

Bowers Harbor Park Expansion Community Engagement Exercise

Summary Report

Peninsula Township Park Commission

Process

Bowers Harbor Park, a previously 21-acre park with sports fields and play equipment located on the scenic Old Mission Peninsula, was expanded with the purchase of 58 acres of land formerly planted as an orchard. As part of the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund acquisition grant application process, an initial concept plan was developed for the expanded park area to demonstrate to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources what the park property might be used for if acquired. With the grant application successful and the new park property officially purchased, the Township brought the community to the table to ask what the future of Bowers Harbor Park should be.

Around sixty members of the community and Peninsula Township elected officials and staff attended an input session held the evening of August 18th, 2016, at the Old Mission Peninsula School. Beckett & Raeder presented an overview of the park design process to date and informed the public about the findings of the Due Care Analysis report. Following the presentation, the attendees participated in an interactive element preference survey meant to gauge the community's inclination for or against a list of 35 potential park elements. The list of elements began with those that already exist in the original park and followed with elements that do not currently exist at the park, to see which elements the community felt were important to retain or add to the newly expanded park. As each element appeared on the screen along with several descriptive photos, each attendee could vote either A, B, C, or D. "A" meant that the element should definitely remain or would be a fantastic addition to the park. "B" meant that the element could be good or interesting at the park. "C" was a neutral response. "D" meant that the element was not desired at the park at all.

Attendees were invited to fill out comment cards to give further detailed input. They were asked if there were any further recreational elements not identified in the survey that should be at the park, and if there were any other comments to offer the Park Commission. The public was also encouraged to email the Township with any other comments or concerns.

Results

Elements that presently exist in the park were mostly verified as currently desirable recreational activities to remain. Trails received an overwhelmingly positive response and winter recreational pursuits were also widely supported. Survey responses indicate, and several comments mentioned, that more active recreation elements should be confined to the existing park, and that those existing park amenities should be better maintained and/or upgraded, especially the playground. Survey responses and comments show that the south property expansion should be mainly for nature viewing and walking trails, similar to the initial concept plan. Several comments discussed

the need for restroom facilities and a source of water, either for drinking fountains, getting water for dogs, filling up children's pools, or just rinsing off.

The idea of a dog park received very mixed reviews in the survey results. Likewise, comments were either enthusiastically for a dog park, or quite concerned and against the idea. There was not a clear consensus on that issue. Those who wanted a dog park discussed the importance of a place for dogs to run free and the benefits to residents who could meet and socialize there. Those against the idea cited concerns with noise, fighting between dogs, and the potential for the spread of canine diseases.

Next Steps

The information contained herein provides Peninsula Township and the Peninsula Township Park Commission with valuable data demonstrating the public's preferences related to Bowers Harbor Park. Many other factors will most certainly influence the final design including the Due Care Plan, budgetary constraints, and site challenges. However, the outcome of the Community Engagement Exercise better equips the Township and Park Commission to determine the program of recreational elements it wishes to pursue as it contemplates improvements at the existing park site and expansion of the park onto the recently-acquired property.

Element Preference Survey Results

Element (Ranked in Order of Preference)	Cost	A	B	C	D	Existing in Original / North Park?
Pedestrian Trails	\$\$	91%	5%	2%	2%	Yes
Playground	\$\$\$	76%	17%	6%	2%	Yes
Picnic Pavilions	\$\$	67%	18%	15%	0%	Yes
Outdoor Ice Rink	\$-\$\$\$	62%	23%	11%	4%	No
Natural Tree Cover	\$\$	58%	17%	17%	8%	Yes
Meadow / Wildflowers / Native Grass Plantings	\$	57%	21%	7%	14%	No
Sled Hill	\$	53%	18%	18%	12%	No
Non-motorized Trails	\$\$	52%	15%	13%	20%	Yes
Open Green Lawns	\$	50%	20%	17%	13%	Yes
Interpretive Trails / Viewing Trails	\$\$	45%	14%	17%	24%	No
Tennis Courts	\$\$	44%	25%	27%	4%	Yes
Baseball Fields	\$\$	44%	24%	20%	13%	Yes
Cross Country Ski Trails	\$\$	40%	21%	28%	11%	No
Stormwater Management	\$\$	37%	19%	22%	22%	No
Improved Parking - Gravel	\$\$	36%	25%	22%	16%	Yes (Unimproved)
Soccer Fields	\$\$	34%	28%	26%	11%	Yes
Sand box	\$	33%	23%	19%	25%	Yes
Multi-Use Pavilion	\$\$	29%	29%	23%	20%	No
Basketball Courts	\$\$	27%	27%	37%	8%	Yes
Poured-in-Place Safety Surfacing	\$\$	27%	25%	25%	22%	No
Pickle Ball Court	\$\$	26%	22%	30%	22%	Yes
Farmers Market Pavilion	\$-\$\$\$	24%	15%	24%	38%	No
Dog Park	\$\$	23%	14%	25%	39%	No
Enclosed Toddler Play	\$\$	19%	15%	29%	37%	No
Volleyball Court	\$	16%	38%	32%	14%	Yes
Shuffleboard Court	\$\$	15%	13%	40%	32%	No
Fitness Stations	\$\$	13%	10%	27%	50%	No
Contained Water Play Feature	\$\$	13%	4%	9%	74%	No
Horseshoes	\$	12%	23%	33%	33%	No
Disc Golf	\$	10%	12%	20%	57%	No
Bocce Ball Court	\$\$	10%	12%	33%	45%	No
Splash Pad	\$\$\$	9%	5%	5%	81%	No
Improved Parking – Paved / Curbed	\$\$\$	8%	8%	25%	60%	No
Bean Bag Toss	\$	6%	6%	37%	52%	No
Historic Agricultural Plantings	\$\$	2%	7%	25%	65%	No

