

VASSAR TOWNSHIP

PARK AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN



2022-2027

TUSCOLA COUNTY, MI

Vassar Township

2022-2027 Park and Recreation Master Plan

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Community Description.....	5
Vassar Township Population Demographics	6
Household Demographics	8
Analysis.....	9
Administrative Structure.....	10
Recreation Inventory.....	11
Township Recreation.....	11
Regional Recreation.....	11
School District Recreation	11
Accessibility	12
Planning Process.....	14
Public Input	14
Notice of the Availability of the Draft Plan for Public Review and Comment.....	16
Review	17
Goals and Objectives.....	18
Goal One.....	18
Goal Two.....	19
Goal Three	19
Goal Four	19
Action Program.....	21
Current Programming and Partnerships	21
Expand Vassar Township Park	21
New Amenities and Programming	21
Capital Improvement Plan	21
Funding.....	22
Adoption Process.....	24
Public Hearing Notice.....	24
Minutes from the Public Hearing.....	25
Michigan Department of Natural Resources Checklist	27
Stakeholder Interview Questions.....	27

Attachment A: Resolutions of Adoption30
 Vassar Township Parks and Recreation Committee Resolution30
 Vassar Township Board Resolution of Adoption31
Attachment B: Letters of Transmittal32

List of Maps

Map 1: Location of the Township of Vassar.....5
Map 2: Vassar Township Park13

List of Figures

Figure 1: Population by Age and Sex8
Figure 2: Organization Chart10
Figure 4: Should Recreation Facilities be Public or Private?16
Figure 5: Should the Township Acquire More Property for Recreational Activities?16

List of Tables

Table 1: Population Trends and Growth Rates6
Table 2: 2019 Population by Age7
Table 3: Household Characteristics.....8
Table 4: Are More Recreational Amenities Desirable?15

Introduction

The Township of Vassar recognizes the contribution parks and recreation add to the quality of life and the physical health of its citizens as well as the economic health of the Township. This recognition has been manifested in this effort to develop the 2022 - 2027 Vassar Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan with the goal of creating, improving, and developing local parks and recreational offerings, public trails, preservation of natural areas, and the opening of Vassar Township owned lands to enhance public parks and recreational opportunities.

The 2022 - 2027 Vassar Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan provides a specific framework for utilizing the Township's resources for park and recreational purposes in order to effectively meet identified needs. This Park and Recreation Master Plan represents a guideline for the future of parks and recreation in Vassar Township and provides a blueprint for making desired improvements over the next 5 years. In addition, it outlines the vision for parks and recreation in Vassar Township and provides a realistic, workable plan to realize it.

The vision for Vassar Township Parks and Recreation is to create recreational opportunities and community enhancement for growth and enrichment by developing areas or natural resources that promote citizen involvement and a strong sense of community while striving to increase the social, cultural, and physical well-being of residents.

The 2022 – 2027 Vassar Township Park and Recreation Master Plan is the second park and recreation plan prepared specifically for the Township. The last park and recreation master plan was the 2015-2020 Park and Recreation Master Plan. The first plan developed for Vassar Township was in a partnership with the City of Vassar and Tuscola Township in 1999. This new park and recreation master plan assesses the expanding need for park and recreation facilities in the Township and identifies projects to meet the demands of existing and future residents.

The 2022 – 2027 Vassar Township Park and Recreation Master Plan is an investment in the community that will enable the Township to improve the quality of life for residents and visitors through parks and recreational opportunities.



This plan is divided into separate sections that represent the planning process used in its development. In addition to this introduction, the plan contains:

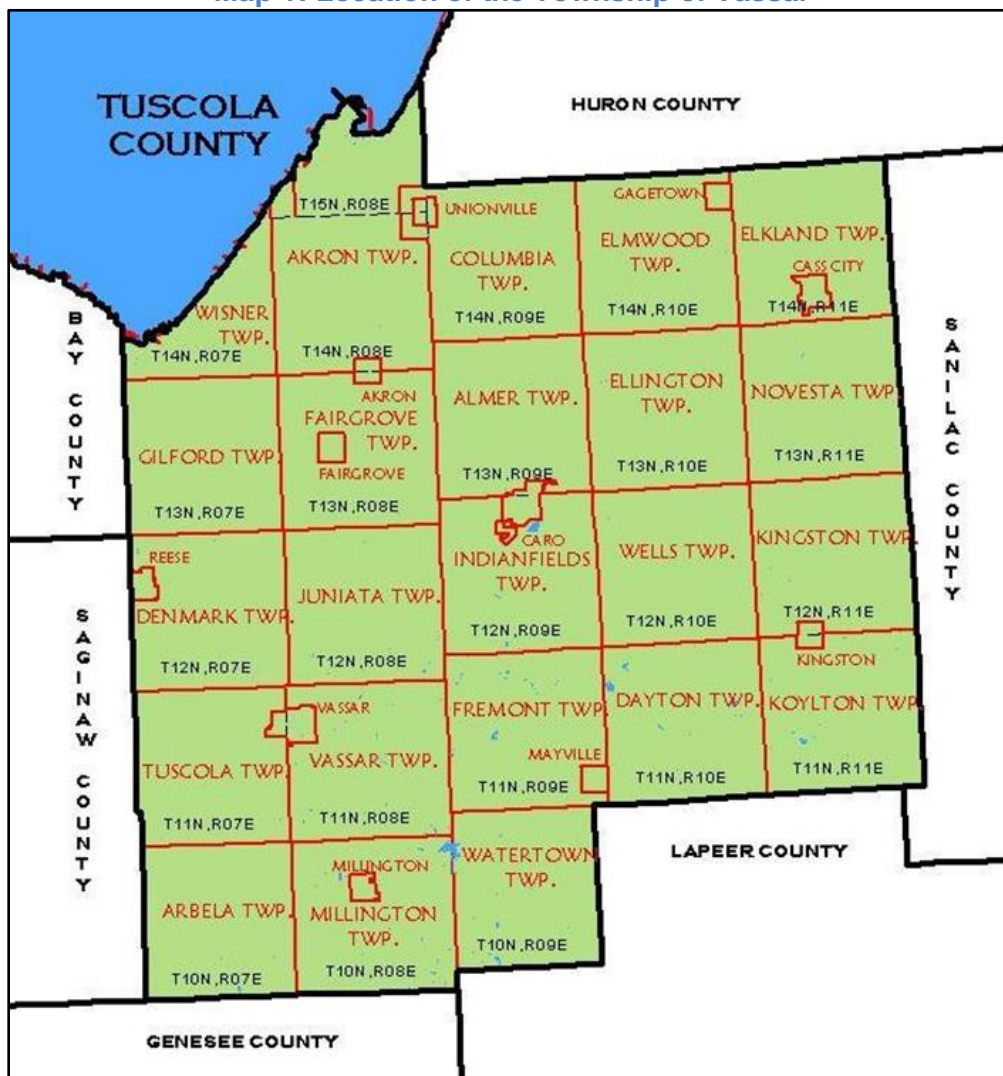
- **Community Description:** Provides a summary of the community's current and projected social, physical, and economic characteristics.
- **Administrative Structure:** Identifies the entities responsible for administration of the park and recreation programs.
- **Recreation Inventory:** Describes the specific parks, facilities, and programs that are available to Township residents.
- **Accessibility:** Provides a review of the accessibility of current recreation equipment.
- **Planning Process:** Reviews the participatory process by the community and other partners.
- **Goals and Objectives:** Outlines the goals and objectives for this five-year plan.
- **Action Program:** Identifies the plan's goals and objectives, all project and system recommendations, and a 5-year plan for investment.

