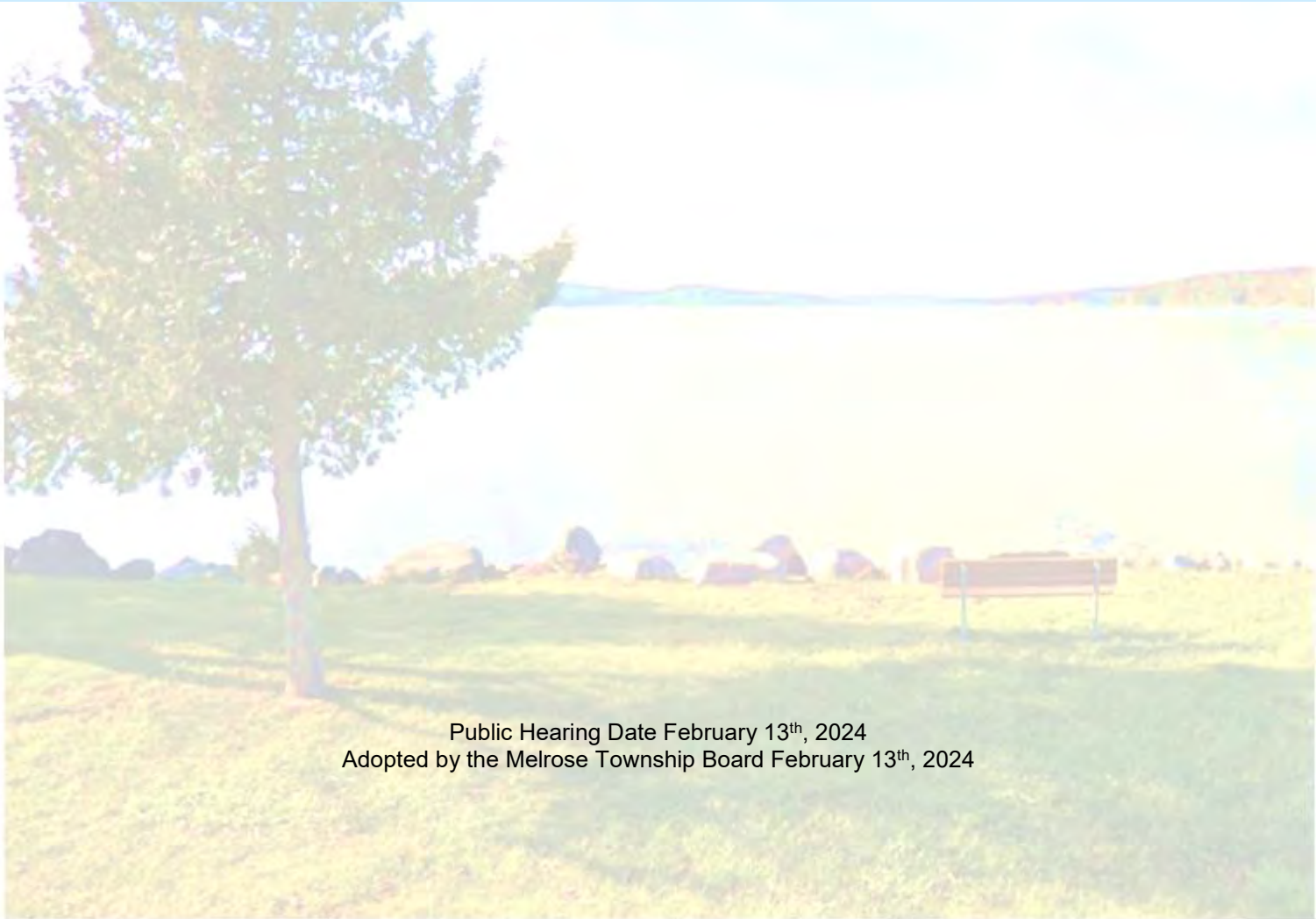




# Melrose Township Parks & Recreation Plan

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## 2024-2028

Public Hearing Date February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
Adopted by the Melrose Township Board February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024

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# Acknowledgements

## Melrose Township Board of Trustees

Vern Goodwin, Supervisor  
Robin Hissong Berry, Clerk  
Shelley Burr, Treasurer  
Mary Pat Goldich, Trustee  
Dan Nowland, Trustee

## Melrose Township Planning Commission

Bart Wangeman, Chair  
Julie Christy  
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## Melrose Township Staff

Ken Lane, Zoning Administrator

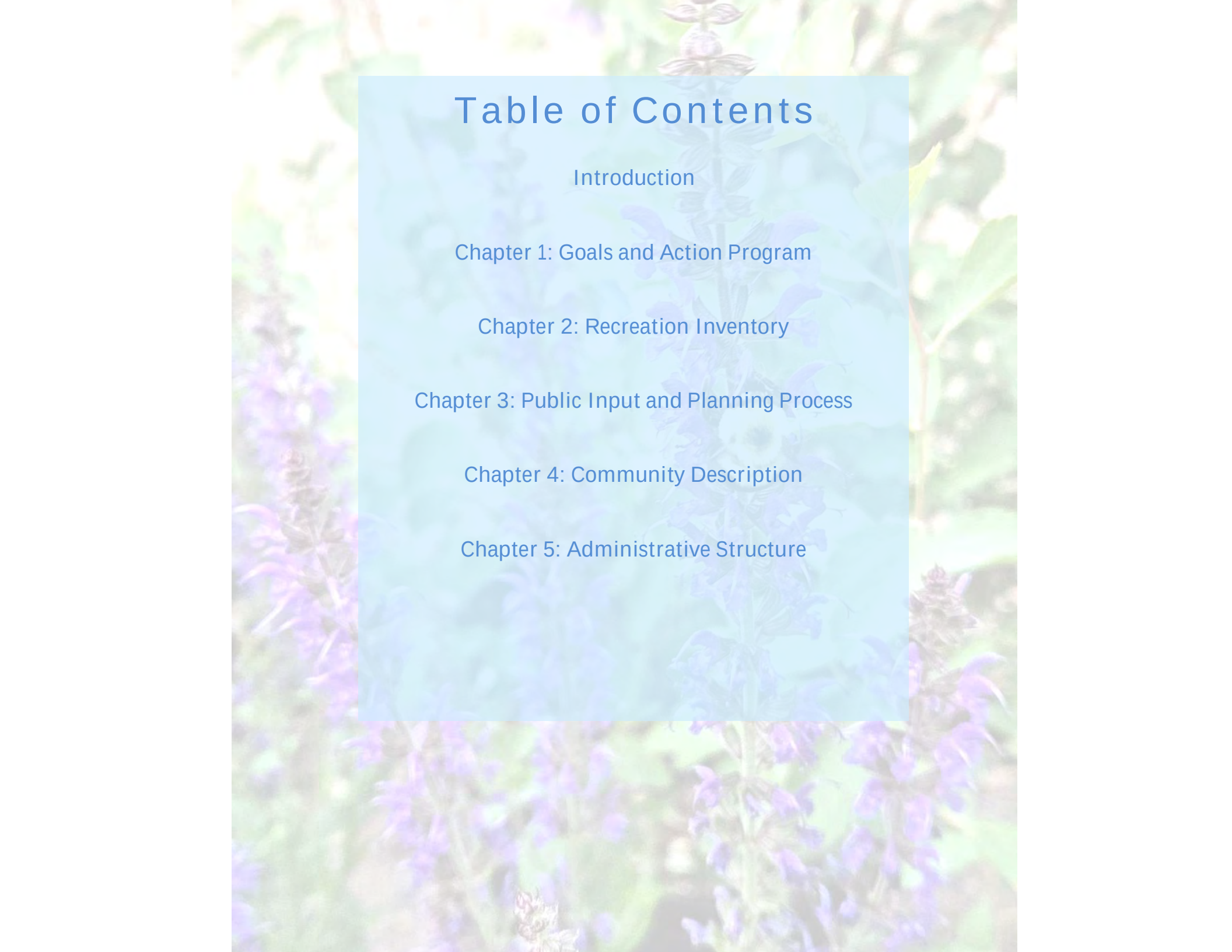
## Prepared by Melrose Township with assistance from:

Networks Northwest  
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*Photos are provided by Networks Northwest unless otherwise noted.*

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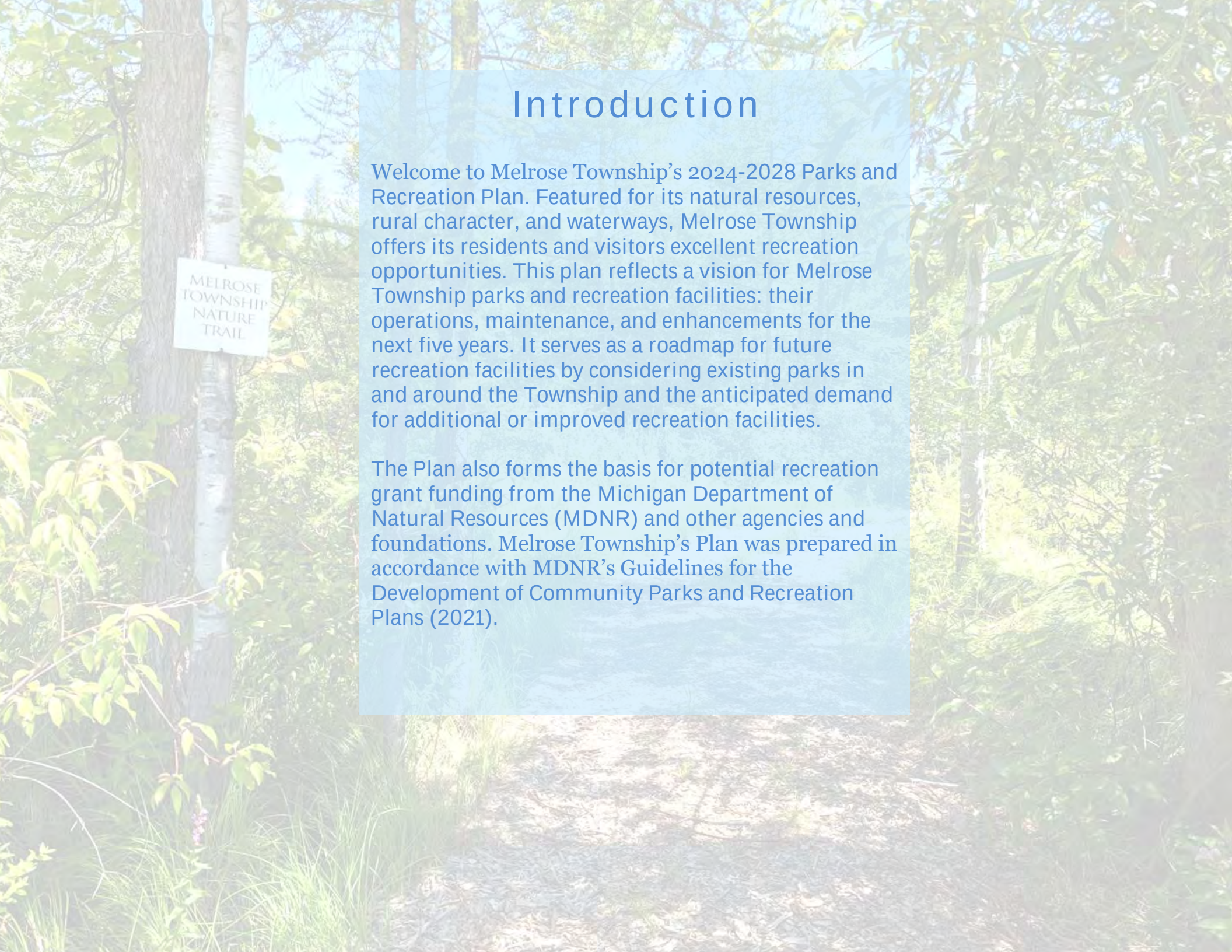
Chapter 1: Goals and Action Program

Chapter 2: Recreation Inventory

Chapter 3: Public Input and Planning Process

Chapter 4: Community Description

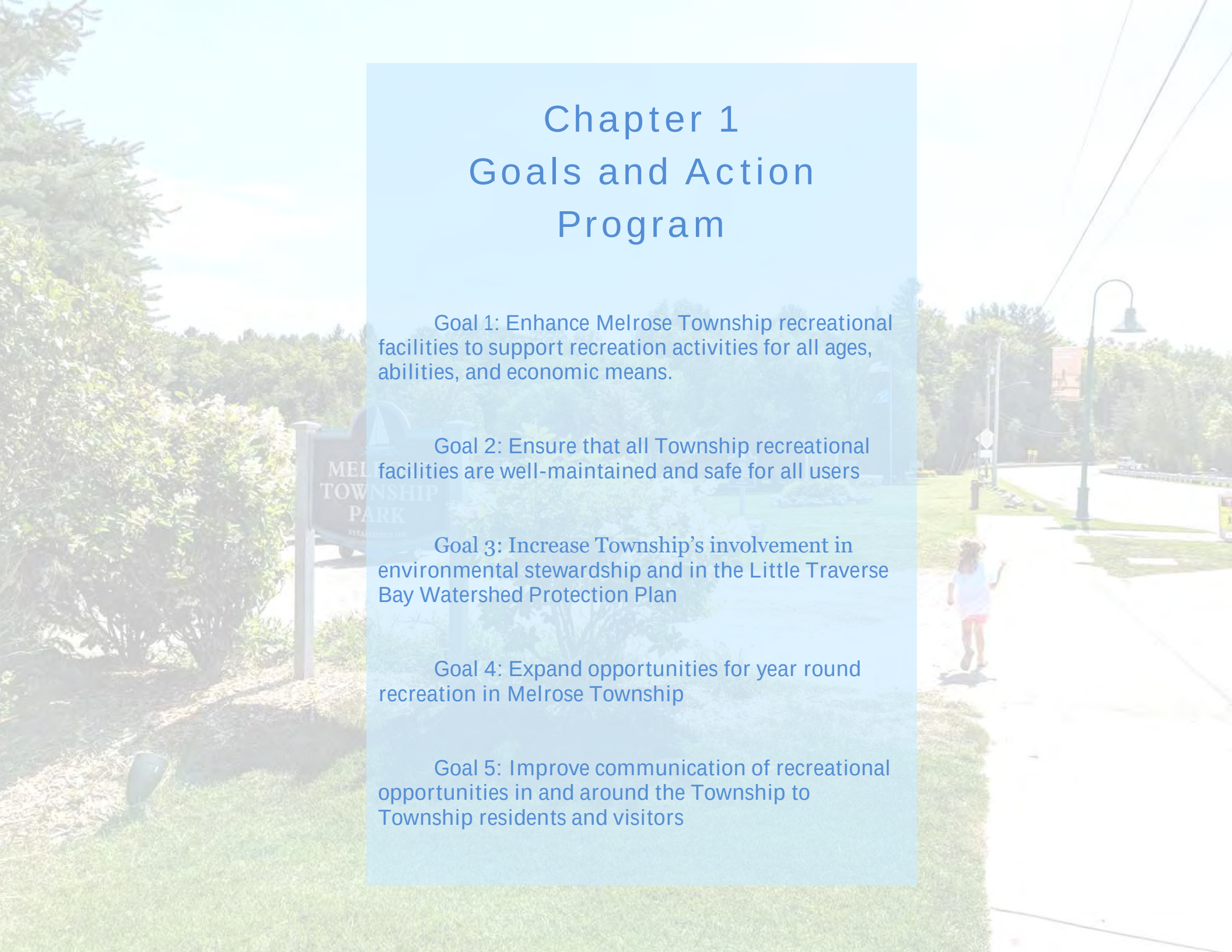
Chapter 5: Administrative Structure

A photograph of a forest path with a sign on a tree. The sign reads "MELROSE TOWNSHIP NATURE TRAIL". The path is dirt and leads into a wooded area with many trees and green foliage. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent blue box.

