

**Blue Heron Environmental Area**  
**New Trails, Parking, Picnic Area, Toilets, Observation Area**  
**Proposed**  
**Board to Vote on MNRTF Grant Application for at March 25<sup>th</sup>**  
**Meeting**

Since the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) has determined that the Blue Herons have abandoned their rookery (nests) at this 139 acre park, they plan some improvements to allow more public access. Active recreation facilities such as ball diamonds, etc are prohibited by a Conservation Easement held by Six Rivers Nature Conservancy.

Retired former PRC Director Mindy Milos-Dale has been retained as a Grant Consultant to prepare the grant application to Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund (MNRTF) by the April 1 due date. (Revisions, after applying, can be made up to October 1.) Our Board of Trustees will be asked to approve the application at their March 25, 2025 meeting.

In a 2/27 planning workshop with 42 participants, some residents questioned if the herons have truly abandoned the nesting site and if so, could they be attracted back. PRC on 3/12 approved Dr. Ben Vanderweide's request to hire a consultant for \$250 to give them an updated expert opinion of this question (last expert opinion was in 2017). See details of the consultant in the meeting packet pages 35-38 here:

[ecode360.com/OA3183/document/753136601.pdf](https://ecode360.com/OA3183/document/753136601.pdf)

Below is the brief description of this park and its history from the Township website here:  
[Blue Heron Environmental Area](#).

## Oakland Township Parks and Recreation

248-651-7810

Blue Heron Environmental Area  
3320 N Rochester Road  
Rochester, MI 48306

Purchased in 1990-91, the Blue Heron Environmental Area is quite possibly one of the Township's most unique parcels of land. The herons who give this park its name returned year after year. Great Blue Herons have not returned to the rookery since 2009. Nesting herons are very sensitive to disturbance within about 1000 feet of the rookery, including alteration of foraging areas.



The park contains 139 acres of wetlands, high-quality lowland forests, and open farmlands along Rochester Road between Gunn and Buell Roads. Fields are leased to local farmers at this time. Oakland Township residents may contact the Parks and Recreation Commission office to arrange for regulated access to the critical wildlife habitat at this park.

Other rookeries may be viewed at:

