

Parks and Recreation Plan



2024 - 2028



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Introduction

Berlin Charter Township's Parks and Recreation Plan designs a roadmap for township parks and amenities while identifying community needs. This plan builds upon ideas from the Master Plan (amended in 2023) and the 2016 Recreation Plan. It makes recommendations for meeting the community's future recreation needs and presents an implementation strategy for parks and recreation improvement. The purpose of this Plan is to guide township recreation planning and development efforts over the next five-year period, 2023-2028. Once adopted, this Plan is the official document to be used by the Township to guide decisions regarding parks and recreation. The Plan is intended to meet State regulations and set standards for community recreation planning which are necessary to gain eligibility for grant programs.

What this Plan Contains

The Berlin Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan follows the format suggested by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) in the *Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plans* (2014). The first chapter provides a community description, including, a summary of the social and physical characteristics, as well as a discussion of current planning initiatives affecting the community. The Administrative Structure chapter includes a description of how parks and recreation services are administered in the Township. The next chapter, Recreation Inventory, describes the existing Township parks as well as those of the state and the region located nearby. It includes an accessibility assessment and a description of previous grant-assisted park projects. The Public Participation and Needs Assessment portion of the Plan presents the input received from local officials and residents, which helped in formulating the Goals and Objectives and Action Program chapters. The Action Program chapter outlines an action plan with strategies for implementation. The final chapter, Supporting Documents, includes the official resolutions and notices documenting the Plan's adoption by the Planning Commission and the Township Board.

Planning Process

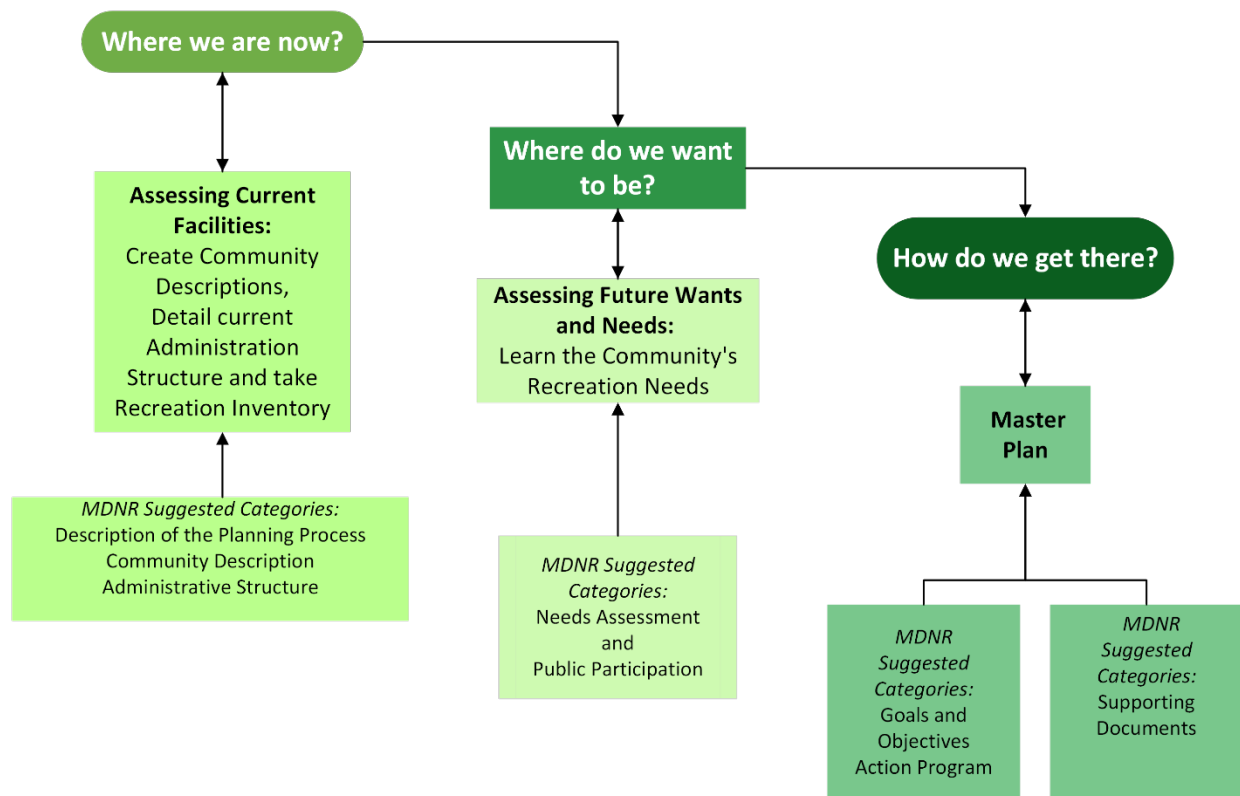
The process used to generate the plan consisted of three major phases which are described below:

1. **Where are we now?** This phase involves a review of demographics and planning context within and around Berlin to provide a foundation for the planning process. In this phase, parks and facilities were inventoried and mapped to document existing resources and begin to assess their conditions. The information is organized into three main categories: community description, administrative structure, and recreation inventory.
2. **Where do we want to be?** The second phase consists of an analysis of the area's parks and recreation system to determine recreation deficiencies and needs. Public participation was sought through an online questionnaire to solicit ideas and suggestions from the community about their recreation preferences. Additionally, input from the Parks and Recreation committee officials, and staff and township residents at public meetings were incorporated.

3. **How do we get there?** Finally, this phase focuses on creating a roadmap incorporating development plan elements to support the community’s vision for parks and recreation as well as provide for park planning and development. Recommended projects were summarized in a project schedule, accompanied by strategies for implementation. This phase also includes preparation of a full draft of the Plan, which was presented to the Planning Commission and Township Board, as well as the public for review and comment prior to adoption.

The following diagram illustrates the planning process and how it corresponds to the MDNR suggested format described earlier.

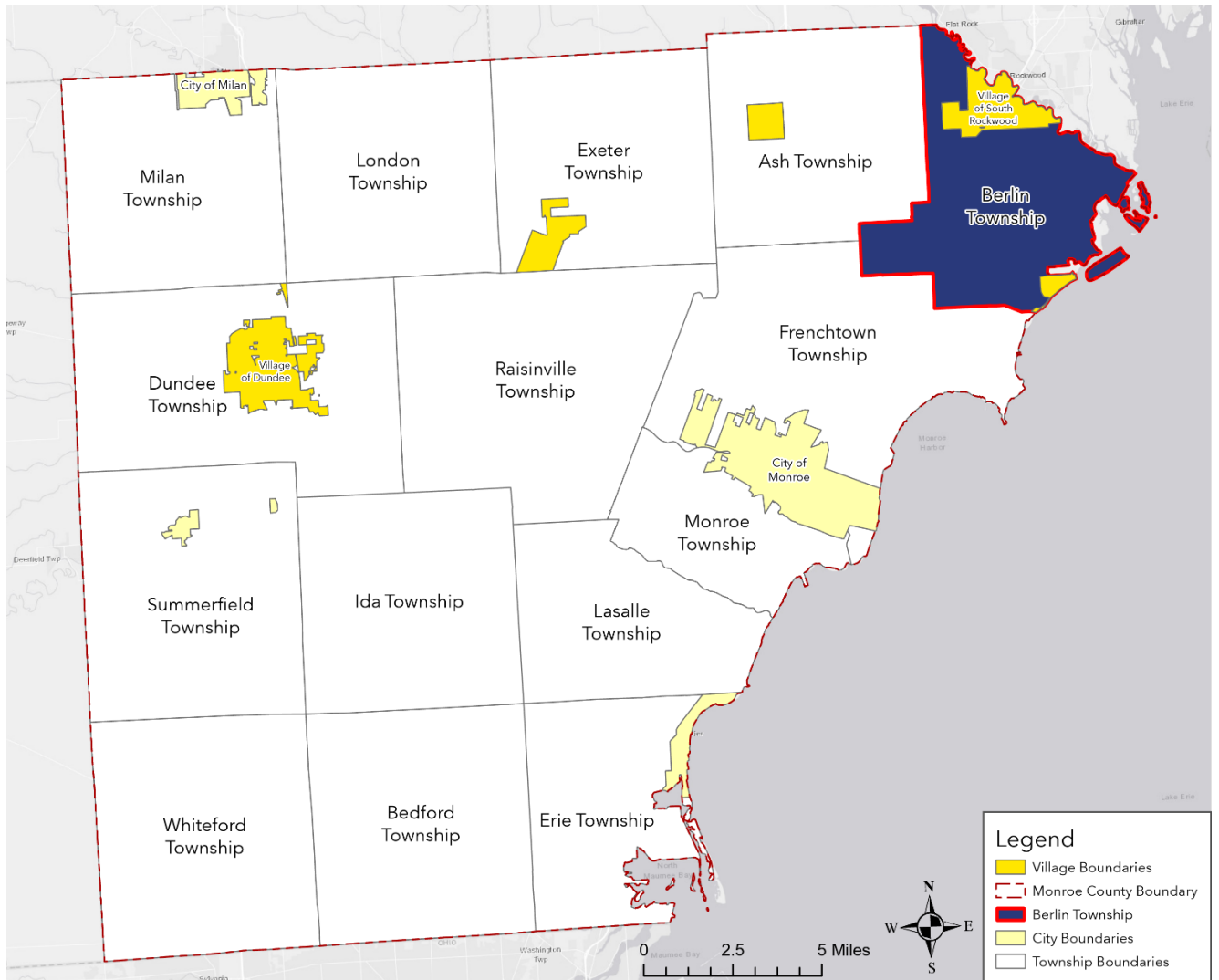
Figure 1. Planning Processes as suggested by MDNR



Description of the Planning Area

Berlin Charter Township encompasses the jurisdiction within this Plan. Berlin is located in Southeast Michigan within Monroe County. This area falls inside of the Southeast Council of Governments (SEMCOG) region, which encompasses the following seven counties: Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Wayne. SEMCOG provides regional planning services and supports local government efforts in planning areas, including but not limited to topics in environment, education, community and economic development, and transportation. SEMCOG is also a key resource for data about more specified topics such as: manufactured housing and building permits to nonresidential development and existing land use. Additionally, community profiles and population and employment estimates can also be obtained through SEMCOG.

Figure 2. Location Map



Community Description

This section sets out to provide a general context of Berlin Charter Township, as compared to the surrounding area. This allows us to gain an understanding of the opportunities the community has to offer. The first three chapters of the Plan provide information on the social and physical characteristics of Berlin Township.

Population Characteristics

Between 1990 and 2000, Berlin increased 518 (11.1%) residents to a total population of 5,153; and increased another 2,053 (39.8%) persons to total 7,206 in 2010. The 2020 Census demonstrated almost 10% growth from 2010 to 7,900 persons. However, the Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) has projected Berlin's population to remain approximately the same through 2045. In the year 2045, SEMCOG has forecasted that the population of Berlin will be 7,729.

The reasons for the Township's population increase includes the continual out migration of people from urban core areas, such as Monroe and cities located in lower Wayne County, and potential new housing starts. As shown in Table 3, the Township and the surrounding area is not projected to have as significant of growth through 2045.

Table 1. Population, 2000-2045

Governmental Unit	2000	2010	2020	# Change 2010-2020	% Change 2010-2020	2045 Forecast
Berlin Charter Township	5,153	7,206	7,900	694	9.6%	7,729
Village of Estral Beach	486	418	403	-15	-3.6%	444
Village of South Rockwood	1,284	1,675	1,587	-88	-5.3%	1,639
Ash Township	5,048	5,438	5,534	96	1.7%	5,239
Brownstown Township (Wayne County)	22,989	30,627	33,194	2,567	8.4%	35,690
City of Flat Rock (Wayne County)	8,488	9,878	10,541	663	6.7%	9,902
Frenchtown Township	20,777	20,428	21,609	1,181	5.8%	22,156
Huron Township (Wayne County)	13,737	15,879	16,994	1,115	7.0%	19,901
City of Rockwood (Wayne County)	3,442	3,289	3,240	-49	-1.5%	2,952
Monroe County	145,945	152,021	154,809	2,788	1.8%	156,274
Southeast Michigan	4,833,493	4,704,743	4,830,489	125,746	2.7%	5,104,922

In addition to new population due to migration, the overall population can be shaped through changes in household size and composition. Throughout the country, household sizes are decreasing, which is related to the number of aging baby boomers and smaller family sizes.

A household, as defined by the U.S. Census, is all persons who occupy a housing unit. The occupants may be a single family, one person living alone, two or more families living together or any other group of related or unrelated persons who share living arrangements.

As demonstrated in Table 2, Berlin's households increased approximately 15% to 2,972 between 2010 and 2020. This is the greatest rate of growth of the surrounding communities. Berlin and all surrounding communities demonstrated a decrease in average household size. The average household size in 2010 was 2.80 persons and decreased to 2.64 persons in 2020 (Table 2).

