



# 2022–2026 **Parks and Recreation Master Plan**

Van Buren Charter Township, MI







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DRAFT · January 10, 2022

Adopted by the Van Buren Charter Township Planning Commission on \_\_\_\_\_

Adopted by the Van Buren Charter Township Board of Trustees on \_\_\_\_\_

Prepared by



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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. Located within the geographic center of the Township is the City of Belleville, approximately 4,000 individuals. 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 Township residents, as detailed in the following sections:

### Population

Recent projections indicate that the population of Van Buren Township is expected to increase at a moderate rate through 2045. The population increased 5.4% from 2010 to 2020 (Table 1). Based on SEMCOG estimates, the Township population is anticipated to increase to 35,966 residents by 2045.

**Table 1: Change in Population, Van Buren Charter Township, 2010–2045**

2010	2020	Percent Change (2010–2020)	2045	Percent Change (2020– 2045)
28,821	30,375	+5.4%	35,966	+18.5%

Source: US Census Bureau, SEMCOG 2045 Forecast



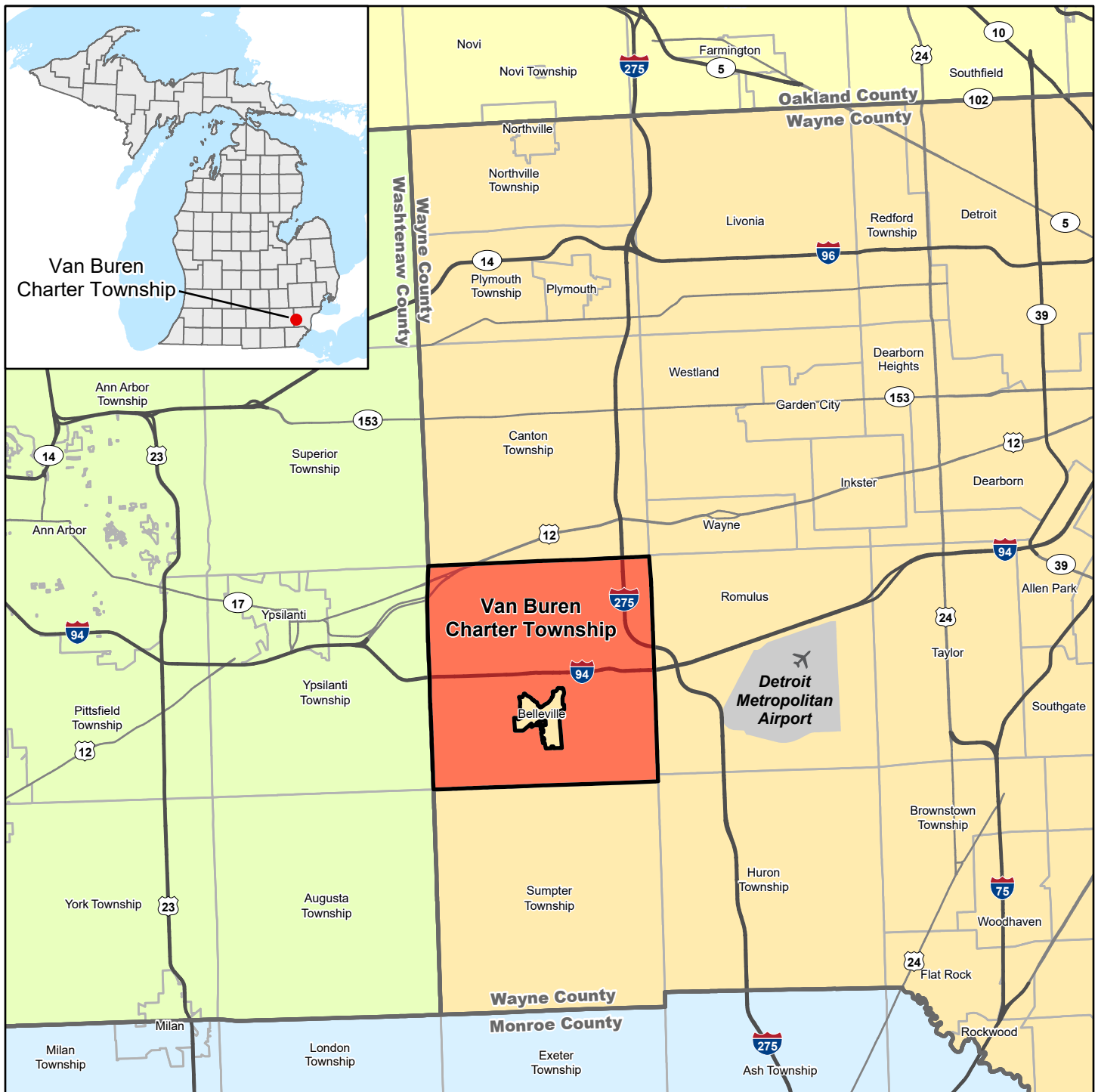
The Township's population has grown slightly. Residents enjoy a community with a high quality of life, particularly related to parks and recreation amenities. As shown in Table 2, most communities in the surrounding area increased in population between 2010 and 2019. The only exceptions are Sumpter Township, the City of Romulus, and Wayne County as a whole. Van Buren Township's growth rate is greater than that of Southeast Michigan as a whole. Given the warming economic climate in both Southeast Michigan and throughout the state, the growth in many communities is anticipated to increase.

**Table 2: Population Trends, Selected Communities, 2010–2019**

Community	2010	2019	Percent Change (2010–2019)
Van Buren Charter Township	28,821	30,275*	18.5%
City of Belleville	3,991	4,013	0.6%
Canton Charter Township	90,173	97,404	8.0%
City of Romulus	23,989	23,803	-0.8%
Sumpter Township	9,549	8,672	-9.2%
City of Ypsilanti	19,435	22,334	14.9%
Ypsilanti Charter Township	53,362	55,130	3.3%
Wayne County	1,820,650	1,745,279	-4.1%
Southeast Michigan	4,704,809	4,751,646	1.0%

Source: US Census Bureau \*2020 Census Data





## Regional Location

Van Buren Charter Township  
Wayne County, Michigan

March 11, 2021

### LEGEND

- Van Buren Charter Township
- County Boundaries
- Municipal Boundaries



0 2.5 5  
Miles

Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a.



## 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 2045, as indicated in Table 3. Average household size, defined as the number of persons per household, has been declining for more than 25 years and this trend is expected to continue through 2045 with some fluctuations.

The Township's population and number of households have increased over the past ten years, and both are anticipated to increase through 2045. However, beyond 2025 the trend is projected to be an increase in households with a decrease in 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 3: Community Population and Housing Statistics – Van Buren Charter Township, 2010–2045**

	2010	2020	2025	2035	2045
Population	28,821	30,463	31,898	34,064	35,966
Households	11,821	12,578	13,225	14,207	14,950
Household Size	2.42	2.40	2.41	2.39	2.39

Source: US Census Bureau, SEMCOG 2045 Regional Forecast

## Education and Race

According to the 2015-2019 American Community Survey, 27.5% of Township residents 25 years and over have a bachelor's degree or higher, including 10.2% 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 (23.9%), but not Michigan (29.1%).

Overall, the Township is fairly racially diverse. According to the 2015-2019 American Community Survey, the population is 65.5% White, 27.3% African American, 1.4% Asian, 0.1% American Indian and Alaska Native, and 5.4% two or more races. Additionally, 3.9% of the total population is Hispanic or Latino of any race. 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.

## 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, the number of people at age 65 years and older is forecast to increase significantly (+60.7%) from 2020 to 2045. This age group will also be a larger share of the Township's total population in 2045 (19.6%), compared to 14.2% in 2020. At the same time, the numbers of people between ages 0 to 4 (+20.4%), 5 to 17 (+9.0%), 18 to 24 (+6.4%), and 25 to 54 (+13.9%) are all anticipated to increase by 2045, while the number of people ages 55 to 64 (–2.9%) is expected to decrease.

Today, residents between 25 and 54 years of age make up the largest share of the Township's population. 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 4: Age Distribution, Van Buren Charter Township, 2010–2045**

Age Group	Life Phase	2020		2045	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0 – 4	Preschool	1,770	5.8%	2,131	5.9%
5 – 17	School Age	4,642	15.1%	5,061	14.1%
18 – 24	Young Adult	2,756	9.0%	2,933	8.2%
25 – 54	Adult	12,419	40.4%	14,148	39.3%
55 – 64	Older Adult	4,821	15.7%	4,679	13.0%
65 – 84	Retirees	3,963	12.9%	5,953	16.6%
85+	Seniors	402	1.3%	1,061	3.0%
<b>Total</b>		<b>30,773</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>35,966</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: SEMCOG 2045 Regional Forecast

### 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 12.0% 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 5: Persons with a Disability, Van Buren Charter Township, 2019**

Age Group	Total Persons	With a Disability	Percent
0 – 18	5,642	172	3.0%
18 – 64	19,073	1,928	10.1%
65 +	3,598	1,295	36.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,313</b>	<b>3,395</b>	<b>12.0%</b>

Source: 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Disability Characteristics





## 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 58% developed. The remaining 42% is agriculture, parks and recreation, open space, vacant, or water. Single family residential (26.6%) is the highest single land use in Van Buren Charter Township. Despite most 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 from 2021 shows that the summer (July) average high is 83 degrees, while the average winter (January) low temperature is 17 degrees. Rain averages approximately 34-inches a year, while snow averages 43-inches a year. 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 soil 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.





# Administrative Structure and Funding

Van Buren's 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 community. The administrative structure and budget analysis for parks and recreation are reviewed in this section.





# Administration

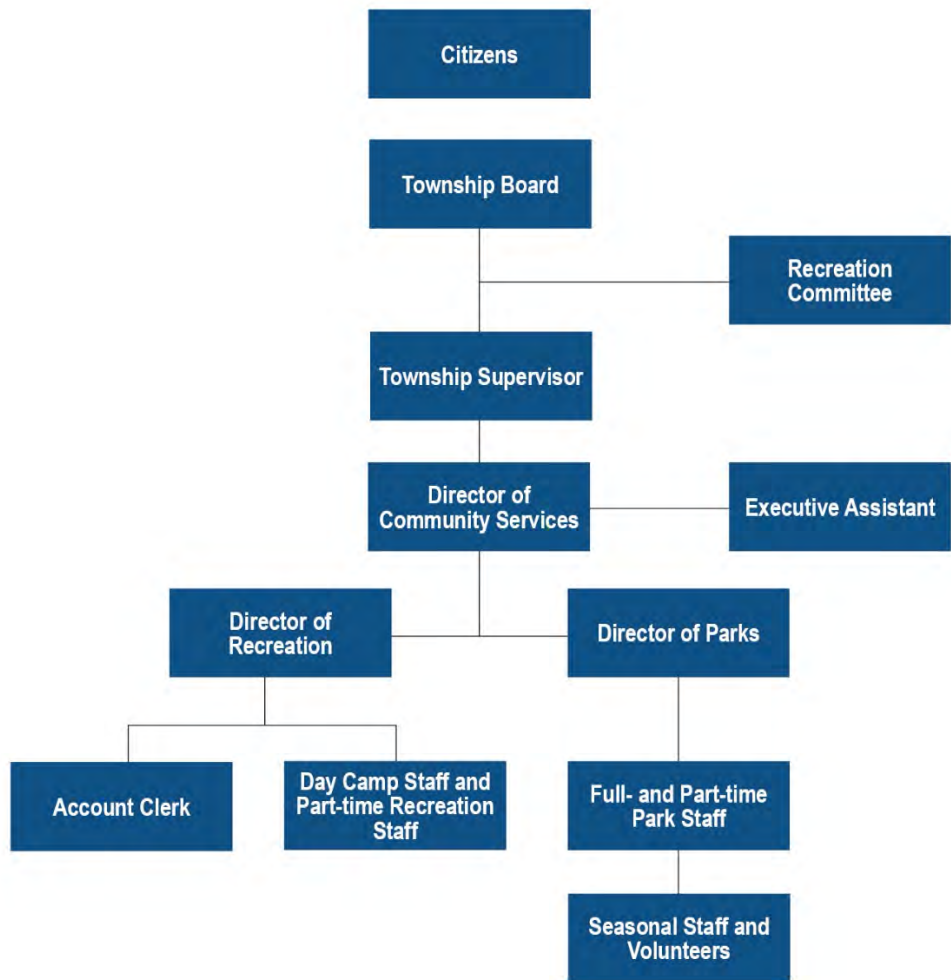
## Parks and Recreation Department

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. In May of 2021, the Department underwent a reorganization, which resulted in a separate Director of Recreation and a Director of Parks. This reorganization also combined the departments of Parks, Recreation, Senior Center, and the Historical Museum under one department: Community Services. See Figure 1 which illustrates the administrative structure of the Department.

## Recreation Committee

The Township Board created the Recreation Committee in 1989, with the aim of advising the Trustees on issues relating to recreation in the community. 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 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 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 partners with:

- American Cancer Society
- American Red Cross
- 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



## 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 6 below details the 2021 and 2022 projected park and recreation revenues.

**Table 6: Parks and Recreation Budgets, Van Buren Charter Township, 2020–2022**

Description	2021 Projected Budget	2022 Projected Budget
Waste Management Group	\$10,000	\$10,000
Wayne Count Milage	\$122,000	\$130,000
Pavilion / Park Entry Fees	\$28,626	\$40,000
SMART	-	\$20,000
DDA Reimbursement	-	\$1,137,000
Civic Fund Reimbursement	-	\$980,000
MDNR	\$500,000	\$500,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$660,626</b>	<b>\$2,817,000</b>

Source: Van Buren Charter Township

\*Note: The large increase to the 2022 Projected Budget is due to the 'Capital Outlay' line item for Community Center Projects and other park projects.

Table 7 on the following page details the Van Buren Township Park and Recreation budgets for 2020, 2021 and 2022. The budgets are divided among the Recreation Department, Park and Lake Department, and Community Services Department.

**Table 7: Parks and Recreation Budgets, Van Buren Charter Township, 2020–2022**

Recreation Department	2020 Actual	2021 Amended	2022 Projected
Director Parks & Recreation, Salary	\$58,287	\$64,900	\$63,00
Deputy Director Parks & Recreation, Salary	\$41,891	\$300	-
Recreation Wages	\$100,393	\$82,000	\$39,000
Allocated Fringes	\$90,064	\$70,000	\$45,457
Operating Supplies	\$2,480	\$3,000	\$5,000
Program Expense	\$3,634	\$30,000	\$30,000
Program – Summer Camp	(\$19,847)	\$45,000	\$65,000
Membership and Dues	\$667	\$1,240	\$1,500
Recreation Commission	\$166	\$500	\$500
Contracted Services	-	\$3,975	\$2,650



Transportation	-	\$500	\$500
Training	\$950	\$2,000	\$3,000
Printing and Publishing	\$20,274	\$10,000	\$15,000
Utilities	\$848	\$2,500	-
Equipment Maintenance	\$2,087	\$3,000	\$4,000
Other	(\$475)	\$500	\$500
Capital Outlay	\$2,621	\$14,000	\$6,000
Capital Outlay – Community Center	-	\$657,000	\$9,600,000
Reimbursement – DDA	-	-	(\$1,137,000)
Reimbursement – Civic Fund	-	-	(\$980,000)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$304,040</b>	<b>\$990,415</b>	<b>\$7,744,107</b>

Park and Lake Department	2020 Actual	2021 Amended	2022 Projected
Park & Lake Wages	\$67,721	\$99,985	\$176,725
Allocated Fringes	\$5,181	\$7,649	\$46,700
Operating Supplies	\$8,603	\$9,000	\$9,000
Contracted Services	\$3,088	\$37,200	\$37,200
Telephone	\$187	-	-
Transportation	\$175	\$400	\$600
Training	-	\$1,500	\$1,000
Printing and Publishing	\$1,044	\$4,600	\$5,000
Utilities	\$15,719	\$15,000	\$19,500
Other	\$8	\$500	\$500
Environmental Grant Project Expenses	\$61,726	-	\$500,000
Environmental Grant Project Proceeds	(\$24,068)	-	(\$400,000)
Capital Outlay	-	\$320,000	\$1,720,000
Wayne County Park Millage Projects	-	\$122,000	-
Wayne County Park Millage	-	(\$122,000)	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$139,384</b>	<b>\$495,834</b>	<b>\$2,116,225</b>

Community Services Department	2020 Actual	2021 Amended	2022 Projected
Employee Wages	-	\$54,000	\$193,000
Allocated Fringes	-	\$18,953	\$70,260
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$72,953</b>	<b>\$263,260</b>

Source: Van Buren Charter Township





## Grant History

Several years ago, Van Buren Township received a Clean Michigan Initiative (CMI) State grant for the Quirk Park development project.

