

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Parks and Recreation Master Plan – Five year vision

2015



Acknowledgments

Parks and Recreation Commission

Randy Rusch

David Gibbons

Tracy Thomas

Jennifer DeLisle

Sam Iaquinto

Tim Saville

Chuck Steuer

Doug Wilbur

Township Board of Trustees

Marilyn Engstrom (Supervisor)

Kathy Braun (Treasurer)

Angela Westover (Clerk)

Janet Chick (Trustee)

Wayne Dockett (Trustee)

Jacki Otto (Trustee)

Tracy Thomas (Trustee)

Staff Assistance

Howard Fink, Township Manager

Tami Averill, Community Center Director

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Introduction

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan for Northfield Township is the culmination of an approximately one year process involving numerous stakeholders, Township regulatory and planning bodies, and public participation in an effort to articulate a vision for the township's parks and recreation activities, efforts and implementation strategies. Our philosophy in creating this process was simple: we felt this Plan should focus on identifying a vision that is achievable, rather than delivering recommendations that require additional planning efforts. As a master plan, however, this document will help guide the Parks and Recreation Commission over the next five years; more importantly, the planning process that the commission undertook removed the often "pie in the sky" thinking that results in a plan that is useful primarily as a marketing tool. Rather, this Plan is focused on an achievable vision in recognition of scarce resources and existing organizational capacity.

Good planning must be flexible (and innovative), in both process and recognition of changing circumstances. Northfield Township's parks and recreation activities are in their infancy. As capacity improves and resources are cultivated, our vision should and will change; it may become bolder, with greater expectations for results. The three principles coalescing are flexibility, realistic implementation, and visionary thought.

"Men only hit what they aim at. Therefore they
had better aim at something high"
- Henry David Thoreau

*"The Plan will look to
more effectively bridge
the gap between
planning and action-
oriented implementation
strategies."*

*Quote taken from
the community
meeting survey
document.*

Reading this Plan

The Plan utilizes information previously gathered from the 2008 – 2013 versions of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the township's Master Plan adopted in 2012, the Northfield Township Comprehensive Community Survey conducted in 2010, and numerous other resources gathered throughout the planning process. The Plan format and content are intended to meet state standards, adopted through the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), so that Northfield Township is eligible for grant programs.

The Plan follows the suggested format of Michigan's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as described in its Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plans (2012). The contents of the Plan include:

1. A description of the planning process used to develop the Plan.
2. A community description providing information on the built environment and how various geographical sub-groups are critical to our planning methodologies, and demographic information on Northfield Township.
3. The township's administrative structure, including that of the Parks and Recreation Commission.
4. A detailed inventory of parks and recreation spaces in Northfield Township and how our location in the region provides resources outside the township that are nevertheless easily accessible by local residents (the regional context).
5. An explanation of how we integrated public participation in a manner that identified individuals' needs and wants based on scarce resources.
6. The results of the process, including the identification of guiding principles, seen very much as overall goals and objectives for our vision.
7. Finally, the implementation chapter outlines step-by-step strategies to implement our ideas.

What this Plan Contains

This Plan is not simply “off the shelf”. It is tailored to Northfield Township, innovative in its approach, and provides a guiding vision for our efforts. During the process, a number of specific planning principles and questions kept repeating themselves within our planning efforts. These issues became a theme throughout the Plan, interconnected with our research, public participation, goals, and implementation strategies.

Key Guiding Principles and Resulting Questions

- 1) Ensure everyone is represented: How do we include the interests of the various sub-communities present within the Township, not just those in the Whitmore Lake area? Our planning must be neighborhood-specific.
- 2) Regional Context: In planning for the what parks and recreation improvements are desired, we considered our location in Southeast Michigan and what is available to our residents in surrounding communities
- 3) Natural Features: Northfield Township has an abundance of open space and natural areas. We considered what our focus should be given that many recreational opportunities are inherent and abundant in a natural context.
- 4) Scarce Resources: Northfield Township does not have a parks and recreation millage or a permanent general fund expenditure designed for parks (although the Whitmore Lake Public School District does have a Recreation Millage for funding for both the public pool and community recreation programming).
- 5) Historical Desires: The Township has some longstanding visions with regard to parks and recreation opportunities. How do those needs match up to economic realities?

The Planning Process

In the summer of 2014, the Parks and Recreation Commission undertook this update to the master plan. The commission reviewed the previous plan and felt that a new planning direction was necessary. The previous plan represented a lot of hard work by many volunteers and contained much valuable information. It provided a comprehensive inventory of assets and future projects that were of importance to the Northfield Township community. However, over the years the commission seemed to struggle with its role and with establishing priorities.

Some felt that, in keeping with the rural character throughout much of Northfield Township, assets should be used on nature trails, preserving wildlife corridors and generally passive recreational opportunities. Others wished to focus their energy on creating a park with public access to Whitmore Lake. Others yet voiced the desire to create active opportunities for kids and families near Whitmore Lake, the most urban and geographically populous area of the township. And some questioned if the status quo wasn't sufficient, given our proximity to the abundance of recreational opportunities in Ann Arbor, Brighton and the entire Southeast Michigan region.

It became clear that the planning bodies, in collaboration with the community, had not settled on a vision for parks and recreation activities in Northfield Township.

While we will never entirely unify the vision, this Plan attempts to create a road map for success, with realistic goals given our limited resources, large geography, and multiple geographical sub-communities.

Planning Process Outline

Given that the previous plan was not that far out of date, the Parks and Recreation Commission grappled with the idea of “updating” the existing document to satisfy grant requirements. The Commission decided, however, that in order to create a parks and recreation master plan that would provide an effective guide to future activities, a more comprehensive planning process needed to be undertaken. Once the commission began the work of planning, it became clear that this new “visioning” would dictate the plan’s objectives and goals over the next five years while still utilizing the efforts of past volunteers and the data they collected.

A draft outline was agreed upon for the creation of the Plan. While it is difficult to define the precise planning theory used, the Plan outline is intended to be designed around the participatory planning model. It’s important to note that much of the planning work was done by a small group of volunteers on the Parks and Recreation Commission, which some could argue is more typical of a top-down approach.

Original Outline

- 1) First Parks and Recreation Visioning Session
 - a. SWOT Analysis
 - b. New Ideas and New Vision
- 2) Second Visioning Session
 - a. SWOT Analysis (abbreviated version)
 - b. New Ideas and New Vision
- 3) Assets Inventory
 - a. Existing Parks
 - b. Community Activities and Other Municipal Agency Resources
- 4) Needs Assessment
 - a. Community Description
 - b. Community Survey
 - c. Community Design/Planning Charrette
- 5) Third Visioning Session
 - a. Analyze issues
 - b. Synthesize issues, re-visit SWOT analysis and identify new ideas and vision
- 6) Implementation
- 7) Document Development

SWOT Analysis Process

Wikipedia identifies a SWOT analysis as “a structured planning method used to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats involved in a project....” At its core, the process involves identifying internal and external factors that promote both success and challenges to achieve certain objectives.

- Strengths: characteristics that provide a unique advantage.
- Weaknesses: characteristics that provide a disadvantage.
- Opportunities: elements that can be exploited to its advantage.
- Threats: elements in the environment that could cause trouble.

The Northfield Township Board of Trustees and the Parks and Recreation Commission each engaged in a SWOT analysis. The Parks and Recreation Commission performed this over multiple meetings. Although abbreviated, the township Board of Trustees also engaged in a parks and recreation SWOT analysis, focusing primarily on identifying various strengths and weaknesses. Both entities were asked to synthesize their SWOT results and identify goals that would become the foundation of the community’s efforts.

As identified in the outline, the Parks and Recreation Commission had an opportunity to review the Board of Trustees’ analysis and integrate their efforts into the analysis. This was intentional, in order to integrate as much of a circular, 360 degree approach to the planning process as possible.

The results of these efforts –that is, the goals and project priorities that were identified - will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Community Meeting Introduction

To capture community ideas and support for parks and recreation development in Northfield Township, the Master Plan process included a two phase public participation component. Involving stakeholders early and often in the planning and idea formation process helps secure community buy-in, a necessity during implementation. The commission believes strongly that utilizing local knowledge and resources in the community is a fundamental component of a sustainable parks and recreation strategy. As we have stated, plans must be tailored to the organizational capacity of the community.

Significant conversations ensued at the Parks and Recreation Commission on how best to gather community input. It was decided to have a large community meeting, but one with a very different layout from traditional design charrettes. In particular, we focused on determining what residents felt should be priorities given scarce resources. Special attention was paid to how the results corresponded with where residents lived.

- 1) *Status Quo vs. Change*
- 2) *Funding Analysis*
- 3) *Guiding Principles*
- 4) *Desire for new improvements in light of scarce resources*

The community meeting design was broken up into 4 primary sections. The entire process was designed to be highly participatory, with individual decisions affecting the choices within subsequent sections. In the final section, a participatory technique was used, dubbed “Monopoly” to clarify priorities among the possibilities participants had envisioned. Despite significant advertising, an incredibly low turnout occurred for the first meeting. Two possible theories emerged to explain the low turnout: 1) that Northfield Township residents are not focused on parks and recreation improvements, or 2) that the residents trust their elected and appointed leadership to implement sound changes and improvements. Due to the low turnout, but still seeking input, the commission decided to take a different approach. Surveys were sent to the township’s email listserv, placed online, and a participatory community meeting process was performed at a police and fire open house.

In total, 6 participants attended the original meeting, 8 participated at the police and fire open house, and 17 surveys were filled out online. While by no means a robust public participation component, the results are meaningful, and are summarized in the section titled “Public Participation and Planning Process Results” on page 64.

Community Meeting Process

The community meeting materials consisted of a formal survey process which incorporated sections 1, 2, and 3 of the participatory outline. The survey was designed to run various statistical calculations to dig deeper into the results. Initial questions addressing demographics, income, household size, ages of household members and location were asked of participants. The survey is included in the Appendix.

Community Meeting: Status Quo vs. Change

Following the demographic inputs, the next section was designed to identify the participants' overall, "big-picture" desires to guide the Parks and Recreation Commission's efforts. As previously discussed, the commission needed to determine if residents were satisfied with their current efforts (mainly grassroots efforts and fundraising for low impact, easy-to-implement park improvements), or if they wished for more. The following question was posed:

Within Northfield Township, a number of recreational opportunities exist: nature preserves, various lakes, biking opportunities, outdoor recreation, and winter activities, to name a few. Surrounding Northfield, Ann Arbor, Brighton and other communities offer an array of opportunities, some that are profit-oriented and others that are municipally funded. Taking all of the area's recreational assets into consideration, please answer the following question:

Does Northfield Township need to focus on improving and adding additional recreational assets or are these needs already being addressed?

My needs are not being addressed and I would like to see additional parks and recreational assets

I do not feel as though new parks and recreation assets are needed, as there is a great deal to take advantage of in the area.

Community Meeting, Funding Analysis

The following portion of the survey expanded on the common planning question of status quo vs. change, and sought to identify if residents would support new funding options for parks and recreation assets, both physical and programmatic.

To help determine the financial implications to residents, the survey provided the average taxable value of properties in Northfield Township and tax implications of a property with a Taxable Value of \$120,000 (Market Value \$240,000).

The answer to this question would pre-determine how much money was given to participants to “buy” specific improvements that they desired. Option 1a, which supports .5 mills, would provide participants with \$1,000,000 of “spending money” on projects; Option 1b, supporting .25 mills, would provide \$500,000; Option 2, supporting limited general fund expenditures, would provide \$50,000; and finally Option 3, supporting the status quo, would provide \$10,000. This “Monopoly-like” exercise helped visualize what improvements residents were willing to fund in light of scarce resources.

Whitmore Lake Sub Area Funding

Please select one of the four funding options for each funding type (Physical Assets & Programming Assets):

	Funding for Physical Assets	Funding for Programming Assets
1. Northfield Township Parks & Recreation activities should be <u>funded by a community millage</u> to create a functioning Parks & Recreation System.		
Option A: .5 mills to generate approximately \$160,000 per year		
Option B: .25 mills to generate approximately \$80,000 per year		
2. I do not wish to support a millage campaign for new physical Parks & Recreation assets. <u>I wish to encourage fundraising, access to outside resources, and limited general fund expenditures</u> to be used for low cost, commission driven improvements similar to the Whitmore Lake Bark Park.		
3. Northfield Township Parks & Recreation system, whether it is run by the Township or other municipal / recreational organizations is sufficient, and <u>I wish for the Status Quo to continue</u> . I would like no additional resources, general fund, or elsewhere to be spent on park assets.		

2014 Residential Taxable Value Analysis for Northfield Twp		
	School District	AVERAGE TAXABLE VALUE
1	South Lyon	\$100,146.30
2	Whitmore Lake	\$53,558.22
3	Ann Arbor	\$135,030.11
4	Dexter	\$114,672.67
	Total Twp.	\$62,443.45

Additional Parks Millage for a Home with a Taxable Value of 120,000		
Tax Bill		
.5 mills	\$60.00 per year	
.25 mills	\$30.00 per year	

Community Meeting, Guiding Principles

The results of the SWOT analyses from both the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Board of Trustees, together with the countless hours spent discussing/debating the parks and recreation vision for the future of Northfield Township, moved the commission towards some guiding principles. These guiding principles are a key part of the Parks and Recreation Commission's vision for this master plan.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The township should act as a common area for information on Parks & Rec programming and projects including (but not limited to):

- Parks & Rec Calendar of Events
- Facebook Page
- Newsletter
- E-mail list

Given our proximity to recreational assets around the region and the various opportunities present in Northfield Township (including activities in Brighton, Ann Arbor, etc.), marketing and promotional materials should represent Northfield Township as an area with an abundance of assets.

Our marketing materials should represent Northfield Township as a highly recreational area with a focus on our natural beauty.

The Parks & Rec Commission should create better pedestrian linkages between the library, the schools, and the hamlet area.

The Parks & Rec Commission should create better pedestrian and bicycle pathways that link surrounding communities

- Linking the Border to Border Trail
- Rails to Trails connections
- Link existing trails to Ann Arbor, Green Oak, and surrounding municipalities with quality trail systems

The Parks & Rec Commission should create and promote a trail system that is multi-seasonal (i.e. ability to utilize trails in autumn for fall color tours, in winter for cross-country skiers, etc.).

The Parks & Rec Commission should focus on opening Whitmore Lake up to the public by creating a public access point and/or a lakefront park.

The Parks & Rec Commission should focus on physical park assets in the hamlet area.

The Parks & Rec Commission should be a leader in creating programming coalitions between different entities within the community (i.e., the library, schools, etc.)

The Parks & Rec Commission should utilize and develop properties already owned by the township.

- 75 Barker
- Fire Station
- Property in the old Whitmore Lake Summer Homes Subdivision

The Parks & Rec Commission should coordinate with the Community Center, Library and Community Education Center for programming involving Parks & Rec assets.

The Parks & Rec Commission should focus on developing passive recreational opportunities such as trails, picnic areas and natural parks.

The Parks & Rec Commission should focus on developing active recreational assets, such as BMX parks, Frisbee golf, bocce ball courts, etc.

Once the guiding principles were ranked, participants were given the opportunity to add any new guiding principles they felt were not included in the survey. This was done to determine if there was consensus among the community on issues that needed to be addressed, of which the appointed and elected officials were unaware. Lastly, participants were then asked to identify specific projects in relation to the new guiding principles they identified previously.

Community Meeting “Monopoly”

The final section became the highlight of the participatory process, where residents participated in a “Monopoly-like” game in which they made choices on new park development projects. Using the money they accrued from their answer in the funding analysis, participants could “buy” park assets throughout the community. A small list of likely park development assets was included, each having a monetary value attached. This was not a comprehensive list, and if individuals identified a project not on the list, the facilitators provided a monetary value for the project on the spot.

Please Note: Results are summarized in the section titled “Public Participation and Planning Process Results” on page 64.

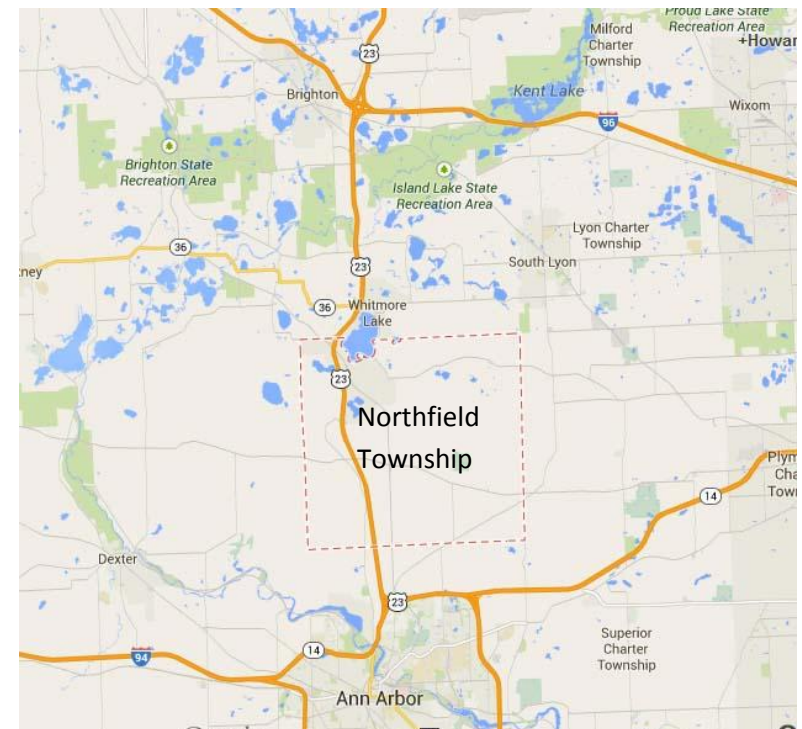
Community Description

Northfield Township is located in eastern Washtenaw County, north of Ann Arbor and south of Brighton, with U.S. 23 running through the west side of the township from north to south. The township shares common boundaries with Ann Arbor Township, Green Oak Township (Livingston County), Salem Township, Hamburg Township, and Webster Township. This section provides a short history of Northfield Township detailing how the community has drastically changed over the last century, from a summer resort and farming community to a mostly bedroom suburb of the Ann Arbor area. Following the historical analysis, the Plan goes into greater detail in describing certain sub-areas of Northfield Township, recognizing that it does not always function as a cohesive community.

Various statistics and data are used to profile Northfield Township, with sections on the following areas:

- 1) Population Growth and Characteristics
- 2) Housing Characteristics
- 3) Land Use Patterns and Development Trends
- 4) Natural and Cultural Features

Whenever possible, the Plan compares the statistical profiles to Washtenaw County as a whole in order to identify if trends are “universal” or point to alternate factors such as demographic or economic shifts central to Northfield Township. Despite our best efforts, demographics alone do not tell the entire story of “who is Northfield Township?”; statistics are generally aggregated to the entire municipality rather than specific geographic areas where differences can and do occur amongst the population. To provide perspective, the City of Brighton is 3.7 square miles, the City of Ann Arbor is 28.7 square miles and Northfield Township is 36 square miles.



A Short History of the Township

In 1824, Benjamin Sutton was the first settler in Northfield Township, making his way west from Plymouth, Michigan, on established Indian paths. By 1832 the township was legally established by the territorial legislature, and in 1833 the first election was held in Benjamin Sutton's home. More settlers followed, establishing farms and businesses throughout the township.

Though long a farming community, Northfield Township has also experienced boom periods as a recreation destination due to Whitmore Lake. At the turn of the 20th century, the Ann Arbor-Toledo Railroad came through Northfield Township, turning it into a popular summer resort. Two grand hotels overlooked Whitmore Lake during this period. A dance hall provided dancing, and four public beaches attracted swimmers.

When the U.S. 23 expressway was built in 1956, it bypassed the commercial district of Whitmore Lake and bisected long-established neighborhoods. Summer resort traffic, which had depended on the railroads, disappeared. The disappearance of the grand hotels and dance hall and the eventual closure of the public beaches all significantly diminished the summer resort atmosphere.

The community began a revival in the 1970s, after a period of long decline. Better quality dwellings were built and a \$500,000 federal grant was obtained to renovate dwellings that were initially intended as temporary housing. In more recent years, Northfield Township voters approved several millages in support of a full-time police department, expanded fire and medical rescue services, the establishment of the Northfield Township Area Public Library, the construction of the Public Safety Building, and the construction of the new Whitmore Lake High School.

Population Trends

Population Change

Northfield Township saw a large population increase from 1980 to 2000; since then, its population has remained flat. The population of Northfield Township as of the 2010 census was 8,245 people, which represents a very slight increase from the 2000 census of 8,238 people. The township is the seventh most populous community in Washtenaw County. It includes nearly three percent of the population living in Washtenaw County. The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) predicts a population increase by 2040 to 8,368.

