



Homer Township

Parks and Recreation Master Plan



Draft:
12/4/2020



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

2021 Homer Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2021 - 2025

A public hearing on the Parks and Recreation Master Plan was held on **DATE**. On **DATE**, the Homer Township Board adopted the Plan.

Parks and Recreation Committee

John Pruiett - Chair
Cassie Lambka- Secretary
Pamela Allen
Greg Bates
Brian Horton
Darcie Johnson
LeeAnn Kerns
Joel Marshall
Brian Van Wert

Township Board

Russ Varner - Supervisor
Todd Lee - Clerk
Sandra Turk - Treasurer
Trustees:
Keith Johnson
Craig Norton
John Pruiett
Brian Van Wert



With assistance from Spicer Group, Saginaw, Michigan
www.spicergroup.com

126448SG2018

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION	3
ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE	8
RECREATION INVENTORY	10
COMMUNITY INPUT	18
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	25
ACTION PLAN	28
SUMMARY AND ADOPTION	30
APPENDIX A Community Input Survey Results	
APPENDIX B Potential Funding Sources	
APPENDIX C Adoption Documentation	

Chapter 1 |

Introduction

This is the 2021 – 2026 Homer Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This plan reflects the vision for the future of parks and recreation in Homer Township for the next five years. It serves as a roadmap for future recreation facilities in the Township considering the existing parks, community demographics, natural features and public input. The plan is written in accordance with the State recommended five-year cycle for recreation planning. The content and process follow requirements of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) for a community recreation plan.

According to the National Park and Recreation Association, parks and recreation have three values that make them essential services to communities:

Economic Value

- Parks improve the local tax base and increase property values. It is proven that private property values increase the closer such land is to parks. This increase in private property value due to the proximity to parks increases property tax revenues and improves local economies.
- Parks and recreation programs and facilities provide significant indirect revenues to local and regional economies from sports tournaments and special events such as arts, music, and holiday festivals. Economic activity from hospitality expenditures, tourism, fuel, recreational equipment sales, and many other private sector businesses is of true and sustained value to local and regional economies. This indirect economic value is in addition to direct revenues that are gained from park facilities and programs.

Health and Environmental Benefits

- Parks are the places that people go to get healthy and stay fit.
- Parks and recreation programs and services contribute to the health of children, youth, adults, and seniors.
- Parks and protected public lands are proven to improve water quality, protect groundwater, prevent flooding, improve the quality of the air we breathe, provide vegetative buffers to development, produce habitat for wildlife, and provide a place for children and families to connect with nature and recreate outdoors together.



Social Importance

- Parks are a tangible reflection of the quality of life in a community. They provide identity for citizens and are a major factor in the perception of quality of life in a given community. Parks and recreation services are often cited as one of the most important factors in surveys of how livable communities are.
- Parks provide gathering places for families and social groups, as well as for individuals of all ages and economic status, regardless of their ability to pay for access.
- Parks have a value to communities that transcend the amount of dollars invested or the revenues gained from fees. Parks provide a sense of public pride and cohesion to every community.

This document is intended to serve as a guide in the planning for future park and recreation opportunities, services and implementation. Population shifts, new development and changing attitudes towards leisure have added additional pressures to the community's existing parks and recreation system, thus increasing the need for both short and long-range planning.

Recommendations such as land acquisition, and facility expansions and construction, and even the design of park improvements, will require additional study or involvement of residents in order to address the site-specific details. This plan lays the foundation upon which these activities can build.

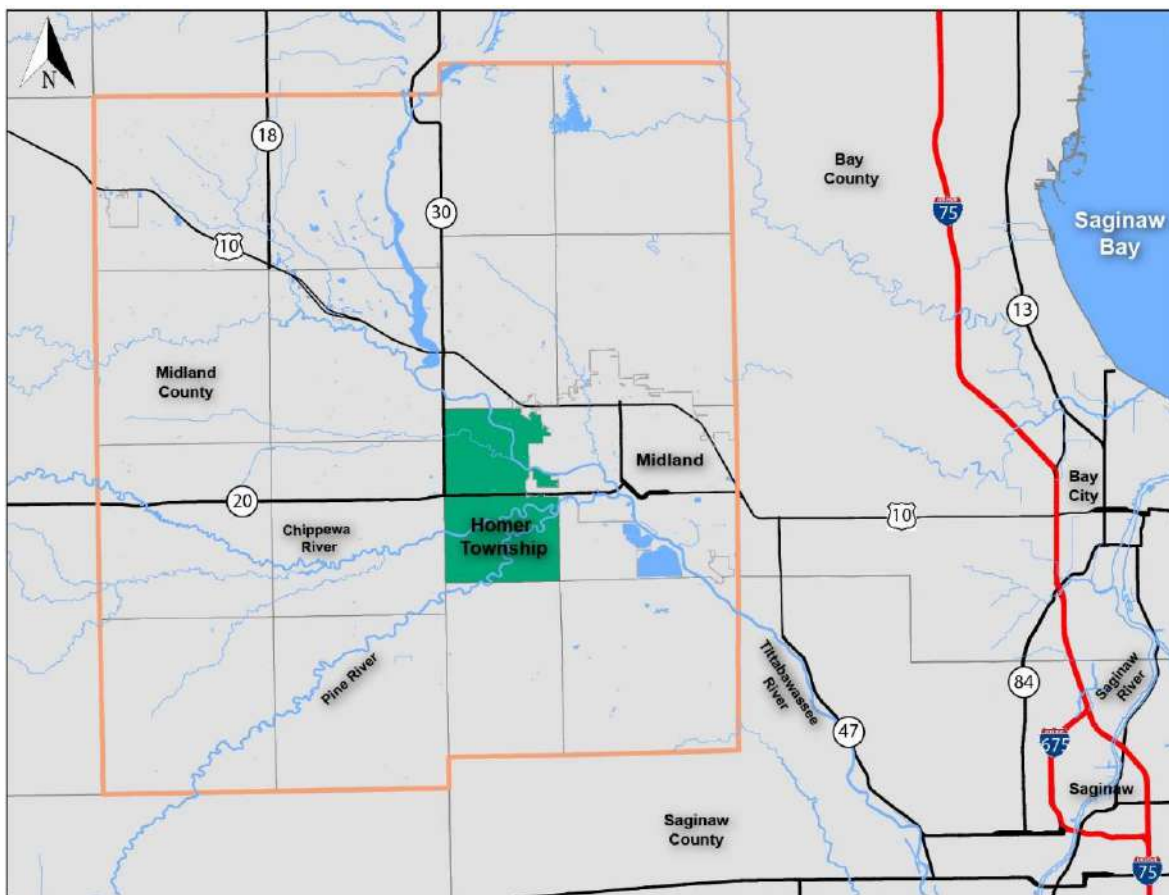
Implementation strategies are identified over the next five years, at which time the plan will again be updated. The delineation of these improvements will aid Homer Township in grant solicitation from the DNR and other granting agencies, as well as with long range capital improvement budgeting. Additionally, during the next five years, it is important for Homer Township to reference the plan and make appropriate priority adjustments as conditions change and funding opportunities arise.

Chapter Two | Community Description

Regional Setting

Homer Township is located in the heart of the Great Lakes Bay Region, just west of the City of Midland. It is bordered by Lincoln Township to the north, Lee Township to the west, Mt. Haley Township to the south, and Midland Township and the City of Midland to the east. The Township has three rivers that flow through it: the Pine, the Chippewa, and the Tittabawassee. In addition to the rivers, the Township is largely wooded and residential with sections of wetlands and the Chippewa Nature Center, a unique regional recreation resource.

Map 1 – Homer Township Location



Demographics

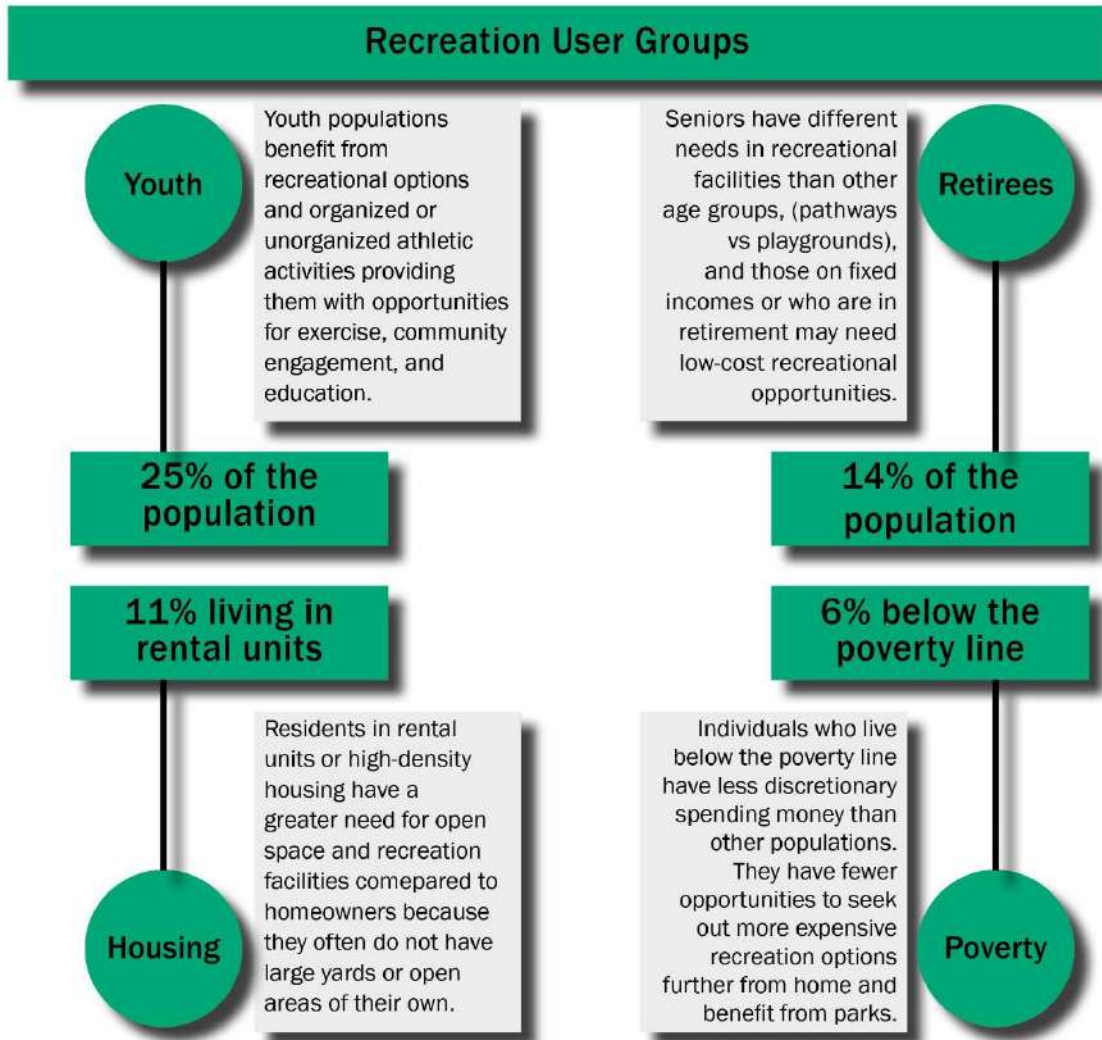
Analyzing the demographics of a community helps determine the quality and quantity of parks and recreation facilities necessary to serve Homer Township residents. The following data is from the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census and the 2018 American Community Survey estimates. The following section compares Homer Township to adjacent communities for a better understanding of both, the Township's population, and also how that population compares to similar localities.

Table 1 – Demographics

Selected Demographics			
	Homer Township	Midland County	Michigan
2000 Population	3,924	82,874	9,938,444
2010 Population	4,009	83,629	9,883,640
2018 ACS population estimates	3,987	83,223	9,984,072
Median Age	40.7 years	41.5 years	39.6 years
Population under 19	25.2%	21.8%	22.3%
Population over 65	14.2%	16.9%	15.9%
Percentage of Rental Units	11.8%	24.1%	29.0%
Median Household Income	\$54,876	\$57,117	\$52,668
Population with a Bachelor's degree or higher	25.6%	34.1%	28.1%
Individuals below the Poverty Level	6.0%	11.3%	16.6%

For almost 20 years, the population in Homer Township has been steadily hovering right around 4,000 people. In 2010, the population was the highest at 4,009. The American Community Survey, an annual survey completed by the Census Bureau, predicts the current population of Homer Township at 3,987. However, the ACS is an estimate and there won't be a full population count until to 2020 Census data is released. In comparison, Midland County and Michigan have also had steady population numbers, with the difference that Homer Township and the State lost population between 2000 and 2010 and Midland County gained population.

There are certain demographics that are more pertinent to parks and recreation planning than others. Those include population age, rental households, median household income and the poverty level. The following graphic is a discussion of those four characteristics related to parks and recreation planning in Homer Township.



Physical Characteristics

Transportation Network

The transportation network in Homer Township is made up of several different types of roads and modal options. M-20 bisects the Township separating the northern and southern half, the Township has a network of County and private roads. Due to the heavily wooded areas and the three rivers in the Township, the layout of the transportation network is not the standard mile grid like other Michigan townships. Just outside of the northeast corner of the Township boundary there is a US 10 interchange, connecting Homer Township to the Statewide highway network.

In addition to the auto-oriented transportation network, the Pere-Marquette Rail Trail traverses the northeast corner of the Township. The Pere-Marquette Rail Trail connects into the City-owned pathway along Poseyville Road and Midland Township Path. Eventually, this path will extend to Gordonville Road in Midland Township and will connect into the Great Lakes Bay Regional Trail. This is a regional trail system that connects Bay, Saginaw, and Midland Counties.

