

FIVE YEAR PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

2015-2020

SOLON TOWNSHIP KENT COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Draft September 2015

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Solon Township

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Elected Township Board

Robert Ellick – Supervisor

Mary Lou Poulsen – Clerk

Art Gerhardt – Treasurer

V. Fred Gunnell – Trustee

Mark Hoskins – Trustee

Parks and Recreation Committee

Shelly Aardema, Chair

Len Allington, Vice-Chair

Mary Lou Poulsen, Secretary

Koadi Pritchard, Member

Tony Owen, Member

Hal Babcock, Member

Annette Ellick, Member

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1 – Introduction	1
Chapter 2 – Community Description	3
Chapter 3 – Administrative Structure	7
Chapter 4 – Existing Parks, Natural Areas, and Recreation Facilities	11
Chapter 5 – Recreation Analysis	21
Chapter 6 – Planning and Public Input Process	29
Chapter 7 – Goals and Objectives	33
Chapter 8 – Action Plan	37

Tables

Table 1 – Population Comparison	5
Table 2 – Population by Age	5
Table 3 – Park Accessibility Assessment	13
Table 4 – 2015 Recreation Facilities	14
Table 5 – Mini Park Acreage Analysis	22
Table 6 – Neighborhood Park Acreage Analysis	23
Table 7 – Community Park Acreage Analysis	24
Table 8 – Recreation Standards and Deficiency Analysis	26
Table 9 – Capital Improvement Schedule	37

Maps

Map 1 – Location Map	4
Map 2 – Existing Recreation Facilities	18
Map 3 – Regional Recreation Facilities	19

Appendices

1 – Echo Park Plan	
2 – Firefighters Park Plan	
3 – Township Park Master Plan	
4 – Notice for Public Hearing for Adoption (<i>placeholder</i>)	
5 – Board of Trustees Resolution of Adoption (<i>placeholder</i>)	
6 – Minutes of Public Hearing for Adoption (<i>placeholder</i>)	
7 – Notice for Public Review and Comment Period (<i>placeholder</i>)	
8 – Visioning Workshop Notice	
9 – Visioning Workshop Questionnaire	
10 – Visioning Workshop Notes	
11 – June 4, 2015 Notice for Township Park Master Plan Unveiling	
12 – May 29, 2015 Notice for Township Park Master Plan Unveiling	
13 – May 5, 2015 Park Survey	
14 – March 30, 2015 Community Input Meeting Notes	
15 – March 26, 2015 Notice for Township Park Master Plan Public Input Meeting	
16 – March 18, 2015 Public Input Meeting Notes	

- 17 – Stakeholder Meeting Notes
- 18 – 2012 Survey
- 19 – Regional Planning Agency Letter
- 20 – County Planning Agency Letter
- 21 – Certification Checklist

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space are important components of vibrant and healthy communities and provide many recreational, social, and environmental benefits that contribute to a high quality of life. Solon Township is committed to providing high quality recreational opportunities for its residents and visitors and has chosen to take an active role in the delivery of recreational opportunities by developing this Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Recreation planning is an exercise engaged by local governments to promote the development and expansion of recreational facilities and services for the benefit of its community. Parks and recreational facilities provide many benefits to the community and the natural environment. Parks provide people with a place to gather, be active, socialize, and connect with the environment and community. Developing a green infrastructure also enhances the livability of a community by increasing property values and connecting the community. Having the ability to recreate has also been shown to improve the quality of life by contributing to overall mental and physical health and reducing obesity brought on by inactivity. As the community continues to grow and change over time, the Township continues to dedicate itself to improving recreational offerings for the community. This plan represents the culmination of the planning efforts of the community and local officials; and reflects the Township's desire to blend the available recreational resources and activities with the natural beauty of the surroundings and the environmental and cultural elements of the community.

PLAN PURPOSE

The Five-Year Recreation Plan is a guide for the future development of recreation opportunities and park development projects for the residents and visitors of the Township. The Township has recognized the importance of recreation planning and the significant role that recreation plays in providing a high quality of life and improved physical health of its citizens. This understanding has been demonstrated in this effort to create the Parks and Recreation Master Plan with the hopes of developing local park systems and public trails, promoting the preservation of natural areas, and establishing a solid commitment to strengthening a sense of community. This plan represents a policy statement about what the community values and what the residents hope the community will become in regards to parks and recreation facilities and services. The plan addresses current recreation issues and identifies and prioritizes future needs of the community and the means for meeting those needs over the upcoming five-year period.

The Township is a part of the Cedar Springs Area Parks and Recreation Board and has participated in the Cedar Springs Area Five Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Although the Township is participating in this regional planning effort, it has decided to develop its own Five Year Recreation Plan to better serve its residents. This new plan builds on what was developed in the regional recreation plan and has been developed to reflect the changing needs and goals of the Solon Township community. The plan also meets the Michigan Department of Natural Resources requirements for qualifying for Federal and State funding assistance. These funds are available for land acquisition, facility development and improvements to new and existing park lands.

PLAN SCOPE

The scope of this plan includes suggestions for the management, improvement, and development of the recreation system within Solon Township. The following Plan is to serve as a guide for directing the Township in the expansion of existing facilities and the development of

new facilities and programs. The plan also considers recreational facilities within the county and neighboring municipalities that are available to citizens of the Solon community. Key planning issues are identified, a clear set of goals and objectives are outlined, and specific implementation strategies are identified. The scope will include all of the Township's existing recreation facilities, undeveloped open space, and linear "green" corridors. Recreational programming is also a consideration, although this is not handled directly by the Township. The area of the planning effort is essentially limited to the Township boundaries. However, consideration is also made of regional facilities that influence use patterns. The use of Township facilities by residents living in the surrounding communities, which may have limited recreation facilities of their own, is also a consideration of the planning process. In terms of an implementation time-line, the Action Program section of this document covers development over the next five years.

CHAPTER 2- COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

PLAN JURISDICTION

This section of the plan is intended to describe the jurisdiction and focus of the plan, provide a brief overview of the community, and identify important community based factors that should be considered in parks and recreational planning. This Recreation Master Plan has been prepared to serve Solon Township and is planned to focus on all aspects of the Township's parks and recreation facilities and programs. Recreational facilities and programs that serve adjacent communities have also been considered and incorporated into this planning document. The Plan is intended to contribute to the quality of life for the residents and visitors of the Solon Township community, but also to provide recreational experiences to the residents in adjacent communities within the County.

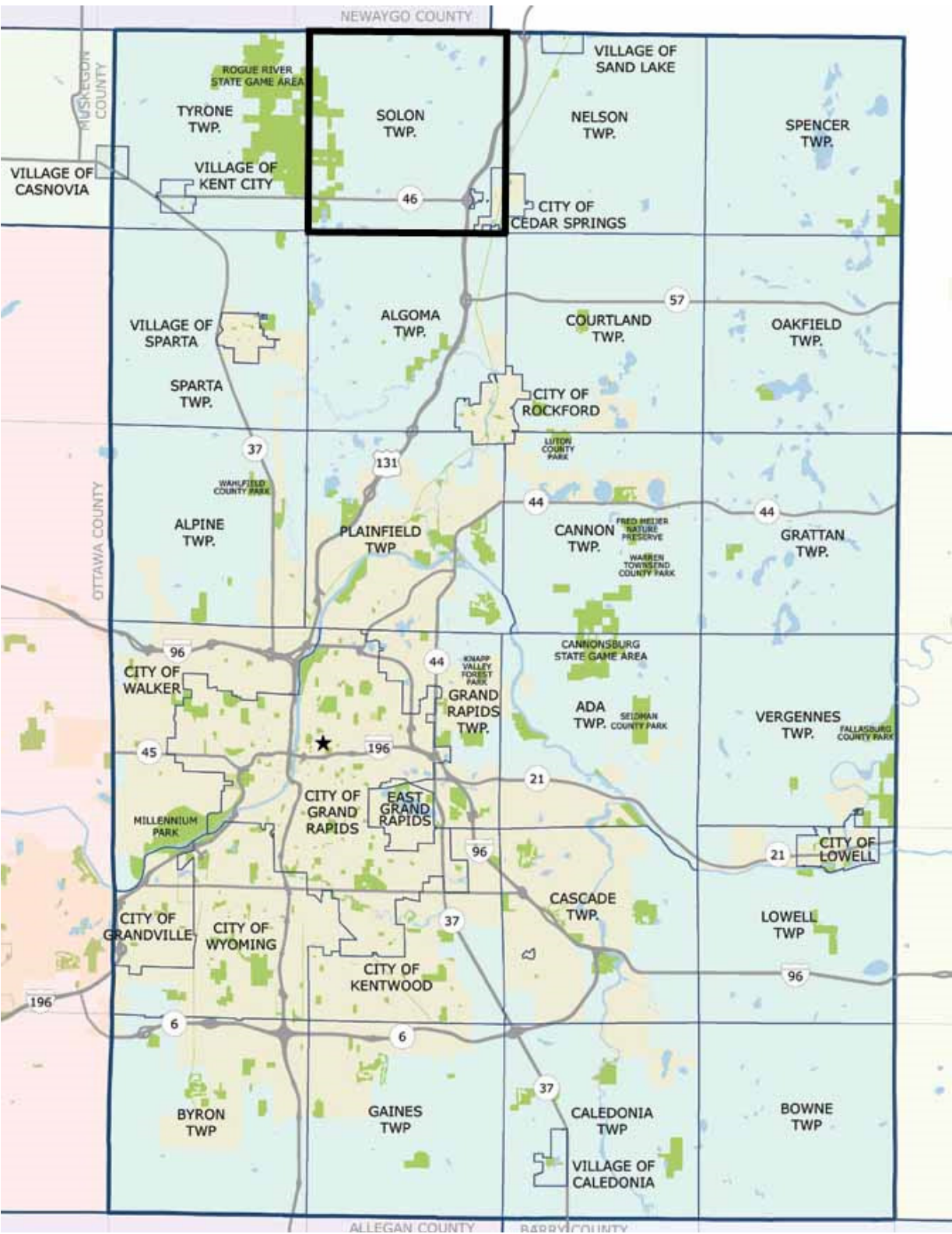
COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Solon Township is located in the north portion of Kent County and encompasses a total area of 36.3 square miles. Solon Township adjoins the City of Cedar Springs and is approximately 23 miles north of downtown Grand Rapids. The Township is bordered by Ensley Township in Newaygo County to the north, Nelson Township to the east, the City of Cedar Springs to the southeast, Algoma Township to the south, and Tyrone Township to the west. The Township also encompasses a small section of a major highway trunk line: US-131 which cuts north/south through the southeastern part of the Township near Cedar Springs. Refer to Map 1 which shows the Township's location in a regional context.

The area was first settled in 1854 and was initially attached to Algoma and called North Algoma until 1857 when it was organized as a separate Township under the name of Solon. The community is characterized by significant woodlands, farmlands, rural residences, and several inland lakes. The land is diversified by broad plains, areas of open cropland, brushy hillsides, natural landscapes, and marshy lowlands. The land is mostly level throughout the Township and tends to slope from east to west. According to the 2010 Census, Solon Township has a population of 5,974. Although there are no K-12 schools located within the Township the following school districts are encompassed by the Township: Cedar Springs Public Schools, Tri County Area Schools, Grant Public Schools, and Kent City Community Schools.

Solon Township is blessed with several inland lakes and streams that provide a substantial recreational resource for residents. These water resources provide exceptional recreational opportunities and have also served as magnets for residential development. The lakes in the Township include: Gilbert Lake, Upper Lake, Middle Lake, Lower Lake, Lime Lake, Black Lake, No-Ko-Mo Lake, Giddings Lake, Long Lake, Clear Lake, KeWagaWan Lake, and Olin Lake. Rivers and streams in the Township include: Duke Creek, Forest Creek, Cedar Creek, Spring Creek, Frost Creek, and White Creek. These lakes and creeks provide aesthetic and recreational values while also functioning as natural retention and ground water recharge basins. Additionally, public access points are provided to some of the lakes, providing opportunities for citizens without private lake frontage to enjoy these water features.

Map 1. Solon Township Location Map



POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

The analysis of population growth trends can be a helpful tool in understanding the Township's recreational needs. Also reviewing other demographic indicators such as age, education, income, and employment trends can assist in determining the type of recreational facilities that may be needed to keep pace with demand.

The 2010 U.S. Census indicates a population in Solon Township of 5,974 which represents a 28% increase from the 2000 Census. The 2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate for Solon Township is 6,046 which represents a 29.6% increase from the 2000 Census. This indicates the Township has experienced a modest but steady population growth rate. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the Township's growth, it is important to compare growth comparisons with other adjacent communities. This can be helpful in attempting to forecast areas of future growth in the greater Cedar Springs area and how this might impact future demands on the Township's park system. The following table illustrates population growth comparisons with adjacent communities as well as the County and State. As shown below, the growth rate in the Township has generally kept pace with or exceeded growth in adjacent communities.

Table 1: Population Comparison - Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Community	1990 Population	2000 Population	2010 Population	Rate of Growth 2000-2010	2015 Estimate
Solon Twp	3,648	4,662	5,974	28.1%	6,219
Nelson Twp	3,406	4,192	4,764	13.6%	4,825
Algoma Twp	5,496	7,596	9,932	30.7%	10,429
Courtland Twp	3,950	5,817	7,678	32%	8,608
Cedar Springs, City	2,600	3,112	3,509	12.7%	3,708
Kent County	500,631	574,336	602,622	4.92%	629,237
State of Michigan	9,295,297	9,938,444	9,883,640	-0.5%	9,909,877

The median age of Solon Township is 37.5, older than the County as a whole (34.4) and younger than the State of Michigan (39). The median age represents the mid-point in the range of all ages within the Township. Understanding the age demographics is useful in identifying the type of recreational facilities that may be needed, desired, or is in excess. For example, a younger population may desire more active types of facilities while an aging population may desire more passive types of facilities. The table below illustrates the breakdown of population based on age.

Table 2: Population by Age - Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Age	Persons	Percentage
Under 18	1,553	26%
18 and over	4,421	74%
18-24	428	9.1%
25-34	805	11.6%
35-49	1,360	22.7%
50-64	1,143	19.1%
65 and over	685	11.5%

A strong pattern for family oriented recreation is reflected in the age distribution with a high percentage of the population in the 25-49 group (34.3%). About 26% of the population falls in the 18 and under age range suggesting there may be a need for youth-oriented facilities. About 30.6 % of the population falls in the 50 and over age group suggesting a need for senior-oriented facilities. The 18-24 age group makes up the smallest portion of the population likely due to lack of major universities and emerging professional job opportunities. The Township's age distribution reflects a need for park and recreation facilities for young, active families, as well as accessible facilities for seniors. The 2013 American Community Survey data for individuals with disabilities estimates that 11% of Solon Township residents have a disability, compared to 10.7% for the County and 19.3% for the United States.