Northfield Township Total Population				Washtenaw County Total Population		
Year	Population	% Increase year over year		Year	Population	% Increase year over year
1970	3,975			1970	234,103	35.80%
1980	4,672	15%		1980	264,740	13.09%
1990	6,732	31%		1990	282,937	6.90%
2000	8,252	18%		2000	322,770	14.08%
2010	8,245	0%		2010	344,791	6.80%
2040 (Projections)	8,368	1%		2040 (Projections)	386,235	8.59%

Population and Household, 1990 – 2040

From the 2000 to the 2010 census, there has been a noticeable increase in housing units. This decreasing household size is a typical phenomenon occurring throughout the United States during this time period. SEMCOG projections through 2035 show the percentage of households with children decreasing.

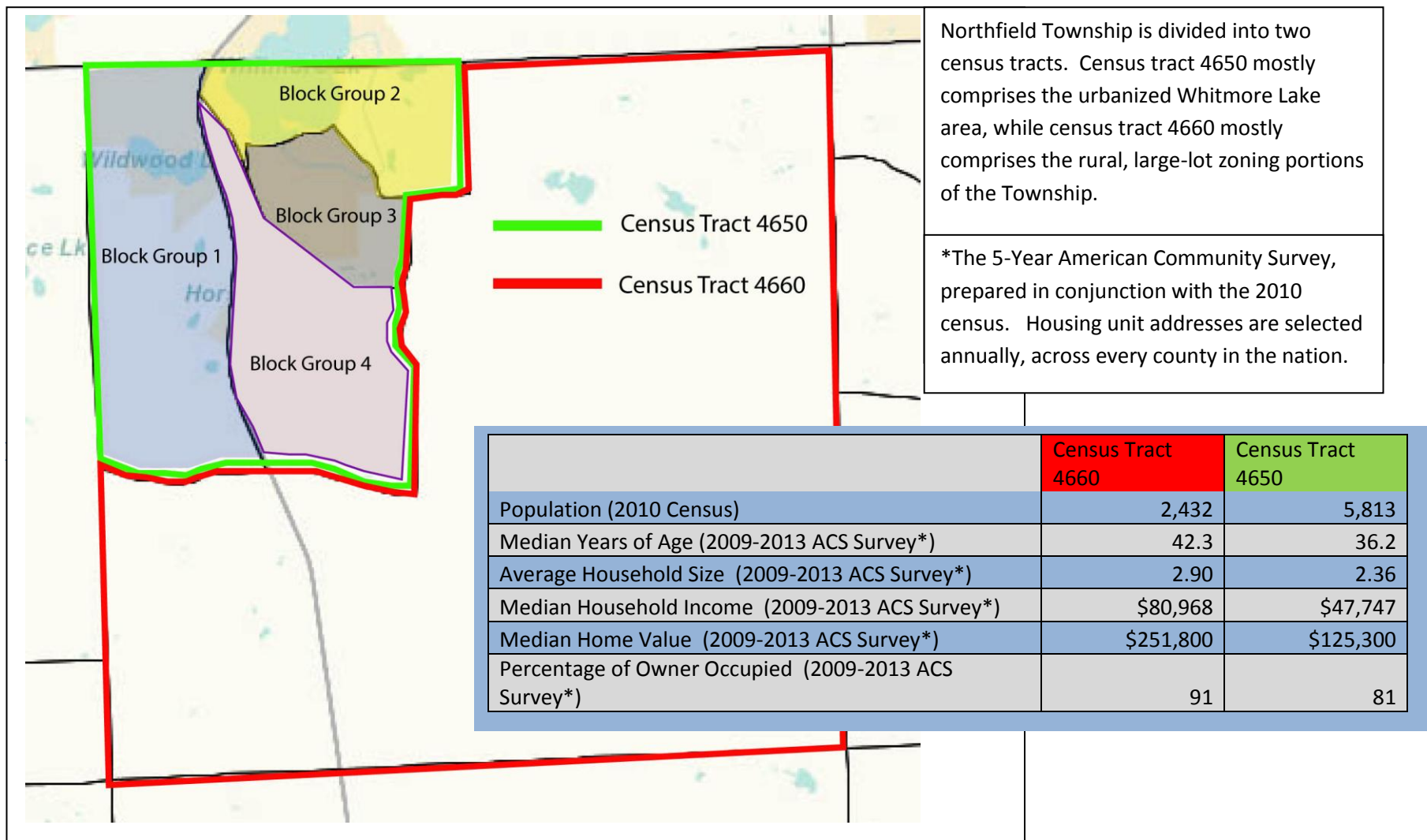
Northfield Township

	1990 Census	2000 Census	2010 Census	2040 Forecast (SEMCOG)
Population	6,732	8,252	8,245	8,368
Households (occupied housing units)	2,449	3,154	3,303	3,684
Household Size	2.77	2.57	2.49	2.26

Washtenaw County

	1990 Census	2000 Census	2010 Census	2040 Forecast (SEMCOG)
Population	282,937	322,770	344,791	386,235
Households (occupied housing units)	104,528	125,232	137,193	164,447
Household Size	2.5	2.41	2.38	2.23

Census Tracts and Block Groups Population and Demographics



Northfield Township

Highest Level of Education	Census 1990	Census 2000	5-Yr ACS 2010	Percentage Point Change 2000-2010
Population 25 years and over	4,369	5,494		
Graduate/Professional Degree	6.80%	10.7%	8.2%*	-2.5%
Bachelor's Degree	11%	17.5%	21.7%*	4.2%
Associate Degree	6.90%	7.1%	9.2%*	2.2%
Some College, No Degree	25.50%	29.2%	25.5%*	-3.6%
High School Graduate	28.10%	25.2%	28.4%*	3.2%
Did Not Graduate High School	21.80%	10.4%	7.0%*	-3.4%

Washtenaw County

Highest Level of Education	Census 1990	Census 2000	5-Yr ACS 2010	Percentage Point Change 2000-2010
Population 25 years and over	166,406	197,414		
Graduate/Professional Degree	20.8%	23.8%	26.2%*	2.4%
Bachelor's Degree	21.0%	24.3%	24.6%*	0.3%
Associate Degree	6.2%	6.0%	6.8%*	0.8%
Some College, No Degree	19.8%	20.2%	19.3%*	-1.0%
High School Graduate	19.4%	17.1%	16.7%*	-0.4%
Did Not Graduate High School	12.8%	8.5%	6.4%*	-2.0%

Population Profile: Education (continued)

Education: Northfield Township has a well-educated population. While the percentage of the population 25 and over with a bachelors and or graduate / professional degree lags that of Washtenaw County, Northfield Township's combined percentage (29.9%) is greater than of the State of Michigan (25.9%) and the United States (28.8%).



Population Profile: Income

Northfield Township

	1990 Census	2000 Census	5-Yr ACS 2010	Change 2000- 2010	Pct Change 2000-2010
Income					
Median Household Income (in 2010 dollars*)	\$67,620	\$76,432	\$57,529	-\$18,903	-24.7%
Per Capita Income (in 2010 Dollars*)	\$28,089	\$33,432	\$28,142	-\$5,290	-15.8%

Washtenaw County

	1990 Census	2000 Census	5-Yr ACS 2010	Change 2000- 2010	Pct Change 2000-2010
Income					
Median Household Income (in 2010 dollars*)	\$63,846	\$68,048	\$59,065	-\$8,983	-13.2%
Per Capita Income (in 2010 Dollars*)	\$30,097	\$35,566	\$31,316	-\$4,250	-11.9%

*Conversion made using the U.S. City Average Consumer Price Index

In the 1990 and 2000 censuses, Northfield Township's median household income exceeded Washtenaw County. By the 2010 ACS survey, this statistic reversed. Northfield Township's median household income now lags behind Washtenaw County.

Population Profile: Age

Population Change by age, 2000-2010

Northfield

Age Group	Census 2000	Census 2010	Change 2000-2010
85+	62	77	15
80-84	89	95	6
75-79	149	131	-18
70-74	160	203	43
65-69	221	302	81
60-64	296	443	147
55-59	351	621	270
50-54	514	797	283
45-49	672	793	121
40-44	793	617	-176
35-39	842	565	-277
30-34	757	497	-260
25-29	648	565	-83
20-24	436	455	19
15-19	449	542	93
10-14	601	534	-67
5-9	592	500	-92
Under 5	620	508	-112
Total	8,252	8,245	-7
Median Age	35.1	39.7	4.6

Washtenaw

Age Group	Census 2000	Census 2010	Change 2000-2010
85+	3199	4708	1509
80-84	3599	4904	1305
75-79	5474	5902	428
70-74	6657	7641	984
65-69	7342	11796	4454
60-64	9207	17707	8500
55-59	13830	21558	7728
50-54	20188	23534	3346
45-49	23272	23654	382
40-44	24724	22427	-2297
35-39	25303	21364	-3939
30-34	25908	22276	-3632
25-29	27705	27061	-644
20-24	38444	40467	2023
15-19	27987	30492	2505
10-14	19630	20153	523
5-9	20296	20009	-287
Under 5	20130	19138	-992
Total	322,895	344,791	21,896
Median Age	31.3	33.3	2

Population Profile: Age (Continued)

Age: Age is an important factor in evaluating parks and recreation opportunities. We often match both physical parks and program offerings with certain age groups. For example, senior programming is aimed at older adults, little league sports are aimed at children, and athletic teams are aimed at young adults. While certainly not the only factor, age is a demographic that deserves careful consideration in parks planning.

What seems clear from the data is that Northfield Township is generally becoming an older community. This is a phenomenon that is occurring throughout the United States, but as we see from the data, the rate of age increase in Northfield Township is greater than Washtenaw County. The age data, while not conclusive on its own, does point to a trend in Northfield Township. We see this by comparing the increases / decreases in children between 5 and 19 years of age.



Housing Characteristics and Development Trends

Housing Tenure, 1990 – 2010: Northfield Township compared to Washtenaw County

	Northfield Township			Washtenaw County		
	1990 Census	2000 Census	2010 Census	1990 Census	2000 Census	2010 Census
Median Housing Value (in 2010 dollars)	\$146,632	\$210,187	\$166,900*	\$167,906	\$224,437	\$216,200*
Median Gross Rent (in 2010 dollars)	\$958	\$949	\$960*	\$942	\$906	\$866*
Population	6,732	8,252	8,245	282,937	322,770	344,791
Total Housing Units	2,579	3,393	3,601	111,256	131,069	147,573
Owner Occupied Units	1,943	2649	2599	57,787	74,830	83,483
Renter Occupied Units	506	505	704	46,741	50,497	53,710
Vacant Units	130	239	298	6,728	5,742	10,380
Persons In Poverty	323 (4.8%)	334 (4.1%)	530 (6.6%)*	31,777 (11.2%)	33450 (11.1%)	44,059 (13.7%)*
Households In Poverty	115 (4.7%)	126 (4.0%)	230 (7.2%)*	12,140 (11.6%)	13,520 (10.8%)	17,565 (13.1%)*

*Represents the 5-Year American Community Survey, as part of the 2010 Census

Housing Tenure (continued)

(Information from Southeast Michigan Council of Governments Development Data)

Growth in the local housing stock exceeded population growth between 1990 and 2000, indicative of a decrease in household size. While this trend continues from 2000 to 2010, there is also a drastic slowdown of population growth and new housing. The number of housing units increased by 612 or 49 percent between 1990 and 2000 while the population increased by 23 percent during the same period. From 2000 to 2010, new housing units increased by 6%, while population remained flat.



Median Housing value declined from the 2000 to the 2010 census, as did many municipalities during the “great recession”. Values in Northfield Township declined more rapidly than Washtenaw County.

Residential Building Permits, 1990-2000

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Single Family	49	83	49	51	50	43	96	67	102	118	74
Two Family	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	18	2	0	0
Attached Condo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Multi Family	12	4	0	5	4	0	0	28	8	132	0
Total Units	65	87	49	56	56	43	96	113	112	250	79
Total Demos	0	4	1	1	1	1	1	4	2	0	2
Net Total	65	83	48	55	55	42	95	109	110	250	77

Residential Building Permits, 2000-2014

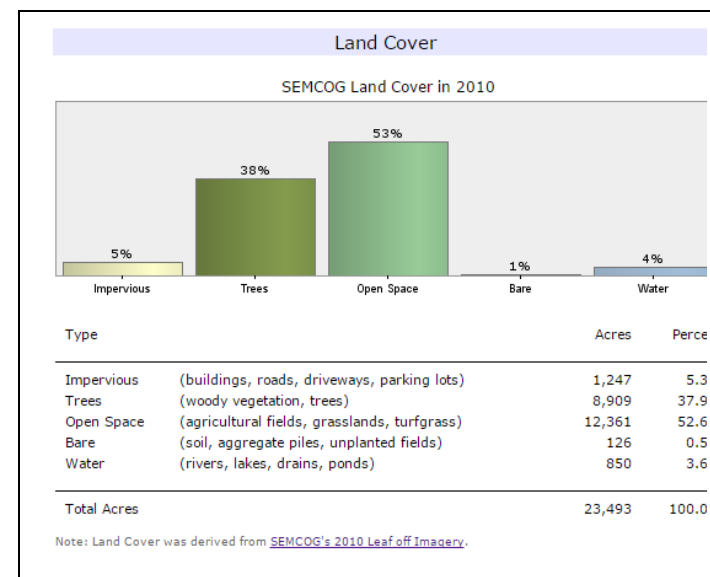
Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Single Family	74	59	17	31	19	25	27	11	7	3	3	5	9	15	12
Two Family	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Attached Condo	5	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Multi Family	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Units	79	59	17	35	21	25	27	11	7	3	3	5	9	15	12
Total Demos	2	6	0	0	3	8	7	4	3	2	4	0	3	2	1
Net Total	77	53	17	35	18	17	20	7	4	1	-1	5	6	13	11

New housing starts in Northfield Township began a significant decline beginning in 2001/2002 and continued sharply until 2006/2007. Most economists agree that the recession began in late 2006, early 2007, resulting in reduced housing starts throughout the United States. However, in Northfield Township building permits begin to show a decline in 2001/2002, prior to the “great recession”.

Land Use Patterns and Development Trends

Northfield Township covers a geographic area of 36 square miles. As seen from all the map exhibits (future land use, zoning, natural features and land cover maps) the majority of the township is rural in character, estimated at 85%. The vast majority of the township is master planned as agricultural, which only permits a residential property on 5 acres or more (the zoning ordinance does provide various density bonuses for developments with clustering, those located on paved roads, etc.). The zoning map currently shows more properties zoned agricultural than the future land use map on the 2014 Master Plan, reflecting the ability of residents in certain areas to petition for their property to be re-zoned in the areas that the Planning Commission has determined to be most appropriate for greater density development. Other than agricultural, the portion of the township around Whitmore Lake and Horseshoe Lake is more urbanized, with both commercial and higher-density residential uses, and there is also a large swath of land zoned mixed-use around the North Territorial interchange at U.S. 23, including a number of light industrial businesses.

With so much agricultural zoning (five acre minimum), the township has preserved many of its natural features. Its many types of woodlands, wetlands, streams, lakes and other topographical features provide for a very aesthetically pleasing rural character. Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG's) percentage breakdown for land cover in Northfield Township is shown in the accompanying graphic

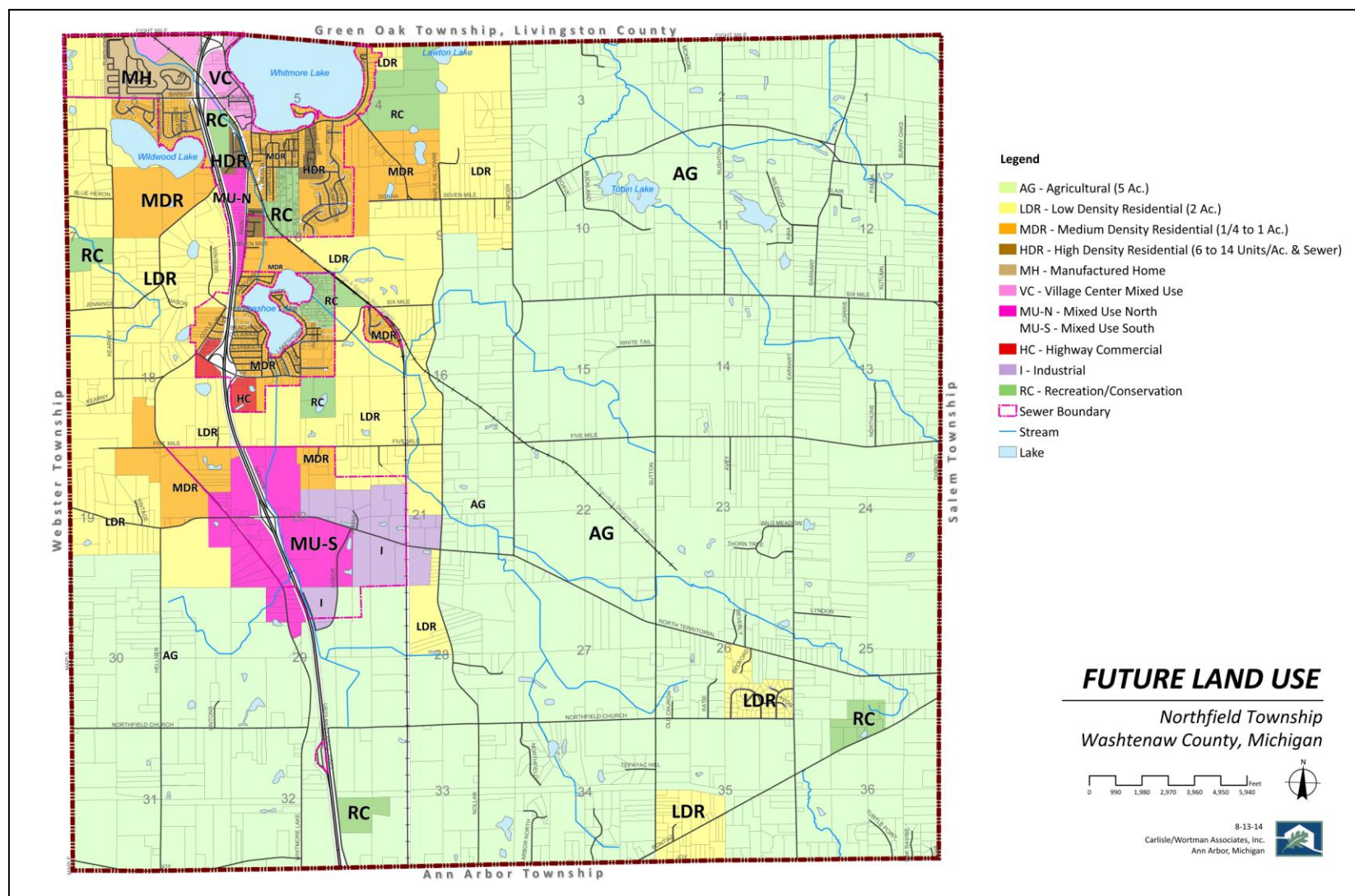


Wetlands

The water table in Northfield Township is quite high in many areas. It is no surprise that Northfield Township has a large number of wetlands and sensitive lands that deserve protection. Some of the most important wetlands in Northfield Township are those contiguous to lakes, rivers, and streams. Wetlands are important for storm water retention, water quality, wildlife habitat and to mitigate flooding. In the area east of Horseshoe Lake, both the township and Horseshoe Lake Corporation (the property owners' association for land around Horseshoe Lake) have purchased wetland areas to ensure their protection, as these lands are quite sensitive and needed for protection of flood-prone areas.

