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ST. JOSEPH CHARTER TOWNSHIP

# Parks and Recreation Plan

## 2019-2023

December 4, 2017

Prepared By:
St. Joseph Charter Township Parks and Recreation Committee

With Assistance from:
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Please take a moment to make comments on this draft plan. Please also include your name and address.

The plan will be in draft form for a minimum of 30 days. There will be another meeting at the Township Hall to finalize the plan and an opportunity for additional comments at that time as well. Tentative meeting date is February 5, 2018 at the Township Hall, 3000 Washington Ave., St. Joseph, MI 49085

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## St. Joseph Charter Township
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## Acknowledgements

Thank you for all of the participation and input from the community leaders, residents and neighboring communities in the preparation of this plan.

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# Introduction

The St. Joseph Charter Township Board has a long history of providing parks and recreation opportunities for its residents and visitors. The Township has eleven (11) municipally owned parks. Investments in township parks and recreation have been guided by long-range master planning and funding through local government appropriations, grants, and private donation. The most recent Township parks and recreation plan expires in March 2018. The prior plan was certified by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) for a five year period. The Township established a parks and recreation plan committee in 2008 to create new plans for submission to the MDNR each year.

Need for Updating Plan:

* Recognition that the current plan is expired under the MDNR requirements and to submit a new plan for certification by the MDNR.
* The assessment of current parks and determines future needs of the community.
* To identify opportunities for growth in tourism activities with trails, canoe launch, bicycle and walking enthusiasts.

# Purpose of the Parks and Recreation Plan

The purpose of the Parks and Recreation Plan is to provide the necessary framework from which to develop an integrated and coordinated approach to the provision of park and recreation facilities, and natural resource protection. Under the requirements of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Federal Land & Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, the Township must prepare and maintain an Outdoor Recreation and Open Space Plan. All land acquisition and park development funded through these programs will be consistent with the approved State and Federal Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plans.

From the Township's perspective this Plan will provide guidance for future improvements and growth of recreational facilities.

# Community Description

## History

The Township's first permanent settler, William Burnett, arrived in 1780. Burnett established a successfully trading post, but true settlement did not begin until 50 years later in 1830. The community grew so rapidly thereafter, that it incorporated as a township in 1823.

At one time, fruit agriculture was paramount with more than 2,000 acres devoted to this industry by the 1880's. The Township has gradually developed into a residential area, with areas of commercial, light industrial and medical facilities rounding out the community.

Today St. Joseph Charter Township is known to be an excellent, upper-class, residential community fully equipped with water, sewer, and waste management. There are paved roads throughout the Township, cable TV, and good recreational programs. The Township, with only 21 full-time employees, contracts for most of its services. This results in a relatively low tax rate. St. Joseph Charter Township is a typical bedroom community with no downtown area, except for the City of St. Joseph. The only lakefront property within the Township belongs to Shoreham Village, a small, incorporated community in the southwest corner of the Township. Most of the housing units are well maintained with a few upper-class residential subdivisions added each year.

## Location

St. Joseph Charter Township comprises 6.97 miles and is located in southwest lower Michigan, in Berrien County. It is 90 miles from Chicago, 30 miles from South Bend, Indiana, 50 miles from Kalamazoo and 90 miles from Grand Rapids.

Locally, St. Joseph Charter Township is part of the "Twin Cities" area. To the north and east, the Township is bordered by the Cities of St. Joseph and Benton Harbor respectively. The Township lies between the major thoroughfare in the region, which is Interstate 94, and downtown St. Joseph. The Township's natural beauty, shorelines on Lake Michigan and St. Joseph River and its central location in relation to many other urban centers make it a highly desirable place to live and work.

## *Physical Characteristics*

This chapter examines the natural characteristics of St. Joseph Charter Township's topography and climate, as well as the man-made physical characteristics of zoning and land use. It also looks at demographic, economic and social characteristics of the Township. This is intended to provide information about the Township that local officials

can use as an aid in making decisions regarding the location and adequacy of recreational facilities within the community.

# Land Use Patterns

St. Joseph Charter Township's location, as well as its natural features, has contributed to the evolution of the Township. Many homes in the Township have been placed in locations, which are best suited to take advantage of the natural views and settings offered by this important lakeshore community. However, the bulk of the commercial and industrial development has occurred along major transportation routes.

## Residential

The majority of development within the Township is residential. Single-family homes of various lot sizes are located throughout the Township. This development reflects the original attraction of this area as a place to live that is in close proximity to the business districts of the Twin Cities. The types of homes are mainly modest, single-family residences, but the Township is also intermixed with large expensive homes as well.

## Commercial

The commercial businesses are principally located in two areas of the Township. They are the northern portions that border the City of St. Joseph and along M-63/Niles Avenue. The commercial establishments have developed to cater to the needs of both the individuals living in the Township as well as those who pass through en route to shopping and work. A variety of services including gas stations, restaurants, medical and dental offices as well as many others are located in St. Joseph Charter Township.

# Industrial/Other

The industrial sections of the Township are located in areas that have easy access to major transportation routes such as Interstate 94. The ability to easily move materials in and out of these locations makes them ideal for industrial uses. Other land uses in the Township include Recreation and Open Space, Community Facilities, as well as Water Oriented (marinas).

Recreation and Open Space is a valued asset in St. Joseph Charter Township, and a goal of the residents is to actively encourage this type of land use whenever possible. St. Joseph Charter Township's Future Land Use Map reflects this goal; it shows a large amount of land set aside for park and recreation areas.

# Zoning

St. Joseph Charter Township is zoned in accordance with official policy of how the land in the Township is used and developed. In the Zoning Map it is evident how the Township is currently zoned to encourage residential development with industrial and commercial areas located near transportation routes.

# Topography

Over 10,000 years ago glaciers that advanced southward from Canada covered Berrien County. Because this glaciation was so extensive, the landscape was heavily impacted, and these impacts can still be seen today. One example of this is the slight variations in relief in St. Joseph Charter Township as well as surrounding areas. This gently rolling topography is, however, slightly interrupted within St. Joseph Charter Township by the St. Joseph River and its tributaries. These hydrologic features have cut valleys through the Township providing some areas with steep slopes.

Along the majority of Berrien County's shoreline, there is a belt of sand dunes that extends about a quarter of a mile from the lake. This diverse topography makes St. Joseph Charter Township a very attractive location to live and work. There is a wealth of areas in the community that have yet to be utilized to their full potential in regard to the recreational opportunities they possess.

# Soils

The soils in St. Joseph Charter Township are also the result of glaciers; therefore, soil types vary widely in texture, permeability, stability, composition and other characteristics throughout the community. However, through the use of the Berrien County Soil Survey, it is possible to make observations about the soils in this area. There are five major soil types in St. Joseph Charter Township. Table 1 lists the names and general characteristics of these soils.

It should be noted that these are just broad generalizations of the soil in and around St. Joseph Charter Township and are only meant to provide a broad understanding of the soil conditions in the area and should only be used for general land use planning considerations. To determine the suitability and soil conditions of a particular site, however, further investigation would be needed.

***Table 1. St. Joseph Charter Township Soil Types***

| ***Name*** | ***General Characteristics*** |
|---|---|
| Cohoctah Sandy Loam | Nearly level with moderate possibility.<br>Generally located along flood plains of rivers or streams. |
| Houghton-Kerston Mucks | Gentle Slope with low permeability.<br>Located along floodplains and are usually left idle. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Shoals Silt Loam | Slightly undulating slope with moderate permeability.<br>Acceptable for many uses including development. |
| Plainfield – Urban | Nearly level, excessively drained soil.<br>Ideal for building. |
| Thetford – Urban | Nearly level somewhat poorly drained.<br>Suitable for development. |

Source: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Soil Conservation service, Soil Survey of Berrien County, Michigan, 1980.

## Climate

Lake Michigan has a moderating effect on the prevailing westerly winds that influence St. Joseph Charter Township's climate. The lake is responsible for keeping the area cooler in the spring and summer and warmer in the fall and winter. This results in a growing season that is approximately 180 days.

The average temperature is 33.6 Fahrenheit in the winter, with an average daily minimum temperature of 20.7 Fahrenheit. In the summer, the average temperature is 69.8 F and the average daily maximum temperature is 80.5 F. The annual precipitation is 37.14 inches on average with 56% falling from April through September. The average seasonal snowfall is 68.4 inches and there is an average of 82 days that have .10 inches of precipitation or more. Source: Weather Underground 2007

## Transportation

Interstate 94 serves as the primary transportation route from other Midwestern states, making it one of the most important thoroughfares in the state. The Interstate 94 interchanges at M-63 (Niles Ave.), M-139 and Stevensville (Red Arrow Highway) provide convenient regional access to St. Joseph Charter Township.

Commercial airline flights are available at both the Michiana Regional Airport in South Bend (35 miles south) and Kalamazoo International Airport (45 miles to the east). Local service is available at the Southwest Michigan Regional Airport (5 miles northeast) in Benton Harbor.

Amtrak passenger service terminals are located in Niles (25 miles), St. Joseph (2 miles), and New Buffalo (30 miles). High speed Amtrak service between Chicago and Detroit is also provided along Amtrak's major route, with plans for high-speed rail service that exceeds 100 mph to be implemented in the coming years.

## Vegetation, Wildlife and Fish

Most of the Township's native vegetation has been lost to development. However, some relatively undisturbed areas are still available along Hickory Creek and the St. Joseph

River. Both are exceptional areas of natural beauty and are important sources of bird and wildlife habitat in the Township. Lake Michigan also provides excellent opportunities to view wildlife as well as opportunities for salmon and perch fishing.

# *Social Characteristics*

A careful study of population growth rate and other general demographic characteristics is vital in the development of a community's recreation plan. It is important to understand the composition of a community in order to determine the nature and amount of community facilities and recreation services that are needed to best serve its residents.

## Population

St. Joseph Charter Township, unlike other areas around Benton Harbor and St. Joseph, has seen very little change in population over the past 20 years. In 1990, the Township's population dropped 3.4% falling from 9,961 in 1980 to 9,613 in 1990. From 1990 to 2000, the Township's population growth rose to 4.47%. Examining the Township's figures alone, it would appear that the area is seeing very little growth.

