



CLAY TOWNSHIP

**PARKS &
RECREATION
PLAN**

2022 – 2026

DRAFT

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Community Description	4
Administrative Structure	11
Parks & Recreation Inventory	13
Recreation Needs & Opportunities Analysis	28
The Planning & Public Input Process	32
Goals & Objectives	34
Action Strategies	36
Appendix	38

Introduction

Clay Township recognizes that an ongoing commitment to its parks and recreation facilities and programs is a vital investment in its future. These programs and facilities have a unique potential to increase an overall quality of life for both current and future generations of Township residents. Promoting personal health and education, fostering economic activity, creating intricate social networks, and protecting environmental landscapes, are some of the most compelling benefits gained through well-maintained parks and recreation facilities. Ultimately these benefits are contingent upon a well planned and executed system of parks, trails, open space, water access, and recreational programming.

This Parks & Recreation Plan provides the community with a five-year work plan and a long-range vision to guide future recreational investments. The Township of Clay intends to use this plan to guide decisions on capital improvement projects, guide the acquisition of open space and available public buildings, explore the implementation of future recreational programming, and pursue both state and federal grant opportunities.

The Plan follows the guidelines set forth by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and includes the following:

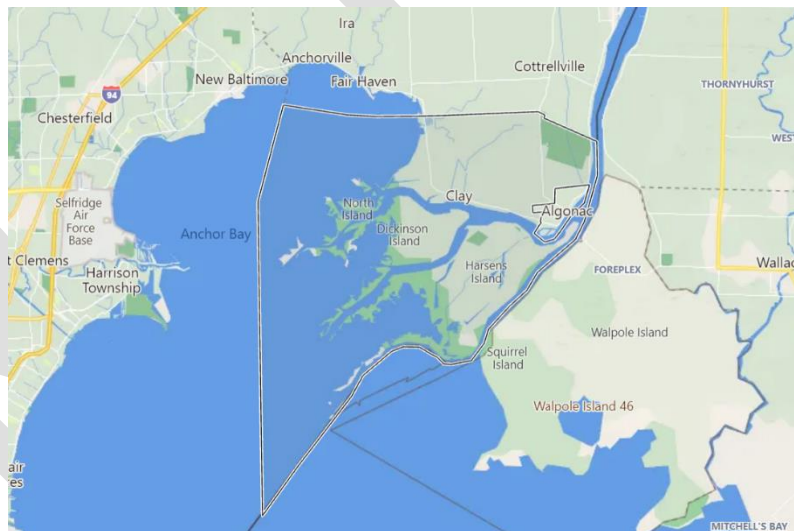
- Community Description
- Administrative Structure
- Parks & Recreation Inventory
- Resource Inventory
- Recreational Needs & Opportunity Analysis
- Planning & Public Input Process
- Goals and Objectives
- Action Strategies

Community Description

The following is a description of the various physical features of Clay Township. This description is important to the recreation planning process because it establishes the physical context in which future decisions regarding recreation facility and program development will take place.

Community Profile

Clay Township is in southern St. Clair County and is approximately 83 square miles in size, with 36 square miles of land and 47 square miles of water. The area has a lengthy stretch of shoreline along Lake St. Clair and the St. Clair River. The Township is accessible by M-29 and Marine City Highway, and I-94 runs within 14 miles of the Township's northwestern



corner. The Township is bordered by Ira Township and Cottleville Township to the north, while the remainder of the Township is surrounded by the St. Clair River and Lake St. Clair. The Township surrounds the City of Algonac.

Population

The estimated 2020 population for Clay Township is 8,845 persons. The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) projects the Township population will remain steady, with 8,979 persons by 2045.



Population Trends for Clay Township & Surrounding Communities

	2000	2010	2020	2030	2045
Clay Township	9,822	9,066	8,845	8,868	8,979
City of Algonac	4,613	4,110	4,196	4,323	4,285
Ira Township	6,966	5,178	4,531	4,538	4,631
Chesterfield Township	37,405	43,381	47,378	50,962	51,464
New Baltimore	7,405	12,084	11,929	12,596	12,454
Casco Township	4,748	4,107	4,158	4,127	3,949
China Township	3,340	3,551	3,625	3,909	3,835
Cottrellville Township	3,814	3,559	3,276	3,410	3,384

Source: Southeast Michigan Council of Governments

Households

Average household sizes have dropped across the country, from 2.62 in 2010, to 2.53 in 2020. Michigan experienced a larger drop (2.75 to 2.52) during the same period. Clay Township has followed this trend, with the average household size decreased from 2.5 to 2.18.

The number of households in the Township has decreased slightly from 3,947 in 2010 to 3,868 in 2020.

Clay Township Population and Household Data

	2000	2010	2020	2045 Forecast
Population	9,822	9,066	8,845	8,979
Households	3,934	3,947	3,868	3,974
Persons Per Household	2.5	2.29	2.18	2.26

Source: Southeast Michigan Council of Governments

Age Characteristics

An important demographic factor influencing recreation planning is the age composition of the community and the extent to which this composition has changed over time. This can assist in matching recreational services to community characteristics, and in determining the special needs of certain age groups.

While the Township’s population has decreased, there have been increases in three segments of the population: adults aged 20 to 34, adults aged 55 to 64, adults aged 65 to 84, and adults aged 85 and older. SEMCOG projects that this trend will continue in the Township. Growth among these age groups will play a role in the planning of recreation needs now and in the future.

Clay Township Population by Age Brackets

	2010	2019	2010 – 2019 Percentage Change
Under 5	373	264	-29%
5 – 19	1,404	1,182	-15%
20 – 34	1,086	1,180	8.6%
35 – 54	2,747	2,065	-25%
55 – 64	1,631	1,737	6.5%
65 – 84	1,654	2,259	37%
85 +	180	187	3.9%
Median Age	48,8	53.2	0.9%

Source: Southeast Michigan Council of Governments

Racial Composition

One important social characteristic of a community is its racial make-up. Understanding the racial composition of a community helps to identify the diverse needs of its population.

The following chart indicates the racial make-up of the Township in both 2010 and 2019.



Clay Township Race Composition

	2010	Percentage of 2010 Population	2019	Percentage of 2019 Population
White	8,786	96.9%	7,935	93.9%
Black	13	0.1%	16	0.2%
Asian	27	0.3%	19	0.2%
Hispanic	97	1.1%	103	1.2%
Multi-racial	98	1.1%	336	4%
Other	45	0.5%	37	0.4%

Source: Southeast Michigan Council of Governments

Income and Poverty Levels

Studying income and poverty levels is a good way to measure the relative economic health of the community. Clay Township saw a decrease in median income from 2010 to 2019, matching the trend of St. Clair County in general for that period.

