



Ira Township Recreation Plan 2016-2021

Prepared by: Ira Township Recreation Advisory Committee
Adopted by: Ira Township Board
Assisted by: Clearzoning, Inc./Giffels Webster
Adopted: June 6, 2016

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Ira Township Recreation Plan



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1 Community Description

Ira Township prepared this Recreation Plan to:

- Create an inventory of existing parks and recreation facilities in and around the Township.
- Gain community input on parks and recreation strengths and weaknesses.
- Develop goals and objectives that will lead to future improvements.

This plan will address parks located within and under the jurisdiction of Ira Township. All aspects of recreation will be evaluated through the planning process. The previous Recreation Plan, completed in 2009, will be reviewed; any remaining goals that are still pertinent will be detailed. New objectives will be added as appropriate.

Community Profile

Ira Township is located in southern St. Clair County and possesses a long stretch of shoreline on Lake St. Clair's Anchor Bay. Access to the region is provided by M-29 and Marine City Highway; I-94 runs within a mile of the Township's northwestern corner.

The Township is bordered by Chesterfield Township and New Baltimore to the west, Lenox Township to the northwest, Casco Township to the north, China

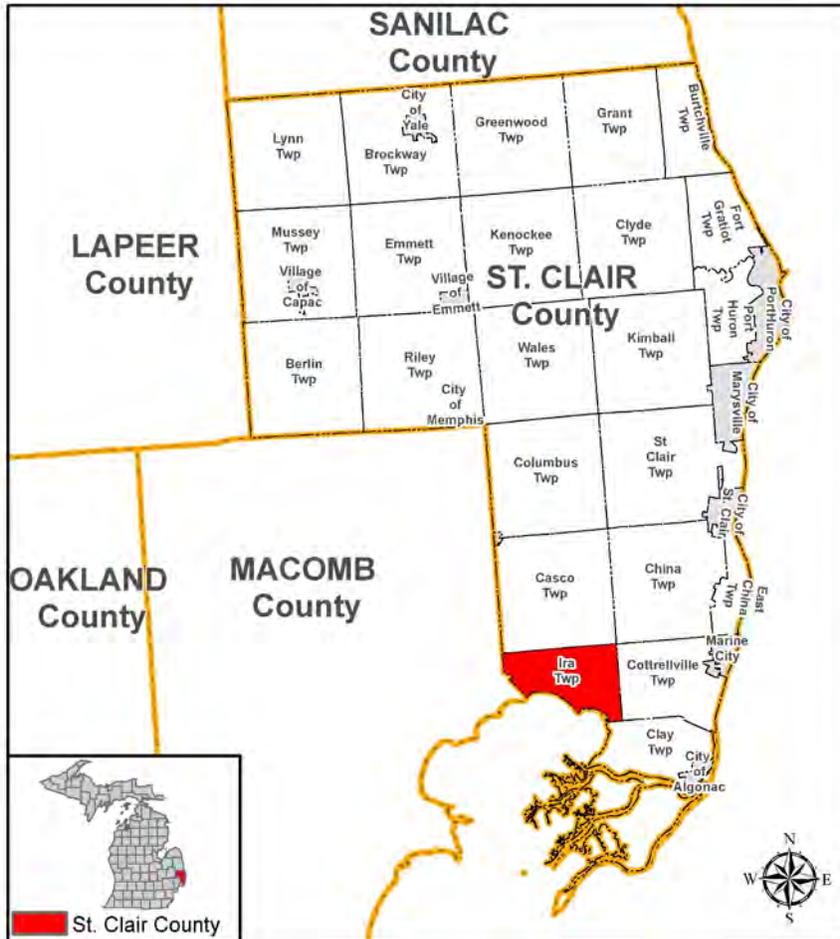
Township to the northeast, Cottrellville Township to the east, and Clay Township to the south/southeast. Ira Township is approximately 17.1 square miles.

Population

The 2014 population for Ira Township was 4,894, down from 5,178 in 2010. From 1970 thru 2000, the township had experienced steady population increases, peaking at 6,766 residents. Much of the township's population loss from 2000 to 2010 can be attributed to the displacement of residents from a single very large mobile home park following a change in ownership. The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) projects the Township's population to potentially rebound to 6,217 residents by 2040.

The number of households has decreased over the past ten years as well, from 2,677 to 2,068. The sale of the mobile home park also contributed greatly to this decrease. Household size has decreased slightly from 2.60 to 2.50 persons. The Township's 4,894 residents are split fairly evenly between males and females.

While the Township's population has decreased, there has been a large increase in one segment of the population: adults aged 55 and over. From 2010 to 2013, the Census reports the median age



Map 1 Location of Ira Township

population will play a role in the planning of recreation needs now and in the future.

Land Use & Zoning

Ira Township’s population is concentrated in the area along the shoreline, where many small lots line Lake St. Clair and the canals of Fair Haven. Industrial development lies primarily in the northwest corner of the Township, near Marine City Highway, while commercial development, including marinas, is mostly in the M-29 corridor, with major concentrations in the unincorporated communities of Fair Haven and Anchorville. The vast majority of the Township is large-lot residential development, agriculture, and vacant land. About 5.4% of the Township’s area is roads.

Less than 20% of the Township is considered developed. Single-family residential use is the largest segment

increased from 39.7 to 44.9 years. SEMCOG projects that this trend will continue—in Ira Township as well as in the region and the country.

In St. Clair County, the 55+ population rose from 22,811 in 2000 to 24,471 in 2013. SEMCOG projects this population segment to nearly double to 42,022 by 2040. This increase in the senior population is not only due to the aging Baby Boomer segment, but also is due to our population living longer and a lower overall birth rate. This growing segment of the Township’s

of land use, with approximately 8.9% of total land use. Most of the Township’s developed land is located within the M-29 corridor, which generally runs parallel to the Lake St. Clair shoreline. The next largest land-use is roads at 5.4%, followed by commercial/industrial/marina (1.8%) and public/semi-public (1.1%).

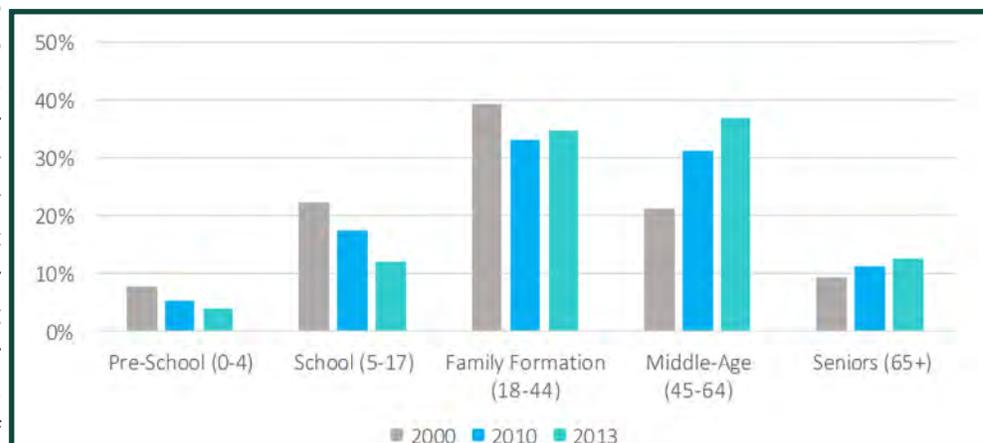
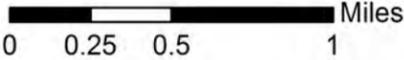


Fig. 1-1 Ira Township Age Distribution

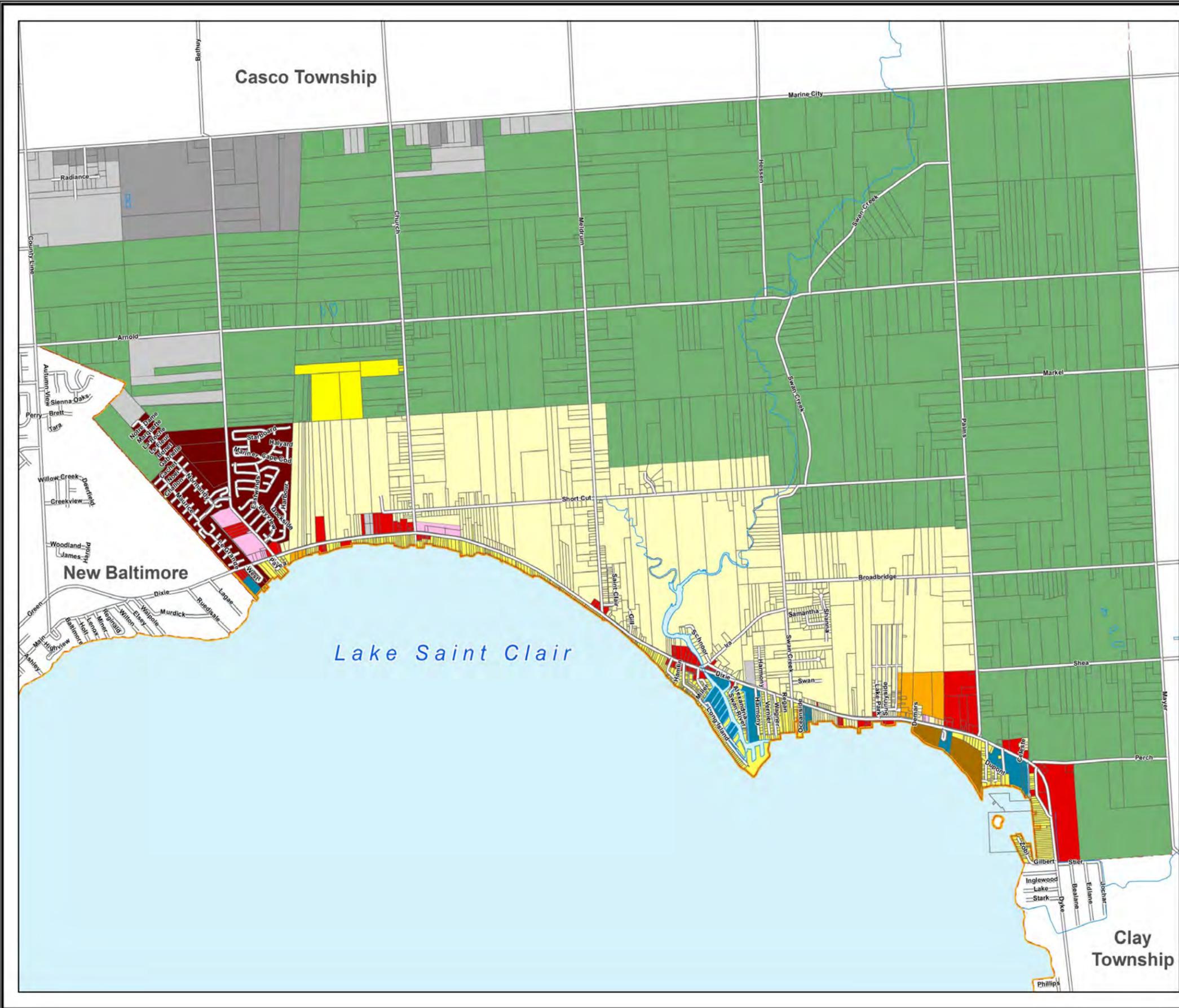
Official Zoning Map

Ira Township
St. Clair County, Michigan

- AEC Agricultural
- RS Residential Suburban
- RU Residential Urban
- RT Residential Transitional
- RM1 Multiple-Family Residential (Low-Rise)
- RM2 Multiple-Family Residential (Low-Rise)
- RM3 Multiple-Family Residential (High-Rise)
- MH Mobile Home Park
- B1 Local Business
- B2 General Business
- WM Waterfront Marina
- I-1 Light Industrial
- I-2 Heavy Industrial



Base Map Source: St Clair County GIS
 Map Created: March 12, 2015
 Includes amendments adopted through
 November 3, 2014 and
 Effective: November 18, 2015



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2 Administrative Structure

Ira Township has one parks staff member, the Recreation Director.