***Table 2: Population***

| Municipality | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | % Change 1990-2000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **St. Joseph Charter Township** | **9,961** | **9,613** | **10,042** | **4.47%** |
| City of St. Joseph | 9,622 | 9,214 | 8,789 | -8.66% |
| Lincoln Township | 13,520 | 13,604 | 13,952 | 3.20% |
| Royalton Township | 3,046 | 3,135 | 3,888 | 27.64% |
| City of Benton Harbor | 14,707 | 12,818 | 11,182 | -23.97% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

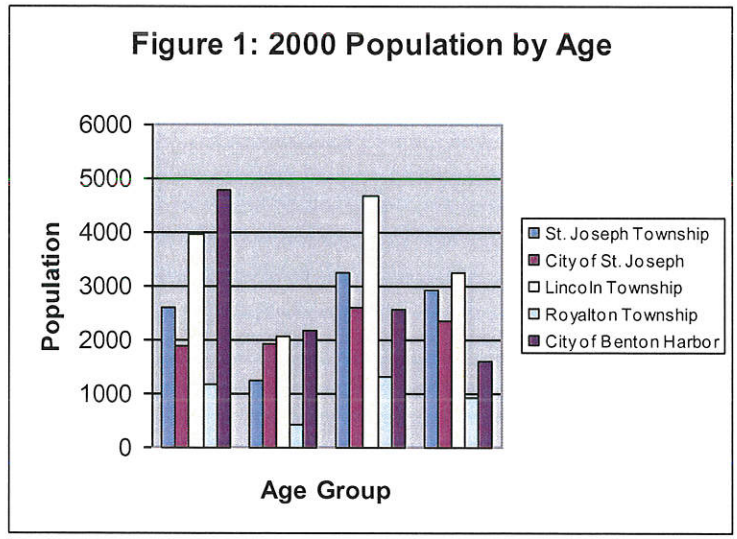
However, upon further inspection, it is evident that the entire Twin Cities Area is experiencing a trend similar to other areas in the state and nation. This "ex-urbanization" phenomenon is evident when the primary growth of an area is not within the city limits but in outlying areas. Table 2 indicates the percent change in population between 1980 to 2000 in the cities and townships surrounding St. Joseph Charter Township.

## Age

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. Surrounding municipalities differed slightly with Lincoln Township and the City of Benton Harbor, both having a large number of people in the less than 20 age group. However, the trend that is already evident in St. Joseph Township is one that will impact the entire Twin Cities area in the future. This trend is one of an aging population. The aging of the "Baby Boomers" coupled with the fact that

people are living longer, will help to shape the way this part of the state continues to develop. Figure 1 shows the population by age for the St. Joseph Township and the surrounding areas.

This 5-year plan is an attempt to view the recreational needs and wants of an older population. While youthful activities are still the first options that come to mind when asking about recreation, it is the baby boomers that will have the most need for appropriate activities. The Township must begin planning and putting the facilities in place during the next five to ten years in order to remain the attractive community it is now.




| | <20 | 20-34 | 35-54 | 55+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age Group** | **<20** | **20-34** | **34-54** | **55+** |
| St. Joseph Township | 2594 | 1262 | 3246 | 2940 |
| City of St. Joseph | 1896 | 1916 | 2622 | 2355 |
| Lincoln Township | 3953 | 2063 | 4677 | 3259 |
| Royalton Township | 1194 | 436 | 1321 | 937 |
| City of Benton Harbor | 4791 | 2188 | 2584 | 1619 |

# Persons with Disabilities

As part of the 1990 Census, mobility and self-care limitations for persons 16 years and over who are not institutionalized was reported. In 1990, there were 66 people in St. Joseph Charter Township between the ages of 16 and 64 that suffered from a mobility limitation, 70 people within the same age group that suffered from a self-care limitation, and 25 people who suffered from both mobility and self-care limitation. Of those individuals ages 65 and over, 110 had a mobility limitation; 124 a self-care limitation; and 93 suffered a mobility and self-care limitation. For the 2000 Census, the persons with disabilities increased to a total of 1,465 persons which equates to 15.2% of the Township

population. Of the ages of 16-64, there were 187 that suffered from a mobility limitation, 128 that suffered from a self-care limitation, and 92 that suffer from both mobility and self-care limitation. It is a significant goal of the planning process to address the recreational needs of those persons with all abilities and disabilities. Therefore, the planning process, assessment and the future needs of the recreational facilities in the Township will accommodate this segment of the community and further incorporate activities and apparatuses to attract the aging population, senior citizens and people with all abilities through the planned improvements of the parks and recreational amenities. The Township has a good relationship with the Senior Center and wants to provide opportunities for all ages.

## Race and Ethnicity

For the first time in history, respondents to the 2000 decennial census were able to indicate each race with which they identify themselves. In previous censuses, respondents were asked to identify with only one race. The results presented in Figures 2 and 3 reflect the population by race for St. Joseph Charter Township and surrounding areas.

A majority of the population in St. Joseph Charter Township, as well as in the surrounding townships, identified themselves as White alone or in combination with one or more other races. Blacks or African Americans make up the next largest segment of the population in both the St. Joseph Charter Township and the Twin Cities area; however; the overwhelming majority of Blacks or African Americans live within the City of Benton Harbor.

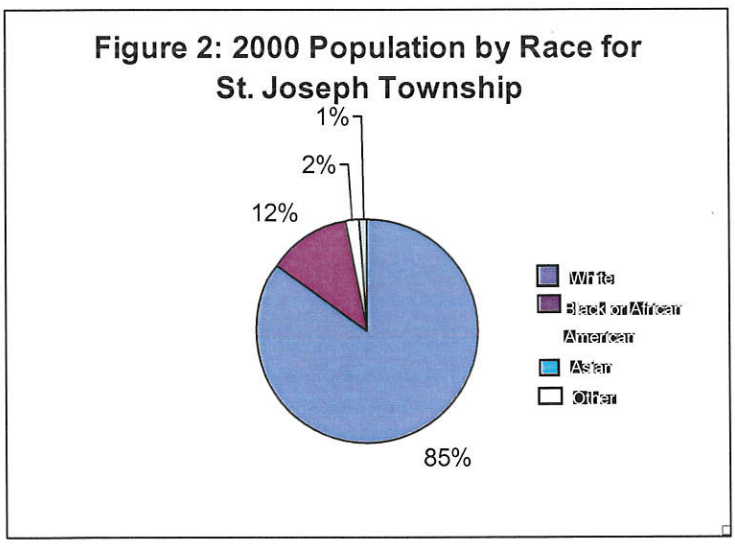
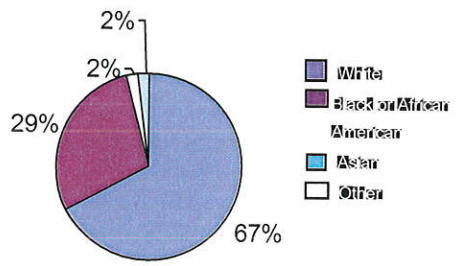


**Figure 3: Population by Race for the Twin Cities Area (Excluding St. Joseph Township)**




A concept that can be confusing is the difference between Race and Hispanic origin. Hispanic origin refers to one's ethnicity. One who considers himself to be of Hispanic origin is from or has ancestors that were from Spanish-speaking countries. In St. Joseph Charter Township, 1% of the population identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin.

# Housing

There are 4,271 housing units in St. Joseph Charter Township according to Census 2000 with an occupancy rate of 95.9%. A percentage of the vacancy is due to the presence of homes used only occasionally for recreational and seasonal purposes. In 2000, one hundred seventy seven homes were classified as vacant due to seasonal purposes, which represents nearly four (4) percent of all the housing units in St. Joseph Charter Township.

Owner-occupied units represent 89.5% of the housing units in the Township. This means that only 10.5% percent of the housing units in St. Joseph Charter Township are renter occupied. This helps to identify the kind of recreation needs St. Joseph Charter Township should consider in this planning process.

# Income

***Table 3: Median Household Income in 2000***

| | **Median Household Income** |
|---|---|
| **St. Joseph Charter Township** | **$54,158.00** |
| City of St. Joseph | $37,032.00 |
| Lincoln Township | $53,718.00 |
| Royalton Township | $69,375.00 |
| City of Benton Harbor | $17,471.00 |

The median household income in and around the Twin Cities reflects a wide range in the 2000 Census. Table 3 depicts that the median household income was $54,158 for St. Joseph Charter Township, which was the second highest in the area.

***Table 4: 2000 Households by Income***

| Income Level | % of St. Joseph Charter Township's Households |
|---|---|
| $0 - $14,999 | 8.6% |
| $15,000 - $24,999 | 11.2% |
| $25,000 - $34,999 | 10.1% |
| $35,000 - $49,999 | 15.6% |
| $50,000 - $74,999 | 23.0% |
| $75,000 and over | 31.5% |

As the median household income level indicates, there are a fare number of households in St. Joseph Charter Township with high-level income levels. However, there are also a large number of households at lower income levels as well. Table 4 details the breakdown of households by income level for St. Joseph Charter Township in 2000. This large range of income levels can be attributed in part to the wide range of job types and employment opportunities that can be found in and around the Twin Cities. Over the past decade there have been significant gains in the percentage of household income above $35,000. The strongest gains have been in the $45,000 - $74,999 and in the $75,000 and over levels.

***Table 5: 2000 Poverty by Age for St. Joseph Charter Township***

| Age | # Below Poverty Level | % of Population |
|---|---|---|
| Under 5 | 24 | 0.0025% |
| 5 to 17 | 148 | 0.0151% |
| 18 to 64 | 153 | 0.0156% |
| 65 and over | 55 | 0.0058% |
| | Total | 3.9080.% |

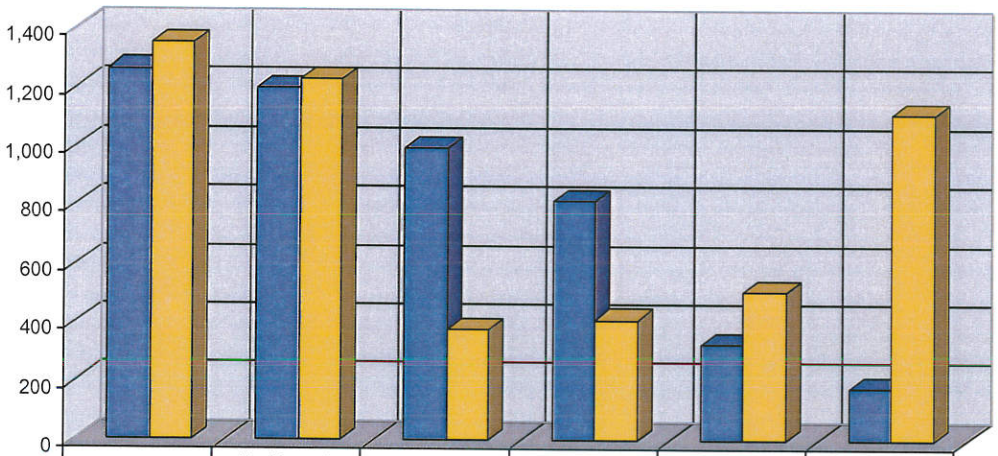
In 2000, poverty status was determined for St. Joseph Charter Township by the United States Census Bureau, 96.092% of the residents were determined to be above poverty level. Table 5 shows the poverty status for St. Joseph Charter Township in 2000 by age.

# Employment Trends

Employment in St. Joseph is diverse, and there is not one sector that controls a majority of the workforce. Figure 4 shows the breakdown of employment by industry in 2000. Manufacturing was the largest employment category, employing 29.2% of employed persons over 16 years old. This category includes manufacturing of both durable and non-durable goods. Health and education was the second largest sector employing 23.6% of the workforce. The third largest category was retail and wholesale trade with 9.4% of the workforce. Other categories include Professional with 8.3%, which is business and

finance primarily, Construction, Agriculture, Utilities and Other with 3.2%, 0.3%, 6.6% and 4.6% respectively.

