

Howell Township Park Master Plan

In 2010, Howell Township acquired five parcels of land at the heart of the Township near the intersection of Bowen and Tooley Roads. The parcel southwest of Warner and Tooley is planned for use as a municipal complex, with a new fire station and town hall being considered.

Two additional parcels lie east and north of the Tooley and Warner Road intersection. The parcels, which are currently farmed, total just over 160 acres. The Township began talking about park development on these parcels in 2018. In October of 2024, the Spicer Group prepared a development plan showing a parking lot, rain garden, benches, and roughly one mile of trail winding through the property.

Since 2022, Township voters have been using the Livingston County EMS facility at 1911 Tooley Road as their polling place. This lease expires in 2028 and cannot be renewed, meaning a new polling place will need to be established prior to the 2029 election. Previous research in 2022 found no suitable locations within the Township boundaries. This new deadline forced the Township to consider other options for polling locations, and ultimately lead to discussions about development of a new community center that could double as a polling place.

The attached Park Master Plan is intended to act as a development guide for the property. It shows the general layout and potential improvements to be implemented in phases. The layout shows desired amenities are shown to-scale, and the plan takes into consideration slopes, soils, and other site constraints to ensure the layout is as accurate as possible.

Major Site Constraints

The floodplain of the South Branch of the Shiawassee River takes up much of the eastern sides of the property. This segment of the river is part of an 8-mile Super Fund Site established due to PCB contamination released upstream by the former Cast Forge Company. The floodplain boundary closely align with the forested areas on the north and east sides. Visitors will be restricted from entering this area, and no site development is planned for the zone.

The site is generally characterized as gently rolling with a few areas of steep slopes. The steepest slopes are limited to the edge of the floodplain and will not be disturbed. The buildings and paths are positioned to limit site grading and ensure that the park will remain ADA compliant.

Finally, the Township wants to be a good neighbor to those property owners adjacent to the park. Fencing and strategic planting is included to discourage trespassing on neighboring properties. The proposed buildings are aligned to act as a noise buffer between surrounding properties and any active-use areas. The proposed reforestation areas will also help to disperse and deaden any noise from activities on the site.

Design Considerations

The Community Center/Polling Place will be designed to retain a rustic feel that fits in with the surrounding community. Taking advantage of the existing topography would allow the proposed buildings to retain a relatively low profile.



Example: Berthoud Recreation Center, Berthoud, CO



Example: Devon Creek Clubhouse, Lancaster, PA

The proposed sports building would provide indoor practice space during inclement weather, but would be designed to be multifunctional, allowing for uses beyond sports. Like the Community Center, it would retain a rustic feel and could be set into the terrain to reduce the exterior height.



Example: Byron Township Recreation Center, Byron Center, MI



Example: Waxhaw Recreation Barn, Waxhaw, NC

Prairie Restoration & Pathways

The prairie restoration would improve habitat and attract local fauna. A wetland overlook on a knoll on the north end of the park would provide excellent opportunities for birdwatching. Benches and wayfinding signs would be placed strategically to guide visitors through the park and highlight special features.



Flex Lawn / Special Event Area

A flexible play space is positioned just north of the community center building. A small stage is shown on the northwest end, allowing movie nights and small concerts in the park with lawn seating capable of holding approximately 1,500 people. It is positioned so sound would travel to the southeast, away from residences.

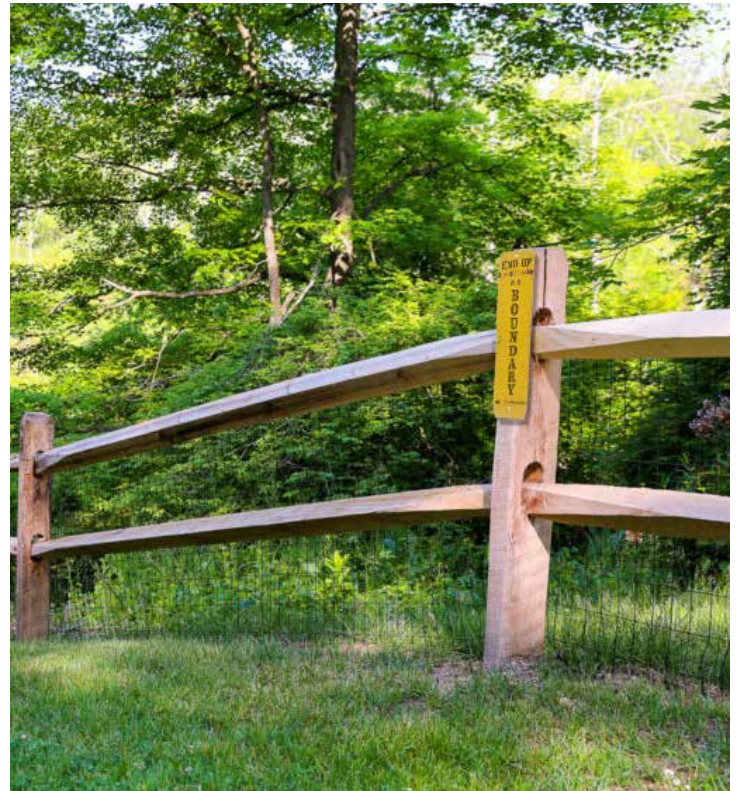


Example: Berthoud Recreation Center, Berthoud, CO

Privacy Considerations

Every effort is being made to protect the privacy of neighboring properties. Berms near the entry drives and reforested areas along the west side of the park will screen views of the park and serve as a deterrent to trespassers. A detention pond is strategically placed to act as an additional barrier, and split rail fencing running along the perimeter of the use areas will be marked with “Park Boundary / No Trespassing” signs. Wayfinding kiosks will clearly show the park boundaries, and will include park rules at all major intersections.

The parking lot and main buildings have been moved south from previous iterations, shifting the entrances away from the intersection of Tooley and Warner Roads. The adjustment was completed both to respect privacy and to reduce safety concerns at the intersection.



Site location and Township-owned properties

