



Blackman Charter Township

Parks & Recreation Plan 2023-

2028 edition



developed by

Blackman Charter Township Parks and Recreation Committee, Blackman Township Board,
and Region 2 Planning Commission.

Blackman Township Board

Pete Jancek, Supervisor.

Dave Elwell, Clerk.

Phil Preston, Treasurer.

Trustees: Mike Thomas, Brandon Williams, Scott Pack, Mike Ambros



Plan Approval and Adoption

Blackman Charter Township Board, May 20, 2024

Parks and Recreation Plan will expire on December 31, 2028

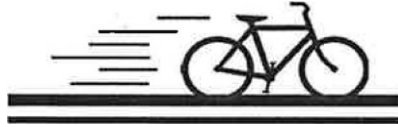


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Community Description

Blackman Charter Township Parks & Recreation Plan



A priority of Blackman Charter Township is to develop a parks and recreation plan which responds to the recreational needs and desires of its residents. Given that charge, this plan provides a clear picture of the recreation opportunities available to residents regardless of who provides them. This review includes nontraditional opportunities such as shopping venues as well as traditional parks and recreation facilities.

A sincere effort was spent in developing this parks and recreation plan, which represents the projected needs for recreation facilities and services in the 21st Century. For example, the presence of a potential trail corridor, and the public's support for a bike path, requires serious consideration regarding the construction of a new non-motorized trail. This document must be re-evaluated regularly and updated into new editions that meet the current needs of the community at least every five years.

Location

Blackman Charter Township is located in northern Jackson County, surrounding the northern third of the City of Jackson. The Township is also bordered by Rives Township to the north, Henrietta Township to the northeast, Leoni Township to the east and southeast, Summit Township to the south, Spring Arbor Township to the southwest, Sandstone Township to the west, and Tompkins Township to the northwest. A number of major roadways traverse the 31.8 square mile municipality: Interstate Highway 94 (I-94), United States Highway 127 (US-127), Michigan Highway 60 (M-60), Michigan Highway 50 (M-50), and Michigan Highway 106 (M-106) (see Map 1 - Location).

Jackson County is located in south-central Lower Michigan, close to the border with northwest Ohio and northeast Indiana. The Jackson Urbanized Area is located in the center of the County and covers the majority of Blackman Township. The junction of I-94 and US-127 is located along the Township's southern border with the City of Jackson, earning the Area the nickname of "Crossroads of

Michigan." Those roads connect Jackson directly to Ann Arbor and Detroit to the east, Battle Creek and Kalamazoo to the west, and Lansing to the north.

A Brief Socioeconomic Summary

The demographic composition of the population of Blackman 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 & Projections** — Blackman Township's population was 25,759 in 2022 according to the US Census. The population of the Township grew in every decade between 1930 and 2020, with the largest increases occurring in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. It's projected the Township's population will grow nearly five (4.9) percent by 2050, resulting in projected populations of 27,027 in 2050.

It should be pointed out that 28.9% of the population lived in group quarters (i.e., were institutionalized) in 2021, in the various state prisons located in the Township. It is important to note that this factor reduces the population to be served and skews the demographic profile of the population living in the rest of Blackman Township.

- **Age & Gender** — the estimated median age of Blackman Township residents was 38.9 years for the 2016-2021 time period. People aged 20-29 and 30-39 years old each comprised an estimated 17.6 percent of the population during the 2016-2021 time period. While those aged 40 to 49 years old comprised an estimated 15 percent of the population. People aged 50 to 59 years old comprised an estimated 12.7 percent of the population. Males comprised an estimated 62.1 percent of the population for the 2016-2021 time period (note that as the prisons in Blackman Township are all male, this is one of the clearest instances of how those facilities skew the demographics, with the following category of race being a close second).
- **Race & Ethnicity** — African Americans comprised the largest minority group with an estimated 16.1 percent of the population for the 2016-2021 time period. Other minority groups comprised an estimated 12.1 percent of the total population, leaving it substantially white (71.9 percent). People of Hispanic origin are a small but important segment (3.6%) of the Township's population, as are the nearly six percent (5.8%) who identify as multi-racial.
- **The Disabilities of Residents** — it is estimated that disabled individuals comprised 23 percent of Township residents during the 2016-2021 time period. An estimated 21.3 percent of residents 18-64 were disabled in some way and an estimated 11.4 percent had an ambulatory disability. An estimated 9.2 percent of residents at least 65 years old were disabled in some way and an estimated 6.8 percent had an ambulatory disability.

- Households & Families — Families comprised 75.4 percent of Blackman Township's estimated 8,237 households for the 2016-2021 time period. The average size of the average size of a household was 2.16. An estimated 24.6 percent of households consisted of a single person.
- Household Income — the estimated median family income for Blackman Township was \$52,003 for the 2016-2021 time period, substantially higher than the estimated \$23,054 reported for nonfamily households. The estimated median household income for all households was \$52,003. The estimated per capita income was \$26,054.

The ¹Health of Jackson County Residents

Obesity describes ranges of weight that are above healthy guidelines given a certain height. Body Mass

Index is used to calculate an individual's ratio of height to weight. Generally, a person with a Body Mass Index score of 25.0 or greater is considered obese. ¹ In 2023, 34.4 percent of Michigan residents were considered obese,² with 39 percent of adults in Jackson County reporting being obese. ³ According to a report published by Michigan State University's Institute for Public Policy and Social Research and Institute for Health Care Studies, being overweight or obese substantially increases the risk for cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, lipid disorders, stroke, gallbladder disease, osteoarthritis, sleep apnea, respiratory problems, psychological disorders, stress incontinence, and cancers of the endometrium, breast, prostate and colon.³ It has been established throughout peer reviewed medical research that one of the leading causes of death in the United States is poor diet and physical inactivity. ⁴ Furthermore, a publication by the World Health Organization states that physical inactivity and a poor diet are large contributors to being overweight and obesity.⁵ According to the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion,

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2012). Obesity and Overweight for Professionals: Adult: Defining — DNPAO - CDC. Retrieved from <http://vxm.cdc.aov/obesity/adult/defining.html>

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). Obesity and Overweight for Professionals: Data and Statistics — DNPAO - CDC. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.aov/obesity/data/prevalence-maps.html>

³ Kreulen, G. J. (2002). Promoting healthy weight in Michigan through physical activity and nutrition (Informing the debate: health policy options for Michigan policymakers). East Lansing: Institute for Public Policy & Social Research and Institute for Health Care Studies at Michigan State University.