**Employment by Industry**
**1990-2000 Comparison**




| | Manufacturing | Health and Education | Retail | Professional | Construction, Ag. and Utilities | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1990 | 1,265 | 1,202 | 998 | 819 | 331 | 183 |
| 2000 | 1,357 | 1,230 | 378 | 413 | 506 | 1,113 |

Unemployment in recent years has fluctuated throughout the United States and Michigan. St. Joseph Charter Township however, has been relatively immune to this change in the economy. Table 6 shows that St. Joseph Charter Township had an average unemployment rate of 2.2% in 1999 and an average of 2.1% in 2000. The 2007 average for the year was 3.1%.

***Table 6: Unemployment Rates***

| | 2007 Average | 2000 Average | 1999 Average |
|---|---|---|---|
| **St. Joseph Charter Township** | **3.1** | **2.1** | **2.2** |
| City of St. Joseph | 1.6 | 1.2 | 1.3 |
| Lincoln Township | 2.3 | 1.8 | 2.0 |
| Royalton Township | 5.4 | 3.3 | 3.5 |
| City of Benton Harbor | 21.2 | 16.9 | 22.1 |
| Berrien County | 6.1 | 3.8 | 4.0 |
| Michigan | 6.9 | 3.6 | 3.8 |
| United States | 5.5 | 4.0 | 4.2 |

*Source: Michigan Department of Career Development – Labor Market Information*

# Administrative Structure

The St. Joseph Charter Township is organized under the Charter Township Act of 1947. As a Charter Township, it has additional local discretion and general taxing power greater than a township organized under General Law. See Attached Articles of Incorporation. The Township Board adopts an annual budget for Parks and Recreation. The Parks Committee will recommend spending priorities based on the five year recreation plan as adopted and amended, as appropriate.

The St. Joseph Charter Township Parks Committee is a four person committee comprised of volunteers from various interests in the Township. All committee work is done on a volunteer basis; there are no salaried positions.

Recreation members include:

- Denise Cook
- Dave Rindfield
- Ron Griffin
- Roger Seely

The Parks Committee studies parks-related issues and makes recommendations for action to the St. Joseph Charter Township Board of Trustees. The Parks Committee does not have direct supervision or authority over the Parks and Recreation Department. The Superintendent of the Parks and Recreation Department reports to the St. Joseph Charter Township Manager. The Township Manager is a professional manager hired by the St. Joseph Charter Township Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is the official, elected governing body authorized to adopt ordinances, enter into agreements and contracts, authorize expenditures and indebtedness, hire staff and take any other appropriate actions on behalf of the citizens of St. Joseph Charter Township.

Current funding of the Parks Department is through the appropriations of the St. Joseph Charter Township annual budget. Other funding sources may include, but are not limited to, MDNR grants, public and private foundation grants and/or awards, special appropriations and other forms of public finance. The current budget for the Parks Department and related activities is $297,005 for Fiscal Year 2017. The Township Fiscal Year is on the calendar basis. Budget requests are developed and advanced beginning in the latter part of the summer. The Fiscal Year begins January 1st of each year.

The Charter Township of St. Joseph collaborates with the neighboring townships of Royalton and Lincoln and the City of St. Joseph for development of areas adjacent to municipal boundaries and on a regional cooperative basis. The four entities recognize that the citizens within each of their respective boundaries do not differentiate when it comes to using available facilities.

# Recreation Inventory

The Township's park and recreational facilities were inventoried by Dave Rindfield, Supervisor of the Department of Public Works and verified by LaGrow Consulting through on site visual inspection. An inventory was also taken of surrounding community parks to assist in our planning phase for future development of the park including input from officials and residents of St. Joseph Charter Township. Included in the data collected are recreation facilities owned by schools, municipalities and County.

The Township has received funding from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for developing current parks.

## Accessibility Assessment

During the inventory phase of the parks and recreation plan development, evaluations included accessibility assessments using Michigan Department of Natural Resources standards. It is the policy and procedure of the parks maintenance department to purchase and/or construct ADA compliant playground equipment as part of its routine maintenance programming. Each park was scored and is described as follows:

**St. Joseph Charter Township Recreation Facilities**

| *Name* | *Description* | *Facilities* |
|---|---|---|
| Eaton Park | Located off of Lincoln Avenue this park is primarily used for organized athletics although there are many other facilities that can be utilized for other activities. The park is 22.5 acres and is the headquarters for the Township's maintenance crew.<br><br>Accessibility Rating: 2- Some of the facilities/ park meets accessibility guidelines. Due to its evenness of terrain and pavement. | ❖ Information board and signage<br>❖ 6 baseball & softball fields<br>❖ Concession stand<br>❖ Storage building<br>❖ 3 tennis courts<br>❖ 1 basketball court<br>❖ 2 shelters<br>❖ 6 dugouts<br>❖ 19 bleachers<br>❖ 6 backstop/fences<br>❖ 25 picnic tables<br>❖ 12 park benches<br>❖ 2 grills<br>❖ 1 play structure<br>❖ Open play areas<br>❖ 9 swings<br>❖ 3 slides<br>❖ 2 bike racks<br>❖ 2 restrooms<br>❖ Trash cans |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | ❖ Water fountain<br>❖ Paved access and parking<br>❖ Walking trail |
| Carronde Park | Located at the end of River Bend directly on the St. Joseph River this park is very popular for summer water sports. The boat launch in the park is public and is operated by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Carronde Park is 19.05 acres and provides a large amount of open space along the river.<br><br>Accessibility Rating: 3 - Most of the facilities and park meet accessibility guidelines with level entrances and handicap equipped restrooms and shelters. | ❖ Information board and signage<br>❖ 2 play structures<br>❖ 6 swings<br>❖ 2 slides<br>❖ Monkey bars<br>❖ Sandbox<br>❖ 1 shelter-pavilion<br>❖ 9 grills<br>❖ 1 boat launch/dock<br>❖ 12 park benches<br>❖ 20 picnic tables<br>❖ 2 restrooms<br>❖ Water fountain<br>❖ 3 Tennis courts<br>❖ 1 softball field<br>❖ 2 bleachers<br>❖ 1 backstop/fence<br>❖ 1 storage/bldg.<br>❖ Trash cans<br>❖ Paved access and parking<br>❖ Abundant open space<br>❖ Walking trail |
| Knauf Park | This linear park located at Vineland Road was acquired using Township and donated monies for limited development. Nature trails going through wooded areas connect with neighboring communities. Development is ongoing.<br><br>Accessibility Rating: 2 - Some of the facilities/park meets accessibility guidelines. Due to its unevenness in parts of the trails and width of the trail it may be more difficult to explore the terrain in some areas without pavement, however this trail does not have any stairs and is all at ground level. | ❖ 1 picnic table<br>❖ 20 bird houses<br>❖ 5 park benches<br>❖ Access to walking trail |
| Township | Located behind the St. Joseph | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Hall Washington Ave. | Township Hall, this 5 acre green space is mainly used by residents who live within close proximity to the hall. By covenant and policy, there are no permanent athletic structures (i.e. soccer goals, backstops) on this property.<br><br>Accessibility Rating: 3 - Most of the facilities/park meet accessibility guidelines due to its level terrain. | |
| Napier Park | .3 acres neighborhood park<br><br>Accessibility Rating: 3 - Most of the facilities/park meet accessibility guidelines due to its level terrain. | ❖ Signage<br>❖ 2 swings<br>❖ Baby swings<br>❖ 1 slide<br>❖ 2 monkey bars<br>❖ 1 merry-go-round<br>❖ 1 teeter totter<br>❖ 1 table<br>❖ Sandbox<br>❖ Open play areas<br>❖ 4 park benches<br>❖ Trash can<br>❖ Paved access road |
| Kedzie Park | .3 acres, neighborhood park<br><br>Accessibility Rating: 3 - Most of the park is accessible; however, there are no handicap ply swings. The access road is paved and there are sidewalks in the area. | ❖ Signage<br>❖ 1 table<br>❖ 2 park benches<br>❖ Play structures<br>❖ Swings<br>❖ Sandboxes<br>❖ Open play areas<br>❖ Water fountain<br>❖ Bike rack<br>❖ Trash can<br>❖ Paved access road |
| Sandra Terrace Park | .3 acres, neighborhood park<br><br>Accessibility Rating: 3 – Most of the park is accessible. | ❖ Signage<br>❖ 2 swings<br>❖ 1 slide<br>❖ 1 monkey bars<br>❖ Open play areas<br>❖ 1 table<br>❖ 1 park bench<br>❖ Trash can<br>❖ Paved access road |
| Ann Park | .3 acres, neighborhood park | ❖ Signage<br>❖ 1 play structure |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Accessibility Rating: 3 – Most of the park is accessible. | ❖ 3 swings<br>❖ 1 monkey bars<br>❖ Merry-go-round<br>❖ Sandboxes<br>❖ Open play areas<br>❖ 1 table<br>❖ Trash can<br>❖ Paved access road |
| McLin Park | Located off of Lincoln Avenue McLin Park is popular recreation area for the Township residents.<br><br>Accessibility Rating: 3 – Most of the park is accessible. | ❖ Signage<br>❖ 1 bike rack<br>❖ 1 play structure<br>❖ Sandboxes<br>❖ Open play areas<br>❖ 4 swings<br>❖ Water fountain<br>❖ 1 picnic table<br>❖ 2 park benches<br>❖ Trash can<br>❖ Paved access road |
| Valley View Drive | .3 acres, neighborhood open space; access to Benson Property. | ❖ Undeveloped |
| Benson Property | .3 acres, this parcel is located at Shoreham Drive giving access to the Benson Property Green Space. | ❖ Undeveloped |
| Maiden Lane Community Park | This 32-acre parcel was acquired by the Township and is currently being developed. The plans for the park are to primarily use it for soccer but to allow for other recreation as well.<br><br>Accessibility Rating: 3 - Most of the facilities/park meets accessibility guidelines due to its level terrain and handicap accessible restrooms. | ❖ Information Board and Signage<br>❖ Open play areas<br>❖ 2 park benches<br>❖ 6 picnic table<br>❖ Paved access road and parking<br>❖ 8 soccer fields<br>❖ 3 bleachers<br>❖ Restrooms<br>❖ Concession stand<br>❖ Storage/bldg.<br>❖ Trash cans<br>❖ Water fountain<br>❖ Dog lure course<br>❖ Walking trail |
| Tall Grass Prairie Park | This 12-acre parcel is located at Lincoln Ave. and I-94. It was acquired using Township monies and donations. Development is limited to | ❖ Undeveloped |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Nature Trails connecting neighboring residential areas.<br><br>Accessibility Rating: This is not developed and generally there is no accessibility to the property for park use with or without handicap. | |
| Trail Lane | This 1.5 acre parcel located at Trail Lane was acquired using Township monies as potential access to the nature trail system.<br><br>Accessibility Rating: This is not developed and generally there is no accessibility to the property for park use with or without handicap. | ❖ Undeveloped |
| Cleveland Ave Park | This 3.4 acre parcel along Hickory Creek is ideal for enjoying the water.<br><br>Accessibility Rating: 2-Some of the facilities/park meets accessibility guidelines. | ❖ Kayak/canoe<br>❖ Benches<br>❖ ADA picnic table<br>❖ Grills<br>❖ Picnic table<br>❖ Parking<br>❖ Trash receptacles |
| Nature Trail | Linear open trail beginning at Knauf Park through natural wooded areas.<br><br>Accessibility Rating: 2 - Some of the facilities/park meets accessibility guidelines. Due to its unevenness in parts of the trails and width of the trail it may be more difficult to explore the terrain in some areas without pavement, however this trail does not have any stairs and is all at ground level. | ❖ Information Board and Signage<br>❖ Open play areas<br>❖ 1 picnic table<br>❖ 3 park benches<br>❖ Trash can<br>❖ Paved access road and parking |

