



MEMORANDUM

REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING

January 3, 2024, at 7:00 PM

TO: City Council

FROM: Jenny Pearson, Executive Assistant

SUBJECT: Tri-Community Parks and Recreation 2024 Master Plan – First Reading of Resolution 01-2024

The City of Douglas has undertaken the development of the Tri-Community 2024 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, in collaboration with the City of Saugatuck, Saugatuck Township, and the Saugatuck Board of Education, which describes the physical features, existing recreation facilities, and the desired actions to be taken to improve and maintain recreation facilities during the period between 2024 and 2028.

City Council reviewed the draft plan as part of the 30-day review requirement at the December 18th City Council meeting. Changes given at that meeting are not yet made to the plan attached. Viridis is gathering all changes during the 30-day review opportunity and will incorporate them for final approval at the second reading of the required public hearing.

First Reading of Resolution 01-2024

**CITY OF THE VILLAGE OF DOUGLAS
COUNTY OF ALLEGAN
STATE OF MICHIGAN**

RESOLUTION NO. 01-2024

**A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE TRI-COMMUNITY 2024
PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN**

At a regular meeting of the City Council for the City of the Village of Douglas, Michigan, held at the City of the Village of Douglas City Hall, Douglas, Michigan, on the 16th day of January, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. with

PRESENT:

ABSENT:

The following Resolution was offered by Councilperson _____ and supported by Councilperson _____.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the City of Douglas has undertaken the development of the Tri-Community 2024 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, in collaboration with the City of Saugatuck, Saugatuck Township, and the Saugatuck Board of Education, which describes the physical features, existing recreation facilities, and the desired actions to be taken to improve and maintain recreation facilities during the period between 2024 and 2028; and

WHEREAS, residents of the City of Douglas were provided with a well-advertised opportunity during the development of the draft plan to express opinions, ask questions, and discuss all aspects of the parks and recreation plan; and

WHEREAS, the public was given a well-advertised opportunity and reasonable accommodations to review the final draft plan for a period of at least 30 days; and

WHEREAS, the City of Douglas has development the plan for the benefit of the entire community and desires to adopt the plan as a document to assist in meeting the recreation needs of the community; and

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held at the regularly scheduled City Council meeting on January 16, 2024 at 7:00 PM to express opinions, ask questions, and discuss all aspects of the parks and recreation plan; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS: that the City of Douglas City Council hereby adopts the Tri-Community 2024 Parks and Recreation Master Plan as a guideline for improving recreation for the residents of the City of Douglas.

YEAS: Council Members:

NAYS: Council Members:

ABSTAIN: Council Members:

ABSENT: Council Members:

ADOPTED this 16th day of January, 2024

CITY OF THE VILLAGE OF DOUGLAS

BY: _____ DATE: _____
Cathy North, Mayor

BY: _____ DATE: _____
Laura Kasper, City Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I, Laura Kasper, the duly appointed Clerk of the City of the Village of Douglas, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a Resolution adopted by the Douglas City Council at a regular meeting held on Monday, January 16, 2024 in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, Act No. 267 of the Public Acts of Michigan, 1976, as amended, the minutes of the meeting were kept and will be or have been made available as required by said Act.

CITY OF THE VILLAGE OF DOUGLAS

BY: _____
Laura Kasper, City Clerk



BUILD THE PLAN,

GROW OUR FUTURE

2024 TRI-COMMUNITY PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP, CITY OF SAUGATUCK,
CITY OF DOUGLAS, & SAUGATUCK PUBLIC SCHOOLS



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THANK YOU, Tri-Community residents, for sharing your vision and ideas that made this plan a collaborative and united effort. Your continued commitment to the health and sustainability of our community ensures a equitable park system for future generations.

DOUGLAS CITY COUNCIL

Jerome Donovan, Mayor
Cathy North, Mayor Pro-Tem
Gregory Freeman
Robert Naumann
John O'Malley
Neal Seabert
Randy Walker

DOUGLAS CITY MANAGER

Lisa Nocerini

DOUGLAS CITY AD HOC PARK COMMITTEE

Richard Donovan
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Jennifer Pearson
Demetriha Terrien
Ricky Zoet

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Russ Gardner
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Holly Leo
Gregory Muncey

SAUGATUCK CITY MANAGER

Ryan Heise

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SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP PARKS COMMISSION

Jim Searing, Chair
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Jane Dickie
Elliott Sturm

TRI-COMMUNITY STEERING COMMITTEE

Helen Baldwin
Daniel DeFranco
Richard Donovan
Ryan Heise
Scott Kierzek
Kelly Roche
Jim Searing
Ricky Zoet

CONSULTANT TEAM

VIRIDIS Design Group
www.virdg.com

LETTER FROM THE ENTITIES

DRAFT



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BUILD THE PLAN, GROW OUR FUTURE

Where we live shapes the way we experience life. Parks, recreation, and open spaces are important elements of all communities and provide physical, social, and environmental benefits that contribute to a high quality of life. The City of Saugatuck, the City of the Village of Douglas (City of Douglas), Saugatuck Township, and Saugatuck Public Schools has recognized the importance of recreation planning and has chosen to take an active role in the delivery of recreational opportunities by updating their separate Parks and Recreation Master Plans with a collaborative joint Tri-Community Plan. The 2024 Tri-Community Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a cooperative effort to provide diverse and equitable experiences for Tri-Community area residents and visitors.

Recreational planning is an exercise engaged by local governments to anticipate change and promote development and expansion of recreational facilities and services for the benefit of its community. Parks provide people with a place to gather, to be active, to socialize, and connect with the environment and each other. Green infrastructure enhances the livability of a community by increasing property values and restoring natural systems. Access to recreational spaces contributes to overall mental and physical health. As the community continues to grow and change, the Tri-Community continues to dedicate themselves to improving recreational offerings for its citizens. This Plan represents the culmination of the planning efforts of the community and local officials and reflects the community's desire to blend the available recreational resources and activities with the environmental and cultural identity of the Tri-Community.

PLAN PURPOSE

The 2024 Tri-Community Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a guide for aspirational recreation amenities and offerings in Saugatuck, Douglas, and Saugatuck Township. The purpose of this plan is to use technical study and community input to guide future park investment within the Tri-Community park systems in the most efficient manner possible, where inner-local municipalities can support each other. It is an adaptive tool to help prioritize

PLACEMAKING strengthens the connection between people and the places they share... **PLACEMAKING** is how people are more collectively and intentionally shaping our world, and our future on this planet.

PROJECT FOR PUBLIC SPACES

park improvements in a way that elevates the role of the parks and recreation system in the daily lives of all residents in the years to come. Driven by community priorities, the master plan will serve as an informative document for policy decisions that balance demands and opportunities, and present a framework for evaluating land acquisitions, park improvements, and recreation programs. Additionally, the master plan offers recommendations for park facilities, programs, and services; maintenance operations; administration and management; and capital improvements.

Inner-local leadership recognizes the significant role that recreation plays in providing a high quality of life and improved physical health of its citizens. This appreciation has manifested in a joint effort in improving park systems and public trails, promoting the preservation of natural areas, and strengthening a sense of community. As a tool, this plan provides data and direction to ensure parks and recreation offerings are balanced with the Tri-Community needs and values while addressing current recreation issues and needs over the next five-year period.

Aligned with the statewide planning process outlined by the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), this master plan will assist in recreational grant funding. The planning process incorporated community feedback toward the development of all MDNR plan components and was submitted to the State on February 1, 2024.



OVAL BEACH, CITY OF SAUGATUCK

MASTER PLAN REPORT SCOPE

Preservation, management, improvement, and expansion of the recreation system within the Tri-Community form the framework for the overall master plan report. Key planning issues are identified, a clear set of goals and objectives are outlined, and specific implementation strategies are delineated. The report evaluates all recreation facilities, undeveloped open space, trail systems, and recreational programming within the Tri-Community area. The planning effort spans facilities that fall under control of the City of Saugatuck, the City of Douglas, Saugatuck Township, and Saugatuck Public Schools. The report considers recreational facilities within the Saugatuck School District, Allegan County, and neighboring townships, that are available to citizens of the Tri-Community. Consideration is also made of non-resident usage and regional facility availability in neighboring counties that may influence resident use patterns.

This comprehensive master plan encompasses a detailed process and report that involves internal assessment, community involvement, resource gathering, and data analysis, culminating in the development of an implementation strategy for each municipality.

- » **Internal Assessment:** Establish the fundamental vision and mission of the Tri-Community and master plan report. Assess capabilities and determine the necessary steps to collaborate with the municipalities, and other stakeholders for plan development and approval.
- » **Community Engagement:** Engage the community throughout the master plan process to ensure their active participation and final report buy-in.
- » **Resources & Data Collection:** Conduct data collection and analysis to prioritize resource allocation based on park access needs and associated outcomes like physical activity and climate resilience. Utilize both qualitative and quantitative analysis methods to identify disparities in distribution, park quality, safety, and inclusivity.
- » **Implementation:** Develop a pragmatic action plan that aligns with identified needs and considers current and future resource availability, partnerships, and funding possibilities. Address anticipated funding gaps by outlining strategies to bridge these gaps and prioritize resource allocation in the short term.

COMMUNITY COORDINATION

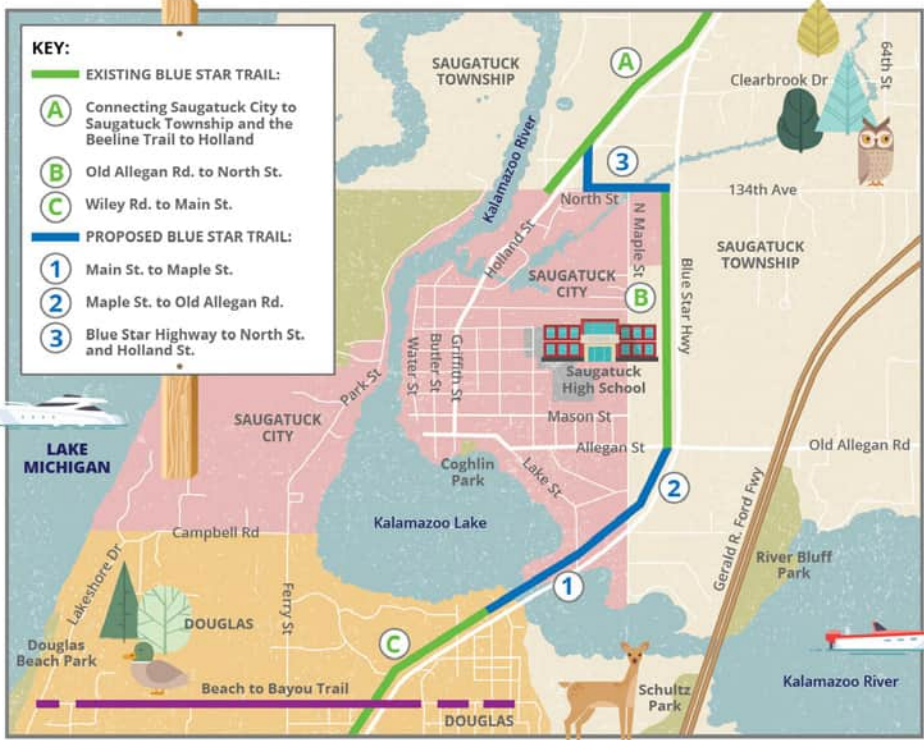
The Parks and Recreation Master Plan aligns with ongoing community-wide planning initiatives focused on enhancing community health, connectivity, and ensuring fair access to natural resources. This plan's vision and objectives further bolster previous endeavors directed at revitalizing waterfront areas, conserving natural spaces, and establishing connected trails for non-motorized transport. Below are recent Tri-Community planning efforts that form a robust foundation for shaping the future of the public park system within the community:

- Riverside & Douglas Cemetery Master Plans (2023)
- Saugatuck Township Parks Millage (2022)
- Tails n Trails Park Master Plan (2022)
- Tri-Community Non-Motorized Trail Study (2021)
- 2019 Lower Kalamazoo River Greenway Plan
- River Bluff Park Shoreline Restoration Feasibility Study
- 2016 Tri-Community Master Plan
- 2016 Douglas Master Plan
- 2016 Douglas Waterfront Master Plan
- Xtreme LA Saugatuck/Douglas Vision Report (2015)





Tri-Community Non-Motorized Trail Study and Implementation
 Inner-local municipalities partnered with Friends of the Blue Star Trail to develop and begin implementation of the regional trail connection through Douglas, Saugatuck, and the Township.