Community Description

Vassar Township is a civil township located in the southwestern portion of Tuscola County. The Township has a total area of 35.3 square miles of which 35.2 square miles is land and 0.1 square miles is water. The City of Vassar is located in the northwestern portion of the Township. The Township of Juniata is located on the northern border, the Township of Fremont is located on the eastern border, with the Township of Millington to the south and the Township of Tuscola on the west. The Cass River runs in a southwesterly direction across the northwest corner of Vassar Township. Bay City, Birch Run, Detroit, Flint, Frankenmuth, Midland, MBS Airport, Flint Bishop Airport, and Saginaw are a short driving distance away.

Vassar Township Park is currently in the early stages of planning and development. While the Township of Vassar has owned the 26-acre property since 1983, it has not been developed into a public park until now. While the development process continues, the Township of Vassar firmly believes that Vassar Township Park will be a focal point and destination which will further enhance Vassar Township's sense of place.

Map 1: Location of the Township of Vassar



Vassar Township Population Demographics

As Table 1 below shows, Vassar Township experienced growth in all but five decades since it formed. US. Census Bureau data for 2020 indicates a slight decline of 200 people since 2010. Of the five decades of population decline, they each exist because of a historical event. The decline of 1890 was the result of the Great Fire of 1881. The decline of 1920 was the result of the flu pandemic and WWI. The decline of 1940 was the result of the Great Depression, and the decline of 2010 was the result of the Great Recession. Data from the 2020 census indicates the 2010s are the fifth decade of population decline. This decade of population decline is a consequence of the Great Recession's severity and the relatively slow recovery Michigan experienced.

Table 1: Population Trends and Growth Rates

Year	Vassar Township	Tuscola County	Percentage of Tuscola County
1860	245	4,478	5.5%
1870	775	12,549	6.2%
1880	909	25,738	3.5%
1890	812	32,598	2.5%
1900	1,062	35,890	3.0%
1910	1,381	34,913	4.0%
1920	1,092	33,220	3.3%
1930	1,183	32,934	3.6%
1940	1,154	35,694	3.2%
1950	1,174	38,258	3.1%
1960	1,652	43,305	3.8%
1970	1,960	48,603	4.0%
1980	3,709	56,961	6.5%
1990	3,917	55,498	7.1%
2000	4,356	58,266	7.5%
2010	4,090	55,729	7.3%
2020	3,890	52,939	7.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census

Table 2: 2019 Population by Age

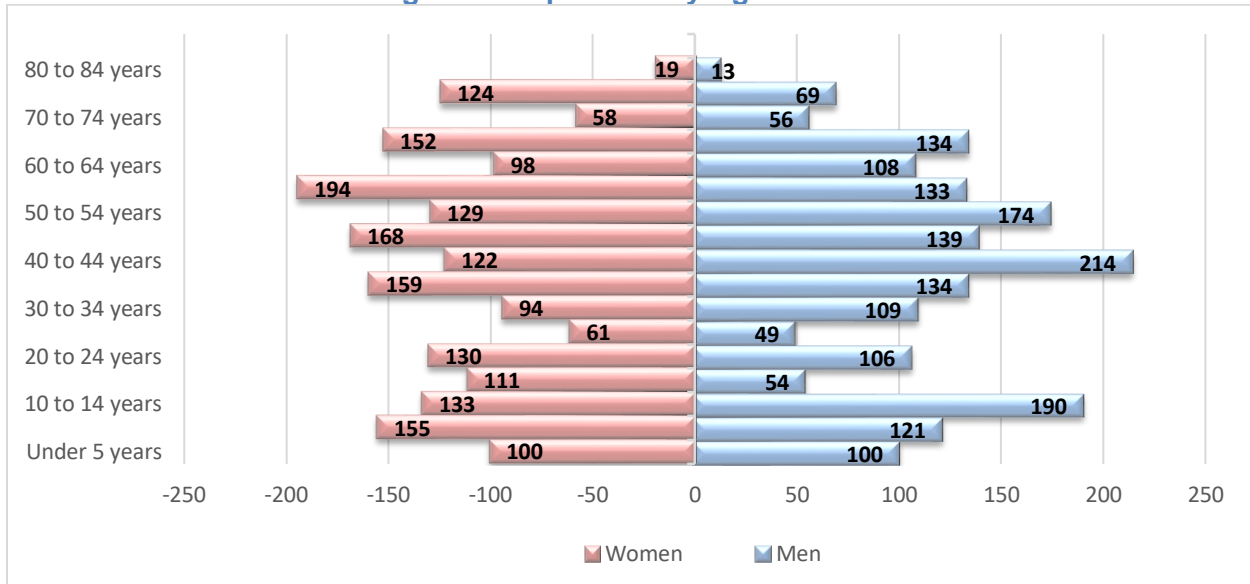
Subject	Number	Percent
Total Population	3,910	100.0%
Under 5 years	200	5.1%
5 to 9 years	276	7.1%
10 to 14 years	323	8.3%
15 to 19 years	165	4.2%
20 to 24 years	236	6.0%
25 to 29 years	110	2.8%
30 to 34 years	203	5.2%
35 to 39 years	293	7.5%
40 to 44 years	336	8.6%
45 to 49 years	307	7.9%
50 to 54 years	303	7.7%
55 to 59 years	327	8.4%
60 to 64 years	206	5.3%
65 to 69 years	286	7.3%
70 to 74 years	114	2.9%
75 to 79 years	193	4.9%
80 to 84 years	32	0.8%
85 years and over	0	0.0%
Median age (years)	41.7	
<i>Source: American Community Survey, 2019</i>		

As shown in Table 2, in 2020, Vassar Township had a total resident population of 3,890. The highest percentage of residents was in the 40- to 44-year age bracket with 8.6 percent. The second highest age group was the 55- to 59-year bracket with 8.4 percent. The third highest age group was the 10- to 14-year age bracket with 8.3 percent followed by the 45- to 49-year age bracket in fourth with 7.9 percent.

Of the resident population of Vassar Township, 51.3 percent is female and 48.7 percent is male. The information from Table 2 indicates that of the female residents, the highest population bracket was 55 to 59 years of age with 194 residents or 9.7 percent. The second highest was the 45 to 49 age bracket with 168 female residents or 8.4 percent. The third highest was the 35 to 39 age bracket with 159 residents or 7.9 percent of the female population. The fourth highest population group was the 5- to 9-year age bracket with 155 residents or 7.7 percent of the female population. The median age of the female residents is 43 years of age.

