

# NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP, MI PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

2021 – 2025

DRAFT

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## Thank you.

The participation and cooperation of community leaders, residents and members of civic organizations in the preparation of the 2021-2025 Northfield Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan is greatly appreciated.

The content in this Plan reflects the ongoing collaboration between Township community members, stakeholders, the Parks and Recreation Board, and the Township Board.

In particular, we acknowledge the efforts of:

### **Township Board [INCLUDE NEW BOARD AS WELL???)**

Marlene Chockley, Supervisor

Kathy Manley, Clerk

Lenore Zelenock, Treasurer

Wayne Dockett, Trustee

Jacki Otto, Trustee

Janet Chick, Trustee

Tawn Beliger, Trustee

### **Parks and Recreation Board**

Jennifer DeLisle, Chair

Chuck Steuer, Vice Chair

Tawn Beliger, Board of Trustees Representative [INCLUDE JACKI OTTO AS WELL???)

Lee Cole, School Board Representative

Sam Iaquinto, Planning Commission Representative

Leigh Prince, Member

Tim Saville, Member

Cici Koenig, Member

Doug Wilbur, Downtown Development Authority Representative

**Parks and Recreation Master Plan Subcommittee**

Tawn Beliger [INCLUDE JACKI OTTO AS WELL???)

Leigh Prince

Jennifer DeLisle

Cici Koenig

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# Chapter 1

# INTRODUCTION

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## *A PLAN FOR AN ENGAGED COMMUNITY*



Welcome to the Northfield Township 2021 - 2025 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This plan reflects a vision for parks and recreation within Northfield Township for the next several years. This plan serves as a roadmap for future recreation facilities and programs by considering existing parks and programs in and around the township and the anticipated demand for additional or improved recreation facilities.

Northfield Township's Parks and Recreation Master Plan was prepared in accordance with MDNR's Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and

Greenway Plans. This plan also forms the basis for potential recreation grant funding from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and other agencies and foundations.

Most importantly, this plan will act as Northfield Township’s playbook for community building as it relates to parks and recreation over the next five or more years.

## ***PLANNING PROCESS***

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan was prepared with technical assistance from McKenna, a planning and design consulting firm, and with the active involvement of the township's administration and the Northfield Township Parks and Recreation Board and Master Plan Subcommittee.

Citizen input and action, through a community survey and a public hearing, provided critical input that guided the development of the plan. As a result, recommendations described within the action plan reflect the needs and ideas of those who use Northfield Township’s parks and recreation facilities.

Following several discussions held by the Parks and Recreation Board and Master Plan Subcommittee, and a draft review by the Parks and Recreation Board and Township Board, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan was submitted to Northfield Township Board of Trustees for adoption. Throughout the process, all meetings were open to the public (except for subcommittee meetings). Notices were posted beforehand, as provided by the Open Meetings Act. The planning process kicked off in September 2020 and concluded with the adoption of the plan in January 2021.



## ***IMPORTANCE OF PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEMS***

This plan is a guide that addresses expressed community desires related to parks and recreation amenities, which play a key role in the lives of Township residents by providing:

- Environmental protection and sustained rural character.
- Improved connectivity and walkability.
- Both active and passive recreational opportunities
- Improved quality of life for Northfield Township community members

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## Chapter 2

# COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

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### ***NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP***

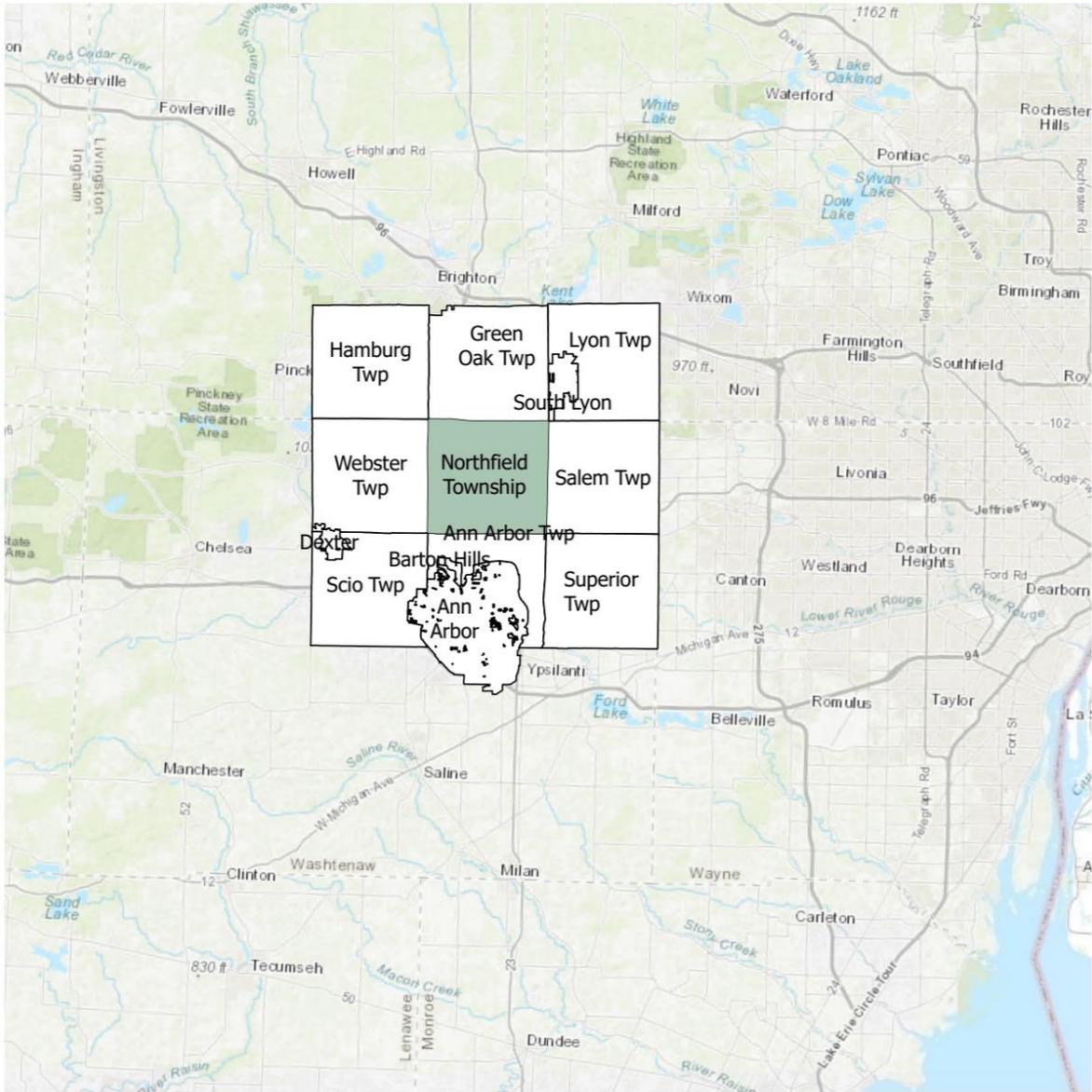
The Community Snapshot chapter presents the regional and social composition of Northfield Township, together with the administrative structure and funding mechanisms, as these fields strongly inform the possibilities for parks and recreation within the community.

Northfield Township, located in northeastern Washtenaw County and approximately one mile north of the City of Ann Arbor, covers about 36 square miles in area. The township provides a rural escape nestled within the metro Ann Arbor area.

Established in 1824 as a recreation destination due to Whitmore Lake, Northfield Township takes great pride in being a community that provides a high quality of life for its residents and offers a diversity of values and experiences.



