

Carronde Park Tennis Court Project 2021 MNRTF Grant Application

**Scope items:**

Tennis Court	\$43,700
Pickleball Court	\$43,700
Access Pathway 6' wide or more	\$2,000
Benches	\$2,000
Recycle Bin	<u>\$1,000</u>
<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<b>\$92,400</b>

**Grant request:** \$50,000

**Township Match:** \$42,400

**\*I. Project Justification and Support:**

Carronde Park is a popular recreation destination in St. Joseph Charter Township. The available tennis courts at the park were built in 1976 with the assistance of LWCF monies and have far exceeded their useful life. Uneven surface areas and cracking are leading to poor player experience and safety hazards so the township seeks to renovate the existing courts. Also, after assessing current demand for court sports, the township plans to include two pickleball courts as part of the renovation. The township does not offer pickleball at any of its other parks. The total court count will remain the same and additional tennis courts are planned in Eaton Park to support users.

Future plans for the park include improving ADA accessibility by adding a crosswalk and new sidewalks from the shore to the restrooms, accessible fishing platforms and an accessible kayak launch.

Existing activities at the park include softball, boating, playground use, walking, pavilion use and parking. Fencing surrounds both the tennis and softball areas for safe separation of activities.

This project supports township Recreation Plan goal, "To the greatest degree feasible, ensure that recreational land and facilities for local populations are conveniently located relative to population centers, are accessible without reliance on the automobile, and help to protect natural open spaces and resources." Carronde Park is within walkable and bikeable distance from several homes and a newly planned LWCF funded water trail access point.

In its recreation plan, a Township action program goal is to "Provide more parks and recreational facilities to accommodate future growth and all sports types" (page 41) and cites "Re-evaluate usage and maintain tennis courts" for Carronde Park.

Also stated in the plan, "There is an aging demographic trend - In 2000, the 35-54 age groups, as well as the 55 and over had the largest number of people in St. Joseph Charter Township... It is a significant goal of the planning process to address the recreational needs of those persons with all abilities and

disabilities.” According to the 2016 Pickleball Single Sport Participation Report of the Sport and Fitness Industry Association, the average age for core pickleball players is 55+. The pace of pickleball being slower, the smaller courts and doubles play accommodates more mobility levels than tennis, while still offering strong hand-eye coordination challenge. No special apparel is needed and equipment can be inexpensive and easily portable. The games can be played by all ages, serving a wide socioeconomic level. By keeping tennis and adding pickleball, the township is addressing its stated demographic needs. Local pickleball players are enthusiastically supportive of this project.

The project supports SCORP goals to “Enhance health benefits: Outdoor recreation increases physical activity and the health of Michigan’s residents and visitors.” The project supports continued exercise at all ages.

#### **\*II. Project Description:**

The proposed project will renovate the existing three tennis courts built in 1976. The renovation will produce one tennis court and two pickleball courts, adding support to the tremendous local interest in pickleball.

The court surface will be ADA compliant acrylic athletic surfacing over an HMA base. A section of lawn will separate the two activities. The grass area will be open, with no barriers surrounding it.

Benches will be placed adjacent to the lawn area for spectator viewing and resting areas for players. ADA accessible routes meeting universal design will connect users to tennis, pickleball, and the lawn area from all sides, without crossing into other areas of play.

2 additional ADA parking spaces with a van accessible lane will be striped in the existing boat parking lot to support court use. There are 28 spaces in the lot, with 2 existing ADA spaces. The new ADA count of 4 exceeds the minimum number required of 2 for 26-50 spaces. There are also 38 spaces to the south of the tennis courts including 4 ADA spaces.

The existing courts are surrounded by a fence with openings on the east (39” inches with gate) and west (39” with no gate) sides. The existing openings will stay and add a new 10’ wide, ungated opening on the north side will be added. A new 8’ wide universal access concrete pathway will provide access from parking. A recycle bin will be placed at the 10’ gate opening. The 10’ opening allows for a riding mower to move in and out of the fenced area to maintain the grass.

The site is currently used as a park and renovation of the tennis courts will not require reduction of any of the natural landscape. The park will retain its existing groundwater infiltration point at the drainage ditch along the parking perimeter. Recreation is clearly separated from vehicle traffic by the existing 8’ fence. New ADA striped parking allows users to easily access the courts without having to cross traffic. All existing parking spaces have clear views of the road and vehicles, and the park is well lit, enhancing safety.