Table 2. Total Households By Community

Governmental Unit	2010	2020	# Change 2010-2020	% Change 2010- 2020
Berlin Charter Township	2,575	2,972	397	15.4%
Village of Estral Beach	183	203	20	10.9%
Village of South Rockwood	687	726	39	5.7%
Ash Township	2,050	2,174	124	6.0%
Brownstown Township (Wayne County)	11,342	12,917	1,575	13.9%
City of Flat Rock (Wayne County)	3,754	4,033	279	7.4%
Frenchtown Township	7,958	8,836	878	11.0%
Huron Township (Wayne County)	5,781	6,270	489	8.5%
City of Rockwood (Wayne County)	1,295	1,337	42	3.2%
Monroe County	58,230	62,152	3,922	6.7%
Southeast Michigan	1,844,758	1,936,635	91,850	5.0%

Table 3. Average Household Size By Community

Governmental Unit	2010	2020	# Change 2010-2020
Berlin Charter Township	2.80	2.66	-0.14
Village of Estral Beach	2.28	1.99	-0.30
Village of South Rockwood	2.44	2.19	-0.25
Ash Township	2.65	2.55	-0.10
Brownstown Township (Wayne County)	2.69	2.56	-0.13
City of Flat Rock (Wayne County)	2.62	2.61	-0.01
Frenchtown Township	2.53	2.41	-0.12
Huron Township (Wayne County)	2.73	2.69	-0.04

City of Rockwood (Wayne County)	2.52	2.41	-0.11
Monroe County	2.59	2.47	-0.12
Southeast Michigan	2.51	2.46	-0.06

Table 4. Percent of Population by Age Group and Median Age, 2020

Age Group	Berlin	Estral Beach	South Rockwood	Ash	Brownstown	Flat Rock	Frenchtown	Huron	Rockwood
0-4	2.9%	3.0%	1.9%	4.1%	6.4%	5.2%	4.5%	4.4%	5.3%
5-9	6.1%	4.4%	7.8%	7.1%	5.9%	7.5%	4.7%	7.0%	7.6%
10-14	6.1%	6.3%	9.5%	3.6%	6.5%	8.5%	5.7%	6.8%	7.0%
15-19	8.7%	8.4%	5.9%	3.9%	7.5%	8.0%	6.3%	8.1%	4.9%
20-24	9.2%	4.1%	6.3%	4.9%	5.2%	6.6%	8.4%	5.1%	3.6%
25-29	6.8%	6.8%	7.9%	3.1%	5.3%	6.7%	7.3%	5.2%	7.8%
30-34	4.2%	7.1%	4.8%	4.9%	4.3%	4.8%	5.0%	6.7%	4.1%
35-39	7.3%	2.7%	10.5%	4.7%	4.1%	7.1%	5.4%	4.6%	7.9%
40-44	5.9%	3.8%	5.6%	5.9%	6.7%	8.4%	5.1%	6.2%	5.0%
45-49	9.9%	5.7%	8.6%	4.2%	8.4%	5.1%	7.1%	9.4%	10.8%
50-54	7.5%	6.5%	6.3%	8.7%	8.7%	5.7%	7.9%	6.5%	4.1%
55-59	6.6%	10.6%	5.5%	11.8%	7.5%	8.5%	8.8%	8.7%	9.9%
60-64	6.4%	7.9%	6.9%	6.5%	6.6%	6.4%	6.0%	6.8%	4.8%
65-69	4.9%	9.0%	4.7%	7.4%	6.6%	5.7%	6.3%	4.4%	4.0%
70-74	3.1%	4.6%	3.3%	6.0%	5.3%	3.2%	4.7%	3.7%	4.3%
75-79	2.2%	6.5%	2.6%	4.9%	2.1%	0.9%	3.0%	3.5%	3.6%
80-84	0.8%	2.2%	0.6%	4.4%	1.4%	0.4%	1.5%	1.1%	3.5%
85+	1.5%	0.3%	1.3%	3.9%	1.6%	1.3%	2.1%	1.7%	1.8%
Median Age	39.0	48.1	39.1	52.0	44.2	37.2	43.5	42.0	42.3

In comparison with the surrounding communities, Berlin has the second lowest median age at 39.0 years; Flat Rock has the lowest median age of 37.2 years. In addition, one-third of the Township's population is between the ages of 25-44, and approximately 24% of the population is 19 years old or younger. Generally, it can be determined that a young population between the ages of 25-44 are in the family forming stage of their life, which could also mean increases in the potential for population growth in the near future.

Housing and Building Trends

The amount of housing stock increased nearly 45% in Berlin between 2000 and 2010. In the last decade (2010-2020), housing stock continued to increase; however, more modestly at 10%. Brownstown Township is 10.0%. Both Berlin and Brownstown Townships rate of housing unit growth exceeds the surrounding communities, see Table 5.

Table 5. Total Housing Units by Community

Governmental Unit	2010	2020	# Change 2010-2020	% Change 2010- 2020
Berlin Charter Township	2,866	3,156	290	10.1%
Village of Estral Beach	220	210	-10	-4.5%
Village of South Rockwood	734	768	34	4.6%
Ash Township	2,159	2,315	156	7.2%
Brownstown Township (Wayne County)	12,157	13,374	1,217	10.0%
City of Flat Rock (Wayne County)	3,995	4,212	217	5.4%
Frenchtown Township	8,780	9,523	743	8.5%
Huron Township (Wayne County)	6,103	6,481	378	6.2%
City of Rockwood (Wayne County)	1,387	1,390	3	0.2%
Monroe County	62,971	65,845	2,874	4.6%
Southeast Michigan	2,060,749	2,087,258	26,473	1.3%

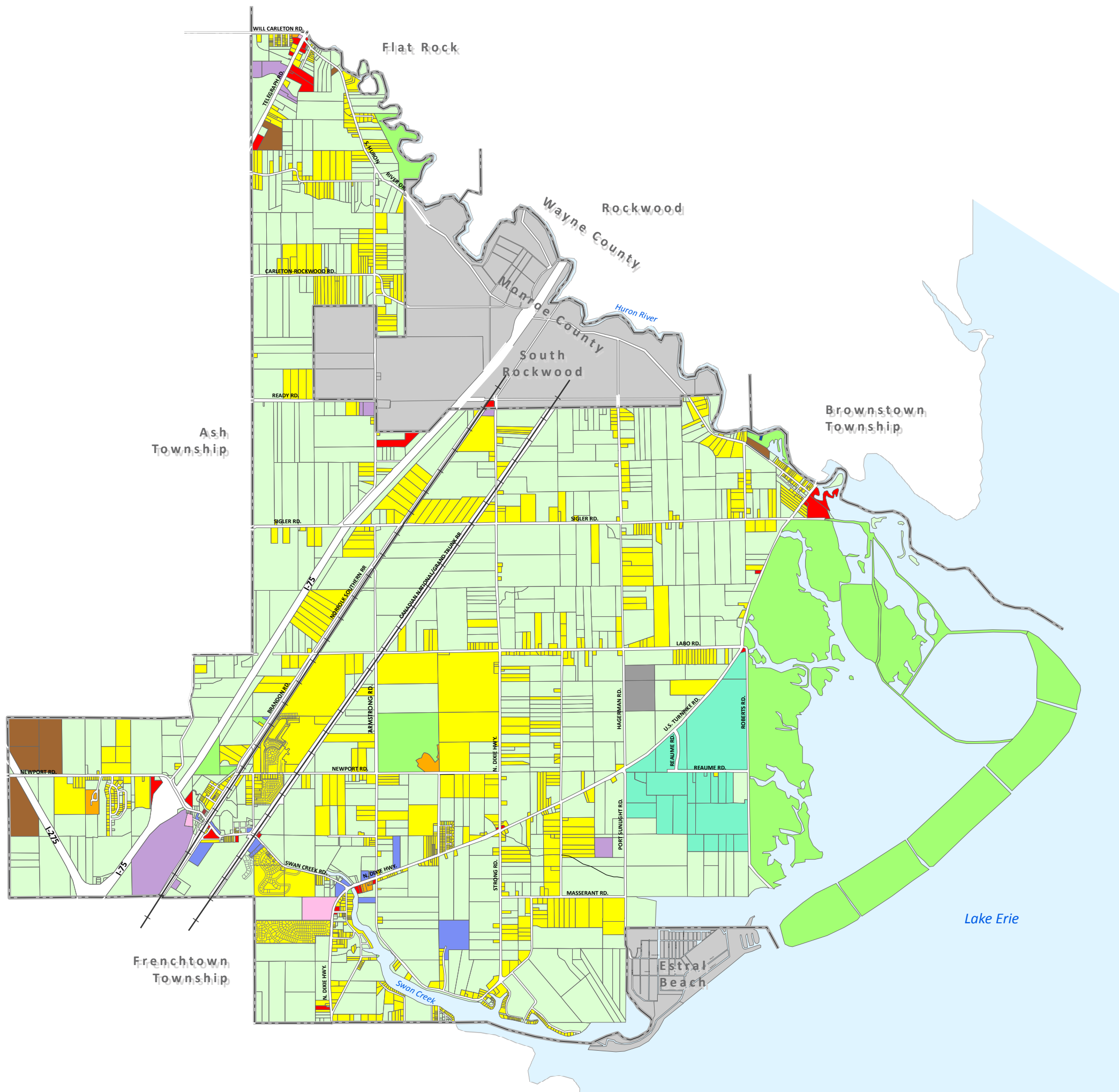
Land Use Development Patterns

Agriculture and Open Space have been the predominate land use categories throughout the Township's history (62% Agriculture / 12% Recreation/Open Space). These land uses categories continue to dominate the landscape in Berlin. Development of the Township has been affected most significantly by access to I-75 and I-275, which are both major highways in Michigan.

The Township has tremendous development opportunities due to waterfront property and large tracts of land that are mainly undeveloped; however inaccessible. Mixed-use development, such as marinas and residential developments can be developed in numerous locations adjacent to Lake Erie, Swan Creek, and the Huron River. Large tracts of vacant land remain in the Township's interior having potential for many uses including residential, commercial, and industrial development.

Table 6. Land Use Acreage

Land Use	Acres	Percent
Agricultural	10,668.67	61.14%
Single-Family Residential	3,302	19.03%
Multiple-Family Residential	31.52	0.18%
Manufactured Housing Park	223.64	1.29%
Office	4.69	0.03%
Commercial	91.97	0.53%
Light Industrial	155.13	0.89%
Heavy Industrial	35.06	0.20%
Quarry/Landfill	605.16	3.49%
Institutional	86.62	0.50%
Recreation/Open Space	2,070.89	11.93%
Utility	58.37	0.34%
Waterfront Marina	17.38	0.10%
TOTAL	17,351.46	100.0

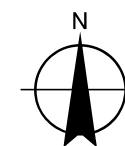


- Agricultural
- Single Family Residential
- Multiple Family Residential
- Manufactured Housing Park
- Office
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Quarry/Landfill
- Institutional
- Recreation/Open Space
- Utility
- Waterfront Marina

Figure 3

EXISTING LAND USE

Berlin Charter Township
Monroe County



0 2,100 4,200 6,300 8,400 Feet

Basemap Data Source: Monroe County Planning

9-17-14

Carlisle/Wortman Associates, Inc.
Ann Arbor, Michigan



Natural Features

Berlin is situated in an area abundant in natural resources, including Lake Erie, the Huron River, Swan Creek, and the Pointe Mouillee State Game Area. These resources are fragile and can be easily damaged through pollution, erosion, and uncontrolled development. It is important to understand the hazards that could befall these resources, and to address measures to manage and protect the frail equilibrium between man and nature.

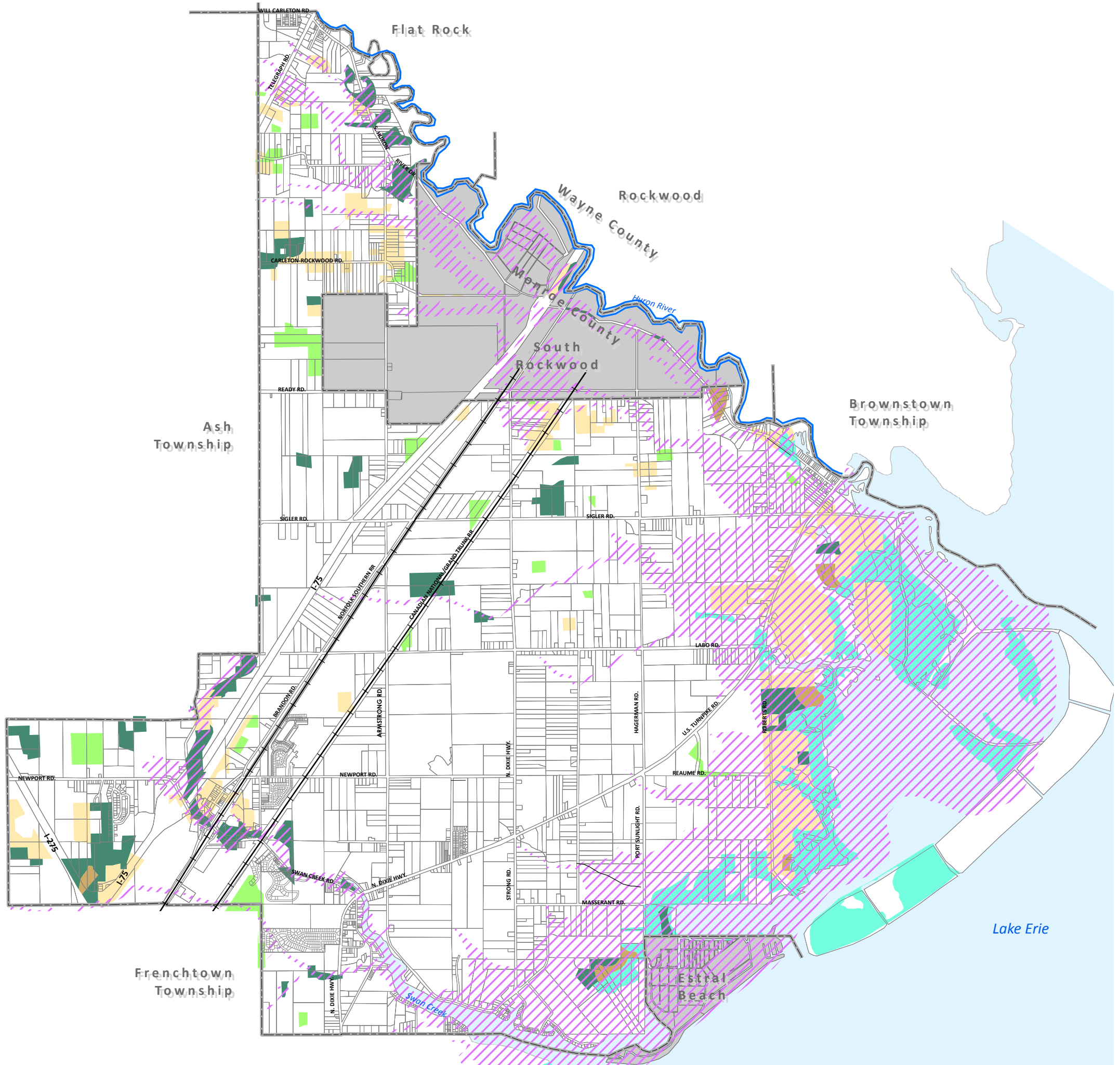
The Township's topography is relatively flat due to glacial activity that produced a series of pro-glacial lakes over much of Monroe County. Due to this, the Township has many deposits of productive agricultural soils, although the underlying glacial till has resulted in drainage problems. Furthermore, this glacial activity has left deposits of sand and gravel which have economic potential for mining and are sought after within the Township.

