

# **Tompkins Township Recreation Plan 2026-2030**

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## **Introduction**

The recreation needs of Tompkins Township residents are currently provided by recreation services and facilities provided outside of the township by Jackson County and various other public and private organizations. Recently the Stewart Property in Tompkins has been a growing part of our community, and is providing area for recreation. Minard Mills Park located within Tompkins Township is owned and maintained by Jackson County. The Township has many natural features and open spaces under private ownership contributing to the quality of life in the Township.

Tompkins Township is largely a rural community with many working farms and residential areas. Commercial is limited to a main highway M-50 running through the township and one industrial facility. Within the township may be several home based businesses. See Map 4 for zoning information.

Land was donated to Tompkins Township by the late Sheridan Stewart with stipulations for usage. The Tompkins Township Board developed this Plan in response to the charge in stipulations listed in the deed for land. The Plan is also designed to meet the requirements of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, thereby making the Township eligible for State grants.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Plan Adoption**

The Tompkins Township Board and Parks Committee have held several public meetings through the years regarding the Stewart Property. Along with the tax bills to the residents of Tompkins Township an invitation was given to all to complete a survey for input. Survey forms have been available to the public in the Township office at the Treasurer's window for years. The Supervisor maintains an email list to interested persons. Invitation to attend a public workshop was sent by Supervisor email October 2, and November 1, 2025. Invitation to the Public Hearing was emailed in November also. To obtain recent input for this updated Recreation Plan an invitation to a semi-formal meeting of interested persons was held on October 09, 2025. Another public invitation for participation in updating the creation Plan was held on November 13, 2025. A public meeting and hearing was held December 4, 2025 to formally introduce a draft of the Recreation Plan. At the conclusion of this hearing, which was advertised in the Jackson Citizen Patriot on November 20, 2025, the Plan was approved at the Regular Township Board Meeting. The goals and objectives of the Plan were adopted by the Township Board on December 4, 2025. Please see Appendix C (Resolutions and Summary of Public Meetings and Hearings) for a copy of the resolutions and minutes of the public meetings and notices as well as the legal notices.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Action Program**

In developing this action program initially, the Tompkins Township Board and Parks Committee went through the planning process described in Chapter 4. The result of this process was the reaffirmation of the goal to establish a recreational area with event areas and trails for public purposes, among the other established uses listed in the deed restrictions. Chapter 3 describes this goal and the supporting objectives.

This Plan is a continuation of Tompkins Township's commitment to the planning and development of the Stewart Property. There are questions about costs, and timing, however, that can only be answered as the action program continues to be refined. In the meantime, the action program gives the Township a starting point in the implementation of this Plan. Funds and the ability to fund are an integral part of the future planning and progress to be made.

In the past, the Tompkins Township Board approved the formation of a Parks Committee with six members focused on planning, reviewing, and enabling growth in all aspects of the township properties. A meeting of residents involved in the growth of the Stewart Property was held for gathering information. Since then the Committee has dwindled in number and purpose.

#### **Program Overview**

The Township proposes to develop the Stewart Property into an area where a new township hall and fire station shall reside. The land designated for the future township hall and fire station is excluded from the Recreation Plan. Since the creation of the previous Recreation Plan the Township has built out the second floor of the township hall for offices which were previously in the homes of each official. The need still exists for future handicap accessible township offices and fire station. Recreational areas, including but not limited to baseball fields, soccer fields, playgrounds, walking trails, pickle ball courts, and preservation of natural habitats, RV campsite, rustic camping, exercise, sports activities, festivals and community events are desired on the Stewart Property.

The Tompkins Township Stewart Property is zoned agricultural and residential, which prevents commercial facilities, and maintains the land as recreational or preserved.

The main focus and goal of this Recreation Plan is to make use of land that was donated to the township by J. Sheridan Stewart. Mr. Stewart donated 175 acres to the township with stipulations. Tompkins Township is under obligation to create and maintain the land for public purposes. The deed to the property is Appendix B.

