

A photograph of a park bench in a park setting. The bench is made of dark wood and is positioned on a paved path. The ground is covered with fallen yellow and orange leaves, suggesting autumn. In the background, there are green trees and a grassy area. A blue vertical bar is on the left side of the image, and a dark green horizontal bar is at the bottom.

Pennfield Township Parks & Recreation Plan 2023-2027

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Introduction

The Pennfield Township Recreation Plan is the guiding document for the development of new recreational sites and the enhancement of existing recreational amenities within the Township. This plan spells out the types of recreation sought by the Township and its residents as well as how the Township will meet the recreation needs expressed by the citizenry. This document also outlines and catalogs the process undertaken to create the plan. This plan will remain in place for five years or until it is amended.

This plan lays out the future of recreation in Pennfield Township.

Acknowledgements

The Pennfield Planning Commission would like to thank the following organizations for their support in the development of this plan:

- Pennfield Public Schools
- Pennfield Township Board of Trustees
- Calhoun County Department of Community Development
- Southcentral Michigan Planning Council
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources

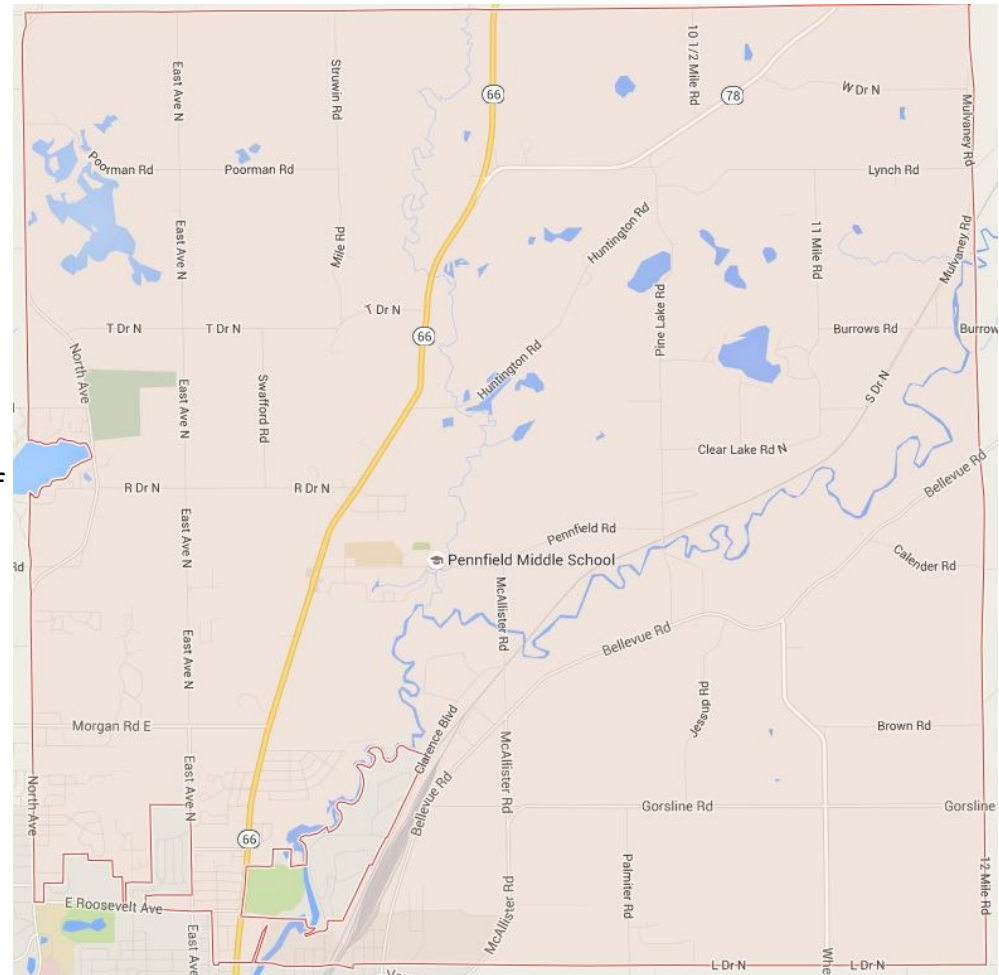
Without the support of these organization, this plan would not have come together and the future of recreation in Pennfield Township would not have a clear definition.

Chapter 1

This plan is designed to provide a roadmap for Township Officials and residents as it relates to the development and maintenance of recreational spaces in Pennfield Township. Pennfield Charter Township (Township) is located in northcentral Calhoun County, Michigan. Calhoun County is located in Southwest Michigan; approximately midway between Detroit and Chicago, near interstate I-94. The Township lies adjacent to the City of Battle Creek to the south-southwest and is also surrounded by Bedford Township to the west, Assyria Township (Barry County) to the north, Convis Township to the east, and Emmett Township to the south. A very small portion of Bellevue Township (Eaton County) borders Pennfield Charter Township in the extreme northeast corner.

The major transportation routes in the Township include M-66, also known as Capital Avenue Northeast, North Avenue, M-78, and Morgan Road. The Township and a majority of the surrounding areas are part of the Battle Creek Metropolitan Statistical Area.

Figure 1: Map of Pennfield Township

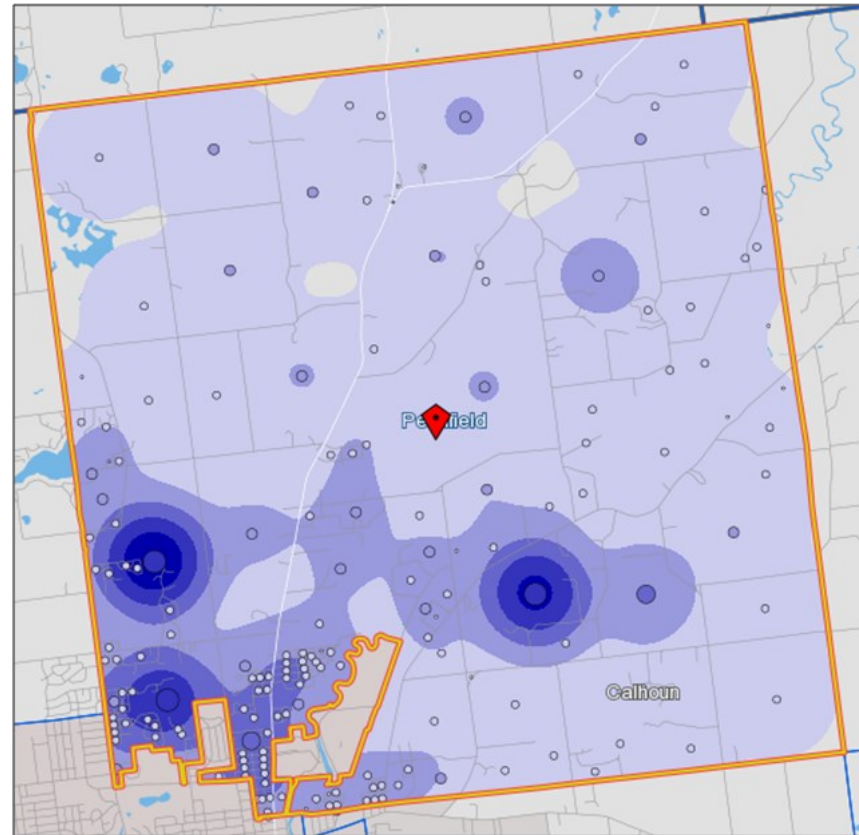


Community Description

The Township encompasses 35.1 square miles. A large portion of the land use in the Township is low density and rural residential with pockets of higher density residential, commercial, and agricultural land use in various locations. Much of the residential development is located in the Southwest portion of the Township, near the City of Battle Creek (see figure 2). Commercial development in the Township predominantly centers located along the main thoroughfares, mainly Capital Avenue. A small number of farms exist in the Township along with numerous woodlots and undeveloped open spaces. Approximately 3% of the total area is open water, including: the Battle Creek River, Wanadoga Creek, Saint Mary's Lake, Pine Lake, and Clear Lake.

The future land use map in the Pennfield Township Master Plan projects future high density residential or commercial activity to occur in the southwestern portion of the Township and along the major transportation corridors, especially M-66. Furthermore, the future land use map projects that about three-quarters of the Township will remain rural residential or agriculture.

