



Oakland Township Parks & Recreation 2025 Year in Review

Ben McLoskey
Director of Parks & Recreation
Rev: 1/7/2026

Bear Creek Nature Park

Executive Summary ~ 2025 by the Numbers



- **Secured \$400k in MNRTF Grant Funding** for Blue Heron Environmental Area
- **Submitted 2 grant applications** to fund Fox Nature Preserve's Stony Creek West Branch Culvert Replacement.
- **Managed \$340k in LWC Funds** through first phase of Stony Creek Ravine Nature Park Development project



- **Created 40 Parking Spaces** with new and expanded lots at Fox Nature Preserve & Watershed Ridge Park
- **Added ~4 Miles of New Trails** across Marsh View Park, Fox Nature Preserve & Watershed Ridge Park
- **Key Facility Improvements:** MVP Archery Range, LLNP Warming Shelter & DTLP Kayak Launch



- Natural Areas Stewardship Team held a **total of 82 outreach events this year**
- **Volunteers contributed 2,080 hours in 2025** (equal to \$68,376 of labor toward maintaining our natural areas)
- Collected enough seed to support **20 acres of prairie planting projects at WRP & BHEA.**
- Conducted **prescribed burns across 223 acres and 11 different parks** to restore native habitat & control invasive species
- Approximately **190 acres of priority invasive species** treated through targeted management



- **616 Programs offered:** nearly twice as many as last year (+93% / 319 in 2024)
- **2108 Participants:** Increased participation by +31% compared to last year (2024: 1606)
- **Excellent Satisfaction Score of 8.8** out of 10 & **Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 64** for all Recreation Programs



- **Complete Redesign of Digital Assets & Outreach Strategy:** Website, Social Media, & RecDesk capabilities
- **Developed new & improved Newsletter, Park & Trail Maps, Signage and Wayfinding.**
- **Online Engagement grew by ~12%** (138,8k total impressions) and **Social Media grew by 6%** (5,200 Total Followers)

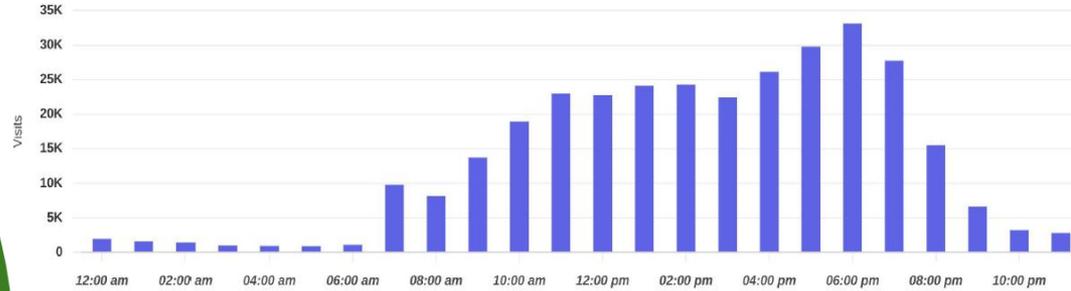
Park Visitation

Visitation reports provided by SEMCOG / Placer.ai through anonymized mobile device data. Reports include do not include trails/connectors (such as Paint Creek Trail) or environmental areas.



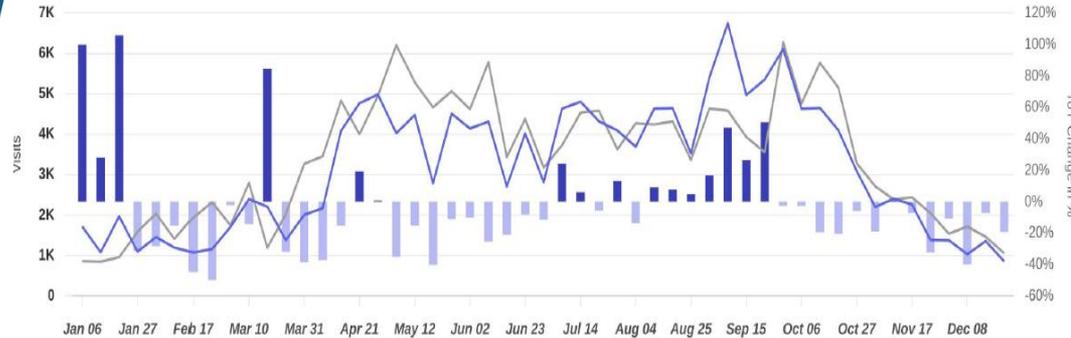
Hourly Visitation

Average Dwell Time: **49 Minutes**
Median Peak Time: **Saturday, 4pm**



Visitation YoY: 2025 vs. 2024

Visitors: **+4% YoY**
Visits: **-6% YoY**



Grant Funded Project Timelines

Oakland Township Parks & Recreation submitted for a total of \$780,000 in grant funding in 2025 and secured \$400,000.

	Concept Plans & Public Input	Draft Application	Submitted	Grant Awarded	Implementation
<p>SCRNP Development \$340K LWC Funds + 50% Match</p>	☑	☑	☑	☑	<p>DNR approved construction drawings & bid documents 12/18.</p> <p>Project will go out to bid in Q2 with the plan to break ground Q3 of 2026.</p>
<p>BHEA Development \$400K MNRTF Funds + 25% Match</p>	☑	☑	☑	<p>MNRTF Board awarded grant. Awaiting state legislature final authorization for public act to be signed in early 2026.</p>	<p>Preparing official Boundary Map & Legal Description to execute Project Agreement Contract as soon as possible.</p> <p>2026 - Draft construction drawings & bid documents.</p>
<p>FNP Culvert Replacement DNR Fisheries Habitat Grant Program & SE Michigan Resilience Fund \$115K + 40% Match</p>	☑	☑	☑	<p>DNR Fisheries Habitat Application Rejected.</p> <p>Awaiting decision from SE Michigan Resilience Fund</p>	
<p>Marsh View Park Development MNRTF Funds 'TDB' + 25% Match</p>	<p>Gathered initial input from focus groups and key MVP stake holders.</p> <p>Drafted preliminary concepts based on feedback.</p>	<p>Compiled public input from focus groups and developed concept drawings</p>			

Park Improvements ~ Trails

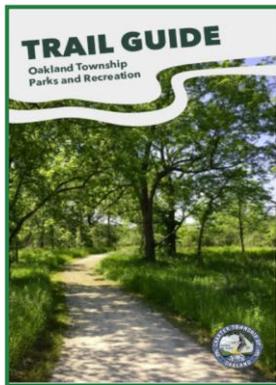
2024 Community Surveys ranks for highest areas of priority:

- 1) Develop Trails
- 2) Acquire/Preserve New Areas,
- 3) Maintain/Improve Existing Parks and Structures
- 4) Stewardship of Natural Areas.

