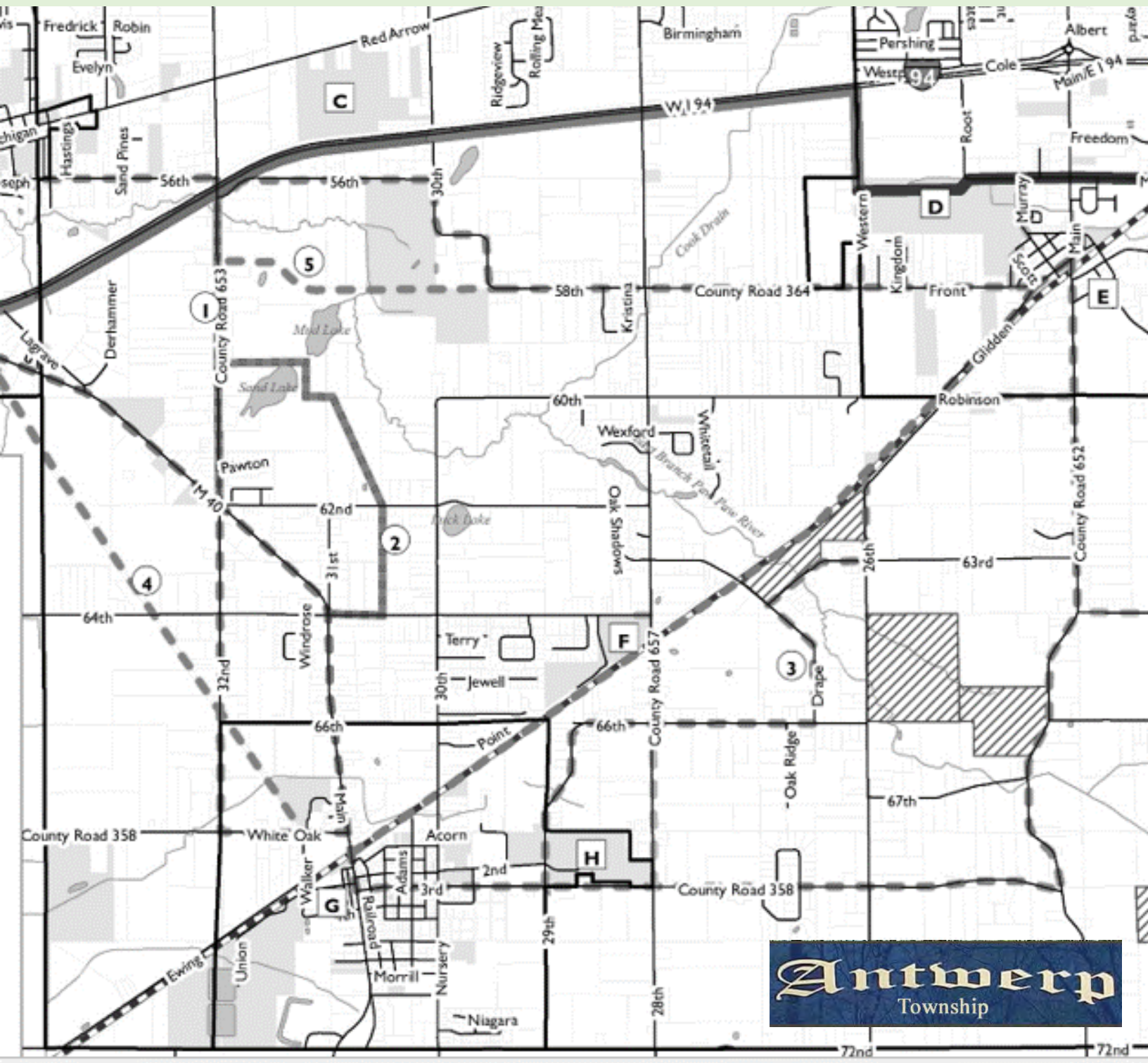


Antwerp Township

2023 Parks and Recreation Plan

January 10, 2023





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Antwerp Township Parks and Recreation Plan 2023
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Chapter One: Introduction

As Antwerp Township has grown and prospered, residents have come to appreciate the quality of life that living in the Township provides. However, the community realizes that parks, recreation and open space are integral to a high quality of life. The Township has authorized this Parks and Recreation Plan to promote opportunities for parks and recreation, to provide an even better future for Township residents.

The Parks and Recreation Plan is intended to guide decision makers with the future development and improvement of parks, recreation facilities, and programs to serve Antwerp Township.

The Plan is divided into separate sections that represent the planning process used in its development. In addition to this Introduction, the Plan contains:

- **Planning and Administration.** Identifies the planning process, recreation budget and grant history, and the entities responsible for administration of the park and recreation programs and facilities.
- **Inventory.** Describes the specific parks, facilities, and programs provided in and around the Township.
- **Analysis.** Analyzes the programs and facility needs for Antwerp Township.
- **Action Program.** Identifies the Plan's goals, objectives, recommendations, and a five-year plan for investment.



- **Appendices.** Four appendices are included to supplement the Plan including:
 - A. **Community Description.** An overview of the Township’s current and projected social, physical and economic characteristics.
 - B. **Public Involvement.** A summary of comments heard at the public meeting and documentation of the public meeting, review period, and public hearing.
 - C. **Funding Sources.** A summary of potential funding options to pursue implementation of the Action Program.
 - D. **Adoption and Transmittal Information.** Documentation of the Plan’s adoption and submission to required agencies.

This document creates a solid foundation for future park and recreation improvements, investments, and policies that support a healthy, desirable quality of life for Antwerp Township residents.

Past Planning Efforts

2006 Parks and Recreation Plan

The Township’s first Parks and Recreation Master Plan was prepared by the newly-established Recreation Committee and adopted in August of 2006. The Plan was certified by the Department of Natural Resources in October of the same year.

2010 Antwerp Township Pathways Plan

In 2010, the Township Board adopted a Pathways Plan for non-motorized transportation. The Pathways Plan provides a framework for promoting acquisition and creation of shared use paths and trails within the community and recommends routes and locations for pathway improvements. The Pathways Plan was an integral part of the parks and recreation planning and goals for Antwerp Township.

2012 Parks and Recreation Plan Update

In 2012, the Recreation Committee prepared and adopted an update to the Plan. The Plan was adopted in February of 2013 and certified by the Department of Natural Resources later of that month.

2017 Parks and Recreation Plan Update

This 2017 Plan update follows the same general planning process as the 2012 Plan but also incorporates all elements of the 2010 Pathways Plan into one complete document. This update includes an evaluation of parks, facilities, and programming to determine where improvements can be made, in accordance with the State of Michigan’s five-year cycle for recreation planning and as envisioned by the Township.

2023 Parks and Recreation Plan Update

This 2023 Plan update follows the same general planning process as the 2017 plan. This update includes an evaluation of parks, facilities, and programming to determine where improvements can be made, in accordance with the State of Michigan’s five-year cycle for recreation planning and as envisioned by the Township. Further, the Township conducted a community survey, open house meeting, and public hearing prior to finalizing and adopting the plan.



Chapter Two: Planning & Administration

Administrative Structure

Antwerp Township does not currently administer a parks and recreation program nor owns and maintains any park lands. In 2006, the Township Board created a Recreation Committee and appointed the members of the Planning Commission to serve on the committee.

The Planning Commission continues to serve as the Township Recreation Committee, advising the Board on recreation needs and priorities. This Parks and Recreation Plan serves as the Recreation Committee's action plan, to guide Township policy and funding decisions related to parks and recreation. It is anticipated that a more formal organizational structure for parks and recreation will evolve as the actions and goals of this plan are realized.

Planning Process

The planning process followed State guidelines and was highly participatory. It resulted in a Plan that reflects the needs and ideas of those who make use of the area's parks and recreation facilities. The planning process is discussed below.

Task One Community Description

The process began with an update to the township's physical and social characteristics. These features include location, land use, natural features, and a description of the transportation network as well as population features including age distribution, people with physical disabilities, employment and income.

Task Two Recreation Inventory

The recreation inventory included site visits and written descriptions of recreation facilities in the township including public parks, schools, and private facilities. The information includes acreage, barrier-free accessibility, types of equipment and other descriptions of the physical attributes. A list of



other parks that are available to township residents through the villages of Lawton, Mattawan and Paw Paw, Van Buren County and the State of Michigan, is also included. Non-public recreation facilities in the Township and county are listed, as well.

Task Three Analysis

Based on the data collected from tasks one and two, information was analyzed in accordance with national and state standards and guidelines, local needs, the experience of staff and consultants, the desires of the residents, and potential funding sources.

Task Four Public Participation

A community survey was carried out during the summer of 2022, which included questions related to parks and recreation. An open house event was held on November 2, 2022, to gain input from the general public. Interactive exhibits used during the open house remained at the Township Hall through November 30, 2022, to provide additional opportunities for public participation in the planning process. In addition, a public hearing was held before adoption. See *Appendix B: Public Involvement* for a summary of public comments received.

Task Five Action Program

Upon completion of the analysis, goals and objectives were determined to provide guidance for the development of the Action Program. This created the five-year plan and offers a checklist of what action is to be accomplished, when and where it will occur, who will accomplish it, how much it will cost, and potential funding sources.

Task Six Plan Completion and Adoption

Once consensus was reached among township officials, a public hearing was held to present the plan and to solicit public input prior to adoption. The Plan was available for public review for one month prior to adoption. Based on public comments, the Plan was revised and the document was endorsed by the Planning Commission and adopted by the Township Board. See *Appendix D: Adoption and Transmittal Information* for adoption documentation.

Budget and Funding

The Township does not currently have a line-item budget for parks and recreation due to the lack of facilities and programs. However, a major purpose of this Plan is to provide the framework for future Township budgets and efforts toward grants and other funding sources. The Township has approved the project estimate for the Antwerp Township Trailway Project, which is described later in this plan. Once approvals are secured, the Township Board will budget specific funds for the project.

Grant Inventory

Between 1976 and 2009, six Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grants have been awarded in Van Buren County, to the villages of Bangor and Paw Paw, the City of South Haven, and South Haven Township. To date, Antwerp Township has not received grants through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.



In 2016, the Township unsuccessfully attempted to obtain grant funding from the Natural Resources Trust Fund for the development of 2.27 miles of non-motorized trail as part of a larger initiative to connect the villages of Paw Paw and Mattawan. The proposed segment of trail extends from the westerly Township line to 30th Street and follows the southern right-of-way line of Interstate 94 to the AEP substation at CR 653. The project was not funded because the use of the Michigan Department of Transportation right-of-way was not yet authorized at the time of review. This project remains a high priority as the route will serve as a critical link in a larger regional trail system.

It is a goal of this plan to propose and promote projects that are eligible for grants and to continue to seek funding for recommended projects as contained in this Plan.



Chapter Three: Inventory

Developing a complete inventory of facilities, programs, and events is an essential component of a five-year Parks and Recreation Plan, as it provides the base of information for developing the Action Program. Understanding the facilities, programs, and events that are available to area residents will assist decision-making in the future.

Map One: Township Parks illustrates all parks located in Antwerp Township, including Village-owned parks and schools. This inventory also includes other parks open to township residents that are privately owned (both commercial and not-for-profit) but are available to the public.

Inventory Process

The following inventory and subsequent analysis were developed using the recommended park classifications and facility guidelines of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). These guidelines were developed in 1983 and are used to help identify needed recreational facilities in the community. While they provide a baseline for measuring whether existing parks meet community needs, the township should balance these guidelines with other needs evident in the community. The inventory here was considered along with the community survey and public input gathered throughout development of the plan. These efforts are discussed further in *Appendix B: Public Involvement*.



Park Classifications

Local parks generally fall into one of three categories based on size and function. The NRPA has established these generally recognized standards for classifying types of parkland which provide a means for determining the primary purpose or use of existing facilities within a community. Because of their unique nature, regional parks are discussed later in this chapter.

Table 3-1

Park Classifications

Park Type	Description	Service Area	Setting	Typical Size
Mini	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small, specialized parks that serve the needs of residents in the surrounding neighborhood. Provides daily places for those who cannot travel. 	¼ mile	Residential	2,500 sf. to 1 acre
Neighborhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-purpose facilities that serve as a local recreational and social focus. Provides both active and passive recreation. 	¼ to ½ mile	Away from main roads	5 to 10 acres
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets larger, community-wide needs. Preserves unique landscapes and open spaces. 	½ mile to 3 miles	Varies	30 to 50 acres
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilities located on public school property. Generally used for school athletic programs but are also open to the public. 	Determined by school location and site size		
Natural Resource Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lands set aside for preservation due to significant natural resources, landscapes or aesthetics. May be used for passive recreation. 	Determined by the resource, site location and size		
Greenways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linear parks generally measured in feet/miles rather than acres. Can link parks together to create a continuous park. 	Depends on available resources and location		

Barrier Free Accessibility

The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) required all areas of public service to have barrier-free accessibility, including parks and recreation facilities. The evaluation of the parks and facilities in Antwerp Township includes an assessment of their barrier-free access. In accordance with the MDNRE standards, facilities were evaluated to determine if persons with limited sight, hearing, mobility and comprehension can safely and independently access and use the park or facility. The following evaluation system was used to rank each park’s accessibility:



Table 3-2
Levels of Park Accessibility

Level	Characteristics
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completely undeveloped and left in a natural state. ▪ No paved surfaces.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not accessible to people with a broad range of physical disabilities. ▪ Few paved areas. ▪ Facilities such as play equipment or picnic areas are not easily accessible.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Somewhat accessible to people with a broad range of physical disabilities. ▪ Either the parking or pathways are paved, but not both. ▪ Many of the facilities such as play equipment or picnic areas are not easily accessible.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mostly accessible to people with a broad range of physical disabilities. ▪ Most of the parking and pathways are paved. ▪ Some of the facilities such as play equipment or picnic areas are accessible but may not be completely barrier-free.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completely accessible to people with a broad range of physical disabilities. ▪ Parking areas and pathways are paved. ▪ Most of the facilities such as play equipment or picnic areas are easily accessible.
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completely accessible and designed using the principles of universal design. ▪ Enables all environments to be usable by everyone, regardless of age, ability, or situation.

Antwerp Township Parks and Recreation Facilities

While the Township does not own or maintain any park land, it does own the Rental Hall and Activity Center located on the same grounds as the Township Hall. This building is available for use by community groups or may be rented for special events such as wedding receptions.

The Township Transfer Station on 64th Street west of CR 657 is Township-owned land that is used as a recycling drop-off site. It was formerly a landfill and has been capped. At one time, the Township maintained some play equipment and basketball courts at this site. These have fallen into disrepair and are no longer usable. However, this site may be a candidate for a future park.

Portman Nature Preserve

In 2017, the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy (SWMLC) purchased a 188-acre property located in the northern section of Antwerp Township and southern end of neighboring Almena Township to be set aside as a public natural resource preservation area. SWMLC identified the 188-acre property as a high priority site of conservation nearly a decade ago as the area encompasses a critical headwater region in the Paw Paw River Watershed. The nature preserve contains high-quality prairie fen, wetlands, savanna and woodland habitats, wetlands, three lakes, a creek, and hundreds of natural springs. The area is home to several rare, threatened, and endangered plant and animal species, including all species of turtles native to southwest Michigan.

The nature preserve was a collaboration of local, state, and federal organizations, the Conservation Fund, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Enbridge Energy, the U.S. Forest Service, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, The Carls Foundation, and over 200 individual donors and which met The Carls Foundation’s \$75,000 matching grant challenge in late 2016. In total, the Land Conservancy has raised nearly \$2.2 million to acquire, maintain, and open the preserve to the public.



The vision is to ultimately create a nature preserve that conserves the property’s natural features but also provides educational opportunities for local students and a natural space for the community to explore, learn, exercise, gather, and connect with nature and each other.

Since the park’s opening, the Land Conservancy has been engaging school children with activities and using the nature preserve as an outdoor classroom. Recently a community forest plan was completed for the preserve.

In April of 2017, the Township approved the parking and access plan through a special land use permit. A grand opening for the nature preserve occurred in October of 2017.



Approved parking and access for the Portman Nature Preserve off 49th Avenue in the Township

Village Parks

Other park facilities located in the Villages of Mattawan, Lawton, and Paw Paw and owned/operated by those municipalities, are available for use by township residents. They are relevant to list here, even if they fall outside of the township’s jurisdiction, because they provide recreation opportunities to township residents. These parks include:

Mattawan Village Parks

Memorial Park. The Village of Mattawan maintains one park. Memorial Park lies between Downtown Mattawan and the railroad tracks. It contains a newer playground, picnic tables, and a small pavilion that can also serve as a stage for concerts and similar events. The park is the site of the community’s annual festival.



Lawton Village Parks

Cannon Park. This small park provides picnic tables and is occasionally used for outdoor fundraisers.

Chancy Lewis Park. This park contains a tennis court, basketball court, horseshoe pits, a playground, picnic tables and pavilions, and restrooms. An ice rink (with a warming house) is created for the winter months.

Paw Paw Village Parks

Hazen Street Park. This mini park is located on the southwestern edge of 172-acre Maple Lake, which is an impoundment of the South Branch of the Paw Paw River. Because of its location on the lake, many residents know it as “Duck Park.” There are a few picnic tables located along the lakefront.