***Private Land with Township Public Access***

| ***Name*** | ***Description*** | ***Facilities*** |
|---|---|---|
| Hickory Creek Area | This .5 acre property is owned by AEP. Township has authorization to use this property as neighborhood access to the Land Conservancy nature trails using the north side of Creek for accessibility. | ❖ 1 walking/jogging trail |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Accessibility Rating: 3 – Most of the facilities/park meet accessibility guidelines. | |
| Niles Road to Knauf Park | A .5 acre parcel owned by AEP. Abandoned railroad right of way used as linear park connection to entire nature trail. AEP has given the Township permission to consider this property as use and access to the Wilderness Park Nature Trail System.<br><br>Accessibility Rating: 2- Some of the facilities/park meet accessibility guidelines. | ❖ Walking/jogging trail<br>❖ Nature trail |
| Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy Area | This 34-acre property is owned by the Southwestern Michigan Land Conservatory. The land is primarily wetlands. SMLC has given the Township permission to consider this property as use and access to the AEP and Wilderness Nature Trail System. | ❖ Not Developed |

Ranking System used to access the facilities/park and access routes to them.
1 = None of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines.
2 = Some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines.
3 = Most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines.
4 = The entire park meets accessibility guidelines.
5 = The entire park was developed/renovated using the principals for universal design.

***Private Recreation/Public Facilities within St. Joseph Charter Township***

| ***Name*** | ***Description*** | ***Facilities*** |
|---|---|---|
| Riverview Park | City of St. Joseph- Located in St. Joseph Township off of Niles Road | ❖ Pavilion<br>❖ Softball<br>❖ Baseball<br>❖ Picnic Area<br>❖ Playground |
| Shoreham Downs | Village of Shoreham – Located in St. Joseph off of Wissing Lane | ❖ Tennis Courts<br>❖ Basketball<br>❖ Play Structure<br>❖ Walking Path<br>❖ Picnic Tables |
| Estate Park | Located within the Estate subdivision | ❖ 1 pavilion |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | this 2.5 acre park is utilized only by the residents of the Estates. | ❖ 1 volleyball court<br>❖ 1 play structure<br>❖ 1 walking/jogging trail |
| Churchill Farms | Located in the Churchill Farms subdivision | ❖ Pavilion<br>❖ Play structure |
| Berrien Hills Country Club | 96 acre | ❖ 18 hole golf course<br>❖ 2 tennis courts<br>❖ Outdoor swimming pool |
| Pier 1000 Marina | 13.5 acre | ❖ Marina/Fishing |
| Eagle Pointe Harbor | 65 acre | ❖ Marina/Fishing |
| South Shore Health and Racquet Ball Court | Located on Tennis Court Drive | ❖ 4 Indoor Tennis Courts<br>❖ 4 Racquetball Courts<br>❖ Indoor swimming pool |
| Industrial Park Walking Path | Nye's Industrial Park | ❖ Walk Path connecting site to Parks System |

***School Recreation Facilities within St. Joseph Charter Township***

| *Name* | *Description* | *Facilities* |
|---|---|---|
| Brown Elementary | On Garden Lane | ❖ Athletic Field<br>❖ Basketball Court Indoor and Outdoor<br>❖ Soccer Field<br>❖ 12 Swings |
| Fair Plain West and Northwest Elementary | 2 sites | ❖ Athletic Field<br>❖ Basketball Court Indoor and Outdoor<br>❖ 9 Swings |
| North Lincoln ISD School | Located at 3301 Lincoln Ave. | ❖ Athletic Field<br>❖ Basketball Courts, Indoor and Outdoor<br>❖ 4 Soccer Fields |
| Lake Michigan Catholic Elementary School | Located at 3200 Washington Ave. | ❖ 2 Soccer Fields<br>❖ Athletic Field<br>❖ 3 Outdoor Basketball Courts<br>❖ 8 Swings |

***Public Recreation Facilities adjacent to St. Joseph Charter Township***

| *Name* | *Description* | *Facilities* |
|---|---|---|
| YMCA | Located on the corner of Hollywood Rd. and Maiden Lane | ❖ Indoor swimming pool<br>❖ Indoor basketball courts |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | ❖ Indoor track<br>❖ Racquetball courts<br>❖ Weight room<br>❖ Baseball field |
| Benton Harbor High School | Located on the corner of Colfax Ave. and Empire Ave. | ❖ Indoor swimming pool<br>❖ Indoor basketball courts<br>❖ Football field<br>❖ Baseball field |
| Lake Michigan Lookout Park | Owned by the City of St. Joseph | ❖ Lookout Structure |
| Riverview Front Park | Owned by the City of Benton Harbor | ❖ 1 Boat Launch<br>❖ 1 Fishing site |
| Lakeland Wellness Center | Located at the corner of Hollywood Rd. and Maiden Lane | ❖ Walking Paths |
| Grand Mere State Park | Notre Dame Ave. at I-94 | ❖ Lake Michigan Beach |
| Silver Beach County Park | In City of St. Joseph | ❖ Outdoor volleyball courts<br>❖ Lake Michigan Beach<br>❖ Playgrounds |
| Rocky Gap County Park | Located off of M-63 | ❖ Lake Michigan Beach and access |
| Jean Klock City Park | City of Benton Harbor | ❖ Lake Michigan Beach |
| St. Joseph High School | 2521 Stadium St. | ❖ Indoor swimming pool<br>❖ 3 Baseball fields<br>❖ 5 tennis courts<br>❖ 1 football field<br>❖ Indoor basketball courts |
| Lions Beach | City of St. Joseph | ❖ Lake Michigan Beach |
| Kiwanis Park | City of St. Joseph | ❖ Tennis courts<br>❖ Skate boarding facility |
| Niles Ave. | City of St. Joseph | ❖ Morton School Park |
| Whittlsey Park | City of St. Joseph | ❖ Outdoor ice skating pavilion |
| Tiscornia Park | City of St. Joseph | ❖ Lake Michigan Beach |
| Benton Township Boat Launch | I-94 at River Rd. | ❖ Boat launch on St. Joseph River |
| North lake | Lincoln Charter Township | ❖ Picnic area |
| Lincoln Township | Cleveland at Lemon Creek | ❖ Baseball |
| Lincoln | Town Hall | ❖ Volleyball |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Township | | ❖ Soccer |
| Lincoln Township | Cleveland South of John Beers Road | ❖ Baseball |
| Lincoln Township | Hickory Creek at Glenlord Road | ❖ Nature trail |
| Lincoln Township | Glenlord Beach | ❖ Beach on Lake Michigan |
| Lincoln Township | Nature Park and Trails Notre Dame Ave. | ❖ Lake Michigan Beach |
| Royalton Township | Hollywood at John Beers | ❖ Volleyball<br>❖ Picnic |

# Description of the Planning Process

The Township instituted the Systems Approach to Planning whereby we assessed the park, recreation and open space needs of the community for meeting the physical, spatial and facility requirements to satisfy the needs of the community. Our approach incorporated public input, surrounding communities input, surveys, community workshops and public meetings.

The decisions of parks and recreation facilities in St. Joseph Charter Township are made by the citizens through the appointed and elected officials of the community. These decisions are made based on a participatory process and common principles of public involvement.

The Township had many steps to arrive at a Parks and Recreation Plan including:

1. The Township utilized its established Parks Committee.
2. The Township hires a consultant and consultant conducts a site analysis looking at topography and physical constraints on the land to determine areas suitable for development and those areas to remain in a natural state.
3. Through input from the Committee the types of facilities to be developed in the park are identified based on the local needs and the suitability of the site.
4. A survey is disseminated to residents/key stakeholders and interest groups of the Township through their Facebook page as well as utilizing Survey Monkey.
5. A Preliminary Plan is developed and recommended by the Committee.
6. A public meeting is held to present the Plan and solicit comments.
7. Plan is reviewed by the County Parks and Recreation Commission for its input.
8. Plan is presented to the St. Joseph Charter Township Board of Trustees for its review and a finding of consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.
9. Plan is presented to the St. Joseph Charter Township Board of Trustees for final approval.

As the parks and recreation plan author, LaGrow Consulting worked closely with the Township, the parks and recreation plan committee, American Electric Power, Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy, Royalton Township, Benton Township, St. Joseph Schools,

Lakeshore Schools, Lincoln Township, and the City of St Joseph to gather existing parks and recreation information that would be needed to provide a coordinated foundation for parks design.

Utilizing aerial photography, digital photographs, surveys and more were used to compile the information to assess current and future parks needs.

The Township's Master Plan was updated on July 10, 2017 and provides the framework for long-range goals, objectives, and policies related to the development of the Township. Within Chapter 2 – Community Profile is a section on open space, parks, and recreational facilities. The plan includes detailed land use plans for the Township with a five (5) year outlook. This Plan will be adopted as a stand-alone functional plan to supplement the Master Plan.

## Description of Public Input Process

Public involvement in the Township planning process included surveys that were mailed to a randomly selected number of registered voters, surveys sent to local recreation providers, utilization of a survey through Facebook and Survey Monkey, availability of the draft plan with a process for written comments at the Township Hall and public Library, a series of public workshops and presentations at several commission/advisory group meetings. All of the public presentations were widely advertised, including written notification to a large group of stakeholders and meeting postings.

The meetings were facilitated by Denise Cook and Cynthia LaGrow describing the findings of the plan, the survey and the draft goals and action program. Printed copies of the plan were made available to the attending public at all Township meetings. The Township Clerk also recorded comments from the public.

The comments received during the above mentioned public input opportunities were broadly directed at the following areas:

- Overwhelming support for all types of trails and the need to recognize the level of volunteer support for the trail and the regional significance of the trail in terms of tourism and economic benefits.

- Overwhelming support from the mountain biking community and the need to recognize the level of volunteer support for mountain bike trails, and the lack of adequate opportunities to meet the demand.

- The need to support the renovation of park infrastructure and community-based recreation.

- The need to support the acquisition of critical properties and environmentally significant natural areas.

- The need to continually monitor and safeguard existing parks from encroachment by development and outside pressures to convert parkland to non-recreation uses.

- The importance of Township/Neighborhood park and recreation providers to incorporate environmental education and the use of environmentally sensitive elements in the design and development of parks that could include low-impact or "green" development.

- The focus on health and wellness to use the parks systems as a way to keep the family in shape and healthy. As well as a family bonding tool and the ability for people to get to know each other and therefore watch out for one another in the community considering the world is evolving with so many random acts of violence.

- The survey this year showed a growing popularity of international sports such as cricket, flying disc sports and the need to have dedicated grounds for specific sports.

Various comments also were received related to wildlife management, cooperation with planning agencies, the use of parks as an economic development tool, and other items may be considered more appropriate in other management plans specific to that purpose.