Berlin has a seasonally high-water table, which in turn severely limits the use of septic system or on-site waste disposal because of drainage issues with soils. In the 1970s problems emerged stemming from septic system use regarding water and soil pollution. The Township constructed a sanitary sewage disposal system to help mitigate the pollution caused by septic system use. The Township's soils are generally suitable for agricultural purposes if adequately drained.

Berlin is one of eight coastal communities in Monroe County situated on Lake Erie. All surface waters from the various drainage systems are of local origin, with Swan Creek (upper reaches in Midland County) and Port Creek having their upper reaches Ash Township.

Segments of Berlin Township seasonally flood due to stream overflows or from high lake levels. The entire Township is located either in the 100-year flood plain or the 500-year flood plain based upon the latest FEMA updated mapping. The eastern one-third of the Township is encompassed within the 100-year flood plain which is primarily wetland area and does not contain soils suitable for high-density or high-impact development. The remaining portion of the Township is considered part of the 500-year flood plain area.

Scattered areas of woodlands are located throughout the central and western portions of the Township. Much of the Township's forested areas were cleared for timber and prepared for cultivation by the area's early settlers. The Township's wetlands are generally associated with other water features present such as Lake Erie, the Huron River, and Stony Creek, and are concentrated along the eastern boundary of the Township at Lake Erie.



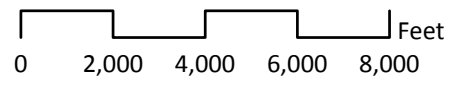
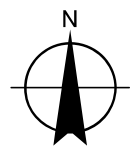
- Grassland & Shrub Area
- Hardwood Forest
- Shrub/Scrub Wetland
- Forested Wetland
- Wetland
- 100-Year Floodplain

The whole Township, with the exception of the extreme north bordering Flat Rock, is in the 500-year floodplain

Figure 6

NATURAL FEATURES

Berlin Charter Township
Monroe County



Map Data Source: Monroe County Planning and SEMCOG Land Cover Data

9-17-14

Carlisle/Wortman Associates, Inc.
Ann Arbor, Michigan



Regional Parks and Planning Initiatives

While change is inevitable and growth in population and housing will occur, Berlin Township is committed to managing growth to enhance economic benefit, recreational activities, and overall quality of life for all their residents. A number of planning initiatives related to parks and the environment, as well as trail planning and development have taken place in the region and in the Berlin Township area.

Several regional planning initiatives have been undertaken in the past 10-15 years providing a variety of ways to connect regional recreational opportunities throughout Southeast Michigan.

[The Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative](#) is a regional non-motorized pathway vision for the Downriver region. It is envisioned that this regional pathway system will connect the 17 Downriver communities and Wayne County through a network of trails and greenways, and will feed the link to a rapidly forming regional and statewide system of greenways. The effort to produce a coordinated, functioning, non-motorized system is an essential factor in the quality of life for the Downriver communities.

Berlin Township plays a critical role in the planned connection of northern and southern pathways, as a major segment of the proposed “Monroe Trail” that follows I-75 is located in Berlin Township. Further, a connection at the I-75/I-275 interchange is also demonstrated as a primary connection point along the I-275 trail.

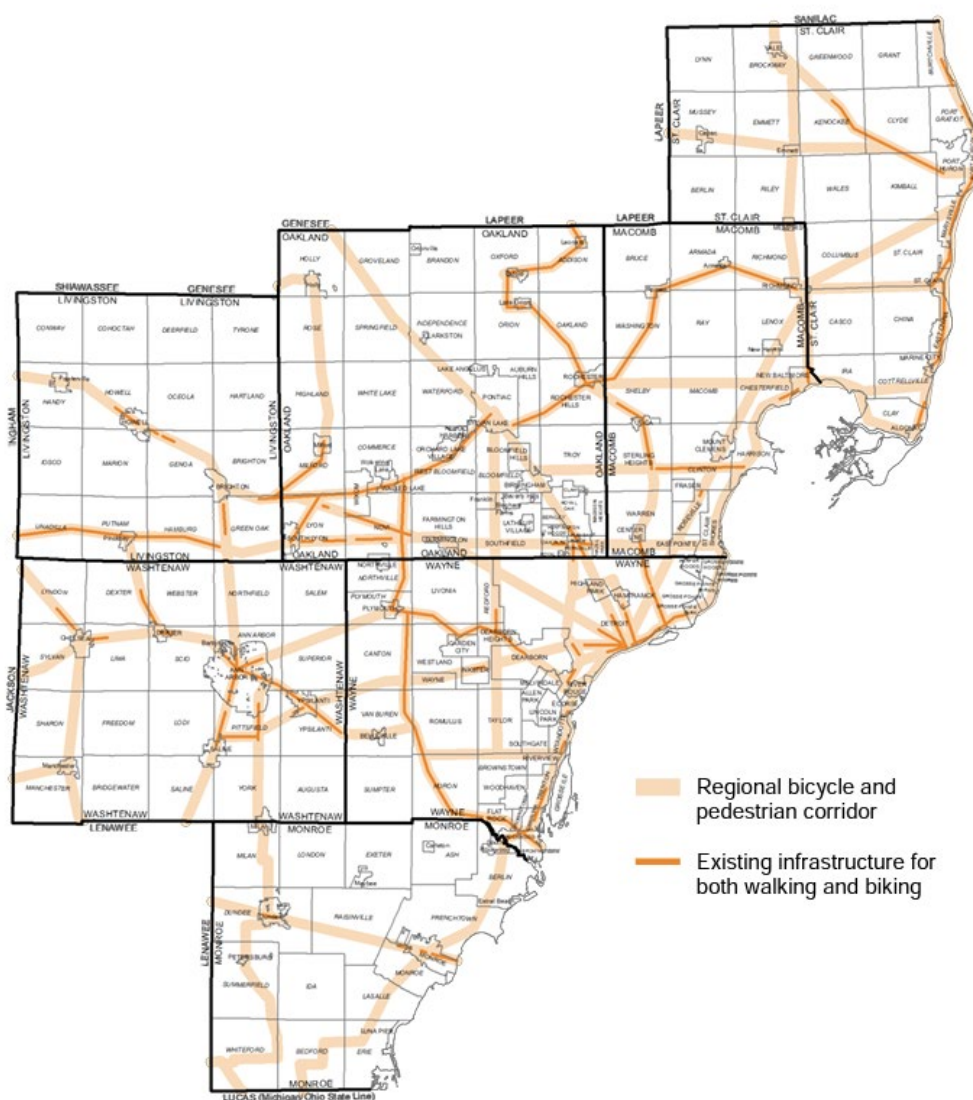
The map displays the Detroit River Corridor, highlighting various trails and connectors. Key locations include Livonia, Garden City, Dearborn, Detroit, Canton Twp, Westland, Inkster, Melvindale, Ecorse, Allen Park, Lincoln Park, Wyandotte, Southgate, Riverview, Trenton, Woodhaven, Flat Rock, Gibraltar, Rockwood, Berlin Twp, Ash Twp, Huron Twp, Brownstown Twp, Sumpter Twp, Belle Isle, Van Buren Twp, Plymouth Twp, Frenchtown Twp, Monroe Twp, and Raiville Twp. Parks shown include Willow Metropark, Oakwoods Metropark, Lake Erie Metropark, and Sterling State Park. The Detroit Metropolitan Airport is also marked. The map features a legend with icons for various amenities: Parking, Restrooms, Drinking Water, Food, Bicycle Rental, Camping, Horse Back Riding, Boat Launch, Cross Country Skiing, Lotus Beds, Fishing, Marsh, and Birding. A compass rose is located at the bottom center. The map is color-coded to show different types of trails and connectors: North-South Connector (solid red), Proposed North-South Connector (dotted red), HCMA/East-West Connector (solid brown), Proposed HCMA/East-West Connector (dotted brown), Hines Park/Rouge Gateway Greenway (solid orange), Proposed Rouge Gateway Greenway (dotted orange), I-275 Trail (solid green), Proposed I-275 Trail (dotted green), Monroe Trails (solid purple), Proposed Monroe Trails (dotted purple), Detroit River Heritage Water Trail (solid blue), Local Connectors (dotted blue), and Proposed Local Connectors (dashed blue).

[Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Plan for Southeast Michigan](#) (2020 – Southeast Michigan Council of Governments) ties all the components of the region’s non-motorized system together into an identified system and benchmarks existing facilities, identifies deficiencies, visions, and provides implementation strategies for the various communities. The plan was guided by a Plan Advisory Team comprised of MDOT, County, and local governmental agencies and various interest groups.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Corridor Map produced by SEMCOG lists a gap in the county’s regional system along Dixie Highway which connects the main east-west regional connection to Monroe through South Rockwood, Berlin Township, and Frenchtown Township.

Figure 6. Monroe County Regional Non-motorized Corridors + Gaps – SEMCOG

Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Corridors



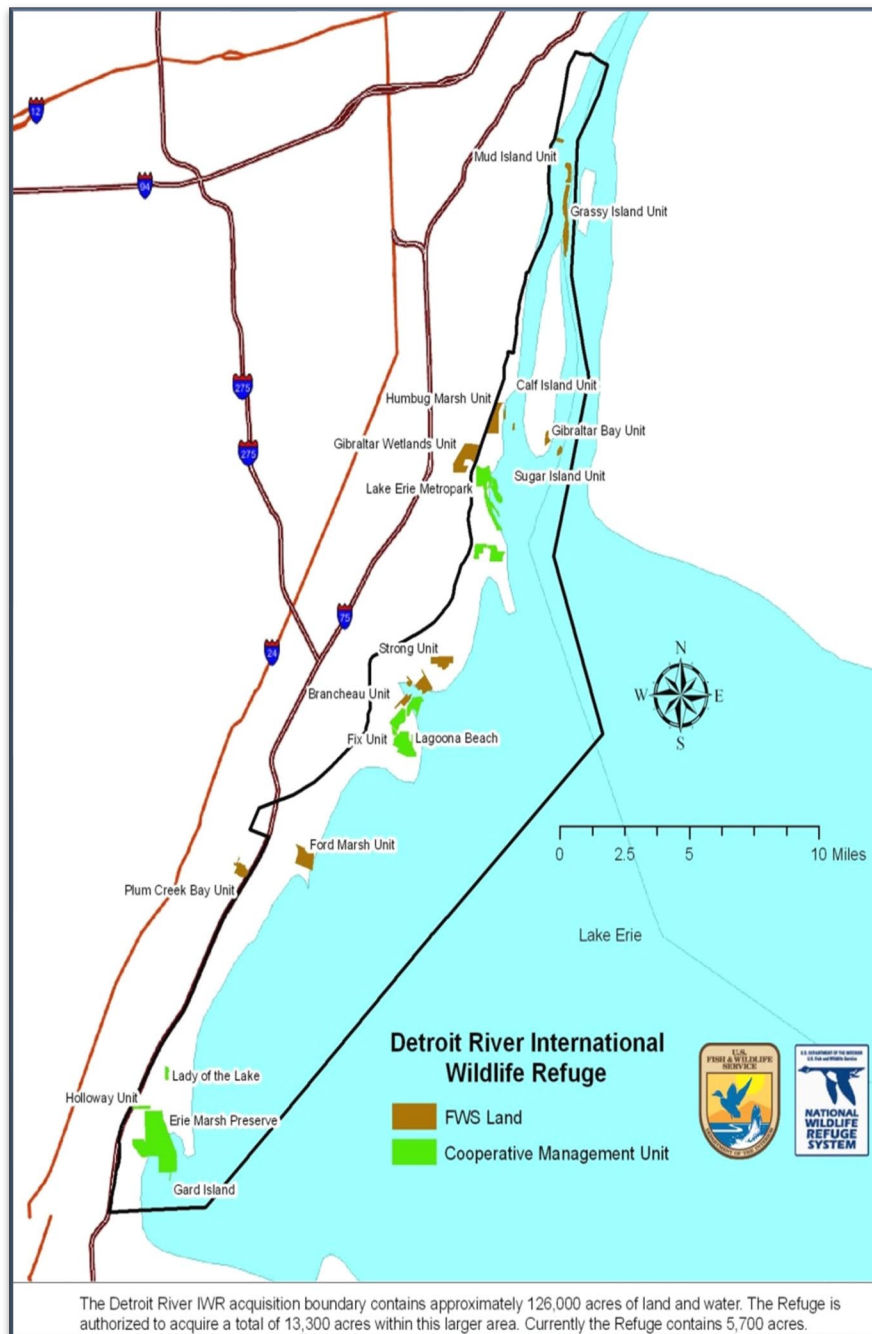


Figure 7. Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge

The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge is located along the lower Detroit River and western shoreline of Lake Erie. It was established in 2001 as the first International Wildlife Refuge in North America. The authorized refuge boundary includes islands, coastal wetlands, marshes, shoals, and waterfront lands along 48 miles of shoreline. The refuge is managed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, which is focusing on cooperative management agreements with the various industries, government agencies, and others within the refuge boundaries.