Funding Source	Project Name	Grant Amount	Project Results
Wayne County Park Millage	French Landing Park (Phase I): 2015-2019	\$121,008, combined with \$300,000 in General Fund Dollars	Phase I constructed: Tensile Shade Structure, pathways, landscaping, and irrigation.
Wayne County Park Millage	French Landing Park (Phase II): 2020-2022	\$64,277, combined with \$900,000 in General Fund Dollars	To be constructed in 2022.
CDBG-Wayne County	Van Buren Park Saddle Paving Project: 2020-2021	\$500,000	Paved saddle portion of Van Buren Park as part of the state-wide Iron Belle Trail project.
Clean Michigan Initiative	CM00-294 Quirk Park Development of Quirk Park: 2019	\$293,300	Multi-purpose park with a splash pad, play structure, walking paths, soccer fields, seating and gathering areas, etc.
MDNR Mini-Grants	Iron Belle Trail Design: 2019-2022	2 Mini-Grants, each at \$50,000 (total \$100,000)	Design & engineering services for portion of Iron Belle Trail (Section D & J).
Natural Resources Trust Fund	Iron Belle Trail: 2018-2022	\$400,000 (with \$100,000 Township Match)	Section H of Iron Belle Trail. Projected construction in 2022 or 2023.
Van Buren Civic Fund	Pickleball and Tennis Court Improvements: 2020-2021	\$45,000	Shade structure and tables installed at outdoor Pickleball and Tennis Courts.
SMART	N/A (annual)	\$20,000	-
Waste Management	N/A (annual)	\$10,000	-

Van Buren has received a variety of other funding sources for parks and recreation projects, including donations and Downtown Development Authority (DDA) contributions. Specifically, grants that have been received over the years include:

- Wayne County Parks Millage (ex: French Landing)
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) for the Youth Tree Learning Program
- Van Buren Civic Fund
- NRPA ACHIEVE Program
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, including the Saddle Grant
- IBT Grants
- Smart Grants
- Civic Fund Grant



# 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 the community.





## Township Parks and Facilities

Van Buren Township contains ten 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).

### 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 three mini-parks:





### *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, and picnic tables for the adjacent neighborhood.

**Accessibility assessment = 2**







### *Pickleball and Tennis Courts*

Pickleball and Tennis Courts are located at the corner of Denton and Beckley and features four pickleball and tennis courts, as well as a small parking area, shade structure, and picnic tables.

**Accessibility assessment = 3**







### *Harris Park*

Harris Park was named in honor of the Harris family and their contributions to the community. Amenities include a walking path, benches, picnic tables, pergola, a pavilion, free Wi-Fi access, and device charging stations. It also includes a public reader board to keep the community of activities taking place within the Township.

**Accessibility assessment = 5**







# Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities

Van Buren Charter Township,  
Wayne County, Michigan

November 2, 2021

- LEGEND
- Parks

School Facilities

Mini Parks

1. Haggerty Neighborhood Park

2. PickleBall Park

3. Harris Park

Community Parks and Facilities

4. Beck Ball Fields

5. Quirk Park

6. Van Buren Community Center

7. Van Buren Park

Natural Resource Areas

8. French Landing Park

9. Riggs Heritage Park

10. Visteon Woods Park

Public School Facilities

11. Haggerty Elementary School

12. Savage Elementary School

13. Tyler Elementary School

14. North Middle School

Regional Parks and Facilities

15. Lower Huron Metropark

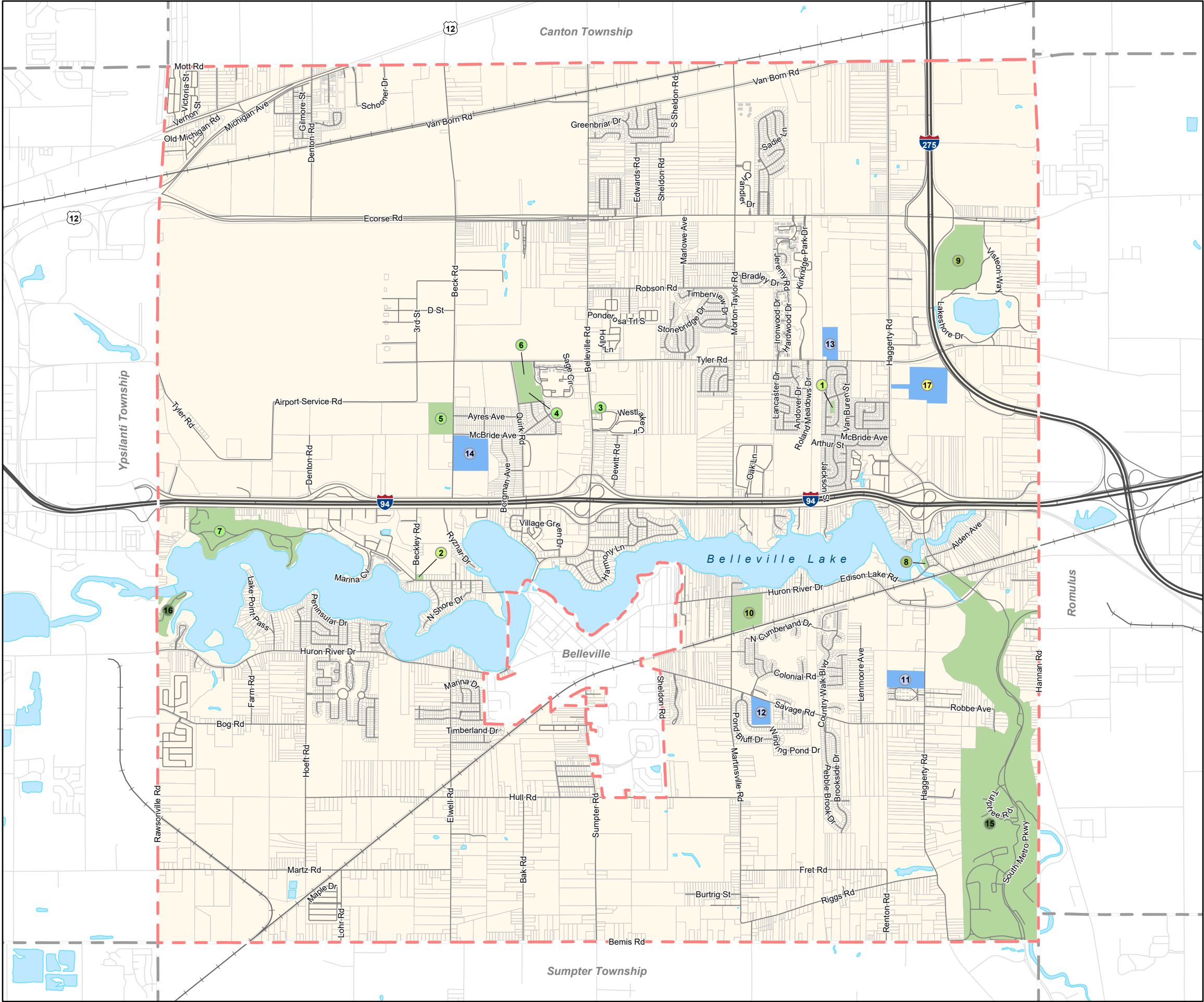
16. Rawsonville Road DNR Boat Launch

Quasi-Public and Private Recreation Facilities

17. Wayne County Community College - Ted Scott Campus



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.  
Data Source: Van Buren Charter Township 2021. McKenna 2021.







## 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)

## 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 - 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 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.

**Accessibility assessment = 4**







### Quirk Park

Quirk Park, located south of Tyler Road and behind Township Hall, is a 5-acre park with a variety of amenities. The park contains Wayne County's largest splash pad, an all-access play structure, walking paths, a gazebo, picnic tables, grills, pavilion, soccer fields, restrooms, and changing rooms.

The Township Hall Facility that is part of this park system contains the Parks and Recreation offices and program space, as well as the Senior Center.

**Accessibility assessment= 4**





### *Van Buren Township Hall*

Van Buren Township completed a Feasibility Study on constructing a Community Center, attached to the current Township Hall building at 46425 Tyler Rd. Schematic design for the project was completed in 2021. If constructed, the Center will be approximately 14,000 sq. ft. of renovation and 16,000 sq. ft. of addition. Program spaces include:

- Full-court gym and elevated track
- Open Fitness Area
- Fitness Studio
- Multi-purpose Party Rooms
- Teen Center
- Black Box Theater
- Locker / Toilet Rooms
- Senior Multipurpose Room
- Community Service Offices
- Outdoor Program Space

**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, grills, basketball court, benches, hiking trails, pavilions, picnic areas, play structure, swings, sledding hill, community garden, concession stand facility (currently unused), and a 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. In 2009, ADA parking and signage was installed, and 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.

Recent upgrades include a new pavilion, new streetlights at the front of the park and park signage. A \$500,000 CDBG grant from Wayne County was received to pave the saddle portion (between the front and back loop sections) as part of the Iron Belle Trail program; this was constructed in 2021. A master park design plan is planned for 2022 and two pavilions will be demoed and reconstructed.

Entry fees are \$5 daily passes for residents (\$7 for non-residents), \$15 annual passes for Van Buren/Belleville residents (\$20 for non-residents), and \$8 annual passes for seniors 55 and older.

**Accessibility assessment = 2**







## 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, and scenic views of both Belleville Lake and the Huron River.

Starting in 2021, the park has been under construction for Phase I and Phase II improvements. Phase I improvements included a new shade structure, pathways, irrigation, and landscaping. Phase II (construction anticipated in 2022) includes a remodel of the fishing pier, a kayak launch, and a reconstruction of the parking areas.

**Accessibility assessment = 1**







### *Riggs Park*

Riggs Park, located on Martinsville Road off Huron River Drive, is a 30-acre park. The park contains a pavilion, restrooms, trails, and scenic views.

Construction work has been planned for 2022, including the development of a new trailhead and significant investment in the maintenance of natural areas.

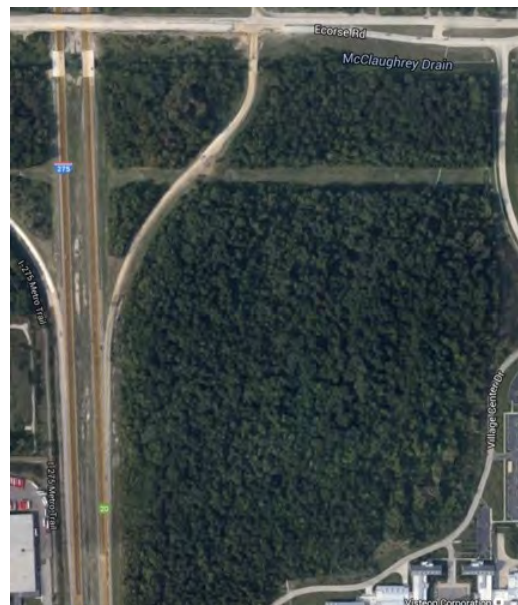
**Accessibility assessment = 4**



### *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**







## 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's 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



## Accessibility Rankings

A five-point evaluation system is used to rank each facility's accessibility, as 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 are paved, and most of the facilities such as play equipment or picnic areas are 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.

**Table 6: Barrier-Free Accessibility Ranking, 2021**

Park or Recreational Facility	Accessibility Assessment Rating
Haggerty Neighborhood Park	2
Harris Park	5
Pickleball and Tennis Courts	2
Beck Ball Fields	3
Quirk Park	4
Van Buren Township Hall	5
Van Buren Park	2
French Landing Park	1
Riggs Heritage Park	4
Visteon Woods Park	2





## 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:

- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.



## 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 using trails. 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 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.

- **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-country skiing, mountain biking, and horseback riding. There are no State parks located in the Township, but there is a State DNR-administered boat launch, the Rawsonville West Boat Launch, as well as the Huron River Dr. Boat Launch.
- **Wayne County Parks.** The Wayne County park system consists of 12 parks including the extensive Hines Park, which runs through the communities of Northville Township, Plymouth Township, Plymouth, Livonia, Westland, and Dearborn Heights. 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, volleyball courts, ice skating, and fishing. Crosswinds Marsh Wetland Interpretive Preserve (located in Sumpter Township) is also another Wayne County amenity that offers hiking trails, horse trails, fishing docks, and interpretive programming. There are no County parks located in the Township.



- **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.
- **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, and grassy meadows and offers a variety of year-round recreational activities such as 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.
- **City of Belleville Parks.** The City of Belleville operates four primary parks. Since the City is surrounded by 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.** Located on eight acres on Savage Road just East of Five Points, Village Park is adjacent to the Victoria Commons subdivision. It features an ADA accessible children's playground, walking trails, basketball courts, and sand volleyball courts. A striking feature of Village Park are three large ponds and the surrounding trails; the main path around the large pond was paved and made ADA accessible in 2010.





# Regional Parks and Recreation Facilities

Van Buren Charter Township,  
Wayne County, Michigan

April 20, 2021

## LEGEND

● 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 Lake St. Clair 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 Metropark

37 Dexter-Huron Metropark

38 Delhi Metropark

39 Maybury State Park

40 Ford Motor Company's MI. Arboretum

41 Belle Isle Fishing Pier

42 Whitcomb Conservatory

43 Belle Isle Bench

44 East River Front Loop Bikeway

45 Detroit Garden Center

46 Belleville Lake Boat Launch

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

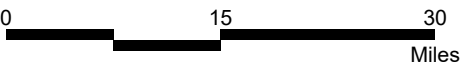
60 Catawba Island State Park

61 Cedar Point Amusement Park

62 Maumee State Forest

63 Michigan International Speedway

64 Rawsonville Boat Launch



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.  
Data Source: Van Buren 2021. McKenna 2021.









## 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:

**Table 7: Parks and Recreation Amenities**

Amenities	Haggerty Neighborhood Park	Harris Park	Pickleball and Tennis Courts	Beck Ball Fields	Quirk Park	Van Buren Township Hall	Van Buren Park	French Landing Park	Riggs Park	Visteon Woods Park
Athletic field				✓	✓					
Bathroom			✓*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Benches		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bike racks				✓			✓		✓	
Court facilities			✓				✓			
Grills					✓		✓			
Indoor activity space						✓				
Play structure	✓			✓	✓		✓			
Swings	✓			✓	✓		✓			
Tables with benches	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Trails / Pathways					✓		✓		✓	✓

\*No permanent restrooms, seasonal porta-johns available.



## 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 goals for 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:

- Making communities better places to live by preserving and creating open space;
- Encouraging exercise, physical fitness, and healthy lifestyles;
- Creating new opportunities for outdoor and close-to-home recreation;
- Providing options for non-motorized transportation;
- Strengthening local economies through tourism, recreation expenditures, and increased property values;
- Protecting the environment through preserving habitat, improving air and water quality, and preventing soil erosion;
- Offering education opportunities;
- Preserving cultural and historic areas by connecting us to our heritage and providing access to them; and
- Connecting 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.

### Iron Belle Trail System

Additionally, Michigan's under-construction signature trail—the Iron Belle Trail—is planned to create an uninterrupted trail experience across the state and will traverse the Township along Belleville Lake. Spanning hundreds of miles from Ironwood in the Western Upper Peninsula to Belle Isle in Detroit, this statewide trail can serve as a catalyst for trail tourism in the township and presents enhanced non-motorized network facilities for Van Buren.

The Van Buren Township (Wayne County) non-motorized pathway project will close a 7.0 mile gap in the Iron Belle State trail, connecting the B2B Trail system (55 miles) in Washtenaw County with the HCMA trail system (30+ miles) that begins in the Lower Huron Metropark and extends southeast to Lake Erie. Over 80% of the completed distance will follow the Huron River Greenway while the overall trail will connect dozens of existing parks, schools, central business districts and neighborhoods.

Feasibility studies have been completed on the entire route and design engineering is complete on 6.40 of the 7.0 miles. The attached segmentation plan for construction details 10 different segment within the Township along with 2 connecting segments being built by Washtenaw County and HCMA.

The entire 6.40 miles of designed trail, represents phase #1 of the project and can be built in 2022/2023 if sufficient funding can be secured with remaining 2 segments targeted for construction in 2024/25. Significant engineering is required for the final two segments (.60 miles) and that expense is included in the phase #1 planning.