# Introduction

Welcome to Melrose Township's 2024-2028 Parks and Recreation Plan. Featured for its natural resources, rural character, and waterways, Melrose Township offers its residents and visitors excellent recreation opportunities. This plan reflects a vision for Melrose Township parks and recreation facilities: their operations, maintenance, and enhancements for the next five years. It serves as a roadmap for future recreation facilities by considering existing parks in and around the Township and the anticipated demand for additional or improved recreation facilities.

The Plan also forms the basis for potential recreation grant funding from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and other agencies and foundations. Melrose Township's Plan was prepared in accordance with MDNR's Guidelines for the Development of Community Parks and Recreation Plans (2021).

The background image shows a park setting. On the left, there is a large green bush and a sign that reads "MELROSE TOWNSHIP PARK" with "ESTABLISHED 1961" below it. A child in a white shirt and pink shorts is running on a paved path on the right. In the background, there are trees, a street lamp, and a building.

# Chapter 1

## Goals and Action Program

Goal 1: Enhance Melrose Township recreational facilities to support recreation activities for all ages, abilities, and economic means.

Goal 2: Ensure that all Township recreational facilities are well-maintained and safe for all users

Goal 3: Increase Township's involvement in environmental stewardship and in the Little Traverse Bay Watershed Protection Plan

Goal 4: Expand opportunities for year round recreation in Melrose Township

Goal 5: Improve communication of recreational opportunities in and around the Township to Township residents and visitors

**Goal 1: Enhance Melrose Township recreational facilities to support recreation activities for all ages, abilities, and economic means.**

**Objective 1: Enhance existing Melrose Township recreation facilities**

**Potential Actions:**

1. Provide a variety of passive and active recreational spaces for all people to enjoy
2. Incorporate universal design standards when developing or renovating park facilities
3. Include multi-generational amenities to allow people of all ages to participate

**Objective 2: Expand access to recreation through strategic improvements**

**Potential Actions:**

1. Create ADA compliant paths throughout Melrose Township Park with fishing and paddling access points to the Bear River and Walloon Lake.
2. Build fishing and paddling access points on Bear River downriver
3. Create trail and pathway connections to neighboring communities
4. Create donation program for benches and other recreation equipment

**Objective 3: Partner with surrounding communities and County, State, and private recreation providers to expand recreation opportunities**

**Potential Actions:**

1. Explore non-motorized trail connection with Boyne Valley Township
2. Explore snowmobile trail connections opportunities
3. Create Walloon Lake non-motorized trail system
4. Partner with neighboring communities, local land conservancies, and recreational groups to identify strategic areas for acquisition.
5. Research potential grant sources for acquisition.

**Goal 2: Ensure that all Township recreational facilities are well-maintained and safe for all users**

**Objective 1: Operate regular maintenance program and fix or replace equipment as needed**

**Potential Actions**

1. Invest in improving facilities and amenities to provide a clean and safe place for people to recreate
2. Replace or repair amenities that are outdated and unsafe
3. Develop monthly and yearly schedule for maintenance.
4. Keep a log of ongoing maintenance
5. Spotlight water quality reports by the Health Department of Northwest Michigan (HDNW)

**Objective 2: Consider the maintenance cost and time of each project or acquisition prior to approving.**

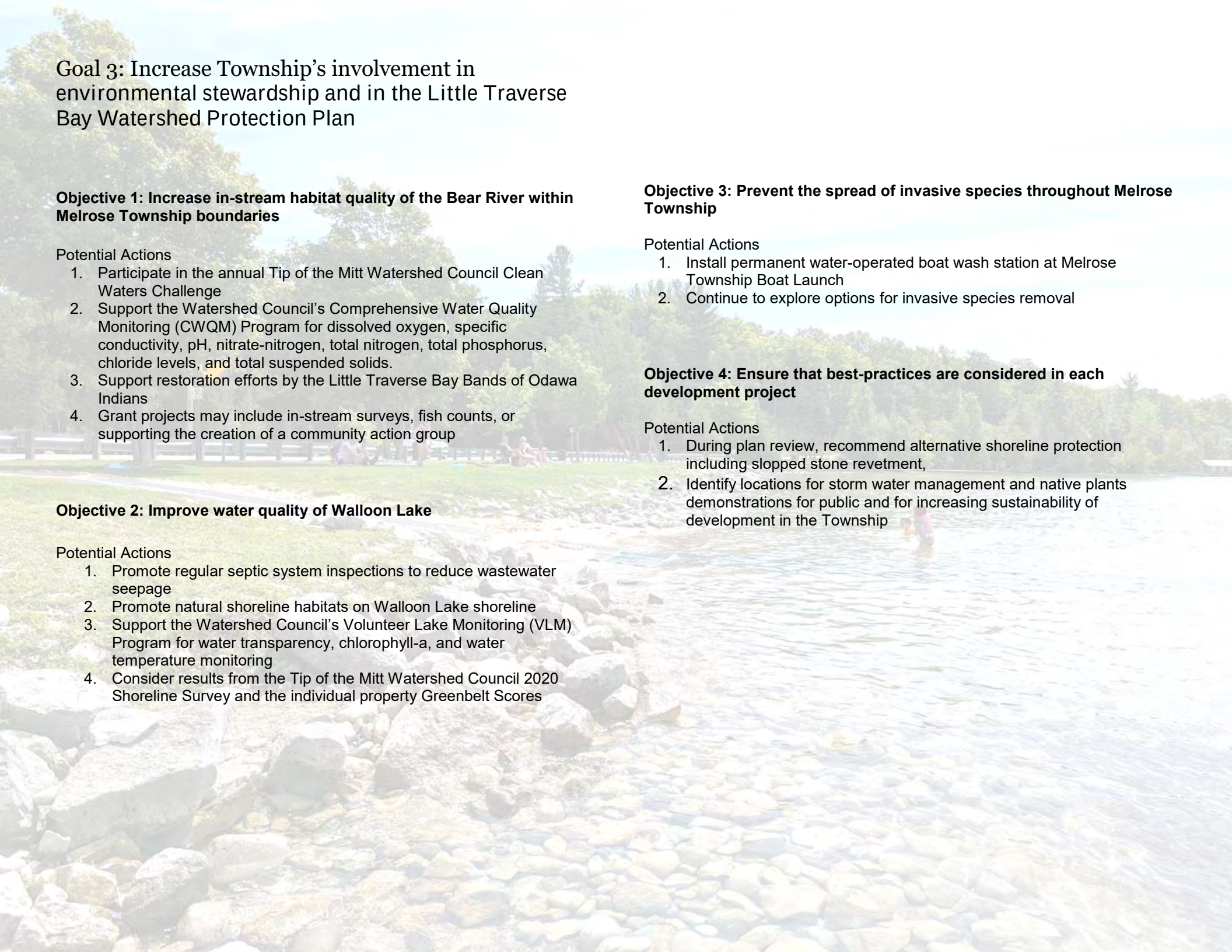
**Potential Actions**

1. Set up standard format for presenting new projects or acquisitions that include project life span and replacement costs.
2. Require all projects to include annual maintenance costs in proposal.
3. Expand no-mow areas, plant native no or low maintenance perennial gardens, and/or install low maintenance activity equipment

**Objective 3: Seek additional funding for maintenance and improvements.**

**Potential Actions**

1. Develop list of volunteer opportunities and advertise to local organizations.
2. Reach out to local individuals, foundations and businesses to develop long term sponsorship opportunities.
3. Apply for grant funding for facilities improvements and/or invasive species management
4. Partner with lake association, watershed council, conservation district, and other like organizations to manage natural areas



## Goal 3: Increase Township's involvement in environmental stewardship and in the Little Traverse Bay Watershed Protection Plan

### Objective 1: Increase in-stream habitat quality of the Bear River within Melrose Township boundaries

#### Potential Actions

1. Participate in the annual Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council Clean Waters Challenge
2. Support the Watershed Council's Comprehensive Water Quality Monitoring (CWQM) Program for dissolved oxygen, specific conductivity, pH, nitrate-nitrogen, total nitrogen, total phosphorus, chloride levels, and total suspended solids.
3. Support restoration efforts by the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians
4. Grant projects may include in-stream surveys, fish counts, or supporting the creation of a community action group

### Objective 2: Improve water quality of Walloon Lake

#### Potential Actions

1. Promote regular septic system inspections to reduce wastewater seepage
2. Promote natural shoreline habitats on Walloon Lake shoreline
3. Support the Watershed Council's Volunteer Lake Monitoring (VLM) Program for water transparency, chlorophyll-a, and water temperature monitoring
4. Consider results from the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council 2020 Shoreline Survey and the individual property Greenbelt Scores

### Objective 3: Prevent the spread of invasive species throughout Melrose Township

#### Potential Actions

1. Install permanent water-operated boat wash station at Melrose Township Boat Launch
2. Continue to explore options for invasive species removal

### Objective 4: Ensure that best-practices are considered in each development project

#### Potential Actions

1. During plan review, recommend alternative shoreline protection including sloped stone revetment,
2. Identify locations for storm water management and native plants demonstrations for public and for increasing sustainability of development in the Township

## Goal 4: Expand opportunities for year round recreation in Melrose Township

### **Objective 1: Develop winter recreation activities utilizing existing Township facilities and properties.**

#### Potential Actions

1. Explore expansion of designated snowmobile trails and connections to new trailheads with community partners
2. Develop a plan for making existing and future trail systems multi-season to allow for biking, walking, hiking, snow shoeing, cross country skiing and paddling
3. Look for ways to utilize existing Township facilities and properties (examples could include Spring Flower Walk, Fall Color Tours, Winter Bonfires, etc.)

### **Objective 2: Increase public outreach and knowledge of existing year-round opportunities**

#### Potential Actions

1. Explore partnerships with local businesses that would include cross-promotion, sponsorship, etc.
2. Develop a calendar of year-round activities and share on Township website and in public locations

## Goal 5: Improve communication of recreational opportunities in and around the Township to Township residents and visitors

### **Objective 1: Improve and enhance communication tools used to educate and engage citizens and visitors about Township recreation resources and opportunities**

#### Potential Actions

1. Update website regularly
2. Post information in a timely manner in commonly known locations
3. Ensure volunteer opportunities are clearly listed online and regularly communicated to citizens and visitors

### **Objective 2: Increase local involvement in Parks and Recreation committee work.**

#### Potential Actions

1. Advertise need of committee to community (landscaping, planning, fund raising, etc)
2. Publically recognize members and volunteers and reach out to other volunteer groups.

# Previous Plan Activity Status

The Townships' 2018-2022 Parks and Recreation Plan identified a number of actions to be undertaken during the planning years. Below is a summary of the actions identified in the previous plan and the status of each.

| Recreation Site                        | Year      | Activity                                                                     | Status                                                                |
|----------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Melrose Township Park</b>           | 2017-2021 | Develop new/Maintain existing amenities                                      | On going; Restroom renovation complete                                |
|                                        | 2018-2019 | ADA Park and Beach Access Development - Planning                             | Complete; Mobi-mat and pavers added                                   |
|                                        | 2018      | Pickle Ball Court Upgrades                                                   | Complete                                                              |
|                                        | 2020-2021 | Storm water management solutions                                             | Complete                                                              |
| <b>Melrose Township Boat Launch</b>    | 2018      | Accessible Restroom Signage                                                  | Complete                                                              |
|                                        | 2019-2021 | Collaborate with Walloon Lake Association - Mobile Boat Wash                 | Complete                                                              |
| <b>Walloon Lake Village</b>            | 2018      | Submit for DNR Natural Resources Grant to purchase Village Green and Parking | Complete; Grant Denied                                                |
|                                        | 2019      | Purchase Village Green and Parking                                           | No action; On hold                                                    |
| <b>Bear River</b>                      | 2018      | Bear River Kayak/Canoe Access and Site - Design Work                         | No action; Included in current planning activities                    |
|                                        | 2019      | Access Site - Development                                                    |                                                                       |
|                                        | 2020      | Fish Habitat Improvement                                                     |                                                                       |
|                                        | 2021      | Maintain facilities                                                          |                                                                       |
| <b>US 131 Township Drainfield Site</b> | 2018      | Plan for trail connections, bridge, boardwalks                               | No action; Included in current planning activities                    |
|                                        | 2019      | Begin trail connections, boardwalk, bridge                                   |                                                                       |
|                                        | 2020      | Boardwalk, Bridge                                                            |                                                                       |
| <b>Other Township Properties</b>       | 2018      | Explore Snow Mobile Trailhead at Boat Launch Parking Lot                     | No action; Exploring alternative snowmobile trail opportunities       |
|                                        | 2019      | Explore Dog Park                                                             | No action; No longer a priority                                       |
|                                        | 2020      | Explore Mountain Bike trails                                                 | Not feasible; Exploring alternative mountain bike trail opportunities |

# Action Program

Based on community feedback and discussion with local officials, the Township has identified the following activities to be undertaken at Melrose Township parks and recreation areas. Activities are anticipated to be completed in the present year (2023) and throughout the planning years (2024-2028). The Township is considered the lead agency for implementation of all activities. Costs associated with each activity may vary depending on market conditions. All activities may be potentially funded by the Charlevoix County recreation millage, General Fund, DDA, DNR Grants, and partnerships with other stakeholder organizations.

| Recreation Site                     |                                                                                                                                                        | Year |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                              |                                     | Estimated Costs |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Melrose Township Park               |                                                                                                                                                        | 2023 | 2024                                                                                                                        | 2025                                                                                                                                  | 2026                                                                                                                                                                  | 2027                                                                                                                                                         | 2028                                |                 |
| Beach area                          |                                                                                                                                                        |      | Install new signage                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand beach sand area</li> <li>Create ADA paths</li> </ul>                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Install covered picnic shelter</li> <li>Install water filling station</li> <li>Install shower</li> </ul>                       |                                                                                                                                                              |                                     | \$ 300,000      |
| Playground / Ball Courts / Gazebo   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New picnic tables</li> <li>Improve gazebo</li> <li>Resurface pickleball court, new nets, new fencing</li> </ul> |      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sidewalks and paths to restrooms</li> <li>Conduct tree assessment</li> </ul>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Install ADA accessible playground and surface</li> <li>Tree removal and replacement</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Install play equipment suitable for older children</li> <li>Install water filling station</li> <li>Tree replacement</li> </ul> | Add second pickleball court                                                                                                                                  | Install new picnic areas and grills | \$ 225,000      |
| Nature Trails / Bear River          |                                                                                                                                                        |      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nature trail boardwalk</li> <li>Install native plantings and rain gardens</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Install water filling station</li> <li>Install plant identifier markers</li> </ul>             |                                                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Install Bear River ADA Accessible kayak launch</li> <li>Install mile marker signs on Bear River Watertrail</li> </ul> |                                     | \$ 80,000.00    |
| <b>Melrose Township Boat Launch</b> | Install air operated boat wash station                                                                                                                 |      |                                                                                                                             | Install water operated boat wash station                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                              |                                     | \$40,000        |
| <b>Walloon Lake Village</b>         | Add sidewalk connections to U.S. 131                                                                                                                   |      |                                                                                                                             | Add sidewalk connections to library                                                                                                   | Install doggy waste stations                                                                                                                                          | Install additional bike racks                                                                                                                                | Install water filling stations      | \$ 30,000       |
| <b>Melrose Township Hall</b>        | Install Monarch City Pollinator Gardens                                                                                                                |      |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                              |                                     | \$ 3,000        |
| <b>Other Undeveloped Properties</b> | Allow plant and naturalize drainfield, other township areas                                                                                            |      |                                                                                                                             | Install boot cleaning station at trailheads                                                                                           | Extend Nature Trail on U.S. 131 properties                                                                                                                            | Trail connection to Holms Road.                                                                                                                              | Create new snowmobile trails        | \$ 600,000      |

# Chapter 2

## Recreation Inventory

Melrose Township park and recreation facilities include the following locations:

Melrose Township Park

Melrose Township Boat Launch

Bear Hill Trail

Melrose Township Hall

Melrose Township Railroad Grade Trail

Other Undeveloped Properties

The inventory also includes other State and County public areas as well as public and private areas in Melrose Township used by Melrose Township residents.

