

Victor Township Park and Recreation Plan 2023-2027

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Victor Township Planning Commission**

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Introduction and Benefits of Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor recreation is critical to the quality of life and the economic health of Victor Township. Public parks and recreation areas provide places for all to enjoy and interact with nature, friends and family. They provide natural resources like rivers, wetlands and forests as well as human made facilities such as sports fields, picnic areas and trails. They welcome residents and visitors, benefiting both the participants in recreation as well as those businesses who serve them with food, fuel, sporting goods, souvenirs, etc.

Outdoor recreation is a voluntary use of one's free time. It provides for enjoyment and fulfillment and is vital to a healthy and well-balanced life. Public recreation venues are especially valuable as they bring the community together and are available to all, regardless of economic or social status. This link to others and the natural world reminds each of us of the interrelatedness of our world and our dependency on clean air, water and living resources.

Rationale for the Plan

This plan is to chart the future of park, outdoor recreation and open space provision in Victor Township, Clinton County Michigan for the years 2023-2027. It builds on earlier plans and the existing park and infrastructure base in the township as well as the recent 2022 Master Plan for Victor Township.

To be eligible to receive state or federal grants to support the acquisition of land for outdoor recreation or the development of facilities for the same purpose, a new Victor Township park, outdoor recreation and open space plan is needed that is approved by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). This plan will fulfill that requirement.

These grants, such as the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) and the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) are substantial. The MNRTF was created by Michigan voters in the state constitution in 1984 and solely provides monies for the acquisition and development of outdoor recreation lands and facilities. It is modeled on the federal LWCF which began in 1965. The MNRTF derives its funding from royalties and lease payments on state owned minerals such as oil, natural gas and hard rock minerals. This takes a one-time funding benefit from a non-renewable resource and generates lasting good from this windfall.

Since its inception, the MNRTF awarded close to a billion dollars to the DNR and local units of government to buy land for outdoor recreation and to develop outdoor recreation facilities. Most funds to local units were provided at a rate of 3 state dollars matching every 1 local dollar. A number of local units were able to purchase land with the selling landowner donating 25% of the appraised value, thus providing the local unit share and limiting the out-of-pocket costs to the local unit for acquisition to the price of the appraisal. To date, Victor Township has received no acquisition grants and one MNRTF development grant to develop the existing park and facilities surrounding the Township Hall.

By following the DNR prescribed planning process to develop an outdoor recreation plan, the Township openly and transparently involves citizens in decision making and setting the future direction for locally owned public outdoor recreation opportunities. This is done through the Township Planning Commission regular meetings, a survey of all households in the Township regarding their outdoor recreation needs, assessment of area outdoor recreation opportunities and public meetings devoted to plan development and review. The planning process also takes into account the track record of the Township in maintaining existing outdoor recreation resources and the opportunities already provided by surrounding jurisdictions and the private sector.

Required Plan Content

The DNR requires the following for an approved plan:

- Community Description
- Administrative Structure
- Recreation Inventory
- Resource Inventory
- Description of the Planning Process
- Description of the Public Input Process
- Goals and Objectives
- Action Program
- Supporting Documentation

Victor Township's Plan fully meets these requirements.

Community Description

Victor Township is a mixed rural agricultural and residential community located in southeastern Clinton County. The township is named after the original home of its first white settlers: Victor, New York. Key natural features of the Township include the Looking Glass River, the Little South Maple River, Round Lake and many wetlands and forests. There are significant populations of game and non-game wildlife and fish and a wide diversity of plants. Unique species include Bald Eagle, which nest and hunt along the Township's waterways.

Victor Township's population has grown modestly from 3,275 in the 2000 census to 3,510 in the 2020 census. Public school districts serving the Township's residents include St. Johns, Laingsburg, Ovid-Elsie and Bath. Housing stock is generally single family residential and farms with 97% of the housing units owner occupied per the 2020 census. Since 2000, property values generally appreciated with state equalized value in the township growing from \$83,417,000 in 2000 to \$198,351,500 in 2021. Taxable value increased from \$70,133,584 in 2000 to \$141,476,529 in 2021. The tax structure is millage based. The total tax rate (inclusive of all county, school, and township millages) for a Victor Twp principal residence in 2021 was approximately 29 mills (1 mill equals \$1 per \$1000 of taxable value).

Newspapers include the Lansing State Journal, Clinton County News and the Meridian Weekly. A Victor township newsletter is developed by township staff and typically mailed to residents at least twice a year. Rich in history and natural beauty, the Township provides residents and visitors with numerous recreational opportunities including fishing, hunting, camping, boating, horseback riding, cross country skiing, snowmobiling, biking, running and walking. At the center of recreation is Sleepy Hollow State Park. The park offers a number of interpretive nature programs and hosts annual events such as Ichabod Crane Days, Winter Sled Dog races and the Lansing Legislator Ironman Race.

The Township maintains an active, up-to-date website at www.victortwp.org. The site provides information and news on public hearings, bids, meeting schedules, agenda, current events and opportunities to get involved in Township government.

Demographics

The following information is based upon public and published information provided by the United States Census Bureau for 2010 and 2020.

Population Characteristics

Based on the 2010 census information, the total population of the Township was 3,460 persons. According to the 2020 census, the total population of the Township was 3,510.

Age Characteristics

Of the 3,510 persons counted in the 2020, 22% were ages 0-19, 23% were ages 20-39, 27% were ages 40-59 and 29% were 60 years old and up.

Race/Ethnicity Characteristics

Of the 3,510 persons counted in the 2020 census, 98% identified themselves as “White”, with 1% identifying as two or more races and 1% identifying as Hispanic.

Household Characteristics

The 2020 census reported that there were 1,337 households within the Township. This represents an increase of 4.6% over the 1,279 households cited in the 2010 census. The average number of persons per household was 2.6 in 2020, down from 2.7 in 2010.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010, Census 2020.

Administrative Structure

Roles of Commissions/Advisory Boards

Victor Township is a six (6) mile square general law township governed by an elected five-member Township Board. Elected positions include Supervisor, Clerk, Treasurer and two Trustees, all serving four-year terms. The board meets the second Tuesday of every month at 7:00 PM in the Township Hall at 6483 E. Alward Road in Laingsburg, Michigan and the Township Planning Commission generally meets the first Tuesday at the same location at 7PM.

Township government also includes an assessor, positions on boards, committees and commissions, giving residents many opportunities to be directly involved in Township government. Residents are able to currently serve on the following: Planning Commission, Board of Review and as election inspectors.

Department, Authority, Staff Description and Organization Chart

Membership of the Township Board of Trustees:

- James Conklin - Supervisor
- Lianne Prange - Clerk
- Paula Willoughby - Treasurer
- Julie Townsend– Trustee
- Nicole Fickes– Trustee

The Township Board is responsible for managing the Township Park and works with community volunteers for operation of activities and programming. The township is primarily responsible for the following maintenance and operation activities:

1. Basic lawn maintenance and soccer field turf management including mowing, fertilizing, rolling, seeding, and repair of holes and damaged turf areas.
2. Site planning, planting and maintenance of landscaping.
3. Parking and traffic signage.
4. Maintenance of parking and security lighting.
5. Maintenance and repair of park pavilions.
6. Maintenance and repair of picnic tables, trash receptacles.
7. Maintenance and repair of heated, year-round park restrooms.
8. Trash collection and disposal.
9. Maintenance and repair of playground equipment and annual chip replacement.
10. Maintenance and repair of water fountain.
11. Maintenance of well and annual water testing.
12. Seasonal placement and removal of bleachers.
13. Facilities reservations for township hall and pavilions.
14. Supervision and support for all projects and capital improvements that involve volunteers.

The township coordinates with volunteers, primarily the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) and United States Soccer Federation (USSF) organizations, and the Boy Scouts, to accomplish the following maintenance and operation activities:

1. Inspection and repair of soccer equipment and fields.
2. Layout, lining and flagging of soccer fields.
3. Scheduling of soccer fields.
4. Stocking of restrooms during peak use.
5. Operation, renovation, cleaning and security of seasonal concession stand.
6. Renovation and maintenance of Historic Buildings.

In January 2022, the Township approved the Victor Township Master Plan that with the following vision statement: “Victor Township strives to ensure high quality of life for residents by protecting, preserving, and improving its key assets, including natural beauty, recreational attractions, rich soils, natural habitats, attractive housing stock, and a prime location within easy reach of big cities, small towns, and outdoor amenities.

The township recognizes that, in order to leverage its assets, it must continuously improve its infrastructure, protect the environment, respond to changing market trends, maintain fiscal responsibility and adapt to technological advances.

To support these core township functions, the Victor Township Planning Commission and Victor Township Board of Trustees have adopted this master plan to guide the future of Victor Township and its residents.”

This vision recognizes the importance of parks, outdoor recreation and open space to residents and visitors.