MASTER PLAN PROCESS

The 2024 Tri-Community Parks and Recreation Master Plan builds upon the foundation laid by the 2019 Saugatuck-Douglas Area Parks and Recreation Plan and the 2019 City of Saugatuck Parks and Recreation Plan, considering both physical assets and community requirements. Elements and objectives from these prior plans remain pertinent in shaping today's park system and meeting community needs. This updated collaborative plan maintains and expands upon these components from past plans, where appropriate.

While previous planning efforts identified conditions, trends, and proposed improvements—some of which have been realized—the Tri-Community region has experienced substantial growth in tourism and development over the last 5 years. This continuous expansion necessitates enhancements to the park system. Moreover, shifts in recreational trends, influenced in part by the global pandemic, have altered perceptions and usage of public spaces. This plan builds upon past initiatives while primarily focusing on meeting the evolving recreational needs of the growing Tri-Community area through the following planning process:

PHASE 1: INVENTORY + ENGAGEMENT

The Tri-Community Steering Committee and project team developed an overall strategy for broad and focused public outreach and began data collection during this phase. The goal of this phase was to identify a holistic approach that would provide baseline information to create the unified master plan.

During this phase, the project team analyzed each community's existing parks and trail conditions and established a strong understanding of the local context and foundation for future recommendations. Ongoing analysis included (1) updating of the system-wide inventory, (2) the establishment of level of service and community needs, and (3) the evaluation of system-wide resources and patterns.

Simultaneously, the project team hosted focus group meetings with each municipality, where small group discussions identified strengths and needs within each municipality. These conversations helped develop questions for an online public survey and the format of

a community open house input session. Findings from the focus group meetings and community response and feedback were then synthesized into individual municipality goals and big-picture, community-wide vision.

PHASE 2: VISIONING AND GOAL SETTING

An analysis of existing park system conditions, cross referenced with community member feedback, provided the groundwork for the steering committee to develop a comprehensive vision and set of goals in which the entire Tri-Community could support. Through this process, the committee outlined a list of pillars that would guide future decisions made on park improvements. These pillars serve as a touch stone for individual community projects as well as ambitious long-term goals the Tri-Community tackles together.

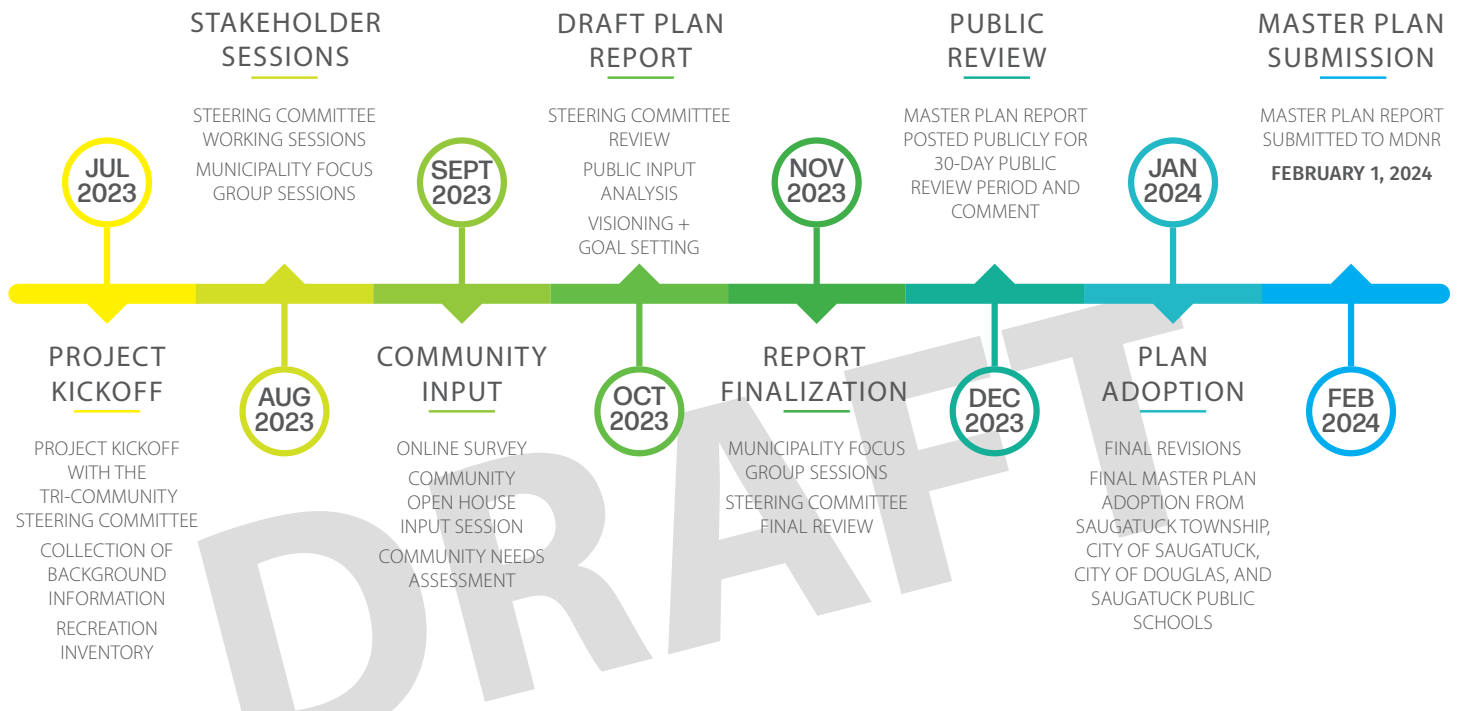
Additionally, focus groups from each entity worked to develop a list of important projects or initiatives to consider over the next five years.

PHASE 3: REPORT FINALIZATION

In the final phase of the project, the project team refined the unified park system vision statement and verified inner-local and individual municipality goals and objectives.

Cost estimates for park and trail improvements were established to assist the municipalities with developing and planning of park improvement capitol projects over the next five years. Report content was vetted and reviewed through the Parks Advisory Board and revisions were applied, as needed. **The final draft was made available in December for a 30-day public comment period and was officially approved by each municipality's council in January 2024. The official Master Plan report was approved by City Commission on January 25, 2022.**

TIMELINE AND MILESTONES



COMMUNITY INPUT OVERVIEW

A combination of digital and in-person means provided opportunities for folks to share their opinions and provide feedback on priorities for the next 5-year planning horizon. Face to face conversations allowed participants into an immersive planning process where they could share their own ideas, understand other perspectives, and build trust with the project team and steering committee. In addition to general input on parks and recreation, the project team conducted deep-dive planning sessions with each municipality for focused discussions on departmental operations and park facility maintenance. Using previous planning efforts as a baseline, the design team used the following engagement strategies to understand current community needs:

- » **Online Public Survey:** An online community survey was made publicly available from the end of August through October. 433 Participants completed the survey, 68% of which were full-time residents in the Tri-Community.
- » **Community Open House:** A public open house was held at the Douglas Library on September 21. Over 40 community members participated in a series of interactive stations to share ideas and feedback on existing park conditions and future aspirations.
- » **Focus Group Sessions:** A focus group for each entity, consisting of municipality leaders, public committee members, and local residents, was created to gain feedback on specific parks and operations within their own community. Each focus group met with the project team twice to identify goals and objectives for their park system over the next five years.

Reflecting community values and inspired by the ideas contributed by many residents and informed by evaluation of the specialness of this place, this plan describes an aspirational vision for Tri-Community parks and trails.

Saugatuck parks have a great foundation and it is exciting to see what is in store for the future. As the community grows the need for additional parks and facilities to deal with the increase in demand requires **PLANNING, INVESTMENT, and DELIVERY.**

Douglas Rodewald, City of Saugatuck Resident



HOW TO USE THE MASTER PLAN

THE 2024 TRI-COMMUNITY PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN

This parks and recreation master plan is unique in that it evaluates and offers suggestions for each municipality's individual park system as well as a Tri-Community unified park and trail network.

At the start of each report section is a description of the chapter's content and how it relates to the larger Tri-Community context. A deeper dive into each community follows with analysis, findings, and/or recommendations specific to the City of Saugatuck, the City of Douglas, and Saugatuck Township.

Each Municipality has its own colored tab at the edge of the page. This allows users to quickly flip to pages that are relevant to the community they are interested in. Additionally, Saugatuck Public Schools is included in the chapters, where pertinent.

A parks and recreation master plan is a living document. Over the next five years, the needs and desires of the Tri-Community will continue to evolve. Inner-local benchmarks and individual community metrics should be established by community leaders to regularly assess and track the progress of plan implementation. Communication regarding updates and progress on the implementation of the master plan to stakeholders and the general public will maintain transparency and garner ongoing support.

SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP

CITY OF SAUGATUCK

CITY OF DOUGLAS

SAUGATUCK PUBLIC SCHOOLS



2/ PARK SYSTEM OVERVIEW

Tri-Community Context

Water Resources

Land Resources

*Park Inventory and Analysis, Programs and Services,
Administrative Organization*

Saugatuck Township

City of Saugatuck

City of Douglas

Saugatuck Public Schools

Tri-Community Budgeting and Funding

Non-Motorized Trails

Committees + Organizations

Facilities Matrix

Community Input

THE TRI-COMMUNITY CONTEXT

LOCATION

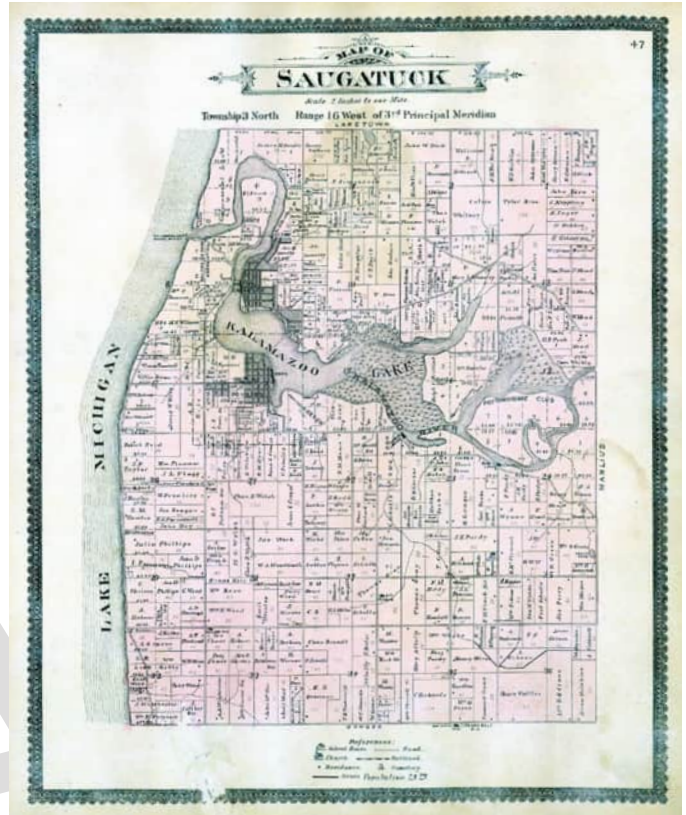
The Tri-Community area is made up of the City of Saugatuck, the City of the Village of Douglas, Saugatuck Township, and Saugatuck Public Schools, and make up the unified regional jurisdiction of this plan. The Tri-Community area is located in Allegan County along the beautiful southeastern shores of Lake Michigan. The city of Saugatuck includes 1.77 square miles, the City of the Village of Douglas includes 2.01 square miles, Saugatuck Township includes 24.2 square miles, and Saugatuck Public School District covers an area of 22.1 square miles. The Tri-Community area is bordered to the north by Laketown Township, to the east by Manlius Township, to the south by Ganges Township, and to the west by Lake Michigan (see Figure xx - location map). Regional accessibility is provided by several interchanges along US 31 which traverses the area running north and south.