West Bloomfield

<http://www.wbparks.org/west-bloomfield-woods-nature-preserve.html> and

Shelby Township

Holland Ponds

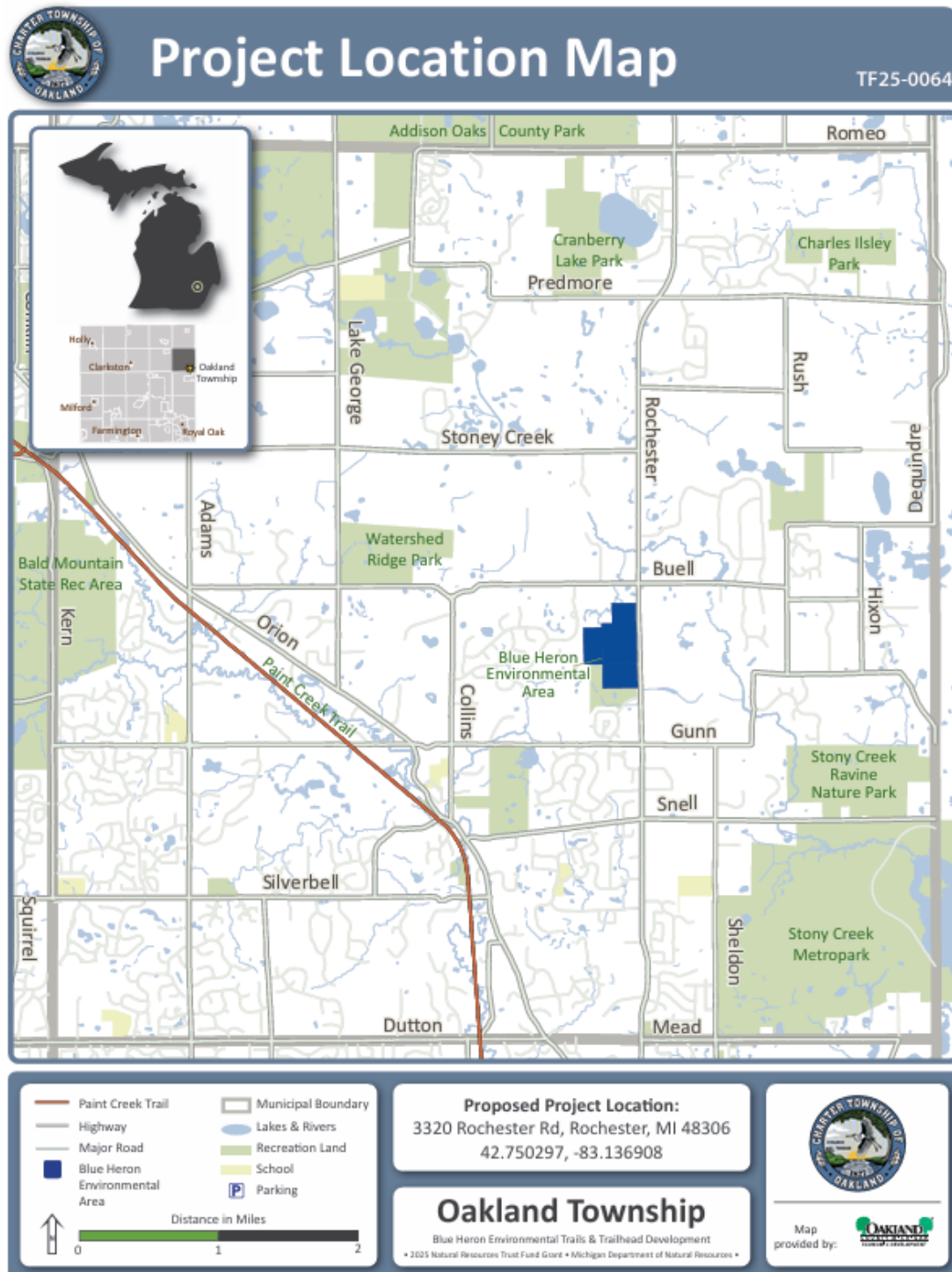
[Shelby Township Parks Holland Ponds](#)

See more information on pages 26-113 of PRC Meeting Packet for March 12 about this project

[Microsoft Word - 03.12.25 PRC 7pm Regular Meeting Notice & Agenda](#)