Park and Recreation Programming/Programs/Volunteers

Park and recreation programming is provided by citizen volunteers and non-profit organizations. Key users of and programmers for township facilities are the AYSO Region 862 and USSF Soccer organizations. These organizations were key partners in the development of soccer fields at Victor Township. These two organizations engage more than 1,000 youngsters aged 4-14 years in recreational and competitive soccer in the spring and fall. In addition, nearly 200 volunteer coaches, managers, board members, and referees participate in these soccer activities. AYSO Region 862 is in the process of developing a Very Important Player (VIP) program in the area. The VIP program is designed for players with physical and/or mental disabilities ages 4 to adult (no upper age limit). The Mission of this program is to provide a quality soccer experience for individuals whose physical or mental disabilities make it difficult for them to successfully participate on a mainstream soccer team. Other soccer groups such as the St. Johns area homeschoolers, the adult men over 40 league, British Soccer Camp, and individuals utilize the fields for practice, drop-in games, and camps. For each youth, multiple adults and siblings watch and enjoy the soccer activities.

The second most predominant use of the township hall and facilities is for community gatherings. Hundreds of groups, families and individuals use the facilities year-round for a wide range of activities such as school and family reunions, markets and sales, sanctioned dog-tracking tests, benefits and fundraisers, open houses, weddings and receptions, anniversaries, celebrations of life, holiday parties, informal family picnics, team picnics, 4H meetings and demonstrations, basketball, radio-controlled airplane flying, community service projects, etc. The hall and parking serve as a popular rendezvous point and base for bicycle riders and runners who utilize the region for these activities.

In addition to the above-mentioned efforts, the Township has in the past worked with the Laingsburg Wrestling Club to provide a practice facility for the club sport, due to constrained practice facilities at the Schools. It has also served as a back-up practice facility for competitive cheerleading when school facilities were not available, for soccer when weather is inclement, and as a shelter for teams and families when severe weather causes evacuation of the fields.

Boy Scout Troop 205 uses the township hall and grounds for meetings, projects and training. The Township was privileged to host the gathering and camping site for the 2009 International Boy Scout Festival. The Scouts also support capital improvement and maintenance projects such as renovation and operation of the concession stand, construction of the playground equipment, grading and seeding of the area around the Historic Denison Schoolhouse, construction of a mock outhouse, and painting of the interior of the large hall. An Eagle Scout Project to apply for a State Historical Marker for the Historic 1885 Reed Church has been approved by the Boy Scout Council.

Current Funding Sources and Park and Recreation Budget

The Park and Recreation budget comes from the general operating budget of the township. Approximately \$15,000 dollars annually has been appropriated for parks & recreation operating expense. The AYSO and Laingsburg Soccer Club volunteer groups are the key funding sources for soccer activities. They raise funds throughout the year and volunteer labor to provide maintenance and repair of soccer equipment with some assistance from the Township. The restroom facilities at the Park are also used during many other community events besides soccer as they adjoin the picnic pavilions, playground and historic buildings such as the Reed Church.

Relationship with Schools, Other Public Agencies and Private Organizations

There are no public school buildings or incorporated cities or villages in Victor Township. Public school districts serving the Township's residents include St. Johns, Laingsburg, Ovid-Elsie and Bath. Nearby cities and villages include Laingsburg (Shiawassee County), Ovid, Bath, Dewitt and St. Johns (all in Clinton County). One key public agency partner to the Township in terms of outdoor recreation opportunity is the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The DNR manages Sleepy Hollow State Park in the northern portion of the Township and a public access site on the Looking Glass River off Babcock Road. Also, in 2009 the township signed an agreement with the American Red Cross to designate the township hall facilities and grounds for potential use as an emergency shelter in time of disaster. To that end, the Township installed a back-up generator to provide power to the building in the event of a power outage. Currently the hall is the only facility currently serving the SE region of Clinton County.

Recreation and Resource Inventory

The following recreation resources are available in Clinton County, which encompasses Victor Township.

State Owned Recreation

The State of Michigan has key facilities and lands that help meet outdoor recreational needs. Six of these areas are located within Clinton County. Each offers slightly different opportunities and activities that contribute to the diversity of the area.

Rose Lake State Game Area

Located in Clinton and Shiawassee counties, this area is owned by the DNR and is comprised of over 4,107 acres of rolling hills, lakes and wetlands. The area is managed for wildlife research and wildlife associated recreation. Hunting and other outdoor recreation opportunities are offered for people within several surrounding counties. The area has been developed with many parking areas, 15 miles of marked trails, skeet shooting, rifle ranges, youth group camping and is also a favorite place for non-motorized trail activities. The area is managed primarily for deer, small game, waterfowl and wild turkeys as well as non-game wildlife. Hunting is also permitted in various locations within the area during the appropriate seasons.

Sleepy Hollow State Park

Located partially in Victor Township, the property is owned by the State of Michigan and managed by the DNR. It encompasses over 2,600 acres of land and the 410-acre impoundment of Lake Ovid as well as three major wildlife floodings. The Little Maple River is the source of Lake Ovid. The park contains a 181-site modern campground, several walk-in campsites, a couple of campers cabins (including one designed for equestrians) and a primitive organization campground. There is a large beach with picnicking opportunities as well as a second picnic area with shelter. The park provides a large boating access sites with two paved ramps, a grassy area to launch canoes and kayaks and four accessible fishing piers. There are more than 10 miles of equestrian trails and 13 miles of non-motorized trails in the park as well as a disc golf course. The park is also open for hunting other than in highly developed areas during appropriate seasons and is a popular deer hunting location.

Babcock Landing

The MDNR provides a boat launch on the Looking Glass River within Victor Township. The site provides carry-down launching and an unimproved site to back in small watercraft. The launch is open daily from 4:00 AM to 11:00 PM and is used by anglers and boaters.

Muskrat Lake Game Area

This 219-acre area is in Olive Township and includes a boating access site to the lake which is popular for fishing and waterfowl hunting. The surrounding uplands are managed for wildlife habitat and hunting.

Maple River State Game Area

Located in Lebanon and Essex Townships in Clinton County with additional acreage in Gratiot and Ionia County, this area has an extensive system of forests, wetlands and some widely spaced, generally primitive river access sites. The 11,000-acre area is managed for wildlife habitat, which in turn provides opportunity for hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, boating and walking/hiking. Non-motorized trails are generally unimproved and provided to facilitate hunter access. The Maple River traverses the area and provides boating opportunities for canoes and other small boats as well as fishing. The river has a significant floodplain and navigation for powered watercraft is often challenging due to log jams, shallow water, etc.

Portland State Game Area

Located in the very southwest tip of the county, a portion of the Portland State Game Area is found in Eagle Township. The area provides opportunities for hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing as well as non-motorized trail activities.

Fred Meijer Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Trail

The trail is 41.3 miles long and stretches from Owosso to Ionia. It is 12 feet wide and parallels M-21 across the 24 miles of Clinton County. The trail is owned by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and is managed by MDNR. It is surfaced with a mixture of crushed limestone that has proved challenging for riding in some weather conditions and solutions to improve the surface are under consideration by the DNR. It is managed in conjunction with the Midwest Trail Authority and the Friends of the Fred Meijer CIS Trail and benefits from an endowment from the Meijer Foundation that supports a total of more than 125 miles of Fred Meijer named trails in mid-Michigan.

Clinton County Facilities

Clinton County owns and manages four (4) park areas: Francis Motz County Park, Clinton Lakes County Park, Latoff Landing (i.e., access site to the Maple River in DuPlain Township at French and St. Clair Roads), and the 4-H Fairgrounds.

Francis Motz County Park features a 15-acre lake with an accessible 1 acre beach, an accessible fishing pier, a barrier free toilet/changing building with 7 regular stalls and a special needs room for those with spinal cord injuries, a fully accessible picnic area with 32 tables and an adjacent accessible picnic pavilion that seats 176 and parking for 102 vehicles, including with appropriate parking for handicapper vehicles. All facilities are connected by sidewalks that meet ADA standards. The park serves the Mid-Michigan area providing a regional, accessible water recreation opportunity with free entry to all visitors, whether county residents or those from other places. The facilities are in excellent condition due to their design and use of materials for longevity, recent construction and scrupulous preventive maintenance.

Clinton Lakes County Park has two lakes of 90 and 12 acres. The park was acquired in fall 2013 and is minimally developed. The current focus is on providing high quality natural resources and natural resource recreation in a regional park, likely serving Clinton, Shiawassee, Gratiot and Ingham County residents and visitors from greater distances as the fishery, nature observation and hunting attributes become better known. The natural resource recreation activities provided include fishing, waterfowl and small game hunting, deer hunting for disabled veterans, nature observation, hiking/walking and canoe and kayak use. Like Francis Motz County Park, which is adjacent on the East side of DeWitt Road, Clinton Lakes County Park was also a former sand and gravel quarry. Its two lakes (Big Clinton Lake and Little Clinton Lake) were stocked with rainbow trout, walleye, perch and fathead minnows upon the advice of Dr. Ned Fogle, retired DNR fisheries biologist and Scott Hanshue, current DNR fisheries biologist. In addition to the stocking, there were bass and bluegill already in the lakes when the property was acquired.