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CONTEXT MAP IN PROCESS

HISTORY

Settlement in the Tri-Community area began in the late 1830s with the lumber industry. The shipbuilding and lumber port community was originally named Singapore and founded in 1837 by Oshea Wilder. Singapore was a bustling town near the mouth of the Kalamazoo River and included two active mills that helped provide lumber to many Midwest towns. The community turned to shipping and fruit growing once all the forests were clear cut and Singapore became buried in sand. Saugatuck was incorporated in 1868, which is a native American name signifying a stream outlet. Douglas was originally known as Dudleyville and first settled later in 1851 as part of the lumber boon. In 1861 residents changed the name to Douglas and was incorporated in 1870. The Township was originally organized under the name of Newark Township until 1861 and was part of a larger territory that included many other current Townships. The early 1900s saw the advent of tourism and the arrival of summer residents who built cottages along the Lake Michigan Shoreline. The art and cottage culture emerged leading to the dominant tourism industry that exists today.

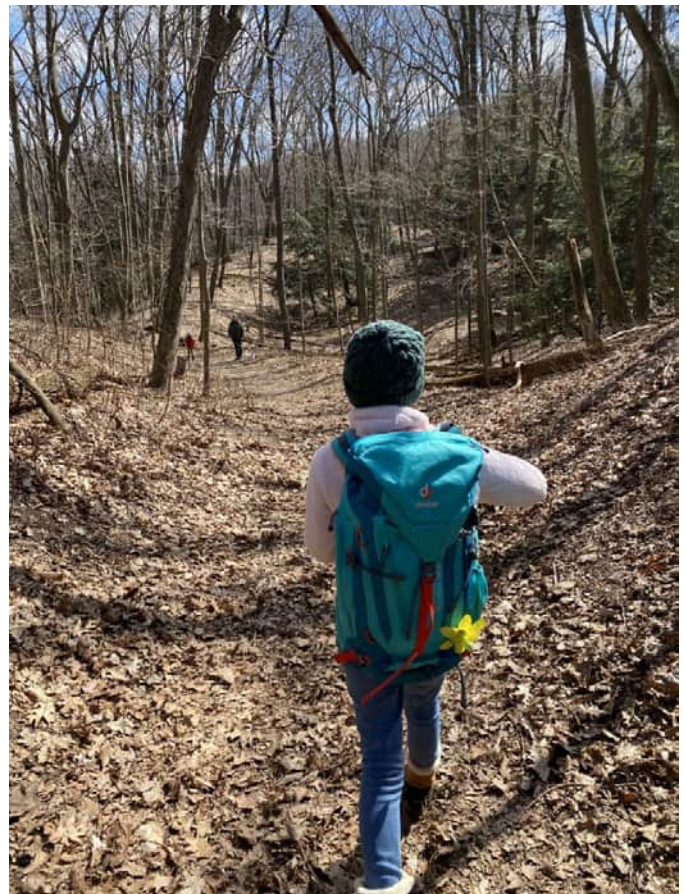


CARE OF SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS HISTORY CENTER

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Natural resources have played a central role in the culture and livelihood of the community and balancing access to these natural resources with preservation is the foundation for the community's economy and quality of life including beaches, dunes, forests, wetlands and water bodies. The sand dunes along Lake Michigan form a unique, fragile geological formation and ecosystem that is susceptible to erosion by wind and water, and subject to degradation from over use or development.

The Tri-Community area is located on the southwestern flank of the Michigan Basin, which is a bedrock feature centered in the middle of the Lower Peninsula. The sandstone and shale bedrock is overlain by glacial deposits from 50 to 400 feet thick. There are no outcroppings of the bedrock and the proximity of the bedrock to the surface of the ground does not impose limitations for normal excavating or construction. Glacial deposits consist primarily of sandy lakebed deposits located between two major physiographic formations: the Lake Border Moraine, which is adjacent to Lake Michigan, and the Valparaiso Moraine, which extends through the center of the county, from north to south.

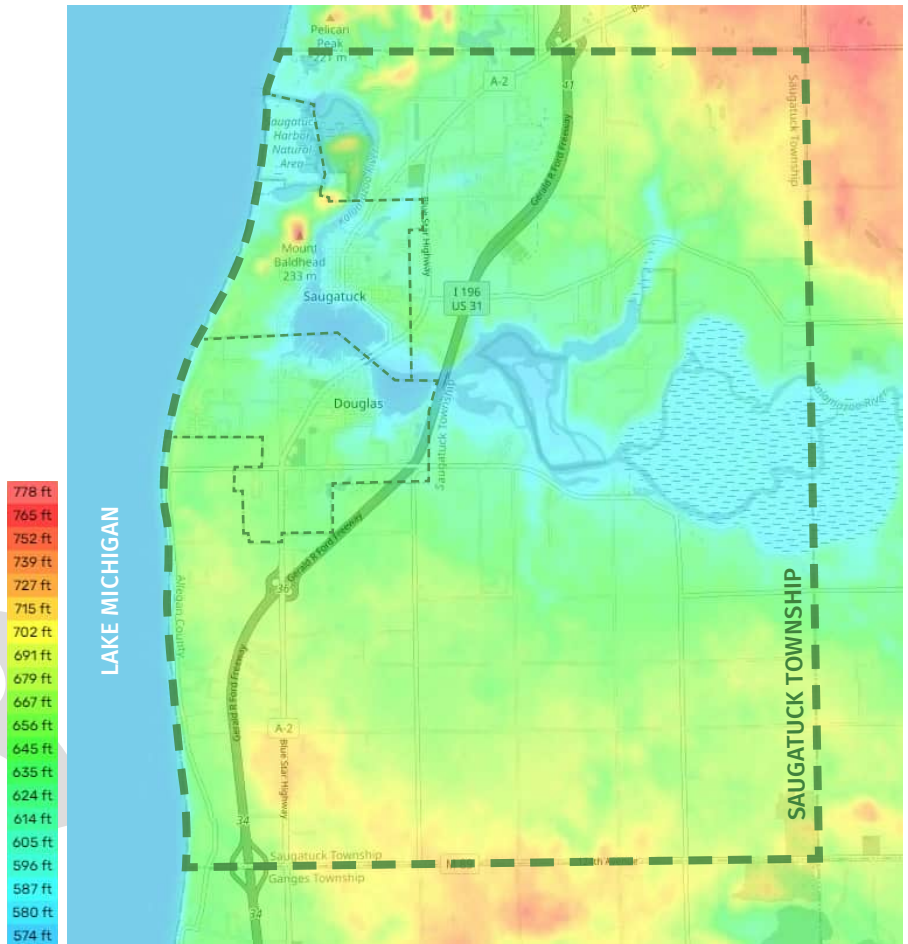


SAUGATUCK DUNES STATE PARK

TOPOGRAPHY

The current topography of the Tri-Community area is the result of the retreat of the glacial ice sheet roughly 12,000 years ago and the subsequent movement and fluctuation of its rivers and Lake Michigan. The elevation change across the area is minimal, but local variations in elevation of up to 150 feet exist between uplands and the flood plain of the Kalamazoo River. There are also considerable local differences in elevation in the extreme northwest portions of the area in the sand dunes between the Kalamazoo River and Lake Michigan. The highest point in this area is Mount Baldhead which rises 310 feet above Lake Michigan.

DR



CLIMATOLOGY

Lake Michigan has a significant influence on the climate of the Tri-Community area. The lake temperature, together with the prevailing westerly winds, moderates seasonal temperature extremes. Summers are warm and humid but slightly cooler than inland areas, while winters are moderate to severe with abundant snowfalls. The Tri-Community area gets some kind of precipitation (snow, rain, sleet, hail), on average, 129 days per year. This causes precipitation levels to be from 37 inches of rain and 80 inches of snow on average each year helping maintain the area's streams, lakes, and wetlands. The Tri-Community area is considered to have a mild continental climate based on its seasonal precipitation and temperature patterns (warm summers and cold winters). The average temperature is 49.3 degrees Fahrenheit with an average low of 21.9 degrees and an average high of 80 degrees. The mild climate makes the Tri-Community area an ideal place for tourism and outdoor recreation.

SOILS

Much of the region contains poorly drained soils including the Newton-Granby Association and the Nappanee-Blount-Rimer Association. Drainage occurs via creeks, including Peach Orchard Creek, Tannery Creek, Silver Creek, and Moore's Creek, all of which flow into the Kalamazoo River and many of which include floodplain areas. These soils create limitations for development but can offer opportunities for recreational amenities. A network of county drains facilitates the movement of water from flat areas in the southern half of the township. Well-drained soils are found in the northwestern corner of the region and the southwestern corners.

SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Reviewing trends in population growth is helpful in developing an understanding of the Tri-Community's recreational needs. Other demographic indicators such as age, education, income, and employment trends can assist in determining the type of recreational facilities that may be needed or desired, and will allow facilities and programs to keep pace with demand.

The Tri-Community showcases several distinct socioeconomic characteristics that contribute to the area's unique identity:

Tourism-Driven Economy: The tourism economy serves as a vital pillar of the local community, contributing significantly to the region's overall economic prosperity. The area's scenic beauty, charming small-town ambiance, and diverse attractions draw visitors year-round, playing a pivotal role in sustaining businesses and employment opportunities.

Artistic and Cultural Hub: The region fosters a vibrant artistic community, attracting artists, artisans, and art enthusiasts. Galleries, studios, art festivals, and cultural events play a significant role in the community's Art Coast identity and draw in residents and tourists alike.

Small-Town Charm: The Cities of Saugatuck and Douglas maintain a small-town atmosphere with historic architecture, quaint streets, and a tight-knit community. This charm appeals to residents and visitors seeking a slower pace of life and a welcoming environment.

Diversity and Inclusivity: The area is known for its open and inclusive atmosphere, welcoming people from diverse backgrounds. This inclusivity contributes to the vibrant cultural fabric of the towns.

Natural Beauty and Outdoor Recreation: Preserved natural landscapes, including the Lake Michigan shoreline, the Kalamazoo River, and scenic dunes, provide opportunities for outdoor recreation such as beach activities, hiking, boating, and birdwatching.

Education and Lifestyle: The region attracts residents and visitors who value a blend of cultural experiences, access to art, and a high quality of life. This often includes a focus on education, appreciation for the arts, and a strong sense of community.

Agriculture: The Tri-Community has a significant agricultural presence primarily revolving around fruit production, particularly blueberries and apples. The

regions favorable climate and soil conditions make it conducive for growing these fruits, and several farms in the area specialize in their cultivation. Additionally, there are smaller-scale farms producing vegetables, flowers, and other crops. Farmers markets and local produce stands play a vital role in connecting farmers with residents and tourists, offering fresh, locally grown produce. While not the primary focus of the area, agriculture in the Tri-Community, particularly within the Township, contributes to the local economy and adds diversity to the region's offerings beyond its artistic and tourist attractions.

Seasonal Fluctuations: The towns experience seasonal fluctuations due to the tourism industry, with summer being the peak season for visitors and economic activity.

Understanding these characteristics helps paint a picture of Saugatuck-Douglas as a place that thrives on its natural beauty, cultural offerings, small-town ambiance, and a diverse, welcoming community, all of which contribute to its socioeconomic makeup and appeal.



FARMERS MARKET AT THE SAUGATUCK CENTER FOR THE ARTS



DOUGLAS ROOT BEER BARREL

POPULATION TRENDS

According to the 2020 U.S. Decennial Census, the Tri-Community has a population of 5,686, which represents a 22% increase from the 2000 Census. The area has experienced growth over the past 20-30 years, with most of this growth occurring within the Township with a 45% increase since 2000 and a 83% increase since 1990. Douglas has seen modest growth at 13.5% but Saugatuck City has seen a decrease of 18.7%. Table X.X delineates the population growth in the Tri-Community area over the last 30 years.

