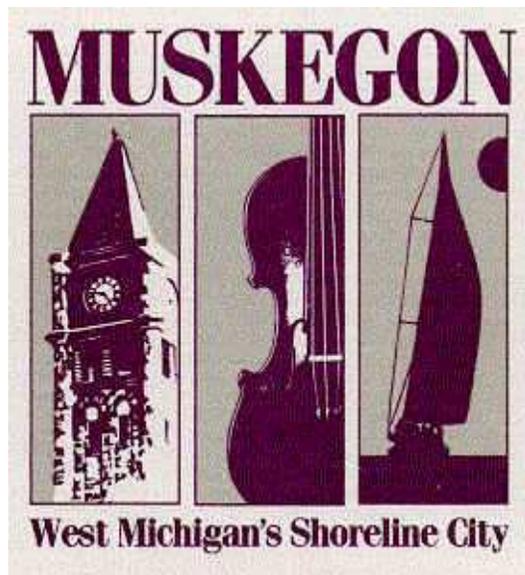


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# Muskegon Parks & Recreation Master Plan 2009



Amended December 2011

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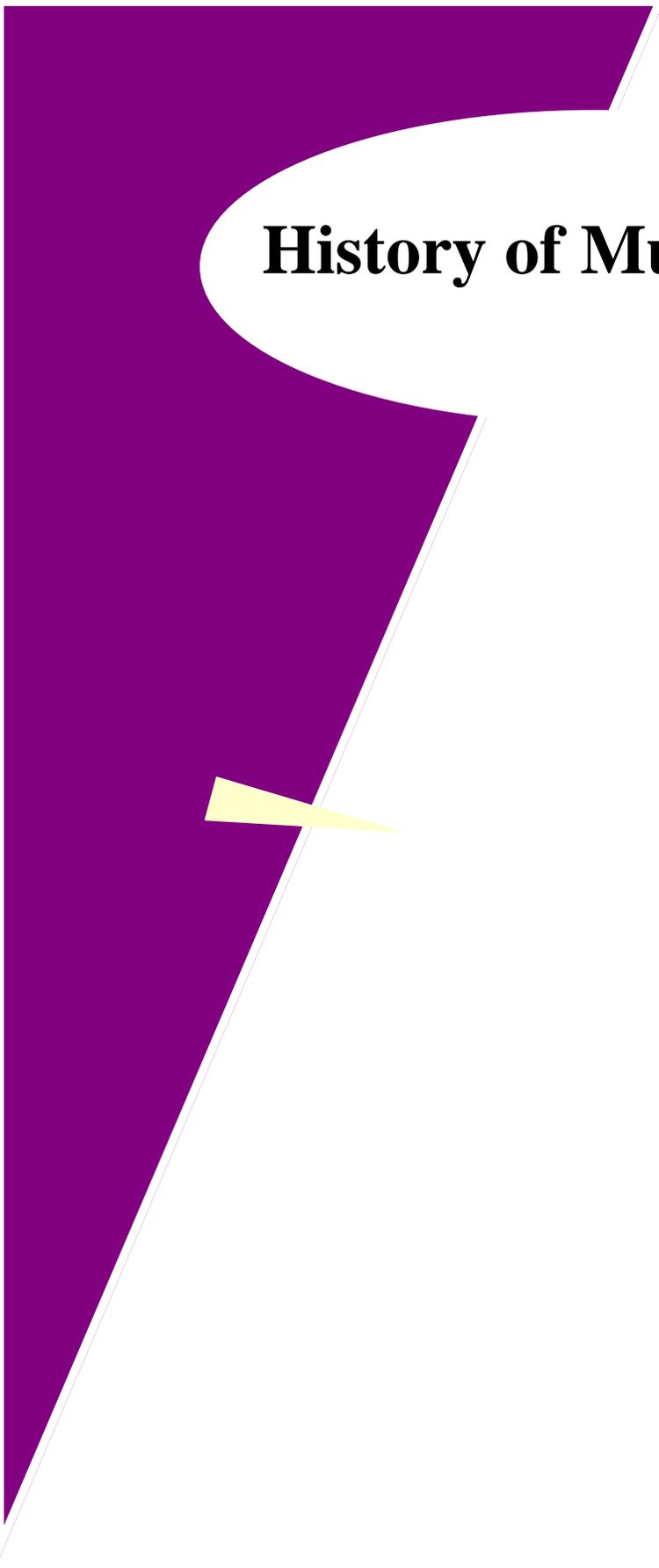
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# **History of Muskegon**

## **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 harvesting of Michigan's prime timberlands, Muskegon's sawmills began closing in rapid succession. Between the mid-1800 and 1900's, 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 20-30 years, Muskegon was transformed from a lumber town to a manufacturing/industrial center. The process was slow and at times, painful; however, it proved successful.

The strong industrial base established during this period continued to grow throughout the first half of the century, due to war equipment production, such as tanks, and auto-related industries. By the early sixties this base, too, began to deteriorate. This phenomenon was common to many Michigan cities whose economy was tied to automotive manufacturing.

The second major change began to occur in the mid-seventies. With the deterioration of the auto-related industries, the City had to look to other ways to spur the economy. Existing manufacturing diversified, so that it would not be so reliant on the automobile, and tourism became one of the major focal points of future growth.

Since the mid-seventies, the City and surrounding governmental agencies have begun developing new tourist related facilities and events. In conjunction with the Muskegon Economic Growth Alliance (the regional economic development agency at the time, which later became Muskegon Area First) and the Convention and Visitors' Bureau, the Parties-in-the-Park, the Shoreline Spectacular, Summer Celebration, and several other special festivals were created. More recent events include the Unity Christian Music Festival, Irish Music Festival, Bike Time, and the Taste of Muskegon. The L.C. Walker Arena is also the home of the Muskegon Lumberjacks hockey team, Muskegon Thunder indoor football team, and has many other attractions. 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 purchase by the State are all facilities designed to attract the tourism market.

In 1995, Muskegon county voters approved a \$15,000,000 bond issue to renovate the L. C. Walker Arena and the Frauenthal Center for the Performing Arts. The renovations to both these facilities improved the quality of experiences that people using these facilities enjoy.

Several private developments have increased tourism in Muskegon, as well. The Harbour Towne, Great Lakes, and Muskegon Yacht Harbor Marinas have helped reestablish marine traffic to Muskegon Lake. The continued expansion of Michigan's Adventure Amusement Park, which is now a part of the Cedar Fair theme parks, added quality new facilities to the area. In addition, a marina and restaurant were built as a component of the SPX Corporate Headquarters expansion on the former Lakey Property. More recently, this property was purchased by new owners and the Shoreline Inn & Suites was built. The former Muskegon Mall site is currently going through new construction as well

as rehabilitation of structures that were still there. All of these developments have added to the available tourist-related recreational activities and services in Muskegon.

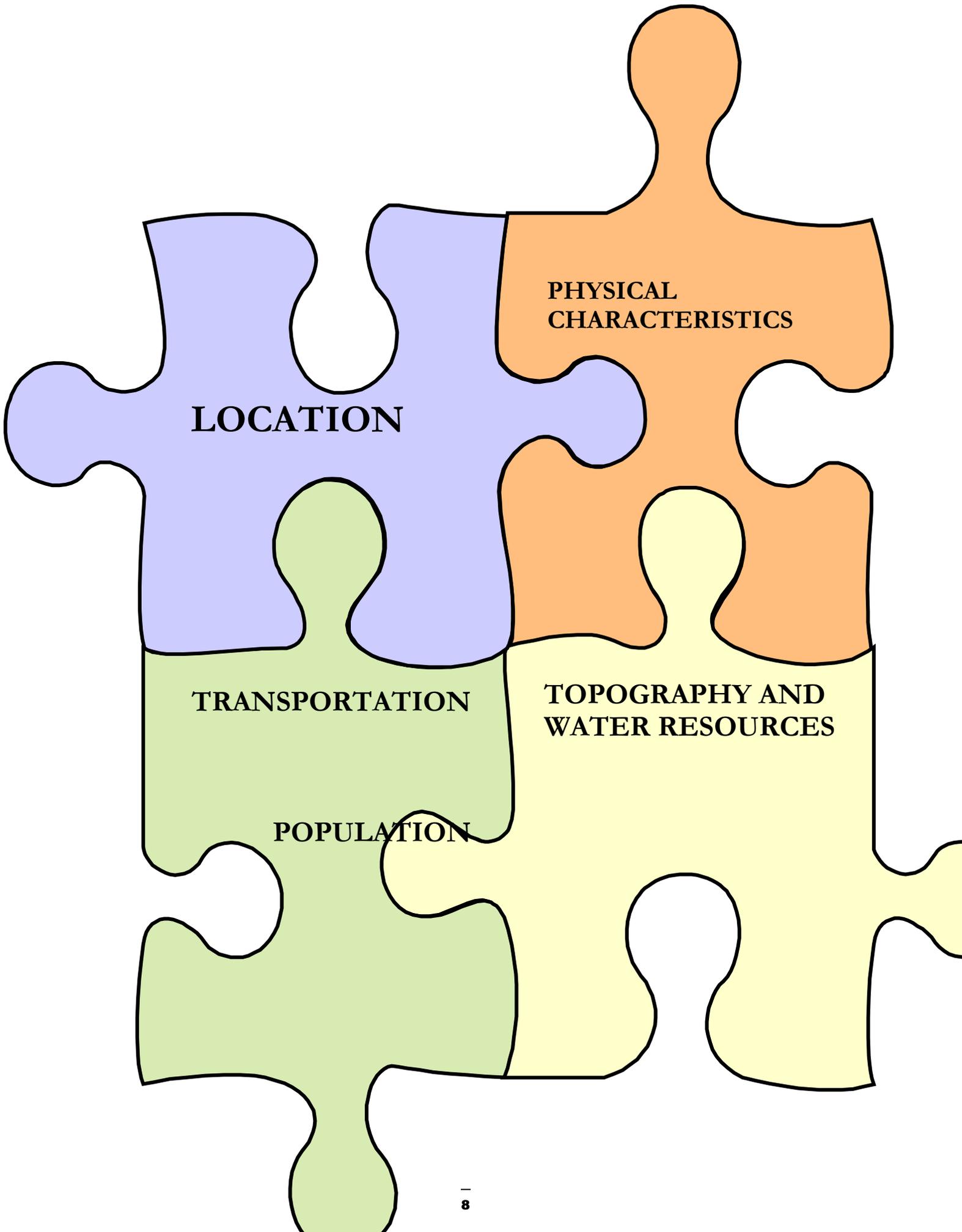
The Muskegon County Convention and Visitors' Bureau has taken an assertive role in attracting tourists and conventions to the Muskegon area. It has become an integral part of the overall economic development focus for the county. It is comprised of four basic components:

- 1) General Tourism;
- 2) Visitors Center Operation;
- 3) Group Tour Development; and
- 4) Meeting and Convention Development.

In addition, the City of Muskegon Event's Committee was established in 2008. The Committee's objective is to provide residents of the area with events to attend and participate in, and to bring visitors to the area to enjoy Muskegon's natural resources, entertainment, dining, accommodations, and shopping opportunities. With the facilities and activities already in place, Muskegon's many natural resources, and the City's Events Committee and County Convention and Visitors Bureau, the future of tourism in Muskegon continues to be bright.

Over the last several years, Muskegon's manufacturing employment has remained relatively stable, despite a difficult economy. The City of Muskegon Economic Development staff regularly meet with industry and business owners. The City works with the private sector to address concerns and assist with retention and expansion. In addition, the City partners with the other 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 of Michigan departments, in an effort to provide the best programming possible to businesses and industries.

With this cooperation a unified vision has been developed and we are moving forward together for the future of Muskegon.



**LOCATION**

**PHYSICAL  
CHARACTERISTICS**

**TRANSPORTATION**

**POPULATION**

**TOPOGRAPHY AND  
WATER RESOURCES**

## **COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION**

### **Location**

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

Muskegon is the central city of Muskegon County, surrounded by Muskegon Lake, Lake Michigan and other cities and townships. The downtown serves as the entertainment district for the entire area. Cultural and entertainment venues include the Frauenthal Center for the Performing Arts, Walker Arena, the Muskegon Arts Museum, the County Museum and Hackley-Hume Historic sites.

### **Physical Characteristics**

The City of Muskegon has a total area of approximately 19.9 square miles. The developed portion of the City encompasses about 63.78% with any bodies of water or roads excluded. Total road area encompasses about 14.3% of the area. Of the developed portion, residential is at 17.2%, commercial is at 9.25%, and industrial is at 7.38%. The city owns 10.05% improved and unimproved land. The State of Michigan 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 serves most of the county with bus service. The Muskegon County Airport has flights daily to Detroit, Chicago, and Milwaukee. In 2004 a cross-lake ferry service between Muskegon and Milwaukee was added with the Lake Express. The ferry carries both passengers and cars. There has also been the construction of the bike trail, otherwise known as the Muskegon Lakeshore Trail. Construction of the trail began in 1998. Funding for the construction came from the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, and the sale of the once city owned Chase Hammond Golf Course. The Lakeshore Trail is designed to provide users many different types of scenery, including Lake Michigan, Muskegon Lake, dunes, parks, and much more.

### **Topography**

Muskegon is fortunate to have Lake Michigan and Muskegon Lake bordering the community. The Muskegon River provides the primary source of water into Muskegon Lake. The barrier dunes are the prominent feature of the City, as most of the remainder of the City is relatively flat. The only other major elevation changes occur 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. The fishing is some of the best in Michigan. Because the city is landlocked, there is limited wildlife. However, deer roam the sand dunes and it is not unusual to spot flocks of wild turkey and the occasional fox. The City recently completed the

Lakeshore Trail, which travels the entire length of the Muskegon Lake shoreline. This trail offers spectacular views of the lake and allows those using the trail to interact with nature. One of the goals of the City is to continually improve public access, which includes additional fishing opportunities.

### **Soils and Vegetation**

Much of Muskegon has a sandy soil because of the sand dunes along Lake Michigan. There is a strip of clay that runs through the middle of the city. Much of the area along Muskegon Lake is fill material from either the foundries, sawdust remaining from the lumber days, or other sources. The city is heavily wooded and the city has been designated a Tree City. Since the majority of the city is developed, the natural areas exist primarily along Ruddiman and Ryerson Creeks and in the many parks, including the sand dune parks along Lake Michigan.

### **Climate**

The City of Muskegon has an average precipitation of 32.6 inches per year, which includes over 100 inches of snow annually. The mean temperature in July is 70° and in January it is 23°. Due to the effects of Lake Michigan, Muskegon is one of the cloudiest areas in the United States.

### **Environmental Issues**

Historically, there were many foundries and manufacturing plants located along the shoreline, as well as in other locations throughout the City. Unfortunately, this left a legacy of environmental problems due to foundry fill, spills, etc. Over the last several years, the City has worked diligently to have the buildings reused or removed. The City has also partnered with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and private developers/owners to have these properties environmentally remediated. In addition, an Area-Wide site assessment has been completed for the Shoreline, through a MDEQ Site Assessment Grant. This assessment will assist with preservation and redevelopment along the shoreline. This process is ongoing.

### **Zoning**

The City of Muskegon has nineteen different zoning districts. The city has a Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals, which regulate zoning throughout the community. The current zoning ordinance was adopted in 1987.

### **Population**

The characteristics of population are important in determining resident needs in planning for programs and facilities. As indicated in Table II, Muskegon has experienced a steady decline in population from 1950 to 1990. The population has been fairly steady since then.

**TABLE II**  
**1950-2000 Population**

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

Source: West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission, March 2002. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census of Population and Housing

Much of this decline and lack of growth can be attributed to urban sprawl as city residents have moved to the suburbs of Norton Shores, Roosevelt Park, North Muskegon, and the surrounding townships. Projections through the year 2010 indicate only a slight increase in the population of the City, to 40,589.

The Population percentage distribution by age group for 2000 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  
2000 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+
3,062	3,082	2,736	2,593	3,536	6,672	6,222	4,670	1,446	1,109	2,218	1,989	770

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census of Population and Housing.

The percentage of women in Muskegon (47.7%) is slightly lower than men (52.3%). The median age is 32.3 years. 24,309 of the City residents are white; 12,701 or about 31.6% of the residents are black; and 3,095 people are of various other backgrounds, with 2,560 being of Hispanic or Latino background.

In the past ten years, the median age has increased only about three years, but the population of women has gone down from just over 50% in 1990. There has also been a significant increase in the minority population with the number of white residents falling about 4,000 and with an increase of approximately 4% in the population of blacks.

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. 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.

The senior high rise units, however, are predominantly in the central city. Minority populations tend also to be in the central city or on the east side of the community. There is no specific area where there are people with special needs.

The unemployment rate in the city of Muskegon has fluctuated over the years. Based on the Michigan Labor Market Information's Annual Unemployment Statistics; the unemployment rates have been: 1991 had an unemployment rate of 5.57%; in 1996 it decreased to 3.24%; in 2001 it increased to 4.4%; and in 2006 it decreased to 4.09%.

As new census information becomes available, population characteristics would need to be reviewed in planning future recreation priorities. The current information is based on the 2000 census information. The next census is in 2010. The under 44 population of the 80's can be

seen in 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 be demanding senior programs.