Maple Island Park. This island park is surrounded by Maple Lake. The 5-acre park is accessible by a footbridge on the eastern shore of the lake. There is a picnic area, playground, and restrooms. The island includes a swimming beach which at this time is not recommended for use due to water quality issues. The Village is working with the State to resolve these issues.

Rotary Park. This mini-park at the west end of Berrien Street, created with funds from the Paw Paw Rotary Club, consists of markers and a footbridge across the East Branch of the Paw Paw River. This park provides access to an undeveloped Village-owned natural area along both sides of the East Branch with a walkway to the Southshore Park Boardwalk/Pathway.

Southshore Park. Located on the southwestern edge of Maple Lake, this park contains a bandshell, boat docks, canoe launch, and picnic tables. A trail crosses over West Michigan Street to a boardwalk on the south side of the road, with views of the confluence of the South and East branches of the Paw Paw River and Barton Pond. An undeveloped walking trail connects this area with Rotary Park.

Sunset Park. This park is located on the north shore of Maple Lake and overlooks the dam. It features a boat dock, a boat launch ramp, picnic areas and open space. A handicapped-accessible fishing pier is also available.

Tyler Field. This park, formerly the Paw Paw High School Stadium site, provides a softball field, football field for youth football leagues, three tennis courts, bleachers, restrooms and a vending building.

Courtyard Park. This mini-park in Downtown Paw Paw is owned and maintained by Van Buren County. The park provides access to the Van Buren County Court House from East Michigan Street and the downtown businesses. It also provides a viewframe from downtown to the historic Court House. The park contains seating and picnic tables as well as several historic memorials.

Inventory Summary Table

The table below summarizes the inventory of publicly-owned parks and recreation facilities located within the township boundaries. These parks, as well as the county parks discussed below, will be input into the analysis in Chapter Four to assess whether there are adequate amounts of parkland available to area residents. The table below shows the type of park, number of acres and facilities provided at each park, along with a barrier-free assessment of all parks located within the study area, which includes the parks located in the three incorporated villages.



Table 3-3

Township Parks and Facilities Inventory

Park	Park Type ¹	Acres	Access-ability Rating ²	Baseball/Softball Fields	Soccer Fields	Tennis Courts	Walking Trails	Play-grounds	Rest-room buildings	Picnic Shelters	Basket-ball Courts
Memorial Park	M	2.4					1	1		1	
Cannon Park	M	.4									
Chancy Lewis Park	N	7				1	1	1	1	1	1
Hazen Street Park	M	0.5									
Maple Island Park	N	5.0					1	1	2	3	
Rotary Park	M	0.1					1				
Southshore Park	M	1.2					2				
Sunset Park	N	6.4					1		1		
Tyler Field	N	10.0		1	1	3		1	1		
Courtyard Park	M	0.7								1	
Portman Nature Preserve	NRA	188									

¹ Park type key: M – mini-park, N – neighborhood park, NRA – natural resource area

² See Table 3-2 for levels of accessibility

School Park Facilities

The children in Antwerp Township attend school in one of three districts: Paw Paw Public Schools, Lawton Community Schools and the Mattawan Consolidated School District. All three districts maintain school campuses, as well as separate facilities serving neighborhoods.

Because they are not owned by the Township and are subject to close at the discretion of the respective school boards, school facilities are not officially counted in the community parks and recreation land inventory. However, school open space, gymnasiums, meeting rooms, athletic fields, and playgrounds all contribute to the larger recreation system, and do warrant some discussion. Local schools are listed below, and locations shown on *Map One: Township Parks*.

Lawton Community Schools

The Lawton schools are on two campuses: the elementary campus at North Nursery Street and East 3rd Street, and the middle/high school campus on 29th Street at the east edge of the village. The Elementary School provides two indoor basketball courts, two outdoor basketball courts and two soccer fields (which are shared with the local American Youth Soccer Organization league, AYSO). There are also picnic tables and a playground area available for public use outside of school hours.

The Middle School building contains a gymnasium with a basketball/volleyball court. An outdoor basketball court is also available. The Lawton High School stadium is located south of the High School building and provides track and field facilities and restrooms in addition to bleachers and locker rooms. The site also contains two other football fields and cross country running trails.



Mattawan Consolidated School District

All of Mattawan's school facilities are located on one campus within the Village of Mattawan. Facilities available to the public include a gymnasium for basketball, volleyball and an indoor track, a football stadium with track and field facilities, lockers and restrooms. Outdoor facilities, including tennis courts, basketball courts, baseball/softball fields, soccer fields (one lighted; shared with the local AYSO), playground equipment, a picnic area and a skate park can be used by members of the public.

Paw Paw Public Schools

Paw Paw's educational facilities are located in various parts of the village, with the High School campus about one mile east of the village within Antwerp Township. The elementary campus (consisting of early and late elementary school buildings) is in the northwest corner of the village and provides a gymnasium for basketball and volleyball, playgrounds, outdoor basketball courts and open space areas used for soccer, nature walks, and similar activities.

The Middle School on West Michigan Street contains a gymnasium for volleyball and basketball, four outdoor basketball courts, soccer fields (also used by AYSO) baseball/softball fields (managed by the Village's recreation department) and playground equipment. The football stadium and track are also used for High School athletic events.

The combined High School and Performing Arts Center is a newer facility located on 90 acres east of the Village, between Red Arrow Highway and Interstate 94. This facility includes 30 acres of open space, used for passive recreation such as dog walking and kite flying. The site includes eight tennis courts, three baseball/softball fields, a football practice field and soccer fields. The gymnasium is used for basketball and volleyball. The school district offers summer youth athletic programs to the public. The 900-seat Performing Arts Center is used for public and theatrical events, including productions from touring and other outside groups.

Paw Paw Public Schools also maintains an Early Education Center on Cedar Street within the village. This facility is used for day care and pre-kindergarten programs. Facilities include a gymnasium for basketball and volleyball, playgrounds and indoor restrooms.

The old Michigan Street School is now the Paw Paw Community Education Center. This building provides recreation facilities and programs open to the public. All Paw Paw Public Schools recreation programs are managed from this site. Programs include adult basketball leagues, summer youth athletic programs, fitness classes, and self-defense. Outdoor basketball courts and playgrounds are also available.

In addition, the school district owns a wooded, 40-acre parcel off 58th Street in Antwerp Township. This land is used for school ecology programs and nature study.

Privately Owned Parks and Facilities in Antwerp Township

Several facilities are located within the Township that are open to the public but are privately owned, either not-for-profit or commercial. These include:



Pin High Golf Club

The Pin High Golf Club, on the north end of the Village of Lawton, is a privately-owned 9-hole executive course open to the public. Located on North Main Street, facilities include a driving range, snack bar and club house.

Lawton Little League

The Lawton Little League maintains four softball/baseball fields at their complex on West 2nd Street in Lawton. The site includes a concession stand and parking facilities.

Performance Field House

On East Michigan Avenue on the east end of the Village of Paw Paw, the Performance Field House is a private sports facility with indoor recreation, sports training, and two outdoor ball fields.

Mattawan Little League

This popular organization maintains a large facility on Front Street in the western part of Mattawan. The 2006 girls' softball team won the Little League Softball World Series in Portland, Oregon. Several classes of youth baseball and softball have nine fields for their use. Modern restrooms and a concession building are also available.

West Point Hills Recreation Facilities

The West Point Hills Manufactured Home Community in northern Mattawan contains recreation facilities on the community site to serve its residents. Facilities include a playground, basketball court, tennis court, picnic areas, and a small lake for fishing and boating.

Private Conservation Lands

Several privately-owned parcels in the township have been placed in perpetual conservation, mostly along or near the East Branch of the Paw Paw River. Some are owned by a land conservation group (for instance, the Paw Paw Prairie Fen on the west side of 22nd Street is owned by the Nature Conservancy). Others remain in title to the owner, but a conservation easement has been granted to a conservancy organization, such as the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy. These lands are generally not open to the public, but may provide future opportunities for public open space or an eco-park, as envisioned in the 2006 Parks and Recreation Plan and the Pathways Plan.

Regional Parks and Facilities

Regional parks offer unique natural features that are well suited for outdoor recreation, such as viewing and studying nature, wildlife habitats, fishing, boating, hiking, and trail use. Some include active play areas, and while these parks are not used for formal programming by Antwerp Township residents, they provide opportunities for relaxed family activities and educational opportunities. Regional Parks are depicted on *Map Two: Regional Parks*.

Antwerp Township is approximately six miles from the western borders of the cities of Kalamazoo and Portage, with their numerous park, recreation and trail opportunities. The regional study area includes the four townships in Kalamazoo County adjacent to Van Buren County. These townships are influenced



by their proximity to Kalamazoo/Portage and provide additional recreational amenities to the citizens of Antwerp Township.

Table 3-4				
Van Buren County Parks and Facilities				
Name	Acres	Type	Amenities/Activities	Accessibility Rating¹
Eagle Point Campground	9.9	Community	Semi-primitive campground with vault toilet; picnic area	2
Goddess Grove Campground	2.6	Community	Rustic campground with water/toilet facility; picnic areas	4
Maple Meadow	3	Community	Primitive campsite	1
North Point Conservation Area	17	Natural Resource Area	330 feet of Lake Michigan beach; swimming; forested dunes, wetlands	1
Van Buren County Fairgrounds	39.94	Special Use (not categorized)	Annual youth fair; amphitheater	3

¹ See Table 3-2 for levels of accessibility

County Facilities

County facilities located within Van Buren County are available to serve Antwerp Township residents. These parks are included in the analysis to determine park needs in Antwerp Township. The table above lists the parks owned and maintained by Van Buren County.

Michigan State Parks

There is one State Park within the County, Van Buren State Park, located on Lake Michigan in Covert and South Haven townships. It contains approximately 400 acres, including one mile of sandy beach and high dunes. Facilities include modern restrooms, modern and primitive campgrounds, picnic areas and playgrounds. The beach is a popular place for swimming.

Pathways and Trails

Pathways in the area provide excellent recreational opportunities, and can also act as secondary transportation routes, often connecting key parks with other destinations or places. There are two State-designated trails in Van Buren County:

Kal-Haven Trail. The Kal-Haven Trail is a 33.5-mile multi-use trail linking Kalamazoo to South Haven. This rail-to-trail is paved with a limestone/slag surface. It is used for hiking, biking, and snowmobiling. The Van Buren County Road Commission maintains the trail under a permit from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. The Kal-Haven is a popular and well-developed trail with public amenities including parks, parking areas, and restrooms at numerous locations along its length. Several businesses in the towns and villages that the trail passes through provide food, entertainment and supplies. In Van Buren County, the trail passes through Osteoma, Alamo, Pine Grove, Bloomingdale, Columbia, Geneva



and South Haven townships, as well as the villages of Gobles and Bloomingdale, before ending in the City of South Haven.

Van Buren Trail State Park. The Van Buren Trail is 14 miles long, from Hartford to South Haven. This rail-to-trail is mostly unimproved and suitable for hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding. It is used for snowmobiling in winter. Like the Kal-Haven Trail, it is owned by the MDNR but is maintained by the Van Buren County Road Commission. Parking is provided at the trailhead in Hartford, but not in South Haven. The parking lot serving the Kal-Haven Trail is approximately 2.3 miles north of the South Haven trailhead.

Fruit Belt Trail (planned). The Fruit Belt Trail is proposed to be a circular route running throughout Van Buren County along the right-of-way of the West Michigan Railroad Company, connecting Paw Paw, Lawrence, and Hartford, eventually connecting in the west end of Antwerp Township. The proposed trail is supported by a number of jurisdictions in the county, including Antwerp Township through approval of a resolution. As of 2017, the Department of Natural Resources has been in negotiations with the current owners of the railroad corridor proposed for the trail to purchase or obtain a long-term lease and funds have been secured by the DNR. The new owners of the railroad corridor have expressed interest in re-using the railroad for freight transportation but are open to the possibility of a trail-with-rail facility where a trail runs adjacent to the active rail line. However, no timeline exists for the completion of purchase or lease agreements.

Antwerp Township Pathways. The Township has completed a Pathways Plan for connecting the three villages and important sites (schools, scenic areas, etc.). The Pathways Plan is integrated into this Parks and Recreation Plan, and the goals and action items of the Pathways Plan are part of this plan, as well.

Other Regional Recreational Facilities

Antwerp Township is approximately six miles west of the cities of Kalamazoo and Portage, with their numerous park, recreation and trail opportunities. The regional study area includes the four townships in Kalamazoo County adjacent to Van Buren County. These townships are influenced by their proximity to Kalamazoo/Portage and provide additional recreational amenities to the citizens of Antwerp Township. The following describes other regional facilities within Van Buren County and the western townships of Kalamazoo County.

Preserves and Open Space. There are several large preserves in the study region. Some are owned by public entities, while others are owned and preserved by a conservation organization. All of the following are open to the public.

- **Algird Barvicks Dunes Nature Sanctuary** features two distinct habitats: the Atlantic Coast Plains marsh and a hardwood conifer swamp. The 40-acre dune/forest complex is a refuge for numerous plant species, including several with threatened status. The sanctuary is located about one mile from Lake Michigan, northwest of Coloma in Van Buren County.
- **Jeptha Lake Fen Preserve.** This 49-acre nature preserve, owned by the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy, is located in Columbia Township in the north central portion of Van Buren County. The preserve features a walking trail and a boardwalk into the fen.



- **Ross Preserve**, a 1,449 acre preserve, located in Covert Township in the western edge of Van Buren County, is owned by The Nature Conservancy. This preserve contains coastal plain marshes, wooded inland dunes, wetlands, small lakes and northern hardwood forests.
- The **Keeler State Game Area** is a 400-acre game area open to the public for hunting and fishing, picnicking, and hiking on work roads. Camping is allowed seasonally with a permit. The facility is located in Keeler Township, in the southwestern corner of Van Buren County.
- **Al Sabo Preserve** is located in neighboring Texas Township in Kalamazoo County. The preserve contains 710 acres of woods, lakes, and wetlands and is used for passive recreation such as hiking, biking, and cross-country skiing.

Golf Courses. According to the Van Buren Community Information Center, there are currently seven golf courses in Van Buren County (including Lawton Golf Club described earlier). Within the four westernmost townships of Kalamazoo County, there are three golf courses. All of the area golf courses are listed below.

- **Heritage Glen Golf Club**, Paw Paw, Van Buren Co.
- **Lake Cora Hills**, Paw Paw, Van Buren Co.
- **Shamrock Hills**, Gobles, Van Buren Co.
- **Thornapple Creek Golf Club**, Alamo Township, Kalamazoo Co.
- **Ridgeview Golf Course**, Oshtemo Township, Kalamazoo Co.
- **Olde Mill Golf Club**, Prairie Ronde, Kalamazoo Co.

Skiing. The **Timber Ridge Ski Area** is located in Pine Grove Township outside of Gobles in Van Buren County. The resort features a variety of ski slopes suited for advanced skiers as well as beginners. Facilities and services within the resort include a lodge, restaurants, rental shop, ski instruction classes, night time skiing, and other activities and events.

Camping. Numerous camping options are available within Van Buren County and the four westernmost townships of Kalamazoo County. The campgrounds are listed below:

- **Covert Township Park**, Van Buren Co.
- **Leisure Valley**, Decatur, Van Buren Co.
- **Oak Shores Campground**, Decatur, Van Buren Co.
- **Pioneer Point Campground**, Lawton, Van Buren Co.
- **Pretty Lake Camp**, Texas Township, Kalamazoo Co.
- **Rota-Kiwani Boy Scout Camp**, Texas Township, Kalamazoo Co., is planned as a future County Park.
- **Thousand Adventures Travel Inn Resort**, Hartford, Van Buren Co.
- **Three Mile Mobile Home Park**, Paw Paw, Van Buren Co.
- **Timber Trails Tent and Trailer Park**, Decatur, Van Buren Co.
- **Van Buren State Park**, South Haven, Van Buren Co.
- **Winding River Campground**, South Haven, Van Buren Co.

Kayaking. The **Bangor-South Haven Heritage Water Trail** comprises 21 miles of the Black River between Bangor and Lake Michigan. The Bangor-South Haven Heritage Water Trail Association has developed trail maps and identified launch sites and stretches of the trail that require portages.



Others. The **Kids in the Mud Off-Road Park** offers seasonal access to off-road vehicles at the facility southeast of Bloomingdale. The non-profit foundation that owns this facility is raising funds to provide classes in the safe use of all-terrain vehicles and further develop the off-road vehicle and nature trails on the property.



Chapter Four: Analysis

An essential task in the recreation planning process is to determine the needs of the community. The needs serve as a basis for the development of the Action Program. This task is accomplished using a compilation of several methods, including comparing the Township to established national recreation standards and input received from the public, Township staff, community leaders and local officials.

Method of Analysis

As suggested by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Antwerp Township's parkland and recreation inventory was compared to the guidelines set by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA, 1995). Although the NRPA's guidelines were set over twenty-five years ago, the MDNR still recommends their use as the acceptable standards to establish minimum community needs in terms of land area and number of facilities. The NRPA guidelines are based on the population of the study area. The 2020 decennial Census counted 13,425 residents within Antwerp Township and its villages.

