



**VILLAGE OF BELLAIRE
PARKS AND
RECREATION PLAN
2023- 2027**



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1. COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Village of Bellaire is the county seat of Antrim County. Nestled in northwestern Lower Michigan and situated on the Chain of Lakes, the Village of Bellaire and surrounding area offer a wealth of natural attractions and year-round activities.

The Village of Bellaire is located within two townships, Forest Home, and Kearney. The Intermediate River flows through the Village separating the townships, Forest Home Township to the north and west, and Kearney Township to the south and east. M-88 meandering through the Village affords residents, tourists and commerce easy access to businesses and services.

The Village works with businesses, other local units of government, and agencies to provide access to services and recreational opportunities.

Whether one enjoys hiking, running, swimming, skiing, pedaling, or paddling, northwest Lower Michigan offers it all. Maintaining the beauty of its recreation assets while assuring enjoyment and access to the water and scenic vistas are the Village of Bellaire's goals.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Village Council

The Village of Bellaire was incorporated in 1891. It is a general law village operating under the General Law Village Act, 1895 PA 3 (MCL 61.1 *et seq*), as amended.

The Village of Bellaire is governed by a village council, consisting of a president, who is elected every two years, and six (6) trustees, who are elected every four-years. Village Council members are assigned to committees, including a Parks Committee, made up of three (3) members. These committees are tasked with reviewing operations and services, advising, and making recommendations to the full council at open meetings. The Village Council is vested with legislative and policy-making authority.

Parks Committee

The Parks Committee makes recommendations to the Village Council regarding parks and recreation issues.

The Parks Committee, with the assistance of Village staff, prepared the Parks and Recreation Plan and passed a motion recommending its adoption by the Village Council.

Parks Staffing

Oversight of park maintenance and any construction within the Village's parks is the responsibility of the Supervisor of the Department of Public Works. The DPW staff, five full-time employees engage in the day-to-day park maintenance.

Park security is provided by the Village of Bellaire Police Department. The Clerk and Treasurer serve as support staff.

Parks Funding Source / Parks Budgets

The Parks budget is funded solely from the Village's general fund. The general fund revenues are mainly derived from property taxes. Sales tax revenues contribute to the general fund as well. All revenues from campground fees, park rental fees, and player/team participation fees become part of the general fund.

	FY 2022-2023	FY 2023-2024 Estimate
General Fund Revenues	\$757,138.50	\$809,550.00
Budget for Parks	\$190,449.63	\$169,786.69
Parks Budget as of % General Fund	25%	21%

Volunteer Partnerships / Relationship with Bellaire Public Schools & Others

Support from the local Rotary Club was essential to the development of the soccer fields within the Village. Other volunteer groups playing a role in sustaining local recreation efforts include the Bellaire Summer Ball League, the Antrim County Youth Soccer organization, the Bellaire Community in Action, the Bellaire Youth Initiative, and the Antrim County Fair Board (4-H).

In 2015, the Friends of Glacial Hills was created to manage activities on the 31.5-mile trail system. A village council member serves on this recreation board that provides input and oversight to this regional asset.