# Evaluation Criteria

Melrose Township owns and manages four recreational facilities and a number of undeveloped properties throughout the township. The five recreational facilities are: Melrose Township Park, the Melrose Township Boat Launch, the Bear Hill Trail, the Melrose Township Hall, and the Melrose Township Railroad Grade Trail. An inventory of each site is detailed in the following section. The inventory contains information for each of Melrose Township's recreation facilities including:

- Park name
- Size in acres or length of linear park feet
- A description of the general purpose or use of each park
- The park's primary service area with a walkability map where appropriate
- The type and number of recreation and support facilities, including size, quality, and age or condition of each facility.
- An accessibility assessment

Map 2.1: Recreation Inventory provides the location of all township, state, and private recreation areas within Melrose Township.

The methods of conducting the inventory included site visits to parks and evaluation of available amenities, discussions with Township officials and residents regarding the state of parks, and a comparison to state and national standards. This combination of efforts allowed for a complete inventory of Township-owned recreation facilities and their amenities. This plan encompasses 37.2 acres of parks, or 0.06 square miles of land. There are an additional 103.2 acres, or 0.16 square miles, of undeveloped properties. The total parkland (140.4 acres) makes up .63% of the total area of the township.

According to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), the typical park and recreation agency offers one park for every 2,287 residents served, with 10.8 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. In Melrose Township there are 23.38 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.

| <b>Township Parks &amp; Facilities</b>                                       | <b>Acreage</b> | <b>Designation</b>                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Melrose Township Park<br>Playground<br>Riverwalk and Trail<br>Swimming Beach | 13.7           | Neighborhood Park                 |
| Melrose Township Boat Launch and Parking                                     | 0.8            | Special Use Park                  |
| Melrose Township Bear Hill Trail                                             | 19.9           | Non-motorized Trail /<br>Greenway |
| Melrose Township Hall and Fire Station                                       | 0.5            | Special Use Park                  |
| Melrose Township Railroad Grade Trail                                        | 2.3            | Non-motorized Trail /<br>Greenway |
| <u>Subtotal</u>                                                              | <u>37.2</u>    |                                   |
| <b>Undeveloped Land &amp; Trails<br/>(North to South)</b>                    | <b>Acreage</b> | <b>Designation</b>                |
| East of US 131 @ State St.                                                   | 22.4           | Undeveloped                       |
| West of US 131 @ Railroad Corridor                                           | 8              | Undeveloped                       |
| Across US 131 (north)                                                        | 18.6           | Undeveloped                       |
| Across US 131 (south)                                                        | 10.7           | Undeveloped                       |
| West of US 131 (south)                                                       | 4.8            | Undeveloped                       |
| East of US 131 @ Holms Rd.                                                   | 38.7           | Undeveloped                       |
| <u>Subtotal</u>                                                              | <u>103.2</u>   |                                   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                                                 | <b>140.4</b>   |                                   |

## Accessibility Assessment

Melrose Township has evaluated the accessibility of existing recreational facilities and noted physical barriers or potential barriers to handicapped persons. To mitigate the existing barriers all improvements to existing facilities and new construction will incorporate barrier-free design and meet applicable code standards. Networks Northwest Community Planners compared each facility to the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design and gave each facility a ranking from 1-5. Melrose Townships will create more accessible facilities with on-going improvements. Previous improvements include construction of barrier free restrooms at Melrose Township Park and the parking lot at the Melrose Township Boat Launch.

| DNR Accessibility Grading System for Parks and Recreation Facilities |                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Accessibility Grade                                                  | Definition                                                             |
| 1                                                                    | None of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines                   |
| 2                                                                    | Some facilities meet accessibility guidelines                          |
| 3                                                                    | Most facilities meet accessibility guidelines                          |
| 4                                                                    | The entire park meets accessibility guidelines                         |
| 5                                                                    | The entire park was developed using the principles of universal design |

## Grant Funded Projects

Melrose Township has received grant funding from the State of Michigan for one park project: the Melrose Township Boat Launch. Funding was received from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment and the Michigan State Waterways Commission. The Boat Launch site is open to the public and no conversions exist at the site.



# Melrose Township Park

Melrose Township Park is a neighborhood park and the main recreation area for the Melrose Township community. The park offers a variety of recreation amenities including, both active and passive facilities. The park is open to the public and free to use. The park is a total of 13.7 acres and is made up of three distinct areas:

- The beach and swimming area west of M-75 on Walloon Lake
- The playground and ball courts in the center (east of M-75)
- The nature trails and river walk on the Bear River farther east

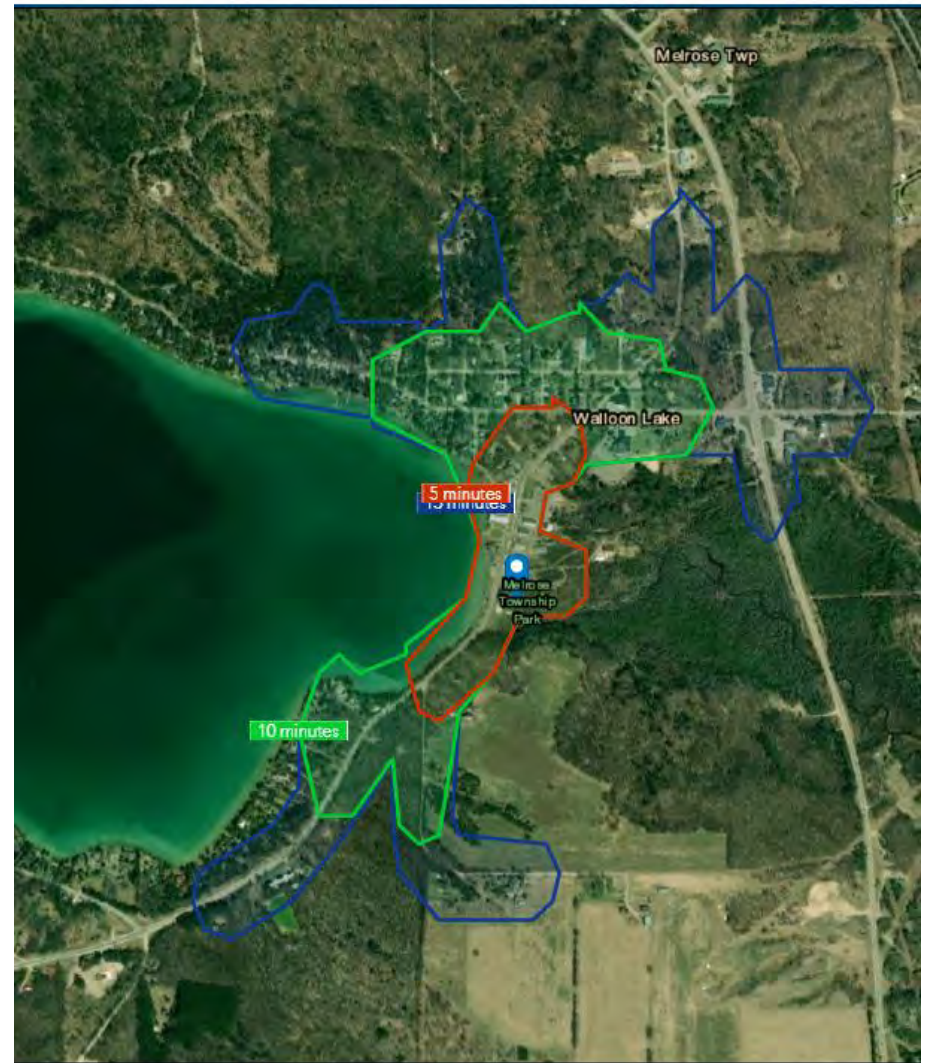


Melrose Township Park is located on M-75 just south of the Walloon Lake Village. Much of the central commercial area is within a five minute walk of the park (shown in red) and most all of neighborhood surrounding the village including the Crooked Tree District Library are located within a ten minute walk of the park (shown in green). The blue line indicates a 15 minute walk where areas along North Shore Dr., east past U.S. 131, and residential areas to the south are walkable.

The park is connected to the commercial area to the north by a sidewalk. In 2023, the sidewalk will connect South Shore Dr. east to U.S. 131. U.S. 131 is a state highway connecting to Petoskey in the north and Cadillac, Grand Rapids, and Kalamazoo in the south.

| Park & Recreation Facilities Evaluation |                         |                |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| Type                                    | Quantity                | Condition      |
| Beach                                   | 1                       | Good           |
| Water access mat                        | 1                       | Good           |
| Benches                                 | 12                      | Acceptable     |
| Picnic tables                           | 11                      | Acceptable     |
| Barbeque grills                         | 9                       | Acceptable     |
| Stone grills                            | 2                       | Poor           |
| Drinking fountain                       | 1                       | Poor           |
| Trash receptacles                       | 12                      | Excellent      |
| Restroom building                       | 1                       | Good           |
| Pavilion with Picnic Tables and         | 1                       | Good           |
| Trash Receptacles                       | (7 / 3)                 | Good           |
| Bike racks                              | 2                       | Good           |
| Basketball court                        | 1                       | Excellent      |
| Volleyball pit                          | 1                       | Poor (no net)  |
| Horseshoe pit                           | 1 set                   | Good           |
| Pickleball court                        | 1                       | Excellent      |
| Play equipment (1-3 years old)          | 1                       | Acceptable     |
| Play equipment (4-10 years old)         | 1                       | Good           |
| Swings                                  | 4                       | Good           |
| Tire swing                              | 2                       | Acceptable     |
| Slide                                   | 1                       | Good           |
| Climbing bars                           | 1                       | Good           |
| Merry-go-round                          | 1                       | Good           |
| Rocking seats                           | 3                       | Acceptable     |
| Sand digger                             | 1                       | Good           |
| Ball toss                               | 1                       | Poor (no ball) |
| Kayak drop                              | Bear River - Unimproved |                |

## Walk Times from/to Melrose Township Park



**\*Note that delineated walk-time boundaries are a requirement within DNR Park and Recreation Guidelines. Boundaries don't dictate or display future trail routes, sidewalks or other pedestrian facilities. They simply provide an average distance for walk times from the Township Park.**

## The Swimming Beach

The Melrose Township Park swimming beach is a water access area on the southeast side of Walloon Lake that runs parallel to M-75. The shoreline is approximately 510 linear feet from the northernmost property line to the waters edge of the dam at the Bear River. The entire swimming beach area including the grass area is approximately 19,512 square feet. The northern portion of the beach is sand, followed by a grassy area with shade trees. The shoreline is sand in the northern part and rocky sand on the shoreline to the south. The swimming beach at Melrose Township Park is one of only a few public access swimming areas on Walloon Lake. The majority of the Walloon Lake shoreline is developed for residential use or protected open space. Like the larger park, the swimming area is free to use and is an excellent amenity to the entire community.

Picnic benches and shade trees are dotted along the rest area. The swimming area is roped off and marked with buoys to signal to boaters in the area. It does not have a lifeguard and the water is swim at your own risk. The bathrooms are located across M-75 in the main part of Melrose Township Park. Parking is located to the east across M-75. Pedestrian crossing signage indicates the crosswalk to motorists. When first entering the beach area the ground is sand. In recent years, the Township has added pavers across the sand area and a Mobi- water mat to improve accessibility. However, there are no accessible benches, picnic tables, or other paths to allow access through the grassy area and the ground is uneven. These are being considered for future improvements.

Accessibility rating: 3

Canada geese and other water fowl are attracted to the grassy area and shallow waters. This causes water quality concerns. Therefore, E. coli water testing is completed regularly during the summer months by the Health Department of Northwest Michigan (HDNW). The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) water quality index determines safe water standards. Level 1 standards ensure E. coli levels meet EGLE swimming standard for full body contact with a measurement from 0-300 E. coli / 100 ml (single event). Reports available for 2022 indicate the Melrose Township Park water was tested several times in August; the highest amount the sample results reported was 8.6 / 100 ml.



## The Playground and Ball Courts

The central area of the park features a “Veterans Who Served in World War II” monument, a “Veterans Buried at Maple Hill Cemetery” monument, a Hemingway historical marker, Walloon Lake Village and park signage, men’s and women’s restroom facilities, parking, two bike racks, a gazebo, play equipment (full list below), ball courts (a full basketball court, a pickleball court, and a volleyball sand court), horseshoe pits, charcoal grills, picnic tables, benches, drinking fountain, and a green space for play or walking. No pets are permitted in the park. Benches and picnic tables are in various conditions and located throughout the park. However, there are no accessible benches, picnic tables, or other paths to allow access through the grassy area and the ground is uneven. These are being considered for future improvements. Barbeque charcoal grills and trash receptacles are also located throughout. There is only one drinking fountain in Melrose Township Park located at the World War II memorial near M-75 and the restroom building. However, it is not accessible. Mature shade trees dot the grounds, however many are nearing the end of their lifespan and will need replacement.