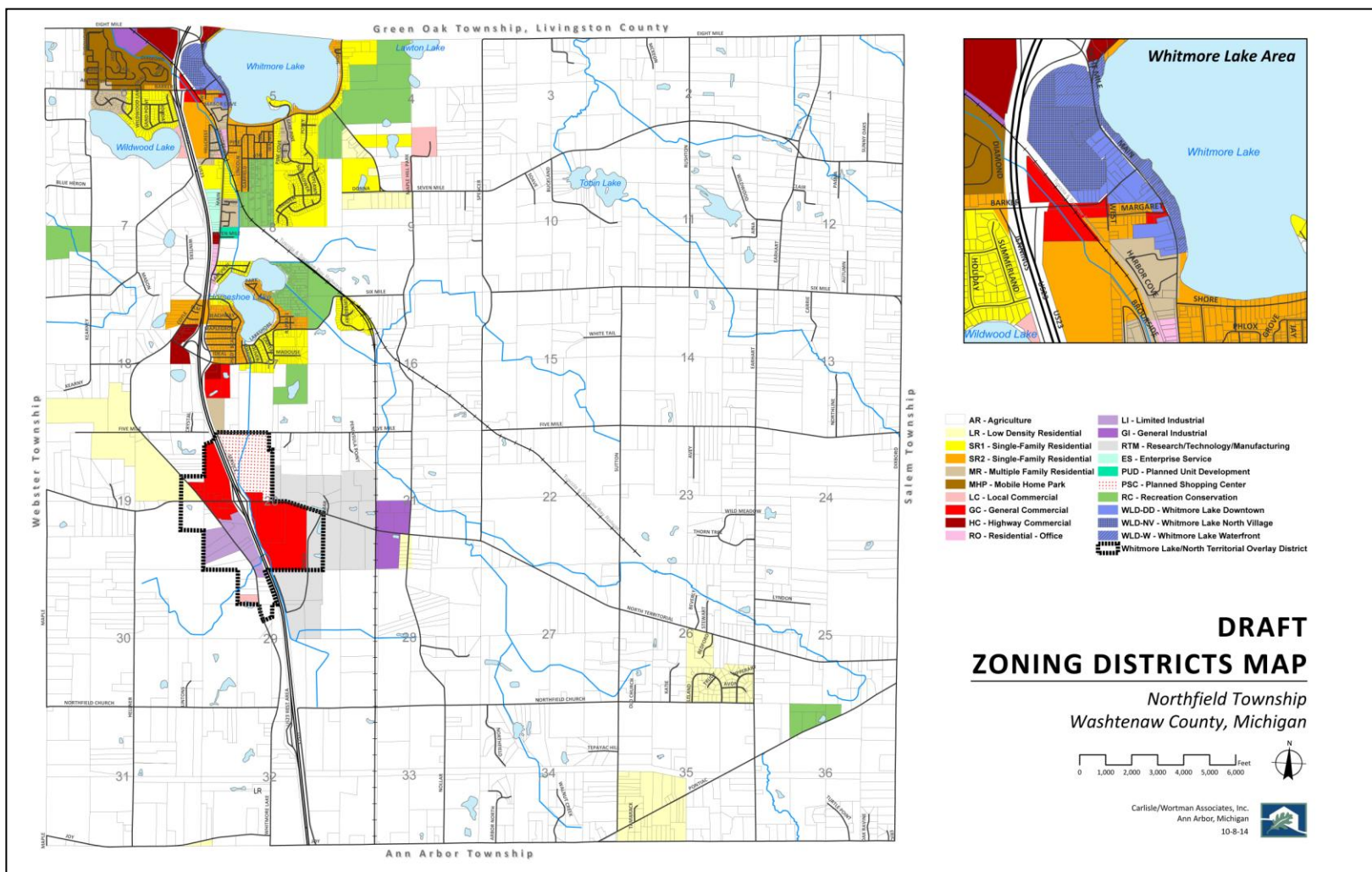
Future Land Use Map

(Northfield Township 2012 Master Plan, Future Land Use Map)



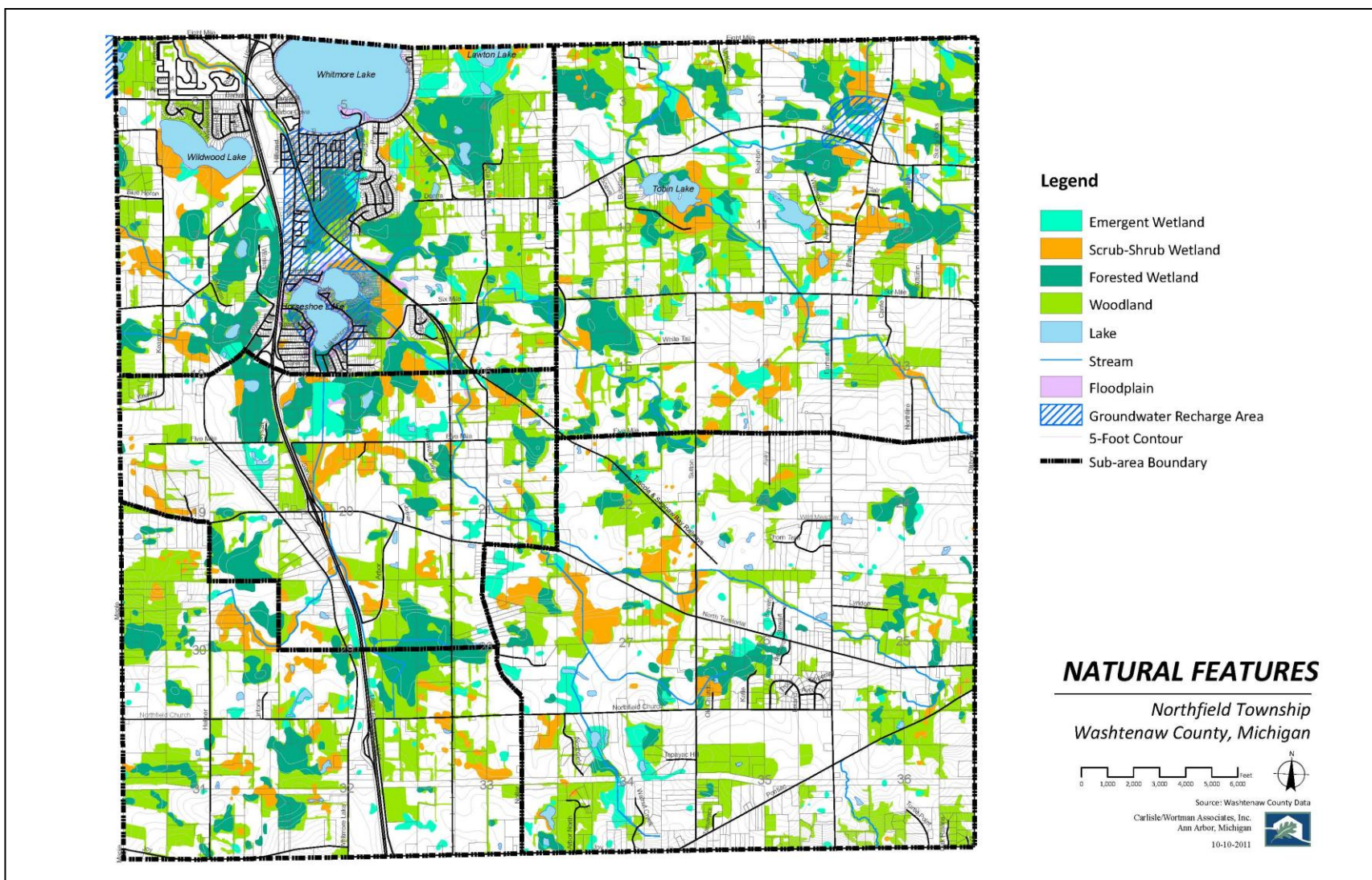
Zoning Map

(Northfield Township 2012 Master Plan, Zoning Map{updated as of 2015})



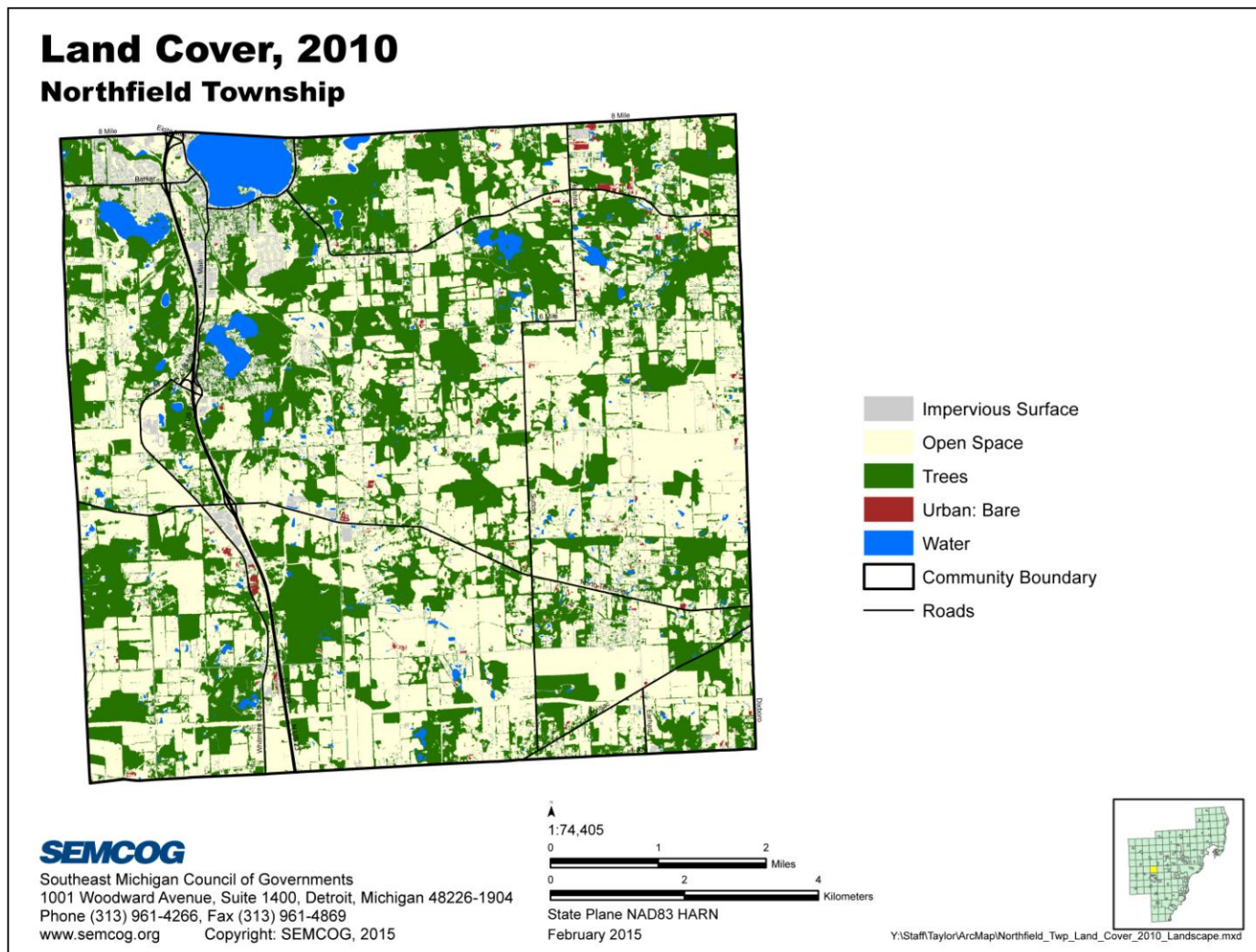
Natural Features

(Northfield Township Natural Features Map, Washtenaw County Michigan Data, 2012 Master Plan)



Land Cover, 2010

(Northfield Township 2010 Land Cover, Southeast Michigan Council of Governments)



Sub-Area Descriptions

While important, statistics, topography, and zoning do not tell the entire story of “Who and What is Northfield Township?” The Parks and Recreation Commission recognizes the need to identify and categorize the various “sub-areas” of Northfield Township, as there is a general recognition that both opinions and demographics of residents often reflect where they reside. More bluntly, this increased emphasis is a result of the perception that Northfield Township is, in a number of ways, a divided community.

Northfield Township feeds into four different school districts (South Lyon, Ann Arbor, Whitmore Lake, and Dexter), and there are different development patterns within each of these districts. At 36 square miles, the township covers a great deal of land mass. The image on page 18 depicts Northfield Township and its relationship to the surrounding Ann Arbor region. As a geographically, economically, politically, and physically diverse community, it is difficult to create a plan that encompasses the will of the entire population and even more challenging to ensure that every group is represented. What follows is a brief breakdown of some of the more prominent areas in the township with distinct commonalities. These descriptions are only meant as a guide to help the township better plan for parks and recreation activities and ensure a diverse participation among our residents. They are not intended to be an absolute representation of the area. Just as Northfield Township is diverse, so too are its sub-areas.

Rural Areas

The rural areas of the township (basically those areas zoned agricultural or “AR”, which roughly correspond with Census Tract 4660 as shown on page 22) comprise the majority of the township’s total area. The majority of housing units in the rural areas are located on 5 or more acres and are higher valued than the average for Northfield Township. As a group, these residents also have higher household incomes, as depicted in the graphic on page 22. The rural areas cover the southern and eastern portions of the township, and feed into three different school districts: the southeast portion of the township is within the Ann Arbor Public Schools attendance area, the northern and eastern portions of the township are within the South Lyon Community Schools, and the central portion is within the Whitmore Lake Public Schools.

In surveys and planning fairs over the years, residents of this sub-area have expressed a desire for natural areas, open space preservation, and rural character. They have also requested improved trails and trail connections to surrounding communities. Residents in the rural areas have ready access to open space, horseback riding, off-road vehicles, hunting, and other typically “rural” activities.

The general sense amongst the members of the Parks and Recreation Commission is that residents of the rural areas have proximate access to many recreational opportunities literally in their own backyards, because of their large lot sizes and chosen lifestyle in such rural areas, as such,

these residents are therefore less in need of publicly organized park spaces (such as the Bark Park), but may support development of multipurpose trails linking Northfield Township with surrounding communities.

In addition, Commission members assume that residents of the rural areas were likely more focused on connections with surrounding communities and the resources offered there, rather than the Whitmore Lake hamlet area. Residents within the Ann Arbor Public Schools district boundaries, for instance, may be more likely to spend time in and around Ann Arbor, and find recreational outlets there, while residents within the South Lyon Community Schools boundaries may be more likely to spend recreation time in and around South Lyon.

It would be helpful to get more input from residents of the rural areas to see whether these assumptions are true, or whether residents of the rural areas would wish to spend Township resources in other ways, and the commission is committed to continuous efforts to solicit such input.

Hamlet Sub-Area

The hamlet sub-area is located in the northwest corner of the township, bounded by the Northfield Township border on the north and west. The southern boundary is Six Mile Road, from roughly Kearny to Nollar Roads. The eastern boundary of the hamlet sub-area is defined by East Shore Drive to Seven Mile Road, and further south from Nollar Road to Six Mile Road. The hamlet area does not include any properties fronting Whitmore Lake, as that is a separate sub-area.

The hamlet area includes the Northfield Estates Manufactured Home Community, encompassing 648 home sites, currently with 75% occupancy. The Main Street and East Shore Drive corridors include Harbor Cove and Westbrook apartment complexes as well as some smaller, lower to mid-scale apartment complexes. In addition there are numerous duplex and multiplex housing units throughout the area. The original village homes from Barker Road to Margaret Street off Main, the Summer Homes Subdivision south of East Shore Drive from Walnut to Pine and Jennings Road, and the similar Horseshoe Lake Summer Homes subdivision, are all a mixture of small starter homes and rentals with some more modern mid-scale residences mixed in. The Wildwood North Point, Eagle Gardens subdivision and condominium complex, and Shadowwood Farm are mid-grade subdivisions with property values ranging from approximately \$150,000 to \$230,000. The core of the hamlet area is served by sewer, and is most accessible to police and fire services and to U.S. 23, and the Whitmore Lake Road, Seven Mile Road and North Territorial Road traffic corridors.

Most future expansion of higher-density housing opportunities will likely be in or proximate to the hamlet area based on current zoning, the 2012 Master Plan and existing municipal infrastructure. The peripheral bounds of the hamlet area are a mixture of small farms, country estates, and luxury homes on lots of five or more acres.

From a parks and recreation standpoint, the commission reasoned that residents of the hamlet area have a stronger desire for traditional, physical parks and recreation assets, as the housing stock for the most part has small or no yards. It is important to note that the majority of the township's population resides in the hamlet area; correspondingly, the majority of this Plan's features that call for new parks and recreation assets are sited in this area.

Whitmore Lake Sub-Area

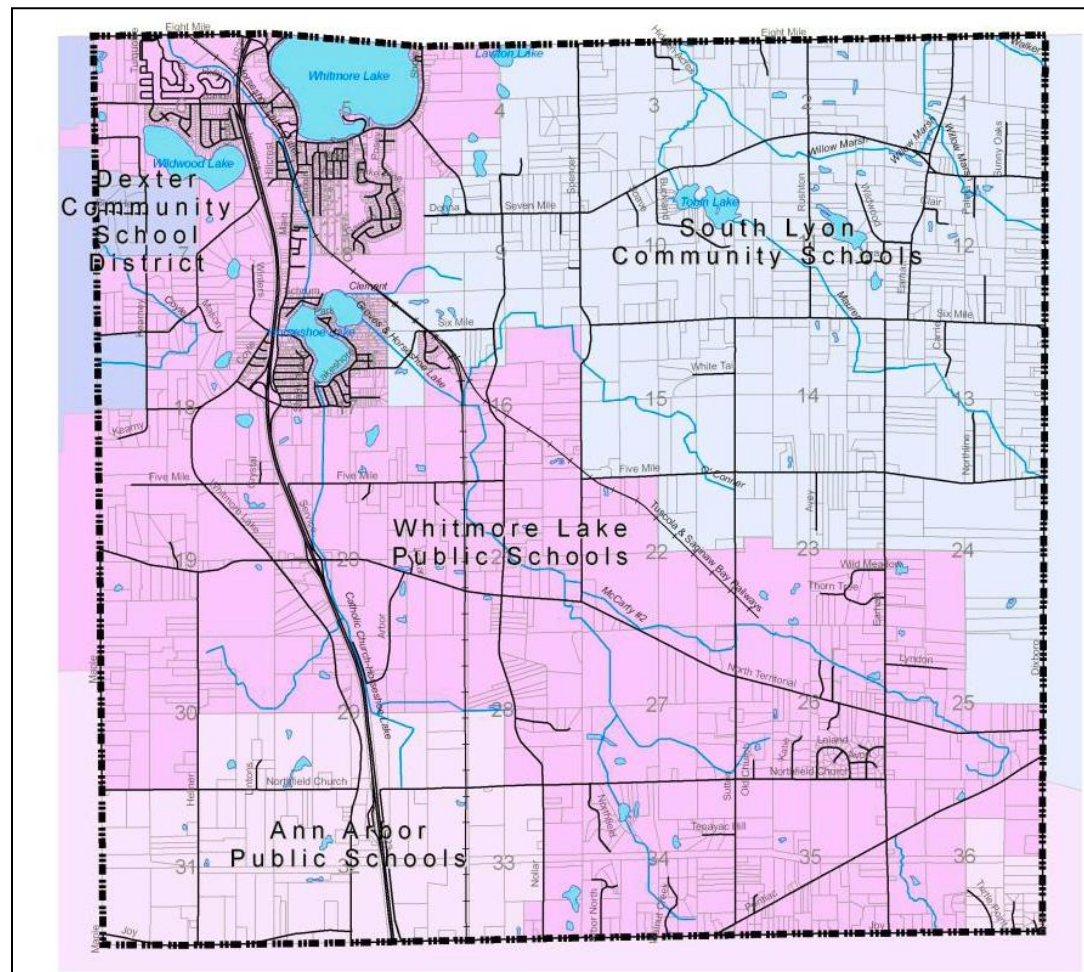
The Whitmore Lake sub-area residents live on or have direct access to Whitmore Lake. They represent a small percentage of the total population of Northfield Township, but are an important demographic to consider in parks and recreation planning because the use of Whitmore Lake is generally limited to those with deeded access. Whitmore Lake is one of our Township's most important and best-known assets. It is widely considered one of the premier all-sports lakes in southeast Michigan. While the census tracts and block groups don't allow us to compare and contrast income, house values, population, etc. with those of the hamlet area, we do know that houses on the lake are generally higher priced than the average in the hamlet area. A well-maintained, family home (with lake frontage) starts at approximately \$300,000 and increases depending on lot size, location on the lake, and various other factors (well over the \$125,300 median home value shown on page 22 for houses in Census Tract 4650).

Located mostly along Main Street and East Shore Drive, residents of this sub-area receive much of their recreation from Whitmore Lake, both in summer and winter months. Boating, fishing, snowmobiling, ice fishing, and skiing are just a few of the common activities seen on Whitmore Lake. A large portion of lake residents reside in Green Oak Township, as the border between Northfield Township and Green Oak Township cuts across the lake.

From a parks and recreation perspective, Whitmore Lake is a significant asset that could be better utilized to the advantage of all Township residents. One of the projects contemplated in this master plan is the creation of a lakefront park in Northfield Township. In order to accomplish this, much outreach would need to be made with residents in the Whitmore Lake sub-area, as many have voiced that the lake is overcrowded now, and don't wish to increase access to those who don't live on the lake.

School Districts in Northfield Township

The map to the right shows the various school districts located in Northfield Township. These delineations contribute to the township having a diverse group of “sub-areas” with different needs and desires.