The stipulation reads: The perpetual obligation upon Grantee (Tompkins Township) to own, develop, operate and maintain the premises only for public purposes, including but not limited to, a township hall/offices; fire station; park; and recreational facilities. Should it become necessary for Grantee to sell a portion(s) of the premises to develop, operate or maintain the remainder for public purposes, the revenue derived from such sale shall be used exclusively for such purposes(s), and shall not be commingled with other Township funds.

Also donated to the Tompkins Township by J. Sheridan Stewart were his house and several barns. The land surrounding the house, the house, and all the barns, except a large barn next to the area are leased to the Tompkins Historical Society for renovation into a historical museum for public purposes. The Historical Society made significant progress in improving the location, including a three story addition and renovation for handicap accessibility. The Historical Society has added a one room school house, working windmill with water for steam engines, a log cabin all filled with artifacts with historical qualities, a gazebo, a 65'x50' pole barn with new lean-to, corn crib transformed into a gazebo, and extracted the historic Quigley Cabin from Springport Road and rebuilding it to be used for a historic cabin. The Historical Society continues to raise funds with dinners and events; Fourth of July Picnic and Freedom Festival (Sept.), Tompkins Tea and More Party, Trunk or Treat events, Easter Egg Hunt, County Museum Day with plant sale and Pancake Breakfast, and a Christmas Tree Lighting event honoring the veterans by name on an ornament. One large barn has been retained for use by Tompkins Township which houses the township owned tractor. South of the house and large barn a Pavilion with cement pad and electricity was built. The land behind the house and barns shall be maintained by Tompkins Township and may be considered a greenway for trails to connect open spaces. This land and property is also excluded from the Recreation Plan.

An area of land within the greenway adjacent to the Stewart House has been leased for a cell tower. The zoning ordinance contains regulations for cell towers sufficient for placement. The land and surrounding area that may house a cell tower will be excluded from the Recreation Plan.

Maps follow to show the township land by parcel number. The donated land is comprised of 6 parcels of land all located on Tompkins Rd. All but one is on the same side of the road as the house with an address of 10138 Tompkins Rd. The one remaining parcel of land is alongside a creek that is between the creek and a previously owned parcel with the existing township hall.

The Township Hall continues to be updated and maintained. The first floor has been built out to provide four offices for Township officers. The Township Hall is maintained as a rental hall on the basement floor with the Township Board meetings held at that location once a month, or as needed. Various appointed boards meet also, and those meetings are usually quarterly or as dictated by law. Otherwise the township hall is available for the residents and non-residents alike to rent the facility, along with community groups such as 4-H, MSU Extension, and Tompkins Center Historical Society equipped with a kitchen and appliances.

Behind the Township hall are two baseball fields with fencing and benches. The local baseball league has used them regularly in the past. The Township rents portable bathroom facilities for the baseball teams as needed. The bleachers have been updated and now used by the Tompkins Tractor Pullers.

In the fall of 2004, Tompkins Township Board planned and completed the construction of a parking lot on the Stewart Property with an entrance across the road from the Roth Rd. and Tompkins Rd. intersection. The 110 ft. x 140 ft. parking lot is constructed of a sand base of at least 6 inches with 6 inches of 23A limestone compacted. The Tompkins Township Board

provided for an entrance foot bridge to access the parking lot opposite the township hall driveway from the road.

In the parking lot the township and community have hosted monthly refuse recycling. Costs were incurred and paid by citizens of Tompkins Township. Currently this has been discontinued. Tire recycling events are hosted on a rotational basis with neighboring townships at this location.

Between the parking lot and the large barn, the Hunter Wood Memorial Pavilion has been built with 23A grade limestone gravel as a base later covered by concrete with electricity for the picnic tables that have been purchased and placed for public use. Since initial construction a sealed steel ceiling has been added to deter animals, predominately birds.

Presently three miles of trails exist on the Stewart Property. Three miles are disc smoothed, yolk raked, grass edged and mowed regularly. Mr. Stewart created the trails for personal use and the township has maintained and expanded the trails. Volunteers have contributed to the upkeep and expansion. The township would like to continue maintaining these trails and create more as funds are available. Current plans for the trails include signage for mile markers to encourage exercise activities. At the pedestrian bridge is a map of the trails created by a community project of a local girl scout. Horses are allowed, but no motor vehicles or golf carts without permit.