⁴ For example: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/Oama/article-abstract/198357>

⁵ World Health Organization. (2009). Unhealthy Diets & Physical Inactivity. Retrieved from <http://www.who.int/nmh/publications/fact-sheet-diet-en.pdf>

28 percent of Jackson County residents reported being physically inactive.⁶ These statistics point to a need for more active recreational opportunities in all communities. Those opportunities may include providing more walkable neighborhoods as well as the provision of actual recreational opportunities such as athletic fields (e.g., soccer, baseball, etc.) and courts (e.g., basketball, tennis, etc.). Factors of particular relevance to community growth, development, and planning contributing to unhealthy weight according to the 2006 Jackson Community Report Card produced by the United Way of Jackson County include:

- "Inadequate community infrastructure limits the ability of people to be active. These include lack of accessible indoor and outdoor exercise facilities, neighborhood sidewalks, walking paths, and bicycle trails. Additionally, inclement weather, lack of adequate recreational opportunities, fear of unsafe neighborhoods, and unattractive/unpleasant local environments may prevent people from exercising."
- "Programs and policies are necessary to promote smart community growth and the establishment of urban and rural environments supportive of physical activity. Active community environments access to safe favorable conditions for physical activity and promote the development of social support networks that encourage activity."

The Michigan State University Report: Promoting Healthy Weight in Michigan through Physical Activity and Nutrition (Kreulen, 2002), recommends cooperation among state and local units of government and residents in the promotion of active environments, including the following actions.

- "Develop walkable communities by widening and maintaining or building sidewalks, safe roadway crossings, and aesthetically pleasing areas."
- "Encourage bicycling by developing, maintaining, and promoting the use of bike paths."
- "Require [that] all urban planning and re-design incorporate the concepts of active community environments and thereby promote physical activity."

⁶ County Health Rankings. (2023). Physical inactivity in Michigan | County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. Retrieved from <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/michigan?year=2022&measure=Physical+Inactivity>

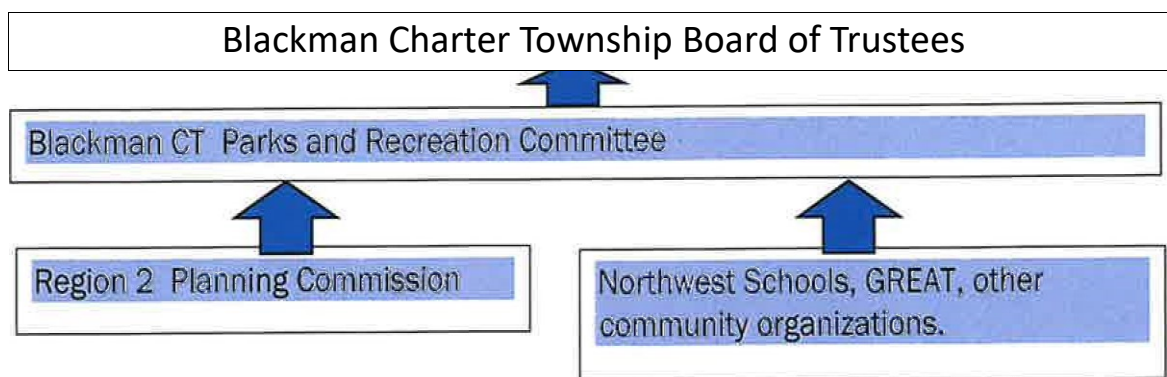
Administrative Structure

The authority to provide public park systems and recreation programs is granted by the State of Michigan. Blackman Township's parks are established under the authority of Public Act 156 of 1917, Recreation and Playgrounds (MCL 125.51 et seq). The act also allowed the creation of the Blackman Charter Township Parks and Recreation Committee.

Organizational Structure

Blackman Charter Township's Board of Trustees created the Parks and Recreation Committee and charged it to plan for and implement recreational services and facilities in the community (please see the organizational chart). The committee assesses the needs and desires of the community (e.g., develops this document), makes appropriate budget requests to the Board, and seeks out grant opportunities on behalf of the Township.

Blackman Township Organizational Chart



Blackman Township does not maintain any parks and recreation staff. Mowing and other ongoing maintenance responsibilities are currently contracted out. The Parks and Recreation Committee undertake specific maintenance and improvement projects by partnering with the Township's.

Beautification Committee and other volunteers (please see the organizational chart). The cooperation of Township departments and other commissions, boards, and committees is also needed from time-to-time in order to administer projects and grants.

Parks and Recreation Budgeting

The Township's parks and recreation operating budget for 2023 was \$130,000 and it is anticipated that the budget should remain constant with the millage approved in 2022. Several projects are planned with the addition of property on Parnall Road that will be completed during the current millage cycle.

Sources of Funding

The following funding sources are utilized by Blackman Township for parks and recreation purposes:

Millage for parks and recreation; • general tax fund dollars may be used; • rental fees for pavilions and sporting facilities; • grants and donations awarded for specific projects.

Grants are sought from various state, federal, and philanthropic sources for the development of a specific park, facility (e.g., trails, playgrounds, picnic shelters, sports facilities, etc.) or programs. Donations from the general public and various service organizations for a specific park, facility, or program are also accepted. A portion of the local match required of most grants may also come from the general fund or donations. A DNR Grant (highly competitive) provided 50% of funding for upgraded playgrounds at Rod Mills Park in 2021-2022

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 in a city or village, or any other appropriate measure." The Michigan Department of Transportation and the Jackson County Road Commission 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.

Relationships with Other Recreation Providers

Blackman Charter Township is not the only supplier of parks and recreational opportunities to local 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 Northwestern School District covers most of Blackman

Township and its schools are located in the Township. However, Jackson Public Schools, East Jackson Community Schools, and the Western School District also serve some of the youth of the Township (see the School Districts map). The Jackson Intermediate School District also maintains facilities in Blackman Township.

Local County, State Government and Private Providers

Some of the surrounding townships and the City of Jackson also maintain parks, trails, and recreation programs. The same is true for Jackson County. Blackman Township also joined other local governments in planning for a statewide trail system that is under work passing through the County and Blackman Charter Township. This is partially completed, with the remainder to be completed in Blackman in 2024/2025.

The State of Michigan provides a variety of recreational facilities in the form of state game, wildlife, and recreation areas; state historic parks; and state parks in the vicinity of Blackman Township. A variety of private entrepreneurs and quasi-public agencies also provide recreation facilities and programs in and around the Township.

Please refer to Page for a more detailed description of recreation facilities in Blackman Charter Township.

Recreation and Resource in Greater Jackson, Inventory.

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 and recreation facilities and programs available in Blackman Township, not just those owned and managed by the Township. The parks, facilities, and programs were identified through local knowledge and review of current and historic documents and maps.