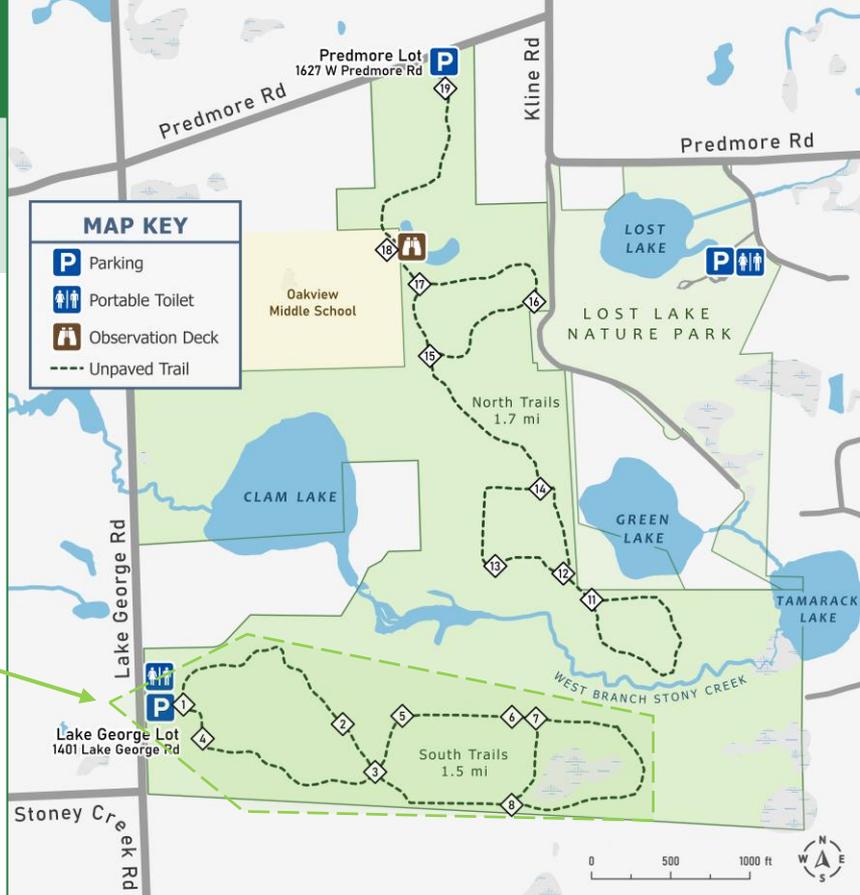
2025 Trail Improvements:

- Designed and piloted **new Signage & Wayfinding parks & trails**
- Replaced **boardwalk at Bear Creek Nature Park** damaged by fallen tree.
- Repair and grading of gravel trails at **Cranberry Lake Park**
- Added **1 mile loop at Marsh View Park**
- Added **1.1 miles at Watershed Ridge**
- Added **1.5 miles at Fox Nature Preserve south trails**

New Trail Guide



New Trail & Park Signage



FOX NATURE PRESERVE

Open dawn - dusk, 365 days a year. **234 acres**
1401 Lake George Rd, Oakland Township, MI 48363
Parks Office: (248) 651-7810

Park Improvements ~ Parking & Amenities

Parking

- **Fox Nature Preserve:** Added park entry and 20 space gravel parking lot off Lake George Road: work done in-house included grading, installation of gravel, concrete curbs, signs, equestrian trailer turn around and area for portable toilet.
- **Watershed Ridge Park:** Extended gravel parking lot by an additional 20 spaces to the north of the Buell Road west lot.



Fox Nature Preserve Parking Lot off Lake George Road

Amenities

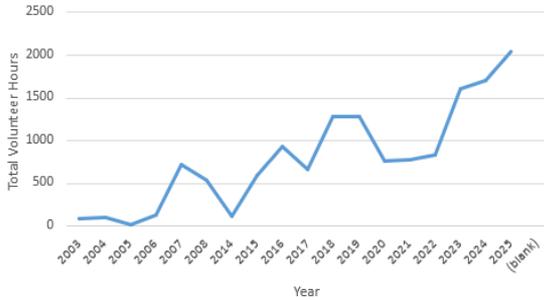
- Installed **Kayak Launch at Draper Twin Lakes Park** and repaired existing dock
- Extended gravel **shooting lane access at Marsh View Park Archery Range.**
- Built **portable toilet enclosure at Charles Ilsley Park.**
- Installed new **Park Maps & Wayfinding Signs** across all parks
- Installed **electric garage door openers at both Marsh View Park and Watershed Ridge Park** maintenance buildings.



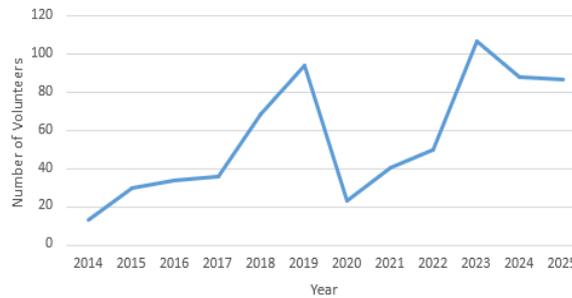
Draper Twin Lake Park's new Kayak Launch

Natural Stewardship ~ Volunteers & Outreach

Total Volunteer Hours (YoY)



Total Number of Volunteers (YoY)



82 Outreach Events in 2025

- 44 Bird Walks
- 13 Bear Creek Workdays
- 13 Seed Collecting/Cleaning Workdays
- 4 Garlic Mustard Workdays
- 4 Social Events
- 3 Training Events
- 2 Stewardship Talks

Volunteer Hour Breakdown

Blog	210.5
Lake Monitoring	3
Misc Projects	70
Nest Box Monitoring	197.2
On Call	545
Rx Fire	162.25
Seeds	540.5
Vernal Pool Patrol	143.25
Workdays	208
Total	2080.2

Total 2025 Volunteer Hours: 2080.2

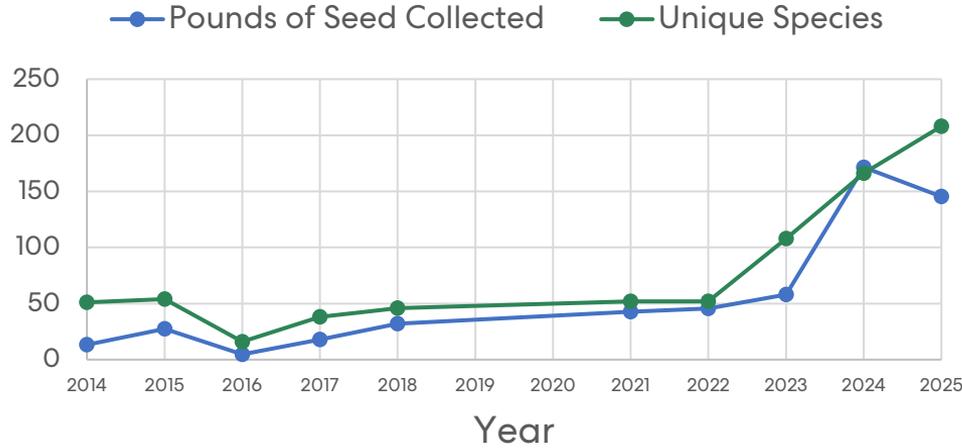
2080.2 total hours at \$32.87 per/hour* equals a value of \$68,376.17 of hands-on labor toward maintaining and restoring Oakland Township's natural areas.

**Source: Independent Sector, Michigan 2024 value estimate (last year available)*



Wednesday Bird Walk

Natural Stewardship ~ Seed Collecting



Stewardship collected enough seed in 2025 for 20 acres of prairie planting projects at Watershed Ridge Park & Blue Heron Environmental Area.

This year the team focused on improving the process for data collecting, seed handling, and seed spreading, which helped improve volume of unique species collected and also resulted in a seed collection that is much cleaner this year vs. previous years.



Natural Stewardship ~ Priority Invasive Species Control

Species	No. Locations Checked	Acres Treated
Phragmites	629	28.3
Teasel	146	27.3
Swallow-wort	288	29.4
Wild Parsnip	30	0.4
Crown Vetch	347	51.2
Tree-of-Heaven	1	0.03
Garlic Mustard	478	6.1
Creeping Bellflower (new)	2	.01
Flowering Rush (new)	7	1
Invasive Woody Shrubs	NA	46.7
Others	102	



Natural Stewardship ~ Prescribed Burns

**2025 Prescribed Fire Crew
consisted of 24 Individuals**

(6 Contractors & 18 Stewardship Staff + Volunteers)

A total of 223 acres across 11 parks were treated to restore native habitats, control invasive species, and support long-term maintenance and land stewardship.