The park has a clear entry sign and wayfinding signage exists throughout the township. The park is situated within a quiet, residential area, and allows for easy walking and biking access. A new LWCF funded kayak launch will provide nonmotorized watercraft access to the park when finished. It is approximately three miles from St. Joseph Township, St. Joseph city and Benton Harbor Township

commercial corridors. It can be easily accessed by I-94 and M-139. It is 90 miles from Chicago, 30 miles from South Bend, IN, 50 miles from Kalamazoo and 90 miles from Grand Rapids. Public transportation is available through a Dial a Ride service at a low cost, particularly accommodating those with disabilities or low income. The park's thousand feet of shoreline access allows all socioeconomic levels to enjoy the natural landscape while at the park.

The project renovation meets needs without being extravagant.

### **\*III. Natural Resource Access and Protection:**

When coming to play a game of tennis or pickleball, users will also be able to enjoy all the natural resources at the site including the river, shoreline, wetlands, and wooded areas. The park offers a wide range of activities and court activity can be combined with picnicking, birding, walking trails, recreational boating, and fishing. The site preserves native trees and users can see small mammals, deer, birds, owls, hawks, and waterfowl. Birders can view both resident woodland species and migrant species.

The park includes 1000 feet of St. Joseph River frontage, which the DNR designates as a Type 3 Trout Stream. Many species of fish are available for shore fishing, and boaters can launch at the site to seek additional fishing in the river and Lake Michigan about 4.5 miles upstream. Future plans for the site will add new ADA fishing docks to support a wider variety of fishing skills, mobility, and ages.

The northern portion of the park is classified as freshwater forested/shrub wetland. The project will not disturb this area. These wetlands are an important part of the local watershed, contributing to hydrological utility, environmental diversity, natural flood control, improved water quality, recharge of aquifers, and flow stabilization of streams and rivers.

Little of the Township's native vegetation remains, so keeping the park's open land is an important part of community green infrastructure goals of maintaining green space and natural landscape, providing increased recreational and transportation opportunities, providing habitat for wildlife viewing, flood control, and providing people with a better connection to nature and sense of place. Also, tennis and pickleball users at the park tend to be ages 55+ and according to the SWMPC, "Green Infrastructure is attractive to various segments of the population... 65+ are strongly attracted by quiet landscapes with water, forest and open-space amenities.

### **\*IV. Other Information:**

#### Universal Access Design

There are currently 28 parking spaces in the lot to the north, including 2 ADA. Two more van accessible spaces will be striped in this lot as part of the project scope. The four total ADA spaces will exceed the minimum number required of 2 for 26-50 spaces. There are also 38 spaces to the south of the tennis courts including 4 ADA spaces.

All gate/fence openings are wider than the minimum 36" ADA requirement. No gates need to be pushed or pulled open to access the court.

An 8' ADA compliant concrete sidewalk will access the court from the parking lot, exceeding the minimum 3' required by ADA.

Once inside the fenced in area, users can move toward tennis, pickleball, the grass area and the benches on ADA accessible surfacing, without crossing into other areas of recreation. The grass area will be open, with no fencing surrounding it.

The benches will have arms and backs. See attached Gretchen Bench as an example.

Sustainable design

The benches for the project will contain sustainable components similar to the attached Gretchen Bench example.

A recycle bin will be added at the north gate opening.