The third is Latoff Landing, at the intersection of French and St. Clair Roads on the Maple River. The one-acre site was acquired in 2005 by the County using only County general fund dollars. It was improved in 2014 by the Clinton County Road Commission during their upgrade of the bridge over the Maple River to facilitate parking for vehicles with carry-in craft and those fishing from the bank. The only development consists of a 6-vehicle gravel parking area and a walkway to the river.

The County uses the 4-H Fairgrounds as a special use park to hold events such as the Mint Festival. This area is adjacent to the St. Johns City Park and encompasses 38 acres. This area is fully compliant with the ADA. There are 7 handicap/van accessible parking spots (4 is minimum according to the ADA

guidelines), all paved walks are accessible (curb-cuts, etc.) and all facilities are accessible (36" doors, etc.). The following is a list of the 12 facilities located in the fairgrounds:

1. Smith Hall
2. Peck Hall
3. Dairy Barn
4. Swine Barn
5. Pavilion
6. Restrooms
7. Retention Pond
8. Office Building
9. Uncovered Arena
10. Livestock Barn
11. Horse Barn
12. Sheep, Goat and Llama Barn

The County has long-range plans for renovations at the 4-H Fairgrounds. Phase one has been completed of which included drive and access extension and repair, a storm water retention pond, Smith Hall improvements, a new swine barn and green space additions. The total cost for these renovations (not including the swine barn and Smith Hall improvements) was \$2,328,000 from the public improvement fund. Five more phases of renovation of the Fairgrounds will be completed. Phase 2: Site work and south fairgrounds; Phase 3: Site work and covered arena; Phase 4: Site work and west access drive and lot; Phase 5: Site work and campground; Phase 6: Site work and conference center.

Township Facilities

The sixteen townships within Clinton County offer a wide range of recreational opportunities (e.g., most townships offer nothing more than a small playground area adjacent to their township hall or no facilities at all, whereas Bath, DeWitt and Watertown have staffed parks and recreation departments and planned recreational programs). The following inventory represents established recreational opportunities in the Townships. In that some Townships do not have established facilities, those Townships are not listed. Lebanon Township, where the Village of Maple Rapids is located, is one of those townships with no park or recreation facilities.

Bath Township

Bath Township has several community parks that offer a range of recreational opportunities, as well as a township parks and recreation program for township residents. The township also offers soccer, t-ball and baseball programs and a seasonal event area.

- James Couzens Memorial Park is a two -cre park located on Main St. just south of Bath. The park features a pavilion, a war memorial and a historical marker commemorating the Bath School Disaster of 1927.
- Fletcher Robson Nature Park was recently donated to the Township for a natural area. Initial trails and a small parking area have been cleared by township staff and further trails, benches, amenities will continue to be completed in-house by township staff. This park is targeted for passive recreational uses and natural trails.
- Park Lake Waterfront/North Webster Road Park is a 26-acre site that is currently owned by the township and development of this site will depend upon the results of a forthcoming utilization study.

- Upton Road Park is a 19-acre parcel of property that is currently undeveloped. Possible uses are multiple active sports opportunities such as baseball, softball, basketball and football facilities.
- Gary Lane Soccer Complex (Bath Soccer Field) provides the only soccer area within the township. Additional improvements are being made to create a permanent soccer facility. This includes improvements to drainage, construction of a restroom/concession/storage facility, handicap accessible paths, fencing and equipment.
- The *Park Lake Beach* is a one-acre lake front site on Park Lake, which features 300 feet of clean sand beach. Public swimming is permitted from this area.
- *Rickard Park Boat Launch* is another facility on Park Lake that offers a one-acre site with the only public access to the lake for boating. It features a paved boat launch and a small picnic area.
- *Wiwasser Park* is a 1.5-acre park across the street from the Rickard Boat Launch Park with playground equipment, a sand volleyball court, picnic tables, a grill and mature trees.
- *The Michigan Wildlife Habitat Conservancy* (MWHC) is also located in Bath Township on approximately 200 acres south of Drumheller Rd. encompassing Grass Lake and other unique natural features. Their property also houses the Bengal Wildlife Center, an educational center offering demonstration projects in wetland conservation and enhancement as well as wildlife habitat development.

Dallas Township

- Fowler Conservation Club is a private 10-acre site with woods and river access to Stony Creek. It also has an outdoor pavilion and a building that can be rented for various activities.

DeWitt Township

DeWitt Township offers numerous parks and playgrounds as well as recreational programs for township residents. A staffed position for a parks and recreation director provides the daily operation of the program and guidance to the township parks and recreation commission. Their programs include soccer, t-ball and baseball leagues, as well as indoor basketball and volleyball leagues and open court times. They also offer seasonal activities such as an Easter Egg hunt, bike rodeo and other events.

- Valley Farms Park & Kramer - Ruthruf Area is an 11-acre site that offers a variety of activities. A disc golf course and natural trails through wooded areas, along with soccer fields, basketball courts, sand volleyball courts, t-ball and softball diamonds and a playground are found in this park. Additionally, there are horseshoe pits, 2 pavilions, picnic tables and restrooms. Numerous improvements have been made to this site over the past several years, making it a favorite township park.
- DeWitt Community Center is the former township hall. Portions of the building have been demolished, leaving a large recreational room and support rooms which offer indoor recreational opportunities year-round. This is also the location of the DeWitt Area Recreation Authority that provides recreational opportunities to DeWitt Township and the City of DeWitt.
- Stationhouse Playground is the newest Township Park. It was completed in the summer of 2002 and offers a modern piece of playground equipment with slides, climbing areas and more. Swings and picnic tables are also available. The adjacent township hall and the fire station provide parking.
- Richard A. Padgett Natural Area is a 42 acre community park, which is adjacent to a 38 acre parcel of property, which contains the local wastewater treatment plant. The park has

authorization from the Water Department to utilize 27.4 acres of their property for recreational purposes, bringing the total park acreage to 69.4 acres. The park is mainly wooded with various types of forests and scrub/shrub areas. Walking/jogging trails, a parking area, restroom facilities and picnic tables are available. Programs to mark the trails are underway.

- Looking Glass Riverfront Park is a 5.2-acre park that provides approximately 930 feet of access to the Looking Glass River. This park provides the only access to a water body within the Township park system. The park offers a canoe launch, observation deck, parking area, picnic tables and several grills.
- Valley-Turner a 3.4-acre neighborhood park/playground which offers a climbing tower and several swings, along with a few picnic tables.
- Coleman Play Lot is a small, 1.3-acre, neighborhood park/playground which was given to the Township for use as a public park by the Granger Waste Management Company. This playground includes a playground structure with slides and climbers, as well as several benches.
- Wood-Webb Park is an undeveloped 7.6 acres park. There is no parking or other facility on site.
- Granger Meadows Park – As part of a community host agreement for the expansion of the Granger Wood Street Landfill, a park of approximately 76-acres in size has been developed. Facilities include a sledding hill, in-line skating rink, trails, softball/baseball diamond, playground, skating pond, basketball court, restrooms and pavilions.
- An 11-acre parcel acquired from Michigan Department of Transportation by the Township is undeveloped at the time. It is bounded by US-127, Round Lake Road, Wood Street and provides more than 400 feet of frontage on the north bank of the Looking Glass River.

Duplain Township

- Friendship Park is located on the Maple River at the dam near Elsie. It has had minimal development and maintenance, although there is considerable potential to make it an attractive water-based recreation site.

Eagle Township

- Lincoln Brick Park, an Eaton County Park, is partially located within Eagle Township.
- Eagle Park owned by the Eagle Township Fair Association, a private entity. It includes pavilions, truck and tractor-pull area and mud bog area as well as softball fields, tennis/basketball courts, playground equipment and a caboose railcar.

Victor Township

- Victor Township has the Township Park which encompasses ten acres of property adjacent to the township hall. The park includes restroom facilities for outdoor recreation, five soccer fields, and a large parking lot with basketball courts. The township soccer program is very active and well supported. A detailed analysis follows on pages 19-20.
- The *Grove Bible Church* on Price Road has some recreational facilities including a playground, two soccer fields and two softball/baseball fields.
- *Lake Victoria* is a private lake (impoundment of Alder Creek) accessible to members of the Lake Victoria Property Owners Association by several private beach areas and a ten acre park with a softball/baseball diamond, open play area and a pavilion.

- *Round Lake* is a lake that connects to the Looking Glass River in the southern part of the Township. Access is available at Round Lake Gas for a fee, as are watercraft rentals. Fishing is popular on Round Lake on a year-round basis and the store sells bait and tackle.

Watertown Township

- Watertown Township Office Complex - Play area and open field behind Township Hall.
- *Looking Glass Park* is located ½ mile south of the Township Hall and contains three acres of property. It offers a canoe launch and access to the Looking Glass River, as well as baseball/softball diamond, sand volleyball, swings, ½ court basketball, pavilion with power and restrooms.
- *Heritage Park* located in Wacousta encompasses 9.3 acres and offers access to the Looking Glass River via a canoe launch, access to the Township Hall, 1 mile trail, baseball/softball diamonds, sand volleyball, soccer field, and a pavilion with power.
- *Holiday Haven* (private facility) is a Girl Scout Camp and educational center.
- *Minibeast Zooseum and Educational Center* is a private learning/interpretive center devoted to insects. The center includes hands-on exhibits, resource center, science store and outdoor classroom.

