



2020-2025

Lee Township Park & Recreation Plan



Prepared by:
The Lee Township Grant Committee
1485 W. Olson Road
Midland MI, 48640

Acknowledgments

Lee Township

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Introduction:

Lee Township has developed a Recreation Plan to serve as a guideline to improve and develop new recreational opportunities. To that end, this document forms the basis to guide policy for implementation of improvements and new initiatives that will meet the recreational goals and interests of the Lee Township community. The development of this plan was guided by the Lee Township Board.

Before any recreational plan is adopted and enacted, it is first important to understand what the needs of the residents are, what opportunities already exist, and what sort of projects and programs are relevant for residents based on age, ability, population density, and the availability of recreational opportunities in neighboring communities. This plan carefully considered input and suggestions via active communication from area residents, officials, and others. This input is a critical component to this plan, and, together, the voices of the Lee Township community have united to develop a recreation plan to enhance the quality of life for everyone.

Location:

Lee Township T14N, R1W is located near the center of Midland County, Michigan. It is bordered by the townships Jerome to the North, Homer to the East, Mt Haley to the Southeast, Porter to the South and Greendale to the West. Meridian Road (M-30) is a major state highway traversing the East boundary of the township and M-20 (Isabella Road) traverses the township two miles from the North boundary.

Midland County is located in East Central Lower Michigan. The city of Midland is almost centrally located in the eastern section of the County; and, Lee Township is six miles west of the city.

History:

Lee Township, formerly part of Homer Township, was organized as a general law township in October 1880. At that time, it was a thriving farming community with miles of fields bearing corn, hay and oats and pastures of livestock. The settlements of Olson, Floyd, St Elmo, the Pines, and Dutchtown had been established by people living in the surrounding areas. These served as local business and social centers. The discovery of brine brought Herbert H. Dow to the Midland County area. In 1880 he started what is now called the Dow Chemical Company. Many residents found work there.

John A. Mallory built a log house west of Floyd Settlement on Chippewa River Road. It was a one room school and post office in 1899 when Mr. Mallory served as postmaster. School buildings have been erected, added to and torn down and rebuilt several times per the community's needs. The first Floyd school was built in 1878 at the corner of South Eight Mile and Chippewa River roads. Students from neighboring St Elmo (Higby) school were transferred to Floyd in that year.

The first election was held in 1881 at the Mallory School; A. J. Davis was elected as the first supervisor and Nehemiah Fessenden was the first clerk.

The first official township hall was built in 1907 on the corner South Nine Mile Road and West Prairie roads. The original hall was torn down. The offices moved to a converted one room schoolhouse (Olson School) acquired from Bullock Creek School District in 1966. It is located at the corner of North Nine Mile and West Olson roads. The present hall was built on that site in 2015.

The Lee Township Cemetery was established in 1903 on South Nine Mile Road. The park and solid waste transfer site are located on South Nine Mile Road and West Prairie Roads on 80 acres purchased in 1953

In 1980 the Township Board formed the Lee Township Fire Department, and the fire station was built across Nine Mile Road from the park. The Lee Township Fire Department serves Lee and Greendale Townships and gives mutual aid to other areas.

Floyd Church of God, Midland Missionary Church (St Elmo), Olson Community Church and Lighthouse Body of Christ Church remain at the heart of the Township community.

Over the years, the Township has seen many improvements. The park now includes a play-scape, restrooms, pavilions and a spray-park and the cemetery, a chapel.

Community Description:

A priority of Lee Township is to develop a recreational plan which responds to the needs and desires of its residents. This plan provides a clear picture of the recreation opportunities available to residents regardless of who provides them. This review includes traditional parks and shopping opportunities within the Township.

In addition to the river network of the Chippewa, Pine and Little Salt rivers, Lee Township is home to several small neighborhoods clustered near their Floyd, Olson, St Elmo historic roots.