Land Use and Natural Features

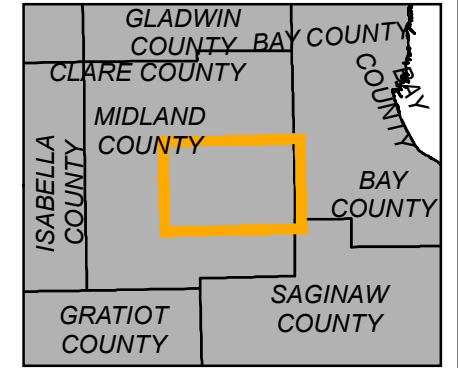
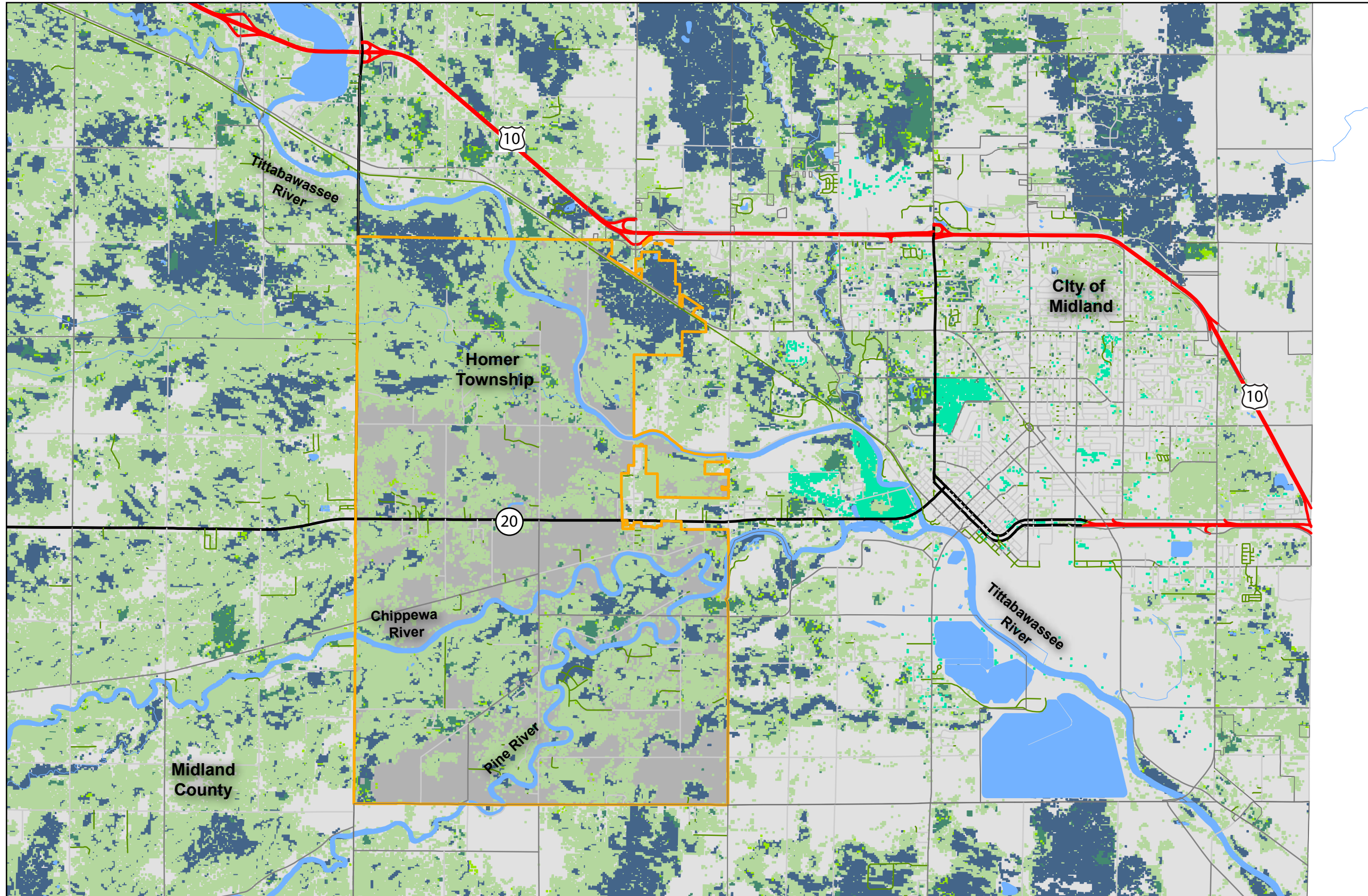
A resource inventory can be used to identify open space areas that may be desirable for protection and/or public access through acquisition or other means. Homer Township is rich in natural resources. The land use and natural features in Homer Township are largely wooded rural or undeveloped land. There are three rivers that flow through the Township and converge to the east in the City of Midland, the Tittabawassee River, the Pine River, and the Chippewa River. After they converge, they continue southeast as the Tittabawassee River and flow toward Freeland and Saginaw County. Each river corridor provides unique fish and wildlife habitat in the Township. The rivers also serve as recreation for canoers and kayakers.

The wooded land in the Township is mostly privately owned, there is no State Forest land in Homer Township. In general, the forest is made up of deciduous trees with pockets of evergreens throughout the Township. There are also areas of wetlands along the northern border of the Township and along the rivers. Due to the presence of so many rivers, there are parts of the Township that are in the floodplain. The majority of these parcels follow the riverbeds, but there is a larger floodplain area where the Chippewa and Pine Rivers converge. See the Natural Features Map on the following page for more information about the natural resources in Homer Township and the surrounding area.

NATURAL FEATURES MAP

HOMER TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN

MIDLAND COUNTY - MICHIGAN



AREA MAP
NOT TO SCALE



LEGEND

- Deciduous Forest
- Evergreen Forest
- Mixed Forest
- Recreational Grasses
- Wetlands
- Waterways

Spicer
group

SAGINAW'S OFFICE
230 S Washington Ave
Saginaw, MI 48607
Tel. 989-754-4747
www.SpicerGroup.com

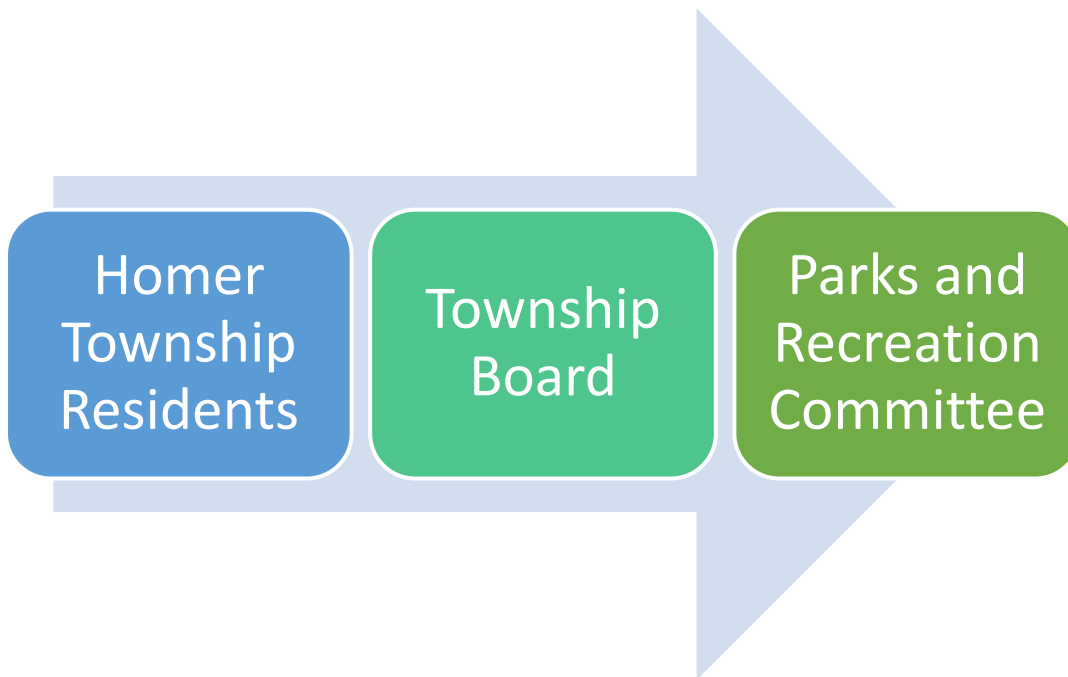
Administrative Structure

How Parks and Recreation Function in Homer Township

The Homer Township Board, with input from the Parks and Recreation Committee, carries out the management of recreation in the Township. The commission consists of nine members, two representatives from the Township Board, and members of the public. Each member receives his or her appointment from the Township Board. The Parks and Recreation Committee is an advisory committee to the Township Board. The Committee meets quarterly to review parks and recreation concerns in the Township. The Township hires **1 PT seasonal and 2 FT public works** employees to maintain the parks. The Committee, with assistance from the Planning Commission, created this Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The Township has not received any grants in the past.

A chart showing the administrative structure of the Township's parks and recreation components is shown below.

Organizational Chart



FINANCING AND BUDGETS

The parks and recreation facilities and programs in Homer Township are funded through the Township general fund and rental fees. Rentals of the park pavilions provide some additional revenue to the parks. Funds for capital improvements such as new playground equipment have been allocated from the general fund in the past. Budget information for Homer Township's Parks and Recreation is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 – Budgets

Homer Township Parks and Recreation Budgets		
	2020	2021
Operation and Maintenance	\$37,675	\$38,175
Programming	\$0	\$0
Capital Expenditures	\$20,000	\$20,000

Cooperative Relationships

The Township has several cooperative relationships with different community groups for use of both parks. They are as follows:

- Bullock Creek High School Soccer – Homer Township Park soccer fields
- Bullock Creek Little League – Softball and Baseball fields in Homer Township Park for girls softball and boys baseball.
- Michigan Mase Advanced Athletics – Township Hall Park fields for flag football
- Archery Club Tournaments
- Radio Club – HAM Radio gatherings
- Potential Future Partnership – Midland Lacrosse League to use fields in Homer Township Park

Each of these groups keep their own participation records. The Township is not involved in programming.

Role of Volunteers

Volunteers are a regular part of parks and recreation in Homer Township. The volunteers are affiliated with each of the different organizations the Township partners with for use of the parks, see cooperative relationships above. These volunteers run their respective programs and the facilities they use in the parks.

Chapter Three – Recreation Inventory

This chapter is an inventory of the Township's existing park system, which includes a record of the current recreation amenities provided at each facility. The inventory also includes a description of some key recreational facilities that are available outside of Homer Township.

Developing a complete inventory of recreation facilities is an essential component of a five year Parks and Recreation Master Plan as it provides a base of information to use in developing the Action Plan. Understanding what facilities are available to Homer Township residents will assist decision-making in the future.

The inventory covers the following components:

- Public Parks and Facilities (managed or owned by Homer Township)
- Undeveloped Park Land
- Local & Regional Parks and Facilities

Accessibility

Creating a park system that is safe, accessible, and usable to all individuals, including those with disabilities, is essential. A grading system has been developed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) to rate parks and facilities simply and effectively on their ease of use and accessibility for handicapped residents. The standards are based on the American Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines. The accessibility grading system uses a five-point system ranging from one (none of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines), to five (the entire park was developed/renovated using the principals of universal design). See Table 3.

Table 3 – Accessibility Guidelines

MDNR Accessibility Grading System for Parks and Recreational Facilities	
Accessibility Grade	Definition
1	None of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
2	Some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
3	Most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
4	The entire park meets accessibility guidelines
5	The entire park was developed/renovated using the principles of universal design

An ADA compliance assessment of parks owned and operated by Homer Township was conducted during the summer of 2020 by the planning consultant and was verified by Township staff. The assessment consisted of a visual inspection of each park regarding access and circulation in relation to the park facilities. Homer Township is dedicated to improving accessibility at each of its parks when improvements are made. This includes accessible parking, paths, restrooms, activity areas, amenities, and signage.

Type of Parks

Classifying parks into categories helps define their role in the overall Plan, demonstrates their relationship to each other, highlights deficiencies, helps to develop an action plan, and assists in allocating funding. The classification system described below is adapted from the National Recreation and Parks Association guide recommended by the MDNR for recreation standards. It describes park types based on size, service area, facilities, and use groups.

Mini Park

Parks are less than one acre in size and is less than 1/4 mile from a residential setting. Access is primarily pedestrian and by bicycle, with no on-site parking. It is used to address limited, isolated, or unique recreational needs.

Neighborhood Park

Parks serve as the recreational and social focus of a neighborhood. They are easily accessible to neighborhood populations and geographically centered within safe walking distance and have bike access. Their service area is generally 1/4 to 1/2 mile.

Community Parks

Parks serve a broader purpose than Neighborhood Parks. They have more amenities and usually serve the entire community. They are larger in size than Mini-Parks or Neighborhood Parks. Access is primarily vehicular and parking is included on-site.

Special Use Park

Parks generally cover a broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented toward single-purpose use.

Homer Township Parks

The Township owns and operates two developed parks and one undeveloped property. These three areas total 36 acres of recreation land. The following section includes an in-depth discussion for each park. A park location map is included at the end of this chapter. This inventory was completed in the summer of 2020 by the planning consultant.

Homer Township Park

Type:	Community Park
Size:	30 acres
Accessibility Rating:	2
Location:	Homer Road, across from Township Safety Complex

Homer Township Park is the largest and most developed of the recreation facilities in the Township. This is the Township's main park. In addition to day use activities, the park is also home to softball diamonds which serve the Bullock Creek school system and a local little league program. The southern end of the park is fully developed, however the eastern area of the park is still open play area and the Township is looking to design a park concept plan for this area in the future and use that plan as a guide for future DNR grant applications and park projects.



Amenities at this park include:

- Pavilion
- Restroom
- Playground Equipment
- Three Soccer/Football Fields
- Four Softball Diamonds
- Concessions
- Rollerblading/Ice Skating or Hockey Rink
- Batting Cages
- Parking Lot
- Open Play Area



Township Hall Park

Type:	Community Park
Size:	5 acres
Accessibility Rating:	2
Location:	Township Hall, intersection of Homer and Olson Roads

This park is much smaller than the park located across from the safety building it is also not as busy as compared to the other Township park.