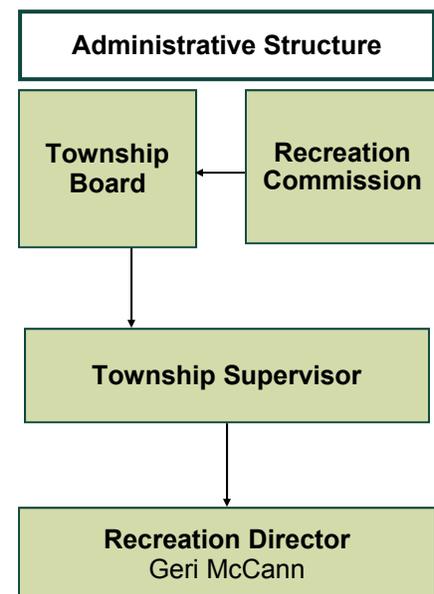
The Recreation Plan is developed by the seven-member Recreation Commission, which advises the Township Board on the recreation needs of the Township. The purpose of the plan is to identify the Township’s near- and long-term recreation needs and develop a program to address these needs.

The Recreation Commission is an all-volunteer body that is directly involved in planning and running events. The Commission welcomes other volunteers and in particular seeks volunteers to aid in its programmed events. The Township does not have ongoing relationships with the local school districts or other local organizations for recreation activities or facilities. The Township benefits from St. Clair County Parks & Recreation’s distribution of funds from the county park millage to municipalities.

The total Township budget for Parks & Recreation for fiscal 2014/2015 was \$70,220. Expenditures through March 15, 2015 were \$36,174.53. The 2015/2016 budget is \$53,077. Recreation funding is derived from allocations in the Township general budget and the St. Clair County parks millage.

Table 1. Ira Township Parks and Recreation Budget

	FY: 2014-2015	FY: 2015-2016
Personnel Costs	\$7,200	\$7,200
Contracted Services	\$5,300	\$20,800
Supplies	\$400	\$500
Sand/Gravel/Mulch	\$2,000	\$3,000
Programs	\$1,150	\$1,100
Transportation	\$100	\$50
Maintenance	\$8,220	\$7,185
Beautification Committee	\$150	\$150
Capital Outlays/ Improvements	\$45,000	\$12,392
Total	\$70,220	\$53,077



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3 Parks & Recreation Inventory

Ira Township residents have access to a variety of recreation opportunities. Within the Township, Ira Township Municipal Park offers picnic areas, a war memorial, trails, playgrounds, basketball courts, a volleyball court, and disc golf, while Water Works Park offers a small waterfront area with an open field and access to fishing. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) also operates a boat launch within the Township, and athletic facilities are available at several schools. A portion of the St. John’s Marsh State Wildlife Area is located within the Township’s southeastern corner.

Beyond the Township’s limits, St. Clair County, the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority and the State of Michigan offer numerous recreation opportunities within a short drive of Ira Township. These other facilities offer many activities not available at Township recreation facilities, including swimming, horseback riding, game areas, fishing, boating, hiking, camping, wildlife study, splash pads, museums, butterfly gardens, and off-road bicycling. Private recreation opportunities in neighboring townships include golf courses and gun clubs.

Various methods were employed to assess local recreational facilities including a review of aerials and existing maps, wind shield surveys, site visits, and discussions with recreational providers. The primary methods used to assess the usability of the Ira Township Municipal Park and Water Works Park were walking tours and input from actual park users. The inventory that follows provides a detailed look at the amenities available at the Township park facilities, as well as the local schools, and an overview of golf courses, private recreation areas, and regional parks in the area.



IRA TOWNSHIP PARKS

Ira Township Municipal Park

This park is located near the Township Hall and Public Library and encompasses over 33 acres, including the South Park site. It can accommodate small events and features a war memorial, playscapes, a picnic area with shelter and grills, trails, and a disc golf course.

Type	Community Park
Size	33 acres
Accessibility Rating	2

DNR Grant Inventory:

Project #: 26-01549

Name: Ira Township Hall Park

Year: 1994

Scope: \$12,752.54 to develop a community park at Township offices, with play equipment, picnic area and shelter

Status: Closed

In 1998, Grant #BF98-050 was withdrawn.

Amenities

1 pavilion with tables
1 basketball court
Swings
2 playscapes (toddler, child)
Sandbox
Horseshoe pits
Volleyball court
Water fountain (for both people and dogs)
Benches
Grills
Walking trail
Disc golf course
War memorial
Parking lot



IRA TOWNSHIP PARKS

Water Works Park

This 2.5-acre waterfront park sits on a peninsula surrounded by canal views, and provides opportunities for Township residents south of M-29 in Fair Haven.

Type	Mini Park
Size	2.5 acres
Accessibility Rating	3

Amenities
Asphalt paved walking/biking path
Benches
Fishing from seawall
Parking lot

DNR Grant Inventory:

Project #: CM99-019

Name: Waterworks Neighborhood Park

Year: 1999

Scope: \$144,000 to develop small peninsula with seawall and walkways as a neighborhood park

Status: Closed



Barrier-Free Analysis

A critical component in planning for recreation facilities is providing barrier-free access to accommodate the needs of both physically and mentally challenged visitors. Barrier-free access includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that adequate barrier-free parking spaces, sidewalks, trails, picnic tables, and playground equipment are provided for renovated or new recreational facilities. Standards from The Accessibility Checklist, a guidebook founded upon the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) and the codes and standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), were used to verify barrier-free compliance.

The MDNR Guidelines require that a barrier-free ranking be given to each facility for assessing its accessibility to persons with disabilities. The assessment considers the accessibility of both the facilities themselves as well as the access routes to them. The following system, provided by the MDNR *Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plans (01/27/06)*, was used to assess each park:

- Rank 1:** None of the facilities / park areas meet accessibility guidelines.
- Rank 2:** Some of the facilities / park areas meet accessibility guidelines.
- Rank 3:** Most of the facilities / park areas meet accessibility guidelines.
- Rank 4:** The entire park meets accessibility guidelines.
- Rank 5:** The entire park was developed / renovated using the principals of universal design.

Accessibility

The U.S. Access Board is designated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as the agency responsible for developing minimum accessibility guidelines to ensure that new construction and alteration of facilities covered by ADA are accessible and useable by people with disabilities. The Access Board has published the following guidelines that should be used by Access to Recreation applicants to determine the criteria they must exceed to achieve universal accessibility:

- Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) 2002:
www.access-board.gov/adaag/html/adaag.htm
- Recommendations for Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas:
www.access-board.gov/outdoor/outdoor-rec-rpt.htm

The National Center on Accessibility is a collaborative program of Indiana University and the National Park Service and also provides information on access for people with disabilities in recreation.

www.ncaonline.org

Accessibility: Barrier Free Analysis

Ira Township Municipal Park

Overall rating: 2 (see details next page)

Water Works Park

Overall rating: 3 (See details next page)

Improvements to Target

In Ira Township, there are general improvements that could be made to each park that would make the parks more accessible:

- Concrete pads adjacent to existing benches will allow users in wheelchairs the ability to be seated next to a friend on a bench.
- Move trash receptacles adjacent to the paved walkways
- Develop paved or stabilized pathways for all amenities within the parks; make all paths of sufficient width for two people to walk side-by-side or pass
- Provide smooth transitions between trails and decks, etc.
- When making playground improvements, provide ramps and transfers, and use “poured-in-place” or rubber tiles under equipment, rather than loose fill material such as woodchips; as playground equipment requires replacement, provide ramps and transfers to all play components.
- Provide accessible seating spaces near sports courts.

Barrier-Free Analysis: Municipal Park

Park Name: Ira Township Municipal Park

Overall Park Rating: 2

Parking

- Y Accessible parking spaces are provided and marked with International Symbol of Accessibility.
- Y Accessible parking is as near to the park entrance as possible.

Play Areas

- N There is an accessible route (60 inches wide) to the entrance of the play area with a slope no steeper than 1:16.
- N For playground equipment, at least one turning space is provided on the same level as play components.
- N Play area surface is firm and stable (mulch/woodchips, sand and gravel are not accessible surfaces)
- N Where multiple swings in a swing bay are provided, one swing is located on an accessible route.
- Y For court sports, at least one accessible route connects both sides of the court.

Park Amenities

- Y Picnic tables provide at least one wheelchair space for each 24 linear feet of usable table surface perimeter. The aisles between chairs and tables are 3 feet wide.
- Y Drinking fountain spout outlets are a maximum of 36 inches above the finish floor or ground.
- N Safety is promoted by good street lighting.
- Ramps are non-slip.
- Y If public restroom facility present, there is at least one fully accessible restroom.

Trails and Sidewalks

- N There is a path of travel that does not require the use of stairs.
- N Bike paths are separate from pedestrian walkways.
- Y Sidewalks are free of obstruction, wide enough for wheelchairs, solid (not made of dirt), and have curb cuts.
- All stairways feature a railing and stair tips that are painted to distinguish each step.
- Handrails are provided on both sides of a ramp.
- N Accessible routes connect all park amenities and coincide with general circulation paths.

Accessibility: Water Works Park

Park Name: Water Works Park

Overall Park Rating: 3

Parking

- Y Accessible parking spaces are provided and marked with International Symbol of Accessibility.
- Y Accessible parking is as near to the park entrance as possible.

Play Areas

- There is an accessible route (60 inches wide) to the entrance of the play area with a slope no steeper than 1:16.
- For playground equipment, at least one turning space is provided on the same level as play components.
- Play area surface is firm and stable (mulch/woodchips, sand and gravel are not accessible surfaces)
- Where multiple swings in a swing bay are provided, one swing is located on an accessible route.
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Local Schools and Other Local Facilities

Schools

Ira Township is split between the Anchor Bay, East China, and Algonac school districts and is the location of Anchor Bay High School, one of the largest public schools in Michigan. The Township has no formal recreation partnerships with any of the three school districts.

