



## **Leoni Township Recreation Plan**

2022-2026 edition

**Plan Approval and Adoption**

Recreation Committee ..... January 10, 2022

Leoni Township Board ..... January 11, 2022

Michigan Department of Natural Resources .....

**The 2016-2020 edition of the *Leoni Township Recreation Plan* will expire on December 31, 2026**

Prepared with the assistance of



**120 W. Michigan Avenue • Jackson, MI 49201 • (517) 788-4426**

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*(Source: Grant Bauman)*

Chapter 1

**Community Description & Administrative Structure**

Leoni Township Recreation Plan

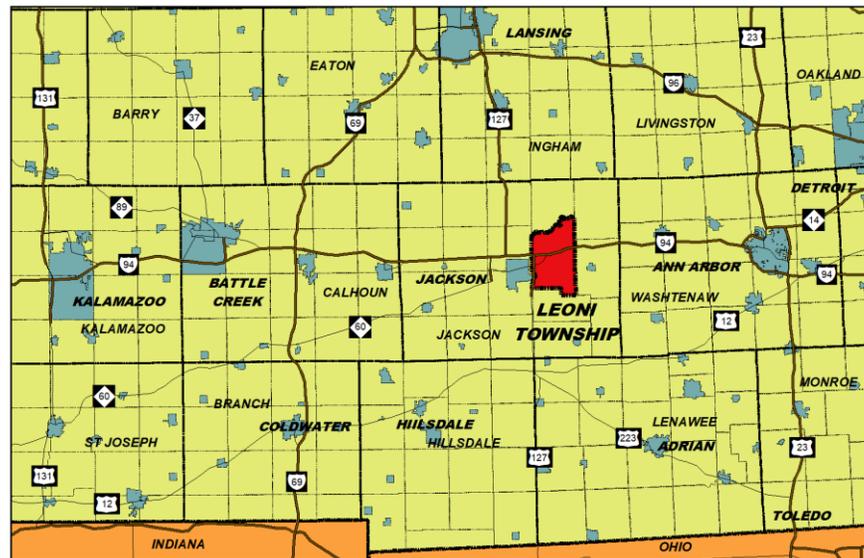
## Community Description

A priority of Leoni Township is to develop and implement a recreation plan which responds to the recreational desires of its citizens and plans for enhancements to its parks and recreation programs. A sincere effort was spent in developing this plan which represents the projected needs for recreation facilities and services in the Township. For example, the plan provides a clear picture of the recreational opportunities available to residents regardless of who provides them. Nontraditional recreation opportunities such as historic districts/structures and shopping opportunities are catalogued as well as traditional parks and recreation facilities.

## Location

Leoni Township comprises 51.3 square miles of Jackson County—on the east side of the City of Jackson—that is located in south-central Lower Michigan, close to the border with Northwest Ohio and Northeast Indiana. Interstate Highway 94 (I-94) and United States Highway 127 (US-127) converge in Metropolitan Jackson, earning the area the nickname of “Crossroads of Michigan. Those roads connect Leoni Township and the rest of Jackson County to Ann Arbor and Detroit to the east, Battle Creek and Kalamazoo to the west, and Lansing to the north.

### Regional Location



## A Brief Socioeconomic Summary

The demographic composition of the population of Leoni Township has an effect upon its recreational needs. Pertinent demographic components are listed below along with a brief paragraph describing the local situation. Each of the components is described in greater detail in Appendix A of this document.

- **Population History and Projections.** The population of Leoni Township was an estimated 13,807 people in 2010 according to the US Census. The American Community Survey (ACS) estimates that the Township’s population was approximately 13,660 people in 2019. The population of the Township is projected to grow to 13,981 people in 2025 and 14,269 people in 2035.
- **The Gender & Age of the Population.** The ACS estimated that females comprised approximately 50% of Township residents in 2019 (49% countywide and 51% statewide). It was also estimated that the median age of Leoni Township residents was 42.9 years in 2019 (41.3 years countywide and 39.8 years statewide). ‘Generation X’ (aged 35-54) was the largest age group with 26% of the population in 2019 (25% countywide and 24% statewide). ‘Generation Z’ and younger generations (aged ≤19 years) was the second largest age group with 25% of the population (24% countywide and statewide). ‘Baby Boomers’ (aged 55-74) was the third largest age group with 24% of the population (25% countywide and 24% statewide). ‘Millennials’ (aged 20-34 years) was the fourth largest age group with 17% of the population (19% countywide and 20% statewide). The ‘Silent’ and older generations was the smallest age group with 8% of the population (7% countywide and statewide).
- **Racial & Ethnic Minorities.** The population of Leoni Township is homogenous with few racial and ethnic minorities. For example, an estimated 97% of Township residents were estimated to be white in 2019 (87% countywide and 78% statewide). Persons of Hispanic origin—an ethnic group—comprised an estimated 3% of Township residents (4% countywide and 5% statewide).
- **The Disabilities of Residents.** Disabled individuals comprised small but significant segments of the Township population. For example, an estimated 16% of residents were disabled in some way in 2019 (15% countywide and 14% statewide] and 10% had an ambulatory disability (8% countywide and 7% statewide). The ACS estimates that more people become disabled as they age. It is interesting to note that an estimated 30% of residents at least 75 years of age had an ambulatory disability (24% countywide and 29% statewide).
- **Households & Families.** The ACS estimates that there were 5,678 households in Leoni Township in 2019. Married and cohabitating couples—with or without children—comprised 59% of those households (51% countywide and 53% statewide). Single parents with kids comprised an estimated 16% of households (15% countywide and 17% statewide). Single householders comprised an estimated 25% of households (34% countywide and 39% statewide) Average household size was estimated to be 2.40 people for the Township (2.43 people countywide and 2.46 people statewide). Average family size was estimated to be 2.85 people for the Township (3.16 countywide and 3.09 statewide). Less than 1% of Township residents lived in group quarters in 2019.

- Income.** The median household income was \$54,876 for all Leoni Township households in 2019 (\$55,124 countywide and \$59,584 statewide). The median family household income was \$61,013 in the Township (\$75,845 countywide and \$75,703 statewide). The median non-family household income in the Township was \$38,354 (\$31,064 countywide and \$35,755 statewide). Per capita income in the Township was \$34,167 (\$29,209 countywide and \$32,892 statewide).

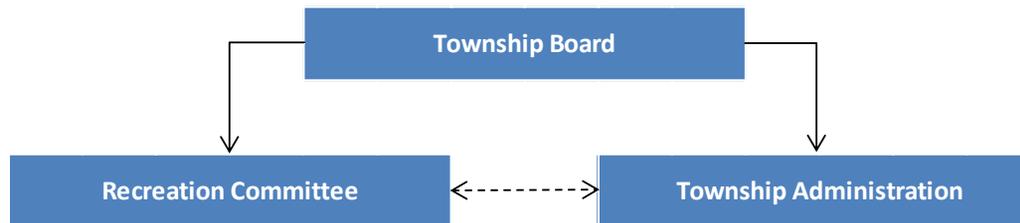
### Administrative Structure

The authority to provide public park systems and recreation programs is granted by the State of Michigan. Leoni Township’s park system is established under the authority of Public Act 156 of 1917, *Recreation and Playgrounds (MCL 125.51 et seq)*. The act allowed for the creation of the Recreation Committee under the control of the Leoni Township Board.

### Organizational Structure

The Recreation Committee is responsible for the initial planning of Leoni Township parks and recreation facilities and making recommendations to the Township Board. The Leoni Township Board of Trustees is responsible for constructing, maintaining, and administrating any parks and recreation facilities developed during the 5-year planning period of this document. The Township’s administration is responsible for the coordination of any recreation programing taking place in Township facilities. The Committee is also charged with studying and making recommendations on various recreation needs, advising the Township Board on recreation issues and making appropriate budget requests (see the organizational chart).

**Leoni Township Organizational Chart**



The following members comprise the Recreation Committee:

- 2 members of the Township Board appointed by the Board
- 3 Leoni Township residents appointed by the Board (1 from each school district is possible)

Any parks and recreation facilities developed by the Township will be administered in conjunction with its cemetery program. The Township Supervisor (or his/her designee) reports to the Leoni Township Board. The Township employs 3 people in its Department of Public Works which is involved in parks and recreation maintenance. The Township will also utilize individual volunteers and service groups to develop and maintain parks and volunteer to help with park cleanup.

### **Parks and Recreation Budgeting**

Leoni Township spent an average of \$14,162.42 maintaining its Parks for the past 4 years (July 1 through June 30). The Expenses were as low as \$10,208.24 in 2020-2021 and as high as \$18,626.60 in 2019-2020. Budgeting for the foreseeable future are likely to follow the same pattern.

### **Sources of Funding**

Leoni Township will utilize a variety of funding sources to maintain its parks and recreation facilities and programs:

- general tax fund dollars
- grants and donations awarded for specific projects

General fund tax dollars will be used by Leoni Township for the maintenance of any parks and recreation facilities, including the cost of producing this Plan. Grants will be sought from various state, federal, and philanthropic sources for the acquisition of any parkland and the development of a specific park or facility (e.g., trails, playgrounds, picnic shelters, sports facilities, etc.). Donations from the general public and various service organizations for a specific park or facility will also be accepted. A portion of the local match required of most grants may also come from the general fund or donations. Many grants for parks and recreational facilities are likely to come from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources through the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and the Land and Water Conservation Fund<sup>1</sup>

The Michigan Transportation Fund Act (Act 51) states that “a reasonable amount, but not less than 1% of” funds allocated to the state or a county, city, or village “shall be expended for construction or improvement of non-motorized transportation services and facilities.” That set-aside can be used to fund “an improvement in a road, street, or highway which facilitates non-motorized transportation . . . or improvement of a sidewalk or any other appropriate measure.” The Michigan Department of Transportation and the Jackson County Department of Transportation receive funding through Act 51. Coordination with those entities could result in the expenditure of Act 51 funds on non-motorized projects proposed within this document.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a Federal program administered locally by the State of Michigan.

## Relationships with Other Recreation Providers

Leoni Township is not the only supplier of parks and recreational opportunities to Township residents.

- **Schools.** Local school districts are significant suppliers of parks and recreational opportunities to their students and boosters as well as the general public. The service areas of the following school districts extend into Leoni Township:
  - Michigan Center School District
  - East Jackson Community Schools
  - Grass Lake Community Schools

The Michigan Center School District and East Jackson Community Schools maintain recreation facilities within Leoni Township. However, all recreation facilities maintained by Grass Lake Community Schools are located in or around the Village of Grass Lake. All 3 districts are part of the Jackson County Intermediate School District (ISD) which provides educational services to residents and local school districts, including some recreation facilities (see the School Districts map).

- **Local, County, State Government and Private Providers.** The City of Jackson and some of the townships surrounding Leoni Township also maintain parks, trails, and recreation programs. Leoni Township intends to participate with the other local governments within Jackson County in the planning for and provision of recreation facilities, including the Jackson City + County Nonmotorized Plan (see the Trail Planning map). The State of Michigan maintains a state recreation area which extends through Leoni Township. Jackson County maintains a county park within the Township. A variety of private entrepreneurs and quasi-public agencies also provide recreation facilities and programs in and around the Township. Please refer to Chapter 2 for a more detailed description of recreation facilities in Leoni Township.



(Source: Grant Bauman)



*Leoni Community Park*

*(Source: Grant Bauman)*

## Chapter 2

# **Recreation and Resource Inventories**

Leoni Township Recreation Plan

In order to plan for future parks and recreation facilities it is important to prepare a complete inventory of existing resources and facilities. The following inventory is comprised of all known parks, recreation facilities, and programs available in the Michigan Center Area or the rest of Leoni Township, not just those owned and managed by Leoni Township. The parks, facilities, and programs were identified through local knowledge and review of current and historic documents and maps.

### Township Parks

Township parks are the primary source of recreation for many residents. Leoni Township’s park system is comprised of 5 parks encompassing 21.5 acres of parkland and 2 trails traversing 2.6 miles (please see the following tables and maps). The system includes 2 community parks, a baseball field, the Township’s office, and an undeveloped property. The two roadside trails are along Ann Arbor Road, west of the Sergeant Road Interchange with I-94, and Page Avenue as it traverses Michigan Center.

