Muskegon Parks & Recreation Master Plan 2016

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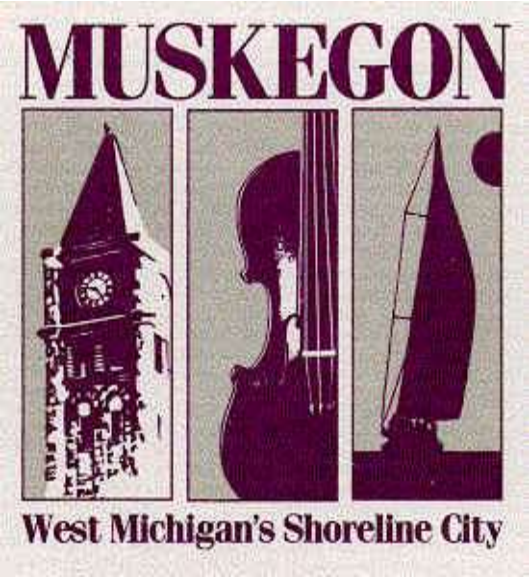


Table of Contents

Table of Contents will be corrected once all changes are completed.

History of Muskegon 6

Community Description

- Location 9
- Physical Characteristics 9
- Transportation 9
- Topography 9
- Water, Fish, and Wildlife 9
- Soils and Vegetation 10
- Climate. 10
- Environmental Issues. 10
- Zoning 10
- Population. 10
- Conclusions 12
- Neighborhood Map. 13
- Individual Neighborhood Maps. 14
- Zoning Map. 29
- Population of the City of Muskegon Table. 31
- Population Distribution by Age. 31
- Population by Gender Table 32
- Population by Race Table 32
- Population Distribution Income Level Table 33
- Number of Households Table 34
- Household Size Table 34
- City Census Tracts Map 35

Governmental Organization

- Organizational Chart 37
- City Government 38
- The City Commission's Role 38
  38
- Department Divisions 39
  - Parks Department 39
    39
  - Marina Department 40
  - L.C. Walker Arena 40
  - Farmers Market/Flea Market 40
  - The Cemetery/Forestry Department 40
- Department Financing 40
  - Budget Process 40

General Funding 40
User Fees 41
Gifts, Donations, Trusts. 41
State and Federal Funding 43
CDBG 45
Volunteers 45
General Maintenance and Capital Improvement 45
Contractual Services 45
Land Acquisition 46
Governmental Cooperation 46
Regional Level 46
State and Federal Level 47
Relationships with Agencies 47
Parks and Recreation Policies and Procedures 47
Conclusion 47

Service Issues

Introduction. 49
Programs-Past and Present 49
Program Coordination 52
Intergovernmental Cooperation 52
Private and Semi-Private Sector Cooperation 52
Recreation Programs outside of the City 53
Conclusions 53

Physical Issues

City Parks & Recreational Facilities 55
Definitions 55
Parks & Recreation Facilities Map 56
Public Facilities & Recreational Uses 57
Tot Lots 60
Playgrounds. 61
Neighborhood Parks. 61
Playfields 63
Major Parks 66
Special Use Facilities 70
Open Space Parklands 74
School-Related Recreation Facilities (Muskegon School District). . . . 77
School-Related Recreation Facilities (Not part of Musk. School Dist.). 78
Other Facilities 78
Facilities Outside of the City 79
Barrier – Free Compliance 80
Derelict and Vacant Lands 80
Conclusions - Physical Issues 82

Citizen Participation

Planning Process Description 84
Recreation Survey 85
Completion of Master Plan 93

Action Plan

Introduction…….. ……. 95
Action Plan and Assessment…… ……. 96
Evaluation and Updating. 104
Capital Improvement Schedule 105
Accessibility Report……. 109

****Please note: Staff is still making some additional changes for some areas & a listing of all changes made will be kept track of (page, what was changed) in order to help this process.**

History of Muskegon

Steamship Charles W. Wadsley

HISTORY OF MUSKEGON

Incorporated in 1869, the City of Muskegon is an older, established metropolitan community located in Western Michigan on Lake Michigan. Like most cities, it has undergone several stages of evolution, two of which have had major impacts on both its physical and socio-economic character.

The first change occurred during the period 1890 through World War I, following the end of the booming lumber era. With the harvest of Michigan's prime timberlands, Muskegon's sawmills began closing in rapid succession. Between mid-1800 and 1900, the number of mills declined from a high of 47 to a mere handful. With no other economic base, the City faced a crisis.

During the next 20 to 30 years, Muskegon was transformed from a lumber town to a manufacturing/industrial center. The process was slow and a painful; however, it proved successful.

The strong industrial base established through the production of tanks, war equipment, and automobiles grew throughout the first half of the century, but by the early sixties this base, too, began to deteriorate. It was a phenomenon all too common to Michigan cities whose economy was tied so heavily to manufacturing.

The second change occurred in the mid-seventies. Auto-related activities continued to deteriorate and the City was forced to look for other ways to spur the economy. Existing manufacturing diversified and tourism became the focal point of future growth.

The City and surrounding governmental agencies began developing facilities and events targeting the market. The Muskegon Economic Growth Alliance (a regional agency that later became known as Muskegon Area First) teamed up with the Convention and Visitors' Bureau and soon Parties in the Park, Shoreline Spectacular, Summer Celebration, and several other festivals were born. As popularity grew, events such as, Unity Christian Music Festival, Michigan Irish Music Festival, Muskegon Bike Time, and Taste of Muskegon were created. In addition, the L.C. Walker Arena, home of the USHL Muskegon Lumberjacks hockey team, began hosting concerts, youth and adult hockey leagues, public skating, graduation ceremonies, circuses and more. The Winter Sports Complex at the Muskegon State Park, the Great Lakes Naval Memorial and Museum, the Port City Princess, the Milwaukee Clipper, the Navy Landing Craft (LST) and the Grand Trunk Launch Ramp all continue attracting tourists to the area.

In 1995, Muskegon county voters approved a $15,000,000 bond to renovate the L. C. Walker Arena and the Frauenthal Center for the Performing Arts. Renovations to both facilities have dramatically improved the quality of experience at each venue.

Private developments have also served to increase tourism in Muskegon. Great Lakes Marina, Torresen Marine, and the Muskegon Yacht Club have helped reestablish marine traffic to Muskegon Lake. As a component to the expansion of SPX Corporate Headquarters on the former Lake Property, a marina and restaurant were constructed. The property is now home to Terrace Point Marina and The Lake House Waterfront Grille. The revamping of Shoreline Inn & Suites rounds out the downtown waterfront revitalization.

The Muskegon Mall site which once sat in the center of downtown has also experienced growth by the construction of a modern Farmer's Market. The downtown area is home to several historic structures that have been expertly rehabilitated, providing a unique shopping and dining experience.

Two of these historic buildings – the Russell Block and Noble Building -- now house Muskegon's first craft beer microbreweries, and the relocated Freres Gas Station building became home to a local winery and art gallery. The Russell Block building is downtown's newest performance hall and rental space, "The Block", is the new home of the West Michigan Symphony. Adjacent to that is the beautifully-restored Century Club, boasting unique boutique-style shopping. The continued expansion of Michigan's Adventure Amusement Park; now a part of Cedar Fair theme parks, brings quality family entertainment to the area as well. All of these developments have contributed to the available tourist-related activities and services available in the Muskegon area.

The Muskegon County Convention and Visitors' Bureau has become an integral part of the overall economic development focus for the county and the CVB has taken an assertive role in attracting tourists and conventions to Muskegon. It is comprised of four basic components:

1) General Tourism;

2) Visitors Center Operation;

3) Group Tour Development; and

4) Meeting and Convention Development.

In 2008, the City established a committee to streamline the event approval process in order to provide residents with events to attend and participate in, as well as draw visitors to the area. With the facilities and activities already in place, Muskegon's many natural resources, the City's Events Committee, and the County Convention and Visitors Bureau, the future of tourism in Muskegon continues to hold promise.

Over the last several years, Muskegon's manufacturing employment has remained stable, despite a difficult economy. The Economic Development staff regularly meets with industry and business owners through its Partnership Initiative. The City works with the private sector to address concerns, and assists with business retention and expansion. The City partners with organizations such as Muskegon Area First (the County-wide economic development organization), the Muskegon Area Chamber of Commerce, the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission, the Community Foundation for Muskegon County, the County of Muskegon, and various State departments in an effort to provide the best possible opportunities for business and industry.

In cooperation, a unified vision has been deployed, moving forward together for the future of Muskegon.

Location
Physical Characteristics
Our Community
Topography & Water Resources
Transportation
Population

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Location

Bound on the west by Lake Michigan, the north by Muskegon Lake, and the east by wetlands of the Muskegon River, Muskegon is located among some of the finest fishing and water sports areas in Michigan.

Muskegon is the county seat of Muskegon County. The downtown serves as an entertainment district for the area. Cultural venues include the Frauenthal Center for the Performing Arts, the L. C. Walker Arena, the Muskegon Museum of Art, the Lakeshore Museum Center, the Hackley-Hume Historic sites, and the newly renovated Russell Block building; home of the West Shore Symphony.

Physical Characteristics

The City of Muskegon is approximately 19.9 square miles. The developed portion encompasses nearly 63.78%, excluding bodies of water and roads. Road infrastructure comprises nearly 14.3%. Of the developed portion, residential use is at 17.2%, commercial use is at 9.25%, and industrial use is at 7.38%. The City owns 10.05% improved and unimproved land. The State owns 3.66% improved and unimproved land.

Transportation

With US-31 running north and south, and I-96 and M-46 heading east, Muskegon is easily accessible from every direction. The Muskegon Area Transit System (MATS) serves most of the county. The Muskegon Airport has daily flights to Detroit, Chicago, and Milwaukee. In 2004, Lake Express, a high-speed, cross-lake ferry service between Muskegon and Milwaukee was established. The ferry carries passengers and automobiles alike. Construction of the bike trail, otherwise known as the Muskegon Lakeshore Trail began in 1998. Funding for construction came from the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, and the sale of the former City-owned Chase Hammond Golf Course. The Lakeshore Trail provides users access to Lake Michigan, Muskegon Lake, sand dunes, parks, marshlands, and more with many different types of scenery along the way.

Topography

Muskegon is fortunate to have Lake Michigan and Muskegon Lake bordering the community. Muskegon River provides the primary source of water into Muskegon Lake. The barrier sand dunes are a prominent feature of the City, as most of the remainder of the City is relatively flat. The only other major elevation change occurs along the banks of Muskegon Lake and the various streams that flow into Muskegon Lake.

Water, Fish, and Wildlife

With Lake Michigan to the west and Muskegon Lake to the north, Muskegon has some of the finest water resources in Michigan. Fishing is at its finest in Michigan. Because the City is landlocked wildlife is limited; however, deer roam the sand dunes and it is not unusual to spot flocks of wild turkey and an occasional fox. The City recently completed the Lakeshore Trail bike path, which travels the entire length of the southern shoreline of Muskegon Lake. This

trail offers spectacular views and allows trail-goers to interact with nature. A priority of the City is to continually improve public access, while incorporating additional fishing opportunities along the route.

Soils and Vegetation

Because of the dunes along Lake Michigan, Muskegon's soil is primarily sand, with a strip of clay running through the middle of the City. Much of the area along Muskegon Lake is a mixture of fill material from extinct foundries and sawdust remnants from the bygone lumber era. The City is heavily wooded and has been designated a *U.S.A. Tree City* by the national Arbor Day Foundation. Since the majority of the City is mature, natural areas exist along Ruddiman and Ryerson Creeks, and in a myriad of parks including the dune parks along Lake Michigan.

Climate

The City of Muskegon has an average annual rainfall of 33.5 inches per year, and an annual average snowfall of 93 inches. The mean temperature in July is 80° and 35° in January. Effects of Lake Michigan cause Muskegon to be one of the cloudiest areas in the United States.

Environmental Issues

Historically, many foundries and manufacturing plants dotted the shoreline and other locations throughout the City. Unfortunately, a legacy of environmental problems was left in their wake. Over the past several years, the City has worked diligently to repurpose or remove the buildings and contamination. The City has partnered with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and private developer/owners to have the properties environmentally remediated. In addition, an Area-Wide site assessment was completed through a MDEQ Site Assessment Grant. The assessment serves to assist in the preservation and redevelopment of the shoreline. The process is ongoing.

Zoning

The City has 18 different zoning districts. In addition, Muskegon has a Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals to regulate zoning throughout the community. The current Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 1987. A new Form Base Code was approved for the downtown lakefront area in 2015 and has been incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance.

Population

The characteristics of population are important in determining residential needs in planning for programs and facilities. As indicated in Table II, Muskegon experienced a steady decline in population from 1950 to 2010. After leveling off, it appears to have declined again since the turn of the century.

TABLE II
1950-2010 Population

1950	48,429
1960	46,485
1970	44,631
1980	40,823
1990	40,283
2000	40,105
2010	38,401

Source: West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission, March 2002. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010 Census of Population and Housing

Much of the decline and stagnation of growth can be attributed to urban sprawl, as City residents moved to the suburbs of Norton Shores, Roosevelt Park, North Muskegon, and surrounding townships. Fortunately, interest in housing downtown has resumed, with several housing developments in stages of planning and construction.

The Population percentage distribution by age group for 2010 is displayed in Table III. In general, the City of Muskegon had a younger population, with about 70% of all residents under the age of 44.

TABLE III
2010 Population Distribution by Age
City of Muskegon

0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-59	60-64	65-74	75-84	85+
2,710	2,433	2,343	2,841	3,312	6,038	5,019	5,241	2,263	1,765	2,032	1,473	931

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010 Census Summary

The percentage of women in Muskegon (47.9%) is slightly lower than men (52.1%), with a median age of 34.1 years. Racially, 21,906 or 57% of the City's residents are white, and 13,241; or about 34.5% of the residents are black with 3,254 people of various other backgrounds including 0.9% Native American, 0.4% Asian, 2.6% from other races, and 4.5% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race comprised 8.2% of the population.

Over the past ten years, the median age has increased approximately three years, but the population of women has gone down slightly from just over 50% in 1990. There has been a significant increase in minority population, with the number of white residents falling by nearly 4,000 and the black population increasing almost 4%.

As new census information becomes available, population characteristics need to be reviewed in planning future recreation priorities. The current information is based on the 2010 census information. The under 44 population of the 1980's can be seen by the increase in adult sports programs during that time. This type of program should begin to fall off, but in ten or so years these same people will need senior programs.

Housing: There are a total of 15,999 housing units within the city. Of those, 14,569 are occupied -- 8,284 are owner-occupied and the remaining are rental units. The average household is 2.42 people. Of the 8,535 family households, 4,836 are married families and 2,941 have a female as head of the household. There are 6,034 non-family households. While the central city tends to have most of the rental units, the various types of housing are spread out throughout the community.

Senior high-rise units are located predominantly in the central city. Minority populations also tend to be centralized on the east side of the community. There is no specific area where there are people with special needs.

Employment: The jobless rate in the City of Muskegon has fluctuated over the years. Based on figures from Michigan Works! the unemployment rates have been:

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
9%	8.9%	9.3%	11.1%	18.5%	17.3%	13.2%	11.4%	11.7%

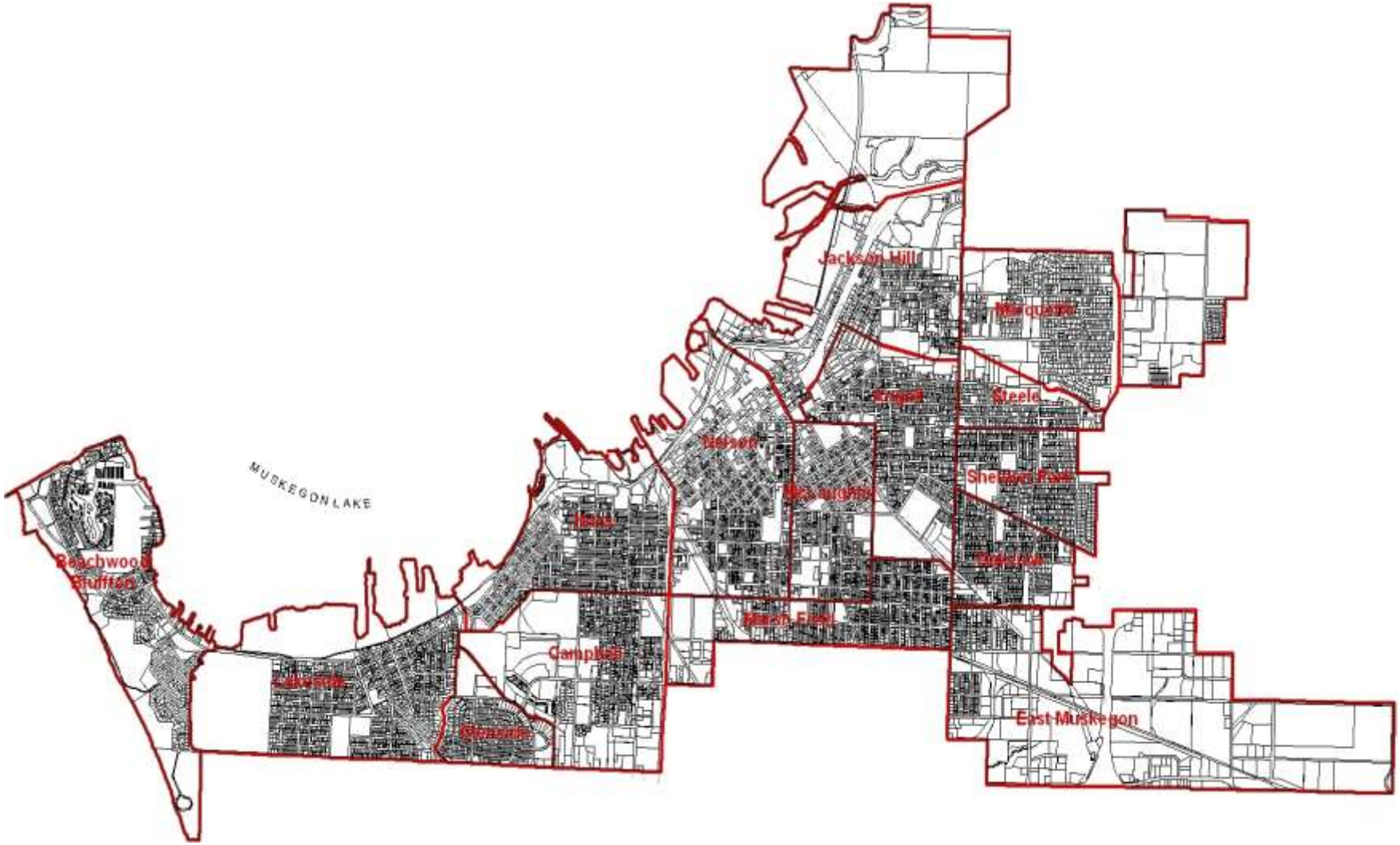
Parks: City parks are open from 5:00 a.m. until 11:00 p.m., and are accessible to residents and non-residents alike. In addition to residents of the City, Muskegon facilities also serve approximately 75,000 residents within the metropolitan area, and thousands more from all over West Michigan. For example, over 50% of participants in the adult programs are non-City residents and almost 75% of the people using facilities such as Pere Marquette Park come from outside the City. Neighborhood parks and the Community Center at Smith-Ryerson are used almost exclusively by City residents, however. Muskegon's "dog beach" on the southern end of the Lake Michigan beach just north of Kruse Park has proven to be a popular attraction for dog lovers. Many out-of-town visitors to Muskegon enjoy this beach with their four-legged friends. The disc golf course at McGraft Park is also a popular destination drawing visitors.

Conclusions

The City of Muskegon has a diverse population. Programs and facilities need to be implemented and updated to meet their needs.

Since Muskegon is an urban city, it is critical that public lands be available to the extent possible. Vacant lands should be evaluated to determine if there is a good use for recreational purposes; whether passive or active.

With the abundance of natural resources in Muskegon and a transportation network that includes bike trails, roads for automobile and bus travel, and a regional airport, a concerted effort to enhance and attract tourism should remain a top priority. Improved marketing strategies will help increase the public's awareness of what a great place Muskegon is to live, work, play, and visit.