The playground equipment includes:

- Play equipment for young children (1-3 years)
- Play equipment for older children (4-10 years)
- Swings (two regular and two infant/toddler)
- Two tire swings
- One stand-alone slide
- Climbing bars
- Merry-go-round
- Ball toss
- Bounce seats
- Sand digger

The entrance drives and parking areas are gravel. However, because of the level topography, the area is basically wheel chair accessible. Handicap-parking spaces are indicated by signs. ADA compliant restrooms were built in 2020.

Accessibility rating: 2





## Nature Trails and Riverwalk

The unimproved, natural area in the eastern third of Melrose Township Park is primarily suited to passive recreation. The natural area has terrestrial plant and animal species as well as aquatic species where the Bear River flows on the southern property line. A trail path has been cleared for much of the grounds, however, the path is unimproved, narrow in some areas. Fallen trees or debris crossing the path are regularly removed by township staff. This area is not fully accessible. The nature trail has approximately 1,600 linear feet of cleared pathway.

Accessibility rating: 1

The Township has plans to create a boardwalk or other improved path that will create an accessible nature trail.

## Bear River Water-trail

The Bear River and its adjoining communities have prepared the Bear River Water Trail Plan for improved recreation, education, and stewardship. The goal of the plan is implementation of the water trail including environmentally friendly, inclusive access sites, signs, clear information for users, and promotion of the trail, streambank erosion improvements, and educational opportunities. Melrose Township is a participating jurisdiction and has opportunities to create access points along the river. There is currently an unimproved access point at Melrose Township Park near the dam. This location is less than ideal as it is across the park from the parking area where paddlers have to carry their boat to the drop in point. An improved and accessible kayak launch near existing parking or with parking nearby is ideal. Access points in Melrose Township would become part of a network of launch sites on the Bear River Watertrail. To the north, Bear Creek Township and the City of Petoskey in Emmet County, are considering improve launch sites in their respective communities. The State of Michigan has participated in discussions for a launch site on State-owned property along the Bear River.

Accessibility rating: 1

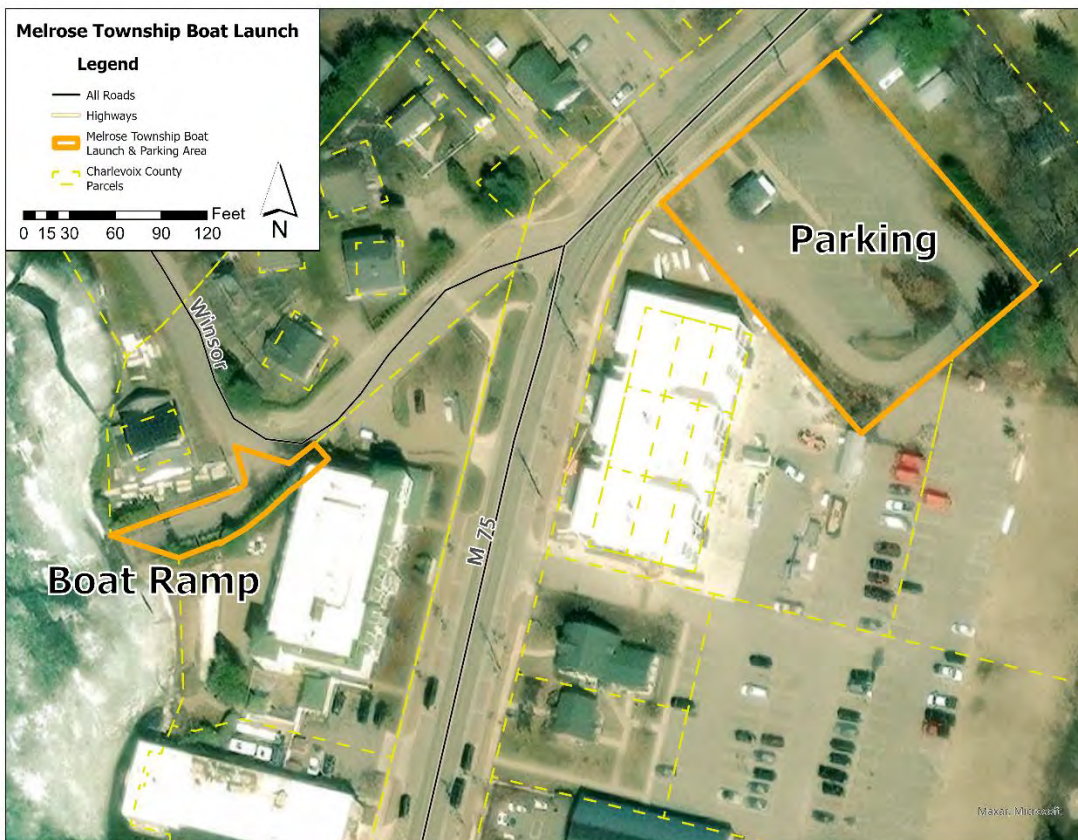
Ideally, the Township would install an accessible kayak/canoe launch with direct access to the improved boardwalk that will create an accessible water trail.



# Melrose Township Boat Launch

The Melrose Township Boat Launch is a special use park and the only public access point to Walloon Lake in Melrose Township. The launch site is located at the southeast corner of the lake and at the Windsor Road-end behind Hotel Walloon. Boat launch improvements were completed in 2011 and 2020. Melrose Township received grant funding from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment and the Michigan State Waterways Commission to improve the site. The launch can easily accommodate boats up to 20' in length and has a ramp and dock. Vehicle and trailer parking is located a short distance to the northeast on S. Shore Drive. The surface parking lot was completed in 2011 to accommodate up to 16 vehicles with trailers. The facility also has an accessible rest room and landscaping throughout. The Township acquired an air-operated boat wash station in 2023 to clean water craft entering and exiting the lake in order to prevent the spread of invasive species.

Accessibility rating: 3





# Bear Hill Trail

A portion of the North Shore Nature Area and Bear Hill Trail are located on a 19.9 acre undeveloped parcel of Township land on the northwest side of the township. North Shore Dr. traverses the northern part of the property. The property is characterized as being on upland soils and rolling hills/slopes. The Bear Hill Trail through the property is approximately 2,000 linear feet and is intended for non-motorized, pedestrian use. The trailhead and roadside parking is located on North Shore Dr. The property's location and trail connection create a greenway park with the adjacent Walloon Lake Trust and Conservancy property to the south.

Accessibility rating: 1

The Township will consider installing an improved path that will create an accessible nature trail.



# Melrose Township Hall & Fire Station

The Township Hall is open year-round and serves the dual purpose of providing the Township's offices and training room for the Township Volunteer Fire Department. All Township meetings are held in the Hall as well. A garage housing the Township's firefighting apparatus is attached to the hall. A paved parking area is present along the west side of the building. The Township Hall offers public meeting space, kitchen facility, and accessible public restrooms. Facilities may be rented by the public by signing up with Township staff. The building provides space to operate indoor or winter recreation programs. The building is located at 4289 M-75 N., just west of U.S. 131. The property is approximately .5 acres.

Accessibility rating: 5

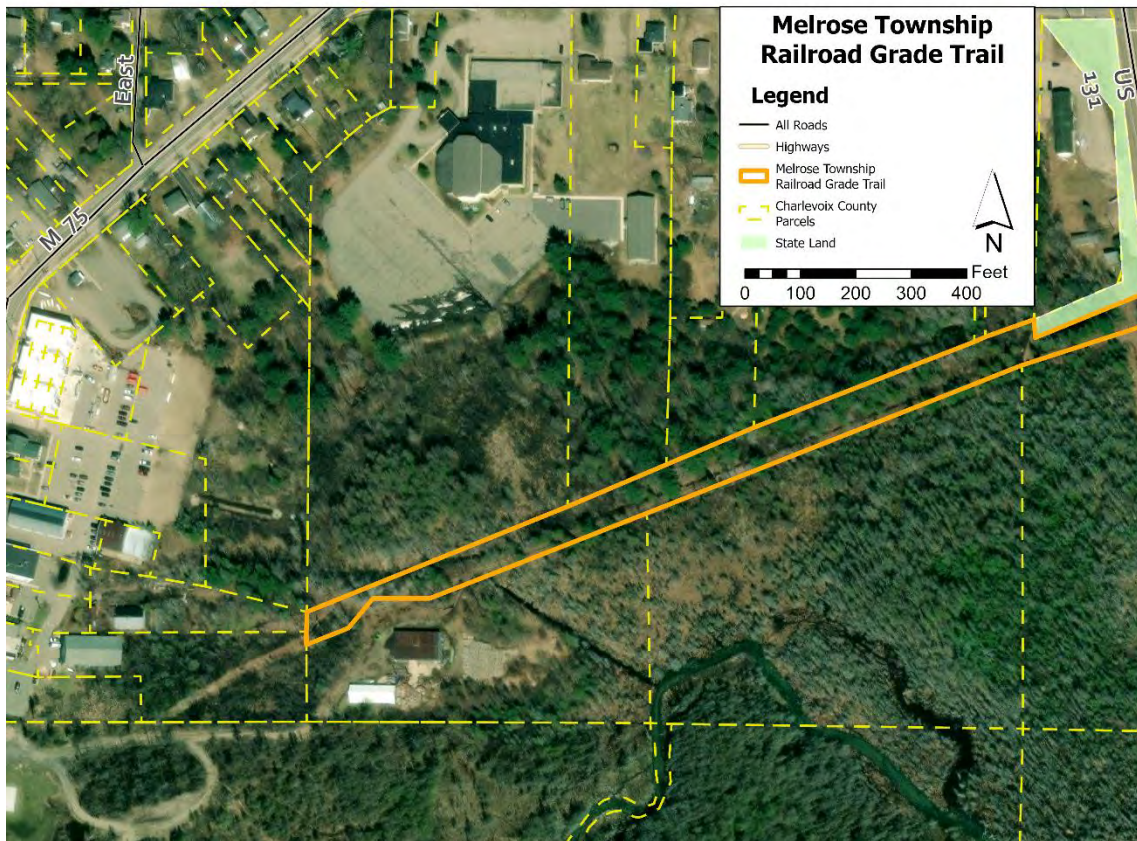


# Melrose Township Railroad Grade Trail

The a portion of railroad corridor west of U.S. 131 passes through the interior of Walloon Lake Village just north of Melrose Township Park. The railroad grade is an unimproved trail connected to Melrose Township Park nature trails via an easement. The railroad corridor also accesses U.S. 131 and businesses on South Shore Drive. The Melrose Township Park nature trails and railroad corridor may connect to future trails on undeveloped properties. The corridor is a 2.3 acre parcel.

Accessibility rating: 1

The Township will consider installing an improved path that will create an accessible nature trail.



# Other Undeveloped Properties

The Township owns several properties that are held for planned recreation opportunities or may be used for recreation in the future. The properties are listed from north to south:

- The Township owns a 22.4 acre parcel east of U.S. 131, south of Clarion Rd. The terrain is hilly and the property was intended to become a mountain bike trail; however the size of the property is not suitable for that activity.
- The Township owns a set of properties located east of Melrose Township Park on the Bear River. The Township owns four parcels (a total of 42.1 acres) that currently sit in their natural state. The properties are directly north of a parcel owned by Boyne City Public Schools. These parcels may support future hiking and nature trails as well as the Bear River Water-trail.
- Farthest to the south, off of Holms Rd., is a 38.7 acre parcel. The site is surrounded on three sides by land owned by the State of Michigan. The Hay Marsh Creek runs to the west of the township property; to the north, the creek runs into the Bear River. This parcel may support future hiking and nature trails as well as the Bear River Water-trail.

## Other Recreational Sites in Melrose Township

### Crooked Tree District Library

Located at 2203 Walloon Street, the Crooked Tree District Library is walkable to the Walloon Lake Village center. The library is open to the public and hosts events throughout the year. This community resource supplies education materials for both adults and children and supports life-long learning.

### Challenge Mountain

Challenge Mountain of Walloon Hills is recreational facility designed for physically and mentally impaired people. The Mountain hosts a Winter Special Olympics on a ski hill where youth are presented with a chance to compete, demonstrate, and be recognized for their talents. The location has two rope tows designed to accommodate special needs children. Facilities also include a lodge with a kitchen, restroom area, and eating area. In the summer, horseback riding is the primary activity at the site. Considerations for future activities may include snowmobile and mountain-bike trails. The location is open to families with special needs children or those working with these children.

## Walloon Lake Country Club (Private)

The Walloon Lake Country Club is located in the northwest part of the Township encompassing an area of about 112 acres. Located on Country Club Road, this site is restricted to members and their guests. This 18 hole course is generally open from late spring to early fall. A significant number of Township residents are members. It is directly north of the Walloon Lake Trust and Conservancy's Postle Farm Preserve and Asa Wilson Preserve.

## Springbrook Hills Subdivision

The Springbrook Hills Subdivision provides a recreational opportunities for residents (and guests) of the subdivision. The attractions include a clubhouse, swimming pool, and fishing pond. Cross-country skiing is available during the winter as well.

## Springbrook Hills Golf Course

Located east of the residential area of the subdivision is an 18-hole course in both Melrose and Chandler Townships. The course is open to the public and offers amenities including a clubhouse and restaurant.

## Flywheelers Club

The Walloon Lake Flywheelers Club is a nonprofit organization that maintains and operates over 100-acres of land to showcase antique equipment and tractors and an "old fashioned way of doing things." They host an annual Flywheelers Show each summer that brings thousands of visitors to our community. They also host several other events each year, including field trips for school-aged children from across the area.

## Walloon Equestrian Center

The Equestrian Center is located on Old State Rd, and provides riding and boarding services including an indoor arena for year-round accommodation. They have riding trails on-site that connect to State of Michigan trails for long-ride opportunities. Possibly not operating anymore

## Walloon Lake Association and Conservancy Preserves

The Walloon Lake Trust and Conservancy owns and manages the following preserves in Melrose Township open to the public:

- North Shore Preserve, 53-acres of steep slopes and wooded land with a loop trail and parking area in partnership with Melrose Township.
- Postle Farm Preserve, 113-acres of open field, historic farmstead, and wooded land with 3-miles of trails, parking for 15 vehicles, and space for public events.
- Asa Wilson Preserve, 45-acres of wooded land adjacent to Postle Farm Preserve on Country Club Road
- Country Club Shores Preserve, 15-acres of wooded land close to the Walloon Lake Country Club along Country Club Road
- Cedar Valley Preserve, 50-acres of wooded land along South Arm Creek, protecting hilly woodlands, wetlands, and stream corridor. Parking for 10 vehicles and a 1.5 mile loop trail are available
- Frog Hollow Preserve, 65-acres of cedar wetlands protecting South Arm Creek. Preserve is open for hunting, but no other amenities are developed
- Other preserves open to the public but not developed include Shadow Trail Nature Area (2 preserves along Shadow Trail Rd), Hargreaves-Matthews Preserve, Freese-Sloneker Preserve and Howell-Zimmerman Preserve on South Shore Drive, and Ecker Road Preserve along M-75 North at Ecker Road.