Anchor Bay High School

- Extensive athletic facilities
- Ballfields
- Running track
- Soccer fields
- Tennis courts

Palms Elementary School

- 2 playgrounds

Francois Maconce Elementary School

- Playground
- Ballfield

All-Ways Care Services (former Fair Haven School)

- Playground not open to the public

Bloom Academy Kindergarten

- Playground

Immaculate Conception Catholic Elementary School

- Playground

Country Meadows Montessori

- Playground not open to the public

Main Stage Center for the Arts

- Private dance studio

Other Facilities

Anchor Bay Lions Club Park

- Largest recreation facility in Ira Township (39 acres)
- Ballfields
- Small event facility
- Regular activities, including bingo

Manufactured Housing Park Facilities

The Township's mobile home parks provide limited recreational facilities for residents, including playgrounds and swimming pools.

State Boat Launch

- Operated by MDNR
- 2 boat launches
- Restrooms

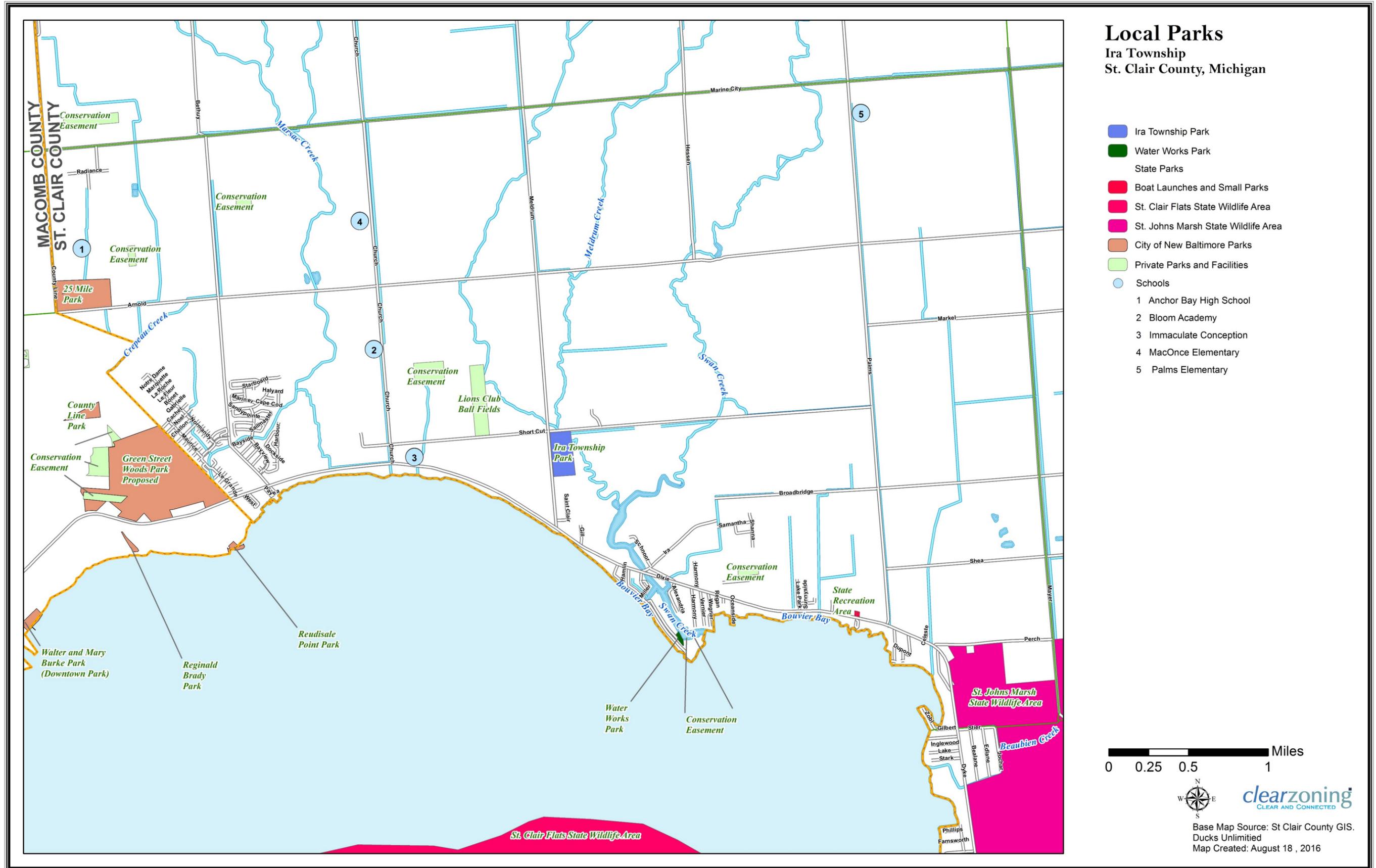
Parks & Rec Programming:

Planned 2016 Events:

- Easter Egg Event
- Canine Program
- Hunger Games Survival Skills
- Archery Program
- Snowmobile Safety
- Trick and Treat Event
- Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony



2015 Trick and Treat Event

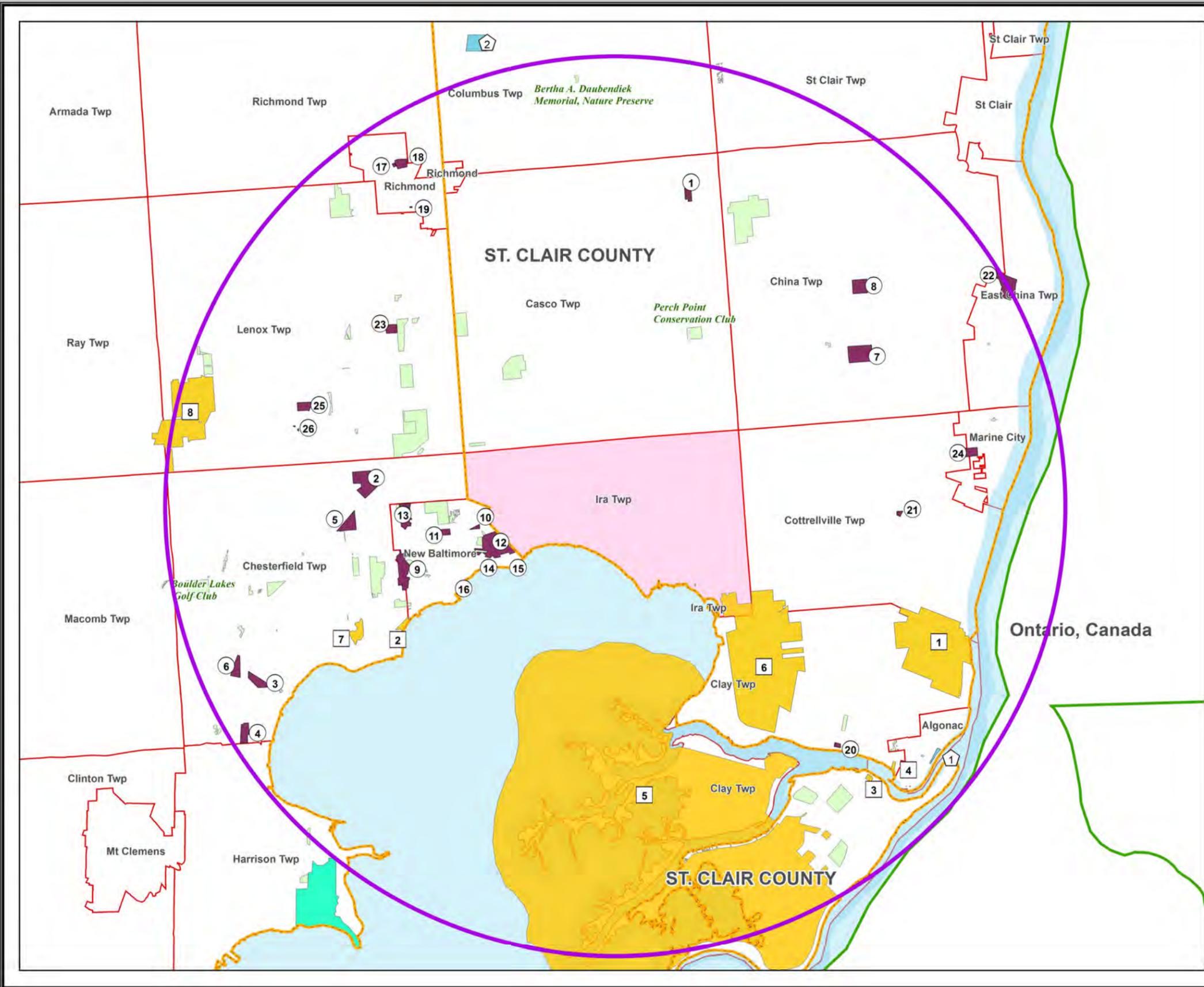


Regional Parks within 10 Miles Ira Township St. Clair County, Michigan

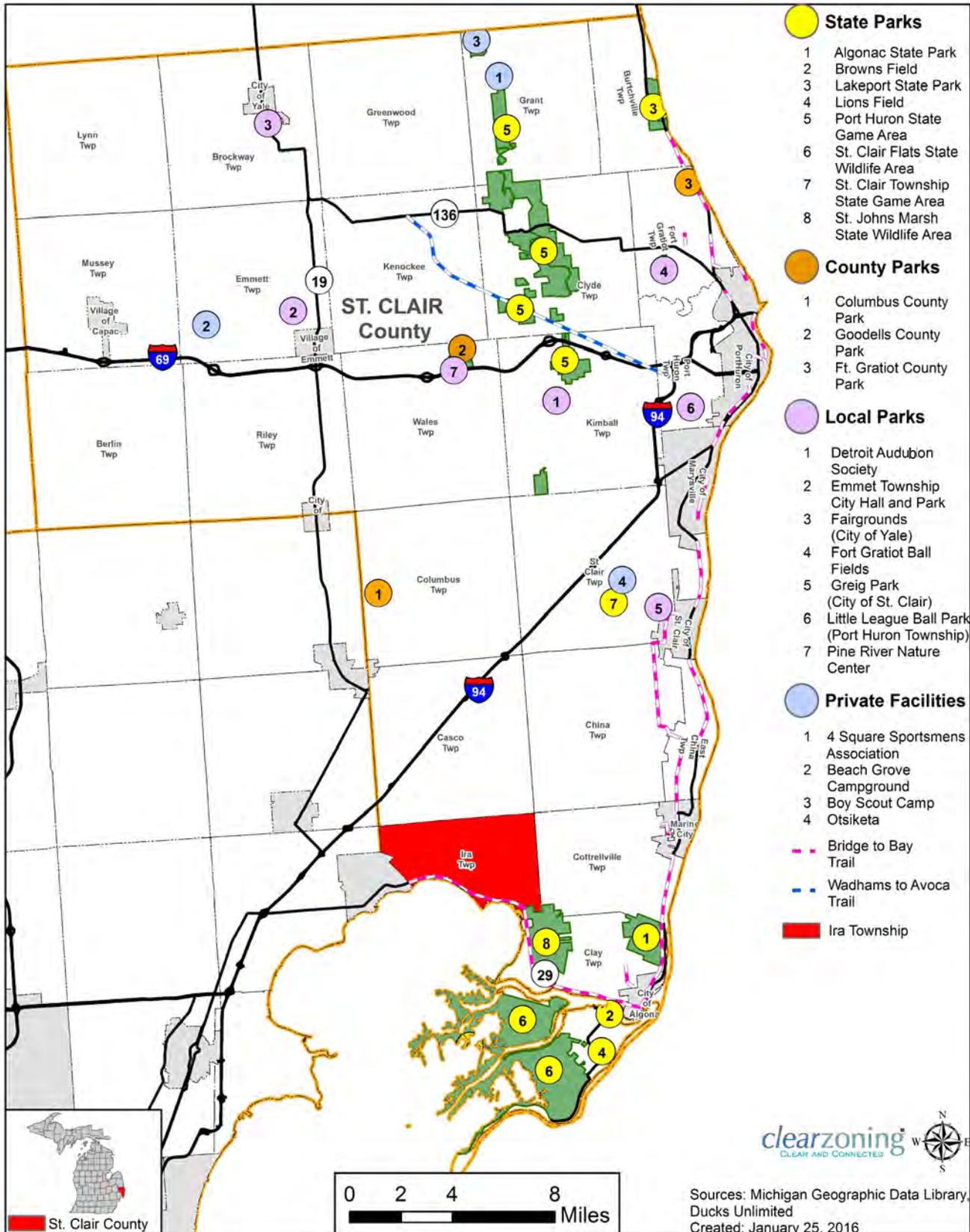
- State Parks
 - 1 Algonac State Park
 - 2 Brandenburg Park
 - 3 Browns Field
 - 4 Boat Launches and Small Parks
 - 5 St. Clair Flats State Wildlife Area
 - 6 St. Johns Marsh State Wildlife Area
 - 7 Salt River Marsh State Wildlife Area
 - 8 Wetzell State Park
- Metro Beach Metropark (Huron Clinton Metropark Authority)
- County Parks
 - 1 Algonac County Park
 - 2 Columbus County Park
- Local Parks
 - Casco Township Parks
 - 1 Casco Township Park
 - Chesterfield Township Parks
 - 2 Bertha M. Pollard Park
 - 3 Chesterfield Township Park
 - 4 Community Center Park
 - 5 Mount Trashmore
 - 6 North Lagoons Property
 - China Township Parks
 - 7 Indian Trail Road Park
 - 8 Township Hall Park
 - City of New Baltimore Parks
 - 9 24 Mile Road Park Site
 - 10 County Line Park
 - 11 Festival Park - Proposed
 - 12 Green Street Woods Park - Proposed
 - 13 Homestead Wetland Park
 - 14 Reginald Brady Park
 - 15 Reudisale Point Park
 - 16 Walter and Mary Burke Park (Downtown Park)
 - City of Richmond Parks
 - 17 Baily Park
 - 18 Beebe Park and Jack Davidson Memorial Field
 - 19 Gierk Street Park
 - Clay Township Parks
 - 20 Clay Township Park
 - Cottrellville Township Parks
 - 21 Cottrellville Township Park
 - East China Township Parks
 - 22 Township Park
 - Lenox Township Parks
 - 23 Lenox Township Community Center and Park
 - Marine City Parks
 - 24 King Road Park
 - Village of New Haven Parks
 - 25 New Haven Village Park
 - 26 Downtown New Haven Park
- Conservation Easements, Private Parks and Facilities



Base Map Source: St Clair County GIS.
Ducks Unlimited
Map Created: January 25, 2016



Regional Recreational Opportunities St. Clair County, Michigan



Regional Facilities

State Parks, Game Areas and Wildlife Areas

There are numerous state parks and recreation areas located in Southeast Michigan. These facilities provide opportunities for hiking, swimming, fishing, boating, picnicking, camping, cross-country skiing, and other recreational opportunities. Several large state facilities are located in St. Clair and northern Macomb Counties.

Lakeport State Park

Lakeport State Park is on the Lake Huron shore in far northern St. Clair County. The park includes a beach, campgrounds, picnic areas, playgrounds, and cabins.

Algonac State Park

Located along the St. Clair River, Algonac State Park features unique habitats, campgrounds and trails.

St. John's Marsh Wildlife Area

St. John's Marsh is a managed hunting unit of the St. Clair Flats State Wildlife Area. It includes two large wildlife refuges and hunting opportunities.

Port Huron State Game Area

Port Huron State Game area is a large hunting area located in central St. Clair County.

St. Clair Flats State Wildlife Area

St. Clair Flats is a very large wildlife area located on the islands of Clay Township and including wildlife refuges and a large area open to in-season hunting. The area has unique terrain and habitats.

Wetzel State Recreation Area

Located in Lenox Township, Wetzel State Recreation Area is an undeveloped park providing areas for hiking, hunting, snowmobiling and cross-country skiing.

Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority

The Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority operates 13 parks across Southeast Michigan, including three in Macomb County, all of which are a short drive from Ira Township.

Stony Creek Metropark, Shelby Township

Established around Stony Creek Lake, this park includes a nature center, hiking and mountain biking trails, campgrounds, boat rental and launch, bike rental, golf course, and disc golf course.

Lake St. Clair Metropark, Harrison Township

Located on the Lake St. Clair shore, this park offers a splash pad, swimming pool, and beach, tennis, par-3 golf, a sledding hill, nature center, trails, windsurfing launch, and boat launch, among other amenities.

Wolcott Mill Metropark, Ray Township

Wolcott Mill Metropark is a largely natural park featuring trails, a farm center, campgrounds, a golf course, and a model airplane field.

Regional Facilities

St. Clair County Parks

Columbus County Park

Located in Columbus Township, this park on the Belle River includes a modern lodge, sledding hill, and large, natural outdoor area, including hiking, equestrian, and mountain biking trails.

Goodells County Park

This park occupies 327 acres and contains the County Farm Museum and 4-H Fair Grounds. Other amenities include the Butterfly Garden, meadows, picnic areas, a BMX track, sledding hills, playgrounds and a splash pad for children.

Fort Gratiot County Park

This 30-acre park is located in north St. Clair County, and offers scenic views of Lake Huron. This park includes a public beach, picnicking facilities, playgrounds, and walking trails, as well as the 1971 Tunnel Explosion Memorial, which honors 22 workers killed in an accident while constructing a water intake tunnel in the area.

Fort Gratiot Light Station

This five-acre former Coast Guard station was transferred to St. Clair County in 2010, making it the county's newest park. The site is home to Michigan's oldest lighthouse. Restoration and improvements to the site were completed with various grants and fundraising.

Woodsong County Park

This park was purchased from the Michigan Waterways Council of the Girl Scouts of America. This site contains rustic trails and runs along a half mile of the Black River. Activities includes nature study, hiking, biking, and paddling.

Blue Water Trails

In 2009, St. Clair County began implementing its Blueways Trail system along the county's many waterways. Its website lists 16 different paddling

routes, totaling 138 miles, in nine unique bodies of water. The Island Loop Route, which runs up the Black River and along the Lake Huron shoreline, has been selected as a National Water Trail by the US Department of the Interior, the first such trail in Michigan, and one of only 14 in the nation. There are four ADA-accessible kayak launches in St. Clair County: River Front Park off North River Road in Fort Gratiot Township, the City of St. Clair Marina, the Marysville Boat Launch north of the water treatment plant, and the newest one (2012), Baker's Field Park in Port Huron Township.

Bridge-To-Bay Trail

The Bridge-To-Bay Trail is a biking and walking path that roughly follows the coast of St. Clair County, running from Burtchville Township to New Baltimore. Much of the trail is comprised of off-street shared-use pathways; the segment running through Ira Township is on the shoulder of Dixie Highway and not separated from the street.

Wadhams to Avoca Trail

The Wadhams to Avoca Trail is a rails-to-trails pathway more than 12 miles in length, comprised of the former CSX rail line. The trail is open to hikers, bikers, and equestrians, and its scenic rural character also supports birding. The trail also contains the 60-foot Mill Creek Trestle, which provides four overlook areas into the Mill Creek Valley.

Other Facilities

Specialty facilities in the region include the Washington Life Center in Marine City, which offers programming for seniors, sledding hills in New Baltimore, East China Township and Marine City, and ice arenas in Chesterfield Township, Mount Clemens, and Marysville. Clay Township's park annually floods its basketball court to create an ice rink.

Local Facilities in Neighboring Communities

New Baltimore

The City of New Baltimore is host to eleven parks and recreational facilities, which include eight public parks, one public/private venture, and two private facilities. Public parks in New Baltimore include amenities similar to Ira, as well as soccer fields, ice rinks, sledding hills, and exercise paths.



Waterfront park in New Baltimore

Clay Township

Clay Township offers three facilities, including the Pearl Beach Pier, a popular fishing location. The two remaining parks provide sports fields and courts, walking path, picnicking amenities, and sheltered areas.

Cottrellville Township

A community park was established on the waterfront in 2010. There is also a park at the Township Hall, a private riding stable, as well as the Bridge-to-Bay Trail.

China Township

Three parks are located in China Township. Recreation amenities at these parks include playscapes, picnicking amenities, shelters, and sports fields and courts. Boy Scouts use the wooded areas of the Recor Road Site for camping, and the King Road/Belle River site contains a wooded trail and an access point for canoeing/kayaking in the Belle River.

Casco Township

Casco has recently developed a Township Park and contains sports fields, picnic facilities, and equestrian trails. Senior activities are also conducted at the Casco Township Hall.

Chesterfield Township

Eight parks are located in Chesterfield Township and contain numerous sport fields and courts, boat launches and paddling opportunities, hiking and bike paths, shelters, wild-life watching, and indoor facilities.

Lenox Township

A Township Park is available to the residents of Lenox and New Haven. It contains sports fields, courts, and rinks, picnic amenities, and playscapes.

Algonac

The City of Algonac's waterfront park features a long riverfront boardwalk with access to the local historical museum, a ferry landing, and boat launch.

Other Nearby Facilities

The nearest ice arena is on 25 Mile Rd in Macomb Township, roughly ten miles from the Township.

East China Township is home to several parks, including an 80-acre park whose amenities include softball, baseball and soccer fields, basketball and pickle ball courts, a sledding hill, four picnic shelters, playscape, nature trails, dog park, canoe access to the Belle River, disc golf, and public restrooms. A new ADA-compliant seasonal kayak and canoe launch was recently developed in the Township on Belle River Road.



