

Torch Lake Township Planning Commission (PC)

Regular Meeting Agenda

Monday, November 17, 2025

7:00 PM

Community Services Building, Torch Lake Township, Michigan

Please turn off cell phones.

Public Hearing/Public Comment Rules:

Fill out comment card at the back of the room if you wish to speak. Turn into the secretary.

Each member of the public will be given 3 minutes to address the Planning Commission.

Comments should be directed at the Chair.

Please no clapping or cheering.

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Consideration of Agenda
4. Conflict of Interest
5. Approval of Meeting Minutes from October 20, 2025
6. Public Comment on Agenda Items other than Public Hearing
7. Correspondence
8. Unfinished Business
 - a. Park and Recreation Plan
9. New Business
 - a. Election of Officers
 - b. Bylaw Review
 - c. 2026 Meeting Calendar- Currently regular meetings are 3rd Monday at 7pm
10. On-Going Reports
 1. Zoning Administrator's Report
 2. PC Representative to ZBA Report
 3. TLT Board Representative on PC Report

11. Public Comment

12. Concerns of Commission

- A. Chair
- B. Members
- C. Consultant

13. Adjournment

TORCH LAKE TOWNSHIP
ANTRIM COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Torch Lake township
Planning Commission Meeting
Community Service Building
Draft Minutes
October 20, 2025

Present: Clarke, Walker, Graves, Carleton

Absent: Ellison-Coats

Others: S. Kopriva

Audience: 3

Recording Secretary: M. Merchant

1. **Call to Order Regular Meeting**-called to order at 7:00pm by Clarke
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**-recited
3. **Consideration of Agenda**-approved by consent
4. **Conflict of Interest**-none
5. **Approval of Minutes of August 18, 2025**-Graves makes motion to adopt minutes subject to modification of the second item under #11. Carleton seconds. Passes 4-0
6. **Public Comment:**
 - Wendy McWhorter shares her concerns about the preservation of Torch Bay Nature Preserve with regards to trash collection. Requests the township provide trash cans and cigarette receptacles.
 - Maureen Lorenz makes statement in support of McWhorter's comments.
 - S. Kopriva adds that any comments or concerns for the Nature Preserve can be directed to the Zoning Administrator.
7. **Correspondence**-none
8. **Unfinished Business:**
 - a. **Park and Recreation Plan:** Kopriva gives brief overview of the Park and Recreation Plan draft. 5-year plan, submitted to the state to be eligible for possible grant money. Must be adopted and uploaded by February 1st to apply for aid by April 1st. Board will review it at the Nov. meeting. Once approved, review period and public hearing will follow.

Discussion of the Park and Recreation draft follows, action plan created. *See specific details online.*

Clark makes a motion to favorably submit the proposed recreation plan for approval by the township board at their upcoming November meeting subject to final edits as discussed in tonight's meeting. Second by Graves. Passes 4-0

- b. Master Plan-Survey/Open House Summary: Roughly 1/3 of the township residents returned the survey. General consensus seems to be on preserving a natural and rural community. Next steps will include looking at existing and future land use, and implementation of the Master Plan.

9. New Business-none

10. On-Going Reports:

- 1. **Zoning Administrator's Report**-Finishing up some enforcement items related to people living in campers without permits. 57 land use permits issued year to date. ZBA organization meeting next month.
- 2. **PC Representative to ZBA**-none
- 3. **TLT Board Representative on PC Report**-2 new Flock License Plate Readers to be installed. Work has been done at the Day Park. New EMT hired. Possible Trash Day in the works for 2026. New PC member nominee, a new ZBA member. A potential speed study on NW Torch Lake Drive. Concerns about speed limit at M88 and US31 intersection.

11. Public Comment-none

12. Concerns of Commission:

- A. **Chair**-happy to see the recreation plan in the works and the Master Plan getting done.
- B. **Members**-none

13. Adjournment-Motion by Graves/Carleton to adjourn at 8:20pm Passes 4-0

Please see full meeting online for more details.

Torch Lake Township Planning Commission Bylaws adopted June 16, 2025

These Bylaws are adopted by the Torch Lake Township Planning Commission to facilitate performance of its duties as described in P.A. 33 Of 2008, as amended, being the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (M.C.L. 125.3801 et seq.), hereinafter "the Planning Act".

These Bylaws are also adopted to facilitate performance of its duties for administration of a zoning ordinance as outlined in P.A. 110 of 2006, as amended, being the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, (M.C.L. 125.3101 et seq.) hereinafter 'the Zoning Act'.

SECTION 1: Officers

- A. **Selection and Tenure** - At the first regular meeting following October 31 of each year, the Planning Commission (referred to as the Commission) shall select from its membership a Chairperson, Vice- Chairperson, and Secretary. All officers shall serve a term of three years, or until the successors are selected and assume office. All officers shall be eligible for re-election for consecutive terms for the same office. The Torch Lake Township (referred to as the Township) board representative shall not be eligible for selection as an officer.
- B. **Chairperson** - The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings and public hearings, appoint committees, and perform such other duties as may be ordered by the Commission. The Chairperson when present may have the Vice-Chairperson preside at a meeting and/or public hearing for training purposes. The Chairperson may cancel scheduled regular or special meetings and public hearings.
- C. **Vice-Chairperson** - The Vice-Chairperson shall act in the capacity of the Chairperson in his/her absence. In absence of the Secretary, the Vice-Chairperson will perform the Secretary's duties unless a commissioner is temporarily authorized by the Chair to perform the Secretary duties.
- D. **Secretary** - The Secretary shall execute documents in the name of the Commission, perform the duties listed below and other duties as the Commission may determine.

1. Minutes - In absence of the Recording Secretary, the Secretary shall be responsible for creating a permanent record of the minutes of that meeting of the Commission and deliver those minutes to the Township clerk. The Township clerk is responsible for maintaining the minutes in the Township permanent records. The minutes shall contain a brief synopsis of the meeting, including a complete statement of each motion and record of votes, conditions or recommendations made on any action along with a record of attendance. The Township clerk shall confirm that the minutes sent by the Recording Secretary or Secretary for the previous meeting will not be changed in that next meeting minutes except for typographical errors or known statement of factual error e.g. a Commission member was absent and minutes stated the member was in attendance. If the previous meeting's minutes need clarification or additional input is wanted and passed by the Commission, these passed motions should go into the current meeting minutes and not change or be added to the minutes of the previous meeting.
2. Correspondence - The Secretary shall be responsible for issuing formal correspondence with other groups or persons as directed by the Commission except where routinely completed by the Township zoning administrator for the Commission. Note, the Township zoning administrator performs many services for the Commission such as getting the Commission meeting notice posted, correspondences to the Antrim County Planning Commission on any Commission-proposed Zoning Ordinance change and forwarding of the next Commission's agenda to the Commissioners. Any communications, petitions, reports, or other materials received by the Secretary shall be brought to the attention of the Commission.
3. Attendance - The Secretary shall be responsible for preparing an attendance record for Commission members at each Commission meeting, collecting the signature of the Chairperson or Vice- Chairperson, and delivering the attendance record to the Township clerk. The official minutes of the meeting can be used as the attendance record for Commission members and used in any report.

- E. **Township Board Representative**-The Township Board Representative shall present the recommendations of the Commission to the Township board and shall keep the Commission informed as to the actions of the Township board, which impact or affect the Commission. The Township Board Representative shall not serve as the Chairperson but may serve as Vice Chair.
- F. **Zoning Board of Appeals Representative** - The Commission's Representative to the Township Zoning Board of Appeals shall report the actions of the Zoning Board of Appeals to the Commission and update the Zoning Board of Appeals on actions by the Commission that relate to the functions and duties of the Zoning Board of Appeals.
- G. **Recording Secretary** - The Recording Secretary, who may be the Township clerk or hired by the Township clerk, is responsible for minutes and process as stated in above Number 1. Minutes.
- H. **Vacancies/Succession** - In the event of an officer vacancy, an election shall occur at the next meeting to fill the remainder of the term for the office.

SECTION 2: Meetings

- A. **Regular Meetings** - The Commission shall hold not less than four (4) regular meetings each year and at its first meeting of each calendar year shall by resolution determine the time and place of such meetings which shall include the date of its first meeting in the subsequent calendar year. When a regular meeting falls on a legal holiday or upon a day resulting in a conflict, the Commission shall, if possible, select an alternate meeting date in the same month as the originally scheduled meeting. Notice of schedule of regular meetings shall be posted by the Township zoning administrator within 10 days after the Commission's first meeting in each calendar year in accordance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act and the Township's policy. Rescheduling of a regular meeting shall be done only at a meeting of the Commission and notice of the rescheduled regular meeting shall be posted within three (3) days of that rescheduling in accordance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act and the township's policy.
- B. **Special Meetings** - Special meetings may be called by the Commission chairperson or upon written request to the secretary by at least two members of the Commission. Any fees must be paid before a special meeting may be scheduled. Notice of special meetings shall state the purpose, time and location of the special meeting, shall be given to members of the Commission, and shall be posted in accordance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act and the township's policy at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.
- C. **Open Meetings** - All meetings and minutes, records, documents, correspondence,

and other materials of the Commission shall be open to the public for public inspection in accordance with the Michigan Freedom of Information Act, except as may otherwise be provided by law. The Township clerk shall be the office of record for the Commission.

- D. **Quorum**- Three (3) members of the five (5) member Commission shall constitute a quorum for transacting business and taking official action. Whenever a quorum is not present, those present may adjourn the meeting to another time and day, in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, or hold the meeting to accept public comment and otherwise discuss items on the agenda. No action shall be taken when a quorum is not present.
- E. **Voting** - An affirmative vote of the majority of the Commission membership is required to adopt any part of the Township Master Plan or amendments to the Plan (MCL 125.328). Unless required by statute, other actions or motions placed before the Commission may be adopted by a majority vote of the membership in attendance as long as a quorum is present. Voting shall be by voice vote. However, if the voice vote is not unanimous or if the motion is rejected, the dissenting Commissioner(s) should be noted in the minutes. All Commission members present shall vote on all matters except if a Commissioner(s) abstains because of a conflict of interest and the abstaining Commissioner(s) should be noted as abstained in the minutes. If the vote count is within one (1) vote to accept or reject or is tied, a roll count vote is required.
- F. **Agenda** - The Zoning Administrator, in consultation with the Chairperson, shall be responsible for preparing an agenda for Commission meetings. Public notices and agenda sending will be done by the Township Zoning Administrator. Agenda items may include the following but shall be in any order determined appropriate by the Chair.
 - 1. **Call to Order Regular Meeting**
 - 2. **Consideration of Agenda**
 - 3. **Conflict of Interest**
 - 4. **Approval of Minutes**
 - 5. **Correspondence,**
 - 6. **Unfinished Business**
 - 7. **New Business**
 - a. **Public Hearing if needed**
 - 8. **Reports**
 - 9. **Public Comment**
 - 10. **Concerns of the Commission**

11. Adjournment

10. **Public Hearings** - All public hearings held by the Commission shall be held immediately preceding a meeting of the Commission. The following rules shall apply to public hearings held by the Commission:

- a. Commission chairperson opens the public hearing and announces the subject.
- b. Commission chairperson summarizes the procedures/rules to be followed during the hearing.
- c. Applicant presents the main points of the subject.
- d. Zoning administrator, planning consultant or other Township representatives speak as requested by the Commission chairperson.
- e. Persons speaking in support of or in opposition to the subject are recognized to speak.
- f. Letters or other written communications received from the public are acknowledged by the Commission secretary and made part of the record.
- g. Commission chairperson closes the public hearing.
- h. The general guideline for the order of business for meetings shall be as follows:

To ensure everyone has the opportunity to speak, the Commission chairperson may limit the time permitted for each person to speak and may elect to allow persons to speak only once, until all persons have had the opportunity to speak, at which time the chairperson has the discretion to permit additional comments.