Park Classifications and Standards

It is also important to be able classify parks and recreation facilities in order to identify the need for additional parkland and recreation facilities in Jackson County and the City of Jackson. Park systems are comprised of several types of parks: ⁷

⁷ Springate, Lee, "Defining Parks and Park Systems," From Recreation to Re-creation: New Directions in Parks and Open Space System Planning, Megan Lewis, editor (PAS Report Number 551)

- Mini-Parks — Small parks (less than an acre) which address limited, isolated, or unique recreational needs.
- Neighborhood Parks — Informal active and/or passive recreation parks which serve as the focus of the neighborhood; this park type also serves as a mini-park for the area immediately adjacent to the facility.
- Community Parks — Parks which serve a broader focus than a neighborhood and may also preserve a unique landscape or open space; this park type also serves as a neighborhood park for the area immediately adjacent to the facility.
- Regional Parks — Parks which serve the entire county as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces; this park type also serves as a community park for the area surrounding the facility.
- Connector Trails — Linear parks which serve as non-motorized connectors among neighborhoods, business areas, parks, schools, and other destinations.

Parks and Recreation Facilities in Blackman Township

Parks and recreation facilities found in Blackman Township are provided by the Northwest School District and a variety of private and quasi-public entities as well as the Township.

Blackman Township Park

Blackman Townships' park system is comprised of Rod Mills Memorial Park, and newly acquired property adjacent to the Township offices. A community park which encompasses approximately 115 acres Given the population of 25,759 people in Blackman Township in 2022— once the institutionalized population has been subtracted - the park, which serves as a community park, satisfied ??% of the acreage recommended by the National Recreation and Park Association.

BlackmanTownship Parks

Key	Name	Acres	Facilities	BFA
A	Rod Mills Memorial Park	91.5	Hiking trails, picnic pavilions; picnic tables and grills; baseball diamonds; a playground area, vault bathroom facilities	3
B	Parnall Complex	25	In progress, with plans for pavilions, pickleball courts, hiking paths, bathrooms based upon community feedback and survey.	3

It is important that the township park be accessible to people with disabilities. After all, an estimated 6% of township residents had ambulatory difficulties in the 2008-2010 time period. Accordingly, the park was rated according to its level of barrier free access. ⁸ The number listed under the BFA column in the above table equates to the barrier-free rating listed in the table below.

Barrier-Free Access (BFA) Analysis

Key	Description
	None of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
	Some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines

⁸ The analysis of barrier free access was provided by the Blackman Township Parks and Recreation Committee, based upon its knowledge of the parks and understanding of barrier-free access. A professional analysis may produce different results.

Description
None of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
Some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
Most of the facilities/park area meet accessibility guidelines
The entire park meets accessibility guidelines
The entire park was developed/renovated using the principal of universal design
The entire park meets accessibility guidelines
The entire park was developed/renovated using the principal of universal design

Schools

Schools also 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

Key	Name	District	Facilities
B	Northwest High*	Northwest School District	Gymnasiums, baseball/softball field, soccer field, football field, and track
C	R.W Kidder Middle**		
D	Parnall Elementary	Northwest School District	Gymnasiums, Playgrounds, baseball/softball fields, and soccer fields
E	Northwest Elementary		
F	Lyle Torrent Training Center	Intermediate School District	Playground and baseball field
G	da Vinci Primary School	da Vinci Institute	Playground
* The Northwest Alternative High School is located in the High School complex			
** The former Flora List Elementary School, located to the north, still contains a playground			

The Northwest School District serves the majority of Blackman Township students and all of its schools are located within the municipality. Several other public school districts also serve students from Blackman Township. However, they maintain no facilities in the municipality.

The Lyle Torrent Training Center — a Jackson County Intermediate School District (ISD) which serves students from across the county — is located within the Township. Other ISD facilities are located outside of the surrounding area. Blackman Township is home to the da Vinci Institute's primary school (K-8). The da Vinci Institute— a public charter school operated by Central Michigan University — also maintains a secondary school (9-12) outside of the surrounding area.

Quasi-Public and Private Recreation Facilities

Finally, a number of quasi-public and private entities also maintain facilities in Blackman

Townships that have some recreational value. For example, the Jackson County Airport— Reynolds Field — provides a place for recreational flyers to land, maintain, and store their aircraft. The Jackson District Library (JDL) also provides access to books, films, and a variety of enrichment programs; the JDL's Meijer Branch is located in Blackman Township; the other branches are located throughout the county (please see the City of Jackson and Jackson County Recreation Plan for more detail on JDL facilities).

The main purpose of other facilities is strictly recreational. Golf Jackson maintains a mini golf course and driving range and the Rando Activity Center provides basketball courts and a gymnasium.

Other Recreation Facilities

Name	Facilities
Richard F Smith Post Foundation	Baseball field
Rando Activity Center	Basketball courts and gymnasium
Golf Jackson	Mini Golf dome, driving range, volleyball courts
Marino's Fields	Soccer fields
Keeley Park	Indoor pickleball courts
Cascades Falls park	Hurst Foundation pickleball courts , outside

Parks and Recreation Facilities in the Surrounding Area

Parks and recreation facilities utilized by Blackman Township residents are also located in the surrounding area.

Other Municipal and County Parks

Some of the surrounding municipalities also provide parks to their residents (please see the City of Jackson and Jackson County Recreation Plan for more facilities).

- City of Jackson — the City maintains a total of 27 parks (please see the City of Jackson and Jackson County Recreation Plan for more detail).
- Leoni Township — Peter Alec Ball Park, Leoni Community Park, Bender Park, and a public boat launch
- Rives Township — Rives Township Park
- Spring Arbor Township — Fritz Gallagher Park and Harmony Park
- Summit Township — Probert Road Trail
- Tompkins Township — Tompkins Township Park
- County of Jackson — the County maintains a total of 16 parks (please see the City of Jackson and Jackson County Recreation Plan for more detail).

Other Public School Districts

The following school districts also maintain facilities within the surrounding area (please see the City of Jackson and Jackson County Recreation Plan for more school districts).

- East Jackson Community Schools — covers portions of Blackman, Leoni, Summit, and Waterloo Townships. The district maintains the following facilities: Bertha Robinson Elementary School, East Jackson Middle School, Memorial Elementary School and East Jackson High School.
- Jackson Public Schools — The district covers the City of Jackson and portions of Blackman, Liberty, Napoleon, and Summit Townships. Jackson Public Schools, which is part of the Jackson County Intermediate School District, maintains the following facilities: Bennett Elementary School, Northeast Elementary School, Cascades

Elementary School, Sharp Park Academy, Dibble Elementary School, Amy Firth Middle School, Frost Elementary School, Middle School at Parkside, Hunt Elementary School, Jackson High School, McCulloch Elementary and T.A. Wilson Academy

- Western School District — The district covers the Village of Parma and portions of Blackman, Concord, Parma, Sandstone, and Spring Arbor Townships. The district maintains the following facilities: Bean Elementary School, Parma Elementary School, Warner Elementary School, Western Middle School, Western High School, Western Options High School and Woodville Community Center.