Stewardship Staff, Hanna Muntz, conducting burns at Bear Creek Nature Park

Recreation Programs

2025 was a year of growth for our Oakland Township Recreation.

In offering nearly twice as many programs, our Recreation team was able to gather data and feedback on program quality, quantity, type and timing to better enhance and tailor recreation offerings specific to our community.

A few key takeaways from 2025 include: high interest in Nature Programming as well as Adult Fitness, Wellness and Art. / Low participation and overall interest in sports (and sport camps) for all ages, likely due to similar offerings in nearby communities.

Rec Program Satisfaction by Category



Note: Recreation data does not include registrants through sports leagues or additional programming hosted outside of RecDesk
 *Wellness Programs saw a few detractors due to instructor tardiness as well as scheduling issues.
 ** Misc./Meditation Yoga received negative comments regarding class schedule as they could not regularly attend.

616 Programs offered in 2025

- Nearly twice as many as last year (319 in 2024 or +93% YoY)

Participation increased by +31%

- 2108 Total Participants in 2025 compared to 1606 last year.

Overall Program Satisfaction Score: 8.8 out of 10
Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 64 -upper-tier of 'Excellent' according to national standards.



Recreation ~ Special Events

OTPRC Hosted 5 Special Events in 2025:

Winter Carnival – January 25th

Music in the Meadows – June 13th

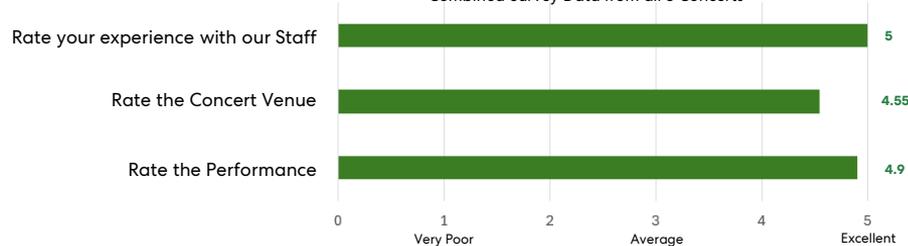
Music in the Meadows – July 18th

Music in the Meadows – August 15th

Goodison Good Time – September 13th

Music in the Meadows Satisfaction Ratings

Combined Survey Data from all 3 Concerts



Over 1,000 attendees enjoyed our Special Events in 2025.

Surveys held at every event to gather feedback on the experience, rated OTPR Events as 'Excellent' with an **Overall Satisfaction Score of 4.9 out of 5**

2025 Adjustments and Additions

Recreation Team added numerous new activities, art, entertainment and food & beverage offerings to every event

Noteworthy additions include:

- Wildlife Shows
- Magic & Ventriloquist Show
- Winter Carnival: Dogsledding & Snow Games
- Musical Acts and new genres (hand-picked per resident survey feedback)
- F&B offerings: BBQ, Tacos and complimentary baked goods.



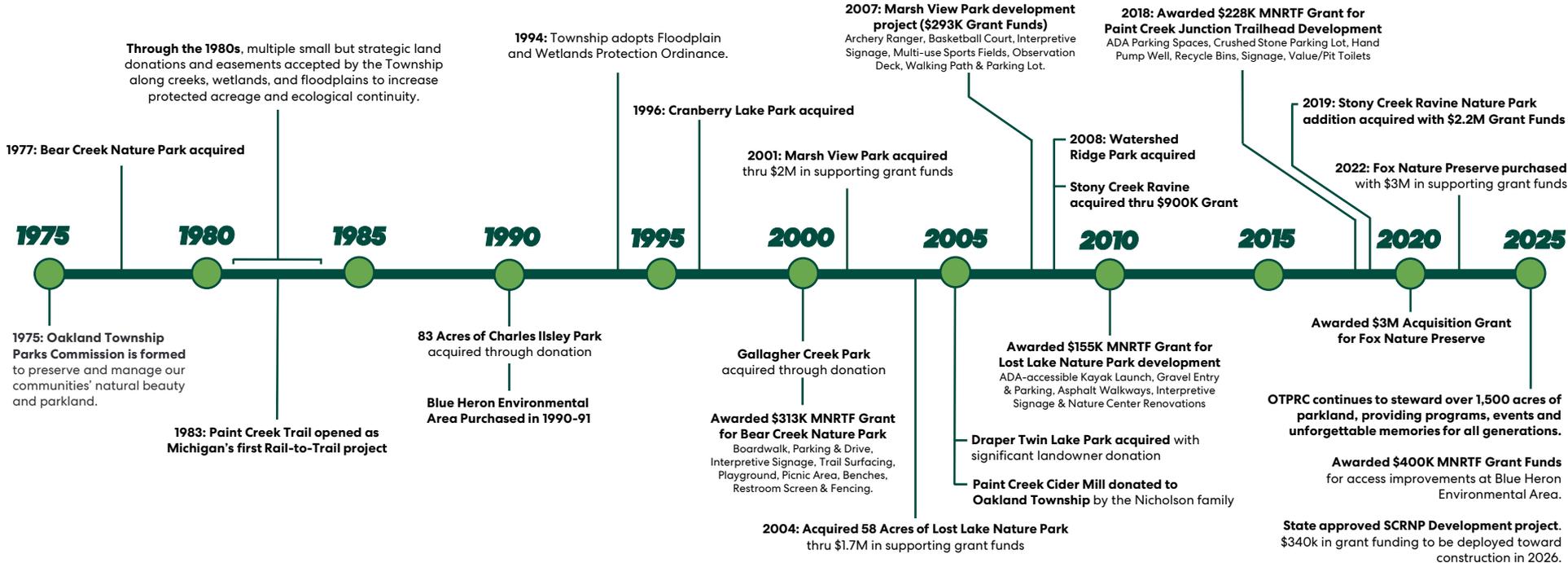
Parks & Recreation Vision & Mission + Progress, Past to Present

VISION

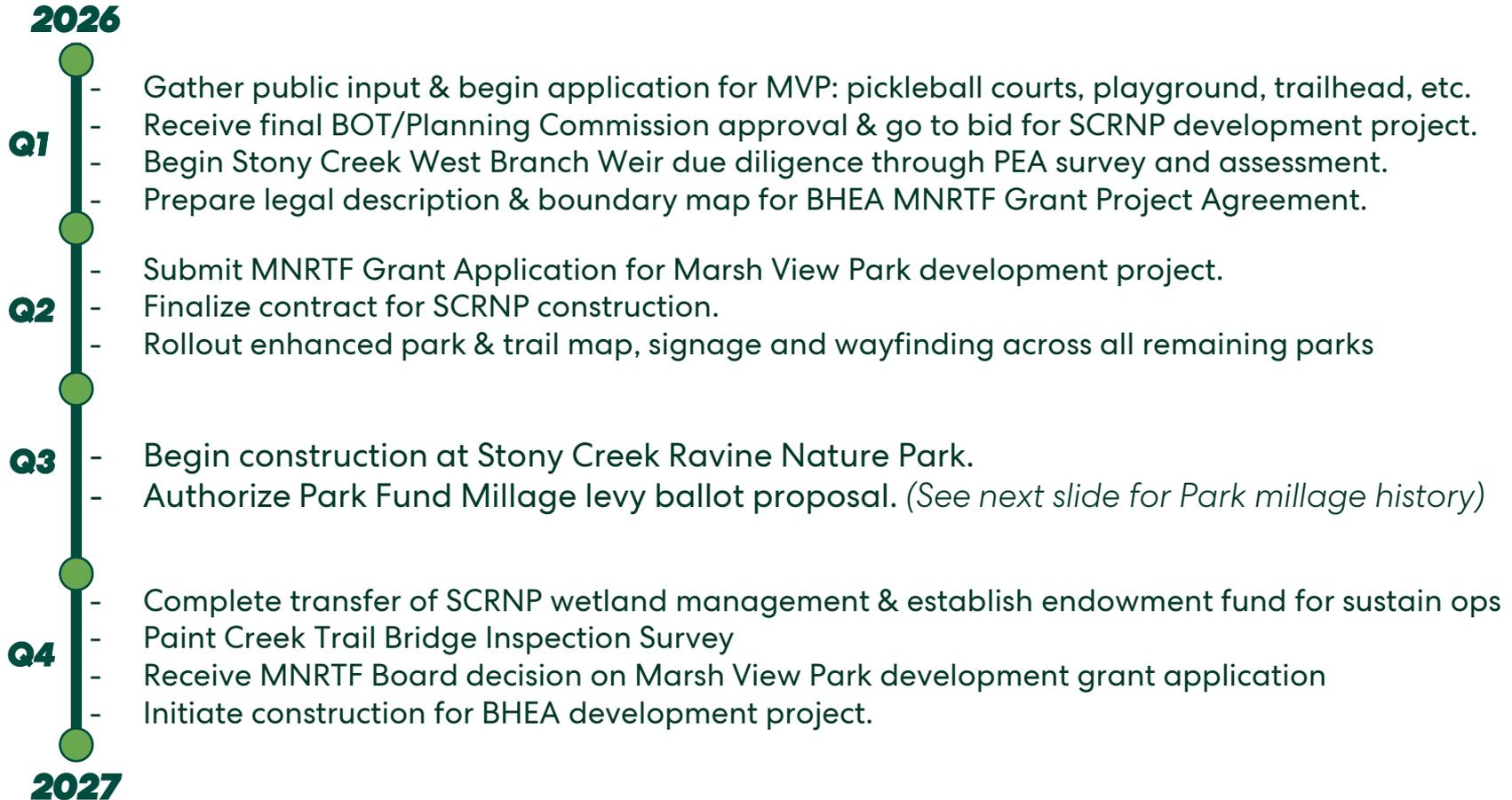
To provide responsible management and stewardship of our natural resources through quality parks, trails and appropriate recreation experiences now and for future generations.