Caution must be taken when interpreting recommendations based on these guidelines because they may not represent current popular activities and trends. Area-to-population ratios tend to oversimplify the purpose of recreation planning which is to address the specific needs of the community based on its own particular resources and resident preferences and demands so that the plan best suits the community's desires for recreation.

Parkland Analysis

Amount of Parkland

Table 4-1: Public Parkland Acreage Analysis shows the results of the parkland analysis for the Township. It appears the acreage of parks is sufficient when considering the facilities provided in the Township and the villages of Lawton, Mattawan, and Paw Paw, adequate parkland is available. However, what is not shown is the need for better park distribution throughout the community. The parks located in the villages are naturally located in concentrated areas within the Township, and with only one central park provided by the Township, residents not living near the villages are without local facilities. The Township should consider ways to augment the community recreation already provided with smaller parks like mini parks and neighborhood parks that can serve residents' daily needs.

Although the purpose of the parkland acreage analysis is to determine if Township parks are adequate to serve local residents, some of the parks in the table below include parks owned by nearby villages, cities, counties, the State of Michigan, and other quasi-public entities. The parks listed in the table were determined to be those that serve the residents of Antwerp Township. The factors used in deciding which parks to include in the analysis were their proximity to Antwerp Township (within 30 miles), the intended service area of each park, and likelihood of use by Township residents. Therefore, Mini, Neighborhood, and Community parks that may be within 30 miles of the Township but whose service area does not extend into the Township, were not included in the analysis, but larger parks intended to draw regional residents were included.



More specifically, Table 4-1 analyzes recreation needs considering only Township-owned parks (on the left) and needs considering all publicly-owned parks (on the right) as recommended by the National Recreation and Park Association. Public parks include those provided in both villages, as well as the Prairie View Park, which was considered a Community Park rather than a Regional Park because of its partial location in the Township. Additionally, the future Portman Nature Preserve was also included as a Regional Park.

Table 4-1 Public Parkland Acreage Analysis						
Park Classifications	Township Parks Only			Total Public Parks in Township Boundary		
	NRPA Guideline	Provided	Analysis	NRPA Guideline	Provided	Analysis
Mini Parks	2.06	0	-2.06	3.03	5.3	+2.27
Neighborhood Parks	8.22	0	-8.22	12.10	28.4	+16.3
Community Parks	41.11	40	-1.11	60.51	336	+275.50
Regional Parks ¹	41.11	3,888	+3,846.90	60.51	3,680	+3,625.55
Total	92.50	3,928	+3,835.51	136.15	4,035	+3,904.92

¹ Regional Parks include all County Parks shown in Table 3-3, County Parks and Facilities Inventory, except for Prairie View County Park, which acts more as a Community Park due to its proximity and partial location within the Township.

Service Area Analysis

Although the overall amount of parkland in Antwerp Township is sufficient by national guidelines, it is important to consider the type of parks, their location, and their geographic disbursement throughout the Township. When evaluating parks and recreation service areas, it is important to specifically consider where the residents of the community live. The NRPA establishes a recommended service area for each park classification to determine which areas in Antwerp Township are lacking easy access to parkland. By mapping these service areas, the township can see what areas are underserved.

Regional parks are not included in this analysis because of their large (30-mile) service area. Service areas for the other park types are as follows:

- Mini Parks ¼ miles or less
- Neighborhood Parks ¼ to ½ miles
- Community Parks ½ to 3 miles

Map Three: Service Areas shows the service areas of publicly-owned Mini-, Neighborhood- and Community Parks in the vicinity. The map illustrates geographic coverage of these parks by type. Parks provided by Antwerp Township; the villages of Paw Paw, Lawton, and Mattawan; and the counties of Van Buren and Kalamazoo provide valuable parkland to most residents within the Township’s boundary. According to Map Three, much of the northeastern and southern portions of the Township are underserved. This is an issue particularly as the areas of the Township north of I-94 contains the Township’s most populated sections.



Facilities Analysis

In addition to parkland, facilities were analyzed to determine if the current facilities are adequate to meet the needs of residents. This analysis includes facility recommendations based on national averages but also considers the public input provided during this process, as well as recent trends in recreation that could not be anticipated when the national standards were developed.

National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Standards

As noted previously, the NRPA standards are commonly used to evaluate the adequacy of parkland and facilities when compared to local populations. Since recreational desires and needs change over time, as expected, the standards do not consider more modern desires like dog parks, skate parks, splash parks, or large recreational complexes that have become more common in recent years. The number of athletic fields in the Township reflects an adequate number of fields when compared to the NRPA standards. Potential facility surpluses and deficiencies are shown below, in *Table 4-2: Recreation Facility Analysis*. *Table 4-2* analyzes the same parks as those in *Table 4-1*, above. It is important to note neither analysis includes school facilities.

Table 4-2 Recreation Facility Analysis						
Park Facility	Township Parks Only			Total Public Parks in Township Boundary		
	Guideline	Provided	Analysis	Guideline	Provided	Analysis
Tennis	2	-	-2	4	-	-4
Playground	1	1	-	2	10	+8
Baseball/ Softball	1	4	+3	1	6	+5
Basketball	1	-	-1	1	-	-1
Volleyball	1	-	-1	1	6	+5
Soccer	0	3	+3	0	4	+4
Football	0	-	0	0	-	0
Running Track	0	-	0	0	-	0
Swimming Pool	0	-	0	0	-	0
Golf Course (18 hole)	0	-	0	0	1	+1

The analysis indicates that additional tennis, basketball, and volleyball courts are needed to serve residents; however, it likely that these needs are met through local school facilities.

Conclusions

The Township is well-served in terms of the amount of land devoted to parks and recreation facilities when considering facilities provided in the villages of Lawton, Mattawan, and Paw Paw. The Township is fortunate to have an abundance of Community and Regional Parks as provided by county, state, and conservation agencies. According to the Parkland Analysis, the Township is well-served by Community and Regional Parks but is deficient in Mini and Neighborhood Parks. While the Service Area Analysis showed much of the more populated northern portions of the Township to be under-served with park facilities, the Township should consider ways to augment the community recreation already provided with smaller parks (e.g., Mini Parks and Neighborhood Parks) that can serve residents’ daily needs,



especially in the under-served areas. The facilities most needed according to NPRA guidelines are tennis, basketball, and volleyball courts; however, these are likely met by local school facilities.

Other Considerations

Public Meetings

The Township solicited public input on parks and trails, the primary method being public meetings. An open housing meeting was held on November 2, 2022, to solicit feedback from the public. The workshop served as a kick-off for an extended public feedback period where exhibits from the workshop were left available at the Township Hall for a month to allow the public additional opportunity to provide input at their convenience. The public workshop gathered feedback in an interactive format. Participants were asked to rank the goals from the previous 2017 Recreation Plan, indicate what types of recreational activities they enjoy, provide comments on maps regarding where park improvements are needed, and to identify connections that should be made by trails and pathways to connect key locations throughout the Township.

Lastly, a public hearing was held on January 4, 2023, to solicit additional comments.

Survey

The Antwerp Township Community Survey attracted 333 respondents. Almost half have lived in the Township for over 20 years, and approximately 71% have lived in the Township for 11 years or more. Younger adults less than 35 years of age were less represented than older generations. A significant number of respondents (76%) strongly agreed or agreed that neighborhoods and commercial areas should be connected by pedestrian and bike paths.

The majority of respondents felt that recreational opportunities within the Township are not adequate for the community (75%), and 59% would be willing to contribute to parks and recreation facilities, improvements, and programs financially. The survey resulted in the following rankings of importance (very or somewhat important).

1. Neighborhood parks (95%)- also top 3 in 2008 (89%)
2. Nature trails/passive recreation areas (94%)- also top 3 in 2008 (88%)
3. Pedestrian/bike paths (91%)- also top 3 in 2008 (87%)
4. Senior citizen center (89%)
5. Teen/youth center (87%)
6. Indoor recreation/sports facility (77%)
7. Ball fields (77%)
8. Soccer fields (74%)
9. Dog park (68%)
10. Tennis courts (64%)
11. Golf courses (39%)



Pathways Analysis

History

Since the early 1970's, the popularity of pathways has increased for both transportation and recreation opportunities. A comprehensive non-motorized pathway network encourages alternative modes of movement within the community while contributing to a balanced transportation system. Further, pathway systems provide an outlet for much needed recreation. Statewide, a growing number of people have recognized the benefits of pathways including economic, cultural, social, and recreation benefits which help define the quality of life for a community, not to mention the increased public health, safety, environmental protection and alleviated pollution which results from pathway systems. Antwerp Township recognizes these benefits and has pledged a commitment to development of a comprehensive pathway system.

While several regional pathways and non-motorized trails are available for use by Township residents, few trailhead or access points are within walking or biking distance. Antwerp Township is working with adjacent communities in the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) region toward a comprehensive pathways system that will define a continuous pathway network connecting some of these regional systems to local parks. Currently, a regional non-motorized transportation plan is being conducted by KATS called KATS Moves which will identify and prioritize future on-street and greenway bike facilities throughout the region including within Antwerp Township. This plan will direct future federal and state funds toward the development of non-motorized transportation facilities.

In addition to pathways along major roads, opportunities to develop off-road paths along natural features corridors, drainage easements, railroad corridors, transmission lines, and other greenway corridors should also be actively pursued. The plan should provide direction on the location, types, design details, estimated costs and necessary land acquisition that would be required to implement a comprehensive pathway system. In order to efficiently accomplish this objective, priorities must be established.

Key elements to consider during the design of any pathway system are discussed below, but for the sake of producing a meaningful system in the long-term, some compromises are required in the short-term. Because local path systems are relatively new, they are likely to consist of on-street bike lanes and use of shoulders along county roads. Because most roads fall within the County's jurisdiction, Antwerp Township should build relationships with the Van Buren County Road Commission to ensure that road-side paths are properly maintained and safe. Ideally, such as with the Portage Bikeway System, separate paths are provided to protect non-motorized users. Therefore, the long-term plan for pathways in Antwerp Township should include acquisition of off-street land or easements where the trails can meander away from vehicle traffic to create a more peaceful experience.

Benefits of Pathways

Pathways positively impact residents and improve communities by providing a number of benefits, ranging from the obvious recreation and transportation opportunities to the more obscure benefits of improved economics, health, public education and quality of life. Specifically, benefits provided by pathways include:



Recreation Opportunities. The increased demand for recreation is resulting in the increased presence of pathways throughout the nation. Pathways provide for a diverse range of recreational interests, including walkers, joggers, hikers, runners, cyclists, rollerbladers, cross country skiers, and horseback riders. Pathways provide an opportunity for residents to enjoy their community and take in the natural and cultural features of Antwerp Township at their own pace.

Transportation Alternatives. A network of non-motorized pathways in Antwerp Township will ensure that residents, particularly children, can travel safely, without the use of an automobile. The plan identifies pathway connections to residential neighborhoods, schools, recreation facilities, and commercial nodes to provide a safe alternative for accessing these destinations.

Environmental Preservation. Pathways can help preserve important natural landscapes, provide needed links between fragmented habitats and offer numerous opportunities for protecting plant and animal species. In addition, reduced reliance on the automobile leads to reduced pollution and traffic congestion.

Enhanced Economy. It has also been shown that pathways actually tend to reduce crime and increase property values. Experience nationwide has shown that well-planned trails attract families, local residents, and other friendly, responsible people, whose presence on the trails serves as a “neighborhood watch,” driving troublemakers away. Access to pathways is one of the most desirable amenities that homebuyers seek, and the value of most properties is enhanced by being located near a pathway.

Improved Health. Health problems such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and obesity are all linked to a lack of exercise. Pathways help people of all ages and health incorporate exercise into their daily routines by providing them with safe and easy access to the places they need or want to go and contribute towards the fight against obesity and inactivity. Possible health benefits of regular pathway use include weight loss, reduce blood pressure, reduced risk of developing Type II diabetes, and lessened symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Outdoor Education. Pathways traverse a wide range of environments and can be used as an outdoor classroom. The installation of interpretive signage can describe natural, cultural or historic aspects of the community.

Quality of Life. The quality of life is a primary attractor and marketing tool for communities and helps keep residents satisfied with their community. Areas perceived as having a high quality of life often include amenities and features such as numerous parks, ample open space and good schools, with a safe and walkable environment.

Continuity

Maintaining an interconnected system of pathways enhances the pedestrian environment. The Township should pursue filling in gaps in the system that act as barriers. While Township funds may be used for this purpose, the community in general should also share in this commitment. Options to accomplish this include requiring the installation of pathways along major roads and throughout the interior of new development projects or for residential lots that have not maintained or installed their sidewalks, requiring an escrow or performance guarantee when transfer of property ownership occurs.



Convenience

While people will walk farther distances for exercise and recreation purposes, studies show that the average pedestrian will not walk more than 15 minutes or a quarter mile to reach a destination. Therefore, convenient routes must be offered to encourage more pedestrian activity as an alternative to driving. This includes considerations for road crossings, conflicts with multiple users, continuity of the pathway and directness of the route. Inconvenient systems can encourage unsafe activity or use of non-designated sidewalks or crossings. Where the township wishes to increase pedestrian activity, it should ensure that continuous pathways are provided that offer safe crossings that bring the pedestrian to the forefront of consideration, rather than making the automobile the priority.



On-street bike lane with pedestrian sidewalk

Safety

Without a safe pedestrian environment, pathways will not be used to their maximum. Elements such as lighting, proper maintenance and proper crossing enhancements will bring comfort to users. Where high pedestrian activity exists or is encouraged, the township should work toward reducing the posted speed limits for motorists. Statistics show that 85% of vehicle-to-pedestrian crashes will result in death to the pedestrian if a vehicle is traveling at 40 mph, versus only a 15% rate if a vehicle is traveling at 20 mph.

Functional Design

Between the main route, alternate routes, and spurs the concepts show a number of different opportunities for trails including road right-of-way, utility corridors, abandoned rail corridors, and active rail corridors. Depending on the road right-of-way available, routes shown along the street could range from wide pathways separated from the traffic lanes by a grassy strip; sidewalks for pedestrians; marked bike lanes; or traffic lanes with sharrows (arrows reminding drivers to share the road with bikes – see graphic) painted on the roadway for bikes. Available right-of-way,



Suburban/urban separated bike/walk trail



engineering constraints and cost will determine the type of pathway needed along each section of the pathways system.

Cross sections may also vary depending on whether the route is connecting to a suburban/urban segment at one of the village lines or is in a rural stretch of the pathway. In suburban/urban areas the cross section may separate bike users from pedestrian uses due to volume and speed of the bicyclists, while in a rural area the volume is lower and the potential for bike-pedestrian conflict is lower.

Pathway width can vary somewhat with function. Generally, the width of a shared use path should be at least 10 feet. When the volume is anticipated to be heavy, the path width should be from 12 to 14 feet to allow for safe passing and multiple user types. An area of two feet beyond the pavement width should be graded on either side of the paved area.

Pavement material also depends on the programmed users and the anticipated volume of use. Areas intended for low-volume pedestrian-only use may be surfaced with natural materials or gravel, while high-volume multi-user surfaces should generally be paved with asphalt. Asphalt and concrete are popular surface materials because of their longevity and ability to be used for strollers, bikes, and rollerblading. Runners typically prefer asphalt over concrete as it has more “give.” Crushed aggregate surfaces are less usable for bicyclists and unusable by rollerbladers. If natural surfaces are being considered, a synthetic bonding material may be desirable to ensure a firm and slip-resistant surface for canes, strollers, and wheelchairs.

Vertical clearance is also an important consideration. Generally, eight feet of vertical clearance should be provided for shared use paths to ensure safety for bicyclists. Heights needed for emergency vehicle access should also be considered.

Other considerations include:

- Need for railings
- Changes in elevation
- Openings in the tread (for drainage or other purposes)
- Grade and cross-slope
- Protruding objects



Shared-use path



Sign identifies cross street and rules



Design Amenities

The design amenities section is intended to illustrate alternatives for the Township to consider in developing a pathways system. Examples from other communities are used to illustrate a range of alternatives available, not to recommend exact replication of any design concept.

Crosswalk signs and signals. Crosswalks should be marked to provide awareness to trail users that they need to stop and make drivers aware that there is potential for pedestrians and bikers to be entering the intersection.

- Signs - Signs can be used on the trail to alert pedestrians and bicyclists that they need to stop, because vehicles will not be stopping. These signs also alert trail users of which road they are crossing. Pathway signs should be accompanied by a sign on the road that alerts drivers that they are crossing a place that may have pedestrians, for an added level of safety.
- Crosswalk signals - Crosswalk signals come in a variety of types. The most basic cycle together with the traffic signal and include only symbols of a hand and a walking person. Others are activated by the pedestrian and allow crossing with the next cycle of the light, and the most advanced are demand-responsive and switch to a pedestrian crossing when activated. Some of the signals include countdown timers so pedestrians know how long they have before the signal will change and others include a sign that explains what each symbol (hand, flashing hand, person) means. During public outreach efforts, Township residents expressed a preference for signs similar to the photo on the previous page with instructions for pathway users and identification of the cross street.



Crosswalk signal



Conventional striping



Crosswalk striping.