Neighborhood Boundaries

Angell Neighborhood

Beachwood/Bluffton Neighborhood

Campbell Field Neighborhood

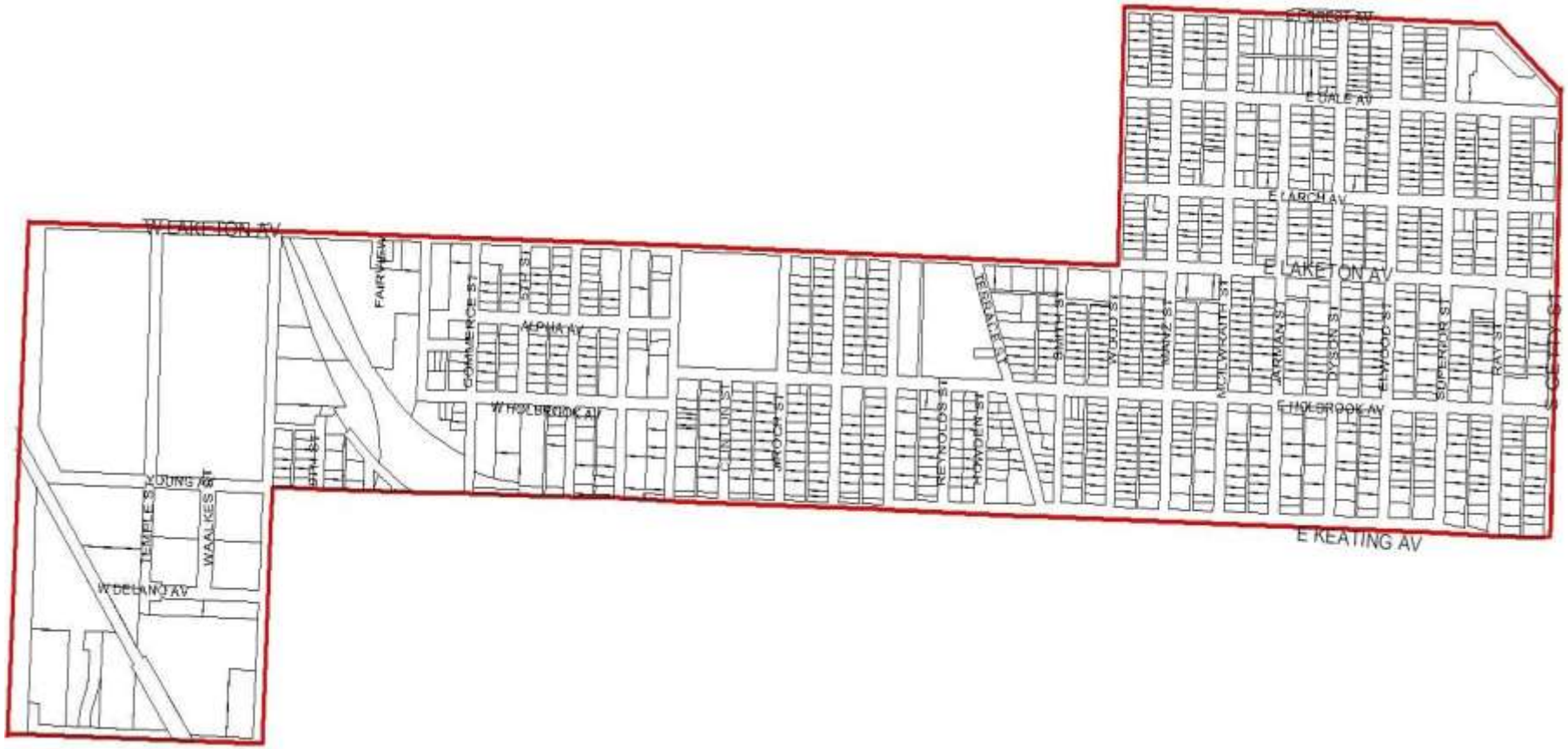
East Muskegon Neighborhood

Glenside Neighborhood

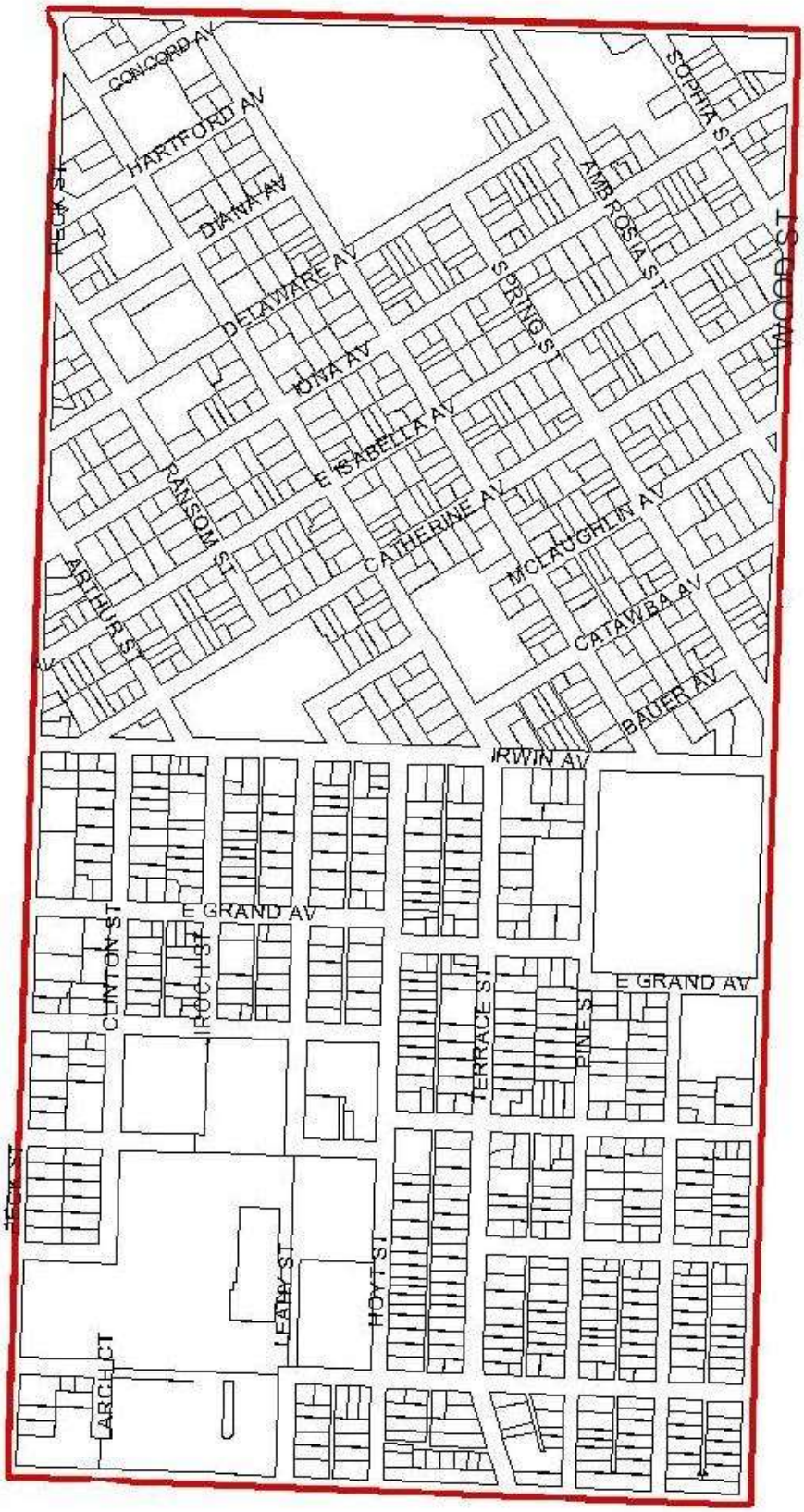
Jackson Hill Neighborhood

Lakeside Neighborhood

Marquette Neighborhood



Marsh Field Neighborhood



McLaughlin Neighborhood

Nelson Neighborhood

Nims Neighborhood

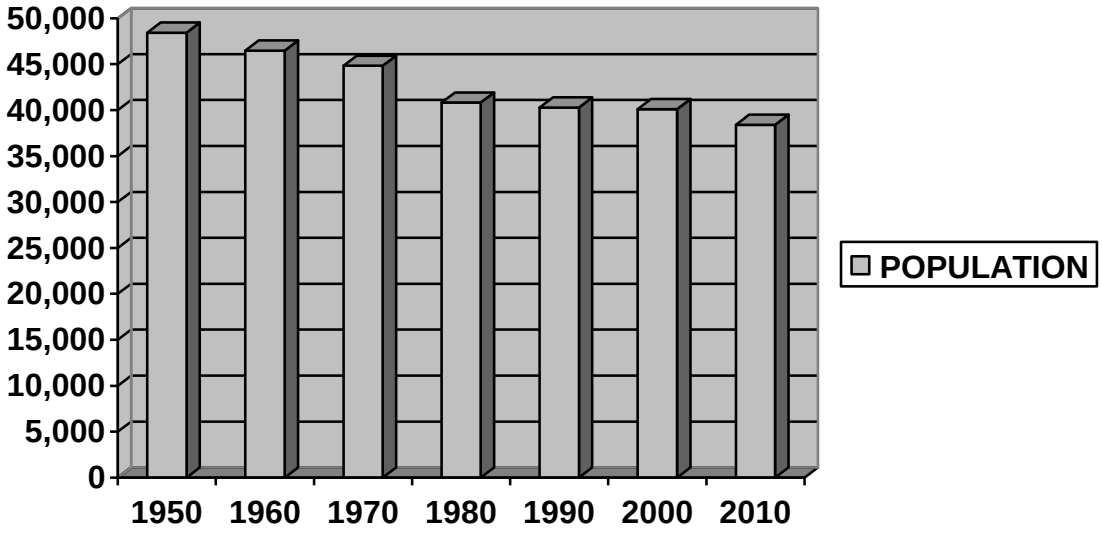
Oakview Neighborhood

Sheldon Park Neighborhood

Steele Neighborhood

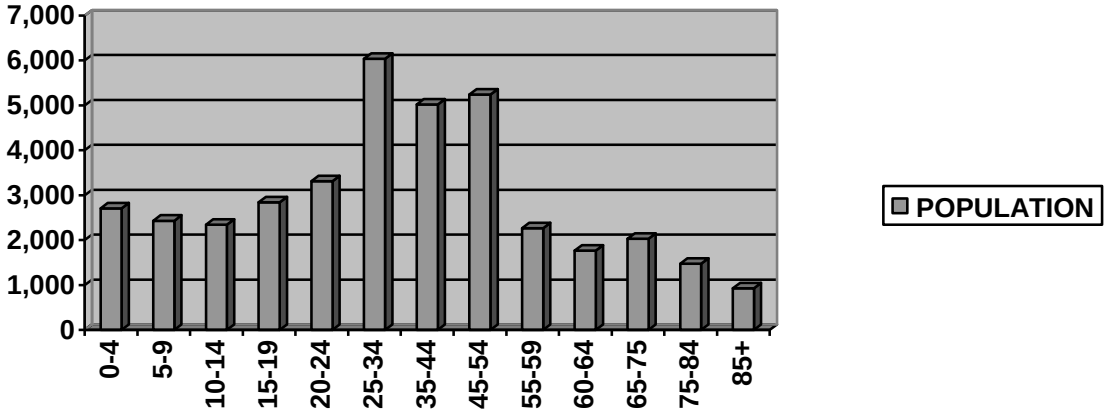
Zoning Map
To be inserted separately in
the final product.

TABLE I
POPULATION OF THE CITY OF MUSKEGON



SOURCE: West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission
U.S. Bureau of Census, 2010 Census of Population and Housing

TABLE II
POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY AGE



SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2010 Census of Population and Housing

TABLE III
POPULATION BY GENDER

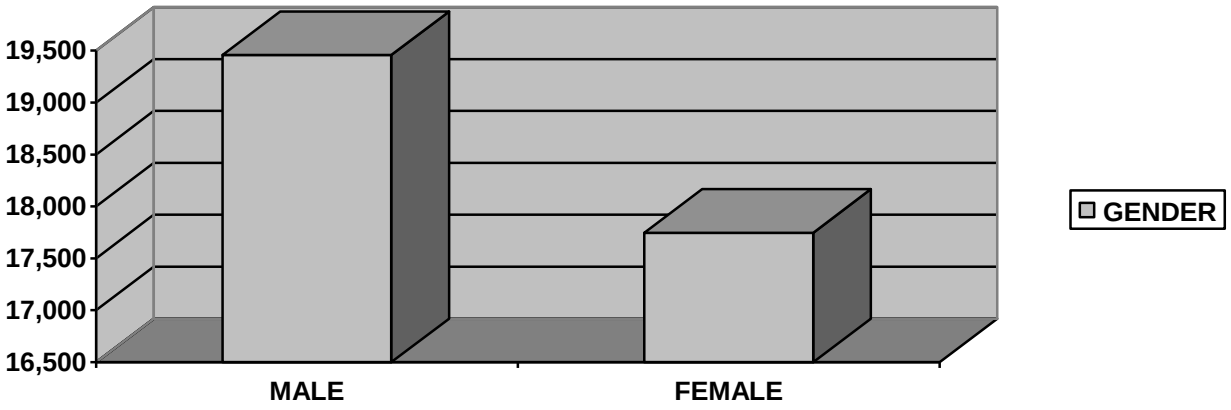


TABLE IV
POPULATION BY RACE

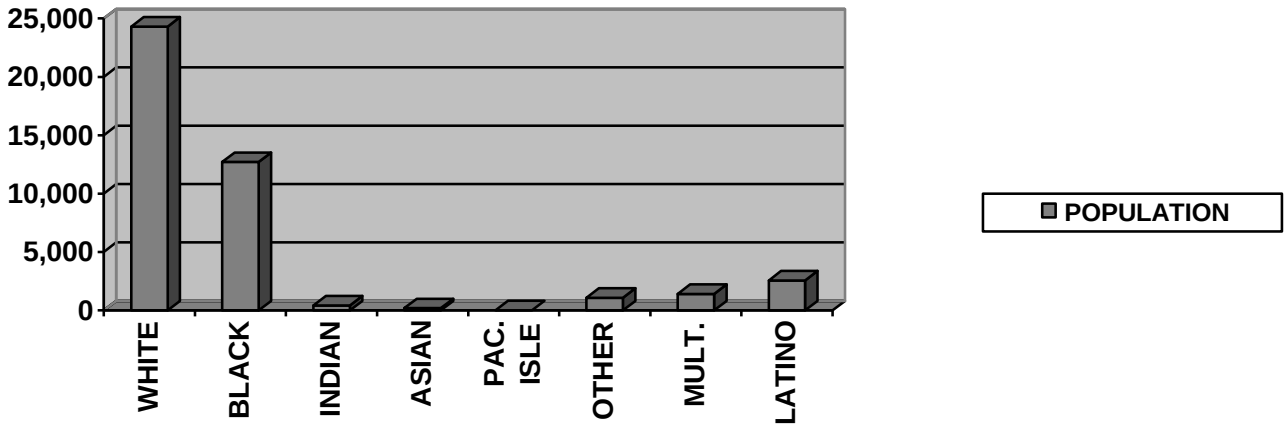


TABLE V
POPULATION DISTRIBUTION
INCOME LEVEL

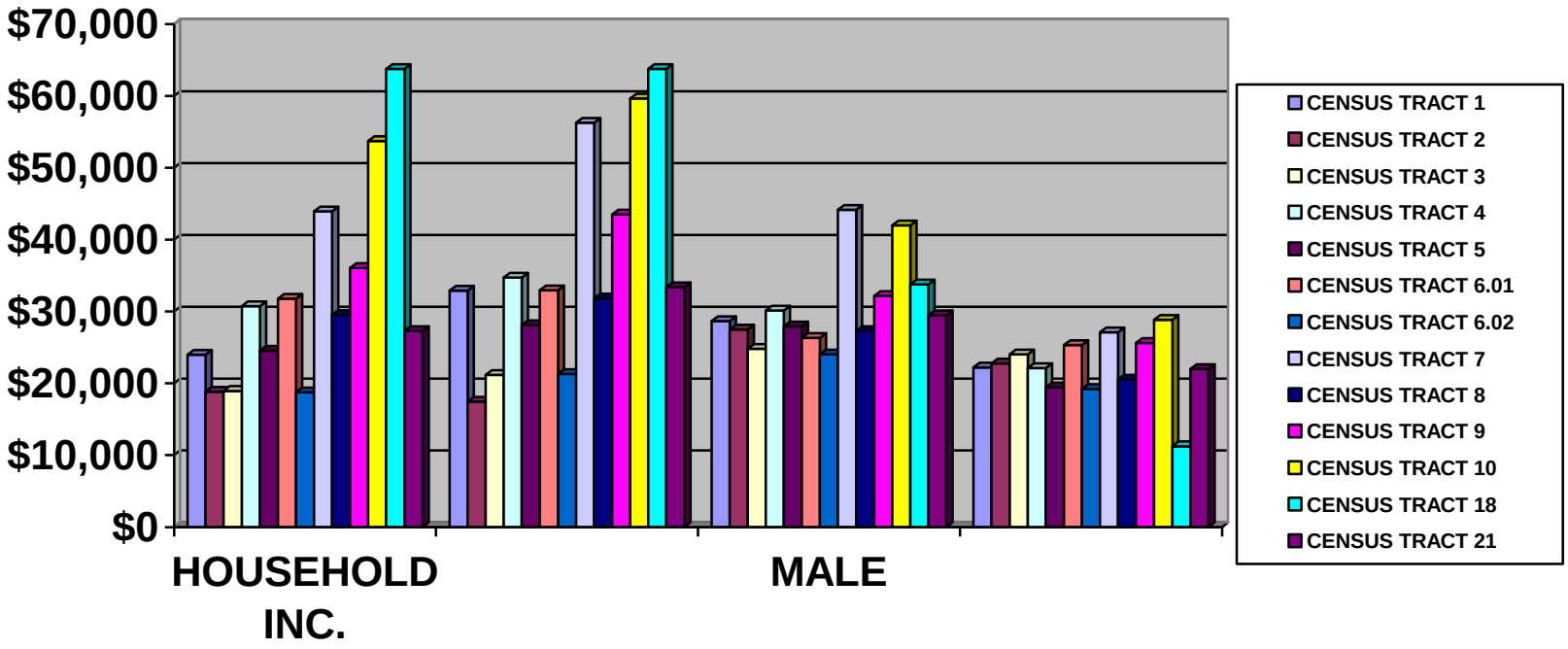


TABLE VI
NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS

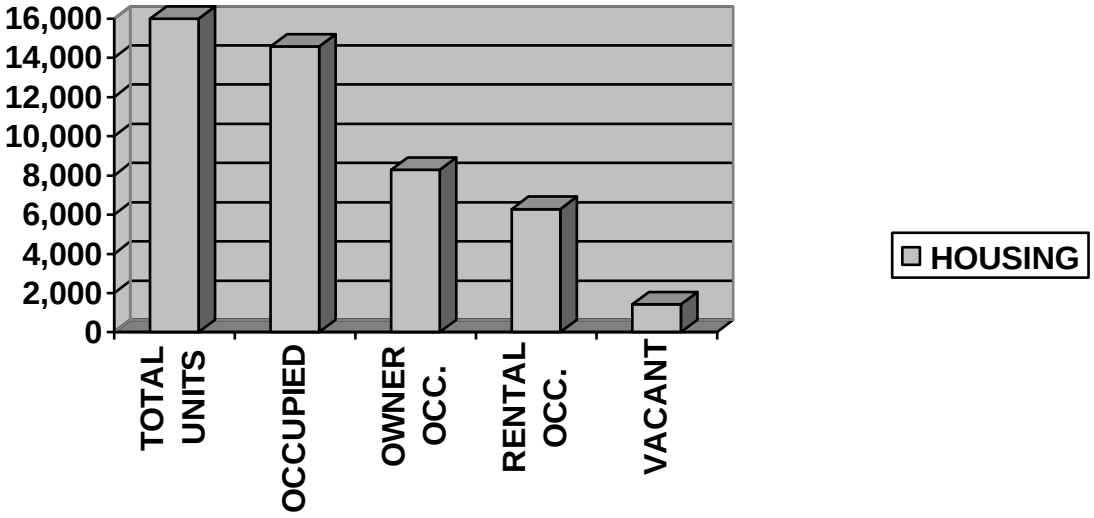
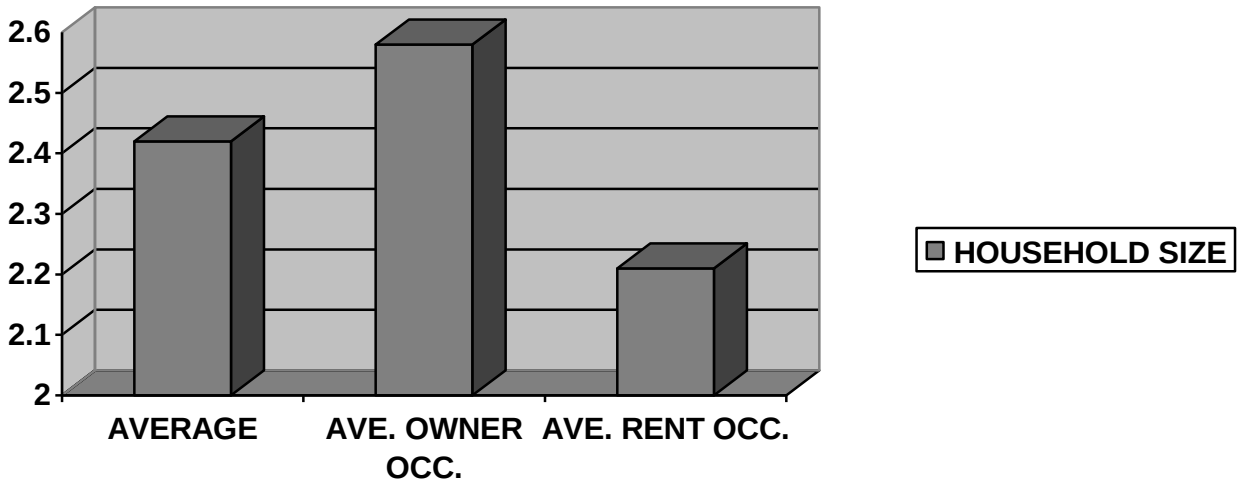