Northfield Township is bordered by Salem Township to the east, Ann Arbor Township to the south, Webster Township to the west, and Green Oak Township in Livingston County to the north.



# Regional Context

Northfield



November 1, 2020

### LEGEND

-  Northfield Township
-  Adjacent Municipalities



*Aerial source: ESRI, Accessed 2020 Data Source Accessed 2019*  
*Roads, Water Bodies source Washtenaw, Livingston, Oakland County, MCGI 2019*  
*Municipal Boundaries source SEMCOG, Accessed 2020.*



## COMMUNITY PROFILE

Demographics characterize a community by identifying its population trends and needs. Guided by this information, we can better identify how to serve the recreational needs of the Northfield Township community.

The figures used in this plan come from the US Census Bureau’s 2019 5-year data, which uses statistical sampling over a 5-year period to describe the average characteristics over the period of collection. The table below shows population data for Northfield Township, comparison communities, Washtenaw County, and the State of Michigan.

### Demographic Trends

Table ? below indicates that Northfield Township has a stable, and slightly growing population. Population trends are an important indicator for parks and recreation planning. While upward trends in population indicate that there is demand for parks and recreational features in Northfield Township, data involving age and socio-economic assist in identifying specific recreational needs.

Table ? :Northfield Township Population 2010-2019

Population	Northfield Township	Salem Township	Scio Township	Webster Township	Washtenaw County	State of Michigan
2010	8,245	5,627	17,921	6,784	344,791	9,883,640
2019	8,673	6,293	20,081	6,809	367,601	9,986,857

### Trends and Needs

Lifestyle trends identified in the Northfield Township community will affect the long-term future of parks and recreation. Identifying trends and needs of the community must go beyond traditional demographic data such as income, age, employment status, etc., and address characteristics such as spending habits, recreation and entertainment preferences, and family structures.

ESRI’s Tapestry Segmentation provides lifestyle tapestry categories based upon socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. The below table and descriptions include data provided through ESRI Business Analyst that categorize Northfield Township residents’ top socioeconomic traits.

[NOTE THAT THESE DESCRIPTIONS DON'T INCLUDE ANYTHING ABOUT PARKS AND REC PROCLIVITIES FOR EACH GROUP]

Rank	Tapestry Segment	2020 U.S. Households
Middleburg	26.6%	2.9%
Green Acres	22.9%	3.2%
Savvy Suburbanites	22.0%	3.0%
Suburban Satellites	17.8%	3.2%
Emerald City	7.4%	1.4%
Professional Pride	3.4%	1.6%

### *Middleburg*

- Median age: 36.1
- Education: 65% with a high school diploma or some college.
- Unemployment rate lower at 4.7% (Index 86).
- Labor force participation typical of a younger population at 66.7% (Index 107).
- Traditional values are the norm here— faith, country, and family.
- Prefer to buy American and for a good price.
- Comfortable with the latest in technology, for convenience (online banking or saving money on landlines) and entertainment.

### *Green Acres*

- Median age: 43.9
- Education: More than 60% are college educated.
- Unemployment is low at 3.8% (Index 70); labor force participation rate is high at 66.8% (Index 107).
- Income is derived not only from wages and salaries but also from self-employment (more than 13% of households), investments (27% of households), and increasingly, from retirement.
- They are cautious consumers with a focus on quality and durability.
- Comfortable with technology, more as a tool than a trend: banking or paying bills online is convenient; but the Internet is not viewed as entertainment.
- Economic outlook is professed as pessimistic, but consumers are comfortable with debt, primarily as home and auto loans, and investments.

### *Savvy Suburbanites*

- Median Age: 45.7

- Education: 50.6% college graduates; 77.6% with some college education.
- Low unemployment at 3.5% (Index 65); higher labor force participation rate at 67.9% (Index 109) with proportionately more 2-worker households at 62.2%, (Index 120).
- Well-connected consumers that appreciate technology and make liberal use of it for everything from shopping and banking to staying current and communicating.
- Informed shoppers that do their research prior to purchasing and focus on quality.

### *Suburban Satellites*

- Median age: 40.3
- Education: almost 40% have a high school diploma only (Index 140); 45% have college education (Index 73).
- Unemployment rate is 6%, slightly higher than the US rate.
- Labor force participation rate is 59.1%, slightly lower than the US.
- These consumers are more concerned about cost than quality or brand loyalty.
- They tend to be somewhat late in adapting to technology.
- They obtain a disproportionate amount of their information from TV, compared to other media

### *Emerald City*

- Median age: 37.4
- Well educated, these consumers research products carefully before making purchases.
- They buy natural, green, and environmentally friendly products.
- Very conscious of nutrition, they regularly buy and eat organic foods.
- Cell phones and text messaging are a huge part of everyday life.
- They place importance on learning new things to keep life fresh and variable.
- They are interested in the fine arts and especially enjoy listening to music.

### *Professional Pride*

- Median age: 40.8
- Professional Pride consumers are highly qualified in the science, technology, law, or finance fields; they've worked hard to build their professional reputation or their start-up businesses.
- These consumers are willing to risk their accumulated wealth in the stock market.
- They have a preferred financial institution, regularly read financial news, and use the Internet for banking transactions.
- These residents are goal oriented and strive for lifelong earning and learning.
- Life here is well organized; routine is a key ingredient to daily life.

## ***Persons with Disabilities***

Understanding the status of persons with disabilities will assist in planning facilities and locations for existing and future recreational and nonmotorized transportation activities. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires that all public services, including parks, recreation facilities, and nonmotorized transportation be subject to barrier-free requirements.

The Act also requires that public recreation providers eliminate any eligibility requirements for participation in programs, activities, and services.

The type of disability and number of residents impacted will shape the design and accommodations made for them within the Northfield Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The US Census Bureau reports that approximately 9.8% percent of Northfield Township residents have a disability. The most prevalent disabilities within the population are ambulatory and cognitive ability difficulties, followed by independent living difficulty. Ambulatory difficulties encompass serious difficulties with walking or stairs, issues that limit physical activity, leading to steeper decline in health. Providing accessibility options for these difficulties when planning for parks and recreation activities could result in positive health outcomes for a population that already experiences great difficulty on a day-to-day basis.

Accommodations could include introducing small open space areas near areas with high concentrations of independent living difficulties for passive recreation access, ramps or pavement improvements in order to ease accessibility concerns for those who suffer from ambulatory difficulties, or by installing audible and visually assisted cross walks that are conscious of those who may be visually or hearing impaired.