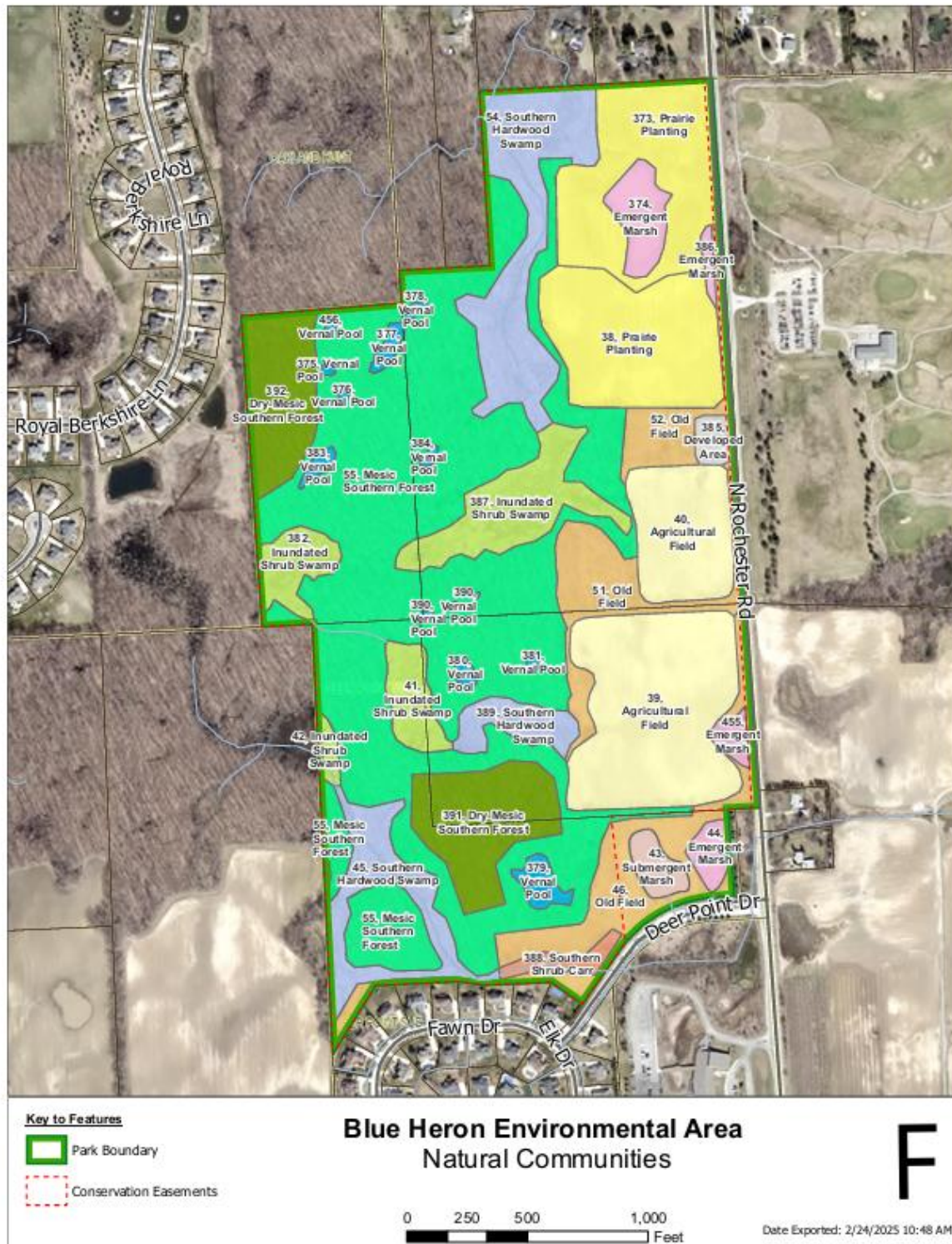
Also consider listening to Director Ben McCloskey describe the project with slides at agenda 9 (15:00 to 33:00) in the March 12, 2025 PRC meeting video here: [Parks & Rec - March 12, 2025](#)