- Conventional striping – Either traditional perpendicular stripes or the continental striping pattern (shown) will delineate the crosswalk for drivers and can be appropriate in low traffic or low traffic speed areas.
- Customized pattern – a customized paint pattern allows greater visibility for drivers and can contribute to the design theme or identity of a trail or district. This pattern can be appropriate for collector or arterial streets with higher volumes and speeds, and in special districts such as arts districts, university districts, and downtowns.
- Change in materials – A change in materials is a strong signal to drivers to pay attention to what is happening in the intersection. Alternative materials include brick (shown), integrally colored concrete, and cobblestone. Details of crosswalk striping were not considered by the participants in the public workshop. This detail can be determined at design and may be changed over time as the needs and desires of the Antwerp Township community change.



Customized striping

Street Furniture. Places to stop and rest are important to creating a user-friendly trail environment. Benches and trash receptacles are important components of the street furniture for a trail system. To create a quality trail experience, the street furniture elements should be of the same or similar design throughout the trail or system and the various elements should be from the same set (trash receptacle, benches).

- Standard – Benches and trash receptacles should be able to be secured to the ground and have finishes that are resistant to rust, weathering, graffiti, and scratching. Many of the finishes available today have taken these issues into consideration and are able to provide durable coating for the benches and trash receptacles.
- Natural materials – some amenities are now available using natural and/or sustainable materials. These amenities are appropriate for places with a high level of vigilance (to protect against vandalism) and that are desired to blend with the natural context of the trail system (particularly for rural segments or environmentally sensitive areas).
- Design – Some street furniture is now available in designs that can be part of the overall character of the trail theme, even if that theme is not very conventional. Issues with durability and security of the materials should be considered. During the public outreach efforts, Antwerp



Change in materials



Township residents expressed a preference for metal benches or flat benches with no backs. Benches should be weather and vandalism resistant and securely mounted.

Mile Markers. Mile markers are critical features if the trail is going to be used as part of a regional system or for athletes who like to train outdoors. While an increasing number of athletes are using personal geographic positioning systems (GPS), many still rely on mile markers for knowing the distance of their runs.

- Simple distance – Mile markers can be relatively simple and merely mark the distance from the start of the trail. Mile markers can also be painted on the trail surface itself.
- Road style signage – A somewhat more sophisticated system identifies the trail and the distance. These systems maintain the appearance of highway signs, while being scaled for trail use.
- Permanent markers – Permanent, high quality markers that are not easily moved are ideal in most situations. These too can be relatively simple concrete markers with only the distance.
- Design elements – The most elaborate markers are permanent and include the trail logo and mile information, and may include other information such as a sponsor. The marker shown includes the overall greenway logo and the mile/kilometer distance. Other styles include boulders engraved with the trail logo and the distance. The mile markers can be designed to fit with the overall design theme of the trail.
- Simple, familiar signage that worked with deep snow was a priority for mile markers expressed by participants in the Antwerp Township public workshops. The “road style” marker was the preferred type.



Permanent markers



Design elements



Simply distance



Road style



Trailheads. There are several types of trailheads, depending on the function of the trailhead. Each function brings its own design considerations.

- Parking – Some trailheads provide a few parking spaces (on or off street) for people who live a distance from the trail and those with special needs to access the trail. Most of this type of trail head does not have lighting or any special amenities. It also generally lacks regulation such as hours.
- Destination or District Trailhead – the design of this type of trailhead will depend on the area it is serving. There may or may not be amenities like restrooms and drinking fountains, but there is typically a larger off-street parking area and direct connections for pedestrians to the destination. This may also serve as a gathering place and have amenities such as benches.
- Community or Regional Trailhead – this type of trailhead offers a greater number of parking spaces and may also include amenities such as restrooms, drinking fountains, and parking lot lighting. This type of facility is often closed at the end of the trail hours each day.



Destination Trailhead

Rest areas in addition to trailheads may be needed if the spacing of the trailheads is more than a few miles. Generally, rest areas should be provided on the uphill side if only provided on one side of a trail. For heavily travelled trails, the rest areas need to be more frequent and should be on both sides of the trail to minimize conflict.

Participants in Antwerp Township public workshops felt that parking and restrooms should be available at trailheads, and drinking fountains and trash receptacles need to be available as well. They also expressed that maps of the pathway system should be available at trailheads.

Maintenance. Maintenance is an ongoing function and expense of having a pathway system. There are routine maintenance activities that need to be handled by staff or scheduled volunteers to ensure that they are completed in a timely manner. More periodic maintenance activities may need to be done by contractors (depending on the scope of the maintenance or repair). Annual (or more frequent) community clean-up events are one way to approach major routine items and periodic maintenance that can be done by volunteers. The type of maintenance program adopted, who is responsible for maintenance activities, and the cost of maintenance will depend in large part on the type of organization that oversees the pathway system.

A Township department as the organizational entity would likely be staff dependent for routine maintenance and some periodic maintenance, using contractors for major periodic maintenance. Volunteer programs may be coordinated for major routine maintenance.



Non-profit management of the pathways would likely involve a focus on volunteers, with perhaps a limited staff role and the most significant projects done by contractors. Regularly scheduled volunteers and frequent community events are typically for this type of structure to accomplish maintenance work.

Contracting with another entity already involved in the maintenance of pathways in the area (such as Van Buren County) is another approach that could be used to ensure both regular and periodic maintenance.

- Routine - Routine maintenance includes daily/weekly activities related to general upkeep of the pathway system, including:
 - Trash collection and removal
 - Re-stocking and cleaning restrooms at trailheads
 - Branch/large limb removal
 - Tree/shrub trimming
 - Mowing (possibly)
 - Snow removal (unless pathways are groomed for cross-country skiing)
 - Light bulb replacement
 - Spot pavement repair
 - Graffiti removal
- Periodic - Periodic maintenance is a less-frequent occurrence, but includes more capital-intensive types of maintenance and repair activities including:
 - Painting/replacing faded/broken trash cans, benches, and light standards
 - Painting trail markings
 - Replacing faded, vandalized, or broken signage
 - Repairing pavement sections
 - Trailhead renovations

Ecology Park

An ecology park was originally a priority established in the 2006 Antwerp Township Park and Recreation Plan. Specific details were not provided as to the goals or expectations for the ecology park, other than a desire to preserve open space and provide for environmental education areas. At the time that plan was adopted, it was anticipated that the ecology park would be through conceptual design in 2006-2007 and final design in 2008-2009 with Phase I construction commencing in 2009-2010 and Phase II in 2010-2011. Changes to the economy and organizational



Approximate location of proposed ecology park



structure have delayed the planning and implementation of both the pathway and ecology park projects.

In their survey responses from the public workshop during the 2010 Pathways Plan planning process, Antwerp Township residents indicated a desire for the ecology park to have primary functions of being a place to enjoy nature and a place for students to use as a learning laboratory. Desired features include interpretative signs and boardwalks into wetland areas. They also expressed a desire for the area to be “off-limits” to bicycles and to have a trailhead and parking area.

The location currently being considered for the ecology park is the property held in conservation in the southeast corner of the Township.

Agreements have not yet been reached regarding public access to the land, hours of availability, construction of walkways/boardwalks through the wetland areas, signs, and parking. Terms of these agreements will determine the conceptual and final design of the ecology park concept. The conceptual design for the site should balance the desire to protect natural systems and habitat in that location with public access and educational opportunities.

Dirt roads into the area currently exist off Van Kal Avenue and several places have been previously disturbed that could be used for parking and other trailhead amenities.

Other opportunities for ecological parks in the Township, in conjunction with the villages or The Nature Conservancy, should also be considered to provide a theme or connectivity between various segments of the pathway system.

Antwerp Trailway Project

A top priority in Antwerp Township is to construct a non-motorized off-road trail as part of a larger initiative that will connect the villages of Paw Paw and Mattawan. The 2011 South West Michigan Non-Motorized Transportation Plan identified an east-west route along Red Arrow Highway connecting Hartford to Paw Paw to Mattawan in Van Buren County. While not following the exact route, this route achieves the same intent by providing access to various community facilities and parks by offering a source of recreation for residents that bike, jog, and walk, and by offering other opportunities for recreation and physical activity.

Currently, non-motorized transportation options do not exist in this area. The proposed trail is a critical link in the connection of the Van Buren and Kalamazoo Trail systems and was listed a high priority in the regional plan which was developed with extensive public input from stakeholders in the nine-county region. It will also be a key segment of the continuous 70-mile Kalamazoo, Van Buren, and Fruit Belt trail systems.

The trail will meet the needs and desires of its residents and visitors and will provide a village-to-village pathway, creating an alternative means of transportation for those too young to drive, no longer drive, or are seeking affordable or environmentally sustainable ways of traveling.

Details

The proposed trailway is 4.9 miles of non-motorized trail. The westerly limits of the proposed trail extend into the Village of Paw Paw (Paw Paw), while the easterly limits of the trail extend into the



Village of Mattawan (Mattawan). The majority of the trail will be constructed along the south side of I-94 Limited Access Right of Way (LAROW). MDOT and FHWA provided conceptual approval for use of the LAROW in August 2019, this approval requires a paved surfaced. Portions of the trail, outside I-94 LAROW, will be constructed through permanent transportation easements on private properties. The route will typically follow the southerly edge of I-94 from the MDOT Park and Ride, located in the southeast quadrant of the I-94 and M-40 interchange, to Western Street, near Mattawan. Trail heads will be constructed at both locations. The existing parking at the Park and Ride will be utilized to serve trail users. Prior site visits and correspondence with MDOT staff have proven excess parking would be available for future use. The existing cul-de-sac, located at the Western Street terminus, would be utilized for parking. Modifications to the Park and Ride and cul-de-sac, in support of the trail, will include landscaping for storm water management, benches, accessible picnic tables, trash receptacles, bike racks, and informational trail signage.

The typical cross section of the trail will be 14-ft wide, consisting of a 10-ft asphalt paved path, with 1-ft gravel shoulders and 1-ft clear zone on each side. Fencing will be placed between the trail and I-94 when inside LAROW. Portions of the trail within wetland areas will require boardwalk with a 14-ft wide clear width to be constructed. The boardwalk will consist of timber substructure and deck designed for the H-10 and 90 psf loadings as well as timber railings. Other items of work will include retaining walls, split-rail fencing, mile markers and signage. Advanced signing and Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons will be installed at the county road crossing due to the unexpected nature of pedestrian crossings in a rural area. All trail elements will conform to AASHTO and MUTCD standards

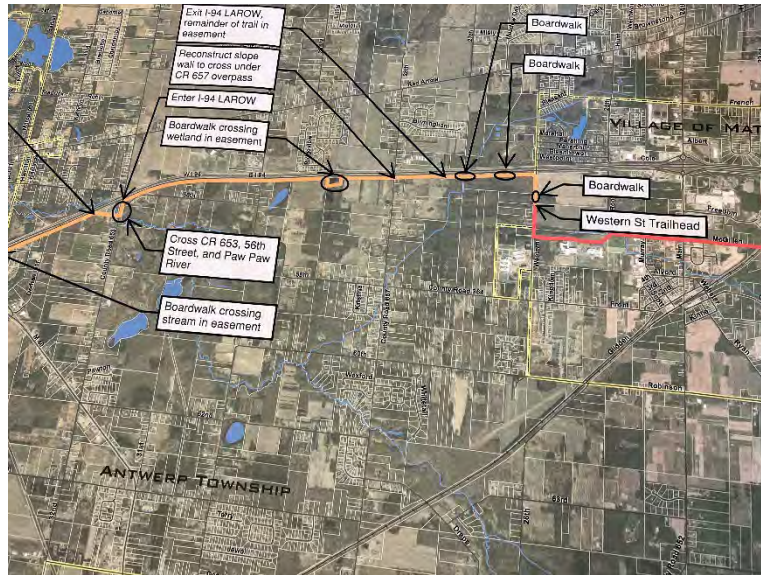
The trail route consists of the following segments:

- 1,100 ft of asphalt trail beginning at the MDOT park-and-ride and traversing through an existing AEP easement.
- 1,300 feet of asphalt trail within I-94 LAROW.
- 100 ft of board walk within a permanent transportation easement.
- 4,000 ft of asphalt paved trail within I-94 LAROW.
- 1,950 feet of asphalt trail within a permanent transportation easement and county road R.O.W. along the existing AEP substation, crossing Almena Dr, crossing the Paw Paw River, and crossing 56th Ave.
- 1.5 miles of asphalt trail within I-94 LAROW.
- 1,100 ft of asphalt trail within a permanent transportation easement around an existing wetland area.
- 4,000 ft of asphalt trail within I-94 LAROW.
- 3,600 ft of asphalt trail and 500 ft of boardwalk within a permanent transportation easement over an existing wetland.
- 300 ft of boardwalk within a permanent transportation easement over an existing wetland, terminating at the eastern trail head.



Project estimates are as follows:

- Construction cost = \$3,200,000
- Total project cost = \$4,000,000 (including engineering, permitting, and easement acquisition)





Chapter Five: Action Program

The Action Program is the culmination of a comprehensive effort that began with a parks inventory and the analysis of existing community conditions and attitudes. It begins by briefly discussing key goals and objectives that evoke the spirit of this effort, but which are common to most communities. These overall goals are then translated into Township-specific tasks, organized into useful lists and expressed in a 5-year Action Program that itemizes targeted actions that should be accomplished each year. The goals stated here were developed in consideration of the previous Recreation Plan (adopted in 2006), the Pathways Plan (developed in 2010), the analysis in this plan, local and regional demographics, and the public input gathered throughout the process.

While this Action Program is intentionally aggressive to encourage more progress, the speed at which the tasks are completed will depend on local resources, funding, and regional cooperation.

Overall Goals

Generally speaking, the overall goal of parks and recreation planning is to improve the quality of life for area residents by providing the physical facilities and organized recreation programming needed to maintain healthier lifestyles and provide enjoyable physical activities and social interaction. Successful implementation requires action, not generalized goal statements that provide sentiment but not direction. Therefore, the three primary goals of this plan are discussed in general, followed by more specific goals and objective statements.



1. **Quality:** *As the Township develops more land, programs and recreational facilities, Antwerp Township will offer high quality, well-maintained park facilities and recreation programs that create a pleasant experience for all users.*

The parks inventory indicates numerous parks and programs available to area residents, but some additional facilities may be needed. Certain structures, fields and facilities are needed to meet the national guidelines. Residents have also indicated a strong desire for pathways and opportunities to enjoy nature. The Township may be able to fill in some of the gaps not filled by the villages, school districts or the County.

2. **Accessibility:** *Parks and recreation facilities will meet the diverse needs and interests of the community.*

The 2020 Decennial Census showed 25.5% of residents were under 18 years of age, 60.5% were adults under 65, and 14% were adults over 65.

There is a relatively even distribution of residents in all age categories up to age 60 and over which naturally tends to make up a smaller proportion. This means park and recreation planning should not be focused toward any one particular age group; rather, recreation facilities and programs should focus on addressing the needs of all ages. The smaller percentage of senior citizens suggests, however, that some preference could be given to providing youth and young adult recreation opportunities.

Approximately 8 percent of area residents under 65 years of age have a health disability, according to the 2021 American Community Survey (ACS). ACS identifies serious difficulty with four basic areas of functioning – hearing, vision, cognition, and ambulation. This, coupled with the fact that few of the public parks inventoried are fully accessible, suggests that a large segment of the population is underserved.

The Township must take care to consider accessibility in all of its park and recreation facilities. The Township should incorporate “universal design” into future park improvement projects. Universal design seeks to improve the function of products and buildings so they can be used by everyone, not just the elderly or disabled. For example, the design of curb ramps – originally designed to respond to the needs of those wheelchair-bound – now also benefit those on bicycles, those pushing strollers, and the visually impaired. The idea behind universal design is to continually evaluate and improve facilities to enhance the experience of all users, rather than merely adhere to a prescribed set of guidelines.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) established guidelines to provide barrier-free accessibility at public facilities. As parks and facilities are improved or developed, a high priority must be placed on upgrades that improve barrier-free accessibility with improvements to proper surfaces for

Examples of Universal Design:

- Installing electrical outlets within reach of everyone
- Larger restrooms for handicap accessibility or family use
- Signage that clearly communicates rules and hazards
- Use of symbols rather than words on signs



wheelchairs, accessible picnic tables, and play equipment that provides universal access. Outside consultants may be valuable in assessing barriers.

3. **Variety:** *A variety of recreation facilities and programs will be offered to provide fun physical and passive recreational activities, encourage social interaction, and provide a high quality of life for all area residents.*

The variety desired will serve residents in all areas but also those with differing needs. Currently, village parks, county facilities, and private organizations provide a reasonable mix of the typical facilities desired (such as athletic fields, play areas, walking paths, and pavilions), but those features more recently in demand (such as skateboard parks, splash parks, and pathways) are lacking.

Specific Goals and Objectives

The following specific goals and objectives are intended to provide a “road map” to achieving the above overall goals.

1. **Implement the recommendations of this plan as cost-effectively and efficiently as possible.**

Objectives

- Coordinate the Action Plan with the Township’s capital improvement program.
- Explore methods to encourage or require parks and recreation needs to be considered during the development review process.
- Review the Parks and Recreation Plan annually to establish yearly priorities and responsibilities.
- Explore grant and alternative funding opportunities for improvement projects.
- Involve local residents, service groups and volunteer organizations in fundraising efforts to demonstrate strong community support and grass-roots efforts.
- Coordinate with other recreation providers to prevent duplication of services and avoid unnecessary competition.
- Evaluate the option of charging programming fees that balance operation costs with affordability.