The Township's Shoreline along Lake Erie is included as part of the Detroit River international wildlife refuge area.



Fix Unit



Strong Unit



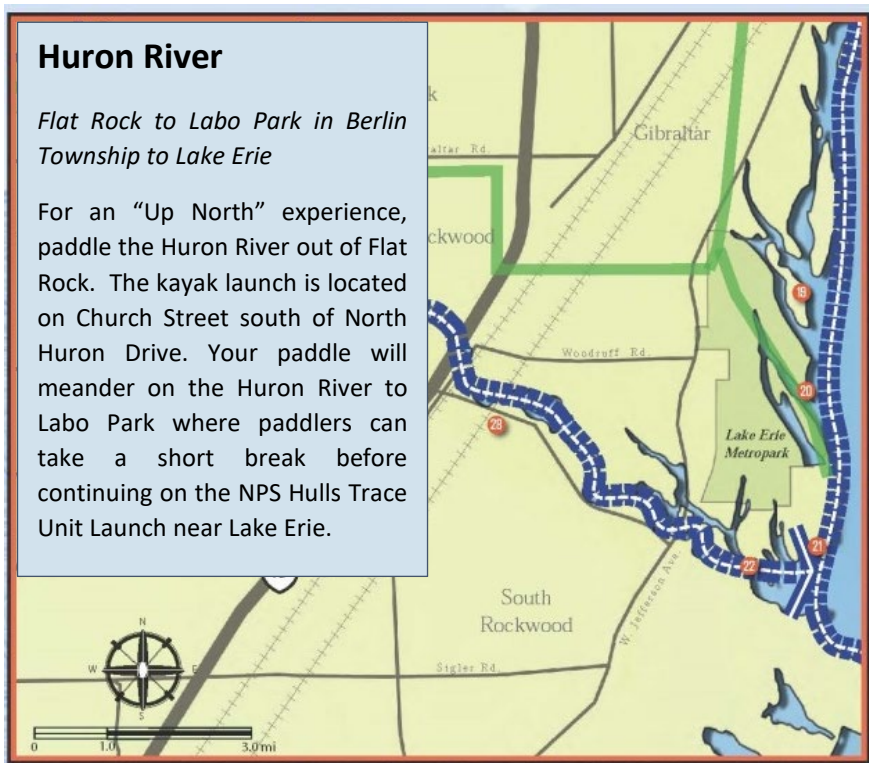
Wetland

Regional Vision for the Detroit Heritage River Water Trail is a network of recreational trails along the Detroit, Huron, Raisin, and Rouge Rivers. It is planned to encourage small boaters to recreate and experience the natural, cultural, and historic resources offered along these routes. The Detroit Heritage River Water Trail directly accesses Berlin Township via both the Huron River, Swan Creek, and Lake Erie.

Figure 8. Detroit Heritage River Water Trail



Figure 9. Huron River Inset - Detroit Heritage River Water Trail



Administrative Structure

The management and planning for parks and recreation services in Berlin Township is the responsibility of the Township Board.

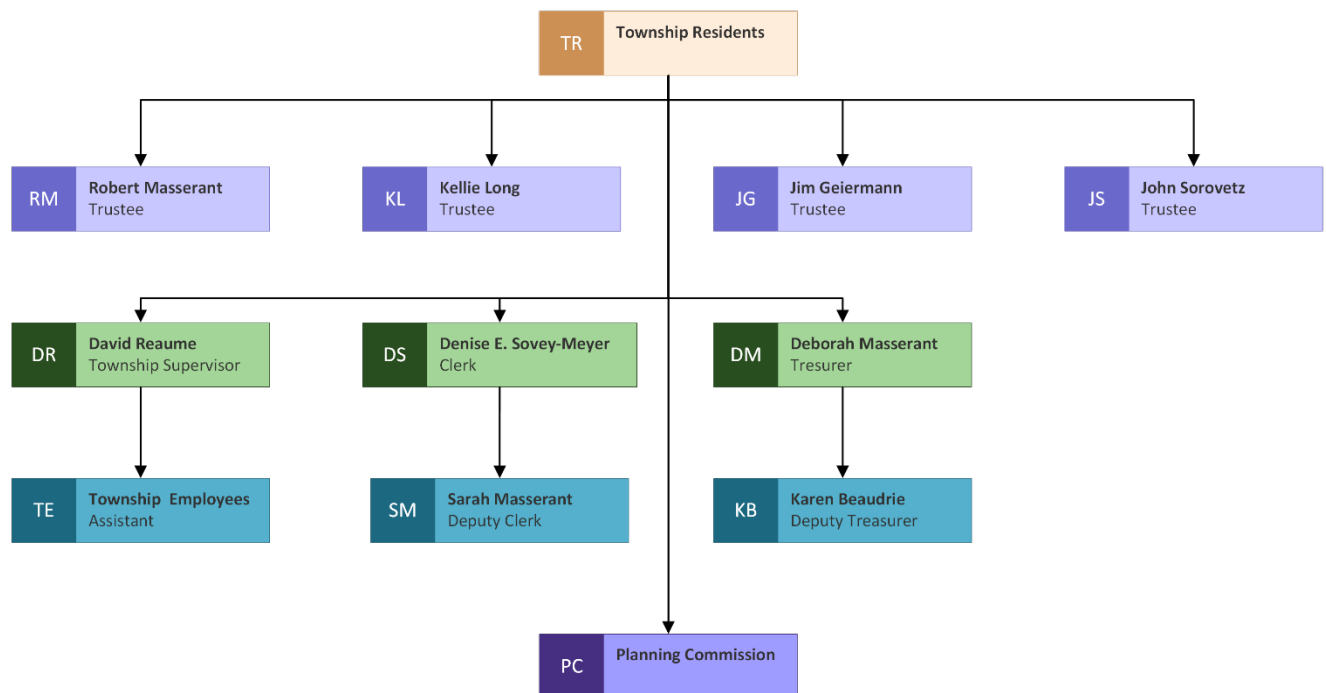
Administration

Currently, there is no standing Recreation Commission or Advisory Board. One recommendation of this Plan is to establish a Recreation Advisory Committee. In the interim, the Township Planning Commission services as the Recreation Commission.

An elected Township Supervisor, Township Clerk, Township Treasurer, and four Township Trustees, all with four-year terms, govern Berlin Township. The Township Supervisor has the responsibility for maintenance of parks and recreation facilities. The Township Board meets on the second and fourth Mondays of every month, at which time recreation issues within the Township are addressed. Budgeting for recreation and facilities maintenance is submitted on an annual basis.

The Township Supervisor oversees the Department of Public Works and all contracted maintenance, which is responsible for maintenance of the Township's recreation. The Township does not currently have a Director of Parks and Recreation.

Figure 10. Organizational Chart



Funding and Budget

In the 2023 Fiscal Year, the Township had an annual operating budget of \$341,000. Maintenance of the Township's recreation facilities in the 2023 Fiscal Year received funding through the Repair and Maintenance Fees (\$5,000) and Contracted repair and Maintenance (\$10,000).

The 2023 Capital Improvement Program adopted budget for Halls and Grounds (including Vehicle Replacement, Black Top and Improvements) is \$80,000. As shown in table 7 below.

Table 6. Budget

Description	2023 Original Budget
Fees	\$1,000.00
Repair and Maintenance Fees	\$5,000.00
Engineer Services	\$40,000.00
Planner Services	\$5,000.00
Contracted Repair and Maintenance	\$10,000.00
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$5,000.00
New Equipment	\$275,000.00
Total Expenses	\$341,000.00

Table 7. Amended Capital Improvement Plan 2023

Laginess Park						
Year	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Building	\$ 175,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
Playground Equipment	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
Trails	\$ 44,500.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
Fitness & Games	\$ 14,300.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 1,000.00
Gazebo	\$ 209,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
Total	\$ 452,800.00	\$ 27,500.00	\$ 14,500.00	\$ 13,000.00	\$ 9,500.00	\$ 31,000.00
Hall & Grounds						
Vehicle Replacement	\$ 45,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 35,000.00
Black Top	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
Improvements	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 5,000.00
Total	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 17,500.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 41,000.00
Water Department						
New Meters	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Valves	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
Total	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 70,000.00
Sewer Department						

Lift Stations	\$ 150,000.00	\$150,000.00	\$ 150,000.00	\$150,000.00	\$150,000.00	\$150,000.00
WWTP Improvement	\$ 900,000.00					
Drying Bed Main	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
Total	\$ 1,075,000.00	\$175,000.00	\$ 175,000.00	\$175,000.00	\$175,000.00	\$175,000.00
Local Roads						
Grass Cutting	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
Chloride	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
Ditching & Drains	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 60,000.00
Local Roads	\$ 300,000.00	\$250,000.00	\$ 200,000.00	\$300,000.00	\$250,000.00	\$300,000.00
Total	\$ 380,000.00	\$325,000.00	\$ 280,000.00	\$400,000.00	\$ 34,000.00	\$400,000.00
Library						
Improvements	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 6,000.00
Repairs	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
New Equipment	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
Maintenance	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
Total	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 37,000.00	\$ 14,000.00	\$ 16,500.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 21,000.00
Fire Stations						
Ladder Truck	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,700,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Epoxy Bay Floor	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 65,000.00	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 8,000.00
Replace Ambulance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$250,000.00	\$ -	\$250,000.00
Radios	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
Second Set of Jaws	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50,000.00	\$ -	\$ -
Addition to Hall	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
Total	\$ 25,000.00	\$230,000.00	\$ 1,867,000.00	\$317,000.00	\$ 43,000.00	\$288,000.00

Current Funding

Funding for Parks and Recreation is generated from the General Fund, donations, fundraising, and grants. The Township has the option of requesting a millage from voters for additional parks and recreation funding.

Volunteers and Partnerships

The Township works closely with the Airport, Jefferson, and Flat Rock School Districts, as well as the Villages of South Rockwood and Estral Beach regarding recreation programming available to Township residents.

Currently, the responsibility for recreational programming lies solely with the individual school districts. Recreation facilities owned by the schools are maintained by school district maintenance staff and part-time seasonal employees.

Volunteers assist with the organization and preparation (e.g. attending meetings, gathering sponsorships and donations, etc.) of civic events and fundraisers. They also volunteer for various roles and responsibilities during these events.

Recreation Inventory

Berlin Township residents have a variety of recreational opportunities available to them, ranging from neighborhood parks to large regional parks containing thousands of acres. The inventory consists of a compilation of parks found in the Township and the surrounding region. The inventory is then used to provide an assessment of the Township's facilities compared with state and national standards.

The Township contains over 4,813 acres of recreational land including State, County, and Township parks, school grounds, marinas, and subdivision parks. Most recreation land is under the control of outside agencies like the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA), Monroe County, local school districts, and neighborhood associations.

Pointe Mouillee State Game Recreational Area represents the largest recreational/open space area in the Township with approximately 4,000 acres. It encompasses the entire eastern shoreline of the Township and juts out into Lake Erie due to dredging deposits.

Local Parks and Recreation Facilities

Robert D. Laginess Park

The Township owns and maintains a community park located on Brandon Road south of Labo Road. The 40-acre park includes:

- A play structure
- A little Library
- A swing-set
- A slide
- Benches
- A picnic pavilion
- A paved walking path
- A 1,155 square foot meeting building



Future plans for Laginess Park include: walking trail, future play area for children between 2 – 5, flexible use playing fields accommodating various youth sports groups, court sports area (pickleball, tennis, basketball), restroom facilities, large picnic shelter, splash pad, older play structures for those aged 13+ (such as a ninja warrior course) See Figure 11 for a conceptual plan.



Lillian Park

This mini-park is located within the Lillian subdivision. This 0.4 acre park includes:

- A play structure



- A swing-set
- A bike rack
- A basketball court

Merrill Park

Merrill Park is an undeveloped Township mini-park located along the south bank of Swan Creek.

Regional Recreation Facilities

DNR Boat Launch

The DNR Boat Launch offers access to Swan Creek and Lake Erie. A small fishing deck, picnic area, and parking are provided.

Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA)

Another large open space area is located on the south-side of the Huron River. This area is owned by the HCMA, but the property is not accessible to the public due to the single-family residential properties that abut it.

Pointe Mouille State Game Area

Pointe Mouille Recreational Area represents the largest recreational / open space area in the Township containing approximately 2,000 acres. It takes up the entire eastern shore line or Township boundary and juts out into Lake Erie, near the mouth of the Huron River due to dredging deposits. According to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Pointe Mouille is one of the largest fresh water marsh restoration projects in the world consisting of wetlands, diked marshes, and river bayous.