## Van Buren Township Iron Belle Trail Gap

### 2022-2023 Construction Opportunities







## Planned Improvements to the Non-Motorized System

The 2020 Van Buren Master Plan proposed numerous additions to the Township's trails and greenways network. Non-motorized transportation routes by proposed class and location are listed below:

**Class I Bicycle/Pedestrian:** The bike or pedestrian way is physically separated from vehicle traffic by an open space barrier. Class I routes are proposed in the following areas:

- Beck Road (along the North Middle School property)
- Belleville Road (north of Ecorse Road) and through the vacant property at the corner of Belleville and Ecorse Roads
- Ecorse Road
- Quirk Road (N. I-94 Service Drive to Tyler Road)
- Visteon Woods Trail

**Class II Bicycle Lanes:** A portion of the roadway is designated by striping, signing, and pavement markings and is dedicated as a bicycle lane.

- Beck Road (N. I-94 Service Drive to North Middle School property; north of North Middle School property to Tyler Road)
- McBride Road
- Tyler Road
- Quirk Road (S. I-94 Service Drive to Belleville Road)

**Class III Bicycle Routes:** Signed, shared roadway bicycle routes with no special treatment except signs.

- Belleville Road (Ecorse Road to N. I-94 Service Drive; Quirk Road to City of Belleville)
- N. I-94 Service Drive (Quirk Road to Belleville Road)

# Greenways and Trails

Van Buren Charter Township,  
Wayne County, Michigan

November 2, 2021



- LEGEND**
- Class I Pedestrian Lane
  - Class I Bike Lane
  - Class II Bike Lane
  - Class III Bike Route
  - Pedestrian Bridge
  - Crushed Stone & Boardwalk Path
  - Visteon Woods Trail
  - Future Iron Belle Trail
  - Parks
  - School Facilities
  - Residential Developments
  - Trail Connection/Gateway
  - Existing Railroad Crossing
- Parks
- School Facilities



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.  
Data Source: Van Buren Charter Township 2021. McKenna 2021.









## 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
- Kopper Park
- Patriot Park
- Pheasant Run Golf Club
- Preservation Park
- Summit on the Park Community Center
- BLOCK Youth and Teen Center
- Village Theater at Cherry Hill

### City of Belleville

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

### 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

### Sumpter Township

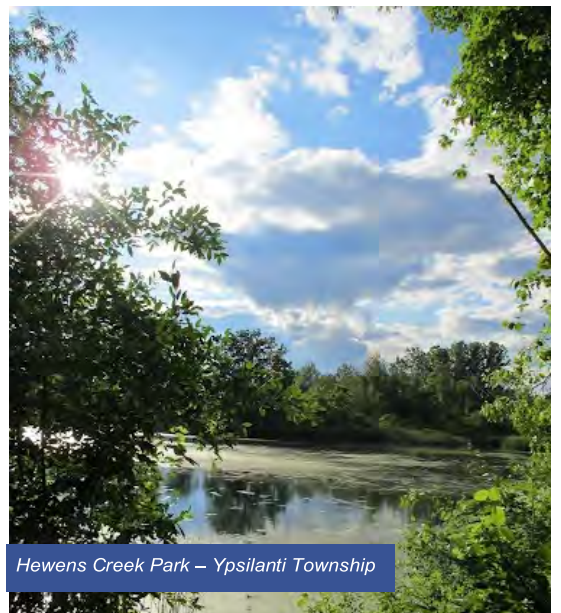
- Banotai Park
- Community Center
- Crosswinds Marsh Wetland Interpretive Preserve
- Graham Park



Horizon Park – Belleville



Romulus Athletic Center



Hewens Creek Park – Ypsilanti Township

## Ypsilanti Township

- Appleridge Park
- Big Island Park
- Bud & Blossom Park
- Burns Park
- Clubview Park
- Community Center Park
- EMU Boathouse
- Fairway Hills Park
- Ford Heritage Park
- Ford Lake Park
- Grove Road Overlooks
- Harris Park
- Hewens 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
- Sugarbrook Park
- Tot Lot Park
- Watertower Park
- Wendell Holmes Park
- West Willow Park

## City of Ypsilanti

- Ainsworth Circle Lot
- Border to Border Trail
- Candy Cane Park
- Carrie 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



North Bay Park – Ypsilanti Twp



Frog Island – Ypsilanti

## Quasi-Public and Private Recreation Facilities

Some recreation opportunities in Van Buren 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. With the closure of all three golf courses in the Township—Harbour Club Golf Course, Pine Creek Golf Course, and Woodlands of Van Buren Golf Course—the only quasi-public/private recreation facility in the township is the Ted Scott Campus of Wayne County Community College. Ted Scott is located in the northeast portion of the township and offers a variety of educational and career classes and assistance.





## Programming

The Van Buren Township Parks and Recreation Department offers a large variety of programs and special events throughout the year. Offerings have expanded with the establishment of the Community Center, which includes the space and facilities for active programming, including a large gym and dance studio. 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
- 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







# 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.



## Planning and Public Input Process

### Planning Process

The Parks and Recreation Department 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 key tasks:

**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.

**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.

**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.

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

**Public Survey –** A community-wide survey was posted online during the months of October and November 2021, 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 during the months of December and January 2021.

**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.

**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.

**Task Seven: Plan Completion and Adoption.** Once consensus was reached among the Parks and Recreation Department and Parks and Recreation Committee, the Plan was received at the Parks and Recreation Committee meeting on December 14, 2021. The Township Planning Commission held a public hearing on January 12, 2022, and the Commission recommended adoption of the Plan. Finally, on January 18, 2022, the Township Board reviewed and formally adopted the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. See Appendices for meeting notices, and adoption documentation.





## Park Land Analysis and Service Areas

Approximately 1,094.8 acres of parks and recreation facilities are located in Van Buren Township. Of that, 267.2 acres are owned by the Township and managed by the Parks and Recreation Department. The public schools, Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA), the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), and private entities own the remaining 827.6 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). 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 8: 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 30,375 (US 2020 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 has a total of 4.25 acres, but there is a deficiency of 3 acres of mini-park sites based on the recommended acreage of 7.5. In order to better meet this need, the Township should look for opportunities to develop smaller parks in areas of high residential concentration. However, larger lot sizes in much of the township do 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 a one-half to three mile-radius and are between 30 to 50 acres in size. The Township owns 151 acres of community park land in eight parks. Despite not exceeding the recommended park land by less than one acre, 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 113 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 87.5 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, approximately 30 acres of the approximately 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 two regional parks within its borders – Lower Huron Metropark (HCMA), the Rawsonville West Boat Launch, and the Huron River Dr. Boat Launch. These parks account for over 697 acres of park land, thus exceeding the recommended acreage by 546 acres. These regional parks are a valuable resource to Township residents and offer a variety of recreational opportunities merely 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 8: Park Land Acreage Analysis**

Park Classification	NRPA Acreage Guideline <sup>1</sup>	Recommended Acreage <sup>2</sup>	Existing Acreage	Surplus (Deficiency)
Mini Parks	0.25	7.59	4.25	(3.34)
Neighborhood Parks (including public school facilities)	1.0	30.37	29.16	(1.20)
Community Parks	5.0	151.87	151.01	(0.86)
Natural Resource Areas	Variable		113.42	-
Public School Facilities	Variable – depends on function		N/A	-
Regional Parks	5.0	151.87	697.97	+ 546.10
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>995.81</b>	<b>+ 540.70</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Based on Township population of 30,375 as of the 2020 US Census.

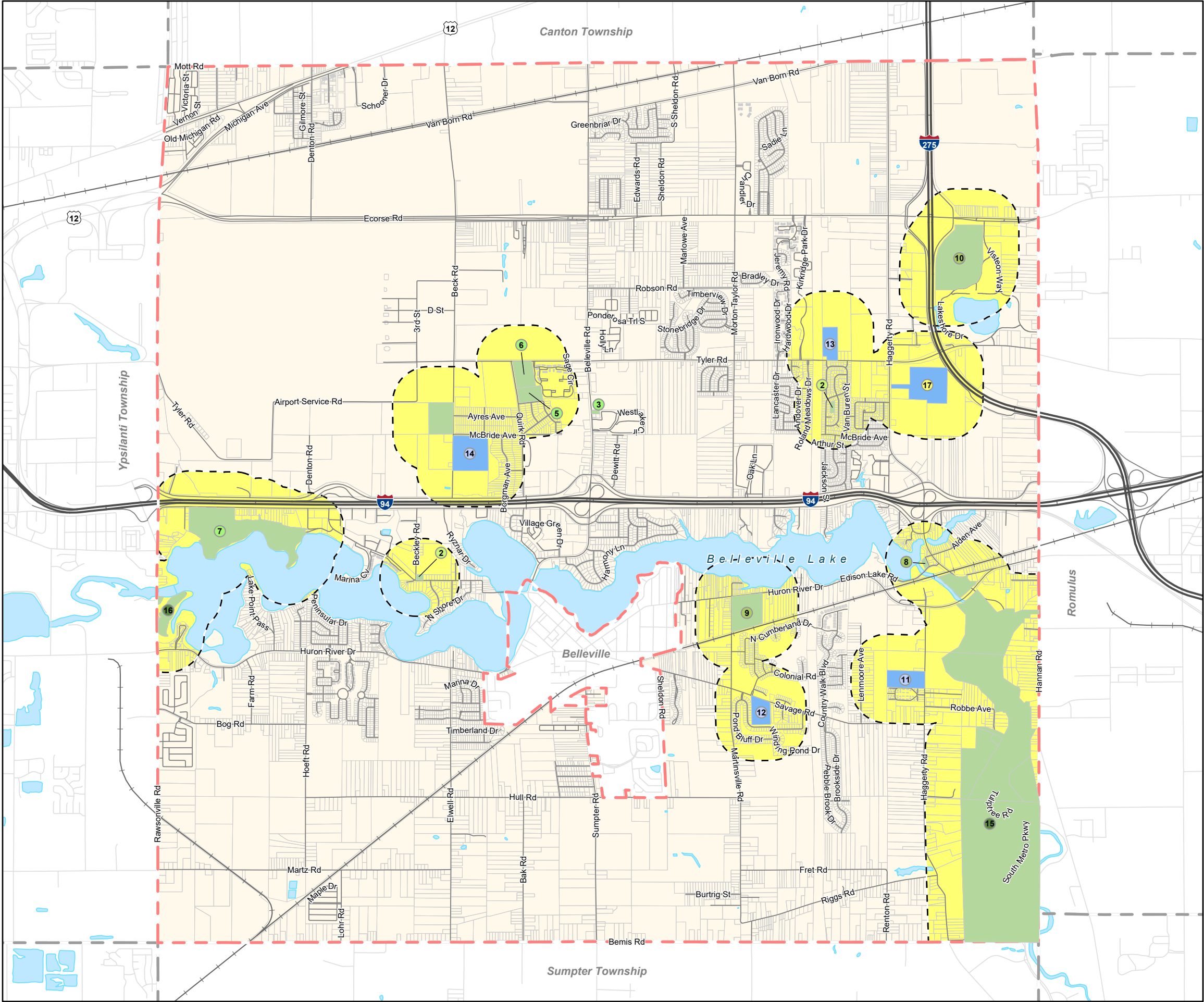
<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of evaluating recommended acreage for Neighborhood Parks, school facilities are counted at one-third (1/3) of their acreage for comparison purposes. Therefore, ~30 acres of the ~90 total school acres are counted as neighborhood park facilities.

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 of 0.25 miles for each 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. Most of Van Buren is well-served by community parks, with the exception of the far north and south areas of the Township.

# Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities

Van Buren Charter Township,  
Wayne County, Michigan

November 02, 2021



**LEGEND**

Parks

School Facilities

Mini Parks

Natural Resource Areas

Public School Facilities

Regional Parks and Facilities

Quasi-Public and Private Recreation Facilities

1/4-Mile Walkability Radius

1. Haggerty Neighborhood Park

2. PickleBall Park

3. Harris Park

Community Parks and Facilities

4. Beck Ball Fields

5. Quirk Park

6. Van Buren Community Center

7. Van Buren Park

8. French Landing Park

9. Riggs Heritage Park

10. Visteon Woods Park

Public School Facilities

11. Haggerty Elementary School

12. Savage Elementary School

13. Tyler Elementary School

14. North Middle School

Regional Parks and Facilities

15. Lower Huron Metropark

16. Rawsonville Road DNR Boat Launch

Quasi-Public and Private Recreation Facilities

17. Wayne County Community College - Ted Scott Campus

Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.  
Data Source: Van Buren Charter Township 2021. McKenna 2021.







## Facilities Analysis

Prior to 2020, the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) published the NRPA Areas and Facilities Standards to help agencies assess whether they had sufficient parks and recreation facilities. The Standards had not been updated in more than two decades, and the NRPA realized that a single set of standards could not encompass the uniqueness found in every community across the country. Consequently, NRPA replaced the single set of standards with the creation of a nationwide benchmarking tool for parks and recreation, called NRPA Park Metrics.

The NRPA publishes the NRPA Agency Performance Review, which is a report that summarizes the benchmarking data contributed by 1,100 park and recreation agencies to the Park Metrics database. The Park Metrics database separates the data based on size of jurisdiction being served. Table 10 below provide a snapshot of Van Buren's parks and recreation offerings in comparison to data from similarly sized peer communities. This information must be combined with information about the community's specific needs and experiences to identify the optimal mix of facilities and programming. The Township meets or exceeds the standards for just under half of the facility types. Thus, as funding allows and needs arise, based on the deficiencies above and other needs in the community, the additional facilities should be considered.

**Table 9: Park Facility Analysis**

Facility type	Median No. of residents per Facility <sup>1</sup>	Recommended Facilities <sup>2</sup>	Existing Facilities	Surplus (Deficiency)
Baseball / Softball	7,560	4	21	+ 17
Basketball Courts	7,000	4	6	+ 2
Community Center	26,099	1	1	Met
Community Gardens	25,480	1	1	Met
Dog Parks	27,528	1	0	(1)
Ice Rink (Outdoor)	13,049	2	1	(1)
Multi-Purpose Fields	7,400	4	2	(2)
Playgrounds / Playscapes	2,961	10	10	Met
Skate Parks	31,248	1	0	(1)
Soccer Fields	5,833	5	5	Met
Swimming Pool	25,402	1	0	(1)
Tennis / Pickleball Courts	4,560	4	4	Met
Volleyball Courts	18,850	1	2	+ 1

<sup>1</sup> The Median Number of Residents per Facility is based on data from communities having a population of 20,000 – 49,999.

<sup>2</sup> The figures in this column represent the number of facilities needed to achieve a Median Number of Residents per Facility, based on the Township's population of 30,375 (2020 US Census).



## Public Engagement Summary

### Overview

The current amenities offered by Van Buren parks are being utilized and enjoyed by the community. Satisfaction with the appearance, maintenance, and cleanliness of the parks and recreation facilities is overwhelmingly positive. However, there is indication of a need for increased maintenance of the public bathrooms, trails, and overall aesthetics of the parks. There is a strong desire to further diversify the types of amenities available within the community as well as enhance some of the existing features. Those surveyed throughout the community have indicated a desire for a dog park, a pool, increased trail access, and additional programming.

### Top New Amenities Requested

***Community Pool** – Respondents indicated that a facility for swimming and water aerobics would be appreciated by many.*

***Dog Park** – Many remarked on the need for a community dog park as dog owners living in Van Buren Township visit neighboring communities' dog parks.*

***Programing** – Respondents indicated a desire to see more programming throughout the parks, with yoga, arts and crafts, weekend festivals, and outdoor rentals.*

Other amenities mentioned by respondents include a skatepark, an inside walking track, a nature center, youth sports, a movie theatre, and additional benches.