#### TOWNSHIP PARKS AND TRAILS

MAP KEY	NAME OF FACILITY	OWNERSHIP	FACILITY TYPE	AREA (ACRES)	SERVICE AREA	FACILITIES	BFA
A	LEONI TOWNSHIP HALL	LEONI TOWNSHIP	TOWNSHIP OFFICE	6.5	LEONI TOWNSHIP	GOVERNMENT OFFICES	2
B	PETER ALEC BALL PARK	LEONI TOWNSHIP	BASEBALL FIELD	1.6	LEONI TOWNSHIP	BASEBALL FIELD	2
C	LEONI COMMUNITY PARK	LEONI TOWNSHIP	COMMUNITY PARK	4.3	LEONI TOWNSHIP	PAVILIONS (3), PLAYGROUND, REST ROOM, BOAT LAUNCH, PARKING, DOCK, WETLANDS, TRAILS	2
D	BENDER PARK	LEONI TOWNSHIP	COMMUNITY PARK	5.3	LEONI TOWNSHIP	PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT, PAVED WALKING PATH, PAVILION, BENCHES	2
E	MILL POND	LEONI TOWNSHIP	UNDEVELOPED	3.8	LEONI TOWNSHIP	PARKING AREA	N/A

MAP KEY	NAME OF FACILITY	OWNERSHIP	FACILITY TYPE	MILES	SERVICE AREA	FACILITIES	BFA
1	ANN ARBOR ROAD TRAIL	LEONI TOWNSHIP	ROADSIDE TRAIL	0.68	LEONI TOWNSHIP		5
2	PAGE AVENUE TRAIL	LEONI TOWNSHIP	ROADSIDE TRAIL	1.89	LEONI TOWNSHIP		4

**Barrier-Free Access**

It is important that the parks and recreation facilities operated by Leoni Township be accessible to people with disabilities. After all, it is estimated that approximately 16% of Township residents had some type of disability in 2019 according to the American Community Survey (ACS) and approximately 10% had an ambulatory difficulty. Accordingly, the parks and trails provided by the Township were also rated according to their level of barrier free access.<sup>1</sup> The number listed under the BFA column in the tables listing those parks equate to the barrier-free rating listed below:

**BARRIER-FREE ACCESS (BFA) ANALYSIS**

KEY	DESCRIPTION
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 PRINCIPAL OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN

**Grant-Assisted Parks and Recreation Facilities**

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources has awarded 1 recreation grant to Leoni Township.

**RECREATION GRANT HISTORY**

PARK NAME	PROJECT NUMBER	YEAR	USAGE
BENDER PARK	CM00-219	2000	THE PLAY EQUIPMENT, PAVILION AND OTHER PICNICKING FACILITIES, BIKE PATH, AND LIGHTS ARE STILL USED

**Park Standards and Types**

A park and recreation plan should also recognize and use appropriate park standards. The recommendation of the National Recreation and Parks Association (NPRA) is a minimum of 10 acres of parkland per 1,000 persons. Therefore, Leoni Township should have 139.8 acres of parkland in order to meet the needs of the population in 2025. The 21.5 acres of parks and recreational facilities provided by the Township do not come close to meeting that standard. However, the additional 3,073.6 acres of parks and recreation facilities provided by schools, other governments, quasi-public agencies, and private businesses far exceed that standard. According to the NRPA, school facilities generally function as community parks.

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<sup>1</sup> The analysis of barrier free access was provided by Leoni township, based upon its knowledge of the parks and understanding of barrier-free access. A professional analysis may produce different results.

### Local Schools

Leoni Township students are served by 3 school districts. However, only the Michigan Center School District and East Jackson Community Schools have facilities located in the Township. Schools provide a variety of recreational facilities. For example, elementary schools provide numerous playgrounds aimed at different age groups and sports fields. Middle and high schools provide football fields, ball diamonds and tennis courts. Elementary, middle, and high schools provide gymnasiums. Because of those facilities, schools generally function as community parks.

#### SCHOOLS

MAP KEY	NAME OF FACILITY	OWNERSHIP	FACILITY TYPE	AREA (ACRES)	SERVICE AREA	FACILITIES
G	EAST JACKSON ALTER-NATE SCHOOL	EAST JACKSON	SCHOOL	35.5	EAST JACKSON	
H	EAST JACKSON ELEMEN-TARY SCHOOL	EAST JACKSON	SCHOOL	29.3	EAST JACKSON	
I	EAST JACKSON SECOND-ARY SCHOOL	EAST JACKSON	SCHOOL	46.3	EAST JACKSON	
J	KEICHER ELEMENTARY	MICHIGAN CENTER	SCHOOL	7.1	MICHIGAN CENTER	
K	ARNOLD ELEMENTARY	MICHIGAN CENTER	SCHOOL	8.4	MICHIGAN CENTER	
L	MICHIGAN CENTER JR/SR HIGH SCHOOL	MICHIGAN CENTER	SCHOOL	39.6	MICHIGAN CENTER	
N	7TH STREET BALLFIELDS	MICHIGAN CENTER	RECREATION FACILITY	6.0	MICHIGAN CENTER	BASEBALL FIELDS
O	OUR LADY OF FATIMA	PRIVATE SCHOOL	SCHOOL	12.4	N/A	BASEBALL FIELDS

A private school operated by Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church is also located in Leoni Township. Grass Lake Community Schools provide the Little Warriors Pre-School and Daycare, George Long Elementary School, Grass Lake Middle School, and Grass Lake High School in or around the nearby Village of Grass Lake.

### Regional Parks and Recreation Facilities

A variety of other public agencies and private entrepreneurs also provide recreational opportunities to Township residents.

### Jackson County

Jackson County’s park system is comprised of 17 parks, most of which are adjacent to water —providing opportunities for swimming, boating, and/or fishing— making them community facilities. Gillett’s Lake County Park is located in Leoni Township, north of Michigan Center. Clear Lake, Grass Lake, Little Wolf Lake, and Vandercook Lake County Parks are other community facilities located in nearby townships. Pleasant Lake, Sparks Foundation (i.e., the Cascades), Swains Lake, and Burns County Parks are regional facilities available to Township residents. The Falling Waters Trail is also accessible to Township residents.

#### JACKSON COUNTY

MAP KEY	NAME OF FACILITY	OWNERSHIP	FACILITY TYPE	AREA (ACRES)	SERVICE AREA	FACILITIES
P	GILLETT’S LAKE COUNTY PARK	JACKSON COUNTY	COMMUNITY PARK	5.5	JACKSON COUNTY	SWIMMING AREA, SHELTER AND PICNIC AREA, PLAYGROUND, SOFTBALL DIAMOND, AND TOILETS

### City of Jackson

The City of Jackson’s park system is comprised of 27 parks. The Martin Luther King Center, Loomis Park, and William Nixon Memorial Park are nearby community facilities. Ella Sharp Park is a regional facility as is the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Equity Trail (i.e., formerly the Intercity Trail).

### State Parks

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), a significant provider of regional parks and recreation facilities, several of which extend into Leoni Township and Jackson County.

The Waterloo Recreation Area provides opportunities for cross-county skiing, snowmobiling, boating, fishing, hiking, mountain biking, swimming, horseback riding, picnicking, playing (i.e., playgrounds), and camping. The Waterloo Game Unit (part of the Waterloo Recreation Area) provides opportunities for hunting. The DNR also maintains boat launches on Center Lake and Gillett’s Lake in Leoni Township.

#### STATE OF MICHIGAN

MAP KEY	NAME OF FACILITY	OWNERSHIP	FACILITY TYPE	AREA (ACRES)	SERVICE AREA	FACILITIES
Q	PUBLIC BOAT LAUNCHES	STATE OF MICHIGAN-DNR	BOAT LAUNCH	1.5 2.6	REGIONAL	CENTER LAKE BOAT LAUNCH GILLETTS LAKE BOAT LAUNCH

MAP KEY	NAME OF FACILITY	OWNERSHIP	FACILITY TYPE	AREA (ACRES)	SERVICE AREA	FACILITIES
R	WATERLOO RECREATION AREA (PORTION)	STATE OF MICHIGAN-DNR	STATE PARK	1,903.9	REGIONAL	CROSS COUNTRY SKIING, HIKING, SNOWMOBILING, WATCHABLE WILDLIFE, BOAT LAUNCH, FISHING, HUNTING, MOUNTAIN BIKING, SWIMMING, CAMPING

The Walter J Hayes State Park provides opportunities for boating, fishing, picnicking, metal detecting, swimming, and camping as well as playgrounds. The Sharonville and Grass Lake Unit State Game Areas provide other opportunities for hunting. The DNR also maintains 6 other boat launches in Jackson County, including Portage Lake in Waterloo Township.

### Private and Quasi-Public Parks and Recreation Facilities

A number of private and quasi-public institutions also provide recreation facilities.

### Wildlife Preserve

Adjacent to the Waterloo Recreation Area is the Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Audubon Sanctuary, which is located almost entirely in Leoni Township. Known for its Sandhill Cranes, the wildlife preserve also provides opportunities to observe other animals such as deer, squirrels, and birds from its hiking trails. Other preserves, including the Dahlem Center, the MacCready Reserve, and the Kate Palmer Sanctuary are located nearby in Jackson County.

#### WILDLIFE PRESERVE

MAP KEY	NAME OF FACILITY	OWNERSHIP	FACILITY TYPE	AREA (ACRES)	SERVICE AREA	FACILITIES
S	PHYLLIS HAEHNLE MEMORIAL AUDOBON SANCTUARY (PORTION)	MICHIGAN AUDOBON SOCIETY	WILDLIFE PRESERVE	968.5	REGIONAL	

### Recreation and Sport Centers

Suburban lanes, a bowling alley, is located in Leoni Township off of Ann Arbor Road.

**RECREATION AND SPORTS CENTERS**

MAP KEY	NAME OF FACILITY	OWNERSHIP	FACILITY TYPE	AREA (ACRES)	SERVICE AREA	FACILITIES
T	SUBURBAN LANES	PRIVATE	BOWLING ALLEY	0.5	REGIONAL	12 LANES, RESAURANT AND BAR, PRO SHOP, AND BANQUET FACILITY

Other recreation and sports facilities are located in the Jackson Urbanized Area. For example, American Legion baseball facilities are located in the City of Jackson and Blackman Township. JAX 60, another bowling alley, is located in Blackman Township. The YMCA of Jackson provides a variety of sports and recreational activities and the Optimist Ice Arena, also located in Jackson, provides a venue for hockey and skating. Finally, the Michigan Sports Facility of Jackson in Blackman Township specializes in basketball leagues and tournaments and contains a fitness center.

**Golf Courses**

Leoni Township hosts 2 private golf courses: Pine Hollow Golf Course and Lakeland Hills Golf Course. A variety of private courses are located in Jackson County. Most of those courses are open to the general public.

**GOLF COURSES**

MAP KEY	NAME OF FACILITY	OWNERSHIP	FACILITY TYPE	AREA (ACRES)	SERVICE AREA	FACILITIES
U	PINE HOLLOW GOLF COURSE	PRIVATE	GOLF COURSE	169.9	REGIONAL	18-HOLE GOLF COURSE, CLUBHOUSE AND PARKING AREA
V	LAKELAND HILLS GOLF COURSE	PRIVATE	GOLF COURSE	107.2	REGIONAL	18-HOLE GOLF COURSE, CLUBHOUSE, AND PARKING AREA

**Camps and Campgrounds**

A variety of private campgrounds throughout Leoni Township also provide individual campsites to patrons.

### CAMPGROUNDS

MAP KEY	NAME OF FACILITY	OWNERSHIP	FACILITY TYPE	AREA (ACRES)	SERVICE AREA	FACILITIES
W	HIDEAWAY CAMPGROUND	PRIVATE	CAMPGROUND	55.4	REGIONAL	
X	THE OAKS CAMPGROUND	PRIVATE	CAMPGROUND	37.8	REGIONAL	
Y	SHERWOOD FOREST CAMPGROUND	PRIVATE	CAMPGROUND	70.5	REGIONAL	
Z	GREENWOOD ACRES CAMPGROUND	PRIVATE	CAMPGROUND	183.5	REGIONAL	
AA	CAMP TEETONKA	PRIVATE	CAMPGROUND		REGIONAL	

#### Other Recreation Facilities

Michigan International Speedway is the most conspicuous of the private recreation facilities located in Jackson County. However, a wide variety of privately provided recreational opportunities are available to their members and/or the general public including nature preserves, gun and sportsmen’s clubs, and other clubs.

#### Trails & Trail Planning & Programming

Networks of trails and “blueways” (i.e., water trails) are continuing to develop throughout Leoni Township and Jackson County.