Figure 2: Map of Population Concentrations in Pennfield Township



Source: Census on the Map, 2013

Chapter 2

As a charter township, Pennfield Township is governed by a Board of Trustees and administered by a Supervisor and staff. The Board of Trustees is comprised of a Supervisor, Treasurer, Clerk, and four general trustees. Each member of the Board of Trustees is elected by the residents of the Pennfield Township.

The Township does not have a parks and recreation commission. Therefore, the Pennfield Township Planning Commission (Commission) is overseeing the creation of the five-year recreation plan. Commission members are appointed by the Supervisor and approved by the Board of Trustees. Lists of the Pennfield Township Trustees, Planning Commission members, and administrative staff members are on the next page.

The Township is working through potential long-term strategies for providing recreational opportunities to its residents. The long-term strategies include ownership structures and funding mechanisms. If the Township determines that the best long-term structure for the recreation is an independent authority, it will create a Parks and Recreation Commission. Other ownership structures will require different forms of oversight.

Regardless of ownership structure, the Township must consider the funding mechanism. This may include the implementation of user fees, general fund allocations, or use of its Calhoun County Park Millage allocation.

Furthermore, the Township will employ a site-specific funding strategy. When developing a specific site, the Township will develop a unique funding strategy that fits the needs of the site while seeking funding from sources that support the recreational amenities associated with the site.



Administrative Structure

Township Board of Trustees

Kevin Leiter - Supervisor
Kathy Case - Clerk
Deborah Jackson - Treasurer
Paul Anderson - Trustee
Perry Beard - Trustee
Tony Goodman - Trustee
Dave Vandlen - Trustee

Township Planning Commission

Judy Robinson - Chair
Brad Messenger - Vice Chair
Dave Vandlen - Board Representative
Ken Hendrickson - Member
Larry Skelding - Member
Ron Hoerr - Member
Judy Mackinder - Member

Township Administration

Barb Darlington - Code Compliance Officer/Office Manager
Danielle Virgil - Deputy Clerk
Sandy Cummings - Deputy Treasurer
Roger Smith - Assessor
Christin Berry - Utilities Division/Permits Clerk
Shelby Dilley - Utilities Division/Permits Clerk
Tim Smith - Fire Department Chief



Chapter 3

An initial step in providing a framework for long range recreation planning is an inventory and assessment of existing park and open space facilities. Therefore, a comprehensive inventory of recreational opportunities was conducted within Pennfield Charter Township and the area within a 2 mile buffer of the township boundaries.

The two mile buffer was selected for two reasons. First, Pennfield Charter Township does not own or manage any parks. And two, the public survey from 2015 indicated that almost 90% of the respondents were comfortable traveling over two miles to visit a park, leaving slightly more than 10% who would only travel up to 2 miles to visit a park. To understand which parks would be included in this area of travel, the two mile boundary was added to the perimeter of the Township and included in the inventory.

The inventory resulted in three maps with accompanying amenity inventories.

Map one depicts land that is owned by Pennfield Charter Township. The inventory includes current land use and size. This map also includes land owned by other agencies that might be suitable for future park development. These parcels are primarily owned by Consumers Energy Company and the Grand Trunk Western Railroad Company. Among this inventory are also parcels owned by other agencies involved in resource conservation and several non-profit organizations that may be interested in patterning on future recreation projects.

Map two shows school locations that provide valuable recreation opportunities for residents since Pennfield does not own any parkland. School grounds account for approximately 380 acres in the study area and provide various facilities such as playgrounds and athletic fields. The use of school property and facilities, however, offers limited public access which is dependent on each individual school district's policies that often prohibit use during school hours.

Inventory of Existing Parks, Natural Areas, Recreation Facilities, & Resources

Map three includes municipally owned parks that exist within the study area described above. The majority are owned and operated by the City of Battle Creek and three by Calhoun County.

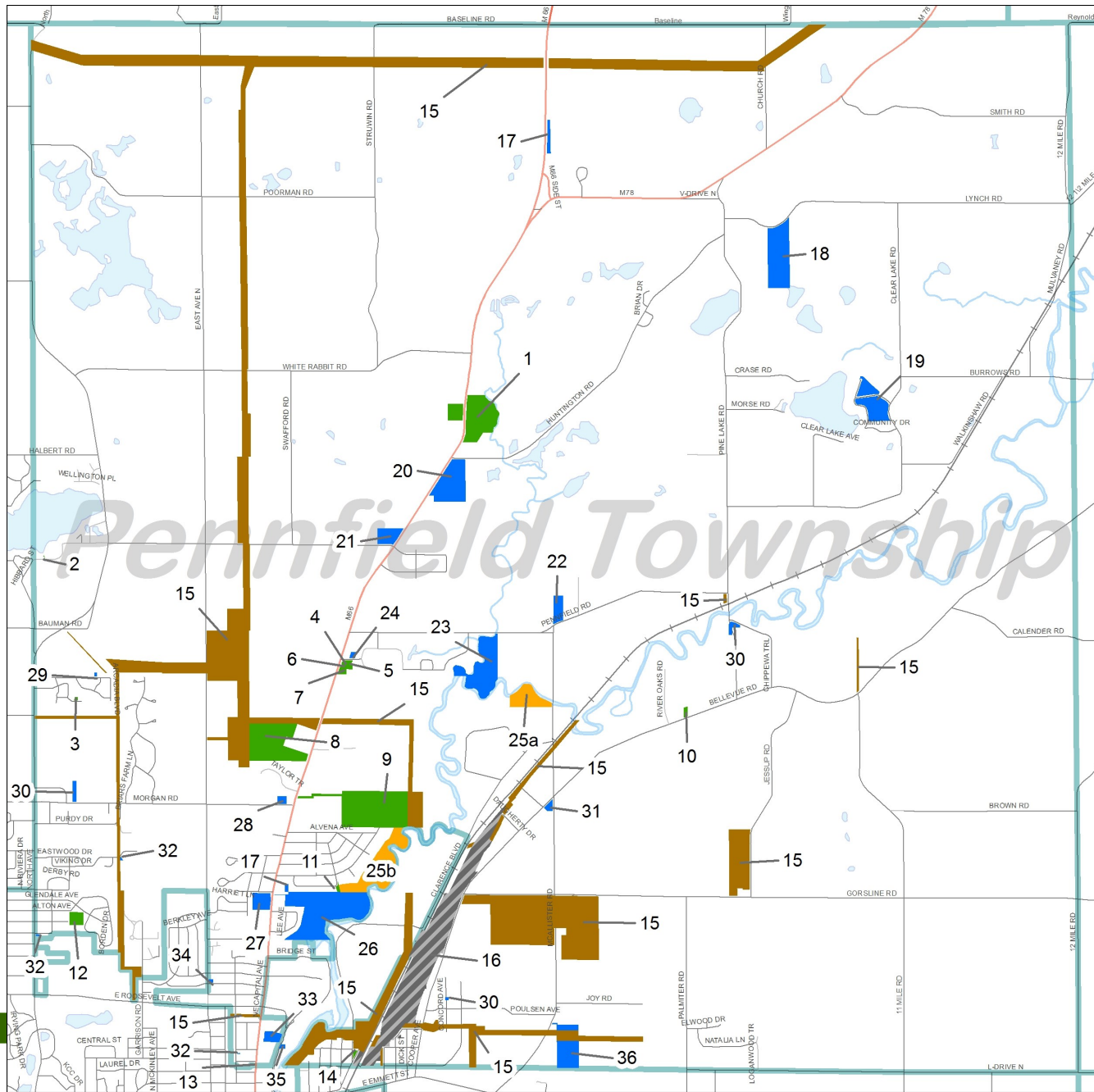
The City of Battle Creek parks within the two mile boundary vary in size and offer a wide range of passive and active recreational activities. Bailey Park (which is the closest recreational opportunity for the majority of Township residents) houses a multi-field baseball complex, multiple playground structures (including a universal play structure), access to the 40+ miles of Linear Trail, as well as outdoor volleyball and shuffle board courts that are among the amenities found at this location.

The County-owned facilities that fall within the study area include Ott Biological Preserve, Kimball Pines Park, and the Calhoun County Trailway. This accounts for over 400 acres of hiking, biking, and picnic opportunities.