The 2010 U.S. Census Bureau data indicates a median household income level of \$60,306 compared to \$44,814 in 2000. The median income level in the Township is about 17% higher than that of the County (\$51,667) and about 29% higher than the State of Michigan (\$46,861). This level of income in the Township could make it possible to secure certain types of grants, but may not support the concept of a park millage. In terms of ethnicity, Solon Township is a Caucasian community with 96% of the population being white.

CHAPTER 3 – ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

In order to understand how park and recreation functions are administered in the Township, we must look at the overall administrative structure of the Township. Solon Township is categorized as a General Law Township under State of Michigan Law. The main governing body of the Township is the Solon Township Board of Trustees, which is an elected body that represents the interests of the Township citizens. The Township Board of Trustees is comprised of the Supervisor, Clerk, Treasurer, and two at-large Trustees. In addition to overall municipal management, the Board of Trustees oversees the financial administration of the Township; develops coordinates, and implements services; and strives to enhance the community to ensure a high quality of life for the residents of the Township. The Township also employs a Deputy Treasurer, a Deputy Clerk, an Assessor, six administrative employees, and currently twenty fire-fighters.

The Township Supervisor serves as the chief administrative officer and works with the Board of Trustees to coordinate and supervise the activities of staff, and implement the policy, programs, and projects established by the board. Township currently does not have an organized parks and recreation department and staff. The Township Supervisor coordinates maintenance and operations; while the Township Board makes decisions regarding park budgeting, grant applications, land acquisition, facilities and program development.

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

The Township has recognized that, as the demand for public services has increased over time with the increase in development, the establishment of additional committees would be beneficial to better meet the needs of the Township. Therefore in 2013 the Township established the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee. The Committee consists of seven Township citizens who are appointed by the Township Board at the recommendation of the Township Supervisor. Committee members are volunteers who dedicate their time to the improvement of parks and recreation in Solon Township. The Parks and Recreation Committee serves in an advisory capacity to the Township Board and their responsibilities include: participate in the development, planning, and programming of current and future park facilities, and provide recommendations for all issues related to parks and recreation in the Township.

The Township currently does not employ parks and recreation staff. Operation of the park facilities is the responsibility of the Township Supervisor. Maintenance for park facilities is performed by an outside contractor. Security for Township parks is provided by the Kent County Sheriff's Department.

RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING

The Township does not provide recreational programming for existing park facilities. All recreational programming is currently handled by the Cedar Springs Area Parks and Recreation Board, of which Solon Township is a participating member.

BUDGETING AND FUNDING

Solon Township parks and recreation activities are funded with general fund dollars; there is no separate park millage. Any additional sources of income for parks and recreation come from private donations and recreational based grants. The Township Board oversees budgeting and allocates the appropriate funding amount based on projected needs. The Township Board has budgeted \$3,000 for parks and recreation from the General Fund for 2015.

CEDAR SPRINGS AREA PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD

In addition to administering its own parks and recreation facilities, Solon Township is also a participating member of the Cedar Springs Area Parks and Recreation Board. The Cedar Springs Area Parks and Recreation Board is a public authority formed under Act 156 of the Public Acts of 1917. The Board is established to address the local recreation resources in the service area of the City of Cedar Springs, Algoma, Courtland, Nelson and Solon Townships. The Board is comprised of twelve members; two from each community, and the Cedar Springs School District, of which there is a chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary and treasurer. Further, the Recreation Director for the Cedar Springs Area works with the Board integrating the activities of the Board throughout the Plan area. Solon Township appoints two representatives to this board.

The Cedar Springs Area Parks and Recreation Board establishes its own budget which is made up of annual dues of participating municipalities and revenue from recreational programs. As a member of this area board, Solon Township budgets funds from its General Fund to allocate to the Cedar Springs Area Parks and Recreation Board. The Township has budgeted \$4,000 to this board for 2015.

TOWNSHIP ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



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CHAPTER 4 – EXISTING PARKS, NATURAL AREAS, AND RECREATION FACILITIES

In order to understand the recreational needs of the Township, an inventory and analysis of the existing facilities was completed. The intent of the analysis is to provide a comprehensive perspective of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing recreational opportunities the Township has to offer its citizens. The inventory is based on information provided by Township leadership and Park Committee members, site inspections carried out by VIRIDIS Design Group, National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Standards, and informed opinions of interested citizens who participated in the public input exercises as part of the planning process.

SOLON TOWNSHIP FACILITIES

There are three (3) Township parks with existing recreational facilities on approximately 23.15-acres of public land within the Township. These parks are maintained by the Township and available to all Solon Township residents and visitors. There are no K-12 school facilities within the Township.

The NRPA has established generally recognized standards for classifying types of parkland based on size and function. These designations have been adopted by the MDNR; and provide one method of defining the purpose and use of facilities. Public facilities in Solon Township can be identified by the following classifications: Mini Park, Neighborhood Park, and Community Park. A more detailed description of the various public, quasi-public, and private recreation facilities follows.

An Existing Recreation Facilities Map at the end of this section illustrates the location of public park/recreation areas within the Township, and an Existing Recreation Facilities matrix provides a summary of the facilities provided at each site. A Park Accessibility Assessment is also provided at the end of this section.

The Township has never received a grant from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Mini-Parks

Mini-parks are specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population of specific groups such as tots or senior citizens. The service area of a mini-park is less than ¼ mile radius and the park size is typically 1 acre or less. There is currently one site that fits this description

Echo Park is a 0.5-acre park located between Eno Drive and the shore of Middle Lake. This park provides public access to Middle Lake. A map of this park can be found in the appendix of this plan.

Neighborhood Parks

A neighborhood park is the basic unit of the park system and typically serves a residential area within a ¼ to ½ mile distance. A size of 5-10 acres is considered optimal for this type of park. The focus is typically on informal active and passive recreational activities. There is one

neighborhood park in Solon Township.

Fire Station Park is a 2.65-acre park located on 19 Mile Road just west of Algoma Road and shares the site with the Solon Township Fire Department. The Park contains outdated playground equipment and picnic tables and serves as a neighborhood gathering spot for various functions.

Community Parks

Community-wide parks serve a broader purpose than neighborhood parks and provide a range of facilities and areas capable of supporting structured and unstructured community participation. These areas typically range between 30-50-acres in size and serve two or more neighborhoods within a ½ to 3 mile distance. Facilities may include wooded or natural areas, picnic shelters and grills, bike or hiking trails and other semi-active and passive uses for large groups of people. They may also contain specialized recreational facilities such as swimming pools, community centers and lighted ball diamonds. Community Parks should be serviced by arterial or connector streets and should be easily accessible throughout their service area by interconnecting trails. Currently there is one Township park classified within this category.

Solon Township Park is a 20-acre park located on the west side of Algoma Ave. The Park is home to the Township Offices which includes a parking lot. The remainder of the park is currently undeveloped. The Township has developed a master plan for this park which is located in the appendix of this plan.

Natural Resource Areas

Natural resource areas are lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, landscapes and open space. These sites are typically unsuitable for development but offer natural resource potential and can support recreational activities at a level that preserves the integrity of the natural resource. The location and size of these parks are largely governed by availability. There are no natural resource areas in Solon Township.

Trails/Linear Parks

There are a number of different types of trails that can provide both transportation and recreation opportunities. Trails may be located within parks, on an independent right-of-way, or within the road right-of way. Connector Trails are defined as “multi-purpose trails that emphasize safe travel for pedestrians to and from parks and around the Community” (J.D. Mertes and J.R. Hall, Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, 1995). These trails are generally located within the road right-of-way and can be divided into two types. Type I has separate paths for different user types, such as pedestrians and bicyclists. Type II has mixed uses and is suited to lighter use patterns. Currently there are no paved trails within the Township, however the North Country Trail does traverse through the Township at Long Lake Park and the Rogue River State Game Area.

PARK ACCESSIBILITY ASSESSMENT

Federal and State laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of physical ability in connection with recreational facilities owned by the Township. Developed park facilities must comply with

barrier-free design standards. Public facilities in Solon Township have been reviewed to understand the need for improvements relating to barrier-free accessibility. In addition, as park development is considered in the future, barrier-free accessibility is a significant priority item to help ensure that recreation can be enjoyed by all residents and visitors of Solon Township. Table 4 below summarizes the accessibility of public facilities located within Solon Township.

Following is a ranking system in accordance with MDNR standards:

- 1 = None of the facilities in the park meet accessibility guidelines.
- 2 = Some of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines
- 3 = Most of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines
- 4 = All of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines
- 5 = Universal design guidelines were used to design the entire park.

Table 3: Park Accessibility Assessment

PARK	RANK	DESCRIPTION OF FACILITIES	RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS
Echo Park	1	Provides access to the lake but does not include paved accessible paths	Provide barrier-free paths within the park and to the boat launch
Fire Station Park	1	There is no accessible safety surfacing or accessible paths for the playground equipment. The equipment is also not barrier free.	Replace playground equipment with barrier-free play equipment and provide accessible surfacing and walkways.
Township Park	2	The Township Hall provides barrier free access and the parking lot provides barrier free spaces. The rest of the park is currently undeveloped.	When the Township Park Master Plan is implemented provide barrier free access.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Public school facilities, including playgrounds, sports fields and courts, gymnasiums, and meeting rooms, can add tremendous recreational value to a community. Although no local school district-owned buildings, parks, sports facilities or recreational areas exist within the boundaries of Solon Township, the school facilities are open to the public and are in close proximity to the Township and provide service to Solon Township residents. The Township is encompassed within four public school districts; but none of these districts have built facilities in the Township. The districts include Cedar Springs Public Schools, Kent City Community Schools, Grant Public Schools, and Tri-County Area Schools. Because the school facilities are not owned by the Township, the school facilities are not counted in the community parks and recreation inventory. However, since these school facilities serve the Solon Township Community they are important to note.

The table below illustrates the number of existing facilities within the Township Parks.

Table 4: 2015 Recreation Facilities

	# Acres	Parking	Picnic Area	Grills	Shelter	Drinking water	Restrooms	Sand Volleyball	Trails	Lacrosse	Ball Diamonds	Lighted Ball Diamonds	Basketball Court	Football	Soccer Field	Playground Equipment	Tennis Courts
Echo Park	0.5	0	X														
Fire Fighters Park	2.65	0	X													X	
Township Park	20						1										
TOTAL	23.15		2				1									1	

STATE PARK FACILITIES

Rogue River State Game Area is a 6,202-acre wildlife conservation and management area that consists mostly of undeveloped forested land that is managed to provide habitat and recreation opportunities for a variety of wildlife species. The main section of the State Game Area has sections in both Tyrone and Solon Townships and includes areas along the Rogue River, Spring Creek, and Duke Creek. The area is open to the public for hunting and includes a number of parking areas. There is also an additional section of the State Game Area that is separated from the main area and is located approximately 4-miles south of Solon Township between Algoma Ave. and Edgerton Ave. in Algoma Township. This State Game Area extension area includes approximately 266-acres of mostly undeveloped land that is open to public for hunting, approximately 90-acres of managed agricultural fields dedicated to sharecropping, a small parking area, and a boat launch (located on Friske Dr.) for canoes, kayaks, and non-motorized boats.

White Pine Trail State Park is Michigan's largest Rail Trail State Park and includes 93 miles of trail that runs between Comstock Park and Cadillac and is used by walkers, joggers, and bicyclists.

COUNTY PARK FACILITIES

There are a number of Kent County Parks and public access sites that provide recreational opportunities to the residents of the Township.

Kent County Long Lake Park is 133 acres and located at the extreme southwest corner of the Township near the intersection of Division Ave. NE and 17 Mile Road. On site facilities include: one ball field; boat launch; picnic tables and grills; pavilion; three bath houses; primitive restrooms; play equipment and parking areas. The Park is located on Long Lake and provides swimming and fishing areas.

Kent County Gordon Park is approximately 20 acres and is located on Northland Drive across from the Fred Meijer White Pine Trail. On site the facilities include four picnic areas with tables and grills; a ball field; open play areas; and play equipment; restrooms, and parking.

Fisk Knob is located at the north end of the Township on Algoma Avenue. It is the highest spot in Kent County. It is currently undeveloped and not open at this time.

Kent County Myers Lake Park is located on Hessler Drive between 10 and 12 mile roads and east of Myers Lake Road. This park has a shelter, restrooms, playground area, picnic area, swimming area and is accessible for fishing. There is not an access to the water for boats.

Bettes Memorial Park is located near Sparta on 13 Mile Road and is currently undeveloped.

Lime Lake Public Access is located on the northern side of Lime Lake for fishing purposes.

Pine Lake Public Access includes a 10' walkway at the end of Oak Lane, a 10' walkway at the end of Patience Drive and one 20' wide boat launch at the end of Love Drive.

Middle Lake Public Access is on the northern edge of the Township and is used for fishing purposes.

REGIONAL FACILITIES

North Country Trail is a multi-state trail that runs over 4,600 miles from New York to North Dakota passing through Solon Township at Pine Island Drive to Long Lake Park through the Rogue River State Game Area and into Tyrone Township.

Howard Christianson Nature Center is located on 135 acres in Tyrone Township and includes nature trails, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, summer camps, and educational programming.

Algoma Sports Park is a 20 acre park located on the corner of Algoma Ave. and 13 Mile Rd. adjacent to the Algoma Township Hall. This facility includes a soccer field, five baseball fields, a .64-mile walking path, a small play area, a full restroom and concession area with picnic overhangs, and a picnic pavilion. This park is home to the Algoma Little League.

Trestle Park is a 2.35 acre park located in Algoma Township and is adjacent to the White Pine Trail. This park has a picnic area with tables, two viewing decks, parking, parking for bikes and a historical marker and a vault toilet for a restroom facility.

Rivers Edge Park is a 10.96 acre undeveloped park located in Algoma Township.

Camp Lake Park is a 2.5 acre park located in Algoma Township near the west side of Camp Lake. The park offers a basketball court, a picnic shelter with table, playground, and sliding hill.

Boomer Park Soccer Fields are located on the east side of Ritchie Rd. in Nelson Township. There are 8 fields on 25 acres with concession stand and rest room facilities.