MISSION

To provide a sustainable system of parks, trails, programs, amenities, and services which creates memorable experiences and a sense of place, contributes to the economic value of the Township and preserves the historical and natural heritage of the landscapes for existing and future generations.



Looking Ahead ~ Major Projects & Plans for 2026



Park Millage History and Upcoming Ballot Proposal

Approved Millage Rate & Period

**August
1998**

**November
2006**

**August
2016**

2026



.75 Mill Renewed to original voter approved rate	10 Years
.75 Mill Renewed to original voter approved rate	10 Years
.7301 Mill Renewed at the then-current Headlee-rolled rate (2006-2016)	10 Years
??? Mill 2025 Millage to be levied after Headlee Rollback: .6865	10 Years

Official Ballot Language for August 2, 2016 Parks and Recreation Millage Renewal

“Shall the Charter Township of Oakland be authorized to renew the current tax levy of 0.7307 of one mill for a period of ten (10) years beginning with the December 2017 tax levy for the purpose of providing funds to be used for the support of the Oakland Township Parks and Recreation Commission for the acquisition, maintenance, operation, improvement and management of Township parks, recreation areas, facilities, programs, recreation, and services. Approval of this proposal would renew the tax limitation levy of 0.7307 mills on all taxable property in the Township. Approval of this proposal would authorize the levy of approximately \$0.7307 per \$1,000 of taxable property in the Township. It is estimated that this proposal would result in the authorization to collect up to 945,418.01 in the first year if approved and levied.” ([LINK HERE](#))

Notes for 2026:

- PRC & BOT required to determine ballot language and authorized levy ceiling prior to submission to the Clerk.
- Voters may be asked to renew the Parks Millage at the previously voter-authorized rate or renew at the then-current levied rate, subject to PRC & Board direction.
- Any renewal will remain subject to annual Headlee Amendment rollbacks based on inflation and taxable value growth.
- Public communication will clearly distinguish between voter authorization and actual annual levy.
- The ‘Parks’ Millage and the ‘Trail System’ Millage are the only voter-authorized park millages scheduled to expire in 2026.
- No action in 2026 would result in expiration of levy authority at the end of the current term: 12/31/2026.

A dirt path winds through a dense forest. Sunlight filters through the trees, creating dappled shadows on the path. The trees are lush and green, with some taller trees on the left and a thick wall of bushes on the right. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

APPENDIX

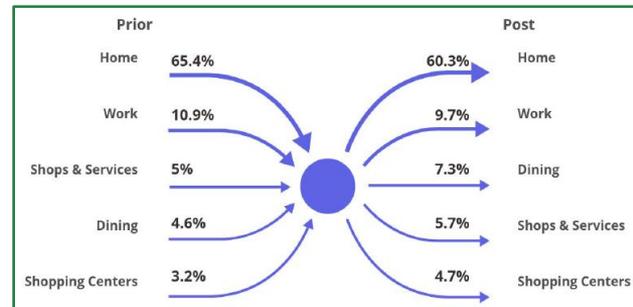
Visitation Report: Bear Creek Nature Park (Example of individual park report detail)

Bear Creek Nature Park

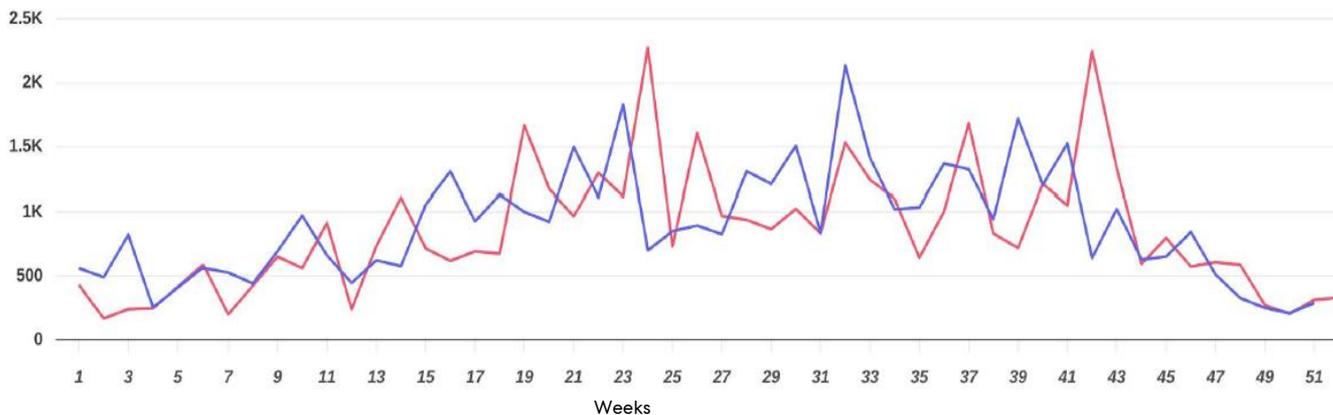
Visitation YoY:

	2024	2025	Variance (YoY)
Visits	44k	46.3k	+5.3%
Visitors	18.7k	18k	-3.7%
Avg. Dwell Time	31mins	43 mins	+38%