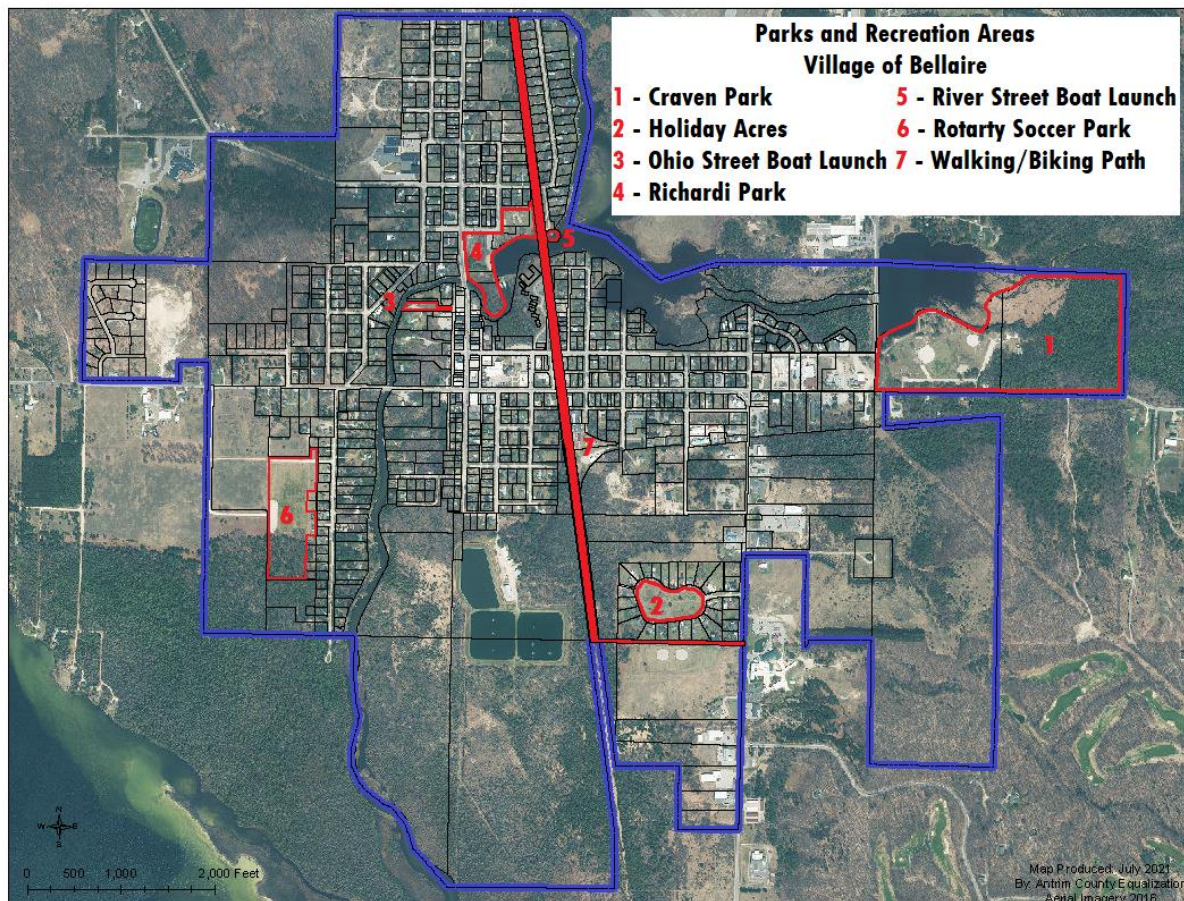
In the past the Bellaire Public Schools have entered a contract with the Village for priority use of the softball and baseball diamonds at Craven Park annually; however, because of the renovations that took place in 2022 and that need to be finished in the upcoming years, the Bellaire Public Schools have entered a contract for the next twenty-five (25) years. This solution addresses the lack of space on school property and provides relief from expensive of facility maintenance costs.

Antrim County Conservation District and CAKE (Charlevoix-Antrim-Kalkaska-Emmet) Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area have provided invaluable assistance in identifying and seeking treatment for invasive species in Craven Park Campground and other public sites.

3. RECREATION INVENTORY

Recreational facilities within the Village of Bellaire are identified on the map below. A description of each access point and park is listed including each access point and park's size, type, primary service area, facilities' amenities, and an accessibility survey.

Using the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, each facility was inspected visually by the Supervisor of the Department of Public Works.



A. Craven Park

Size: 58 acres

Park Type: Special Use / Sports Complex

Location: Craven Park is located on the east side of the Village at the northeast corner of Derenzy Road and East Cayuga Street.

Service Area: Craven Park serves the Village, surrounding townships, Antrim County 4-H Fair participants, and visitors wishing to camp.

Park Facilities and Amenities:

- ❖ 35 Campsites – 7 primitive sites; 7 water/electric sites; 21 water/sewer/electric sites
- ❖ Fire rings and picnic tables
- ❖ Day-use parking area
- ❖ Bathhouse with restrooms – renovated in 2016
- ❖ Playground equipment
- ❖ Fishing and boating access
- ❖ Hiking trails
- ❖ 4 Ball diamonds – brand new 2022/2023
- ❖ 4 Scoreboards – installed Spring of 2023

Accessibility Evaluation: 2

Craven Park does not have sidewalks or a delineated pedestrian path. While vehicle parking is allowed on each campsite, there are no specifically designated ADA accessible parking spaces. The bathhouse and restrooms are accessible. The showers have limited access.