Comment Responses			
Number	Are there any recreational program elements not identified in the survey that should be at the park?	Are there any other comments you'd like to offer to the Park Commission?	Name
1		All playground equipment needs replacing! Parts of it are downright dangerous!	Victoria Shurly
2	Nothing more I can think of. Very good list.	Great work BHP exp. Com	Maura Sanders
3	Restrooms (not pit toilets)		
4		The current parking lot is a soggy mess many times of the year. Needs to be better prepped. I walk the dog very often so have to park on the grass, which is not good.	
5	More wildlife area - currently good birding. Wider path for part (not all) paths for bikes. Need cut through from Devils dive to BH road near Pen. Drive. Need event parking for TRI and half marathon. More tree cover near pavilions. No splash pad.		Monnie Peters
6	Restrooms (so you don't have to drive home), drinking fountains	Loved farmers market idea. Need things for grandkids and guests	
7	Outdoor grills and picnic tables. Warming hut for winter storms by sled hill or ice rink.	Improve restrooms in park. Have a wash down / sprinkler head area for cooling off	
8		Pavilion seating faces setting sun - yuck. Who will maintain equipment? Hand out horseshoes? Security? Liability? Maint?	
9		Equipment management, maintenance, liability, congestion, confusion, parking, implementation of maintenance and costs, workers to care maintain area?	
10	No	The addition needs to remain passive use. Active uses can be improved in the north park area. Stormwater management - yes if native plants, need to protect neighboring properties from flooding.	

11	Bird watching platform, benches for viewing sunsets, promote natural / native plant materials, snowshoe trails, if not groomed x country trails.	Keep spaces as natural to this peninsula as possible. Space for young and old residents. Thanks for winter snow plowing done now!	Bill Camper (?)
12		Really need a dog park	Barb Taylor
13		Dog park with a water fountain for the dogs. A water hook up to fill up small pools would be great too	Alecia Hurley
14		Dog park with water hook ups, hoses to fill kiddie pools. Also I would be willing to help organize at the basketball courts.	Kevin Hurley khurley28@hotmail.com
15		I believe the farmers market option is an excellent idea. Keeping adults in the park prevents problems.	Bill Catinella, 2600 Bowers Harbor Rd
16		Improved and additional restroom facilities. Invasive species control program. Vet and breeder professions do not support dog parks.	
17	Benches for viewing nature. (Bird watching platform in wetlands area on 2013 plan). Be aware of many ground nesting birds in south end of park. In donating to the purchase of the park we were led to believe it would be a natural area - let's maintain as much of that as possible!	Playgrounds and sandbox at the current park need upgrading, but we don't need more. Same is true of basketball and soccer and tennis etc. Multi-use pavilion and farmers market could be same structure. Outdoor rink should be simple, open, less expensive style.	Diana Hammond
18	Bird watching platform / areas / benches. Sensitivity to existing ground nesting birds and animals would be nice. Please if do the pavilion make compatible multiuse (i.e. farmers market). Playground need upgrade, not new ones. Simple outdoor ice rink, not covered with refrigeration.	I goofed in the water feature vote. Meant to vote D, voted A. (I think its either bacteria or chemicals). Was led to believe the south annex would be more nature oriented.	Nancy K. Hammond
19	A longer hiking / view trail. Maybe simple multiuse pavilion for unplugged performance events / gatherings.	I like all the existing uses in the quantity now present. Maybe instead of 2 playgrounds, the new area should be left natural except for a hiking / view trail through it. All the existing uses should remain informal, no increase in parking, no paving. We need natural areas, places that are quiet for entire new expansion - except possibly pavilion as above. No new parking, or at most 1 small 6-place lot on Devil's Dive. Busses can be required for bigger events or walking from the Bowers Harbor dirt lot.	Bill Gittlen