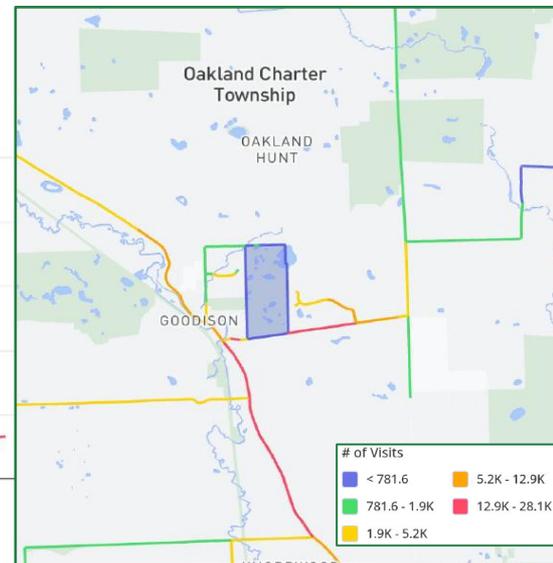
Visitor Journey %



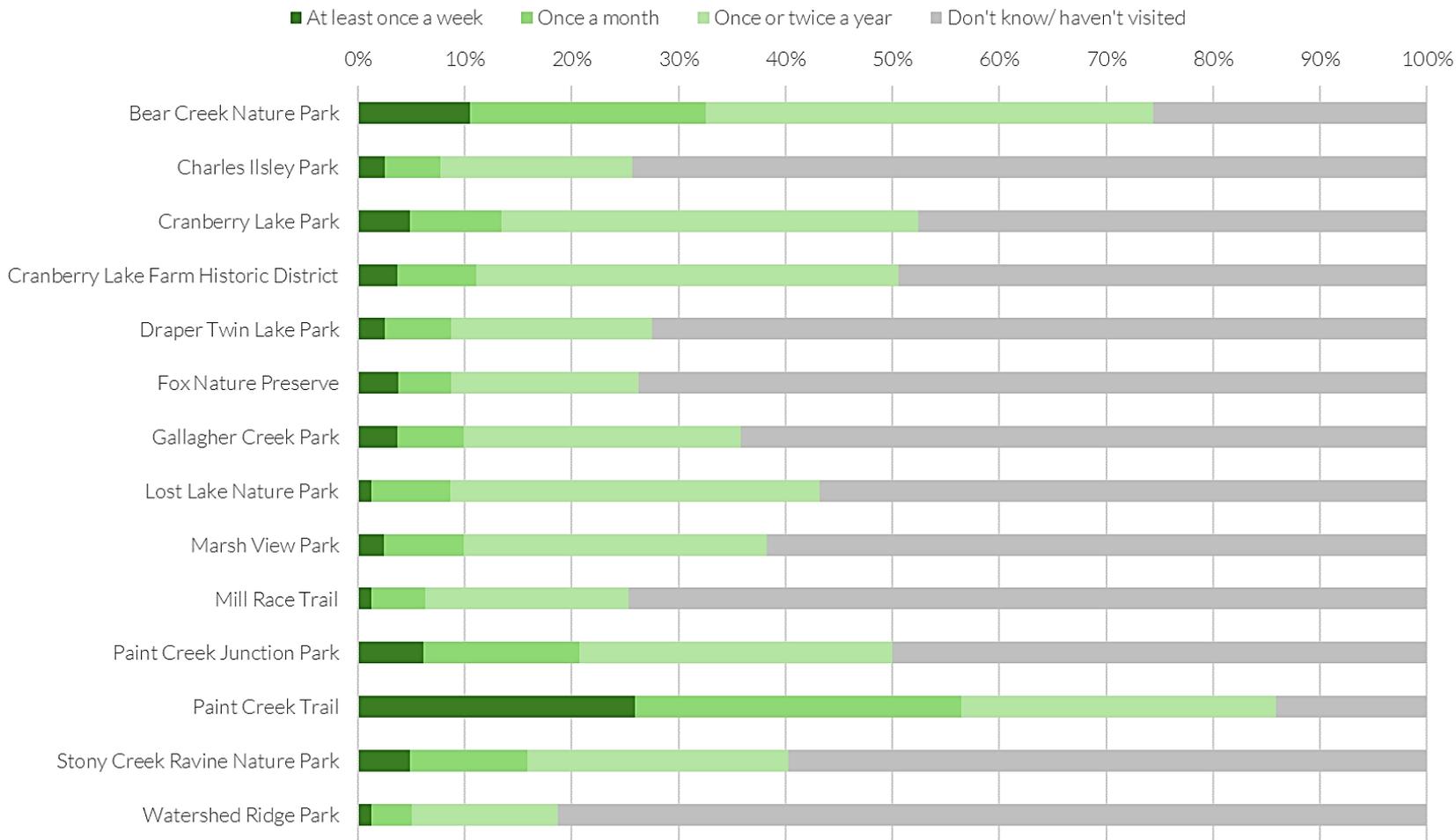
Visitation YoY ~ Week by Week: 2025 vs. 2024



Traffic Routes



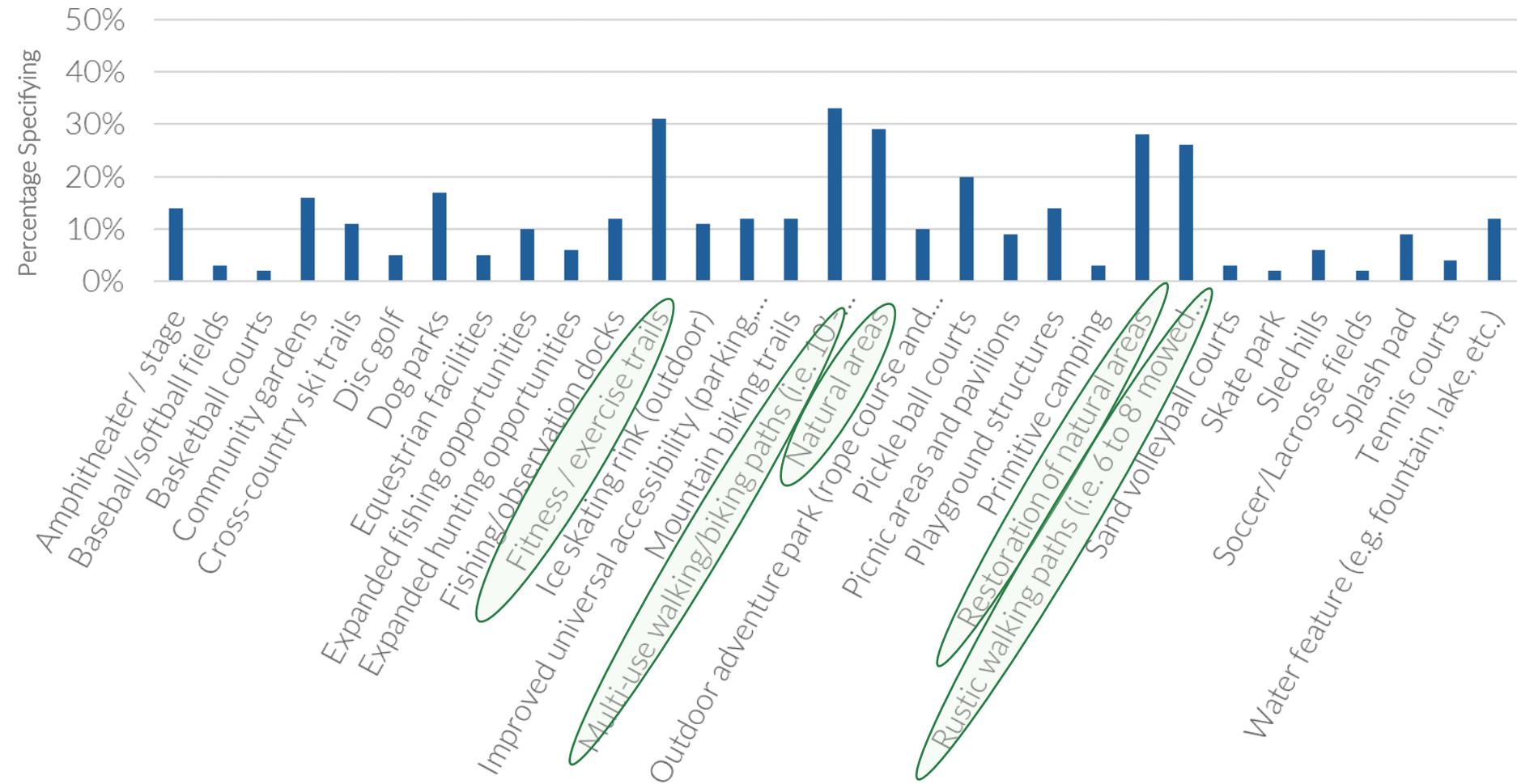
Oakland Township Parks ~ Frequency of Use (425 Residents Sample Size)