City and Village Recreation

The cities and villages within Clinton County offer diverse recreational opportunities just like the townships. Some have small community parks while others have larger parks and activity programs. Those cities and villages without established facilities are not listed.

Village of Elsie

- Elsie Park has a picnic area, access to the Maple River and a series of baseball/softball fields.
- Hope Green Park.

Village of Fowler

- Fink Park contains softball/baseball diamonds, playground, and a pavilion and restrooms.
- Victor Street Park contains a seasonal ice rink and playground.
- Field of Dreams includes playground and play equipment, picnic area and pavilion.

City of St. Johns

The City of St. Johns has an extensive park system, which supplements the local school system and their recreational facilities. Additionally, the community has a strong community recreation program with non-profit organizations such as the St. Johns Youth Athletic Association, the St. Johns Youth Baseball, American Youth Soccer Organization, etc. These organizations make use of the City and School district facilities to provide local recreation programs. In the case of St. Johns Youth Baseball, they operate five fields behind the Bee's Chevrolet dealership that the owner leases to the association. They serve over 500 youth each year with t-ball, softball for girls and baseball for boys and girls and in addition hold various tournaments attracting a wide variety of regional teams.

- Senior Citizen Park contains several basketball and tennis courts as well as a soccer field, picnic shelter, restrooms and grills.

- J.C. Park provides a small neighborhood park with playground equipment and benches.
- Kibbee Street Park is another neighborhood park with playground equipment, several picnic tables and a small basketball court.
- Water Tower Park is a neighborhood park with playground equipment, several picnic tables and a small basketball court.
- Oak Street Park has a small playground with various playground equipment.
- St. Johns Depot is host to city festivals and events and is located downtown.
- St. Johns City Park is the largest of the city parks and contains a multitude of facilities. A Splash Park is located within the park. There are also 4 tennis courts, a band shell, picnic pavilion, several playgrounds, numerous horseshoe pits, several smaller picnic shelters, benches and picnic tables throughout the park, and several restrooms. There are several paved and unpaved trails as well as a 1/4 mile paved track and roller blade court. As basketball court, three softball diamonds and a disc golf course are also available. A sand volleyball court, sledding hill, seasonal skating rink and warming house round out the facilities.
- 4-H Fairgrounds are owned by Clinton County and governed by the Clinton County Board of Commissioners, however, the property is actually located within the City of St. Johns. The fairground consists of Smith Hall, which is used for community activities and meetings, several animal barns, restrooms an arena and a seasonal skating rink. Parking for many of the events held at the fairgrounds is provided by the use of the St. Johns High School parking lot.

In addition to these existing facilities, the City is currently updating their plan to include provisions for the development of a rails-to-trails program, approximately 1.5 miles of asphalt trail through the city, and possibly a skate park. The rails-to-trails project would complement the County goals of a linear park system offering trail opportunities for county residents and is now completed.

Village of Maple Rapids

- Three baseball/softball fields, basketball court, playground and picnic pavilion in one park covering multiple city blocks

Village of Westphalia

- Droste Memorial Park includes a softball field, horseshoe pits, playground equipment, picnic facilities, restrooms, barbecue area and pavilions, as well as green space and shade trees.

City of DeWitt

The City of DeWitt offers an extensive number and type of recreational opportunities to local residents. Numerous parks are available, as well as recreation programs, ranging from soccer leagues to baseball leagues and special activities such as summer concerts in Memorial Park. Numerous private recreational facilities are located within the community (mainly parks of recent subdivision developments). The City has made a concerted effort to connect all of the City parks with a bicycle trail and walking paths and has created a very attractive and efficient park system for local residents. These various lots have not been inventoried due to the private ownership of the property.

- McGuire Park is a neighborhood park along the Looking Glass River. This park has recently been redeveloped to include a new play structure, two picnic pavilions, portable restrooms, two zone soccer fields and a pedestrian pathway along the river.
- The City Hall and Police Department site on approximately 4.5 acres of land. The property is currently undeveloped with the exception of the river trail, which leads to River Trail Park. The city hall lot provides parking.
- River Trail Park has undergone a tremendous amount of development since it was first acquired in 1992. The park has been developed into a nine acre park with a play structure, picnic pavilion, restroom facility, parking lot and open spaces, as well as bicycle/walking trails to City Hall and River Side Park.
- DeWitt Sports Park is a 14.5-acre complex that provides a soccer field, two adult-size softball fields, a maintenance/restroom facility, concession stand, a large playground structure and a swing set, as well as a large parking area. This facility has extensive use by local residents and is connected to the other City parks by way of the bicycle/walking trail.
- Wilson Street Park is a 0.75 acre parcel, which is an open play space utilized for zone soccer in the spring and fall.
- Riverside Park is a 2.98 acre neighborhood park located along the Looking Glass River. The park has had recent upgrades, including a new picnic pavilion, a new playground structure, a barrier-free playhouse and restroom facilities. Large multi-use open space and parking lot are available as well. This park is linked with a trail to the River Trail Park and is located across the street from Memorial Park.
- Memorial Park is a small one-acre park that contains a gazebo, sidewalks and gardens and serves as a passive recreation area, just south of the downtown business district.
- City Park is currently an undeveloped piece of property containing 0.42 acres of property.
- Percy Carris Park is a 1 acre site with serves as a mini-park and contains various play equipment.
- Elmwood Park is a 0.7 acre site with a sand volleyball court horseshoe pit, picnic tables and a paved pathway.
- Well House #1 is an open space area of 6 acres which is undeveloped area leased to the Millbrook Homeowners Association for a small playground area.

City of Ovid

- Gumaer Park - located near the North Elementary School, this park offers woods, exercise trails and a pavilion along with a vehicle parking lot.
- Boyer Park- located at 119 S. Main Road, this park offers picnic tables and benches.
- Ovid Recreation Field

School Facilities

The thirteen public school districts and several private schools that serve Clinton County residents offer various recreational opportunities. Playgrounds and sports fields including baseball, football, soccer and running tracks are available at most, if not all of these schools. Their primary focus is recreational activities although their size and style vary. The following lists the thirteen public school districts;

however, no attempt has been made to inventory each school districts facilities at this time, because seven of these school districts actually have the majority of their school campuses outside of Clinton County.

- Bath
- Carson City - Crystal
- DeWitt
- Fowler
- Fulton
- Grand Ledge
- Haslett
- Laingsburg
- Lansing
- Ovid-Elsie
- Pewamo-Westphalia
- Portland
- St. Johns

School facilities play an important role in the provision of recreational opportunities within the County. They meet the local recreational needs and provide the majority of the local indoor recreational experiences. The availability of school recreational facilities to the general public varies by school district. The school facilities and programming are closely related to the local programming and facilities.

Private Facilities

Numerous private facilities have not been inventoried in detail since they predominately offer specific recreational opportunities that may not appeal to a broad enough cross section of the county population. The facilities' list includes golf courses, nature centers, shooting and archery clubs and private subdivision trails and pathways.

Regional Facilities

Being located at the northern edge of the Lansing metropolitan area provides a wide range of recreational opportunities the residents of Clinton County. For example, Ingham and Eaton Counties have fairly extensive park systems and recreational programs. Ingham County owns seven parks, 2 canoe landings, a boat launch, a soccer complex and a trail system. Eaton County owns five parks totaling 285.5 acres. The cities of East Lansing and Lansing, as well as Haslett, Okemos, Grand Ledge and Holt offer parks and recreational programs, any of which are open to non-residents. Coupled with larger recreational facilities such as Oldsmobile Park, the Michigan State University Campus, Potter Park Zoo and the Woldumar Nature Center, there a many recreational opportunities available.