#### Jackson City + County Nonmotorized Plan

The Region 2 Planning Commission, the City of Jackson, and Jackson County developed the *Jackson City + County Nonmotorized Plan* that covers all of Jackson County, including Leoni Township. It provides an update to the *Jackson County Regional Trailway Study* completed in 2002. Potential on-road and off-road nonmotorized projects throughout Jackson County, including Leoni Township, are identified in that document (see the Trail Planning map). Please see the nonmotorized plan for a complete listing of proposed nonmotorized facilities. **The *Jackson City + County Nonmotorized Plan* is adopted by reference as part of this plan.**

### **On-Road Nonmotorized Transportation**

With the exception of freeways, Jackson County’s roads and street are available for use by pedestrians and bicyclists. Consequently, this Recreation Plan states that Leoni Township supports the goal of complete streets, which “means roadways, planned, designed, and constructed to provide appropriate access to all legal users in a manner that promotes safe and efficient movement of people and goods whether by car, truck, transit, assistive device, foot, or bicycle,” as defined by Public Act 51 of 1951 (State Trunk Line Highway System), as amended. Accordingly, Leoni Township officials will advise the Jackson County Department of Transportation (JCDOT) and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) on future road and street projects within Leoni Township regarding the inclusion of appropriate nonmotorized facilities (e.g., sidewalks, bike lanes, paved shoulders, trails, etc.).

### **Upper Grand River Water Trail Development Plan**

Water trails are comprised of canoe/kayak launch sites connecting together signed stretches of river (and lakes) maintained for paddling. The *Upper Grand River Water Trail Development Plan*, adopted by the Upper Grand River Watershed Council in 2017, proposes several water trails in Jackson County. The Upper Grand River Water Trail will flow from the Liberty Mill Pond (Liberty Township) to Eaton Rapids (Eaton County), as well as on the North Branch of the river from the unincorporated village of Michigan Center (Leoni Township) to the confluence with the main channel (City of Jackson). The Chain of Lakes Water Trail will flow from Little Wolf Lake County Park (Napoleon Township) to Leoni Community Park on the shore of Center Lake (unincorporated village of Michigan Center). Those trails were recognized as state-designated water trails by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) in 2018. Please see the water trail development plan for a complete listing of the proposed canoe/kayak launch sites. **The *Upper Grand River Water Trail Development Plan* is adopted by reference as part of this plan.**

### **Public and Private Facilities with Recreational Benefits**

Various other facilities provided publicly and privately also have recreational benefits:

- **Jackson District Library (JDL)** — The Eastern Branch of the JDL is located in Leoni township on Michigan Avenue, east of Dettman Road, provides access to books and other items of entertainment (e.g., audio books, CDs, DVDs, etc.); the JDL operates 12 other library branches including the (main) Carnegie Branch in Downtown Jackson.
- **Airports** — Airports provide opportunities for recreational activities as well as transportation. For example, Reynolds Field (Jackson County Airport) provides opportunities for recreational flying; Napoleon Airport provides opportunities for flying and parachuting.
- **Sidewalks** — Some of Leoni Township’s streets have sidewalks; those facilities are used for exercise as well as transportation and may even connect with non-motorized trails.

- **Shopping and Eating** — Many people enjoy shopping and going out to eat. Consequently, Downtown Michigan Center and the downtowns of Brooklyn, Concord, Grass Lake, Hanover, Jackson, Napoleon, Parma, and Spring Arbor are recreation destinations because of their restaurants and/or shops. The proximity of those downtown areas to each other —as well as the various shops and restaurants scattered throughout the rest of Jackson County— increase the opportunities for this type of activity.
- **Local Colleges**
  - There are several colleges which maintain campuses in Jackson County. Baker College’s local campus is located in Blackman Township, north of the Jackson County Airport. Jackson College’s central campus is located in Summit Township and its Maher Campus is located in Blackman Township. Finally, Spring Arbor University’s main campus is located in the unincorporated village of Spring Arbor.
  - Many colleges provide access to collegiate sports and athletic facilities. Township residents can also avail themselves of the other recreational facilities and programs hosted by those institutions. For example, The Potter Center (Jackson College) “is comprised of the most versatile and complete performing arts complex in the area.”<sup>2</sup> The Ganton Gallery (Spring Arbor University) “is one of the largest, single-room galleries in Michigan.”<sup>3</sup>

## Recreation Events and Programs

A wide variety of recreation programs are available to Township residents. However, it must be pointed out that many of the recreation providers listed above also provide recreational programs. For example, the various bowling alleys also host bowling leagues. The Jackson District Library hosts a summer reading program. The Michigan Center School District and East Jackson Community Schools both provide a variety of sports programs for their students. Area service/social clubs—Michigan Center Lions Club, Michigan Center Rotary Club, Three Horse Club, and Michigan Center Eagles Club—also provide a variety of programs/events open to the public, such as the Annual Carp Carnival (Michigan Center Lions Club).

## Resource Inventory

In addition to recreation facilities, Jackson County and the City of Jackson are also home to a wide variety of cultural and natural resources.



(Source: Grant Bauman)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.jccmi.edu/events/pottercenter/theatres.htm>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.arbor.edu/edu\\_detail.aspx?id=37930](http://www.arbor.edu/edu_detail.aspx?id=37930)

## **Topography**

“Topography in the area of Jackson County” (according to the 2000-2025 edition of the [Jackson Community Comprehensive Plan](#)) “can be described as gently rolling, moderately hilly morainal uplands”. There is a 192 foot difference in the low and high elevations in Leoni Township (see the Topography Map). Low elevations of 904 feet above sea level are located on the northern border of the Township in the vicinity of the Portage River Drain. The high elevation of 1,096 feet is located in the vicinity of I-94 and Race Road (i.e., Exit 147) near the eastern border of the Township.

## **Water Resources**

The Upper Grand River Watershed covers all of Leoni Township. However, various sub-watersheds cover various portions of the municipality (see the Watersheds Map). For example, sub-watersheds associated with the Portage River are located in the northern half of Leoni Township. The majority of Michigan Center is located in the Center Lake Sub-Watershed.

In addition to the Grand and Portage Rivers, Leoni Township is blessed by many lakes and wetlands (see the Hydrology Maps). For example, large lakes such as Center, Gillett’s, Brills, and Goose are located in the Township. Wetlands exist throughout Leoni Township.

## **Transportation**

Leoni Township and Michigan Center share a well-connected transportation system. Interstate 94 (I-94) traverses the Township from east-to-west, providing access to the major metropolitan areas of Chicago and Detroit. United States Highway 127 (US-127) runs along the western edge of the Township. It provides access to the Lansing area and other points north as well as Adrian and Toledo to the south. A wide variety of county primary roads provide access to those major roadways. For example, Page Avenue provides access to Michigan Center.

## **Soils**

The types of soils found in Jackson County are important to its development. For example, the 2000-2025 edition of the [Jackson Community Comprehensive Plan](#) identifies lands suitable for agricultural preservation as well as the establishment of greenways. That plan contains a map of ‘Agricultural Preservation Areas’ which identifies parcels of land eighty (80) acres or more in size with soils classified as prime or unique for agricultural production by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The location of active agricultural land, the location of agricultural and open space areas on township future land use plans, and existing proposed sewer service areas also impacted the designation of those areas. The ‘Jackson County Greenways Plan’ map contained in the document identifies a possible network of greenways which “generally follows wetland areas, drainage ways, and forested lands” (see the Farmland & Greenways Map).

## **Land Use**

The latest Leoni Township Future Land Use Plan map was published in the 2030 edition of the Leoni Township Master Plan (see the Future Land Use Map). It recognizes Michigan’s Waterloo Recreation Area, the Audubon Society’s Phyllis Haehnle Wildlife Sanctuary, and several agricultural

preservation areas recommended in the 2000-2025 edition of the Jackson Community Comprehensive Plan. Other significant parks and recreation facilities are also recognized on the map (see the Future Land Use Map).



*Center Lake*

*(Source: Grant Bauman)*

### Chapter 3

## **Descriptions of the Planning and Public Input Processes**

Leoni Township Recreation Plan

## Description of the Planning Process

The development of the first edition of the *Leoni Township Recreation Plan* included the following steps:

- Leoni Township recognized the need to update the Recreation Plan
- The Recreation Committee was formed
- The Township contracted with Region 2 Planning Commission staff to assist the Recreation Committee in the development of the 2022-2026 edition of the Recreation Plan
- The Recreation Committee conducted a survey of Leoni Township Area residents, business owners, and park and recreation consumers
- Region 2 staff created the community description; administrative structure; recreation and resource inventories; and descriptions of the planning and public input processes chapters of the Plan, including mapping, and reported the findings to the Recreation Committee
- The Recreation Committee utilized the input collected from the various public involvement efforts and the information produced by Region 2 staff to develop the goals and objectives and action program chapters of the Plan
- The Recreation Committee provided the Plan for public review from December 10, 2021 through January 10, 2022
- The Recreation Committee held a public hearing on January 10, 2022, approving the Plan and recommended adoption by the Township Board
- The Township Board adopted the Recreation Plan on January 11, 2022

## Description of the Public Input Process

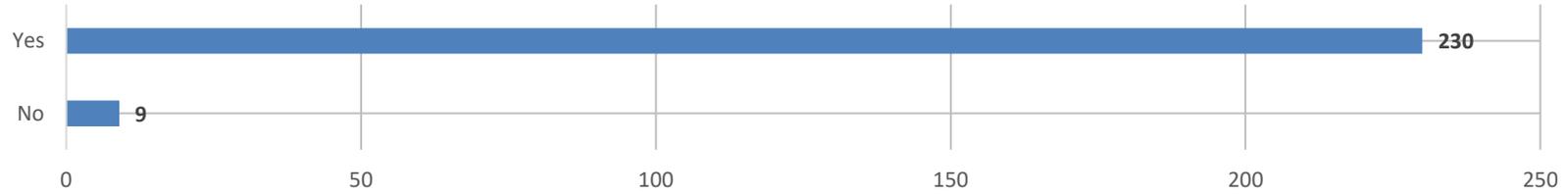
A variety of methods were employed to incorporate public input into the development of this Recreation Plan:

### Recreation Survey

An online survey was conducted from June 1, 2021 through August 3, 2021. The 240 responses can be summarized as follows:

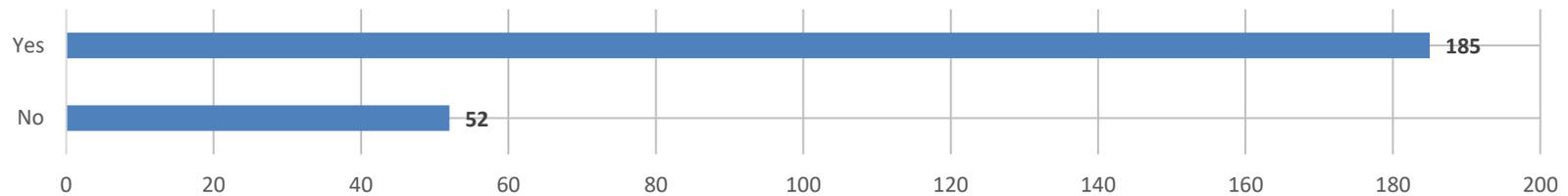
- **Are you a Leoni Township resident?**

Almost all respondents (96%) were Leoni Township residents (n=239). Only 4% of respondents lived somewhere else.



- **Will additional/improved parking improve the usage of Township park and recreation facilities?**

Most respondents (78%) felt that better parking would improve the usage of parks and recreation facilities operated by Leoni Township (n=237). Only 22% of respondents stated no.



- **Do you support the development of any of the following?**

- **Non-motorized trail expansion.**

Most respondents (88%) were in favor of non-motorized pathway expansion (n=238). Only 12% were against trails.



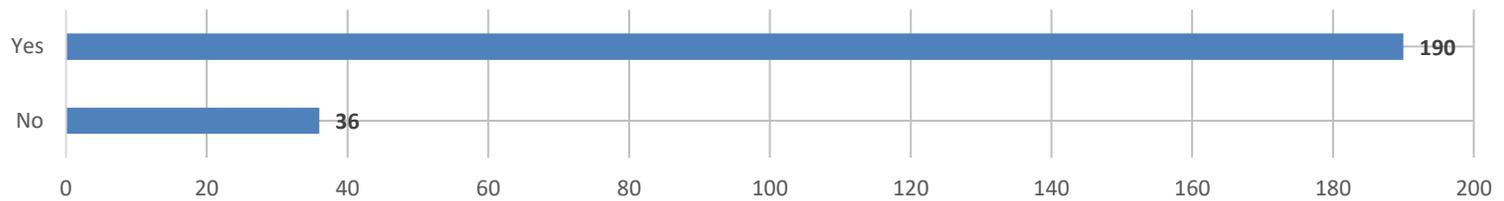
- **Water trail (i.e., kayaking/canoeing) on the Chain of Lakes**

Most respondents (87%) were in favor of a water trail on the Chain of Lakes (n=230). Only 13% were against a water trail.