This map also includes the Trailways and golf course that are within this area.

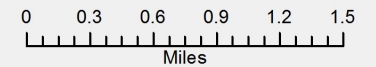


Inventories continued



MAP 1

Potential Recreation Locations



- Pennfield Township Owned
- Calhoun Conservation District
- Consumers Energy Company
- Grand Trunk Western Railroad
- Other

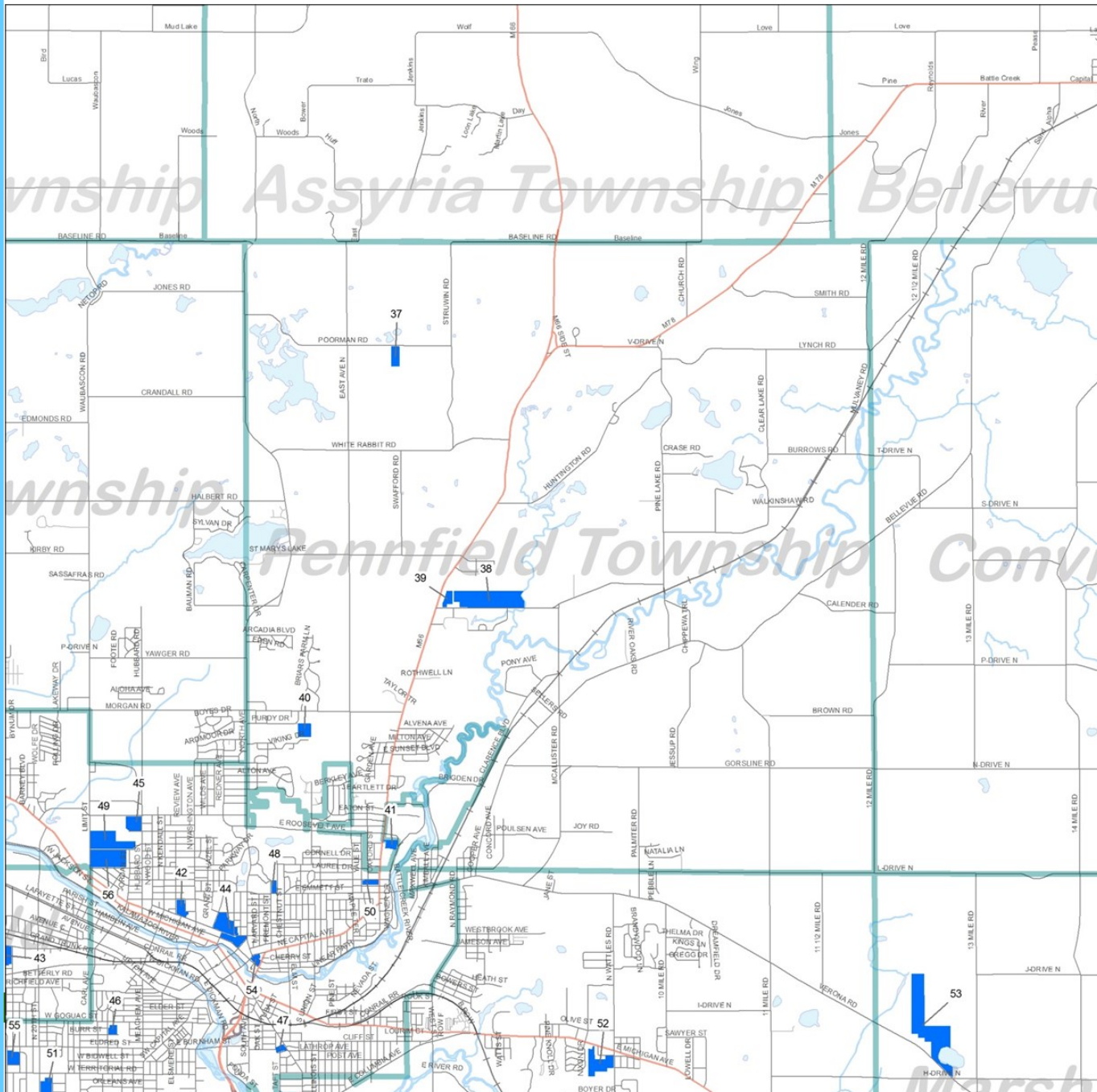


Created by Calhoun County GIS, 2015
Source: Calhoun County 2015

Table 1:
Inventory of
Potential
Recreation
Locations

Map ID	Property Address	Owner	Acres
1	21864 Capital Ave NE	Pennfield Charter Township	31.4
2	St. Marys Lake Rd	Pennfield Charter Township	0.1
3	239 Eden Rd	Pennfield Charter Township	0.2
4	Primrose Trail	Pennfield Charter Township	0.7
5	132 Primrose Trail	Pennfield Charter Township	0.3
6	20300 Capital Ave NE	Pennfield Charter Township	1.2
7	20260 Capital Ave NE	Pennfield Charter Township	0.9
8	19785 Capital Ave NE	Pennfield Charter Township	36.3
9	Capital Ave NE	Pennfield Charter Township	53.1
10	9745 Bellevue Rd	Pennfield Charter Township	0.8
11	311 Dream Dr	Pennfield Charter Township	0.5
12	230 Alton	Pennfield Charter Township	3.9
13	881 Capital Ave NE	Pennfield Charter Township	0.1
14	Brigden (Park)	Pennfield Charter Township	0.4
15	Several properties	Consumers Energy Company	717.4
16		Grand Trunk Western Railroad Company	114.2
17	Capital Ave NE	Michigan Department of Transportation	2.8
18	Lynch Rd	Michigan Nature Association	45.9
19	Community Dr	Clear Lake Recreational Park	17.2
20	21342 Capital Ave NE	Rhema Word Outreach Center	23.5
21	7979 St. Marys Lake Rd	United Presbyterian Church	7.2
22	9037 Pennfield Rd	Grace Community Church	5.5
23	Pennfield Rd	Soutwest Michigan Land Conservation	30.2
24	115 Primrose Trail	Calhoun County Community MHA	0.8
25 A	McAllister Road	Calhoun Conservation District	13.2
25 B		Calhoun Conservation District	32.7
26		Calhoun County Water Resources/Pennfield Drain 1 & 2	56.7
27	1625 Capital Ave NE	Calvary Baptist Church	6.2
28	7615 Morgan Rd	Sancturay of Praise Church of God	1.5
29	351 Arcadia Blvd	Seventh Day Adventist Church	0.2
30	3 properties listed	Calhoun County Road Department	3.7
31	8938 Bellevue Rd	Christ Alive Church, Inc.	1.4
32	3 properties listed	Calhoun County Land Bank Authority	0.4
33	1021 Wagner Dr	River Walk Community Church	3.6
34	Bradley & East Ave North	Garrison Hills Wesleyan Church	0.3
35	Wagner Dr	City of Battle Creek	0.5
36	292 Mc Allister Dr	Harmony Missionary Baptist Church	15.4