Of the male residents, the highest population bracket was the 40 to 44 years of age bracket with 214 male residents or 11.2 percent. The second highest age bracket was the 10- to 14-year bracket with 190 male residents or 10 percent of the male population. The third highest age bracket was men 50 to 54 years of age with 174 male residents or 9.1 percent. The fourth largest age bracket was the 45- to 49-year age group with 139 male residents or 7.3 percent.

Figure 1: Population by Age and Sex



Source: American Community Survey, 2019

Table 3: Household Characteristics

	Estimate	Percent
Total households	1,595	100.0%
Married-couple family	915	57.4%
Cohabiting couple household	102	6.4%
Male householder, no spouse/partner present	224	14.0%
Female householder, no spouse/partner present	354	22.2%
Households with one or more people under 18 years	552	34.6%
Households with one or more people 65 years and over	424	26.6%
Average household size	2.45	
Average family size	2.85	

Source: American Community Survey, 2019

Household Demographics

According to the 2019 American Community Survey, there were 1,595 households in Vassar Township. Of these, 915 were married households and 102 were cohabitating couple households. There were 224 households with a male householder and no wife present, and 354 households with a female householder and no husband present. There were a total of 552 households with children under the age of 18 and 424 households with one or more people 65 years and over.

According to the 2019 American Community Survey, there were 1,751 housing units in the Township with 1,595 or 91.1 percent of them listed as occupied. There were 156 vacant housing units and a homeowner vacancy rate of 3.1 percent. Of the 1,595 occupied housing units, 1,449 or 90.8 percent were owner-occupied and 146 or 9.2 percent were renter-occupied. The average household size of an owner-occupied unit was 2.34 while the average household size of a renter-occupied unit was 3.55.

Analysis

From evaluation of the demographic makeup of Vassar Township residents, it appears that there are two majority population groups residing in the Township; Baby Boomers and Generation Y, born between 1980 and 2000. The Baby Boomer societal generation is those individuals who were born during the years of 1943 to 1964. They are the largest population group in American history. Because of improved health, fitness, and lifestyle changes, many members of the Baby Boomer Generation are participating in recreational activities at ages well past those in previous generations. Members of this generation often look for park and recreation destinations that offer activities such as hiking, trailway, or water sport activities.

After the Baby Boomer Generation, birth rates declined until the majority of the Baby Boomers became parents themselves, which created the societal generation known as Generation Y. Members of this societal age group often make up the largest park and recreational user group in America. As Generation Y continues to enter the workforce and have families of their own, their specific wants and needs will increasingly shape parks and recreational supply and demand. Their values and desires are very different from those of their parents', the Baby Boomer generation. Tendencies within this group include a demand for instant access to information, high levels of multitasking, and low rates of physical activity. Interestingly, Generation Y often seeks out park and recreational offerings that are based on family group or friend activities, such as picnic and community gathering areas such as a pavilion.

In evaluating the population age brackets of Vassar, it is apparent the largest age group is the Baby Boomer Generation. As this group continues to enter into retirement, the wants and needs of Vassar Township residents concerning parks and recreational opportunities may shift from the present demand. In addition, analysis shows the second largest resident group is Generation Y. This societal group differs in park and recreational wants and needs compared to those of their parental group the Baby Boomers. Another factor that warrants consideration is the emergence of a variety of new and non-traditional family structures. These new family types which are often found in Generation Y, have created many new and different leisure patterns and recreation demands. More adults in Generation Y remain single until their 30s and 40s, with many of those that do marry either postponing having children until later in their lives or choosing to not have children at all. At the same time, single-parent families have also increased.

For all age groups, free time is perceived as an opportunity to spend time with family and friends and as such, they often seek out recreation activities that allow group participation. While group activities are popular among single-parent and no-children families, members of these demographics are often also interested in the more active and unusual recreation available in experiential trips and other non-traditional recreation activities. Traditional team sports such as football have reached a plateau in their growth, while more modern activities such as canoeing, kayaking, and disc golf continue to rise in popularity. Interestingly, both the Baby Boomers and Generation Y often want and place a high priority on park and recreation areas that have wireless internet access.

Administrative Structure

Under Public Act 157 of 1905, the Township of Vassar Board of Trustees approved the Vassar Township Parks and Recreation Committee which is currently comprised of seven volunteer members from the Vassar Township Community. The role of the Parks and Recreation Committee is to advise and recommend policy and projects regarding parks and recreation. The Parks and Recreation Committee reports to the Vassar Township Board, who are ultimately responsible for parks and recreation within the Township.

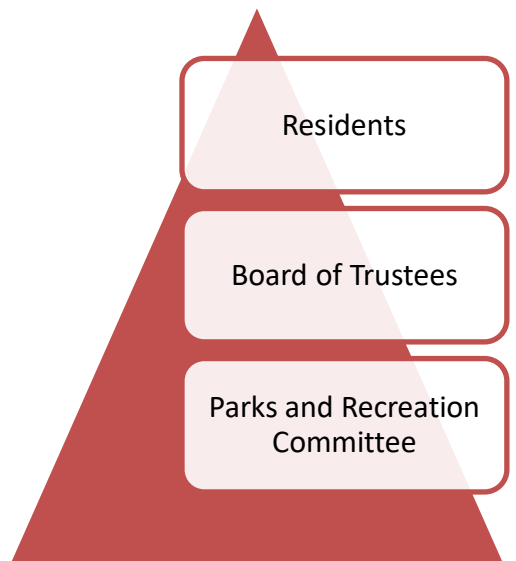


The Township of Vassar is honored to have a group of volunteers who have agreed to manage and operate Vassar Township Park. This group of volunteers is being led and directed by the Vassar Township Park and Recreation Committee Chairperson.

The fiscal year of the Township of Vassar, which includes parks and recreation, runs from July 1st to June 30th. The current year's budget is \$8,000 for capital improvements and maintenance of Vassar Township Park. The projected future budget is \$8,000 per year for each year of the 2022-2027 Vassar Township Parks and Recreation Plan. The main source of funding for parks and recreation is from the Township of Vassar Park and Recreation budget. This money is spent on paying seasonal employees, Parks and Recreation Committee Members, monthly meetings, electric and wireless internet, and capital improvements.

The Township of Vassar has partnered with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Cass River Greenway, and received assistance from the Tuscola County Road Commission in the creation of a Cass River access site, located on the southwest corner of Caine and Waterman Roads. In addition, the Township of Vassar contributes funds each year to help support the park and recreation facilities in the City of Vassar. It is the plan of the Township of Vassar to continue and encourage the partnership and volunteer relationships that have been created and to seek out new partnership opportunities.

Figure 2: Organization Chart



Recreation Inventory

The recreation inventory was updated using input from the Parks and Recreation Committee, stakeholder interviews, and research into the recreational facilities offered in nearby communities. The base inventory was developed as part of the 2015 – 2019 Parks and Recreation Plan.

Township Recreation

Vassar Township Community Park was created in 2015. The 23-acre Community Park serves the community-based park and recreational needs of the Township as well as preserving green open space. The Park serves the Township of Vassar, City of Vassar, and surrounding Townships. Current recreation and support facilities include a driveway, rustic parking lot, and wooded green space. Several amenities have been added since the park initially opened. These amenities include a pavilion, playground equipment, picnic tables, signage, a nature trail, park benches, public restrooms, and a little free library.

