CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF VAN BUREN
PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA
Wednesday, September 14, 2016 – 7:30 PM
Board of Trustees Room

CALL TO ORDER:

ROLL CALL:

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

MINUTES:

ITEM #1: Approval of minutes from the regular meeting of August 24, 2016.

CORRESPONDENCE:

PUBLIC HEARING:

ITEM #1: **16-027 – SPECIAL LAND USE APPROVAL**

TITLE: **THE APPLICANT, CLAUDIA PEREZ, IS REQUESTING A SPECIAL USE PERMIT TO OPERATE A GROUP DAY CARE HOME FOR SEVEN (7) TO TWELVE (12) CHILDREN AT 6191 RAWSONVILLE ROAD, VAN BUREN TOWNSHIP, MI 48111.**

LOCATION: Parcel number V-125-83-118-99-0030-000 (6191 Rawsonville Road.) The site is approximately 1.0 acre. It is located in the R1-A, Single Family Residential district. This site is located on the east side of Rawsonville Road between West Huron River and Bog Road.

A. Presentation by the applicant.
B. Presentation by the Township Staff and Consultants.
C. Public Comment
D. Planning Commission discussion.

ITEM #2: **PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN**

TITLE: **THE VAN BUREN TOWNSHIP PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT IS REQUESTING A RECOMMENDATION FOR THE 2016 – 2020 PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN TO THE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES.**

INFORMATION: The 2016-2020 Parks and Recreation Master Plan is presented for the Planning Commissions review and recommendation to the Township Board of Trustees. The Plan was last adopted by the Board of Trustees in 2011 and must be adopted every 5 years for Van Buren Township to be eligible for state and federal recreation grants.

A. Planning Commission Opens Public Hearing
B. Presentation of draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2016-2020 by McKenna Associates
C. Public Comment
D. Planning Commission discussion

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

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A. Presentation by the applicant.
B. Presentation by the Township Staff and Consultants.
C. Public Comment
D. Planning Commission considers action.

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A. Presentation by the Township Staff and Consultants.
B. Public Comment
C. Planning Commission discussion.
D. Planning Commission considers action.

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

ADJOURNMENT

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF VAN BUREN
PLANNING COMMISSION
AUGUST 24, 2016
MINUTES - DRAFT

Vice-Chairperson Boynton called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

ROLL CALL:
Present: Jackson, Franzoi, Budd, Atchinson and Boynton.
Excused: Kelley and Thompson.
Staff: Director Akers and Secretary Harman.
Planning Representatives: None.
Audience: One (1).

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:
Motion Franzoi, Budd second to approve the agenda of August 24, 2016 as presented.
Motion Carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
Motion Atchinson, Franzoi second to approve the regular meeting minutes from August 10, 2016 as presented. Motion Carried.

PUBLIC HEARING: None.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

ITEM # 1 **16-033 – Country Walk Architectural**

TITLE: **THE APPLICANT, GILBERT HOMES IS REQUESTING AN AMENDMENT APPROVAL TO THE COUNTRY WALK SITE PLAN FOR REVISED SINGLE FAMILY ARCHITECTURAL ELEVATIONS.**

LOCATION: **THE PARTIALLY FINISHED COUNTRY WALK SUBDIVISION IS THE SUBJECT OF THE REQUEST. THE DEVELOPENT IS LOCATED ON THE EAST SIDE OF MARTINSVILLE ROAD AND NORTH SIDE OF SAVAGE ROAD.**

Director Akers gave the presentation for the applicant whom was unable to attend. The applicant, Gilbert Homes, is in the process of acquiring ten (10) homes in the Country Walk subdivision and is requesting architectural approval for an additional home plan and façade elevation for residential dwellings.

Director Akers presented his staff review letter dated 8-20-16 recommending the applicant address the underlined comments in the letter and resubmit plans for approval in order to move forward with the construction of the proposed model in the development.

Commissioners discussed exterior façade brick requirements, the fireplace to be a complete chimney vs. cutoff, sump pump venting, applicant to have more than one floor plan, side-entry garage requirements, set back requirements and the homeowners' association involvement.

Motion Budd, Franzoi second not to take action on the architectural approval for this project at Country Walk until such time we have the additional floor plans from the developer and conditions referred to in Director Akers' staff review letter dated 8-20-16. Motion Carried. (Letter Attached)

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

ITEM #1: Citizen Planner Course – Washtenaw County

Director Akers presented the Commission members with an informational flyer on the upcoming Citizen Planner Course put on by MSU Extension Service in Washtenaw County. The course is a training program for BZA and Planning Commission members. Director Akers offered members the opportunity to attend; online courses are available as well. Commissioner Boynton also informed the Commissioners of the upcoming Annual MAP Conference dates, October 26-28, 2016.

Director Akers presented a letter from a resident requesting a change to the zoning ordinance, which would allow construction of a 12' x 12' shed on the property. Currently the resident is in the process of applying for a variance. The resident would like to know if the Planning Commission would consider discussing the matter at a future meeting and the Commissioners agreed.

Commissioner Atchinson inquired about an update on the Lakeshore Ordinance. Director Akers informed Commissioners that a draft has been formed, it is currently in legal counsel review and will return to the Planning Commission when the review is complete. Commissions discussed how all lakefront residents will be notified of the upcoming meetings, staff will take measures to make sure all residents are notified. Commissioners also discussed the lily pad growth at the west end of Belleville Lake. Director Akers will take the information to the Environmental Commission to make a formal request for them to seek alternative treatment options to control the lily pad growth in Belleville Lake.

Motion Atchinson, Boynton second to adjourn at 8:23 p.m. Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Christina Harman
Recording Secretary

PLANNING & ZONING APPLICATION

Case number 16-027 ***Date Submitted*** _____

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant Claudia Perez **Phone** 734-395-7485
Address 6191 Rawsonville Rd Fax _____
City, State Belleville MI Zip 48111
E:mail ciperez123@yahoo.com Cell Phone Number _____
Property Owner _____ **Phone** _____
(if different than applicant)
Address _____ Fax _____
City, State _____ Zip _____
Billing Contact _____ **Phone** _____
Address _____ Fax _____
City, State _____ Zip _____

SITE/ PROJECT INFORMATION

Name of Project Group daycare
Parcel Id No. V125-83- 18-99-0038-000 Project Address 6191 Rawsonville

Attach Legal Description of Property

Property Location: On the East Side of Rawsonville Road; Between textile Road and Bog Road. Size of Lot Width _____ Depth _____
Acreage of Site 1 Total Acres of Site to Review 1 Current Zoning of Site R1A
Project Description: group daycare

Is a re-zoning of this parcel being requested? _____ YES (if yes complete next line) (NO)
Current Zoning of Site R1A Requested Zoning _____

SPECIAL PERMIT INFORMATION

Does the Proposed Use Require Special Approval? (YES) (if yes complete next line) NO
Section of Zoning Ordinance for which you are applying 7.03 E

Is there an official Woodland within parcel? N/A Woodland acreage N/A
List total number of regulated trees outside the Woodland area? N/A Total number of trees N/A
Detailed description for cutting trees No trees removed

If applicable application **MUST** be accompanied with a Tree Survey or statement of no trees, which incorporates all the requirements listed in Section 4.45 of Zoning Ordinance 6-2-92, as amended.

OWNER'S AFFIDAVIT

Claudia Perez
Print Property Owners Name

Claudia Perez
Signature of Property Owner

5/20/2016
Date

STATE OF MICHIGAN
COUNTY OF WAYNE

The undersigned, being duly sworn, deposes and says that the foregoing statements and answers herein contained and accompanied information and date are in all respects true and correct.

Subscribed and sworn before me this _____ day of _____ 20____.

_____ Notary Public, _____ County, Michigan My Commission expires _____, 20____.

Rev 1/12/06

Memo

TO: **Van Buren Township Planning Commission**

FROM: **Ron Akers, AICP - Director of Planning and Economic Development**

RE: **Review #2 of SLU 16-027 – Group Daycare**

DATE: **September 10, 2016**

Staff Report

File Number: 16-027 SLU

Site Address: 6191 Rawsonville Road

Parcel Number: 125-83-118-99-0030-000

Parcel Size: 1.00 Acres

Location: East side of Rawsonville Road, south of W. Huron River Dr. and north of Bog Road.

Applicant: Claudia Perez, 6191 Rawsonville Road, Van Buren Township, MI 48111

Property Owner: Same as applicant.

Request: Applicant is requesting a special use approval for a Group Daycare at the above mentioned property.

Zoning and Existing Use: R1-A, Single Family Residential

Adjacent Zoning and Existing Uses:

North: R1-A (Single Family Residential) & Single Family Dwelling
East: RMH (Mobile Home Park) & Manufactured Housing Community
South: R1-A (Single Family Residential) & Single Family Dwelling
West: I-2 (General Industrial) & Vacant (Ypsilanti Township)

Other: Public Notices appeared in the Belleville Independent on August 25, 2016 and 300' notices were mailed out in accordance with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act.

Background:

The applicant Claudia Perez has made application for a Special Use Permit for a group daycare home at the single family dwelling located at 6191 Rawsonville Road. A group daycare is defined in the Zoning Ordinance as, *"A private home in which more than six (6) but not more than twelve (12) minor children are given care and supervision for periods of less that twenty-four (24) hours a day, unattended by a parent or legal guardian, except children related to an adult member of the family by blood, marriage or adoption. Group day care home includes a home that gives care to an unrelated minor child for more than four (4) weeks during a calendar year. All group day care homes shall be registered with or licensed by the Division of Child Care Licensing in the State of Michigan Bureau of Regulatory Services."*

The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act of 2006 (MZEA) identifies specific uses and activities which are given a special consideration including "group childcare homes." "Group childcare homes" are defined in the Child Care Organizations Act of 1973 and their definition mirrors the definition in the Township's Zoning Ordinance for "group daycare homes." The special consideration in the MZEA includes a very specific set of criteria a Township is required to utilize when reviewing these type of land uses. These provisions are mirrored in the Township's Zoning Ordinance. This criteria is as follows:

"(4) For a county or township, a group child care home shall be issued a special use permit, conditional use permit, or other similar permit if the group child care home meets all of the following standards:

(a) Is located not closer than 1,500 feet to any of the following:
- *(i) Another licensed group child care home.*
- *(ii) An adult foster care small group home or large group home licensed under the adult foster care facility licensing act, 1979 PA 218, MCL 400.701 to 400.737.*
- *(iii) A facility offering substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation service to 7 or more people licensed under article 6 of the public health code, 1978 PA 368, MCL 333.6101 to 333.6523.*
- *(iv) A community correction center, resident home, halfway house, or other similar facility which houses an inmate population under the jurisdiction of the department of corrections.*

(b) Has appropriate fencing for the safety of the children in the group child care home as determined by the local unit of government.

(c) Maintains the property consistent with the visible characteristics of the neighborhood.

(d) Does not exceed 16 hours of operation during a 24-hour period. The local unit of government may limit but not prohibit the operation of a group child care home between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.

(e) Meets regulations, if any, governing signs used by a group child care home to identify itself.

(f) Meets regulations, if any, requiring a group child care home operator to provide off-street parking accommodations for his or her employees."

The following is a review of the submitted application based upon the standards set forth in the Zoning Enabling Act and the Township Zoning Ordinance.

Special Use

1. **Is located not closer than 1,500 feet to any facilities as specified above:**
   The State of Michigan has a database of these facilities in the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) portion of their website. I have performed searches for any of these facilities using Van Buren Township, Belleville, and Ypsilanti postal districts. Based on my search I have found none of these facilities within 1,500 of 6191 Rawsonville Road.

2. **Has appropriate fencing for the safety of the children in the group child care home as determined by the local government:**
   Per the site plan the applicant has proposed an outdoor play area of 60' X 60'. The applicant has erected a 4' chain link fence, which covers a 60' X 60' area. This section provides discretion for the Planning Commission to make the determination if the fencing is appropriate for the safety of the children. As a 4' chain link fence is common in residential areas and a minimum standard for other safety related issues (such as swimming pools) it is my recommendation that the 4' chain link fence should be sufficient for the safety of the children.

3. **Maintains the property consistent with the visible characteristics of the neighborhood:**
   The only improvement which is proposed to be made to the property is the erection of a fence in the rear yard. So long as the materials and size of the fence are consistent with what is typically used for residential homes, there should be no issues with the use maintaining the characteristics of the neighborhood. The number of vehicle trips due to the daycare should be limited to a maximum of twenty-four (24) per day. Due to the circular drive way and multiple curb cuts on Rawsonville road, traffic should flow fairly smoothly through the site. The neighboring properties have frontage on Rawsonville road which see extensive amounts of traffic each day.

4. **Does not exceed 16 hours of operation during a 24 hour period. The local unit of government may limit, but not prohibit the hours of operation of a group childcare home between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.:**
   The applicant has indicated that their hours of operation are from 5:30 am to 5:30 pm. This does not exceed the 16 hours of operation requirement.

5. **Meets regulations, if any, governing signs used by a group child care home to identify itself:**
   The applicant has not proposed any signs. If there are any signs proposed in the future the applicant will need to obtain a permit from the Township. The Planning Commission may want to require directional signs to indicate the one (1) way nature of the driveway.

6. **Meets regulations, if any, requiring a group child care home operator to provide off-street parking accommodations for his or her employees:**
   The Zoning Ordinance standard for group childcare homes is one (1) parking space per employee. In addition to the residential use on the property (two (2) spaces required for a single family residence) this would require three (3) off street parking spaces. The property has a 576 square foot two (2) car garage and according to aerial photos it appears there is a separate gravel parking space existing on site. The applicant has indicated that she will have two (2) employees

and thus would require four (4) parking spaces. Based on this and the area depicted on the attached plan it appears that this standard has been met. The parking areas have been reflected on the site plan.

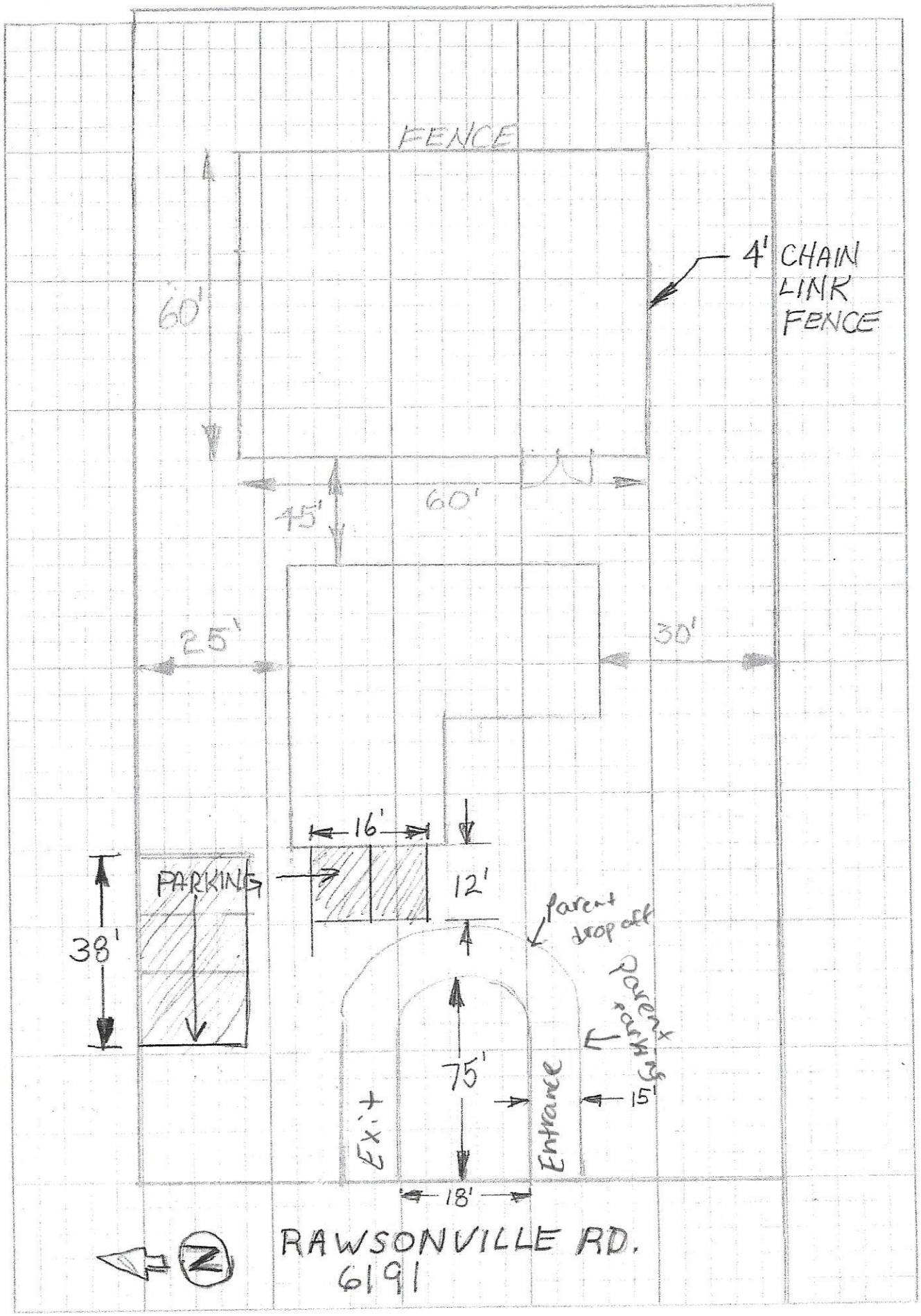
Recommendation

Based on the above mentioned staff recommends the following:

Recommend to the Township Board approval of a special use to conduct a group day care home licensed by the State of Michigan at the property known as 6191 Rawsonville Road, parcel ID # 125-83-118-99-0030-000 conditioned upon the following:

1. The applicant provide adequate directional signage to move traffic through the site.

The Zoning Ordinance requires site plan review for all special use requests, but due to the special considerations for this use in the Zoning Enabling Act and the fact that the daycare is accessory to the primary residential use of property I do not believe that the Township can require a full site plan review for this use. We do have the authority to require a plot plan because the criteria for approval established in the state statute requires that we review items such as parking and signage.


FENCE
4' CHAIN LINK FENCE
60'
60'
45'
25'
30'
16'
12'
PARKING
38'
Parent drop off
Parent parking
75'
15'
Exit
Entrance
18'
RAWSONVILLE RD.
6191
N

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF VAN BUREN
PLANNING COMMISSION
September 14, 2016
7:30 P.M.
PUBLIC HEARING

The Charter Township of Van Buren Planning Commission will hold a public hearing at Van Buren Township Hall, 46425 Tyler Road, Van Buren Township, MI 48111 for the following special use request at the September 14, 2016 regular meeting:

1. **Case 16-027:** A request by Claudia Perez, 6191 Rawsonville Road (Parcel ID# V-125-83-118-99-0030-000) for a special use permit to operate a group day care home for seven (7) to twelve (12) children at 6191 Rawsonville Road, Van Buren Township, MI 48111.

Please address any written comments to the Van Buren Township Planning Commission at, 46425 Tyler Road, Van Buren Township, MI 48116 or via email at rakers@vanburen-mi.org. All materials relating to this request are available for public inspection at the Van Buren Township Hall prior to the hearing.

Van Buren Township will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aides and services to individuals with disabilities who are planning to attend. Please contact the Van Buren Township Planning & Economic Development department at 734-699-8913 at least seven (7) days in advance of the meeting if you require assistance.

Posted: August 22, 2016
Published: August 25, 2016

September 7, 2016

Planning Commission
Charter Township of Van Buren
46425 Tyler Road
Belleville, Michigan 48111

Subject: Draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan – 2016 - 2020

Dear Commissioners:

We are pleased to transmit the complete draft 2016-2020 Parks and Recreation Master Plan for your review and recommendation to the Township Board of Trustees. The Plan was last adopted by the Board of Trustees in 2011 and must be adopted every 5 years for Van Buren Township to be eligible for state and federal recreation grants.

While the Township Board of Trustees is the approving authority for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, a recommendation from the Planning Commission beforehand is required. The enclosed draft Plan has been prepared with assistance from the Recreation Committee, the Parks and Recreation Department staff, and public comments during the survey. The Plan also reflects updated statistics and observations of the parks and facilities. As a summary, the Action Plan is on pages 49-59 and the Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan is on pages 60-62.

We will be in attendance at the September 14, 2016 Planning Commission meeting for the public hearing and to answer any questions that you may have. If you are satisfied with the Plan after the completion of the public hearing, we have included a resolution recommending to the Township Board of Trustees that it adopt the Plan.

We look forward to the discussing the Parks and Recreation Master Plan with you and continuing the adoption process.

McKENNA ASSOCIATES

Patrick Sloan, AICP
Senior Principal Planner

RESOLUTION

TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE VAN BUREN CHARTER TOWNSHIP 2016 – 2020 PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

At a meeting of the Van Buren Charter Township Planning Commission, Wayne County, Michigan, held at the Van Buren Township Hall on September 14, 2016, at 7:30 p.m.

The following Resolution was made by _____ and seconded by _____.