Administrative Structure

In March 2000, the Northfield Township Board of Trustees established the Northfield Township Recreation Board as a governmental function of the township pursuant to Public Act 156 of 1917 (as amended). The Northfield Township Board of Trustees authorized the creation of a five to seven member Recreation Board to develop and administer the township recreation program at the authorization and direction of the Board of Trustees. The Recreation Board originally was created to consist of one member of the Whitmore Lake School Board, one member of the Northfield Township Area Library and four members from the community. Over the years, and with significant turnover from the Recreation Board, the structure of what is now known as the Parks and Recreation Commission has been altered and is no longer in line with the original approval. It still consists of various volunteer appointees made by the Board of Trustees, but recently lost its Whitmore Lake School Board representative and does not currently have a Northfield Township Area Library representative.

The Parks and Recreation Commission is primarily volunteer-driven. While the Board of Trustees appoints official members, anyone interested in parks and recreation is welcome to attend and become an active participant in the decision making process, albeit without a formal vote on decisions made. Volunteers of the commission are often recommended for appointment by the township Board of Trustees.

Funding has been exclusively fundraising-driven; both monetary and in-kind donations have been made by community businesses and residents. The most recent example of this has been the creation of the Whitmore Lake Bark Park, a low-budget parks solution that has been well-received and utilized by the community. Moving forward, the Parks and Recreation Commission recognize the need to examine and perhaps re-define its administrative responsibilities and powers. One of the major goals in the next year will be to establish a more permanent definition of the role the Parks and Recreation Commission has in the township as a whole. If additional funding options are sought, they would likely come from one of many sources, including grant applications, general fund appropriations, or millages supported by the community. As has been a common theme throughout this Plan, this analysis of funding will be determined principally by residents' wishes for new resources and how they are willing to pay for them.

The Parks and Recreation Commission recognizes the need to further its partnership with various appointed bodies, including the Downtown Development Authority, Planning Commission, Whitmore Lake Public Schools, and other community groups such as the Chambers of Commerce and Kiwanis Clubs. One step was made recently to move these partnerships forward by appointing a member of the Planning Commission to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Whitmore Lake Bark Park: a Recent Success

The Parks and Recreation Commission recently celebrated a great success: the creation of the Whitmore Lake Bark Park. This project is an excellent example of the future possibilities for the Parks and Recreation Commission. The commission led a dedicated group of citizens and business owners to establish a public dog park in an athletic complex owned by the local school district within walking distance of downtown Whitmore Lake (the most heavily populated area in Northfield Township), all with minimal use of public funds.

The Parks and Recreation Commission began the process by researching the benefits of dog parks and analyzing how to create such a park within the Township using only community donations and volunteer labor. A group of residents promised to contribute \$2,500 – nothing compared to the amount many municipalities have spent to create a dog park, but enough to fund the construction of the park and the first year's maintenance with such a dedicated pool of resourceful volunteers. The Parks and Recreation Commission then secured a lease agreement with the Whitmore Lake Public Schools allowing the Township to use school property for the





dog park for a nominal fee of \$1, prepared a detailed plan for the construction, operation, maintenance and funding of the park, and submitted the plan to the Board of Trustees for their approval. The Parks and Recreation Commission then led a crew of incredibly able volunteers to erect sturdy fencing, including a set of double-entry gates to ensure that dogs could safely enter and exit the park with their owners, along with signage and waste receptacles. The Parks and Recreation Commission has also organized a group titled “Friends of the Dog Park” to look after the park’s maintenance and operation over time.

Since the park opened in 2013, additional features have been contributed by local businesses, including, recently, a gazebo (still under construction) and benches.

The park has proved to be popular with the community, and seems to be in constant use throughout the day (the park is open from dawn to dusk). The commission anticipates further upgrades to the park in future as the park’s popularity increases and additional (continued on next page)



(continued)

community members step forward with contributions.

The Whitmore Lake Bark Park now provides the residents of Northfield Township and surrounding areas with a place to gather and exercise their dogs off-leash within a fenced area while enjoying the natural beauty of the surrounding athletic complex, which also includes a children's playground, ball fields and wooded trails along the scenic Horseshoe Lake Drain. The hard work of the community has resulted in a true community asset.

As noted by Township Manager Howard Fink. in a press release announcing the formal opening of the park, "This is the perfect example of residents and interested parties coming together for the betterment of Northfield Township . . . and a reminder that even a small group of individuals with vision and passion can make a huge difference."

"This was a passion of mine for many years . . . now I have a place to take Ginger (my 6 year old Beagle mix) to run around, and I am overjoyed about that, and so is she," said Randy Rusch, Chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Recreational Resources

An essential element of this plan is an inventory of Northfield Township's recreational resources. This inventory includes existing and potential parks and recreational facilities, programs and events. This inventory and assessment will aid in the decision-making process and provide a base upon which an action plan can be built. It includes both public and private recreational opportunities for the residents of Northfield Township. The inventory covers the following components:

- Community facilities
- School District facilities
- Regional Facilities
- Private Facilities

There are currently several governmental bodies providing parks and recreation opportunities within Northfield Township, of which the Northfield Township Parks and Recreation Commission is but one. The Northfield Township Board of Trustees operates the Northfield Township Community Center. Whitmore Lake Public Schools owns several parks, controls a community recreation millage to develop recreational facilities and to provide programming for township residents, and serves more generally as a center for community life for much of the township. The Northfield Township Area Library provides an additional community gathering point and considerable recreational programming. Washtenaw County operates three parks within the township. There are also many privately-owned businesses catering the recreational activity within the township.

Northfield Township built a senior center building in 1995, and hired a director the following year. In 2014, the "Senior Center" was changed to "Community Center". The township's Board of Trustees recognized what an asset the Senior Center was, and felt it had the potential to expand and provide service to the entire community. While still maintaining some programming specifically for seniors, family activities are now offered as well. The Community Center currently offers a wide variety of activities, including arts and crafts, fitness and nutrition classes, ongoing educational opportunities, holiday events and festivities; day trips to many local attractions; family movie events; and more.

The Whitmore Lake Public School District has been a center of community life since its inception. School plays, band concerts, and choral performances, as well as athletic events provide a source of entertainment and recreation in the community. As part of the construction of the

new Whitmore Lake High School, a Whitmore Lake community recreation millage was passed in June 2003. The new high school was designed to allow public access to recreational facilities, including the swimming pool, and the millage continues to fund Whitmore Lake Community Recreation, which organizes various programs, activities and recreational opportunities for the public.

The Community Center, Whitmore Lake Public Schools, the Northfield Township Area Library and Washtenaw County parks form the cornerstones of recreational activities in Northfield Township, along with the lakes and natural resources we possess.

COMMUNITY-OWNED RESOURCES

Northfield Township contains a variety of public recreation facilities. Listed below are eight properties owned by the township and available for use by the residents of the community.



1. **PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING**, 8350 Main Street. The first floor of the Public Safety Building, built in 2002, houses the township's administrative offices, and its police and fire departments. The second floor is utilized as meeting space for the Northfield Township Board of Trustees, and other committee meetings. The second floor has a capacity of 350. This space is suitable for use by community groups and is available free of charge.

The second floor space is mostly unimproved. While this presents a challenge, it is also a major asset. New groups, events, or organizations could potentially utilize this space for a parks and recreation programming in Northfield Township.

2. **Old Fire Hall #1**, 75 Barker Road. Old Fire Hall #1 formerly housed the township offices as well as the police and fire departments. Part of the building is currently leased to a local business. The portion of the hall that formerly housed fire trucks on the ground floor and public meetings on the second floor now stands empty most of the year and is in need of some repairs. It is still used by community organizations for

activities such as rummage sales, community picnics, Christmas tree sales, and other activities. The hall has a capacity of 100; it also has a parking lot for approximately 28 cars, a significant asset in an area with very little public parking.

3. **Community Center**, 9101 Main Street. The Community Center is run by a director and a small group of volunteers. The Community Center currently has 203 members. The Community Center offers an ever-expanding schedule of programming and activities for all age groups. These activities include fitness classes for children, adults and seniors, presentations, art classes, craft workshops, trips, karaoke nights, outdoor movies, luncheons, and special events.



4. **Northfield Township Area Library**, 125 Barker Rd. The Library collection consists of over 15,000 books, 1,600 audiobooks, nearly 1,000 music CDs, and over 800 DVD movies and documentaries. It provides downloadable audio and e-books, puppets, public computer and internet access, summer reading programs, cultural and educational events, and copy, fax and notary services, to over 5,000 registered library patrons. The library is currently in the process of expanding.
5. **Whitmore Lake Bark Park**, 168 Jennings Road. Located at the back end of the Jennings Road Athletic Complex and described in further detail on pages 41-43, the Bark Park is a safe place for residents to gather and exercise their dogs off leash within a fenced area. The Bark Park is open year-round, 7 days a week, from dawn to dusk.
6. **Fire Station #2**, 2727 E. North Territorial Rd. This building has a small meeting space that is available to local organizations and is used as a polling place during elections. It is located on a 18.17 acre lot, roughly 8.7 acres of which is currently leased to a local farmer for cultivation.
7. **Seven Mile Preserve Park (proposed)**. Northfield Township owns a number of vacant parcels comprising approximately 50 acres (depicted on the community-owned resources map), adjacent to the Public Safety Building. This land is primarily forested wetlands and is located within walking distance from much of the hamlet area. This property, tentatively identified as “Seven Mile Preserve Park”, could be developed for recreational use while preserving and enhancing its natural beauty, potentially providing the community greater interconnectivity and a fabulous, centrally-located park.



Community Events

Northfield Township hosts a number of community events that highlight the area's community spirit and traditional values. These events help to bring in visitors to explore and discover what the township has to offer.

a. Michigan Pond Hockey Classic

Established in 2008 by Whitmore Lake residents Pete Read and Sam Iaquinto (a member of the Parks & Recreation Commission), this pond hockey tournament grows in size each year, with 110 7-person teams competing and 2,000-3,000 spectators in 2014. This event brings recognition and business into the community and provides a unique draw to the township during the cold of winter. Proceeds from the event are dispersed to area school districts and hockey associations. The Greater Whitmore Lake Kiwanis Club's annual Chilly Dip fundraiser (in which contestants jump into Whitmore Lake in costume) also takes place during this event.



b. Rick's Ice Fishing Bonanza

This annual ice fishing contest is hosted by Rick's Bait Shack. Prizes are awarded for size of fish, amount of fish, youngest and oldest fisherman, and more. Proceeds from this event are used to sponsor area children, ages 9 to 15, to attend Michigan United Conservation Club Youth Camp.

c. **4th of July**

The township has a long history of celebrating the 4th of July in a traditional, community-oriented style. There is a parade, chicken BBQ, Fun Run, and a fireworks spectacular on Whitmore Lake. In 2015, the Whitmore Lake Community Schools sponsored a carnival at the Middle School. All of the 4th of July events are family-friendly and geared towards all age groups. The 4th of July Parade is organized by the Whitmore Lake Kiwanis. The fireworks committee comprises individuals from Northfield and Green Oak Townships and is organized as an independent community 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation.



WHITMORE LAKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS FACILITIES & RESOURCES

In order to finance the construction of Whitmore Lake High School, two millages were passed in 2003; one to pay for the building, and a second to build and operate recreational assets for the community as a whole. Thus, along with a new building and facilities for students within Whitmore Lake Public Schools, a Whitmore Lake Public Schools Community Recreational millage of .6 mills allowed for the creation of a public pool and a children's playground, along with ongoing recreational programming.

Whitmore Lake High School, 7430 Whitmore Lake Road. The High School encompasses a 77 acre campus. The building contains an auditorium, gym, indoor running/walking track, weight room, dance room, pool with diving, lap and wading options. Outdoor facilities include a football field, track and field facilities, cross-country course, practice field areas, a pond and nature study area. A variety of recreation classes and leagues for both children and adults are offered through the District's Community Recreation Program. Classes include swimming lessons, water aerobics, soccer, yoga, basketball, volleyball, Zumba, and art classes. The pool is open to the public at varying times for open swim. It is also available to rent for parties and social functions. Prices vary depending on age, frequency of visits and use.



1. **Whitmore Lake Middle School**, 8877 Main Street. The Middle School has a nine acre campus. The building contains two gyms, a cafetorium with stage, kitchen and seating for 300, and pre-school/day care center. Outdoor facilities include basketball courts, a baseball field, and two separate play structures. As part of the Whitmore Lake Community Recreation, open gym is offered at the middle school at various times.
2. **Whitmore Lake Elementary School**, 1077 Barker Road. The Elementary School sits on a 20 acre campus. The building contains a gym, a cafetorium with stage and kitchen and seats 200. Outdoor facilities include a large play structure, GAGA pits, basketball hoops, separate swing area, two tee ball fields, soccer area, and picnic shelter area. A non-motorized path was installed along Barker Road; which creates better connection between the downtown Whitmore Lake area and the elementary school.
3. **Jennings Road Athletic Complex/Community Park**, 168 Jennings Road. This facility sits on approximately 25 acres. The complex contains a football field, a track and field facility, spectator stands, a concession building, a storage and observation building, a baseball/softball field, two youth baseball fields, a large grass practice area, a large play structure designed for children from 3 to 12 years of age, the Whitmore Lake Bark Park (described in further detail on pages 41-43) a wooded area with a stream (Horseshoe Lake Drain) running through it, and rustic trails.



PRIVATELY-OWNED RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Northfield Township has a number of privately-owned, commercial recreational facilities within its borders and nearby in neighboring communities. These facilities offer a variety of recreational opportunities for the community.

1. Golf Courses

- a. **Links at Whitmore Lake**, 1111 Six Mile Road. This 6,257-yard, 18 hole William Newcomb public course covers 254 acres, nearly one-half of which are protected wetlands. The front nine is a beautiful uplands course, with tee-to-green bent grass. The back nine includes five boardwalks (one nearly a quarter-mile long), and acres of wetlands. The course also offers a clubhouse suitable for receptions and group events, a driving range, putting greens, teeing decks placed in the middle of marshland, golf carts, and opportunities to enjoy wildlife.
- b. **Rolling Meadows Country Club**, 6484 Sutton Road. This is a 6,474 yard 18 hole public golf course, designed by William Shively. It includes a putting green, golf carts and a small pavilion.
- c. **Indian Trail Golf Center**, 5440 Earhart Road. This is a golf driving range with open and covered tees.



2. Marinas

With four lakes within the Northfield Township boundaries, lake living, boating and water sports are a focal point of community life. The township boasts two marinas, as well as a variety of private access and docking areas.



- a. Mac's Marina**, 9876 Main Street. This is a full service marina with 30 rental dock slips, boat rentals, a service center for boats, snowmobiles and ATVs, and food service. Mac's Marina also hosts the annual Michigan Pond Hockey Classic.
- b. Driftwood Marina**, 9594 Main Street. This marina has 30 rental boat slips and a club room.
- c.** There are also a variety of private lake access lots and dock areas owned by associations and various subdivision entities.

3. Stables

Northfield Township offers a rural atmosphere with centennial farms, trails and countryside. Several stables and equestrian centers featuring training facilities, camps, programs and trails are located within the community or in neighboring communities.



- a. Wildwind Equestrian Center**, 3935 Seven Mile Road. The center offers lessons, a hunter jumper schooling barn, a show team, summer and school break camps, Tiny Tots, boarding, training, sales, leasing and a home school program.
- b. Odyssey Training Center**, 6105 Walsh Road. Dedicated to the sport of carriage driving, the Odyssey Training Center is situated on twelve acres, and includes amenities such as 28 oak stalls, 3 grooming areas, wash rack, tack room, carriage house, 75' x 110' indoor arena, 80' x 375' outdoor arena, wood wall round pen, custom feed, daily pasture or paddock turnout, and a clubhouse with kitchen, bath, and lounge. There are miles of groomed country roads for driving. The center offers lessons, training, conditioning, showing, coaching, sales, consulting, clinics, outfitting, and evaluations.
- c. Double H Equestrian Center**, 1138 Five Mile Road. The center offers training, lessons, boarding and leasing.
- d. Turning Point Farm**, 4001 Seven Mile Road. This private boarding facility on 60 acres features indoor and outdoor riding arenas, a quarter mile track with event field and an outdoor jumping arena. It caters to many riding disciplines, with a focus on dressage.
- e. Great Escape Stables**, 8266 S. Rushton Road. This stable is a lesson, boarding and training facility specializing in hunters, jumpers and equitation, and is a United States Pony Club Riding Center. Also offers birthday party rentals, horse showing, and day camps.

- f. **Mary-Go-Round Equestrian**, 7595 Dixboro Road. This stable offers lessons, training, boarding and summer camp. Specializes in hunters, jumpers and dressage.
- g. **Down Under Stables**, 5189 Pontiac Trail. Dressage stable offering lessons, boarding and training.

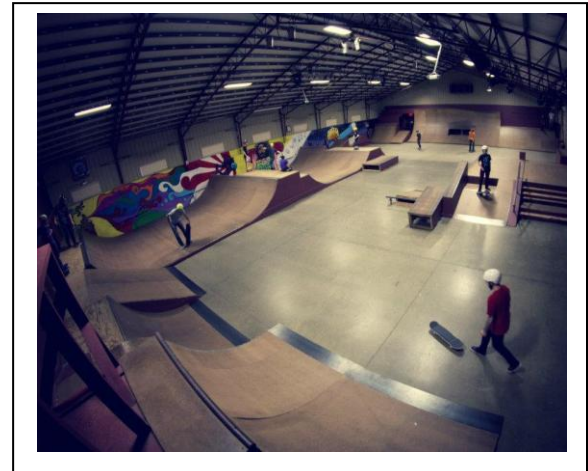
4. Miscellaneous Private Recreation

A variety of private enterprises offer further recreational opportunities, such as bowling, paintball, biking and dance. Others provide enhancements and supplies for sporting and recreational activities within the community.

- a. **Van's Archery Center**, 240 Barker Road. Indoor archery, a practice facility and archery merchandise and services are featured.
- b. **Rick's Bait Shack**, 9815 Main St. Offers fishing supplies and tackle, and bait.
- c. **Fine Arts Academy of Dance**, 238 Jennings Road. Offers classes in dance, martial arts, music, tumbling, recreational competitive cheer and musical theater.
- d. **German Park Recreation Club**, 5549 Pontiac Trail. This facility consists of several picnic areas/pavilions and concession/kitchen buildings, a covered band shelter, indoor restrooms, and a large parking lot. The club hosts several picnics during the summer months. The facilities are also rented out to groups.
- e. **Whitmore Lanes & Lounge**, 9455 Main Street. Family owned 18 lane bowling center with food service.



- f. **Futureball Paintball**, 9269 E. M-36 in Green Oak Township. This is a privately-owned and operated 115 acre playing field and pro-shop.
- g. **Oak Valley Entertainment LLC**, 10910 Whitmore Lake Road at M-36 in Green Oak Township. Privately owned driving range and pro-shop, with fireworks sales and party supply rentals.
- h. **The Naz Youth Center & Skatepark**, Brighton Church of the Nazarene, 7669 Brighton Rd., Brighton 48116. This facility offers skating, skateboarding, video games, ping pong, foosball, a snack bar and more.
- i. **Whitmore Lake Rod and Gun Club**, 11150 Lemman Road, south of M-36 in Green Oak Township. This is a membership club located on 27 acres and includes shooting and archery ranges, meeting hall, bar, and picnic grounds. It hosts both membership and public events, and rents the meeting hall out for parties and special events.



Pocket Parks

Pocket parks (or mini parks) are categorized as small, specialized parks that are usually less than one acre in size and serve the needs of residents in the immediate neighborhood. These parks usually serve a limited population or specific demographic group.

There are various small, designated, dedicated park areas and lake front lots owned and maintained by homeowner associations throughout Northfield Township. One example is Eagle Garden Subdivision, which has 200 homes and three pocket parks – Sunrise Park, Cherry Blossom Park and Eagle Garden Park. One has a play set and basketball court, but the other two are designated to remain nature conservation and wetland-type parks.



Not Located in Northfield Township

REGIONAL RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Regional parks offer unique opportunities for outdoor recreation, such as viewing and studying nature, fishing, boating, hiking, and trail use. Many also include active play areas such as ball fields or courts. These parks are not used for formal programming by Northfield Township; they provide active and passive recreational opportunities to the residents of the community. Regional facilities are provided by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority, and Livingston, Oakland and Washtenaw Counties and the neighboring communities of Ann Arbor, Webster Township, Hamburg Township and Lyon Township. Listed below are just a few of the many parks in the immediate vicinity of Northfield Township.