In Clay Township, the number of households living in poverty was 8% in 2019, significantly less than St. Clair County (10.7%), and Michigan (14.1%).

Income and Poverty Levels 2010 - 2019

Community	2010 Median Household Income	2019 Median Household Income	Percentage of households living in poverty
Clay Township	\$69,184	\$63,496	8%
St. Clair County	\$57,590	\$56,951	12.3%
Michigan	\$52,414	\$54,938	14.1

Source: Southeast Michigan Council of Governments

Education Levels

A community’s educational attainment metrics are a vital statistic to track. The correlation between education attainment and economic prosperity is remarkably high. As residents continue to gain degrees and credentials, there is more opportunity for job growth.

As of 2019, the percentage of residents in Clay Township with a Bachelor’s or Graduate College Degree was 32%. In addition, the percentage of residents with a high school degree or higher was 90%.

**Highest Level of Education Completed – 2019
(Percentage of Residents)**

Highest level of Education	Clay Township	St. Clair County	Michigan
Graduate/Professional	13.7%	6.8%	11.9%
Bachelor’s	19.2%	11.8%	18.2%
Associate	8.9%	12.4%	9.4%
Some college, no degree	22.8%	25.8%	22.8%
High school graduate	25.9%	34%	29.1%
Did not graduate from high school	9.5%	9.2%	8.7%

Source: Southeast Michigan Council of Governments

Housing & Building Trends

Housing is a vital characteristic of any community. Houses are highly visible and relatively permanent, and for these reasons serve as great indicators of the wellbeing of a community. Housing values in Clay Township decreased 11.2% from 2010 to 2019. The median housing value in Clay Township was \$195,900 in 2019, which exceeded the county median by over \$41,600.

Median Housing Value 2010 – 2019

Community	2010	2019	Change
Clay Township	\$229,626	\$195,900	-11.2%
St. Clair County	\$184,839	\$154,300	-16.5%

Source: Southeast Michigan Council of Governments

In 2010 there were 3,528 owner-occupied units, which represented 62% of all occupied units. In 2019, the percentage of owner-occupied remained at 62%.

Clay Township Housing Tenure 2010 - 2019

	2010	2019
Owner-Occupied Units	3,528	3,660
Renter Occupied Units	419	469
Vacant Units	1,684	1,726
Total Units	5,631	5,855

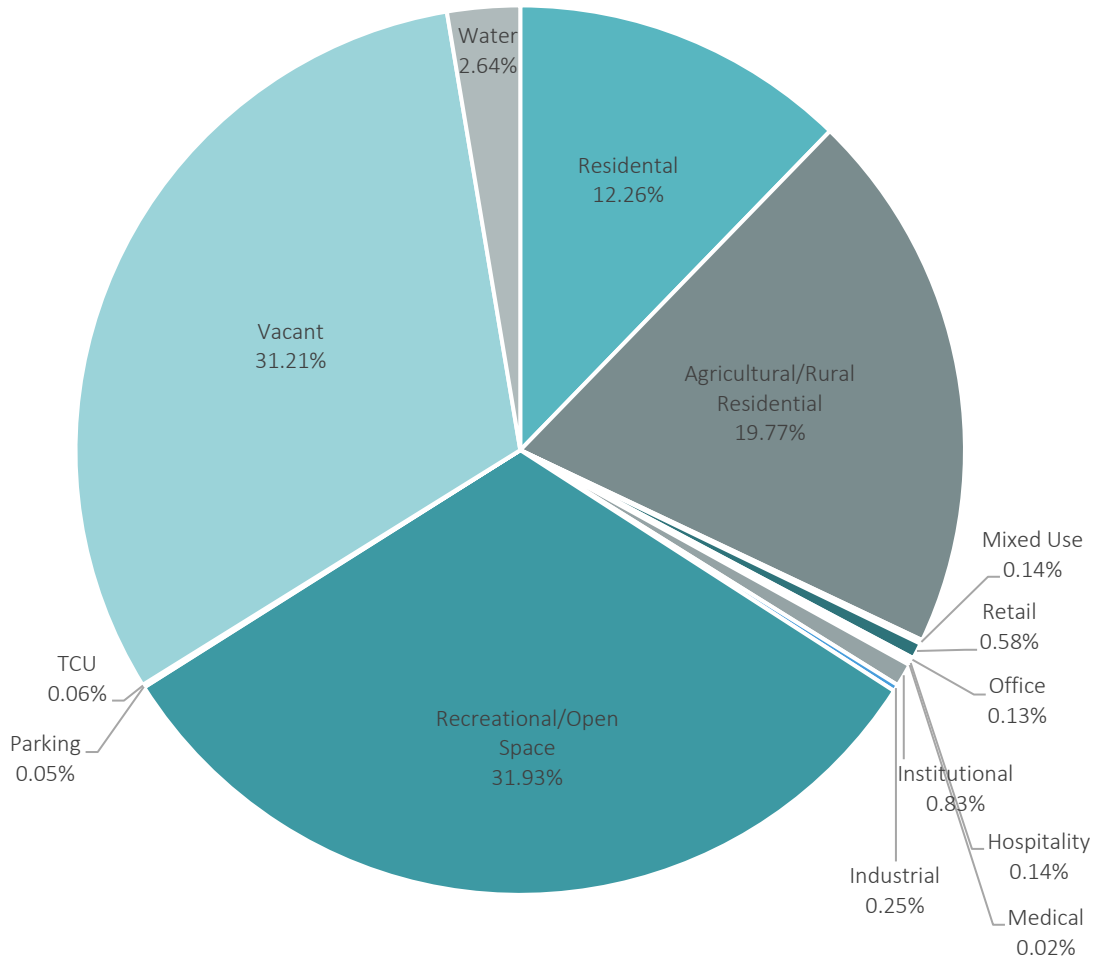
Source: Southeast Michigan Council of Governments

Existing Land Use

Clay Township's population is concentrated along the shoreline, where many small lots line the St. Clair River and the canals of the North Channel. Industrial and commercial development, as well as marinas, are found along Pointe Tremble Rd. Most of the Township's large-lot residential development, agriculture, and vacant land can be found to the north portion of the mainland, as well parts of Harsens Island, Dickinsen Island, and Middle Island. About 5.2% of the Township's area is roads.

