



IRA TOWNSHIP

Parks and Recreation Plan

2022 - 2026

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Cassin Planning Group, LLC

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INTRODUCTION

Ira Township recognizes that an ongoing commitment to its parks and recreation facilities and programs is a vital investment in its future. These programs and facilities have a unique potential to increase an overall quality of life for both current and future generations of Township residents. Promoting personal health and education, fostering economic activity, creating intricate social networks, and protecting environmental landscapes, are some of the most compelling benefits gained through well-maintained parks and recreation facilities. Ultimately these benefits are contingent upon a well planned and executed system of parks, trails, open space, water access, and recreational programming.



Youth activities provided by Ira Township's Parks and Recreation Programming

This Parks & Recreation Plan provides the community with a five-year work plan and a long-range

vision to guide future recreational investments. The Township of Ira intends to use this plan to: guide decisions on capital improvement projects, guide the acquisition of open space and available public buildings, explore the implementation of future recreational programming, and pursue both state and federal grant opportunities.

The Plan follows the guidelines set forth by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and includes the following:

- Community Description
- Administrative Structure
- Parks & Recreation Inventory
- Resource Inventory
- Recreational Needs & Opportunity Analysis
- Planning & Public Input Process
- Goals and Objectives



- Action Strategies

View from Water Works Park

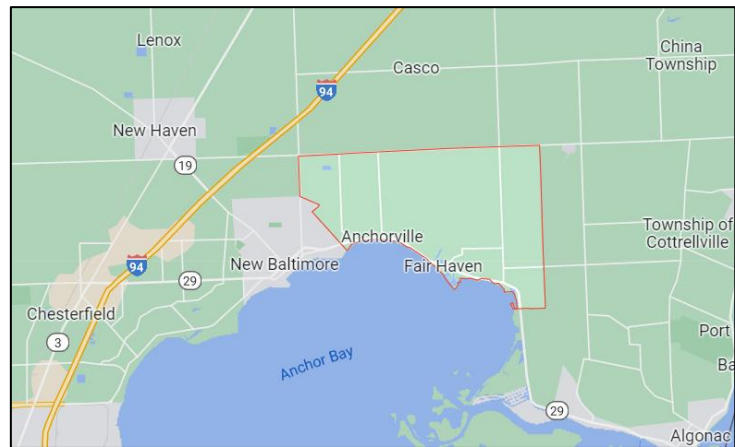
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COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

The following is a description of the various physical features of Ira Township. This description is important to the recreation planning process because it establishes the physical context in which future decisions regarding recreation facility and program development will take place.

Community Profile

Ira Township is in southern St. Clair County and is approximately 17.1 square miles in size. The area has a lengthy stretch of shoreline along Lake St. Clair. The Township is accessible by M-29 and Marine City Highway, and I-94 runs within a mile of the Township's northwestern corner. The Township is bordered by Chesterfield Township and New Baltimore to the west, Lenox



Township to the northwest, Casco Township to the north, China Township to the northeast, Cottrellville Township to the east, and Clay Township to the south/southeast.

Population

The estimated 2020 population for Ira Township is 4,836 persons. The Township's population drop from 2000 to 2010 can be linked to the closure of a large, manufactured home park that occurred when the property underwent a change in ownership. The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) projects the Township population will be 4,631 persons by 2045.



Population Trends for Ira Township & Surrounding Communities

	2000	2010	2020	2030	2045
Ira Township	6,966	5,178	4,836	4,538	4,631
Chesterfield Township	37,405	43,381	47,378	50,962	51,464
New Baltimore	7,405	12,084	11,929	12,596	12,454
Lenox Township	5,362	5,828	5,552	6,647	7,322
Casco Township	4,748	4,107	4,158	4,127	3,949
China Township	3,340	3,551	3,625	3,909	3,835
Cottrellville Township	3,814	3,559	3,276	3,410	3,384
Clay Township	9,822	9,066	8,845	8,868	8,979

Source: Southeast Michigan Council of Governments

Households

Average household sizes have dropped across the country, from 2.62 in 2000, to 2.53 in 2019. Michigan experienced a larger drop (2.75 to 2.52) during the same period. Ira Township has followed this trend, with the average household size decreased from 2.60 to 2.45.

The number of households in the Township has decreased slightly from 2,068 in 2010 to 1,976 in 2020.

Ira Township Population and Household Data

	2000	2010	2020	2045 Forecast
Population	6,966	5,178	4,836	4,631
Households	2,677	2,068	1,976	2,002
Persons Per Household	2.60	2.50	2.45	2.31

Source: Southeast Michigan Council of Governments

Age Characteristics

An important demographic factor influencing recreation planning is the age composition of the community and the extent to which this composition has changed over time. This can assist in matching recreational services to community characteristics, and in determining the special needs of certain age groups.

While the Township's population has decreased, there have been increases in three segments of the population: children under 5, adults aged 55 to 64, and adults aged 65 to 84. SEMCOG projects that this trend will continue in the Township. Growth among these age groups will play a role in the planning of recreation needs now and in the future.

Ira Township Population by Age Brackets

	2010	2019	2010 – 2019 Percentage Change
Under 5	277	464	67%
5 – 19	1,045	832	-20%
20 – 34	779	761	-2%
35 – 54	1,706	1,420	-16%
55 – 64	706	763	8%
65 – 84	596	806	35%
85 +	69	48	-30%
Median Age	42	44.8	2.8

Source: Southeast Michigan Council of Governments

Racial Composition

One important social characteristic of a community is its racial make-up. Understanding the racial composition of a community helps to identify the diverse needs of its population.

The following chart indicates the racial make-up of the Township in both 2010 and 2018.



Ira Township Race Composition

	2010	Percentage of 2010 Population	2019	Percentage of 2019 Population
White	4,885	94.3%	5,012	98.4%
Black	52	1%	50	1%
Asian	20	0.4%	0	0%
Hispanic	121	2.3%	28	0.5%
Multi-racial	88	1.7%	0	0%
Other	12	0.2%	4	0.1%

Source: Southeast Michigan Council of Governments

Income and Poverty Levels

Studying income and poverty levels is a good way to measure the relative economic health of the community. Ira Township saw an increase in median income from 2010 to 2019, Ira Township and St. Clair County saw a drop in median household income during the same period.

In Ira Township, the number of households living in poverty was 8.4% in 2018, significantly less than St. Clair County (10.7%), and Michigan (14.1%).

Income and Poverty Levels 2010 - 2018

Community	2010 Median Household Income	2018 Median Household Income	Percentage of households living in poverty
Ira Township	\$56,871	\$72,625	10.8%
St. Clair County	\$57,590	\$56,951	12.3%
Michigan	\$52,414	\$54,938	14.1

Source: Southeast Michigan Council of Governments

Education Levels

A community's educational attainment metrics are a vital statistic to track. The correlation between education attainment and economic prosperity is remarkably high. As residents continue to gain degrees and credentials, there is more opportunity for job growth.

As of 2019, the percentage of residents in Ira Township with a bachelor's or Graduate College Degree was 25%. In addition, the percentage of residents with a high school degree or higher was 92.%.