### Existing Enhancements

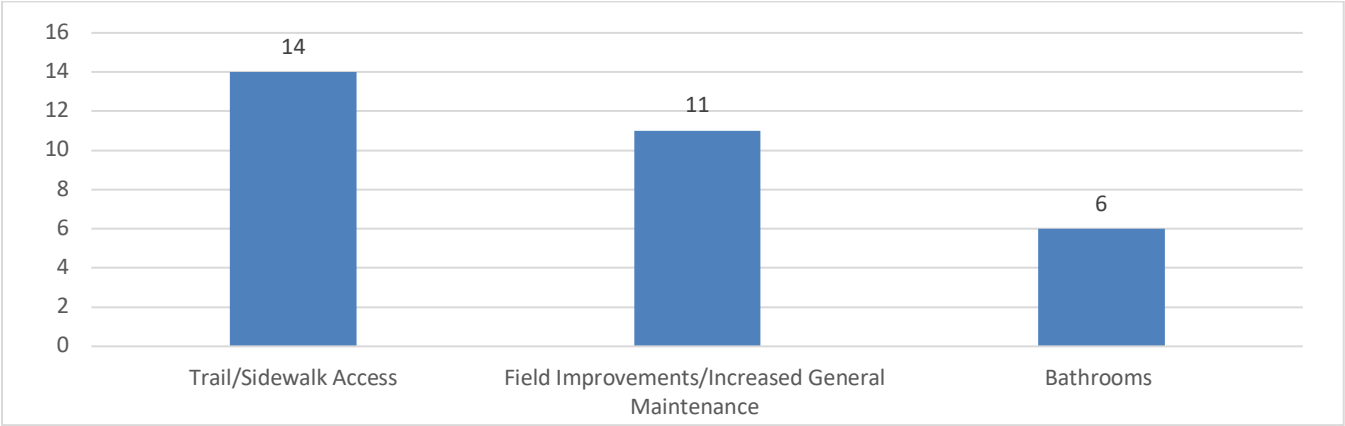
- **Greater Connectivity** - The desire for greater connectivity was indicated through the need for more walking and bike trails, with some emphasis being placed on the Iron Belle Trail and the connection between the Lower Huron Metropark and downtown Belleville.
- **Field Improvements and Maintenance** – The soccer fields at Quirk Park deteriorate over the season and could benefit from increased maintenance and drainage.
- **Greater access to bathrooms** – Respondents indicated a needed improvement to the bathrooms at Van Buren Park. Additionally, there was a need to have bathrooms open at Harris Park year-round as well as additional bathrooms throughout the other parks.
- **Enhancements to Lake Access** – The beachfront at Van Buren Park is a treasure community asset. Respondents felt that the beach area could be increased to allow for greater access and enjoyment of the lake. Additional access for shore fishing would be appreciated. Comments also indicated that if a community center available for rentals was constructed in the park near the lake it would increase general access and ability to appreciate the water.





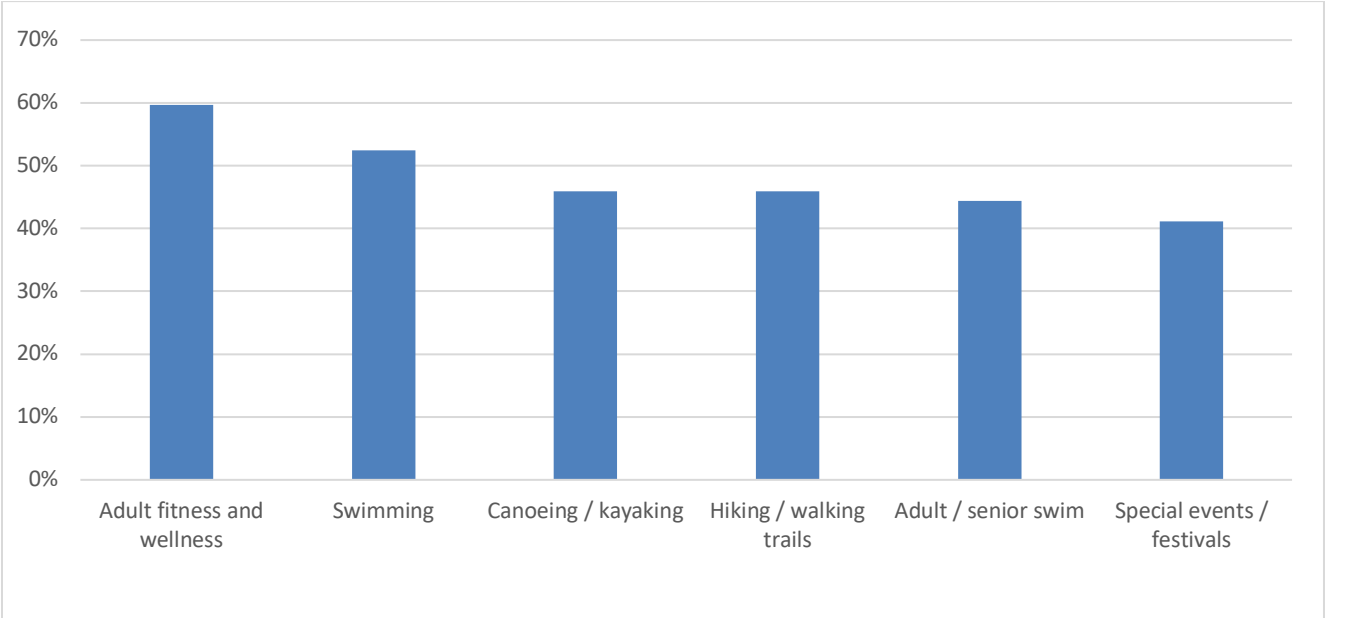
Other potential enhancements focused on lake access at Van Buren Park. Respondents indicated that the beach area could be increased to allow for greater access, added area for additional shore fishing, and a community center on the lake. There was an additional desire to increase the number of playgrounds throughout the parks, benches, and shade.

Figure 2: Top Three Park Enhancements to Existing Facilities (open answer)



Overall, there was a desire for residents to become more engaged with the existing parks. There is a definite acknowledgement of the natural beauty and an appreciation of the open space throughout the township parks. Residents can potentially become more engaged with the natural treasures through additional programming, both small and large scaled led by the Township.

Figure 3: Top 6 Choices for Activities, Programs and Facilities





### Comparison to the 2015 Survey

Questions from the 2015 community-wide survey were repeated in the 2021 survey for purposes of cross-referencing. The following are several findings between the survey results:

- Van Buren Park and Quirk Park both remain the top priority for investment.
- The community remained satisfied with the appearance, maintenance, and cleanliness of the parks and recreation facilities.
- Respondents still found the most significant barriers to using the Township's recreation facilities, programs, or parks to be missing programs or facilities or not knowing the location of the parks and facilities.
- Overall park attendance (self-reporting) is up from 2015, predominately in Quirk Park.





# 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:

- Vision, Mission and Special Delivery Values
- Goals and Strategies
- Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan

## 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.



## 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.*

#### STRATEGIES

##### 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.

##### 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.



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### 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.
  - ✓ **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.
  - ✓ **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.
- ✓ **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.
- ✓ **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.** Implement the Greenways and Trails Master Plan, as outlined in the 2020 Township Master Plan.
- ✓ **Iron Belle Trail.** Provide connections to the Iron Belle Trail.





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### 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.

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### 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.



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#### **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, Wayne County, 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.

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#### **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.



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**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.

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**Strategy 3.5 — Raise Awareness of Programs Offered:**

Create a stronger awareness program for the program services offered through Van Buren Township.

- ✓ 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.

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**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.

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**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.





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#### **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.

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#### **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.



## 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 10: 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 2021 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 10: Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan, 2022-2026**

Year	Project	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources
Year 1 2022	<b>Community Center</b> – Construct the new community center, complete with a gym, plaza and space for various recreation and cultural activities and programming	\$10,000,000	GF, CDBG
	<b>French Landing Park: Phase II</b> – Construct a new fishing pier and other park amenities	\$900,000	GF, LWCF,
	<b>Iron Belle Trail Head</b> – Construct a new trailhead at Riggs Park	\$250,000	GF, MDNR, MDOT
	<b>Park Signage: Phase II</b> – Continue to provide location and wayfinding signage, focusing on interior wayfinding and small entry signs	\$200,000	GF, CF
	<b>Park Cameras: Phase I</b> – Install park security cameras	\$18,000	GF, UF
	<b>Riggs Park Landscape Management</b> – Develop and implement a plan for natural landscape maintenance	\$60,000	GF, MDNR
	<b>Van Buren Park (Master Plan)</b> – Develop, with citizen input, a comprehensive master design plan for the park	\$60,000	GF
	<b>Van Buren Park Playscape Enhancements</b> – Create a concrete sidewalk enclosure around the existing playscape	\$50,000	GF
	<b>Van Buren Park Pavilions</b> – Demolish the current two pavilions and replace with new pavilions	\$400,000	GF, CDBG, CF, P
Year 2 2023	<b>Van Buren Park</b> – Construct a performance venue, such as a gazebo, stage, or similar structure (as designed in the latest Master Plan)	\$75,000	GF, CDBG, MDNR
	<b>Non-Motorized Pathway System</b> – Construct first phase of Township portion of Iron Belle Trail	\$125,000	CDBG, MDNR
	<b>Riggs Park</b> – Monarch butterfly way station	\$5,000	GF, MDNR
Year 3 2024	<b>Van Buren Park</b> – Pave the trail encircling the park	\$100,000	GF, CDBG, MDNR
	<b>Van Buren Park</b> – Playground replacements/addition	\$75,000	GF, CDBG, MDNR
	<b>Van Buren Park Basketball Courts</b> – Renovate with full court basketball courts	\$150,000	CDBG, MDNR
	<b>Park Development</b> – Development of future park at 15000 Haggerty	TBD	MDNR





Year	Project	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources
Year 3 2024 (cont.)	<b>Park Development</b> – Development of future park at 15080 Elwell	TBD	MDNR
	<b>Non-Motorized Pathway System</b> – Continue construction of non-motorized paths, connecting existing trails including the Iron Belle Trail	\$250,000	CDBG, MDNR, MDOT, CF, P, DDA
	<b>French Landing Park</b> – Repair bridge at Edison Lake Road for use of a trailhead for the Iron Belle Trail	\$400,000	CDBG, MDNR
Year 4 2025	<b>Van Buren Park Restrooms</b> – Improve user friendliness of restrooms including upgrading the interior and exterior lights, and making necessary improvements for ADA accessibility	\$25,000	GF, CDBG
	<b>Wi-Fi</b> – Van Buren Park and Riggs Park (high speed)	\$15,000	GF, CDBG
	<b>Riggs Park</b> – Repair and seal asphalt walk paths	\$50,000	GF
	<b>Quirk Park</b> – Repair and seal asphalt walk paths	\$50,000	GF
	<b>DNR Property Construction</b> – Construct a Township Lakehouse to be used as community space for future programming	\$5,000,000	GF, MDNR, CF, P
	<b>Non-Motorized Pathway System</b> – Continue construction of non- motorized paths, connecting existing trails including the Iron Belle Trail	\$250,000	CDBG, MDNR, MDOT, CF, P
Year 5 2026	<b>Non-Motorized Pathway System</b> – 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, CF, P
	<b>Van Buren Park</b> – Provide access for boat docking and launching, and rental of recreation equipment	\$300,000	LWCF
	<b>Van Buren Park</b> – 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	GF, CDBG, MDNR, UM
	<b>Van Buren Park</b> – Stabilization of peninsula area at southeast end of park including U of M facility	\$250,000	GF, CDBG, MDNR, UM
	<b>Dog Park</b> – Acquire land for off-leash dog activity and develop a fenced in dog park, potentially with an agility course	\$250,000	GF, UF, CF, P



CDBG	Community Development Block Grant	LWCF	Land and Water Conservation Fund
CF	Community Foundation	P	Private
DDA	Van Buren Township Downtown Development Authority	UM	University of Michigan
GF	General Fund	UF	User Fees
MDNR	Michigan Department of Natural Resources	VBCF	Van Buren Civic Fund
MDOT	Michigan Department of Transportation		







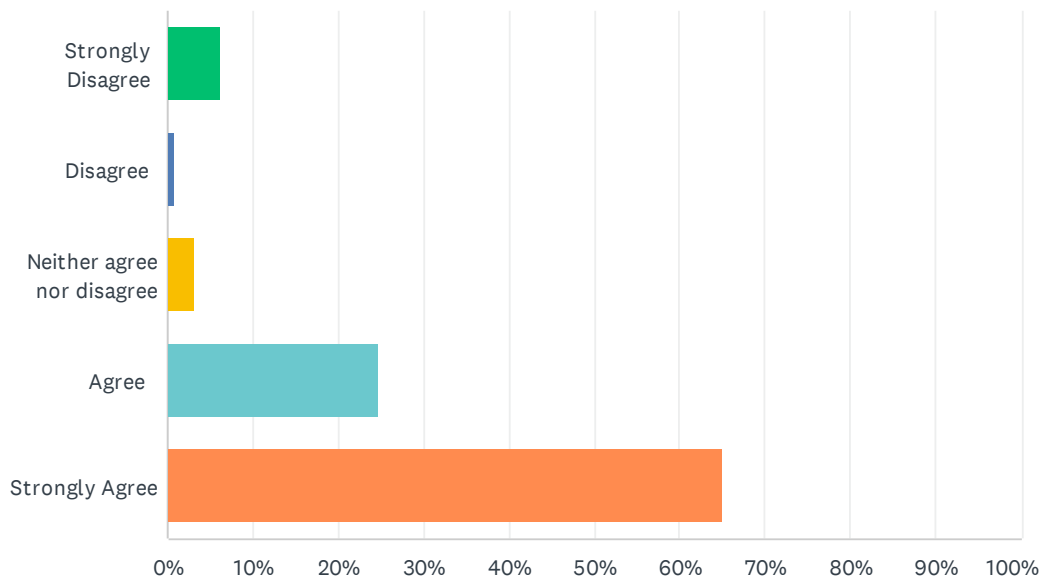
# Appendix A: Survey and Public Input Results

A survey was posted on the Township website and advertised on social media during October and November of 2021, asking people for feedback on their experiences and opinions of the current parks and recreation offerings and any improvements they would like to see. Paper copies were also made available at Township Hall offices. The survey consisted of 16 questions regarding several aspects of the parks and recreation facilities, programs, and services offered by the Township. The survey received a total of 130 responses.



## Q1 I believe parks, trails, open space, and recreational programs are vital in our community.

Answered: 129 Skipped: 1



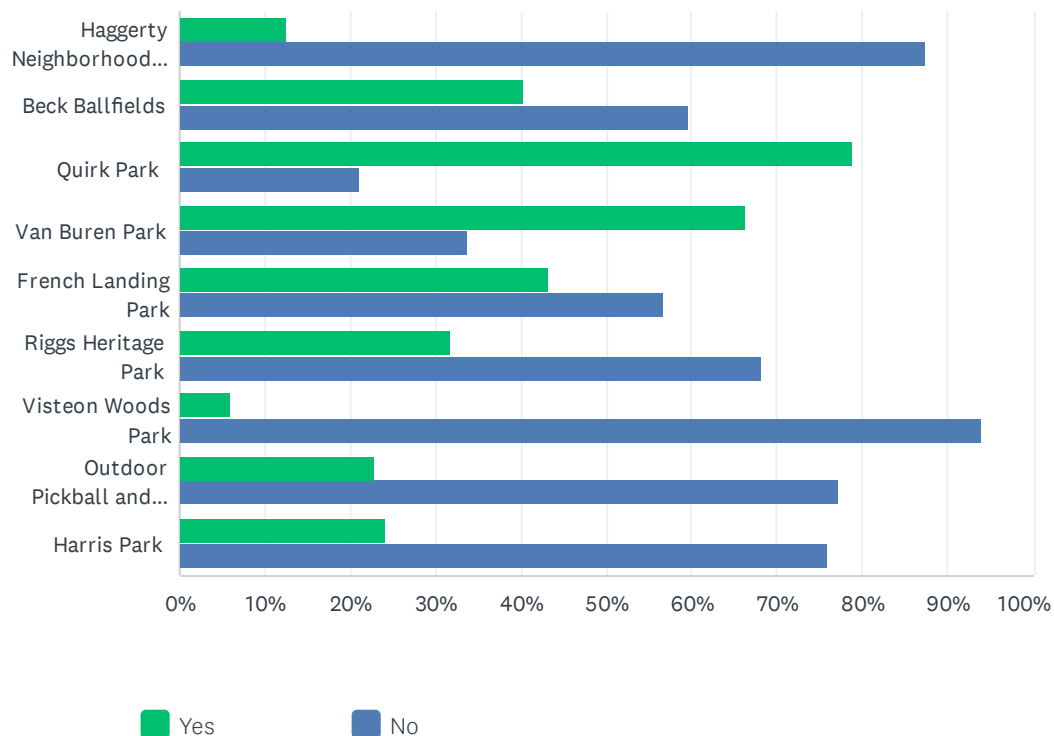
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Disagree	6.20%	8
Disagree	0.78%	1
Neither agree nor disagree	3.10%	4
Agree	24.81%	32
Strongly Agree	65.12%	84
TOTAL		129