Less than 50% of the Township's land is developed. Park, recreation, and open space use is the largest segment of land use, with approximately 31% of total land use (land classified as vacant also accounts for an additional 31% of the Township's land area). Most of the Township's developed land is located along Pointe Tremble Road, which generally runs parallel to the Lake St. Clair shoreline. The next largest land-use is agriculture/rural residential at 19.7%, followed by all other residential at 12.26%.

2020 Existing Land Use



Source: Southeast Michigan Council of Governments

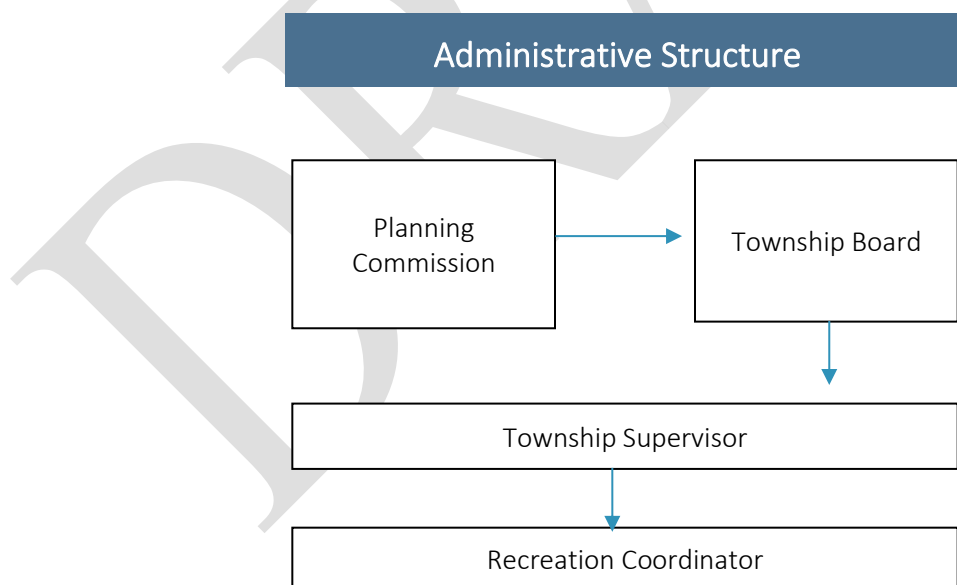


Administrative Structure

In terms of recreation planning, Clay Township's seven-member Recreation Commission provides an advisory role to the Township Board on the needs of the community. In addition, the Township has a Recreation Director who oversees recreational programming.

Clay's current recreation budget for recreation is \$100,312 for 2022-2023. Recreation funding comes from the Township's general budget and the St. Clair County parks millage

The Township is furthering the recreation planning process through development of this Recreation Plan to develop a recreation program which meets the current and future needs of Township residents.



Budget

Employee/Labor Expenses	\$56,862.67
Supplies and Programming	\$16,800.00
Capital Outlays under \$5K	\$0
Engineering Fees	\$5,000.00
Electricity/Gas	\$7,500.00
Water/Sewer	\$5,250.00
Maintenance	\$8,500.00
Contingency Fund	\$0
Capital Outlays Over \$5K	\$0
TOTAL	\$100,312.77

Clay Township's Parks and Recreation Projected Revenues	
	FY 2022-23
Projected Revenues	\$100,312.77

The Role of Volunteers

Volunteers are welcome and critical to recreational offerings in the Township, especially as the Township begins rebuilding programs, activities, and special events.

Volunteer availability is a concern. The Township tries to encourage Boy and Girl Scout, Student Council, National Honor Society, and retiree involvement.

Parks & Recreation Inventory

When a community seeks to develop a comprehensive parks and recreation master plan, it is imperative to catalog existing parks and recreation facilities. An extensive inventory of parks and recreation will allow a community to highlight its assets, develop linkages, build from innovative trends, and determine any gaps in services.

Existing Facility Inventory

Various methods were employed to assess these recreational facilities, including a review of aerial photographs and existing maps, windshield surveys, site visits, and discussions with recreational providers. The inventory that follows provides a detailed look at the amenities available at private and regional recreational facilities/parks.

State and Regional Parks

Clay Township is part of a region that has a wealth of parks and recreation destinations. As a region, southeast Michigan has illustrated a longstanding commitment to parks and recreation. From major park systems to wildlife preservation areas, the State of Michigan and the Huron-Clinton Metroparks Authority have established a network of facilities that provide users of all abilities and interests with plentiful parks and recreation destinations.

Sixteen (16) state parks and recreation areas are located in the five-county area surrounding Clay. In total, these recreation facilities encompass over 50,000 acres of land, and offer a wide range of services including trails, swimming, fishing, boating picnicking, camping, nature preserves, cross-

country skiing, and many others. St. Clair County is home to Lakeport State Park, Algonac State Park, St. John's Marsh Wildlife Area, Port Huron State Game Area, and St. Clair Flats State Wildlife Area.

The Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority operates 13 parks across Southeast Michigan, including three (Stony Creek Metropark, Wolcott Mill Metropark, and Lake St. Clair Metropark) in Macomb County.

Stony Creek Metropark, Shelby Township

Established around Stony Creek Lake, this park includes a nature center, hiking and mountain biking trails, campgrounds, boat rental and launch, bike rental, golf course, and a disc golf course.

Lake St. Clair Metropark, Harrison Township

Located on the Lake St. Clair shore, this park offers a splash pad, swimming pool, and beach, tennis, par- 3 golf, a sledding hill, nature center, trails, windsurfing launch, and boat launch, among other amenities.

Wolcott Mill Metropark, Ray Township

Wolcott Mill Metropark, containing 2,380 acres of land, is located within Ray Township. The park is actually three parks in one, and includes a late 20th century working farm, a historic grist mill, and a campground. In addition, the park has over 10 miles of trails that meander through woods, meadows, and along the Clinton River.



Wolcott Mill Metropark

St. Clair County Recreational Facilities

Columbus County Park

This county park, located in Columbus Township along the Belle River, provides natural area for outdoor enjoyment, a sledding hill, lodging, and a variety of trails.

Goodells County Park

This park occupies 327 acres and includes the County Farm Museum and 4-H Fair Grounds, as well as a butterfly garden, natural areas, a sledding hill, and a splash pad.

Fort Gratiot County Park

This park in north St. Clair County offers scenic views of Lake Huron, and provides a public beach, picnic areas, playscapes, trails, and the 1971 Tunnel Explosion Memorial, which honors 22 workers killed in an accident during construction of a water intake tunnel in the area.

