

Imlay Township Parks and Recreation Plan 2025 - 2029



Adopted December 18, 2024

Parks & Recreation: Credit Page

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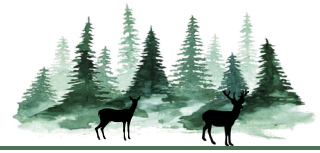
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Background

The 2025-2029 Imlay Township Parks and Recreation Plan was prepared under the direction of the Township’s Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee and was adopted by the Imlay Township Board to serve as a guide and decision-making document for future recreation facilities and programs. The plan presents an inventory of existing facilities and programs within the Township and an evaluation of opportunities and needs. The plan considers the existing facilities in and around the Township, the anticipated demand for additional or improved facilities, and the means for providing those facilities over the upcoming five-year period.



This plan provides five years of grant eligibility with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. It is recommended, however, that the plan be reviewed on an annual basis and amended, if necessary, to ensure it is reflective of the needs of the community.

Plan Organization

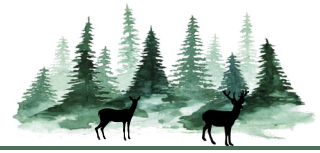
The Parks and Recreation Plan is divided into separate sections that represent the planning process used in its conception. In addition to this introduction, the plan contains:

- **Planning and Administration.** Identifies the planning process, recreation budget and grant history, and the entities responsible for administration of the park and recreation programs and facilities
- **Inventory.** Describes the specific parks, facilities, and programs provided in and around Imlay Township
- **Analysis.** Analyzes recreational programming and facility needs, based on national trends, parks and recreation planning standards, an analysis of demographic trends and public input
- **Action Program.** Identifies the plan’s goals, objectives, and recommendations for recreational facility improvements over the next five years
- **Appendices.** Includes the following supplemental information:
 - Funding Sources
 - Public Engagement Results
 - Adoption and Transmittal Documentation

Community Description

Imlay Township is located in eastern Michigan in Lapeer County; boarded by Goodland Township to the north, St. Clair County on the east, south by Almont and west by Attica Township. It covers a land area approximately 34 square miles. Imlay Township is 40 miles north of Detroit and 32 miles east of Flint. Imlay City Schools currently provide educational service to the community. The population, as reported in the 2020 U.S. Census was 3,115; a decrease of -0.4% from the 2010 U.S. Census of 3,128.

The American Community Survey (ACS) 2022 5-year Estimates indicate the Township’s largest age group is those 45 to 54 years of age, representing 18.3% of the population. The second largest group was those age 35 to 44 at 12.6%. Those under 18 years of age represent 21.8% of Imlay Township’s residents. Households with one or more people under 18 years of age account for 34.0% of all households.

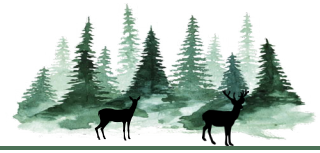


A large percentage of residents drive using their own method of transportation within the region. The Township sits within a very rural environment with easy access to a major transportation corridor through Michigan (I-69); also, the Township is within reasonable distance to a number of other communities that offer a variety of amenities and opportunities for shopping, recreation, education and employment. Map 1 (below) shows the location of Imlay Township and its surrounding communities.

The Polly Ann Trail runs through the western portion of Imlay Township; this corridor is a recreational trail managed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. It is connected to a statewide trail network, providing tourism and recreation benefits to many communities in the region.

Figure 1: Location Map

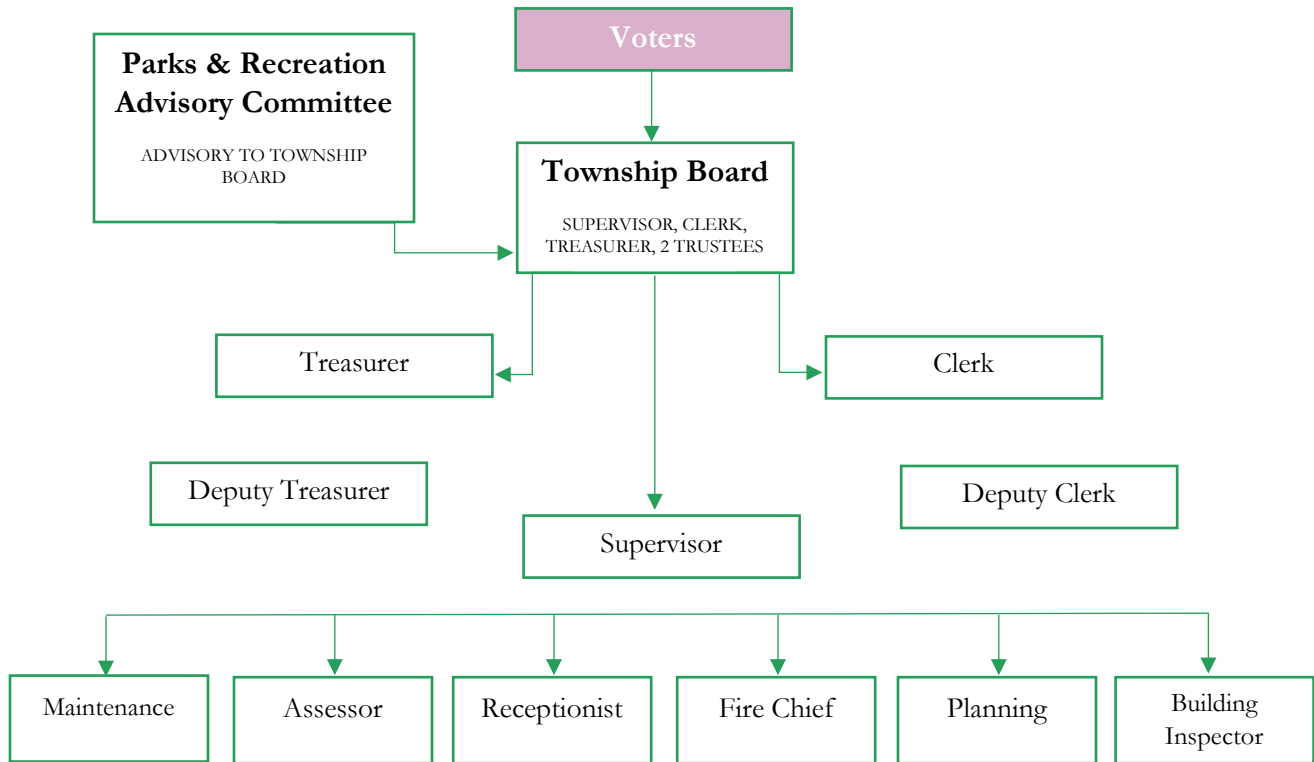




Administrative Structure

The Township utilizes an “ad-hoc” committee known as the ‘Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee’ to develop plans and goals for municipal recreation sites. However, the committee has no direct authority to implement any proposal or expense. Members of the “Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee” are appointed or nominated by members of the Township Board to represent the interests of the Township.