Highest Level of Education Completed – 2018 (Percentage of Residents)

Highest level of education	Ira Township	St. Clair County	Michigan
Graduate/Professional	6%	6.8%	11.4%
Bachelor's	15.2%	11.8%	17.7%
Associate	10%	12.4%	9.4%
Some college, no degree	28.5%	25.8%	23.4%
High school graduate	33.10%	34%	28.9%
Did not graduate from high school	7.2%	9.2%	9.2%

Source: Southeast Michigan Council of Governments

Housing & Building Trends

Housing is a vital characteristic of any community. Houses are highly visible and relatively permanent, and for these reasons serve as great indicators of the wellbeing of a community. Housing values in Ira Township rose 9.3% from 2010 to 2019. The median housing value in Ira Township was \$200,200 in 2019, which exceeded the county median by over \$45,000.

Median Housing Value 2010 – 2018

Community	2010	2019	Change
Ira Township	\$183,117	\$200,200	9.3%
St. Clair County	\$184,839	\$154,300	-16.5%

Source: Southeast Michigan Council of Governments

In 2010 there were 1,667 owner-occupied units, which represented 84% of all occupied units. In 2019, the percentage of owner-occupied units increased to 89%.

Ira Township Housing Tenure 2010 - 2018

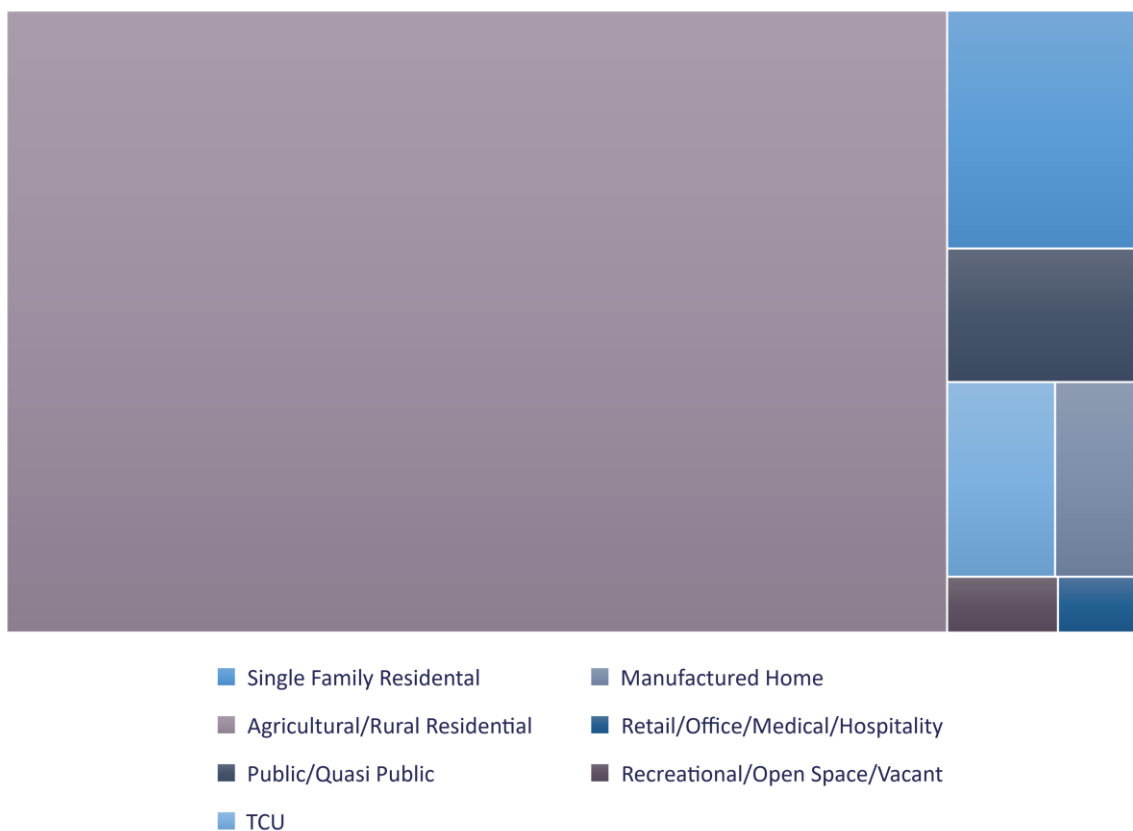
	2010	2018
Owner-Occupied Units	1,667	1,748
Renter Occupied Units	401	246
Vacant Units	201	246
Total Units	2,269	2,240

Source: Southeast Michigan Council of Governments

Existing Land Use

Ira Township primarily remains a rural community, with farms and open space interwoven with large lot homes. Agricultural land represents 72% of the land use within the Township, followed by Recreational and Open Space (12%) and single-family housing (6%)

2020 Existing Land Use



Source: Southeast Michigan Council of Governments



2020 Existing Land Use

Source: SEMCOG

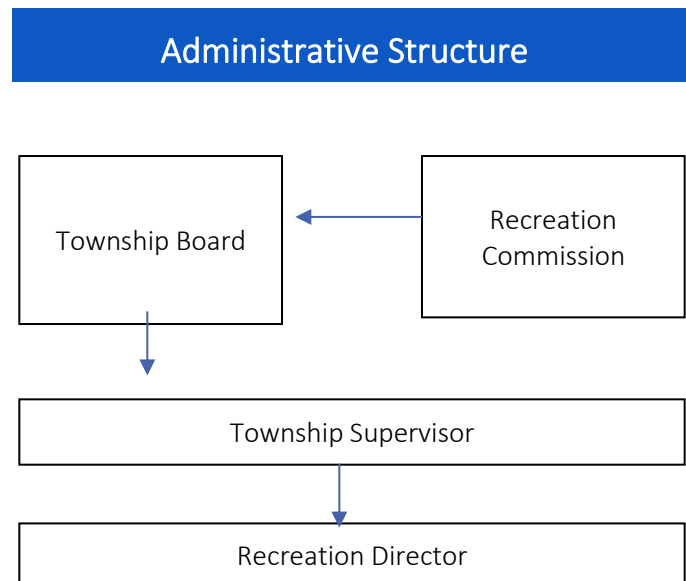
ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

3

In terms of recreation planning, Ira Township's seven-member Recreation Commission provides an advisory role to the Township Board on the needs of the community. In addition, the Township has a Recreation Director who oversees recreational programming.

Ira's current recreation budget for recreation is \$147,270. Recreation funding comes from the Township's general budget and the St. Clair County parks millage

The Township is furthering the recreation planning process through development of this Recreation Plan to develop a recreation program which meets the current and future needs of Township residents.



Budget

Ira Township's Parks and Recreation 2021-2022 Budget	
	FY 2022
Personnel Costs	\$14,650
Contracted Services	\$7,900
Supplies	\$250
Sand/Gravel/Mulch	\$3,000
Programs	\$4,500
Transportation	\$50
Maintenance	\$11,920
Beautification Committee	-
Capital Outlays/Improvements	\$105,000
TOTAL	\$147,270

Ira Township's Parks and Recreation Projected Revenues	
	FY 2022
County Contribution	\$25,240
Programming Fees	\$1,000
Rental Fees	\$1,000
Donations	\$8,000
TOTAL	\$35,240

The Role of Volunteers

The Recreation Commission is an all-volunteer body. Aside from its advisory role to the Township Board, it is also directly involved in running events.