- **Water trail (i.e., kayaking/canoeing) on the Grand River**

Most respondents (84%) were in favor of a water trail on the Grand River (n=226). Only 16% were against a water trail.



- **Kayak/canoe livery/launch at Leoni Community Park**

Most respondents (90%) were in favor of a livery/launch for canoes/kayaks at the park (n=229). Only 10% were against a livery/launch.



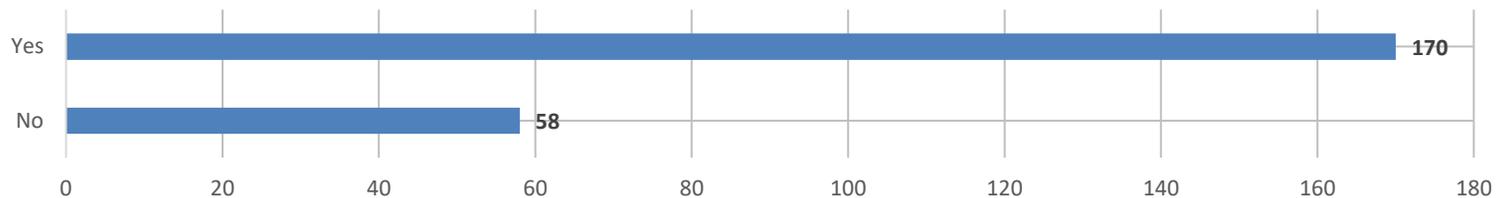
- **Playground equipment**

Almost all respondents (92%) were in favor of a playground equipment (n=234). Only 8% were against playgrounds.



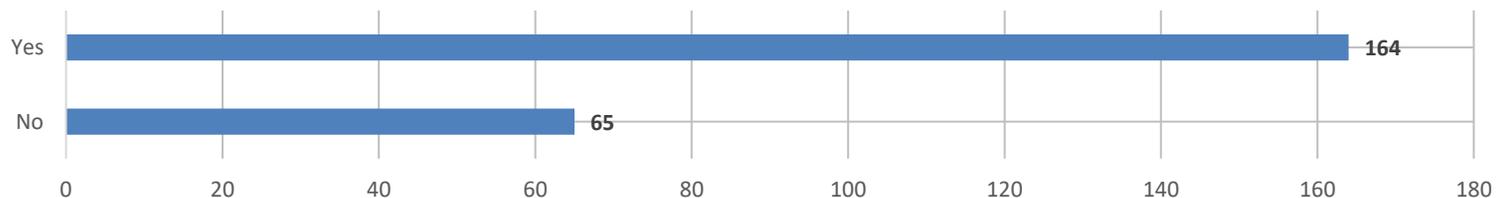
- **Athletic Fields (e.g., football, soccer, baseball, softball, etc.)**

Most respondents (75%) were in favor of athletic fields (n=228). Only 25% were against athletic fields.



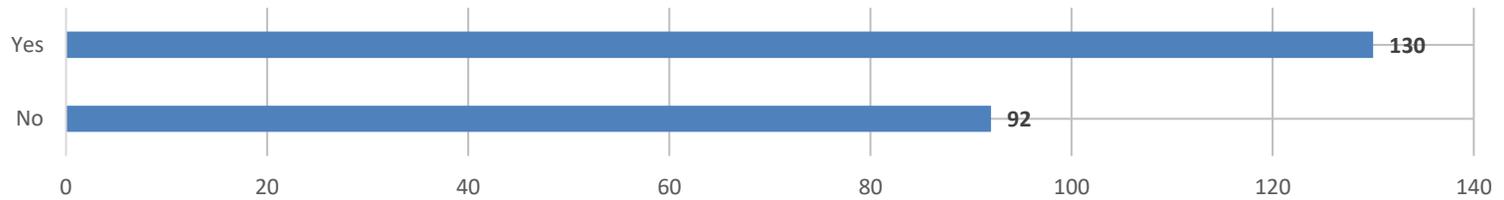
- **Basketball and tennis courts**

Most respondents (72%) were in favor of basketball and tennis courts (n=229). Only 28% were against courts.



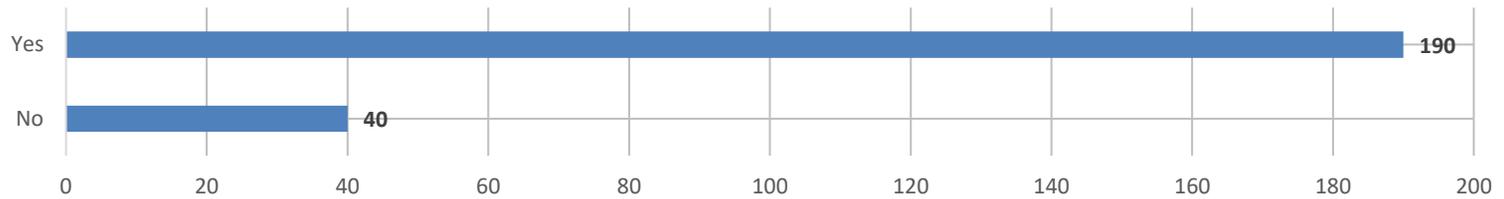
- **Disc (Frisbee) golf**

More than half of respondents (59%) were in favor of disc (Frisbee) golf (n=222). Only 41% were against disc golf.



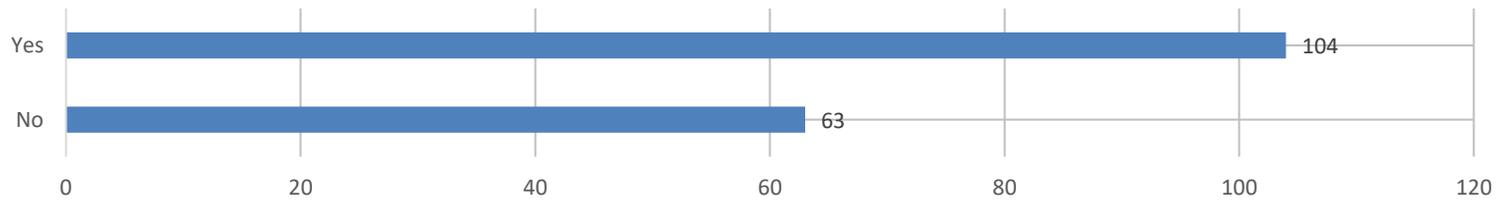
- **Community flower gardens**

Most respondents (83%) were in favor of community flower gardens (n=230). Only 17% were against gardens.



- **Other recreation facilities**

More than half of respondents (62%) were in favor of other recreation facilities (n=167). Only 38% were against other facilities.



The following are the types of other recreation facilities respondents suggested:

---

I support any type of improvement with our town. My only one main suggestion is to put thought and care into the upkeep of what we already have. It just seems like anytime that there's an investment that it's really nice for a few years but it slowly falls apart because it's never taken care of. An example is the wooden dock that used to be up at the lake. [It] had looked so beautiful when it was put in, and there were even nice stairs to get down into the water. This made the swimming area much more kid friendly! But the stairs were never removed, so after the first winter they rotted and had to be removed and were never replaced. The wood dock was removed this year and I very well doubt that's going to be replaced anytime soon. So regardless of what is put in place there needs to be a bigger focus on the long-term care and maintenance.

---

Improvement in fishing habitat

---

I would like to see the 5th street boat launch paved. Its time to up grade that lot.

---

The boat launch on 5th street needs to be widened to accommodate two wide launching. Wasted space and waits/[backups].

---

Kayak and canoe rental shop.

---

An actually pavilion with stage would be great.

---

Volleyball sand court Gas available on lake

---

DISC GOLF COURSE

---

Fishing piers - rifle range - clean up the island make it useful

---

[Pickleball] courts

---

Fishing dock into a lake

---

Art wall graffiti expression

---

Possibly Vendors in the park selling ice cream, another selling bait...etc.

---

Where there is demand and room I would consider basketball and tennis courts. Thank you for caring about our community.

---

[Picnicking]

---

Pickleball/tennis courts

---

Mini golf, waterslides, splash pad

---

Community Recreational Marijuana growing area- fitting with the township that is the Marijuana Capital of MI.

---

An area for live music, food trucks, and a farmers market type area in the park for local sellers.

---

Please build a bike path down Huggins [Rd] from the lake to the golf course. We have tons of families who ride and walk the street and it would be safer and more used if you built a path. They go round trip lake to golf course and back on Huggins

---

Anything that will draw people.

---

I completely support utilizing our [waterways] for kayaking an DC family recreation.
Restroom
Golf putting green
Playground equipment is a huge must. My toddler always wants to go to the park but there is no playground equipment her size to enjoy.
Community swimming pool. Community indoor recreation center
Updated public restrooms
Basketball courts would get more use than tennis. Both are combined in the same section above. walking and running paths/trails and a kayak or canoe launch would give the community more outdoor recreational opportunities. Also in Vandercook, they have a rental place for kayaks. I wish that was available here so I didn't have to go to Vandercook Lake to kayak. And for trails and walking I have to go elsewhere too. That results in me stopping places and spending money outside of Leoni Township. Another note, if we had trails and/or waking paths then there would be less students and residents on the roads. I always see a lot of students running cross country and for sports on Falahee and Flansburg, it's dangerous. A safer environment just for running and [walking] would be really nice for the community and youth. Also flowers everywhere! Like in Holland, MI would be awesome. We need to hide some of the dumpy homes and the 100 car lots that are everywhere.
Please have a trail around Gillette's Lake for everyone to enjoy instead of going on a busy road.
Sandy beach would be amazing ♥
Please include gilletts lake area.
Would love to see a walking/riding trail around the park at Gilletts Lake. Roads are narrow in the area & not safe for kids riding.
Splash pad
Small skate park/bmx. Such an under looked clean hobby for kids of all ages.
Pickleball courts too!
I think basketball courts are a good idea, tennis courts not so much, another pavilion or two would be nice, the playground equipment would be a huge plus, maybe some sort of kayak rental similar to vandercook lake could happen.
Designated swim area at the park; More seating throughout the park; Picnic tables throughout the park
Marked off swimming area by park
Bathrooms open with running water. More picnic tables.
Splash Pad in the 5th St park.

- **Would you support the following activities in Leoni Township parks?**

- **Movies**

Most respondents (88%) were in favor of movies in the parks (n=228). Only 12% were against movies.



- **Concerts**

Almost all respondents (97%) were in favor of concerts in the parks (n=235). Only 3% were against concerts.



- **Car/boat/motorcycle/tractor shows**

Almost all respondents (91%) were in favor of car/boat/motorcycle/tractor shows in the parks (n=229). Only 9% were against shows.



- **Street fairs/community parties**

Almost all respondents (97%) were in favor of street fairs/community parties in the parks (n=236). Only 3% were against fairs/parties.



- **What have you seen at parks or recreation facilities in other communities that you would like to see in Leoni Township?**

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Street parties. Food trucks

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Farmers market

---

Basketball courts, flower gardens, playgrounds, street fairs

---

Dog park

---

Paved walking/biking trails, better playground equipment with cork ground area instead of grass or dirt.

---

Just a better maintained area. Functioning bathrooms (not porta potties) and a kid-friendly swimming area.

---

No

---

a really nice playground and a larger picnic area/[pavilion]

---

Street/Farmers markets

---

Car shows, BBQ craft shows

---

More vendors on the weekends.

---

Street/Farmers markets

---

A better development of our waterway access. It would be nice to start kayaking the Grand River after the dam and towards the City of Jackson.

---

STAGED PAVILION. They also sold pop, water, snacks to raise money for the park and pavilion.

---

Weekend Christmas Holliday market, Food, beverage, Christmas related gift booths.