## Q2 Please tell us about your experience with the following Township parks and recreation facilities.

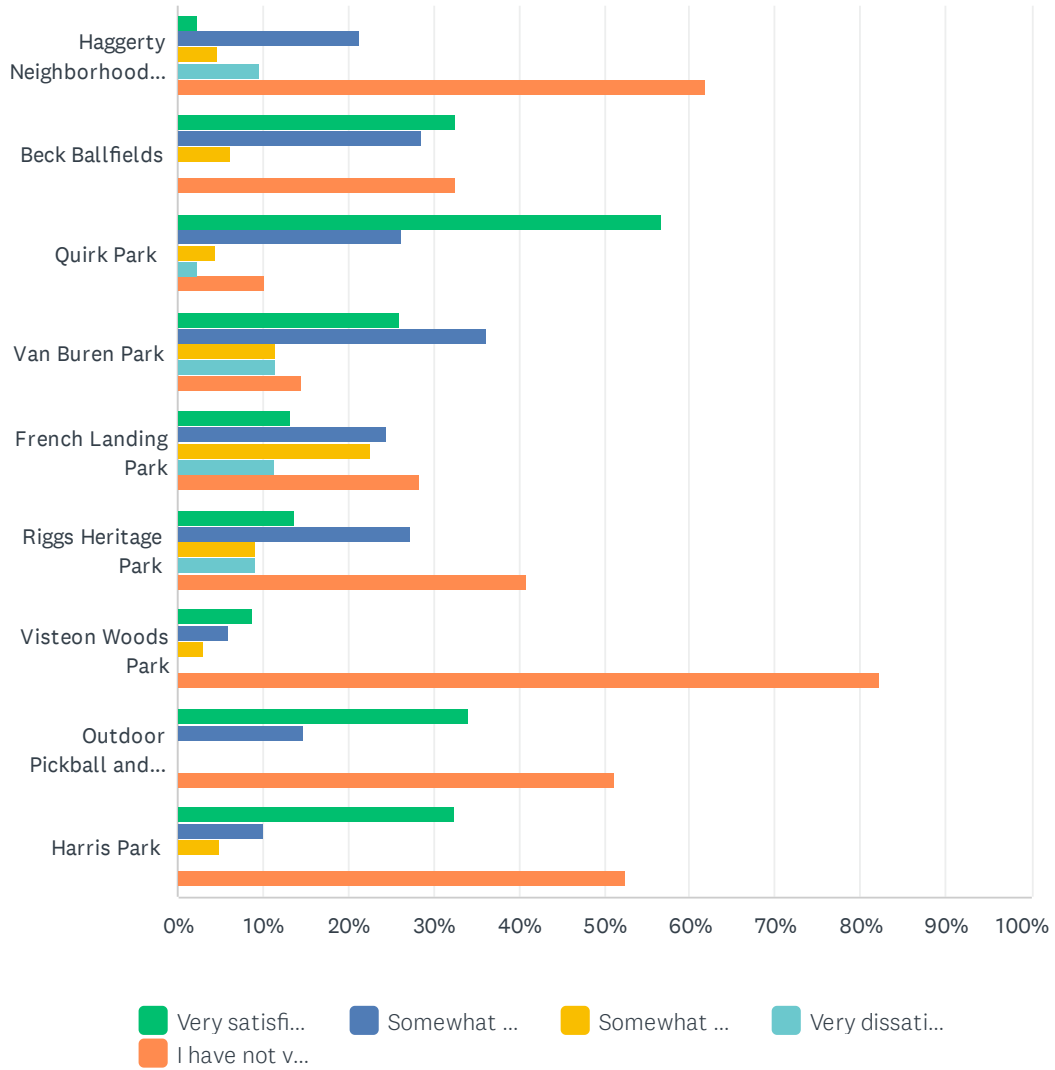
Answered: 129 Skipped: 1

Have you or a member of your household visited this park or recreation facility in th...



## Van Buren Township - Updated Parks and Recreation Plan !

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



# Van Buren Township - Updated Parks and Recreation Plan !

Have you or a member of your household visited this park or recreation facility in the past year?						
	YES		NO		TOTAL	
Haggerty Neighborhood Park	12.62%	13	87.38%	90		103
Beck Ballfields	40.38%	42	59.62%	62		104
Quirk Park	78.86%	97	21.14%	26		123
Van Buren Park	66.37%	75	33.63%	38		113
French Landing Park	43.27%	45	56.73%	59		104
Riggs Heritage Park	31.73%	33	68.27%	71		104
Visteon Woods Park	5.94%	6	94.06%	95		101
Outdoor Pickball and Tennis Courts	22.86%	24	77.14%	81		105
Harris Park	24.04%	25	75.96%	79		104
How satisfied are you with your experience at this park or recreation facility?						
	VERY SATISFIED	SOMEWHAT SATISFIED	SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED	VERY DISSATISFIED	I HAVE NOT VISITED THIS PARK IN THE PAST YEAR	TOTAL
Haggerty Neighborhood Park	2.38% 1	21.43% 9	4.76% 2	9.52% 4	61.90% 26	42
Beck Ballfields	32.65% 16	28.57% 14	6.12% 3	0.00% 0	32.65% 16	49
Quirk Park	56.82% 50	26.14% 23	4.55% 4	2.27% 2	10.23% 9	88
Van Buren Park	26.09% 18	36.23% 25	11.59% 8	11.59% 8	14.49% 10	69
French Landing Park	13.21% 7	24.53% 13	22.64% 12	11.32% 6	28.30% 15	53
Riggs Heritage Park	13.64% 6	27.27% 12	9.09% 4	9.09% 4	40.91% 18	44
Visteon Woods Park	8.82% 3	5.88% 2	2.94% 1	0.00% 0	82.35% 28	34
Outdoor Pickball and Tennis Courts	34.15% 14	14.63% 6	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	51.22% 21	41
Harris Park	32.50% 13	10.00% 4	5.00% 2	0.00% 0	52.50% 21	40



### Q3 If you use any of the Van Buren parks, trails, and recreation facilities, please share any improvements that would increase the likelihood that you would visit the park(s):

Answered: 67   Skipped: 63

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Kid friendly stuff, soft padding under playground equipment for crawlers. Baby swings	11/9/2021 12:12 PM
2	It would be great if you got moving on the Iron Belle trail between the Metropark and the city of Belleville along EHRD. It would connect things. As it is now, it's not safe riding a bicycle along EHRD.	11/9/2021 12:21 AM
3	Better soccer fields on quirk park.	11/8/2021 11:30 PM
4	Having a trail/bridge that goes from Old Denton Rd to Van Buren Park	11/8/2021 9:54 PM
5	None	11/8/2021 9:51 PM
6	More benches, walking paths.	11/8/2021 6:56 PM
7	More benches along walk ways and path ways for older people that walk but need to take a break	11/8/2021 6:07 PM
8	More events	11/8/2021 3:32 PM
9	VTP-light posts are damaged. Quirk...more parking near Pavilion.	11/8/2021 3:05 PM
10	Better bathrooms. Scheduled entertainment.	11/8/2021 2:57 PM
11	Maps of the park, bee/wasp control at playgrounds	11/8/2021 2:39 PM
12	Dog park	11/8/2021 1:26 PM
13	Bathrooms need to be available!	11/8/2021 1:23 PM
14	Overall	11/8/2021 12:27 PM
15	I would like to see the bike trail completed instead of talking about it for years	11/7/2021 6:36 PM
16	A dog park. Wooded walking trails.	11/7/2021 6:26 PM
17	Playgrounds playgrounds playgrounds!	11/7/2021 12:41 PM
18	Dog parks and trails that you can take your dogs on.	11/7/2021 9:23 AM
19	Riggs Park needs benches along the trail	11/6/2021 9:31 AM
20	Skate park, something for teens to do. We spend our money in other areas because there's not much for teenagers. Add bins for recycling	11/4/2021 11:22 AM
21	Van Buren Park has little or no views of the lake	11/4/2021 10:23 AM
22	Riggs Park is nice but it tends to get overgrown.	11/4/2021 8:03 AM
23	Shore fishing at van buren park	11/3/2021 7:52 PM
24	Wildflower/native grass fields and bird houses would be a nice touch. It would save the township money to get away from grass that needs constant attention.	11/3/2021 2:39 PM
25	only one real family park is quirk park that has decent playground, the rest are only space for picknick	11/3/2021 1:15 AM
26	Vanburen Park needs updates. The beach really needs to be more user friendly. The ride to the beach needs to be updated and easier to use. The roads are rough.	11/2/2021 10:32 PM

## Van Buren Township - Updated Parks and Recreation Plan !

27	Quirk Park soccer fields need a lot of work! Unsafe towards the end of the season.	11/2/2021 2:36 PM
28	Riggs, bathrooms open, more native plants, more nature activities	11/2/2021 12:38 PM
29	The athletic fields need better maintenance. A community pool would be nice.	11/1/2021 8:25 PM
30	Playground and kayak launch at French Landing Park. The soccer fields at Quirk were terrible for mosquitoes, would be good to spray them during soccer season if possible. More youth sports leagues/programs and summer camp.	11/1/2021 5:05 PM
31	It would be nice to have something on the south side of the township	11/1/2021 1:07 PM
32	Haggerty sub park needs to be better maintained. Grass cutting and trash removal. We'd also LOVE a soccer net. There's a large open grassy space and a couple goal posts would be awesome.	11/1/2021 12:45 PM
33	Would like to see Movies at the Park	11/1/2021 11:39 AM
34	For Van Buren Park, road improvement and widening when entering the park.	11/1/2021 10:55 AM
35	Beck Ball Fields, supposed to be maintained by the township. But I have never once seen anyone but volunteers of the little league doing any sort of mantainance.	11/1/2021 9:05 AM
36	Quirk- more playground equipment, some shade	11/1/2021 8:01 AM
37	Maintenance of trails and sidewalks.	11/1/2021 7:35 AM
38	Dog park please!!!	10/31/2021 10:51 PM
39	N/a	10/31/2021 10:26 PM
40	Adding more fishing areas and bathrooms or porta potties	10/31/2021 9:50 PM
41	Community pool, lights on the ball fields.	10/31/2021 8:51 PM
42	More trails, more playground equipment	10/31/2021 7:36 PM
43	Haggerty neighborhood park. I live in the neighborhood and need to keep teenagers out that write all over stuff and ruin it for the little ones.	10/31/2021 7:07 PM
44	Paved trails, lighting, water views, clean restrooms,	10/31/2021 6:45 PM
45	clean, open, well-stocked restrooms	10/31/2021 3:23 PM
46	Quirk Park in back of the police station would be wonderful to have a dog park that way when doing sporting events or family outings you have a spot for your furry friend as well it would be like a one stop family spot and bring more family's to the township	10/31/2021 2:56 PM
47	Bring back play equipment to French Landing Park. Improve bathrooms at Can Buren Park. Do not charge to get into VBP, and improve Beach at VBP.	10/31/2021 2:20 PM
48	Open Restrooms at Harris Park!!	10/31/2021 1:57 PM
49	Clean them. Garbage everywhere at the beach.	10/31/2021 1:43 PM
50	More tennis courts	10/31/2021 1:22 PM
51	More police presence	10/30/2021 9:00 PM
52	More trails in wooded areas; improved aesthetics	10/29/2021 6:34 PM
53	clean up the Riggs park and make the area look more appealing from Huron River Dr	10/29/2021 1:37 PM
54	More appealing play scapes. Possibly some smaller shed options.	10/29/2021 10:21 AM
55	More use via the townships involvement. We have the big beautiful park that has no use. Other towns and cities, have weekend festivals, art shows, wine/beer tastings in their parks.	10/29/2021 7:30 AM
56	Increase the sidewalks that lead down Tyler towards the parks.	10/28/2021 4:05 PM
57	I would love to see a nature center.	10/28/2021 2:51 PM
58	The beach is horrible and there should be a bike trail at VB park	10/28/2021 2:39 PM

## Van Buren Township - Updated Parks and Recreation Plan !

59	Keep the playgrounds clean. More lake access at Van Buren Park	10/28/2021 10:36 AM
60	More available sidewalks to get to these parks. Most of these parks are near busy streets with a lack of walkability. I think it would be worthwhile to have more greenery. I am a big fan of the nature at the metroparks and would love to see more trees/shade in the parks we have. I think having more recreation programs geared towards young adults would be beneficial. All the programs they have right now are for seniors or little kids. Even their fitness stuff is mostly geared towards seniors and occurs during weekday work hours. Can we get some yoga or boxing classes? What about having some bike paths throughout the township like Ypsi has?	10/28/2021 9:53 AM
61	Bike path at Van Buren park	10/28/2021 9:33 AM
62	The beach is not well maintained. Also the hill down to the beach is steep, not easily accessible.	10/27/2021 11:32 PM
63	Improve bike access to Van Buren. The service drive doesn't seem safe for bike riders. The park can also use some tree trimming.	10/27/2021 10:15 PM
64	I like to see the parks look as well-kept and modern as possible (new pavilions, restriped parking lots, state-of-the-art equipment, etc.). I'd also like to see more of the parks stay open later and receive cool lighting features similar to Harris Park.	10/27/2021 6:50 PM
65	Focus on programming in the parks so people have a reason to go there.	10/27/2021 5:55 PM
66	I'd love to use a bathroom at van Buren park	10/27/2021 5:24 PM
67	Free entry into VB Park - longer hiking trails	10/27/2021 2:13 PM

## Q4 What do you like best about Van Buren Township parks, trails, and recreation facilities?

Answered: 64   Skipped: 66

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Continued Upkeep	11/10/2021 3:21 PM
2	Splash pad	11/9/2021 12:12 PM
3	Well designed, well maintained	11/8/2021 11:30 PM
4	I live really close to the new tennis courts and love it!	11/8/2021 9:54 PM
5	The many things to do	11/8/2021 9:51 PM
6	There's a variety of activities and environments.	11/8/2021 7:06 PM
7	Clean! Nit too crowded.	11/8/2021 6:56 PM
8	Family friendly	11/8/2021 6:07 PM
9	Cleanness/ locstions	11/8/2021 3:48 PM
10	Proximity	11/8/2021 3:32 PM
11	Most are free to residents.	11/8/2021 3:05 PM
12	Trails	11/8/2021 2:57 PM
13	You build a beautiful splash pad -and put no work or up keep in the soccer fields. If you understood how many people visit quirk park each weekend during soccer season, you would take more pride in them.	11/8/2021 2:48 PM
14	Near home	11/8/2021 2:39 PM
15	That they try very hard to make the whole community a part of the decision making process.	11/8/2021 2:26 PM
16	Convenient & nicely kept!	11/8/2021 1:52 PM
17	Open to pets and great for kids!	11/8/2021 12:27 PM
18	The Splash Pad.	11/7/2021 6:26 PM
19	Playgrounds!	11/7/2021 12:41 PM
20	Bathrooms	11/7/2021 9:23 AM
21	Clean, well kept	11/6/2021 9:31 AM
22	They are kept nice	11/4/2021 11:22 AM
23	Splash Park is great. Ball Fields are retro cool. Cant really think of anything else they have.	11/4/2021 10:23 AM
24	The public green space.	11/4/2021 8:03 AM
25	The convenience of them being nearby.	11/3/2021 2:39 PM
26	Love the improvements and additions of items families can do together!	11/3/2021 1:18 PM
27	I like in quirk park playground, close distance to restroom, closeness to community center when it was opened almost two years ago	11/3/2021 1:15 AM
28	Splash pad and pickleball courts were a GREAT addition!	11/2/2021 2:36 PM
29	Location	11/2/2021 12:38 PM
30	Most parks havea good variety of offerings.	11/1/2021 8:25 PM