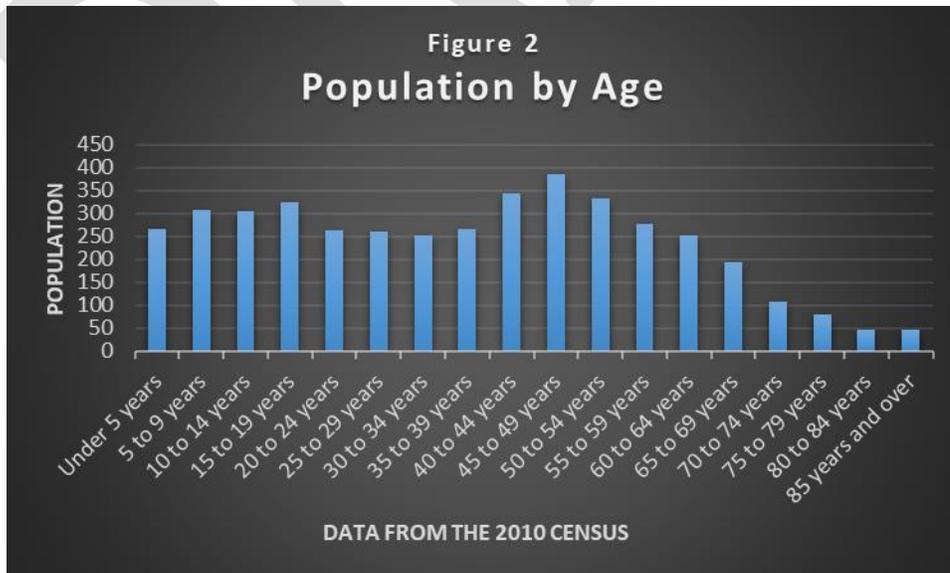
A desire to develop a walking trail within the park that incorporates fitness stations, a pavilion, gazebo and additional American Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible facilities and equipment, would be an asset to the people of the Township.

This recreational plan represents the projected needs and recreation facilities and services in the 21st century.

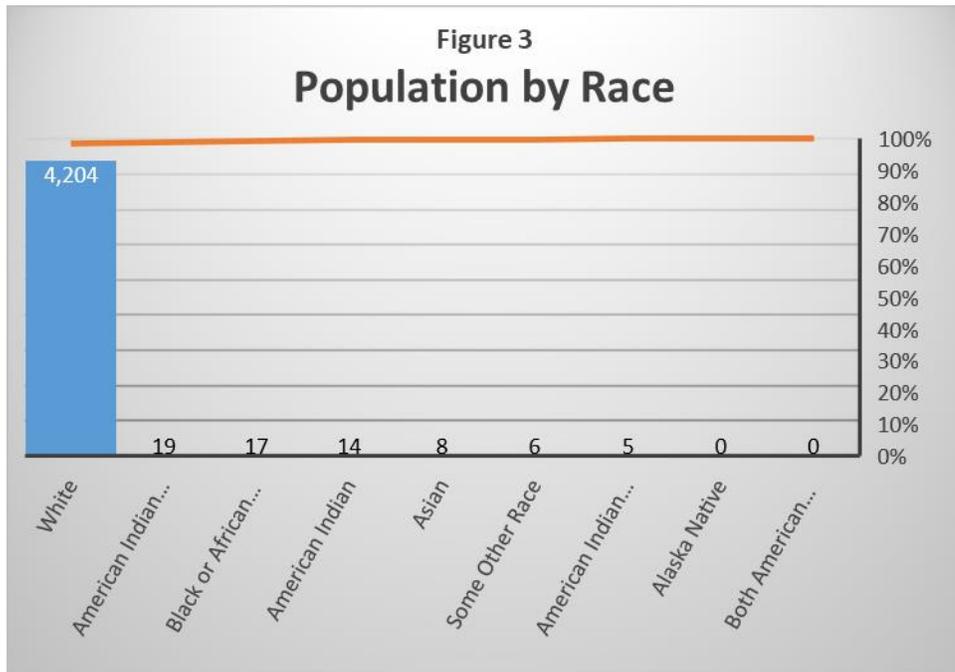
Population Statistics:

The composition of Lee Township's population influences its recreational needs. Pertinent demographic components are listed below:

