

A N N A R B O R T O W N S H I P
P A R K S , R E C R E A T I O N & O P E N S P A C E M A S T E R P L A N



Draft 12-15-2014

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Adopted by the Ann Arbor Township Board of Trustees on
February x, 2015

Assisted by: Carlisle/Wortman Associates, Inc.

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INTRODUCTION

The Ann Arbor Township Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan articulates a vision for identifying and meeting residents' recreation needs through parks and open spaces both in and outside of the Township's boundaries. The plan will guide the recreation planning and the community's park and open space development efforts over the next five years, through 2019. It is also intended to meet state standards for community recreation planning that are necessary to gain eligibility for grant programs.

The plan brings together some of the planning efforts the Township has undertaken to guide future decision making. It includes the most recent non-motorized planning effort and incorporates other components of the Township's 2014 Master Plan.

What This Plan Contains

The Ann Arbor Township Park, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan follows the format suggested by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in the *Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plans*. It begins with a brief overview of the plan as well as a description of the **Planning Process** which was used to develop the plan. The plan then presents a **Community Description**, providing information on both the social and physical characteristics of the community. The Ann Arbor Township **Administrative Structure** is next described, including information on budgets. A detailed **Inventory of Parks, Recreation, Open Spaces, and Greenways** follows this section and describes the existing parks and recreational facilities located in and around Ann Arbor Township. The **Public Participation** section presents the input received from Township officials, staff, and the residents of Ann Arbor Township, which helped in formulating the plan's **Goals and Objectives**. The **Action Program** then provides an action plan and strategies for implementation. Finally, the **Supporting Documents** include the resolutions and notices documenting the plan's adoption by the Ann Arbor Township Board of Trustees.

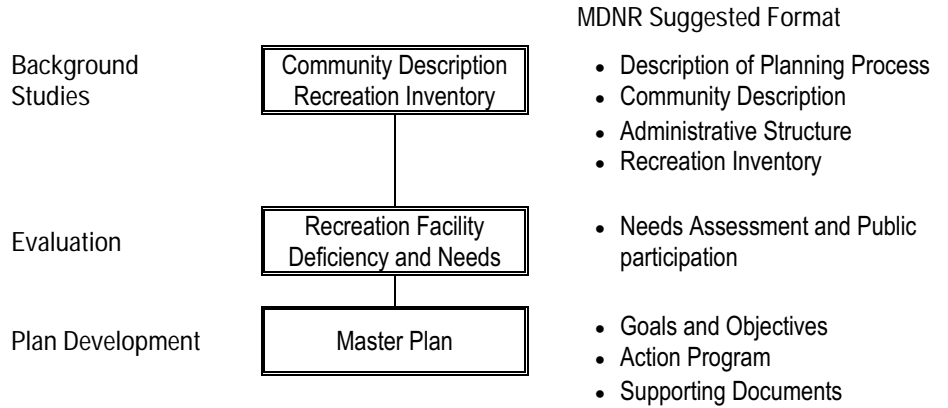
Planning Process

The process used to generate the plan consists of three phases: background studies, evaluation, and plan development.

1. **Background Studies.** This phase involved a review of demographics and the planning context to provide a foundation for the plan's development. In this phase, parks and recreation facilities located within and around Ann Arbor Township were inventoried and mapped to document existing resources. The information is organized into three main categories: community description; administrative structure; and parks, recreation and pathway inventory.
2. **Evaluation.** The second phase in the planning process consisted of an analysis of the Township's parks, pathways/trails and recreation system to determine recreation deficiencies and needs. Public input to assess needs was sought at this level. Surveys were conducted to receive residents' opinions and ideas for a park, recreation, and open space system. Input from township officials, staff, and committee representatives was also used.

3. **Plan Development.** Once needs were identified, the final phase involved developing plan elements to support the community's vision for parks and recreation and provide for recreation planning and development. This phase also included preparation of a full draft of the Plan, which was presented to Township staff and officials as well as the public for review and comment prior to adoption. Strategies to implement the plan are also discussed.

The following diagram illustrates the planning process and how it corresponds to the MDNR suggested format described earlier.



COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

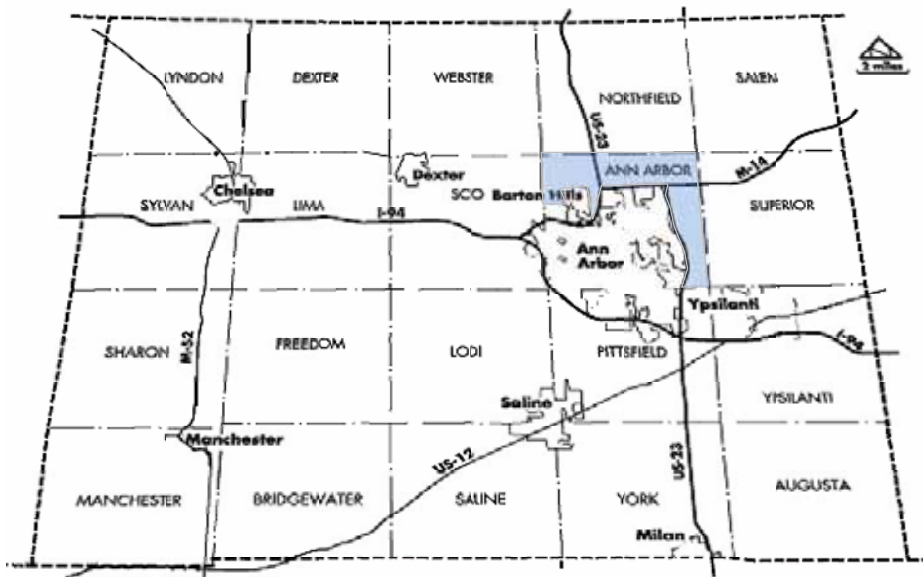
In planning for the future of a community, it is essential to understand both the people to be served and the physical resources that the community has to offer. Identifying the needs and desires of Ann Arbor Township residents will help define an appropriate action program while available resources will help shape where and how the action program is implemented. The purpose of the first section of this Master Plan is to provide an overview of the human and physical resources of Ann Arbor Township with the goal of understanding the unique features and opportunities the community has available.

Township Location and Planning Context

Ann Arbor Township is located in Washtenaw County and is approximately 15 square miles in area. It is bordered by the City of Ann Arbor to the south, Scio Township to the west, Northfield Township to the north, and Superior Township to the east. The Village of Barton Hills is surrounded on three sides by the Township.

Washtenaw County is the sixth largest county in the State of Michigan. It is located in the west part of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) region. SEMCOG is the regional planning agency that conducts planning studies and maintains a comprehensive database of information about the following seven counties: St. Clair, Macomb, Oakland, Livingston, Washtenaw, Wayne, and Monroe. According to SEMCOG, the Ann Arbor area, which includes Ann Arbor Township, is located in one of the fastest growing areas of the region.

Figure 1. Regional Context



Source: Washtenaw County Planning

The Township is an integral part of the Ann Arbor area. While the Township does not have a single developed focal point, such as a central business district, it does have characteristics that establish its unique character. These characteristics are summarized below:

1. Ann Arbor Township is a geographically narrow community, forming a band around the north and east side of the City of Ann Arbor. Annexation of portions of the Township into the City have resulted in Ann Arbor Township's unusual shape. This configuration plays a key role in land use policy. Because Ann Arbor Township is not a conventionally-shaped community allowing for a central "downtown" or commercial center of its own, it exists symbiotically with the City of Ann Arbor. The City serves as the central urban hub of Washtenaw County, and Ann Arbor Township plays an important role as the first "band" of rural area outside the City.

This relationship reinforces the Township's regional role as a predominantly rural community working in tandem with the City of Ann Arbor to form a graduated, logical transition from the most intense center of Washtenaw County, Downtown Ann Arbor, to the most rural outer areas of the County.

2. The north and northwest portions of the Township are clearly defined as rural in character, supporting economically-viable farming operations and agricultural land use patterns. Residential uses abut Pontiac Trail, a major north/south transportation corridor.
3. The northeast portion of the Township, adjacent to Fleming Creek, is generally large lot residential within a framework of preserved open spaces
4. South of M-14 in the eastern part of the Township, is where higher-density residential development and large office developments are located. Cluster residential developments and several multi-family residential developments are located here. In addition, a number of large employers (such as Domino's Farms, the U of M East Medical Campus, and the Ann Arbor Technology Park) offer job opportunities to Township and City residents alike.
5. Further to the east, at the edge of the Township, lies a significant amount of permanent open space consisting of the Radrick Farms/Matthaei Botanical Gardens/ Fleming Creek corridor. This part of the Township also contains Parker Mill County Park, and a portion of Washtenaw County's Border-to-Border trail. A full inventory of parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces are provided later on in the Plan.

Population Trends and Growth

According to the U.S. Census, the 2000 population of the Township was 4,720 people. The population as of the 2010 Census was 4,361 persons, a 7.6 percent decrease since 2000. Like most Michigan communities, the Township's population has decreased slightly. This is most likely due, at least in part, to the economic down turn and reduction in manufacturing activity in the region. Another reason is due to annexation. Under a 1994 boundary agreement with the City of Ann Arbor, those areas of the Township lying within the future boundaries of the City are subject to annexation by the City.

Census data for 2000 and 2010 also show a progressively aging population in Ann Arbor Township. The 18 year-old and under age group decreased by 10.7 percent between 2000 and 2010. In contrast, the over 65 age group increased during this same period by more than four percent. The number of people 65 and older is forecasted to increase by 137 percent over the next 30 years. Given the large size of the "Baby Boomer" generation, it is reasonable to expect this aging trend to continue.

Housing Characteristics

The housing stock in Ann Arbor Township prior to 1987 consisted almost entirely of single-family detached dwellings. With the subsequent construction of the Fleming Creek subdivision, Village Green apartments, the Arbors and Laurel Gardens condominium complexes, the Township's housing stock is now approximately 64 percent single-family and 36 percent multiple-family residential units, including single-family attached units. Sixty-three percent of all units are owner-occupied. The number of multiple-family dwelling units is not expected to increase in the future.

Based on the number of building permits issued, an average of 33 new single-family housing units were constructed each year from 1990 to 1998. Since 1999, new residential development has continued to decline in Ann Arbor Township. The following demonstrates the number of single family building permits issued each year from 1999 until the present.

- 1999 34 permits issued
- 2000 24 permits issued
- 2001 11 permits issued
- 2002 13 permits issued
- 2003 15 permits issued
- 2004 13 permits issued
- 2005 11 permits issued
- 2006 0 permits issued
- 2007 3 permits issued
- 2008 1 permit issued
- 2009 0 permits issued
- 2010 2 permits issued
- 2011 1 permits issued
- 2012 2 permits issued
- 2013 128 permits issued

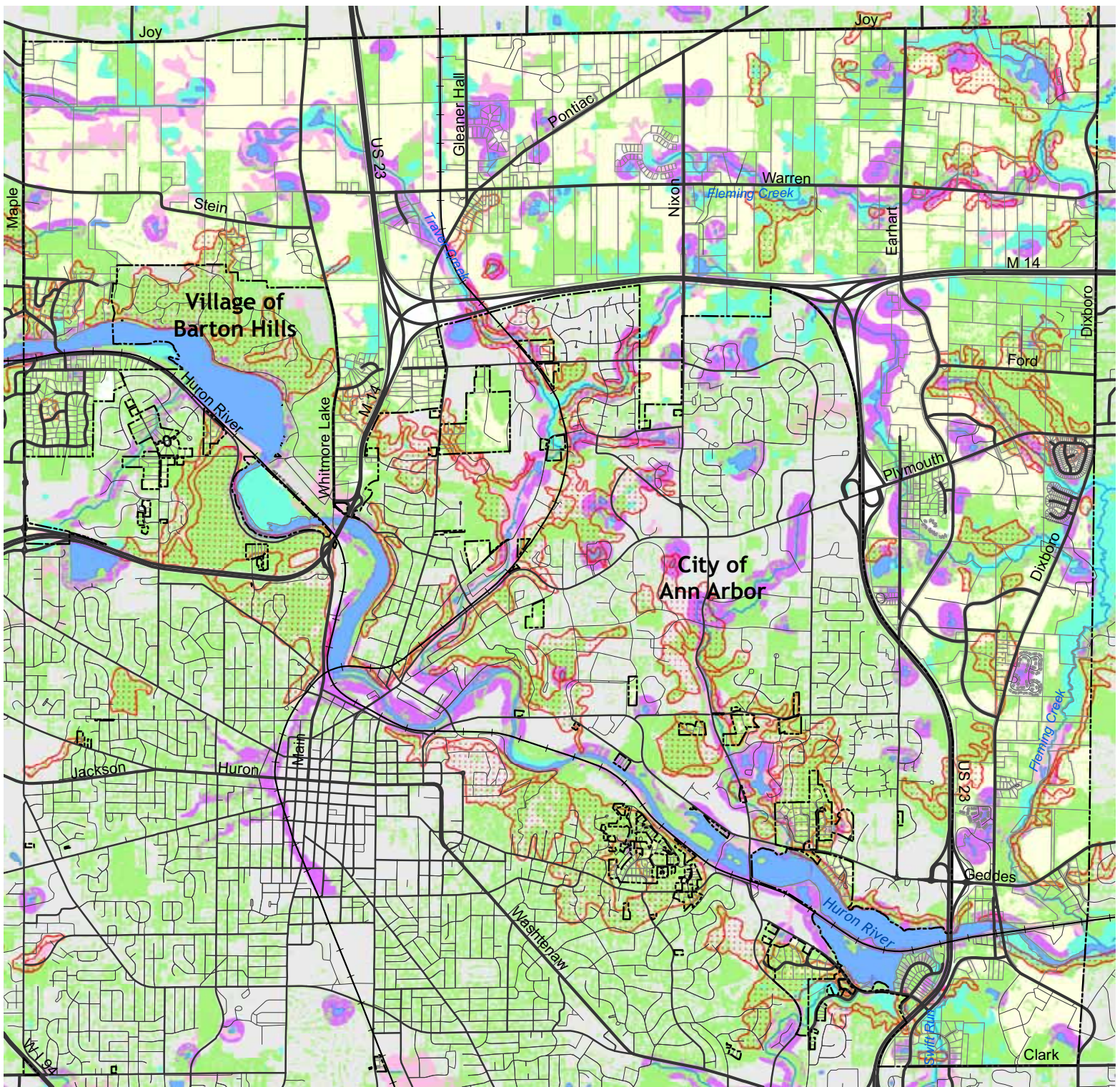
Natural Features

The gently rolling landscape of Ann Arbor Township is dominated by agricultural lands, woodlands, wetlands, the Huron River and three major stream corridors - Traver Creek, Fleming Creek and Swift Run Drain. These features help define the rural character of the area and distinguish it from the urban character of the City. The existence of sensitive natural features throughout the Township puts limits on the development potential of land and has resulted in Township policies and ordinances to preserve agriculture, open space and natural features. Natural features also add amenities and value to existing residential development. A description of the primary natural features that constitute the Township's environment follows; Figure 2 indicates in a general manner where these features are located.