20	No	Thank you for your work. I am strongly in favor of not adding any NEW tennis courts, ball fields, soccer fields, or playgrounds. Those that we already have in existing park are fine and sufficient. Fields and native plantings and pedestrian trails would be ideal - that would keep nature and peace / quiet at a maximum. Most healthful for us all (not to mention the birds & butterflies etc). Please don't pave paradise and put up a parking lot.	
21		At this discussion group, most of the attendees were older folks. The results might be different if more young people responded.	
22	Bird watching natural area	When we donated for the south addition we were told that purchase (south area) would be fore low intensity use permitting the north area to be higher intensity. Hope this is still correct.	Tim Wolf
23	Retain softball fields - they both result in good use of the park.	The playground situation is so old and not [illegible] its embarrassing and likely unsafe. Definitely more hiking / biking trails and skiing on the same trails in winter. X country & consider winter uses & sledding / ice rink / skiing.	
24		Please try to preserve it as naturally as possible. Please talk to the people who have ideas about birds & wildlife & take care of their concerns.	Nancy Tucker
25	You covered it well, thank you.	We would like to see fewer elements done well... rather than over reach of too many projects.	Kathleen & Eric Dreier
26	Came in late and did not get to vote on toddler park - awesome idea!!!		
27	How can water be used for children, when it was too polluted to use for housing.	1) Great attention should be given to upkeep costs. 2) None of the facilities are used because of lack of supervision and organization e.g.. Tennis courts & pickle ball.	

28	No	We really need elements for our children in the peninsula! Our playground is currently in need of repair! Please help peninsula kids get out & play!	Chris Curran
29	Community Center w/ pool etc.	Better maintenance of current & future park	
30	The dog park is an important element. There is no open public space for dogs to run free. This would provide that opportunity. It is also a great place for residents to meet and interact. It is as important for people as for the dogs.		
31	Yes, a bathroom & shower and a small camp area for bicyclists.	What are we good at. Well cycling, running, swimming.	
32		Good job in current park. Voted for BB courts, tennis courts, baseball fields etc. but did not vote for increased or duplication in new area.	David Tucker
33	Please remove or correct the drain tile so anything that is done at the park does not increase of runoff or flow of water to any homes to the west.	Please no dog park out of respect for adjoining property owners. Improve the playground in the existing part but don't place a new playground in the new land. Keep soccer, baseball, basketball, & tennis at the existing park. New park walking trail should be a combo of trails like Pyatt Lake & paved for strollers. Add a retention pond in wetland to hold water on property instead of draining it.	
34	Organizer of activities. Small pool to swim laps and swim lessons etc. Handicap access & activity related.	Community garden. Drinking fountains. More benches & restrooms. If civic center pool closes & not enough funds raised for that playground - minimal items on east side of town! :(Please remember all demographics. We want families and to support them. Winter activities (rink & Sledding). Thanks for your work from a OMP resident 35+ years with grandkids living here too!	

35		<p>Would like to see improvements in existing park. Passive use - trails in addition. No new stuff. If you must, use existing baseball / softball fields as dog park OFF SEASON. Ridiculous for them to sit unused 6(?) months a year! Please do NOT build new dog park. Really bad in opinion of dog behaviorists. Please do your homework. Who is liable for spread of dog diseases and dog fight? Really BAD idea. What is invasive species control program? Spotted knapweed is out of control and grape vines will be soon.</p>	
EMAIL 1	<p>My husband and I have loved and used Bowers Harbor Park for over twenty years. We both love the walking trail and I love the tennis courts. Our seven grandchildren have spent untold hours on the playground equipment, walking trail and tennis courts. We would like to see the playscape updated and enlarged. We feel that shade should be provided at the south end play area through trees or playscape awning covering. The kids all seem to love the older equipment at the north end...especially the merry go round, swings and metal slide! Plus there is shade... While I am not a pickle ball player, I feel that the park could provide at least two courts. I'd like to see the tennis courts remain tennis courts and not just be re-stripped for pickle ball. The existing tennis courts seem to have lots of players. Perhaps more basketball areas. More walking paths would also be welcome! Anything to get the community out and active!</p>		Susan and E.J. Eckert.
EMAIL 2		<p>I believe that a high school regulation size baseball field would be an excellent addition to the Little League baseball fields at Bowers Harbor Park. Also a basketball court would be used by our kids and families. Attached is a sketch illustrating the proposed location of the baseball field and basketball court. The greater Traverse City Area is lacking good baseball facilities in general. Central High School has a single field while West High School has 2 fields. The Civic Center doesn't have anything of high school regulation size. Charlevoix Township recently constructed a beautiful baseball field and basketball court at their township park. The baseball field is being utilized by their high school teams and also facilitates travel team tournaments. I will forward the site planning as well as pictures of those facilities. It is possible that Central High School could use this facility in the same manner whereby the residents of Peninsula Township could enjoy watching their kids play and practice baseball there. I would encourage you as well as the members of your planning committee to visit the Charlevoix Township Park which is located at 12491 Waller Rd, Charlevoix MI 49720. Thanks again for your time this morning. Sincerely,</p>	Patrick Flynn