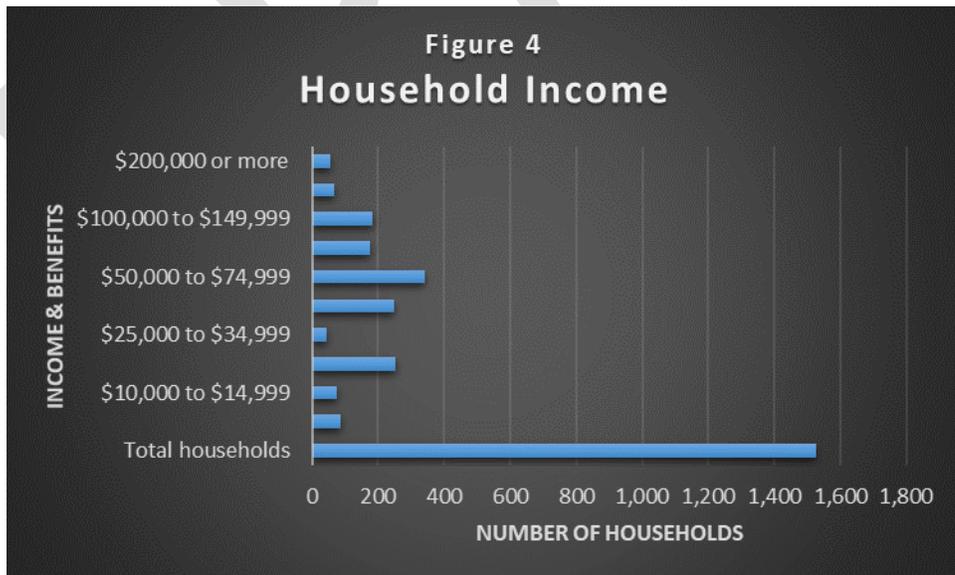
1. **Population History:** 1980 population of Lee Township was 3,325, the 2010 population was 4,315 residents. The growth during that time was approximately 1.29%.
2. **Median Age:** Currently 40.8 years.



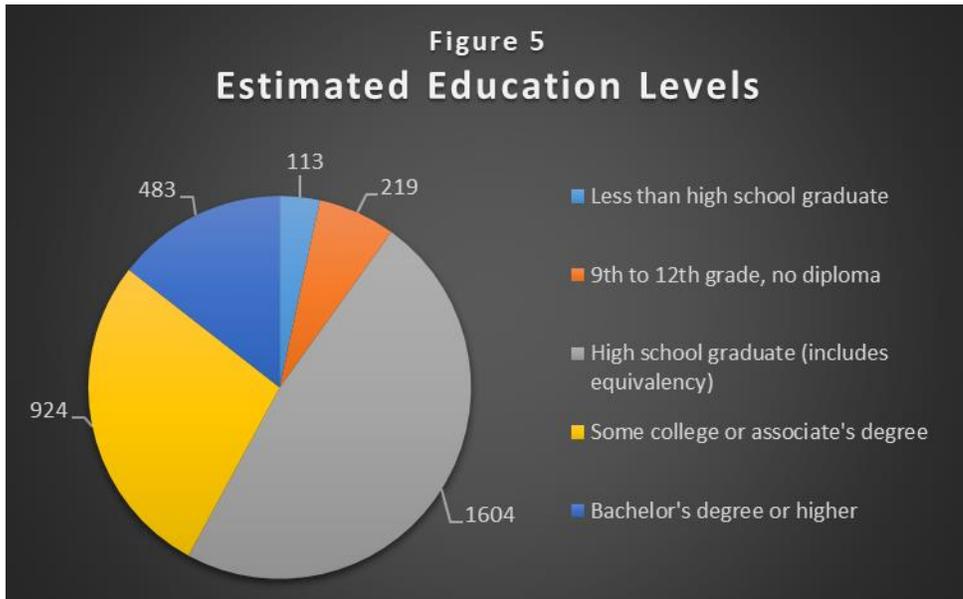
3. **Racial and Ethnic Composition:** The population is very homogenous.



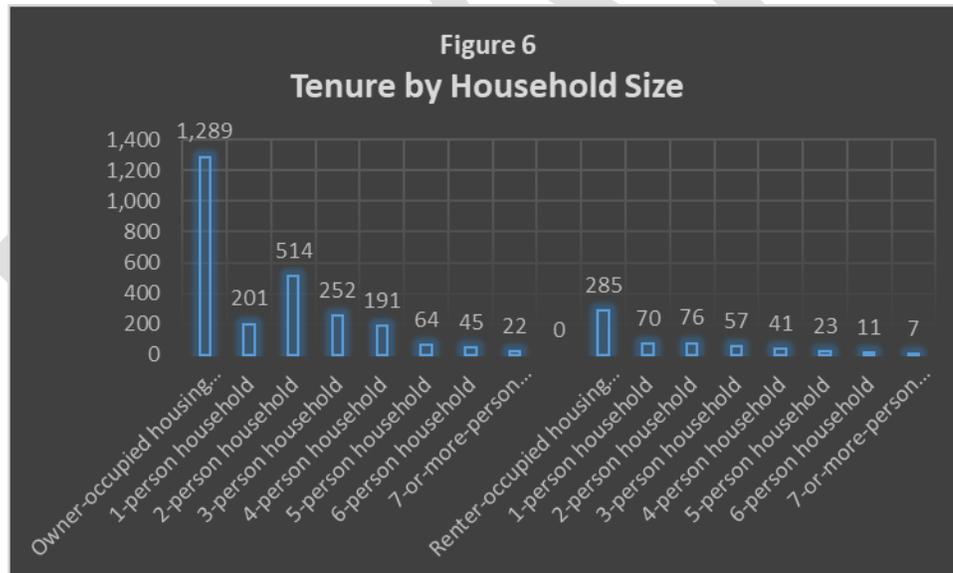
4. **Median Income:** \$52,114 for households. The percentage of households below poverty level is 17.1%.