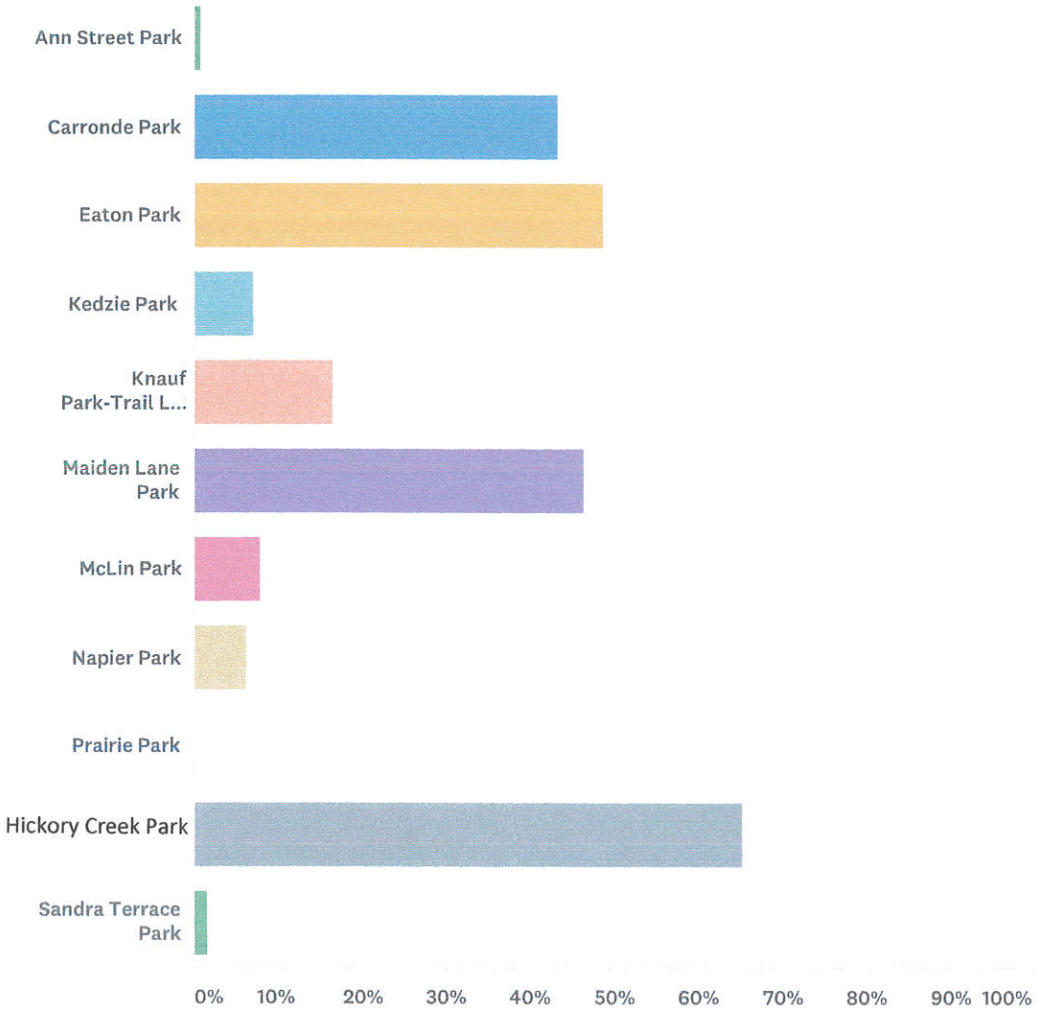
## SURVEY OF COMMUNITY

The Township utilized social media to broadcast the opportunity for input on the public survey. This presented the best opportunity to target a large, diverse population for the survey. There was a diverse representation. The responses to the questionnaire served as the starting point for developing the initial projects and priorities for this Plan.

1. Do you or any of your family use the Township Parks? (Which ones?)

# Q1 Do you or any of your family use the Township Parks? (which ones)?

Answered: 127 Skipped: 2




| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Ann Street Park | 0.79% | 1 |
| Carronde Park | 43.31% | 55 |
| Eaton Park | 48.82% | 62 |
| Kedzie Park | 7.09% | 9 |
| Knauf Park-Trail Lane Park | 16.54% | 21 |
| Maiden Lane Park | 46.46% | 59 |
| McLin Park | 7.87% | 10 |
| Napier Park | 6.30% | 8 |
| Prairie Park | 0.00% | 0 |
| Hickory Creek Park | 65.35% | 83 |

2. If applicable, please list the ages of the children in your immediate family that use the park.

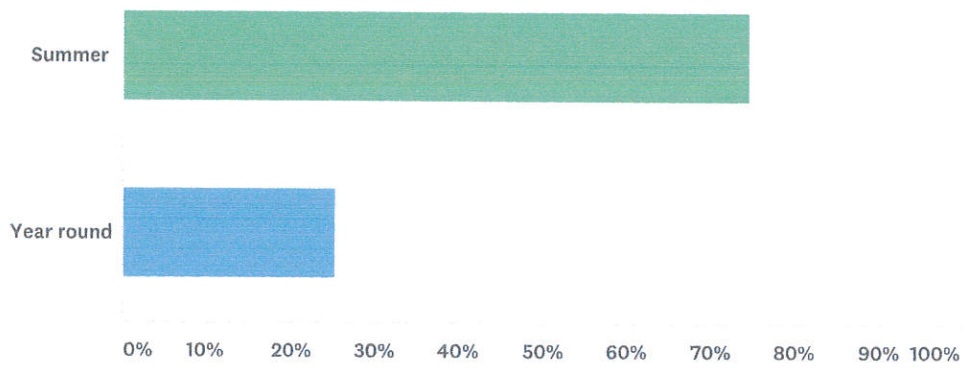
   Respondents of the survey had children ranging in ages 1-18 years old.

   Many of the respondents who did not have children did however, reference their grandchildren and the desire to utilize the parks to provide entertainment for visiting relatives.

3. If you use the park, do you use it only during the summer months or year-round?

# Q3 If you use the park, do you use it during the summer or year round?

Answered: 126 Skipped: 3




| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Summer | 74.60% | 94 |
| Year round | 25.40% | 32 |
| TOTAL | | 126 |

4. What specifically do you like about the Parks (size, equipment, nearness, etc.)?
   - Centrally located
   - Walking and biking areas
   - Playground equipment at parks
   - Pavilions for shelter
   - Size, beauty, peaceful, variety, cleanliness and quality
   - Facilities at the parks including grills, waste bags, concession stands, and bathrooms
   - Maiden Lane is great for soccer activities
   - Updates and Fields at Eaton Park
   - Knauf Trail improvements
   - River access
   - Parking

5. What specifically do you not like, if anything, about Parks (i.e. landscape, equipment, etc.)? (Please identify the park.)
   - Noise from highway and from other park goers at Eaton and Maiden
   - Most parks need more playground equipment
   - More/better/repair/add diaper changers in bathrooms of parks
   - Unpaved parking at Maiden Lane
   - Aging roadways at all parks
   - Pavilions –not enough
   - Lack of basketball and tennis at Carronde
   - Kedzie park is overgrown and in disrepair/dangerous
   - Hours need to be extended so you can access parks year round
   - Dogs off their leashes-dog feces
   - Napier Park-metal slides burn skin/teeter totter is broken-needs drinking fountain
   - Disrepair/litter
   - Mosquitoes at all parks

6. Would you like any additional playground equipment added to the park, or any removed?
   - Playground equipment at Maiden Lane
   - Playground equipment at Carronde Park
   - Add a concrete pitch for cricket

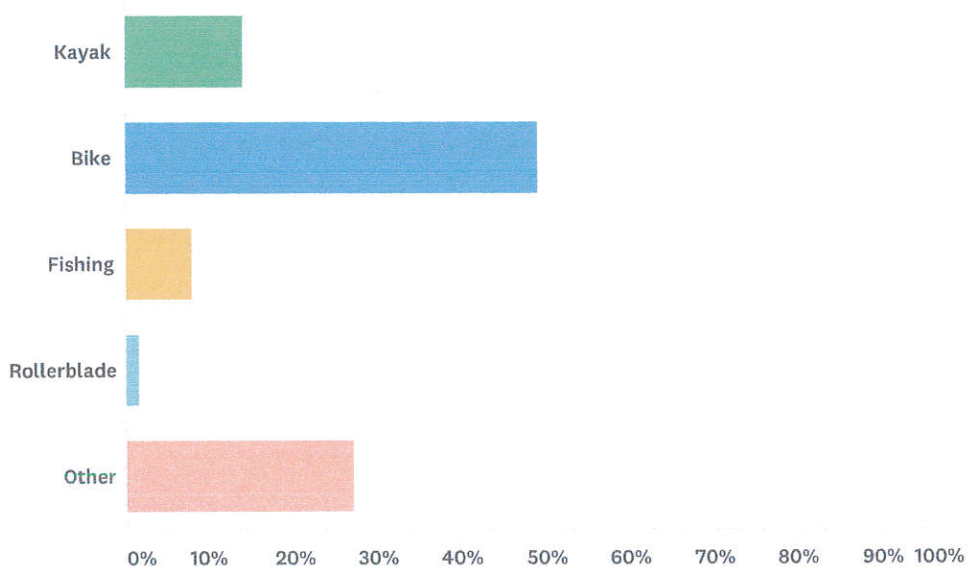
7. Would you like to see any other park items added to the Parks, (i.e., picnic tables, benches, trash cans, etc.)?
   - Cricket needs a dedicated grounds
   - Picnic tables at all parks
   - Benches at all parks including Knauf
   - Covered areas for shade from sun
   - Grills at all parks
   - Electronic score boards
   - Updated bathrooms with doors on all stalls
   - Add parkour – ultimate course with stations for different fitness apparatuses
   - Adult swings or "Love Swings" for two
   - Add primitive restroom to Knauf Trail-porta potty
   - Enclosed facility to enjoy year round events at all parks
   - Add a dog run to Maiden Lane

- Add more paved trails for people who are disabled
- Tether Ball added to parks

8. What type of recreational property do you own? (Bike, Fishing Equipment, etc).

# Q8 What type of recreation property do you own?

Answered: 114 Skipped: 15




| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Kayak | 14.04% | 16 |
| Bike | 49.12% | 56 |
| Fishing | 7.89% | 9 |
| Rollerblade | 1.75% | 2 |
| Other | 27.19% | 31 |
| TOTAL | | 114 |

9. What one action could the Township take to improve the amount of outdoor recreation opportunities?

- Link trails for hiking and biking to all other communities
- Provide maps and schedules of activities at the parks
- Keep them fee free
- More accessible for ADA
- Periodic winter plowings
- Add water sports to Carronde Park
- Add entertainment to get the public out to the parks at least once a year
- More trees at Maiden Lane and Eaton
- Utilize the water more
- Listing/communication of the programs on website and mailings to inform public on who is using the park and what programs are available
- Focus on health and fitness more
- Diversify Maiden Lane park for other activities
- Add reflective markers at drain at Eaton at the pedestrian entrance
- Keep grass cut and use bagger if long grass
- Add a dirt bike track

10. What one action could the Township take to increase your household's participation in outdoor recreation?

- Add cricket league dedicated grounds
- Link the trails/sidewalks and improve the surface
- Encourage adult league use of parks and allocate specific times for adults only
- Increase hours of use at parks
- Add more playground equipment at all parks and keep it maintained/repaired
- Non-motorized vehicle trails
- Add Carronde boat launch and dock to allow for dedicated fishing
- Plan special events at parks to increase usage
- Add disk golf

11. What other broad initiative/direction would you propose to improve Township outdoor recreation over the next five years?