All comments by the public, staff and Commission members shall be directed to the Commission chairperson. All comments shall be related to the subject for whom the public hearing was called, and unrelated comments shall be ruled out of order.

- i. **Rules of Order** - All meetings of the Commission shall be conducted in accordance with generally accepted parliamentary procedures, as general guideline by Roberts Rules of Order.

SECTION 3: Duties of the Planning Commission

The Commission's basic function is to make and adopt a plan for the Township's land use development and to assure the township's zoning ordinance and its application reflects that plan. The Commission shall perform the following duties:

- A. Review and revise the Township's Master Plan as required under the Planning Act and

consider and act upon petitions, staff, or township board requests for amendments to the Master Plan.

- B. Consider and act upon petitions, and staff, township board or Commission recommendations for amendments to the Township's Zoning Ordinance.
- C. Prepare an annual fiscal year report and budget request to the township board.
- D. Take such actions as are required by the Zoning Act.
- E. Review and act upon subdivision, Planned Unit Development (PUD), condominium proposals and required site plans including recommending appropriate action by the Township board as may be required.
- F. Attend training sessions, conferences, or meetings to enhance knowledge of planning and zoning issues and for which funds have been budgeted by the Township board.
- G. Commission member are encouraged to take the Citizen Planner Program and complete it within a year of appointment to the Commission.
- H. Annually, each member is required to take at least one training workshop or course approved by the Commission chairperson. If a conflict occurs and the one required training workshop or course cannot be completed, at the discretion of the Commission chairperson, an extension can be granted.
- I. Failure to take the required training workshop or course can result in the Commission chairperson requesting the Township supervisor to invoke Section 5 of these bylaws.
- J. Perform other duties as requested by the Township's board and respond to questions and requests from any Township or Antrim County board or commission.
- K. Before the Commission meetings, all Commissioners are expected to have read and be prepared to discuss agenda items.

SECTION 4: Duties of the Zoning Administrator, Planning Consultant, and other Professionals

The Commission shall be assisted by the zoning administrator and planning consultant in performing its duties.

- A. The **zoning administrator** shall be responsible for the professional and administrative work in coordinating the functions of the Commission:
 - 1. Attend Commission meetings.
 - 2. Issue such notices as may be required by the Commission.
 - 3. Accept applications for matters subject t h a t a r e to be reviewed by the Commission, ensure applications are complete, and forward application materials to the Commission at least one week prior to the meeting at which the matter is to be considered.
 - 4. Inform the Commission of administrative and enforcement actions taken on behalf of the township related to the zoning ordinance or other appropriate

ordinance.

B. The **Planning Consultant who is hired by the Township** shall:

1. Attend Commission meetings in person or electronically when requested by the Commission.
2. Consult with the Commission chair, zoning administrator and Township supervisor concerning interpretation, procedural questions and other matters arising from the master plan or zoning ordinance.
3. Prepare amendments to the zoning ordinance as directed by the Commission.
4. Prepare and forward to the Township zoning administrator and Commission chairperson written reviews and recommendations, if appropriate, for all requests and development proposals to be considered by the Commission.
5. Meet with applicants, their representatives and/or Township officials as directed by the Commission chairperson and/or Township supervisor.
6. Perform other duties as agreed upon with the Commission.
7. Complete all duties as stated in his/her contract with the Township.

Section 5: Absences, Removals, Resignations and Vacancies

- A. To be excused, members of the Commission shall notify the Commission chairperson or the Township zoning administrator when they intend to be absent from a meeting and the reason. Failure to make this notification prior to the meeting shall result in an unexcused absence. If the reason for missing the meeting was outside of the Commissioner's control, e.g. illness, flight delayed, family emergency, etc., the missed meeting will be excused. The determination of an excused absence is by the Commission chairperson whose decision can be appealed to the Township supervisor. After three unexcused absences per year, the information will be forwarded by the Commission chairperson to the Township supervisor who can decide to proceed or not proceed with removal.

SECTION 6: Incompatibility of Office

- A. If a member of the Commission is appointed to another office which is an incompatible office with his or her membership on the Commission, then on the effective date of the appointment to the other office, that shall result in an automatic resignation from the Commission.

SECTION 7: Amendments

These bylaws may be amended at any meeting by a vote of three members of the Commission.

These bylaws as amended in their entirety have been adopted by the Torch Lake Township Planning Commission at its June 16, 2025 regular meeting. These bylaws replace the bylaws approved by the Commission on June 9, 2020.



TORCH LAKE TOWNSHIP

Parks & Recreation Plan

November 2025 DRAFT

Acknowledgements

List of Maps/Tables/Figures

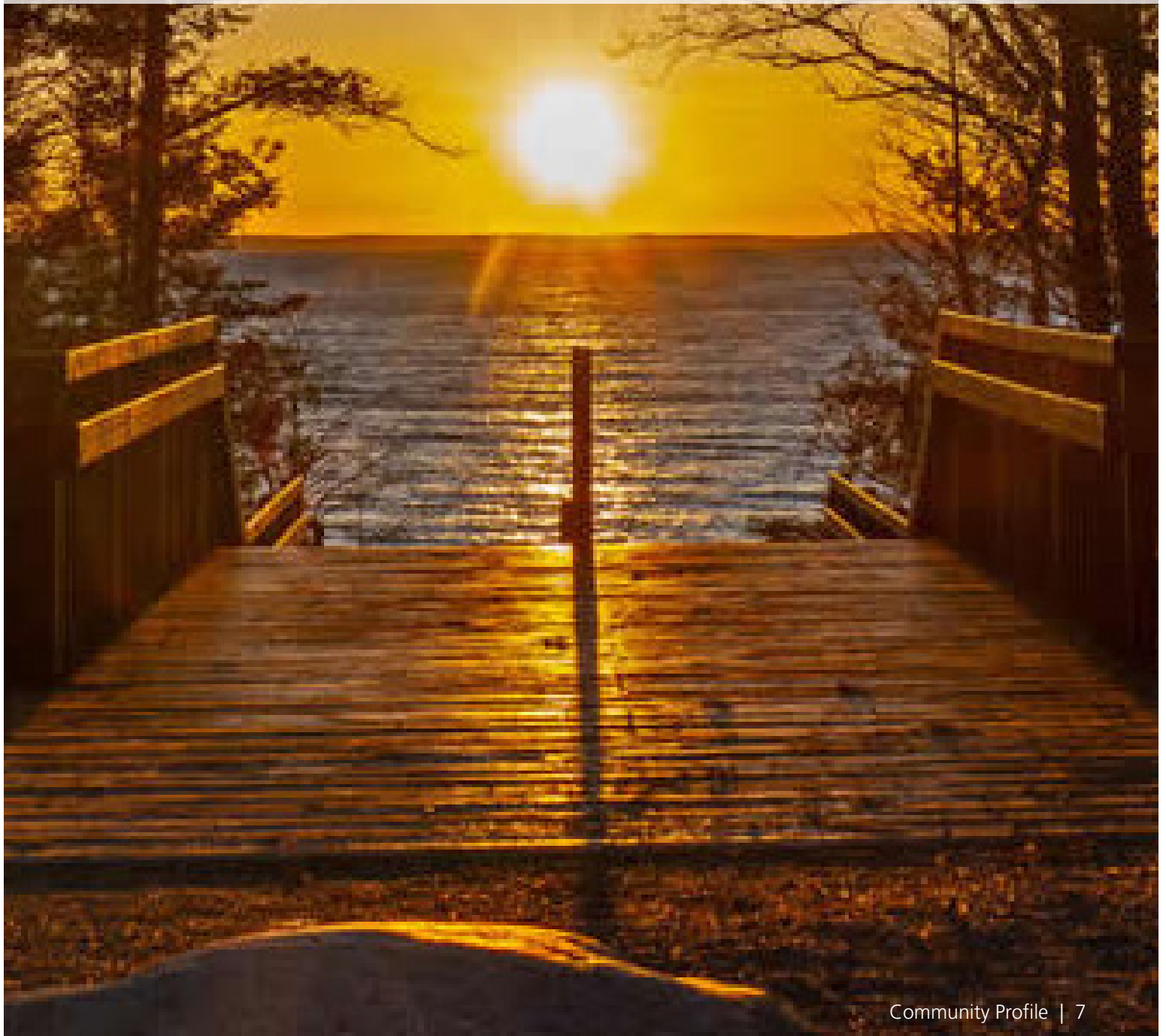
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Community Profile



This Parks and Recreation Plan for Torch Lake Township was created in accordance with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) guidelines. This Five-Year Parks and Recreation Plan will guide future decision making in parks and recreation development, budgeting, and grant funding.

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Torch Lake Township is located in northwest Michigan within Antrim County and is bordered by Banks Township to the north, Milton Township to the south, Lake Michigan to the west, and Torch Lake—with a small section of Central Lake Township—to the east. The Township's geography is uniquely defined by its proximity to two prominent water bodies: Lake Michigan and Torch Lake.

One of fifteen townships in Antrim County, Torch Lake Township is accessible primarily via US-31, which connects the area to Traverse City approximately 30 miles to the south and Charlevoix about 16 miles to the north. Additional access is available via M-88 from nearby communities such as Central Lake, Bellaire, and Mancelona. Antrim County lies in the northwestern portion of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. It is situated roughly 260 miles northwest of Detroit and about 320 miles north-northeast of Chicago. Several major Michigan cities are within 200 miles, including Grand Rapids (140 miles), Lansing (170 miles), and the Saginaw-Bay City region (150 miles). The cities of Kalamazoo, Battle Creek, and Jackson are each around 200 miles south.

Torch Lake Township encompasses 15.2 square miles of land and is known for its natural beauty and recreational appeal. Often referred to as part of Michigan's "Gold Coast" or "Sunset Coast," the Township features rolling wooded terrain, protected sand dunes, and extensive shorelines along both Lake Michigan and Torch Lake. These shorelines are celebrated for their scenic bluffs, sandy beaches, and clear, high-quality waters that support diverse aquatic life such as lake trout, whitefish, and cisco. Maintaining the pristine condition of these waters is essential to preserving the area's environmental health and recreational value. For those seeking a quieter alternative to more urbanized areas, Torch

Lake Township offers a rural lifestyle with access to natural amenities, quality schools, and year-round outdoor activities like fishing, boating, and hunting.