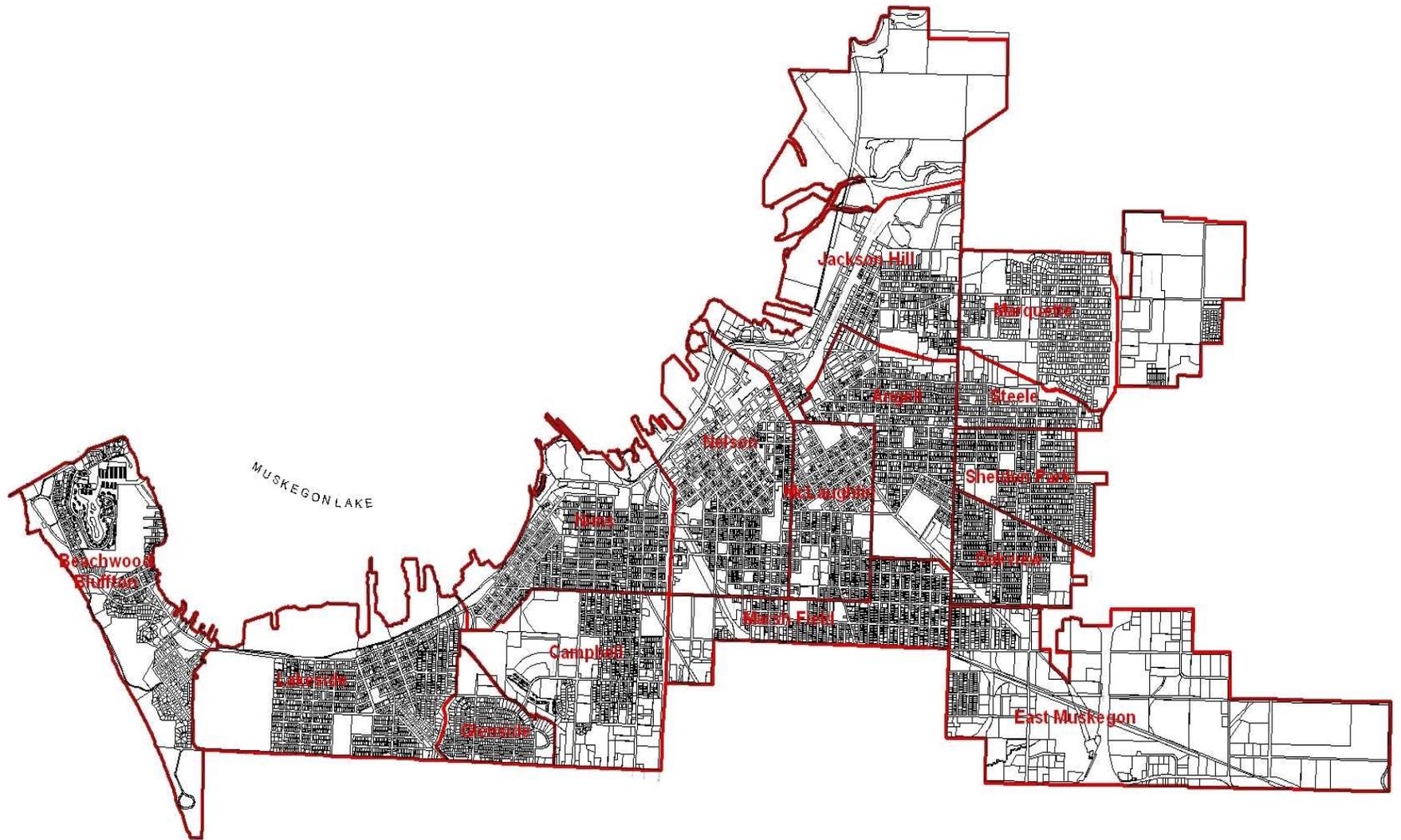
All City parks are open from 5:00 a.m. until 11:00 p.m. and are accessible to residents and non-residents alike. In addition to the residents of the City, Muskegon facilities also serve approximately 75,000 more residents within the metropolitan area and thousands more from all over West Michigan. For example, over 50% of the 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. However, neighborhood parks and the Community Center at Smith-Ryerson are used almost exclusively by City residents. A relatively new addition to the community is the “dog beach”, on the Southern end of the Lake Michigan beach just north of Kruse Park. Many visitors from out-of-town come to Muskegon specifically to walk their dogs on this beach.

## **Conclusions**

The City of Muskegon has a diverse population. Programs and facilities need to be initiated that will better meet the needs of the diverse population.

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

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, efforts need to be increased to enhance tourism in Muskegon. Better marketing of what the city has to offer will also help to 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**



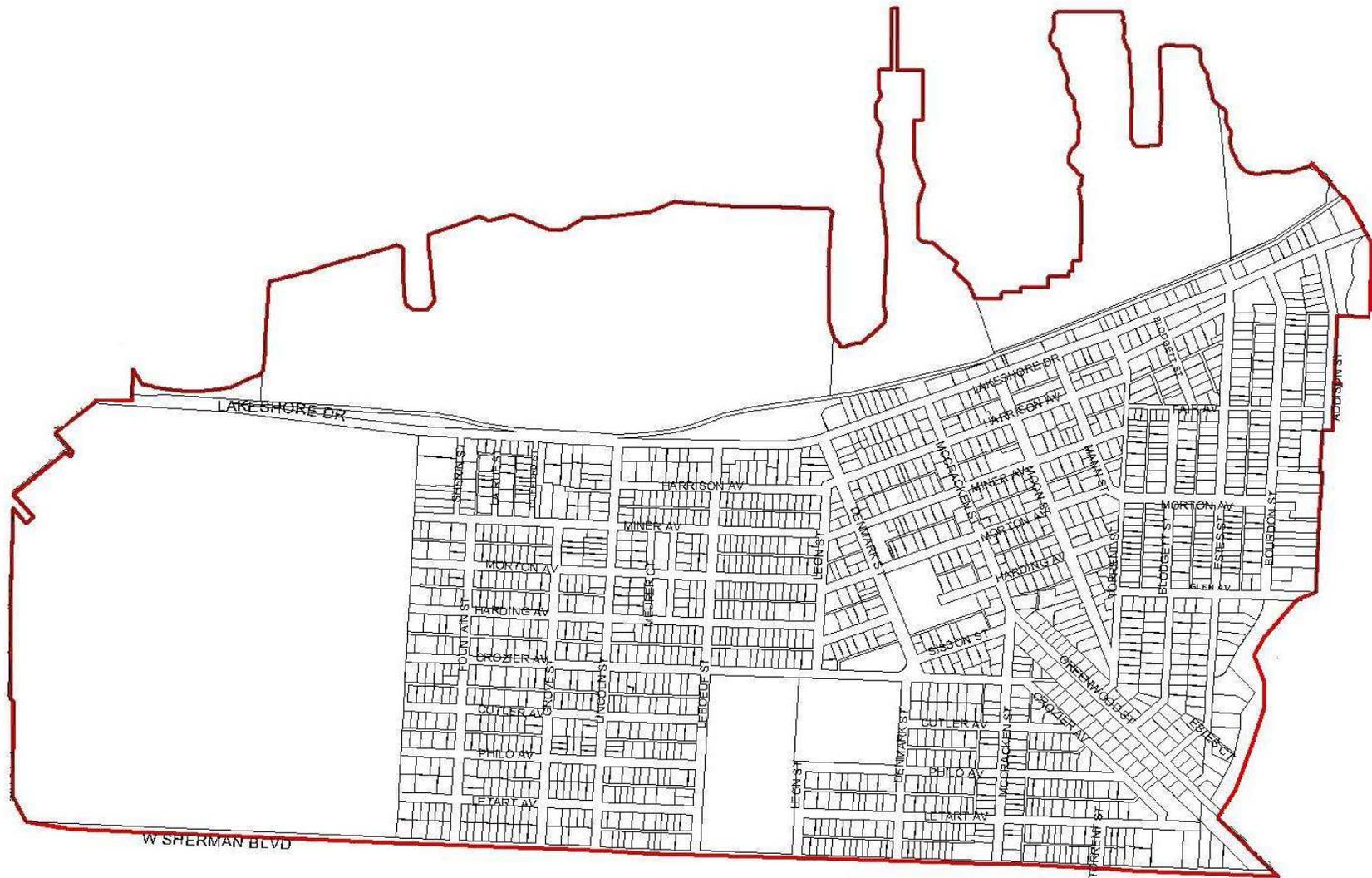


East Muskegon Neighborhood



**Glenside Neighborhood**





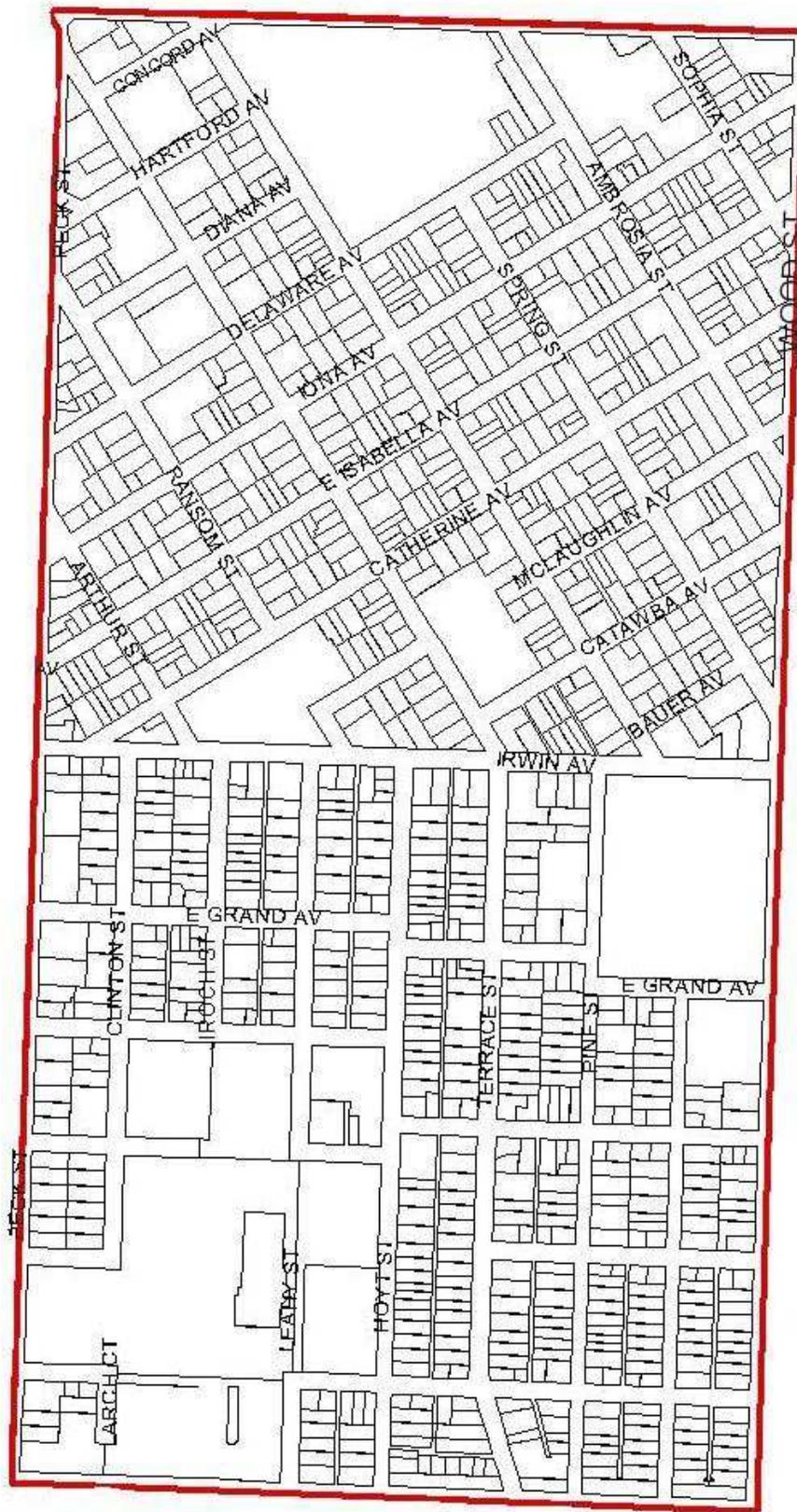
Lakeside Neighborhood



Marquette Neighborhood



## Marsh Field Neighborhood



McLaughlin Neighborhood



Nelson Neighborhood





## Oakview Neighborhood



## Sheldon Park Neighborhood

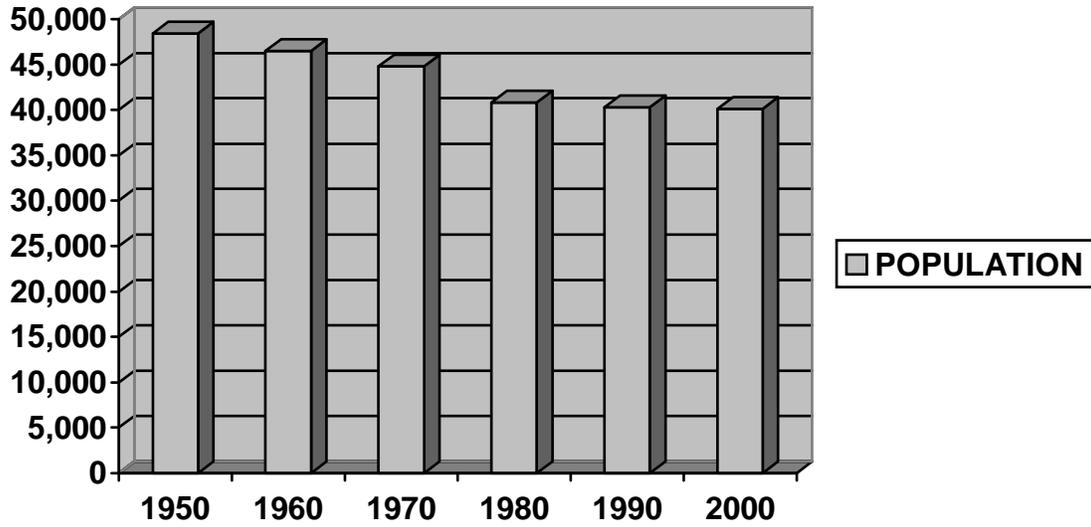


Steele Neighborhood

**Zoning Map**  
**To be inserted separately in**  
**the final product.**

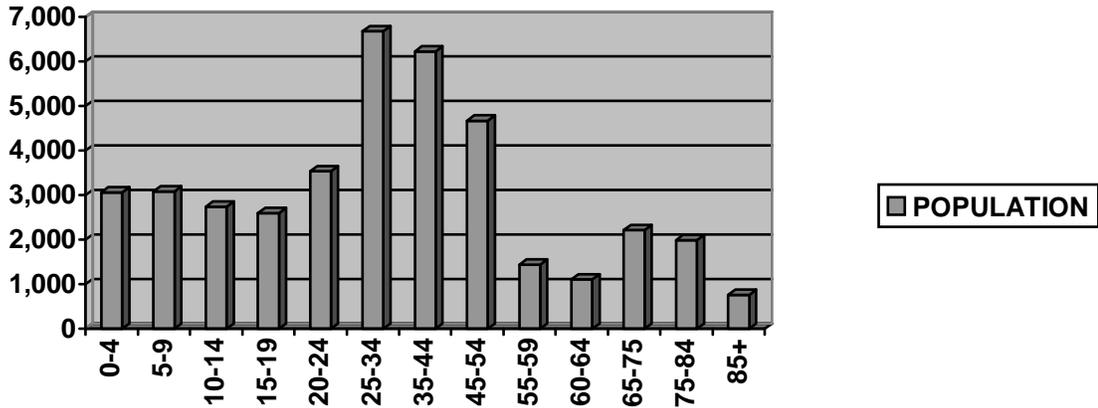


TABLE I  
POPULATION OF THE CITY OF MUSKEGON



SOURCE: West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission  
U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000 Census of Population and Housing

TABLE II  
POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY AGE



SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000 Census of Population and Housing

