



EMMETT TOWNSHIP

PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN

2025-2029



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INTRODUCTION

Emmett Township recognizes the importance of land management, placemaking, and design of public green spaces for year round recreational activities.

The Township's Five Year Comprehensive Recreational Plan (2025-2029) is provided as a guide for both short term and long term goals, prioritizing needs, and investment strategies for the creative development of public spaces.

The 2025-2029 Recreation Plan has been prepared in accordance with the current "Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenways Plans" from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (IC1924, Rev. 12/20/16). The Plan is designed so that it may also be included as an appendix to the Township's existing and/or future Comprehensive Master Plan.

Appropriate community demographics and land use maps will be provided within the attached Recreation Plan Appendix so as to allow for reasonable updates as census data or related information becomes available within the plan's five year timeframe.

The "Recreation Plan" is a basic broad stroke that depicts the input from township residents, stakeholders, visitors and adjacent community members regarding desired improvements to the Township Park, and other public green spaces.

The Plan is not intended to be a closed document that lists definitive action items and rigid cost outlines. It is meant to encourage further discussions, seek creative opportunities, identify financial resources, and provide a framework for fundraising and establishing both public and private partnerships.

Action items and park improvements are dependent upon the availability of local funds, and to a larger extent, the ability to successfully compete for federal, state, and private grant programs.

The Plan provides an ambitious list of development ideas and action items so as to anticipate ever changing community needs, recreational trends, and all potential resources.

In accordance with the requirements of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the plan includes the following topics:

1. **Community Description:** Description of the jurisdiction covered by the plan and the extent of its focus.
2. **Administrative Structure:** Description of how the park and recreation functions are or will be carried out. This includes current and projected budgets and sources of funding for capital improvements, adoption of a maintenance policy plan, staffing and volunteers, and partnerships-both public and private.
3. **Inventory:** A brief inventory of existing parks, nature areas, and recreational facilities and their location, size and amenities (including types of recreational activity) in the area. This includes maps and site plans, and the completed “DNR Inspection Reports” for any previously funded grant sites.
4. **Description of the Planning and Public Input Process:** Evidence of public participation, public hearings, and plan reviews prior to the final adoption of the Plan by the legislative body.
5. **Goals and Objectives:** Specific goals and objectives that will be taken into consideration when setting priorities, evaluating proposals and funding opportunities.
6. **Action Plan:** Specific work task items that may be undertaken by staff, volunteers or other partners which will assist the city in meeting the stated goals and objectives during the next five years. It will also allow for development of capital improvement plan that includes rough cost estimates for priority projects and needs so as to be effectively matched with limited resources and leveraged dollars.

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

The community description consists of two specific components: jurisdiction served (township) and extent of the plan focus (St. Clair County).

Emmett Township has a population of approximately 2,257. Census Data for 2020 indicates a Median Household Income of \$90,871 and an 8.5% poverty rate. Only 8% of the population works within the Township and the remaining commute to Port Huron, adjacent townships or the Detroit Metropolitan Area. Nearly 95% of land acreage is zoned for agricultural/rural residential use.

The Emmett Township Park is located at 11100 Dunnigan Road and is also the site of the Emmett Township Hall. The 3.1 acre site currently includes space for play equipment, parking and a wooded area to the north of the township office building.

The following community profile is provided:

(insert updated data and map here)

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Emmett Township is organized with an elected Township Supervisor and Board of Trustees to oversee the township’s activities and financial operations. A committee of volunteers act as advisors for the park and report to the Supervisor and Board of Trustees with input from the residents and township voters. Part time staff take care of necessary maintenance and seasonal tasks as necessary.

Michigan Enabling Legislation for providing public recreation and parks include the 1917 Public Act 156, 1929 Public Act 312, and 1965 Public Act 261, as amended.

(Insert Administrative Chart here)

Emmett Township fiscal year and annual budget include public reviews and access to financial information as desired. The township also receives an annual allocation specifically for parks and recreational needs from the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission’s annual millage.