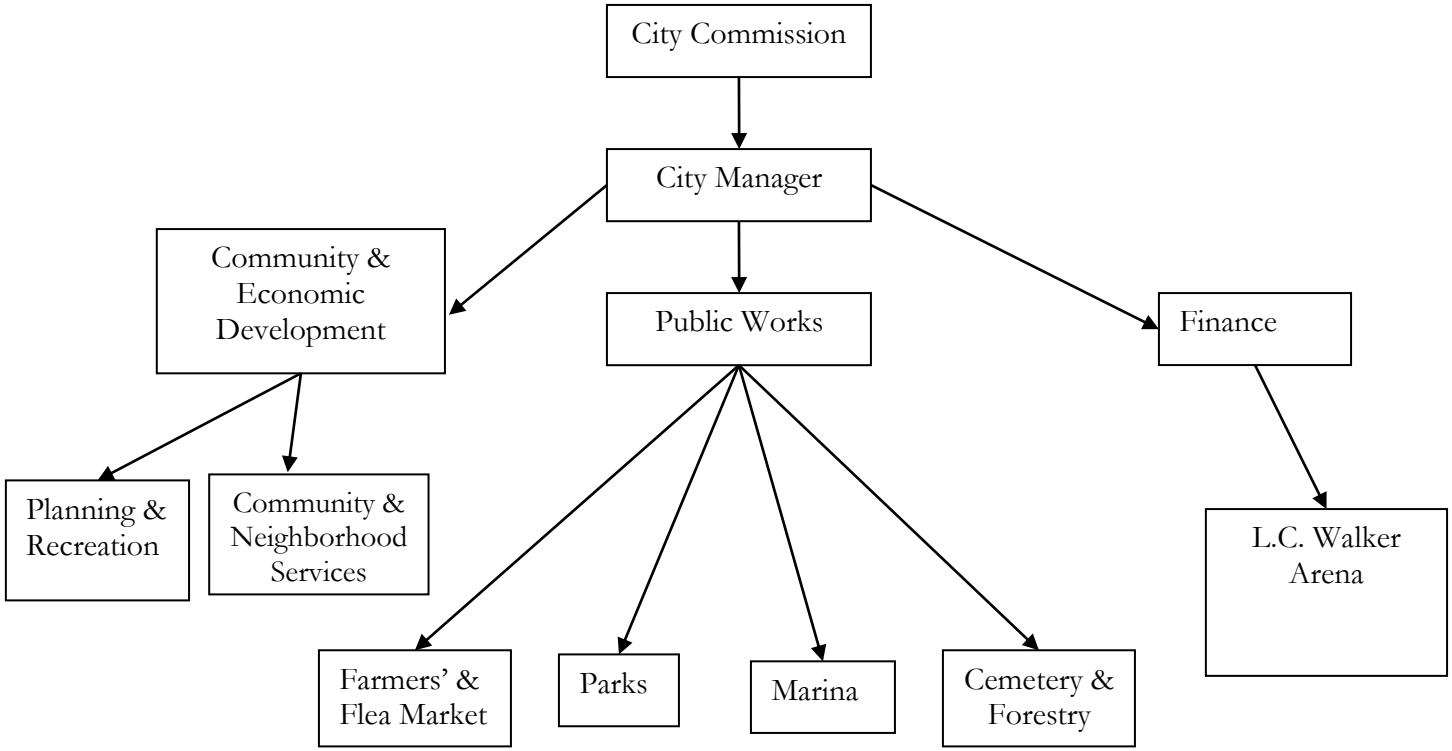
TABLE VII
HOUSEHOLD SIZE



Government

Organization

Organizational Chart



GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

City Government

Muskegon has had a Commission-Manager form of government since 1919. The seven Commissioners are elected by the citizens and act as the legislative body for the City. Two Commissioners are elected at large and one Commissioner is elected from each of the four wards. The Mayor is also elected at-large and is the presiding officer and chairperson of the Commission.

A City Manager is appointed by the Commission and serves as Chief Administrator of most City departments. The City Commission also appoints the Finance Director, City Clerk, City Treasurer, and the City Attorney. The Directors of Public Safety, Public Works, and Community & Economic Development are hired by the City Manager. The City has a contract with Muskegon County Equalization for Assessing needs, and as of 2013, it contracts with a private company, SafeBuilt of West Michigan, for Building Inspections, Environmental Code Enforcement and Rental Housing Inspections.

The City Commission's Role

The Muskegon City Commission established the Department of Recreation and Parks on October 25, 1949. The ordinance provided for the creation of a department and staff to be administered by a Director. It also established a Board of Recreation and Parks (later changed to the Leisure Services Board, or LSB), which determined policy and procedures for the operation and maintenance of the Park system. The Leisure Services Department and the Leisure Services Board were disbanded in 2010 due to budget constraints.

Department Divisions

Due to the dissolution of Leisure Services, its duties have been divided among existing City divisions for administrative purposes as outlined below.

1. Parks Department – This department is administered by the Public Works Division and is responsible for the general maintenance and operation of all City-owned parks and recreational facilities, as well as the McGraft Park Trust Fund Budget. Also included within the Department's responsibilities are the grounds of City buildings, other non-recreational properties and the graffiti program. The Park Supervisor serves as head of the department. There is one Leisure Service Maintenance I employee, four, Leisure Service Maintenance II's, and a part time Customer Service Representative II. Approximately 20 seasonal employees are hired during the summer months each year.

2. Marina Department – Administered by the Department of Public Works this department is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the City-owned Hartshorn Marina, four boat launch ramps, moorings, and summer dry storage areas at Pere Marquette Park and Harbour Towne Beach. Staff includes one part time Assistant Harbour Master, and eight seasonal staff hired to provide on-site supervision during the boating season.

3. L.C. Walker Arena – The L.C. Walker Arena is owned and operated by the City of Muskegon.

Until 1987, the City was directly responsible for the day-to-day management of the Arena. In the fall of 1987, a management agreement was signed with Civic Arena Management Corporation for the management of the Arena. In 1996, the City entered into an agreement with Arena Management Group (AMG). In 2008, AMG was bought by the new owners of the Muskegon Lumberjacks hockey team for the management of the Arena. In 2011, the City entered into a new agreement with Logger Hockey, LLC for the operations, management, and promotion of the L. C. Walker Arena and Conference Center. More recently, the City has taken over management of the arena; leasing space for the hockey team and other activities.

4. Farmers Market/Flea Market – The markets are administered by the Department of Public Works. The Market Master, a seasonal employee of the City, manages the Farmers' Market and Flea Market. The Farmers' Market is open on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from May to November and on Saturdays only during December. The Flea Market is open on Wednesdays from May to October.

   In of May 2014, the Farmers' Market was relocated to a new facility located in downtown Muskegon.

5. The Cemetery/Forestry Department - This Department is administered by the Department of Public Works. The Cemetery/Forestry Supervisor leads the department. The City of Muskegon maintains and operates four cemeteries and a mausoleum. As a general fund-supported department, the City Commission directs the overall policies and procedures. The Cemetery/Forestry Supervisor is responsible for the maintenance of all buildings and equipment. About 300 interments are done annually. The total income to the City from the cemetery operations produces approximately 40% of the annual expenditures. Staff includes two, Leisure Services Maintenance III, one, Leisure Services Maintenance II, one Secretary, plus twelve to fifteen seasonal staff. Staff also maintains all trees within the City's rights-of-way and on public properties.

6. Special Events & Film/Music Events - The City Commission assigned the Planning Department authority to approve Special Event Permits throughout the City. A "Special Event" refers to any public event using City property or requiring City services. Annually, the City approves over 50 special event applications from Easter egg hunts, to road races, to Muskegon's Rebel Road; a four-day motorcycle-themed festival drawing thousands of people to Muskegon each year. Muskegon encourages film production in the City, and coordination of film and music events has been added to the responsibilities of the Planning Department as well.

Department Financing

Budget Process

The annual City budget calendar year is formulated on the basis of balancing known and anticipated revenues against anticipated expenses for each of the various City departments. Annually, the City Manager prepares a budget that is reviewed by the various department heads. A final budget is submitted to the City Commission for its consideration and approval as mandated by the Charter.

Parks and Recreation relies on six basic sources of funding:

1. General Fund

   A. The Parks Department, which includes parks maintenance, marina, and forestry, receives direct tax-supported funding for the purpose of administration and maintenance of 600+ acres of parklands. The funding supports staff and seasonal employees. All equipment and material expenses are incorporated into the General Fund Budget. The 2014-2015 budget was $1,175,406.

   B. The Cemetery Department is partially funded by the General Fund. The funding supports staff and seasonal employees. There was $368,180 in expenditures for 2014-2015; with $150,000 in revenue from various fees and charges.

   C. General Recreation, which is primarily the administration of grants to community agencies and organizations who provide recreation programming, had a budget of $100,500 in 2014-2015.

   D. Farmers Market/Flea Market - While a general fund operation, revenues from the Farmers Market and Flea Market generate revenues in excess of expenditures. The budget for 2014-2015 was $158,500, with $75,000 in revenues.

2. User Fees

   A. Marina Division - Hartshorn Marina and the other water-related facilities are financially self-supporting through the collection of fees for annual and transient use of boat slips, moorings, and launch ramps; dry storage of small sailboats at Pere Marquette Park and Harbour Towne Beach, and miscellaneous sales. The monies collected maintain City-owned facilities and support the necessary staffing including a part-time Harbour Master and eight seasonal employees (seasonal maintenance workers and Marina Aides), as well as the Recreation Supervisor, a portion of two secretaries and the Division Head. Fees and sales in 2014-2015 were $204,800.

   B. L.C. Walker Arena's management agreement with Logger Hockey, LLC is funded through the general fund. The 2014 budget amount was $235,000. The County funded the 1996 improvements via voter-approved "quality of life" bonds.

C. Additional revenues were generated by picnic shelter rentals, beach rentals, and McGraft Park rentals in the amount of $81,895 for 2014-2015.

3. Gifts, Donations, Trusts - This method of funding assists in financing annual maintenance programs for particular parks or facilities and various capital improvement projects. Trust funds are established to maintain and improve specific parks. Currently McGraft Park has a trust fund. Reese and Hackley Parks have been moved to the City's general fund, so they no longer need to transfer funds from the Trusts.

   A. Established by Edith Wickham McGraft in the mid-sixties, the McGraft Trust fluctuates yearly depending on prevailing interest rates. It is billed annually by the Parks Department for maintenance costs and capital improvements. Any surpluses are reinvested and utilized in future years. The only stipulation on this trust is that the facility continues to be named McGraft Park.

   B. In the age of shrinking budgets, private and corporate gifts provide major sources of funding for capital improvement projects. The Community Foundation for Muskegon County has provided many grants for special projects within City facilities. The Community Foundation provides annual money from the Seyferth Fund to provide a playground program at Seyferth Park. In the past several years, the Community Foundation has provided $79,675 for the Seyferth Park. The money went towards a hockey rink, the summer program, and equipment for the park. Contributions from the Community Foundation prior to 2003 include: $20,000 to build a skate park at Seyferth Park, $50,000 for a new playground at Seyferth, $10,000 annually towards the Summer Parks Program for Youth, $10,000 to build a community garden at Monet Park in downtown Muskegon, $10,000 to build an accessible walkway on Pere Marquette Beach, and $5,000 to help renovate a historic fountain at Kearney Park. In addition to these contributions, the Veterans Memorial Park Committee in Muskegon has raised funds to pave a walkway around Veteran's Park. They also oversee the park financially.

   C. Many City parks have been "adopted" and are now being maintained by private businesses, organizations and individuals through the "Adopt-a-Park" program. Such gifts will become more critical as funding resources diminish.

   D. In 1996, volunteers constructed a tot lot at the corner of Muskegon Avenue and Seventh Street. Through the annual United Way Day-of-Caring, five facilities have received major renovations. In 1999, over 400 volunteers painted and replaced fence, installed a playground structure, and made other improvements to Marsh Field. In 2001, Reese Field had over 300 volunteers performing similar work. The Day of Caring Park was also built. The United Way Day of Caring in 2008 included tree trimming, landscaping, invasive species removal and installation of bark around the trees at Veteran's Park. The sidewalks were edged and the adjoining veterans' nameplates were cleaned. In addition, improvements to Smith-Ryerson Park during the 2008 Day of Caring included painting and other improvements to the park's recreation center.

E. In 1986, a Parks Fund was created under the umbrella of the Muskegon County Community Foundation. To date, little activity has occurred with the fund. The intent of the fund was to provide a mechanism to attract corporate or individual donors who would be more willing to give to an established foundation rather than to a municipality.

4. State and Federal Funding – The City has been fortunate to receive grants that have helped build or rebuild many of the park facilities over the years. The following are the most recent of those grants.

   A. In 2007, the City was approved for a $433,400 Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) grant for Smith-Ryerson Park. These funds provided an accessible restroom/concession stand, irrigation, reconstruction of basketball courts, removal of one baseball field, construction of a pier and trail along the creek, striping of the parking lots, a picnic shelter with picnic tables and grills, as well as bleachers.

   B. In 2004, the City received a $500,000 MNRTF grant for the Muskegon Lakeshore Trail. These funds went toward site preparation, an asphalt pathway, a bridge, and a boardwalk, a rest area for viewing, rip-rap shoreline protection, a shade structure, fencing, site amenities, bollards, signage, and landscaping.

   C. In 2001, the City received a $400,000 Clean Michigan Initiative (CMI) grant to rehabilitate Beachwood Park and build an alternate route for the Lakeshore Trail.

   D. In 2001, the City received a $220,000 Waterways grant to rebuild the electrical system at Hartshorn Marina.

   E. In 2000, the City received a $200,000 state grant to dredge Hartshorn Marina.

   F. In 2000, the City received a grant for $319,000 through the federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21) to build Phase II of the Laketon Avenue corridor of the Lakeshore Trail bike path.

   G. In 2000, the City received a $60,000 Coastal Zone Management (CZM) grant to design phase I of the Lakeshore Trail bike path.

   H. In 2000, the City received a $295,000 CMI grant for the Beachwood Park Development. This paid for paving of the parking lot, playground equipment, irrigation system, restroom, shelter, site amenities, grading for an ice rink, seeding for landscaping, and a 10-foot wide, 0.5-mile long Lakeshore Trail linkage.

   I. In 1999, the City received a $295,000 CMI grant for Campbell Field redevelopment. Funds provided parking improvements, irrigation, a restroom/shelter, park amenities, ball field realignment – infields, 3500 feet of fencing, with landscaping (seeding, sod, grading, and sidewalks).

   J. In 1999, the City received a $140,000 Waterways grant to rebuild launch ramps.

K. In 1999, the City received a $300,000 TEA 21 grant to construct Phase IV of the Lakeshore Trail bike path.

L. In 1998, the City received a $600,000 TEA 21 grant to construct Phase III of the Lakeshore Trail bike path.

M. In 1998, the City received a $70,000 CZM grant to construct boardwalks in the dunes at Kruse Park.

N. In 1995, the City received a $240,000 Bond Fund grant for Seyferth Park development. Funding was used for a restroom facility, picnic shelter, playground equipment, parking lots, bikeway/walkway/trail, ball diamond infields, irrigation, park amenities, and landscaping.

O. In 1993, the City received a $375,000 MNRTF grant for Lakeshore Trail Phase I. This was for the asphalt trail and pavement, intersection modification, fencing, boardwalk, dune steps, landscaping, site amenities, lighting, and a crosswalk signal.

P. In 1991, the City received a $270,000 Bond Fund grant for Smith-Ryerson gymnasium. This was for the construction of a gymnasium.

Q. In 1990, the City received a $375,000 MNRTF grant for Bronson Park development (now Kruse Park). This was for site preparation, parking areas with paving, playground equipment, a restroom building, picnic shelters, landscaping with seeding, lighting, dune walkways, and fencing.

R. In 1989, the City received a $375,000 Bond Fund grant for Pere Marquette Park redevelopment. This was for site preparation, parking areas, playground equipment, restroom/storage building, two picnic shelters, a fishing pier, irrigation, landscaping/seeding, lighting, and walkway/bikeways.

S. In 1984, the City received a $101,874.34 Land and Water Conservation Fund grant for Hartshorn Marina.

T. In 1983, the City received a $53,200 Land and Water Conservation Fund grant for Pere Marquette Park development. This was for construction of a beach house with restrooms, lifeguard stations, first aid, and storage.

U. In 1980, the City received a $55,311.66 Land and Water Conservation Fund grant for Reese Field. This was for lighting, development of softball field, parking lot, landscaping, fencing, and irrigation. Currently there are two softball fields; two were turned into soccer fields with lights as soccer's popularity increased.

V. In 1977, the City received an $84,609.56 Land and Water Conservation Fund grant for the Beukema Softball Complex. This was for lighting, bleachers, and scoreboards for the ball diamonds, fencing, irrigation and sodding for the ball diamonds, and a concession and storage building.

W. In 1976, the City received a $60,435.60 Land and Water Conservation Fund grant for Fisherman's World. This was for a bathhouse with utilities, parking, boardwalk and boat tie-up, landscaping, sprinkler system, and lighting.

X. In 1968, the City received a $114,250 Land and Water Conservation Fund grant for Lake Michigan Park.

Y. In 1967, the City received a $10,000 Land and Water Conservation Fund grant for Lakeshore Trail (6(f)-approved conversion). This was for the acquisition of 2+ acres of land for the construction of the trail.

5. CDBG – Community Development Block Grant Funds from HUD have funded central-city recreation programs since the early 1980's. In 2014-2015, $70,000 was budgeted into the recreation budget from CDBG. Further, CDBG has funded some capital projects such as the paving of the parking lot at Marsh Field.

6. Volunteers – The City uses volunteers for several recreation programs. Volunteers also maintain many of the small parks through the Adopt-a-Park program. The City works with Volunteer Muskegon, Muskegon Public Schools, the neighborhood associations, and others to help complete special projects. The United Way has provided hundreds of volunteers to renovate several parks over the years, and volunteers also serve on several City boards. The City also works with the hundreds of volunteers who put on the many festivals that occur within the City each year.

The availability of State and Federal funding for recreation programs and facility improvements will be less certain in the future as aid programs are reduced; or in some instances, eliminated. However, the City will continue to actively pursue all possible sources of State and Federal funding for park and recreation development and maintenance.

General Maintenance and Capital Improvement Scheduling

The operation, maintenance, and capital improvement budgets are established using a fiscal year of July 1 to June 30, and are approved by the City Commission annually.

Appropriations are based on past expenditures and projected needs. Recent appropriations have not kept up with current needs. Increased daily vandalism, break-ins, and littering have added to maintenance expenses. Capital improvements are generally programmed as part of a long-term schedule (5-10 years) contingent upon funding availability.

It is the Director of Community & Economic Development and the Director of Public Works' responsibility to carry out the policies and procedures within the limits of the established department and division budgets. Over the past several years, money has been allocated not only to match the many grants the City has received, but also for additional work. The Reese Playfield Building was demolished and rebuilt in the early 2000's. The Cemetery office received major renovations in 2001 and 2002.

Contractual Services

City Departments are using contractual services in some cases as an alternative to operating and maintaining facilities. The past agreement for the Walker Arena is an example of this philosophy. The City contracts for seasonal maintenance work on parks and cemeteries through a contract with a temporary employment agency approved by the City Commission.

In the future, the City will continue to look at contracting out both maintenance and personnel as a means of reducing operational costs and improving the quality of services.

Land Acquisition

Rather than purchase more parkland, the City Commission's current position is to maintain its current parkland. Since most of the major facilities were acquired either through donation or with grant monies, most park properties must be maintained as recreational parklands. In the past, the purchase of land for new park development was often supplemented by corporate and/or private contributions. The Progress and Development Fund (the forerunner of the Muskegon County Community Foundation) was extensively involved in the development of new parklands in Muskegon. Federal monies from the Land and Water Conservation Fund were used to purchase a portion of Kruse Park (formerly Bronson Park). The scarcity of undeveloped land suitable for park development within the City limits, and the cost of maintaining additional facilities within a restricted budget have also affected the purchase of land. Due to these factors, the City has concentrated its resources on maintaining and upgrading existing facilities.

One exception to this is the purchase of land for the Lakeshore Trail bike path. The City Commission had authorized staff to proceed with the conversion of the Chase Hammond Golf Course to property for the Lakeshore Trail. The golf course was not located in the City and served a very low percentage of City residents. The proceeds from the sale of the golf course enabled the City to complete the portion of the trail located along the shoreline. Additional property may be needed as sections of the trail are linked throughout the city to the State of Michigan Trail System and additional linkages to the lakeshore are desired.

Another recent partnership development is for a park in the Nims neighborhood. This is unique since a portion of the former school property was donated by Muskegon Public Schools to the City of Muskegon. The City then leases the property to the Nims Neighborhood Association to develop and maintain with the possibility of future expansion.

The City has explored the option of purchasing property from Consumer's Energy for the development of a sports complex on the Causeway. This is the last large piece of land available within the City for this type of facility. The intent for this property would be to have it be reasonably self-supporting through user fees and charges. There are no immediate plans to move forward on this project. However, a more recent possibility has arisen at the former Brunswick property on the NE corner of Laketon Avenue and Seaway Drive. There is interest from the current owner (Brunswick), as well as Muskegon Baseball, to develop this as a baseball/softball/soccer complex. The possibility exists to sell the property to the City or the County of Muskegon and proceed with the development.

