

A scenic view of a park with large trees, a grassy area, a lake, and a person walking a dog. The sky is blue with white clouds. In the foreground, there are several large, mature trees with dense green foliage. The ground is covered in green grass. In the middle ground, a person is walking a dog on a leash near a wooden bench. A picnic table is visible on the right. In the background, a calm lake stretches across the frame, with a forested shoreline and a few houses visible on the left. The sky is bright blue with scattered white clouds.

# PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN 2023-2027

VILLAGE OF BERRIEN SPRINGS



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### **Village of Berrien Springs Village Council**

Barry Gravitt, Village President

Jack Davis, President Pro-tem

Zachary Fedoruk, Trustee

Lonna Johnson, Trustee

Sheila Snyder, Trustee

Mark VandeVere, Trustee

Kristin von Maur, Trustee

Sheri Kesterke, Village Clerk

Rachael Kuzda, Village Clerk in Training

Barbara Clem, Village Treasurer

### **Public Properties and Ordinance Committee**

Kristin von Maur, Chair

Sheila Snyder

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CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION





## INTRODUCTION PURPOSE OF PLAN

Developed through a community engagement process, the Village of Berrien Springs' Park and Recreation Plan presents an exciting vision that will help guide the refinement of the recreational amenities within the Village. The Plan will guide local officials in implementing park and recreational enhancements.

The community survey and focus groups provided the foundation for the five-year plan. Members of the Public Properties and Ordinance Committee worked enthusiastically to further refine the information to develop the plan goals and served as the Parks and Recreation Steering Committee. The action plan is reflective of the needs across the park system.

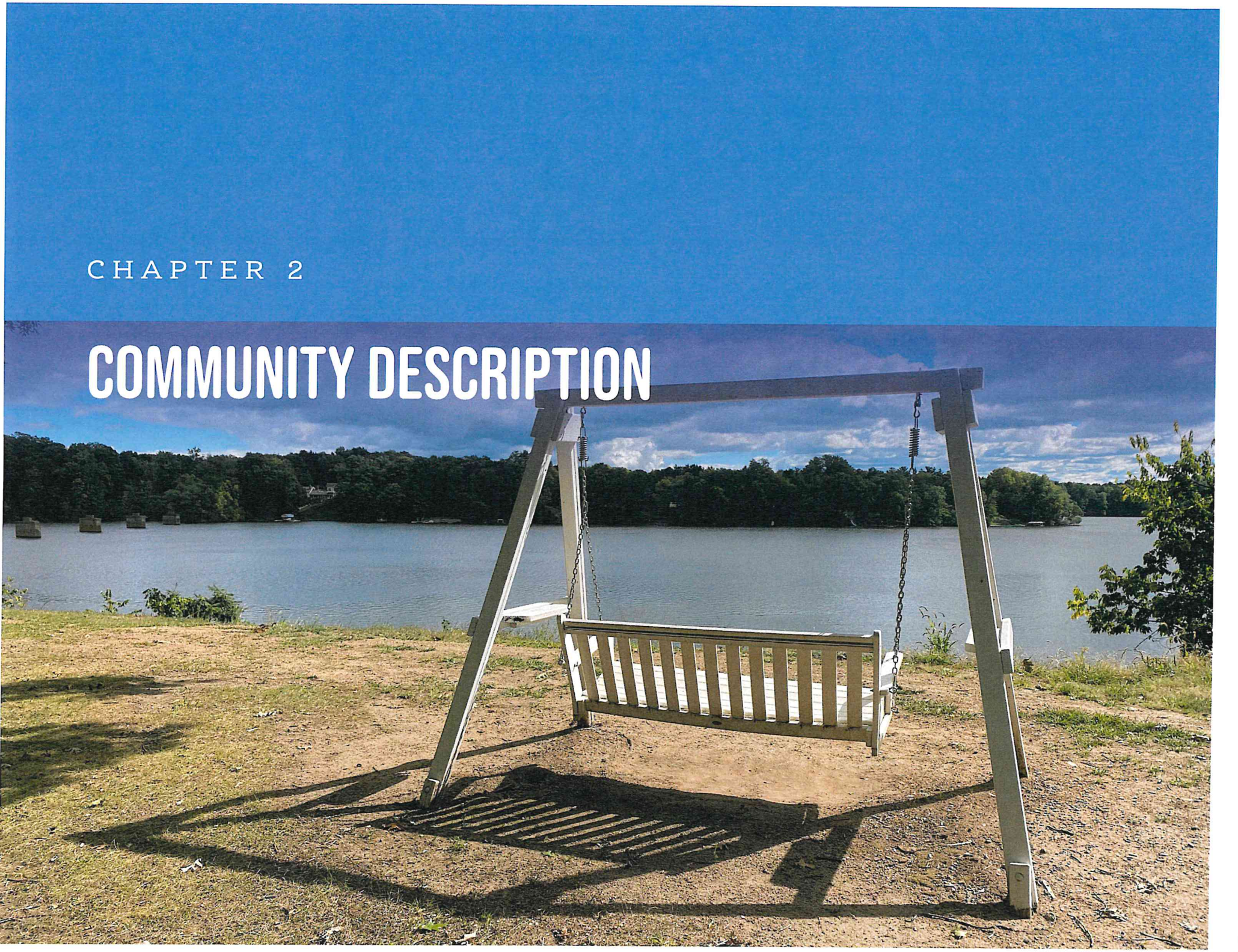
The Village is focused on growing and prospering. Some residents are new-comers, while others are fifth-generation residents. There are several lush, special, natural places that the Village has preserved as park lands that are beloved. Investing in and maintaining the park system will continue to draw people to the community, giving them spaces and places to fish, bike, play, relax, and gather.

The completion of the Village's Parks and Recreation Plan establishes the five-year eligibility for recreation grants administered through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. The Plan is intended to meet the requirements and provisions set forth by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for the development of community park, recreation, open space, and greenway plans.

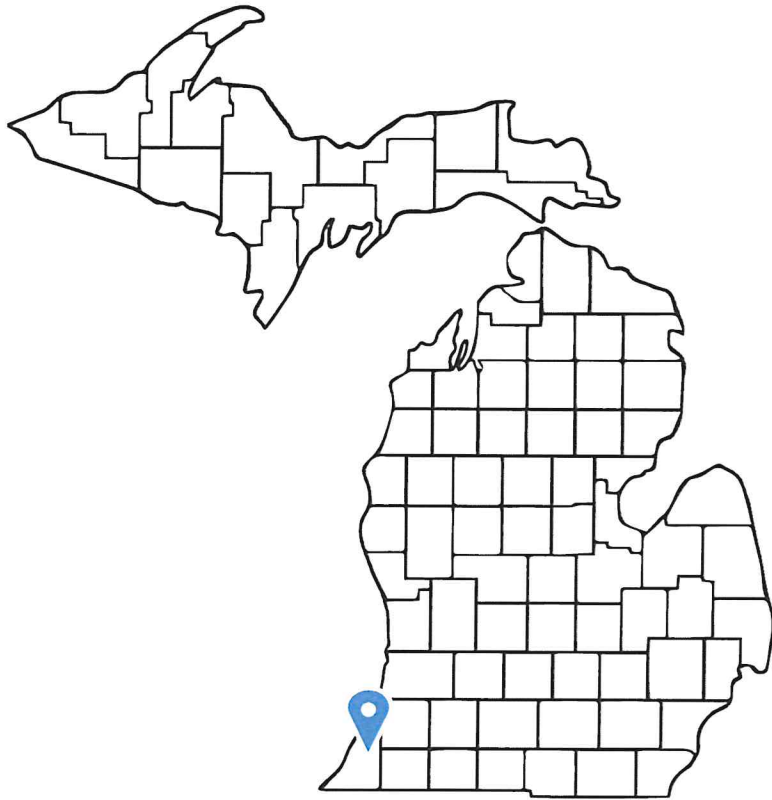
The Plan reflects the needs, desires, and vision of the community members who call the the Village of Berrien Springs home. The Plan will direct the future development of park and recreation facilities, amenities, and services over the next five years and beyond. By coming together, the community has worked hard to determine how best to continue to use its resources to support parks and recreation in Berrien Springs.

CHAPTER 2

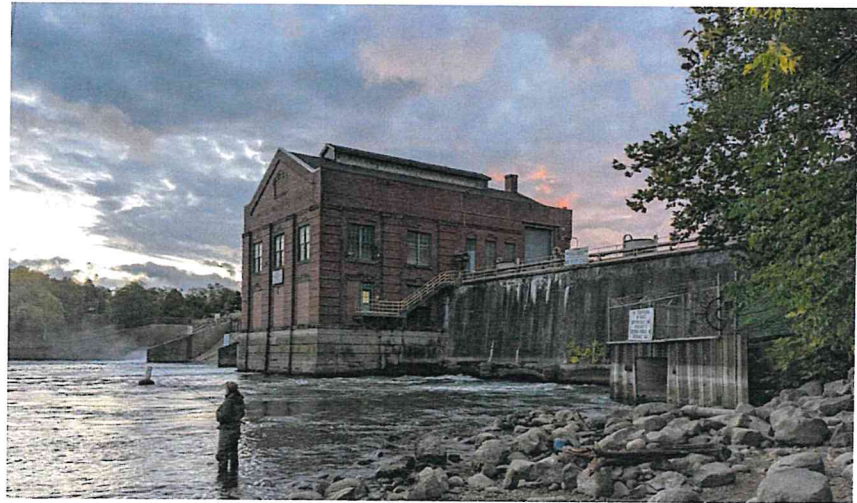
# COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION



## COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION



The Village of Berrien Springs is in central Berrien County, located along the banks of Lake Chapin and the St. Joseph River. The Village is surrounded by Oronoko Township to the west and Berrien Township to the east. M-139 cuts through the heart of the Village, and US 31 is located outside of the Village limits, just to the west. Benton Harbor is 15 miles to the north, and Buchanan and Niles are 10 miles to the south. Interstate 196 is 10 miles to the southeast.



## TOPOGRAPHY

Over 10,000 years ago, glaciers covered Berrien County, shaping much of Michigan. Evidence of this period can be seen in the variations in relief in the Berrien Springs area and the large number of lakes, streams, and wetlands. The Village is located within the St. Joseph River Valley at approximately 650 feet above sea level.

## SOILS

In the Lake Chapin area, soils are the result of glaciers, and therefore vary in texture, permeability, stability, and composition. However, the soils are fairly well-suited for construction and agricultural uses. Soils in the Berrien Springs area are comprised of the Riddles-Crosier Oshtemo Association group. This group of soils has somewhat poor drainage and is located on till plains and moraines. The permeability is moderately slow.

## HYDROLOGY

Lake Chapin and the St. Joseph River run along the eastern border of the Village. Lake Chapin was formed in 1908 when a dam was built for hydroelectric power. Wildlife abounds in the area due to the location, size, and condition of Lake Chapin and the St. Joseph River. Boating, kayaking, fishing, and walking are popular activities that residents enjoy. Residents regularly observe eagles, great blue herons, deer, foxes, and fish like salmon and walleye who call this impressive area home.

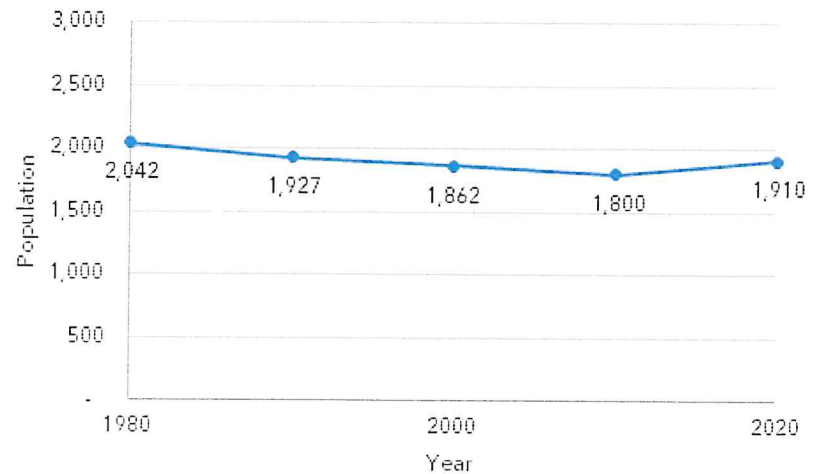
Wetlands are an important part of the community, as they are a home for wildlife and support storm water runoff, acting as a filter for sediments near lakes and rivers. Wetlands also help with flood prevention, which is especially important as rain events are predicted to increase in frequency and duration due to climate change. The preservation of wetlands and marshes is also important in supporting the quality of local groundwater since this is the public water supply for the Village. There are three wells that supply approximately 150,000 gallons per day to the Village's water system.



## COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

The population in the Village has not changed significantly in the last 50 years. The number of residents declined from 1980 – 2010. Between 2010 and 2020 there was an increase of 110 residents which grew the community to 1,910 residents according to the 2020 U.S. Census. This is shown in the table below.

**Figure 2.1 - Village of Berrien Springs Population 1980-2020**



In 2020, the median age of residents in the Village was 35.7 years old, as compared to 39.8 years old in Berrien County and 39.8 years old in Michigan. The two largest population groups in the Village are people under 19 years of age and between 20 to 29 years old.

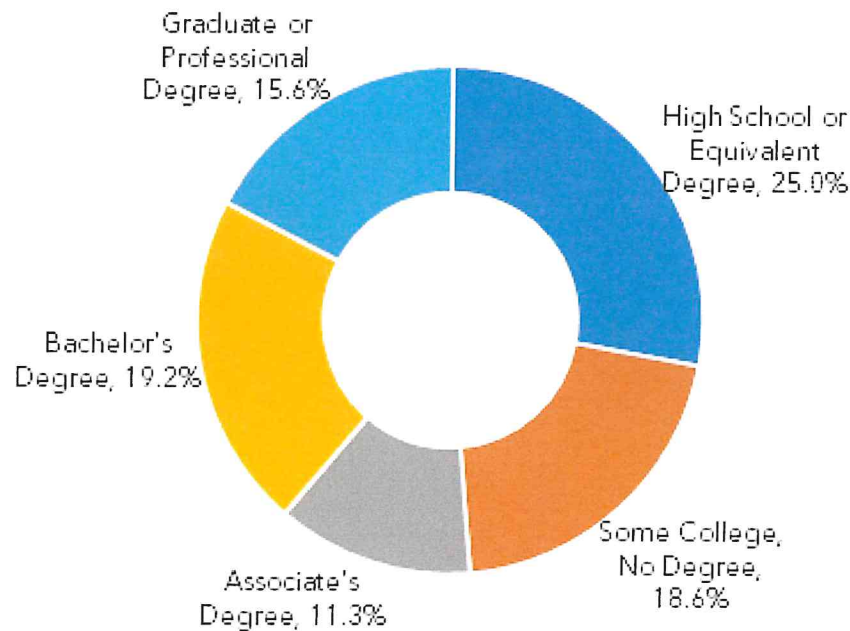
The median household income for Village residents is \$50,139. There are a total 660 households and 855 housing units within the Village boundaries, according to the 2020 U.S. Census. There are 783 occupied housing units in the Village, which is 91.6% of the total housing units available. There were 72 vacant units, which



is only 0.08% of the total housing units and includes units that weren't occupied; units that were for sale; rented units that weren't occupied; and units that were a part of vacation rentals. The average commute to work time is 23 minutes for Village residents. Seventy-seven percent of commuters drove alone, while 3.4% walked, and 6.5% worked remotely.