Imlay Township Parks and Recreation Org Chart



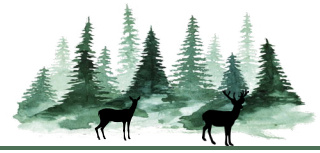
Parks and Recreation Budget

The anticipated budget for Imlay Township parks maintenance and development includes a revolving improvement amount within the general fund that averages \$10,000 per year. Funding for Imlay’s parks comes primarily through general funds from property taxes. Additional revenue will come from the lease agreement for use of soccer fields in Yntema Park along Blacks Corners Road with the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO).

Maintenance for park facilities is performed by a contracted service. Operation of the park facilities is the responsibility of the Township Supervisor and police set by the Township Board. Security for the parks is provided by the Lapeer County Sheriff’s Department.

Funding History

Imlay Township has previously received funding from the MDNR for the development of the since-closed Veterans Park. The park project was eventually transferred to develop the Township Park located behind the Township Hall. The project has since been closed out and all funding for the park has been utilized.



Grant number RP18-0083 consisted of funding from the MDNR for \$75,000. Improvements for this project included development of two pickle ball courts, earth-work, new parking lot, and sidewalk access to the splash pad.

To date, any additional improvements to park property and recreational programming have come from the general fund of the Township.



Figure 2: Photo of Pickleball Courts in Township Park

Programming

There is no established structure for providing local programs by Imlay Township.

The American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) runs programs at the 28-acre complex that is owned by the Township at Blacks Corners Road near Newark Road, known as Yntema Park. AYSO also maintains the park and operates under a separate budget supported with user fees.

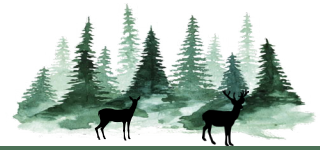
There is additional regional programming for a variety of age groups through the Lapeer County Senior Programs, Ruth Hughes Memorial District Library, Imlay City Community Schools, and Imlay City Parks & Recreation which is discussed more in the next section regarding the relationships with school district and other public and private organizations.

The Township continuously will work on developing relationships with some of the following list of organizations who also help provide community programming.

- Lapeer County Sportsman’s Club
- Various local church groups
- Imlay City Sport Teams
- American Youth Soccer Organization
- Little League Football
- Veterans of Foreign Wars
- Lion’s Club
- Rotary Club
- Boy & Girl Scout
- 4-H Clubs

Role of Volunteers

Volunteers in Imlay Township have proved to be essential in the current oversight and maintenance of park properties in the Township. In 2015, the splash pad located behind the Township Hall was installed by volunteers and in-kind labor. The Township will typically identify a need for the parks, and residents volunteer as needed to help with whatever is requested. The above list of organizations that help with community programming are also potential volunteers.



Relationships with School District, Other Public Agencies or Private Organizations



School District

Imlay Township and Imlay City Schools are continually engaged in programming and activities through the students that attend the school system. While there are no school buildings located within the Township, students are still provided with recreation and programming options that promote healthy lifestyle choices and physical fitness. The school also has a variety of athletic fields further detailed in the parks and recreation inventory. The Township will continue to partner with the local school district as opportunities arise.

American Youth Soccer Organization

American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) is an international non-profit organization established in 1964; it focuses on providing youth soccer leagues around the country. The local chapter, as previously stated, works on management and maintenance of six soccer fields for various age groups in Yntema Park. The Township will continue to look for mutually beneficial opportunities to work together.



Lapeer County Senior Programs

Lapeer County Senior Programs provide supportive services and comprehensive programming designed to help seniors remain in their homes and maintain an independent lifestyle. Eligibility for services is based on the level of care needed. Participants must be 60 years of age or older and a resident of Lapeer County. Services Provided through the Lapeer County Senior Programs include:



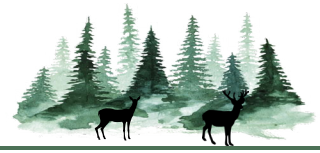
- Home Delivered Meals and Congregate Site Meals
- Senior Centers (See link below for flyers with information)
- Care Management
- In-Home Personal Care and Homemaking Services
- Respite
- Home Chore Services
- Transportation

The Township will continue to explore partnering opportunities as they arise.

Ruth Hughes Memorial District Library

The Ruth Hughes Memorial District Library serves the residents of Imlay City, Imlay Township, and Attica Township. The closest branch is located in Imlay City on Almont Avenue in Downtown Imlay City. Features and amenities of the library include meeting rooms, quiet rooms, computers, wi-fi access, and copy services. Additionally, programs are available such as story-times, crafting and seasonal events, presentations and speakers, computer classes, a summer reading club, “crafts in the park,” and more. In addition to books, DVDs, and audiobooks on CD, the library also provides access to thousands of electronic books, comics, movies, music albums, and television shows available for download through its Overdrive and Hoopla digital collections. The Township and library will continue to support each other.





Imlay City

Imlay City is geographically surrounded by Imlay Township. Imlay City has six city parks noted in the Regional Parks and Recreation Facilities section. Located within the boundary of Imlay City is the Michigan Eastern Fairgrounds that provide a variety of events and seasonal recreational opportunities. Also located within Imlay City is the Lapeer County Senior Center. As opportunities arise, the Township and City may continue to coordinate recreational activities, programs, and/or amenities.

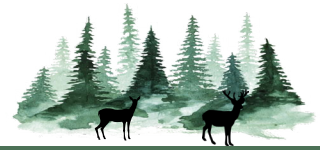


Other Private Organizations

Other potential partnerships for Imlay Township include local chapters of the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Rotary Club. Pursuing these types of partnerships helps with funding and development of recreation opportunities while strengthening the Township's relationship with members of its community.

Prosperity Region Designation

Since 2012, Imlay Township has been part of the State-designated Region 6 – East Central Michigan Prosperity Alliance. This designation allows for state and federal funding to provide quality of life improvements in those counties. The counties in this region include Genesee, Huron, Lapeer, Sanilac, Shiawassee, St. Clair, and Tuscola. Formalizing a collaborative relationship among local and regional partners allows the state, as well as private and non-profit stakeholders, to recognize local efforts and work in closer collaboration with local and regional decision makers throughout the state to support their efforts for economic prosperity. The purpose of the Regional Prosperity Initiative is to create sustainable economic development with rising employment, income, and overall quality of life in Imlay Township and beyond.



Recreation Inventory

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

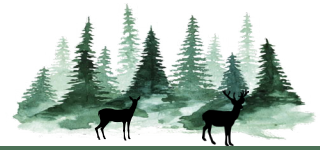
Inventory Process

The following inventory and subsequent analysis was developed using the recommended park classifications and facility guidelines of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). These guidelines are used to help identify needed recreational facilities in the community. While they provide a baseline for measuring whether existing parks meet community needs, the Township should balance these guidelines with other needs evident in the community. Information was gathered based on existing spatial data, field visits, previous plans, and public and committee input.