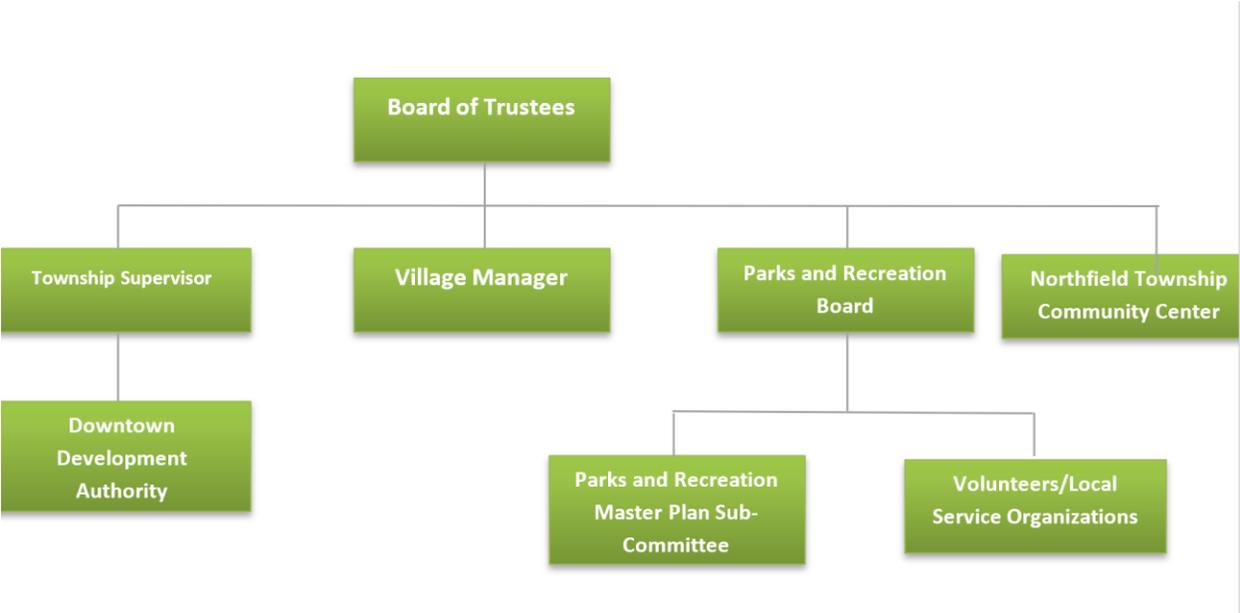
## ***ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE***

Operations, maintenance, and improvements to Northfield Township's parks and recreation facilities are collaboratively managed by Township administration, the Board of Trustees, and the Parks and Recreation Board.

### ***Special Thanks!***

The Township appreciates the contributions of the below organizations in the success of parks and recreation within Northfield Township. These organizations include but are not limited to:

- Volunteers,
- Local service organizations
- Northfield Township Community Center
- Whitmore Lake Public Schools
- Northfield Township Area Library.



**Administrative Structure Detail**

1

***Township Supervisor***

Serves as the Township’s leader or spokesperson. The Supervisor is the Chief Assessing Officer and is ultimately responsible for the duties of the Assessing Department. The Township Supervisor works closely with the appointed Township Manager and Board of Trustees to enact policies and carry out efficient and effective operation of Northfield Township's government

2

***Township Manager***

Oversees the day to day administration of Northfield Township government. The Township Manager is the chief appointed executive and works directly with the Township Board and various departments of the township.

3

***Board of Trustees***

The Township Board of Trustees is elected by the people. The Township Board is comprised of seven members: Supervisor, Clerk, Treasurer, and four Trustees. The Supervisor chairs the Township Board meetings and the Board appoints a Township Manager to oversee Township operations.

4

***Parks and Recreation Board***

Oversees parks and recreation efforts in the community and leads the master planning process. Establishes a vision for current and future long-range programs for the development of park areas and facilities. Develops projects that have the capacity to provide a tangible benefit to the community.

5

***Downtown Development Authority***

Undertakes public improvements and activities that have the greatest impact in strengthening the business district. Since some of the park facilities within Northfield Township are located within the District, the DDA has interest and responsibility in the promotion and enhancement of recreation.

6

***Parks and Recreation Master Plan Subcommittee***

Comprises four members of the Parks and Recreation Commission as a focus group for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

***FUNDING***

Funding for the Northfield Township parks and recreation programming and facilities is provided largely by the Township's general fund. Other funding sources and revenue come from grants awarded for parks and recreation projects and donations from individuals, businesses and community organizations, all of which the township will continue to pursue.

The Township has invested in land acquisition for the purpose of providing the community more opportunity for recreation and open space. In 2016, the Township purchased 23 acres of land alongside Whitmore Lake, referred to as North Village. The purpose of investing in and developing the North Village site was to address public amenities, lake views, natural features, and create connections to the downtown area. Through this effort, the Township continues to prioritize utilizing the community's natural features and upgrading parks and recreation facilities when fiscally feasible.

Whitmore Lake Public Schools, which serves part of Northfield Township, and the Northfield Township Area Library both also provide recreational programming in the township. Both are supported by millages paid by township community members.

Table ? details Northfield Township's Parks and Recreation budget expenditures.

**BUDGET [?????]**

Table : Parks and Recreation Budget Expenditures 2017-2020

<b>Expenditure Category</b>	<b>2017-2018 Amended</b>	<b>2018-2019 Actual</b>	<b>2019-2020 Amended</b>	<b>2019-2020 Actual</b>
Supplies	\$4,800	\$180	\$0	\$0
Parks Maintenance	\$200	\$399	\$5,000	\$1,385
Community Center				

**GRANTS**

Table? : Grants Received

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Project Year</b>	<b>Grant Amount</b>	<b>Site Elements</b>	<b>2020 Condition of Elements</b>
Urban County Grant	2019-2021	\$91,000		
Senior Café Grant				

**Chapter 3****WATER, LAND & PARKS****Natural Resources**

Northfield Township's environmental setting is critical when planning for recreation facilities and the connections between them. Environmental features, such as lakes and woodlands, of Northfield Township are not only available for residents but provide an opportunity for those who live outside of Northfield Township to enjoy its natural features as a destination option.

The location, topography, and existing environmental features all influence the types of facilities, amenities, and programs that are best suited for implementation. In addition, environmental quality significantly affects the quality of life in a community. Visual aesthetics, clean water, and fertile soil all enhance the public health and economy. Therefore, a thorough plan requires that the condition of the environment be considered in future decisions and to promote best practices for the stewardship of the land.

The Water, Land, and Parks chapter describes Northfield Township’s parks and recreation and natural resources features. The existing recreational facilities and land devoted to such uses then provides the framework for analysis and comparison to MDNR standards, highlighting where the township is excelling or may have room for improvement.

The township wishes to improve environmental quality, connectivity, walkability, parks and recreation facilities, and the Whitmore Lake waterfront through the goals and objectives identified within this plan.

### ***NATURAL FEATURES FRAMEWORK***

Northfield Township’s natural feature framework highlights the Township’s plethora of environmentally significant features, including open space, lakes, and woodlands:

#### ***Agricultural Lands***

*(Insert section description)*

#### ***Whitmore Lake***

*(Insert section description)*

#### ***Wetlands***

*(Insert section description)*

#### ***Trails***

*(Insert description)*

#### ***Trees***

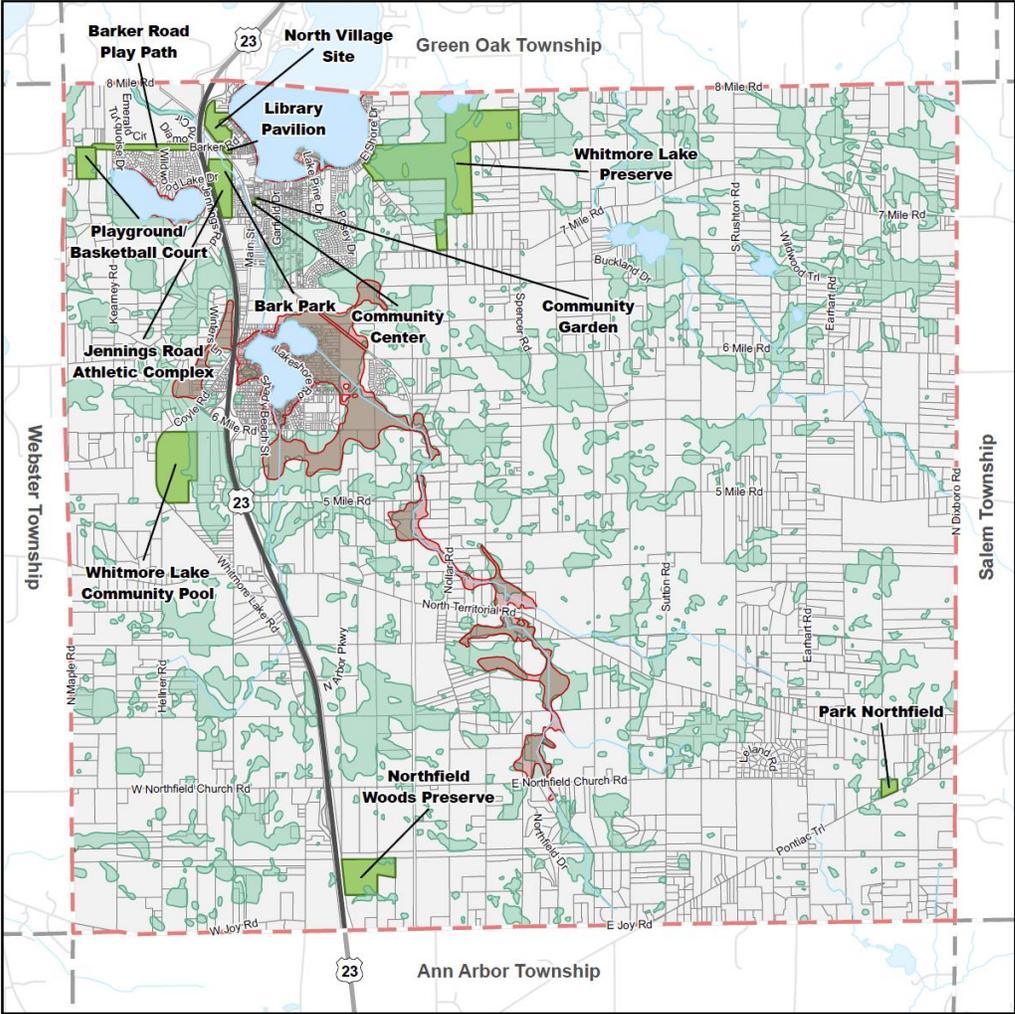
*(Insert description)*

#### ***Topography***

*(Insert description)*

#### ***Scenery***

*(Insert description)*



## Natural Features Map

Northfield Township,  
Washtenaw County, Michigan

December 15, 2020

### LEGEND

-  Northfield Township Boundary
-  Other Municipal Boundaries
-  Lakes and Rivers
-  100-Year Floodplain
-  Wetlands
-  Northfield Township Recreation Facilities



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Source: Northfield Twp 2020, McKenna 2020.



[ADD SEVEN MILE PRESERVE TO MAP]

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## Northfield Township's Recreation Inventory

In total, Northfield Township features twelve (12) public recreation facilities, with approximately 220 acres of land. The Township's parks and recreation facilities each have different types of amenities and opportunities for a wide variety of recreational experiences. The following inventory and the adjoining Recreation Facilities and Service Area Map details the amenities currently available at each facility and the facility's respective location.

### **Barker Road Play Path**

Classification: Park Trail  
Length: 1.0 Miles  
Accessibility Ranking: 4

Located in the northwest portion of the Township, along Barker Road, the Barker Road Play Path serves the Downtown Whitmore Lake area. Stretching from the old township hall to the Whitmore Lake Elementary School, the path features musical instruments, hidden painted rocks, custom benches, blackboards, a mural painted under a highway overpass, and interactive games, such as hopscotch and tic-tac-toe. The Barker Road Play Path was financed through an award from a community-driven design competition as a Play Everywhere project.

### **Community Garden**

Classification: Mini-Park  
Area: 0.25 Acres  
Accessibility Ranking: 4

Located in the northwest portion of the Township, across Main street from the Northfield Township Community Center, the Community Garden is intended to be a public space reserved for residents to grow fruits and vegetables using raised beds. There is a garden usage fee of \$10 per plot for both residents of the township and non-residents.

### **North Village site/Northfield Township Community Park**

Classification: Large Urban Park  
Area: 23 Acres  
Accessibility Ranking: 2

Located in the northwest portion of the township, with frontage on Whitmore Lake, the North Village site is a yet-undeveloped site that will provide added public amenities, lake views, natural features, desirable connections to downtown Whitmore Lake, parking, site access, and community vitality to the area. In the future development, mixed use buildings with restaurants, retail, and second floor residential along Main Street may be included to subsidize the public amenities of the site.

### **Northfield Township Community Center**

Classification: Community Park

Area: 0.34 Acres

Accessibility Ranking: 3

Located in the northwest portion of the township, the Community Center is run by a director and a small group of volunteers to offer programming and activities for residents regardless of age. Examples of the programming available are fitness classes (for children, adults, and seniors), presentations, art classes, craft workshops, trips, karaoke nights, outdoor movies, luncheons, and special events.

### **Whitmore Lake Bark Park**

Classification: Community Park

Area: [ ] Acres

Accessibility Ranking: 4

Located in the northwest portion of the township, at the back end of the Jennings Road Athletic Complex, the Whitmore Lake Bark Park is a safe place for residents to gather and exercise their dogs off-leash within a fenced area. The Bark Park is open daily all year long, from dawn to dusk.

### **Basketball court at Whitmore Lake Elementary School**

Classification: School Park

Area: [ ] Acres

Accessibility Ranking: 3

Located in the northwest portion of the township, on the nearly 20 acre Whitmore Lake Elementary School campus, the basketball court serves the residents of the downtown Whitmore Lake area. The basketball court is owned and operated by Whitmore Lake Public Schools.

### **Jennings Road Athletic Complex**

Classification: Community Park

Area: 32 Acres

Accessibility Ranking: 4

Located in the northwest portion of the township, the Jennings Road Athletic Complex included a football field, and track and field facility, spectator stands, a concession building, a storage and observation building, a baseball/softball field, two youth baseball fields, a large grass practice area, a large play structure designed for children (3-12 years old), the Whitmore Lake Bark Park (see above), a wooded area with a stream, and rustic trails. With the exception of the Whitmore Lake Bark Park, the athletic complex is owned and operated by Whitmore Lake Public Schools.

### **Playground at Whitmore Lake Elementary School**

Classification: School Park

Area: [ ] Acres

Accessibility Ranking: 4

Located in the northwest portion of the township, on the nearly 20 acre Whitmore Lake Elementary School campus, the playground serves the residents of the downtown Whitmore Lake area. The playground is owned and operated by Whitmore Lake Public Schools.

### **Whitmore Lake Community Pool, Walking Track and other facilities**

Classification: School Park

Area: [ ] Acres [NOT REALLY APPLICABLE SINCE THESE ARE WITHIN THE SCHOOL BUILDING]

Accessibility Ranking: 4

Located in the northwest portion of the township, on the approximately 80 acre Whitmore Lake High School campus, the Community Pool, Walking Track, and other facilities serve the residents of the Northfield Township. These facilities are owned and operated by Whitmore Lake Public Schools, which also operates recreational programming for children and adults.

### **Northfield Township Area Library Pavilion**

Classification: Community Park

Area: 1.6 Acres

Accessibility Ranking: 4

Located in the northwest portion of the township, on Barker Road, the Northfield Township Area Library Pavilion serves the residents of the Downtown Whitmore Lake area. The pavilion is owned and operated by the Northfield Township Area Library, which also provides recreational programming for children and adults.

### **Northfield Woods Preserve (Northfield Church Road)**

Classification: Regional Park

Area: 48 Acres

Accessibility Ranking: 3

Located in the southwest portion of the township, on Northfield Church Road, the Northfield Woods Preserve is a nature preserve with a high-quality woodlot, wooded wetlands, about 10 acres of active farmland, and an area in transition from former farm fields to woods. The preserve is owned and operated by Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission.