DATA SOURCES

The demographic information in this Plan came from the following sources, in this preferred order:

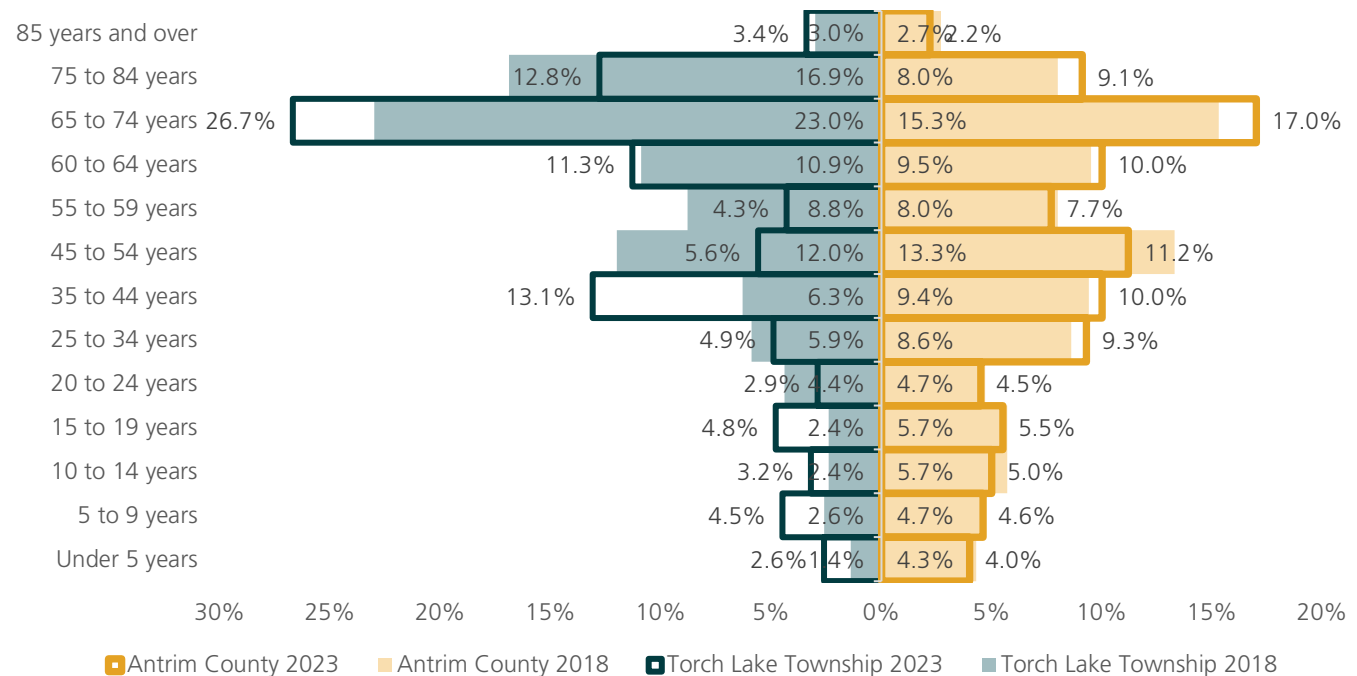
- » **US Decennial Censuses.** The decennial censuses are the most accurate source of demographic information in the United States, though the information is limited. Mandated by the United States Constitution, the aim of the decennial census is to count 100% of the US population. Because the decennial census has been operating since 1790, it offers a valuable reference point to illustrate how populations have changed over time. While the decennial census has been administered for over 200 years, the questions have shifted to reflect cultural changes. For example, one's history of rebellion against the United States is no longer a question on the form. Information collected in the most recent counts includes information about age, sex, race, the relationship between household members, and household tenure.
- » **American Community Survey.** The American Community Survey (ACS) replaced the "long-form" Census questions beginning in 2000, collecting the same types of information about social, economic, and housing conditions on a continual basis. Including these questions in the decennial census would be more resource-intensive and could reduce the response rate for the more critical decennial census. The ACS is not a complete survey of the United States but a sample. A random selection of households receives the ACS every year, and the Census Bureau uses the responses to create estimates for the rest of the population. Because the ACS is a sample, smaller communities require multiple years of sampling to create accurate estimates. Communities with fewer than 20,000 people must be sampled over 60 months to create estimates, and these estimates are referred to as 5-year estimates. This plan will use ACS 5-year estimates, as Torch Lake Township's population is under 20,000 people.

Table XX: Population 2000-2020

	2000	2010	2015	2020	% Change 2000-2020
Torch Lake Township	1,159	1,331	1,183	1,212	4.6%
Antrim County	23,110	23,975	23,267	23,431	1.4%
State of Michigan	9,295,297	9,938,444	9,990,571	10,077,331	8.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, P1

Figure XX: Population Pyramid, 2018-2023



Source: American Community Survey, DP05

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Population

Torch Lake Township's population has experienced modest growth over the past two decades, increasing from 1,159 residents in 2000 to 1,212 residents in the 2020 Census—an overall rise of 4.6%.¹ Similar population increases were observed throughout Antrim County and the State of Michigan during this period. According to the American Community Survey, the Township's estimated population in 2023 was 1,564.² While this suggests a potential uptick—possibly influenced by the growing trend of remote work enabling people to live farther from traditional employment centers—the estimate carries a high margin of error due to the Township's relatively small population size.

Age Distribution

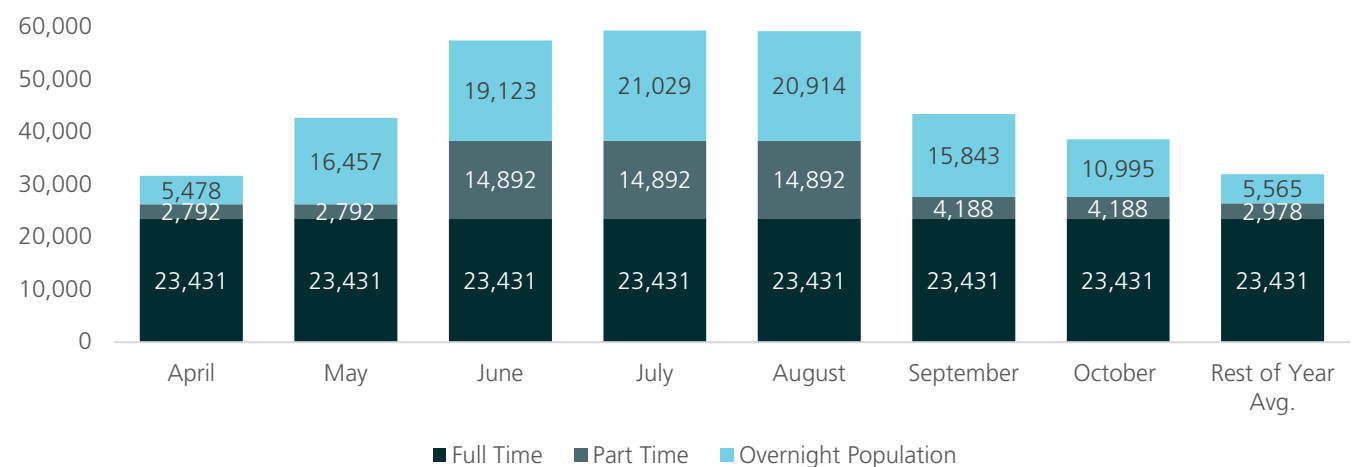
The figure "Population Pyramid, 2018-2023" shows age distribution in Torch Lake Township and Antrim County for the years 2018 and 2023. The data shows that the population in Torch Lake trends towards the elderly, with 42.9% of all residents being 65 and older in 2018; interestingly this same figure remained 42.9% in 2023.³ In 2018, 19.1% of residents were under 35 years old, a figure that increased to 22.9% in 2023.⁴ Communities with elderly populations need a variety of recreational activities that cater to different abilities and interests, including social events, physical activities, and opportunities for creative expression and engagement. Additionally, enhancing intergenerational activity offerings can help to increase community cohesiveness.⁵

Table XX: Racial Composition in Torch Lake Township, 2023

	Torch Lake Township	Antrim County	State of Michigan
Total population	1,564	23,876	10,051,595
One race	98.4%	96.0%	93.7%
White	96.7%	93.9%	74.8%
Black or African American	0.0%	0.4%	13.4%
American Indian and Alaska Native	3.0%	1.4%	0.9%
Asian	0.3%	0.4%	3.3%
Some Other Race	0.0%	0.6%	1.8%
Two or More Races	1.6%	4.0%	6.3%

Source: American Community Survey, DP05

Figure XX: Average Population of Antrim County by Month



Source: Networks Northwest

Racial Composition

The table titled “Racial Composition in Torch Lake Township, 2023” indicates that the racial makeup of both Torch Lake Township and Antrim County is predominantly white, with over 96% of residents identifying as such.⁶ The next largest racial group in the Township is American Indian or Alaska Native, comprising approximately 3% of the population. Compared to statewide figures, both the Township and the County exhibit significantly less racial diversity.⁷

Seasonal Population

It’s important to note that the U.S. Census and American Community Survey do not fully reflect the seasonal population fluctuations in Torch Lake Township—particularly during the busy summer months. Since the Census is conducted

on April 1st, many part-time residents who winter elsewhere are not included in the count. Although respondents are instructed to list their primary residence as the place, they live for more than half the year, this guideline is often misunderstood or disregarded, sometimes for tax-related reasons, resulting in an undercount.⁸

To provide a more accurate picture, Networks Northwest monitors seasonal population trends across 10 counties in Northwest Lower Michigan, including Antrim County. Their 2022 Seasonal Population Study for Lower Michigan reported that while Antrim County had a permanent population of 23,431, the summer population more than doubled—rising to nearly 60,000.⁹ A detailed monthly population estimate is illustrated in the figure titled “Average Population of Antrim County by Month.”

Employment

The U.S. Census Bureau defines the labor force as all individuals age 16 and older who are either employed, unemployed, or serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. The civilian labor force includes only those who are employed or actively seeking employment.¹⁰

As of 2023, 1,395 Torch Lake Township residents were eligible to participate in the labor force, with a participation rate of 44.3%. Of those participating, 44% were employed at the time of data collection, while approximately 0.3% of the total population was unemployed. The Township's official unemployment rate—calculated as the percentage of unemployed individuals within the civilian labor force—stood at 0.6%.¹¹ A majority of residents (55.7%) were not participating in the labor force, which aligns with the Township's age profile, as many residents are senior citizens who are likely retired.