Programming

Ira Township offers a variety of recreational programs for both youth and adults year-round, including but not limited to:

- Crafts
- Nature programs
- Archery
- Easter festivities
- Painting
- Music in the Park
- Halloween festivities
- Christmas festivities
- Mahjong
- Bicycling safety events



4

PARKS & RECREATION INVENTORY

When a community seeks to develop a comprehensive parks and recreation master plan, it is imperative to catalog existing parks and recreation facilities. An extensive inventory of parks and recreation will allow a community to highlight its assets, develop linkages, build off of innovative trends, and determine any gaps in services.

Existing Facility Inventory

Various methods were employed to assess these recreational facilities, including a review of aerial photographs and existing maps, windshield surveys, site visits, and discussions with recreational providers. The inventory that follows provides a detailed look at the amenities available at private and regional recreational facilities/parks.

State and Regional Parks

Ira Township is part of a region that has a wealth of parks and recreation destinations. As a region, southeast Michigan has illustrated a longstanding commitment to parks and recreation. From major park systems to wildlife preservation areas, the State of Michigan and the Huron-Clinton Metroparks Authority have established a network of facilities that provide users of all abilities and interests with plentiful parks and recreation destinations.

Sixteen (16) state parks and recreation areas are located in the five-county area surrounding Ira. In total, these recreation facilities encompass over 50,000 acres of land, and offer a wide range of

services including trails, swimming, fishing, boating picnicking, camping, nature preserves, cross-country skiing, and many others. St. Clair County is home to Lakeport State Park, Algonac State Park, St. John's Marsh Wildlife Area, Port Huron State Game Area, and St. Clair Flats State Wildlife Area.

The Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority operates 13 parks across Southeast Michigan, including three (Stony Creek Metropark, Wolcott Mill Metropark, and Lake St. Clair Metropark) in Macomb County.

Stony Creek Metropark, Shelby Township

Established around Stony Creek Lake, this park includes a nature center, hiking and mountain biking trails, campgrounds, boat rental and launch, bike rental, golf course, and a disc golf course.

Lake St. Clair Metropark, Harrison Township

Located on the Lake St. Clair shore, this park offers a splash pad, swimming pool, and beach, tennis, par- 3 golf, a sledding hill, nature center, trails, windsurfing launch, and boat launch, among other amenities.

Wolcott Mill Metropark, Ray Township

Wolcott Mill Metropark, containing 2,380 acres of land, is located within Ray Township. The park is actually three parks in one, and includes a late 20th century



working farm, a historic grist mill, and a campground. In addition, the park has over 10 miles of trails that meander through woods, meadows, and along the Clinton River.

St. Clair County Recreational Facilities

Columbus County Park

This county park, located in Columbus Township along the Belle River, provides natural area for outdoor enjoyment, a sledding hill, lodging, and a variety of trails.

Goodells County Park

This park occupies 327 acres and includes the County Farm Museum and 4-H Fair Grounds, as well as a butterfly garden, natural areas, a sledding hill, and a splash pad.

Fort Gratiot County Park

This park in north St. Clair County offers scenic views of Lake Huron, and provides a public beach, picnic areas, playscapes, trails, and the 1971 Tunnel Explosion Memorial, which honors 22 workers killed in an accident during construction of a water intake tunnel in the area.

Fort Gratiot Light Station

This former Coast Guard station is home to Michigan's oldest lighthouse, which has been renovated and restored, and is St. Clair County's newest county park.

Woodsong County Park

This park was purchased from the Girl Scouts – Michigan Waterways Council Inc. This site contains trails and runs along a half mile of the Black River, and offers opportunities for nature study, hiking, biking, and paddling.

Blueways of St. Clair

St. Clair County's Blueways Trail is a water trail system implemented throughout the county's many waterways and lakeshore. Implemented in 2009, this 17-route system, including some ADA accessible launches, includes the Island Loop Route, which runs up the Black River and along the Lake Huron shoreline, and has been recognized as a National Water Trail by the US Department of the Interior, the first such trail in Michigan.

Bridge-To-Bay Trail

The Bridge-To-Bay Trail is a biking and walking path that follows the lakeshore the County from New Baltimore to Burtchville. Most of the trail is a shared-access route, and the segment in Ira Township is along Dixie Highway.

Wadhams to Avoca Trail

The Wadhams to Avoca Trail is a rails-to-trails pathway located on the former CSX rail line. The trail is open to hikers, bikers, and equestrians, and its scenic rural character also supports birding. The trail also contains the 60-foot Mill Creek Trestle, which provides four overlook areas into the Mill Creek Valley.

Anchor Bay Lions Club

Located at 9200 Shortcut Road in Ira Township, the Anchor Bay Lions Club is home to the Ira Township Baseball Little League. The facility has 7 fields for all age groups, parking located adjacent to each field, a concession stand, indoor restrooms, and an indoor practice facility.



Source: www.iralittleleague.org



Ira Township Municipal Park

This park is located near the Township Hall and Public Library and encompasses over 33 acres and serves the Township and can also be accessed by the general public. It can accommodate small events and features a war memorial, playscapes, a picnic area with shelter and grills, and a disc golf course.

Amenities

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| • 2 pavilions | • Volleyball court | • Gaga pit |
| • Picnic tables | • Water fountain (for both people and dogs) | • Grills |
| • 1 basketball court | • Benches | • Walking trail |
| • Swings | • Butterfly Memorial Garden | • 12-hole Disc golf course |
| • 2 playscapes (toddler, child) | • "Little" library | • Portable restroom |
| • Horseshoe pits | | • Parking lot |
| • Veterans Memorial | | |

DNR Grant Inventory: Project #: 26-01549 Name: Ira Township Hall Park Year: 1994 Scope: \$12,752.54 to develop a community park at Township offices, with play equipment, picnic area and shelter Status: Closed In 1998, Grant #BF98-050 was withdrawn.



Water Works Park

This 2.5-acre waterfront park sits on a peninsula surrounded by canal views and serves the nearby community.

Amenities

- Aggregate walkway
- Benches
- Gazebo
- Fishing from seawall
- Parking spaces
- Portable restrooms
- Safety station

DNR Grant Inventory: Project #: CM99-019 Name: Waterworks Neighborhood Park Year: 1999 Scope: \$144,000 to develop small peninsula with seawall and walkways as a neighborhood park Status: Closed

Accessibility

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources in their publication “Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plans” states that recreational areas, facilities, and programs play an important role in the life of the community; therefore, it is essential that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy these areas and any programs provided. Federal and state laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability, and these laws apply to parks and other recreation lands and programs controlled and operated by local units of government. The DNR has a strong commitment to barrier free recreational opportunities in our department-managed programs and facilities. This commitment extends to those communities that receive recreation grants.