TABLE III  
POPULATION BY GENDER

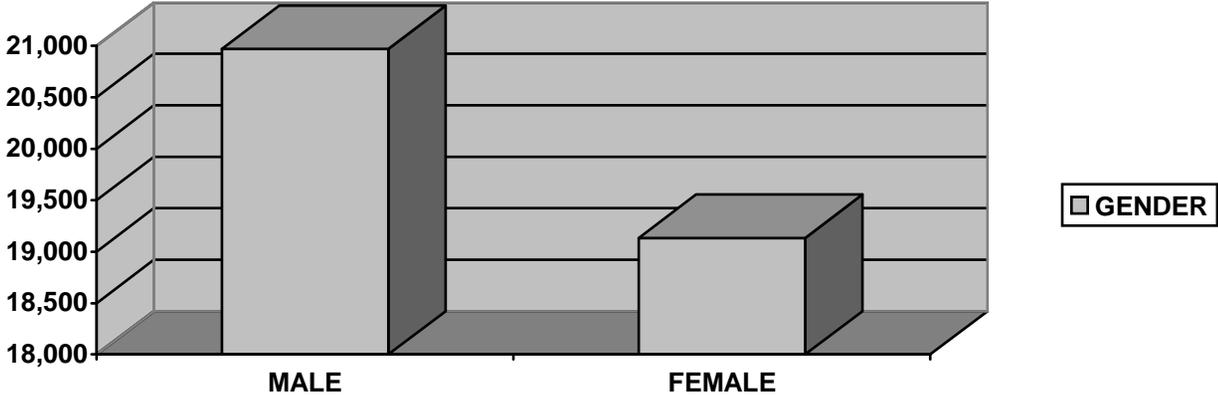


TABLE IV  
POPULATION BY RACE

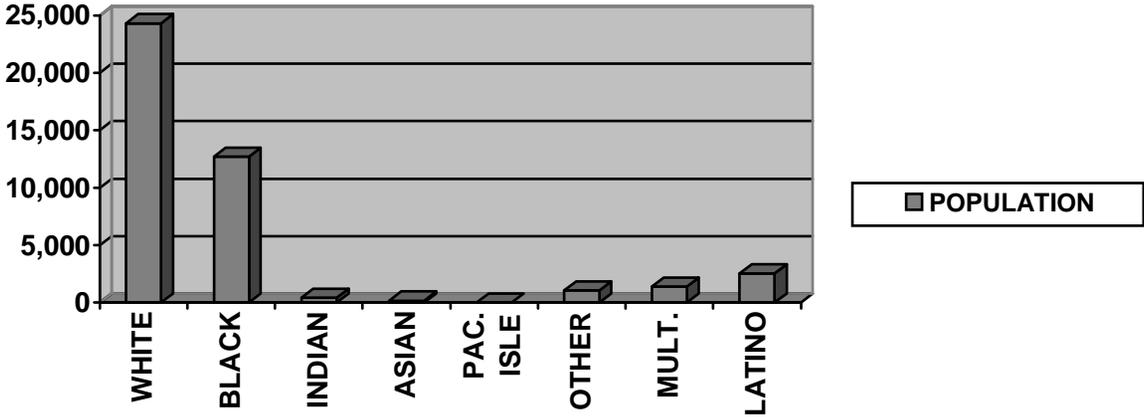


TABLE V  
POPULATION DISTRIBUTION  
INCOME LEVEL

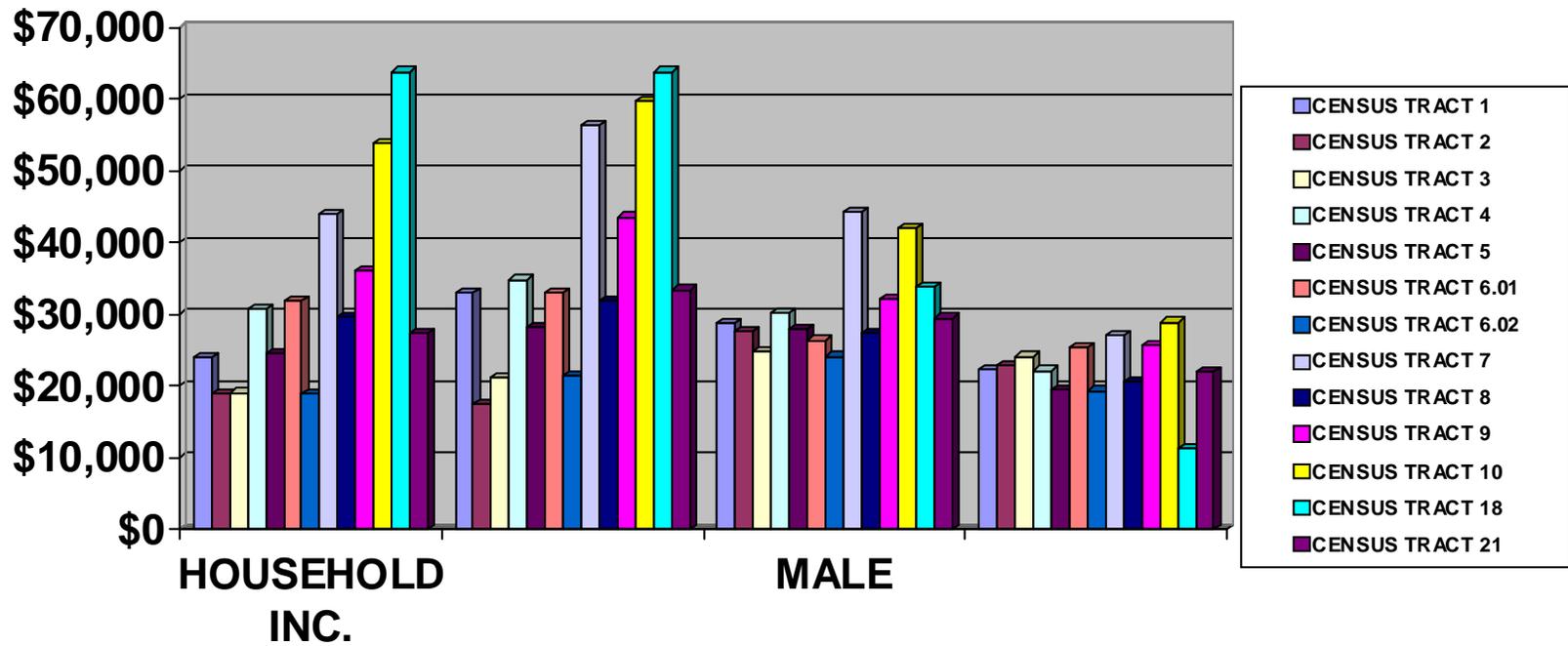


TABLE VI  
NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS

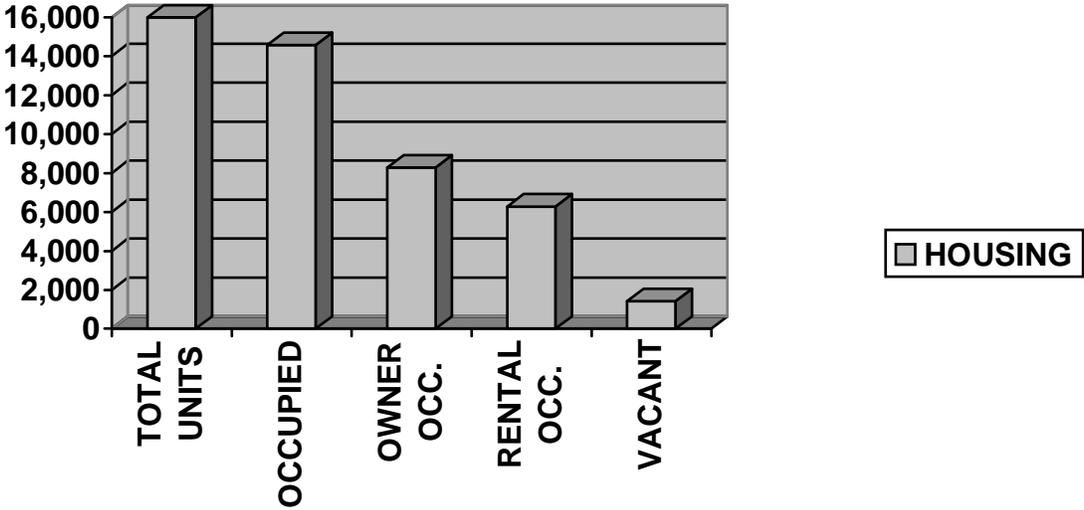
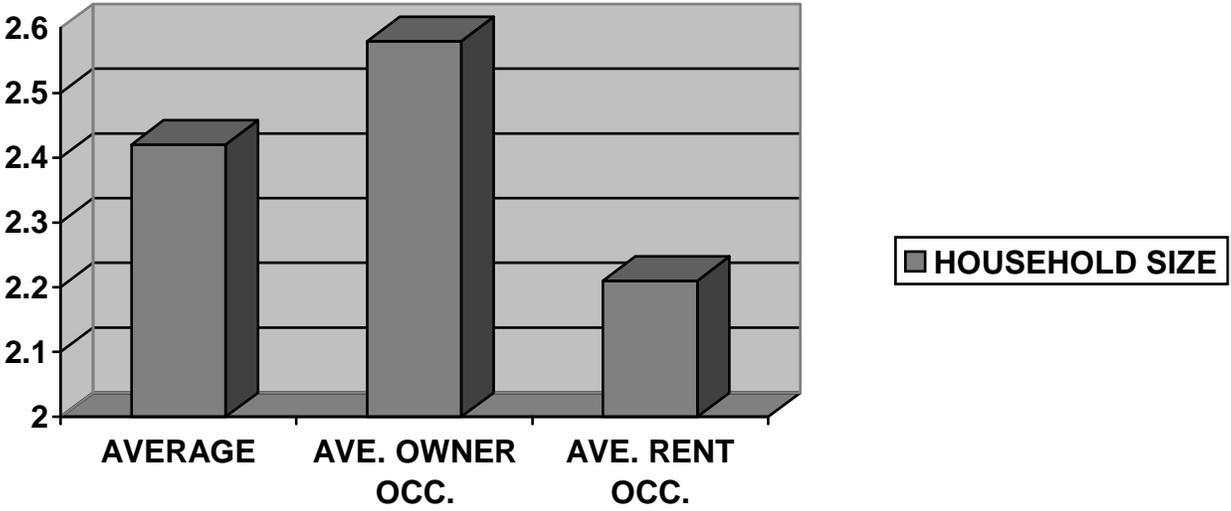
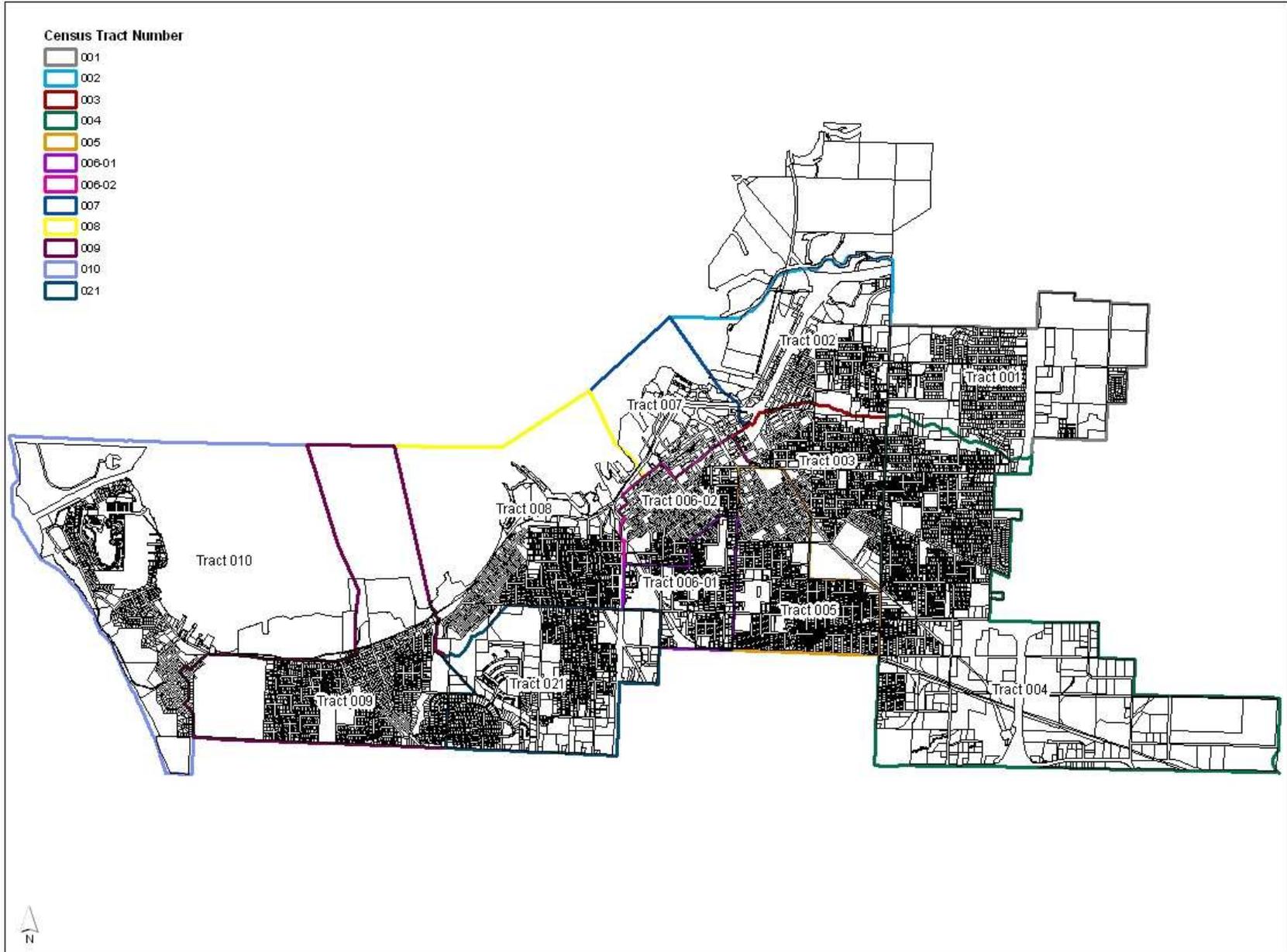


TABLE VII  
HOUSEHOLD SIZE



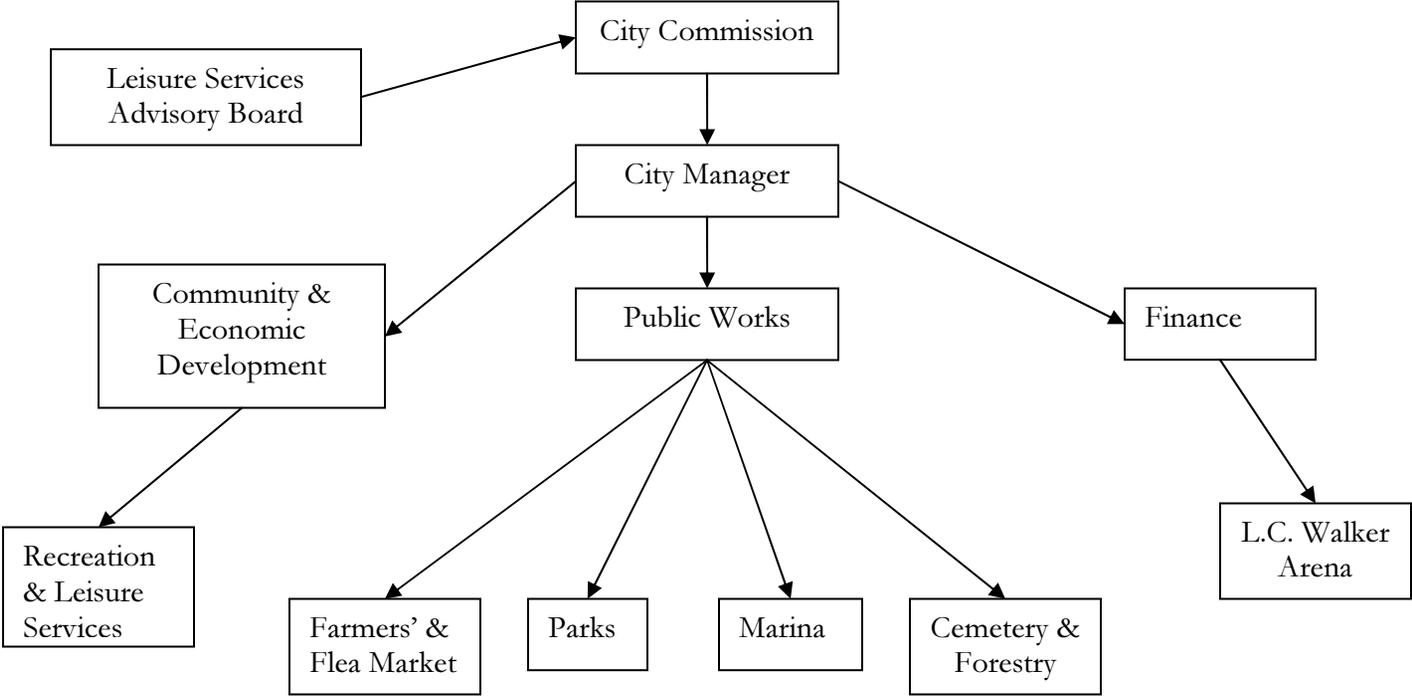
# City of Muskegon Census Tracts



# 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; 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.

The City Manager is appointed by the Commission and serves as Chief Administrator of most City department heads. The City Commission appoints the Finance Director, City Clerk, City Treasurer, City Attorney and the Civil Service Director. The city has a contract with County Equalization for our Assessor's Office.

### **The City Commission's Role**

The Muskegon City Commission on October 25, 1949 established the Department of Recreation and Parks. 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, which determined policy and procedures for the operation and maintenance of the Parks System.

On November 8, 1988 the City Commission passed a new ordinance creating a Department of Leisure Service and eliminated the Recreation and Parks Ordinances and the Chase Hammond Golf Course Commission. Under this ordinance the Parks, Recreation, Marina, and Arena all fall under the direction of the Director of Leisure Services. The golf course has since been sold. Due to downsizing, the Director's duties have fallen under different Division Heads.

Further, the Board of Leisure Services was created as an Advisory Board to the City Commission. Their duty is, "to advise the City Commission upon matters relating to the proper conduct of public recreation, programs and/or facilities within the City."

### **The Board of Leisure Services**

The Board of Leisure Services meets on a monthly basis and advises the City Commission on matters of public recreation, programs and facilities. They approve various events, and are appointed by the City Commission and are composed of seven members as follows:

2 City Commissioners

1 Member - Muskegon Board of Education

4 Citizens at Large

While the Board of Education still has a member on the Leisure Services Board, the role of the Board of Education has changed somewhat since the Parks Board's inception in 1949. Initially, the Board of Education provided a share of the funding for the Recreation and Parks Departments; in as much as the schools utilized City parks and facilities for their own programs. The City also maintained the playgrounds and lawns of the schools, billing the Board of Education on a monthly basis. Due to limited financial resources, the Muskegon Public Schools has not contributed to the department since the late 60's. The School Board

has instituted its own in-house maintenance program, thereby eliminating the need for City crews at school facilities.