Another potential future addition to the recreational inventory of the Township of Vassar would be a rail trail that connects to the Southern Links Trailway in the southern portion of the Township and runs northwesterly to connect with the trailway in the City of Vassar.

MDOT operate a roadside park along M-15 in Vassar Township.

Regional Recreation

The residents of the Township of Vassar have access to the following public park and recreational opportunities:

- The City of Vassar – Harper Park, White Birch Park, T. North Pavilion, Vassar Riverside RV Park, Vassar Memorial Park, Veterans Park, Gazebo Park, Vassar Rail Trail, and McKinley Park
- Township of Arbel, Township of Millington, and Village of Millington – Arthur Latham Park
- Township of Tuscola – Tuscola Township Park

The residents of the Township of Vassar also have access to the following State of Michigan public lands:

- Vassar State Game Area
- Murphy Lake State Game Area
- Tuscola State Game Area.

The residents of the Township of Vassar also have access to recreation opportunities at the Juniata Christian School just outside the Township limits.

School District Recreation

While there is no public or private school system located in Vassar Township, the majority of student residents reside in the Vassar Public School District with a minority of student residents residing in the Millington Community School district and Mayville School District. Each of these school districts offer some form of recreational opportunities to residents.

Accessibility

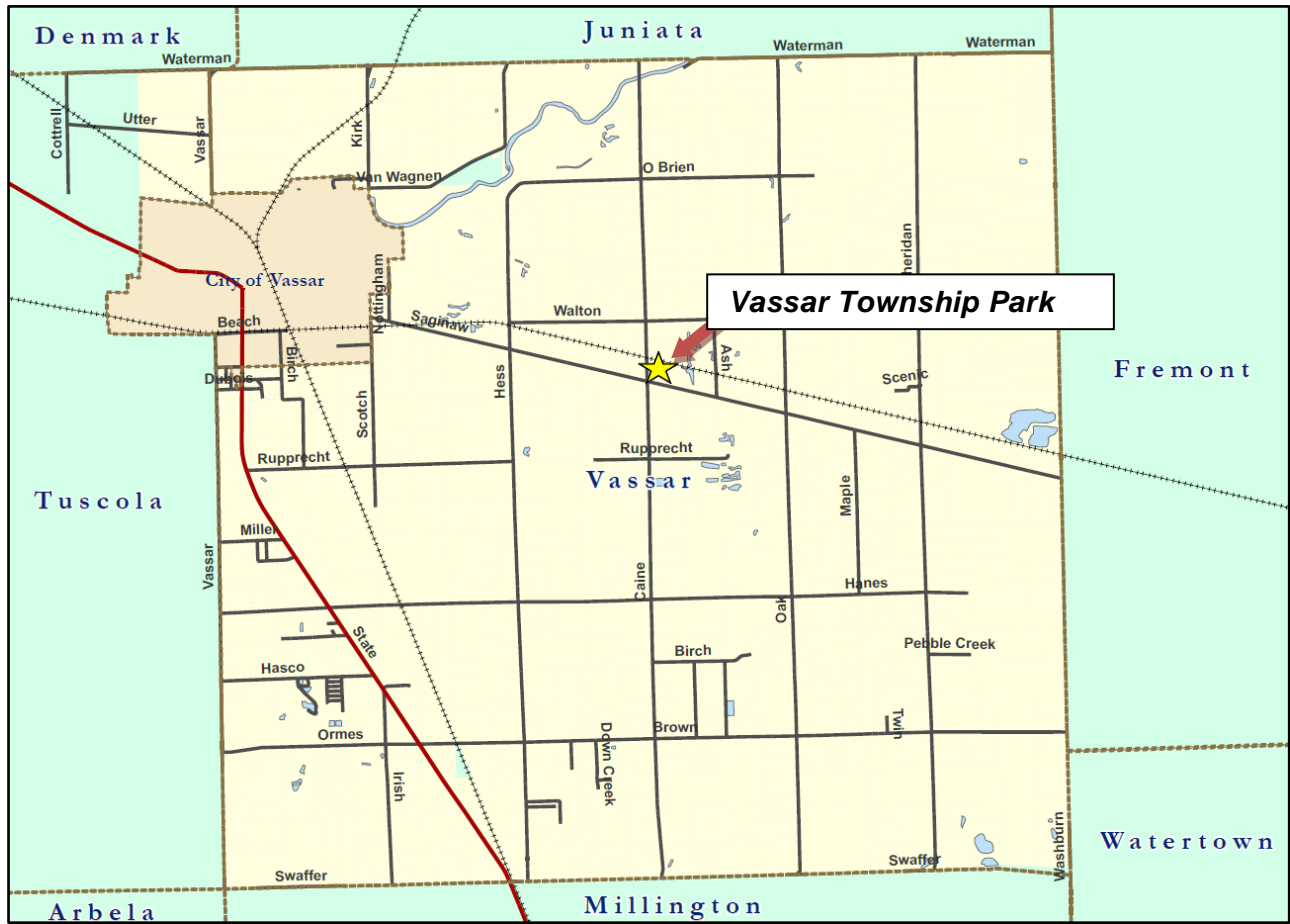
Creating a park system that is safe, accessible, and usable to all individuals within the community, including those with disabilities, is essential. A grading system has been developed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to easily identify those parks and facilities, which are most, and least, handicap-accessible and usable, based on the ADA guidelines. The following accessibility grading system uses a five (5) point system:

1. None of the facilities park areas meet accessibility guidelines
2. Some of the facilities park areas meet accessibility guidelines
3. Most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
4. The entire park meets accessibility guidelines
5. The entire park was developed/renovated using the principals of universal design



An Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance assessment of Vassar Township Park was conducted on July 22, 2021. The assessment consisted of a visual inspection of the park in regard to access and circulation in relation to the park facilities. Most of the park meets all criteria for handicap accessibility. The pavilion is accessible via a handicap accessible path and offers handicap accessible tables. Park paths and some playground equipment do not meet the criteria for handicap accessibility. For this reason, the Vassar Township Park earns an accessibility grade of 3. The Township of Vassar will continue its efforts towards improving accessibility at Vassar Township Park when improvements are made.

Map 2: Vassar Township Park



Planning Process

A systems approach was taken in the planning and development of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This included an analysis of the population and economic characteristics of Vassar Township, its relevant development patterns, the physical and natural attributes of the Township, accessibility of facilities, and resident opinions related to recreation to guide planning efforts. Another element of this process is an assessment of the Township's local and area wide park and recreational resources. The success of prior planning efforts are regularly assessed to guide future planning efforts.

Public Input

Public participation in the community of Vassar Township is always sought and welcomed. As part of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan process, the MDNR requires at least two opportunities for public participation, with the first taking place before or during the preparation of the plan (i.e., community workshop, survey, questionnaire, citizen luncheon) and the second taking place as an advertised public meeting at which the plan is presented for adoption.



The Township of Vassar meets the minimum MDNR requirements for public input, as well as the required 30-day period for review and comment of the Vassar Township Park and Recreation Draft Master Plan.