Income and Poverty

In 2023, the median household income in Torch Lake Township was \$85,972, up 16.6% from

Table XX: Labor Force Participation, 2023

	Torch Lake Township
Population 16 years and over	1,395
Labor force	44.3%
Employed	44.0%
Unemployment rate	0.6%
Not in labor force	55.7%

Source: American Community Survey, DP03

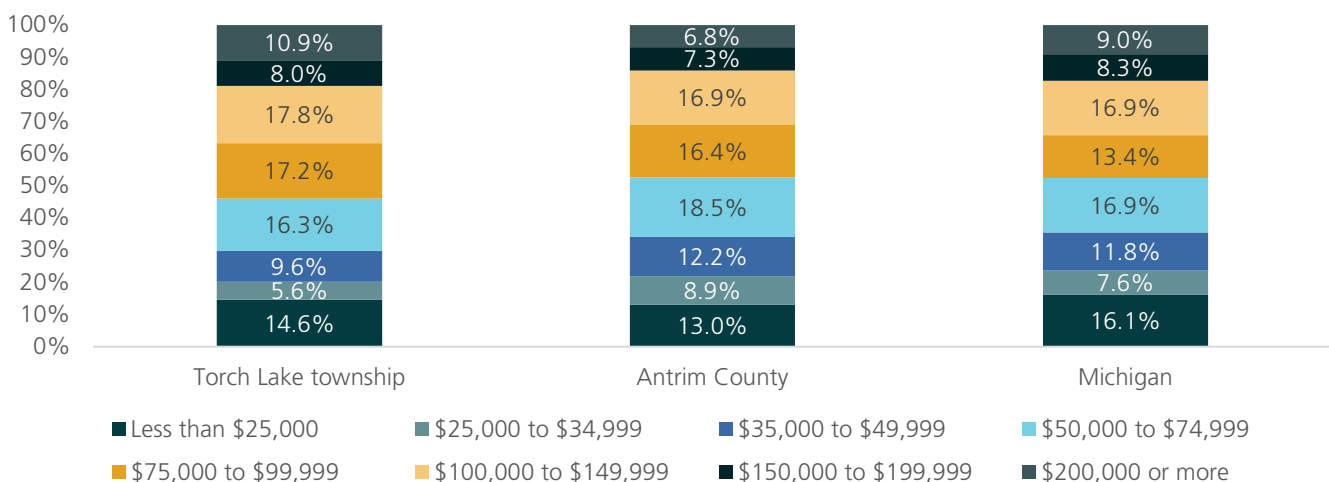
2018 (when the median household income was \$73,750).¹² The figure median represents the middle value in an ordered list of data values. The median is the very middle value and is a more reliable figure than the mean (average) of a dataset because it is not skewed by very high or very low figures in the dataset. Incomes in Torch Lake Township are significantly higher than Antrim County and the State of Michigan, which are approximate to each other.¹³

Table XX: Median Household Income, 2018 & 2023

	Torch Lake Township	Antrim County	State of Michigan
2018	\$73,750	\$52,589	\$54,938
2023	\$85,972	\$71,421	\$71,149
% Increase	16.6%	35.8%	29.5%

Source: American Community Survey, DP03

Figure XX: Household Incomes, 2023



Source: American Community Survey, DP03

Table XX: Households in Poverty, 2023

	Torch Lake Township	Antrim County	State of Michigan
All people	11.0%	9.4%	13.1%
All families	6.2%	5.3%	8.8%
With related children of the householder under 18 years	14.8%	11.1%	14.4%
Married couple families	4.3%	3.0%	4.2%
Families with female householder, no spouse present	42.3%	20.5%	25.1%
Under 18 years	12.4%	13.4%	17.5%
65 years and over	11.6%	6.0%	9.3%

Source: American Community Survey, DP03

Table XX: Population with Disability, 2023

	Torch Lake Population	With a disability	% with a disability	Antrim County % with a disability	Michigan % with a disability
Under 18 years	225	12	5.3%	8.3%	4.9%
18 to 64 years	669	60	9.0%	13.7%	12.2%
65 years and over	670	85	12.7%	24.7%	32.2%
TOTAL	1,564	157	10.0%	15.9%	14.2%

Source: American Community Survey, S1810

The Federal Poverty Level (FPL), or federal poverty guidelines, is a yearly income benchmark used to assess eligibility for a range of federal assistance programs and benefits, with thresholds varying by household size.¹⁴ In Torch Lake Township, 11.0% of residents were living below the FPL in 2023. Poverty rates were notably higher among single female-headed households and families with children.¹⁵ Household income is an important metric in recreation planning because lower-income households are more likely to face barriers to accessing recreation assets due to factors like transportation and cost of participation.¹⁶ By ensuring that recreation amenities are available throughout the Township and that programming is affordable, Torch Lake can help to ensure all residents are able to receive enrichment through recreation and interpersonal interactions.

Disability

Compared to the County and State, Torch Lake Township residents have a lower disability rate. Just 10% of the total population is disabled in some form, compared to 15.9% in the County, and 14.2% statewide.¹⁷ While the rate is lower compared to other areas, 1 in 10 residents do have a disability which should be considered in recreation planning for Torch Lake Township. When designing recreational spaces, the Township should consider barriers to access and ensure that they are modified so that all may use these spaces, employing Universal Design concepts will help to increase access for all.

Sources

- 1 U.S. Census Bureau, P1, 2000-2020
- 2 American Community Survey, 2023 5 Year Estimates, DP05.
- 3 American Community Survey, 2018 & 2023 5 Year Estimates, DP05.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 National Recreation and Park Association, Parks and Recreation Supports Older Adults, 4-8-2025, <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2024/july/parks-and-recreation-supports-older-adults/#:~:text=The%20most%20common%20intergenerational%20activities,well%2Dbeing%20of%20older%20adults.>
- 6 American Community Survey, 2023 5 Year Estimates, DP05.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 U.S. Census Bureau, About the Decennial Census, 4-7-2025, www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/about.html#:~:text=Every%2010%20years%2C%20the%20U.S.,Day%2C%20which%20is%20April%201.
- 9 Networks Northwest. 2022 Seasonal Population Study, 4-7-2025, <https://www.networksnorthwest.org/news-events/news/new-study-looks-at-seasonal-population-seasonal-workforce-and-short-term-rentals-in-northern-michigan.html>
- 10 U.S. Census Bureau, Glossary, 4-7-2025, https://www.census.gov/glossary/#term_Laborforce?term=Labor+force
- 11 American Community Survey, 2015 & 2023 5 Year Estimates, DP03.
- 12 American Community Survey, 2015&2023 5 Year Estimates, DP03.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Poverty Guidelines, 4-8-2025, <https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines>
- 15 American Community Survey, 2015 & 2023 5 Year Estimates, DP03.
- 16 Kenzie, et al., National Institute of Health, Neighborhood Income Matters: Disparities in Community Recreation Facilities, Amenities, and Programs, 4-8-2025, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4082954/#:~:text=Meanwhile%2C%20support%20for%20physical%20activity,maintained%20and%20safe%20park%20and>
- 17 American Community Survey, 2023 5 Year Estimates, S1810.

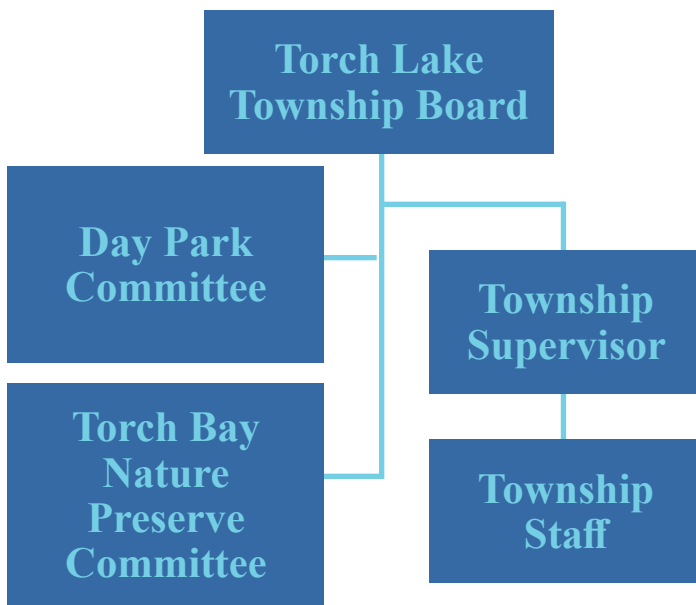
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2

Administrative Structure



Figure XX: Organization Chart for Torch Lake Township



ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Torch Lake Township’s parks and recreation system is overseen by the Township Board, which holds ultimate decision-making authority for all recreation-related matters. A Day Park Committee and Torch Bay Nature Preserve Committee, appointed by the Board, serves in an advisory capacity to support the development and implementation of the Township’s recreation goals. The Committees make recommendations on recreation policies, park improvements, and project priorities. The Recreation Committees also function

as a conduit for public input, helping to ensure that the community’s recreational needs and concerns are communicated to Township leadership. Day-to-day park operations and maintenance are carried out by Township staff, contractors, and volunteers under the direction of the Township Board.

BUDGET AND FUNDING

The budget proposed for parks and recreation in the 2025-2026 fiscal year (FY) in Torch Lake Township is \$65,480. The table “FY 2025-2026 Budget” shows the budget broken down by line items, as well as the pervious budget years.¹

GRANT HISTORY

Torch Lake Township has actively sought and received grant funding in the past to support the acquisition and development of its park and recreation facilities. According to records from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), the Township has obtained grants for the improvement or establishment of the following park and recreation sites within its boundaries:

- » **Grant# TS 91-340 - Torch Lake Day Park**
Acquisition of 3.58 acres, with 196 feet of frontage on Torch Lake. (1991)
- » **Grant# TF 93-308 - Torch Bay Trail & Beach**
Acquisition of approximately 37 acres of forest and dunes with 720 feet of frontage on Lake Michigan. (1993)

COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND

Table XX: FY 2025-2026 Budget

	2023-2024 Budget	2024-2025 Budget	2025-2026 Budget
Wages	\$18,715	\$20,512	\$16,250
Contract Services	\$4,181	\$4,537	\$11,010
Janitorial	\$14,452	\$20,964	\$17,920
Electric	\$842	\$2,373	\$2,000
Repairs	\$882	\$6,020	\$3,800
Grounds Maintenance	\$8,398	\$7,000	\$6,500
Day Park Building Improvements	\$39,501	\$21,577	\$8,000
Total	\$86,971	\$82,983	\$65,480

Source: Torch Lake Township 2025-2026 Budget

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer participation plays an important role in recreation projects throughout the Township. While there is no formal volunteer program, individuals are engaged on a project-by-project basis—often providing in-kind labor to support grant applications or help implement park improvements

Torch Lake Township lies within the boundaries of both the Elk Rapids and Central Lake school districts; however, neither district currently plays a formal role in the Township’s recreation planning or

programming.

The Township typically collaborates with Antrim County, particularly on the development of non-motorized trails and bike infrastructure. Ongoing coordination with Antrim County, local conservancies, the Upper Torch Lake Association, area Tribal Governments, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) will be important for expanding and enhancing recreational opportunities across the Township.