Amenities at this park include:

- Playground Equipment
- Basketball Court
- Baseball diamond



Chippewa River Property

Type:	Special Use Park
Size:	1 acre
Accessibility Rating:	1
Location:	Intersection of Chippewa River Road and Sandow Road

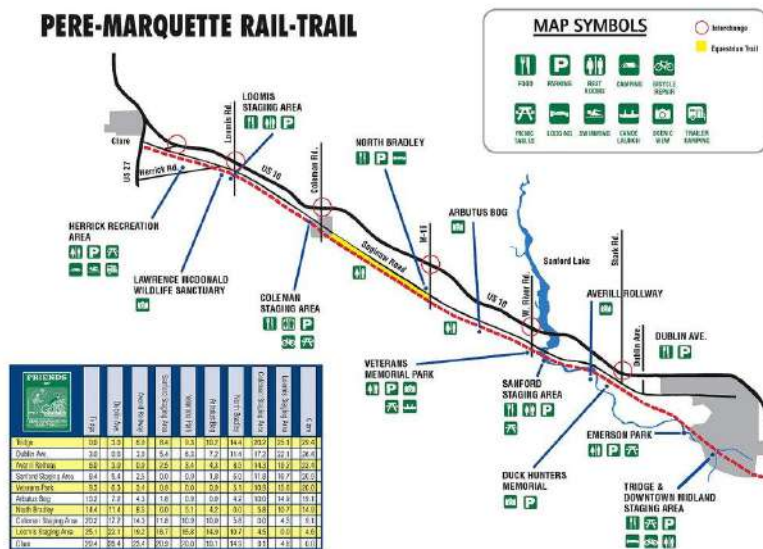
This is a piece of undeveloped piece of property located along the northern bank of the Chippewa River. The Township does not have any facilities on the property at this time, but may place a canoe/kayak launch or fishing pier here in the future. The location is close to the Chippewa Nature Center canoe/kayak launch and is an ideal location for another launch site for paddlers along this river.

This property is directly across from the Nature Center property and the Parks and Recreation Committee sees this as a possible connection opportunity for the future.



Table 4 - Parks and Recreation Inventory

Homer Township Recreation Inventory			
	Homer Township Park	Township Hall Park	Chippewa River Property
Park Type	Community Park	Community Park	Special Use Park
Acreage	30	5	1
Accessibility	2	2	2
Pavilion	2	1	
Playground	1	1	
Baseball Diamond		1	
Basketball Court		1	
Picnic Area	2		
Restrooms	1		
Playfield (open space)	Yes	Yes	
Soccer/Football Fields	3		
Softball Diamonds	4		
Concessions	1		
Rollerblading/Ice Rink	1		
Batting Cages	1		



Trails

Communities across the United States are creating regional trail systems in both cities and rural areas to provide a higher quality of life for residents. In fact, of all the states, Michigan has the largest rail-trail system. Even more impressive, these trails cover long distances, which is uncommon in other states. Trails give residents the opportunity to be more active and healthy, safer while walking or biking on the roads, provide additional ways to experience their community, and give all users the option of increased mobility in different modes of travel.

Historically, the roads in Homer Township have been designed with only automobile traffic in mind. However, communities are now working toward creating a network of trails and roads that are accessible to several forms of traffic. This often means sharing the existing road right-of-way with bikes or having a separate pathway running parallel to the road which is designated for non-motorized use and connects regional centers.

Why trails are important

While trails can be a challenge to implement, their positive effects on a community cannot be disputed. It has been proven that trails create a pride of place and sense of ownership in Michigan residents. Trails are also an important driver in the local and regional economy, increase property values, and provide safe and healthy recreation options.

The growing trail trend in Michigan is also reflected in Homer Township's residents' opinions. On the whole, they feel trails and pathways would be an asset to their community. In the public input survey, respondents emphasized how important non-motorized pathways and trails are to the residents.

Trail users have a measurable impact on the local economy. Working with the surrounding townships and other jurisdictions is an effective way to connect with existing systems and expand the non-motorized pathway infrastructure. These projects would create a long-term, valuable investment in the community and the opportunity to connect the Township to others in the region. This would promote economic vitality, encourage a healthier lifestyle in their residents, and create a safer travel environment.

Homer Township Trails and Pathways

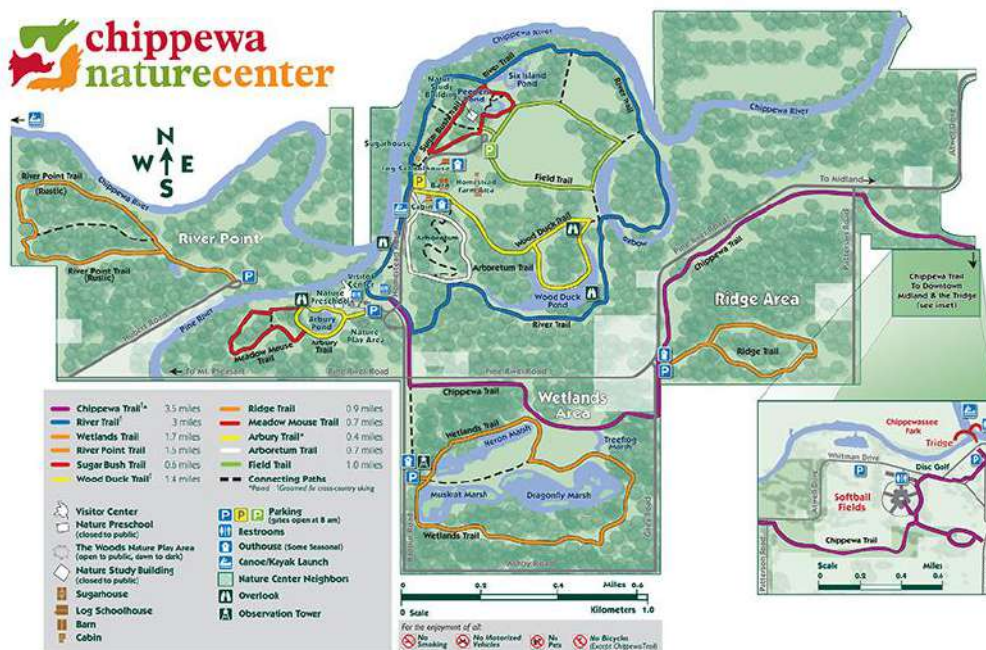
The Parks and Recreation Committee recognizes the importance of planning for trails in Homer Township. The Township is fortunate to be close to several existing trail systems and the Committee sees a few key connection points that would connect Homer Township residents to the larger existing trail network.

The Pere-Marquette Rail Trail traverses the northeast corner of the Township, see the Recreation Map at the end of this chapter. This trail connects Midland and Clare Michigan along the old Pere-Marquette railbed. It is 30 miles of paved trail. The trail passes right through Homer Township and is a great opportunity for residents who are looking to walk or bike. There was some interest in the community input survey for a trailhead in Homer Township so residents can more easily access the trail. The Committee is also interested in looking into the possibility of a trailhead.

A portion of the Chippewa Nature Center is located in Homer Township. The Chippewa Nature Center is a unique recreation provider in the Mid-Michigan region. The nature center began as a collaboration between Dow Chemical Company Foundation and The Midland Nature Club. Dow reserved 200 acres between the Pine and Chippewa Rivers. Eventually, Dow donated the property to the Nature Center which has been steadily growing and it is the largest private non-profit nature center in the United States. In total the Nature Center has more than 1,500 acres, 40 staff members, and over 70,000 visitors a year. In addition to beautiful natural land, the Nature Center also offers programming.

The Nature Center has a robust trail network throughout the property with more than 19 miles of trails. See the Nature Center's trail map below. The trail network in the Nature Center is also connected to Midland's parks and pathways system. As this facility is located partially in the Township, it provides a unique recreation opportunity for residents. The Committee is interested in connecting to this resource. If the Township can connect a non-motorized pathway from the park or Township Safety Building, it would connect Homer Township residents to the Nature Center and the extensive park and recreation system in the City of Midland.

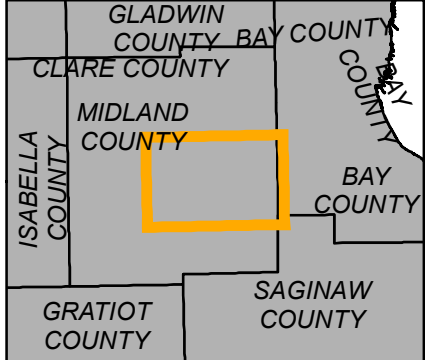
If Homer Township could connect to the Nature Center, it would also be able to connect residents to the pathway system that extends south of the City. The City has a path that runs to Overlook Park and from Overlook Park, the Midland Township trail extends south along Poseyville. Midland Township is currently planning to extend that trail to Gordonville Road and there are funds in place from Dow and plans to extend the Trail to Freeland along River Road and connect into the Great Lakes Bay Regional Trail. There is an extensive trail system in place just outside of the borders of Homer Township, and if the Township can make a few key connections to that network the residents will have significantly more recreation options.



RECREATION MAP

HOMER TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN

MIDLAND COUNTY - MICHIGAN



AREA MAP
NOT TO SCALE

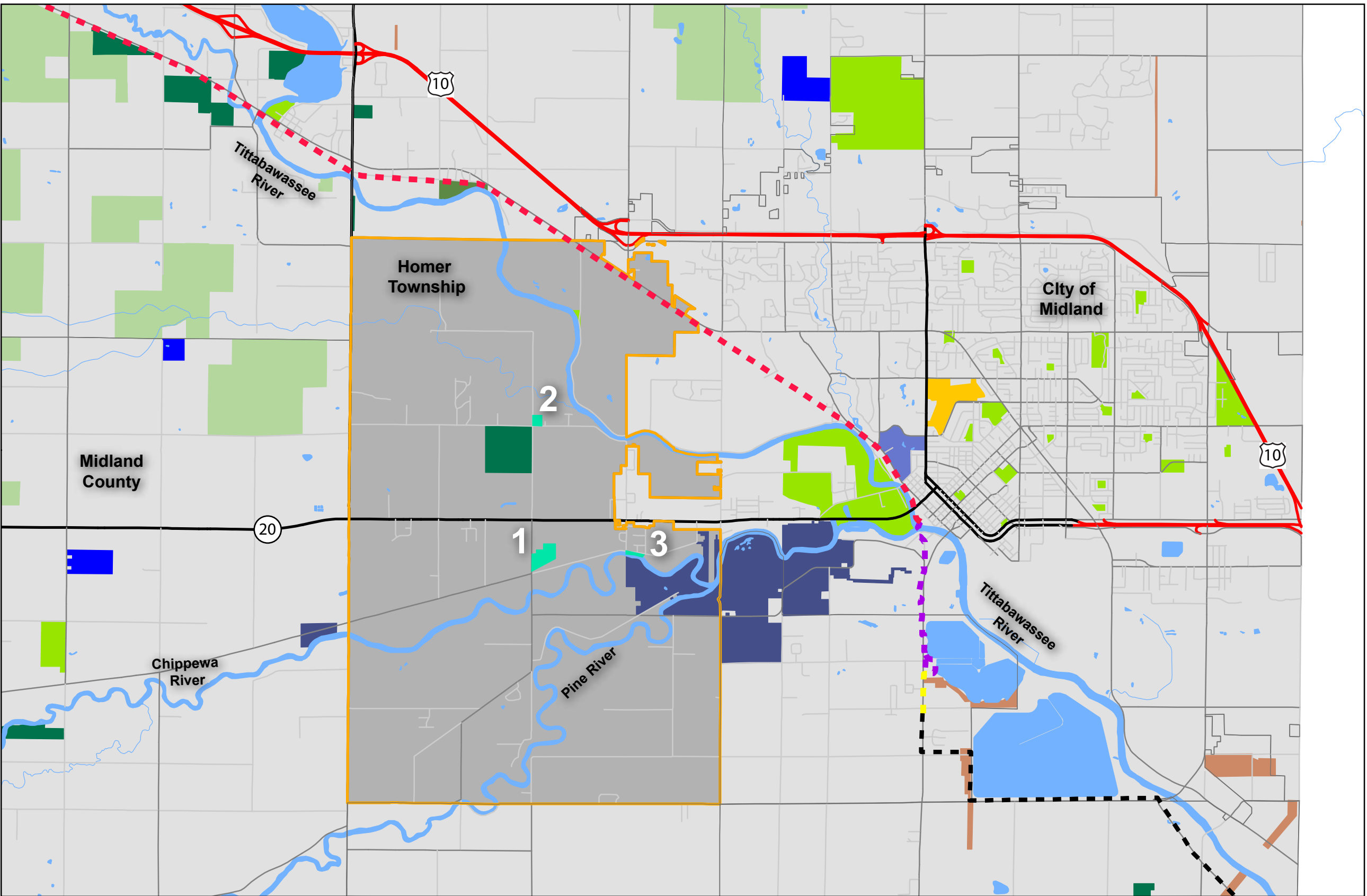
LEGEND

Recreation Areas

- Homer Township Parks
- 1** Homer Township Park
- 2** Township Hall Park
- 3** Chippewa River Access
- Local Parks
- Midland County
- Chippewa Nature Center
- Dow Gardens
- Little Forks Land Conservancy
- State Land
- Sportsman's Clubs
- Country Club
- Consumers Energy

Paths and Trails

- City Path
- Midland Township Path
- Proposed Path
- Pere-Marquette Rail Trail



PATH: Q:\PROJ\2020\128\169S\G2020 - HOMER TOWNSHIP RECREATION PLAN\MAPPING\RECREATION.MXD, PRINTED ON: 6/5/2020, BY: JENNIFER STEWART

Spicer group SAGINAW'S OFFICE
230 S Washington Ave
Saginaw, MI 48607
Tel. 989-754-4747
www.SpicerGroup.com

Chapter Four |

Community Input Summary

One of the most important aspects of a community's Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a detailed review and analysis of the resident's opinions regarding the future of their parks and recreation system. Homer Township released a survey designed to gather the information to guide the Township's parks and recreation program for the next 5 years. A complete tabulation of the results is available for review in Appendix A. The text below provides a description of the significant results.

Overall, the survey had 14 questions, and there was a total of 168 responses, with a 100% completion rate. The Township advertised the community input survey on the Township website, sent out mailers to Township residents, published an article in the Midland Daily News, and put out a targeted advertisement on Facebook. The online survey was available in summer of 2020, at www.homertownshipparksurvey.com.

A second means of input was provided during the required public review period. The draft plan was available for review at **LOCATION** and on the **LOCATION** from **DATE to DATE**. A third opportunity was provided at the public hearing on **DATE at LOCATION**.