Stakeholder Interviews



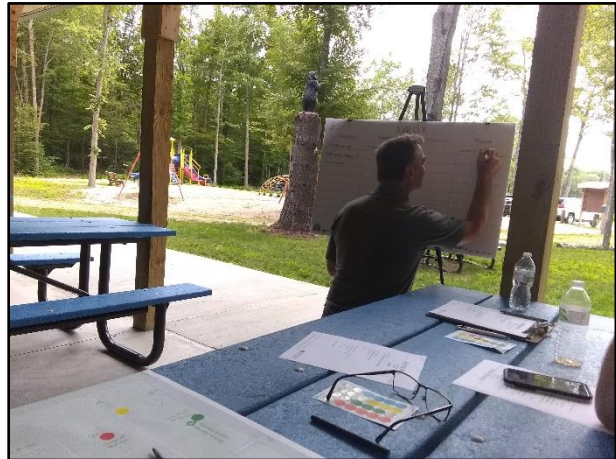
During the planning process, the Vassar Township Park and Recreation Committee conducted stakeholder interviews.

When asked about the current strengths of Vassar Township's parks and recreation facilities, stakeholders referenced the location of Vassar Township near the Cass River Water Trail. Between the City of Vassar and Vassar Township, there's a lot of traffic generated. Stakeholders also referenced Vassar Township's positive and progressive approach to increasing and improving park activities and facilities.

When asked about opportunities for parks and recreation in Vassar Township, stakeholders pointed to the township's park amenities and indicated the Township could be best served by expanding their existing facilities, while not necessarily expanding their existing park or adding new parks.

When asked about the challenges facing parks and recreation in Vassar Township, the most common response was challenges related to funding park improvements. Due to the limited number of big businesses, foundations, and others likely to provide funding in the area, the Township could face challenges raising money.

Stakeholders indicated Vassar Township’s parks and recreation program could benefit from the inclusion of more youth. Partnerships with 4H clubs could be an area where Vassar Township expands its network. In regard to financing, one stakeholder stated they were surprised when they first started working with the Cass River Greenway by how many foundations and groups were in the area that were available and willing to offer funding.



Recreational Preferences

This update to the 2015 Parks and Recreation Plan was done in conjunction with an update to the Township’s Master Plan. As part of the 2022 Vassar Township Master Plan Update residents were surveyed on a variety of topics, including parks and recreation. This survey was conducted in June 2021 and received 48 responses. Residents were previously surveyed in 1995 and, when possible, the same questions were posed again in 2021 to provide insight on how public attitudes have shifted since 1995.

Respondents were asked to identify if the addition of more recreational amenities was desirable to them. Of the 48 respondents, 21 percent had no preference. The remaining respondents skewed in favor of more recreational amenities, at 50 percent. Only 29 percent considered more amenities to be undesirable. This represents a modest shift in public opinion when compared to survey responses in 1995. Of respondents then, 82 percent viewed more recreational amenities as desirable, 32 percent more than in 2021. In 1995, 14 percent viewed it as undesirable, 15 percent less than 2021. Much of this change may be explained by the addition of Vassar Township Community Park in 2015. Many of those in 1995 who felt the Township should have more recreation amenities may view the addition of Vassar Township Community Park as more than sufficient for the needs of the Township and so no longer view adding recreational amenities as desirable.

Table 4: Are More Recreational Amenities Desirable?

	2021		1995		Change
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	
Yes	50%	24	82%	284	-32%
No	29%	14	14%	47	15%
No Preference	21%	10	5%	17	16%

Views on how recreation should be provided has changed very little between 1995 and 2021. Residents have skewed heavily in favor of public parks over private parks in both 1995 and 2021, with support for public parks only declining 6 percent (from 83 percent to 77 percent) and support for private parks increasing 6 percent (from 17 percent to 23 percent). Similarly, residents remain nearly as divided on the question of if the Township should acquire more property for recreation. In 1995, 43 percent were in favor and 48 percent were opposed compared to 38 percent in favor and 46 percent opposed in 2021. The share of respondents who had no preference increased from 9 percent in 1995 to 17 percent in 2021.

Figure 3: Should Recreation Facilities be Public or Private?

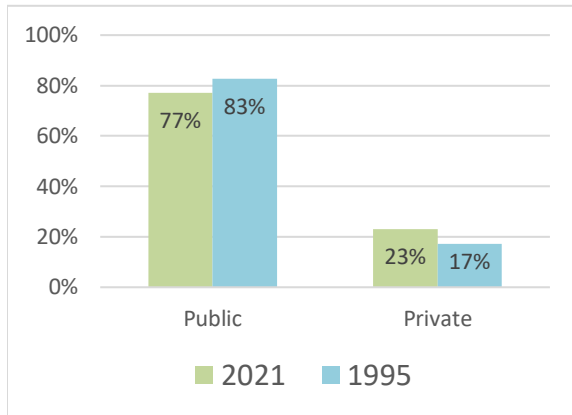
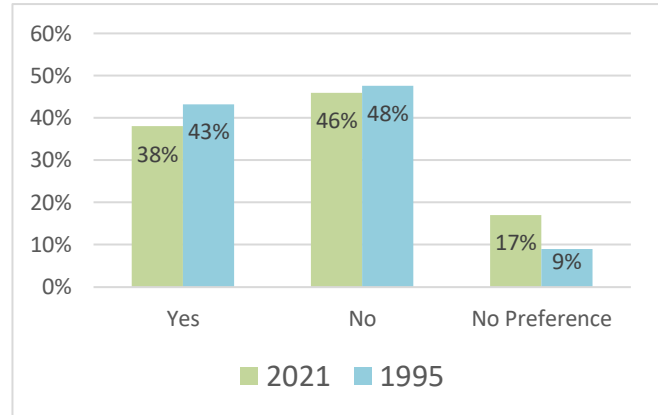


Figure 4: Should the Township Acquire More Property for Recreational Activities?



Notice of the Availability of the Draft Plan for Public Review and Comment

**NOTICE OF
PUBLIC HEARING COMMENT PERIOD AND PUBLIC HEARING VASSAR
TOWNSHIP PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN**

December 15, 2021

The Vassar Township Parks and Recreation recently completed a draft update to the Vassar Township Parks and Recreation Plan. This is notice of the initiation of the 30- day review period and public hearing for the draft plan. The township of Vassar Parks and Recreation Committee will be holding a Public Review on Tuesday, January 18th, 2022 and the Vassar Township board of Trustees will be holding a public hearing on January 27th, 2022 at the Vassar Township Hall, 4505 West Saginaw Road Vassar, MI 48768.

Comments should be submitted to:

Parks and Recreation Plan Comments
Vassar Township Planning Commission
4505 West Saginaw Rd
Vassar, MI 48768

Please contact Corey Christensen, Planner at ROWE Professional Services Company if you have any questions concerning this notice or the plan. He can be reached at CChristensen@Rowepsc.com or by calling phone number (248) 915-5505

Review

The proposed park and recreation master plan was available for a 30-day review by area residents in two locations, the Vassar Township Hall, 4505 W. Saginaw Road and the Township website. There was also notification of the availability of the parks and recreation plan for review and an upcoming public hearing clearly posted in the local newspaper.

