

City of Hart

Oceana County, Michigan

5-Year Park & Recreation Plan 2025 - 2029

Prepared by

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PREPARED FOR

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Parks & Recreation Committee

Member	Dean Hodges
Member	Travis Larson

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Section A – INTRODUCTION & COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Part 1 – Introduction & City History

The City of Hart is located in the west central lower peninsula of Michigan. Hart is in the northwest portion of Oceana County and is the county seat. It is the only City in the County. Oceana County is a tourism and agricultural community of 26,659 people (2020 census) located on Lake Michigan. Other notable features within the county, aside from the shoreline, include the Manistee National Forest, MDNR owned land, and a variety of smaller lakes. The City of Hart is situated approximately seven miles from Lake Michigan and is part of Hart Township. It is adjacent to Hart Lake, a 250-acre impoundment of the South Branch Pentwater River.



Location Map

Hart is located along US-31 in the western Ocean County. It's an important highway of the State's highway system that passes just west of the downtown, making the area highly accessible from both the north-south routes. The cities of Muskegon and Ludington are the nearest commercial centers within 40 miles. Grand Rapids (pop. 193,710) is the second largest city in Michigan about 75 miles from Hart. Chicago and Detroit markets are about four hours by vehicle, both of which play a significant role in the tourism trade and growing industrial and commercial development. The City of Hart is in the Township of Hart. Additional nearby municipalities include Weare Township, City of Mears, Shelby, and Pentwater.

Hart was named from its central position in the "heart" of Oceana County. It was founded in 1856 by early pioneers including Nelson Grove. Hart Township was named after Wellington Hart.



Map of the City

Before any recreation plan is adopted and enacted, it is first important to understand the needs of the community and its residents, what recreational opportunities already exist and what future projects and programs are relevant to the residents of the Community. This is based on the age, ability, population, density and the availability of recreation in the surrounding communities. This input is a critical component of this plan and the Community has united to develop a recreation plan to enhance the quality of life for everyone in the Community.

The foundation for the development of the Hart Parks and Recreation Plan was based on the following goals:

- Involve the community in the process to develop a Five Year Recreation Master Plan,
- Inventory and map existing Hart recreational facilities,
- Build a strong foundation of Hart area stakeholders in addressing the future Recreational needs and priorities of the Community,
- Enable the City of Hart to be eligible for financial assistance based upon the Recreation Plan,
- Facilitate interagency collaboration in establishing recreation goals, objectives, and actions,
- Continue to support and implement improvements for barrier–free, Universal Access to Hart area parks, and
- Consistency with and expansion upon goals and objectives set forth in existing planning documents that deal partially or wholly with recreation.

The newly revised Recreation Plan's intended use is to guide the City of Hart officials on all future recreational and parks projects within the City of Hart. Specifically, this plan is developed in accordance with the guidelines for Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plans published by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). A five-year, MDNR-approved Recreation Plan is necessary for the government entities to pursue MDNR-administered grants. This plan is written for the City of Hart and it covers all aspects of park facilities and recreation within the community.

Part 2 – Social Characteristics

Population

The population of the City of Hart increased by 10 persons to 1,574 between 2010 and 2020, or 0.99%. The County as a whole has also experienced some small growth from 2010-2020.

Table 2-1 City of Hart Population, 2010 -2020			
	2010	2020	% Change 2010-2020
City of Hart	1,564	1,574	0.99%
Oceana County	26,570	26,659	0.99%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 & 2020

Median Age

While the overall population is the most important consideration, there are other characteristics to consider when planning for a community's recreation. The age distribution of a community influences the types of facilities and programs needed. Table 2 shows that the City's median age (37.4) is lower than the County but on par with the State of Michigan average. This would indicate that the City has a younger age base than the rest of the county due to a higher percentage of persons in the 18 and under age groups. Of course, the City should not ignore the other age groups since they still comprise a large proportion of the overall population.

Table 2-2 Median Age in City of Hart 2010-2019		
	2010	2019*
City of Hart	37.3	37.4
Oceana County	45.1	43.2
Michigan	38.3	39.2

** U.S. Census Bureau 2019 estimate*

The size of families in Hart follows the Oceana County and Michigan trend of staying fairly even when compared to the State of Michigan trend for smaller households. The general trend toward smaller family size may be due to many factors including end of the baby boomer generation, divorce, widowed older persons and young people waiting longer to get married.

Table 2-3 Average Household Size in City of Hart 2010-2019			
	2010	2019	% Change 2010-2019
City of Hart	2.67	2.56	-39.1%
Oceana County	2.58	2.53	-1.9%
Michigan	2.49	2.47	-0.8%

** U.S. Census Bureau 2010 & 2019 estimate*

Income, Poverty and Employment

Year-around Hart households had a median income of $40,521 in 2020. This compares with $50,104 for Oceana County and $59,584 for the State of Michigan. This would place the City's bottom 1/3 in the ranking category of median income for communities across Michigan. The MDNR guidelines for income categories are recalculated every year and has not been done for 2021 yet, but if they change at all, it is very minimal. So, the figures below are a guiding point:

Bottom 33% = $0.00 - $43,897.00
Middle 33% = $43,898.00 - $54,432.00
Top 32% = $54,433.00 - $95,780.00
Top 2% = $95,781.00 - Above

	Hart City, Michigan					
	Total		**With a disability**		**Percent with a disability**	
Label	**Estimate**	**Margin of Error**	**Estimate**	**Margin of Error**	**Estimate**	**Margin of Error**
Total civilian noninstitutionalized population	1,951	±252	370	±91	19.0%	±4.5
SEX						
Male	983	±156	175	±53	17.8%	±5.3
Female	968	±130	195	±56	20.1%	±5.7
RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN						
White alone	1,794	±246	333	±87	18.6%	±4.7
Black or African American alone	9	±17	0	±10	0.0%	±86.7
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	34	±23	17	±17	50.0%	±33.6
Asian alone	0	±10	0	±10	-	**
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	4	±5	4	±5	100.0%	±100.0
Some other race alone	63	±34	6	±9	9.5%	±12.4
Two or more races	47	±34	10	±14	21.3%	±23.5
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	1,291	±180	306	±81	23.7%	±5.9
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	615	±185	57	±41	9.3%	±6.0
AGE						
Under 5 years	147	±52	3	±4	2.0%	±2.7
5 to 17 years	420	±101	52	±48	12.4%	±10.5
18 to 34 years	403	±78	27	±19	6.7%	±4.5
35 to 64 years	710	±108	173	±49	24.4%	±6.8
65 to 74 years	131	±37	40	±31	30.5%	±18.5
75 years and over	140	±39	75	±31	53.6%	±14.3

** U.S. Census Bureau 2019 estimate*

The disability status of a population may be especially significant when considering recreational needs for a community. With 19.0% of the total the City population affected by some form of disability, these individuals may have difficulty participating in recreational programs, accessing facilities or even getting to designated public areas. Understanding the disability status of the City's population may assist decision-makers in determining adequate programs and appropriate locations for recreational activities. With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), all areas of public service and accommodation became subject to barrier-free requirements, including parks and recreation facilities and programs.

Part 3 – Physical Characteristics

Climate

The climate in and around Hart is considered continental and is strongly influenced by Lake Michigan throughout most of the year. Spring and early summer temperatures are cooler than those observed in central and eastern Michigan because of prevailing westerly winds which blow across Lake Michigan. Similarly, temperatures of fall and winter are milder. The area rarely experiences prolonged periods of either hot, humid weather in the summer or extreme cold during the winter.

Mean daily maximum temperatures during the summer months typically range between 74- and 78-degrees Fahrenheit, while the mean daily temperatures during the winter typically range between 15- and 20-degrees Fahrenheit. The annual precipitation is around 32 inches, with the average annual snowfall being 85 inches.

Woodlands

Originally, Michigan was covered with a dense forest of deciduous trees. As the area was cleared for farming and development, or the trees were removed for timber, the area's forests were replaced by farm fields, open field areas, orchards and smaller forested areas containing both deciduous and coniferous trees. Much of the City's original vegetation has been replaced due to the land use patterns that typically develop within a densely populated community. Most of the natural vegetation in the City is located along the floodway/floodplain corridor along the Pentwater River, Chippewa, and Russell Creeks.

Wetlands

The wetlands in the City are similar to the County in that wetlands with associated woodlands that existed during the time of large expanses of pre-settlement wetlands have been reduced to small, scattered upland areas or wetlands associated with floodway/floodplain areas. Upland wetlands have been reduced due to filling, subsurface drainage and drain construction undertaken to improve agriculture. Most upland wetlands are forested and are less than 20 acres in size. Both upland and coastal wetlands provide opportunities such as hiking, nature viewing, hunting, and environmental education.

The Wetlands Map shows wetland areas that serve to provide wildlife habitat, stormwater storage, water quality improvement, natural scenery, and other benefits. Generally, these areas exhibit severe limitations for the use of individual waste disposal systems. A majority of the wetlands are located along the various waterbodies such as rivers, creeks, streams, drainage ditches and other water bodies.

Hydric soils are also identified. These are soils that have formed in the presence of water for sustained periods. They can be used to help locate wetlands, especially those that have been disturbed or altered by fill or excavation. Hydric soils may be unsuitable for certain types of development and can be an indicator of high groundwater levels.

Because they occur where the dry land meets the water, wetlands play a critical role in the management of our water-based resources. Acre for acre, wetlands produce more wildlife and plants than any other Michigan habitat type. Wetland species also comprise a critically important segment of these species.



Benefits of wetlands are many. Wetlands help:

- Reduce flooding by absorbing runoff from rain and melting snow and slowly releasing excess water into rivers and lakes - a one acre swamp when flooded to a depth of one foot contains 330,000 gallons of water
- Filter pollutants from surface runoff, trapping fertilizers, pesticides, sediments, and other contaminants and helping to break some of them down into less harmful substances, improving water clarity and quality
- Help recharge groundwater supplies when connected to underground aquifers
- Contribute to natural nutrient and water cycles, and produce vital atmospheric gases, including oxygen
- Provide commercial or recreational value to our human economy, by producing plants, game birds (ducks, geese) and fur bearing mammals - many fish are directly connected to wetlands, requiring shallow water areas for breeding, feeding and escaping from predators
- When wetlands occur adjacent to inland lakes or streams, they serve as nutrient traps that then enrich the larger body of water of which they are part

The last century has seen a greatly increased rate of wetland loss due to filling and drainage by man. Prior to World War II, drainage to expand agricultural lands accounted for most of this loss. Recently, much wetland destruction has been caused by commercial, industrial, and residential expansion. The estimated 11 million acres of Michigan wetlands existing in pre-settlement times has now been reduced to less than 3 million acres. Recent legislation has slowed the loss rate somewhat but threats to these habitats, particularly the smaller wetlands, continue in many areas.

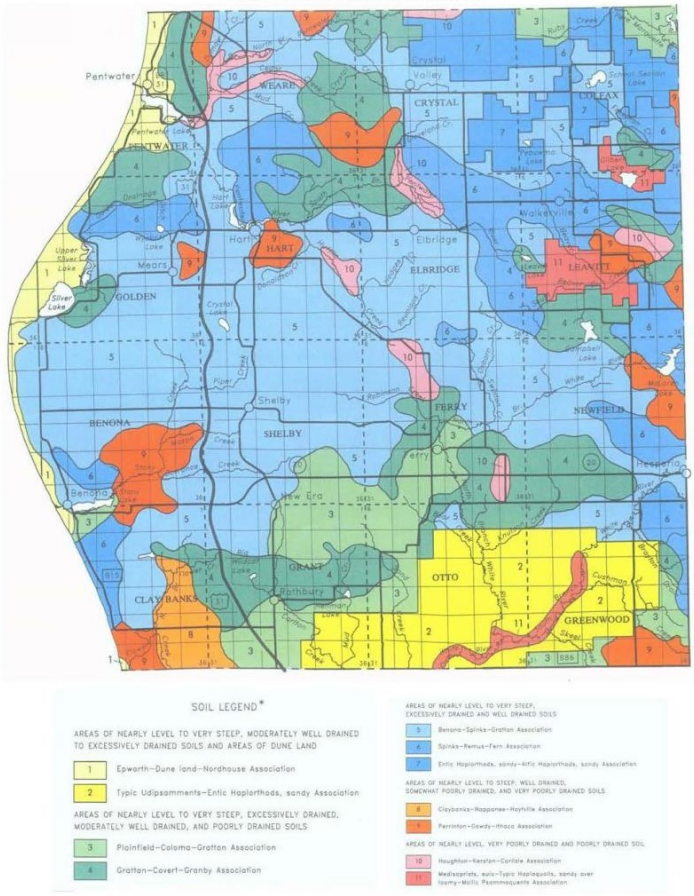
Prior to park & recreation development, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) should be consulted to review the results of a wetlands determination. The impacts of development within

wetland areas should be carefully considered, and a permit from the MDNR should always be obtained if regulated wetlands are to be impacted.

Soils

Soils are a primary factor in determining suitability for a given development, and must be considered to ensure a sustainable balance between development and the natural environment. Soil surveys assist in determining the extent of flood prone areas, prime farmland potential, access to aquifers, erosion and sedimentation potential, ability to site septic tanks and absorption fields, and limitations for construction and foundations. In addition, soil surveys can give direct information regarding areas more or less suitable for such recreational uses as camping facilities and golf courses.

GENERAL SOILS MAP
Source: USDA/Mich.Dept.Agr.(compiled 1995)



In general, Oceana County's soils were formed from the remains of the last glacial retreat. This means that in Oceana County, like much of western Michigan, sandy soils are predominant. The Soil Survey of Oceana County includes detailed soil maps with interpretation guides to help determine the suitability of particular sites for various kinds of development. It identifies 93 different soil types, which fall into 60 soil series. The Survey also includes a General Soils Map, which enables a broad overview of the county's soils through identification of major soil associations based on attributes such as pattern of soils, relief and drainage.