(Insert Annual Township Budget here)

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE CHART

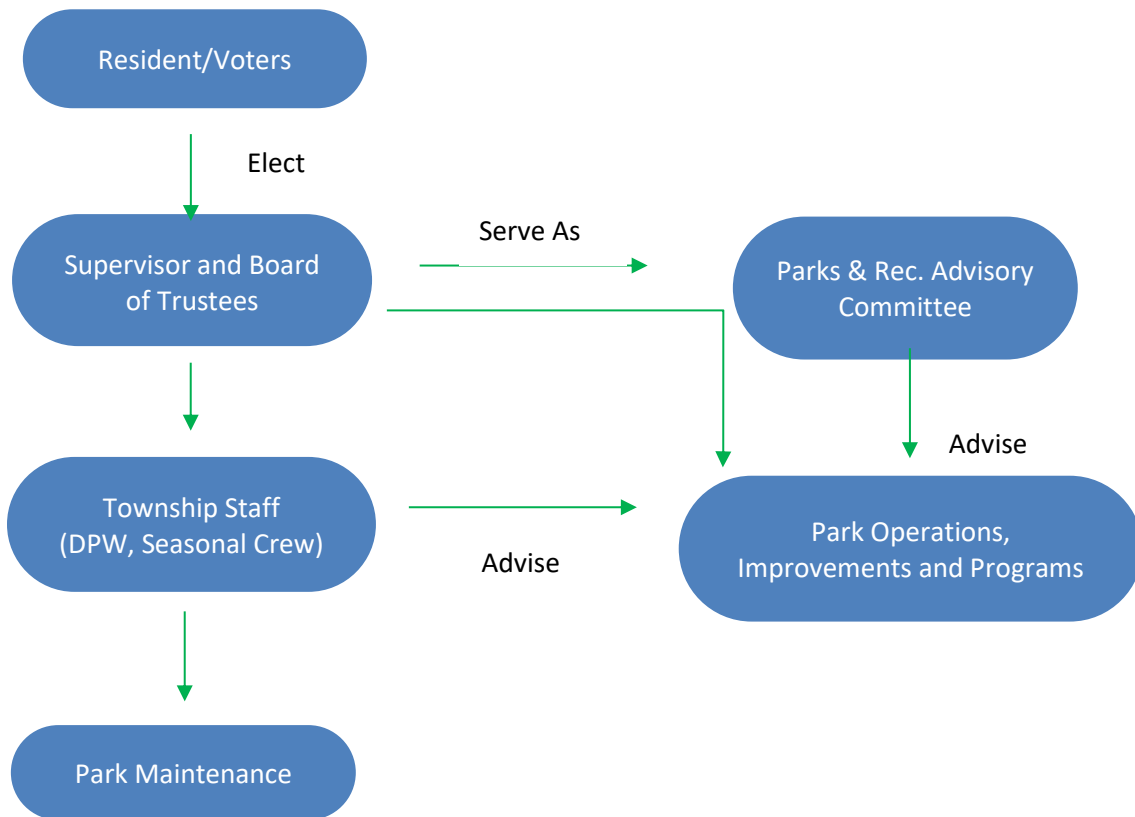
The Emmett Township Board of Trustees consists of 5 elected individuals who are residents of the township and serve in the following capacities: Township Supervisor, Township Clerk, Township Treasurer, and two Trustees elected at large.

The Trustees have the sole responsibility for expenditure of funds to provide necessary services, including recreational facilities and programs.

The Parks and Recreation Committee is established by the Board of Trustees as an advisory committee to the Board. The 5 member committee meets to review the needs at the park and explores creative opportunities for funding partnerships, recreation programs and events.

The Township's statutory authority to prepare recreation plans is provided by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act 110 of 2006, as amended.

The following chart illustrates the administrative structure of the township:



Role of Volunteers:

Emmett Township is fortunate to have a strong commitment from local volunteers regarding their park and responding to opportunities to offer assistance in a variety of tasks. Seasonal park clean up events, donations of equipment and materials, work parties to install or repair play features, landscaping; and fundraising ideas to meet goals for additional play features are all undertaken by local volunteers. The park committee are strictly volunteers and they meet monthly to ensure that the township park is an attractive place for local residents.

