

## **Clare Parks and Recreation Emerald Isle Recreation Complex Proposal**

### **Need for Project**

The Clare community has a proud tradition of providing its residents and the residents of the surrounding area excellent recreation facilities, programs, and opportunities. In 2019, Clare County was ranked 79 out of 83 as one of the “unhealthiest” counties in Michigan by the Wisconsin Population Health Institute. Based upon the statistics of Clare County’s overall health rankings, the City of Clare has made a commitment to help facilitate and continue improvement in the Clare County rankings. To be part of the solution, the City of Clare Parks and Recreation Department, community members, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and GFA engineering designed plans for a new recreation complex and started the development.

Emerald Isle Recreation Complex will significantly improve public health by providing access to free health and fitness opportunities for the people we serve. With 39% of the children who live within Clare County living in poverty, this community park will significantly improve public health by providing free health and fitness opportunities to people of all demographics.

The City of Clare currently has four other small parks located within the city limits; however none of them offer a broad range of recreation opportunities in one location. Local support of recreation is evident everywhere within the Clare community. The City of Clare has 62.97 acres, dedicated to parks and recreation and the Pere Marquette Rail-Trail (constructed with assistance of the MDNR Trust Fund) courses into the heart of the city’s downtown; the city employs a full-time recreation director and offers year-round recreation programs; and the Clare electorate currently has a dedicated ten-year parks and recreation millage.

### **Site Quality**

The recreation complex is currently being constructed on 26 acres of vacant, city owned property. This property was purchased by the city in 2012, to serve as a new park area. The multi-purpose complex will be complete with a universal design, incorporating ten varied size soccer fields, paved walking/hiking paths, exercise stations, a playground, concession building with bathrooms, two pavilions that will be used for family/group gatherings and for educational workshops, a paved parking lot, and a skate and bike park. The complex project will also incorporate conservation elements of a butterfly/pollen garden and a wetland area with interpretive signage.

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board created a priority list for the scope items that will be included within the first phases of the project. This list is also located within the Park and Improvement Goals outlined within the 5-Year City of Clare Parks and Recreation Master Plan (p. 73). Those projects listed on the top of the priority list are the 60’ x 60’ natural playground facility, butterfly/pollen garden and skate and bike park.

### **Project Quality**

The creation of a new park within the City of Clare was initiated in 2010 when the City of Clare discovered a need within the community after taking over the Clare Public Schools - Youth Soccer Program. Currently our Youth Soccer Program serves over 325 youth and their families. After taking over the program, the city was told that we would have to find an alternate location for the program and the city did not have a permanent site for holding practices or games. The City of Clare utilized open space that was available at the Clare Municipal Airport and behind the Cherry Grove Cemetery until the complex property was purchased and developed enough for the youth to play on.

The original design plans consisted of soccer fields, but no other recreational opportunities for community members. After Simmer took over as the Director of Clare Parks and Recreation she approached the Clare Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and suggested that the park be made more community friendly and become a park that the whole community could enjoy. That is when other elements were added into the design plans.

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There will be no entrance fees into the park and visitors will be able to travel to the complex by automobile, transit, bicycle, wheelchair, scooter, or on-foot. Non-motorized access to the park is possible today by means of a marked trail-way on US-BR 127. This trail-way will ultimately become part of the 67-mile long Mid-Michigan Community Pathway Project, which is a multi-governmental entity, sponsored project commencing in Ithaca and terminating with the connection to the Pere Marquette Rail-Trail in Clare.

There are two parking lot entrances/exits, which will make it easier for traffic flow and safety to and from the parking area. Congestion of traffic will not be an issue, there are two ways to exit the park and two ways that park users can travel to and from the park. They can either take Pinecrest Street to McEwan Street or they can take Pinecrest to Markley Street to travel to and from town.