WHEREAS, the Charter Township of Van Buren has undertaken a Five Year Parks and Recreation Plan which describes the physical and social features, existing parks and recreation facilities, and the desired actions to be taken to improve and maintain recreation facilities during the period between 2016 and 2020; and

WHEREAS, public comment, which was incorporated into the Master Plan, was obtained through a variety of methods including Parks and Recreation Department Staff, public comments received during an online survey that was posted from October 26, 2015 through December 18, 2015, and comments from the Recreation Committee members at its meetings on October 13, 2015, April 12, 2016, and June 14, 2016; and

WHEREAS, additional public comments were sought during the 30-day public review period from June 30, 2016 to July 31, 2016, a public notice of which was published in the June 30, 2016 edition of the Belleville Independent and posted at the Township Hall; and

WHEREAS, this plan meets the requirements of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources as the document must be filed with that agency if the Township is to be eligible for state and federal recreation grants; and

WHEREAS, the Parks and Recreation Committee of Van Buren Charter Township has completed its preparation of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission of Van Buren Charter Township has held a public hearing on the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, considered the comments received, and the Planning Commission finds that it supports the basic plans and strategies outlined in the proposed Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2016 – 2020.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Van Buren Charter Township Planning Commission recommends that the Van Buren Charter Township Board adopt the 2016 – 2020 Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

ADOPTED:

YEAS: _____

NAYS: _____

ABSENT:_____

I, _____, _____, of the Charter Township of Van Buren Planning Commission, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted by the Charter Township of Van Buren Planning Commission at a regular meeting held on _____, 2016.

_____

Parks and Recreation Master Plan

VAN BUREN CHARTER TOWNSHIP· WAYNE COUNTY · MICHIGAN

2016 – 2020
Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Van Buren Charter Township
Wayne County, Michigan

ADOPTED: _____ 2016

McKenna ASSOCIATES

Acknowledgements

Recreation Committee
Charles Coleman, Chairperson
Tammy Wall, Co-Chairperson
Kimberly Nofz, Member
Denise Willougby, Member
Daniel Belanger, Member
Todd O'Neill, Member
Clerk Leon Wright, Board Rep

Planning Commission
Carol Thompson, Chair
Joan Franzoi, Member
Donald Boynton, Member
Bryon Kelley, Member
Ronald Jackson, Member
Medina Atchinson, Member
Sharry Budd, Board Rep

Township Board of Trustees
Linda Combs, Supervisor
Leon Wright, Clerk
Sharry Budd, Treasurer
Phillip Hart, Trustee
Jeffrey Jahr, Trustee
Reggie Miller, Trustee
Brenda McClanahan, Trustee

Parks and Recreation Department Staff
Jennifer Wright, Director
Jennifer Zaenglein, Deputy Director
Jennifer Price, Account Clerk
Tina Harman, Account Clerk

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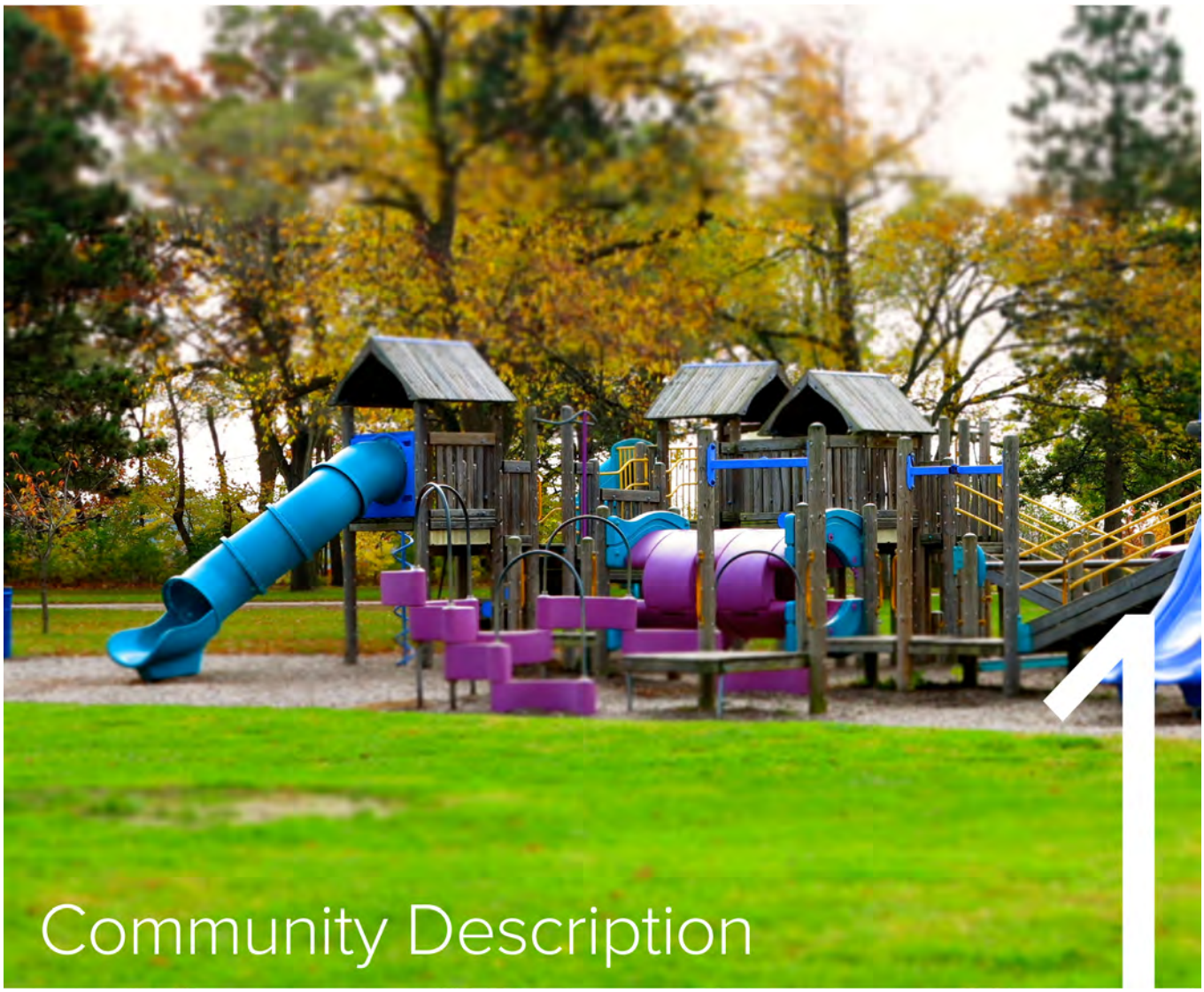


1 Community Description

The Community Description is a snapshot of the various physical and socioeconomic characteristics of Van Buren Township. This information provides valuable insight for determining future parks and recreation facility development and programming needs for the community. The Township takes great pride in providing a high quality of life for its residents with a well-regarded parks and recreation program and offers a diversity of values and experiences.

Regional Setting

Van Buren Township is located in southwest Wayne County. The Township is bordered by Canton Township to the north, Romulus to the east, Sumpter Township to the south, and Ypsilanti Township and City of Ypsilanti (Washtenaw County) to the west. The Township is conveniently located a short drive (only 28 miles) from Detroit to the east and 19 miles from Ann Arbor to the west. See Map 1 – Regional Location.

Demographic Characteristics

The demographic makeup of the community helps determine the quality and quantity of parks and recreation facilities and programs necessary to serve Van Buren Township residents. Relevant aspects are addressed below.

Table 1.1: Change in Population – Van Buren Charter Township, 2010–2040

2010	2014*	Percent Change (2010 to 2014)	2040**	Percent Change (2014 to 2040)
28,821	29,091	+0.9%	30,265	+4.0%

Source: US Census Bureau, SEMCOG
**December 2014 SEMCOG estimate ** SEMCOG 2040 Forecast*

Population

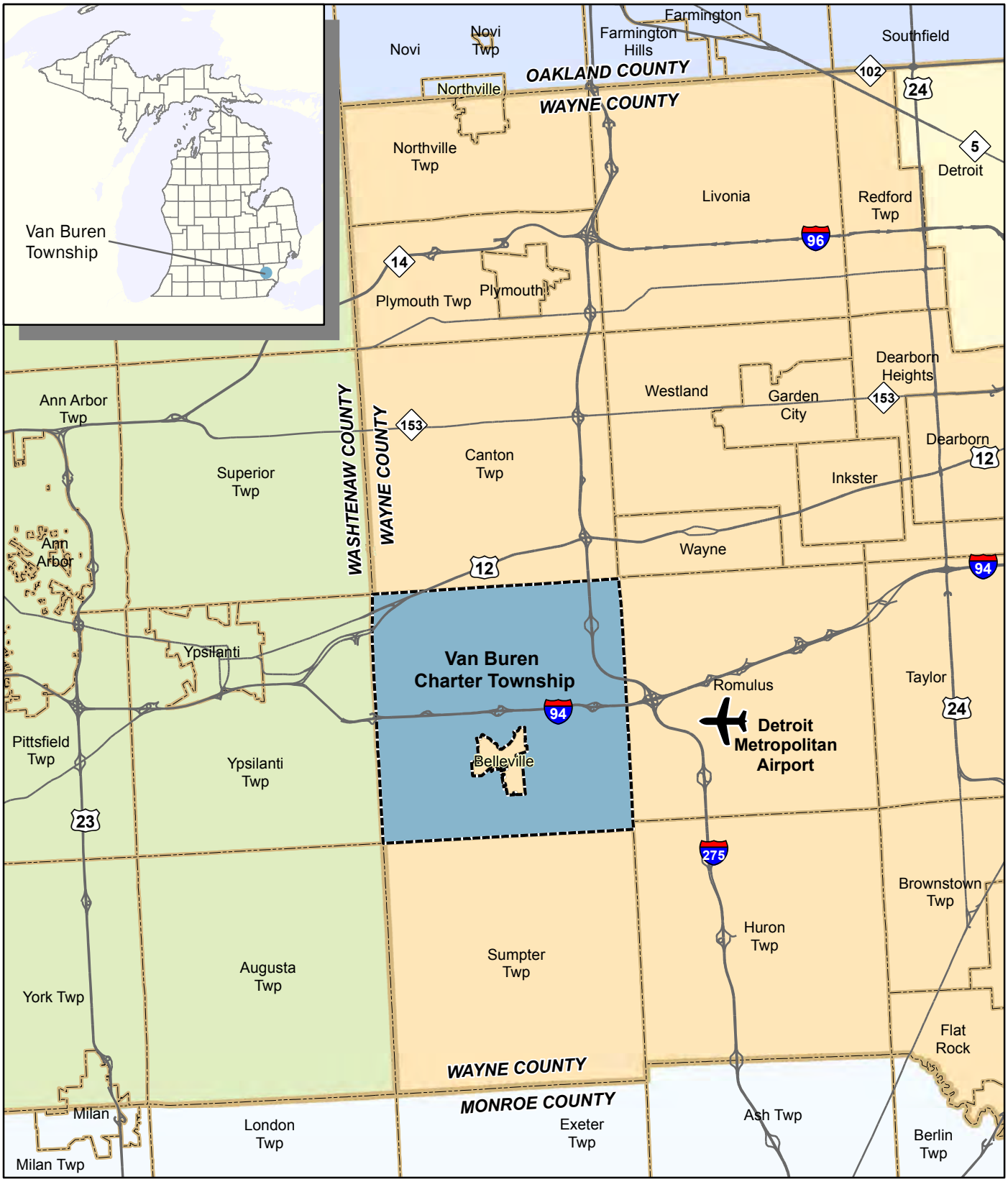
Recent projections indicate that the population of Van Buren Township is expected to increase at a slow rate through 2040. The population increased approximately 0.9% from 2000 to 2010, as indicated in Table 1.1. Based on SEMCOG estimates, the Township population is anticipated to slowly increase to 30,265 residents by 2040.

The Township's population has remained relatively constant. Residents enjoy a community with a high quality of life, particularly related to parks and recreation amenities. As shown in Table 1.2, the majority of communities in the surrounding area increased population between 2010 and 2014. The only exceptions are Sumpter Township, the City of Romulus, and Wayne County as a whole. Van Buren Township's growth rate is comparable with that of Southeast Michigan as a whole. Given the changing economic climate in both southeast Michigan and throughout the state, the growth in many communities is anticipated to either slow or decline.

Table 1.2: Population Trends, Selected Communities, 2010–2014

Community	2010	2014*	Percent Change (2010 to 2014)
Van Buren Charter Township	28,821	29,091	0.9%
City of Belleville	3,991	4,053	1.6%
Canton Charter Township	90,173	93,186	3.3%
City of Romulus	23,989	23,687	-1.3%
Sumpter Township	9,549	9,262	-3.0%
City of Ypsilanti	19,435	19,749	1.6%
Ypsilanti Charter Township	53,362	55,451	3.9%
Wayne County	1,820,650	1,752,566	-3.7%
Southeast Michigan	4,704,809	4,724,737	0.4%

Source: US Census Bureau, SEMCOG
**December 2014 SEMCOG estimate*



Map 1
Regional Location

Van Buren Charter Township,
Wayne County, Michigan

Municipal Boundaries
Van Buren Twp
City of Detroit
Monroe County
Oakland County
Washtenaw County
Wayne County

Mi 0 1 2

4/8/16

McKenna Associates

Data Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, 2006

Housing

A household is defined as a person or group of people occupying a housing unit. As would be expected with a population increase, the number of households in Van Buren Township is expected to grow through 2030 but decrease afterwards, as indicated in Table 1.3. Average household size, defined as the number of persons per household, has been declining for more than 20 years and this trend is expected to continue through 2030 with some fluctuations. However, it should be noted that the Township had a lower average household size than either Wayne County (2.53 persons) or Southeast Michigan (2.49 persons) as of 2014.

The Township's population and number of households have increased over the past ten years and both are anticipated to increase through 2020. However, beyond 2020 the trend is projected to be an increase in households with a decrease in population and household size. The decline in household size will create a more dispersed population if housing densities do not increase accordingly. Correspondingly, future parks and facilities will thus need to be distributed throughout the community to meet the needs of current and new residents.

Table 1.3: Community Population and Housing Statistics –Van Buren Charter Township, 2010–2040

	2010	2014*	2020	2030	2040
Population	28,821	29,091	31,195	30,789	30,265
Households	11,821	11,836	12,803	13,057	12,743
Household Size	2.42	2.44	2.44	2.36	2.38

Source: US Census Bureau, SEMCOG Population and Household Estimates (December 2014), SEMCOG 2040 Regional Forecast
**December 2014 SEMCOG estimate*

To gain more detailed insights into the expected characteristics of the population, the U.S. Census classifies households as *Families with Children*, *Two or More People Living Together (2+) Without Children*, and *People Living Alone*. In Van Buren Township, 33% of all households are Families with Children, 37% are 2+ Without Children, and 30% are People Living Alone. There is a fairly equal distribution among the different household types, therefore a variety of offerings are needed.

Age Distribution

Another important consideration in planning for future parks and recreation needs is the age distribution of residents. In each stage of life, peoples' activity requirements change, resulting in the need for a variety of recreational facilities and programs. In Van Buren Township, the number of people at age 65 years and older is forecast to increase significantly (153.0%) from 2010 to 2040. This age group will also be a larger share of the Township's total population in 2040 (21.3%), compared with 8.8% in 2010. At the same time, the number of people between ages 0 to 4 (-14.4%), 5 to 17 (-11.9%), 18 to 34 (-14.5%), and 35 to 64 (-4.7%) are all anticipated to decrease by 2040. Each of these age groups will be a smaller portion of the Township's total population.

Today residents between 35 and 64 years of age make up the largest share of the Township's population, and there is a roughly equal distribution of preschool or school age children and young adults. Each age group has its own preferences for recreational facilities and programs for example, pre-school children would use a tot lot, playfields for school age children, and fitness facilities for young adults, etc. As a result, Township parks and recreation facilities and programs should be designed to serve the needs of a broad spectrum of ages and the entire community, while at the same time accounting for an aging population.

Opportunities for active living, recreation, and cultural engagement play a major role in where people choose to live, raise families, and retire, and these opportunities should allow for the population to age in place in the community.

Table 1.4: Age Distribution – Van Buren Charter Township, 2010–2040

Age Group	Life Phase	2010		2040	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0 – 4	**Preschool**	1,913	6.6%	1,638	5.4%
5 – 17	**School Age**	4,980	17.3%	4,388	14.5%
18 – 34	**Young Adult**	6,942	24.1%	5,937	19.6%
35 – 64	**Adult**	12,436	43.1%	11,851	39.1%
65 +	**Seniors**	2,550	8.8%	6,451	21.3%
Total		**28,821**	**100.0%**	**30,265**	**100.0%**

Source: US Census Bureau, SEMCOG

Education and Ethnicity

According to the 2011-2013 American Community Survey, 27.3% of Township residents have a bachelor's degree or higher including 8.7% who have earned a graduate or professional degree. Compared to surrounding communities, the education level of the Township is only exceeded by Canton Charter Township, Ypsilanti Charter Township, and the City of Ypsilanti. The percentage of residents in the Township with a bachelor's degree or higher exceeds that of Wayne County (21.5%) and the State of Michigan (26.2%).

Overall the Township is fairly diverse in race and ethnicity. According to the 2011-2013 American Community Survey, the population is 64.7% White, 28.1% African American, 3.0% Asian, and 3.6% two or more races. The parks and recreation activities and programs should accommodate community diversity, and should include different activities that will appeal to people from a variety of backgrounds.

Persons with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires that all public services, including parks, recreation, and cultural facilities, comply with barrier-free access requirements. Further, public providers must eliminate any eligibility requirements for participation in programs, activities, and services.

As the population ages, the proportion of people who have one or more disabilities steadily increases. This trend is consistent with the statistics for Van Buren Charter Township. Approximately 13.1% of Township residents have one or more disability, and over one-third of the population 65 years and older have a disability. The Parks and Recreation Department should reach out to and consider the input of persons with disabilities and the principles of universal design as it builds new facilities and upgrades existing facilities in its inventory to comply with ADA.

Table 1.5: Persons with a Disability – Van Buren Charter Township, 2013

Age Group	Total Persons	With a Disability	Percent
0 – 18	6,626	332	5.0%
18 – 64	19,175	2,396	12.5%
65 +	2,671	1,006	37.7%
Total	28,472	3,734	13.1%

Source: 2011-2013 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates

Economic Characteristics

A variety of indicators suggest that Van Buren Charter Township is well positioned economically. Residential construction had several periods of booming growth over the last 40 years, but has slowed drastically since 2006, according to recent data. The median household income of Township residents is higher than Wayne County and Southeast Michigan, and the Township has fared better than some of the surrounding counties, the region, and state in employment.

The relatively strong economic health of Van Buren Charter Township suggests that residents will continue to demand high-quality services and facilities from the Parks and Recreation Department and that continued funding will be necessary to help support these amenities.

Construction Activity

The number of local building permits issued fluctuates with market demands, paralleling local and regional economic strength. According to SEMCOG figures, the largest residential construction periods over the past 50 years took place from 1969 and 1973 and again for most of the time between 1990 to 2006. Residential construction has slowed significantly since 2008; only 135 permits issued from 2008-2015. In 2015 only 12 building permits for new housing units were issued. New parks and recreation facilities should be located to serve current Township residents. Areas of new residential construction are ideal locations for new facilities and public/private partnerships with residential developers are possible ways to increase recreation land and facilities.

Table 1.6: Land Use Percentages by Type – Van Buren Charter Township, 2008

Land Use	Percentage
Single Family Residential	34.4%
Industrial	15.3%
Agriculture	12.9%
Transportation/ Communication/Utility	9.5%
Airport	7.9%
Water	6.7%
Parks/Recreation/Open Space	4.2%
Government/Institutional	3.9%
Commercial	3.9%
Multiple Family	1.3%
TOTAL	**100.0%**

Source: SEMCOG, 2008 Land Use

Income

Median household income is defined as the income level above which half of all households earn more and below which half earn less. According to the 2011-2013 American Community Survey, the median household income in Van Buren Township ($52,572) was higher than in Wayne County ($41,184) and the State of Michigan ($48,411) but less than neighboring Washtenaw County ($59,055). Aside from Canton Charter Township ($81,667) and Sumpter Township ($53,109), Van Buren Charter Township has a higher median income than in surrounding communities, suggesting that the Township is faring well regionally.

Employment

Employment in Van Buren Charter Township is historically healthy and better than the region overall. According to Michigan Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives figures for September 2015, unemployment in the Township was 4.9%, which was lower than the City of Romulus (6.7%) and Ypsilanti Township (5.2%) but higher than Canton Township (3.1%). The unemployment rate was 7.5% for Wayne County and 4.7% for the State of Michigan. The state unemployment rate decreased from 6.6% in January 2015 to 4.7% in September 2015, possibly indicating an economic upswing. Unemployment

throughout the state and the Detroit Metro area has decreased greatly since 2009, and Van Buren Charter Township remains relatively strong.

Physical Characteristics

Existing land uses and natural features in the Township impact the potential types, locations, and extent of parks and recreation improvements that are feasible.

Land Use

Van Buren Charter Township is approximately 75% developed. The remaining 25% is agriculture, parks and recreation, open space, or water, as noted in Table 1.6. Single family residential (34.4%) is the highest single land use in Van Buren Charter Township. The Township's strong employment base is reflected in the second-highest land use category, Industrial. Despite the majority of the Township being developed, the efforts of the Township Board and Planning Commission and support from the community has allowed the Township to maintain its rural character, parks and open space.

Transportation and Access

The current transportation system in and around Van Buren Charter Township is predominately oriented toward the automobile. This can limit access to parks and recreation facilities for certain segments of the population, often children, young adults, and seniors who may not have access to a car.

Road System. I-94, I-275 and US-12 cross the Township and allow quick access to other parts of the Detroit Metro area. I-94 bisects the Township east to west, I-275 runs north-south through the eastern portion of the community, and US-12 connects I-275 and I-94. Within Van Buren Township, Rawsonville, Beck, Belleville, Morton Taylor and Haggerty Roads are the main north/south corridors, and Van Born, Ecorse, Bemis, and Tyler Roads and Huron River Drive are the major east/west corridors.