A disc golf club has played on the trails adding temporary baskets and flags during their play. It was their desire to establish a permanent course. Disc golf is known as a sport that is played for the sheer fun of the game – no matter the age or skill level. Jackson College hosts an 18 cement tee beds course. Ella Sharp Park created a disc golf course in 2018.

Michigan State University assisted Tompkins Township by providing an Environmental Impact Assessment. The findings were reported to the Board and are retained on file.

Jackson County Conservation District provided a Natural Resource Assessment for Tompkins Township/ Stewart Property in November 2001. The findings were reported to the Board and are retained on file.

In April, 2003 Tompkins Township gave permission to Pheasants Forever to work the north 30 acres to plant wildlife food plots and begin to grow native grasses in that area. It is Pheasants Forever's hope that walking trails can be constructed in the area. There hasn't been a report of progress from Pheasants Forever since the initial burning of the landscaping. Pheasants Forever are no longer active at this time, but are welcomed to continue.

One goal of the township was to provide electricity on the Stewart Property across from the township hall for lighting the parking lot. Electricity has been installed. In the same area a fire well with a 12 inch casing has been drilled and power connected to it. Electricity has been extended to the pavilion from the fire well area.

Lawn has been established in the area. Currently fifteen acres of land is mowed with brush hog equipment. Rustic campsites have been created with 21 areas available. Burn rings and portable toilets are provided as needed. Tompkins Tractor Pullers (community tractor pulls) have demonstrated their talents near the pavilion for several years. Lately there has been a blacksmith group meeting also. Several hours of volunteer help have been given, and many take the lead to

ensure the property is maintained. Permission has been granted for them to place a shed for storage.

Jackson Radio Control Model Airplane Club has been given permission to use a portion of the south end of the property to fly their airplanes. They maintain approximately 6 acres the area for their events.

The Tompkins Township Board has purchased in 2005 a John Deere tractor with brush hog, blade, front end loader, disc and a landscape rake. The tractor is housed in the township barn on the Stewart Property.

Split from parcel #000-02-16-476-001-00 is 44.06 acres m/l leased to a local farmer for five years beginning in 2006. The benefit to the township is having the land cleared, tilled and maintained to minimize overgrowth. The township leased for a fee, but the land is also on the tax rolls until the time the lease expires. Currently the lease has been extended. 9.06 acres was later separated out for public use. Currently the farmer farms 51 GIS measured acres.

It is a vision of the residents of Tompkins to see many various community events occur on the grounds. Residents have fond memories of community events, and have a renewed interest now that the property is available to them. Some of the events spoken of at a meeting for input from the residents include tractor pulls, Fire Department exhibits, kite flying contests, community picnics, signs on the trails, playground area for children, musical playground instruments, pickle ball courts, a composting toilet, and alongside the Grand River on parcel 000-02-16-226-001-00 a camping and or picnic area for watersport activities.

Annually the Tompkins Historical Society has hosted a weekend Freedom Festival. The Freedom Festival has involved not only the community, but people from miles away in many states. The Freedom Festival has sparked the interest for an extensive list of various types of exhibits, including steam engines, Native American encampments, military encampments, weaving demonstrations, hunting, logging, and tractors of all ages and sizes. The Freedom Festival has been an annual event, expanded and grown beginning in 2005.

Further mid-range planning is desired, but with the assistance of a landscape architect to do site planning. The goal of hiring an architect is to guide the Tompkins Township Board to plan for placement of projects, determined by the lay of the land, according to the best use for the amount of acres available. The Township Board has hopes of utilizing the Michigan State University Environmental Assessment for this tool. The document is a valuable asset, but further direction is desired. A grant for funding of an architect would be of great benefit.

Community involvement has been very active. Volunteers have been on hand to provide their time, resources and equipment. Projects are being planned and completed by local citizens interested in our community. The township purchases an insurance policy to cover volunteers.

## **Staffing, Operations, and Maintenance**

The Township does not currently own, staff or maintain any parks besides the Stewart Property. It is not anticipated the five-year program outlined in this Plan will necessitate hiring full-time staff. Presently the Township contracts to have the township grounds mowed and maintained.