Detailed Inventory of Victor Township Park

The Planning Commission evaluated the Township owned park and recreation facilities through an on-site inspection of all facilities and through records and information provided by the Township Clerk and Supervisor. All Township park facilities are designed to serve the entire Township and are also used by those from neighboring jurisdictions such as Laingsburg in neighboring Shiawassee County. The park type is local. The detailed inventory of the Township park and recreation facilities uses the DNR's rating scale of accessibility found on page 7 in the Guidelines for Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Green Space Plans:

- 1 = none of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 2 = some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 3 = most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 4 = entire park meets accessibility guidelines
- 5 = entire park developed/renovated using principals of universal design

- Township Park. This 10-acre site has 3 soccer fields, parking for more than 100 cars on a paved lot and includes clearly designated parking for handicappers. A portion of the lot is open for basketball with a regulation court and two goals and backboards. There are 3 fully accessible picnic pavilions (no lip to ground, firm ground surrounding, concrete pad, accessible tables) that will in total provide picnic facilities for approximately 175 persons. The entire site is flat and firm with mowed grass and no slopes that exceed 5%. Rest room facilities are found inside the adjacent Township Hall. A second set of restrooms are located on the north side of the adjacent fire station. Both sets of restrooms are fully accessible, heated and include indoor plumbing. The restrooms adjacent to the fire station have direct access from the exterior of the building and are open 24/7. These restrooms serve the needs of those using the park as well as those using the area for recreation such as bicycling, running, walking, cross country skiing, etc. There is no lip from the parking lot to any portion of the park, allowing mobility impaired individuals to use the full area. Trash receptacles are open and less than 42 inches in height and require no pressure to open, thus are universally accessible. In 2019, the playground was updated to be universally accessible using Township general fund dollars. The area is now popular with families who have young children and provides a valued asset to the community. A small concession stand is used at selected times (i.e., during community events, soccer league games). It has a roof, concrete pad on grade with the surrounding turf and sufficiently wide travel way to accommodate a wheel chair under the roof. Two historic structures stand on the property and represent days gone by. Both are available for use by appointment/reservation. The park as a whole would be rated a 4 with the exception of the two historic structures. The park pavilion, restrooms, the playground and parking lot meet accessibility guidelines.
- Victor Township Hall (which is surrounded on three sides by the Park) provides a meeting place for a variety of community events and can be reserved and rented for family related events (e.g. reunion, wedding reception, etc.). The Township Hall is on grade with no steps up or down and a door jamb that does not preclude access by a mobility impaired individual. Doors are 36" to accommodate a person in a wheelchair. The restrooms at the community center are accessible, but the building is often locked unless opened for a specific event. Parking is available for more than 100 cars in a paved lot adjacent to the building with no curb or significant variation in grade. Requisite handicapper parking sites are marked and provide the closest and most direct access to the building. The Township Hall is rated as a 4. Most of the facility meets accessibility guidelines.

The Township takes considerable pride in excellent maintenance of all park and recreation facilities. The Township Board contracts with individuals or companies to provide building maintenance, housekeeping and grounds-keeping to ensure the facility is in excellent shape. This includes accurate signage, properly painted structures and that sidewalks, historic buildings, and picnic pavilions are all in good repair. A positive relationship with the area Fire and Rescue Authority, its many volunteers and parents and friends of youthful soccer players have been very valuable in creating and maintaining the outstanding condition of the facilities.

DNR Recreation Grant Inventory

Victor Township has not received an acquisition grant and has received one development grant from the Clean Michigan Initiative (which is counted as receiving an MNRTF grant for scoring purposes) in 2000 of \$57,000. Hence, they should be eligible for additional points under the current MNRTF scoring system for acquisitions as a having never received such funding. No new projects have been funded via grants since 2000.

Summary

As the inventory and community description illustrate, while Victor Township has a number of public and private recreation facilities nearby in Clinton County, the Township has a growing population and only one township park. The Township has done an excellent job with its existing park and recreation facilities which are focused on providing active (e.g., soccer) and passive (e.g., picnic area, playground, historic buildings, quiet and shaded public space) recreation opportunities for community residents and visitors. However, it is lacking non-motorized trails and non-motorized connection to key recreation resources within the Township or beyond in Clinton County as well as access to key waterways within the township.

Planning and Public Input Process

The planning process used is what the DNR, in the Guidelines for the Development of Community Park and Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plans, characterizes as the “systems approach to planning”. The needs of the community are assessed by multiple levels of public input and translated into a framework for meeting the physical, spatial and facility requirements to satisfy those needs.

Relationship to Victor Township Master Plan

Two planning processes occurred within Victor Township beginning in 2019 with the development of a new Master Plan for the township that was approved in early 2022 after extensive public input. Many aspects of that Master Plan touch on park, recreation and open space needs and that plan helped guide the development of this park and recreation plan. Key areas in the Master Plan for the township that related to parks and recreation include the following goals and numbered objectives:

Improve Our Infrastructure

Goal 2: Create a Robust Network of Non-Motorized Paths for Recreation and Transportation

1. Implement the Clinton County Non-Motorized Plan.
2. Where possible and practical, improve safety for cyclists on designated cycling routes.
3. Provide wayfinding signs for cycling routes.
4. Clear sightlines by removing buildings and structures within the public right of way, especially at hazardous intersections.

Protect the Environment

Goal 2: Protect Watersheds, Wetlands, and Bodies of Water

1. Reduce the amount of stormwater runoff, fertilizers, and harmful chemicals that flow directly into township lakes and waterways.
2. Work with lake resident groups to preserve water quality in the township’s lakes. Consider special assessment districts or other funding mechanisms to construct a public sewer system, and/or assist property owners with septic system upgrades and repairs.

Respond to Changing Market Trends

Goal 1: Ensure the Township Remains a Desirable Community in Which to Live

3. Leverage and expand recreational opportunities centered around the township’s natural features.

Goal 3: Invest in Recreational Facilities to Meet the Needs of Residents

1. Partner with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources on programming at Sleepy Hollow State Park.
2. Engage with the community to determine the amenities that should be available at the township hall park.
3. Seek out opportunities for additional township park space, as funds and sites become available.
4. Continue pursuing recreation development grant resources.
5. Complement the Clinton County parks system and programming.

Maintain Fiscal Responsibility

Goal 2: Continue to Enhance the Township Hall as a Community Landmark and Meeting

Place

1. Maintain the township hall kitchen to ensure a high-quality experience for renters.
2. Continue to market the township hall as a popular event space for the township and surrounding areas.
3. Grow partnerships with senior and youth organizations for regular township hall use.

In summary, the Victor Township Master Plan provides strong support to develop and sustain park and recreation opportunities for the township, as well as expand partnerships with government and non-profit organizations to better meet the needs of Victor Township residents.

Source: Victor Township Master Plan Approved January 9, 2022

Park, Recreation and Open Space Needs Assessment Survey

Following the adoption of the Master Plan and the emphasis by residents on parks, outdoor recreation and open space, the Victor Township Planning Commission developed a specific needs assessment survey for parks, recreation and open space. After review at multiple Township Planning Commission meetings and review by the Victor Township Board of Trustees it was printed and mailed to all resident households with the summer 2022 township newsletter. It provided each household two ways to respond, one by hard copy and the other on-line. A copy of the survey instrument follows in italics with results follows.

Park, Recreation and Open Space Needs Assessment Survey Instrument

Victor Township has one township-owned park that includes soccer fields, picnic pavilions, playground equipment, a basketball court, rest rooms/drinking fountain, parking and historic buildings on Alward Road adjacent to the Township Hall. This survey is focused on your household’s use of this park, other public and private outdoor recreation resources in the Township and what your household seeks in future Township provided local outdoor recreation opportunities. We will use the information received to help formulate the 2023-2027 Victor Township Park and Recreation Plan. This plan is required to be eligible for state and federal grants to acquire land and develop or renovate public outdoor recreation opportunities. No specific response will be linked to any respondent’s name, A copy of this survey is being distributed to each household in the Township to the best of our ability. Thanks for sharing your information and opinions with the Victor Township Planning Commission.

1. Have any of your household members visited the township park in the past 12 months? Yes No

1A. If NO, what is the ONE main reason your household doesn’t use the park?

1B What ONE change would most encourage your household to use the township Park?

(Please go to Question 3)

2. If YES (any member of your household visited the township park in the past 12 months), please check ALL the recreational activities in which any household participated while visiting the park.

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Participated</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Participated</i>
<i>Picnicking</i>		<i>Soccer</i>	
<i>Walk/hike</i>		<i>Visit historic buildings</i>	
<i>Community gathering</i>		<i>Private/family gathering</i>	
<i>Basketball</i>		<i>Relax/socialize</i>	
<i>Visit cemetery across street</i>		<i>Playground activities</i>	

Other (list)		Other (list)	
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Of the activities in which you participated above, which was the ONE most important reason for visiting the park in the past 12 months? _____

2B. Please check your rating of each of the facilities in the park from very good to very poor.

Facilities	Very good	Good	OK	Poor	Very Poor
Soccer fields					
Pavilions					
Playground					
Historic buildings					
Restrooms					
Basketball court					
Parking					

2C. What is the ONE most important reason if you rated any facility poor or very poor?

2D. Please check your rating of the overall level of maintenance at the park.

Very Good Good OK Poor Very Poor

2E. What is the ONE most important reason for your maintenance rating?

2F. What ONE most important improvement would you suggest for the township park?

ADDITIONAL OUTDOOR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES IN VICTOR TOWNSHIP

Besides the Victor Township Park, there are two other public park venues in Victor Township, Sleepy Hollow State Park and Babcock Landing Boating Access Site, both managed by the Michigan DNR. In addition, for a fee to a private business there is a public opportunity to launch a boat to use Round Lake. Lakeside residents can also use the lake as a property owner or provide access to guests. Finally, Lake Victoria provides water-based recreation opportunities for residents and their guests through the Lake Victoria Property Owners Association.