Local Colleges

There are several local colleges. Baker College's local campus is located in the Township, north of the Jackson County Airport. Jackson Community College's main campus is located in Summit 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 Community College) "is comprised of the most versatile and complete performing arts complex in the area." "10 The Ganton Gallery (Spring Arbor University) "is one of the largest, single-room galleries in Michigan." "8 The local Baker College campus does not contain significant recreation facilities that are open to the general public.

Regional Parks and Recreation Facilities

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

State Parks

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), a significant provider of regional parks and recreation facilities, maintains the following park which extends into the surrounding area (please see the City of Jackson and Jackson County Recreation Plan for more state parks in Jackson County): Meridian-Baseline State Park, Henrietta and Rives Townships (not open to the general public).

¹⁰ <http://www.iccmi.edu/events/pottercenter/theatres.htm> ⁸ http://www.arbor.edu/edu_detail.aspx?id=37930

The following state game and recreation areas which extend into Jackson County are also provided by the DNR (please see the City of Jackson and Jackson County Recreation Plan for more state game and recreation areas in Jackson County): Waterloo Recreation Area, Grass Lake, Leoni, and Waterloo Townships. 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.

Finally, the DNR also maintains 5 boat launches in the surrounding municipalities (please see the City of Jackson and Jackson County Recreation Plan for more DNR boat launches in Jackson County).

- Center Lake and Gilletts Lake, Leoni Township
- Maple Grove Bridge (Grand River) Rives Township
- Tompkins Bridge (Grand River), Tompkins Township
- Trestle Bridge (Grand River), Tompkins Township

Jackson County Fairground Keeley Park.

The Jackson County Fair is held every August in the City of Jackson. However, it is important to note that the Fairground also hosts other special events throughout the year, including the annual 'Nite Lights at the Fairgrounds.' Private and Quasi-Public Parks and Recreation Facilities

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

Golf Courses

In addition to the public courses associated with the Ella Sharp and Sparks Foundation (Cascades) County Parks, a variety of private courses are available to Blackman township residents. Many of those courses are open to the general public (please see the City of Jackson and Jackson County Recreation Plan for a complete listing of golf courses in Jackson County).

Recreation and Sport Centers

The YMCA of Jackson provides a variety of sports and recreational activities. Allskate Fun Center and Optimist Ice Arena are also located in the City of Jackson. Finally, at least five bowling alleys operate in surrounding municipalities: Airport Lanes, AMF Summit Lanes, Center Stage, and Suburban Bowling Lanes.

Public and Private Facilities with Recreational Benefits

Various other facilities in the surrounding area (provided publicly and privately) also have recreational benefits: Cemeteries — Cemeteries provide important green space. They can also be used as safe places to walk/exercise and contemplate nature (please see the City of Jackson and Jackson County Recreation Plan for a listing of cemeteries in Jackson County).

Descriptions of the Planning and Public Input Processes

Blackman Charter Township Parks & Recreation Plan



Description of the Planning Process

The development of this edition of the Blackman Charter Township Parks and Recreation Plan included the following steps:

- Blackman Township's Board recognized the need to create a Parks and Recreation Plan.
- The Parks and Recreation Committee conducted a community survey with the assistance of Northwest Schools.
- The Parks and Recreation Committee held two advertised public meetings to review and receive input and suggestions for future planning of facilities and activities. • The Parks and Recreation Committee in conjunction with Region 2 Planning Commission staff to assist it in the review and updating of the Parks and Recreation Plan.
- The Parks and Recreation Committee approved the draft of the Parks and Recreation Plan for the 2023 thru 2028 edition, released it for public review on December 14, 2023.
- The Parks and Recreation Committee held a public hearing on the Parks and Recreation Plan on two occasions, including April 15, 2024. The Committee subsequently approved the document and recommended it for adoption by the Township Board.
- The Township Board adopted the Parks and Recreation Plan on May, 20, 2024.

Public Opinion Survey

The following survey was distributed through the mail with the tax bills for the Township, that also included our Newsletter. In addition the survey was distributed at the Township office for walking visitors, and through direct contact with Township employees and Park Committee members.

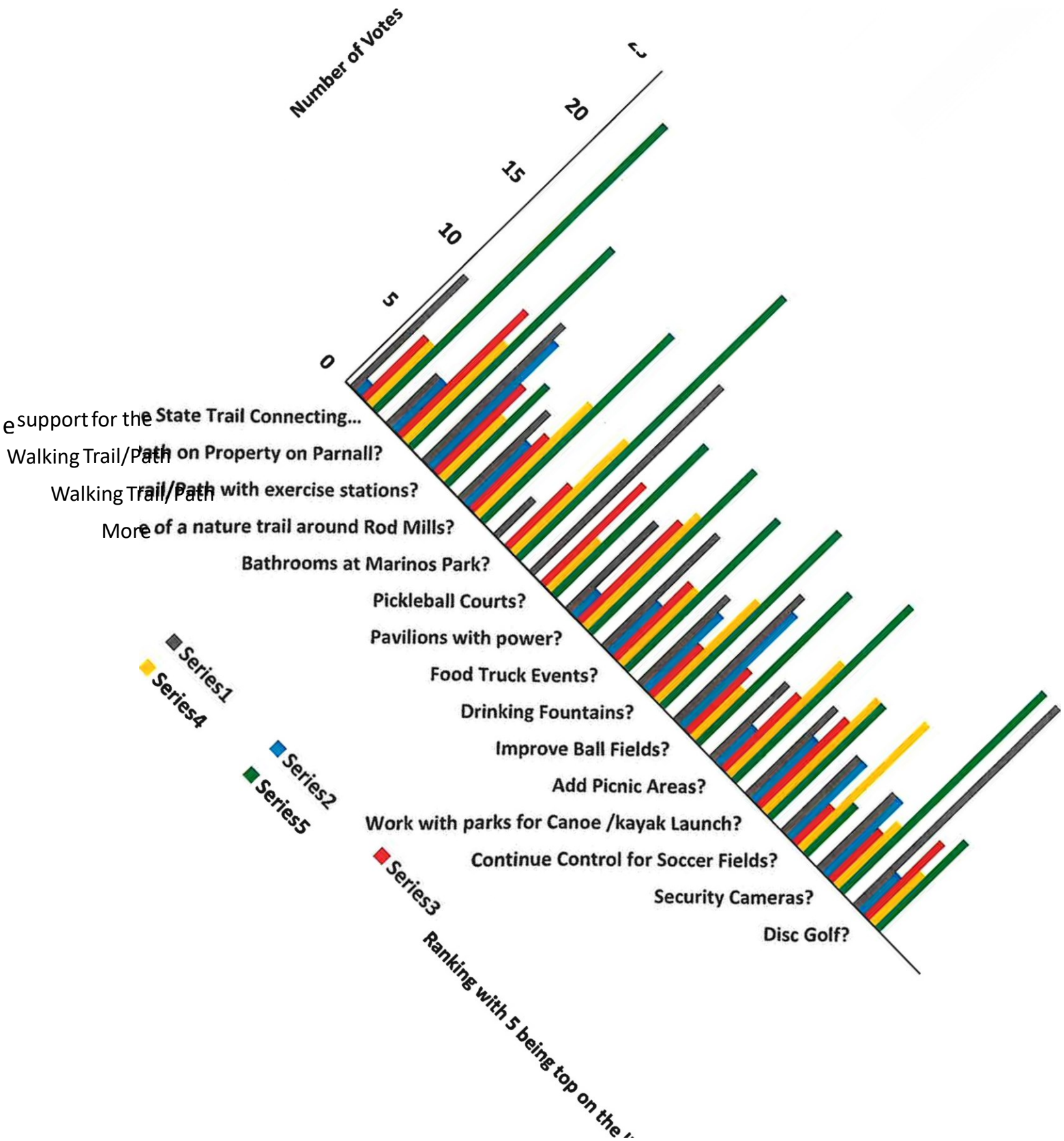
Parks and Recreation Survey for Blackman Charter Township