Equipment may be rented or purchased as necessary to clear and level the ground. As maintenance responsibilities increase with the development, the Township will continue to contract with individuals or companies for the maintenance of the grounds. Volunteers now mow and clear the 15 acres of land for community activities. We have maintained the land and trails with volunteers since the inception of the land.

## **Land Acquisition**

It is not anticipated the Township will need to acquire additional land.

## **Facility Development**

The extent to which this recreational area shall include capital improvements, such as restrooms and picnic facilities, will be determined as the details are refined.

Excerpt from Program Overview:

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The Township Hall continues to be updated and maintained. The first floor has been built out to provide four offices for Township officers. The Township Hall is maintained as a rental hall on the basement floor with the Township Board meetings held at that location once a month, or as needed. Various appointed boards meet also, and those meetings are usually quarterly or as dictated by law. Otherwise the township hall is available for the residents and non-residents alike to rent the facility, along with community groups such as 4-H, MSU Extension, and Tompkins Center Historical Society equipped with a kitchen and appliances.

Behind the Township hall are two baseball fields with fencing and benches. The local baseball league has used them regularly in the past. The Township rents portable bathroom facilities for the baseball teams as needed. The bleachers have been updated and now used by the Tompkins Tractor Pullers.

In the fall of 2004, Tompkins Township Board planned and completed the construction of a parking lot on the Stewart Property with an entrance across the road from the Roth Rd. and Tompkins Rd. intersection. The 110 ft. x 140 ft. parking lot is constructed of a sand base of at least 6 inches with 6 inches of 23A limestone compacted. The Tompkins Township Board provided for an entrance foot bridge to access the parking lot opposite the township hall driveway from the road.

In the parking lot the township and community have hosted monthly refuse recycling. Costs were incurred and paid by citizens of Tompkins Township. Currently this has been discontinued.

Tire recycling events are hosted on a rotational basis with neighboring townships at this location.

Between the parking lot and the large barn, the Hunter Wood Memorial Pavilion has been built with 23A grade limestone gravel as a base later covered by concrete with electricity for the picnic tables that have been purchased and placed for public use. Since initial construction a sealed steel ceiling has been added to deter animals, predominately birds.

Presently three miles of trails exist on the Stewart Property. Three miles are disc smoothed, yolk raked, grass edged and mowed regularly. Mr. Stewart created the trails for personal use and the township has maintained and expanded the trails. Volunteers have contributed to the upkeep and expansion. The township would like to continue maintaining these trails and create more as funds are available. Current plans for the trails include signage for mile markers to encourage exercise activities. At the pedestrian bridge is a map of the trails created by a community project of a local girl scout. Horses are allowed, but no motor vehicles or golf carts without permit.

A disc golf club has played on the trails adding temporary baskets and flags during their play. It was their desire to establish a permanent course. Disc golf is known as a sport that is played for the sheer fun of the game – no matter the age or skill level. Jackson College hosts an 18 cement tee beds course. Ella Sharp Park created a disc golf course in 2018.

One goal of the township was to provide electricity on the Stewart Property across from the township hall for lighting the parking lot. Electricity has been installed. In the same area a fire well with a 12 inch casing has been drilled and power connected to it. Electricity has been extended to the pavilion.

Lawn has been established in the area. Currently fifteen acres of land is mowed with brush hog equipment. Rustic campsites have been created with 21 areas available. Burn rings and portable toilets are provided as needed. Tompkins Tractor Pullers (community tractor pulls) have demonstrated their talents near the pavilion for several years. Lately there has been a blacksmith group meeting also. Several hours of volunteer help have been given, and many take the lead to ensure the property is maintained. Permission has been granted for them to place a shed for storage.

Jackson Radio Control Model Airplane Club has been given permission to use a portion of the south end of the property to fly their airplanes. They maintain approximately 6 acres the area for their events.

The Tompkins Township Board has purchased in 2005 a John Deere tractor with brush hog, blade, front end loader, disc and a landscape rake. The tractor is housed in the township barn on the Stewart Property.

Split from parcel #000-02-16-476-001-00 is 44.06 acres m/l leased to a local farmer for five years beginning in 2006. The benefit to the township is having the land cleared, tilled and maintained to minimize overgrowth. The township leased for a fee, but the land is also on the tax rolls until the time the lease expires. Currently the lease has been extended. 9.06 acres was later separated out for public use. Currently the farmer farms 51 GIS measured acres.