### **Park Northfield (Pontiac Trail)**

Classification: Regional Park

Area: 7.7 Acres

Accessibility Ranking: 3

Located in the southeast portion of the township, on Pontiac Trail, Park Northfield is a small, roadside park with a lowland hardwood forest, a small marsh at its western edge, a large rolling open field, and a natural oak hedgerow along its eastern border. Park Northfield also features an open play field and two picnic tables. Dogs are allowed. The park is owned and operated by Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission.

### **Seven Mile Preserve**

Classification: \_\_\_\_\_

Area: Approximately 50 acres

Accessibility Ranking: \_\_\_\_

Northfield Township owns a number of vacant parcels comprising approximately 50 acres adjacent to the Public Safety Building. This land is primarily forested wetlands and is located within walking distance from much of the downtown Whitmore Lake area. This property, tentatively identified as “Seven Mile Preserve Park”, could be developed for recreational use while preserving and enhancing its natural beauty, potentially providing the community greater interconnectivity and a fabulous, centrally-located park.

### **Whitmore Lake Preserve (7 Mile Road)**

Classification: Regional Park

Area: 235 Acres

Accessibility Ranking: 3

Located in the northwest portion of the township, on 7 Mile Road, Whitmore Lake Preserve is a nature preserve with approximately 2.7 miles of trails, along with meadows, mixed hardwood forest, wooded wetlands, and scenic views over a large marsh and small lakes. The preserve is owned and operated by Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission.

## **ACCESSIBILITY RANKINGS**

Providing accessible facilities that may be utilized by persons with varied disabilities is one of Northfield Township’s community goals. Each publicly owned recreation facility was evaluated for compliance to the ADA Standards of Accessible Design by McKenna in the summer of 2020. Recreation facilities are rated on a 1-5 scale, as defined by MDNR:

- 1--None of the site elements meet ADA accessibility guidelines.
- 2--Some of the site elements meet ADA accessibility guidelines.
- 3--Most of the site elements meet ADA accessibility guidelines.
- 4--The entire recreation facility meets ADA accessibility.

5--The entire recreation facility was developed / renovated using the principles of universal design.

The above facilities have ratings of 2, 3, and 4. Due to some of the facilities such as the Whitmore Lake Preserve being mainly wetlands, marshes, and open space, many of the entrance routes to these facilities are not paved. While most of the above facilities include elements that are handicapped accessible, many of the routes to reach such facilities are lacking in principles of universal design.

## **Privately-Owned Recreational Facilities**

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

### **Golf Courses**

- a. Links at Whitmore Lake, 1111 Six Mile Road.  
*(Insert Description)*
  
- b. Rolling Meadows Country Club, 6484 Sutton Road. This is a 6,474 yard 18 hole public golf course, designed by William Shively. It includes a putting green, golf carts and a small pavilion.  
*(Insert Description)*
  
- c. Indian Trail Golf Center, 5440 Earhart Road. This is a golf driving range with open and covered tees.  
*(Insert Description)*

### **Marinas**

*(Insert Description)*

### **Stables**

*(Insert Description)*

### **Miscellaneous Private Recreation**

*(Insert Description)*

## **Regional Recreational Resources**

*Independence Lake County Park, 3200 Jennings Road, west of Kearney Road, in Webster Township.*

*(Insert Description)*

*Bandemer Park, located along the Huron River at Whitmore Lake Road and Barton Drive. This Ann Arbor city park has 35 acres of nature trails and footpaths, a dirt bike course, picnic areas with grills, an accessible canoe dock, a fishing deck, shelter, restrooms and benches. 3.*

*(Insert Description)*

*Olson Park, an Ann Arbor city park located at the corner of DhuVarren Road and Pontiac Trail south of M-14.*

*(Insert Description)*

*Manly W. Bennett Memorial Park, located along both the east and west sides of Merrill Road in Hamburg Township.*

*(Insert Description)*

*South Lyon Rail-Trail (Huron Valley Trail System). A ten mile of hiking, biking and blading trail connecting South Lyon to Kensington Metropark, Island Lake State Park, Wixom and the Oakland County Trail System.*

*(Insert Description)*

*Delhi Metropark (53 acres), Dexter-Huron Metropark (122 acres), Hudson Mills Metropark (1,550 acres). These three Metroparks (operated by the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority, a regional special park district encompassing Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Washtenaw and Livingston Counties) are all located on the Huron River within 2 to 6 miles west of Northfield Township.*

*(Insert Description)*

*Huron Meadows Metropark, located at Maltby and Rickett Roads in Brighton Township.*

*(Insert Description)*

*Kensington Metropark, 4570 Huron River Parkway, in Milford.  
(Insert Description)*

*Brighton Recreation Area, 6360 Chilson Road, Howell.  
(Insert Description)*

*Island Lake State Park, 12950 E. Grand River Ave. in Brighton.  
  
(Insert Description)*

Whitmore Lake Boat Launch, The DNR maintains a public boat launch on the north side of Whitmore Lake in Green Oak Township. Boat launch, dock, and restroom facilities are provided. 12.  
*(Insert Description)*

Pinckney State Recreation Area, 8555 Silver Hill Road in Pinckney.  
  
*(Insert Description)*

*Maybury State Park, 20145 Beck Road in Northville.  
  
(Insert Description)*

## **Recreation Systems Analysis**

### *COMPARISON TO STATE AND NATIONAL STANDARDS*

Comparing the adequacy of Northfield Township’s parks and recreation facilities to national standards is important in identifying needs. The type of parks and their location, number of amenities, and distribution throughout the Township are all components that are assessed together as a recreation system analysis. The following comparisons are made between Northfield Township and state and national standards for service areas, acreage, and number of facilities.

Due to assistance from community members and township staff, Northfield Township has a strong parks and recreation system and has made considerable efforts towards improving recreation facilities. Through working side-by-side with community members, the township is able to continue to improve community destinations.

### SERVICE AREA ANALYSIS

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources establishes a recommended service area for each park classification to identify areas in the community that are lacking access to recreation facilities. The service area boundary for each type of park is as follows:

Mini-Park	0.25 mile walkability service radius
Neighborhood Park	0.25 – 0.5 mile service radius
Community Park	1.0 mile service radius

Northfield Township is largely agricultural, resulting in neighborhoods and parks that have greater separation than an urban or suburban community. Due to greater distances in between amenities, and use of motorized vehicles as resident’s primary method of transportation, increasing the number of mini and neighborhood parks to mitigate the deficiency may not be a need within the community. However, the township would like to build upon the existing non-motorized pathways / trail systems to link neighborhoods to parks as a means to improve assess and expand recreation opportunities for residents.

### ACREAGE ANALYSIS

Table ? : compares Northfield Township’s park acreage to national guidelines for Michigan communities. As a state-wide measure, these standards are general in nature and do not always reflect the quality of the facilities, the character of the community, or other local differences that impact community recreation facility needs. Thus, in evaluating the results, the actual conditions and trends present in Northfield Township must be accounted for.

As a baseline indicator, Table ? highlights the surplus / deficiencies of all park land that is available to residents. While there is a surplus of community park acreage available to Northfield Township residents, there is a deficiency in mini-park acreage.