	1990	2000	2010	2020	% Change 2000-2020
Douglas City	1,049	1,214	1,232	1,378	13.5%
Saugatuck City	954	1,065	925	865	-18.7 %
Saugatuck Township	1,876	2,376	2,944	3,443	45%
Total	3,879	4,655	5,101	5,686	22.1

To put the Tri-Communities rate of growth into perspective, it is important to compare growth comparisons with other adjacent communities. This is useful in attempting to forecast areas of future growth in the larger area as well as future demands on the Tri-Community Park system. Table X.X illustrates population growth comparisons with adjacent waterfront communities as well as the County and State. The table shows the growth rate in the Tri-Communities over the past 20 years has been stronger than the adjacent Townships of Laketown and Ganges, as well as the City of Holland and Allegan County. Additionally the Township and Douglas individually have a stronger growth rate than adjacent communities. As the population continues to grow in the Tri-Community area, strategic acquisition of park land, continued enhancement of current parks and trails, and continued Tri-Community collaboration should be the focus in order to keep up with the growth trend.

	1990	2000	2010	2020	% Change 2000-2020
City of Holland	30,869	35,012	33,051	34,378	-1.81%
Laketown Township	4,813	5,574	5,505	5,928	6.3%
Ganges Township	2,177	2,557	2,535	2,574	0.66%
Allegan County	90,509	105,904	111,4058	120,502	13.7%
State of Michigan	9,295,297	9,938,444	9,883,640	10,077,331	1.9%

A seasonal influx of cottage owners, visitors, campers, and boaters is estimated to double the population of the Tri-Community area in the summer season. Even though seasonal visitors are only residents for a part of the year, they need to be accounted for when looking at the recreational needs of the Tri-Community area. In addition, the area also experiences many day trip visitors that come to the area for just the day or weekend. This additional influx of visitors, although short term, adds to the demands put on the recreational facilities of the area.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics play a crucial role in informing park and recreation planning by providing insights into the needs, preferences, and behaviors of the community. This valuable information enables municipalities to create inclusive, accessible, and relevant recreational spaces and programs that cater to the diverse needs and preferences of the communities they serve.

Age: The age distribution of a community may influence the types of facilities and programs needed. The median age of the City of Saugatuck is 55.6, the Village of the City of Douglas is 55.7, and Saugatuck Township is 50.7. The median age of the Tri-Community area is 26-38% older than Allegan County (40.2) and 27-40% older than the State of Michigan (39.8). The median age represents the mid-point in the range of all ages within the Tri-Community. This information suggests that the Tri-Community area could be considered a retirement community due to the older population. Understanding the age demographics is useful in identifying the type of recreational facilities that may be needed, desired, or under-provided. For example a younger population may desire more active types of facilities while an aging population may desire more passive types of facilities. Table XX below illustrates the breakdown of population for the Tri-Community area based on age (based on 2020 census).

Age	City of Saugatuck		City of Douglas		Saugatuck Township		Total	
	Persons	Percentage	Persons	Percentage	Persons	Percentage	Persons	Percentage
Male	480	55.5	689	50	1,790	52	2,959	52
Female	385	45.5	689	50	1,653	48	2,727	48
Under 18	116	13.4	223	16.2	644	18.7	983	17.3
Over 18	749	86.6	1,155	83.8	2,799	81.3	4,703	82.7
18-34	64	7.4	163	11.8	430	12.5	657	11.6
35-44	48	5.5	128	9.3	351	10.2	527	9.3
45-54	188	21.7	84	6.1	551	16	823	14.5
55-64	144	16.7	318	23.1	537	15.6	999	17.5
65+	305	35.3	462	33.5	930	27	1,697	29.8

In looking at the population data, all three communities have similar trends with a higher number of residents over the age of 45 and lower number of residents in the 18-44 age range. As an overall community, approximately 47% of the population is over the age of 55 and that number jumps to 61.8% when you include the 45-54 age group. With nearly two-thirds of the population over the age of 45, providing passive and accessible recreational facilities for the aging population may need to be a focus for future park development. About 17% of the population is under the age of 18 and about 21% are between the ages of 18-44 suggesting there also is a need for active recreational facilities that provide activities for young active families.

Persons with Disabilities: The proportion of the population with some type of disability should be considered when planning parks and recreational facilities and programs, especially with a high population of those over the age of 55. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 mandates that all public services, including park facilities, be barrier-free. As the population ages, the proportion with one or more disabilities generally increases, and this trend is consistent for the Tri-Community. Disabilities include vision, cognitive, auditory, ambulatory, self-care, and living independently difficulties. According to the U.S. Census data, it is estimated that approximately 10.3% of the residents in the Tri-Community area live with a disability (12.3% of Saugatuck City residents, 8.1% of Douglas City residents, and 11.4% of Saugatuck Township residents), which is lower than the State of Michigan average of 14.5% and lower than the national average of 26%. Of those individuals living with a disability, approximately 18% are 65 years and older. These figures indicate that, while the overall population of persons with disabilities is modest, there still exists an important contingent of residents who rely on more accessible places to recreate.

Income: A successful parks and recreation system includes providing affordable, equitable recreational opportunities to all members of the community. It is important to understand the availability of disposable income for recreation within the community as household incomes may vary within the region. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the amount of people living at or below the poverty line in the combined Tri-Community area is 3.2% (8% for Saugatuck City, 7.8% for Douglas City, and 1.3% for Saugatuck Township) which is moderately lower than adjacent communities and the county, but the cities of Douglas and Saugatuck are a bit higher than adjacent townships. The estimated median household income level for 2020 is \$105,024 for Saugatuck City, \$67,627 for Douglas City, and \$100,200 for Saugatuck Township, which is an increase of 80%, 67%, and 63% respectively from the 2010 census. Both Saugatuck City and Township exceed Allegan County (\$70,264) as a whole and Douglas City is just slightly lower. Table XX illustrates the median household income of the Tri-Community's compared to adjacent communities.

Employment: Approximately 56.6% of Tri-Community residents over the age of 16 are employed in a range of employment categories (54.3% for Saugatuck City, 52% for Douglas City, and 59% for Saugatuck Township). The most common employment sectors in the Tri-Community include: manufacturing, arts, entertainment, and recreation, accommodation and food services, and educational services, health care and social assistance. The most common occupation groups, by number of people living in the Tri-Community area, are management, business, science and arts occupations, service occupations, sales and office occupations, and production, transportation, and material moving occupations. According to the U.S. Census, the Tri-Community area has an estimated unemployment rate of 5.1% which is slightly higher than the county (3.3%) but lower than the national average of 6%. The relative strength of the employment picture in the area suggests that the local economy is stable and that residents should be able to continue to fund the parks and recreation budget.

City of Saugatuck	\$105,024
City of Douglas	\$67,627
Saugatuck Township	\$100,200
City of Holland	\$70,269
Laketown Township	\$79,647
Ganges Township	\$47,143
Allegan County	\$70,269

According to the U.S. Census the average commute time to work is approximately 55 minutes for Saugatuck City, 16.9 minutes for Douglas City, and 23.8 minutes for Saugatuck Township. The work force in Saugatuck City have an average commute time of more than double the national average of 25 minutes, while both Douglas and Saugatuck Township are lower than the national average. According to the U.S. Census, most of the workforce in the Tri-Community area drive automobiles/ carpool to work (Saugatuck City 71%, Douglas City 70%, and Saugatuck Township 88%). Approximately 20% of the workforce in Saugatuck City, 19% in Douglas City, and 11% in Saugatuck Township work from home, and the remaining 1%(Township) - 11% (Douglas) walk or use public transportation.

Per capita income measures the average income earned per person in a given area in a specified year, used to determine the average per-person income for an area and to evaluate the standard of living and quality of life of the population. Table XX illustrates the per capital income of the Tri-Community compared to adjacent municipalities. Based on the higher level of income and lower level of poverty in the Tri-Community area, residents of the community may have disposable income to spend on parks and recreation and may support expansion and development of new park facilities.

City of Saugatuck	\$67,264
City of Douglas	\$44,665
Saugatuck Township	\$48,613
City of Holland	\$30,924
Laketown Township	\$42,346
Ganges Township	\$22,753
Allegan County	\$32,115

Households: The Tri-Community area provides a variety of housing opportunities based on both age and density. According to the U.S. Census data there are a total of 2,654 households in the Tri-Community (See table XX) and approximately 1.85 persons per household for Saugatuck and Douglas, and 2.5 persons per household for the Township. Of these households, 16.3% are households with individuals under 18 years-old and 41% are households with individuals 65-years and older. In addition, approximately 60% of total households are family households, and 40% non-family. A household consists of all the people who occupy a housing unit and a family is a group of two or more people related by birth, marriage, or adoption, and residing together.

	Total Households	% of Tri-Community	% of Allegan County
Saugatuck City	464	17.5	1%
Douglas City	693	26.1%	1.6%
Saugatuck Township	1,497	56.4%	3.4%
Total Tri-Community	2,654	100%	6%
Allegan County	44,240	N/A	100%

According to the U.S. Census data there are a total of 4,001 housing units in the Tri-Community area of which 66.3% are occupied, 84.6% is owner occupied and 15.4% is renter occupied. Single family structures make up 82% of the housing units in the city with 10.6% multi-family units and 7.4% mobile homes. The number of housing units has increased approximately 33% since 2000, which indicates that the Tri-Community has been steadily growing over the last 20 years and the need for additional park land may be needed to keep up with the growing community.

	Total Housing Units	Total Occupied Units	Percent Occupied Units	Total Owner-Occupied Units	Total Renter-Occupied Units
Saugatuck City	916	464	50.7%	70%	30%
Douglas City	1,155	693	60%	78.9%	21.1%
Saugatuck Township	1,930	1,497	77.6%	91.7%	8.3%
Total Tri-Community	4,001	2,654	66.3%	84.6%	15.4%
Allegan County	93,357	81,490	87.3%	82.6%	17.4%

Employment: Approximately 56.6% of Tri-Community residents over the age of 16 are employed in a range of employment categories (54.3% for Saugatuck City, 52% for Douglas City, and 59% for Saugatuck Township). The most common employment sectors in the Tri-Community include: manufacturing, arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food services, educational services, health care, and social assistance. The most common occupation groups, by number of people living in the Tri-Community area, are management, business, science and arts occupations, service occupations, sales and office occupations, production, transportation, and material moving occupations. According to the U.S. Census, the Tri-Community area has an estimated unemployment rate of 5.1% which is slightly higher than the county (3.3%) but lower than the national average of 6%. The relative strength of the employment picture in the area suggests that the local economy is stable and that residents should be able to continue to fund the parks and recreation budget.

The U.S. Census the averages work commute time at approximately 55 minutes for the City of Saugatuck, 16.9 minutes for the City of Douglas, and 23.8 minutes for Saugatuck Township. The work force in the City of Saugatuck have an average commute time of more than double the national average of 25 minutes, while both Douglas and Saugatuck Township are lower than the national average. According to the U.S. Census, most in the Tri-Community area drive or carpool to work, with 11% walking or using public transportation. **BIKING?**

TRANSPORTATION

The road network in the Tri-Community area contains a number of major thoroughfares and transportation routes that are readily available to the residents of the area. Interstate 196 runs north-south through the area on the east side of the city's of Saugatuck and Douglas and connects to Holland and Grand Rapids to the northeast and South Haven and Benton Harbor to the South. I-196 also connects to US-31 which connects the area to Muskegon to the north. M-89 runs east-west along the south side of the Township and connects to the City of Allegan to the east. The Blue Star Highway, which is part of the Great Lakes Circle Tour, also runs north-south and bisects Saugatuck and Douglas and provides the two interchanges with I-196 for the area. The Blue Star Highway also acts as the gateway to visitors entering the community from the north and south and is the primary arterial between Saugatuck and Douglas.

The Tri-Community area is also serviced by the Interurban Transit Authority which provides demand responsive public bus service to members of the Tri-Community. The Interurban is managed by a board of directors that are appointed by Saugatuck Township, Saugatuck City, and Douglas City. The Interurban provides transportation to all areas within the Saugatuck boundaries.

The Tri-Community area is highly accessible by water. There are several marinas and boating facilities along the coast of Kalamazoo Lake, which provides direct access to Lake Michigan. Commercial charter boat service and boats for hire are available in Saugatuck and Douglas, and many private boats visit the area from other Great Lakes communities. The Saugatuck Chain Ferry (hand cranked) also operates seasonally to shuttle passengers across the Kalamazoo River from downtown Saugatuck to western residential areas and tourist destinations of Oxbow, Oval Beach, and the Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area.