Inventories continued



MAP 2

School Owned Property



 School Owned Property

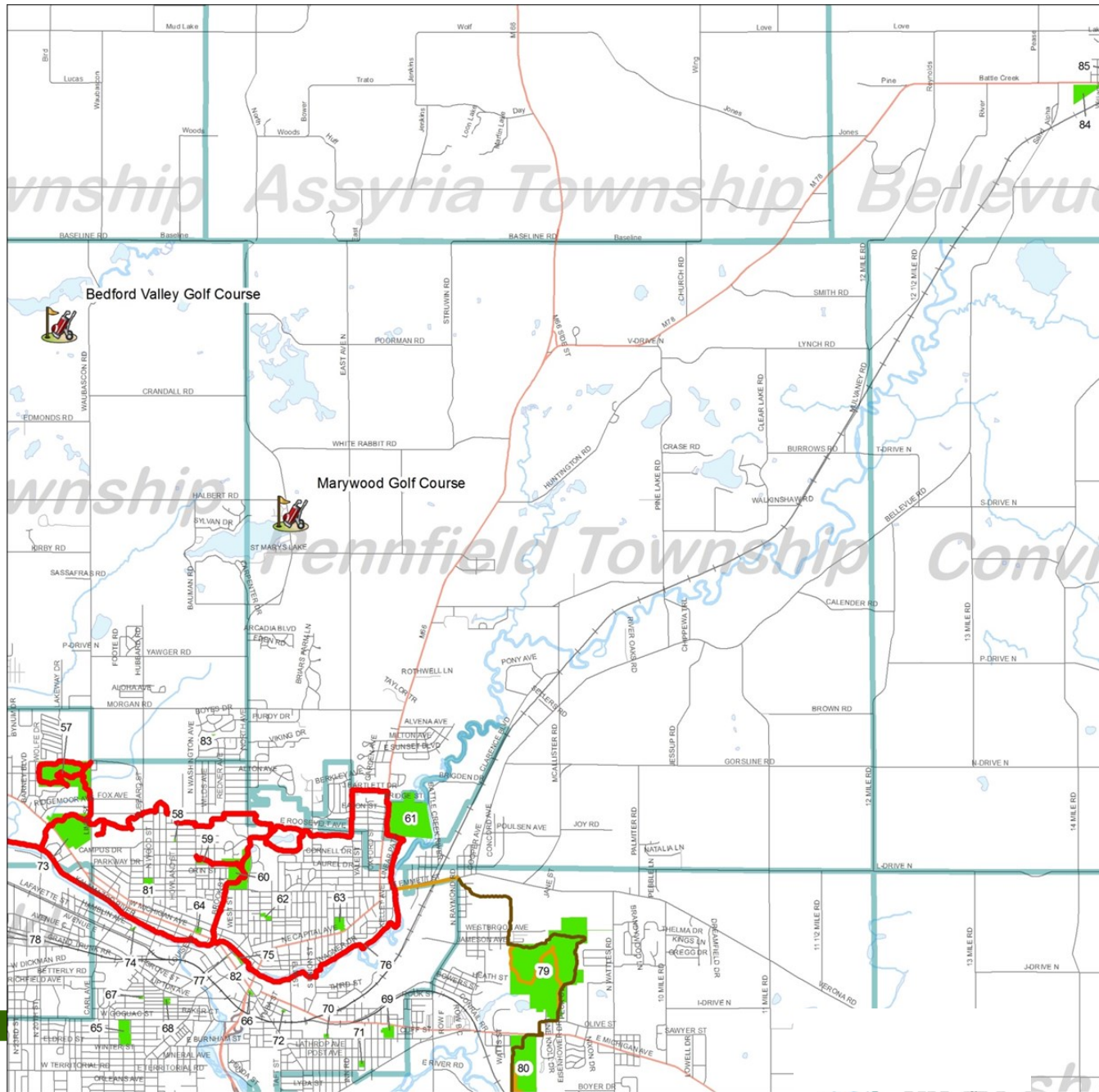


Created by Calhoun County GIS, 2015
Source: Calhoun County 2015

Table 2: Inventory of School Owned Properties within Two Miles of Pennfield Township

Map ID #	Park Name	Address	Ownership	Acres	Accessible to water	Baseball	Basketball	Boat Launch	Community Gardens	Concession Stand	Disc Golf	Fishing	Football	Grills	Handicap Accessible	Hiking	Restrooms	Parking	Pavilion	Playground	Picnic area	Soccer	Shuffleboard	Track	Tennis	Visitor Center	Volleyball	Other	
37	Pennfield North Elementary School	7422 V Drive N (Poorman Rd)	Pennfield Public Schools	9.7														X		X									
38	Pennfield Middle & High Schools	8587 Pennfield Rd	Pennfield Public Schools	64.5		X							X					X				X		X	X				
39	Pennfield Central Elementary School	8465 Pennfield Rd (Dunlap)	Pennfield Public Schools	7.2			X											X		X									
40	Purdy Elementary School	6510 Purdy Dr	Pennfield Public Schools	10.4			X											X		X								Multi purpose field	
41	Battle Creek Christian	1035 Wagner Dr.	Battle Creek Christian School	6.1		X														X									
42	Ann J. Kellogg Elementary School	306 Champion St, Battle Creek	Battle Creek Public Schools	8.4														X		X									
43	Battle Creek Math & Science Center	171 West Michigan Ave	Battle Creek Public Schools	22.5														X		X									
44	Battle Creek Central High School	100 W VanBuren St.	Battle Creek Public Schools	29.1		X	X											X										Plaza area with seating	
45	Dudley STEM School	308 W Roosevelt St	Battle Creek Public Schools	12.8														X						X	X			Football	
46	Coburn Elementary	39 Fairhome Ave.	Battle Creek Public Schools	29.0																									
47	Franklin Elementary	20 Newark Ave.	Battle Creek Public Schools	3.3														X		X									
48	Fremont Elementary	115 E. Emmett St.	Battle Creek Public Schools	3.7														X		X									
49	Northwestern Middle School	176 Limit St.	Battle Creek Public Schools	35.9														X		X									
50	Verona Elementary	825 NE Capital Ave.	Battle Creek Public Schools	4.6														X						X	X			Football	
51	Calhoun Christian School	20 S. Woodrow Ave.	Calhoun Christian School	13.6		X												X		X									
52	Wattles Park Elementary	132 S. Wattles Rd.	Harper Creek Comm. Schools	25.1		X	X									X	X	X	X	X	X								Bike trail
53	Grever's Nature Center	Verona Rd, Marshall, MI	Marshall Public Schools	90.6										X		X	X	X	X	X	X						X		
54	St. Philip Catholic Central High School	20 Cherry St	Roman Catholic Diocese of Kalamazoo	4.1												X		X										Performance area	
55	St. Joseph Elem. & Middle School	47 N 23rd St	St. Josephs Catholic Church	9.1		X										X		X	X		X				X			Sledding	
56	Battle Creek Academy	480 Parkway Dr	Michigan Conference Association of Seventh-Day Adventists	36.3		X								X		X					X	X						Sledding	

Inventories continued



MAP 3

Pennfield Area Parks



- Other Municipal Owned Park
- Battle Creek Linear Park
- Calhoun County Trailway
- North Country Trail
- Golf Courses



Created by Calhoun County GIS, 2015
Source: Calhoun County 2015

Table 3: Inventory of Park within Two Miles of Pennfield Township

Map ID #	Park Name	Address	Ownership	Acres	Accessible to water	Baseball	Basketball	Boat Launch	Community Gardens	Concession Stand	Disc Golf	Fishing	Football	Grills	Handicap Accessible	Hiking	Restrooms	Parking	Pavilion	Playground	Picnic area	Soccer	Shuffleboard	Track	Tennis	Visitor Center	Volleyball	Other
57	Fell Park	Park Ridge Drive, BC.,	City of Battle Creek	89.7		X																						
58	Julia Milner Park	Corner of Roseneath & Howland	City of Battle Creek	0.4												X		X	X	X	X			X				
59	Claude Evans Park	N Washington Ave	City of Battle Creek	5.0		X	X																					
60	Irving Park	Corner of Emmett and North Ave	City of Battle Creek	46.9							X	X		X					X	X	X							Drinking fountain
61	Bailey Park	7400 Division Dr.	City of Battle Creek	97.0	X	X		X		X		X						X		X	X							Benches
62	Quaker Park	135 Fremont St	City of Battle Creek	2.8											X	X	X	X	X	X	X							Sledding, Bike trail
63	Piper Park	Capital Ave NE	City of Battle Creek	7.2		X								X						X	X							
64	McCamy Park	N Washington Ave & W Mich Ave	City of Battle Creek	1.6											X			X										Performance area
65	McCrea Park	McCrea St	City of Battle Creek	17.3		X	X											X			X							Performance area
66	Monument Park	Division & Michigan Ave	City of Battle Creek	1.1														X										
67	Meachem Park	Meachem St	City of Battle Creek	0.7		X	X						X					X		X				X				
68	Prospect Park	S Washington Ave	City of Battle Creek	2.2												X		X										
69	Post Park	E Michigan Ave	City of Battle Creek	7.9			X									X		X			X							
70	Cliff Street Park	Cliff St	City of Battle Creek	1.2					X																			
71	Hamilton Park	151 Academy St	City of Battle Creek	2.0														X		X		X						
72	Stellrecht Park	85 Bennett St	City of Battle Creek	0.6			X											X		X		X						
73	Leila Arboretum & Kingman Museum	928 W Michigan Ave, B.C.	City of Battle Creek	66.1							X					X		X										Cross Country Skiing
74	Hamblin Park	Hamblin Ave	City of Battle Creek	0.8														X		X								
75	Friendship Park	Capital Ave Ne & State St W	City of Battle Creek	1.7								X						X				X	X	X				
76	Horseshoe Bend Park	Wagnrer Dr.	City of Battle Creek	2.0							X		X			X		X			X							
77	Wave Park	McCamy St	City of Battle Creek	0.1														X		X								Multi purpose field
78	Upton Avenue Park	Upton Ave	City of Springfield	5.5														X		X								
79	Ott Biological Reserve	Arlington St, BC, MI	Calhoun County	298.0														X										
80	Kimball Pines	1150 East Michigan Ave.	Calhoun County	116.9							X							X		X								
81	Greenwood Park	Greenwood Ave	Washington Heights United Methodist	9.8			X							X						X	X		X					
82	Mill Race Park	Capital Ave SW	WK Kellogg Foundation	1.8	X															X	X				X			
83	Ardmoor Park	200 Block of Ardmoor Dr	Calhoun County Road Department	4.4			X											X		X								
84	Keehne Environmental Area	245 S. Williams & 8711 Sand Rd.	Eaton County	17.0	X						X		X		X		X				X							Boardwalks
85	Washington Park	200 Block of Parkway	City of Bellevue	1.5														X	X	X								