The Board of Education and the City of Muskegon have a cooperative use agreement for the use of facilities. Essentially, they use the others facilities at a cost, depending on the availability of the facility for their own programs. Use of the school's facilities by the City is not always possible, particularly during the school year, as the school is conducting their own programs.

Until 1987, the Leisure Services Board became directly responsible for the management of the L.C. Walker 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 a new agreement with Arena Management Group. In 2008 AMG (Arena Management Group) was bought by the new owners of the Muskegon Lumberjacks hockey team for the management of the Arena. While the Director of Finance oversees the contract, the day-to-day operations are no longer the City's responsibility. The agreement was signed to reduce the City's General Fund contribution to the Arena and to provide a mechanism for facility improvements.

The City Commission has given the Board the authority to approve Special Event Permits throughout the City. Annually, the board approves over 50 special event applications from Easter Egg Hunts, to road races, to the Summer Celebration, an eleven-day event drawing hundreds of thousands of people to Muskegon each year. Most recently, the annual Bike Time has been added to the schedule of events. A new responsibility, "Film and Music Events" has been added to the responsibilities of the department. It is anticipated a new film studio will locate in the City. Muskegon is encouraging film production. Special Events are any activity involving city property or requiring city services.

### **Department Divisions**

Due to previous downsizing of staff the Leisure Services Division duties have been divided among existing Division Heads 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, and the McGraft Park Trust Fund Budget. Also included within the Department's responsibilities are the grounds of City buildings, other non-recreational properties, the graffiti program, and the Park Ranger program. The Park Supervisor heads the department. There are two, Leisure Service Maintenance I's, four, Leisure Service Maintenance II's, and a part time Customer Service Representative II. There are approximately 30 seasonals hired each year during the summer months and about 15 Park Rangers each year.
2. Leisure Services & Recreation Department – This Department is administered by the Planning and Economic Development Division and is responsible for the administration of the City's fee supported recreation programs. The Leisure Services Supervisor heads the Department. Staff includes one Customer Service Representative II, one part time

- Customer Service Representative I, and approximately 54 seasonal staff (as it relates to recreation) is hired as playground staff, lifeguards, program leaders, and other recreation support people.
3. Marina Department – This Department is administered by the Public Works Department and is responsible for the operations and maintenance of the City-owned Hartshorn Marina, four launch ramps, moorings, and the summer dry storage areas at Pere Marquette Park and Harbour Towne Beach. Staff includes one part time Harbour Master, and eight seasonal staff hired to provide on-site supervision during the boating season.
  4. L.C. Walker Arena – The Finance Department is responsible for the management of the contract with Arena Management Group.
  5. Farmers’ Market/Flea Market - This Department is administered by the Public Works Department. A Market Master, who is 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 every Wednesday from May to October. Income generated by the Farmers’/Flea Markets exceeds expenditures spent on its operation and maintenance.
  6. The Cemetery/Forestry Department - This Department is administered by the Public Works Department. The Cemetery/Forestry Supervisor heads the Cemetery/Forestry 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 about 40% of the annual expenditures. Staff includes three, Leisure Services Maintenance III, one, Leisure Services Maintenance II, one Secretary, plus twelve to fifteen seasonal staff. Staff maintains all trees within the city’s right-of-ways and trees on public properties.

## **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.

The Parks and Recreation relies on six basic sources of funding:

1. General Funding
  - A. The Parks Department receives direct tax supported funding for the purpose of administration and maintenance of 600+ acres of parklands. The funding supports staff, seasonal employees, and rangers. All equipment and material expenses are incorporated into the General Funding Budget. In 2007, the funding was \$1,340,824.

- B. The Cemetery Department is partially funded by the General Fund. The funding supports staff and seasonal employees. There was \$545,975 in expenditures for 2007, with \$55,518 in overall income through various fees and charges.
- C. The Forestry Department is primarily funded through the general fund, but the work done within the right-of-ways is billed to the Highway Fund. The funding supports staff. Some fees are charged and they are put into a special account to purchase new trees. In 2007 the expenditures were \$9,107.
- D. Leisure Services Department - Administration and maintenance of the recreation programs have been funded primarily through the general fund since 1997. Prior to that time, the department had been a special revenue account with funding coming from user fees and Community Develop Block Grant Funds (CDBG). Leisure Services is a general fund function that is funded primarily through user fees and local tax dollars. In 2007, the recreation budget was \$264,522. In 2007 the recreation fees were derived from basketball, soccer, tournaments, miscellaneous recreation, baseball, and tennis in the amount of \$41,427. All sports officials are paid through a contract with an officials association.
- E. Farmers Market/Flea Market - While a general fund operation, revenues from the Farmers' Market and Flea Market generate revenues in excess of expenditures. The budgets for 2007 were \$62,389 in income and \$43,578 in expenditures.

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 were expected to generate approximately \$404,100 in 2007
- B. L.C. Walker Arena's management agreement with Arena Management Group is funded through the general fund. The 2007 budget amount was \$175,300. The County had funded the 1996 improvements via the voter-approved "quality of life" bonds.
- C. There were also other revenues with rentals for the picnic shelters, beach rentals, and McGraft Park rentals in the amount of \$73,034 for 2007.

- 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 the prevailing interest rates, but was \$37,145 in 2007. It is billed annually by the Department for costs of maintenance 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 this period of shrinking budgets, private and corporate gifts provide major sources of funding capital improvement projects. The Community Foundation for Muskegon County has provided many grants for special projects within the City facilities. The Community Foundation provides annual money from the Seyferth Fund to provide a playground program at Seyferth Park. In the past five 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 skatepark at Seyferth Park, \$50,000 for a new playground at the Park, \$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. There have been many city parks that have been "adopted" and are 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 been 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 at 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 than to the municipality.

4. State and Federal Funding – The City has been fortunate to receive many grants that have built or rebuilt 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 MNRTF grant for the Smith-Ryerson Park. This was for an accessible restroom/concession stand, irrigation, reconstruction of the basketball courts, removal of one baseball field, construction of a pier, trail along the creek, striping of the parking lots, one picnic shelter with picnic tables and grills, and bleachers.
  - B. In 2004, the City received a \$500,000 MNRTF grant for the Muskegon Lakeshore Trail. This was for site preparation, asphalt pathway, bridge, and a boardwalk, a rest area for viewing, rip rap shore protection, shade structure, fencing, site amenities, bollards, signage, and landscaping.
  - C. In 2001, the City received a \$400,000 CMI grant to rehabilitate Beachwood Park and build the alternate route for the Lakeshore Trail.
  - D. In 2001, the City received a \$220,000 Waterways grant to rebuild the electrical system in Hartshorn Marina.
  - E. In 2000, the City received a \$200,000 state grant to dredge Hartshorn Marina.
  - F. In 2000, the City received a \$319,000 TEA 21 grant to build Phase II of the Laketon corridor of the Lakeshore Trail.
  - G. In 2000, the City received a \$60,000 CZM grant to design phase I of the Lakeshore Trail.
  - H. In 2000, the City received a \$295,000 CMI grant for the Beachwood Park Development. This was for the paving of the parking lot, playground equipment, irrigation system, restroom, shelter, site amenities, grading for ice rink, seeding was changed to landscaping, and 10 foot wide 0.5 mile long Lakeshore Trail linkage.
  - I. In 1999, the City received a \$295,000 CMI grant for the Campbell Field Redevelopment. This was for parking, irrigation, restroom/shelter, park amenities, ballfield realignment – infields, fencing (3500 feet), with landscaping (seeding, sod, grading, and sidewalks).
  - J. In 1999, the City received a \$140,000 Waterways grant to rebuild the launch ramps at Fisherman’s Landing.
  - K. In 1999, the City received a \$300,000 TEA 21 grant to construct Phase IV of the Lakeshore Trail
  - L. In 1998, the City received a \$600,000 TEA 21 grant to construct Phase III of the Lakeshore Trail.

- 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. This was for a restroom facility, 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 asphalt trail and pavement, intersection modification, fence, 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. This was for site preparation, parking areas with paving, playground equipment, 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 a Beachhouse with restrooms, lifeguard, 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 the lighting, development of softball field, parking lot, landscaping, fencing, and irrigation. Currently there are two softball fields because two were removed to turn them into soccer fields with lights.
- V. In 1977, the City received an \$84,609.56 Land and Water Conservation Fund grant for Beukema Softball Complex. This was for lighting, bleachers, and scoreboards for 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 2007, \$65,000 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 including the youth basketball program. Volunteers 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 do special projects. United Way has provided hundreds of volunteers to renovate several parks over the years. Volunteers also serve on the Leisure Services Board. The City also works with hundreds of volunteers that put on the many festivals that occur within the city each year.

The availability of this source of funding recreation programs and facility improvements will be less certain in the future as Federal and State 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 yearly and approved by the City Commission.

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**

The Departments are using Contractual Services as an alternative to operating and maintaining facilities. The agreement for the Arena is an example of this philosophy. The Leisure Services Department contracts with the West Michigan Umpires Association to provide officials for all adult sports. The City has a facility use agreement with Muskegon Public Schools for the use of facilities and coordinated programming. The city contracts for the seasonal maintenance work on parks and cemeteries through a contract approved by the City Commission with a Temporary Service.

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 received either through donation or with grant monies, most park properties must be maintained as Recreational Park Lands. 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. 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 Department has concentrated its resources on maintaining and upgrading existing facilities.

The exceptions to this are the purchase of land for Lakeshore Trail and the possible acquisition of property currently owned by Consumer's Energy. In the past, the City Commission 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 the City's 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.

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 of this property would be to have it be reasonably self-supporting through fees and charges. There are currently plans to develop a baseball complex on this property.

The Parks and Leisure Services Departments are 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.

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 Muskegon Heights and 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 limits the use of the park and especially access to the bike trail which runs through it.

### **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 has cooperated with these agencies as issues of mutual concern have developed. There are many departments within the City of Muskegon that are a member of both the Michigan and National Recreation and Parks Associations. Through these Associations, 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 parks agencies in furthering their interests

### **Relationships with other Agencies**

The City of Muskegon works with various groups and agencies throughout the year. Through Volunteer Muskegon, murals have been painted throughout the community including murals in 2002 at McGraft Park and Seyferth Park. A mural was also painted at the Farmer's Market in 2001. Work with the United Way has previously been discussed. The city works with each of the neighborhood associations for facility development, programs and special events. Recently, the City has established a relationship with the organization "No More Sidelines"; a non-profit group helping children and young adults with disabilities to participate in sports and other social events, which are hosted within many public facilities. The City has also provided grant funding to assist with their softball and soccer program. In addition, the City has a relationship with the Lakers Soccer Club, who uses Reese Field for games and practices. While the Parks Department does not have any formal partnerships with private organizations; staff does attempt to accommodate individuals when asked to provide staff volunteer hours.

The City works with most of the major events in Muskegon including Parties-in-the-Park, Muskegon Summer Celebration, Shoreline Spectacular, Bike Time and many smaller events. The City hosts many regional or national events like Gus Macker Basketball, the AVP, the MPVA, Jet Ski races, and other events.

### **Parks and Recreation Policies and Procedures**

Various policies and procedures have been implemented within Leisure Services. In most cases, the policies are developed by staff and given to the Leisure Services board for recommendation to the City Commission. In some cases, staff simply develops a policy and then implements it, as it is simply an internal policy. However, even in this case, staff generally runs the policy past the Leisure Services Board for their input.

Many of the policies are overall city policies. For example, everything we build will be universally accessible. The city will not discriminate for any reason covered under the law. The city's employment department, Civil Service, covers the personnel policies. The Finance Department covers financial policies. Other departments cover many of the overall policies that the department operates under.

### **Conclusion**

Considering staff limitations and a limited budget, the 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 a 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 of the programs they administered or supervised. Prior to the demise, the Department provided a variety of services with a budget of \$145,000. Full time staff consisted of three positions: 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 (4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup>) 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 & crafts, in-county field trips
12. Senior Citizen Program
  - a. Five (5) drop-in centers - McGraff 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. Life guards at Pere Marquette - Concession revenues
2. Boys and girls grade school basketball – CDBG
3. Easter egg hunt - Local real estate group and various neighborhood associations
4. Instructional swimming – CDBG
5. Full-time Recreation Supervisor - CDBG/fees/General Recreation
6. Open swim and gym - CDBG

Programs, which have been partially re-instituted, include:

1. Outdoor ice rink – Beachwood/Bluffton Neighborhood Association has reopened one at Beachwood Park,
2. Senior Citizen Programs - Nutritional Services has a program at one meal site at McGraft Park.
3. Playground Program – eleven playgrounds have been opened through various funding sources. including the General Recreation budget, McGraft Trust Fund, Thomas & Geraldine Seyferth Fund, and CDBG
4. Instructional tennis – General Recreation

The City indirectly supports several other recreation programs in conjunction with private or semi-private sponsors. The Muskegon Area Little Leagues utilize the ballfields at Reese, Sheldon, McCrea and Campbell with both the City and the little league sharing in their 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 has included a Drug Information Program in cooperation with the Muskegon Police Department. Norton Shores has taken over the youth hockey and the inline skate programs at the arena.

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 for the park. The Club supervises the use of the courts and the distribution of equipment. Though open to all age groups, the Club appeals primarily to the elderly, for whom the sport is a major recreational outlet.

For those who wish a more passive form of recreation, the City supports a series of summer concerts at the McGraft Park Band Shell. The series receives a small amount of funding from the McGraft Trust Fund plus use of the facilities.

Adult league sports are self-supporting and though they cover their costs, all expenses and revenues are now included in the Recreation budget of the General Fund. Presently, there are two such programs in operation including: (1) adult soccer, and (2) adult baseball. The participation in these programs serve the greater Muskegon area and player and team fees covers the cost of the program including administrative expenses. The number of participants in these programs is as follows:

	<u>1988</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2007</u>
Baseball Participants	150	117	220	195	193
Adult soccer	0	0	0	120	120

The adult programs have dwindled as the baby boomers get older and no longer participate. The young adults are not participating at the levels of their parents. Some of the softball drop off is that Norton Shores began running their own leagues, which accounts for about 600 of the drop in participants to the city's program.

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

A complete evaluation of the accessibility of all facilities within the city including all recreation and parks facilities have been inventoried in 2007 by the 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 had a group of nine people which included an attorney and an architect. They divided the city into four sections and sent teams of people in each direction to assess the city's parks, polling places, marinas, facilities and services for accessibility. Once their report is completed, it will be reviewed through several levels of bureaucracy then the report will be sent to the city. An ADA transition plan is being adopted. All buildings, playgrounds, and other facilities are brought into compliance when construction projects are done to specific parks. However, 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. Other such improvements are done whenever possible. There is also an accessible lift at Fisherman's Landing to get wheelchair bound people into their boats.

Similarly, the City offers no specific programs 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 new Inner City Recreation budget also targets inner city youth.

The grade school basketball program has expanded dramatically to include almost 500 youth in both the girls and boys programs. 12 playgrounds are now being operated during the summer months. Many of the elementary schools have after-school programs.

## **Program Coordination**

### **Intergovernmental Cooperation**

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

The City of Muskegon has a cooperative use agreement with the Muskegon Public Schools for the reciprocal use of facilities on a non-rental basis. Primarily, the Schools own the indoor facilities (gyms and pools) and the city maintains the outdoor facilities (baseball fields, softball field, 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 agreements with the County concerning program staffing and operation. However, when needed, both parties extend such cooperation. The County owns Heritage Landing, a major park within the city that is the site of many festivals annually. The city and county cooperate extensively for the use of this facility.

### **Private and Semi-Private Sector Cooperation**

The City has cooperated with various elements of the private sector in the operation of a number of recreational programs. The city and the YFCA have cooperated for years on their soccer program and the summer competitive swimming program. Inside-Out Volleyball runs volleyball leagues and tournaments at Pere Marquette beach each summer. The Master Gardeners Group, affiliated with the Cooperative Extension Service has worked with the city to create Monet Gardens in downtown Muskegon. The City has worked with Zonta for years to beautify Seaway Drive. The local Veteran's organization and the city have worked cooperatively to put in a walking trail around Veteran's Park and the general care of the park.

Additional public/private cooperation has resulted in the private management of the campsites and fish cleaning station at Fisherman's Landing. Also, many mini parks have been adopted by companies or individuals that tend to the maintenance. There have also been agreements with different groups to create gardens on city owned vacant lots. City staff is also working with the McLaughlin Neighborhood Association to try to form a park in their neighborhood. They are currently leasing and using city owned vacant land at the corner of Terrace and East Isabella. The agreement with Arena Management Group had been assigned and assumed by JS Hockey Enterprises, Inc. in 2008 for the administration of Walker Arena is another public/private agreement. Future cooperation between the City and local historical groups is likely as the historical and cultural heritage of the City is tapped to increase the influx of tourist dollars to the downtown.

New proposals for public/private ventures are received periodically. These are screened based on the service being provided and compatibility with surrounding land and public uses. As future proposals are brought before the Board of Leisure Services, a diligent screening procedure must be maintained in order to safeguard the interests of the public.

### **Recreation Programs Outside of the City of Muskegon**

Only the City's of Muskegon Heights and Norton Shores have full-time recreation programs and staff. Generally, these programs are for their residents only. The program offerings are very similar to the City of Muskegon's with playgrounds, youth basketball, and after-school programs.