The accessibility assessment for Ira Township’s parks and recreation facilities was done on the rating scale listed below:

Rank 1: None of the facilities / park areas meet accessibility guidelines.

Rank 2: Some of the facilities / park areas meet accessibility guidelines.

Rank 3: Most of the facilities / park areas meet accessibility guidelines.

Rank 4: The entire park meets accessibility guidelines.

Rank 5: The entire park was developed / renovated using the principals of universal design.

Ira Township’s Municipal Park received a ranking of 2 in its accessibility evaluation, and Water Works Park received an accessibility ranking of 3.

Future Accessibility Design Standards

In all future park development, Ira Township will utilize the following set of criteria to confirm its accessibility.

Parking

- ☐ Accessible parking spaces are provided and marked with International Symbol of Accessibility.
- ☐ Accessible parking is as near to the park entrance as possible.

Play Areas

- ☐ There is an accessible route (60 inches wide) to the entrance of the play area with a slope no steeper than 1:16.
- ☐ For playground equipment, at least one turning space is provided on the same level as play components.
- ☐ Play area surface is firm and stable (mulch/woodchips, sand and gravel are not accessible surfaces)
- ☐ Where multiple swings in a swing bay are provided, one swing is located on an accessible route.
- ☐ For court sports, at least one accessible route connects both sides of the court.

Park Amenities

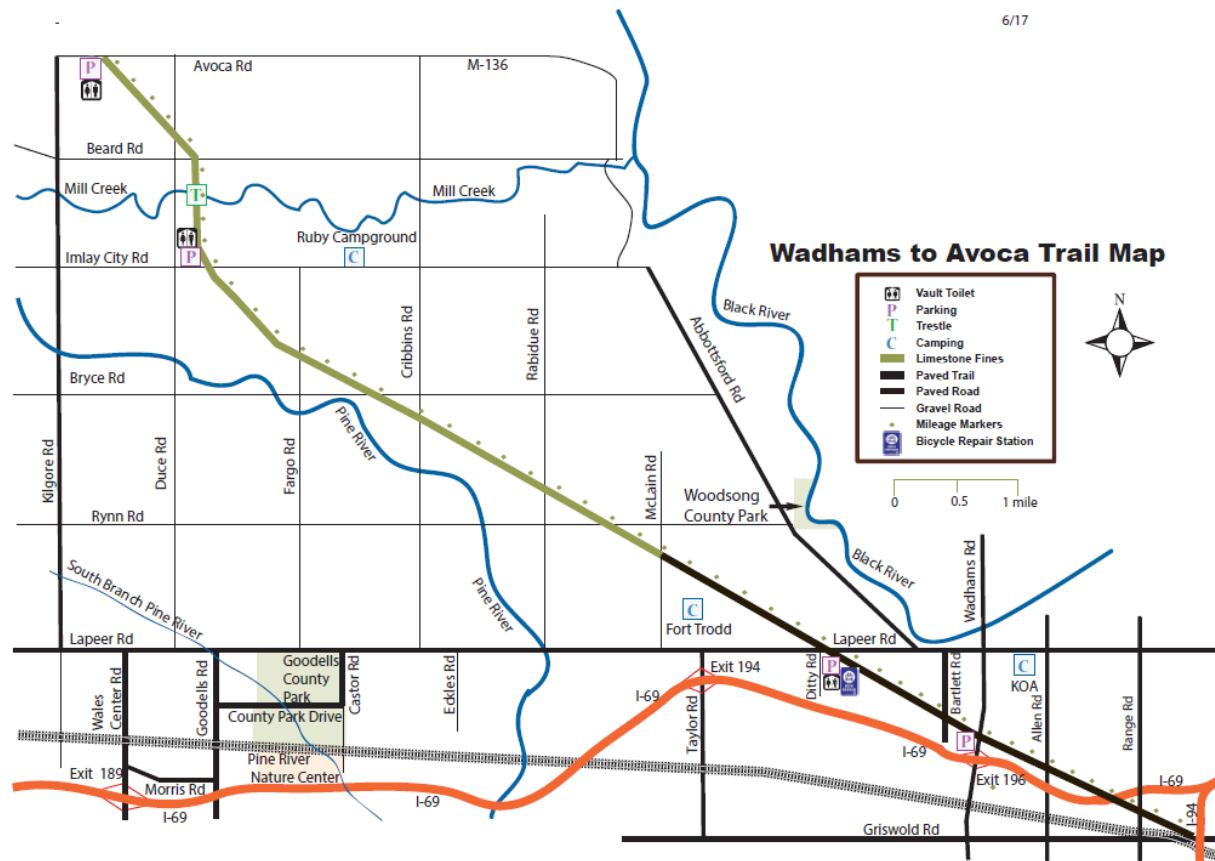
- ☐ Picnic tables provide at least one wheelchair space for each 24 linear feet of usable table surface perimeter. The aisles between chairs and tables are 3 feet wide.
- ☐ Drinking fountain spout outlets are a maximum of 36 inches above the finish floor or ground.
- ☐ Safety is promoted by good street lighting.
- ☐ Ramps are non-slip.
- ☐ If public restroom facility present, there is at least one fully accessible restroom.

Trails and Sidewalks

- ☐ There is a path of travel that does not require the use of stairs.
- ☐ Bike paths are separate from pedestrian walkways.
- ☐ Sidewalks are free of obstruction, wide enough for wheelchairs, solid (not made of dirt), and have curb cuts.
- ☐ All stairways feature a railing and stair tips that are painted to distinguish each step.
- ☐ Handrails are provided on both sides of a ramp.
- ☐ Accessible routes connect all park amenities and coincide with general circulation paths.

