. The Park Commission is largely responsible for developing policies pertinent to parks that the staff of the Township ultimately administer. The Park Commissioners also provide input to the Board of Trustees to determine priorities for capital outlay related to parks. These priority decisions are made based on the Township's Parks and Recreation Five-Year Master Plan which the Park Commission plays a role in establishing.<sup>2</sup>

PA 157 of 1905, the enabling act for the creation of a Township Park Commission in Michigan, dictates the responsibilities of Park Commissions. The scope of the Park Commission's advisory responsibilities includes the recommendation

for parkland acquisition; development of parks; creation of park policies; maintenance of parks and associated facilities; and solicitation of grants, donations, and general fund appropriations to enact their capital and operating program. The Recreation Services Manager helps to coordinate monthly Park Commission meetings.

## Administration

### Residential Services Department

The Ypsilanti Township Municipal Services Director oversees the Residential Services Department (RSD), which is responsible for all staff that oversee day-to-day operations that support the grounds, parks and recreational facilities, environmental services, and building operations across the Township. The RSD also oversees the Art Serafini Scholarship Fund, a scholarship fund supported by an annual golf tournament which was established in 2020 to provide programming opportunities for youth.

Five subgroups report to the Municipal Services Director:

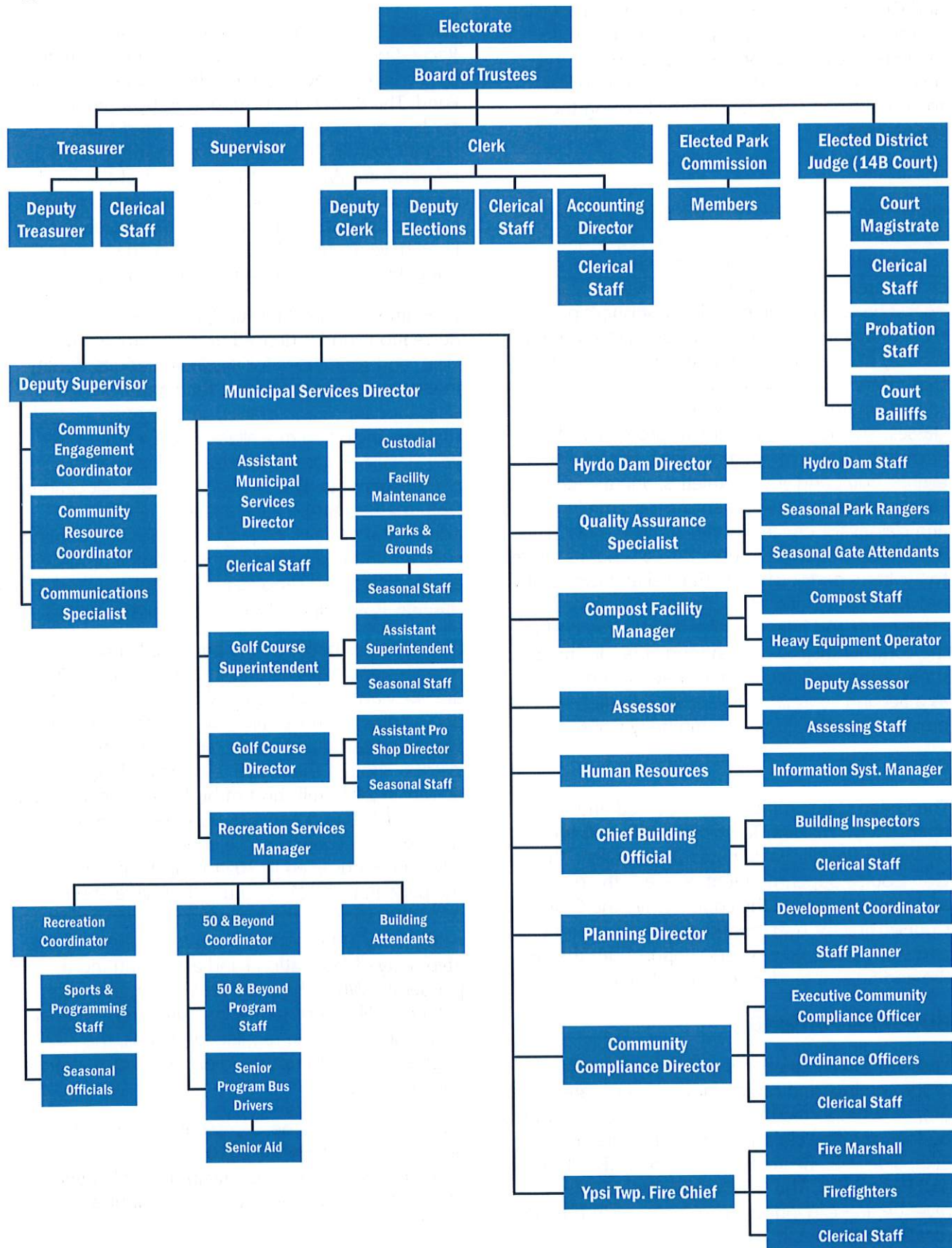
- » The Assistant Municipal Services Director who also oversees the Management Superintendent, head of the Parks and Grounds, Custodial, and Facility Maintenance divisions;
- » The Recreation Services Manager who also supervises Recreation and 50 and Beyond programming as well as facility Building Attendants;
- » Clerical Staff;
- » Golf Course Superintendent; and
- » Golf Course Director.

### Parks and Grounds

The Parks and Grounds Division is managed by the Assistant Municipal Services Director and is primarily responsible for the upkeep and improvement of Township parks and green spaces. The Parks and Grounds crew is also responsible for other maintenance tasks such as public rights-of-way and occasional roadside upkeep. As a year-round operation, the Parks and Ground Division is tasked to address snow removal, storm remediation, and motor pool upkeep needs as appropriate for the current season. Currently, the Division maintains the Township's 27 parks, a total combined acreage of more than 970 acres.



Figure XX: Administrative Structure





The Assistant Municipal Services Director and Parks and Grounds Crew report to the Park Commission and the Municipal Services Director to work to implement capital improvements for parks and associated facilities. The Grounds Crew works to improve parks and facilities by keeping them maintained.

### Recreation Division

Under the management of the Municipal Services Director, the Recreation Division is responsible for recreation programming, services, community center operations, and staffing as well as the operation and planning of the Township's parks and recreational facilities. The Recreation Department proudly hosts a strong 50 and Beyond program that offers its members low-cost opportunities to participate in day and overnight trips, fitness classes, and various enrichment programs. The Recreation Department also offers community events, adult and youth athletics, and a wide variety of other developmental programming and classes for dance, karate, art, and more. The Recreation Department uses the community center to facilitate partnerships with local agencies that provide opportunities to support educational attainment and health outcomes at a low cost to the community and neighboring areas. In the past, these community-led sessions have included English as a Second Language (ESL) and GED classes provided by Washtenaw Community College.

### Golf Course

The Green Oaks Golf Course is owned and operated by Ypsilanti Township and is a division under the Residential Services Department. The Golf Course Superintendent oversees the grounds and maintenance of the course while the Golf Course Director oversees the Pro Shop operations and staff. Seasonal workers support both the Golf Pro and Superintendent on the 18-hole course.

## BUDGET & FUNDING

Ypsilanti Township's parks and recreational facilities, programming, and capital improvements are primarily supported by four funds of the Township's budget: the Recreation Fund; Golf Course Fund; Bike, Sidewalk, Recreation, and Roads (BSRII) Fund; and Parks Fund. The following section illustrates revenue and expenditure activity for each fund in recent years.

## Recreation Fund

The largest portion of Ypsilanti Township's Recreation Fund comes from a contribution made by the Bike, Sidewalk, Recreation, and Roads (BSRII) Fund. The BSRII Fund is supported by a property tax levy of 1.0059 mills, recently raised from 0.9837 mills in 2021 through a voter-approved referendum. While the total amount of the fund has become larger through the increased millage rate, contributions from BSRII to the Recreation Fund have decreased from 2021 to 2023 for both budgeted expectations and actual allocations.

In addition to the BSRII Fund, revenue for the Recreation Fund is derived from programming, class, and sports fees for youth and adults; facility rentals and permitting fees; food and beverage sales; donations and grants; and other sources of funding, including miscellaneous revenues, prior year balances, earned interest, and insurance reimbursements. The areas that receive allocations from the Recreation Fund include annual administration fees, employee salaries and benefits, supplies and equipment for recreational programs and facilities, and services and utilities required to operate Township parks and recreational spaces.

Discrepancies between the budgeted and actual revenues and expenditures in both 2021 and 2022 are likely attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic and a collective uncertainty surrounding the safest way to participate in group recreation activities and classes. Though the actual revenue and expenditure activity in 2022 fell short of budgeted expectations by about \$50,000 and \$25,000, respectively, these discrepancies show notable improvement from differences observed in 2021 near the height of the pandemic. 2021 revenues that were about \$234,000 short of the budget and expenditures nearly \$262,000 short of the budget illustrate the atypicality of Recreation Fund activity during the pandemic. While the years reflected in the table below are likely not representative of recreational costs and revenue in regular conditions, the 2023 Budget reflects an upturn in expected recreational participation.

The breakdown of the Recreation Fund's budget and financial activity for 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 are reflected below in the table titled "Recreation Fund Revenues & Expenditures, 2020 – 2023."



Table XX: Recreation Fund Revenues & Expenditures, 2020 – 2023

Recreation Fund	2020 Activity	2021 Budget	2021 Activity	2022 Budget	2022 Activity	2023 Budget
<b>Revenues</b>						
Bike, Sidewalk, Recreation, Roads Fund	\$468,519	\$482,890	\$300,000	\$367,800	\$300,000	\$405,354
Youth, Adult, and 50 & Beyond Programming Fees	\$55,194	\$188,500	\$125,349	\$235,500	\$217,905.84	\$211,515
Rental & Permit Fees	\$37,715	\$92,000	\$122,056	\$93,000	\$151,408.84	\$122,000
Food & Beverage Sales	\$1,238	\$2,500	\$1,187	\$2,500	\$5,754.25	\$5,000
Contributions & Donations	\$4,366	\$21,200	\$6,205	\$43,900	\$27,784.00	\$28,066
Transfer from General Fund				\$4,306	\$4,306.00	
Other	\$1,045	\$2,349	\$1,088	\$9,451	\$2,648.27	\$400
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$568,077</b>	<b>\$789,439</b>	<b>\$555,885</b>	<b>\$756,457</b>	<b>\$709,809.15</b>	<b>\$772,335</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>						
Administration Fees	\$19,602	\$21,488	\$17,970	\$22,141	\$22,140.96	\$21,521
Salaries, Benefits, & Pension	\$384,587	\$436,598	\$258,319	\$414,556	\$398,643.11	\$451,743
Program, Facility Supplies & Equipment	\$31,225	\$77,350	\$43,676	\$102,480	\$95,556.86	\$81,950
Services, Fees, Utilities	\$113,826	\$238,681	\$192,154	\$217,280	\$214,912.93	\$217,121
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$577,795</b>	<b>\$789,439</b>	<b>\$527,441</b>	<b>\$756,457</b>	<b>\$731,253.89</b>	<b>\$772,335</b>

Source: Budget Report for Charter Township of Ypsilanti, 2022 & 2023

## Golf Course Fund

As a "Business-Type Activity," the revenues and expenses accrued by Ypsilanti Township's Green Oaks Golf Course are supported by the Golf Course Fund, a source of funding that operates separately from the Recreation Fund.

While, like the Recreation Fund, the Golf Course Fund receives some revenue from the BSRll Fund to support operational expenses, most of the golf course's revenue comes from member and user charges as well as the sale and rental of merchandise, equipment, and food. In recent years, contributions from the BSRll Fund have been markedly less than the budgeted amount and allocations from years past. However, revenues collected from other sources have exceeded the

budgeted amounts and allowed deficits between the budget and actual activity to be less prevalent than the aggregate reductions in BSRll funding. The primary expenses covered by the Golf Course Fund include an annual administrative fee, employee salaries and benefits, supplies and equipment for the course's facilities, maintenance and services, and fees associated with utilities and various other sources.

Like the Recreation Fund, the pandemic has resulted in a budgeting and funding process that is not reflective of "normal" circumstances at the golf course. However, perhaps different from the Recreation Fund which relies on revenue derived from participation in programming, classes, and other activities, users of the golf course were able to continue to enjoy this amenity and utilize its



open space throughout the pandemic, resulting in less pronounced discrepancies between budget and activity in 2021 and 2022.

The breakdown of the Golf Course Fund's budget and financial activity for 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 are reflected below in the table titled "Golf Course Fund Revenues & Expenditures, 2020 – 2023."

### Bike, Sidewalk, Recreation, and Roads Fund

The BSRII Fund provides financial support to numerous elements of the Township's parks and recreational facilities even beyond its annual contribution to the Recreation and Golf Course Funds. The table below illustrates the Fund's revenue and expenditure areas. Notably, Ford Lake Park receives funding for its operations and annual

repairs from BSRII rather than the Recreation Fund. In addition to support for Ford Lake Park and the operational expenses of recreational facilities and the golf course, BSRII Fund's primary expenditures are put towards efforts to improve, repair, and/or maintain park facilities across the Township.

### Parks Fund

The final Township fund used to support park and recreation activities is the Park Fund. The Park Fund's revenues are primarily derived from the rental of handball courts in the Community Center. The fund supports the compensation of the seven elected members of the Parks Commission as well as annual membership fees paid to the Michigan Parks and Recreation Association. The table below shows the Fund's revenue and expenditure areas for 2020 through 2023.

**Table XX: Golf Course Fund Revenues & Expenditures, 2020 – 2023**

Green Oaks Golf Course	2020 Activity	2021 Budget	2021 Activity	2022 Budget	2022 Activity	2023 Budget
<b>Revenues</b>						
Bike, Sidewalk, Recreation, Roads Fund	\$135,000	\$184,650	\$0	\$208,505	\$80,000	\$233,151
Food & Beverage Sales	\$23,031	\$90,000	\$33,150	\$32,000	\$38,308.89	\$34,000
Use & Admission Fees	\$391,382	\$368,000	\$466,241	\$407,000	\$399,680.82	\$432,000
Merchandise & Equipment Sales	\$24,112	\$25,250	\$30,527	\$25,000	\$29,287.31	\$28,000
Equipment & Facility Rentals	\$165,415	\$143,800	\$189,783	\$151,400	\$170,416.32	\$161,050
Transfer from General Fund				\$2,153	\$2,153	
Other	\$27,153	\$7,340	\$1,627	\$77,383	\$25,884.69	\$42,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$766,093</b>	<b>\$819,040</b>	<b>\$721,328</b>	<b>\$903,441</b>	<b>\$745,731.03</b>	<b>\$930,301</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>						
Administration Fees	\$18,241	\$19,981	\$16,723	\$20,593	\$20,592.96	\$19,903
Salaries, Benefits, & Pension	\$413,415	\$445,097	\$387,987.00	\$462,014	\$450,101.45	\$506,497
Supplies & Equipment	\$128,493	\$158,557	\$121,180	\$136,942	\$102,386.91	\$154,300
Services & Maintenance	\$75,837	\$51,200	\$46,161	\$65,300	\$59,974.60	\$57,000
Utilities & Fees	\$125,746	\$144,205	\$129,057	\$218,592	\$157,268.76	\$192,601
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$761,732</b>	<b>\$819,040</b>	<b>\$701,108</b>	<b>\$903,441</b>	<b>\$790,342.72</b>	<b>\$930,301</b>

Source: Budget Report for Charter Township of Ypsilanti, 2022 & 2023



Table XX: Bike, Sidewalk, Recreation, and Roads Fund Revenues & Expenditures, 2020 – 2023

Bike, Sidewalk, Recreation, Roads Fund	2020 Activity	2021 Budget	2021 Activity	2022 Budget	2022 Activity	2023 Budget
<b>Revenues</b>						
Net Property Tax Revenue	\$1,353,737	\$1,384,582	\$1,402,591	\$1,475,497	\$1,498,817.97	\$1,541,696
County, State, & Federal Grants	\$261,327	\$402,665	\$154,700	\$177,760	\$184,984	\$616,901
Fees & Transfers	\$338,278	\$665,280	\$17,377	\$1,144,850	\$349,635.71	\$1,269,864
Contributions & Donations	\$10,976	\$9,000	\$4,740	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,964,318</b>	<b>\$2,461,528</b>	<b>\$1,579,408</b>	<b>\$2,798,107</b>	<b>\$2,033,437.68</b>	<b>\$3,428,461</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>						
Ford Lake Park Operations & Repairs	\$3,163	\$22,300	\$19,252	\$20,950	\$20,751.04	\$22,860
Services, Repairs, & Maintenance	\$318,313	\$869,607	\$411,697	\$376,613	\$209,884.45	\$1,617,328
Operational Expense Support	\$606,889	\$568,140	\$300,000	\$537,276	\$380,000	\$638,505
Highways, Streets, Sidewalks, & Bridges*	\$359,960	\$71,738	\$52,919	\$1,248,018	\$971,287.97	\$1,149,768
<b>Total**</b>	<b>\$1,288,325</b>	<b>\$1,531,785</b>	<b>\$783,868</b>	<b>\$2,182,857</b>	<b>\$1,581,923.46</b>	<b>\$3,428,461</b>

Source: Budget Report for Charter Township of Ypsilanti, 2022 & 2023

\*While expenditures to support highway, street, sidewalk, and bridge maintenance are supported by BSRll, they are not directly related to the Township's park and recreation system.

\*\*These totals are the sum of BSRll appropriations and capital outlay appropriations as supported by the Fund. They do not reflect debt service appropriations which are also supported by the Fund.

Table XX: Parks Fund Revenues & Expenditures, 2020 – 2023

Parks Fund	2020 Activity	2021 Budget	2021 Activity	2022 Budget	2022 Activity	2023 Budget
<b>Revenues</b>						
Handball Court Fees	\$2,556	\$6,000	\$2,003	\$5,000	\$3,431.50	\$4,000
Interest Earned		\$93	\$300		\$349	
Appropriated from Prior Year Balance		\$2,522		\$3,822		\$4,823
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,649</b>	<b>\$8,822</b>	<b>\$2,005</b>	<b>\$8,822</b>	<b>\$3,780.11</b>	<b>\$8,823</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>						
Salaries & Benefits	\$4,320	\$8,322	\$5,780	\$8,322	\$4,855.23	\$8,323
Membership & Dues	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$0	\$500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,820</b>	<b>\$8,822</b>	<b>\$6,280</b>	<b>\$8,822</b>	<b>\$4,855.23</b>	<b>\$8,823</b>

Source: Budget Report for Charter Township of Ypsilanti, 2022 & 2023

## PARTNERSHIPS & PROVIDERS

The Recreation Department facilitates partnerships with several businesses, groups, and organizations annually to provide expanded and updated recreation opportunities to Ypsilanti Township. These partnerships play a vital role in establishing a well-rounded and expansive variety of programmatic offerings.

The Recreation Department also partners with the Michigan Recreation & Park Association (MParks), Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), USA Softball Association, Ypsilanti National Little League, Start Smart, United States Tennis Association (USTA) and other sports groups. In addition, the Department has established several partnerships at various levels with senior organizations, other regional parks & recreation departments, public and charter schools, and colleges and universities. The Recreation Department continues to seek out and develop new relationships and opportunities to enhance existing partnerships.

Beyond these partnerships in support of park resourcing and programming, the Recreation Department provides numerous opportunities for residents to engage with local artists and creative outlets. The Ypsilanti Area Art Society was created in coordination with local artists and aims to cultivate a network of collaboration, education, and inspiration among professionals, teachers, and students.<sup>3</sup> The Township's Recreation Department further supports local artists through the annual Rosie the Riveter Arts & Craft Show, hosted each summer in North Bay Park. The show provides both local and touring crafters an opportunity to share their talents and work with all in attendance.<sup>4</sup>

The Ypsilanti Township Recreation Department also serves as a partner for the Washtenaw County Border-to-Border (B2B) Trail. The B2B Trail is currently 35 miles long, and plans exist to develop the trail up to 90 miles through Washtenaw County. Visitors may access the trail through various parks throughout the county, including the Township's North Hydro Park.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, the Recreation Department works in partnership with the Township's golf course to host the "Fore the Cause – Serafinski Scholarship Golf Tournament" to raise money for the Serafinski Scholarship Fund in honor of the late recreation director, Art Serafinski. Scholarships are awarded to individuals aged 3 to 17 in the Township to enable their participation in Township recreation programs and classes and used to support family events hosted by the department.<sup>6</sup>

## VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers play an important role in the operation of the Township's parks and recreation departments. Many volunteers are sought out and used on an annual basis as necessary and valued members of their respective programs. Each year, volunteers are needed to coach youth sports, support the 50 and Beyond program, and staff special events such as the J.E.L. Summer Jazz Series and the Rosie the Riveter Craft Show. Additionally, the Ypsilanti Community The Village works with Township recreation to lead numerous programs and sessions, including free afterschool tutoring and athletic training clinics.

## Sources

- 1 Ypsilanti Township, "About", <https://ypsitownship.org/about>
- 2 Ypsilanti Township, "Park Commission", <https://ypsitownship.org/park-commission>
- 3 Ypsilanti Area Art Society, <https://ypsitownship.org/72-departments-services/recreation-parks/2351-ypsilanti-area-art-society>
- 4 6th Annual Rosie the Riveter Arts & Crafts Show, <https://ypsitownship.org/ypsitownship-news-1/2547-6th-annual-rosie-the-riveter-arts-craft-show>
- 5 About B2B Trail, <https://b2btrail.org/about-b2b/>
- 6 Serafinski Scholarship Fund, <https://ypsitownship.org/serafinski-scholarship-fund>





*Summer Jazz Festival.*

Image Credit: Randy Mascharka

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*Green Oaks Golf Course.*  
Image Credit: Randy Mascharka

# 03.

## Recreation Inventory

To understand the condition and status of recreational facilities across Ypsilanti Township, an inventory of existing facilities was conducted in June 2023. The intent of this inventory is to provide comprehensive descriptions of the current parks and recreational offerings that are available to recreational users across the Township. While various agencies and groups in Ypsilanti Township also manage recreational facilities within the jurisdiction, only Township-operated facilities were inventoried.

In addition to detailing the type, quantity, and quality of amenities at each park and recreational facility, the condition of amenities and overall park accessibility were recorded as well. The condition of each park's amenities was assessed as "poor," "fair," "good," or "excellent," and accessibility was evaluated on a scale of 1 to 5:

- » 1: none of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines
- » 2: some of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines
- » 3: most of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines
- » 4: the entire park meets accessibility guidelines
- » 5: The entire park was developed/renovated using the Principles of Universal Design

## PRINCIPLES OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Universal design is the practice of designing and constructing a space or environment so that it can be understood, accessed, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of their age or ability. Everyday examples of universal design include curb cuts, which allow people with wheelchairs, parents with strollers, and cyclists to seamlessly transition between the street and the sidewalk. Universal design has seven principles:

- » **Principle 1: Equitable Use.** The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.
- » **Principle 2: Flexibility in Use.** The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
- » **Principle 3: Simple and Intuitive Use.** Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.

- » **Principle 4: Perceptible Information.** The design communicates necessary information that effectively enables its use, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.
- » **Principle 5: Tolerance for Error.** The design minimizes the hazards and adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
- » **Principle 6: Low Physical Effort.** The design can be used effectively, comfortably, and with a minimum of fatigue.
- » **Principle 7: Size and Space for Approach and Use.** Appropriate size and space are provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use, regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

## YPSILANTI TOWNSHIP FACILITIES

The inventory analysis of the 29 recreational facilities across 900 acres of land that the Township manages, funds, and operates includes an overview the park's location, size, and communities served; a description of the park's general purpose and/or use; a description of the amenities found in each park, including their current conditions; the accessibility rating based on the previously described scale; and recommendations for the park based on observations surrounding existing conditions, accessibility standards, and opportunities for additional programs and investments. The overall "condition" score of each was calculated by scoring and averaging the quality of each inventoried amenity. Amenities in "poor" condition received a score of 25, "fair" condition a score of 50, "good" condition a score of 75, and "excellent" a score of 100.

To better understand visitor patterns in the Township's parks alongside their facilities and amenities, cellphone data was analyzed to provide context trends of visitation. The inventories of the Community Center Park, Ford Lake Park, Loonfeather Point Park, and North Bay Park each include data that detail the frequency of visitors based on the time, the demographics of park users compared to the Township, and the point of origin for visitors from the Township, southeast Michigan, or the broader region. These analyses illustrate how widely visited each of these four parks are by the number of visitors and their place of permanent residence as well as demographic characteristics.



## Mini Parks

Mini parks are small facilities (often less than an acre in size) that are located in residential settings and intended to serve community members residing within a ¼ mile radius of the site. These parks tend to focus on serving one specific group of recreational users, such as children or adults who enjoy observing nature. Consequently, tot lots and overlook points are common examples of mini parks.

## Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are the basic building blocks of park systems that provide informal recreational activities like playgrounds, courts, and field games to the residents of the surrounding neighborhood. Typically, neighborhood parks range from one to 15 acres in size and serve the community within a ½ mile radius around the park. These spaces provide a recreational and social focus for the neighborhood and lend themselves to opportunities for community programming and gathering.

## Community Parks

Community parks serve a broader purpose than neighborhood parks and provide a range of facilities that are capable of supporting large community events and sporting events. These areas are typically larger than 25 acres and service multiple neighborhoods located within one or two

miles from the park. Facilities at community parks generally include natural areas, picnic shelters, and trails, and some parks also offer play equipment for visitor use.

## Natural Resource Areas

Natural resource areas are large tracts of land that have been set aside for the preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics. While structured recreation is not often the primary goal of a natural resource area, these areas provide access to an abundance of passive recreation opportunities like hiking, birdwatching, water recreation, and natural resource education.

## Special Use Parks

Special use parks are parks that have a specialized or single purpose activity, such as golf courses, nature centers, or arenas.

## Indoor Facilities

Indoor recreational facilities typically host recreational programs that are managed by the parks and recreation department. While communities may have more than one indoor recreational center, it is common for just one facility to be the site of these indoor offerings and to serve as the central recreational site of the area.



*Ypsilanti Township soccer fields.*

Image Credit: Randy Mascharka



## Grove Road Overlook – Mini Park

Ypsilanti Township maintains an overlook of Ford Lake on the western edge of Loonfeather Point Park. While the overlook is technically a part of a larger park, it has traditionally been treated as a separate facility. The site is adjacent to a sidewalk and bike lane which are considered part of the Border-to-Border (B2B) Trail. Widening the

sidewalk to 10' has been discussed but is not being considered or pursued at this time as existing sidewalks and bike lanes were deemed sufficient. Should widening the sidewalk become a priority for the Township, the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission would need to incorporate it into their B2B plan.

## Pines Park – Mini Park

Pines Park is situated in a power line easement near the center of the Township and south of Ford Lake. Totalling 1.4 acres in size, the park is generally underutilized and equipped with play equipment that is outdated and largely prohibitive for safe recreation. The park's proximity to a new subdivision on large lots of land may contribute to its limited use. Pines Park offers two swing sets, a play structure with slides, and a large field with the potential to be programmed for various uses.

**Accessibility Rating:** 1 – none of the park's facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 56.3% – fair to good

**Recommendations:** Because all park amenities and structures are located on a plot of grass, there is extremely limited accessibility to existing play equipment. Additionally, a lack of signage fails to alert visitors of the park's existence, and the play equipment itself could use updates to ensure safety. Clearly demarcating the park throughout the surrounding neighborhood and upon arrival could impact and increase overall usage.



Park sign.



Play structure.



## Tot Lot Park – Mini Park

Located on 0.3 acres of land at the northernmost edge of the Township, Tot Lot Park provides a play place for the youngest residents of the surrounding neighborhood. The park's amenities include play structures, swings, and a bench located on a comparatively large all-purpose field.

**Accessibility Rating:** 1 – none of the park's facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 50% – fair

**Recommendations:** To increase the park's accessibility and add to the amenities it has to offer, incorporating a paved trail, including paved access, will address these elements. The all-purpose field offers opportunities for neighborhood programming. To enable comfortable time spent in the park for passive and active users, added tree coverage to provide shade as well as updated benches and/or tables will facilitate greater use.



*Park sign.*

## Watertower Park – Mini Park

Located on a 0.8-acre lot south of Packard Street and north of Verna Avenue, Watertower Park received its name from a water tower that has long been removed from the site. The park's playground equipment includes two play structures and a swing set that show signs of deterioration on an all-purpose field that has potential for further development or neighborhood programming.

**Accessibility Rating:** 1 – none of the park's facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 56.3% – fair to good

**Recommendations:** Watertower Park has the potential to better serve nearby residents by incorporating feedback and ideas regarding how the field might be programmed to meet residential needs. To encourage more passive use and enjoyment of the site, added tree cover and other methods of providing shade are recommended. Finally, increasing accessibility to and within the park by adding a paved entrance and/or trail will support usage on a broader scale.



*Play structure.*



# Appleridge / Bud & Blossom Parks – Neighborhood Park

Appleridge and Bud & Blossom share a border along the Willow Run Drain but serve two distinct neighborhoods. Appleridge Park is 2.48 acres in size and provides amenities for formal and informal sporting activities, including basketball courts, tennis courts, and playing fields. The park also includes playground equipment, running trails, and a picnic pavilion with tables and benches. Because it has a paved parking lot, Appleridge tends to draw residents from a somewhat broader radius than Bud & Blossom Park.

Bud & Blossom Park is 11.5 acres and largely serves residents in the immediately surrounding area. New playground equipment and a large open field are the main attractions of this facility. The Willow Run Drain forms the eastern border of the park and connects it directly to Appleridge Park.

**Accessibility Rating:** 2 – some facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 86% – good to excellent

**Recommendations:** To improve accessibility for both parks, the Township may consider extending existing compliant, paved pathways to each of the park’s amenities. The open fields provide an excellent opportunity for sport and/or social programming among neighborhood residents. Appleridge Park specifically presents an opportunity to host wider community events because of its parking lot, fields, and picnic shelter.



*Bud & Blossom Park play structure.*  
Image Credit: Randy Mascharka



*Appleridge Park play structure.*  
Image Credit: Randy Mascharka



*Appleridge Park signage.*  
Image Credit: Randy Mascharka



## Burns Park – Neighborhood Park

Burns Park is nestled between Packard Street, N. Hewitt Road., and S. Congress Street in the northwest corner of Ypsilanti Township and serves as a gathering point for the surrounding neighborhoods. At just 1.9 acres in size, Burns Park offers a wide variety of amenities to visitors of all ages that meet numerous activity preferences, including tennis and pickleball courts, three play structures, a trail for biking, walking, and running, bicycle racks, an all-purpose play field, and various picnic tables and benches that provide options for passive recreation.