Water Resources & Drainage

Hart Lake, in addition to being an important community amenity, is a 240-acre impoundment of the Pentwater River which has a hydroelectric dam that generates electricity for many area businesses and residents. Chippewa and Russell Creeks are part of the Hart Lake watershed and provide green spaces and wildlife habitat.

Fish and Wildlife

The area's wildlife is typical of that found in most of Lower Michigan. Common wildlife includes deer, raccoons, opossums, rabbits, muskrats, beavers, squirrels, rodents, and other small mammals. The area is home to a variety of birds including owls, wild turkeys, pheasants, and many others. The area is also a seasonal home to many migratory birds including ducks and Canada Geese.

Utilities Services

Hydro Electric. Improvements to the City's hydro-electric system are necessary to ensure long-term provision of electrical power to area residents and businesses. Expenditures for the hydro-electric

system typically include electric improvements, meter reading technology, new vehicles, and the reuse and refurbishment of decommissioned infrastructure.

Water Pumping and Distribution. In order to ensure the longterm provision of water service to existing and future residents and businesses, expenditures such as meter reading technology, repairs and maintenance, rehabilitation and repairs of wells, construction of water transmission mains, and the design, planning, and construction of boost stations are needed. These projects are commonly identified in Water System Reliability Studies conducted by the City.

Sewer Collection. Similar to the water pumping and distribution system, the City depends on a well-functioning sewer collection system to ensure the health and safety of its residents and businesses. Common expenditure items under this category include the design, planning, and construction of sewer transmission mains, purchase of new equipment, and the construction or repair to lift stations.

BioPure Treatment. The BioPure system treats wastewater at the City's sewage treatment facility. Aeration of wastewater and irrigation are key components of the system process and expenditures will commonly be earmarked for the maintenance and repair to these systems.

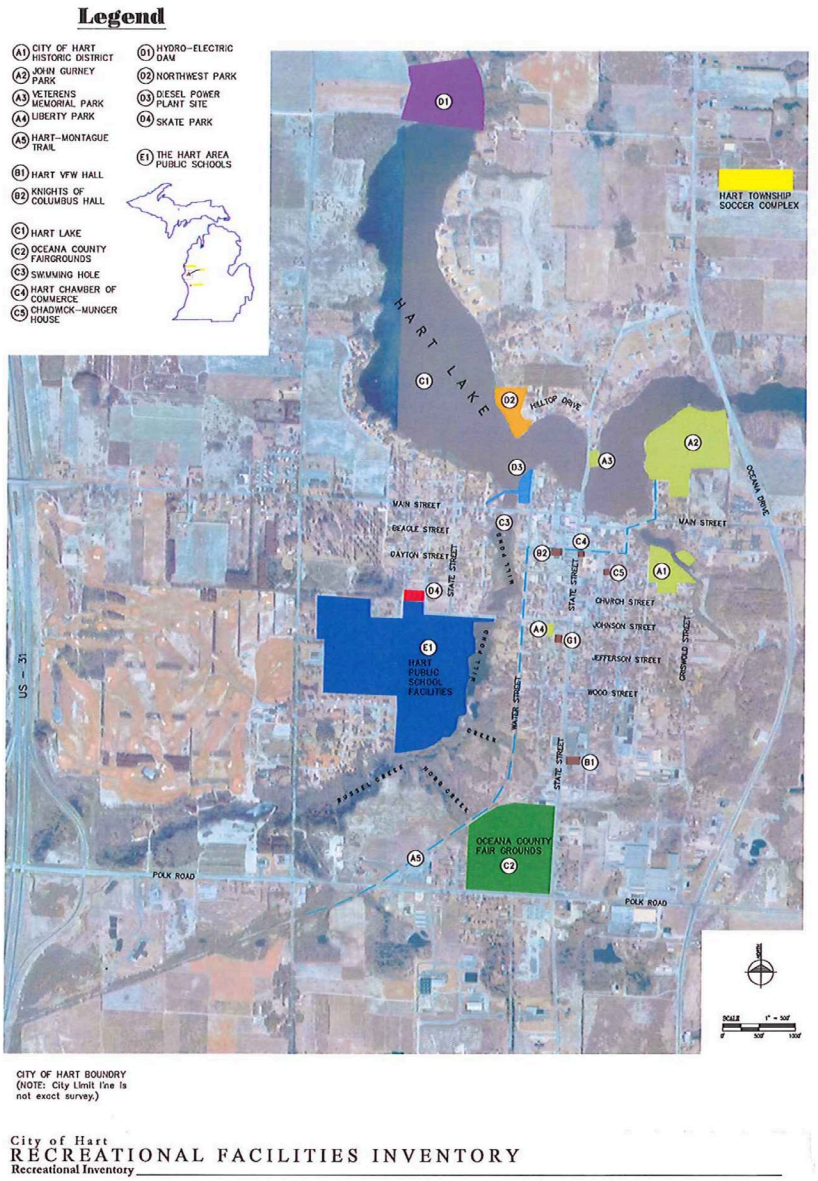
Community Services

Hart is the only city in Oceana County and is the county seat. The community was established around the fruit farming industry and is the home to several large fruit storage and processing facilities. Just east of US-31, Hart is only seven miles from Lake Michigan and close to Silver Lake State Park.

The City is an employment and service center to the greater Hart community and is the home of several service businesses that are vital to everyday living, including grocery, hardware, and financial services. A Michigan State Police Post and County Road Commission facilities are also located in the City along with Oceana County offices. The Oceana Medical care facility is in the northeast portion of the City. Most of the community is walkable, having ready access to parks and the downtown by foot.

Land Use

The City is approximately one square mile in size with a well-defined, active downtown commercial business district, a designated industrial district, a designated historic district, a central school campus and well-developed residential neighborhoods interspersed throughout the City. In addition to the eight block square downtown commercial area, the Polk Road corridor provides a highway commercial district which is mainly highway convenience shopping and continues to experience growth.



Residential – The majority of land use within the City of Hart is residential, with single-family detached housing comprising the majority of the residential. The central and northwest areas are predominately the core single-family housing units with medium density lot sizes. Multiple family housing does exist including the Parkview Apartments, Chippewa Creek Apartments, Lake Pointe senior apartments and the Oceana County Medical Care Facility.

Commercial – Two distinct commercial districts exist within the City limits. The downtown central business district is located around the State Street and East and West Main Streets intersection and includes retail, boutiques, office and service related business and both City and County governmental centers. The south end of State Street also provides retail stores, service business such as tourist accommodations and restaurants and some industrial uses as well as the County Fair Grounds.

A second commercial district exists along Polk Road west of State Street and extends to the US 31 expressway at the west City limit. The Polk Road commercial district is primarily highway development and includes a supermarket, farm market, hotels, financial institutions, construction, landscaping nursery, fast food, service stations and a visitor information center.

Industrial – Industrial land use is primarily located in the southeast corner of the City and south of Polk road and includes a mix of warehousing and industrial developments. A 40-acre industrial park has been developed which is anchored by an automotive manufacturer and a regional kitchen

incubator. Agribusiness flourishes here with processing and cold storage for cherries, asparagus, carrots, zucchini, apples, potatoes and celery.

Public/Semi-public – These uses include local parks, public schools and other public and quasi-public facilities.

Water Features, Non-Developed/Vacant, Woodlands, Other – A significant land use within the City limits is Hart Lake and its tributaries. The lake covers 250 acres and provides opportunities for viewing, fishing, boating, birding, and a source of renewal electric power for Hart Hydroelectric customers. Russell Creek and Chippewa Creek are scenic brooks that feed Hart Lake and feature undeveloped riparian zones and adjacent woodlands. Both tributaries have unique geologic and vegetative attributes, are situated within the core residential fragile ecosystems that should be preserved and protected while providing public access for wildlife observation, passive recreation and educational opportunities.

Road Network

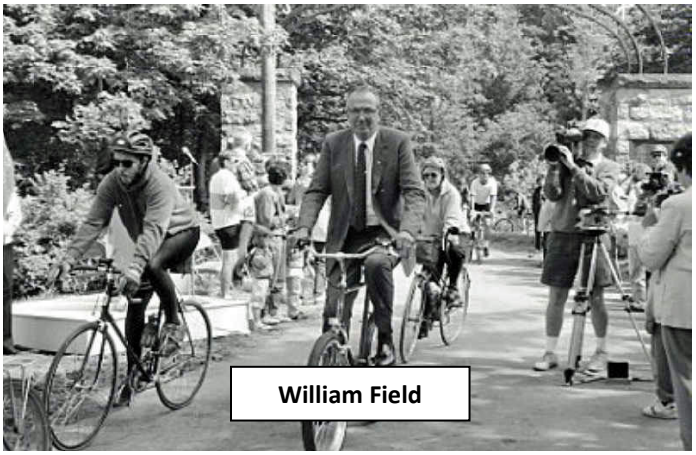
Like most communities, Hart has four types of roadways, which function in a hierarchical fashion. These are major arterials, minor arterials, collectors, and local streets (See Transportation and Public Facilities Map). How a street functions in a community is important with respect to land use decisions, public walking routes, and public road improvements. The function of each roadway type is briefly described below. Depending on location, some systems may serve in more than one purpose:



- Major Arterial - A roadway whose principal function is the movement of high volumes of traffic into and through the city. Polk Road and Oceana Drive are the City's major arterials.
- Minor Arterial - A roadway whose principal function is the movement of traffic received from the City's system of collector streets intended mainly to move traffic to major streets. Minor arterials include Main and State Streets.
- Collectors - Collectors provide access to minor or major arterials by traffic originating from local streets. Collectors include Griswold and Johnson.
- Local Streets - Local streets are the neighborhood (residential) streets on which homes are located. Their only purpose is to provide land access.

Regional Linkage – Hart is located along US-31 in the western Oceana County. The cities of Muskegon and Ludington are the nearest commercial centers within 40 miles. Grand Rapids (pop. 193,710) is the second largest city in Michigan about 75 miles from Hart. Chicago and Detroit markets are about four hours by vehicle, both of which play a significant role in the tourism trade and growing industrial and commercial development.

City's Street System – Internally, the City's streets are orientated in traditional grid form with State Street and Polk Road as the main north-south east-west corridors, respectively. Old US 31, otherwise known as Oceana Drive is located along the east side of the City and is another important arterial road that traverses Oceana County and neighboring counties. The City street system has extensive infrastructure, providing two-way traffic, and little congestion. The road system offers connections to the City's local parks and recreational facilities.


William Field

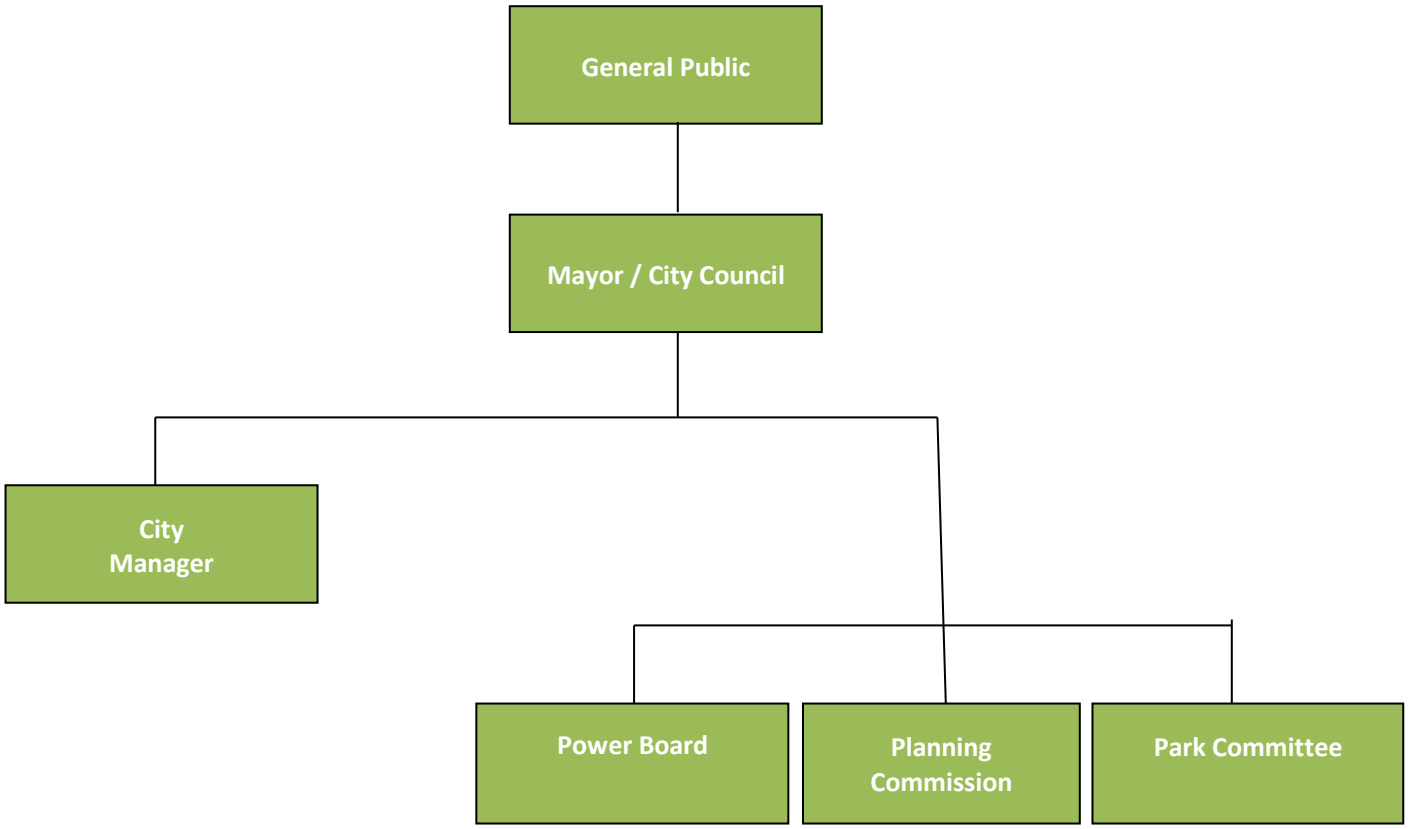
Non-Motorized Transportation –The William Field Memorial Hart-Montague Trail (HMT), formerly an abandoned rail line, has been converted to a multi-modal recreation and transportation corridor. Running north from Dalton Township, the 30+ mile long trail connects the communities of Whitehall, Montague, Rothbury, New Era, Shelby, Mears, and Hart. The HMT is a segment of the recently established U.S. Bike Route 35 that traverses West Michigan north to south along Lake Michigan. It is estimated the pathway brings in excess of 60,000 bicyclists to, but not into, the City every year. The northern portion is to be refurbished in 2015 and includes improvements that extend to East Main Street in downtown Hart. The southern connection to the City of Muskegon is to be completed by 2016. This connection will create a fully improved non-motorized pathway from Hart through Muskegon and beyond to Grand Rapids and the pathways to many other parts of the state that connect or pass through Grand Rapids. It is anticipated the improvements and connectivity to the rest of the western Michigan pathways will significantly increase bicycle tourism in the City and County.