These natural features have also been identified by a number of studies, including the 2007 Bioreserve Project conducted by the Huron River Watershed Council. The Bioreserve Project used a computer model to rank each natural area based on fifteen different measurements of its ecological value. These included the size of the area, whether wetlands, streams, or lakes are on the site, the diversity of the landscape on the site, the potential for the site to be a groundwater recharge area, the potential for the site to be connected to other natural areas, and how much native vegetation the site potentially still harbors. The resulting map showed over 1,700 sites, totaling about 237,000 acres of natural lands across the watershed.



Gently Rolling Topography











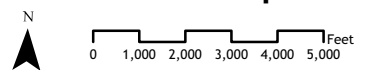
Map 3

NATURAL FEATURES

Ann Arbor Township Master Plan Update

Legend

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------|---|--------------------|
|  | Steep Slopes (>12%) |  | Riparian Corridor* |
|  | Upland Forests |  | Lakes |
|  | Wetlands |  | Streams |
|  | Hydric Soils |  | Ann Arbor Township |



Base Map: Ann Arbor Township and Washtenaw County

* Riparian corridors consist of a 300 foot buffer and floodplain boundary from surface waters.

9-25-14

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In 2014, the Huron River Watershed Council conducted another valuable exercise with the Township that resulted in the Green Infrastructure Map (Figure 3). The exercise identified the Township's important natural areas and how they are connected. Large natural areas (hubs) and smaller natural areas (sites) are linked by linear features, such as tree rows or rivers and streams. The resulting network of hubs, sites, and links provide wildlife with access to various food sources, and nesting and rearing sites. By preserving the links as well as the hubs and sites, the Township will minimize the habitat fragmentation present in developed landscapes, and preserve the variety of habitats that local wildlife use to fulfill their life-cycle.

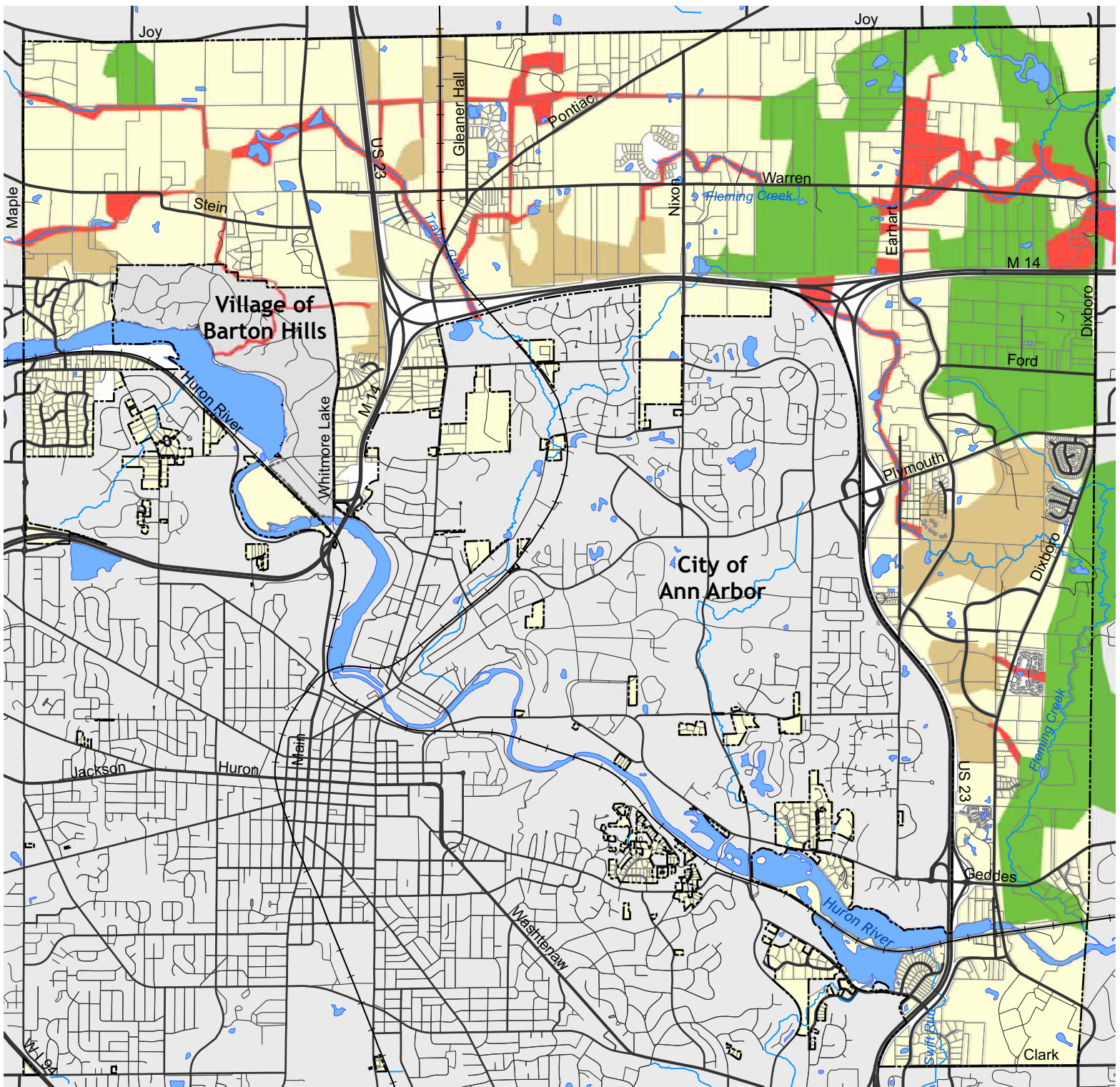
Watershed and Water Resources

Ann Arbor Township lies within the Huron River Watershed. The Huron River at Barton Pond serves as a drinking water source and the river and its tributaries provide wildlife habitat, recreation opportunities and scenic beauty. While the three primary watercourses in the Township are Fleming Creek and its tributaries, Swift Run Drain, and Traver Creek, portions of the Township are also located within other primary sub-watersheds, including the Middle Huron River, Boyden Creek, and Mallett's Creek. These waterways discharge into the Huron River. Recognizing these watershed units is useful for planning purposes and for monitoring the cumulative impact of development within each watershed.

Fleming Creek traverses several residential developments and the eastern side of the University of Michigan East Medical Campus, Radrick Farms Golf Course, and Ann Arbor Technology Park. Swift Run Drain flows through wooded residential and developing areas on its way to the Huron River. Traver Creek flows through alternating agricultural and suburban residential areas.

Fleming Creek is one of the highest quality tributaries in the Huron River watershed. Fleming Creek has an active advisory council that formed in 1994. By Township Board resolution, the Fleming Creek Advisory Council is invited to review all development proposals within the Fleming Creek Watershed. The Fleming Creek Management Plan (FCMP) developed by the Fleming Creek Advisory Council proposes strategies aimed at protecting water quality and preserving the rural character of the stream. The FCMP recommends strict control of stormwater and erosion to preserve and improve the creek's water quality. FCMP addresses future development and recommends that construction in the creekshed is located away from streams, wetlands, steep slopes and groundwater recharge areas. In addition to the FCMP, the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner's Office has updated its stormwater standards to require stricter stormwater controls and runoff mitigation techniques.



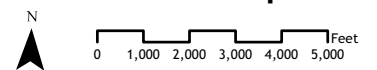


Map 5 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Ann Arbor Township Master Plan Update

Legend

- Hub
- Link
- Site
- Ann Arbor Township



Base Map: Ann Arbor Township and Washtenaw County
Green Infrastructure Data from Huron River Watershed Council

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Wetlands

Wetlands occur throughout the Township as either isolated pockets of saturated soils or swales filled with water only in wet months, as year-round ponds, or as complex systems of swales and ponds connected by streams that into larger water courses. Wetlands are often referred to as fens, bogs, or swamps. These wet areas serve as valuable wildlife habitat for fish, amphibians and migratory birds, provide flood control and groundwater recharge, help irrigate the landscape, and drain rainwater from the soil. Because of the integral part they play in the landscape, wetlands are very sensitive to damage by polluted run-off, sedimentation from erosion, and outright destruction by development. The size, quality, and connectivity of wetland systems are all important factors considered in Township planning. Many wetlands are protected under state law; others are protected by the Township's Wetland and Watercourse Protection Ordinance.

Groundwater Recharge Areas

These are areas where water infiltrates into the soil, eventually reaching an aquifer. These areas are often found in floodplains or associated with wetlands but usually their boundaries are imprecise. Pavement in groundwater recharge areas reduces absorption. Developing in these areas can also result in discharge of pollution into the soil and possible percolation into aquifers that supply well water. Groundwater recharge areas play an important part in the overall environmental health of the Township. These areas can also be important to maintaining water levels in wetlands and base stream/river flows.

Floodplains

Floodplains are low lying areas adjacent to lakes, streams, rivers, or ponds that receive excess water from flooding. They protect downstream areas from flooding and control erosion, silting, and contamination of water features by storing excess water during flood events. Floodplains also serve as wildlife corridors and habitat for plant and animal species. Delineated flood plains in Ann Arbor Township are relatively narrow bands of land adjacent to the Huron River and certain streams.

Woodlands and Other Flora

Once forested over most of its territory, the Township now has only fragments of native mixed hardwood forests and cultivated pine plantations. These stands of trees provide wildlife habitat, shade, and scenic amenities to the Township, stabilize soil, and encourage stormwater infiltration. Woodlands are often located along watercourses and in floodplains, on wet soils, or in wetlands. Trees in wet areas include willow, red and black maple, and elms. The Township also has some dry, upland area woodlands, located on well-drained soils and often interspersed with residential development. These woodlands include remnants of beech/maple and oak/hickory forests. The Township is host to a number of threatened plant species, including the white lady-slipper, taprooted valerian, ginseng, American burnet, goldenseal, Jacob's ladder and Virginia snakeroot. A comprehensive inventory of botanical species in Ann Arbor Township is provided in the 1994 report, "Environmentally Significant Areas of Ann Arbor Charter Township" by Ellen Weatherbee.

Fauna

The Township is home to at least two state-protected species, the redbreasted dace (an endangered fish species) and the Mississauga rattlesnake (a reptile of special concern). Common mammal species include deer, raccoons, opossums, skunk, rabbits, groundhogs and a variety of squirrels and smaller

rodents. Red foxes and coyotes are occasionally seen. Commonly found bird species include a variety of hawks, turkey vultures, American crows, pheasant, blue jays, Mallards and wood ducks, great blue heron, great egrets, Canada geese, woodpeckers, and songbirds. The wetlands and watercourses are also home to a variety of amphibian and fish species.

Soils

Soil is the lifeblood of agriculture as well as the nourishment for many species of vegetation, and is an important resource for the Township. Much of the Ann Arbor area is composed of glacially deposited sandy and loamy soils and gravel, which are well drained. However, a significant amount of the Township is covered by wet soils, which are often associated with wetlands, woodlands or groundwater recharge areas. Wet or hydric soil is defined in the Natural Resources Conservation Soil Survey of Washtenaw County as having a slow infiltration rate and/or a high water table (depth to water one foot or less). Wet soils provide for vegetation important to wildlife and the aesthetic beauty of a green landscape. They are also an impediment to development. Soil type is therefore an important consideration in the Township's land use policies. Heavy, wet soils with high clay content limit residential development due to poor drainage and an inability to support septic systems. Wet soil areas are sometimes interspersed with pockets of well-drained soils. The northwest area of the Township includes some soils that are not suitable for septic tanks and drain fields, based on the County Soil Survey. Those soils constitute an estimated 25 percent of the area. Other significant areas of hydric soils are found in the north portion of the township.

AGRICULTURE

Ann Arbor Township's rural character is anchored by active farming. Agriculture is a valuable economic and aesthetic resource and should be protected. Class II soils, the highest quality soil in Washtenaw County for farming, cover much of the northwestern and north central portions of the Township. While not "natural" elements of the landscape, agricultural lands play an important role in defining the environmental conditions of the Township.

The climate, variety of soils and terrain make Ann Arbor Township well suited to the production of a great number of row crops, specialty crops and livestock. These resources include an estimated 2,800 acres of tillable land, approximately 2,600 of which are currently in agricultural production. These agricultural lands serve to link farm operations north, east and west of the City of Ann Arbor and as such play a critical role in stabilizing farming in the northeastern region of Washtenaw County. Such lands provide unique aesthetic and economic benefits to the citizens of Ann Arbor Township and Washtenaw County and are an important part of the natural and agricultural heritage of the Township and county. Since the 1800s, farming has significantly reshaped natural features in the area. Most of the remaining open spaces in the Township's landscape are agricultural lands and these areas are subject to increasing pressure from residential development. Residential growth must be balanced with maintaining and preserving good quality agricultural land.