Many Village residents have some level of education, as shown in the graphic below. Nearly 50% have obtained a degree from an institution of higher education. This likely coincides with the proximity of several institutions of higher education in the area, including Andrews University.

**Figure 2.2 - Educational Attainment**



In 2020, the median home value was \$117,800 in the Village of Berrien Springs, which was less than the median home value of \$199,800 in Berrien County in 2019. The median home value in Michigan in 2020 was \$219,300.

In 2020, 95% of the civilian labor force was employed in the Village of Berrien Springs, while 32% of the total population was not in the labor force. This means that a majority of the workforce was employed, yet there is a portion of the population that is retired.

According to the 2019 Michigan ALICE Report by the United Way, of the 61,809 households in Berrien County, 38% are below the ALICE threshold. ALICE is the acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed households. These households earn more than the Federal Poverty Level, but less than the basic cost of living for the county. This is noteworthy, as the Village of Berrien Springs is within Berrien County.

## PARKS AND RECREATION PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

Since the Village has a significant portion of the population under the age of 30 and the median age of residents is 35.7 years old, local officials should consider investing in recreational facilities and activities for young adults, families, and children. Residents have just over a 20-minute commute time to work, which could imply that people may enjoy parks and other recreational opportunities that are relatively close to their house. The Village should consider making strategic investments in a number of recreational facilities across the park system. Since a number of community residents also face financial hardship according to the United Way's ALICE Report, having amenities that are free or low-cost will also allow more people to access recreational opportunities.

CHAPTER 3

# ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

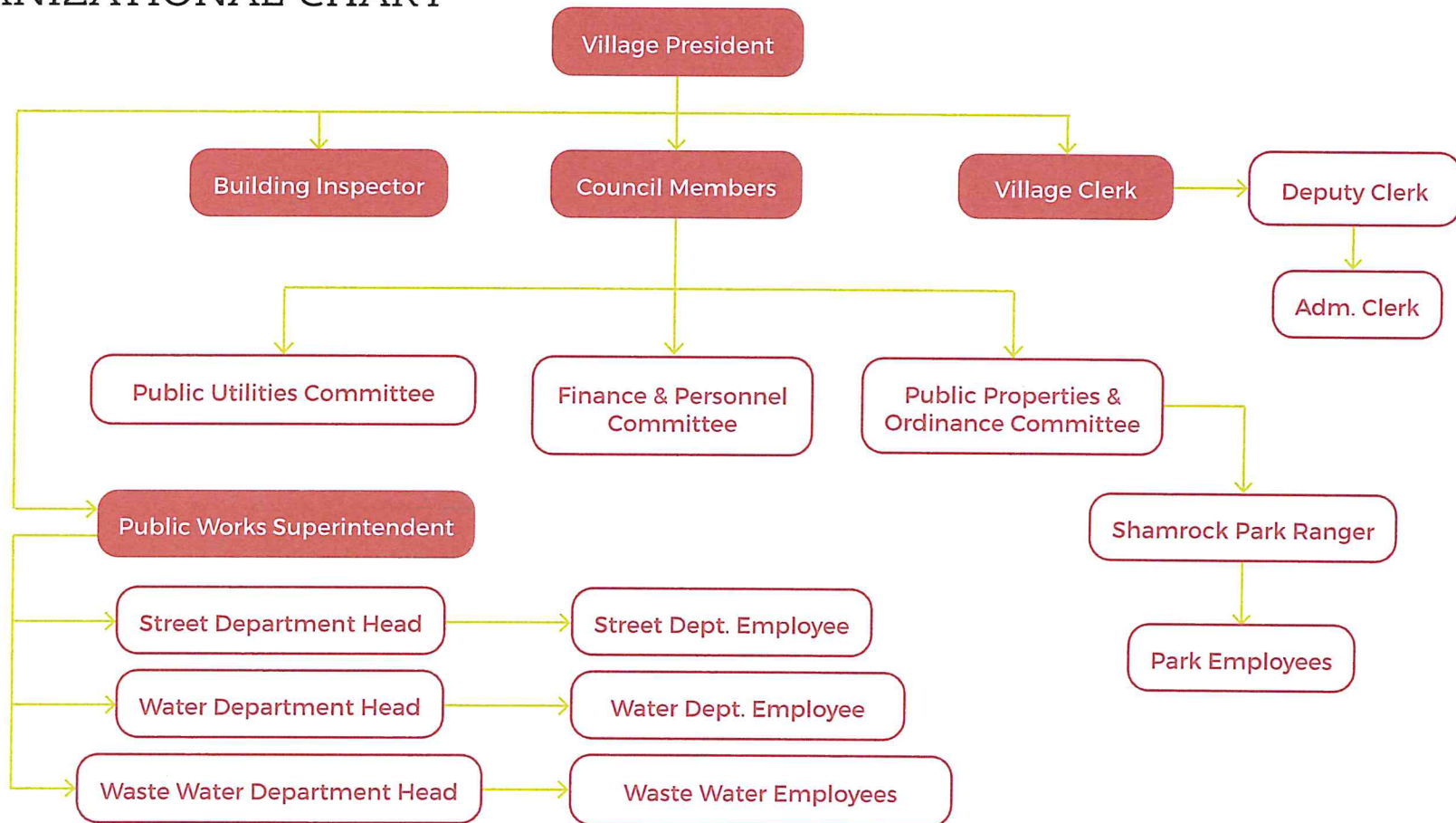


# ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The Village Council is comprised of seven members. There is a Village President and a President Pro-Tem. The Village President is elected every two years. The role of the Village Council regarding the parks and recreation facilities and programs is to review staff responsibilities, as well as review recommendations from the Public Properties and Ordinance Committee.

Dave Kunde, the Village's Public Works Superintendent, is the staff member that oversees parks and recreation facilities and programs maintenance and operations. There is no dedicated staff for parks and recreation matters.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART





**Table 3.1 - Berrien Springs FY 2022-2023 Recreation Budget**

|                           | Item                            | Budget Amount    |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>GENERAL FUND</b>       | Indian Fields Grove Park        | \$29,350         |
|                           | Memorial Park                   | \$3,800          |
|                           | Police Memorial Park            | \$1,750          |
|                           | Wolfs Prairie Playground        | \$10,000         |
|                           | Parks/Recreation                | *\$75,600        |
|                           | Christmas Festival              | \$3,500          |
|                           | Pickle Festival                 | \$2,000          |
|                           | <b>Subtotal</b>                 | <b>\$126,000</b> |
| <b>SHAMROCK PARK FUND</b> | Shamrock Park Fund Revenues     | \$602,100        |
|                           | Shamrock Park Fund Expenditures | (\$595,769)      |
|                           | <b>Subtotal</b>                 | <b>\$6,331</b>   |
|                           | <b>Total</b>                    | <b>\$132,331</b> |

## VILLAGE PARKS AND RECREATION BUDGET

The Village's budget for parks and recreation is funded by the Village General Fund and the Village Shamrock Park Fund. The FY 2022 - 2023 annual budget for parks and recreations operation, programs, and maintenance is \$132,331. More information on the details of the Village's budget is found in the Table 3.1.

The growth of Shamrock Park has been supported by the DNR in the award of previous grants, as will be highlighted in Chapter 4 Park and Recreation Inventory. This is important to note, as there is a dedicated space for the Shamrock Park revenues and expenditures. Without the support of and investment by the DNR, Shamrock Park would not be the highly-regarded, beloved campground for many residents and visitors to the Berrien Springs area.

\*\*\$14,000 of the Parks/Recreation General Fund line-item budget are for "fireworks" and "Berrien Springs Recreation," which are activities that are for the larger Berrien Springs community. Through these funds, the Village is providing recreation funding for programs beyond the Village municipal responsibilities.



## PUBLIC PROPERTIES AND ORDINANCE COMMITTEE

All major work and responsibilities related to parks and recreation for the Village, including planning and budgeting has to run through the Public Properties and Ordinance Committee for approval. The Committee is tasked with overseeing work on any public property. Once a matter is approved by the Committee, the recommendation is brought forward to the Village Council for final approval.

CHAPTER 4

# PARKS & RECREATION INVENTORY





## PARKS & RECREATION INVENTORY






















This chapter provides an overview of the park and recreation facilities and programs available in the Village of Berrien Springs, the required DNR accessibility assessment, and the parks and recreation inventory map. The Village has a variety of amenities that are treasured by residents. Some parks provide access to the St. Joseph River for people to enjoy activities like fishing and kayaking, while other parks that are located in residential neighborhoods allow friends and families to meet for play dates and pick-up basketball games. The stunning vista across Lake Chapin draws people to Indian Fields Grove Park. The information documented in this chapter can help Village officials understand the recreational resources that exist and what improvements could be considered for the future.

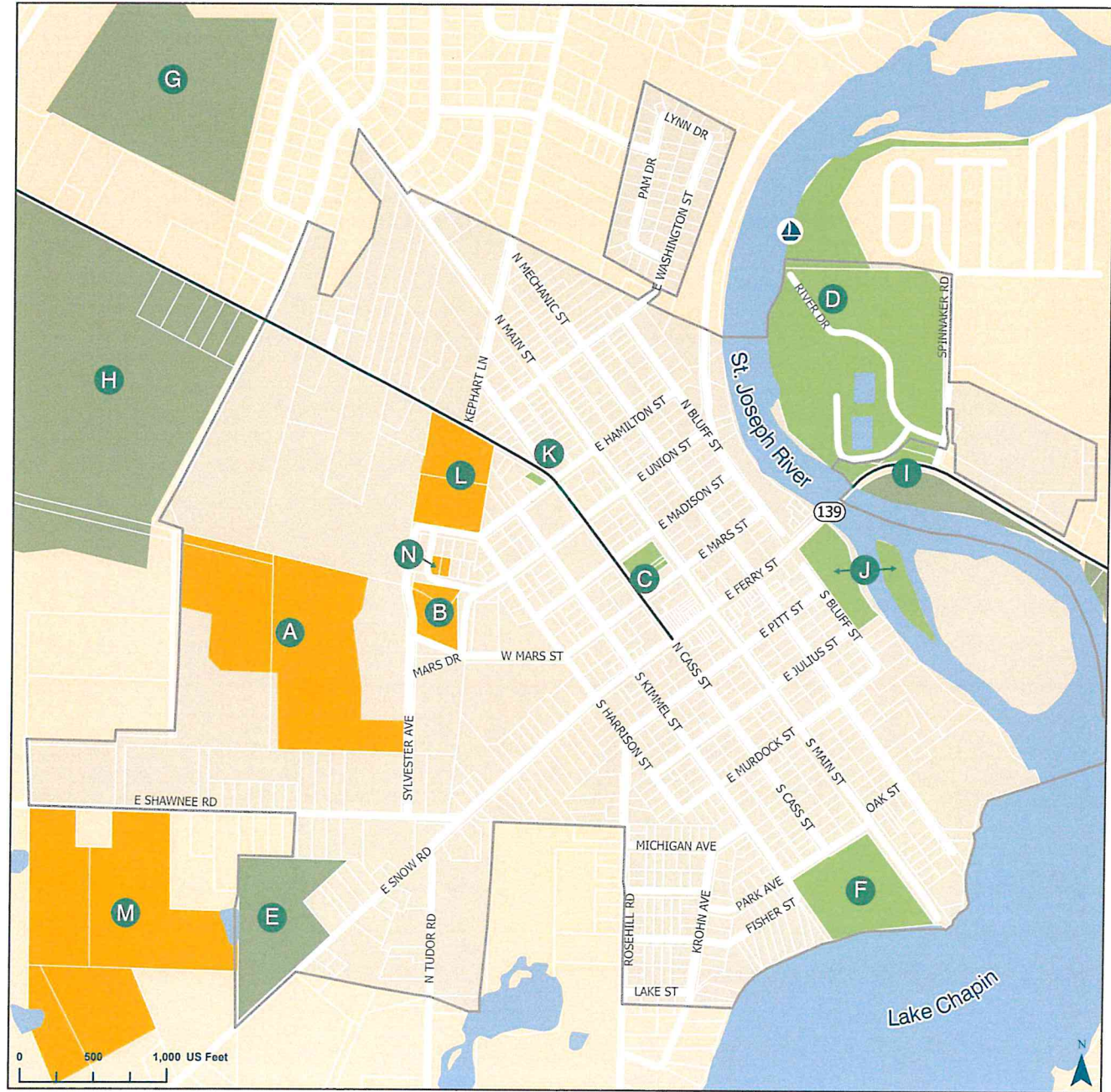
Per the Michigan Department of Natural Resources guidelines, an assessment of the accessibility of each park to people with disabilities is required in this recreation plan. This assessment considers the accessibility of both the facilities themselves (as appropriate) as well as the access routes to them. The accessibility grading system is based on compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) through a five-point system as defined in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 - MDNR Grading System for Accessibility**

| Accessibility Grade | Definition   |
|---------------------|--|
| 1                   | None of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines                  |
| 2                   | Some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines                  |
| 3                   | Most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines                  |
| 4                   | The entire park meets accessibility guidelines                                   |
| 5                   | The entire park was developed/renovated using the principles of universal design |

# Map 1

-  Village Parks
  -  Other Parks
  -  Other Recreational Facilities
  -  Lakes & Rivers
  -  Boating Access Site
  -  Wide Shoulder on Road
  -  Village Boundary
- 
-  A Berrien Springs Middle School & High School Fields
  -  B Berrien Springs Public School Tennis Facility
  -  C Veteran's Memorial Park
  -  D Shamrock Park
  -  E Robert G. Feather Park
  -  F Indian Fields Grove Park & Wolf's Prairie Playground
  -  G Andrews University Athletic Fields
  -  H Berrien County Youth Fairgrounds
  -  I Police Memorial Park
  -  J Rotary Park
  -  K Lion's Park
  -  L Berrien Springs Public School Track & Football Field
  -  M Snow Road Recreational Complex
  -  N Fitness Court





## VILLAGE-OWNED PARKS

### Indian Fields Grove Park and Wolf's Prairie Playground

About 8.85 acres in size, the park is located in the southeastern corner of the Village and offers views of Lake Chapin. Facilities include picnic shelters, picnic tables, benches, a gazebo, paved paths, rest rooms, play structures, and a parking lot. Much of the park is covered by large trees that provide shade and shelter within the park.