SECTION B - ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The City of Hart is a Council / City Manager form of government. The city commission members elect mayor and mayor pro tem from among the seven. They set the fiscal budgets for the City, approve contracts, and works with the City Staff to set policy and takes recommendations from the Planning Commission, City Manager, and committees. The City Manager, appointed by and reports to the City Council, oversees the general operations of the city and enforces the established commission policies. This includes the management and oversight of the City Staff, departments, and is the primary liaison to committees. An organizational chart of the administrative functions within the City is included below.

The Hart Park Committee is administered and funded through the Hart City Commission. The Committee members are appointed through the Hart City Commission to work with staff and John Gurney Park Superintendent to make recommendations to the City Council with regards to ongoing projects. The Committee reviews and provides oversight to the Council on recreation plans and projects. All decisions made by the Parks and Recreation Committee are forwarded to the Hart City Commission for approval or adoption.

The City Manager is the liaison between the Parks Committee and the City Commission and is responsible for the appointment and supervision of any staff recommended by the Committee. The Superintendent works specifically with the Power Board, Planning, and Park Committee and provides oversight and guidance with relation to recreational improvements, activities, and recommendations. The chart illustrates the relationship among the various entities involved in recreation within the City. The administrative structure is as follows:



The Planning Commission members are charged with the responsibility of interpreting, updating, and amending the City Master Plan, Zoning Ordinances, Site Plan Reviews, and work with recommendations of the Park Committee, City Manager, and City Staff.

The Power Board has oversight of the Hydroelectric Utility. They review budgets, contracts, and rates and make recommendations to the City Council. Due to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued license to operate the Hart Dam, the Power Board also recommends recreation related actions to comply with the FERC order.

The Hart Economic and Redevelopment Team works with the public and private sectors to attract and retain talent, promote the area, and improve the quatility of life for Hart residents and visitors.

The City leases the Hart Historic District to the Hart Heritage Preservation Group (HHPG), a private club, to manage improvements, maintenance, operations, events, and historic collections. In 2014, the City restructured the Hart Historic District to provide more support services.

The City is a charter member of the Hart Area Recreation Commission, now a 501c3 organization. This group dates back to the 1960s but has accelerated their efforts in recent years through paid staff, volunteer recruiting and website.

The City's budget includes a Park Fund that operates from revenues gained from park use and camp site rentals, mainly from John Gurney Park Campground. The revenues generally provide ample funding to manage and provide maintenance for Gurney Park. All other park facilities and available recreation programs are maintained and / or funded by the Public Works and Hydroelectric Departments.

The City maintains the facilities, including grass mowing and landscape, general maintenance, and trash removal. However, in-kind and volunteer services to various facilities have included improvements such as the installation of wildlife (bird) nesting boxes and numerous Eagle Scout projects by the Boy Scouts of America Troop 1155 including trail maintenance, natural resource interpretation, placement of life rings on Hart Lake and baseball dugout repairs.

Hart Park, etc. Budget Total Revenues			
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Park - 208	$120,030	$112,030	$167,000
H.E.A.R.T.	$67,290		
Historic Commission - 701	$5,050	$50	$50
Historic District - 702	$66,950	$67,260	$67,260
Rail Trail – 284 (S.F.)	$8,000	$8,010	$8,010

Hart Park, etc. Budget Total Expenditures			
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Park - 208	$106,860	$111,335	$131,020
H.E.A.R.T.	$65,700		
Historic Commission - 701	$5,000	$0	$0
Historic District - 702	$57,010	$57,009	$29,760
Rail Trail – 284 (S.F.)	$8,000	$8,000	$8,000

Expenditures from the funds of the Hart Park Fund consist of:

Salaries	FICA/Medicare	Combined Benefits
Operating supplies	Professional Services	Management Fee
Contractual Service	Utilities	Community Promotions- Fireworks
Advertising, Printing, Publishing	Equipment Rental	Insurance (Property, Liability)
Utilities	Membership/Dues	Equipment rentals

SECTION C – DESCRIPTION OF PLANNING PROCESS

Community recreational facilities cannot be effectively provided without some basis from which the type, quantity, location, need, and priority for that facility has been determined. Several methods for determining a community's recreation needs and priorities have been identified. These include observed use levels for existing facilities, comparisons of recreational facilities between similar communities, unique opportunities for certain types of facilities, guidelines or standards based on quantity per population, and projected population growth, to identify a few methods.

Existing recreation opportunities can be compared to recreation standards to determine deficiencies. However, great care must be taken to apply common sense and knowledge of the community. These standards will be used only in conjunction with other methods to determine recreation deficiencies and priorities.

It is highly recommended that additional effort be put forth to solicit comments from residents in close vicinity to or who may be negatively impacted by future projects. Public review and comment were done when this plan was in its draft stage.

For this Recreation Plan, public strategic planning workshops facilitated by the City Staff and planning consultant were held on (Date) and (date). At the workshops, it was determined that a strong desire existed within the City to improve the recreational facilities throughout the City but with an emphasis on _____
_____
_____.

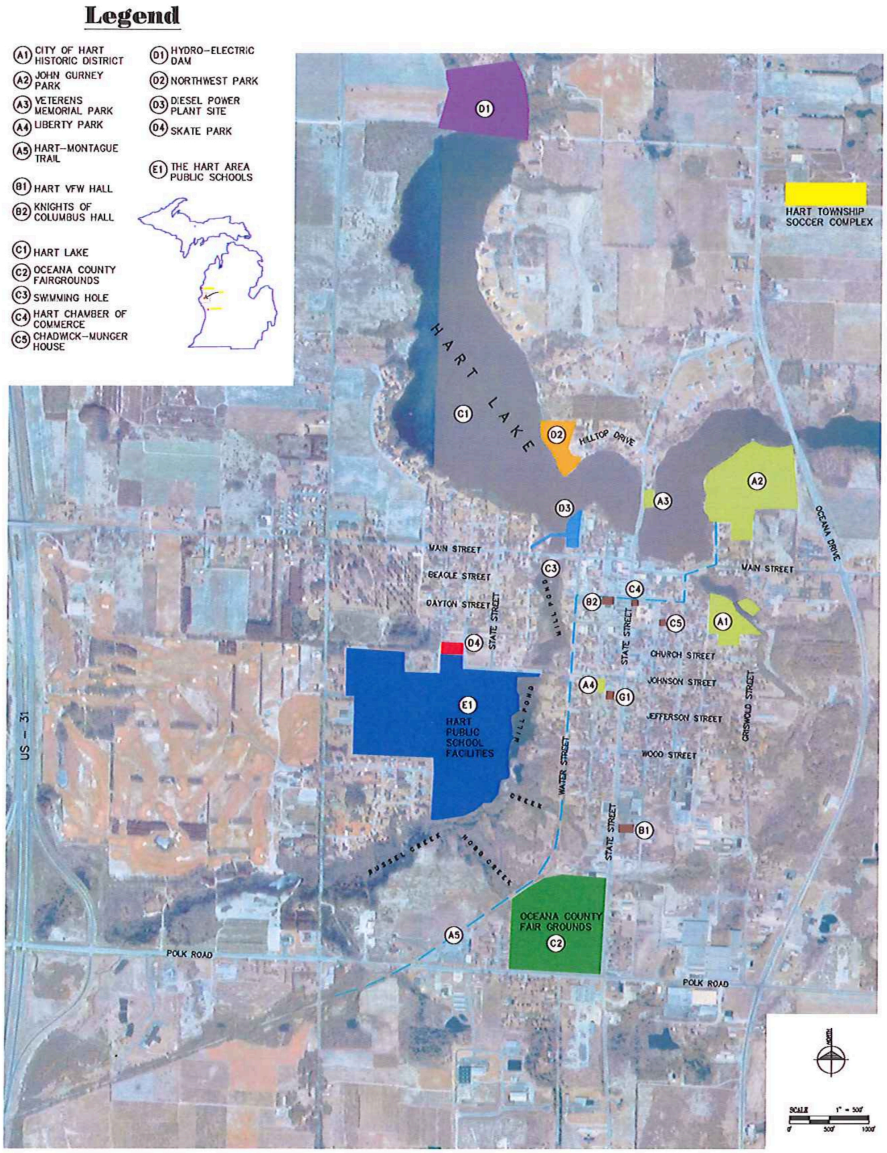
The purpose of the strategic planning process was to receive direct input from key individuals within the community relative to the identification and ranking of the community's current recreation needs. The issues and needs were identified and discussed at the workshop and are incorporated into this document. A draft copy of this plan was placed on file at the City Hall and a public notice was placed in the (Place ad info) to invite further public comment on the plan.

The information contained in the draft report was presented to the City Council at a public hearing on (Date) to further allow public comment to discuss the issues and needs of the community.

On (Date) a public hearing was held with the Hart City Council to review and formally adopt this recreation plan. Meeting minutes are attached (see appendix).

SECTION D – EXISTING RECREATIONAL INVENTORY

An essential element of a recreation plan is the inventory of local and regional, public, and private recreation facilities that are available to a community's resident. Such an inventory provides a basis from which a comparison can be made of existing recreation opportunities with the community's identified recreation needs. This inventory process also identifies barrier-free facilities. This will ensure that citizens with disabilities will fully enjoy these facilities. Involving advocate organizations and utilizing the knowledge of the City staff will help facilitate this element of the inventory process. Further, this facility inventory establishes the foundation from which a recreational improvement program can be developed and implemented.



City of Hart
RECREATIONAL FACILITIES INVENTORY
Recreational Inventory

1 – CITY RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

John Gurney Park (1912): is a large community park along the shores of Hart Lake. The Park is a short walk from the Downtown Business District. The campground is open April 15 to end of October. The Park provides scenic views to the west and north along the Hart Lake shoreline. The State of Michigan recognized the Park with a Historic Marker in 2009. A private contractor manages the Park for the City.

Park	Size	Facilities / Amenities	
John Gurney Park	17 Acres	▪ Wooded campground with 84 Campsites, with 50 Amp Hook Ups ▪ 10 Primitive Campsites ▪ Boat launch and Dock ▪ Swimming Beach on Hart Lake ▪ Soccer ▪ Pickleball Courts (4) ▪ Baseball fields (2) ▪ Horseshoe pits (2) ▪ Shuffleboard Courts (2) ▪ 108 Picnic Tables ▪ Playground, new in 2017 ▪ Fishing ▪ Kayaking ▪ Hiking ▪ 22 Miles of Bike Trails	▪ Basketball Courts (2) ▪ Restroom and Shower Facility ▪ Concession stand ▪ Camp Store ▪ Rec Room ▪ Coin Laundry ▪ John Gurney Park Pavilion (Enclosed Pavilion w/ Kitchen) ▪ Open Air Pavilion on Hart Lake (seats 50) ▪ Restroom Building / Storage ▪ Boy Scout Cabin ▪ Scenic wooded bluff overlooking Hart Lake ▪ Parking areas – informal grassed & gravel parking areas are scattered throughout the Park



Veterans Park: It is located just north of the City across the bridge dividing Hart Lake. The Park is foremost a memorial for veterans with a granite memorial, flag poles, commemorative bricks, and a historic US Air Force Jet; however, the primary use of the park seems to be fishing access to Hart Lake and the bridge. The boat launch area has experienced erosion problems and currently fabric and gravel are being used to retain the soil.