Respondents

Of the 168 respondents, 128, or 76.6%, were residents of Homer Township, 21% were residents of Midland County, and 2.4% lived elsewhere. The age range of the survey respondents was representative of almost all the age groups in Homer Township. The age groups and survey participants are listed below:

- **Under 19:** 0.6%
- **Ages 19 – 29:** 12.6%
- **Ages 30 – 39:** 32.9%
- **Ages 40 – 49:** 22.2%
- **Ages 50 – 59:** 15.6%
- **Ages 60 – 69:** 14.4%
- **Ages 70 and older:** 1.8%



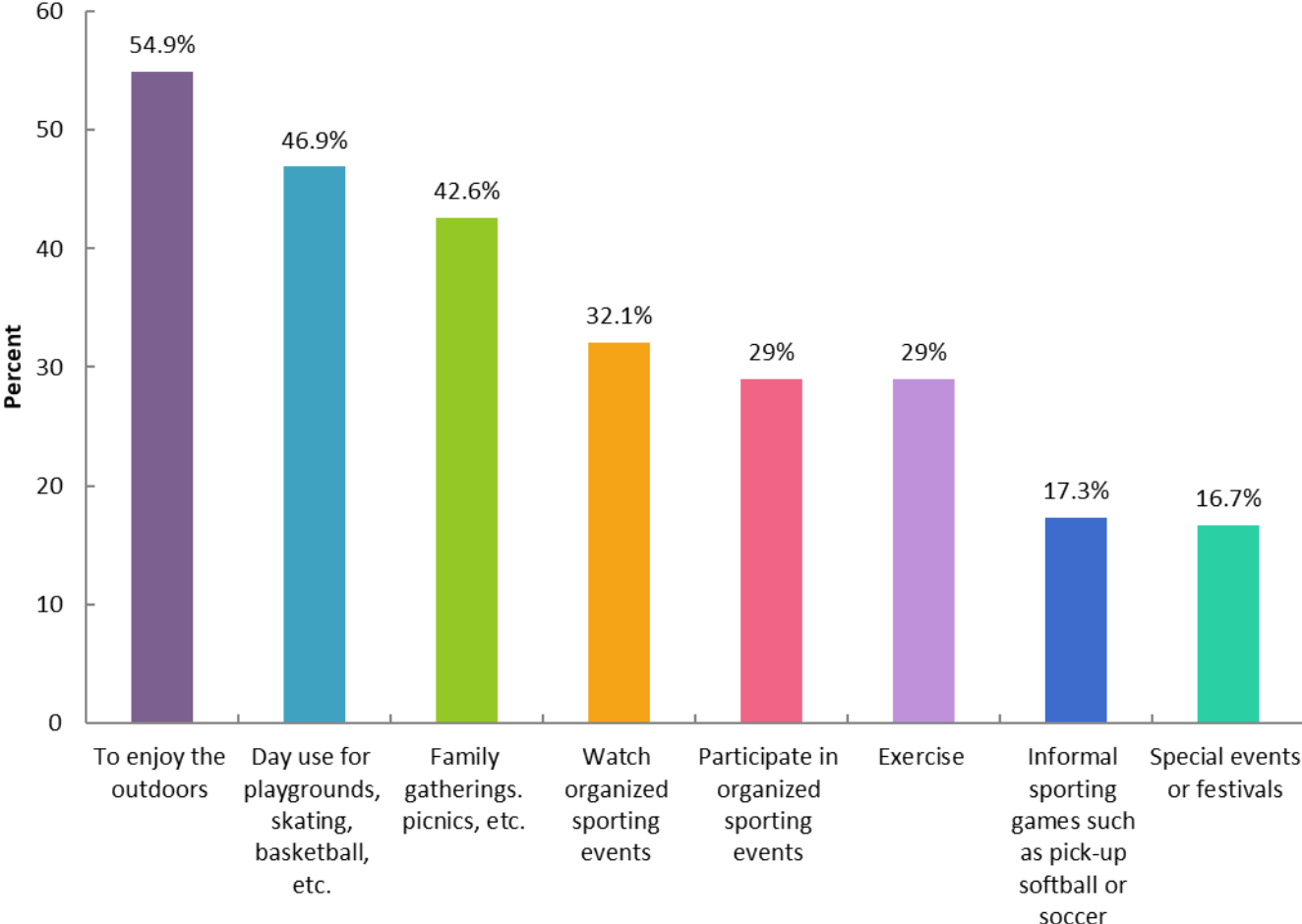
Most respondents visit Homer Township parks with their children (68%), then spouse (54%) other popular groups included pets, friends, alone, or grandchildren.

Parks and Recreation Questions

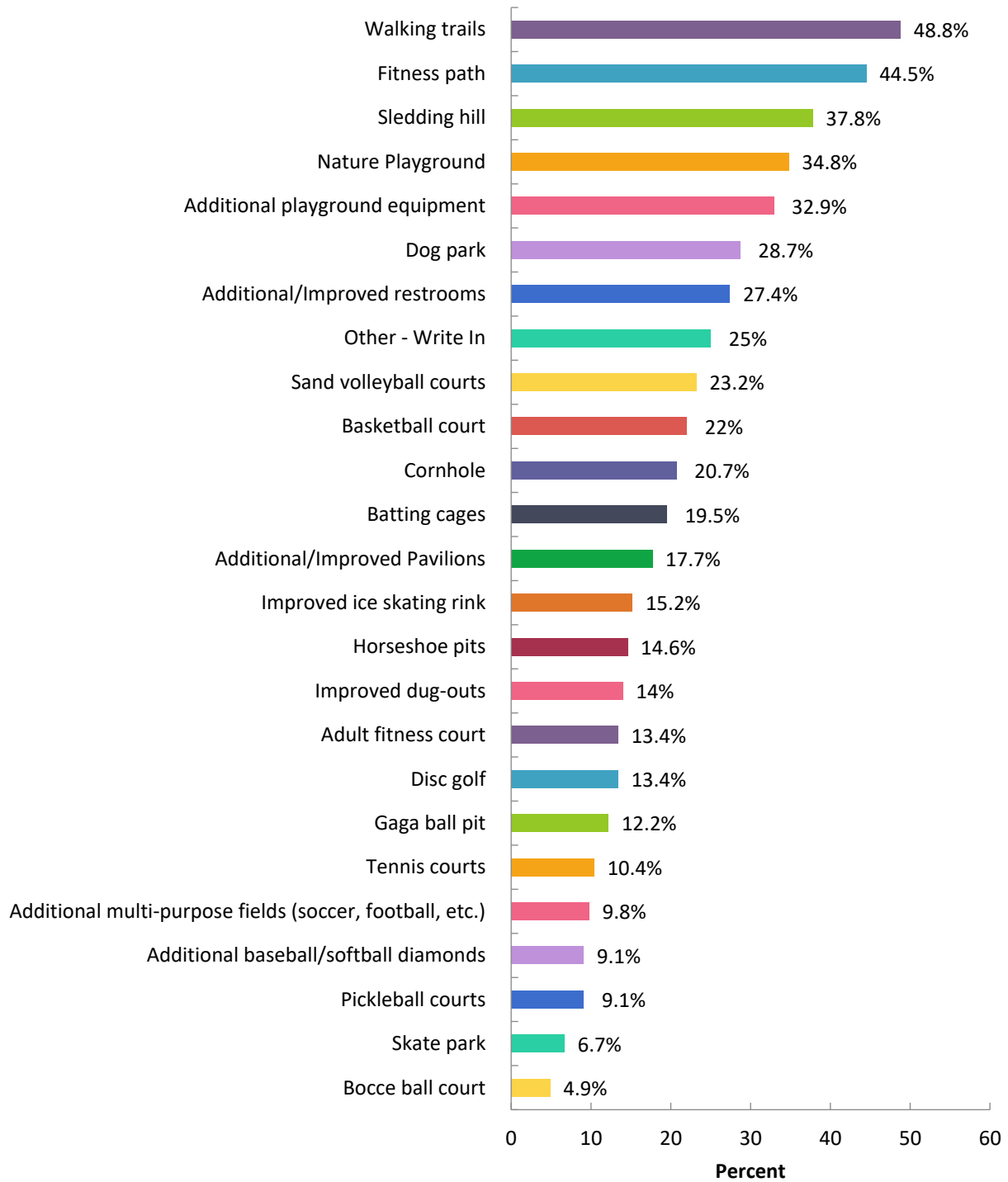
The following questions revolve around the current status of parks in Homer Township and the future of parks and recreation.

Why do you visit parks in our community? Please check all that apply.

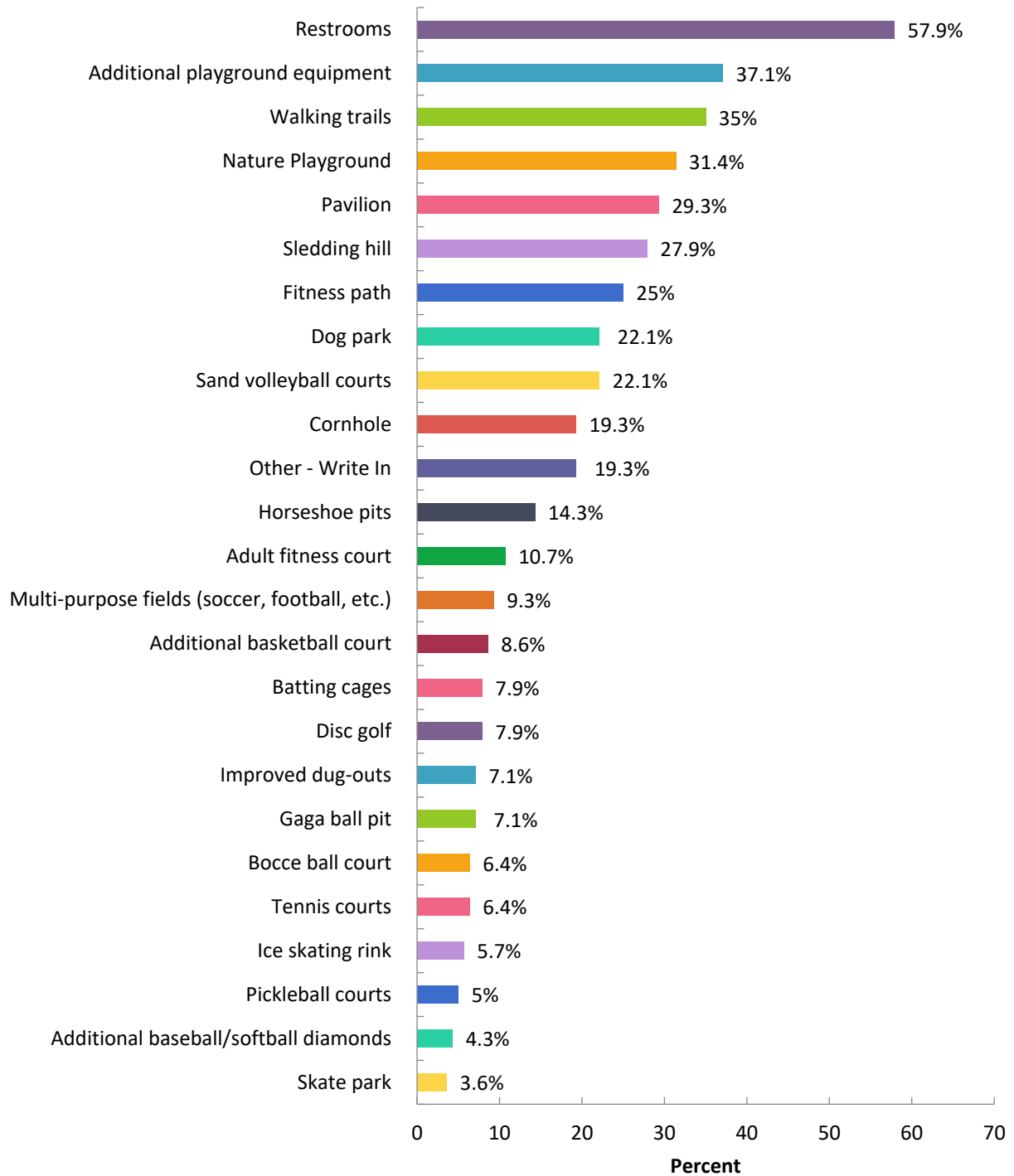
Most respondents visit the parks to enjoy the outdoors (54%), for day use such as playgrounds, skating or basketball (46%), for family gatherings (42%), or to watch organized sporting events (32%). The chart below is a depiction of the results for this question.



**What additional amenities would you like to see at Homer Township Park?
Please check all that apply.**

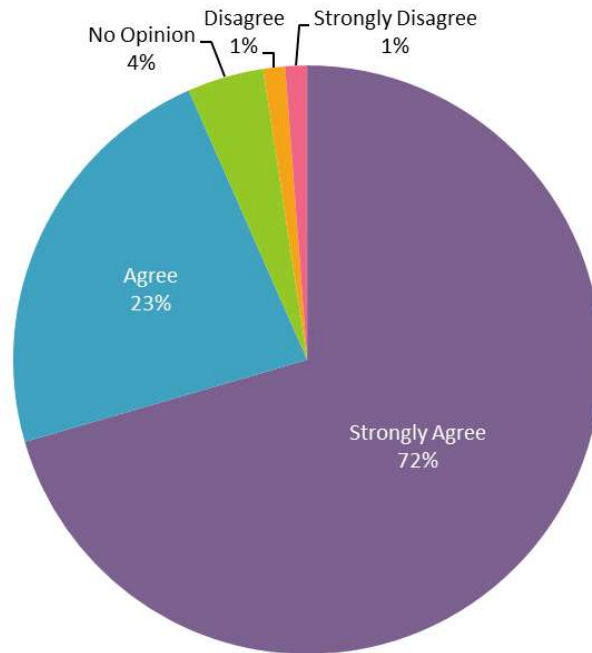


**What additional amenities would you like to see at Township Hall Park?
Please check all that apply.**



Homer Township owns property near the corner of Chippewa River Road and Sandow Road along the Chippewa River. In the future, this property could provide river access for fishing or a canoe/kayak launch. Would this recreation option be an opportunity you believe would improve the Homer Township recreation facilities?

Almost 95% of the survey respondents would like to see a canoe/kayak launch at this currently undeveloped Township-owned piece of property. See the pie chart below for a breakdown of the responses.



Please rate your feelings on the following statements concerning parks in Homer Township.

The following four statement focus on four different ways to use parks and recreation and indicate how important each type is to the survey respondents. Overall, informal day use activities of the parks and non-motorized pathways and trails were the most important recreation options. See the chart on the following page.