Inventories continued

Table 4: Inventory of Golf Courses in, and within two miles of, Pennfield Township

Name	Address	City	Website	Public or private	Size (9 or 18 holes)
Bedford Valley Golf Course, 1 of 5 of Gull Lake View Golf Club & Resort	23161 Waubascon Road	Battle Creek	http://www.gulllakeview.com/	Public	18
Marywood Golf Course	21310 North Ave	Battle Creek	http://marywoodgolf.com/	Public	9 & 18

Table 5: Inventory of Trails in, and within two miles of, Pennfield Township

Trail Name	Owner	Total Length in Miles
Battle Creek Linear Trail	City of Battle Creek	40.34
Calhoun County Trailway	Calhoun County	5.56
North County Scenic Trail	National Park Service	56.41 *
* This trail is over 4,600 miles in length. The number reported is the length through Calhoun County.		

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Chapter 4

Plan Development Process

In early 2022, the Pennfield Township Board of Trustees (Trustees) contracted with the Calhoun County Planning Department to develop a five-year recreation plan for the Township. The Commission tasked a group of volunteers and Planning Commission Members to develop and distribute a parks survey. The volunteers also met to discuss the plan draft. The group was designed to create an outreach strategy, gather data, receive public input, discuss and develop the plan, and review the plan.

For a number of years, the Planning Commission and Township Trustees both recognized the need for additional recreational resources in the Township. Both the Commission and Trustees realized the importance and value of receiving public input and deliberate planning in regards to recreation. The Commission was tasked with the oversight of the development of the plan. The Commission recognized the need for assistance with the development of the plan.

The Township Board of Trustees and the Planning Commission both recognized the need for additional recreational resources in the Township

Description of the Planning & Public Input Process

Public Notification and Input

Public Input was garnered through a survey (online and hard copy) that was widely distributed and advertised to gather the greatest amount of public input as possible. Ultimately, the survey resulted in nearly 200 responses.

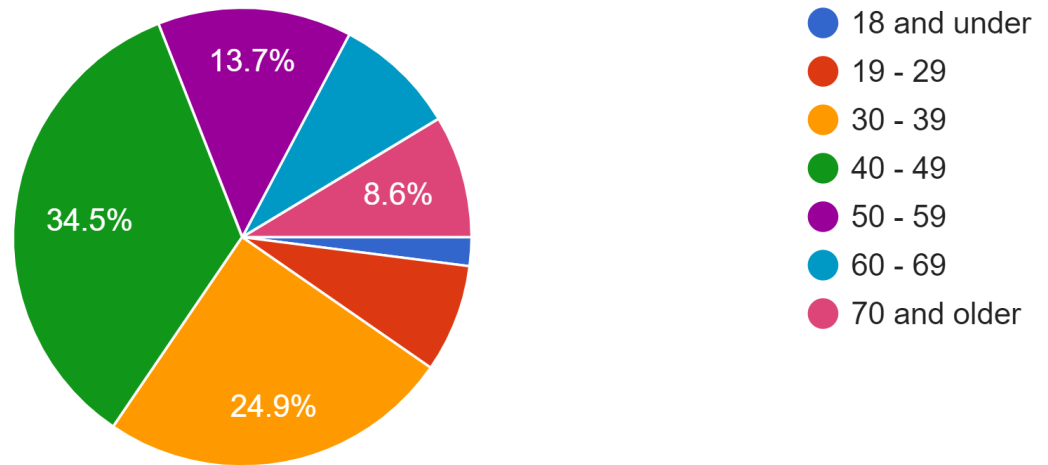
The survey was distributed between September-October 2022. A link to the electronic version of the survey was distributed through social media, email, township websites, businesses and more. Hard copies of the survey were available at the Township Offices. Analysis of the data from the survey are located in the next section of this chapter.

The survey consisted of two main sections: recreation preferences and demographic data. The length of the survey was intentionally limited to encourage completion of the survey. The survey was designed to gather public opinions regarding the type and of recreational activities that residents currently as well as use and the type that would like to see in the Township. Recreation preference questions were focused on likes and dislikes of amenities in parks, and the recreational activities available at parks. Summaries of the questions used in the survey are located on the following pages. The complete print version of the survey is included in appendix A.

Planning & Public Input Process continued

What is your age range?

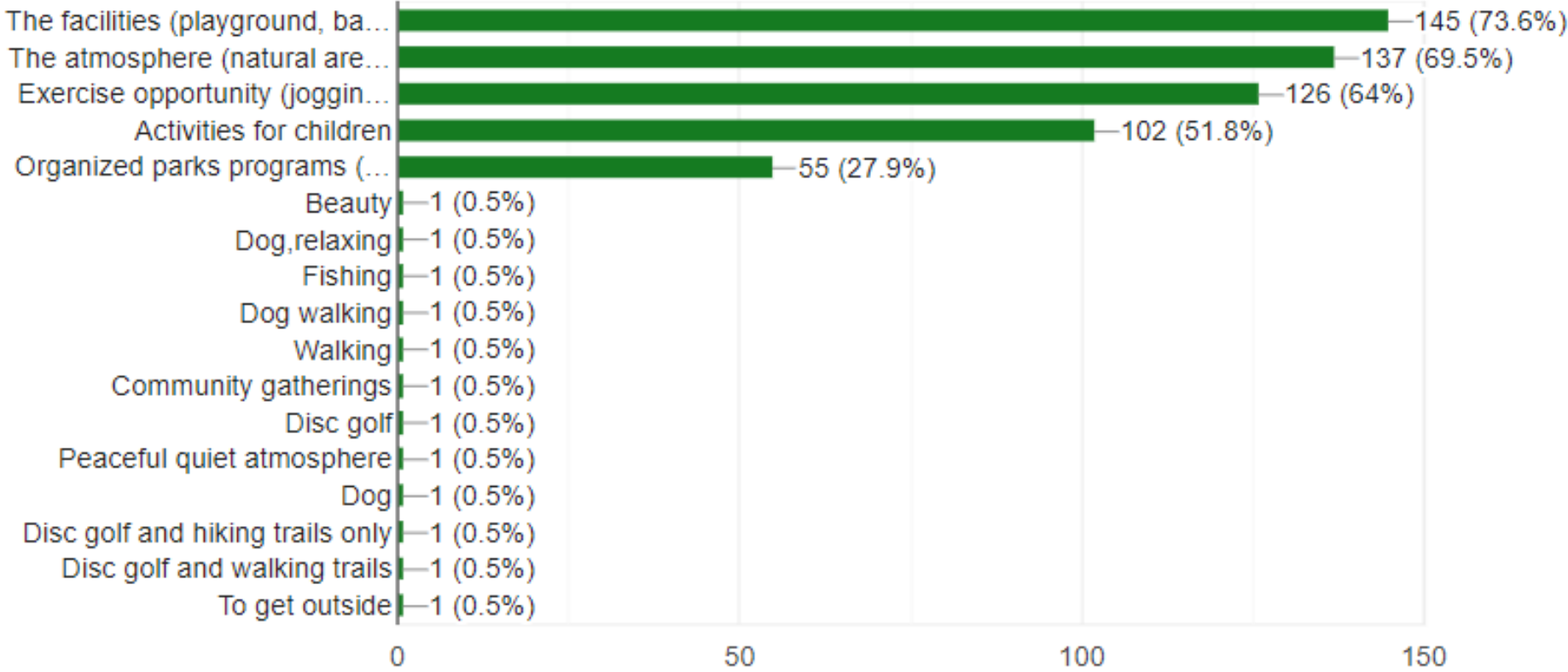
197 responses



Although the survey lacked responses from school aged children, there was otherwise a good variety of age groups represented. The age groups of 30–39 and 40-49 were most represented which may have provided some insight into what families would like to see developed in Pennfield Township.