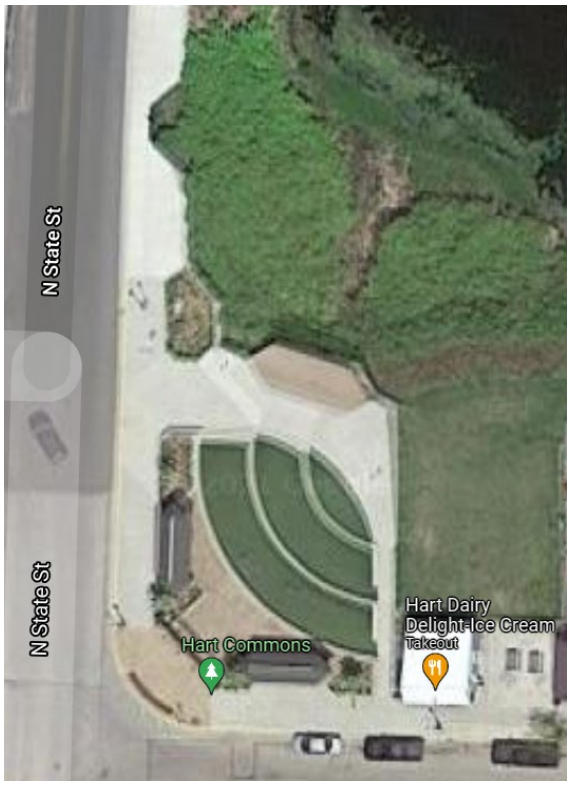
Park	Size	Facilities
Veterans Park	0.6 Acres	▪ Boardwalk & Railing (210') with public viewing and fishing ▪ Veterans Memorial ▪ Picnic Tables (3), Benches (5), Waste Receptacles (1) & Bike Rack (1) ▪ Substantial maintained lawn area ▪ Decorative Masonry Wall w/ cap (2.5' tall x 180') spans the distance between the street and the park ▪ Restroom is currently a porta-john in the summer months only. ▪ Parking area (unimproved gravel) of approx. 8-10 spaces, which also serves as an impromptu boat launch for kayaks and canoes. Parallel parking for 4-5 cars is also available along State Street.



Current Planning: The residential lot adjacent to the north line of the existing park may be available for acquisition by the City in the near future. The purchase would increase the area of the park and lake frontage by about 25%. It would allow reconfiguration of uses in the park to enhance the veteran's memorial, provide more waterfront access, and provide more space for parking. The house and stone building on the property could be used for restrooms and / or other programmable indoor space.

Hart Commons: This open-air park was built in 2011 and is in the center of the downtown business district. It's the location for all community events that involve the core community, entertainment, parages, sale days, holiday celebrations and related events as well as being the principal "gathering place" for the community.

Park	Size	Facilities
Hart Commons	0.45 Acres	▪ Terraced amphitheater with concrete curbed and synthetic turf seating terraces ▪ Viewing deck and lake overlook ▪ Two shelters with multi-purpose tables and seating ▪ WI-FI service in the park area ▪ Community Christmas Tree ▪ Bike racks and trash receptacles ▪ Entrance arch and community "identity sign" that has become integral to the identity of the community, and particularly the downtown area. ▪ Accessible parking is provided on-street and in parking lots No. 1 and No. 2 near the park. ▪ Not in the park, but adjacent private walk-up ice cream shop, Dairy Delight, is a community gathering place and "treat" stop in the warmer seasons and is a significant asset for the park and the community.



Current Planning: The planned bike network for the community and region converge at the Commons and a bike repair station is planned for the park.

Liberty Park: It is located on the same property as the City Hall and Hart Area Public Library. The Park is designed as a play equipment area with clustered playground equipment for children of all ages and benches for parents and guardians. Restroom facilities are available in the City Hall during normal business hours.

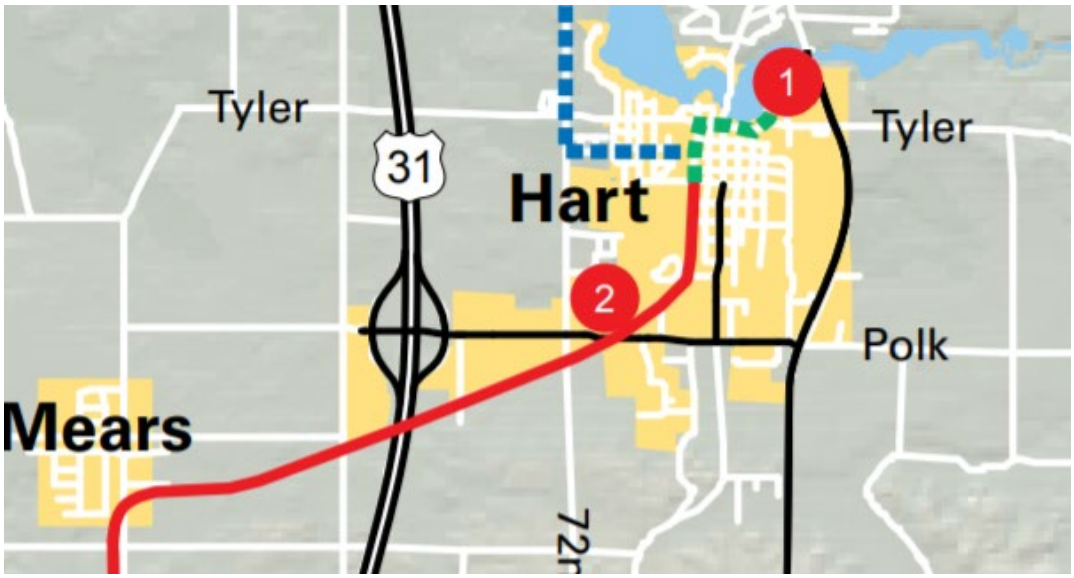
Park	Size	Facilities
Liberty Park	0.25 Acres	▪ Play Structure in mulch surfacing ▪ Swings ▪ Spring Rides ▪ Benches ▪ Parking on-street or in City Parking Lot

Liberty Park



William Field Memorial Hart-Montague Trail (HMT): This trail is recognized throughout the State of Michigan as an excellent rails-to-trails pathway park. It was the first in the State to be a State Park specifically designated for trail users. The over 22 miles of rail-to-trail conversion connects the communities of Whitehall, Montague, Rothbury, New Era, Shelby, Mears, and Hart. There is a planned trail going west out of Hart and then north to Pentwater.

Park	Size	Facilities / Amenities
William Field Memorial Hart-Montague Trail (HMT)	22 miles (0.6 miles in City of Hart between Polk Rd and Wood St)	▪ Bituminous Paved Trail – 10' wide for ADA Standards ▪ Trail signage ▪ John Gurney Park Trail Head **(#1 on map)** o Unimproved parking with location signage but does not directly connect to HMT; offers a connector route. o Waste receptacles and benches ▪ Polk Road Trail Head **(#2 on map)** o Barrier-free restroom facility o Handicap accessible bituminous parking area o Trail signage o Waste receptacles and benches o Exercise station o Way finding kiosk

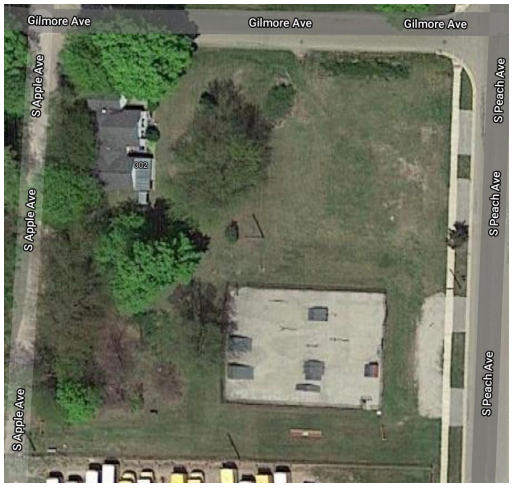


Source: MI Trails Magazine 2021

Current planning: Rest areas are planned to be expanded to other parts of the City.

Ramps & Rails Skate Park: This skateboard/inline skating park was constructed in 2008, with on-street parking and a fenced in paved area with ramps and rails, a paved entry walk and seasonal porta-johns.

Park	Size	Facilities / Amenities
Ramps & Rails Skate Park	Approx. 0.2 acres	▪ Fenced in paved area with ramps and rails ▪ Seasonal porta-johns ▪ On-street parking



Current planning: A portion of the site is available for additional development which could be skate area expansion, Pickleball court or neighborhood play area.

Hydro Disc Golf Course Park: This 18-pin course was newly completed in the fall of 2017 and is open to play all year round.

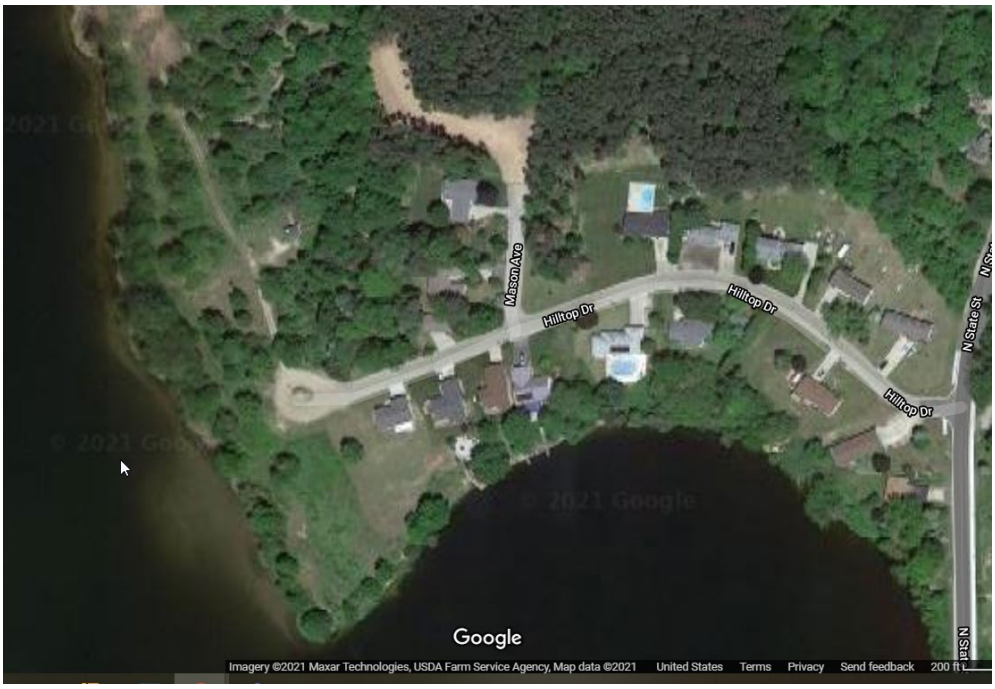
Park	Size	Facilities / Amenities
Hydro Disc Golf Course Park	Approx. 24 acres	▪ 3681 W. Harrison St, near Hart Dam ▪ 18-pin course





Pointe Park: (Northwest Park) is a city-owned undeveloped property with nearly 1,100 feet of shoreline on Hart Lake. The site is undisturbed and may contain historical artifacts. The FERC has suggested that an archaeological survey be conducted before improvements are made.

Park	Size	Facilities / Amenities
Pointe Park	Approx. 1,100' shoreline on Hart Lake	▪ Undeveloped shoreline on Hart Lake ▪ Access is from Hilltop Drive off State St through Hardy's Subdivision. ▪ Several power lines in a corridor through the land that are primary conductors for the city power plant and a small bldg. for a pumping station that requires access by City vehicles and service equipment.



Current planning and FERC order requirements: A Conceptual Master Plan has been prepared for the land and reviewed and approved by the City, Park Committee and the community as a goal to be achieved as soon as possible within the limits of the City and possible grant funding capabilities. Northwest Waterfront Park improvements are included in the Capital Improvements Program (under FERC order) for completion in the next planning period. The following aspects need to be considered in order to proceed with development of the proposed park:

Confirm and submit the approved site plan, or "undertaking" to the appropriate agencies for their review, approval, and potential funding assistance commitments. A past FERC order and input from the recreation planning public input has identified improvements are warranted for public access to the park. These included improved paved parking in the road R.O.W., possible overlook deck areas, group shelters, footpaths, and canoe/kayak launch and swimming area.

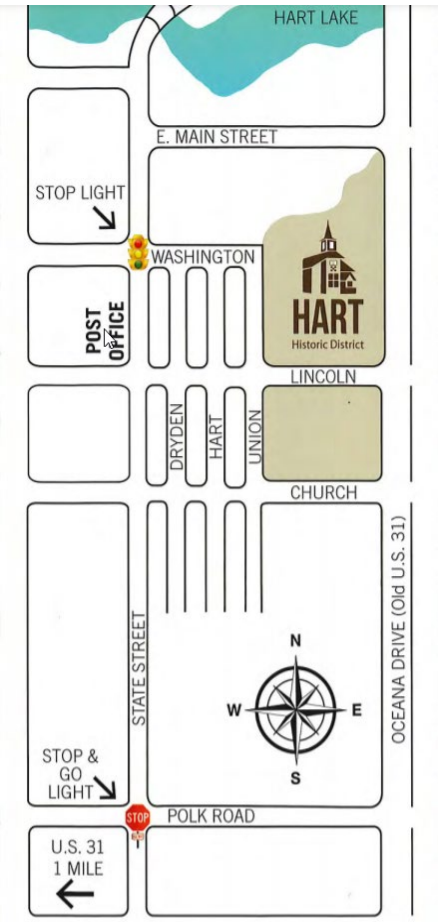
Diesel Power Plant Site
Park Type: Undeveloped, currently a Diesel Electric Generation Plant
Size: 1-1.5 acres approximately (not including dam and Mechanic St. R.O.W.)
Service Area: Community.

The Diesel Power Plant is currently under evaluation on whether to remain open as a power plant. The City has opened talks for potential adaptive re-use of the site to become a recreational facility. A possible use that is currently under consideration is to improve the southern part of the property as a trailhead, convenience, and parking area for the Hart Montague Trail and USBR35 pathways. The facility will serve the trail systems at a convenient location and support activities and improvements in the downtown area.

Hart Lake: (250 acres) located just to the north of the city offers an array of recreational opportunities that include boating, swimming, and fishing. Hart Lake is formed by a hydroelectric dam on the Pentwater River just north of the city.