Fort Gratiot Light Station

This former Coast Guard station is home to Michigan's oldest lighthouse, which has been renovated and restored, and is St. Clair County's newest county park.

Woodsong County Park

This park was purchased from the Girl Scouts – Michigan Waterways Council Inc. This site contains trails and runs along a half mile of the Black River, and offers opportunities for nature study, hiking, biking, and paddling.

Blueways of St. Clair

St. Clair County's Blueways Trail is a water trail system implemented throughout the county's many waterways and lakeshore. Implemented in 2009, this 17-route system, including some ADA accessible launches, includes the Island Loop Route, which runs up the Black River and along the Lake Huron shoreline, and has been recognized as a National Water Trail by the US Department of the Interior, the first such trail in Michigan.

Bridge-To-Bay Trail

The Bridge-To-Bay Trail is a biking and walking path that follows the lakeshore the County from New Baltimore to Burtchville. Most of the trail is a shared-access route, and the segment in Clay Township is along Dixie Highway.

Wadhams to Avoca Trail

The Wadhams to Avoca Trail is a rails-to-trails pathway located on the former CSX rail line. The trail is open to hikers, bikers, and equestrians, and its scenic rural character also supports birding. The trail also contains the 60-foot Mill Creek Trestle, which provides four overlook areas into the Mill Creek Valley.

In 2021, St. Clair County acquired 10 acres of waterfront property in Clay Township between the Algonac Harbour Club and the DNR Boat Launch on M-29 to develop a new county park. The project is in partnership with Clay Township, the City of Algonac, and the Six Rivers Land Conservancy. Proposed developments include a swimming beach, kayak launch, a playground, walking trails, parking areas, and fishing amenities.

Local Schools and Other Local Facilities

Schools

Clay Township is within the Algonac School District, which includes Algonac High School, Algonquin Middle School, and Millside Elementary School. The Township has no formal recreation partnerships with any of the three schools

Algonac High Schools

- 1 baseball field
- 1 softball field
- 1 track
- Athletic field
- 4 tennis courts
- Playground

Algonquin Middle School

- 4 softball diamonds
- 1 baseball diamond
- Playground
- Athletic field

Millside Elementary School

- Playground

Other Facilities

Harsens Island Lions Club

- Located on Harsens Island
- Approximately 14-acre open area
- 3 trap houses

Harsens Island Association—Browne’s Field

- 14-acre semi-public park Intended for island residents
- Playground
- 1 softball diamond
- 1 picnic pavilion
- 2 tennis courts
- Athletic field

The Old Club

- 3 tennis courts
- 9-hole golf course
- Trap shooting range

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Township Hall Park Site



This park is located adjoining the Township Hall, provides 7.5 acres and serves the Township, but can also be accessed by public. It can accommodate small events, playscapes, a splash pad, and sports courts, walking paths, and picnic and grilling areas.

Amenities

- Looped pathway
- Playground
- Pavilion
- Concession Stand
- Volleyball Court
- Basketball Court
- Splashpad
- Restrooms
- Stationary Grills

Pearl Beach Pier



This 0.6 acre site is a pier located at the end of Pearl Beach Boulevard behind Gabriel Marine, and is a popular sport of anglers and the community. The pier currently provides a fishing pier, benches, and parking.

The Township received a DNR Passport Grant to rebuild the pier into a small park, to remedy outstanding safety issues and provide enhancements. However, the grant was returned and the project was completed through Township Funding

The Township is in the process of building a restroom facility at the pier, as well as a barrier free docking station, which would allow people of all abilities to access the water in partnership with No Limits Fishing Adventures, Inc.

Amenities

- Fishing Piers
- Benches
- Parking lot

DNR Grant Inventory: Project #: 13-484

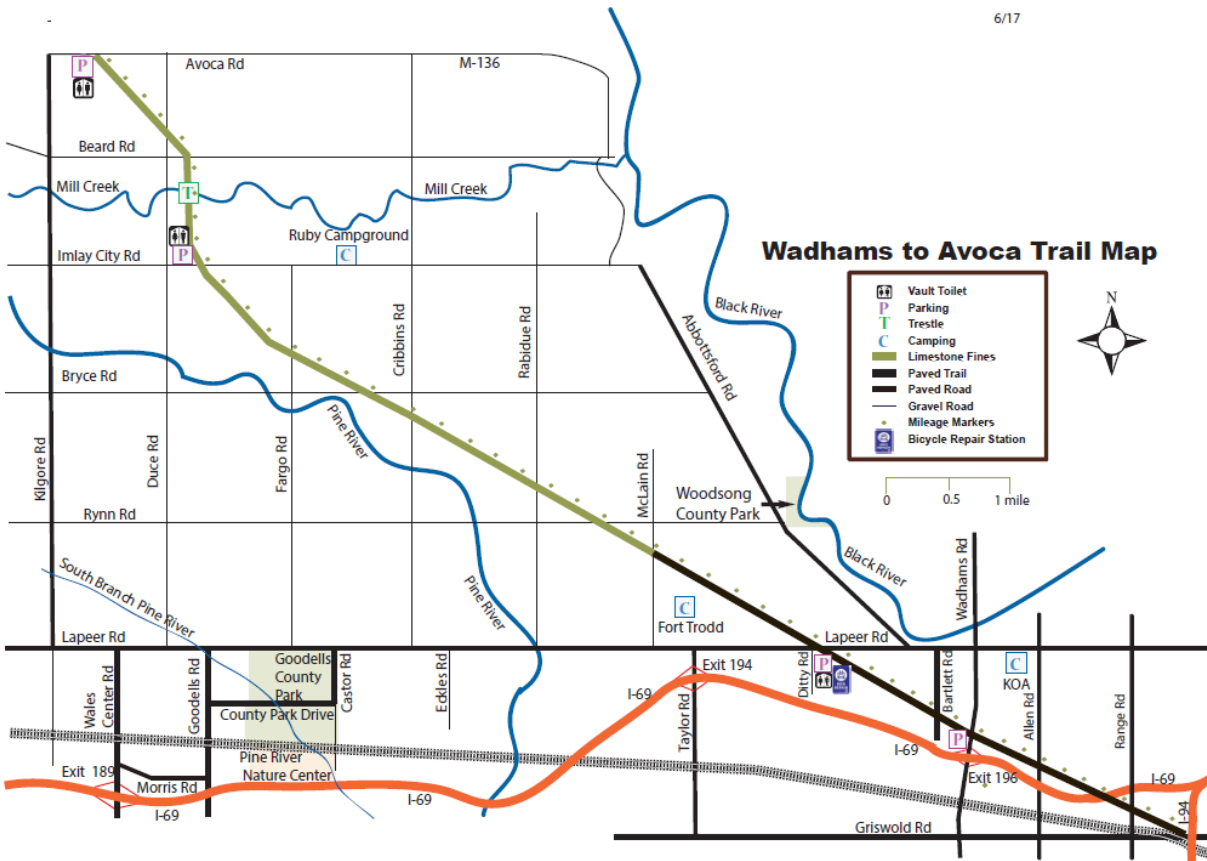
Name: Pearl Beach Park Pier Reconstruction