What are the reason(s) you visit a park? Please check all that apply.

197 responses

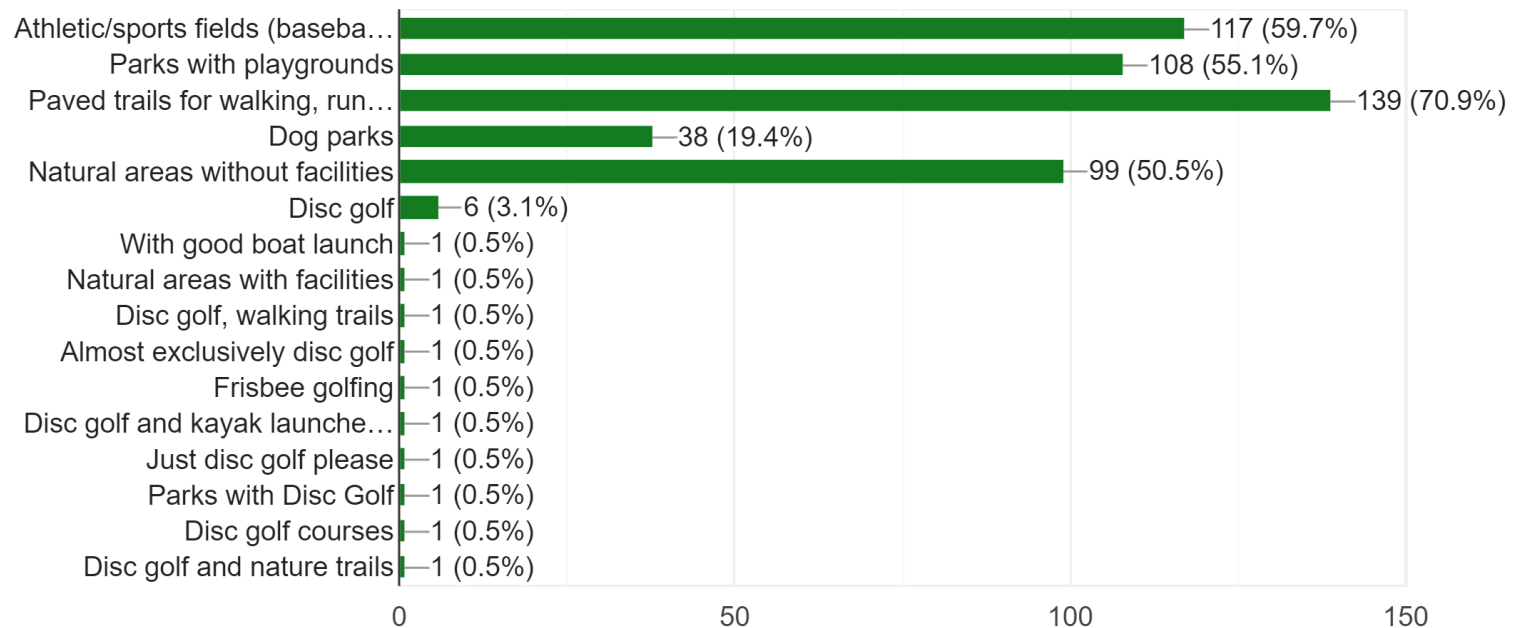


Planning & Public Input Process continued

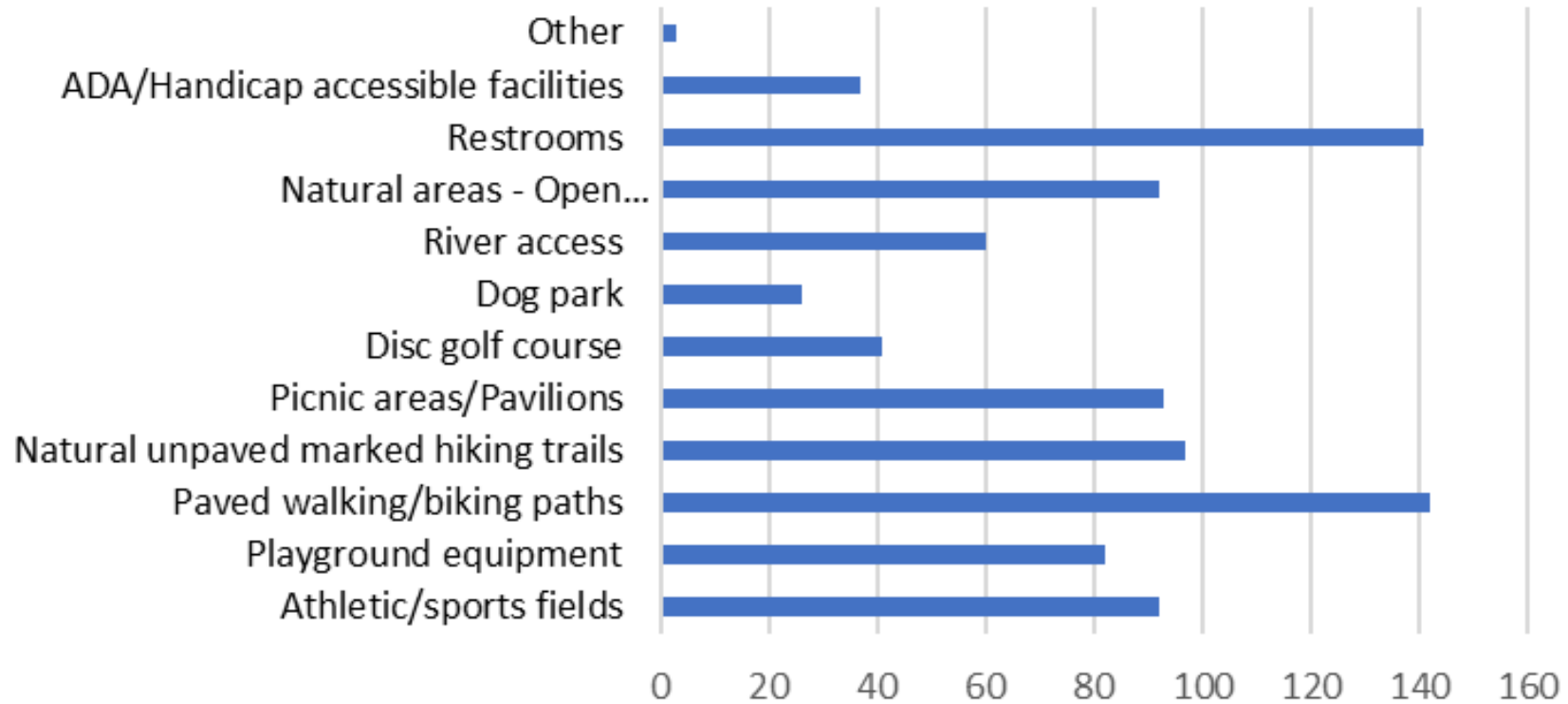
The recreation preferences section of the survey revealed a few interesting results. The respondents were fairly definitive in their preferences for facilities at recreation sites. The top reason respondents visit parks is for the facilities. Further evidence of this attitude was evident in the results of the most important park amenity question; the top result was restrooms.

What types of parks do you currently use? Please check all that apply.

196 responses



Of the park amenities listed below, which FIVE (5) are the MOST important to you?