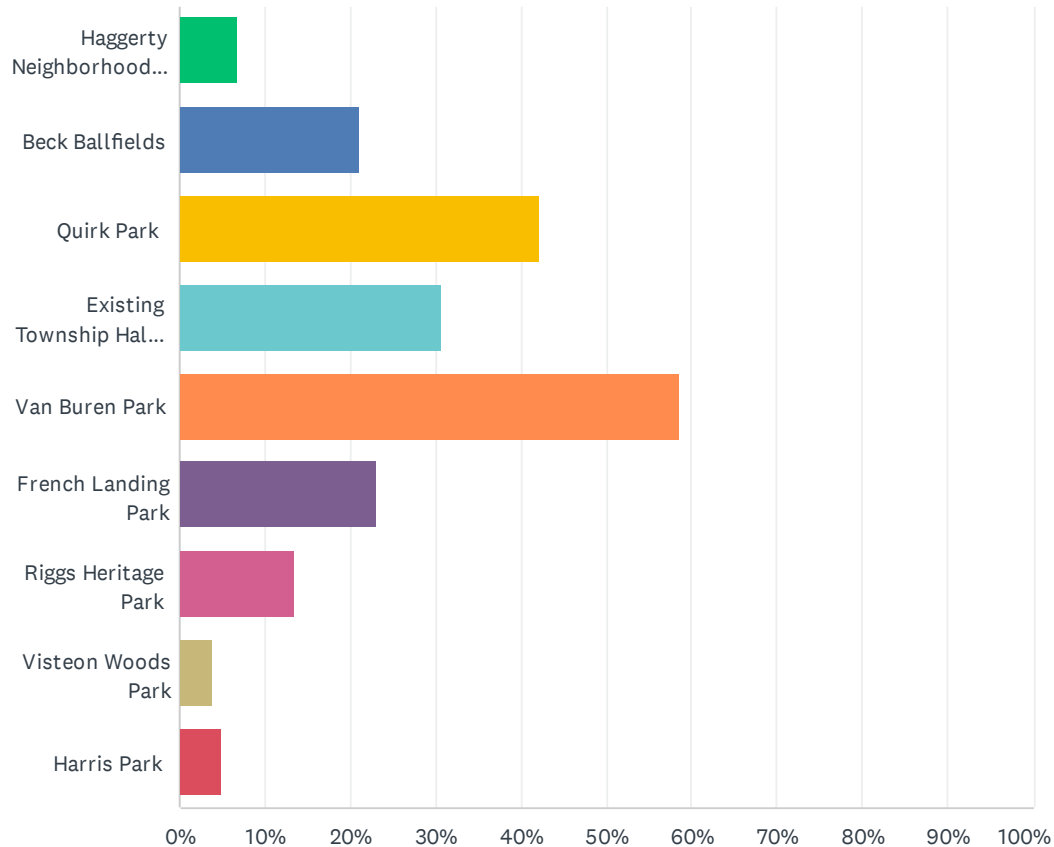


## Van Buren Township - Updated Parks and Recreation Plan !

31	Access and convenience.	11/1/2021 5:05 PM
32	My family and friends really enjoyed the Outdoor Concerts! Keep them coming!	11/1/2021 11:39 AM
33	Cleanliness, available activities, access to clean/stocked restrooms	11/1/2021 10:55 AM
34	Availability	11/1/2021 8:09 AM
35	Accessible	11/1/2021 8:01 AM
36	Lication	11/1/2021 7:35 AM
37	Clean, multiple activity options, splash pad is our favorite	10/31/2021 11:53 PM
38	Playground areas and fishing areas	10/31/2021 9:50 PM
39	Kid-friendly, clean, easy to access.	10/31/2021 8:51 PM
40	The scenry	10/31/2021 7:36 PM
41	That we have a lot of parks!!!	10/31/2021 7:07 PM
42	Preserving nature & promotes healthy lifestyle	10/31/2021 6:45 PM
43	normally well maintained	10/31/2021 3:23 PM
44	Fun events that are held like music in the park and the splash pad	10/31/2021 2:56 PM
45	Many locations.	10/31/2021 1:57 PM
46	Bathroom	10/31/2021 1:22 PM
47	They're available and it's a green space	10/30/2021 9:00 PM
48	Family oriented; maintenance	10/29/2021 6:34 PM
49	Availability	10/29/2021 1:37 PM
50	The size of Quirk Park. The new water feature r t	10/29/2021 10:21 AM
51	The parks are most always clean and safe.	10/29/2021 7:30 AM
52	A variety of styles and activities.	10/28/2021 4:05 PM
53	The pavilions, open spaces.	10/28/2021 2:51 PM
54	Harris is nice	10/28/2021 2:39 PM
55	They are easily accessable	10/28/2021 10:36 AM
56	Their location throughout the township is great.	10/28/2021 9:53 AM
57	Walking path at Quirk-more signage about distance & parking is limited	10/28/2021 9:31 AM
58	Riggs Park is well maintained. Very accessible	10/28/2021 7:52 AM
59	Quirk park- splash pad and playground. Loved the music there over the summer.	10/27/2021 11:32 PM
60	I like the improvements to Van Buren Park.	10/27/2021 10:15 PM
61	Most of the township's parks display the beauty of the area's natural features.	10/27/2021 6:50 PM
62	The neighborhood feel the parks have	10/27/2021 5:55 PM
63	It's well taken care of	10/27/2021 5:24 PM
64	quiet	10/27/2021 2:13 PM

## Q5 Which parks or recreation facilities should be the highest priorities for investments over the next five years? Check all that apply:

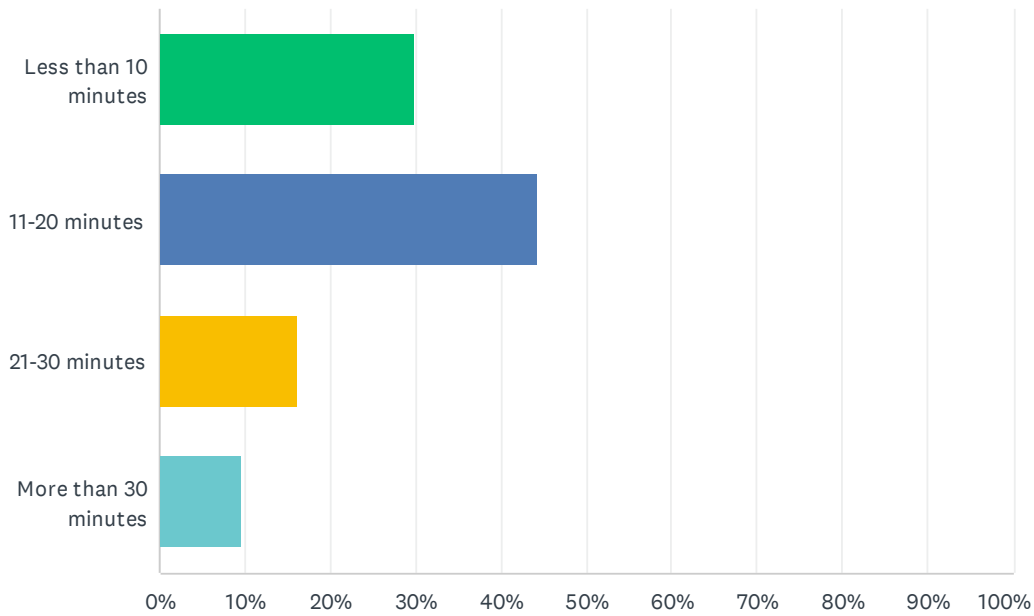
Answered: 104 Skipped: 26



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Haggerty Neighborhood Park	6.73%	7
Beck Ballfields	21.15%	22
Quirk Park	42.31%	44
Existing Township Hall Facilities	30.77%	32
Van Buren Park	58.65%	61
French Landing Park	23.08%	24
Riggs Heritage Park	13.46%	14
Visteon Woods Park	3.85%	4
Harris Park	4.81%	5
Total Respondents: 104		

## Q6 I am willing to drive\_\_\_\_\_ to a park or trail.

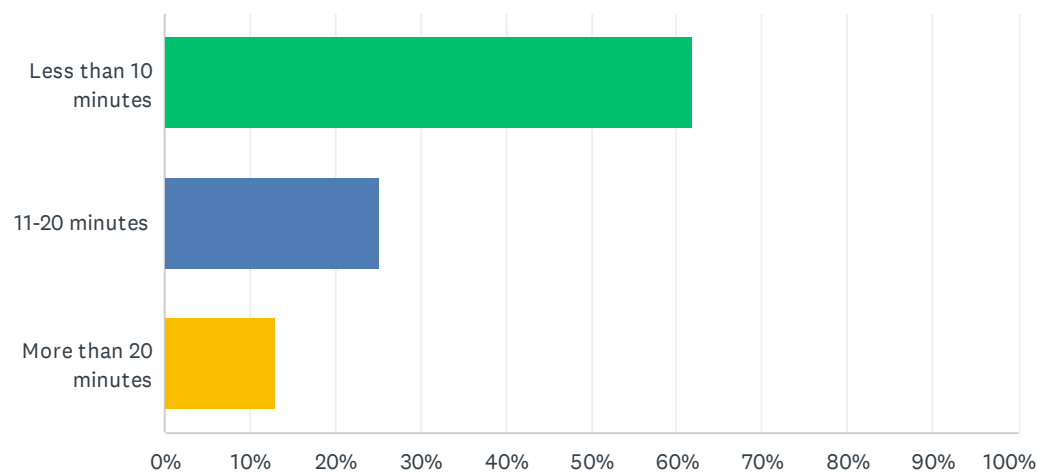
Answered: 124 Skipped: 6



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 10 minutes	29.84%	37
11-20 minutes	44.35%	55
21-30 minutes	16.13%	20
More than 30 minutes	9.68%	12
TOTAL		124

Q7 I am willing to walk\_\_\_\_\_ to a park or trail.

Answered: 123    Skipped: 7

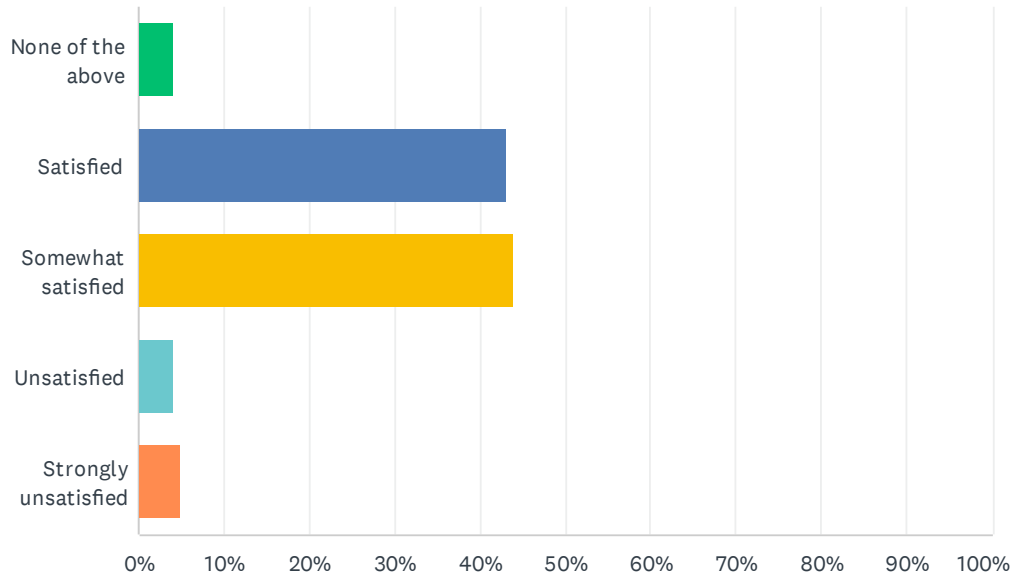


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 10 minutes	61.79%	76
11-20 minutes	25.20%	31
More than 20 minutes	13.01%	16
TOTAL		123



## Q8 Overall, how satisfied are you with the appearance, maintenance, and cleanliness of the parks and recreation facilities?

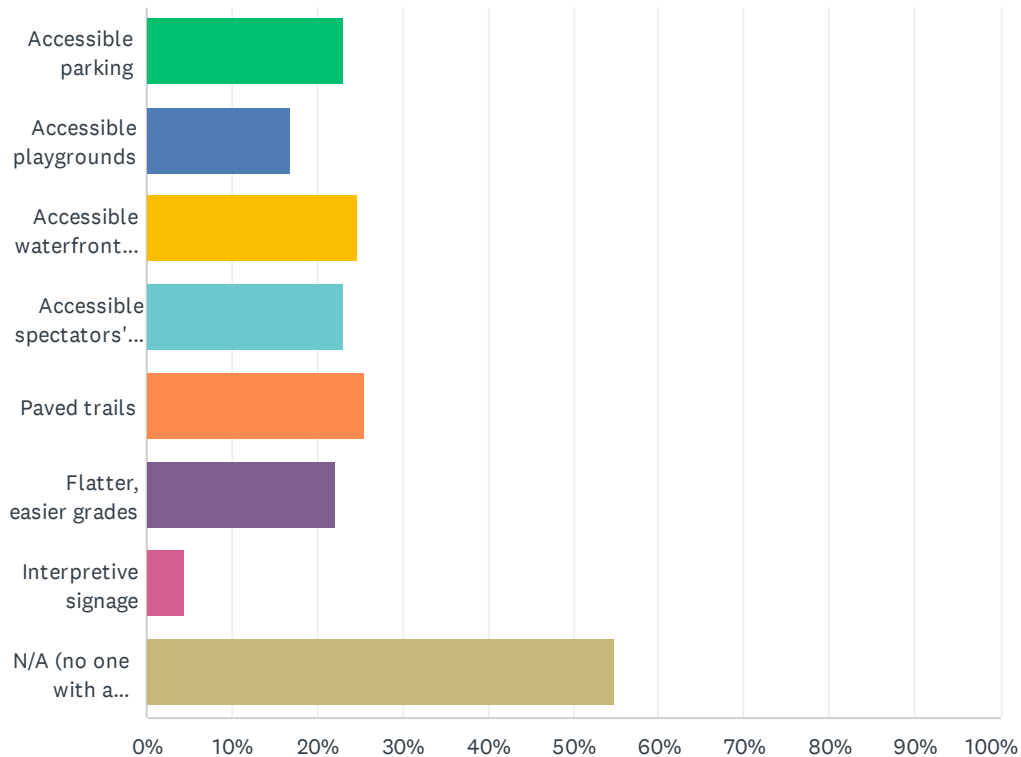
Answered: 123 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	4.07%	5
Satisfied	43.09%	53
Somewhat satisfied	43.90%	54
Unsatisfied	4.07%	5
Strongly unsatisfied	4.88%	6
TOTAL		123

## Q9 If there is a person with a disability in your household, what would make Township parks and recreation more user-friendly? Check all that apply.

Answered: 113 Skipped: 17



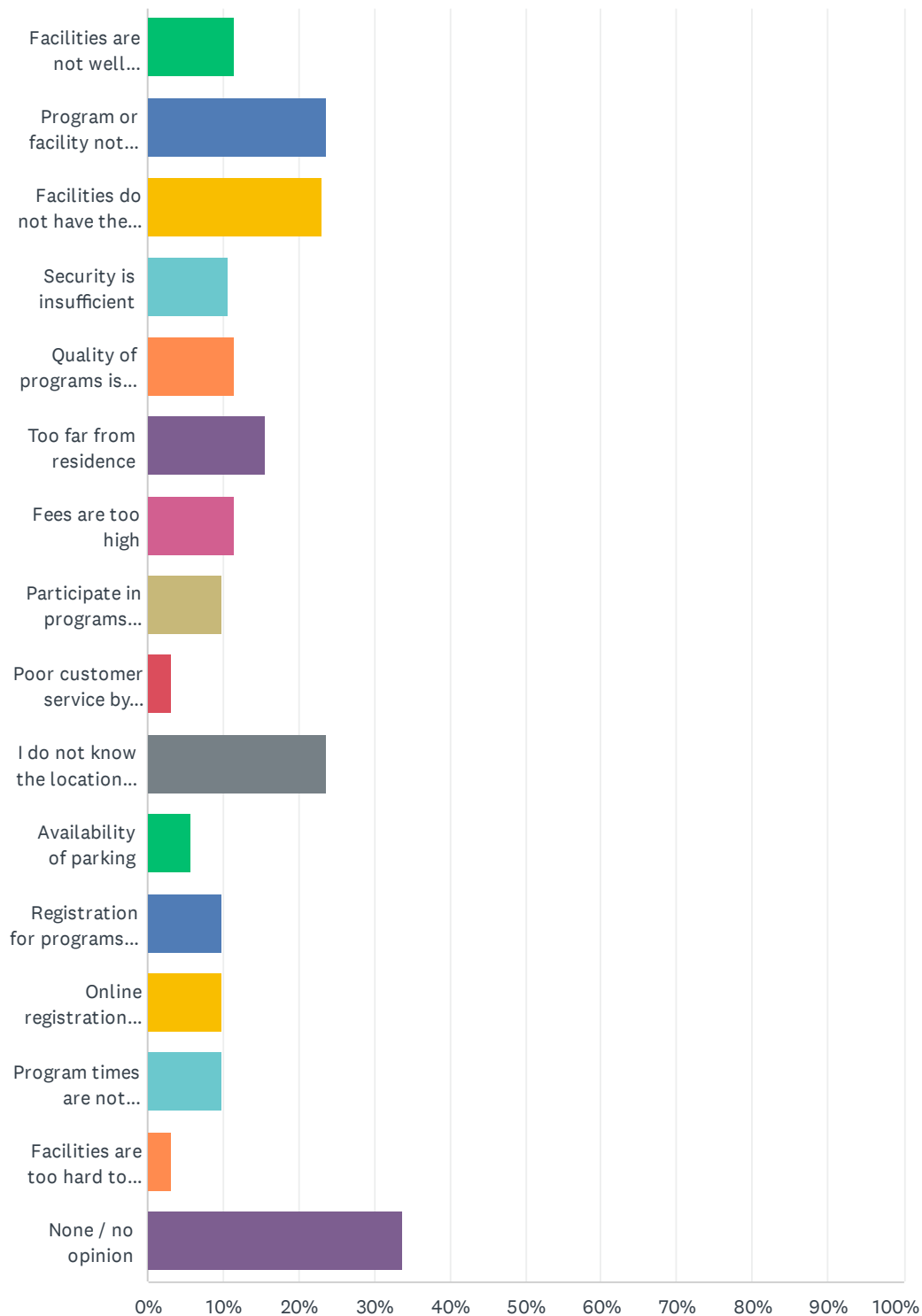
ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Accessible parking		23.01%	26
Accessible playgrounds		16.81%	19
Accessible waterfront access		24.78%	28
Accessible spectators' viewing areas		23.01%	26
Paved trails		25.66%	29
Flatter, easier grades		22.12%	25
Interpretive signage		4.42%	5
N/A (no one with a disability in our household)		54.87%	62
Total Respondents: 113			