NEIGHBORING TOWNSHIP/CITY RESOURCES

- 1. Independence Lake County Park**, 3200 Jennings Road, west of Kearney Road, in Webster Township. This park is located on 400 acres and includes 3 miles of hiking, biking and blading trails, picnic areas, beach, nature trails with an observation tower, disc golf course, boat launch and pavilions. Blue Heron Bay, a major water park featuring a splash pad with three separate areas for toddlers, families and teens as well as a two-story water slide with two flumes, one enclosed and one open, was opened in 2013. The splash park is universally accessible. Other activities include fishing, swimming, geocaching, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing.
- 2. Bandemer Park**, located along the Huron River at Whitmore Lake Road and Barton Drive. This Ann Arbor city park has 35 acres of nature trails and footpaths, a dirt bike course, picnic areas with grills, an accessible canoe dock, a fishing deck, shelter, restrooms and benches.
- 3. Olson Park**, an Ann Arbor city park located at the corner of DhuVarren Road and Pontiac Trail south of M-14. This 54 acre parcel includes 5 miles of hiking and mountain bike trails, picnic area, basketball courts, paved trails, and an off-leash dog play area. Significant natural features include a pond, wetlands, creek and woods. Future plans include soccer fields, game courts, more bike trails, and the restoration of native plant communities and butterfly and bird habitat.



4. **Manly W. Bennett Memorial Park**, located along both the east and west sides of Merrill Road in Hamburg Township. This 384 acre Hamburg Township park includes basketball courts; baseball, softball and T-ball fields; soccer fields; model airplane runway/flying field; picnic areas; hiking trails; a fishing dock; and the Lakeland Trail.
5. **South Lyon Rail-Trail (Huron Valley Trail System)**. A ten mile of hiking, biking and blading trail connecting South Lyon to Kensington Metropark, Island Lake State Park, Wixom and the Oakland County Trail System. As this Oakland County network is completed, this trail will connect to Proud Lake Recreation Area (4,700 acres), Pontiac State Recreation Area (3,750 acres), Holly State Recreation Area (8,000 acres), Highland Recreation Area (5,900 acres), Ortonville Recreation Area (5,400 acres), Bald Mountain Recreation Area (4,650 acres) and Stony Creek Metropark (4,500 acres).
6. **Delhi Metropark (53 acres), Dexter-Huron Metropark (122 acres), Hudson Mills Metropark (1,550 acres)**. These three Metroparks (operated by the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority, a regional special park district encompassing Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Washtenaw and Livingston Counties) are all located on the Huron River within 2 to 6 miles west of Northfield Township. All provide picnic facilities and pavilions, nature activities, canoeing, kayaking, river fishing, ball fields and play areas. In addition, Hudson Mills has disc golf, 18 holes of regular golf and paved hike, bike and blade trails.
7. **Huron Meadows Metropark**, located at Maltby and Rickett Roads in Brighton Township. This 1,540 acre park provides an 18 hole golf course, softball field, soccer field, volleyball court, geocaching, picnic and nature areas, playground, restrooms, rental shelter and five miles of hiking trails. Water sports include boat and canoe rentals, and fishing. Four miles of cross-country trails and ice fishing are available in the winter.
8. **Kensington Metropark**, 4570 Huron River Parkway, in Milford. The park's 4,481 acres includes 10 miles of bridle trails, 12 miles of ski trails, 10 miles of hiking trails, an 18 hole golf course, a 27 hole disc golf course, bike trails, picnic areas, play areas, baseball diamonds, geocaching, a nature center, and a farm center. Kent Lake has 2 beaches for swimming, the Splash 'n Dash waterpark, the Island Queen II boat tour of the lake, boat rentals, paddle boarding and fishing. Winter sports include ice fishing, cross-country skiing, snowboarding, ice-skating, and tobogganing.
9. **Brighton Recreation Area**, 6360 Chilson Road, Howell. This 5,000 acre area provides 18 miles of hiking, biking, skiing, snowmobile and bridle trails. Other amenities include camping, hunting, fishing, an ADA accessible beach, an ADA accessible boat launch/dock, canoe

kayak and paddleboat rentals, a volleyball court, horseshoe pits, complete equestrian facilities, disc golf, geocaching, and metal detecting.

- 10. Island Lake State Park**, 12950 E. Grand River Ave. in Brighton. This 4,000 acre state park includes 13 miles of hiking, biking snowmobile and ski trails; picnic areas; play areas; boat rental; fishing ; hunting; metal detecting; swimming; camping; shooting range and hot air balloon launch.
- 11. Whitmore Lake Boat Launch**, The DNR maintains a public boat launch on the north side of Whitmore Lake in Green Oak Township. Boat launch, dock, and restroom facilities are provided.
- 12. Pinckney State Recreation Area**, 8555 Silver Hill Road in Pinckney. This 11,000 acre state park accesses a chain of lakes and includes swimming, fishing, hunting, metal detecting, playgrounds, a boat launch, campgrounds, restrooms, picnic areas and shelters, concession stand, and equestrian facilities. Winter sports include snowmobiling, ice fishing and cross-country skiing. The 40 miles of multi-use trails connect to the 17 mile Potawatomi Trail (hiking, biking and skiing), the 8 mile Pinckney Equestrian Trail and the 35 mile Pinckney-Waterloo hike and ski trail, which terminates at the 20,000 acre Waterloo Recreation Area with its 47 miles of hiking trails, 26 miles of horse trails and 12 miles of nature trails with camping and water sports.
- 13. Maybury State Park**, 20145 Beck Road in Northville. This park is almost 1,000 acres, offering fishing, 10 miles of hike and ski trails, equestrian facilities with 11 miles of bridle trails, 9 miles of bike trails, picnic areas/shelters, playgrounds, nature areas, and a group use area.

Methods Used to Conduct the Recreational Inventory

The recreational resource inventory began with a review of inventories from previous Northfield Township Parks and Recreation Master Plans. These previous inventory listings were first reviewed for which resources were still in operation. The entries for those that still existed were then reviewed and updated to reflect changes such as increase or decrease in size, services, and amenities. These reviews were done via internet searches, telephone inquiries and/or site visits.

The initial review was followed by a search for new resources in, or in close proximity to Northfield Township, which appear likely to be utilized by Township residents. New resources were located and information attained via internet searches, interviews with Township residents, telephone inquiries and site visits.



Public Participation and Planning Process Results

Our public participation component of Parks and Recreation Master Plan consisted of the following activities:

1. Results of the SWOT analysis from the Parks and Recreation Commission
2. Results of the SWOT analysis from the township's Board of Trustees
3. Two community visioning/design charrettes
4. Online and in-person surveys

As previously stated, while the commission hoped to engage a more robust public participation process, a number of respondents did participate in the community visioning/design charrettes and completed the surveys. In total, 6 participants attended the original community meeting, 8 participated in a similar exercise at the police and fire open house, and a total of 33 surveys were completed. The results of the SWOT analysis from the Parks and Recreation Commission and Board of Trustees are compiled in Appendices B and A respectively.

The commission held two public visioning/design charrettes that allowed participants the opportunity to “spend” resources on parks improvements. The amount they received to “spend” on these improvements corresponded to their willingness to fund additional resources for parks and recreation activities in Northfield Township through a millage. The results of that exercise at the original community meeting (six participants) and the second presentation made during the police and fire open house (eight participants) are summarized on the following page. Photos from the original maps are included in Appendix E.

Community Meeting Results

Lake Front Park

- 4 participants
- Spent \$3.75 million
- All 4 participants indicated support for a .5 mill millage for parks and recreation

Trails

- 3 participants
- Spent \$2 million
- 1 supported a .5 mill millage and 2 supported .25 mill
- 1 trail was located in the 7 Mile Preserve Park/Summer Woods Subdivision/, 1 in the eastern portion of the township with the trail stretching from north to south near the Whitmore Lake High School, and one in the far southeastern portion of the township.

Expanded Parks Programming

- 3 participants
- Spent \$150,000
- 1 participant supported limited general fund expenditures, 1 participant supported .5 mill and the other participant supported .25 mill

River Walk/Trail to Downtown

- 2 participants
- Spent \$200,000
- 1 participant indicated support for a .5 mill millage and the other for a .25 mill millage for parks and recreation

7 Mile Preserve Park/Summer Woods Subdivision (disc golf and general improvements)

- 2 Participants
- Spent \$225,000
- 1 participant indicated support for a .5 mill millage and the other for a .25 mill millage for parks and recreation

Protection of Interconnected Wildlife Corridors throughout the Township (with Trails)

- 1 participant
- Spent \$900,000
- Participant noted that advertising the township as a great natural area was also a priority

*Please note that 4 participants did not specify any specific improvements other than additional resources for both physical and programming assets. All 4 participants supported a .5 mill.

Community Survey Results

Guiding Principle (GP) Ranking Averages (lower number = higher priority)

	GP1	GP2	GP3	GP4	GP5	GP6	GP7	GP8	GP9	GP10	GP11	GP12	GP13
Sub-Area 1 (1 response)	10	7	6	13	11	5	2	8	12	4	9	1	3
Sub-Area 2 (7 responses)	7.5	8.3	8.8	8.2	5.2	5.2	7.0	9.5	7.7	6.0	5.7	7.7	10.0
Sub-Area 3 (1 response)	7	5		8	2	4	1		6	10		3	9
Sub-Area 4 (4 responses)	6.3	6.0	7.3	2.3	6.3	3.7	5.3	6.0	4.0	6.3	4.0	6.0	8.3
Sub-Area 5 (20 responses)	8.0	8.4	8.5	6.6	4.7	6.1	4.7	8.2	7.5	5.4	6.5	6.2	6.6

Does Northfield Township need to focus on improving and adding additional recreational assets?

	Yes	No
Sub-Area 1	0%	100%
Sub-Area 2	42.8%	57.1%
Sub-Area 3	0%	100%
Sub-Area 4	50%	50%
Sub-Area 5	83.3%	16.7%

Which type of funding would you support for Physical Assets?

	.5 mill	.25 mill	Fundraising	Status Quo
Sub-Area 1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Sub-Area 2	16.7%	0%	83.3%	0%
Sub-Area 3	100%	0%	0%	0%
Sub-Area 4	75%	0%	25%	0%
Sub-Area 5	60%	15%	20%	5%

Which type of funding would you support for Programming?

	.5 mill	.25 mill	Fundraising	Status Quo
Sub-Area 1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Sub-Area 2	0%	16.7%	66.6%	16.7%
Sub-Area 3	100%	0%	0%	0%
Sub-Area 4	25%	0%	75%	0%
Sub-Area 5	55%	20%	25%	0%

Community Meeting and Survey Results Analysis

It's important not to over-emphasize survey and community meeting results, as the number of participants was not significant. The sample size of both participation components is too small to assume that results are repeatable. Nonetheless, the results give us some insight into community trends. At the community meeting, the projects that received the most support were the development of a lakefront park, the creation of trails (both within the township and connecting to surrounding communities), and the expansion of parks programming (represents 12 participants total). Those that supported these more costly improvements generally supported a millage for parks and recreational opportunities in some fashion. Because public participation was so small, however, we would need to seek additional community input before devoting significant resources on a project such as a lakefront park.

Guiding Principles Summary

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. The township should act as a common area for information on Parks & Rec Programming and projects.
2. Given our proximity to recreational assets around the region and the various opportunities present in Northfield Township (including activities in Brighton, Ann Arbor, etc.), marketing and promotional materials should represent Northfield Township as an area with an abundance of assets.
3. Our marketing materials should represent Northfield Township as a highly recreational area with a focus on our natural beauty.
4. The Parks & Rec Commission should create better pedestrian linkages between the library, the schools, and the hamlet area.
5. The Parks & Rec Commission should create better pedestrian and bicycle pathways that link surrounding communities
6. The Parks & Rec Commission should create and promote a trail system that is multi-seasonal (i.e., ability to utilize trails in autumn for fall color tours, in winter for cross-country skiers, etc.).
7. The Parks & Rec Commission should focus on opening Whitmore Lake up to the public by creating a public access point and/or a lakefront park.
8. The Parks & Rec Commission should focus on physical park assets in the hamlet area.
9. The Parks & Rec Commission should be a leader in creating programming coalitions between different entities within the community (i.e., the library, schools, etc.)
10. The Parks & Rec Commission should utilize and develop properties already owned by the township.
11. The Parks & Rec Commission should coordinate with the Community Center, Library and Community Education Center for Parks and Rec. programming.
12. The Parks & Rec Commission should focus on developing passive recreational opportunities such as trails, picnic areas and natural parks.
13. The Parks & Rec Commission should focus on developing active recreational assets, such as BMX parks, disc golf, bocce ball courts, etc.

Results from the community survey were slightly more relevant, as the number of participants was higher (33 surveys completed). Except for sub-areas 1 and 3 (they only had one response each), the following were the top five guiding principles:

1. The Parks and Rec Commission should create and promote a trail system that is multi-seasonal (i.e., Ability to utilize trails in autumn for fall color tours, in winter for cross-country skiers, etc.).
2. (tie) The Parks and Rec Commission should create better pedestrian and bicycle pathways that link surrounding communities.
2. (tie) The Parks and Rec Commission should coordinate with the Community Center, Library and Whitmore Lake Community Recreation Center for programming involving Parks and Rec assets.
4. The Parks and Rec Commission should create better pedestrian linkages between the library, the schools and the hamlet area.
5. The Parks and Rec Commission should utilize and develop properties already owned by the township.

Funding Analysis

Residents of sub-area 5, which represents the majority of the hamlet area, indicated a strong desire for improving and adding additional recreation assets. In general, sub-area 5 supported a millage for additional physical and programming assets. There was stronger support for a millage for physical than programming assets. Sub-areas 2 and 4 were nearly evenly divided as to whether we should improve or add new recreational assets. On the question of funding, sub-area 2 was mostly against a millage for either physical or programming assets. Sub-Area 4 was in favor of a millage for physical assets but not for programming.

Public Participation Next Steps

The Parks and Recreation Commission should continue its outreach efforts to generate additional public feedback, further refining the results of these efforts. In addition, the approval of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan will require a public hearing. The Board of Trustees and Parks and Recreation Commission should consider further comments, ideas, suggestions, and corrections at that public hearing in their overall efforts moving forward.

Results: Goals and Objectives Overview

In a broad sense, this Plan should offer the community a 5 year “road map” for parks and recreation planning in Northfield Township. The Parks and Recreation Commission currently has limited resources; it has no guaranteed funding and no dedicated parks staff member, and relies upon the limited capacity of our mostly volunteer group. We therefore need to be realistic on the goals, objectives and projects we undertake.

**Yet, in the words of Daniel Burnham, “Make no little plans.
They have no magic to stir men's blood and probably will not themselves be realized.”**

The following section outlines the projects that the Parks and Recreation Commission will be undertaking over the next five years, along with the guiding principles addressed by each project, and the action items required to move each project forward. The Plan is phased; we recognize our limitations today, but desire to work toward a more comprehensive solution that will allow for larger park projects to be undertaken in the future. In evaluating our progress over the next five years, it will be quite telling how well we will be able to complete each phase and move on to the next. As you will see, there is a great deal more detail identified in phase 1. This is due to the fact that it is much easier to identify what needs to be done immediately than to foresee which new projects will be most desirable in the future. This Plan is designed to be flexible so as to adapt to changing conditions, and the commission may add new projects not even yet identified phases 2 and 3.

*Phase 1: Building
capacity and
implementing
grassroots efforts*

Years 1-2

*Phase 2: Coalescing
community support
for additional
resources*

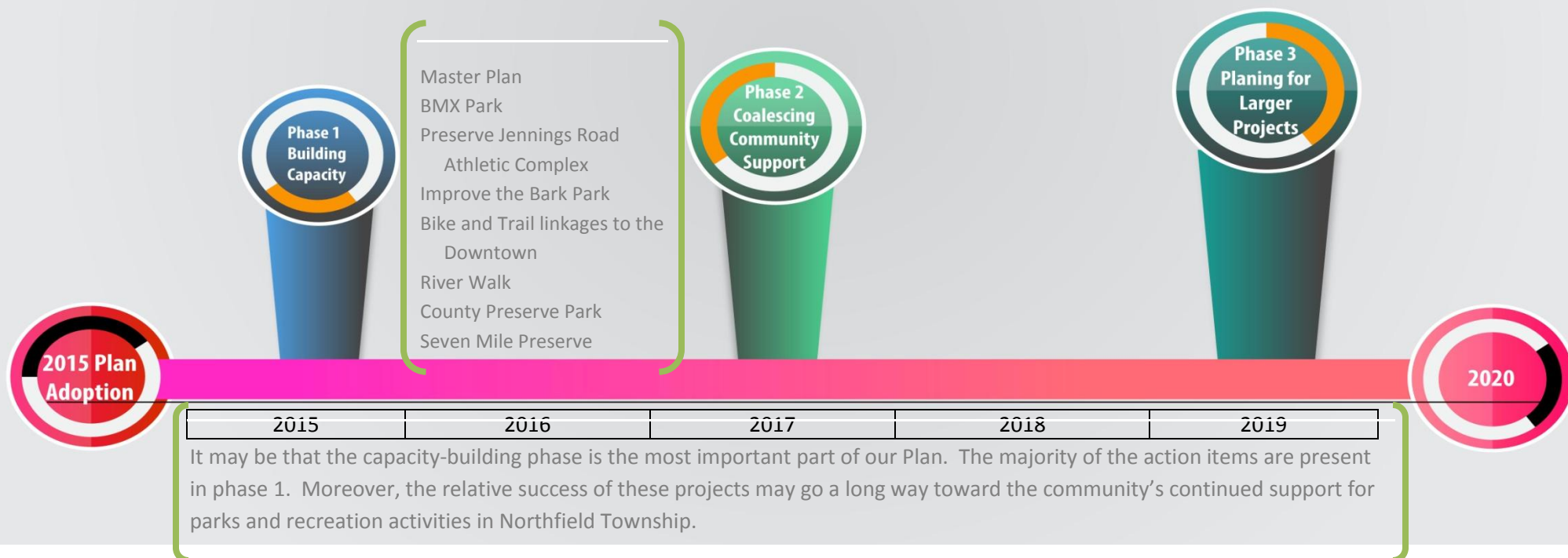
Years 2-3

*Phase 3: Begin
planning for larger,
more costly park
improvements*

Years 3-5

Goals and Objectives: Phase 1, Building Capacity

Phase one, identified as the capacity-building phase, represents the Parks and Recreation Commission's planned efforts for the first two years of the Plan. In phase one, the commission will focus on completing projects that it has previously identified and that can be accomplished mostly through fundraising and volunteer efforts. We will work to complete small, achievable projects, but also to plan and move forward with larger park improvements such as plans for Seven Mile Preserve Park and submittal of a large Natural Resources Trust Fund grant application to help fund that park. Focus will also be on formalizing the role of the Parks and Recreation Commission and what authority the Board of Trustees should vest in this group. Work already has begun and will continue to form a Northfield Township parks and recreation coalition, which could include various groups including the Whitmore Lake Public Schools, the Northfield Township Area Library, the Downtown Development Authority ("DDA"), and other local bodies. The following is a detailed description of the projects to be achieved in phase 1.



Completion of the Master Plan

Time Line: *Current - October 2015*

Estimated Cost: \$0 – \$500

The completion of this master plan has been an ongoing process. While not related to a specific guiding principle, the Parks and Recreation Commission sees completion of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan as part of Phase 1: Building Capacity. The planning process and creation of the Plan in itself creates capacity by providing a clear road map for parks and recreation activities in Northfield Township. The various interactions with the public provide a platform to create a vision and gather support for specific projects. In particular, the planning process has been aimed at creating a plan that is ambitious yet achievable in light of scarce resources. Through this education process, it is hoped that various stakeholders will begin to organize around providing additional resources to accomplish projects included in this Plan.

Creation of the BMX Park

Time Line: *January 2016 – July 2016*

Estimated Cost: \$5,000 – \$10,000

Guiding Principle(s): *Creation of a BMX park relates to three of our guiding principles: creating physical park assets in the hamlet area, focusing on developing recreational assets, and creating partnerships with different entities in the community*

Similar to the original design concept for the Bark Park initiated in 2011, plans include creation of a BMX park, walking trails and a pedestrian bridge over the Horseshoe Lake Drain (creek) at the Jennings Road Athletic Complex. There is strong public interest in using such a course and the project should be relatively easy to implement without a significant amount of financial resources. The concept is to house the BMX Park at the Jennings Road Athletic Complex, which is owned by the Whitmore Lake Public Schools, adding to the multi-faceted recreational activities available at this location. The BMX Park is focused on kids and young adults, and its potential location in the hamlet area provides an accessible

location for kids in Whitmore Lake. The commission also feels that, like the Bark Park, this type of novel asset will attract people from surrounding areas.

With the support of the Whitmore Lake Public Schools, the Parks and Recreation Commission feels this is a project that can be implemented somewhat quickly. Various individuals have volunteered to design and build the park. Construction would consist mostly of dirt moving operations to create a BMX course with various jumps and obstacles. Donations will include design assistance, fundraising efforts, use and operation of construction equipment to create the course and install a fence around it. Sponsorships will be sought to support construction and future improvements, such as benches, gazebos, outdoor grills and bicycle racks.