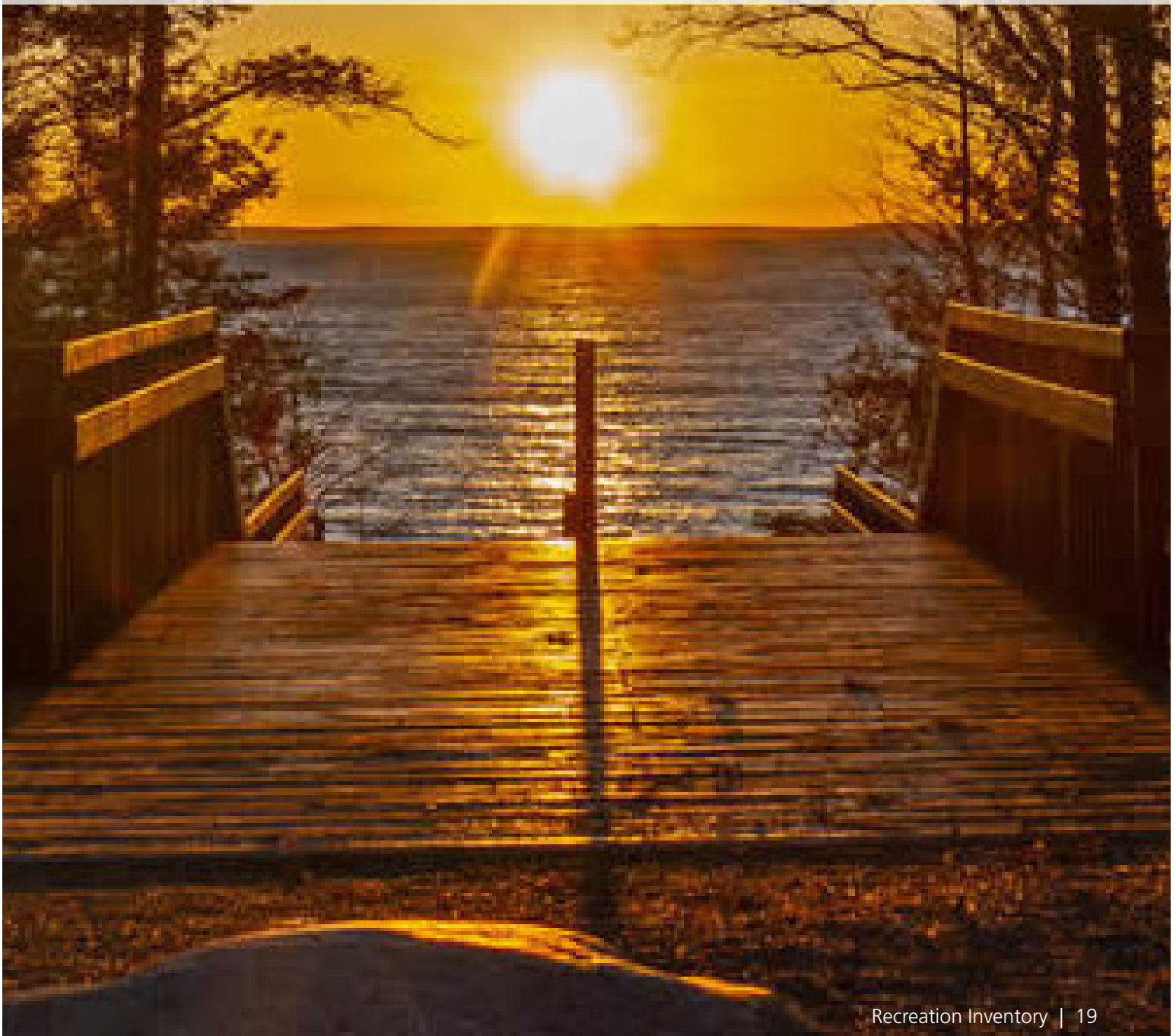
Source

- 1 Torch Lake Township, 2025-2026 Budget, 4-8-2025, <https://www.torchlaketownship.org/budgets/BUDGET%20DRAFT%20FYR%202025-2026.pdf>

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3

Recreation Inventory



Having a detailed understanding of the recreation assets used by a community is a key component of recreation planning. To understand the condition and status of recreational facilities in Torch Lake Township, an inventory of existing facilities was conducted. This inventory is intended to provide a comprehensive description of the current parks and recreational offerings that are available to recreational users across the Township. While this section accounts for facilities in the Township, including those managed by other groups in Torch Lake, and others will be mentioned in this section, only facilities operated by the Township are fully inventoried.

Beyond detailing the type, quantity, and quality of amenities at each park and recreational facility, this assessment documents the condition of amenities and park accessibility, per State of Michigan requirements. The condition of each park's amenities was assessed as "poor," "fair," "good," or "excellent," and accessibility was evaluated on a scale of 1 to 5:

- » 1: none of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines
- » 2: some of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines
- » 3: most of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines
- » 4: the entire park meets accessibility guidelines
- » 5: The entire park was developed/renovated using the Principles of Universal Design

PRINCIPLES OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Universal design is a concept of the implementation of design standards in buildings and environments that makes them accessible and inclusive for individuals of all ages, sizes, abilities, and disabilities. Its aim is to develop spaces that are convenient and functional for everyone, enabling full participation in a community. Examples of universal design in a community include large print signage, ramps instead of stairs, curb cuts for wheelchair access as well as strollers. Universal design has seven principles encompassing design for all:¹

- » **Principle 1: Equitable Use** - The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.
- » **Principle 2: Flexibility in Use** - The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
- » **Principle 3: Simple and Intuitive Use** - Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.
- » **Principle 4: Perceptible Information** - The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.
- » **Principle 5: Tolerance for Error** - The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
- » **Principle 6: Low Physical Effort** - The design can be used efficiently, comfortably, and with a minimum of fatigue.
- » **Principle 7: Size and Space for Approach and Use** - Appropriate size and space is allotted for approach, reach and manipulation regardless of physical characteristics such as size or mobility.



Torch Lake from Day Park.
Source: torchlakedaypark.org

INVENTORY OF RECREATION FACILITIES

Facilities Owned by Torch Lake Township

Torch Lake Township is a naturally rich recreation area, situated on a narrow moraine between Torch Lake to the east and Lake Michigan to the west, with most of its boundary comprised of shoreline. The area's varied climate supports a wide range of year-round recreational activities. Within an hour's drive, residents and visitors have access to ski resorts, golf courses, tennis courts, boat charters, marinas, parks, campgrounds, sailing and boating facilities, ball fields, hunting and fishing areas, nature trails, protected natural lands, and other major tourist amenities.

Many facilities in Torch Lake Township are not accessible with universal design standards which prevents many from being able to sufficiently access

recreation options in the area. While some facilities are left largely undeveloped to preserve natural features, some standards like a developed parking area, and improved pathways would still allow more access while preserving much of the site.

Road Ends

There are 18 known road ends in Torch Lake Township, some were formerly owned by transferred from the Antrim County Road Commission to the Township. Many of these road ends are not regularly maintained, some have become overgrown while others are informally maintained by neighboring property owners, making them difficult for the public to identify or access. In addition to Township- and County-owned access points, there are also numerous privately owned access sites that are collectively held by property owners within specific subdivisions.

Table XX: Recreation Facilities Owned or Managed by Torch Lake Township

Facility Name	Size	Amenities	Accessibility Score
William Good Day Park and Torch Lake Dock and Ramp	4 acres	200' Torch Lake Access, beach, restrooms, picnic area, playground, volleyball, basketball court, two pavilions, dock and single lane boat ramp and parking area, adjacent to the Day Park.	5
Golden Beach Access – Lake Michigan	100' wide lot in a subdivision	Beach on Lake Michigan	1
NW Torch Lake Drive Boat Ramp	Less than 1 acre	Concrete boat launch on Torch Lake	3
Torch Bay Nature Preserve *Property managed by Township	38 acres	Beach on Lake Michigan, nature trails, undeveloped boat launch	2
East Torch Lake Drive	Less than 1 acre	Undeveloped Site	1

Table XX: Notable Road End Sites in Torch Lake Township

Facility Name	Width of Road End	Amenities	Accessibility Score
Barnes Road – Access Site	--	Torch Lake Access	1
Kruger Road – Access Site	100 feet	Torch Lake Access	1
3rd Street – Access Site	70 feet	Torch Lake Access	1
Bay Colony Rd Ext – Access Site	--	Lake Michigan Access	1
Creswell Road – Access Site	50 feet	Lake Michigan Access and Beach	1
Erickson Rd – Access Site	66 feet (shared with Milton Twp)	Lake Michigan Access	1

Facilities Not Owned by Torch Lake Township

Beyond recreation facilities owned by Torch Lake Township, there are also facilities, both public and private that are present in the Township but owned by another entity. Most of these facilities are owned by Antrim County, and one is owned

by the State of Michigan. Recently a private group purchases property at the corner of M 88 and US 31 to provide a trailhead for the Nakwema Trailway under development. These facilities provide recreational options and enjoyment for residents of Torch Lake Township as well as those in surrounding areas.

Table XX: Public Facilities Not Owned by Torch Lake Township

Facility Name	Size	Amenities	Ownership
Potential Nakwema Trailway Trailhead (corner of M 88 & US 31)	5 acres	None	Private
Bay Colony Road – Four Different Access Sites	Varies in width from 15 – 36 feet	Lake Michigan Access	Antrim County
Birchview Drive – Access Site	55 feet width	Lake Michigan Access	Antrim County
Manitou Trail – Access Site	--	Lake Michigan Access (with a stairway)	Antrim County
Michigan Trail North – Access Site	66 feet, comprised of 2 separate adjacent lots	Lake Michigan Access	Antrim County Road Commission
Michigan Trail South - Three Different Access Sites	--	Lake Michigan Access	Antrim County Road Commission
Barnes Park	163 acres	Campground, beach on Lake Michigan, restrooms, bath house, picnic area, playground, baseball field, two pavilions	Antrim County
Torch Lake Access Site	4.5 acres, with over 500 feet of beach frontage	Beach on Torch Lake, restrooms, boat launch	MDNR
Torch Lake Property	2.3 acres, with over 200 feet of beach frontage	Undeveloped	State of Michigan
A-Ga-Ming Golf Resort	--	72 holes for golf, dining, lodging	Private

Source

- 1 UC Berkeley, Disability Access & Compliance, Universal Design Principles, 4-16-2025, dac.berkeley.edu/services/campus-building-accessibility/universal-design-principles

4

Planning Process



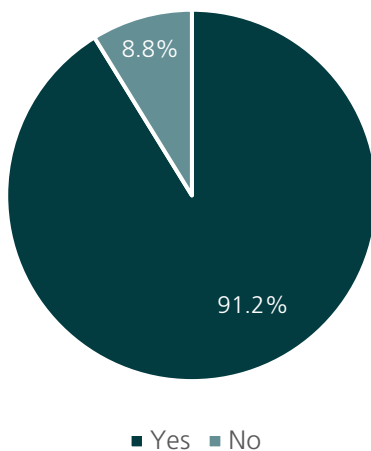
For the Torch Lake Township parks and recreation plan, public engagement was facilitated through a survey made accessible to residents online and an open house event in September. The survey and open house were done in combination with input for an update to the Township Master Plan. Both forms of public engagement informed the suggestions, strategies, and opportunities promoted by this parks and recreation plan.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

The survey was advertised by mailing, newspaper advertisements, emails, as well as in paper form that was available for completion at Township Hall. During the survey period from July 18 to September 4, 2025, the Township collected 456 responses from community members. A summary of this survey as well as a distillation of key takeaways are included in this document.

Question: Do you live in Torch Lake Township?