Hart Historic District: The City of Hart leases the Hart Historic District (circa 1989) to the Hart Heritage Preservation Group (HHPG), a private club, to manage improvements, maintenance, operations, events, and historic collections. In 2014, the City restructured the Hart Historic District to provide more support services. The District is located centrally at the east side of the downtown area long the west back of the Chippewa Creek ravine. The District consists of native historic structures. The park-like setting provides programmable space for historical collections, summer concerts and special events. The Mudget Pavilion provides a large, covered picnic area in the center of the District.

Park	Size	Facilities / Amenities	
Hart Historic District	Approx. 6 Acres	▪ B.R. Mudget Pavilion (1993) ▪ Heritage Hall (2002) ▪ Historic Structures: o Schaner Feed Mill (1911) and fruit processing structures o Sackrider Church (1897) o Randall (1-room) School (1876) o Chief Cobmoosa Log Cabin (1858) o Log House (1947) o Hart Railroad Depot and caboose	▪ Historic Collections: o Rider Indian artifacts o Animated dolls o Wildlife mounts & furs o Antique hand tools ▪ Open Space / Lawn Area between the Pavilion, Church, and School. ▪ Parking / Entrance Drives



Current Planning: The Historic District has acquired by donation two (2) parcels of land across Chippewa Creek. The HHPG and the City have proposed the design and construction of a pedestrian bridge to connect the District to the east side of Chippewa Creek. Accessing the east side would allow more direct pedestrian access from John Gurney Park, more opportunity for historic display and increased connectivity with the entire community pathway network. Currently, there are no designated parking areas with most of it on-street along Washington, Union, and Lincoln Streets and special event parking next to the Mill and Heritage Hall.

Chadwick-Munger House - Built in 1893 on Dryden Street, the house is the home of the Oceana County Historical & Genealogical Society. It offers a museum, library, and display and archive of Oceana County history. www.oceanahistory.org

Oceana County Fairgrounds - The County Fairgrounds (30 acres) is owned and operated by Oceana County Agricultural Society. The property is located within the City limits and abuts the Hart-Montague Trail as it enters Hart from the southwest and the large parcel of land is primarily used for the County Fair at the end of summer. The Fairgrounds are available for programmed activities such as the annual Folk Festival. www.oceanafair.com

2 – SCHOOL RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

In addition to the city and county recreation facilities, there are public schools with recreation facilities located in and around the region. They are briefly described as follows.

Public Schools

The Hart Public Schools campus covers 68 acres and provides public education to the residents of the City of Hart and surrounding area. The district serves over 1,300 students and has four schools, all of which are located in the City.



- **Hart High School** – 300 W. Johnson Street, Hart, MI. Houses grades 9-12. Recreation facilities include one indoor gymnasium with seating for 1,500 people and parking for 400 cars, a weight room with training facilities, and an outdoor athletic complex that includes all-weather track, lighted football field, soccer field, one softball and baseball field. All have bleacher seating.
- **Hart Middle School** – 308 W. Johnson Street, Hart, MI. Houses grades 5-8 as well as the district auditorium. It has a large gymnasium and indoor and outdoor basketball facilities.
- **Spitler Elementary** – 302 W. Johnson Street, Hart, MI. The school houses grades K-4, has a multipurpose room with a basketball hoop. Outdoor facilities include a basketball hoop, playground equipment, and wooden fort.
- **Diman-Wolf Early Childhood Center** – 306 W. Johnson Street, Hart, MI. It houses Head Start, Great Start Readiness Program and the Central Office facilities.

3 – PRIVATE FACILITIES

There are some private facilities in and around the City of Hart which include recreation amenities. While they provide public access to varying degrees, they are important in providing recreation opportunities. Some of these facilities are listed below.

Location	Facilities
Lakeside Rehabilitation Family Fitness (LRFF) – downtown Hart	Offers fitness classes, weight room and aerobic activities www.lakesiderehab.com
The Eagle's Club	Bowling alley Ballfield Other recreational opportunities
American Fitness Center (AFC) – in downtown Hart	Gym and fitness center www.afcmichigan.com
Colonial Golf Course – located just west of Hart	18 holes of golf Driving range www.colonialgolfhart.com
Comfort Inn Hotel – located adjacent to the Hart-Montague Rail Trail	Swimming pool Sauna and whirlpool Exercise Room Sun patio Facility for conferences
Hart VFW Hall	Offers available space to groups for meetings and special programs.
Knights of Columbus Hall	Offers available space to groups for meetings and special programs.

4 –REGIONAL RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Silver Lake State Park and Sand Dunes - located less than 10 miles from the City of Hart, they offer a large spectrum of recreational opportunities for the family on the Lake Michigan shoreline. Recreational opportunities include driving the dunes, hiking the dunes, boating, and sunbathing. The Silver Lake area also offers a broad array of recreation for the family that includes water sports, putt-putt golf courses, zip-line, and go-carts (Craig's Cruisers).

West Michigan Sand Dragway - located west of Hart and offers five classes of sand dragsters: top fuel, pro classes, sportsman, ATV, and juniors May – September. www.sanddragways.com

Hart Township Soccer Complex - consists of two (2) soccer fields. The Hart Area Recreation Club has volunteered their time to construct, operate and maintain the fields and the facility.

Gale's Pond Park - This County Park offers passive recreation including a boardwalk. Doolittle Park is also adjacent to Gale's Park.

Charles Mears State Park - This State Park is a 179-acre park along the shores of Lake Michigan. Mears State Park offers an array of recreational opportunity. Attractions include camping, swimming, boating, fishing, hiking, and relaxing on the beach. Winter activities are also available that include snowmobiling, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing.

Star Hill - a snowboarding attraction and is located about 1.5 miles south of Hart on Oceana Drive. It derives its name from a "star" shape formed by pine trees planted over 0 years ago. Hart Township oversees and manages the site.

Pentwater Artisan Learning Center - was developed to transfer artisan skills to other interested artisans in a safe, clean, and mentoring environment using specialized equipment and tools. www.pentwaterartisan.org

Friendship Center - located in Pentwater and has programs such as dancing and other recreational activities for seniors.

Oceana County Parks - a park system of (7) parks that include Crystal Valley, Cedar Point, Stony Lake, Ferry, Gale's Pond (Doolittle), Black Lake, and Marshville. All the parks are available for day-use recreational activities such as fishing, picnicking, boating, and ball fields except for Black Creek which has 20 campsites.

State Parks and Federal Lands - Within Oceana County the state and federal government own and manage several recreation facilities. Facilities include parks, national forest, and public access sites such as Silver Lake State Park, Charles Mears State Park Pere Marquette State Forest and Pentwater State Game Area, Public Access Sites (Crystal Lake, McLaren Lake, and the White River), Manistee Nation Forest.

State Parks in neighboring counties includes Ludington State Park, Newaygo State Park, Duck Lake State Park, and Muskegon State Park.

Country Dairy, Inc and Farm Store - offer tours of their dairy processing plant in New Era, Michigan. The processing plant and display barn provide the backdrop for an educational tour of the (bovine-free growth hormone) bottling facility.

Rainbow Ranch Horse-back Riding Stables - offer 85 available horses for riding on over 300 scenic acres of private land. Rainbow Ranch is in New Era, Michigan and is open to the public including the elderly and developmentally disabled.

Double JJ Resort - The Resort is located approximately 10 miles south of Hart in Rothbury and offers indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities including indoor/outdoor water parks, golf, mini-golf, equestrian, hiking, dog sledding, X-country skiing, and tubing run.

Farm Markets - Dillingham and Rennhack Farm Markets are located in the Hart city limits. Other Oceana County markets included Woodland Farm Market (west of Shelby), Lewis Farm Market and Petting Farm (west of Rothbury), Brubaker Market (Mears) and Cargill Market (east of Hart).

Golfing - Other nearby Oceana County golf courses include Golden Sands Golf Course (west of Mears), Oceana Golf Club (north of Shelby) and Benona Shores Golf Course (west of Shelby) offer golf both recreationally and competitively through league programs and tournaments.

5 – BARRIER FREE EVALUATION & UNIVERAL ACCESS

The ultimate goal is to provide recreation opportunities that include everyone. With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), all areas of public service and accommodation are subject to barrier-free requirements, including parks and recreation facilities and programs. This planning process should include methods to ensure that the City park and recreation system is accessible to persons with disabilities. The City completed an evaluation of existing facilities in 2010 to determine if they are barrier-free.

When looking at areas to determine their accessibility to all people, we started by asking these simple questions:

Can a person who has a sight or hearing disability, uses a wheelchair, uses a walking aid such as crutches or braces, has a mental disability that affects learning and understanding, safely and independently:

- *Get from the arrival place to the activity area?*
- *Do what others do in the area?*
- *How can this barrier be removed?*
- *Move around the area?*
- *If not, what is getting in the way?*

Common components that need to be looked at to answer these basic questions include parking, paths of travel from parking, street or sidewalk to activity areas, the activity areas themselves, signage, support facilities such as restrooms, surfacing, and communications required for recreation programs and general use of a facility or area. The existing parks were evaluated on the following criteria and scored 1-5.

> 5- Facility is fully accessible. Features and facilities meet and exceed the Uniform Building Code and take into consideration Universal Design principles. Main elements such as the washrooms, entrances, parking, and amenities are barrier free.
>
> 4- Majority of the facility is accessible; however, there are some accessibility barriers. Some improvements are needed to make the facility fully accessible.
>
> 3- Facility is partially accessible. Barriers exist to fully accessing the facility and an alternate facility may be necessary.
>
> 2- Facility is partially accessible. Barriers exist to fully accessing the facility and an alternate facility may be necessary.
>
> 1- Facility has poor accessibility. Accessibility barriers may exist at entranceway, recreation area and washrooms. Alternate facility is recommended if barrier free access

Hart Historic District: Upon completion of barrier-free compliance analysis the Historic District scored "2". Currently, most structures and connections between structures are not ADA accessible and no barrier-free parking exists.

John Gurney Park: Upon completion of barrier-free compliance analysis John Gurney Park scored "2". The new shower/bathing facility is the only improvement that meets ADA guidelines. Existing restrooms, picnic pavilion, parking areas, beach access, boat launch and dock, baseball dugouts, and campsites do not meet ADA guidelines and need improvement.

Veterans Park: Upon completion of barrier-free compliance analysis Veteran's Memorial Park scored "3". Barrier-free access is limiting with regards to connection point of sidewalk and boardwalk not being smooth and flush. Parking area is sandy gravel and unimproved lacking proper signage.

Hart Commons: Upon completion of the barrier-free compliance analysis, Hart Commons scored "5" for the park itself. However, improved access to parking lot No. 1 would enhance accessibility for the park.

Liberty Park: Upon completion of barrier-free compliance analysis Liberty Park scored"2". Improved access to the play area and some of the facilities in the play area would be beneficial.

William Field Memorial Hart-Montague Trail (HMT): Upon completion of barrier-free compliance analysis Hart-Montague Rail Trail scored "5". Currently, all existing trail heads, restroom facilities, and existing wayfinding points have been designed for barrier-free access.

Ramps & Rails Skate Park: Upon completion of barrier-free compliance analysis Hart Skate Park scored "5". Currently, access and use areas provide for barrier-free access.

Hydro Disc Golf Course Park:

Universal Access

Another often overlooked category is Universal Access. This practice goes way beyond typical Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations to practice "common and equal experiences for all." The goal of universal access is, throughout concept and design phases, to incorporate technology, materials and other considerations that promote equal opportunities for people of varied abilities. These concepts should be kept in the forefront as a prime consideration in the 5-year Master Plan and individual parks or projects as they develop and progress.

	Universal Access Design Considerations:
Archery range	▪ All stations ▪ Route to retrieval area for each target ▪ Targets also usable with cross bows ▪ Arrow back stop to limit retrieval distance ▪ Larger maneuvering spaces to accommodate archers with shooting assistants
Beach	▪ Routes over the beach and into the water, can be portable/temporary matting if it needs to be taken in and out for beach cleaning/dragging or in the off season ▪ Wide enough for side by side walking/passing ▪ At beach route end have an accessible area at the water's edge large enough to park multiple chairs while the owners are in the water ▪ With a transfer system at the water's edge so people can get down to the ground level and into the water
Boardwalk wetland and water access	▪ 6 feet minimum width so two people can walk side by side or people can pass ▪ Edge treatment to prevent roll/step off ▪ If side rails are used, **more than 25%** must lowered for easy viewing in various places along the boardwalk ▪ Interpretive information in a variety of alternative formats such as auditory, large print, Braille, pictures, etc.