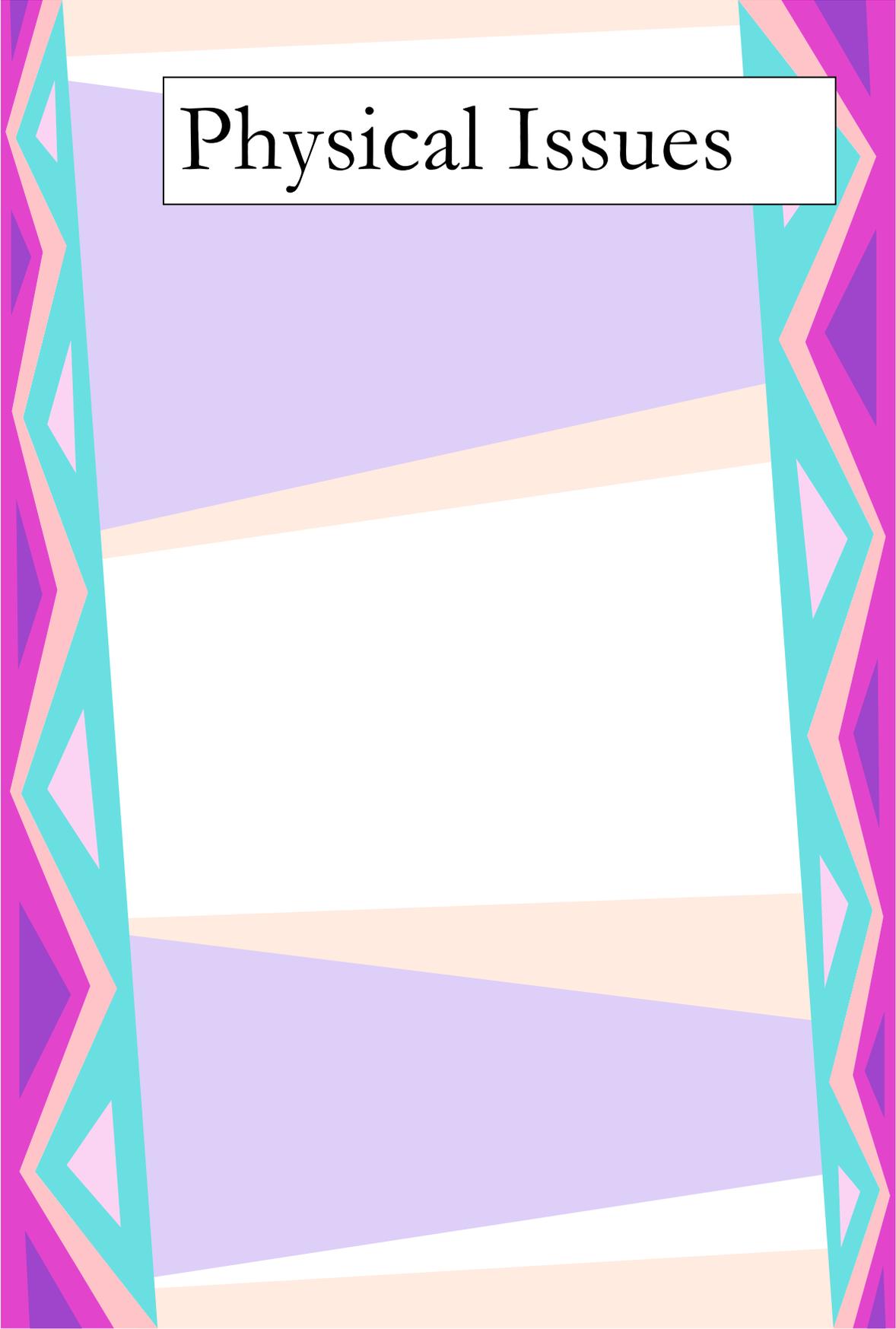
Many of the school districts around the area have Community Education programs that serve a larger population. Reeths-Puffer Schools offer an adult basketball league. Orchard View Schools offers senior programs. Whitehall also offers an adult basketball program. All of these programs serve a greater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

All of the youth sports programs are run by private groups including the youth football leagues, baseball programs, and soccer programs. Club teams exist throughout the county. Hockey programs are run by Norton Shores and the youth leagues at the new ice facility on Airline Rd. called the Lakeshore Ice Center.

### **Conclusions**

The City needs to continue to look for partnerships for offering new programs. Programs need to be designed and with funds raised to better meet the changing needs of the youth. With an aging America, Muskegon also needs to 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 parks 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 provided as a regular part of the 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 recreation 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 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 recreation 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.

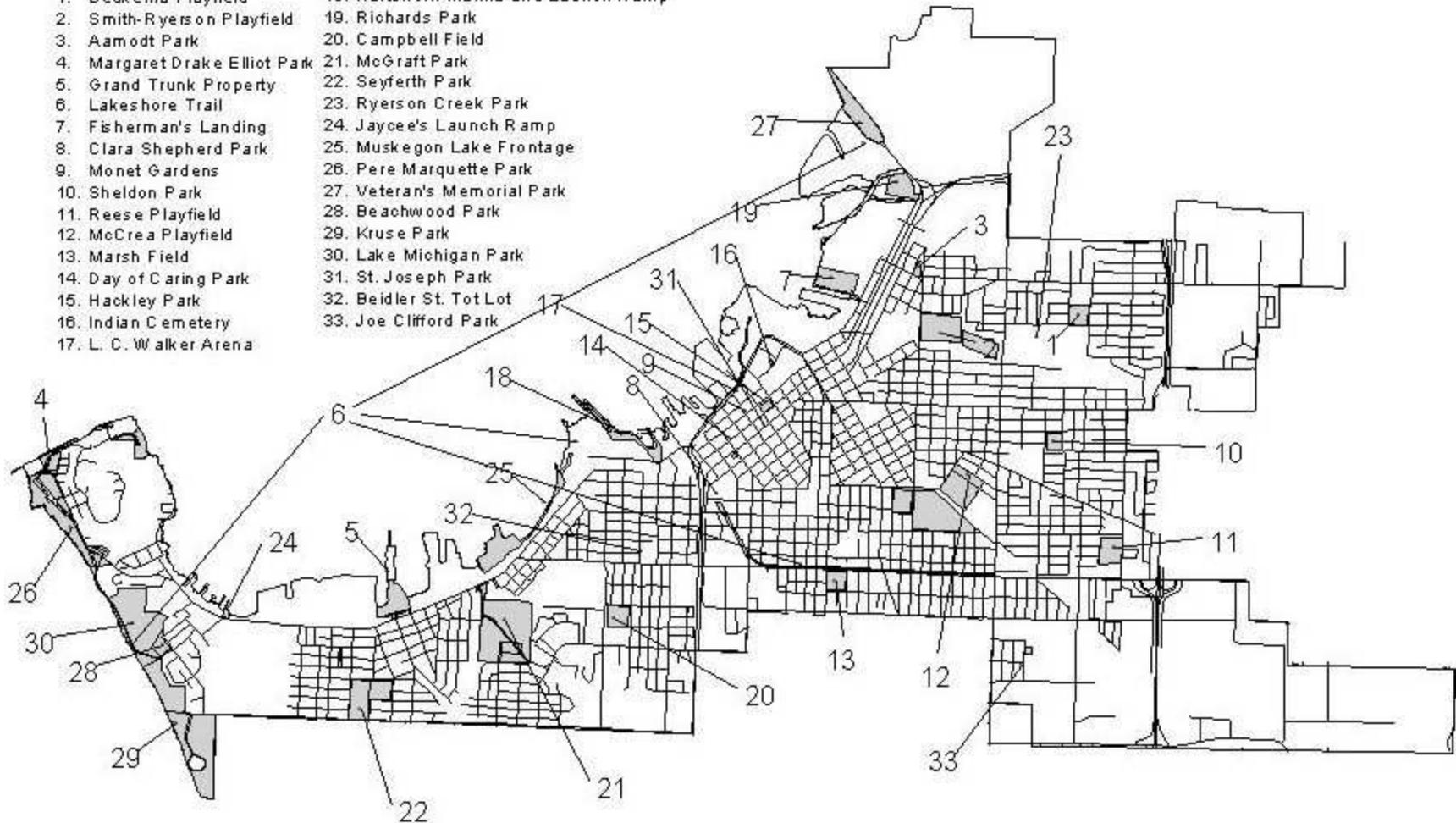
#### **Neighborhood Gardens**

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.

# City of Muskegon Parks & Recreation Facilities

## Park Properties

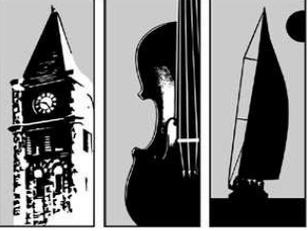
- |                               |                                      |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Beukema Playfield          | 18. Hartshorn Marina and Launch Ramp |
| 2. Smith-Ryerson Playfield    | 19. Richards Park                    |
| 3. Aamodt Park                | 20. Campbell Field                   |
| 4. Margaret Drake Elliot Park | 21. McGraft Park                     |
| 5. Grand Trunk Property       | 22. Seyferth Park                    |
| 6. Lakeshore Trail            | 23. Ryerson Creek Park               |
| 7. Fisherman's Landing        | 24. Jaycee's Launch Ramp             |
| 8. Clara Shepherd Park        | 25. Muskegon Lake Frontage           |
| 9. Monet Gardens              | 26. Pere Marquette Park              |
| 10. Sheldon Park              | 27. Veteran's Memorial Park          |
| 11. Reese Playfield           | 28. Beachwood Park                   |
| 12. McCrea Playfield          | 29. Kruse Park                       |
| 13. Marsh Field               | 30. Lake Michigan Park               |
| 14. Day of Caring Park        | 31. St. Joseph Park                  |
| 15. Hackley Park              | 32. Beidler St. Tot Lot              |
| 16. Indian Cemetery           | 33. Joe Clifford Park                |
| 17. L. C. Walker Arena        |                                      |



PUBLIC FACILITIES & RECREATIONAL USES

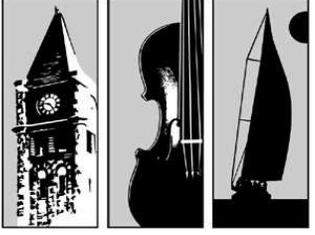
 <p><b>MUSKEGON</b> West Michigan's Shoreline City www.shorelinecity.com</p>	Park Acreage	Play Apparatus (ADA)*	Softball Diamonds (lights)*	Baseball Diamonds	Tennis Courts (lights)*	Basketball Courts	Volleyball Courts	Ice Rinks –Outdoors	Football Fields	Picnic Tables	Picnic Grills	Boat Launching Ramps	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
2 <sup>nd</sup> & Houston	0.08																									
2 <sup>nd</sup> & Muskegon	0.08																									
4 <sup>th</sup> & 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

 <p><b>MUSKEGON</b> West Michigan's Shoreline City www.shorelinecity.com</p>	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)	
<b>SPECIAL USE FACILITIES</b>																										
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														
<b>OPEN SPACE PARKLAND</b>																										
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																									
<b>SMALL PARKS</b>																										
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

 <p><b>MUSKEGON</b> West Michigan's Shoreline City www.shorelinecity.com</p>	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
<b>TOT LOTS</b>																											
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*																									
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS</b>																											
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							
<b>PLAYFIELDS</b>																											
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							
<b>MAJOR PARKS</b>																											
Fisherman's Landing	18.6	X								X	X	X				X			X	X	X						X
McGraft	92	X*	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.

+ Combined field for football, & soccer (Smith-Ryerson only)

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

An inventory of the present Park's System is organized according to the categories given above. A detailed breakdown and description of the complete Park's System follows. (The park numbers refer to the map on page 56. City neighborhoods are listed in parentheses under Item No. 2 (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 "Adopt-A-Trail" procedures for the trail system. The procedures will ensure that the trails are being taken care of. There are currently some areas of the trails that are already adopted.

### **Tot Lots**

There are four Tot Lots within the City which are City-maintained, and which exist as separate entities not being a 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.      Park Number: 3
2.      Location: Wood at Marquette (Jackson Hill Neighborhood)
3.      Land Area: 2.0 acres
4.      Surrounding Land Use: Residential
5.      Facilities: Play apparatus (1), open space, grill, picnic tables
6.      Special Characteristics: Tree-shaded grounds providing safe play area for small children in low-income residential community.
7.      Condition: Overall condition is good with general maintenance required including tree trimming

### **Day of Caring Park**

1.      Park Number: 14
2.      Location: Seventh Street and Muskegon Avenue (Nelson Neighborhood)
3.      Land Area: .4 acre
4.      Surrounding Land Use: Residential
5.      Facilities: Play apparatus, limited open space
6.      Special Characteristics: Built through a Day of Caring project with United Way
7.      Condition: Good

### **St. Joseph Park**

1. Park Number: 31
2. Location: Monroe near Fifth (Nelson Neighborhood)
3. Land Area: .7 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Residential
5. Facilities: Play apparatus (1), open space with picnic tables.
6. Special Characteristics: Park created in conjunction with St. Joseph Church, Nelson Neighborhood Association, and the City of Muskegon.
7. Condition: Overall condition is good with general maintenance required.

### **Beidler St. - Optimist Park**

1. Park Number: 32
2. Location: Beidler St. at Young (Campbell Field Neighborhood)
3. Land Area: .08 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Residential
5. Facilities: Play apparatus (1), open space
6. Special Characteristics: Playground equipment installed by the Optimists
7. Condition: Overall condition is good with general maintenance required

### **Conclusions**

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 can serve as an example for the development of such facilities in the future. Local neighborhoods have organized in the past to fund and construct 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. Park Number: 10
2. Location: Madison at Isabella (Sheldon Park Neighborhood)
3. Land Area: 5.8 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Residential
5. Facilities: Play apparatus area (2), little league baseball diamond (1), little league softball (1), shuffleboard courts (2), basketball court (1), restrooms, picnic area.
6. 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 disabilities; and could in turn bring much more interaction to the park as the program is growing in popularity.
7. 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. The park needs an automatic irrigation system. 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), soap box derby hill (not in use), picnic area with grill, heated restroom, picnic shelter with a fire place.
6. Special Characteristics: This park has the potential to maximize 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. Minor ADA upgrades are being planned for the park, such as a route to the covered BBQ area and a path to the play area.
7. Condition: The park received a major facelift in 2002 and is in great condition.

### **Joe Clifford Park**

1. Park Number: 33
2. Location: Valley St. (East Muskegon Neighborhood)
3. Land Area: 1.8 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, Industrial Park
5. Facilities: Play apparatus area (1), picnic area with grill, picnic shelter, spray fountain.
6. 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.
7. 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 guideline 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 expected to take place there. 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 in regard to the active recreation 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 uses. The various City and private sponsored softball, baseball, and football leagues are the principal organized beneficiaries of these facilities. These 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 park users. These playfields are the backbone, in terms of active recreation, of the entire parks system.

### **Beukema Playfield**

1. Park Number: 1
2. Location: Roberts and Wesley (Marquette Neighborhood)
3. Land Area: 10 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, Grade School

5. Facilities: Play apparatus area (1), softball diamonds (3), shuffleboard courts (4), open space for field games, restroom facilities (2), picnic area.
6. 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.
7. 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**

1. Park Number: 2
2. Location: Wood and Sumner (Jackson Hill & Angell Neighborhoods)
3. Land Area: 23 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Residential
5. 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 (1), observation pier (1), trail along the creek (1), picnic pavilion (1), and a combined soccer and football field.
6. 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 a boxing club, computer classes, general recreation, and receptions. The Port City Boys football program has moved to this site for practices and would like to make it their home field.
7. Condition: Overall Smith-Ryerson is in great condition. The basketball courts have recently been reconstructed with cement rather than asphalt which will minimize future maintenance. There are new basketball poles, backstops, and hoops. There is also a new timed lighting system for the courts. In the past, the play apparatus area had been moved, rebuilt and new equipment added. The removal of the softball diamond has left more room for open green space as well as more room for other recreational activities to take place. The community center, which had been extensively vandalized in the past, has been kept up since the Muskegon Recreation Center has been managing it. A large gymnasium to better service area residents, people with a disability, and elderly is needed. Accessibility is especially important as the building is used as a voting precinct. The old restroom facility in the park has been converted to

storage for maintenance equipment. A new ADA accessible restroom and concession stand building have been constructed on the site. A large picnic shelter has been added with ADA accessible grills and barrier free picnic tables. An underground irrigation system has been added to the park. This will keep the combined football and soccer field looking presentable and green. The parking area has been reconstructed, enlarged, striped and made ADA van accessible. There are more parking spaces overall with more spaces added for people with disabilities. There is also an observation pier located at the creek as well as a trail to walk along the creek. The City has been awarded a MDNRTF grant for the Smith Ryerson Renovation and Improvements Phase I. The improvements have been completed. In 2008 this was also chosen as a site for the United Way Day of Caring. The recreation center building was painted and cleaned. Future renovation plans for the park include creating an ADA accessible route to the playground area.

### Reese

1. Park Number: 11
2. Location: Creston at East Forest (Oakview Neighborhood)
3. Land Area: 13 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, Light Industrial
5. Facilities: Play apparatus area (1), softball diamonds (2), tennis courts (2), football/soccer field (1), basketball court (1), restrooms.
6. Special Characteristics: West Michigan Christian High School uses the softball field on occasion for their girl's 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.
7. 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 to the visual appeal of 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. These should include ADA accessible parking spaces. For every 50 spaces it is required to have one van accessible and one standard accessible parking space. The restroom and maintenance building are in good condition and the playground building was replaced in 2001. A concession stand, as well as a place for storage is needed. Getting a well water system in place should be looked into as a new irrigation system for the soccer field is of high priority. An expansion of lights on the field is also needed. 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 some from suburban Detroit to play at this soccer field. An accessible picnic shelter is needed at this park.