	A Top Priority	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	No Opinion	Responses
It is important to me to provide outdoor recreations facilities that focus on sports such as athletic fields and courts in Homer Township.	33 20.0%	69 41.8%	42 25.5%	19 11.5%	2 1.2%	165
It is important to me that Homer Township parks provide informal/day use park amenities such as pavilions and playgrounds.	44 26.7%	98 59.4%	20 12.1%	2 1.2%	1 0.6%	165
It is important to me to have water-based recreation opportunities on the Chippewa River.	44 26.7%	69 41.8%	39 23.6%	12 7.3%	1 0.6%	165
It is important to me that Homer Township parks have non-motorized pathways and trails.	38 23.0%	87 52.7%	29 17.6%	10 6.1%	1 0.6%	165

Please rank the following statements in order of importance to you.

The survey respondents were asked what the priority should be for parks and recreation over the next 5 years. The ranking is as follows:

1. Upgrade/Add amenities to Homer Township's existing parks.
2. Maintain Homer Township's existing parks and recreation facilities.
3. Acquire additional park land.

Most respondents would like to focus efforts on improving the existing parks by adding new amenities and then maintaining the existing facilities. Priority 3 was to acquire new land.



What do you like best about Homer Township parks?

This was one of two open-ended questions in the survey. In total, there were 103 responses to this question. The most common responses were:

- The parks are close to home
- The parks are clean and well maintained
- The parks are safe
- The parks have large open spaces
- The parks are not too busy

What is one thing you would do to improve Homer Township parks?

This was the second open-ended question which had 117 responses. The most common answers were:

- Walking trails
- New play equipment for multiple age groups
- Update restrooms
- Bike paths
- Splash pad
- Access to water

Chapter Five | Goals, Objectives, and Action Plan

Developing goals and objectives is an important part of the recreation planning process. Overall the Township wants to provide quality recreation opportunities for the community it serves. More specific goals, like those listed below, must be based on public input, the demographic characteristics of the population served, and other physical and environmental characteristics of the Township.

Read this chapter with the following principles in mind. Goals are the broadest level, they are overreaching and general. By nature, objectives are the measurable items which carry out the purpose of a goal. Action items are the last level, and they identify specific projects and programs to be pursued over the next five years. Action items can include organizational, staffing, programming, public information, and operation and maintenance actions. The Parks and Recreation Committee, with assistance from the Planning Commission, formulated the following goals and objectives based upon the characteristics of the overall community, the online survey, and other factors.

Goal 1: Provide safe, broad, community-based recreation opportunities that improve the overall quality of life for all residents of Homer Township.

Recreation opportunities geared toward different age groups and user types can help improve the health, fitness, and overall quality of life for Homer Township residents. To leverage limited local funding, the Township wishes to seek grant opportunities to fund capital improvement projects for the parks.

Objective: Develop recreational facilities that are accessible for users of all abilities.

Objective: Provide for activities and experiences that can be enjoyed together with persons of multiple ages.

Objective: Monitor trends and new emerging recreational opportunities that are growing in popularity.

Objective: Provide both passive and active recreation options.

Objective: Seek and apply for grants to support new recreational opportunities through grant agencies such as the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and local foundations.

Goal 2: Improve/provide barrier free access or universal design standards to all recreation facilities.

All parks and recreation facilities should be designed to be inclusive of all user groups. Homer Township recognizes the importance of this and places a high priority on ensuring accessibility with current and future park amenities. Where possible, the Township will work to ensure universal accessibility in all future projects.

Objective: Provide equal recreational opportunities for people with disabilities.

Objective: Improve barrier-free access to all existing recreation facilities.

Objective: Where possible, strive to meet universal design standards with new park amenities and facilities.

Goal 3: Improve walking and pedestrian opportunities throughout Homer Township

Non-motorized trails provide a wide variety of users with opportunities for exercise and access to previously undiscovered scenery. These benefits are making all forms of non-motorized transportation increasingly well-received across the United States. Expanding the community's non-motorized corridor network will ensure an accessible recreation option for current and future residents.

Objective: Add walking and multi-use pathways in Township parks.

Objective: Investigate the potential for a regional multi-use pathway that is accessible for Homer Township residents and links to a regional path network.

Goal 4: Develop and strengthen water-based recreation opportunities.

Homer Township has three rivers that flow through it, they are defining features of the Township. Based on the survey responses, the residents of Homer Township are very supportive of more access to these bodies of water. They have potential to provide a variety of recreation options for residents.

Objective: Provide access to waterways in Homer Township for recreational activities such as fishing, canoeing, kayaking, and swimming.

Objective: Preserve and protect water-related resources in Homer Township

Goal 5: Investigate new opportunities to acquire properties for park land and open space as they become available

Community input survey results clearly demonstrate that Homer Township residents prioritize new facilities in existing parks above expanding the parks and recreation system. Still, opportunities may arise for additional park land acquisition and expansions of existing facilities. Examples could include parcels adjacent to the existing parks or parcels connected to the Chippewa Nature Center. Depending on the circumstances the right parcel could open up recreation opportunities to Homer Township residents.

Objective: Acquire additional park land in various open spaces in the Township including parcels with access to the Chippewa River.

Objective: Preserve and protect open space and other important natural resources in the Township

Objective: If desired, acquire property adjacent to existing park facilities.

Goal 6: Increase public awareness and knowledge of the recreation opportunities in Homer Township

The Township has two parks, and 53% of survey respondents indicate they visit the parks more than five times a year, but the Parks and Recreation Committee is aware that not all residents of the Township are aware of or actively use the parks. The Committee believes it will be important in the upcoming years to ensure the parks and events at the parks are more widely advertised so Homer Township residents can take advantage of this great resource.

Goal 7: Foster regional collaboration with local groups to improve recreation options in Homer Township

Homer Township is in a key location in Midland County. The Township is just west of the City limits and therefore has the potential to greatly benefit from the extensive parks and recreation system in the City of Midland and the region as a whole. With strategic planning and a few key amenities, Homer Township has the opportunity to become connected to the City's parks and the regional trail network.

Objective: Explore partnerships with local sporting groups for park usage

Objective: Build relationships with other regional partners like the Chippewa Nature Center

Objective: Look to partner with neighboring communities to provide more recreation opportunities for Homer Township residents.



Action Plan

This section of the plan introduces an action program that will guide the park and recreation activities of the Township for the next five years. Homer Township developed a 5-year Action Program to work toward accomplishing the goals and objectives outlined above. The project list is not a fixed element and it is neither all-inclusive nor exclusive. The Action Plan reflects the results of the input received from the online survey and the decision-making efforts of Township officials. Future circumstances, especially availability of funding, may change priorities or require reprioritization of items. A full list of funding sources for parks and recreation projects can be found in Appendix B.

Each action item relates to one or more goals described above. Each item has been a priority of 1 – 5, with 1 being the most important and 5 least important. See the chart on the following page.



Homer Township Action Program – Project List

Action Item	Priority	Relates to Goal
Homer Township Park		
Develop a park concept plan	1	1, 2, 3, 7
Add multi-purpose fields to support local sporting groups	1	1, 7
Improve softball fields and dug-outs	2	1, 7
Add walking trails in the park	1	1, 2, 3
Add fitness stations along the walking path	2	1, 3
Add additional playground equipment	3	1, 2
Upgrade restroom facilities	3	1, 2
Reconfigure parking lot layout	1	1, 2
Cover ice rink – add storage	3	1
Add restroom for new fields	2	1, 2, 7
Add pavilion at lacrosse fields	2	1, 2, 7
Add sledding hill	4	1
Add horseshoes	4	1
Township Hall Park		
Add restrooms	3	1, 2
Add additional playground equipment	3	1, 2
Add pavilion	3	1, 2
Add dog park	2	1
Add pickleball courts	3	1, 2
Reconfigure main field for multi-purpose fields	2	1, 7
Add parking	2	1, 2
Other Projects		
Add canoe/kayak launch at Chippewa River Road property	3	1, 2, 4
Add trailhead along Pere-Marquette Rail Trail	5	1, 2, 3, 7
Explore trail routes to connect to Chippewa Nature Center	5	1, 2, 3, 7



Chapter Six |

Summary and Adoption

In an effort to provide quality recreational opportunities for its citizens, Homer Township has created this Parks and Recreation Master Plan to guide the development of community parks and recreational facilities and locations over the next five years. This Plan is an important effort by Homer Township to establish recreational goals and objectives for the community. The Plan will also provide the Township eligibility for grants from the MDNR to assist the community in reaching its recreational goals. Homer Township contracted with Spicer Group of Saginaw, Michigan, to assist them with completion of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The consultant met with the Township Parks and Recreation Committee, Planning Commission, and Board during the development of the Plan.

Data was collected about the community including maps, demographics, park information and an inventory of existing facilities. This data was collected from Township staff members as well as various web sites and through field observations.

Community input was collected via a community input survey held in the summer of 2020. Based on inventoried information and the community input, the Township developed goals and objectives for parks and recreation in Homer Township. The Township finally developed and prioritized an action plan to accomplish the goals and objectives of the Plan.

The consultant completed the draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan document, and it was made available for review at **the LOCATION on DATE**. This reviewing opportunity was advertised in the **local newspaper** and the **Township website**. The final opportunity for community input occurred at the advertised public hearing held prior to adoption of the Plan. This hearing was held at **meeting on DATE**. The Township Board adopted the Recreation Plan by resolution at its regular board meeting on **DATE**.

A copy of the advertisement for the public hearing, copies of meeting minutes for both the public hearing and the regular board meetings, as well as the resolution of adoption of the Plan by the Township Board, are included in Appendix C.



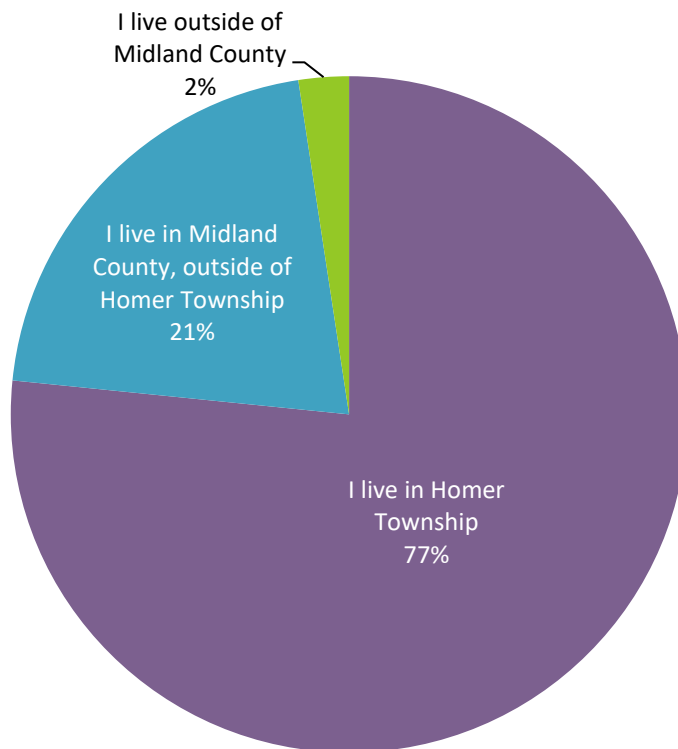
Appendix A

Community Input Survey Results

Homer Township Parks and Recreation Survey

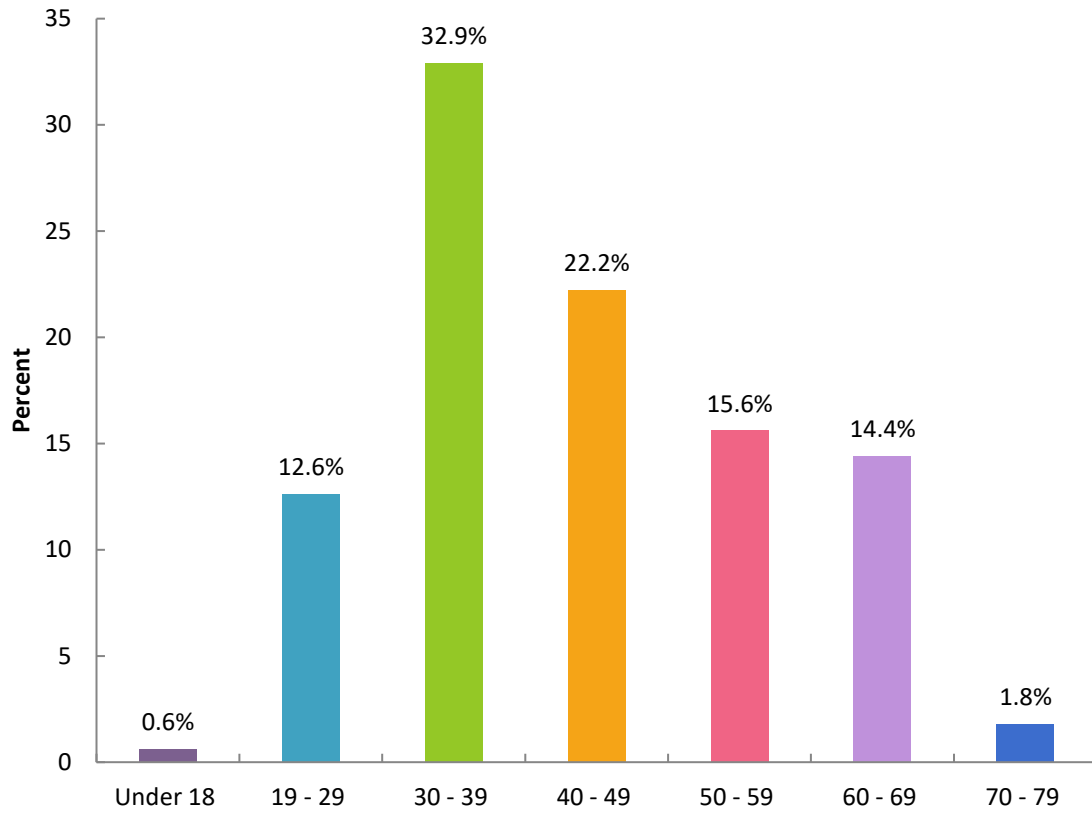
Total Responses: 168
Completion Rate: 100%

What is your relationship to Homer Township?