King Road/Belle River site in China Township



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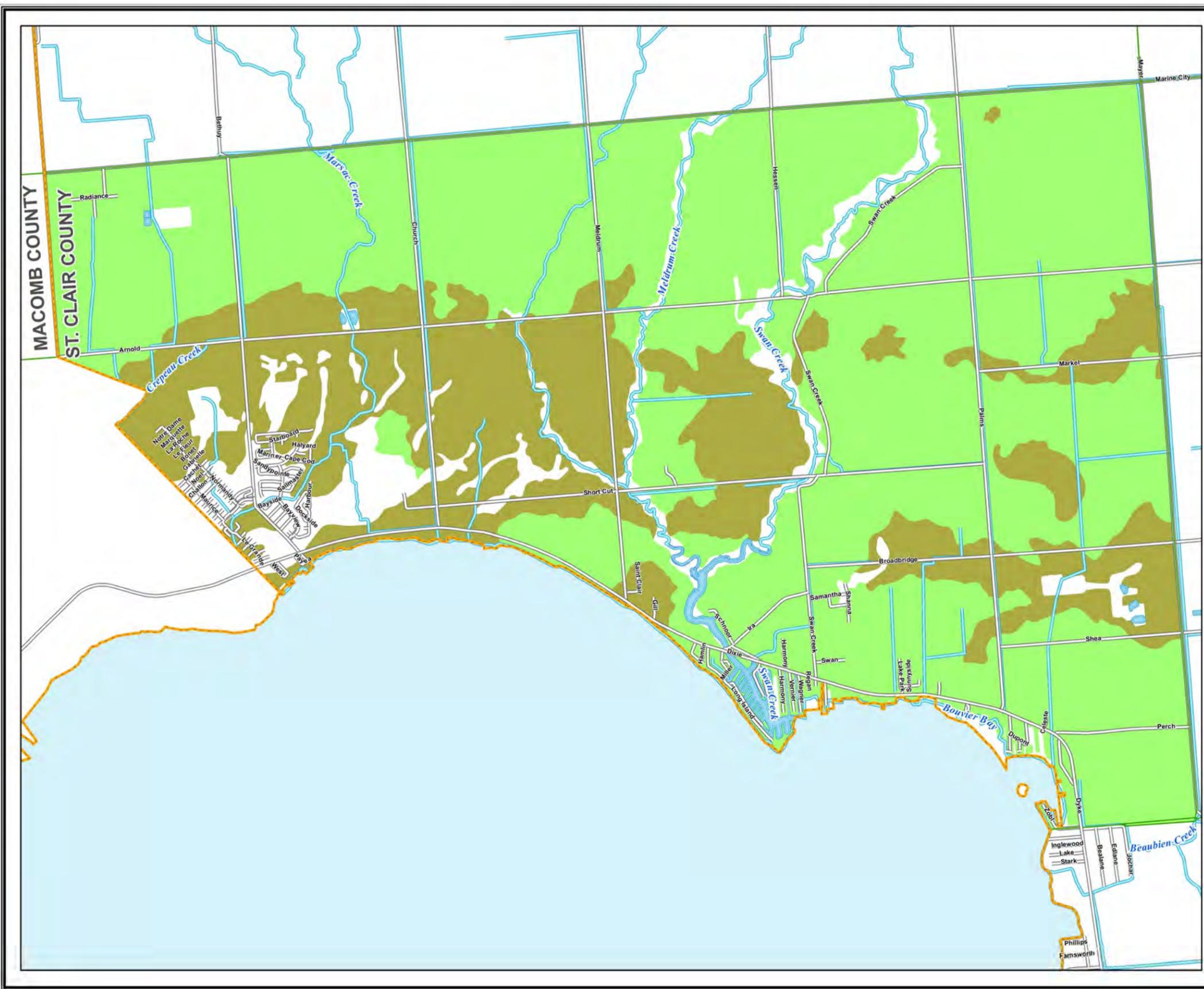
Resource Inventory

In a community such as Ira Township, where recreation is heavily intertwined with the natural environment, an inventory of natural resources is a helpful tool for understanding where potential opportunities may be available. These maps can also inform planning for open space preservation not related to recreation.

The following pages map prime farmland, quaternary geology, soils, topography, watershed and waterways, wetlands, and woodlands.

Prime Farmland
Ira Township
St. Clair County, Michigan

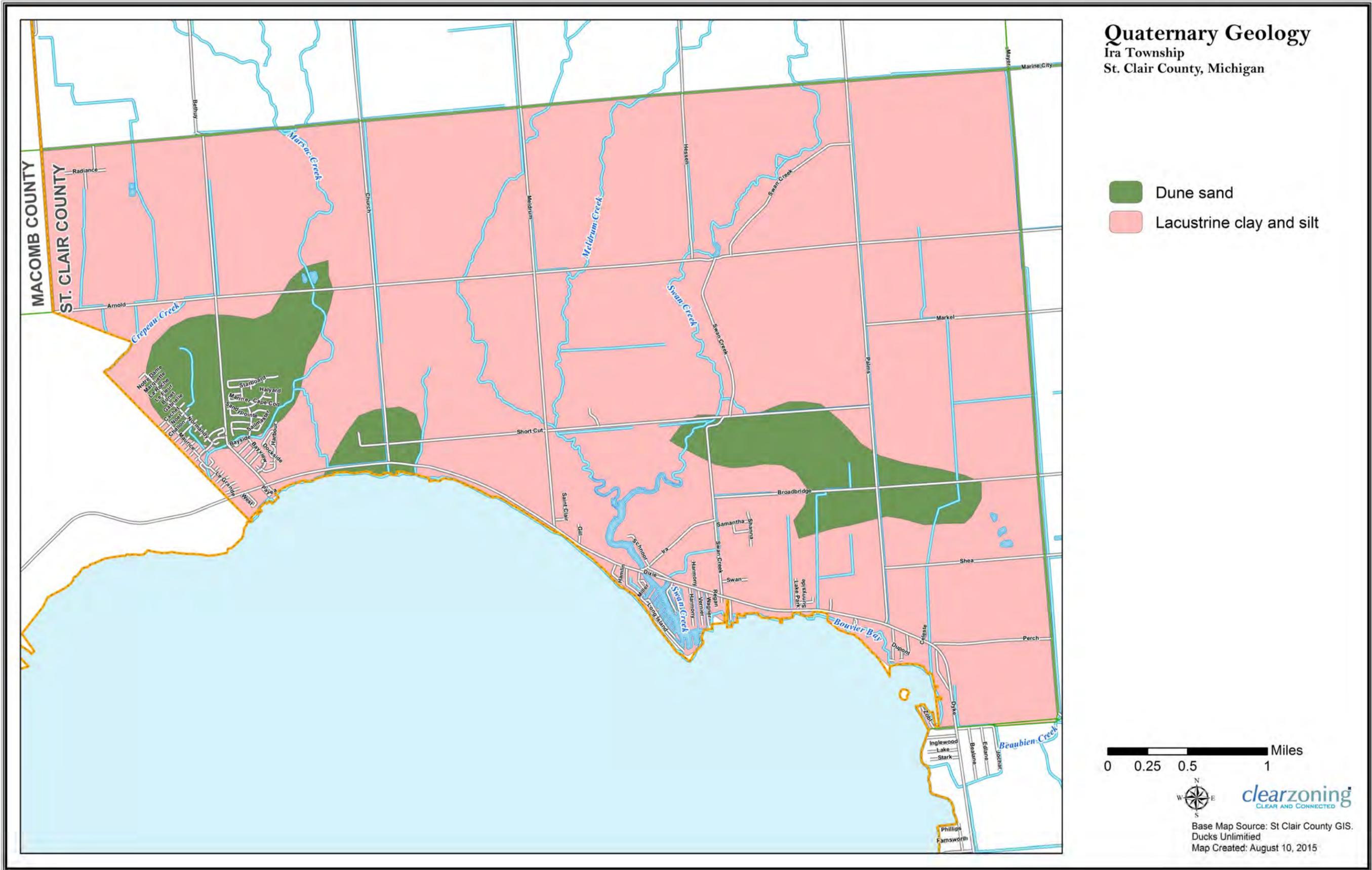
- Prime farmland if drained
- Farmland of local importance

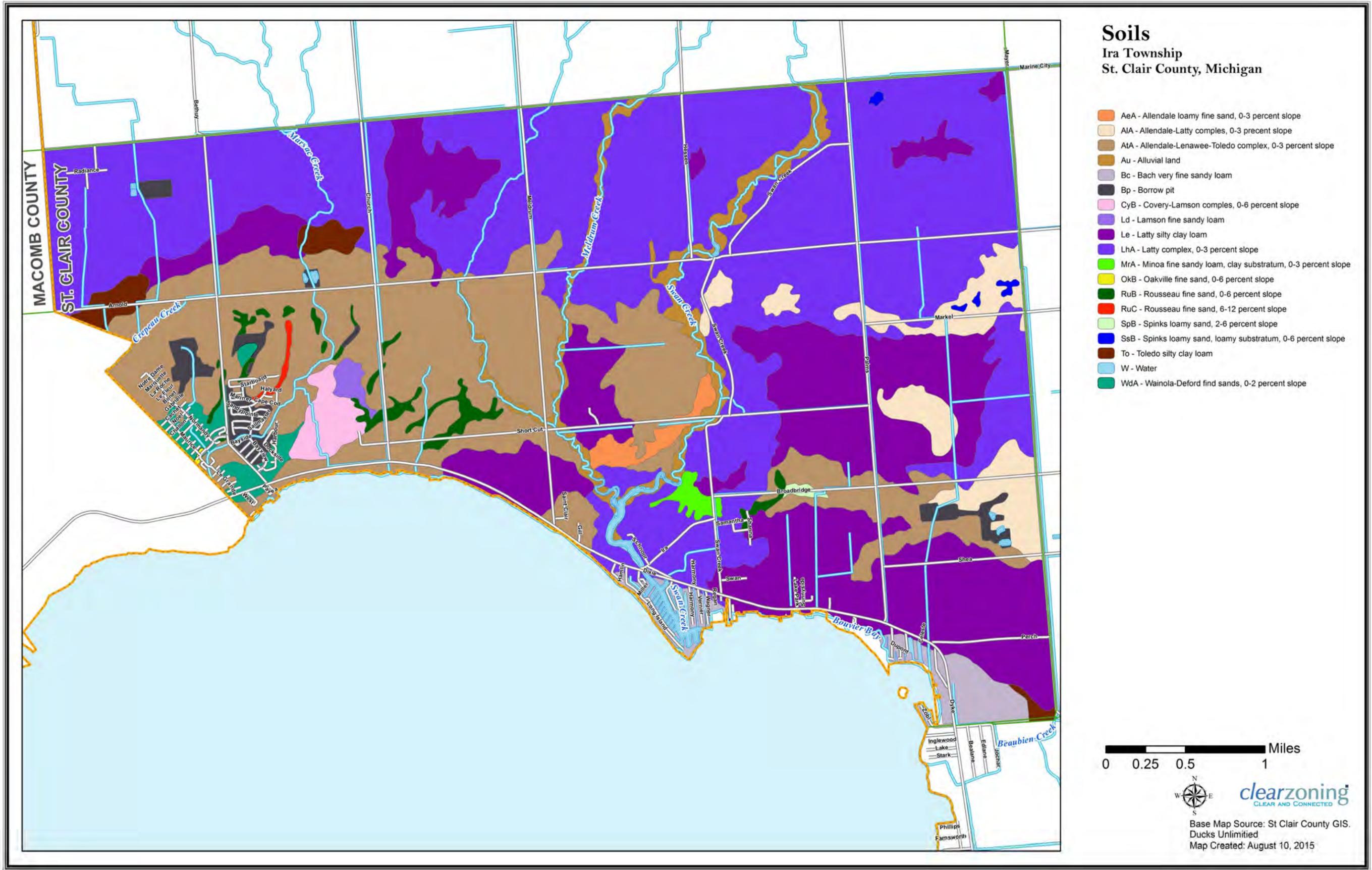


0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

clearzoning
CLEAR AND CONNECTED

Base Map Source: St Clair County GIS.
Ducks Unlimited
Map Created: August 10, 2015