---

Community garden; Farmers Market
Food trucks...more playground equipment
Farmers Market, Live Music
Street sweeping, trash and parking lots pickup and clean up; residents cleaning up their properties, trail cams in certain areas, pet poop stations.
Kayak rental, paddle boat rentals, swim/beach area
Farmers market
Different tournaments (cornhole/bags, horseshoe, etc.)
Family movie nights in the park are great in the summer.
A dedicated day for celebrating the community, cars shows, craft shows, farmers market, Scottish games, lumber jack [competitions].
Clean bathroom
Concerts, vendors and food trucks all at the same time.
A better fishing area at the park
Decent sized playground that's well kept. Less [potholes]. Bike paths
Na
Splash pad
Golf carts allowed to travel in town
A place to rent for reunions, showers, weddings.
Nothing
Public restrooms, larger picnic/pavilion area, craft shows, community events for the holidays- Easter egg hunts (I believe we used to do this).
Winter/ice festival, exercise trail with basic equipment, walking running path, nature trails, community garden, better dock infrastructure
Food trucks on [Thursdays]
good, well lit, safe playgrounds.
NA
The Clydesdales, fire truck explaining how they work, animals from rescue organizationaS for adoption

A water park section for the kids like Cascades
Movies. Craft shows. Old car shows
Playground equipment
Art in the park
Dog Park
Art / craft fairs
Fireworks
Car shows
Pickleball courts
Waterpark minigolf
Community uniting
Haven't seen much since we bought our weekend home 3 years ago
More gazebo seating
Cleanliness plus more grass less weeds. Fertilization program with irrigation would be beneficial.
Community events (Michigan Center Park). Basketball courts
N/a
Farmer's market
Farmers market
Trees and bushes for shaded areas, clean restroom facilities, swimming area/small water park/fountain area. Good lighting
Larger playground and picnic areas
Fountains in the lake
N/a
craft show
Nice restrooms
Food trucks,
Benches by the water. Better garbage clean up.

Restrooms, pickle ball. We should take advantage of the waterfront.
Bathrooms
Craft shows, music,
Historical info and water way map showing the area. Grills.
Fenced in area for dogs
Overall, I feel a community-feel is lacking in Leoni, especially compared to 15 years ago. I moved and came back from Napoleon and they are a much tighter-knit group of GOOD people there. I feel like good people aren't moving here and it's just run down. SO, any recreational activities will help at this point!!!! As long as it doesn't smell like a marijuana fest. Kayaking is a great idea we would utilize! More playground equipment at the park, definitely. Hope the carnival will come back. That really set Center apart from neighboring communities. Love what you're trying in the park this year and hope it's successful. The Lions Club does so much, too around the holidays.
Bring back carp carnival
-Fall Beer Festival -Winter Carnival -Local FFA to clean up park/add landscape as part of community project. -Art Fair -Playground equipment for all ages
Canoe launch area
Traffic Jam Car Show close down 5th street from Shell to DQ.
Actual permanent restroom facilities with access to working water fountains (including the type allowing people to fill water bottles)
Flea market and vegetable stands
Swings for the disabled
Concerts. Craft or flea markets
Picnic areas, biking trail away from main road, better public restrooms
Food trucks, ice cream trucks, lifeguards
Farmers market
More trails, additional seating and more unique games
Nice waking/biking trails, places for kayaking/canoeing with access and parking.
Farm markets
Craft fairs

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Can't think of anything at the moment.
Farmers market, vendors
Kayaking for the chain of lakes
Walking/running trails and paths; launch areas for kayaks and canoes or rental both for the community to rent; basketball courts, activities like concerts and movies in the park.
Playground equipment for 1-5 year olds. Swings with infant swing
New walking/bike paths
More trails/things to do
Nothing I can think of
Food vendors
Flea markets, street fairs, yoga
Art/craft shows!
Rentals...canoe/kayak, bike rentals for trails, etc.
Diagonal parking on the street just as your development plan states!
Bike trails, pickleball courts
Maintenance
Art fair in Ann Arbor, car show in [Jackson]
Better rest rooms
Farmers market on Friday/Saturday
Craft shows
Street lights
Better play structures for the kids
Trails, playgrounds, live music, food vendors
more picnic tables and bathroom area with running water open to public
A play structure for kids!
Farmers market

---

More playground equipment for young children.
Farmer's market
Wider range of play structure for kids
Splash pad
More playground equipment. Swimming spot.
Farmers markets
A bmx/ skate park. There isn't one anywhere in Jackson that is free for the kids.
Farmers market
Music
All of the above are great ideas. Community gardens or senior events
Ice sculptures, farmer's markets
Trails, fishing, other activities already mentioned
Plant flower in pots (adopt planter with name on it like downtown Jackson)
More playground equipment
Outdoor exercise classes
Arts/Crafts Vendors with Food trucks on site.
Things going on over the weekends, a lot of people work weekdays and right now the only thing going on is during the week
Farmers market
Actual playground
Better parking; expanded parking for boat launch area; Move vehicles with trailers to the lot on the west side of the street. Create a non-parking area so vehicles can actually get to the boat launch with their boats instead of having to fight with vehicles parked in the middle of the launch area. Expanded fishing docks.
Kid based activities such as storybook walks, scavenger hunts, historical information about Leoni twp., etc.
Bike storage that owners can lock. Fenced off pet area.
A playground [that] incorporates young children to play on. We have the schools playground for older children but nothing for young ones to get outside and get active. Also movies or community events [that] are safe and are kid friendly.
Flea market and farmers market

---

Art festivals, music

---

Walking, bike trails. Sidewalks need fixed

---

My young children and I would LOVE to see a larger, more expansive playground set please <3

---

More events for kids and even teens. These kids need more things to do other than be on their phones or getting in trouble

---

Music, Farmers Markets, Fall Festivals

---

- **General comments**

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None

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None

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I hope that this new energy of wanting to bring more to the township is something that continues. Yet I know that we're really lacking for things that kids can do. We got a lake but there's no real defined swimming area. I would love to see maybe paddleboat rentals canoe rentals just different things that could bring in a little income to the township as well. Also a volunteer program to help keep things clean would be beneficial and would save the township money.

---

None

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None

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I have lived here my whole life and I really appreciate the effort being made to improve our park and town.

---

N/A

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Need improvement with bathroom facilities

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Just glad covid is over and its great to see the parks active again. Well, covid restrictions are over.

---

N/A

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I would just like to thank the individuals who are constantly working hard to improve our Township. It is appreciated

---

None

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Keep Trying!!!!

---

Add a disc golf course, could be a nice one where you pay even.

---

Whatever the event needs to be more [inclusive] to everyone in the [community], not just a select few.

---

Clean up the lake instead of spending money on dumb stuff. lakes are nasty

---

---

---

Nice job by beautify Leoni
We have great bones. There's a lot more things we could do. Kids fishing clubs/ tournaments and rowing clubs
None
Larger covered picnic space, people could use for parties, etc. Improved dock space at boat launch, improved fishing areas. Concrete the boat launch area/parking on 5th St. Walking, bike trail through Leoni township. Great job on the Thursday night activities! Bring in local vendors (food trucks) at the Leoni township park. Dog park is needed in Leoni. Love the idea of playground equipment, but make it different playground equipment then what is available in Jackson Co. Have a train kids can play on/in (Hx of Mi Center), boat/jet ski, fire truck, high slides, big swings, similar to George Wade Park playground equipment. Water fountain w Lights and put on a firework display for holidays in summer over lake. Need duck crossing signs along 5th street. Improve grounds behind the Leoni township of- fice. Playground equipment here or basketball court or soccer field.
Thanks to committee for their efforts.
Nothing
Thank you for improving our community!
Clean up , bring life, to Fifth St. there was so much done and now there is so many empty businesses
Thanks for all that you're doing!
NA
I think you're on the right track. Thank you.
None
Any family activities where families can spend time together!
None
Na
Need nice restrooms
Question: do you support YES, or if it should read Would you attend NO
None
See above
Covid has messed things up 2 years. No carp carnival sucks.
Keep up the hard work to improve our community!!

---

---

---

The Township now has additional revenue from Marijuana businesses. There is absolutely no excuse not to spend some of that on the people, by providing top notch recreation facilities

---

I would love to see a walking/jogging trail I see quite a few people out walking on gilletts lake road with no shoulder to the road and I feel that that's a safety issue when it comes to the fact that the speed limit is 40mph.

---

Would also like to see new Christmas decorations. Current ones have seen better days

---

The better the accessibility, the more the facilities are used by the residents.

---

Living near the boat launch, we can see a need for, alcohol free, family events. There's a place and time for fun and alcohol. It would be nice to skip the alcohol for good family fun.

---

Ok

---

I wish the park was better patrolled. Sometimes I see folks there who don't appear to be cleaning up after themselves and people meeting there for drug deals

---

I think any of these suggestions will provide more recreational activities for the locals.

---

I believe that all events need police participation

---

Looking forward to helping in any way I can.

---

I really hope some of these things happen. There isn't much to do here outside. And if I do walk/jog outside it's not that safe with people texting and driving. I would think safety would be the #1 priority for improving our community recreational activities. Also a new baseball and softball complex is needed for youth. The school sold the property to the church there and in a few years won't have access. Grass Lake has a community baseball/softball complex that's outstanding and it brings in a lot of people out of town or from other local areas and they spend money in GL. We should do things that support our local restaurants, stores and gas stations. Then maybe we can fill up all the empty storefronts with businesses. Other option maybe change the ordinance and allow those building owner to change the [1st] floor into apartments so it's not such an eyesore. Our community "could be" so nice.

---

Gillette's Lake Park could use two functional basketball hoops

---

Love what Leoni Township is doing with Thursday events and the Lions Club hosting Carp Carnival. Really trying to make the community nice. Wish more businesses would come to 5th St & Page.

---

New to the area and very excited to see activities in my new town!

---

Would absolutely love a kayak launch!

---

Will be happy to see improvements!

---

Clean up

---

---

Love that Leoni is improving.

---

I don't live in Leominster now but I own 3 houses in Michigan Center and both my Kids live there. So do care about this community.

---

Develop the Leoni Mill Pond for kayaking and fishing.

---

The lake gets very busy at times with boaters. I think adding a bunch of canoes and kayaks would make for a dangerous situation with boats flying around the lake. The river would be best for that.

---

I think your efforts are well worth it. You have made vast improvements to a much needed area.

---

More picnic area

---

I would like to see playground for younger kids like onsted or norvell lake rd park. Older kids have playgrounds at the schools but we don't have anything for littles to play on safely.

---

When I was at the park this spring with my 3 grandkids 2-4 year olds and a 2 year old. I was surprised at the lack of equipment for younger aged children. Of the 4 pieces of play equipment there. The swings were the only thing I didn't have to be right next to them to make sure they didn't fall off. I would love to see more play equipment in the park for the children and families to enjoy.

---

The park is a great place to do something nice for the community. Can't wait to see what is to come!!

---

Continue developing aesthetics for 5th Street-expand to MC entry-Page Ave. Business development plan so there are no vacant buildings. Garbage pails at park-attended to more. Continue sidewalk maintenance. Dollar Store/Plaza updated-clean/fresh. Thank you for inviting feedback!

---

It would be great to clean up the park/sporting areas that are already there. Better lawn maintenance of city area. Do we have a full time parks and rec crew?

---

Thanks to all of you making Leoni Township a more fun place to live.

---

I would love to see improvements to our parks.

---

Thank You!!!!

---

We appreciate our kind, caring community and support it as best we can.

---

Trash needs to be emptied on a scheduled basis with increased frequency during summer months; Grass needs to be mowed in advance of the weekend when people are more likely to use the park;

---

Cleaning up the Fifth St. park with new guardrails or fencing at the bridge, cut down tree that is leaning toward the water just east of bridge.

---

---

It would be nice if the parking lot at the park was level without a bunch of potholes. I don't think any other improvements are needed at this time unless we do more to the park to have more [usage]. I never see all the parking full from people at the park, only the boat launch being utilized.

---

Happy to help any way we can.

---

It is exciting to see this happening in Leoni. About [time]

---

Storefronts and houses on 5th street need improved. Sidewalks down Napoleon road need fixed.

---

We have lived in Michigan Center for the past 13 years and absolutely LOVE our small, but strong community. Any and all additions to our community would be incredible.

---

We need to have a splash pad installed in the Township park.

---

**Recreation Committee Meetings**

All meetings of the Recreation Committee are open to the public.

**One Month Review Period**

The Recreation Plan was submitted for public comment beginning on December 10, 2021 and ending on January 10, 2022. The plan was available for review in the Township offices as well as online at [www.leonitownship.com](http://www.leonitownship.com). No comments were submitted to the Recreation Committee.

**Public Hearing**

A public hearing on the *Leoni Township Recreation Plan* was held on January 10, 2022 at 6:00 pm in the Township Hall, during a meeting of the Recreation Committee. The hearing took place prior to the vote on the resolution recommending adoption of the Plan by the Township Board. No comments were made during the public hearing.

**Jackson County and the Region 2 Planning Commission**

The Township must provide a copy of the Recreation Plan to the Jackson County Parks Department and the Region 2 Planning Commission. The Plan was transmitted to them on January 12, 2022.