Non-Motorized Pathways. Non-motorized pathways provide opportunities for physical fitness, recreation, and transportation for pedestrians, runners, bikers, and other similar users. The Township has planned for future non-motorized pathways, including the Greenways and Trails Master Plan in 2002 and the Walkability Audit for the DDA in 2015. These plans established a framework for connections and greater non-motorized access to destinations including parks, schools, shopping areas, community facilities, cultural amenities, and natural areas. Some existing non-motorized pathways in the Township include the path in Van Buren Park, the I-275 Metro Trail, and the Metro Parkway path in Lower Huron Metropark along with segments of bike paths installed along public roads in conjunction with residential developments. The Township continues to explore opportunities and support for non-motorized transportation, including State and regional pathways such as the Iron Belle Trail. The Township's Greenways and Trails map is included in Chapter 3.

Environmental and Natural Features

Environmental features, such as climate, hydrology, soils, and vegetation influence the land's adaptability for recreational uses. Natural features are not easily restored after they are impaired, and properly planned will provide numerous parks, recreation, and programming opportunities.

Climate. There are no unusual climatic conditions that severely impede outdoor recreational activities in the Township. The climate is humid continental modified by the Great Lakes. Temperature data obtained from Weather Underground at the Willow Run Airport station showed an average temperature of 52 degrees in 2015, with an average high of 82 degrees and an average low of -2 degrees. The precipitation in 2015

totaled 27 inches. Due to the variations in the weather patterns in Southeast Michigan, Van Buren Township residents have the opportunity to enjoy a wide variety of seasonal recreational activities.

Surface Water and Watershed Districts. Surface water resources are among the Township's most valuable natural resources. Belleville Lake provides recreational opportunities such as boating, fishing, and swimming for area residents. Also, a portion of the Huron River flows across the southeast section of the Township down through Lower Huron Metropark.

Van Buren Township is located in both the Rouge River (majority of the northern half of the Township) and Huron River watersheds (remaining part of the Township and Belleville Lake). The Rouge River watershed covers 400 square miles and all or part of 48 communities and three counties. While the Rouge River does not flow through the Township, the community is connected to the Rouge through the storm drain system. The Huron River watershed covers more than 900 square miles and all or part of 63 communities and seven counties, flowing more than 125 miles. As noted above, the Huron River runs through the southeast part of the Township.

Wetlands. Van Buren Township contains many wetland areas scattered throughout the Township. Wetlands are transitional areas between aquatic ecosystems and the surrounding uplands. They filter stormwater runoff, help control flooding and erosion, help protect water quality and are home to many different types of wildlife. In general, larger wetlands are protected by State law; smaller wetlands are also important to preserve. These features are valuable educational resources for residents.

Soils. Soil features affect the cost of development and are one basis for determining the presence of a regulated wetland. According to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Web Soil Survey, the soils in the Township are mainly Wesepi loamy, Thetford loamy, Blount loam, and Boyer loamy sand. These soils types are typically well to somewhat poorly-drained. The soils as a whole throughout the Township range from having moderate to severe limitations for cultivation without irrigation and require thoughtful selection of plants and careful management. Further, the soils along the lake can be limited due to the soil being shallow, droughty, and/or stony and other soils throughout the Township can be limited by their propensity for erosion and/or water in or on the surface can interfere with plant growth.

Vegetation. The topography, soils, and climate in the Township create conditions that support a variety of indigenous Michigan animal and plant species as well as natural communities. According to the Michigan Natural Features Inventory for Wayne County, among the species potentially present are the bald eagle, the Eastern Massasauga rattle snake, American chestnut, Great Blue Heron, and many others.

2 Administrative Structure and Funding

The Van Buren Township Parks and Recreation Department provides a wealth of parks, recreation, and cultural facilities and programming. The Department collaborates with a variety of commissions, agencies, and groups to provide the high quality parks and recreation facilities present in the Township. The administrative structure and budget analysis for parks and recreation are reviewed in this section.

Administration

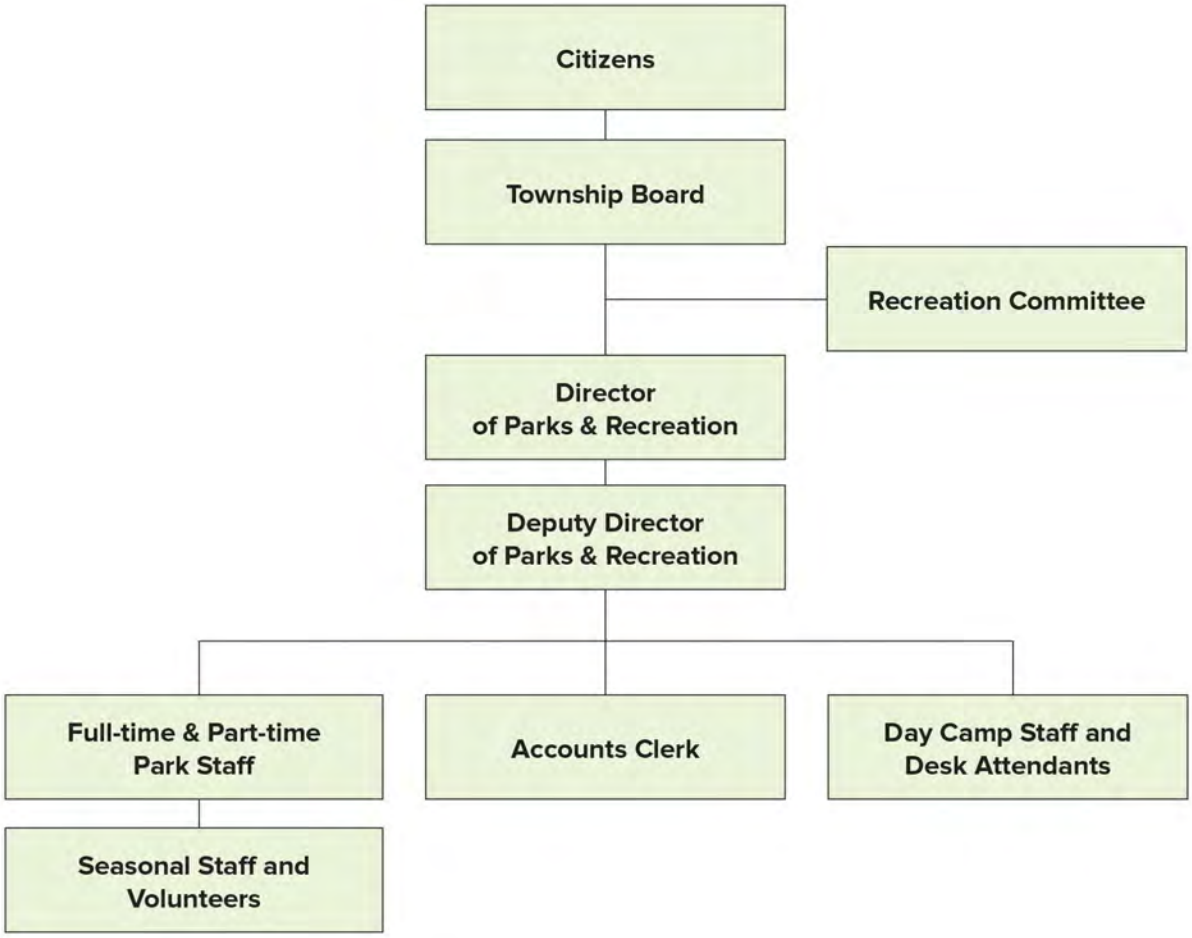
Parks and Recreation Department

The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the facilities and programs. A Director heads the department and reports to the Township Supervisor and Township Board**.** The Department also includes additional full time staff, including the Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation. See Figure 2.1, which illustrates the administrative structure of the Department.

Recreation Committee

The Township Board of Trustees created the Recreation Committee in 1989, with the aim of advising the Board of Trustees on issues relating to recreation in the Township. The Recreation Committee was established under the Michigan enabling Act 157 of 1905, Township Parks and Places of Recreation. The Recreation Committee is comprised of a Chair and Co-Chair, four members, one Township Board representative, and one non-voting student representative.

Figure 2.1: Administrative Structure – Van Buren Charter Township



Volunteers and Other Relationships

Volunteers

In addition to the full and part time staff, and the seasonal employees, the Parks and Recreation Department also coordinates over 100 volunteers who help with special event programs throughout the year.

Relationship with Other Agencies/Organizations

The Parks and Recreation Department has seen a continual increase in participation in its programs over the years. The Department works in close cooperation with the school district to develop community recreation programs and coordinate facility use. The Department has continued to build a strong relationship with the Huron Clinton Metro Parks. The following are other agencies and organizations with whom the department currently works:

- American Cancer Society
- Belleville Area Council for the Arts
- Belleville Area Little League
- Belleville Area Museum
- Belleville Cougars
- Belleville Garden Club
- Boy Scouts
- Coca-Cola Bottling Company
- Detroit Red Wings
- Detroit Tigers
- Fred C. Fisher Library
- Healthy Lifestyles Coalition
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources
- Michigan Recreation and Park Association
- National Recreation and Parks Association
- Relay for Life
- Southeast Michigan Community Alliance (SEMCA) and Michigan Works
- Van Buren Civic Fund
- Van Buren Downtown Development Authority
- Van Buren Fire Department
- Van Buren Police Department
- Van Buren Public Schools
- Van Buren Soccer Association
- Wal-Mart Foundation
- Wayne County
- Wayne County Community College District
- Wayne Parks and Recreation
- Western Wayne County Senior Olympics
- Western Wayne County Therapeutic Recreation (WWCTR)
- Westland Parks and Recreation

The Department hopes to develop a relationship with the Yankee Air Museum and other agencies during the five-year period of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan and beyond.

Parks and Recreation Funding and Grant History

The funding for operating the Township's parks and recreation system comes from the Township's general fund appropriation. The general fund is the basic operating fund for Van Buren Township as a whole. General fund revenues are derived from property taxes, state-shared revenues, federal grants, license and permit fees, charges for services, interest on investments, and court fines or forfeitures. Recreation program user fees are channeled through the general fund as well. There are also several other existing or potential funding sources available for parks and recreation facility improvements.

Table 2.1 shows the Van Buren Township Park and Recreation budgets for 2014, 2015 and 2016. The budgets are divided among the Recreation Department, Park and Lake Department, and Community Services Department. Between the three departments, the 2016 budget is $554,567, demonstrating a 0.1% increase from the year before.

Table 2.1: Parks and Recreation Budgets – Van Buren Charter Township, 2014–2016

Recreation Department	2014 Actual	2015 Amended	2016 Budget
Director Parks & Recreation, Salary	$61,140	$61,683	$61,753
Deputy Director Parks & Recreation, Salary	$45,500	$46,182	$46,360
Office Wages	$37,898	$116,000	$118,000
Allocated Fringes	$63,069	$105,000	$113,400
Operating Supplies	$923	$3,000	$3,000
Program Expense	$31,550	$38,600	$37,500
Program – Summer Camp	$33,032	$40,000	$40,000
Membership and Dues	$696	$849	$800
Commission	$377	$551	$600
Transportation	$1,119	$700	$1,000
Training	$15	$500	$500
Printing and Publishing	$0	$3,400	$4,500
Utilities	$2,315	$2,500	$2,500
Equipment Maintenance	$1,945	$3,000	$2,000
Other	$1,042	$1,400	$1,400
Capital Outlay	$2,240	$7,000	$0
Wayne County Parks Millage Reimbursement	$0	$0	$0
TOTAL	**$282,859**	**$430,365**	**$433,313**

Park and Lake Department	2014 Actual	2015 Amended	2016 Budget
Park & Lake Wages	$90,780	$69,425	$70,466
Allocated Fringes	$19,843	$5,082	$5,488
Operating Supplies	$11,287	$13,000	$6,000
Concert Series Donation	($4,158)	($4,400)	($4,000)
Fireworks Donation	$6,250	($5,200)	($5,200)
Membership and Dues	$0	$0	$0
Contracted Services	$21,014	$19,750	$18,000
Telephone	$1,826	$2,000	$2,200
Transportation	$10,373	$10,000	$5,000
Training	$105	$500	$500
Printing and Publishing	$1,813	$2,000	$3,000
Utilities	$16,033	$19,000	$19,000
Building Maintenance	$7,164	$5,000	$0
Equipment Maintenance	$875	$1,500	$0
Rentals	$0	$0	$0
Other	$687	$800	$800
Environmental Grant Project Expenses	$24,975	$0	$2,500
Environmental Grant Project Proceeds	($23,900)	$0	($2,500)
ACHIEVE Grant Expenses	$311	$0	$0
ACHIEVE Grant Revenue	$0	$0	$0
Capital Outlay	$0	$122,157	$0
MMRMA Reimbursement	$0	($122,157)	$0
Civic Fund Reimbursement	$0	($14,975)	$0
French Landing Park	$0	$0	$0
Wayne County Park Millage Projects	$0	$10,000	$15,000
Wayne County Park Millage	($19,900)	($10,000)	($15,000)
TOTAL	**$165,378**	**$123,482**	**$121,254**

Community Services Department	2014 Actual	2015 Amended	2016 Budget
Employee Wages	$67,884	$0	$0
Allocated Fringes	$41,930	$0	$0
Office Supplies	$1,442	$0	$0
Printing and Publishing	$2,926	$0	$0
Capital Outlay	$0	$0	$0
TOTAL	**$114,182**	**$0**	**$0**

Source: Van Buren Charter Township

Several years ago, Van Buren Township received a Clean Michigan Initiative state grant for the Quirk Park development project (see Table 2.2).

In addition, the Township has received a variety of other grants over the years including $2 million in the fall of 2004 from Wayne County for recreation improvements. In 2010, the Township received $6,000 from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) for the Youth Tree Learning Program, $3,000 from DTE for a tree project, $2,000 from the Van Buren Civic Fund for an ADA swing set, $40,000 from the NRPA ACHIEVE program for healthy lifestyle promotion, $12,000, $13,500, and $6,700 in Community Development Block Grant funding for ADA swings, youth programming, and update to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, respectively. In the winter of 2011 the Township was awarded $60,000 from the Wayne County Parks Millage for the Community Center gym rehabilitation project. The Township has also used CDBG funding for improvements to Beck Ball Fields and demolitions of the log cabin and stage in Van Buren Park. Private donors to parks and recreation include U.S. Ecology.

Table 2.2: Michigan DNR Recreation Grant History – Van Buren Charter Township

Funding Source	Project Name	Grant Amount	Project Results*
Clean Michigan Initiative	CM00-294 Quirk Park	$293,300	Development of Quirk Park

Source: Michigan Department of Natural Resources

*See Chapter 3 for a description and photo of each park and the related grant scope items.

3 Parks and Recreation Inventory

Developing a complete inventory of the parks and recreation facilities and programs is an essential component of a five-year Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Understanding what parks, facilities, and programs are available to Van Buren Township residents will assist in decision-making and is the basis upon which future improvements and plans will be built. It should be noted that not all facilities listed in this chapter are available to the public full time or charge a fee for use, but they provide additional recreation opportunities for Township residents. This chapter covers the following components:

A. Township parks and facilities
B. Barrier free access
C. Public school facilities
D. Regional parks and facilities
E. Parks and Recreation Amenities
F. Greenways and trails
G. Nearby parks and facilities
H. Quasi-public and private recreation facilities
I. Programs

A. Township Parks and Facilities

Van Buren Township contains nine parks and open spaces, one of which is privately owned. These parks are inventoried and described below, and shown on Map 2 – Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities. The parks are divided into four categories based on their size and function. These categories, mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, and natural resource areas, are suggested by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) and meant to aid in determining the primary purposes and uses of existing facilities in the Township. The description of each park or facility includes an assessment of its condition for barrier-free access (see following section).

1. Mini-Parks.

Mini-parks are small, specialized parks that are usually less than one acre in size and serve the needs of the residents in the immediate area, approximately less than one-quarter mile away. These parks usually serve a limited, isolated, or unique population. Residential open space areas often serve as mini-parks. The Township owns one mini park.

- **Haggerty Neighborhood Park.** Haggerty Neighborhood Park, located west of Haggerty Road and south of Tyler Road on both Hamilton and Jackson Streets, is part of the Haggerty subdivision. The 2-acre park contains a recently upgraded play structure, swings, pavilion, picnic tables and grills for the adjacent neighborhood. *(Accessibility assessment = 2)*

Haggerty Neighborhood Park

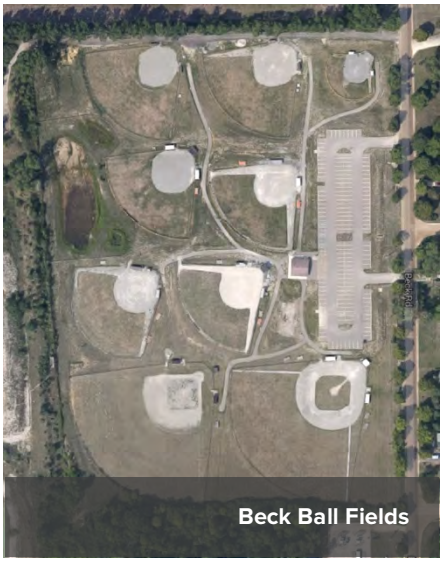
2. Neighborhood Parks.

Neighborhood parks are typically multi-purpose facilities that serve as the recreational and social focus of a neighborhood. They provide areas for both passive and active recreation activities such as fields, playgrounds, picnicking, and trails. These parks are typically between five and ten acres in area and serve residents within one-half mile. Van Buren Township does not currently own any parks that can be classified as Neighborhood Parks; however, several public school properties and private open space in residential developments help satisfy this need by providing playgrounds and fields for Township residents. (See Chapter 4)

3. Community Parks.

Community parks contain a wide variety of recreation facilities to meet the diverse needs of Township residents. Community parks may include areas for intense active recreation as well as passive recreation opportunities not commonly found in mini or neighborhood parks. The focus of these parks is to meet community-based recreation needs, as well as preserve unique landscapes and open spaces. Community parks are generally between 30 and 50 acres in area and serve residents within one-half to three miles. Community parks may also include smaller parks that are more specialized in nature and are meant to serve the entire community. Van Buren Township has four parks and facilities that can be classified as Community Parks, one of which is a private facility.

- **Beck Ball Fields.** Beck Ball Fields, located west of Beck Road and south of Willow Run Airport, is a 20.5-acre park dedicated primarily to baseball. The park contains baseball fields, concessions, restrooms, a playground, walking paths, storage, announcer's booth, and seating. Landscaping, paved parking, new walking paths, and other improvements have been completed by U.S. Ecology (formerly EQ), under its host community agreement with Van Buren. Additionally, Van Buren Township recently spent approximately $335,000 in federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to install additional ADA walking paths, construct a playground, repair the dugouts, and add fencing and landscaping to Beck Ball Fields. The last phase of the CDBG-funded project will consist of constructing a pavilion and will cost approximately $100,000. *(Accessibility assessment = 4)*


Beck Ball Fields

- **Quirk Park and Senior Activity Garden.** Quirk Park, located south of Tyler Road and behind Township Hall, is a 5-acre park with a variety of amenities. The park contains soccer fields, walking paths, a VITA course, pavilion, picnic areas, seating, a softball field, and play equipment. The park is also home to the Senior Activity Garden, which was completed in 2005 and contains numerous amenities for seniors including shuffleboard, checkers and chess tables. The garden is also home to the Western Wayne County Senior Olympics shuffleboard competition. (Accessibility assessment= 4)

Quirk Park and Senior Activity

- **Van Buren Community Center.** The Van Buren Community Center is located south of Tyler Road and connected to Township Hall. The Center contains a multi-purpose room and gymnasium that can be rented, instruction space and the Parks and Recreation Department offices. *(Accessibility assessment = 5)*

- **Van Buren Park.** Van Buren Park, located on the S. I-94 Service Drive between Belleville and Rawsonville Roads, is a 101-acre park on the north side of Belleville Lake. The park contains restrooms, storage, basketball court, benches, hiking trails, pavilions, picnic areas, football, sand volleyball, play equipment, sledding hill, overlook, horse shoe pits, community garden, concession stand, and beach. The University of Michigan boathouse is also located at the park. In 2005, the front entrance to the park was renovated and an ADA accessible pathway provided to the lake, ADA parking and signage was installed in 2009 and new sand added to the beach. In 2014, the area that includes Van Buren Park became eligible to receive federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for certain improvements. CDBG funded an emergency outdoor warning siren in the park and demolition of the log cabin building (2015) and the performance stage (2016), which had fallen into a state of disrepair. Several proposed improvements are listed in the Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan and include accessibility improvements, safety-related repairs, and new recreational amenities. *(Accessibility assessment = 2)*

Van Buren Park

4. Natural Resource Areas.

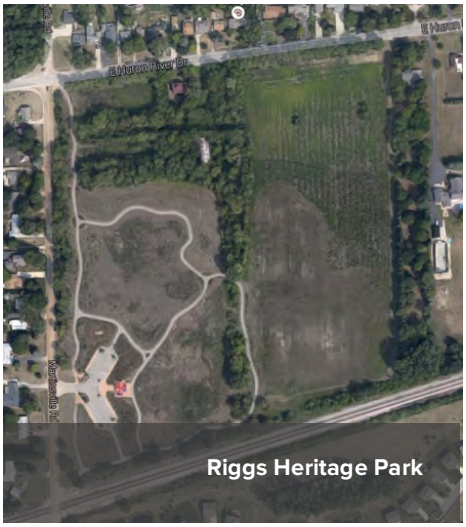
Natural Resource Areas are generally lands set aside for the preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics/buffering. The location of these areas is based on resource availability and opportunity, thus the size varies depending on the property. Van Buren Township has three properties that are classified as Natural Resource Areas; one of them is privately owned.