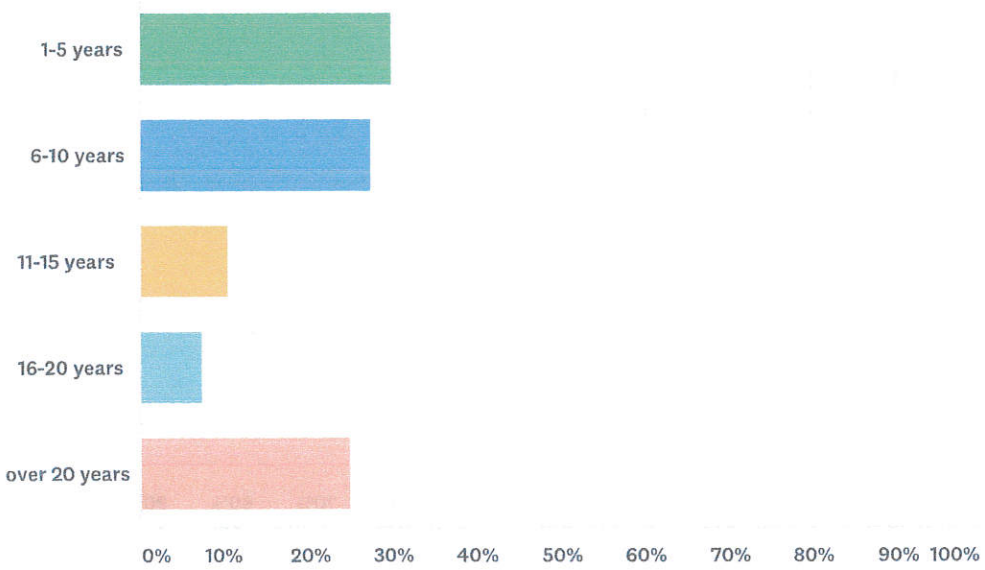
- Add cricket dedicated grounds to a park
- Link all trails/sidewalks
- Focus on health and wellness to encourage park usage
- Update and add more playground equipment
- Improve dugouts at Eaton Park
- Need more shade at all parks
- Add dedicated Lacrosse to a park
- Use volunteers to help maintain and repair parks
- Increase drainage at Eaton Park
- Add a water park or splash pad at a park
- Organize a community wide picnic each year or large event

- Add shock absorbing materials to playgrounds
- Improve the safety and cleanliness at all parks
- Add Wi-fi to parks so people can use health apps
- Parks millage in order to ensure upkeep of parks

12. How long have you lived in the Township or visited the parks in the Township?

# Q12 How long have you lived in the Township or visited the parks in the Township?

Answered: 124 Skipped: 5

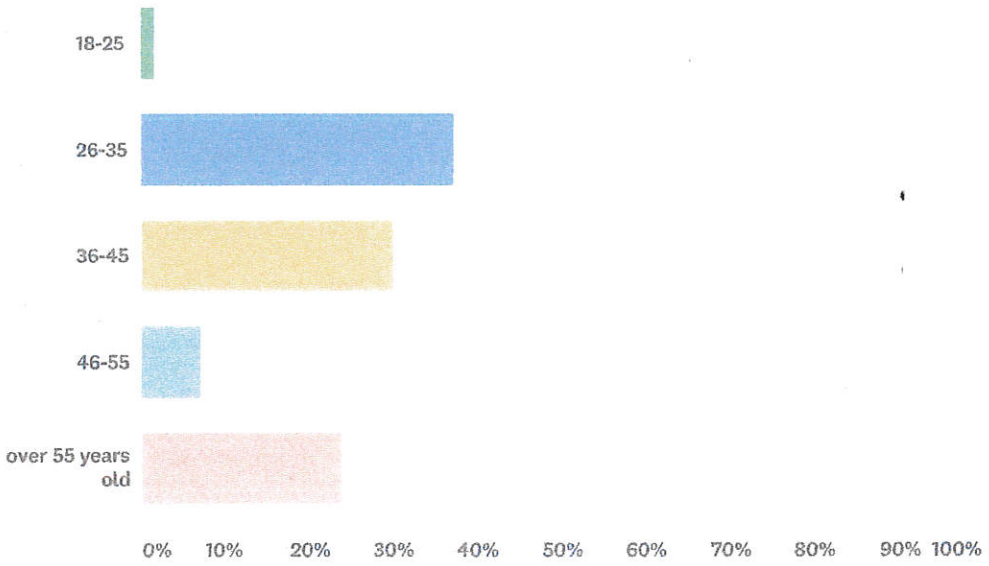



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| 1-5 years | 29.84% | 37 |
| 6-10 years | 27.42% | 34 |
| 11-15 years | 10.48% | 13 |
| 16-20 years | 7.26% | 9 |
| over 20 years | 25.00% | 31 |
| TOTAL | | 124 |

13. What is the age of the person or persons filling out this survey?

# Q13 What age is the person filling out this survey please?

Answered: 126 Skipped: 3




| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| 18-25 | 1.59% | 2 |
| 26-35 | 37.30% | 47 |
| 36-45 | 30.16% | 38 |
| 46-55 | 7.14% | 9 |
| over 55 years old | 23.81% | 30 |
| TOTAL | | 126 |

14. Please feel free to list any other concerns or opinions regarding this matter.
    - Add cricket dedicated grounds to a park
    - Add security/cameras/CCTV
    - Add flowers and landscaping at parks
    - Accessibility for non-drivers
    - Keep parks funded please
    - Make sure everyone uses a leash and picks up after their pets
    - Not repairing or replacing playground equipment could cost the Township undue liability
    - Stands for viewers outside of fields for all sports
    - Add online reservation system for parks
    - Add more trash receptacles and recycling
    - Graffiti
    - Treat all parks for ticks
    - You are doing a great job
    - Good work – keep it up

The final process included the following:

1. A presentation before the St. Joseph Charter Township Board of Trustee's, the constitutionally empowered body that provides guidance to the Parks and Recreation Committee, at which time public testimony was heard.
2. Submission of the final document to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

## Surrounding Communities

The Township believes in coordinated planning and this perspective requires thinking and planning beyond the board and committee. The coordination of recreation planning with a comprehensive view from all areas allows for a better understanding of current parks and recreation needs for current and future demographics and physical context of the community and region. We want to avoid duplication of effort and expensive parks and recreational facilities and give all communities involved a greater voice in planning the facilities to serve the entire region. Therefore, the Township also made the plan available to the Southwestern Michigan Planning Commission, County of Berrien, Lincoln Township, Royalton Township, Benton Township, Lakeshore Schools, St. Joseph Public Schools and the City of St. Joseph prior to final adoption for input and coordination of the future plans of the Township.

# Discussion of Community Findings

Critical to the success of the parks and recreation plan is the communication between the Township staff and officials, and surrounding municipalities, the school district, sports associations and the residents of the Township.

The Township involved the users of the parks and recreation facilities to assess the important characteristics of the community facilities.

### Eaton Park

Based on the community findings, Eaton Park received the most feedback due to its high utilization for youth baseball and softball. The park is used by the North Lincoln Youth Softball/Baseball Association, Lake Michigan Catholic Schools, St. Joseph Middle School, Michigan Lutheran Schools and public youth baseball and softball associations throughout Southwestern Michigan and South Bend, Indiana.

This area could include expand/improve existing and new playground equipment. In addition, this area is used by thousands of residents and visitors each year. A pedestrian pathway to link the park to the Lakeland Health Park with access on Symphony Drive and access to the YMCA.

The park can be a source for multi-uses for such agencies as the school and the North Lincoln Senior Center for a safe place for walking to improve health. For family members visiting the park, play areas, paths, and other natural amenities could be provided. Additional landscaping incorporating trees could be utilized to assist with the minimization of highway noise. Noise abatement may be a difficult task; however, this causes a distraction for the coaches and players. The existing path at the entrance of the park should be enhanced and continued throughout the park.

The Township started to improve the drainage of the Babe Ruth baseball field and added irrigation by Field E & F. Bathroom improvements were completed in 2017.

Fencing around the fields has been improved in the last year. As well as planting of 120 red maples to provide for shade at the fields.

Additionally, this year the Township did work with American Electric Power to install trees to assist with noise reduction and landscaping. Along with including Eaton Park as part of the overall non-motorized connector path system.

Furthermore, the Township has worked with the North Lincoln League to increase available fields for clinics and instructional leagues on Field C & F.

**Carronde Park**
Carronde Park is highly utilized with a picnic shelter used by many families and groups. Additional river access could be acquired to provide another boat launch and serve as a means for river rescue. This river access could serve as a new access roadway alleviating traffic congestion through a neighborhood off of Jakway Avenue near the Fairplain Intersection. The existing parking lot and drive needs resurfacing and expansion to accommodate the large groups that use the park. Landscaping needs enhancement at the park to provide shade, aesthetic improvements and separation of the parking areas from facilities.

Over the last several years the township has worked to improve the park that included dock restoration and updating the softball field.

**Maiden Lane Community Park**
St. Joseph Charter Township has a continuing relationship with the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) to develop additional soccer fields. The park can offer multi-uses to compliment the soccer activities. To achieve multi-uses, playground equipment should be added. A turf maintenance program with a university research facility should be reviewed to determine ways to keep the property up to pristine conditions with little maintenance. Landscaping at this park would improve the aesthetics, shade and breaks between parking areas and fields. Another area of review should be to capture surface water run-off to supply for the fields.

This year the Township worked with American Electric Power to plant trees as a source of noise reduction and landscaping.

Additionally, since the last parks and recreation plan was developed, the Township worked to obtain a grant to build a pavilion at the park.

The survey respondents provided an overwhelming desire to create dedicated grounds for a cricket field with a paved pitch area that would also include stands for the spectators outside of a fenced in area.

**Benson Property**
This property is 65 acres of vacant land that is adjacent to an existing private health club with hill and valley views along the Hickory Creek area. This property is proposed for further park expansion and could be used for access to a nature trail, indoor sports complex, additional baseball and softball fields, etc.

**Nature Trail**
This area of improvements will provide necessary linkage to the Southwestern Michigan Land Conservancy "Woodland Habitat Trail". The Woodland Habitat is over 32 acres of property running from downtown St. Joseph along the St. Joseph River to Hickory Creek through the Township's Knauf Park. The area of Knauf Park has a diverse habitat rich in forest, wetlands, and savannas supporting distinctive plants and animals such as Gray Fox, Scarlet Tanager, Box Turtle, Indigo Bunting, Wood Duck, Woodland Sunflower, Spiderwort, Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly and Big Bluestern Grass including fish such as Pike, Sunfish, and Trout. This area could serve as an educational opportunity, land conservation and a concentration for wildlife.

This year the Township spent $19,750 to repair wash out areas of the trails with 8' wide paths and 6" deep bases that was noticed by the public as evidenced through the survey respondents.