Community Partnerships:

Emmett Township officials and park committee members are eager to continue to explore local partnerships with service clubs, interest groups, school administrators, non-profits, churches, adjacent townships, the Community Foundation of St. Clair County, St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission, federal and state agencies and private businesses that may wish to contribute their resources and expertise regarding the creation of accessible play features, and enhancing natural surroundings for the public's enjoyment.

RECREATION AND RESOURCE INVENTORY

A listing of public and private parks, nature areas and recreational facilities (private and public) are illustrated in the “Resource Inventory Table” within the appendix.

Methods Used to Conduct Inventory:

Methods used to conduct an inventory of nearby parks and recreational facilities included review of the recently completed St. Clair County Parks & Recreation Plan (2023-2027) and information provided by the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission and the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission; as well as field observations and contact with adjacent townships.

Inventory included the following categories:

- Township owned facility
- School District owned facilities
- Privately owned recreational facilities (as observed)

National Recreation Park Associate (NRPA) park classification is used to help determine the type of park(s) that each community has access and ownership.

NAME	DESCRIPTION	SERVICE AREA	SIZE
Mini Park	Small, Unique	< ¼ mile	1 acre
Neighborhood	Variety Activities	¼ - ½ mile	2-10 acres
Community	Variety Activities, Including sport fields	½ - 3 miles	10+ acres



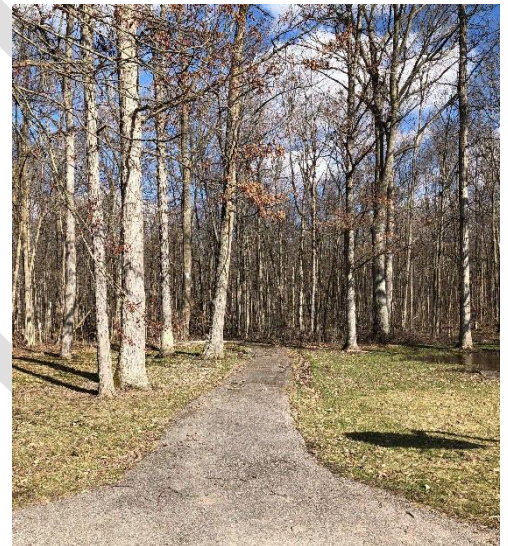
Accessibility Factors:

Accessibility factors were noted at the Township Park. The recognized American with Disabilities Act (ADA) – 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design was used as a guide. A ranking from 1-5 (1 = none of the site amenities meet ADA standards and up to 5 = all of the facility/site amenities meet not only the ADA standards; but also, the “Principles of Universal Design” was used and is shown in the Resource Inventory Table.

In accordance with Michigan DNR standards, facilities and access routes were considered.

The following guideline was used:

- 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 = Entire facility/park area meets accessibility guidelines**
- 5 = Entire facility/park area was renovated/newly built using Universal Design guidelines to meet accessibility.**



The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) provides guidelines that suggest public park systems include 6.25 to 10.5 acres of public park land for every 1,000 of population. With a population at just under 3,000; Emmett Township has 3.1

acres of public parkland. An additional 15 acres of recreational space could be deemed reasonable if appropriate land ever became available for acquisition.

Location maps and walkability circles are include for comparison and visual guidance. This includes nearby parks, major waterways and recreational facilities within adjacent communities.

Local public transportation routes are important factors when determining a community's accessibility to public parks and recreational facilities. This includes not only major highways and trunk lines, but also paved roadways, bus routes, regional trail systems and waterways if available.

(Insert Maps here)

Post Completion Self Inspection Reports:

A "Post Completion Self Inspection Report" (including photographs) is provided in the Appendix for all sites that have received grant assistance, regardless of the year of funding from the following resources:

1. Land and Water Conservation Fund
2. Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund
3. Recreation Passport Grant Fund
4. Clean Michigan Initiative Recreation Bond Fund
5. 1988 Recreation Bond Fund

Emmett Township has not participated in the above mentioned programs.