2. **Provide recreation opportunities for residents of all areas of the Township.**

Objectives

- Consider population densities when identifying new park locations. While there may be underserved areas, some are very rural and may not demand significant park land or programs.
- Encourage new residential projects to include parkland and/or open spaces to serve future residents.
- Continue to monitor resident desires, local trends and preferences in recreation. Follow-up surveys and comment boxes could be used to solicit continued input.
- Host community-wide events that bring together residents from different neighborhoods, generations and backgrounds.



3. Support the acquisition and development of land that respects natural resources and complements conservation efforts.

Objectives

- While hard-surface pathways are important, trails through natural areas should be carefully designed to use natural materials.
- Avoid the need to cut mature or large stands of trees, or at a minimum, maintain existing root systems along shorelines and riverbanks.
- Where funds allow, purchase sensitive lands that are susceptible to development and would otherwise be developed if not protected.
- Work with local land conservancies to acquire sensitive land for protection.
- Encourage walking and bicycling as alternative transportation options to help reduce emissions and improve the environment.
- Work with property owners to establish conservation easements on sensitive lands.

4. Connect villages in the Township by pathways

Creating “alternative” means of transportation between the villages provides transportation options, particularly for those who are too young to drive, no longer drive, or are seeking more affordable or environmentally sustainable ways of getting around. Providing bicycle and pedestrian connections between the villages will allow for choice, the first of such efforts being the Antwerp Trailway Project.

Objectives

- Complete the Antwerp Township Trailway project.
- Determine village priorities for sidewalk extensions and plan for appropriate pathway connections.
- Maintain the sidewalk systems in the villages and in Township neighborhoods to support a functional pathway system, to encourage walking and biking.
- Ensure future connectivity by requiring new development to provide sidewalks or pathway connections.
- Sidewalks or pathways should be required for all new residential subdivisions, commercial, institutional, or industrial development, even if gaps are created in the sidewalk system; these will be filled over time. There may be an appropriate public role in filling these gaps.
- Fund and build the proposed pathway system connecting the villages.
- Fund and build connections that address the “gaps” between the existing sidewalk network and the pathway system.



5. Provide for safe pathways to key destinations

Objectives

- Complete the Antwerp Township Trailway project.
- Determine and prioritize the destinations within the Township that should be connected by a pathway system.
- Design/engineer a pathway system to connect the destinations that is separate from the roadway network.
- Working with appropriate agencies, determine corridors for side paths or bike lanes within road rights-of-way.
- Develop an amenity program to make pedestrians and bicyclists feel safe and secure. Amenities like lighting, signs, benches, drinking fountains, and restrooms contribute to the safety and comfort of pathway users. Certain amenities may be needed in the initial design and construction (such as lighting) while others may be considered in later projects (restrooms).
- Coordinate a police presence and emergency response plan for the pathway system.

6. Meet the needs of a variety of pathway users

A variety of user groups were identified for the pathways, including: walkers, joggers, runners, bicyclists, rollerbladers, children, elderly people, and people using wheelchairs. These groups may have different needs related to their use and enjoyment of the pathway.

Objectives

- Comply with ADA requirements and strive for universal accessibility
- ADA requirements must be implemented for all federally funded projects and should be met for projects that are not federally funded. Universal accessibility goes beyond the requirements and ensures that places are accessible to families with strollers, small children learning to walk, people walking with canes or having difficulty walking, and the visually or hearing impaired.
- Separate fast and slow pathway “traffic.” Some pathway users will be faster (bicycles and rollerbladers) than others (walkers, runners, and joggers). Establishing “rules of the path” for yielding to other users is one way to manage “traffic” on the path. In certain locations, it may be preferable to separate the two types of users by using on-street bikes lanes and a sidewalk for other users, or divided pathway configurations.

7. Implement an ecology park as a living, learning laboratory

An ecology park has been a goal of the Antwerp Township community since the Community Recreation Plan was adopted in 2006. The Nature Conservancy owns land that could be used for this purpose if agreement about access, development, and similar issues can be reached. The ecology park will be a public asset, as well as an environmental treasure available for public use and education. This area will be a key destination along the pathway system and a learning laboratory in its own right.



Objectives

- Establish conditions under which the public will have access to a Nature Conservancy site or other appropriate site, and its functions as an ecology park. This may include a Memorandum of Understanding with the Nature Conservancy or other conservation land owner.
- Design and implement a program for informational/interpretive signs. The signs for the ecology park should be consistent throughout the site. Signs should include wayfinding and warnings in addition to interpretive signs related to natural features.
- Promote the ecology park as a community asset. Ongoing marketing of the ecology park will be needed to ensure continue success.

8. *Ensure ongoing maintenance of the parks and recreation system*

Funding sources (including local organizations) are more likely to be available for development of a pathway system if there is a well-established maintenance program and responsible entity in place to maintain the integrity of their investment. Additionally, property values and safety are enhanced by well-maintained systems.

Objectives

- Determine who is responsible for maintenance of the pathway infrastructure, amenities, and routine activities (like snow removal, mowing, and trash removal).
- Identify and maintain a revenue source for maintenance. Funding for the long-term operations and maintenance of the pathway system should be identified at the outset of the project.
- Encourage volunteers and recreational organizations to take part in maintaining and promoting the pathway system. Volunteer and organization assistance with maintenance and promotion can ease the demand for public resources while providing the valuable community-wide asset of a pathway.

Five Year Action Program

The Action Program for Antwerp Township provides a five-year implementation checklist for use by those involved in park and recreation planning.

The tables on the following pages list recommendations to help the Township track projects and identify funding priorities. Tasks should be reviewed on an annual basis and priorities adjusted to respond to updated findings and identification of funding opportunities. While the tables list items that should be completed in a specific order, the reality of implementation is that projects will be completed as time and funding resources permit. This requires some flexibility when implementing the Action Program, as time-sensitive opportunities may demand that certain projects rise to the top of the priority list.



Actual costs for each project will be more specifically determined as site surveys, programming elements and engineering plans are developed. If funding levels are lower than required to implement the Plan based on the schedule provided, some projects may extend beyond the five-year scope of this Plan, or be broken into sub-projects to be completed incrementally over time. Costs related to grant investigation and application can be applied to matching funds if the grant is approved.

The above tasks may be funded through a variety of sources (see inset above), which are discussed in greater detail in **Appendix C, Funding Sources**.

FUNDING SOURCES

Federal Programs:

- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grants
- Save America's Treasures
- EPA's Clean Water Fund/Wetland Program Development Grants

State Programs:

- Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) Grants
- Clean Michigan Initiative (CMI) Grants
- Michigan Natural Resources Tree Planting Grants

Private:

- Arbor Day Foundation
- Bikes Belong Coalition
- Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
- W. K. Kellogg Foundation
- Michigan Recreation and Park Association Foundation
- Baseball Tomorrow

Local Fundraising:

- User Fees
- Private Donations
- Public Partnerships
- Recreation Bond or Millage
- Conservation Easements



Year	Project	Estimated Cost <i>(if known)</i>
2023	1. Antwerp Trailway project	\$4,000,000
2024	2. Identify land appropriate for an ecology park and other types of parks	\$3,500
2025	3. Develop a concept plan for the ecology park	\$12,000
2026	4. Identify and apply for funding to develop the ecology park	\$4,000
2027	5. Through ownership, easement, agreement or other means, provide public access to the ecology park	\$3,000
2028	6. Begin planning/funding for the second village-to-village pathway	\$6,000
2029	7. Design and build public facilities for the ecology park (drives, parking area, pathways, interpretive buildings, etc.)	Project Scope Dependent - \$100,000 - \$400,000
2030	8. Detailed design of the second pathway corridor	Project Scope Dependent - \$10,000 - \$50,000
2031	9. Begin planning/funding for the third village-to-village pathway	\$6,000
2032	10. Design and begin development of the third pathway corridor	Project Scope Dependent - \$10,000 - \$50,000



Appendix A: Community Description

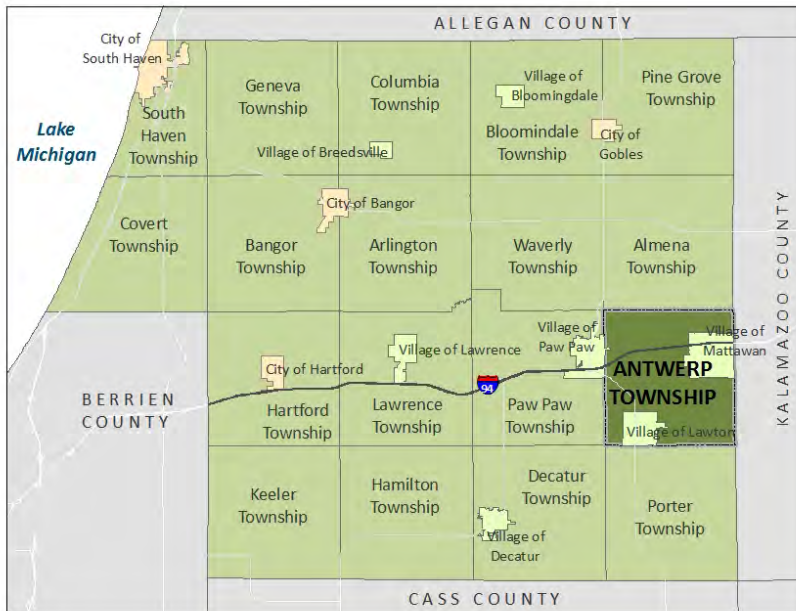
This Appendix is a snapshot of Antwerp Township today. It serves as a starting point for understanding current conditions in the Township and is valuable when considering park and recreation needs. Included in this appendix are key findings of the Township’s various socioeconomic characteristics, as well as an overview of the community’s location, land use, natural features, and transportation system. Understanding existing conditions in the Township is important for establishing realistic and appropriate goals and objectives.

Regional Setting

Antwerp Township lies in the eastern reaches of Van Buren County in the southwestern region of Michigan near the Indiana border. The Township is bordered by Alma Township to the north, Porter Township to the south, Paw Paw Township and the Village of Paw Paw to the west, and Texas Township in Kalamazoo County to the east. There are three villages located in Antwerp Township:

Mattawan, Lawton, and

Paw Paw. Mattawan and Lawton are located entirely within Antwerp Township while the Village of Paw Paw lies partially in Antwerp Township (primarily along the Red Arrow Highway) and mostly in Paw Paw Township.



Antwerp Township is influenced by growth in the nearby cities of Kalamazoo and Portage. Interstate 94, which runs through the northern half of the Township, links the Township to the Kalamazoo-Portage metropolitan area. The City of Kalamazoo provides an increasingly attractive urban center that includes influential educational, cultural, and health facilities while many of the region’s villages have evolved into quaint, rural residential communities. This combination of rural charm and access to urban amenities and employment opportunities has led to residential and commercial growth in Antwerp Township. Due to this trend, residential development has become the dominant land use in the Township. However, preserving the Township’s rural character and active farmland remains a priority for many residents.



The quantity and quality of the Township’s natural features have also played an important role in its development. Fertile soil and rolling topography make the southeastern portion of the Township amenable to specialty crops such as vineyards and fruit orchards. Conversely, these same steep slopes make development in those areas difficult. The Township also contains a plethora of wetlands, lakes, and woodlands which all serve important environmental functions and contribute to the rural character that continues to attract residents to the Township.

Socioeconomic Characteristics

The following is a demographic profile of Antwerp Township which depicts various characteristics of the community to gain a better understanding of its unique qualities and population dynamics.

Figure A-1 Population Trends						
Year	Antwerp Township*			Van Buren County		
	Population	Change	Percent Change	Population	Change	Percent Change
1970	2,312	-	-	56,173	-	-
1980	3,910	1,598	69.1%	66,814	10,641	19%
1990	5,039	1,129	28.9%	70,060	3,246	5%
2000	6,289	1,250	24.8%	76,263	6,203	9%
2010	8,198	1,871	22.8%	76,258	(5)	0%
2020	9,025	827	10%	75,587	(671)	-0.88%

Source: American Community Survey, US Census
* Excludes village populations.

Population Trends

As *Figure A-1* demonstrates, population in the Township has grown steadily over the past 50 years. The 2010 Census indicated the largest influx of population the Township had experienced since 1970. Growth continued, but slowed to 10% between 2010 and 2020. The County as whole experienced a decrease in population. It is important for the Township to consider its capacity to meet the recreational needs of its growing population.

Age

An understanding of age distribution is essential in planning for future park and recreation needs. As people pass through the various stages of life, their recreational requirements change resulting in different facility and programming requirements. The 2020 Decennial Census showed 25.5% of residents were under 18 years of age, 60.5% were adults under 65, and 14% were adults over 65.



Income

A successful parks and recreation program requires providing affordable recreational opportunities to the community. As incomes vary within communities and regions, so too does the notion of affordability and availability of disposable income for recreation. *Figure A-2* illustrates the median household income of the Township compared to adjacent and similar communities. The table reveals that the Township currently has the second-highest median household income among comparable communities. These figures suggest that the Township should be able to fund its parks and recreation programs and improvement projects if it makes them a priority.

Figure A-2 Median Income	
Place	Income
Antwerp Township*	\$59,025
Almena Township	\$73,719
Decatur Township	\$33,859
Paw Paw Township	\$30,329
Porter Township	\$52,017
Waverly Township	\$44,833
Village of Lawton	\$42,277
Village of Mattawan	\$37,275
Village of Paw Paw	\$29,531
City of Kalamazoo	\$33,009
Van Buren County	\$46,008
State of Michigan	\$49,576
Source: American Community Survey	
* Includes village populations.	



Figure A-3 Occupation				
Occupational Category	Antwerp Township*		Van Buren County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	106	1.8%	1,507	4.7%
Construction	362	6.2%	2,129	6.6%
Manufacturing	957	16.4%	5,898	18.3%
Wholesale trade	156	2.7%	784	2.4%
Retail trade	634	10.9%	3,622	11.2%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	219	3.8%	1,401	4.3%
Information	94	1.6%	372	1.2%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	277	4.8%	1,367	4.2%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	445	7.6%	2,649	8.2%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	1,580	27.2%	6,973	21.6%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	464	8.0%	2,791	8.7%
Other services, except public administration	293	5.0%	1,536	4.8%
Public administration	232	4.0%	1,223	3.8%
Total	5,819	100.0%	32,252	100.0%
Source: American Community Survey				
* Includes village populations.				

Employment

Residents of Antwerp Township are employed in a range of employment categories. As shown in *Figure A-3*, a high proportion of residents work in manufacturing and in the educational, health care, and social assistance occupational sector. The relative strength of the employment picture in Antwerp Township suggests that the local economy is stable and that residents should be able to continue to fund the parks and recreation budget.



Physical Characteristics

The following is a description of the physical characteristics of the township, including its land use, natural features, and transportation network. This information is useful for locating future residential growth areas, and subsequently the extent of needed future park and recreation improvements.

Land Use

The land use distribution and development pattern of a community is important when considering the geographic distribution of parks and recreational facilities because they should be located near dense concentrations of residents and related places of public gathering. *Map 4* indicates the location, and *Figure A-5* shows the acreage of key land uses in the Township.

Figure A-5 Land Use Distribution		
Land Use	Acres	% Total
Agricultural	6,627	28%
Commercial Office	1,401	6%
Industrial	758	3%
Public/Quasi Public	1,436	6%
Residential	13,462	56%
Vacant	339	1%
Total	24,023	100%
Source: Williams & Works Existing Land Use Map, 2017 * Includes village areas.		

Residential development is the dominant land use in the Township. Antwerp is home to many types of residential units: single-family homes on large lots, rural farmsteads, manufactured homes, duplexes, as well as older homes on smaller lots in the village centers. With limited access to water and sewer services, land-consumptive large lot development is very common.

Agricultural land ranks second. This use occurs throughout the Township with much of the specialty agriculture (i.e., vineyards, fruit orchards) in the southeast and south-central

sections of the Township with much of the northern portions of the Township dedicated to traditional row crops.

Most of the commercial development in Antwerp Township is located near the villages and along the M-40 and Red Arrow Highway corridors. Major commercial uses like grocery stores, gas stations, restaurants, and home improvement stores generally occur at intersections along Red Arrow Highway at CR 653, 30th Street, 29 1/2 Street, and 28th Street and along M-40 concentrated near 62nd Avenue.

Industrial use is scarce in the Township due to the lack of sewer and water services. The best opportunities for industrial use are areas along major corridors with access to village sewer and water system. An industrial park is located along M-40 where the corridor enters the Village of Paw Paw. Except for a few established light industrial uses, the industrial park is mostly undeveloped.



Natural Features

Antwerp Township is blessed with abundant natural features, as shown on *Map 5*. Preservation of natural features is a major priority for the community as they both enhance and protect the quality of life. These features help to clean groundwater supplies, provide wildlife habitats, accommodate stormwater surges, manage floodwaters and, where in public ownership, protect environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, steep slopes, and woodlots. These natural features also attract development as residents seek out the serenity and beauty they offer. Additionally, they can offer excellent opportunities for park and recreation development.