In 1999 the Township sponsored a Farmland Analysis (Cost of Services) study conducted by the Washtenaw-Potawatomi Land Trust. The central conclusion of this study was that the preservation of agricultural land through purchasing development rights would cost less than if those acres were developed for residential uses. This analysis also included a survey of the attitudes of residents which indicated that over 73 percent agreed it was important to maintain farmland in the Township.

The agricultural industry in Ann Arbor Township provides the opportunity to harvest locally grown fruits and vegetables to sell at roadside stands, farmers markets, local retail food stores and other local outlets in the County. Land suitable for farming is an irreplaceable natural resource with soil and topographic characteristics that have been enhanced by generations of agricultural use. When such land is converted to residential or other more developed uses that do not require those special characteristics, a critical community resource is permanently lost to the citizens of Ann Arbor Township and Washtenaw County.

Agriculture in Ann Arbor Township produces a notable array of crops and livestock including corn, soybeans and wheat with vegetables and fruit; as well as beef cattle. While agricultural census data are not available for Ann Arbor Township, they do exist for Washtenaw County and reflect the general situation for Ann Arbor Township. Of the County's nearly 460,000 acres, the 2007 United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service (N.A.S.S.) states that 166,811 acres are involved in agricultural production, located on 1,300 farms. These farms produce \$73,197,000 in direct sales of all agricultural products sold annually.

Generally, farmlands that are close to urban centers have a greater market value for future residential development than their market value for farming. Prime farmland has many of the same features that are components of desirable residential areas, such as favorable soil characteristics. This fact encourages the speculative purchase of these lands at high prices for future residential development, regardless of the current zoning of such lands.



Farmland

Land Use Patterns and Development Trends

Ann Arbor Township's past shows that the area's potential for growth was established early by several factors that would influence its character and the opportunities it offered. First, its natural setting created after the glacier melted left the area with a scenic beauty, good soil for agriculture to support early settlers and ample water supplies.

Second, human settlements provided the foundation for development. Native Americans traversed the area with trails that established the pattern for most of the current road system. European settlers who came later founded the City of Ann Arbor and Ann Arbor Township. The City gradually became the dominant social and economic force in the life of the Township and continues to be a magnet for urban growth, a consumer of Township land to support that growth, and a provider of commercial and service land uses.

The third factor contributing to the area's growth potential was the major improvements made to the transportation system tying the area to much larger economic regions. The railroads created the first dependable and efficient economic connection between the Ann Arbor and Detroit areas and provided a north-south connection to the rest of Michigan and to Toledo. More recently, the freeway system repeated the railroads' century-earlier impact on the area, but on a scale many times greater. The primary freeway orientation was east-west, particularly to the southeast Michigan region. A north-south orientation was created with construction of the I-75/US-23 freeway system from the Canadian border at Sault Ste. Marie to southern Florida.

While US-23 has had a significant impact on the development pattern of Ann Arbor Township, that impact varies greatly from one area of the community to the next. Given that two exits to US-23 exist within the east portion of the Township, on the east side of the City of Ann Arbor, most of the recent development within the community has occurred near Geddes Road or Plymouth Road. This phenomenon reinforces the generally east-west development pattern in this area of Washtenaw County, situated along Plymouth Road and Washtenaw Avenue, just south of the Township. In contrast, no US-23 exits are present within the Township north of the City of Ann Arbor, leaving the area mostly residential, agricultural, or open space. Fourth, throughout this period of development the steady and sometimes rapid growth of the City took place primarily at the expense of Ann Arbor Township territory. Much of the original Township area, about 50 percent, has been absorbed by the City to support its growth.

Fifth, large public institutional uses within the Ann Arbor area are located in Ann Arbor Township. The North Campus of the University of Michigan is just within the City limit, and the University satellite medical campus is located at Earhart Road and Plymouth Road in the Township. Washtenaw Community College is also within the Township, and St. Joseph Medical Center lies just outside the Township boundary to the east. All these uses have influenced the somewhat more intensive land use patterns in the eastern part of the Township.

The remaining Township territory still has the natural character that made the area attractive for initial settlement. The attractiveness of these features is amplified many times by the fast, easy access to millions of people and thousands of businesses provided by the freeway system. It is with these historical forces, including natural beauty for a living and working environment, ready accessibility to a larger region and the attraction of a major city on its doorstep that Ann Arbor Township moved from the final years of the 20th century into the 21st.

Farmland and Open Space Planning Initiatives

While change is inevitable and growth will occur, Ann Arbor Township is committed to managing that growth to enhance economic benefit, recreational activities, and overall quality of life for all residents. A number of planning initiatives related to farmland and open space preservation have taken place in the region and in Ann Arbor Township.

Washtenaw County Natural Areas Preservation Program (NAPP)

Voters in Washtenaw County approved a county-wide 0.25 mil tax to fund the Natural Areas Preservation Program in 2000, which was reapproved for a ten-year renewal in 2010. County policy provides that 25% of funds generated be available to purchase development rights on farmland. That component generates \$800,000 available annually for direct purchases or in support of projects in other jurisdictions. The Arbor Vista and the Raymond F. Goodrich Preserves located in Ann Arbor Township were acquired in part with this fund.

The Ann Arbor Area Greenbelt Initiative

In 2003, the City of Ann Arbor residents authorized a one-half mil tax for 30 years to raise funds for preservation and protection of parkland, open space, natural habitats, and city source waters within and outside the City of Ann Arbor. Following this in 2004, the Ann Arbor City Council adopted the Open Space and Parkland Preservation provisions in its City Code, providing a framework for the purchase of conservation easements and fee properties within the greenbelt area. All of Ann Arbor Township falls within the designated greenbelt area.



Ann Arbor Greenbelt Initiative

Ann Arbor Township Farmland and Open Space Preservation Initiative

Ann Arbor Township established a Purchase of Development (PDR) program in 2003 with 80% voter approval of a 20-year dedicated millage, expected to generate \$8 million over its duration. The program seeks to preserve 2,000 acres of farmland near developing urban areas and provide permanent protection for the public interests served by farmland in Ann Arbor Township. Properties, or portions thereof, on which development rights are purchased, will remain substantially undeveloped in order to promote their agricultural character.

The Washtenaw County NAPP and the City of Ann Arbor Greenbelt programs play an essential supporting role to the Township PDR Program. As of 2014, 1,099 acres of agricultural lands — of which 17% are in woodlands, wetlands and ponds — have been protected in Ann Arbor Township, with 916 acres utilizing millage funds. The Township millage has expended about \$3.2 million and has attracted \$6.7 million of matching funds from the Greenbelt and NAPP. Moreover, several landowners who sold development rights have used the proceeds to invest in their operations, thereby overcoming the “impermanence syndrome” that often afflicts urban fringe agriculture.

In addition to commodity grain and livestock on large acreage farms, there is growing local and nationwide interest in small farms as a source of food for local markets, an attractive way of life, and a community asset. Small farms can prosper in proximity to urban areas such as Ann Arbor where farming is well established and where there is a strong network of markets for farm goods, significant individual and institutional interest in fresh produce, engagement in community farming, and appreciation for organic produce. Michigan’s climate and soils support agriculture more diverse than any state

except California, which makes these small farm activities particularly appropriate. Ann Arbor Township has important advantages in all these respects, and there are many properties between 10 and 50 acres in size that would be appropriate for such farm operations. In 2007, the Township Farmland and Open Space Preservation Board (FPB) established a Small Farm Initiative to encourage and develop small farm operations within Ann Arbor Township.

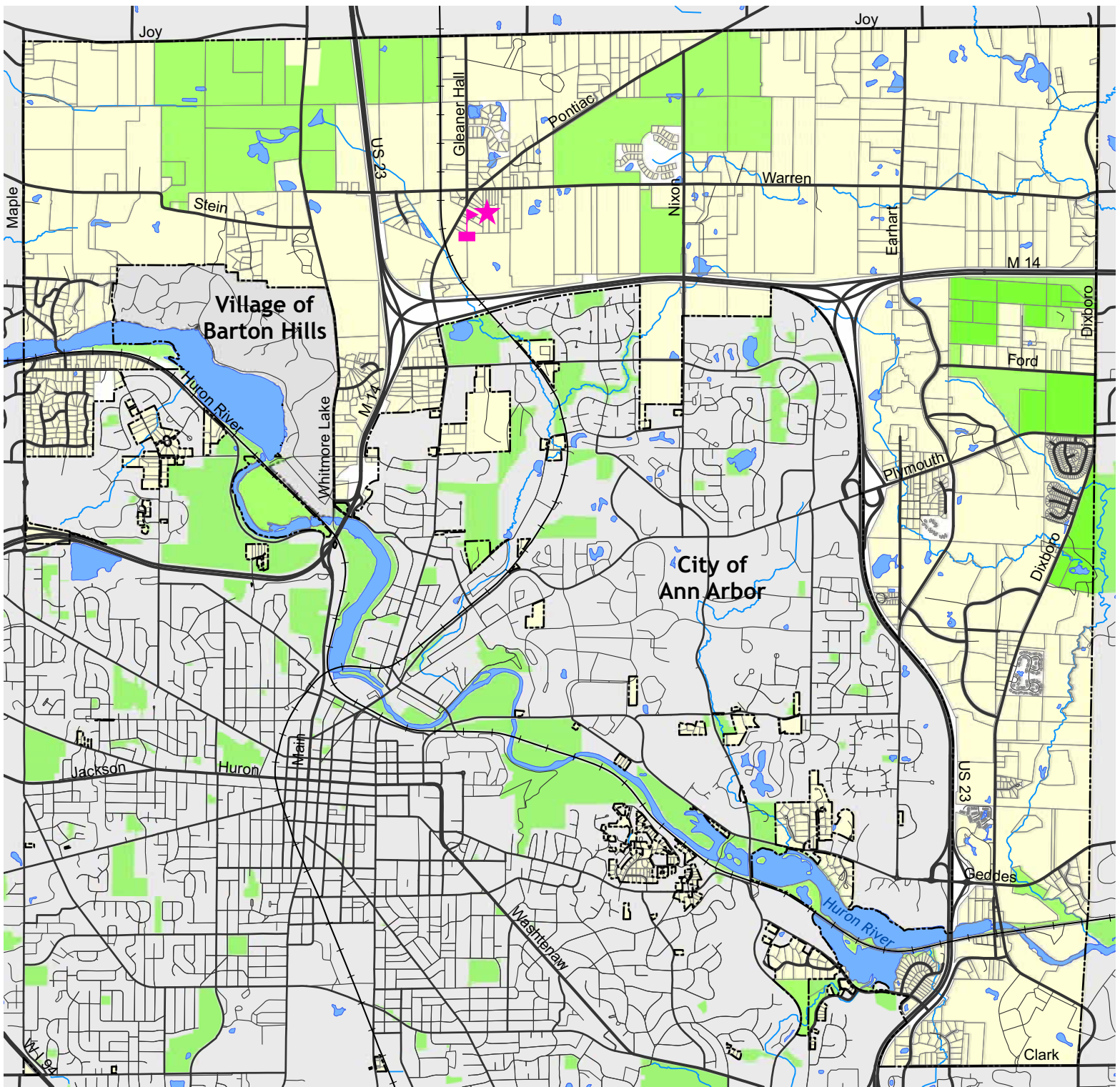
One of the Township's main achievements in supporting small farms is the lease of its own property to the Tilian Farm Development Center. In 2006, the Township took title to 153 acres of mostly agricultural land that was originally part of a residential development. The FPB was given the charge of determining the appropriate future use of this parcel. With new interest in local foods and small-scale farming expanding in the County, the FPB decided to support a proposal where new farmers could be trained and new farming businesses could be launched. The Township Board of Trustees invested funds to stabilize the barn, provide water for irrigation and supply electrical service to match funds provided by USDA to construct hoop houses, install a wash/pack station and build storage for produce. Tilian operates its programs in conjunction with the nonprofit Food Systems Economic Partnership and the MSU Organic Farmer Training Program. Tilian's programs include:

- Farmer Residency Program. Individuals with agricultural education further their skills through managing the Residency Farm. Program participants also learn how to market what they raise through Community Supported Agriculture shares to individuals, families, and local restaurants.
- Incubator Farms. Tilian assists new farming businesses by providing land at no cost to experienced farmers. The program also helps participants establish a network, develop their business model, and guide them into farming as a full-time livelihood on their own land.

The Township's farm property may also be leased by small farm operations other than Tilian.

The Township's PDR program has completed one small farm conservation easement and is pursuing several others. In addition to the typical easement prohibitions on use (division, residential construction, surface mining, etc.), a small farm easement requires the land to be in an agricultural use. It is intended for these properties to be used by small-scale fruit, vegetable and livestock producers, whether through lease or ownership. In addition, the Township facilitated the transfer of a 64-acre parcel from a group of investors to the Tilian incubator Green Things Farm by first purchasing development rights.





Lands that have been protected through the PDR program are shown in the northwest and north central portions of the Township on the map on the following page (Figure 4).



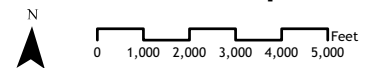
Map 4

PROTECTED LANDS & PUBLIC FACILITIES

Legend

-  Protected Lands*
-  Fire Station
-  Township Hall
-  Ann Arbor Township

Ann Arbor Township Master Plan Update



* Protected lands and greenways consist of County Parks, Local Parks, Washtenaw Land Trust, Washtenaw County Conservation and Recreational Lands, Public and Quasi-Public Lands, Township Conservation Easements, and properties protected by PDR programs.