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Handicap ramps for kayaking	11/6/2021 9:31 AM
2	Specifically, settings for disabled	10/31/2021 9:50 PM



## Q10 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.

Answered: 122 Skipped: 8



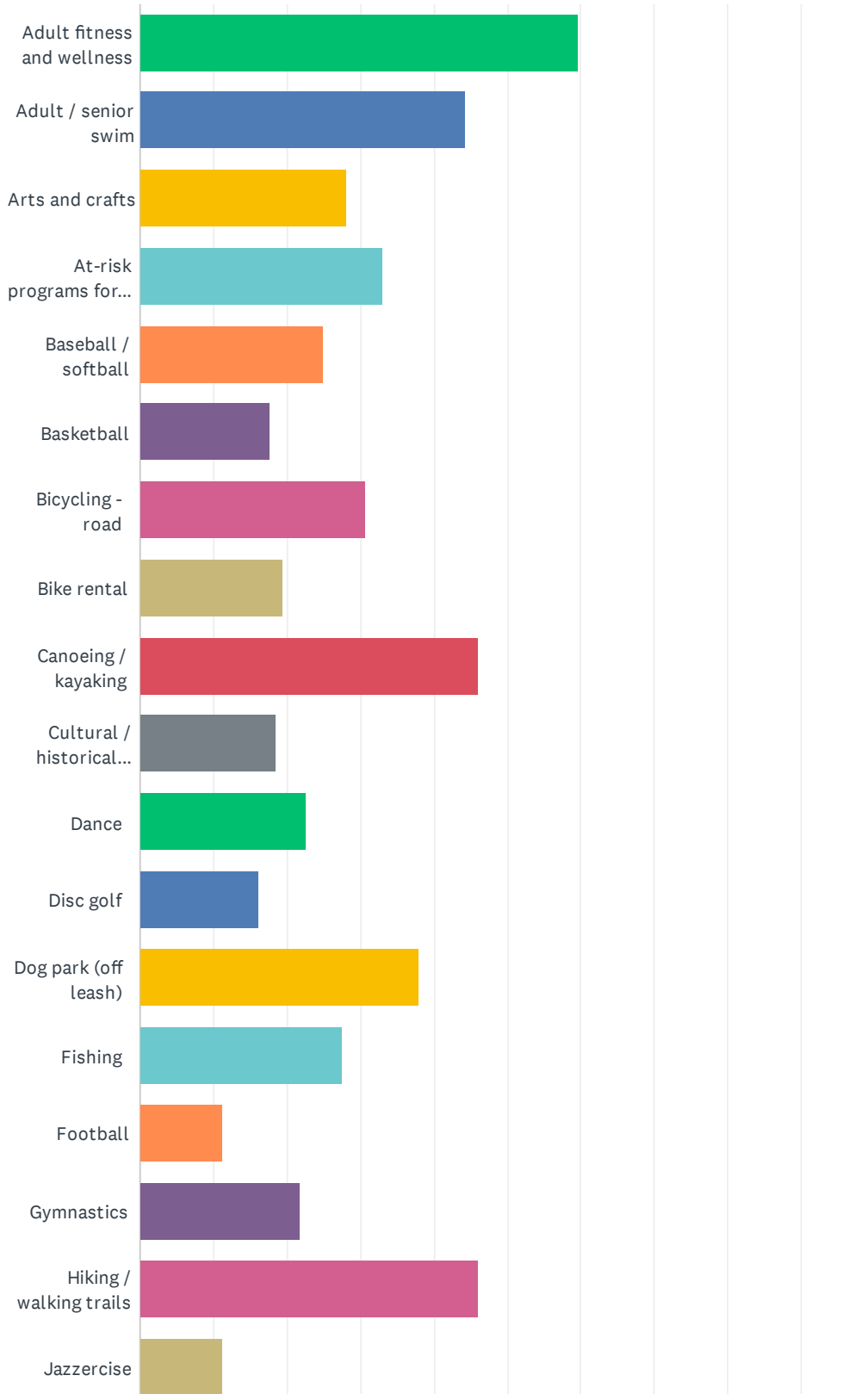


# Van Buren Township - Updated Parks and Recreation Plan !

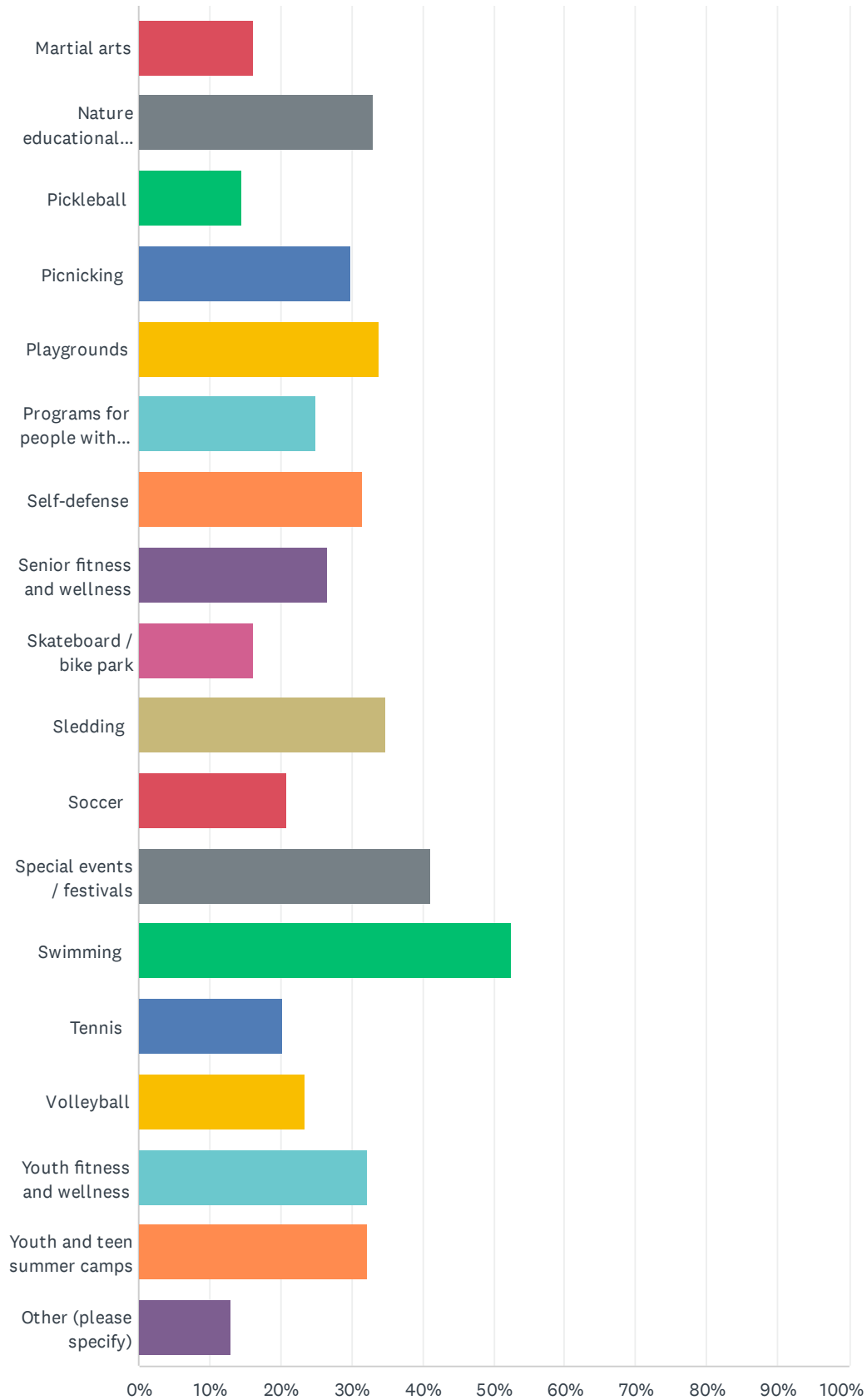
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Facilities are not well maintained	11.48%	14
Program or facility not offered	23.77%	29
Facilities do not have the right equipment	22.95%	28
Security is insufficient	10.66%	13
Quality of programs is poor	11.48%	14
Too far from residence	15.57%	19
Fees are too high	11.48%	14
Participate in programs provided by other communities or organizations	9.84%	12
Poor customer service by staff	3.28%	4
I do not know the location of parks and facilities	23.77%	29
Availability of parking	5.74%	7
Registration for programs is difficult	9.84%	12
Online registration for programs is not offered	9.84%	12
Program times are not convenient	9.84%	12
Facilities are too hard to reach, poor access	3.28%	4
None / no opinion	33.61%	41
Total Respondents: 122		

## Q11 Identify which of the following activities, programs, or facilities are needed in Van Buren. Check all that apply.

Answered: 124 Skipped: 6



## Van Buren Township - Updated Parks and Recreation Plan !



# Van Buren Township - Updated Parks and Recreation Plan !

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Adult fitness and wellness	59.68%	74
Adult / senior swim	44.35%	55
Arts and crafts	28.23%	35
At-risk programs for youth	33.06%	41
Baseball / softball	25.00%	31
Basketball	17.74%	22
Bicycling - road	30.65%	38
Bike rental	19.35%	24
Canoeing / kayaking	45.97%	57
Cultural / historical programs	18.55%	23
Dance	22.58%	28
Disc golf	16.13%	20
Dog park (off leash)	37.90%	47
Fishing	27.42%	34
Football	11.29%	14
Gymnastics	21.77%	27
Hiking / walking trails	45.97%	57
Jazzercise	11.29%	14
Martial arts	16.13%	20
Nature educational programs	33.06%	41
Pickleball	14.52%	18
Picnicking	29.84%	37
Playgrounds	33.87%	42
Programs for people with disabilities	25.00%	31
Self-defense	31.45%	39
Senior fitness and wellness	26.61%	33
Skateboard / bike park	16.13%	20
Sledding	34.68%	43
Soccer	20.97%	26
Special events / festivals	41.13%	51
Swimming	52.42%	65
Tennis	20.16%	25



# Van Buren Township - Updated Parks and Recreation Plan !

Volleyball	23.39%	29
Youth fitness and wellness	32.26%	40
Youth and teen summer camps	32.26%	40
Other (please specify)	12.90%	16
Total Respondents: 124		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	indoor pickleball	11/10/2021 1:42 PM
2	Tetherball	11/9/2021 10:32 AM
3	Dog training	11/9/2021 2:04 AM
4	lacrosse	11/8/2021 1:48 PM
5	Ice skating	11/8/2021 1:26 PM
6	More boys programs	11/7/2021 8:27 AM
7	Pickle all indoors and outdoors.	11/6/2021 9:31 AM
8	We need indoor activities for the kids	11/4/2021 11:22 AM
9	Yoga	11/3/2021 7:52 PM
10	Programs need to be offered multiple times throughout the day. Residents need to know the programs exist. More marketing needs to be done. Get the word out what the Township has to offer. Q	11/2/2021 10:32 PM
11	I checked all because they are all great for the township, whether currently done or needed.	11/2/2021 2:36 PM
12	Please have something on the Southside of the township	11/1/2021 1:07 PM
13	Some already exist.	10/29/2021 10:21 AM
14	I find it hard to believe that I'm already paying for things I don't and won't use.	10/29/2021 9:42 AM
15	Dog Park, outdoor sand volleyball	10/27/2021 5:55 PM
16	More beachfront and access to community without a boat	10/27/2021 2:13 PM

## Q12 If you could introduce one new amenity or program to any park or recreation facility in Van Buren, what would it be?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 56

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	indoor pool	11/9/2021 3:31 PM
2	An education program geared towards educating, training and Providing resources for animal rescue and wildlife rehabilitation. There is a serious lack of knowledge & compassion for animals in our world, both wildlife & domestic. We think nothing of demolishing every spare plot of land to build more & more houses and subdivisions or yet another gas station, bank, strip mall or "Recreation Park" with no regard to the wildlife living there first. Most people living in our community chose this town because of the small town feel, scenery and yes wildlife. Now we are watching as our community leaders fast track us to just another carbon copy of overcrowded communities like Canton or Westland wondering which "park" we can visit to enjoy the nature, scenery & wildlife we used to enjoy by just looking out our own windows or stepping outside our own homes. We have people planning & deciding how to "create" a space that God had already provided us in abundance. Those community members who wish to visit or upgrade a local "park or Recreation area" are usually the same ones that have no tolerance for the wildlife that may wander through their yard or take up residence on their property, not because they choose to but because it's now their only option, the same people that will poison, kill or have them "removed" and dumped elsewhere. We have a society that will dump thousands of dollars into "recreating" a space to enjoy nature yet never seem to have the funds to help the wildlife creatures we hurt, maim or destroy. Our community has the funds to invest in "parks" and upgrades but not an animal shelter? It's nearly impossible to find help for an injured bird, squirrel, coon, possum or any other wildlife animal that has suffered some type of illness or injury (usually a result of us humans, our way of life and our "desire" for advancement). It's just as hard to find help for a homeless dog or cat (also a result of us humans). Communities prioritize investing in parks and recreation, inanimate objects and recreated nature scenery with no concern *or funds to care for living, breathing creatures. The least we can do with these previously wildlife plots of land that we have turned into "parks" or "recreation areas" is offer training, education, resources & awareness for wildlife rehabilitation and animal rescue. Offer a program that could potentially train up a new generation of wildlife rehabbers or animal rescuers. Help fill the void we have in this world. The very few wildlife rehabbers and volunteer animal rescues we have in our area are usually older in years, train up a younger generation to fill the void when they are no longer able or here to do it. Every community always has the same excuse when it comes to animal shelters or rescues....."we don't have the funds".....they do, they just have other priorities. Scenery and optics mean nothing if a community lacks compassion for the most vulnerable, and the most vulnerable is our wildlife and domestic pets that are at our mercy, the ones we as a society seem so hell bent on destroying.	11/9/2021 12:03 PM
3	Dog park/run area	11/9/2021 10:32 AM
4	Skateboard park or pool!	11/8/2021 11:30 PM
5	If we had a pool, water aerobics for arthritis	11/8/2021 9:51 PM
6	Walking trails that are safe.	11/8/2021 9:15 PM
7	Swimming	11/8/2021 8:38 PM
8	A public pool	11/8/2021 7:50 PM
9	Yoga	11/8/2021 7:34 PM
10	Indoor walking track!	11/8/2021 6:56 PM
11	Benches	11/8/2021 6:07 PM
12	N/a	11/8/2021 3:48 PM