Campgrounds	▪ All sites and amenities ▪ Accessible surface on all sites, including rustic sites ▪ Larger spaces to accommodate side lifts on campers and vehicles ▪ Accessible tables, grills (15 " minimum, 34 " maximum height), and fire rings on all sites ▪ Centrally located restrooms on easy routes from each site
Camping Cabins and Yurts	▪ Larger clear space and maneuvering spaces in between all furnishings, including when all are in use (beds, tables/chairs with people seated at the table, shelves within lowered reach ranges, lowered wall hooks, etc.) ▪ Larger clear space thoughtfully located for typical portable items such as coolers, luggage, equipment/food bins/tubs, etc.
Canoe/kayak/boat launch:	▪ Wider route so someone can hand wheel boat on dolly to launch pulling boat next to them if they are in a wheelchair or two person carry down ▪ Accessible surface to water's edge and into water at launch ▪ More gentle slopes for easier entry and exit when hand wheeling a boat ▪ Some type of "rack" to stabilize boat at a transferable height then some type of mechanism/roller system to move, while seated in the boat, into the water Some means of transfer assistance such as overhead bars ▪ Some type of wench system to help pull boat out of water back into the rack to exit/transfer out. ▪ If there is a dock provide a transfer system on the dock so a person can be seated on the dock to transfer over to a boat in the water that is in some type of a stabilizer rack ▪ Adaptive kayaks available for use Shore station with a platform (instead of "V" rack) with a transfer system on the deck of the shore station, located next to a dock so someone could roll/get on the platform and lower it to the right level to transfer into a boat
Type of Recreation Facility	**Universal Access Design Considerations:**
Fishing dock/pier and observation/viewing decks:	▪ More than 25% of the rails are lowered in various locations or no rails at all with only an edge treatment to prevent roll off ▪ Sitting benches (all with backs and arm rests) scattered about so anglers can choose to sit or stand to fish ▪ Tackle box stands next to one bench end (not both) leaving one end clear space for sitting side by side with someone in a wheelchair ▪ A variety of fish landing cutaways strategically placed ▪ Variety of accessible opportunities—over-water fishing, shore fishing, in-water fishing, etc. ▪ Transition plates between access route and deck/pier
Nature center	▪ All interpretive information in a variety of alternative formats such as auditory, large print, Braille, pictures, etc. ▪ Creative use of technology such as mp3 players for auditory descriptions (this gives the info. directly to the individual) closed loop assistive listening devices and closed-circuit captioning of all interpretive presentations ▪ All displays at lowered heights for sitting or standing viewing ▪ All operating mechanisms that are operable with one hand and do not require tight/pinch/grasp/wrist twist to operate
Parking	▪ More than minimum number of accessible spots ▪ Each connected directly to an accessible route to the park elements

	and NOT into the traffic flow ▪ Thoughtfully located nearest the activity entrance, which might require multiple lots (some near the beach, some near the playground, some near the bathhouse, etc.)
Picnic areas and elements: Pavilions, picnic tables, grills, fire rings, water pumps, etc.	▪ All located on accessible routes ▪ All tables, grills, fire rings, water pumps, etc. accessible ▪ Level routes onto pavilions with no changes of level from path to pavilion surface ▪ Wider routes and clear space with firm surface around all elements so someone with mobility limits can easily move around the element (table, grill, etc.) ▪ A variety of table styles, some with clear sitting space on the side, some with extended table tops on the end ▪ Some fixed tables to ensure they remain accessible (not moved off into a grassy or sandy area, etc.) ▪ Clear space all around each element so people can approach and use the grill, fire ring, etc. from the front, back and either side ▪ Grills you can lower/raise the cooking surface with one hand ▪ Raised fire building surfaces so you can place wood without learning too far over from a standing or seated position
Playgrounds	▪ Ramps and transfers ▪ Has both ramp and transfer access to all play components ▪ Ramps to every "getting on spot" or "sit/stand & do it spot" of every play component ▪ Transfer system from the ground up to the main deck located near the exits of slides and climbers furthest from the ramp onto the structure ▪ Only unitary safety surface such as poured-in-place or rubber tiles NOT any loose fill materials like shredded rubber, wood chips, engineered wood fiber, or any other non-unitary surface material.
Type of Recreation Facility	**Universal Access Design Considerations:**
Playgrounds (Con't)	▪ On deck transfer platform at the entry point of every slide ▪ On deck transfer platform with one open transfer side and one side with transfer steps to every entry/exit point of every climber, so kids climbing up can get down to the deck to move to another component, as they may have left an assistive device at the ground ▪ A good variety of things to manipulate that make noise or music, have high contrast/bright colors, games that two kids can play (to foster social interaction), Braille and sign language panels to teach awareness, easy to operate with just one hand with a whole fist (does not require tight/pinch/grasp/wrist twist to operate) ▪ Different high contrast colors for decks versus transfers so kids with low vision can perceive a change in level ▪ Play panels are located at heights so they can be used from a seated position or standing
Restrooms	▪ More than the minimum number of accessible units ▪ Multiple unisex/single user toilet rooms/units so opposite sex care givers can assist; also good for parents of young children of the opposite sex so kids aren't sent alone into the multi-user restroom ▪ Thoughtfully located near areas of activity such as play areas, beaches, fishing piers, etc. ▪ Accessible door pulls and water faucet handles - all accessible port-a-johns, again big enough for individual use or care giver/parental assistance.

Skiing/sledding hill	▪ Accessible route to top (no steps), possibly using a "magic carpet" lift ▪ Level surface for sled mounting at hilltop ▪ If staffed, provide ATV transport, or have policy allowing personal ATVs ▪ Transfer at hill bottom to help transfer
Sports fields/courts Fields: soccer, football, baseball, etc. Courts: tennis, basketball, bocce, horseshoes, etc. Other: skate parks, frisbee golf	▪ Routes to both sides of all fields and courts, not just end zones ▪ Accessible seating spaces both ground level and elevated if risers/bleachers are provided ▪ Accessible seating spaces scattered throughout all viewing areas and levels with companion seating on both sides of the space ▪ All lowered service windows at all concession areas ▪ Wider gate openings into court areas (tennis, bocce, basketball) and skate parks to accommodate wider sports wheelchairs ▪ Routes to both horseshoe pits and along both sides of the route between pits ▪ Level routes onto bocce courts with sitting benches at both ends
Trail: nature trail, walkway, pathway, etc	▪ Multi-use trail - 8 feet, with slopes under 2%, wider width so two people can walk side by side or people can pass ▪ Walkways within a site – at least 6 feet wide and have slopes under 2% ▪ Regional trail system - at least 10 feet wide, with 1-foot buffers on either side, with slopes under 2% ▪ Unitary surface like concrete, boardwalk or asphalt, crushed aggregate/screenings that have been "stabilized" or natural soils enhanced with soil stabilizers ▪ Transition plates between trail and pedestrian bridges, decks, etc. ▪ Contrasting color treatment of the surface and textured surface treatments such as brushed concrete at intersections or interpretive stations to cue people who have vision impairments that there is something to pay attention to at that spot ▪ Close to level cross slopes (side to side) and very gentle running slopes, no steep sections, larger (greater than 60" X 60") level areas at all turns and intersections ▪ Thoughtfully laid out on the site to maximize the experience with minimal difficulty ▪ Accessible amenities such as benches, restrooms, drinking fountains, etc.

The goal of full accessibility is stated as a primary goal in the action plan outlined by the City.

6 – RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS / EVENTS / FESTIVALS

1. **HART REC** - A non-profit 501c3 organization whose goal is to offer the youth of the Hart area a safe, fun environment to learn and develop athletic skills while promoting good sportsmanship, respect, and strong work ethic. Offers Baseball/Softball, Basketball, Football and Soccer. http://www.oceanacoa.com/

2. **SENIOR SERVICES** - Oceana County Council on Aging (Hart) http://www.oceanacoa.com/

3. **SOCCER, BASEBALL, SOFTBALL, BASKETBALL, CHEER, FOOTBALL PROGRAMS**
   Hart Area Recreation Club (Hart) www.hartrec.com

4. **THEATRE/ARTS/MUSIC**
   Summer Youth Theater Program (Hart)
   http://www.hartauditorium.org/oceana-summer-youth-theatre.html
   Performing Arts Series (Hart)
   http://www.hartauditorium.org/performing-arts-series.html
   Ruthie's Music Café (Hart)
   Oceana Singers (Hart)

5. **DANCE**
   Melody Mates Square Dancing (Shelby)
   Cedar Creek Cloggers (Montague)
   Custer Boot Scooters Line Dancing (Custer) http://bitelybasementbats.com/

6. **SCOUTS**
   Boy Scout Troop #1155 (Hart) and Girl Scout Troop #4596 (Hart)

7. **4-H** http://msue.anr.msu.edu/county/info/oceana

8. **SHOOTING SPORTS**
   Hart Long Rifles (Hart) www.hartlongrifles.com
   Oceana Archers (Hart)
   http://www.thinkdunes.com/memberProfiles/oceana-archers,-inc-393.html

9. **CYCLING**
   Shoreline Cycling Club (Ludington) http://www.shorelinecyclingclub.org/

10. **SAILING**
    Pentwater Junior Sailing Program (Pentwater) http://www.pentwaterjrsailing.org/
    Pentwater Yacht Club (Pentwater) http://www.pentwateryachtclub.com/

11. **DUNE/SPORT BUGGIES**
    Michigan Sport Buggy Association (Ann Arbor)
    https://www.facebook.com/pages/Michigan-Sport-Buggy-Association/122088946149

12. **CROSS COUNTRY SKIING**
    Oceana Cross Country Ski Association http://www.oceanaski.org/index.htm

13. **SNOW MOBILE RACING**
    Whiskey On Ice (Whiskey Creek Campground, Custer)
    http://www.whiskeyoniceraces.com/home-1.html

14. **ICE SKATING/ICE HOCKEY**
    West Shore Community College Ice Arena (Scottville) - West Shore Wolves Amateur Hockey Association http://www.westshore.edu/community/recreation/ice_arena/index.html

15. **Oceana County Fair** - The Fair is an end of the summer event where residents can come together as a community. Activities include 4H horse, cattle, livestock, and poultry shows and other craft displays. A large commercial building on-site allows vendors to display their goods and products

including tractors, cars, and snowmobiles. The fair is also a venue for horse races, tractor pulls, riding shows, demolition derbies, livestock auction, and most importantly for the children, a carnival midway. The County Fair is annually on the third week of August and draws an estimated 30,000 people. www.oceanafair.com

16. **National Asparagus Festival (NAF)** - The festival, since 1974, is county-wide and includes a celebration that is hosted in the City of Hart and other County locations. Many activities are available that include a parade on State Street, craft fair, asparagus farm tours, 5K 'Spear-It" Run (Silver Lake), and Taste of Asparagus Competition. The Village of Shelby hosts the NAF "Asparagus Queen Pageant and Banquet". Asparagus Queens visit many West Michigan parades and festivals to promote the asparagus industry. The Parade and Festival occurs in June every year and draws over 5,000 people. www.nationalasparagusfestival.org

17. **Antique Snowmobile Show -** This is held on the first Saturday in February. The vintage snowmobile show was held at the Oceana County Fair Grounds!

18. **Hart Hills Bike Race -** Annual gravel road bike race, offering 50-mile, 25-mile, and 5/10-mile waves separately, that are traveled in, out, and around the City.

19. **Memorial Day Parade -** Annual parade to honor those who have given their all in service to our country.

20. **Hart Heritage Car Show -** Annual car show in Hart's Historic District. Also offers entertainment, concessions, pony rides and prizes.

21. **Labor Day Hart Healthy 5K Run and 2.2 Mile Bridge Walk** - Hart Main Street hosts this fun family event in downtown Hart and around Hart Lake. www.hartmainstreet.org

22. **Friday Night Concert Series -** The Friday Night Concerts take place in the Historic District starting in July and ending in August. The concerts draw hundreds to the District and Hart downtown area.

23. **Music on the Commons** - H.E.A.R.T. offers a wide variety of musical talent for all to enjoy at the Hart Commons.

23. **Folk Festival -** The Folk Festival occurs annually in the month of April. The festival and workshops are hosted by the Oceana County Fairgrounds which draw music students from Oceana County.

24. **Heritage Days -** Heritage Days is an event held in the Historic District which draws over 700 people on Labor Day Weekend. The Hart Heritage Preservation Group hosts this event to honor Hart and Oceana County history with music, BBQ, clogging and tours.

25. **"Hart Sparks" Fireworks** - Typically held on July 2nd, the event attracts West Michigan families to hear live bands and watch the show over Hart Lake in downtown Hart. www.hartmainstreet.org

26. **Pow Wow** – Area native tribes host the Annual Pow Wow which is held in September at the Oceana County Fairgrounds. Enjoy a traditional Native American pow-wow with Intertribal dancing, Native singing, storytelling, arts and crafts, food and more.

27. **Veterans Day Service -** Annual event held at Veterans Memorial Park on November 11 each year and features a guest speaker. Parade starts at County Courthouse and ends at Veteran's Memorial Park.

28. **Hispanic Heritage Celebration -** This takes place on the third weekend of September at the Hart Commons. The cultural celebration brings together the diversity of our community and celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month. Activities include live music, folkloric dancers, kid activities, contests, and authentic Mexican food.

29. **"Lighted Christmas Parade"** - This evening Christmas Parade welcomes Santa Claus to Hart the first Friday after Thanksgiving. Santa will be there for the lighting of the Christmas Tree and will be available at the Commons for a "meet and greet" time.

30. **Winterfest** - Sponsored by Hart Main Street, Winterfest is held in February and takes place in downtown Hart and on Hart Lake. The festival offers ice fishing and broom ball tournaments, State Street 1-mile fun run, homemade soup, and campfires. www.hartmainstreet.org

7- PAST GRANT STATUS

SECTION E – ACTION PROGRAM, CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE AND RATIONALE

In defining the action program, the formulation of community goals and objectives for the provision of recreation is a vital component. The goals and objectives represent the purposes for a community's role in providing recreation to its residents as well as outlining the direction that the community's effort should take in the long term. Goals are the general targets for which a community aims for while objectives are the specific steps that can be taken towards that goal. A recreation plan identifies those actions that can be undertaken to implement the objectives and fulfill the community's goals. The goals and objectives for the City in meeting the recreation needs of residents are outlined below.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1

PROVIDE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES THAT FOCUS AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HART AREA WATER RESOURCES.

Objectives:

Many residents and visitors comment on the natural beauty of our trails and parks in Hart which utilize the Hart Lake/Pentwater River as a focal point. They also responded that they also felt it was important to develop recreational opportunities that take advantage of what the river has to offer. This can be very important to local residents as well as those interested in visiting the community. Hart Lake and the Pentwater River recreational opportunities can be seen as an economic development tool.