Waterfowl, shorebirds, and other wetland wildlife, as well as bald eagles are the primary attractions at this site. Visitors can walk or hike along the water control dikes for a good look at muskrats, waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, and birds-of-prey (osprey). This recreational area provides some of the best shorebird viewing in the state especially in late summer and early fall.

Most of the Pointe Mouille State Game Area is open to public hunting during appropriate seasons. Restrooms are available at the area headquarters. A boat ramp and fishing are also available at this site.

Jefferson Recreation Center

The Jefferson Recreation Center located on Williams Road in Frenchtown Township offers a variety of fitness activities and classes for members including a pool, basketball and volleyball courts, walking/running track, racquetball courts, locker rooms and sauna.



Flat Rock Community Center

Membership at the Flat Rock Community Center is available to Berlin Township residents. The Community Center offers a pool, fitness/weight area, walking/running track, basketball court, volleyball court, banquet facilities, and classroom/meeting space. Child care is also available during scheduled times.

Schools and Private Recreation Facilities

North Elementary School

North Elementary School is part of the Jefferson School District located on 22 acres next to North Dixie Highway in the southwest portion of the Township. The school grounds contain many recreation amenities including: ballfields, basketball courts, play equipment, a picnic area, a gymnasium, an auditorium, and restroom facilities.

Formerly Niedermeier Elementary School, the Niedermeier Center for Education is part of the Airport School District located on S. Newport Road. The elementary school was closed in 2011, but the facility has been repurposed as an alternative high school. A play structure is still available at this 10 acre site.

Ritter Elementary School

Ritter Elementary Schools is part of the Airport School District contains 10 acres and is located on Carleton Rockwood Road. The school grounds include: ballfields, a play structure, and restroom facilities.

St. Charles Elementary School

St. Charles is a parochial elementary school located on 9.65 acres at the intersection of Swan Creek Road and Dixie Highway. Recreation amenities on the school grounds includes: ballfields, a play structure, and restroom facilities.

Newport Fireman's Park

Located on Brandon Road just south of Laginess Park encompassing 5 acres of land, the Newport Fireman's Park offers a variety of recreation amenities such as: a ballfield, a sand volleyball court, a play structure, picnic area, kitchen, indoor dining, and restroom facilities.

Swan Yacht Basin

Swan Yacht Basin is located along Swan Creek off of Trombley Road offering full-service marina facilities. This includes: an on-site mechanic and parts department, slips, shore power, navigational night lights, a gas dock, inside and outside storage areas, and an on-site convenience store.

Michigan Marina and Campground

Michigan Marina and Campground is located along the Huron River off of US Turnpike Road offering boat storage, docks, and slips.



Swan Creek Boat Club

Located along Swan Creek off of Brancheau Road, the Swan Creek Boat Club has two harbor entrances off the creek. Their boat wells are equipped with electricity and city water service. A pump-out station and fuel dock are also available, in addition to a restaurant with indoor and outdoor seating, and showers. Additional outdoor amenities include: a grill, picnic tables, and a play structure.

Big Al's Grill and Greens

Big Al's Grill and Greens at Lilac is a public golf course located centrally in the Township on Armstrong Road. The course's amenities include: a restaurant with indoor and outdoor seating, a driving range, and a practice green.

Westburn Golf and Country Club

Located off Huron River Drive, the Westburn Golf and Country Club is an 18-hole private golf course. On-site amenities include: a pro-shop, a driving range, and a restaurant.

Recreation Programs

Berlin Township relies upon the school districts, area churches, and neighboring communities for recreation programming.

Accessibility Assessment and Grant Assisted Projects

A critical component in planning recreation facilities is providing access to accommodate the needs of all people, including those with disabilities. The ranking system suggested by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Guidelines (MDNR, 2014) was used to evaluate the accessibility of the area parks. The ranking system ranges from 1 to 5 as follows:

1. None of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines.
2. Some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines.
3. Most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines.
4. The entire park meets accessibility guidelines.
5. The entire park was developed/renovated using the principals of universal design.

Each of the Township parks was evaluated using the MDNR ranking system. The specific elements that were evaluated included parking, paths of travel from parking to activities areas, activity areas themselves, support facilities such as restrooms and surfacing. Laginess Park ranked a 4, meeting accessibility guidelines but there are some places for improvement to reach 5. For example, the playscape transition is greater than ½ inch so having additional mulch would accommodate a more accessible transition and there are some wear around highly trafficked areas, like ruts underneath the swings. Lillian Park and Merrill Park both ranked a 1 as they do not meet accessibility guidelines because they are either undeveloped, or minimally developed.

In 2000, Berlin Township received a Clean Michigan Initiative Grant (Project #CM00-333 - \$23,390) for development of a Modular play structure, swings, a slide, and accessible pathway within Laginess Park.

Table 8. Americans with Disabilities Act Recreation Assessment

Park	Rank	Description
Laginess Park	4	Engineered wood-fiber playground surface complaint. Two reserved parking spaces compliant with updated ADA requirements. Walkway surfaces are made of asphalt. Accessible route to playscape provided. Playscape transition greater than .5-inch, additional mulch would accommodate transition.
Lillian Park	1	No accessible parking with signage that complies with updated ADA requirements for reserved parking spaces. No accessible route for playscape—there is sidewalk provided in front, the rest is grass.
Merrill Park	1	No accessible parking with signage that complies with updated ADA requirements for reserved parking spaces. No accessible route for playscape

Public Participation and Needs Assessment

An essential task in the recreation planning process is to determine the needs of the community as a basis for an action plan to improve the parks and recreation system. Needs expressed by the public provide the rationale for the formulation of goals and objectives as well as identify areas for capital improvements. To assess the public's desires, consideration was given to general recreation trends, a public meeting, and an on-line survey of residents. The input process focused on identifying priorities for future park development.

Park Acreage Comparison

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) suggests a minimum amount of parkland to adequately serve a given population size. The NRPA guidelines provide minimum park land standards that are applicable nationwide for recreation planning purposes. While the NRPA standards are useful benchmarks addressing minimum park acreage, a parks and recreation system should be tailored to meet the needs of the community.

According to NRPA, parks are categorized as mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, and regional parks. The mini, neighborhood, and community parks are the close-to-home parks, designed to satisfy the recreational needs of local communities. All Township parks are considered close-to-home parks. According to NRPA standards, the suggested amount of close-to-home parkland is 6.25 to 10.5 acres for every 1,000 residents.

Regional parks serve a broader area and focus on meeting the recreation needs of the region as well as preserving unique areas. For the Berlin Township area, regional parks include HCMA, DNR, and state-owned recreation areas described in the proceeding chapter. According to NRPA standards, the suggested amount of regional parkland is 15 to 20 acres for every 1,000 residents.

Table 9 presents a comparison of the NRA suggested parkland standards with existing, developed parks based on the Township's current population 7,900 (2020) and SEMCOG's projected population 7,729 (2045). According to this comparison, local parks do not meet the acreage for total close-to-home parkland. However, the residents of Berlin are well-served by the school grounds located in the community and the regional park facilities provided by the state, DNR, and HCMA that are located nearby.

Table 9. Comparison to Suggested Parkland Acreage Standards

Type of Park	NRPA Standard Acres/1,000 Population	Suggested Per 2022 Pop: 7,900	Suggested Per 2045 Pop: 7,729	Existing
<i>Close-to-Home Parkland</i>	6.25 – 10.5 acres	49 – 83 acres	48 – 81 acres	41 acres
Regional Parks	15 – 20 acres	118.5 – 158 acres	115 – 154 acres	223 acres
School Property	-	-	-	52 acres

Recreation Deficiencies

Table 9 compares the existing community parkland acreage to recommended standards, based on current and projected population. The current system is slightly deficient in the amount of acreage recommended for community parks. However, the greater deficiency is the lack of adequate recreation facilities within the park. The numbers presented do not address the quality of existing parks and recreation facilities within the Township. Upon closer examination, limitations or deficiencies are apparent due to location accessibility, maintenance, level of development, and individual size of existing park lands. These include:

1. [Reliance on School Sites:](#) Cooperation between the Township and school districts provide for efficient use of park land. However, school facilities are concentrated in the southwest portion of the Township. Moreover, there are limitations associated with utilizing the school sites because of use of the facilities are first available to the school athletic teams and scheduled programs, and then open to the general public on a request basis. Middle school and high school facilities are located outside of the Township.
2. [Barrier-Free Facilities:](#) Access to parks can be improved not only by installing additional barrier-free pathways, but by providing wayfinding signage to the parks and within the parks, better field identification; large print on signage, and Braille for those who are visually impaired, and strategically located barrier-free parking and drop-off areas. Modular play equipment and accessible pathways have been installed at Laginess Park. However, resilient surfacing and additional barrier-free measures should be considered at Laginess Park, as well as Lillian M.
3. [Program Deficiencies:](#) The Township provides limited recreational programming in conjunction with the Village of South Rockwood. Each of the three school districts provides recreational programming for the residents that reside within their respective district. These programs are very beneficial and provide an excellent community service. Three programs are not, however, uniform in terms of the amount of programming provided. Both the City of Flat Rock and Jefferson Schools have recreation centers available to Township residents for a small additional fee. Both facilities have pools, fitness centers, athletic classes, walking track, and senior facilities.

The Airport School District provides recreational programming including intramural sports for elementary and middle school aged children.

4. [Facility Deficiencies:](#) While the Township's recreation facilities deficiency can partially be satisfied by existing school sites and regional parks, local conditions, interests, and trends must be considered. School sites may provide certain facilities, such as football and athletic fields; however, access to school athletic facilities may be limited. Private businesses may also provide some facilities and services in addition to recreational opportunities available in adjacent communities.
5. [Service Areas:](#) The northern and eastern portions of the Township are not serviced by any active recreation park facilities, with the exception of facilities located within South Rockwood. Additional mini-parks should be set aside as part of residential subdivision development to serve the immediate residents of that development. A neighborhood park

should be acquired or set aside along Newport Road, between I-75 and I-275, to service projected residential growth in that area.

6. [Administration](#): As mentioned previously, programming is limited and not provided directly through the Township. If a future need for Township recreation programming presents itself, the citizens may have to pass a millage to fund such activities. A Recreation Advisory Board should be established to make recommendations on facilities, programs, and services.
7. [Maintenance](#): An on-going maintenance program must be set up to ensure continued upkeep of existing and new equipment and facilities. Yearly inspections of playground equipment and fall-zone surfacing should be conducted to determine maintenance needs.
8. [Protection of Open Space](#): Protection of the Township’s natural features should be a priority in any recreation facility development.
9. [Safety](#): Safety and the perception of safety are important to increasing the use of existing parks. Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a national program aimed at increasing the perception of safety for a normal user and the perception of risk for a would-be offender. The CPTED’s premise notes the “proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the incidence and fear of crime and an improvement in the quality of life” (National Crime Prevention Institute, 1986). CPTED is encompassed by four principles:
 - a. **Natural Surveillance** - The placement of physical features, activities, and people in such a way as to maximize visibility.
 - b. **Natural Access Control** – The physical guidance of people coming and going from a space by the judicious placement of entrances, exits, fencing, landscaping, and lighting.
 - c. **Territorial Reinforcement** – The use of physical attributes that express ownership, such as fences, pavement treatments, art, signs, and landscaping.
 - d. **Maintenance** – Regular maintenance gives the impression that parks and other facilities are cared for and watched. Poor maintenance makes the parks and facilities feel abandoned and encourage vandalism and graffiti.

The Township could adopt and utilize the CPTED program in their facilities. The Michigan Municipal League performs an annual risk management assessment of all municipal facilities including parks. Recreation staff should perform and keep inspection logs for each facility to help prioritize on-going maintenance, repair, and replacement.

State and National Recreation Trends

Recreation trends on a national level and in Michigan provide insight into activities that show the greatest growth in popularity and therefore may affect the future direction of parks and recreation. The Outdoor Foundation regularly conducts national surveys to measure participation in physical activities and track changes from previous years. The National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) annually conducts surveys to measure participation in physical activities to track recreation trends. Table 10 lists the top five outdoor activities nationally and by the east north central region of states, as designated by the United States Census.

Table 10. National Sports Participation, 2020

Activity	Participation	Overall Rank	Participation (East North Central Region)	East North Central Region Overall Rank
Exercise walking	106.1 million	# 1	16.4 million	# 1
Exercising w/ equipment	56.5 million	# 2	8.1 million	# 2
Hiking	46.4 million	# 3	6.2 million	# 6
Swimming	41.7 million	# 4	6.4 million	# 5
Aerobic exercise	46.5 million	# 5	7.3 million	# 3

These trends are consistent with trends observed in Michigan. According to a survey of Michigan residents conducted as part of the 2018 – 2022 Michigan Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, the top ten outdoor recreation activities are listed below in Table 11.

Table 11. Top Outdoor Recreation Activities in Michigan, 2018 – 2022

Activity	Percentage
Relaxing outdoors	75 %
Walking outdoors, including dog walking	74 %
Visit parks or playgrounds	67 %
Sightseeing and/or driving for pleasure	64 %
Visiting nature centers or historic sites	56 %
Swimming outdoors	54 %
Picnicking	53 %
Fishing	41 %
Biking of any kind (on or off road)	40 %
Camping of any kind (modern, RV, tent, rustic)	39 %

Monitoring parks and recreation trends is important in determining how parks and recreation services should evolve. The implication of the trends noted above along with the demographic and physical characteristics of Berlin Township can be summarized as follows:

- Recreation facilities and programs should respond to the expected increase of seniors.
- Additional recreation options and/or non-motorized connections to existing regional facilities would further support the recreation needs of residents.
- Enhance existing and/or provide additional outlets for water access along Swan Creek, the Huron River, and Lake Erie

Public Input

To create a master plan that reflects the preferences, needs, and values of Berlin Township, the planning process included community outreach forums. Public input was received through a public workshop and an online survey.