3. Did anyone from your household visit Sleepy Hollow State Park in the past 12 months? Yes No

4. Did anyone from your household fish or boat on Round Lake in the past 12 months? Yes No

5. Did anyone from your household fish or boat on the Looking Glass River using Babcock Landing in the past 12 months? Yes No

6. Did anyone from your household fish or boat on Lake Victoria in the past 12 months? Yes No

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

7. If the Township were to provide additional outdoor recreation opportunity to residents and visitors, please check the TWO types of outdoor recreation opportunity/facility/activity that your household would most strongly support.

Type of additional opportunity	First choice (check one)	Second choice (check one)
Public access to lake or river		
Non-motorized trail opportunities (hike, bicycle, etc.)		
Outdoor swimming		
Additional soccer fields		
Additional picnic facilities		
Additional playground facilities		
Additional public land for outdoor recreation		
Other facility/opportunity (list _____)		
Don't support additional public outdoor recreation opportunities		

ABOUT YOUR HOUSEHOLD

These household questions help interpret how your views relate to others in similar circumstances.

- 8. How many years have you lived in Victor Township? _____ years
- 9. What is your age? _____ years _
- 10. Check whether you rent or own your home in Victor Township. Own Rent
- 11. How many people live in your household including you? ___ number living in household
- 12. How many household members are younger than 18? ___ number

FINAL COMMENTS

Please provide any additional comments regarding public outdoor recreation in Victor Township.

Thanks for your information and opinions. If you have any other, please provide them here including the role you would like the township to play in meeting your outdoor recreation needs. Please mail the survey back to us at Victor Township Planning Commission, 6843 E. Alward Rd., Laingsburg, Michigan 48848-9256 or place it in the drop box at the Township Hall.

Sincerely,

Chuck Nelson, Victor Township Planning Commission Chairperson

Needs Assessment Survey Results

A total of 192 households completed the survey and responded with approximately half being returned as a hard copy and half on-line. Comparing the household size of respondents to 2020 Census data suggest that the respondents were representative of the population of Victor Township with an average household size of 2.5 people in survey respondents and 2.6 people in the 2020 census. Of the household respondents, 69% of the households had no members under 18 years of age and 31% did have one or more children.

Park Visitor Household Perspectives

Of the respondent households, 37% had used the Victor Township Park in the past 12 months and 63% had not. Of those who used the park, the most common use was of the new playground (Table 1).

Table 1. Specific uses of Victor Township Park by resident households in past 12 months that visited Victor Township Park.

Activity	Percent
Playground	58%
Soccer	33
Visit Reed Cemetery across the stree	32
Community gathering	32
Walk/hike	26
Friends/family gathering	23
Relax/socialize	23
Visit historic buildings	20
Picnicking	18
Other	17
Basketball	12

When asked to rate park facilities at the Victor Township Park, the most highly rated facilities were parking, the playground and the pavilions (Table 2). The facility with the lowest rating was the basketball court. Key problems with the basketball court were a broken rim, poor marking of the court lines and its location in the center of the parking lot.

Table 2. Rating of Victor Township Park facilities by those visiting the park in the past 12 months.

Facility	Percent very good	Percent good	Percent OK	Percent poor	Percent very poor	Total (a)
Parking	49%	39%	12%	0%	0%	100%
Playground	39	43	19	0	0	101
Pavilions	31	56	11	2	0	100
Soccer fields	29	57	12	2	0	100
Historic buildings	20	52	23	2	3	100
Rest rooms	20	53	24	3	0	100
Basketball courts	14	34	41	8	3	100

a) Total percentages in rows may not add to 100% due to rounding.

When asked about the overall maintenance of the park, on average respondents rated it a 4.2 on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being very poor and 5 being very good. Reasons for positive ratings focused on an overall neat, clean appearance and positive comments about the new playground. Negative

ratings were most likely associated with concerns about the broken light pole in the parking lot, the missing basketball rim and the vandalism/inaccessibility of the historic buildings. Overall, the average maintenance rating of 4.2 was a good report card from visitors.

When those who had visited the park in the past 12 months were asked in an open-ended question about the one most important improvement to make, of the 53 who responded, the most common responses were to improve/repair the parking area/basketball court, develop pickleball courts, develop a walking trail/path, develop a pool/splash pad for kids and improve the aesthetics with trees/shade, greener grass and landscaping (Table 3). A few suggestions did not pertain to park, but rather to facilities run by the MI DNR such as Sleepy Hollow State Park and Babcock’s Landing boating access site.

Table 3. One most important improvement suggested for Victor Township Park by those who had visited in the past 12 months.

Suggested improvement	Percent
Improve/repair parking lot/basketball court/lighting	14%
Develop pickleball court(s)	12
Develop walking path/trail	10
Improve aesthetics with shade, landscaping, etc.	10
Develop splash pad/water feature for kids	10
Expand and further improve playground	8
Improve hall (e.g. kitchen, etc.)	4
Improve, secure and have historic buildings open	4
Have more community events	4
All other (none mentioned by more than 1 respondent)	24
Total	100%

Non-Park Visitor Household Perspectives

For those respondents who had not visited the park (63%), when asked in an open-ended question for the one most important reason they had not visited, the most common response was no need to visit due to a variety of reasons including not interested in park activities, using their own property for outdoor recreation or just writing NA (Table 4). Some of the reasons cited were ones that could be addressed with changes in management and development, such as lacking information on the park, lack of adult activity opportunities and concerns about the condition of the basketball court.

Table 4. One most important reason for not using Victor Township Park in past 12 months.

Reason	Percent
No need	42%
No children at home	20
Older/health issues	9
Go to other parks (e.g. Sleepy Hollow SP, etc.)	8
Lack of information on park	6

Lack pickleball courts/adult activities	6
Concerns about covid	3
Too busy/lack time	3
All other reasons only mentioned by 1 respondent	5
Total (a)	102%

(a) Total may not add to 100% due to rounding.

When those who hadn't visited the park in the last year were asked in an open-ended question what one change would most encourage them to visit the park in the future, the most common response was nothing. However, more than 2/3 of those who made a suggestion had a specific improvement that would encourage their visitation. The most commonly suggested ones were development of a walking trail/path, pickleball courts, water feature for kids, playground enlargement and more community events at the park (Table 5).

Table 5. One most important change that would encourage use of Victor Township Park by non-visitors in the past 12 months.

Change	Percent
Nothing	31%
Walking trail/path	15
Pickleball courts	7
Water feature for kids/splash pad	7
Enlarge/improve playground	7
More community events	7
Improve grills/pavilions	4
More trees/shade	4
Provide dog park area	4
All other responses provided by 1 respondent	14
Total	100%

All Respondents Perspectives on Additional Outdoor Recreation Opportunities

When all respondents were asked to provide a first and second choice of how Victor Township should provide additional outdoor recreation in the township from a close-ended list, 157 respondents provided at least one choice. The two most commonly selected items were non-motorized trails and more public access to lakes/streams (Table 6). Respondents were also given the choice to select "not supporting any additional public outdoor recreation opportunities", which very few did.

Table 6. First and second most preferred options for additional outdoor recreation opportunity in Victor Township from selected options.

Options	Percent first choice	Percent second choice	Percent choosing 1 st or 2 nd choice
Non-motorized trails	46%	13%	59%
Public access to lake/river	21	11	32
Public outdoor swimming	8	15	23
More public land	6	14	20

More playground equipment	6	8	14
More picnic facilities	3	6	9
I do not support additional public outdoor recreation opportunities	2	3	5
More soccer fields	1	3	4
Other (a)	6	8	11

(a)Some other options concerned DNR facilities not under the purview of Victor Township.

When all respondents were asked about their use of outdoor recreation resources within Victor Township other than the Victor Township Park, many used such resources in the past 12 months (Table 7). Sleepy Hollow State Park was the most commonly visited. Lake Victoria is a private lake without public access. Round Lake has a business that permits boat launching for a fee while the rest of the shoreline is private. Babcock Landing is a minimally developed DNR boating access site on the Looking Glass River. There are no other major water bodies or public land in the township.

Table 7. Use of selected outdoor recreation resources in Victor Township during the past 12 months not provided by the township.

Outdoor recreation resource	Percent used
Sleepy Hollow State Park visitation	68%
Lake Victoria boating or fishing	37
Round Lake boating or fishing	16
Babcock Landing on Looking Glass River boating or fishing	13

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Respondents were asked about selected demographic characteristics. The average respondent was 58 years old, had lived in Victor Township for 25 years and owned their home. The mean household size was 2.5 persons with 23% of the households having four or more members. A majority of households (69%) had no children, but many (31%) had one or more members under 18 years of age.

Final Open-Ended Comments from Respondents

Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to provide any additional comments regarding outdoor recreation in Victor Township. These are printed verbatim except any names mentioned are removed and obvious spelling errors are fixed. A total of 55 respondents chose to provide these additional comments printed below in italics.