A planned future project will include a link Knauf Park and Trail, to Woodland Habitat Trail, June Trail Trace Section, Tall Grass Prairie Trail Section, Eaton/Maiden Lane Park Trail
Section.

The Hickory Creek section would include a bridge across the creek at Shoreham Drive. This improvement project will be coordinated with a sewer line replacement that runs along the west side of the creek. With proper planning and regional cooperation, the trail can start at the Knauf Park Trailhead and extend through the Township on Hickory Creek to the MDNR site where the Township provides custodial care with a future canoe livery moving to the City of St. Joseph to Clementines Restaurant, past the County jail and potentially to Silver Beach County Park.

The Nature Trail area will also incorporate collaboration with the Village of Shoreham for their 2011 Michigan Department of Transportation Enhancement Project that will include non-motorized pathways for a linkage between the City of St. Joseph and St. Joseph Charter Township. Improvements could include signage, clearing overgrown areas, lookout decks, bridges, fishing piers and canoe livery.

This trail area will also incorporate the Paw Paw River Watershed (PPRW) which is all of the land that drains into the Paw Paw River. The Southwestern Michigan Planning Commission is developing a management plan with a Clean Water Act Section 319 grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. The plan is intended to guide individuals, businesses, organizations and municipalities working cooperatively to build more environmentally and economically sustainable communities within the PPRW.

In addition, the trails system will be an avenue for regional cooperation with the City of St. Joseph and Lincoln Township. The City of St. Joseph discusses their John and Dede Howard Family Recreational Path expansion plans. The city would like to see linkages and access to the City Riverview Park in St. Joseph Township for its residents. Lincoln Township with the call for an area wide non-motorized trail along Hickory Creek and discussions of walkways at North Lake Park by Grand Mere, Community Center Park off of John Beers Road, 80-acre Park at Cleveland and Rockyweed Road and Rudnick Park at Glenlord Road.

Finally, the system of connected green space allows for the movement of wildlife, plants through propagation and people throughout the region. The connections are vital to the survival of many plant and animal species, especially as land is fragmented through development. Many respondents of the survey this year indicated that they were of a non-driving age and would like to have the trails combined in order to access schools, grocery stores and doctors' offices.

**Benson Property**
The Township needs to study the feasibility of public access and uses for the property that was donated for public use. Also included in the study should be options regarding changing any covenants and development restrictions place on this land.

**Hickory Creek Park**
The Township added this park in 2017 and started their partnership with the Southwest Michigan Realtors Association to install a kayak and canoe area, grills, ADA accessible picnic tables, benches, AEP parking barriers and trash receptacles.

**Park Funding Sources**
The St. Joseph Charter Township Parks and Recreation Committee should identify sustainable funding sources for current and expanded park opportunities. The committee should recommend financing scenarios including local government revenues, private funding, millage, fundraising, grants and assessments. The public survey indicated that some people whom have love for the environment or parks would like to volunteer their time to repair or maintain the parks system to assist the Township.

Also, the Township will be able to capitalize on the involvement with the City of St. Joseph through Riverview Park which is located off of Niles Avenue in the Township, but owned by the City of St. Joseph, which is utilized by the region. In addition, with the regional cooperation experienced through this planning process, the communities together could apply for regional grant opportunities.

# Goals and Objectives

The following are goals and policies set forth by the Township for the preservation, acquisition and development of parkland, recreation facilities and open space are based

on the social and physical characteristics of the community including a growth in population and change in the number of people who are physically challenged.

- Continue to protect recreational open space and resource lands.

- Make a variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities readily accessible to all of its citizens regardless of ability, and thereby contribute to their physical and mental well being.

- Recognize and strategically use parks and recreation facilities as amenities to make the Township a more desirable place to live, work and visit.

- Use Township investment in parks, recreation, and open space to complement and mutually support the broader goals and objectives of the master plans.

- 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.

- Preserve the rural landscape and natural resources of the Township.

- Provide physical links between public lands

- Major floodplains and stream valleys within growth areas designated in the Township's Plan should be acquired through fee-simple ownership to the Township.

- The Township shall continue to cooperate with local jurisdictions and associations in the provision of park and recreation services to avoid duplication of efforts and encourage maximum use of available resources.

- Preserving points of historic and scenic interest shall be considered in the development of parks and open space areas.

- The Township should continue developing stream valley parks such as Knauf Park, which may serve as vital greenways in residential areas.

- Park and recreation facilities shall be efficiently provided in the most needed locations and with the lowest possible expense to the taxpayer. Emphasis should be given to serving those areas designated for growth in the Township's Master Plan.

- Provide public access points to the river. Such property could be obtained in the following manners:
    - As part of the development process (i.e., land dedication/reservation)
    - Through the granting of easements by the various property owners
    - Purchased as fee simple parcels by the Township

- A variety of funding, including Federal, State, local and private non-profit resources, should be utilized in the provision of park and recreation services.

- Multi-use trails should be encouraged within major roadway corridors.

- The Township's review of applications for roadway abandonments should encourage appropriate conversions to the bikeways and trails system.

# Action Program

The following is the five-year action program for St. Joseph Charter Township. This program was developed as a result of the inventory taken, public input and the established goals of the Parks and Recreation Committee. It is the intent of the Township to leverage local and private funds with state and federal funds whenever possible.

The recommendations contained in this plan are based on the following criteria for parks and recreation needs of the community that includes:

- Improve or reduce maintenance costs.
- Infill services or structures in recreation and park facilities.
- Acquire land.
- Complement economic development initiatives that serve residents and visitors.
- Provide more parks and recreational facilities to accommodate future growth and all sports types.
- Improve the access to all parks for persons of all abilities.

The main highlights of improvements focus on improving existing parks, acquiring additional land to expand the parks system and developing a linear trail system to separate vehicular traffic from pedestrians to various points of interest and parks.

Each improvement listed was given a priority rating to assist the electorate in achieving the goals and actions indicated below:

| | |
|---|---|
| Priority Level A<br>Highest Priority | Significant importance perceived to be of highest concern for the community or rectify a problem area. |
| Priority Level B<br>Mid-range Priority | Short range desirable improvements. |
| Priority Level C<br>Low Priority | Proposed projects or action that are long-term or need further study and may require a significant amount of funding. |

| PROPOSED ACTION | PRIORITY LEVEL | TARGET YEAR(1) | PROJECTED COST | FUNDING SOURCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *1. Eaton Park* | | | | |
| 1. Study and recommend sound abatement options to mitigate noise of I-94 highway. | B | 2020 | $70,000 | General taxes, private donations, recreation grants |
| 2. Continue drainage of Babe Ruth baseball field to increase availability and add irrigation additions or improvements. | A | 2019 | $30,000 | MDOT grant, private donations, service club contributions |
| 3. Replace lighting. | C | 2021 | $70,000 | Civic organizations; general funds |
| 4. Develop open spaces of the park. Provide multiple uses for those using the park. | B | 2020 | $40,000 | General funds, grants, donations, league participation |
| 5. Continue overall non-motorized connector path system | C | 2021 | $32,000 | General funds, existing budgets |
| 6. Improve ADA Accessibility. | A | 2019 | $20,000 | Staff |
| 7. Indoor pitching and batting. | B | 2020 | $100,000 | General taxes MDNR Grant |

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| *2. Carronde Park* | | | | |
| 1. Playground Equipment and increase handicap accessibility. | A | 2019 | $60,000 | General taxes, partnership with schools, Senior Center. |
| 2. Replace or enhance picnic and shelter on east side of park. | B | 2020 | $65,000 | General taxes, partnership with school General taxes. |
| 3. Re-evaluate Usage and Maintain tennis Courts | B | 2020 | NA | General taxes, MDOT, Road Commission |
| 4. Trail along Fairplain Ave. to Access Carronde Park for neighbor-hood access , non-motorized path to Jakeway. | C | 2021 | $82,000 | General taxes.<br>General taxes. |
| 5. Improve ADA Accessibility. | A | 2019 | $9,000 | MDNR Grant |
| 8. Develop Parkour Course for its health benefits | C | 2021 | $65,000 | MDNR Grant |
| 3. *Maiden Lane Community Park* | | | | |
| 1. Continue to develop multi-user activities to complement main purpose of soccer that includes LaCrosse, Rocket Football and Cricket dedicated grounds. | A | 2019 | $70,000 | General taxes, existing departmental budgets, private donations, league fees and revenues, outside foundation grants, state and federal grants |
| 2. Paved trail for walking | B | 2020 | $30,000 | Departmental budgets, private |

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| | | | | donations and contributions, capital funding campaigns, regional and national foundations |
| 3. Develop playground area with equipment within the Maiden Lane Complex | A | 2019 | $80,000 | Departmental budgets, MDNR Grant, Assoc. contributions |
| 4. Turf Maintenance program continuance for the fields, through a university sponsored research program | C | 2021 | $70,000 | Research university such as MSU or Andrews University, lawn care industry sponsor. |
| 5. Improve ADA Accessibility. | C | 2021 | TBD | TBD |
| 6. Indoor facilities for all sports with regional cooperation and regional access. | D | 2022/2023 | $175,000 | General taxes, Regional support, fees, MDNR grant |
| 4. *Develop Park Funding Source* | | | | |
| 1. Research the financial needs of the Parks system in five-year increments for a twenty year period by auditing the operations and maintenance and the development of facilities. | A | 2019 | $10,000 | General taxes, Staff |
| 2. Develop a proposal for | A/B | 2020/2021 | $10,000 | General taxes |

| | | | | |
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| establishing specific funding levels and line items for parks planning and operations and maintenance | | | | |
| 3. Develop a local annual source of public funding | A/B | 20 | TBD | General taxes, township budget appropriation, fundraising with Associations |
| 5. *Neighborhood Park Standards* | | | | |
| 1. Continue to support the concept of NP to guide the building of privately developed publicly accessible parks in residential neighborhoods. | A | 2019 | $15,000 | General taxes, private contributions, existing departmental budgets |
| 2. Establish a policy for acceptance of donated parks to the park system. | D | 2023 | $1,000 | Staff |
| 3. Replace and upgrade play equipment in existing neighborhood parks. | B | 2020 | $60,000 | Parks budget MDNR Grant |
| 4. Improve ADA Accessibility | A | 2019 | $8,000 | General taxes |
| 5. Evaluate safety surfaces and park equipment. | D | 2023 | TBD | General taxes |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. *Benson Property Tennis Court 65 acres Feasibility Study* | | | | |
| 1. Retain consultant services for the study and development of facilities and uses for the property | D | 2023 | $20,000 | TBD (To be determined) |
| 2. Establish timeline and schedule for acceptance, modification and implementation of findings and recommendations. | D | 2023 | TBD | TBD |
| 3. Potential for private/public partnership for indoor sports complex including ice, baseball, softball, LaCrosse, Football. | C | 2022 | $30,000 | Existing budgets |
| 7. *Hickory Creek Multi-Use Natural Trail Feasibility Study* | | | | |
| 1. Study needs, purposes and feasibility of developing a designated for non-motorized access and activities (i.e. a riding trail, kayaking, cross country skiing, canoe launch, walkway) along Hickory Creek. | B | 2020 | $50,000 | Private donations, grants, club and organization donations |