Facility Evaluation: Craven Park is a multi-use park and small gem within the community. The bathhouse has been renovated and upgraded. Campsites are clean and reasonably priced. The ball fields are brand new and will be maintained. Future improvements include upgrading playground equipment, field lighting and concession stand for the ball fields. Expanding the campground is another potential area of improvement.



B. Holiday Acres Park

Size: 3.5 acres

Park Type: Neighborhood

Location: Centered within Holiday Acres Park Subdivision, west of M-88 in the southeast part of the Village.

Service Area: This park serves neighborhood residents and their guests

Park Facilities:

- ❖ Playground equipment
- ❖ Large open space

Accessibility Assessment: 1

Holiday Acres Park has no formal access points or dedicated accessible parking. There are no compliant approaches to the playground equipment.

Facility Evaluation: This park is used by neighborhood children and adults. The equipment is older and in need of updating. Connecting this park to the Walking/Biking Path and updating the play equipment are potential areas of improvement.



C. Ohio Street Boat Launch

Size: Less than 1 acre

Park Type: Special Use

Location: This site is located west of downtown Bellaire, at the end of Ohio Street, off Bridge Lane and Bridge Street.

Service Area: This access site serves the Village, surrounding townships, and visitors to the area.

Park Facilities:

- ❖ Paved approach to ramp
- ❖ Concrete boat ramp
- ❖ Docks
- ❖ Grass vehicle and trailer parking close by

Accessibility Assessment: 1

The paved street provides a stable approach to the launch. Access to the pier is not compatible.

Facility Evaluation: Residents and visitors use this site for boating and paddling access to Lake Bellaire and the lower Chain of Lakes. Maintaining the site and adding more accessible options are potential areas of improvement.



D. Richardi Park

Site: Approximately 8 acres

Park Type: Community Park

Location: Richardi Park is located on the Intermediate River just north of downtown Bellaire, on the east side of M-88.

Service Area: Richardi Park serves the Village, townships, and visitors to the area.

Park Facilities and Amenities:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| ❖ Restrooms | ❖ 2 Playground areas |
| ❖ Swimming beach | ❖ Ice rink area |
| ❖ 3 Basketball courts | ❖ Fishing area |
| ❖ Tennis court | ❖ Kayak Launch – installed Spring of 2023 |
| ❖ 2 Picnic pavilions | |
| ❖ Gazebo | |

Accessibility Assessment: 4 for restroom and path; 2 for playground equipment. The restrooms are compliant. Continuous asphalt provides universal access to the Walking/Biking Path. Approaches to the playground equipment are clear but are not compliant.

Facility Evaluation: Richardi Park enjoys frequent usage because of its on-site amenities and location. Its inclusion on the water trail map and the nearby Glacial Hills Pathway & Natural Area have resulted in additional activity. Funds are being set aside for playground equipment replacement. Annual kayaking events have encouraged the installation of a kayak launch. Maintaining the park, a more accessible kayak launch, replacing the wooden play equipment, along with updating the other play equipment, replacing fencing, and a new overall design for the park are all potential areas of improvement.



E. River Street Boat Launch

Size: Less than 1 acre

Park Type: Special Use

Location: This site provides access to the Intermediate River. It is located at the south end of River Street, off East Forest Home Avenue, east of M-88.

Service Area: This access site serves the Village, surrounding townships, and visitors to the area.

Park Facilities:

- ❖ Gravel approach
- ❖ Concrete boat launch
- ❖ Wooden dock
- ❖ Grass parking area

Accessibility Assessment: 1. The approach to the ramp is gravel and the ramp too steep for compliance. The wooden dock has a step up and therefore is not accessible.

Facility Evaluation: Residents and visitors use this site for boating access to the upper Chain of Lakes. A beaten path connects this access site to the Walking/Biking Path. Maintaining the site and adding more accessible options, along with extending the Walking/Biking Path to the site are all potential areas of improvement.



F. Rotary Soccer Park

Size: 20 acres

Park Type: Sports Complex

Location: The Rotary Soccer Park is located south of West Cayuga (aka County Road 620, Bellaire Highway) on the west side of Bellaire.

Service Area: The soccer park serves the Village and surrounding townships. It is used by the Antrim County Youth Soccer organization, as well as youth and other groups.

Park Facilities:

- ❖ Gravel parking area
- ❖ Fertilized and irrigated soccer fields
- ❖ Seasonal portable restrooms
- ❖ A Seasonal concession-stand

Accessibility Assessment: 1. There are no sidewalks or pathways to the park. Restroom facilities are identified as accessible. Parking is not compliant.