# Public Recreation Sites in Charlevoix County

## State of Michigan Recreation Sites

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources owns over 8,000 acres of land in Melrose Township which is part of the Mackinaw State Forest. State forest lands provide excellent recreational opportunities for low impact uses including hiking, hunting, wildlife viewing, and mountain biking and camping. Currently there are no designated pathways or rustic campgrounds administered by the State of Michigan in Melrose Township. However, there are several two-track trails throughout the forest serving as undesignated pathways for hiking and mountain biking. Virtually all state forest land is accessible for camping, provided a permit is obtained from a DNR field office. The only designated pathway in Charlevoix County administered by the MDNR is the Spring Brook Pathway located in the southwest quarter of Chandler Township (approximately 2.5 miles east of Melrose Township). The pathway offers five miles of trails situated on flat to hilly terrain, for Nordic skiing, hiking, hunting and snowmobile trail.

Young State Park is located four miles east of Melrose Township, just northwest of Boyne City. The park offers 563 acres of land for modern camping, day use facilities, and year-round recreational activities. The park offers boating access to Lake Charlevoix and Lake Michigan from a launch site with a paved ramp which can accommodate most recreational watercraft. The park offers 240 campsites and is designated as a handicapped accessible facility. The day use area contains a picnic area, swimming beach, beach house, concession, and playground. Activities within the park include interpretive programs, fishing, hiking, and Nordic skiing. Young State Park will connect to the Boyne City to Charlevoix Trail, the soon to be completed non-motorized trail. The park is located on Boyne City Road in Evangeline Township.

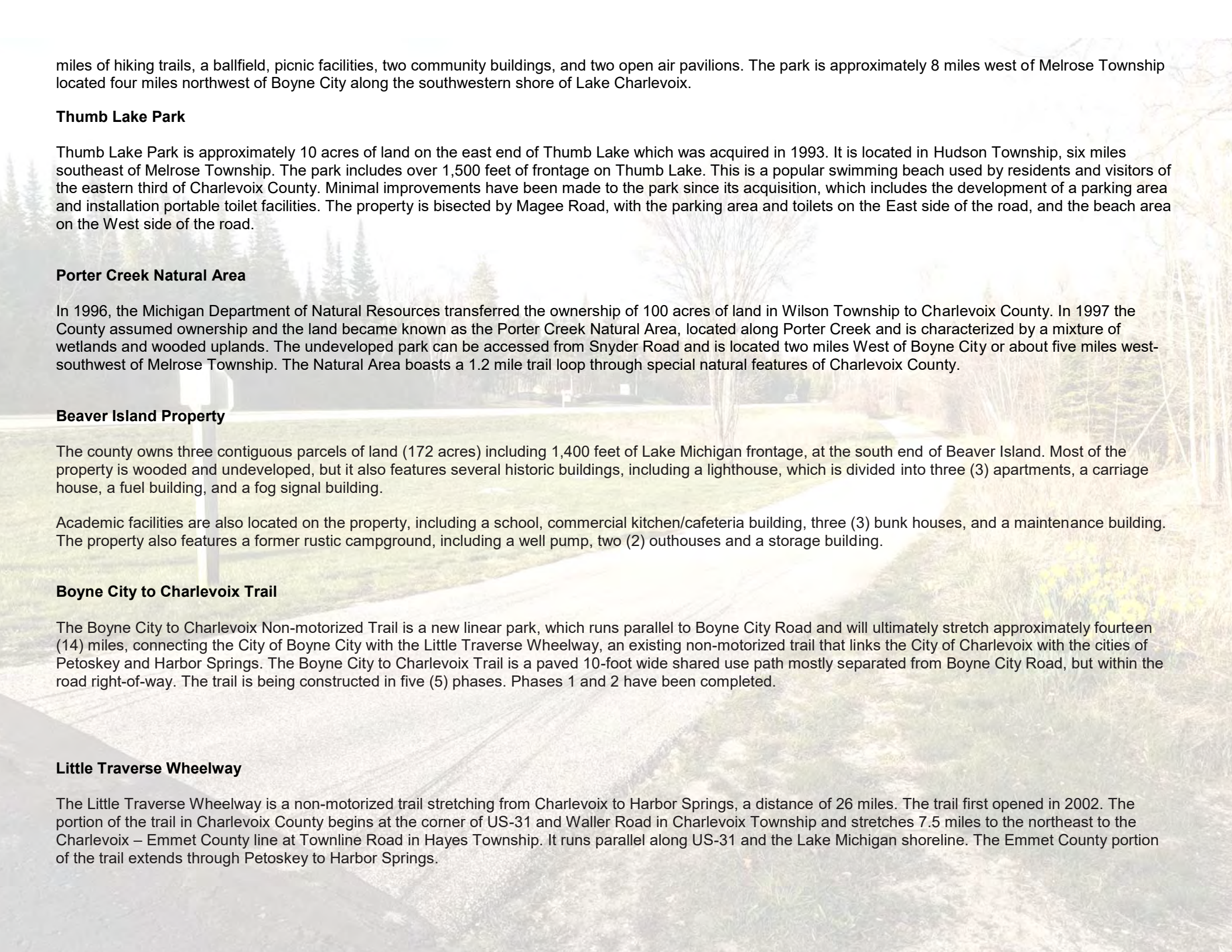
Fisherman's Island State Park is located about 20 miles west of Melrose Township and is 2 miles southwest of the City of Charlevoix. This park offers over 2,600 acres of land area featuring a large, 90 site rustic campground, scenic hiking areas, and five miles of undeveloped Lake Michigan shoreline. The park has a day use area for swimming, hiking, and fishing.

## County-owned recreational sites

The [Charlevoix County Recreation Plan](#) adopted in 2019 was consulted to review current facilities and recreation improvements available to all County residents, including Melrose Township. Charlevoix County has 520 acres of parkland which is composed of Whiting Park, Thumb Lake Park, Porter Creek Natural Area, and three parcels on Beaver Island. The county also has 14.4 miles of non-motorized trails to operate and maintain. This includes 7.5 miles of the Little Traverse Wheelway and 6.9 miles of the Boyne City to Charlevoix Trail. The County is both the owner and is responsible for the maintenance of these locations. The recreation plan was prepared by the County to serve as the local recreation plan for many communities in the County as well. The Plan acknowledges that the sites described serve more than just the local community in which the facility is located. Therefore a coordinated effort on the part of the cities, villages, townships, county, and state governments is encouraged to benefit the interests of everyone and foster cooperation between all units of government.

### Whiting Park

Whiting Park continues to experience an increase in usage during the spring, summer, and fall months. The northern 166 acres of the park was donated to the County for use as a county park, by Perry Whiting in 1923. The southern 72 acres were purchased by the county from the Butler family in 2014, with grant assistance. The park is bisected by Ferry Road. The lakeshore parcels contains 56 campsites, a swimming beach, boat launch and dock capable of handling shallow-draft boats, a toilet-shower building, and a parking area for day use. The majority of the property is located on the west side of Ferry Road and offers 7



miles of hiking trails, a ballfield, picnic facilities, two community buildings, and two open air pavilions. The park is approximately 8 miles west of Melrose Township located four miles northwest of Boyne City along the southwestern shore of Lake Charlevoix.

### **Thumb Lake Park**

Thumb Lake Park is approximately 10 acres of land on the east end of Thumb Lake which was acquired in 1993. It is located in Hudson Township, six miles southeast of Melrose Township. The park includes over 1,500 feet of frontage on Thumb Lake. This is a popular swimming beach used by residents and visitors of the eastern third of Charlevoix County. Minimal improvements have been made to the park since its acquisition, which includes the development of a parking area and installation portable toilet facilities. The property is bisected by Magee Road, with the parking area and toilets on the East side of the road, and the beach area on the West side of the road.

### **Porter Creek Natural Area**

In 1996, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources transferred the ownership of 100 acres of land in Wilson Township to Charlevoix County. In 1997 the County assumed ownership and the land became known as the Porter Creek Natural Area, located along Porter Creek and is characterized by a mixture of wetlands and wooded uplands. The undeveloped park can be accessed from Snyder Road and is located two miles West of Boyne City or about five miles west-southwest of Melrose Township. The Natural Area boasts a 1.2 mile trail loop through special natural features of Charlevoix County.

### **Beaver Island Property**

The county owns three contiguous parcels of land (172 acres) including 1,400 feet of Lake Michigan frontage, at the south end of Beaver Island. Most of the property is wooded and undeveloped, but it also features several historic buildings, including a lighthouse, which is divided into three (3) apartments, a carriage house, a fuel building, and a fog signal building.

Academic facilities are also located on the property, including a school, commercial kitchen/cafeteria building, three (3) bunk houses, and a maintenance building. The property also features a former rustic campground, including a well pump, two (2) outhouses and a storage building.

### **Boyne City to Charlevoix Trail**

The Boyne City to Charlevoix Non-motorized Trail is a new linear park, which runs parallel to Boyne City Road and will ultimately stretch approximately fourteen (14) miles, connecting the City of Boyne City with the Little Traverse Wheelway, an existing non-motorized trail that links the City of Charlevoix with the cities of Petoskey and Harbor Springs. The Boyne City to Charlevoix Trail is a paved 10-foot wide shared use path mostly separated from Boyne City Road, but within the road right-of-way. The trail is being constructed in five (5) phases. Phases 1 and 2 have been completed.

### **Little Traverse Wheelway**

The Little Traverse Wheelway is a non-motorized trail stretching from Charlevoix to Harbor Springs, a distance of 26 miles. The trail first opened in 2002. The portion of the trail in Charlevoix County begins at the corner of US-31 and Waller Road in Charlevoix Township and stretches 7.5 miles to the northeast to the Charlevoix – Emmet County line at Townline Road in Hayes Township. It runs parallel along US-31 and the Lake Michigan shoreline. The Emmet County portion of the trail extends through Petoskey to Harbor Springs.

This trail consists of a 10-foot wide asphalt surface, the Charlevoix County portion of which is 6.9 miles. It is widely used for hiking, bicycling and rollerblading during the spring, summer and fall, and, to a lesser extent, cross-country skiing in the winter. The remaining 0.6 mile of the trail in Charlevoix County is a wolmanized wood boardwalk bridging an extensive wetland area.

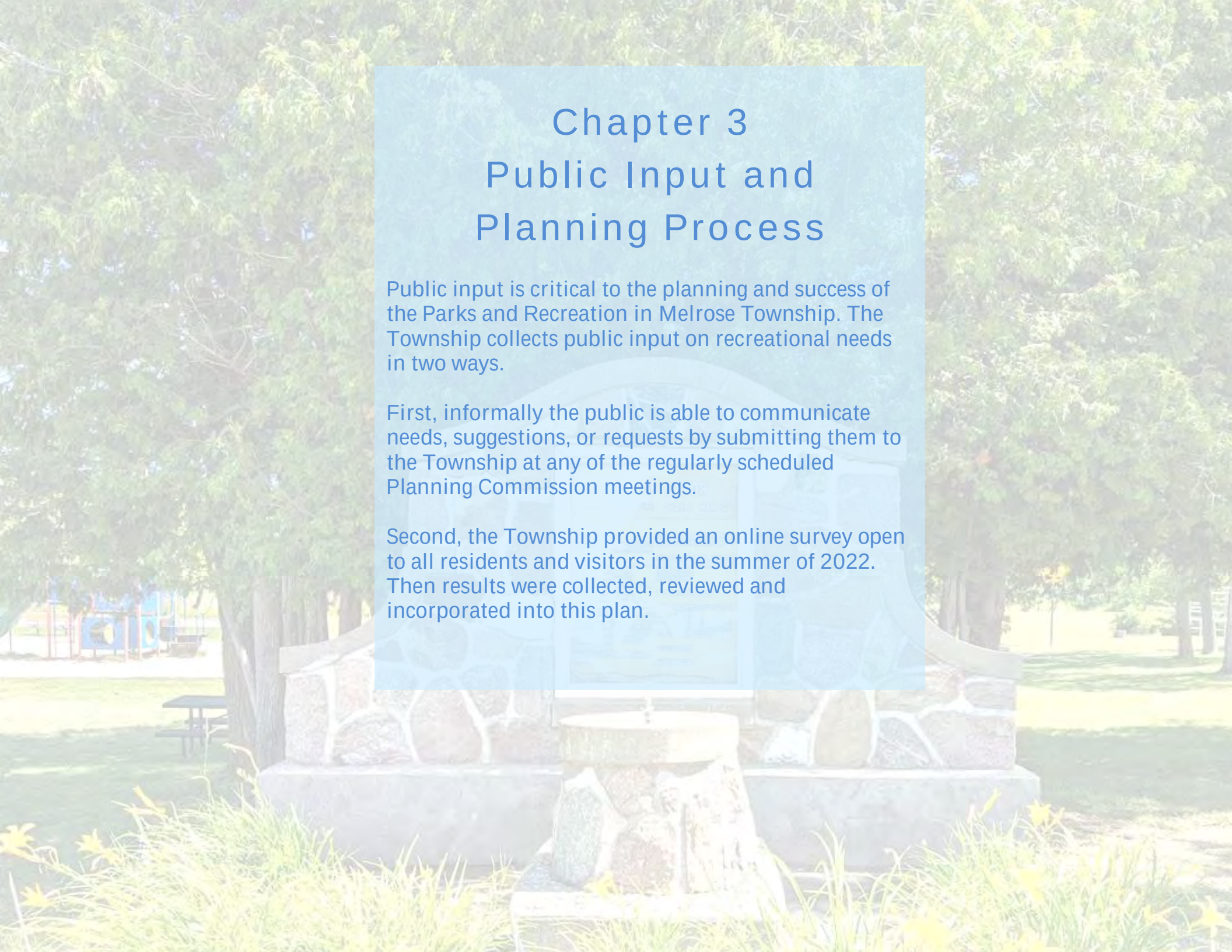
The trail is located within Michigan Department of Transportation right-of-way and is operated and maintained by the Charlevoix County.

### **Other Trails**

Snowmobiles and off-road vehicles (ORVs) are authorized to use road shoulders on County road rights-of-way, and a number of motorized trails are available on the County's public land. Trail opportunities for ORVs were recently expanded with Public Act 288 of 2016, which opens state forest roads to ORV use unless posted.

### **Other nearby recreation sites**

Each city and township within Charlevoix County has a diverse list of public park and recreation facilities. Overall, there are approximately 57,179.21 acres of state land, preserves, public and private parks and facilities located within the county. Melrose Township is adjacent to the City of Boyne City at the township's southwest corner. Melrose Township residents frequent Boyne City's parks system where water resources are the focal point. These significant water features include City land holdings providing 3,000 feet of frontage on Lake Charlevoix and the Boyne River flowing through the center of the City. The City's Sunset and Veterans Parks are in the central section of the City, along the shores of Lake Charlevoix, adjacent to the Central Business District, and the public multi-use dock in Sunset Park. The City's Municipal Marina is also located in Veterans Park. The Boyne River flows through the City's business district and empties into Lake Charlevoix at the point where Sunset and Veterans Parks meet. Avalanche Preserve is at the southern boundary of the city. This 320 acre complex will be a focus for long-term improvements in City parks.