Total Responses: 441

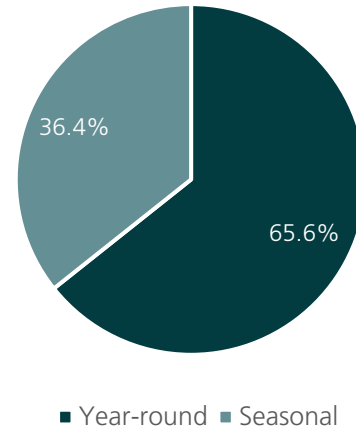


The overwhelming majority of survey respondents (over 9 out of 10) live in Torch Lake Township, indicating this survey successfully captured input

primarily from residents.

Question: Are you a seasonal or year-round resident?

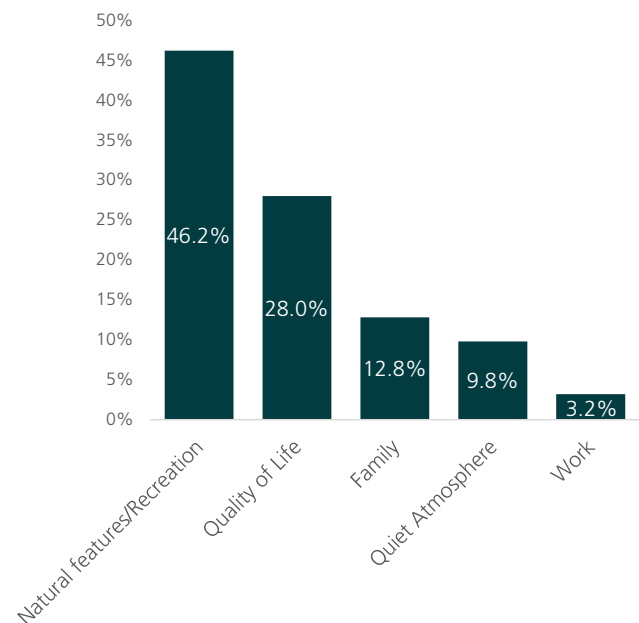
Total Responses: 456



The survey reveals a mixed community composition in Torch Lake Township with roughly a 2:1 ratio of year-round to seasonal residents among respondents.

Question: What is the main reason you decided to live/own property in Torch Lake Township?

Total Responses: 456

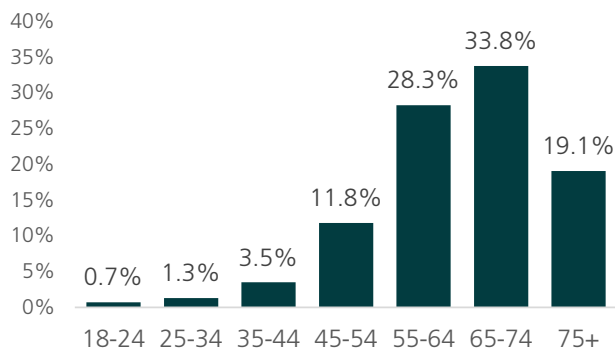


This data reveals Torch Lake Township as primarily a destination community chosen for its natural amenities and lifestyle benefits rather than economic opportunity. Residents are likely highly

invested in preserving the environmental qualities and peaceful character that originally attracted them. This could influence priorities around development, environmental protection, and maintaining the rural atmosphere that defines the community's appeal. The strong emphasis on natural features suggests residents would likely support policies that protect water quality, preserve green spaces, and maintain recreational access.

Question: What is your age range?

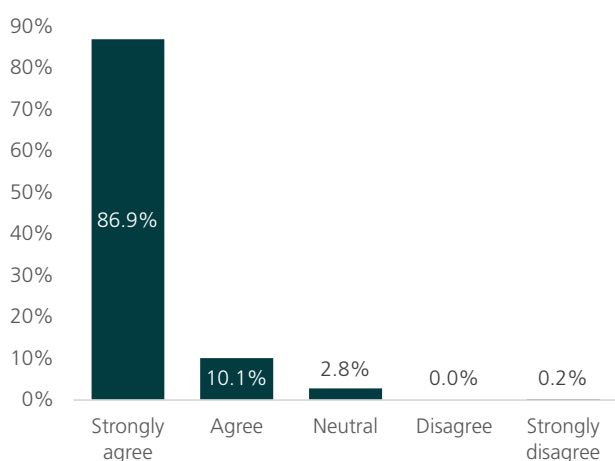
Total Responses: 456



More than 80% of all respondents were aged 55 years or older. Though not representative of the overall population age distribution, it shows that a large portion of older residents are engaged with recreation opportunities in Torch Lake Township. This age profile suggests priority needs around accessibility improvements and age-friendly recreation infrastructure.

Question: Natural features (lakes, streams, forests, wetlands, etc.) are important to my quality of life and should be protected.

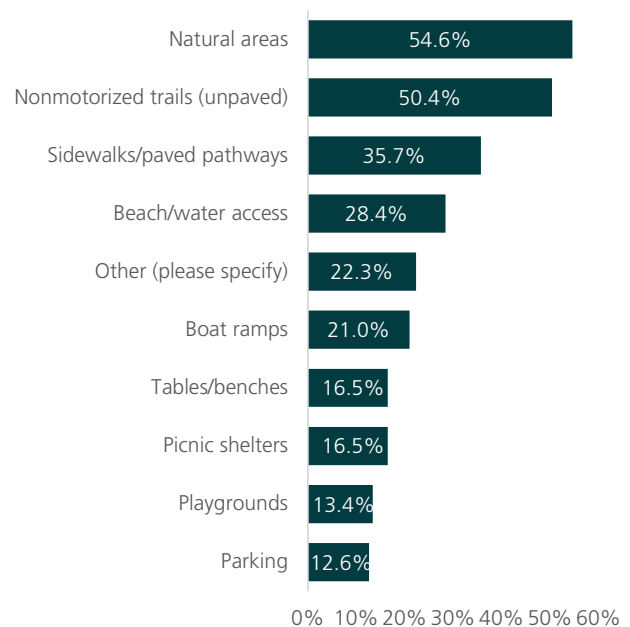
Total Responses: 456



Nearly all (96.7%) respondents either strongly agree or agree that natural features are important and should be protected, representing one of the strongest unified opinions in community surveys. This overwhelming consensus represents a rare opportunity for township leadership to pursue ambitious environmental protection measures with strong community backing.

Question: What type of recreational facilities would you like to see more of in Torch Lake Township? (Check all that apply)

Total Responses: 381



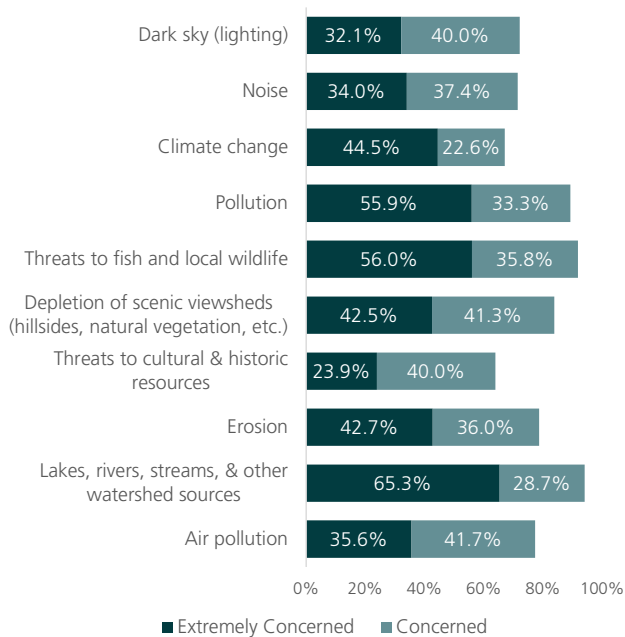
Survey responses indicate that residents of Torch Lake Township are most interested in expanding natural areas (54.6%) and nonmotorized trails (50.4%), making these the highest priorities for future recreational development. Sidewalks and paved pathways also received strong support (35.7%), showing a clear demand for improved walkability and connectivity within the community. Additionally, beach and water access (28.4%) and boat ramps (21.0%) are seen as important amenities, reflecting residents' desire for greater opportunities to enjoy the township's waterfront resources.

There was also space for additional comments with many respondents expressing a strong desire to maintain the township's natural, quiet character and limit additional recreational development, with several emphasizing that existing facilities

are sufficient and concerns about attracting more tourists and spending tax dollars on public amenities. Lastly, there was notable interest in specific improvements, including pickleball courts, bike trails, better trail connections (such as the Nakwema and TART Trails), improved boat access, and enhanced facilities like restrooms, benches, and picnic areas.

Question: Please state your level of concern with each of the topics below:

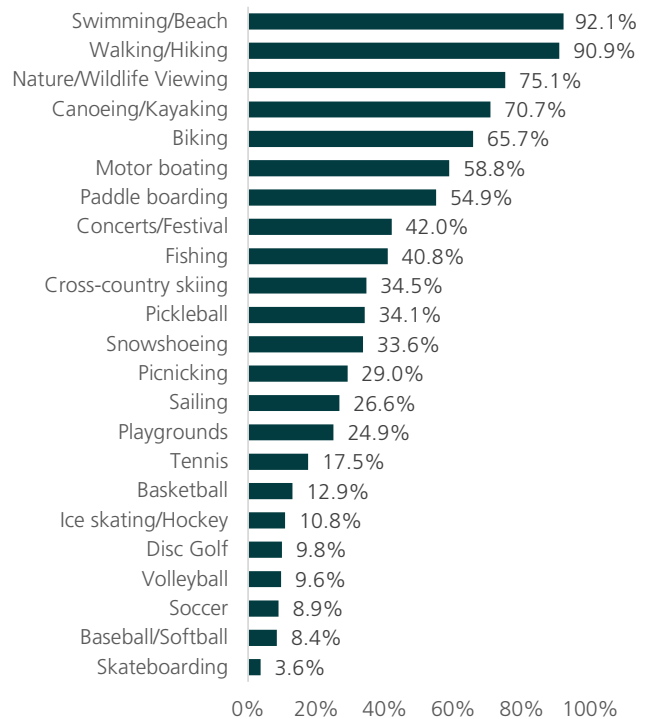
Total Responses: 425



This question gave the following options for each of the ten topics: Extremely Concerned, Concerned, Neutral, Unconcerned, Extremely Unconcerned. All topics received higher than 50% of responses stating that they were either Extremely Concerned or Concerned. Lakes, rivers, streams, and watershed sources emerged as the top concern at 78% extremely concerned/concerned, followed closely by threats to fish and local wildlife at 76%, and general pollution at 75%. These findings strongly align with the community's core values around natural features and reflect the recreational and ecological priorities that originally attracted residents to the area. Moderate-high concern issues include erosion (65%), depletion of scenic viewsheds (64%), and air pollution (62%), while lower priority issues encompass climate change (55%), threats to cultural and historic resources (52%), noise pollution (51%), and dark sky lighting concerns (48%).