Base Map: Ann Arbor Township and Washtenaw County

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Ann Arbor Township does not currently administer parks and recreation services. Historically, the Township has relied on its proximity to the City of Ann Arbor and the wealth of the regional parks in the area. Following the voter-approved land preservation millage in 2003, however, a Farmland and Open Space Preservation Commission was formed to address issues related to land acquisition, preservation, and development.

Administration

Ann Arbor Township residents are represented by a seven-member board consisting of three officers and four trustees, all of which are elected at large every four years. Limited by law in the amount of taxes that can be levied without voter approval, Township officials must be creative in delivering quality services with the least possible burden to taxpayers.

In 2003, Ann Arbor Township voters approved a **one-half** mil levy through 2023,

to preserve farmland, open space, wildlife habitat, and scenic views, protect drinking water, provide new parks, recreational opportunities and trails by funding the voluntary purchase of land and interests in land throughout the township.

Following this, Ann Arbor Township formed a Farmland Preservation Commission in 2005 to implement the township land preservation program. This program allows the township to purchase land or development rights to protect both farm and non-farm open space as well as to provide parkland, recreational opportunities, and trails. It also provides the township with matching funds with which to participate in land preservation efforts with other partners such as the Washtenaw County Natural Areas Preservation Program and the City of Ann Arbor Greenbelt Program. A number of properties have been preserved using these funds.

Funding and Budget

A summary of the township's current budget is included on the next page.

In Michigan, townships have a number of statutory options available to them for the establishment, development, and operation of a park and recreation system

- *The Township Parks and Places of Recreation Act (1905 P.A. 157) provides for the acquisition, management, and control of township parks, and for the creation of a township park commission established by vote of township electors. The commission is authorized to acquire, manage, and control township parks and places of recreation. The commission's budget, however, is subject to approval by the township board.*
- *The Recreation and Playgrounds Act (1917 P.A. 156), gives power to any city, village, county, or township to operate a system of public recreation areas and playgrounds, including acquiring, equipping, and maintaining land, buildings, or facilities, employing a superintendent of recreation, and voting and expending funds for the operation of such a system. The Recreation and Playgrounds Act allows townships to form recreation boards, which are advisory bodies to township boards.*
- *The Metropolitan District Act (1929 P.A. 312), and the Metropolitan Councils Act (1989 P.A. 292) allow cities, counties, villages, and townships within a metropolitan area to form a metropolitan district or council for the purpose of acquiring, owning, operating, and maintaining parks or public utilities. Metropolitan area councils are formed with the Councils Act.*
- *The Recreational Authorities Act (2000 P.A. 321) is a more recent legislation, which allows two or more municipalities or a district (defined as having boundaries coterminous with those of a precinct used for general elections) to establish a recreation authority. The purposes for which a recreation authority is established are for the acquisition, construction, operation, maintenance, or improvement of public swimming pools, public recreation centers, public auditorium, public conference centers, and/or public parks.*

Table 1: Ann Arbor Township 2015 Budget Summary

GENERAL FUND	
REVENUES	
Taxes	\$379,000.00
Licenses and Permits	1,000.00
State Share Revenue	300,000.00
Metro Fees	6,000.00
Charges for Services	10,100.00
Comcast	90,000.00
Miscellaneous	358,700.00
Total Revenue	\$1,144,800.00
EXPENDITURES	
Administration	\$397,457.00
Operations	42,960.00
Technology	20,500.00
Legal & Professional	58,550.00
Election	1,000.00
Building & Grounds	25,510.00
Unallocated	6,000.00
Roads	100,000.00
Parks & Recreation	55,000.00
Zoning	54,510.00
Planning Commission	32,000.00
Total Expenditures	\$793,487.00

Volunteers and Partnerships

Since Ann Arbor Township currently does not administer any parks or recreation facilities within its boundaries, it does not have a group of existing volunteers from which to draw for such a purpose. However, it does work with service clubs, community groups, and private businesses in supporting other programs that have community-wide benefits.

While the Township does not run recreation programs, Ann Arbor Public Schools offers extensive recreation programs for area residents through their community education and recreation departments. Private schools in the Township such as Gabriel Richard, include a limited number of sports fields and recreation facilities that provide some opportunities for sports organizations and clubs.

Service clubs and community groups have also played a significant role in providing volunteer labor and financial support for the broader area's park and recreation programs. They include:

- Sports organizations: Ann Arbor Soccer Youth Association
Ann Arbor Youth Football League
- Local service clubs: Rotary
- Fraternal organizations: Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor
Lions Club
Masonic Lodge
- Scouting Groups: Boy Scouts of America
Huron Valley Girl Scouts
- Land Conservancies: Legacy Land Conservancy
Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy
- Recreation Use Groups: Equestrian Coalition
Michigan Mountain Bike Association
- Non-Profit Organizations: Huron River Watershed Council

PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACES & TRAILS

While Ann Arbor Township does not own or operate local public parks, the Township contains a variety of open spaces and public park facilities as well as school and private recreational facilities. This section describes these recreational facilities. The information provided in this section was derived from a variety of sources including documents and the Internet.

Regional Recreation Facilities

There are 156 acres of parkland owned by Washtenaw County in Ann Arbor Township. These parks and preserves are considered regional recreational facilities. In addition, there are over 32,000 acres of state-owned parks and recreation areas, 1,500 acres of HCMA metroparks, and 1,000 acres of county parks and preserves in adjacent communities. These regional facilities incorporate large areas and provide opportunities such as swimming, boating, hiking, hunting, camping, and golfing, which are typically beyond the ability of a local municipality to provide. The figure below depicts the location of the regional parks and Table 2 lists the recreational activities they offer. A detailed description of the county parks and preserves located in Ann Arbor Township follows.

Figure 5. Regional Recreation Facilities Around Ann Arbor Township

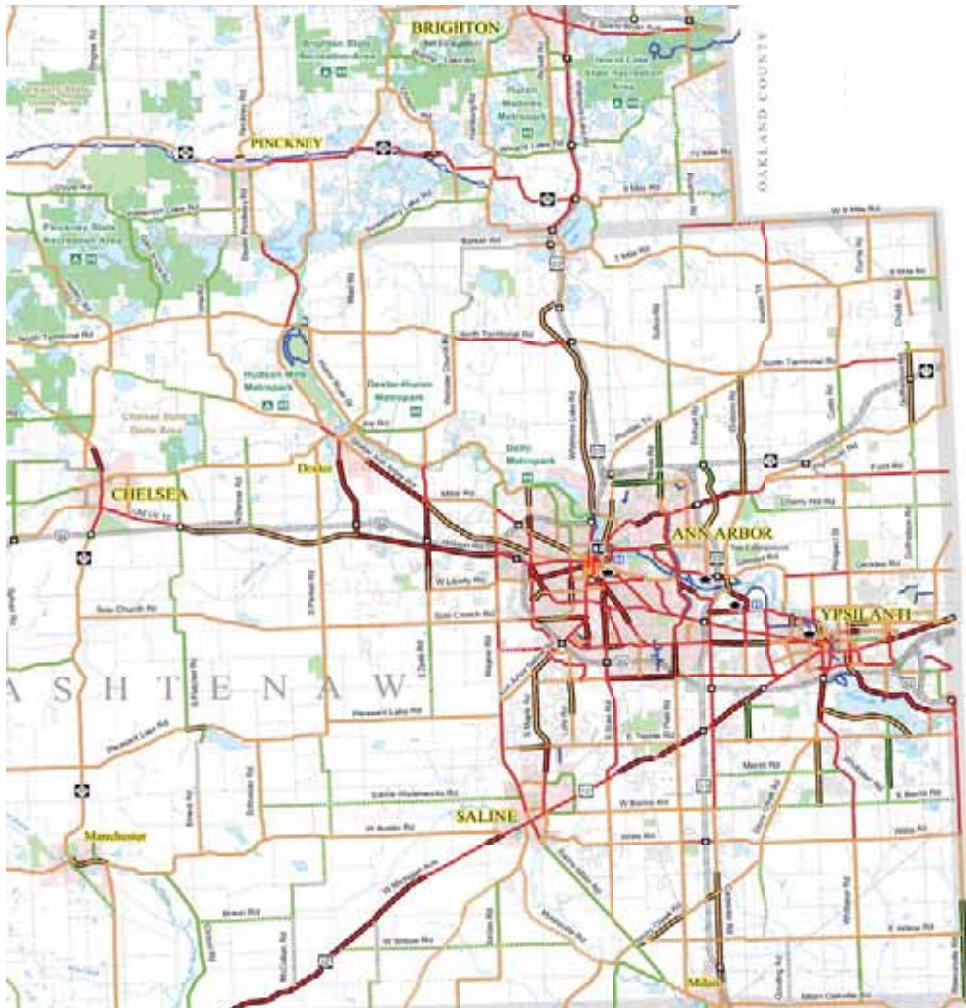


Table 2. Regional Recreation Facilities

		State Recreation Areas		HCMA Metroparks					Washtenaw County Parks and Preserves						
		Island Lake Recreation Area - 4,000 Ac.	Pinkney State Rec Area - 11,000 Ac.	Hudson Mills Metropark - 1,508 Ac.	Dexter Huron Metropark - 122 Ac.	Delhi Mills Metropark - 50 Ac.	Huron Meadows Metropark - 1,258 ac	Kensington Metropark - 4,481 ac.	County Farm Park - 127 ac.	Independence Lake - 405 ac.	Parker Mill County Park - 26 ac.	Arbor Woods Preserve - 23 ac.	Arbor Vistas Preserve - 59 ac.	Goodrich Preserve - 48 ac.	
Public Access	Parking Area	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●					●
Passive	Picnicking	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
	Playground		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
Trails	Unimproved Trail	●													●
	Paved Trail	●		●				●	●	●	●				
	Nature/Hiking Trail	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●			
	Mountain Biking Trail	●	●												
	Equestrian Trail		●												
	Fitness Trail								●						
	Cross-country skiing	●	●	●				●	●		●				
	Snowmobiling	●	●												
Water Activities	Swimming Beach	●	●							●					
	Water Park/Spray Park									●					
	Boat Launch	●	●					●	●	●					
	Boat Rental	●	●	●		●				●					
	Canoeing		●	●	●	●				●					
	Shore Fishing	●	●		●	●				●	●				
	Dock Fishing	●	●					●	●	●					
	Boat Fishing	●	●							●					
Winter & Seasonal Activities	Ice Fishing	●	●	●						●					
	Ice Skating									●					
	Hunting	●	●												
Interpretive Facilities	Nature Center														
	Nature Area	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Court & Turf Games	Ball fields			●	●	●	●								
	Soccer fields			●			●								
	Court Games		●	●		●	●								
	Disk Golf			●		●		●		●					
	Golf Course			●		●	●	●							
Misc.	Banquet/Event Facility			●		●									
	Indoor Rec Center								●						
	Community Garden								●						
	Horse Stable		●												
Camping	Rustic Campsite		●												
	Modern Campsite		●												
	Canoe Camping			●											
	Cabin Rental	●													
	Group Camping	●		●					●						

Parker Mill County Park

This heavily wooded 44-acre park is partly in Ann Arbor Township (26 acres) and partly in Superior Township (18 acres). The natural areas encompass the lower reach of Fleming Creek, including the mouth of the creek where it joins the Huron River. It includes the following facilities and activities:

- Access and parking from Geddes Road;
- Historic grist mill, built in 1873 and in operation until 1958. The mill is open for public tours, and hosts various educational programs. Additional historical buildings include a former cider mill and log cabin;
- Nature trails and boardwalks with interpretive signs;
- Pavilion and interpretive signs regarding millpond;
- Bituminous path connection with Gallup Park; and
- Creek/river fishing.

Arbor Woods Preserve

This 23-acre preserve is located on the northern boundary of Ann Arbor Township, in close proximity to Northfield Woods Preserve. Ann Arbor Township holds a conservation easement on this preserve. The preserve includes the following characteristics:

- Access and parking from Northfield Woods Preserve;
- Thirteen-acre high-quality woodlot with vernal ponds; and
- Ten-acre active agricultural field.

Arbor Vistas Preserve

This 59-acre preserve was previously owned by Domino's Farms Corporation, and was purchased in 2013, partly through a financial contribution from Ann Arbor Township. This preserve is adjacent to other preserves in the area, helping to form 300 acres of protected lands in the eastern portion of Ann Arbor Township. The preserve includes the following characteristics:

- Access and parking from Marshall Nature Area, to the east;
- Mature, high-quality woodland with wetlands; and
- Kirk's Brook, a tributary of Fleming Creek.

Goodrich Preserve

This 48-acre preserve is adjacent to other preserves in the area (including Arbor Vistas Preserve), helping to form 300-acres of protected lands in the area. The preserve includes the following characteristics:

- Access and parking from Dixboro Road;
- Mature, high-quality woodland, wetlands, and topographic relief; and
- Nature trails.

Local Parks and Recreation Facilities

In addition to the HCMA and county parks, there are city, institutional, and private recreation facilities and open spaces located in Ann Arbor Township. These facilities are shown on Figure 6 and are briefly described as follows.