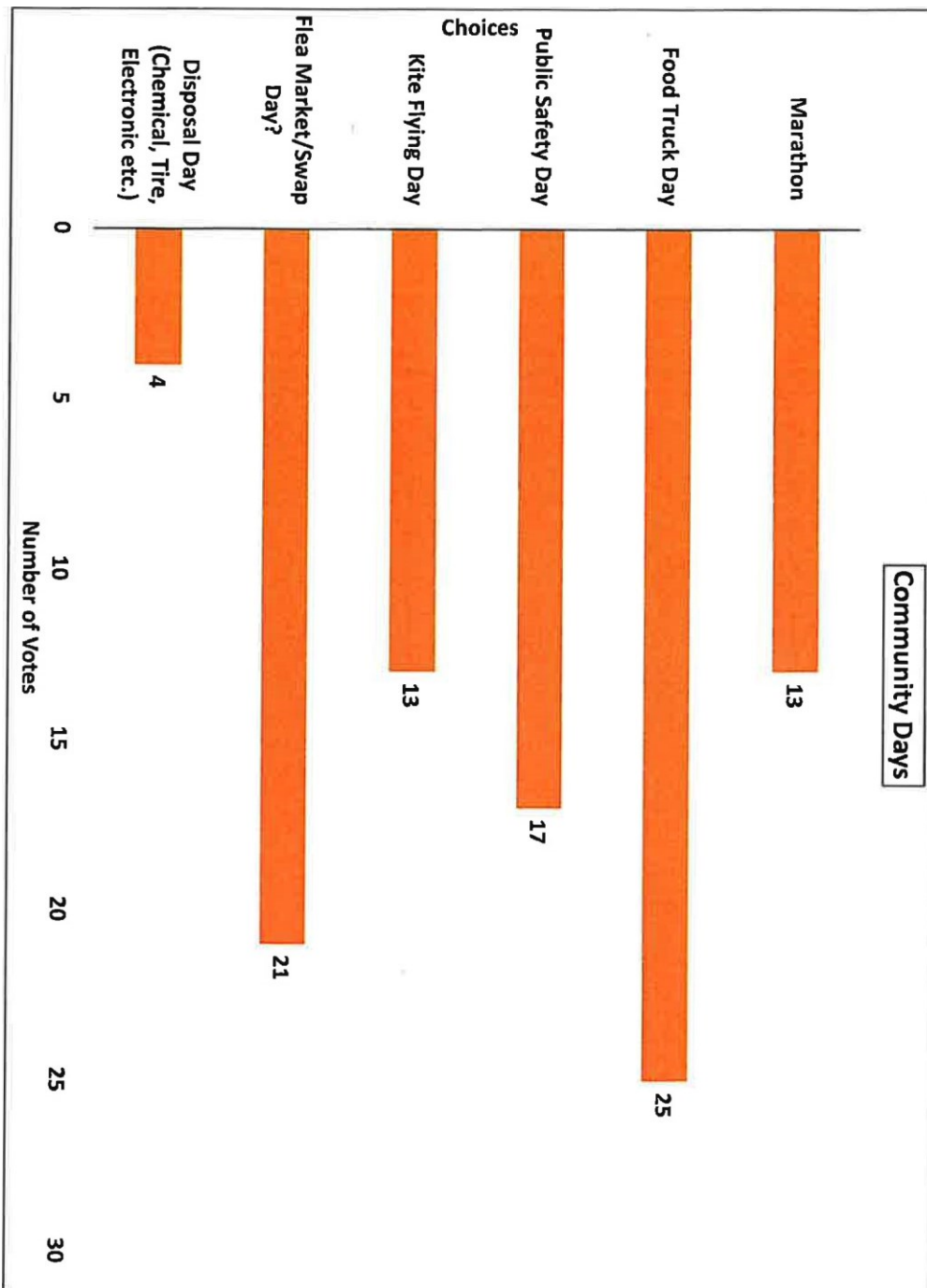
Blackman is ready for Public Input on our Plans for the Next Five Years. Attached is a survey of thoughts & ideas for you to provide input for consideration. Please feel free to add comments at the end, or to add suggestions. Please mark up and return Back to the Township office or email your comments to ppreston@blackmantwp.qom

Blackman Charter Township Survey for Parks and Recreation Planning.