### **Additional Information**

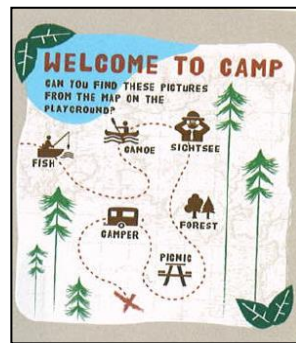
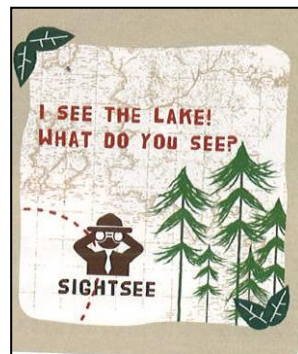
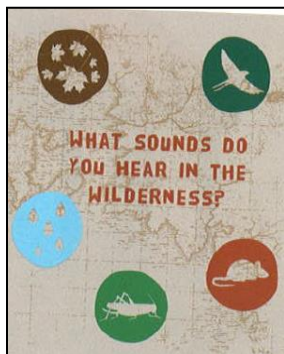
The Clare Recreation Complex Project is a project that will be completed in phases, as funding allows. In 2018, the City of Clare reached out to various playground companies to figure out a playground design that would be inclusive and a great design for the City of Clare. The playground facility design was chosen due to its natural elements and to try and promote interaction with nature at the park. The design consists of equipment made from recycled materials and the theme consists of trees and other nature based elements. When working with the playground company, we insisted on a universal design that would incorporate equipment with ramps and guardrails to allow visitors with mobility issues to play on and enjoy the equipment. This park will provide a safe environment for local residents and park users to come and enjoy being outdoors.

The maintenance activities that currently take place within our parks consist of janitorial work in the public restrooms, lawn care, field prepping for sports leagues, and our existing parks require repairs and general care. The maintenance of the Clare Recreation Complex will be taken care of through a joint effort through our Department of Public Works and parks crew. The costs associated with the recreation complex will be taken care of through the current millage which is in place for the City of Clare Parks and Recreation.

This is a large and unique project and we hope that you will strongly consider designating funds from the Hammerberg Family Trust to utilize for this project. Attached you will find a breakdown of the complex project. The highlighted sections are the components of the project that we are asking for assistance with. The total of the request for the recreation complex is **\$59,000.00**. If you have any further questions or if you would like a digital copy of the plan, please let me know. I can be contacted by email at [jsimmer@cityofclare.org](mailto:jsimmer@cityofclare.org) or by phone at 989-386-7541 x213.

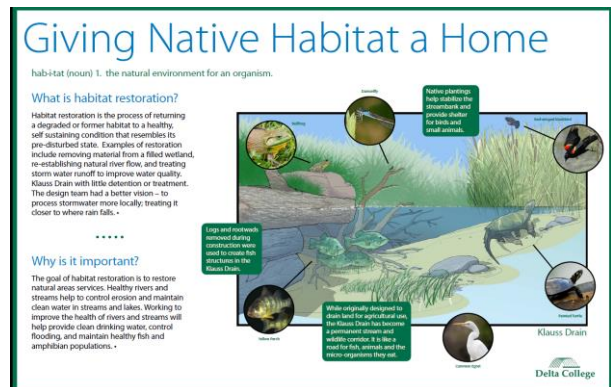
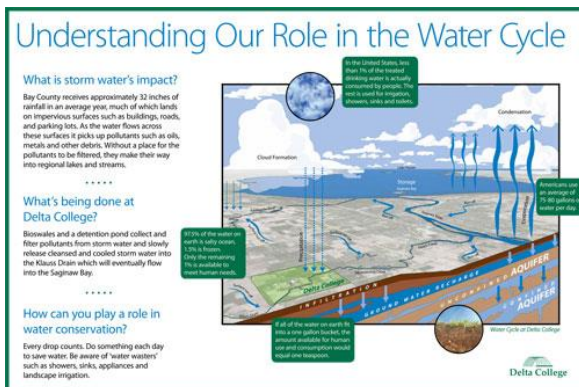
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PLAYGROUND FACILITY:



INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE EXAMPLES:

Sign sizes will be 8.5" x 11" and 20" x 30" (24 signs estimated)





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**EMERALD ISLE RECREATION COMPLEX**

BUTTERFLY/POLLEN GARDEN

SKATE AND BIKE PARK  
80' X 100' PAD

PLAYGROUND AREA



NATURAL  
AREA/PICNIC AREA

RETENTION POND  
WITH PLANTINGS  
AND MULCH

WETLAND AREA