City of Ann Arbor

The City of Ann Arbor has an extensive park system including almost 2,000 acres of parks and natural areas. City parks used by Ann Arbor Township residents (as reported through the on-line survey discussed later) include the following:

- Argo Nature Area is a 22-acre, linear park on the east side of the Huron River, Bordered by Broadway Street, Longshore Drive and Barton Drive. This park includes parking, a canoe livery, boat launch, and access to trails that accommodate hikers and bicycles.
- Bandemer Park is a natural area long the Huron River accessed off North Main Street. The park features accessible trails, restrooms, benches, accessible canoe dock, fishing deck, shelter, picnic areas and grills.
- Barton Nature Area is a 102-acre park located along the Huron River on Huron River Drive. The park is accessible from two parking lots, and the park offers natural areas, picnic areas, fire pit, benches and trails.
- Bird Hills Nature Area is a 153-acre nature area consisting of various woodland ecosystems, a stream, extensive topography, and nature trails. The park is accessible from the Newport Road parking lot.
- Fuller Park is a 60-acre recreation area located on Fuller Road. The park contains soccer fields, outdoor pool, waterslide, restroom/locker facilities, and concession stand. A play area is accessible via a pedestrian bridge to Island Park, which also offers picnic tables.
- Gallup Park is a 69-acre park located along the Huron River and Geddes Pond, and is accessed from Fuller Road parking lot. The park includes scenic walkways, playgrounds, a canoe livery, picnic areas and grills, picnic shelters, open field for play, and over three miles of asphalt trails available for walking, jogging or biking. The park also offers drinking fountains and benches.
- Marshall Nature Area is a 79-acre park in the eastern part of Ann Arbor Township. It is adjacent to Arbor Vistas and Goodrich preserves, helping to make up a large natural area in this part of the Township. Parking off of Dixboro Road provides access to a nature trail system within the heavily-wooded property.

University of Michigan

The University of Michigan has several significant recreation areas within Ann Arbor Township. Adjacent to Goodrich Preserve, Arbor Vistas Preserve, and Marshall Nature Area, U. of M's Horner-McLaughlin Woods off of Dixboro Road is an integral part of the large, 300-acre natural area in the eastern portion of the Township. Horner-McLaughlin Woods is a 90-acre site that was donated to the University of Michigan by the Michigan Botanical Club in 1964 as a plant and wildflower sanctuary for scientific, educational, and aesthetic purposes.

Matthaei Botanical Garden is a 350-acre site located about six miles east of downtown Ann Arbor. Its location in the Township provides for a significant

cultural resource for residents and visitors. The Gardens offers an indoor plant conservatory, classroom and meeting spaces, greenhouse and outdoor sites to host research, display gardens, native plant gardens, unique natural areas including two fens, and conducts ongoing ecological restoration activities. The property is traversed by numerous nature trails and is the center of environmental learning and plant knowledge.

Just south of Matthaei, along the Fleming Creek tributary, is Radrick Farms Golf Course. This is a 275-acre, 18-hole golf course that is managed to preserve the environmental features of the site. As of 2014, the course has been recertified as an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary golf course, and participates in the following environmental programs:

- Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses
- Groundwater Guardian Green Site
- Michigan Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Program
- Community Partners for Clean Streams
- Clean Corporate Citizen Program

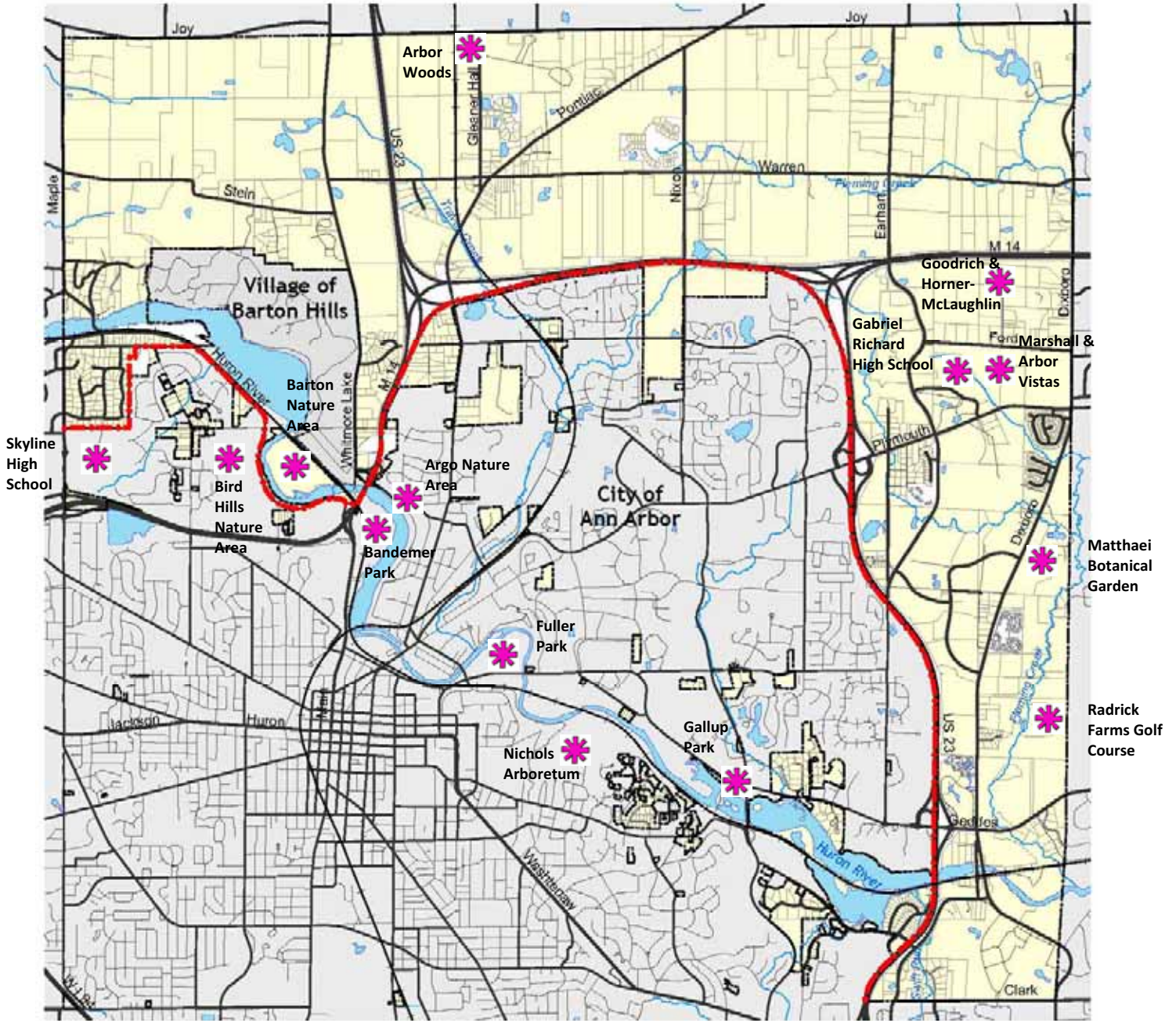
The site also contains a driving range, club house and practice tees. The course primarily serves faculty and staff of the University of Michigan.

While not in the Township, residents also visit Nichol's Arboretum, a 123-acre site adjacent to central campus in the City of Ann Arbor. The "Arb" contains specialty gardens, historic and culturally significant collections, areas of native Michigan ecosystems, access to the Huron River, and active areas of ecological restoration. Students and faculty can use a small classroom located in the Reader Center in the Burnham house at the Washington Heights entrance. An amphitheater is also available for outdoor performances.

School Facilities

The Ann Arbor Skyline High School, constructed in 2008, borders the township on the far west side of the community. While it contains a number of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, the City's Community Education and Recreation program does not use this facility. Gabriel Richard High School is a private school located adjacent to Arbor Vistas and Marshall Nature Area in the eastern portion of the township. As Skyline, this school's recreation facilities are also reserved for student use only. However, the administration is planning on constructing a 300+ seat performing arts wing in the next several years, which will offer theatrical and musical performances to the public.

Figure 6: Local Parks and Community Facilities



Private Open Spaces and Recreation Facilities

There are several private recreation facilities in Ann Arbor Township. Although they do not provide public access, they are important in providing recreation facilities for members or open space for subdivision residents. They include the following:

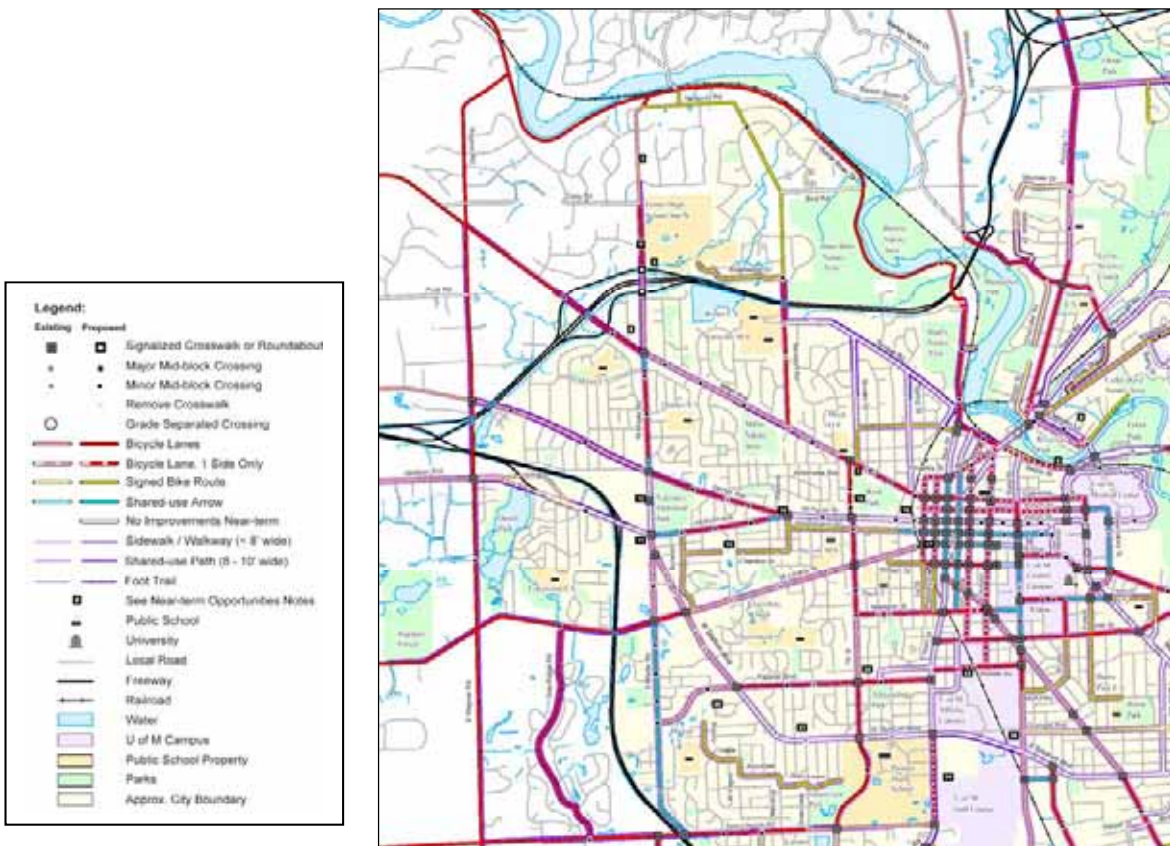
- Barton Hills Country Club and Golf Course is located in the northwest portion of the township and contains about 135 acres of land. The facility includes an 18-hole golf course, club house with fitness center, swimming pool, locker rooms, playground, disc golf, and four tennis courts.
- Open spaces have also been preserved in some of the township's residential developments. Northbrooke residential development **(ARE THERE ANY OTHERS?)** includes private open spaces. Although they are not open to the public, they help to protect natural features.

Non-Motorized Trails and Facilities

The City of Ann Arbor has an extensive system of sidewalks and non-motorized facilities (either shared roadways or dedicated bike lanes as part of the road) (Figure 7). Some of the non-motorized facilities are contiguous to Ann Arbor Township from the north and east. As of 2013, the City had 80.2 miles of bicycle lanes as a component of their roadway system.

US-23 and M-14 post significant barriers to non-motorized connections with the City. The one bicycle lane that traverses the highway system is the bridge over US-23 along Geddes Road that was constructed in 2010 as part of the Border to Border trail. Otherwise, pedestrians and cyclists must traverse the road system to move between the City and Ann Arbor Township.

Figure 7. City of Ann Arbor Non-motorized Transportation Plan (Partial)



Border-to-Border Trail

The Huron-Clinton Metropark Authority and Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation have been working to establish the Border-to-Border trail, a 35-mile continuous greenway along the Huron River which traverses Ann Arbor Township. As envisioned by HCMA and Washtenaw County Parks, the Border-to-Border Trail will ultimately allow pedestrian and bicycle travel to communities and recreational facilities from the City of Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor to the Village of Dexter and the Pinckney State Recreation Area (Figure 8). Given its length and regional significance, the Huron River greenway is considered a primary ecological, pedestrian, and open space corridor.

The trail will connect a number of existing public facilities along the river, including parks in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti, Hudson Mills Metropark, and Washtenaw Community College (WCC) campus. Some segments of the trail are completed - almost the entire length of the river within Ann Arbor can be walked - and several more segments are underway.



Figure 8. Border-to-Border Trail



SONIA L. GOTTFRIED, THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

Accessibility Assessment & Grant Assisted Projects

Ann Arbor Township does not currently own or operate any parks to be assessed for accessibility. The Township has also never been the recipient of MDNR grant funds for the acquisition or development of its Township-owned properties.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION & NEEDS ASSESSMENT

An essential task in the recreation planning process is to determine the needs and desires of the community as a basis for an action plan to improve or develop the Township’s parks and recreation system. Needs and desires provide the rationale for the formulation of goals and objectives that lead to an action plan. To assess needs and desires, consideration was given to current recreation trends, two surveys of residents, and a public meeting which was conducted with input from community stakeholders, public officials, staff, and residents of Ann Arbor Township.

National Recreation Trends

Recreation trends on a national level and in Michigan provide insight into activities that show the greatest growth in popularity and therefore may affect the future direction of parks and recreation. The Outdoor Foundation regularly conducts national surveys to measure participation in physical activities and track changes from previous years. According to the Outdoor Foundation, nearly 50 percent of Americans (141.9 million) ages six and older participated in outdoor recreation in 2012. Table 3 lists the top five outdoor activities.