- **French Landing Park.** French Landing, located on the west side of Haggerty Road just south of the S. I-94 Service Drive, is a 6-acre park. The park contains a fishing pier, restrooms, picnic area, play equipment, and scenic views of both Belleville Lake and the Huron River. *(Accessibility assessment = 1)*

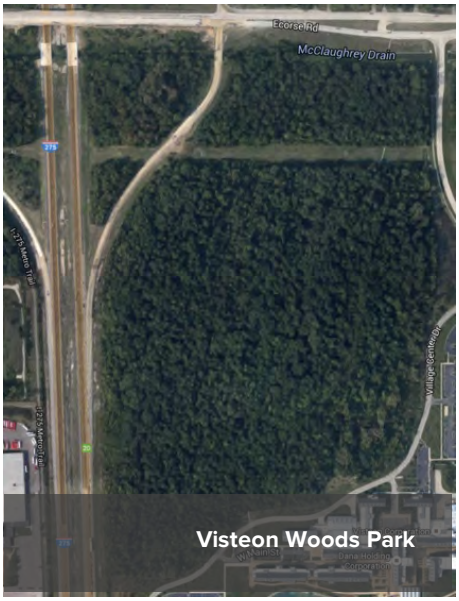
- **Riggs Heritage Park.** Riggs Park, located on Martinsville Road off of Huron River Drive, is a 30-acre park. The park contains a pavilion, restrooms, trails, and scenic views. *(Accessibility assessment = 4)*

- **Visteon Woods Park.** Visteon Woods, located at the southeast corner of the Ecorse Road/I-275 interchange on the Visteon Village site, is a privately-owned 40-acre natural area with a hiking trail. The land is predominantly wooded wetlands and public access is allowed under an easement for public use. *(Accessibility assessment = 2)*

French Landing Park



Riggs Heritage Park



Visteon Woods Park

B. Barrier-Free Access

The passage of the American Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires all areas of public service, including parks and other recreation facilities, to have barrier-free accessibility. An evaluation of Van Buren Township parks and recreation facilities has been conducted as part of the inventory in this Plan. To comply with MDNR standards for a parks and recreation master plan, all facilities were evaluated to determine if a person with any of the following conditions can safely and independently access and use the park or facility:

- Has limited sight or is blind
- Uses a wheelchair
- Has difficulty hearing or is deaf
- Uses a walking aid
- Has a mental disorder

A five-point evaluation system was used to rank each facility's accessibility. The system is described below. The applicable accessibility ranking can be found following the description of each park and facility under Township control.

Level 1. The park is not accessible to people with a broad range of physical disabilities. The site includes few paved areas and the facilities such as play equipment or picnic areas are not easily accessible.

Level 2. The park is somewhat accessible to people with a broad range of physical disabilities. Either the parking area or pathways are paved, but not both. Many of the facilities such as play equipment or picnic areas are not easily accessible.

Level 3. The park is mostly accessible to people with a broad range of physical disabilities. Most of the parking areas and pathways are paved, and some of the facilities such as play equipment or picnic areas are accessible but may be completely barrier-free.

Level 4. The park is completely accessible to people with a broad range of physical disabilities. Parking areas and pathways area paved, and most of the facilities such as play equipment or picnic areas area easily accessible.

Level 5. The entire park was developed or renovated using the principles of universal design, a design approach which enables all environments to be usable by everyone, to the greatest extent possible, regardless of age, ability, or situation.

Park or Recreational Facility	Accessibility Assessment Rating
Haggerty Neighborhood Park	2
Beck Ball Fields	4
Quirk Park	4
Senior Garden	4
Van Buren Community Center	5
Van Buren Park	2
French Landing Park	1
Riggs Heritage Park	4
Visteon Woods Park	2

C. Public School Facilities

Although school facilities are designed and intended for school use and are not available to the public all the time, they do satisfy some community recreational needs. The Township is served by the Van Buren Public School District. The district includes four elementary schools, two middle schools, one high school, and one early childhood development center. The public school facilities located in the Township are:

1. **Belleville High School.** Belleville High School has been recently renovated. The school has facilities for use by its athletic programs including an indoor pool, a football field, a baseball field, and eight tennis courts.

2. **Haggerty School.** Haggerty School is located west of Haggerty Road in the southeast corner quarter of the Township on 20 acres. The school has an indoor gymnasium and outdoor facilities including one playground.

3. **Savage Elementary School.** Savage Elementary is located on the south side of Savage Road east of the City of Belleville on 15 acres. The school has an indoor gymnasium and outdoor facilities including two basketball courts, one ball field, two playgrounds and one soccer field.

4. **Tyler Elementary School.** Tyler Elementary is located north of Tyler Road between Morton-Taylor and Haggerty Roads on 15 acres. The school has an indoor gymnasium and outdoor facilities including one playground and one soccer field.

5. **McBride Middle School.** McBride Middle School is located east of Beck Road between Tyler Road and I-94 on 40 acres. The school has an indoor gymnasium and outdoor facilities including two ball fields, a multi-purpose field, two soccer fields and a play area.

D. Regional Parks and Facilities

Regional parks serve a multi-community area and often offer unique natural features that are particularly suited for outdoor recreation, such as viewing and studying nature, fishing, boating, hiking, and trail use. Many also include active play areas such as ball fields or courts. While Van Buren Township does not use these parks for the Township's recreation programs, they do provide active and passive recreational opportunities for the residents of the community. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority, and Wayne and Washtenaw counties provide regional parks and facilities. The only regional park in Van Buren Township is the Lower Huron Metropark (see Map 2 – Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities). Other regional parks within 60 miles of the Township are shown on Map 3 – Regional Parks and Recreation Facilities.

1. **Michigan State Parks.** Several Michigan state parks within 60 miles offer recreational opportunities for Van Buren Township residents. These state facilities provide a variety of activities including camping, picnicking, swimming, hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, hiking, cross-county skiing, mountain biking, and horseback riding. There are no state parks located in the Township.

2. **Wayne County Parks.** The Wayne County park system consists of 12 parks including the extensive Hines Park, which runs through the communities of Dearborn Heights, Livonia, Northville Township, Plymouth Township, and Westland. The County parks offer year-round recreational opportunities including ball diamonds, soccer fields, play equipment, nature and walking trails, picnic areas and

shelters, marinas, golf courses, restaurants, disc golf, sledding hills, volley ball courts, ice skating, fishing. There are no county parks located in the Township.

3. **Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority.** The Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA) is a regional park district that encompasses the counties of Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Washtenaw and Livingston. Since its inception in 1940, the HCMA has obtained over 20,000 acres of parkland, all located in the metro Detroit region. The parks provide a variety of outdoor recreation and educational activities including picnicking, hiking, golf, biking, winter sports, golf, water-related activities, horseback riding, and special programs. There is one Metropark located in Van Buren Township.

4. **Lower Huron Metropark.** This 1,258-acre regional park is in the southeast corner of the Township. Owned by the HCMA, the park features a scenic view of the Huron River, woodlands, grassy meadows and offers a variety of year-round recreational activities such as a paved, hike-bike trails, fishing, canoeing, Turtle Cove Family Aquatic Center, ice skating, picnic areas, basketball, volleyball, and tennis courts. The park also features an 18-hole, par-3 golf course.

5. **City of Belleville Parks.** The City of Belleville operates four primary parks. Because the City is located totally within the Township, residents of both communities are able to enjoy these parks. Descriptions of the City's parks from the City of Belleville website are provided below.

   - **Horizon Park.** Located on the shores of Belleville Lake, Horizon Park is home to the Belleville War Memorial and features a rose arbor, picnic pavilion, benches, restrooms and wonderful lake views. The Horizon Park waterfront offers a lakeside boardwalk, courtesy boat docks and ADA accessible canoe/kayak launch. A favorite activity of area residents is watching the sun set over the lake at Horizon Park.

   - **Doane's Landing.** At the foot of the Belleville Bridge, Doane's Landing is a community gathering place for individual quiet time and for fun events offering lakefront vistas.

   - **Victory Park.** Located in the heart of the City, at an intersection known by local residents as "Five Points", Victory Park offers a children's play area, picnic facilities, a gazebo, and features a statue of the famous explorer LaSalle. It is home to the renovated Victory Station, which is available to rent for meetings and special events.

   - **Village Park.** A City park located on 8 acres, Village Park is adjacent to the Victoria Commons subdivision. It features walking trails, basketball courts, a children's play area, and sand volleyball courts. A striking feature of Village Park are its three large ponds and surrounding trails; the main path around the large pond is paved and ADA accessible.

E. Parks and Recreation Amenities

The parks and recreation facilities in the Township each have different types of amenities and opportunities for a wide variety of recreational experiences. The following table lists some of the amenities currently available at each park and recreation facility:

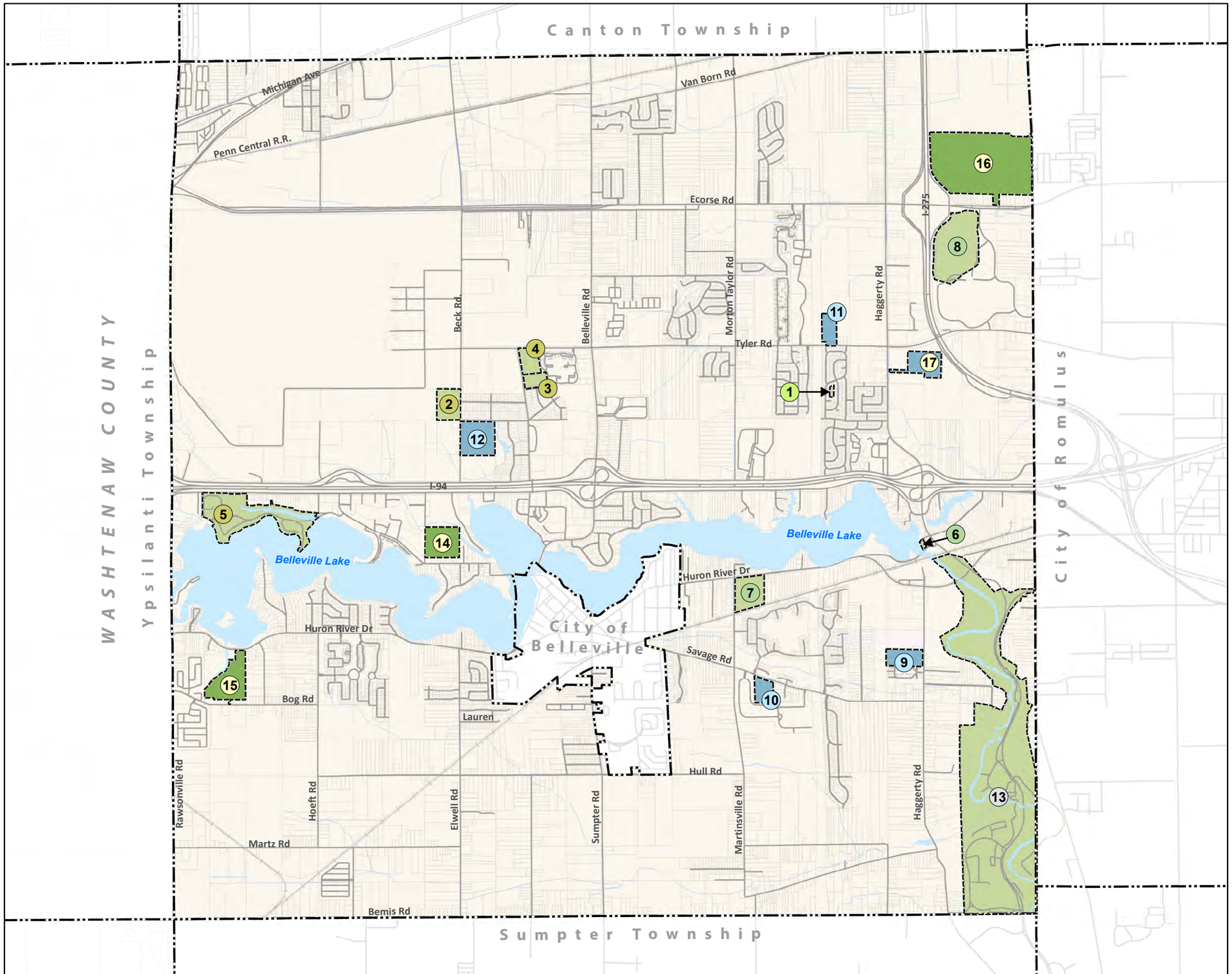
Amenities	Haggerty Neighborhood Park	Beck Ball Fields	Quirk Park	Senior Garden	Van Buren Community Center	Van Buren Park	French Landing Park	Riggs Heritage Park	Visteon Woods Park
Athletic fields		✓	✓						
Bathrooms		✓	✓			✓	✓		
Benches		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Bike racks		✓				✓		✓	
Grills	✓		✓			✓			
Indoor activity space					✓				
Play structures	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		
Swings	✓	✓	✓						
Tables with benches	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Trails						✓		✓	✓

Van Buren Park

Map 2
Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities

Van Buren Charter Township,
Wayne County, Michigan

June 6, 2016



Mini Parks
1. Haggerty Neighborhood Park

Community Parks and Facilities
2. Beck Ballfields
3. Quirk Park
4. Van Buren Community Center & Senior Activity Garden
5. Van Buren Park

Natural Resource Area
6. French Landing Park
7. Riggs Heritage Park
8. Visteon Woods Park

Public School Facilities
9. Haggerty School
10. Savage Elementary School
11. Tyler Elementary School
12. McBride Middle School

Regional Parks and Facilities
13. Lower Huron Metropark

Quasi-Public and Private Recreation Facilities
14. Harbour Club Golf Course
15. Pine Creek Golf Course
16. Woodlands of Van Buren Golf Course
17. Wayne County Community College – Western Campus

Parks
School Facilities
Golf Courses

0 2,000 4,000 FT

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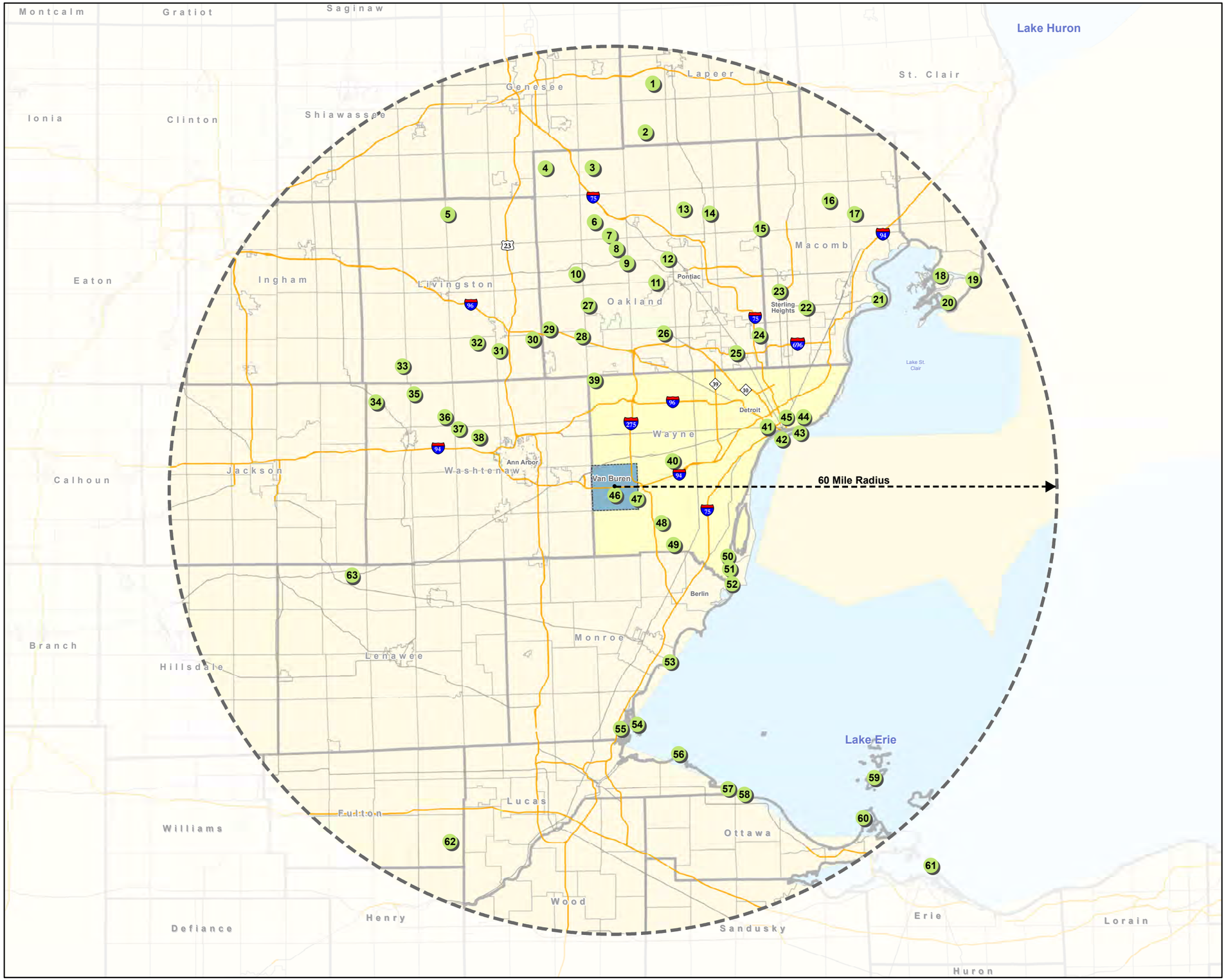
McKenna ASSOCIATES

Data Source: McKenna Associates, 2006.
Base Map Source: Wayne County GIS,2004 and Van Buren Township, 2006.

Map 3
Regional Parks and Recreation Facilities

Van Buren Charter Township,
Wayne County, Michigan

June 6, 2016



Regional Parks and Recreation Facilities

1 Metamora-Hadley Recreation Area
2 Ortonville State Recreation Area
3 Holly Recreation Area
4 Seven Lakes State Park
5 Oak Grove State Game Area
6 Springfield Oaks County Park
7 Indian Springs Metropark
8 Pontiac Lake State Recreation Area
9 White Lake Oaks County Park
10 Highland State Recreation Area
11 Dodge Brother State Park #4
12 Waterford Oaks County Park
13 Orion Oaks County Park
14 Bald Mountain State Recreation Area
15 Stony Creek Metropark
16 Wolcott Mill Metropark
17 Wetzel State Park
18 St. Johns Marshland Recreational Area
19 Algonac State Park
20 St. Clair Flats State Wildlife Area
21 Metrobeach Metropark
22 Freedom Hill County Park
23 Rochester-Utica State Recreation Area
24 Red Oaks County Park
25 Detroit Zoological Park
26 Glen Oaks County Park
27 Proud Lake State Recreation Area
28 Lyon Oaks County Park
29 Kensington Metropark
30 Island Lake State Recreation Area
31 Huron Meadows Metro Park
32 Brighton Recreation Area
33 Gregory State Game Area
34 Waterloo State Recreation Area
35 Pinckney State Recreation Area
36 Hudson Mills Metro
37 Dexter-Huron Metropark
38 Delhi Metropark
39 Maybury State Park
40 Ford Motor Company's MI. Arboretum
41 Belle Isle Fishing Pier
42 Whitecomb Conservatory
43 Belle Isle Bench
44 East River Front Loop Bikeway
45 Detroit Garden Center
46 Belleville Lake Boat Lounch
47 Lower Huron Metropark
48 Willow Metropark
49 Oakwood Metropark
50 Lake Erie Metropark
51 Elizabeth Park Boat Launch
52 Pointe Mouillee State Game Area
53 Plum Creek Bay Wildlife Area
54 Woodtick Peninsula Park
55 Erie Marsh Game Area
56 Cedar Point National Wildlife Refuge
57 Crane State Park
58 Magee Marsh State Wildlife Area
59 Put-In-Bay
60 Catawba Island State Park
61 Cedar Point Amusement Park
62 Maumee State Forest
63 Michigan International Speedway

0 5 10 Miles

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McKenna ASSOCIATES

Data Source: McKenna Associates, 2006.
Base Map Source: Wayne County GIS,2004 and Van Buren Township, 2006.

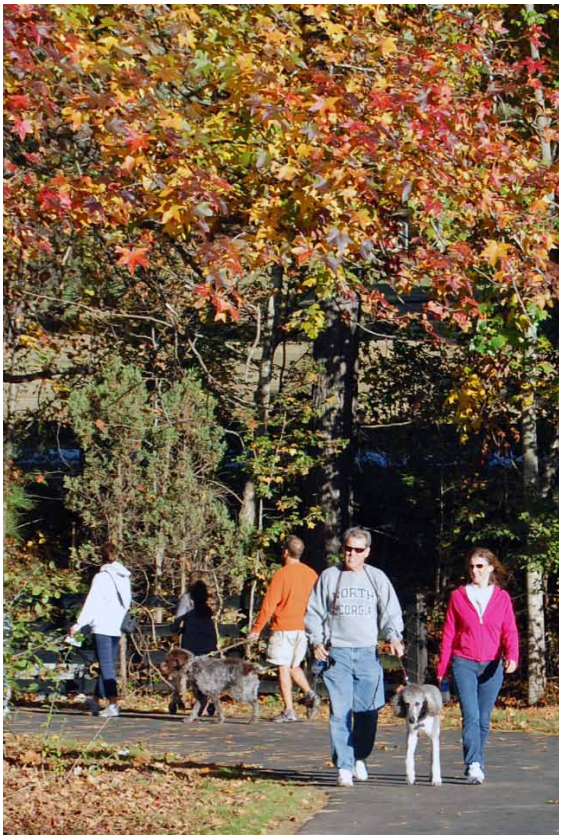
F. Greenways and Trails

The Township's Greenways and Trails Master Plan was prepared in response to the residential growth and economic development of the Township (see Map 4- Greenways and Trails). That plan establishes a framework for connections and greater non-motorized access to nearby destinations including parks, schools, shopping areas, community facilities, cultural amenities, and natural areas. Incremental progress has been made to accomplish some of the planned sidewalks, trails and pathways.