Year: 2013 Scope: \$43,000 to reconstruct the existing Pearl Beach Park Pier

Status: Grant returned, project completed through Township funding

St. Clair County Wadhams to Avoca Trail Map

6/17



Source: St. Clair County Parks and Recreation

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Bay-To-Bridge Trail Map

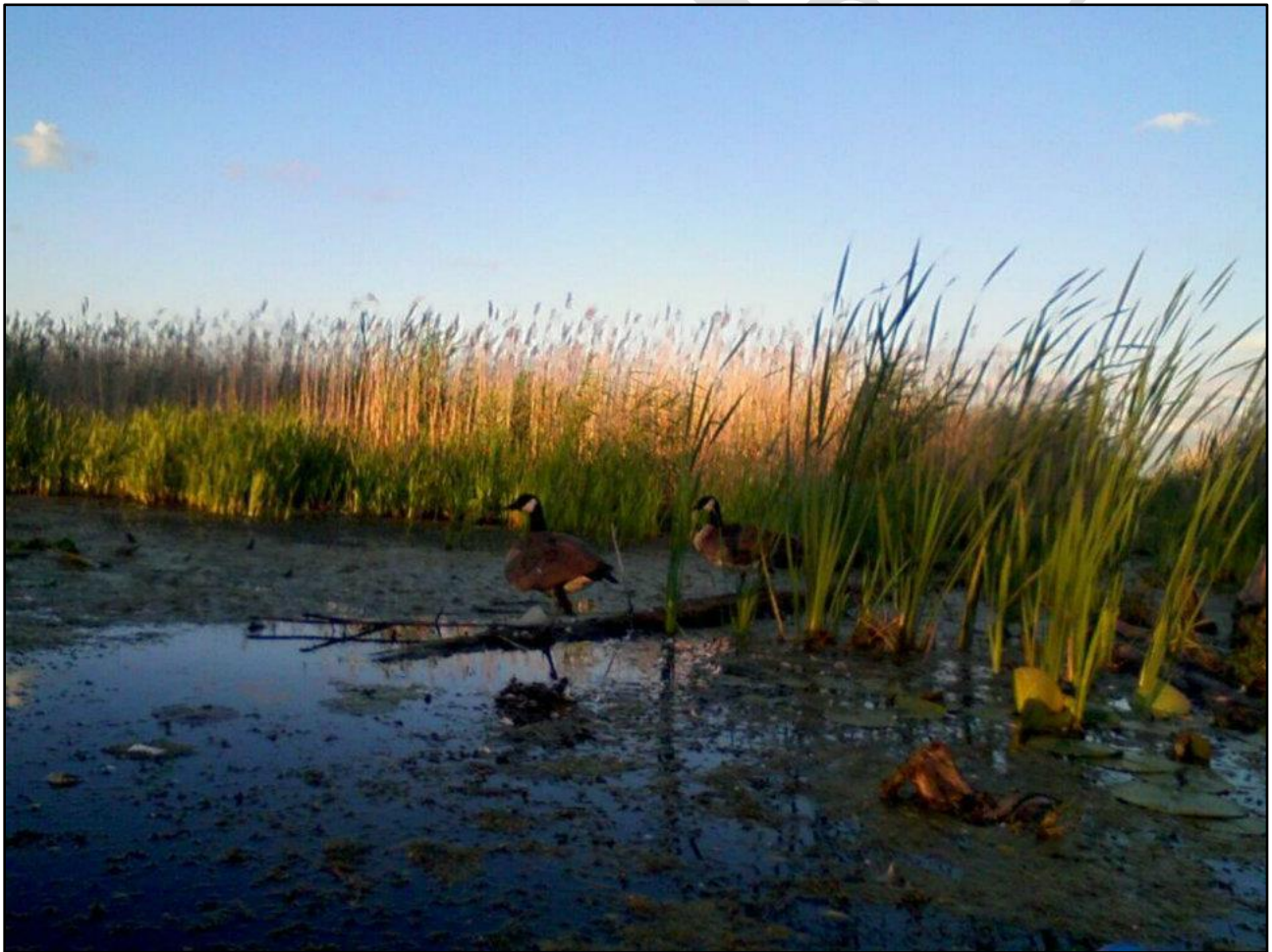


Source: St. Clair County Parks and Recreation

5

Resource Inventory

In a community such as Clay Township, where recreational opportunities are heavily intertwined with the natural environment, an inventory of natural resources clarifies where potential opportunities may be available.



Canada geese in St. Johns Marsh

The following maps depict Natural Features, Sub-Watersheds/Elevations, and Soil types within the Township.



- Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland
- Freshwater Emergent Wetland
- Freshwater Pond