Table 3. National Sports Participation, 2010

Activity	Participation
1. Running, Jogging & Trail Running	53.2 million
2. Freshwater, Saltwater & Fly Fishing	46.0 million
3. Road Biking, Mountain Biking & BMX	42.3 million
4. Car, Backyard & RV Camping	38.0 million
5. Hiking	34.5 million

Source: Outdoor Participation Report, 2013, the Outdoor Foundation

These trends are consistent with trends observed in Michigan. According to a survey of Michigan residents conducted as part of the 2013-2017 Michigan Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, the top ten outdoor recreation activities are: biking (all types), camping, fishing, walking outdoors (including dog walking), hiking (all types), playing outdoor games/ sports, hunting or trapping, swimming (all types), boating and using playgrounds.

Monitoring parks and recreation trends is important in determining how parks and recreation services should evolve. The implication of the trends noted above along with the demographic and physical characteristics of Ann Arbor Township can be summarized as follows:

- Recreation facilities and programs should respond to the expected increase of seniors.
- There is a trend towards implementing community-wide non-motorized transportation systems to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian recreation use and to contribute to a healthy and walkable community.
- Ann Arbor Township contains and has available nearby a vast amount of regional and county-owned land and regional recreation facilities. Connecting to these systems and partnerships with the various recreation providers are desirable to maximize the community’s recreation potential.

Public Participation

To create a master plan that reflects the recreation preferences, needs and values of Ann Arbor Township, the planning process included multiple forums for community outreach. Public input was received through two online surveys and a public meeting with community stakeholders

Resident Surveys

During the month of February, a short questionnaire was posted to the Township's website asking residents to provide their ideas regarding non-motorized trails in the Township. The survey was also advertised in a post-card mailed to all Township addresses, and on flyers for a public trails meeting.

Sixty-one people took the survey, 38 of which were Township residents. Respondents were mostly between the ages of 18 and 55 years (41), with the remainder being seniors (19). Respondents provided the following opinions:

1. Eighty-one percent ride a bike in the Township.
2. Of those, almost all ride for fitness/recreation, and about half are adults that use a bike to commute to work.
3. Eighty-three percent have ridden their bike to downtown Ann Arbor in the past 18 months; 70% to the Border-to-Border Trail; and more than 60% to both U. of M.'s north and central campuses.
4. The five roadways that were ranked highest to receive new bike lanes/trails include (in order of priority):
 - a. Plymouth Road
 - b. Huron River Drive
 - c. Geddes Road
 - d. Dixboro Road
 - e. Maple Road
5. Eighty-nine percent reported that they walk/run for exercise or recreation in the Township.
6. Seventy-eight of them stated that they walk/run on trails in existing parks.
7. Ninety-eight percent reported that they do not feel safe when walking/running along the shoulder of a major Township road.
8. Of these, 71% thought a wider shoulder or a separate path along the road would help them feel safer.
9. Sixty-seven percent stated that they walk/run along Huron River Drive; 45% along Pontiac Trail, and 43% along Dixboro Road. Twenty-four percent stated that they also walk/run along Plymouth Road.
10. Most respondents (51%) usually walk/run three to five miles.

Later in 2014, another short questionnaire was posted to the Township's website asking residents to provide their opinions regarding parks and recreation in Ann Arbor Township. The survey was also advertised in a utility bill mailed to all Township addresses.

Eighty people took the survey, 95% of which were Township residents. Respondents were asked to provide the ages of all members of their family. Most families included people between the ages of 55 and 74 (45%), with the next largest group being families with people between 0 and 24 (23%). Forty-five to 54-year-olds comprised the next largest group (12%). Respondents to this survey provided the following information:

1. As in the non-motorized transportation survey, 81 percent report that they participate in trail sports (walking/running, cycling, rollerblading, etc.) on a regular basis (once a month). The next most popular activities are nature activities (picnicking, nature walks, bird watching, etc.), with 74% of respondents choosing these activities. Court sports follow with 20%, and then playgrounds with 12%.
2. The 10 parks that were ranked highest where people participate in recreation activities include (in order of priority):
 - a. Gallup Park
 - b. Matthaei Botanical Garden
 - c. Bandemere Park
 - d. Argo Nature Area
 - e. Nichols Arboretum
 - f. Park Mill County Park
 - g. Barton Nature Area
 - h. Along Township gravel roads
 - i. Fuller Park
 - j. Marshall Nature Area
5. Fifty-eight respondents think that nearby parks either completely meet their recreation needs, or meet their needs very well. Thirty-two percent think that they meet their needs adequately. Only ten percent think that nearby parks either don't meet their needs very well, or not at all.
6. Of those that weren't satisfied with nearby facilities, most wanted to see more safe places to walk, run or ride a bike. They would also like trails or sidewalks so that they can walk to nearby facilities, such as Gallup Park, Marshall Nature Area, or to the Border-to-Border Trail.
7. If the Township were to acquire open space for public use, 76% of respondents would like to be able to participate in trail sports in these new areas, 66% nature activities, 19% community gardening, 15% dog park, and 13% each for playgrounds, court sports and field sports. Other responses included cross-country ski trails, access to the River for kayaking, and golf.

Copies of both surveys are provided in the Supporting Documents section of the Plan.

Public Meeting

A public meeting was conducted on March 10, 2014 at the Township Hall. Over 60 people attended, most of who were Township residents. The purpose of the meeting was to gather resident input regarding future non-motorized transportation routes throughout the Township. After introductions, a background presentation was made describing the process the Township went through to develop a preliminary vision for non-motorized trails within the Township. The presentation also reviewed a draft *Priority Corridors for Non-Motorized Transportation Map* ("Priority Corridors Map"), which illustrated this draft vision.

Creating the Priority Corridors Map

The first step in developing the Township's Priority Corridors Map was to create maps to show the existing non-motorized facilities in the Township (Map A - Appendix), and future facilities planned by County and regional organizations (Map B and Map C - Appendix). The other agency plans included:

- Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) 2012 Complete Streets Plan
- 2008 SEMCOG Greenways Data
- WATS 2006 Non-Motorized Plan
- 2006 Regional Trails & Greenways Vision

The public was invited to weigh in on this draft plan through the public meeting. The meeting attendees were divided into six small groups of approximately eight people each for a planning exercise. Each group was given a large aerial map of the Township, and marking pens of various colors. They were asked to identify important bike/walk destinations and the corridors to each these destinations, and then prioritize the destinations/corridors. Priorities were determined by each person placing "sticky dots" next to destinations/corridors they thought most important. Table 4 on the next page identifies the total number of votes (or sticky dots) each destination or corridor received. The small group maps also illustrated some additional ideas:

1. Prioritize routes/corridors that create loops. For example, create a loop with Pontiac Trail and Dixboro Road (Note that these roads connect in Northfield Township).
2. Coordinate non-motorized lanes/trails with existing bus stops. Bus stops identified include:
 - a. Pontiac Trail at Dhu Varren
 - b. Dhu Varren at Nixon Road
 - c. Geddes Road at Dixboro Road
3. Plymouth Road needs wider shoulders and improvements for non-motorized access into the City.
4. Two destinations north of Ann Arbor Township were identified: German Park and Alexander's Farm Market.
5. Don't improve Maple Road or the CSX Railroad tracks for trails.

The input collected was then integrated into the draft map to create the finalized Priority Corridor Map, which is provided on page 36. Detailed survey and meeting results are included in the next chapter.

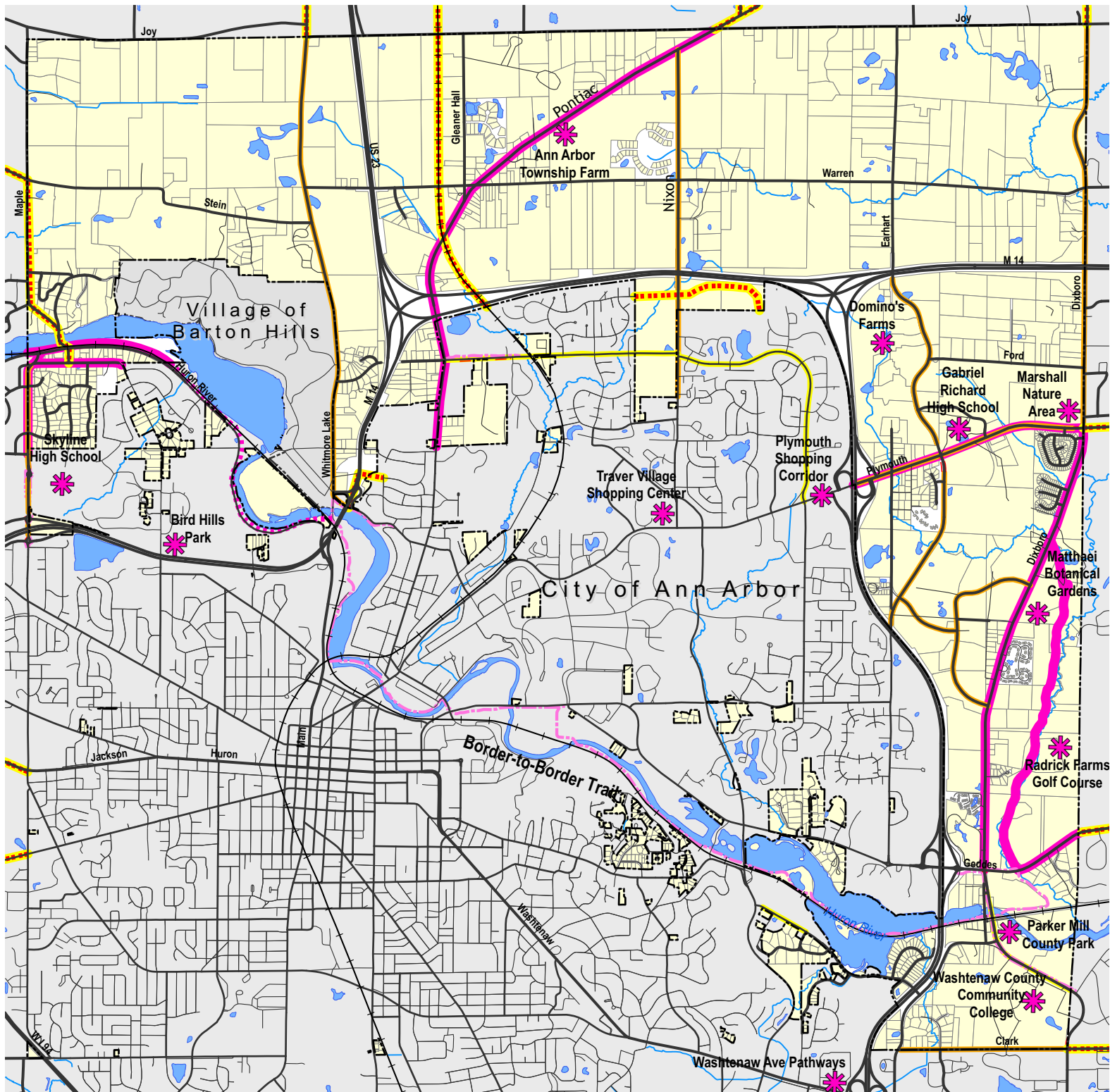
Priority Corridors Vision

Key components of this vision include:

- *Partnering with the University of Michigan and Matthaei Botanic Garden to create an easterly connection with the Border-to-Border trail that traverses Radrick Farms Golf Course and Matthaei Botanic Garden. This segment would provide access between Parker Mill County Park to the south, and the natural areas (Marshall Nature Area) and Plymouth Road to the north.*
- *Creating better non-motorized facilities along Plymouth Road (Dixboro Road to US-23), connecting residents with shopping amenities in the City of Ann Arbor.*
- *Creating a connection along Pontiac Trail to the City of Ann Arbor. This corridor is also identified by WATS (2006 and 2012), and the Regional Trails & Greenways Vision. Heading north, this segment could also eventually connect with the Huron Valley Regional Trail in Livingston County.*
- *Creating a connection to the Border-to-Border trail on the west side of the Township, and to Skyline High School along Maple Road*

Table 4. Meeting Results - Priority Routes and Corridors

Priority Routes/Corridors	Number of Sticky Dots Received							
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6	Total	% of Total
U. of M./Matthaei/Township Trail/Dixboro Rd.	4	27	10	15	5	3	64	30%
Pontiac Trail	5		30	10	5	2	52	25%
Plymouth Road (west of Dixboro Rd.)				10	8	3	21	10%
Future Border-to-Border Trail	2		1		10	4	17	8%
N. Pontiac Trail (to Earhart & Dixboro Rd. in Northfield Twp.	6			3		2	11	5%
Huron River Drive		9	1				10	5%
Ex. Pedestrian Trail under M-14 (Pontiac Trail to Barton Drive	4				2		6	3%
Earhart Rd. (north of M-14)	3				2	1	6	3%
Connection to Gallup Park		6					6	3%
Connecting U. of M./Matthaei /Township Trail with Parker Mill path	1					4	5	2%
Dixboro Road (connecting Matthaei with Woodridge Ave.)	3						3	1%
Warren Road (west of CSX tracks; coord. w/existing bus stop)				3			3	1%
Whitmore Lake Road					2		2	1%
Earhart Road (south of M-14)/Woodridge Ave.						2	2	1%
Stein Road				1			1	.5%
Dhu Varren Road (City of Ann Arbor)					1		1	.5%
Connection with Downtown Ann Arbor					1		1	.5%
Maple Road							0	
Newport Road							0	
East Huron River Drive/Hogback							0	
Geddes Road (between Border-to-Border Trail & Superior Twp.)							0	
Total	28	42	42	42	36	21	211	



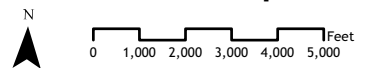
Map 11

PRIORITY NON-MOTORIZED CORRIDORS

Legend

- Priority Corridors
- Destinations
- Future Border-to-Border Trail
- Potential Future On/Off-Road Routes
- Existing Sidewalks
- Existing On-Road Bike Lanes/Marked Paved Shoulders
- Existing On-Road Unmarked Paved Shoulders
- Existing Off-Road Shared-Use Paths

Ann Arbor Township Master Plan Update



Base Map: Ann Arbor Township and Washtenaw County

8-13-14

Carlisle/Wortman Associate, Inc.
Community Planners & Landscape Architects



(WATS, 2006 & 2012; SEMCOG, 2008; & SE Mi Foundation, 2006)

Public Review and Public Hearing

After the input received through the surveys and public meeting was considered and the recreation trends, deficiencies, and other background information were reviewed, the master plan goals and objectives were formulated, and an action program for implementation was developed.