St. Clair County Wadhams to Avoca Trail Map

6/17



Source: St. Clair County Parks and Recreation

Bay-To-Bridge Trail Map

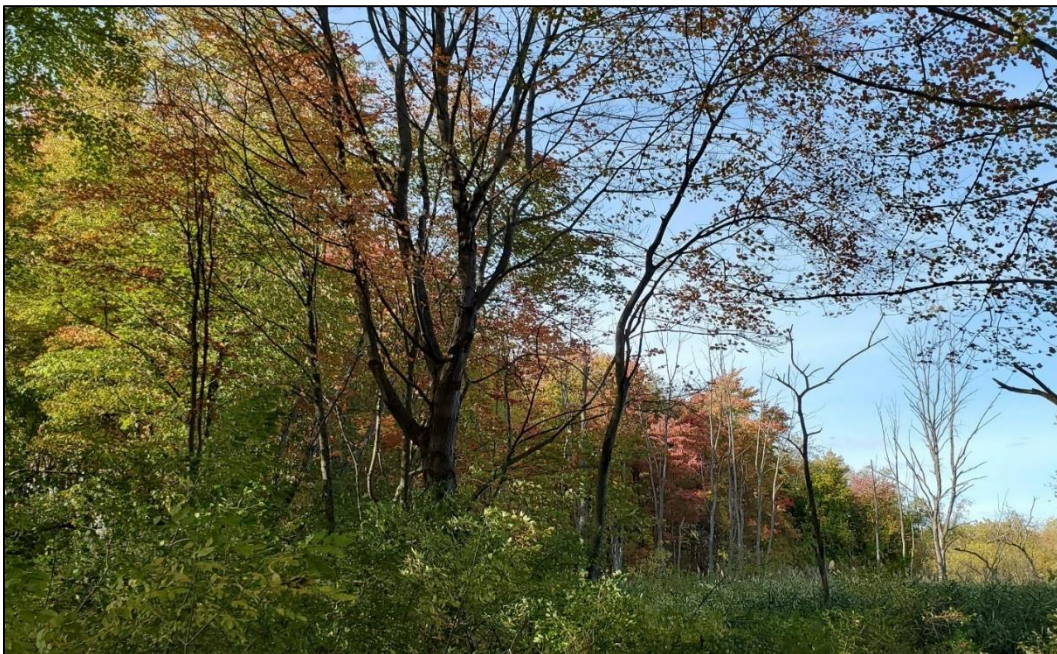


Source: St. Clair County Parks and Recreation

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RESOURCE INVENTORY

In a community such as Ira Township, where recreational opportunities are heavily intertwined with the natural environment, an inventory of natural resources clarifies where potential opportunities may be available.



Ira Township scenery

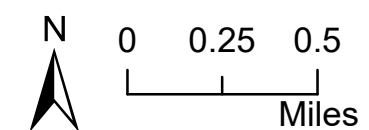
The following maps depict Natural Features, Sub-Watersheds/Elevations, and Soil types within the Township.

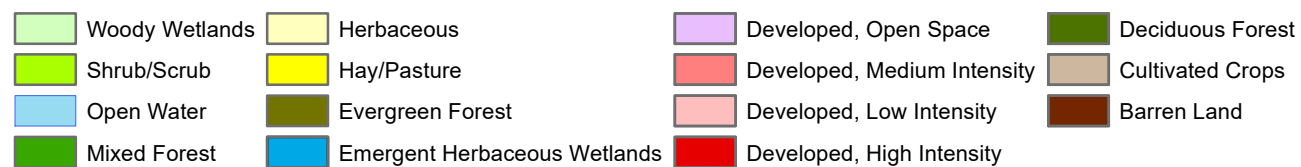
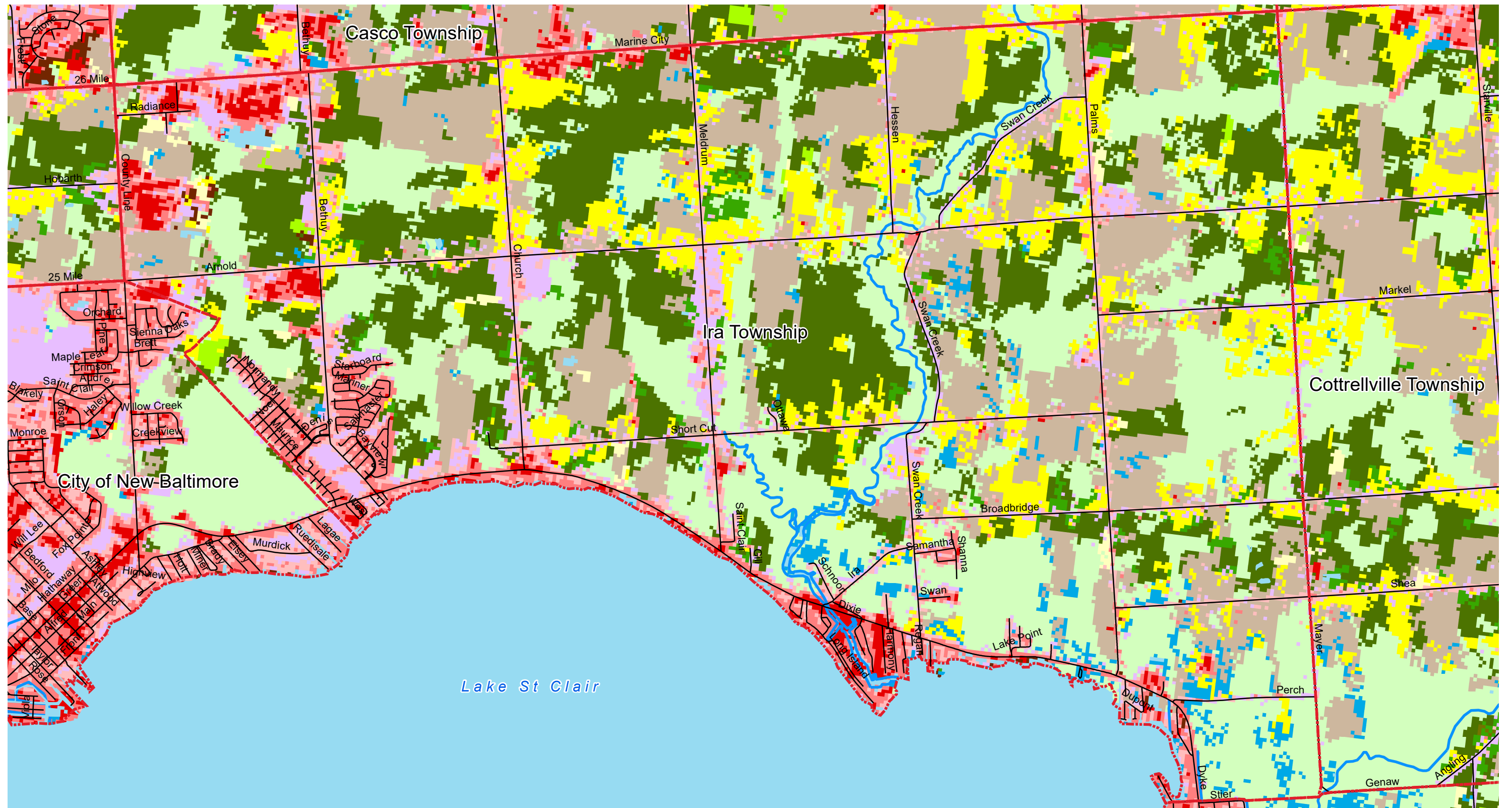


- Freshwater Emergent Wetland
- Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland
- Freshwater Pond
- Lake
- Riverine