Barrier Free Accessibility

The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) required all areas of public service to have barrier-free accessibility, including parks and recreation facilities. The evaluation of the parks and facilities in Imlay Township includes an assessment of their barrier-free access. In accordance with the MDNR standards, facilities were evaluated to determine if persons with limited sight, hearing, mobility, and comprehension can safely and independently access and use the park or facility. The following evaluation system (**Table 2-1**) was used to rank each park's accessibility:

| Table 2-1 Levels of Park Accessibility | |
|---|---|
| Level | Characteristics |
| 1 | <p>None of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not accessible to people with a broad range of physical disabilities • Few paved areas |
| 2 | <p>Some facilities meet accessibility guidelines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Either the parking or pathways are paved, but not both • Many of the facilities, such as play equipment or picnic areas, are not easily accessible |
| 3 | <p>Most facilities meet accessibility guidelines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the parking and pathways are paved • Some of the facilities, such as play equipment or picnic areas, are accessible but may not be completely barrier-free |
| 4 | <p>Entire park meets accessibility guidelines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completely accessible to people with a broad range of physical disabilities • Parking areas and pathways are paved • Most of the facilities, such as play equipment or picnic areas, are easily accessible |
| 5 | <p>Entire park was developed using the principles of universal design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables all environments to be usable by everyone, regardless of age, ability, or situation |



Township Parks and Recreation Facilities

Imlay Township Park

This park provides an accessible path to the gravel parking lot but requires paved barrier free parking areas. Play equipment has safety surfacing but no transfer connections. The splash pad has no pathway access, and the walking path is grass with varying slopes. Improvements at this location include accessible pathway access from the paved parking lot to the multiuse courts, pavilion, playground, and splash pad. Recommendations include permanent, publicly accessible restroom facilities.

Size: 13 Acres

Age Groups Serve: All Ages

Location: 682 N Fairgrounds Rd

Facilities: Pavilion, Splash Pad, Multiuse Courts, Walking Path

Accessibility: (Ranking – 4) Completely accessible to people with a broad range of physical disabilities.

DNR Recreation Grants: 1 Grant



Imlay Township Park Walking Path

Located in the back of the Imlay Township Park, this grassy walking path is accessible to users via the Imlay Township Hall parking lot. Additional pedestrian walking space is located across Fairgrounds Road in the Township Cemetery.

Length: 0.48 miles

Age Groups Serve: All Ages

Location: 682 N Fairgrounds Rd

Facilities: Walking Path

Accessibility: (Ranking 1) The walking path is maintained grassed area with only a small portion of the route from the parking lot is paved.



Imlay Township Cemetery

This passive recreation space serves as a walking trail for locals. Located directly across the street from the Imlay Township Park, users can easily park their car and cross Fairgrounds Road into the Cemetery.

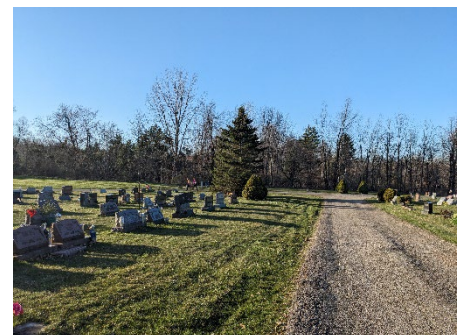
Length: 0.82 miles

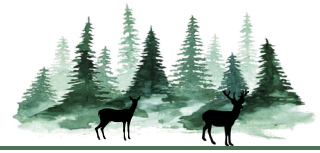
Age Groups Serve: All Ages

Location: 671 N Fairgrounds Rd

Facilities: Walking Path

Accessibility: (Ranking 3) There are paved areas for vehicle maneuverability/ pedestrians may walk on, but grassed areas around grave sites.





Yntema Park

This active recreation space provides for 6 various size soccer fields in addition to parking lot area. The Brinker Drain divides the property in half where the undeveloped portion of the property is dense forest areas.

Size: 28 Acres

Age Groups Serve: All Ages

Location: 2307 S Blacks Corners Road

Facilities: Gravel parking lot, Six soccer fields for various age groups

Accessibility: (Accessibility Ranking – 1) None of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines.



Yntema (AYSO) Park

Vacant Land Owned by Imlay Township

The Township currently owns a large parcel of land adjacent to the Imlay Township Park. At present, the southeast corner of this property is being used as extra parking for users of the Township Park and Township Hall. The rest of the land is undeveloped.

Size: 43 Acres

Location: Directly north of 682 N Fairgrounds Rd

Facilities: Gravel parking lot

Regional Parks and Recreation Facilities

Regional recreation facilities within the Imlay Township service area offer unique natural features that provide outdoor activities such as wildlife habitats, boating, hiking and trails. Many of these amenities are readily available to the residents of Imlay Township through the County, State, region, and privately.

Imlay Township lies within Lapeer County, which falls under the jurisdiction of the Lapeer County Parks and Recreation Commission. There are various parks and recreation locations around Imlay Township that the residents have enjoyed activities through.

Lions Park – Imlay City

Size: 9.3 Acres

Age Groups Served: All Ages

Facilities: Ball Field, Basketball, Playground, Soccer, Walking Path, Sledding Hill, Natural Area, Picnic Area, Restrooms

Veteran’s Park – Imlay City

Size: 3.5 Acres

Age Groups Served: All Ages

Facilities: Playground, Walking Path, Natural Area

Lamb Steele Park – Imlay City

Size: 5 Acres

Age Groups Served: All Ages

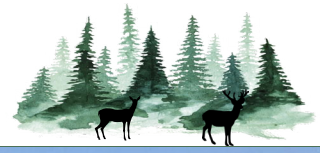
Facilities: Swimming Pool, Splash Pad, Picnic Area

Old School Park – Imlay City

Size: 1.1 Acres

Age Groups Served: All Ages

Facilities: Basketball, Playground, Picnic Area, Restrooms



Rotary Park – Imlay City

Size: 0.9 Acres

Age Groups Served: All Ages

Facilities: Playground, Picnic Area, Restrooms

Butterfly Garden – Imlay City

Size: 0.5 Acres

Age Groups Served: All Ages

Facilities: Walking Path, Natural Area, Picnic Area

Sutter’s Recreation Area – North Branch

Size: 40 Acres

Age Groups Served: All Ages

Facilities: Swimming, Campgrounds, Playground, Horseshoes, Volleyball, Basketball

Washakie Recreation – North Branch

Size: 40 Acres

Age Groups Served: All Ages

Facilities: Golf, Campgrounds, Swimming

Seven Ponds Nature Center - Dryden

Size: 245 Acres

Age Groups Served: All Ages

Facilities: Nature Preserve, Educational Center

General Squier Park – Dryden

Size: 87 Acres

Age Groups Served: All Ages

Facilities: Splash Pad/Water Slide, Restroom Facilities, Pavilion, Meeting Hall (Available for rent)