Wetlands

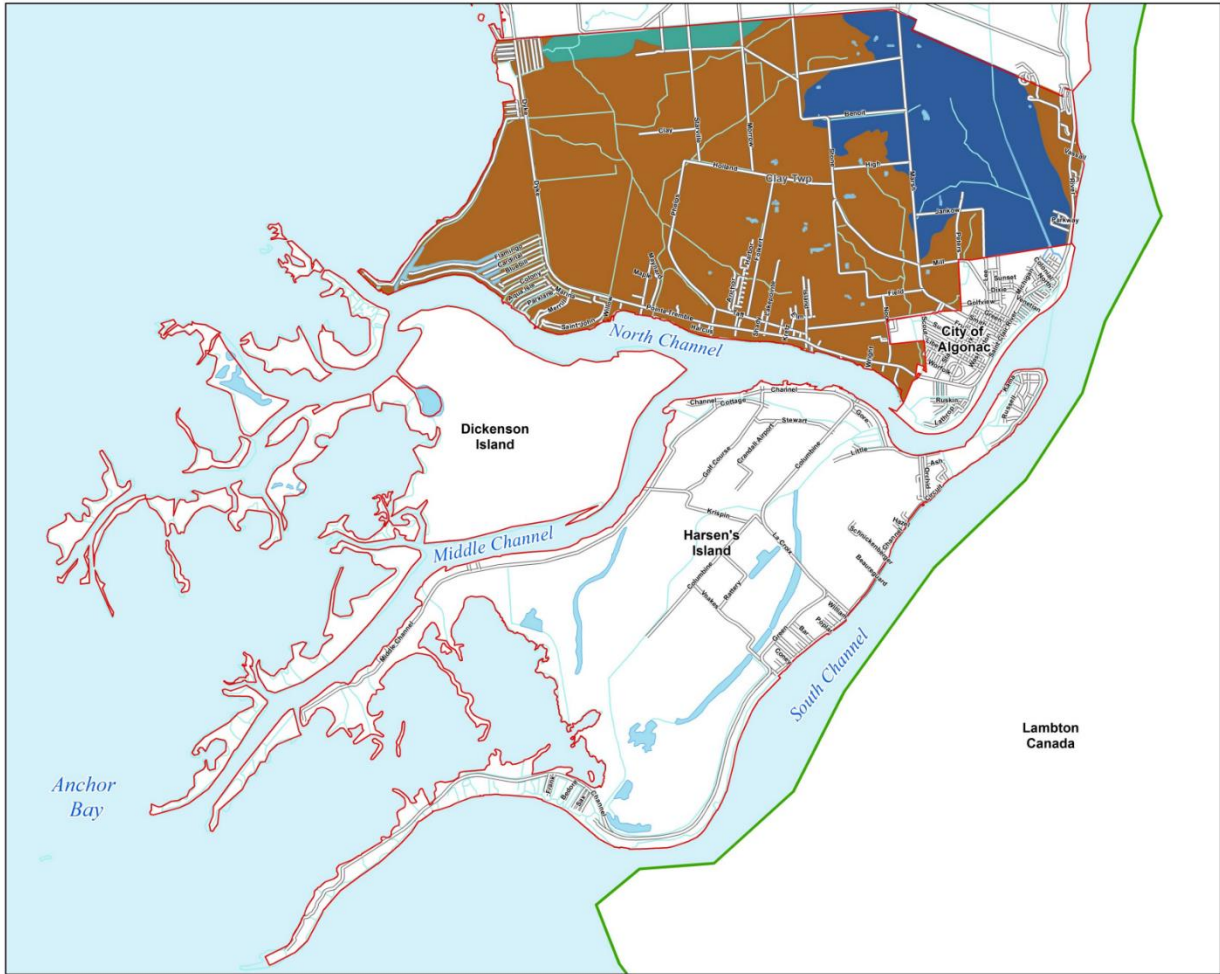
Clay Township, St. Clair County, MI



- Woody Wetlands
- Mixed Forest
- Evergreen Forest
- Deciduous Forest

Woodlands

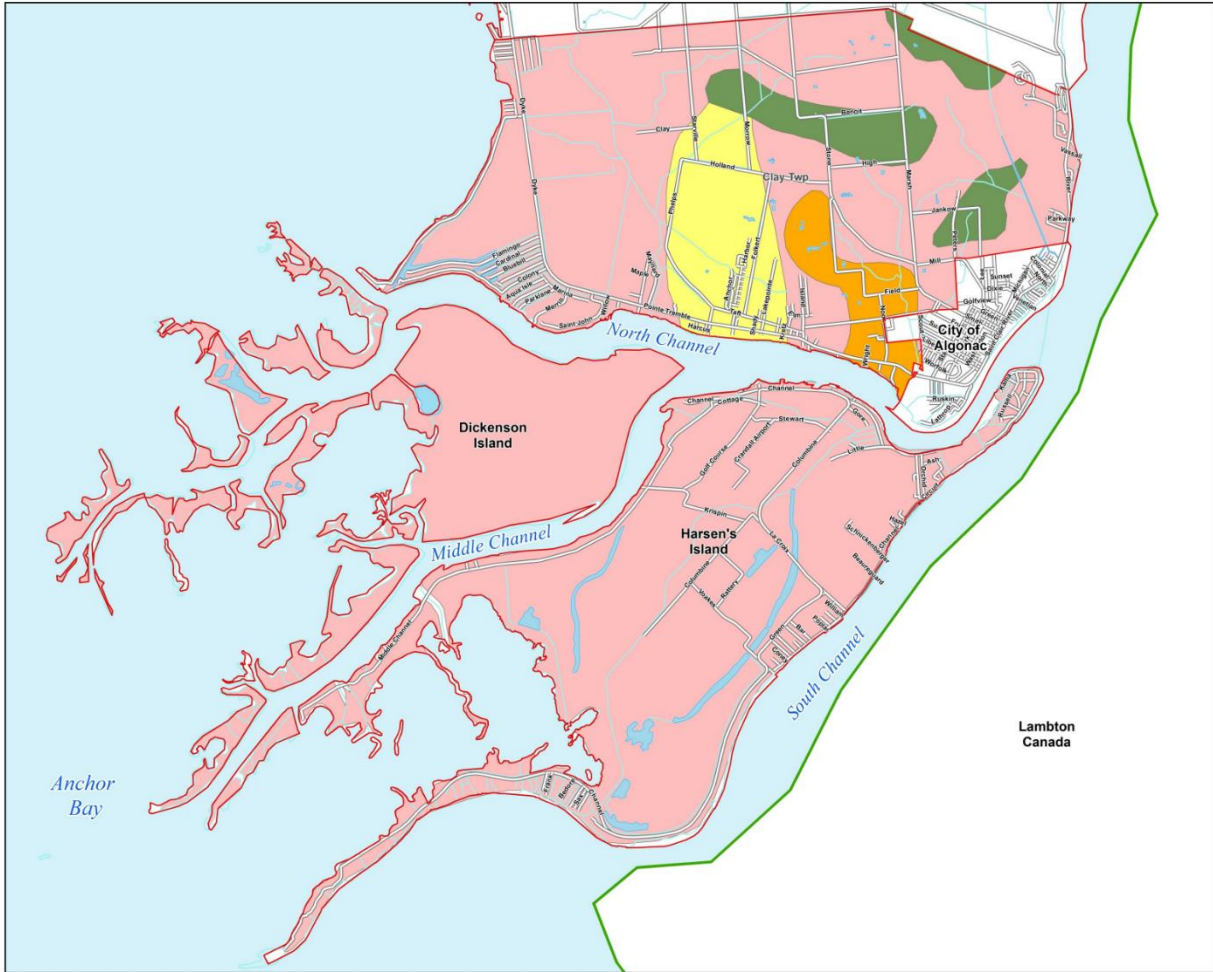
Clay Township, St. Clair County, MI



- Beaubien Creek
- Lake Drainage
- Marine City Drain

Watersheds

Clay Township, St. Clair County, MI



- Dune sand
- Lacustrine clay and silt
- Lacustrine sand and gravel
- Medium-textured glacial till

Quaternary Geology

Clay Township, St. Clair County, MI



- Prime farmland if drained
- Farmland of local importance

Prime Farmland Clay Township, St. Clair County, MI

6

Recreation Needs & Opportunities Analysis

To analyze the recreational needs of Township residents, and to determine deficiencies within recreation programs, it is helpful to consider standards for recreation service areas, land needs based on future population, and the ultimate size and extent of recreation facilities and their location.