Wetlands

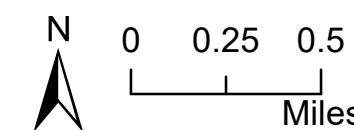
Ira Township
St. Clair County, Michigan

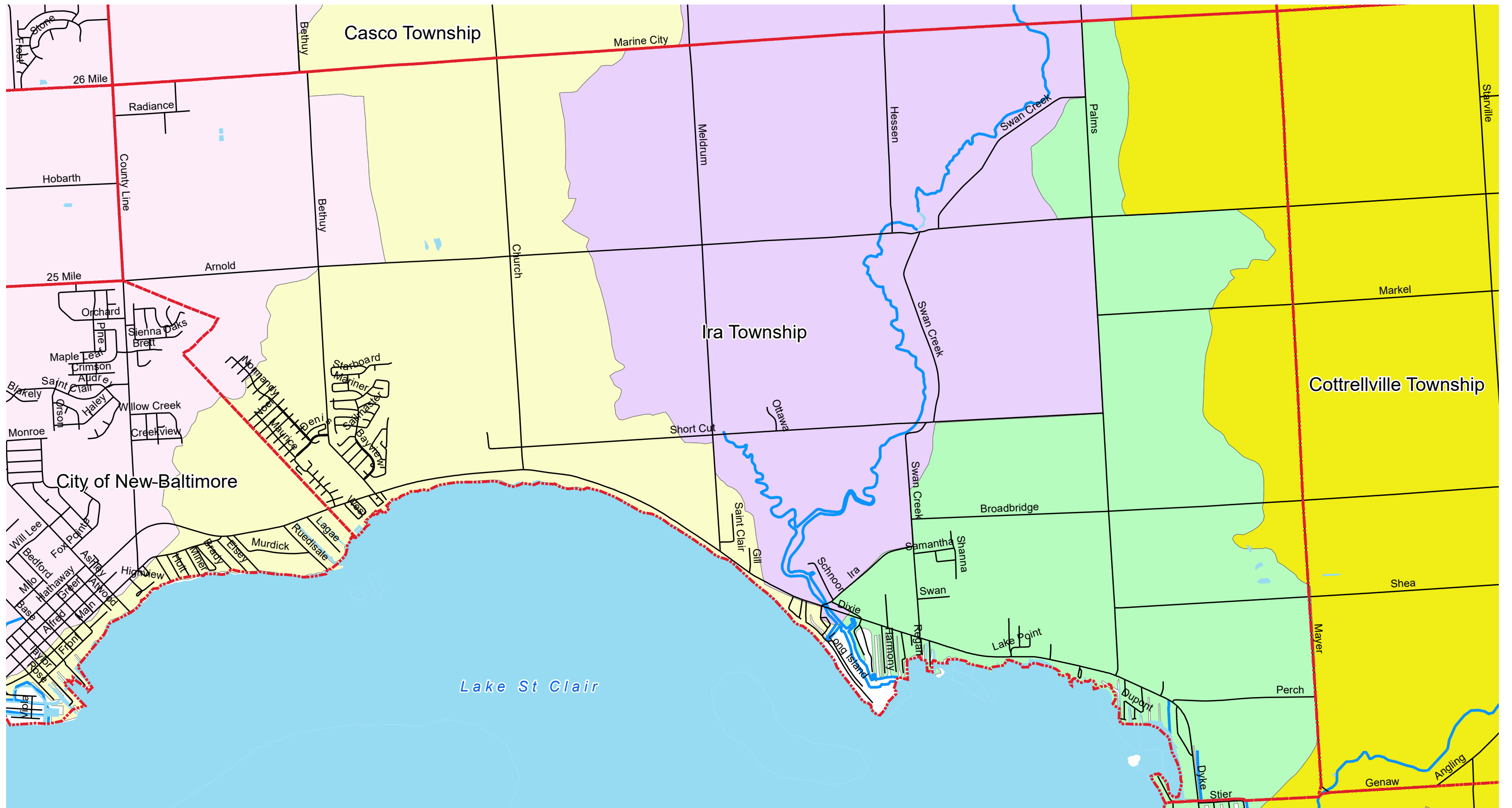




2019 Landcover

Ira Township
St. Clair County, Michigan

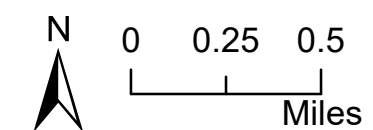


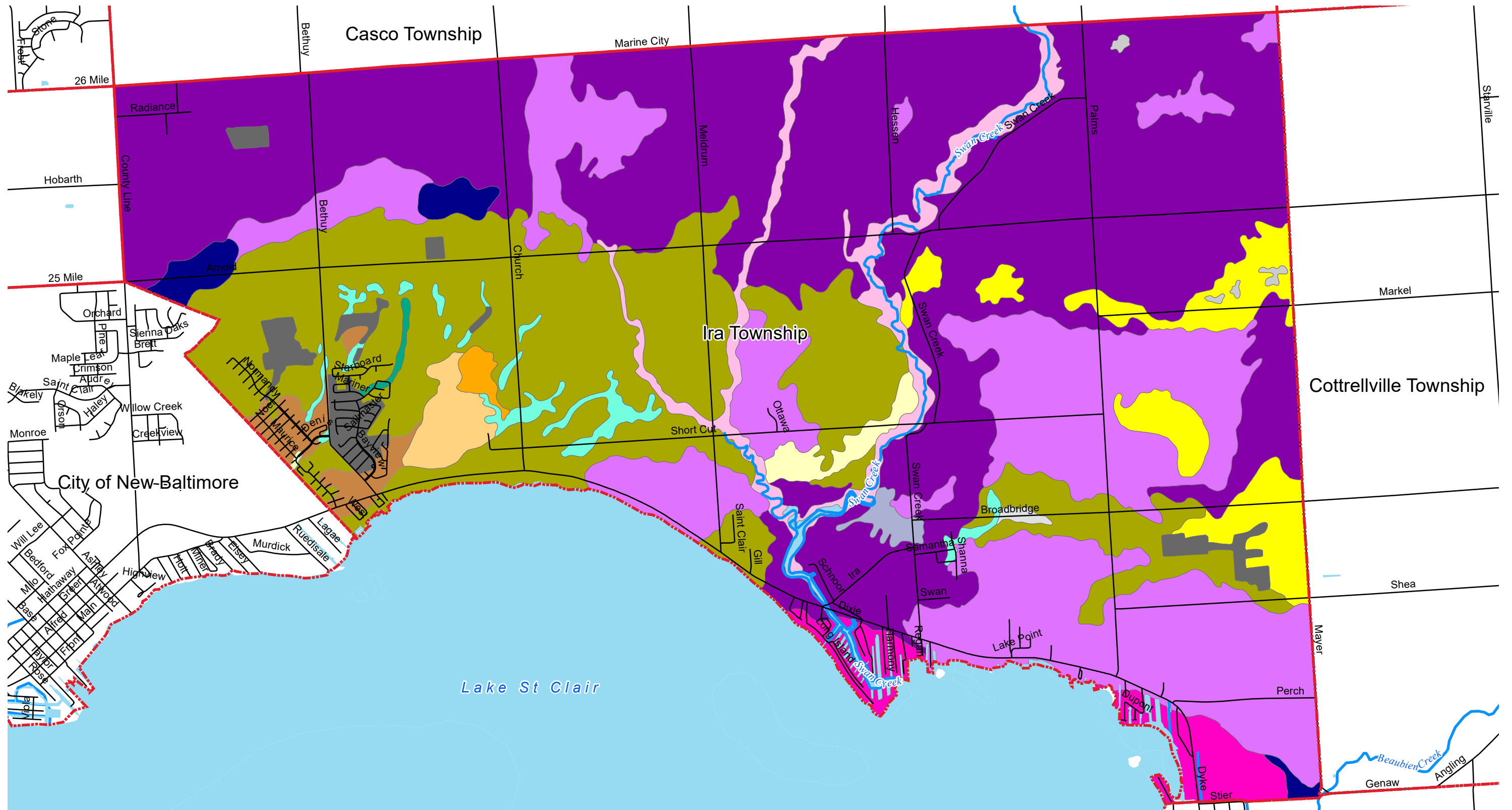


- Subwatershed and Water Course**
- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 3, Lake Drainage | 6, Swan Creek |
| 4, Beaubien Creek | 7, Lake Drainage |
| 5, Lake Drainage | 8, Crapaud Creek |