**Accessibility Rating:** 2 – some facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 85% – good to excellent

**Recommendations:** To improve the park's accessibility, the Township may consider extending paved pathways to each play structure and moving benches closer to the existing paved sidewalks to enable ease of access to existing amenities. The park's green space and play field, benches, and tables provide excellent opportunities for sport and/or social programming among neighborhood residents.



*Tennis and pickleball courts.*



*Paved walking trail.*



*Play structure.*



## Clubview Park – Neighborhood Park

On the west side of the Township, Clubview Park offers 10-acres of land to accommodate numerous recreational activities for residents of all ages. The majority of the park's area is comprised of an all-purpose field that is surrounded by a gravel trail for the enjoyment of walkers and runners. The park serves a dual purpose by acting as a swale that leads to a low point at the northern edge of the park, and the central field offers valuable stormwater mitigation capability. Other park amenities are well suited for children, their families, and nearby residents seeking a space to socialize outdoors. These amenities include three play structures, a swing set, a picnic shelter with tables and grills, and bicycle racks. The park also has a tennis court that is currently out of commission and unsafe to play. However, the Township has plans to redo this facility and incorporate pickleball infrastructure to the court.

**Accessibility Rating:** 1 – none of the park's facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 86.5% – good to excellent

**Recommendations:** Currently, Clubview Park does not have any paving or additional features to bolster accessibility among those who require it. While there are environmental and physical benefits to using gravel for walking trails, the Township might consider paving the park's trail to enable wheelchair access around the park, including to its play structures and the picnic area. Clubview's large playfield, benches, tables, and pavilion provide plenty of space and excellent opportunities to accommodate sporting activities and/or social events for neighborhood residents. Though the park's tennis courts were found to be in poor condition, signs indicate that improvements are soon-to-come which will benefit Township residents interested in tennis and pickleball.



*Walking path.*



*Play structure.*



*Pavilion.*



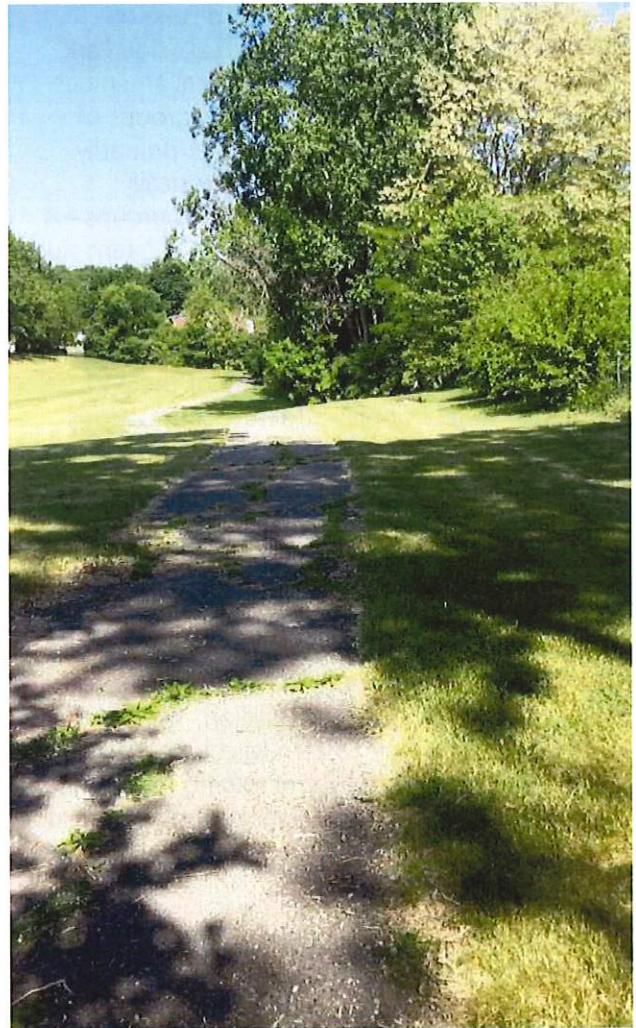
## Fairway Hills Park – Neighborhood Park

Fairway Hills Park offers a “natural” recreation option to visitors interested in immersing themselves in green space while spending time outside. Covering 6.6 acres on the west side of Ypsilanti Township off of Hewitt Road, Fairway Hills Park includes a paved running and walking trail through the park amidst rolling green terrain and mature trees that line the area. The topography of the park is fairly steep with a slope of approximately 8% and the paved pathway leads to a small wetland on the adjoining apartment complex property to the southeast. While this park does not offer a wide variety of traditional park amenities such as play spaces for children, the open space can serve numerous purposes for visitors and facilitate time spent outside.

**Accessibility Rating:** 2 – some facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 50% – fair

**Recommendations:** Fairway Hills’ primary feature is its large, open green space surrounded by residential properties. This space presents various opportunities for programming and events to be held for nearby residents. To simultaneously address challenges to universal accessibility and improve the park’s overall condition, the running/walking trail that surrounds the park should be repaved so that existing cracks and other signs of deterioration are fixed. Additionally, widening the trail may facilitate greater use and accommodate wheelchair needs.



*Walking path.*



*Open space.*



## Lakeside Park – Neighborhood Park

Located on the south shore of Ford Lake on the eastern side of the Township, Lakeside Park provides a wide variety of recreational amenities that fulfill the interests of numerous groups of prospective visitors. The 21-acre park primarily serves two distinct groups and is physically separated to fulfill these uses for both groups - it functions as two separate parks. The western side of the park offers traditional playground and picnic facilities to primarily serve children, families, and groups (such as sports teams or organizations) that seek a picnic shelter. This side of the park provides a variety of play structures and swings that are appropriate for numerous age groups, bicycle racks, an all-purpose field with picnic tables and benches for passive enjoyment, and a picnic shelter with restrooms. The east side of the park, the "Boat House Property," offers facilities amenable to its location off of Ford Lake that are built to accommodate boating, rowing, and fishing activities, such as a boat launch and deck, a row team building, and covered pavilion. The boat facilities are leased by Eastern Michigan University (EMU) and Saline High School rowing teams, and EMU owns the dock. Both sides of the park include a gravel parking lot and are connected by a paved trail.

**Accessibility Rating:** 2 – some of the park's facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 85.3% – good to excellent

**Recommendations:** While the trails between both sides of the park are paved and accommodate wheelchair use, continuing paved trails to the east side's play structures and picnic shelter would increase access for all. Additionally, paving both parking lots would further bolster connectivity across the park. Finally, the boating facilities on the west side of the park may present an opportunity for Township residents to access Ford Lake by renting kayaks or canoes if they do not have their own. Despite Ford Lake being an asset to the park system as a whole, there is a large barrier to entry and full enjoyment because permanent rental facilities do not currently exist.



*Dock owned by Eastern Michigan University.*



*Play structure.*



*Pavilion.*



## Lakeview Park – Neighborhood Park

Lakeview Park is located north of Ford Lake on the eastern side of the Township with amenities that fulfill the needs and interests of children and families seeking play-based recreation as well as participation in baseball and softball. Covering 3.6 acres and highly visible from Grove Road, the park offers an open-space all-purpose field, facilities for baseball and softball (including spectator stands), a paved walking trail around the park, numerous play structures and swings, and a paved parking lot. Additionally, the Border-to-Border trail lies on the south side of Grove Road, opposite the park, and is connected to the park via a crosswalk and pedestrian island near the playground equipment.

**Accessibility Rating:** 2 – some facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 59.6% – fair to good

**Recommendations:** Lakeview Park's paved trail increases accessibility from the parking lot and across the park. To further address the needs of individuals requiring accommodations, this trail could be repaved to fix cracks and other areas of deterioration. Additionally, the spectator stands that surround the baseball/softball field speak to the park's potential as a space for community ball games, practices, and other more formalized team-based events. To support this notion, the ball field requires redevelopment to smooth over vegetation and increase the field's overall quality. Finally, the park's open space provides opportunities for programming among nearby residents, sports teams, or organizations seeking organized recreational activities.



*Parking area and accessible sidewalk.*



*Play structure.*



*Multi-use field.*



## Nancy Park – Neighborhood Park

Located in the Gault Village neighborhood and adjacent to Erikson Elementary School on the east side of Ypsilanti Township, Nancy Park offers numerous recreational amenities to support the interests and activities of children of all ages from the surrounding neighborhood. The 6.1-acre park offers a variety of play structures and swings for active enjoyment, open space well-suited for soccer games, a baseball field, paved trails, bicycle racks, and tree coverage. Organized uses for team sport games and practices as well as spontaneous visits are well accommodated by Nancy Park's facilities.

**Accessibility Rating:** 2 – some facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 80.6% – good to excellent

**Recommendations:** To increase Nancy Park's accessibility rating, existing paved sidewalks could be extended to increase connectivity between play structures – in general, the play structures themselves could also be adjusted to ensure accessible use and enjoyment. Additionally, portions of the sidewalks that have a slope greater than 5% could be renovated to have a shallower angle. The area surrounding the playground contains loose wood chips – tamping them down would also bolster accessibility to play equipment.



*Paved sidewalk.*



*Play structure.*



*Play structure signage.*



## Rambling Road Park – Neighborhood Park

Located on the north end Ypsilanti Township, Rambling Road Park offers 2.6-acres of recreational activities for children seeking play structures and swings as well as sports facilities. Rambling Road has an abundance of open space for visitors to utilize in a variety of ways. While the playground equipment is fairly new and in good condition, the basketball court is currently cracked and in need of renovations in order to be safely utilized.

**Accessibility Rating:** 1 – none of the park's facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 77.8% – good to excellent

**Recommendations:** The park's wealth of open space offers numerous opportunities for programming and/or additional recreational development informed by the desires of nearby residents. The low accessibility rating could be improved with paved access to the park's play structures, tamped down wood chips in the play area itself, and efforts to increase connectivity across the park. Though the park has two entrances, the entrance on Lexington Parkway is notably more prominent than the back entrance from Rambling Road – addressing this discrepancy (or simply streamlining access through the front) would clarify access as well.



*Play structure.*



*Open space.*



## Sugarbrook Park – Neighborhood Park

Located on the east side of Ypsilanti Township adjacent to I-94, Sugarbrook Park covers 5 acres of land and provides recreational activities to suit a variety of interests. The most prominent uses and potential users of the park include children and families seeking play structures and swings as well as young people interested in sports such as basketball and baseball or softball. Additional amenities of the park include an open field with a picnic area, bike racks, some tree coverage, and a designated parking area.

**Accessibility Rating:** 1 – none of the park's facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 65% – fair to good

**Recommendations:** To increase the park's accessibility, paving surfaces and trails from the parking lot to the play structures would improve connectivity. Additionally, the basketball court was found to be in poor condition with cracks and deterioration on the court's surface and basketball hoops themselves. Renovating and repaving the court would address these areas and further promote the park's use as an area to play basketball. Finally, the park's open field presents opportunities for programming and/or further development related to neighborhood and social events, sports uses, or additional structures for users to enjoy.



*Basketball courts.*



*Bicycle racks.*



*Play structure.*



## Wendell Holmes Park – Neighborhood Park

Located in the northern part of the Township, Wendell Holmes Park is 4.6 acres in size and includes amenities such as a small ball diamond, spectator stands, a paved parking lot, and a large all-purpose field.

**Accessibility Rating:** 1 – none of the park's facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 50% – fair

**Recommendations:** While the parking lot of Wendell Holmes Park is paved, creating paved trails that provide a connection to the ball diamond's spectator stands would increase the accessibility of the park. Given that the ball diamond is the park's primary active use amenity and offers a clearcut opportunity for how it should be used, improving the area by removing the current vegetation and restoring the play area is necessary to encourage proper use and enjoyment for youth and adult ball teams alike. For families or friends that come to watch baseball practices or games, the spectator stands should also be refurbished to ensure their comfort. Finally, the open field provides a lot of space for neighborhood programming as well as opportunities for further development of the park.



*Bleachers.*



*Park signage.*



## West Willow Park – Neighborhood Park

Located in the West Willow neighborhood in the eastern part of the Township, West Willow Park is 2.5 acres in size and offers numerous amenities to its visitors. In addition to its play structures and swing sets, park amenities include basketball courts, trails across the park's area, a picnic shelter and tables, a small baseball diamond, open space, benches, bicycle racks, and a parking lot.

**Accessibility Rating:** 1 – none of the park's facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 59.6% – fair to good

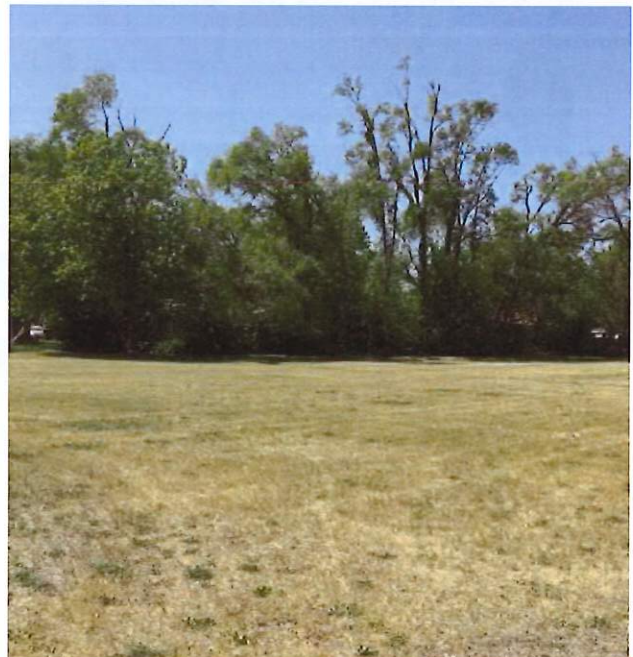
**Recommendations:** The park's existing trails cover much of the park's land area and offer a connection from the parking lot. Paving the parking lot and trails and ensuring that the trails extend to each play structure will improve the overall accessibility of the park. Though the picnic shelter offers a shaded space for visitors and groups interested in holding events in the park, the roof could be improved to address its deterioration. Finally, the park's ball diamond and open space, owned by the Whitehead Memorial Church of God, could be improved to accommodate softball and/or baseball play and to program events and additional recreational activities.



Walking trail.



Park signage.



Open space.



## Community Center Park – Community Park

Spanning 25 acres in the northeast corner of Ypsilanti Township, the Community Center Park is located across the street from the Township's Community Center and offers numerous amenities to meet the recreational needs of a wide range of community members. These amenities include four baseball and softball diamonds in excellent condition for use of both youth and adult leagues, a picnic shelter and pavilion for members of the public and visiting teams to use, six tennis courts in need of repair, a picnic area, playground and swings, signage and directions throughout the park, and a gravel parking lot.

**Accessibility Rating:** 2 – some of the park's facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 72.9% – fair to good

**Recommendations:** The accessibility of the Community Center Park could be improved by adding paved sidewalks throughout the lot for access across all amenities and by paving the parking lot to allow people to enter the park more easily. Additionally, the park's six tennis courts as well as all other complimentary amenities present an opportunity for the park to be used for tennis team activities, practices, games, and/or tournaments, but only in the event that the courts are repaired from their current conditions. The Township has plans to refurbish courts and incorporate pickleball facilities during their repair as well. Finally, educational signage throughout the park could assist with visitor wayfinding.



Ball fields and signage.



Ball fields.



Tennis courts.



## Community Center Park – User Insights\*

The Community Center Park receives visitors from across the region. The park's facilities are likely to contribute to the months in which the park receives the most activity as recreational baseball and softball leagues typically take place over the spring and summer. Though May and June were the months that received the first and second most visitors, April was the third most frequented month. This is notable given the presence of lingering winter weather up through the start of May. While the racial and ethnic identities of visitors to the Community Center Park are mostly representative of the demographics of residents in a 10-mile radius, there is a slight overrepresentation of white visitors and more notable underrepresentation of Black visitors. Additionally, income data about park visitors illustrates a general overrepresentation of residents with higher incomes, particularly households making over \$100,000 a year.

Figure XX: Community Center Park Visits by Month (2022-2023)

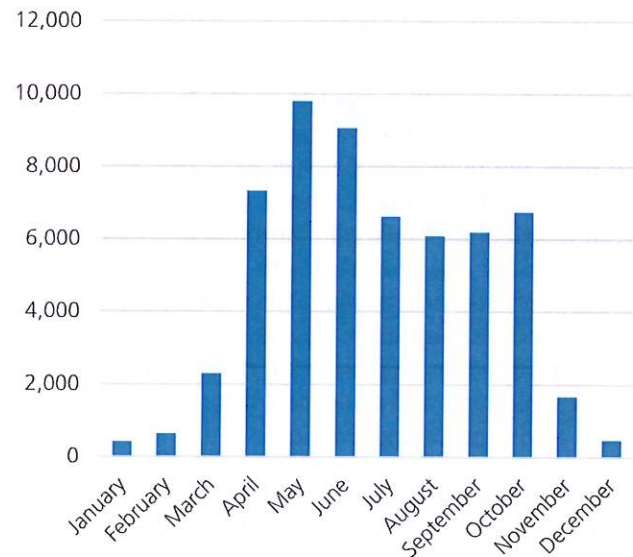


Figure XX: Race and Ethnicity of Community Center Park Visitors Compared to Residents of the Surrounding Area

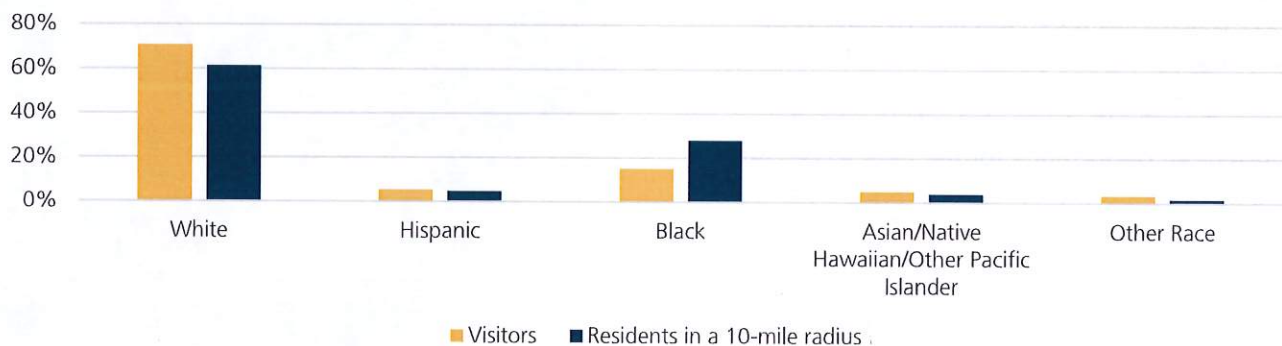
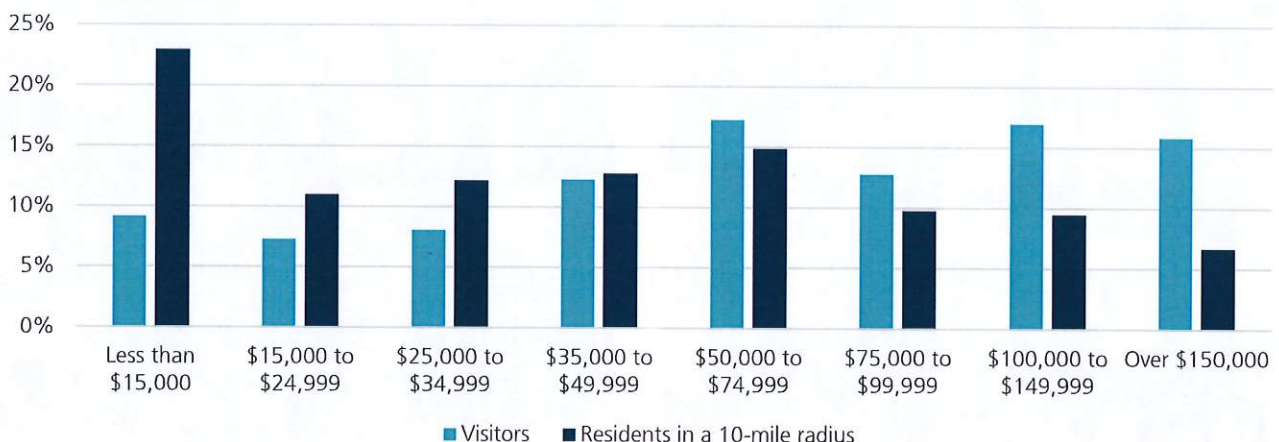
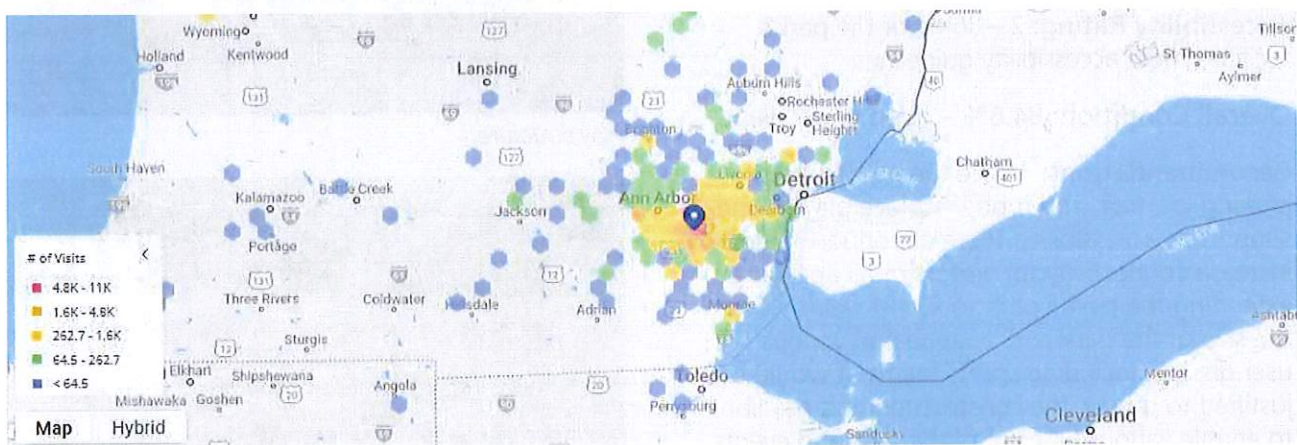
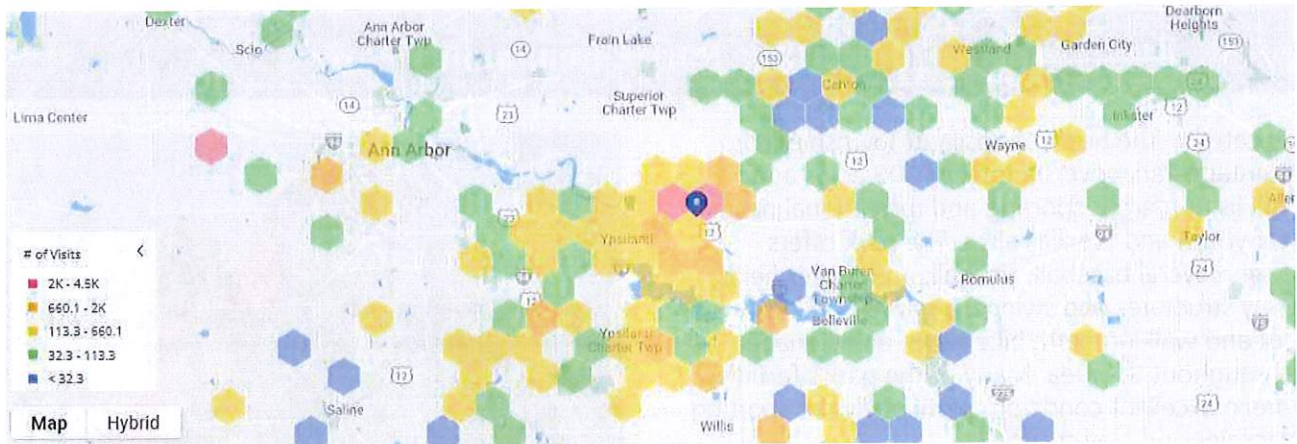


Figure XX: Income of Community Center Park Visitors Compared to Residents of the Surrounding Area



\*Source: Cobalt Community Research





Source: Cobalt Community Research



## Ford Heritage Park – Community Park

Located in the heart of Ypsilanti Township, Ford Heritage Park covers a total of 109 acres and fulfills numerous sporting and recreational needs for youth and families alike. The park offers users several baseball, softball, and soccer fields, play structures and swings, a paved parking lot and walking path, bike racks, and signage throughout the area. Many of the park's facilities are in excellent condition, particularly the sporting facilities and play structures.

**Accessibility Rating:** 2 – some of the park's facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 84.6% – good to excellent

**Recommendations:** While the park's paved parking lot, trail, and rubber surface playground support its accessibility, there are opportunities to increase connectivity for visitors of all abilities by extending the paved path to soccer fields. Given the size of the park and its appeal to various user groups, including sports teams, it would be justified to pursue the construction of a pavilion to enable various types of gatherings and events and to provide restrooms beyond just a porta-potty. Additionally, the various fields and large coverage of the park speak to the need for shaded areas, possibly including shade sails or other forms of overhead coverage to support the comfort of visitors.



*Play structure.*



*Parking lot.*



*All-purpose fields.*



## Ford Lake Park – Community Park

Ford Lake Park covers 98 acres and is considered the “signature park” of Ypsilanti Township’s park system. Located towards the eastern side of the Township on the southern banks of Ford Lake, the park provides amenities that support a wide variety of recreation and sporting activities, both land- and water-based. The park’s sporting facilities include courts for basketball, volleyball, racquetball, and pickleball, six tennis courts, fields for softball, baseball, and soccer, and associated spectator stands to support patronage of sports games and events. The park also has three separate play structures and swings that are accessible for a wide range of users. Four picnic shelters are available for rent. These structures and associated facilities (like grills, picnic tables, restrooms, and trash cans) support events and gatherings for a variety of occasions. Finally, the park’s boat launch is the only public one in the Township; this and the park’s fishing deck offer access to Ford Lake, sharing the natural assets of the park with visitors in a variety of ways. The majority of the park’s amenities are in good to excellent condition, illustrating the Township’s investment in Ford Lake Park as an avenue to experience the lake. However, the sand volleyball net is in need of repairs, and the viewing platform on the edge of lake also requires maintenance to ensure structural integrity. During the park season, the park is gated and staffed; however, it remains open to the public through the winter months as well. Ford Lake Park requires an entrance fee – while daily rates are the same for residents and non-residents, the cost of season passes are higher for non-residents.

**Accessibility Rating:** 2 – some of the park’s facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 79.3% – good to excellent

**Recommendations:** While the play structures at Ford Lake Park prioritize accessibility and use on behalf of many visitors, there is little connective accessibility across the entirety of the park between its various amenities for sporting and water activities. Access is also limited to the park’s bathrooms as well as the boat ramp along the lake. Additionally, signage for educational purposes and wayfinding would bolster visitor orientation across the park.



*Dock access to the lake.*



*Pavilion.*



*Basketball courts.*



Ford Lake Park – User Insights\*

Ford Lake Park pulls visitors from across the region. As it may be expected, the park receives the greatest number of visitors in the summer months, corresponding with warmer weather, the start of the Township’s official park season, and Summer Jazz Series which is hosted in Ford Lake Park from the end of June through Labor Day Weekend. The racial and ethnic identities of visitors to the park are generally representative of the demographics of residents in a 10-mile radius. However, there is simultaneously an underrepresentation of visiting households that earn less than \$15,000 annually and an overrepresentation of individuals from households that earn between \$100,000 and \$150,000. Daily entry fees to Ford Lake Park may be a contributor to this discrepancy in visitor demographics on the basis of income.