**Other Planning Efforts Impacting Leoni Township Parks**

Leoni Township also participates in various regional nonmotorized trail planning and water trail planning efforts:

- Jackson City + County Nonmotorized Plan (see Chapter 2)
- Upper Grand River Water Trail Development Plan (see Chapter 2)



*Leoni Community Park*

*(Source: Grant Bauman)*

#### Chapter 4

## **Goals & Action Program**

Leoni Township Recreation Plan

## Goals and Objectives

The following goals (i.e., strategies) and objectives (i.e., tactics) were developed for the recreation plan:

### #1

#### **Promote the Michigan Center Waterfront.**

- Develop a master plan for Leoni Township Community Park, utilizing professional consultants.
- Build a community Farmers Market Pavilion at Leoni Township Community Park.
- Improve the community boat launch at Leoni Township Community Park, including facilities for canoes and kayaks.
- Establish a safer Leoni Township Community Park through lighting.
- Create more handicapped accessibility in Leoni Township Community Park, including the playground.
- Acquire land to enlarge Leoni Township Community Park.
- Establish a community-wide festival.

### #2

#### **Provide a system of trails and paths to connect parks, schools, the township office, and other recreation facilities.**

- Plan for a system of shared-use paths, boardwalk nature trails, etc. that connect parks, schools, and the township office, utilizing the *Jackson City + County Nonmotorized Plan*.
- Cooperate with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) in the development of the Mike Levine Lakeland Trail State Park extension.
- Develop water trails, utilizing the *Upper Grand River Water Trail Development Plan*.

### #3

#### **Fully utilize available public and private resources to reduce costs and maximize public convenience.**

- Improve the promotion of recreation services to immediate and surrounding communities.
- Continue to improve the use of volunteers in the planning, operation, and maintenance of parks and in recreation programming.
- Improve cooperation and coordination with other providers of recreation in the community.
- Include recreation opportunities in the Leoni Mill Pond dam project.
- Develop a master plan for the Leoni Millpond Park, utilizing professional consultants.

Input into developing the goals and objectives listed above included:

- existing recreation facilities available to Township residents, regardless of the provider
- the health, age, and disabilities of Township residents
- responses from the survey and the other opportunities for public comment

### **Promote the Michigan Center Waterfront**

Michigan Center’s waterfront is one of the Township’s prime assets. The Leoni Township Community Park serves as the centerpiece of the waterfront and is the Township’s premier recreation facility. A water trail on the Chain of Lakes was supported by 87% of survey respondents, a water trail on the Grand River was supported by 84% of respondents, and 90% were in favor of a livery or launch site for canoes and kayaks at the Leoni Community Park.

It is estimated by the American Community Survey (ACS) that 16% of township residents have some type of disability. The ACS also estimates that 30% of residents at least 75 years of age, and 3% of children 5 through 17 years of age, respectively, have an ambulatory difficulty. Playgrounds (92%), athletic fields (75%), basketball and tennis courts (72%), disc golf (59%), and community flower gardens (83%) were supported by a majority of survey respondents.

Street fairs and community parties were supported by 97% of survey respondents. More specifically, 91% were in favor of car/boat/motorcycle/tractor shows. Hosting movies and concerts in Leoni Township Community Park are popular with 88% and 97% of respondents, respectively.

### **Provide a system of trails and paths to connect parks, schools, the township office, and other recreation facilities**

The Mike Levine Lakeland Trail State Park continues to extend into Jackson County from Stockbridge. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources has been clearing the old railroad right-of-way in Jackson County and has received a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant to construct the extension. The trail is constructed to just southwest of Hawkins Road in Leoni Township. Non-motorized trails were supported by 88% of survey respondents. The *Jackson City + County Nonmotorized Plan* and the *Upper Grand River Water Trail Development Plan*—both of which were developed with public input and support—also advocate and provide plans for terrestrial and water trails in Leoni Township.

### **Fully utilize available public and private resources to reduce costs and maximize public convenience**

Intergovernmental cooperation and cooperation with the private sector is desirable. The *Jackson City + County Nonmotorized Plan* and the *Upper Grand River Water Trail Development Plan* are two examples of such cooperation. Also, there have been discussions with Grass Lake Township officials in the past regarding the development of a trail connecting a new park at the Leoni Mill Pond and the Grass Lake Township Sports and Trails Park.

## Action Program

The following projects are proposed for the current 5-year planning period. Please note that the projects are not prioritized, but simply organized by use (i.e., activity).

1. Leoni Township Community Park playground, athletic fields, and boat launch improvements, including canoes and kayaks
2. Develop a shared-use path linking the Leoni Mill Pond with the Grass Lake Township Sports and Trails Park (joint project with Grass Lake Township)
3. Develop a park as part of the Leoni Mill Pond dam project
4. Extend the Ann Arbor Road Trail from Gillet's Lake Road to the Waterloo Recreation Area (i.e., Race Road)

### **Leoni Township Community Park playground, athletic field and boat launch improvements**

“Improve the community boat launch at Leoni Township Community Park, including facilities for canoes and kayaks” is a tactic of the strategy: “Promote the Michigan Center Waterfront”. A playground and athletic fields are anticipated components of the master plan proposed for the Leoni Township Community Park.

### **Develop a shared-use path linking the Leoni Mill Pond with the Grass Lake Township Sports and Trails Park (joint project with Grass Lake Township)**

“Improve cooperation and coordination with other providers of recreation in the community” is a tactic of the strategy: “Fully utilize available public and private resources to reduce costs and maximize public convenience”. Furthermore, “plan for a system of shared-use paths, boardwalk nature trails, etc. that connect parks, schools, and the township office” is a tactic of the strategy: “Provide a system of trails and paths to connect parks, schools, the township office, and other recreation facilities”.

### **Develop a park as part of the removal of the Leoni Mill Pond dam project**

“Include recreation opportunities in the Leoni Mill Pond dam removal project” is a tactic of the strategy: “fully utilize available public and private resources to reduce costs and maximize public convenience”.

### **Extend the Ann Arbor Road Trail from Gillet's Lake Road to the Waterloo Recreation Area**

“Plan for a system of shared-use paths, boardwalk nature trails, etc. that connect parks, schools, and the township office, utilizing the *Jackson City + County Nonmotorized Plan*” is a tactic of the strategy: “provide a system of trails and paths to connect parks, schools, the township office, and other recreation facilities”.



*Leoni Township Recreation Plan | 2022-2026 Edition*

Appendix A

## **Demographics**

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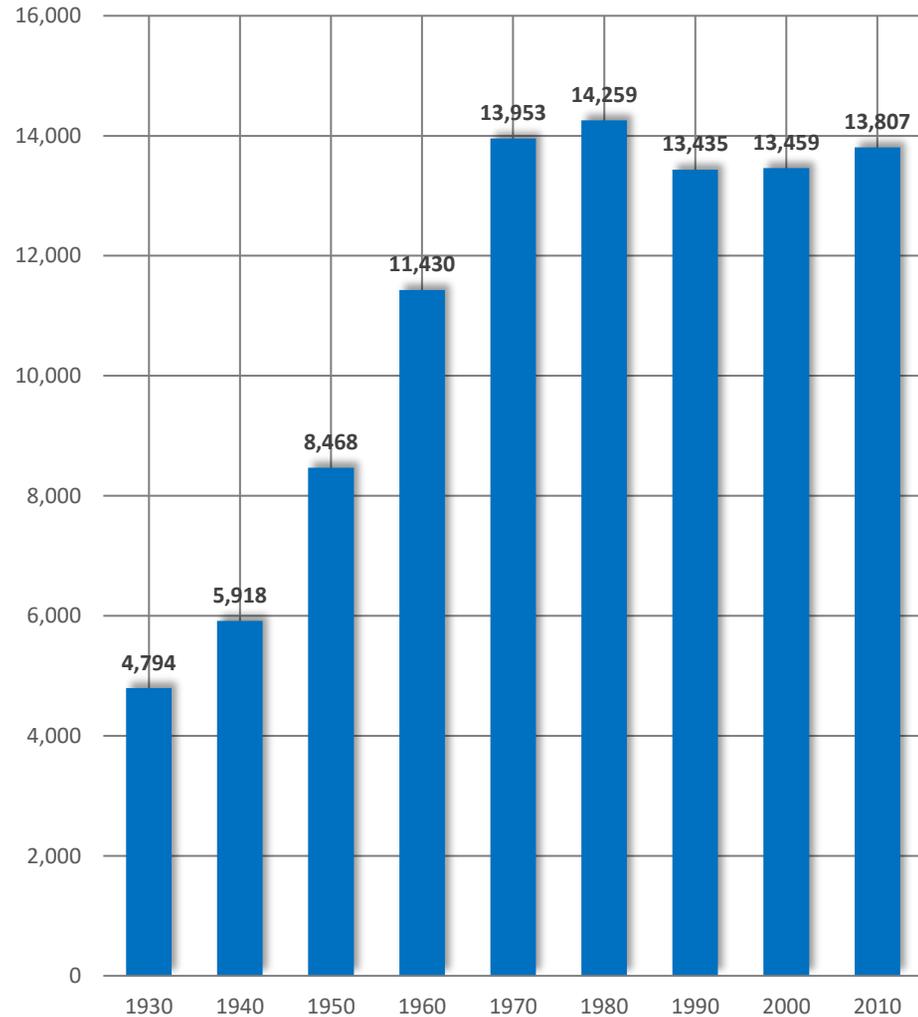
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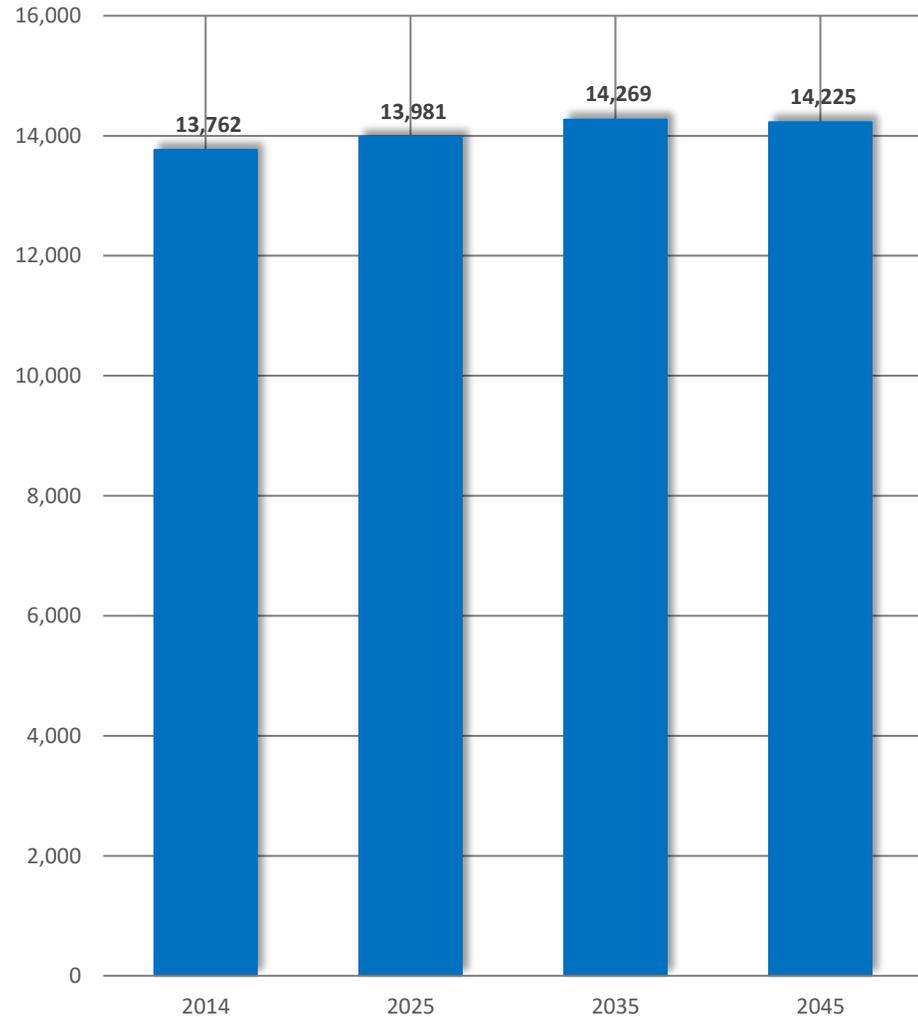
### Population History

- The Township grew from to 4,794 residents in 1930 to 13,807 residents in 2010 according to the U.S. Census, a 188% increase.
- The adjacent figure shows that the population:
  - Increased 23% between 1930 and 1940 to 5,918 residents.
  - Increased 43% between 1940 and 1950 to 8,468 residents.
  - Increased 35% between 1950 and 1960 to 11,430 residents.
  - Increased 22% between 1960 and 1970, to 13,953 residents.
  - Increased 2% between 1970 and 1980 to 14,259 residents.
  - Decreased 6% between 1980 and 1990, to 13,435 residents.
  - Increased <1% between 1990 and 2000 to 13,495 residents.
  - Increased 3% between 2000 and 2010 to 13,807 residents.
- ***The American Community Survey (ACS) estimated that the population was 13,660 in 2019.***



### Population Projections

- The population projections utilized in this plan were developed for the Michigan Department of Transportation’s (MDOT’s) Jackson travel demand model. The 2014-2045 projections are grounded on Regional Economic Models Inc. (REMI) forecasts.
- Utilizing that information, it is reasonable to expect that the population will increase 3% per year between 2010 and 2045.
- The adjacent figure shows that:
  - The 2014 population was estimated to be 13,762 people, a decrease of approximately <1% between 2010 and 2014.
  - The 2025 population was estimated to be 13,981 people, an increase of approximately 2% between 2014 and 2025.
  - The 2035 population was estimated to be 14,269 people, an increase of approximately 2% between 2025 and 2035.
  - The 2045 population was estimated to be 14,225 people, a decrease of approximately <1% between 2035 and 2045.