- *If tax dollars are being spent in Lake Victoria subdivision, then all residents of the township should have access to the lake.*
- *Keep going with a progressive approach. The township needs to grow.*
- *We own, not rent.*
- *I own-question was faulty.*
- *Streetlights around the Lake Victoria neighborhood.*
- *We absolutely love the historic school*
- *Look into motorized e-bike trails as well, not allowed currently at sleepy hollow*
- *The trails south of price road should allow side by sides.*
- *Dog park would be nice*

- *It looks like a nice area. Would be nice to have more sport activities available*
- *Improve bicycle paths*
- *A public launch on Round Lake would be nice*
- *Would love some motorized trails*
- *Would like a walking path around the property/properties. maybe with some work out stations*
- *Softball fields*
- *Would be nice to make Lake Victoria open to the public!*
- *I think it would be a great idea to open up the trails in Sleepy Hollow south of Price road, west of Upton Rd., east of Shepherd Road, to ORVs. There are many many machines in this area that have no place to run. If those Trails were open to ORVs, I'm guessing there would be a lot less ORV traffic on the roads.*
- *If it ain't broke don't fix it*
- *The state park gives the township a real boost, a couple pickle ball courts would be nice.*
- *A lot of residents walk or ride bikes on/along paved roads. With increasing traffic volume this is dangerous. Would like to see a dedicated hiking/biking path somewhere.*
- *Outdoor rec areas are nice. Our household does not need them, but they are good for young families.*
- *Cemeteries need some work*
- *I would like Sleepy Hollow State Park to allow motorized trials in the area south of Price Road between Shepardsville and Upton roads.*
- *We appreciate what we have here, but are pleased to see that expansion of facilities is being considered.*
- *Put in a couple pickleball courts or more. Many people play. my neighbors and i would use them often.*
- *Great place to live but want to bike on roads- speed limits too high, especially w/out bike lanes. (we realize this is a county issue) * other issue- speeding quads: 99% are driving >50-55 on Hollister, Upton, Round LK rds.*
- *We kayak. Please clean up the milfoil on the Looking Glass River!! Spray it back!!!*
- *I'm proud of the parks available in the township*
- *I may not use it, but I think park is very important and support maintenance and growth of recreational outdoor areas.*
- *Sleepy Hollow and Lake Victoria both have nice hiking trails that we occasionally utilize. And we support keeping things nice for the kids in the community.*
- *Thank you for seeking input from residents.*
- *Walking trails!*
- *Sleepy Hollow provides ample of opportunity for outdoor recreation.*
- *Have never used Round Lake parks/lake but pay the fees every year. No parking/fenced in*
- *Just have a lot on Lake Victoria. Do not live there*
- *We believe the township takes great care and pride in the facilities. However not having children in the area our needs are minimal. Thanks to all of you for your care and commitment.*
- *We need internet!*
- *We like parks. We live in one. we think parks are good, good for everyone. We generally don't go.*
- *The pandemic slowed most group activity but if anything, gave us all new appreciation for our outdoor spaces.*
- *Public access to Round Lake or Lake Victoria would be a great improvement.*
- *Don't live, but own property in township*
- *Due to a recent accident I'm visually impaired- I could barely see a new basketball hoop and wouldn't use. However, I do think that the soccer kids could use that hoop being fixed.*
- *Bike path & walking paths are great use of public funds plus family fishing docks*
- *We have too many now*
- *Land purchases are expensive and without substantial grants, aren't very practical. Improving playgrounds, soccer fields and hall rental space may be more cost efficient.*
- *I think it's great there are facilities are available for the residents of victor twp.*
- *Keep cleaning Round Lake*
- *Own empty lot only*
- *Have a township picnic & pancake breakfast for fire department*
- *For a small township, I believe we have very nice facilities and access to the natural resources within the township.*
- *Like that things are well maintained. Very nice place to be.*

- *We need a nice dog park*
- *I am glad improvements have been made over the years since moving here. I know it could use others. I have enjoyed and used the facilities in the past*
- *Trails to and from Sleepy Hollow and other parks for horse people to use*
- *A walking path around township grounds would be nice*

The results of the needs assessment survey, the Township Master Plan and public comments from various Board of Trustee and Planning Commission meetings formed the basis of the draft Park and Recreation Plan that was developed by the Planning Commission. The completed draft plan sent to the Planning Commission by email on October 13, 2022. Upon their subsequent review, the Planning Commission voted at their November 7, 2022 regularly scheduled meeting to recommend the draft plan to the Township Board of Trustees. The Chair of the Planning Commission emailed the Board of Trustees subsequently on November 7, 2022 of that recommendation and included information about public involvement to date and future public involvement needed per MDNR guidance (see Supporting Documents). The Chair of the Planning Commission also verbally discussed the plan during the Planning Commission presentation to the regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting on November 14, 2022, highlighting public involvement requirements.

At the subsequent December 12, 2022 Board of Trustees meeting, the Board moved the draft plan be put out for the required 30 day public review period. Notice of this was provided in the Meridian Weekly newspaper and on the Victor Township website (see Supporting Documents). It requested that comments be received in writing to the Clerk no later than January 23, 2023 or verbally or in writing at the regularly scheduled meetings of the Township Planning Commission (January 3, 2023), Trustees (January 10, 2023) or at the January 24 public hearing by the Board to Trustees for the purpose of adopting the plan.

There were no comments by the public at any of these meetings or to the Clerk prior to the public hearing on January 24, 2023. At the public hearing three citizens attended and there were only positive comments on the plan recommending its adoption. Minor changes were suggested regarding the administrative structure of the Township as membership on the Board of Trustees had changed per the November 2022 election and meeting nights for both the Planning Commission and the Board of Trustees had changed respectively to the first and second Tuesdays (previously it had been Mondays) of the month. Those changes were made. The resolution to adopt the plan was unanimously supported by the Trustees and is in Supporting Documents.

Goals and Objectives

Based on the inventory of area resources and facilities, the results of the outdoor recreation needs assessment survey, the Victor Township Master Plan and public input to the Victor Township Planning Commission at its public meetings, the plan has the following goals and objectives.

Goals

Over the next five (5) years, the following goals are set forth as priorities by the Township:

1. The Township should work to acquire and develop a functional system of non-motorized transportation and trail opportunities linking Township assets with surrounding communities and their assets. The Clinton County Non-Motorized Transportation Plan should be used as a reference for coordinating efforts of other communities and the County. Additional consideration should also be given to planning efforts in Shiawassee County and other bordering communities not in Clinton County.
2. The Township should identify, acquire and develop additional public access to area surface waters.
3. The Township should seek to further strengthen the recreational opportunities already provided at the Township Park. Improvements to existing parkland will complement the outstanding work done by the Township and volunteers to maintain the existing public park infrastructure and make the park more welcoming to all residents and visitors. Acquisition of adjacent land may be needed to expand the range of recreational opportunities provided at the existing park. Development of additional opportunities should be universally accessible
4. Lastly, the Township should work to enhance cooperation and coordination with other recreation providers in the area including the DNR, Clinton County and others.

Objectives

1. Develop a non-motorized transportation/trail system in the Township connecting recreational and community assets. This may use existing roads and their rights of way as well as benefit from new dedicated non-motorized trails. This will be done in conjunction with broader planning efforts for non-motorized circulation planning at the county level and may also integrate with efforts of many non-profit organizations representing a variety of non-motorized trail users.
2. Identify, acquire and develop a public access opportunity to an area lake or river for fishing and non-motorized watercraft use.
3. Explore options of providing additional and improving existing recreational opportunities at the Township Park, including possible expansion. Key areas of focus include improved and expanded playground equipment, development of pickleball courts, development of a universally accessible walking path, restoration and interpretation of historic structures and renovation of the basketball court opportunities.
4. Improve the aesthetics and increase the availability of shade through tree planting and other means at the Victor Township Park.

Action Plan

The action plan is a proposed a calendar of events, not a rigid schedule. The action plan does not commit the Township to the dollar amounts as they are subject to change as grant awards are increased/decreased. The action plan is a living document that serves as a guideline that details the intentions of the Township. Grant sources for the plan include the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) which has a minimum match rate of 3:1 (every one dollar the local unit puts up, the MNRTF will match it up to three dollars), the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (match rate of 1:1), the Recreation Passport Grant (for facility development or renovation with a minimum match rate of 3:1 (every one dollar the local unit puts up, the Passport grant can match it up to three dollars) or the new Michigan Spark Grants which currently don't have an established match and are using American Rescue Act Plan monies allocated to the State of Michigan with a focus on meeting public health needs. Proposals for a non-motorized trail/transportation network are done in cooperation with the county to dovetail with plans related to county roads and the ability of Act 51 (McNitt Transportation Act) entities to seek Transportation Alternative Program grants to develop non-motorized transportation infrastructure. For all projects, regardless of funding source, design/construction will emphasize low maintenance, sustainable features.