One of the main play structures within the park is called Wolf's Prairie Playground. Facilities include swings, slides, climbing structures, balance beams, a sandpit, a multi-tiered walkway, and other amenities. The play structure is 0.25 acres in size and surrounded by a low wooden fence.

In October 2020 a master plan was developed for Indian Fields Grove Park. Elements of the plan included a nonmotorized trail, water access with a boat and kayak launch, a new pavilion performance space, a formalized on-site trail network, and other features.

Accessibility Grade: 2



### Veteran's Memorial Park

Located near the heart of the Village, the 0.75 acre park has a veteran's memorial, benches, a portable toilet, a parking lot, swings, and other children's play equipment.

Accessibility Grade: 2

### Police Memorial Park

Located on the north side of the St. Joseph River on the eastern part of the Village, the 1-acre park is dedicated to the Police. There are picturesque views up and down the St. Joseph River that can be seen from this park. The park includes a memorial, flags, and popular fishing spot for residents. There is no formal boat launch, but people put in canoes and kayaks due to the low banks of the river.

Accessibility Grade: 1



## Shamrock Park

Located along the St. Joseph River in the northeastern part of the Village, the park has grown in size and significance over the years. The park is open year-round and is a destination for outdoor wintertime activities. Originally 16.5 acres in size, Shamrock Park has grown to nearly 35 acres. The park has fee-based campsites for tents and trailers, a sanitary dump station, a fish cleaning station, rental cabins and boat launch into the St. Joseph River, restrooms, a pavilion, fish grinder, a basketball court, an outside ping pong table, and playground. The park has become a beloved camping and recreational spot by many local residents and seasonal visitors.

In 2010, the campground Phase 1 expansion added 10 modern campsites with water, sewer, and electricity connections as well as a campground road, appurtenant water and sewer mains, and wastewater lift station. In 2011, a DNR grant was approved for the Phase II expansion of the park which included 20 modern camp sites with water, sewer, and electrical connections, as well as a new restroom facility. In 2015 a third round of expansions was approved for another 10 camp sites.

Accessibility Grade: 2



### **Rotary Park**

Located in the Village on the west bank of the St. Joseph River and on 1.65 acres on Pardee Island, the total park size is about 4.35 acres. Boats are sometimes used by locals to access the island, though there is no formal docking area or facilities. The park is a popular fishing point. Accessing the St Joseph riverfront is only permissible via an informal, undeveloped path. Due to the steep incline, it is impossible to keep the road safe and open in the winter months and gates were added in 1997 to close the park in the winter. Park amenities include a small parking lot, a few benches, trash cans, and picnic tables.

Accessibility Grade: 1

### **Lion's Park**

Lion's Park is a nearly 0.2-acre park located at the intersection of M-139/St. Joseph Avenue and West Hamilton Street. The park is on a parcel that abuts the major route through the community, and contains a nicely decorated, old fashioned pick-up truck and a bench. The rest of the area consists of a mowed green lawn.

Accessibility Grade: 2

## **OTHER AREA PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES**

### **Pardee Island**

Located in the middle of the St. Joseph River just north of the dam that created Lake Chapin, Pardee Island is within the boundaries of the Village. This hard-to-access, undeveloped island is a refuge for wildlife. The island is only accessible via boat (however there are no developed docking locations), or by wading across the channel when the water level is low.

## **NONMOTORIZED ROUTE**

### **M-139**

The state trunkline highway runs entirely within Berrien County. According to the Southwest Region Nonmotorized Transportation Plan 2020, the part of the route that runs through the Village is a part of Regional Corridor 7. The Plan also identifies the route through the Village as a 4-foot shoulder or bike lane.

## Nonmotorized Studies

The Indiana - Michigan River Valley Trail has an established 17-mile route from Mishawaka, Indiana to Niles, Michigan. There is a proposal to extend the route by developing a trail from Niles to the Village of Berrien Springs. The proposal includes one route option that would use the existing abutments in Lake Chapin from the old interurban rail line as a part of a nonmotorized bridge.

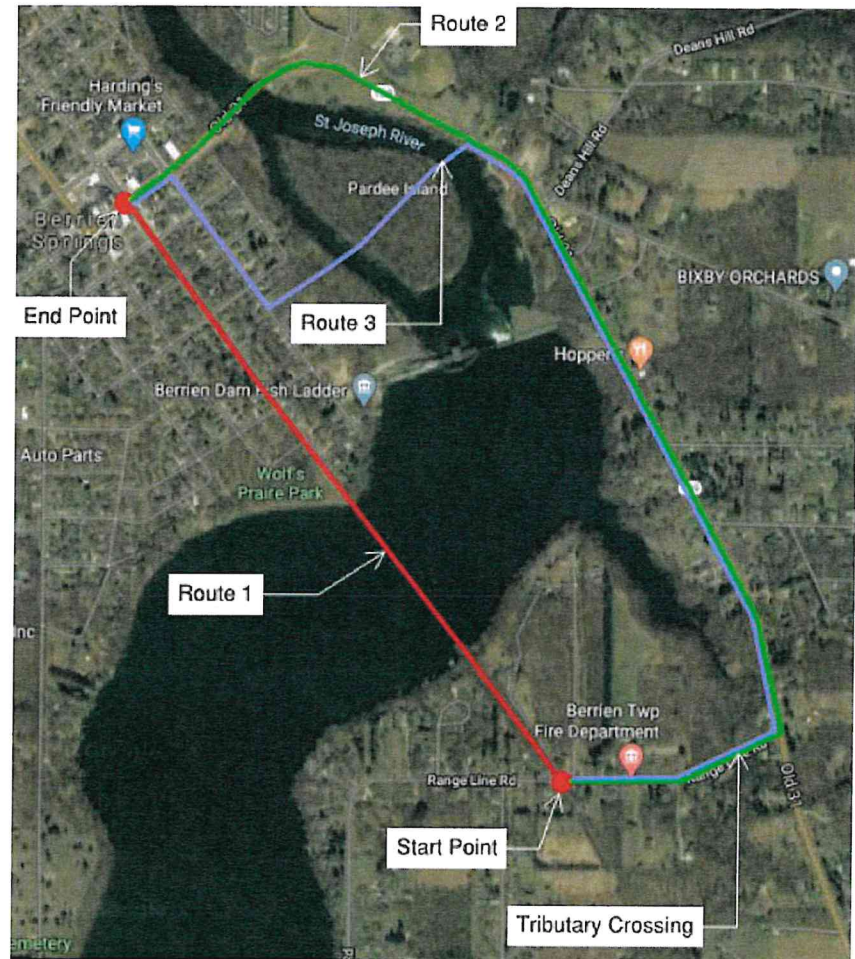
In May 2020, the St. Joseph River Crossing Feasibility Report for the Friends of Berrien County Trails was completed. This study specifically focused on examining the proposed trail segment connecting Berrien Township to the Village of Berrien Springs, and identified three feasible route options to cross the St. Joseph River.

The abutments were inspected on July 28, 2021. The Indiana Michigan River Valley Trail Interurban Inspection Report was composed, documenting the condition of each piece of infrastructure in the lake. More information on this subject can be found in that report.

## PRIVATE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

### Berrien Springs Boat Club (Lake Chapin Access)

A privately owned facility, the boat club is about .5 acre in size and does not allow public access. Paying members are provided access to Lake Chapin. Facilities include a boat launch, picnic tables, outdoor grills, and swings. There is a lease to allow a kayak launch for use by Village residents on the property with American Electric Power.



## PREVIOUS MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES GRANTS

The following is a list of past DNR grants that have been awarded to the Village of Berrien Springs.

**PROJECT NUMBER:** 26-00304

**PROJECT YEAR:** 1972

**PROJECT TITLE:** Berrien Springs Rec. Area

**PROJECT STATUS:** Grant Closed

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$52,370.15

**SCOPE ELEMENTS & DESCRIPTION:** Develop 10 acres of land to include a boat launch, 22-site camping, landscaping, restroom, sewer service, fish cleaning stand, and parking.

**PROJECT NUMBER:** TF96-060

**PROJECT YEAR:** 1996

**PROJECT TITLE:** Shamrock Park Improvement

**PROJECT STATUS:** Grant Closed

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$43,350

**SCOPE ELEMENTS & DESCRIPTION:** Extend and upgrade electrical utilities; extension of waterlines; fish grinder and accessories; fisherman's family picnic shelter (open air); pave remaining roadway and parking area. A shelter will be added and utilities, roads, and parking areas upgrade in park which has 1,350 feet frontage on the St. Joseph River.

**PROJECT NUMBER:** TF10-109

**PROJECT YEAR:** 2010

**PROJECT TITLE:** Shamrock Park Campground Expansion

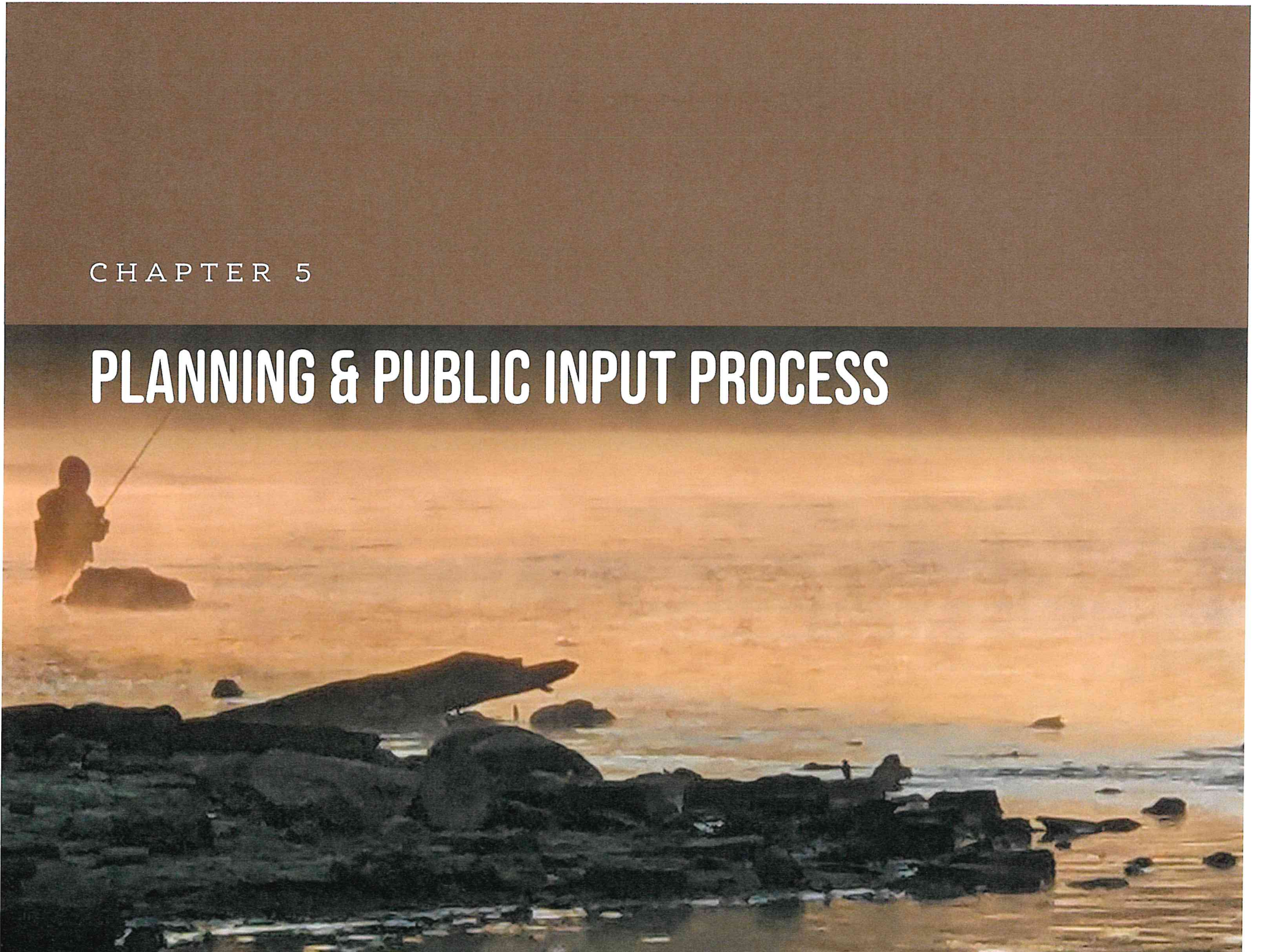
**PROJECT STATUS:** Grant Closed

**GRANT AMOUNT:** \$306,800

**SCOPE ELEMENTS & DESCRIPTION:** Drive and pad paving; Landscape and restoration; MNRTF sign; Play equipment; Restroom/shower building; Site cleaning and grading; Site lighting (salvaged); Tables, grills, fire rings; Water, sewer, electric cable. Development to include expansion of campground with 20 full service, universal access sites, accessible restroom/shower building and landscaping on the St. Joseph River.

CHAPTER 5

# PLANNING & PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS



# PLANNING PROCESS & PUBLIC INPUT

## PLANNING METHODS

The Village of Berrien Springs Parks and Recreation Plan was initiated to provide direction for future Village parks and recreation projects, administration, and ongoing operation and maintenance. The timetable for review and approval began with a kickoff meeting with the Public Properties and Ordinance Committee (the project steering committee) in July 2022, and ended with local support of the Plan in early 2023. Community input was gathered by working with members of the Village’s Public Properties and Ordinance Committee, community dialogue via two unique focus group meetings, and by the residents completing the community survey.