PLANNING AND PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

The purpose of the 2025-2029 Recreation Plan is to identify needs, desires for improvements to the park and recreational facilities; to recognize potential opportunities for partnerships (both programs and financial resources) and guide development to achieve those improvements.

A key factor in the success of those effects begins and ends with public participation, thoughtful input and support for the goals and objectives, as well as assistance with action items during the next five years.

Methods Used to Obtain Public Input:

Several methods have been used to seek public input and ideas for improvements to the park. Over the past year, the Parks Committee has held several workshops and public meetings to hear the views of the residents and in particular, local children and teens.

In 2023, at a public meeting, the Township Board of Trustees and the Parks Committee received an enthusiastic presentation from local families and their children that shared specific ideas for new play features and the development of a nature trail within the park.

Additional outreach to local partners such as the Port Huron Recreation Department, St. Clair County Parks & Recreation Commission, and the Community Foundation of St. Clair County have resulted in positive exchanges of information, potential funding schedules, play feature suppliers, and shared resources.

In April, 2024, the Community Foundation of St. Clair County offered a unique opportunity that allowed the township to participate in a “Capacity Building Program”. This partnership has resulted in funding for completion of the Recreation Plan, a concept plan for site development, boundary map, grant narrative guides and administrative support to place the township in a positive position to more easily apply for future grants and leverage fundraising events.

A detailed schedule and certified copies of the resolutions, published public hearing notices and final authorizations are included in the Appendix.

Overview of the public input process includes:

(Insert specific dates of presentations, public meetings etc. here)

DRAFT

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Access to public green spaces for both active and passive recreational activities and social interaction is a key element in a community's desirability when considering residential and commercial investment.

Emmett Township recognizes the importance of public spaces and is committed to retaining the land adjacent to the Township Hall as the community's public park.

With the results shared during public input events and monthly township meetings, the following goals and objectives have been set to guide property development, partnerships, investment strategies and public support at the Township Park during the next five years.

Mission Statement: *To support and encourage improvements and investments at the Township Park which create diverse recreational opportunities that are accessible and creative for all ages and abilities.*

Goals & Objectives:

Goal 1: Provide and maintain safe recreational facilities and open public spaces.

Objective: Develop and adopt a local Maintenance Policy Plan that includes guidance for weekly, monthly, seasonal and annual inspections and maintenance tasks.

Objective: Investigate and evaluate security and risk management options as necessary at park.

Goal 2: Encourage healthy lifestyles and physical activity year-round, regardless of age, physical challenges or socio-economic status.

Objective: Engage in partnerships with surrounding communities or interest groups to participate and/or offer a wide variety of recreational activities at low or no cost.

Objective: Promote recreational activities and programs available through Township or adjacent communities using township's website or social media accounts.

Objective: Commit to including inclusive and accessible play options when updating play equipment or park features in order to facilitate all ages and abilities.

Goal 3: Plan for a desired expansion of recreational needs in community.

Objective: Identify possible land acquisitions, easements, or development partnerships that would increase or expand recreational facilities and protect natural resources.

Objective: Explore options as they become available, to extend or create connections to non-motorized pathways between recreational, commercial and residential areas; as well as connectors to established trails or pathways in adjacent communities.

Objective: Promote bike or walking trails where appropriate to connect residential areas with open spaces.

Goal 4: Protect natural surroundings and promote environmental stewardship.

Objective: Incorporate energy efficiency and green technology when making improvements to existing site or developing new recreational spaces; including water conservation, natural or solar lighting, use of native plantings and drought resistance landscaping designs.

Objective: Utilize best practice standards for storm water management, drainage and flood mitigation measures when completing design of public spaces as feasible.

Objective: Promote recycling by using recycled materials in park amenities such as benches, bins, signage.

Objective: Create educational opportunities within public park spaces that promote pollinator gardens, wildlife habitats, signage and design.