- ### Soils
- #### Ira Township St. Clair County, Michigan
- AeA - Allendale loamy fine sand, 0-3 percent slope
 - AIA - Allendale-Latty complexes, 0-3 percent slope
 - ATA - Allendale-Lenawee-Toledo complex, 0-3 percent slope
 - Au - Alluvial land
 - Bc - Bach very fine sandy loam
 - Bp - Borrow pit
 - CyB - Covery-Lamson complexes, 0-6 percent slope
 - Ld - Lamson fine sandy loam
 - Le - Latty silty clay loam
 - LhA - Latty complex, 0-3 percent slope
 - MrA - Minoa fine sandy loam, clay substratum, 0-3 percent slope
 - OKB - Oakville fine sand, 0-6 percent slope
 - RuB - Rousseau fine sand, 0-6 percent slope
 - RuC - Rousseau fine sand, 6-12 percent slope
 - SpB - Spinks loamy sand, 2-6 percent slope
 - SsB - Spinks loamy sand, loamy substratum, 0-6 percent slope
 - To - Toledo silty clay loam
 - W - Water
 - WdA - Wainola-Deford find sands, 0-2 percent slope

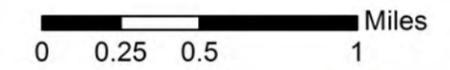
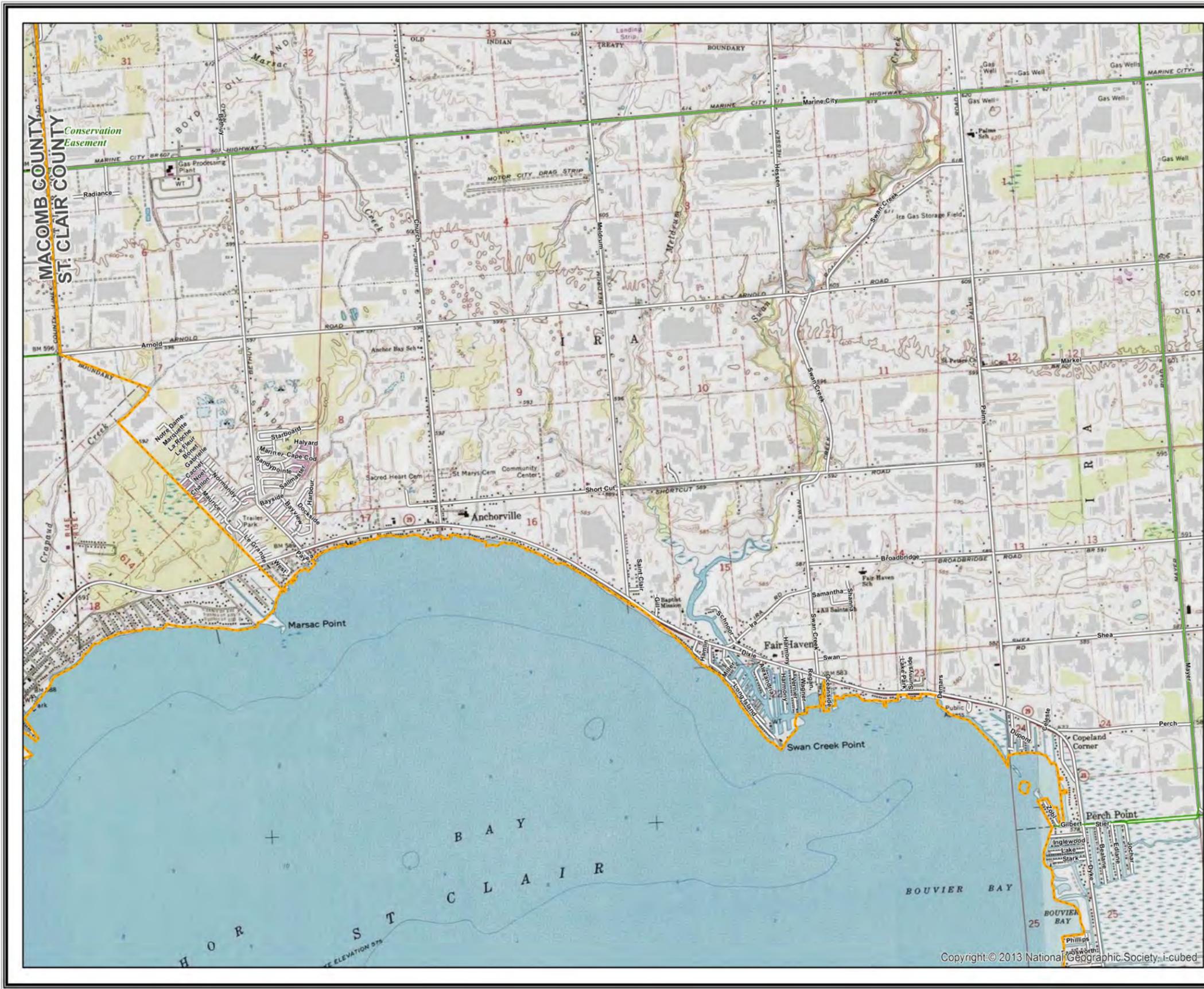
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

clearzoning
CLEAR AND CONNECTED

Base Map Source: St Clair County GIS.
Ducks Unlimited
Map Created: August 10, 2015

