

APPENDIX D: PARKS AND RECREATION ACTION PLAN

Goals

The following goals are specific to the development, maintenance, and operation of the existing parks in the Township, as well as the acquisition and improvement of new parks. These are long range goals, many of which will require more time than the 5-years allotted to this plan to achieve. It is the intent of the Township to continually work towards realizing this future vision.

GOAL: Acquisition

Explore land acquisition opportunities to develop new parks.

Action Strategies:

- A. Focus land acquisition efforts for parks in the urbanized area of the Township.
- B. Concentrate acquisition efforts on the development of neighborhood or mini-parks, with an acreage size between one and ten acres.
- C. As the Township continues to develop, provide for future park development and more uniform distribution of facilities, in terms of both geography and population.
- D. Work towards ensuring that the majority of Oshtemo residents within the urbanized area of the Township are within ½ mile of a park.

GOAL: Accessibility and Diversity

Provide a diversity of recreational opportunities, both active and passive, that meet the needs of the Oshtemo Community.

Action Strategies:

- A. Incorporate amenities and facilities missing in Township parks or identified as a priority by the community such as walking/biking paths, basketball courts, pickleball courts, and a spray park.
- B. Maintain a logical balance between active and passive pursuits in the parks, to address the recreation needs of all users.
- C. Seek citizen input when designing park and recreation facilities and programs, especially from children and families when designing playgrounds and youth-oriented recreation facilities and from seniors to address the specific needs of the aging population.
- D. Coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions to provide a wider diversity of recreation opportunities that help to meet the needs of Oshtemo residents.
- E. Explore opportunities, such as updating Township ordinances, to require developers to provide private recreation facilities within new developments.

GOAL: Exceptional Park Experience

Deliver an exceptional park user experience through proper maintenance and continuous improvements, recognizing that our parks are a source of community pride.

Action Strategies:

- A. Annually assess and update the Long-Term Capital Maintenance Forecast to assist with projecting recreational facility replacement and operational needs.
- B. Continue to evaluate improvements needed to enhance universal access that provide equal levels of experiences for all age groups and abilities and their specific recreational needs.
- C. Review the Township's park rules and policies and routinely seek public input and feedback on ways they might be improved.
- D. Develop a system to encourage park users to report maintenance issues and other concerns.
- E. Explore opportunities to establish a greater staff presence in the parks during busy times, to enforce park rules, ensure a welcoming environment, and increase safety.
- F. Consider ways to simplify and improve the reservation system and web-based interactions.
- G. Continue to repair and renew facilities at existing parks, such as the disc golf course at Township Park, which is heavily used and showing signs of deterioration.
- H. Continue to restore and maintain the unique historic amenities like the Drake Farmstead, Community Center, Grange Hall, etc. that are managed by the Parks Department.
- I. Explore nature-based play opportunities where children can engage with the natural environment.
- J. Pursue opportunities to bring art into the parks.

GOAL: Environmental Stewardship

Foster environmental stewardship through the preservation of important natural features and sustainable design practices within parks, supporting efforts to make Oshtemo a leader in environmental conservation.

Action Strategies

- A. Develop programs for the "greening" and naturalization of the parks and facilities through improvements such as:
 - field maintenance;
 - reestablishment of native trees, shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers;
 - storm water improvements;
 - lighting upgrades; and,
 - energy audits.
- B. Preserve natural features during design and development of park sites to the maximum extent feasible, in consideration of the type of park planned.
- C. Collaborate with adjoining property owners to coordinate environmental stewardship efforts in areas such as Township Park, Lillian Anderson Arboretum, and adjacent environmentally sensitive lands.

- D. Restore and preserve natural areas in the parks to improve habitat, prevent the spread of invasive species, and increase the enjoyment of park users.

GOAL: Development of Existing Facilities

Continue progress towards development of existing park facilities in established and undeveloped Township park land.

Action Strategies:

- A. Develop a long-range master plan for the property owned by the Township and Kalamazoo County located on KL Avenue just east of 4th Street, to meet future needs.
- B. Continue to implement the park master plans for Drake Farmstead Park, Flesher Field, and Township Park.
- C. Develop and implement a plan to provide additional outdoor recreation facilities at Grange Hall.
- D. Develop and provide educational programs with a focus on nature and history at the Drake Farmstead Park.