It is a vision of the residents of Tompkins to see many various community events occur on the grounds. Residents have fond memories of community events, and have a renewed interest now that the property is available to them. Some of the events spoken of at a meeting for input from the residents include tractor pulls, Fire Department exhibits, kite flying contests, community picnics, signs on the trails, playground area for children, musical playground instruments, composting toilet, and alongside the Grand River on parcel 02-16-226-001-00 a camping and or picnic area for watersport activities. Creation of an additional parking area on parcel 02-16-276-000-00 would open the northern portion of the Stewart Property.

Further mid-range planning is desired, but with the assistance of a landscape architect to do site planning. The goal of hiring an architect is to guide the Tompkins Township Board to plan for placement of projects, determined by the lay of the land, according to the best use for the amount of acres available. The Township Board has hopes of utilizing the Michigan State University Environmental Assessment for this tool. The document is a valuable asset, but further direction is desired. A grant for funding of an architect would be of great benefit.

## **Project Funding**

Projects will be funded through the Township's general fund, cell tower rental income, donations, as well as through anticipated grants. Grants for funding have been submitted in the past, but we are continually seeking possible sources of revenue. Contributions have been donated to the Tompkins Historical Society for building projects. The fire well was built with donated funds. A culmination of the wide community support through funding and volunteerism has enabled projects to be completed that the township could never see come to fruition without their efforts.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Basis for Action Program**

The action program described in Chapter 2 was developed in accordance with the goals and objectives of this Plan, which are based upon various factors including:

- The 2005 Stewart Property Survey, Second Update 2013 Survey, Third Update 2019 Survey, and Fourth Update 2025 Survey.
- Opinions of those attending local meetings.
- Stipulations of the deed and prior wishes of Mr. Sheridan Stewart.
- Opinions of the Tompkins Township Board members.
- Tompkins Township Planning Commission was invited to review the Plan.
- Interested residents participating in the growth of the property.

A five (5) person Playground Committee will be formed with volunteers, and will be made up of two (2) from the Board and three (3) from the public to study the interest in a playground, and possible toilet facility for six (6) months beginning approximately January 2026.

### **Goals and Objectives**

The Tompkins Township Board adopted on April 1, 2003 a Mission and Vision Statement regarding the Tompkins Township Stewart Property. The mission reads, “To provide the township residents with a recreational area as well as a place for a fire station, township offices, and Tompkins Historical Artifacts through grants, donations and volunteer services.” The vision reads, “Develop, operate and maintain the premises only for public purposes, including but not limited to, a township hall/offices; fire station; park; and recreational facilities.”

### **The Township Opinion Survey**

Tompkins Township created a survey directed to the residents of Tompkins Township in March, 2005, updated and re-circulated in 2013, 2019, and 2025. The survey was made available at Tompkins Township Board meetings, perpetually at the window of the Township Treasurer, posted on the Tompkins Township web site, emailed to those wishing to receive township communications, and addressed in a newsletter distributed to tax payers.

The survey will continue to be made available and opinions will continue to be reviewed. The Clerk created the survey and updated the questions and re-circulated the survey asking for input for future planning. Based upon this survey minimal additional input was given from the community, but provided validation for our plans outlined in this document. With each update the survey is distributed and links for the survey on the township website will be provided in newsletters distributed to tax payers and emails of communicative nature to concerned individuals.

Suggested Stewart Property Projects:

Including community surveys from 2005, 2013, 2019, and 2025

Maintenance and infrastructure

1. Electricity - lighting for the parking lot
2. Lawn - purchase a mower or contract for mowing to create lawns and/or trails
3. Water/Building for water source
4. Add on to or remodel town hall, rewiring/upkeep on the Hall
5. Windbreak around future buildings
6. Clean brush & weeds around large barn
7. Composting toilet on Stewart Property

#### Recreation

8. Trails - walking exercise
9. Playgrounds
10. Rustic Camping
11. Soccer Fields
12. Baseball Fields
13. Basketball area and Pickle Ball Courts
14. 4H area with pavilion and arena. Area for 4H youths to meet and work on projects.
15. Horse Trails – 5 miles