The background of the slide is a photograph of a park. In the foreground, there is a stone fountain with water spraying upwards. Behind the fountain, there are large, leafy trees. To the left, a colorful playground with blue and red equipment is visible. The overall scene is bright and sunny, with green grass and yellow wildflowers in the foreground.

## Chapter 3

# Public Input and Planning Process

Public input is critical to the planning and success of the Parks and Recreation in Melrose Township. The Township collects public input on recreational needs in two ways.

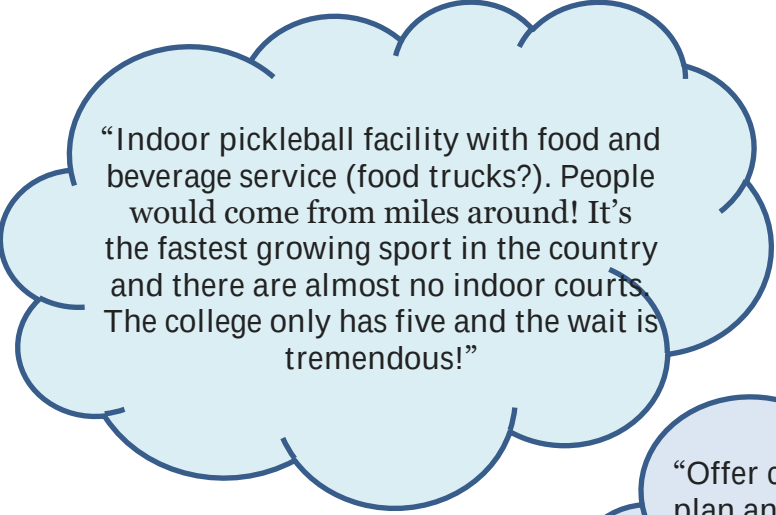
First, informally the public is able to communicate needs, suggestions, or requests by submitting them to the Township at any of the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meetings.

Second, the Township provided an online survey open to all residents and visitors in the summer of 2022. Then results were collected, reviewed and incorporated into this plan.

## Description of the Public Input Process

This five-year update of the Parks and Recreation Plan began in July 2022 with the distribution of the community survey. Notices for the survey were posted on bulletin boards, on flyers passed out during informal community discussions, and shared in the Township's newsletter. The survey was available July 2022-January 2023 and received 102 responses. The Melrose Township Planning Commission reviewed the survey results and incorporated public feedback into the update. The summary results of the survey are as follows. A complete copy of the survey results are located in Appendix A.

- 47% of responses came from full-time, year round residents
- The Melrose Township Park playground and the swimming beach tied with the most votes (15) to be the preferred recreation area or facility
- Of note, the Melrose Township Park pickleball courts received four (4) write in votes for preferred recreation area or facility
- The majority of survey responses rated parks and recreation facilities "Good" with the exception of the Crooked Tree District Library which received a majority rating of "Excellent"
- Beach/Lake Swimming was the #1 preferred recreation activity
- The Melrose Township Park playground equipment received the most recommendations for improvements. Comments included:
  - o "Several new high end children playground activities. New improvement on climbers, ropes, swings, adventure stations. Kids and grandkids need this and will certainly bring in more users and commerce."
  - o "A climbing structure would be a nice addition."
  - o "Expand playground equipment. add additional pickleball court"
- Survey responders shared their "big idea" for Melrose Township parks and recreation. Comments included:



"Indoor pickleball facility with food and beverage service (food trucks?). People would come from miles around! It's the fastest growing sport in the country and there are almost no indoor courts. The college only has five and the wait is tremendous!"

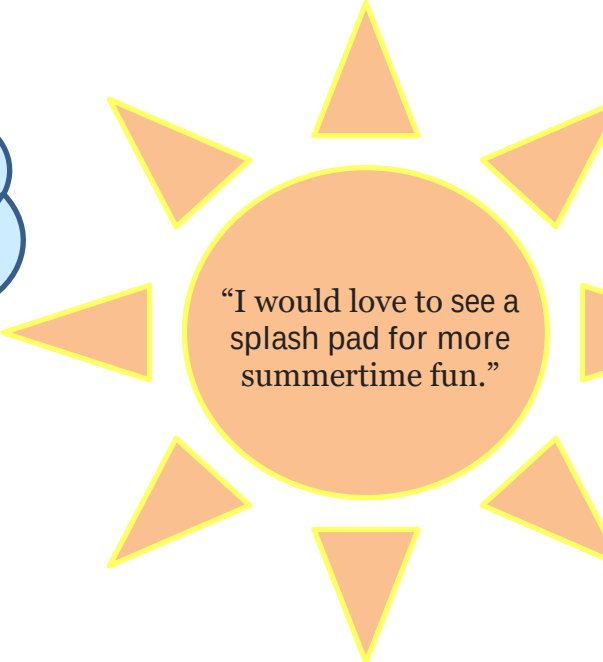


"Restore the beach, add sand to the beach, keep away the geese. The bathrooms at the park should also be remodeled."



"Offer community events-for example, plan and communicate community walks on trails, concerts in the park, etc.

Plan events for all seasons. Get the community involved."



"I would love to see a splash pad for more summertime fun."

Additionally, members of the public were provided opportunities to share input on the development of the plan throughout the planning process. The Planning Commission holds regular monthly meetings and the update of the plan was discussed at the following meetings:

- September 26, 2022
- January 23, 2023
- April 24, 2023
- May 22, 2023
- August 28, 2023

A final draft of the plan was recommended to the Township Board of Trustees by the Planning Commission. The Board reviewed the plan at the regular meeting and released the plan for public comment. The notice of the draft plan and 30-day public comment period was posted on (date) in the (newspaper). After the 30 day review period, a public hearing was held at the Melrose Township Hall Board of Trustees meeting on (date), where the Board oversaw the final adoption of the plan. The plan was approved by the Board on (date).

## Description of the Planning Process

The update of the 2024-2028 Melrose Township Parks and Recreation Plan combined several planning methods to assist with the assessment of the Township's park, recreation, open-space needs. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) was referenced for a comparison to park metrics to determine potential deficiencies in the recreation system while applying knowledge of the community when determining its recreation needs. Such metrics included a socio-economic profile, residents per park and acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, and prevalence of outdoor facilities. The planning method also included considerations for equity-based planning with a focus on community engagement, equity, and inclusion. Planning for equity ensures all people have access to programs, facilities, and public spaces in the community. The goals, objectives, potential action, and action program reflect the combined efforts of the planning methods utilized in this process.

## Chapter 4

# Community Description

Melrose Township is located in north-central Charlevoix County in the northwestern part of the Lower Peninsula. Melrose Township is surrounded by Bear Creek Township (Emmet County) to the north, Chandler Township to the east, Hudson Township to the southeast, Boyne Valley Township to the south, Wilson Township to the southwest, and the City of Boyne City and Evangeline Township to the west. Melrose Township is approximately 35 square miles in area, 32.98 square miles is land and 2.02 square miles is water. Clarion and Walloon Lake are two unincorporated communities in Melrose Township.

The natural features and vast public land in Melrose Township provide a diversity of recreational opportunities, including areas for hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, water sports, and hiking, among others.



## Social Characteristics

An important component in the recreation planning process is an understanding of the community's social and economic characteristics. This section explores current and historical population changes, age distribution, household make-up, income, education, employment, disability, and housing characteristics for Melrose Township. Where significant, township data is compared to Charlevoix County demographic data and data for surrounding Charlevoix County communities. The purpose of this section is to identify factors that could influence recreation planning decisions and to assist policy makers with these decisions.

### Population Characteristics

The Melrose Township permanent population estimate in 2021 is 1,591 people. The population grew 24.8% since 2011. Each of the comparison communities, except for Charlevoix County, grew during the ten-year timeframe. Chandler Township had the second largest growth with 13.1%, followed by Wilson Township (12.0%), Boyne Valley Township (4.2%), and City of Boyne City (1.5%). Table 2 is a review of the Melrose Township population trend for permanent residents since 1970. The township's population saw a 7.7% decrease in population in 2010; however, the population has otherwise grown steadily throughout the years. The township reached 1,000+ permanent residents in 1990.

Table 1: Charlevoix County and Comparison Communities Population Estimates, 2011 and 2021

| Municipality                                   | 2011 Estimated Population | 2021 Estimated Population | Numeric Change | Percent Change |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Charlevoix County                              | 26,149                    | 26,109                    | -40            | -0.15          |
| City of Boyne City                             | 3,763                     | 3,819                     | 56             | 1.5            |
| Boyne Valley Township                          | 1,323                     | 1,379                     | 56             | 4.2            |
| Chandler Township                              | 222                       | 251                       | 29             | 13.1           |
| Melrose Township                               | 1,275                     | 1,591                     | 316            | 24.8           |
| Wilson Township                                | 1,863                     | 2,087                     | 224            | 12.0           |
| Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Yr Estimates |                           |                           |                |                |

Table 2: Melrose Township Historic Population Trends

| Year                                                             | Population | Numeric Change | Percent Change |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1970                                                             | 830        | -              | -              |
| 1980                                                             | 947        | 117            | 12.4           |
| 1990                                                             | 1,106      | 159            | 14.3           |
| 2000                                                             | 1,388      | 282            | 25.5           |
| 2010                                                             | 1,281      | -107           | -7.7           |
| 2020                                                             | 1,405      | 124            | 9.7            |
| Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, ACS 5-Yr Estimates |            |                |                |

## Education and School Enrollment

Education is an important factor in analyzing the capabilities of the local work force and the economic vitality of a community. The U.S. Census Bureau tracks educational attainment. Statistics from the 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) exhibit that 24.7% of Melrose Township residents 25 years and older have at least a high school diploma or GED, as compared to 27.8% for Charlevoix County and 28.5% for the State as a whole. Township residents with a bachelor's degree or higher amount to 22.7% of the adult population, while Charlevoix County and State of Michigan have 19.5% and 18.6% percent college graduates, respectively.

Melrose Township is within the Char-Em Intermediate School District (ISD) and is split between three area public schools: Boyne City Public Schools, Public Schools of Petoskey, and Boyne Falls Public School District. The enrollment across the entire ISD, and each of the three public schools is described in Table 3. Enrollment numbers are gathered for three years, approximately ten years apart. The enrollment for the district and each public school has declined since the first reported school year. Enrollment information is collected from MI School Data ([mischooldata.org](http://mischooldata.org)), Michigan's Official Education Data Source.

Table 3: School District Enrollment

| School Year | All Char-Em ISD Districts | Boyne City Public Schools | Public Schools of Petoskey | Boyne Falls Public School District |
|-------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2002-2003   | 11,076                    | 1,319                     | 2,999                      | 318                                |
| 2012-2013   | 9,618                     | 1,350                     | 2,921                      | 199                                |
| 2021-2022   | 8,035                     | 1,279                     | 2,612                      | 182                                |

## Seasonal Population

Like many northwest Michigan communities, Charlevoix County experiences an influx of seasonal residents and tourists throughout the year. However, the decennial Census and the American Community Survey only consistently and comprehensively track the permanent population. Networks Northwest's *2022 Seasonal Population Study for Northwest Lower Michigan* analyzed the 2020 seasonal population for the ten counties in northwest Michigan: Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford. The study collected data for permanent and part-time residents and overnight visitors in accommodations and short-term rentals (STRs) by county. Northwest Lower Michigan's permanent base population is 310,802 and expands to include its largest amount of part-time residents and overnight visitors in July at an estimated total of 676,052 persons, a 118% increase.

The average Charlevoix County-seasonal total population change is 61% for an average of 15,791 additional visitors to the county throughout the year. Charlevoix County sees the largest season population increase in July with 59,533 and a low of 34,603 in April. The seasonal growth of the county is driven by people staying in traditional accommodation businesses (hotels, motels, bed & breakfasts, campgrounds, etc.). Table 3 illustrates the monthly estimated differences between the permanent population and seasonal residents/overnight visitors for the county.

Table 4: Charlevoix County Seasonal Population, 2020

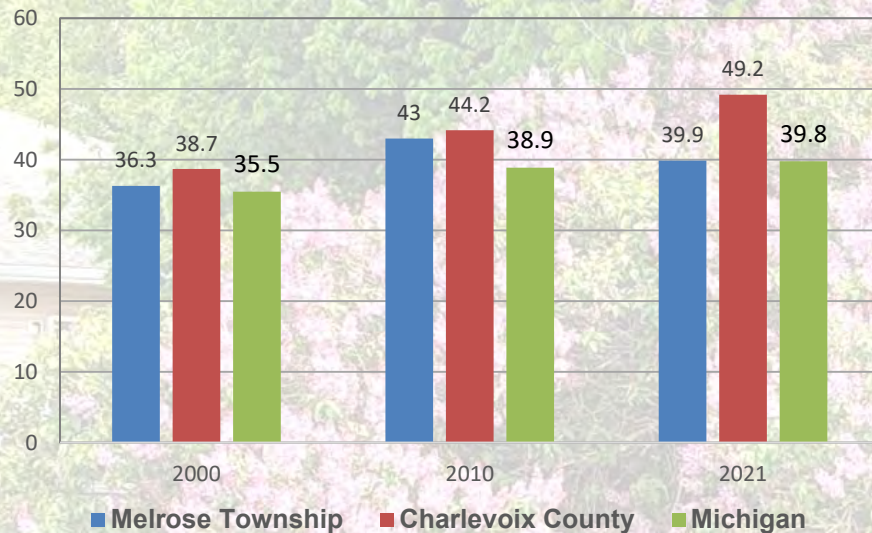
|                                                    | Jan    | Feb    | Mar    | Apr    | May    | Jun    | Jul    | Aug    | Sep    | Oct    | Nov    | Dec    | Ave    |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Permanent Population                               | 26,054 | 26,054 | 26,054 | 26,054 | 26,054 | 26,054 | 26,054 | 26,054 | 26,054 | 26,054 | 26,054 | 26,054 |        |
| Combined Part Time Population Overnight Population | 34,781 | 34,949 | 34,780 | 34,603 | 40,504 | 53,131 | 59,533 | 55,564 | 42,809 | 40,635 | 34,694 | 36,153 | 41,845 |
| Difference                                         | 8,727  | 8,895  | 8,726  | 8,549  | 14,450 | 27,077 | 33,479 | 29,510 | 16,755 | 14,581 | 8,640  | 10,099 | 15,791 |
| Percent Change                                     | 33%    | 34%    | 33%    | 33%    | 55%    | 104%   | 128%   | 113%   | 64%    | 56%    | 33%    | 39%    | 61%    |

Source: Networks Northwest

## Household and Age Characteristics

In 2021, Melrose Township has 656 total households, and the average household size is 2.42. 54.1% of households are married couples; 23% of those are with children of the householder under the age 18 years. Melrose Township's 2021 median age is 39.9, about even with the state median age (39.8). The median age of Charlevoix County and the State of Michigan has been steadily increasing since 2000 (Figure 1). The median age divides the age distribution into two equal parts; half of the cases fall below the median value and half are above the median value. The age of a community's residents is an important factor in determining recreation needs. Communities can work to provide diverse recreation opportunities to accommodate the varying abilities and interests of residents at different stages of life.