Greenways and trails not only provide recreation and non-motorized transportation opportunities, but also have a positive impact on economic and community development. Ultimately, they contribute to the quality of life of the township as a whole in the following ways:

- Make communities better places to live by preserving and creating open space;
- Encourage exercise, physical fitness, and healthy lifestyles;
- Create new opportunities for outdoor and close-to-home recreation;
- Provide options for non-motorized transportation;
- Strengthen local economies through tourism, recreation expenditures, and increased property values;
- Protect the environment through habitat preservation, improving air and water quality, and preventing soil erosion;
- Offer education opportunities;
- Preserve cultural and historic areas by connecting us to our heritage and providing access to them; and
- Connect to regional and local parks.

The creation of a linked pedestrian pathway system through Van Buren Township is an ongoing goal of the community, as demonstrated in the Township's Premier Community Amenities Plan, previous Parks and Recreation Master Plans, the Township DDA's plans and other community plans. Additionally, the Visteon Woods recreational trails resulted from a collaborative effort between Van Buren Township and the Visteon Corporation to provide passive recreational opportunities and protect natural resources in the Township.

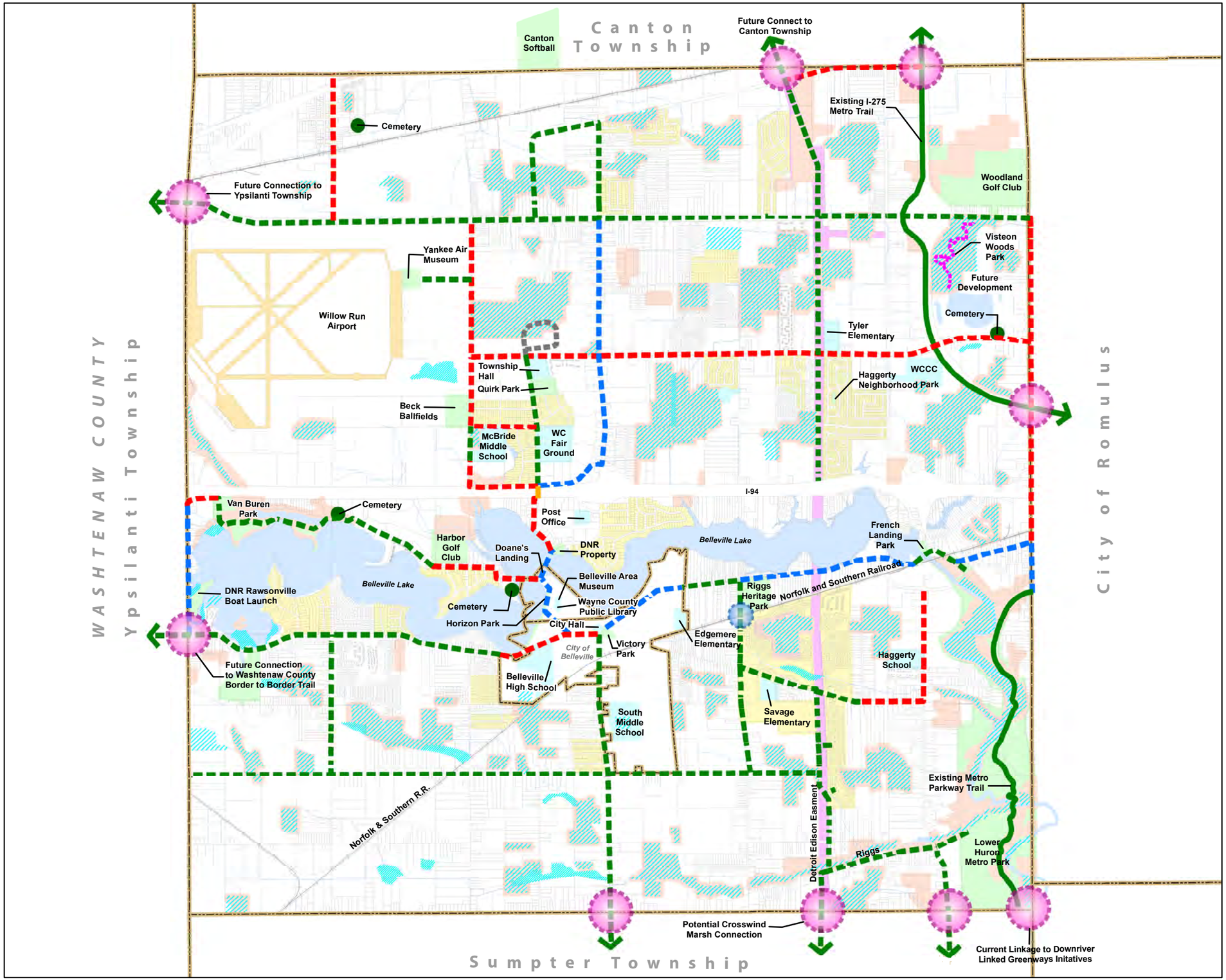


Existing bicycle and pedestrian trails in the Township include the biking/walking trail in Van Buren Park, which was extended in 2015. The I-275 Metro Trail also runs along the west side of I-275 for its entire length within the Township and was recently reconstructed. Lower Huron Metropark also has a trail that runs along Metro Parkway for most of its length, with an entrance at Hannan Road.

Map 4
Greenways and Trails Master Plan, 2002

Van Buren Charter Township, Wayne County, Michigan

June 6, 2016



- Funded/ Developed Trail
- Future Trails
- Class I Bicycle/ Pedestrian
- Class II Bicycle Lanes
- Class III Bicycle Routes
- Crushed Stone & Boardwalk Path
- Local and Regional Parks
- Schools
- Residential Developments
- Detroit Edison Easement
- Van Buren Regulated Woodlands
- Michigan Regulated Wetlands
- Trail Connection/Gateway
- Existing Railroad Crossing
- Pedestrian Bridge
- Visteon Woods Trail
- Municipal Boundary

0 2,000 4,000 FT

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McKenna ASSOCIATES

Base Map Source: Wayne County GIS
Data Source: McKenna Associates, Inc. 2/2002,
Michigan Department of Natural Resources Van Buren Township

G. Nearby Parks and Facilities

Surrounded by Canton Township, City of Belleville, City of Romulus, Sumpter Township, Ypsilanti Township, and the City of Ypsilanti, Van Buren Township residents benefit from the proximity of neighboring communities' parks and recreation facilities. These parks and facilities supplement those located in the Township with offerings such as active recreation, athletic fields, educational programs, golf, nature centers, playgrounds, and swimming. The following local parks and facilities are located within a short distance of the Township:

Canton Township

- Barchester Park
- Canton Dog Park
- Canton Sports Center at Victory Park
- Fellows Creek Golf Club
- Flodin Park & Fellows Creek Wetland Nature Trail
- Freedom Park
- Griffin Park
- Heritage Park
- Independence Park
- Patriot Park
- Pheasant Run Golf Club
- Preservation Park
- Summit on the Park Community Center
- The BLOCK Youth and Teen Center
- The Village Theater at Cherry Hill

Canton Dog Park

City of Belleville (see D.4)

- Doane's Landing
- Horizon Park
- Victory Park
- Village Park

Horizon Park – Belleville

City of Romulus

- Downtown Historical Park
- Elmer Johnson Park
- Fernandez Park
- Mary Ann Banks Park
- Oakbrook Neighborhood Park
- Romulus Athletic Center
- St. John's Lodge Park

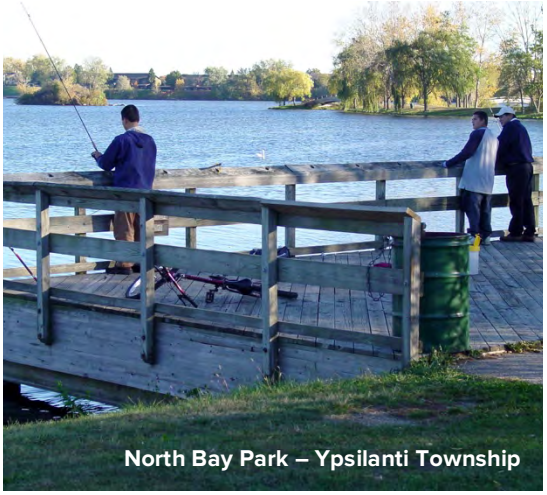
Romulus Athletic Center

Sumpter Township

- Banotai Park
- Community Center
- Graham Park
- Polish National Alliance Hall

Ypsilanti Township

- Appleridge Park
- Big Island Park
- Bud and Blossom Park
- Burns Park
- Clubview Park
- Community Center Park
- Fairway Hills Park
- Ford Heritage Park
- Ford Lake Park
- Grove Road Overlooks
- Harris Park
- Hewen's Creek Park
- Huron River Park
- Lakeside Park
- Lakeview Park
- Loonfeather Point Park
- Nancy Park
- North Bay Park
- North Hydro Park
- Pines Park
- Rambling Road Park
- South Hydro Park
- Sugar Brook Park
- Tot Lot Park
- Watertower Park
- Wendell Holmes Park
- West Willow Park


North Bay Park – Ypsilanti Township

Hewen's Creek Park - Ypsilanti Township

City of Ypsilanti

- Ainsworth Circle Lot
- Border to Border Trail
- Candy Cane Park
- Carrie R. Mattingly Tot Lot
- Charles Street Tot Lot
- Edith Hefley Tot Lot
- Freighthouse
- Frog Island Park
- Parkridge Park and Community Center
- Peninsular Park
- Prospect Park
- Recreation Park
- Rivers Edge Park/Water Street Trail
- Riverside Park
- Rutherford Municipal Pool
- Senior Citizens Center
- Waterworks Park

Frog Island - Ypsilanti

H. Quasi-Public and Private Recreation Facilities

Some recreation opportunities in Van Buren Township are available from quasi-public and privately owned facilities in and around the Township. These range from private swim clubs to bowling establishments. Many charge a membership or user fee. Significant quasi-public and private recreation facilities in the Township and shown on Map 2 – Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities are:

1. **Harbour Club Golf Course.** Harbour Club Golf Course is located off Denton Road in the southwest portion of the Township. The 9-hole course is open to the public as well as members and includes a practice facility with a driving range and putting green.

2. **Pine Creek Golf Course.** Pine Creek Golf Course is located off West Huron River Drive in the southwest part of the Township. The 18-hole, par 3 course is open to the public.

3. **Woodlands of Van Buren Golf Course.** Woodlands of Van Buren Golf Course is located off Ecorse Road on the northeast side of the Township. The 18-hole course is open to the public and includes a practice facility with a 35-station driving range and putting green, a club house and golf shop, restaurant, banquet rooms, and outdoor patio. The club is available to be rented for events such as weddings and corporate outings.

4. **Wayne County Community College – Western Campus.** Wayne County Community College--Western Campus is located off Haggerty Road in the northeast part of the Township. The college offers a variety of educational and career classes and assistance.

Woodlands of Van Buren Golf Course

I. Programming

The Van Buren Township Parks and Recreation Department offers a large variety of programs and special events throughout the year. Among the programs and events offered are:

- Programs
- Adult fitness
- Ballroom dance
- Baseball camp
- Basketball camp
- Boaters safety
- Cheerleading
- CPR and first aid
- Day camps
- Domestic violence and anger management
- Football camp
- Gymnastics
- K-9 obedience
- Jazzercise
- Pet first aid
- Pickleball
- Senior fitness
- Social dance
- Softball
- Specialty classes
- Tae kwon do
- Tai chi/meditation
- Urban ballroom
- Volleyball camp
- Yoga
- Youth dance classes
- Youth floor hockey
- Youth nature classes
- Zumba

Special Events

- Candy Loop
- Daddy/Daughter Dance
- Family Fishing Fun Day
- Holiday Arts and Craft Show
- Kidz Colorful Ceramic Painting
- Mother/Daughter Tea Party
- Mother/Son Bowling
- Summer Concert Series
- Takin' it to the Streets
- Touch a Truck

4 Basis for Action Plan

Once the community's demographic and physical characteristics have been identified, and the existing supply of land, facilities and programs confirmed, the next step in the recreation planning process is to quantify and evaluate the needs of the community. These needs are a primary basis for the development of the Action Plan. The basis for the Action Plan is accomplished using several methods, including comparison to national recreation guidelines, information gathered during the public input process, consultation with the Parks and Recreation Department and the Recreation Committee, and by reviewing current offerings and programming.

A. Planning and Public Input Process

Planning Process

The Parks and Recreation Department and Recreation Committee directed the update of the Van Buren Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Citizen and Township input played a critical role in the development of the plan. As a result, recommendations described within the action plan reflect the needs and desires of those who use the Township's parks and recreation facilities. The plan preparation process included seven tasks that are discussed below.

1 **Task One: Community Description.** The first task was to obtain a description of Van Buren Township's physical and social features. These features include location, land use, environmental and natural features, as well as population characteristics including age distribution, people with physical disabilities, household types, employment, and income.

2 **Task Two: Administrative Structure and Funding.** The second task was to review the administrative structure of the Township, the Parks and Recreation Department, the Recreation Committee, and other recreation providers associated with the Township. This analysis also includes a review of the current and projected revenues and expenditures for the Township as well as the grant history of funding received from the MDNR and other sources.

3 **Task Three: Parks and Recreation Inventory.** The parks and recreation inventory included site visits by McKenna Associates (McKenna) and written descriptions of facilities in Van Buren Township including Township parks and facilities, schools, regional parks and facilities, greenways and trails, local parks and facilities, and quasi-public and private recreation facilities. The information includes the acreage, barrier-free accessibility, types of recreation facilities, and other descriptions of the physical attributes of the area's facilities. The Township's and other recreation providers' programming are discussed in that section as well.

4 **Task Four: Public Participation.** The following public participation methods and events were conducted during the process of preparing the plan:

Public Survey – A public survey was posted online from October 26 through December 18, 2015, asking people for feedback on their experiences and opinions of the current parks and recreation offerings and any improvements they would like to see. The complete results of the survey can be found in Appendix A.

30-Day Review Period – The draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan was available for the 30-day public review starting _____ until _____. A notice was published in the Belleville Independent on _____.

5 **Task Five: Analysis.** The data collected in tasks one through four was analyzed in comparison to national and state guidelines, specific local needs, the experience of the Parks and Recreation Department and consultants, the desires of the residents, and potential funding sources.

6 **Task Six: Action Plan.** The analysis resulted in the creation of a five-year plan for prioritized projects and improvements. The Action Plan gives the Township a checklist of what action is to be taken, when and where it will occur, who will accomplish it, how much it is expected to cost, and potential funding sources.

7 **Task Seven: Plan Completion and Adoption.** Once consensus was reached among the Parks and Recreation Department and Parks and Recreation Committee, the Plan was recommended for approval at the Parks and Recreation Committee meeting on August 9, 2016. The Township Planning Commission held a public hearing on August 24, 2016, and the Commission recommended adoption of the Plan. Finally, on September 20, 2016, the Township Board reviewed and formally adopted the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. See Appendices for meeting notices, and adoption documentation.

B. Park Land Analysis and Service Areas

Approximately 1,434.5 acres of parks and recreation facilities are located in Van Buren Township. 204.5 acres are owned by the Township and managed by the Parks and Recreation Department. The public schools, Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA), and private entities own the remaining 1,230.5 acres.

For purposes of this plan, the Van Buren Township park land and facilities were compared to the guidelines set forth by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA, 1983, 1995). Although the NRPA's guidelines were last updated more than 21 years ago, the MDNR still recommends their use to establish minimum community needs in terms of land area and number of facilities, and as one consideration for parks and recreation planning.

Caution must be exercised in the interpretation of these results given that the NRPA guidelines were set over two decades ago and might not accurately reflect current popular activities and trends. Each community, with its own particular resources and resident preferences and demands, is encouraged to establish its needs and requirements so that the plan best suits the community's desires for recreation. Recreation needs are often better documented through public input rather than relying only on the national guidelines. Both the NRPA guidelines and the MDNR standards were considered in the development of the Action Plan but not weighted heavily.

Table 4.1 – Park Land Acreage Analysis and the following discussion compare the amount of park land as it relates to the conditions of the Township and the MDNR standards based on the Township population of 28,821 as of the 2010 US Census. The results are summarized below.

1. **Mini Parks.** Mini parks serve the needs of the residents in the immediate area, approximately less than one-quarter mile away and are typically less than one acre in size. Van Buren Township's Haggerty Neighborhood Park has a total of 2.0 acres, but there is a deficiency of 5.21 acres of mini-park sites based on the recommended acreage of 7.21. In order to better meet this need, the Township should look for opportunities to develop smaller parks in areas of high residential concentration, however the

larger lot sizes in much of the Township offer space for young children to play. This characteristic compensates for much of the numeric deficiency.

2. **Neighborhood Parks.** Neighborhood parks serve an area up to a one-half mile distance and are typically less than 10 acres in area. Van Buren Township does not own any parks classified as neighborhood parks given their current function. School facilities, private neighborhood parks, and some condominium open spaces generally help to fulfill the need for neighborhood parks (see School Facilities discussion below).

3. **Community Parks.** Community parks typically serve an area within one-half to three miles and are between 30 to 50 acres in size. The Township owns 126.50 acres of community park land in nine parks, only missing the recommended 144.11 acres by 17.61 acres. Despite not exceeding the recommended park land, the distribution and quality of the parks in the Township is exceptional.

4. **Natural Resource Areas.** Natural resource areas are lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, visual aesthetics, and buffering. Three parks/areas in the Township are classified as natural resource areas, for a total of 76.0 acres. There is no specific standard for a recommended quantity of this type of park land, but these lands are significant assets to the community. The natural resource areas not only further the goals of the Township to protect woodlands, wetlands and the natural environment, but also provide residents with unique opportunities for environmental education. The Township should explore acquiring natural resource areas as they become available.

5. **School Facilities.** School properties can assist in fulfilling the requirements for parks, such as neighborhood, community, sports complex, and special use. For the purposes of this analysis, the Township's three elementary schools and one middle school were included. They total 90.0 acres, thus complementing Township sites and providing more active recreation facilities. For the purposes of evaluating recommended acreage, school facilities are counted at one-third (1/3) of their acreage for comparison purposes. Therefore, 30 acres of the 90 school acres are counted as neighborhood park facilities.

6. **Regional Parks.** Regional facilities offer a variety of active and passive recreational opportunities which help in meeting the need for local park land and help balance the deficiencies in facilities. Van Buren Township is fortunate to have one regional park within its borders – Lower Huron Metropark (HCMA). This park accounts for 1,200 acres of park land, thus exceeding the recommended acreage by 911.79 acres. This park is a valuable resource to Township residents, and offers a variety of recreational opportunities a short distance from home.

According to the above guidelines, Van Buren Township exhibits an overall surplus but is slightly deficient in all park categories except regional parks. Overall, the Township is providing a good amount of park land for its residents. There will be some need to expand offerings among specific types of facilities as the population continues to grow.