#### Events

16. Tractor pulls
17. Draft horse pulls
18. Easter Egg Hunt
19. Halloween Party
20. Fourth of July Parade & Hall Party
21. Music & fun at the Hall
22. Picnics
23. Kite flying contests
24. RV Rally Day
25. Carnival - Fundraising
26. Monthly flea market / farm market
27. Young adult ball games

#### Education

28. Involve 4H
29. Educational opportunities for children

#### Preservation/conservation

30. Maintain open space
31. Support integrity of hunting land surrounding the property.
32. Keep growth down by cultivating the land
33. Grow trees on the land to encourage wildlife habitat
34. Mature trees desired
35. "Keep property as one block and not broken into strips of land"

## Good Neighbor

- 36. Protect neighbor privacy & hunting integrity
- 37. Keep a buffer zone from the public.

Conversations needed: to cultivate property, naturalize (prairie or forest), development or some combination?

## **Chapter 4**

### **The Planning Process**

The Tompkins Township planning process is steady by not only the mature residents, but also by the youth of the township. Consideration of the character of the township, the desires of certain residents, the needs of the community, the stipulations of the deed, and what can be accomplished with limited funds available are at the forefront of planning.

The Tompkins Township Stewart Property Plans are developed with the foundation that the property was donated to the township with the task to develop the land for public purposes. Discussions have occurred as to what those purposes shall be, and with the amount of land available it seems as though several avenues of planning can occur simultaneously.

Historically, 15 acres across from the present Tompkins Township hall have been designated to house future administrative buildings and a new fire station. This land was subjected to a controlled burn in 2004. Clearing and leveling the land seems to be the predominant goal for that time. From there, planning for the layout of future projects needs to be done, hopefully with the assistance of a landscape architect who has the ability to see the contour of the land and guide future planning accordingly. Afterward, suggested facility development standards may be available.

Without the assistance of an engineer future planning may be limited to clearing and leveling the grounds for future lawns and trails. Available labor may determine the level of progress, but with adequate funding consistent labor can be contracted, and equipment rented or purchased. Property already cleared will need regular maintenance using the present contracted grounds keeper or volunteers.

Citizens have the opportunity and did participate in the development of the Plan through the regularly scheduled Township Board meetings. Residents have voiced their opinions at meetings of plans they would like to see accomplished. In the past the Parks Committee has reviewed and taking into consideration the completed surveys submitted. The contents of this Recreation Plan consider and include the requests of the participants. A newsletter included with the tax bills has previously been sent to all residents of Tompkins Township with link of the Survey, and will continue to be communicated. Community has been notified by email and posting on the website of two community public workshops to assist the Recreation Plan update and re-adopted, and a hearing held before the Tompkins Township Board meeting at the time of adoption. This plan can be changed or amended annually with the approval of the Tompkins Township Board, and resubmitted to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for approval, for the purposes of applying for grants made available. Over the course of time this plan has been revised and updated with several meetings and additional public hearings.

After adoption of this Recreation Plan it shall be submitted to the regional planning commission which is Region 2 Planning Commission for review to ensure it does not conflict with regional or county plans.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Recreational and Resource Inventory**

#### **Park Standards**

Tompkins residents have local needs. Availability is lacking for this quadrant of Jackson (Tompkins Township). Health factors include physical activity, fresh air, and decreased stress. Community activities and playground equipment are desired, and need a developed location.

#### **Regional Parks/ State-Owned Land**

State owned land consists of 2 areas in Tompkins Township. Basically they are small parcels of land giving public access to the rivers in the form of a driveway and boat launch areas. These locations only consist of a launch area and driveway.

#### **County Parks in Jackson County**

Cascades County Park, Clark Lake County Park, Clear Lake County Park, Gillett's Lake County Park, Grass Lake County Park, Horton Mill Pond County Park, Keeley Park (Jackson County Fair Grounds renamed in 2019), Lime Lake County Park, Little Wolf Lake County Park, Minard Mill County Park, Pleasant Lake County Park, Portage Lake County Park, Round Lake County Park, Swains Lake County Park, Vandercook Lake County Park, Vineyard Lake County Park, and the newest and ever expanding addition in Jackson; the Falling Waters Trails.