Transportation

While residents are attracted to the Township's rural character and natural beauty, what makes the area work for them is the regional transportation network. The transportation system that serves Antwerp Township makes it easily accessible and has attracted commuters working in Kalamazoo and Portage. Interstate 94, a major highway connecting Detroit and Chicago, travels east to west through the northern half of the township. US-131, a major north south freeway, meets I-94 just east of the township in Kalamazoo and I-196/US-31 meets up with I-94 to the southwest in the Benton Harbor area. All public roads are paved and are under the jurisdiction of the Van Buren County Road Commission or Michigan DOT.

There are also other modes of transportation available in the region. Amtrak owns and operates a rail line that runs through Antwerp Township. It is part of a high-speed passenger line that runs from Detroit to Chicago. There is no stop in Antwerp Township; nearby stops include Kalamazoo and Dowagiac. There is a small private airport just west of Mattawan, but the nearest commercial airport is located approximately 14 miles east, in Kalamazoo.

Non-motorized transportation options are currently very limited in Antwerp. By providing better opportunities for both recreational users and commuters the Township could improve its recreational offerings and meet a transportation need. A pathways plan was adopted by Antwerp Township's Board of Trustees in 2010. This document lays out pathway location and design concepts and addresses funding, phasing, and other implementation concerns.



Appendix B: Public Involvement and Adoption

Antwerp Township developed this plan with input from the public. Some input was obtained through meetings held during this planning process and through community surveys. Summarized below are the various ways the Township solicited input.

Public Meetings

The Planning Commission/Recreation Committee met with residents to discuss goals for the plan. A community open house was held on November 2, 2022 and was open to the public. In order to gain further feedback, the interactive materials utilized during the open house were made available for one month at the Township Hall during normal business hours. Many participants expressed support and excitement for the trailway project. However, several citizens expressed concern with the eastern drop-off area and concern with unauthorized parking and maintenance.



Public Review Period and Public Hearing Notice

Upon completion of a draft of the plan, the Planning Commission provided a public review period to further solicit comments, concerns, and support of the plan from the public. The Planning Commission/Recreation Committee solicited comments from the public during the November 30 special meeting and continued the conversation regarding the eastern trailhead of the Antwerp Trailway. Upon completion of the required 30-day public review period, a public hearing was scheduled. This public hearing was held on January 4, 2022, at the Antwerp Township Hall. A notice was posted to announce the meeting. While concerns were expressed regarding the Antwerp Township Trailway project, the Planning Commission/Recreation Committee committed to further workshops and public outreach efforts outside of the Parks and Recreation Plan process.

After the public hearing, the Township Board approved the plan's adoption on January 13, 2022, during its regularly-scheduled meeting.



Open House Notice

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

State of Michigan
County of Van Buren

R. Michael Wilcox, being duly sworn says he is one of the principal clerks of the Courier - Leader, a weekly newspaper published and circulated in said county. The annexed is a printed copy of a notice which was published in said newspaper on the following date(s), to wit: 10/13/22

R. Michael Wilcox
R. Michael Wilcox

Subscribed and sworn to before me this

3 day of Jun A.D. 2023

Julie Hotchkiss
Julie Hotchkiss

Notary Public, Allegan County, Michigan.
Acting In Allegan County, Michigan

My commission expires 03/15/2023



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The Commercial Record*
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Fax (269) 673-5535



30-Day Review and Public Hearing Notice

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

State of Michigan
County of Van Buren

R. Michael Wilcox, being duly sworn says he is one of the principal clerks of the Courier - Leader, a weekly newspaper published and circulated in said county. The annexed is a printed copy of a notice which was published in said newspaper on the following date(s), to wit: 12-1-22

R. Michael Wilcox
R. Michael Wilcox

Subscribed and sworn to before me this

10 day of Jan A.D. 2022

J. K. Hotchkiss
Julie Hotchkiss

Notary Public, Allegan County, Michigan.
Acting In Allegan County, Michigan

My commission expires 03/15/2023

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**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
PARKS AND RECREATION
COMMITTEE ANTWERP
TOWNSHIP 2023 PARKS AND
RECREATION PLAN**

Notice is hereby given that the Antwerp Township Parks and Recreation Committee will hold a public hearing to accept and consider public comments regarding the draft of the 2023 Antwerp Township Parks and Recreation Plan. The plan identifies future parks, open spaces, recreation strategies, and trail projects within Antwerp Township. Parks and recreation plans are approved by the State of Michigan and qualify the Township for grant funding opportunities.

Date: Wednesday, January 4, 2023

Time: 6:30 PM

Location: Antwerp Township offices located at 24821 Front Street, Mattawan, MI 49071

Relevant information is available for review at the Antwerp Township offices during regular business hours, or call (269) 668-2615. Those unable to attend the public hearing are invited to submit written comments to the attention of the Parks and Recreation Committee at the Township Hall address cited above. All written comments must be received no later than 4:00 PM on Wednesday, January 4, 2023.

If any individual has a physical disability that may limit their participation in this hearing, please notify the Township Hall at least five (5) days before the meeting date so that reasonable accommodations may be made.



Public Hearing Minutes- January 4, 2023

Minutes of the Antwerp Township Planning Commission Meeting January 4, 2023

1. **Call to Order**-Chairman Morris called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.
2. **Roll Call-Present:** Cronenwett, Stock, Morris, Paquin, Schultz, Tarchala, Kneeshaw.
Also Present: David Jirousek, Horizon Community Planning and guests.
3. **Approval of Minutes**-Motion by Cronenwett second by Paquin to approve the minutes of November 30, 2022 as presented. All voted in favor. Motion carried.
4. **Approval of Agenda**-Motion by Cronenwett second by Tarchala to approve the agenda as amended by Cronenwett to add item 8A. Election of Officers for 2023. All voted in favor. Motion carried.
5. **Public Comments on Non-Hearing Agenda Items**-none
6. **Public Hearing and Consideration of the 2023 Antwerp Township Parks and Recreation Plan**
David Jirousek gave review of the Recreation Plan program which mentions that the Trailway Plan is part of this. This is a 5-year review that entails, community surveys, community workshop comments, population of the township and current community offerings for recreation.

There were two (2) letters of submittal from Jordan Rewa and Bobby McCaig in regards to the Trailway. They were not read out loud, but commissioners had the opportunity to read them. They will be submitted to the township for the record.

Public Hearing

Public Hearing was called to order by Chairman Morris at 6:35 PM.
Public Hearing guidelines were given by Chairman Morris

Jacob LaRue-owns several parcels along the trail. Concerns with liability and the upkeep of maintaining the trail

Ron Kussy-owns property along the proposed trailway. Question in regards of what side of I-94 will this trailway run. Has safety concerns of this trail as well.

Caleb Anderson-voiced concerns with areas for walking/pedestrians and the possibilities of hunting in the area as well.

Ryan Johnson-there are issues with the Kal-Haven trail with malicious content, so there could exist the same with the trailway.

Karen Bohm-is a bike rider and feels that this path would not be safe. States that there has been no public input in regards to this trailway.

Beth LaRue-in regards to the trailway has concerns with traffic and what uses there will be. States that there has been no public input on this subject.



Bill Multop-wanted to know when the questions that people have commented on will be answered.

David Zygadlo-mention of the electric sub-station on County Road 653 and the safety/property concerns in that area. Also, mention of concerns with the wetland areas along the trailway.

Sadie Spence-voiced concerns with privacy along the trailway.

Beth Combs-concerns with privacy and safety of the trailway. Question in regards to the seasonal time use of the trail.

Joy Gooses-questioned of how does this trailway benefit this community.

Patty Krajewski-uses the Kal-Haven trail for biking. Sad to hear that questions have not been answered in regards to the trailway.

Brian Krajewski-trespassers are always a problem. Has had issues with the Van-Kal Fen property. Those property owners that have property directly linked to the trailway will have issues. Will there be parking areas and entry fees for access to the trail?

Bill Engle-voiced concerns with the amount of traffic on I-94 going past this trailway.

Brett Jeffers-is information in regards to the trailway on Antwerp Township website. What will be the timeline for the trail project in 2023?

There being no further public comment. Motion by Cronenwett second by Kneeshaw to close the Public Hearing at 7:40 PM. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

6. Consideration of the 2023 Antwerp Township Parks and Recreation Plan

Notation by Gary Stock for spelling correction of Oshtemo Township.

Motion by Cronenwett second by Tarchala to recommend approval of the 2023 Antwerp Township Parks and Recreation Plan.

Roll Call Vote: Cronenwett-yes, Stock-yes, Morris-yes, Paquin-yes, Schultz-yes, Tarchala-yes, Kneeshaw-yes. Motion carried.

7. Resolution-2023 Meeting Dates

David Jirousek reviewed with commissioners the 2023 Planning Commission Schedule.

Motion by Kneeshaw second by Cronenwett to approve 2023 Meeting Dates as submitted. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

8. Annual Report

The Planning Commission Annual Report was reviewed by David Jirousek and commissioners.

In regards to the 2023 Goals, commissioners listed additional goals to be completed. Parks and Recreation Plan approval was completed, the list was modified is as follows:



1. Wellhead protection overlay
2. Environmental Regulations.
3. Master Plan 5-year review.
4. RRC-Re-Development Ready Communities.
5. Continue public engagement on Trailway Plan.

Motion by Cronenwett second by Morris to recommend approval to the Antwerp Township Board the Planning Commission Annual Report and 2023 Goals for their review.

All voted in favor. Motion carried.

8.A. Election of Planning Commission Officers for 2023

Motion by Cronenwett second by Tarchala to appoint

Chairman-Zach Morris
Vice-Chair-John Paquin
Secretary- Denise Schultz

All voted in favor. Motion carried.

9. Environmental Regulations and Wellhead Protection Overlay District

Paquin reported that he and Gary Stock will be putting together a preliminary draft for review.

10. Additional Comments and Communications

Discussion with applicant of Rose Creek Estates and Planning Commissioners.
Items of interest and overview of project discussed.

Planning commissioners reviewed the public hearing this evening and proper protocol of how interactions with public comments should be handled.

11. Adjournment-Motion by Tarchala second by Kneeshaw to adjourn the meeting at 8:41 PM.

All voted in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise M. Schultz, Secretary



Recreation Committee Resolution

RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING ADOPTION

**ANTWERP TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION/RECREATION COMMITTEE**

2023 ANTWERP TOWNSHIP PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN

WHEREAS, the Antwerp Township Planning Commission has been appointed as the Recreation Committee for the Township; and

WHEREAS, the Recreation Committee guided the development of the 2023 Antwerp Township Parks and Recreation Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Recreation Committee conducted a Public Open House and Community Survey to solicit the opinions of residents of the Township; and

WHEREAS, the Antwerp Township Parks and Recreation Plan has been completed, and a public hearing was held before the Recreation Committee on January 4, 2023, to hear comments from the public.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Antwerp Township Recreation Committee does hereby recommend the adoption of the 2023 Antwerp Township Parks and Recreation Plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Parks and Recreation Plan shall serve as a guide to future recreation development in Antwerp Township.

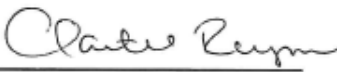
Motion by: Cronenwett

Supported by: Tarchala

Ayes: 7
Nays: 0
Absent: 0

I, Chantel Reyna, Clerk of Antwerp Township, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the Antwerp Township Planning Commission/Recreation Committee and its regular meeting held on January 4, 2023.

Dated this 4th day of January, 2023



Chantel Reyna, Township Clerk



Township Board Resolution

**RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE
2023 ANTWERP TOWNSHIP PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN**

ANTWERP TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES

WHEREAS, the Antwerp Township Board of Trustees has appointed the Planning Commission as the Recreation Committee; and

WHEREAS, the Recreation Committee was asked to oversee and guide the planning process and to provide a recommendation in the form of a draft 2023 Parks and Recreation Plan to the Township Board for approval; and

WHEREAS, the Recreation Committee conducted a Public Open House and Community Survey to solicit the opinions of residents of the Township; and

WHEREAS, the Recreation Committee has made inventories and surveys of the existing recreation resources and assessed future need for recreational facilities and services; and

WHEREAS, the 2023 Antwerp Township Parks and Recreation Plan has been completed, and a public hearing was held before the Recreation Committee on January 4, 2023, to hear comments from the public.

WHEREAS, the Recreation Committee reviewed the 2023 Antwerp Township Parks and Recreation Plan and passed a resolution recommending adoption at their meeting on January 4, 2023.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Antwerp Township Board of Trustees does hereby adopt the 2023 Antwerp Township Parks and Recreation Plan to serve as a guide to future recreation development in Antwerp Township.

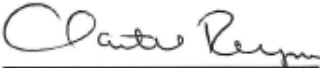
Motion by: Stock

Supported by: Cutting

Ayes: 5
Nays: 0
Absent: 0

I, Chantel Reyna, Clerk of Antwerp Township, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the Antwerp Township Board of Trustees and its regular meeting held on January 10, 2023.

Dated this 10 day of January, 2023


Chantel Reyna, Township Clerk



Appendix C: Funding Sources

The scope of recreation improvements proposed in the Action Program can be financed through a combination of resources. In addition to the general fund, potential funding sources are described below.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

The National Park Service’s Land and Water Conservation Fund provides funding assistance for communities to acquire and develop land for outdoor recreation. The minimum award is \$15,000 and the maximum is \$500,000 with a required 50% local match. The eligibility criterion emphasizes preservation of natural resources such as waterways. Grant applications are due in April of each year. For more information, visit their website at:



Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF)

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources administers the MNRTF grant program. The MNRTF provides funding assistance for the purchase of land (or interests in land) for recreation or protection of land because of its environmental importance or scenic beauty, and the development of recreation facilities. Funding assistance is directed at projects that protect natural resources or improve outdoor recreational opportunities, especially those promoting “universal design” and development of trails. Two types of grant applications are offered: improvement grants are offered between \$15,000 and \$500,000 with a required minimum local match of 25%, and acquisition grant amounts vary depending upon the value of property and local match amount – there is no maximum. MNRTF grants are ideal for acquisition of environmentally sensitive land and park development plans, but it is a highly sought source of funding and the application process can be quite competitive. Applications are due in April and September of each year for acquisition projects and April of each year for development projects. For more information, visit their website at:



www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10366_37984_37985-124961--,00.html



Clean Michigan Initiative's Local Recreation Grants

In 1998, Michigan voters approved a bond initiative to fund improvements to State and local parks. The Local Recreation Grants Program provides funding for the development and renovation of indoor or outdoor public recreation facilities and infrastructure. The goal of the program is to enhance or develop recreational opportunities by improving or replacing an existing public facility, by meeting the recreational needs of the local residents, or by attracting tourists. Grants are awarded for non-acquisition projects



in amounts between \$15,000 to \$750,000, based on the need for the project, capability of the local community to operate and maintain the improvement, and quality of the site and project design. More information on these programs can be found on the state's website at:

http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-30301_31154_32314---,00.html

Michigan Natural Resources Tree Planting Grants

Through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), there are two tree planting grant programs that will assist in funding park landscape enhancements and re-forestation projects. Applicants must provide at least 50% of the total project cost.

- **Arbor Day Mini-Grants.** This mini-grant program is designed to provide information and technical assistance to municipal governments and volunteer groups for urban and community forest activities related to Arbor Day. Applications are due in July with maximum grant requests of \$20,000. For more information, visit their website at:
www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10366_37984_38165-128813--,00.html
- **Urban Community Forestry Program.** This program provides the same services as above plus management plans, inventories and maintenance activities. These activities do not have to be related to Arbor Day. Applications are due in July with maximum grant requests of \$20,000. For more information, visit their website at:
www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10366_37984_38165-126153--,00.html

U.S. Department of the Interior

The Department of the Interior (DOI) is the nation's principal conservation agency. Its mission is to "protect and manage the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provide scientific and other information about those resources; and honor its trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated Island Communities."

- **Non-competitive Grants.** Grants are offered through the Historic Preservation Fund to assist State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices in their efforts to protect and preserve their historic resources.
- **Save America's Treasures.** Funding to government agencies and nonprofit organizations is available for preservation and conservation work on nationally significant artifacts, collections, and historic properties.



Wetland Program Development

The goals of the Environmental Protection Agency's wetland program and the Clean Water Action Plan are to increase the quantity and quality of wetlands in the U.S. by conserving and increasing wetland acreage, and improving wetland health. State, tribal, and local governmental agencies, interstate, intertribal, and local government associations are eligible to receive grant funds. Applications are due in the fall with a required 25% minimum local match. For more information, visit their website at:

www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/grantguidelines

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

TIF is authorized by the Downtown Development Authority Act and Local Development Finance Authority Act. When a TIF district is established, the stated equalized assessment value of all properties within the district is recorded. Every year thereafter, the property tax revenue generated by any increase in the total stated equalized value is "captured" by the responsible organization to finance improvements established in the overall development plan. The development plan is a required document illustrating all proposed improvements within the district. Often, revenue bonds are used to finance the improvements and the tax increment revenues are used to repay the bonds.

Conservation Easements

A conservation easement is a method of preserving open space that is guaranteed through formal documentation. This technique can also be used to preserve open space if it is not feasible or practical for the Township to acquire the land. Rather than obtaining fee simple, or complete ownership, an organization or community can purchase or acquire by gift an 'easement' to the property.