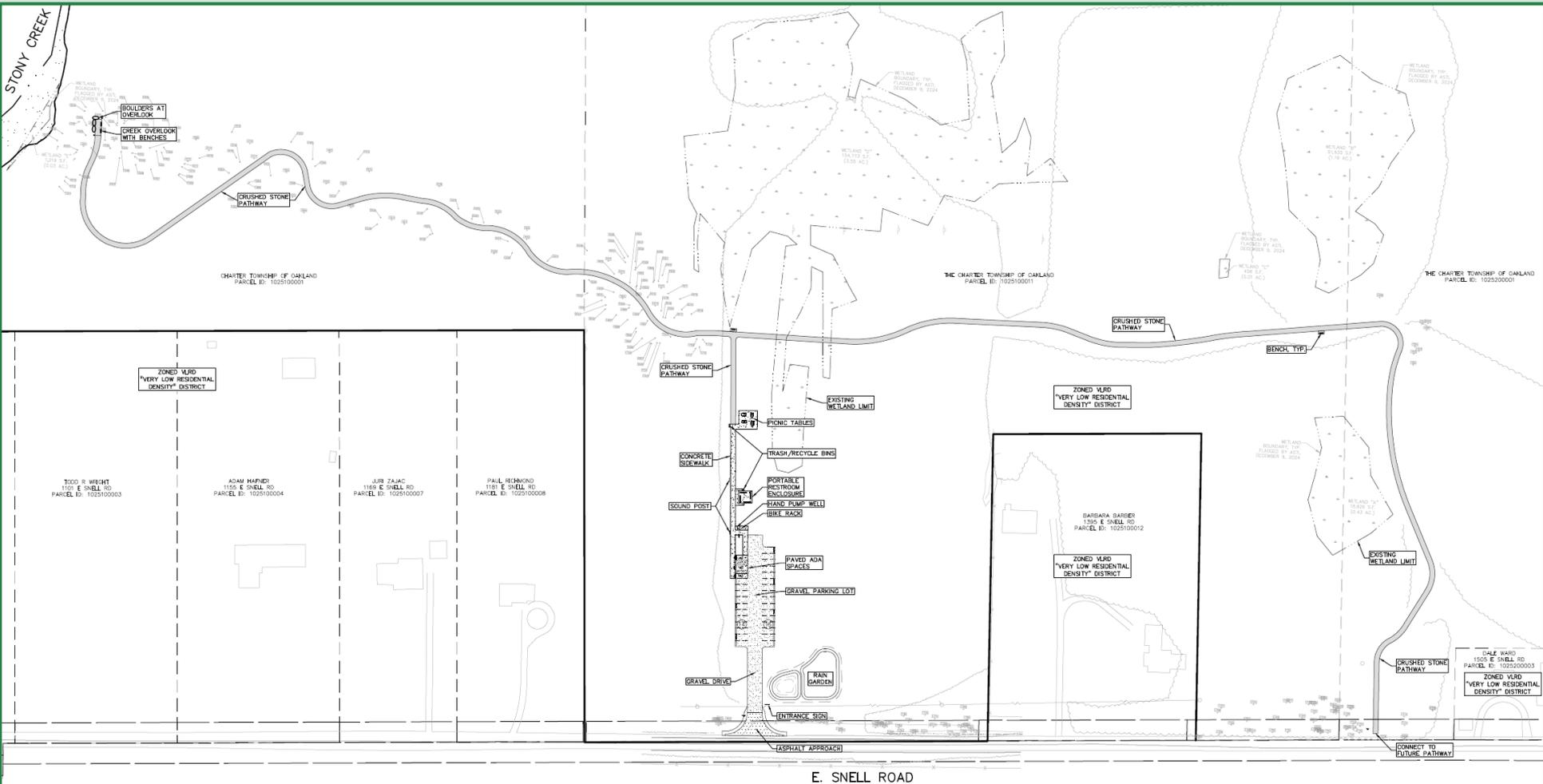
Oakland Township ~ Park Satisfaction Ratings

Rating Questions 2024 Oakland Township Parks and Recreation Response: 425, Margin of Error +/- 4.7		Rate Satisfaction with Township Parks													
		Bear Creek Nature Park	Charles Ilisley Park	Cranberry Lake Park	Cranberry Lake Farm Historic District	Draper Twin Lake Park	Fox Nature Preserve	Gallagher Creek Park	Lost Lake Nature Park	Marsh View Park	Mill Race Trail	Paint Creek Junction Park	Paint Creek Trail	Stony Creek Ravine Nature Park	Watershed Ridge Park
Overall		4.4	3.9	4.0	4.1	3.8	3.8	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.9	4.1	4.4	3.9	3.5
Home Location	Northwest	4.4	4.1	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.2	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.1	4.4	4.6	4.1	3.9
	Southwest	4.7	4.0	4.3	4.3	3.9	4.1	4.3	4.2	4.3	4.0	4.2	4.5	4.1	3.7
	Northeast	4.0	3.6	3.8	3.9	3.6	3.4	3.7	3.8	3.5	3.6	4.0	4.1	3.7	3.2
	Southeast	4.4	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.8	4.0	3.6	4.0	3.8	4.0	3.9	4.4	3.9	3.2
	Outside the Township*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ages in Home	0-5 years*	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.6	4.3	4.7	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.6	4.3	3.6
	6-12 years	4.3	4.0	4.1	3.9	4.0	3.7	4.0	4.4	4.4	3.7	4.1	4.4	3.8	3.8
	13-18 years	4.2	3.3	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.8	3.5	4.3	3.7	3.7	4.1	4.4	3.6	3.4
	19-24 years*	4.4	3.7	3.8	3.3	3.6	3.4	4.3	4.1	3.7	3.7	4.1	4.3	3.7	3.9
	25-34 years	4.7	4.5	4.3	4.3	3.8	4.3	4.0	4.6	4.2	4.1	4.8	4.7	4.3	3.5
	35-44 years	4.5	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.3	4.1	4.1	4.4	4.3	4.1	4.6	4.3	3.8
	45-54 years	4.3	3.6	3.9	3.8	3.9	3.7	4.2	4.0	4.0	3.9	4.2	4.4	3.7	3.4
	55-64 years	4.4	3.9	4.1	4.1	3.5	3.9	3.9	4.0	3.9	3.9	4.2	4.4	3.9	3.4
	65-74 years	4.5	4.0	4.1	4.1	3.8	3.8	3.9	4.1	4.0	3.8	4.1	4.3	3.9	3.9
	75 and over	4.3	4.1	4.0	4.0	3.9	3.6	3.9	4.0	3.5	3.6	4.0	4.4	3.9	3.4
Prefer not to answer*		4.3	3.7	4.2	4.4	3.8	3.8	4.0	4.0	4.2	3.6	4.3	4.2	4.2	3.3

Which five of the following amenities would you like to see more of in Oakland Township?