Goals and Objectives

Vassar Township parks, recreation, and open space exists to serve the needs and wants of the residents of Vassar Township and the community by striving to provide a full spectrum of recreational opportunities, while enhancing the visual quality of neighborhoods and Vassar Township as a whole. Parks, recreation, and open space are looked upon as one of the most important elements in the quality of life for Vassar Township residents.

In order to best serve the park and recreational needs of Vassar Township, the Vassar Township Park and Recreation Committee has developed the following park and recreational guiding principles.

- Provide accessible facilities and leisure opportunities for all persons regardless of their physical and socio-economic characteristics.
- Efficiently employ Vassar Township resources, in concert with other public, private, and volunteer resources, to provide a wide range of recreation and leisure opportunities and where unnecessary, avoid duplication of services.
- Actively seek the most appropriate acquisition and uses of community open space and natural features to meet the community's needs for active, structured recreation, as well as passive enjoyment of the out-of-doors.



Developing goals and objectives is an important part of the park planning process. Based on the guiding principles, the overall goal of the Township of Vassar is to provide park and recreational opportunities for the community and/or region it serves. The Township of Vassar formulated the following goals and objectives based upon the input received at stakeholder interviews, the community survey, and the demographic characteristics of Vassar Township.

Goal One

Provide safe, broad, and community-based park and recreational opportunities that improve the overall quality of life for all residents of the Vassar Township area. Parks serve as a natural gathering place for community residents and provide free or inexpensive recreation opportunities. To enrich the quality of life in Vassar Township, it is important for the Township of Vassar to provide and improve park facilities. Township residents communicated in the survey responses a wish to have community parks with basic amenities that appeal to all age groups. Community input is a solid indicator of what residents in Vassar Township and surrounding communities want in terms of parks and recreational facilities. The Township of Vassar will continue to plan its improvements based upon the needs expressed in formal and informal input sessions.

Objectives

- Continue to add amenities to the park facilities in the Township of Vassar including outdoor lighting, paved parking/driveway, and more, as needed.
- Provide increased and improved access to and through Vassar Township Park.
- Acquire additional parkland, if necessary.
- Create an ongoing maintenance schedule and financing plan to address repair needs.
- Investigate training opportunities, such as the DNR's workshops, for Township Officials.

Goal Two

Continue to develop and improve Vassar Township Park to offer the community a park of which they can be proud. Park facilities are among the most visible indicators of a community's identity and pride, as well as local tax dollars at work. The Township of Vassar wishes to provide a quality park and facilities that show that the Township is an active community that takes pride in its community facilities.



Objectives

- Keep Vassar Township Park safe and well-maintained.
- Add support facilities to improve the ease of use.
- Expand Vassar Township Park along W. Saginaw Road.

Goal Three

Provide recreational opportunities for people with disabilities. The Township of Vassar wishes to provide park and recreational opportunities for all residents, including those with disabilities. This will be especially important as the population in the community continues to age and mobility and accessibility issues become more common.

Objectives

- Make sure all improvements and upgrades to Vassar Township Park, where feasible, are barrier-free.
- Offer more ADA-accessible playground equipment.
- Offer a paved trail to provide better access to the natural environment for persons with disabilities.

Goal Four

Improve the health and fitness of the Township of Vassar residents. The Township of Vassar wants to offer park facilities that will allow residents to enjoy the benefits of physical fitness. This will raise the quality of life for Township residents. There may be partnering opportunities with school districts, recreational groups, and other governmental agencies. The ability to offer programming or recreational opportunities is dependent upon available funding and volunteer staffing for such projects.



Objectives

- Investigate programming opportunities that take advantage of present and planned park facilities.
- Add passive and active facilities and programming as needed based upon available funding and community input.

- Continue to involve the increasing adult population in activities and events. Maintain and expand senior programming as resources allow.
- Provide a range of programs and facilities to accommodate the interests and age groups of as many children as possible. Programs should be somewhat structured and directly supervised.

Action Program

With goals and objective in place, the Township of Vassar developed an action program to work toward accomplishing the goals and objectives. The Action Program details the direction the Township of Vassar wishes to take over the next 5 years in order to develop and improve the quality and diversity of park and recreational opportunities. These decisions were made based on park and recreational trends, national standards, community input, and analysis of demographic trends.



Current Programming and Partnerships

Moving forward, Vassar Township should continue to maintain the programming and activities currently in place for residents. New recreational opportunities should constantly be implemented to match the demand by the community and participants. This project is ongoing and will continue throughout the duration of the 2022-2027 plan.

Expand Vassar Township Park

As funding becomes available, continue to expand the Vassar Township Park along W. Saginaw Road. Provide for a new point of access, expanded trails, and dedicated areas for new park amenities. Once funding is secured, this should be a priority in the final 2 years of the 2022-2027 plan.

New Amenities and Programming

Continue to expand the amenities and programming available at Vassar Township Park. In recognition of the aging population that Vassar Township Park services, new amenities should prioritize barrier-free access. As resources allow, prioritize expanding senior programming while still providing new programming for all ages. New amenities and programming should continuously be introduced through the course of the 2022-2027 plan.

Capital Improvement Plan

Potential Capital Improvements (CIP) for parks and recreation in Vassar Township have been established, not only to provide a framework for decision makers but also to enable Vassar Township to apply for grant funding for these proposed projects. It is very likely that the schedule and plan will be amended at some point during its life due to unanticipated circumstances, such as changing recreational trends, community opinion, available funding, and/or private donations.

The following Capital Improvement Plan provides an outline and guide as to the desires of the community. Major priorities for the coming years include a parking lot expansion, connecting the pavilion to electricity, and adding a new entrance off Saginaw Rd.

Item	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Cost
Install Outdoor Lighting - Solar	X					\$1,000
Connect Pavilion to Electricity		X				\$20,000
Trail Expansion and Clearing			X			\$10,000
Parking Lot Expansion & Paving					X	\$35,000
Public Restrooms – Chemical and/or Portable	X					\$2,500
Water for Pavilion					X	\$6,000
Horseshoe Pits	X					\$500
Playground Equipment		X		X		\$30,000
Picnic Tables					X	\$3,000
Grills	X		X			\$500
Southeast Service Drive off Saginaw Road		X				\$2,000
Hard Surface for Handicap Parking		X				\$10,000

Funding

Various grant programs can be used to leverage funds for development projects and property acquisition. A summary list of sources includes:

- General Fund:** Continue to allow for re-investment in facilities to avoid future increased maintenance costs and ensure revenue streams when possible.
- Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund (MNRTF):** Provides funding assistance for the purchase of land (or interest in land) for recreation or protection of land because of its environmental importance or scenic beauty, and the development of recreation facilities. This assistance is directed at creating and improving outdoor recreational opportunities and providing protection to valuable natural resources. The improvement grants are between \$15,000 and \$500,000 with a required minimum local match of 25 percent. Acquisition grants vary depending upon the value of property and local match amount; therefore, there is not a minimum or maximum amount. This grant is ideal for implementing community park plans and for land acquisition in the future. Applications are due in April and September of each year for acquisition projects and April of each year for development projects.
- Michigan Recreation Passport:** Provides capital improvement plans and development projects in communities throughout Michigan. Projects must be in public recreation use for the life of the project rather than perpetuity. Indoor recreation facilities and existing park locations are eligible for the grant. The primary focus is on improving and renovating existing parks. The application deadline is April 1st, with a November grant award announcement. Duration of the grant usually runs 3 years. The minimum grant request must be \$7,500 with a maximum request of \$45,000; there is a 25 percent match by the local municipality or organization. The 25 percent match can either be cash/credit (for locally assumed costs including labor and equipment) donations of goods and services from non-government entities, cash donations from non-governmental entities, or repurposed land.
- Community Development Block Grants:** Projects eligible for CDBG funding must be in a low-moderate income service area and/or provide access to the disabled to qualify.