Figure XX: Ford Lake Park Visits by Month (2022-2023)

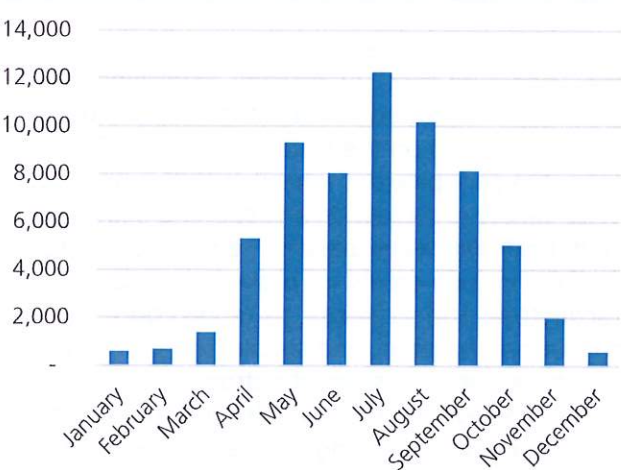


Figure XX: Race and Ethnicity of Ford Lake Park Visitors Compared to Residents of the Surrounding Area

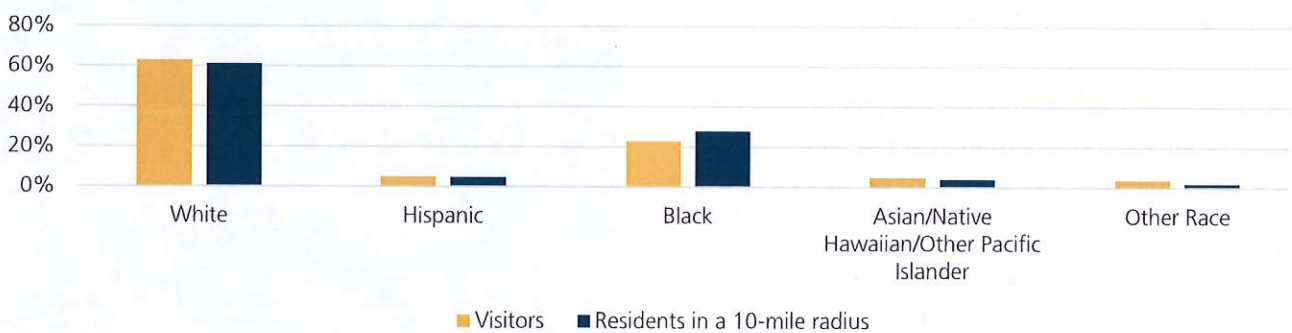
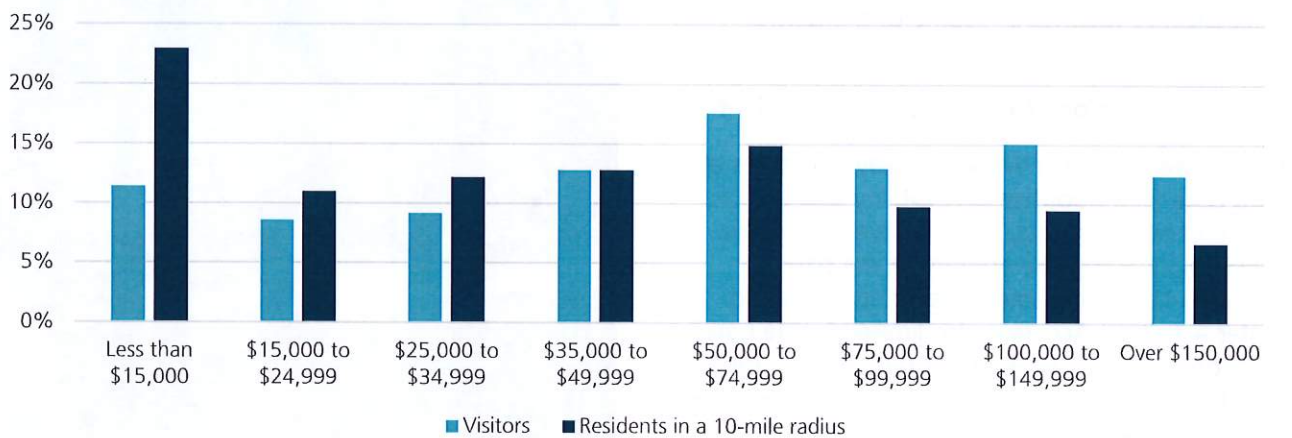
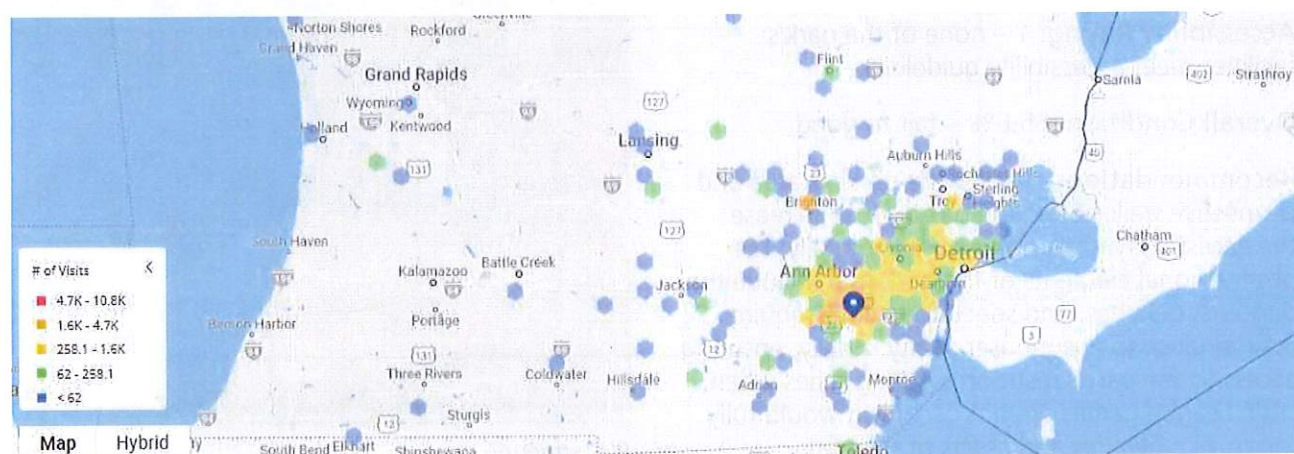
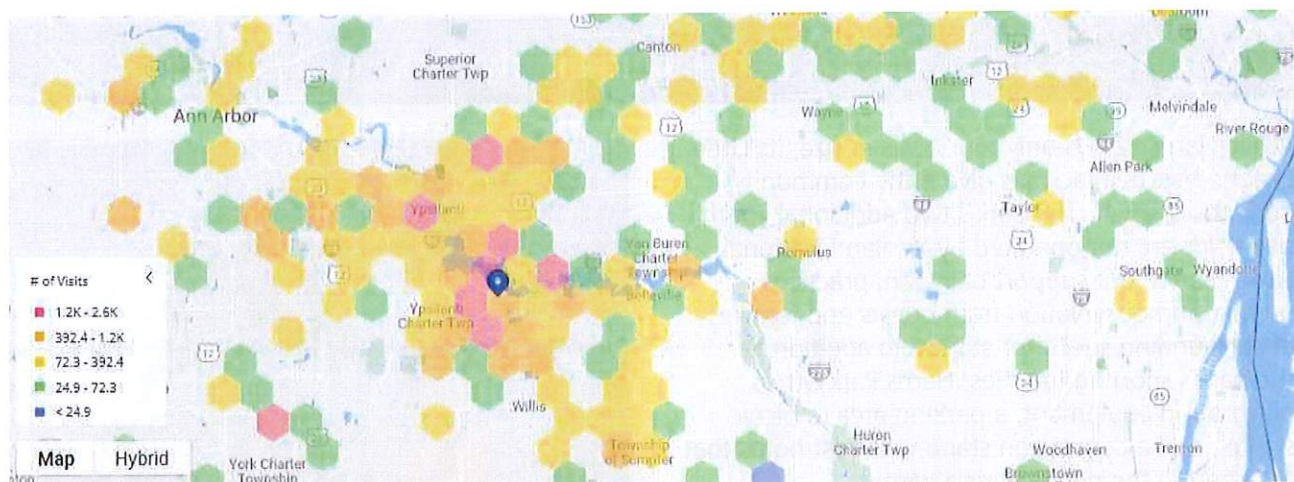


Figure XX: Income of Ford Lake Park Visitors Compared to Residents of the Surrounding Area



\*Source: Cobalt Community Research





Source: Cobalt Community Research



## Harris Park – Community Park

While Harris Park is only four acres in size, its Little League baseball facilities give it the community park designation. The park's two additional youth ball fields are not operated by Ypsilanti National Little League but support ball team practices, games, and observation from guests and families at surrounding spectator stands. In addition to the park's sporting facilities, Harris Park offers playground equipment, a parking area, a picnic shelter, and a concession stand with restrooms that are open to the public during games.

**Accessibility Rating:** 1 – none of the park's facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 65.6% – fair to good

**Recommendations:** Paving the parking area and connective trails across the park would increase the accessibility of Harris Park. Additionally, the observational elements of the park that include the dugouts, benches, and spectator stands require maintenance to ensure user safety. Finally, ensuring access to the park's restrooms during times when Little League games are not occurring would fully utilize all amenities and assets of the park.



*Play structure.*



*Bleachers.*



*Pavilion.*



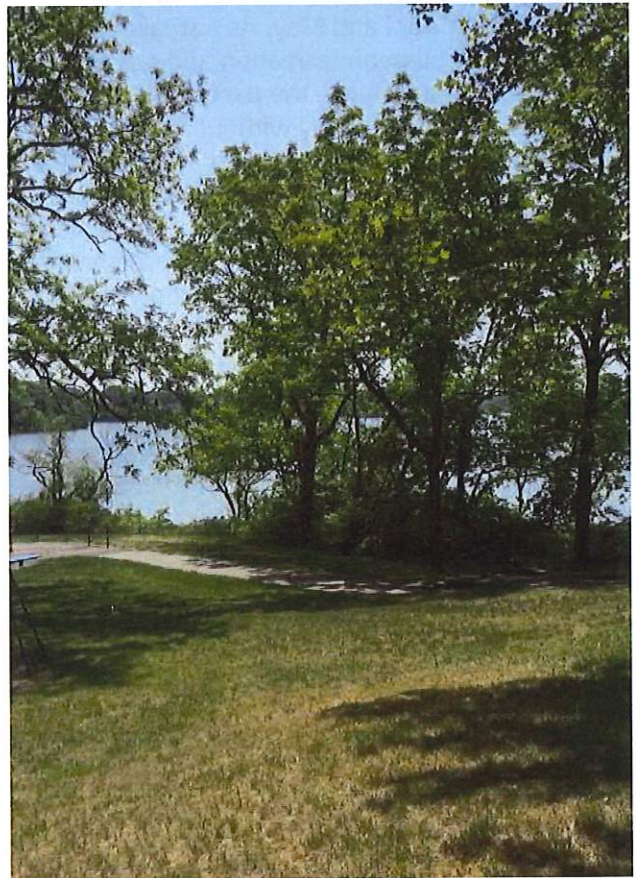
## Loonfeather Point Park – Community Park

Loonfeather Point Park covers 11.2 acres along the north shore of Ford Lake, offering visitors a scenic view of the lake as well as various amenities to support passive and active activities. The park's facilities include two picnic shelters that are available for rent, play structures and swings, a soccer field, restrooms, a paved parking lot, and paved trails that lead down a shaded hill to a fishing pier at the edge of the park along the lake. The amenities of Loonfeather Point Park are largely in excellent condition and provide broad access to users of all abilities. Recent renovations to the park are to thank for the quality and condition of its facilities and the largely accessible nature of all areas of the park.

**Accessibility Rating:** 3 – most of the park's facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 93.8% – good to excellent

**Recommendations:** Paved access across the entire site of the park bodes well for Loonfeather Point Park's overall accessibility. To further bolster access to all elements of the park, the Township might consider replacing the mulch lots that surround each play area with a rubber surface that extends connectivity to each structure.



*Sidewalk to lake.*



*Restrooms.*



*Play equipment.*



## Loonfeather Point Park – User Insights\*

Loonfeather Point Park receives visitors from across the region with the greatest number of visits taking place in April and May. As a smaller facility that caters to children's recreation and provides numerous play structures, the park offers a space where visitors come to play without much regard to the season. While the racial and ethnic identities of visitors to the Loonfeather Point Park are mostly representative of the demographics of residents in a 10-mile radius, there is a slight overrepresentation of white visitors and underrepresentation of Black visitors. Additionally, income data about park visitors illustrates a general overrepresentation of residents with higher incomes, particularly households making over \$50,000 a year.

Figure XX: Loonfeather Point Park Visits by Month (2022-2023)

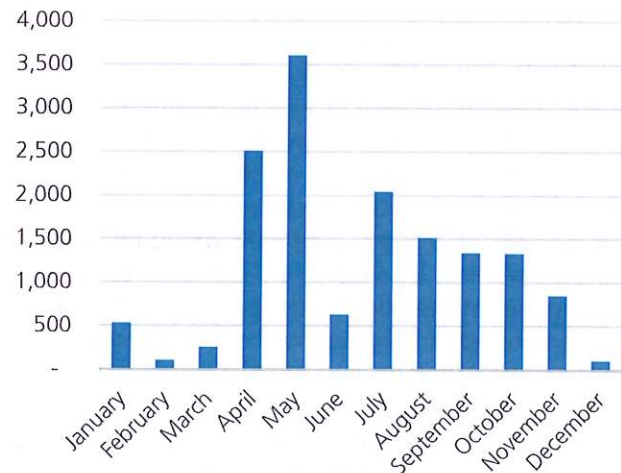


Figure XX: Race and Ethnicity of Loonfeather Point Park Visitors Compared to Residents of the Surrounding Area

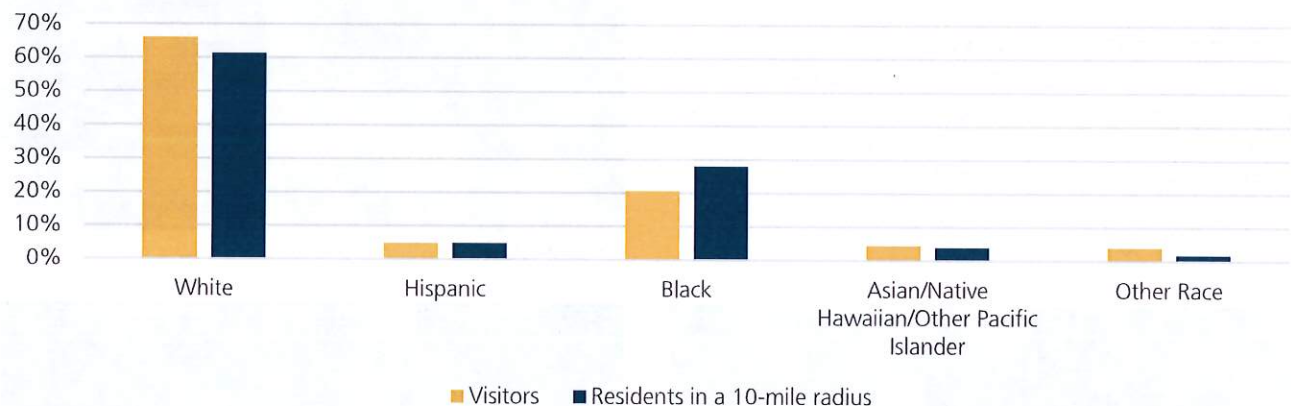
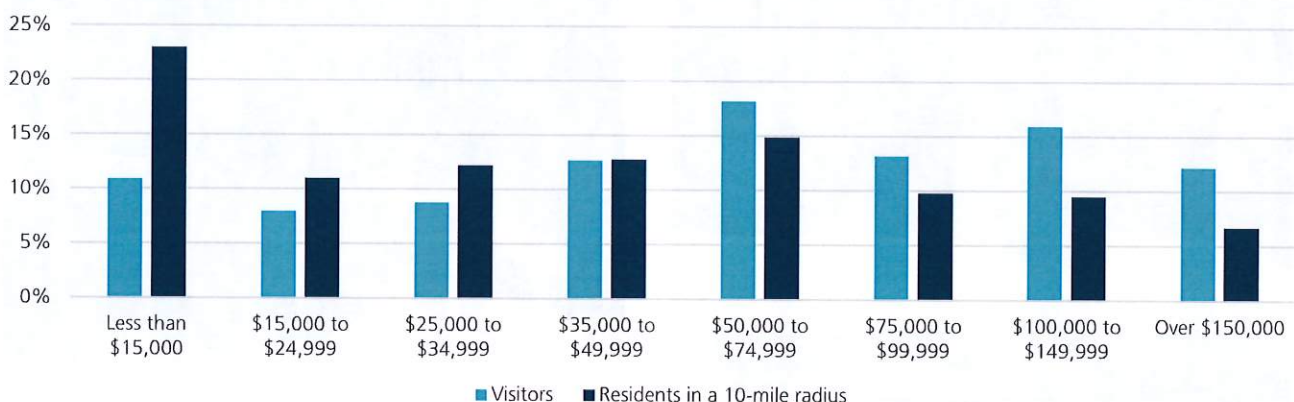
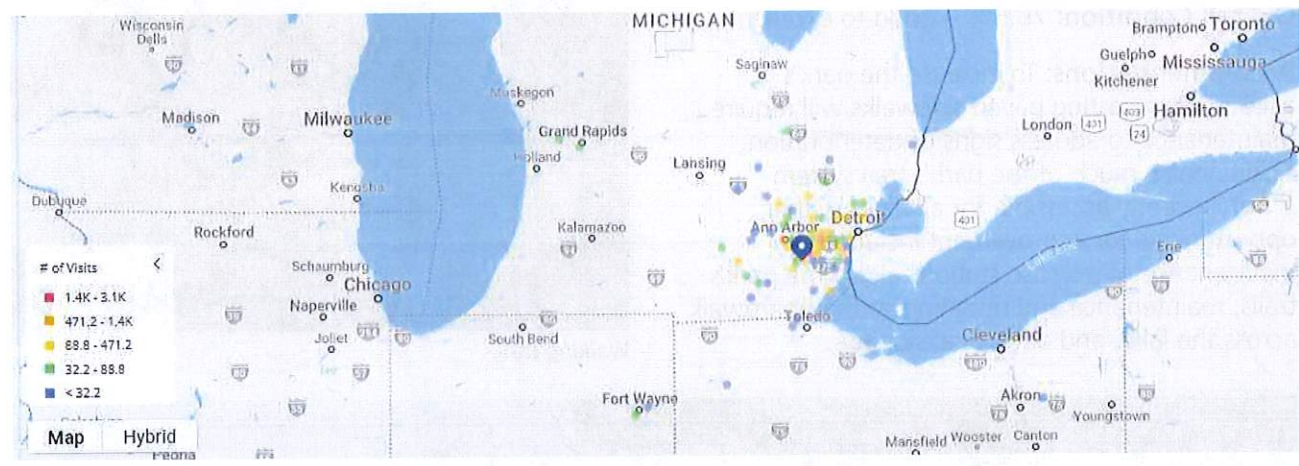
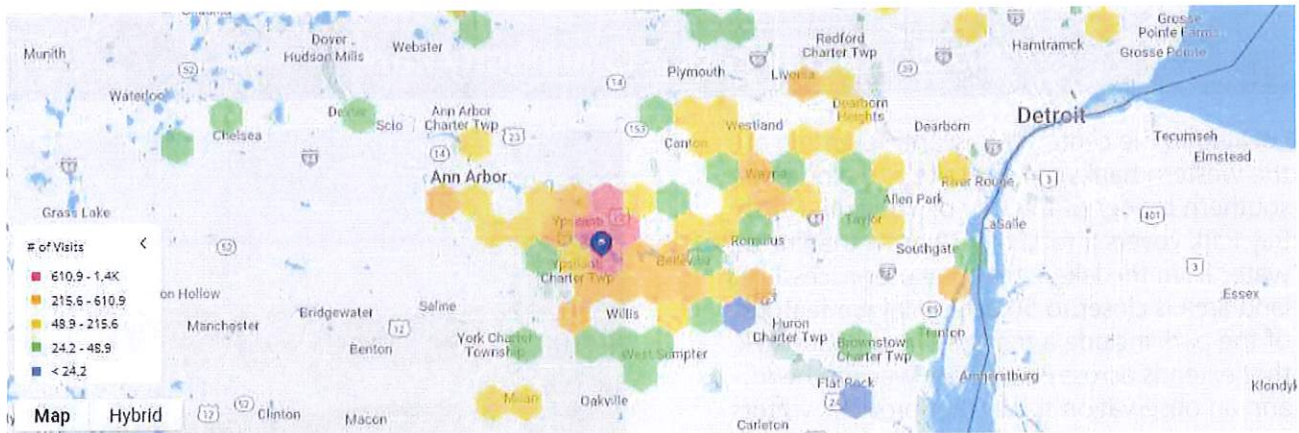


Figure XX: Income of Loonfeather Point Park Visitors Compared to Residents of the Surrounding Area



\*Source: Cobalt Community Research





Source: Cobalt Community Research



## North Bay Park – Community Park

Located in the center of Ypsilanti Township at the western banks of Ford Lake and along the southern border of the City of Ypsilanti, North Bay Park covers a total of 139 acres that includes water from the lake – the total user-accessible land area is closer to 50 acres. Unique features of the park include a trail system, a boardwalk that extends across Ford Lake's western bend, and an observation tower that provides visitors with access to coveted views of the lake. Exercise stations are located along the park's trails that allow visitors to engage in physical activity during their walks, hikes, and/or bike rides. The park also offers fishing opportunities along the lake as well as numerous picnic areas. Further inland are numerous play structures and swings, educational and wayfinding signage, and a paved parking lot. The park's educational signage provides appropriate and engaging information about the elements of nature, wildlife, and desired behaviors that are apt for all areas of the park.

**Accessibility Rating:** 2 – some of the park's facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 76.5% – good to excellent

**Recommendations:** To increase the park's accessibility, existing paved sidewalks will require maintenance to address signs of deterioration. Additionally, much of the park's trail system is not currently accessible for all users. Other opportunities for improvement include the maintenance of exercise stations along the park's trails, maintenance and updating of the boardwalk across the lake, and additional signage.



*Lake view and deck.*



*Walking trail.*



*Water access.*



## North Bay Park – User Insights\*

North Bay Park has a broad reach of appeal and receives many visitors from across the region. Visits to the park are mostly steady from April through October with a peak in May. While the racial and ethnic identities of visitors to the Community Center Park are mostly representative of the demographics of residents in a 10-mile radius, there is an overrepresentation of white visitors and more notable underrepresentation of Black visitors. Additionally, income data about park visitors illustrates a general overrepresentation of residents with higher incomes, particularly households making over \$100,000 a year.

Figure XX: North Bay Park Visits by Month (2022-2023)

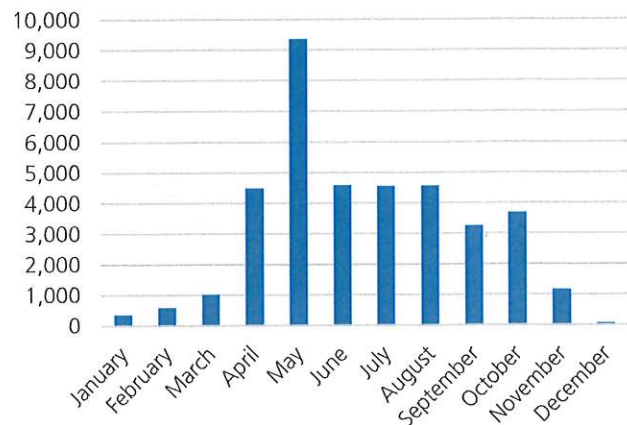


Figure XX: Race and Ethnicity of North Bay Park Visitors Compared to Residents of the Surrounding Area

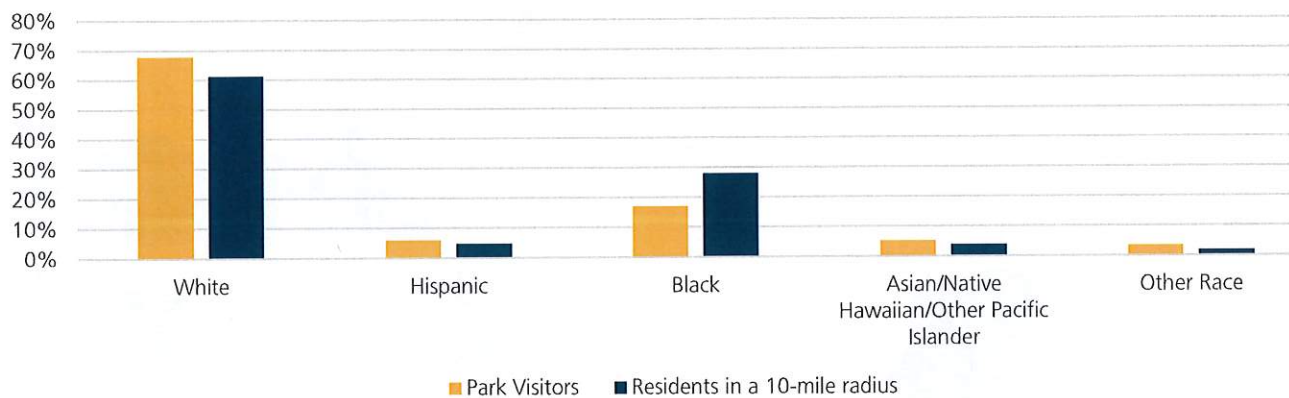
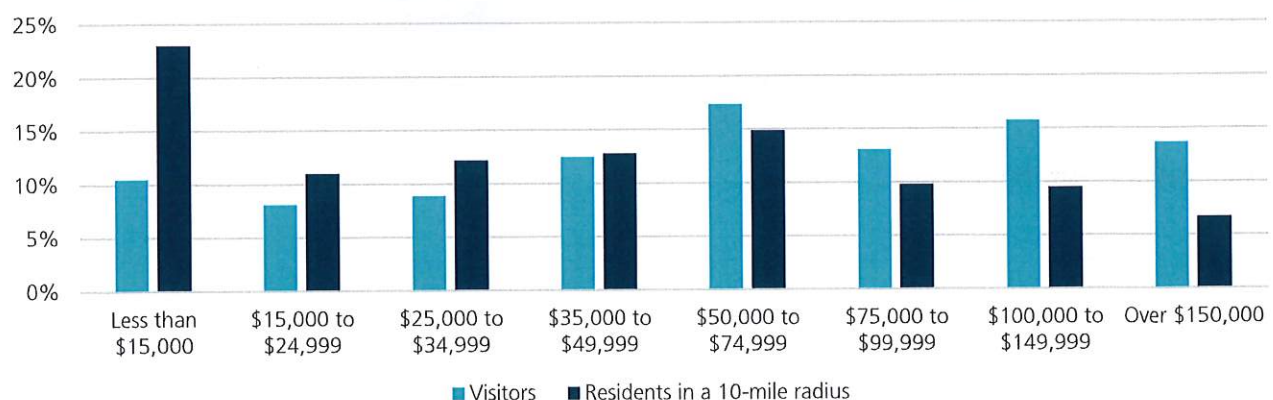
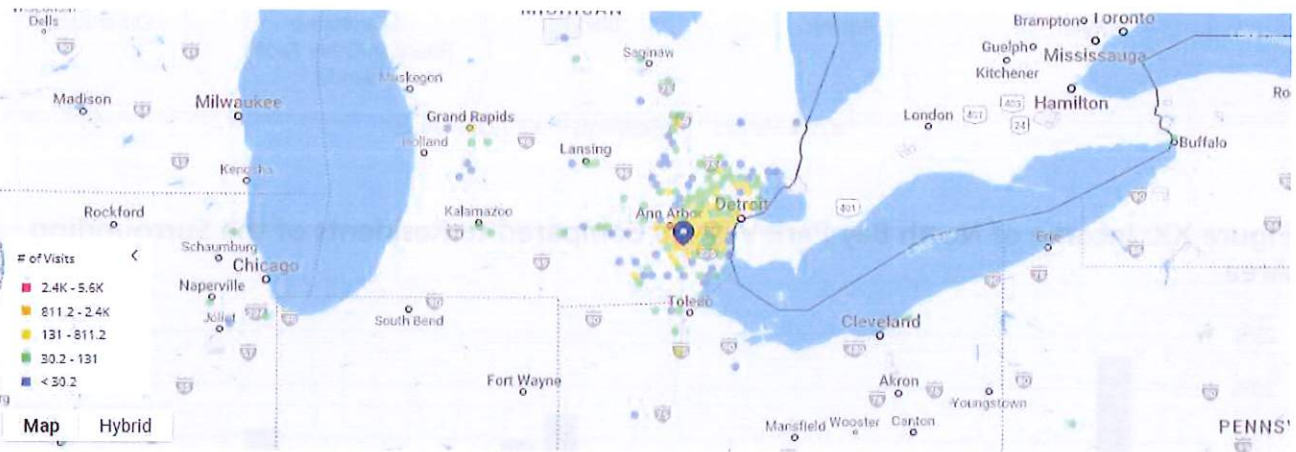
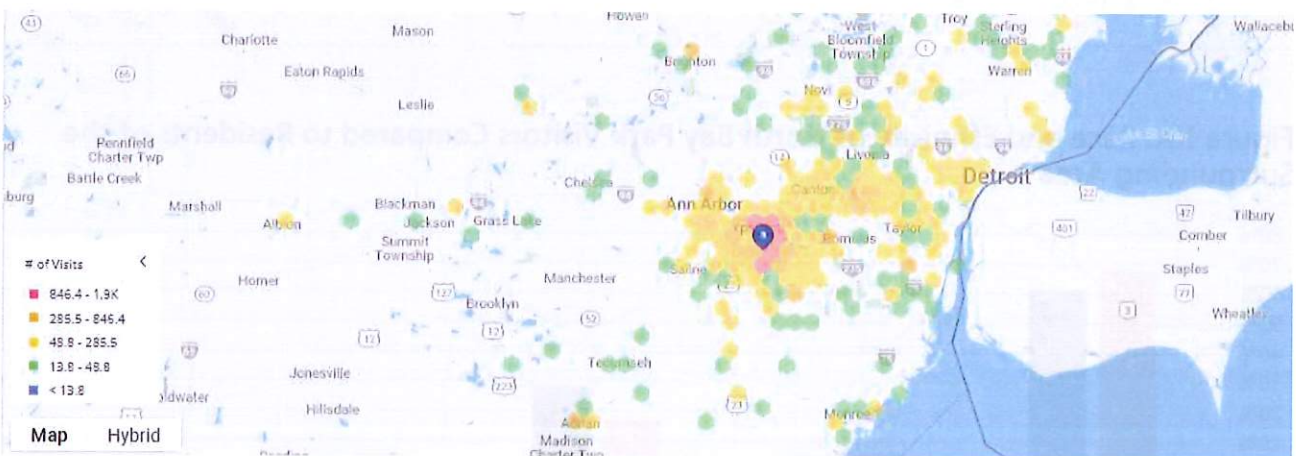


Figure XX: Income of North Bay Park Visitors Compared to Residents of the Surrounding Area



\*Source: Cobalt Community Research





Source: Cobalt Community Research



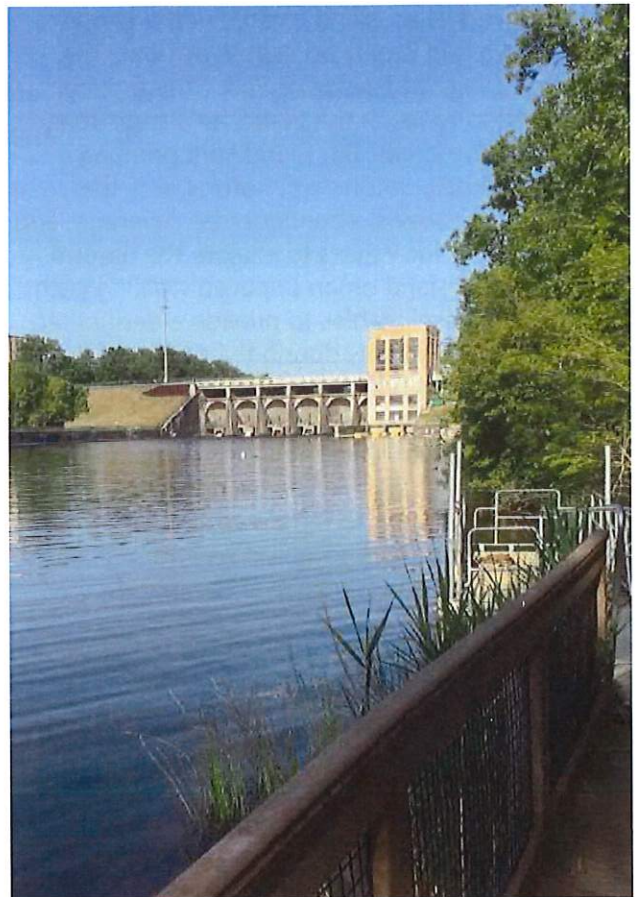
## North Hydro Park – Community Park

North Hydro Park covers 46 acres of land along the north shores of the Huron River and is located just above the Ford Lake Dam. North Hydro Park offers numerous opportunities for visitors to immerse themselves in outdoor recreation along the river. Park amenities include a paved trail that extends along the adjacent river bend and into surrounding tree coverage, educational signs that line the walkway, open fields, picnic tables, bike racks, a picnic shelter, restrooms, and a paved boardwalk that leads to the river, offering docks for canoes, kayaking, fishing, and observing scenic view of the water and dam.