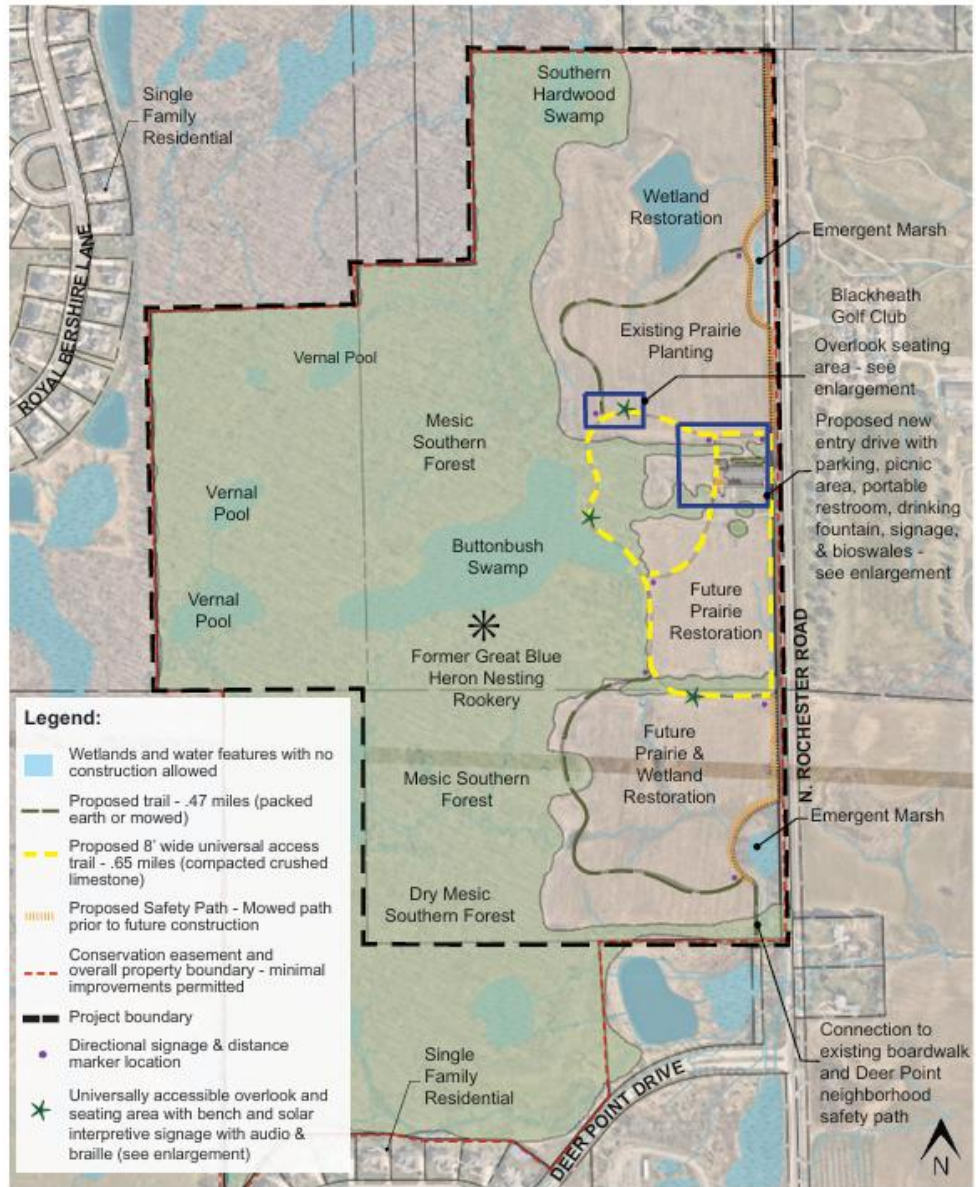
I have cut and pasted some key pages from the meeting packet below.