Investments using CDBG funds must provide a documented benefit to low-moderate income households. Projects eligible for funding include public infrastructure improvements and those that provide ADA accessibility.

- **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF):** LWCF provides funding assistance for communities to acquire and develop land for outdoor recreation. The minimum award is \$15,000 and the maximum of \$500,000 with a 50 percent local match. The eligibility criterion emphasizes preservation of natural resources such as waterways. This grant is ideal for implementing community park plans for land acquisition in the future.
- **MEDC Patronicity Crowd Funding:** The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) has developed an additional way of securing funding for community development projects by using crowdfunding to support developments. Communities, non-profits, and municipalities can submit projects by applying to the Patronicity campaign. The projects that meet the programs parameters and successfully crowd-fund their goal will receive a matching grant from the MEDC of up to \$50,000.
- **Public-Private or Public-Public Partnerships:** Reduced funding at the public and private sector has created a need for various partnerships between public and private entities as well as between two or more public entities, to accommodate specialized large-scale recreation demands.
- **Donations:** Businesses, corporations, private clubs, community organizations and individuals will often contribute to recreation and other improvement programs to benefits the communities in which they are located. Private sector contributions may be in the form of monetary contributions, the donation of land, the provision of volunteer services, or the contribution of equipment or facilities.

Adoption Process

Public Hearing Notice

The following notice was placed in the Local Newspaper

**NOTICE OF
PUBLIC HEARING COMMENT PERIOD AND PUBLIC HEARING VASSAR
TOWNSHIP PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN**

December 15, 2021

The Vassar Township Parks and Recreation recently completed a draft update to the Vassar Township Parks and Recreation Plan. This is notice of the initiation of the 30- day review period and public hearing for the draft plan. The township of Vassar Parks and Recreation Committee will be holding a Public Review on Tuesday, January 18th, 2022 and the Vassar Township board of Trustees will be holding a public hearing on January 27th, 2022 at the Vassar Township Hall, 4505 West Saginaw Road Vassar, MI 48768.

Comments should be submitted to:

Parks and Recreation Plan Comments
Vassar Township Planning Commission
4505 West Saginaw Rd
Vassar, MI 48768

Please contact Corey Christensen, Planner at ROWE Professional Services Company if you have any questions concerning this notice or the plan. He can be reached at CChristensen@Rowepsc.com or by calling phone number (248) 915-5505

Public Hearing - Parks + Rec Master Plan

Call to Order - 7:00 P.M.

Pledge Allegiance to the Flag:

Note: 705 public hearing opened

- Roll Call
- Tom Borcharding
 - Ben Partridge
 - John Stack
 - Deborah Founds
 - Bruce - excused absent

Ben Partridge Motion to appoint Depa as the mediator for this meeting, seconded Tom

All in favor: 4 ayes 0 nays

To go over new Vassar Gap park + rec master plan update 2015-2019 plan to 2022-2027 plan

Overview of Township

Public perspective

Action programs - grants

if not in plan - can't apply for grants
approved by Parks + Rec committee

Does anyone wish to speak for or against plan
Russ commented on all the hard work on the plan

reiterated by Justice Zuvol

Public hearing closed at 7:11 by Tom B.

Ben Partridge - are the 30 days up or do we have to wait.

Ben Partridge made a motion to approve Resolution 03-2022 2nd by Tom Borcharding

Tom chaired the meeting

Questions - discussion

John makes a note for the budget to be considered for the annual

Roll call

John - Y 4 Y 1st 0 Rays

Bruce - ea

Tom Y

Ben - Y

Deb Y

Tom Borcharding filled in as Supervisor by motion and signed the Resolution

Public Comment - Thank you for

Adjourn - Motion to adjourn 7:45pm by Deborah Founds, second by Tom Borcharding

**APPENDIX I:
COMMUNITY PARK, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE AND GREENWAY
PLAN CERTIFICATION CHECKLIST**



Michigan Department of Natural Resources-Grants Management

**COMMUNITY PARK, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND
GREENWAY PLAN CERTIFICATION CHECKLIST**

By Authority of Parts 19, 703 and 716 of Act 451, P.A. 1994, as amended, submission of this information is required for eligibility to apply for grants

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete, obtain certification signatures and submit this checklist with a locally adopted recreation plan.

All recreation plans are required to meet the content and local approval standards listed in this checklist and as outlined in the *Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plans* provided by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Plans must be submitted to the DNR **with** a completed checklist that has been signed by an authorized official(s) of the local unit of government(s) submitting the plan. Plans may be submitted at any time of the year, but no later than March 1 of the year the local unit of government is applying for grants.

PLAN INFORMATION

Name of Plan: Vassar Township Park and recreation Master Plan, 2022 - 2027		
List the community names (including school districts) that are covered under the plan and have passed a resolution adopting the plan.	County	Month and year plan adopted by the community's governing body
Vassar Township	Tuscola County	January, 2022

PLAN CONTENT

INSTRUCTIONS: Please check **each** box to certify that the listed information is included in the **final** plan.

- 1. COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION
- 2. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE
 - Roles of Commission(s) or Advisory Board(s)
 - Department, Authority and/or Staff Description and Organizational Chart
 - Annual and Projected Budgets for Operations, Maintenance, Capital Improvements and Recreation Programming
 - Current Funding Sources
 - Role of Volunteers
 - Relationship(s) with School Districts, Other Public Agencies or Private Organizations
 - Regional Authorities or Trailway Commissions Only:**
 - Description of the Relationship between the Authority or Commission and the Recreation Departments of Participating Communities
 - Articles of Incorporation
- 3. RECREATION INVENTORY
 - Description of Methods Used to Conduct the Inventory
 - Inventory of all Community Owned Parks and Recreation Facilities
 - Location Maps (site development plans recommended but not required)
 - Accessibility Assessment
 - Status Report for all Grant-Assisted Parks and Recreation Facilities
 - Waterways Inventory (if applicable)
- 4. RESOURCE INVENTORY (OPTIONAL)
- 5. DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

PR1924-1 (Rev. 12/21/2016)

6. DESCRIPTION OF THE PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

Description of the Method(s) Used to Solicit Public Input Before or During Preparation of the Plan, Including a Copy of the Survey or Meeting Agenda and a Summary of the Responses Received

Copy of the Notice of the Availability of the Draft Plan for Public Review and Comment

Date of the Notice December 15, 2021

Type of Notice Newspaper

Plan Location Township Hall

Duration of Draft Plan Public Review Period (Must be at Least 30 Days) 30 Days

Copy of the Notice for the Public Meeting Held after the One Month Public Review Period and Before the Plan's Adoption by the Governing Body(ies)

Date of Notice December 15, 2021

Name of Newspaper Tuscola Advertiser

Date of Meeting January 27, 2022

Copy of the Minutes from the Public Meeting

7. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

8. ACTION PROGRAM

9. POST-COMPLETION SELF-CERTIFICATION REPORT(S)

PLAN ADOPTION DOCUMENTATION

APPROVAL DOCUMENTATION: For multi-jurisdictional plans, each local unit of government must pass a resolution adopting the plan. Prepare and attach a separate page for each unit of government included in the plan.