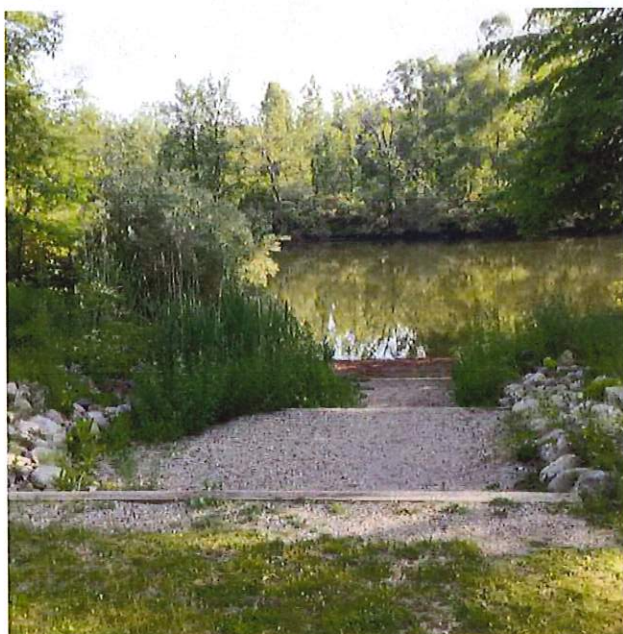
**Accessibility Rating:** 3 – most of the park's facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 81.3% – good to excellent

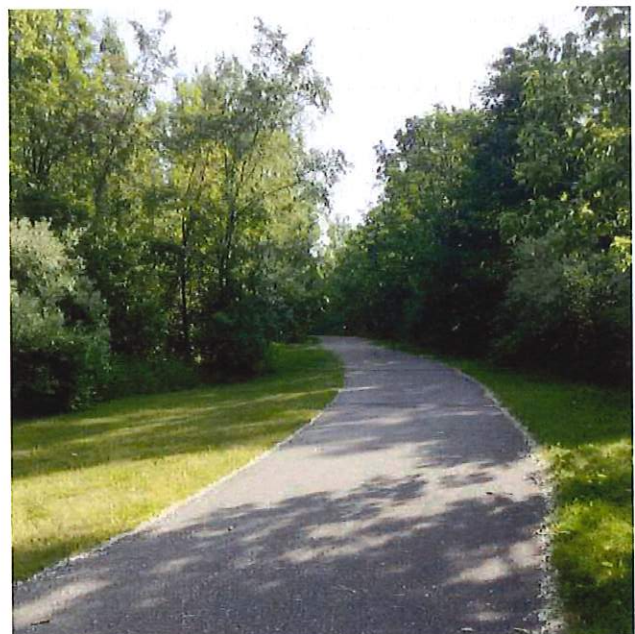
**Recommendations:** While most of the park's amenities are accessible and widely connected through the surrounding paved trail, paving the parking lot and entrance to the park could further increase access to all facilities. Though park facilities primarily support passive activities, the site's all-purpose field presents plenty of space for the possible addition of a play structure or other amenities that provide a structured recreation outlet for visitors.



*View of dam.*



*Portage location.*



*Paved trail.*



## Big Island Park – Natural Resource Area

Big Island Park is an island located in the center of Ford Lake and is only accessible by boat. The boating facilities at Ford Lake Park offer a public access option to reach the island for visitors that have their own boats. Big Island Park primarily exists as a largely untouched, natural area that provides scenic views, abundant tree coverage, and an opportunity for visitors to explore the natural aspects of the island on an unpaved walking path. The park has picnic tables to provide a designated eating space for visitors during their time on the island – while this provides an opportunity for rest and rejuvenation, the park has had some problems with litter and/or trash in the aftermath of visits. Additionally, Big Island Park does not have a docking area or ramp to facilitate boat access for visitors, requiring them to utilize an informal launch point at the southwest corner of the island.

**Accessibility Rating:** 1 – none of the park's facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 87.5% – good to excellent

**Recommendations:** Accessing Big Island Park requires a boat ride across Ford Lake. Currently, there is limited infrastructure to assist differently abled individuals in both entering and exiting a boat from origin and destination points. Because the park is a natural resource area, exploring the area also requires navigating unpaved trails and vegetative areas. Beyond inherent barriers to accessing the park because of its undeveloped nature, the park may address issues with trash and litter by providing more signs that remind visitors to clean-up after themselves, including educational components that detail the consequences of failing to do so for wildlife.



Island.



Picnic area.



Park signage.



## Hewen's Creek Park – Natural Resource Area

Hewen's Creek Park covers 191 acres on the southern border of the Township and offers visitors the opportunity to spend time in nature and engage with unique elements of the area. The park is one of the largest remaining wooded areas in the Township and boasts a nearly five-mile trail system that is perfect for hiking and mountain biking. Within the boundaries of the park are also a pond and creek, fishing docks, meadows, wooded areas, and abundant wildlife. The park also offers a gravel parking lot near its entrance. In 1999, Ypsilanti Township received an acquisition grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund to support the purchase of the park's land. A plaque from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) is present at the site to commemorate its acquisition and the support from the MDNR that has made the park's development and use possible.

**Accessibility Rating:** 1 – none of the park's facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 83.8% – good to excellent

**Recommendations:** Currently, Hewen's Creek Park has extremely limited accessibility – its designation as a natural resource area that boasts natural hiking and biking trails is likely to limit progress towards broad access in all parts of the park. However, paving the parking lot and providing access to some natural features of the park will bolster enjoyment and access for a wider range of visitors. Additionally, the park would benefit from more signage to support wayfinding across the area as well as information sharing as it relates to the natural features the park has to offer.



*Water features.*

Image Credit: Randy Mascharka



*Parking area and signage.*

Image Credit: Randy Mascharka



*Park signage.*



## South Hydro Park – Natural Resource Area

South Hydro Park is a 17.3-acre lot that is nestled along the eastern banks of Ford Lake and south of the Huron River's source. Largely undeveloped, South Hydro Park offers visitors access to natural views of the river amidst abundant greenery, trees, and grass. However, the park's entrance is not clearly marked, and the site is only accessible by foot through a barricaded entrance off of Textile Road and down a steep, gravel trail that is currently overgrowing with vegetation. Further, the park's former parking lot is clearly not in use. Should it eventually be reinstituted for visitor use and enabling greater access to the park, it is in need of significant repairs, including a full repaving.

**Accessibility Rating:** 1 – none of the park's facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 64.3% – fair to good

**Recommendations:** South Hydro Park has significant barriers to access for all potential visitors, regardless of ability. Establishing a clearly marked entrance to the park and revitalizing the parking lot is necessary for the park's utilization and enjoyment. Additionally, the park itself is absent of any programming, including signage related to wayfinding or information sharing. There are opportunities to integrate the park's location along Huron River with passive and active activities such as defined walking trails, benches and/or tables, fishing, or observation areas.



*Parking area.*



*Gate.*



*Open space and dam.*



## Green Oaks Golf Course – Special Use Park

Green Oaks Golf Course is an 18-hole golf course that covers 152 acres in the northeastern corner of the Township, adjacent to the Community Center. The course is owned by Ypsilanti Township but operated and funded separately from the Township's Parks and Recreation department. In addition to the 18-hole course, Green Oaks offers putting green, a chipping area, a pro shop, restrooms, and a parking lot that is shared with the Community Center. Golfing fees are reduced for residents of Ypsilanti Township as well as seniors, and seasonal operations run from April through mid- to late-November.

**Accessibility Rating:** 2 – some of the park's facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 87.5% – good to excellent

**Recommendations:** Green Oaks Golf Course will be well-served by regular maintenance efforts that support the upkeep of the 18-course, parking lot, and other facilities. To expand the audience of potential users, Green Oaks might also consider family-friendly programming and/or events that invite a wider audience of non-golfers to explore the course's facilities.



*Golf course building.*

Image Credit: Randy Mascharka



*Golf course.*

Image Credit: Randy Mascharka



## Huron River Park – Special Use Park

Huron River Park covers 53 acres of largely undeveloped land and is located across from the Township's Civic Center on Huron River Drive. The most notable, unique amenities of the park include a series of bee boxes towards the entrance of the park as well as a Township-planted pollinator garden. Additional park amenities include wooded areas and wetlands. While the boundaries of the park extend to North Bay Park as well as 1,500 feet of the shoreline along Ford Lake, the topography of the area includes steep bluffs that prevent waterfront access. In 2018, Ypsilanti Township received an acquisition grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund to support the purchase of the park's land. A plaque from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources is present at the site to commemorate its acquisition and support from the DNR that has made the park's development and use possible.

**Accessibility Rating:** 1 – none of the park's facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 75% – good

**Recommendations:** Currently, access to the park and its amenities faces notable barriers. Parking is available at the Civic Center across the road, but there is no pedestrian infrastructure to facilitate safe arrivals for visitors of any ability. To provide better access and additional programming of the site, implementing park trails throughout the area would better direct visitor traffic to all aspects of the park. Additionally, the park's bee boxes would benefit from signage to ensure the safety of visitors and bees, and to educate park patrons about the amenity as well as appropriate ways to engage with it.



*Park access.*



## Ypsilanti Township CommUNITY Skate Park – Special Use Park

The Ypsilanti Township CommUNITY Skate Park is the newest addition to the Township's park and recreation facilities, opening in September 2020 after plans for its construction began in early 2018. Located in the northeastern corner of the Township down the street from the Community Center Park and opposite Green Oaks Golf Course and the Community Center, CommUNITY Skate Park fulfills a longtime need of the Township as evidenced by numerous community engagement opportunities and partners, including funders, contractors, skating enthusiasts, and other community groups. Skateboards, bicycles, and rollers skates are permitted on the surface of the park; however, electric devices such as electric bicycles, remote controlled-cars, and other electronic vehicles are not permitted. The park also offers picnic tables and bike racks.

**Accessibility Rating:** 4 – all of the park's facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 100% – excellent

**Recommendations:** The CommUNITY Skate Park provides consistent access to visitors of all abilities and provides a unique opportunity for recreational engagement amidst surrounding Township parks and recreation facilities. To improve comfortability at the site, the Township might consider implementing shade structures so that visitors have the opportunity to cool down while they are taking a break.



Park signage.



Skate park features.



Skate park features and green infrastructure.



## Community Center – Indoor Facility

The Township Community Center is the site of much of the Township's indoor recreational programming as well as the location of recreational operations for the Township.

**Accessibility Rating:** 3 – most of the park's facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Overall Condition:** 72.9% – good to excellent

**Recommendations:** While the Community Center building is accessible to users and well-suited to host most of the Township's recreation programs, including 50 and Beyond activities and classes, the building is long overdue for an update. Programming options are somewhat limited by a shortage of indoor facilities and the configuration of rooms at the Community Center. There is a definitive need for large rooms with high ceilings which can accommodate a variety of uses.



*Community Center building entrance.*



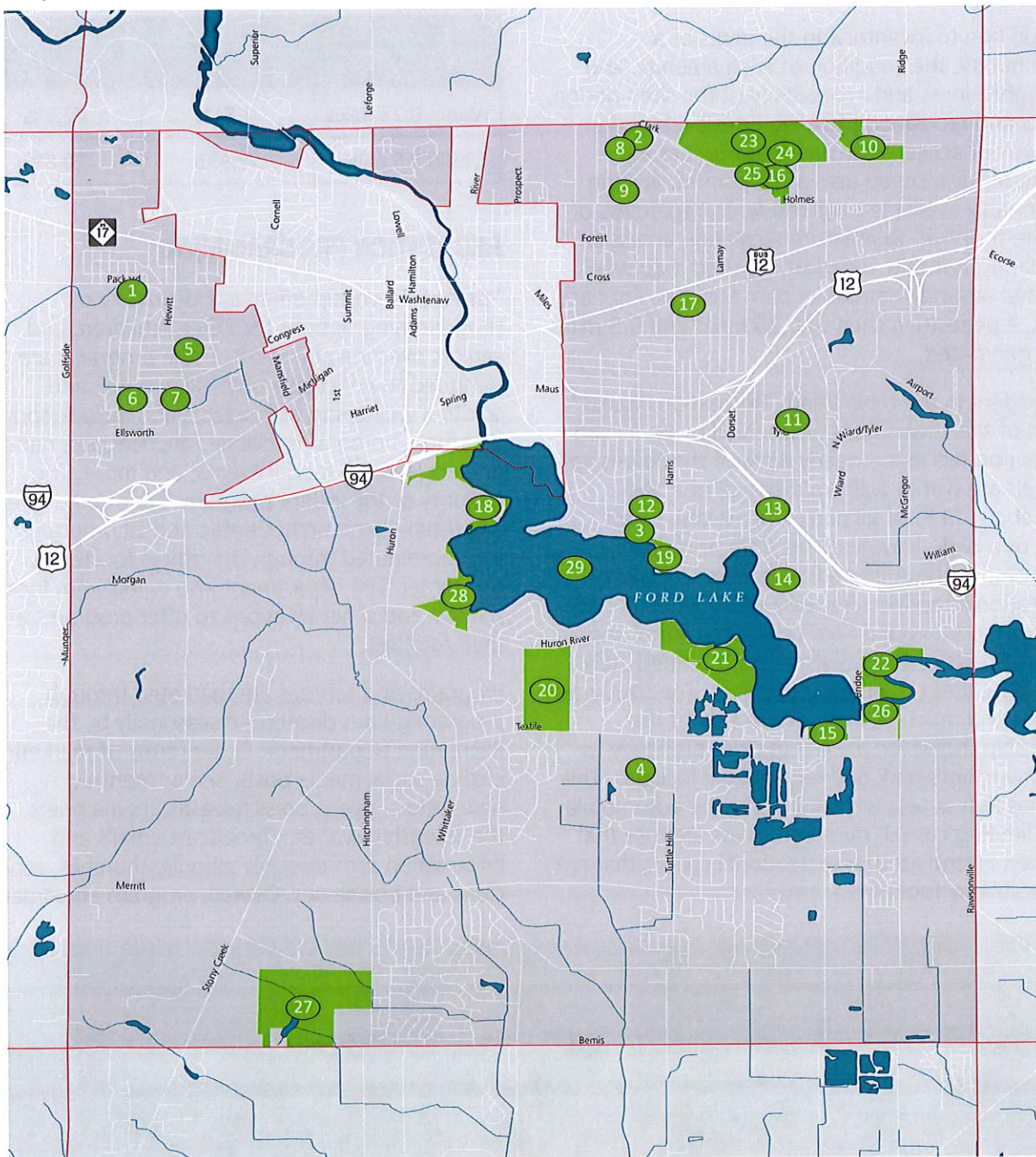
*Interior.*



*Pavilion and entrance.*



Map XX: Parks



## Parks

Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, Washtenaw County

- |                                   |                           |  |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 1 Watertown Park                  | 11 West Willow Park       | 22 North Hydro Park                    |
| 2 Tot Lot Park                    | 12 Nancy Park             | 23 Green Oaks Golf Course              |
| 3 Grove Road Overlook             | 13 Sugarbrook Park        | 24 Ypsilanti Township Community Center |
| 4 Pines Park                      | 14 Lakeview Park          | 25 Skate Park                          |
| 5 Burns Park                      | 15 Lakeside Park          | 26 South Hydro Park                    |
| 6 Clubview Park                   | 16 Community Center Park  | 27 Hewen's Creek Park                  |
| 7 Fairway Hills Park              | 17 Harris Park            | 28 Huron River Park                    |
| 8 Rambling Road Park              | 18 North Bay Park         | 29 Big Island Park                     |
| 9 Wendell Holmes Park             | 19 Loonfeather Point Park |  |
| 10 Apple Ridge & Bud Blossom Park | 20 Ford Heritage Park     |  |
|                                   | 21 Ford Lake Park         |  |

3,000 Feet  
Beckett & Raeder, Inc.



## RECREATION ACCESS

In addition to inventorying the parks of a community, the condition of each amenity, and thoughtfulness and accessibility of the site's design, parks and recreation planning entails a broader analysis of access to ensure that facilities are equitably distributed across the community and reasonably available to all residents, regardless of where they live. To measure recreation access in Ypsilanti Township, a pedestrian shed map was created around community park facilities. For each park, a pedestrian shed of 0.25 miles and 0.5 miles was generated.

As evident in the table titled "Recreation Access", most of the Township is well served by parks and recreation facilities – nearly 43% of the Township's parcels are within walking distance of a park, and about 71% of all parcels are within a half mile of a park. However, there are pockets of the Township without immediate access to parks or recreational facilities. Because many amenities are concentrated around Ford Lake, the central and eastern parts of the Township most immediately served by these features and spaces. The southeast corner and much of the western side of the Township, however, are not in close proximity to the Township's park and recreational facilities. This implies that access is most possible by automobile use, limiting casual, frequent access and use that is often incentivized by recreational spaces that are accessible by foot.

Table XX: Recreation Access

Distance	Parcel Count	Percent of Parcels
Within 0.25 miles	7,811	42.7%
Within 0.5 miles	12,935	70.8%

## RECREATION PROGRAMMING

Ypsilanti Township offers a wide variety of programming options for adults, children, and seniors over the age of 50. These programs are designed to enrich the physical, mental, and spiritual well-being of residents and include sports and fitness programs, classes, and leagues; dance and art lessons; special events; and more. The majority of the indoor programs are offered at the Township Community Center, and all programs are coordinated through the offices located at the center. The department also works with local schools and other locations to offer programs at their facilities.

Programs and services are marketed through program guides distributed seasonally by the Recreation Department. Other forms of marketing include social media posts, senior monthly newsletters, flyers, press releases, media briefs, the Township website, broadcast emails and information sent through schools, churches, service clubs and businesses. Overall, program enrollment

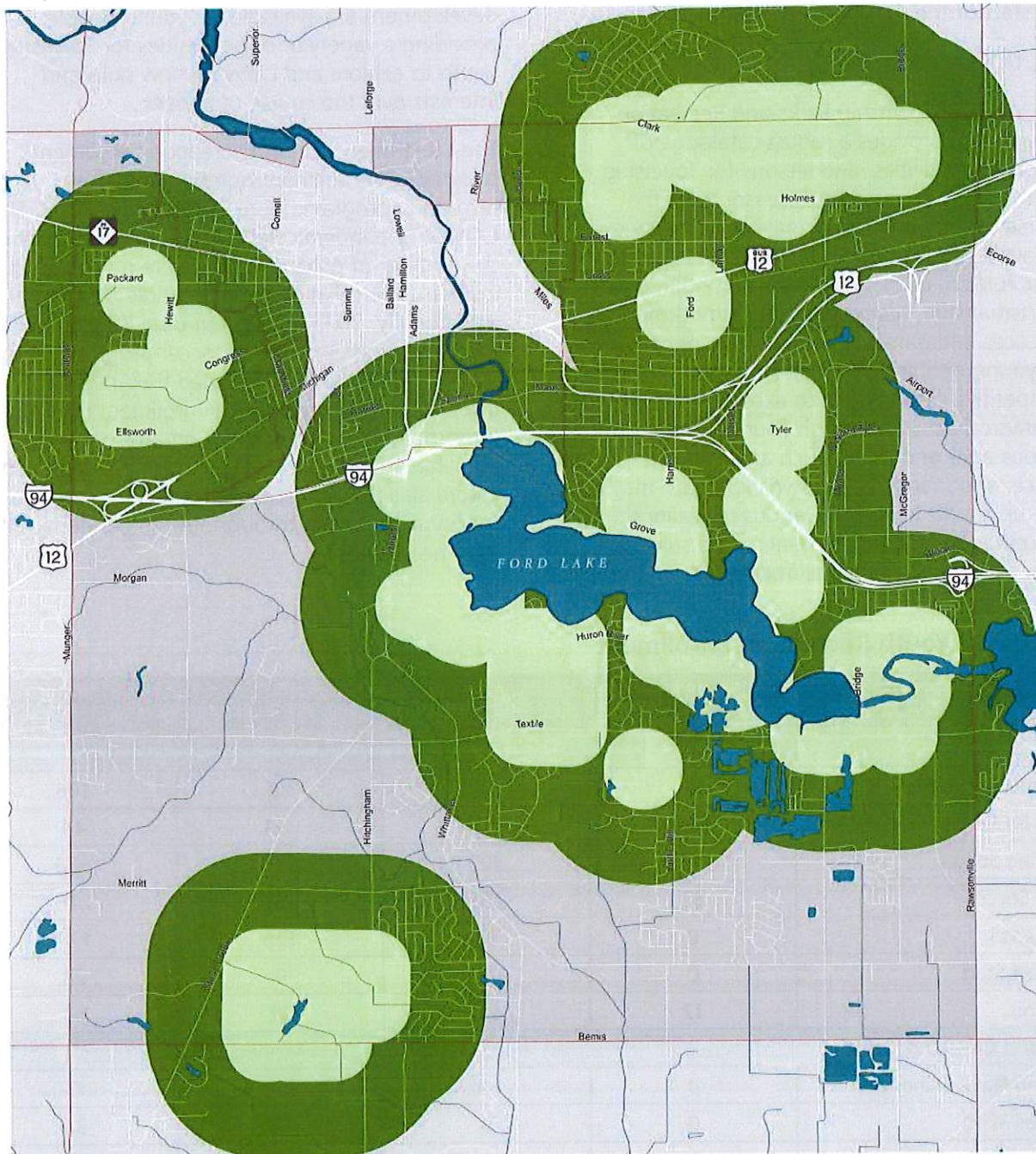


Ford Lake Park.

Image Credit: Randy Mascharka



Map XX: Pedestrian Shed Map



## Pedestrian Shed Map

Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, Washtenaw County

- Ypsilanti Charter Township
- 0.5 mi Buffer Zone
- 0.25 mi Buffer Zone

3,000 Feet  
Beckett & Raeder, Inc.



has seen a return to more normal conditions since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Youth Programming

The Ypsilanti Township Parks and Recreation department provides a robust catalogue of programs, activities, and lessons for Township youth that is updated each season over the course of the year. Traditional sports leagues of various levels introduce children of all ages to the basic rules of each sport, playing fundamentals, sportsmanship, teamwork, and commitment to practices and games. There are also opportunities for young people to take sports lessons in non-competitive settings and to explore other avenues of physical activity through courses offered for various ages and levels, such as gymnastics, karate, dance, and martial arts. Township youth may also sign up for art lessons in various modalities that alternate throughout the year. In the summer, camps that range in focus from sports and fitness,

arts and enrichment, and mentorship and personal development are available for young people, providing a variety of opportunities for Township youth to explore and cultivate new skills and interests over the course of a week.

The table titled “Youth Recreation Enrollment” summarizes enrollment numbers for youth recreation programs from 2020 to mid-2023. The COVID-19 pandemic had an observable impact on the number of programs that were offered in 2020, including cancellations in the middle of registration. Additionally, 2023 enrollment data is incomplete for some programs. Youth soccer programs in the spring and fall have maintained their popularity throughout this period with enrollment returning to normalcy as soon as the programs became available again in 2021. Dance, jump-a-rama, and karate also provided popular enrichment options for Township youth throughout the pandemic and into the present.

**Table XX: Youth Recreation Enrollment**

Program	2020 Participants	2021 Participants	2022 Participants	2023 Participants
<b>Youth Sports</b>				
Winter Basketball	0	0	88	106
Fall Basketball	0	82	111	44
Spring Soccer	16	308	378	366
Fall Soccer	82	259	257	276
Baseball	0	98	126	127
Smart Start	0	0	0	23
Tennis	12	22	72	47
<b>Sports Classes &amp; Camps</b>				
Grind Now, Shine Later	0	144	156	0
B-Ball Skills	0	0	18	34
Skyhawks	0	8	17	18
<b>Youth Enrichment</b>				
Jump-a-Rama (gymnastics)	14	220	213	224
Martial Arts	0	0	19	129
Karate	18	120	152	82
Diamond Princess	0	0	23	0
Dance	108	180	167	214
Act it Out	0	0	17	0
Art Class	0	11	8	40



Table XX: Adult Recreation Enrollment

Program	2020 Participants	2021 Participants	2022 Participants	2023 Participants
<b>Adult Sports</b>				
Spring Soccer	0 teams	9 teams	6 teams	7 teams
Summer Soccer	6 teams	0 teams	0 teams	0 teams
Fall Soccer	6 teams	8 teams	0 teams	0 teams
Spring Softball	3 teams	3 teams	7 teams	7 teams
Summer Softball	--	--	7 teams	8 teams
Fall Softball	3 teams	3 teams	6 teams	5 teams
Cornhole	5 teams	0 teams	9 teams	0 teams (building closures)
<b>Adult Enrichment</b>				
Line Dancing	0	35	215	152 (registration ongoing)
Urban Ballroom	0	96	366	122 (registration ongoing)
Yoga/Pilates/ Zumba	0	82	61	143 (registration ongoing)
Portrait Drawing	1	11	16	16 (registration ongoing)

## Adult Programming

Adult recreational programming through the Township allows individuals over the age of 16 to explore new and existing interests in various sports, fitness modalities, arts, and team activities. The Township organizes various adult sports leagues for softball, soccer, basketball, and more as well as lessons for adults interested in cultivating their skills in new sports such as tennis. Other fitness classes for adults include self-defense, martial arts, line dance, ballroom, yoga, Zumba, and more. Additionally, arts classes with various levels rotate throughout the year and provide the opportunity for adults to engage where they feel most appropriately challenged.

The table titled "Adult Recreation Enrollment" summarizes enrollment numbers for adult recreation programs from 2020 to mid-2023. With the exception of outdoor sports leagues, the COVID-19 pandemic had an observable impact on the number of programs that were offered in 2020 as well as their enrollment numbers. Additionally, 2023 enrollment data is incomplete for some programs. Softball leagues in all seasons

have grown in popularity and participation over this three-year period, as has spring soccer participation. However, summer and fall soccer team participation has dwindled from the start of the pandemic to the present. Both dance programs (urban ballroom and line dancing) have maintained notable popularity among Township adults.

## 50 and Beyond Programming

Ypsilanti Township's 50 & Beyond Program aims to support adults nearing or in retirement with all elements of their mental, physical, and emotional health. The 50 & Beyond Program offers a wide range of fitness and social opportunities for adults aged 50 and over as well as a variety of programs in recreation, leisure, continued education, health, and volunteerism on a daily basis.

The 50 & Beyond program is membership-based and available for residents and non-residents with annual dues that are just \$15 for individuals and \$25 for entire households. Membership entitles participants to discounted special events, free coffee, many free classes and activities, and the ability to travel through the group travel program.



Table XX: 50 and Beyond Activity Participation

Program	2020 Participants	2021 Participants	2022 Participants	2023 Participants
50 & Below Activities and Classes				
Day Trips	0	20	569	728
Overnight Trips	0	0	25	19
Dance	0	11	52	63
Painting with Melody	0	0	14	15
Social	0	69	127	--
Activities	0	0	125	167
Exercise Classes	0	0	171	253

The program distributed a newsletter on a monthly basis to inform and update the community on current program options, health information, classes, travel, special events, and more.

The table titled "50 and Beyond Activity Participation" illustrates participation trends for various activities and classes that are provided through 50 and Beyond membership. COVID-19 completely halted programming in 2020 and impacted 2021 activities as well. However, program enrollment and participation for a variety of activities and classes have steadily increased into 2022 and 2023, illustrating the continuing, present appeal of 50 and Beyond programming.

## REGIONAL RECREATION FACILITIES

Beyond the Township's parks and recreational facilities, there are several additional recreational spaces that are available across the region. These facilities are largely maintained and managed by Washtenaw County, the Huron-Clinton Metroparks Authority, the State of Michigan, or area schools, colleges, and universities, and are available to Ypsilanti Township residents in various capacities to fulfill numerous purposes.

### Ypsilanti Community Schools

Ypsilanti Community Schools serve the children of both the City and Township of Ypsilanti, offering over 100 acres of public grounds for recreational use on behalf of community residents. Additionally, Ypsilanti Community Schools encourages the "maximum use of the district's school grounds, schools, and building facilities" by groups and individuals within the community through leasing

procedures that outline parameters for use, allowing school facilities and grounds to be used by community organizations and residents in support of their entertainment, education, and recreational desires and needs.<sup>1</sup> Ball and soccer fields, football and track facilities, school gymnasiums, pools, and wrestling rooms are available for rent by the hour with fees determined by the renting individual or group's relative relationship to the school district.

### Van Buren Public School District

Located to the east of Ypsilanti Township in Van Buren Township, the Van Buren Public School District serves families in the eastern portion of the Township, particularly residents of the historic Rawsonville community. Like Ypsilanti Community Schools, school sporting and recreational facilities are available for community members and groups to rent based on their connection to the school district. These grounds and spaces include school gyms, football and soccer fields, ball diamonds, auditoriums, indoor and outdoor tracks, restrooms and locker rooms, wrestling rooms, and concessions stands.

### Lincoln Consolidated School District

The Lincoln Consolidated School District is based in Garfield Township to the south of Ypsilanti Township; however, some schools are located within the Township that serve nearby residents. The school district allows residents and non-residents to purchase monthly or daily passes to access athletic buildings across the district. These passes grant users access to the district's workout centers, fieldhouse track, turf, and batting cages when not in use by school teams.<sup>2</sup>



## Eastern Michigan University

Eastern Michigan University (EMU) is located within the City of Ypsilanti, and the campus covers more than 395 acres across the community. Some on-campus athletic fields and facilities like the football stadium and track, baseball diamonds, indoor and outdoor basketball facilities, sand volleyball court, and disc golf are available to the public when not in use for university programs and events. EMU also operates University Park next to its student center, Pease Park which includes a tribute to 9/11's first responders, and many miles of walking and jogging paths, including almost two miles of the B2B Trail. These spaces are open to the public, and the campus's gym offers members that are available for members of the public to purchase. Additionally, the 18-hole Eagle Crest Golf Course is a joint venture with the Township. Opened in 1989 and significantly renovated in 2012, the course is operated by the University and located in the center of the Township, just south of the City's boundary. The University also utilizes Ford Lake Park for storage and the launching point for their rowing team.