Stony Creek Ravine Nature Park Construction Drawings (1): Breaking ground in 2026



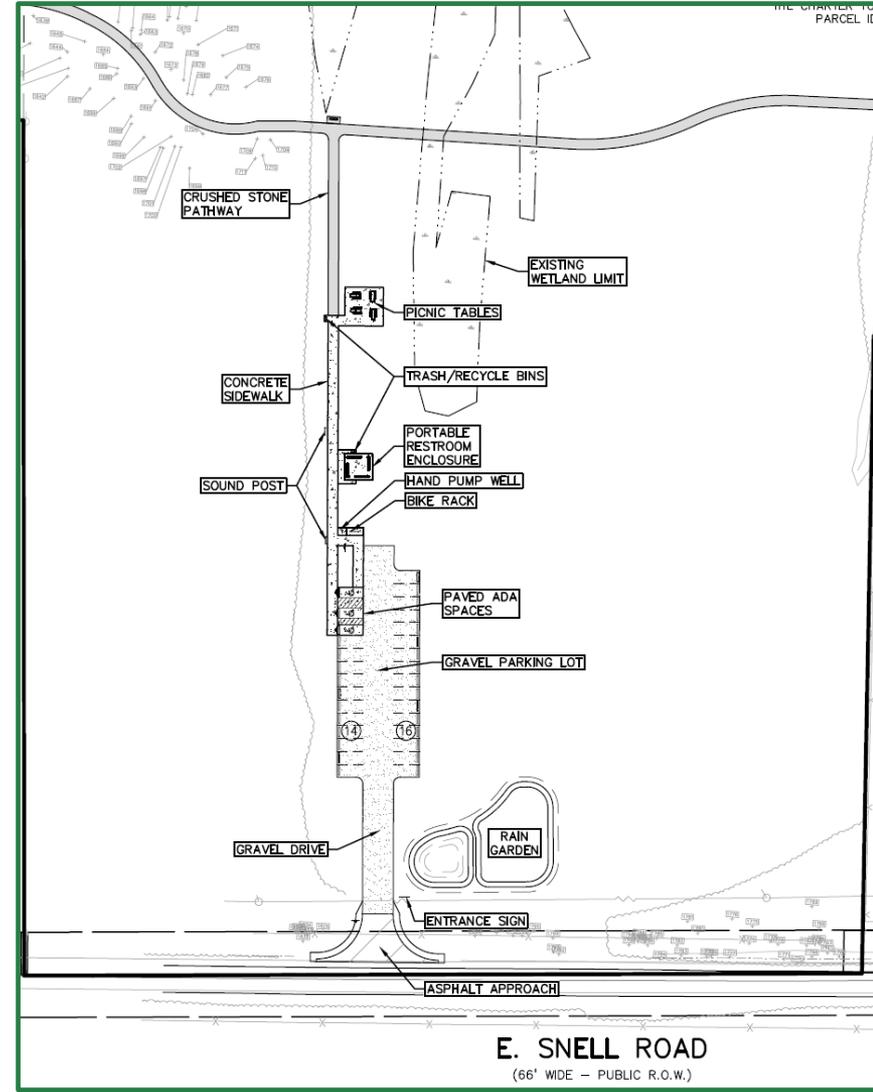
E. SNELL ROAD

Stony Creek Ravine Nature Park

Construction Drawings (2):

Enlarged View of Parking Area & Trailhead

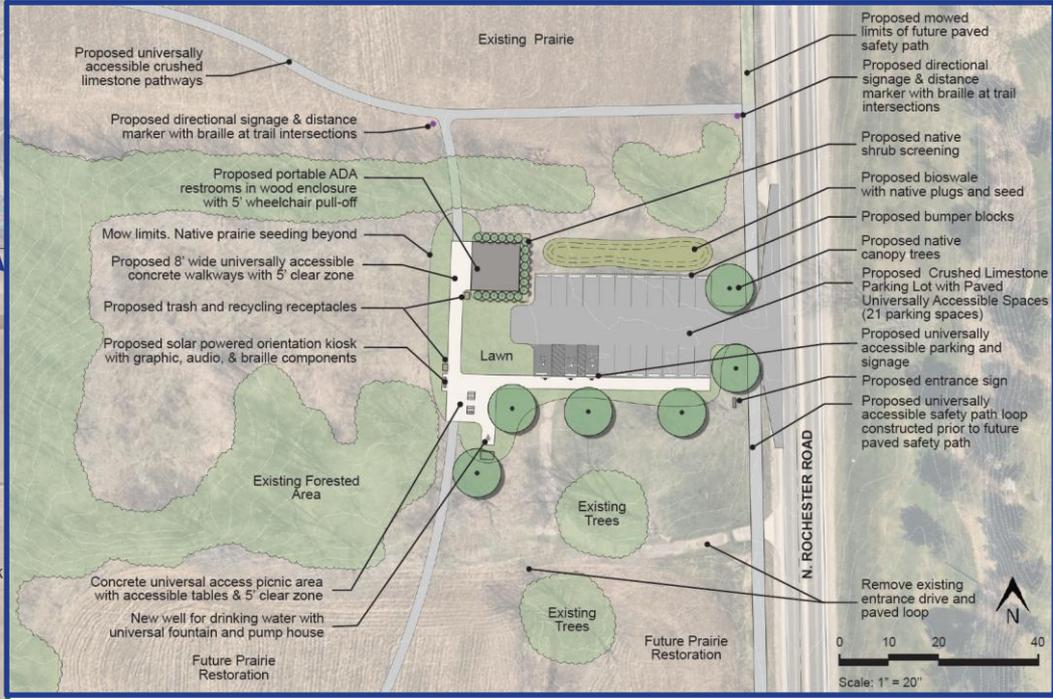
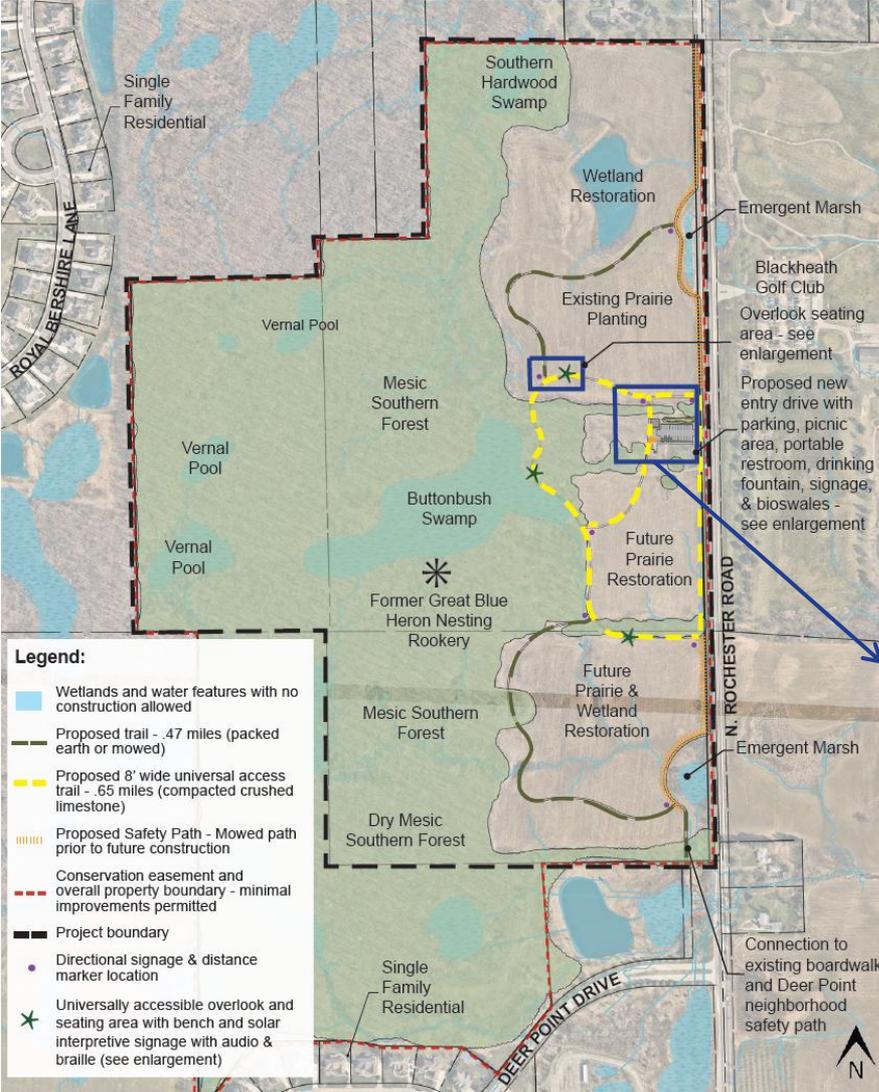
- **Entry off E. Snell Road**
- **Gravel Drive & Parking Lot**
- **3 Paved ADA Spaces**
- **Bike Rack**
- **Drinking Fountain**
- **Portable Restroom Enclosure**
- **4 Picnic Tables**
- **Trailhead for crushed limestone path**