## American Community Survey (ACS)

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, *[t]he American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey designed to provide communities a fresh look at how they are changing. The ACS replaced the decennial census long form in 2010 and thereafter by collecting long form type information throughout the decade rather than only once every 10 years.*

The reporting period utilized for this plan is 2019.

### Definitions

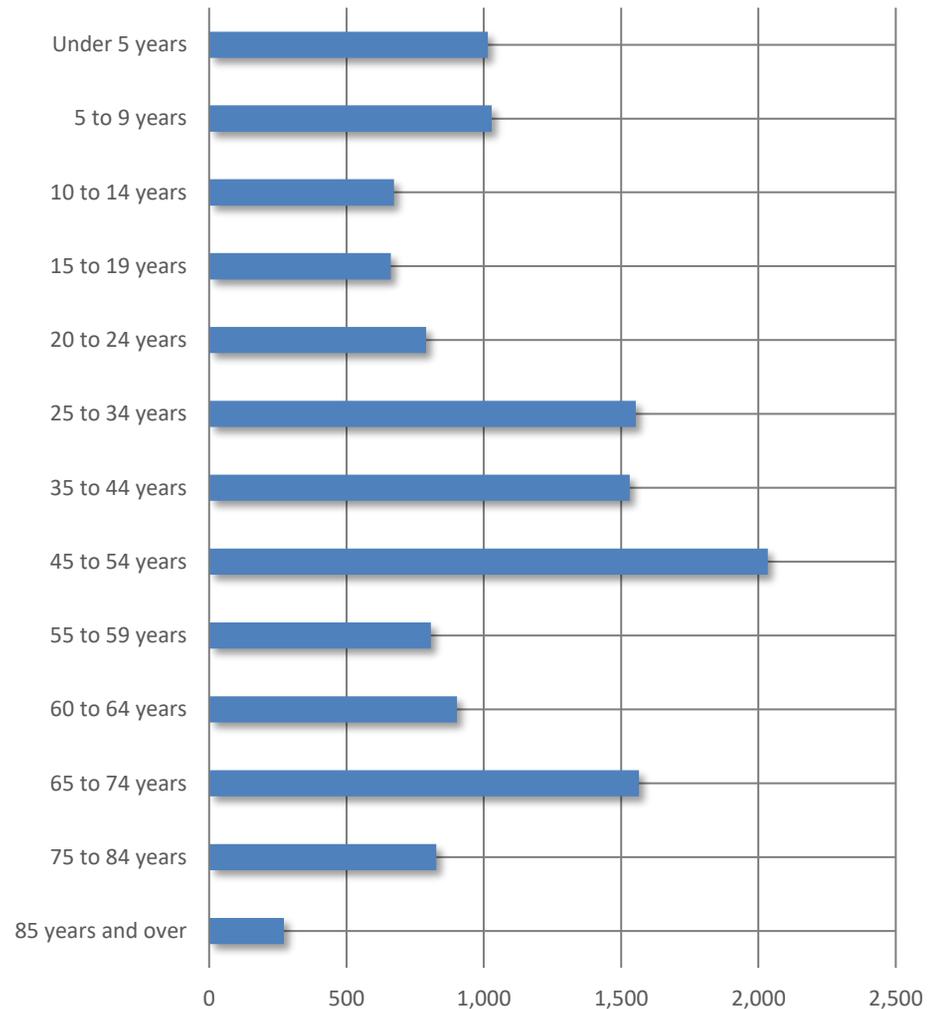
- **Group Quarters.** *The Census Bureau classifies all people not living in housing units as living in group quarters. There are two types of group quarters: institutional group quarters (for example, correctional facilities for adults, nursing homes, and hospice facilities) and non-institutional group quarters (for example, college/university student housing, military quarters, and group homes).*
- **Household Income.** *According to the U.S. Census Bureau, [t]his includes income of the householder and all other people 15 years and older in the household, whether or not they are related to the householder.*
- **Median Income.** *According to the U.S. Census Bureau, [t]he median income divides the income distribution into two equal groups, one having incomes above the median, and [the] other having incomes below the median.*
- **Per Capita Income.** *According to the U.S. Census Bureau, this is an [a]verage obtained by dividing aggregate income by total population of an area.*

### Other General Notes

- **Rounding Errors.** Any totals that do not add up to 100% are caused by rounding errors.
- **Ambulatory Difficulties.** The ACS does not compile information on ambulatory difficulties for the population less than 5 years of age.
- **Hispanic.** Please note that ‘Hispanic’ is an ethnic rather than a racial description. Each Hispanic person is also a member of one or more races.

### Age and Gender

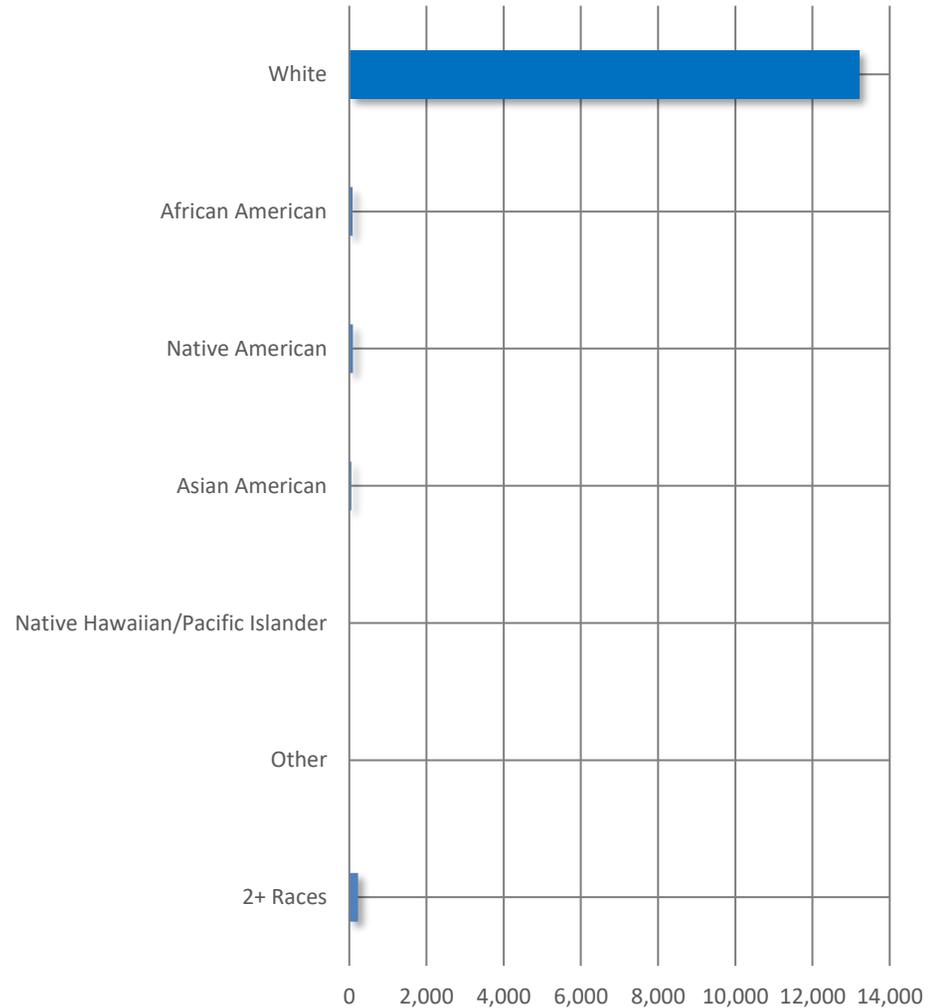
- The estimated median age of Leoni Township residents was 42.9 years in 2019 [41.3 countywide and 39.8 statewide].
- The adjacent figure illustrates the generations to which those residents belonged in 2019:
  - The ‘Generation X’ generation (i.e., people 35-54 years old) — 26% [25% countywide and 24% statewide].
  - ‘Generation Z’ & younger generations (i.e., people ≤19 years old) — 25% [24% countywide and statewide].
  - The ‘Baby Boomers’ generation (i.e., people 55-74 years old) —24% [25% countywide and 24% statewide].
  - The ‘Millennials’ generation (i.e., people 20-34 years old) — 17% [19% countywide and 20% statewide].
  - The ‘Silent’ and older generations (i.e., people ≥75 years old) —8% [7% countywide and statewide].
- Finally, it is estimated that females comprised approximately 50% of Township residents in 2019 [49% countywide and 51% statewide].



### Race and Ethnicity

The population of Leoni Township was homogenous in 2019.

- The adjacent figure illustrates the races to which those residents belonged in 2019:
  - White — 97% [87% countywide and 78% statewide].
  - Black — 1% [7% countywide and 14% statewide].
  - Native American — <1% [<1% countywide and 1% statewide].
  - Asian — <1% [1% countywide and 3% statewide].
  - Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander — 0% [0% countywide and <1% statewide].
  - Some Other Race — 0% [<1% countywide and 1% statewide].
  - 2+ Races — 2% [4% countywide and 3% statewide].
- An estimated 3% of Township residents considered themselves Hispanic in 2019 [4% countywide and 5% statewide].

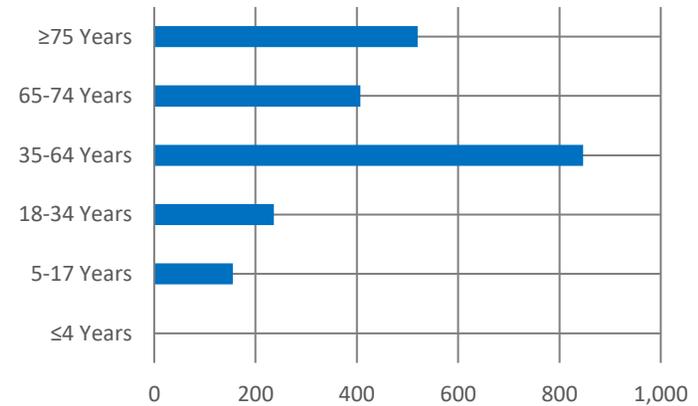


### Disabilities

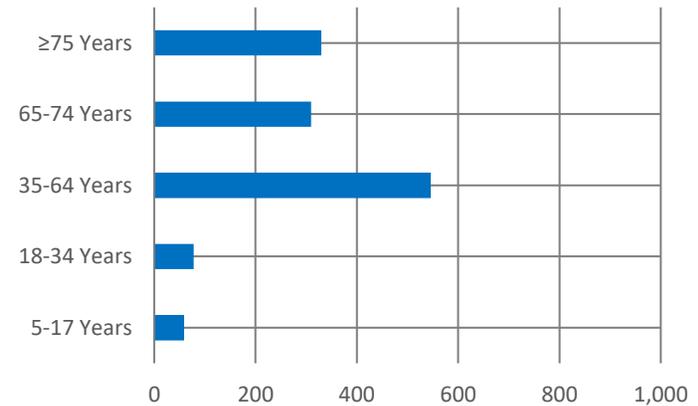
Disabled residents were a significant component of Summit Township’s noninstitutionalized civilian residents in 2019.