Table 4.1: Park Land Acreage Analysis

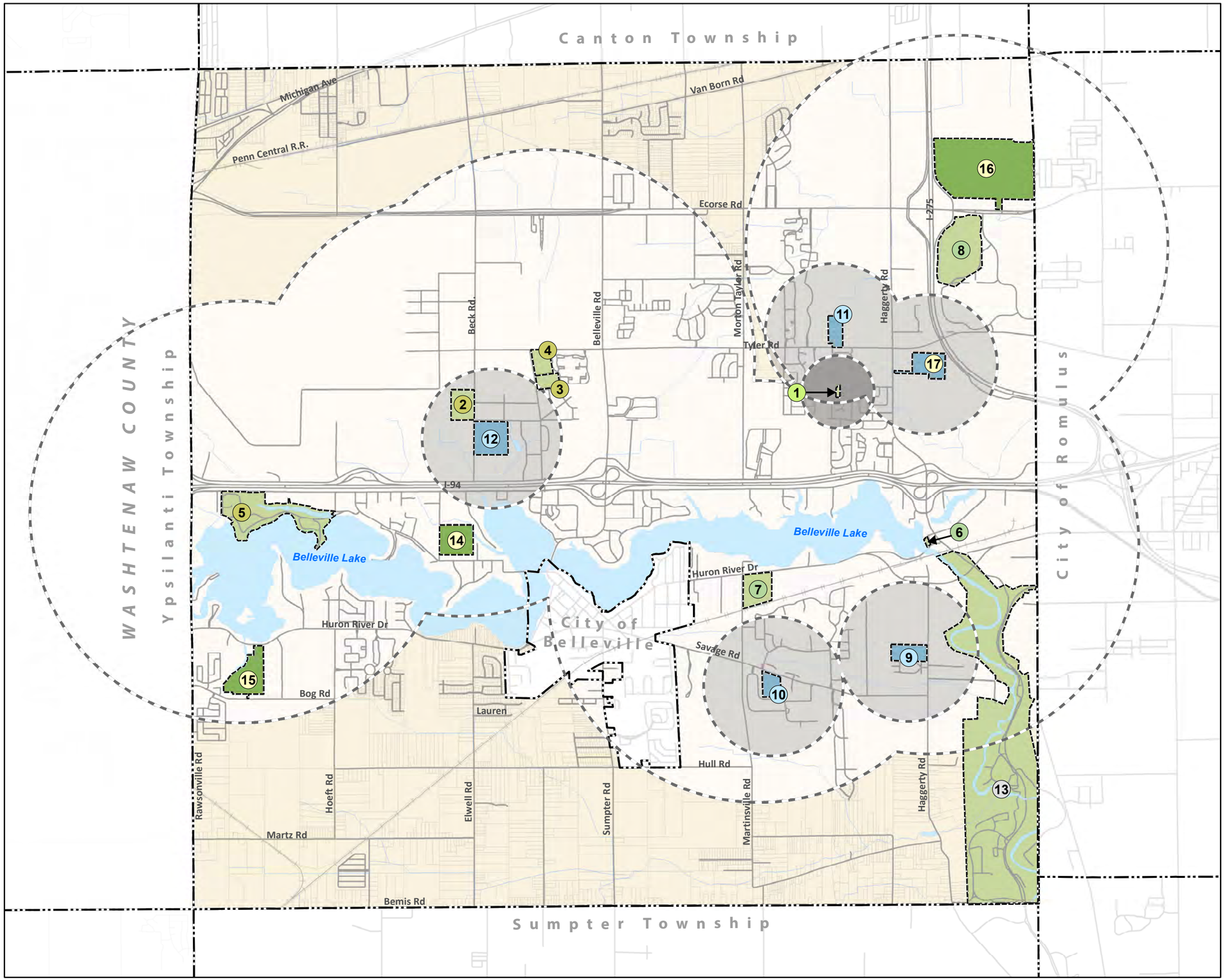
Park Classification	NRPA Acreage Guideline[1]	Recommended Acreage[2]	Existing Acreage	Surplus (Deficiency)
Mini Parks	0.25	7.21	2.0	(5.21)
Neighborhood Parks (including public school facilities)	2.0	57.64	30.0[3]	(27.64)
Community Parks	5.0	144.11	126.50	(17.61)
Natural Resource Areas	Variable		76.0	N/A
Public School Facilities	Variable – depends on function		N/A	N/A
Regional Parks	10.0	288.21	1,200.0	+ 911.79
TOTAL	—		1,434.50	+ 861.33

[1] Source: Lancaster, R. A., Ed. Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines. Alexandria, VA: NRPA, 1983; Mertes, J.D. and J. R. Hall. Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines. Alexandria, VA: NRPA, 1995. Based on minimum acres/1,000 residents.
[2] Based on Township population of 28,821 as of the 2010 US Census. SEMCOG forecasts Van Buren Township's population to slowly increase to 30,265 by 2040, so the Park Land Acreage Analysis is not expected to significantly change unless SEMCOG revises its 2040 Forecast.
[3] For the purposes of evaluating recommended acreage for Neighborhood Parks, school facilities are counted at one-third (1/3) of their acreage for comparison purposes. Therefore, 30 acres of the 90 total school acres are counted as neighborhood park facilities.

Although it is important to consider the total amount of park land in the Township, it is also essential to consider the type of parks, and their distribution throughout the Township. Parks and recreation service areas should relate to where the residents in the Township live. The MDNR offers a recommended service area for each type of park. The recommend service radius for each park type was used to determine the areas in Van Buren Township that lack easy access to parks and facilities. The service area boundary for each type of park is as follows:

- Mini Parks — Less than 0.25 miles
- Neighborhood Parks — 0.25 – 0.5 miles
- Community Parks — 0.5 – 3.0 miles
- Regional Parks — 30 minute driving time

The parks and recreation service areas are shown on Map 5 – Existing Facilities Service Areas. For purposes of evaluation, a radius of 0.25 was used for mini-parks, 0.5 miles for neighborhood parks, and 1.5 miles for community parks and natural resource areas. The service boundaries of regional parks were not included. The majority of the Township is well-served by community parks, with the exception of the far north and south areas of the Township.



Map 5
Existing Facilities Service Areas

Van Buren Charter Township, Wayne County, Michigan

June 6, 2016

Mini Parks

1. Haggerty Neighborhood Park

Community Parks and Facilities

2. Beck Ballfields
3. Quirk Park
4. Van Buren Community Center & Senior Activity Garden
5. Van Buren Park

Natural Resource Area

6. French Landing Park
7. Riggs Heritage Park
8. Visteon Woods Park

Public School Facilities

9. Haggerty School
10. Savage Elementary School
11. Tyler Elementary School
12. McBride Middle School

Regional Parks and Facilities

13. Lower Huron Metropark

Quasi-Public and Private Recreation Facilities

14. Harbour Club Golf Course
15. Pine Creek Golf Course
16. Woodlands of Van Buren Golf Course
17. Wayne County Community College – Western Campus

Parks
School Facilities
Golf Courses

Mini-Park Service Area (1/4 Mile Radius)
Neighborhood Park Service Area (1/2 Mile Radius)
Community Park Service Area (1.5 Mile Radius)

0 2,000 4,000 FT

N

McKenna ASSOCIATES

Data Source: McKenna Associates, 2006.
Base Map Source: Wayne County GIS,2004 and Van Buren Township, 2006.

Facilities Analysis

The Township's existing recreation facilities were compared against the guidelines set by the NRPA and MDNR to determine if the existing facilities are adequate to meet the needs of residents in comparison to national standards. The analysis takes into account a variety of factors including existing conditions in Van Buren Township, information obtained from public input, programming desires, and site conditions. Table 4.2 identifies the NRPA guideline for each facility type, the recommended number of facilities and the existing number of facilities in the Township, and the surplus or deficiency.

Table 4.2: Park Facility Analysis

Park Classification	NRPA Guideline[1]	Recommended Facilities[2]	Existing Facilities	Surplus (Deficiency)
Baseball/Softball	1/5,000	6	21	+ 15
Basketball	1/5,000	6	6	0
Football	1/20,000	1	2	+1
Golf Driving Range	1/50,000	1	1	0
Golf Course (9-Hole)	1/25,000	1	1	0
Golf Course (18-Hole)	1/50,000	1	2	+1
Ice Rink (Indoor)	1/100,000	1	0	(1)
Ice Rink (Outdoor)	Depends on climate	Depends on climate	1	N/A
Playground	1/3,000	9	10	+ 1
Running Track	1/20,000	1	0	(1)
Soccer	1/10,000	3	5	+ 2
Swimming Pool	1/20,000	1	0	(1)
Tennis	1/2,000	14	2	(12)
Volleyball	1/5,000	6	2	(4)

[1] Source: Lancaster, R. A., Ed. Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines. Alexandria, VA: NRPA, 1983; Mertes, J.D. and J. R. Hall. Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines. Alexandria, VA: NRPA, 1995. Based on minimum acres/1,000 residents.
[2] Based on Township population of 28,821 as of the 2010 US Census.

The Township meets or exceeds the standards for most facility types. However, as funding allows and needs arise, based on the deficiencies above, the following facilities should be considered on a long-term basis:

- **Swimming Pools.** Given that a traditional swimming pool is very costly in light of the limited resources of the Township, the Township should evaluate whether a swimming pool can be supported within the available budget before proceeding with any pool project. The Township is close to several pools and other swimming resources including the pool at Belleville High School, the Turtle Cove Family Aquatic Center in the Lower Huron Metropark, and the Romulus Athletic Center pools. The Romulus Athletic Center in particular was mentioned as a popular destination for residents in the public survey.

- **Tennis Courts.** The Township should consider constructing some additional tennis courts at existing parks or include them in future park developments. The Township also collaborates with Van Buren Public Schools to utilize their tennis courts. Tennis courts can be adapted for use in pickleball, a sport that is growing in popularity.

- **Volleyball Courts.** Outdoor volleyball courts should be considered in future park developments.

- **Other Facilities.** Other facilities requested during the public input process include, but were not limited to, a multi-use indoor facility, biking trails/greenways, more lake access, basketball hoops, and a dog park. These facilities should be evaluated for inclusion in future park developments in the Township as they are deemed appropriate.

5 Action Plan

By using the comprehensive planning process of trend identification and a public input survey, the Van Buren Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan has effectively established a framework for the Action Plan. The Action Plan describes recommendations for improvements and enhancement of the Van Buren Township parks and recreation facilities and programming, as well as identifying the tools needed for implementation of the plan components.

A complementary component of the Action Plan is the Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Action strategies that require significant capital investment from the community have been organized into the five-year plan. The specific projects have been prioritized in the CIP in order to better manage the Parks and Recreation Department's budget and equally distribute the projects over a five-year cycle. The timing of these projects may be influenced, moved, or eliminated depending upon economic conditions, available funding, and/or grant awards. However, the spirit and intent of the project priorities are well-defined in the CIP.

The Action Plan is organized into three sections:

A. Vision, Mission and Special Delivery Values
B. Goals and Strategies
C. Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan

A. Vision, Mission, and Special Delivery Values

Vision

The following is the Vision of the Van Buren Township Parks and Recreation Department:

"Creating Community through People, Parks and Programs."

Mission

The following is the Mission of the Van Buren Township Parks and Recreation Department:

"Van Buren Township Community Services will work with all citizens to be good stewards of our environment and to provide safe and welcoming cultural opportunities to play, learn, contemplate and build community."

Special Delivery Values

The community values that were brought forward during the community input process of the strategic plan included:

People

- Deliver outstanding customer service.
- Provide accessible, safe, and welcoming spaces to all residents.
- Strengthen relationships and the sense of community.

Parks

- Provide quality parks for residents.
- Encourage resident usage of parks.

Programs

- Encourage health and fitness for individuals and families.
- Provide opportunities for lifelong play, creativity, learning, and discovery for individuals and families.
- Strengthen accountability for projects and programs.

B. Goals and Strategies

To provide a guideline for decision-making, the Parks and Recreation Department, with the assistance of McKenna, has developed a set of comprehensive goals and strategies.

The following goals and strategies are intended to provide an operational framework for future decisions related to the provision of parks and recreation for Van Buren Township. These goals and strategies should be reviewed continually and modified as necessary.

Section 1: Parks and Recreation Facilities

Goal: Provide a variety of parks and recreation experiences that are desired by the community for passive and active recreation that supports the community values of people, parks and programs.

Strategy 1.1 - General: Meet the land and facility standards (as applicable) as outlined in Chapter 4 of this plan.

- **Standards.** Meet the land and facility standards over a five-year period in existing and future parks to meet the community's unmet need for parks and recreation pursuits.
- **Needs-Based Assessment.** Develop design principles and standards for parks to support appropriate recreational needs and available operational money available.
- **Wayfinding.** Develop a wayfinding system for parks with a signage program, including historical interpretative signage, which informs the community of the parks that are available for their use and how to access them in the Township

Strategy 1.2 - Maintenance: Develop maintenance standards for developed park areas and the cost to maintain the standard on a yearly basis by acre, type of amenity, and/or other factors.

- **User-Based Operational Costs.** Seek to share operational costs with permitted users for access to the developed park areas where appropriate.
- **Fees.** Incorporate maintenance costs into program fees where appropriate.
- **Environmental Sustainability.** Establish an environmental sustainability strategy into the daily operations of the Department.

Strategy 1.3 – Existing Facilities: Enhance and utilize existing parks and recreation facilities based on particular needs and amenities.

- **Staffing.** Ensure that Van Buren Park is staffed year round and increase staffing at other parks as needed.

- **Van Buren Park Beach.** Prevent erosion of the beach area at Belleville Lake by stabilizing the peninsula area at southeast end of park including at the University of Michigan facility, and by restoring the slope and repairing the road down to the beach with guardrails.
- **Water-Based Programming.** Promote the existing lake and water resources in the Township, and offer recreation programming based around Belleville Lake, such as water skiing, boating, and fishing clubs, and other water-based uses.
- **Partnership with University of Michigan.** Coordinate with the University of Michigan on Van Buren Park upgrades, repairs, and programming, including use of the boathouse.
- **ADA Accessibility.** Continue to improve ADA accessibility in all Township parks.

Strategy 1.4 – Land Acquisition: Acquire additional land throughout the Township as needed or where residents are lacking access to parks and recreation facilities and/or to preserve natural features and open spaces.

- **Potential Sites.** Explore potential of purchasing land for future parks at 15000 Haggerty Road and 15080 Elwell Road.
- **Needs Assessment.** Continually evaluate where new facilities are needed throughout the Township, similar to the needs assessment in Table 4.1.
- **Planning & Economic Development Department Assistance.** Work with the Planning & Economic Development Department to identify valuable open space areas, acquire land from developers where appropriate, and create zoning for open space areas, including the use of Planned Residential Development (PRD) to provide for the preservation of open space and private maintenance of matured features.
- **Funding Sources.** Seek funding sources for new facilities including the general fund, user fees, community foundations, private donations, the Michigan DNR Trust Fund grant, and other sources.

Strategy 1.5 – New Facilities: Explore providing new facilities based on input from the public survey for this plan, including a recreational center and a pool, a splash pad, a nature center, or a dog park.

- **Dog Park.** Acquire land for off-leash dog activity.
- **Splash Pad.** Build new facility for public enjoyment depending on feasibility and maintenance.
- **Feasibility.** Prepare a needs assessment and feasibility study for new facilities.
- **Planning & Economic Development Department Assistance.** Work with the Planning & Economic Development Department to identify potential sites and zoning regulations for new facilities.
- **Review Similar Facilities in Other Communities.** Visit facilities in nearby communities to gain insight on design and operations.
- **Funding Sources.** Seek funding sources for new facilities including the general fund, user fees, community foundations, private donations, and other sources.

Section 2: Greenways and Trails

Goal: Provide for the improvement and expansion of greenways and trails in the Township in order to offer both recreation and transportation opportunities, to connect with regional and state greenway and trail systems, and to link people with parks and other destinations.

Strategy 2.1 – Statewide Iron Belle Trail: Seek options for the construction of the Township portion of the Iron Belle Trail, which will provide trail connections between the Township and existing regional and state-wide trails and promote better mobility and public health in the community.

- **Funding.** Pursue funding through the Michigan DNR Trust Fund, CDBG, MDOT, community foundations, private donations, and other funding sources.
- **Huron River Drive Trail Development.** Explore the possibility of routing the trail along Huron River Drive, as indicated by the preference of survey respondents and on the DNR website.
- **Connections to Van Buren Park.** Explore potential alternative or supplemental routes, including through Van Buren Park.
- **Stakeholder Outreach.** Solicit input from stakeholders along potential routes and in the community.
- **Collaboration with Adjacent Governmental Entities.** Work in collaboration with Washtenaw County, the City of Belleville, and the Huron-Clinton Metroparks to ensure connectivity along the entire trail route.
- **Regional Cooperation.** Establish and maintain strong partnerships with adjacent communities, regional and state agencies, and other key stakeholder organizations including the MDNR, MDOT, Wayne County, and landowners adjacent to and near potential trail routes.
- **Update Greenways and Trails Master Plan.** Update Greenways and Trails Master Plan, as needed, to include the Iron Belle Trail.

Strategy 2.2 – Connect Existing Sidewalks and Trails: Connect existing township sidewalks and trails to future bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in the Township, and rank the connections in order of importance or priority.

- **Prioritize Connections.** Establish a priority system to connect trails with other infrastructure such as sidewalks and bike lanes based on population, existing infrastructure, and available funding.
- **I-275/Metro Parkway Connection.** Establish a trail connection between Metro Parkway trail in the Lower Huron Metropark and I-275 Metro Trail.
- **DDA District Improvements.** Provide for bicycle and pedestrian connections within the DDA boundary to the surrounding areas according to the goals of the 2015 DDA Walkability Audit.
- **Update Greenways and Trails Master Plan.** Update Greenways and Trails Master Plan, as needed, to include new and proposed connections.

Strategy 2.3 – New Township Trails: Continue to develop new greenways and trails throughout the Township to promote bicycling and walking and to increase access to parks.

- **Stakeholder and Community Input.** Solicit input from stakeholders and the community for trail location and development to foster community ownership of trail system, based on the support for trails shown in Questions 3, 8, 9, and 12 of the survey for this Plan.
- **Land Acquisition.** Acquire land for greenways and trails in the Township where feasible and based on a priority system, through funding sources such as the Michigan DNR Trust Fund grant, CDBG, MDOT, community foundations, private donations, and other funding sources.
- **Planning & Economic Development Department Assistance.** Work with the Planning & Economic Development Department to acquire land and easements for trails leading to existing parks.
- **Rails-to-Trails.** Pursue Rails-to-Trails funding for developing trails along former railways.
- **New Developments.** Require developers to provide paths and connections wherever feasible, in addition to sidewalks, in new residential developments.
- **Zoning Ordinance and Township Amenities Plan.** Utilize the Township Amenities Plan and Zoning Ordinance to provide for the development of trails.
- **Utility Corridors.** Utilize utility corridors easements (e.g. ITC, Detroit Edison), where feasible, for development of trails.
- **Water and Drainage Corridors.** Identify unique and valuable open spaces along water and drainage corridors that are ideal for trails but less suitable for other land uses.
- **Update Greenways and Trails Master Plan.** Update Greenways and Trails Master Plan, as needed, to show new trails.

Strategy 2.4 – Funding: Seek and explore all options for funding the construction and operational costs of greenways and trails, including the General Fund, Van Buren Civic Fund, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Community Development Block Grant, and the Downtown Development Authority.

- **Grants.** Identify and pursue federal, state and local grants.
- **Public, Private, and Non-Profit Partnerships.** Establish strong partnerships with public, private, and non-profit entities.
- **Sponsorships.** Sell greenway and trail sponsorships, where appropriate.
- **Detail Costs.** Prepare an implementation strategy for each of the greenway routes with an estimated cost associated with each project.

Strategy 2.5 - Design: Create greenway and trail standards and design guidelines based on operational costs and in meeting user desires for a quality experience.

- **Trail Design and Maintenance.** Implement greenway and trail design and maintenance standards for based on the type of surface and location.
- **Wayfinding.** Develop a greenway and trail signage program and way finding system to access greenways and trails within the Township.

Section 3: Recreation Programs

Goal: Develop core recreation services to maximize the Township resources and support other service providers in the region by working together to serve people of all ages and abilities to enjoy recreation opportunities both passive and active.

Strategy 3.1 – Maintain Core Recreation Services: Confirm core recreation services the Township will be maintained and developed over the next ten years such as adult fitness and wellness, special events, 50+ adult programs, nature and environmental programs, and special interest clubs.

- Develop and maintain a business plan for each core service to determine its overall direction, cost, staffing needs, and operational impact.
- Develop and maintain social networking opportunities as a way of increasing park and program awareness to users in the Township.
- Develop and maintain online registration capabilities.
- Develop and maintain performance measures for each program and service to determine the outcomes achieved.

Strategy 3.2 – Policies: Develop and maintain policies for pricing of services, partnership development, and earned income development as it applies to recreation programs and services.

- Increase partnerships particularly with the schools and sports groups.
- Involve similar providers in a roundtable programming discussion on a regular basis to limit duplication and raise awareness on how each agency operates.

Strategy 3.3 – Staff Management: Evaluate staff hours dedicated toward managing recreation programs that promote Van Buren Township parks.

- Establish and maintain a plan for what programs require what type of person to lead the program as it applies to part-time, seasonal, or contracted instructor.
- Establish and maintain a working arrangement with other service providers and the school districts to help deliver programs where appropriate.
- Price services effectively to create revenue to help support increasing recreation program offerings along with a pricing policy is in place.
- Tie staff hours to core services to build strong support for each program being developed.
- Develop and maintain a maintenance plan for each park that includes the anticipated staffing needs and allocated number of hours.

Strategy 3.4 – Volunteers: Develop a strong volunteer program to help staff in managing events, programs and parks.

- Develop and maintain a volunteer training and recruitment program for volunteers.
- Establish and maintain job descriptions and duties in the park system for volunteers to help deliver services and support staff work in the Township.
- Develop and maintain a volunteer recognition program to recognize volunteer efforts in the Township parks and programs.

Strategy 3.5 – Raise Awareness of Programs Offered: Create a stronger awareness program for the program services offered through Van Buren Township.

- Develop and maintain a stronger, more viable website to inform the community of activities and events upcoming.
- Encourage broad distribution of the Parks and Recreation newsletter.
- Improve the marketing efforts to reach various age groups and user groups through various media methods.
- Improve awareness and branding of programs for the Park and Recreation Department to build recognition, advocacy to energize the community to spend time in the parks and enroll in the programs.
- Develop and maintain an annual program event schedule that is published monthly to build strong awareness of upcoming programs and events and post on the Department's website.

Strategy 3.6 – Educational Institution Partnerships: Continue to foster relationships with Van Buren Public Schools, private schools and charter schools to use their existing facilities to offer more programs.

- Consider and implement programs using Van Buren Public School facilities.
- Consider and implement programs using private and charter facilities.
- Invite school officials to Recreation Committee meetings.
- Provide therapeutic recreation in schools.

Strategy 3.7 – Program Standards and Performance Measures: Develop program standards and performance measures for recreation programs to demonstrate consistency and value on the delivery of services to the community.

- Develop five performance indicators for each core program area.
- Teach and train staff how to track and evaluate these performance indicators.
- Use additional customer feedback methods beyond post evaluations that include non-user intercept surveys to meet their needs and expectations.

Section 4: Finance

Goal: Prioritize funding streams to create options for the Township to access and meet the unmet needs of the community for parks, recreation, and facilities for the future.

Strategy 4.1 – Financial Performance and Sustainability: Develop and implement financial tools to ensure financial performance and sustainability through cost of service analysis for significant operations of the Department such as maintenance management.