Numerous tools can be used to determine the recreational needs of a community. One way to assess a community’s needs is to compare metrics or data. Another way is to use a systems planning approach to identify local issues, priorities, and levels of service that can be determined via community input to inform the planning process. Both of these methods are employed in the Village of Berrien Springs Parks and Recreation Plan.

## COMPARISON TO PARK METRICS

One method of evaluating need is to compare the Village’s facilities with those of other communities using some standardized measure. This approach was used as a first step to identify any significant recreational deficiencies that may exist in Berrien Springs. The recreation classification system and facility development standards developed by the National Recreation and Park Association has data on different types of parks, their desired site characteristics, size, and service area. The following tables

provide a comparison with recreation development standards and classifications systems to help inform the planning process:

**Table 5.1 - Mini-Park**

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Use                            | Specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population or specific group such as toddlers or senior citizens. |
| Service Area                   | Less than ¼ mile radius   |
| Desirable Size                 | 1 acre or less  |
| Acres per 1,000 Population     | 0.25 to 0.5 acres per 1,000 population  |
| Desirable Site Characteristics | Within neighborhoods and near apartment complexes, townhouse development, or housing for the elderly.                         |
| Mini-Park in Village           | Veteran’s Memorial Park   |

**Table 5.2 - Neighborhood Park / Playground**

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Use                            | Area for intense recreational activities such as field games, court games, crafts, playground apparatus area, skating, picnicking, wading pools, etc.                                |
| Service Area                   | ¼ to ½-mile radius to serve a population up to 5,000 (a neighborhood)  |
| Desirable Size                 | 15+ acres  |
| Acres per 1,000 Population     | 1 to 2 acres per 1,000 population  |
| Desirable Site Characteristics | Suited for intense development. Easily accessible to neighborhood populations geographically centered with safe walking and bike access. May be developed as a school park facility. |
| Neighborhood Park in Village   | Shamrock Park  |

| Table 5.3 - Community Park     |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Use                            | Area of diverse environmental quality. May include areas suited for intense recreational facilities, such as athletic complexes, large swimming pools. May be an area of natural quality for outdoor recreation, such as walking, viewing, sitting, and picnicking. May be any combination of the above, depending upon site suitability and community need. |
| Service Area                   | Several neighborhoods. 1-to-2-mile radius.   |
| Desirable Size                 | 25+ acres  |
| Acres per 1,000 Population     | 5 to 8 acres per 1,000 population  |
| Desirable Site Characteristics | May include natural features such as water bodies and areas suited for intense development. Easily accessible to neighborhood served   |
| Community Parks near Village   | Love Creek County Park   |

| Table 5.4 - Regional Park Preserve   |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Use                                  | Area of natural quality for nature-oriented outdoor recreation such as viewing and studying nature, wildlife habitat, conservation, swimming, picnicking, hiking, fishing, boating, camping, and trail uses. May include active play areas. Generally, 80% of the land is reserved for conservation and natural resource management with less than 20% used for recreation development. |
| Service Area                         | Several communities. 1 hour driving time.   |
| Desirable Size                       | 1,000+ acres; sufficient area to encompass the resource to be preserved and managed.  |
| Acres per 1,000 Population           | Variable  |
| Desirable Site Characteristics       | Diverse or unique natural resources such as lakes, streams, marshes, flora, fauna, and topography.  |
| Regional Park Preserves near Village | Warren Dunes State Park   |

## SYSTEMS PLANNING

When using the systems planning approach for parks and recreation development, results of the public engagement activities can be used to guide the development of project recommendations. A community survey was completed and two focus groups were held to obtain feedback from the public. A community engagement report that summarizes the project tasks is found in the Appendix. The results of the report were used to guide the development of the goals, objectives, and action plan for this plan. A brief summary is provided to identify highlights of the discussion.

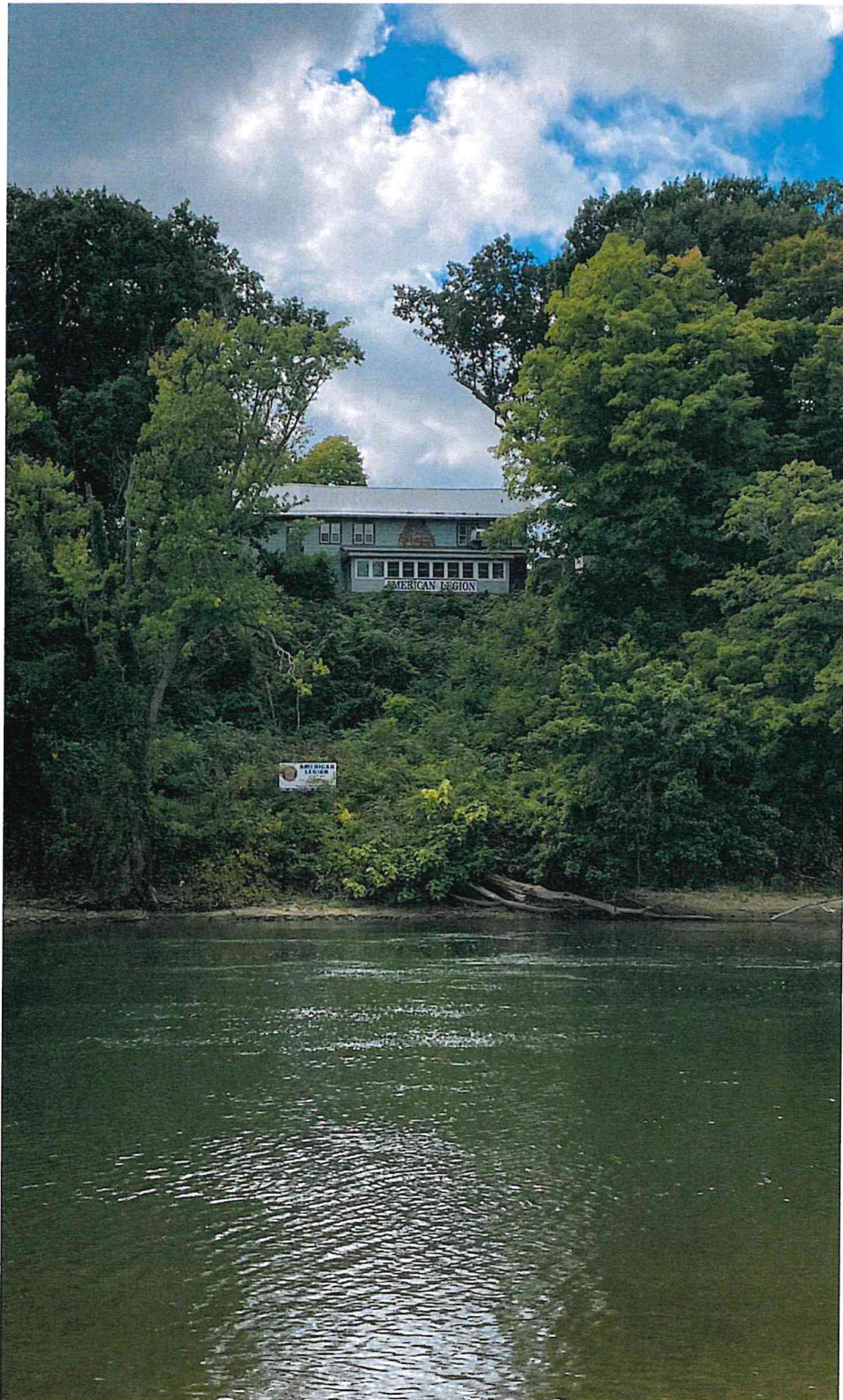




## COMMUNITY SURVEY

Conducting a survey can be used to help determine a community's needs when using the systems planning approach to park and recreation development. The community survey was conducted during the fall of 2022. There were 171 respondents that completed the 15-question survey. The survey was available online, and paper copies were provided at the Village Hall. Highlights of the survey are found in the following:

- Parks, trails, and open spaces are very important to nearly 70% of survey respondents.
- The top three benefits of parks and recreation within the Village for survey respondents are as follows:
  1. Provide opportunities to enjoy nature/outdoors
  2. Improve health and wellness
  3. Protect the natural environmental and wildlife
- The top way that the Village can improve park and recreation facilities would be to maintain the existing parks.
- Over half of the survey respondents use the Village parks and recreation facilities more than once a month.
- According to survey respondents, the group that is most underserved by recreation services and amenities is people with disabilities.
- The top three park and recreation amenities, facilities, and services that survey respondents are most interested in are:
  1. A place to walk/run
  2. Paved trails
  3. Children's play equipment



## FOCUS GROUPS

The planning process also included engaging with two focus groups. The focus groups were held at the Village Hall on Thursday, September 22, 2022. Senior citizens were invited to attend one focus group to share their opinions and ideas on what the Village could do to serve their recreational needs. The second focus group was comprised of local biking and walking champions who engaged in an energetic discussion that highlighted the need for more and safer nonmotorized infrastructure like trails, sidewalks, and bike lanes. Highlights of the focus group discussions are listed here:

- Build on the success of recent, popular events like the Coffee & Car show held on Saturday mornings during the summer of 2022.
- Excitement and energy for nonmotorized infrastructure that could be developed in and near the Village.
  - Desire for nonmotorized bridge on exiting abutments in Lake Chapin
  - Want to develop a route to be a part of the Indiana Michigan River Valley Trail network
  - Connection to Indiana Michigan River Valley Trail
  - Connecting the gaps in the Village sidewalk network.
- Safety concerns for crossing M-139.
- Want a safe space for kids to play outside.
- Lots of ideas for programming of space and events at Indian Fields Grove Park.
  1. More/better lighting
  2. Hosting a jazz festival

### 3. Terrace plan for lakeshore/lake front

- Kayak launch at the end of Main Street into Lake Chapin.
- Desire to (better) use the water that surrounds the Village.
- Install community gardens, including along trails.
- Residents see a lot of potential in the park and recreational opportunities in the Village.

## COMMUNITY SOCIAL MEDIA COMMENTS

Members of the PPO Committee also shared that there has been an increase in the desire to improve safety along the M-139 corridor as documented through comments on local social media pages. Residents have been posting their concerns about community members, including children, who have to cross the street to get to the local schools. The busy street creates a barrier within the Village for people who walk for recreation, exercise, and transportation. The state trunkline highway that's owned by MDOT cuts through the heart of the Village of Berrien Springs. The traffic speeds, volume, and road design prevent people from feeling safe in crossing the road.

The route has the opportunity to be a conduit for the community. There has been an increased desire for places to walk in the Village as a form of recreation and exercise since the beginning of the COVID Pandemic in the Spring of 2020. Residents have increased their desire to make the M-139 corridor in the Village a more pedestrian-friendly, enjoyable route.

## PARKS AND RECREATION ANALYSIS

Considering the results of the standardized park metrics analysis, along with the systems planning approach that included the results of the community engagement tasks provides a great resource in developing a list of needs for the Village of Berrien Springs park system. With the focus being on supporting the maintenance and long-term, sustainable investment in the facilities, this will provide an important way to continue to meet the recreational needs of the community.

## PUBLIC MEETING AND PLAN ADOPTION

Following preparation of the Plan, citizens were provided an adequate opportunity (at least 30 days) to review and comment on the Plan prior to the official recommendation by the Village of Berrien Springs Public Properties and Ordinance Committee and adoption by the Village of Berrien Springs Village Council.

A draft of the Plan was submitted to the Berrien Springs Public Properties and Ordinance Committee and Village staff for their review and comments. A notice was published in the local newspaper, The Journal Era, on November 23, 2022, notifying the public of the availability of the Plan to provide them the opportunity to review and comment. The Plan was available for public review at the Village Hall and the Village's website. Suggestions received to improve the Plan were incorporated into the document, which was then revised and finalized.

The Village of Berrien Springs Village Council adopted the plan on January 3, 2023.

CHAPTER 6

# GOALS & OBJECTIVES





## GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Considering community input and the existing conditions of the Village of Berrien Springs park system, the following goals and objectives are developed to form the foundation of the Plan. The goals are intended to help the community aspire to accomplish big ideas, and are considered attainable through long-term, focused efforts. The objective statements are more specific and may be regarded as milestones to achieving the goal.

The goals and objectives are written to address the parks and recreational needs and deficiencies for the Village of Berrien Springs. The vision that these statements create are based on the results of the community engagement activities during the development of this plan. The community survey results revealed that families typically recreate and enjoy the local parks together, making the parks a destination for many residents. Parks, trails, and open spaces are very important to members of the community. Maintaining the existing parks is top priority according to the survey results. Making targeted investments by improving playscape equipment, maintaining sport court facilities, and keeping up with general park maintenance are ways Village officials could demonstrate that they are listening to the community's desires.

Nearly 70% of survey respondents state that pedestrian connectivity is important. The top two parks and recreation facilities and amenities that community survey respondents are most interested in having are 1) a place to walk or run and 2) paved trails. Conversations with focus groups members also revealed how creating more walking opportunities along paved trails, Village sidewalks, and paths within Indian Fields Grove Park is a desire for many different community members. Residents also shared how these features could be further enhanced by benches, natural landscaping, lighting, and other beautification efforts.

The community input was valuable in creating the goals and objectives in this section, and they are intended to be the official policy of the Village of Berrien Springs on recreation matters. They should be used to guide the Village's priority projects and funding program over the next five years. The community is excited and ready to take a sustained approach to implementing this vision.