	Item	Comment	Ranking 1-5 (5 being high)
1.	Continue support for the State Trail connecting from Cooper / Parnall to the cit .	In the works, may include a trail head in Blackman. Within 2 years.	
2.	Walking trail /path around the ropert on Parnall	Could be 5,000 feet in length	
3.	Walking trail/path with exercise stations	At Marino Park, as above	
4.	More of a nature trail around Rod Mills Park		
5.	Bathrooms like at Rod Mills	At Marino Park	
6.	Pickleball courts (2 courts)	Marino Park property on Parnall	
	Pavilion with power	At Marino Park	
8.	Drinking fountain	At Each Park	

9.	Food Truck events	At Marino Park	
10.	Improve the ball fields	At Rodd Mills Park	
11.	Add a Picnic area	At Marino Park	
12.	Continue control of Marino soccer fields for sports teams	Fields are maintained by Soccer clubs, not Townshi	
13.	Security Cameras	At Rod Mills & Marino Park	
	Disc golf	Either at Rod Mills or Marino Park	
15.	Sponsor events at the Parks? Rod Mills Park and / or Marino Park.	Community tire disposal day, etc. -flea market / swap day - kite flying day? -Public Safety Day -Food Truck Day	Circle & rank
16.	Work with the County Parks to create canoe / kayak launch at confluence of the Grand & Portage Rivers	North side of Blackman, off 106.	
17.	What would you like to see in the Parks or in Blackman for Recreation opportunities?		



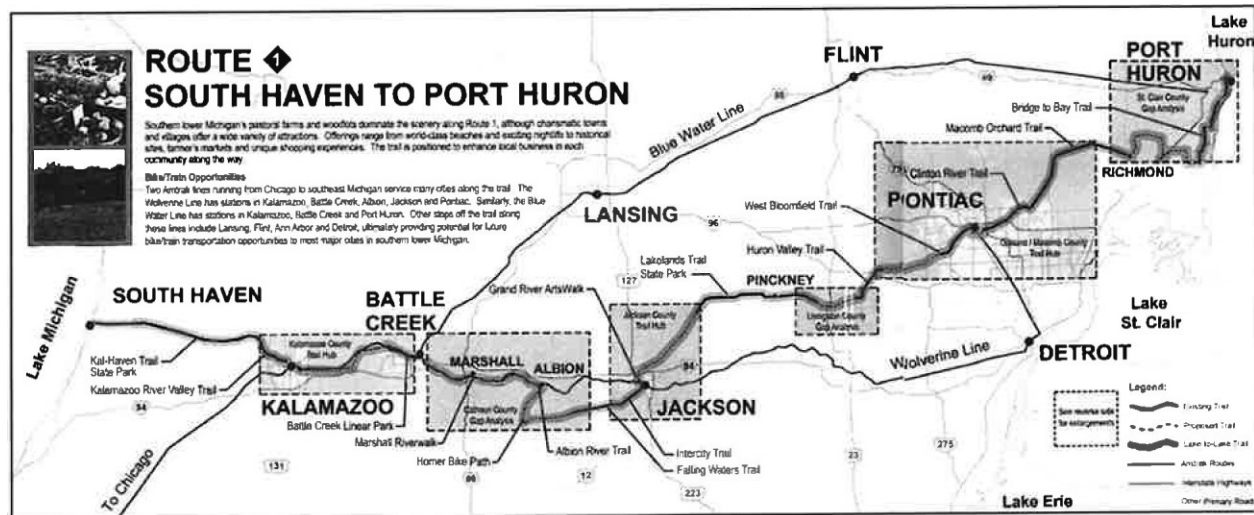


Jackson County Regional Trailway Study

Blackman Township; the Parks Departments of Jackson County and the City of Jackson; the

Townships of Spring Arbor and Summit; the Falling Waters Trail Committee; and the Lakelands Trail Effort joined together in 2002 to develop the Jackson County Regional Trailway Study.

In 2024, much of this plan has been implemented with a section in Blackman Charter Township to be completed in 2024 that will connect from the City of Jackson with the trail headed northeast.



LakeTrails):

¹¹ Please refer the trail map in Appendix C as well as the full study for greater detail. ¹²

Please see the individual recreation plans for greater detail.

Jackson County Regional Railway Study Corridors

<p>Route #1 Corridor: o Lakelands Trail (Extension) - 15.4 mi.</p> <p>O Henrietta Loop - 19.9 mi.</p> <p>O Portage Lake Trail - 6.5 mi.</p> <p>o Blackman Township Loop (Partial) - 8.0 mi.</p> <p>o Intercity Trail - 7.5 mi. o Falling Waters Trail - 11.5 mi.</p>	<p>Other trail corridors:</p> <p>o North Trail - 7.6 mi. o Airport Trail - 5.5 mi. o Hanover Trail 8.9 mi. o Summit Township Loop 7.2 mi. o Ella Sharp Park Trail and Cascades Park 4.4 mi.</p> <p>o South Trail - 19.5 mi. Connection to Existing Trail on Page Avenue – 0.3 mi</p>
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Significant segments of Route #1 of The Great Lake to Lake Trails traversing Jackson County are complete. For example, the majority of the Intercity Trail was already in place at the time the Jackson County Regional Trailway Study was released (although more construction is required); the Grand River Arts Walk, a 1% mile extension of the Intercity Trail to the north city limits, has since been completed. A 10 1/2 mile section of the Falling Waters Trail was also completed from the east village limits of Concord to Weatherwax Road.

Jackson County Regional Trailway Study: Connecting Communities

In 2002, The Jackson County Regional Trailway study was initiated by a collective effort from numerous municipal, non-profit, and public entities. Their shared vision was to create a comprehensive trail network that would enhance recreational opportunities, promote active lifestyles, and foster community connections. The following partners played pivotal roles in this undertaking:

1. Blackman Township. As a central player, Blackman Township recognized the importance of trail development in enhancing the quality of life for its' residents. The township actively participated in planning and implementing trail segments.
2. Parks Departments of Jackson County and the City of Jackson. These departments contributed their expertise in park management, trail design, and community engagement. Their collaboration ensured that the trail system seamlessly integrated with existing parks, recreational facilities and green spaces, focusing on maximizing accessibility and usability.
3. Townships of Spring Arbor and Summit. Spring Arbor and Summit townships joined forces to extend the trail network beyond municipal boundaries. Their commitment to regional connectivity allowed the trail expansion to link neighboring communities, creating a continuous pathway to explore on foot or by bike.
4. Falling Waters Trail Committee. This volunteer committee was a vital force in the development of the Falling Waters Trail. Their advocacy and hard work contributed significantly to the success of the overall Trailway Study.
5. Lakelands Trail Effort. The Lakelands Trail effort focused on expanding the existing Lakelands Trail, creating a continuous route that meanders through picturesque landscapes, connecting lakes, towns, and natural areas.

Fast-forward to 2024, and the vision outlined in the Jackson County Regional Trailway Study has materialized into tangible achievements. Notable progress includes:

Intercity Trail Enhancement.