The Parks department is primarily interested in land or facility donations to the City, and only if a trust fund can be established to ensure long-term maintenance of the site.

Governmental Cooperation

Regional Level

Regional planning for Muskegon, Oceana, and Ottawa counties is provided by the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC). The Commission produces studies and plans involving all facets of regional planning, including recreation. The City has cooperated with the Commission on regional recreation studies relative to facility usage and tourism.

Most recently this includes the Lake Michigan Water Trail Plan. The City intends to partner with WMSRDC to advance the establishment of the Lake Michigan Water Trail along Lake Michigan and Muskegon Lake boundaries.

While there are no formal working relationships among the various metropolitan communities in formulating common recreation programs and development plans, the City does coordinate many programs with the YFCA and the City of Muskegon Heights, with various area community education departments, as well as with various youth sports groups in the City. The County of Muskegon has one park (Heritage Landing) in the City limits. There is little conflict with the County except when events are being held at Heritage Landing which limit the use of the park**.** The bike trail was recently rerouted to the outside perimeter of the park so that it remains accessible to users during park events.

State and Federal Level

There is no direct coordination between the City and the State or Federal planning agencies for recreation and planning. The City cooperates with these agencies as issues of mutual concern arise. City of Muskegon staff who are members of the Michigan and National Recreation and Parks Associations help insure that the department is kept abreast of political developments affecting recreation and park programs, operations, and development. The Associations act as a voice for all recreation and park agencies to further their interests.

Relationships with other Agencies

The City of Muskegon works closely with various non-profit groups and agencies throughout the year. Through Volunteer Muskegon, murals have been painted throughout the community; including McGraft and Seyferth Park(s) completed in 2002, and at the Farmer's Market completed in 2001. Work with the United Way has been discussed, and the City works with each of the neighborhood associations for facility development, program/promotion and special events. The City has established a relationship with the organization "No More Sidelines", a non-profit entity to help children and young adults with special needs participate in sports and other social events hosted within public facilities. The City has also provided youth recreation grant funding to assist with softball and soccer programs. While the Parks Department does not have any formal partnership with private organizations, staff does attempt to accommodate individuals when asked to provide volunteer hours.

The City works with most of the major events in Muskegon including Parties in the Park, and Rebel Road, as well as many smaller events. The City has hosted many regional and/or national events such as the Bassmaster's Elite Series fishing tournament, Hot Rod

Power Tour car show, Catamaran Racing Association of Michigan regatta, and the Midwest Professional Volleyball Association beach volleyball tournaments.

Parks and Recreation Policies and Procedures

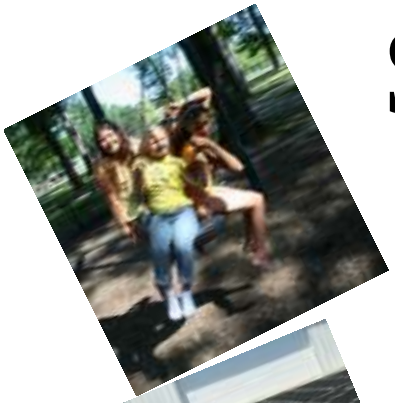
Over the years, various policies and procedures were implemented by the Leisure Services Department. In most cases, the policies were developed by staff and given to the Leisure Services board for recommendation to the City Commission. In the absence of a separate Leisure Services Department and Board, policies are now developed by staff with input from the City Manager and City Commission when necessary.

Many of the policies are overall City policies. For example, City facilities will be universally accessible, and the City will not discriminate for any reason covered under the law. The Muskegon County Human Resources Department now covers the City's personnel policies, and the Finance Department covers financial policies.

Conclusion

Considering staff limitations and a limited budget, City departments do their utmost to meet the City Commission Mission Statement of "Improving the quality of life for the citizens of Muskegon through good stewardship of resources, excellent service, and leadership for the greater community."

Service Issues



(Photos from the Youth Playground & Basketball Programs)

SERVICE ISSUES

Introduction

Within the City limits of Muskegon, the Parks and Recreation System has the responsibility of serving a potential user population of nearly 40,000 people. This figure grows considerably when the residents of the surrounding metropolitan cities and townships; who routinely make use of City facilities, are included. For all practical purposes, the system serves a potential user population in excess of 100,000 people. Even though the parks and accompanying services are not utilized by all the people within the Greater Muskegon area, the numbers are of such magnitude as to burden the resources of the City.

The following sections examine the programs offered by the City, and the coordination of these programs with other governmental units and the private sector. Deficiencies within existing programs and the lack of particular programs are discussed.

Programs - Past and Present

On January 1, 1981 the Recreation Department was eliminated from the General Operating Budget of the City. Consequently, some staffing positions were eliminated along with many programs they administered or supervised. Prior to its demise, the Department provided a variety of services. Full-time staff consisted of; Superintendent of Recreation, Senior Citizen Coordinator, and Community Center Director. Programs and facilities funded and operated by the City in 1980 included:

1. Seven (7) supervised outdoor ice rinks
2. Life guards at Pere Marquette Park
3. Winter grade school (4th through 6th) basketball program at elementary schools
4. Junior hockey program - monetary assistance
5. Easter egg hunt
6. Instructional tennis program - supplied facilities and instructors
7. Competitive swimming program
8. Instructional swimming program - at Junior High pools, City supplied instructors
9. Fall youth soccer program - facilities and instructors
10. Connie Mack baseball
11. Youth playground program
    a. Two playground leaders at each of ten parks.
    b. Activities - softball, volleyball, arts and crafts, in-county field trips
12. Senior Citizen Program
    a. Five (5) drop-in centers - McGraft Park, Hartford Terrace, Oakview, Nims and Bluffton Schools.
    b. Smith-Ryerson Community Center - provides organized activities under City supplied supervision.
    c. Other activities - arts and crafts, blood pressure clinics, banquets, and travel packages.
13. Community Center - full-time recreational offerings at Smith-Ryerson.

Since 1981, these programs have been eliminated, taken over by other agencies or groups, or financially restructured. Some of the programs have been re-established to some degree through community groups or through CDBG Funding.

Programs that were taken over completely by others are as follows:

1. Competitive Swimming – YFCA
2. Youth Soccer – YFCA and Muskegon Soccer Club
3. Junior Hockey Program - Norton Shores Recreation
4. Smith-Ryerson Community Center – Muskegon Recreation Center
5. Connie Mack Baseball - Area High Schools

Programs that were eliminated but have been reinstated through various means include:

1. Boys and Girls Grade-School Basketball – CDBG; funded and managed by Muskegon Public Schools
2. Easter Egg Hunt - Local real estate group and various neighborhood associations
3. Open Gym – CDBG; funded and managed by Muskegon Public Schools

Programs, which have been partially re-instituted include:

1. Outdoor Ice Rink – Beachwood/Bluffton Neighborhood Association built a new pickle-ball court/ice rink at Beachwood Park through City grant funds and fundraising.
2. Playground Program – five playgrounds have been opened through various funding sources including the General Recreation budget, McGraft Trust Fund, Thomas & Geraldine Seyferth Fund, and CDBG; managed by the YMCA.

The City indirectly supports several other recreation programs in conjunction with private or semi-private sponsors. The Muskegon Area Little League utilizes the ballfields at Reese, Sheldon, McCrea and Campbell, with both the City and the League sharing maintenance. Capital improvements to these facilities have been accomplished with Little League dollars. The West Michigan Youth Football League receives City support through the use of the Seyferth, McCrea, and Smith Ryerson football fields. There is a private soccer program (Muskegon Lakers) that uses Reese Field in the fall. The Playground Program includes a Drug Information Program in cooperation with the Muskegon Police Department. The L.C. Walker Arena hosts three youth hockey programs – the Junior Lumberjacks, the Norton Shores Recreational League, and the Reeths-Puffer Varsity Hockey Program.

The Muskegon Shuffleboard Club provides its members organized shuffleboard play on the City courts at McGraft Park. The City maintains the courts as part of its general maintenance program. The Club supervises the use of the courts and distribution of the equipment. While open to all age groups, the Club appeals primarily to the seniors for whom the sport is a major recreational outlet.

An evening youth/young adult recreation program is held during the summer months at the Muskegon Public High School. The YMCA manages the program and seeks grants for a portion of its operations. The City contributes funding as well. Two City police officers are present at the school during program hours.

For those who wish a more passive approach to recreation, the City supports a series of summer concerts at the McGraft Park Band Shell. This series is minimally funded through the McGraft Trust Fund, and allows access to its facilities during concert events.

The City has no specific program or activity to serve particular needs of people with disabilities; however, all facilities and programs are designed to allow access to people with disabilities. The development of such programs must be done carefully and in conjunction with the proper agencies. The West Michigan Center, the Muskegon Regional Center, the Wesley School programs, the Muskegon Community Health Organizations, Disability Connection, the Center for Independent Living, and various other agencies do an excellent job of servicing area accessibility needs.

The City offers small grants for recreational programming. This helps assist local agencies in expanding their programming efforts, and enables them to offer scholarships to those in need.

An evaluation of the accessibility of facilities within the City including recreation and parks facilities was inventoried in 2007 by Disability Connection; a Center for Independent Living, and in 2008 by the Department of Justice/Civil Rights Division from Washington D.C. The Department of Justice group was composed of nine people including an attorney and an architect. They divided the City into four sections and sent teams of people in each direction to assess City parks, polling places, marinas, facilities, and services for accessibility. The report was completed, reviewed through several levels of the department and returned to the City and an ADA transition plan was adopted. All buildings, playgrounds, and other facilities are brought into compliance as construction projects are done to specific parks. Some playgrounds are now barrier free. An accessible walkway was installed at Pere Marquette to provide access to the beach for people who have disabilities onto the beach, and other such improvements are done whenever possible. There is also an accessible lift to get wheelchair-bound people into their boats.

Similarly, the City offers no specific program geared to the special needs of minorities. However, the CDBG programs are operated within the target neighborhoods and are geared to the inner city population, which has a high percentage of minority and low-income residents. The small grants program offered by the City targets inner city youth as well.

The grade school basketball program has expanded dramatically to include nearly 500 youth in both the girls and boys programs. Five playgrounds are now operated during the summer months, managed by the YMCA. Additionally, many of the elementary schools offer after-school programs.

Program Coordination

Intergovernmental Cooperation

Due to the scope of its facilities and services, the City Park System creates an impact beyond its own municipal boundaries. Consequently, intergovernmental contact is to be expected and encouraged for the benefit of all.

The City of Muskegon works in cooperation with the Muskegon Public Schools for the reciprocal use of facilities. The schools own the primary indoor facilities (gyms and pools), and the City maintains the outdoor facilities (baseball fields, softball fields, and tennis courts). Although no written agreements exist, the Catholic and Christian Schools in Muskegon also cooperate and participate in the sharing of outdoor facilities with the Department.

The City has no formal working agreement with the County concerning program staffing and operation. However, when the need arises, both parties work cooperatively with one another to staff events. The County owns Heritage Landing, a major park within the City that is the home of many festivals. They also own Rotary Park which is adjacent to Heritage Landing and is slated to be developed in 2015-2016. The City and County work diligently to promote and use this facility.

Private and Semi-Private Sector Cooperation

The City cooperates with elements of the private sector in the operation of a number of recreational programs. The City and the YFCA have cooperated for years on summer soccer and competitive swim programs. They currently partner on the summer parks program and the evening recreation program. Inside-Out Volleyball runs leagues and tournaments at Pere Marquette Park each summer, and the Master Gardener's Group; affiliated with the Cooperative Extension Service, worked with the City to create Monet Gardens in downtown Muskegon. The local Veteran's group and the City have worked together to install a walking trail around Veteran's Park, and partner on the care and maintenance of the park.

Additional public/private cooperation has resulted in the private management of campsites and fish cleaning station. Many mini parks have been adopted by companies or individuals that tend to their maintenance. Agreements have also been established with different groups to create gardens on city-owned vacant lots. City staff worked with the McLaughlin Neighborhood Association to develop a park in their neighborhood. They are leasing a City-owned parcel of land at the corner of Terrace and East Isabella that once stood vacant. Future cooperation between the City and local historical groups is likely to continue as the historical and cultural heritage of the City is tapped into to increase an influx of tourism to the downtown.

New proposals for public/private ventures are received periodically. They are screened based on the service being provided and the compatibility with surrounding land and public uses. A diligent screening method must be maintained in order to safeguard the interests of the public.

Recreation Programs Outside of the City of Muskegon

Many of the area school districts have Community Education programs that serve a larger population. Reeths-Puffer offers an adult basketball league. Orchard View offers a senior program. Whitehall also offers an adult basketball program. All of these programs serve a population beyond the school district boundaries. Other programs are strictly reserved for district residents.

All youth sports programs are run by private groups including youth football, baseball, and soccer. Club teams can also be found throughout the county. A hockey program run by Norton Shores hosts youth leagues at their new ice facility on Airline Road called the Lakeshore Ice Center.

Conclusions

The City needs to seek additional partnerships to offer new programs. Programs need to be evaluated regularly to meet the changing needs of the youth. With an aging America, Muskegon needs to take a comprehensive look at what services the baby boomers are going to need as they reach senior citizen status.

PHYSICAL

ISSUES

CITY PARKS & RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Definitions

The various facilities that make up the City's park system may be divided into the following categories:

Tot Lot	A small area specifically designed for the creative and active play of preschool children. Although this play area may be located within a playground, neighborhood park or major park, it is physically separated or buffered from the activities of other age groups.
Playgrounds	An area designed for the active and vigorous play of elementary school-aged children. These areas are a regular part of elementary school facilities provided by the City. Playgrounds may be located within a neighborhood park, playfield, or major park.
Neighborhood Park	An area or areas designed to meet the recreational needs of all age groups; for both active and passive family recreation. Playgrounds and Tot Lots are normally contained within Neighborhood Parks.
Playfields	A large area designed to serve both the organized and unorganized active recreation needs of all age groups. These areas should be equipped with officially sanctioned fields/courts, whether baseball, softball, soccer, basketball, etc.
Major Parks	Recreation areas serving the entire community and providing facilities to meet a much wider range of recreational activities than will be found in a neighborhood park. These areas should serve all age groups, family activities and community organizations. Ideally, a major park is an area of unique scenic, topographic, and/or thematic character.
Special Use Facilities	Areas developed for a special purpose or use.
Open Space Parklands	Areas of generally undeveloped, natural or near-natural state, varying in size, offering unique scenic and/or topographic character. Limited development for passive recreation uses is allowed under controlled conditions.
Neighborhood Gardens	An area of land that is small. There is a person designated to make sure the garden is maintained with neighborhood residents taking part in the planting, maintaining, etc. There are also neighborhood gatherings at the locations.

PUBLIC FACILITIES & RECREATIONAL USES

MUSKEGON West Michigan's Shoreline City www.shorelinecity.com	Park Acreage	Play Apparatus (ADA)*	Softball Diamonds (lights)*	Baseball Diamonds	Tennis Courts (lights)*	Basketball Courts	Volleyball Courts	Ice Rinks –Outdoors	Football Fields	Picnic Tables	Picnic Grills	Boat Launching Ramps	Sand Beaches	Gym or Indoor Rec. Center	Toboggan/Sled Slides	Fishing Area	Soccer Fields	Restrooms (ADA)*	Picnic Shelters	Swimming	Natural Area	Skate Park	Frisbee Golf	Lakeshore Trail	Other (Please Specify)
Laketon & Terrace																									
Meurer Court	1.6																								
Montgomery & Ruddiman	0.05																								
Oakgrove/McLaughlin	0.05																								
Root Park	0.05																								X
2nd & Houston	0.08																								
2nd & Muskegon	0.08																								
4th & Jefferson	0.07																								
Torrent & Moon	0.04																								
Beach & Sherman	0.05																								
Harbour Towne Beach	2.1												X							X					
City Hall Grounds	1.3																								
Skyline Drive	53.1																								
Terrace – Morris	6.2																								
Shoreline Drive	13.7																								
Park Ave	0.85				X																				
Beach Bike Trail	7.7																								
Downtown Terrace Ext.	11.3																								
Western Ave. Parking Lot	0.4																								
Shoreline Drive Bike Trail	2.5																								
Steele School Bike Path	0.95																								
Foundry Park	1.5															X									

PUBLIC FACILITIES & RECREATIONAL USES

MUSKEGON West Michigan's Shoreline City www.shorelinecity.com	Park Acreage	Play Apparatus (ADA)*	Softball Diamonds (lights)*	Baseball Diamonds	Tennis Courts (lights)*	Basketball Courts	Volleyball Courts	Ice Rinks –Outdoors	Football Fields	Picnic Tables	Picnic Grills	Boat Launching Ramps	Sand Beaches	Gym or Indoor Rec. Center	Toboggan/Sled Slides	Fishing Area	Soccer Fields	Restrooms (ADA)*	Picnic Shelters	Swimming	Natural Area	Skate Park	Frisbee Golf	Lakeshore Trail	Other (Please Specify)
SPECIAL USE FACILITIES																									
Hackley Park	2.3									X															
Indian Cemetery	0.42																								
Grand Trunk Launch Ramp	4.6									X		X				X			X						
Hartshorn Marina	10.3										X	X				X		X*	X					X	X
Lakeshore Trail	40																								
Clara Shepherd Park	0.8					X																		X	
Monet Garden	0.3																								X
LC Walker Arena	2.4																								
Jaycees Launch Ramp	0.8											X													
OPEN SPACE PARKLAND	0.6																								
Veteran's Memorial Park	28															X									
Richards Park	7.5															X									
Ryerson Creek Open Space	72																				X				
Muskegon Lake Frontage	10																								
Lake Michigan Park	54.5												X							X					
Shoreline Drive	59.6																								
SMALL PARKS																									
Green Acres	5																								
Peck & Arthur	0.06																								
Peck & Ransom	0.06																								
Hartford & Peck	0.08																								
Kearney Park	0.2																								X
Lighton Park	0.8																								
Kenneth & Evanston	0.04																								
Lakeshore Overlook	0.2																								

Monet Gardens has a pond, goldfish, and a bridge.

PUBLIC FACILITIES & RECREATIONAL USES

MUSKEGON West Michigan's Shoreline City www.shorelinecity.com	Park Acreage	Play Apparatus (ADA)*	Softball Diamonds (lights)*	Baseball Diamonds	Tennis Courts (lights)*	Basketball Courts (lights)*	Volleyball Courts	Ice Rinks –Outdoors	Football Fields	Picnic Tables	Picnic Grills	Boat Launching Ramps	Sand Beaches	Gym or Indoor Rec. Center	Toboggan/Sled Slides	Fishing Area	Observation Pier	Soccer Fields	Restrooms (ADA)*	Picnic Shelters	Swimming	Natural Area	Skate Park	Frisbee Golf	Lakeshore Trail	Other (Please Specify)	Campground
TOT LOTS																											
Aamodt Park	1.6	X*								X	X																
Day of Caring	0.9	X																									
St. Joseph	0.7	X*																		X							
Beidler-St.-Optimist Park	.08	X*																									
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS																											
Sheldon	5.8	X	X	X		X				X									X								
Beachwood	3.4	X*				X		X		X	X				X				X*	X		X			X		
Joe Clifford Park	1.8	X*								X	X									X							
PLAYFIELDS																											
Beukema	10	X*	X*							X	X								X								
Smith-Ryerson	23	X	+	+	X	X*			+	X	X			X			X	+	X	X							
Reese	13	X*	X*		X	X			X	X								X	X*								
McCrea	9.1	X		X		X				X									X								
Marsh Field	6.1	X		X*						X									X							X	
Campbell Field	9.5	X	X	X						X	X								X*	X							
MAJOR PARKS																											
McGraft	92	X*	X		X	X				X	X			X	X				X			X		X		X	
Pere Marquette	27.5	X					X			X			X			X			X		X				X		
Margaret Drake Elliott	5	X								X	X					X			X	X							
Kruse	52.3	X*				X				X	X		X						X*	X	X	X				X	
Seyferth	16	X	X			X		X	X	X	X							X	X	X			X				

Marsh Field has a track where people may walk, run, rollerblade, etc.

+ Universal field for Softball, baseball, football, & soccer (Smith-Ryerson only)

Muskegon possesses over 600 acres of park and open space land. Each type of recreational facility is a unit within the overall park system. Each performs its specified function in order to meet the needs of the people of Muskegon.

An inventory of the present Parks System is organized according to the categories given above and a detailed breakdown and description of the complete Parks System follows. City neighborhoods are listed in parentheses under Item No. 1 (location). Specific recommendations for particular parks and facilities will be included in the Capital Improvements Schedule, which also contains the cost estimates.

Bike and Walking Trails

The City is looking at an "Adopt-A-Trail" program for the trail system, with procedures ensuring that the trails are being taken care of. There are currently some areas of the trails that have already been adopted.

Tot Lots

There are four Tot Lots within the City which are City-maintained, and which exist as separate entities; not being part of a larger park or playground. They have been developed on small parcels of land to serve the immediate neighborhoods in which they are situated.