**Goal 1:** The Village of Berrien Springs will contain accessible and well-maintained parks.

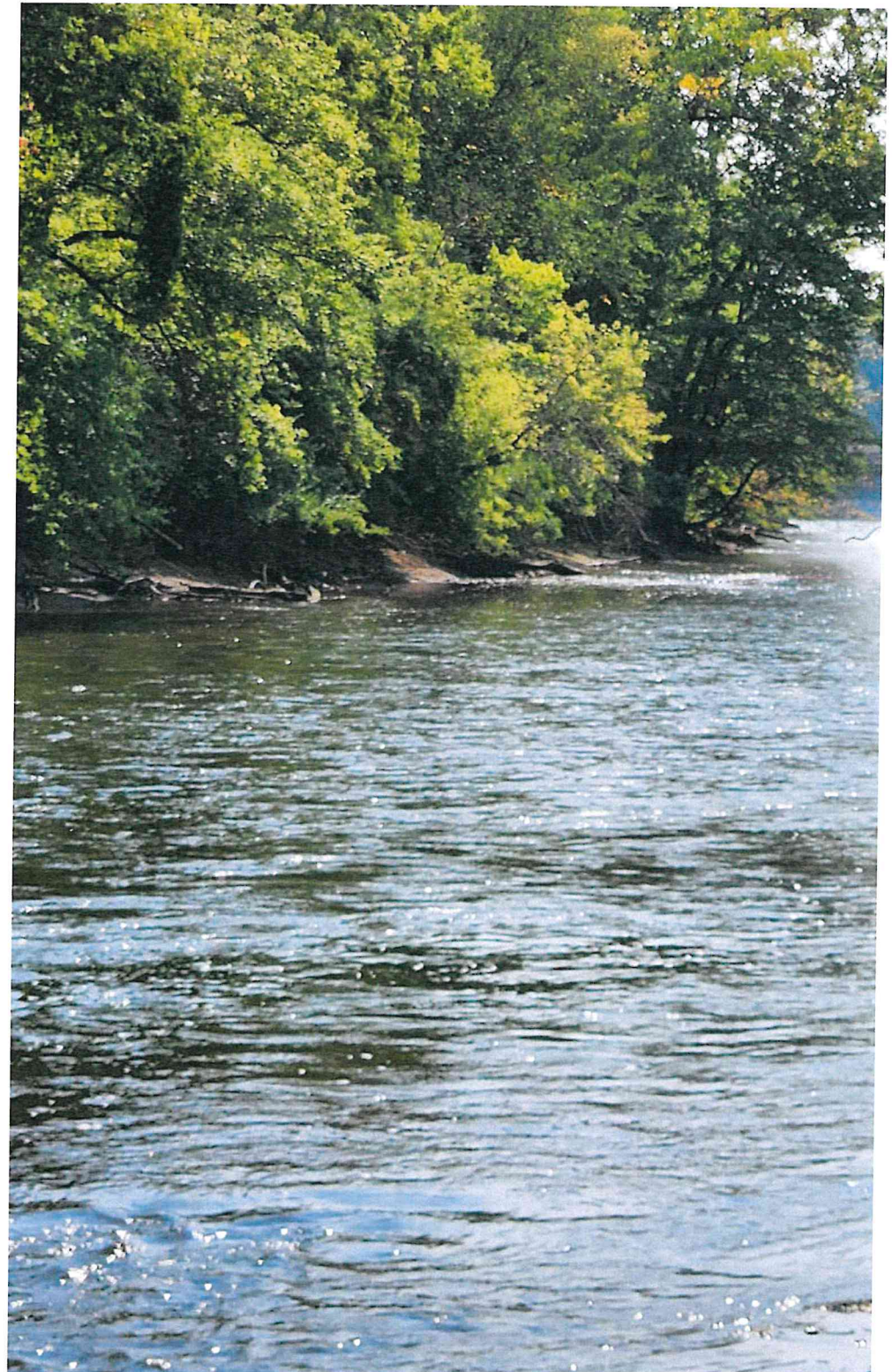
**OBJECTIVES:**

- A. Develop a prioritized list that will be used to identify the cost, resources needed, and priority level to systematically address park and recreation maintenance needs.
- B. Update the recreation plan at least every five years to ensure that the Village is in good-standing to receive DNR park and recreation grants.
- C. Consider developing a volunteer "Friends of the Village of Berrien Springs Parks" group to support the Village's efforts to maintain and support the parks.

**Goal 2:** Provide places where people of all ages and abilities can recreate for health, wellness, and fun.

**OBJECTIVES:**

- A. Consider incorporating accessible features like play structures, paved trails, sidewalk maintenance, and/or accessible kayak launches when updating park and recreation areas.





- B. Plan 3 new events, programs, and/or festivals over the next 5 years.
- C. Update Indian Fields Grove Park to reflect the community's recreational needs and desires.

**Goal 3:** Invest in nonmotorized infrastructure to support recreation opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.

**OBJECTIVES:**

- A. Develop and adopt a Village nonmotorized plan.
- B. Work with MDOT to address safety concerns along M-139.
- C. Continue to support efforts to develop a nonmotorized network within and near the Village.

**Goal 4:** Develop a Village park system identity.

**OBJECTIVES:**

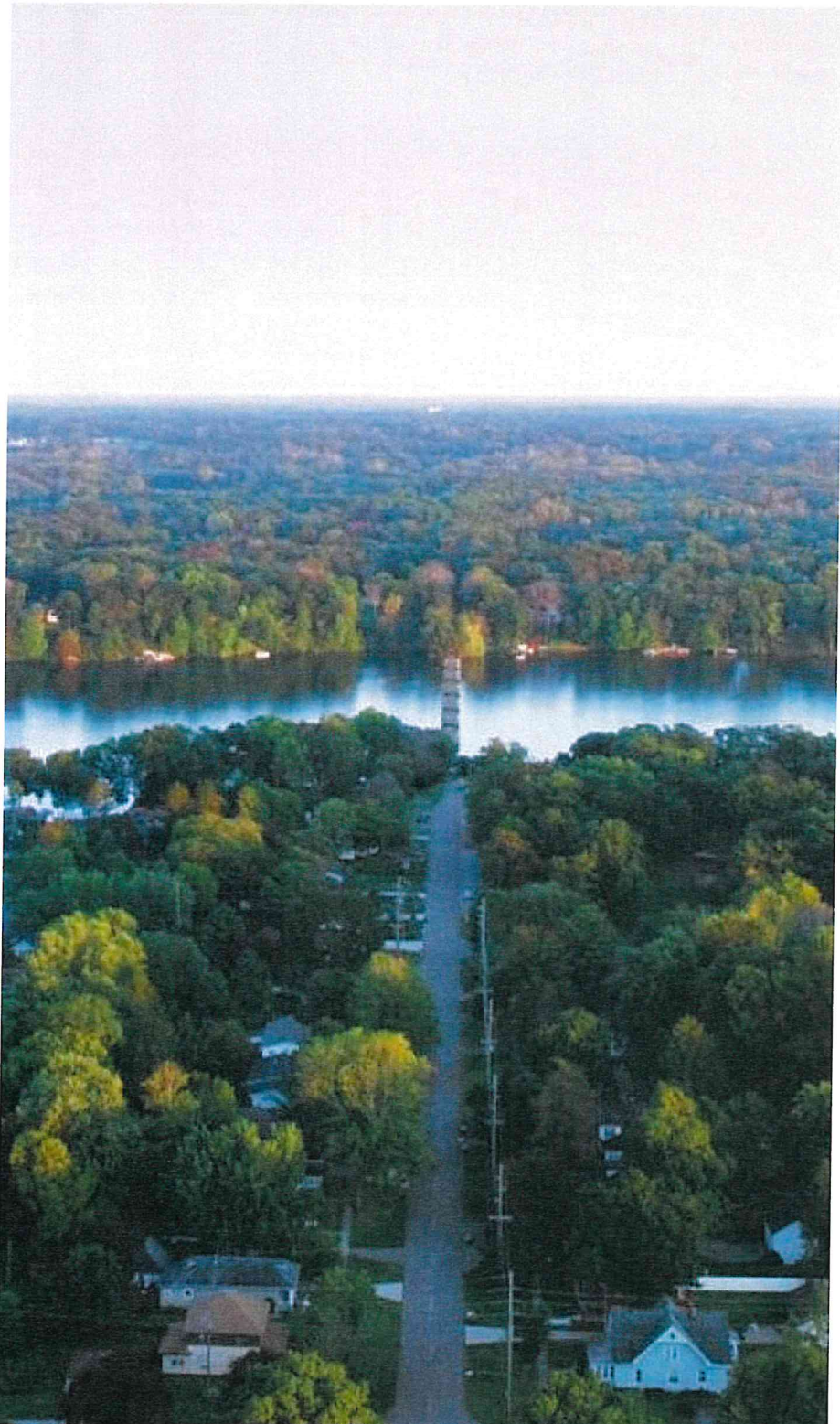
- A. Create a Village website that contains the names and addresses of Village parks.
- B. Develop a Village park system identity that unifies the parks and can be used on promotional materials like Village park signs and the website.
- C. Provide park location data to online providers like Google so that parks can be found for people who are using digital information.

CHAPTER 7

**ACTION PROGRAM**







## ACTION PROGRAM

The following section details the strategic actions and the general direction that the Village of Berrien Springs will take to maintain and improve the park and recreation facilities and programs in the community. A description of each action is provided to indicate a basis for action, identify relevant goals, and provide a plan for such action. In addition, strategic actions should meet with all ADA requirements, where appropriate. Although a five-year time period will not be sufficient to accomplish all of the goals and objectives, the action program is intended to prioritize projects that may be achievable within five years.

The recommendations in this section are intended to be flexible and the following list of projects is not exhaustive. The ideas in the table are things that could be achievable in the right circumstances, providing the right amount and kind of resources. Future circumstances, such as funding and available opportunities, will likely influence the timing and duration of projects. The following recommended actions are based on the input received from the community survey, focus groups, Village of Berrien Springs officials and staff, and an inventory of existing conditions.

## PARKS AND RECREATION – MAINTENANCE & ENHANCEMENT

One of the strongest ways Village officials will be able to demonstrate its commitment to continued investment in the local park system to residents will be to make sure that the existing facilities are in good condition. Maintaining the current recreation amenities within the community shows a sense of local pride. This action can spur other groups, agencies, and potential private donors to support the on-going care and funding that's needed to develop a park system that residents seek. The community spoke in support of this kind of specific, continued effort through the documented results of the community survey and in conversation during the focus groups. In addition, the Village should also consider how to enhance the existing programming to continue to provide amenities that residents desire, while recognizing that over time needs and interests may change.

## SUPPORT NONMOTORIZED NETWORK

There is a lot of energetic support for the development of nonmotorized infrastructure within and near the Village. The public engagement phase of this plan revealed and documented an active community of advocates devoted to making these projects happen. Improved safety measures on streets within the Village boundary, especially along M-139, is an important concern for many residents. Developing a corridor that provides equitable space for all road users, and not just cars, on M-139 would have a big impact on the local community. This could result in a strong sense of place for the residents of Berrien Springs, more places to bike and walk, fewer crashes, and improved access to the local schools. Investing in sidewalks, trails, and bike lanes across the community would

provide accessible recreation amenities for people of all ages and abilities. The desire to have a trail connection across Lake Chapin is another aspirational project that the community seeks. The Village may find that a variety of agencies (MDOT, DNR, SWMPC, and private entities) and funding streams (grants, line-item contributions, private funds) could support local efforts to propel these activities forward.

## FORMALIZE PARK SYSTEM IDENTITY

The focus group members agreed that finding parks within the Village can be difficult. In the development of this plan, there were also several discussions to clarify park boundaries and come to a consensus on formal park names. Some of the parks cannot be found using digital information or online maps. Not all of the Village parks are clearly identified with signage. Residents have different names for the parks, which can cause confusion even among people who live in the community. Developing a consistent brand and providing that information could be a boon to local residents and tourists, and could help with economic development.

Table 7.1 lists the Parks and Recreation Action Program which identifies specific ideas and tasks that can turn the plan's goal statements into an actionable reality.

**Table 7.1 - Parks and Recreation Action Program**

| Improvement   | Relates to Goal | Priority |
|---|-----------------|----------|
| <b>PARK SYSTEM</b>  |                 |          |
| Put a Village of Berrien Springs Park Sign up at all Village parks            | 4               | Medium   |
| Update Village website to list the names and addresses of Village Parks       | 4               | High     |
| Provide Park addresses to online providers                                    | 4               | High     |
| Install a basketball court in a Village Park                                  | 1,2             | Low      |
| <b>INDIAN FIELDS GROVE PARK</b>   |                 |          |
| Maintain playground area  | 1,2             | Medium   |
| Develop formalized internal park trail  | 2,3             | Low      |
| Maintain view over Lake Chapin  | 1,2             | High     |
| <b>POLICE MEMORIAL PARK</b>   |                 |          |
| Provide dog waste bags and refuse container                                   | 2,3             | Low      |
| Formalize entrance  | 1,4             | Low      |
| <b>VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK</b>  |                 |          |
| Do a small study to determine new uses and updated layout                     | 1               | Medium   |
| Provide updated playground equipment  | 1,2             | Low      |
| <b>RECREATION PROGRAMS</b>  |                 |          |
| Support a new seasonal program  | 2               | High     |
| Host a new festival   | 2               | Medium   |
| <b>NONMOTORIZED</b>   |                 |          |
| Meet with MDOT to discuss Village's vision for M-139 corridor                 | 3               | Medium   |
| Complete a nonmotorized plan to prioritized Village investments & development | 2,3             | High     |
| Address gaps & maintenance in sidewalk network                                | 1,2,3           | Medium   |

APPENDIX

# ENGAGEMENT REPORT

# Village of Berrien Springs Parks and Recreation Plan

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## Community Engagement Report October 2022

### Introduction

During September 2022, the Village of Berrien Springs Parks and Recreation Plan Steering Committee, also known as the Public Properties and Ordinance Committee, promoted the community engagement survey to gather public input for the 5-year Parks and Recreation Plan. The survey responses provided a considerable amount of quantifiable data to help develop goals and actions that reflect the community's needs and desires. The results of the survey are provided in this report.

### Community Survey

#### METHODOLOGY AND GENERAL INFORMATION

The survey questions were developed by the Village of Berrien Springs Parks and Recreation Committee with the assistance of the consultant team from Williams & Works. The survey was organized to gather responses from the residents of the Village. There were 15 questions in the online survey tool that was developed using Survey Monkey. Printed copies were also available at the Village Hall. A total of 171 responses were received by the deadline with a completion rate of 88%.

It should be noted that due to sample size, sample population, and other limitations present in online surveys, the results should not be interpreted with a purely scientific mindset; however, results of the survey provide valuable feedback from the community and provides a perspective on the community's opinion regarding parks and recreation facilities and programming. The survey was successful as it resulted in objective quantifiable information from a large number of people compared to typical participation in other forms of public input like community open houses, or visioning meetings. The survey enabled respondents to provide anonymous replies using a "check-the-box" format to expedite the completion of the online form and maximize the rate of response. Some questions allowed the respondents to leave other comments that may not have been covered with the multiple-choice options. Spelling and grammatical mistakes were corrected in the open-ended responses otherwise, all responses were kept as written by the respondent.