Sub-Watersheds

Ira Township
St. Clair County, Michigan





- | | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Allendale loamy fine sand, 0-3% slopes | Borrow pits | Minoa fine sandy loam, clay substratum, 0-3% slopes | Spinks loamy sany, loamy substratum, 0-6% slopes |
| Allendale-Latty complex, 0-3% slopes | Covert-Lamson complex, 0-6% slopes | Oakville fine sand, 0-6% slopes | Toledo silty clay loam |
| Allendale-Lenawee-Toledo complex, 0-3% slopes | Lamson fine sandy loam | Rousseau fine sand, 0-6% slopes | Water |
| Alluvial land | Latty silty clay loam | Rousseau fine sand, 6-12% slopes | Wainola-Deford fine sands, 0-2% slopes |
| Bach very fine sandy loam | Latty complex, 0-3% slopes | Spinks loamy sand, 2-6% slopes | |

Soils
Ira Township
St. Clair County, Michigan

N

0 0.25 0.5
Miles

Cassin Planning
Group LLC



— Elevation in feet

Elevation
Ira Township
St. Clair County, Michigan

N

0 0.25 0.5
Miles



6

RECREATION NEEDS & OPPORTUNITIES ANALYSIS

To analyze the recreational needs of Township residents, and to determine deficiencies within recreation programs, it is helpful to consider standards for recreation service areas, land needs based on future population, and the ultimate size and extent of recreation facilities and their location.

Recreation Needs & Opportunities Analysis

It is important to determine adequacy and need for recreation facilities, both currently and in the future. Several techniques are commonly used to accomplish this. Perhaps the most common method of determining recreation needs and deficiencies is to compare existing park acreage and facilities with accepted recreation planning standards. The standards normally suggest optimum or ideal conditions that communities should strive to meet in the development of park facilities and provide a benchmark against which progress can be measured. The risk in using these standards, however, is that they may not be uniformly applicable to every community and as such, need to be evaluated in light of the unique physical, social, and economic conditions that may characterize a specific community.

Recreation Planning Standards

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) offers generalized standards to assist communities in recreation planning activities. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has also developed a set of standards based on NRPA guidelines entitled “Michigan Recreation Opportunity Standards,” which will be utilized in this recreation needs and deficiency analysis. These standards specify the amount of developed recreation acreage, and the

amount/number of recreation facilities that a community should have per 1,000 residents.

Michigan Recreation Opportunity Standards	
Type of Recreation Opportunity	Plan Standard
Developed Local Park Land	10 acres / 1,000 population
Archery Ranges (including private & commercial)	1 / 50,000 population
Ballfields (not including school facilities)	1 / 3,000 population
Outdoor Basketball Courts (not including school facilities)	1 / 5,000 population
Bicycle Trails (miles)	1 / 40,000 population
Golf Courses (including private & commercial)	1 / 25,000 population
Indoor Ice Rinks	1 / 50,000 population
Outdoor Ice Rinks	1 / 20,000 population
Picnic Areas (tables)	1 / 200 population
Playgrounds (not including school facilities)	1 / 3,000 population
Rifle Ranges (including private & commercial)	1 / 50,000 population
Shotgun Ranges (including private & commercial)	1 / 50,000 population
Sledding Hills (not including school facilities)	1 / 40,000 population
Soccer Fields (not including school facilities)	1 / 20,000 population
Outdoor Swimming Pools	1 / 40,000 population
Outdoor Tennis Courts (not including school facilities)	1 / 4,000 population
Campground Sites (including commercial)	1 / 150 population
Cross-Country Ski Trails (miles)	1 / 10,000 population
Fishing Access (feet)	1,000 / 1,000 population
Fishing Piers	1 / 100,000 population
Hiking Trails (miles)	1 / 5,000 population
Horseback Trails (miles)	1 / 20,000 population
Nature Areas (each)	1 / 50,000 population
Nature Trails (miles)	1 / 20,000 population
ORV Areas	1 acre / 7,500 population
ORV Trails (miles)	1 / 10,000 population
Snowmobiling Land	10 acres / 1,000 population
Snowmobiling Trails (miles)	1 / 3,000 population
Swimming Beaches	1 / 25,000 population

For some of the standards listed above, the specific facilities require a larger service population than that of Ira Township. However, these types of facilities could be established in the Township

if location advantages, natural resource features and monetary resources permit. The location of such facilities within Ira Township can make the Township a more attractive place to visit, thereby creating jobs and expanding the local economic base.

Current Recreation Needs

Based on the Michigan Recreation Opportunity Standards and the 2020 population of Ira Township of 4,836 persons, recreation standards suggest the Township's need for developed recreation acreage and for the various types of recreation activities. However, it should be noted that these standards are guidelines, and each community should consider other recreation opportunities within the area as well as the ability to maintain community facilities. The table below lists some of the current recreation opportunities that may exist within the Township.

Ira Township's Current Recreation Needs (Based upon an estimated 2020 population of 4,836 persons)			
Recreation Facility	Existing Amount	Suggested Amount (based upon Recreation Standard)	Need
Outdoor Tennis Courts	0	1	1

As can be seen in the table above, there may be a need to provide additional park land and some recreational facilities. Ira Township should keep these facilities in mind in weighing the priorities for recreation opportunities. Expanding public access to the lakeshore for activities such as fishing and natural enjoyment should be a top priority.

Future Recreation Needs

Based on the Michigan Recreation Opportunity Standards and the 2030 and 2045 projected populations of Ira Township of 4,149 and 4,493 (respectively), the Township's future needs for developed recreation acreage and for the various types of recreation activities for those years were derived. The two tables below list the future recreation needs that may exist within the Township, assuming that none of the current recreation deficiencies noted previously are addressed between now and the years 2030 and 2045. It should be noted that the recommendations remain relatively similar for current recreation needs and the projected needs for both 2030 and 2045.

Ira Township's Current Recreation Needs (Based upon an estimated 2030 population of 4,583 persons)			
Recreation Facility	Existing Amount	Suggested Amount (based upon Recreation Standard)	Need
Outdoor Tennis Courts	0	1	1

Ira Township's Current Recreation Needs (Based upon an estimated 2045 population of 4,631 persons)			
Recreation Facility	Existing Amount	Suggested Amount (based upon Recreation Standard)	Need
Outdoor Tennis Courts	0	1	1

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THE PLANNING & PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

The recreation planning process in Ira Township involves individuals who represent a broad cross-section of the community's population. The Township Board is responsible for implementing the Recreation Plan, but the Recreation Commission provides input, analysis, and recommendations.