- An estimated 16% of those residents were disabled in some way (i.e., hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, or independent living) [15% countywide and 14% statewide] and 10% had an ambulatory disability [8% countywide and 7% statewide]. *It should be noted that an ambulatory disability is not determined for residents ≤4 years old.*
- ≤4 years old:
  - Disabled in some way — 0% [0% countywide and 1% statewide].
- 5-17 years old:
  - Disabled in some way — 7% [5% countywide and 6% statewide].
  - Had an ambulatory disability — 3% [2% countywide and 1% statewide].
- 18-34 years old:
  - Disabled in some way — 9% [11% countywide and 8% statewide].
  - Had an ambulatory disability — 3% [2% countywide and 1% statewide].
- 35-64 years old:
  - Disabled in some way — 16% [16% countywide and 15% statewide].
  - Had an ambulatory disability — 10% [9% countywide and 8% statewide].
- 65-74 years old:
  - Disabled in some way — 26% [25% countywide and 24% statewide].
  - Had an ambulatory disability — 20% [15% countywide and statewide].
- ≥75 years old:
  - Disabled in some way — 47% [43% countywide and 46% statewide].
  - Had an ambulatory disability — 30% [24% countywide and 29% statewide].

Some Type of Disability

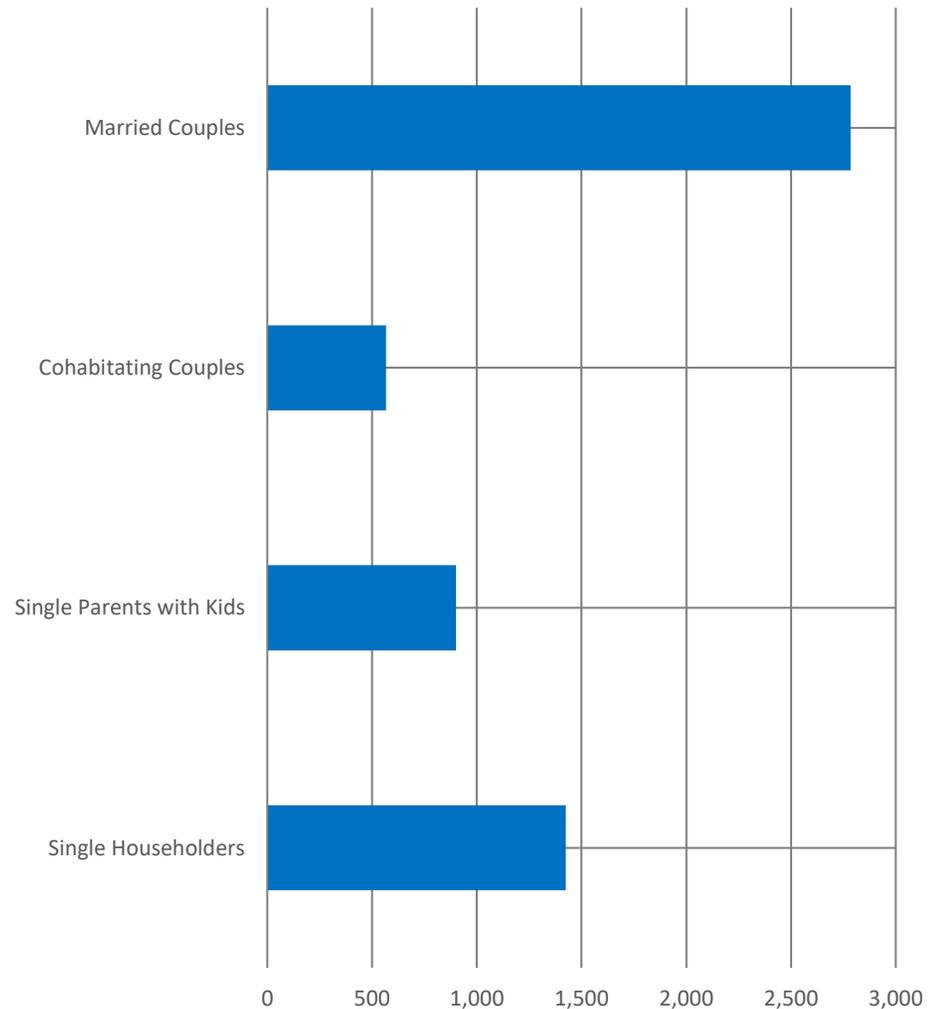


Ambulatory Disability



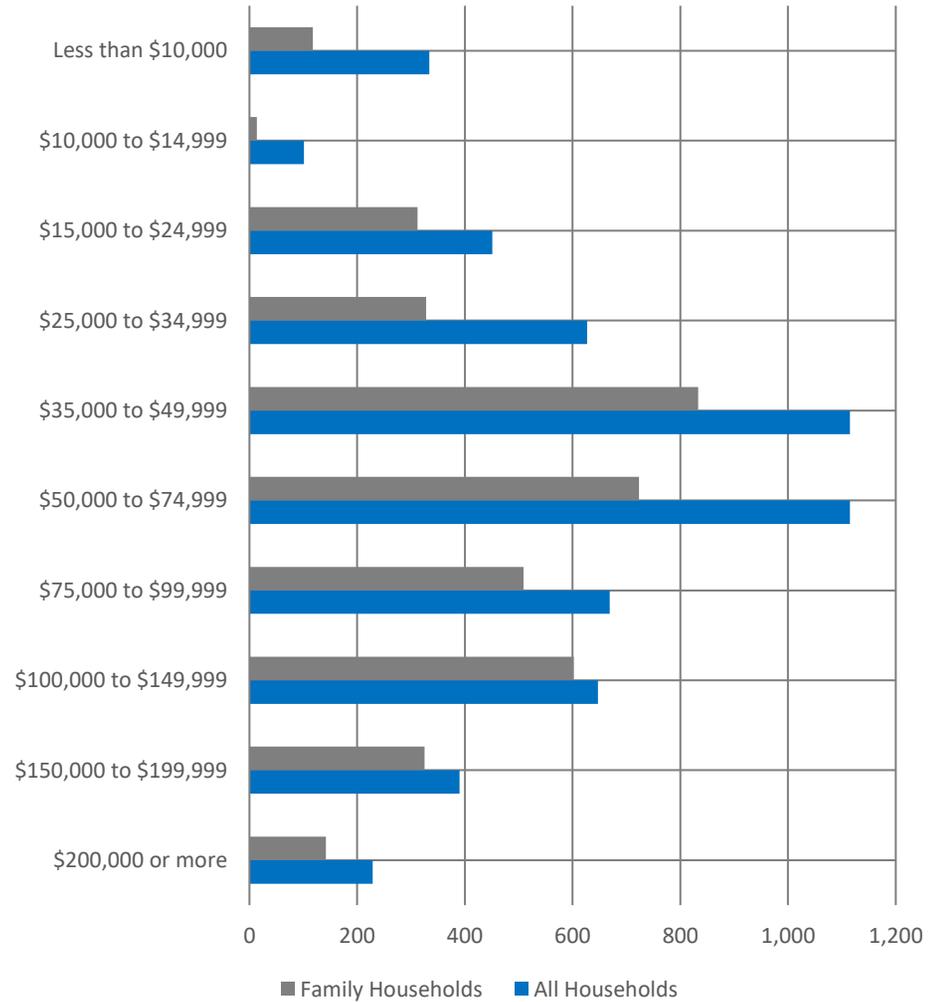
### Households and Families

- Most residents lived in households in 2019.
  - Married couples—with or without children—comprised an estimated 49% of those households [42% countywide and 46% statewide].
  - Cohabiting couples—with or without children—comprised an estimated 10% of those households [9% countywide and 7% statewide].
  - Single parents with kids comprised an estimated 16% of households [15% countywide and 17% statewide].
  - Single householders comprised an estimated 25% of households [34% countywide and 30% statewide].
  - The estimated average household and family size was 2.40 people and 2.85 people, respectively (please see the ACS note) [2.43 people and 3.16 people, respectively, countywide and 2.46 people and 3.09 people, respectively, statewide].
- Group quarters (e.g., nursing homes, etc.) were home to an estimated <1% of the population [6% countywide and 2% statewide].



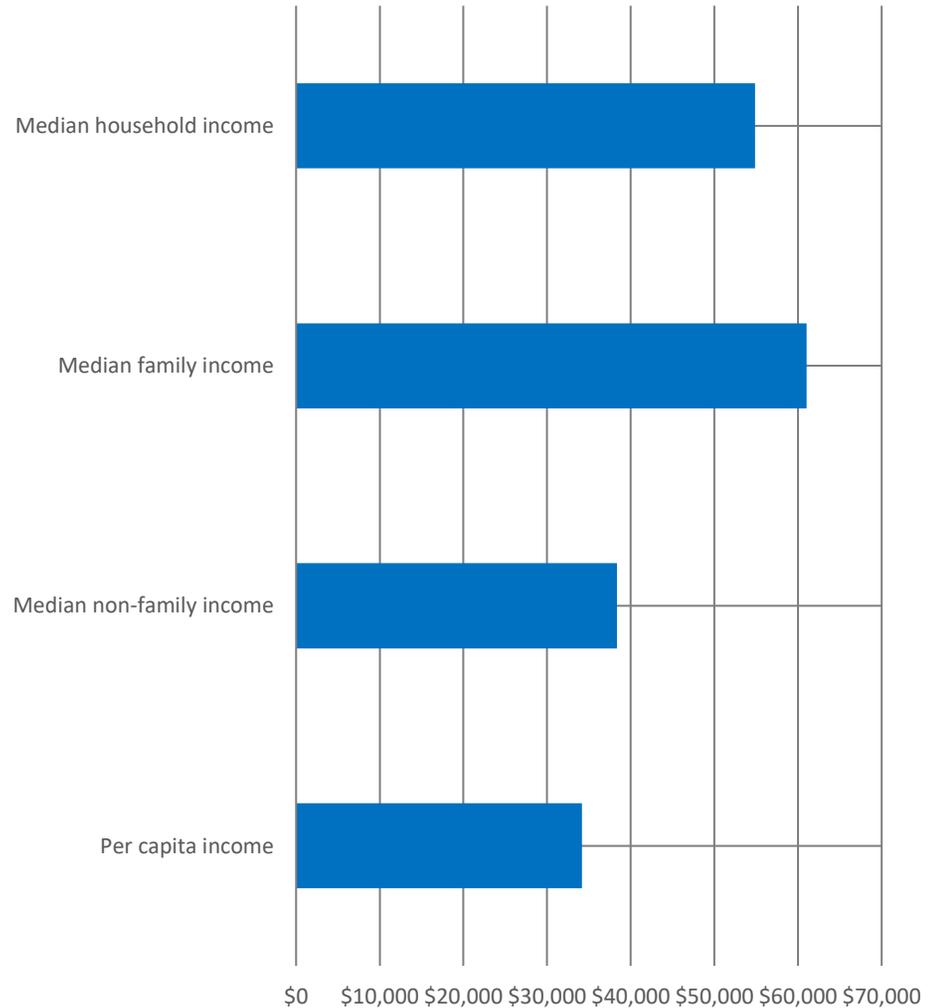
### Household and Family Income

- All Households (HHs) with an income of:
  - ≤\$24,999 comprised an est. 16% of HHs [21% countywide and 19% statewide].
  - \$25,000-\$49,999 comprised an est. 31% of HHs [25% countywide and 23% statewide].
  - \$50,000-\$99,999 comprised an est. 31% of HHs [33% countywide and 32% statewide].
  - \$100,000 or more comprised an est. 22% of HHs [21% countywide and 26% statewide].
- Family Households (FHs) with and income of:
  - ≤\$24,999 comprised an est. 11% of FHs [12% countywide and 11% statewide].
  - \$25,000-\$49,999 comprised an est. 30% of FHs [20% countywide and 19% statewide].
  - \$50,000-\$99,999 comprised an est. 32% of FHs [38% countywide and 35% statewide].
  - \$100,000 or more comprised an est. 27% of FHs [30% countywide and 35% statewide].



### Median and Per Capita Incomes

- Median Incomes:
  - Household – \$54,876 [\$55,124 countywide and \$59,584 statewide].
  - Family – \$61,013 [\$75,845 countywide and \$75,703 statewide].
  - Non-Family – \$38,354 [\$31,064 countywide and \$35,755 statewide].
- Per Capita Income – \$34,167 [\$29,209 countywide and \$32,892 statewide].







*Center Lake Boat Launch*

*(Source: Grant Bauman)*

Appendix B

## **Maps**

Leoni Township Recreation Plan