Recreation Needs & Opportunities Analysis

It is important to determine adequacy and need for recreation facilities, both currently and in the future. Several techniques are commonly used to accomplish this. Perhaps the most common method of determining recreation needs and deficiencies is to compare existing park acreage and facilities with accepted recreation planning standards. The standards normally suggest optimum or ideal conditions that communities should strive to meet in the development of park facilities and provide a benchmark against which progress can be measured. The risk in using these standards, however, is that they may not be uniformly applicable to every community and as such, need to be evaluated in light of the unique physical, social, and economic conditions that may characterize a specific community.

Recreation Planning Standards

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) offers generalized standards to assist communities in recreation planning activities. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has also developed a set of standards based on NRPA guidelines entitled “Michigan Recreation Opportunity Standards,” which will be utilized in this recreation needs and deficiency analysis. These standards specify the amount of developed recreation acreage, and the amount/number of recreation facilities that a community should have per 1,000 residents.

Michigan Recreation Opportunity Standards

Type of Recreation Opportunity	Plan Standard
Developed Local Park Land	10 acres / 1,000 population
Archery Ranges (including private & commercial)	1 / 50,000 population
Ballfields (not including school facilities)	1 / 3,000 population
Outdoor Basketball Courts (not including school facilities)	1 / 5,000 population
Bicycle Trails (miles)	1 / 40,000 population
Golf Courses (including private & commercial)	1 / 25,000 population
Indoor Ice Rinks	1 / 50,000 population
Outdoor Ice Rinks	1 / 20,000 population
Picnic Areas (tables)	1 / 200 population
Playgrounds (not including school facilities)	1 / 3,000 population
Rifle Ranges (including private & commercial)	1 / 50,000 population
Shotgun Ranges (including private & commercial)	1 / 50,000 population
Sledding Hills (not including school facilities)	1 / 40,000 population
Soccer Fields (not including school facilities)	1 / 20,000 population
Outdoor Swimming Pools	1 / 40,000 population
Outdoor Tennis Courts (not including school facilities)	1 / 4,000 population
Campground Sites (including commercial)	1 / 150 population
Cross-Country Ski Trails (miles)	1 / 10,000 population
Fishing Access (feet)	1,000 / 1,000 population
Fishing Piers	1 / 100,000 population
Hiking Trails (miles)	1 / 5,000 population
Horseback Trails (miles)	1 / 20,000 population
Nature Areas (each)	1 / 50,000 population
Nature Trails (miles)	1 / 20,000 population
ORV Areas	1 acre / 7,500 population
ORV Trails (miles)	1 / 10,000 population
Snowmobiling Land	10 acres / 1,000 population
Snowmobiling Trails (miles)	1 / 3,000 population
Swimming Beaches	1 / 25,000 population

Current Recreation Needs

While the Recreation Opportunity Standards reference a very broad set of facilities, it is important to note that many of the standards reference populations that are considerably larger than Clay Township's, or in several cases, populations larger than the Township and its neighbors combined.

Nearly all of the facilities in the list are accessible to Township residents either within the Township boundaries or in a directly neighboring community. The Township meets most of the standard with the inclusion of St John's Marsh Wildlife Area and Algonac State Park, as well as Browne's Field and the Lions Club facility. The Township also offers ample fishing access at the Peal Beach Pier, as well as the Krispin Drain.

Clay Township, especially as a waterfront community, may want to consider increased opportunities for public boat launches (currently only two public launches available. It is likely the Township will meet this goal, as a partnership with the DNR has proposed at least three more launches for non-motorized boats.

The Township also lacks ORV access and snowmobiling opportunities, which is not uncommon and likely not appropriate for Southeast Michigan.

The Township currently does not have its own system of connector trails, paths and greenways. It does, however, have a network of largely rural roads capable of accommodating bicycle users, and the Bridge-To-Bay Trail runs on the shoulder of M-29, the beginnings of a sidewalk network in the Downtown Development District, and an opportunity to add the Krispin Drain to the Blueways of St. Clair.

Clay Township's Current Recreation Needs (Based upon an estimated 2020 population of 8,845 persons)			
Recreation Facility	Existing Amount	Suggested Amount (based upon Recreation Standard)	Need
Ballfields	0	2	2
Outdoor Tennis Courts	0	1	1

As can be seen in the table above, there may be a need to provide additional recreational facilities. Clay Township should keep these facilities in mind in weighing the priorities for recreation opportunities. Expanding public access to the lakeshore for activities such as fishing and natural enjoyment should be considered a top priority.

Future Recreation Needs

Based on the Michigan Recreation Opportunity Standards and the 2030 and 2045 projected populations of Clay Township of 8,845 and 8,979 (respectively), the Township’s future needs for developed recreation acreage and for the various types of recreation activities for those years were derived. The two tables below list the future recreation needs that may exist within the Township, if none of the current recreation deficiencies noted previously are addressed between now and the years 2030 and 2045. It should be noted that the recommendations remain relatively similar for current recreation needs and the projected needs for both 2030 and 2045.

Clay Township’s Current Recreation Needs (Based upon an estimated 2030 population of 8,868 persons)			
Recreation Facility	Existing Amount	Suggested Amount (based upon Recreation Standard)	Need
Ballfields	0	2	2
Outdoor Tennis Courts	0	1	1

Clay Township’s Current Recreation Needs (Based upon an estimated 2045 population of 8,979 persons)			
Recreation Facility	Existing Amount	Suggested Amount (based upon Recreation Standard)	Need
Ballfields	0	2	2
Outdoor Tennis Courts	0	1	1

The Planning & Public Input Process

The recreation planning process in Clay Township was intended to involve individuals who represent a broad cross-section of the community's population. The Township Board is responsible for implementing the Recreation Plan, but the Planning Commission provides input, analysis, and recommendations.