Goal 5: Support local and regional arts and culture.

Objective: Encourage partnerships that provide educational and recreational programs within the park, including special events that the community and surrounding Blue Water Area are welcome to attend.

Goal 6: Develop Financial Plan to sustain the park and related recreational programs.

Objective: Establish fiscal priorities for next five years regarding park amenities and set a working budget.

Objective: Create a Financial Plan that includes creating a fundraising campaign for private and corporate donations, volunteer opportunities, investigate and target private and public grant funds, foundations, and potential sponsorships for desired improvements and a maintenance fund.

ACTION PLAN

Implementation Strategies:

The goals and objectives agreed upon for the next five years are meant to be flexible and offer a guide to seeking out and pursuing opportunities for improvements at the park and throughout public spaces or recreational facilities.

The specific action plan with “project tasks” are greatly dependent upon securing resources that heavily include financial assistance. The current recreation budget does not have adequate funding available for all of the desired projects. Therefore, it is necessary to prioritize improvements and to identify potential partners, matching funds, donations, in-kind services and similar donations. Not all sources will be applicable to all projects. However, the following may be considered as deemed appropriate:

- **General Fund – Annual budget allocation and monies available through the Township’s annual Parks and Recreation line item in the annual budget. This may be available for not only normal maintenance, but for the leveraging of funds to provide match dollars for the purchase new play features, and develop a nature trail on site.**
- **St. Clair County Parks & Recreation Commission - Annual millage allocation to the township. These funds and any subsequent increase in annual amount are eligible for the cost of improvements to the park and/or as match funds for other grants programs or seed money for fundraising efforts.**
- **Land and Water Conservation Fund – DNR funding program provides competitive grant for 50% (maximum grant \$500,000) with local match for park projects that include property acquisition, site improvements in nature areas.**
- **Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund – DNR funding for up to 75% (maximum grant \$400,000) to acquire land, improve or develop parks and recreation facilities, improve accessibility at sites.**
- **Recreation Passport Fund – DNR funding for up to 75% (maximum \$150,000) for unique improvements to play features in parks and improve accessibility at sites. Emphasis on creative play.**
- **Foundations, Private Grant Opportunities – Private foundations and regional organizations at times will offer grant funds in a**

competitive manner. Utility companies (DTE Foundation) and regional corporations encourage community projects with small grants to act as seed money to generate and motivate local fundraising efforts.

- **Business Sponsorships/Branding – Area businesses (large and small, chain or local) will consider improvements such as pavilions with a chance to include a sponsorship or branding right.**
- **Service clubs, interest groups – Area service clubs (Rotary, Lions, Optimist etc.) may enjoy the opportunity to raise funds for a park amenity in exchange for publicity and a name plate. Boy Scout Eagle candidates and Girl Scout Gold Award candidates are another resource for potential park amenities such as nature trail signage, wood benches, bird houses, picnic tables and other similar needs.**

Fundraising campaigns are more successful when there is a clear “wish list”, a colorful “concept plan” and when the fundraising is kicked off with a variety of participants and funding levels to generate confidence in the project and enthusiasm for participation.

ACTION PLAN – (Example Only)

PROJECT/YEAR	EST. COST	SOURCE
TOWNSHIP PARK - 2025		
Engineering Design Nature Trail	\$5,000	DNR TF, PARC
Construct Nature Trail	\$15,000	DNR TF, PARC, Millage \$ Donations
Park Amenities (Benches, Nature signs, birdhouses)	\$ 2,000	Service Club grant Eagle Scout
TOWNSHIP PARK - 2026		
Picnic Pavilion	\$ 25,000	Branding Sponsor
Play Features	\$ TBD	DNR Rec Passport DNR TF Millage \$ for match Fundraising Events Foundations
TOWNSHIP PARK – 2027		
Multi-sport Court	\$ 45,000	DNR TF DNR Rec Passport Foundations Fundraising
TOWNSHIP PARK - 2028		
Parking Lot Improvements ADA spaces, drainage issues	\$25,000	Millage Funds In-Kind Donations
TOWNSHIP PARK - 2029		
Restroom structure (CXT)	\$TBD	DNR TF

TOWNSHIP PARK – General 2025-2029		
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Explore future funding options (endowments, etc)		
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<p>Property Acquisitions</p> <p>Drainage and Landscaping</p> <p>Additional Play features</p> <p>Safety Play surfaces (EWF or Rubber Pour)</p> <p>Maintenance-Capital Improvement Fund</p> <p>Tree Planting and Forestry Maintenance</p> <p>Recreational Programs/Seasonal Events</p>		
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POTENTIAL PARK IMPROVEMENTS (PER COMMUNITY INPUT)



#1 The most popular choice: Track Ride

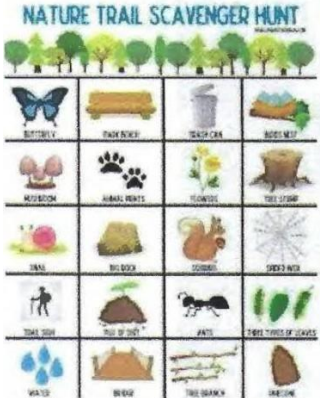


Bonus choice: Zip Krooz



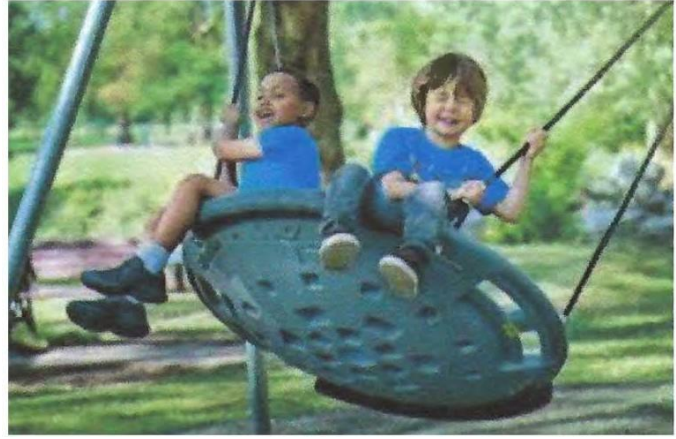
#2 Sledding Hill

#3 Nature/Bike Trail with Scavenger Hunt

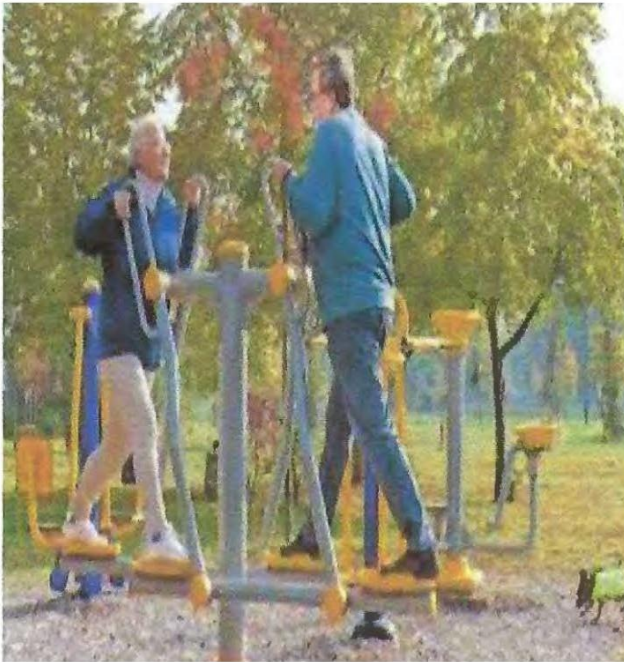




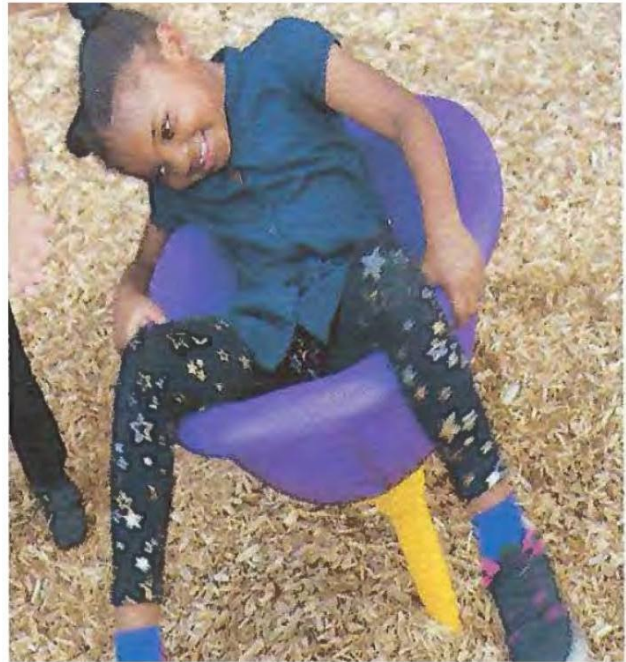
#4 Pavilion - for Birthday and Graduation Parties



#5 Spider Swing



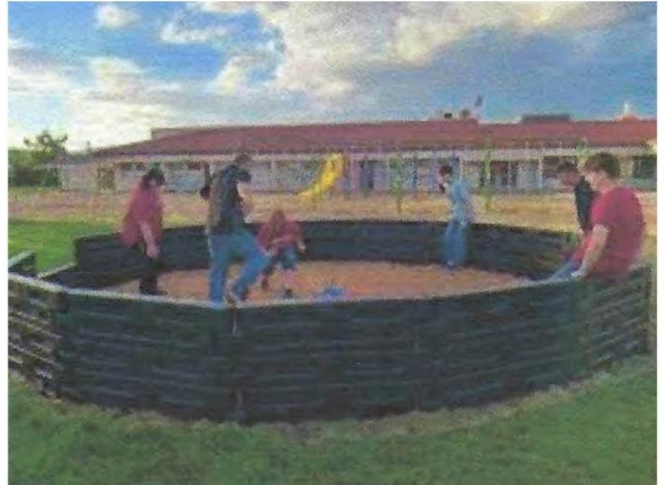
#6 Exercise Equipment for All Ages