Blue Heron Environmental Area Site Plans

2025: \$400K MNRTF Grant awarded

2026: First Phase of Implementation:
Draft Construction Drawings & Bid Documents



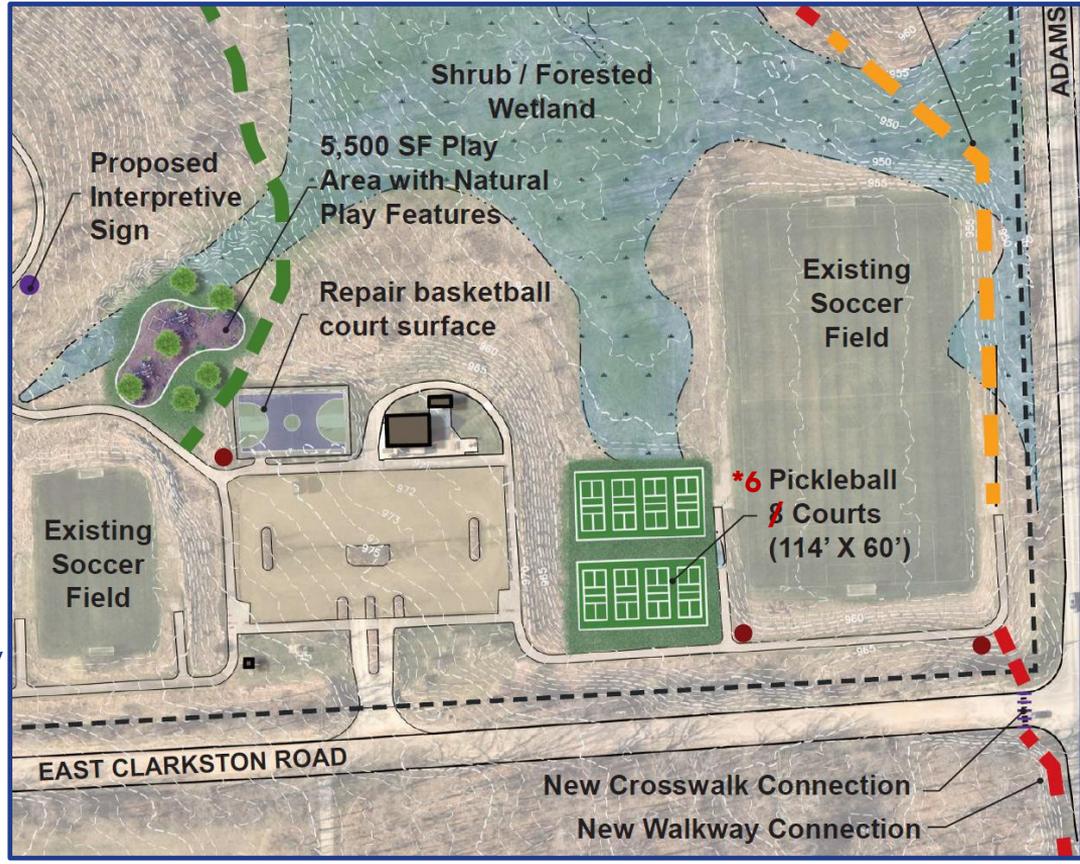
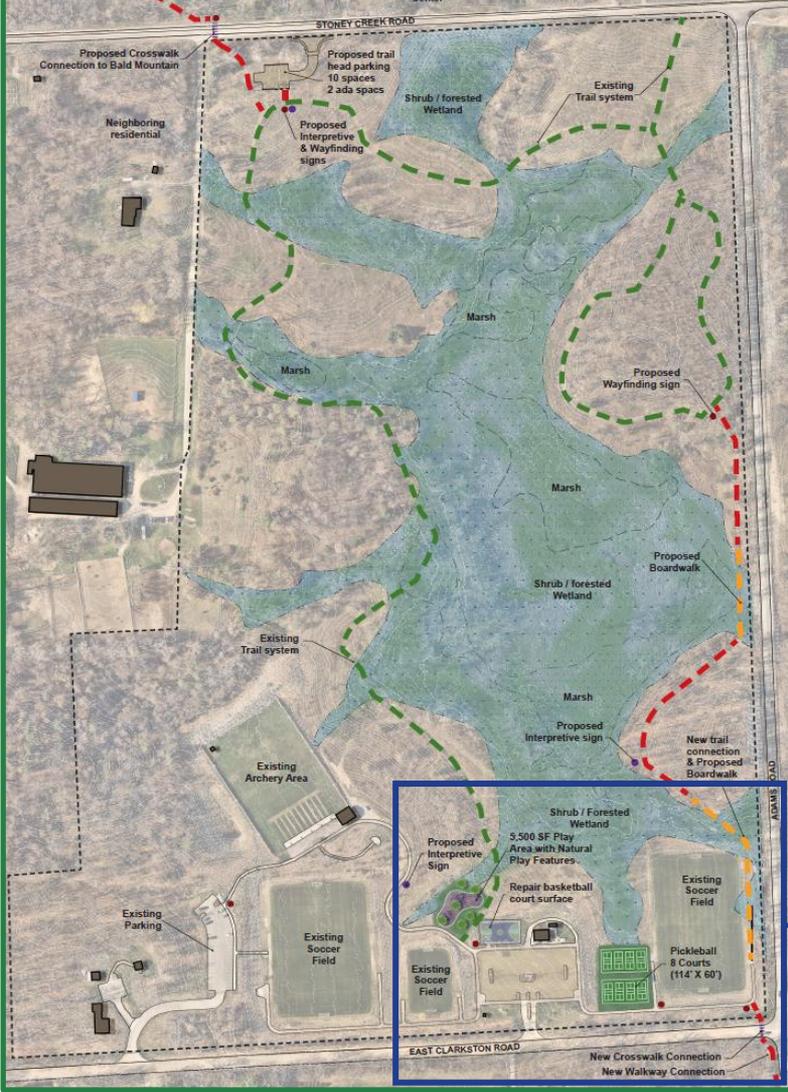
- Legend:**
- Wetlands and water features with no construction allowed
 - Proposed trail - .47 miles (packed earth or mowed)
 - Proposed 8' wide universal access trail - .65 miles (compacted crushed limestone)
 - Proposed Safety Path - Mowed path prior to future construction
 - Conservation easement and overall property boundary - minimal improvements permitted
 - Project boundary
 - Directional signage & distance marker location
 - Universally accessible overlook and seating area with bench and solar interpretive signage with audio & braille (see enlargement)



Marsh View Park - Preliminary Concept Plans

2025: Gathered public input & concept plans

2026: Complete application and submit to MNRTF Board by April 1st.





Thank you!

For more information on
Oakland Township Parks & Recreation please visit:
www.oaklandtwpmi.gov/parks-recreation

Ben McLoskey
Director of Parks & Recreation
Rev: 1/7/2026

Oakland Township Parks & Recreation 2025-2029 Master Plan can be found at:
www.oaklandtwpmi.gov/parks-recreation/grants-plans