Action Items:

1. Work out the liability issues for this type of facility, hours of operation, and rules of governance.
2. Create a separate lease agreement to present to the township and Whitmore Lake School District Board.
3. Create a park design, taking into consideration both safety and fun.
4. Fundraise and implement these improvements.

This dirt bike course is for beginners and experts alike. It will challenge bikers with a series of jumps and moguls of varying sizes. Children and adults will be encouraged to grab their bikes and “catch some air” or find a place on a nearby bench and enjoy the show. The BMX park dirt course will be free to use and will be open daylight hours.

Budget Details

Start-up costs (estimated): Fence, \$2,000.00; excavator equipment, \$2,000.00; signage, \$500.00; 20 year lease, \$1.00/yr

Recurring (estimated): Maintenance, \$500.00/yr

Jennings Road Athletic Complex

Time Line: *Ongoing*

Estimated Cost: *Unknown (may include acquisition costs and or park maintenance)*

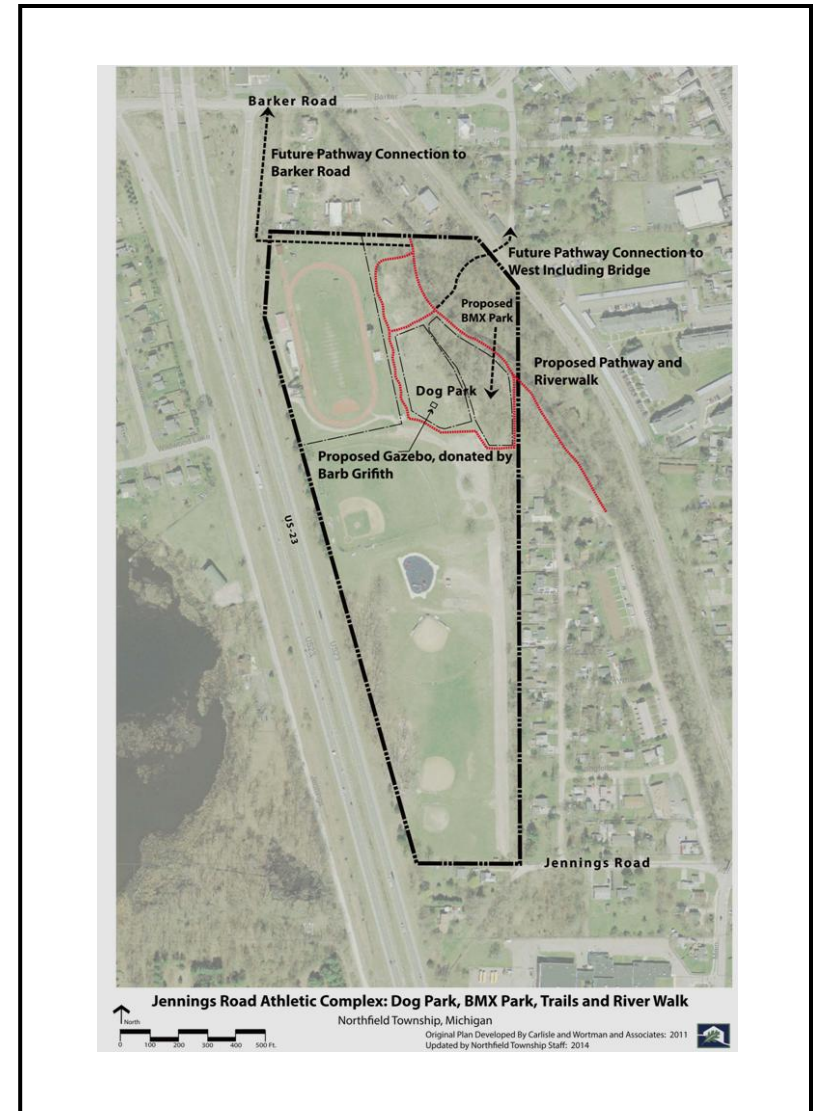
Guiding Principle(s):

- *Create and maintain physical park assets in the hamlet area*
- *Focus on developing recreational assets*
- *Create partnerships with different entities in the community.*

The Jennings Road Athletic Complex is a critical component of Northfield Township's existing parks and recreation inventory. Located at 168 Jennings Road, the complex consists of 25 acres of football fields, baseball fields, track and field facilities, spectator stands, and the recently completed Bark Park. The complex is centrally located within the hamlet area of Whitmore Lake and in many respects is the largest traditional recreational asset in the township (excluding the various lakes). Maintaining its current uses, and perhaps adding to these uses, presents a number of recreational opportunities for the township's residents.

Action Items

- 1) Engage with the Whitmore Lake School Board to identify options that will continue to maintain the Jennings Road Athletic Complex.
- 2) Work with the School Board to create other recreational opportunities.



Improvements at the Bark Park

Time Line: *Current – No end date*

Estimated Cost: \$0

Guiding Principle(s):

- *Create physical park assets in the hamlet area*
- *Focus on developing recreational assets*
- *Utilize and develop properties already owned by the township (in this case, partially controlled by the township)*

The Whitmore Lake Bark Park has been a popular success, but it is not complete. The Parks and Recreation Commission plans to continue to improve the park over time. In 2016, we will be constructing a gazebo donated to the park by a generous local veterinarian. Future improvements may include additional furniture for visitors, and incorporating programming (such as animal adoption events) so that the park can serve even more as a community focal point.

Action Items:

- 1) Generate feedback from park participants to see what type of improvements they would like added.
- 2) Construct the gazebo that has been generously donated for the Bark Park.



Pathway/River Walk from Barker Road to Jennings Road Athletic Complex

Time Line: Phase 1: Current to February 2017 (low cost improvements)

Phase 2: Approximately February 2017 –February 2018

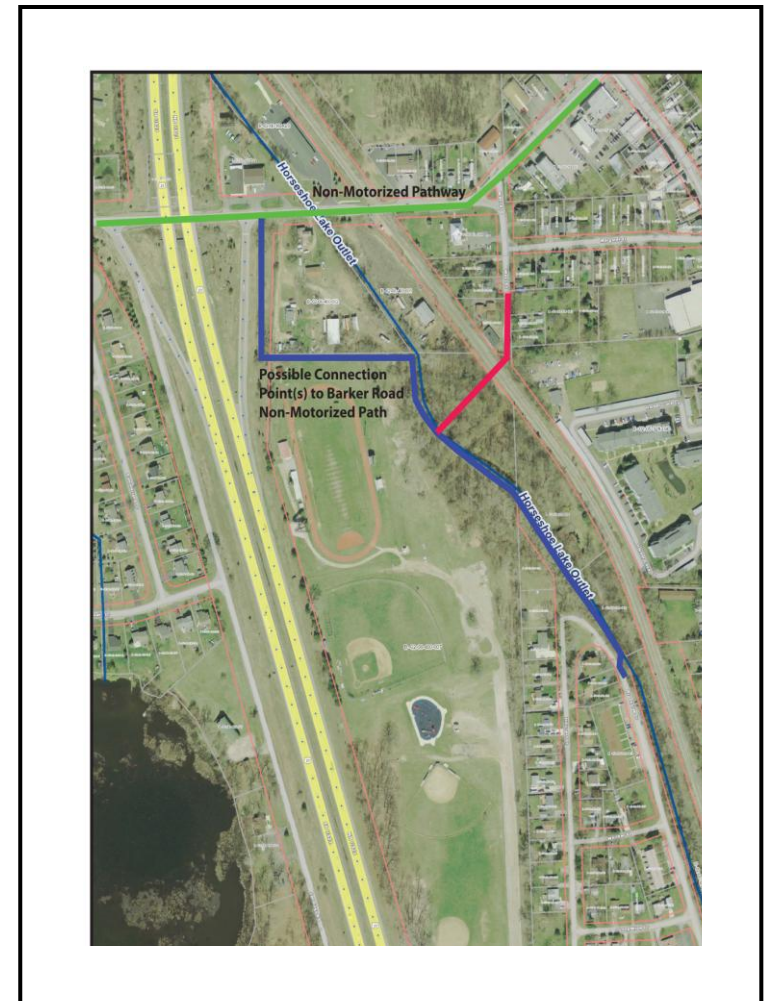
Estimated Cost: \$50,000 - \$150,000

Guiding Principle(s):

- Focus on developing passive recreational opportunities such as trails, picnic areas and natural parks.
- Create better pedestrian linkages between the library, the schools, and the hamlet area.
- Utilize and develop properties already owned by the township.

The Jennings Road Athletic Complex is centrally located in the hamlet area of Whitmore Lake and is a major recreational asset for Northfield Township. However, it is not easily accessible except by car. Creating a walking/biking pathway from the park to the downtown area would be a significant recreational asset in itself and would make the complex much more accessible to many residents in the community, especially children.

The township is currently in the process of completing the third and final phase of a non-motorized path along Barker Road. This walking/biking pathway (shown in green on the map) would provide a critical linkage between the downtown area and Whitmore Lake Elementary School, giving over 30% of our residents a connection between their homes to our downtown, and our children safe passage to the elementary school. Now that the non-motorized path is nearing



completion, the commission is exploring plans to enhance the walkability of the downtown area -- and to create a beautiful river walk -- by linking the Barker Road non-motorized path to the Jennings Road Athletic Complex.

Preliminary planning work for the proposed pathway/river walk was completed by OHM Advisors, including two possible routes and a preliminary cost estimate (a copy of the cost estimate is shown on page 76). The two proposed routes are shown on the map on page 74 in red and blue. Both routes would pass through a wooded area along the northeast corner of the Athletic Complex and end up near the Northfield Township Area Library; the route marked in red would cross the Horseshoe Lake Drain (a beautiful, rather large creek) and a railroad track to link up to West Street, while the route marked in blue would follow alongside Horseshoe Lake Drain to the northern edge of the Athletic Complex property, cut west and then north, and eventually link up to the Barker Road Non-Motorized Path. The route shown in blue is preferred because, although it is longer, it would be less expensive. The route shown in red would have to include a bridge and railroad crossing, which would, among other roadblocks, cost substantially more.

This project incorporates the idea of a river walk alongside the Horseshoe Lake Drain. Recently, a local Eagle Scout has approached the township about turning this river walk concept into a musical garden. Along the trail, various instruments will be constructed allowing visitors to interact with the environment through music. The project is currently in the works.

The area along the western portion of Horseshoe Drain has an existing, informal pedestrian path. While the area is not identified as an official trail, it can easily be converted into a pathway with appropriate markings and materials. Eventually, it is envisioned that the river walk would extend along Brookside Drive, across Main Street and eventually link to the drain in the Seven Mile Preserve Park. Benches, trailhead signage, and a path material (i.e., limestone or woodchips) are envisioned for this project. A small section of this river walk will be completed through the Eagle Scout project with the assistance of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

It is estimated that the improvement of the river walk and path linking Barker Road to the Jennings Road Athletic Complex will be completed over the first two phases of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan. In phase 1, improvements will consist of low-cost improvements such as clearing the path and lining it with wood chips. In phase 2 the commission will focus on installing the more permanent improvements, some of which are detailed in the preliminary cost estimate prepared by OHM Advisors.



OHM Advisors
34000 Plymouth Rd, Livonia, MI 48150

CLIENT: Northfield Township

PROJECT: Non-motorized Pathway

LOCATION: Option 1 MDOT/Park Route

BASIS FOR ESTIMATE: [X] CONCEPTUAL [] PRELIMINARY [] FINAL

PRELIMINARY OPINION OF PROBABLE
CONSTRUCTION COST

Telephone: (614) 418-0600 FAX: (614) 418-0614

DATE: Apr 17, 2014

PROJECT NO. 0151-14-0011

ESTIMATOR: BSA

CHECKED BY: JAR

Assumptions: 1. Pathway route option 1 proposed to extend from the new Barker Road pathway south along MDOT ROW through the Township Park, then along the creek and connect to Brookside Drive.
2. Option 1 length is approximately 2,270 feet.
3. Pathway width is proposed as 10 feet per MDOT TAP grant requirements.
4. Pathway cross section is proposed as 3" HMA on 6" 21AA aggregate
5. MDOT and WCRC Permit will be required.

OPTION 1					
Item	Description	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Item Cost
1	Mobilization, Max. 10%	LS	1	\$ 9,140.00	\$ 9,140.00
2	Digital Recorded Route Survey	LS	1	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
3	Traffic Maintenance and Control	LS	1	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
4	Erosion Control	LS	1	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00
5	Clearing and Grubbing	LS	1	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 8,000.00
6	Tree Removal	EA	20	\$ 285.00	\$ 5,700.00
7	Excavation	CV	50	\$ 35.00	\$ 1,750.00
8	Embankment	CV	50	\$ 30.00	\$ 1,500.00
9	Shared Use Path, Grading	FT	2270	\$ 6.00	\$ 13,620.00
10	Shared Use Path, HMA	TON	420	\$ 80.00	\$ 33,600.00
11	Aggregate Base, 21AA	TON	1090	\$ 15.00	\$ 16,350.00
12	Fence, Rem	LF	12	\$ 20.00	\$ 240.00
13	Surface Restoration	SV	1520	\$ 3.00	\$ 4,560.00
Subtotal Option 1 Construction Cost					\$ 100,460.00
Contingencies (20%)					\$ 20,100.00
Total Option 1 Construction Cost					\$ 120,560.00
Geotechnical Investigation (Soil Borings)					\$2,500.00
Design Engineering Costs (10%)					\$12,060.00
Construction Engineering Costs (Testing, Layout, Inspection, Contract Admin) (15%)					\$18,090.00
Total Engineering Cost					\$32,650.00
Total Opinion of Project Costs					\$153,210.00



Action Items:

- 1) Survey and identify needed brush and tree clearing along the entire portion of the Jennings Road Athletic Facility.
- 2) Secure right-of-way or easement access along the Barker Road exit adjacent to U.S 23 from Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to connect the Barker Road non-motorized path to the Jennings Road Athletic Facility (required for the route marked in blue).
- 3) Install wood chips along the pathway.
- 4) Identify practicalities and cost of bridge over the creek and/or creating a link from the property to the Jennings Road Athletic Facility by way of the U.S. 23 right of way/easements from MDOT (required for the route marked in red).
- 5) Secure necessary legal analysis and insurance coverage.
- 6) Seek to fund portions of the projects with grant dollars.

Working with the County on the design of the second Northfield Preserve

Time Line: *Current – No end date*

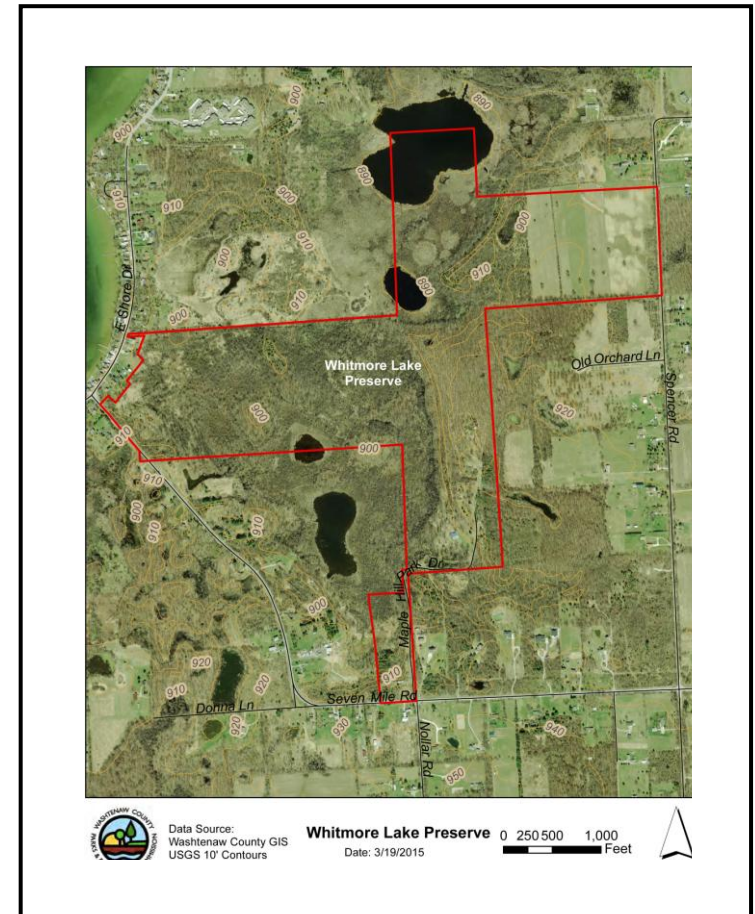
Estimated Cost: \$0

Guiding Principle(s):

- *Create physical park assets in the hamlet area*
- *Create better pedestrian and bicycle pathways*
- *Create and promote a trail system that is multi-seasonal*

In the summer of 2013, Washtenaw County approached Northfield Township requesting its support to establish a second preserve located on the east side of Whitmore Lake, developed with funding from the Natural Areas Preservation Program. The county is getting close to submitting a site plan to the Northfield Township Planning Commission for their vision of this preserve. The initial plans include trails and a scenic outlook over Lawton Lake (a small lake, currently inaccessible to the public, near Whitmore Lake). The township has enthusiastically encouraged the county to create a trail connection to East Shore Drive, thus connecting the Whitmore Lake hamlet area with the nature preserve. This connection will help create linkages between the recreation that occurs around Whitmore Lake and the new nature preserve. Northfield Township has requested that the county work both with both the Planning Commission and the Parks and Recreation Commission on developing a final site plan.

Future connections between this nature preserve and the Seven Mile Preserve Park could create one of the largest and most successful park assets in Washtenaw County. The commission sees this as a major opportunity to encourage biking/hiking within Northfield Township in close proximity to Whitmore Lake.



Township as Common Area for Parks and Recreation Information

Time Line: *Current –End of Plan*

Estimated Cost: *\$0 - \$500*

Guiding Principle(s):

- *Create partnerships with different entities in the community*
- *Act as a common area for information on Parks and Rec. Programming and Projects*

Throughout the planning process, it has become clear that while we have various groups engaged in parks and recreation activities throughout Northfield Township, these groups are not always working in partnership with each other. The township would like to use its resources to engage with the various organizations in Northfield Township, creating a coalition of providers to meet the needs of parks and recreation opportunities for everyone. These groups include, but are not limited to the Northfield Township Area Library, Whitmore Lake Public Schools, and the township.

One of the resources that the township can offer is a centralized informational area for all parks and recreation opportunities. Through our website and online newsletter, the township wishes to offer a centralized marketing effort for all events and activities throughout the township.

Action Items:

- 1) Create an online calendar for parks and recreation activities in Northfield Township.
- 2) Develop and maintain an inventory of all the events happening throughout Northfield Township and create a marketing strategy to get the word out to residents and visitors alike.

Community Garden

Time Line: *Current –May 2016*

Estimated Cost: *\$0 - \$500*

Guiding Principle(s):

- *Creating physical assets in the hamlet area*
- *Utilize and develop properties already owned by the township*

As local farming and food sustainability has gained national attention, communities are realizing the many benefits of community gardens. They provide both a active recreation for gardening lovers and often provide organic solutions to community beautification. They offer a great opportunity for neighbors and visitors to connect with one another and build community pride / togetherness.

Northfield Township owns a vacant lot across the street from the Community Center. This parcel offers a tremendous opportunity for a community garden. It is centrally located in the hamlet area and situated near several apartment complexes where residents do not currently have the opportunity for outside gardening. It is anticipated the Community Center will create programming around the garden and help to market it to the community. Current plans are to create raised garden beds, many which will be raised approximately 3 to 4 feet off the ground, accessible to seniors and those with disabilities. Fifty percent of the plots / garden beds will be allocated as allotment-style, available for any member of the community to grow vegetables and or flowers. The remaining fifty percent will be community grown and donated to the local food pantry, Northfield Human Services.