### **McCrea**

1. Park Number: 12
2. Location: Kenneth at Catawba behind Restlawn Cemetery (Angell Neighborhood)
3. Land Area: 9.1 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, Commercial, Light Industrial, Cemetery
5. Facilities: Play apparatus area (1), greenspace, baseball diamond (1), shuffleboard courts (4), basketball court (1), horseshoe pits (5), restrooms, and picnic area.
6. 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 recreation facility for the local neighborhood.
7. Condition: The one primary ballfield is well maintained. All the surface courts need resurfacing. The horseshoe pit area needs work. The new restroom and maintenance building is in good repair. The playground equipment receives extensive use and is in good condition, although a large new structure is needed for the older children. A picnic shelter should be added to this park with grills.

### **Marsh Field**

1. Park Number: 13
2. Location: West Laketon at Peck (Marsh Field Neighborhood)
3. Land Area: 6.1 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, Commercial
5. Facilities: Baseball diamond lighted (1), restroom (1), play apparatus area (1), concession stand (1), picnic tables.
6. 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.
7. Conditions: The park is very well maintained.

### **Campbell Field**

1. Park Number: 20
2. Location: Barclay and Young (Campbell Field Neighborhood)
3. Land Area: 9.5 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Residential

5. Facilities: Play apparatus area (1), baseball diamonds (3), softball diamond (1), restroom maintenance building (2), concession buildings (3), and open space for field games.
6. Special Characteristics: Home of the Muskegon West Little League who provides some of the maintenance and capital improvement dollars.
7. Condition: Campbell playfield is well maintained. A CMI grant in 2001 rebuilt the facility and added parking and a 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 the various City, adult and youth leagues. These leagues make up, by far, the largest recreation program run by the City. 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 other within the City, tend to attract visitors from the outlying areas, both within and outside the county.

### **Fisherman's Landing**

1. Park Number: 7
2. Location: Giddings Street off Ottawa (Jackson Hill Neighborhood)
3. Land Area: 18.6 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Commercial, Industrial
5. Facilities: Launch ramps (5), swimming beach (1), restrooms (2), shower facility (1), playground apparatus (1), picnic shelter (1), campsites (39), fish cleaning station (1), vehicle stored waste disposal site (1), open space for picnicking.
6. Special Characteristics: This park has been geared towards the large sports fishing industry. The parking lot for 250 vehicles contains oversized spaces to accommodate both car and trailer. In time, it is planned to be a self-supporting tourist facility for regional usage. There is an accessible lift for boaters and a dry storage area for sailboats.
7. Condition: The park is in reasonably good condition. The foundry fill used to build the park limits the vegetation growth and consequently, it is difficult to grow plant material. The campsites are used extensively during the summer and more campsites are needed. An agreement with local fishing groups has improved the facility and has increased usage of the park. Further park development is planned to include additional campsites, a new restroom/shower facility, and new docks.

## **McGraft**

1. Park Number: 21
2. Location: Wickham and Glen (Campbell Field, Nims, & Lakeside Neighborhoods)
3. Land Area: 92 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Residential
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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 bandshell. 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 bandshell, the baseball/softball field needs to either be removed or redone, upgrading of the tee box areas on the disc courts is needed in order to ease the major erosion from usage, and to paint the tennis and basketball courts. There is a need to add a trail to this park that connects to the existing trail system and have it follow through to Seyferth Park.

## **Pere Marquette**

1. Park Number: 26
2. Location: Beach Street and Lakeshore Drive (Beachwood/Bluffton Neighborhood)
3. Land Area: 27.5 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, Recreation



5. Facilities: Restaurants (1), snack bar (1), play apparatus areas (2), guarded beach (1), restrooms (1), picnic area (1), sand volleyball courts (40), public beach, accessible walkway.
6. Special Characteristics: Park contains large expanse of public sandy beach bordered on the north by the Muskegon Channel. Park is 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.
7. 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 neighbors' yards. An extension is needed for an accessible ramp to the water. Benches and picnic tables had been donated to the park.

### **Margaret Drake Elliot Park**

1. Park Number: 4
2. Location: Beach Street and the Muskegon Channel (Beachwood/Bluffton Neighborhood)
3. Land Area: 5 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, Recreation
5. Facilities: play apparatus areas (1), restrooms (1), picnic area (1), picnic shelters (2), fishing pier (1), open-space for field games
6. 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.
7. Condition: The park is in generally good condition.

### **Kruse Park (formerly called Bronson Park)**

1. Park Number: 29
2. Location: Sherman at Beach (Beachwood/Bluffton Neighborhood)
3. Land Area: 52.3 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, open space
5. Facilities: Parking lots (2), nature trails, barrier dunes, accessible dune walkways, playground, dune overlooks, picnic shelters, restrooms, basketball court.
6. 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.

7. Condition: This park was rebuilt in 1992 and is in excellent condition. Additional development in the southern portion of the park needs the parking area to be expanded, upgrades to the boardwalk, additional restrooms, and possibly camping.

### **Seyferth Park**

1. Park Number: 22
2. Location: West Sherman between Leon and LeBoeuf (Lakeside Neighborhood)
3. Land Area: 16 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, Commercial
5. Facilities: Play apparatus area (2), softball diamond (1), football field (soccer field) (1), basketball courts (2), in-line skating rink (1), skatepark, restrooms, picnic area, grills, picnic shelter.
6. Special Characteristics: Park provides both active and passive recreation opportunities for the community. Physically, the park is divided into two distinct areas. The north half is primarily flat open space used for field games. The south half along Sherman Boulevard contains large numbers of mature oak trees providing an attractive setting for picnics and family oriented recreation activities.
7. 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 –

Fisherman’s Landing - Sport fishing

McGraft - Active & passive family recreation

Pere Marquette - Water and beach related activities

Kruse - Picnic area and dune walkways

Seyferth - Skatepark

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 recreation developments and programs, they can contribute greatly in increasing the tourist dollars coming into the community.

### **Special Use Facilities**

These City-owned facilities fall outside the 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 due to 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 located on the Muskegon Channel. Each facility provides the City and its resident's additional recreational outlets for their enjoyment.

### **Hackley Park**

1. Park Number: 15
2. Location: City block bounded by Webster and Clay and Third and Fourth Streets (Nelson Neighborhood).
3. Land Area: 2.3 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Institutional, commercial
5. Facilities: None
6. 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, 18<sup>th</sup> President Grant, and 16<sup>th</sup> President Lincoln grace the 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, and downtown shopping, restaurants, and entertainment add to its value to the City.
7. Condition: The park is in excellent condition as the pavers have been replaced, the statues have been restored, and trees added. The only work remaining to be done is the restoration of the fence around the monument.

### **Indian Cemetery**

1. Park Number: 16
2. Location: Morris Street (Nelson Neighborhood)
3. Land Area: 0.42 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Commercial (Central Business District)
5. Facilities: None
6. Special Characteristics: Oldest known Indian Cemetery in the area dating back to the early 1800's. Provides pleasant view of Muskegon Lake.
7. Condition: Well-maintained passive oriented park.

### **Grand Trunk Launch Ramp**

1. Park Number: 5
2. Location: McCracken and Lakeshore Dr. (Lakeside Neighborhood)

3. Land Area: 4.6 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: residential, industrial, business
5. Facilities: launch ramps (2), picnic tables.
6. 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. This is adjacent to the bike trail. There is an annual trail cleanup put on by the Walkn Wheels Committee and the Lakeside Business Association.
7. Condition: The parking lot needs to be paved and the park spruced up. The Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership (MLWP), SAPPI Local, and Bunker Middle School organized an annual clean-up in the spring for the site. The MLWP also supported building the pavilion that is now on the property and is working with the DNR to secure fish and wildlife funding for the site. However, none of this will be done until either the state gives the property to the City or the state develops it under the Harbors Act. There is a need for drinking fountains, platforms, and piers for viewing and fishing.

### **Hartshorn Marina**

1. Park Number: 18
2. Location: Division at Western (Nims Neighborhood)
3. Land Area: 10.3 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Industrial, recreation
5. Facilities: Major slips (134), small slips (30), moorings (51), launch ramps (1), restrooms (2).
6. Special Characteristics: Only public-owned marina on Muskegon Lake. This is adjacent to the bike trail
7. Condition: Very Good. There is a need to add a boardwalk and piers for fishing to the Marina.

### **Lakeshore Trail**

1. Park Number: 6
2. Location: Throughout Muskegon
3. Land Area: 40 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, commercial, industrial.
5. Facilities: 10 foot non-motorized trail for about 12 miles throughout Muskegon. This is also in the process of being connected to the Musketawa Trail.
6. Special Characteristics: The Lakeshore Trail along Muskegon Lake has been completed. Other trail connectors are or will be completed. Mile markers will be added along the Lake portion of the trail. There is still a chance to add more trails to other areas that will connect to this trail and other area parks.



7. Condition: Excellent. Additional parking is necessary to meet the current demand. There may be a need to add some benches along the trail so people may sightsee or rest.

### **Clara Shepherd Park**

1. Park Number: 8
2. Location: Southern Ave just east of Seaway Dr. (Nelson Neighborhood)
3. Land Area: 1 acre
4. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, industrial.
5. Facilities: basketball courts.
6. Special Characteristics: this park was built to add basketball courts to the inner-city. This is adjacent to the bike trail.
7. Condition: good

### **Monet Gardens**

1. Park Number: 9
2. Location: 5<sup>TH</sup> and Clay (Nelson Neighborhood)
3. Land Area: .1 acre
4. Surrounding Land Use: Residential
5. Facilities: gardens, fountain
6. Special Characteristics: This is a vacant lot that has been turned into a garden by the Master Garden Club. This is also a popular place for people to get married in the spring and summer months.
7. Condition: Excellent.



### **L.C. Walker Arena**

1. Park Number: 17
2. Location: Western Avenue at Fourth Street (Nelson Neighborhood)
3. Land Area: 1.8 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Commercial
5. Facilities: 5,100 seat arena, 200 X 85-ice surface, convention center, meeting rooms.
6. Special Characteristics: Built in 1960 as a gift to the City from the late L.C. Walker, it is the home of the Muskegon Lumberjacks Hockey Team and the Muskegon Thunder indoor Football Team. The arena hosts a variety of sporting and cultural events and is open for public skating and private ice rental. Convention center hosts banquets, flea markets and meetings. Arena Management Group, through a management contract, was operating the facility. In 2008 Arena Management Group signed an Assignment and Assumption agreement with JS Hockey Enterprises, INC. JS Hockey Enterprises,

INC. will take over the management agreement for the arena. This is adjacent to the bike trail.

7. Condition: The arena received a major upgrade in 1998 through a countywide bond issue. \$9,000,000 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. Park Number: 24
2. Location: Cottage Grove at Lakeshore Drive (Beachwood/Bluffton Neighborhood)
3. Land Area: .6 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, commercial, industrial
5. Facilities: Launch ramps (2)
6. Special Characteristics: Heavily used public ramp on West End of lake. This is adjacent to the bike trail.
7. 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, thus helping to create 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 will provide an important link with the state trail system. The creation of Monet Gardens added a new exciting facility to the community.

### **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. Park Number: 27
2. Location: Causeway, East End of Muskegon Lake (North Muskegon)
3. Land Area: 28 acres

4. Surrounding Land Use: Industrial, open space
5. Facilities: None
6. 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. This property is owned by the county but maintained by the City of Muskegon. This is adjacent to the bike trail. **Each parking lot here will have at least one ADA van accessible parking space.**
7. Condition: Michigan's "Most Beautiful Mile" was seriously damaged during periods of high water during the early 70'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". This was also 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 by area veterans at the park.

### **Richards Park**

1. Park Number: 19
2. Location: North end of Ottawa Street (Jackson Hill Neighborhood)
3. Land Area: 7.5 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Commercial, industrial
5. Facilities: None
6. Special Characteristics: Small rustic park providing access to the Muskegon River and Lake - unknown to most Muskegon residents. This is adjacent to the bike trail.
7. Condition: Richards Park has been neglected for many years. Only in the past couple of years has a general clean up begun with the removal of dead and overgrown material and the pruning of others. The Abandoned sewage treatment plant that occupies part of the park is going to be demolished and restored to natural vegetation. The demolition and restoration will be done as funds are available.

### **Ryerson Creek Open Space**

1. Park Number: 23
2. Location: Entire length of Ryerson Creek (Marquette, Angell, East Muskegon, Oakview Neighborhoods)
3. Land Area: Approximately 72 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, commercial
5. Facilities: **Pier overlooking creek (located in Smith-Ryerson Park)**

6. 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.
7. Condition: This area remains in a wild undeveloped state. Litter in scattered areas is its chief eyesore. This 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 has been 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 newly added pier overlooking the creek, which offers a good spot 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 past the park property.

**8. Muskegon Lake Frontage**

1. Park Number: 25
2. Location: Along Lakeshore Drive (Jackson Hill, Nelson, Nims, Lakeside, Beachwood/Bluffton Neighborhoods)
3. Land Area: 10 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Residential
5. Facilities: None
6. Special Characteristics: Open space within a residential neighborhood containing numerous large shade trees located along the banks of Muskegon Lake.
7. Condition: This area remains in a natural state and provides public access to Muskegon Lake. There are also shopping areas in many of the different neighborhoods adjacent to Muskegon Lake.

**Lake Michigan Park**

1. Park Number: 30
2. Location: Lake Michigan Shoreline and Dunes from Sherman Boulevard to Lakeshore Drive (Beachwood/Bluffton Neighborhood).
3. Land Area: 54.5 acres
4. Surrounding Land Use: Residential, recreation
5. Facilities: None
6. Special Characteristics: Major publicly owned stretch of shoreline dune between Pere Marquette and Kruse Parks. Characterized by narrow beaches and high steeply ascending dunes. Dunes are generally grass covered on their western

faces. The back dunes are heavily wooded. (There is also a stretch of this area that is a dog beach.)

7. Condition: Natural. A boardwalk has been built for the lakeshore trail on the lakeside of this 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. Park Number: None
2. Location: Business 31 Corridor North and South
3. Land Area: 59.6 acres
4. Surrounding land use: commercial, waterfront marine
5. Facilities: None
6. Special Characteristics: The medians between North and South bound Business 31. These provide a green open space entrance into the City.
7. 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 for people to view the waterfront as they travel through the area and have better access to downtown.

### **Conclusion**

The open space parklands belonging to the City provide relief for its 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 quite evenly distributed throughout the City, and for the most part, meet the recreational needs of school age children within the surrounding neighborhoods. In effect, they serve as local neighborhood playgrounds for the City.

#### **Elementary Schools**

The eight elementary schools provide basic recreation needs for school age 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 apparatus appear in plentiful quantity with only general maintenance required (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 considerable 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. 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 done to provide a neighborhood park setting.

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 Schools**

The two middle schools are evenly distributed in the City. Steele Middle School is in the eastern portion of the City. Bunker Middle School lies in the City's West Side. Both schools are 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. Steele has a football field and track, which are generally well maintained and provide adequate open space for recreation purposes. Bunker does not have any recreation areas outside. The nearby City-owned Seyferth Park provides these facilities for the school and the surrounding neighborhood.

### **Senior High School (Central Campus)**

Muskegon Senior High School includes Hackley Stadium, a 6500 seat facility for football and other events. The gymnasium and swimming pool complex are used by swim teams from other school systems in addition to Muskegon's. The pool is very good. These facilities primarily serve the needs of the high school population, but are used during the winter for the CDBG Recreation Programs.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, the City school facilities provide the local neighborhood 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.

The City of Muskegon and the Muskegon Public school District have a reciprocal use agreement, which encompasses the parks and recreation facilities owned or operated by each.

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

There are a few remaining schools within the City that are not part of the Muskegon School District. Included are the Greater Muskegon Catholic Schools, the Muskegon Christian Schools, the Muskegon Intermediate School System, Three Oakes 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, a softball field and open space for field games. In all cases, the facilities primarily serve the school population. The general population does not utilize the Catholic Central facilities. The close proximity of the City-owned Campbell Playfield serves this function.

The 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 apparatus. 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 Street School provides play apparatus designed especially for students with special needs and 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 recreation needs of the population. The first golf course is the University Golf Course, which is opened to the public. The second is the Muskegon Country Club, which is a private course. The miniature golf course is the Bat-N-Club. The Bat-N-Club also offers batting cages. There are also two miniature golf courses outside the City limits. They are Putters Creek located on the Causeway, and Craig's Cruisers located off US-31. They are 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 limited facilities provided by the City. The YMCA is also located within the City of Muskegon and provides needed 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 Shore Symphony Orchestra 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 part of their operations 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. There are two fitness clubs, the OMNI, and Norton Pines Athletic Club.

The Muskegon County Parks system includes primarily 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. The other County parks receive limited use. Most of the other political jurisdictions have small parks that serve primarily local residents. The only two exceptions are Ross Park in Norton Shores and Softball World in Muskegon Township. Also, Muskegon Township has built a skate park.