The Intercity Trail, a cornerstone of the regional trail network, was largely established during the initial release of the Jackson County Regional Trailway Study. Subsequent construction efforts have further solidified its presence. The completion of the Grand River Arts walk, a 1 mile extension, now extends the Intercity Trail to the northern city limits, offering a picturesque pathway for residents and visitors alike.

Falling Waters Trail Completion.

A significant portion of the Falling Waters Trail, totaling 10 % miles, has been successfully completed. This section connects the east village limits of Concord to Weatherwax Road.

Blackman Charter Township Extension.

Blackman Charter Township is on track to finalize a critical trail segment. This extension will establish a vital link between the City of Jackson and the northeast bound trails, enhancing regional connectivity and opportunities to explore, appreciate nature, and the abundance of natural resources in Blackman Township.

Jackson City + County Nonmotorized Plan

Continuing with this vision, in 2020, the City of Jackson, Jackson County, and several communities within the County collaborated to create an undated Nonmotorized Network Plan, aimed at enhancing non-motorized routes. Blackman Township, representing the Township of the County Steering Committee, placed a crucial role in shaping this plan. The primary objective was to improve non-motorized transportation options, making it more convenient for both residents and visitors to walk, bike, and connect with key destinations.

However, Blackman Township faces unique challenges due to its proximity to railroads, highways (such as US-127 and 1-94), and the Grand River. To address

these challenges, the plan outlined several priorities specifically related to Blackman Township:

1. Completing Sidewalk Gaps. Filling in missing sidewalk segments along critical route.
2. Improving Crosswalks. Ensuring crosswalks comply with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and provide safe routes to schools.
3. Creating Connections. Establishing pathways across expressways, rivers and bridges.
4. Linking to Schools. Enhancing connectivity to educational institutions.
5. Connecting Isolated Neighborhoods. Bridging gaps between neighborhoods.
6. Iron Bell Trail/Great Lake-to-Lake Trail Route One. Integrating with this major trail system.

For more details, you can explore the [Jackson City + County Nonmotorized Plan](#) as well as the Blackman Township Nonmotorized Network Map on the following page.

Blackman Township

Nonmotorized Network

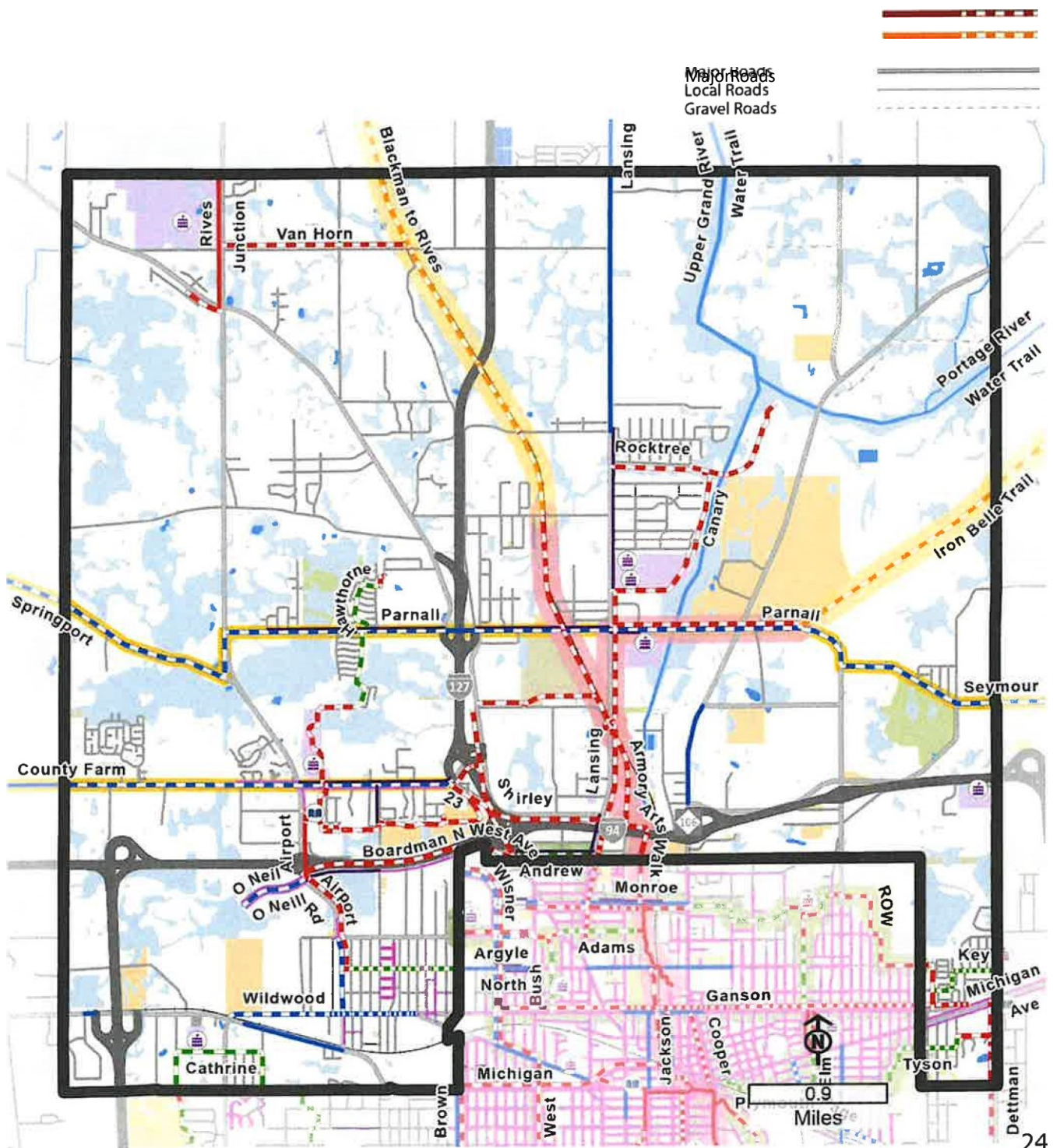
Priority Paved Shoulders



Unpaved Trails and
Routes Paved Trails and
Routes

City of Jackson
Family Friendly Routes
Roads





Nonmotorized Network
Trail (paved)
Trail (unpaved/gravel)
Bike Lane/Paved Shoulder

existing planned

Signed Bike Route
Sidewalk

Footpath/Hiking Trail
Regional Connections

Goals and Action Program 2024-2028 Five-year Plan (DRAFT)

Mission:

Provide more community-wide recreation opportunities for each and every resident. Support goals established In the Blackman Chatter Township Master Plan to link Master plan goals with capita/ expenditures and to Establish a Community Identity.