## Border to Border (B2B) Trail

Within Washtenaw County, the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission (WCPARC) and the Washtenaw County Greenways Advisory Committee (GAC) have collaborated to create the Border to Border (B2B) Trail, a regional trail that runs along the Huron River through all of Washtenaw County, providing a connection to the statewide Iron Belle Trail. Although gaps remain, the trail is largely complete with additional progress planned to bridge the trail's remaining gaps and improve the overall trail experience. Area trails that connect to the B2B offer access to prominent regional recreational resources, such as the Matthaei Botanical Gardens of the University of Michigan.

## Subdivision Parks

New subdivisions in Ypsilanti Township that include more than 24 lots are required to incorporate dedicated open spaces for the community. The amount of required open space is determined by the number of lots in the subdivision to ensure that it is proportionate to the number of new households. This program ensures that

neighborhood recreation facilities are integrated into growing subdivisions and available for new residents within their immediate community. The parks are under the ownership and control of the neighborhood's homeowner's association but are also open to the public. Most subdivision parks are clustered in the southern half of the Township, where the majority of all new subdivisions have been constructed.

## Private Facilities

Private recreation facilities in Ypsilanti Township and the City of Ypsilanti play an important role in providing recreation resources to Township residents. Private recreation facilities include membership-only gyms, specialty/"boutique" fitness studios (e.g., yoga, Pilates, and cycling studios), country clubs, golf courses, arts centers and studios, dance studios, and more. Specific examples within the Township include the Washtenaw Country Club, the Washtenaw Sportsman Club, Pine View Golf Course, Eagle Crest Golf Course, Riverside Center for the Arts, Powerhouse Gym, Dance Pavilion Studio, CrossFit Fitness, Planet Fitness, Club Chippewa, and the Detroit-Greenfield RV Park.

## City of Ypsilanti Park Facilities

The City of Ypsilanti maintains 15 parks and four facilities across 95 acres of parkland in City boundaries. Like much of the Township, parks along the Huron River and Ford Lake provide many of the City's unique recreational amenities, and portions of North Bay Park and Ford Lake Park cross into the City over borders of the Township. The Parkridge Park and Community Center is located in the southern part of the city and close in proximity to the residents in the northern part of the Township. Parkridge also provides recreational and educational programming to community youth throughout the year with focuses on academic instruction and tutoring, art courses, teamwork and character development, and more. Other recreational programming opportunities in the city are offered through the Ypsilanti Senior Center which manages programs for senior residents of the city that focus on learning, fitness, healthy living, and active engagement as well as Rutherford Pool which offers swim lessons during summer months.



## City of Ann Arbor Park Facilities

The City of Ann Arbor maintains a total of 162 park properties, including 15 parks facilities (such as the Bryant Community Center, Eberbach Cultural Arts Building, Farmers Market, Gallup Park Livery, Veterans Memorial Pool and Ice Arena, and more). Located less than 20 miles from Ypsilanti Township, Ann Arbor's catalogue of parks and recreational centers is available for residents of the Township to access. While Ann Arbor's recreational amenities are not vastly different from the Township's park system, membership to or swim lessons from any of the City's pools are available to nonresidents, providing an avenue for residents of the Township to access pool facilities in both the on- and off-season. Further, parks located in Ann Arbor that lie along the B2B trail present an opportunity for access and use from the Township. These parks include Gallup Park, Nichols Arboretum, Fuller Park, and the Bandemer Nature Area.

## University of Michigan Recreation and Nature Preserves

The University of Michigan manages various gardens, arboreta, and preservation areas that are available for members of the public to access, regardless of their place of residence. Both Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum are open all year round and provide an opportunity for visitors to immerse themselves in natural areas that are rich with plant diversity.

## Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy

The Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy protects more than 3,400 acres of land in southeast Michigan. A significant concentration of these lands is in Superior Township to the north of Ypsilanti, as part of their Superior Greenway efforts. These lands include the Conservancy Farm, a 99-acre historic farmstead that still has portions of farmland that are in active use; the Smiley Nature Preserve, a 100-acre nature preserve and farm; LeFurge Woods Nature Preserve, 325 acres of farmland and nature area, including woodlands, wetlands, and meadows; and Springhill Nature Preserve, 30 acres that contain cattail and button brush swamp. The Superior Greenway project is a collaborative effort to protect high-quality natural areas and farmland in the area between Ann Arbor and Detroit.

## Rolling Hills County Park

Rolling Hills County Park is located in the southwest corner of Ypsilanti Township but operated by the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Department. Covering 439 acres, Rolling Hills offers access to a wide variety of activities throughout the entire year. During the summer months, Rolling Hills serves as a water park with features that include a wave pool, spraygrounds, a lazy river, and several water slides. In the winter, the park supports cross country skiing and sledding. Spring and fall let visitors walk along the park's accessible woodland trails or play soccer on the park's fields. Additional park amenities include a concession area, playground equipment, sports fields, picnic pavilions with tables and grills, an 18-hole disc golf course, a mountain bike trail and hiking trails, fishing dock, and wooded areas to explore. Access to the park is free for pedestrians, but there is a parking fee for vehicles. There is also an entrance fee to the water park for each visitor.

## Washtenaw County Parks, Facilities, and Natural Areas

The Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission (WCPRC) and Natural Areas Preservation Program (NAPP) maintain many recreational amenities that are accessible to residents of Ypsilanti Township. Some of these facilities require annual or daily entry fees. In addition to Rolling Hills County Park, the following WCPRC- and NAPP-operated facilities are closest in proximity to the Township:

- » Parker Mill County Park with amenities that include nature trails and seasonal tours of a functioning grist mill;
- » County Farm Park which offers many nature trails;
- » Meri Lou Murray Recreation Center, located off of Washtenaw Avenue and a major bus route that provides fitness equipment and classes.

## Huron-Clinton Metroparks

The Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority is a regional special parks district that maintains 13 parks around the Detroit region. The Metroparks system includes 24,000 acres of parkland that are funded by a regional millage, annual and daily vehicle entry fees, and user fees for some



facilities. These parks supplement local parks by offering a diverse range of activities that most local governments cannot provide. These parks are also typically smaller and less wilderness-oriented than MDNR-operated recreation areas. Within a half-hour drive from Ypsilanti Township, this system includes the Delhi, Dexter-Huron, Hudson Mills, and Lower Huron Metroparks; notably, the Lower Huron Metropark offers camping. Washtenaw County's Border to Border Trail and a trail along the Huron in Wayne County provide hiking and biking connections from Ypsilanti to these Metroparks, and the Huron River Water Trail runs through these parks as well.

### State Recreation Areas

Within and near Washtenaw County, the MDNR provides large natural areas for activities like hunting, fishing, hiking, snowmobiling, and camping that are largely unlikely to be accommodated in areas with greater development. These MDNR facilities typically require entrance fees which are available daily or annual basis as well as additional fees for activities like camping.

The Waterloo Recreation Area is located near Chelsea on the western side of Washtenaw County and is the largest park in Michigan's Lower Peninsula. The park's 20,000 acres include

campgrounds, rustic cabins, and group use camping; picnic areas and playgrounds; multiple lakes for swimming, fishing, and boating; and more than 40 miles of interpretive nature, equestrian areas, mountain biking routes, cross-country skiing, and general hiking trails. Waterloo also includes the Gerald E. Eddy Discovery Center, a year-round facility that offers exhibits dedicated to geology and natural history as well as educational programming by the Waterloo Natural History Association.

The Pinckney Recreation Area spans 11,000 acres north of Chelsea in western Washtenaw and Livingston Counties, also about a half-hour drive away. Like Waterloo, Pinckney includes numerous lakes, campgrounds, and trails to accommodate a variety of users. The Pinckney and Waterloo Recreation Areas are connected via the 35-mile-long Waterloo-Pinckney Trail.

A number of smaller MDNR parks are located to the north of the Township. Brighton and Island Lake Recreation Areas are in Livingston County near Brighton and Maybury State Park is close to Northville of Wayne County. These state facilities also offer a range of activities, from swimming and fishing to hiking and picnic areas. As a smaller, more "suburban" recreation area, Maybury does not provide space for hunting or camping.

### Sources

- 1 Ypsilanti Community Schools. Use of School Facilities. [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-dTRVsM\\_Suq4yAQoRxSa5Mz1Stt9KcxEtT50PmO\\_usM/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-dTRVsM_Suq4yAQoRxSa5Mz1Stt9KcxEtT50PmO_usM/edit)
- 2 Lincoln Athletic Building Membership Levels. [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcjpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.lincolnk12.org/downloads/district\\_files/lab\\_-membership\\_fees\\_7.1.21.pdf](chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcjpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.lincolnk12.org/downloads/district_files/lab_-membership_fees_7.1.21.pdf)



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Ypsilanti Township Rosie the Riveter Craft Show.  
Image Credit: Randy Mascharka

# 04.

## Planning Process



Ypsilanti Township revises its Parks and Recreation Plan every five years to conduct an updated assessment of its recreation inventory and to re-prioritize recreation projects based on need and public input. Community engagement provides critical information during this process as various stakeholder groups, Township residents, and users of parks and recreational facilities share insights and preferences about the future of the parks system. The community engagement strategy for the updated parks and recreation plan was multi-pronged and included an online survey; three stakeholder meetings with invited Township citizens, users of parks and programs, and past and present elected officials; and two community open houses.

The online community parks and recreation survey was offered in English, Arabic, and Spanish and was distributed over social media, the Township's website and email lists, by word of mouth, and through posters spread across the Township. The survey received 915 responses throughout the time it was available (April 2023 through August 2023). This response rate indicates that the results from the survey are significantly significant at the 95% confidence level with a 3% margin of error. For communities with similar population sizes to Ypsilanti Township, this is an impressive response rate that provides valuable, comprehensive information about respondent perceptions.

A steering committee team comprised of Township staff, officials, local leaders, and community members reviewed the draft plan and additional content throughout the process. A final draft plan was approved for distribution by \_\_\_\_\_ and the 30-day public review period began on \_\_\_\_\_.

After the 30-day public review period concluded, a public hearing was held at the \_\_\_\_\_ Parks Commission Meeting. The public hearing was advertised in the \_\_\_\_\_. The Parks Commission voted \_\_\_\_\_ to approve the plan for Township Board Approval. The Parks and Recreation Plan came before the Township Board on \_\_\_\_\_. A public hearing was held at this meeting and advertised in the \_\_\_\_\_. Following the public hearing, the plan was adopted by the Township Board on \_\_\_\_\_.

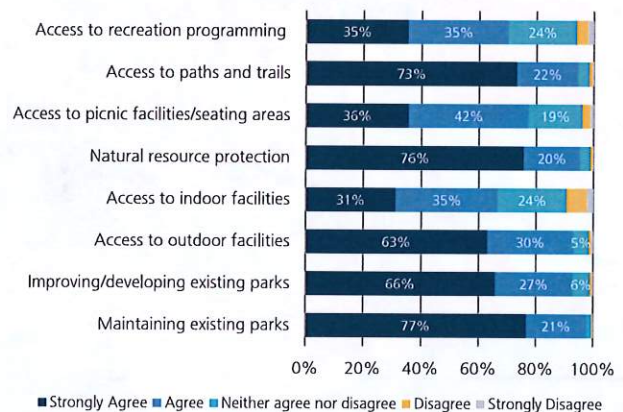
A summary of the community survey results, stakeholder sessions, and community open houses is highlighted on the following pages.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY SUMMARY

### Overview

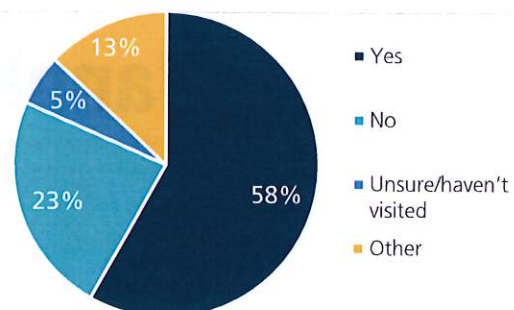
*Q1: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "The following are important priorities for me and my household"?*

The maintenance of existing parks, natural resource preservation, and access to paths and trails were identified as the highest priorities for survey respondents and their households. Access to indoor facilities was regarded with the least amount of relative importance, followed by access to recreational programming and access to picnic facilities/seating areas.



*Q2: In general, do the existing parks and recreation facilities in Ypsilanti Township meet the recreational needs of you and your household?*

Nearly 60% of survey respondents shared that existing park and recreational facilities in the Township fulfill the recreational needs of their households and themselves. While this represents a majority of respondents, a combined 36.5% of respondents stated that their needs were not met or used the "Other" option to provide additional context about their experiences with the parks and recreation system.





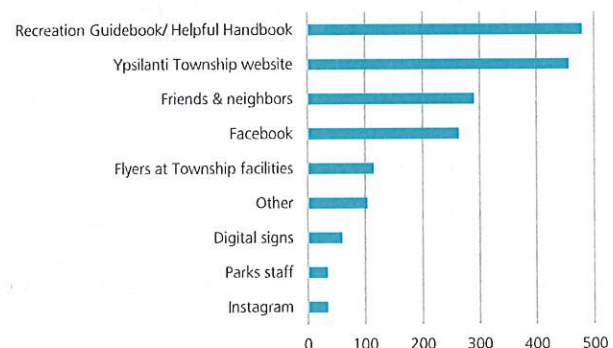
Respondents who used the “Other” option to answer this question has a mostly positive perception of the Township’s facilities and park system with the exception of the following elements that are missing, needed, or undesirable:

- » **Accessibility:** Limited/inconsistent ADA accessibility in facility parking lots, restrooms, and play amenities presents a notable barrier to use for individuals with disabilities.
- » **Cost prohibitive:** Respondents that mentioned park entry fees noted that they present a barrier for low-income residents of the Township. Others expressed their opposition to entry fees because of tax funds that are used to support park maintenance.
- » **Distance/location:** Some respondents shared that distance from Township facilities prevents their regular use of them, particularly those who live in the southern part of the Township where parks are less prevalent and those who have an interest in Community Center programming but that live far away.
- » **Dog park:** The absence of a dog park in the Township has caused many residents to travel to other municipalities to utilize their facilities, consequently reducing the time they are able to spend at facilities in the Township.
- » **Improved non-motorized paths:** Respondents identified extended, maintained, and continuous walking, biking, and hiking paths as a recreational need. While some non-motorized infrastructure exists, safety hazards present themselves when there are gaps in connectivity.
- » **Maintenance/clean-up:** In some parks and recreational spaces, the need for maintenance and regular clean-up overshadows the function and satisfaction of the space.
- » **Restrooms:** The absence of restrooms at all Township facilities was identified as a barrier to use for some respondents. This includes offering restrooms for hikers and individuals who recreate in preserved, natural areas.
- » **Splashpad/water facilities:** Water features were identified as an enormous area to explore across Township facilities, both in terms of smaller amenities like splash pads up to community/neighborhood pools in an indoor or outdoor setting.

- » **Year-round access:** Gating parks outside of the summer months drastically reduces the facilities that Township residents can access on a year-round basis. In many cases, this impacts household proximity to parks for those who wish to utilize recreational spaces during the winter but that may not live near parks that operate throughout the entire year.

*Q3: How do you learn about Ypsilanti Township Parks and Recreation programs and activities?*

The Ypsilanti Township website and Recreation Guidebook/Helpful Handbook were the two most common avenues for individuals to learn about parks and recreation programs within the Township, indicating that Township-led communications efforts have been successful in communicating recreational offerings to residents. “Other” responses included Township email blasts as another common avenue for learning about programming opportunities. Additionally, short-answer responses also illuminated the prevalence of individual research to learn about programming, indicating that there is a self-guided desire to become involved with the Township’s recreational offerings but some difficulty in discovering available options, particularly for new residents that may be less connected to the Township’s communications systems.

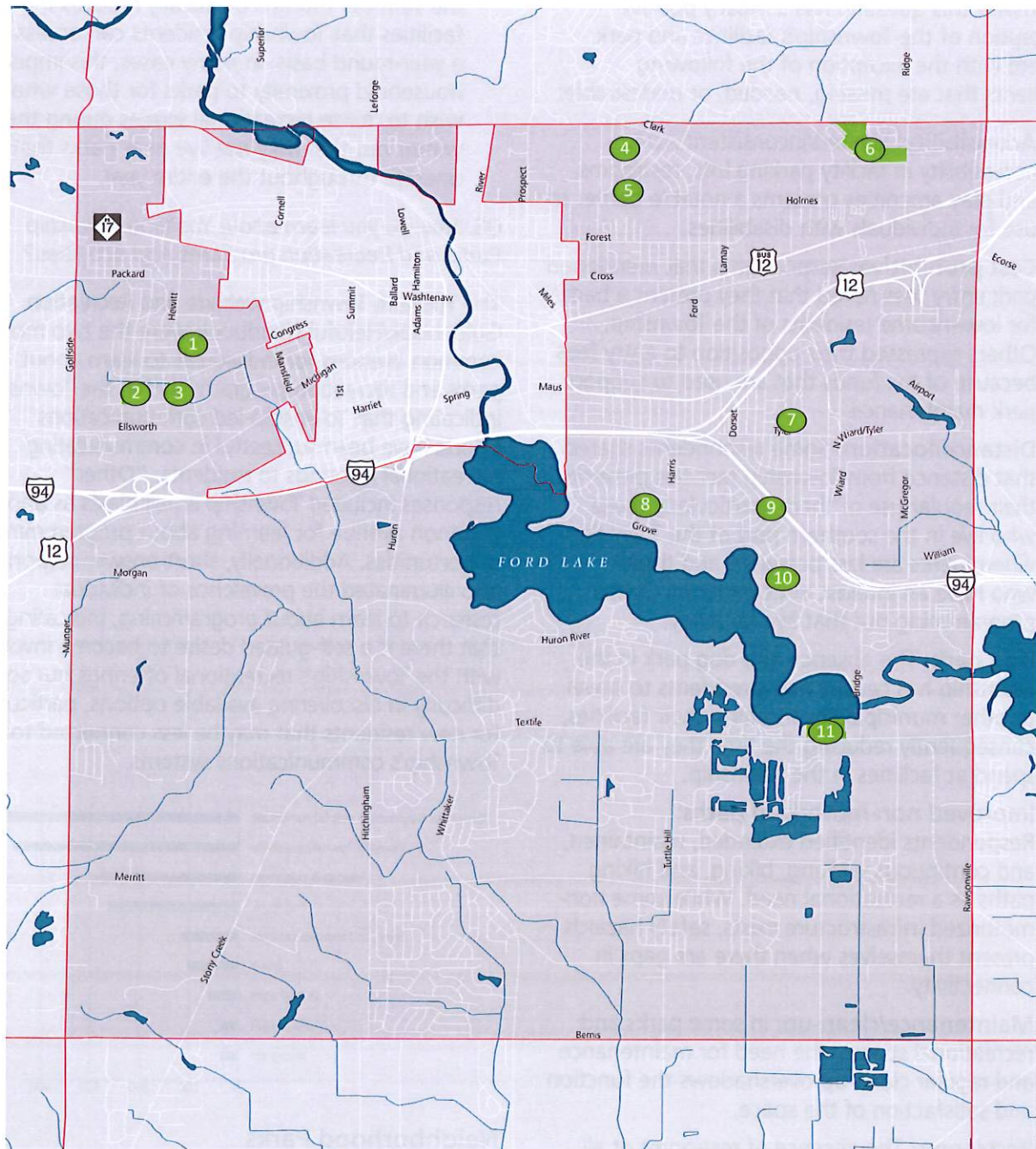


## Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood Parks range from 5 – 15 acres in size and serve the community within ½ mile radius around the park. The following parks in the Township are classified as Neighborhood Parks: Appleridge/Bud & Blossom Parks, Burns Park, Clubview Park, Fairway Hills Park, Lakeside Park, Lakeview Park, Nancy Park, Rambling Road Park, Sugarbrook Park, Wendell Holmes Park, and West Willow Park (Please reference **Map XX** to locate the Neighborhood Parks).



Map XX: Neighborhood Parks



## Neighborhood Parks

Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, Washtenaw County

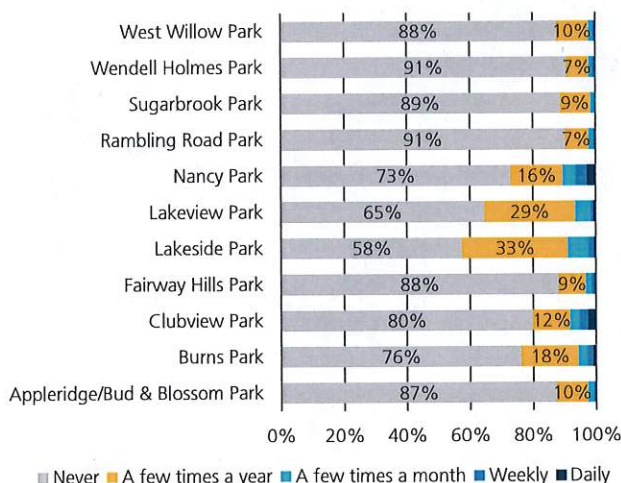
3,000 Feet  
Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

- |                                  |                    |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| ① Burns Park                     | ⑦ West Willow Park |
| ② Clubview Park                  | ⑧ Nancy Park       |
| ③ Fairway Hills Park             | ⑨ Sugarbrook Park  |
| ④ Rambling Road Park             | ⑩ Lakeview Park    |
| ⑤ Wendell Holmes Park            | ⑪ Lakeside Park    |
| ⑥ Apple Ridge & Bud Blossom Park |                    |



Q4: How often have you visited Ypsilanti Township's Neighborhood Parks in the last 12 months?

As might be expected, the Township's neighborhood parks have a limited draw for residents that live outside of the neighborhood in which these parks are located. With the exception of Lakeside Park, each individual neighborhood park has "never" been visited by over 60% of survey takers. While Lakeside Park has the greatest portion of visitors that come a few times a year (33.4% of respondents) and a few times a month (6.7% of respondents), Nancy Park and Clubview Park are visited daily by the greatest relative portions of the population – 2.8% and 2.4% of respondents, respectively. This illustrates the level of commitment that nearby residents have to these parks and may also be an indication of the "pull" that each one has for Township residents that may not necessarily live in the surrounding area.

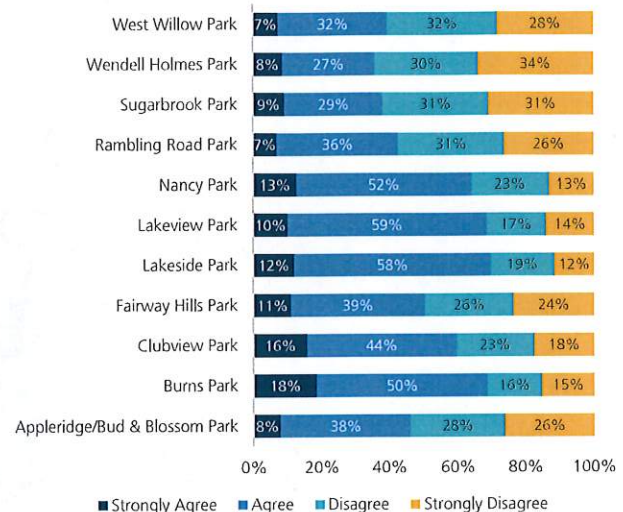


Q5: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "Neighborhood Parks in Ypsilanti Township meet my needs and the needs of my family"?

For each neighborhood park, 63.5% to 84.5% of respondents stated that they "neither agree nor disagree" with the statement posed in this question, reflecting respondents' unfamiliarity with parks that are not in their neighborhood or that they do not visit. For this reason, analysis will take place only based on responses that agree or disagree with the statement to some extent.

Of the Township's eleven neighborhood parks, six received less than 50% agreement with the statement that the individual park meets the needs

of the responding individual and/or their family. While neighborhood parks have inherently limited use that is tied to their surrounding geography, evidence of dissatisfaction with neighborhood amenities points to a need for targeted investment in local parks that should be an asset to the immediate community.



## Community Parks

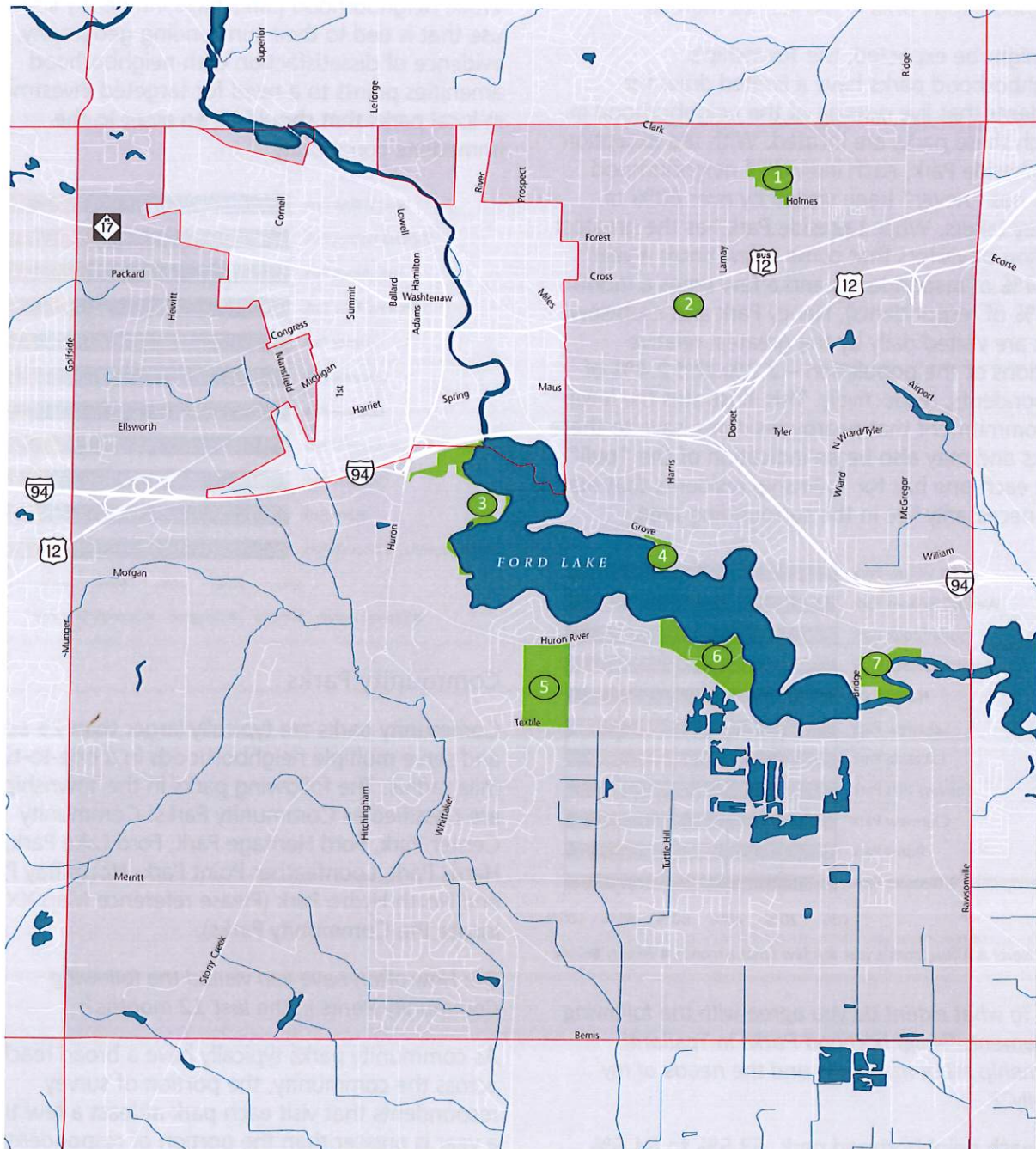
Community parks are typically larger than 25 acres and serve multiple neighborhoods in a one-to-two-mile radius. The following parks in the Township are classified as Community Parks: Community Center Park, Ford Heritage Park, Ford Lake Park, Harris Park, Loonfeather Point Park, North Bay Park, and North Hydro Park (Please reference Map XX to locate the Community Parks).

Q6: How often have you visited the following Community Parks in the last 12 months?

As community parks typically have a broad reach across the community, the portion of survey respondents that visit each park at least a few times a year is greater than the portion of respondents that regularly visit the Township's neighborhood parks. However, 86.8% of respondents indicated that they never visit Harris Park, and 78.3% of respondents stated that they never visit the Community Center Park. While Ford Lake Park is the community park with the greatest portion of visitors a few times a year (45.7% of respondents), Ford Heritage Park has the greatest portion of visitors on a weekly (12.1% of respondents) and daily (6.5% of respondents) basis.