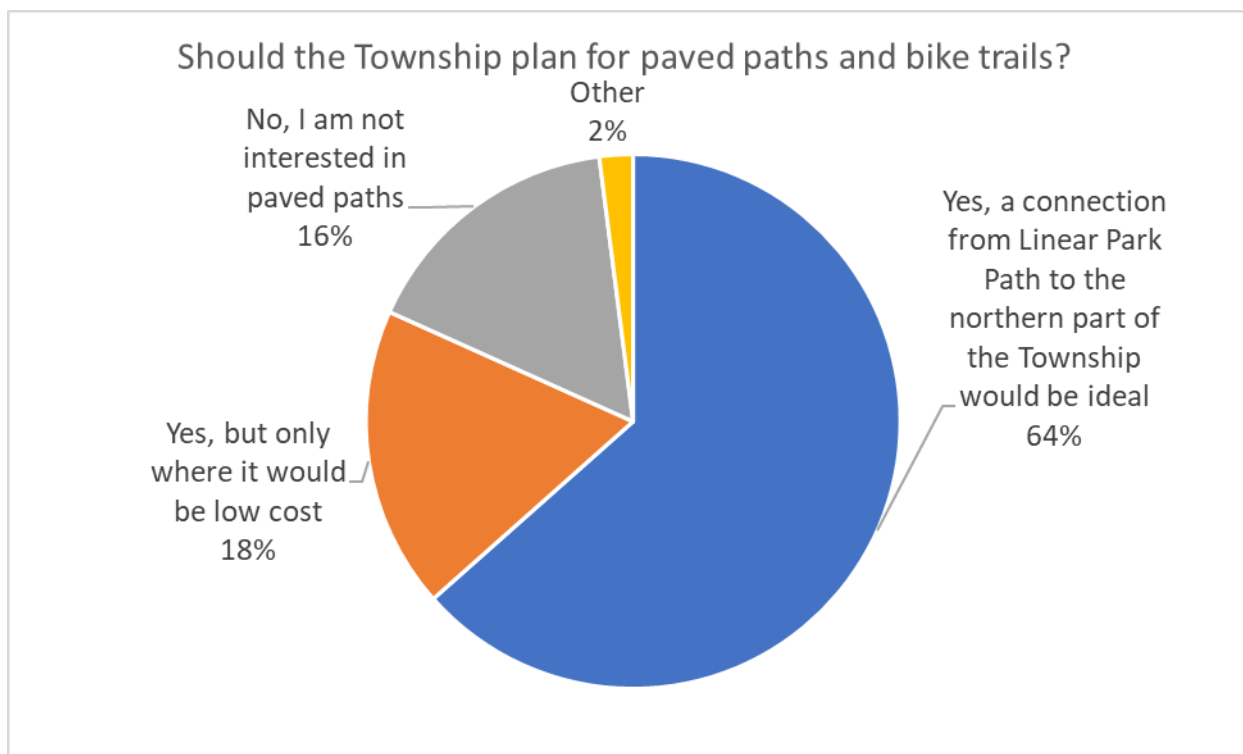


Planning & Public Input Process continued



Once again restrooms seem to be a priority for respondents. Restrooms provide a convenient and hygienic place for park visitors to use the bathroom. This is especially important for families with small children or individuals who may need to use the restroom more frequently. Additionally, having restrooms available at parks can help to reduce litter and other forms of pollution, as people are less likely to leave waste behind if there are facilities available for them to use.

There is significant support for paved bike paths and trails in the community. Paved paths provide a safe and accessible way for people to walk, jog, or cycle through a park. This is especially important for people with disabilities or mobility challenges, who may have difficulty navigating unpaved paths or trails. In addition, paved paths can help to reduce erosion and other forms of damage to the environment, as they provide a durable surface that can withstand heavy foot traffic without causing harm to the surrounding ecosystem.



Planning & Public Input Process continued

Approval Process

The Township followed guidelines for plan approval as determined by the Michigan State Legislature and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Grant Management. The approval process followed the procedure established in the State of Michigan Public Act 33 of 2008. The plan's format followed the guidelines for approval by the MDNR. Following these guidelines allows the Township to legally establish this plan and potentially apply for grant funding.

The Planning Commission recommended the plan for approval at their regular January meeting, held on January 3rd, 2023. A public notice was posted at the Township Administrative office on December 9th, 2022. The plan was made available on the Township's website and at the Township Administrative office. All comments received were presented at a public hearing held by the Township Board of Trustees on January 10th, 2023. The Board of Trustees reviewed the plan and comments, and approved the plan.

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Chapter 5 -Goals, Objectives, and Action Items

The Township Board and Planning Commission have long recognized the need for additional recreational resources within the Township. The overarching mission of this effort was to increase the recreation opportunities in the Township. To achieve that end, the Planning Commission developed several goals. Associated with each goal is a set of objectives and action items aimed at accomplishing each objective.

Through the 2015 planning process, a number of goals and objectives were created. Those goals and objectives were used as a starting point for what is listed in the following pages. The goals outline high-level ideas related to recreation in Pennfield Township; whereas the objectives are methods for achieving each goal. Finally, the objectives are accompanied by action items. The action items outline specific tasks taken by the Township or local partners to achieve the objective and overarching goal.

Goal 1: To provide additional recreational opportunities to Township residents.

Local leaders and residents have expressed a desire to have more recreation options in Pennfield Township. Township residents have expressed their desires about the type of recreation areas and amenities they would like to see in the Township. The Township does not immediately possess the requisite resources to develop all of the preferred amenities; therefore, a phased approach is required.

Objective 1: Acquire and build the resources and long term support to enhance the existing recreation resources, construction of a new park, trail, or recreation area in the Township.

Action Item: Develop site specific plans for individual recreation areas. The Township Board and Planning Commission should develop a plan for each recreation area identified this plan. The phases developed as action items should dictate the order in which the parks are planned. The individual park plans should include public engagement, design assistance from appropriate professionals to best incorporate the Township's preferred amenities given the sites natural features, catchment area (the area from which the park will draw visitors), and budgeting.

Goal 1, Objective 1 continued

Action Item: Seek funding for the development of recreation areas.

The Township has discussed the use of general fund allocations, user fees, grants, and its County millage allocation as funding sources. The Township should review implications of each mechanism, examine community attitudes to each funding mechanism, and ultimately employ one, or multiple, of these funding options. The Township should examine all local, state, and federal funding sources to assist with the development of recreation areas once a long term funding mechanism is established.

Objective 2: Provide recreation resources tailored to the needs and desires of the Township residents.

Action Item: Thoroughly examine potential recreation sites to ensure that the initial site developed by the Township will garner broad public support and commitment from local partners. In order to build local support for recreation in the Township, the initial site developed or enhanced should have commitment from partners, a sustainable long-term maintenance plan, and provide visitors with amenities that are desired. Furthermore, the location of the initial site should be such that it allows access to a large percentage of the Township's residents.

Objective 3: Develop a phased approach to developing recreation areas within the Township.

Action Item: Use the plan, and more specifically the survey results, to develop a phased approach to building or enhancing recreation areas within the Township. The phasing should depend on the availability of land, funding, community support, and ability to provide the highest ranked recreation preferences. The phase should also outline reasonable and measurable outcomes.

Goals, Objectives, and Action Items continued

Goal 2: To utilize the Township’s existing land resources to provide recreational opportunities.

The Township and Pennfield Public Schools own several parcels that are available for recreational development. These sites would make great candidates for the first parks in Pennfield Township. Chapters 3 and 4 describe the parcels owned by Pennfield Public Schools and the Township. Utilizing Township owned land will reduce the costs and procurement issues associated with developing a recreation area. Furthermore, the land already owned by the Township or Pennfield Public Schools is highly visible and connected to other amenities that already attract residents.

Objective 4: Develop recreational opportunities on lands owned by the Township.

Action Item: Work with parks experts, Township and school officials, and local stakeholders to determine the appropriate amenities on Township and School owned properties. The amenities examined should primarily include the most preferred according to the survey.

Action Item: Examine the water tower property, the sewer transmission right-of-way, the cemetery property, the “Wal-Mart Property”, and all school owned property for recreation appropriateness. Each site offers many good features for recreation use, it is important that resident have the chance to fully utilize the publicly owned property.

Objective 5: Enhance the facilities owned and maintained by Pennfield Public Schools.

Action Item: Work with parks experts, school officials, and local stakeholders to determine the appropriate amenities on School owned properties. The amenities examined should primarily include the most preferred according to the survey as well as serve the school aged population.