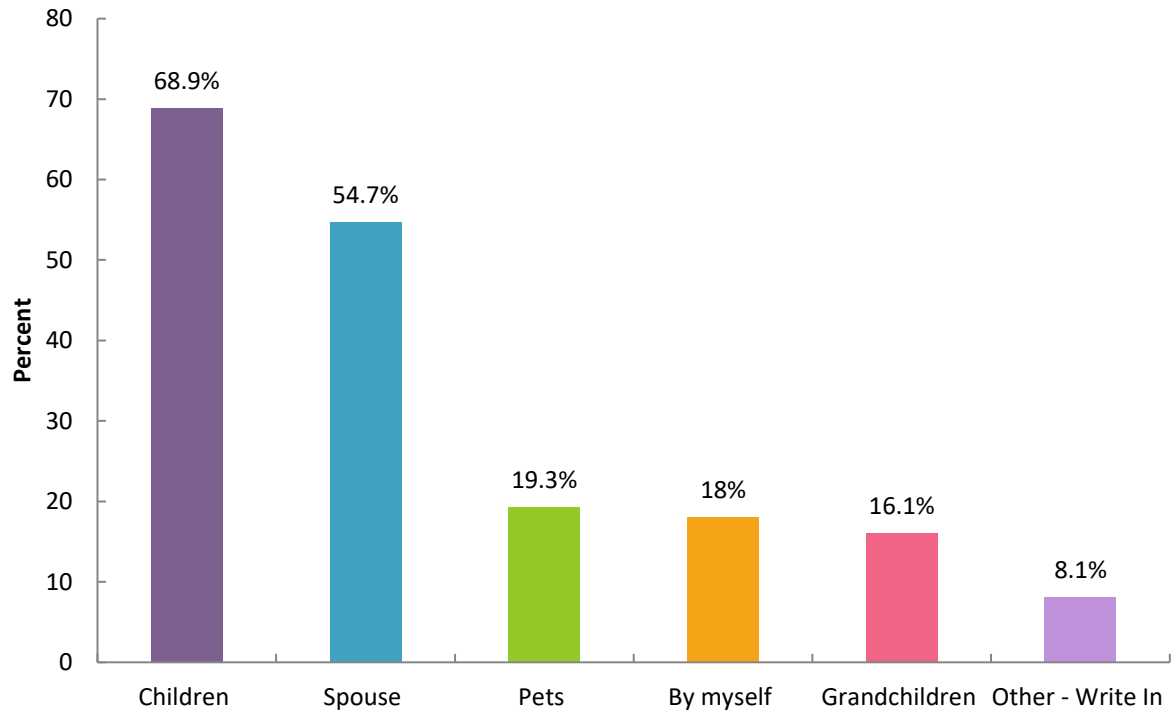
Value	Percent	Count
I live in Homer Township	76.6%	128
I live in Midland County, outside of Homer Township	21.0%	35
I live outside of Midland County	2.4%	4
	Totals	167

What is your age?



Value	Percent	Count
Under 18	0.6%	1
19 - 29	12.6%	21
30 - 39	32.9%	55
40 - 49	22.2%	37
50 - 59	15.6%	26
60 - 69	14.4%	24
70 - 79	1.8%	3
	Totals	167

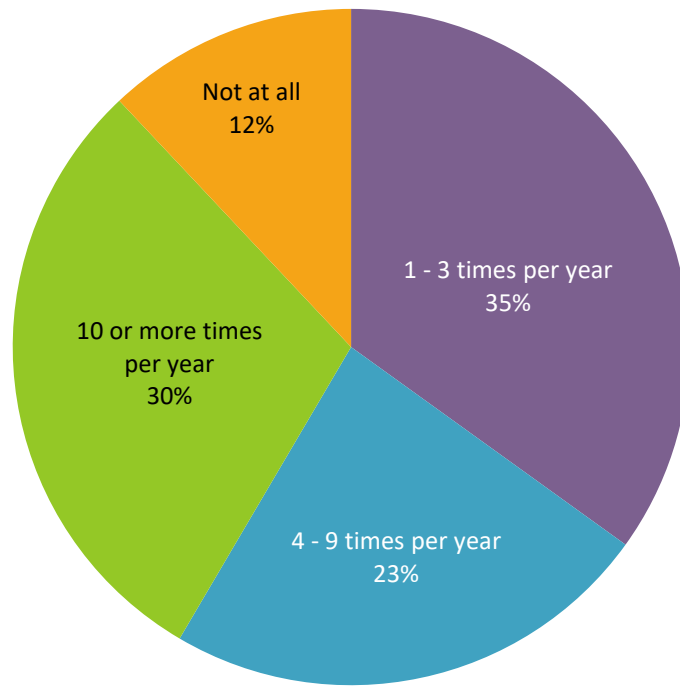
When you visit the parks, who do you normally visit with?



Value	Percent
Children	68.9%
Spouse	54.7%
Pets	19.3%
By myself	18.0%
Grandchildren	16.1%
Other - Write In	8.1%

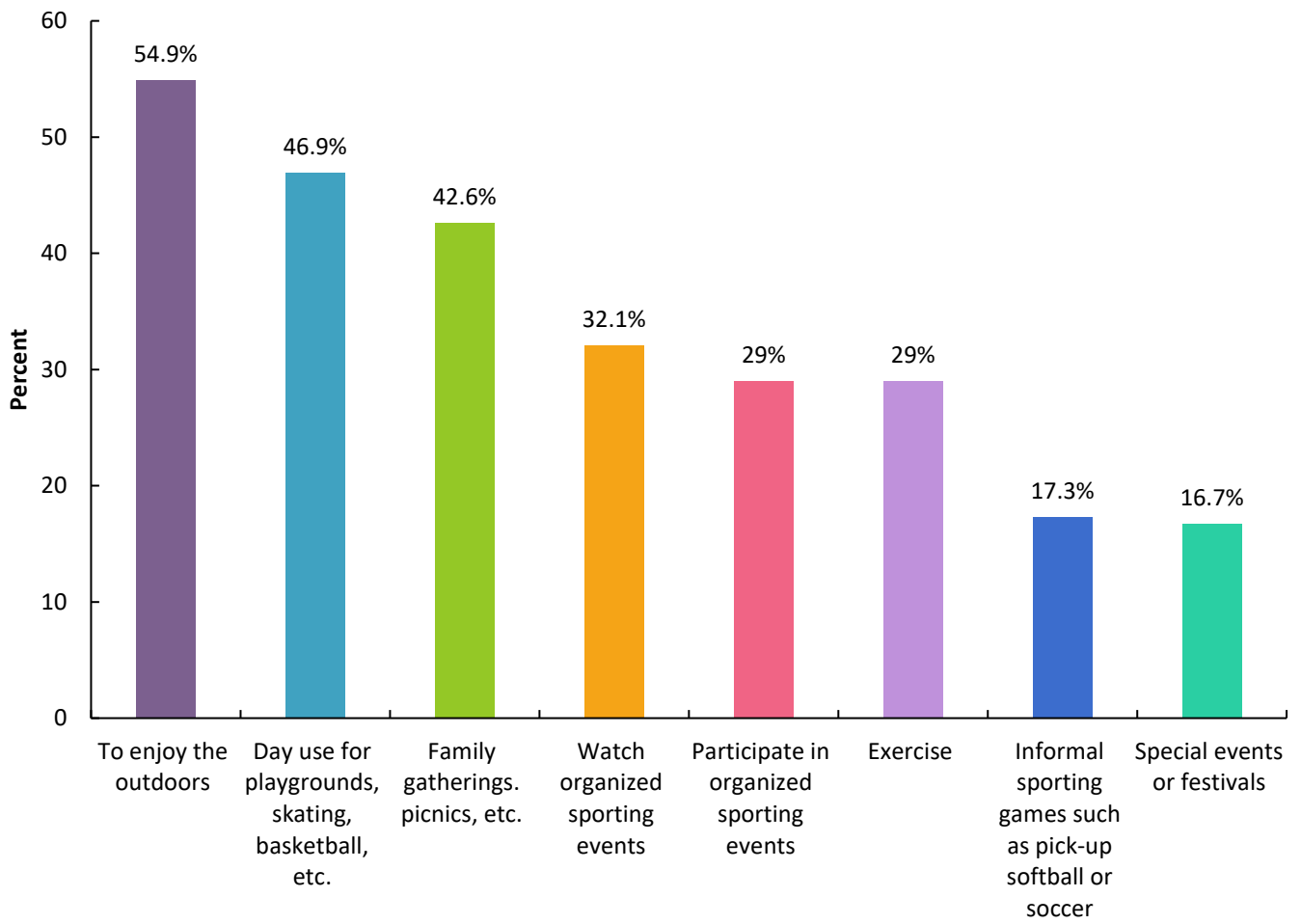
Other - Write In
Friends
"Clients"
Family friends
Friends (kids play, we walk/exercise)
Friends/family
Nieces
Play dates w/ other parents
Youth soccer team
don't
extended family
parents and brother

How often do you visit Homer Township Parks?



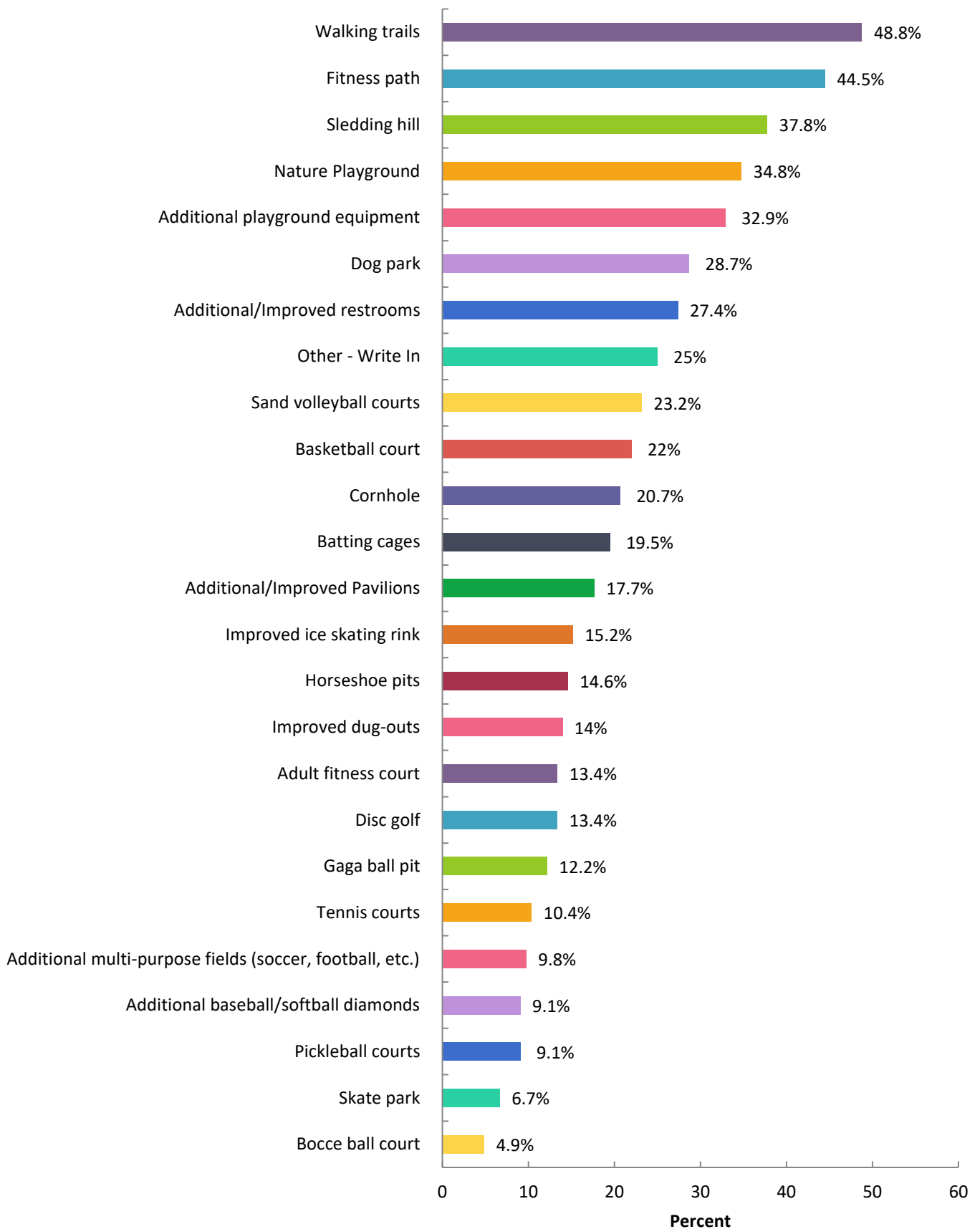
Value	Percent	Count
1 - 3 times per year	34.9%	58
4 - 9 times per year	23.5%	39
10 or more times per year	29.5%	49
Not at all	12.0%	20
	Totals	166

Why do you visit parks in our community? Please check all that apply.



Value	Percent
To enjoy the outdoors	54.9%
Day use for playgrounds, skating, basketball, etc.	46.9%
Family gatherings. picnics, etc.	42.6%
Watch organized sporting events	32.1%
Participate in organized sporting events	29.0%
Exercise	29.0%
Informal sporting games such as pick-up softball or soccer	17.3%
Special events or festivals	16.7%

Homer Township Park is located across the street from the new Township Fire Department. The park has pavilions, restrooms, playground equipment, soccer/football fields, softball diamonds, concessions, rollerblading, and an ice skating/hockey rink. What additional amenities would you like to see at Homer Township Park? Please check all that apply.