#7 Spinning Seats like at Emmett KOA



#8 Ice Skate Rink



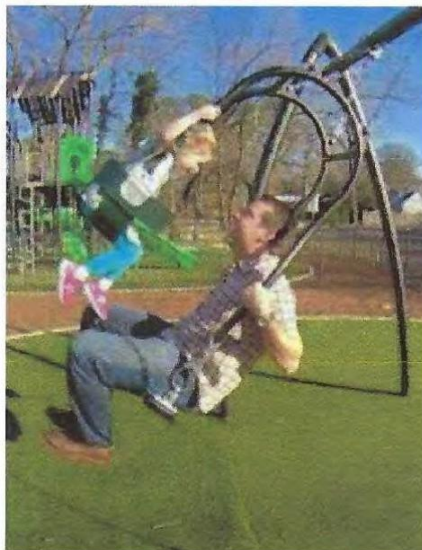
#9 Gaga Pit



Little Library



Wasp Removal in current playground equipment



#10 Dual Swing



Bathroom Sign



Chain Link Fence between playground area and road?

SUMMARY

It is important for the future of local parks and recreation facilities that along with an “Action Plan” for new improvements, there is also a clear understanding of future needs, and long-term goals. Planning for such may not rely on fundraising alone.

The exploration of a capital improvement plan, strategic financial investments and endowment funds may be of benefit to the community.

The 2025-2029 Recreation Plan has been made available to the public for their comments thru August, 2024. A copy of the final plan, once approved and adopted by the Emmett Township Board of Trustees will be sent to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for their review and approval in order to qualify Emmett Township as an eligible community to compete for related DNR grants.