A complete draft plan was then prepared which was made available for public review beginning on **December x, 2014**. Copies were placed at the Township Hall and on the Township's website. The plan's availability for public review was posted at the Township Hall and in the **(NEWSPAPER)**. Comments reviewed from the month-long public review were considered and incorporated into a final draft plan which was submitted for the Township Board's consideration.

The public input into the plan culminated in an advertised public hearing held on **February x, 2015**. After the hearing, the Ann Arbor Township Board of Trustees adopted the plan **by resolution**.

All of the documents described here are provided in the Supporting Documents section of the Plan.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals and objectives were formulated to provide direction and a long-term vision for Ann Arbor Township parks and recreation. The goals and objectives are broad enough to encompass the needs expressed from the public, Township officials and staff as well as to address the observed deficiencies in the recreation resources of the area. In addition, they consider demographics, current and anticipated growth and development, the area's physical resources and national and state recreation trends.

Goal 1. Land, Open Space, and Natural Features Preservation:

Ann Arbor Township is characterized by unique natural features, farmland, and rural landscapes. Although the township is establishing a legacy of farmland, open space preservation, and environmental awareness and stewardship, its growth rate has placed the Township's remaining open spaces at risk of development.

Existing natural features, such as wood lots, wetlands, stream corridors, and fence rows should be protected and preserved. They should be respected in farming activities, in daily living in rural residential areas, and in development planning and construction. These features are important as visual amenities, are critical elements in sustaining the rural character of the Township, and are essential in protecting water quality, wildlife habitat and wildlife corridors. Most communities, especially townships, have natural features but the patterns and relationships between various natural features that they collectively create are usually unique to each community. So it is with Ann Arbor Township. Its natural features play a vital part in establishing the Township's character and identity.

Future preservation efforts should focus on preserving environmentally sensitive land, farmland, and open spaces to tie these areas together and form a continuous open space system connected to the community's facilities. A priority on acquisition, preservation, and stewardship of the Township's natural features, farmland, and open spaces is important to ensure an ecologically sound open space system. The land and open spaces that are preserved may present opportunities for public recreation. They will also require active management to ensure the long-term protection and restoration of its ecosystems.

Goal 2. Non-Motorized Transportation

In addition to preserving farmland, open space, and natural features, there is a strong desire for a non-motorized transportation system that connect neighborhoods, parks, schools, shopping, and employment. The establishment of an interconnected, multi-modal, easily accessible, and safe non-motorized system is recognized as a priority for Ann Arbor Township.

Townships don't have jurisdiction over the public roadway system. However, Ann Arbor Township developed a vision for non-motorized facilities to illustrate its priorities for future non-motorized facilities along both major roadways (under the jurisdiction of the Washtenaw County Road Commission - WCRC). One purpose of this plan is to communicate to the WCRC the Township's desires for non-motorized facilities within the right-of-way of major roads. The Township intends to work with the WCRC to implement these facilities as a part of roadway projects.

The Priority Corridor Map also illustrates a desired pathway through U. of M.'s Radrick Golf Course and Matthaei Botanic Garden. The Township has worked with Matthaei to secure partial funding for this pathway. It will continue to work with these partners, as well as adjoining communities, Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS), Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation, and others, to realize this vision for trails in the Township.

Other off-road, non-motorized transportation facilities are also part of the Township's vision, which would coordinate with on-road facilities to create a looped system of non-motorized trails to allow for recreation, pedestrian and bicycle transportation throughout the Township, and to important local destinations. Separate paths should be at least eight feet in width and paved when located adjacent to major roadways.

Goal 3. Collaborations and Partnerships

Achieving each of the preceding goals will require cooperation with neighbors. For example, the Fleming Creek watershed is located in four townships and the City of Ann Arbor. The creek discharges into the Huron River in the southeast corner of Ann Arbor Township. Success in reaching goals and implementing policies that Ann Arbor Township has regarding preservation of the water quality in Fleming Creek or of protecting the stream corridor will depend to a great extent on preservation efforts upstream in Northfield, Superior, Salem Townships and the City of Ann Arbor. An on-going planning and working relationship with its neighbors is essential if Ann Arbor Township is to have a reasonable chance at achieving its other goals. The City and Township Boundary Policy Statement provides a significant example of cooperative community planning.

In addition, the Township is a participant in the Washtenaw Metro Alliance (WMA), an organization dedicated to "protect our quality of life by anticipating issues before they become problems, to enhance our quality of life by identifying opportunities to maintain our sense of place through commitment to leadership and action."

The WMA has adopted a document entitled: "Green Places: Open Spaces - A Plan for Coordinated Parkland and Open Space." This document will help member communities better integrate and coordinate open space preservation efforts. In addition to Ann Arbor Township, WMA includes the City of Ann Arbor, City of Ypsilanti, Pittsfield Township, Scio Township, Superior Township, Ypsilanti Township, and Washtenaw County.

ACTION PROGRAM

The action program details the manner in which the goals and objectives will be met. It includes a list of specific actions, as well as a schedule with suggested tasks to be accomplished and strategies for implementation. In particular, the action program discusses how the Township will begin implementing their vision for non-motorized transportation facilities within the community.

Action Plan

The following actions are recommended for accomplishment during the five-year planning period.

1. Participate in the Township's land preservation efforts.

- Participate in the advancement of Ann Arbor Township's land preservation program and the activities of the Farmland Preservation Board. Develop a map and regular news updates on the activities of the Board.
- Continue to support and promote the use of the Farmland Preservation Fund for farmland preservation, open space and parkland acquisition.
- Maintain and nurture partnerships with the City of Ann Arbor Greenbelt Program, Washtenaw County Natural Areas Preservation Program, the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission, and others, as well as state and federal programs for future open space acquisition projects.
- Collaboration between the Township Board and Planning Commission to ensure open space preservation and parkland needs are considered in the review of new developments and to review regulations used by developers to set aside land appropriate for open space preservation and community parkland.

2. Implement a Township-wide non-motorized transportation plan.

- Partner with the University of Michigan and Matthaei Botanic Garden to design and implement the non-motorized trail proposed between Parker Mill County Park and Matthaei Botanical Garden along the Fleming Creek corridor.
- Develop an action plan for the Township-wide pathway system construction. Priority should be given to the primary arteries of Plymouth Road, Huron River Drive, Geddes Road, Dixboro Road, Maple Road, and Pontiac Trail.
- Further coordinate the Township pathway system with the non-motorized plans and projects of the City of Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County, in particular Huron River Drive and the Border-to-Border Trail.

3. Provide for sustainable parks, open spaces, and trails with fiscally sound administrative and operational strategies.

- Actively seek sources of funding for park, open space, and trail management and development through public and private grants, donations, and other fundraising activities.
- Communicate information regarding the vision for Ann Arbor Township's recreation facilities and the Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan to the residents through the Township's website and other means.
- Advocate the goals and objectives adopted in the current Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan to the Township Board and Planning Commission to ensure park, open space, and recreation needs are considered in the Township's future planning initiatives and in the review of new developments.

Project Schedule

Table 5 lists individual projects along with the specific goal references, a cost estimate, and potential funding sources. In addition, a time frame for completion has been assigned. Short-term projects are recommended for completion within one to two years, medium-term within two to five years while long-term projects may take longer to complete, within five to six years.

Table 5. Capital Improvement Schedule

Project		Goals	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Time Frame
	Planning Commission and Township Board to review existing regulations that call for preserving open space and/or encouraging land set aside for parkland uses, ensuring their effectiveness	1	-		ST - MT
Informational, Marketing, and Promotional Materials	Develop/update a map of the Township's land preservation efforts showing the properties preserved to date.	1	Minimal	General Fund	ST - MT
	Expand information available on the Township's website regarding the Farmland Preservation Board's activities.	1	Minimal	General Fund	ST - MT
	Create an Ann Arbor Township trails "vision" brochure	2	\$5,000	General Fund	ST - MT
	Promote the Ann Arbor Township Park, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan to residents to ensure implementation.	1, 2 & 3	Minimal	General Fund	ST - MT
Land Preservation	Establish acquisition priorities based on presence of sensitive natural features and develop open space preservation plan to help guide acquisition decision-making and development review.	1 & 3	To be Determined	Land Preservation Fund, Grants, & Donations	ST - MT - LT
	Continue to seek partnerships with the City of Ann Arbor Greenbelt Program, the Natural Areas Preservation Program, Washtenaw County, and U. of M. for acquisition projects	1 & 3	To be Determined	Land Preservation Fund, Grants, & Donations	ST - MT - LT
	Continue communications with the Washtenaw County Road Commission for implementing on-road non-motorized facilities.	2	Minimal	General Fund	ST - MT
	Seek funding to manage Township open spaces.	1	To be determined	General Fund, Grants & Donations	ST - MT - LT
Non-Motorized Transportation	Formulate an action plan to implement the Township's Priority Non-Motorized Corridors vision (this effort should be coordinated with Washtenaw County Road Commission and Washtenaw County Parks)	2	\$15,000	General Fund	ST - MT
	Seek additional funding to implement the pathway planned between Parker Mill County Park and Matthaei Botanical Garden along Fleming Creek.	2	To be determined	General Fund, Grants & Donations	ST - MT - LT
	Seek funding to maintain Township non-motorized facilities.	2	To be determined	General Fund, Grants & Donations	ST - MT - LT

Implementation Strategies

To accomplish the recommended actions during the next five years, it will be necessary to secure adequate funding. The current budget provides a limited amount of money for parks and recreation facilities. Therefore, the following strategies are recommended in order to proceed as planned.

Apply for Federal Funding

At the federal level, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) in conjunction with SEMCOG funds the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). A minimum 20 percent local match is required for proposed projects and applications are accepted online on an on-going basis. Activities which may apply to Ann Arbor Township include:

- Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles including new or reconstructed sidewalks, walkways, curb ramps, bike lane striping, wide paved shoulders, bike parking, off-road trails, bike and pedestrian bridges and underpasses; and
- Provision of safety and educational programs for pedestrians and bicyclists designed to encourage walking and bicycling.

Apply for State Funding

At the state level, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) and the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) continue to be the primary funding sources for park land acquisition and development. The new Recreation Passport grant also offers some state funding to local units of government.

The MNRTF provides funding for the purchase and development of parkland for natural resource-based preservation and recreation.

Grant proposals must include a local match of at least 25 percent of the total project cost. There is no minimum or maximum for acquisition projects. For development projects, the minimum funding request was \$15,000 and the maximum was \$300,000 in 2014. Applications are typically due April 1st.

The LWCF is a federal appropriation to the National Park Service, which distributes funds to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for development of outdoor recreation facilities. The focus of the program has recently been on trailway systems and other community recreation needs such as playgrounds, picnic areas, skate parks, ball fields, soccer fields and walking paths. Minimum grant requests were \$30,000 and maximum grant requests were \$100,000 in 2014. The match percentage is 50 percent of the total project cost. Applications are typically due on April 1st.

The Recreation Passport grant program offers funding for the development of public recreation facilities for local units of government. Minimum grant requests were \$7,500 and maximum requests were \$45,000 in 2014. The local match obligation is 25 percent of the total project cost. Applications are usually due on April 1st as well.

Other funding conducted in partnership with the MDNR is available through other state government divisions, such as the Fisheries Division (Inland Fisheries Grants) and the Forest Resources Division (Community Forestry Grants).

The Inland Fisheries program considers projects that enhance habitat and fisheries, riparian property for public fishing use, water quality and ecology. While not offered in 2014, they may become available in the future.

Municipalities may use Community Forestry grants to develop a management plan for a municipal forest which would include a component targeting outreach to private landowners. Grant requests may be up to \$20,000 depending on the project type and applications are usually due in the middle of the summer. Detroit Edison also offers tree planting grants for up to \$3,000 to local municipalities in its coverage area.

Apply for Other Grant Funding

The Washtenaw County Connecting Communities Initiative is a county-wide program that provides funds to supplement those provided or obtained by the partner organization to construct non-motorized connections between communities and activity centers – offering a healthy alternative for recreation, transportation, fitness and energy conservation. Ann Arbor Township and Matthaei Botanical Garden received a \$250,000 grant in 2014 from the Connecting Communities Initiative to put toward construction of the trail along Fleming Creek between Parker Mill County Park and Matthaei Botanical Garden.

There are also a variety of smaller grant programs available for the establishment of greenways, walk/bike ways, or greenway-related facilities such as Bikes Belong Coalition. The Bikes Belong Coalition is sponsored by members of the American Bicycle Industry. Their mission is to put more people on bikes more often. The program funds projects in three categories: facility, education and capacity building. Requests for funding can be up to \$10,000 for projects such as bike paths, trails, lanes, parking and safe routes to school. Applications are reviewed on a quarterly basis.

Increase Support for Parks

Public support for parks and recreation will be crucial in what the Township will be able to provide in the future. A specific project millage could be considered in the future for particular projects such as walk/bike way development or maintenance.