The Township and Pennfield Public Schools have a number of valuable assets that are available for recreational development or enhancement.

Goal 3: Partner with other non-profit or public land owners to develop recreation sites.

The Calhoun County Conservation District, City of Battle Creek, a local utility provider, and a civically minded private landowner own a sizable site along the Battle Creek River in the southern portion of the Township. Each party has expressed an interest in developing the property for recreational purposes. The amenities that the Conservation District, City, and private land owner are interested in developing on the site (river access, wetland boardwalk, and dog park) mostly coincide with the results of the survey well.

Furthermore, the Calhoun County Road Department has right-of-way that intersects with the Battle Creek River. This right-of-way could potentially be used to supply public access points to the river. Additionally, if the right-of-way is large enough, the Township could develop parking facilities and watercraft access points to allow for many uses of the river.

Objective 6: Work with the Calhoun County Conservation District, City of Battle Creek, and adjacent land owners to develop a cohesive plan for a targeted site along the Battle Creek River.

Action Item: Meet with local property owners and representatives from the Calhoun County Conservation District to determine their vision for their parcels along the Battle Creek River. If their vision coincides with the vision of the Township, the Township should look to develop a partnership with the local landowners.

Objective 7: Work with the Calhoun County Road Department to understand the potential use their right-of-way for public recreational access sites to the Battle Creek River.

Action Item: Meet with officials from the Calhoun County Road Department to gauge the appropriateness of using their right-of-way as public recreational access sites to the Battle Creek River. If the right-of-way is not appropriate for access points, the Township may need to procure land adjacent to the river.

Goals, Objectives, and Action Items continued

Goal 4: Create recreational connections and corridors with neighboring jurisdictions.

The Battle Creek Linear Trail passes just to the south of the Township. The Township could create a trail loop that connects to the Linear Park in two places while passing through much of the densely populated areas of the Township. This loop would create connections with statewide trails.

The Battle Creek River flows from the northeast portion of the Township to the southwest portion of the Township. The river flows through the City of Bellevue in Eaton County before entering the Township. The river flows through portions of the City of Battle Creek before joining the Kalamazoo River. Both the City of Bellevue and the City of Battle Creek could benefit from Pennfield Township developing a water trail for the Battle Creek River. Likewise, Pennfield Township would benefit from both cities developing access points to the river. Therefore, a cohesive and comprehensive plan is the best approach to developing a water trail.

Objective 8: Create a connection to the Battle Creek Linear Park that loops through the Township.

Action Item: Meet with officials from the City of Battle Creek, Calhoun County Parks, and other partners to develop a plan for a trail connection to the Battle Creek Linear Park from Pennfield Township.

Objective 9: Find and explore natural connections with neighboring municipalities.

Action Item: Work with the state-wide effort to promote Great Lake to Lake Trail, the Iron Belle Trail, and the North Country Trail. The Township should explore developing linear parks that connect to each of these



Objective 10: Utilize a water trail as a connection to Bellevue and Battle Creek (see Goal 5).

Goal 5: Develop a water trail for the Battle Creek River.

The Battle Creek River offers amenities for many different types of users. The river offers opportunities to kayak, canoe, fish, swim, bird watch, and/or study nature. Few of the smaller rivers in Southwest Michigan are mapped or have official access point; much of the recreational development was conducted on the larger rivers in the area. Furthermore, well maintained and well documented rivers are fairly rare in the region; most municipalities do not have a navigable river to act as a low cost recreation amenity. A water trail will work to document and promote the amenities of the river while also promoting several facets of the local economy.

Objective 11: Develop a water trail that connects for the Battle Creek River.

Action Item: Meet with officials from Eaton County, the City of Bellevue, the City of Battle Creek, Calhoun County Parks and Recreation, the Calhoun County Conservation District, and the Southcentral Michigan Planning Council to create a plan for a Battle Creek River Water Trail.

Action Item: Work with local, state, and federal stakeholders to remove impediments to watercraft from the Battle Creek River in order to establish a navigable connection with the Kalamazoo River.

Action Item: Create events surrounding the use of the Battle Creek River.

Action Item: Develop a volunteer network to maintain the Battle Creek River and its access points.

A water trail would create a natural connection with neighboring municipalities while offering residents a number of recreational opportunities.

Goals, Objectives, and Action Items continued

Goal 6: Maintain the recreation plan as a guiding document.

The purpose of this plan is to guide the development of recreation areas in the Township, the plan has much more value than simply fulfilling a requirement. Furthermore, it is important to maintain an understanding of how well the Township is meeting the need of its residents. Likewise, maintaining a dashboard will demonstrate progress to local stakeholders.

Objective 12: Conduct annual reviews of these goals and objectives.

Action Item: At least once a year, review the goals and objectives in this plan to ensure that they still fit the needs of the community.

The value of this plan is not only found in the development of parks but as a strategic document continually guiding the development of parks into the future.

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Chapter 6

The action plan is the bridge between the goals, objectives, and action items in Chapter 6 and the organization that will carry out the action items. The action plan presents projects discussed for the development of recreational opportunities in the Township as well as the recreation prioritization for the Township.

Action Plan Phases

The action plan assumes a phased approach with the initial phases as follows:

1. Determine the initial site for recreational development or enhancement
2. Determine site and long-term ownership structure
3. Develop site plan and cost estimates for initial site
4. Secure funding for the development or enhancement of the initial site
5. Develop or enhance the initial recreation site in Pennfield Township

Recreation Prioritization

The Parks and Recreation volunteers reviewed the results of the survey and prioritized the type of recreation they wish to provide through their initial investment. Each member shared their four top priorities and the two they felt were least important. They also considered how difficult each project would be to accomplish and the public input. Types of projects were prioritized on a 1-5 scale with five as the highest priority. The priorities are found on the following pages.

Action Plan

Top short-term priorities

- *Development of picnic areas*
 - This amenity was broadly supported in the survey and volunteers ranked it highly as it is a low cost but highly used amenity.
- *Development of hiking and walking trails (not paved)*
 - Volunteers favored this type of recreation because it can serve as a natural connection between recreation areas and was a popular amenity identified in the public survey.
- *Development of a township park at the Cemetery Property.*
 - This was the highest priority because it would likely include a picnic area and trails, which were the other high priorities. The project would also be more easily accomplished because the township already owns the property.

Top long-term priorities

- *Development of paved off road non-motorized trails*
 - The public favored this type of trail because it offered extensive exercise opportunities, natural connection to other areas of the Township, and is inviting to all ages. This could include the creation of a linear connection between newly developed recreation areas and school-owned properties with public amenities. *Furthermore, the a connection to the Battle Creek Linear Park by way of a paved on-street loop through the Township is important to residents.* A loop through the Township that connected to the park would offer visitors and residents many more miles of paved non-motorized facilities. Although a high priority, it is a difficult project to undertake.
- *Development of a riverfront park with river access, boardwalk, playground, restrooms, and other amenities*
 - The Battle Creek River is a unique feature to Pennfield Township. The Planning Commission wanted to highlight this feature and utilize the natural beauty and attraction. Furthermore, several property owners, including the Township, expressed interest in developing a recreation site along the river.
- *Development of a water trail for the Battle Creek River*
 - This was the highest priority because it creates a connection with neighboring jurisdictions, offers a wide variety of recreational experiences, appeals to all ages, and is relatively inexpensive to develop.

Appendix—Prioritization activity results

Project	Most Important Pick 4	Least Important Pick 2	How hard would it be to accomplish? 1-5, 5 being the hardest
Development of a water trail for the Battle Creek River	● ●	●	3-4
Development of hiking and walking trails (not paved)	✓ ● ● ● ●		1-2
Development of a riverfront park with river access, boardwalk, playground, restrooms, and other amenities			3 5
Development of picnic areas	✓ ● ● ● ●		1-2
Development of a township park at the Cemetery Property with playground, restrooms, and other amenities	✓ ● ●		1-3
Creation of a linear connection between newly developed recreation areas and school-owned properties with public amenities			● 4-5
Development of paved off road non-motorized trails	✓ ● ●		4
Development of a dog park		● ●	● 2
Creation of a disc golf course		●	● ● 2-3
Development of a connection to the Battle Creek Linear Park through the Township	●		4-5
Morgan Road/ Capital Ave Property			● 5
Invest in Bailey Park			1-2