Question: What recreational activities do you and members of your household enjoy? (check all that apply)

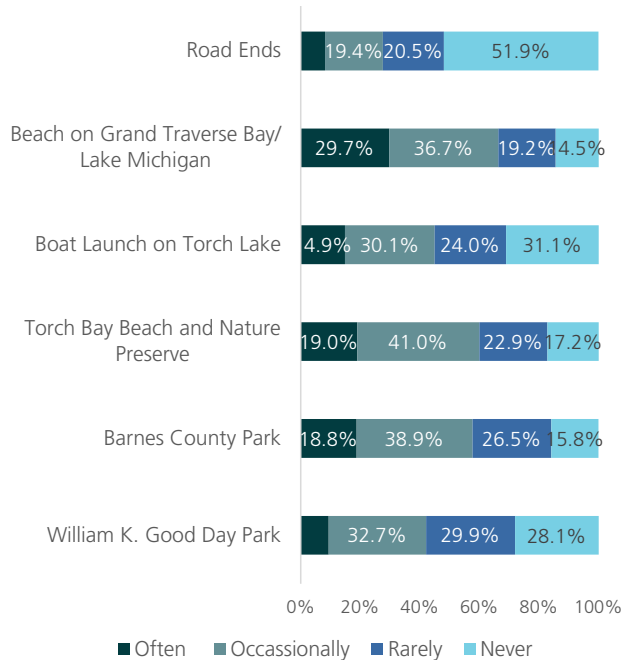
Total Responses: 417



Based on the survey responses about recreational activities enjoyed by household members, the data reveals a community deeply connected to water-based recreation and outdoor activities. Swimming and beach activities appear in nearly every response, making them the most popular pursuits, closely followed by walking, hiking, canoeing, kayaking, paddle boarding, and motor boating, which strongly suggests this is a waterfront community where aquatic recreation forms the foundation of residents' leisure time. Nature and wildlife viewing also ranks among the most frequently selected activities, indicating residents value the natural environment and outdoor experiences. The survey responses demonstrate a population that remains active throughout all seasons, with substantial winter participation in snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and ice skating, while biking, fishing, and picnicking maintain steady popularity year-round. Beyond the options that were presented, many residents added golf as another recreational activity that they frequently enjoy. The overall pattern reveals a highly active, outdoors-oriented community centered around water recreation with strong engagement in year-round outdoor pursuits.

Question: How often do you use the following Township recreational assets?

Total Responses: 415



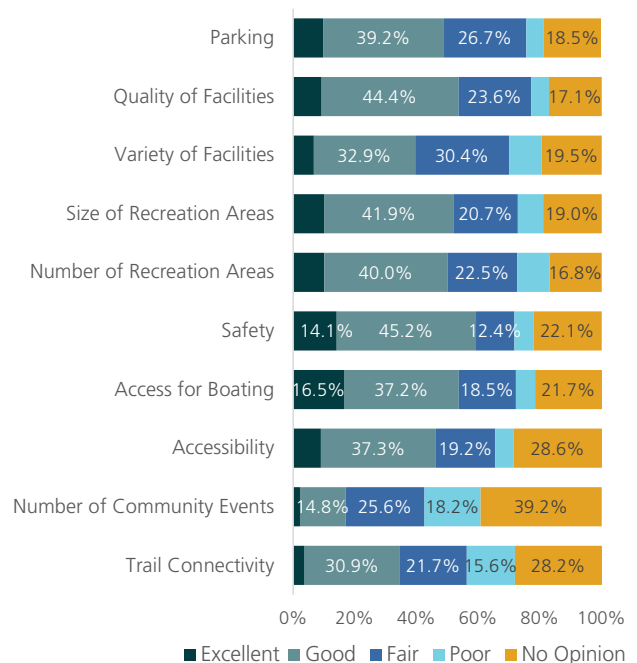
Looking at the survey responses for how often residents use Township recreational assets, the data shows varied usage patterns across the six facilities. The responses follow a frequency scale of Never, Rarely, Occasionally, and Often. William K. Good Day Park shows moderate usage with most respondents indicating "Occasionally" or "Rarely" using the facility. Very few respondents report "Often" usage, and a significant portion select "Never," suggesting this park may have limited appeal or accessibility for many residents. Barnes County Park demonstrates similar patterns with predominantly "Rarely" and "Occasionally" responses, though slightly fewer "Never" responses than Good Day Park, indicating somewhat broader community engagement.

Torch Bay Beach and Nature Preserve emerges as one of the more popular facilities, with a higher proportion of "Often" and "Occasionally" responses compared to the parks. This aligns with the community's strong preference for water-based activities, identified in the recreational preferences survey. Boat Launch on Torch Lake shows strong usage among those who participate, with many "Often" responses, though also significant "Never" responses, creating a polarized usage pattern that likely reflects the divide between boat owners and non-boat owners in the community. Beach

on Grand Traverse Bay/Lake Michigan receives substantial usage across all frequency categories, with many residents reporting "Occasionally" or "Often" visits, reinforcing the community's connection to water recreation. Road Ends show mixed usage patterns, with responses distributed evenly across all frequency categories, suggesting these access points serve different purposes for different residents. When asked more specifically which road ends respondents were referring to using, Cresswell Road, Barnes Road, Traverse Bay Road, and Erickson Road were the most frequent responses. The overall pattern indicates that water-related facilities receive the highest and most consistent usage, while traditional park facilities show more moderate engagement levels.

Question: How do you rate the following Torch Lake Township parks and recreation amenities?

Total Responses: 412

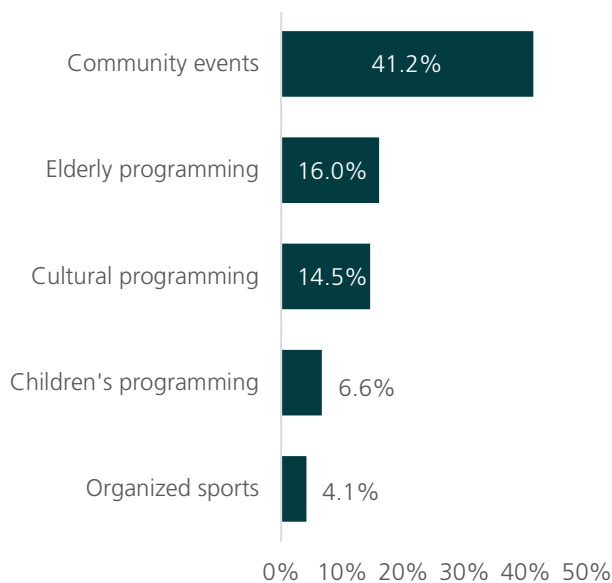


Respondents ranked various aspects of Township recreation amenities on a scale of Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, or No Opinion. Survey results show mixed opinions about Torch Lake Township's parks and recreation amenities. Safety received the highest positive ratings, with 59.3% of respondents rating it as excellent or good, followed by the quality of facilities (53.6%) and the size of recreation areas (52.1%). Access for boating also performed well, with 53.7% rating it positively. Accessibility and

parking received moderate satisfaction, with 46.3% and 48.9% positive ratings, respectively. On the other hand, several areas need improvement. Trail connectivity earned only 34.6% positive ratings, while 37.3% of respondents rated it fair or poor. The variety of facilities also scored lower, with nearly a third (30.4%) rating it as fair. The lowest-rated category was the number of community events, with just 17% positive responses and the highest percentage of respondents (39.2%) indicating no opinion, suggesting a potential lack of awareness or engagement. Overall, the results indicate that increasing programming, enhancing trail systems, diversifying facilities, and improving outreach should be top priorities moving forward.

Question: What type of recreation programs would you like to see offered in Torch Lake Township?

Total Responses: 318

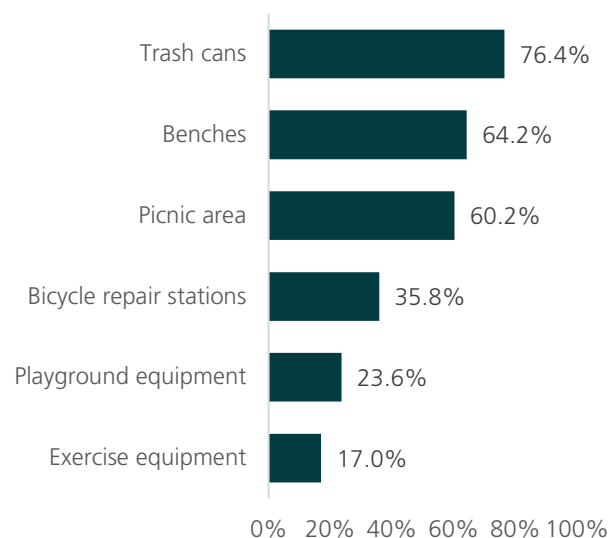


Survey responses show that community events were the most desired type of recreation program in Torch Lake Township, receiving 41.2% of selections. Other popular choices included elderly programming (16.0%), cultural programming (14.5%), children's programming (6.6%), and organized sports (4.1%), while 17.7% of responses fell under "other," reflecting a range of additional ideas. Open-ended comments revealed several key themes. A recurring request was for pickleball facilities, including both indoor and outdoor courts, highlighting its popularity as a growing sport and social activity. Some comments also suggested

additional offerings such as bike paths, outdoor concerts, therapeutic pools, senior transportation, tennis courts, and library access. At the same time, several respondents voiced skepticism about expanding township programming, citing concerns about costs, taxes, or unnecessary duplication of nearby recreation opportunities. Others preferred to leave the area as it is, with no further development. Overall, the results suggest strong community support for expanded programming especially community events, cultural activities, and pickleball.

Question: A non-profit recently acquired 4 parcels totaling 5 acres at the northwest corner of M-88 and US 31, next to Barnes Park. Current plans are to add a trailhead as part of the Nakwema Trailway that will connect Traverse City to Charlevoix. What other amenities would you like to see included at this location?

Total Responses: 377



Survey results show the most desired amenities at the new trailhead site near M-88 and US-31 are trash cans (76.4%), followed by benches (64.2%), picnic areas (60.2%), and bicycle repair stations (35.8%). Playground equipment (23.6%) and exercise equipment (17.0%) were less common but still received support, reflecting interest in creating a comfortable, functional gathering space for trail users. Open-ended feedback emphasized restrooms as the top priority, with requests for permanent, portable, or year-round facilities. Parking was also frequently noted as essential for accessibility. Beyond these basics,

many residents supported expanded recreation such as pickleball courts, basketball or volleyball courts, a skatepark, splashpad, and dog park. Others suggested community gathering amenities like shelters, fire pits, and multipurpose rooms, as well as trail-supportive features such as hydration stations, recycling bins, signage, and e-bike charging. Overall, the feedback reflects a balance between strong demand for restrooms, parking, and basic facilities, enthusiasm for new recreation opportunities, and caution from some residents about costs and growth.

Key Takeaways

- » **Survey Respondents:** Over 90% of respondents live in the township, with a 2:1 ratio of year-round to seasonal residents. More than 80% are aged 55 and over, highlighting the influence of older adults in shaping recreation needs.
- » **Environmental priorities:** Nearly all respondents (96.7%) want natural features protected, with top concerns around water quality, wildlife, and pollution.
- » **Recreation patterns:** The community is highly water- and nature-oriented, with swimming, hiking, kayaking, and wildlife viewing as top activities. Winter sports like skiing and snowshoeing also show strong participation.
- » **Facilities:** Water access sites see the most frequent use. Trail connectivity and facility variety are seen as weak spots, while community events are rated lowest.
- » **Future development:** Residents prioritize natural areas, trails, and walkability improvements, with less interest in playgrounds and parking. Many stress preserving the township's quiet, natural character.
- » **Programming:** Community events are most desired, followed by elderly and cultural programming. Pickleball is a recurring request.
- » **New trailhead site:** Trash cans, benches, picnic areas, and restrooms top the list of desired amenities. Parking and pickleball courts are also common requests, though some residents caution against overdevelopment.