LAND USE

The land use distribution and development pattern of a community is important when considering the geographic distribution of parks and recreational facilities because they should be placed where there are concentrations of residents and the related places of public gathering. Residential areas in the Tri-Community area vary widely in character between the rural areas of the Township and the urbanized areas of Saugatuck and the City of the Village of Douglas. Single family structures are the predominant residential type throughout all three communities. Most of the residential development in the Township is scattered along county roads and along the Lake Michigan Shore. Rural areas of the Township include agricultural areas, farms, and single-family homes on large parcels. The multiple family structures that exist are concentrated in the Cities of Saugatuck and Douglas. The major commercial areas in the Tri-Community area are in the northern part of the Township along the Blue Star Highway, the downtowns of Saugatuck and Douglas, and along the section of the Blue Star Highway that runs through Douglas.

Waterfront Areas: The Lake Michigan shore is fronted by many large single family homes along Lakeshore Drive between M-89 and Saugatuck City. This area is characterized by scenic vistas of the lake and bluff. Most resort-residential development in all three communities is located along the Kalamazoo River and Lake Michigan. A large portion of the lakeshore both north and south of the mouth of the Kalamazoo River is undeveloped and includes Oval Beach Park and the Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area. In addition, much of the area surrounding the Kalamazoo River east of Douglas is undeveloped due to wetlands and land unsuitable for development.



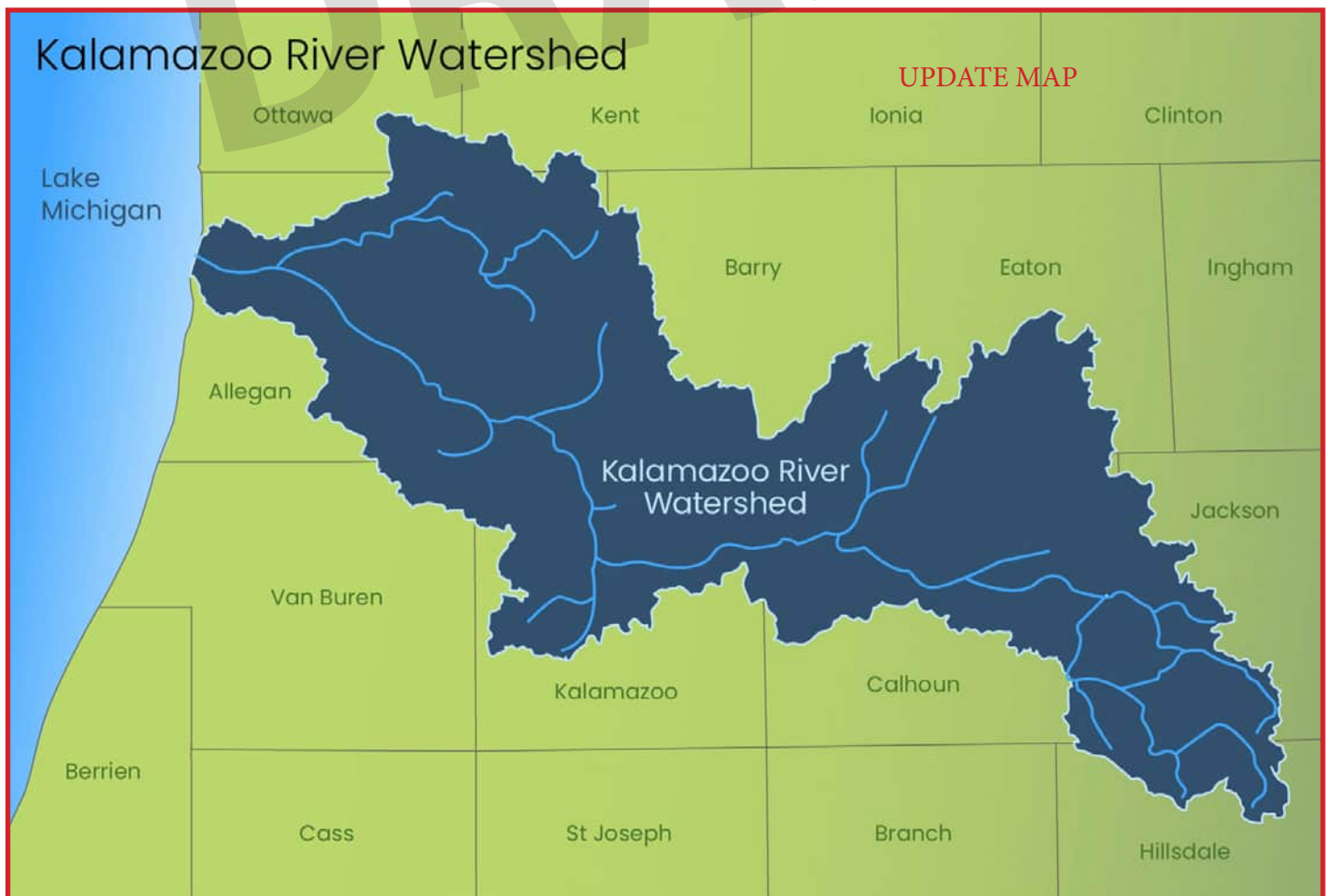


OX-BOW SCHOOL OF ART

WATER RESOURCES

The Tri-Community area lies within the Kalamazoo River Watershed, covering 2,030 square miles and draining into eight counties in Southwest Lower Michigan before discharging into Lake Michigan. Eight small watershed areas lie within the Tr-Community area and discharge into Lake Michigan via the Kalamazoo River. The principal water features in the area include Lake Michigan, the Kalamazoo River, and Kalamazoo Lake (a widened area of the river) which separates Saugatuck and Douglas and contains approximately 184 acres. Other water features in the area include Ox-Bow Lagoon in the northwestern corner of Saugatuck Township, Goshorn Lake at the northern boundary, Silver Lake in the central part of Saugatuck Township; and short-run streams with sub-watersheds that flow into the Kalamazoo River and include Tannery Creek, Peach Orchard Creek, Sliver Creek, and Goshorn Creek.

The Kalamazoo River watershed holds immense significance for the Saugatuck and Douglas communities, serving as a vital natural feature that intertwines with their identities. Flowing through these areas, the winding Kalamazoo River plays a pivotal role in shaping the local landscape and providing diverse recreational opportunities. As it meanders through lush woodlands, scenic wetlands, and picturesque valleys, the river offers a serene backdrop for outdoor activities such as kayaking, canoeing, and wildlife observation. Additionally, the river's connection to Lake Michigan, with its confluence near Saugatuck and Douglas, enhances the region's allure, creating a dynamic ecosystem where freshwater meets the Great Lake's vast expanse. This interconnectedness underscores the importance of the Kalamazoo River watershed to the communities of Saugatuck and Douglas, not only for its environmental significance but also for its role in providing natural beauty and recreational enjoyment.



KALAMAZOO RIVER WATERSHED BUILDING BLOCKS



LAKE MICHIGAN

Lake Michigan's name is derived from the Ojibwa word Michi Gami, meaning "large lake." It spans the entire west coast of Michigan's Lower Peninsula, and it is the only one of the five Great Lakes that is located entirely within the United States. Over 300 miles long and 118 miles at its widest point, it reaches to a depth of over 900 feet with an average depth of 279 feet. Based on surface area, Michigan is the fourth largest freshwater lake. Based on volume, Lake Michigan is the fifth largest in the world. Lake Michigan's expansive shoreline boasts several stunning dune regions and provides an enormous amount of recreational and economic benefits to the Tri-Community area. The Tri-Community area is home to approximately xx miles of Lake Michigan shoreline and includes the Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area and the Saugatuck Dunes State Park.



KALAMAZOO RIVER

The Kalamazoo River meanders through the central and northwestern portions of Saugatuck Township and creates the inviting waterfronts of Saugatuck and Douglas. The Kalamazoo River is one of the largest rivers in Michigan, spanning and draining parts of eight counties, the last of which is Allegan. It is the seventh longest river located entirely within Michigan, draining just over 2,000 square miles. The Kalamazoo River and the Saugatuck Harbor is a federally authorized shallow draft recreational harbor with a project depth of 14 feet. It consists of over 2 miles of maintained Federal channel and 4,000 feet of maintained piers and revetments between Lake Michigan and Kalamazoo Lake. The river widens to form Kalamazoo Lake, a center of boating activity between Saugatuck and Douglas, and empties into Lake Michigan.



FLOODPLAIN

Floodplains are low-lying areas adjacent to rivers or streams that periodically flood. They play a crucial role in the ecosystem by supporting natural features that provide wildlife habitat, water storage and conveyance, protection of water quality, and recharge of groundwater. The Tri-Community area contains approximately xx acres of land designated by FEMA as "Zone A" which includes areas of the 100-year flood, mostly located along the Kalamazoo River at the central and east sections of the area. The floodplain is a riverine system that varies in steepness, width, and flow and is defined by the floodway. This type of floodplain typically floods in the spring but is subject to periodic flooding due to extensive rainfall and snowmelt.



FISH AND WILDLIFE

The Kalamazoo River watershed and its tributaries boast diverse population of fish and wildlife. Fish species range from salmon and walleye in Lake Michigan and the Kalamazoo River to smaller panfish like sunfish and bluegill in inland waters. Abundant waterfowl breed and feed in this area, a key part of the Lake Michigan Flyway for migrating ducks, geese, and swans. Whitetail deer, opossums, raccoons, and other small mammals are prevalent, even in urbanized parts due to wooded corridors and parks. Forests, dunes, and open fields host various songbirds. The close proximity of different ecosystems like dunes, floodplains, wetlands, and lakes creates exceptional wildlife viewing opportunities, despite being in densely populated areas. Conservation organizations like the Saugatuck Dunes Coastal Alliance safeguard rare species such as the Bald Eagle, Prairie Warbler, Lake Sturgeon, Eastern Box Turtle, and Blanchard's Cricket Frog in these sensitive habitats.

LAND RESOURCES

Tri-Community area contains significant areas of land that have remained relatively undeveloped and preserved. Collectively these areas are not only significant in size but also demonstrate a wide variety of natural habitats. Three basic ecosystems are found in the Tri-Community area that provide diverse environments and a wide array of flora and fauna:

The first ecosystem is comprised of hardwoods holding the sand dunes in place along the Lake Michigan shoreline. These woodlots are inhabited by small game common to most of Michigan. These areas are sensitive to soil disturbance and wind erosion along the shore.

The second ecosystem is the marsh-wetland ecosystem that covers the area along the Kalamazoo River, Silver Lake, and Goshorn Lake, and the connecting tributaries. This area is covered with marsh grasses, low shrubs, poplar trees, spruces, some white pine, and other softwoods. The cover is inhabited by common Michigan marsh dwellers such as frogs, turtles, ducks, blackbirds, and snakes. The marsh ecosystem is also populated by muskrats, mink, mallard ducks, black ducks, teal, wood ducks, blue herons, Canadian geese, and mute swans. The marsh ecosystem is very sensitive to changes in water quality and disruption of vegetation.

The third ecosystem covers the rest of the Township area and is predominantly agricultural/forest with birds and wildlife common to this dominant ecosystem in Michigan. These areas can provide educational, recreational, aesthetic, and wildlife preservation benefits with minimal development or maintenance costs.

IN PROCESS

SAUGATUCK DUNES COASTAL REGION

The Saugatuck Dunes are part of the largest assemblage of freshwater dunes in the entire world. Created from the glaciers thousands of years ago and sculpted by thousands of years of prevailing southwest winds, crashing waves, and stabilizing native vegetation, these dunes on Lake Michigan range from Oval Beach up to Lake Macatawa near Holland. The Saugatuck Dunes State Park and the Saugatuck Dunes Natural Area feature over two and a half miles of almost completely undeveloped sandy beach for residents and visitors to enjoy. The dunes along Lake Michigan, located in the northwest corner of the Tri-Community Area, represent a unique and fragile physiographic formation and ecosystem that is very sensitive to wind and water erosion. These dunes have been identified by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as a critical dune area, subject to protection under the Michigan Sand Dune Protection and Management Act, new Part 353, PA 451 of 1994. Critical dune areas are a unique and fragile resources that provide significant recreational, ecological, scenic, and economic benefits to residents and visitors.