Shaner Ballfield is located on the southeast corner of 17 Mile and Shaner Ave. There are 7 fields for t-ball softball and baseball with a concession stand and parking.

City of Cedar Springs Parks

Morley Park	7.0 acres
Skinner Field	3.0 acres
H.B. Riggle Park	3.0 acres
North Park	5.2 acres
Chalmers Park	5.3 acres
Veteran's Memorial Park	Less than 1.0 acre

SEMI-PUBLIC/PRIVATE FACILITIES

Sparta Hunting and Fishing Club is located along Long Lake Drive southwest of Long Lake Park. This facility is open to the public, and requires a membership for admittance to use the facilities. The club provides three shooting ranges, five archery ranges, a pavilion for events, and a pier for fishing on Squaw Lake.

Rockford Sportsman Club is located north of 13 Mile Rd. on Northland Dr. The Rockford Sportsman Club features a clubhouse, a heated shooting facility, a skeet field, a trap field, 100 and 200 yard rifle ranges, a pistol range, and covered shooting stalls with lighting for evening use.

Grand Rapids/Sparta Moose Lodge is located off Division Ave. NE southwest of Camp Lake. The lodge is open to Moose members and guests, and membership is available to the public through application. The organization maintains a 9-hole golf course and a lodge with kitchen. The lodge hosts events such as a classic car show and craft beer tasting events.

Cedar Rock Sports Plex is located on Cornfield Drive south of the City of Cedar Springs. The facility includes indoor soccer fields and a hockey rink.

Equest Center for Therapeutic Riding is located in Rockford and provides equine based therapy to physically and mentally challenged individuals.

Red Flannel Rod and Gun Club is located in Nelson Township and includes a shooting range for pistol, rifle and archery, as well as a trap field.

Golf Courses:

Rogue River Golf Course - Eighteen holes, 147 acres
Cedar Chase Golf Course - Eighteen Holes, Nelson Township
North Kent Golf Course - Eighteen holes, 154 acres, Courtland Township

Camp Grounds:

Duke Creek Campground - 114 licensed sites located in Solon Township
Lakeside Camp Park - 200 licensed sites located in Solon Township

Cemeteries:

Solon Cemetery – Solon Township
Elmwood Cemetery – City of Cedar Springs

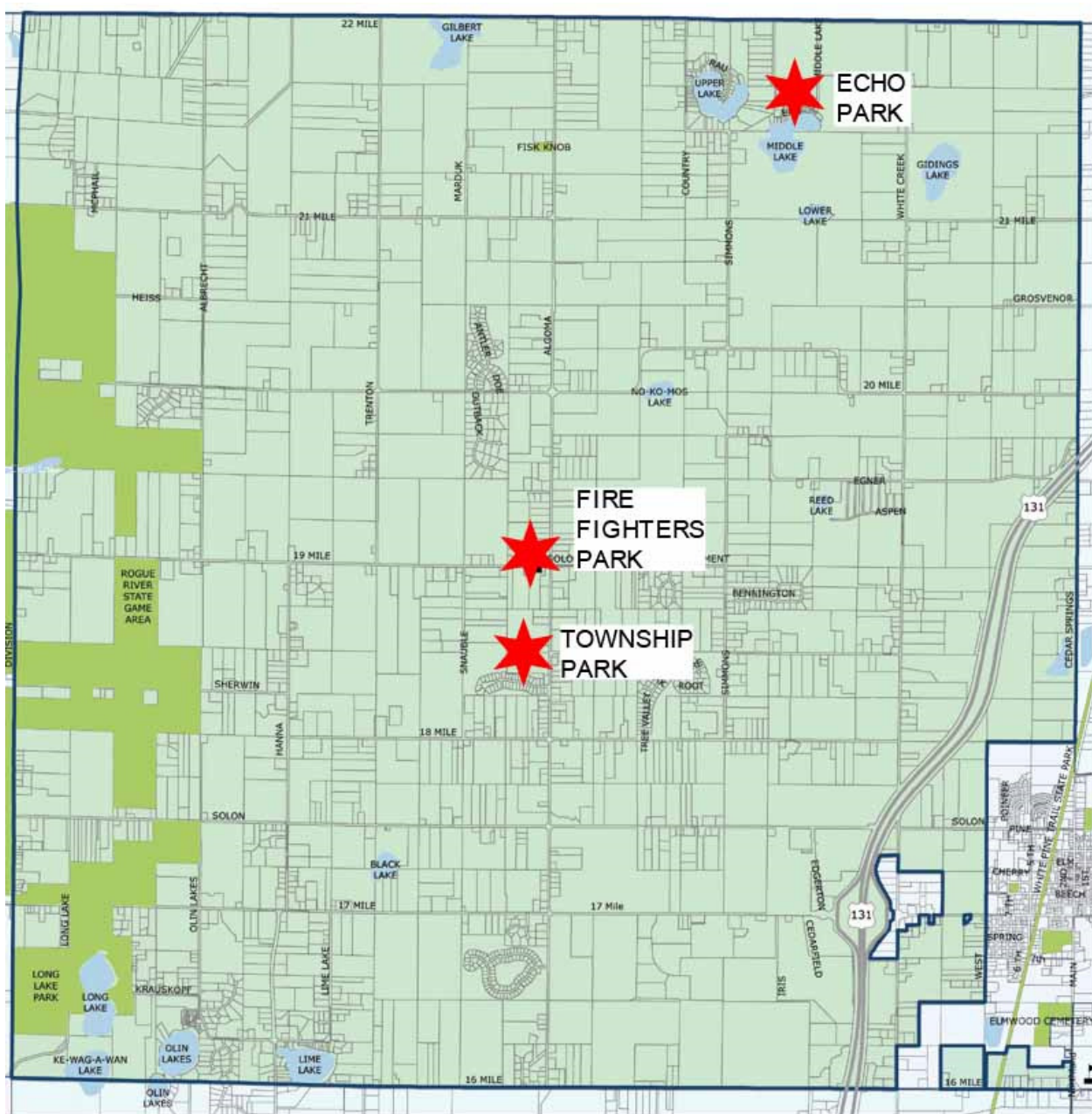
Commercial Entertainment and Exercise Facilities:

North Star Cinemas – Algoma Township
Kent Theatre – City of Cedar Springs
Curves – City of Cedar Springs
MVP Athletic Club – City of Rockford
Sparta Lanes – Village of Sparta
Rockford Lanes – City of Rockford

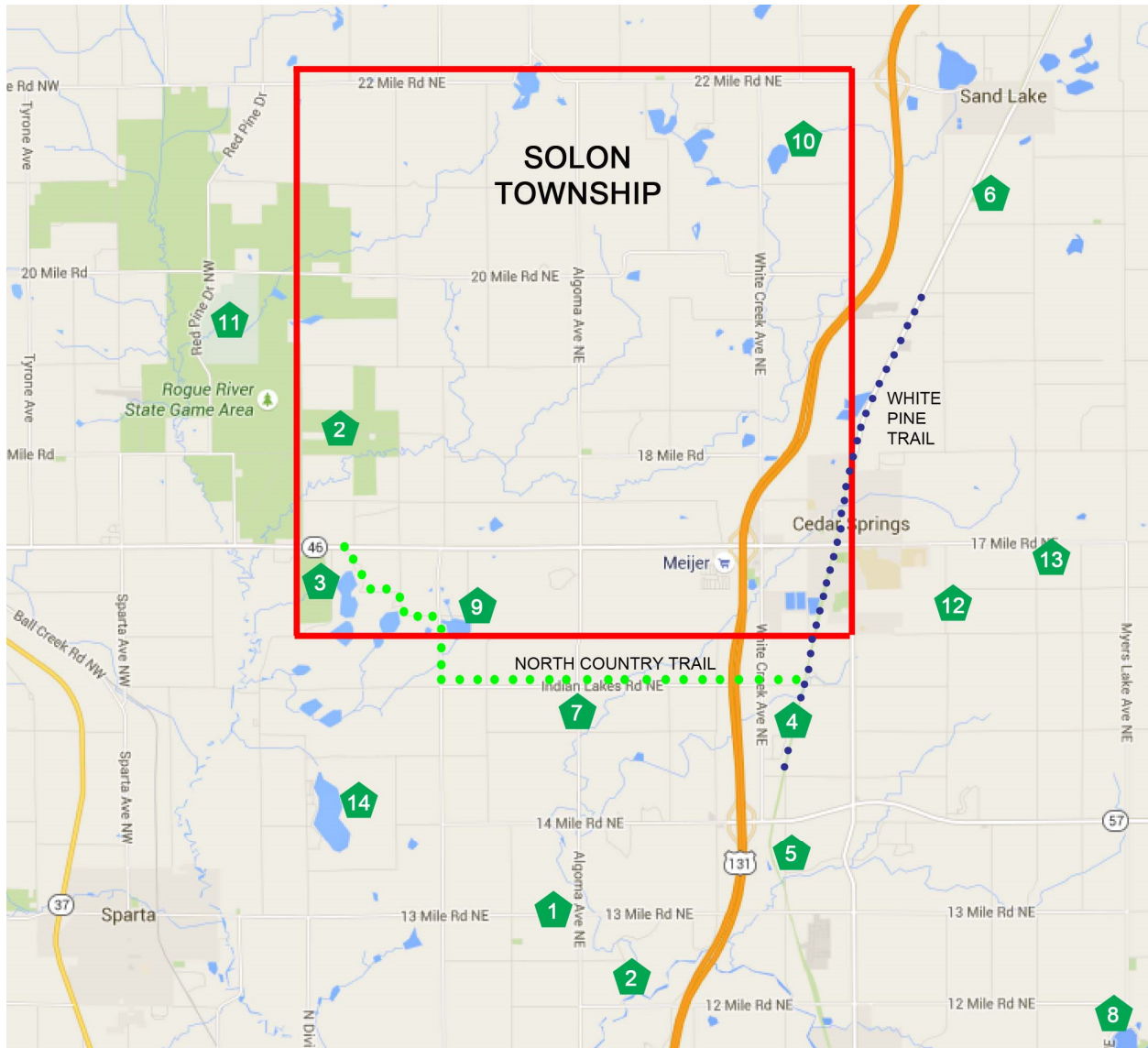
Private Residential Development Facilities:

Several residential developments throughout the Township contain useable open space and recreational facilities which serve as “pocket parks” for residents living close by.

Map 2. Existing Recreation Facilities



Map3. Regional Recreational Facilities



1. Algoma Sports Park
2. Rogue River State Game Area
3. Long Lake Park
4. White Pine Trail
5. Trestle Park
6. Gordon Park
7. Fish Knob Park
8. Meyers Lake Park

9. Lime Lake Public Access
10. Middle Lake Public Access
11. Howard Christianson Nature Center
12. Boomer Park Soccer Fields
13. Shaner Ballfields
14. Camp Lake Park

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CHAPTER 5 – RECREATION ANALYSIS

Chapter 5 identifies recreation deficiencies in the community. The following elements were sources of information or considerations during the analysis:

- The professional expertise and informed opinions of Township officials, committed citizens and stakeholders who participated in the public input exercises associated with the plan.
- National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Standards.
- Geographic distribution of existing facilities.

While each of these methods may have its limitations, using a combination of methods will yield a more accurate assessment of recreational needs and deficiencies. The following is a brief description of each of the methods used.

RECREATION STANDARDS

The NRPA has established generally recognized standards for classifying types of parkland based on size and function. These designations have been adopted by the MDNR and provide one method of defining the purpose and use of facilities. Recreation standards provide a benchmark for evaluating the relative adequacy or inadequacy of the Township's recreation system. This Plan has used as a guide the *1983 Recreation, Park, and Open Space, Standards and Guidelines* and *1995 Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines* published by the National Recreation and Park Association.

This plan will combine two commonly utilized approaches to ascertain deficiencies in recreational facilities and acreage in the Township. One approach is to establish a certain number of acres per 1,000 of population for different types of park facilities, such as neighborhood, community and regional parks. These standards are adapted to reflect the Township's character and compared with the Township's existing and projected population. Another standard is to use typical recreation standards to establish a certain number of activity-specific recreational facilities per 1,000 of population (e.g. 1 basketball court per 2,000 persons). The 2010 Census figures were used for the purposes of this analysis.

Passive recreation and active recreation are the primary types of recreational uses. Passive recreation includes less intense activities that are more quiet and non-exertive for a limited numbers of users. Active recreation requires space and facilities capable of accommodating exertive activities. Examples include: sports fields, play apparatus areas, open areas, special facilities, such as pools and court areas, and areas for organized activities. Recreation areas must provide for both types of use and preferably include a variety of opportunities for each to respond adequately to a wide range of interests and age groups. Parks are generally classified by purpose and area per population served. They range in type from mini-park tot lots and pocket parks to large regional and national parks.

The categories used for this plan will be as follows:

1. Mini-Parks
2. Neighborhood Parks
3. Community Parks

4. Natural Resource Areas
5. Special Use Parks
6. Trails

1. Mini-Parks

Description - Mini-parks are used to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs, and may serve a concentrated or limited population or specific group, such as tots or senior citizens, as determined by the distance that can be easily traveled by the local user.

Service Areas - The area served by a mini-park is generally considered to be less than one-quarter (1/4) mile radius in size. This may, in reality, vary slightly depending on ease or difficulty of access and the character of the facility.

Mini-Park Acreage Standards - Nationally accepted standards for mini-parks recommend 1/4 to 1/2 an acre per 1,000 of population with one (1) acre as a desirable size.

Existing Mini-Park Recreation Acreage – Solon Township currently has one (1) mini-park which falls into this category. Echo Park provides access to Middle Lake.

Needs and Deficiencies – The Township has identified the need to add more mini parks or pocket parks within the Township as the area develops. The table below compares the 2010 Township population to the recreation standard of one-half (0.5) acres per 1,000 persons.

Table 5: Mini Park Acreage Analysis

2010 Population	Mini Park. Acreage Required	Mini Park Acreage Available	Deficiency/Surplus
5,974	3	0.5	-2.5

2. Neighborhood Parks

Description - Neighborhood Parks remain the basic unit of the park system and serve as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. They can serve individual neighborhood populations as determined by the distance that can easily be traveled by local users for relatively short periods of recreation. Focus is on informal active and passive recreation for all seasons. Facilities provided in these parks may include court games, play structures, open play areas, landscaping, site furnishings and possibly a shelter.

Service Areas - A neighborhood unit is a concentrated residential development which, ideally, would be provided with a neighborhood school, playground and park facility. The playground would provide an area for active recreation and the neighborhood park for more passive recreation and for neighborhood recreation play fields.