#### DATA ENTRY AND MEASUREMENT

The online survey tool Survey Monkey presented respondents with a standardized set of questions and responses. Some questions only permitted one answer while some permitted multiple-choice answers along with space for individual comments. This method restricted acceptable entries to those required by the survey form, providing a standardized method for analysis.

Three scoring scales were used to report the data received: Nominal, Ordinal, and Ratio scales. A nominal scale counts responses by particular classification (e.g., permanent residents or seasonal residents). This scale is useful to separate responses into working groups or to evaluate the overall sample to determine whether it represents the larger population. Most of the questions were designed using the scale.

An ordinal scale is more useful in gaining insight into respondent beliefs because it includes the characteristic of rank order. One item is greater or lesser than another item or it has more

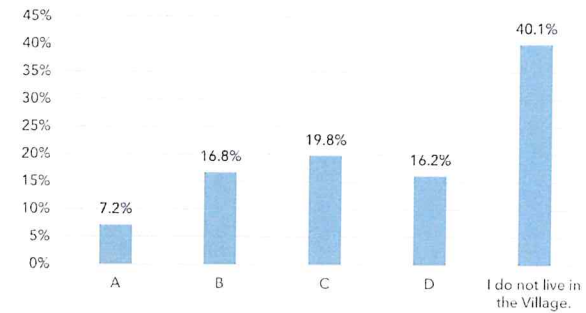
or less of a particular quality, based on a commonly understood standard. An ordinal scale enables some greater judgment about the relative strength or weakness of a particular response (e.g., "somewhat adequately," "very important," etc.). However, it does not include a quantifiable or consistent interval between the various points in the scale.

A ratio scale was used for question 2 as respondents were asked to indicate a range of items that applied to them such as age. Item 15 featured an open-ended, write-in response for participants to list their answers and add any additional thoughts about parks and recreation not covered in the survey.

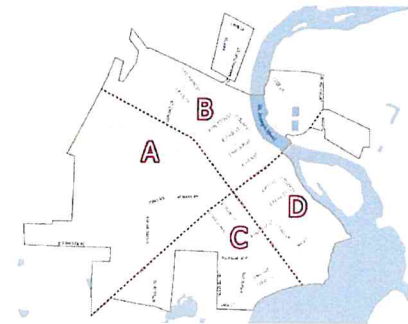
To report the results of the survey, the ordinal scales used were converted to interval scales. A numeric value was assigned to each response with an interval of "1" between each point on the scale. For example, in Question 4 "Very important" responses were assigned a value of 4, "Somewhat important" responses were assigned a value of 3, and so forth. This was done to enable the measurement of the central tendency of all responses, which is accomplished by determining the arithmetic mean or average response for the item. However, it must be recognized that the assignment of value to the intervals of the scale does not automatically result in a true interval scale because each respondent will have his/her interpretation of the interval. Nevertheless, in aggregate, this procedure does enable a comparison of the items from one to the next via a weighted average.

## Survey Results

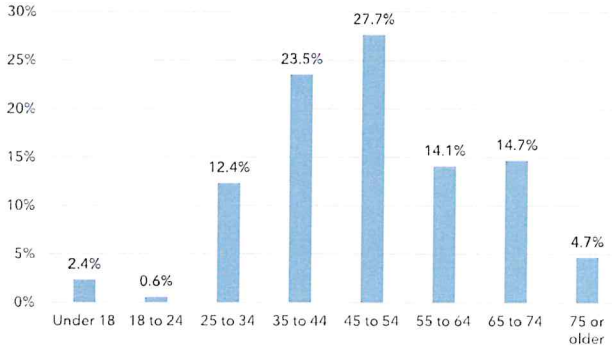
1. Do you live in the Village of Berrien Springs?



| Others (Please specify)  | Number of Responses |
|--|---------------------|
| Oronoko Township   | 30                  |
| Berrien Township   | 19                  |
| Village of Eau Claire  | 3                   |
| Berrien Center   | 2                   |
| Buchanan   | 2                   |
| Kephart Lane   | 2                   |
| Rangeline Road   | 2                   |
| Benton Harbor  | 1                   |
| D  | 1                   |
| John beers road, husband's business is in zone B and attends Berrien schools | 1                   |
| Countryside-Hinchman   | 1                   |
| I stay 8 months here in Shamrock Park than the other in Lebanon, In          | 1                   |
| Answered   | 167                 |
| Skipped  | 4                   |

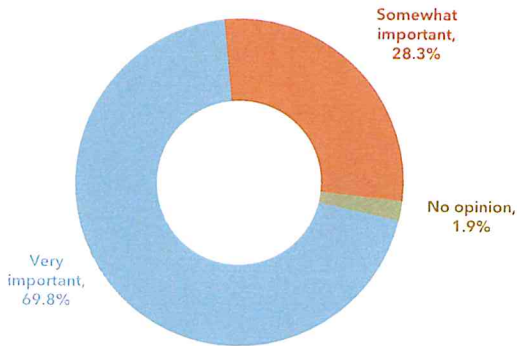


2. What is your age?



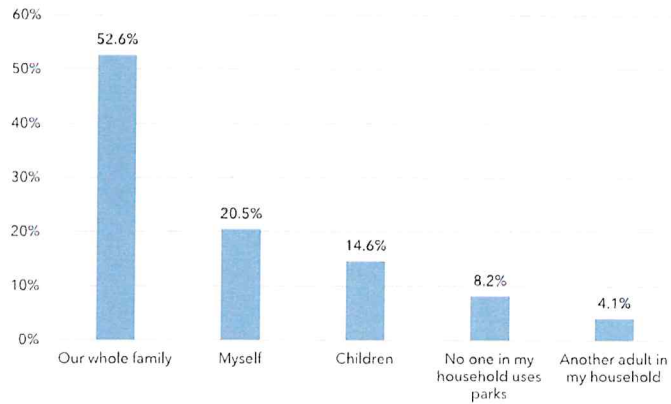
| Answer Choices | Responses | Count |
|----------------|-----------|-------|
| Under 18       | 2.4%      | 4     |
| 18 to 24       | 0.6%      | 1     |
| 25 to 34       | 12.4%     | 21    |
| 35 to 44       | 23.5%     | 40    |
| 45 to 54       | 27.7%     | 47    |
| 55 to 64       | 14.1%     | 24    |
| 65 to 74       | 14.7%     | 25    |
| 75 or older    | 4.7%      | 8     |
|                | Answered  | 170   |
|                | Skipped   | 1     |

4. How important are parks, trails, and open space to you and/or your household's quality of life?



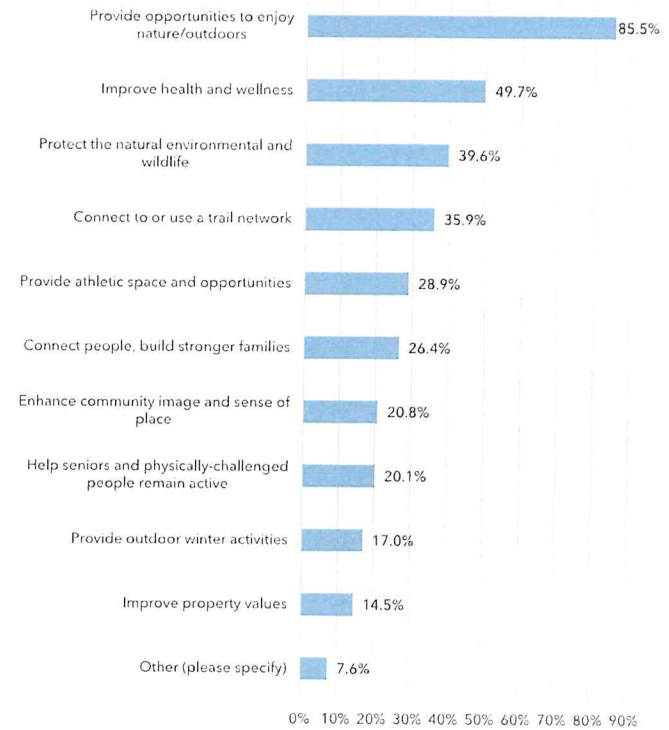
| Answer Choices     | Responses | Count |
|--------------------|-----------|-------|
| Very important     | 69.8%     | 111   |
| Somewhat important | 28.3%     | 45    |
| No opinion         | 1.9%      | 3     |
| Not important      | 0.0%      | 0     |
|                    | Answered  | 159   |
|                    | Skipped   | 12    |

3. Who in your household is the most active user of parks?



| Answer Choices                    | Responses | Count |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| Our whole family                  | 52.6%     | 90    |
| Myself                            | 20.5%     | 35    |
| Children                          | 14.6%     | 25    |
| No one in my household uses parks | 8.2%      | 14    |
| Another adult in my household     | 4.1%      | 7     |
|                                   | Answered  | 171   |
|                                   | Skipped   | 0     |

5. Which of the following benefits of parks and recreation are most important to you? (Please select your top THREE)



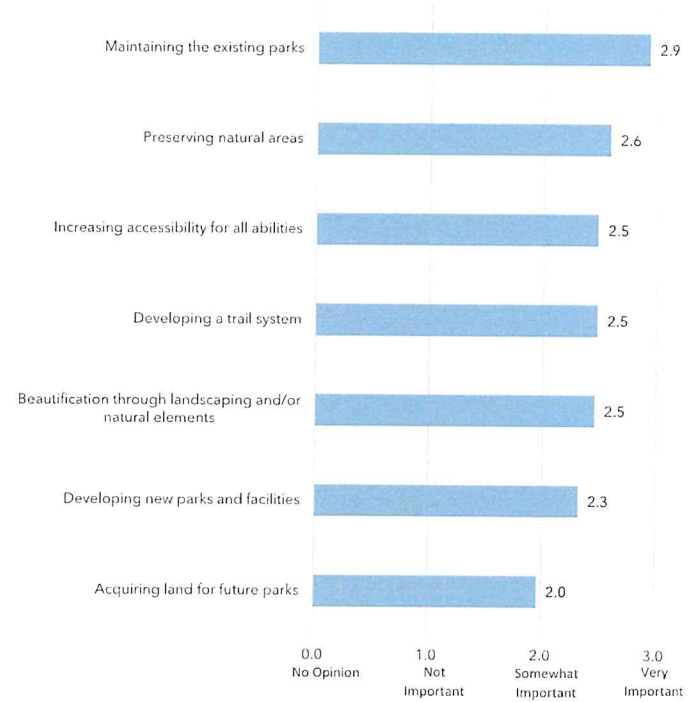


| Answer Choices   | Responses |     |
|--|-----------|-----|
| Provide opportunities to enjoy nature/outdoors                               | 85.5%     | 136 |
| Improve health and wellness  | 49.7%     | 79  |
| Protect the natural environmental and wildlife                               | 39.6%     | 63  |
| Connect to or use a trail network  | 35.9%     | 57  |
| Provide athletic space and opportunities                                     | 28.9%     | 46  |
| Connect people, build stronger families                                      | 26.4%     | 42  |
| Enhance community image and sense of place                                   | 20.8%     | 33  |
| Help seniors and physically-challenged people remain active                  | 20.1%     | 32  |
| Provide outdoor winter activities (snowmobiling, cross country skiing, etc.) | 17.0%     | 27  |
| Improve property values  | 14.5%     | 23  |
| Other (please specify)   | 7.6%      | 12  |
|  | Answered  | 159 |
|  | Skipped   | 12  |

Other (please specify):

1. Let's make this a community others want to be in.
2. Your access down to the river for handicapped people such as by the ladder and dam. I feel there should be handicapped parking at the bottom of the hill for the elderly and handicapped.
3. Fishing
4. It's good to get families outdoors.
5. Connect with the proposed bike trail to Niles.
6. Have a safe and fun place to spend time with kids.
7. Fun safe space for kids to enjoy
8. Fishing
9. Celebrations/gatherings
10. An environment for my dogs to play on & off-leash.
11. Activity outlet for kids
12. Berrien Springs NEEDS a dog park! -or at least get more dog-friendly

6. How important are the following in improving the park and recreation facilities in the Village of Berrien Springs?

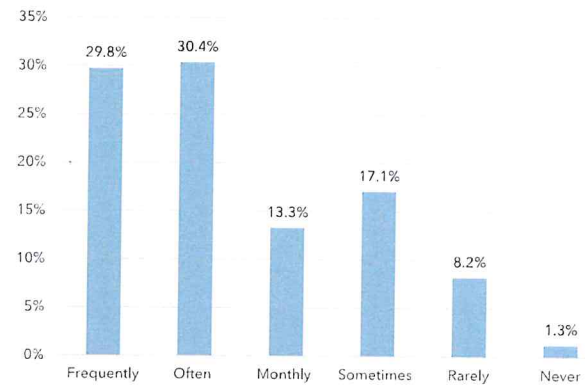


Other (please specify):

1. So excited about the bridge and bike trail to Niles!
2. Keep naturally maintained, don't alter nature.

|  | Very Important | Somewhat Important | Not Important | No Opinion | Total    | Wtd. Avg |      |    |     |     |
|--|----------------|--------------------|---------------|------------|----------|----------|------|----|-----|-----|
| Maintaining the existing parks                             | 91.7%          | 144                | 8.3%          | 13         | 0.0%     | 0        | 0.0% | 0  | 157 | 2.9 |
| Preserving natural areas                                   | 68.0%          | 106                | 25.0%         | 39         | 4.5%     | 7        | 2.6% | 4  | 156 | 2.6 |
| Increasing accessibility for all abilities                 | 58.3%          | 91                 | 34.6%         | 54         | 3.9%     | 6        | 3.2% | 5  | 156 | 2.5 |
| Developing a trail system                                  | 57.7%          | 90                 | 34.6%         | 54         | 5.8%     | 9        | 1.9% | 3  | 156 | 2.5 |
| Beautification through landscaping and/or natural elements | 54.2%          | 84                 | 40.0%         | 62         | 3.2%     | 5        | 2.6% | 4  | 155 | 2.5 |
| Developing new parks and facilities                        | 45.2%          | 71                 | 43.3%         | 68         | 10.2%    | 16       | 1.3% | 2  | 157 | 2.3 |
| Acquiring land for future parks                            | 28.2%          | 44                 | 48.1%         | 75         | 15.4%    | 24       | 8.3% | 13 | 156 | 2.0 |
|  |                |                    |               |            | Answered |          |      |    | 158 |     |
|  |                |                    |               |            | Skipped  |          |      |    | 13  |     |