Henley Recreation Center - Lapeer

Size: N/A

Age Groups Served: All Ages Facilities:

Lapeer Recreation Center – Lapeer

Size: 6.9 Acres

Facilities: Indoor Swimming Pool, Gym, Fitness/Weight Room, Meeting Space, Track,

Racquetball Courts, Classroom space, Water Slide



Rotary Park

Sutherland Nature Sanctuary – Hadley Township

Size: 75 Acres

Age Groups Served: All Ages

Facilities: Restroom, Pavilion (Non-Profit Educational Organization)

Ortonville Recreation Area – Oakland County

Size: 5,400 Acres

Age Groups Served: All Ages

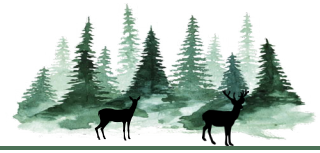
Facilities: Fishing, Boating, Hunting, Swimming, Picnic Pavilion, Cross-Country Skiing, Mountain Biking, Playground equipment, Volleyball Court, Horseshoe Pits, Equestrian Area/Campground, Paddle boating and Camping

Metamora-Hadley State Recreation Area – Hadley Township

Size: 723 Acres

Age Groups Served: All Ages

Facilities: Hiking, Picnic Pavilion, Hunting, Snowmobile trails, Cross-Country Skiing, Fishing, Paddleboats, Campgrounds



Poly Ann Trail

The Polly Ann Trail is a 36.7 mile rail trail that runs through Oakland and Lapeer Counties, including Imlay Township. The trail is an old railroad line starting in Orion Township and ending in Kings Mill Road and Lake Pleasant Road northwest of Lum.

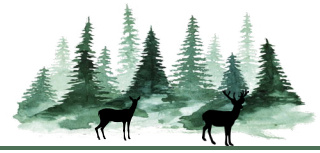
The trail is managed by the Department of Natural Resources. The trail starts in the southwest corner of the Township curves toward Imlay City and continues through the northwest side of the Township. The portion of the trail located within the Township is a grass surface, which is maintained with volunteer effort.



Private Recreation Facilities

There are private facilities located within and around Imlay Township that provide recreational activities for residents. These facilities are privately operated and, in some cases, require a user fee for admittance. They are included in the recreation analysis because they meet a specific need in the community. These private facilities include:

- Fitness Clubs
 - Anytime Fitness, Imlay City
 - Imlay City Fitness, Imlay City
 - FGFIT Inc., Almont
- Golf Courses
 - Castle Creek Golf Club, Attica
 - Heather Hills Golf Club, Bruce Township
 - Holly Meadows Golf Course, Capac
 - Lake Nepessing Golfland, Lapeer
 - Lapeer Country Club, Lapeer
 - Three Oaks Golf Center, Bruce Township
 - Washakie Golf and RV Resort, North Branch
- Indoor Playground
 - Jump City Trampoline Park, Imlay City
- Bowling
 - IC Strikes, Imlay City



Analysis

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

Method of Analysis

A combination of sources were used in this section. All requirements and quartile ranges used to measure the Township's park and trail inventory were from the NRPA's 2024 Agency Performance Review. The U.S. Census and American Community Survey Estimates were used to determine Imlay Township's demographic data. National statistics on youth program participation is from the National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) and the Aspen Institute Project Play's The State of Play report from 2022. This information helps understand how Imlay Township is serving their residents' recreation needs at present and may be used to identify potential areas of focus or improvement.



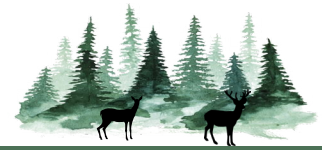
Parkland and Park Facility Analysis

Number of Parks

The following guidelines are provided by the NRPA's 2024 Agency Performance Review. The Agency provides a range containing a lower quartile, median, and upper quartile values for residents per park within a jurisdiction. For jurisdictions with a population of less than 20,000, the range is 659 residents (lower quartile), 1,172 residents (median), and 1,944 residents (upper quartile). According to the 2020 U.S. Census, Imlay Township's population is 3,115. Presently, Imlay Township has two Township parks: Imlay Township Park and Yntema Park. When the Township's population is divided by 2 (the number of parks in the Township), the sum is 1,558 residents per park. As a result, Imlay Township is firmly between the median and upper quartile range as stated by the NRPA.

Total Parkland

The following guidelines are provided by the NRPA's 2024 Agency Performance Review. The Agency provides a range containing a lower quartile, median, and upper quartile values for acres of parkland per 1,000 residents within a jurisdiction. For jurisdictions with a population of less than 20,000, the range is 6.0 acres (lower quartile), 12.6 acres (median), and 20.9 acres (upper quartile). According to the 2020 U.S. Census, Imlay Township's population is 3,115. Based on its population, Imlay Township should have a range between 18.69 acres (lower quartile), 39.25 acres (median), and 65.10 acres of total parkland (upper quartile). Presently, Imlay Township has 41 total acres of parkland. Imlay Township's total parkland acreage is very close to the median based on the NRPA standard.



Park Facilities

The following guidelines are provided by the NRPA’s 2024 Agency Performance Review. The Agency provides a range containing a lower quartile, median, and upper quartile values for residents per indoor/outdoor facility within a jurisdiction.

Imlay Township’s parkland and recreation inventory was compared to the guidelines set by the NRPA. The NRPA guidelines are based on the population of the study area. In 2020, the U.S. Census reported the total population within the Township to be 3,115 residents. **Table 3-1** applies these guidelines to recreational facilities located within the Township, adjacent to the Township, and within a reasonable travel distance. The values found in the “NRPA Guidelines” column of the table are for jurisdictions with a population of less than 20,000.

Table 3-1
Analysis of Imlay Township Recreation Facilities

| Park Facility | NRPA Guidelines (pop. per Facility) | Recommended (based on Twp population) | Existing (within Imlay Twp) | Surplus or Deficiency | Existing (surrounding communities) |
|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Playgrounds or play structures | 1,990 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 9 |
| Diamond fields: total | 1,833 | 2 | 0 | -2 | 16 |
| Basketball courts, standalone | 4,366 | 1 | 0 | -1 | 8 |
| Rectangular fields: total | 2,493 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 10 |
| Dog park | 10,327 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Community gardens | 8,800 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Pickleball | 3,390 | 1 | 0 | -1 | 4 |
| Multiuse courts - basketball, volleyball | 5,248 | 1 | 0 | -1 | 5 |
| Multiuse courts - tennis, pickleball | 4,634 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 20 |
| 18-hole golf courses | 9,626 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Driving range stations | 2,122 | 1 | 0 | -1 | 3 |
| Playgrounds (aged 5-12) | 2,417 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 9 |
| Inclusive playgrounds | 9,644 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 9 |
| Fitness zones/exercise stations | 8,233 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Disc golf courses | 11,079 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ice rink | 8,015 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9-hole golf courses | 17,750 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Overlay field | 10,584 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Raquetball/handball/squash courts | 13,350 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Recreation centers (& gyms) | 9,685 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Community centers | 8,908 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Performance amphitheater | 12,769 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Senior centers | 14,286 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Nature centers | 9,430 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Aquatics centers | 12,618 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Outdoor restrooms | 2,579 | 1 | 0 | -1 | 7 |



| Park Facility | NRPA Guidelines (pop. per Facility) | Recommended (based on Twp population) | Existing (within Imlay Twp) | Surplus or Deficiency | Existing (surrounding communities) |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Stadiums | 10,633 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Public restrooms | 5,642 | 1 | 0 | -1 | 7 |
| Indoor ice rink | 8,004 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Teen centers | 14,797 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Arena | 7,057 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