3.1	Facility Type	NRPA Guideline for Minimum Acreage per 1,000 Residents	Northfield's Minimum Recommended Acreage	Northfield's Actual Acreage	Surplus,
	Mini Parks	0.25 acres	2.19	.25	-1.94
	Neighborhood Parks	1.00 acres	8.673	0	-8.673
	Community Parks	5.00 acres	43.37	65.94 [IS THIS NUMBER CORRECT???)	+22.57
	Greenways/Trails	Variable	-	-	-

TABLE : Northfield Township's Recreation Land Acreage Analysis

## FACILITIES ANALYSIS

Additionally, MDNR recommends a certain number and type of recreation facilities for a community based on population size. Table ? compares Northfield Township's recreation facilities to the MDNR standards. However, it is important to note that most of these facilities are owned and operated by Whitmore Lake Public Schools. While public school facilities can be utilized by members of the community, they are not substitutes for well-designed parks. They do not offer the full range of facilities normally provided in a park, such as picnic facilities and benches. Additionally, school recreation sites are designed to meet the needs of school children and are generally not adequate for the recreational pursuits of the general public, ranging from organized sports for adults to passive recreational activities like hiking.

Northfield Township's 2019 estimated population is 8,673, which means the Township has mostly exceeded MDNR standards for several types of applicable recreation facilities for a population of this size. Northfield Township intends to continue its collaboration with Whitmore Lake Public Schools and other entities, to provide residents with greater access to recreation facilities.

TABLE :Northfield Township's Recreation Amenities Standard Analysis

[THESE NUMBERS DON'T SEEM RIGHT]

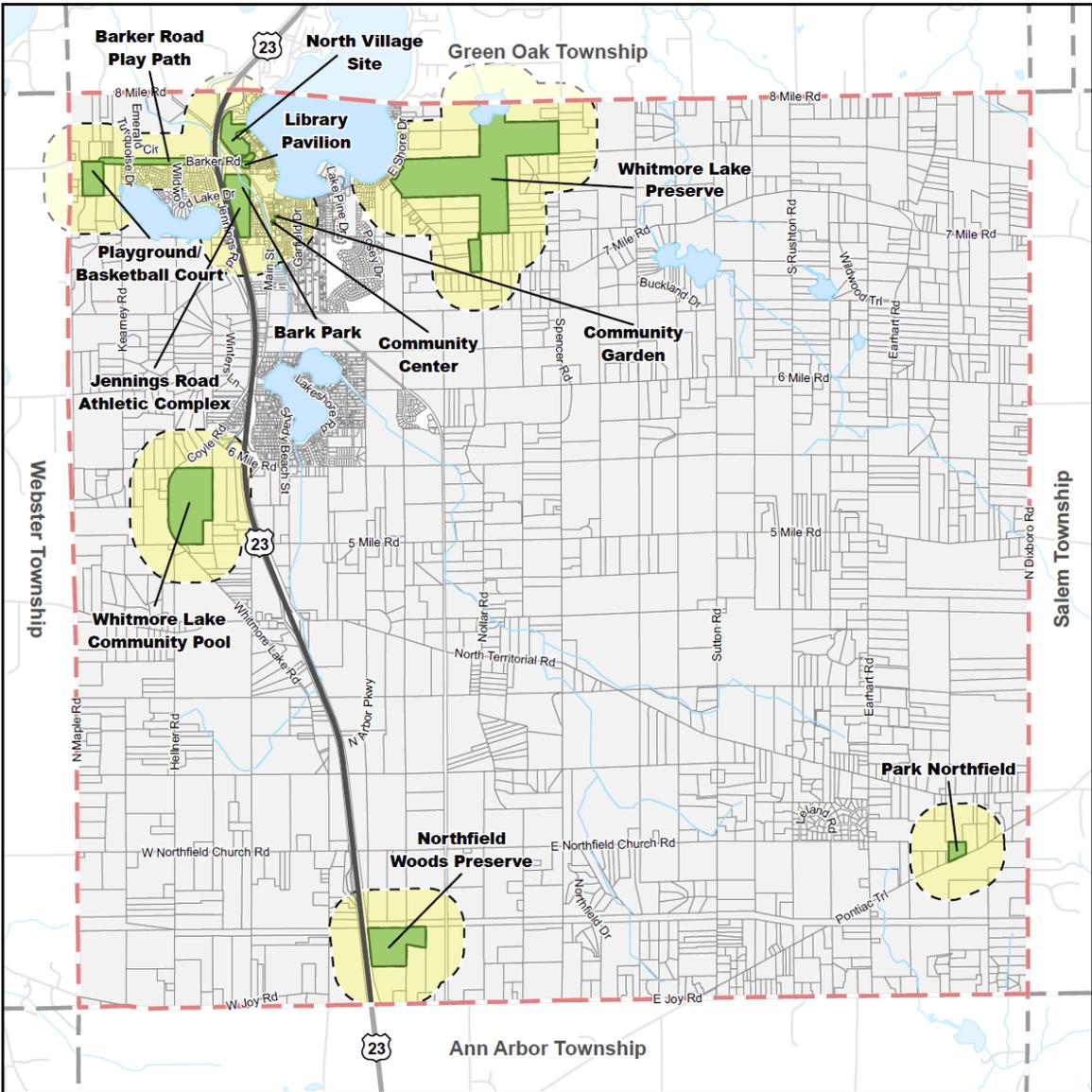
Amenity Type	MDNR Standard	Northfield Township's Recommended Amenity Count	Surplus/Deficiency
Basketball court	1 per 5,000	1	+1
Baseball/Softball field	1 per 5,000	1	+2
Multi-Purpose Athletic Field	Varies	-	-
Soccer Field	1 per 10,000	1	-1
Tennis Court	1 per 2,000	4	-1
Greenway/Trail System	1 system per region	1	+4
Volleyball Court	1 per 5,000	1	-1
Beach	Varies	-	-

TABLE :Northfield Township's Recreation Amenities Standard Analysis

*\*Based on the 2019 U.S. Census Bureau count of 8,673 individuals*

[ADD SEVEN MILE PRESERVE]





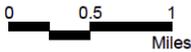
# Recreational Facilities and Service Area

Northfield Township,  
Washtenaw County, Michigan

December 15, 2020

## LEGEND

-  Northfield Township Boundary
-  Other Municipal Boundaries
-  Northfield Township Parcels
-  Lakes and Rivers
-  Northfield Township Recreation Facilities
-  Quarter (1/4) Mile Walkability Radius



Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, v. 17a. Source: Northfield Twp 2020, McKenna 2020.



## Chapter 4

### NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP'S STRATEGY

#### *The Vision*



Trends and needs identified in the Northfield Township community guided the visioning process for this plan. Northfield Township envisions meeting the community's identified needs via the goals and objectives.

The goals and objectives within this chapter were formulated by community member input, the Parks and Recreation Board and Master Plan Subcommittee, and Township Board. The goals and objectives are key in the recreation planning process, as they form the framework for decision making.

The purpose of this plan is to provide a basis for public policy decisions and technical coordination in recreational development and to bring to life the long-term vision through near-term and long-term actions.

This chapter details the community engagement process its key results and establishes the Township's goals and objectives.

## *Community Engagement Process*

The purpose of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is to provide a clear, concise framework to meet Northfield Township’s recreation needs and wants. Community participation brings vitality and energy to the planning process.

To gather the community’s vision, needs, and wants for parks and recreation, the township hosted an online survey, as well as distributed a physical copy of the survey within every township tax bill. The survey was live from November-December 2020 and generated approximately 225 responses. Quality control of data collection was provided via a requirement for each respondent to enter their name and address for their responses to be considered valid.

### *Key Results*

Respondents were asked a series of questions regarding long-term goals and priorities for parks and recreation in Northfield Township. Approximately 95% of survey respondents were Northfield Township residents. A summary of the results of the survey are detailed below, and full survey data is included within the appendix of this plan.