- Track how the Township will spend its money in the future on parks, recreation facilities and programs.
- Inform the public on the resources available and how the Township will spend its money in the future on parks, recreation facilities and programs.

Strategy 4.2 – Capital Improvement Program: Develop a capital improvement program for the Township that follows what the community desires in the most cost-effective manner as possible.

- Prioritize the capital improvements based on cost benefit, greatest impact and operational costs.

Strategy 4.3 – Pricing and Sponsorship: Develop earned income policy to leverage opportunities to increase resources to develop the parks and recreation system to its highest capability.

- Develop a pricing policy and earned income policy.
- Develop a partnership and sponsorship policy.

Strategy 4.4 – Management Model: Continue to review the parks and recreation management model and consider adopting alternative models as needed.

- Teach and train staff how to manage in the business context while managing a social product to achieve financial sustainability.
- Seek “seed” money from a foundation to help support the goals and vision of the Master Plan’s capital and operational costs.
- Develop a greenways and trails foundation to help raise dollars for needed capital and operational projects.

Strategy 4.5 - Fees: Develop a pricing policy for how to incorporate appropriate fees to help offset operational costs.

- Develop criteria for core and non-core services.
- Establish what is a public, merit, and private service and the level of benefit a user receives over a general taxpayer.

Strategy 4.6 – Business Plan: Develop and maintain a business plan for the Park and Recreation system in the Township each year on how the Department will manage itself through cost of services and appropriate pricing, with measurable outcomes for parks, recreation amenities, and program services. (See Appendix D for Comprehensive Analysis)

- Align the business plan to the strategic master plan to ensure operational and capital dollars are in place to support the programs or facilities being developed.
- Develop and maintain a pro-forma on the cash flow of the system to manage sustainability.
- Develop and maintain efficiency practices throughout the system to maximize the Parks and Recreation resources.

Strategy 4.7 – Funding Sources: Seek and explore all options for funding of parks and recreation projects, including the General Fund, Van Buren Civic Fund, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Community Development Block Grant, and the Downtown Development Authority.

- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).** Pursue CDBG grants to provide funding for projects in low-moderate income areas, improve ADA accessibility, and allow for better access to parks and recreation opportunities.
- **Downtown Development Authority (DDA).** Use funding generated in the Downtown Development Authority district to generate new activity, improve livability, and provide parks and recreation opportunities in the district.
- **Grants.** Identify and pursue all applicable federal, state and local grants, including MNRTF.
- **Public, Private, and Non-Profit Partnerships.** Establish and maintain strong partnerships with public, private, and non-profit entities.
- **Sponsorships.** Seek sponsorships for facilities and programs where appropriate.

C. Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan

This section summarizes the overall system recommendations as well as specific improvements to individual parks. Some are multi-year efforts that will involve time and coordination, while others are park improvements that require largely monetary investment. Table 5.1 – Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan incorporates the top recommendations that require capital improvement in the next five years for planning purposes.

Priorities should be reviewed on an annual basis and adjusted to respond to updated findings and identification of funding opportunities. In particular, costs should be closely monitored, as the proposed plan estimates are in 2016 dollars and are strictly preliminary. Actual costs for each project will be more specifically determined as site surveys, programming elements, and engineering plans are developed if applicable, as well as further analysis of the proposed improvement. If funding levels are lower than required to implement the Plan based on the schedule provided, the implementation could be stretched over additional years.

It should be noted that the CIP is based on the existing financial resources of the Township. This helps to ensure that the projects are aligned with the operational and financial realities of the Township's resources and are not simply a pure reflection of community desires. The Township has taken a comprehensive approach of preparing the Master Plan to fully evaluate and prioritize projects based on the cost benefit, impact to the community, and operational costs.

Table 5.1: Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan

Year	Project	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources
Year 1 2016	**Van Buren Park** – Add gravel or paved areas for vehicle parking paved area (will be ADA compliant)	$50,000	General Fund, CDBG, MDNR
	All Parks and Community Center – Provide location and wayfinding signage	$5,000	MDOT/Van Buren Civic Fund
	Van Buren Park – Demolish, reinforce, or relocate Pavilion #4 on the east side of the park, and renovate Pavilions #1-#3	$100,000	General Fund, CDBG, MDNR
Year 2 2017	**Van Buren Park** – Restore access at east entrance of park via Denton Road, to ensure two access points to park during future construction of "saddle" area	$500,000	MDOT, MDNR, CDBG
	Van Buren Park – Playground replacements and additions	$75,000	General Fund, CDBG, MDNR
	Van Buren Park – Construct a performance venue, such as a gazebo, stage, or similar structure	$125,000	General Fund, CDBG, MDNR
	Non-Motorized Pathway System – Construct first phase of Township portion of Iron Belle Trail	$100,000	CDBG, MDNR
	Riggs Park – Monarch butterfly way station	$5,000	General Fund, MDNR
Year 3 2018	**Van Buren Park** – Pave the trail encircling the park	$100,000	General Fund, CDBG, MDNR
	Van Buren Park – Playground replacements/addition	$75,000	General Fund, CDBG, MDNR
	Van Buren Park Basketball Courts – Renovate with full court basketball courts	$150,000	CDBG, MDNR
	Park Development – Development of future park at 15000 Haggerty	TBD	MDNR
	Park Development – Development of future park at 15080 Elwell	TBD	MDNR
	Non-Motorized Pathway System – Continue construction of non-motorized paths, connecting existing trails including the Iron Belle Trail	$250,000	CDBG, MDNR, MDOT, Community Foundation, Private, DDA
	French Landing Park – Repair bridge at Edison Lake Road for use of a trailhead for the Iron Belle Trail	$400,000	CDBG, MDNR

Year	Project	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Year 4 2019	**Van Buren Park Restrooms** – Improve user friendliness of restrooms including upgrading the interior and exterior lights, and making necessary improvements for ADA accessibility	$25,000	General Fund, CDBG
	Wi-Fi – Van Buren Park and Riggs Park (high speed)	$15,000	General Fund, CDBG
	Riggs Park – Repair and seal asphalt walk paths	$50,000	General Fund
	Quirk Park – Repair and seal asphalt walk paths	$50,000	General Fund
	Van Buren Park – Construct floating swimming docks	$10,000	MDNR
	Van Buren Park – Stabilize "saddle" area with proper height guard rails on both sides for safety	$300,000	General Fund, CDBG, MDNR
	Non-Motorized Pathway System – Continue construction of non-motorized paths, connecting existing trails including the Iron Belle Trail	$250,000	CDBG, MDNR, MDOT, Community Foundation, Private
Year 5 2020	**Non-Motorized Pathway System** – Continue construction of non-motorized paths, connecting existing trails including the Iron Belle Trail, and establish a connection between the Metro Parkway Trail within Lower Huron Metropark and the I-275 Metro Trail	$250,000	CDBG, MDNR, MDOT, Community Foundation, Private
	Van Buren Park – Provide access for boat docking and launching, and rental of recreation equipment	$300,000	LWCF
	French Landing Park – Construct a new fishing pier	$175,000	LWCF
	Splash Pad – Build new facility for public enjoyment depending on feasibility and maintenance	$80,000	General Fund, User Fees, Community Foundation, Private
	Van Buren Park and/or Quirk Park – Tennis courts, which can also be used for pickleball	$50,000	General Fund, CDBG, MDNR
	Community Center – Recreation department/multi-purpose room repairs and improvements	$50,000	General Fund
	Van Buren Park – Restoration of existing beach area or relocation of beach, including slope restoration and repair the road down to the beach with guardrails. If relocated, repurpose existing beach area for more suitable use	$200,000	General Fund, CDBG, MDNR, U of M
	Van Buren Park – Stabilization of peninsula area at southeast end of park including U of M facility	$250,000	General Fund, CDBG, MDNR, U of M
	Dog Park – Acquire land for off-leash dog activity	$200,000	General Fund, User Fees, Community Foundation, Private

MDNR = Michigan Department of Natural Resources
MDOT = Michigan Department of Transportation
DDA = Van Buren Township Downtown Development Authority
CDBG = Community Development Block Grant
LWCF = Land and Water Conservation Fund
U of M = University of Michigan

Appendix A - Survey and Public Input Results

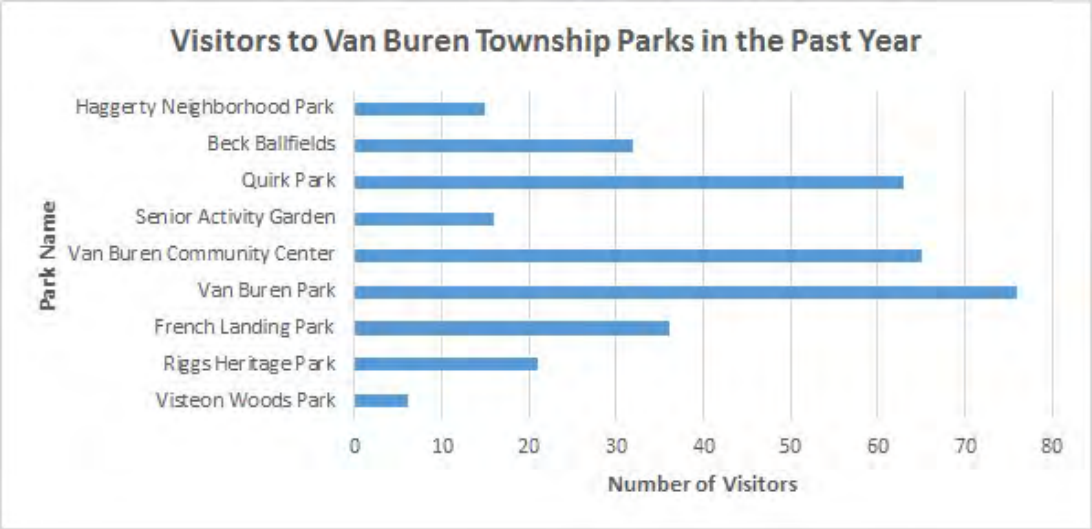
A survey was posted on the Township website from October 26 through December 18, asking people for feedback on their experiences and opinions of the current parks and recreation offerings and any improvements they would like to see. The survey consisted of 12 questions regarding several aspects of the parks and recreation facilities, programs, and services offered by the Township. The survey received a total of 124 responses.

Survey Results

Question 1: Please tell us about your experience with the following Township parks and recreation facilities.

Have you or a member of your household visited this park in the past year?

Park	'Yes' Answers
Van Buren Park	76
Van Buren Community Center	65
Quirk Park	63
French Landing Park	36
Beck Ball Fields	32
Riggs Heritage Park	21
Senior Activity Garden	16
Haggerty Neighborhood Park	15
Visteon Woods Park	6

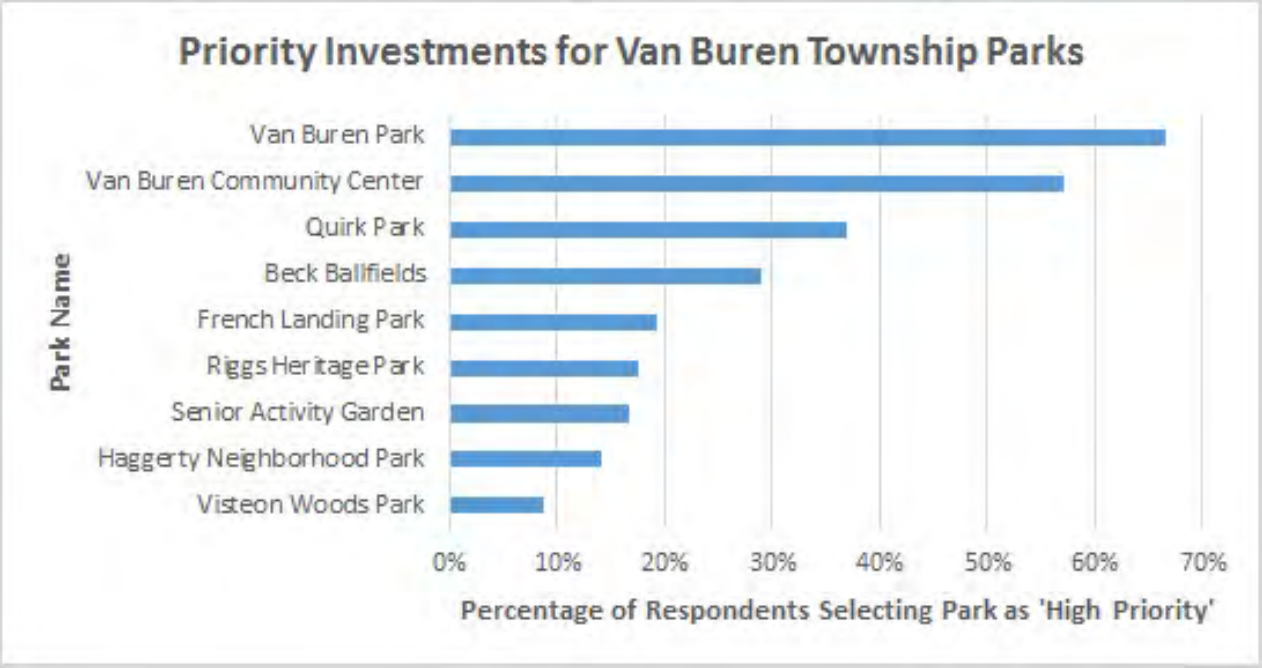


How satisfied are you with your experience at this park or recreation facility?

Park	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Haggerty Neighborhood Park	2	8	1	4
Beck Ball Fields	13	13	3	0
Quirk Park	23	32	1	0
Senior Activity Garden	7	8	0	0
Van Buren Community Center	30	23	6	0
Van Buren Park	18	42	5	1
French Landing Park	9	16	4	2
Riggs Heritage Park	7	10	1	0
Visteon Woods Park	1	5	0	0

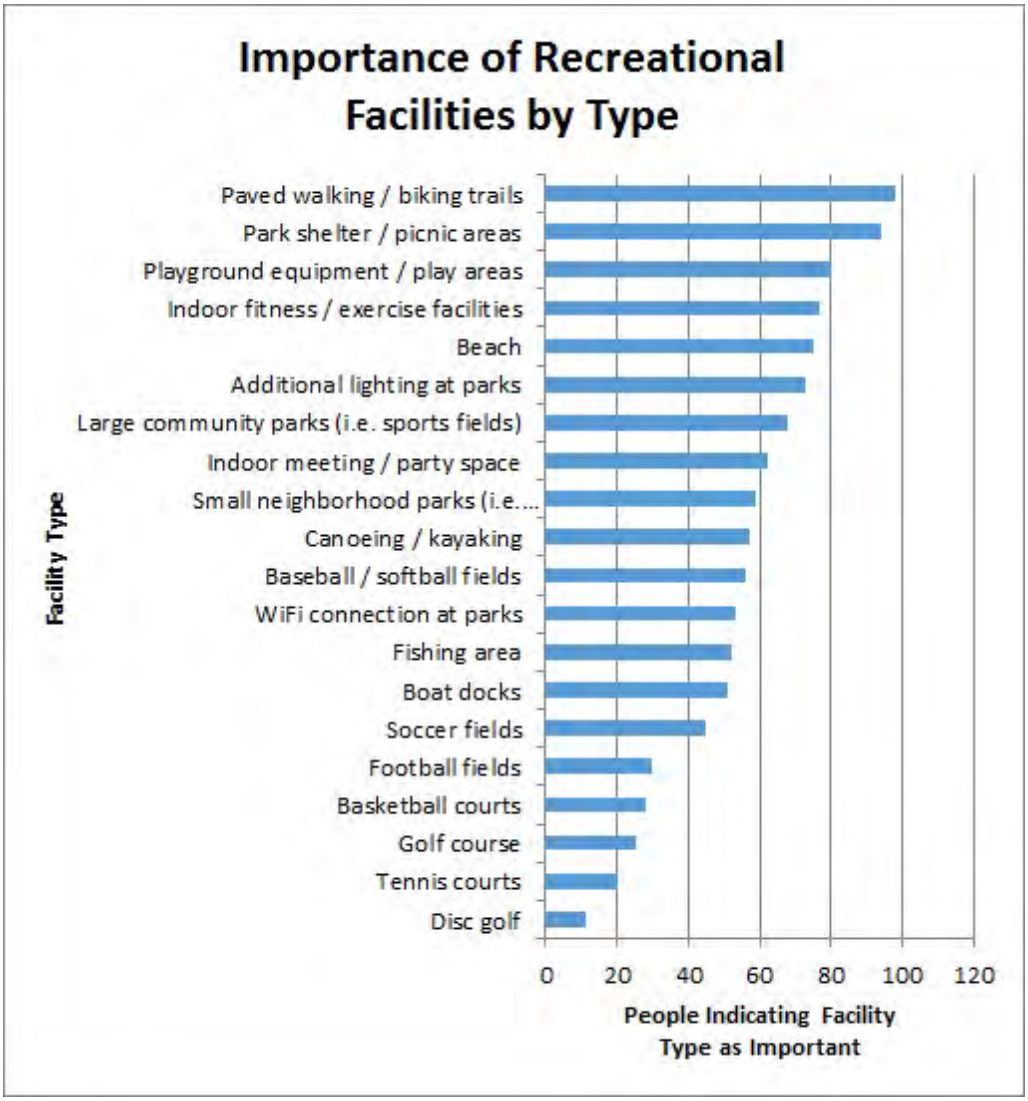
Question 2: Which parks or recreation facilities do you think should be the highest priorities for investments over the next five years? Check all that apply.

Park	Percentage of Respondents Indicating Park as 'High Priority'
Van Buren Park	67%
Van Buren Community Center	57%
Quirk Park	37%
Beck Ball Fields	29%
French Landing Park	19%
Riggs Heritage Park	18%
Senior Activity Garden	17%
Haggerty Neighborhood Park	14%
Visteon Woods Park	9%



Question 3: Please identify the importance of the following recreational facilities to you and members of your household.

Facility	Important	Neutral	Not Important
Paved walking / biking trails	98	14	7
Park shelter / picnic areas	94	15	5
Playground equipment / play areas	80	28	9
Indoor fitness / exercise facilities	77	25	13
Beach	75	24	14
Additional lighting at parks	73	25	10
Large community parks (i.e. sports fields)	68	33	12
Indoor meeting / party space	62	34	17
Small neighborhood parks (i.e. playgrounds, pocket parks)	59	43	12
Canoeing / kayaking	57	47	12
Baseball / softball fields	56	42	13
WiFi connection at parks	53	31	25
Fishing area	52	41	19
Boat docks	51	40	23
Soccer fields	45	50	18
Football fields	30	50	25
Basketball courts	28	58	23
Golf course	25	41	44
Tennis courts	20	59	30
Disc golf	11	54	43



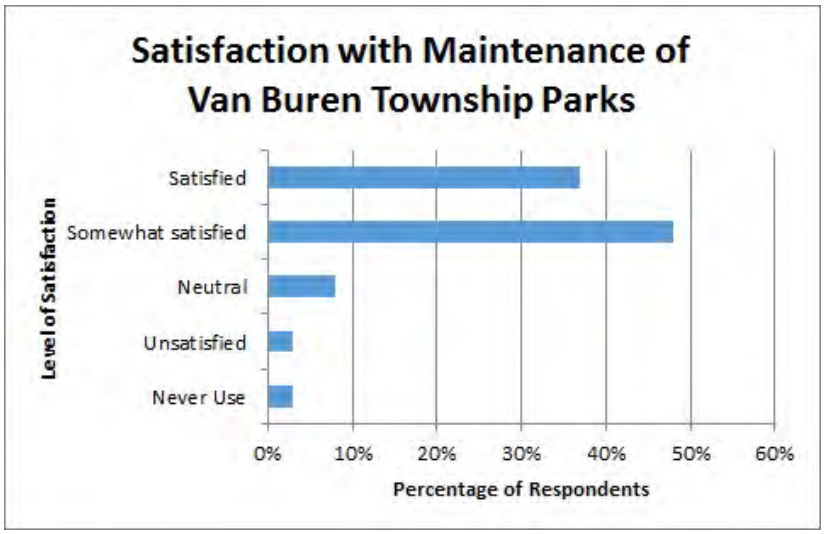
Question 4: What other public or private recreational facilities inside or outside the Township do you use? Please list.

This was an open-ended question. People indicated a variety of parks in nearby communities and throughout Southeast Michigan. There were 69 responses to this question. Some of the most frequent answers given included the following parks:

Park	Responses
Lower Huron Metro Park and other Metro Parks	30
Romulus Athletic Center	11
Splash pads in Canton	7

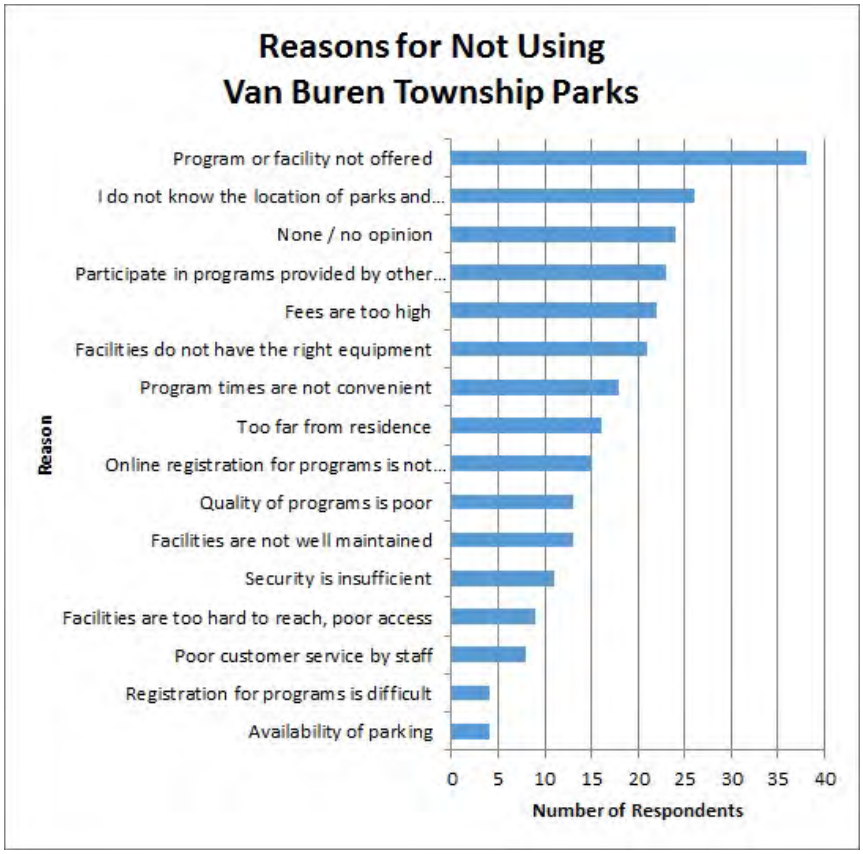
Question 5: Overall, how satisfied are you with the appearance, maintenance, and cleanliness of the parks and recreation facilities?