IN PROCESS

WOODLANDS AND VEGETATION

The wooded areas of the region are a mixture of hardwoods and conifers. Large areas of upland hardwoods are found in the sand dune areas, along Lake Michigan, and in the northeast quarter of the area. Other smaller patches of upland and lowland hardwoods and conifers are scattered throughout the area. Mature trees represent a valuable resource in maintaining the aesthetic character of the area, not to mention their overall importance to wildlife and the natural environment. In particular, the wooded sand dunes along the Kalamazoo River and Lake Michigan are especially important. They should be managed to insure their long term existence.

PARK INVENTORY + ANALYSIS

To understand the Tri-Community park and recreation system, we first completed an inventory and analysis of existing park and school facilities. The intent of the analysis is to evaluate the character, performance, and accessibility of the diverse spaces in the park system, and provide a comprehensive perspective of the opportunities and challenges of the existing recreational facilities the community has to offer its citizens. The inventory is based on feedback provided by Tri-Community staff and stakeholders, site inventories carried out by VIRIDIS Design Group, park accessibility review, and a review of the 2019 plans.

PARK AND RECREATION SYSTEM INVENTORY

The park and recreation system inventory establishes a baseline understanding of the quantity, type, location, and quality of all park and recreation facilities in the Tri-Community. The project team visited each park facility and recorded its amenities, accessibility, and condition. The site inventory was supplemented by an aerial survey and verified against the county's GIS database. Overall, X parks and open spaces, as well as school sites were inventoried through this process.

The Tri-Community has a variety of park spaces and other public recreational trails and facilities. Numerous county, private and non-profit facilities are also found within the community and county and are highlighted as part of the inventory.

The NRPA has established generally recognized standards for classifying types of parkland based on size and function which provide a means for determining the primary purpose or use of existing facilities in a community. These designations have been adopted by the MDNR; and provide one method of defining the purpose and use of facilities.

NRPA PARK CLASSIFICATION



MINI PARK

- Small green spaces designed for specific populations or purposes within a ¼-mile radius and typically under 1.5 acres in size.
- Walk-to parks without parking facilities, emphasizing recreational opportunities and commonly including passive activities, gazebos, benches, and picnic tables.
- Service levels range from 0.25 to 0.5 acres per thousand residents with a high level of walkability



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

- Community hubs ranging from 2 to 10 acres serving neighbors within a ¼ to ½ mile radius.
- High level of walkability with diverse, multi-age recreational activities including play areas, sports fields, walking paths, and shelters.
- Serve 10,000 to 20,000 residents at a rate of 1.0 to 2.0 acres per thousand people.



COMMUNITY PARK

- Serve multiple neighborhoods and cater to diverse populations, offering a variety of day and evening activities for users of all ages.
- Span 15 to 50 acres, feature active and passive amenities like sports fields, hiking trails, swimming pools, and play structures, serving 50,000-80,000 people or at a rate of 5-8 acres per 1,000 people.
- Designed for a 1 to 3 mile radius of service, with multiple transportation access points, on-site parking.



REGIONAL PARK

- Expansive public recreation areas meant for larger populations in a specific region or metropolitan area.
- Cover extensive land areas, providing diverse recreational activities and amenities to draw visitors from various neighborhoods or cities.
- Feature facilities like sports fields, playgrounds, hiking trails, picnic areas, nature reserves, cultural attractions, water bodies, and educational resources.

BARRIER FREE ACCESSIBILITY

Federal and State laws require all areas of public service to be accessible to all persons including those with limited sight, hearing, mobility, and comprehension. Developed park facilities must comply with barrier-free design standards. Park facilities in the Tri-Community have been reviewed to understand the need for improvements relating to barrier-free accessibility. In addition, as park development is considered in the future, barrier-free accessibility is a significant priority item to help ensure that recreation can be enjoyed by all residents and visitors of the community. Following is a ranking system in accordance with MDNR standards:

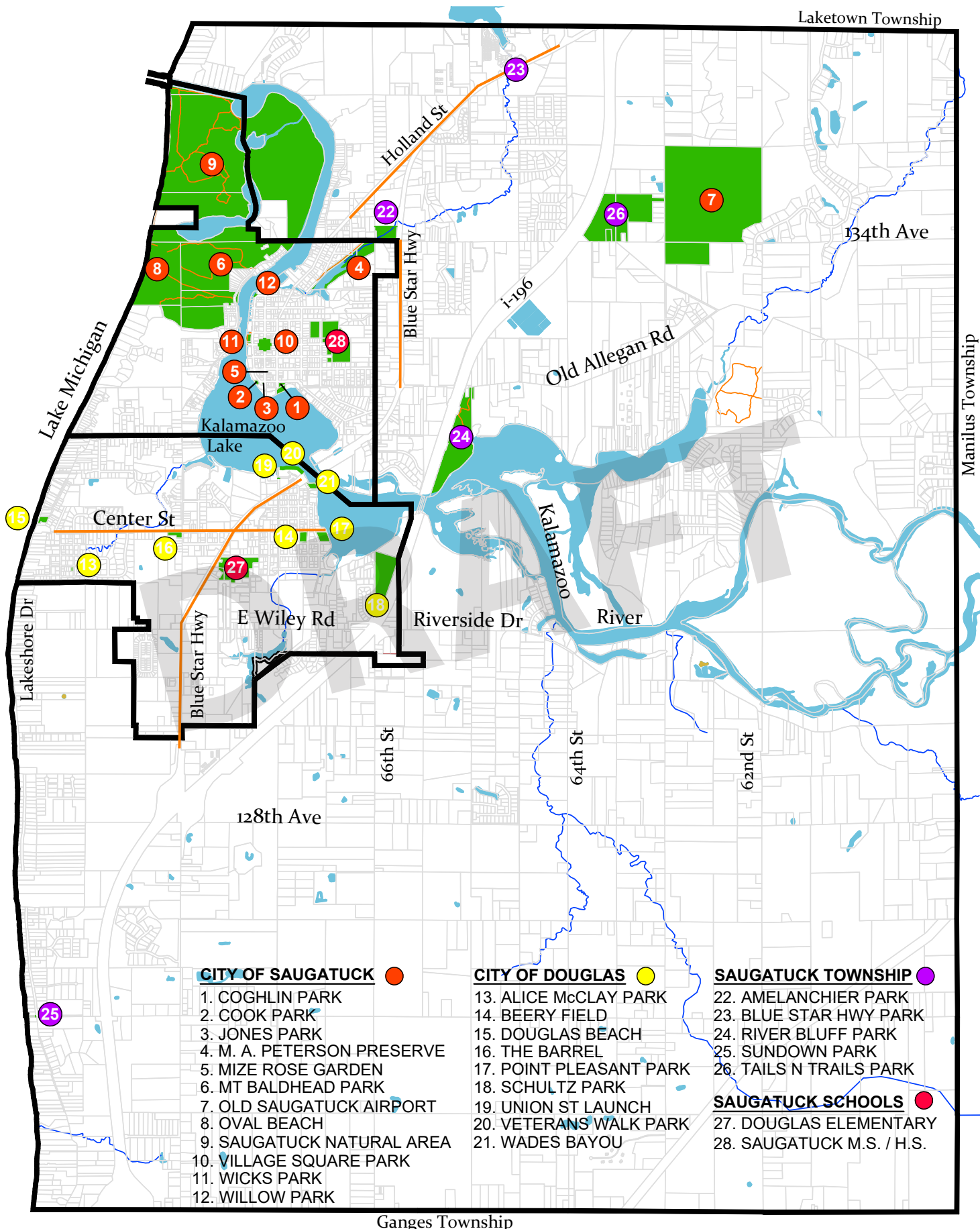
- 0** Completely undeveloped, no paved surface, left in a natural state.
- 1** None of the facilities in the park meet accessibility guidelines.
- 2** Some of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines.
- 3** Most of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines.
- 4** All of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines.
- 5** Universal design guidelines were used to design the entire park.

EXISTING PARKS

As part of the methodology of determining present-day and future needs of the Tri-Community residents, the existing park facilities were examined. This combined with current trends, comparison to park standards, and community feedback (discussed later) will help the parks department anticipate and plan for future user needs. The design team visited each park to observe existing facilities to understand defining features, quality and condition of existing facilities, quantity of amenities, and level of accessibility. This field analysis was completed in August of 2023 (refer to table XX for park amenity inventory).

The following pages offer insights into each municipality's park inventory and accessibility. Parks are grouped together based on the NRPA's classification system. A complete Tri-Community Facilities Matrix is found on page XX.





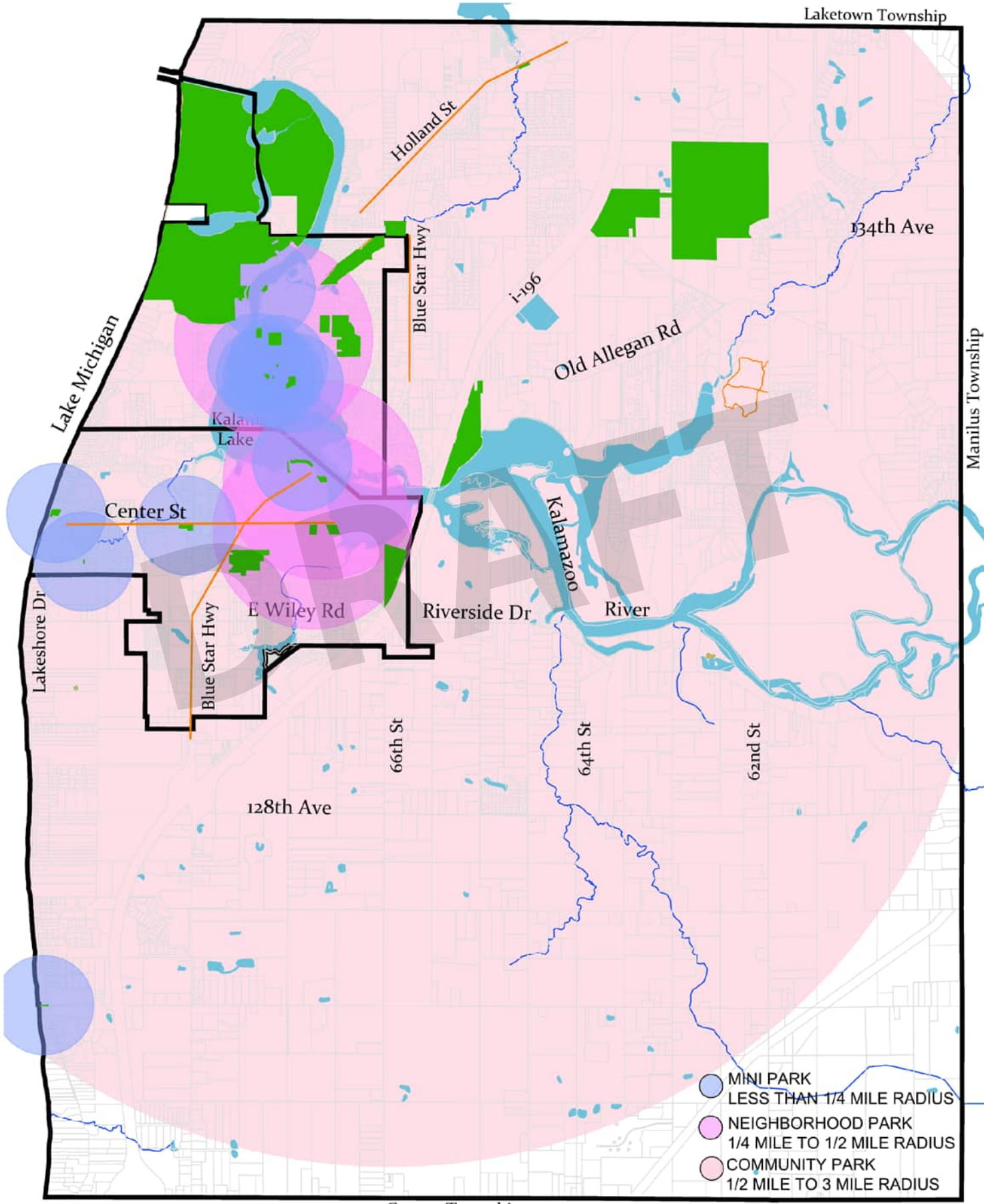
- CITY OF SAUGATUCK** ●
1. COGLIN PARK
 2. COOK PARK
 3. JONES PARK
 4. M. A. PETERSON PRESERVE
 5. MIZE ROSE GARDEN
 6. MT BALDHEAD PARK
 7. OLD SAUGATUCK AIRPORT
 8. OVAL BEACH
 9. SAUGATUCK NATURAL AREA
 10. VILLAGE SQUARE PARK
 11. WICKS PARK
 12. WILLOW PARK

- CITY OF DOUGLAS** ●
13. ALICE McCLAY PARK
 14. BEERY FIELD
 15. DOUGLAS BEACH
 16. THE BARREL
 17. POINT PLEASANT PARK
 18. SCHULTZ PARK
 19. UNION ST LAUNCH
 20. VETERANS WALK PARK
 21. WADES BAYOU

- SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP** ●
22. AMELANCHIER PARK
 23. BLUE STAR HWY PARK
 24. RIVER BLUFF PARK
 25. SUNDOWN PARK
 26. TAILS N TRAILS PARK
- SAUGATUCK SCHOOLS** ●
27. DOUGLAS ELEMENTARY
 28. SAUGATUCK M.S. / H.S.