Recreation Bond

A number of bond programs can be used to finance construction of parks and recreation facilities. General Obligation Bonds are issued for specific community projects, such as park improvements and park land acquisition, and may not be used for other purposes. These bonds are usually paid for with property tax revenues. Revenue Bonds are issued for construction of public projects that generate revenues. The bonds are then retired using income generated by the project.

Special Millage

A property tax millage can be used to finance specific park and recreation projects such as park development, pathway improvements and facility upgrades. A millage is an effective method to divide costs over time amongst all the taxpayers in the community to provide matching grant funds or finance projects out-right. A millage allows more flexibility in how the money is used than a bond.

Local Fundraising

The Antwerp Township community is full of active, community-minded residents. Businesses, corporations, private clubs, community organizations, and individuals often contribute to recreation and other improvement programs to benefit the communities in which they are located. Private sector



contributions may be in the form of monetary contributions, the donation of land, the provision of volunteer services, or the contribution of equipment or facilities.

Soliciting funding and support from those who stand to benefit from parks and recreation improvements makes sense, but is also more likely to foster a sense of ownership of local resources.

Foundations

A foundation is a special non-profit legal entity that is established as a mechanism through which land, cash, and securities can be donated for the benefit of parks and recreation services. The assets are disbursed by the foundation Board of Directors according to a predetermined plan. Two of the more prominent, Michigan-based foundations that fund recreation programs include:

- **Arbor Day Foundation.** Becoming a member of the Arbor Day Foundation could provide the township with additional resources for tree planting and maintenance. Antwerp Township may investigate becoming a designated Tree-City USA, which provides additional advantages towards park enhancement projects. To qualify, the township must meet the following four standards, established by The Arbor Day Foundation and the National Association of State Foresters. More information is available on their website: www.arborday.org
 1. A Tree Board or Department
 2. A Tree Care Ordinance
 3. A Community Forestry program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita
 4. An Arbor Day observance and proclamation
- **Baseball Tomorrow Fund.** This fund, which is provided through a joint partnership between Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association, awards annual grants to projects aimed at increasing the number of youth participating in and improving the quality of baseball and softball programs. The program is specifically aimed at children ages 10 to 16, and to those using innovative approaches or providing opportunities to minorities and women. Tax exempt and 501(c)3 organizations are eligible, and Baseball Tomorrow strongly encourages at least 50% matching funds.
http://mlb.mlb.com/mlb/official_info/community/btf.jsp?content=grant_process
- **Bikes Belong Coalition.** The Bikes Belong Grants Program strives to put more people on bicycles more often by funding projects that leverage federal funding and build momentum for bicycling. They seek to assist local organizations, agencies, and citizens in developing bicycle facilities projects. Bikes Belong Coalition accepts applications for grants quarterly for up to \$10,000 each, and will consider successor grants for continuing projects. For more information, visit their website at: www.bikesbelong.org/grants





- **Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.** The Mott Foundation is a private, grantmaking organization based in Flint, Michigan with a vision, “of a world in which each of us is in partnership with the rest of the human race-where each individual's quality of life is connected to the well-being of the community, both locally and globally.” Mott funds environmental, social and economic programs that further their vision. Funding through Mott should be limited to those items with strong community support, preferably those initiated through grass-roots efforts that cannot be funded through other public funding sources.
www.mott.org

- **W. K. Kellogg Foundation.** The Kellogg Foundation’s mission is aimed at “creating communities, systems, and nations in which all children have an equitable and promising future – one in which all children thrive.” As such, many of their grants fund school-related projects, and since recreation in Antwerp Township involves the school districts, this is a promising funding source for school-based applications. Kellogg grants are directed to child education and learning; food, health and well-being; and family economic security, and are best suited for Safe Routes to School projects that focus on improving safety and non-motorized access to local schools.
www.wkkf.org/default.aspx?LanguageID=0

- **Michigan Recreation and Park Association Foundation.** The MRPA is committed to enhancing quality of life experiences for all people by supporting community enrichment, research, advocacy, natural resources, and professional development of park and recreation professionals, students, and citizen advocates.
www.mrpafoundation.org

- **National Recreation Foundation.** The National Recreation Foundation has actively made annual grants since its inception as a foundation in 1965. Grants are generally awarded in two ways: as a Trustee Grant or a Special Grant. Every year, each member of the Board of Trustees selects a project they believe fulfills the mission of the National Recreation Foundation. The sponsoring Trustee must propose the project to the Board with recommendations to fund the grant. Trustee Grants are limited to \$30,000.
<http://www.nationalrecreationfoundation.org/recent-grants2/>

- **Lowe’s Charitable and Educational Foundation.** The Lowe’s Charitable and Educational Foundation has works to improve the communities and schools they serve. The foundation supports nonprofit organizations and public institutions that support public education and community improvement and has grant funds available for playground projects (\$5,000-\$25,000).
https://www.lowes.com/cd_Charitable+and+Educational+Foundation_936258779

- **KaBOOM!.** Dr. Pepper Snapple & KaBOOM! offer \$15,000 grants to qualifying U.S.-based organizations to be used toward the purchase of playground equipment that will be built using the KaBOOM! community-build model. These partners also offer \$750 grants to communities who want to make their playgrounds cleaner, safer, and more inviting. In addition, KaBOOM! And Dr. Pepper Snapple offer joint-use grants for communities who partner with schools to open recreation facilities



to the public during non-school hours. These grants are solely for the expansion or creation of joint use agreements. There is a rolling deadline for this set of grants.

<https://kaboom.org/grants>



Appendix D: Transmittal Information and Checklist



Letter to the Van Buren County Planning Commission

DANIEL J. RUZICK, Supervisor
CHANTEL REYNA, Clerk
BONNIE OSBORNE, Treasurer
BRUCE T. CUTTING, Trustee
GARY STOCK, Trustee

ANTWERP TOWNSHIP
24821 FRONT AVENUE
MATTAWAN, MI 49071-9598
Phone: 269.668.2615
Fax: 269.668.5233

Office Hours:
Mon., Wed., Thurs.
7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Tuesday: 7:00 a.m. – 6 p.m.

www.antwerptownship.com

January 23, 2023

Van Buren County Planning Commission
219 Paw Paw St., Suite 201
Paw Paw, MI 49079

Re: 2023 Antwerp Township Parks and Recreation Plan

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Antwerp Township Board and Recreation Committee, the 2023 Antwerp Township Parks and Recreation Plan was approved on January 10, 2023. The final plan is available for your review on the Township's website: <https://antwerptownship.com/>

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns at 616-540-1794 or hcplanning@outlook.com.

Sincerely,

David M. Jirousek, AICP
Antwerp Township Planner and Zoning Administrator

CC: Dan Ruzick, Township Supervisor



Letter to Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

DANIEL J. RUZICK, Supervisor
CHANTEL REYNA, Clerk
BONNIE OSBORNE, Treasurer
BRUCE T. CUTTING, Trustee
GARY STOCK, Trustee

ANTWERP TOWNSHIP
24821 FRONT AVENUE
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Office Hours:
Mon., Wed., Thurs.
7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Tuesday, 7:00 a.m. – 6 p.m.

www.antwerptownship.com

January 23, 2023

Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
376 W. Main Street, Suite 130
Benton Harbor, Michigan 49022-3651

Re: 2023 Antwerp Township Parks and Recreation Plan

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Antwerp Township Board and Recreation Committee, the 2023 Antwerp Township Parks and Recreation Plan was approved on January 10, 2023. The final plan is available for your review on the Township's website: <https://antwerptownship.com/>

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns at 616-540-1794 or hcplanning@outlook.com.

Sincerely,

David M. Jirousek, AICP
Antwerp Township Planner and Zoning Administrator

CC: Dan Ruzick, Township Supervisor



Certification Checklist



Michigan Department of Natural Resources-Grants Management

COMMUNITY PARK, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND GREENWAY PLAN CERTIFICATION CHECKLIST

By Authority of Parts 19, 703 and 716 of Act 451, P.A. 1994, as amended, submission of this information is required for eligibility to apply for grants

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete, obtain certification signatures and submit this checklist with a locally adopted recreation plan.

All recreation plans are required to meet the content and local approval standards listed in this checklist and as outlined in the Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plans provided by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Plans must be submitted to the DNR with a completed checklist that has been signed by an authorized official(s) of the local unit of government(s) submitting the plan. Plans may be submitted at any time of the year, but no later than February 1 of the year the local unit of government is applying for grants.

Table with 3 columns: Name of Plan, County, and Month and year plan adopted by the community's governing body. Row 1: 2023 Antwerp Township Parks and Recreation Plan, Van Buren, January, 2023.

PLAN CONTENT

INSTRUCTIONS: Please check each box to certify that the listed information is included in the final plan.

- 1. COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION
2. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE
3. RECREATION INVENTORY
4. RESOURCE INVENTORY (OPTIONAL)
5. DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING PROCESS



6. DESCRIPTION OF THE PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

Description of the Method(s) Used to Solicit Public Input Before or During Preparation of the Plan, Including a Copy of the Survey or Meeting Agenda and a Summary of the Responses Received

Copy of the Notice of the Availability of the Draft Plan for Public Review and Comment

Date of the Notice December 1, 2022

Type of Notice Newspaper, Website

Plan Location Township Office, Website

Duration of Draft Plan Public Review Period (Must be at Least 30 Days) 34 days

Copy of the Notice for the Public Meeting Held after the One Month Public Review Period and Before the Plan's Adoption by the Governing Body(ies)

Date of Notice December 1, 2022

Name of Newspaper Courier Leader

Date of Meeting January 4, 2023

Copy of the Minutes from the Public Meeting

7. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

8. ACTION PROGRAM

9. POST-COMPLETION SELF-CERTIFICATION REPORT(S)

PLAN ADOPTION DOCUMENTATION

APPROVAL DOCUMENTATION: For multi-jurisdictional plans, each local unit of government must pass a resolution adopting the plan. Prepare and attach a separate page for each unit of government included in the plan.

1. Official resolution of adoption by the governing body dated: January 10, 2023

2. Official resolution of the Antwerp Twp. Recreation Committee Commission or Board, recommending adoption of the plan by the governing body, dated: January 4, 2023

3. Copy of letter transmitting adopted plan to County Planning Agency dated: January 23, 2023

4. Copy of letter transmitting adopted plan to Regional Planning Agency dated: January 23, 2023


OVERALL CERTIFICATION

NOTE: For multi-jurisdictional plans, Overall Certification must include the signature of each local unit of government. Prepare and attach a separate signature page for each unit of government included in the plan.

I hereby certify that the recreation plan for

Antwerp Township (Van Buren County) *includes the required content, as indicated*
(Local Unit of Government)

above and as set forth by the DNR.

David Jirousek  January 23, 2023
Authorized Official for the Local Unit of Government Date

This completed checklist must be uploaded in MiRecGrants.



Appendix E: Maps

Township Parks

Including the Village of Paw Paw

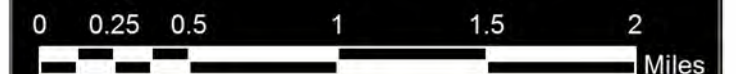
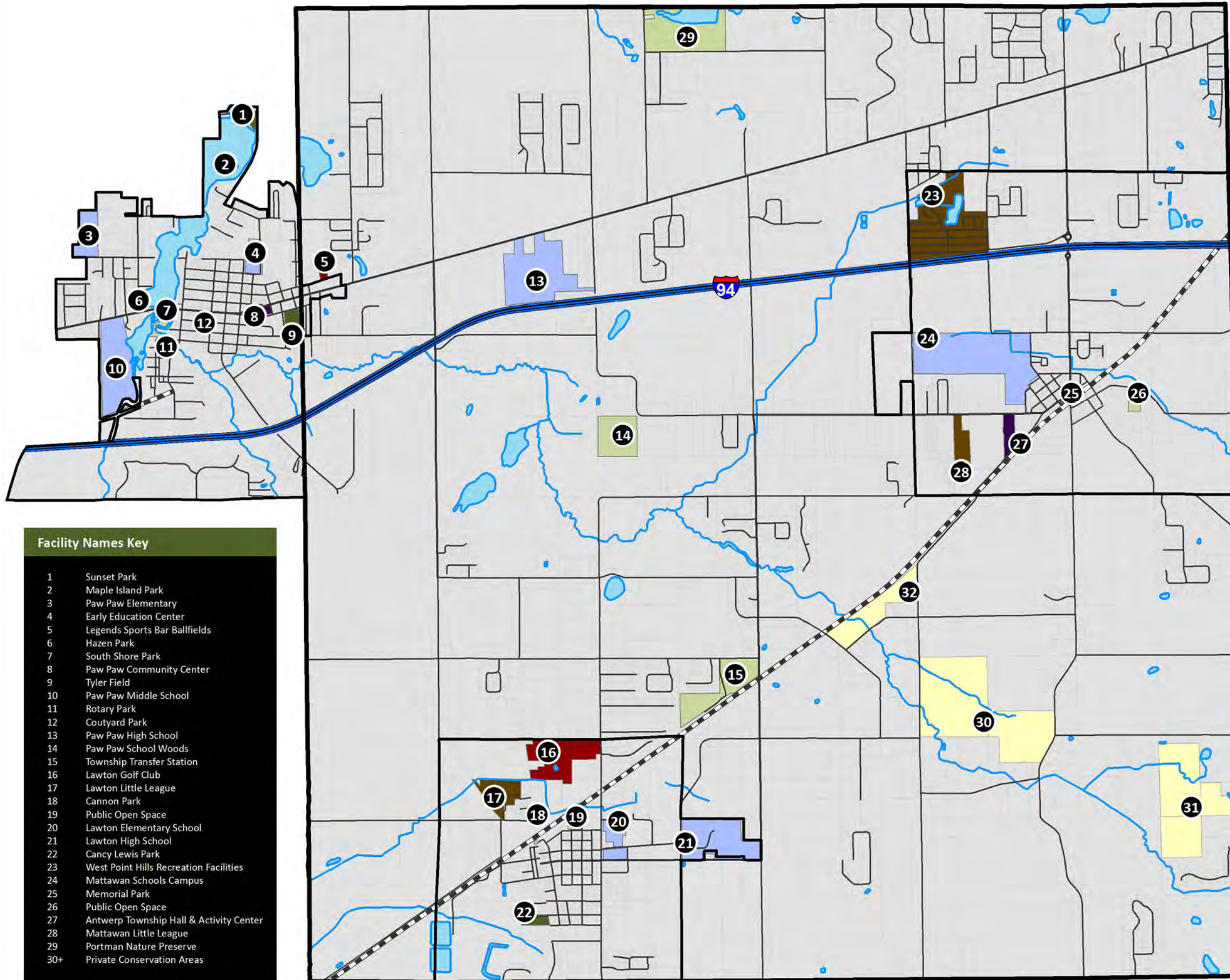
Antwerp Township
Van Buren County, MI
2023 Parks and Recreation Plan

Park and Facility Types

-  Parks
-  Schools
-  Public Facilities
-  Public Open Spaces
-  Private Conservation
-  Non-Commercial Recreation
-  Commercial Recreation

Facility Names Key

- 1 Sunset Park
- 2 Maple Island Park
- 3 Paw Paw Elementary
- 4 Early Education Center
- 5 Legends Sports Bar Ballfields
- 6 Hazen Park
- 7 South Shore Park
- 8 Paw Paw Community Center
- 9 Tyler Field
- 10 Paw Paw Middle School
- 11 Rotary Park
- 12 Coutyard Park
- 13 Paw Paw High School
- 14 Paw Paw School Woods
- 15 Township Transfer Station
- 16 Lawton Golf Club
- 17 Lawton Little League
- 18 Cannon Park
- 19 Public Open Space
- 20 Lawton Elementary School
- 21 Lawton High School
- 22 Cancy Lewis Park
- 23 West Point Hills Recreation Facilities
- 24 Mattawan Schools Campus
- 25 Memorial Park
- 26 Public Open Space
- 27 Antwerp Township Hall & Activity Center
- 28 Mattawan Little League
- 29 Portman Nature Preserve
- 30+ Private Conservation Areas