Seek Other Sources of Funding

Ann Arbor Township should investigate additional sources of funding. Seeking donations, attracting sponsors, holding fund-raising events and seeking out other revenue sources are methods that should continue to be pursued aggressively to raise funding for land acquisition and development.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Surveys

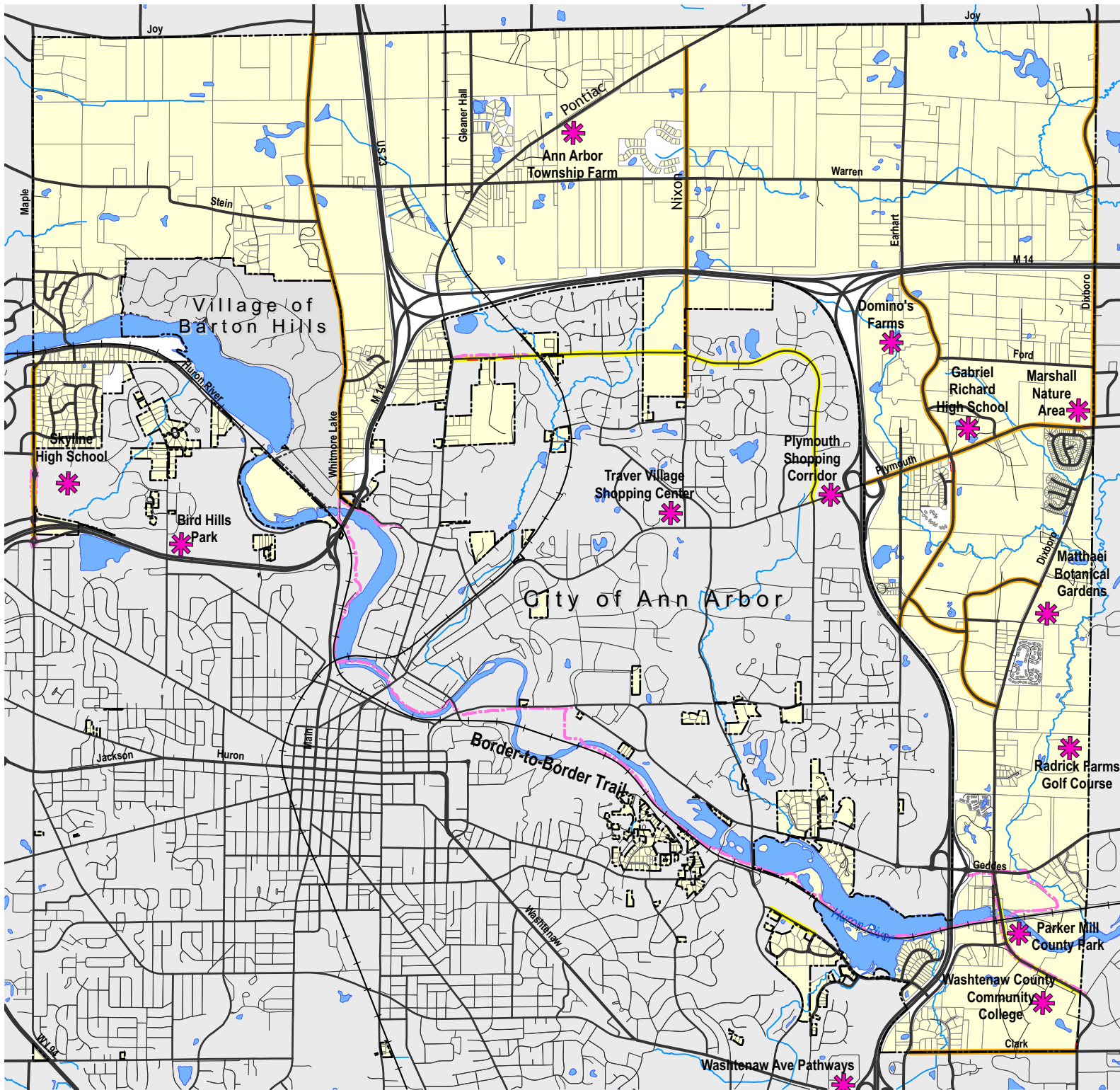
Notices of Draft Plan Availability & Public Hearing

Minutes of Public Hearing

Board of Trustees Resolution

Letters of Transmittal






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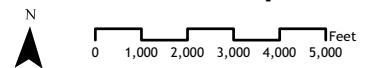
Map A

EXISTING NON-MOTORIZED FACILITIES & DESTINATIONS

Legend

-  Destinations
-  Sidewalks (5' wide min.)
-  On-Road Bike Lanes/Marked Paved Shoulders (4-5 ft. wide min.)
-  On-Road Unmarked Paved Shoulders (about 2-3' wide)
-  Off-Road Shared-Use Paths (8-10' wide, asphalt)

Ann Arbor Township Master Plan Update

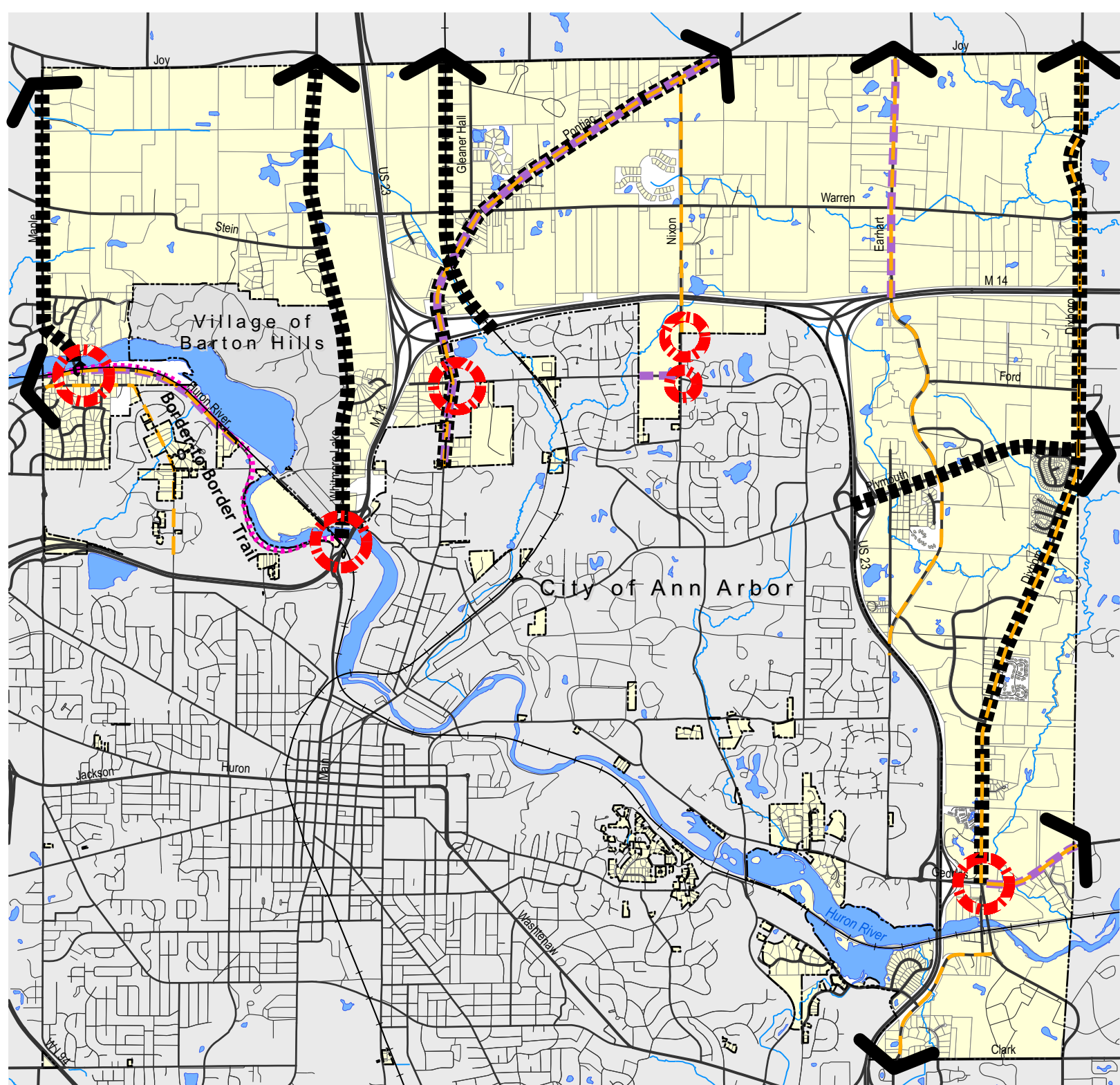


Base Map: Ann Arbor Township and Washtenaw County

8-13-14

Carlisle/Wortman Associate, Inc.
Community Planners & Landscape Architects





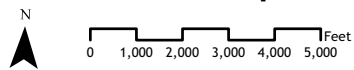
Map B

BASIS FOR NON-MOTORIZED PRIORITIES

Legend

- WATS 2012 Complete Streets Plan
- WATS 2006 Non-Motorized Plan
- Regional Trails & Greenways Vision 2006
- Future Border-to-Border Trail
- Connections with Adjacent Townships
- Connections with City of Ann Arbor

Ann Arbor Township Master Plan Update

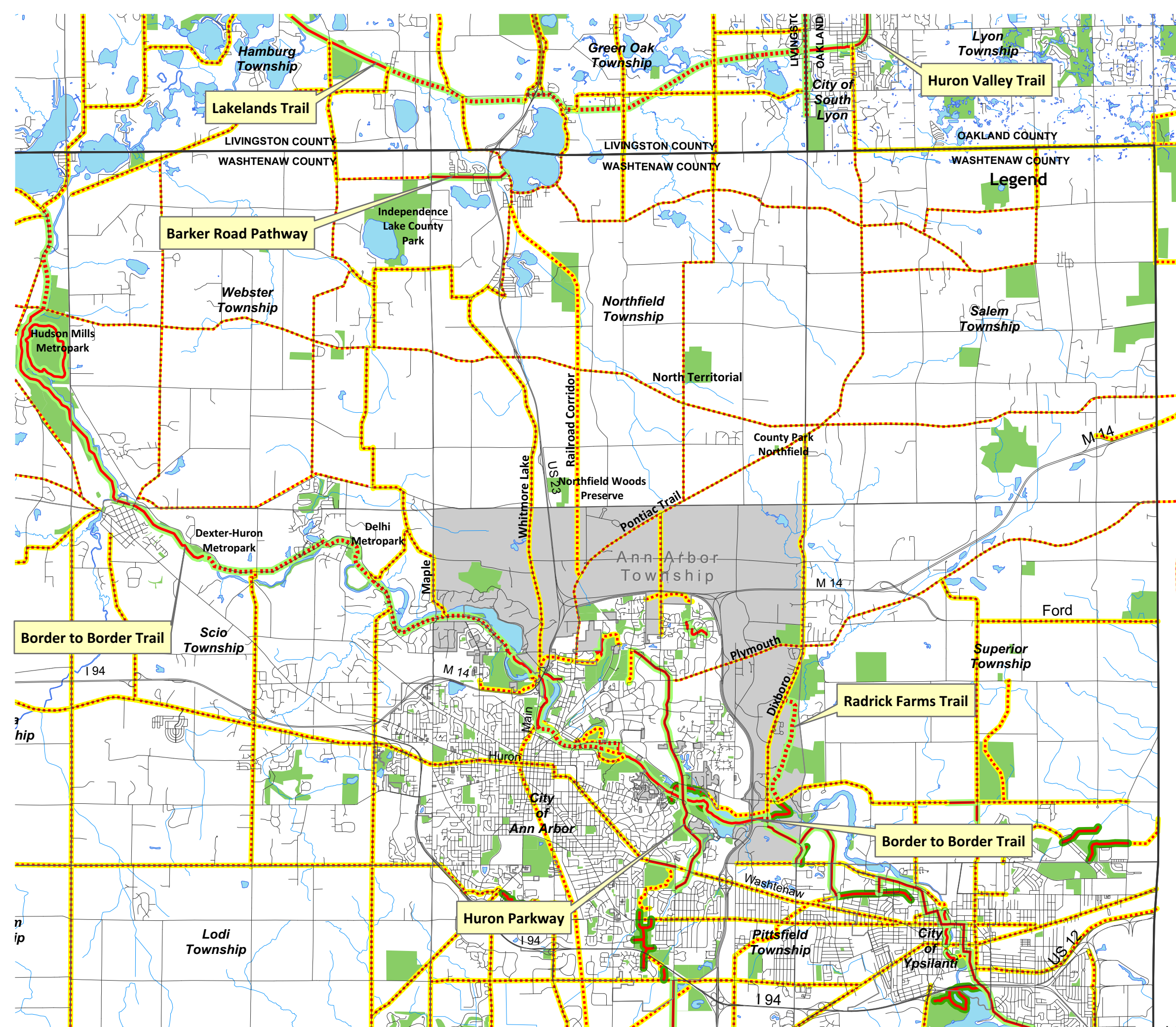


Base Map: Ann Arbor Township and Washtenaw County

8-13-14

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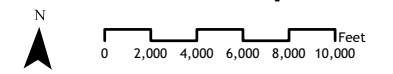
Legend

- Existing Off-Road Shared-Use Path
- - - Planned Off-Road Shared-Use Path
- - - Potential Future On/Off-Road Routes

Source: WATS Complete Streets Plan (2012) and Non-Motorized Plan (2006), SEMCOG Greenways Data (2008), and Regional Greenways Initiative (2006)

Map C
EXISTING & PLANNED
REGIONAL NON-MOTORIZED
ROUTES

Ann Arbor Township
Master Plan Update



Base Map: Ann Arbor Township and Washtenaw County