Year	Action	Possible Funding Sources	Total Estimated Cost for all Funding Sources
2023-27	Submit DNR tree planting grant to provide shade and beautify Victor Township Park	MDNR Community Forestry grant; MDNR Arbor Day Mini-Grant, Township funds	\$200 for Arbor Day Mini-Grant; up to \$2,000 for Community Forestry Grant; up to \$2,000 Township funds
2024-27	Identify, seek, apply and procure public and private funding for expanding accessible playground equipment at Victor Twp. Park.	Recreation Passport, Michigan Spark of Land and Water Conservation Fund grants, local funding raising, Township funds.	Up to \$100,000
2023-25	Develop 2-4 pickleball courts at Victor Township Park per standards of the International Federation of Pickleball	Recreation Passport, Michigan Spark of Land and Water Conservation Fund grants Recreation Passport, Michigan Spark of Land and Water Conservation Fund grants, township funds, local fund raising	Up to \$50,000
2024-27	Identify, seek, apply and procure public access for fishing and non-motorized watercraft use on an area lake/river	Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund grant, township funds	
2023-25	Develop non-motorized circulation	Township funds,	Up to \$5,000

Year	Action	Possible Funding Sources	Total Estimated Cost for all Funding Sources
	plan in conjunction other plans and opportunities.	cooperation with Clinton County, local fundraising	
2024-25	Working with Clinton County non-motorized circulation plan, submit grant proposal to implement Township non-motorized circulation plan	MDOT Transportation Alternatives Program grant, Clinton County, Township funds, local fundraising.	Unknown, likely to be minimal to \$0
2025-27	Identify, seek, apply and acquire additional parkland contiguous to Victor Township Park to provide additional recreational opportunity and room for growth	MNRTF, Landowner donation, Township funds.	Up to \$125,000
2025-27	Implement Township non-motorized circulation plan in conjunction with Clinton County	MDOT Transportation Alternatives Program grant (minimum local match is 25%), Clinton County, Township funds	Up to \$75,000

It is also important to note that these funds are contingent on the local unit continuing to maintain the acquired parkland and its facilities into the future. Victor Township has an outstanding record in this area and has recently retained the services of a new maintenance coordinator.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

November 7, 2022 Email from Planning Commission Chair to Board of Trustees

At the Victor Township Planning Commission tonight, the PC unanimously moved to recommended the attached draft Victor Township Park and Recreation Plan (dated October 13, 2022) to the Board of Trustees. We would recommend beginning the public review period of a minimum of 30 days per DNR guidelines beginning with November 15, 2022. I will be at the BOT meeting 11/14 to provide additional information should it be needed. Please add “The distribution of the draft park and recreation plan for public review” to the 11/14 agenda.

DNR public review guidelines (*in italics*) state:

“Description of the Public Input Process

In this section, describe the methods used to incorporate public input into the recreation planning process. Residents’ opinion on recreation and open-space priorities is a key consideration in plan development.

Early Public Input

As you develop your plan, you must solicit early public input from your community before preparing your draft plan. The means of soliciting that input should take place within a year of plan adoption by the governing body. It is important to involve the public early in the process before the draft plan is written. It is highly recommended that additional effort be put forth to solicit comments from residents living near future projects and from others who may be negatively affected by the projects. Special efforts may be required to involve segments of the population whose concerns are often overlooked. If your community has substantial minority, low-income, disabled or elderly populations, identify and address their needs and concerns. Early public input increases ownership of the plan by community members, promotes democracy and equality with equal opportunity to share in decisions, empowers residents to be more active and to participate more fully, enhances creativity, increases stability and commitment to management, and encourages support for local grassroots initiatives. During early public input, a typical public meeting format is discouraged. Methods such as surveys, questionnaires, workshops, stakeholder meetings, focus groups, or visioning sessions are encouraged because they facilitate more public participation from all segments of the population. Describe the early public input method(s) you used. Explain whether the responses received represented the whole community, groups that do not typically attend public meetings, the potential users for special-use areas (for example, skate parks) and those who may be greatly affected by the recreation and open-space opportunities considered. This is an ideal time to include input from other recreation providers, private and public partners and regional organizations.

30-Day Public Review Period

Once the draft plan has been completed, residents must be provided with a well-publicized opportunity of adequate length, at least 30 days, to review and comment on the plan before it is officially adopted. Select convenient locations for reviewing the draft plan, such as your public library, town hall and municipal website. Document and describe the methods you used to notify people of the opportunity to review and comment on the draft plan before it was officially adopted. The notification can be accomplished by a variety of means, including methods typically used to make announcements by the governing body, such as a published notice or posting at the government office or on the municipal website, etc. The announcement must include the date of posting and must be certified by the publisher. Physical postings must be date-certified by the clerk. The notice should provide instructions to the public on how to submit comments to the plan via email or other methods. In addition, provide a summary of any comments received and how they were used to modify the plan.

Public Hearing and Resolution of Adoption

The final means of soliciting public input is an advertised public hearing, held after the 30-day public review period. The public must be given the opportunity to provide comments prior to passing a resolution to adopt the plan, according to the Open Meetings Act, PA 267 of 1976. This public hearing can be held as part of a regularly scheduled meeting, such as a planning or parks and recreation commission or a meeting of the governing body, or it can be held as a special single-topic public hearing. The public hearing must occur prior to passing a resolution for adoption by the highest governing body. If both the public hearing and resolution for adoption occur at one meeting of the highest governing body, they must be conducted as separate agenda items and the public hearing must be held prior to the resolution for adoption. Plans will not be accepted if the public hearing occurs after the plan has been adopted by the local governing body or bodies. Advance notice for the public hearing is required in the manner typically used by the community for public hearings, such as published notice, certified posting at government offices, posting on the municipal website, etc. The announcement must include information on the time, date and location of the public hearing. The public hearing notice must be available for viewing to residents in all local units of government included in the plan. Proof of the notice location and posting date must be provided, such as an affidavit from the publisher, or full copies of the published page with the notice, including masthead. Physical postings must be date-certified by the clerk and include photo documentation. Notices for the public hearing should be publicized in the same manner as the community notices other public hearings, as for the planning commission. Care should be taken to provide a nonelectronic method, as not everyone has access to the internet. Notice for the 30-day review period and the public hearing can be combined if the title of the notice includes both items. The final resolution to adopt the plan must come from the highest governing body. The adoption of the plan must be in the form of a resolution of adoption. The template for the resolution for adopting the recreation plan can be found in Appendix A. Public hearing minutes must reflect that a call for comment was made to the public and whether there was public comment or not. When submitting the plan to the DNR, include a copy of the published notices for the 30-day review period and the public hearing and the approved, certified minutes of the meetings at which the public hearing was conducted and the plan was adopted by the governing body. If the plan was adopted at a separate meeting from the public hearing, provide the minutes of both meetings. For joint recreation plans, the public hearings can be condensed to cover multiple communities at one meeting if the meetings are located so that all residents can easily attend. Otherwise, each community should host its own public hearing. Any proposed consolidation of public hearings for joint recreation plans should be approved by the DNR prior to scheduling them. The public hearing must be advertised for all the communities contained within the plan in a method that can be viewed by members of all those communities. The plan must be adopted by resolution at a public meeting of each of the individual local governing bodies covered in the plan.”

As you know, we conducted a township wide survey of all households with both on-line and paper response opportunities concerning park and recreation priorities, giving every household the opportunity to participate. Their responses along with input provided directly to Township Board of Trustees meetings and Planning Commission meetings, as well as the Township Master Plan and attendant survey provided many opportunities prior to the writing of the draft plan for early public input. Using that input, the Planning Commission has crafted the attached draft plan for public review and ultimate approval by the Township Board per the DNR guidelines. This will provide the Township eligibility to apply for a number of different state and federal grant opportunities related to parks and recreation.

We look forward to the public review period and successfully completing this plan and better meeting the park and recreation needs of Township residents.

Chuck Nelson, Victor Township Planning Commission Chair

PUBLIC NOTICE (from Township website <https://victortwp.org/>)

**30-Day Public Review Period – Draft 2023-27 Park and Recreation Plan Public Hearing –
January 24, 2023 - Draft 2023-27 Park and Recreation Plan
Township of Victor**

Victor Township is releasing the draft of the 2023 Victor Township Parks & Recreation Plan ("Plan") for a thirty (30) day public review. The review is required by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources ("MDNR") as part of the Plan review process.

A draft of the Plan will be available for public review on December 19, 2022 at the following locations during their normal office hours:

Victor Township Hall, 6843 E. Alward Rd., Laingsburg
Laingsburg Public Library, 255 Grand River Rd., Laingsburg
The draft plan will also be available on the Victor Township website www.victortwp.org

Any persons wishing to comment on the Plan may submit their comments in writing by January 23rd, 2023 via email to clerk@victortwp.org, mail or drop off at the address below, there is a drop box for 24/7 access:

Victor Township
Attn: Clerk
6843 Alward Road
Laingsburg MI
48848

The following advertised meetings will be held at 6843 Alward Rd., Laingsburg and have the draft plan on their agenda and will accept comments on the draft Plan:

7pm - January 3, 2023 Planning Commission Meeting
7pm - January 10, 2023 Victor Township Board Meeting
5:45pm – January 24, 2023 Victor Township Special Board Meeting Public Hearing will be held to hear comments on the draft plan

Lianne Prange
Victor Township Clerk