Potential Actions:

A. Develop opportunities with other agencies in our community to educate our residents about our local natural resources.
B. Enhance fishing, canoeing and kayaking opportunities the Hart Lake.
C. Enhance and expand our use of our natural resources for festivals and special events.
D. Promote stormwater run-off quality control measures to improve water habitat for fish.
E. Evaluate improvements at Veterans Memorial Park such as:
    I. Acquire adjacent property to allow for park expansion and additional parking
    II. The boat launch area and water's edge has been eroding and may require stabilization improvements to protect the water resources
    III. Demolish vacant structure
    IV. Construct additional parking and amenities
    V. Construct kayak and canoe launch
    VI. Construct public restrooms
    VII. Repair existing boardwalk

GOAL 2

PROVIDE ADDITIONAL NON-MOTORIZED TRAILS FOR RECREATIONAL AND TRANSPORTATION USE.

Objectives:

Providing the community with trail system which is our "safe highway" across the community connecting our schools, parks and the downtown district is a high priority in our community.

Potential Actions:

A. Expand the accessible trail system in the Hart area with a focus on continuing to connect our existing parks, neighbors, and destination points.

B. Connect Hart's trail system to neighboring communities.

C. Explore cooperative effort with the surrounding communities to promote, manage, oversee, plan, and seek joint funding for trails in the regional area and to avoid duplication of efforts and to enhance the connectability of the trails and ensure the best regional outcomes.

D. Develop system of wayfinding signage to aid users in navigating and utilizing park facilities

E. Support, promote and fund HMT and USBR 35 reconstruction and extension into and through Hart as soon as possible.

F. Plan and develop a "welcome station" at the City water booster facility on Polk Road.

G. Develop an improved trailhead feature at John Gurney Park and at the Diesel Power Plant site.

H. Develop and adopt a pathway and trail plan that connects to HMT and USBR 35 to a intra City network of walks, trails and pathways that utilizes natural corridors like Russell Creek and Chippewa Creek and connects directly to John Gurney Park, the Historic District, downtown, school campus, Fairgrounds site, City parks and other important features in the community.

I. Develop unified route identification and delineation system for the pathway network with distinctive lines, patterns, colors, and wayfinding system informs and directs residents and visitors alike. Cross Chippewa Creek ravine through the Historic District from the Lincoln-Griswold intersection in the District and extend the route north to John Gurney Park.

J. Develop a Trail and Pathway Management Plan that guides development, operation and maintenance and funding of HMT / USBR 35 and the Intra-City pathway network in the future.

K. Provide unified theme bike racks at all destinations on the pathway network with benches, tables, and convenience opportunities where appropriate.

L. Provide a bicycle repair station at Hart Commons or other key trail head location or City parking lot.

GOAL 3

PRESERVE THE HISTORIC ELEMENTS AND UNIQUE NATURAL RESOURCES OF JOHN GURNEY PARK WHILE PROGRAMMING IMPROVEMENTS THAT RESPECT AND MAINTAIN THE TYPE AND PURPOSE OF EXISTING FACILITIES AND PROVIDE DIVERSE ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES THAT COEXIST WITHOUT CONFLICT AND MEET THE RECREATION NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY.

Objectives:

The various input received from the community during this planning process has provided many suggestions for improvements in our park facilities and recreational programs. The City of Hart will continue to use these suggestions to guide their planning for the future.

Potential Actions:

A. Rehabilitate 2 existing tennis courts for conversion to 4 Pickleball courts.

B. Approve a Master Plan for the entire park area that will better define and control access to the various use areas in the park and guide future planning, funding and improvement actions.

C. Develop a Management Plan that will facilitate implementation of the Master Plan and create "universal access" to all existing and new facilities.

D. Improve Park circulation and construct park road and entry feature improvements on Eastern Park Road.

E. Construct new Oceana Drive entrance and parking facility.

F. Improve trail head area and non-motorized pathway along Chippewa Creek to historic district, downtown and the Hart-Montague Trail / USBR 35.

G. Build a new, safer pedestrian bridge or earthen causeway between the south and north areas of the park for improved access to the pavilion.

H. Construct permanent boat dock for camper use.

I. Relocate and improve the swimming beach area to eliminate erosion and improve beach quality.

J. Develop new drive and parking for the beach area, pavilion, and scout cabin.

K. Continue to add amenities and support facilities to the current Hart Park facilities based upon community input and current needs of the community.

L. Provide recreational opportunities for people with disabilities. Ensure that improvements and upgrades to existing park facilities are handicap accessible, where feasible.

GOAL 4

PROVIDE QUALITY LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES WITH SPECIAL CONSIDERATION GIVEN TO IMPROVE HEALTH AND FITNESS.

Objectives:

The Community's recreational facilities and programs offer the community an opportunity to enjoy nature and take part in activities that will improve health and fitness. The Hart community realizes the importance of providing top quality park facilities and programs and also would like to continue to improve the health and fitness of its residents.

Potential Actions:

A. Provide both passive and active programming for a variety of ages and abilities of the population.

B. Add recreational facilities based upon recreation trends and input from the community. Negotiate acquisition of the property adjacent to John Gurney Park, Veterans Memorial Park, Northwest Waterfront Park, Hart Commons and along Russell Creek and Chippewa Creek that would protect wetlands and natural areas and provide improved organization and development as well as increased opportunities for access and use of these facilities.

C. Acquire high-quality remote wooded sites adjacent to the City's Valley wells and Russell Creek (near 72nd Avenue) to preserve natural areas, preserve and enhance Russell Creek, protect the City's wellhead property; and protect a watershed that delivers cold water to the Hart Lake impoundment. The Russell Creek watershed is a complex geologic construct of natural ravines with steep slopes, diverse vegetative communities, natural springs and spring pools and streams, sensitive wetland, and diverse seasonal and resident wildlife populations. Much of the land in both corridors is undevelopable and the cold-water streams are essential to the character and

quality of Hart Lake. Preservation protection and managed public access to and through all the tributary and watershed ecosystems within the City are extremely high priority acquisition, development and management objectives of the City.

D. Develop Pickleball courts on available land at the Peachy Skate Park, John Gurney Park, Hydroelectric Site and/or vacant lot at Wood –Water Street intersection.

E. Develop new access and parking at Hydroelectric Park with trails for hiking, nature observation, picnicking and fishermen.

F. Develop gathering and sitting open space nodes in the downtown area with benches, shade elements, public art, and landscaping.

G. Complete development of Hart Commons with a performance stage and shelter and access to City parking lot No.1 in cooperation with the Dairy Delight.

H. Develop Northwest Waterfront Park with the initial phase of parking, shoreline clean-up, trails and canoe/kayak launch and fishing pier with accessible walk connecting to parking.

I. Develop a plan for the Diesel Power Plant Site that will improve the recreational value of Hart Lake and Russell Creek frontage, provide educational opportunities, repurpose historic elements of the site and provide access and parking.

J. Develop and adopt a master plan for the Historic District that will identify the renovation needs and sequence, enhance open space areas, provide organized bike and vehicle parking, creates an information and interpretation system, provides improved security, and creates and promotes identity and curb appeal.

GOAL 5

ACQUIRE AND RETAIN PUBLIC LAND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

Objectives:

As the Hart community continues to grow our local officials need to be conscious of the need for acquiring additional park land as it becomes available.

Potential Actions:

A. Retain existing parkland and acquire new public lands to meet the future recreational needs of the community.

B. Preserve and protect open space and other important natural features in the Hart area.

C. Develop programs for evaluating future land acquisition.

D. Preserve floodplains and wetlands for recreation purposes whenever possible.

E. Acquire property adjacent to existing park properties whenever possible to allow for the greatest flexibility and offer economy of sharing infrastructure when expanding or adding recreation activities to existing dedicated parklands.

GOAL 6

CREATE COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF HART AREA RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND PROMOTE THEM TO OUR LOCAL CITIZENS AS WELL AS TO VISITORS OF THE COMMUNITY.

Objectives:

Several respondents indicated in the past that they were not aware of all the parks that were available in our local community. They also indicated that they were not aware of all the adult and youth recreational programs that we offered in our local recreation department.

Potential Actions:

A. Develop additional print and web-based media to describe existing recreational opportunities available to the residents of our service area.

B. Develop additional print and web-based media to describe and highlight our existing park facilities.

GOAL 7

DEVELOP A SYSTEM OF PARK FACILITIES THAT PROMOTE FOUR SEASON USE.

Objectives:

Provide residents with opportunities for recreation that provide multiple seasons of use within the City and the respective park facilities.

Potential Actions:

A. Construct compatible yet diverse uses within the parks that promote spring, summer, fall, and winter uses.

B. Explore options for all-season facilities such as improvements to cross country ski paths, warming shelters and restrooms in the parks as appropriate.

GOAL 8

CONTINUE THE IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN CONCEPTS AT ANY AND ALL CITY PARK LOCATIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PARK'S DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN.

Objectives:

Develop new and expanded facilities and programs at the park including new restrooms, picnic facilities, paved parking, walking paths, new play equipment and lighting.

Potential Actions:

A. Improve restroom facilities.
B. Provide for universally accessible play areas, picnic facilities and shelters
C. Provide for paved drives, roadways, parking areas and trails to provide barrier-free access to all areas.
D. Improve signage for any visually or physically impaired park users
E. Upgrade electrical systems and services as necessary

GOAL 9

TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE CITY BY PROVIDING MULTI-GENERATIONAL, FULLY ACCESSIBLE AND SAFE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES THAT ARE RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF *ALL*

RESIDENTS WITH HIGH QUALITY RECREATIONAL FACILITIES THAT EFFICIENTLY UTILIZE AVAILABLE RESOURCES.

Objectives:

A. Develop a variety of recreational facilities that reflect the changing and diverse needs of the City residents.
B. Improve existing recreational facilities to fulfill the needs of City residents more effectively and to encourage regular use of these facilities.
C. Develop certain recreational facilities as identified by the survey and needs assessment and establish priorities for their development.
D. Utilize design, construction, and maintenance practices that maximize the benefits provided for the resources expended.
E. Plan improvements that offer both active and passive recreation opportunities.
F. Develop unique recreational opportunities for elderly and physically challenged citizens. Every recreational opportunity should be fully accessible to all individuals whenever possible.
G. Provide play areas that are in conformance with the "Playground Equipment Safety Act".

GOAL 10

IMPLEMENT A PARKS, RECREATION, AND TRAILS OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE PROGRAM THAT ENSURES QUALITY LEISURE TIME RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL CITIZENS AND VISITORS OF ALL AGES AND ABILITIES OF ALL CITY PARKS AND FACILITIES LONG TERM.

Objectives:

A. Develop an operations and maintenance program with City staff to adequately address immediate and long-term equipment, budgetary, and personnel needs for the existing and proposed facilities.
B. Obtain input and general oversight from the Parks Committee and related participant groups to assist staff with management of an operations and execution of maintenance programs and to make recommendations to the City Council for improvements and financing.
C. Seek out additional in-kind or sub-contractual services where and when needed to supplement seasonal maintenance program and staff needs.
D. Consider partnerships with local stakeholder groups to identify and delegate O&M tasks to special interest groups at designated facilities.
E. Inform, educate, and solicit input from Hart area residents of emerging or ongoing recreation projects to encourage broader buy-in and support from City and Township residents.
F. Retain part-time recreation coordinator for the City.
G. Develop partnerships with non-profits and local agencies to achieve goals.
H. Research and develop advertising program to promote more awareness and public involvement.

I. Work with non-profits and adjacent local agencies to promote and encourage their activities wherever possible to broaden programming availability and diversity in the City and surrounding Townships.

J. Engage students and challenged individuals to participate in the planning, review, and operation of community facilities to ensure accommodation of all ages and abilities.

GOAL 11

CREATE NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION.

Objectives:

A. As Michigan continues to struggle it is important to take advantage of collaborations and partnerships as a cost-effective way to offer recreational programs in the community.
B. Coordinate existing recreational projects and programs with the Hart Area Schools, Oceana County, Hart Township, MDOT, and volunteer groups and look for ways to utilize existing facilities such as well as expanding recreational programs as new facilities are developed.
C. Encourage the cooperation and participation of adjacent communities in the formation of a regional recreational advisory board in an effort to combine resources and avoid duplication of facilities and services.
D. Utilize public and private sector cooperation in the promotion of recreation and the improvement of recreational opportunities.
E. Encourage the participation of volunteers in the development of recreational facilities.
F. Explore options of multi-jurisdictional cooperation with the area school district.

GOAL 12

TO CONTINUALLY IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF AND THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION IN THE CITY BY REASSESSING COMMUNITY RECREATION NEEDS, TRENDS, AND CHARACTERISTICS.

Objectives:

A. Periodically update this Recreation Plan.
B. Pursue acquisition and development funding assistance grant(s) through the Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund (MNRTF), Community Foundation, Passport Program, Land and Water Conservation Fund, MDOT Enhancement and Safe Routes 2 Schools, FERC and all other options that become available for expansion, connection, or improvement to existing City facilities where appropriate and suitable.
C. Develop an expanded survey to ensure public needs and desires in areas of parks & recreation.
D. Expand and develop community park advocates through the ongoing efforts the existing parks & recreation advisory board.
E. Provide opportunities for the involvement of City residents in the identification, selection, and development of recreational facilities.
F. Monitor the effectiveness of the City's efforts in fulfilling identified goals and objectives by providing opportunities for City residents to evaluate the progress of recreational development.

G. Monitor the effectiveness of the City's efforts in providing fully accessible opportunities for City residents.

H. Facilitate regular meetings of the Recreation Board.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A widely publicized public review and input meeting was held at City Hall _____ (date) by the City and facilitated by the City planning consultant. The session included City staff, commission, community stakeholders and citizen representatives from the public at large. The Public Input Session presented all the recreational facilities and programs in the City, reviewed existing goals and objectives, discussed perceived and needed action items and potential costs and provided the residents the opportunity to comment with insights and opinions and make suggestions regarding the importance and value of each of those areas of discussion.