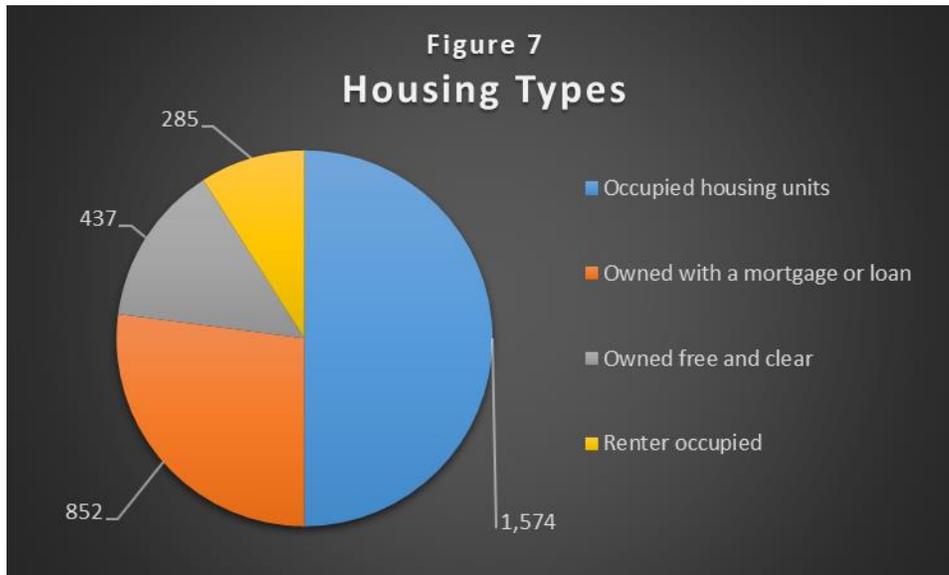
5. **Educational Attainment:** High School graduate or higher 90.9%.



6. **Household/family composition:**



7. **Housing Types:** owned w/mortgage or loan 54.1%, rented 18.1%, owned free & clear 27.8%



Administrative Structure:

Michigan Public Act 156 of 1917(recreation and playgrounds). The act authorizes: "cities, villages, counties, townships, and school districts to operate systems of public recreation and playgrounds". It also allows those entities to: "operate a system of public recreation and playgrounds; acquire, equip and maintain land, buildings or other recreational facilities; employ a superintendent of recreation and assistants; vote and expend funds for the operation of such system", "operate such a system independently or they may cooperate in its conduct in any manner which they may mutually agree; or they may delegate the operation of the system to a recreation board created by any or all of them, and appropriate money, voted for this purpose, to such board." The act also allows park systems to operate on "(1) property under its custody and management; (2) other public property...; [and] (3) private property with the consent of the owners."

Roles of commission(s) or Advisory Board(s):

The Lee Township Park and recreation functions are currently handled by the Lee Township Board.

Department, Authority and/or Staff Description:

Lee Township currently employs one (1) caretaker that maintains the park functions as well as the Township Hall maintenance. The caretaker maintains the playscape, ball diamonds, pavilions, restrooms and splashpad during the operating season. The Lee Township Park lawn mowing is a contracted service. The Lee Township Park landscaping is provided by the caretaker and volunteers.

Annual and Projected Budgets for Operation, Maintenance, Capital Improvements and Recreational Programming:

Figure 8		
Lee Township Park and Recreation Budget Data		
	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021
Operations & Maintenance	\$37,725.20	\$37,726.00
Capital Expenditures	\$0.00	\$30,000.00

Current Funding Sources:

The main source of funding for the parks and recreation of Lee Township is the general fund. A small secondary source of funding is the pavilion rental fees. General tax fund dollars are used for recreation, including the cost of producing this document. The Township may solicit grants for the development of a recreational facility (e.g. trails, playgrounds, picnic shelters, sports facilities, etc.) Donations to be used at the discretion of Lee Township or for a specific facility or program are also accepted. A portion of the local match required of most grants may also come from the general fund or donations. Grants for parks and recreational facilities are likely to come from several sources: (1) Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, (2) The Land and Conservation Fund (a federal program administered locally by the State of Michigan), (3) Local charitable organization grants.