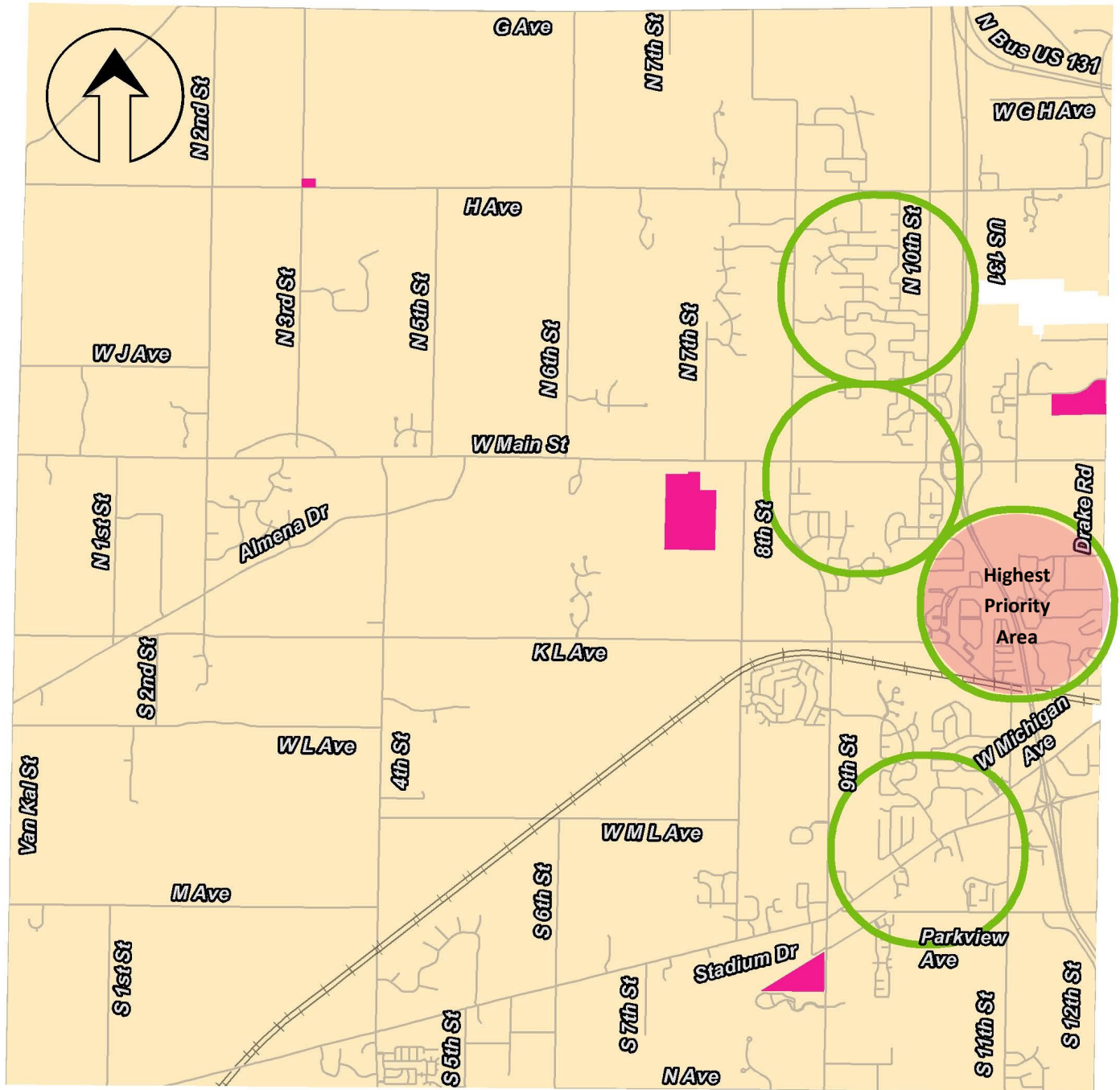
Parks and Recreation Anticipated Projects

To ensure movement towards achieving the Goals outlined above, the Township anticipates completing a number of capital improvement projects over the course of this 5-year Plan. To see these projects to fruition, many will need support of both State and local grant dollars. These projects include:





New Parks

Based on the MDNR's suggested classification system for parks, the Township is lacking in neighborhood and/or mini parks. In addition, as shown in this Plan, the residents of the Township have indicated a desire for additional parks in the more densely populated areas of the community. The Township hopes to address this issue with the acquisition of property within the priority areas outlined in the Neighborhood Park Priority Map. This map utilizes the information provided in the Trends and Needs section of the Plan to assist with the selection of the Priority Areas. These areas were determined based on population density and distance to the existing Township community parks. It is anticipated that the Township will work towards acquiring property, developing concept plans, and then constructing the park facilities within the time period of this Plan.

Neighborhood Park Priority Areas



0 1 2 Miles

-  Road Network
-  Railroad
-  Existing Township Park
-  Neighborhood Park Focus Area



Existing Parks

Drake Farmstead Park:

As a new park in the Township, there are a number of items from the Drake Farmstead Park Plan which are still to be developed. The Township will continue to improve the Carriage Barn, which will be constructed in 2019, to assist with accessible design, such as wall-mounted handicap door push buttons. Also, there is an ongoing relationship with the Oshtemo Historical Society to support the continuing restoration activities to the historic Drake House, including the improvements to the heating and cooling system. Finally, continual implementation of the Drake Farmstead Park Plan will be a focal point during this 5-Year Plan. This will include picnic shelters, outdoor classroom, trails, interpretive signs, gravel parking lot, improvements to the existing driveway, development of a new access point to Croyden Road, gazebo, event lawn, educational garden, and new storage shed.

Flesher Field:

The new facilities to be developed in Flesher Field would include a basketball court, trail improvements, parking lot extension, and the expansion of the existing playground to include music, water, or traditional play equipment. In addition, the Township intends to develop a forest management plan for the underutilized 12-acre wooded area of the park to control invasive species and improve wildlife habitat.

Township Park:

One of the most utilized facilities within Township Park is the disc golf course. The Township intends to complete course improvements, particularly signage and erosion control measures. All other improvements to the Park will include upgrades/refurbishments to the asphalt paths, trails, playground equipment, picnic shelters and tables, restroom buildings. Finally, the tennis and basketball courts will receive a new clear coat, seal, and striping to include new pickleball courts. New nets will also be furnished.

Community Buildings

The Township owns two community buildings, the Community Center and Grange Hall, which are managed by the Parks Department. The improvements planned for these structures include:

- Grange Hall - heating and cooling upgrades.
- Community Center - heating and cooling upgrades, and roof replacement.