During the months of July and August, residents were invited to provide ideas and suggestions for parks, trails, and the recreation system through an online survey from the Township's website.

Four hundred and eight (408) persons provided responses to the survey. Of the total respondents, 99% were residents of Berlin Township. Most respondents (41%) said that the nearby parks and recreation facilities met their needs adequately. A majority of respondents reported that they participate in recreation activities in Sterling State Park. The other top recreation areas are Lake Erie Metropark, and Robert D. Laginess Park. The park with the least participation noted in the survey is Lillian M.

Key findings from the survey are outlined below:

- Walking / Hiking and Nature Activities are the most regularly participated activity for respondents.
- The majority of respondents feel the parks and recreation facilities do not meet their needs very well.
- Future development of restrooms, walking/biking paths, splash park/splash pad, playground (age 5+) are the most sought after.

Public Review and Hearings

Once a draft Parks and Recreation Plan was completed, it was made available for a 30-day public review. The availability of the draft plan for public review was advertised in the Monroe News and on the Berlin Charter Township website. Copies were placed at the Township Offices, the Newport Branch Library, and the Township website. Additionally, some were placed at the Senior Center located in the Village of Rockwood.

XXX comments were received.

The public input into the plan culminated in an advertised public hearing held on January, XX 2024. After the hearing, the Township Board adopted the plan by resolution (See Appendix TBD).

Goals and Objectives

Berlin Township has formulated goals and objectives for the next five years. These goals and objectives are intended to be broad enough to encompass the suggestions expressed by the public, and Township officials, as well as to meet the observed deficiencies in the recreation resources of the area. They also consider demographic changes, current and anticipated growth and development, the area's physical resources, and recreation trends.

General Long Range Goals

1. [Expand Recreation Opportunities.](#) Increase recreation opportunities, particularly outdoor park facilities and trails, which meet the needs of all segments of the population including youth, young adults, families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.
2. [Address Residents' Preferences.](#) Provide parks and recreation facilities and programs that are based on the preferences of residents in the Township.
3. [Maintain Fiscal Responsibility.](#) Develop parks and recreation facilities and programs based on a sound fiscal policy. Consider the use of volunteers, state, and federal funding programs, and other funding sources.
4. [Natural and Aesthetic Qualities of Parks.](#) Provide parks and recreation facilities that not only satisfy recreation needs, but also complement the topography and natural terrain and contribute to the aesthetic (rural) quality of the Township.
5. [Cooperation with the School District.](#) Cooperate with the three school districts in the planning and programming of parks and recreation facilities. Written agreements of cooperation should be entered into when appropriate.
6. [Reduce Duplication of Services.](#) Strive to reduce duplication in recreation services. Overall recreation planning should consider existing facilities and programs offered by the school district, adjacent municipalities (e.g. Village of South Rockwood and City of Flat Rock), and other agencies.
7. [Consider Maintenance Needs.](#) Consider the cost of maintenance and operation in designing new recreation facilities. Projections of costs should be compared to future revenue projections for the life of the facilities.
8. [Upgrade Existing Facilities.](#) Maximize the use of parks and recreation facilities by upgrading existing facilities to make them safer and more accessible.
9. [Improve Accessibility.](#) Improve accessibility to parks, recreation facilities, and programs by residents of Berlin Charter Township, particularly for youth, young adults, families, elderly, and persons with disabilities. Provide trail and pathway linkages from neighborhoods and business districts to parks and school sites.
10. [Continue the Planning Process.](#) Maintain the on-going parks and recreation planning process. The parks and recreation master plan should be reviewed annually and updated at least every five years.
11. [Promotion.](#) Continue to promote activities and special events sponsored by the Township and the school districts, using all types of media. A brochure should be developed depicting

park and school facilities with a schedule of dates and activities of annual events. A list of key officials and contact information should also be included.

Specific Goals and Objectives

General Parks and Recreation Objectives

1. [Optimize Park Use.](#) Optimize the use of all parks and recreation facilities through multiple use of park space, adequate maintenance, and timely repair and replacement of facilities.
2. [Recreation Programs.](#) Continue to support and expand recreation programs and events in cooperation with the school districts.
3. [Acquisition and Expansion.](#) Consider purchasing additional land for parks and recreation use. Land acquisition efforts should be guided by three principal objectives:
 - a. The need for uniform geographic distribution of facilities.
 - b. The need for adequately sized parks.
 - c. Access to water features.
4. [Needs survey.](#) A township-wide recreation needs survey should be completed on a regular basis to determine with greater accuracy the recreation needs and desires of community residents.
5. [Park Design and Landscaping.](#) Enhance the appearance of all parks, recognizing the significance of parkland to the overall character and image of the Township. A five-year landscaping/tree planting and lighting program should be developed for all parks and passive areas.
6. [Promotion.](#) Prepare and update a brochure showing park and school facilities, with a schedule of dates, times, and activities for special events. A list of key officials and contact information should be included.

Action Plan

Belin Township has identified the following action items relating to how they intend to meet, or work towards meeting the Plan's goals and objectives over the next five years.

Accessible Pathways: Provide additional accessible pathway links within parks (e.g. Laginess Park) to facilities and program areas. Improve field identification, larger print on signage and Braille for those who are visually impaired. Strategically locate barrier-free parking and drop-off areas.

Non-Motorized Pathway Plan: Prepare a non-motorized pathway master plan for the Township identifying existing pathways, gaps, and future development of sidewalks, pathways, and bike lanes throughout the Township. Provide design standards, sign guidelines, estimated development costs, and identify possible funding sources.

Develop missing links in the Township's non-motorized pathway system between neighborhoods, schools, regional parks, business districts, and existing regional non-motorized pathway networks. Investigate the use of abandoned railroad corridors for rails-to-trails.

Interpretive Panels: Install additional interpretive panels and wayfinding signs within the park system to educate residents and promote stewardship.

Sports Facilities: Install sports facilities to meet the demands of the community.

Laginess Park: A master plan for Laginess Park is provided in Figure 11. Proposed facilities include: a looped pathway; community center; expanded parking; new picnic shelter; updated play structure; sandbox with water feature; benches; parks signage/wayfinding; and additional landscaping. The table below lists the top 4 recreation features with approximate current pricing as of 2023.

Table 12. Top 4 Recreation Features from Public Survey

Amenity	Approximate Cost 2023 (USD)
Restrooms	\$100,000 - \$150,000
Walking / Bicycling Paved Path or Trails	\$1,000 - \$1,500 per mile
Spray Park / Splash Pad	\$200,000 - \$250,000
Playground Structure (ages 5+)	\$100,000

Programming: Work with the school districts and adjacent communities to develop more programming options for youth and seniors within the Township.

Park Acquisition: Identify future parkland that provides water access to the Huron River and Swan Creek.

Implementation Strategies

In order to accomplish the recommended actions during the next five years, it will be necessary to secure adequate funding. The current budgets provide a limited amount of money for parks and recreation facilities. Therefore, the following strategies are recommended in order to proceed as planned.

Apply for Federal Funding

In order to accomplish the recommended actions during the next five years, it will be necessary to secure adequate funding. The current budgets provide a limited amount of money for parks and recreation facilities. Therefore, the following strategies are recommended in order to proceed as planned.

At the federal level, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), in conjunction with SEMCOG, funds Transportation Alternative Program (TAP). A minimum 20 percent local match is required for proposed projects and applications are accepted online on an on-going basis. Activities may include:

- Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles including new or reconstructed sidewalks, walkways, curb ramps, bike lane striping, wide-paved shoulders, bike parking, off-road trails, bike and pedestrian bridges, and underpasses;
- Provision of safety and educational programs for pedestrians and bicyclists designed to encourage walking and bicycling; and
- Acquisition, planning, designing, and constructing abandoned railway corridors.

Apply for State Funding

At the state level, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) and the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) continue to be the primary funding sources for parkland acquisition and development. The Recreation Passport grant also offers some state funding to local units of government.

The MNRTF provides funding for the purchase and development of parkland for natural resource-based preservation and recreation. Grant proposals must include a local match of at least 25 percent of the total project cost. There is no minimum or maximum for acquisition projects. For development projects, the minimum funding request is \$15,000 and the maximum is \$300,000 for 2023. Applications are due February 1st.

The LWCF is a federal appropriation to the National Park Service, which distributes funds to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for development of outdoor recreation facilities. The focus of the program has recently been on trailway systems and on meeting community recreation needs such as playgrounds, picnic areas, skate parks, ball fields, soccer fields, and walking paths. There are no minimum or maximum grant requests as of August 2023. The match percentage is 50 percent of the total project cost. Applications are due on April 1st.

The Recreation Passport program offers funding for the development of outdoor public recreation facilities by local units of government. Minimum grant requests are \$7,500 and maximum requests are \$150,000 in 2023. The local match obligation is 25 percent of the total project cost. Applications are due on April 1st.

Other funding conducted in partnership with the MDNR is available through other state government divisions, such as the Fisheries Division (Inland Fisheries Grants) and the Forest Resources Division (Community Forestry Grants).

The Inland Fisheries programs consider projects that enhance habitat and fisheries, riparian property for public fishing use, water quality, and ecology. While not currently offered, they may become available in the future.

Municipalities may use Community Forestry grants to develop a management plan for a municipal forest which would include a component targeting outreach to private landowners. Grant requests may be up to \$20,000 depending on the project type and applications are usually due in the middle of the summer. DTE Energy and Consumers Energy also offer tree planting grants for up to \$3,000 to local municipalities in their service areas.

Other Sources of Funding

There are also a variety of smaller grant programs available for the establishment of greenways/pathways or greenway-related facilities such as Bikes Belong Coalition. The Bikes Belong Coalition is sponsored by members of the American Bicycle Industry. Their mission is to put more people on bikes more often. The program funds projects in three categories: facility, education, and capacity building. Requests for funding can be up to \$10,000 for projects such as bike paths, trails, lanes, parking, and safe routes to school. Applications are reviewed on a quarterly basis.

Seek Other Sources of Funding: Berlin Township should investigate other sources of funding. Seeking donations, attracting sponsors, and seeking out other revenue sources are methods that should continue to be pursued aggressively to raise funding for parkland acquisition and development.

Online Survey Summary

During the months of July 2023 through August 2023, Berlin Township residents were invited to participate in an on-line survey to provide ideas and suggestions related to the Township's 2024 Recreation Plan update. The survey was made available through the Township website.

Four hundred and eight (408) persons provided responses to the survey. Of the total respondents, 99% were residents of Berlin Township. Most respondents (41%) said that the nearby parks and recreation facilities met their needs adequately. A majority of respondents reported that they participate in recreation activities in Sterling State Park. The other top recreation areas are Lake Erie Metropark, and Robert D. Laginess Park. The park with the least participation noted in the survey is Lillian M.

When asked how important current recreation programs in Berlin Township, the MOST important topics included:

1. Youth and Sports Fitness.
2. Adult Fitness and Wellness.
3. Summer Camps.
4. Special Events.

Respondents indicated the following topics to be the LEAST important topics in Berlin Township:

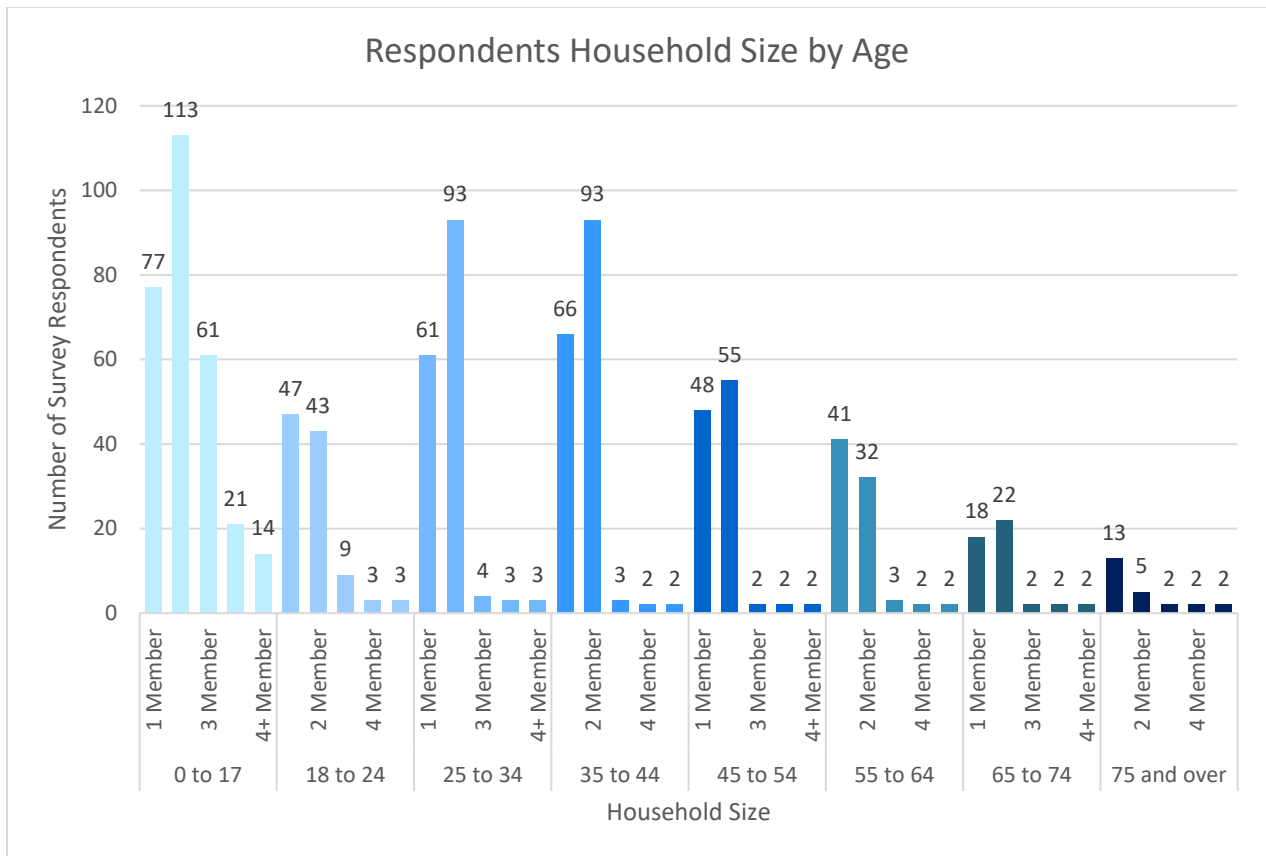
1. Senior Trips.
2. Senior Programs.
3. Summer Camps.
4. Special Events.