Map XX: Community Parks



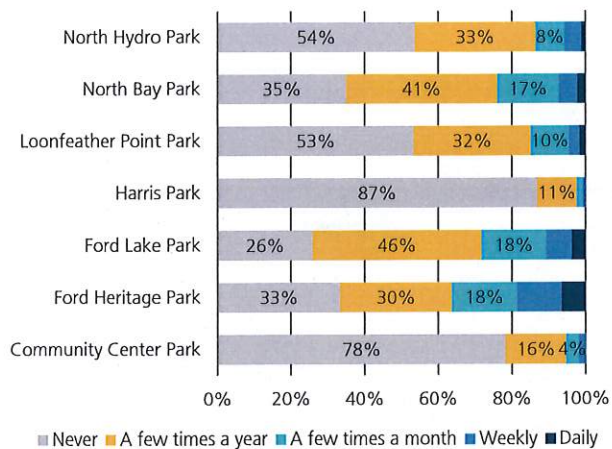
## Community Parks

Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, Washtenaw County

- ① Community Center Park
- ② Harris Park
- ③ North Bay Park
- ④ Loonfeather Point Park
- ⑤ Ford Heritage Park
- ⑥ Ford Lake Park
- ⑦ North Hydro Park

3,000 Feet  
Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

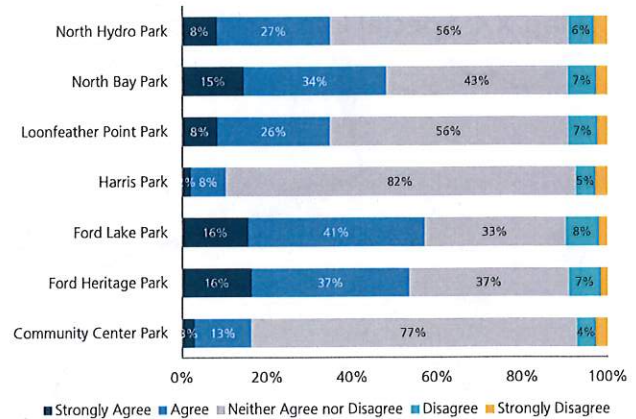




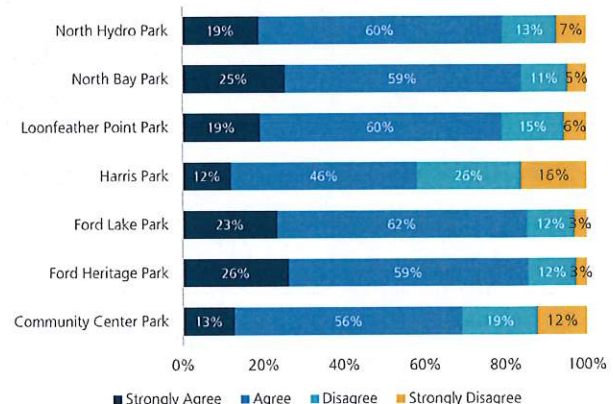
**Q7: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "The Community Parks in Ypsilanti Township meet my needs and the needs of my family"?**

For each community park, 33.2% to 82.3% of respondents stated that they "neither agree nor disagree" with the statement posed in this question, reflecting respondents' unfamiliarity with some community parks OR moderate opinions about some parks more than others. Because this distinction is not clear, separate analysis will take place for responses that include neither agreement nor disagreement, and for responses that agree or disagree with the statement to some extent.

As expected based on the rates of visitation to each community park, Harris Park and the Community Center Park received the greatest portion of survey respondents that did not agree or disagree with this question's statement of satisfaction. However, both parks also received the greatest portion of survey respondents who "strongly disagree" with the statement that either park meets their needs. Ford Lake Park, Ford Heritage Park, and North Bay Park received the greatest portions of agreement with this question's statement of satisfaction; however, Ford Lake Park and Ford Heritage Park also had the greatest percentages of respondents who "disagree" with the statement that either park meets their needs with 7.4% and 7.7% of survey respondents stating this, respectively. This is a function of each park's frequency of use – analysis that controls for park popularity is provided below. However, it is important to note that community parks that are highly regarded by a majority of survey takers still have areas that could be improved upon to both meet visitors' needs and increase their appeal to a broader range of visitors.



To further analyze community park perceptions and satisfaction, the figure below focuses on survey responses that provided a definitive level of satisfaction with each park. North Bay Park, Ford Lake Park, and Ford Heritage Park remain the parks that have the greatest degree of agreement with the satisfaction statement (over 80% of respondents each). Harris Park and the Community Center Park also illustrate the greatest portions of dissatisfaction among respondents who have firsthand experience with either park, despite relatively infrequent visitation rates. While it is unclear whether or not dissatisfaction with either park is the cause of low use rates, it is possible that there is a connection between both observations.

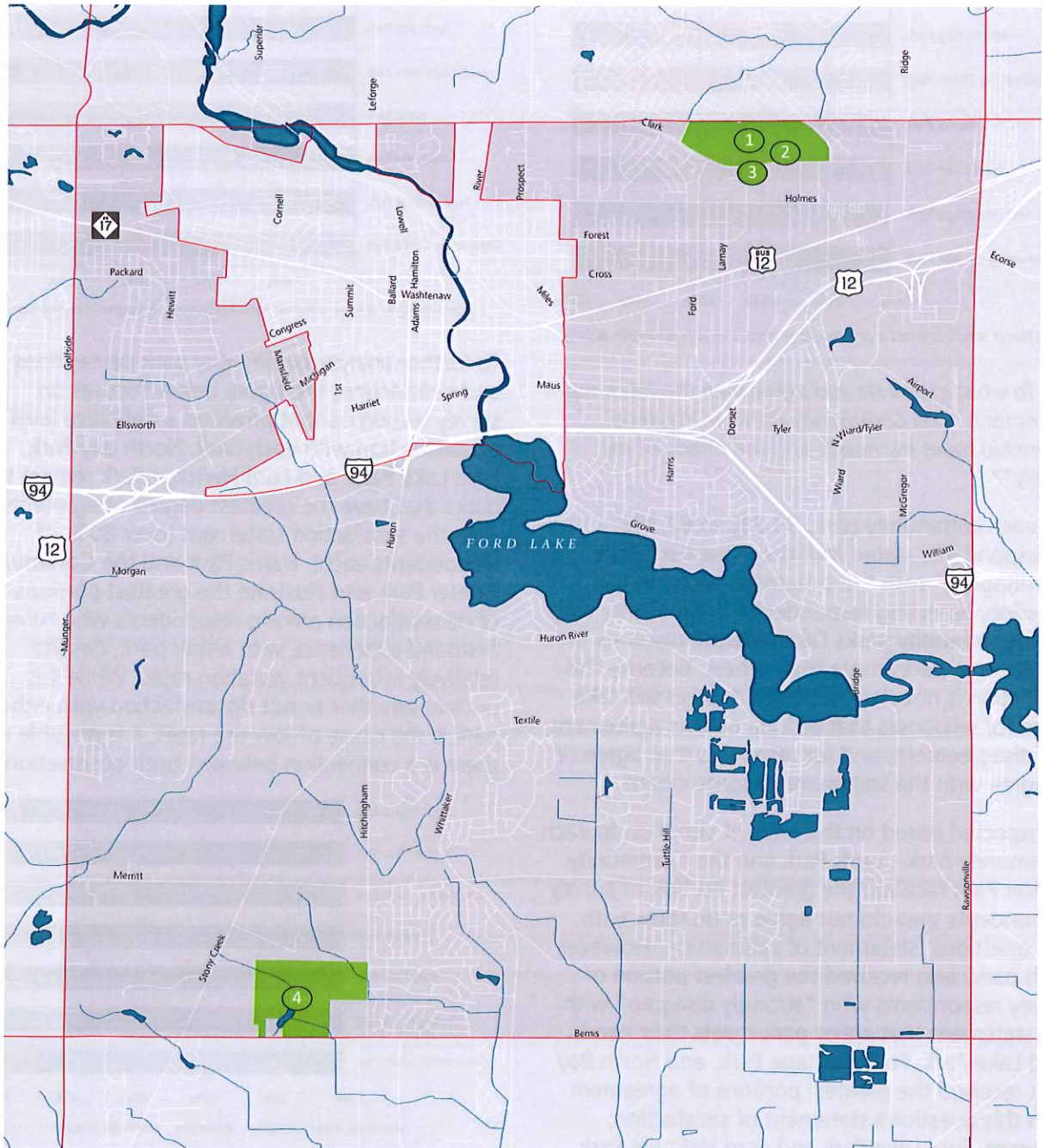


## Special Use Facilities

Special use facilities are parks and other recreational spaces that offer visitors the opportunity to engage in a specialized, single-purpose activity, such as golf courses, nature centers, or arenas. The following parks in the Township are classified as Special Use Facilities: Hewen's Creek Park, the Skate Park, Green Oaks Golf Course, and the Ypsilanti Township Community Center (Please reference [Map XX](#) to locate the Special Use Facilities).



Map XX: Special Use Facilities



## Special Use Facilities

Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, Washtenaw County

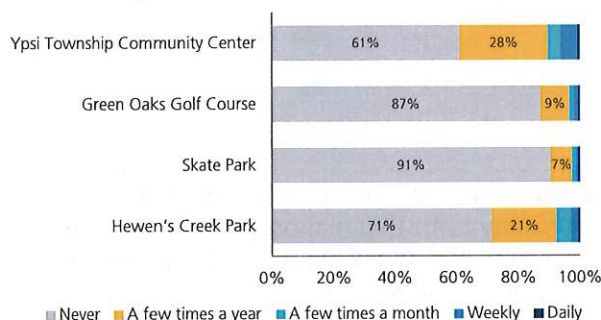
- ① Green Oaks Golf Course
- ② Ypsilanti Township Community Center
- ③ Skate Park
- ④ Hewen's Creek Park

3,000 Feet  
Beckett & Raeder, Inc.



**Q8: How often have you visited the following Special Use Facilities in the last 12 months?**

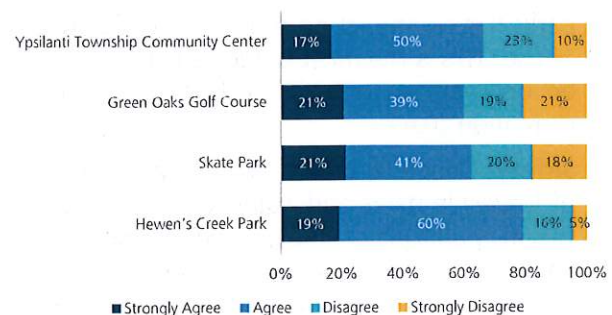
The Township's Community Center receives the greatest rates of visitation of all the Township's special use facilities. This is relatively unsurprising – while the Community Center houses programs and activities that are specialized in nature, the center as a whole and all of its offerings appeal to a broader portion of the population than other, more focused special use facilities. Hewen's Creek Park is the second most popular special use facility in terms of frequency of visitation. Hewen's Creek's popularity is reflective of other survey themes that name natural preservation and trail extensions and maintenance as high priorities for the Township's recreation system.



**Q9: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "The Special Use Facilities in Ypsilanti Township meet my needs and the needs of my family"?**

For each special use facility, 59.4% to 83.0% of respondents stated that they "neither agree nor disagree" with the statement posed in this question, reflecting respondents' unfamiliarity with some special use facilities that do not support their own specialized interests and/or recreational hobbies. For this reason, analysis will take place only based on responses that agree or disagree with the statement to some extent.

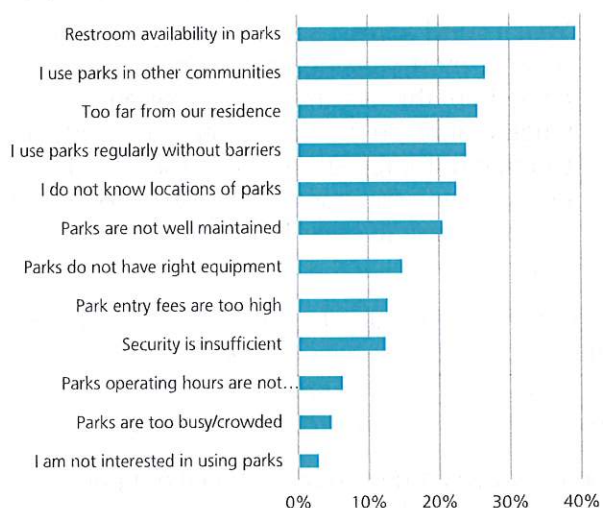
Among the users of the Township's special use facilities, the Green Oaks Golf Course received the lowest levels of satisfaction from survey respondents with exactly 40% stating that they do not agree that the course meets their needs or the needs of their families. Hewen's Creek Park, on the other hand, is regarded with the highest level of satisfaction among park visitors. This speaks to the park's ability to fulfill unique interests and needs related to natural space recreation that align with many of residents of the Township.



## Parks And Recreation Access

**Q10: Which of the following reasons prevent you or other members of your household from using parks in Ypsilanti Township more than you do now?**

Nearly 40% of all survey respondents identified restroom availability in parks as the primary deterrent to visiting them more often. The other two most common reasons for limited use are possibly related – residents of the Township that live far from its parks may be located closer to parks in other communities. However, the patronage of parks in other communities may also be a result of other challenges identified in this question, including limited maintenance, outdated equipment, entry fees, or concerns about security.



This question gave survey respondents the opportunity to further elaborate on forces that limit their use of Township parks. The following themes emerged as barriers to use that were not previously identified through the question's answer choices in order of frequency:

- » **Trails and paths:** Limited availability of trails and paths both within and between existing

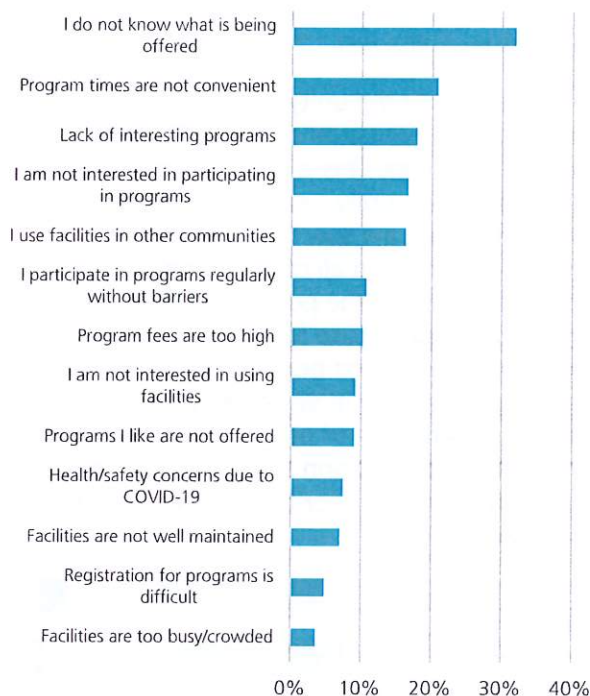


parks has an impact on some visitor's frequency of use. This is the most requested amenity to be incorporated in the Township's park and recreation spaces.

- » **Safety:** Concerns about the general safety of Township parks and instances of crime in specific parks play a role in resident visitation. Some respondents shared a tendency to visit the parks that they perceive to be the safest.
- » **Accessibility:** Individuals with limited physical ability stated that they are deterred from parks that do not have adequate benches, parking access, restroom facilities, or accessible play structures.
- » **Dog park:** The absence of a dog park in the Township has an impact on residents with and without dogs. While dog owners request an off-leash area for their pets to socialize and play in, other residents cite limited dog-friendly infrastructure as a challenge because of associated waste and unleashed dogs in inappropriate areas.
- » **Water/pools:** Respondents express a desire to swim somewhere in the Township – because the absence of community pools does not allow this, those seeking this amenity look elsewhere.
- » **Year-round access:** Some respondents shared that the most pressing barriers to park visits come from the fact that they are often gated, whether it be during the off-season/outside of summer or for repairs and construction. This impacts park visitation and the extent of access residents have to parks based on the time of year.

*Q11: Which of the following reasons prevent you or other members of your household from using the recreation facilities and programs offered by the Ypsilanti Township more than you do now?*

The top three barriers to recreational program participation speak to the need for resident input in setting a programmatic schedule in terms of the opportunities that are offered and the best times to do so. The information gap related to respondents do not know which programs or activities that are available is reflective of channels of communication that may be less accessible for newcomers to the community as well as individuals who have not had a chance to engage with recreation programs thus far in their residence.



This question gave survey respondents the opportunity to further elaborate on forces that limit their use of Township recreation programs and facilities. The following themes emerged as barriers to use that were not previously identified through the question's answer choices in order of frequency:

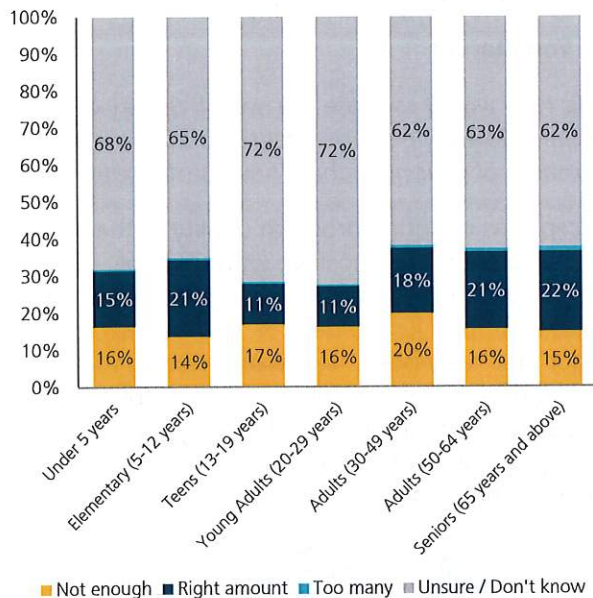
- » **Too far:** The most prevalent theme from open-ended responses is that recreation programs offered through the Township are often too far for residents to commit to participate in them. Because most programs (and the Township's recreational operations) are based in the Community Center at the northeast corner of the Township, it is difficult for households located elsewhere to make it to the center for regular programming. Some respondents expressed a desire for programming to be spread out at different sites, or for there to be a second community recreation space in a more central location.
- » **Unmatched demand:** Respondents shared experiences with the Township's recreation programming in which they could not register because of long waitlists, programs were overenrolled without sufficient capacity to operate, or programs in which they had registered were cancelled because of a lack of participation or because an instructor had not been identified.



- » **Information gap:** Some respondents reiterated a limited awareness of what programming options are available along with an uncertainty of how they can receive notification of program opportunities. Others shared that Township communications come to them, but often too late.

*Q12: Please rate the availability of recreational facilities and programming in Ypsilanti Township for each of the following age groups.*

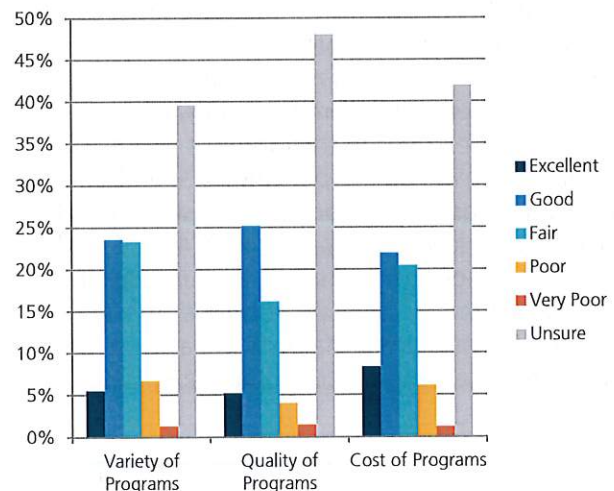
While recreational facilities and programs are largely unknown across all age groups, survey respondents general noted that there is an appropriate availability of recreational facilities and programming for the elementary age group of children between 5 and 12 years, adults aged 50 to 64 years, and seniors aged 65 years and older. Conversely, survey takers also noted that there is not enough recreational programming for individuals between the ages of 13 and 49, spanning the teen, young adult, and 30- to 49-year-old adult age groups. No age group stuck out as having "too many" recreational opportunities.



## Parks and Recreation Programming

*Q13: How would you rate recreational programming in Ypsilanti Township in the categories of variety, quality, and cost?*

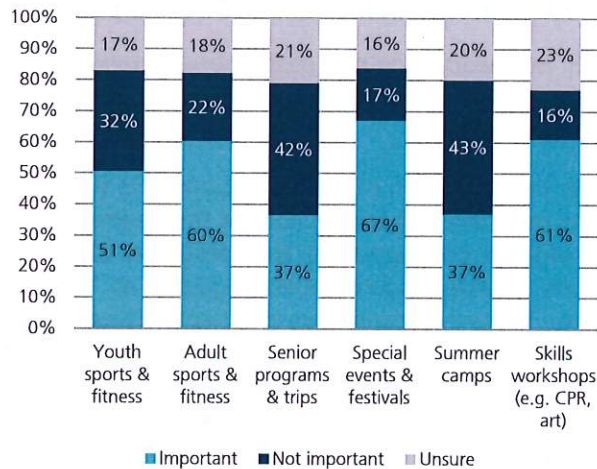
With the exception of survey respondents who are "unsure" about characteristics of the Township's recreational programming, the categories of variety, quality, and cost were regarded as "good" by the highest portion of respondents. Overall, the variety of recreational programs was regarded least favorably with a weighted average of 3.42. The quality and cost of programs had similar weighted scores (3.55 and 3.52, respectively), but the greatest portion of respondents (8.36%) indicated that the cost of recreational programs was "excellent," roughly 3% more than respondents who regarded the variety or quality of programs in the same way.



*Q14: How important are the following recreation programming options to you and your household?*

Over 60% of respondents expressed the importance of recreational programming that provides adult sports and fitness options, special events and festivals, and skills workshops to fulfill the needs and interests of all members of their household. On the other hand, roughly 42% of respondents shared that senior programs and trips as well as summer camps were not important for them or their household.

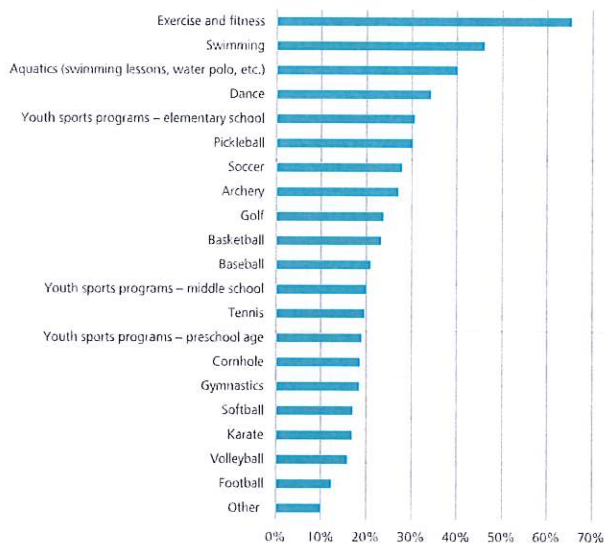




## Sports Programs

*Q15: Which of the following sports programs interests you or any member of your household?*

The figure below shows respondent preferences for sports programs of interest. Exercise and fitness classes in general received the greatest level of support with more than 65% of respondents expressing their interest in these programs. Swimming opportunities as well as aquatics programming received the second and third highest levels of support, with 46.0% and 40.1% of respondents sharing their interest in these programs. This supports themes present throughout the survey that indicate a need for both structured and unstructured water-based recreation.

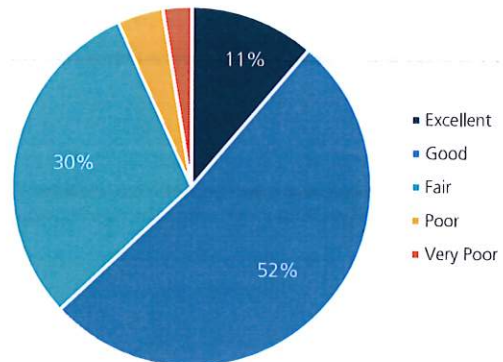


This question gave survey respondents the opportunity to further specify sports programming opportunities that they would like to participate in. Some programming interests specify the types of exercise and fitness classes that Township residents would like to see, while others suggest additional sport programs not identified in the survey. These interests are listed below:

- » Beginner level sports classes and teams for youth
- » Boxing/kickboxing
- » Co-ed adult sports leagues (e.g., soccer, softball)
- » Disc golf
- » High school/teen sports programs
- » Hiking
- » Jazzercise/Zumba classes
- » Martial arts
- » Racquetball
- » Running
- » Senior fitness classes
- » Skateboarding/rollerblading
- » Yoga/tai chi

*Q16: How would you rate the overall quality of Ypsilanti Township sports programs that you and members of your household have participated in?*

Perceptions of sports program quality in the Township are largely positive with 63% of respondents regarding them as “good” or “excellent” and just under 7% rating them as “poor” or “very poor.” It is worth noting that 47.6% of respondents selected “not applicable” for this question, indicating that they have not participated in sports programming and cannot speak to the quality.





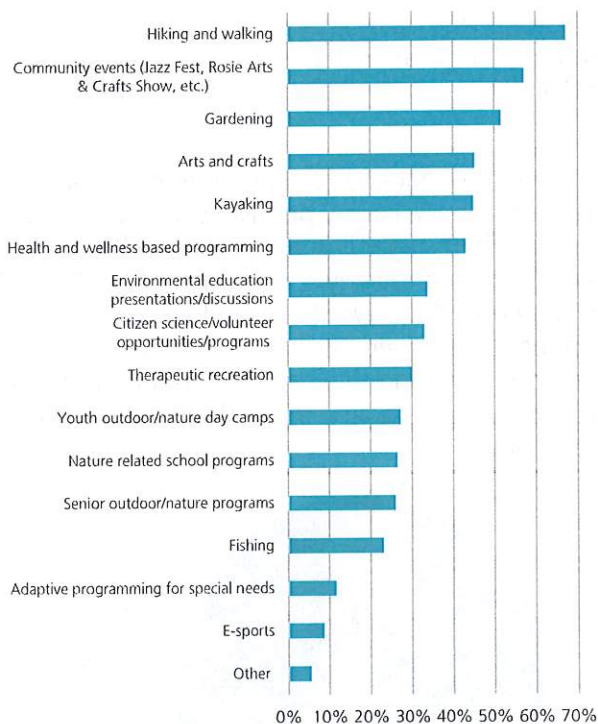
Respondents had the opportunity to further elaborate on their experiences with sports programs, and many used this space to share areas for improvement. These perceptions have been consolidated into themes and are described below:

- » **Community center with pool:** Some respondents shared that limited indoor facilities make existing programs hosted at the Community Center too far from them. The absence of an indoor community pool and water programs also contributes to limited use of existing recreational facilities.
- » **Cost prohibitive:** Limited participation for some respondents is attributed to the fact that sports program costs are not feasible for them or their families.
- » **Low participation:** Some experiences with sports programs are limited to the program's cancellation if there is not enough interest or participation.
- » **Positive team sport experiences:** Respondents expressed their appreciation for the opportunity for their children to participate in team sports, specifically soccer.
- » **Program organization and management:** Related to the cancellation of programs with low enrollment, programmatic organization as it relates to clear communication, staffing and capacity, overcrowding, and accommodating schedules was identified as an area of improvement to support positive experiences in Township programming.

## Other Engagement Programs

*Q17: Which of the following engagement programs interests you or any member of your household?*

Hiking and walking programs received support from over 67% of all survey takers, aligning with survey themes that reiterate the importance of outdoor trails and paths as a part of the Township's recreation system. Community events also received notable support from about 57% of respondents, indicating the success of existing Township programming like the summer Jazz Fest and Rosie Arts & Crafts Show and possibility pointing to an interest in additional events of the same nature.



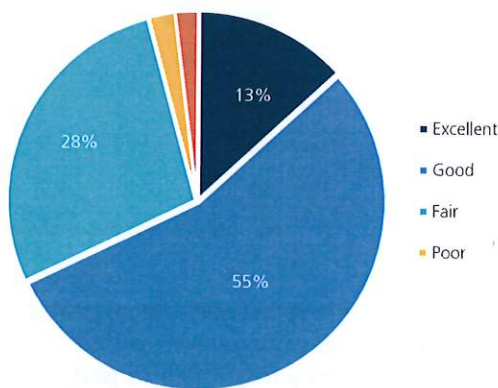
This question gave respondents the opportunity to identify additional engagement program opportunities that they might like to participate in. In addition to sharing hobbies of interest, specific nature-related programs, and other programs not identified in the survey, some respondents pointed out the value of community events but that they can be cost prohibitive because they are sales based. Program suggestions are listed below:

- » Beekeeping
- » Birding
- » Functional classes – technology, parenting, stress management, DIY, etc.
- » Homeschool programming/classes
- » Photography
- » Programs for teens
- » Sewing
- » Trips
- » Virtual offerings



*Q18: How would you rate the overall quality of Ypsilanti Township engagement programs that you and members of your household have participated in?*

Perceptions of engagement program quality in the Township are largely positive with about 68% of respondents regarding them as “good” or “excellent” and roughly 4% rating them as “poor” or “very poor.” It is worth noting that 43.2% of respondents selected “not applicable” for this question, indicating that they have not participated in recreational programming and cannot speak to the quality.

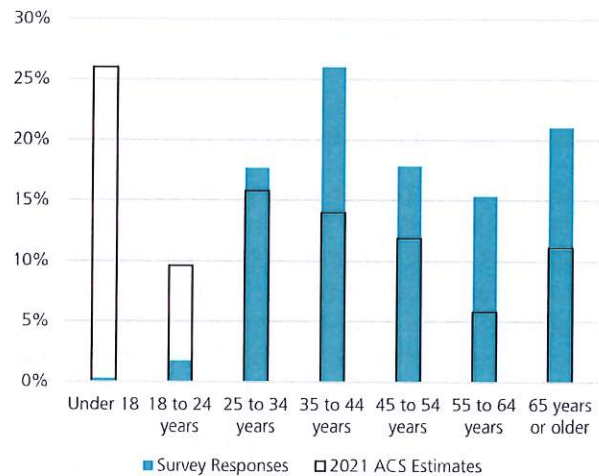


Respondents had the opportunity to further elaborate on their experiences with other recreation programs. These comments were overwhelmingly positive and expressed definitive interest in what the Township has to offer; however, many respondents also shared that they have not yet had the opportunity to participate or take full advantage of available programs and activities.

## Demographics

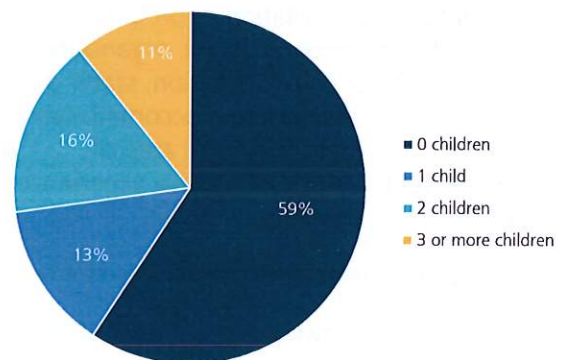
*What is your age?*

As is expected, the number of respondents under the age of 18 is vastly underrepresented in this community survey. However, the presence of survey takers between the ages of 35 and 54 years presents the likelihood that these respondents have children under the age of 18 and can share recreational insights on their children’s behalf. Ypsilanti Township population estimates from the 2021 American Community Survey are somewhat skewed because of the limited number of respondents under the age of 24, but generally match comparative proportions across age groups.



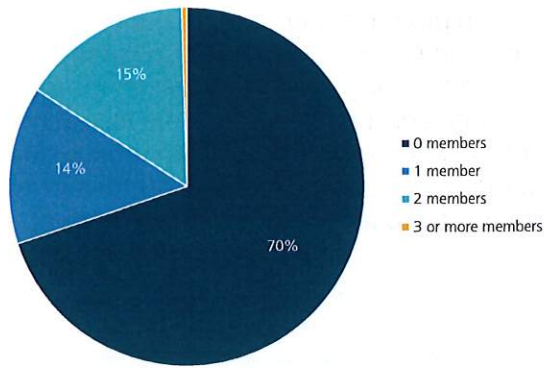
## Household Characteristics

About 40.8% of respondents have at least one child living in their household, providing these respondents with additional perspectives that account for their children’s needs as they relate to the Township’s parks and recreation system. It is important to note that a greater portion of survey respondents may have children, but their children may no longer live in their household.