### *Major Themes*

Major themes gathered from the community engagement provided direction for the goals and objectives section of this plan. Major themes identified included:

- Natural features preservation
- Lakefront access and preservation
- Connectivity
- Safety and walkability
- Fiscal conservation
- Township pride for assets and resources

Thank you, Northfield  
Township Community  
Members!

*Quoteables from the  
community:*

*“I use the Lakeland trail and go to Independence Park all the time (5-7x per week) because their trail systems are so beautiful and well-maintained.”*

*“I’d really love to see the Whitmore lake preserve be connected to e shore. Also, continue the sidewalk on e shore and connect around the whole lake.”*

*“Preserving natural areas with public access is very important to me and providing educational opportunities in them too: signage, identifying trees and plants and other features.”*

### *Top Visited Parks and Recreation Facilities*

The top five visited parks and recreation facilities within the Township in the past year are listed below.

Barker Road Play Path	43%
Whitmore Lake Preserve	39.7%
North Village Site/Northfield Community Park	39.15%
Jennings Road Athletic Complex	31.22%
Northfield Township Area Library Pavilion	30.69%



### *Community Driven Guiding Principles*

Respondents were asked to identify the importance of a list of draft parks and recreation goals. The top six most voted for guiding principles were crafted into the goals within this plan. The top six goals are long-term recreation plans that will be met through the objectives.

1. Offer township residents opportunities to walk, run, and bike safely without leaving their community.
2. Strive to ensure all new projects are fiscally sustainable.
3. Enhance the health and wellness of the community through a variety of recreational opportunities throughout the year.
4. Develop an interconnected network of recreation facilities and trails to enhance quality of life, offer health benefits and provide non-motorized transportation options.
5. Offer township residents the opportunity to enjoy the Whitmore Lake waterfront.
6. Foster a township-wide sense of pride in, and support for, our community's recreational assets.

## *Priority Parks and Recreation Projects*



*In order of importance, within the next several years, the Northfield Township community would like to have:*

- *Farmer's Market*
- *Beach/swimming area*
- *Bathrooms*
- *Landscaped areas with paths and benches*
- *Unpaved trails*
- *Canoe/Kayak/Paddleboard Launch*
- *Fishing pier*
- *Kids' adventure walk through natural areas*
- *Trails paved*
- *Small neighborhood parks*
- *Parking lot*
- *Playground*

- *Water overlook*
- *Pavilion*

The majority of respondents stated that the township should pay for additional parks and recreation amenities and their maintenance via private fundraising, grants (public and private), volunteer labor and limited general fund expenditures.

## ***Community Goals and Objectives***

### ***Goal 1***

Offer township residents opportunities to walk, run, and bike safely without leaving their community.

#### *Objectives*

- a. Ensure barrier free accessibility to all existing parks, trails, and recreation areas.
- b. Increase walkability in the Whitmore Lake hamlet area.
- c. Encourage safe cycling, hiking and horseback riding on rural roads.
- d. Implement safe street crossing for access to the library across Barker Road to the Northfield Township Community Park and across Main Street from the Northfield Township Community Park to the Whitmore Lake waterfront.
- e. Encourage pedestrian, non-motorized and public transportation improvements with private development projects

### ***Goal 2***

Develop an interconnected network of recreation facilities and trails to enhance quality of life, offer health benefits and provide non-motorized transportation options.

#### *Objectives*

- a. Extend the River Walk along Horseshoe Lake Drain from the Jennings Road Athletic Complex to Barker Road.
- b. Create a trail linking the North Village site to the Mike Levine Lakelands Trail State Park and Great Lake to Lake Trail.
- c. Consider other possible linkages, such as connecting Washtenaw County’s Whitmore Lake Preserve to East Shore Drive, Whitmore Lake Preserve to Seven Mile Preserve Park and the Huron Valley Trail in Oakland County to Ann Arbor.
- d. Create trails through Seven Mile Preserve Park.

### ***Goal 3***

Enhance and preserve healthy ecosystems for native plants, fish, and wildlife.

#### *Objectives*

- a. Encourage the preservation and maintenance of green space.
- b. Use environmentally friendly design and construction techniques, ensure that parks are inviting, friendly, aesthetically pleasing and consistent with the township’s overall design standards.
- c. Create landscaping showcasing native plantings and natural materials.
- d. Encourage environmental education such as signage and interactive learning opportunities.

### ***Goal 4***

Maintain a fiscally conservative approach to park development and encourage public volunteerism.

#### *Objectives*

- a. Strive to ensure all new projects are fiscally sustainable.
- b. Maintain and improve existing park projects on a timely basis.
- c. Support and create awareness through Township website and social media for citizen-led projects that will not require township funding.
- d. Employ volunteers to maximum extent possible.

- e. Seek, encourage, recognize and reward private investment and participation.
- f. Seek grant funding where applicable.
- g. Continue to dedicate township owned properties as open space or recreation areas.
- h. Maximize community enjoyment of township-owned properties.
- i. Look for opportunities to acquire land that (1) is adjacent to/near existing township-owned land planned for parks; (2) would provide increased/enhanced recreation opportunities; and/or (3) would help ensure protection and access to community natural features.
- j. Coordinate with the other major providers of parks and recreational activities in the township, including Northfield Township Community Center, Northfield Township Area Library, Whitmore Lake Public Schools and Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation, to strengthen partnerships and create synergy.
- k. Create a centralized register of volunteer needs across Northfield Township.

### ***Goal 5***

Offer township residents the opportunity to enjoy the Whitmore Lake waterfront.

#### *Objectives*

- a. Begin small projects to provide residents the opportunity to stroll and sit along the waterfront (e.g., pathways, landscaping, seating and possibly a pier/kayak launch)
- b. Support citizen-led recreation projects, such as the potential disc golf course, that do not require township funding.
- c. Encourage and expand recreation and lakefront events.
- d. Focus on connecting Northfield Township Community Park to surrounding residents and communities.
- e. Plan for larger projects (e.g., bathrooms, pavilion, bandshell, playground, swimming beach) as and when fiscally feasible.

### ***Goal 6***

Foster a township-wide sense of pride in, and support for our community's recreational assets.

#### *Objectives*

- a. Share photos and information via the Township’s website and social media.
- b. Create a centralized resource listing all parks and recreational opportunities within Northfield Township, including those provided by Northfield Township Community Center, Northfield Township Area Library, Whitmore Lake Public Schools and Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation.
- c. Publicize parks and recreational opportunities in and near Northfield Township.
- d. Initiate and maintain community special events or contests to invite, encourage and engage public participation and exploration of township parks and amenities
- e. Employ design that honors and preserves local history and historic architecture.
- f. Support agritourism and events featuring the township’s farmers.

## **Chapter 5**

### **PARKS AND RECREATION IN ACTION**

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#### ***CALL TO ACTION***

Northfield Township’s Action Plan serves as a template for future projects and is intended to be a flexible, year-by-year list of improvements for 2021-2025. The Action Plan supports the goals and objectives for township development, growth, and enhancement through a comprehensive set of network improvements, policies and programs that are staggered over the five (5) year period.

Within this chapter, projects are identified which will develop the township's recreation system to provide active and passive recreational experiences for all ages, including picnic and gathering spaces and natural landscapes. Northfield Township seeks to afford residents and visitors a high-quality park and recreation experience.

Detailed on the next several pages is Northfield Township’s Action Plan, top five (5) projects for prioritization, and project descriptions to help guide and inspire responsible parties towards a common understanding and lay the groundwork for implementation.