The area served by neighborhood parks is generally considered to be a one quarter (1/4) mile to one half (1/2) mile radius in size and should be uninterrupted by non-residential roads or other physical barriers.

Neighborhood Park Acreage Standards - Nationally accepted standards for neighborhood parks recommend 1-2 acres per 1,000 of population with five (5) acres as a minimum size and 5 to 10 (5-10) acres optimal. It is recommended that the minimum of two (2) acres per 1,000 population projected ten (10) years hence be used as a guide for site selection.

Existing Neighborhood Recreation Acreage – Solon Township currently has one neighborhood park which is Fire Fighters Park. The table below compares the 2010 Township population to the recreation standard of two (2) acres per 1,000 persons.

Table 6: Neighborhood Park Acreage Analysis

2010 Population	Neighborhood Rec. Acreage Required	Neighborhood Rec. Acreage Available	Deficiency/Surplus
5,974	12	2.65	-10.35

This analysis indicates the Township is in need of neighborhood park facilities in order to service the recreational needs of the Township. It is important to note that there are a number of lakes within the Township that have private access but provide water based recreation for those that live on it. Although these facilities provide great recreational opportunities, they should not be considered substitutes for neighborhood park facilities as the use is regulated to water based uses and has a limited user base.

3. Community Parks

Description – Community parks serve a broader purpose than neighborhood parks and focus on meeting community based recreation needs capable of supporting organized community participation programs that would not be appropriate in neighborhood parks because of their average size or traffic volume generated. Community parks also strive to preserve unique landscapes and open spaces. Facilities should be centrally located, diverse enough to accommodate all age groups for both active and passive experiences, and organized so that compatible uses relate to one another by both type and intensity of use. Adequate parking and vehicular circulation is also an important consideration, since park users will generally arrive at these parks by vehicle. Lighted use areas significantly increase the recreational value of parks of this type and should be provided on athletic fields, court areas and special gathering areas whenever possible. Typical facilities recommended for community parks include ball fields, open use areas, tennis courts, horseshoe and shuffleboard courts, picnic areas, play apparatus areas, restrooms, shelters and landscaping. Additional special facilities could include band shells, amphitheaters, swimming and wading pools, community-meeting buildings, skating facilities, walking paths, and bicycle courses.

Service Area - The area served by community-wide parks varies significantly from one municipality to another because of the distribution of population and related factors.

However, a Community Park usually serves 2 or more neighborhoods within a ½ to 3 mile distance.

Community Park Acreage Standards – The size of a Community Park varies according to the desired uses, but is usually between 30 and 50 acres. It is recommended that a range of five (5) to eight (8) acres per 1,000 population be used as a standard basis for development.

Existing Community Recreation Acreage – Solon Township currently has one park that falls into this category which is Solon Township Park located on Algoma Ave. near the center of the Township. The table below compares the 2010 Township population to the recreation standard of eight (8) acres per 1,000 population.

Table 7: Community Park Acreage Analysis

2010 Population	Community Rec. Acreage Required	Community Rec. Acreage Available	Deficiency/Surplus
5,974	48	20	-28

This park is well positioned in the Township as it is centrally located and contains the Township Hall. The Township has engaged in a master planning process for this park and has developed a master plan which, when implemented fully, will serve a wider area than those residing in the Township as visitors, outside groups, and residents from other Townships utilize the park for programmed activities. It should also be noted that Algoma Township also has a developed community park that the residents of Solon Township utilize due to its close proximity to the Township.

4. Natural Resource Areas

Description - Natural resource areas are lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space and visual/aesthetic buffering. These sites are typically unsuitable for development but offer natural resource potential and can support recreational activities at a level that preserves the integrity of the natural resource. The location and size of these parks are largely governed by availability.

Existing Natural Resource Area Acreage – The Township currently does not own any natural resource areas.

Needs and Deficiencies - There are no recognized acreage standards for natural resource areas. It is important to identify and protect natural resources and it is also important to provide improved access and facilities, while maintaining integrity as a wildlife habitat.

5. Special Use Parks

Description - Special use parks are areas for specialized or single purpose recreational activities. The specialized recreational activities may include boat launches, swimming beaches, plazas or squares, historic sites, stadiums, urban green-spaces, and nature

centers. There are no generally accepted standards for the size or service areas of these parks.

Existing Facilities – There are many private boating access points in the Township for the many lakes; however, the Township does not own any special use parks.

6. Trails

Description – There are a number of different types of trails that can provide both transportation and recreation opportunities. Trails may be located within parks, on an independent right-of-way, or within the road right-of way. Connector Trails are defined as “multi-purpose trails that emphasize safe travel for pedestrians to and from parks and around the Community” (J.D. Mertes and J.R. Hall, Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, 1995). These trails are generally located within the road right-of-way and can be divided into two types. Type I has separate paths for different user types, such as pedestrians and bicyclists. Type II has mixed uses and is suited to lighter use patterns.

Existing Facilities – The Township does not own any public trails.

Needs and Deficiencies – The Township has a need to develop non-motorized facilities. Trail development, both within parks and linking parks together, was identified as a priority during the planning process. Walkability needs to be addressed within the Township in order to provide safe, accessible routes for pedestrians. Sidewalks, traffic control devices, and accessibility facilities are some of the items that were discussed as being critical issues during the planning process. A non-motorized trail system also needs to be considered in order to provide trail connections to the subdivisions within the Township. The Township has identified priorities for trail development which are included in the Action Program section of this report.

RECREATION STANDARDS FOR ACTIVITIES/FACILITIES

A comparison of activity-specific recreational facilities within the Township to recreation standards indicates that Solon Township is deficient of recreational facilities desirable for the current population. The Township also suffers from lack of school facilities located in the Township. It is important to note that the Township has developed a master plan for the Township community park and therefore has plans to address many of these deficiencies with the implementation of the master plan.

The following table compares the recommended number of facilities per population for Solon Township with the existing facilities available and illustrates current or projected deficiencies.

While standards for comparison address the quantity of facilities desirable for a particular number of persons, they do not address quality or location concerns. Consequently, any community that has the appropriate numbers of facilities may not have facilities of a useful or desirable quality, or may not have facilities located where they would be most accessible to residents.

*Table 8: Recreation Standards and Deficiencies Analysis
Based on 2010 Population of 5,974*

FACILITY	STANDARD	RECOMMENDED FACILITIES	EXISTING FACILITIES	FACILITY DEFICIENCIES
Volleyball	1:5,000	1	0	-1
Picnic Shelters	1:2,000	3	0	-3
Playground Equipment	1:3,000	2	1	-1
Basketball Courts	1:5,000	1	0	-1
Tennis Courts	1:2,000	3	0	-3
Baseball	1:5,000	1	0	-1
Softball	1:5,000	1	0	-1
Football	1:20,000	1	0	-1
Track	1:20,000	1	0	-1
Soccer	1:10,000	1	0	-1
Sledding Area	As available	-	0	-
Bicycle Trails	1 system	1	0	-1
Walking Trails	1 system	1	0	-1
Gymnasium	1:5,000	1	0	-1
Ice Rink	1:20,000	1	0	-1
Swimming Pool	1:20,000	1	0	-1
Swimming Beaches	As available	-	0	-
Auditorium	1:20,000	1	0	-1
Community Center	1:20,000	1	0	-1

RECREATION FACILITIES SUMMARY

The Solon Township recreation system consists primarily of a small and hidden water front park, a small neighborhood park with outdated and little used play equipment, and an undeveloped community park at the site of the Township Hall. Essentially the extent of recreation offerings has not kept up with the steady population growth the Township has experienced.

Township facilities are few and not well-dispersed. Areas not served with recreation facilities may be considered for additional land acquisition. Furthermore, improving accessibility within the Township parks and developing non-motorized connections to existing facilities may be one tool to establish a connected and meaningful recreation network in the community. Since significant portions of Solon Township are not within the service area of an existing facility, new parkland is likely needed to maintain or improve quality of life for residents.

Regional trails, and bike-ways in adjacent communities, lend themselves to desired connections within Solon Township to provide meaningful linkages among regional destinations. Additionally, regional facilities and local parks in adjacent communities, such as the City of Cedar Springs and Algoma Township, can be integrated into the Township's parks system by linking with these facilities via non-motorized transportation routes. Engaging a regional discussion on non-motorized linkages will benefit all communities in the vicinity.

Information that was received during the stakeholder and public input meeting also identified the need for additional active uses such as playgrounds, trails, an athletic complex, ball fields, disc golf, and multi-generational activities. Comments received also focused on implementing the design of the master plan for the Township Community Park which include many new and needed facilities. Minutes of the Stakeholder and Public Meetings are included in the Appendices of this report.

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CHAPTER 6 – PLANNING AND PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

PLANNING PROCESS

The residents of Solon Township take an active role in planning for their community's recreational opportunities. The Township appreciates the fact that recreation planning plays an important role in maintaining the quality of life in a community and therefore tries to be responsive to citizen needs and desires for parks and recreation. Recreation planning is one means of obtaining a perspective on the needs and desires of the community and engaging in a process that includes; developing realistic alternatives; formulating goals, policies, and recommendations for public and private decisions; developing criteria to measure change; and involving people in the planning, design and decision processes. Township residents were encouraged to participate and comment throughout the planning process.

The recreation planning process included understanding current recreational based challenges, anticipating future needs and forming a plan of action. During the early phase of the planning process background data was gathered from site investigations and available reports in order to develop a current snapshot of the Township and a comprehensive understanding of the needs of the community. This snapshot was also reviewed in comparison to national park standards to help determine where deficiencies may exist. In order to understand the preferred future of the parks and recreation system, the Township also engaged in a public input process that included public workshops, a public review period, and open Township Board meetings.

It is also important to note that the Township engaged in a master planning process for the Township Park prior to the development of the Recreation Plan. The planning process for the Township Park also included a public workshop where park and recreational needs and desires were discussed. Notes from the workshops are included in the Appendix of this document.

In order to help establish a policy basis for the Township's recreational goals, input was first sought from Township officials and other stakeholders by means of a stakeholder kickoff meeting. The stakeholder kickoff meeting was held on January 19, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. at the Township Hall (prior to the development of the recreation plan, the Township Park Master Plan, and the public input meetings). Members of the Township Board, Parks Committee, and other stakeholders were invited to the meeting to discuss the Township Park Plan, the Cedar Springs Area Parks and Recreation Plan, and goals and expectations for this Recreation Plan.

SOLICITING PUBLIC INPUT

The Township was very active in promoting the efforts to develop the Recreation Plan. The Township promoted the public input session through its website, local newspaper, and through social media. The Township views public input as an open, on-going process and continues to seek input from the community. The public notice that was used to promote the meeting is included in the Appendix of this document.

Once the draft Recreation Plan was complete, citizens were provided with a 30-day period to review and comment on the plan. A copy of the plan was made available at the Township Hall for review by the public on September 10, 2015. The plan was also published on the Township's website. To notify the residents that a draft of the plan was available for review and to describe the purpose of the 30-day review period, a notice was published on the Township website and

posted at the Township Hall. A copy of the website notice is included in the Appendix as well as a photo of the posted notice at the Township Hall. In addition to the local media, the public was notified through social media that the plan was available for review and was encouraged to provide feedback.

Finally the Township published a notice prior to the public adoption meeting advertising the opportunity to comment once more prior to adoption of the draft plan. A copy of the notice is included in the Appendix.

PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

The Township understands the importance of meaningful citizen input and is committed to using this input to assist in evaluating trends and forming policy. Prior to development of the plan, the Township used three methods to solicit input and participation from the residents of the Township: two surveys, a master plan community work shop, and a recreation plan visioning workshop.

Community Workshop

The community workshop was intended to develop a general consensus among the participants regarding the design and master plan concepts for the Township Park. The implementation of the final design serves as a basis for many of the goals in this recreation plan.

VIRIDIS Design Group led the workshop and facilitated the discussions. The workshop was split into two 2-hour sessions and took place on Wednesday, March 18, 2015, from 3-5 p.m. and 6-8 p.m. at the Township Hall. The meeting followed a typical format to ensure a productive outcome, but encouraged an open and informal atmosphere. The 11 attendees were encouraged to engage in the process to provide ideas and suggestions.

The workshop started with VIRIDIS providing a presentation that included: an introduction to the planning process and expected outcomes, an overview of stakeholder input, a review of existing site conditions, presentation of preliminary concepts, and a description of next steps in the process.

Following the presentation, attendees were able to review the concept plans in an open house format, engage with the designers, and ask question and provide feedback regarding the proposed concepts. The final design is included in the appendix section of this plan.

Visioning Workshop

The visioning exercise was intended to develop a general consensus among the participants as to the current issues, needs, desires, and deficiencies regarding parks and recreation in the Township.

VIRIDIS Design Group led the workshop and facilitated the discussions. The workshop took place on Tuesday, June 30, 2015, at 7:00 p.m. at the Township Hall. The meeting followed a typical format to ensure a productive outcome, but encouraged an open and informal atmosphere. The 7 attendees were encouraged to engage in the process to provide perspective and to think about the big picture. In other words, the attendees were asked to dream big.

The public meeting started with VIRIDIS providing a brief presentation that included: an introduction to the planning process, an explanation of the purpose of the plan and how the results of the activity will be incorporated into the plan, brief description of existing park facilities, park standards, and goals from the previous plan.

Following this presentation, a visioning session took place where meeting attendees were asked to individually answer a series of four questions. Each person was provided a pen and paper and asked to write down their responses. The questions were as follows:

1. If you feel the Township is underserved with parkland, what types of new facilities should be developed?
2. In addition to implementing the recently completed Township Park Plan, what other recreational goals should the Township consider?
3. What services/programs can the Township provide to improve recreational opportunities?
4. Name a community that you have visited that embodies the type of park facilities you think the Township should strive for?

After the attendees were allotted 10-15 minutes to write down their thoughts, the audience reconvened to share and discuss all of the ideas and priorities. It turned out that the group shared many similar ideas, needs, and desires for the park and recreation system so the group was able to come to a consensus fairly easily. The results of the workshop are recorded in meeting minutes and are included in the Appendix section of this report.

Public Review / Public Hearing

Once the draft plan was prepared, it was published for public review and comment for a period of 30-days. Contact information for key Township officials and the planning consultants was provided.

In addition, at the conclusion of the plan development process, a public hearing was held at the Township Board. Meeting minutes and the adoption resolution are included in the Appendix of this report.