Trail Facilities

The following guidelines are provided by the NRPA’s 2024 Agency Performance Review. The Agency provides a range containing a lower quartile, median, and upper quartile values for trail miles within a jurisdiction. For jurisdictions with a population of less than 20,000, the range is 2.0 miles (lower quartile), 4.5 miles (median), and 9.2 miles (upper quartile). According to the 2020 U.S. Census, Imlay Township’s population is 3,115. Presently, Imlay Township has 4.73 miles of trails within the Township limits, according to GIS information. This value is from the trail located at the Township Park, Township Cemetery, and the portion of the Polly Ann Trail that runs through the Township. Thus, Imlay Township is slightly above the median value for a community of its size.

Demographic Analysis

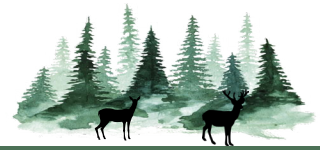
The socioeconomic characteristics of a community play a role in the demand for certain types of recreation facilities. By examining socioeconomic characteristics such as population, density, age, and household size, municipalities can identify trends and opportunities that may influence future land use and recreation decisions and/or policy choices. For example, if the elementary school enrollment in a particular area is growing, there may be a need to plan for more playgrounds and children’s programs. Conversely, if the population of the community is aging, more recreational facilities may be needed for senior citizens. This section provides a brief summary of the socioeconomic characteristics of Imlay Township that may influence parks and recreation planning decisions.

| Year | Population |
|------|------------|
| 1980 | 2,238 |
| 1990 | 2,143 |
| 2000 | 2,713 |
| 2010 | 3,128 |
| 2020 | 3,115 |

Age Distribution

The following data was collected using the 2020 U.S. Census and 2022 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates. The median age in Imlay Township in 2020 was 43.1 years. When compared with the 2020 Lapeer County median age of 44.4 years, the Township has a marginally younger population, although the community is still relatively young. Imlay Township’s median age is notably higher than the 2020 state average of 40.1.

In 2022, 34.0% of households in Imlay Township included one or more people age 18 or younger. This value is higher than the County (29.0%) and State (27.7%). In comparison, 29.9% of households in Imlay Township had households with at least one person age 65 or older. This value is slightly lower than the County (33.3%) and State (31.8%). These values suggest a generally younger population, indicating a



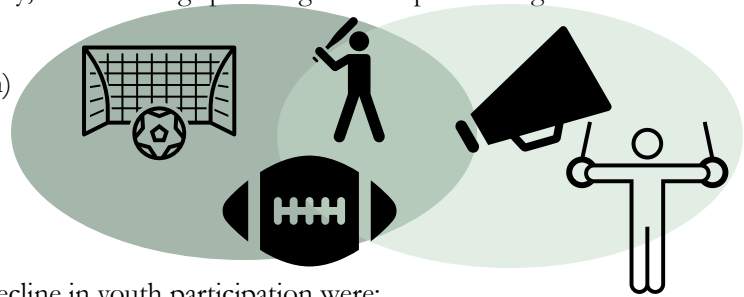
significant number of residents in Imlay Township may be young and growing families. Due to its notable variation in age among residents, it is important for Imlay Township to provide adequate recreation amenities for all ages.

National Recreation Trends

Recreation trends occurring nationally may provide insight into activities that have shown the greatest growth in popularity. Organizations such as the National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) and the Aspen Institute Project Play conduct national surveys that measure sports participation across the country.

According to the NSGA, based on a 2022 study, the following sports segments experienced growth rates over the past year (ranked by rate of growth):

1. Soccer (Outdoor) (18.6% growth)
2. Flag Football (15.8%)
3. Baseball (9.5%)
4. Cheerleading (9.5%)
5. Gymnastics (7.0%)



Conversely, the sports that saw the greatest decline in youth participation were:

1. Wrestling (-6.4% decline)
2. Track and Field (-6.0%)
3. Golf (-5.6%)
4. Lacrosse (-4.1%)
5. Swimming (Team) (-3.6%)

Much of the report centers around the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth sports. Low-contact outdoor team sports saw notable growth, while high-contact sports experienced some of the biggest declines (wrestling and lacrosse). According to the NSGA, fitness activities, open water sports, outdoor activities, and wheel sports segments have experienced increases over the last 5 years, while the individual sports and team sports segments have remained relatively flat.

The State of Play report from 2022, published by the Aspen Institute Project Play, provides insights into youth sports (ages 6-12) participation trends between 2008 and 2021 for the United States. According to the report, the most popular sports in 2021, in terms of total youth participation, were:

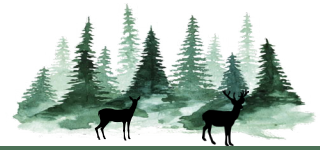
1. Bicycling (5.2 million participants)
2. Basketball (4.2 million)
3. Baseball (3.6 million)
4. Soccer (Outdoor) (2.1 million)
5. Tennis (1.7 million)



Planning Process & Public Engagement

Planning Process

The planning process followed the State guidelines and was highly participatory. It resulted in a plan that reflects the needs and ideas of those who make use of the area’s parks and recreation facilities. The planning process began with an update to the administrative structure and park inventory chapters of the plan. Data was collected from various sources including Imlay Township, Lapeer County, the previous Township Parks and Recreation Plan, field observations, and internet research.



The next step in the planning process was to conduct an analysis of recreational programming and facility needs based on national trends, parks and recreation planning standards, an analysis of demographic trends, and public input received. As noted in the next section, three forms of public engagement were used in the development of this plan. The results of this analysis provided the rationale for the Action Program, which outlines goals, objectives, and recommended capital improvements over the next five years.

A complete draft plan was made available for public review on Wednesday November 6, 2024, well in advance of the public hearing. The availability of the draft plan and the upcoming public hearing was officially noticed and published in the *Tri City Times* on Wednesday November 6, 2024. A public hearing on the draft Parks and Recreation Plan was held in front of the Parks and Recreation Committee on Tuesday December 10, 2024, and the Imlay Township Board adopted the Parks and Recreation Plan by resolution at its Wednesday December 18, 2024 meeting.