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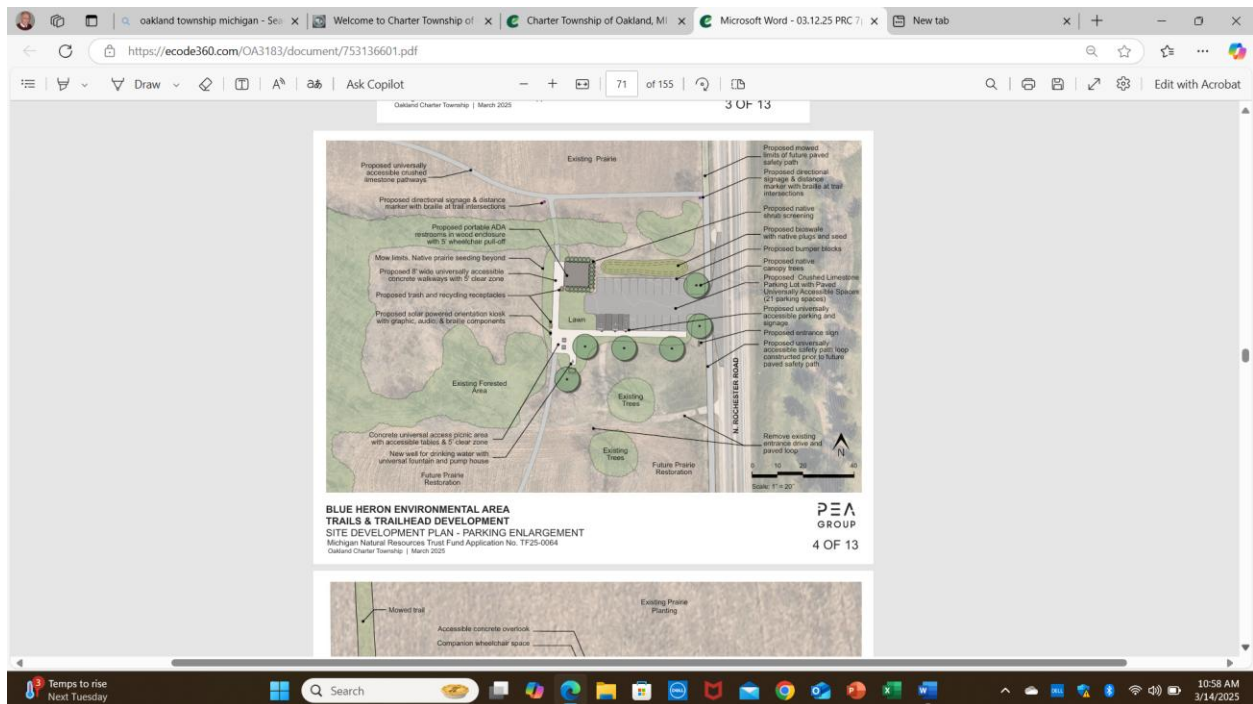
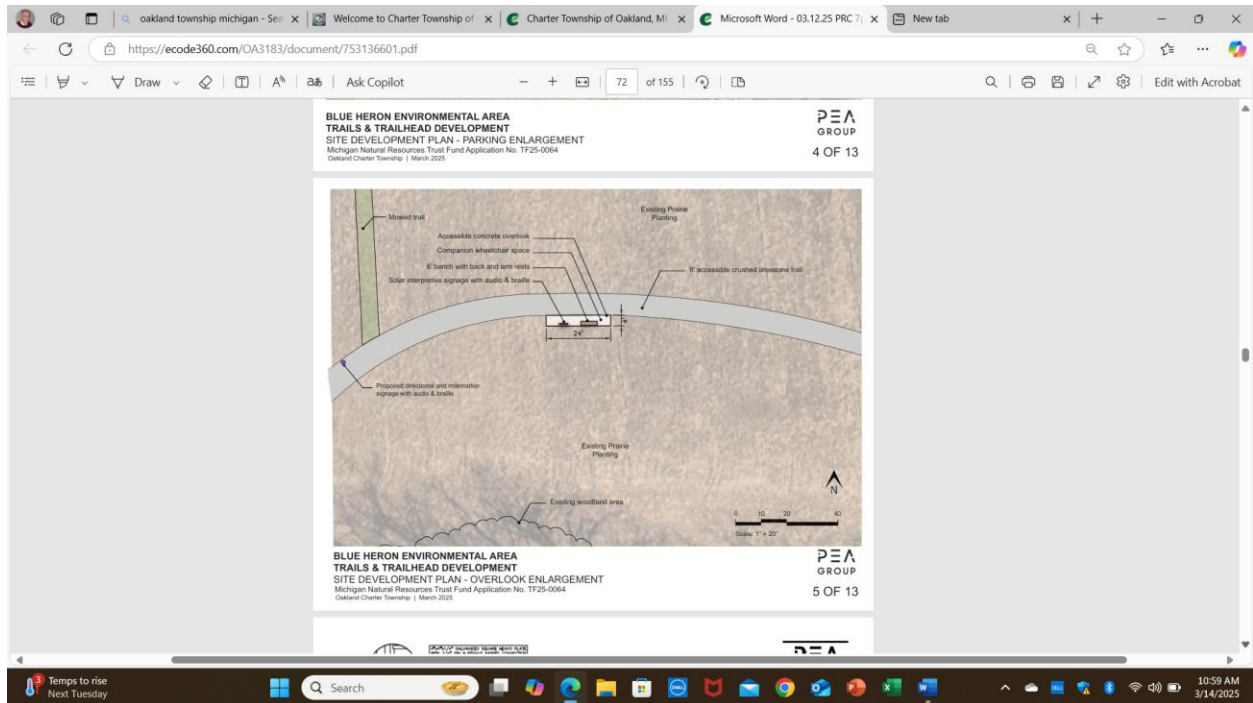
## BLUE HERON ENVIRONMENTAL AREA TRAILS & TRAILHEAD DEVELOPMENT SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Application No. TF25-0064  
Oakland Charter Township | March 2025