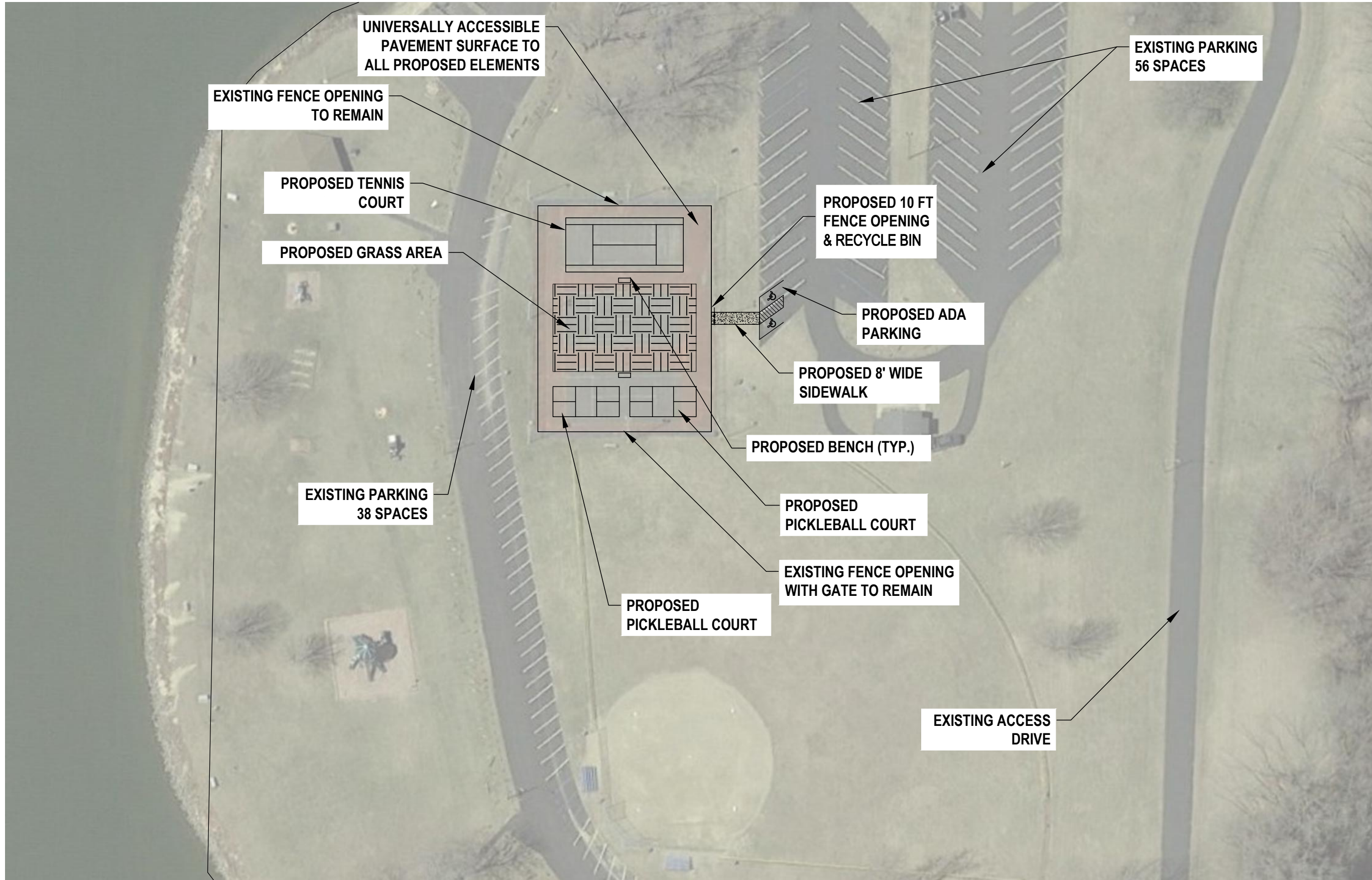
The tennis court and pickleball court material will be finished with an acrylic based hardcourt surface material such as Plexipave. Three colors in the Plexipave product lines meet LEED Solar Reflective Index (SRI) requirements. See document in attachments. It is also a water based product.

The center grass area will be permeable and allow rain and snow melt to absorb and filter into the ground. It is a renewable resource. It presents a cooler surface than concrete or asphalt.

The 8' wide access pathway will be made out of concrete, which can be crushed and recycled into aggregate for use in new concrete or as a backfill or road base once it has outlived its original purpose.

Collaborative maintenance at the park - On an annual basis, the Director of Public Works contacts the Berrien County Sheriff's Office for help from their inmate "work crew" to complete manual labor tasks when manual labor time is expected to be high. Volunteers are also recruited to help offset high manual labor costs. See document in attachments

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UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE PAVEMENT SURFACE TO ALL PROPOSED ELEMENTS

EXISTING FENCE OPENING TO REMAIN

PROPOSED TENNIS COURT

PROPOSED GRASS AREA

EXISTING PARKING 38 SPACES

PROPOSED PICKLEBALL COURT

PROPOSED PICKLEBALL COURT

EXISTING FENCE OPENING WITH GATE TO REMAIN

PROPOSED 10 FT FENCE OPENING & RECYCLE BIN

PROPOSED ADA PARKING

PROPOSED 8' WIDE SIDEWALK

PROPOSED BENCH (TYP.)

EXISTING ACCESS DRIVE

EXISTING PARKING 56 SPACES

NO.	REVISION DESCRIPTION:	BY:	DATE: