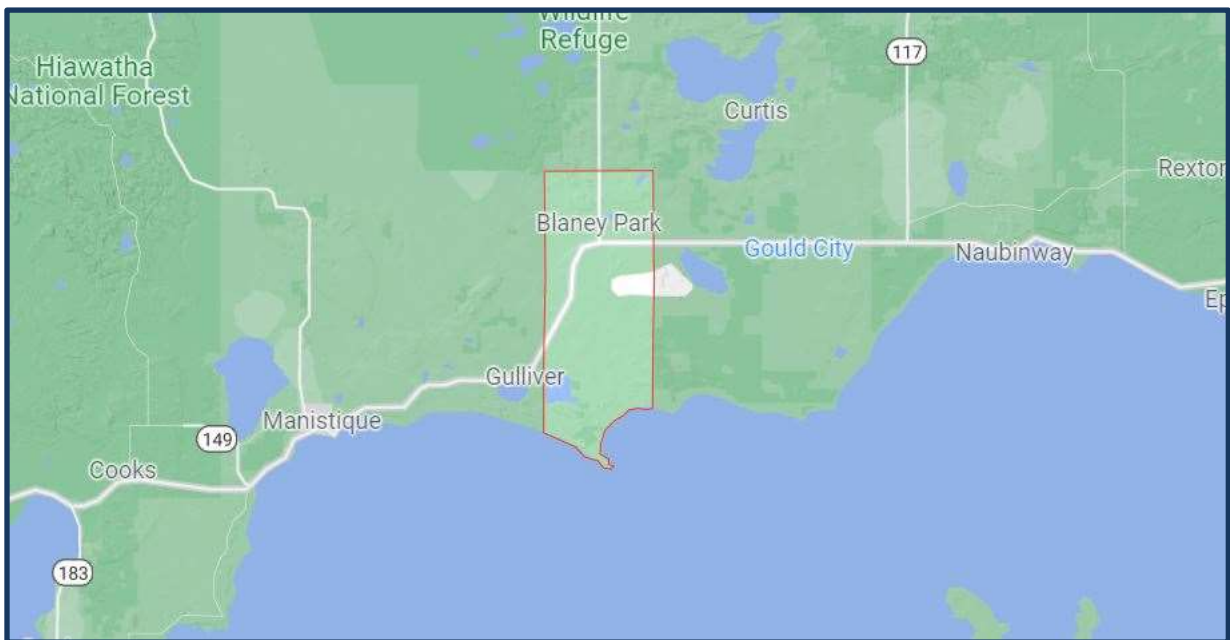


MUELLER

T O W N S H I P

Recreation Plan | 2022-2026



46°03'3"N / 85°55'14"W

ADOPTED ON: July 13, 2022

This Recreation Plan was prepared for Mueller Township with input from the Board of Trustees, Planning Commission, residents and stake holders. Professional consulting services provided by Jason McCarthy of *Northwoods Planning & Zoning Services, LLC*

INTRODUCTION

The *Mueller Township Recreation Plan | 2022-2026*, shall serve as a road map to the future with regard to recreation planning and development within the community. Mueller Township is a civil township located in Schoolcraft County, Michigan.

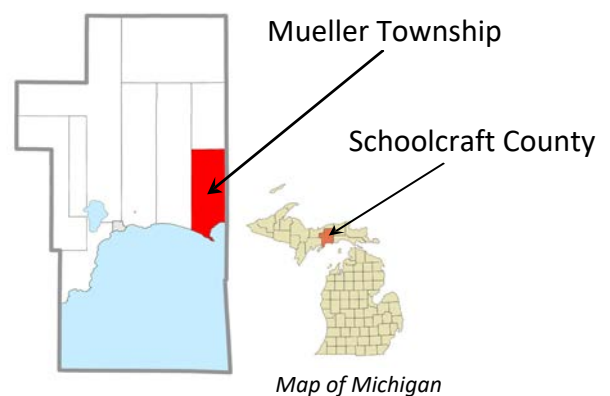
The plan's primary focus is to ensure that quality recreational opportunities are available for users of all ages and abilities. Recreation provision in Mueller Township is a key component of community planning, as it serves as a benchmark for how residents and visitors view their quality of life. As residents already know, Mueller Township is home to world-class, four-season recreational opportunities. With approximately 10 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, historical sites, and several local, county and state-owned recreational properties, Mueller Township is truly destination for outdoor enthusiasts.

This plan was written in accordance with the [Michigan Department of Natural Resources Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plans](#), as administered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Grants Management team. It has also been developed with the acknowledgment of [Michigan's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan \(SCORP\)](#). Many of the goals and objectives found in this plan reflect similar intentions of the SCORP and this plan aims to align Mueller Township's recreation planning with many of the state's long-range recreation planning objectives.

The plan provides ways to achieve Mueller Township's long-range outdoor recreational goals and allow eligibility to apply for financial assistance from the [Michigan Department of Natural Resources](#). The five-year Action Program, which can be found later in the document, is based on input residents, stakeholders and elected and appointed officials. Additional input was received at an open house discussion at the Mueller Township Hall on Thursday, December 16, 2021. Once complete, the final draft document was distributed to surrounding municipalities, agencies, partners and the public for review and comment on June 13, 2022. The plan was also available for review on the township's website at: www.muellertownship.com

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

The jurisdiction of this plan represents the desired outdoor recreation needs for residents and visitors of Mueller Township. Other municipalities within Schoolcraft County may also conduct recreation planning at some level. When possible, Mueller Township will coordinate with other governmental, educational and stakeholder's efforts to support and advance their recreational goals. The plan speaks to a broader, regional audience further along in the document.



Mueller Township is a civil township located in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, within Schoolcraft County. It is located approximately 20 miles East of the city Manistique, which is the largest population base in the county with approximately 2,800 residents. Mueller Township's Southern boundary features over 10 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline. As of the 2020 U.S. Census, there were 260 residents living in Mueller Township. The community has a land area of 87.78 square miles.



Total Population
260



Median Household Income
\$50,000



Bachelor's Degree or Higher
23.0%



Employment Rate
29.3%



Total Housing Units
316



Without Health Care Coverage
13.3%



Total Households
106



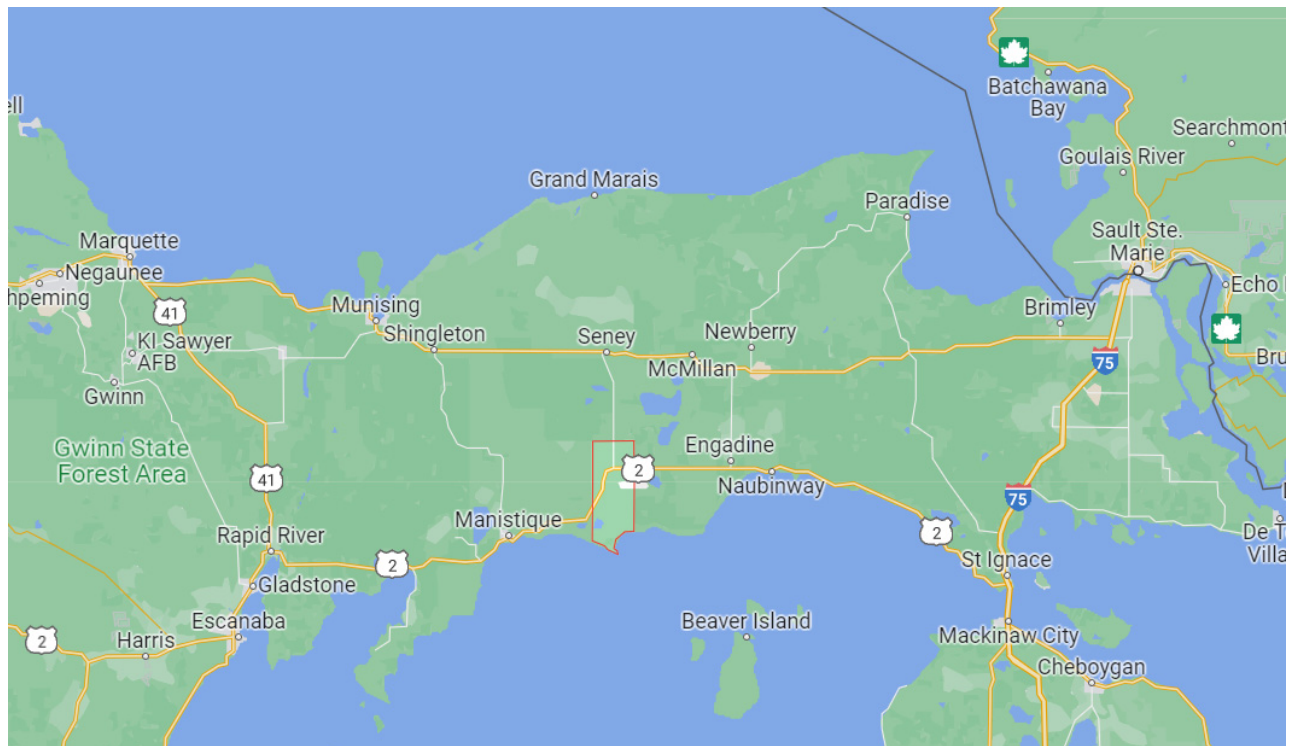
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
4

2020 US Census Bureau Data

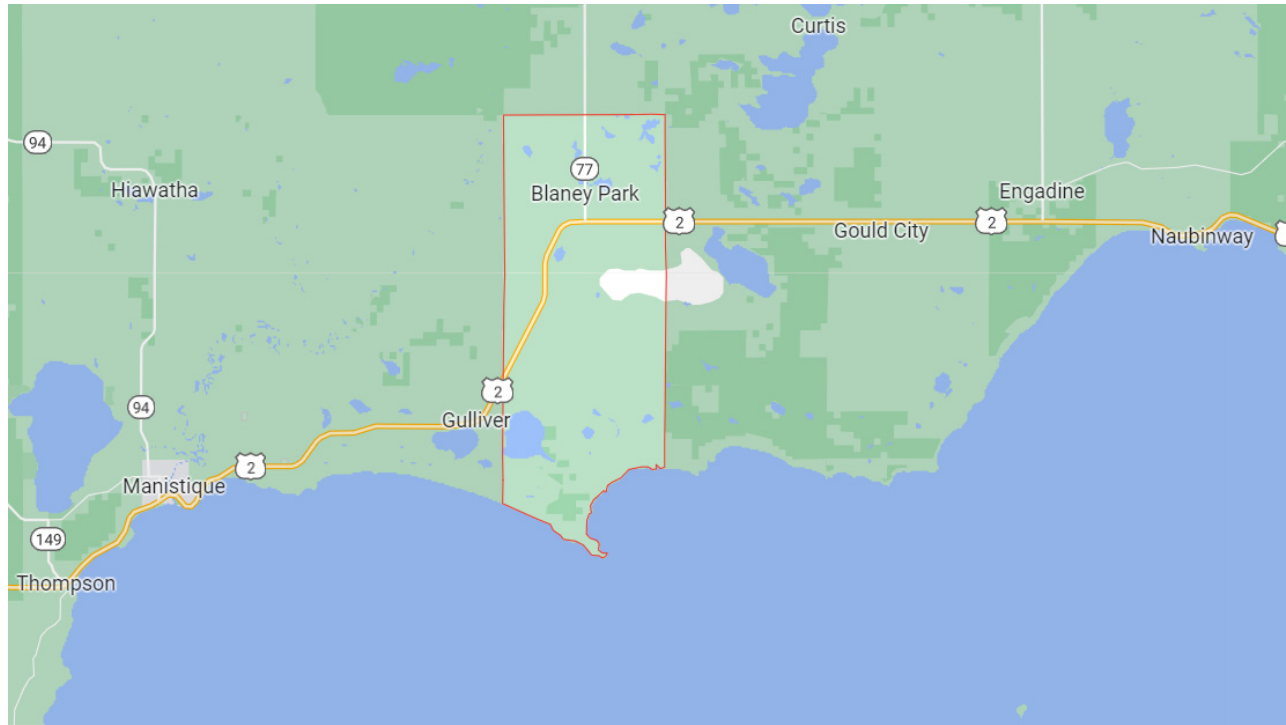
The Township's geographic location is relatively remote from large urban areas of Michigan. It is a five-hour drive to Detroit and 4.5 hours to Lansing. However, the city of Manistique is located within close proximity to the Township, offering amenities found in larger urban areas, such as schools, Schoolcraft Memorial Hospital, and shopping. Many other recreational and resort areas of the Upper Peninsula are within fairly close proximity to Mueller Township.

The major transportation route in Mueller Township is U.S. Highway 2. US-2 and M-77 meet in the area of Blaney park which is located just North of the intersection. US-2 travels east and west, where M-77 runs north and south through the township. US-2 is an important east/west corridor that traverses the southern half of the Upper Peninsula from the City of Ironwood to Interstate 75 near Sault Ste. Marie.

Mueller Township is shown in red outline in the below base map – Figure 1.



Mueller Township shown in red outline with Blaney Park – Figure 2.



ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Being a small, rural township, recreational operations, maintenance, and the proposed Action Program projects will all be administered by the Mueller Township Board of Trustees. The township does not have staff that assists with recreation. Project financing will come from township's general fund, potential local donations and grant opportunities. The Township Board of Trustees serve as the "Recreation Director," (in the sense of budgeting, coordinating programming and facility maintenance schedules).

The Township's Recreation Plan will also be administered by the Township Board and reviewed annually to assure that its goals, objectives and Action Program improvements are focused towards providing the highest and best recreational opportunities for the community. It is anticipated that this Recreation Plan will be reviewed and updated every five years.

Recreation Programs

The Township Board has the task of developing programs at township-owned parks. It is also advisable to engage in public and private partnerships to assist in the development of well-rounded recreational programming.

Recreation Sites

Periodically, the Township Board will review facilities located at township-owned parks and make recommendations on issues and opportunities. Recommendations cover the use of the facilities, personnel and/or maintenance that may be required, the expenditure of funds on the improvement of the facilities, and types of facilities that may be needed.

Regulations

The Township Board will also make recommendations concerning rules and regulations to be implemented at township-owned parks.

Funding Sources

At this time, the Township Board themselves or a consultant can assist the community with identifying possible grant sources. They may also provide input in developing and preparing grant applications; however, preparation and submittal of grant applications are still the responsibility of Township Board. The Township Board allocates funds on an annual basis for recreation projects as needed. In recent years, the Township Board has been working towards submitting a 5-year recreation plan and Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund grant applications to develop park properties within the community. Based on recent public input, recreation has become more important to our residents. As such, township officials have placed the expansion of recreational opportunities as a high-priority during recent planning and budgeting exercises.

Annual and Projected Budgets for Operations, Maintenance, Capital Improvements and Recreation Programming

In previous years, Mueller Township has spent minimal, general budget funds on recreational improvement and events on an as-needed basis. Mueller Township now features an active marijuana facility that the community benefits from by way of the state's annual distribution revenues. In 2022, Mueller Township received \$54,000. In 2023, the Township will receive \$51,000. As of 2022, the funds are now budgeted to be used for recreational purposes - both for developments project and future maintenance.

Role of Volunteers and Organizations

Two vital components of recreation provision in Mueller Township are volunteerism and stewardship. Each Action Program improvement or maintenance project at a township-owned park property aims to involve assistance from local residents, trail advocates and/or service group volunteers, as well as public and private financial assistance. This plan also aims to focus on improving and building our volunteer base.

The township works with a few groups for the provision of activities and events. The local farmer's market is a popular event that utilizes the township hall for their regular events. Euchre tournaments are also held at the township hall. It is anticipated that these groups would be interested in assisting the community with new recreational opportunities. Local church groups may also be available for volunteer work in the future. It has also been mentioned that several township residents are willing and able to assist with the development of new recreational opportunities in the community.



Relationships with School Districts and Other Public Agencies Involved in Recreation

Mueller Township does not feature a school in the community. Student-age residents of Mueller Township either attend the Three Lakes Academy, St. Francis de Sales School, or they are part of the Manistique School District.

RECREATION INVENTORY

Township-Owned Facilities:

Mueller Township Hall & Property

The Mueller Township Hall and surrounding property serves the community as a meeting space, administrative offices, and as an event location for various indoor and outdoor activities. Outside of the township hall, there is a playground with several pieces of playground equipment. The site is approximately four acres in size and has plenty of room for expansion of recreational opportunities. This site features an ADA accessibility grade of 2. (See below for ADA rating companion key.)



DNR Accessibility Grading System for Parks and Recreation Facilities	
Accessibility Grade	Definition
1	None of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines
2	Some facilities meet accessibility guidelines
3	Most facilities meet accessibility guidelines
4	The entire park meets accessibility guidelines
5	The entire park was developed using the principles of universal design

Non-Township Owned Facilities:

Seul Choix Pointe Lighthouse

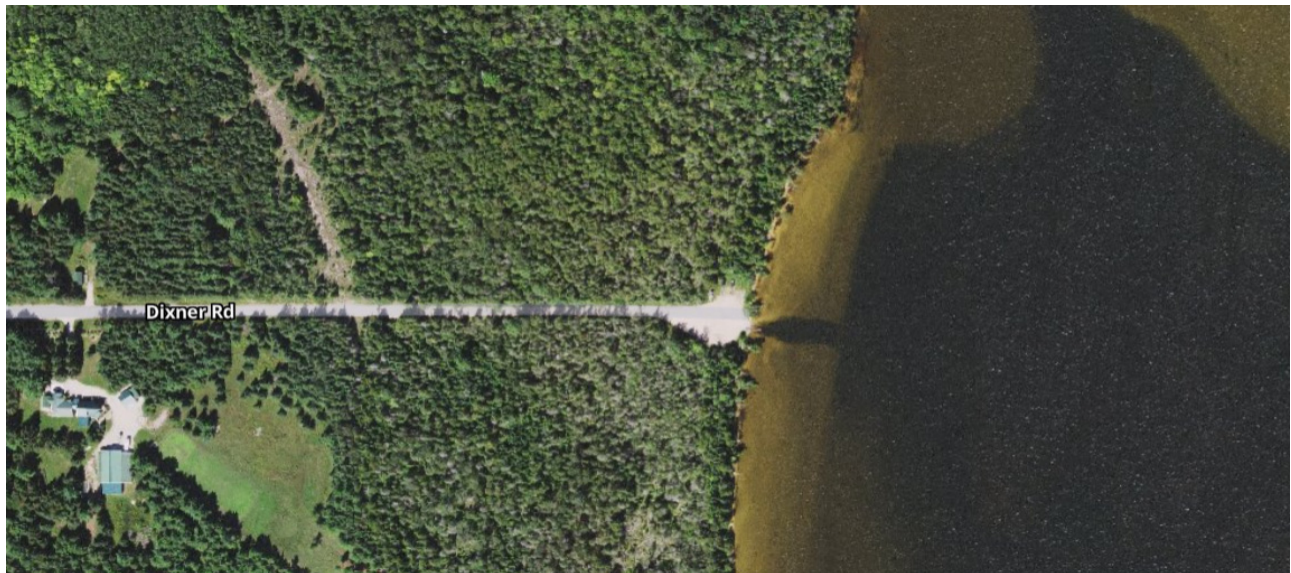
The Seul Choix Pointe Lighthouse is located in the town of Gulliver, MI. It is operated by the Gulliver Historical Society, Inc., in cooperation with the Department of Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Division.

Funded by the Society, monies are generated from State and Federal grants, private donations, fundraiser, memorials, gift shop sales, historic book sales and the “Adopt a Step and Brick Programs”. The restoration of this site is being assisted by dedicated volunteers within the community. According to their [website](#), their goal is to preserve the structures and promote an awareness and appreciation of our unique “Maritime History.”



McDonald Lake Access Site

McDonald Lake, near Gulliver, is a favorable location to catch pike and a small mouth bass to be had. Ice fishing can also be eventful in the winter months. McDonald Lake is not overcrowded and tends to lend itself well for swimming, kayaking and picnics. Access to the lake is provided by Schoolcraft County at the end of Dixner Road. The public access site is less than one acre in size and has an ADA accessibility grade of 1.





Greenscholl Roadside Park

The Greenscholl Roadside Park is operated by the Michigan Department of Transportation during the summer season that features ample parking for resting travelers, rest rooms and a picnic area. The park is situated west of Calspar Quarry Pool in Gulliver.

Iron Belle Trail (Biking Trail Segment)

The Iron Belle Trail is a set of two trails that will span the state of Michigan when complete. The two trails, one for hiking and one for biking, connects Ironwood in the Upper Peninsula and Belle Isle State Park in Detroit. When complete, the hiking trail will be 1,204 miles long and the biking trail is 828 miles long. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is coordinating the planning and construction of the missing trail segments. It will be the longest state-designated trail in the nation. It will traverse more than 2,000 miles, cross 48 counties and 240 townships.

The hiking trail primarily follows the Michigan segment of the North Country National Scenic Trail with connectors to Belle Isle and Ironwood.

The biking trail connects existing trail such as the Paint Creek Trail in Oakland County, the North Central State Trail between Gaylord and Mackinaw City, and U.S. Bicycle Route 10 in the Upper Peninsula parallel to new trail, including a segment through Mueller Township, along US-2 and via an old railroad grade. The bicycle route was 63% complete as of January, 2019, and will incorporate routes along U.S. Highway 2 across the Upper Peninsula, and will have a length of 828 miles when complete.



Status Report for all Grant-Assisted Parks and Recreation Facilities

To our knowledge, Mueller Township does not currently feature any grant-assisted sites or facilities.

Mueller Township Recreational Facilities Location Map:



DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

In this section, Mueller Township's planning method is discussed. This method is intended to assist with the assessment of the township's park, recreation and open-space requirements.

Planning Method

Mueller Township will utilize the system planning method. This planning method will use the township's metrics, priorities, needs, level of service and community-wide issues and opportunities to guide annual planning efforts. As planning efforts and projects are implemented, the system can be re-evaluated to measure success and guide future planning goals.

Since the community has not previously participated in long-range recreation planning, the community naturally has needs based on appointed official observations, resident and visitor inquiry and public input. Additional discussion on this topic is presented below.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

In this section, we detail the approach used to incorporate public input into the recreation planning process. Residents' opinion on recreation and open-space priorities is a key factor in this plan's development.

Early Public Input

Because our residents' opinions on recreation and open-space priorities are paramount in this plan's development, a Community Input Session was held at the Mueller Township Hall on December 16, 2021, from 6-7:30 PM. This session offered a chance for to share their outdoor recreation ideas, as the township was preparing to draft their first DNR 5-year Recreation Plan. Eight (8) attendees were present to offer their input. The comments from those in attendance are detailed within the meeting minutes and have been utilized in the development of the Goals & Objectives and the Action Plan.



30-day Review Period

The draft of the updated Recreation Plan was made available for review on June 13, 2022. Notice was posted in the Manistique Pioneer Tribune Newspaper. Copies of the draft plan were placed for review at the Mueller Township Hall and on the township's website at: www.muellertownship.com Instructions for providing additional comments on the plan were included in the public notice placed in the newspaper and on the community's website.

Public Hearing & Plan Adoption

Advance notice for the proposed adoption Public Hearing was also provided in the ad that was placed in the Manistique Pioneer Tribune Newspaper on June 13, 2022. The public hearing occurred on July 13, 2022. A brief presentation of the competed plan was provided remotely by planning consultant, Jason McCarthy of Northwoods Planning & Zoning Services. No additional comments were received at the public hearing and the plan was adopted by resolution after the public hearing was closed. A copy of the Public Hearing Notice, Adoption Resolution, and official meeting minutes will be provided, as required prior to DNR approval.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The Michigan *State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)* provided assistance in developing Mueller Township's recreational goals and objectives. The goals and objectives from the SCORP have been adapted to fit our community's recreational needs. Public input from our residents also provided helpful engagement by way of our Public Input Session. Many of the below goals and objectives are shared by our surrounding municipal neighbors. There are also provisions to collaborate with those entities if and when those opportunities should arise.

Goal #1 – Foster stewardship and conservation with businesses, organizations, and individuals in protecting Mueller Township's natural and cultural resources.

Objectives:

- Encourage efforts directed at improving both the visual and physical characteristics of all Recreational opportunities in Mueller Township.
- Support and promote initiatives to improve and/or maintain the quality of recreational opportunities in Mueller Township.
- Promote the preservation and expansion of recreational opportunities and other recreational-oriented business opportunities for recreation and tourism.
- Encourage developers to retain open space and preserve trail rights-of-way to further enhance Mueller Township's non-motorized and motorized transportation network.
- Collaborate with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for financial assistance in developing additional recreational opportunities in Mueller Township.

Goal #2 – Improve collaboration with recreation stakeholders to meet the outdoor needs of Township residents and visitors

Objectives:

- Collaborate with surrounding municipalities, trail networks, non-profit organizations and other recreation program providers for the purpose of expanding recreational opportunities in the area.
- Develop a regional network of trails by collaborating with other municipalities, trail organizations, and recreation providers.
- Participate in regional recreational planning to ensure multi-jurisdictional trail connectivity.
- Collaborate with the Schoolcraft County regarding mutual planning issues and opportunities.

Goal #3 – Raise the awareness of residents and visitors on the variety of outdoor recreational opportunities available in Mueller Township.

Objectives:

- Coordinate regional recreational planning; build environments and programming activities that identify opportunities, fill deficiencies, and avoid duplication of services and efforts so as to make optimal use of financial and other resources.
- Encourage cooperation and coordination between surrounding municipalities, school districts, recreational service providers, and developers with regard to recreational opportunities.

Goal #4 – Improve recreation accessibility for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities.

Objectives:

- Promote bicycling, walking, and other rolling activities that provide opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.
- Continue to provide Americans with Disability Act (ADA) access, Universal Design features, and multisensory experiences to enhance access and attract all types of recreational users.
- Develop recreational tourism opportunities such as interpretive cultural and/or historical signage, farmer's markets, and the like.

Goal #5 – Provide quality outdoor recreational experiences in balance with township resource management capabilities.

Objectives:

- Purchase property to set aside, in perpetuity, for recreational use, if and when feasible.
- Identify, acquire and develop trail easements that connect residential, commercial, and recreational nodes.

Goal #6 – Enhance the health of Mueller Township residents and visitors by providing physical outdoor recreational opportunities.

Objectives:

- Identify and develop motorized and non-motorized crossings at strategic intersections along the US-2 or M-77 corridors.
- Develop Mueller Township's motorized and non-motorized transportation system and integrate with other regional trail networks.

Goal #7 – Enhance economic prosperity by supporting a high quality of life to retain talent in Mueller Township

Objectives:

- Where and when feasible, acquire local, state, federal and private funding to develop a myriad of recreational opportunities that will enhance additional economic development opportunities in the area.
- Take advantage of opportunities to expand and develop trailheads, public access sites, and other facilities which further encourage hiking, biking, skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, boating, canoeing, kayaking, fishing, hunting, and other recreational uses of the natural assets in Mueller Township.

ACTION PROGRAM

The action program is the section of the plan where you identify how you intend to meet or work toward meeting your goals and objectives over the next five years. Describe specific projects identified during the planning process and how they will meet goals and objectives. You also may include organizational, staffing, programming, public information, operation and maintenance actions, as well as land acquisition and facility development, if applicable. A capital improvement schedule for park development projects is not required, but may be useful for planning purposes and may include the type of improvement, the estimated cost, funding sources and a schedule of construction.

2022

Complete draft of the Mueller Township Recreation Plan 2022-2026 and submit to Michigan Department of Natural Resources for approval, so as to become eligible for funding assistance from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund grant opportunities.

Begin planning for 2023 MNRTF grant application submittal.

2023

Consensus amongst the Mueller Township Board is that new playground equipment is desperately needed at the Township Hall property. The new play structure(s) would be implemented using universal design features and inclusive opportunities for all ages regardless of ability. One young resident requested that a slide be included in the plans for playground equipment. Parking and pathway connectivity to the township hall property is also proposed to be expanded upon.

Estimated Cost: \$50,000 - \$75,000

2024

Mueller Township Hall Property - Non-motorized Walking Pathway

A walking pathway that circumnavigates the large township hall property has been suggested is that residents and visitors may have a dedicated walking path within the community.

Estimated Cost: \$15,000 - \$25,000

2025

Mueller Township Hall Property – Tennis Courts

A plan to construct tennis courts at the Mueller Township Hall property has been discussed. The tennis courts could be multi-functional, as they could double as pickleball courts in the summer months. During the winter months, the tennis ball courts could be used and an ice rink surface.

Estimated Cost: \$25,000 - \$50,000

Historic Ball Field Property

Mueller Township staff desires to redevelop this township-owned property for recreational activities. Additional planning is necessary to determine scope items to be included at the property but early suggestions include redevelopment of the ball field, pavilion, restroom facilities, trash and recycling receptacles, picnic tables, outdoor grilling opportunities, and perhaps a disc golf course.

Estimated Cost: \$25,000 - \$50,000

Potential Funding Sources

Creative funding options for the abovementioned projects may come from a number of sources including but not limited to: local matching funds, established marijuana facility distribution revenues, the Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund (MNRTF) Development and Acquisition Grant program, the Recreation Passport Grant program, and private donations.

The Township Board may also want to consider a recreation millage in the future to provide matching funds for proposed future projects, as well as maintenance and upkeep of proposed facilities. It is also recommended that a study be conducted regarding Mueller Township-owned properties to determine the feasibility of developing (or not developing) additional recreational opportunities in the community.