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| 2. If warranted, develop base trail and non-motorized access point starting at Maiden Lane. | B | 2020 | TBD | MDNR Grant |
| 3. Acquire and preserve Hickory Creek marsh. | D | 2023 | $20,000 | Existing budgets, general taxes, Fundraising |
| 4. Develop signage, benches, drinking fountain, trash receptacles | C | 2022 | $12,000 | Existing budgets |
| 5. Educational materials/views of nature and activity points to learn about habitat on trail and marsh area | B | 2020 | $15,000 | Township Staff Assessment |
| 6. Improve ADA accessibility | C | 2021 Ongoing | TBD | Existing budgets, grant funding, private donations |
| 8. *Other* | | | | |
| 1. Study the needs and uses of a large capacity picnic shelter with kitchen facilities for large community gatherings (i.e. neighborhood crime watch event) at one of the existing parks. | D | 2022 | TBD | Existing budgets, grant funding, private donations |
| 2. Acquire land as budget allows to accommodate for the goals of the park committee. | D | 2019-2022 | TBD | Existing budgets, grant funding, private donations |

## *Program Costs by Year*

| Year | Estimated Project Cost |
|---|---|
| 2019 | |
| 2020 | |
| 2021 | |
| 2022 | |
| 2023 | |
| Total | |

**Status Report for all Grant-Assisted Parks and Recreation Facilities**

1976 Carronde Park Grant No. 26-00836 $14,409.66 CLOSED
Install parking and three lighted tennis courts.

1978 Carronde Park Grant No. 26-0106012 $13,073.66 CLOSED
Install utilities and public restroom building

1993 MDOT Property Dev. Grant No. TF93-014 $102,000.00 CLOSED
Acquisition of 1E Acres

1999 Maiden Lane C.P. Grant No. CM99-311 $191,000.00 CLOSED
Site preparation, grade, install drainage and seed five soccer fields, restrooms, concession stand, parking lot and fencing.

2006 Eaton Park Grant No. 26-01669 $40,000.00 CLOSED
Access and surface, installation of playground equipment, ADA accessible improvements and LWCF Plaque.

2009 Maiden Lane Grant No. 09-017 $70,000.00 CLOSED
Pavilion and Improvements

2011 Eaton Park Grant No. 11-021 $50,000 CLOSED
General Improvements

# SUMMARY

In summary, the Township wants to maintain/expand and enhance the current and future parks system to improve the quality of life for present and future generations of the Township. Overall, the Township is trying to provide total access to the community for all persons with all abilities. The trail component of this plan directly correlates with the "*Connecting Michigan – A Statewide Trailways Vision and Action Plan*" which was formed through a collaborative effort of many trail related organizations and governmental entities under the umbrella of the Michigan Trails and Greenway Alliance. These trail initiatives tout the economic, health, recreational and transportation benefits of trail systems and the need for connectivity among existing trail segments and entities. The Township will provide linkages and integration of non-motorized trail opportunities into regional transportation planning and is one way of achieving the trails goal including the Safe Routes to Schools Program of the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, in cooperation with MDOT.

The Township is cognizant that environmental quality is the foundation on which all outdoor recreation is built. A healthy, productive environment sustains living resources such as fish, wildlife and plants and provides an attractive environment for leisure-time activities. It also is central to the MDNR's legal mandate to "protect and conserve the natural resources of the state."

Finally, the Township is dedicated to provide universal access to outdoor recreation venues to ensure all recreation and park facilities are enjoyed and utilized by people with all abilities.

***Table: Facility Development Standards***

| Activity/Facility | Standard* | Need | Existing | Deficiency |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Badminton | 1/5,000 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Basketball (Youth) | 1/5,000 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Basketball (High School) | 1/5,000 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Handball | 1/20,000 | - | - | - |
| Ice Hockey | 1/100,000 | - | - | - |
| Tennis | 1/2,000 | 5 | 6 | 0 |
| Volleyball | 1/5,000 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Baseball (Official) | 1/5,000 | 2 | >2 | 0 |
| Baseball (Little League) | 1/5,000 | 2 | >2 | 0 |
| Field Hockey | 1/20,000 | - | - | - |
| Football | 1/20,000 | - | 1 | 0 |
| Soccer | 1/10,000 | 1 | >4 | 0 |
| Golf-Driving Range | 1/50,000 | - | - | - |
| ¼ Mile Running Track | 1/20,000 | - | 1 | 0 |
| Softball | 1/5,000 | 2 | >2 | 0 |
| Multiple Recreation Court | 1/10,000 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Trails | 1 system | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Archery Range | 1/50,000 | - | - | - |
| Skeet and Trap Field | 1/50,000 | - | - | - |
| Golf | 1/25,000 | - | - | - |
| Swimming Pools | 1/20,000 | - | - | - |

*Based on Population

# Appendices

## Appendix A: St. Joseph Charter Township Maps

## Appendix B: Notice for Public Meetings and Local Newspaper Articles

## Appendix C: Public Meeting Minutes

## Appendix D: Resolution of Adoption

## Appendix E: Transmittal to County and Regional Planning Agency

## Appendix F: Articles of Incorporation

## Appendix G: Sample Surveys

### SURVEY OF COMMUNITY

The St. Joseph Charter Township Board is revising their 5 year Parks and Recreation Plan. We need you input as to what the community might like to see as improvements, changes or additions to the parks and recreation system in the Township. Please take a few minutes to fill out the following survey and return to the Township Hall located at 3000 Washington Avenue, St. Joseph, MI 49085 or you can send the survey via email to: lagrowdc@sbcglobal.net

| |
|---|
| Dear Park Neighbors, Visitors and Township Residents:<br>We would like all comments in by November 15, 2017. All comments will be welcomed. Thank you for your time and your interest in your community. |
| 1. Do you or any of your family use the Township Parks? (Which ones?) |
| 2. If applicable, please list the ages of the children in your immediate family that use the park. |
| 3. If you use the park, do you use it only during the summer months or year-round? |
| 4. What specifically do you like about the Parks (size, equipment, nearness, etc.)? |
| 5. What specifically do you not like, if anything, about Parks (i.e. landscape, equipment, etc.)? (Please identify the park.) |
| 6. Would you like any additional playground equipment added to the park, or any removed? |
| 7. Would you like to see any other park items added to the Parks, (i.e., picnic tables, benches, trash cans, etc.)? |
| 8. What type of recreational property do you own? (Bike, Fishing Equipment, etc). |
| 9. What one action could the Township take to improve the amount of outdoor recreation opportunities? |

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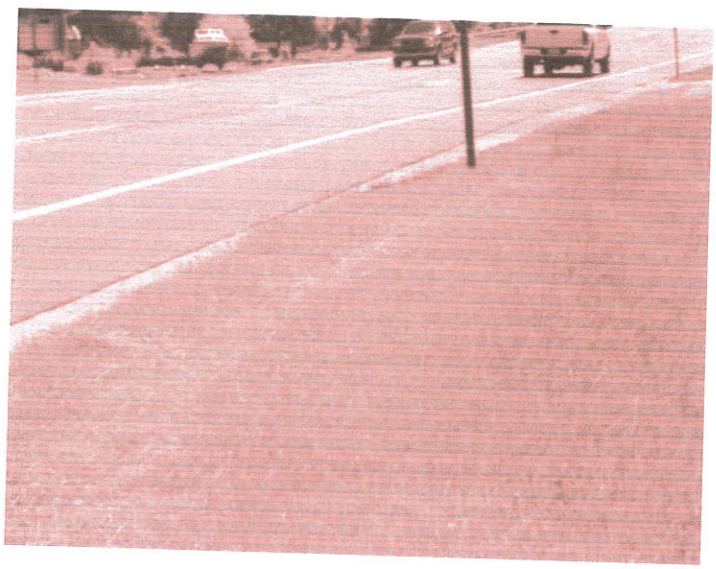
| 10. What one action could the Township take to increase your household's participation in outdoor recreation? |
| 11. What other broad initiative/direction would you propose to improve Township outdoor recreation over the next five years? |
| 12. How long have you lived in the Township or visited the parks in the Township? |
| 13. What is the age of the person or persons filling out this survey? |
| 14. Please feel free to list any other concerns or opinions regarding this matter. |

We envision having a draft Parks and Recreation Plan available for public review and comment by December 15, 2017 and will have the plan available at the Township Hall and the St. Joseph Public Library. The public review and comment period will last for 30 days and then comments will be reviewed and incorporated into the plan as necessary for Township adoption in early February 2018.

## Appendix H: Facility Pictures

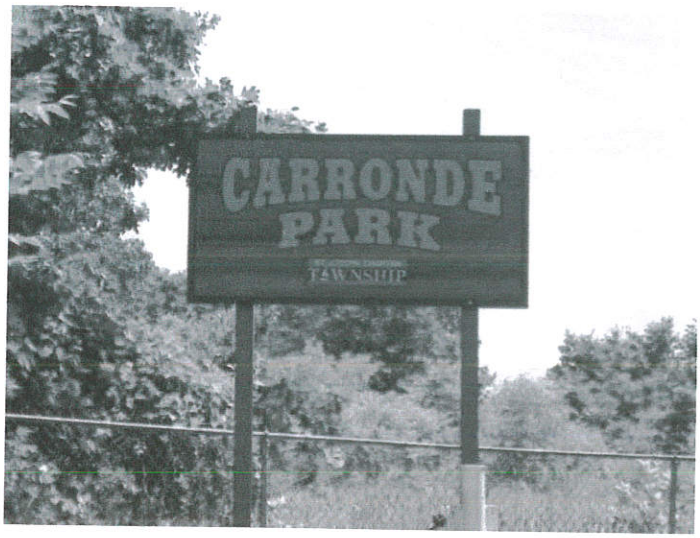
Nature Trail (AEP)

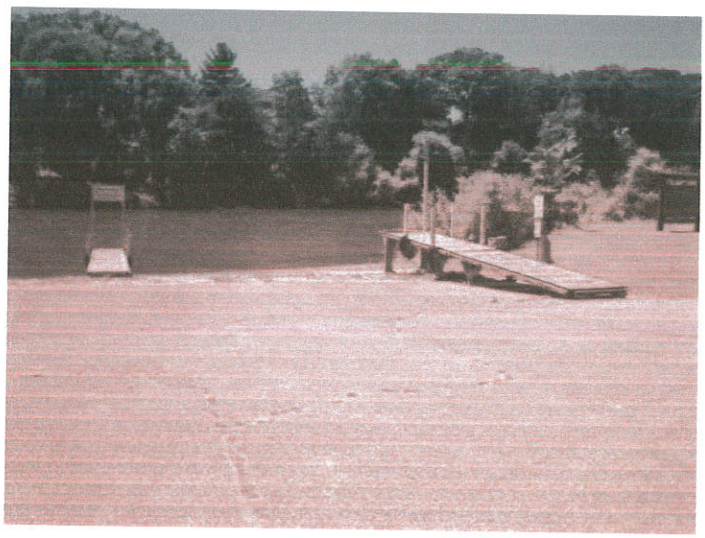


Access to Nature Trail from Ace Hardware

Hickory Creek Area

Access to Hickory Creek Area



Fishing/Boating Access at Carronde Park