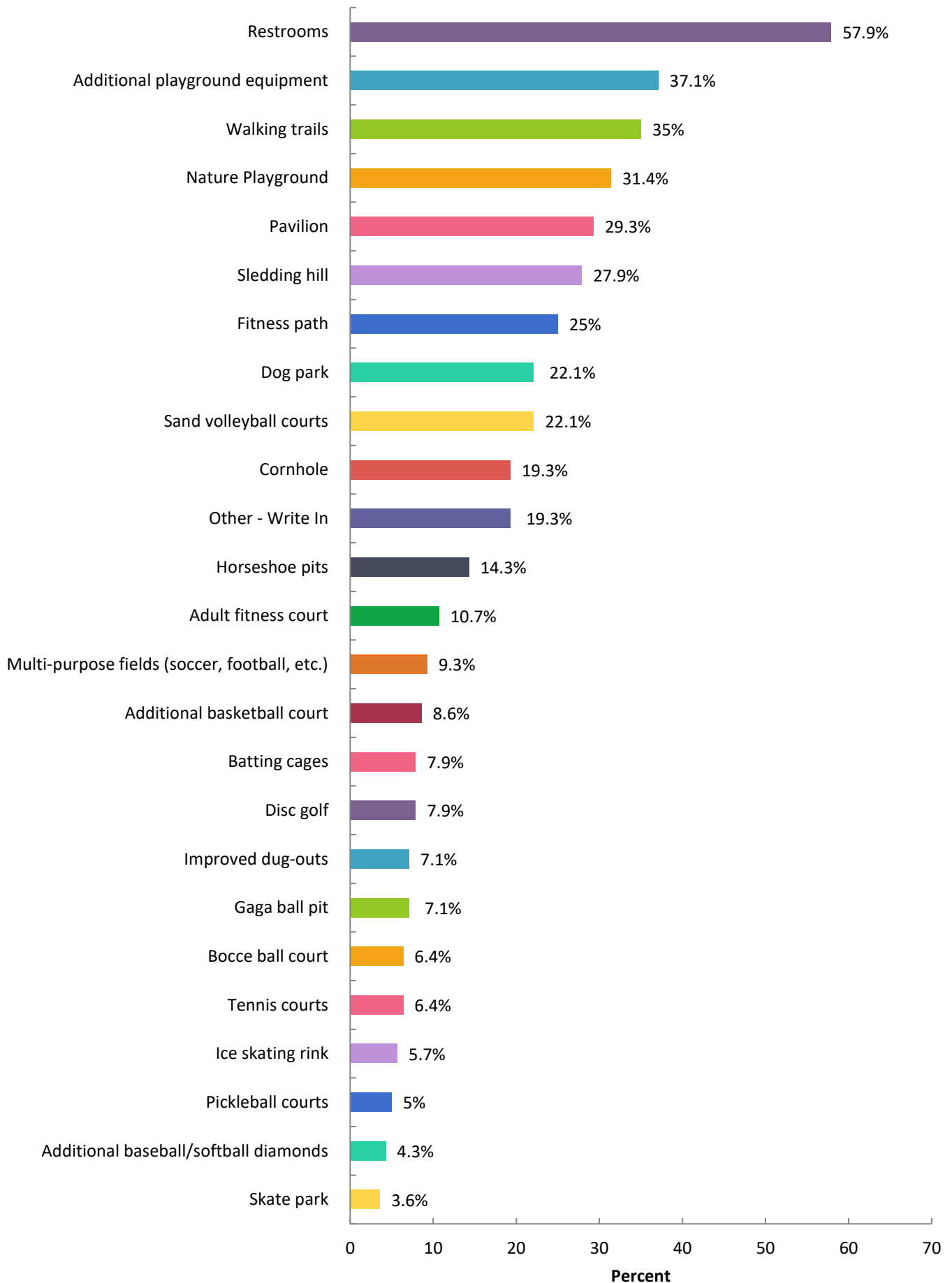
Homer Township Park is located across the street from the new Township Fire Department. The park has pavilions, restrooms, playground equipment, soccer/football fields, softball diamonds, concessions, rollerblading, and an ice skating/hockey rink. What additional amenities would you like to see at Homer Township Park? Please check all that apply. (con't)

Value	Percent
Walking trails	48.8%
Fitness path	44.5%
Sledding hill	37.8%
Nature Playground	34.8%
Additional playground equipment	32.9%
Dog park	28.7%
Additional/Improved restrooms	27.4%
Other - Write In	25.0%
Sand volleyball courts	23.2%
Basketball court	22.0%
Cornhole	20.7%
Batting cages	19.5%
Additional/Improved Pavilions	17.7%
Improved ice skating rink	15.2%
Horseshoe pits	14.6%
Improved dug-outs	14.0%
Adult fitness court	13.4%
Disc golf	13.4%
Gaga ball pit	12.2%
Tennis courts	10.4%
Additional multi-purpose fields (soccer, football, etc.)	9.8%
Additional baseball/softball diamonds	9.1%
Pickleball courts	9.1%
Skate park	6.7%
Bocce ball court	4.9%

Homer Township Park is located across the street from the new Township Fire Department. The park has pavilions, restrooms, playground equipment, soccer/football fields, softball diamonds, concessions, rollerblading, and an ice skating/hockey rink. What additional amenities would you like to see at Homer Township Park? Please check all that apply. (con't)

Other - Write In
Spray park
Spray Park
Lacrosse
Lacrosse fields
Splash pad
Water park
spray park
Benches for walk trails
Bicycle trails to get TO the parks
Bike path along Chippewa River Rd too
Ninja warrior type course
Pedestrian bridge from site on Chippewa River Rd to cross river to Chippewa Nature Center property. Used for bikes and walking.
Playground equipment suited for older kids/tweens, like ninja obstacle style
Shuffle board
Softball and baseball fields need lots of work
Splash area for toddlers
Splash park
Spray park
Spray park!
Spray park, Playground that isn't closed during baseball games
Trees
community garden area
covered hockey rink
lacrosse
playscape
water pad,swimming pool

The Township Hall Park is located behind the Township Hall. The park has playground equipment, picnic tables, a baseball diamond, and a basketball court. What additional amenities would you like to see at Township Hall Park? Please check all that apply.



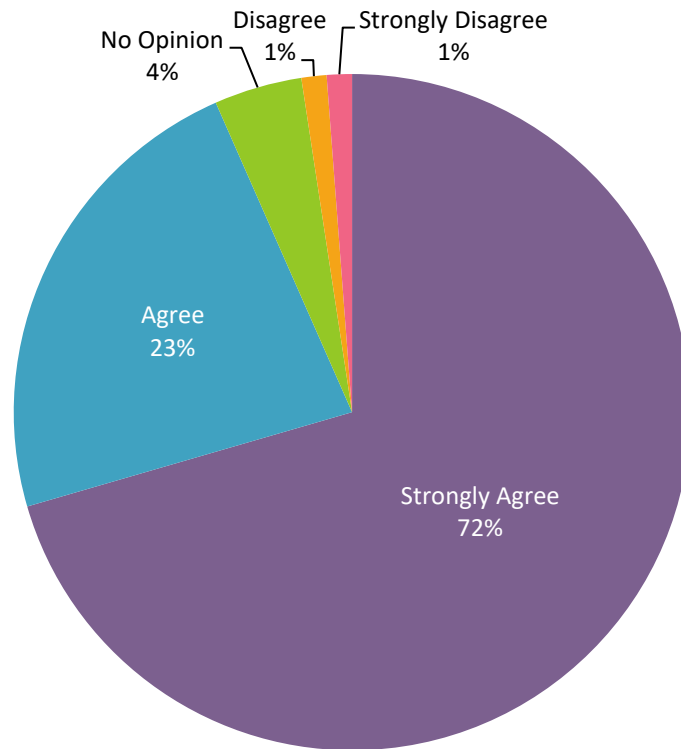
The Township Hall Park is located behind the Township Hall. The park has playground equipment, picnic tables, a baseball diamond, and a basketball court. What additional amenities would you like to see at Township Hall Park? Please check all that apply. (con't)

Value	Percent
Restrooms	57.9%
Additional playground equipment	37.1%
Walking trails	35.0%
Nature Playground	31.4%
Pavilion	29.3%
Sledding hill	27.9%
Fitness path	25.0%
Dog park	22.1%
Sand volleyball courts	22.1%
Cornhole	19.3%
Other - Write In	19.3%
Horseshoe pits	14.3%
Adult fitness court	10.7%
Multi-purpose fields (soccer, football, etc.)	9.3%
Additional basketball court	8.6%
Batting cages	7.9%
Disc golf	7.9%
Improved dug-outs	7.1%
Gaga ball pit	7.1%
Bocce ball court	6.4%
Tennis courts	6.4%
Ice skating rink	5.7%
Pickleball courts	5.0%
Additional baseball/softball diamonds	4.3%
Skate park	3.6%

The Township Hall Park is located behind the Township Hall. The park has playground equipment, picnic tables, a baseball diamond, and a basketball court. What additional amenities would you like to see at Township Hall Park? Please check all that apply. (con't)

Other - Write In
Spray park
Spray Park
Lacrosse field
Splash pad
spray park
Again, something suitable for kids beyond elementary age
Gazebo, or shaded area to use while children play
Lacrosse
New swings, trash cans
Pedestrian bridge between old fire station site and Nature center for bikes and walkers to cross the river
Splash park
Trees
Water park
lacrosse
lacrosse
little free library

Homer Township owns property near the corner of Chippewa River Road and Sandow Road along the Chippewa River. In the future, this property could provide river access for fishing or a canoe/kayak launch. Would this recreation option be an opportunity you believe would improve the Homer Township recreation facilities?



Value	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	70.5%	117
Agree	22.9%	38
No Opinion	4.2%	7
Disagree	1.2%	2
Strongly Disagree	1.2%	2
	Totals	166

Please evaluate the following aspects of the parks owned and operated by Homer Township.

	Good	OK	Poor	Don't Know	Responses
Variety of facilities/amenities	42 25.6%	98 59.8%	16 9.8%	8 4.9%	164
Maintenance and appearance	60 36.4%	81 49.1%	15 9.1%	9 5.5%	165
Safety and Security	82 50.0%	59 36.0%	3 1.8%	20 12.2%	164

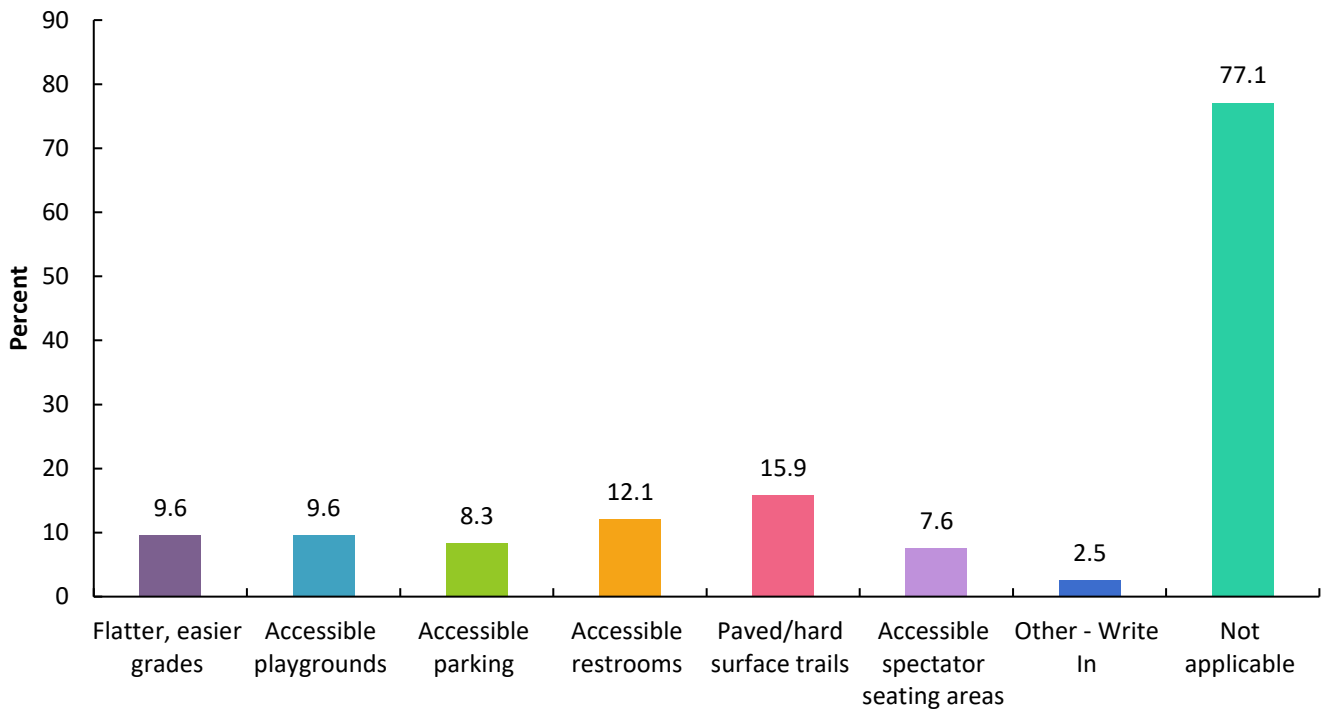
Please rate your feelings on the following statements concerning parks in Homer Township.

	A Top Priority	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	No Opinion	Responses
It is important to me to provide outdoor recreations facilities that focus on sports such as athletic fields and courts in Homer Township.	33 20.0%	69 41.8%	42 25.5%	19 11.5%	2 1.2%	165
It is important to me that Homer Township parks provide informal/day use park amenities such as pavilions and playgrounds.	44 26.7%	98 59.4%	20 12.1%	2 1.2%	1 0.6%	165
It is important to me to have water-based recreation opportunities on the Chippewa River.	44 26.7%	69 41.8%	39 23.6%	12 7.3%	1 0.6%	165
It is important to me that Homer Township parks have non-motorized pathways and trails.	38 23.0%	87 52.7%	29 17.6%	10 6.1%	1 0.6%	165

Please rank the following statements in order of importance to you.

Item	Overall Rank	Score
Upgrade/Add amenities to Homer Township's existing parks.	1	429
Maintain Homer Township's existing parks and recreation facilities.	2	331
Acquire additional park land.	3	189

If there is a person with a disability in your family, please indicate which of the following would make Homer Township parks more user-friendly for you and your family member. Please check all that apply.



Value	Percent	Count
Flatter, easier grades	9.6%	15
Accessible playgrounds	9.6%	15
Accessible parking	8.3%	13
Accessible restrooms	12.1%	19
Paved/hard surface trails	15.9%	25
Accessible spectator seating areas	7.6%	12
Other - Write In	2.5%	4
Not applicable	77.1%	121

Other - Write In	Count
Drive thru parks	1
Everything is currently accessible	1
Keep motorized vehicles out of park	1
walking track wiht benches	1
Totals	4

What do you like best about Homer Township parks?