When asked what type of recreation facilities Berlin Township should be considered for future park development, respondents provided the following TOP 4 CHOICES:

1. Restrooms.
2. Walking/Bicycling Paved Paths or Trails.
3. Spray Park/Splash Pad.
4. Playground Structures (age 5+).

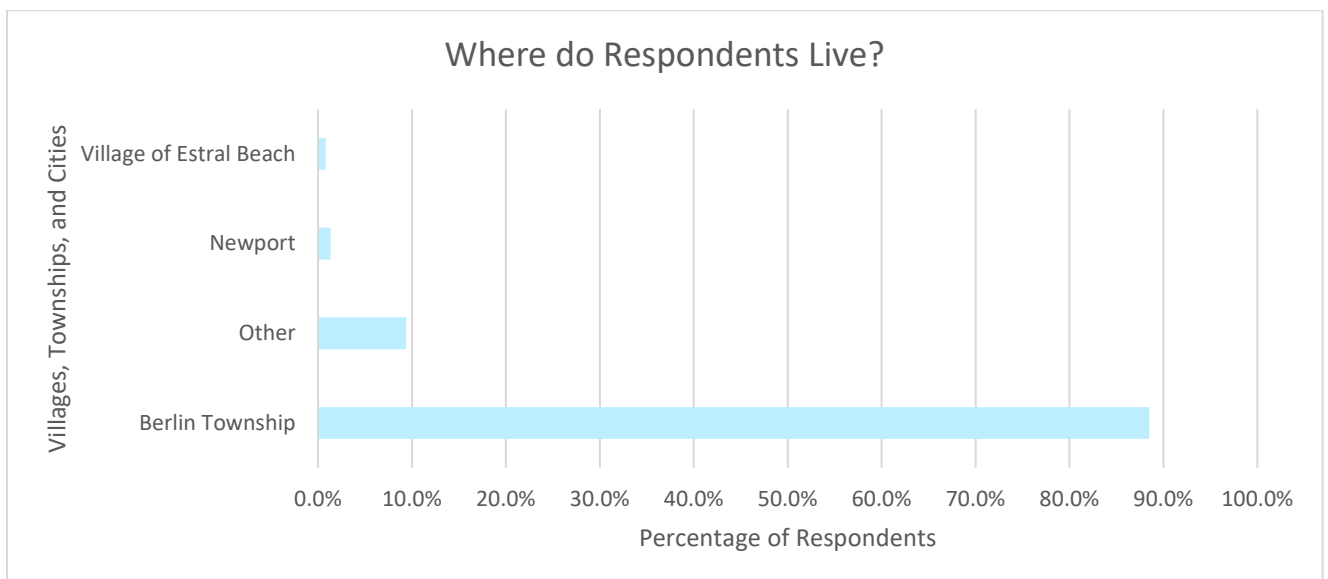
Eighty-six percent (86%) of respondents feel there is interest in developing Township property into parks.

Q1 What are the ages of the people living in your household?



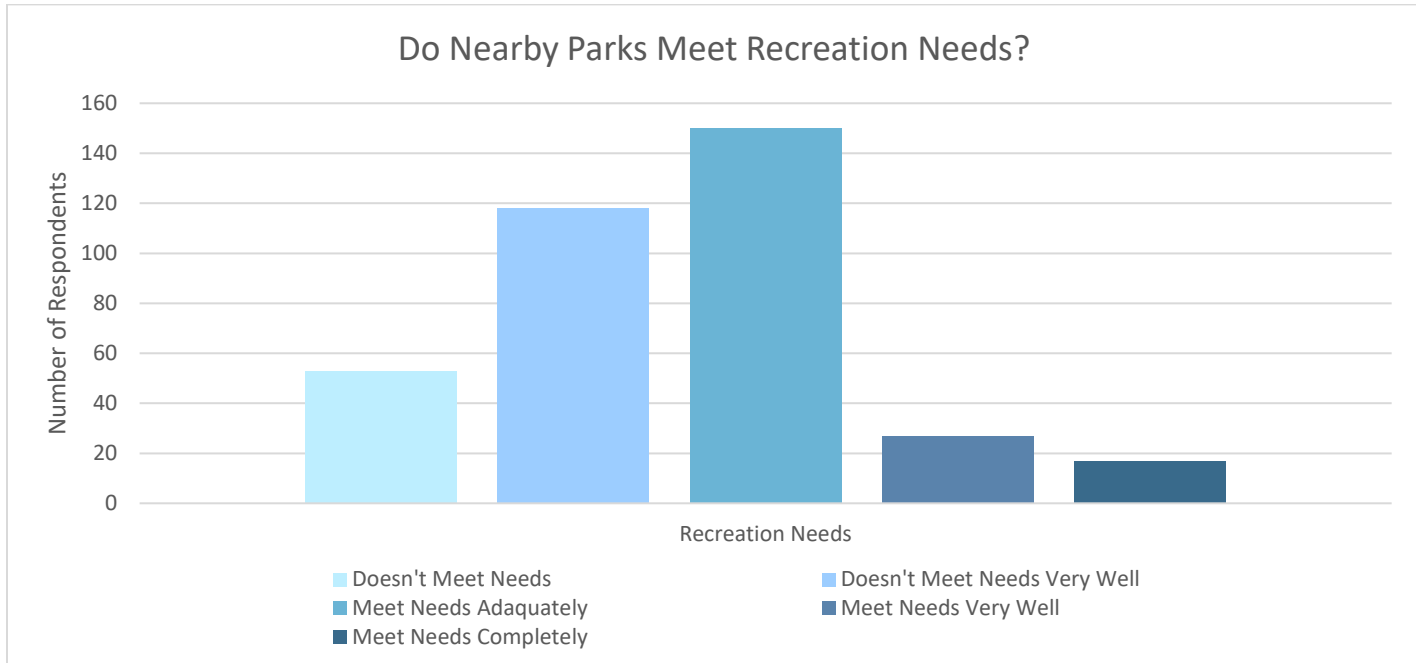
This graph displays the number of household members by age of respondents to this survey. A majority of household members comprise of 1-2 members under 17 years old, and 1-2 members between the ages of 25 to 44.

Q2 Where do you live?



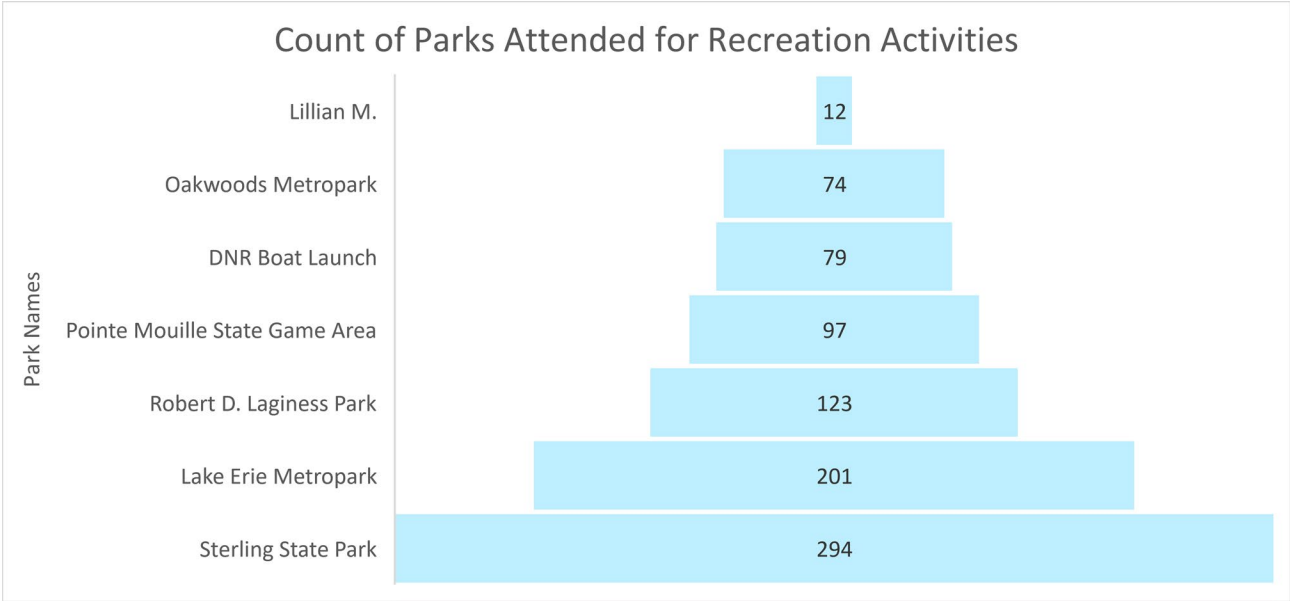
A majority of respondents (88.5%) live in Berlin Township. Roughly 10% of respondents are from neighboring cities, townships, and villages. The rest live in either the Village of Estral Beach or Newport.

Q3 Do nearby parks and recreation facilities meet your and/or your family's recreation needs?



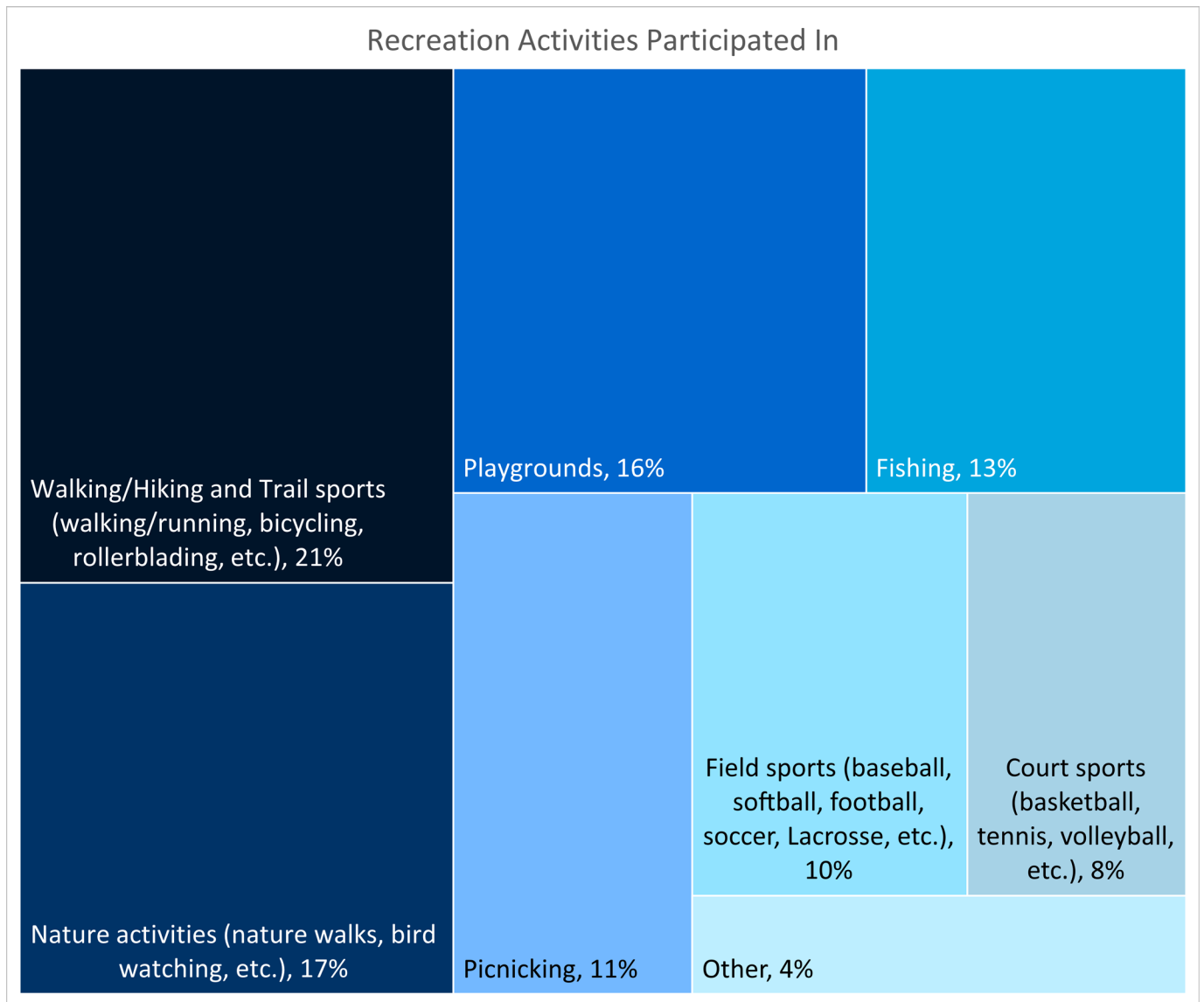
Most survey participants reported that nearby parks either do not meet recreational needs, or do not meet them very well, totaling 47%. This is in comparison to those who reported that nearby parks meet needs adequately at 41%. A small margin of people expressed that nearby parks meet needs very well or completely (12%).