## **ACTION PLAN**

Northfield Township’s Action Plan is detailed in Table ? which presents each of the proposed project titles, the anticipated time frame, estimated cost range, and potential funding sources / partnerships. Some park facilities contain various projects that are planned to occur over multiple years and involve coordination with other agencies. Other park and recreation facility projects involve targeted improvements that Northfield Township can implement quickly within one year and/or with the help of volunteers.

Cost range estimates for Northfield Township's Action Plan projects were derived in 2020 dollars and are strictly preliminary. Actual costs for each project should be specifically determined with the aid of site surveys, programming elements, and engineering requirements. If funding levels are lower than required to implement the project based on the schedule provided, the project's implementation time frame could be stretched over additional years or the scope of the project condensed.

Projects of the Action Plan should be reviewed annually by the Parks and Recreation Board and the Board of Trustees, allowing for adjustments to respond to updated needs / conditions and the identification of funding opportunities.

*Quoteables from the community:*

***“Township needs to develop swimming area and paddleboard launch on Whitmore, including parking and restrooms. Better bicycle space along Main St. and the North end round about needed too.”***

***“I have lived many years and plan on retiring here. I would love to take my grandchildren to the beach, nature walks, etc.”***

***“Connections between amenities would be fantastic.”***

***“If you are looking to get private investment for community areas such as a pavilion or bandshell, many communities have been successful with selling personalized pavers to both individuals and businesses. They also help create a sense of community.”***

## TOP 5 PRIORITY PROJECTS

The following top five priority projects represent near-term investments that have the potential to create major and immediate improvements to the Township’s parks and recreation system.

These top five projects were identified by the community, as well as the Township administration, to serve as an excellent starting point for future prioritization and action.

Full project descriptions are detailed on the following pages:

1. Create volunteer and marketing system/database.
2. Construct Disc Golf Course.
3. Begin development of Northfield Township Community Park by landscaping the Whitmore Lake waterfront to provide residents the opportunity to stroll and sit along the lake, with a water overlook and canoe/kayak/paddleboard launch if fiscally feasible, along with high-impact swathes of sunflowers and native plantings on the west side of Main Street.
4. Create a trail linking North Village/Northfield Township Community Park to the Mike Levine Lakelands Trail and Great Lake to Lake Trail.
5. Extend River Walk along Horseshoe Lake Drain from Jennings Road Athletic Complex to Barker Road.

### Legend:

Near-term	Less than 1 year
Mid-term	1-3 years
Long-term	Over 3 years

GF	General Fund
D	Donation
CS/BS	Corporate/Business Sponsor
G	Grants (MDNR, CDBG)
DDA	Downtown Development Authority
PC	Planning Commission
BOT	Board of Trustees
WC	Washtenaw County
NC	Neighboring Communities
DEQ	Department of Environmental Quality

### Estimated Cost Range Key



## Project Descriptions

\$	\$0-10,000
\$\$	\$10,000 - \$500,000
\$\$\$	\$500,000+

Project	Time Frame	Estimated Cost Range	Collaboration and Funding Sources
Create volunteer and marketing system/database	Near term	\$	GF, D
Disc Golf Course	Near term	\$	D, BOT
Lakefront: Landscaping with native plantings, pathways, seating, and possibly overlook/kayak launch east of Main Street and swathes of sunflowers/native plantings west of Main Street	Near term	\$-\$\$	GF, D, G, BOT, PC, DDA, WC, CS/BS
North Village Trail connections	Near term	\$\$	D, G, BOT, DDA, NC,CS/BS
River Walk along Horseshoe Lake Drain from Jennings Road Athletic Complex to Barker Road	Near term	\$\$	D, G, BOT, PC, DDA, WC, CS/BS
Farmers Market	Mid-term	\$	D, G, PC, DDA, NC, CS/BS
East Shore connection [???	Mid-term	\$\$	D, G, PC, NC
Canoe/Kayak/Paddleboard Launch (if not included in lakefront landscaping)	Mid-term	\$-\$\$	GF, D, G, BOT, PC, DDA, CS/BS
Adventure Walk	Mid-term	\$	D, G, PC, DDA, BOT
Seven Mile Preserve	Long-term	\$\$	D, G, BOT, PC, DDA, WC, CS/BS
Beach/Swimming area	Long-term	\$\$\$	D, G, PC, DDA, BOT, CS/BS
Bathrooms	Long-term	\$\$\$	GF, D, G, BOT, PC, DDA, CS/BS

*Create volunteer and marketing system/database*

Create a database to provide organization of volunteers and notify residents of upcoming opportunities on a timely basis. Volunteers are an integral part of the functioning parks and recreation system in Northfield Township. Based on the Parks and Recreation Master Plan survey, respondents showed high interest in future volunteer opportunities.

*Disc Golf Course*

Support resident-driven proposal for implementation of a disc golf course. The disc golf course is now in its implementation stages and was completely resident and volunteer driven.

*Lakefront landscaping and gathering improvements and implementation of water overlook.*

Design, implement and maintain landscaping, including native plantings, pathways, and seating, and possibly a water overlook and canoe/kayak/paddleboard launch on Whitmore Lake on the east side of Main Street, and swathes of sunflowers and native plantings on the west side of Main Street across from the lake. This will provide Northfield Township community members with a placemaking opportunity at an inexpensive cost.

*North Village Trail connections*

Connect the North Village site to the Mike Levine State Trail and Great Lake to Lake Trail. By working with neighboring communities and Washtenaw County, the township will initiate important trail connections that contribute to regional connectivity.

*River Walk along Horseshoe Lake Drain from Jennings Road Athletic Complex to Barker Road*

Extend the River Walk (currently a rough trail along the Horseshoe Lake Drain within the Jennings Road Athletic Complex) for improved connectivity between the athletic complex and downtown Whitmore Lake. Design pathway to allow for passive and active usage (i.e., biking, walking etc.).

*Farmer's Market*

Identify an appropriate site for location of a community farmer’s market, organize vendors, and identify appropriate parks and recreation fundraising activities.

*East Shore Connection [DONT KNOW WHERE THIS CAME FROM – WE HAD TALKED ABOUT CONNECTION FROM EAST SHORE TO WHITMORE LAKE PRESERVE]*

Connect the commercial area along Main Street to East Shore drive and 7 Mile Road to the east of the North Village site. Connectivity between commercial and residential development and recreation areas is a placemaking strategy that would not only provide ease of accessibility to community members but adds destination value to the Township.

*Canoe/Kayak/Paddleboard Launch*

*Designate a water sports launch area on the west side of Whitmore Lake with focus on safety and accessibility for use by community members. Include wayfinding signage that complements other Township signage.*

*Seven Mile Preserve*

*Create a centrally-located park to provide open space. Tentatively identified as "Seven Mile Preserve Park", this is intended to be developed for recreational use while preserving and enhancing its natural beauty, potentially providing the community greater interconnectivity.*

*Adventure Walk*

Integrate passive and active recreation within trails that exist in Northfield Township via a wayfinding signage plan with emphasis on landmark/destination features. The adventure walk serves as a free recreation activity for all ages and allows for exploration of Northfield Township’s natural features.

*Beach/Swimming Area*

Locate an area for design and implementation of a beach/swimming area for enjoyment of the lakefront area. Redesign and relocate any vegetation to be removed and replace with native plantings to provide low-maintenance landscaping.

*Bathrooms*

Build a rest area for community members to use while recreating on the lakefront. The implementation of designing the lakefront for community usage results in the need for public amenities. This long-term project aims to further the placemaking strategy put into action via lakefront improvements.