Figure 1: Median Age, 2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 5 Yr ACS and Decennial Census

The total 2021 Melrose Township and Charlevoix County populations are broken down into the following age groups:

Table 5: Population Breakdown by Age Group, 2021

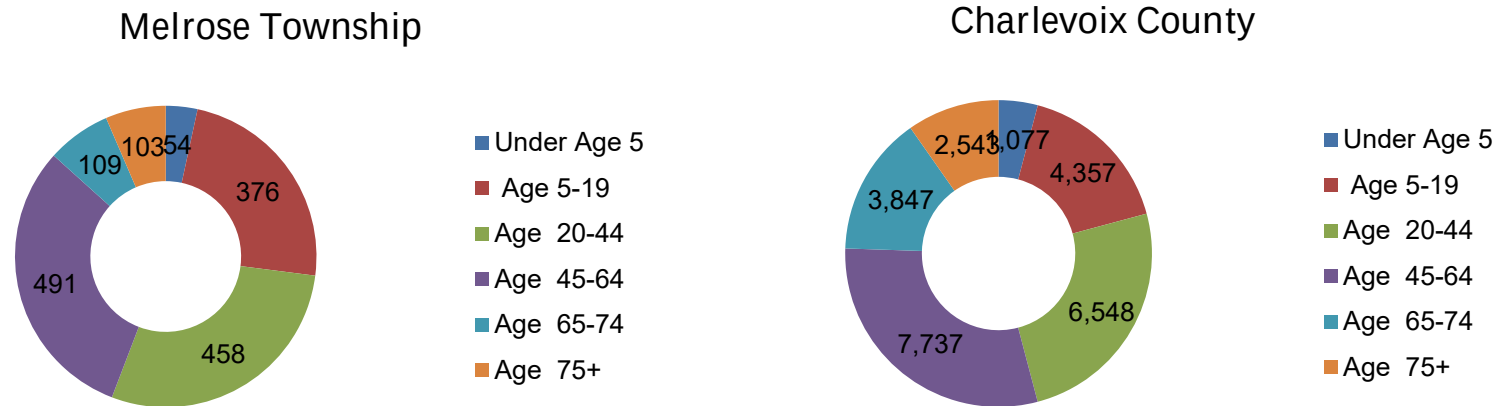
| Category        | Age          | Melrose Township | Percent | Charlevoix County | Percent |
|-----------------|--------------|------------------|---------|-------------------|---------|
| Preschool       | Under Age 5  | 54               | 3%      | 1,077             | 4%      |
| School Aged     | Age 5 to 19  | 376              | 24%     | 4,357             | 17%     |
| Family –Forming | Age 20 to 44 | 458              | 29%     | 6,548             | 25%     |
| Empty Nest      | Age 45 to 64 | 491              | 31%     | 7,737             | 30%     |
| Senior          | Age 65 to 74 | 109              | 7%      | 3,847             | 15%     |
| Elderly         | Age Over 75  | 103              | 6%      | 2,543             | 10%     |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Yr Estimates

Melrose Township and Charlevoix County follow similar patterns for the largest percentage of age groups. The majority of the township's and county's population (31% and 30%, respectively) is in the Empty Nest age group, between the ages of 45 to 64. The second largest group for both the township and the county (29% and 25%, respectively) is Family-Forming between the ages of 20 to 44. The third largest group is School Aged, ages 5 to 19 years old (24% and 17%). The median age and the age cohorts describe an aging population where the empty nest and senior population groups will continue to grow. As individuals age, the need increases for facilities that accommodate passive recreation such as walking. Barrier-free access and universally accessible to recreation is particularly important for persons with a disability as well as senior and elderly adults. Barrier-free access and universally accessible to recreation such as hard-surface pathways and accessible kayak launches allows aging seniors and the elderly access to activities they might not otherwise enjoy. Additionally, all recreation facilities should adhere to standards set by the Americans with Disabilities Act for barrier-free access.

The youth population groups (preschool and school aged) make up 27% in the township and 21% in the county overall. Youth-oriented recreation opportunities will continue to be important for both current residents and as an amenity to draw new families to the county.

Figures 2 and 3: Population by Age Group, 2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Yr Estimates

## Income and Poverty

When planning for recreation, it is important to ensure that activities and amenities in the community are within the financial means of the majority of residents. The American Community Survey reports that 2021 per capita income in Melrose Township was \$36,688 compared to \$38,685 the Charlevoix County per capita income. In 2021, the median household income in the township was \$73,214, which is 15.3% above the county's median household income of \$63,508. 9.1% of all people in Charlevoix County had income below the poverty level. MI School Data reports currently, 47.6% of students are considered Economically Disadvantaged. Economically disadvantaged students include those who have been determined to be eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

ALICE is an acronym that stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed – households that earn more than the Federal Poverty Level, but less than the basic cost of living for the county. Many struggle, especially as wages fail to keep pace with the rising cost of household essentials (housing, childcare, food, transportation, health care, and a basic smartphone plan). Households below the ALICE Threshold – ALICE households plus those in poverty – can't afford the essentials. In Charlevoix County there were 11,769 households in 2021, of those households 27% were ALICE Households, and 9% were households in poverty. In Melrose Township, of the 656 households, 32% are below the ALICE Threshold.

## History of Development and Present Day Context

Early non-native settlement in Melrose Township began in the mid to late 1800's along the waterways serving as primary locations for early development. Attractive natural resources ushered growth for the region as early settlers established homesteads for farming and the lumbermen took advantage of the vast timber resource. Settlers entered the region at a faster rate following the construction of the railroad through the villages of Walloon Lake and Clarion northward to Petoskey.

With the passage of time, the local economy began to diversify with new residents recognizing the opportunity to entice travelers and vacationers to the area. Soon, recreational activities became the featured attraction for the township as it became a widely recognized resort destination. According to the 2017 Melrose Township Land Use Plan, as people found greater time for relaxation and recreation, the number of resorts and second homes grew rapidly. Presently, the growth and development of the Township is significantly impacted by the availability of recreational options. The character of the area is best described as a bedroom-resort community. Commercial and business activities presently are limited but growing slowly. This helps protect natural resources, however a compromise for some basic services (retail stores such as grocery and dry goods) is necessary for those in the Township. This often requires residents and visitors to travel outside the township to obtain needed services. The development philosophy of Melrose Township, as detailed in the 1999 Land Use Plan, is to maintain the rural character of the township and provide a desirable place for people to live or visit. This would serve to protect the value of the resource base for current and future generations.

## Land Use and Planning

Any recreational expansion or newly-created recreational facilities should be coordinated with the community to ensure appropriate location for the proposed activity, and consistency with the Township's 2015 Master Plan, 2017 Land Use Plan, and zoning ordinances as applicable. The Melrose Township Planning Commission reviews land use and zoning decisions for the township. To achieve this, the Township is committed to achieving the following objectives:

- Encouraging the preservation of areas providing high quality fish and wildlife habitats
- Encouraging the use of proper management techniques throughout the State forest lands in the Township
- Encouraging high quality design standards for both public improvements and private developments to ensure compatibility with the natural surroundings
- Providing for the preservation of scenic sites
- Discouraging development in areas designated as unsuitable such as steep slopes, flood plains, wetlands, and poor soils.
- Inventorying, mapping, and protecting the significant natural features (wetlands, slopes, wooded areas, scenic views, lake, and streams) in the Township
- Designating features important to the Township to protect them from over development
- Working with the Gaylord Management Unit to help determine the future of the State owned public lands in the Township
- Continuing to work with Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council and Walloon Lake Association and Conservancy to maintain and improve the water quality of Walloon Lake.

The relationship between existing park and recreation facilities and other land uses in the community is critical in determining the location of future recreational facilities. This enables decision makers to recognize areas where future growth is anticipated and/or further expansion of existing facilities may be necessary. This also identifies areas where existing recreational facilities may be insufficient for the recreational needs of Township residents and visitors. Map 4.1 Environmental Features represent a number of pertinent land features including: land cover in the township, 30% or greater slope areas, watershed boundaries, wetland areas, and other water bodies.

## Transportation

Melrose Township is served by two state/federal highways including U.S. 131 and M-75. Charlevoix County Transit is a door-to-door public transit service for residents and visitors of Charlevoix County. Charlevoix County Transit also provides regional transportation to out of county hospitals and care facilities. Additionally, the Boyne City Municipal Airport, owned by the City of Boyne City, is open to the public and is a general aviation airport. It is located one mile east of Boyne City off East Main Street and is adjacent to the Boyne Business Park. Map 4.1, Infrastructure, indicates transportation networks in Melrose Township as well as available ratings for bridges, dams and road/stream crossings.

## Natural Features

The natural resources of Northwest Lower Michigan and Melrose Township are vital to the economic health and quality of life of area residents. The abundance of quality public forest land and water resources make this area a popular tourism destination, particularly for hunters, fishermen, and snowmobilers, and are an invaluable asset in attracting new visitors and investment to the area. Map 4.2, Environmental Features, indicates land cover features, water bodies, wetlands, and slopes greater than 30% (shown in red).

## Topography

The Township and all of Northern Michigan was subjected to glacial ice sheet advances and retreats 10,000 – 12,000 years ago which greatly influenced the relief of the land. The glacial action had a large impact on the formation of the parent material or unconsolidated mass in which soils were formed.

The relief of the land in the Township ranges from flat, post-glacial lake melt-water plains (existing as wetland and lowland areas currently) to very steep slopes (25% – 50% in some locations). Elevations range from 639 feet in the Southwest corner of the Township to 1,100 feet in the Northeast corner of the township.

## Soils and Vegetative Cover

Soil characteristics help to define the land capacity to support certain types of land uses. Soils most suitable for development purposes are well-drained and are not subject to a high water table. Adequate drainage is important to minimizing storm water impacts and the efficient operation of septic drain fields. Adequate depth to the water table is necessary to prevent groundwater contamination from septic systems. A high water table also limits the construction of basements. Though civil engineering techniques can be employed to improve drainage and maintain adequate separation from the water table, such techniques are expensive to construct and maintain. Planners and public officials should carefully consider any development proposal which threatens this nonrenewable resource.

## Water Resources

The most prominent natural feature and primary source of recreation activity in Melrose Township is Walloon Lake. Walloon Lake has 30.5 miles of shoreline across both Emmet and Charlevoix Counties, in the northwestern section of the Township. There is a high density of residential development around the lake. Approximately 99% of the shoreline in the Township is privately owned with limited public use. Walloon Lake existed in pre-glacial times as a river valley. The lake is surrounded by hilly and rolling terrain that can rise as much as 200 feet above water level. Walloon Lake is the 21st largest lake in Michigan with a mean depth of 28.9 feet and a maximum depth of approximately 100 feet. The lake extends into four other Townships, as well as Emmet County. Walloon Lake is fed primarily by groundwater springs and a few inlet creeks. Walloon Lake has a low flush rate and all land use that takes place in the watershed should be monitored. The Bear River begins at the outfall of Walloon Lake, at the east end of the lake. It begins flowing to the east and then turns abruptly north two miles east of the Village of Walloon Lake. It then winds northward through into Emmet County eventually reaching Little Traverse Bay and Lake Michigan in the City of Petoskey 90 feet lower than Walloon Lake.

The Bear River begins at Melrose Township Park and is the only outlet of Walloon Lake. It continues through Melrose Township, Charlevoix County, Bear Creek Township and the City of Petoskey, Emmet County, and empties into the Little Traverse Bay at the Petoskey Marina. The Bear River currently has two dams, one in Melrose Township and one just south of Lake Street in the City of Petoskey. At the M-75 river crossing is a bridge and dam. The infrastructure has been inspected and the dam was found to be structurally sound; however, the bridge is in need of repairs. Removing either dam would impact the best locations for water trail access points. Infrastructure improvements should consider the lake-river connection to allow paddlers continuous access.

## Climate

The climate in Melrose Township is greatly influenced by Lake Michigan, which tends to moderate temperatures during the year by keeping them slightly warmer in the autumn and cooler in the spring. This is in contrast to areas further inland in Northern Michigan.

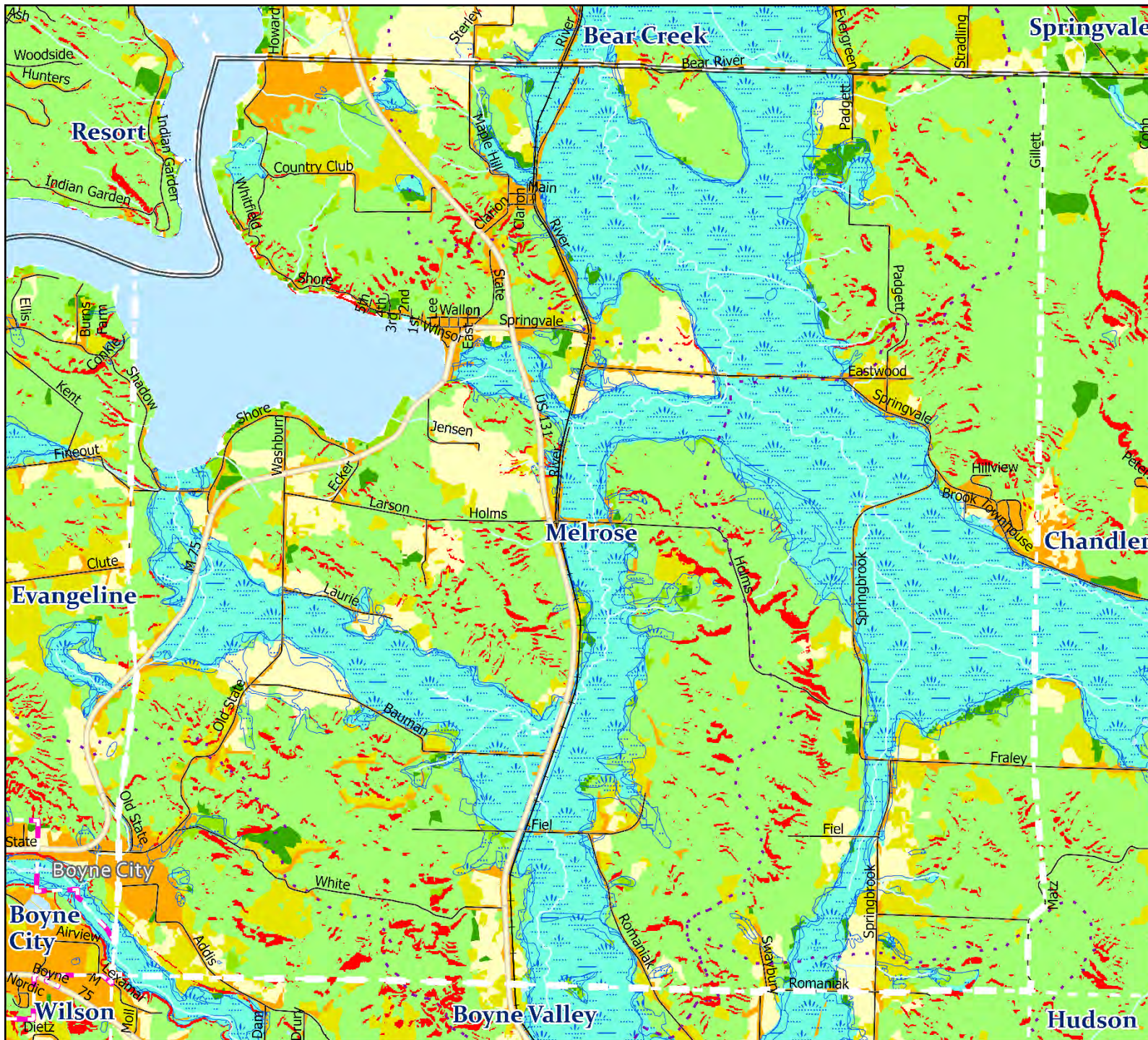
Table 6: Melrose Township Climate Summary