## Van Buren Township - Updated Parks and Recreation Plan !

13	None	11/8/2021 3:32 PM
14	Fishing	11/8/2021 3:16 PM
15	Community pool!	11/8/2021 3:07 PM
16	A better beach area in Van Buren Park! This is a lake town...with one poorly accessible public swim area.	11/8/2021 2:57 PM
17	Outdoor rentals at large parks. Rentals such as bikes, strollers, scooters, wagons, sun umbrellas, chairs, etc.	11/8/2021 2:39 PM
18	Pool	11/8/2021 2:26 PM
19	arts and crafts classes for families of tween kids	11/8/2021 12:46 PM
20	Dog park with swimming pool, better beaches and access on Belleville Lake, kayaks at French Landing would be safer!	11/8/2021 12:27 PM
21	Bike trails	11/7/2021 6:36 PM
22	A Dog Park	11/7/2021 6:26 PM
23	Swimming	11/7/2021 12:41 PM
24	Dog park	11/7/2021 9:23 AM
25	Inside walking track...needed for inclement weather, seniors, etc.	11/6/2021 9:31 AM
26	Movie theater	11/4/2021 11:22 AM
27	A Lake House Community Gathering place on the Lake	11/4/2021 10:23 AM
28	Shore fishing	11/3/2021 7:52 PM
29	A swimming pool.	11/3/2021 2:39 PM
30	Big fun complex of playground for kids different age group, program for kids: art, music, theater, gymnastic, dance, swimming, cross country skiing, steam, nature, cooking... something	11/3/2021 1:15 AM
31	Swimming (pool), upgrated basketball court in rec center, new fitness center, indoor walking track,	11/2/2021 10:32 PM
32	More seating	11/2/2021 5:15 PM
33	Bike trail	11/2/2021 3:18 PM
34	Outdoor volleyball (sand) courts would be great at Quirk!!	11/2/2021 2:36 PM
35	Indoor walking track	11/2/2021 12:38 PM
36	Dog Park	11/2/2021 4:24 AM
37	Nature facility like in Willow Metropark	11/1/2021 8:25 PM
38	Youth summer camp	11/1/2021 5:05 PM
39	Please have something for the south side of the township. Paved walking track	11/1/2021 1:07 PM
40	Summer Outdoor Yoga Spring Summer and Fall Outdoor Low Impact Arobics	11/1/2021 12:49 PM
41	Skate park	11/1/2021 12:45 PM
42	Dog park.	11/1/2021 10:55 AM
43	Dog park	11/1/2021 10:34 AM
44	Swimming	11/1/2021 8:01 AM
45	More shade at Quirk Park by the playground	10/31/2021 11:53 PM
46	Dog park	10/31/2021 10:51 PM
47	Swimming pool	10/31/2021 10:45 PM

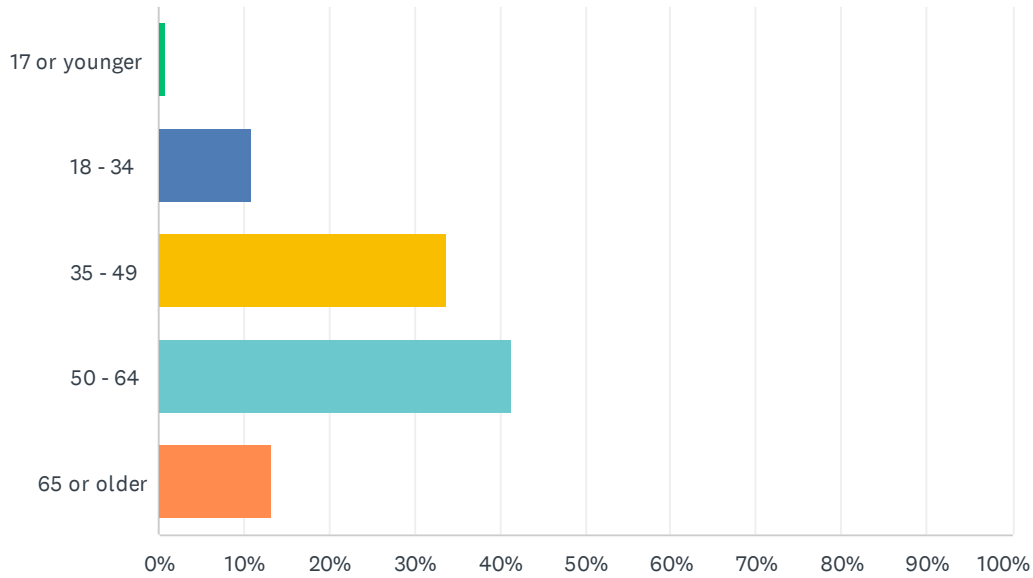
## Van Buren Township - Updated Parks and Recreation Plan !

48	Youth football, baseball clinics,	10/31/2021 10:26 PM
49	Community Pool	10/31/2021 8:51 PM
50	Swimming	10/31/2021 7:36 PM
51	Yoga	10/31/2021 7:07 PM
52	Outdoor exercise circuit	10/31/2021 6:45 PM
53	Pool	10/31/2021 3:51 PM
54	well maintained bbq grills	10/31/2021 3:23 PM
55	Dog park alot of people have a dog but it's not a dog to them it's literally there child	10/31/2021 2:56 PM
56	Free dog Park	10/31/2021 2:20 PM
57	Pool	10/31/2021 1:22 PM
58	Rock climbing walls	10/30/2021 9:00 PM
59	Reopen the museum!	10/29/2021 1:37 PM
60	Dog Park	10/29/2021 12:17 PM
61	Some smaller shed options. Another group came to our rented shed without permission. It was resolved amicably.	10/29/2021 10:21 AM
62	Weekend festivals.	10/29/2021 7:30 AM
63	Swimming pool	10/28/2021 8:30 PM
64	Swimming	10/28/2021 4:05 PM
65	Dog agility course.	10/28/2021 2:51 PM
66	to open up	10/28/2021 2:39 PM
67	Yoga classes	10/28/2021 9:53 AM
68	Low impact aerobics	10/28/2021 9:31 AM
69	A storybook trail for kids	10/27/2021 11:32 PM
70	Dog park?	10/27/2021 10:15 PM
71	This isn't a "new" amenity necessarily, but I wish Van Buren Park had a bigger/more pronounced beach.	10/27/2021 6:50 PM
72	Public swimming pool	10/27/2021 6:01 PM
73	Environmental Interpretive Center at VBT park	10/27/2021 5:55 PM
74	Disk golf	10/27/2021 5:24 PM



## Q13 What is your age?

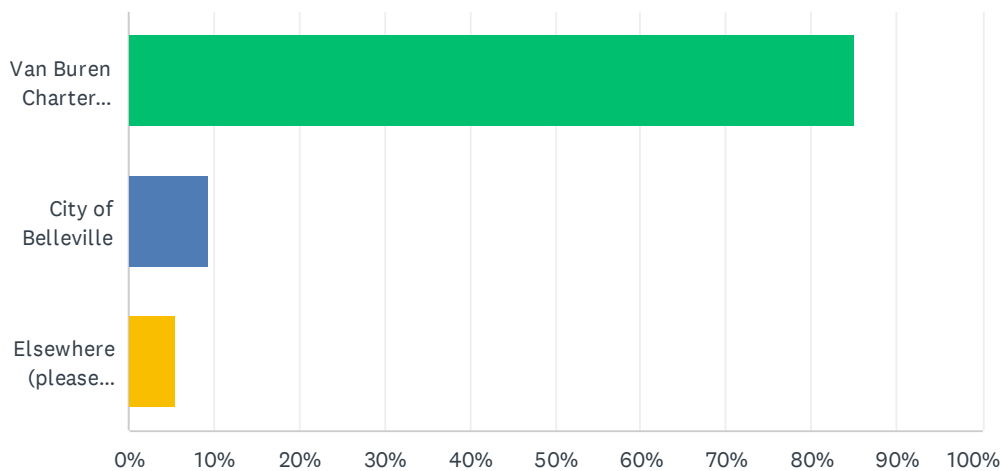
Answered: 128 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
17 or younger	0.78%	1
18 - 34	10.94%	14
35 - 49	33.59%	43
50 - 64	41.41%	53
65 or older	13.28%	17
TOTAL		128

## Q14 Where do you currently live?

Answered: 128 Skipped: 2

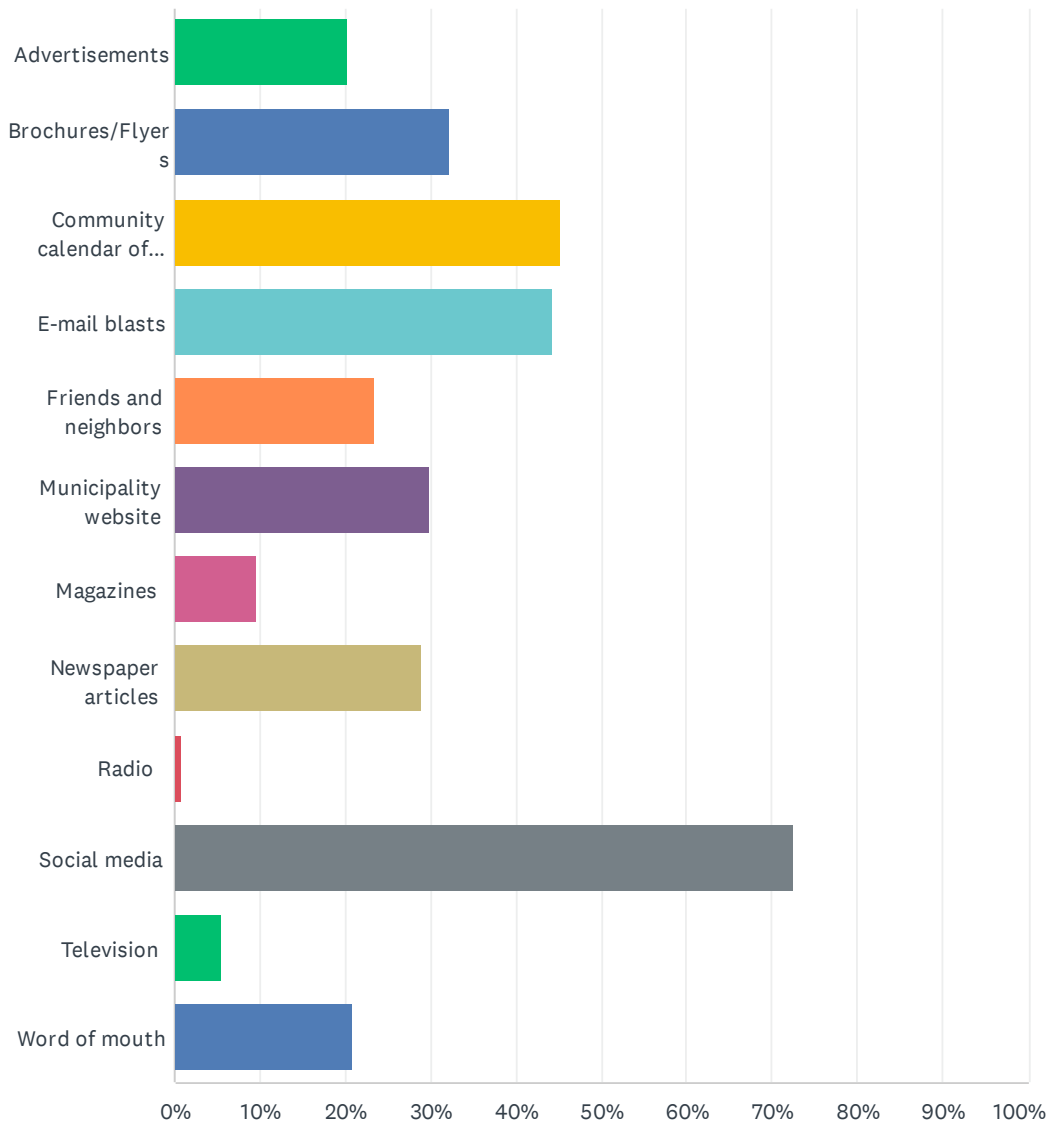


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Van Buren Charter Township	85.16%	109
City of Belleville	9.38%	12
Elsewhere (please specify)	5.47%	7
TOTAL		128

#	ELSEWHERE (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Ypsilanti township, work in vb township	11/8/2021 9:15 PM
2	Sumpter Township	11/8/2021 6:03 PM
3	Sumpter Twnshp	11/8/2021 2:57 PM
4	Ypsilanti	11/3/2021 9:02 PM
5	Canton	11/1/2021 12:32 PM
6	Sumpter Township	10/31/2021 2:20 PM
7	Canton	10/27/2021 5:55 PM

## Q15 What is the best way to inform you about Van Buren Township parks, trails, facilities, and recreational programs? Check all that apply:

Answered: 124 Skipped: 6



# Van Buren Township - Updated Parks and Recreation Plan !

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Advertisements	20.16%	25
Brochures/Flyers	32.26%	40
Community calendar of events	45.16%	56
E-mail blasts	44.35%	55
Friends and neighbors	23.39%	29
Municipality website	29.84%	37
Magazines	9.68%	12
Newspaper articles	29.03%	36
Radio	0.81%	1
Social media	72.58%	90
Television	5.65%	7
Word of mouth	20.97%	26
Total Respondents: 124		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Information sent with water bill	11/8/2021 3:05 PM
2	Mail the vanburen calendar of events to all residents and this mailer should include how the resident can locate the events elsewhere, ie. Social media, website, event phone hotline, local newspaper (also where to find them), a digital billboard in multiple spots throughout the Township (not just city hall)	11/2/2021 10:32 PM
3	Text messages	11/2/2021 4:24 AM
4	Email, dajukupkake@yahoo.com	10/31/2021 9:50 PM
5	Individual HOA Newsletters/Websites	10/29/2021 10:21 AM
6	facebook	10/28/2021 2:51 PM
7	Facebook	10/27/2021 5:24 PM
8	Advertise in The Beat, the Chamber,	10/27/2021 2:13 PM



**Q16 Van Buren 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.**

Answered: 23   Skipped: 107

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	People can never improve on anything God already designed & provided. Stop destroying God's original work & design in attempts to do it better.	11/9/2021 12:03 PM
2	For quirk park it would be nice to have better maintained soccer fields( better grass less mud) a skateboard park would be really fun as well!	11/8/2021 11:30 PM
3	I feel like it is difficult to find information on youth activities/sports that are offered and when registration periods are open.	11/8/2021 2:39 PM
4	Off leash dog park would be an enhancement both financially and community building. Go see Canton dog park on Denton and Cherry Hill.	11/8/2021 1:26 PM
5	I'm concerned that we hear gunshots during baseball games and practice. Doesn't seem safe plus a huge dump nearby is concerning given the smells coming off of it and Canton. I hope the quality of the air and water are being monitored in our area.	11/8/2021 12:27 PM
6	Quirk park swings need additional padding/dirt something to raise the ground under the swings kids can not get on swings. Look at Belleville park swings.	11/7/2021 8:27 AM
7	Need inside walking track...none of your facilities or programs have addressed this issue.	11/6/2021 9:31 AM
8	No discussion about the MDNR Site on the lake. For a Master Plan this is the best site in the Township	11/4/2021 10:23 AM
9	Put digital billboards throughout the Township to advertise parks and rec events. Residents need to know what's happening in and around town as well as Township meetings. Update the parks more and add more amenities to the rec center.	11/2/2021 10:32 PM
10	We have lived here 20 years and I love to see the improvements, keep them coming!!	11/2/2021 2:36 PM
11	Most facilities are all right and mostly maintained, but as mentioned above, the sports fields need more attention	11/1/2021 8:25 PM
12	Please have something for the south side of the township.	11/1/2021 1:07 PM
13	Cost for programs should be the same for VBPS students regardless of where they live	11/1/2021 12:32 PM
14	Please bring back the youth summer camp program, and add online registration and payment options.	11/1/2021 10:55 AM
15	Please invest in parks. Keep business & commercial to a minimum. Preserve green space & celebrate the lake & nature! Thank you.	10/31/2021 6:45 PM
16	I am upset that the Belleville Area Museum was NOT mentioned in any of the above questions. It is a recreational facility and knowing and discovering information about our community and its' history is vital for a bringing and keeping a community together. Yes we are three separate governments, but one community and the museum exemplifies that.	10/29/2021 1:37 PM
17	The walking path on Tyler Road is very dangerous for Walkers/Runners.	10/29/2021 10:21 AM
18	As you can see I am big into our use of the parks for community support.	10/29/2021 7:30 AM
19	We are very excited for the new community center!	10/28/2021 2:51 PM
20	Is there an opportunity for the city of Belleville residents to opt in financially of supporting/being more included in township activities? It's driving me crazy how all 3 communities function in 48111.	10/28/2021 9:31 AM

## Van Buren Township - Updated Parks and Recreation Plan !

21	You have “strongly disagree” twice in the question No. 1 options, and no “strongly agree.”	10/27/2021 10:15 PM
22	Keep up the great work!	10/27/2021 6:50 PM
23	Would like to see VBT be a bigger part of the new summer festival. More lake activities from the park	10/27/2021 2:13 PM





## Appendix B: Meeting Notices







# Appendix C: Adoption Documentation







## Appendix D: 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.

## General Funding Sources

### 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 in 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.

Each year the MDNR encourages communities to submit projects matching the priority project areas for that year.

**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. 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 April 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.



## Staff Acknowledgments



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