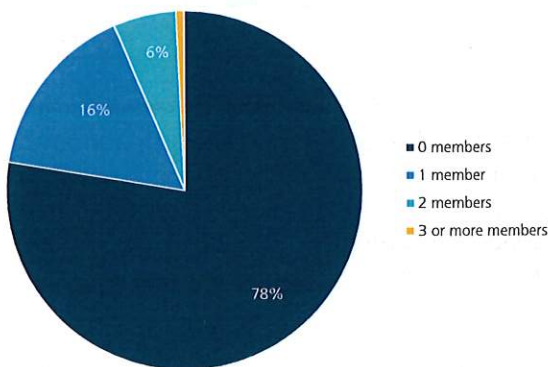


30.1% of households in the Township include at least one individual over the age of 65. 21% of survey respondents indicated that their age was 65 or older, meaning that there is a portion of seniors within the Township that live with non-seniors, such as family members, partners under the age of 65 years, or other caretakers.



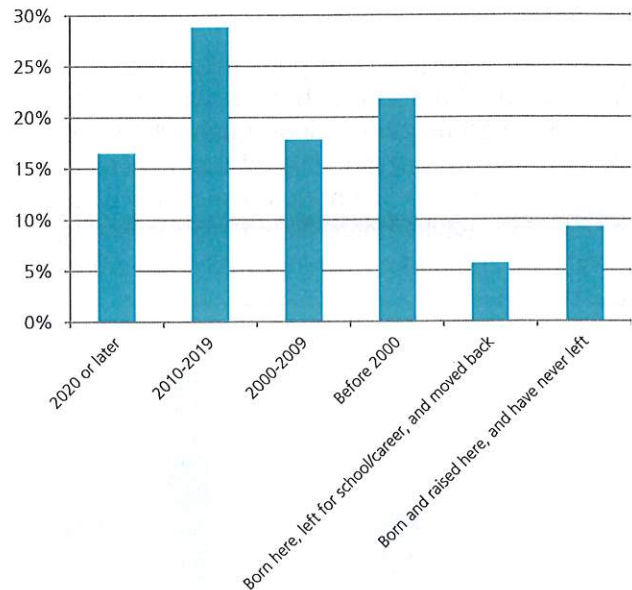


22.4% of survey respondents indicated that at least one individual with a disability lives in their household. The 2021 American Community Survey estimates that 14.1% of the Township's population has a disability. These respondents provide valuable insights to the ways in which the Township's parks and recreation facilities and programs can accommodate those with various abilities as well as the extent to which the current system enables their participation and enjoyment.



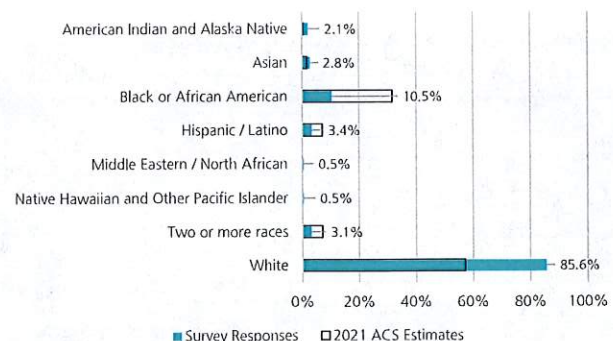
#### What year did you move to Ypsilanti Township?

Roughly 15% of survey respondents were born in Ypsilanti Township and either returned or never left. The greatest portion of respondents (28.9%) moved to the Township between 2010 and 2019, giving them four to 13 years of residence and experience with the system.



#### How do you identify your race?

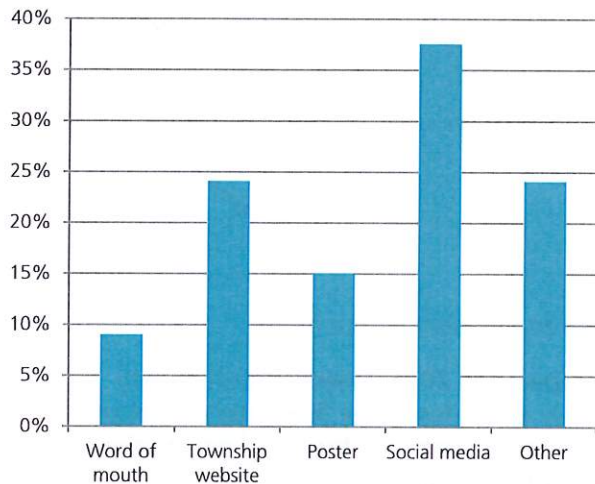
Compared to 2021 American Community Survey estimates of the Township's racial and ethnic demographics, the racial distribution of survey takers illustrates an overrepresentation of respondents who are white and an underrepresentation of respondents who are Black or African American, Hispanic/Latino, and/or two or more races. Though by smaller margins, the portion of respondents who are American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Middle Eastern/North African, and Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Island exceed estimates of the 2021 ACS.





### How did you hear about the survey?

The greatest portion of respondents (37.6%) learned about the survey through social media sites. The vast majority of individuals who selected "other" for this question shared that they received the survey through Township email lists and/or newsletters, while others shared specific events, meetings, and parks where they received word of the survey.



### Final Thoughts

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked to provide their own comments and suggestions related to the park and recreation planning process. The figure below illustrates the most common areas of feedback as they relate to improvements and suggestions that apply across Township parks and

recreation programming. Though not reflected in the following figure, numerous respondents used this space to express their appreciation for the Township's robust range of park and recreational offerings, describing them as an enormous strength of the Township and a significant contributor to their decision to remain in Ypsilanti Township.

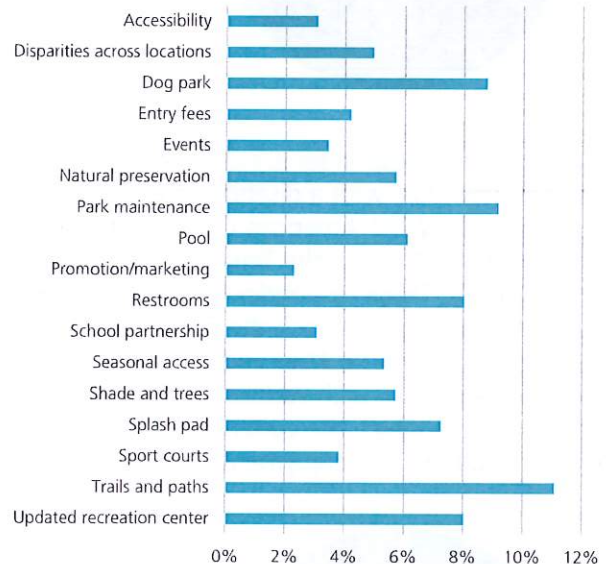


Table XX summarizes feedback provided for specific parks across the Township. It is worth noting that not all Township parks are mentioned by survey respondents and the parks that receive the most feedback are community parks because of their widespread use.



Fountain at Green Oaks Golf Course.

Image Credit: Randy Mascharka



Table XX: Community-Identified Park Improvements

Park	Comments & Suggestions
Big Island Park	Suggestions for improvement included the implementation of a "no fire sign" and the construction of a dock for boaters to picnic
Clubview Park	Respondents voiced their discontent with delayed improvements at the park. Suggestions to improve the park included the renovation of distressed tennis courts, tree replacement, implementation of a community garden and exercise equipment, and addressing prickly thistles in the mulch.
Ford Heritage Park	Many respondents praised Ford Heritage Park, both for its amenities and how recreation programs such as youth baseball were organized at the park. Suggestions for improvement included restroom construction, addressing the dangerous large rock at an otherwise excellent playground, addressing dangerous bricks, improving and maintaining trails, possibly adding basketball and/or tennis courts, caring for trees, and removing snow from trails in the winter
Ford Lake Park	Ford Lake Park received much praise from survey respondents for how it provides access to wildlife, its amenities, and the success of events like JazzFest. Suggestions for improvement included restroom construction, providing shaded areas, maintaining trails, and paving the gravel parking lot to increase accessibility.
Harris Park	Suggestions to improve Harris Park included maintaining its ball fields and overall landscape, cleaning up trash, and improving the safety of the play structures.
Hewen's Creek	Respondents praised Hewen's Creek for its place as a natural refuge in the Township. Suggestions to improve the visiting experience included restroom construction and/or general availability throughout the trail network, expanded parking, clarifying winter hours and park hours outside of the on-season, and clearly marking trails to improve safety.
Lakeside Park	Respondents expressed their enjoyment of Lakeside Park as well as a desire for the Township to consider expanding operations and opening the park's gates outside of the on-season (e.g., April through October).
Loonfeather Point Park	Respondents expressed their enjoyment of Loonfeather Point Park and their appreciation for recent improvements made to the park. Suggestions for improvement include creating a kayak and/or canoe access point and expanding operations to support year-round access.
Nancy Park	Suggestions to improve Nancy Park included adding more benches and areas of passive recreation, creating a paved, circular pathway around the park, and repairing the old baseball field.
North Bay Park	Respondents expressed their appreciation for North Bay Park's boardwalk and access to natural features. Suggestions to improve the park centered around maintaining the park's paths, improving the boardwalk to support safe biking and walking, and clearing litter and geese poop.
North Hydro Park	Suggestions to improve North Hydro Park included considering expanded operations and opening the gates from March to December, providing additional kayaking opportunities, addressing erosion, updating both wayfinding and educational signage, and replanting trees.
Rambling Road Park	Suggestions to improve Rambling Road Park include the implementation of a walking path around the park's perimeter, adding more equipment for visitors to use, removing the park's old basketball court, and prioritizing overall maintenance of the site.
CommUNITY Skate Park	Respondents expressed their appreciation for the skate park's addition and fulfilling a previously unmet recreational need. Suggestions for improvement included adding more lighting.
Watertower Park	Suggestions to improve Watertower Park included general maintenance, increased promotion to encourage greater use, and the possibility of utilizing some of the site as a community garden.
Wendell Holmes Park	Suggestions to improve Wendell Holmes Park include a sidewalk to safely access the park from the neighborhood and generally updating the park with new play equipment.
West Willow Park	Suggestions to improve West Willow Park include the addition of trash cans and generally updating the park's trail, playground, and parking lot.



## STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

On July 20th, 2023, two open discussions were held among invited community stakeholders to gather input about the present state and future hopes for parks, recreation, programming, and related projects within the Township. These group interviews were conducted in the morning and early evening at the Ypsilanti Township Civic Center. In the morning, seven community stakeholders were in attendance; in the evening, eight stakeholders attended. A third and final stakeholder interview was held in the early evening of August 23rd at the Township's Community Center where 6 stakeholders were in attendance. The following section summarizes their conversations about the current state of Township parks and how they believe investments should be prioritized among the 29 total facilities.

### Overview

Across all three stakeholder sessions, the sheer number of parks in the Township's park system, their distribution across the community, and their overall accessibility arose as prevalent themes. The variety of parks in the Township were praised as fulfilling a wide range of functions and interests for all residents and visitors. These characteristics contribute to the perception of the park system as an enormous strength of the Township and as something that contributes to the unique and enjoyable experience of living in the community. The quantity of parks in the system led to a recognition of the amount of work, attention, and capacity that is required for consistent and equitable maintenance across all of Ypsilanti Township. The Township's parks were further compared to other communities and described by some stakeholders as, at times, being disjointed or only used by residents of the neighborhood in which it is located. While this is largely expected, it is different from places that have fewer parks that serve as more central community gathering spaces for all residents and community members. For all of the benefits that the Township's parks provide to residents, stakeholders shared the view that recreational facilities, specifically the Community Center, are outdated in comparison.

## Strengths and Weaknesses of Park and Recreational Facilities

### Strengths

At each interview, stakeholders discussed the strengths of park and recreational facilities both generally across the system and at specific parks, acknowledging the differences in the focus of various facilities and naming these specializations as strengths in themselves. Common themes included successful and beautiful renovations that have recently taken place at some parks to update playground, social, and sporting facilities as well as the overall aesthetic appearance. These updates have created a sense of hope and excitement for upcoming maintenance projects that have been planned for more parks across the Township. The variety of neighborhood parks is also regarded as a strength as these parks provide accessible recreation and opportunities to take ownership and accountability over a space shared and used by neighborhood residents. Water features such as boardwalks, docks, boat launches, and kayaks were also regarded as strengths that capitalize Ford Lake's location within the Township. The stakeholders in attendance also acknowledged that the Community Center benefits the Township greatly by doing the best with the resources and investment that they have despite needing additional attention and funding to spread program opportunities out within the community.

### Weaknesses

Stakeholder discussions about the weaknesses of the park system fell into the following four categories:

- » **Missing facilities, spaces, and elements of design:** Many stakeholders highlighted features that have been commonly requested by Township residents for years but have yet to be implemented or constructed within the Township. These features include: water facilities (i.e., a public pool or splash pad); restrooms at all parks, especially those attended by young children and/or that host sporting events; a dog park; accessible design that is ADA compliant; and playgrounds that are sensory compliant to service visitors with ASD.



- » **Connectivity and pedestrian accessibility:** Though all attendees praised the number of parks and their general accessibility for all parts of the Township, safety concerns for pedestrian and biking access were a theme in each conversation. These concerns are especially prevalent for larger community parks that have the most amenities and that draw visitors from the greatest distances. Inconsistent accessibility has an impact on avid runners that rely on traffic calming techniques, sidewalks, and crosswalks for safe recreation. Attendees also discussed a missed opportunity for greater channels of connectivity directly between parks as well as neighborhoods and parks.
- » **Equitable investments:** The challenges of maintaining a system of 29 parks and recreational facilities were discussed again by stakeholders with a focus on discrepancies between neighborhood parks and opportunities to focus on their revitalization. Neighborhood parks also present the opportunity to hold a collaborative process in which residents guide the changes they would like to see and are able to initiate them.
- » **Partnership and utilization:** The discussion of challenges across the Township's park system also touched on opportunities to promote their expanded utilization. Some ideas focused on ways for members of the public to access the lake without their own boats or kayaks, such as through a rental company or by partnering with Eastern Michigan University to use their rowing team's facilities. Consistent Township park branding, educational and wayfinding signs, and partnership with local entities (like the B2B Trail) were also discussed as opportunities.

## Strengths and Weaknesses of Township Recreational Programming

### Strengths

Recreation programming in the Township was widely praised by the stakeholders at each meeting. The degree of participation and enrollment in a wide variety of activities is a testament to the success of this programming and the recreation guidebook that the Township distributes at various points throughout the year. Sports programming was specifically identified as an asset that provides well-organized and age-appropriate recreation outlets for affordable prices. Sports

teams and lessons also provide an opportunity for participants to explore recreational facilities across the Township, supporting accessibility through alternate locations rather than remaining at or near the Community Center only. The Township's Summer Jazz Series was also praised as a model for additional events that illustrates Ypsilanti Township's potential as an attractive destination that draws in visitors for events as well as other recreational activities.

### Weaknesses

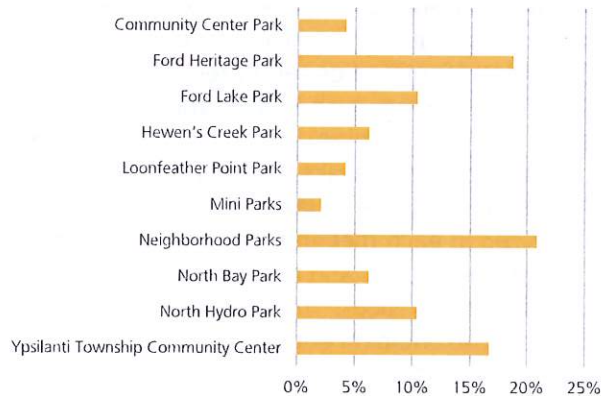
Three themes arose from stakeholder discussions about the challenges that face the Township's recreational programming. The first gap that stakeholders identified generally related to water-based programming, such as swimming and swim lessons, lifeguard training, and accessing Ford Lake with boats, canoes, kayaks, paddleboards, and more. The importance of learning to swim was emphasized in each meeting, pointing to a need for outlets (like pools) and related programming that facilitate this focus. The second challenge that many stakeholders encountered was a mismatch in program scheduling, especially for working adults. These individuals expressed an interest in participating in programs such as yoga, birdwatching, art classes and more, but stated that many times conflict with their work schedules during the week with fewer opportunities offered for adults on the weekends. Finally, the location of the Ypsilanti Township Community Center was identified as the largest constraint to children's participation in non-sporting recreational programming within the Township. Without a bus, many children cannot access the Community Center in northeast corner of the Township because of working parents and other scheduling conflicts that pose a challenge to transportation and getting to the primary location of recreation programs. Stakeholders suggested exploring other location options to host these programs as a way to increase participation and generally spread the word about what is regularly offered.

### Priority Parks

All stakeholders were asked to identify up to three parks or Township recreation spaces that they would prioritize for maintenance, improvements, and other renovation projects. While neighborhood parks and mini parks were grouped together as an overarching category, the greatest percentage

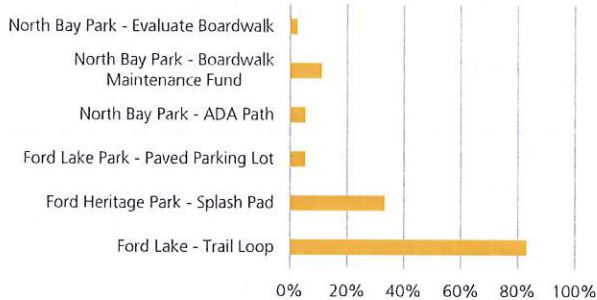


of stakeholders (20.8%) identified neighborhood parks in general as their highest priority for additional investments. 18.8% of stakeholders supported improvements to Ford Heritage Park, and 16.7% were in favor of investing in the Township's Community Center, reflecting the focus of their conversations about recreation programming. *Note: Though Green Oaks Golf Course, Harris Park, and Huron River Park were listed as option for stakeholder selection, none of these three parks were identified as priorities by the stakeholders in attendance and are therefore not included in the following figure.*



### Priority Projects

Stakeholders were asked to identify up to two maintenance or expansion projects that they would support from a list of seven total. Of the provided projects, five were identified during the Township's previous parks and recreation master planning process while the trail loop around Ford Lake and an added stormwater feature at Community Center Park are recently proposed projects that were not included in the last plan. The figure titled "Project Prioritization" shares the results from the prioritization process. *Note: Though adding a stormwater feature to Community Center Park was provided as a project option for stakeholders, it did not receive support from any attendees. Therefore, this project is not reflected in the following figure.*



The proposal to construct a trail loop around all of Ford Lake received the most stakeholder support by far with approximately 83% of all attendees favoring this project. This endeavor would present an opportunity for Township residents to access and enjoy the lake without a boat and on a year-round basis. Constructing a splash pad at Ford Heritage Park received support from about 33% of all attendees, reflecting previously articulated desires for more water features across the Township and a general focus on Ford Heritage Park additional investments.

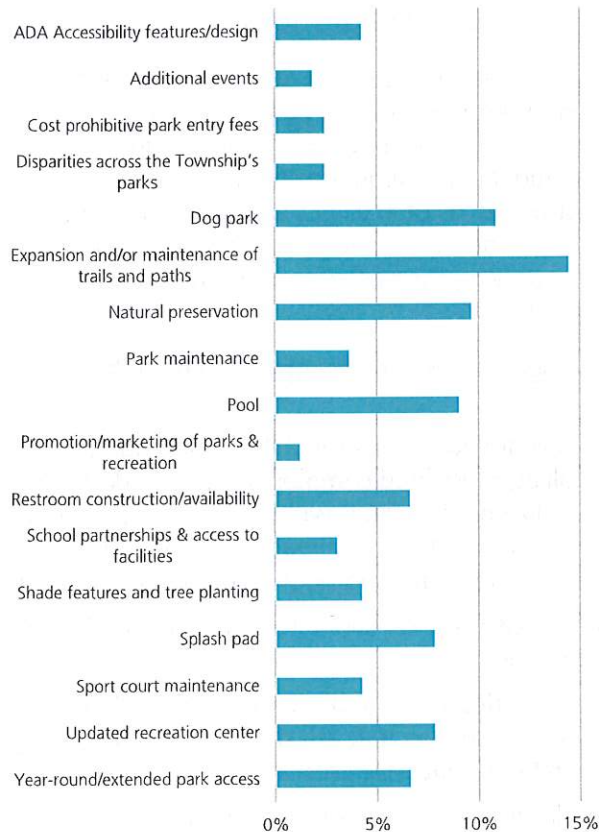
### OPEN HOUSES

Ypsilanti Township hosted two open houses for the public to provide input on parks and recreation spaces, programming, and future projects. The first open house was held on Wednesday, August 23rd at the Ypsilanti Township Community Center from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The second open house session was held on Saturday, August 26th at North Bay Park from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Attendees from the public were asked to share their ideas, concerns, and areas of high priority on three interactive boards at each session. Three additional poster boards were set up to share information about the parks and recreation planning process, the Township's parks and their locations, and initial insights that were provided through the community survey. Approximately 65 Township residents attended these opens houses to share their experiences in and suggestions for the Township's parks and recreation system.

### Survey Themes

On the first of three interactive boards, open house attendees were instructed to identify up to three general areas of focus needed across the Township's park system. These focus areas were compiled from community survey insights and reflect the most prevalent themes that respondents identified as needing additional investment. The results from the open house are provided in the following chart:

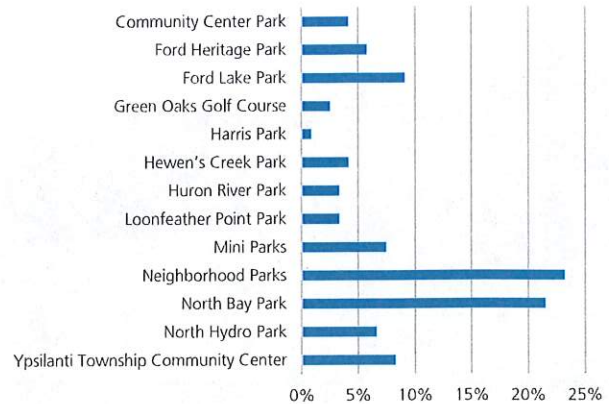




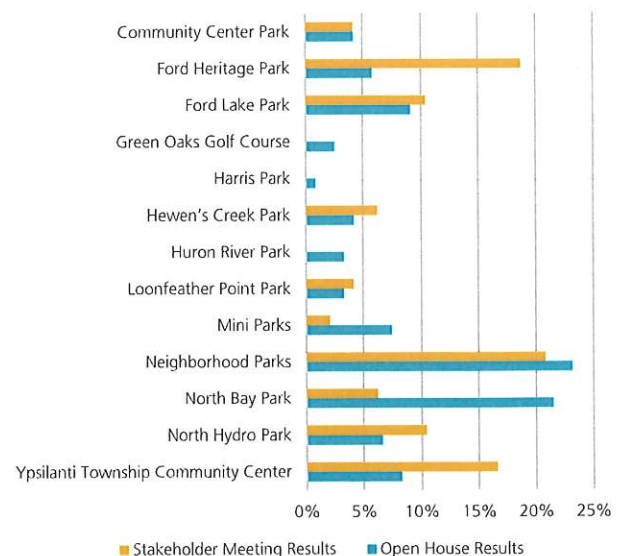
"Expanding and/or maintaining trails and paths" received the greatest portion of support from open house attendees, reflecting the importance of this element that was reiterated throughout the community survey. Implementing a dog park as the second most common prioritization area and reflects longtime efforts to create a dog park within the boundaries of the Township.

### Priority Parks

All open house attendees were asked to identify up to three parks or Township recreation spaces that they would prioritize for maintenance, improvements, and other renovation projects. While neighborhood parks and mini parks were grouped together as an overarching category, the greatest percentage of attendees identified neighborhood parks in general as their highest priorities for additional investment. North Bay Park received the second highest level of support for future maintenance projects.



The figure below compares each group's prioritization of park investments to guide potential improvement projects. Interestingly, both groups identify neighborhood parks as their highest priority which appropriately addresses reiterated concerns and observations related to inconsistent investment and maintenance in neighborhood parks across the Township. Both groups also generally agree about the degree of prioritization the Township should allocate to Ford Lake Park. The greatest discrepancies are observed in three parks where over 15% of one group was in favor of prioritizing the park in question while less than 10% of the other group supported the same prioritization. Ford Heritage Park and Ypsilanti Township Community Center received disproportionate support from attendees of the stakeholder meetings while North Bay Park received notable support from members of the public that attended the open houses.







*Youth soccer programming.*

Image Credit: Randy Mascharka

## Programming Suggestions

The final interactive board at the open houses asked attendees to share programming preferences that touch on which demographic groups recreational programming should be planned for, what the focus of activities and programs should be, and when these programs should be offered. The following themes arose from the provided suggestions:

- » Yoga classes with the option to hold them in a park.
- » Swimming lessons for children and adults of all ages. Related comments shared a desire to utilize pool facilities within public schools that Township residents already pay taxes to support (i.e., the swimming pool at Willow Run School).
- » Exercise classes, sports lessons, and adult sport leagues
- » Expanded times to accommodate working adults, seniors that are still working, and young children that have working parents.
- » Nature programming for children
- » Online court reservations for tennis and/or pickleball courts across the Township
- » Social-emotional learning for children and adults
- » Structured activities such as movie nights and events that allow children to meet and socialize in a positive, safe setting.





*Lakeview Park.*  
Image Credit: Randy Mascharka



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*CommUNITY Skate Park.*  
Image Credit: Randy Mascharka

# 05.

## Implementation



The value of parks and outdoor recreational spaces as essential community amenities has always been inherent to their existence and has been especially clarified in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. A renewed sense of importance in spaces that enable time spent being active, socializing, and playing outdoors has shifted the extent that communities promote these spaces as an asset to their residents by prioritizing safe access, equitable utilization, and constant upkeep of these spaces. Ypsilanti Township's robust landscape of 30 parks and recreational spaces has been a tangible draw for its residents since even before the pandemic, bolstering the uniqueness of the Township in its demonstrated commitment to providing valuable opportunities for outdoor recreation for all community members.

This chapter of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan compiles the findings of all previous sections into an implementation guide grounded by a broad vision, relevant goals, and a specific plan of action. Each component of this implementation framework is informed by community and stakeholder input as provided during various stages of the planning process, ultimately offering a way to prioritize and plan recreation projects in alignment with preferences from various parties in the Township. Additionally, "deficiencies" in community park amenities as determined by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) are outlined in this chapter to provide an understanding of how the Township can best serve its residents based on standards that assess population size, recreation budget, and total number of parks.

## NRPA STANDARDS

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) is a non-profit organization that supports resilient community development by championing parks and recreation systems, professionals, advocates, and planners. As the leading national partner in research, development, advocacy, and the financing of community parks and recreation systems, NRPA's analytical work and data collection efforts provide a variety of standards for the ways in which municipalities can assess the ways in which they are serving their residents based on their provision of parkland and recreational amenities. Setting standards for the number of amenities or amount of parkland that a community should strive to meet is complicated by a multitude of factors. It is important to note that while NRPA standards for the adequate "amount" of recreational spaces, park, and facilities are nuanced and informed by many factors, it is highly unlikely for all influential elements to be fully incorporated into these standards.

In this section, NRPA standards are specified and provided for Ypsilanti Township based on the size of its population, recreational budget, and number of parks that are maintained by the Township. Given the Township's 900 acres of parkland, 2020 population of 55,670, 29 jurisdictional parks, and recreational budget of between \$500,000 and \$1 million, the following standards are broadly recommended.

**Table XX: Acres of Parkland per 1,000 Residents by Population, Budget, Parks System Size**

	Population	Budget	Township Maintained Parks	Acres of Parkland
NRPA Grouping	50,000 to 99,999 people	\$500,000 to \$1 million	20 to 49 parks	--
Township Characteristics	55,670 people	--	29 parks	900 acres
Acres of parkland per 1,000 residents	11.2 - 17.3	10.9 - 15.5	12.4 - 20.3	16.2



**Table XX: Recommended and Existing Amenities by Population, Recreation Budget, and Size of Park System**

Amenity	Parks with Amenity	Total Amenity Count	Recommended Range	Deficit
Playgrounds	20	22	14.7 - 17.7	None
Basketball courts	3	4	6.3 - 10.7	3.3 - 7.7
Diamond ball fields	8	14	2.1 - 14	None
Tennis courts	4	16	9 - 14.3	None
Open play space	15	15	4.2 - 12.7	None
Dog park	0	0	1 - 5	1 - 5
Swimming pools (outdoor)	0	0	1.3 - 5.6	1.3 - 5.6
Soccer field	4	7	7.7 - 17.3	0.7 - 10.3
Volleyball courts	2	3	2.4 - 5.1	0 - 2.1
Tot lots	3	3	4.7 - 10.7	1.7 - 7.7
Skate park	1	1	0.9 - 5.4	0 - 4.4
Pickleball courts	3	7	4.3 - 7.9	None
18-hole golf course	1	1	0.8 - 0.9	None

The range of recommended acres of parkland per 1,000 residents are provided based on median and upper quartile estimates of existing trends for communities that have the same population measures, budget size, and number of municipal parks. The estimated number of acres per 1,000 Township residents (16.2 acres) aligns with each provided range, exceeding the standard set for communities with a parks and recreation budget between \$500,000 and \$1 million. Meeting these thresholds and falling towards the higher end of each estimate is particularly impressive given that the Township's characteristics fall to the lower end of each NRPA grouping.

### Amenities and Facilities

To estimate the number of recreational amenities that the Township should provide on the basis of population, budget, and park system size, data from NRPA Park Metrics were used to calculate a recommended range of recreational facilities.

The Township's recreational portfolio fulfills the recommended standards for playgrounds, diamond ball fields, open play spaces, and golf courses. The number of the Township's multiuse courts and skate parks also falls within the recommended range of provided amenities, though they do not exceed the high end of these estimates.