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

A community open house was held on September 15, 2025 at the Community Services Building, slightly south of the Township of Torch Lake. Approximately 65 community members attended the event to offer input on various topics regarding parks and recreation in the Township. The results of the open house are summarized below.

Recreational Facilities and Activities

What type of recreation facilities would you like to see more of in Torch Lake Township?

The most popular recreation facilities were non-motorized trails, natural areas, and beach/water access, indicating that the Township should prioritize these types of recreational facilities.

Type of Recreational Facility	Count
Non-motorized trails	24
Natural areas	22
Beach/Water access	11
Picnic shelters	5
Boat ramps	3
Playgrounds	3
Sidewalks	2
Tables/benches	0
Parking	0

What recreational activities do you and members of your household enjoy?

Of the 24 options provided, the seven recreational activities included in the following table were the most popular, receiving at least ten votes each. Other activities that garnered fewer than ten votes are listed in order of popularity: motorboating, sailing, fishing, playgrounds, snowshoeing, concerts/festivals, paddle boarding, tennis, baseball, basketball, disc golf, volleyball, picnicking, soccer, and skateboarding.

Type of Recreational Activity	Count
Walking and Hiking	21
Biking	20
Nature/Wildlife viewing	14
Pickleball	13
Cross-country skiing	13
Swimming/Beach	10
Canoeing/Kayaking	10

Future Opportunities

What would you like Torch Lake Township to look like in 20 years?

One of the large focuses shared by participants to prioritize for the next 20 years was recreational amenities. In particular, community members identified that additional recreational spaces, such as hiking, biking, and walking trails should be developed in the Township. Another general opinion shared at the open house was that there should be additional spaces for younger children in the Township. Developing more outdoor recreational facilities geared towards the younger population in the Township may be beneficial.

Several community members additionally noted that the Township should retain many of its current features in the coming 20 years, especially regarding its natural amenities. As such, it is evident that the Township should continue to support its existing recreational facilities and amenities in the future.

What opportunities are in Torch Lake Village? What would you like to see?

Open house attendees identified five categories of opportunities to be pursued in Torch Lake Village. Two of these categories involve the Township's recreational facilities and amenities and are listed below. The other three categories of opportunities may be viewed in the Township's Master Plan.

- » **Bike Trails:** improving the safety of existing bike trails and developing new bike trail connecting Eastport and Torch Lake.
- » **Recreational Facilities:** developing pickleball and tennis courts.

What opportunities are in Eastport Village? What would you like to see?

Five additional – and generally similar – categories of opportunities for the community of Eastport were identified by community members. Again, two of these categories directly involve parks and recreation facilities in the Township.

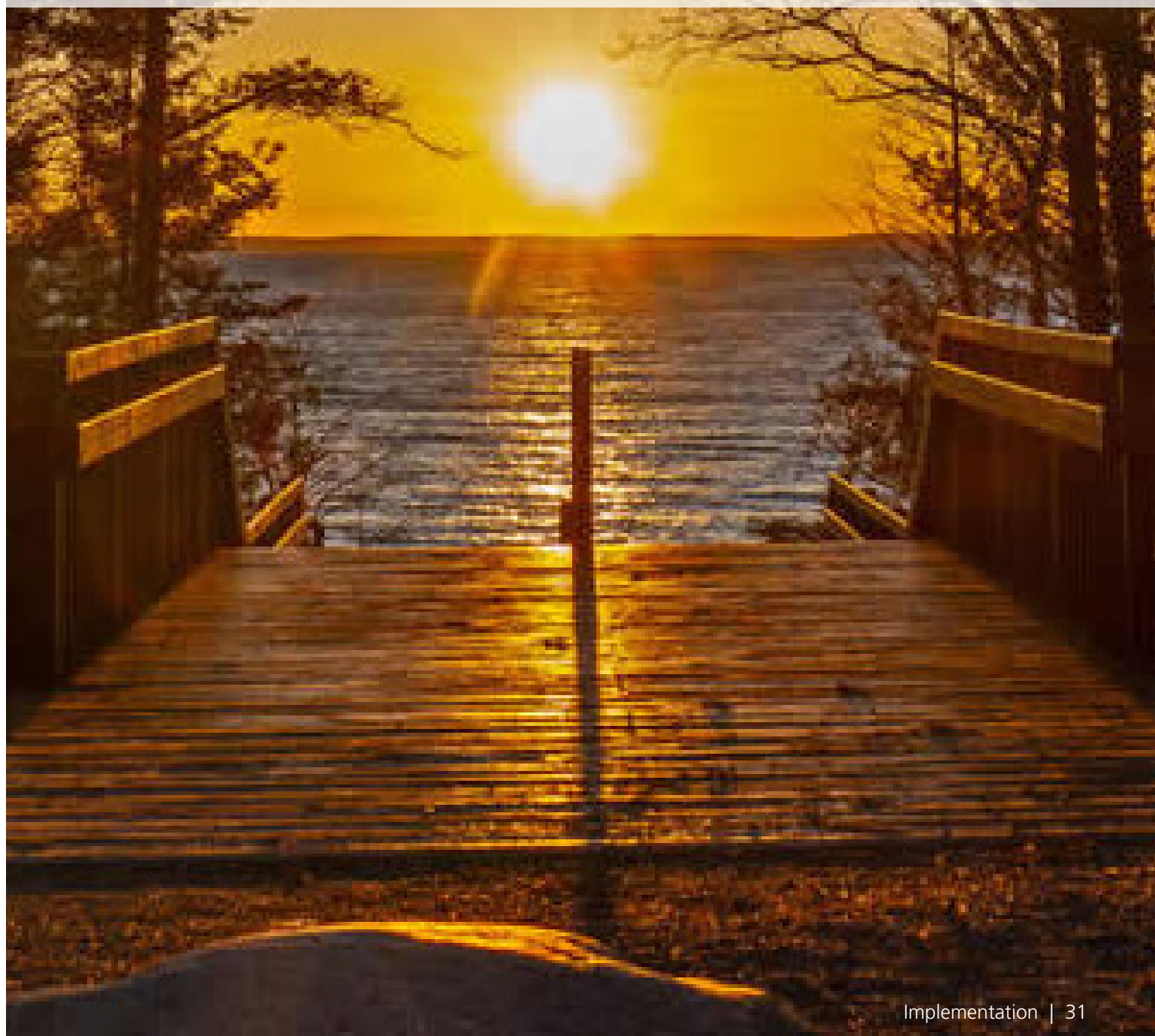
- » **Recreation Facilities:** developing pickleball and tennis courts was largely popular among attendees.
- » **Completing the trailhead:** continuing the development of the Nakwema trailhead was also highly anticipated by community members at the open house.

Key Takeaways

- » The most prevalent interests shared by open house attendees were to expand the Township's non-motorized trails, support the natural areas, and develop additional recreational facilities, such as tennis and pickleball courts.
- » The Township should preserve existing natural features and amenities, as this is a top concern of community members.

5

Implementation



Goals offer broad guidance and outline the desired future state. They address specific needs and issues but remain general in nature.

Objectives are concrete steps that help achieve the broader goals and are designed to be attainable.

Actions detail the specific steps required to meet objectives. A single strategy may support multiple objectives, or an objective may need several strategies to be achieved. These actions also identify the implementation tools, such as zoning changes, and the key stakeholders responsible for fulfilling the goals and objectives.

The goals, objectives, and action plan are designed to shape future decisions regarding recreation, aligning closely with the Township's values and priorities. These goals were formulated through a comprehensive process that included analyzing current facilities, public input, and input from Township officials. To effectively implement these goals, objectives, and actions, it is crucial to grasp their respective roles and their interconnectedness. Understanding these dynamics ensures a coherent approach to achieving our recreational objectives.

GOAL:

Maintain and improve parks and recreational facilities and identify opportunities for new spaces.

OBJECTIVES:

- » Continue to provide, maintain, and enhance parks and recreational facilities and amenities for both residents and visitors.
- » Prioritize the enhancement of the Day Park to continue ensuring that it is a premier recreation space in Torch Lake Township.
- » Keep the 5-year recreation plan up-to-date and ensure it meets DNR approval to maintain a dependable stream of funding.
- » Identify new spaces for recreational opportunities
- » Develop policies and directives to establish construction and maintenance schedules.
- » Develop or upgrade amenities to expand recreational opportunities specifically for the area's youth.
- » Increase the Township's capacity to plan effectively for parks and recreation.

- » Work with the Township Board to look at zoning changes that would set aside open space for recreation in new subdivision developments.
- » Advocate for improved accessibility across all parks and recreational facilities.

GOAL:

Provide indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities, including non-motorized options.

OBJECTIVES:

- » Improve and/or develop trail systems through open space areas in which interest has already been established such as the Nakwema Trailway.
- » Prepare trails that can be used for hiking in the spring, summer, and fall seasons and then be used for snow-shoeing and cross-country skiing in the winter season.
- » Working with neighboring communities and trailhead owners to provide main non-motorized trails routes for the purpose of transportation and recreation that pass through Torch Lake Township such as the Nakwema Trailway.
- » Provide pedestrian routes between activity centers and focus on the more developed areas of the Township for sidewalk construction and expansion.
- » Explore opportunities to introduce additional recreational activities at existing parks and facilities to better attract and retain both residents and visitors.

- » Provide facilities and programming that encourage those living in this community to want to be outside, engaging in physical, health encouraging, and educational activities that enhance their lives
- » Work with local organizations to support events and programs that educate the community of recreation options in the area, wildlife, and the importance of exercise.
- » Establish a system that keeps Township taxpayers informed of the status of recreational/ educational programs.

Table XX: Action Plan

Action Type	Time Frame	Funding Options
Torch Bay Nature Preserve		
Review amenities provided at the nature preserve	2026	Township
Enhance walkability, trail signage, maintenance, and trash removal	2027-2028	Township, Private
Road Ends		
Identify road ends by creating a map for the public	2026	Township
Provide signage to identify and inform public of property lines to reduce trespass	2027-2028	Township, MDNR, Private
Other Items		
Seek organizations to utilize existing facilities	Ongoing	Township
Examine opportunities to acquire property to provide additional recreation facilities	Ongoing	Township
Look at creating a recreational committee or combining the existing committee to move recreational properties forward	2026	Township
Work with TART and property owners to pursue opportunities to enhance Nakwema Trail and trailheads	Ongoing	MDNR

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Appendix

- A. Resolution of Adoption
- B. Parks Board Meeting Minutes
- C. Township Board Meeting Minutes
- D. Public Hearing Notice
- E. 30-Day Review Notice
- F. Survey Flyer
- G. Open House Flyer
- H. Post Completion Forms
- I. Letters of Transmittal
- J. MDNR Checklist