Role of Volunteers:

Lee Township utilizes volunteers for many projects and events within the park. Each spring the Lee Township Park hosts a “Busy Bee Clean-up” where the caretaker and residents come to the park and spruce it up for the opening season that runs from April – October. During the open season volunteers are used throughout to deliver and spread the necessary mulch, woodchips, sand, dirt and any other up-keep needed.

Relationships with School Districts, Other Public Agencies or Private Organizations:

Lee Townships relationships with other entities include: Bullock Creek School District, The Chippewa Nature Center, Midland County Parks and Recreation and Greendale Townships West Midland Family Center.

Recreation Inventory:

Description of Methods Used to Conduct the Inventory:

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

Inventory of all Community Owned Parks and Recreation Facilities:

Bullock Creek School District maintains a walking trail located in Lee Township at Floyd Elementary School that is used by the residents along with a small playground and open fields for baseball and soccer. The Chippewa Nature Center operates and maintains a universal access canoe/kayak launch with picnic area and ample parking. Midland County Park and Recreation operates and maintains Manitou Park a 147-acre parcel which offers fishing from the shoreline, picnic tables and grills as well as a spot to launch a canoe or kayak.

In cooperation with Greendale Township, Lee Township pays an annual fee for its residents to utilize the West Midland Family Center's facilities and programs. Through this annual contract the Lee Township residents have access to programs such as: preschool, aquatics, a drop-in gym, a bowling center, fitness room, batting cages, high school opportunity programs, senior programs including dining and activities as well as offering many other resources to both Lee Township and Greendale Township residents.

Lee Township utilizes land owned by Lee Township for its park, fire station, water tower, waste transfer site, and cemetery a total of 79.5 acres. Recreational area within the park has an irregular shape because it is bordered by Department of Natural Resource designated wetlands. Area for future recreation facilities and equipment is also limited because the park is built over a former solid waste site. The Lee Township Park currently offers 2 baseball diamonds, a pavilion that is available to the public to rent, a public use pavilion, a large playscape, a splash pad and indoor restrooms.

The total area of the park: 338,183.91 ft² (31,418.31 m²) of land. Some of which is wooded, and some of which is designated wetland.

Total distance of the park: 2,846.94 ft. (867.75m) Location Maps:

Accessibility Assessment:

The Department of Justice revised the regulations for Title II and Title III of the ADA Act of 1990. Under the 2010 Standards, Lee Township Park is in compliance with the Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas. When the play scape was erected in 2000, it had a portion accessible to the disabled. This was in compliance with the 1990 ADA guidelines. That area has not had any improvements since then. The splash pad was completed later and is in compliance with the 2010 ADA Standards. The pavilions are all at ground level and have accommodations for the disabled.

Organizational Structure:

The Grant Committee is charged with producing and advising the Township Board on recreation issues and grant opportunities. However, the Lee Township Board maintains final authority concerning local recreation issues.

Lawn mowing and yard care are contracted out to a professional yard service. The restroom and pavilion are cleaned daily by a township employee. The Township may also rely on organized volunteer labor for specific projects on an as-needed basis.

The Board consists of the Supervisor, Clerk, Treasurer, in addition to two trustees.

Community Input:

Surveys were delivered to: Floyd Elementary School, West Midland Family Center, Floyd Church, Midland Missionary Church, Lighthouse Body of Christ Church, Lee Township Fire Department, Lee Township Solid Waste Transfer Station and the Lee Township Hall. Surveys showed our townships residents use the Lee Township Cemetery, Hall, Park and Waste Transfer Station the most. 780 copies of the survey were distributed, 89 were received and in all 265 suggestions and comments were obtained.