The Township developed an online public survey (with hard copies available at the Township Hall), to collect public input on community priorities for future parks and recreation. Using the inventory and survey findings, this Recreation Plan identifies goals, opportunities, and implementation measures.

The draft plan and 5-year action program of priority projects were then reviewed by the Recreation Commission. Following the recommendation of approval by the Recreation Commission, the plan was forwarded to the Township Board.

The draft plan was made available for public review and comment for at least 30 days prior to formal adoption by the Township Board. Notice of the public review period was provided in the local newspaper. The plan was presented at a public hearing held by Township Board. Copies of the notices announcing the review period and public hearing are included in the Appendix.

Public Input

Understanding the important role of public involvement in developing this plan, the Recreation Commission developed an online survey to gather general input from the community regarding their thoughts on parks and recreation facilities and programming in the Township. The survey

was available for five (5) months beginning September 13, 2021. It was advertised on the Township's website and promoted through Township documents/materials. A total of sixty-nine people responded to the survey. (See Appendix for the complete survey results.)

Most survey respondents were residents. Nearly half of respondents had at least one child in their household. The majority of survey participants had visited either the Municipal Park or Waterworks Park. Playground equipment, trails, and restroom facilities were considered the most important features when visiting a park. When asked what recreational programs/activities are most important, the top ranked programs were trails and bike paths, nature education events, holiday events, youth fitness programs, and adult fitness programs. Half of respondents received information about Ira's Parks and Recreation programs through social media.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

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Goals and Objectives formulated by Ira Township are the basis of the recreation planning process. They form the framework for public and private decision-making regarding recreational facilities and programs in the Township. This Recreation Plan seeks to pursue long-range recreational goals and objectives through specific short-range actions on the part of the Township, County, and State as well as private entities.



Summer Recreational Programming

The following goals and objectives were developed by the Township after review of the Township's

natural features, population, housing, existing land uses, existing recreational facilities and programs, and the results of the community recreation survey.

The recreation goals and objectives are not prioritized. The Action Program in the Chapter that follows, will detail the specific program strategies to achieve the goals and objectives.

GOAL 1

Enhance and increase the quality of life for Ira Township residents by providing recreation programs and facilities to meet their needs.

GOAL 2

Cooperate with the school districts, county, and other regional recreation provides in the delivery of recreation opportunities to Township residents.

GOAL 3

Preserve and utilize the Township's existing natural features and habitat (waterfront, woodlands, wetlands, topography, and floodplain) for open space and recreation purposes, such as hunting, swimming, boating, and fishing.

GOAL 4

Acquire additional land in appropriate locations as it becomes available.

GOAL 5

Increase opportunities for access to Anchor Bay for public recreation purposes through the purchase of lease of additional waterfront property.

GOAL 6

Increase Parks and Rec programming by adding events to the calendar as opportunities becomes available.

GOAL 7

Use the Township's planning and zoning powers to encourage developers to incorporate open space into new residential development and to provide recreation space as an integral part of any new development

GOAL 8

Relate the location of future recreation facilities to existing and anticipated population growth areas, as well as to other community facilities.

GOAL 9

Provide for a range of both passive and active recreation facilities.

GOAL 10

Provide for the development of a non-motorized trail system linking major activity centers, recreation facilities, county facilities, and the Bridge-to-Bay Trail.

GOAL 11

Encourage upgrades and expansion of local Little League and facility

GOAL 12

Encourage upgrades and maintenance of DNR launch site.

GOAL 13

Continue to monitor and adjust program offers to reflect changing recreation preferences and age characteristics by way of community surveys and/or questionnaires.

GOAL 14

Continue working with community groups to establish cooperative agreements for the protection, maintenance, and use of recreation sites.

GOAL 15

Provide for necessary staffing and an administrative infrastructure to support the expansion of recreation opportunities

GOAL 16

Provide a consistent level of funding, through county, state, and federal sources, to support improvements to the Township's recreation facilities and programs.

GOAL 17

Continue to support proactive maintenance of the Township's Park and recreation facilities.

ACTION STRATEGIES

Action Strategies outline Ira Township's approach to implementing the goals and objectives identified in the previous chapter. These strategies provide guidance for planning and budgeting purposes for the next five years. They suggest priorities generally but are not intended to be set in stone or limit additional creative approaches. Generally, parks and recreation action strategies should consider the following when outlining a strategy to implement goals and objectives:

1. Based upon the Public Survey, as part of this Recreation Plan, what projects or activities were considered most important by the respondents?
2. Is there immediate health and safety concerns that need to be addressed?
3. What opportunities exist to partner with other groups towards a common goal?
4. Is there a person or group who can champion specific goals/objectives?
5. Are there multiple goals that can be achieved by implementing a project?
6. What projects affect the greatest number of people in the community and/or address the greatest need?
7. How can projects be broken down into phases for a multi-year approach?
8. What funding opportunities exist for implementation of certain goals?

Ira Township Parks and Recreation 5 Year Action Plan

Action	Year	Projected Cost(s)	Funding Source
Municipal Park			
Pursue Grants to replace playground equipment, including ADA compliant features	Ongoing	TBD	LCF
Replaced pavilion roof	2022 - 2023	\$350 - \$550 per square (100 square feet)	Local
Continue maintenance and upgrades at the Veterans Memorial	Ongoing	TBD	Local
Pursue grant opportunities for trail signage and kiosks	2022 - 2023	\$600 - \$1,000 per sign	LCF
Pursue grant opportunities for bike repair station at the trail head	2023 - 2024	\$1,000 - \$2,000	LCF
Create an adopt-a-park program for specific areas	2023-2024	TBD	TBD
Install additional split rail to the open creek area	2022 - 2023	\$20 per linear foot	Local
Monitor park and trail security	2022	\$1,000 (cameras)	Local
Monitor and coordinate groundskeeping and maintenance with contractors and employees	Ongoing	\$9,000 annually	Local
Water Works Park			
Installation of aggregate for 10 car parking area	2022 – 2023	\$10,000	Local
Install St. Clair County Accessible Kayak Launch	2024 - 2025	\$5,000	County
Continue groundskeeping and maintenance	Ongoing	\$3,000	Local
Disc Golf Course			
Continue course clearance and maintenance	Ongoing	\$200	Local
Fill low areas	Ongoing	\$500 annually	Local
Upgrade tee pads and mats	Ongoing	\$1,000	Local
Install “Keep Our Course Clear and Clean” signage	2022 - 2023	\$200	Local

Action	Year	Projected Cost(s)	Funding Source
Long Term Goals			
County bike path (lane) on Shortcut Road	TBD	TBD	County
Splash Pad at the Municipal Park	2023 - 2024	\$135,000	TBD
Indoor recreation/community facility	Ongoing	\$250,000 - \$1,000,000	TBD
Pave walking path and parking lot to Municipal Park	TBD	TBD	TBD
Pickle Ball	TBD	TBD	TBD
Farmers Market	TBD	TBD	TBD

MNRTF = Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund

LCF = Local community foundations

Local = Local Funds/General Funds

County = St. Clair County

TBD = To be determined

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APPENDIX

Approving Resolution

Public Notices

Transmittal Letters

Public Survey Results