Aamodt Park

1. Location: Wood at Marquette (Jackson Hill Neighborhood)
2. Land Area: 2.0 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: Residential
4. Facilities: Play apparatus (1), open space, grill, picnic tables
5. Special Characteristics: Tree-shaded grounds providing safe play area for small children in low-income residential community.
6. Condition: Overall condition is good with general maintenance required including tree trimming

Day of Caring Park

1. Location: Seventh Street and Muskegon Avenue (Nelson Neighborhood)
2. Land Area: .4 acre
3. Surrounding Land Use: Residential
4. Facilities: Play apparatus, limited open space
5. Special Characteristics: Built through a Day of Caring project with United Way
6. Condition: Good

St. Joseph Park

1. Location: Monroe near Fifth (Nelson Neighborhood)
2. Land Area: .7 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: Residential
4. Facilities: Play apparatus (1), open space with picnic tables.
5. Special Characteristics: Park created in conjunction with St. Joseph Church, Nelson Neighborhood Association, and the City of Muskegon.
6. Condition: Overall condition is good with general maintenance required.

Beidler St. - Optimist Park

1. Location: Beidler St. at Young (Campbell Field Neighborhood)
2. Land Area: .08 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: Residential
4. Facilities: Play apparatus (1), open space
5. Special Characteristics: Playground equipment installed by the Optimists Club
6. Condition: Overall condition is good with general maintenance required

Nims Neighborhood Park

1. Location: Davis St. behind the former Nims Elementary at 1161 W Southern (Nims Neighborhood)
2. Land Area: .5 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: Residential
4. Facilities: Play apparatus (1)
5. Special Characteristics: Park created in conjunction with Muskegon Public Schools, Nims Neighborhood and the City of Muskegon.

Conclusion

The Tot Lots serve a very useful purpose to the City's neighborhood communities. They provide a safe play environment that is convenient for the supervising parents, especially when larger parks or playgrounds are a prohibitive distance.

The St. Joseph Park serves as an example for the development of such facilities in the future. Local neighborhoods who organized to fund and construct the playground apparatus. Such resources could be tapped again under City supervision for the development of additional Tot Lots on vacant City-owned land considered undesirable for housing. In many cases, the neighborhood associations contain the volunteer resources capable of building, supervising, and maintaining such facilities.

Playgrounds

Playgrounds, as defined, are generally provided in conjunction with the local elementary schools. These will be discussed in the section on school-related recreation facilities. The facilities generally associated with playgrounds are also located in the City's larger parks.

Neighborhood Parks

These parks provide both passive and active recreation opportunities to their adjoining neighborhoods beyond those supplied by the local school playgrounds.

Sheldon Park

1. Location: Madison at Isabella (Sheldon Park Neighborhood)
2. Land Area: 5.8 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: Residential
4. Facilities: Play apparatus area (2), little league baseball diamond (1), little league softball (1), shuffleboard courts (2), basketball court (1), restrooms, picnic area.
5. Special Characteristics: The numerous white and red oaks lend themselves to the residential setting and provide an excellent picnic and passive recreation area. This is also home to the East Little League, and a potential location for the "No More Sidelines" baseball program to take place. This program is for children and young adults with special needs; and could in turn bring much more interaction to the park as the program is growing in popularity.
6. Condition: Overall condition of the park is good. Restrooms continue to suffer from vandalism, do not meet ADA standards, and need to be replaced. The hard surfaced basketball courts need resurfacing. The playground equipment needs safety play surfacing. The parking lot needs to be paved, as well as the walkways within the park. Irrigation is something that needs to be looked into. A picnic shelter is also needed. Aesthetically, the park is visually very pleasing.

Beachwood Park

1. Park Number: 28
2. Location: Beach Street at Resort (Beachwood/Bluffton Neighborhood)
3. Land Area: 3.4 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, Open Space
5. Facilities: Play apparatus area (1), basketball court (1), sled sliding hill (2), ice rink, pickle-ball court (1), soap box derby hill (not in use), picnic area with grill, heated restroom, picnic shelter with a fire place.
6. Special Characteristics: This park maximizes the natural beauty of the dunes while incorporating active recreational uses in the flat open spaces. Due to the sledding hill, this park receives considerably more winter use than most of the City's parks. The large oaks provide shaded picnic areas along the periphery. A new section of the Lakeshore Trail was built through the park.

7. Condition: The park received a major facelift in 2002 and is in great condition.

Joe Clifford Park

1. Location: Valley St. (East Muskegon Neighborhood)
2. Land Area: 1.8 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, Industrial Park
4. Facilities: Play apparatus area (1), picnic area with grill, picnic shelter, spray fountain.
5. Special Characteristics: This park was developed in conjunction with the East Muskegon Neighborhood Association and the COGIC Center. The City leases the park from the COGIC center.
6. Condition: The park is in very good condition.

Conclusion

These four parks serve a dual purpose within the community providing active recreation by means of ballfields, play equipment, courts and sledding hills; while offering a respite from the urban setting with their large shade trees and wooded hills. Continued upkeep and improvement should be the goal for these facilities. Of the four, Sheldon Park requires the most immediate attention to correct its deficiencies as two of the other parks have received Clean Michigan Initiative (CMI) funding. Sheldon Park's usage is expected to steadily rise as more programs and interaction are introduced. This gives it a higher priority when it comes to enhancing its current state. Even though these parks are classified as neighborhood parks, they serve a much larger portion of the community. This is especially true of the active recreational facilities - the football field at Seyferth, the Little League fields at Sheldon and the sledding hill at Beachwood. The quality level of the facilities in each park should be an overriding concern as usage increases.

Playfields

The six playfields within the City's parks system are perhaps the most intensively used in relation to their size. Their primary function is to provide facilities for intense active recreational use. The various City and privately-sponsored softball, baseball, and football leagues are the principal organized beneficiaries of these facilities. League sports make use of the playfields virtually every weekday throughout the scheduled season. Additional facilities such as play apparatus, tennis and basketball courts, and open space for organized activities draw many more users. These playfields are the backbone, in terms of active recreation, of the entire parks system.

Beukema Playfield

1. Location: Roberts and Wesley (Marquette Neighborhood)
2. Land Area: 10 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, Grade School
4. Facilities: Play apparatus area (1), softball diamonds (3), shuffleboard courts (4), open space for field games, restroom facilities (2), picnic area.

5. Special Characteristics: It serves as a neighborhood park providing recreation facilities within the Marquette Neighborhood. The northeast portion of the park has numerous mature oak trees providing a pleasant area for picnickers. Muskegon High School uses this for their varsity and junior varsity softball games.

6. Condition: The overall appearance of the park is good. The softball fields are well maintained. The parking lot within the park is gravel, needs to be paved and is not large enough. The picnic area is in need of more tables and grills should be added away from the play apparatus. The shuffleboard courts need resurfacing. A picnic shelter and new scoreboards are needed.

Smith-Ryerson Park

1. Location: Wood and Sumner (Jackson Hill & Angell Neighborhoods)

2. Land Area: 23 acres

3. Surrounding Land Use: Residential

4. Facilities: Play apparatus area (1), tennis courts (2), basketball courts (2), restroom facilities (2), small community center (1), gymnasium/all purpose room (1), concession stand, observation pier, trail along the creek, picnic pavilion (1), and a universal softball, baseball, soccer, and football field.

5. Special Characteristics: The park serves as a focal point for recreational activities within the Froebel neighborhood. The park lies in a natural valley bordered on the south by Ryerson Creek and is interspersed with a wide variety of lowland flora (maple, birch, willow, basswood, etc.) providing an excellent setting for picnicking. The Smith-Ryerson Center, which is being managed by a neighborhood group, provides a place for neighborhood gatherings. The building, which hosts boxing, and can be utilized for other activities, includes a kitchen and is utilized for many activities including boxing club, computer classes, general recreation, and receptions. The Port City Boys football program has moved to this site for practice and would like to make it their home field.

6. Condition: Overall Smith-Ryerson is in great condition. The basketball courts have recently been resurfaced and have new basketball poles, backstops, and hoops. There is also a new timed lighting system for the courts. The play apparatus area has been moved, rebuilt and new equipment added. With the creation of a universal sports field, the baseball/softball diamonds were removed from their original location in order to create more open space for other recreational activities to take place. The community center, which had been extensively vandalized, has been kept up since the Muskegon Recreation Center began managing it. A large gymnasium to better serve area residents, people with disabilities, and the elderly is needed. The current restroom facility in the park has been converted to storage for maintenance equipment. A new accessible restroom and concession stand has been constructed on the site. A large picnic shelter with grills has been added. This includes 32, 12-foot picnic tables; some of which are barrier free. An underground irrigation system has been added which will keep the universal baseball, softball, football, and soccer field looking presentable and green. The parking area has been reconstructed, enlarged, and striped. There are more

parking spaces with more spaces for the disabled There is also an observation pier located at the creek as well as a walking trail along the creek. The City has been awarded a MDNRTF grant for the Smith Ryerson Renovation and Improvements Phase I. These improvements have been completed. In 2008 the site was chosen for the United Way Day of Caring. The recreation center building was painted and cleaned.

Reese Field

1. Location: Creston at East Forest (Oakview Neighborhood)
2. Land Area: 13 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, Light Industrial
4. Facilities: Play apparatus area (1), softball diamonds (2), tennis courts (2), football/soccer field (1), basketball court (1), restrooms.
5. Special Characteristics: West Michigan Christian High School uses the softball field on occasion for their girls' softball team. Reese also serves as a neighborhood park for the adjoining residential area. The high schools use the ball fields. Permanent bleachers are provided for spectator viewing. The football/soccer field is lighted and services the adult soccer program and youth soccer. Large oaks along the parking lots and park perimeter provide shade and soften the overall appearance of the park. West Michigan Christian High School plays their girls softball games at Reese.
6. Condition: All ball fields are maintained in very good condition. Surfaced courts require resurfacing. Additional tree plantings around surfaced courts, play apparatus area and parking lots would add considerable visual appeal to the park, as well as adding much needed shade. Existing off-street parking is sufficient in quantity; however, the two gravel lots should be paved to reduce maintenance. The restroom and maintenance building needs to be replaced. The playground building was replaced in 2001. The Lakers soccer team replaced the nets on the centerfield goals in the fall of 2008. There have been visitors from Grand Rapids, Holland, Grand Haven, and suburban Detroit to play at this soccer field. A picnic shelter is needed at this park.

McCrea Field

1. Location: Kenneth at Catawba behind Restlawn Cemetery (Angell Neighborhood)
2. Land Area: 9.1 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, Commercial, Light Industrial, Cemetery
4. Facilities: Play apparatus area (1), greenspace, baseball diamond (1), shuffleboard courts (4), basketball court (1), horseshoe pits (5), restrooms, and picnic area.
5. Special Characteristics: West Michigan Christian High School uses the baseball field on occasion. Some open space area is available for non-organized field games. The Port City Football Team also practices at the park. Many large shade trees provide for limited passive activities and picnicking. Serves as a primary recreational facility for the local neighborhood.

6. Condition: The primary ballfield is well maintained. All surface courts need resurfacing. The horseshoe pit area needs work. The new restroom and maintenance building is in good repair. The playground is extensively used and is in good condition, although a larger structure is needed for the older children. A picnic shelter with grills should be added to this park.

Marsh Field

1. Location: West Laketon at Peck (Marsh Field Neighborhood)
2. Land Area: 6.1 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, Commercial
4. Facilities: Baseball diamond lighted (1), restroom (1), play apparatus area (1), concession stand (1), picnic tables.
5. Special Characteristics: Major baseball facility in the Greater Muskegon area. Field contains permanent grandstands for spectators. A walking trail and rollerblade area was added in 2000. New Playground equipment has also been installed.
6. Conditions: The park is very well maintained.

Campbell Field

1. Location: Barclay and Young (Campbell Field Neighborhood)
2. Land Area: 9.5 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: Residential
4. Facilities: Play apparatus area (1), baseball diamonds (3), softball diamond (1), restroom maintenance building (2), concession buildings (3), and open space for field games.
5. Special Characteristics: Home of the Muskegon West Little League who provides some of the maintenance and capital improvement dollars.
6. Condition: Campbell playfield is well maintained. A CMI grant in 2001 rebuilt the facility and added parking and new restroom facility.

Conclusion

The importance of these playfields to the community is evident by the extensive use they receive. The softball and baseball diamonds are extensively utilized by various City, adult and youth leagues. General upgrading of the ancillary facilities (surface courts, playground apparatus, etc.) is important in order to maintain a broader usage of the parks.

Major Parks

Six major parks lie within the City limits of Muskegon. Each serves the entire community, while providing its own unique recreational experience. These parks, more than any others within the City, tend to attract visitors from the outlying areas, both inside and outside the county.

McGraft Park

1. Location: Wickham and Glen (Campbell Field, Nims, & Lakeside Neighborhoods)
2. Land Area: 92 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: Residential
4. Facilities: Play apparatus area (2), softball diamond (1), tennis courts-lighted (6), unlighted (4), shuffleboard courts (20), basketball court (1), horseshoe pits (3), open air amphitheater, community building, open space for field games, picnic area (1), frisbee golf course, sledding hill.
5. Special Characteristics: The park is set within an area of rolling terrain traversed by Ruddiman Creek. Between August 2005 and April 2006, The Great Lakes National Program Office and the MDEQ conducted a $10.6 million dollar project to dredge and remove contaminated sediments from Ruddiman Creek. The primary objective of this remediation project was to reduce the relative risks to humans, wildlife, and aquatic life. The objective of the study was to evaluate the impact of sediment remediation on the biotic community of Ruddiman Creek, using macro invertebrates as the primary indicator. Approximately 45 acres have been developed for intense active recreation uses. The remaining park area has been reserved in its natural setting providing passive recreation enjoyment. A wide variety of flora and fauna can be found throughout the park varying from wet lowland to dry highland species. The park fits well into the residential surroundings.
6. Condition: McGraft is maintained at a high level, being the pride of the Muskegon Parks System. It also benefits from the McGraft Park Trust Fund, which supplements maintenance and capital improvement projects. Due to the heavy usage of the park, the need for additional parking has become acute. The gravel access road should be paved, as should the parking lot across the road behind the band shell. The community building needs to be replaced. Picnic shelters need to be added. There is also a need for irrigation in some areas of the park. There had been a major clean-up of the lagoon and creek in 2006-2007. There is a need for more grills, swing sets, accessible parking behind the band shell, the baseball/softball field needs to either be removed or redone, and the tennis and basketball courts need paint. Upgrading the tee boxes area on the disc courts is in process in order to ease major soil erosion from use,. A trail to this park that connects to the existing trail system and to Seyferth Park is needed.

Pere Marquette

1. Location: Beach Street and Lakeshore Drive (Beachwood/Bluffton Neighborhood)
2. Land Area: 27.5 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, Recreation
4. Facilities: Restaurants (1), snack bar (1), play apparatus areas (2), restrooms (1), picnic area (1), sand volleyball courts (40), public beach, accessible walkway.
5. Special Characteristics: Park contains a large expanse of sandy beach bordered on the north by the Muskegon Channel open to the public. The park is at the northern-most

end of 2.5 miles of City-owned Lake Michigan frontage. There is a 200' accessible walkway on the beach. The Maritime Museum is nearby. Pere Marquette beach has been one of three nationally certified "Clean Beaches" on the Great Lakes. The City and its residents do their best to maintain this certification.

6. Condition: The park is in generally good condition. Additional landscaping and walkways are needed along the beach to keep blowing sand off the streets and neighboring yards. An extension is needed for an accessible ramp to the water. Benches and picnic tables have been donated to the park, and a beach warning system is being contemplated.

Margaret Drake Elliot Park

1. Location: Beach Street and the Muskegon Channel (Beachwood/Bluffton Neighborhood)
2. Land Area: 5 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, Recreation
4. Facilities: play apparatus areas (1), restrooms (1), picnic area (1), picnic shelters (2), fishing pier (1), open space for field games.
5. Special Characteristics: Small grove of trees just south of the channel provides an ideal picnic location. The walk along the channel is used by many for exercise, fishing, and watching sunsets.
6. Condition: The park is in generally good condition.

Kruse Park (formerly Bronson Park)

1. Location: Sherman at Beach (Beachwood/Bluffton Neighborhood)
2. Land Area: 52.3 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, open space
4. Facilities: Parking lots (2), nature trails, barrier dunes, accessible dune walkways, playground, dune overlooks, picnic shelters, restrooms, basketball court.
5. Special Characteristics: Park has about one mile of Lake Michigan Beach. The large sand dunes are in good shape, but some areas need additional dune grass planting. This is the major picnic area with 4 picnic shelters and an accessible ramp to the beach and into the dunes. A dog beach was created on the beach along the northern part of the park.
6. Condition: This park was rebuilt in 1992 and is in excellent condition. Additional development in the southern portion of the park include the parking area which needs to be expanded, upgrades to the boardwalk, additional restrooms, and possibly camping.

Seyferth Park

1. Location: West Sherman between Leon and LeBoeuf (Lakeside Neighborhood)
2. Land Area: 16 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, Commercial
4. Facilities: Play apparatus area (2), softball diamond (1), football field (soccer field) (1), basketball courts (2), in-line skating rink (1), skate park, restrooms, picnic area, grills, picnic shelter.
5. Special Characteristics: Park provides both active and passive recreation opportunities for the community. Physically, the park is divided into two distinct areas. The northern half is primarily flat open space used for field games. The southern half along Sherman Boulevard contains large numbers of mature oak trees providing an attractive setting for picnics and family-oriented recreation activities.
6. Condition: The park is in good condition after a major renovation several years ago. There is a need for an irrigation system in the front of the park.

Conclusion

Due to their facilities and/or amenities, these parks attract large numbers of out-of-town visitors, as well as local community users. The four parks complement each other without duplicating facilities. Each is geared toward different recreational uses –

McGraft - Active & passive family recreation

Pere Marquette - Water and beach related activities

Kruse - Picnic area and dune walkways

Seyferth – Skate park

All future development plans for these parks should be geared towards maintaining and/or increasing out-of-town tourist usage. In conjunction with other public and private recreational developments and programs, they can contribute greatly towards increasing tourism dollars coming into the community.

Special Use Facilities

These City-owned facilities fall outside normal park or playground definitions. They include Hackley Park, L.C. Walker Sports Arena, Clara Shepherd Park, Hartshorn Marina, Jaycee's Launch Ramp, Monet Gardens, and the Indian Cemetery.

Hackley Park is included in this category because of its unique formal, urbanized character, as well as its role which transcends normal park functions. The Great Lakes Naval Memorial and Museum (historical and educational) is also considered special use, and is located on the Muskegon Channel. Each facility provides the City and its residents additional recreational outlets to enjoy.

Hackley Park

1. Location: City block bounded by Webster and Clay Avenues, and Third and Fourth Streets (Nelson Neighborhood).
2. Land Area: 2.3 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: Institutional, commercial
4. Facilities: None
5. Special Characteristics: This National Historic Designated Park is a formally designed park dedicated to the memory of Civil War veterans, presented to the City in 1890 by Charles H. Hackley. Its focal point is an eighty-foot tall soldier's monument in the center of the park. Statues of Admiral Farragut, Major General Sherman, 18th President Grant, and 16th President Lincoln grace the four corners of the park. The park creates a strong visual image upon entering the downtown area and provides visual and physical relief from the urban environment. It is often used to host various ceremonies, rallies, and concerts; Parties-in-the-Park during the summer, and the art fair in conjunction with the Summer Celebration. Its proximity to Heritage Village, the County Museum, Hackley Library, the Muskegon Art Museum, as well as downtown shopping, restaurants, and entertainment add to its value to the City.
6. Condition: The park is in excellent condition. The pavers have been replaced, the statues have been restored, trees have been added and the fence around the monument has been restored. In addition, major landscaping improvements were added in 2013 with the Horan Fund. This fund includes monies for continued maintenance of landscaping in the future.

Indian Cemetery

1. Location: Morris Street (Nelson Neighborhood)
2. Land Area: 0.42 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: Commercial (Central Business District)
4. Facilities: None
5. Special Characteristics: Oldest known Indian Cemetery in the area dating back to the early 1800's. Provides pleasant view of Muskegon Lake.
6. Condition: Well-maintained passive-oriented park.

Grand Trunk Launch Ramp

1. Location: McCracken and Lakeshore Drive (Lakeside Neighborhood)
2. Land Area: 4.6 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: residential, industrial, business
4. Facilities: launch ramps (2), picnic tables.
5. Special Characteristics: This property is owned by the State of Michigan-Waterways Division, but leased to the City of Muskegon for a launch ramp

facility. It is adjacent to the bike trail. Annual trail cleanup is providedby the Walkin' Wheels Committee and the Lakeside Business Association.

6. Condition: Well maintainted.

Hartshorn Marina

1. Location: Division at Western (Nims Neighborhood)
2. Land Area: 10.3 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: Industrial, recreation
4. Facilities: Major slips (134), small slips (30), moorings (51), launch ramps (1), restrooms (2).
5. Special Characteristics: Only public-owned marina on Muskegon Lake. This is adjacent to the bike trail
6. Condition: Very Good. There is the need for a boardwalk and piers for fishing at the Marina.

Lakeshore Trail

1. Location: Throughout Muskegon
2. Land Area: 40 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, commercial, industrial.
4. Facilities: Ten- foot non-motorized trail for approximately 12 miles throughout Muskegon which is in the process of being connected to the Musketawa Trail.
5. Special Characteristics: The Lakeshore Trail along Muskegon Lake is complete. Other trail connectors are slated for completion. Mile markers will be added along the Lake portion of the trail. There is still the opportunity to add more trails that will connect this trail to other area parks.
6. Condition: Excellent. Additional parking is necessary to meet the current demand. Benches strategically placed along the trail for sightseeing or resting would enhance the trail nicely.