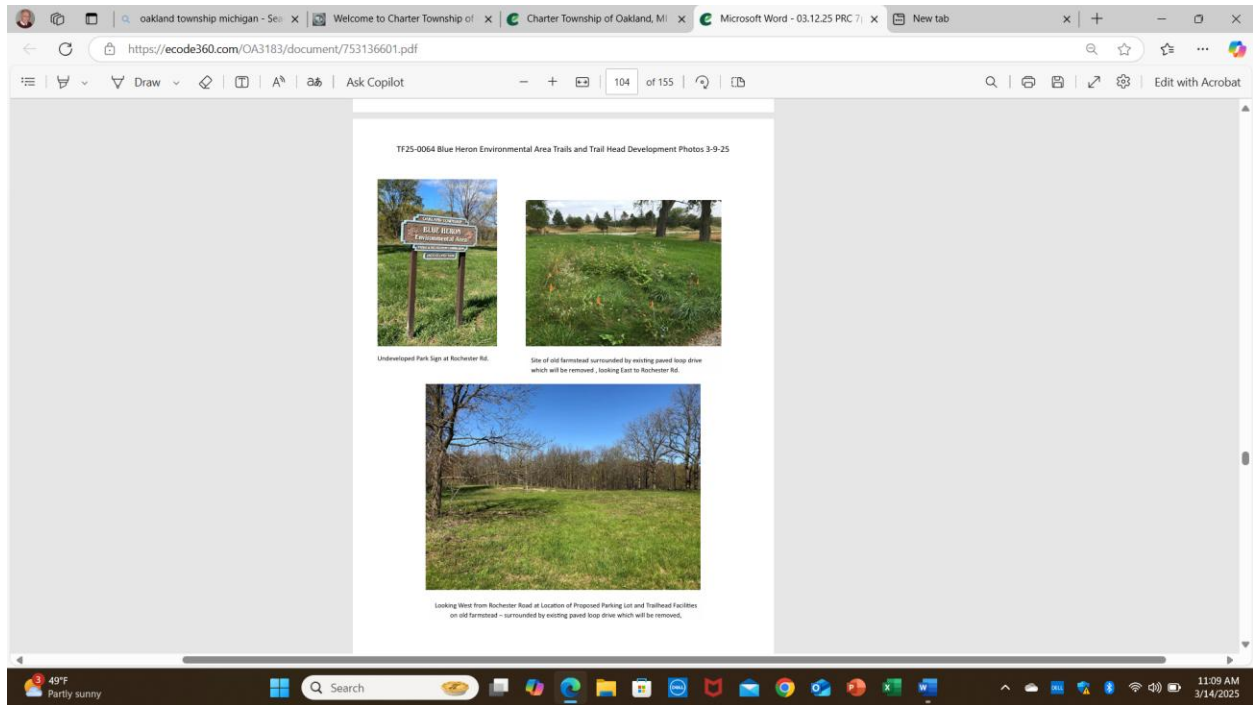
PEA  
GROUP

3 OF 13





More details on the design of each area with example photos on pages 73-80



Additional photos of site on pages 104-109.