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. 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 an ice rink. There will also be improvements that include a three-mile wheelchair accessible path to the state park's Lost Lake in 2008-09. The U.S. Luge Association is attempting to become part of the Winter Paralympics in the future. There will also be a year round, wheeled luge track made of fiberglass and stretching nearly 1,000 feet. It is 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 to the people. 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 people with a disability or the senior citizens. 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 at Fisherman's Landing to provide easy access to boats from the launch ramp. An accessible stairway/ramp was built at Kruse to provide access to Lake Michigan. An accessible ramp was built at Pere Marquette beach to get people closer access to the water. The city continues to work on its universal accessibility at all of the City facilities and parks and has worked with the Disability Connection, a Center for Independent Living and had all of the parks assessed by them for barrier free compliance. They provided the City with their assessment for each park. The Department of Justice also assessed the city's accessibility and will be providing the city with a report in the near future. While the city does have some facilities that are in compliance as they are, 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 uses. Each has been the subject of various proposals, some of which are still being actively pursued, including the portions that have been completed. Muskegon Lakeshore Trail is a 14.1 mile non-motorized, multi-use trailway 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 is providing access to largely unused segments of Muskegon Lake public beach; providing safer non-motorized access to existing parks and beaches; linking trail users to the cities of Norton Shores and North Muskegon and the statewide trail system; and providing better access to a variety of natural ecosystems, including the many beaches, sand dunes, woodlands, wetlands, streams, and lagoons within the City of Muskegon.

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

### **1. Consumers Power Property**

The utility owns 323 acres of property at the northeasterly end of Muskegon Lake. Of this, 297 acres are within the City of Muskegon - most of which is vacant and 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 areas.

Of environmental significance and potential recreation and development value is the remaining 283 acres, some of which is high quality wetlands and 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, providing the security of the power generation facility are 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 Consumer's have discussed the development of about 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 associated recreational opportunities. However, more recently, representatives from the City have been in conversations with the Lakeshore Baseball Club, LLC, regarding development

of a baseball/softball complex on this site. The intention is to develop a partnership between the Lakeshore Baseball Club, LLC and the City of Muskegon and purchase the property from Consumer's Energy. The complex will include four regulation size baseball fields and four regulation size softball fields. In addition, amenities such as restrooms, concession stands and parking will be provided.

## 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 for law enforcement. It would also be converted into open space for game birds/water fowl for hunting. Shot guns would be the weapon allowed with the exception of law enforcement use. There would be hours of operation, proper security measures, parking, safety berms, and adequate sound buffers. This facility could be used for hunter safety, hunter academies, CCW training and a Sportsmen venue for events for all ages. The Michigan Sportsman's Foundation would need a long term lease from the City so they may apply for the grants and secure funding for all the improvements.

## 3. Terrace Point

Twenty 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 dockminium 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 recreation activities. This area has been developed and is being maintained by the property owner. A new hotel has gone up on this 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 this 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, including the 11-day Summer Celebration that draws over 500,000 to this site annually. The outdoor amphitheater is used extensively during the 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. 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. A lot of the playground equipment has been replaced; however some of this is still not accessible to ADA standards. Seyferth, Beachwood, Campbell, **Smith-Ryerson Park**, and Marsh Field have all received major renovations and upgrades through state grants. The Lakeshore Trail is quickly getting completed throughout the City.

The City needs to continue to correct deficiencies within the system and look to add facilities that better meet the changing public needs. The creation of the skatepark 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 disabilities. The addition of a baseball/softball complex on the Consumer's Energy property would provide recreational opportunities for residents of Muskegon County, as well as providing a venue for activities and tournaments attracting participants from the entire State of Michigan.**

The outdoor facilities do a very good job of meeting the needs of the residents and visitors to Muskegon. However, there is a major need for indoor facilities. The City needs to find ways of improving the indoor facilities within the community and to better provide facilities in the central core of the City.

# Citizen Participation



## **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

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 the Department of Leisure Services, the Parks Department, and the 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. The Department of Leisure Services provides a forum for citizen input through its advisory board. The Leisure Services Board meets monthly and is open to all interested citizens.

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 also 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 all were involved in the design of the renovations to the parks in their respective neighborhoods. The Lakeshore Trail Advisory Board continues to give valuable input for the development of the Lakeshore Trail.

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. The previous Director had written each of the past five master plans. 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 the 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 the 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, etc. Bob Burns, The Muskegon Chronicle reporter, also wrote an article regarding the plans to update this plan and included the 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 and wanted to fill a survey out. Staff also sent letters to all the neighborhood associations so they may inform the residents of the survey. The deadline for the surveys was June 15, 2008. The surveys were submitted online and through the U.S. Postal Service. Staff received twelve surveys that were regarding an individual park 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. There has been fighting among the kids at the park. There were safety concerns expressed. There was also the desire to not allow dogs at this park due to the lack of cleanup and controlling 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 a need for a restroom facility that is universally accessible as the current restroom is located in the recreation center and is not accessible based on the standards now. 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 regards 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, as it does block access to the area. The tennis courts need to be resurfaced. This is the “home court” for Muskegon High School tennis. There was a suggestion to remove the Frisbee golf baskets because they can cause danger to people utilizing the trails.

**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 suggested the need for more security/police patrols.

**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 time 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 that there is a need to have life guards in the early evenings as well. The third is that the life guards need to 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 did not use it. There were suggestions provided by the public that would like to see the restrooms unlocked, develop the City land to the point on the Muskegon Lake, and to 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 stating they use the particular ramps and which ones. There were some that use more than one of the ramps. There was also a suggestion to keep Cottage Grove open for small boats. There was also a need for more fishing areas and to have the restrooms opened daily. Need a Port a John at Jaycee's Launch Ramp that is clean. It is also posted no fishing, but they still do at the ramp. Transient slips for out of town guests, slips for boats at summer celebration & other events.

### **Dog Beach:**

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

For those that used the dog beach, many commented the amount of times they used it were quite often based on the weather with four stating they used the dog beach one to two times per week, three stated that they used it weekly, and three did not use it regularly, but they 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 & half (between people who do clean up dog waste and people who didn't). Suggestion of ticketing people that do not 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 can not.
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 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 & park. Let the RV'ers stay in the State camp ground or Fisherman's Landing.
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 & 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 & Margaret Drake Elliot - An additional fire pit between the Coast Guard Station & the South Break wall would improve assurance of availability for family & friend sunset campfire gatherings.
9. Applaud any effort to create a more family-friendly environment. Even people who don't have kids enjoy & benefit from these kinds of activities. Anything that can get people out into the community, engaging in positive activities & events is going to raise the value of our community, as well as the pride we can all take in our homes & city.
10. Not happy with the access to Heritage Landing during summer celebration & 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 & dump stations that the RV's require.
13. Nothing added about the condition of places like Beukema Field, McCreia 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 & future of the city's young people & should be renovated to reflect the city's

investment in youth. A partnership could & should exist between the school & 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.

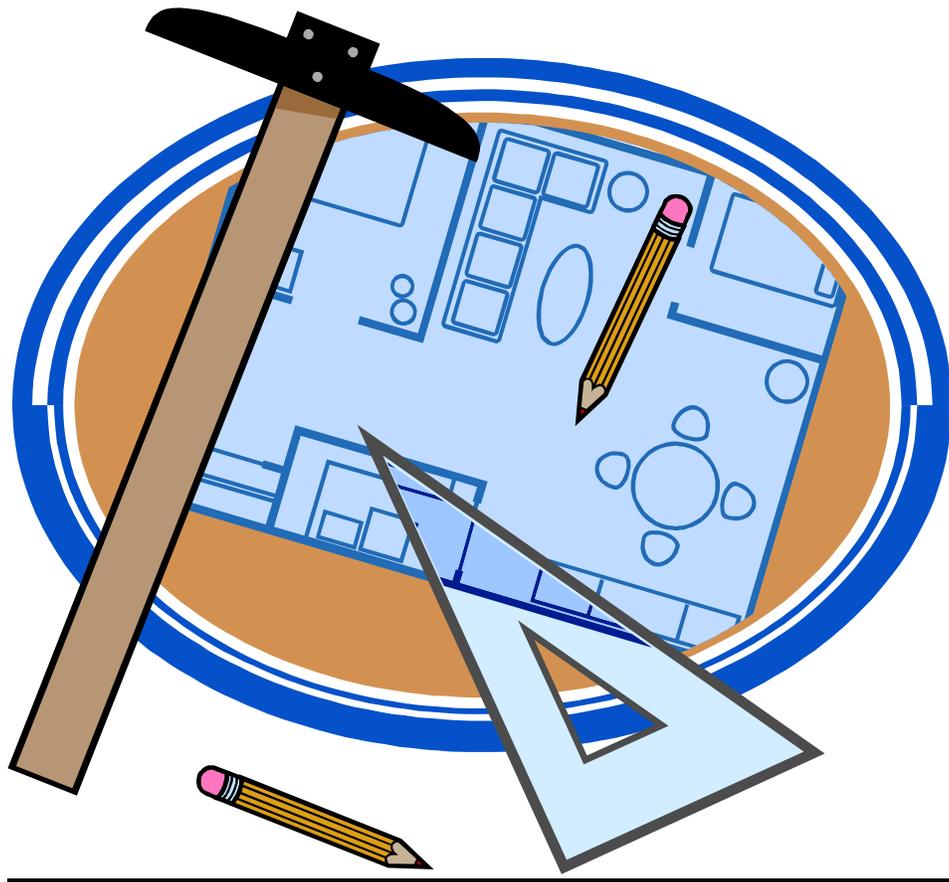
### **Completion of the Master Plan**

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 Department of Leisure Services, Community & Economic Development Department, and the Department of Public Works.

# Action Plan



## **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 are as follows:

### **Mission Statement**

The City of Muskegon Department of Leisure Services, 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.

The needs of the Family unit must also be addressed. There are an abundance of homes with only one parent. In many two-parent homes, both parents are working and children come home from school to an empty house. Grandparents are raising their grandchildren. There are also numerous homeless children. There are many tough issues facing today's families.

The issue is how can the Department provide both programs and facilities to improve the quality of City Neighborhoods and improve family stability?

### **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-proofed, repaired, and made accessible and any graffiti must be cleaned up quickly. Neighborhoods are encouraged to adopt-a-park, which can lead to a higher level of maintenance and instill 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 for 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 can take pride in.

Additionally, a variety in types of facilities is needed to meet the varied 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?

### **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 some minor rehabilitation in other areas. The fountain at Root Park needs to be renovated and returned to working order.

### **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 developed. 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 people with disabilities 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 new 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.

**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 the community needs. There are limited program opportunities for youth and senior citizens and **little to** no programs for preschoolers, and people with a disability. Even the fee supported adult programs can limit participation from those who cannot afford them.

Further, the City staff is exploring better ways of letting people know just what is offered and where. Currently individual flyers are prepared for each activity, and a master brochure is prepared semi-annually and mailed to the citizens of the City. Also, a festival and activities guide is being produced. Additional methods of marketing must be sought.

Facilities also 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 is how can the City provide **universal design, which will enrich** recreational opportunities for all people who live in or visit the City of Muskegon?

**Action Step VI:**

The City will establish a recreational marketing program to better inform residents of available programs. Staff will continue to work with the media to increase public information about programs and facilities. The Web page will be upgraded regularly and the Leisure Services website added to all information and program brochures. The Department will continue to provide individual flyers to be distributed to target markets, and will publish and distribute the festival and activities brochure.

**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.

**Action Step VIII:**

The City Commission has established the Events Committee. This committee will work with existing organizations to bring new events to Muskegon, increasing opportunities for existing residents, increasing tourism, and taking advantage of underutilized city venues.

**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 IX:**

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 to find ways of improving the environmentally sensitive areas throughout 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 occurrence. 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 parks system. A deposit on all bottles and cans would help keep trash down.

Pet owners sometimes 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 X:**

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. Additional park rangers could also be added to enforce various laws now in effect. Deterrent systems, such as digital cameras installed in problem areas, may be beneficial.

Residents need to develop 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 which also encourages students to take 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. In recent years, however, recreational development along the shoreline of Muskegon Lake has increased tremendously. Two new marinas are in the planning stages. The development of Harbor 31 (the former Teledyne property), which includes a new boardwalk and a proposed marina, has greatly improved the shores of Muskegon Lake. The Lakeshore Trail has added significant access to Muskegon Lake.

The City needs to continue to stimulate the recreational development of the lakeshore. In doing so, the City should provide a variety 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. Some of these options are already available.

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 XI:**

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, jet skiing, parasailing, and paddleboat rentals should continue to be added to the system through concession contracts with private businesses. Further, management contracts for facilities like Fisherman's Landing, 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 for fisherman, 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.

**Action Step XII:**

The City will promote and encourage the recreational development or to 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.

**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 of the partners are 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 these residents. In today's marketplace, it makes more sense to pool resources and run cooperative programs to best 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 Leisure Services facilities?

**Action Step XIV:**

The City will work with neighborhood associations to evaluate the perceived level of safety in the parks. The City will expand its current Park Ranger program to include rangers or supervisors in parks where there is a less than acceptable level of user safety. Community Police Officers will be involved in the programming whenever possible.

**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 Summer Celebration, the Parties-in-the-Park, and the Family Christmas at Hackly 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.

**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 is developing 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.

**Action Step XIX:**

The City, with the assistance from the Chamber of Commerce and Main Street, is providing new directional signage to public facilities throughout the City and improving existing signage to insure easy access for visitors to the City.

**Action Step XX:**

The City's Events Committee will coordinate additional local, regional, State, and National events to take place at City venues.

### **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 Leisure Services 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. A Public Hearing before the Board of Leisure Services.
3. Review of the plan by the Board consisting of:
  - a. Review of projects and programs started, completed, or delayed during the past year.
  - b. Public comments.
  - c. Revisions to plan schedule (if necessary).
  - d. Priority revisions (if necessary).

Budgets for the next year's programs and projects are prepared and presented to the Board 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.	SMITHRYERSON	
	Reconstruct tennis courts/fencing	100,000
	Drinking Fountains	<u>10,000</u>
	TOTAL	\$ 110,000
2.	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)	<u>75,000</u>
	TOTAL	\$ 923,700
3.	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	<u>100,000</u>
	TOTAL	\$ 1,029,700
4.	FARMERS' FLEA MARKET (relocate and/or reconstruction costs)	
	Paved area (Parking/Vendor)	\$ 900,000
	Canopies (2 = 13,500 sq. ft.) w/ electric	450,000
	Picnic tables & trash cans	50,000
	Landscaping/irrigation	100,000
	Lighting & signage	100,000
	Benches (sitting)	9,000
	Restroom w/office	<u>300,000</u>
	TOTAL	\$1,909,000

5.	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	<u>75,000</u>
	TOTAL	\$ 600,000
6.	McCREA	
	Playground Equipment	\$ 155,000
	Picnic Shelter	204,700
	Resurface basketball (1/2 court)	<u>75,000</u>
	TOTAL	\$ 434,700
7.	PERE MARQUETTE PARK	
	Extension of accessible walkway to Lake	<u>\$ 200,000</u>
	TOTAL	\$ 200,000
8.	REESE	
	Pave Parking	\$ 100,000
	Picnic Shelter	204,700
	Basketball Court/tennis courts	<u>400,000</u>
	TOTAL	\$ 704,700
9.	CAUSEWAY-VETERANS PARK	
	Shoreline protection	<u>\$ 500,000</u>
	TOTAL	\$ 500,000
10.	BEUKEMA	
	Building Reconstruction (restroom/storage area)	\$ 400,000
	Pave parking	100,000
	Picnic Shelter	<u>204,700</u>
	TOTAL	\$ 704,700
11.	KRUSE PARK	
	Dune Walkways	\$ 200,000
	Expand Parking Lot	<u>100,000</u>
	TOTAL	\$ 300,000
12.	HACKLEY PARK	
	Electrical upgrade	\$ 100,000
	Restore fence	<u>\$ 25,000</u>
	TOTAL	\$ 125,000
13.	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)	<u>60,000</u>
	TOTAL	\$ 940,000
14.	RICHARDS PARK	
	Bicycle Only Campgrounds	\$ 50,000
	Canoe and Kayak Launch Ramp	100,000
	Parking Lots	<u>150,000</u>
	TOTAL	\$ 300,000
15.	FISHERMAN'S LANDING	
	Restroom building w/ office	\$ 350,000
	Campground Expansion (roads/utilities)	500,000
	New Campground Docks	300,000
	Landscaping	75,000
	Campgrounds	200,000
	Repair Launch Ramp	<u>200,000</u>
	TOTAL	\$1,625,000
16.	SPORTS/BASEBALL/SOFTBALL COMPLEX (causeway park)	
	Purchase	\$ 900,000
	Phase I	\$ 900,000
	Phase II	<u>\$ 800,000</u>
	TOTAL	\$2,600,000
17.	LIGHTON PARK	
	Gazebo	150,000
	Landscaping	80,000
	Benches	<u>100,000</u>
	TOTAL	\$ 330,000

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE FOR BUILDING CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

RANK	PROJECT	TOTAL COST
1.	SMITH-RYERSON Enlarge Gymnasium	<u>\$ 1,600,000</u>

	TOTAL	\$ 1,600,000
2.	McGRAFT	
	New Community Hall	\$ 3,000,000
	Demolish current Community Bldg.	<u>20,000</u>
	TOTAL	\$ 3,020,000
3.	LC.WALKER ARENA	
	Restaurant/Club room over Western Ave. Entrance	\$ 500,000
	Additional Office Space facing Shoreline Dr.	350,000
	Complete renovation of Annex	1,500,000
	Arena Façade facing Shoreline Dr.	500,000
	New heating & cooling	500,000
	New scoreboard/security system	<u>300,000</u>
	TOTAL	\$3,650,000

NOTES:

- 1) Restrooms will be universally accessible with a minimum of one accessible stall in each of the restrooms (men & 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 will be two grills with one being universally accessible & 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.