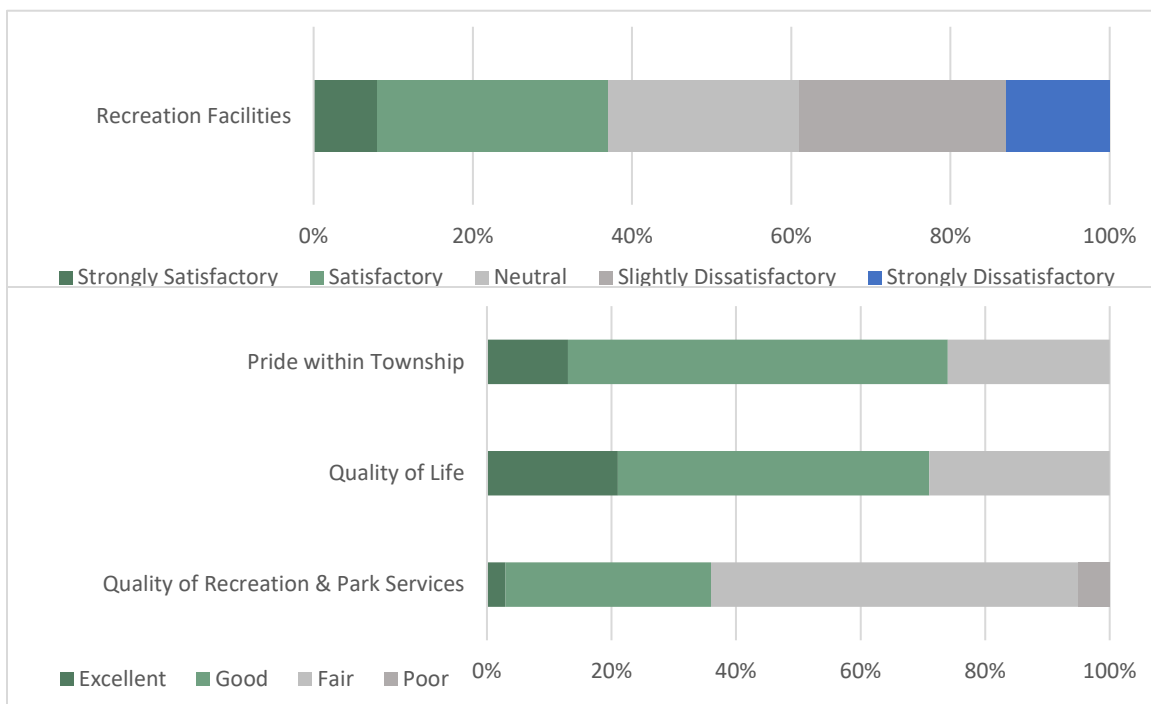
Public Input and Planning Process

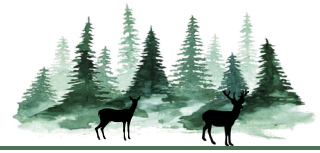
Imlay Township garnered public input for the Parks and Recreation Plan in addition to the development of their Master Plan update. Opportunities to provide input on the parks and recreation system in the Township included a community survey, open house, and public hearing. Below is a summary of the input provided specific to the parks and recreation system.

Community Survey

This analysis is based on the Community Survey conducted from June 24 to August 9, 2024. The following is a summary of the survey's content specific to parks & recreation. Full survey results can be found in the Imlay Township Master Plan.

The age of the survey respondents saw notable variation, with those age 35 to 54 representing the highest group of respondents (52%), followed by respondents age 55 to 74 (30%). When asked about their satisfaction with the Township's recreation facilities, 41% said they were dissatisfied and 35% said they were satisfied; the remaining 24% was neutral. Furthermore, the vast majority of participants said the quality of Imlay Township's recreation & parks services were either good (32%) or fair (60%).





Current Status

Most survey respondents said somewhat more parks & recreation activities and facilities are needed (50%) or many more are needed (29%). Participants were then asked to write up to three responses about programs, activities, or facilities they thought should be provided that are not currently offered. The most common subjects are as follows:

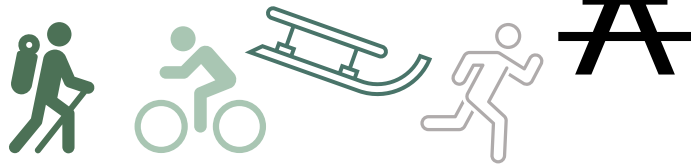
1. More recreation equipment
2. More non-motorized pathways
3. New recreation facility (e.g. multi-sport facility, rec center, youth center)



Potential Improvements

Respondents overwhelmingly endorsed the idea of the Township actively developing bike/walking paths to connect various sites and destinations together, with 39% strongly agreeing and 36% agreeing. Participants were given a list of 29 sport-related recreational facilities/activities and asked to give their opinion on the availability of each. For each choice, they were asked to indicate whether “many more are needed,” “more are needed,” “enough are available,” or “undecided.” The following were the top 5 answer choices ranked based on combined answers of “many more are needed” and “more are needed:”

1. Hiking/walking (25% said many more are needed; 63% said more are needed)
2. Bicycling (15%; 55%)
3. Sledding hill (21%; 48%)
4. Jogging/running (9%; 55%)
5. Picnicking (6%; 56%)



Next, they were asked to write up to three recreational facilities that were not listed that they, or other members of their family, would be interested in. Common answers included an indoor recreation facility, more non-motorized trails, and additional equipment at the Township Hall Park.

Lastly, respondents were asked to write up to three non-sport recreational facilities that they, or other members of their family, would be interested in. Common answers included a community rec center, painting classes, movie night in the park, and horseback riding trails.

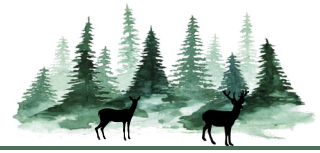
Open House

Imlay Township hosted an open house in conjunction with Imlay City for the development of each jurisdiction’s Master Plan, approximately 40 people attended the event. It took place on September 23, 2024. The open house featured four informational boards specifically related to Imlay Township, covering the topics of housing, commercial development, roads, and parks & recreation.



These were accompanied by a survey for attendees to fill out as they viewed each board. For the full summary of the open house results, review the Imlay Township Master Plan, provided here is an abbreviated summary discussing the results of the parks and recreation topic.

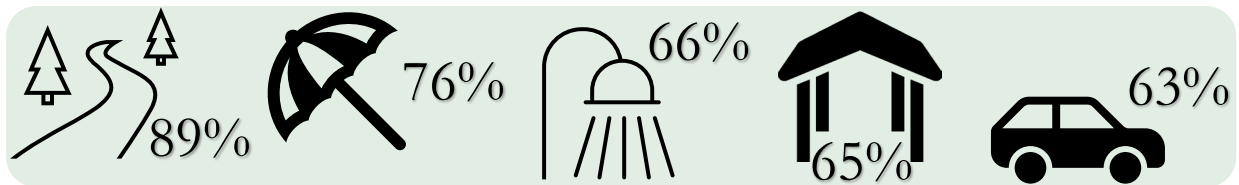
Results from the public survey were provided, listing the three Township recreational facilities (Township Park, Yntema Park, and Township Cemetery) with descriptions, location maps, and proposed features for the Township Park. Within the Township Park location map, two separate locations were proposed for additional



parking and a new pavilion. There was a near-even split in preference between location A and B for additional parking; 71% of participants preferred location 1 for the pavilion (near the splash pad).