Action Items:

1. Build the raised Beds and distinguish between allotments areas for residents and the community
2. Acquire compost / garden soil for food growing applications
3. Decorate and complete the site so that it functions as an outdoor community gathering place

Preliminary Design and Completion of a Grant Application for the Seven Mile Preserve Park

Time Line: *October 2015 – May 2016*

Estimated Cost: *\$0 - \$2000 (Design and technical assistance with the Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant)*

Guiding Principle(s): *It's no surprise that this project is aligned with the greatest number of Guiding Principles that have been established. They are as follows:*

- *Focus on developing passive recreational opportunities such as trails, picnic areas and natural parks.*
- *Focus on developing active recreational assets, such as BMX parks, disc golf, bocce ball courts, etc.*
- *Utilize and develop properties already owned by the township.*
- *Focus on physical park assets in the hamlet area.*
- *Create and promote a trail system that is multi-seasonal (eg., ability to utilize trails in autumn for fall color tours, in winter for cross-country skiers, etc.).*
- *Create better pedestrian linkages between the library, the schools, and the hamlet area.*

In 2003, the township sponsored a study by McKenna Associates, which produced a preliminary plan for hiking, walking, picnic and a nature study natural park. The location is centrally located, in the southeast section of the Whitmore Lake Summer Homes Subdivision, encompassing 50 to 60 acres. Much of the land is currently owned by Northfield Township. More than any other physical asset, the Seven Mile Preserve Park represents quite possibly Northfield Township's best opportunity to create a large, traditional, regional park asset that would have significant impact on the community. Trails throughout the park would provide connectivity to and from multiple areas, including homes located south of Whitmore Lake, the Adler Homes Subdivision, and downtown. The graphics shown on page 82 include: 1) the original McKenna Plan for the park and 2) how this park has the potential to create significant recreational interconnectivity. The original McKenna Plan spells out and depicts the following features:

- Eight to ten foot wide paths of varying lengths
- Picnic tables, shelter areas and grills

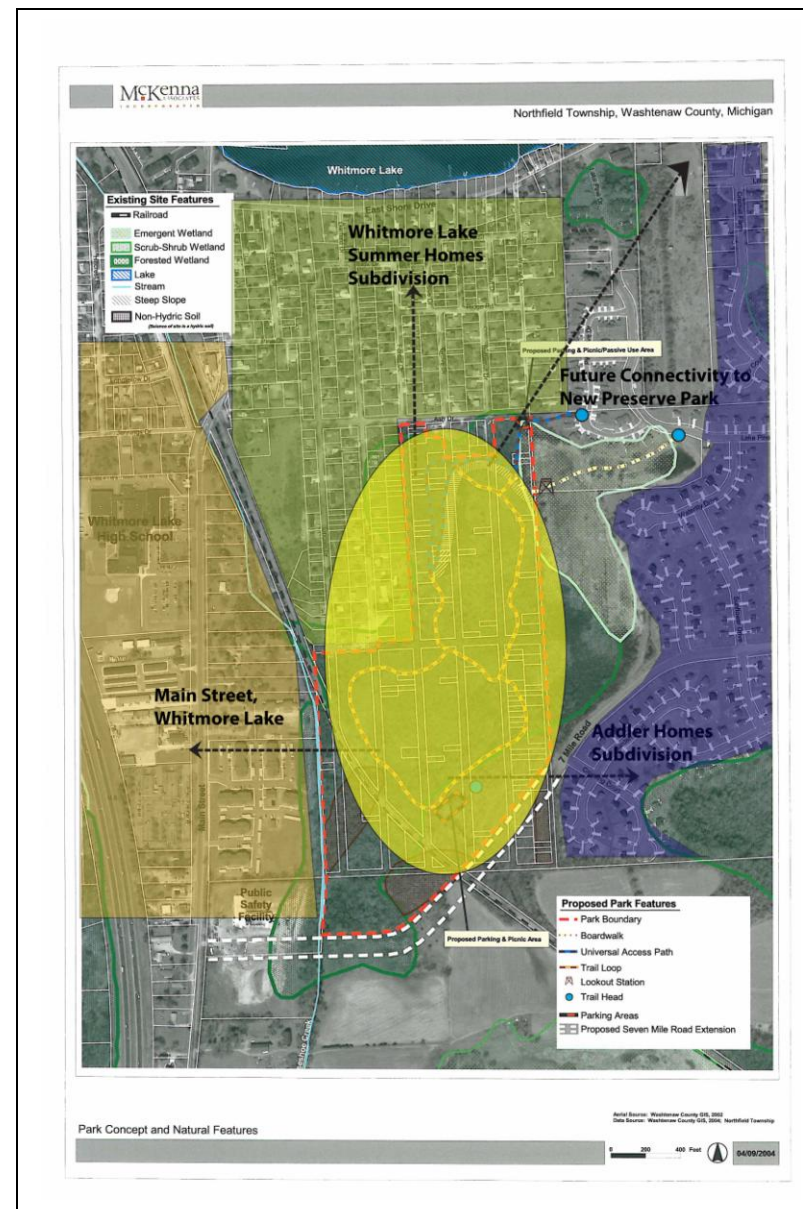
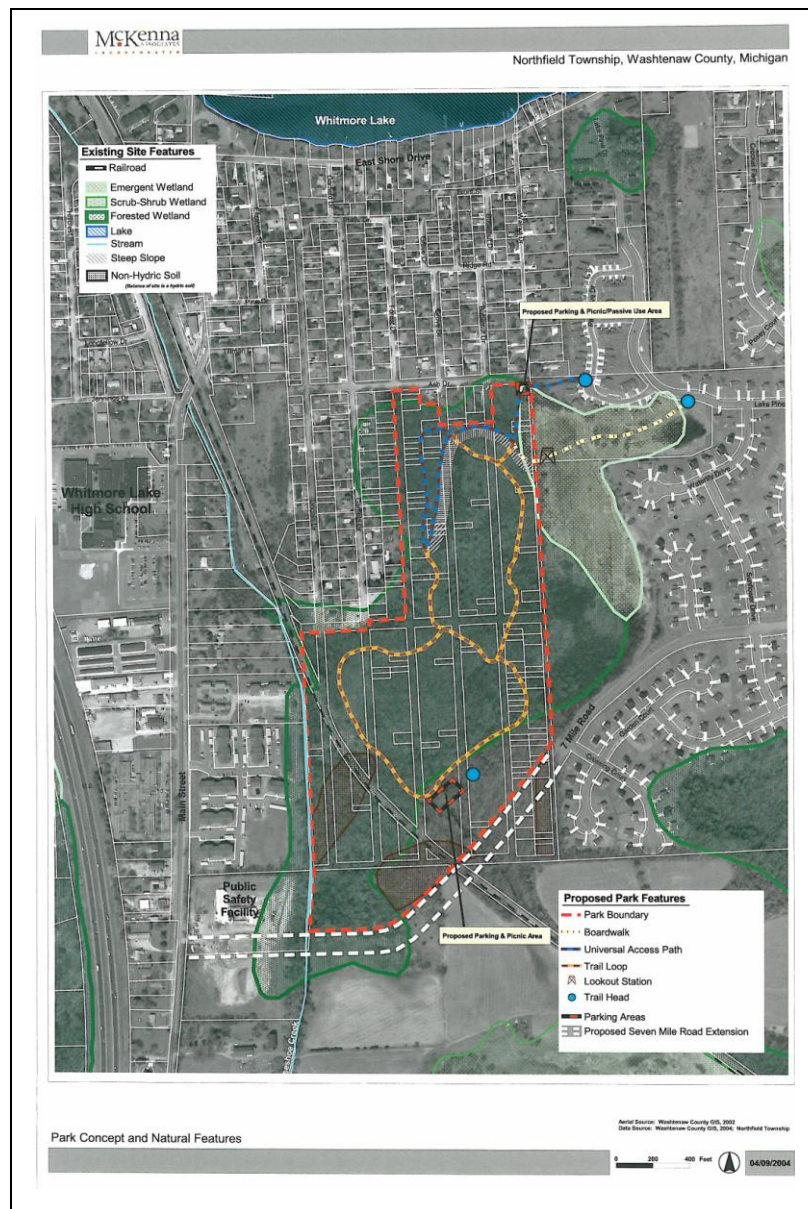
- Parking at 7 mile and Ash drive
- Way-finding signage and identification of trees and native plants
- Boardwalks within the wetland areas

The Parks and Recreation Commission has discussed expanding this original vision to include active recreation opportunities. One possibility that has been suggested is disc golf. Such a concept would allow the township to preserve the natural areas and integrate the various trails, shelters, and natural recreation, while also allowing for an active use.

Continued refinement of the plan for Seven Mile Preserve Park will be a significant effort of the Parks and Recreation Commission moving forward. The park is centrally located, will create recreational connectivity throughout Whitmore Lake, and represents the township's largest conservation effort, a goal that many of our Township residents value. Following completion of this Plan, the commission intends to begin application for a Michigan Natural Resources Land Trust Grant to implement the first set of physical improvements and access to the park. It is expected that this grant request will be large, as this project has a significant potential to positively impact Northfield Township and the greater Ann Arbor region. Simultaneously, the commission intends to work with the township's existing engineers to begin refining the park's design and identify if there are any improvements that can be accomplished without significant costs. Some of the possibilities include cleaning out recreational path areas that have already been established and creating some trail heads to encourage residents to enjoy this tremendous asset. Much of this work will happen in the first year or two of our five year plan. During phase 2, the commission intends to focus on actual construction of the park, depending, of course, on external factors.

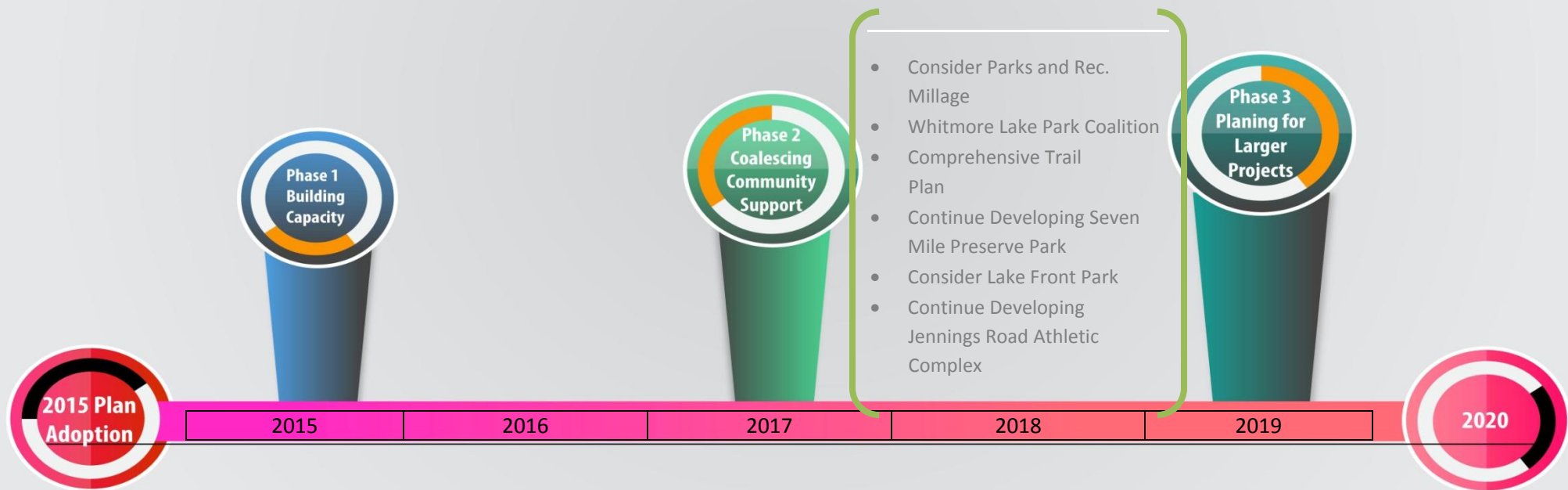
Action Items:

- 1) Engage one of our engineering firms to assist with preparation for the grant.
- 2) Prepare the Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant and identify the dollar amount of the grant request.
- 3) Solicit letters of support from community groups, elected officials, and regionally significant organizations to enhance our application.



Goals and Objectives: Phase 2, Coalescing Community Support

Phase 2, identified as “Coalescing Community Support for Additional Resources”, will mostly encompass an outreach campaign with many of the (presumed) successes fulfilled in phase one as a primary argument for potential parks and recreation funding in Northfield Township. In many ways, the shape and scope of Phase 2 will be determined by the success and community response to our initial efforts over the next one to two years. From a project perspective, phase 2 will be mostly implementing the Seven Mile Preserve Park and developing both active and passive recreation at this facility. Additional efforts include creating a separate trails plan and identifying the practicalities of a lake front park.



Further Evaluation of Millage Option and Possible Creation of a Millage Campaign

Time Line: *approximately 2017 - 2018*

Estimated Cost: \$0

Guiding Principle(s):

- *While there are no specific related guiding principles, the Parks and Recreation Commission would be better able to facilitate parks and recreation development with semi-permanent funding.*

The Parks and Recreation Commission has no current operating budget. All of the current efforts of the commission are done through fundraising, in-kind donations and generous support from our residents. As an appointed Commission, we are still in the infancy of our efforts, and focused on building capacity for the future. Part of that capacity-building is completing some doable, low-cost projects that will add value to the community.

If the commission's efforts meet with popular success and the township's residents express a willingness to add recreational assets, there has been discussion of evaluating a millage campaign as a possible next step in the group's evolution. No one knows whether such a campaign would be supported, but it is an option the commission wishes to consider. This would be a long, involved investigational process with significant public input and feedback. The commission would engage the school district to see about any possible coordination with their recreation millage, along with any other entities that might be impacted, including the Board of Trustees.

Action Items

1. Market the previous "wins" of the commission to show the residents how our efforts have been successful.
2. Engage the residents to determine if they would support a millage.
3. Create a specific action plan on how millage funding would be utilized and how that would have a measurable effect on the community.

Creation of a Parks and Recreation Coalition throughout Northfield Township

Time Line: *approximately 2017 - 2018*

Estimated Cost: *\$0 - \$500*

Guiding Principle(s):

- *The township acting as a common area for information on parks and recreational programming and projects.*
- *Marketing materials should represent Northfield Township as a highly recreational area with a focus on our natural beauty.*

One of the primary purposes of Phase 1 of the master plan is to create capacity and generate some excitement around parks and recreation activities in Northfield Township. There is not one specific task identified for this goal, but rather a concerted effort to generate a coalition of support for improved parks and recreation assets in Northfield Township. No doubt, completion of a few successful projects by the Parks and Recreation Commission would go a long way. As part of this effort, the commission plans to engage in a marketing campaign designed to increase awareness to our efforts and would emphasize our strengths.

Action Items

1. Create marketing campaign that resonates with the general public.
2. Identify opportunities for residents, businesses, and visitors to get involved, such as a “Friends of Northfield Township Parks and Recreation” group.

Identify Practicalities of a Lakefront Park

Time Line: *approximately 2017 - 2019*

Estimated Cost: *\$0 - \$3000*

Guiding Principle(s):

- *The Parks and Recreation Commission should focus on opening Whitmore Lake up to the public by assisting in the creation of a public access point and/ or a lakefront park*

Creation of a lakefront park on Whitmore Lake seems like an obvious way to make the most of one of Northfield Township's greatest assets and to create a regional draw into downtown Whitmore Lake. A lakefront park could create a real community gathering point for residents from across the township, including the rural areas, possibly helping to unify the township, and it could generate significant business for the merchants of downtown Whitmore Lake.

Many Northfield Township residents, especially those who do not live on the lake, would like to see some type of recreation access to Whitmore Lake. However, providing such access would be a difficult and expensive task. Many residents living on the lake would frown upon additional lakefront development, which could hamper their own use and enjoyment of the lake (for which they have paid a premium). Nonetheless, many residents desire greater access to Whitmore Lake and feel as though this major asset is not being utilized to its full potential. A well-designed effort could potentially provide access to the lake and a significant recreational asset without overcrowding the lake. As the Parks and Recreation Commission contemplates the possibility of a lakefront park, various issues would need to be considered.

Starting from scratch, one must consider purchase of available property as a challenging step. Taking into account the need for parking and pedestrian crosswalks, it seems that Main Street between 8 Mile and East Shore would be a preferred location. One location that is not already built up: the Van Curler property, across from the post office, would be ideal. This property is currently for sale, but is only being offered as a part of a much larger parcel that spans from Main Street to Barker Road. The projected cost could exceed two million dollars.

Next, we might consider buying two or three existing houses and demolishing them to make room for a park. Depending on which houses are selected this would likely run from \$500,000 to a million or more. Furthermore, there is very little vacant land left anywhere on Whitmore Lake in Northfield Township. It might be useful to investigate the possibility of working with Green Oak Township and developing a shared facility in Green Oak, on the lake, assuming a suitable property could be found, and agreements reached.

When considering initial cost it is important also to review the intended uses for the park. If it is to include swimming and a beach, then sand would need to be brought in. Whitmore Lake has mostly a muck bottom. Prior to bringing in sand, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) would have to be consulted and necessary approvals sought. Other issues to be considered would include ongoing maintenance, safety, Township liability, etc.

It should be pointed out that a public beach/swimming area is already available to our residents in neighboring Webster Township, one which they support through county tax dollars: Independence Lake. Island Lake State Park and Kensington Metropark also offer public beaches in the near vicinity.

One final possibility is that the township could come to an agreement with a private buyer of the Van Curler property, whereby the developer could provide a lakefront park across from the post office as part of a bigger commercial or residential development on the rest of the property, thereby providing benefit to their own development and to the township residents as a whole.

Action Items:

1. Monitor all lakefront properties for sale to identify any viable locations.
2. Engage the residents on exactly what type of amenities they wish to see in a lakefront park (e.g., gazebo, bandshell, beach, picnic tables, etc.).
3. Engage lakefront residents to see what type of uses they would find beneficial (or at least acceptable).
4. Consider the costs of such a development and consider whether residents would be willing to bear those costs.

Develop Comprehensive Trail Plan as a Subset of the Master Plan

Time Line: *approximately 2017 - 2018*

Estimated Cost: *\$0 - \$3,000*

Guiding Principle(s):

- *Create better pedestrian and bicycle pathways that link surrounding communities*
 - *Linking the Border to Border Trail*
 - *Rails-to-Trails connections*
 - *Link Existing trails to Ann Arbor, Green Oak, and surrounding municipalities with quality trail systems*
- *Create and promote a trail system that is multi-seasonal (e.g., ability to utilize trails in autumn for fall color tours, in winter for cross-country skiers, etc).*

The Parks and Recreation Commission has identified the need to develop a comprehensive trail plan for Northfield Township. Implementing trails can be quite an expensive venture. Implementation would require a permanent funding source or aggressive efforts to obtain grants from SEMCOG and other state agencies. Creating a trails plan is a large undertaking in itself. The commission expects to engage the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) and the South East Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) for assistance in this effort. Such a planning process will look similar to the process for the master plan, rather focused on more detail around trails and connectivity issues.

Action Items:

1. Engage WATS and SEMCOG for assistance in the planning process.
2. Identify grants that are available for development of trails, such as the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and SEMCOG's Transportation Improvement Program.

Goals and Objectives: Phase 3, Begin Planning for Larger Improvements

Planning into the future is important, but it can also be somewhat vague and devoid of details towards the end of longer time spans. This Plan is set up into three phases; Phase 1, Building Capacity, Phase 2, Coalescing Community Support, and Phase 3, Begin Planning for Larger Improvements. While we have identified the overall scope of phase 3 (years 4-5), it is difficult to know if we will ever reach it within the five year timeframe. What happens if we are unable to complete our projects in Phases 1 and 2, or if our thinking will evolve and plans subsequently change?

Northfield Township is especially prone to this evolution, as we are just beginning to build our capacity and create an organizational structure to both implement and sustain our efforts. For example, the Parks and Recreation Commission will be working jointly with the Board of Trustees to define their roles and discuss potential funding. There has been some conversation on a millage option, but it is imperative that the Parks and Recreation Commission show “fruits” of their efforts and continue building capacity before any millage is evaluated. For a variety of reasons, residents of Northfield Township may not support a millage. Given all these unknowns, it is difficult to identify our specific projects and role in Phase 3. As planning theory often suggests, the goals, objectives and projects in this Plan are difficult to accomplish given the time frame, but are no doubt attainable if everything falls into place and we have strong community support.

If Phase 3 is reached within the five year timeframe, the goal may be to tackle larger improvements. Such projects could include a new lakefront park and the full build-out of the Seven Mile Preserve Park, to name but two. As a group, it is our goal to strive to reach Phase 3 within the five year timeframe of the master plan, but even if we are unable to do so we believe the efforts along the journey will provide Northfield Township significant benefits.

Action Program

Throughout this Plan, we have identified action items to assist in our implementation efforts for each project. In order to ensure a project's success, however, it is often necessary to assign a "champion" so that the project can move forward at various levels outside of the commission's monthly meetings.

The commission recognizes that the "power of an individual" is strongest when they are working towards a community improvement that aligns with their passion. Our general philosophy has been, and will continue to be, that we should respond in the positive when volunteers wish to lead a project. It is this philosophy of giving people the freedom and structure to realize their vision that will help the commission succeed with many of the projects noted in this Plan.

Bernard L. Schwartz, former chairman and C.E.O. of the Loral Corporation, had a similar perspective. When asked what favorite expression he developed over the years, Mr. Schwartz had this to say: "Just say yes." He went on to say, "One thing I would look for in the people I hired is optimism — the sense that we're going to win, and that we're going to have a successful answer to whatever the problem is."