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CHAPTER 7 - GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

As a result of the recreation inventory and needs assessment, input from the visioning workshop, and input from Township officials, Solon Township has developed the following goals and objectives in order to guide the management and development of recreation opportunities for the next 5 years. Goals and objectives are meant to guide the intent of the actions to be taken but flexible enough to reflect changing attitudes and opportunities. A degree of flexibility is essential for the Township to be responsive to its citizens. The goals are long-range in nature and intended to be broad in scope to accommodate future change. The objectives are short-range in nature and intended to direct specific program and development decisions to be made in the next five years.

GOAL 1

Develop a multipurpose network of non-motorized trails that connect to local and regional natural areas and recreational facilities and provide a safe, attractive, and enjoyable recreational experience.

Objectives:

1. Develop a Non-Motorized Transportation System and Recreational Trailway Feasibility Study and Master Plan by identifying additional trail routes, taking into account likely emerging growth areas, existing regional trails, natural feature destinations, regional parks, and cultural venues.
2. Coordinate trailway planning with Kent County Parks and adjoining Townships.
3. Coordinate with the Kent County Road Commission to improve existing widened road shoulders so they can be used as bike lanes, and to take advantage of future road projects by incorporating the concepts of Complete Streets.
4. Require trail systems be implemented with new developments.
5. Create a Complete Streets Policy.
6. Develop a trail route connection to the White Pine Trail System.
7. Develop a trail route connection to the North Country Trail.

GOAL 2

Develop new diverse and multi-generational parks and recreational facilities and improve existing facilities to further expand the standards and range of recreational opportunities available to area residents.

Objectives:

1. Implement the master plan for the Township Park.
2. Work towards development of a sports complex, to include sand volleyball courts, softball, baseball, and soccer and football fields with supporting facilities.
3. Consider the feasibility of a community center or indoor recreational facility.
4. Consider the addition of recreational uses currently not provided in the area such as pickle-ball, dog park, and a splash pad.
5. Consider the development of new universally accessible playgrounds.
6. Construct a band shell/ stage/ amphitheater for musical and theater groups, plus community forums and events.
7. Provide cultural and community programming for Township residents.

GOAL 3

Implement one or more phases of the Township Community Park Master Plan.

Objectives:

1. Explore potential funding options for implementation.
2. Apply for recreational based grants for construction of the Master Plan.
3. Develop construction plans for implementation of the Master Plan

GOAL 4

Strive towards providing universal accessibility to recreational facilities and update existing amenities to meet or exceed barrier-free accessibility standards.

Objectives:

1. Bring all existing park facilities in line with ADA guidelines.
2. Develop all new park facilities with universal design concepts.
3. Provide barrier-free playground equipment.

GOAL 5

Provide a geographically balanced system of park and recreation facilities in the Township.

Objectives:

1. Develop new recreation facilities on property already owned by the Township.
2. Acquire new property as it becomes available for future park facilities.
3. Encourage the provision of recreational land as part of new developments.
4. Explore opportunities for easement acquisition for future trail connections.
5. Consider acquisition of environmentally sensitive areas for preservation of natural resources and promotion of passive recreation.

GOAL 6

Promote and maintain strong working relationships of coordination with the Cedar Springs Area Park Board, adjacent Townships and Cities, school districts, and other community groups providing recreational opportunities to the area's residents.

Objectives:

1. Partner with the Cedar Springs Area Parks and Recreation Board to develop new park facilities.
2. Partner with Kent County Parks to develop programs within County Parks.
3. Identify potential opportunities for regional non-motorized trail connections.
4. Pool resources with neighboring municipalities to minimize costs for services and to increase grant funding potential.
5. Work with, encourage and support all state, county, community, school system and municipal groups, organizations and agencies to promote and expand community recreation opportunities and programs for all age groups in all parts of the Township in an efficient, coordinated manner.
6. Engage in activities associated with community festivals and activities to ensure the development of the area and programming.

GOAL 7

Preserve, protect, and improve historic, natural, scenic, or environmentally sensitive areas for appropriate public use and enjoyment and habitat protection.

Objectives:

1. Provide programming to educate the community about the environment and how to preserve and protect it.
2. Pursue the development of a nature center.
3. Acquire lake front property.

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CHAPTER 8 - ACTION PROGRAM

The Action Program and Capital Improvement Schedule of the Solon Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan states the proposed course of development or improvement that will be taken over the next five years. The Goals and Objectives, from the previous section, serve as guidelines for the development of the Action Program. The Capital Improvement Schedule which follows will focus on the needs identified in the Action Program and will project potential expenditures for the five-year action period on a year-by-year basis. The five-year period will begin in 2015 and extend through 2020. This time period will not be sufficient to accomplish all of the goals and objectives, but begins to prioritize those projects that may be achievable within the initial five years.

The Action Program focuses on reduction of deficiencies, and expansion and improvements of facilities in a manner that not only meets current needs, but also diversifies the type and quality of recreational opportunities within the Township. The Parks and Recreation Plan identifies these needs in general terms in the Recreation Analysis; the Action Plan describes specific actions to be taken to address these needs; and the Capital Improvement Schedule specifically itemizes those projects which will be most feasible during the next five years. The proposed schedule will allow for flexibility as funds become available and as opportunities are presented. The following actions are comprehensive and may require more than five years to complete.

Echo Park

This park is located along the shore of Middle Lake and is primarily used for launching boats. This park is unique in that it provides public access to the waterfront; however, due to its location between private residences and the lake, it may not be known that it is open to the public. Also, given the long and narrow shape of the site and proximity to the lake, opportunities for development are limited. Improvements to this park may include the addition of barrier free accessible walkways and boat launch, as well as site identification signage.

Fire Fighters Park

This park includes existing playground equipment and picnic space, and shares the site with the Township Fire Station. Improvements to this park may include updated and barrier free playground equipment, accessible paths, and new picnic tables.

Township Community Park

Although currently undeveloped, this will be the Township's primary park. The Township Hall and parking lot is currently the extent of development on the site. The Township has engaged in a master planning process for the undeveloped portion of the site and will look to start the implementation process once funding alternatives can be identified. It is likely that the park will be developed in multiple phases. The following elements are included in the park master plan:

- Soccer fields
- Baseball/softball field
- Basketball court
- Trails
- Picnic shelter
- Farmers Market structure
- Barnyard themed playground
- Restrooms

- Repurposed barns
- Township Green/Artisan Village
- Parking
- Prairie restoration
- Landscaping
- Site furnishings
- North Country Trail connection

Non-motorized Facilities

The idea of creating a local and regional network of non-motorized trails was discussed at length as a desirable goal to work toward in the Township. Local trail connections were focused around developing a pathway system within the Township Community Park as shown on the Community Park Master Plan. Other ideas include connections to Algoma Township, existing lakes, and existing subdivisions. Regional trail concepts include potential connections to the North Country Trail, the City of Cedar Springs, the Rogue River State Game Area, Long Lake Park, and the White Pine Trail State Park.

Athletic Facilities

The planning process demonstrated a deficit in the quantity of organized sports facilities in the Township. The Community Park Master Plan includes one full size soccer field (or three youth fields), and one ball field which could satisfy meeting the demand for those facilities. The soccer field could also be used for lacrosse and football but the Township may consider planning for other athletic facilities to meet the demand for tennis, football, rugby, and lacrosse.

Winter Recreation

It was conveyed during the public engagement process that there is a need for developing recreational activities during the winter months. Such activities include cross-country skiing, sledding, ice skating, and snowmobiling. Some of these activities could be held at the Township's Community Park once it is implemented.

Other Miscellaneous Items

The following items listed below were discussed during the visioning workshop as being desirable concepts worth further exploration. The Township may need to acquire additional park land to consider some of the items below:

- Community Center
- Senior Center
- Splash Pad
- Dog Park
- Band shell/performance space
- Educational and cultural programming
- Movies in the park
- Art fair exhibit space
- Youth camps
- Space for large community events such as car shows and flea markets
- Nature center with nature exhibits and overlook decks
- Disc golf

Land Acquisition

The Township will consider opportunities to purchase land for recreational purposes or natural resources value as it becomes available. This could include: land for new sports field development, passive recreation, splash pad, community center, dog park, land to expand facilities and acreage available for parks in residential areas, and potential trail easements.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE

As stated in the Action Program, improvements and development will occur as funds and opportunities evolve. Assistance will be solicited from all available sources and will include both physical and financial support. Local businesses, service organizations, land developers, and governmental agencies will be solicited for monetary and material support. The Township will also seek funding assistance from all available sources such as trusts, charitable foundations, and all Federal and State grant funding programs. All projections are based upon year 2015 costs and will be refined as the program progresses. Changes in the program may occur if projected funding levels increase or decrease, but it is anticipated that the changes would be related more to adjustments in the time schedule rather than specific projects. The following schedule is a breakdown of the anticipated projects and projected funding for the next five years:

Table 9 – Capital Improvement Schedule

Year	Project	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source
2015-2016	Apply for grants to fund Phase 1 implementation of the Township Community Park	\$5,000	Township
	Identify potential land acquisition opportunities	TBD	Township
	Establish and fund maintenance budget for Community Park	TBD	Township
2016-2017	Develop Construction Drawings for Phase 1 of the Community Park Master Plan	\$70,000	Township, Donations
2017-2018	Implement Phase 1 of Community Park	\$750,000	Township, LWCF, MNRTF, donations
	Apply for grants to fund Phase 2 implementation of the Township Community Park	\$5,000	Township
2018-2019	Develop Master Plan for Fire Fighters Park	\$8,000	Township, Donations
	Develop a Non-Motorized Transportation Master Plan for the Township	\$15,000	Township
2019-2020	Develop Construction Drawings for Phase 2 of the Community Park Master Plan	\$70,000	Township, Donations
	Park Land Acquisition for development of dog park and splash pad	TBD	MNRTF, Township, LCWF, donations

The following projects have been placed within the 2015 through 2020 time period and are either on-going or will be acted upon as property becomes available and funds identified.

2015-2020	<u>Park Land Acquisition</u> Acquire additional park land as it becomes available targeting land in residential areas, lakefront property, and property adjacent to existing parks.	Acquire property and develop as land becomes available, cost unknown at this time.
	<u>Splash Pad</u> Develop a splash pad at a location to be determined that can provide the necessary infrastructure (sewer and water)	Acquire property and develop as land becomes available, cost unknown at this time.
	<u>Dog Park</u> Develop Dog Park at a location to be determined. Include fencing, parking, water, benches, and accessible paths	Acquire property and develop as land becomes available, cost unknown at this time.
	<u>Non-Motorized Facilities</u> Look for opportunities to develop non-motorized trails. Work with the Road Commission to implement a Complete Streets policy to include sidewalks, bike lanes, and off-road trails as part of future roadway reconstruction.	Consider applying for DNR Trust Fund Grant and/or MDOT TAP funding for non-motorized improvements.

Potential Funding Sources / Resource Partners

A variety of funding sources and resource partners may exist to assist with the implementation of proposed recreation projects. A summary of the primary sources are listed below:

- Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund.** The MNRTF can provide assistance for the Township's outdoor recreation projects, including land acquisition and physical development of park facilities. This assistance is intended to bolster existing facilities, protect critical natural resources and establish new parkland. Development project grants may range between \$15,000 and \$300,000; there is no limit to acquisition requests. The minimum required local match is 25%.
- Michigan Natural Resources Passport Grant.** The Passport grant fund program is primarily focused on renovating and improving existing parks, however the development of new parks is considered eligible. The Minimum grant request is \$7,500 and the maximum grant request is \$45,000. The minimum required local match is 25%
- Land and Water Conservation Fund.** The LWCF is similar to the Trust Fund grant described above, in that it is meant to help fund land acquisition and park development. The minimum grant request amount is \$30,000 and the maximum grant request amount is \$100,000. The minimum required local match is 50%. Natural feature preservation has historically been the primary award criteria; and as such, this opportunity should especially be taken into account when planning for new passive recreation facilities. In addition, the LWCF now places emphasis on trails, "green" technology in outdoor recreation, universal design and coordination among recreation providers.

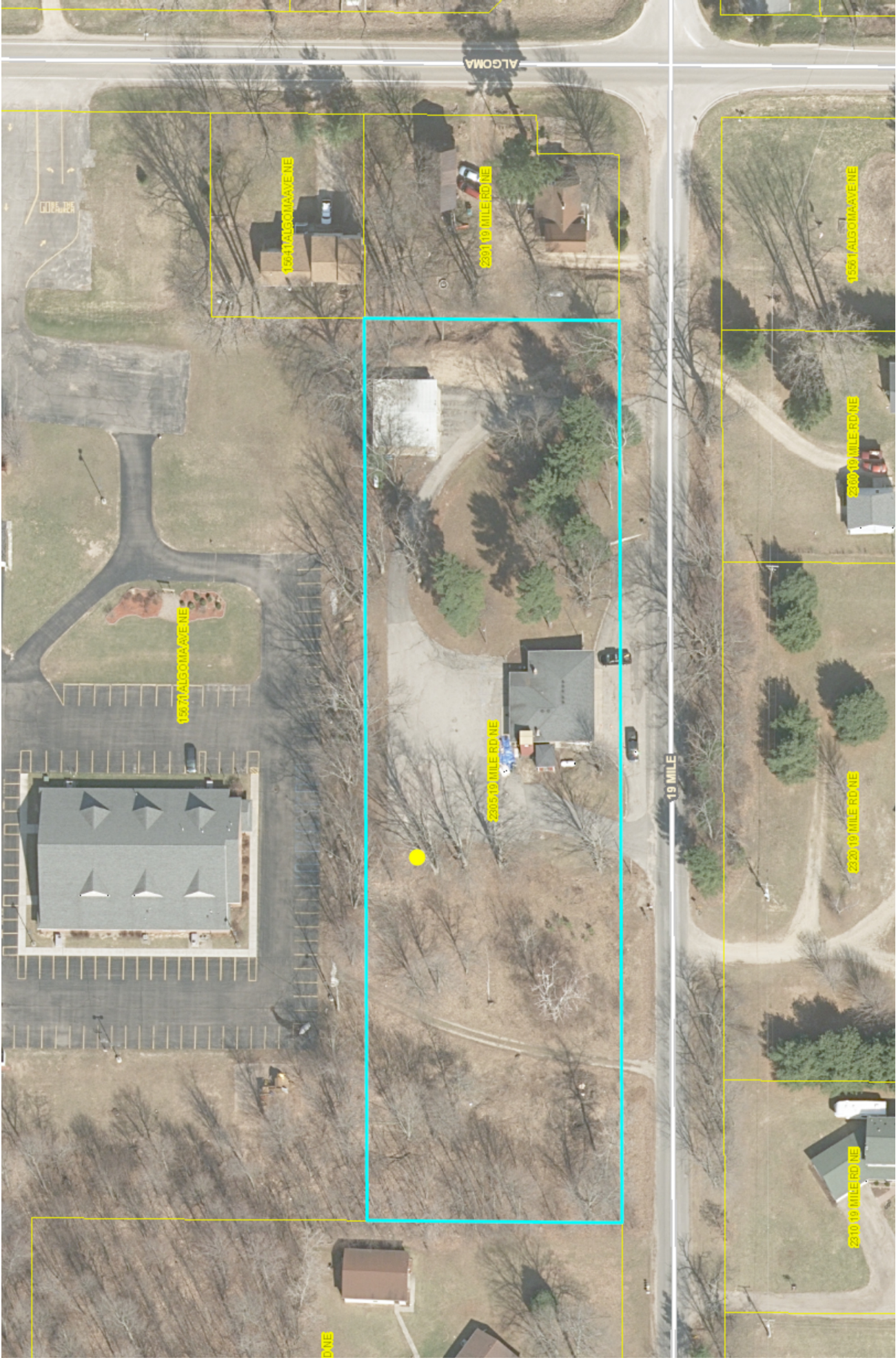
- **MDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).** The TAP fund is a grant program that funds non-motorized paths and streetscapes that enhance the community's intermodal transportation system and provide safe alternative transportation options. The program uses federal funds to promote walkability, alternative transportation options, and place based economic development to improve the quality of life for communities. The minimum required local match is 20%.
- **Township Funds.** The general fund, a special millage, the parks budget, bonds, and the parks capital improvement account are possibilities to help fund new and improved facilities in the Township.
- **Park Millage.** A special millage can help the Township generate funds for development, acquire park land, or to use as leverage for grant applications. The recent community survey indicated that respondents would consider a millage. Attendees at the visioning workshop also showed support for a park millage.
- **Donations & Foundations.** Residents, property owners, businesses, and organizations will frequently contribute to causes that improve local quality of life. While these contributions are often pecuniary, they may also include land donations, volunteer services, or the gift of equipment or other facilities. The Township may consider setting up an endowment for park financial planning.