0 1500 2000

PARK SITES
 WATER RESOURCE
 PAVED TRAIL
 MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY



- MINI PARK
LESS THAN 1/4 MILE RADIUS
- NEIGHBORHOOD PARK
1/4 MILE TO 1/2 MILE RADIUS
- COMMUNITY PARK
1/2 MILE TO 3 MILE RADIUS



PARK SITES



WATER RESOURCE



PAVED TRAIL

MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY

SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP

PARK SYSTEM INVENTORY

Saugatuck Township features 5 parks that include a mix of passive type uses, natural areas, and water access. Refer to figure X.X for a list of uses and accessibility rating.



MINI PARKS

SUNDOWN PARK

Sundown Park is a 9,900 square foot parcel with overlook to Lake Michigan without direct beach access and located at the end of 126th Ave. The park appears to be a residential lot and is sandwiched between two residential properties.

Park features: Open space, bench, minimal gravel parking spaces, scenic views, bench, directional signs on M-89 and Lakeshore Drive

Opportunities: Consider developing a master plan for the development of the site. Improvements may include picnic area, overlook deck, landscaping, restroom, and paved access.

Accessibility = **1**



BLUE STAR MEMORIAL HIGHWAY PARK

This site is a roadside Park with memorial signage. The park is owned by the Allegan County Road Commission and maintained by Saugatuck Township.

Park features: Picnic shelter, signage, small area for off-street parking.

Opportunities: Work with the Road Commission to consider adding parking spaces, trails, and additional signage.

Accessibility = **3**





NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

AMELANCHIER PARK

Amelanchier Park is a 4-acre wooded natural site, north of North Street, with access to Moore's Creek via natural surface trails. The Township has developed a master plan for the development of this site including planned non-motorized trail connections through the park.

Park features: Nature trails, nature observation, scenic views.

Opportunities: Implement the elements of the master plan as funds become available.

Accessibility = 1



COMMUNITY PARKS

RIVER BLUFF PARK

River Bluff Park is a natural 27-acre wooded tract with approximately 0.5 miles of Kalamazoo River frontage located east of Blue Star Highway, along Old Allegan Road. This park offers many passive types uses including water based activities. The Township has received a grant from the Kalamazoo River Trustees to evaluate the park and the river frontage for ecological restoration, preservation, and conservation opportunities.

Park features: Wayfinding signage from Blue Star Highway, picnic lawn area/children's swings, paved parking lot, boat landing with picnic shelter, nature trail to river overlook, public interpretation center, 0.4 miles of natural surface trails including two foot bridges leading from the bluff to river frontage and boat landing, historical marker at entrance of park, barbecue grills and picnic tables.



SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP PARK SYSTEM INVENTORY

RIVER BLUFF PARK (CONT.)

Opportunities: Development of an overall site master plan that is parallel with the restoration efforts and balances the natural characteristics of the riverfront with more active uses near the park entrance. Consider implementation of the recommendations from the shoreline study. Implement improvements envisioned in the future master plan, which may include picnic shelter, restrooms, paved trails, barrier free path from parking lot, modern playground equipment, fishing pier, boardwalk/deck, and pickleball courts.

Accessibility = **2**

TAILS N' TRAILS DOG PARK

This park is a 39.5-acre site that is partially (5 acres) developed as a fenced dog park. The park offers a unique dog park experience for users with enclosed areas for both large and small dogs and extensive off-leash wooded walking trail. The township has developed a master plan for the park that includes loop trails, landscaping, interpretive signs, observation tower, picnic areas, new entry feature, enhanced natural areas, wetland/water management areas, parking, and a picnic pavilion. The Township has received a Sparks Grant for improvements to the park. This park is also near the Old Airport property owned by the City. Consider collaborating with the city of Saugatuck on potential connection opportunities.

Park features include: Dog park that includes enclosures for large dogs and small dogs, gravel parking, nature trails, port-a-john, gazebos in both dog enclosures, and drinking water for dogs.

Opportunities: Pave parking lot and designate barrier free spaces, provide barrier free access between the parking lot and dog areas, replace and reinforce fencing in dog park areas, continued development of loop trails, implement improvements as proposed in the 2022 DNR Sparks Grant, add restrooms, and continue to implement phased elements of the master plan as funds become available.

Accessibility = **2**



ADDITIONAL TOWNSHIP GREEN SPACES

RIVERSIDE CEMETERY

Description:

Park features include:

Opportunities:

Accessibility = **1**



DOUGLAS CEMETERY

Description:

Park features include:

Opportunities:

Accessibility = **1**



DRAFT

SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

Saugatuck Township operates under a Board/Manager form of government. The Board/Manager plan is a system of local government that combines the political leadership of an elected Township Board with the professional managerial experience of the Township Manager.

SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Saugatuck Township is a general township governed by a 5-member Board of Trustees. The Board is composed of a Supervisor, Clerk, Treasurer, and two Trustees. The primary responsibilities of the Board include Fiscal Responsibility, Election Administration, Collection of Taxes, Policy Creation, and Local and Regional Representation of the Township.

SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP MANAGER

The Township Manager serves as Chief Administrative of the Township. The Township Manager is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the elected Township Board. The Township Manager administers and coordinates various functions of Township government including Implementing policy, managing staff, facilities, and assets, and acting as the face of the Township.

- Prepares and administers personnel policies and procedures, compensation systems, employee contracts, and other administrative codes.
- Prepares and administers the annual budget for the city and keeps the Council fully advised as to the financial condition and future needs of the city.
- Manages and supervises all city utilities and public improvements, including construction, repair, and maintenance of all city-owned infrastructure and buildings.
- Directs and coordinates the operations of city departments and staff, assesses city services and operations, and ensures quality services are provided in an efficient, cost-effective, and timely manner.

SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP PARKS COMMISSION

The Saugatuck Township Parks Commission is a five-member elected board with the authority to acquire, maintain, manage, and control Township parks and places of recreation. Funding for the Township Parks and Recreation program is made possible by the Parks and Trails millage; a .5 millage for 10 years approved by voters in 2022. The Parks Commission maintains a 5-year Parks and Recreation plan.

SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

The Saugatuck Township Planning Commission provides community leadership on local planning and development policy. The Planning Commission is an appointed body that advises the Township Board on planning matters. The Planning Commission has the responsibility (1) to prepare a master plan, which influences the regulations and standards in the zoning ordinance and any future changes to approval of Site Plans, (2) to ensure that new development fits the community's vision for a given site, with help from professional staff or consultants, (3) for Special Use approvals, and (4) is the main forum for discussion of changes to the Zoning Ordinance text and map.

CITY OF SAUGATUCK

PARK SYSTEM INVENTORY

The City of Saugatuck features 12 parks that include a mix of unique packet parks, natural areas, and active spaces. Refer to figure X.X for a list of uses and accessibility rating.



MINI PARKS

COGHLIN PARK

Coghlin Park is a 0.5-acre site located in downtown Saugatuck and includes 200' of Kalamazoo River frontage. The Park is primarily open space that is utilized for weddings and festivals such as the popular annual Venetian Festival. The park also offers “shoppers” docks that allow boaters to park and enjoy the downtown.

Park Features: Open space for free play or picnicking, art sculpture, picnic pavilion, waterfront access with docks and paved paths, festival space, picnic tables, benches, and fishing.

Opportunities: The existing shelter/gazebo has fixed picnic tables that allow for some seating but overall the structure is not configured for other types of use such as Music in the Park. During special events, a separate temporary stage has been utilized in the south-east corner of the park. Consider adding a permanent bandshell, a restroom building, and expanded floating docks.

Accessibility = 2



COOK PARK

Cook Park is a 1-acre green space with overlook to Kalamazoo River used for art fairs/watercraft and fireworks viewing. Lake frontage is leased from city and used for boat mooring by Singapore yacht club. This park is utilized primarily by the City for the Art Fair and its identity as a public park is less than other community parks due to an ambiguous boundary on where the park begins and ends.

Park Features: open space for free play or picnicking, art sculpture, waterfront access with boardwalk and docks, picnic tables, festival space, scenic views, and fishing.

Opportunities: Review options for boardwalk renovation and explore the addition of a walking path along Water Street to improve accessibility of area.

Accessibility = 2



JONES PARK

Jones Park is a 0.5-acre park located at the corners of Butler, Water and Culver Streets in downtown Saugatuck. Formerly known as Information Booth Park because of the white building that holds pamphlets and maps about the area, it was renamed after the late Lyle A. Jones, a city police chief for 33 years.

Park Features: brick sidewalks, benches, landscaping, plaque dedicated to Chief Jones, and a scenic view of the Lake Kalamazoo Harbor.

Opportunities: Consider a maintenance plan for the landscaping, and a site identification sign.

Accessibility = 4



CITY OF SAUGATUCK PARK SYSTEM INVENTORY

MIZE ROSE GARDEN

Located in the heart of downtown Saugatuck at the corner of Mason St and Butler St, the 0.2-acre garden is overflowing with unique roses and other flowers. The garden opened in 1998 and was a gift to the city from Roxie Ann Mize. Her estate gave the city \$445,486 to create and maintain the garden in honor of her, her brother, Sam, and his wife, Doris.

Park Features: stone path, bench, landscaping, art, contemplation space, and ornamental fencing.

Opportunities: Consider a maintenance plan for the site, additional benches, and interpretive signs.

Accessibility = 4



WILLOW PARK

Willow Park is a 0.2-acre area that includes 132 feet of frontage on the Kalamazoo River and offers scenic views.

Park Features: waterfront access, scenic views, elevated wooden boardwalk, benches, fishing, and wildlife observation.

Opportunities: The elevated boardwalk decking and rails are reaching the end of their effective life-cycle and replacement is necessary. As part of the improvements to the boardwalk, consider lowering the rail sections to meet ADA guidelines.

Accessibility = 3



WICKS PARK

ter Street between Mary Street and Main Street. The park uses are mostly passive in nature and include excellent viewing of the Kalamazoo River. The existing restroom has a mural depicting “A Sunday on La Grande Jatte” by Georges Seurat and is a focal feature in the park, and the existing gazebo serves as prime location for the Music in the Park series which features popular bands. Given the proximity to the waterfront, Wicks Park has a high degree of visibility and visitors first impressions of the community are reflected by the park. The Saugatuck chain ferry is located just north of the park and a small public parking area is on the south.

Park features include: waterfront access, scenic views, historical significance, restrooms, gazebo, art, benches, picnic tables, and open lawn space.

Opportunities: The existing restroom and gazebo are not ADA accessible and although it may be challenging to achieve, consider modifications to allow for access by all. This park may be a good location for a bandshell or performance space given its location along the waterfront and proximity to downtown. Parking access for this park can be a challenge on busy days as the parking overlaps with downtown parking. Providing dedicated and signed parking spaces for the park may be helpful.