General outcomes of the Public Input Process are described as follows:

1. The family and/or adult age groups were predominantly represented and identified team activities and outdoor activities such as biking, walking, fishing, boating, shopping, going to the movies, taking the kids to the park and related family-oriented activities as most important for the City.
2. An overwhelming number of all members identified walkable/bikeable community as the most desirable recreational opportunity they would like to see developed in the City. Access, without having to drive, to the many attributes of the city including the downtown, the historic district, the Hart-Montague Trail and Hart Lake were cited as extremely important considerations for both current and future community and recreation planning and development. Extension of the HMT and US Bike Route (USBR) 35 into the downtown and through the community to key destinations like the Historic District and Gurney Park with strong identification marking and signage for ease and safety was integral and essential to the walk / bike needs discussion.
3. Residents indicated the existing recreational facilities (Historic District, Downtown Business District, John Gurney Park, and Veterans Park etc.) lacked easy access, diversity, and organized use areas. Master plans for Northwest Waterfront and Hydroelectric parks and a community "Bikeway Plan" needed to be developed to illustrate their potential as community parks and J. Gurney, Veterans, Historic District, Hart Skate Park / Peachy Park all needed to be updated to reflect the current and emerging needs that were being identified by the attendees.
4. Residents view their downtown as the core of activity and would like to see the downtown strengthened with regards to open space, walkability, recreational opportunity, community events, bike lanes and racks, landscaping and identity and wayfinding signage.
5. Improved and expanded access to Hart Lake for active uses like fishing, kayaking, swimming, and boating and more passive uses of viewing, picnicking and meditation were highlighted as very important for the citizens and the identity of the community.
6. Improved facilities such as restrooms, benches and shelters like the Hart Commons and improved maintenance was also identified as important if use of the parks is to increase to any degree.
7. A large improved, accessible public beach on Hart Lake in conjunction with other park facilities and good, paved parking close by was frequently mentioned as very important.
8. Many stated the need to enlarge Veteran's Memorial Park with improved access and parking, respectful separation of the "memorial" area from general use areas, restrooms, and enhancement of the memorial space.
9. Many recognized the quality and importance of the historic district with its many attributes and potentials and there was strong support for the preparation of a Comprehensive Master Plan that develops a long-term strategy for improvements for and development of well-organized structures, exhibit areas and features access and parking, on-site circulation, connection to the city pathway network within a structured phasing plan with procedural and budget direction.

The following recommendation and capital improvement schedule outlines and assigns relative priorities to activities and projects that can be implemented in both the short-term and long-range future to improve recreational opportunities in the City. Those activities and projects that can be undertaken during the five-year planning period (2022-2026) have been summarized in a Capital Improvement Program Schedule**.** This schedule includes cost estimates as well as possible funding sources for each suggested project. Year priorities were first developed by considering the City's pending FERC order, recreational needs and deficiencies identified by user groups during the input process and subsequent meetings, and finally by considering targeted funding and financing timing and grant cycles for various objectives.

Capital Improvement Schedule					
2025	**Project**	**Cost**	**City**	**Grants**	**Other**
1	Trail system lane and sign improvements in town	$60,000	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000
2	Acquire Russell Creek corridor riparian properties	$30,000	$30,000		
3	Prepare Historic District Master Plan with phasing and cost projections	$5,000	$5,000		
4	Construct bridge to John Gurney Park (JGP) pavilion over ravine	$80,000	$60,000		$20,000
5	Submit grant application	$5,000	$5,000		
2026	**Project**	**Cost**	**City**	**Grants**	**Other**
1	Construct Phase 3 of Hart Commons	$120,000	$60,000	$60,000	
2	Construct 2 Pickleball courts at Peachy Park	$60,000	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000
3	Prepare Pointe Park Master Plan	$5,000	$5,000		
4	Develop trailhead parking & bike repair station on Diesel Power Plant Site	$35,000	$20,000		$15,000
2027	**Project**	**Cost**	**City**	**Grants**	**Other**
1	Develop new waterfront drive and parking at John Gurney Park	$60,000	$40,000		$20,000
2	Submit grant application for JGP and/or Veterans Park	$5,000	$5,000		
3	Construct Veterans Park OR JGP improvements	$400,000	$150,000	$250,000	
2028	**Project**	**Cost**	**City**	**Grants**	**Other**
1	Pave N. Griswold and Kathryn to street standards	$150,000	$150,000		
2	Develop parking and overlook at Hydroelectric Park	$200,000	$80,000	$120,000	
3	Submit grant application	$5,000	$5,000		
2029	**Project**	**Cost**	**City**	**Grants**	**Other**
1	Develop Pickleball courts on City land at Water Wood Park	$70,000	$30,000	$30,000	$10,000
2	Expand campsite improvements at JGP	$180,000	$60,000	$100,000	$20,000
3	Construct Phase 1 at Pointe Park	$400,000	$160,000	$240,000	
4	Submit grant application	$5,000	$5,000		

1. Potential Funding Sources: Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MNRTF Acquisition & Development Grants), Land & Water Conservation Fund, Michigan Passport Program, Community Foundation, MEDC Development Grants.

2. Cost projections are provided as a range for the planning/design, development or acquisition project and may vary greatly depending upon scope, phase, and timing or by change of scope.

FINANCING MECHANISMS

The following paragraphs briefly outline existing sources of funds for financing the future recreational improvements in the City.

1. General Funds

The City's general fund has been the primary source of funds for operating and maintaining its current facilities. Future site improvements, acquisition, and development will remain dependent on these tax-supported funds, as will the continued operation and maintenance of these facilities. Consequently, recreation planning must be coordinated with the yearly budgeting process for the City's general funds.

2. Donations and Gifts

The availability of donated land, labor, equipment, and funds from individuals and organizations is an attractive and effective way to improve recreational opportunities in The City. Over the past few years, several groups and individuals have contributed significantly. Such support should be encouraged to continue.

3. Multi-jurisdictional Funding

One of the primary goals of establishing a trail authority comprised of adjacent townships would be to establish a joint source of funding for acquisition, development, and maintenance of multi-jurisdictional trail projects. It is too premature to discuss levels or formulas for financial participation/contribution, but by forming such a coalition, the individual cities and townships will collectively be in a stronger position in seeking future matching grants than if pursuing projects individually.

4. Non-local Financial Assistance

Many communities seek outside sources of funds to supplement their local sources when providing recreational improvements. There are several programs administered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) that can provide some financial assistance to local recreation projects. Funding amounts available to communities vary from year to year depending on Federal support and State legislative agendas.

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is a competitive grant program administered by the Michigan Department of Transportation that funds projects such as nonmotorized paths, streetscapes, and historic preservation of transportation facilities that enhance Michigan's intermodal transportation system and provide safe alternative transportation options. These investments support place-based economic development by offering transportation choices, promoting walkability, and improving the quality of life. The program uses Federal Transportation Funds designated by Congress for these types of activities. Some key information on the TA program are as follows:

- Funding with be reduced from the current $23 million a year to $14-16 million a year. Project funding will be more competitive than previously with the average per capita award in the $44-50 per person range.

- Minimum match is still 20% however historic average is 34% and the 2011 average was 44% local match to grant. Any project request for over $2,000,000 total project cost must be 50%-50%. The most favorable grant request will likely be in the $500,000 range.

- Regional Trails will still be a priority, as will urban area streetscapes. Museums and historic preservation projects will be phased out for funding consideration.

- Preliminary grant application review with regional staff is encouraged to determine competitive nature of project and gather suggestions from TE staff. Project narratives should focus on intermodal transportation opportunities as they relate to the larger picture in the community, traffic calming, improving safety and improving water quality through best management practices.

The **Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund** (MNRTF**)** is administered by the MDNR. The MNRTF program utilizes the royalties from oil, gas, and other mineral developments on state-owned lands to help finance the acquisition and the development of outdoor recreation facilities. The CMI program is the result of the passage of Proposal C of 1998.

Any unit of government, including school districts, may apply for grants to develop or acquire land(s) for public recreation or resource protection purposes. Application forms are available on February 1 of each year. The application deadlines are April 1 and September 1, of each year. The MDNR submits a list of recommended projects to the legislature the following January and funds are available after legislative appropriation, usually the following fall.

All local units of government must provide a local match of at least 25 percent of total project costs. For **MNRTF** development projects, the minimum funding request is $15,000, and the maximum is $300,000. Proposals must be for outdoor recreation or resource protection purposes. Outdoor recreation support buildings and other facilities are eligible for development funding, as is the renovation of existing recreation facilities.

All applicants must have a current DNR-approved community recreation plan, documenting the need for project proposal.

In addition, any private individual may nominate land for public acquisition under this program. All nominations are reviewed by the MDNR for possible acquisition and the landowner is not required to be the person nominating a parcel of land for public acquisition. Nomination forms are available at any time from the DNR Recreation Division and may be submitted to the Department year round.

The Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (**LWCF**) program makes money available to the States for land acquisition and development of outdoor recreation facilities. From 1965 to 1996, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) received over $100 million in LWCF assistance for more than 1,500 projects, over 1,100 of which have been grants to local governments. The objective is to provide grants to local units of government and to the State to acquire and develop land for outdoor recreation.

Applications are evaluated on established criteria including project need, capability of applicant, and site and project quality. At least 50 percent match on either acquisition or development projects is required from local government applicants with a $30,000 minimum and $100,000 maximum funding limit. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) makes recommendations to the National Park Service (NPS), which grants final approval. Criteria are spelled out in the "Recreation Grants Selection Process" booklet given to all applicants.

PA 32 of 2010 created the Local Public Recreation Facilities Fund to be used for the development of public recreation facilities for local units of government. Money for this fund is derived from the sale of the **Recreation Passport** which replaces the resident Motor Vehicle Permit (MVP) — or window sticker — for state park entrance. The passport will be required for entry to state parks, recreation areas and boating access sites. Ten percent of remaining revenue will be used to fund the **Recreation Passport local grant program**. A 25% minimum local match is required for the Passport grant program with a maximum grant amount of $75,000 and a minimum of $7,500.

The grant program may only be used for local development projects. The program is focused on renovating and improving existing parks, but the development of new parks is eligible. In addition, projects must fulfill the following requirements in order to be eligible:

- Current annual capital improvement plan (CIP) – plan must include the proposed project. If your community does not have a CIP, you must have a current approved recreation plan on file with the DNR.

Organizations with an interest in developing fishing conditions in their areas may be able to get financial assistance from a program established through the ***State Game and Fish Protection Fund***.

This fishing development grant is offered through the MDNR and can be as much as $200,000 annually, in cash or in-kind services. Projects eligible for funding include culvert modifications for improved stream flow; livestock or sheet erosion control projects; the development of spawning riffles, fish cover structures, or spawning reefs; and the construction of fishing piers and rough fish barriers.

The MDNR accepts grant proposals from organized fishing groups and local units of government. In all cases, projects can approach other sources such as the federal government for additional matching funds.

The ***Historic Preservation Grant Program*** is administered by the Department of State with funds made available through the National Park Service of the Department of Interior. The intent of the program is to conduct surveys of architectural, engineering, archaeological, and historic resources, to identify and nominate eligible properties to the National Register of Historic Places, and to plan for the protection of those cultural/recreational resources.

The funds for this program are apportioned by the National Park Service directly to the State, which, in turn, allocates funds on a project-by-project basis to local governments, organization, and individuals.

In Michigan the Historic Preservation Grant program is administered by the Michigan Department of State. The amount of assistance is up to 50% of the project expenses. Grantees are reimbursed at the completion of the project for work done within the days of a contract between the Department of State and the grantee. EXPENSES INCURRED PRIOR TO THE EXECUTION OF A CONTRACT ARE NOT ALLOWABLE PROJECT COSTS AND WILL NOT BE REIMBURSED.

The **Inland Fisheries Grant Program** offers grants up to $30,000 for projects that enhance the state's aquatic resources. This program may be applicable to the scenic overlook fishing platforms and educational kiosks.

The City is committed to review all available funding sources and prepare the necessary plans, reports, cost estimates, and funding applications, to achieve the goals of this recreation plan.

Waterways Program Grants are funded through the Michigan State Waterways Fund from state marine fuel tax and watercraft registrations. By law, administration of the Waterways Program is through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and overseen by the Department's Parks and Recreation Division.

Grants provide funding assistance for design/engineering and construction of public recreational harbor/marina and boating access site/launch facilities throughout the state. Only local units of government (city, City, township, or county) and public universities are eligible. Applicants may cooperate with community/sports organizations in the implementation of projects. On-site investigation by DNR, Parks and Recreation Division staff may be required to determine suitability of proposed work. Applicant may also be required to document area boating demand. Greater priority may be given to projects for which a local applicant documents match capabilities equal to or greater than the percentage of project cost they are required to provide. The local match can include in-kind expenses if they are well-documented.

Applications, and all required information, must be received by 5:00 p.**m, April 1st.** If April 1st falls on a weekend, the deadline would be the last State working day prior to April 1st. The application review and funding process for projects is from April 1st until an appropriation is approved by the Legislature. This can take up to 18 to 24 months. Notification of approval for engineering and smaller sized construction projects may occur within six months after completed application form and proper documentation are received. Funding for construction is not released until permits are secured.

5. Millage

In an effort to raise matching funds or fund projects with local money, many community leaders have placed ballot proposals before their residents for a dedicated increase in their existing mill property tax to fund park maintenance and repair, including care for new parks and newly acquired parks, compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as well as safety and security improvements. Establishment of a Park Improvement/Development, Maintenance and Repair Millage will assure that parks and facilities will be maintained at the level of quality expected by park users and that new parkland will have adequate amenities.

Appendix