1. Official resolution of adoption by the governing body dated: January 27, 2022

2. Official resolution of the Parks and Recreation Committee Commission or Board, recommending adoption of the plan by the governing body, dated: January 18, 2022

3. Copy of letter transmitting adopted plan to County Planning Agency dated: January 31, 2022

4. Copy of letter transmitting adopted plan to Regional Planning Agency dated: January 31, 2022

OVERALL CERTIFICATION

NOTE: For multi-jurisdictional plans, Overall Certification must include the signature of each local unit of government. Prepare and attach a separate signature page for each unit of government included in the plan.

I hereby certify that the recreation plan for

_____ *includes the required content, as indicated*

(Local Unit of Government)

above and as set forth by the DNR.

Authorized Official for the Local Unit of Government _____ Date _____

This completed checklist must be uploaded in MiRecGrants.

Stakeholder Questions
Parks and Recreation Master Plan
Date

We recognize that some of you are more recent to your roles, while others might have participated in the development of previous park plans. This is a time to take a fresh look ahead and gain an understanding of views from newer members.

Please consider the following questions as a way to develop some initial goals and objectives for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan as well as a communication tool with fellow stakeholders.

1. What do you see as the greatest strength of the current parks and recreation opportunities in Vassar Township?
2. What do you see as the greatest opportunity for parks and recreation in Vassar Township?
3. What challenges do you feel keep parks and recreation in Vassar Township? held back from their potential?
4. What are the top three items you would like this Parks and Recreation Master Plan to address?
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
5. Do you see any partnerships that can be added or improved to help with parks and recreation programs, facilities development or maintenance?
6. How can this Parks and Recreation Master Plan help you in your current role?
7. Do you see the need for a separate funding source for parks and recreation in the next 5 years?
8. How would you rank the use of additional funding: expand / maintain existing parks, expand / maintain existing programs?

Comments:



Attachment A: Resolutions of Adoption

Vassar Township Parks and Recreation Committee Resolution

RESOLUTION # P+R 01-2022

VASSAR TOWNSHIP, TUSCOLA COUNTY, MICHIGAN
2022-2027 VASSAR TOWNSHIP
FIVE-YEAR PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN

WHERE AS, the Township of Vassar established the Parks and Recreation Committee to prepare a parks and recreation plan, and;

WHERE AS, the Vassar Township Parks and Recreation Committee has prepared a draft 2022-2027 Vassar Township Five-Year Parks and Recreation Plan, and;

WHERE AS, the goals and objectives of the draft 2022-2027 Vassar Township Five-Year Parks and Recreation Plan were developed in response to needs and deficiencies which were identified through public meetings, recreation provider interviews and recreation inventories, and;

WHERE AS, the Vassar Township Parks and Recreation Committee, following reviewed of the draft 2022-2027 Vassar Township Five-Year Parks and Recreation Plan at a public hearing held January 18, 2022 following public notice to solicit input on the draft plan has voted to approve the plan and recommend adoption by the Vassar Township Board, and;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Vassar Township Parks and Recreation Committee does hereby adopt the 2022-2027 Vassar Township Five-Year Parks and Recreation Plan and submits the plan to the Township Board for final approval.

THIS RESOLUTION WAS DULY ADOPTED BY THE VASSAR TOWNSHIP PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE AT A MEETING HELD JANUARY 18, 2022.

Janice made motion to adopt Park + Rec Res 01-2022 - Desire 2nd

Yeas: 4

Nays: 0

Absent: 2

Samuel S. Sester
Parks and Recreation Committee Secretary

Janice Zawol
Parks and Recreation Committee Chair

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*Dartse Foether
Sam Tester
Janice Zawol
Tom Borcharding
Shaun m. Donnell - AB
TROY EURICH - AB*

Vassar Township Board Resolution of Adoption

RESOLUTION # 03-2022

VASSAR TOWNSHIP BOARD, TUSCOLA COUNTY, MICHIGAN
2022-2027 VASSAR TOWNSHIP FIVE-YEAR PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN

WHEREAS, the Township of Vassar established the Parks and Recreation Committee and authorized it to prepare a parks and recreation plan, and;

WHEREAS, the Parks and Recreation Committee has prepared a draft 2022-2027 Five-Year Vassar Township Parks and Recreation Plan, and;

WHEREAS, the goals and objectives of the draft 2022-2027 Five-Year Vassar Township Parks and Recreation Plan were developed in response to needs and deficiencies which were identified through recreation provider interviews and survey responses, and;

WHEREAS, the Parks and Recreation Committee, reviewed the 2022-2027 Five-Year Vassar Township Parks and Recreation Plan at a public hearing held on January 27th following public notice to solicit input on the draft plan has voted to approve the plan and recommend adoption by the Vassar Township Board, and;

WHEREAS, the Vassar Township Board, reviewed the 2022-2027 Five-Year Vassar Township Parks and Recreation Plan at a public hearing held on January 27, 2022 following public notice to solicit input on the draft plan;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Vassar Township Board adopts 2022-2027 Five-Year Vassar Township Parks and Recreation Plan and authorizes ROWE Professional Services Company to execute and submit all necessary documents to the Tuscola County Planning Commission, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for approval of the plan.

THIS RESOLUTION WAS DULY ADOPTED BY THE VASSAR TOWNSHIP BOARD AT A MEETING HELD JANUARY 27, 2022.

Yeas: 4 *John Stack Bruce Goether EA Tom Bercharding Ben Partridge Deborah Danda*

Nays: 0

Absent: 1 *Bruce Goether*

acting supervisor by motion

Deborah Danda
Clerk

Thomas H Bandy
Supervisor

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Attachment B: Letters of Transmittal

January 31, 2022

Planning Commission
Tuscola County
440 N State St.
Caro, MI 48723


RE: Vassar Township 2022-2027 Parks & Recreation Plan Update

Dear Tuscola County Planning commission,

On behalf of Vassar Township, we are forwarding to you a copy of their recently adopted Parks & Recreation Plan. The plan is also being submitted to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at cchristensen@rowepsc.com or 810-341-7500.

Sincerely,
ROWE Professional Services Company



Corey Christensen
Planner

Attachments: 2022-2027 Vassar Township Parks and Recreation Plan

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VASSAR TOWNSHIP

PARK AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN | 2022-2027