## ACCESSIBILITY REPORT

The Disability Connection, a Center for Independent Living had completed an accessibility report in 2008 for the City Parks using the guidelines in “The American with Disabilities Act Checklist for Readily Achievable Barrier Removal (version 2.1)”. Also in 2008 the Department of Justice/Civil Rights Division from Washington D.C. had done an assessment of all City owned facilities. Their report is still being completed. Once their report is obtained, their information will be used to further the accessibility of the parks and facilities. The report that the Disability Connection had completed for the City is located below. This report shows that there are a few parks that are accessible as they are. Their ranking would be a 4 (the entire park meets accessibility guidelines). Many of the City’s other parks and facilities would fall between a 2 (some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines) and a 3 (most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines).

## SMITH RYERSON

### **Priority 1 – Accessible Approach/Entrance:**

This park is located in a ravine. There is a steep driveway that leads into the park from the sidewalk. There is no sidewalk leading into the park from the sidewalk at the top of the ravine.

**Possible Solution** – Install a stable, firm and slip resistant route of travel from the sidewalk at top of ravine.

**Parking and Drop-Off Areas** – There are 80 parking spaces and two of these spaces are accessible. There are no van accessible spaces. There is no access aisle from the parking spaces to the accessible entrance. There is no access to the play area and benches.

**Possible Solution** – Install two additional accessible spaces. Reconfigure to provide van accessible space(s) closest to the accessible entrance. An accessible parking space is suggested at the basketball court. Paint the access aisle from the accessible parking space(s) to the accessible entrance. Add a stable, firm, and slip resistant route to the play area and benches.

## MARGARET DRAKE PARK

### **Priority 1 – Accessible Approach/Entrance:**

Curbs on the route have curb cuts at drives, parking, and drop-offs.

**Ramps** – There are no ramps.

**Parking and Drop-Off Area** – There are two accessible parking spaces marked on the East parking lot. There are no van accessible parking spaces. The parking lot closest to the lake had a number of parking spaces marked with yellow paint. Fading paint makes the accessible spaces difficult to identify. Signs at accessible spaces are missing. There are no van accessible spaces in the parking lot closest to the lake. This lot is also closest to the gazebo.

**Possible Solutions** – Reconfigure to provide van accessible spaces. At least one of every eight accessible spaces must be van accessible (with a minimum of one van accessible space in all cases). Add signs and place them so they are not obstructed by cars or vans.

### **Priority 3 – Usability of Rest Rooms:**

There are no accessible signs at the rest rooms. There is no tactile signage identifying the rest rooms.

**Stalls** – There are no wheelchair accessible stalls. The largest stall is 40” by 10”. There are grab bars on each side of this stall but no rails in the back of the stall.

**Possible Solutions** – Move or remove partitions. Add tactile signage to the side of the door, 60” to centerline (not on the door itself).

## BEACHWOOD PARK

### **Priority 3 – Usability of Restrooms:**

There was a garbage can obstructing the entry way.

**Possible Solutions** – Move or remove obstructions.

## BEUKEMA PARK

### Priority 1 – Accessible Approach/Entrance (Route of Travel):

Gravel and concrete are not level so they are not stable, firm, or slip-resistant.

**Possible Solution** – Replace with a stable, firm, and slip resistant surface.

### Priority 3 – Usability of Restrooms:

**Doorways and passages** – There is not any tactile signage identifying the restrooms. There are no pictograms or symbols used to identify restrooms. Doors are not equipped with accessible handles.

**Possible Solutions** – Add accessible signage, placed to the side of the door, 60” to centerline (not on the door itself). If symbols are used, add supplementary verbal signage with raised characters and Braille below pictogram symbol. Equip the doors with accessible handles.

**Stalls** – There are no stall doors. There is no wheelchair accessible stall. The largest stall is 42” by 47 ¼”. There are no grab bars on the wall behind the toilet. Toilet seat is 16 inches high.

**Possible Solutions** – Install wheelchair accessible stall that has an area of at least 5 ft. by 5 ft. and clear of the door swing. Add grab bars, raise the seat, and add door handles that can be operated with a closed fist.

**Lavatory** – Lavatory does not have a 30 inch wide by 48 inch deep clear space in the front. There were no soap or towel dispensers.

**Possible Solutions** – Remove or alter cabinetry to provide space underneath. Make sure that hot pipes are covered. Add soap and towel dispensers.

### Priority 4 – Additional Access:

There is no access to restrooms from the playground area. Sand covers the mats.

**Possible Solution** – Fibar is recommended. Install stable, firm, and slip resistant route of travel to the restrooms.

## KRUSE PARK

### Dog Beach

#### Priority 1 – Accessible Approach/Entrance:

**Parking and Drop/Off Area** – There are 62 spaces total and three van accessible spaces. There are accessible signs marking accessible spaces but none that identify a van accessible space.

**Picnic Area** – There are 153 parking spaces on the picnic side of the park. There are six accessible spaces. None of these spaces are van accessible.

**Possible Solutions** – Reconfigure to provide van accessible space(s) with proper signage.

#### Priority 3 – Usability of Restrooms:

There are signs mounted on the doors. The mirrors are mounted at 46 inches.

**Possible Solutions** – Add accessible signage placed to the side of the door, 60” to centerline (not on the door itself). Lower or tilt the mirror down.

## **SEYFERTH PARK**

### **Priority 1 – Accessible Approach/Entrance:**

**Parking and Drop/Off Area** – There are 24 spaces and 1 accessible parking space in the east parking lot. The accessible space should be located nearest the accessible entrance. There are 49 spaces and two accessible spaces in the west parking lot. None of these spaces were marked van accessible.

**Possible Solutions** – Reconfigure to provide van accessible spaces nearest to the accessible entrance.

### **Priority 2 – Access to Goods and Services:**

Mats could be added leading to the playground equipment.

### **Priority 3 – Usability of Restrooms (Getting to the Restrooms):**

There are no signs identifying accessible restrooms.

**Possible Solutions** – Add accessible signage, placed to the side of the door, 60 inches to centerline (not on the door itself).

**Doorways and Passages** – The door is 6.11 lbs. There is a 32.5 inch path to fixtures.

**Possible solutions** – Install lighter doors. Remove obstructions at doorways.

## **MCGRAFT PARK**

### **Priority 1 – Accessible Approach/Entrance (Parking and Drop-Off area):**

There are 41 parking spaces in the parking lot closest to the activity center. Three of these spaces are accessible. None of these spaces are van-accessible. There are 25 parking spaces in the east parking lot. One of these spaces is accessible and one is van accessible.

**Entrance** – There are two sets of leaf doors at the front entrance. The first set of doors is 6.11 lbs. There is no access to the stage in the back of the park.

**Possible Solutions** – Install lighter doors. Provide ramp to leading on to stage.

### **Priority 2 – Access to Goods and Services (Activity Center):**

**Kitchen** – The door leading to the kitchen from the inside of the activity center is 31 inches clear. There are fixtures blocking the entrance on both sides of the door. The inner door has a knob and can not be opened with a closed fist. The door leading to the kitchen from the outside of the activity center is locked with a key. There is a push bar on the door leading to the kitchen from the outside. Counter tops are 36 inches high. The sink and paper towel dispensers are too high.

**Possible Solutions** – Move or remove obstructions from entry way to kitchen. Make sure that accessible door is not locked with key. Widen inner door. Replace inaccessible knobs with lever or loop handles. Relocate kitchen cabinets. Place paper towel 48 inches or less from the floor.

**Emergency Egress** – There is no emergency system with flashing lights and audible signal.

**Possible Solution** – Install visible and audible alarms.

**Priority 3 – Usability of Restrooms (Activity Center):**

Interior bathroom is totally non accessible. The doorway is too small. The sink is directly behind the door blocking the entrance. The stall door is too small. There are no grab bars behind or on the wall behind the toilet. The toilet seat is 16 ¾ inches high. The paper towel is 53.5 inches high.

**Possible Solutions** – Reconfigure the restrooms completely.

**Priority 2 – Usability of Restrooms (Storage Building):**

The mirrors are too high. The sinks are non usable with a closed fist. There are no accessible stalls. The pipes under the sink are not wrapped.

**Possible Solutions** – Lower the mirrors. Wrap pipes to prevent burns. Replace sink handles with paddle handles. Move or remove partitions of stalls.

**CAMPBELL FIELD**

**Priority 1 – Accessibility/Entrance Ramps:**

There is a ramp at the grand stand areas that leads to gravel.

**Possible Solution** – Add material that will allow travel to sitting area (hard surface).

**Parking and Drop-Off Area** – There are no signs that read van accessible at the accessible parking spaces.

**Possible Solution** – Add accessible signage so that they are not obstructed by cars or vans.

**Priority 2 – Access to Goods and Services (Controls):**

There is one accessible picnic table that is broken.

**Possible Solution** – Replace or fix accessible table.

**Priority 3 – Usability of Restrooms (Doorways/Passages):**

There are signs on the restroom doors. The doors are 7.5 lbs.

**Possible Solutions** – Add accessible signage, placed to the side of the door, 60 inches to centerline. Adjust or replace closers or install lighter doors.

**DAY OF CARING**

**Priority 2 – Access to Goods and Services:**

There is access to equipment from the sidewalk. The sidewalk runs to the benches. Additional fibar is recommended at the playground area. There is a transfer area at the playground area. There is no access to the picnic area.

**Possible Solution** – Provide slip resistant route to picnic area.

**ST. JOSEPH PARK**

**Priority 2 – Access to Goods and Services:**

There are cement walkways leading to the benches in the picnic area. The table is non-accessible. There is an accessible drinking fountain. There is access to trash cans. There is a transfer area attached to the playground equipment. There is an accessible swing attached to the swing set.

**Possible Solution** – Add accessible picnic table.

## **PERE MARQUETTE**

### **Priority 1 – Accessible Approach/Entrance (Parking and Drop-Off area):**

There are no van accessible parking spaces.

**Possible solution** – Reconfigure parking to provide van accessible space(s).

### **Priority 3 – Usability of Rest Rooms:**

**Doorways and passages** – The signs are on the doors. There is no inner handle. The door is too heavy.

**Possible Solutions** – Add accessible signage, placed to the side of the door, 60 inches to centerline (not on the door itself). Install lever or loop handles. Install a lighter door. Adjust or replace the closer.

**Stalls** – There is no wheelchair accessible stalls, but there is a stall that provides greater access than a typical stall. There are no grab bars on the wall behind the toilet.

**Possible Solution** – Move ore remove partitions and add grab bars.

### **Priority 4 – Additional Access:**

**Drinking Fountain** – There is a fully accessible drinking fountain.

**Telephone** – There is a public telephone that is not hearing-aid compatible.

**Possible Solution** – Have phone replaced with a hearing-aid compatible one.

## **AAMODT PARK**

### **Priority 1 – Accessible Approach/Entrance:**

The curb cuts on the sidewalk to the west of the park are too steep.

**Possible Solution** – Lengthen the ramp to decrease the slope.

### **Priority 3 – Access to Goods and Services:**

There is little fibar at the playground area. There are mats available leading to accessible playground equipment. There are sidewalks available leading to benches and picnic tables.

## **FARMERS MARKET**

### **Priority 1 – Accessible Approach/Entrance:**

**Ramps** – The ramp in the middle of the stall area on the east of the market is too steep.

**Possible Solution** – Lengthen ramp to decrease slope.

**Parking and Drop-Off Area:**

Spaces at the covered stall area are not counted as parking spaces. There are nine spaces that appear to be made as van accessible. There are no van accessible signs marking van accessible spaces.

**Possible Solution** – Add signs and place them so they are not obstructed by a van.

**Priority 3 – Usability of Restrooms:**

**Doorways and Passages** – The doorway is 26.5 inches clear. There are no wheelchair accessible stalls.

**Possible Solution** – Move or remove partitions.

**C.J. REESE PARK****Priority 1 – Accessible Approach/Entrance:**

**Parking and Drop-Off Area** – There is gravel in the east and north parking lots. There are no marked spaces in these parking lots. The west parking lot is paved with no accessible spaces. There is no access to the park from the east or west parking area.

**Possible Solution** – Replace gravel with hard top. Reconfigure a reasonable number of spaces by painting stripes and van accessible space(s). Add an alternative route on level ground.

**Priority 2 – Access to Goods and Services:**

The bleachers on the basketball court are on dirt and have no walkway leading to them.

**Possible Solution** – Add hard surfacing to them.

**Priority 3 – Usability of Restrooms:**

Getting to the restrooms – There are no signs.

**Possible Solutions** – Add accessible signage, placed to the side of the door, 60 inches to the centerline (not on the door itself).

**MCCREA PARK****Priority 1 – Accessible Approach/Entrance:**

**Parking and Drop-Off Area** – There are two accessible spaces in the east parking lot marked with signs. There is one van accessible space that is not marked with a sign.

**Possible Solution** – Add signs places so they are not obstructed by cars or vans.

**Priority 3 – Usability of Rest Rooms:**

There are no signs at the rest rooms. There are no doors on the stalls. There is no wheelchair accessible stall. There are no grab bars behind the toilet.

**Possible Solutions** – Add accessible signage, places to the side of the door, 60 inches to the centerline (not on the door itself). Move or Remove the partitions. Add grab bars behind the toilet.

**Priority 4 – Additional Access:**

The drinking fountain is surrounded by dirt. The play ground equipment, picnic tables, and basketball hoop are surrounded by sand with no access.

**Possible Solutions** – Add a route on level ground to the playground, picnic area, basketball hoop and drinking fountain. Add fibar or mats to give access to play equipment.

### **SHELDON PARK**

#### **Priority 1 – Accessible Approach/Entrance:**

There are no curb cuts leading to the playground. There is no access to the park or playground area. The parking area is made of dirt.

**Possible Solution** – Install curb cuts and replace dirt with hard top and had fibar (recommended) for the playground area.

#### **Priority 3 – Usability of Restrooms:**

**Doorways and Passages** – There are no signs at the restrooms. There are no accessible stalls.

**Possible Solution** – Add accessible signage, placed to the side of the door, 60 inches to centerline (not on the door itself).

### **MARSH FIELD PARK**

#### **Priority 1 – Accessible Approach/Entrance**

**Ramps** – The first ramp is too steep. There is railing on one side of the ramp. The railings are 42 inches high.

**Accessible Approach/Entrance** – There is no access from the sidewalk to the sanded area. There is no access to the benches.

**Possible Solutions** – Add railings and adjust the current railings height between 30 and 38 inches. Add mats or fibar to the sanded area. Provide a stable, firm, and slip resistant route of travel to benches.

#### **Priority 3 – Usability of Restrooms:**

**Doorways and Passages** – There are no signs next to the restrooms. There are no grab bars behind the toilet.

**Lavatory** – The lavatory rim is too high at 38.1 inches. The paper towel dispenser is too high at 56 inches.

**Drinking Fountain** – The spout of the drinking fountain is too high at 42 inches.

**Possible Solutions** – Add accessible signage, placed to the side of the door, 60 inches to the centerline (not on the door itself). Add grab bars behind the toilet. Adjust or replace lavatory. Adjust or provide additional accessible paper towel dispenser. Provide an accessible drinking fountain.

### **L.C. WALKER ARENA**

#### **Upper Level:**

### **Priority 1 – Accessible Approach/Entrance:**

**Ramps** – The ramp is steep and difficult to use.

**Parking and Drop-Off Area** – There is one van accessible parking space marked on 4<sup>th</sup> Street. There is a sign that says 15 minute time limit next to the accessible sign. There are no van accessible parking spaces in the west parking lot. There are two accessible spaces on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Streets. There is also no sign at the back inaccessible entrance indicating the location of the nearest accessible entrance.

**Possible Solutions** – Lengthen ramp to decrease slope. Install signs before inaccessible entrances so that people do not have to retrace the approach.

### **Priority 2 – Access to Goods and Services:**

**Controls** – The condiment counters are 36 inches high. The novelty counter is 42 inches high.

**Possible Solution** – Lower part or all of the high surfaces.

### **Priority 3 – Usability of Restrooms:**

Garbage containers block paper towel dispensers. Drinking fountains near section 109-110 have missing push bars.

**Possible Solution** – Move the garbage containers. Replace the push bars on the drinking fountains.

### **Lower Level:**

Install accessible signage where necessary.

**Telephone** – There are drink machines next to the public telephone that make it very difficult to reach. The TDD telephone is in the administration office, but is not wheelchair accessible.

**Possible Solutions** – Move the drink machine farther away from the telephone. Add signage pointing to the TDD Telephone and make sure it is wheelchair accessible.

## **MONET GARDENS**

There are benches at the edge of the walkways and a sidewalk all around the park. There are curb cuts at the corner that make the park accessible.

## **VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK**

There is an accessible fountain. There are hard gravel walkways. The bridge is 40 inches wide.

## **ROOT PARK**

The park is surrounded by a walkway. There is access to benches. There are curb cuts at the corners.

## **INDIAN CEMETERY**

This park is all grass. The gates are wide enough to enter at 43 inches. The benches are on the grass.

**Possible Solution** – Provide level walkway to benches.

**HACKLEY PARK**

There are picnic tables near a cement walkway. There are curb cuts. There are accessible picnic tables.

**KEARNEY PARK**

There is a sidewalk leading to a bench. Curb cuts make the park accessible.

**LIGHTON PARK**

There is a sidewalk making benches accessible. There are curb cuts leading to the park.

**CLARA SHEPHERD PARK**

**Priority 1 – Accessible Approach/Entrance:**

**Parking and Drop-Off Area** – There are no accessible parking spaces.

**Priority 2 – Access to Goods and Services:**

The benches, basketball court, and drinking fountain are accessible.

**NELSON PARK**

There are sidewalks leading to the playground, picnic tables, and benches. There is fibar at the playground area making it accessible.