Level of Satisfaction	Responses	Percentage
Satisfied	44	37%
Somewhat satisfied	58	48%
Neutral	10	8%
Unsatisfied	4	3%
Never Use	4	3%



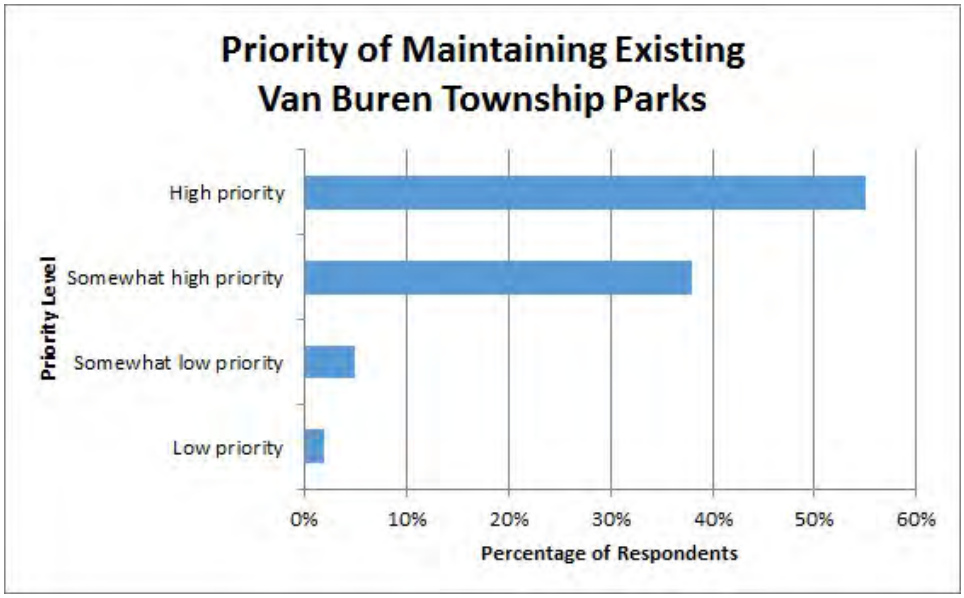
Question 6: Please check all the reasons that prevent you or members of your household from using any of the Township's recreation facilities, programs, or parks.

Reason	Responses
Program or facility not offered	38
I do not know the location of parks and facilities	26
None / no opinion	24
Participate in programs provided by other communities or organizations	23
Fees are too high	22
Facilities do not have the right equipment	21
Program times are not convenient	18
Too far from residence	16
Online registration for programs is not offered	15
Facilities are not well maintained	13
Quality of programs is poor	13
Security is insufficient	11
Facilities are too hard to reach, poor access	9
Poor customer service by staff	8
Availability of parking	4
Registration for programs is difficult	4



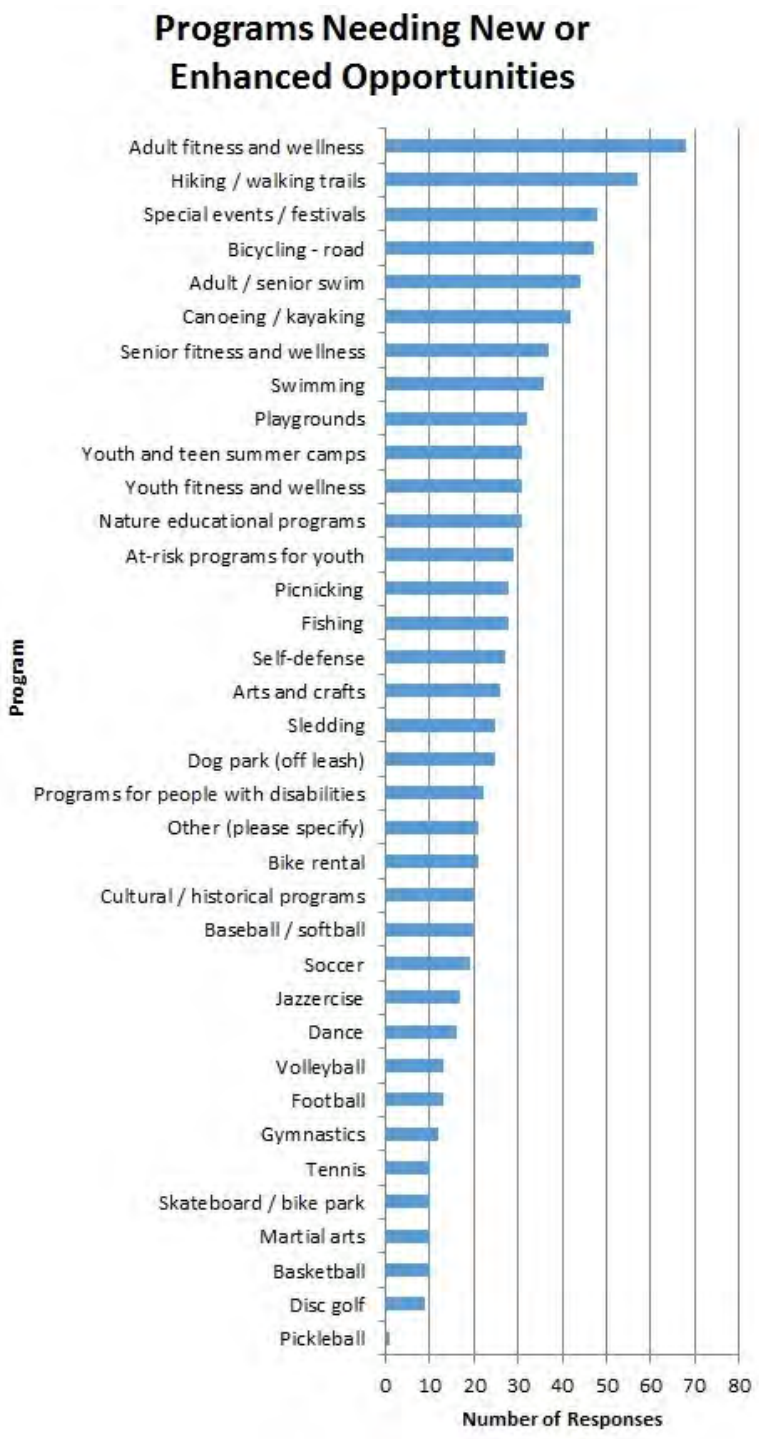
Question 7: How high of a priority should the Township place on maintaining existing parks and recreation facilities?

Priority Level	Responses	Percentage
High priority	67	55%
Somewhat high priority	46	38%
Somewhat low priority	6	5%
Low priority	2	2%



Question 8: Please identify which of the following activities, programs, or facilities need NEW or ENHANCED opportunities. Check all that apply.

Activity, Program, or Facility	Responses
Adult fitness and wellness	68
Hiking / walking trails	57
Special events / festivals	48
Bicycling - road	47
Adult / senior swim	44
Canoeing / kayaking	42
Senior fitness and wellness	37
Swimming	36
Playgrounds	32
Nature educational programs	31
Youth fitness and wellness	31
Youth and teen summer camps	31
At-risk programs for youth	29
Fishing	28
Picnicking	28
Self-defense	27
Arts and crafts	26
Dog park (off leash)	25
Sledding	25
Programs for people with disabilities	22
Bike rental	21
Other (please specify)	21
Baseball / softball	20
Cultural / historical programs	20
Soccer	19
Jazzercise	17
Dance	16
Football	13
Volleyball	13
Gymnastics	12
Basketball	10
Martial arts	10
Skateboard / bike park	10
Tennis	10
Disc golf	9
Pickleball	1



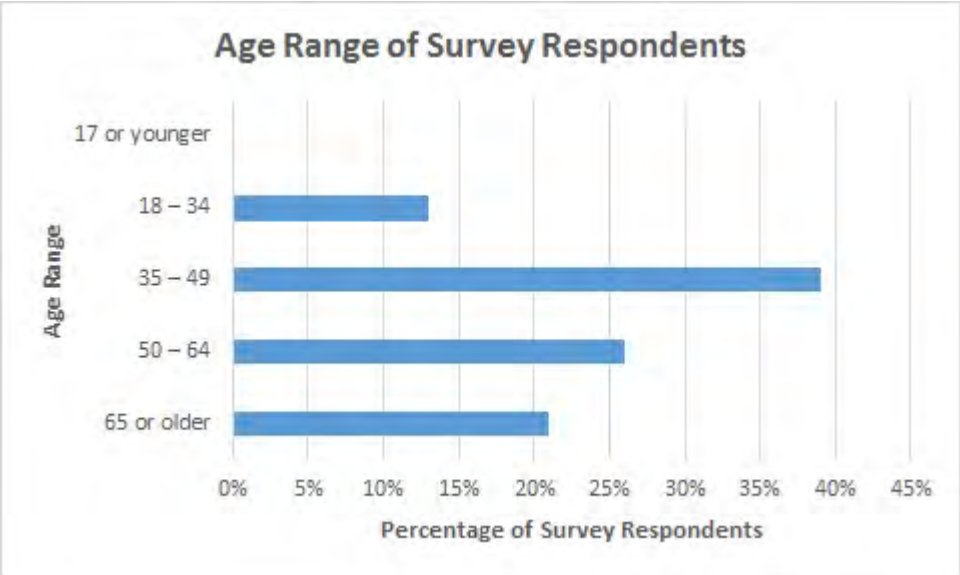
Question 9: If you could introduce one new amenity or program to any park or recreation facility in Van Buren Charter Township, what would it be?

This open-ended question received a total of 66 responses. The most frequent answers given included: biking and walking paths or similar facilities, splash pads or other water recreation facilities, and a community recreation center similar to the Romulus Athletic Center. Some of the other ideas included a dog park, nature center, educational programming, launch area for kayaking or canoeing, and a pool.

Amenity or Program	Responses
Biking and walking paths	12
Splash pads or other water recreation facilities	11
Community recreation center similar to Romulus Athletic Center	8

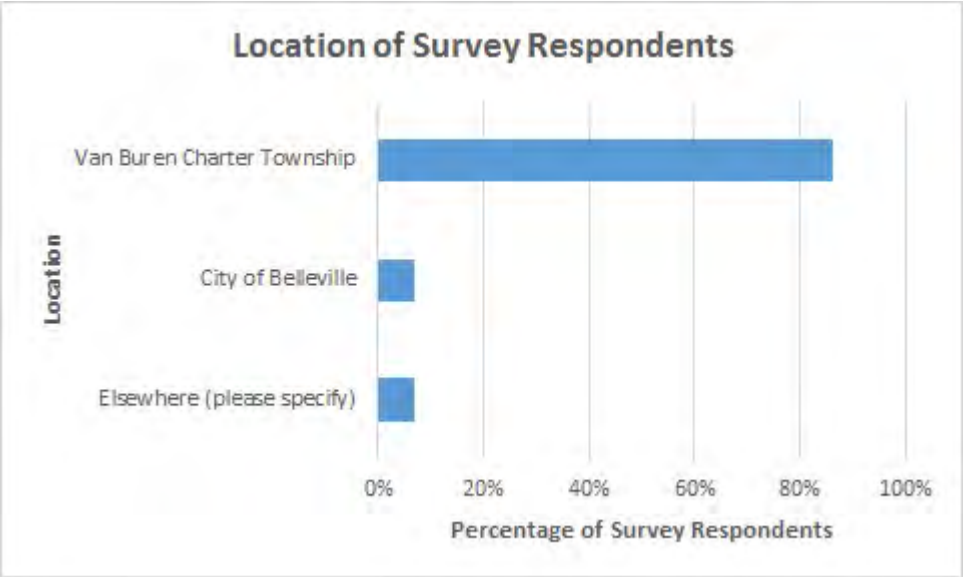
Question 10: What is your age?

Age Range	Responses	Percentage
17 or younger	0	0%
18 – 34	16	13%
35 – 49	48	39%
50 – 64	32	26%
65 or older	26	21%



Question 11: Where do you currently live?

Location	Responses	Percentage
Van Buren Charter Township	105	86%
City of Belleville	9	7%
Elsewhere (please specify)	8	7%



Question 12: Van Buren Charter Township thanks you for participating in this survey! Please feel free to leave any additional comments for the Parks and Recreation Plan that were not addressed in the above questions.

This was an open-ended question and received 27 answers. Some people used this space to echo ideas reflected in the above questions, while other people expressed more specific concerns related to the parks and recreation programs and facilities. The complete responses to this question are listed below.

Please get rid of the Riggs park mosquito breeding pond.

Bike lanes are all over other cities. It's a great way bring the community to downtown and promote healthy living.

I would volunteer to help in the development of new bike paths and trails. Dave Sucher 734-260-2473

Environmental quality of the lake.

Why couldn't this have been accessed from the twp web site instead of a pay extra survey site??????????????

Restrooms should be available at the same time every day in the parks

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Check out this site www.uspbl.com IMO they will need a second park so why not put it next to national rv !

Interested in hall rental overlooking the lake. Maybe renovating a lake view house to be like "Van Buren Clubhouse" that would bring in money to the community for rental (receptions, graduation, anniversary etc).

Bathroom maintenance is key for women.

Please add bike lanes and replace Huron river drive from 5 - points to ransonville road

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Thank you! Great job!

I think the Senior Center is not a top priority and it should be. Seniors need to stay active to stay healthy, and opportunities are not that great to encourage participation in classes you offer.

I would like to see Township and City get along more and use the existing structures instead of tearing them down for no reason.

I also think that having more on the water would be nice. We have this beautiful lake, with really no good way to see it. There is Johnny's restaurant- but that's the closest that we have to actually having nice dining/banquet facilities on the late. I got married last year, and was looking for a venue on the lake. I wanted to be held in Belleville so bad, but we just do not have any kind of banquet halls that are nice. No great places to take pictures on the water (that I'm aware of). It just seems like such a waste. However, I think that what you guys do during the summer and over the holidays is so beautiful. I couldn't be happier about our downtown. I have lived in Belleville for 6 years, and I am very proud of it. Before that, I lived in Woodhaven, and I love the fact that we have a downtown area. And you decorate so beautifully. Thank you for making our community great. If we could just add a rec center, and more options of fun things on the lake- I think the city could really make a lot of money.

Very well done plan!

You offer several program for the senior citizens (fitness center, computer room), less for anyone else, and traditionally the Senior Citizens are the ones who vote the taxes down.
We need bike/walking trail on Huron River drive
I'm a mom of 4 and I'm sick of driving to other cities to use the splash pad. We don't have a community pool or anything for the kids to cool off during the summer.
We love Van Buren Park but renting a pavilion is not convenient when your guests have to pay $7 to enter. We rent pavillions in Ypsilanti for $80 and guests pay $3 to enter park.
keep up your good work!
DOG PARK!!!!
Look at the communities across the nation that have developed bike trails and bike lanes. Lower crime, better health for their citizens, attractive to new businesses.
Sidewalks please. Thank you!
Keep up the good work and in 3 months from now I will be a Van Buren Township Resident coming from Oakland county since my friend is a resident.
need sidewalks along Belleville road between Ecorse road and Tyler road
The access to the Haggerty Neighborhood Park is hard to find and not well maintained.
Access road to Van Buren Park (beyond the paved road) needs a little attention. After it rains, there is a huge mud puddle in the middle of the access road.

Appendix B- Meeting Notices

Appendix C - Adoption Documentation

C

Appendix D - Funding Sources

General Funding Sources

There are several potential funding sources currently being utilized and many that are available for parks and recreation projects such as parkland improvements and facility upgrades as described below.

Millage

A property tax millage can be used to finance specific parks and recreation projects or to operate recreation facilities. A millage is an effective way to divide costs over time among all of the taxpayers in the Township to provide matching grant funds or finance entire projects. A millage allows more flexibility with how the money is allocated than with a bond. Voter approval is required to put a millage in place.

User Fees

The Township can charge reasonable fees to the users of specific recreation facilities and for enrollment in recreation programs. User fees can provide substantial support for park and recreation facilities and programs. Other Michigan communities have established user fees for the use of swimming pools, tennis courts, lighted athletic fields, and indoor facilities. The Township is a position to begin considering the implementation of user fees with their new active recreation facilities coming on-line soon.

Recreation Bonds

A number of bond programs can be used to finance construction of parks and recreation facilities. *General Obligation Bonds* are issued for specific community projects and may not be used for other purposes. These bonds are usually paid for with property tax revenues. *Revenue Bonds* are issued for construction of public projects that generate revenue. The bonds are then retired by using income generated by the project.

Conservation Easements

A conservation easement is a method of preserving open space that is guaranteed through formal documentation. This technique can also be used to preserve open space if it is not feasible or practical for the Township to acquire the land. Rather than obtaining fee simple, or complete ownership, an organization or community can purchase or acquire by gift an easement to the property.

Public-Private or Public-Public Partnerships

Reduced funding for the public and private sector has created a need for various partnerships between public and private entities as well as between two or more public entities to accommodate specialized large-scale recreation demands. The Township should seek partnerships where available and beneficial.

Donations

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

Foundations

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

Specific Funding Programs

Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF)

MNRTF provides funding assistance for the purchase and development of land for public outdoor recreation and natural resource protection. This fund is directed at creating and improving outdoor recreational opportunities and providing protection to valuable natural resources. The available development grants are between $15,000 and $500,000 and there is no limit on the amount for acquisition projects because they depend upon the value of the property. A local minimum match of 25% is required for all projects. Applications must be postmarked by April 1st for both acquisition and development projects and August 1st for acquisition projects only.

Each year the MDNR encourages communities to submit projects matching the priority project areas for that year. The MDNR priorities for 2016 are the following:

- Great Lakes Shoreline Access Initiative
- Michigan's Iron Belle Trail
- Water Trails

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The LWCF provides funding assistance for communities to acquire and develop land for public outdoor recreation. This fund is directed at community recreation and trail improvements that preserve natural resources. A local match of 50% required for all projects, the minimum request amount is $30,000, and the maximum is $75,000. Projects are evaluated based on project need, applicant history, site and project quality, and alignment with the state's recreation plan (2013-2017 Michigan Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan). The fourth criterion is determined to be primarily trails, community outdoor recreation, green technology in outdoor recreation, universal access, and coordination and cooperation among recreation providers. The MDNR provides recommendations to the National Park Service (NPS) on which applications to fund, and the NPS grants the final approval. Applications are due March 1st for grants.

Transportation Enhancement (TE) Program. The TE program was originally established with the passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) in 1991, the reauthorization of the TEA-21 program in 1998, and finally the authorization of SAFETEA-LU in 2005 authorizing highway safety, transit and other surface transportation programs, including regional pathways and trailway systems. The TE program is a 10 percent set-aside of Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds that are administered by the MDOT Office of Economic Development. Eligible activities include those related to non-motorized transportation, transportation aesthetics, historic preservation, and water quality and wildlife. TE funding requires matching funds of at least 20% of the project cost and must be related to surface transportation.

Urban and Community Forestry Program – Community Forestry Grants. This program provides funds for projects that address the urban forestry needs of municipal governments, schools, nonprofit organizations, and volunteer groups throughout Michigan. These projects may include tree inventories, management plans, tree planting educational workshops and trailing materials, and other maintenance activities. Projects that develop or enhance urban and community forestry resources, such as management and planning, education and training, tree planting, and library resources, are looked upon highly. Applications are due each summer with maximum grant requests of $20,000.

Acknowledgments

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Kacy Smith ..... Administrative Support

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF VAN BUREN
PLANNING COMMISSION
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

The Charter Township of Van Buren Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, September 14, 2016 at 7:30 p.m., in the Board of Trustees Room of Van Buren Township Hall, 46425 Tyler Road, Charter Township of Van Buren, Wayne County, Michigan.

The purpose of this Public Hearing is to hear comments on the proposed Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 2016-2020.

Van Buren Township is preparing a five-year Parks and Recreation Master Plan in accordance with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources requirements. When completed, the plan will serve as a guide for the acquisition and development of Parks and Recreation Department facilities and programs over the next five (5) years.

All interested parties may submit comments in person or in writing to the Parks and Recreation Department, 46425 Tyler Road, Van Buren Township, MI 48111. Please contact the Parks and Recreation Department at 734-699-8926 with questions or comments.

In the spirit of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, individuals with a disability should feel free to contact the Department of Developmental Services, at least seventy-two (72) hours in advance of the meeting, if requesting accommodations.

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