Figure 11

Township Areas most Used

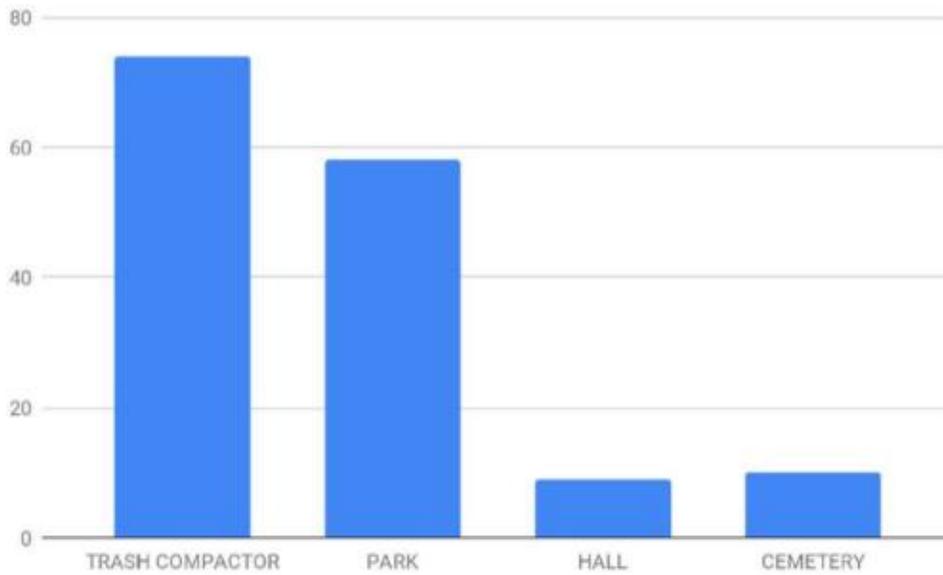


Figure 12

Surveys

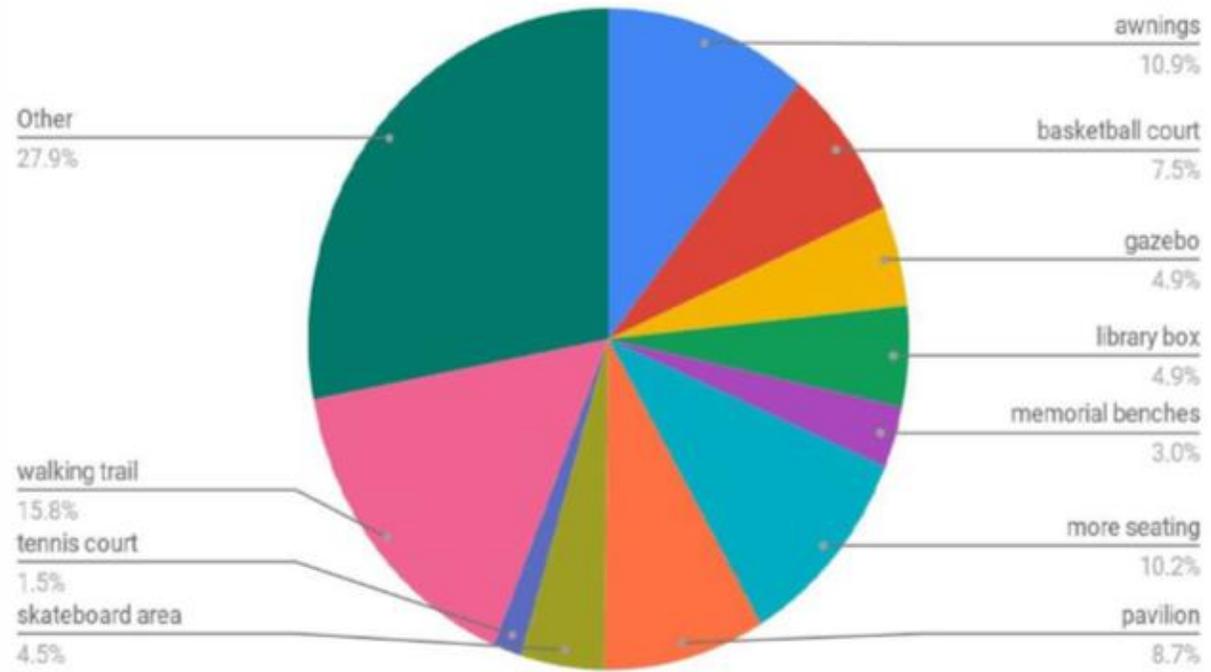


Figure 13

Other Suggestions:

community events	2	community pool	2	frisbee golf	1
river access w/concrete ramp	2	paved trail for power chairs	1	climbing wall	1
more play equipment	4	ice rink	1	exercise equipment	1
great as is-no changes	5	trash pick up	10	new fire hall	1
handicap swing	2	video of monthly board meetings	1	sand box and digging toys	2
batting cages	1	mulch depth playground increased	1	"children playing" signs near park	1
water table for little children	2	dog park	1	safer walking to park	1
larger water/spray park	2	lower taxes	1	more/defined parking spaces Park	
city water (yoke) Pmt Plan 5-10 yrs	2	road repair	6	1	
food & drink trucks	2	spray park better maintained	1	enforce blight code	3
ice cream truck	1	water available to all residents	2	enforce noise code (dog barking)	2
parade/tree lighting	1	bicycle trail	1	reduce hall rental	3
				free internet township residents	3