Topography
Ira Township
St. Clair County, Michigan

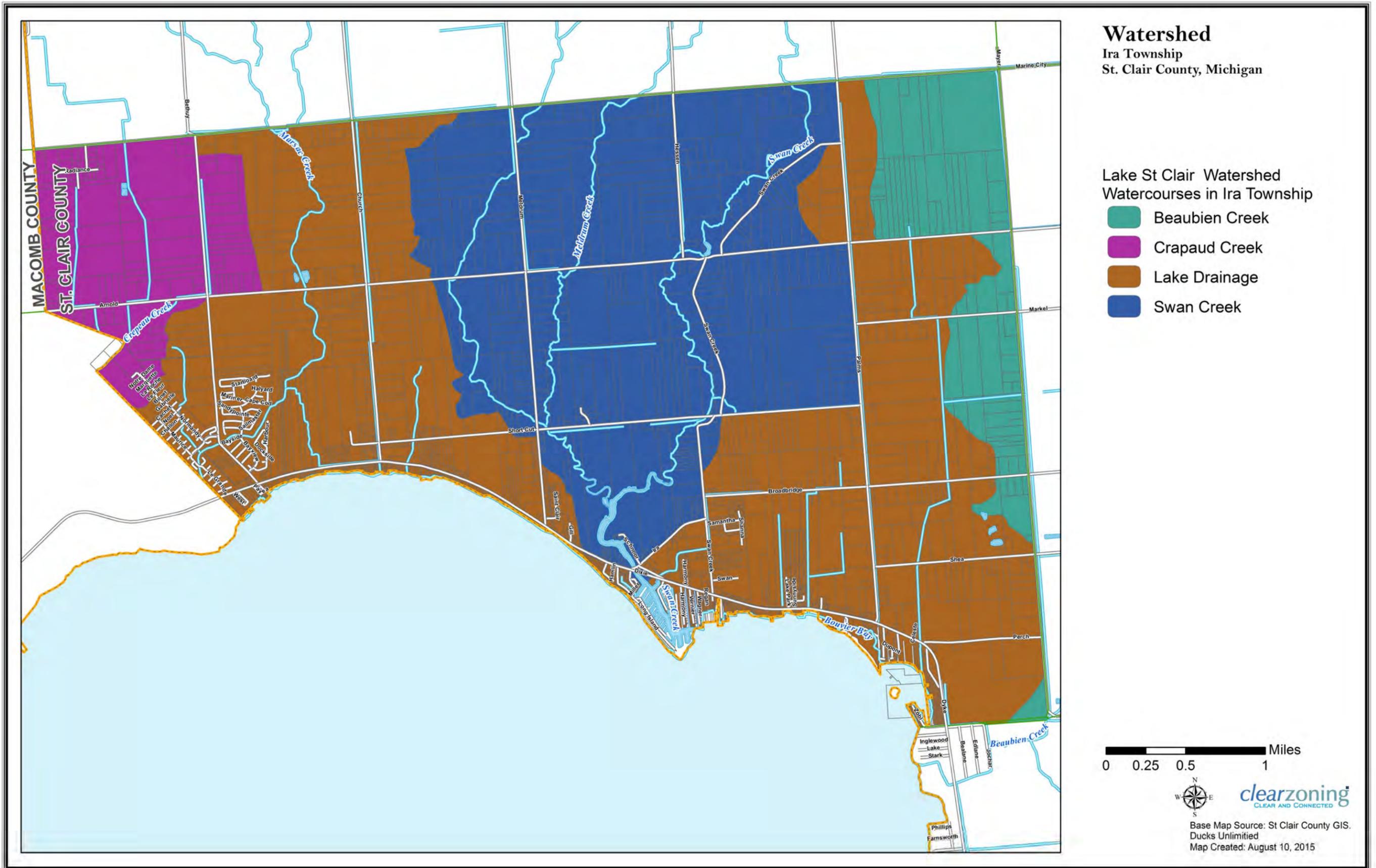
-  County Line
-  Municipal Boundary

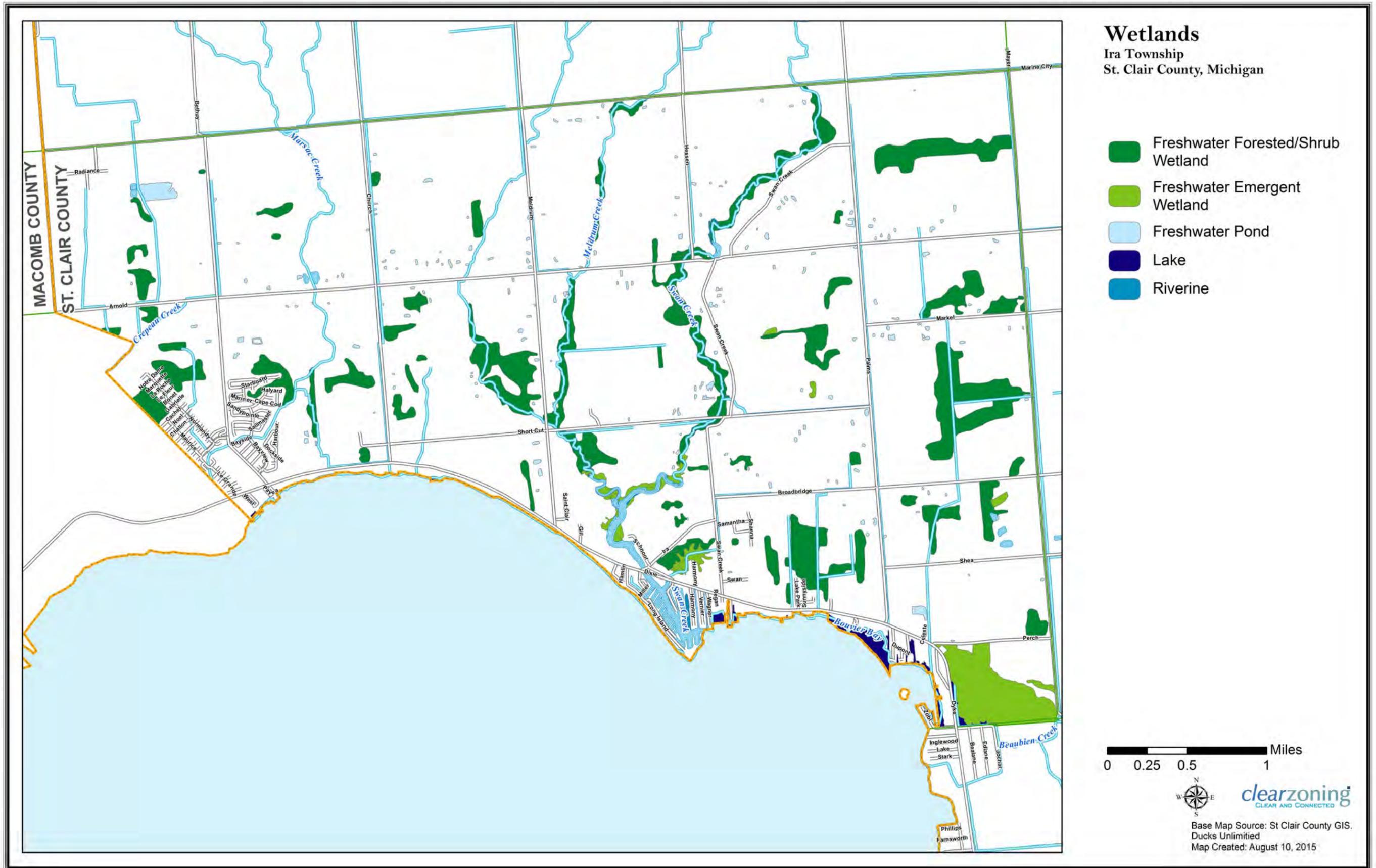


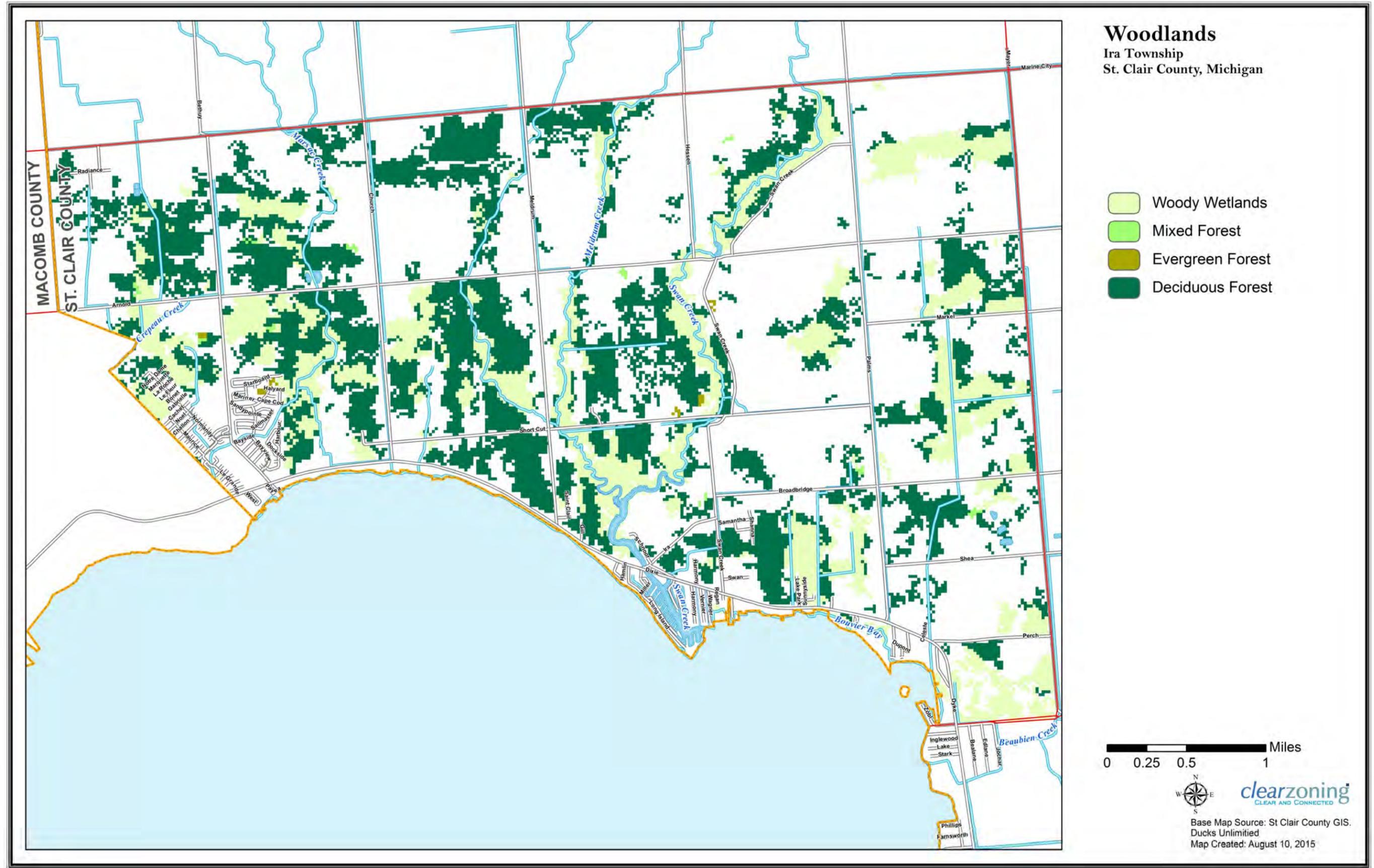
clearzoning
CLEAR AND CONNECTED

Base Map Source: St Clair County GIS.
Ducks Unlimited
Map Created: August 10, 2015

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5 Recreation Needs Analysis

To analyze the recreational needs

of Township residents and determine deficiencies within recreation programs, it is helpful to consider standards for recreation service areas, land needs based on future population, and the ultimate size and extent of recreation facilities and their location.

These recreation planning standards are a useful tool in making an assessment of future recreation needs. Standards may be used effectively only as a means for comparing present conditions to what is thought to be suitable or desirable, and as a general guide toward estimating future needs and demands.

The following organizations have developed guidelines for recreation, which are referenced in this analysis of Ira Township's recreation facilities:

1. **Heritage Conservation & Recreation Service (HCRS)**

The HCRS recommends standards based on compiled data on standards used or recommended by various city, county, metropolitan, state, and federal park and recreation agencies.

2. **Urban Land Institute (ULI)**

The ULI, a private research organization

concerned with planning and development of land, recommends standards for recreation areas for community and neighborhood development.

3. **National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)**

The NRPA developed the following recommended standards and guidelines for recreation, parks and open space.

Recommended Community Recreation Facilities:

The major types of community recreation facilities recommended by the above organizations include:

1. **Playgrounds/Mini-Parks**

Specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population, or specific groups such as small children or senior citizens. For example, suggested recreational amenities for an individual mini-park are a tot lot, 2 picnic tables and ½ acre open space.

2. **Playfield or Athletic Fields/Neighborhood Park**

Neighborhood parks should offer a variety of activities to accommodate a range of ages, physical abilities, and recreational interests. Therefore, it is recommended that neighborhood parks should be comprised of approximately 50% active uses (fields, courts, playgrounds, skating, etc.) and 50% passive

uses (trails, picnic areas, etc.). It is recommended that a minimum of 7-10 parking spaces should be provided.

3. Community Parks

Community-wide parks include larger parks with diverse environmental quality. A variety of passive and active uses are provided, including athletic fields, sledding hills, trails, picnic areas, and playgrounds. Typically, uses are separated by activity and age group to limit potential conflicts between different types of users. Other potential activities include outdoor swimming, lighted spectator-type athletic fields, ice skating, and ample off-street parking.

4. Connector Trails

Connector trails would include a multi-use trail to give non-motorized access to parks and other uses throughout Ira Township, and would also provide connections to the Bridge-to-Bay Trail. Modes of travel include walking, biking, and in-line skating. These trails could be located in an independent right-of-way, such as along the utility corridors, or within the road rights-of-way. There are no current standards for trails within/around a community.

Park types and sizes

Ira Township's modest population and development pattern, with low-density development inland and shoreline-oriented dense development between lake St. Clair and M-29, make particular demands on the Township's recreation offerings. Most residents have direct access to their preferred casual outdoor recreation activities, either through private watercraft or on their own land. The Township's role is to provide facilities that residents do not customarily have access to, and this has been the focus of the development of the municipal park. Playground equipment, sports courts, and gathering places, such as the pavilion, afford Township residents recreational opportunities they would not easily be able to access without public facilities.

The Township currently does not have its own system of **connector trails, paths and greenways**. It does, however, have a network of largely rural roads capable of accommodating bicycle users, and the Bridge-To-Bay Trail runs on the shoulder of M-29.

Assessment of Township Facilities

In determining the recreational needs for the Township as a whole, it is important to consider the location of parks and facilities. Ira Township Municipal Park is centrally located within the Township. The Township's development pattern limits the need for playgrounds and mini-parks.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has developed a set of standards based on NRPA guidelines entitled "Michigan Recreation Opportunity Standards," which will be utilized in this recreation needs and deficiency analysis. These standards state the amount of locally developed recreation acreage and the amounts of various specific recreation facilities and equipment that a community should have per every 1,000 persons in the community's population. Table 5-1 presents these standards.

Table 5-1: Michigan Recreation Opportunity Standards

Type of Recreation Opportunity	Plan Standard
Developed Local Park Land	10 acres / 1,000 population
Archery Ranges (including private & commercial)	1 / 50,000 population
Ballfields (not including school facilities)	1 / 3,000 population
Outdoor Basketball Courts (not including school facilities)	1 / 5,000 population
Bicycle Trails (miles)	1 / 40,000 population
Golf Courses (including private & commercial)	1 / 25,000 population
Indoor Ice Rinks	1 / 50,000 population
Outdoor Ice Rinks	1 / 20,000 population
Picnic Areas (tables)	1 / 200 population
Playgrounds (not including school facilities)	1 / 3,000 population
Rifle Ranges (including private & commercial)	1 / 50,000 population
Shotgun Ranges (including private & commercial)	1 / 50,000 population
Sledding Hills (not including school facilities)	1 / 40,000 population
Soccer Fields (not including school facilities)	1 / 20,000 population
Outdoor Swimming Pools	1 / 40,000 population
Outdoor Tennis Courts (not including school facilities)	1 / 4,000 population
Public Boat Launches (parking)	1 / 400 population
Campground Sites (including commercial)	1 / 150 population
Cross-Country Ski Trails (miles)	1 / 10,000 population
Fishing Access (feet)	1,000 / 1,000 population
Fishing Piers	1 / 100,000 population
Hiking Trails (miles)	1 / 5,000 population
Horseback Trails (miles)	1 / 20,000 population
Nature Areas (each)	1 / 50,000 population
Nature Trails (miles)	1 / 20,000 population
ORV Areas	1 acre / 7,500 population
ORV Trails (miles)	1 / 10,000 population
Snowmobiling Land	10 acres / 1,000 population
Snowmobiling Trails (miles)	1 / 3,000 population
Swimming Beaches	1 / 25,000 population

Analysis of Needs and Deficiencies

While the Recreation Opportunity Standards reference a very broad set of facilities, it is important to note that many of the standards reference populations that are considerably larger than Ira Township's, or in several cases, populations larger than the Township and its neighbors combined.