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APPENDICES



ECHO PARK



FIRE FIGHTERS PARK





COMMUNITY PARK MASTER PLAN

SOLOM TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN
JUNE 2015

CONCEPT PLAN

POST HIGHLIGHTS

News.....	pages 1-3
Church Connection.....	pages 4-5
Arts & Entertainment.....	pages 6-7
Voices & Views	page 7
Auto Life	page 8
Sports	page 9
Sand Lake 4th of July	pages 10-11
Outdoors	page 12
Bloomi' Summer	page 13
Health	page 14
Classifieds	page 16
Legals / At Your Service	page 17
Honor Roll	page 19

Man honored for saving boy's life

On June 3, 2015, the Michigan State Police (MSP) recognized Mr. Kenneth Hansen, of Crystal, with a Distinguished Citizen award for his heroic actions in saving the life of a child during a dog attack.

On May 4, 2015, while working at a construction site in Seville Township, about 5:10 p.m., Mr. Hansen and his work crew heard the screams of a child at a nearby residence.

The child, an 8-year-old boy, went over to visit his step-grandmother. He was familiar with the dogs there, four rottweilers, which were in a fenced in back yard of the residence. As the child walked into the back yard, one dog began barking at him. Another dog knocked the child down and the four dogs attacked him.

It was then that Hansen heard the screams, and saw the four dogs attacking the boy. He jumped over the fence and carried the child



Tpr Tim Cruttenden (Lakeview Post - Investigating Officer), Mr. Drew Trudell (employee of Mr. Hansen's) Mr. Kenneth Hansen, Mr. Brian Hansen (employee of Mr. Hansen and brother to Kenneth) and F/Lt Kevin Sweeney (Lakeview Post Commander).

to safety inside the house, even with the dogs continuing to bite at the child. The boy suffered 22 bite wounds, and was treated at Helen DeVos Children's Hospital and released that evening.

"There is no doubt in my mind that the actions of Mr. Hansen saved the life of this child," stated F/Lt Kevin Sweeney, commander of the Michigan State Police Lakeview Post. "Mr. Hansen knowingly, and without

hesitation, put himself in harm's way to save the life of another."

The recognition was given to him in front of his work crew, at a job site in Oakfield Township.

The POST

www.cedarspringspost.com

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OFFICE HOURS: Mon.-Fri. 10am to 5pm

2015 Subscription Rate..... \$35 per year

There is still time to register to participate in the SAND LAKE JULY 4TH GRAND PARADE

Entry forms available at
Rosie's Ice Cream & More
or Call 616-636-5425 or 616-799-2110
Or sign up on July 4th 9am-12:15pm

Student charged in bomb threats

A 16-year-old from the Belmont area is being charged with making a bomb threat against Rockford High School.

According to the Kent County Sheriff Department, Rockford Public Schools and several employees have been the target of harassing and threatening telephone calls since October 2014.

A joint investigation with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Kent County Sheriff Department, and Rockford Department of Public Safety, identified the local student as one of several people involved.

On June 17, 2015, the evidence involving the student was reviewed by the Kent County

Prosecutor's Office, resulting in the 16-year-old male being charged with False Report or Threat of Terrorism (a 20 year felony). The Kent County Sheriff Department said

they would be requesting restitution in this investigation.

There are additional suspects that are from outside of Michigan or in another country. They are not releasing details on any of the other suspects at this time due to the ongoing investigation.

The Sheriff Department said that law enforcement and the Rockford Public Schools worked closely to ensure the students were safe at all times. "We want to thank the parents, students, staff, and community for their patience and support during this very time-consuming and meticulous investigation," said Detective William Marks.

Anyone with additional information is asked to call the Kent County Sheriff Department at 616-632-6357 or Silent Observer at 616-774-2345.

Solon seeks public input on proposed park plan

Solon Township will conduct a public input session for the Township's 5-year Parks and Recreation Plan on Tuesday, June 30, at 6:30 p.m. at the Solon Township Hall.

The purpose of this meeting is to gather input from the township residents concerning current and future opportunities for parks, recreation, and trails in the community. The comments

and ideas received from this meeting will be used to develop the 2015 Parks and Recreation Plan Update. Watch for information on future sessions on the Solon Township website and facebook page.

The final public presentation of the Solon Township

Parks Master Plan will be held on Wednesday, July 1 at 11:00 am at the Solon Township Hall. This presentation will be attended by the Township Board and is open to the public for viewing and comment.

Sheriff announces new Chief Deputy

Sheriff Lawrence Stelma announced that Kevin Kelley was promoted to Chief Deputy effective Monday, June 8, 2015.

He replaces Michelle LaJoye-Young, who was recently promoted to Undersheriff, after Jon Hess retired.

Kelley began his career

Bureau, Road Patrol, and Vice Unit.

Kelley graduated from Grand Rapids Central High School. He obtained his Associates in Arts from Grand Rapids Commu-



Alpha Family Center would like to thank the following donors for sponsoring and underwriting the costs of Lifewalk 2015. Many thanks to our community for honoring Lorrie Shelton as she retires from Alpha:

Lifewalk 2015 Underwriters:

VanderHyde Ford	The Corner Bar	Pilgrim's Run Golf Club
Festida Foods	Curves	Red Rock Grill
Cedar Springs Rental	DanMark Graphics, LLC	Resurrection Life Church
Gail's Driving School, LLC	Dollarville	Rockford
Thermal-Tec	Downtown Trini's	Shaner Avenue Nursery
The Springs Church	Dykstra Insurance Agency	Sparta Lanes
Irwin Seating	Family Farm and Home	Sparta Variety
	Family Fare	Sue's Kountry Kitchen
	Family Vision	The Screen Print Dent



1430 Monroe Avenue, NW Suite 105
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49505

313 North Burdick Street
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007

Solon Township – 2015 Recreation Plan

June 30, 2015

Visioning Questionnaire

If you feel the Township is underserved with parkland, what types of new facilities should be developed? For example, tennis courts, trails, swimming pools, playgrounds, etc.

In addition to implementing the recently completed Community Park Plan, what other recreational goals should the Township consider? For example, acquire land, new trails, new programming, etc.

What services/programs can the Township provide to improve recreational opportunities?

Name a community that you have visited that embodies the type of park facilities you think the Township should strive for? Explain why.



313 North Burdick Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
(269) 978-5143
(866) 683-5060 (fax)

1430 Monroe, Suite 105
Grand Rapids, MI 49505
(616) 438-9841
(866) 683-5060 (fax)

Public Input Meeting Notes

July 1, 2015

Project: Solon Township 5-Year Recreation Plan

Meeting Date: June 30, 2015

VIRIDIS Project Number: 1454

ATENDEES:

See attached sign-in sheet.

1. VIRIDIS Design Group provided a brief introduction to the process and an overview explanation of how the results of the activity will be incorporated into the Recreation Plan. The presentation also included a discussion of the purpose of the plan, the planning process, a brief description of the existing park system, description of how the township compares to National Park standards, and a list of goals from the Cedar Springs Area Recreation Plan.
2. Visioning Exercise: Each attendee of the meeting was asked to individually answer 4 questions. The questions were as follows:
 - If you feel the township is under-served with parkland, what types of new facilities should be developed?
 - In addition to implementing the recently completed Community Park Plan, what other recreational goals should the Township consider?
 - What services/programs can the Township provide to improve recreational opportunities?
 - What community that you have visited embodies the type of park facilities you think the township should strive for?
3. Mr. Sudziaski voiced a concern about the threat of soil in the Township Park being contaminated with the tetanus bacteria from horse excrement. The previous use of a portion of the site was a horse barn. Mr. Sudziaski suggested having the soil tested prior to construction activities.
4. Following the visioning exercise, the group was asked to share and discuss their answers. Their responses were recorded as noted below:
 - a) New Facilities:
 1. Trails

2. Pavilion
3. Ball Fields
4. Playground
5. Sports Complex
6. Disc Golf
7. Restroom facilities
8. Farmer's market
9. Dog Park
10. Nature Park (passive uses)
11. Interpretive trails with vegetation identification
12. Skate Park
13. Bike paths

b) Recreational Goals:

1. Non-motorized trails
2. Natural resource preservation
3. Land acquisition
4. Educational and cultural programming
5. Connection to North Country Trail
6. Ice skating
7. Performance space (band shell, stage, amphitheater)

c) Programs/Services:

1. Community activities for all ages
2. Movies in the park
3. Youth day camps
4. Festival space
5. 4H programs
6. Boy scout programs
7. Holiday events
8. Flea Market
9. Car show
10. Community picnic
11. Art fair/space
12. Nature exhibits
13. Fitness related events
14. Children's programs
15. All season restrooms
16. Dance
17. Re-purpose barns for events

d) Example Communities:

1. Trail system in Jackson, liked boardwalk and nature areas
 2. Binder Park
 3. Rockford Parks – liked that parks are connected by trails
 4. Themed playground at Deer Tracks Junction
5. There was a brief discussion related to the following items:
- a) Trust Fund Grant application requirements
 1. Grant match requirements
 2. In-Kind donation opportunities to use as part of match
 3. Fund-raising for match
 - b) Potential cost of park maintenance
 1. How to establish a budget to meet grant requirements
 2. Volunteer opportunities

These minutes are VIRIDIS Design Group's interpretation of discussions and conclusions from the referenced meeting. Please contact our office within 5 business days if corrections need to be made.

Respectfully submitted,

VIRIDIS Design Group

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John W. McCann", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John McCann, LLA, LEED AP
Senior Landscape Architect

cc: All attendees

SOLOH TOWNSHIP

5-YEAR PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

PUBLIC INPUT MEETING

June 30, 2015

Name	Organization/Address	Email	Phone
Kodi Pritchard	Solon Twp Site Planning Committee	Kodi_Pritchard@msn.com	616-291-5788
Shelly Cardona	"	Seashell62@gmail.com	616-696-1848
Michelle Foraker	"	clerk@solontwp.org	616-696-1218
Jan Johnson	"	jananddenja@charter.net	616-696-3473
Annette Illick		Annette.illick@gmail.com	616-696-0085
Mark Babcock			
Vicky Babcock		dvbabcock@gmail.com	616-696-4227
John Murphy	Vin's Day Group	John@virdg.com	269-978-543
Jim Britton	VDC	Jim@virdg.com	269-978-543

ARTS/ENTERTAINMENT

HOMETOWN Happenings

Hometown Happenings articles are a community service for non-profit agencies only. Due to popular demand for placement in this section, we can no longer run all articles. Deadline for articles is Monday at 5 p.m. This is not guaranteed space. Articles will run as space allows. Guaranteed placement is \$10, certain restrictions may apply. You now can email your Hometown Happenings to happenings@cedarspringspost.com please include name and phone number for any questions we may have.