Q4 Where do you participate in recreation activities?



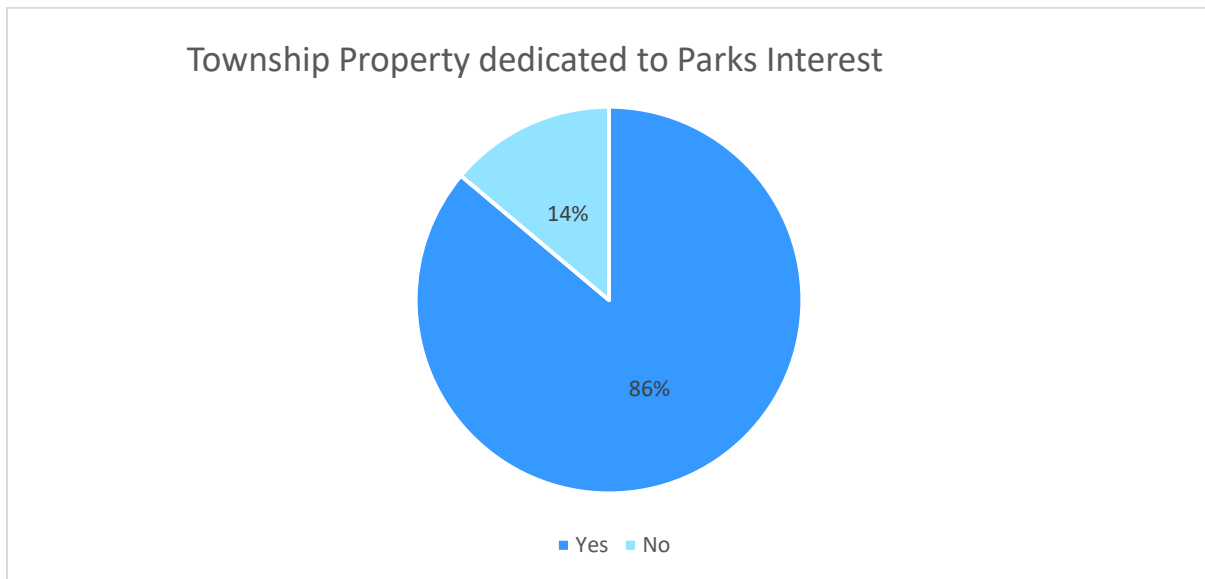
An overwhelming survey response highlights Sterling State Park as the highest attended park for recreation activities for respondents.

Q5 What types of recreation activities do you or your family members regularly participate in?



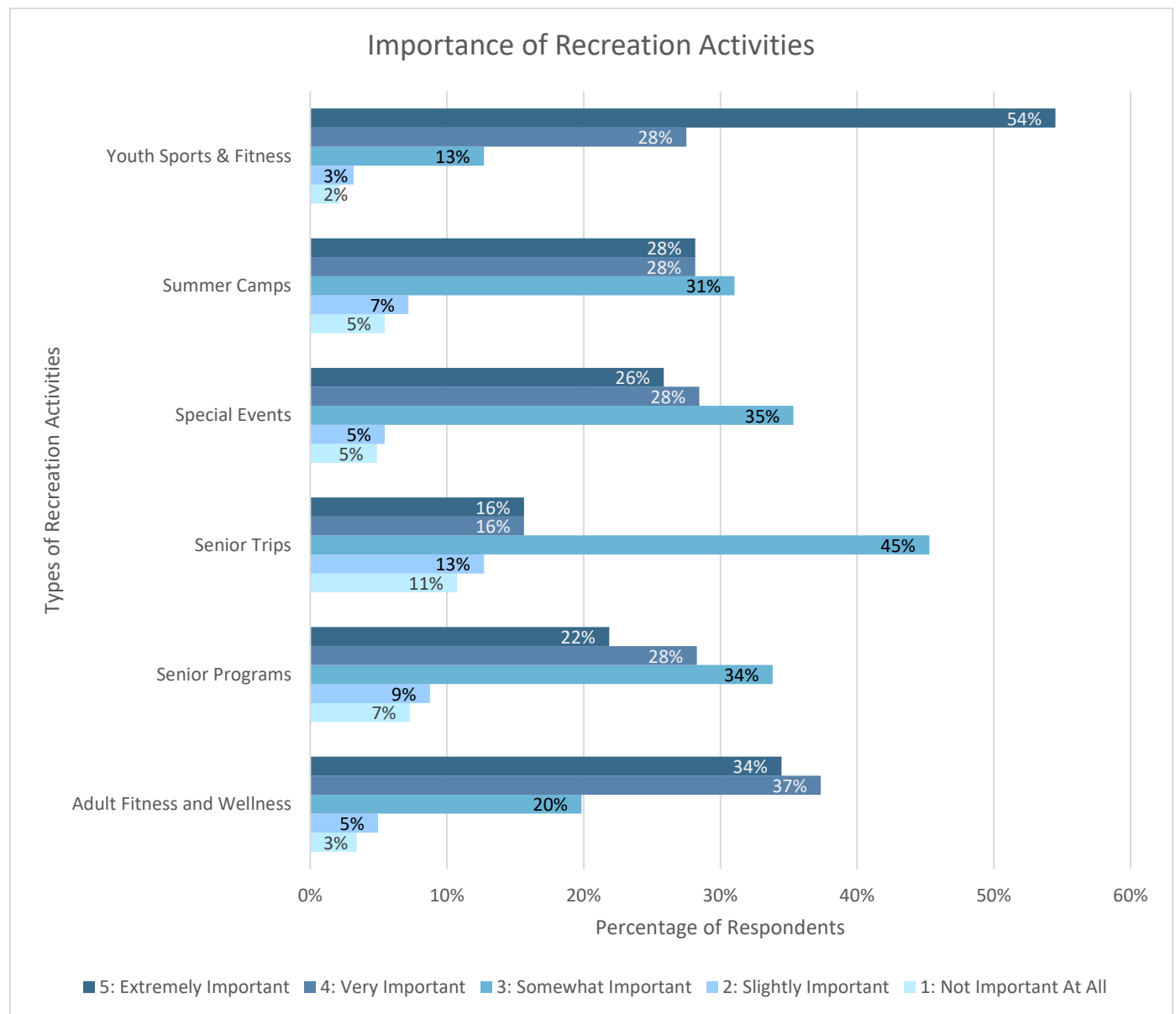
This graph displays the percentage of recreation activities that respondents participate in nearby parks. The total area of the square represents one hundred percent (100%) and the recreation activities are broken down into percentages based on the total number of participants' activities recorded in the survey. Predominately cited activities were walking/hiking trail spots as well as nature activities.

Q6 The township owns property at N. Dixie and Labo Road, and the Library property. Do you feel there is interest in developing these into parks?



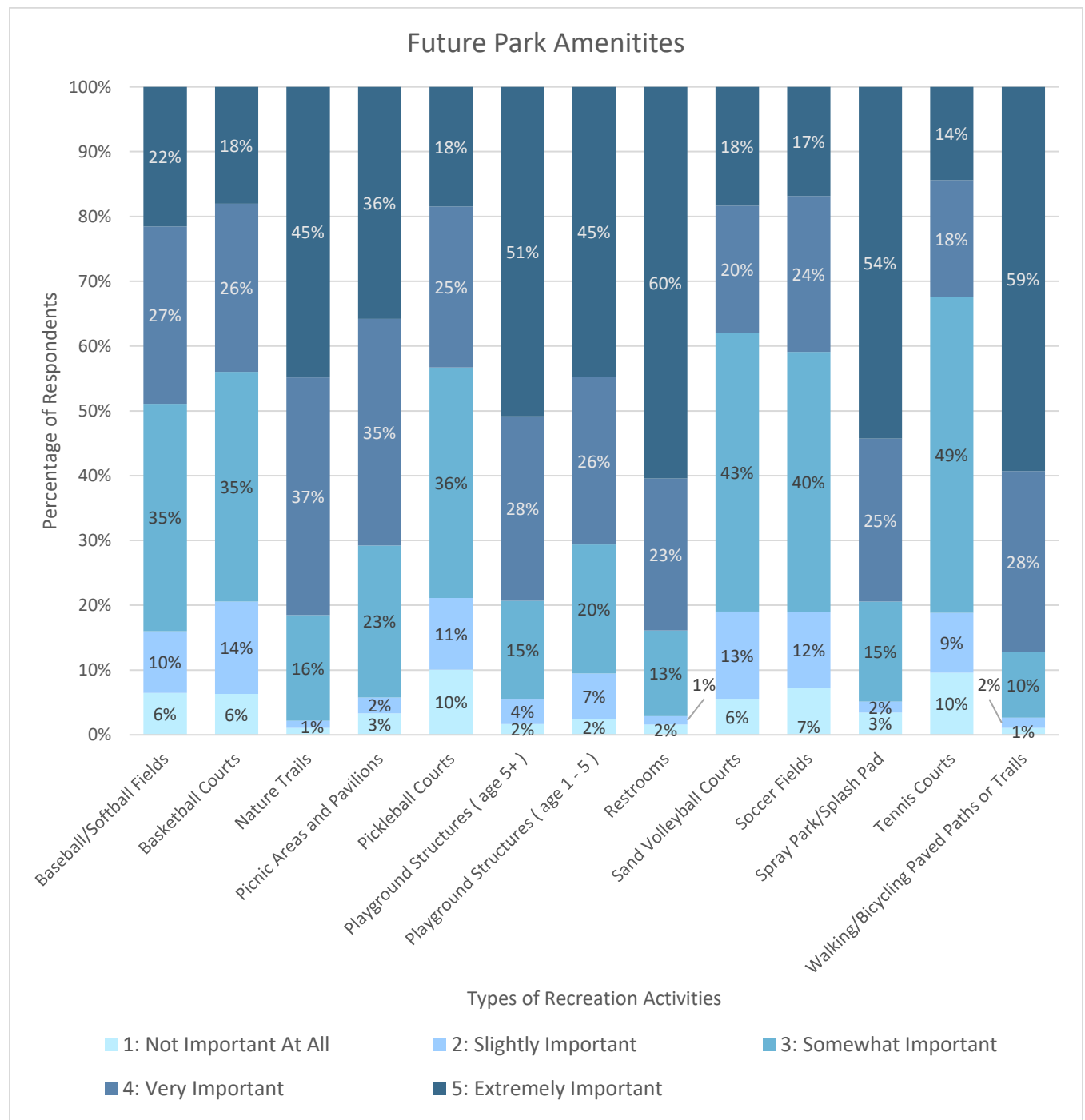
Eighty-six percent (86%) of respondents feel there is interest in developing Township property into parks.

Q7 How important to you are the following recreation programs? Scale from 1 to 5



This graph displays the importance of various recreation activities to those in Berlin Charter Township. The importance of activities are catalogued from one to five (1 – 5) with one being not important at all and five being extremely important. Two features that jumped out are that Youth Sports and Fitness activities are overwhelmingly cited as extremely important to 54% of respondents, and senior trips make up a large percentage of somewhat important at 45%.

Q8 What types of recreation facilities, if any, should be considered for future park developments? Scale from 1 to 5



This graph displays the importance of various recreation activities to those in Berlin Charter Township. The importance of activities are catalogued from one to five (1 – 5) with one being not important at all and five being extremely important. The top three future recreation activities and amenities that survey participants are most interested in order from are restrooms (60%), Walking/Bicycling paved paths or trails (59%), and a spray park or splash pad (54%).

Supporting Documents



- A. Existing parcel boundary.
- B. Work with Planning Commission & Board of Trustees to establish official park boundary as required for DNR grant applications.
- C. Work with Planning Commission & Board of Trustees to incorporate Township-owned wooded parcel as part of park.
- D. Work with Township & County officials and DTE representatives to evaluate the feasibility of a non-motorized trail from Robert Laginess Park to downtown Newport.
- E. Develop a six- to eight-foot wide crushed limestone path through the wooded area.
- F. Develop an eight-foot wide asphalt path around future playing field area.
- G. Develop flexible-use playing fields that can accommodate youth sports groups.
- H. Develop court sports area, including amenities such as pickleball, tennis, and basketball.
- I. Develop secondary asphalt paths between fields to ensure compliance with ADA standards.
- J. Expand parking area.
- K. Add restroom extension on existing building.
- L. Add large picnic shelter.
- M. Add splash pad.
- N. Add play structure for 2 to 5 year olds
- O. Upgrade existing 5 to 12 year old play structures as needed and ensure that all structures are designed for inclusive play.
- P. Consider the addition of a wheelchair accessible swing to further offer inclusive play elements.
- Q. Add smaller picnic shelters near playing fields and courts
- R. Add ages 13+ play structures such as fitness circuits, ninja warrior courses, etc.
- S. Add trees throughout the park to provide shade and add to aesthetic appeal.