Clara Shepherd Park

1. Location: Southern Ave just east of Seaway Dr. (Nelson Neighborhood)
2. Land Area: 1 acre
3. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, industrial.
4. Facilities: Basketball courts.
5. Special Characteristics: This park was built to add basketball courts to the inner-city and is adjacent to the bike trail.
6. Condition: Good

Monet Gardens

1. Location: 5TH and Clay (Nelson Neighborhood)
2. Land Area: .1 acre
3. Surrounding Land Use: Residential
4. Facilities: Gardens, fountain
5. Special Characteristics: This is a vacant lot that has been turned into a garden by the Master Garden Club. It is also a popular place for people to get married during the spring and summer months.
6. Condition: Excellent.

L.C. Walker Arena

1. Location: Western Avenue at Fourth Street (Nelson Neighborhood)
2. Land Area: 1.8 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: Commercial
4. Facilities: 5,100 seat arena, 200 x 85-ice surface, convention center, meeting rooms.
5. Special Characteristics: Built in 1960 as a gift to the City from the late L.C. Walker, it is the home of the USHL Muskegon Lumberjacks Hockey Team. The arena hosts a variety of sporting and cultural events and is open for public skating and private ice rental. More recently, the City has resumed management of the facility. This facility is adjacent to the bike trail.
6. Condition: The arena received a major upgrade in 1998 through a countywide bond issue. Nine million dollars was spent to rebuild the ice surface and equipment, replace the seating, add concession stands, and provide accessibility and other improvements to the facility.

Jaycee's Launch Ramp

1. Location: Cottage Grove at Lakeshore Drive (Beachwood/Bluffton Neighborhood)
2. Land Area: .6 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, commercial, industrial
4. Facilities: Launch ramps (2)
5. Special Characteristics: Heavily used public ramp on west end of Muskegon Lake. Adjacent to the bike trail.
6. Condition: Excellent. Additional parking is necessary to meet the current demand.

Conclusion

Each of these facilities provides its own unique form of leisure-time recreation. The launch ramp and marina are critical as the City continues the development of its lakefront. Continued high levels of maintenance and site improvements are necessary to meet user needs. The redevelopment of Jaycee's Launch Ramp has created a more highly used facility. The addition of moorings and new slips to Hartshorn Marina greatly increases the docking facilities around the lake. Hackley Park and the Walker Arena provide important links to the downtown development area which includes private, public, and semi-public enterprises. The Arena and the Park provide services to all these elements, creating a more cohesive and diversified urban core. The Lakeshore Trail has brought many people into Muskegon and has provided greater access to Muskegon Lake. The trail also provides an important link with the state trail system. The creation of Monet Gardens is a unique and exciting attraction to the community as well.

Open Space Parkland

Within the City are several largely undeveloped tracts of publicly-owned land which offer recreation opportunities of a less organized scope; walking, hiking, climbing, exploring, picnicking, etc. Three of these tracts have been developed as parks, but are generally passive in character with little or no intense recreation activity included. These areas have enabled nature to maintain a foothold within an urbanized environment.

Veteran's Memorial Park

1. Location: Causeway, east end of Muskegon Lake (North Muskegon)
2. Land Area: 28 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: Industrial, open space
4. Facilities: None
5. Special Characteristics: Lowland park containing a lagoon and island with several war memorials. Large fountain anchors the south end of the park. The park is auto-oriented with the typical park viewer being the occupant of automobiles traveling north and south along the Causeway. The Veteran's organization completed a concrete walkway throughout the park, and while the property is owned by the county, it is maintained by the City of Muskegon. It is adjacent to the bike trail.
6. Condition: Michigan's "Most Beautiful Mile" was seriously damaged during periods of high water during the early 1970's, resulting in the destruction of most of the park's plant material. Since the flooding, a gate dam has been installed along Cedar Creek to control the water level. A new landscape plan has been drawn up, and trees and shrubs are being accepted as memorials and gifts. Through public participation, the park is once again becoming Michigan's "Most Beautiful Mile". The park was the site of the 2008 United Way Day of Caring. Volunteers worked on landscaping, tree trimming, invasive species removal and installation of bark around the trees. There is an annual Memorial Day Recognition ceremony by area veterans at the park.

Richards Park

1. Location: North end of Ottawa Street (Jackson Hill Neighborhood)
2. Land Area: 7.5 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: Commercial, industrial
4. Facilities: None
5. Special Characteristics: Small rustic park providing access to Muskegon River and the Lake, and is relatively unknown to most Muskegon residents. The park is adjacent to the bike trail.
6. Condition: Richards Park has been neglected for years. Over the past couple of years a general clean-up has begun with the removal of dead and overgrown trees and shrubs, and the pruning of others. The abandoned sewage treatment plant that once occupied part of the park has been demolished and restored to natural vegetation. Further restoration will be performed as funds are available.

Ryerson Creek Open Space

1. Location: Entire length of Ryerson Creek (Marquette, Angell, East Muskegon, Oakview Neighborhoods)
2. Land Area: Approximately 72 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, commercial
4. Facilities: Pier overlooking creek (located in Smith-Ryerson Park)
5. Special Characteristics: Natural ravine/valley formed by Ryerson Creek. It is heavily wooded and consists of varying terrain from lowland marsh to a high-banked ravine. Provides a ribbon of nature through a heavy residential/commercial portion of the City.
6. Condition: This area remains in an undeveloped state. Litter in scattered areas is its chief eyesore. The undeveloped land should remain to provide the citizens with a place to wander and explore nature close to home. A trail has been constructed along the creek in Smith-Ryerson Park and is approximately 1500-feet long, and was constructed according to ASHTO standards. It has been designed with little to no slope so that it is accessible to everyone. The trail veers off to a pier overlooking the creek ideal for nature watching. The trail connects to two walkways that were previously on the site. In the future the City would like to extend the trail beyond the park property.

Muskegon Lake frontage

1. Location: Along Lakeshore Drive (Jackson Hill, Nelson, Nims, Lakeside, Beachwood/Bluffton Neighborhoods)
2. Land Area: 10 acres
3. Surrounding Land Use: Residential
4. Facilities: None

5. Special Characteristics: Open space within a residential neighborhood containing numerous large shade trees located along the banks of Muskegon Lake.

6. Condition: This area remains in a natural state and provides public access to Muskegon Lake. There are shopping areas in many of the different neighborhoods adjacent to Muskegon Lake.

Lake Michigan park

1. Location: Lake Michigan shoreline and dunes from Sherman Boulevard to Lakeshore Drive (Beachwood/Bluffton Neighborhood).

2. Land Area: 54.5 acres

3. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, recreation

4. Facilities: None

5. Special Characteristics: Major publicly-owned stretch of shoreline dune between Pere Marquette and Kruse Parks. Characterized by narrow beaches and steeply ascending dunes. Dunes are generally grass covered on their western slope. The back dunes are heavily wooded, and there is a stretch of area that is designated as a dog beach.

6. Condition: Natural. A boardwalk has been built for the lakeshore trail on the lake side of the property. No development should be encouraged in this ecologically fragile area. Access should be by foot only; limiting activities to hiking, sunbathing and cross-country skiing in the back dunes. This can be accomplished through the development of a dune trail system.

Shoreline Drive

1. Location: Business 31 corridor north and south

2. Land Area: 59.6 acres

3. Surrounding land use: commercial, waterfront marine

4. Facilities: None

5. Special Characteristics: The medians between north- and southbound Business 31. These provide a green open space entrance into the City.

6. Condition: In 2007, the State of Michigan and the City of Muskegon finalized a transfer agreement. The City received West Muskegon and West Webster Avenues so they could be converted back to residential streets, and the State of Michigan accepted Shoreline Drive as the new Business 31 route. This allows people to view the waterfront as they travel through the area, and this route has better access to downtown.

Conclusion

The open space parklands belonging to the City provide relief for citizens from the heavily urbanized environment. The large vegetative areas cool the surrounding air and allow nature to penetrate the City. Most of these areas should be left in their present undisturbed condition. A few of these parks -- Lake Michigan, Veterans' Memorial and Muskegon Lakeshore -- require limited development; respecting the unique qualities and characteristics that each possesses.

School-Related Recreation Facilities (Muskegon School District)

All schools within the Muskegon Public School District include outdoor recreational facilities. The schools are evenly distributed throughout the City, and for the most part, meet the recreational needs of school-aged children within the surrounding neighborhoods. In effect, they serve as local neighborhood playgrounds for the City.

Elementary Schools

The six elementary schools provide basic recreation needs for school-aged children. The typical playground consists of a variety of play apparatus (swings, climbing bars, slides, etc.), a hard court surface, and an open space game field with softball diamond. In all cases, the play apparatuses appear plentiful, with only general maintenance required (e.g. replacement of missing swings, painting). All schools contain hard surface basketball courts; however, in all cases the hoop has been eliminated. Vandalism and theft of basketball hoops has been a major problem.

The open space areas for field games are ample, although the ball diamonds vary considerably in quality. For the most part, the ball diamonds receive no care other than scheduled mowing of the lawn areas. Marquette School has no ball field of its own. However, it is directly adjacent to Beukema Playfield, which possesses excellent softball facilities. Lakeside Elementary does not have an outdoor recreation area either. The nearby City-owned Seyferth Park provides these facilities for the school and the surrounding neighborhood. Nelson School has the school system's only soccer field, which is one of the finest in the area. Further development of Nelson School should be pursued to provide a neighborhood park setting.

A new park was built on the former Nims School property as the former play equipment was removed when the school closed several years ago.

Park Avenue is a six court tennis facility located on Muskegon Public Schools property. This facility is maintained by the City, a tradition that began many years ago. It is no longer used as a tennis court, and the basketball courts have been moved to Clara Shepherd Park two blocks away. A new use for this property is needed.

Middle School

Muskegon Middle School, formerly Steele School, serves the entire Muskegon Public School District. The former Bunker Middle School on the City's west side is now Lakeside Elementary. The Middle School is equipped with a gymnasium and an indoor pool. However, these are not generally open to the public due to budget restrictions which prohibit necessary supervision. It also has a football field and track, which are generally well-maintained and provide adequate open space for recreational purposes.

Senior High School (Central Campus)

Muskegon Senior High School has been at its current location since 1926. The campus includes Hackley Stadium, a 6,500-seat facility for football games and other events. The gymnasium and swimming pool complex are used by swim teams from other school districts in addition to Muskegon's. The facility primarily serves the needs of the high school population, but is used during the winter for community recreation programs funded through a federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).

Conclusion

Overall, the City school facilities provide the local neighborhoods with playground and open space recreation facilities. The level of service appears adequate and maintained. However, the central City facilities need to be expanded, as no parkland exists in some areas.

School-Related Recreation Facilities (not part of Muskegon School District)

There are a few remaining schools within the City limits that are not part of the Muskegon Public School District. These include the Greater Muskegon Catholic Schools, Muskegon Christian Schools, the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District, Three Oakes Charter Academy, Baker College, and Muskegon Community College.

There are two Catholic schools - Catholic Central High School and Middle School. The high school facilities include football field and track, baseball field, soccer field, tennis courts, softball field and open space for field games. In all cases, the facilities primarily serve the school population. The general population does not utilize Catholic Central facilities. The close proximity of the City-owned Campbell Playfield serves this function.

Muskegon Christian Schools contains a comprehensive recreation complex. The facilities are designed for K-12 age groups. Included are four tennis courts, six basketball courts, a soccer field, a track, two softball fields, open space, and numerous play apparatuses. All facilities except the softball fields are well maintained. The facilities do receive a fair amount of use by the neighborhood, despite the proximity to Sheldon Park.

The Intermediate School District's Wesley School provides play apparatus designed especially for students with special needs, as well as an open space for the students. The neighborhood population makes limited use of the facilities even though Muskegon Townhouse Apartments are located directly across the street.

Muskegon Community College located on 110 acres in the northeast corner of the City provides numerous recreational opportunities for the residents of Muskegon County. The facilities include six excellent tennis courts, one baseball and one softball field, open space for field games, a walking trail and a nature trail covering eight to ten acres of woodland. The gym and fields are available for rent. The College also owns University Park Golf Course that is adjacent to the main campus. The college is under-utilized by the community.

Baker College is located just across the street from the Community College. There is a gym, which is not utilized by the public to any great degree.

Conclusion

Even though the additional school related facilities are few in number, they do provide additional recreational opportunities to the citizens of Muskegon. This is especially true with the West Michigan Christian, Baker College, and Muskegon Community College facilities. Overall community-wide recreation planning should not overlook these resources.

Other Facilities

Within the City of Muskegon there exist numerous institutions, facilities and establishments that provide recreational experiences outside the typical municipal park/playground environment. These facilities may be public, semi-public or private. The private sector provides the residents of the City and outlying areas a wide variety of recreation choices.

Within the City limits, there are two golf courses and one miniature golf course to meet the active recreational needs of the population. The first golf course is the University Golf Course, which is opened to the public and the second is the Muskegon Country Club which is a private course. The miniature golf course is the Bat-N-Club and also offers batting cages. There are two miniature golf courses outside the City limits. They are Putters Creek located on the Causeway, and Craig's Cruisers located off US-31, all open to the public. Private marinas provide local and transient boaters with docking and storage facilities supplementing the facilities provided by the City-owned Hartshorn Marina and moorings. Private and public (state and county) campgrounds supplement the facilities provided by the City. The YMCA building; recently sold to Muskegon Community College and includes the Lakeshore Fitness Centers, is located within the City of Muskegon and provides indoor recreational facilities for its members.

There are also a vast number of cultural recreation experiences within the City. The Muskegon Civic Theatre is a private non-profit organization providing theater devotees with the opportunity to view live stage productions performed by local artists. The West Michigan Symphony enables local musicians to exhibit their talents within the structure of a professional orchestra.

The Frauenthal Center for the Performing Arts; owned and operated by the non-profit Muskegon County Community Foundation provides an acoustically perfect 1800 seat facility outlet for live concert and stage productions. The Beardsley Theatre, which seats about 200 people, is also located in this fine facility.

The Muskegon County Museum, the nationally-recognized Muskegon Art Museum, and the Hackley Public Library are all tax-supported, non-profit facilities located downtown which rely on private contributions for a portion of their operation and capital improvement funding. The Art Museum is owned and operated by Muskegon Public Schools. Hackley Library is now managed by a separate board and supported by tax dollars. These facilities provide quality cultural activities beyond those normally found in a City the size of Muskegon.

The Hackley-Hume Home National Register Properties and other nearby properties are significant Victorian structures open to the public for touring for those interested in historic preservation. These properties have proven critical to the recreation and tourist potential of the downtown area. These facilities are owned by the Muskegon County Museum.

Facilities Outside of the City

Michigan's Adventure, which is owned by Cedar Fair, is located just north of Muskegon and is the largest Amusement Park in Michigan. There are also ten golf courses within Muskegon County and two fitness clubs; Planet Fitness and Norton Pines Athletic Club.

The Muskegon County Parks system includes outdoor facilities that are centered on camping and inland lakes. Pioneer Park is the most heavily used park. It is a major camping facility located on Lake Michigan. A recent addition is Hilt's Landing, a Lakeshore Museum Center, and historical park located in Montague. Most of the other political jurisdictions have small parks that primarily serve local residents. The only two exceptions are Ross Park in Norton Shores and Softball World in Muskegon Township. Muskegon Township has built a skate park as well.

The Muskegon area is fortunate to have three state Parks. Hoffmaster State Park is located just south of Muskegon in Norton Shores. Muskegon State Park is just north of Muskegon in Laketon Township. Duck Lake is located just south of Whitehall. These facilities bring thousands of people into the Muskegon area every year, and many residents spend time there. The Muskegon Winter Sports Complex, which is located in the Muskegon State Park, is the home of one of three luge tracks in the country, as well as cross country skiing, lighted trails, and ice rink. There were improvements that included a three-mile wheelchair accessible path to the state park's Lost Lake in 2008-09, and the U.S. Luge Association is attempting to become part of the Winter Paralympics. There will also be a year-round, wheeled luge track made of fiberglass stretching nearly 1,000 feet, operated by the Muskegon Sports Council.

These and other recreational avenues outside of the typical park/playground mode are an essential part of the overall recreational opportunities available. They must be viewed as integral elements of a complete recreational analysis and plan.

Barrier-Free Compliance

The City has limited special facilities geared toward a particular group within the overall population, including senior citizens, or people with disabilities. Facilities are available at McGraft and Smith-Ryerson parks for senior citizens, and there is a shuffleboard complex at McGraft Park. An accessible lift has been built to provide easy access to boats from the launch ramp. An accessible stairway/ramp was built at Kruse to provide access to Lake Michigan, and an accessible ramp was built at Pere Marquette beach to get people closer access to the water. There are plans to extend this ramp in the near future. The City continues to work on its universal accessibility at all of the City facilities and parks, and has worked with Disability Connection, a Center for Independent Living, and has had all of the parks assessed for barrier free compliance. The Department of Justice also accessed the City's accessibility and provided a report. While the City does have some facilities that are in compliance, some are not in full compliance.

Derelict and Vacant Lands

Along the shoreline of Muskegon Lake are vacant parcels of land once utilized for industrial and waste disposal purposes (Map 7). These parcels provide the opportunity for a variety of lakeshore development including residential, commercial, and recreational. Each has been the subject of proposals; some of which are still being actively pursued--including portions that have been completed. Muskegon Lakeshore Trail is a 14.1 mile non-motorized, multi-use trail in the City of

Muskegon. The trail will form a linear park around Muskegon's lakeshore and will result in an urban corridor that will link downtown Muskegon to over a dozen public parks and marinas.

The trail provides access to largely unused segments of Muskegon Lake public beach. It; offers safer, non-motorized access to existing parks and beaches, links trail users to the cities of Norton Shores and North Muskegon and the statewide trail system, and better access to a variety of natural ecosystems, including the beaches, sand dunes, woodlands, wetlands, streams, and lagoons within the City of Muskegon.

The project fosters further shoreline cleanup and enhancement to create more environmental awareness to serve as a stimulus to economic development. It is also being linked to other trails in preserved wetlands that run through the Port City Industrial Park and the Medendorp Industrial Center. Enhancing those areas provides yet another segment to the statewide trail.

1. Consumers Power Property

The utility owns 323 acres of property at the northeast end of Muskegon Lake. Of this, 297 acres are within the City of Muskegon (most of which is vacant and was previously used for fly ash disposal). The electrical generation facility occupies 40 acres of land which includes outside coal storage, conveyor systems, transmission wire towers, and parking. The Plant will cease operations in 2016.

Of environmental significance and potential recreational and developmental value is the remaining 283 acres; some of which are high-quality wetlands traversed by Cedar Creek, and branches of the Muskegon River. Company officials have expressed an interest in expanding public access to the property and waterways, provided the security of the power generation facility is not comprised. Development of the Shoreline Trail is expected to incorporate portions of the property, connecting North Muskegon with the City of Muskegon.

The City and Consumers have discussed the development of approximately 56 acres of this property along the Causeway for a sports complex to include up to 8 soccer fields. This development could be done in conjunction with the closure of the site through DEQ. The development would include access to Cedar Creek and recreational opportunities associated with the Creek.

2. Sportsman's Foundation/Former City Landfill

Another potential project is the development of the former City landfill located east of the Consumers fly ash disposal. The Michigan Sportsman's Foundation would like to convert the property into a useable facility. The property would be used by Muskegon County and regional law enforcement agencies as a training facility. In addition, it would be converted into open space for game birds and water fowl for hunting. Shot guns would be allowed, as well as guns utilized during law enforcement training exercises. There would be specific hours of operation, security measures, parking, safety berms, and adequate sound buffers. This facility could be used for hunter safety, hunter academies, CCW training, and a Sportsman's venue for all ages. The Michigan Sportsman's Foundation would need a long term lease from the City in order to apply for the grants and secure funding for all the improvements.

3. Terrace Point

Over twenty-five years ago, the largest gray iron steel foundry in the world (the Lakey Foundry) existed on this 20 acre parcel lying directly north of the central business district adjacent to Muskegon Lake. The property was purchased by the City of Muskegon, cleared and made ready for

development, which subsequently occurred under a partnership of investors spearheaded by the SPX Corporation. The property includes the former SPX Corporation headquarters, a dockominium facility, a clubhouse, pool, hotel, and restaurant.

Public access to the waterfront was ensured when the City Commission created a 150-foot easement along the lakeshore for passive recreational activities. This area has been developed and is being maintained by the property owner. A new hotel has gone up on the property.

4. Heritage Landing

This 19-acre lakefront parcel lies between the YMCA to the west and the Mart Dock to the east. Formerly known as the Michigan Foundry Supply Property, it had been used for scrap metal operations. A Remedial Action Plan was developed with the approval of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), and over $2,000,000 of federal, state and local financial resources were spent on an environmental clean-up of the property.

Heritage Landing is owned by the County of Muskegon and is considered a county facility, not a park. With several grants over the years, Heritage Landing has become the focal point for many festivals. The outdoor amphitheater is used extensively during summer months.

5. West Michigan Steel Foundry Property

Located just west of Waterfront Center and adjacent to the small boat basin of Hartshorn Marina, the West Michigan Steel Foundry property provides additional lakeshore opportunities. The City has leased a portion of this property called Foundry Park for the construction of a public on-shore-fishing pier that will be accessible for people with disabilities.