| <b>Temperature Summary (2013-2023)</b>                                       |          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>January Average Minimum Temperature</b>                                   | -9°F     |
| <b>January Average Maximum Temperature</b>                                   | 44°F     |
| <b>July Average Minimum Temperature</b>                                      | 44°F     |
| <b>July Average Maximum Temperature</b>                                      | 94°F     |
| <b>Precipitation Summary (2013-2023)</b>                                     |          |
| <b>Average Annual Rainfall</b>                                               | 39.27"   |
| <b>Average Annual Snowfall</b>                                               | 105.8"   |
| <b>Growing Season Summary</b>                                                |          |
| <b>Date of Last Spring Occurrence (90% of the years recorded - May 12)</b>   | <32°F    |
| <b>Date of First Fall Occurrence (90% of the years recorded - October 9)</b> | >32°F    |
| <b>Average Length of Growing Season (90% of the years Recorded)</b>          | 156 Days |

Source: NOAA National Weather Service, University of Illinois at Urbana - Champaign Midwest Climate Data Center (1961-1990)



# Melrose Township Environmental Features 2023 Parks and Recreation Plan



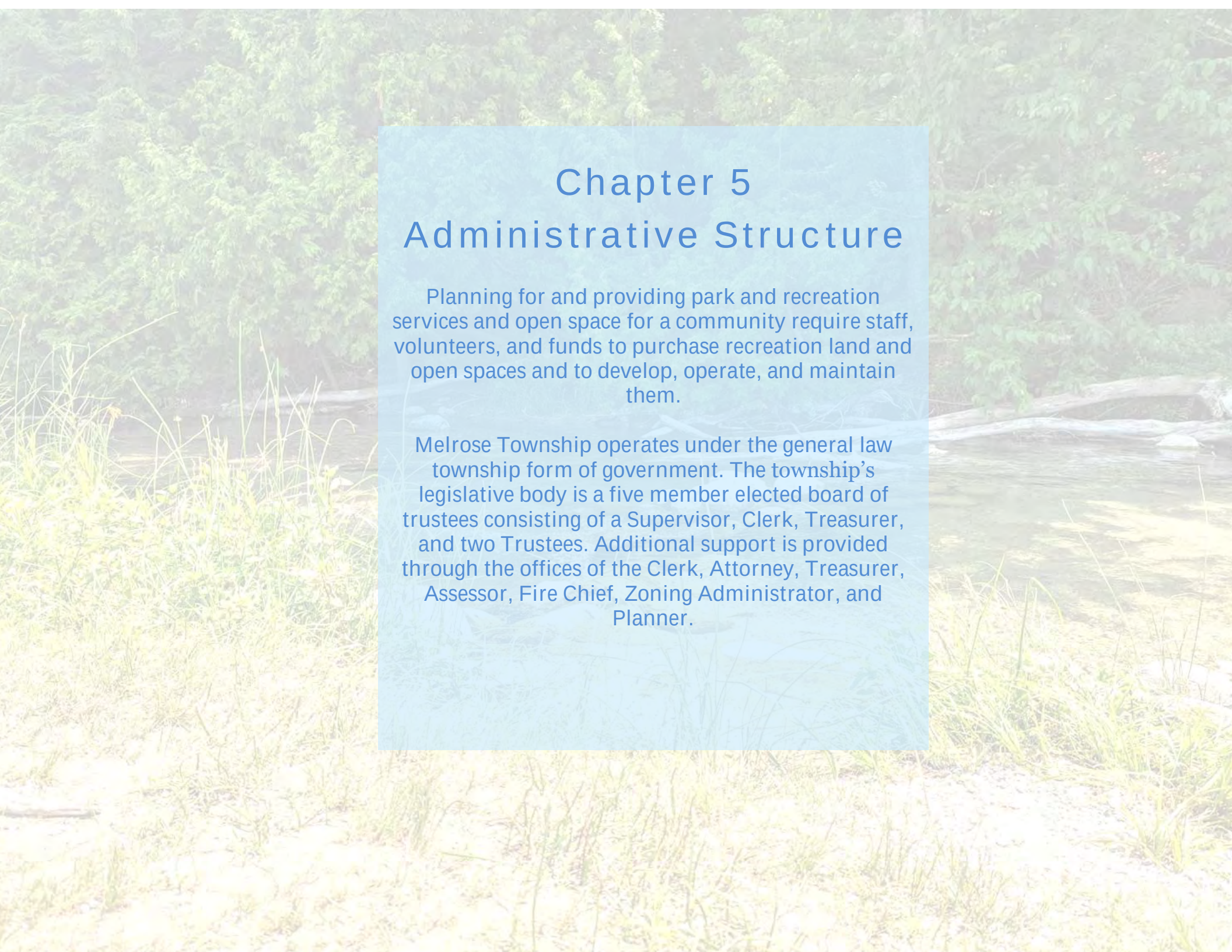
- Legend**
- Charlevoix County
  - Township Boundaries
  - Cities
  - Highways
  - All Roads
  - Railroad
  - Water Bodies
  - Rivers/Streams
  - Part 303 Wetlands
  - Watershed Boundary 12 Digit
- Land Cover**
- Developed (Intensity Varies)
  - Hay/Pasture; Cultivated Crops
  - Shrub/Scrub; Herbaceous; Barren Land
  - Deciduous Forest
  - Mixed Forest
  - Evergreen Forest
  - Woody Wetlands; Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands

0 1,250 5,000 Feet

0 0.45 0.9 Miles



Melrose Township Parks and Recreation Planning Process.  
Map produced by Networks Northwest Community Development 2023.  
Map data sources: State of Michigan, ESRI, NRCS, USDA, USGS, Charlevoix County



## Chapter 5

# Administrative Structure

Planning for and providing park and recreation services and open space for a community require staff, volunteers, and funds to purchase recreation land and open spaces and to develop, operate, and maintain them.

Melrose Township operates under the general law township form of government. The township's legislative body is a five member elected board of trustees consisting of a Supervisor, Clerk, Treasurer, and two Trustees. Additional support is provided through the offices of the Clerk, Attorney, Treasurer, Assessor, Fire Chief, Zoning Administrator, and Planner.

## Township Organization

Townships are explicitly organized under the provisions of the Michigan Constitution. They can only deliver services authorized by state statute and their operations must conform to procedures established by the Michigan Legislature or state administrative rules. Within their constitutional limitations, townships can perform a wide variety of services such as law enforcement, fire protection, emergency medical services, water, sewer, storm drainage and parks and recreation programs. Many other services are also provided including planning, zoning, and economic development. The Michigan Constitution and state statutes limit the amount of property tax millage that townships can levy for general township operations. There are two types of townships in Michigan, general law and charter. General Law townships are allocated one mill from the constitutionally limited 15 mills allocated among townships, the county, public schools, and the intermediate school district. Charter townships do not share in this allocated millage but are authorized to levy additional millage of up to 5 mills, or 10 mills with voter approval. Townships also utilize other sources of revenue to support services. User fees, permits, fines, special assessments and grant programs are the most frequently used.

The Supervisor and Township Board have appointed the following boards, commissions, and committees to guide in the delivery of government services:

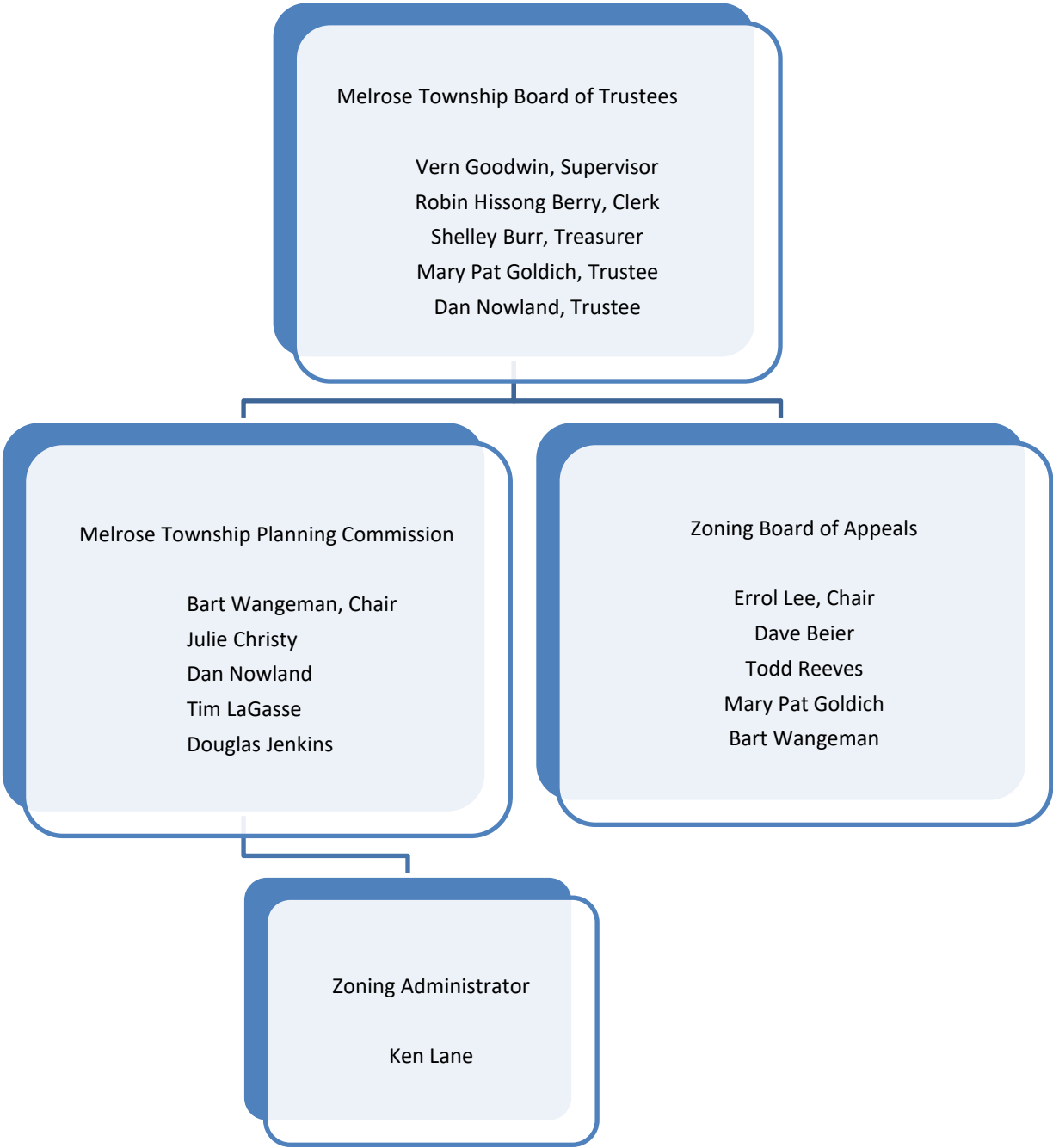
- Board of Review
- Library Board-Crooked Tree District
- Park and Recreation Committee
- Planning Commission
- Road Committee
- Zoning Board of Appeals
- Downtown Development Authority

These boards were authorized in the original Township documents.

With regard to the administration of recreational services, the Park and Recreation Committee and Planning Commission may assist the Township Legislative Body from time to time. While the Township Board relies on committee recommendations in administrative matters, the Board has final Authority, including on the Parks and Recreation budget and any expenditures.

The Township Legislative Body and the Park and Recreation Committee are also open to input from the general public as well. The Park and Recreation Committee is appointed by the Board to prepare the Melrose Township Community Recreation Plan and guide implementation of the plan and care of Township amenities. The Township employs two people to maintain Township properties, including recreational facilities. Recreation maintenance duties include grass mowing, trash removal, the opening, closing and cleaning of restroom facilities, snow removal and general maintenance of equipment and facilities.

Organizational Chart



## Annual and Projected Budgets and Funding Sources

All activities may be potentially funded by the Township's General Fund or upon a successful request to the Charlevoix County recreation millage, Department of Natural Resources, or partnerships with other stakeholder organizations. The Township often partners with the Melrose Township Downtown Development Authority to fund park improvements projects.

For Fiscal Year 2023, the Township had a general fund budget of \$642,568.00. Of that total amount, \$35,675.00 is budgeted for Parks and Recreation, including \$2,800.00 for Melrose Township park maintenance, \$6,875.00 for park utilities, \$13,500.00 for recreation expenses and improvements, \$3,200.00 for supplies, and \$9,300.00 for park maintenance salaries. In addition, the Township budgeted \$21,700.00 for General Liability Insurance coverage.

The projected budget for parks operation and maintenance, recreation programming and capital improvements is \$36,000.00.

## Role of Volunteers and Organizations

The Township would like to expand their capacity for parks and recreation operations and maintenance by enlisting the help of volunteers. One such organization affiliated with Monarch City USA has requested to install a Monarch butterfly garden near Township Hall. Other opportunities exist to enhance natural features and create a more resilient parks system.

## Relationships with School Districts and Other Public Agencies Involved in Recreation

Melrose Township does not have a school in its political boundaries but is served by three different school districts, Boyne City, Boyne Falls, and Petoskey. Therefore, students from the township can participate in the recreation and sports activities of their respective school and also community Little League, hockey and soccer teams.

These schools, as well as other community organizations, such as the Boy Scouts, frequently volunteer with in the maintenance of the Melrose Township Parks.