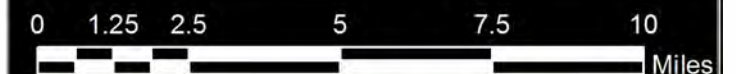


Regional Parks

Antwerp Township
Van Buren County, MI
2023 Parks and Recreation Plan



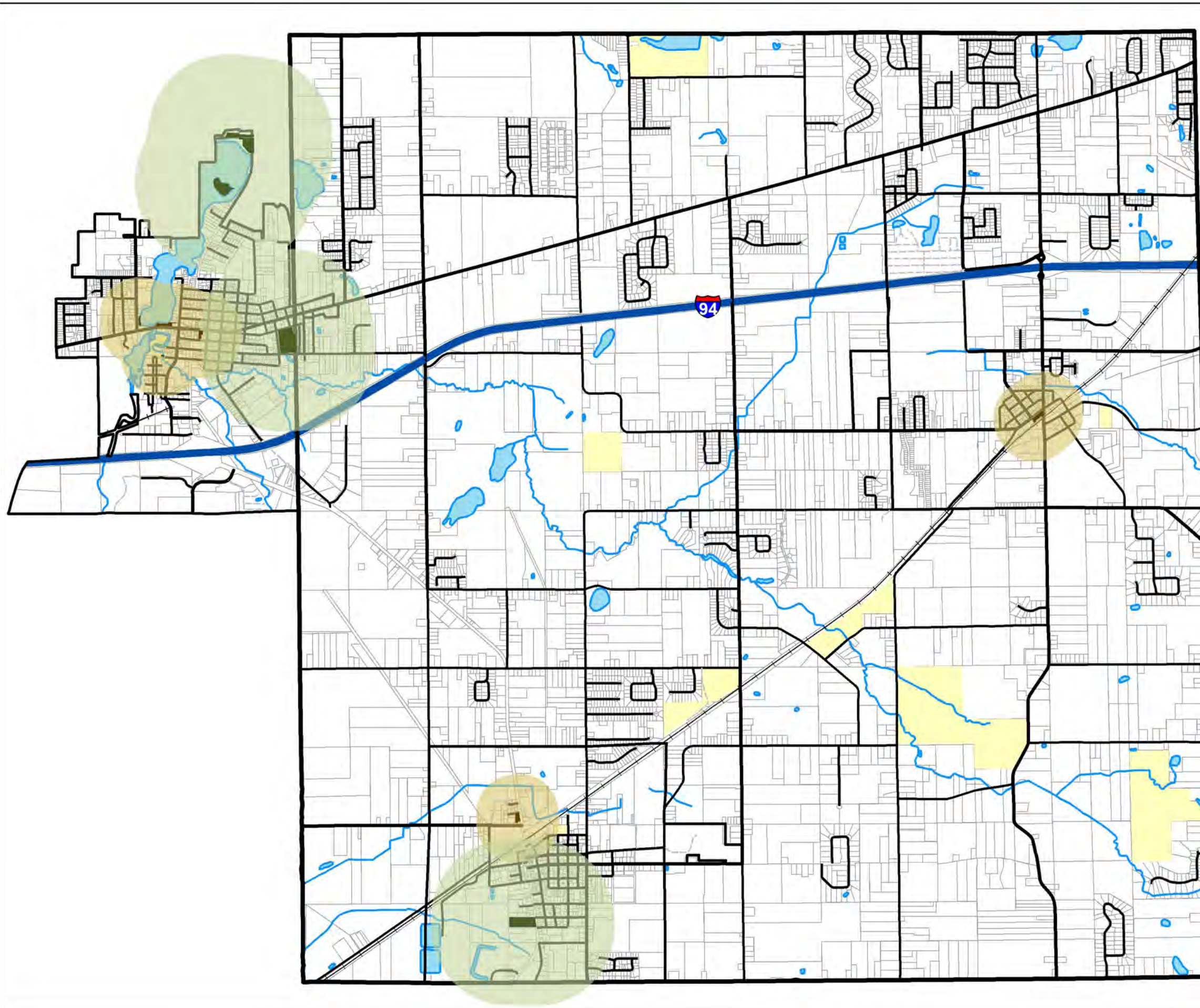
- Nature Preserves
- State Parks
- Golf Courses
- Ski Resorts
- Campgrounds
- Other Recreation Facilities
- Cities
- Villages
- Antwerp Township
- Townships








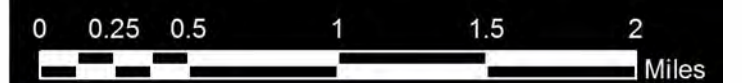
Map Three

Park Service Areas

Antwerp Township
Van Buren County, MI
2023 Parks and Recreation Plan

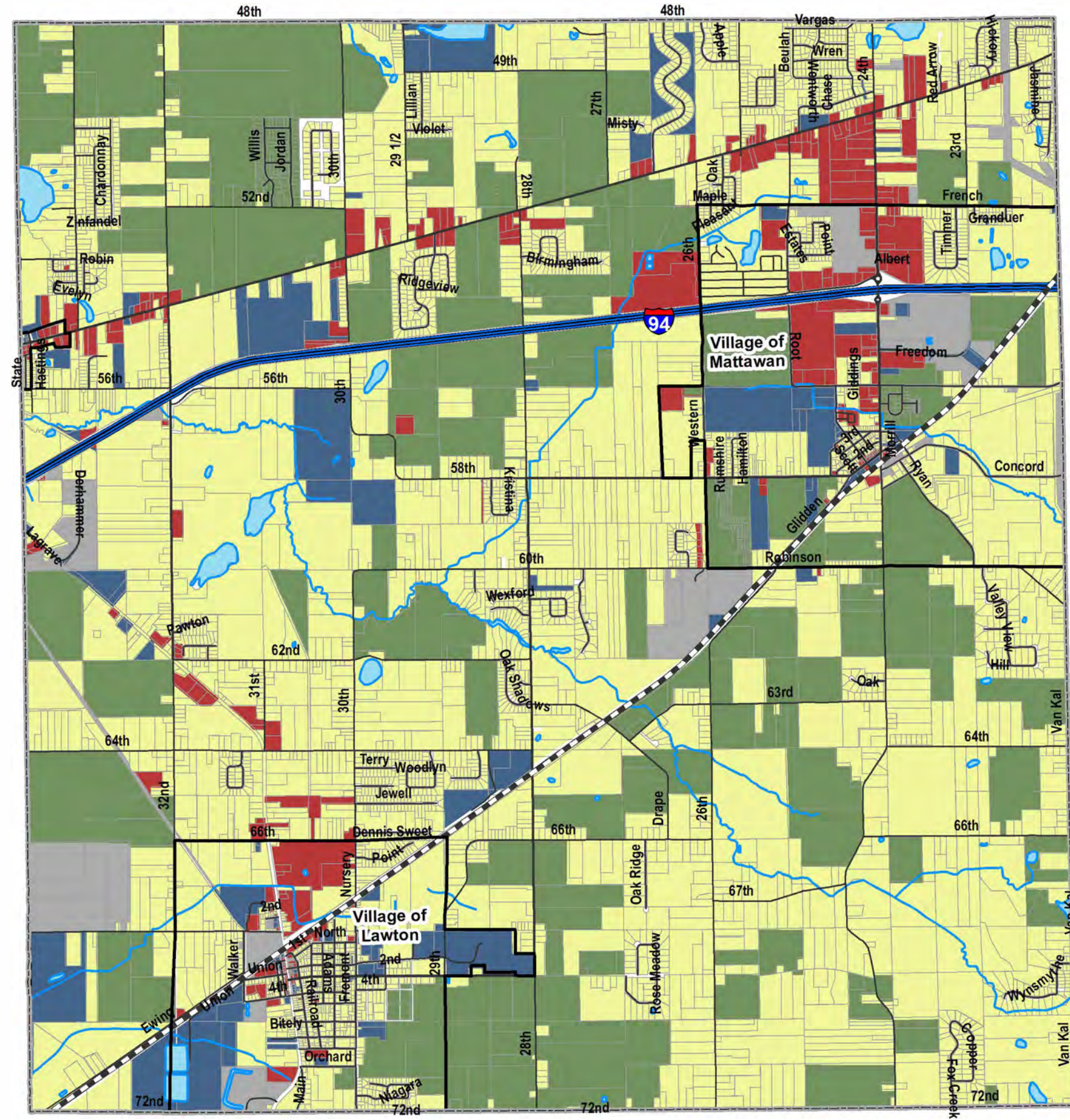


-  Area served by Neighborhood Park (1/2 mile radius)
-  Area served by Mini Park (1/4 mile radius)
-  Neighborhood Parks
-  Mini Parks
-  Natural Resource Areas
Private Conservation Areas + Public Open Spaces



Data Sources: MCGI,
Southwest MI Regional
Planning Commission,
LSL Planning, Inc.

williams&works
engineers | surveyors | planners



Map Four

Existing Land Use

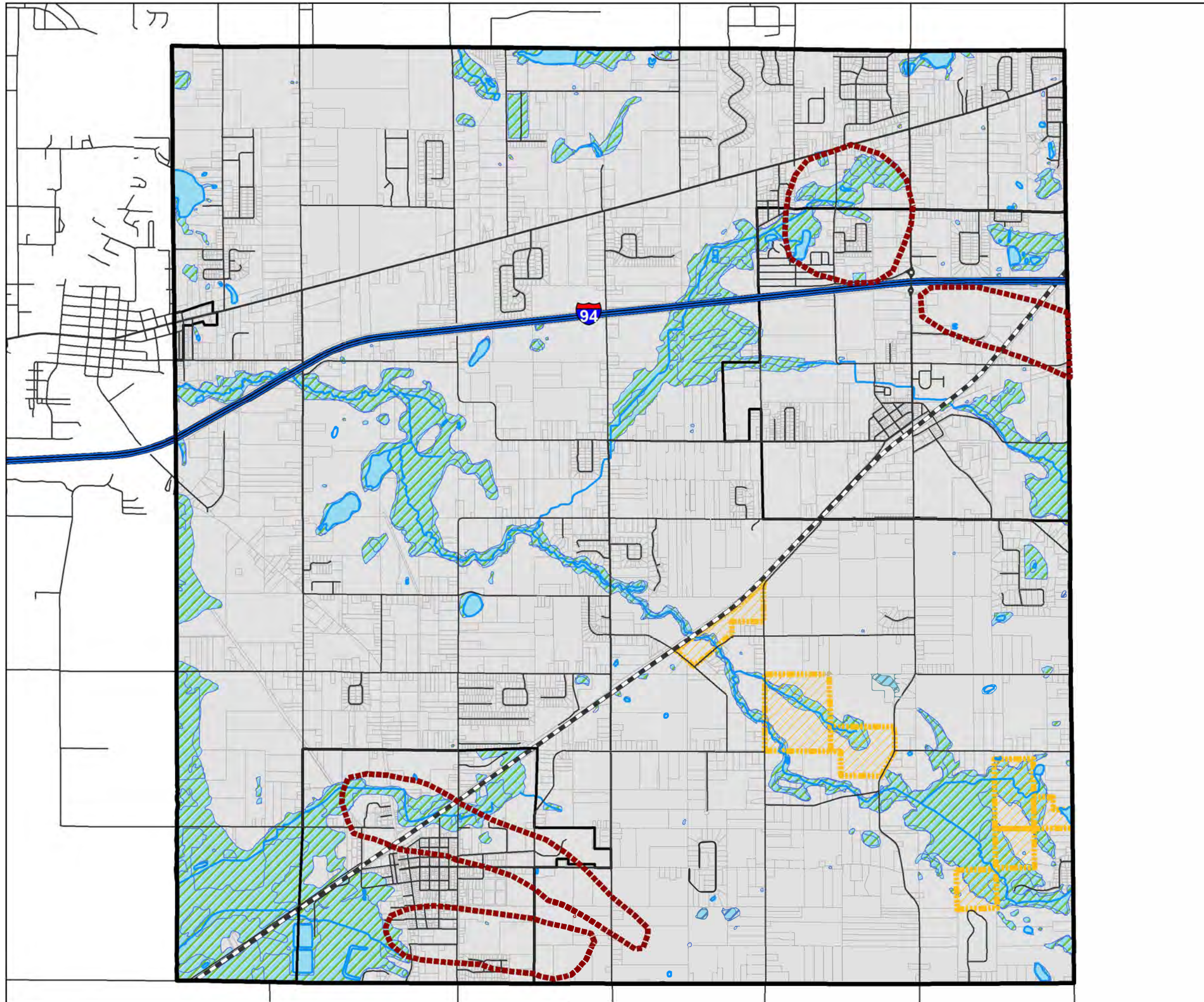
Antwerp Township
 Van Buren County, MI
 2023 Parks and Recreation Plan

- Agricultural
- Commercial/Office
- Industrial
- Public/Quasi-Public
- Residential
- Vacant



Data Sources: MCGI,
 Southwest MI Regional
 Planning Commission,
 Williams & Works







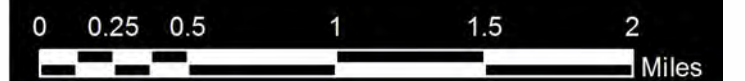


Map Five

Natural Features

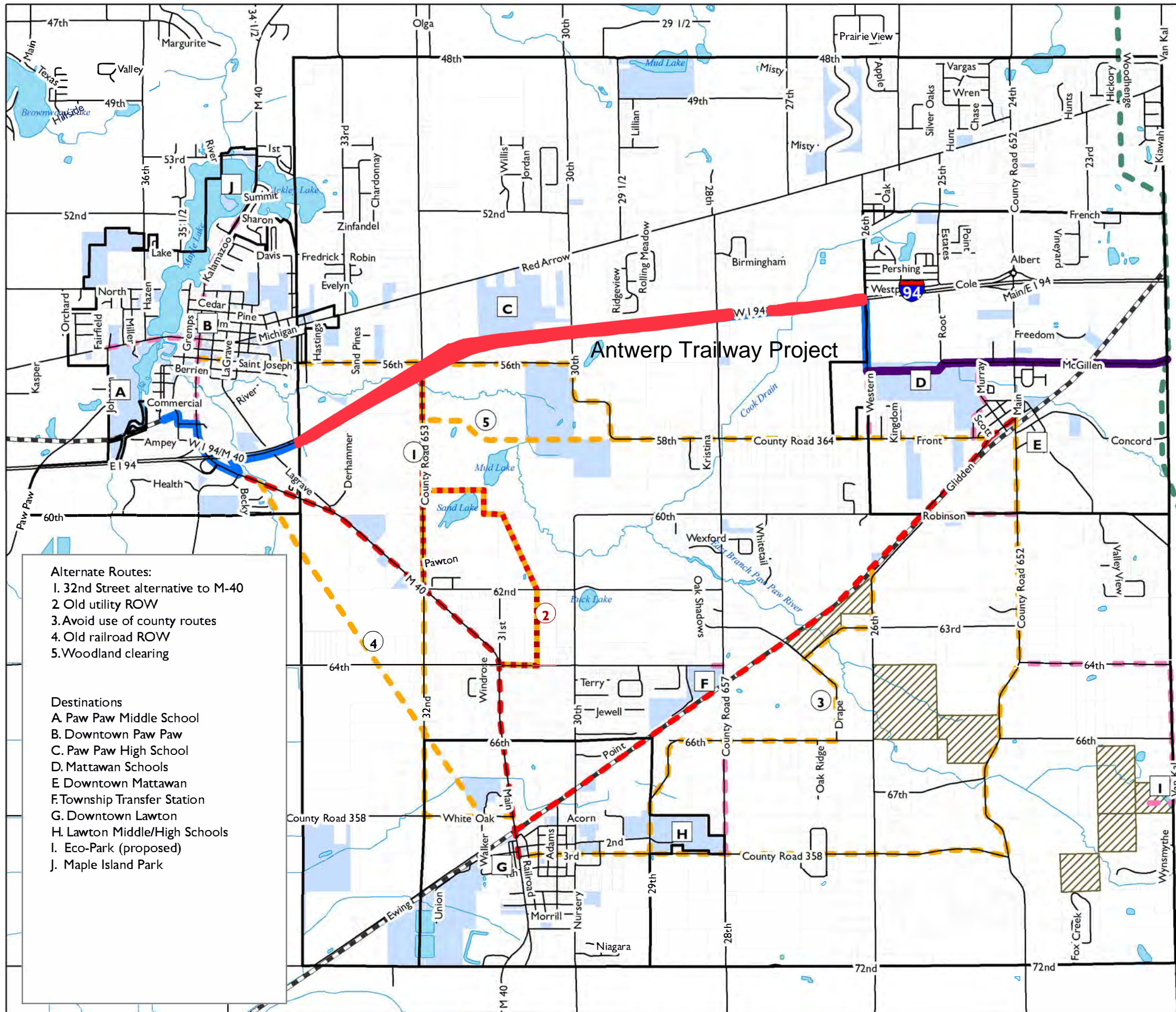
Antwerp Township
Van Buren County, MI
2023 Parks and Recreation Plan

-  Wellhead Protection Areas
-  Waterways
-  Perpetual Conservation
-  Wetlands



Data Sources: MCGI,
Southwest MI Regional
Planning Commission,
Williams & Works

williams&works
engineers | surveyors | planners



Map Six
Proposed Pathways
 Including the Village of Paw Paw
 Antwerp Township
 Van Buren County, MI
 2023 Parks and Recreation Plan

- Top Priority Pathways**
- █ Proposed Phase 1
 - █ Future Phase 2
 - █ Future Mattawan Trail
- Future Proposed Pathways**
- - - Proposed Main Route
 - - - Future Loop
 - - - Alternate Proposed Routes
 - - - Potential Regional Trail
 - - - Spurs to Other Routes/Sites
 - Property in Conservation
 - Public/Quasi-Public Property
 - Waterways

Alternate Routes:

1. 32nd Street alternative to M-40
2. Old utility ROW
3. Avoid use of county routes
4. Old railroad ROW
5. Woodland clearing

Destinations

- A. Paw Paw Middle School
- B. Downtown Paw Paw
- C. Paw Paw High School
- D. Mattawan Schools
- E. Downtown Mattawan
- F. Township Transfer Station
- G. Downtown Lawton
- H. Lawton Middle/High Schools
- I. Eco-Park (proposed)
- J. Maple Island Park