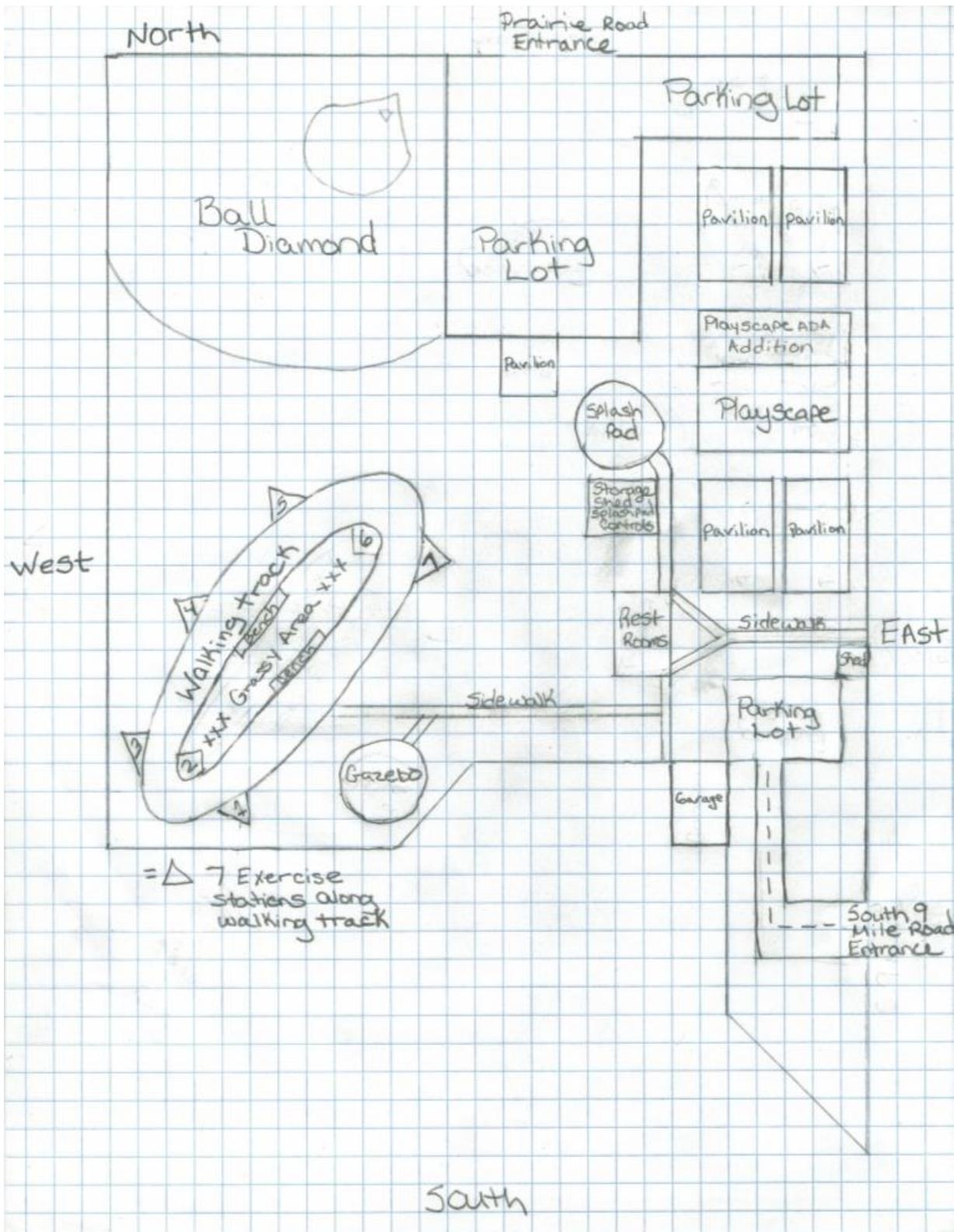
Goals and Objectives:

The goals and objectives of the Lee Township Park and Recreation Plan are; to improve the facilities that are currently within the Lee Township Park and add additional features to enhance the experiences, fitness, wellbeing and enjoyment of the Lee Township Residents as well as the individuals from surrounding townships that utilize the Lee Township Park. This will include increasing parking, adding two additional pavilions with one of the pavilions being dedicated for rentals, a gazebo, a paved walking track, non-technical exercise stations placed along the walking track and an addition to the current playscape that includes ADA playground equipment. (see figure 14)