7. How often do you use the park and recreation facilities in the Village of Berrien Springs?

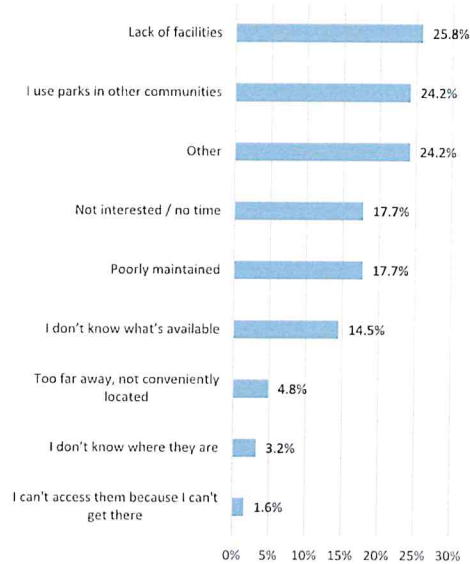


| Answer Choices                    | Responses    |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| Frequently (once a week or more)  | 29.8% 47     |
| Often (2-3 times a month)         | 30.4% 48     |
| Monthly (once a month)            | 13.3% 21     |
| Sometimes (a few times each year) | 17.1% 27     |
| Rarely (less than once a year)    | 8.2% 13      |
| Never                             | 1.3% 2       |
|                                   | Answered 158 |
|                                   | Skipped 13   |

8. If you do not currently use the parks in the Village of Berrien Springs, what is the reason? (Please select all that apply)

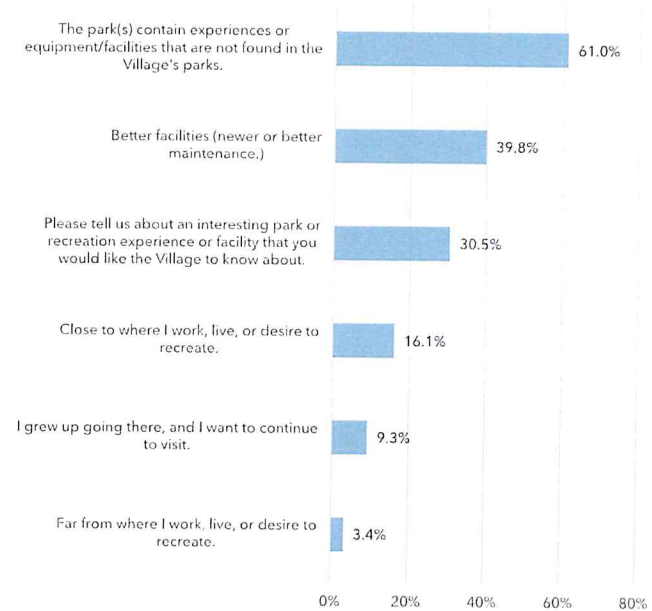
Other (please specify):

1. N/A
2. I do use parks
3. We are always working, so don't have time.
4. lack of personal mobility - but I enjoy their beauty from home!
5. Needs a trail system!
6. We use the parks
7. Lack of time
8. We do use them
9. N/A
10. We need more access to water for fishing. Having a bridge over chapin to walk.
11. No fishing opportunities
12. They really don't offer what I need
13. No fenced in areas for dogs to play or night time availability
14. No pickleball
15. Kids are grown.



| Answer Choices                                | Responses | Count |
|---|-----------|-------|
| Lack of facilities                            | 25.8%     | 16    |
| I use parks in other communities              | 24.2%     | 15    |
| Other   | 24.2%     | 15    |
| Not interested / no time                      | 17.7%     | 11    |
| Poorly maintained                             | 17.7%     | 11    |
| I don't know what's available                 | 14.5%     | 9     |
| Too far away, not conveniently located        | 4.8%      | 3     |
| I don't know where they are                   | 3.2%      | 2     |
| I can't access them because I can't get there | 1.6%      | 1     |
|   | Answered  | 62    |
|   | Skipped   | 109   |

9. If you use parks outside of the Village of Berrien Springs, what draws you to this place or these places? Choose all that apply.



| Answer Choices   | Responses | Count |
|--|-----------|-------|
| The park(s) contain experiences or equipment/facilities that are not found in the Village's parks.                           | 61.0%     | 72    |
| Better facilities (newer or better maintenance.)   | 39.8%     | 47    |
| Please tell us about an interesting park or recreation experience or facility that you would like the Village to know about. | 30.5%     | 36    |
| Close to where I work, live, or desire to recreate.  | 16.1%     | 19    |
| I grew up going there, and I want to continue to visit.  | 9.3%      | 11    |
| Far from where I work, live, or desire to recreate.  | 3.4%      | 4     |
|  | Answered  | 118   |
|  | Skipped   | 53    |

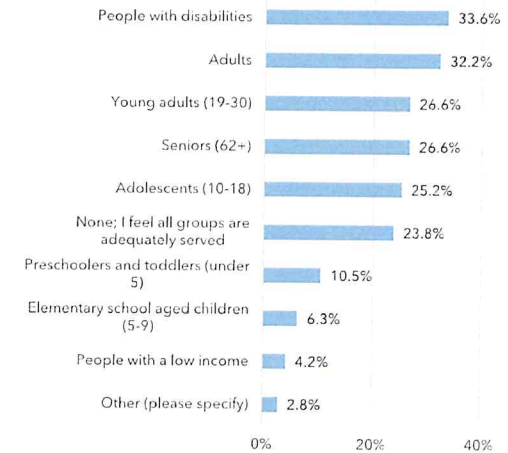
Other (please specify):

1. Bike trails. For the safety of all
2. My family likes to frequently go outside the Village to all the surrounding nature preserves to hike, and walk our dog.
3. Our family goes every week to other locations in order to walk and hike in nature
4. Walking trails - Baroda, Niles, Buchanan/dog parks
5. The trails for walking is great for our family
6. Love creek trail walking or fat tire bikes and xx skiing
7. Splash pad is a big draw
8. Splash pad in Stevensville
9. Splash pad, wading pool
10. Baroda Township Park has a good field for ultimate Frisbee. Same with AU campus. We like the trails in Chikaming Township Park
11. Dog parks
12. Some parks such as those in St. Joe have sculptures or art to look at while on a walk and other such things.
13. Enjoy parking overnight with my fully self-contained RV
14. Galien River Co. Park
15. Niles river park is amazing trail
16. Weko beach
17. Being able to walk on trails, but also have a playground for the younger kids
18. Dog Park
19. The Arthur Dodd Park in Cass County. They have a pedestrian bridge crossing the creek.
20. Nature Trails
21. The nature playground at St. Patrick Park in Indiana
22. I've taken my students to the Splash pad in St. Joe, if we had something similar, I think that would be a great draw.
23. Splash pad in Stevensville
24. Fishing piers
25. Better located and more handicap parking
26. Connect to the countywide trail network that is proposed.
27. Fenced in dog area for large & small dogs to play off leash during the day or at night.
28. River walk
29. Would love pickleball courts
30. We don't.
31. Baroda has nice parks
32. Outdoor discovery center, holland MI
33. Other towns and parks are designed to be much more walkable.
34. Royalton Township Bicentennial Park has nice equipment for kids - not a lot - but good quality. The foot-traffic (walking/jogging) track is also nice for individuals as well as families (great for little kids on scooters/tricycles)
35. Fishing access,
36. Disc Golf Courses

10. Which groups do you feel are underserved by current recreation services and amenities? Please check all that apply.

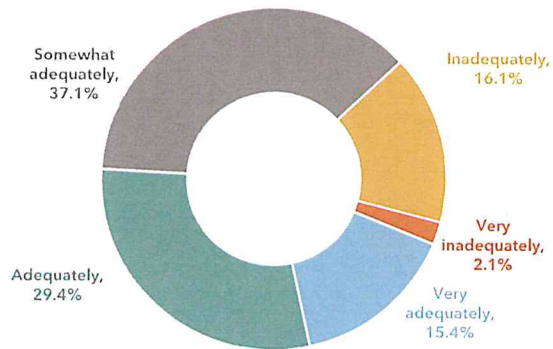
Other (please specify):

1. Active people of all ages
2. It would be nice to have walkways & wheelchair trails, but on the other hand, I wouldn't want their design to harm the surrounding nature
3. Haven't been to Parks and rec in a few years so not sure what is there anymore
4. People who ride bikes.



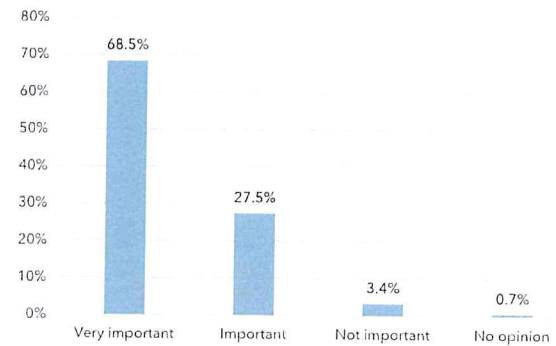
| Answer Choices                                | Responses | Count |
|---|-----------|-------|
| People with disabilities                      | 33.6%     | 48    |
| Adults  | 32.2%     | 46    |
| Young adults (19-30)                          | 26.6%     | 38    |
| Seniors (62+)                                 | 26.6%     | 38    |
| Adolescents (10-18)                           | 25.2%     | 36    |
| None; I feel all groups are adequately served | 23.8%     | 34    |
| Preschoolers and toddlers (under 5)           | 10.5%     | 15    |
| Elementary school aged children (5-9)         | 6.3%      | 9     |
| People with a low income                      | 4.2%      | 6     |
| Other (please specify)                        | 2.8%      | 4     |
|   | Answered  | 143   |
|   | Skipped   | 28    |

11. How adequately do you feel that Village residents are served by area programming (camps, sports leagues, outdoor education)?



| Answer Choices      | Responses | Count |
|---------------------|-----------|-------|
| Very adequately     | 15.4%     | 22    |
| Adequately          | 29.4%     | 42    |
| Somewhat adequately | 37.1%     | 53    |
| Inadequately        | 16.1%     | 23    |
| Very inadequately   | 2.1%      | 3     |
|                     | Answered  | 143   |
|                     | Skipped   | 28    |

12. How important is pedestrian connectivity (sidewalks, trails, pathways, crossing, etc.) to you and/or your household?

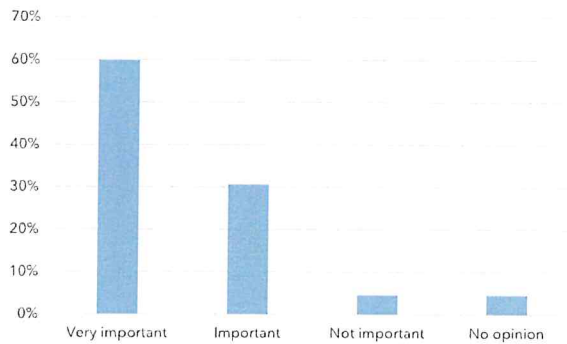


Other (please specify):

1. Our Village streets could use more sidewalks and street trees to make walking safer and more enjoyable.
2. I'd love to see safer street crossings, especially at M-139.
3. The most traveled road by car and pedestrian in the Village has no sidewalk! Rose Hill Rd. Can't walk to parks safely.
4. Really would love a path to walk/run across or around the lake!
5. Sidewalks all over the Village area would be fantastic.
6. We need designated bike paths on our roads.
7. Please connect to trail! And walking bridge over chapin.
8. Trails and walk ways would be great except for the inner urban plan

| Answer Choices | Responses | Count |
|----------------|-----------|-------|
| Very important | 68.5%     | 102   |
| Important      | 27.5%     | 41    |
| Not important  | 3.4%      | 5     |
| No opinion     | 0.7%      | 1     |
|                | Answered  | 149   |
|                | Skipped   | 22    |

13. How important is maintaining a tree canopy and naturally shaded areas in Village Park and recreation spaces to you and/or your household?

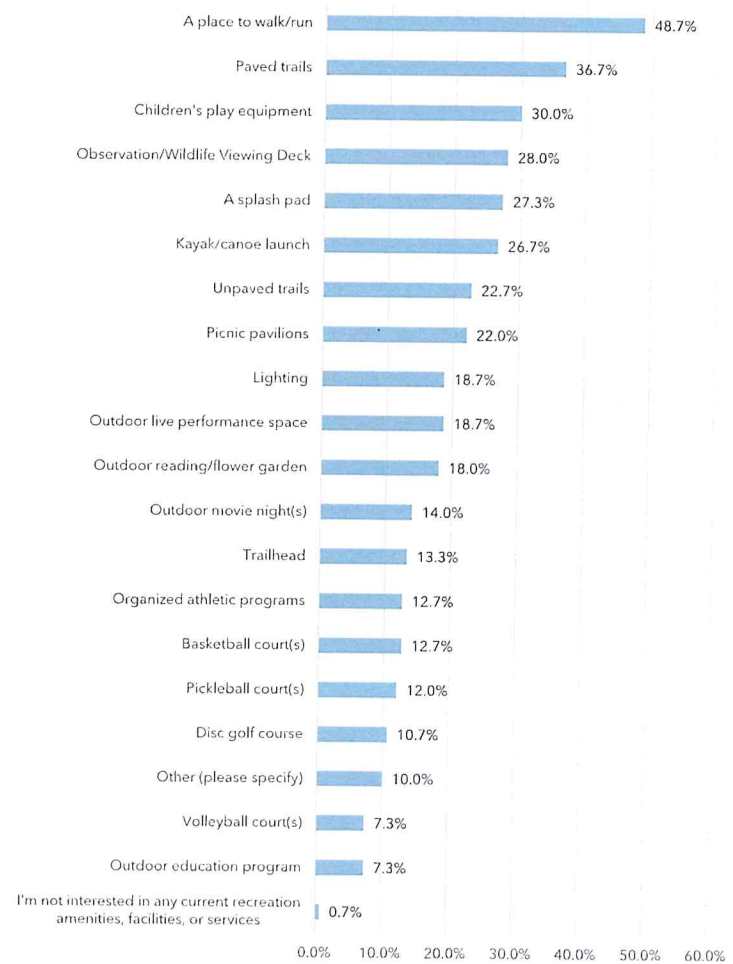


Other (please specify):

1. The Village has lost a lot of mature trees in the last 20 years or so. I'd like to see a lot of new trees planted.
2. We need a better lake view from Wolf Park.

