

September 12, 2022

Ms. Pepper Lockhart, City Manager
City of Ewart
200 S. Main Street
Ewart, MI 49631

Re: Update of the Five-Year Parks and Recreation Plan

Dear Ms. Lockhart:

We are submitting this letter to you in response to your request to update the City of Ewart's Five-Year Parks and Recreation Plan. As you know, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requires that a community updates its Parks and Recreation Plan every five years to maintain eligibility for specific grants. The scope of services outlined below will result in a revised plan before the February 1, 2023 deadline, and it is intended to be flexible and may be tailored to meet the needs of the City. Our objective will be an efficient process that achieves a firm consensus and provides meaningful conclusions while meeting all of the DNR's guidelines.

Work Scope. Following is an outline of proposed work tasks:

1. **Kick-Off Meeting.** The planning team will meet with the Planning Commission to facilitate a kick-off meeting. The meeting's purpose will be to review the work scope and explore essential insights into any recreation-related issues that the Plan must address. We have assumed that the Planning Commission (or a subcommittee) will work directly with us during the development of the updated Plan. This task will be important in understanding the work scope and the specific recreation needs of the community.
2. **Data Gathering and Analysis.** This task includes a data-gathering effort by the planning team. Updating data relative to population growth and other trends and summarizing an inventory of existing facilities and recreational programs is paramount in the recreational planning process. This step will also include reviewing and updating public school facilities and updates to the Accessibility Assessments, as needed. The inventory also includes City properties and any other facilities available for public use, or other sites the community believes are critical to the recreational needs of citizens, including existing or future trail connections. Finally, this phase of the assignment will also include a review of the Administrative Structure chapter of the Plan required by the DNR, describing the community's implementation of park and recreation functions. We will present our findings and research to the Planning Commission in a meeting later in the process.

We assume that significant original research will be necessary for the survey of existing facilities. Data in the former Recreation Plan, Master Plan, and other material will be sufficiently complete. However, we understand that some data will need to be updated.

3. **Public Input.** With a clear understanding of the current conditions in the City and with an inventory of existing recreational facilities completed, the planning team will be prepared to solicit citizen input and develop policies designed to guide the City in implementing the Plan.

Citizen participation is critical to this planning effort. The DNR requires a public hearing before the Plan is adopted and at least one other means of public input before completing the Plan. We have presented two options – an online visioning meeting and an online community survey – as the means to solicit public participation, as our experience shows the outcomes of these activities to be helpful and cost-effective. The community may choose one or both of these options. Other citizen participation techniques exist as well, which can be explored at your request.

Optional Task – Focus Groups. To meaningfully incorporate public needs and opinions into the process and gain more detailed input on specific issues, we propose holding online focus groups that would involve a focused discussion relative to parks and recreation.

We propose conducting three one-hour focus groups to address park facilities, recreation programming, trails, or other issues as determined by the City. These discussions provide an active discussion platform. The planning team will lead the conversation with community members to receive input on these critical aspects of park and recreation planning in the City of Evert.

The planning team will lead each focus group. We will direct the meeting and ask a series of discussion questions intended to glean insight into needed improvements in the community. After the discussions, we will provide a written summary of the input received, incorporated into the updated Plan.

Optional Task – Online Community Survey. The City may also opt for a community survey to gather input in support of the Plan. The questions in the survey, crafted to minimize the risk of confusion, provide an excellent forum for public information. Our objective will be to create a survey instrument that can be completed in five minutes or less. We will work with the City to test the form to ensure that the reader understands the nature of the information sought. Administration of the survey is by posting a link on the City's website, social media, email, postcards, and other methods to ensure as many residents as possible are aware of the survey's availability.

4. **Goals and Objectives.** Based on input received from the public and the Planning Commission, we will review and refine the goal statements regarding the future state of parks and recreation in the community. Each goal statement will describe a desirable

end state for recreation options in the community supported by several specific objectives. The objectives are milestones on the way to reaching a particular goal. Goals and objectives are a required plan element.

5. **Action Program.** With the goals and objectives in place, the action program will outline specific tasks the City will seek to complete over the life of the Plan (typically five years). The DNR requires the action program.

With input from the Planning Commission, the planning team will review and refine the action program. The creation of the tasks listed in the action program is based on the goals and objectives, the results of the community input phase, the existing facility inventory, and the input of the Planning Commission. The action program will contain specific tasks that the Commission should strive to complete, the timeframe for completion, an estimated cost, and potential funding and resource partners.

While the initial action program will be developed by Williams & Works, active participation by the Planning Commission (or a steering committee) is anticipated. We envision one meeting to discuss both the goals and objectives and the action program, where the planning team will present the initial completed plan draft for review and comment.

6. **Plan Finalization and Adoption.** This task will include assembling the various completed chapters and the components necessary to meet the DNR requirements into a final plan document. The DNR requires the following plan sections:

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

This task will require the delivery of a draft document for review and adoption and a second final version as adopted. Once adopted, we will provide the Planning Commission with copies of the adopted Plan at cost, or the City may elect to print final plans. We will also provide electronic versions in PDF format. Any GIS and graphic data created during the planning process will also be provided in the appropriate electronic formats if desired. In addition, if a significant amount of mapping is generated during the process to create the Plan, we will provide two 24-inch by 36-inch presentation/display maps for community use.

We assume the City will be responsible for the logistics of the public hearing on the Plan. We have also taken that the City will be responsible for publishing resolutions and notices associated with the Plan's adoption; however, we have templates that we will provide.

Professional Fees. Williams & Works proposes to serve the City in completing this assignment on an hourly reimbursable basis with total fees as fixed below. These fees will include the costs of all direct labor, fringe benefits, out-of-pocket expenses, and overhead. The costs for each task are distributed as follows:

Total price with Focus Group Option:..... \$7,900
Total price with Online Community Survey Option..... \$7,900
Total price with both Open House and Focus Groups \$9,300

If this proposal is acceptable to you, authorization to begin work can be given by signing in the box below, which would extend our existing professional services agreement insofar as the provisions of this proposal.

We are grateful for the invitation to submit this proposal and look forward to continuing our work with the City of Evert. Please let us know if we can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

Williams & Works

[via email]

Bradley S. Kotrba, AICP
Senior Planner

c: Andy Moore, AICP
Executive & Planning Group Lead

Accepted for the City of Evert	
Signed	_____
Name	_____
Title	_____
Date	_____
<i>Choose one (or both) of the optional tasks below:</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Online focus groups
<input type="checkbox"/>	Online Survey
<input type="checkbox"/>	Online survey and focus groups