Facility Evaluation: This park is dedicated for soccer; however, residents use it as an open space. Maintaining the park, and adding permanent bathrooms are potential areas of improvement.



G. Walking/Biking Path

Size: 1.5 miles

Park Type: Park Trail – Type II

Location: The Walking/Biking Path was constructed primarily on an abandoned railroad right-of-way. It begins at the northern limits of the Village and meanders over an old railroad trestle bridge and beyond to Broad Street where it connects via Village streets to the south side of Cayuga Street at the Antrim County Commission on Aging and the Area Seniors, Inc. The Walking/Biking Path proceeds south to a boardwalk then turns east to M-88 along County Property.

Service Area: The Walking/Biking Path serves the Village, surrounding townships, tourists, and visitors.

Park Facilities:

- ❖ A boardwalk/paved pathway 6' to 8' in width
- ❖ Benches
- ❖ Pet waste stations and trash receptacles
- ❖ Maps identifying points of interest and distance traveled

Accessibility Assessment: 4. The paved pathway has multiple access points that are universally accessible.

Facility Evaluation: The Walking/Biking Path is enjoyed by residents and visitors. Maintaining the site, adding some solar lights, upgrading the boardwalk portion, working with the Townships/Glacial Hills to connect the site to amenities outside of the Village limits, and expanding the site to connect to the Holiday Acres Park are all potential areas of improvement.



H. DNR Recreation Grant Inventory

Grant Number: 26-00719

Year: 1976

Grant Amount: \$20,500

Project Scope: Sanitary dump station, Restroom building with utilities and LWCF sign

Grant Number: 26-01023P1

Year: 1977

Grant Amount: \$29,700

Project Scope: Craven Park Development - Play equipment, nature trails, 2 baseball diamonds, site preparation and landscaping, parking lot and entrance road renovation, and LWCF sign

Grant Number: CM99-261

Year: 1999

Grant Amount: \$59,200

Project Scope: Richardi Park Improvements –Restroom/changing facility with utility line extensions, barrier-free path, and site equipment



4. DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

This plan was created with community effort. A survey was mailed out to Village residents and put on the Village Facebook page in November 2021 for public input. The members of the Parks Committee and Village Council participated in the survey and public input process.

The Village continues to use the systems approach to assessing the parks, recreation, and open space within the community. Once the survey data was compiled, with guidance from the Parks Committee, the staff generated a draft plan for presentation to the Village Council and the community.

The draft plan was presented to the Village Council at their November 2, 2022 meeting. Notice of the draft plan was published in the local newspaper. Copies of the draft plan were available for public viewing at the Bellaire Public Library, in the Village offices and on the Village website.

After consideration of all the public comment, the Village Council approved the Parks and Recreation Plan 2023-2027 at their December 7, 2022 meeting.

5. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Survey respondents were asked to circle the three (3) goals in the 2018-2022 Parks and Recreation Plan that were most important to them and their families. The following goals were derived from a consideration of prior recreation plans, the Village's master plan that had been reviewed and approved in 2019, and the public survey.

Goal 1: Protect, manage, and enhance all existing parks.

Objectives:

The survey respondents emphasize the need to protect, manage, and enhance all existing parks. There is a need to enhance or improve certain amenities, including upgrades to Richardi Park, play equipment, Walking/Biking Path, among other improvement ideas.

Goal 2: Provide multigenerational recreational opportunities, and activities for people of all ages and abilities.

Objectives:

Work towards universal accessibility to the Village's parks and amenities.

Support efforts to use the parks for environmental education and extracurricular activities.

Goal 3: Improve Village Park connections, and construct links from the Village parks to trail systems outside the Village limits.

Objectives:

Expand the Walking/Biking Path east towards Craven Park's Cedar River Trail system and continue to work with other governmental entities to connect the Walking/Biking Path to other trail systems.

Goal 4: Maintain and improve public access to the Intermediate & Cedar Rivers.

Objectives:

Three locations within the Village have been designated as either an access site or a trailhead on the Chain of Lakes Water Trail. The trail head designation for Richardi Park has reinforced the need for the long-term objective of developing an accessible kayak launch system. Maintain and improve all boat launch and kayak launch sites.

Goal 5: Foster collaborative efforts and relationships with Federal, State, other local governmental units, local businesses, and non-profit organizations.