EMAIL 3	<p>I am unable to attend the public input meeting tonight and would like to give you my thoughts. Ideally, we'd have a Peninsula Township newsletter that goes out to every resident with a survey seeking input that could be mailed in or dropped off. My priorities: 1. I would love to see a wonderful new and expanded playground for children with safety features and some handicap accessible features. A bike path for children's small bikes around or near the playground would be great, as well as benches and some picnic tables so parents can watch their children during extended play. It could be a great way for community families to connect. 2. I would like to see the walking path be extended around the perimeter of the entire area. It's great that it is plowed in winter for safe walking. This resource should be advertized in the township newsletter. 3. People who design playgrounds and parks professionally should be sought for ideas and bids once the main goals of the park expansion are decided. 4. Less important: a dog park or a skateboard park, if there is enough interest and funding. Thanks for providing the opportunity to provide input.</p>	Rose Skurski
EMAIL 4	<p>June 6, 2016 4 key things kids and parents love/need: 1. Fenced in area for 0-3 year olds with benches for the parents. We chase those little ones around all day! To have a place where parents can take their eyes off of their kids for a hot second AND sit down to relax....wow. 2. Rubber flooring. NOT mulch. NOT sand. YUCK, GROSS and a pain when your kid drops something. Plus, it's bouncy, so the kids cannot get as hurt easily. And do you know the things I have found buried in the mulch and sand 3. Splash pad or not, kids are obsessed with water. BHP is not Haserot, but could have a water element. Now all they want to do is play with the pump, imagine if there was an outdoor "water park" area like at the indoor water parks. Parks down south have them...just a big bucket that fills and eventually dumps water. Very cool. 4. Running water and flushable toilets like at the Greillickville park. I swear I have almost "lost" one of my kids in that HUGE hole that is a toilet at the park. Plus, we're not camping. It's a nice park!</p>	Allison O'Keefe
EMAIL 5	<p>August 10, 2016 My name is Dan Farley and I live off of Devil's Dive close to the Bowers Harbor Park and also served on the Park Board for several years. During that time we orchestrated the planting of over a thousand white pine trees in Old Mission Point Park, connected the trails on the Murray Property with those of Old Mission Point Park and created the maps. We were also responsible for the cedars around the tennis courts and the maples along the drive in Bowers Harbor Park, among many other things. My wife and I received the post card about the Bowers Harbor Park Addition and will regretfully be out of town on the 18th. We would therefore like to convey our thoughts with this email. Rather than just one large loop around the park, it might be beneficial to have some smaller loops or connecting trails through the center of the large loop. We presently run our dog through the addition and hope that the rules will continue to be "dogs under control". Thank you for your service and we look forward to coming to future meetings on this great addition to some of the most beautiful parks in America!</p>	Dan and Cameron Farley

Thank you for your interest in the Bowers Harbor Park Expansion Project. Please use this sheet to offer other comments and input that may not have been captured in the Element Preference Survey.

Are there any recreational program elements not identified in the survey that should be at the park?

Restroom Facilities. Not recreational but necessary. All facilities
and visitors: more restrooms - Flush or pit?

Trait between new area and old area.

Are there any other comments you'd like to offer to the Park Commission?

Do not set aside large areas for parking vehicles for non peninsula
events such as area wide marathons etc.

For Park Commission & Trustees - Do not build facilities which cannot
be maintained. Easier to get Capital Funds than Maintenance Funds,

Name (optional):

Julia Metzger - 12243 Hedden Dr.

Thank you for your interest in the Bowers Harbor Park Expansion Project. Please use this sheet to offer other comments and input that may not have been captured in the Element Preference Survey.

Are there any recreational program elements not identified in the survey that should be at the park?

As with cross country skiing; snow shoeing would also be a plus.
Drinking fountains would be a huge plus, as would lighting at
night for basketball, tennis, horse shoes

Are there any other comments you'd like to offer to the Park Commission?

I know horse shoes come in low on the "want" list, but to put
(2) sets in would not cost that much. The expectation would be whomever
wanted to use ~~them~~ would bring their own equipment. Please consider!

Name (optional):

Donna Roy & Chris Earle

9/1/16

P.S. The initial walking Path sign @ the entrance to the park has been pulled out of the ground. It needs to be reset! Thank You