#### **Community/ Township Parks**

Other than playgrounds located within elementary school property, Rives Township Fire Station offers playground equipment, a baseball diamond, and a basketball court. A local church has a fenced in play area the public can access in Rives Township.

Adjoining township of Blackman hosts Rod I. Mills Memorial Park offering softball diamonds, playground equipment, pavilion, picnic facilities, outhouses, and nature trails on 80 acres.

#### **Community Playfields**

Behind the Tompkins Township hall located on 9999 Tompkins are two baseball fields open to the public or any baseball organizations. A paved parking lot is available with additional parking along Roth Rd. next to the Township Hall. Seasonal flooding occurs in the present ball fields. No further development at this location is anticipated other than improvements as needed. Playfields are handicap accessible.

#### **Parks in Tompkins Township**

Minard Mill Park - located on the corner of Minard Rd. and Springport Rd. in Tompkins Township. Approximately five acres with a creek, wheel chair accessible unisex bathroom facility, and a pavilion with electrical outlets for picnic area owned and maintained by the County of Jackson. Updated by the County in 2025 with new playground equipment. No school playgrounds or grounds within the boundaries of Tompkins Township. No recreational trails exist within Tompkins Township.

## **Trailways**

Jackson County Recreation Trail - The Falling Waters Trail is an asphalt rail-trail that links the town of Concord with the City of Jackson and opening soon across the State of Michigan to Copper Harbor, also known as the Levine Trail. The trail follows the old rail bed of the former Michigan Central Railroad, and connects Cascades, Ella Sharp, Lime Lake and Swains Lake parks. At its northeast terminus the trail carries on as the Jackson Intercity Trail to Belden Road with an addition of a connector from the trail across Kibby Road to Cascades Park where it connects to intercity. The trails are gaining ground.

The trail is mostly rural, with only a few road crossings. It also crosses the Lime Lake causeway where you can drop a line for fish. There are plenty of places to stop along the way and admire the scenery, have a picnic and take a swim.

G.R.E.A.T – Grand River Environmental Action Team has been active in Jackson cleaning out the Grand River and hosting canoe events. The Grand River flows through Tompkins with two DNR public entrances to the River: Tompkins Road and Dixon Road.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Community Profile**

#### **Location**

Northwest quadrant of Jackson County, east of Springport Township, west of Rives Township, and north of Sandstone Township. The center of Tompkins Township is located near M-50 and Woodard Road.

**\* Demographic information no longer necessary to include.**

#### **Population with Unique Needs**

Between 1990 and 2000, the population of Tompkins aged significantly: there was a 56% increase in residents between 40 and 59 and a 15.8% increase in residents between 60 and 79. Persons in these age groups need access to low impact physical activity, such as walking. Further, as residents age they prefer not to drive long distances. Walking trails on the Stewart Property would be both low impact and local, meeting the aging population's needs.

Between 2000 and 2010 the Census figures for Tompkins Township show the median age as 43.2 years old. Total population in 2010 was 2,671, down from 2,758 in 2000. Most significant reduction in population was the 35 to 44 year old age category, followed by the 10 to 14 year old age category. American Community Survey Population Estimate is 2,668 for 2017.

Census Data from ACS 2015 5 year estimates report Tompkins Township population to be 2,639, by age category: 0 – 9 years old is 665, 18 – 64 years old is 1,675, and 65 years and over is 299.

Within the boundaries of Tompkins Township are four school districts: Northwest, Springport, Western, and Leslie School Districts. The physical locations of the schools are outside the boundaries of Tompkins Township.

#### **Physical Features**

Tompkins Township is rural in nature.

#### **Topography, Soils and Wildlife**

The topography of the Township is gently rolling with elevations ranging from 890 feet to 1080 feet above sea levels. Soils in Tompkins Township include primarily soils of the Hillsdale Series, a sandy loam which is well drained. Substantial areas of poorly drained soils associated with wetland areas meander through the Township. Soils well suited for agricultural purposes are located in the western and northern portions of the Township.