The following Goals continue working on our 2017 plans while utilizing input from our 2023 Survey and public meeting discussions. This includes updated information from Region 2 Planning Commission, courtesy of Jacob Hurt, Executive Director.

Major opportunities became possible in 2023 with the purchase of properties adjacent to our Public Safety office on the west, and adjacent to the Township offices to the East, that will greatly enhance the sense of a community center for Blackman with space for events and recreational activity.

The financial means to these goals and added recreational facilities hinged on the millage strongly supported by the community. The 2024 - 28 plan has significant expansion of recreational and community activities made possible by the ongoing public support.

The following goals piggyback on the past 5 years, and expand opportunities for years to come:

Goal A

Create a more walk able and bike friendly community.

Responses to the survey show a very strong support for non-motorized State trail system being available in Blackman. The completion of the Mike Levine

trail section along Parnall and Lansing avenues connecting the Township with the City of Jackson is a priority for the Township, utilizing funding from outside sources. .

Objective: Connect the State trail from Cooper/Parnall to the City.

ACTIONS:

1. Work with the following organizations in trail planning activities throughout the Township: Michigan DEQ, Michigan DNR, County of Jackson DOT, MDOT.
2. Identify possible funding sources including budgeting support and grant applications leading to a trail head within Blackman to encourage usage of the trail and enhancing ease of access for Blackman residents.
3. Work with MDOT on long term road and bridge planning to assure maximum efficiency during construction / reconstruction in Blackman and surrounding community.
4. Expand community sidewalks system for bikes, strollers, skating, or wheelchair by identifying usage patterns in the township for determining needs. Identify crossing points for improvements in safe crossings.

Goal B:

Development of the Marino Park facilities

The purchase of property on Parnall has provided multiple opportunities for the Township. First, to meet Public Safety Department needs for more officer space. And second, to enhance our community identity and to add park and recreational options. Priority is to solve the overcrowded conditions with new PS facilities, and to plan and complete added facilities for Parks and Recreation around the Parnall complex.

ACTIONS: in rough sequence, with priority to PS construction.

1) Plan the footprint for the entire Parnall property, which is underway as of January, 2024. Information from the 2023 Public survey is used as a guide for inclusion.	<p>Work is underway on redesign & expansion plans for Marinos. Additional facilities will follow in the planning process.</p> <p>Target: spring , 2024</p>
2) Removal of B & H Machine shop ending with clean grass area.	<p>Underwork.</p> <p>Target: spring , 2024</p>
3) Create walking path around the Parnall Property.	<p>-agree on path layout -</p> <p>agree on the surface</p> <p>_RFP, RFQ, Construction.</p> <p>Target: summer 2024.</p>
4) Bathrooms at Marinos park	<p>-location determined for bathrooms and drinking fountain</p> <p>-style agreed upon (vault, water?)</p> <p>-Bid & installation.</p> <p>Target: fall 2024</p>
5) Installation of Security Cameras for Rod Mills Park and Parnall Park.	<p>-Under work with signed contract.</p> <p>-Enhance power & water at same time.</p> <p>Target: summer 2024</p>

6) Pavilion in Marino Park.	-location & size determined -amenities determined: power, water sewer, tables, lighting -Bid & construction Target: spring . 2025
7) Pickleball Courts in Marino Park	-TBD - location, number of courts ? -covered ? -bid & construction Target: summer 2025
8) Support for Soccer & Little Leagues The Township is committed to maintaining facilities in direct support of the Master Plan Goals for Community Identity.	-ensure ongoing availability of fields. -improve the fields & facilities, including the turf, drainage, line & maintenance of the fields. -improve ball fields at Rod Mills. Target: ongoing, with contracts to ensure care
9) Ensure ongoing care of Park & Recreation facilities. Pavilion improvements to include upgrade power & water during #5, Camera work at Rod Mills.	-regular maintenance for Rod Mills Park, including: bathroom facilities, trash, mowing, playground & ball fields. -pavilion roof maintenance, estimate replacements in 2029.
10) Sponsor/ coordinate Food Truck Days for Blackman.	-work with food truck owners to support a Blackman community type event. Target: Summer 2024.

11) Repurposing the current public Safety Building.	Several options for consideration. -service bay for vehicles -meeting rooms for public use -community center - precinct voting Target: 2027-2028
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GOAL C

Work with GREAT (Grand River Environmental Action Team) to protect the Grand River environment and enhance river access improvements where feasible.

ACTIONS:

1. Continue GREAT membership on the Parks & Recreation committee to ensure interests of GREAT and Blackman Parks & Recreation are compatible and supportive.
2. Combine / coordinate resources to acquire financing and assist in completing tasks identified which are open to all Blackman residents and meets the Mission Statement.
3. Provide some financial support to the GREAT organization who provide facilities and work for the betterment of Blackman Township residents.
4. Evaluate the use of Canary Lane Township Property for future use, including nonmotorized walk from Parnall to the Northwest Community Schools.

Goal D:

Create a more handicap accessible, handicap friendly community.

Objective: Improve Barrier-Free Access (BFA) meeting the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), reaching for Universal access where feasible.

The estimated disabled population in Blackman Township numbers 3,321 people (19%,) with 40 % of these being in the 65 and over category. With the importance of recreational facilities in Blackman rated at 84%, the Committee is committed to inclusion of our disabled population, and for improvements to current recreational opportunities.

ACTIONS:

1. Seek expertise (JCISD & others) to assess current compliance on equipment and facilities and develop plans for improvements to move towards universal access where possible.
2. Ensure facilities added and maintained in the Township meets ADA requirements, and work to reach universal access where feasible financially.
3. Participate in the planning of recreational facilities in the Township to Promote ADA compliance, including ADA approved launch facilities for the Type A sites on the Upper Grand River Water Trail Master Plan.
4. Partner with JCISD young adult training program with ongoing learning experiences that add value to the Township, Rod Mills Park and the students.

Goal E

Assure ongoing funding for parks and recreation in Blackman Charter Township.

Objective: Ensure the Parks & Recreation Committee continues a team effort with stakeholders in the community participating Blackman Charter Township.

In 2017 the Township made a conscious attempt to include community representatives and needs to continue this effort in support of a Community Identity. This effort continues with the renewed parks and recreation plans. Several projects require substantial funding for

ACTIONS: completion, followed by ongoing maintenance costs for years following.

1. Reach out to community organizations to participate on the Township Committee in ways that work for them.
2. Create opportunities for organizations and/or individuals to contribute to park and recreation goals in exchange for public recognition of the support, such as naming rights, or event sponsorships. This would be a BCT Policy approved by the Board.