Objectives:

Continue to work with Antrim County and the Bellaire Public Schools on property leases and agreements to maximize the best uses of public land.

Support Antrim County Youth Soccer, Paddle Antrim, Bellaire Community in Action, Bellaire Youth Initiative, and other non-profit organizations in their efforts to promote local recreational opportunities and enhance the facilities.

Develop and maintain relationships with non-governmental agencies to improve information sharing and support.

Continue to work with Antrim County and Forest Home Township in support of the Glacial Hills Pathway and Natural Area, and work with Kearney and/or Forest Home Townships in any efforts to expand/connect the Walking/Biking Path to other amenities.

6. ACTION PLAN

In previous years, the Parks Committee and Village Council have been mindful of the need to maintain the parks' amenities and make improvements on an as-needed basis. To meet the identified goals and objectives, the Village Council is encouraged to use this plan as a baseline for budget discussions with a recognition that the long-term projects will require a combination of general fund revenues and grant dollars.

The Village operates on a fiscal year from March 1 to the end of the following February. As in the previous plan, this list is presented in alphabetical order.

All of Bellaire's Parks – The Village's Park system continues to be a tremendous asset to the community. Residents use the parks and paths on a regular basis. As park use increases, preventive maintenance of park amenities, weed control, and improvement of parks will help the Village meet goals 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Craven Park – The Village has worked with Bellaire High School officials and donors to pay for four new ballfields. Installing new dugouts, lighting, and a concession stand are in the planning phase.

Camping is on a "first come-first serve" basis and remains steady. Updates to playground equipment still need to be done along with the possibility of expanding the campground.

These projects help the Village meet goals 1, 2, 4, and 5

Holiday Acres Park – A park located in the center of a subdivision called Holiday Acres, west of M-88 in the southeast part of the Village. This park serves neighborhood residents and their guests. Connecting this area with the Walking/Biking Path will give the park users easier non-motorized access to the rest of the Village's amenities and the Downtown area.

These projects help the Village meet goals 1, 2, and 3.

Ohio Street Boat Launch – A site used as a public utility source for fire protection this boat launch serves an important function in the community. It has a designation as an access site on the Chain of Lakes Water Trail map, and signage has directed visitors to the location and to Downtown. Seasonal overnight parking adjacent to the site is now allowed.

These projects will help the Village meet goals 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Richardi Park – Adjacent to M-88 and along the Intermediate River, Richardi Park is the jewel of the Village's parks. Richardi Park has been designated as a trail head on the Chain of Lakes Water Trail map. This designation is the recent motivation to install a kayak launch site north of the existing swimming beach in the Fall of 2022.

During the winters, The Village has developed and maintained an ice rink and a warming hut located in Richardi Park.

Future improvements include: a more accessible kayak launch, replacing the woodenware play equipment, along with updating the other play equipment, replacing fencing, and a new overall design for the park with the help of Forest Home Township. As well as, maintaining the basketball courts, and tennis courts. Much of the playground equipment and several courts are over 25 years old.

These projects will help the Village meet goals 1, 2, 4, and 5.

River Street Boat Launch – Although this site is connected to Richardi Park via a footpath, improvements to that path are needed. A parking area is available.

These projects will help the Village meet goals 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Rotary Soccer Park – This site is located south of West Cayuga (aka County Road 620, Bellaire Highway) on the west side of Bellaire. This park serves the Village and surrounding townships, along with the Antrim County youth Soccer Organization, as well as other groups. Maintaining the park, and adding permanent bathrooms are potential areas of improvement.

These projects will help the Village meet goals 1, 2, and 5.

Walking/Biking Path – Constructed on an abandoned railroad line, the walking/biking path spans from one end of the Village to the other. The Walking/Biking Path is intended for pedestrian and non-motorized bicycle traffic only. Informational signs have been added along the walking/biking path. Suggested improvements include clearing overgrowth of shrubbery and brush particularly where the path intersects roadways, replacement of boards over the trestle bridge that are prone to warping with nails popping, adding solar lighting options for the walkway, updating the boardwalk portion of the path, and clearly marking a route between the Bellaire Walking/Biking Path and the Cedar River Natural Area Trail System. Also working with other entities to connect the Walking/Biking Path to amenities outside the Village limits.

These projects will help the Village meet goals 1, 2, 3, and 5.