Project	Priority	Goals and Objectives
Parking Lot Addition and Improved Drainage	1	The current parking lot at the Lee Township does not accommodate all of users daily. The current parking lots are minimal in size and cause the park users to find additional ways to access the park that are unsafe such as: parking along the street, along drive entrances and in other non-parking areas. This congestion also causes a safety issues for those walking through the parking lot as it lowers visibility. The addition of a parking lot and expansion of one of the current parking lots would decrease the safety issues we currently face and would allow more residents and non-residents of Lee Township to access the park facilities. The improvement/addition of the drainage in the parking lots will help lower costs in the long-term for repairing/replacing the parking lots and decrease setting water that can induce a breeding ground for insects.
Erect 2 Additional Pavilions	2	The Lee Township Park currently has 3 standing pavilions. One small pavilion is located near the splashpad and north parking lot, the other two larger pavilions are located between the playscape and south parking lot. These two are the largest and are ADA accessible. One of the pavilions is reserved for individuals to rent during the operating season and the other is used on a first-come first-serve bases. The designated pavilion for rentals is often booked solid throughout the season. The addition of 2 pavilions at the Lee Township Park would increase revenue for the township by designating one of the pavilions as a rental and increase the availability for residents and non-residents of first-come first-serve pavilion space.
Construct a Paved Walking Track	3	The construction of a paved walking track would include; a quarter mile-oval, hard surface, walking track. The center of the track would be left as a grassy inlay with a bench on the northwest and southeast inside edges. Lee Township consists of many rural roadways. Often individuals try to navigate these roadways on foot for exercise and find heavy traffic, narrow shoulders and uneven ground causing safety hazards. The walking track constructed within Lee Township Park would help eliminate the safety hazard of walking along our roadways and give our residents and non-residents a safe, fun and enjoyable way to exercise in the outdoors.
Installation of 7 Exercise Stations	4	The 7 exercise stations would be installed along the outer edge of the walking track and in the center ends. These exercise stations will include some ADA accessible stations so that adults and children of all abilities can access and benefit from them. The exercise stations will help promote health, wellness, fitness and an active lifestyle within the Lee Township community. Each exercise station would have a different instructional signs and equipment that can be utilized by novice or conditioned athletes for no cost during normal operational hours.
Erect a Gazebo	5	The erection and addition of a gazebo to the Lee Township Park would offer additional seating, shelter from the sun and other weather elements and increase township revenue if used as a wedding venue. The gazebo would be situated in the southwest area of the Lee Township Park and would overlook the walking track. This location would allow for easy viewing for parents watching their children using the track, a close structure to take a break from exercising out of the elements, and would be placed so that chairs could be stationed along the walking track so that the viewing of a wedding venue could occur.

****Although the projects that the Lee Township Park and Recreation Plan focuses on are listed in order of priority, more than one project may be in progress simultaneously during the 5-year period. ****

Figure 14



Action Plan:

The future projects will likely include developing a walking trail with exercise stations. It may also include a pavilion, enlarged parking area, and additional handicap accessible areas. A timeline for these projects has not been determined. This plan is based upon the goals and the needs expressed during community input.

These potential improvements have been established to provide a framework for decision makers, and enabled the Township to apply for grant funding for these proposed projects. The actual development will occur in phases as funding becomes available.

Projects for the next five years are prioritized to direct planning, funding and effort.

Funding for the improvements can come from a variety of local, state and federal funding. Grants are available but applicants must target potential funding agencies and programs carefully to meet criteria required.

Summary and Conclusion:

The Recreation Plan for Lee Township was developed as a guideline for initiation and improvement of recreational facilities in our community for the next five years [2020-2025].

The plan will assist the community in achieving its recreational goals and provide eligibility for grants from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources [MDNR]; Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund; and, other state and local funding organizations.

The Lee Township Grant Committee developed the Five-Year Recreation Plan from collected data, including maps, population demographics, and from a complete inventory of existing recreation facilities and township-owned lands. A community survey was implemented to assess public need and invited requests for new recreation facilities during the summer of 2019. The action plan was written that would facilitate accomplishing the goals and objectives of the Five-Year Plan.

The completed Recreation Plan document was made available to the Lee Township Board for review on February 19, 2020. This reviewing opportunity was advertised in the Midland Daily News. The final opportunity for community input occurred at the advertised public meeting held prior to the adoption of the plan. This meeting was also advertised in the Midland Daily News. A public meeting was held on March 9, 2020 at the Lee Township Hall at 7:00 pm. Following the public meeting, the Lee Township Board passed a resolution adopting the Five-Year Recreation Plan. Copies of the advertisements and resolution are included in this document.