AA Meetings at Rebo's House

Rebo's House, 10 N. First St., Cedar Springs is open on Sunday, 9 am, 2 pm and 7 pm. Monday, noon, 7 pm Big Book, 8:15pm, Tuesday, noon, 5:30 women's, 7 pm men's & women's. Wednesday, noon, 7 pm 12X12, 8:15 pm. Thursday, noon, 7 pm, Alanon 7 pm. Friday, noon, 7 pm and Saturday, 8:30 am, 10 am, 2 pm and 7 pm. #22

Blessing of the Bicycles

June 6: A "Blessing of the Bicycles" event will be held at First and Oak St. at The Springs Church parking lot on Saturday, June 6th from 1 to 3 pm. Parents, bring your kids with their bikes for the blessing. Minor bike repairs, bike safety information and demonstration, decorating t-shirts and new bike drawing. Don't have a bike? While supplies last, several used bikes have been graciously donated for this event! Hope to see you there. #20-22p

Red Flannel Queen Scholarship Pageant Meeting

June 7: Seeking pageant contestants! The Red Flannel Queen Scholarship Pageant is open to all girls who will be juniors this fall (2015-2016 academic year), with a 3.0 GPA or greater, who attend a school in the Cedar Springs School District or live in the Cedar Springs School District and attend a different school such as Creative Technologies Academy, Algoma Christian School, homeschool, etc. If interested, please email redflannelpageant@gmail.com. Also, please plan to attend the parent and contestant meeting on Sunday, June 7 at 2 pm at the new Red Flannel Festival Office on Main Street. #22p

Tom Plunkard: Magic to the Rescue

June 10: This entertaining and hilarious show includes animals, audience involvement and amazing magic. For families. Wednesday, June 10th at 6:30 pm at the Nelson Township/Sand Lake KDL Branch, 88 Eighth St. #22

Hooper Heros at KDL

June 13: Grab your magical lasso and learn how to hoop! Audacious Hoops will teach you basic hooping techniques for both fun and fitness. For Families. Saturday, June 13th at 1:30 pm at the Nelson Township/Sand Lake KDL Branch, 88 Eighth St. #22

Summer Spectacular at HCNC

June 13: Come and enjoy live music, community expo - meet local businesses, seminars and program "samplers" all day, police K-9 demonstrations, meet and greet with firefighters, animal demonstrations, informative seminars. Concessions on site all day. Saturday, June 13th from 9 am to 4 pm. FREE but donations are greatly appreciated. Howard Christensen Nature Center, 16190 Red Pine Dr., Kent City. 616-675-3158. #22

Summer Celebration Fireworks - View From the Hill

June 13: You are invited to enjoy the Rockford Start of Summer Celebration fireworks from the hill at Rockford Reformed Church, 4890 - 11 Mile Rd. NE on Saturday, June 13th. Popcorn, refreshments and children's activities provided. Please bring a chair or a blanket, your family and friends, and enjoy the beauty of the fireworks from atop the hill at Rockford Reformed Church. Hope to see you there! #22,23p

Ragtime and Boogie Woogie Concert

June 14: Ragtime and boogie woogie pianist Bob Milne performs in the Barn Theatre on Montcalm Community College's Sidney campus on June 14 at 2 pm. Admission is \$10 at the door. For more information, call 989-328-2111, ext. 334 or email karen.maxfield@montcalm.edu. #22

Cedar Area Soccer Association Tryouts

June 15-17: CASSA will be holding open tryouts at Boomer Park, 13440 Ritchie NE, Cedar Springs MI 49319. Monday, June 15: U9 - U13 boys, Tuesday, June 16: U9 - U13 girls, Wednesday, June 17: U14 - U19 boys and girls. Registration is at 6 pm, tryouts last approximately 2 hours. Please come prepared but do NOT wear any CASSA apparel. Please visit www.cassasoccer.com for details or contact the registrar, Anthony Shaw 616-292-4429. #22,23p

Auditions announced for upcoming CSCP production

June 20,22: The Cedar Springs Community Players are pleased to announce auditions for its upcoming summer production of "Postal" by Herb Hasler, a wacky, two-act comedy. They will be held at the Cedar Springs United Methodist Church on Saturday, June 20 from 10 am to noon and Monday, June 22 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. Needed are 6 men and 6 women, ages between 18-60+. Production dates are August 13-15, 2015, at the Kent Theatre. Please like our FB page and to see details! #22-24p

Bus Trip to Tigers Game

July 19: On July 19th Cedar Springs Area Parks and Recreation is hosting a bus trip to Comerica Park to watch the Baltimore Orioles vs the Detroit Tigers! This bus trip includes transportation via motor coach, a ticket in the right field stand (Section 104), free rides on the carousel and ferris wheels for the kids, and kids can run the bases after the game! The cost of this trip is \$85.00 per person and the deadline is June 17th. The bus will leave and pick up at Cedar Springs Public Schools Campus. For more information or questions you can log onto www.csaparksandrec.com or call 616-696-7320. #22,23p

Longest Day 5K Trail Run/Walk

The 3rd annual Longest Day 5k Trail Run/Walk will be held on Friday, June 19, at 6 p.m. on the trails at Blandford Nature Center. The evening run/walk will benefit Blandford Nature Center, raising funds for their education, recreation and wildlife programs. In addition to the race, there will be a family-friendly "Summer Celebration" party, with children's activities, live music, and food and beer sponsored by local businesses. Runners can sign up online at www.longestday5k.org or at Blandford Nature Center. LONGEST - continues on page 6



Ruth McCarty, 80, was the first to register for the 5k trail run/walk at Blandford Nature Center.



JOKE Of the Week

Smile for the DMV

When Tom went to get his driver's license renewed, the local motor-vehicle bureau was packed.

The line inched along for almost an hour before he finally got his photo taken and his license renewed.

When Tom got his license in the mail, he decided he didn't like his photo, so he went back to the DMV to complain.

"I was standing in line so long, I ended up looking pretty grouchy in this picture," he griped to the clerk.

The clerk looked at his picture closely.

"It's okay," he reassured the man, "That's how you're going to look when the cops pull you over anyway."

This Joke of the Week is brought to you by

CLASSIC KELLY'S

A Finer Family Restaurant and Catering

356 North Main St., Cedar Springs
(616) 696-0620

Solon Market opening day community sale



Saturday, June 6, is Community Sale Day at Solon Market's Opening Day at Solon Township Office! Solon Township is opening up the grounds and parking area to the public for a

huge sale all in one location! Everyone is welcome!

There is no charge. Solon Market is asking residents to bring your garage sale items and join them for a fun and profitable day or come and check out the sales. Set-up is on the blacktop and the area behind the township office. Sale hours are 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. and set-up begins at 8 a.m.

The event will coincide with Solon Market's Opening Day and Solon Park Committee's unveiling of the most recent concept drawings. Residents are invited to check out the drawings, make suggestions or comments and enjoy refreshments.

Come to market, visit your neighbors, check out crafts, produce and garage sale items as well as other merchandise.

Solon Township Office is located at 15185 Algoma Ave. between 18 and 19 Mile Rds. Contact Vicky at 616-696-4227 for more information.

See you there!



City Council discusses agreement with Red Flannel

By Judy Reed

At their regular meeting on Monday, 14, the Cedar Springs City Council discussed their concerns with a potential agreement with the Red Flannel Festival.

Under the two-part agreement, the City would offer in kind services (mainly DPW) to the RFF, and be able to license the various logos owned by the Festival free of charge. No money would change hands.

City Councilor Rose Powell said that she talked to Rockford City Manager

Michael Young, and they provide in kind services to 50 festivals held there. She noted that Sparta does the same, with an in-kind cap of \$5,000.

City Manager Thad Taylor said that with the way the agreement is written, his concern was that there was no way to determine what the cost would be. "I am also extremely concerned about a unanimous vote to get out of the agreement," he noted.



Mayor Pro-tem Pam Conley, who is on the committee working on the agreement, said that they didn't put a number in there (a cap) and that they needed direction from Council.

Councilor Perry Hopkins said that if they do this, they need to be ready to do it for all events, and he felt that

they should leave trademarks out of it. "Just use the in kind services. I think it's taking a step backward (to use the logo)," he said.

Mayor Jerry Hall said he thought they should wait on the trademark and just work on the agreement for services for now.

Solon Township park plans to be unveiled

The Solon Township Parks Committee will unveil the latest design for the Township Park on Algoma Avenue on opening day of the Solon Market, June 6, 2015, from 9:00-1:00. A committee member will be available to answer ques-

tions, gather ideas and share refreshments.

The new drawing developed by the design team was created with input from the May survey of Solon Township residents and from prior surveys and public meetings. After the June

6 unveiling, the design will be displayed for viewing at the township hall for one month, before the Master Plan documents are submitted to the Township Board for approval.

The Park Committee would like input and opin-

ions from all Solon Township residents, with the hope of creating a park that offers amenities to be utilized and enjoyed by everyone. Please visit and like them on [facebook.com/SolonPark](https://www.facebook.com/SolonPark).

Car bursts into flames after crash



A Howard City man was injured Monday, after his vehicle crashed into a tree and later caught fire.

Shortly after 5:30 p.m., Montcalm County's Central Dispatch received several re-

porting a vehicle crashing northbound on Garbow Road, prior to veering off the roadway and striking two mailboxes. After striking the mailboxes, he veered back onto the roadway, traveled a short distance and collided with the tree, which caused his vehicle to catch fire. The vehicle airbags deployed, as a result of the collision.

Huff was later transported to Spectrum Hospital in Grand Rapids for treatment of injuries sustained from the crash.

Plan-A-4
Plan-B-10

Solon Park Survey

May 5, 2015

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU - THANK YOU FOR HELPING TO BUILD YOUR PARK!

1. What reasons would bring you to this park? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 110 <input type="checkbox"/> Biking | 102 <input type="checkbox"/> Play or Watch Sports |
| 113 <input type="checkbox"/> Bring children to playground | 70 <input type="checkbox"/> Relax |
| 105 <input type="checkbox"/> Events | 71 <input type="checkbox"/> Walk Dog |
| 99 <input type="checkbox"/> Time with family and/or friends | 146 <input type="checkbox"/> Walk paths |
| 113 <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise or Jog | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| 156 <input type="checkbox"/> Farm Market | |

2. How often would you use this park?

- 27 ☐ Daily
117 ☐ Weekly
33 ☐ Monthly
44 ☐ Occasionally
11 ☐ Rarely

FARM MKT - 156
WALKING PATH - 146
Playground - 113
Exercise/Jog - 113
Biking - 110

3. Would you visit this park as part of an exercise/health/fitness routine?

- 72 ☐ Often
131 ☐ Sometimes
18 ☐ Never
15 ☐ No Opinion

4. Would you or your children consider participation in a Township event or organized program in this park?

- 43 ☐ Often
131 ☐ Sometimes
12 ☐ Never
44 ☐ No Opinion

5. What programs and/or events would interest you?

Soccer-8 Baseball-9 Softball-6 Fitness Classes-5
Musical/Events-16 Tennis Courts-2 Basketball-4
Volleyball-2 Pickleball-1 Dog Park-2 T-ball-1
Frisbee Golf Course-2 Gazebo for Wedding Pictures-1
Helicopter/R.C. Vehicles Races-2 Community Picnics-5 Bazaar-1
Roller Hockey-1 Ice Skate Rink-1 Hayride/Fire Pit Carve
Rifle Range-1 Car Show-1 Dog Agility-1
Historical Reenactments-1 Ren-fair-2 Art or Nature Program
Horse trails-1 Pumpk

6. What are your top 5 priorities for this park? (number them 1-5 please)

8	44	Amphitheater/Concerts	5	56	Pavilions
1-	138	Restrooms		9	Public artisan display
4	63	Benches/tables	9	42	Recreation/Sports programs
3-	86	Children's play equipment		8	Security - fencing
	42	Drinking Fountains		16	Security - policing
(3)-9	94	Farm Market		12	Skate Parks
Have 7	53	Fitness course	10	37	Splash Pad
	36	Gardens and Flowers	6	55	Sports courts/fields
2-	122	Walking Paths			

7. Please suggest other ideas for park features, services or programming.

Farm Theme/Age Appropriate - Geo-Caching - Shade trees
Dog friendly - Mt Bike Course -
Kids Crafts at Farmers MKT

8. What is your overall opinion of the park designs?

112 ☐ Very Good
 35 ☐ Fair
 2 ☐ Poor
 18 ☐ No Opinion

9. Would you be interested in volunteering through a township volunteer program?

24- ☐ yes, name/phone/email: _____
 131- ☐ Not at this time

10. What is your age?

2 ☐ 20 and under
 42 ☐ 21 to 40
 88 ☐ 41 to 60
 55 ☐ 61 and over

11. If any children in your household, what are their ages? (please indicate number of children in each age group)

57
 50
 43
 29

0 to 5 years
 6 to 10 years
 11 to 15 years
 16 to 18 years

Solon Park Planning Committee and Community Workshop Meeting
Minutes from March 30, 2015 5:30PM

Meeting called to order by Len Allington at 5:35, other members present;
Shelly Aardema and Koadi Pritchard.
9 Community residents attended

Len talked about the previous meeting with the Viridis Group and about DNR grants and the Trail Link which could provide Federal Monies and trying to utilize what we already have.

Comments included how much usage of a little league field, skate park safety, splash pad cost and maintenance costs. Positive comments included the walking path, market area, benches, and adding exercise stations later.

Len talked about the Stout Barn and still trying to save it even though the township voted to tear it down. Several people commented what was done is done. Suggested we need to realize we are a growing community and we need to build for the future.

Suggested we do a manned table at the Election May 5th to talk to residents about the park and get feedback. A couple a people volunteered to help out with that. Also perhaps do a door to door survey in the sub divisions and possibly at Family Farm & Home. Shelly and Mary Lou to work on survey.

Meeting Adjourned
Shelly Aardema/Acting Secretary

March 30
Public Input

* Kim Richards

HummyJoe@hotmail.com

Reese Richards

reesec@woodradio.com

Solon

Terry Owen

dragos32@charter.net

Solon

Vicky & Hal Simpson

clvababeck@gmail.com

Solon

Jan Johnson

jananddenj@charter.net

Solon *

Merrilee & Mary Barrett

m.mbarrett9@Iowa.com

(cont. Family Farm & Home Lance Crawford)

Solon Park committee needs public input

Could see North Country Trail cut through property

By Judy Reed

The Solon Township Park Committee now has two conceptual drawings for how a new park could be laid out on the township property on Algoma, and they want the public's input. They invite residents to come to a meeting on Monday, March 30, from 5:30 to 7 at the township hall and give their comments.

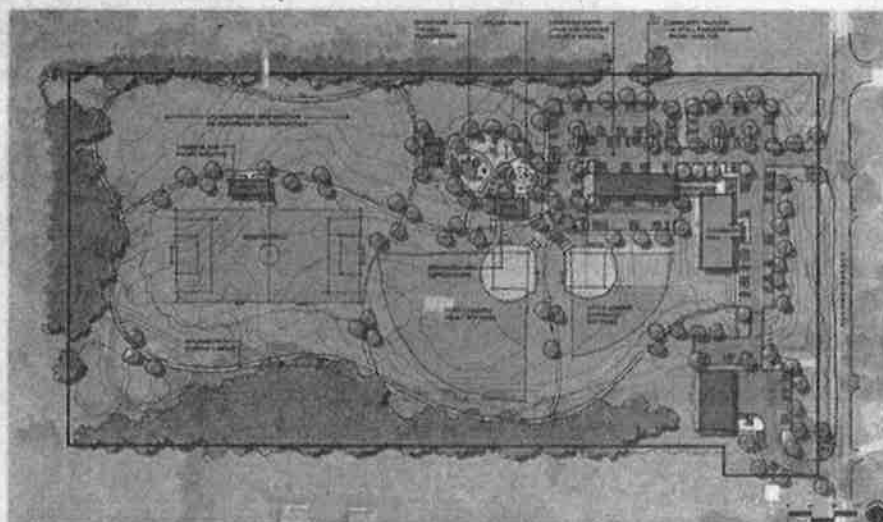
"These are not set in stone," said Len Allington, Vice President of the committee. "These are just ideas people have come up with."