6. Amoco Tank Farm Located on the shores of Muskegon Lake on the East end of the Lakeside Business District, this property is owned by the City of Muskeon. Although remediation continues on the site, plans are being considered for a baseball complex. This will likely be a joint project between the City and private and/or not-for-profit entities.

7. Grand Trunk Property

Located at the end of McCracken Street on Lakeshore Drive, the State of Michigan has acquired a portion of this property, which offers great potential for waterfront development. This property has not been used by the railroad for many years. Because of the inlets that are on the east and west of the peninsula, this property is a natural setting for a marina, launch ramp, on-shore fishing and other water-related facilities. The development of this property will be a boom to the Lakeside business district and provide needed launch ramp and docking facilities to better meet the community needs. The City has leased a portion of this property for the development of a parking lot and launch ramp.

Conclusions - Physical Issues

Park systems, by their very nature, are complex and diversified, providing a wide range of services and facilities for use by the general public. The deficiencies and strengths discussed concerning each park must be viewed, and corresponding priorities established based on the particular needs of the local neighborhood, as well as the needs of the City as a whole.

The City has spent a great deal of money in the past several years to upgrade and bring the parks system up to today's standards. Playground equipment has been replaced and made accessible. Seyferth, Beachwood, Campbell, Smith-Ryerson Park, and Marsh Field have all received major

renovations and upgrades through state grants. The Lakeshore Trail is nearing completion throughout the City.

The City needs to remain diligent in continuing their efforts to correct deficiencies within the system, and look to add facilities that better meet the changing public needs. The creation of the skate park at Seyferth and the dog beach at Kruse are good examples of new facilities to meet changing needs. Perhaps the future renovations of Sheldon Park can focus on creating specific amenities geared toward the needs and interests of people with special needs.

The outdoor facilities are very effective at meeting the needs of the residents and visitors to Muskegon. However, there is a major need for improved indoor facilities. The City needs to find ways to upgrade indoor facilities within the community and to better provide facilities at the central core of the City.

Citizen Participation

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION – This will have edits done to it.

The service-oriented nature of local government in itself emphasizes the importance of input from its residents. Such is the case with the City of Muskegon and its various departments; including, Recreation, Parks, and Department of Public Works. The citizens have a variety of means in which they can lend their input into the activities and policy-making decisions of the City.

All citizens have the opportunity to express their opinions, concerns, or suggestions either to their elected officials (City Commissioners), or directly to the department involved. They can do this directly to City staff, through neighborhood organization meetings, and directly to City Commissioners.

Another outlet for citizen participation is the Community Development Block Grant - Citizens District Council. This council consists of representatives from the four wards (one from each), three citizens at large, two target area representatives, and a member of the City Commission. The Council works in an advisory capacity to the City Commission on all matters dealing with the Federal Housing and Urban Development Programs.

The City meets on a monthly basis with the 15 neighborhood organizations. The Neighborhood Alliance of Muskegon (NAM) meets to discuss issues with all City departments that have an impact on the City's neighborhoods.

The Department also uses various advisory boards and task forces for specific tasks. Most of the park development projects have been done with citizens groups. The Campbell, Seyferth, and Beachwood parks' Neighborhood organizations were involved in the design of the renovations to the parks in their respective neighborhoods.

The City has established a user/survey card within the Marina division to encourage suggestions and comments from the users of the various facilities. A survey is also given to all users of the picnic shelters to assure customer service. Other divisions of the Department also send out questionnaires to get input as to the effectiveness of various programs. Many changes have been made in service delivery as a direct result of this input.

Planning Process Description

As a part of the budget process in 2007 for 2008, it was decided that City staff would again write the Master Plan. Staff reviewed each chapter of the 2003 master plan and revised and rewrote it as necessary. The redraft was then given to various staff members to review and make suggestions including the department supervisors and the department directors in the Planning Department and the Department of Public Works. City staff has also been meeting with Neighborhood Associations.

The planning process for the 2008 Master Plan began in 2007 with the City creating a survey for the public to complete regarding current condition of the parks and services. The survey was available on the City's website and could be submitted online. The

Neighborhood Associations, many different school districts within the County of Muskegon, Baker and Muskegon Community Colleges, and the Hackley Public Library were also notified and asked to pass the information along to the residents, students, and the like. The Muskegon Chronicle included an article regarding the plans to update the plan and included information regarding the survey in the article. The results of the survey are discussed below.

Recreation Survey

On April 24, 2008, The Muskegon Chronicle published an article informing the public that there would be a survey on the City's website in regards to the current parks system. The article included the website and contact information for anyone that did not have access to the internet who wanted to fill a survey out. Staff sent letters to all the neighborhood associations in order to inform the residents of the survey. The deadline for the survey was June 15, 2008. The surveys were submitted online and through the U.S. Postal Service. Staff received twelve surveys regarding individual parks and twenty-seven surveys that were for the lakes/beaches, marina, Farmer's/Flea Market, etc.

The surveys that were submitted for individual parks are as follows:

Seyferth Park:

Seyferth Park has playground equipment, softball field, basketball court, picnic shelter, picnic tables and grills, restroom, drinking fountain, and is known for its skate park. There may be a need for minor repairs due to use, but there was no mention of anything in particular needing replacement.

Survey submittals for Seyferth Park suggested the need for more benches and picnic tables. There was also a section in the survey asking for any positive or negative experiences within the different parks. There were concerns expressed for more policing of the park as there has been fighting among the kids at the park and safety concerns were expressed. There was also a request not allow dogs at this park due to the lack of cleanup and control of the dogs.

McGraft Park:

McGraft Park has playground equipment, softball field, picnic table and grills, a recreation center, sledding hills, restroom, a natural area, tennis court, basketball court, and Frisbee golf. There is the need for a restroom facility to be universally accessible as the current restroom is located in the recreation center and is not accessible based upon current standards. There may be a need for minor repairs due to use other than the restrooms.

Survey submittals for McGraft Park suggested the need for a roller/ice rink, more security, a canoe/kayak launch area in the lagoon, and the need for contact information to be posted at the park in regards to the rental or use of the shuffleboard equipment. There were also concerns in regard to the need for more

policing and the safety of the children. There was a suggestion to have more kids and adult programs at the park. There are events, such as the annual 5k, however, it does block access to the area, and the tennis courts need to be resurfaced. This is Muskegon High School's "home court" for tennis. A suggestion to remove the disc golf baskets because of the potential hazard to people utilizing the trails was also received.

Marsh Field:

Marsh Field has playground equipment, baseball diamond, restroom, picnic tables, drinking fountain, and a paved track where people may walk, run, rollerblade, etc. There may be a need for minor repairs due to use. There was one survey that suggested a basketball court for this park.

Survey submittals for Marsh Field also suggested the need for more security/police patrol.

Beachwood Park:

Beachwood Park has playground equipment, restroom, picnic shelter, picnic tables and grills, drinking fountain, an outdoor ice rink, nature area, sledding hills, and a portion of the Lakeshore Trail. There may be a need for minor repairs due to use.

Hackley Park:

Survey submittals for Hackley Park suggested that the park is underutilized. The park is beautiful and spacious with suggestions for different musical; artist performances (poets, jugglers, dancers, etc.) with some type of food carts during the spring and summer months, especially during the lunch hours.

There was also a larger survey that encompassed the lakes, Farmers'/Flea Market, L.C. Walker Arena, launch ramps and marinas, and the non-motorized trail systems. The results for the different areas are as follows:

Lake/Beaches:

The table below represents the number of votes that were given to each of the items on the survey for the lakes and beaches that are utilized or needed.

	Yes	No	Unsure
Swimming	22	1	
Fishing	11	8	
Boating	16	5	
Canoeing	7	10	
Volley Ball	4	14	
Sun Bathing	20	4	
Dog Beach	11	8	1
Kayaking	3	14	
Kite Boarding	1	16	
Wind Surfing	1	16	
Non Smoking Area	12	4	4

*There was one survey that stated they did not know there was a non-smoking area.

The following is a list of other water recreation activities or amenities that were suggested and the number of people that suggested them:

Sailing	1
Kayaking	2
Kite boarding	1
Food Places	2
Shopping for beach items	1
More Playground Equipment	1
Shelter from sun for elderly	1
Better Fishing for kids and handicapped	1
Nicer Bathrooms	1
More Picnic tables throughout beach	1
More bon fire areas	2
Camping on the beach	1
Rental Places for Kayaks, Paddle Boats, Kites,	2
RV Camping	1
Senior Citizen events (dancing, music, etc.)	1

*One of the votes for “Kayaking” was suggested for Ruddiman Pond as well.
*One of the votes for “More bon fire areas” was suggested for Kruse Park.

Flag System:

There were twenty five people that understood the flag system and one person stating that they did not know. There was also a suggestion to have the flag located where the sign is instead of its current location.

Life Guard:

There were twenty two people that believed the current life guard hours were good, and one person that did not. There were three suggestions, the first being that there

are times when it is busy and there does not seem to be a life guard around. The second was to suggest that life guards be on duty in the early evenings as well. The third was to have the life guards get down from the towers and walk the beach.

Hartshorn Marina:

There were two people that stated they use Hartshorn Marina, and twenty four that stated they did not use it. Suggestions provided by the public were that they would like to have the restrooms unlocked, and have the City develop the land to the point on the Muskegon Lake, as well as build a public fishing pier along the east side of the spit.

Boat Launch Ramps:

There were four people that stated they utilize the launch ramps and nineteen that stated that they did not. The table below represents the number of people using the particular ramps and which ones. Some indicated that they use more than one ramp. There was also a suggestion to keep Cottage Grove open for small boats. A need for more fishing areas, and have restrooms opened daily. Need a Port-A-John at Jaycee's Launch Ramp that is cleaned. It is posted no fishing, but they still do at the ramp. Transient slips for out of town guests, slips for boats at summer celebration, and other events.

Dog Beach:

There were eighteen people that stated they like the fact the City has a dog beach, four stating that they did not like it, and one that was unsure. When asked about dog waste being cleaned up there were thirteen that felt the waste was being picked up, six feeling it was not, one stating that most of the time it was, and two that were not sure.

For those that used the dog beach, many commented to say the amount of times they used it were quite often based upon the weather, with four stating that they used the dog beach one or two times per week, three stating that they used it weekly, and three wjp did not use it regularly, but did use it.

There were additional comments regarding the dog beach. They are as follows:

1) Creating a dog-friendly space is what many forward thinking communities are doing.
2) There was a comment stating that the dog beach was a bad idea and wishes that there was not one.
3) Sometimes clean-up is half and half (between people who do clean up dog waste and people who didn't). Suggestion of ticketing people that do no clean up after their dogs.
4) Need more patrolling as dogs are regularly on the non-dog portion of the beach. Dogs are also allowed to run loose and the owners are not cleaning up the waste. There is waste left on the boardwalk all the time.
5) Need parking for the dog beach.

6) Suggested to require seasonal passes for the dog beach (similar to a launch permit). This would generate revenue that could be used to pay for more patrol in the area.

Farmers'/Flea Market:

The Farmers'/Flea Market are quite popular in the City. Unfortunately, the surveys that were submitted do not reflect the number of people that actually utilize it. The first question was whether the individuals utilized the market at its current location. There were twenty-four that stated they do with three stating they did not. The second question was whether or not the individuals would still utilize the market if it were relocated downtown. There were twenty-two people that stated they would with two that were unsure. The final question was whether or not they wanted to see the market located downtown. There were fourteen people that stated they would with nine that would not.

There was an additional area for suggestions of where to relocate the market if it were to be relocated and the number of times a certain area was suggested. The table below reflects the responses received. The sites are not in a particular order.

Lakeshore	1
Downtown	10
Close to other places to eat or shop	1
Lakeside	3
Morris St. parking lot	1
HotRod Harley site	1
Carpenter Bros lot	1
Anywhere that is convenient to get to	2
Heritage Landing	1
Western/Clay area	1
Don't move it	1

There was also an area for additional comments in regards to the Farmers'/Flea Market. They are as follows:

1. It's always busy with people. Out of town guests are impressed by the market.
2. Like to see a year round facility. Also make it more attractive.
3. Concerned if it is moved, it may not be easy to get to or visible. Many people that use it now, may not be able to get to it if it is moved.
4. Like to have longer hours for the market on the weekends.
5. The current location is adequate. The facility is shabby and out dated, the parking is awful. Need a nicer more friendly market.
6. The Farmer's Market is a very nice place to get fresh produce & gardening plants. The location is not near any downtown activities. A new facility would bring more people.

7. The current location needs updating. Nice to have a pavilion or picnic shelter added.
8. Would like to see an area where people can park to load their items they purchase. There are people with bad backs, etc. and this makes it hard for them to purchase items or load them into their vehicles.
9. There were some concerns when it came to staff to the market not being understanding when it came to needing to get behind a stall to load items into vehicles
10. A vendor had concerns in regards to issues with staff not being considerate or understanding to customers of the market or the vendors.
11. If the market was moved downtown, people would probably visit the downtown area more because the market would be there for the market.
12. Would like to see more activities for the kids.

LC Walker Arena:

There were twenty people that stated that they utilize the Arena and five that did not.

The following is a list of events that are utilized and the number of people that stated they utilize them.

Hockey	16
Football	7
Special Events	2
Graduation Ceremonies	4
Open ice skating in the winter	1
Circus	1
Ultimate Cage fighting	1
Rarely attend at all	1
Other Misc. events	1
Concerts/Musical events	1

The following is a list of events that were suggested and the number of times they were suggested for the arena.

Conferences	1
Trade Shows	1
More Concerts	8
Contemporary Christian Concerts	1
More family-friendly events	2
Any kind of entertainment	1
Parties	1
low-mid income home expos	1
Gallagher	1

Baseball	1
Figure skating competitions	1
High School Basketball	1
Senior events (dancing, etc.)	1

*There was an additional note for "Baseball", provided there was a home team and field.

There was also an area for additional comments in regards to the LC Walker Arena. They are as follows:

1. Suggested wider seats. The current seats are too narrow for some people. The seats are extremely uncomfortable. Taller people quite often have to sit sideways because the seats are too close together (front to back).
2. There was a suggestion that the hockey team not play as many home games. Hockey seems to monopolize the use of the arena and the management overuses it so others cannot.
3. Does not want to see fighting or other things that are detrimental to society at the arena.
4. Suggested a better surface for the football games.
5. Suggested cheaper pricing (such as $5). There is a need for a new scoreboard. Need for updating the interior.
6. Suggestion of a private lounge for nursing mothers.
7. Suggested more reasonably priced concerts - even afternoon ones.

Lakeshore Trail:

There were twenty two people that stated they use the trail and three that stated they did not.

The following is a list of items that were liked about the trail:

1. Enjoy the bike/walking trail and the views of the Lake. Beautiful scenery, variety of birds, well paved.
2. Would like to see North Muskegon connect to the Hart trail.
3. Excited about future portions to be completed
4. This is the best addition to City of Muskegon services in the last 5 years. It is amazing to take the trail in the evening with the sun setting and frogs chirping, and to know that this scenery is in the middle of an urban area.
5. Great way to be close to the beach. Safe & Clean
6. The little area with landscaping is a nice touch. Also like the swing benches.
7. Can get on anywhere, lots of plants & interesting things to see. A variety of scenery!
8. No car traffic. It is a very beautiful ride.
9. It seems fine for the people that use it.
10. A great place to walk dogs, ride bikes, & enjoy Muskegon Lake's lakeshore.
11. The picnic & rest spots.

The following is a list of items that were suggested to improve the trails:

1. Like to see more swings and picnic areas.
2. Add historic information to the trail describing "exhibits" would enhance the area.
3. Would like to see the trail being kept free of debris (thorns, etc.). Also concerns with the burs in the grass because they get in the dog's paws and stick to bare feet, etc.
4. Like to see it extended other trails connected to it.
5. Suggested restrooms, garbage cans, and bike racks to lock up bikes along the trail.
6. Suggested a connector to the farmer's market.
7. Many suggestions for a better trail connector in front of Heritage Landing because they end up being blocked off during festivals that are held downtown. It is not safe to use the street during these times.
8. Need a better map on the City's website so street names can be read in relation to the trails.
9. Needs shrubs trimmed for better view of shoreline on curves so you can see around them better for on-coming traffic. Do not allow fishing from bridges on the trail. They block it so you can't get through.
10. Suggestion of a final destination at the ovals of Pere Market Park. Like to see an open air mini pavilion with benches, drinking fountains, and a big map of all the areas with the bike trails highlighted.

The following is a list of comments that were made in regards to many of the amenities that were not covered in a particular area of the survey:

1. There is a need for more things to do in the Downtown and Lakeside areas.
2. The Parks Department had many compliments regarding the keeping up of the parks.
3. Many people were adamant that they did not want an RV Park at Pere Marquette. It is such a beautiful beach and park. Let the RV'ers stay in the State camp ground.
4. Have the Police Department give out fishing poles to get kids into fishing instead of trouble, they just need a good spot to fish and get them hooked on fishing.
5. Muskegon Lake brings in tourists. Festivals can be held anywhere, nothing wrong with a festival. But the lake can be a year round draw. There are many people looking for a place to take their kids fishing and not have to pay $25 to be entertained. There is a need to make the lake more accessible so people may use it.
6. The renovations to the "new" downtown should include something for people to go downtown for. Business offices, pay-to-park, Firehouse, condos, Baker College Culinary School, and a furniture store are great, but not what everyone is willing to go out of their way to get to.
7. Keep the Casinos out of the Muskegon Downtown. Let the casino go to the Horse Track like Detroit did. Don't allow them to take all the local revenue.

8. Pere Marquette and Margaret Drake Elliot - An additional fire pit between the Coast Guard Station and the South Break wall would improve assurance of availability for family and friend sunset campfire gatherings.
9. Applaud any effort to create a more family-friendly environment. Even people who don't have kids enjoy and benefit from these kinds of activities. Anything that can get people out into the community, engaging in positive activities and events is going to raise the value of our community, as well as the pride we can all take in our homes and City.
10. Not happy with the access to Heritage Landing during summer celebration and other events. Avoids the area all summer due to the fact this area is not accessible.
11. Like to see smoking banned or at least a sign near the parking area with information about how cigarette butts do not magically disappear by themselves when they are tossed in the sand.
12. Pere Marquette Park is a fantastic beach. There needs to be more activity down there to draw people. It would be nice to see specialty shops and some camping. However, the camping should be limited to a short time period (2-3 days) so more people get the chance to camp. Possibly even limit it to tent only camping with no RV's, to cut down on power hookups and dump stations that the RV's require.
13. Nothing added about the condition of places like Beukema Field, McCrea Field, Marsh Field, McGraft Park, tennis courts at Craig School, etc. The facilities used by Muskegon High School students as part of the City's partnership with the school district. These facilities are very important to the health, well-being and future of the City's young people and should be renovated to reflect the City's investment in youth. A partnership could & should exist between the school and City to promote this effort to the taxpayers.
14. It would be a nice tourist attraction to have under water viewing facility in the channel to view the fish and the bottoms of boats.

Completion of the Master Plan

Beginning July 2007, the plan was reviewed by City staff with appropriate changes being made to the general areas. In the spring and summer of 2008, there had been a survey that had been completed and submitted by the public. The Muskegon Chronicle also printed an article regarding the updating, survey, and process for updating the plan. City staff has also participated in the Neighborhood Association meetings. December 2008 a draft version of the plan was submitted to the Neighborhood Associations. Each Neighborhood Association was allowed one paper version and they could also request a version of the plan on CD. The Neighborhood Associations were given time to share the information with their respective neighborhoods and provide staff with input prior to any public hearing(s) being held. There was a notification to review the plan prior to the public hearing on February 14, 2009. There was notification of the public hearing before the Leisure Services Board in the Muskegon Chronicle on February 28, 2009. The Neighborhood Associations were also sent letters informing

them of the public hearing. The first public hearing was held on March 16, 2009 before the Leisure Services Board. The plan was also made available in the Clerk's Office, Community & Economic Development Department, Leisure Services Department, the Department of Public Works, Hackley Public Library, and the City's website prior to the public meeting being held.

After the public hearing, comments were incorporated into the plan.

On March 16, 2009, the Board held a public hearing on the Master Plan. The board then adopted the Master Plan at their Special Meeting on March 30, 2009. The City Commission adopted the plan at their Regular Meeting on April 14, 2009 after holding a public hearing. The completed plan is available at the Hackley Public Library, the City Clerk's office, the Community & Economic Development Department, and the Department of Public Works.

Action Plan

WATCH MUSKEGON

We're just getting started.

INTRODUCTION

In May of 2002, the Leisure Services Board adopted a mission statement and long range goals to guide the Departments in the development of the Citywide Recreation and Park system. The Mission Statement and Goals as adopted and modified more recently are as follows:

Mission Statement

The City of Muskegon Department of Recreation, Department of Public Works, and the Park's Departments will provide quality programs, facilities, and parks for the benefit and enjoyment of City residents and guests.