While seven of the 13 amenities do not meet NRPA recommendations, existing plans to restore deteriorating tennis and basketball courts and add pickleball courts across the Township will support the provision of amenities that meet appropriate standards. Additionally, the absence of a public, Township-operated pool or dog park has been a prevalent area of focus throughout each instance of community engagement. Attention on these areas presents the opportunity for the Township to shift its focus to plans that enable the provision of these amenities for community residents.



## VISION & GOALS

A revised vision and series of goals were developed to broadly guide future decision-making processes for parks and recreational facilities in Ypsilanti Township. The Township's vision for its parks and recreation was revised from the previous parks and recreation master plan with input from stakeholder meetings and steering committee discussions. Goals were synthesized from the prior plan, community engagement, the recreation vision for the Master Plan, and direction from the leadership team.

### Vision Statement

The Charter Township of Ypsilanti Parks and Recreation system supports the development of a safe, welcoming, and sustainable community by ensuring equitable access to a wide range of recreational opportunities for people of all ages, races, abilities, income levels, and interests and by protecting and conserving the integrity of our natural and historic resources.

### Goals

#### *Goal 1: Balanced Distribution of Facilities*

Provide a geographically balanced and accessible system of park and recreation facilities by planning park and recreational spaces in areas of the Township that are underserved in access to facilities.

#### *Goal 2: Maintenance and Equitable Investment*

Maintain and improve the Township's current parks and recreation system by strategically finding, acquiring, and distributing various sources of funding that equitably support parks and recreational spaces based on their need, the community's need, and the current state of the facility.

#### *Goal 3: Connectivity and Safe Access*

Enhance access to the current park and recreation system by recognizing non-motorized infrastructure as part of the Township's parks and recreation to improve connectivity and ensure safety between sites of recreation, Township neighborhoods, and other community facilities.

#### *Goal 4: Conservation*

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

#### *Goal 5: Partnership*

Initiate and strengthen partnerships with community entities located in the Township to provide the fullest extent of recreational opportunities for area residents, including but not limited to county facilities, City of Ypsilanti facilities, facilities of embedded school districts, private recreation spaces, and more.

#### *Goal 6: Increase Awareness and Engagement*

Increase community awareness of parks, facilities, and programs through cohesive branding efforts, targeted outreach and engagement, and multi-pronged communications initiatives.

## ACTION PLAN

The parks and recreation action plan details a series of projects to be considered and/or planned for by the Township throughout the next five years. Identifying these actions provides a guide for the Township's budgeting and grant application processes as it endeavors to complete each project.

Specific initiatives, improvements, and additions are offered for each of the Township's parks and recreation programs. These recommendations are provided as a culmination of observed needs and opportunities that were recorded during the park inventory process, insights from the community survey, and the results from each open house and stakeholder engagement. Additionally, existing plans for projects that have received fund allocations are provided to capture efforts that are underway and that can be expected to come to fruition in the near future.



## American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Fund Allocations

In July 2023, Ypsilanti Township authorized the use of allocated American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for a total of 16 projects, eight of which are based in the parks and recreation system. The American Rescue Plan was passed by President Joe Biden for the purpose of allocating COVID-19 recovery funds to jurisdictions across the nation. Ypsilanti Township received a total of \$9,439,025

in ARPA funding, \$3,481,000 of which will be allocated to its parks and recreation system. The table titled "ARPA Fund Allocations" details the location, project, and amount of funding that will be put towards park projects. Selected projects were identified during the previous parks and recreation master planning process.

Table XX: ARPA Fund Allocations

Location	Project	ARPA Fund Allocation
Park Maintenance		
West Willow Park	Upgrade play equipment, play surface, and shelter	\$350,000
Burns Park	Upgrade play surface	\$250,000
Ford Heritage Park	Replace play surface	\$165,000
Construction and Renovations		
Community Center	Bathroom renovations, galvanized piping replacement	\$737,000
Ford Heritage Park	Bathroom facilities	\$800,000
Green Oaks Golf Course		
Community Center Park	LED light installation at ball fields 3 and 4	\$354,000
Ford Lake Park	Park shelter replacements	\$600,000
Lakeside Park		
Programming		
50 and Beyond, Youth Programming	Two buses for program transportation	\$225,000



Ford Lake at Loonfeather Point Park.



## Mini Park Action Plan



Swings at Tot Lot Park.

The mini parks of Ypsilanti Township provide shared residential spaces for recreational uses. Though small in size, these parks provide a dedicated outdoor play space for young community members as well as an opportunity for the residents of a neighborhood to utilize common areas for their needs as they see fit. For this reason, there is a possibility to convert existing mini parks into spaces that facilitate some recreation alongside community-based activities like gardening, installing art, conversion to a shared gazebo or sitting area, or constructing rain gardens and/or green infrastructure. Fully realizing the greatest potential of these spaces requires coordination with residents of the neighborhoods in which each park is embedded and the following considerations:

### Collaborative Planning and Ownership

- » Encourage and incorporate residential input on plans and issues related to parks in residential settings.
- » Work with neighborhood groups to determine appropriate and useful designs, programs, and activities for each space.

### Reimagining these Spaces

- » Consider alternative uses for mini parks that align with residential suggestions. Uses might include updated or different playground equipment, community gardens, picnic areas, art displays, or a combination of multiple uses.

### Upgrade and Beautify Facilities

- » Remove outdated and/or unsafe equipment in each park.
- » Facilitate community beautification efforts to increase each park's usability, maintenance, and general investment.



Table XX: Mini Park Action Plan

Project	Timeframe
<b>Grove Road Overlook</b>	
Provide accessible route from Loonfeather Point Park in partnership with the B2B Trail.	Medium Term
Add bike stand and/or repair station.	Medium Term
Provide signage to mark site.	Short Term
<b>Pines Park</b>	
Remove and replace existing play structures that are deteriorating, outdated, and/or unsafe for play.	Short Term
Encourage community discussion among neighbors and neighborhood groups to identify and evaluate the feasibility of potential uses for the site.	Short Term
Organize beautification opportunities to engage residents in park ownership.	Medium Term
Implement community-identified design and uses.	Medium Term
<b>Tot Lot Park</b>	
Remove and replace existing play structures that are deteriorating, outdated, and/or unsafe for play.	Short Term
Encourage community discussion among neighbors and neighborhood groups to identify and evaluate the feasibility of potential uses for the site.	Short Term
Organize beautification opportunities to engage residents in park ownership.	Medium Term
Implement community-identified design and uses.	Medium Term
<b>Watertower Park</b>	
Remove existing play structures that are deteriorating, outdated, and/or unsafe for play.	Short Term
Encourage community discussion among neighbors and neighborhood groups to identify and evaluate the feasibility of potential uses for the site.	Short Term
Organize beautification opportunities to engage residents in park ownership.	Medium Term
Implement community-identified design and uses.	Medium Term



## Neighborhood Park Action Plan

Ypsilanti Township's network of neighborhood parks offer surrounding residents immediate access to recreational activities and spaces, playing a significant role in facilitating various interactions between neighbors and cultivating a new level of investment in their immediate community. While each neighborhood park has distinctive needs that require dedicated attention, planning, and funding, there are a few opportunities for improvement that are shared across all community parks. These shared opportunities are identified and detailed below:

### ADA Standards for Accessibility

- » Ensure that all facilities meet ADA standards for accessibility by providing accessible routes to playground equipment, sports facilities, picnic facilities, and other amenities.
- » Provide an adequate number of handicapped parking spaces with signage must be provided.

### Collaborative Planning and Ownership

- » Work closely with neighborhood groups to inform the design and programming of park facilities.

- » Encourage and incorporate residential input on plans and issues related to parks in residential settings.

### Outdoor Programming

- » Evaluate opportunities to utilize neighborhood parks for outdoor programming such as yoga, movie nights, nature education, and similar functions.

### Pursue Equitable Maintenance

- » Prioritize maintenance projects in neighborhood parks with visible deterioration of sports facilities and courts, play equipment, and existing trails.
- » Pursue strategies to encourage widespread usage of neighborhood parks by neighborhood residents through repairs and renovations, programming, community-led beautification efforts, and addressing safety concerns.

Table XX: Neighborhood Park Action Plan

Project	Timeframe
<b>Appleridge / Bud &amp; Blossom Parks</b>	
Ensure facilities meet ADA standards of accessibility by extending existing, compliant paved pathways to each of the park's amenities.	Short Term
Explore and encourage opportunities for sporting and/or social programming among neighborhood residents through coordination with Township sports leagues, the Township's Community Center, and neighbors.	Short Term
Consider the implementation of pathways through wooded area in partnership with local nature groups to strengthen connection between parks.	Medium Term
Consider Appleridge Park as a site for large community events and coordinate with residents and neighborhood groups to facilitate these uses.	Short Term
<b>Burns Park</b>	
Explore and encourage opportunities for sporting and/or social programming among neighborhood residents through coordination with Township sports leagues, the Township's Community Center, and neighbors.	Short Term
Consider an online reservation system for renovated pickleball and tennis courts to avoid congestion among local and visiting users.	Medium Term



Table XX: Neighborhood Park Action Plan (Continued)

Project	Timeframe
<b>Clubview Park</b>	
Ensure facilities meet ADA standards of accessibility by paving walking trail and providing paved access to play structures and picnic area.	Medium Term
Consider the park for large community social and sporting events through coordination with Township sports leagues, neighbors, and neighborhood groups.	Short Term
Replant trees that have storm damage.	Medium Term
Facilitate discussions among residents of surrounding neighborhood to identify feasibility and preferences of additional uses, such as a community garden or exercise equipment.	Short Term
Incorporate pickleball infrastructure with repaving of tennis courts.	Ongoing
Evaluate opportunities to incorporate stormwater management features into park and related partnerships with nature groups.	Long Term
<b>Fairway Hills Park</b>	
Ensure facilities meet ADA standards of accessibility by repaving walking trail to repair signs of wear.	Medium Term
Widen trail to facilitate greater use and accommodate wheelchair needs.	Medium Term
Evaluate opportunities to convert park into a natural area with stormwater features and additional tree plantings.	Long Term
Consider the park for community events through coordination with surrounding residents.	Short Term
<b>Lakeside Park</b>	
Ensure facilities meet ADA standards of accessibility by extending paved trails to the east side's play structure and picnic shelter, paving the parking lots on both sides, and ensuring handicapped parking spaces are provided and marked.	Medium Term
Pursue use of boating facilities, including canoes and kayaks, on the westside through a partnership with Eastern Michigan University.	Medium Term
<b>Lakeview Park</b>	
Ensure facilities meet ADA standards of accessibility by repaving walking trail to repair signs of wear.	Medium Term
Restore quality of the ball diamond by removing vegetation.	Medium Term
Explore and encourage opportunities to for sporting and/or social programming among neighborhood residents through coordination with Township sports leagues and relevant neighborhood groups.	Short Term
<b>Nancy Park</b>	
Ensure facilities meet ADA standards of accessibility by extending existing paved sidewalks to each play structure, adjusting play structures to promote accessible use, and renovating portions of the sidewalk with a slope greater than 5%.	Medium Term
Add benches, picnic tables, and a circular pathway around the park to encourage usage and time spent in the park.	Long Term
Tamp down loose wood chips on each playground to promote access to play equipment.	Medium Term



Table XX: Neighborhood Park Action Plan (Continued)

Project	Timeframe
<b>Rambling Road Park</b>	
Ensure facilities meet ADA standards of accessibility by providing paved access to each play structure and tamping down wood chips in the play area.	Medium Term
Explore and encourage opportunities for sporting and/or social programming among neighborhood residents through coordination with Township sports leagues and relevant neighborhood groups.	Short Term
Improve the condition of the basketball court by resurfacing the court and replacing hoops.	Medium Term
Add a walking path around the perimeter of the park.	Medium Term
Streamline access to the park by removing the entrance on Rambling Road OR making both entrances more clearly.	Short Term
<b>Sugarbrook Park</b>	
Ensure facilities meet ADA standards of accessibility by paving surfaces and trails from the parking lot to each play structure.	Medium Term
Improve the condition of the basketball court by resurfacing the court and replacing hoops.	Medium Term
Explore and encourage opportunities for sporting and/or social programming among neighborhood residents through coordination with Township sports leagues and relevant neighborhood groups.	Short Term
<b>Wendell Holmes Park</b>	
Ensure facilities meet ADA standards of accessibility by creating paved trails that provide connections from entrance to spectator stands.	Medium Term
Restore quality of the ball diamond by removing vegetation.	Short Term
Refurbish spectator stands to encourage their use during ball games or practices.	Short Term
Construct a sidewalk from nearby neighborhoods to support safe access to the park through coordination with MDOT.	Medium Term
Explore and encourage opportunities for sporting and/or social programming among neighborhood residents through coordination with Township sports leagues and relevant neighborhood groups.	Short Term
<b>West Willow Park</b>	
Restore quality of the ball diamond and open space to promote sports-use, community events, and other recreational activities.	Medium Term
Add trash cans to the park	Medium Term



## Community Park Action Plan

Ypsilanti Township's community parks provide unique opportunities for recreation across the municipality. While each community park has distinctive needs that require dedicated attention, planning, and funding, there are a few opportunities for improvement that are shared across all community parks. These shared opportunities are identified and detailed below:

### ADA Standards for Accessibility

- » Ensure that all facilities meet ADA standards for accessibility by providing accessible routes to playground equipment, sports facilities, picnic facilities, and other amenities.
- » Provide an adequate number of handicapped parking spaces with signage must be provided.

### Bathroom Facilities

- » Evaluate the possibility of constructing permanent bathroom facilities.
- » Where permanent facilities are feasible, proceed with plans and fund allocations to enable their construction.

- » Where permanent facilities are not feasible, provide portable toilets on a seasonal basis.

### Dog Park

- » Evaluate open land at each community park for its potential conversion into a dog park.

### Expanded Seasonal Access

- » Develop winter maintenance and staffing schedules to allow parks to stay open throughout the year.

### Outdoor Programming

- » Evaluate opportunities to utilize community parks across the Township for outdoor programming such as yoga, movie nights, nature education, and similar functions.

### Splash Pad

- » Evaluate each community park for the feasibility of constructing and programming a splash pad.

Table XX: Community Park Action Plan

Project	Timeframe
<b>Community Center Park</b>	
Ensure facilities meet ADA standards of accessibility by providing appropriate and marked handicapped parking spaces, paving parking lot and sidewalks from parking lot to all park amenities, and upgrading dugouts for accessible entrance and seating.	Medium Term
Renovate tennis courts and add pickleball courts.	Ongoing
Advertise tennis and pickleball court renovations through Township communications.	Short Term
Implement signage throughout park to assist with visitor wayfinding.	Medium Term
<b>Ford Heritage Park</b>	
Ensure facilities meet ADA standards of accessibility by extending existing paved pathway to soccer fields.	Medium Term
Maintain and expand the park's trail system, including snow removal in the winter.	Medium Term
Install shade sails, plant trees, or provide other forms of overhead coverage to provide protection from the sun.	Short Term



Table XX: Community Park Action Plan (Continued)

Project	Timeframe
<b>Ford Lake Park</b>	
Ensure facilities meet ADA standards of accessibility by paving the parking lot and extending existing paved pathways to all park amenities, including sports fields, bathrooms, and the boat ramp.	Medium Term
Add informational and wayfinding signage to support visitor orientation.	Short Term
Maintain and expand the park's trail system.	Short Term
Evaluate the feasibility of offering a seasonal pass to access the park throughout the on-season.	Short Term
Evaluate the feasibility of a canoe/ kayak/boat rental service and identify appropriate partners to support implementation.	Medium Term
Encourage community events (like the Jazz Series) on a year-round basis.	Medium Term
Evaluate the feasibility of constructing an event space, pavilion, and/or stage for performances, rentals, and other events.	Long Term
<b>Harris Park</b>	
Ensure facilities meet ADA standards of accessibility by paving the parking area and connective trails across the park	Medium Term
Update and maintain the park's spectator elements (the dugouts, benches, and spectator stands) to ensure user safety.	Short Term
Maintain the park's play structures to ensure safety, including the removal of existing structures that are unsafe.	Short Term
Keep park restrooms unlocked to allow access at all times.	Short Term
Upgrade concessions building, bathroom, and picnic shelter.	Long Term
<b>Loonfeather Point Park</b>	
Further promote the park's accessibility by replacing the mulch surfaces of each play area with a rubber surface.	Medium Term
Evaluate the feasibility of creating a kayak and/or canoe access point on renovated dock.	Long Term
<b>North Bay Park</b>	
Ensure facilities meet ADA standards of accessibility by repairing existing paved sidewalks and reconfiguring path from playground to lakeside.	Medium Term
Maintain, repair, and/or replace exercise stations along the park's trail as needed.	Medium Term
Create maintenance fund for the park's boardwalk to support the replacement of existing boards with Trex or similar material.	Short Term
<b>North Hydro Park</b>	
Ensure facilities meet ADA standards of accessibility by paving the parking lot and entrance to the park.	Medium Term
Explore opportunities to facilitate active recreation at the park's all-purpose field by evaluating the feasibility or appropriateness of incorporating a play structure.	Medium Term
Replant trees that are dying or that have encountered storm damage.	Short Term
Explore opportunities for programming or hosting events at the park's all-purpose field through partnerships with Township community groups.	Short Term



## Natural Resource Area Action Plan

Table XX: Natural Resource Area Action Plan

Project	Timeframe
<b>Big Island Park</b>	
Evaluate opportunities to provide a boat tour to the island and across Ford Lake.	Short Term
Construct a boat dock and formal launch point.	Long Term
Add signage on the island to alert visitors of acceptable uses and behaviors to avoid trash, litter, fire-making, and other instances of misuse.	Short Term
Implement natural area restoration program with support from UM, EMU, the Huron River Watershed Council, and other relevant local conservancy groups.	Medium Term
<b>Hewen's Creek Park</b>	
Ensure facilities meet ADA standards of accessibility by providing and marking handicapped parking spaces, paving the parking lot, and upgrading a portion of walking trails to crushed limestone or EWF surface.	Long Term
Add wayfinding signage to orient and direct visitors around the park and its trails.	Short Term
Clarify and communicate park hours and access outside of the on-season.	Short Term
Establish and implement a mile/trail marker system.	Medium Term
Provide educational materials or signage to share information about the park's natural features.	Medium Term
<b>South Hydro Park</b>	
Ensure facilities meet ADA standards of accessibility by providing and marking handicapped parking spots.	Long Term
Establish a clearly marked entrance from Textile Road.	Short Term
Restore parking lot from Textile Road by repaving the lot.	Medium Term
Restore walking trail to water bend by repaving concrete and repairing deteriorated areas.	Medium Term
Add wayfinding signage to orient and direct visitors around the entire park.	Short Term
Evaluate options to facilitate recreational activities, such as kayaking or canoeing, fishing, picnicking, and more.	Medium Term



## Special Use Park Action Plan

Table XX: Special Use Park Action Plan

Project	Timeframe
<b>Huron River Park</b>	
Ensure facilities meet ADA standards of accessibility by establishing paved trails throughout park.	Medium Term
Add small road pull-off for parking.	Long Term
Add crosswalk from the Civic Center for safe pedestrian access across South Huron River Drive.	Medium Term
Provide educational and advisory signage to alert visitors of the presence of bee's and to provide relevant information.	Short Term
<b>Ypsilanti Township CommUNITY Skate Park</b>	
Implement shade structures and/or shaded areas.	Short Term
Add overhead lighting structures for safe night use.	Medium Term
Construct a parking lot for skatepark users.	Long Term

## Community Center and Recreation Action Plan

Table XX: Community Center and Recreation Action Plan

Project	Timeframe
<b>Ypsilanti Township Community Center</b>	
Pursue physical maintenance of the Community Center.	Short Term
<b>Recreational Programming Recommendations</b>	
Evaluate areas of the Township for a second recreation center and pursue funds for its construction as well as partnership with relevant tenants (like the YMCA).	Medium Term
Locate Township recreation programs in spaces and parks across the Township, including, but not limited to, the Township library, the Civic Center, community parks, and/or neighborhood parks.	Short Term
Pursue partnerships with school districts in the Township to define and establish access to existing pool facilities.	Short Term
Provide swimming lessons, lifeguarding lessons, and various water-based activities upon gaining access to pool facilities.	Medium Term
Engage Township residents between the ages of 20 and 50 to identify and provide programs and activities of interest.	Short Term
Provide recreational activities during times that accommodate working adult schedules for both adults and children of working adults.	Short Term



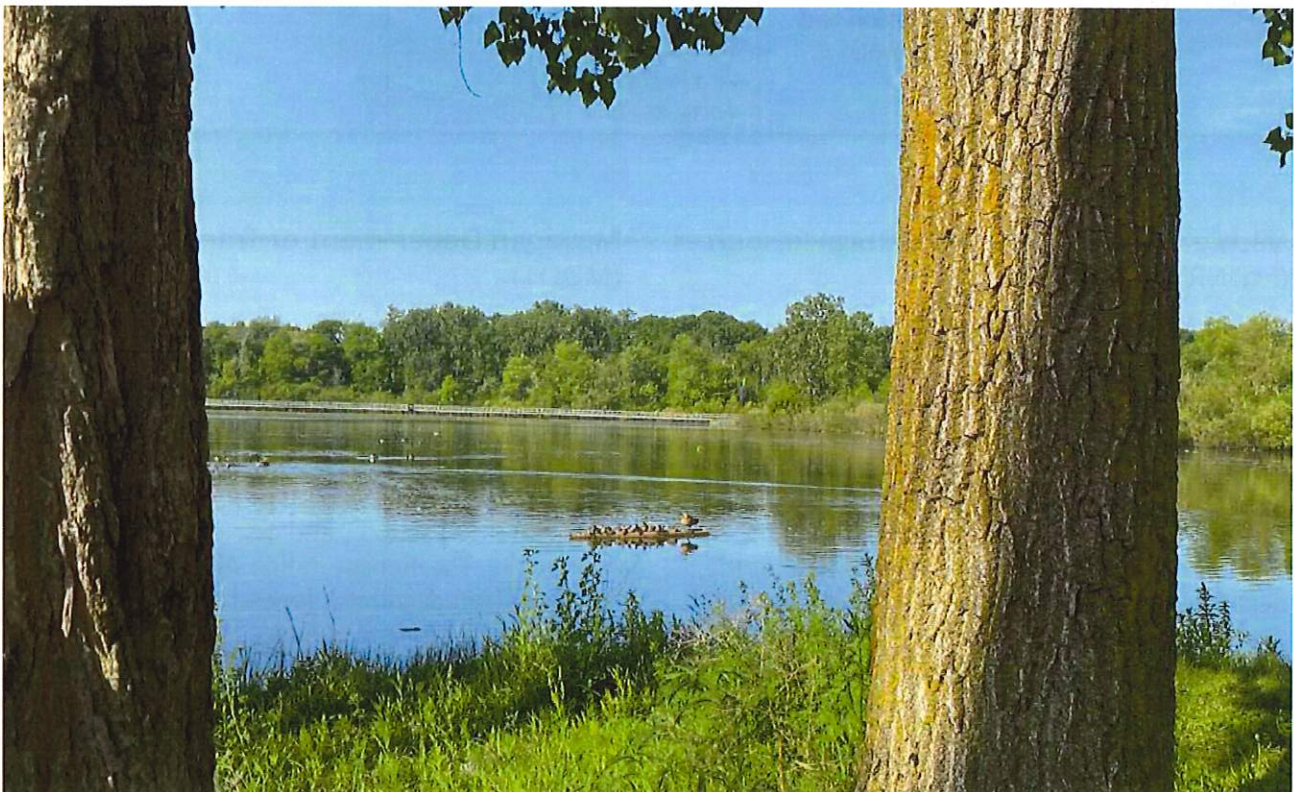
## POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

Numerous funding opportunities exist to resource the projects and improvements that have been identified for each of the Township's parks and recreation offerings. Further, fulfilling each action item proposed in this parks and recreation plan will require an amalgamation of support from various sources. While not fully exhaustive, this master plan concludes with a compilation of possible funding sources that have the potential to cover expenses associated with large capital endeavors, maintenance needs, and coordination and facilitation among the Township and its residents.

### Township Recreation Funds

Ypsilanti Township's budget revenues and allocations as they relate to all aspects of the Township parks and recreation system are detailed in this plan's "Administrative Structure" chapter. As these sources of funding continue to support park improvements and recreational endeavors, the Township can allocate the Recreation Fund and Bike, Sidewalk, Recreation, and Roads Fund (BSRII) to the following areas identified in the action plan:

- » **Recreation Fund:** The recreation fund supports staff salaries and pensions, therefore enabling staff-headed provision of coordinated efforts, facilitated engagements, and avenues of public input to inform decision-making related to park usage and community desires. Additionally, coordination related to recreational offerings and more appropriate provisions of activities and times for a range of age groups will be headed by staff efforts and enabled by recreation fund-supported salaries.
- » **Bike, Sidewalk, Recreation, and Roads Fund:** As operations and repairs at Ford Lake Park are funded by BSRII, projects that take place in the park over the next five years are likely to be supported by continued allocations of this fund. BSRII also allocates financial resources to services, repairs, and maintenance projects which constitute the basis of need in many of the Township's parks. Finally, BSRII's support of highway, street, sidewalk, and bridge maintenance and repairs holds the possibility to increase Township connectivity between residential areas and parks and to promote safe pedestrian infrastructure such that street and sidewalk networks become an extension of the parks and recreation system.



View of Ford Lake at North Bay Park.



Table XX: MDNR Recreation Grant Programs

Grant	Purpose	Funding Sources	Annual Funding	Minimum/Maximum Request	Match Required?
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)	To support the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities.	Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund	\$5 million (statewide)	Development: \$30,000 to \$500,000 Acquisition: no min/max limits	Yes – all (100%) federal funds must be matched
Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF)	To support the acquisition of public land and development of public recreation facilities for natural resource protection and outdoor recreation.	Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund	\$15-\$20 million (statewide)	Development: \$15,000 to \$300,000 Acquisition: no min/max	Yes – at least 25% of allocated funds must be matched
Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLPP)	To fund the development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities in urban areas that are economically-disadvantaged and underserved by parks and recreational resources.	Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund	\$100 million (nationwide)	\$300,000 to \$10 million	Yes – 100% of allocated funds must be matched with non-federal grants
Recreation Passport Grant Program	To fund the development of public recreation facilities, including new facility construction and old facility renovations.	Recreation Passport revenues deposited in the Local Parks and Recreation Facilities Fund.	\$2 million (statewide)	\$7,500 to \$150,000	Yes – at least 25% of the project's total cost must be funded by the applicant

### Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Grant Programs

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources administers a number of grants to support recreation, environmental stewardship, health, and safety in communities across the state. While the plethora of MDNR grant opportunities are relevant for various groups and uses across Ypsilanti Township, the table titled “MDNR Recreation Grant Programs” provides information about the department’s recreation grant programs that can provide direct support to proposed projects and improvements within the Township’s parks and recreation system.

### Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)

MDOT provides funding for several grant and loan programs to support road agencies across the state. Among these fundings programs are Michigan’s Safe Routes to School program and the Transportation Alternatives Program, both of which support walkability and multimodal connectivity to safely access services and assets across a community. The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) distributes federal transportation funds to activities that enhance the intermodal transportation system of a community and safe alternative transportation options. TAP prioritizes pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure which has



been consistently requested by residents of the Township. Seeking these funds to bolster the access of pedestrians and bicyclists will effectively promote connections between residential, recreational, and everyday areas of the Township and, subsequently, promote greater usage of parks and recreational spaces.<sup>1</sup>

### Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development distributes CDBG funding annually to states, cities, and counties. The program is intended to empower communities and their residents to design and implement projects that directly align with their self-identified priorities.<sup>2</sup> As CDBG funds are distributed to state and local governments on an annual basis, applying for these funds takes place by preparing a project for the application process.<sup>3</sup> As Ypsilanti Township has historically received CDBG funding for park improvement projects (such as ensuring ADA compliance in Appleridge Park), additional park projects may apply and be supported by this source as well.

### Philanthropic Support

Outside of dedicated park funding and support provided by the State of Michigan, state and national philanthropic foundations also provide grant opportunities for parks and recreation-based projects. The following are possible sources of philanthropic grant funding specifically available for projects in Michigan as well as opportunities at a national scale.

#### *Michigan – Parks and Recreation Philanthropic Support*

- » **mParks Foundation:** The mParks Foundation provides financial support to members of the mPark system that submit proposals for recreation projects and associated equipment needs. Each year, a total of \$20,000 is made available for all projects that are granted funding from the foundation.<sup>4</sup>

#### *Nationwide – Parks and Recreation Philanthropic Support*

- » **National Recreation and Park Association:** The NRPA sponsors a variety of funding opportunities in partnership with organizations and agencies across the country. Examples include: "Supporting Healthy Aging through Parks and Recreation 3.0" grant with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention; "Reconnecting Neighborhoods" through multimodal and safe transportation connectivity with the Department of Transportation; the "Make a SPLASH! Grant Program" with Life Floor to fund splash pads, and many more.<sup>5</sup>
- » **National Park Foundation:** As the official nonprofit partner of the National Park Service, the National Park Foundation seeks to generate private support and cultivate strategic partnerships to ensure the prosperity of the county's national parks for present and future enjoyment. The "Strong Parks, Strong Communities" program leverages partnerships between the National Park Foundation, National Park Service, and Friends Alliance to coordinate the support of local philanthropic organizations on behalf of park systems across the nation.

### Sources

- 1 "Michigan Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP): 2022 Accomplishments." MDOT, 2022. <https://www.michigan.gov/mdot/-/media/Project/Websites/MDOT/Programs/Grant-Programs/TAP/2022-TAP-Accomplishments.pdf?rev=a0e09a3d81c842b6be11010b9860c53b&hash=BFC0E1073DBF75E9A3F2961A772C4386>
- 2 "Community Development Block Grant Program." U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2022. [https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/comm\\_planning/cdbg](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/cdbg)
- 3 "CDBG Guidelines and Applications." MiPlace. <https://www.miplace.org/programs/community-development-block-grant/cdbg-process-guidelines--applications/>
- 4 "Access for All – Play is Essential for All." mParks Foundation, 2023. <https://www.mparksfoundation.org/access-for-all.html>
- 5 "Grant and Fundraising Resources." National Recreation and Park Association, 2023. <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/grant-fundraising-resources/>



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# Appendix

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- A. Resolution of Adoption
- B. Parks Commission Meeting Minutes
- C. Township Board Meeting Minutes
- D. Public Hearing Notice
- E. 30-Day Public Review Notice
- F. Survey Flyer
- G. Post Completion Forms
- H. Letters of Transmittal
- I. MDNR Checklist



