The Township developed an online public survey (with hard copies available at the Township Hall), to collect public input on community priorities for future parks and recreation. Using the inventory and survey findings, this Recreation Plan identifies goals, opportunities, and implementation measures.

The draft plan and 5-year action program of priority projects were then reviewed by the Recreation Commission. Following the recommendation of approval by the Planning Commission, the plan was forwarded to the Township Board.

The draft plan was made available for public review and comment for at least 30 days prior to formal adoption by the Township Board. Notice of the public review period was provided in the local newspaper. The plan was presented at a public hearing held by Township Board. Copies of the notices announcing the review period and public hearing are included in the Appendix.

Public Input

Understanding the important role of public involvement in developing this plan, the Planning Commission developed an online survey to gather general input from the community regarding their thoughts on parks and recreation facilities and programming in the Township. The survey

was available for five (5) months beginning January 19, 2022. It was advertised on the Township's website and promoted through Township documents/materials. A total of 303 people responded to the survey. (See Appendix for the complete survey results.)

The majority of survey participants were residents (85%). Respondents were diverse, including households with young children, older children, no children, and older adults. Eighty-eight percent of participants had visited the Township Hall Park, while 42% had visited Pearl Beach Pier. Summer was the season most participants engaged in recreational activities in the Township, followed by fall, spring, and then winter. When asked what activities they had participated in within the last two years, the most popular five responses were hiking/walking trails, paddling/boating, hunting, splash pad, and basketball. When asked what three features were most important when visiting the parks, the top three responses were having restroom facilities, nature/walking/bicycling trails, and picnic area/pavilion. Social media was the primary source of finding information about parks and recreation for participants. The majority of respondents (66%) were very interested in having an indoor activity area for programs.

8

Goals & Objectives

Goals and Objectives formulated by Clay Township are the basis of the recreation planning process. They form the framework for public and private decision-making regarding recreational facilities and programs in the Township. This Recreation Plan seeks to pursue long-range recreational goals and objectives through specific short-range actions on the part of the Township, County, and State as well as private entities.

The following goals and objectives were developed by the Township after review of the Township's natural features, population, housing, existing land uses, existing recreational facilities and programs, and the results of the community recreation survey.

The recreation goals and objectives are not prioritized. The Action Program in the Chapter that follows, will detail the specific program strategies to achieve the goals and objectives.

GOAL 1

Enhance the quality of life for Township residents by providing recreational facilities and services that foster social, intellectual, physical, and emotional development of youth and adults.

- Provide recreation opportunities that meet the needs of the community population and trends, including senior interests
- Develop health and wellness programs which educate residents of all ages on healthy eating, exercise habits, stress management, etc.
- Strengthen the pathway connectivity of the Township.
- Provide greater connections between residents as well as visitors and the abundant water resources within the Township, including the river, the channels and the marshes and wetlands.

GOAL 2

Work with schools, community organizations, and other partners to provide and promote recreational opportunities for residents.

- Work with other organizations within and around Clay Township to promote car shows, boat shows, festivals, and the like.
- Promote through newspapers articles, websites, TV advertisements, as well as other promotional materials the abundance of environmental and water related activities which are available in the Township.
- Continue to develop and expand outdoor classroom areas in conjunction with the School District and State facilities.
- Consider the potential of merging resources and programming with other recreation providers within the County.
- Continue to collaborate with the County to implement and maintain the Clay Township portions of the Bridge to Bay Trail.

GOAL 3

Preserve Clay Township's existing unique natural features for open space recreational purposes.

- Recognize and promote the unique environmental opportunities available for Township residents as well as visitors, such as extensive wildlife viewing, hunting, fishing, kayaking, hiking, boating, snowmobiling, etc. in addition to traditional recreation facilities.
- Provide expanded opportunities for outdoor environmental education such as wildlife viewing, fishing, vegetation and environmental systems viewing and education.
- Work with the State to provide additional access to the St. Clair Flats as well as the St. Johns Marsh.

GOAL 4

Acquire additional land for recreational use as it becomes available.

- Monitor sites which become available for potential expansion of baseball, softball, and soccer fields or other recreational opportunities.
- Work with other recreational entities such as the County or State to achieve grant help for land acquisition.
- Secure lands through either acquisition or easement which will limit developments in around those sensitive habitats throughout the Township, including the St. John's Marsh, the St. Clair Flats and the actual waterways.

Action Strategies

Action Strategies outline Clay Township's approach to implementing the goals and objectives identified in the previous chapter. These strategies are intended to provide guidance for planning and budgeting purposes for the next five years. They suggest priorities generally, but are not intended to be set in stone or limit additional creative approaches. Generally, parks and recreation action strategies should consider the following when outlining a strategy to implement goals and objectives:

1. Based upon the Public Survey, as part of this Recreation Plan, what projects or activities were considered most important by the respondents?
2. Is there immediate health and safety concerns that need to be addressed?
3. What opportunities exist to partner with other groups towards a common goal?
4. Is there a person or group who can champion specific goals/objectives?
5. Are there multiple goals that can be achieved by implementing a project?
6. What projects affect the greatest number of people in the community and/or address the greatest need?
7. How can projects be broken down into phases for a multi-year approach?
8. What funding opportunities exist for implementation of certain goals?

Clay Township Parks and Recreation 5 Year Action Plan

Action	Year	Projected Cost(s)	Funding Source
Township Hall Park			
Install fitness stations along walking path	1 Years	\$150,000	Local & DNR
Install gazebo	5 years	\$40,000	TBD
Install warming station for winter	3 years	\$15,000	TBD
Install new playscape with rubber surface	1 - 2 years	\$300,000	Local & DNR
Install three Bay to Bridge Trail bike kiosks	1 year	\$16,000	Local & County
Bay to Bridge Trail improvements	Ongoing	TBD	Local & County
Peal Beach Pier			
Complete planned improvements according to the Pearl Beach Development Plan	2 years	\$175,000	DDA
Evaluate and, if feasible, develop a strategy for repurposing property in front of Pier along Pte. Tremble Road	2 years	TBD	DDA
Develop nature park and kayak launch	4 years	\$400,000	Local & DNR

MNRTF = Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund

LCF = Local community foundations

Local = Local Funds/General Funds

County = Macomb County

TBD = To be determined

Appendix

Approving Resolution

Public Notices

Transmittal Letters

Public Survey Results

DRAFT