Looking at the list of proposed features for the Township Park, improving walking trail material and connectivity was, by-far, the most popular option. More shaded areas, updated water features in the splash pad, additional pavilion, and additional parking were other popular answers.

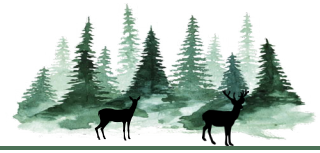


Lastly, if extra recreation funding is available, most attendees said they'd like a year-round sledding hill, additional bench seating throughout Park, teen/adult fitness equipment, more pickleball courts, and ADA playground equipment. Additional comments for improvements were specific to the Polly Ann Trail surface material, fence in playground area, mosquito control, dog run, more walking trails on undeveloped land, disc golf, and basketball courts.



Public Hearing

The required public hearing was held by the Parks and Recreation Committee on December 10, 2024. There was support for the proposed plan provided as part of public comments. The committee reviewed the various components of the Parks and Recreation Plan, public comments received, and formally recommended adoption to the Township Board.



Goals and Actions

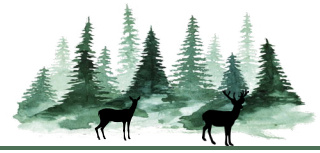
An overall guide for the recreation goals for Imlay Township will be to leverage development, programming and maintenance of park facilities by pursuing partnerships, grant funding, and volunteer efforts when appropriate. Goals are policy statements of what the community would like to be, while Actions are specific steps towards accomplish the goals.

Goal

Continue to maintain the existing recreation facilities and explore new park amenities that help to serve various age groups and community needs.

Actions

- Explore ways to increase awareness of Township Park amenities and use of recreational amenities in nearby communities (Polly Ann Trail, Eastern Michigan Fairgrounds, etc.) through-signage, website presence, etc.
- Implement improvements, expansion, and/or development of new facilities at existing parks to support the diverse needs and interests of all Imlay Township residents such as additional water features, ADA playground equipment, additional picnic spaces, additional or improvements to trailways, diversity of safe bicycling locations, sledding hill, additional pickleball courts etc.
- Explore expanding the diversity of recreational facilities for all seasons of the year like sledding hills in summer, trail ways use in winter months, pavilion and kitchen rental, etc.
- Explore enhancements of near existing facilities like shaded areas near splash pad, fencing enclosing playground area, additional paved sidewalks, additional seating, etc.
- Focus on providing new facilities rather than redundant facilities already available at adjacent communities' facilities.
- Continue to provide regular maintenance of existing park features to ensure useability and prolonged life of equipment/ facilities. As needed, ensure outdated or broken park features are replaced or upgraded.



- Continue to evaluate unmet recreation needs for the region that could be met by the Township (camping, etc.).



Goal

Support land acquisition and/or conservation easements for future active and passive recreation opportunities.

Actions

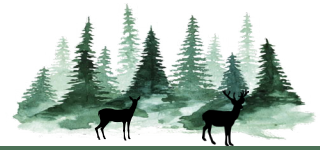
- Continue to identify and evaluate potential properties which would be most suitable for future recreational uses.
- Acquire easements/property, as needed, to develop/expand recreation facilities to support the diverse needs and interests of all Imlay Township residents.
- Support connections to the Polly Ann Trail and non-motorized improvements along the M-53 corridor
- Explore the development of new trails to provide safe connections between neighborhoods, schools, parks facilities, and other key destinations.

Goal

Continue to pursue grants and develop/foster partnerships to provide needed recreational services.

Actions

- Explore grant and alternative funding opportunities for improvement projects through MDNR, etc.
- Continue to seek partnerships with other recreation agencies and neighboring communities to share ideas and provide non-competing programs and facilities (civic groups, community groups, schools, etc.).
- Coordination with Imlay City to identify partnerships and determine available funding.
- Continue to foster a relationship and contract with American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) on the development, use, and maintenance of the soccer fields at Yntema Park.
- Pursue local organizations to coordinate park programs (Rotary, Lions Club, Friends of the Polly Ann Trail, Eagle Scouts, etc.).



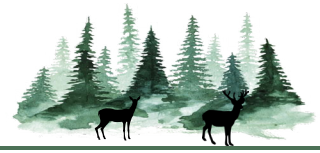
Goal

Continue to implement the recommendations of this plan as cost-effectively and efficiently as possible.

Actions

- At project outset, identify revenue sources for year-round maintenance and long-term operations of existing and future recreation facilities and programs.
- Update the Township's Recreation Plan every five years in order to maintain eligibility for acquisition and development grants through the State and other funding sources.
- Explore methods to encourage or require consideration of parks and recreation needs during the development review process.
- Explore options for coordination with the Imlay City School District and Imlay City in order to leverage funding sources and develop sites that would serve both communities and the school district.





Action Plan

The Imlay Township parks and recreation plan provides an evaluation of the physical, social, administrative, and community desires. As part of development of the goals and actions, extensive public engagement opportunities were provided including a community survey, open house, and public hearing. This five year action plan is intended to help prioritize specific projects for the Township to fulfill the desired parks and recreation system. The action items below are put into categories to help with regular review and implementation.

On-going Strategies

There are various strategies listed below that will be a constant effort by Township staff, volunteers, appointed, and elected officials. Below is a list of on-going actions the Township can consider so as to continue to provide a high level of service for the Imlay Township residents and surrounding area.

- Continue to update and maintain the website to advertise the Township parks and amenities
- Continue to prioritize funding for park maintenance and enhancements
- Continue to pursue various grants, donation, or other funding opportunities for improvements
- Continue to engage the public to ensure enhancements are desired by the community
- Continue to build partnerships with surrounding jurisdictions, nonprofits, or other organizations to improve parks and recreation amenities, programs, etc. for the broader community

Township Park

Township Park is the most developed Township park, and it includes Township Hall. It is a desire of the community to maintain this as the most active park with a variety of activities for all age groups. Some of the specific action items for the park include:

Active Amenities

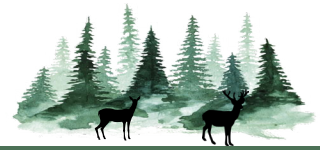
- Update splash pad features
- Expand the splash pad
- Add a second pavilion
- Add additional parking spaces
- Add year-round sledding hill/slide
- Add teen/adult fitness center
- Expand the number of pickleball courts
- Add ADA playground equipment
- Add enhanced sandbox with play equipment
- Add zipline
- Enhance scenic lookout on walking path with an arch or pergola
- Upgrade/replace playground equipment
- Expand toddler playground area
- Add music-based playground equipment