Each of the designs are a little different, but contain things like baseball, softball and soccer fields, a skate park, splash pad, and more.

"We'd really like to engage more kids and young adults in the decision process," noted Allington. "We really just want to get a conversation going."

Once they get some input, they will create updated designs for the public to view at the May election.

Allington said that the funding model the committee would like to follow is the same one that Algoma followed for their park—using donations and grants to get it done. And that could be a real possibility if the North Country Trail travels across their property. Carolee Cole, Community Building Development Team member and North Country Trail committee member, made a presentation about it to the Solon Township board earlier this month.

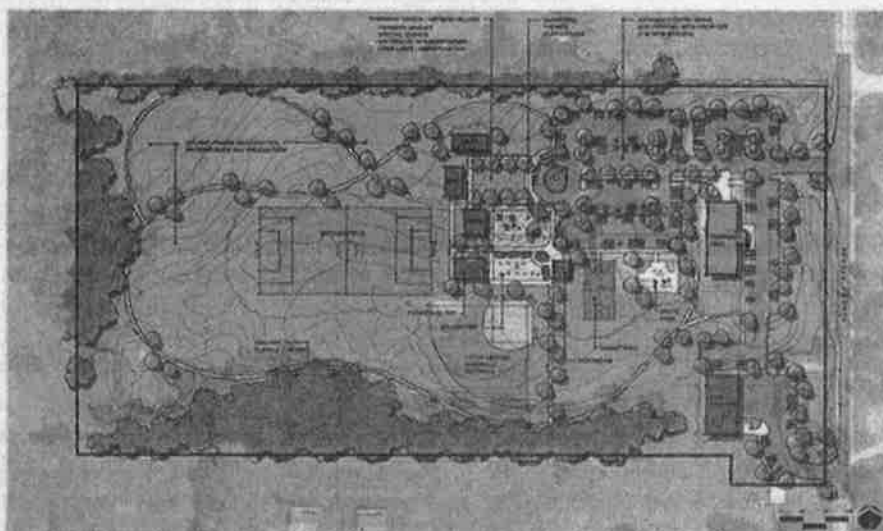


COMMUNITY PARK MASTER PLAN

SOLON TOWNSHIP, ALGOMA
MARCH 2015

CONCEPT PLAN A

WTRIDIS



COMMUNITY PARK MASTER PLAN

SOLON TOWNSHIP, ALGOMA
MARCH 2015

CONCEPT PLAN B

WTRIDIS

The North Country Trail is the longest continuous hiking trail in the United States stretching 4,600 miles from upstate New York to North Dakota. The

national headquarters are based in Lowell and the entire length of the trail is a national park. Cole said that the board of the North Country Trail Association

for West Michigan has voted to begin the process of certifying the trail route through Cedar Springs on its way from Lowell to the

SOLON - continues on page 16

SOLON PARK CONTACT LIST

March 18
Public Input

NAME	ADDRESS	email	PHONE
Amy Anderson	Hazel City (Nct Contact)	adandy@charter.net	231-349-0448
Hal Babcock	2711 18 Mile CS. 49319	dvbabcock@gmail.com	616-696-4227
Vicky Babcock			
Stephanie Morris	2085 Stag Ct OS 49319	gmorris2085@gmail.com	616-04194
Angie Hazen	2895 Wierman 49319	chazens25@yahoo.com	616-915-8492
RANDY CAROLYN DAVIS	16655 SHAMMONS CS 49319	CAROLDAVIS@CHARTER.NET	616-696-1939
Kim Lemke	2271 Quarter Horse CS	Kim.Lemke@charter.net	745-1882
Amanda Gerhardt	2211 Clearwater Ct 49341	director@csaparksandnc.com	
Annette Ellick		deputy clerk@solon-twp.org	
Mary Lou Poolson		clerk@solon-twp.org	

cell
240-
3174



313 North Burdick Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
(269) 978-5143
(866) 683-5060 (fax)

1430 Monroe, Suite 105
Grand Rapids, MI 49505
(616) 438-9841
(866) 683-5060 (fax)

Public Input Meeting Notes

January 26, 2015 (*Italic indicates revisions by Len Allington*)

Project: Solon Township Park Master Plan and Recreational Master Plan –
Kick-off meeting
Meeting Date: January 19, 2015, 6 PM
VIRIDIS Project Number: 1454

ATENDEES:

See attached sign-in sheet.

The following meeting points were discussed:

A) Introductions

1. Tim Britain delivered a brief presentation describing the purpose and goals of the meeting as well as the differences and purposes of both the park master plan and the 5 year recreational plan.
2. Katie will be the primary point of contact with the entire group being copied with correspondence related to the park master plan. Trevor is the VDG representative. *Mary Lou should also be copied.*
3. Katie would also be the point of contact for the recreational plan and would distribute information as necessary to the balance of the group. John is the VDG representative.
4. It was determined that Viridis Design Group (VDG) Would take input from the group and develop preliminary concepts for review by the steering committee.

After review and refinement of the preliminary concepts, VDG would facilitate a Community Workshop to introduce the preliminary concepts and gather information from the greater community. The Community Workshop is scheduled for March 18th with two separate sessions, 3-5 PM and 6-8 PM.

5. The group would like to unveil the master plan concept at the Farmer's market opening on June 6th.
6. The Rec. plan will target the next grant cycle for completion with the goal of completing the process and submitting to the DNR by August or September of 2015.
7. The township will use social media to make residents aware of the process and workshops.

B) The group provided individual wish list items - Park Master Plan:

1. Keep rural flavor, *illustrate Township history*
2. Trails – *walking, biking and XC skiing*
3. Restrooms – *open year round*
4. Pavilion/shelter.
5. Grills.
6. Playground equipment – *tractor/train themes*
7. Amphitheater.
8. open recreational fields – *softball and soccer.*
9. Re-purpose/relocate existing barns – *wedding/photo barn*
10. Re-purpose large barn for farmer's market expansion.
 - *Indoor archery*
 - *Partnership with 4H*
 - *Canine agility shows*
 - *indoor golf - drive into net*
11. Skate park – *something for teenagers.*
12. Basketball.
13. Shuffleboard, *teatherball*
14. Possible parking expansion deeper into the site.
15. Maintain some form of agricultural practice.
16. At one time the township fire barn was to be located on this site. *If large barn is saved, incorporate fire barn into south side.*

C) The following park uses were discussed – Park Master Plan:

1. Move existing barns as a group to a better location on the site – create a “village” for special events.
2. Large barn re-purposing should accommodate a wide range of uses and activities - *4H, canine agility, indoor archery range, indoor net golf.*
3. Naturalized landscape treatments
4. Incorporate interpretation of the site and history of the area as part of the park development.
5. Prepare concepts with and without large barn.

D) Miscellaneous Discussion – Park Master Plan:

1. Cost to bring large barn into code compliance vs. removal.
2. The overland stormwater management system for the office was discussed.
3. Existing parking is not sufficient for both office and market use. Visibility of the Farmer's market should be addressed.
4. The market has between 10-25 vendors.
5. The site water is serviced by an on-site well.
6. An on-site septic system services the office and is located south of the office.
7. Consider future fire department infrastructure as part of the concept development.
8. The site has two existing curb cuts. The south has poor visibility

9. *Septic system at proposed pavilion site and well.*

E) Discussion – 5 Year Recreation Plan:

1. John described the public input process which includes a public meeting, 30 day review period and public hearing with the Township Board.
2. There was discussion about sending a survey with June 2015 tax bills.
3. The township provided a hard copy of the current regional recreation plan.
4. The township will remain in the regional rec plan and prepare their own.

F) Adjourn – Approximately 7:30 PM

These minutes are VIRIDIS Design Group's interpretation of discussions and conclusions from the referenced meeting. Please contact our office within 5 business days if corrections need to be made.

Respectfully submitted,

VIRIDIS Design Group



Timothy A. Britain
Principal

cc: All attendees

Solon Township Site Plan Committee - 2012

Solon Township
Kent County
2305 19 Mile Road NE
Cedar Springs, Mi

To the residents of Solon Township,

The Solon Township Board appointed members to a newly formed citizens committee that was charged with the mission of creating a master site plan for the property at 15185 Algoma Ave NE. As a township resident we would greatly value your input in assisting our committee in determining the best use of this new property. We would appreciate your time in answering some questions that will aid us in that purpose.

Please fill out the following survey as soon as possible and return it by mail or at the drop off box at the township hall by the main doors. Thank you for your support

1. Please number in order the following items by importance using 1 as the highest priority.

3 Playground

2 Walking Trail

1 Covered Picnic Pavilion

4 Baseball Field

5 Soccer Field

 Other _____

2. There is a large arena and 3 small barns on this property. Would you prefer : (check one)

49 The buildings stay and are restored and utilized.

2 The buildings are all removed.

94 The committee look at potential uses for the buildings and what the long term costs would be for both restoration or removal.

3. Additional comments:

James Dean-Chairman

Len Allington-Vice Chair

Josh Allington-Secretary

Katie Hull-Member

Mandi Lucchesi-Calati- Member

Rated by importance 1 being highest	Total Votes for Playground	Total Votes for Walking Trail	Covered Pavilion	Baseball Field	Soccer Field
1	35	45	47	3	2
2	50	36	34	7	4
3	29	27	29	25	13
4	13	14	9	55	23
5	6	10	11	24	53
6 (other)	0	2	2	4	9

Other Ideas counted all together as a total separate from 5 above
People Suggested

Restroom	3	Trees	1
Dog/Park/walk	8	Pool	3
splash pad	2	Pave Wiersma	1
raise millage	1	Storage Rental	1
Hunting	1	Shooting Range	2
Fle Market	5	Little League	1
Tennis courts	3	Recycle area	1
Multipurpose	1	Hall	4
Ice Rink	2	Theater	1
Basketball	1	Skateboard Park	2

Votes based on survey of the Three Barns

Barns Stay	Barns Remove	Look for Potential Uses
49	2	94

Total votes Overall

154



1430 Monroe Avenue, NW Suite 105
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49505

313 North Burdick Street
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007

Date, 2015

Dave Bee
West Michigan Regional Planning Commission
1345 Monroe, NW, Suite 255
Grand Rapids, MI 49505

Dear Mr. Bee:

Enclosed for your review is a copy of the Solon Township 5-Year Recreation Master Plan adopted by the Township Board on XXXX. The plan has recently been developed and we would appreciate your review and any comments you have concerning the Plan's contents. We are submitting this plan in accordance with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' guidelines for preparing a community recreation plan.

If you need additional information, please feel free to call.

Sincerely,

John McCann, LLA
Senior Landscape Architect

Cc: Mary Lou Poulsen, Township Clerk



1430 Monroe Avenue, NW Suite 105
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49505

313 North Burdick Street
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007

Date, 2015

Mr. Roger Sabine
Kent County Parks Director
1700 Butterworth SW
Grand Rapids, MI 49534

Dear Mr. Sabine:

Enclosed for your review is a copy of the Solon Township 5-Year Recreation Master Plan adopted by the Township Board on XXXX. The plan has recently been developed and we would appreciate your review and any comments you have concerning the Plan's contents. We are submitting this plan in accordance with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' guidelines for preparing a community recreation plan.

If you need additional information, please feel free to call.

Sincerely,

John McCann, LLA
Senior Landscape Architect

Cc: Mary Lou Poulsen, Township Clerk



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). To be eligible for grant consideration, plans must be submitted to the DNR prior to the grant application deadline **with** a completed checklist that has been signed by an authorized official(s) of the local unit of government(s) submitting the plan.

PLAN INFORMATION

Name of Plan:

List the community names (including school districts) covered by the plan	County	Month and year plan adopted by the community's governing body

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**

- ☐ Roles of Commission(s) or Advisory Board(s)
- ☐ Department, Authority and/or Staff Description and Organizational Chart
- ☐ Annual and Projected Budgets for Operations, Maintenance, Capital Improvements and Recreation
- ☐ Programming
- ☐ Current Funding Sources
- ☐ Role of Volunteers
- ☐ Relationship(s) with School Districts, Other Public Agencies or Private Organizations

Regional Authorities or Trailway Commissions Only

Description of the Relationship between the Authority or Commission and the Recreation Departments of

- ☐ Participating Communities
- ☐ Articles of Incorporation

☐ **3. RECREATION INVENTORY**

- ☐ Description of Methods Used to Conduct the Inventory
- ☐ Inventory of all Community Owned Parks and Recreation Facilities
- ☐ Location Maps (site development plans recommended but not required)
- ☐ Accessibility Assessment
- ☐ Status Report for all Grant-Assisted Parks and Recreation Facilities

☐ **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 _____

Type of Notice _____

Plan Location _____

Duration of Draft Plan Public Review Period (Must be at Least 30 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 _____

Name of Newspaper _____

Date of Meeting _____

☐ Copy of the Minutes from the Public Meeting

☐ **7. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

☐ **8. ACTION PROGRAM**

☐ **9. POST-COMPLETION SELF-INSPECTION REPORT**

PLAN ADOPTION DOCUMENTATION

Plans **must** be adopted by the highest level *governing body* (i.e., city council, county commission, township board). If planning is the responsibility of a Planning Commission, Park and Recreation Commission, Recreation Advisory Board or other local Board or Commission, the plan should **also** include a resolution from the Board or Commission recommending adoption of the plan by the governing body.

The local unit of government must submit the final plan to both the County and Regional Planning Agency for their information. Documentation that this was done must be submitted with the plan to the DNR.

Items 1, 3 and 4 below are **required** and must be included in the plan.

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: _____

☐ 2. Official resolution of the _____ Commission or Board,
recommending adoption of the plan by the governing body, dated: _____

☐ 3. Copy of letter transmitting adopted plan to County Planning Agency dated: _____

☐ 4. Copy of letter transmitting adopted plan to Regional Planning Agency dated: _____

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

_____ *includes the required content, as indicated*

(Local Unit of Government)

above and as set forth by the DNR.

Authorized Official for the Local Unit of Government Date

This completed checklist must be signed and submitted with a locally adopted recreation plan to:

**GRANTS MANAGEMENT
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL
RESOURCES
PO BOX 30425
LANSING, MI 48909-7925**

DNR USE ONLY - APPROVAL

The recreation plan is approved by the DNR and the community (ies) covered by the plan, as listed on page 1 of this checklist is/are eligible to apply for recreation grants through

Date
By: _____

Grants Management Date