Response
When my son was younger we would sometimes use the playground at the ball fields and he enjoyed it there
close to home, safe
close to my home
I like that they are well maintained and there is a small variety of things to do. Using the parks is free and can be enjoyed by all who live in homer township.
Location
Grounds are mowed and maintained
Location and safety
N/A
They are well kept, large open space
Simple Access,
That it makes my daughter happy to be able to run and have fun.
Typically quiet, almost every time we've been there.
Very close by and clean and maintained
The grounds are clean
I mainly use the homer township park. I like the open area for flying model airplanes. My kids, when younger, used to play on the playground equipment.
Usually clean. Paved parking. Easy to get in and out.
Lots of grassy areas.
Current amenities, including fields, ice rink, restrooms @ Homer Twp. park. It is important that our taxes are not raised and that residents have an opportunity to provide input on how are taxes will be affected if additions and/or improvements in the township are made.
distance from home
The close proximity to our home
Playground equipment
We appreciate that the park provides an additional play space for our children and that it is often NOT very busy. We like that we are sometimes the only people at the park using the play equipment.
Near my home
The nearness (walking distance) to our home! We would also love to have a bridge over the Dice Drain behind the houses on Chippewa River Rd to access the park. This would allow our family to access the park without having to walk on the roads.
Close to home, used mostly for the softball diamonds and playground.
Location in proximity to home. Ability to host social gatherings. As we expect to have a family of our own, we hope to utilize township parks for kids activity.
They are in safe areas.
that we have them

Public restrooms, ball fields, and pavilion with seating.

Location

Clean and nice equipment

Location

Close to where I live and easily accessible

Proximity to my home. Green grass. Accessible year round.

Na

Easy accessibility

Close proximity to my house, not super busy

Accessibility, safe environment, convenience

Close proximity

The park equipment is taken care of and it's not normally super busy.

They are well-maintained!

Close to home!

Large open areas

Proximity to home.

Location safety and accessible

That they are close and available. They are kept up well

Proximity to home. I appreciate that the park at the township hall is appropriate for younger kids, toddler age.

Their local. I don't have to drive all the way into town to take my kids to the park to play.

Proximity to my home, I can bring my dog.

Easy to get to

Great place to plan large family events.

Close to my home for a quick visit!

Fields

Close to home

Part of my childhood. Would love to see it maintained.

Close to our home. Very safe

It's close and convenient and has been a great place to hold gatherings.

Proximity to home

Safe areas

They are not as busy as other area parks and they have a lot of space.

Close to home and good for a short visit, would love to see something like Lee Township Park on 9 mile where you can spend hours and gather for lots of varieties of fun!! (Spray park, sidewalk chalk, excellent park, restrooms, hige pavillions, grassy field areas, ball fields and access to the river just down the road)

The short, walking distance from our home
Location
Playing Pokemon Go!
Within walking distance from our house
Playing Pokemon Go!
More playground equipment, walking paths, exercise equipment, river access for tubes and kayaks
They offer opportunities for outdoor fun and gathering.
Kayak launch site
Availability
location - proximity
Less piles of human feces than Lincoln Township parks
Well maintained
The space to exercise and enjoy nature...
No comment
Playground and basketball
Walk
Locations are good and easy to get in and out of surrounding areas.
Location
Variety at the park - we actually fly kites and drones there too
We use them for our young kids to be active and play from the spring to the fall!!!
Central Location for sports practices.
They are close to home
Close to home
It is clean
Playground
That they are close to my home and that I have many great memories playing softball. I would love to make memories with my young children that are too little to play sports or might not want to.
It's not in midland
location
New resident
Serenity and safe
Close to home and clean
Locations are practical for our family
Clean and well maintained
Great land, hope they can expand and allow more fields like lacrosse

Clean, not very busy

N/A

Cleanliness Lots of things to do

Trails, expanding lacrosse.

very nice offering of amenities. I would like to see more fields for lacrosse and soccer

Provides opportunities for my kids to play baseball and soccer without needing to drive into the city.

Quiet, rural area with good visibility of surroundings. The overall location for softball games is also nice.

Close to my house

What is one thing you would do to improve Homer Township parks?

Response
Make a space for tweens/teens. Hammock posts, equipment suitable for older kids (there are some amazing ninja obstacle style playgrounds being built around the country). A fitness path with a specific length (1/2 mile for example) so people can walk safely. Adding fitness stations along it would be a plus.
Don't lock them!
walking trail
The idea of having a dog park would be nice and ensuring ample walking trails. The water access mentioned earlier in this survey for kayaking would be awesome!
Updated restrooms
improve amenities
More amenities for a variety of ages rather than just playgrounds. A nature-themed playground w/trails for the whole family.
Update playgrounds
N/A
Put in a walking trail around the property
PARKING
Bocce would be great, and low Maintenance.
Maybe put in a water park. My daughter loves the park and loves to play in water. I think it would be a good idea to put that in.
Maintenance. Every single time we have visited the Homer Township Park we have had to bring our own toilet paper. There was ZERO available in the bathrooms, and the bathrooms are absolutely disgusting. Urine on the floor, makeup and marker, amongst other things, on the walls. They smell absolutely terrible. Men's room and women's room. Completely deplorable.
add/upgrade equipment maybe add walking trails or bike paths and/or a dog park.
Maybe make sure there's no bee hives or hornets nest around the restrooms or playground equipment
I'd like to see better pavilions, a way to semi enclose them for inclement weather and bug screens, and lighting. I'd like to see nicer bathrooms.
Develop more family friendly activities especially geared towards younger children and teens.
Adding additional recreational activities.
A basketball court @ Homer Twp. would be nice.
minimize automobile and pedestrian overlap.
Playground equipment farther from the driveway/parking lot, more lighting at dusk, better maintained playground equipment and grounds.
Better landscaping, lawn maintenance and pest control (mosquitoes and bees)
The play equipment could use some updating, otherwise we like what offers.
Add pickle ball court
Playground equipment for multiple age levels
Bathrooms need updating desperately at the park across from the fire station, and safety measures need to be taken so kids can enjoy the playground while boys baseball is going on.

Updates to equipment and facilities / curb appeal.
Add paved trails for non-motorized vehicles, rollerblading, etc.
add spray park
The layout of the entire complex.
More safety.
Spray parks?
Not sure
Visually appealing. Add shrubs and perennials
Maintain the fields better.
The playground being so close to the ball fields. Maybe extra cautious netting to block balls from hitting kids on the playground?
I'd like more Pavilions
Trash receptacles more actively managed, several hornet nests, smelly, with flies and ants.
Safe walking paths
Regular bathrooms
Add a walking trail at the park across from the fire department
I would love more bicycle paths to connect to Nature Center / Midland Township / downtown
Condition of existing athletic fields (soccer, baseball, softball)
Adult playing fields and adequate restroom
Adding a canoe/kayak launch would be awesome!
Add a walking path.
I'd like to see more walking trails and a spray-park added.
Spray park- Island Park in Mt. Pleasant has an amazing spray park with shaded areas along with a huge play set. The closest one we have is Lee Township which is not maintained well at all.
More activities
Access to the Chip River sounds like a great idea. It would allow a nice short trip to the Chip Nature Center landing area if you don't want to dedicate a half of day just for kayaking, etc. If I had one choice, it would be to add parking and a kayak launching site at the property that was mentioned on the corner of Sandow & Chip River Road.
Spray park
More things to do - softball dugout improvement and water park would be nice
More amenities would be great
The park at the hall needs trash cans and new baby swings. They could use a little TLC just to freshen them up.
More playground equipment.
Keep it dog friendly.
Clean up
Would love to have a splash pad and a pavilion at the hall.

More maintenance on the ball fields and add batting cages
Add additional family recreation features. I really enjoy taking children to the spray park on 9 Mile.
Play equipment
Increase in amenities
Add a spray park and more and updated playground equipment
add a spray park and more play equipment
Spray parks
Add a splash park and better maintain the ball diamonds
Open more often
Add a Spray Park
The playground equipment could use some upgrades and adding a track or walking trails would be great.
Spray park for summer and sled hill for winter
Walking trails with dog access
Put in a spray park
River access so Homer road bridge isn't congested with boaters, rafters and fishermen and another access point to launch or get out safely between M-30 launch & Chippewa Nature Center or Tridge access points.
Can the gates be open during winter? And when is the rink used if the park is closed all winter?
More trees for shade
Open the restrooms
More playground equipment
If possible create a walk path/ bike trail. The Little Forks Nature Conservancy trail is wonderful...when it's not wet, which is often. Is it possible to raise the trail and make it more user friendly for humans? Could HT partner w/conservancy to improve this?
Add bike/pedestrian bridge to cross Chippewa River at former fire station site Pickle ball court inside school gym or outside or both.
horseshoe pits.
Beautify
Add bum fighting rings
Spray park fir kids
Provide tennis courts
No comment
Water / kayak launch / fishing
Groups to walk with
Playgrounds need to be updated and improved. My grandchildren were bored there with the selection of equipment to play on. (Ages 4 and 10)
More to do and more share for seniors

Safe biking area
Winter amenities / options
The Kayak launch would be awesome
Put in a spray park for the kids
Need more wooded picnic areas
Additional playgrounds, pavillion
Make it more family-friendly. More playground equipment and a splash pad. I understand that there are already a couple of splash pads in Midland but they are often EXTREMELY crowded given the population of young families in Midland and the size of area, so I don't often my children.
Soccer fields
Improved/enlarged parking at the park across from fire barn. I think a spray park would be incredible.
Bathrooms added at Homer Twp park
more teen activities
We would like more variety at the township hall park. It's within waking distance for us so it would be nice if there was a bit more to do and more shade. Everything there is in the sun.
Walking loop
Lacrosse fields
Add soccer/lacrosse fields
Skate park would be great! Area for lacrosse/soccer.
Add more fields for use of youth sports in the surrounding counties.
Would love to see lacrosse be able to play
Trails and expanding lacrosse options
add more fields for lacrosse and soccer
Adding more soccer fields at park across from the fire department. Upgrading the existing baseball fields with new dugouts, fences, etc.
Get fields in better condition and improve batting cages
Playground updates and general updated landscaping
Need to be better maintained
Improve the ball fields. Up keep on fields so they are usable. They are in terrible shape. Look very pathetic to others that are not from the area.



Appendix B

Potential Funding Sources

SOURCES OF RECREATION GRANT FUNDING IN MICHIGAN

Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF)

- Match requirement – minimum of 25%
- Development grants
 - Minimum Grant Request \$15,000
 - Maximum Grant Request \$300,000
- Acquisition grants
 - No minimum or maximum
- Goals of MNRTF Board
 - Resource Protection
 - Water Access
 - Community Recreation
 - Urban Recreation
 - Economic Development
- Due annually on April 1
- www.michigan.gov/dnr

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

- Administered by MNRTF
- 50% match required
- Minimum grant request \$30,000 (\$60,000 project total)
- Maximum grant request \$300,000 (\$600,000 project total)
- Funds a wide variety of outdoor recreation projects
- Applications due annually on April 1
- www.michigan.gov/dnr

Michigan Recreation Passport Grant

- Administered by MNRTF
- Focus is on improving and renovating existing parks
- Minimum Grant Request - \$7,500, Maximum \$150,000
- Applications due on April 1
- For outdoor *and indoor* recreation projects
- www.michigan.gov/dnr

Michigan Department of Transportation - Transportation Alternatives Program

- For non-motorized transportation (paths) and rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures, or facilities (bridges, railroad depot, etc.)
- 20% minimum match required, 40% recommended
- Eligible applicants include county road commissions, cities, and villages. Other organizations may *sponsor* applications (i.e. County Road Commission or local MDOT office sponsors a township application)
- Rolling on-line application process
- www.michigan.gov/mdot Go to “Projects and Programs”.

Great Lakes Fisheries Trust (GLFT)

- Objective – improve or create shore-based Great Lakes recreational access.
- Must be located on the Great lakes or lower portions of major tributaries
- Matching funds not required but projects with local funding will be favored.
- Relatively simple application form and requirements.
- Due dates vary.
- www.glft.org

Michigan Coastal Management Grants

Objectives

- Protect, manage and restore coastal communities and habitats
- Restore historic structures
- Revitalize urban waterfronts
- Increase recreational opportunities along Michigan’s Great Lakes coast
- Applicant must be a coastal unit of government
- Maximum grant request - \$100,000
- Match requirements – 50% (some flexibility in match for non-construction projects that result in changes to local master plans or zoning ordinances, regional greenways, or include conservation planning)
- Eligible projects
 - Studies, Designs and Land Use Plans – must have a direct connection to coastal planning and/or resource protection.
 - Construction – boardwalks, trails, lighthouse preservation, habitat restoration, scenic overlook, etc.
- www.michigan.gov/ogl

Other grant programs to consider:

Coastal Program – Great Lakes – US Fish and Wildlife Service

- Grants to conserve fish and wildlife and their habitats and to support healthy coastal ecosystems
- Rolling application process
- www.fws.gov/midwest/greatlakes/apply.htm

Specific sports and sports foundations

- United States Tennis Association (USTA)
 - funding for tennis courts and programs
 - www.usta.com
- Major League Baseball
 - Baseball Tomorrow Fund
 - www.baseballtomorrow.com
- United States Soccer
 - www.ussoccerfoundation.org

Safe Routes to School

- For projects near elementary and middle schools:
 - Sidewalks
 - Traffic calming and speed reduction
 - Pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements
 - On-street and off-street bicycle facilities
 - Off-street pedestrian facilities
 - Traffic diversion improvements in the vicinity of schools
- Need to complete the safe routes planning process to apply
- www.saferoutesmichigan.org

Trust for Public Land (TPL)

- Conservation Transactions
TPL helps structure, negotiate, and complete land transactions that create parks, playgrounds, and protected natural areas. TPL serves as an independent agent, buying land from willing landowners and then transferring it to public agencies, land trusts, or other groups for protection. In some instances, TPL will protect land through conservation easements, which restrict development but permit traditional uses such as farming and ranching.
- www.tpl.org

Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Grants

- Must be part of a watershed management plan
- Projects aimed at reducing nonpoint source pollution (streambank and shoreline stabilization, rain gardens, erosion control, conservation easements)
- 25% match required
- www.michigan.gov/egle

Community Foundations

Private Foundations and Endowments

Wickes Foundation
Strosacker Foundation
Gerstacker Foundations
Consumers Energy
Kepler Foundation

KEEP IN MIND...

- Match requirements can usually be in-kind services, donations, or cash
- Most grants are provided on a reimbursable basis.
- Barrier free accessibility is usually required for improvement projects,
- Multiple partners, multiple jurisdictions can be viewed favorably – think “regional” projects.
- Grant applications can be complicated, detailed and competitive. Make sure your grant writer is familiar with the grant and funding source. Learn as much as possible ahead of time to know if your project has potential for funding.



Appendix C

Adoption Documentation