Appendix

- A – Board of Trustees SWOT Analysis
- B – Parks & Recreation SWOT Analysis
- C – Parks & Recreation Community Survey
- D – Comments from Parks & Recreation Community Survey
- E – “Monopoly” Maps from Community Survey Meetings

APPENDIX A

Board of Trustees SWOT

Northfield Twp. Board of Trustees Workshop

January 28, 2014

STRENGTHS

1. Natural resources
 - The Lakes
 - Whitmore Lake
 - Horseshoe Lake and other small lakes - private
 - Library
 - High School Pool
2. Jennings Road Park (aka Spider Park)
3. Community involvement
 - People who want to donate time.
4. Events/Celebrations
 - Pond Hockey
 - 4th of July
 - Fireworks
5. Northfield Woods Preserve & Park Northfield (Washtenaw Co. owns)
6. Property behind Township Hall
 - Whitmore Lake summer homes
7. Bicyclists , joggers, walkers that come through town
 - Non-motorized trail
8. Horse farms

WEAKNESSES

1. No public access to Whitmore Lake from the Township.
 - Only from Green Oaks Twp.
 - No park at Whitmore Lake
2. No public beaches
3. Jennings Road Park
 - Not well kept – falling apart
 - Needs more signage – difficult to find
4. No master calendar of public events.
5. Poor use of funds for Recreation millage
6. Poor pedestrian accessibility.
 - Need more/better sidewalks. Example was given of Barker Rd. across from the non-motorized path.
7. Don't promote the horse farms, except in parades.

APPENDIX B

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION; S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

January 16, 2014

Strengths

1. Our physical location allows us to play a critical connective role for Rails to Trails and trails for cross/state trail connections.
 - We have a strong contingency of long-term hikers and bikers in our community.
2. Close to other Parks
 - Hudson Mills
 - Ann Arbor
 - Kensington/Island Lake
 - Independence Lake
 - Washtenaw County
 - Bandemier Park
3. Whitmore Lake
4. Hoseshoe Lake (private)
5. Lots of open space/rural area, and land the presents great opportunity
6. 2 Private Golf Courses
7. A lot of residents have their own private park/beach – generates lots of opportunity for recreation even though none may occur through Northfield Township.
8. Dog Park
9. Recreation millage from school – Good value for our dollar
10. Senior/Adult Community Center
11. Proximity to Recreational Center (Hamburg Township ?)
12. Lots of gravel roads for biking/walking
13. Topography beautiful

PARKS & REC S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

Weaknesses

1. Divide between Hamlet and “Country Estates”
2. No public park in downtown Whitmore Lake
3. Don’t know about “community assets” – no central catalog
4. Parking
5. Cost for lakefront or commercial land
6. No funding /no millage and people will not support additional millages
7. School has not managed Recreational Millage appropriately
8. Reluctant Board (Township) to spend money
9. Unwalkable downtown in specific areas
10. Little to do in downtown
11. Lack of community events
12. Township is not creating a leadership role

PARKS & REC S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

Opportunities

1. Solve problems, create implementation strategies
2. Connect trails
3. Grants for parks and trails
4. Library/school/community center/collect information
5. Coordination of activities
6. Strength – place has a lot of people to volunteer and donate time
7. Large tracks of unbuilt land in the downtown
8. Partnership with schools
9. Transition with senior center
10. Position of Community Center Director
11. Unusable space in building
12. 75 Barker
 - Possible museum
13. Create central catalog of events/activities

PARKS & REC S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

Threats

1. Board that does not want to spend money
2. Politics

PARKS & REC S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

Goals

1. The Township should act as a common area for information – all assets
 - Website calendar
 - Physical calendar at Township Hall
 - Facebook page
 - Newsletter
 - Email list
2. Path from Barker Rd to Jennings Park
 - Action item
3. Create better linkages from existing parks assets/library/school/Hamlet and Man. Communities
 - Foot/bicycle
 - Identify trail connections
4. Lead collaboration of community assets/library/community center/etc.
5. Evaluate organizational structure (members)
6. Marketing/literature

7. Evaluate park opportunities with Township owned assets
8. Focus on a physical park/recreation asset in the Hamlet and lakefront area. Open Whitmore Lake to public access.
 - Access to swimming in lake
 - Lakefront park
 - Pavilion
9. Leveraging development opportunities for recreation through Planning Commission
10. Coordinate /develop Woodbridge and VanCurler properties

PARKS & REC S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

Action Items

1. The Township should act as a common area for information – all assets
 - Website calendar
 - Physical calendar at Township Hall
 - Facebook page
 - Newsletter
 - Email list
2. Border to border trail - Connections to Green Oak Township to South Lyon
 - Create a plan/preliminary concept
 - Engage regionally with the border to border trail
 - Township needs to be involved.
3. Path from Barker Rd to Jennings Park
 - Action
 - Is it possible – easement
 - Costs
4. Programming coalition
 - Permission to use property
 - Accessibility
 - Someone needs to submerge themselves in these questions
5. Invite school and library to our meetings.
6. Organizational Structure
 - More members
 - Create project managers with a passion for their project.
 - Pinpoint potential new members that have passion

- Define authority with Township

7. Marketing and Promotion

- Part of #1.
- “Approved By”
- Promotional material in foyer (page flyer)
- “Welcome “ letter
- Billboards
- Email marketing
- Newsletters/Community Center information

- Friends of the Dog Park/Parks & Rec

8. Township map of owned properties

- First look at property – then identify what needs to be done.
- Figure out walking trail /Property behind Township Hall and look for opportunities.
- Historical Museum at old Fire Hall
- Reconnect with Historical Society

Appendix C

Parks & Recreation Community Survey

Northfield Township Parks & Recreation
Community Meeting

Contact Information*

Full Name: _____

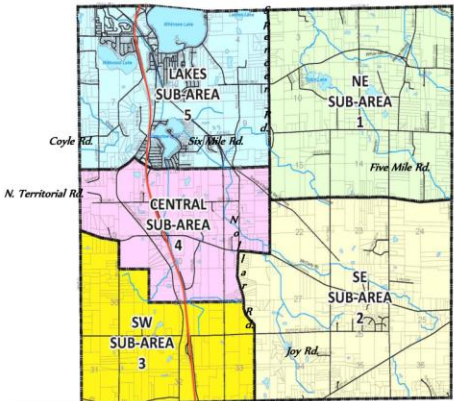
Street Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail: _____

**All of the information provided in this survey will remain confidential*

Based on the map below, in which "Sub Area" of Northfield Twp. are you located? _____



Survey Data*

How many people are in your household? _____

What is your current age? _____

Are there children under the age of 18 in your household? Yes No

Please indicate your TOTAL household income

- ☐ \$ 0 - \$44,750
- ☐ \$44,751 - \$51,150
- ☐ \$51,151 - \$57,550
- ☐ \$57,551 - \$63,900
- ☐ \$63,901 - \$69,050
- ☐ \$69,051 - \$74,150
- ☐ \$74,151 - \$79,250
- ☐ \$79,251 - \$84,350
- ☐ \$84,351+

Overview and Introduction

The Parks and Recreation Board have been engaged in a nearly 4 month process to update Northfield Township's Parks and Recreation Master Plan. As part of this process, it is our intent to gather input from the whole community, ensuring that participation is representative of multiple subsets of Northfield Township. We recognize that while we are

all part of Northfield Township, the views of those living in the southern, rural portion of the Township might vastly differ from those in the more urbanized hamlet area. Recreation assets for someone living on one of our many lakes are much different from those in one of the newer subdivisions. Not only is it important that all these groups are represented within our planning process, but rather our implementation specifics address differing group's needs. With this diversity in mind, the plan will look to more effectively bridge the gap between planning and action-oriented implementation strategies. The philosophy is simple; planning should focus on identifying solutions to existing and future problems, not delivering recommendations that require additional planning efforts.

This leads to quite possibly our most critical analysis. Within Northfield Township a number of recreational opportunities exist; nature preserves, various lakes, biking opportunities, outdoor recreation, and winter activities, to name a few. Surrounding Northfield; Ann Arbor, Brighton and other communities offer an array of opportunities, some that are profit oriented and others that are municipally funded. Taking all of the area's surrounding assets into consideration, please answer the following question.

Does Northfield Township need to focus on improving and adding additional recreational assets or are these needs already being addressed?

- ☐ *My needs are not being addressed and I would like to see additional Parks and Recreational Assets*
- ☐ *I do not feel as though new Parks and Recreation Assets are needed; as there is a great deal to take advantage of already.*

Whitmore Lake Sub Area Funding

Please select one of the four funding options for each funding type (Physical Assets & Programming Assets):

	Funding for Physical Assets	Funding for Programming Assets
1. Northfield Township Parks & Recreation activities should be funded by a community millage to create a functioning Parks & Recreation System. Option A: .5 mills to generate approximately \$160,000 per year Option B: .25 mills to generate approximately \$80,000 per year		
2. I do not wish to support a millage campaign for new physical Parks & Recreation assets. I wish to encourage fundraising, access to outside resources, and limited general fund expenditures to be used for low cost, commission driven improvements similar to the Whitmore Lake Bark Park.		
3. Northfield Township Parks & Recreation system, whether it is run by the Township or other municipal / recreational organizations is sufficient, and I wish for the Status Quo to continue. I would like no additional resources, general fund, or elsewhere to be spent on park assets.		

2014 Residential Taxable Value Analysis for Northfield Twp	
School District	AVERAGE TAXABLE VALUE
1 South Lyon	\$100,146.30
2 Whitmore Lake	\$53,558.22
3 Ann Arbor	\$135,030.11
4 Dexter	\$114,672.67
Total Twp.	\$62,443.45

Additional Parks Millage for a Home with a Taxable Value of 120,000	
Tax Bill	
.5 mills	\$60.00 per year
.25 mills	\$30.00 per year

Guiding Principles and Goals

Below are 13 focus points we believe are of importance to the residents of Northfield Township. Please order the items from 1-13, with 1 being the most important to you, and 13 being the least important.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES	Importance
The Township should act as a common area for information on Parks & Rec Programming and projects including (but not limited to):	
- Parks & Rec Calendar of Events - Facebook Page - Newsletter - E-mail list	
Given our proximity to recreational assets around the region and the various opportunities present in Northfield Township (including activities in Brighton, Ann Arbor, etc), marketing and promotional materials should represent Northfield Township as an area with an abundance of assets.	
Our marketing materials should represent Northfield Township as a highly recreational area with a focus on our natural beauty.	
The Parks & Rec Committee should create better pedestrian linkages between the library, the schools, and the hamlet area.	
The Parks & Rec Committee should create better pedestrian and bicycle pathways that link surrounding communities	
- Linking the Border to Border Trail - Rails to Trails connections - Link existing trails to Ann Arbor, Green Oak, and Surrounding municipalities with quality trail systems	
The Parks & Rec Committee should create and promote a trail system that is multi-seasonal (i.e. ability to utilize trails in autumn for fall color tours, in winter for cross-country skiers, etc.).	
The Parks & Rec Committee should focus on opening Whitmore Lake up to the public by creating a public access point and/or a lakefront park.	
The Parks & Rec Committee should focus on physical park assets in the hamlet area.	
The Parks & Rec Committee should be a leader in creating programming coalitions between different entities within the community (i.e. the library, schools, etc.)	
The Parks & Rec Committee should utilize and develop properties already owned by the Township.	
75 Barker - Fire Station - Property in the old Whitmore Lake Summer Homes Subdivision	
The Parks & Rec Committee should coordinate with the Community Center, Library and Community Education Center for programming involving Parks & Rec assets.	
The parks and recreational committee should focus on developing passive recreational opportunities such as trails, picnic areas and natural parks.	
The Parks and recreational committee should focus on developing active recreational assets, such as BMX parks, Frisbee golf, botchy ball courts, etc.	

Please list 2 additional Guiding Principles you feel should be included in the list above.

1. _____
- _____
2. _____
- _____

Comments:

Are there any specific projects you'd like to see in Northfield Township with relation to the Guiding Principles listed above? Please list them in the space below.

Appendix D

Comments from Parks & Rec Community Surveys

Please list 2 additional Guiding Principles you feel should be included in the list above:

- Increase health & fitness classes offered in the community.
- Do not close Jennings field.
- Northfield Township should create a recreational hub based on public access to Whitmore Lake, and development of parks that capitalize on the lake, proximity to the lake, and small town community feel open swimming beach.
- They are all important.
- The Parks & Rec Committee should work in tandem with Washtenaw County and the schools to promote asset availability & avoid duplication of efforts.
- Preserve and Protect wildlife corridors throughout the Twp. including interconnectivity - trails/access would be great.
- Volunteer labor/materials by Dog Park
- Trails - walking, biking & horses in tandem with neighboring communities
- Water Park downtown like the one at Independence Lake
- Open space for activities such as birding, nature walks, etc.
- Preserving wildlife & areas
- Maximize appeal of existing properties and assets, keep areas clean and safe.
- Include sub areas 1, 2, 3 and 4 in your plan.
- Utilize things that we already have.
- Encourage activities over beautification projects.
- I encourage you to think through the eyes of the taxpayer first. We already pay taxes for Independence Lake and other county resources. If that were not the case, I would support paying for a project for lake access to our residents. However, with cost and safety concerns foremost, I do not see the need to provide lake access when we are already providing and paying for lake access at Independence Lake.
- Attracting new business / developments / residents by promoting our beautiful area

Comments from Parks & Rec Community Surveys (cont'd)

Are there any specific projects you'd like to see in Northfield Township with relation to the Guiding Principles?

- extension of bike paths to downtown/library areas from outlying neighborhoods, park in the center of town
- I heard the township is buying up property in a certain area with plans to develop the area into a community park once all the desired property is purchased. Northfield Township already has a community park in Jennings Field. Northfield Township is not a large enough community to warrant having 2 community parks. Northfield Township needs to focus on growth, attracting businesses and services to the area that would be of use to the residents as well as offer employment opportunities.
- Running paths in or around the lake areas, public park with grill area for boaters to stop at and have lunch when on the lake, Whitmore lake running club
- Lake access near Whitmore Lake Tavern, development of property at 75 Barker, creation of parking near downtown for access to library and lake.
- Developing in conjunction with the State park system could be explored. The large parcel next to the post office would make a great state or township park
- More Trails, More walkability
- Promote all resources/assets in our physical area, including those run by the county, schools & twp. The people who reside here view their home area as one community regardless of who officially runs the asset.
- Work with the Huron River Watershed Council to determine great habitats - they have already mapped twp. intensively
- Some water-oriented draw in the downtown lake area to make it a destination location: paddlewheels, rowboats, splash park
- Identifiers & accompanying maps for birding & other nature areas to draw nature enthusiasts into the community
- map out nesting places of wildlife to share/promote
- Park Northfield - managed by Washtenaw County - is awful. Can you partner with them to improve it?
- We need horse trails. Traffic has increased and not safe for the many riders we have in our township. People will pay to have a safe trail to ride on.
- pedestrian/bike pathway between the high school and main area of town
- Community usable sand volleyball courts, tennis courts, outdoor basketball courts. Coordinating pick-up game times, recreational leagues and linking lake-activity- based groups (ski, wakeboard, hockey clubs)
- Make the most of what we are already paying for. Thanks for asking

Comments from Parks & Rec Community Surveys (cont'd)

General Comments

- The township also needs to focus on increasing revenue, via the suggestions listed above as well as residential developments. All of this can be done on a limited/smaller scale so as to not lose the small town appeal. Increasing Physical Assets of the Parks and Rec department is not going to bring in any revenue. The focus should be on bringing in revenue to the Township.
- The only thing I would want to see a tax increase for is fixing the roads. In this part of the township we have big lots, if I want to go to a park I go out to my back yard. If I want go for a walk I walk along side of the dirt road.
- Seasonal community events similar to 4th of July weekend and hockey classic (fall festival, maybe?)
- I'd love to help!
- We do not need new P&R Assets considering we also have county & school resources. I remain open to suggestions that do not duplicate assets offered by other entities. Thank you for your efforts. I do feel we need resources for teens.
- Is the land under the power lines open for paths? Preservation trumps development - save the open space.
- Cataloging nesting areas & other significant nature areas for possible preservations.
- Promoting our wildlife & areas they need.
- That list is way too long to number. Narrow it down to 5 even if it's 2 or 3 lists of 5. You'll never get solid responses worth any salt with this one.
- Thank you for asking for our input.
- A waterfront area would probably help the downtown area a lot, but I don't know where the money would come from.
- I am in support of a millage, but doubt it is a wide-held view, so still should focus on fundraising efforts and pursue grants.
- I am very supportive of joint projects with other townships or county(ies).

APPENDIX E

“Monopoly” Maps from Community Survey Meetings

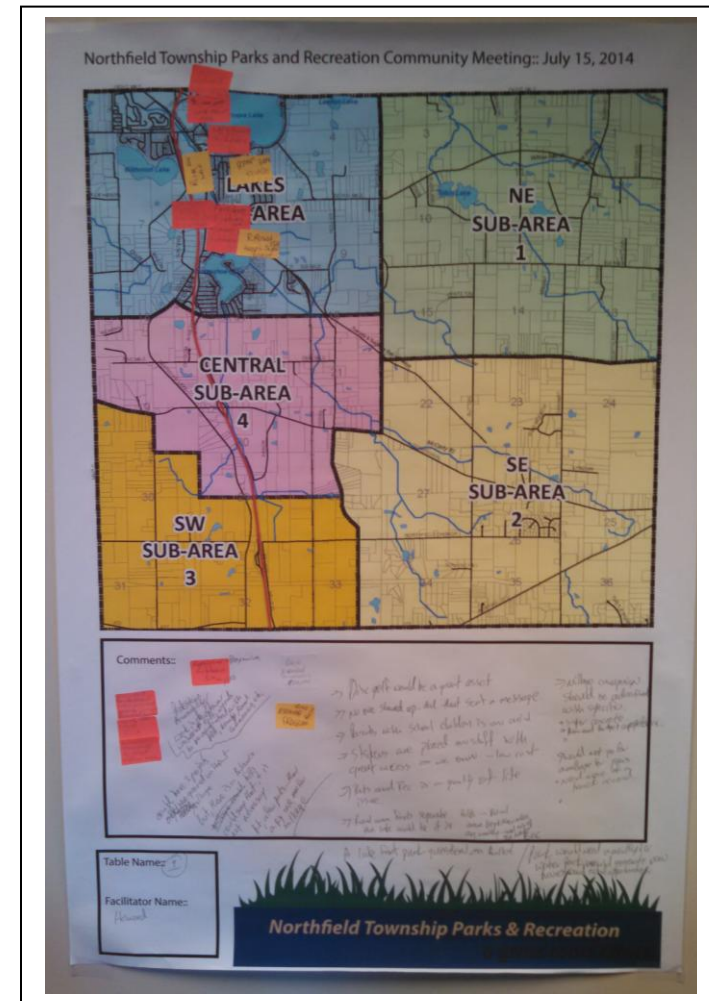
7/15/14 Meeting (6 participants)

Desired Projects and Programs (What participants were willing to put their “money” toward)

- Lakefront Park/Beach – Sub Area 5 (3 supporters)
- Riverwalk/trail to downtown - Sub Area 5 (2 supporters)
- Pocket Parks – Sub Area 5
- Frisbee Golf – Sub Area 5
- Woods subdivision park – Sub Area 5
- Protection of interconnected wildlife corridors, ideally with trails
- Expanded Programming
- Advertise Township as a great Natural Area

Observations and Comments from the Maps Section of the Community Meeting

- Pedestrian Accessibility/ work in downtown Whitmore Lake needs to be coordinated with DDA, County Road Commission, etc.



- Could have 3 projects off the ground without a millage, but there is a balance. Folks could say it is not necessary. But a few parks, then a big one for millage.
- Disc Golf would be a great asset
- No one showed up – Did that send a message?
- Parents with school children is in mind
- Stickers were placed on stuff with great access or is township owned – low cost
- Parks & Rec is a quality of life issue.
- Rural area feels separate. Folks in the rural area keep to themselves – very wealthy and might give to Parks & Rec. The lake could tie it in.
- Millage campaign should be advertised with specifics
- Super concrete
- Plan and budget competence
- Would not go for a millage for years – need more of a track record
- A lakefront park question on ballot – Park would need a multiplier. Water park would generate new businesses and retail opportunities.

10/12/14 Fire Station Open House (8 participants)

Desired Projects and Programs (What participants were willing to put their “money” toward)

- Public Beach Access – Sub Area 5
- Trails – Sub Area 5 & Sub Area 2
- Bike Trails – Sub Area 4
- Programming