Nearly all of the facilities in the list are accessible to Township residents either within the Township boundaries or in a directly neighboring community.

The Township falls short of the recommended local park acreage standard. Under the standard, the Township would have 49 acres of local park land, as compared to the 35.5 acres of existing parkland. Parkland is also highly concentrated, with 33 of those acres embodied in the Township Municipal Park. Exploring opportunities to expand the park system's physical footprint, and distribute its land more thoroughly across the Township would generally expand recreational opportunities for all residents.

In particular, attempting to expand public access to the lakeshore for activities such as fishing would provide opportunities for inland residents that are currently scarce. More park locations would further provide more destinations for a system of connecting trails.



6 The Planning Process

The recreation planning process in Ira Township is intended to involve individuals who represent a broad cross-section of the community's population. The Township Board is responsible for implementing the Recreation Plan, but the Recreation Commission provides input, analysis and recommendations.

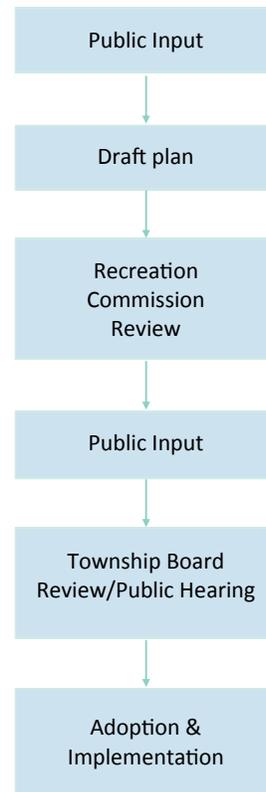
The planning process began with an inventory of all Ira Township parks facilities. An initial survey was administered to participants in the Township's Trick And Treat Halloween event. A second, more generalized survey was developed and posted online. Invitations were sent to set of active parks stakeholders for a focus group. Some focus group invitees provided feedback on proposed discussion topics. Finally, a survey was conducted at the annual Easter Egg Hunt event.

Using the inventory and survey findings, this Recreation Plan identifies strengths and opportunities of the current parks facilities, along with goals for the future.

The draft plan and 5-year action program of priority projects were reviewed by the Recreation Commission.

Following the recommendation of approval by the Recreation Commission, the plan was presented to the Township Board. The draft plan was made available for

public review and comment for at least 30 days prior to formal adoption by the Township Board. Notice of the public review period was provided in the local newspaper. The plan was presented at a public hearing held by Township Board. Copies of the notices announcing the review period and public hearing are included in the Appendix.



Public Input

2015 Trick and Treat Survey

The Trick and Treat survey indicated that half of respondents were participating in the event for the first time, and that word of mouth was the most important method by which people discovered the event. Roughly half of participants had also participated in at least one other Parks & Rec event, and half again followed Ira Township Parks & Recreation on Facebook. Interestingly, roughly two-thirds of event attendees responding to the survey lived outside of Ira Township.

Survey results imply that event attendees respond to a positive experience by attending again and in some cases attending other Parks & Rec events. Events held by the Township also have a certain degree of regional reach; future surveys should explore the nature of this reach by asking out-of-Township respondents to reveal their connection to the Township.

2016 Easter Egg Hunt Survey

The survey administered at the Easter Egg Hunt event confirmed that many attendees of the event also attend other programmed events and frequently utilize the Township park system. Most respondents use the Municipal Park, while fewer had visited Water Works. In general, opinions of the parks were favorable. Over half of the survey respondents attended the event from outside the Township, with social media and word of mouth being the most common methods by which attendees heard of the event.

Online Survey

The online survey measured basic familiarity with the park system, the ways in which respondents interact with Township Parks & Recreation, perceptions of park quality and maintenance, and optimal communication methods. Open-ended questions asked respondents what is missing from the Township parks, what recreation opportunities residents pursue elsewhere, event and activity participation, what programming is missing, and whether they had any other thoughts.

Facilities

In general, respondents were most aware of and most likely to visit Ira Township Municipal Park. Nearly half of respondents were unaware of the existence of Water Works Park. Nearly all visitors to Township parks (91.3%) drive to reach park facilities, with 4% of respondents saying they biked.

Trails, playgrounds, and the picnic shelter were the most popular facilities; more than half of all respondents cited these as features they enjoy. Picnic areas and grills, the disc golf course, and benches were other well-used features. All respondents felt that the parks were somewhat or very well maintained.

When asked what is missing from the Township's parks, pet-friendly areas were the most frequently chosen item, while more sports and exercise facilities were also desired. Write-in items also included water features, expanded picnic facilities including more tables and bathrooms, and paved trails.

Two thirds of respondents cited water parks as the primary type of recreation facility they visit outside of Ira Township.

More than half of respondents brought children to the Township's parks.

Programming

Many respondents had attended the Township's Halloween and Easter events. When asked what programming they'd like to see in the Township, respondents named a variety of activities: mommy meet-ups, community bonfires, outdoor activities generally, dog training, summer craft days, and movies.

Newsletters and social media were the communication methods most respondents felt would best keep them informed of Parks & Rec programming. One third of respondents also said they got information from the Township's electronic sign on M-29.



7 Goals & Objectives 2016-2020

Goals and Objectives formulated by Ira Township are the basis of the recreation planning process. They form the framework for public and private decision-making regarding recreational facilities and programs in the Township. This Recreation Plan seeks to pursue long-range recreational goals and objectives through specific short-range actions on the part of the Township, County, and State as well as private entities.

General Recreation Goals

1. Enhance and increase the quality of life for Ira Township residents by providing recreation programs and facilities to meet their needs.
2. Cooperate with the school districts, county, and other regional recreation providers in the delivery of recreation opportunities to Township residents.
3. Preserve and utilize the Township's existing natural features and habitat (waterfront, woodlands, wetlands, topography and floodplains) for open space and recreation purposes, such as hunting, swimming, boating and fishing.
4. Acquire additional land in appropriate locations as it becomes available.
5. Increase opportunities for access to Anchor Bay for public recreation purposes through the purchase or lease of additional waterfront property.
6. Increase Parks & Rec programming by adding events to the calendar as opportunities become available.

Recreation Facility Goals

1. Use the Township's planning and zoning powers to encourage developers to incorporate open space into new residential development and to provide recreation space as an integral part of any new development.
2. Relate the location of future recreation facilities to existing and anticipated population growth areas, as well as to other community facilities.
3. Provide for a range of both passive and active recreation facilities.
4. Provide for the development of a non-motorized trail system linking major activity centers, recreation facilities, county facilities and the Bridge-to-Bay Trail.
5. Encourage upgrades to the recreation facilities available at the Lion's Club Park.
6. Encourage the State to upgrade the public launch site on Anchor Bay.

Administrative Goals

1. Continue to monitor and adjust program offerings to reflect changing recreation preferences and age characteristics by way of community surveys and/or questionnaires.
2. Continue working with community groups to establish cooperative agreements for the protection, maintenance and use of recreation sites.
3. Provide for necessary staffing and an administrative infrastructure to support the expansion of recreation opportunities.
4. Provide a consistent level of funding, through county, state and federal sources, to support improvements to the Township's recreation facilities and programs
5. Continue to support proactive maintenance of the Township's park and recreation facilities.



8 Action Strategies 2015-2019

Action Strategies outline Ira Township’s approach to implementing the goals and objectives identified in the previous chapter. These strategies are intended to provide guidance for planning and budgeting purposes for the next five years. They suggest priorities generally, but are not intended to be set in stone or limit additional creative approaches. Generally, parks and recreation action strategies should consider the following when outlining a strategy to implement goals and objectives:

1. Are there immediate health and safety concerns that need to be addressed?
2. What are opportunities that exist to partner with other groups towards a common goal?
3. Is there a person or group who can champion specific goals/objectives?
4. Are there multiple goals that can be achieved by implementing a project?
5. What projects affect the greatest number of people in the community and/or address the greatest need?
6. How can projects be broken down into phases for a multi-year approach?
7. What funding opportunities exist for implementation of certain goals?

Planning Actions reflect strategies aimed at identifying an approach to achieving certain goals and objectives. These are activities that can be undertaken at a variety of levels, including the Parks & Recreation Commission, the Planning Commission and the Township Board.

Maintenance Actions address those issues identified in the plan as needing upgrades or attention to repair, safety or appearance. These activities will likely be addressed by the public works department, but may also include assistance by various community groups.

Administrative Actions will pursue strategies that keep an inventory of recreation facilities, programs and events for the Township. Strategies developed through planning actions will be implemented and/or coordinated through administrative efforts.

Funding Actions will actively pursue local, cooperative and grant funding approaches to implementing the goals and objectives of the plan.

Ira Township Parks & Recreation 5-Year Action Plan				
Park	Action	Action Type	Year	Projected Cost(s)
Waterworks	Install swing sets		1	\$1,420 (4 positions)
	Install picnic tables		1	\$1,750 each
	Install gazebo		1	\$2,500
Township Park	Install Gaga pit		1	\$500
	Install horseshoe pit		1	\$500
	Install permanent cornhole game		1	\$300
	Install small pavilion (24' x 24')		1	\$18,000
	Run power to existing pavilion		1	\$2,000
Township Park	Install exercise equipment		2	Avg. \$600/piece
	Develop and install interpretive and mile marker signage for trails*		2	\$600-\$1,000/sign
	Walking path**		2	\$280/linear foot (8-foot path)
	Sledding hill***		2	\$110,000 +
	Install more benches		2	\$500 each
	Install more picnic tables		2	\$1,750 each
Township Park	Install more benches		3	\$500 each
	Install more picnic tables		3	\$1,750 each
Township Park	Install splash pad		3	\$30,000 - \$150,000
	Install tennis courts		4	\$40,000 - \$100,000
	Install more benches		4	\$500 each
Township Park	Add permanent bathrooms		5	\$40,000 - \$62,000
	Install more benches		5	\$500 each

Costs for many of the above items are dependent on quality of construction, brand of manufacturer, and scale of design. For instance, picnic table costs assume ADA-compliant pieces, and walking path costs assume a paved path with a width of 8 feet.

This plan does not target any specific property for acquisition, but the Parks & Recreation Commission reserves the right to recommend to the Township Board the acquisition of appropriate property for future park development as opportunities arise.

* Cost will depend of number of signs, research required, and quality of sign materials
 ** Assumes an ADA-compliant paved path with a width of 8 feet
 *** Estimate is for a modest sledding hill (roughly a 30-foot-wide hill with a 30-foot downhill run) and considers the cost of fill, topsoil and sod. Cost could vary widely depending on the size of the hill constructed



9 Appendix

Resolutions of Adoption
Public Notices
Meeting Minutes
Survey Results
Transmittal Letters
DNR Grant Inventory
Post-Completion Certification Reports