#### **Lakes and Rivers**

Tompkins is notable for its abundant supply of water. The Grand River and its tributary, Sandstone Creek, together with Lord's Lake (privately owned) and the many springs and marshes make for excellent hunting, fishing, and boating. The Grand River and Sandstone Creek have had much influence on Tompkins Township. The Grand River, which is 270 miles long, in the early days was a source of food and transportation. Later it was used for irrigation. Sandstone Creek, although a small stream, turned the wheels for mills at Minard, now part of Tompkins Township,

and Tompkins Center. Both river and creek are now used for recreation, and there is a county park at the site of the Old Minard Mill.

### **Land Use and Zoning**

Tompkins Township is experiencing increasing pressure for conversion of agricultural land to residential use. In the fifteen year period from 1982 to 1997, Jackson County converted 53,897 acres out of farmland to other uses, which was greater than any of the other 83 counties in the state. Tompkins has the second highest percentage population increase in Jackson County from 1990 to 2000 and the third highest from 1980 to 1990.

The housing growth caused by people moving from the cities to rural areas has led to substantially more parcels of residential land: there was a 36.5% increase in residential parcels from 1997 to 2007 resulting in a loss of agricultural and open space land.

The 2050 Tompkins Township Master Plan was updated and adopted in 2025.

The Tompkins Township Master Plan includes the following policies:

- Provide recreation and open space areas easily accessible to residential areas. (The Stewart Property is adjacent to residential area.)
- Utilize the Stewart Property and Minard Park for recreation including, but not limited to, hiking/walking trails, education, and community activities of the Historical Society and 4-H.
- Promote hunting, fishing, and other land/water recreation activities.
- Encourage the maintenance of woodlands, wetlands, and wildlife.

### **Transportation**

Tompkins Township is served by a major arterial route, M-50, which diagonally crosses the township, extending southeast to the City of Jackson and northwest to Eaton Rapids. The residential areas of the Township are proximate to this highway giving access to employment, shopping, entertainment, and health care provided in non-agricultural areas including Jackson, Lansing, and other cities.

### **Environmental Issues**

Tompkins is committed to protecting surface and ground water quality, and preserving agricultural lands from encroachment by harmful and incompatible land uses.

Providence Energy has been contracted within the boundaries of the township to search for oil reserves. Enbridge has the newly updated 6B line running through Tompkins Township.

An 88.33 acre utility solar farm has been installed at the corner of Wood Road and Dixon Road in Tompkins Township.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Administrative Structure**

Tompkins Township Board members take the necessary actions to develop the Stewart Property. The members of the 2024 - 2028 Tompkins Township Board are: Supervisor Charles Woodburn, Clerk Melanie J. Curran, Treasurer Janine M. Baldwin, Trustee Nancy L. Seydell, and Trustee John A. Tuttle, Sr.

The Tompkins Township Board approved the formation of a Parks Committee with six members focused on planning, reviewing, and enabling growth in all aspects of the township properties, but is no longer active.

A five (5) person Playground Committee will be formed with volunteers, and will be made up of two (2) from the Board and three (3) from the public to study the interest in a playground, and possible toilet facility for six (6) months beginning approximately January 2026.

Other than the goals and objectives listed, no other parks and recreation policies or procedures have been established for Tompkins Township at this time.

No full-time staff exists, nor the hiring of full-time staff anticipated. However, community volunteers use private and township equipment to mow, maintain, and clear various areas of the property.

The Township does not currently contract staff with regard to the maintenance of the Stewart Property.

Tompkins Township includes in its budget funds in the range of \$25,000.00 for township hall and grounds annually. This account will fund wages for caretaker of the township hall, repair and maintenance supplies, utilities, and improvements to the Stewart Property. Funding for any future projects on the Stewart Property will be funded from the general funds of the Township, unless grant monies are secured. The township is committed to fund projects to some extent in future budgets. Income has been generated from leasing land to the cell tower and leased land to a local farmer. Enbridge recently updated the 6B line running through the Stewart Property and the township was paid \$35,000.00 for the easement rights. The township also utilizes many hours of volunteer help.

Tompkins Township welcomes opportunities to cooperate with other recreational providers in the region, especially with regard to invitations to utilize future recreational opportunities, or lawns for public purposes.