



**Fruitport Charter Township
Parks and Recreation Master Plan
2021-2025**



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Executive Summary

Introduction

This document, the Fruitport Charter Township Recreation Plan, is intended to guide present and future recreational resource development within the township, including park land, parks facilities, recreational programs, and public open spaces.

This plan, in addition to serving as a guide for recreation facilities and program development, is prepared to satisfy the requirements set forth by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). Recreation plans are required by the MDNR for state and federal grant eligibility.

Community Description

Fruitport Charter Township (hereinafter called Fruitport Township) is located in the Southwest – South Central quadrant of Muskegon County, approximately five miles east of Lake Michigan. It is bounded on the south by Ottawa County, to the east by Sullivan Township, to the west by the City of Norton Shores, and to the north by the City of Muskegon and Muskegon Charter Township. It encompasses the Village of Fruitport. Fruitport Township had an estimated population of 14,386 in 2019 with a percentage change of 5.7% from 2010. More precise population numbers for 2021 will be known when the 2020 Census is released.

Fruitport Township is a small, irregularly shaped township of approximately 30 square miles characterized by a relatively flat terrain with large pockets of wooded land, cultivated fields and lowlands/high water table. Much of the eastern portion of the township is rural and sparsely populated. However, its favorable location adjacent to the Greater Muskegon Metropolitan Area, to the Tri-Cities Area (Grand Haven, Ferrysburg, and Spring Lake), and its proximity to the Grand Rapids metro area make it an increasingly desirable place to live. Commercial development along the western portion of the township has exploded during the past 10 years.

North/South access to the township is provided by U.S. 31, a limited access, high-speed expressway, on the western edge of the township. East/west access is provided by I-96, which bisects the township in a northwest/southeast direction. The Tri-Cities area of Grand Haven, Ferrysburg, and Spring Lake is located immediately to the south of Fruitport and Grand Rapids is approximately 25 miles to the east.

The following Parks and Recreation plan is an outgrowth of the increasing demand for recreational programs and facilities as the Fruitport area continues to grow. A well-conceived strategy of acquisition of land, development of facilities, expansion of programs and the continuation of on-going operation and maintenance capabilities will assist the township in meeting future recreational and leisure-time needs as they develop.

A variety of factors including past and current trends in population growth and economic development, as well as the physiographic amenities, will play an important role in developing the Fruitport Township Recreation Plan. The Grand Rapids to Holland and Muskegon triangle is

experiencing significant changes and growth. The cities of Grand Haven, Norton Shores, Spring Lake and Ottawa County have seen tremendous growth in the past decade. That trend is project to continue in future years.

Actual development, as opposed to projected development, may shift dramatically to one area or another or may not spread uniformly over the entire area, making projections somewhat difficult the next few years. However, we are certain growth will continue at a higher-than-normal rate for most of the area and recreational needs will increase at a proportional or slightly higher rate.

This Parks and Recreation plan will attempt to account for conditions that currently exist and are anticipated to continue.

Fruitport Township consists of twenty-nine (29) sections. The western border of this irregularly shaped township begins at the corner of Sheridan Road and Harvey Street and extends south beyond Judson Road. The southern border continues east to the intersection of Wilson and Maple Island Roads, from which the eastern border is formed by a stair-step pattern traveling north on Maple Island Road, west onto Mount Garfield Road, north towards Wolf Lake Road, west on Cline Road, north on Brooks Road. Finally, the northern township border begins north of the Brooks Road/Broadway Avenue intersection and runs parallel with Broadway Avenue until it reaches Harvey Street.

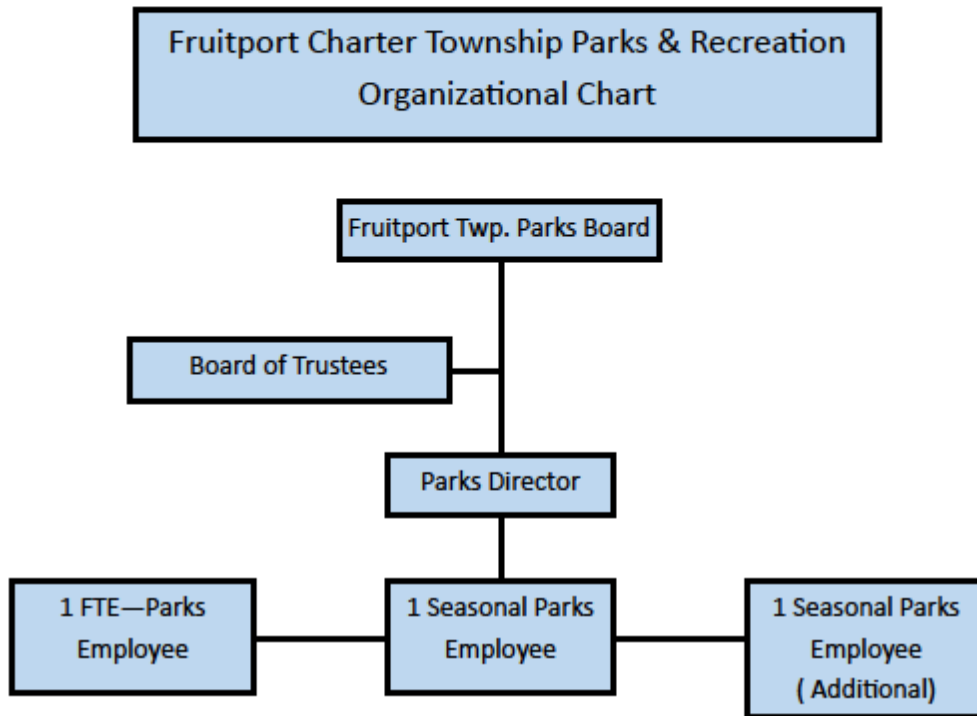
Administrative Structure

The Fruitport Township Parks and Recreation Commission is an elected body responsible for the maintenance, operation, and development of the township recreation facilities. It is comprised of five members elected by the township residents and a Director appointed by the Commission. The Commission reports to the Township Board. The Township Parks and Recreation Commission authorized the development of the Parks and Recreation Plan.

Fruitport Township Parks and Recreation Commission meet regularly on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 6:00 PM, except December. All meetings are held in the Fruitport Township Hall located at 5865 Airline Road in Fruitport, Michigan.

The Parks and Recreation Commission have a part-time Parks and Recreation Director who coordinates the planning, execution and management of all township park facilities and equipment. Any use by the community groups or School Community Education Department is coordinated through the director. School District recreation facilities are generally coordinated though the Community Education Department of Fruitport Community Schools.

The Parks and Recreation Commission staff maintains all fields and facilities at South Fruitport Park, Pine Park, and Sheringer Soccer Park. The youth clubs often assist in minor maintenance upgrades at all fields. At Beach School, park staff has, in the past, prepared the fields for play. (This is the School Districts responsibility.)



Relationships

Relationships with Other Public or Private Organizations

The Fruitport Township Parks and Recreation Commission has partnered with the Fruitport Youth Club, Beach Youth Club, and the Fruitport Youth Soccer Club to provide field marking for these clubs and periodically they have co-funded various improvements for the Fruitport Township Parks facilities.

Volunteers

In past years, Fruitport Township has benefited from volunteer labor and funds that the various youth clubs in the Township have expended on behalf of the parks. The following table summarizes the degree of assistance these groups have given the township:

Township Park Recipient	Contributor	Amount	Assets Received
Sherigner Park	Fruitport Soccer Club	\$ 75,000.00	Fencing, site clearing, grubbing, and parking area sub-base
Sherigner Park	Fruitport Soccer Club	\$ 250,000.00	Soccer fields, sidewalks, parking lot, lighting, construction
Sherigner Park	Fruitport Soccer Club	\$ 45,000.00	Soccer field
South Fruitport Park	Football Club	\$ 7,000.00	New Scoreboard
Pine Park	Youth Club	\$ 4,500.00	3 Portable electronic boards, football concession addition, T-ball field
Miscellaneous Parks	Youth Club	\$ 75,000.00	Painting, electrical, fencing, cleanup, general maintenance work

Park Budget and Funding

Annual and Projected Budgets

The Fruitport Township Parks and Recreation Commission submits an annual report and budget to the Township Board for approval. Most of its funding is provided through the Township General Fund with the remainder coming from donations. In 2021 fiscal year, the township budget was approximately \$130,000 in General Fund dollars. Funding for park and recreation activities has been increased by \$10,000 in 2021. A portion of the annual budget is earmarked annually for an improvement project. The remainder goes for staffing, maintenance, equipment and materials. See the table below for Current Annual and Projected Budgets)

Fruitport Township Parks and Recreation Commission does not currently have any additional funding sources of any substance.

Fruitport Township Parks and Recreation Annual and Projected Budget	
Fiscal Year 2021	Fiscal Year 2022
\$130,000	\$130,000

Resource Inventory

Recreation Programming

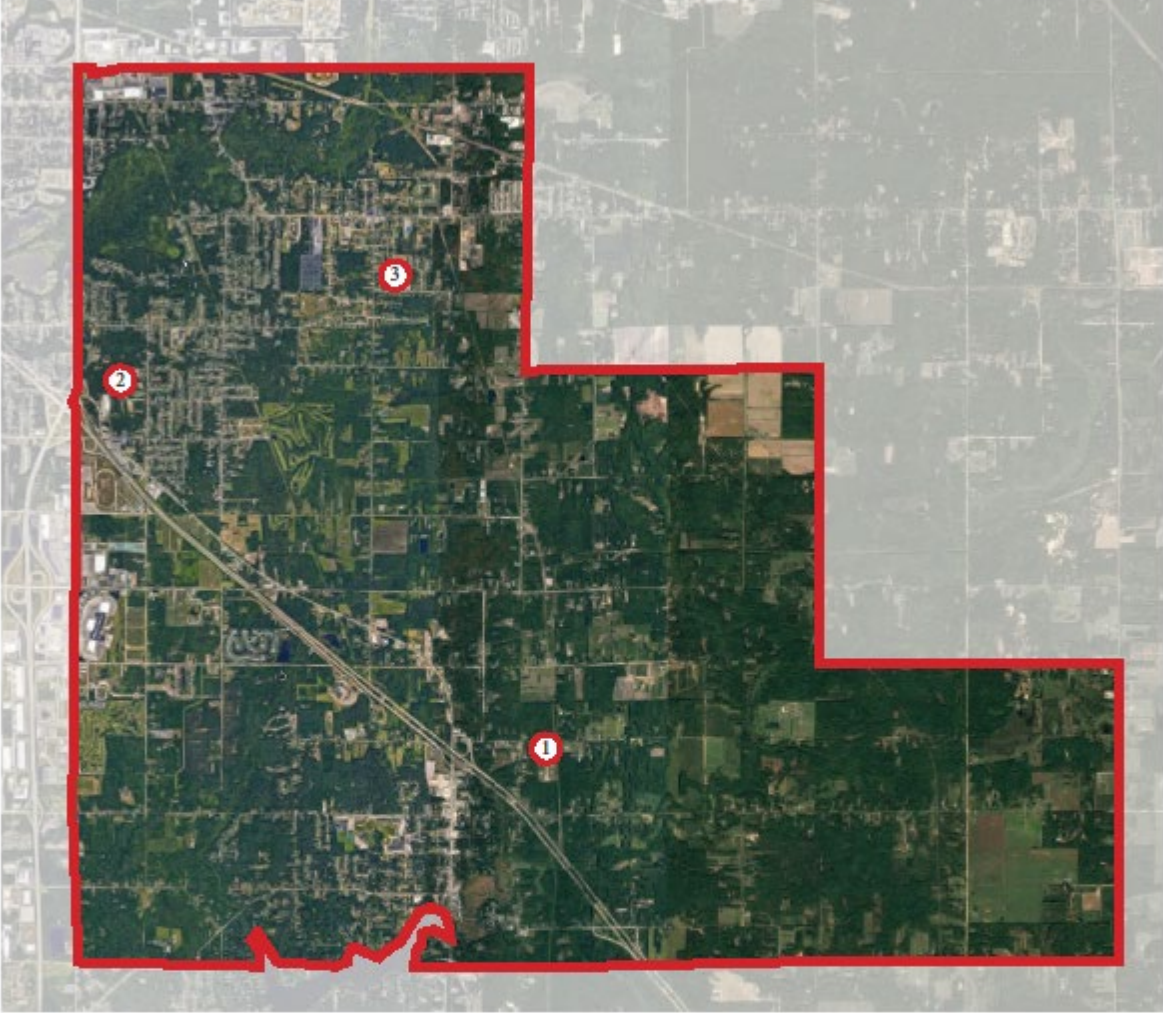
The Fruitport Township Commission currently has the Fruitport Soccer Club as its sole recreational programming. Other recreational programming is mainly provided for by the Fruitport School District and the Fruitport Youth Clubs. The Fruitport Youth Club and the Beach Youth Club provide programming in the township for the various soccer, football, softball, baseball and cheerleading youth teams. These clubs operate on a volunteer basis with members of the community. They are incorporated and have been active for several decades. In fact, some of the existing little league fields have been constructed by these small groups of dedicated individuals with extensive contributions of time, effort, and some funds. The Township Parks continually receive maintenance improvements from Youth Club volunteers in the form of labor and equipment upgrades. The Parks and Recreation Commission have attempted to have one or two of its members from these Youth Clubs, as part of the Commission membership.

Recreation Inventory

Fruitport Township Parks and Recreation Director and their consultant, Prein & Newhof, conducted an extensive tour of the township and the recreational facilities located within its jurisdiction.

Fruitport Township currently operates three recreational facilities within the township, South Fruitport Park, Pine Park, and Sheringer Soccer Park. The next few pages show an Overall Park System Map that identifies the location of the Township's parks and recreational facilities and detailed individual park maps that summarize the location, size, and amenities of each facility.

Overall Parks Inventory Map



- Fruitport Township Parks**
- 1. South Fruitport Township Park
 - 2. Fine Park
 - 3. Sheringer Soccer Park

South Fruitport Park (Farr Park)

Located at 4143-4917 E. Farr Road in Fruitport, Michigan. Farr Park is approximately 20 acres in size and is designated for recreational baseball and football. The amenities of the park include one slow-pitch baseball diamond, four little league diamonds, football field, bleachers, press box, restroom-concession building, maintenance building, playground, and gravel parking lots.



Pine Park

Pine Park is approximately 23 acres in size and is located at the corner of Quarterline Rd. and Emens Dr. in Muskegon, Michigan. The park has a regulation football field, basketball court, two tennis courts, a pony league field, two little league fields, t-ball field, press-box, paved parking, gravel parking, shuffleboard, playground, picnic area, and a grass field with enough room for three small soccer fields.



Sheringer Soccer Park

Sheringer Soccer Park is a Fruitport Township Park located one and a half miles east of Beach School in Fruitport, Michigan. Sheringer Park is approximately 20 acres in size, has soccer fields of varying sizes, paved parking, gravel parking, and portable restrooms. The complex is surrounded by residential development and was formerly owned by the Fruitport Public School System. The Fruitport Township 4-H Club has used the park for horseback riding for many years.



Township Parks and Recreation Resources

Name	Type	Acres	Accessibility Rating	Amenities
South Fruitport Park	Youth Sports Complex	20	1	Ballfields, Football Field, Concessions, Restroom Building, Playground, Gravel Parking
Pine Park	Youth Sports Complex	23	2	Ballfields, Football Field, Concessions, Restroom Building, Playground, Open Space, Paved Parking
Sheringer Soccer Park	Soccer Complex	20	4	Soccer Fields, Portable Restroom, Paved and Gravel Parking

Accessibility Scores:

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

Grant-Assisted Parks

GRANT ASSISTED PARKS				
PROJECT #	PARK NAME	PROJECT YEAR	DESCRIPTION	GRANT STATUS
#26-00928	Pine Park Development	1976	Tennis Courts, Ice Skating, Tot Lot, Shuffleboard Courts	Closed
#BF-91-253	Beach School Community Park	1991	Parking, Ball Fields, Picnic Shelter, Restroom/Concession	Closed
#CM-00-38	Pine Park Restroom	2000	Restroom Building	Closed
#TF10-014	Sheringer Soccer Park	2011	Park Improvements	Closed

The beginning of the project number indicates the funding source as follows:

26 = Land and Water Conservation Fund

BF = Recreation Bond Fund

CM= Clean Michigan Initiative

TF = Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund

Status Report for all Grant-Assisted Parks and Recreation Facilities

During the summer of 1976, Fruitport Township Parks and Recreation Commission completed work on a Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant at Pine Park. Tasks of the grant included the construction of (2) tennis courts, ice skating, tot lot, and shuffleboard courts.

The Fruitport Parks and Recreation Commission received a Clean Michigan Initiative Grant in 1991 to construct a barrier free restroom building connected by concrete pathway and parking.

In 2011, the Fruitport Township Parks and Recreation Commission received Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant to make park improvements at Sheringer Soccer Park.

Planning Process

Public Input

Fruitport Charter Township values the opinions and views of its residents and helped develop the following process to gather the community's thoughts by:

- The consultant, Prein & Newhof, worked with Fruitport Township Parks Commission over the course of several months via phone, email, and face to face meetings.
- Sending digital and hard copies of the survey to residents asking specific questions of the current parks and their dreams for the future.
- The Draft Plan was made available for public for 30 days to allow for public comment.
- Held a public hearing prior to adopting the park plan on 9/27/2021.

Survey Summary Results

There was a total of 321 responses to the survey. 195 responses were given online, while 126 were filled out by hand. The survey results show that 68% of residents are willing to support a $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ mil levy for a specific park project, and 71% of residents support are in favor of expanding the parks system. Pine Park is the most visited (80%), then South Fruitport Park (68%), and then Sheringer Soccer Park (43%). Most residents rated the cleanliness and appearance of the parks system as "Good" with 68%, followed by "Fair" with 24%, "Excellent" with 6%, and "Poor" with 2%. An overwhelming 82% of residents believe the parks system enhances their quality of life. A bulk of people taking the survey were between ages of 45-54, have lived in the township for 31-51 years, and prefer to be notified through Email or E-Newsletter. 36% of people responding have a child under 18 currently in their household.

After reviewing the responses to question 6, the most commented on topics are:

- Parks are close to home, easily accessed, and readily available.
- The parks are great areas for children to play, especially Pine Park.
- The parks are clean/maintained and offer quiet space to enjoy nature.

After reviewing the responses to question 7, the most commented on topics are:

- Not enough bike paths.
- Sheringer Soccer Park needs restrooms/ concession building.
- Farr Park fields, parking lot, and facilities need updating.

After reviewing the responses to question 14, the most commented on topics are:

- More walking/bike paths throughout the township. Specifically, to link residential areas to points of interest like the parks and the mall.
- More playgrounds and possibly a splashpad within the Township parks.
- Expanding the parks system or improving current parks.
- The need for dog parks.

Top 3 Future needs:

- Expanded Bike Paths
- Designated Walking Areas
- Additional Picnic Areas

Top 5 reasons parks are visited:

- Close To Home
- Sport Activities
- Safe
- Quiet/Peaceful
- Natural Setting

Top 5 desired recreation activities:

- Splash Pad
- Playgrounds
- Disc Golf
- Pickleball
- Outdoor Fitness Equipment

Top 5 most desired recreation enhancements:

- Natural Hiking Trails
- More Bike/ Walking Trails
- Kayak/ Canoe Launches
- Swimming/ Beaches
- Festival & Concert Venues

Goals and Objectives

The information received from the public survey was reviewed, calculated, and analyzed to identify the communities' goals and objectives. The Fruitport Township residents who participated in the survey have provided valuable feedback regarding their wishes and desires for the recreational facilities and activities within the Township. The following goals and objectives were formulated based on the total number of surveys that were filled out.

Goal 1: Improve existing Fruitport Township parks and recreation facilities and programs to provide adequate opportunities for year around recreation for all members of the Fruitport Community including the elderly and disabled.

Objective: Improve Sheringer Soccer Park

- Expand and complete paving of the existing parking areas to keep spectators, players, and parents from parking on Sheringer Road and blocking traffic flow.
- Construct designated walking areas or sidewalks at Sheringer Soccer Park to provide better access.
- Add lighting to parking areas and fields for night use.
- Add restrooms, concessions area, storage, picnic pavilion, and playground.
- Connect the park to the municipal water system.
- Connect the park paths to the surrounding streets and walkways.

Objective: Improve Pine Park

- Pave Pine Park driveway and parking lot.
- Improve surface of the tennis courts.
- Add lighting to parking areas and fields for night use.
- Provide additional picnic tables in the park.
- Install directional signage to Pine Park.
- Design and construct designated walking area (track) at Pine Park, which would include mile markers.

Objective: Improve South Fruitport Park (Farr Park)

- Add lighting to parking areas and fields for night use.
- Improve parking configuration and layout, including paved parking.
- Install directional signage to South Fruitport Park – Farr Park

Goal 2: Look for opportunities to acquire more land in the township for recreation while the property is still undeveloped, available, and affordable.

- Explore the possibility of expanding existing park facilities.
- Consider working with the Village of Fruitport for additional park facilities and water access.
- Consider purchasing land in Fruitport Township to develop a Dog Park if the right property is available.
- Consider purchasing land in Fruitport Township to develop a Community Center if the right property is available.

Goal 3: Provide non-motorized connections (Designated Walking Areas and Bike Paths) to and within recreational facilities, schools, and residential areas in order to provide safe, pleasant, and satisfying recreation experiences.

Objectives: Expand Bike Paths

- Construct or expand designated bike paths at all (3) existing Township Parks.
- Develop a bike path that would connect all (3) existing Township Parks.

Objectives: Expand Designated Walking Areas

- Construct or expand designated walking areas at all (3) existing Township Parks.
- Construct walking track, including mile markers, at Pine Park.
- Add a walking path around the Sheringer Soccer Park fields.
- Expand designated walking areas that would provide greater resources for the whole community, including senior citizens, school children, and those interested in fitness or a leisurely walk.

Goal 4: Explore the possibility of a recreational millage or long-term funding as a means to enhance or maintain recreational facilities.

Action Program

Through the knowledge of the Parks Board along with the input provided by the public survey it is apparent that the residents in Fruitport Township support the millage, support park improvements/expansion, and love having the parks system. Although non-motorized trails and designated walking paths is a high priority and will continue to be, park improvement and expansion are important as well.

Communications

According to the survey results, the public prefer to be contacted with a mix of modern and traditional methods. The top three methods include E-mail/Newsletter, direct mail, and through the website. The township is planning to continue to improve all communication methods with a focus on digital means.

Park Development

According to the survey 71% of residents support park system development and expansion, with an amazing 67.5% in support of a tax increase to do so. The most important park developments and new activities that the township will look to expand upon include: more walking paths, improved playgrounds, and possibly a dog park.

Trail Development

The trail system in Fruitport Township needs to be improved. The survey shows the people consider expanding bike paths to be the main priority going forward. They want to see more trails and in general and for them to connect to places of interests. The priorities will include the residential areas, other communities, and to park properties.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Supplemental DNR Attachments

Survey Results

Public Notices

Public Meeting Agenda / Minutes

Formal Resolution to Adopt the Plan