Goals

1. Provide recreational facilities and activities, which contribute to family and neighborhood stability.
2. Provide City Parks to enhance and contribute to the urban living environment.
3. Provide accessible, enriching recreational opportunities and experiences for all people.
4. Preserve the natural resources of the City for present and future generations.
5. Practice and promote good stewardship of parklands.
6. Maximize the use of Muskegon's waterfront for recreational purposes.
7. Develop partnerships to maximize the use of recreational facilities within the City.
8. Provide for a safe environment for park users.
9. Preserve and promote the historical and cultural heritage of the City.
10. Promote City Recreational facilities and programs to residents and guests.

These goals form the basis of the Action Plan.

ACTION PLAN AND ASSESSMENT

Goal #1. Provide recreational facilities and activities, which contribute to family and neighborhood stability.

Many of the City neighborhoods are older with many homes needing repair. The City Commission is currently working to clean up and rehabilitate the central City neighborhoods. The elimination of blight is one of their priorities.

Action Step I:

Department Staff and Board Members will meet with the various neighborhood organizations. Each neighborhood has different characteristics, available facilities, and different needs. The Department will endeavor to work with each neighborhood providing new programs and/or activities designed to meet neighborhood needs. Using the resources of the City, the neighborhood and other agencies, facilities, equipment, money and manpower will be found, which will help build neighborhood stability.

Action Step II:

The level of maintenance in neighborhood parks will continue to be improved. A well-maintained park can make a positive influence on how people view their own neighborhood.

The department will strive to make each City park visibly and physically inviting. Gravel parking lots need to be paved and sidewalks need to be repaired or replaced. All buildings need to be vandal-proof, repaired, and made accessible, and any graffiti must be cleaned up immediately. Neighborhoods are encouraged to adopt-a-park which can lead to a higher level of maintenance and often instills an atmosphere of "ownership" in neighborhood residents.

Action Step III:

Programs and activities will continue to be developed that are aimed at meeting family needs. After-school programs need to be continually evaluated and added to create activities that families can participate in together. Additional programs, facilities, and activities that create positive family interactions need to be developed with neighborhood residents.

Goal #2. Provide City parks to enhance and contribute to the urban living environment.

Parks are a necessary and important part of an urban community. Green spaces provide aesthetically pleasing breaks from concrete and buildings. Parks can be quiet places for people to relax, socialize, exercise, and allow the young and old alike to participate in activities not available in the home. Parks can enhance and make a positive contribution to the quality of life in a community. Beyond general maintenance of parklands is the need for quality facilities that the residents take pride in.

Additionally, a variety of facilities is needed to meet the diverse needs of the community.

The issue is; what can the City parks system do to enhance and make a greater contribution to the Muskegon Community as a whole?

Action Step IV:

The City will continue to rehabilitate and/or redesign many of the City Parks. Sheldon Park, McGraft Park, Reese Playfield, and many small parks throughout the City need paved parking lots, new buildings, picnic shelters, and minor rehabilitation in other areas.

Action Step V:

The City will diversify the types of facilities offered. A dune walkway that extends from Pere Marquette to Kruse should be pursued. The possibility of a major pavilion at Pere Marquette Park needs to be explored. A year-round Farmers Market should be expanded. The Lakeshore Trail connection to the State trail system will be completed. A decision must be made as to the future use of the Consumer's Energy Property. Public facilities geared toward those with special needs could be created throughout Sheldon Park, helping to bring them together and give them more of an opportunity to participate in sports and other activities. These and other options would enhance the current recreational offerings and facilities within the community. The "Master Plan for the Muskegon Lakeshore Trail" from 1990 will be followed whenever feasible. A connection and trail should be added adjacent to the Farmer's/Flea Market. Nims Neighborhood Park should be completed. Plans for a baseball complex on the Amoco property and athletic facility on the former Brunswick property should be explored and advanced of feasible. The Lake Michigan Water Trail routes within Muskgeon should be promoted and developed.

Goal #3. Provide accessible, enriching recreational opportunities and experiences for all people.

While the City does well with the current program offerings, the variety and type of programs simply do not meet community needs. There are

limited program opportunities for youth and senior citizens, and little-to-no programs for preschoolers and people with disabilities.

Further, City staff is exploring better ways of letting people know just what is offered and where. Currently, the City's website and Facebook page are actively used.

Facilities must be accessible to the participants. Not only must the facilities be barrier free, but people must be able to get to the facility. Individual programs should be offered within neighborhoods, or a public transportation system should be available to service the facility.

The issue at hand is, how can the City provide accessible, enriching, recreational opportunities for all people who live in or visit the City of Muskegon?

Action Step VI:

The City will continually review recreational marketing opportunities to better inform residents of available programs. Staff will continue to work with the media to increase public information about programs and facilities. The Department will continue to provide individual flyers to be distributed to target markets.

Action Step VII:

The City shall continue to work with neighborhood groups, special interest groups, and others to find ways to better service people's recreational needs and to develop new programs to meet these needs. The department will continue to work with local service groups, the school systems, local agencies, and other groups and governmental agencies to develop new programs and strengthen existing programs to better meet the recreational needs of the community; such as Nims Neighborhood Park, the baseball complex on the Amoco site, and the Lake Michigan Water Trail.

Goal #4. Preserve the natural resources of the City for present and future generations.

Muskegon is blessed with an abundance of natural resources. With Muskegon Lake, Lake Michigan and the many rivers, streams, and wetlands, Muskegon is rich in water resources. The barrier dunes along Lake Michigan are a unique natural phenomenon. The beach at Pere Marquette, which is one of the few nationally recognized "Clean Beaches", is one of the finest anywhere.

With the opening of the County Wastewater system many years ago, Muskegon took a giant step toward improving the water quality in Muskegon Lake. Since that time, Muskegon Lake has become suitable for boating and swimming and the fishing is one of the best fresh-water spots anywhere.

Much of what can be done to preserve the natural environment needs to be done through the Citywide planning process and the zoning ordinances. The City's Master Land Use Plan identifies many areas in the community as environmentally sensitive areas, and has designated them as OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION. Open Space Conservation Districts are intended to provide for permanent open spaces in the community, the protection of sand dunes, and other natural features.

Another classification is OPEN SPACE RECREATION DISTRICTS. These districts are intended to provide for permanent open spaces in the City and are designed to provide recreational activities. These districts are further intended to safeguard the natural features of the City.

While these are areas that have been identified, the issue is what can the City do to advocate the preservation of these and other natural environmental resources for present and future generations?

Action Step VIII:

In order to preserve natural environmental resource areas, all lands within the City which have sensitive environmental characteristics, will be identified. Once identified, appropriate zoning should be approved for that property to limit the types of development allowed on the property. If, as in the case of privately owned land, a change in zoning is not in the best interest of the property owners because of current land uses, the City should initiate policies and procedures which would insure that future development of these properties address environmental concerns; or the City should initiate options to purchase the land. The City will also continue to work with environmental groups on ways of improving the environmentally sensitive areas throughout the City. Much of this has already been accomplished through the efforts and partnerships of West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) and the City.

Goal #5. Practice and promote good stewardship of park lands.

One of the problems with any park system is the inappropriate behavior of many park users. Vandalism is the most common example of this type of behavior. The needless and senseless destruction of public property costs the City thousands of dollars annually. Graffiti, broken park equipment, and shattered restroom fixtures are the most frequent problems.

Littering is another common nuisance. While the Bottle Bill has all but eliminated soda cans and bottles from the parks, trash is still prevalent in many park areas (including plastic water and juice bottles). Too many people seem to be unwilling to walk the few extra feet necessary to deposit garbage into the trash receptacles that are provided throughout the park system. A deposit on all bottles and cans would help keep trash down.

Pet owners can create problems for park users and staff if they do not pick up after their animals when walking in the City parks.

The issue is; how does the City promote the proper use and care for its park facilities?

Action Step IX:

A major part of promoting good stewardship is accomplished by setting a good example. This can be done in several ways. The City will repair any damage or graffiti done immediately. Fewer people will see the damage, and more people will see well-maintained equipment and grounds. The City will develop a marketing strategy that will better educate Community residents on the effects of vandalism and improper use of City facilities. Deterrent systems such as digital cameras installed in problem areas may be beneficial.

Residents need to foster an ownership feeling for the system so that they will take care of their parks just as they would take care of their own homes. New signage encouraging positive behavior should be developed. The department will encourage the use of high school community service hours to encourage students to participate in ownership of our parks system.

Goal #6. Maximize the use of Muskegon's waterfront for recreational purposes.

While the properties owned by the City along Lake Michigan have been developed and are being utilized, the properties owned by the City along Muskegon Lake have been underutilized for years. More recently, however, recreational development along the shoreline of Muskegon Lake has increased dramatically. Two new marinas are in the planning stages. The development of Harbor 31 (the former Teledyne property), which includes a boardwalk and a proposed marina has greatly improved the shores of Muskegon Lake. And the Lakeshore Trail has added significant access to Muskegon Lake.

The City needs to continually stimulate the recreational development of the lakeshore. In doing so, the City can provide an assortment of options for residents.

Since people enjoy a variety of recreational opportunities, more of them will use the facilities if additional opportunities such as picnic facilities, dune walkways, fishing piers, kite-boarding, paddle boats, Jet Ski rentals, beach equipment rentals, and fishing piers are available. Many of these options are already in place.

The issue is; how can the City provide a range of waterfront recreational activities to attract a wider range of users to waterfront facilities, and get underdeveloped lakefront property developed for public use?

Action Step X:

The City will continue to seek public/private partnerships to both develop public lands and to provide additional support facilities and activities on

the City's waterfront properties. Such activities as kite boarding, wind surfing, jet skiing, parasailing, and paddleboat rentals should continue to be added to the system through concession contracts with private businesses. Further, management contracts should be explored. These types of agreements can provide a better way to manage facilities, while encouraging private development of public properties to the benefit of the whole community.

Opportunities to improve facilities, increasing camping opportunities, and providing greater public access to the lake will help provide additional activities for residents and visitors. Locations for these venues should be sought. This includes making improvements for fishing and recreational boating at Richard's Park.

Action Step XI:

The City will promote and encourage the recreational development or discuss current uses of the lakefront and how the City can work with private property owners adjacent to the lake to help them to beautify, improve access to, and possibly redevelop at least the first 150' of Muskegon Lake frontage.

Action Step XII:

The City will embrace the National Park Service National Water Trail Best Management Practice (BMP) criteria by promoting, establishing, and improving recreational opportunities that encourage use of the local and Great Lakes Region water trails.

Goal #7. Develop partnerships to maximize the use of recreational facilities within the City.

Partnerships are an agreement between two or more parties which benefit all parties. The key to a successful partnership is determining just what the needs of each partner is, and developing an agreement that meets each of those needs.

All too often in the past, communities in urban areas have built facilities or instituted and run programs to meet the needs of its own residents. Often a duplication of services has resulted as other communities or agencies have adequately serviced the residents. In today's marketplace, it makes more sense to pool resources and run cooperative programs to better utilize the facilities and services available.

The issue is; how can the City develop partnerships to maximize the use of available recreational facilities in the City for the benefit of the community?

Action Step XIII:

The City will look at areas where facilities are underutilized or programs are not well attended. Options will be explored as to what can be done to improve and maximize the use of the facility. Options will include possible partners that could benefit from the service, or who could help provide some element of the service that would make the facility/program more attractive to user groups. Developing a relationship with the group, "No More Sidelines" is an example of this. Partnerships that will help improve the quality of service and/or level of service provided will be sought out in all areas of the department.

Goal #8. To provide a safe environment for Park users.

For people to utilize public properties on a regular basis they must feel safe and welcome. Park visitors must not fear for their personal safety or the safety of their vehicles. People should be able to relax and enjoy their experiences at the City of Muskegon facilities.

The issue is; how can the City provide a safe environment for people using the City of Muskegon Parks facilities?

Action Step XIV:

The City will work with neighborhood associations to evaluate the perceived level of safety in the parks. Community Police Officers will be involved in the programming whenever possible. A beach warning system has been explored.

Action Step XV:

The City will continue to evaluate playground equipment and other safety sensitive areas within the parks system to make them universally accessible. Playground equipment and other equipment will be repaired and/or replaced, if deemed to be unsafe or not universally accessible.

Goal #9. To preserve and promote the historical and cultural heritage of the City.

The cultural, social, and economic history of the City provides potential economic opportunities, particularly in the downtown area. Heritage Village and the entire National Register Historic District contain a variety of architectural treasures from the City's past. Cooperation with various historic and civic groups will be instrumental in the preservation and restoration of parkland of historic value within the downtown and other areas within the City.

The issue is; how can the City preserve and promote its historical and cultural heritages?

Action Step XVI:

As a focal point of Downtown Muskegon, Hackley Park is the site of many community events including the Art Fair during the summer, the Parties-

in-the-Park, and the Family Holiday gathering at Hackley Park. These and other events attract thousands to this 100+ year old park. The City will work toward the completion of the historical restoration plan for the park. Additionally, Muskegon's history and other historic sites will be included in recreational programs whenever possible. Much of this has occurred with a generous donation from a private donor through the Community Foundation for Muskegon County. This Park was recently landscaped (following the original plan) and a fund was established for future maintenance. A community stage was recently built in the Park.

Action Step XVII:

The City will work to encourage and develop other historical/tourist facilities in the City. This includes the newly developed Great Lakes Naval Memorial and Museum, which includes the Silverside Submarine, the LST, and the restoration of the Milwaukee Clipper.

Goal #10. Promote City recreational facilities and programs to residents and guests.

With one of the finest beaches in Michigan, the sand dunes, the Silverside's and LST, the many festivals and special events, and the many marina and waterfront facilities, the City of Muskegon has a variety of facilities and activities that are attractive to people from everywhere.

The Muskegon Area Chamber of Commerce and the Muskegon County Convention and Visitor's Bureau promote activities and facilities throughout the region. However, their focus is not specific to the City of Muskegon.

The issue is; how can the City of Muskegon promote the City's recreational facilities and programs to all people?

Action Step XVIII:

The City has developed a brochure highlighting City tourist and regional facilities such as the Farmer's Market, Special Events, and the bike trail for distribution to rest stops, hotels, and other appropriate locations in conjunction with the Convention and Visitor's Bureau and the Chamber of Commerce. New initiatives include the website, etc.

Action Step XIX:

The City, with the assistance from the Chamber of Commerce and Main Street, provided some directional signage to public facilities throughout the City, and new plans are underway to expand this "way-finding" system.

Evaluation and Updating

To ensure public access to the development plan, copies will be made available for public view at the following locations:

1. Department of Economic Development and the City Clerk's Office – Muskegon City Hall
2. Hackley Public Library
3. Muskegon Community College Library

The plan itself will be monitored and evaluated on a yearly basis incorporating the following procedure:

1. Year-end review by Department Staff of the plan and all projects started, completed, or delayed during the past year.
2. Review of the plan by the City Commission during annual budget hearings

Budgets for the next year's programs and projects are prepared and presented to the Commission in June. Further updating of the implementation plan will be made at this time to eliminate any deficiencies that many have developed.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE

RANK	PROJECT	TOTAL COST
1.	PERE MARQUETTE PARK	
	Extension of accessible walkway to Lake	$ 200,000
	Playground Equipment	200,000
	Building Improvement	150.000
	TOTAL	$ 550,000
3.	BEUKEMA	
	Building Reconstruction (restroom/storage area)	$ 400,000
	Pave parking	100,000
	Picnic Shelter	204,700
	TOTAL	$ 704,700
4.	REESE	
	Pave Parking	$ 100,000
	Picnic Shelter	204,700
	Basketball Court/tennis courts	400,000
	TOTAL	$ 704,700
5.	NIMS NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	
	Playground equipment resurfacing	$ 40,000
	Accessible walking path around park	15,000
	Landscaping	10,000
	Drinking Fountains	10,000
	TOTAL	$ 75,000
6.	AMOCO BASEBALL COMPLEX	
	Phase I	$ 500,000
	Phase II	800,000
	Phase III	800,000
	TOTAL	$2,100,000
7.	SMITH-RYERSON	
	Reconstruct tennis courts/fencing	$ 100,000
	Drinking Fountains	10,000
	TOTAL	$ 110,000
8.	SHELDON	
	Pave Parking/alley	$ 50,000
	Concrete sidewalk along south side of Isabella	13,000
	Asphalt sidewalks within park	16,000

	Baseball Diamond	35,000
	Irrigation	75,000
	Picnic Shelter	204,700
	New restroom building	300,000
	Playground Equip. resurfacing	155,000
	Basketball Court (1/2 court only)	75,000
	TOTAL	$ 923,700
9.	McGRAFT	
	Pave Parking	$ 100,000
	Irrigation	75,000
	Picnic Shelter	204,700
	Restroom building (west side of park)	300,000
	Gazebo for lagoon area	150,000
	Improve Tennis Courts/Paint/Fencing	100,000
	Kayak/Canoe Ramp	100,000
	TOTAL	$1,029,700
10.	FLEA MARKET (YUBA STREET SITE)	
	Site Restoration	200,000
	TOTAL	$ 200,000
11.	GRAND TRUNK LAUNCH RAMP	
	Parking lot paving	$ 150,000
	Parking lot lights	75,000
	Restroom Facilities	75,000
	Picnic Shelter	75,000
	Utilities	125,000
	Fish cleaning station	25,000
	Launch Ramp Improvements	75,000
	TOTAL	$ 600,000
12.	McCREA	
	Playground Equipment	$ 155,000
	Picnic Shelter	204,700
	Resurface basketball (½ court)	75,000
	TOTAL	$ 434,700
13.	KRUSE PARK	
	Dune Walkways	$ 200,000
	Expand Parking Lot	100,000
	TOTAL	$ 300,000
14.	HACKLEY PARK	
	Electrical upgrade	$ 100,000
	TOTAL	$ 100,000

15.	HARTSHORN MARINA	
	Shoreline Protection	$ 300,000
	Upgrade Marina main building	80,000
	Parking Lot Lighting	50,000
	Small boat basin improvements:	
	Restroom Facilities	75,000
	Picnic Shelter	75,000
	Utilities	75,000
	Paving	150,000
	Boat Docks	150,000
	Fish Cleaning Station	25,000
	Dingy Launch Ramp (2)	60,000
	TOTAL	$ 940,000
16.	RICHARDS PARK	
	Bicycle Only Campgrounds	$ 50,000
	Canoe and Kayak Launch Ramp	100,000
	Fishing Pier	25,000
	Fish Cleaning Station	25,000
	Parking Lots	50,000
	TOTAL	$ 350,000
16.	SPORTS/SOCCER COMPLEX (causeway park)	
	Purchase	$ 900,000
	Phase I	$ 800,000
	Phase II	$ 800,000
	Phase III	$ 800,000
	TOTAL	$3,300,000
17.	LIGHTON PARK	
	Gazebo	150,000
	Landscaping	80,000
	Benches	100,000
	TOTAL	$ 330,000
18.	MARSH FIELD	
	Lighting	$ 30,000
	Playground Equipment	60,000
	Bleacher Renovation	30,000
	Dug-Out Renovation	25,000
	Additional Concession Venue	40,000
	Splash Pad	10,000
	Picnic Tables	10,000
	Drinking Fountain	5,000
	Paved Track Repair/Replacement	90,000
	Grills	3,000
	Additional Rest Room Facility by Picnic Area	50,000

Picnic Shelter	20,000
Landscaping	40,000
Irrigation	35,000
TOTAL	$ 448,000

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE FOR BUILDING CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

RANK	PROJECT	TOTAL COST
1.	SMITH-RYERSON	
	Enlarge Gymnasium	$ 1,600,000
	TOTAL	$ 1,600,000
2.	McGRAFT	
	New Community Hall	$ 3,000,000
	Demolish current Community Bldg.	20,000
	TOTAL	$ 3,020,000

3. L.C. WALKER ARENA

Following is a priority list of recommended renovations for the L.C. Walker Arena. It is estimated that recommended priority renovations will cost approximately $4,000,000. All associated cost estimates for the renovations are subject to further study; however, the magnitude and order of which these suggested renovations should occur are in descending order from the highest value added renovation. The top five recommended renovations are as follows:

a. New Club, south side – Alternate Club, remove 160 seats, provide ADA seating at center ice, renovate Hall of Fame and concourse, convert in-club lounge, future connection to ancillary ice rink, upgrade 200 club seats at center ice, optional addition of Loges (6 boxes) results in 3,600 square feet of club lounge.

b. Northeast terrace – 16 Loge seats, Corner Club for corner seats, maintain existing wheelchair locations, create knee-wall separation with new suspended ceiling, refinish floor, move ADA seats to southeast corner.

c. Southwest terrace – 16 Loge seats, Corner Club for corner seats, maintain existing wheelchair locations, create knee-wall separation with new suspended ceiling, refinish floor, move ADA seats to southeast corner.

d. New roof and HVAC – Re-roof arena building, excluding Annex; allowance for deferred maintenance and partial replacement of existing HVAC.

e. Ancillary ice rink – Ancillary ice rink; complete demolition of Annex, Ice Plant/floor, deferred maintenance and upgrades to existing Ice Plant.

NOTES:

1) Restrooms will be universally accessible with a minimum of one accessible stall in each of the restrooms (male and female). There will also be one universally accessible unisex restroom.
2) Picnic Shelters will be universally accessible with amenities for each one constructed. The amenities with be two grills with one being universally accessible and picnic tables with at least two being universally accessible.
3) Parking areas will include restriping and proper signage. The universally accessible parking areas will meet or exceed the number required for accessibility.
4) Basketball courts (rebuilt, new, or resurfaced) will include new poles, back board, hoops, any painting, and lighting.