Passive Amenities

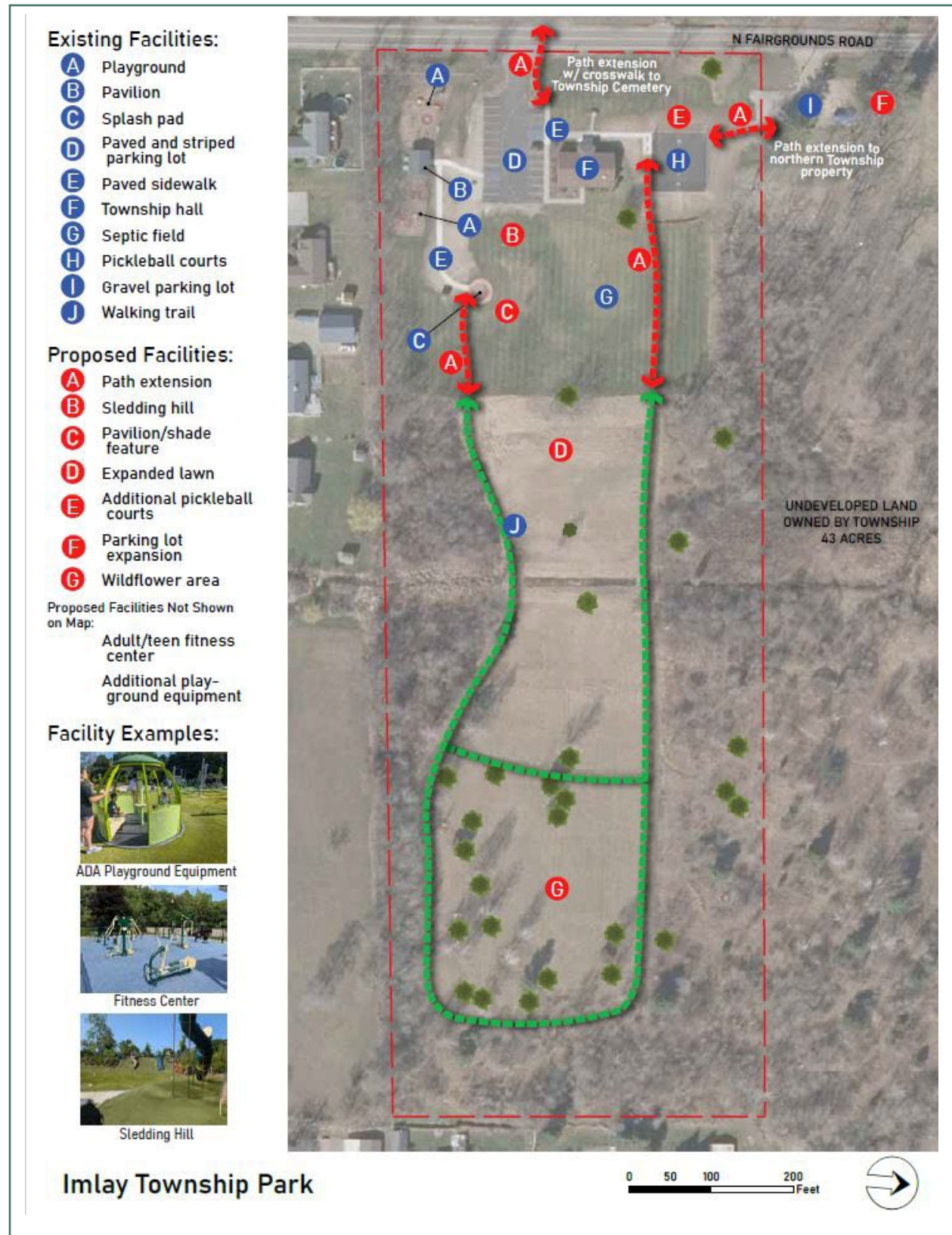
- Add additional shaded areas (trees or structures) throughout the park (especially near pickleball courts and splash pad)
- Add additional seating and exterior lighting throughout park
- Consider installing fencing around playground areas
- Incorporate a township park theme of equipment and features

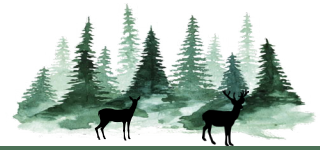
Trails

- Expand and improve park walking trail within park
- Improve connectivity and signage of walking trail into the Township Cemetery
- Improve pedestrian safety crossing across N. Fairgrounds Road for walking path
- Explore opportunities to connect Township Park to the Polly Ann Trail



Provided is a concept plan for the Township Park. This shows some potential locations for park features/amenities desired by the community.





Polly Ann Trail

The Polly Ann Trail is a regional trail system that runs through a portion of the Township. Though the Township does not own the property, they plan to work with Imlay City, other townships, MDNR, the County, and Friends of the Polly Ann Trail to make steady improvements to the trail to further serve residents. Some specific desired improvements include:

- Support local efforts to further Polly Ann Trail development
- Explore adding additional connections and signage towards the Polly Ann Trail
- Encourage/advocate for regular maintenance of Polly Ann Trail in the Township



Concept improved surface material for trail

Yntema Park

The Township will continue to work with American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) as long as is feasible to provide active soccer field space for the residents and those in the surrounding area. Some potential future improvements include:

- Established parking lot separation via bumper blocks, split fence, etc.
- Continue partnership with AYSO for maintenance of soccer fields
- Addition of playground area
- Additional benches, seating, or pavilion
- Improve signage of park
- Addition of horseshoe pits
- Explore use of undeveloped areas for the development of a nature trail

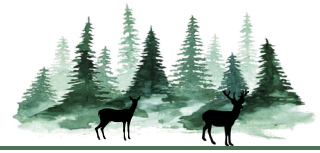
Other Township Properties:

The **Township Cemetery** is not a formal park but is often used for recreational purposes. Visitors often park in the Township Park and take a leisurely walk on the various paved pathways within the cemetery. Some potential improvements to enhance recreational use include:

- Continue to maintain safe ADA compliance walking space within the cemetery
- Explore installing exterior lighting and seating throughout cemetery

The Township owns an **undeveloped 43-acre parcel** north of Township Park. The property is completely vacant except for a small area immediately north of Township Hall, which includes additional parking. This parcel may remain undeveloped, retaining its natural beauty; or the property may be improved, allowing for additional active recreational opportunities; or it may be sold and developed. Below are some enhancements that could be considered:

- Expand parking lot area used by the Township Park/Hall
- Expand Township Park walking trails into the property
- Adding additional pavilion or picnic spaces



Appendix

Appendix A Public Notice & Adoption Documentation

Appendix B Post- Completion Self Certification Report

Appendix C Required Signage for DNR awarded grant for Imlay Township Park