| Answer Choices | Percentage | Responses |
|----------------|------------|-----------|
| Very important | 60.0%      | 90        |
| Important      | 30.7%      | 46        |
| Not important  | 4.7%       | 7         |
| No opinion     | 4.7%       | 7         |
| Answered       |            | 150       |
| Skipped        |            | 21        |

14. What parks and recreation amenities, facilities, and services are you most interested in? (Please select your top THREE)



Other (please specify):

1. Bike trails that connect to other communities
2. Dog park
3. Bike trails
4. Sign for parks, you can even have educational signs for trees, plants, or other natural features like they do on Andrews University.
5. Outdoor venue for music and events
6. Soccer
7. Keep paths clear in the winter for walking
8. Bridge over chapin.
9. Fishing pier
10. Fishing access for the handicapped
11. Dog park
12. Dog park
13. fenced dog park
14. Dock for fishing
15. DOG PARK

| Answer Choices  | Responses |     |
|---|-----------|-----|
| A place to walk/run                                     | 48.7%     | 73  |
| Paved trails  | 36.7%     | 55  |
| Children's play equipment                               | 30.0%     | 45  |
| Observation/Wildlife Viewing Deck                       | 28.0%     | 42  |
| A splash pad  | 27.3%     | 41  |
| Kayak/canoe launch                                      | 26.7%     | 40  |
| Unpaved trails  | 22.7%     | 34  |
| Picnic pavilions  | 22.0%     | 33  |
| Lighting  | 18.7%     | 28  |
| Outdoor live performance space                          | 18.7%     | 28  |
| Outdoor reading/flower garden                           | 18.0%     | 27  |
| Outdoor movie night(s)                                  | 14.0%     | 21  |
| Trailhead   | 13.3%     | 20  |
| Organized athletic programs                             | 12.7%     | 19  |
| Basketball court(s)                                     | 12.7%     | 19  |
| Pickleball court(s)                                     | 12.0%     | 18  |
| Disc golf course  | 10.7%     | 16  |
| Other (please specify)                                  | 10.0%     | 15  |
| Volleyball court(s)                                     | 7.3%      | 11  |
| Outdoor education program                               | 7.3%      | 11  |
| I'm not interested in any current recreation amenities. | 0.7%      | 1   |
|   | Answered  | 150 |
|   | Skipped   | 21  |

15. Please use the space below to provide additional comments regarding parks and recreation in the Village of Berrien Springs.

|          |     |
|----------|-----|
| Answered | 51  |
| Skipped  | 120 |

1. Walking groups or organizing groups for adults would be great. We need to build a community not just spaces.
2. The Berrien Springs area provides a lot of recreational activities for kids. I think our parks need to provide beautiful places to connect with nature. Our streets also need more attention to safety, crossings, traffic speed, and beauty, to encourage pedestrian and bicycle use. A connected trail system would be a huge amenity for the Village as well.
3. A bridge over Lake Chapin to connect to the Niles/Mishawaka trail system would be awesome. I would like to see a lot more trees planted in the Village parks and along roadways.
4. I enjoy your parks, but they need more maintenance.
5. Buildings that have a nice park characteristic instead of one that looks like a maintenance building.
6. I don't have any comments at the moment
7. Ugh, how can I choose just 3 from question 14? So many good ideas there! In addition to the items checked, I'd love to see an outdoor live performance space for music and drama. A summer town band that would perform there would be fun too. Movie nights would be awesome. Things that bring the community together are great. And my husband would appreciate a disc golf course.
8. More should be done with Wolfs Prairie and Lake Chapin. We have a beautiful lake that you can't get down to and it is blocked by messy weeds and trees.
9. the Village & twp. do an outstanding job of maintaining current parks - would like to see more accessible walks, etc., but conflicted about how they could impact the natural aspect (I have mobility issues, too)
10. Needs trails and something to do in Winter.
11. A dog park would be amazing
12. It would be fantastic to have a walking trail through some nature. Even if the paths were doubled for disc golf too like at Bertrand Park.
13. Having places throughout the Village to throw bagged dog poo from a walk. Lit basketball courts because it gets dark so early.
14. A connecting trail network with bridge over Lake Chapin would be amazing!!
15. I know I do not live, live here. But I have to say this Village is beautiful. I don't see kids much though, especially with seeing the school??? Is the anything for kids to do?
16. A walking bridge across Lake Chapin and a kayak launch would not benefit the residents of Berrien Springs. With the large complex behind the public safety building, we now have enough play areas. Focus your attention on ways to attract business.
17. Interconnecting and nature trails would be amazing

18. We wish Berrien Springs would include a nice dog park... It would be utilized and very much appreciated
19. We don't need long, remote trails because they are very dangerous in today's world and we wouldn't encourage
20. The current parks only feature playgrounds for young children. Other than walking around, there isn't much there for adults.
21. Better view of the river at Grove Park while sitting on the swing would be beautiful.
22. Please help connect Niles trails to Berrien Springs using the inter urban railroad
23. Allow soccer for adults
24. Would love to see the trail connected and the town definitely needs public outdoor basketball courts
25. Utmost importance should be given to sidewalks and paved pathways. This includes a safe walkway/crosswalk for students to reach the various schools. Money should be allocated to maintain and upkeep whatever facilities are built to be able to preserve their integrity and intended purposes.
26. Dog Parks are important to communities
27. Benches and walking paths along bluff and river. Acquire private shaker road for walking path. Make Village's natural beauty available to everyone not just to the wealthy.
28. I highly recommend having a nature playground similar to the one in St. Patrick Park. My kids love going there and spend hours playing, building, and exploring with themselves and other kids. It will fit perfectly with Berrien Springs, where we have beautiful nature and is environmentally notable.
29. Fishing at Wolf's Prairie.
30. A pedestrian bridge over lake chapin will be a HUGE draw to the community. Access to fishing from the park will draw families to the community. A boardwalk to walk down to and along the water.
31. Wolf Park can be improved. Canoe rentals and fishing piers. Pedestrian bridge over lake chapin.
32. More advertising of what's available would boost their uses. A lot of people don't know prices for renting or what all the Village has to offer as far as nature and trails go
33. I believe that the Village should highlight its fishing opportunities.
34. Please do not do the inner urban trail.
35. They need more benches in the parks. Even when we take our grandkids to park nowhere to sit.
36. Please work with the township in developing the park behind the police station instead of trying to go alone on a "Village only" park. Make one AMAZING park instead of lots of mediocre parks.
37. It is important to have an area for individuals who do not have children, but pets where they can feel comfortable conversing with other people and letting their dogs play together in a fenced in area, specifically with a lighted area for night time to accommodate all schedules for individuals. Furthermore, organized sports leagues are vital in building relationships within the community. Perhaps basketball courts/tennis/volleyball courts and baseball/softball fields would make for more adult involvement & physical activity for our peers.

38. Definitely need some basketball courts or a skate park... something for the kids to do. BS has never had things for teens and young adults to do. No bowling alleys, pool halls, places just to hang out that are kid/teen friendly. All the parks seem geared to little kids, and just benches for adults. Need more activities in the parks... like all the festivals the Grove used to have (way back in the day) or craft shows like Memorial Park used to have.
39. It is sad that our kids have nowhere to cross on the highway and be safe. We don't even have crossing guards for our children who walk to school. While I love our town doing these things let's focus on those things to.
40. Create better connection to the river by creating a boardwalk with some shops or Kayak rental. The Village has a potential to be a destination if the river can be utilized in the summer.
41. We are excited improvements are being considered!
42. Pickle ball is the fastest growing sport!
43. For a small Village we have beautiful parks.
44. Fenced dog park and something besides sports
45. My family lives a few blocks away from Wolf's Prairie and we use the park fairly often as we do not have a swing set at home. Our biggest complaint would be the lack of upkeep of the wooden structures/play equipment. We feel the park grounds are well groomed usually, and the state of the playground may be due to age and just needing to be replaced, but it can often times look quite unkept and sometimes even dangerous to unaware little ones.
46. Would like adult activities...disc golf, volleyball, paths for biking and walking, kayak launch. Family activities like movies in the park!
47. Trails for walking safely would be great.
48. The grove is a beautiful natural area with a nice play area for children, clean nice bathrooms, and a peaceful restive environment. Please do not over develop.
49. Basketball courts somewhere would be awesome. The school gets mad when kids use theirs because we don't have a court to use.
50. The Grove is beautiful and the wildlife sounds along with children's laughter are the greatest sounds in the world. Don't ruin the park with basketball and/tennis courts. BOING BOING BOING swear swear BOING BOING BOING swear swear. Please do not ruin the Grove Park.
51. Updating the playgrounds, creating paved trails and walkways, and safe pedestrian crossways.



## Key Findings:

- About 60% of the respondents reported living in the Village of Berrien Springs. Non-Village residents were largely from Oronoko and Berrien Townships.
- More than a quarter of the participants reported being in the 45 to 54 age group followed by the 35 to 44 age group.
- A majority of the participants listed parks, trails, and open spaces as very important to their household's quality of life.
- Survey participants listed the following as their top three benefits of parks and recreation:
  1. Provide opportunities to enjoy nature/outdoors
  2. Improve health and wellness
  3. Protect the natural environment and wildlife
- Respondents listed the following as most important for improving parks and recreation facilities:
  1. Maintaining the existing parks
  2. Preserving natural areas
  3. Increasing accessibility for all abilities
- About 30% of the respondents listed being frequent (once a week or more) users of the park, and another 30% listed visiting the parks often (2-3 times a month).
- Of the 171 respondents who took the survey, 62 people indicated that they do not currently use the parks in the Village. The top three reasons for not using the parks in the Village were:
  1. Lack of facilities
  2. I use the parks in other communities
  3. OtherResidents who provided responses when selecting the "other" categories included reasons like the lack of fishing opportunities and a lack of time for them to use the parks.
- Respondents were asked what draws them to parks outside the Village. The top response was "park(s) contain experiences or equipment/facilities that are not found in the Village's parks." Many respondents provided more details on what other places provide, including: splash pads, dog parks, pickleball courts, walking and biking trails, disc golf courses, and access to fishing.
- Nearly 40% of the participants reported that the residents are somewhat adequately served by the current area programming (camps, sports leagues, outdoor education). The following were listed among the underserved groups by current recreation services and amenities in the Village:
  1. People with disabilities
  2. Adults
  3. Young adults (19-30)
- Pedestrian connectivity (sidewalks, trails, pathways, crossing, etc.) was listed as very important to nearly 70% of the survey participants and/or their households.
- Maintaining tree canopies and naturally shaded areas in the Village parks and recreation spaces were also listed as important or very important by 90% of the survey respondents.
- The participants listed the following as the top five most desired recreation amenities, facilities, and services:
  1. A place to walk/run
  2. Paved trails
  3. Children's play equipment
  4. Observation/wildlife viewing deck
  5. Splash pad

## Village of Berrien Springs Focus Group Summary September 2022

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**Summary:** Two focus groups were held on September 22, 2022 for the purpose of having in-depth discussions for the Village of Berrien Springs Parks and Recreation Plan. The meetings were held at subsequent times at the Village Hall. Participants were asked a brief series of questions to spur conversation and dialogue in order to evoke thoughtful information useful for the plan's development. The following is a summary of the two focus group's responses.

### Focus Groups

1. Senior Citizens
2. Trails & Nonmotorized

### Senior Citizens Group Summary

Attendees: Barry Gravitt, Village President; Leona Pitcher, Resident; Deane Richter, Resident; Jim Allred, Resident; Roxanne Gilbert, Resident; Esther Hamel, Resident; Tanya DeOliveira, Williams & Works

- Build on the **success of recent, popular events**
  - Saturday morning Coffee & Car show had over 100 cars at the last show in mid-September 2022
  - Chapel Hill Craft Show
  - Fiddle Fest - used to be a popular festival
- Berrien County Youth **Fairgrounds bring people here**, and **could** build off this being a **destination**.
- **Liked the park on the water in Niles** - "They can do everything" there.
- Suggestions for **future events**:
  - Movie nights in Grove Park
  - Art shows
  - Harvest festival
  - Farmer's market
  - Wine tasting
  - Sidewalk chalk festival for kids
- Desire for trails in parks and across the Lake (on the existing abutments)
- Lots of ideas for programming of space and events at Grove Park
  - **Putting lighting in Grove Park** may allow for more, safer evening walks.
  - Council is considering supporting a **Jazz Festival in Grove Park**.
  - Terrace plan along the park and Lake Chapin
- Put a **kayak launch** at end of Main Street.
- Desire for community garden, including along trails.

- Diverse community, but challenged to over come how **some residents go to church on Saturdays, and others go on Sundays**. This was discussed as a barrier to developing more family- and kid-friendly events for the weekends.
- "We've never used the water that surrounds the Village."
- One word/statement to describe Village of Berrien Springs:
  - **"Potential. There's a lot of good potential"**
  - [Desire to] "bring people together to the parks."
  - "Activities are lacking."

### Trails & Nonmotorized Focus Group Summary

Attendees: Kelly Ewalt, Village Event Coordinator; Brian Wilcox, Resident; Kathy Kesterke, Resident; Deb Conley, Resident; Kristin von Maur, Village Trustee & PPO Committee Chair; Marianne Kordas, Resident; Tanya DeOliveira, Williams & Works

- A lot of **excitement** around the **possibility of trails and bike lanes** being developed in and around the Village.
- **Abutments in Lake Chapin** have been studied for the potential future use of building a nonmotorized bridge.
  - They are usable, but will cost millions of dollars to develop.
- Participants feel that walking and biking across the Village is **unsafe because of the speed** of vehicular traffic.
- Crossing M-139 feels dangerous.
- Trails can **bring people together**.
- The **walking track around the football field** is used by many in the community.
- **Kids need safe spaces to be outside**.
- Sidewalk network is **disconnected**.
- **Existing trails** in the area are good and well-used
  - Andrews University
  - Love Creek Nature Center
  - Sarett Nature Center
- **River is underutilized**.
- Desire for **walking trail** at Grove Park or Police Memorial Park.
- Local Garden Club may be interested in future volunteering opportunities in support of Village.
- There is no nonmotorized plan for the Village.
- One word to describe Village of Berrien Springs Parks and Recreation:
  - "Potential"
  - "Necessary"
  - "Untapped"
  - **"Possibilities"**

# PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN 2023-2027

VILLAGE OF BERRIEN SPRINGS