Accessibility = **2**



CITY OF SAUGATUCK PARK SYSTEM INVENTORY



NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

VILLAGE SQUARE PARK

This is a 2.5-acre centrally located park at the three corners of the intersection of Butler and Main Street and is the city's only neighborhood park. The park has both active and passive zones with the northwest corner of the park containing the children's playground and serves as the site of Memorial Day/Veterans Day festivities. The southwest section of the park is more passive in use and contains a walking path, benches and statuary art.

Park Features: playground equipment, tennis court, basketball court, bike racks, restrooms, drinking fountain, benches, walking path, art, pedestrian walk connection to Griffith Street, Veteran's Memorial, and landscaping.

Opportunities: The playground equipment is nearing end of its useful life-cycle and should be replaced and consider moving to the east section of the park to improve proximity to the restrooms and reduce crossing of street by children. Adaptive re-use of tennis court and basketball court areas for pickleball and multi-use sport court. Landscape maintenance to improve sight lines in southwest quadrant. Expansion of the Veterans Memorial in northwest quadrant.

Accessibility = **3**





COMMUNITY PARKS

MILDRED A. PETERSON NATURE PRESERVE AND INTERURBAN TRAIL

The nature preserve consists of 16 acres of pristine natural habitat areas where native landscaping, wildlife, and water features can be observed. The preserve also features a section of the original interurban rail line that ran from Holland in the early 1900's and is now a trail.

Park Features: nature trail with benches, bird watching, observation of wildlife and wildflowers, scenic views on west edge of dammed backwater of Goshorn Creek, fishing, and historical significance.

Opportunities: Consider adding parking, a paved trail option for barrier free access, benches, picnic tables, and interpretive signs.

Accessibility = 2



REGIONAL PARKS

OVAL BEACH

Oval Beach is a highly used facility consisting of 50 acres that is adjacent to Mt. Baldhead to the east and Lake Michigan to the west. Oval beach is open year-round and has been rated by Conde Naste's Traveler Magazine as one of the 25 best shorelines in the world. This facility provides direct access to the beaches of Lake Michigan and is so popular that during peak summer hours the existing parking lot reaches capacity quickly. This facility requires a fee for entry and the City offers parking passes that can be purchased in advance.



CITY OF SAUGATUCK PARK SYSTEM INVENTORY

OVAL BEACH (CONT.)

Park Features: public beach, swimming, waterfront access to Lake Michigan, nature trails, concession stand, restrooms, changing rooms, concrete plaza area with tables and benches, paved parking area with 480 +- spaces, barbecue grills, picnic tables, beach/hiking trails, swing set, storage shed scenic views, and nature and wildlife observation.

Opportunities: parking lot expansion, upgrades to the Restroom/concession/changing room building to increase capacity and provide storage, addition of new accessible playground equipment, addition of kayak and beach equipment rentals, exploration of adding overnight campsites, improved accessibility, picnic tables and grills, and renovation of viewing dock decking and rails.

Accessibility = **3**



MT. BALDHEAD PARK

Mt. Baldhead Park, locally known as Mt Baldy, is a 100-acre park on west bank of Kalamazoo River in the heart of a critical dune area that leads down to Oval Beach and Lake Michigan. The park features a 282 step wooden stair case that traverses up 250 feet to an observation deck on top of the Mt. Baldhead dune and offers panoramic views of Kalamazoo River valley and Lake Michigan. The site also is home to the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Museum which offers historical details about the site and area. Another iconic feature of the site includes the radar station tower which looks like a giant white ball on a tower and dates back to the 1950s. The tower, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was used by the U.S. government to monitor aircraft activity from the Soviet Union during the cold war.

Park Features: Picnic pavilion, restrooms, gravel parking, picnic tables, waterfront and beach access, boardwalk and docks, fishing, nature trails, scenic views, nature observation, historical significance, museum, and interpretive signs.

Opportunities: The viewing dock decking and rail are reaching the end of their useful life-cycle and in need of replacement. The stair case is in need of maintenance and



decking replacement. The restroom building and parking areas as well as access to the viewing dock are deficient in ADA compliance. Consider improvements to the parking lot, restroom building, and viewing dock to improve barrier free access and increase utilization. The picnic shelter is in need of a new roof and should be replaced. Consider adaptive re-use and maintenance issues related to the radar station tower.

Accessibility = **2**

SAUGATUCK HARBOR NATURAL AREA

The Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area is a 173-acre tract of dune land along the Lake Michigan shore north of Oval Beach. It was acquired by the City of Saugatuck in 2011 with the help of the Land Conservancy of West Michigan. The property, accessible from the Oval Beach parking lot, is the site of the original mouth of the Kalamazoo River, which was bypassed by the construction of the present channel in 1906. Much of it is a peninsula bounded by Lake Michigan, the Kalamazoo River and the Oxbow Lagoon. The latter is the original channel of the Kalamazoo River. The land demonstrates the unique geological and ecological features of Great Lakes dunes, including globally imperiled inter-dunal wetlands, Great Lakes shore and beach, Great Lakes marsh, and riparian shoreline and adjacent marshes. These features, as well as the plants, birds and other animals inhabiting them, are described under Natural Communities. Some of these inhabitants are quite rare in Michigan. To protect these species, dogs are not allowed in the Natural Area. The site also has historical significance as the site of the original mouth of the Kalamazoo. Old pilings from the original river opening still extend out into Lake Michigan. A fishing settlement known as Fishtown was located on the north side of what is now the Oxbow Lagoon. The site was abandoned when the original mouth drifted closed soon after the opening of the present channel.

Park Features: Waterfront access, extensive network of beach/hiking trails, scenic views, historical significance, and nature and wildlife observation.

Opportunities: Consider the addition of parking, paved trail for ADA access, benches, picnic tables, and wayfinding signage.

Accessibility = 2



CITY OF SAUGATUCK PARK SYSTEM INVENTORY

ADDITIONAL CITY OF SAUGATUCK GREEN SPACES

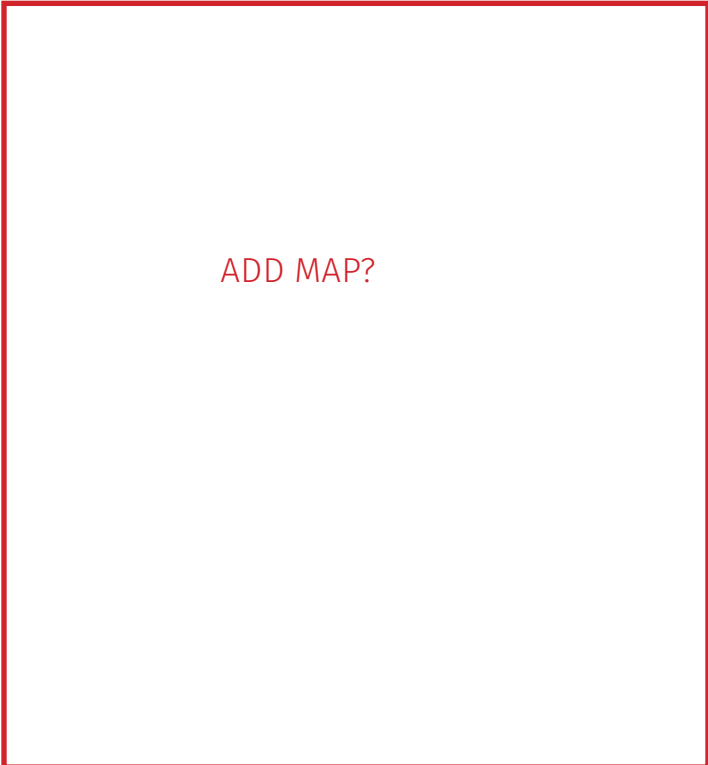
OLD SAUGATUCK AIRPORT

The vacant city-owned property includes approximately 154 acres of woods and fields in Saugatuck Township, east of 63d St and 134th Ave. The site was originally intended to become an airport following the Great Depression however the plan never materialized. Recently the Outdoor Discovery Center completed a Strengths, Opportunity, Aspiration, and results study to understand the natural features of the site and benefits of keeping it natural. The findings indicated that the east half of the site includes high-quality habitat that should be preserved and the west half of the site could be developed due to lower ecological quality.

Site Features: Natural areas, scenic views, wildlife and nature observation, and informal nature paths.

Opportunities: Development of an overall site master plan to guide development, open the park for public use, consider adding accessible parking, accessible trails, benches, picnic tables, formal nature trails, and wayfinding signs. Collaboration with the school district for development of cross-country trails and development of field space on the western half of the site.

Accessibility = 0



DRAFT

CITY OF SAUGATUCK

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The City of Saugatuck operates under a Council/Manager form of government. The Council Manager plan is a system of local government that combines the political leadership of an elected City Council with the professional managerial experience of the City Manager.

SAUGATUCK CITY COUNCIL

The City Council consists of seven members (serving two-year terms) including the Mayor and the Mayor Pro-Tem. The City Council is responsible for adopting and amending city laws and ordinances, determining city policies and standards, and authorizing the annual city budget. The Council also directs the City Manager who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the city and is the chief policy advisor to the Council.

SAUGATUCK CITY MANAGER

The City Manager serves as the Chief Administrative Officer for the city, ensuring all laws and ordinances are properly enforced, implementing policies and directives of the council, and coordinating the day-to-day activities of diverse city operations and staff. The City Manager is also responsible for the following:

- Prepares and administers personnel policies and procedures, compensation systems, employee contracts, and other administrative codes.
- Prepares and administers the annual budget for the city and keeps the Council fully advised as to the financial condition and future needs of the city.
- Manages and supervises all city utilities and public improvements, including construction, repair, and maintenance of all city-owned infrastructure and buildings.
- Directs and coordinates the operations of city departments and staff, assesses city services and operations, and ensures quality services are provided in an efficient, cost-effective, and timely manner.
- Serves as an ex-officio member of all committees of the Council; Establishes proactive, effective community relations and represents the City's official position before the public, various groups, the media, and at various meetings.
- Establishes constructive relationships with other governmental units to reduce duplication of effort, increase efficiencies, and maximize service quality and availability.
- Negotiates and administers various contracts and agreements on behalf of the city and acts as purchasing agent for the City or delegates such duties.
- Oversees and participates in zoning administration and code enforcement functions.
- Coordinates long-range planning, strategic plans, public improvements, and general operations to achieve established goals for community development, economic development, land use, and related issues.
- Researches and recommends grants to benefit the City, prepares related applications, and administers those approved.

CITY OF SAUGATUCK ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

SAUGATUCK DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

The Department of Public Works Superintendent coordinates and participates in a full range of construction, maintenance, and repair activities associated with municipal infrastructure, including streets, curbs, sidewalks, traffic control and related signage, parking lots, parks, buildings, grounds, beach, boat launch ramp, recreational sites, forestry program, leaf pick-up program, water and sewer systems, special events and seasonal activities, and motor/equipment pool and related functional areas.

SAUGATUCK COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS

The City relies on citizen participation on many committees and commissions to help serve the community. The citizens serving on the committees and commissions provide the talent and experience needed to meet the diverse challenges facing the community. The recommendations from these groups assist the City Council and Administration in making decisions regarding parks and recreation. These groups include the following:

Eurasian Water Milfoil Study Group

The environment of Kalamazoo Lake and Harbor is vitally important for residents, businesses, and the tourist-dependent economy and the invasive Eurasian Water Milfoil has become invasive. This six-member board is working on a plan to eliminate the existing pods and mitigate the spread of this invasive species.

Historic District Commission

The City of Saugatuck Historic District Commission (HDC) is a seven-member commission with expertise in historic preservation or historic architecture that makes quasi-judiciary decisions on design reviews for proposed exterior work in the designated historic district. Commission members are residents of the City of Saugatuck appointed by the Mayor with City Council approval to serve three-year terms.

Parks and Public Works Committee

The City of Saugatuck Parks and Public Works Committee is a 6-member committee established to provide the City Council with guidance and information on matters

relating to public works and parks. Committee members are residents of the City of Saugatuck appointed by the Mayor with City Council approval to serve two-year terms. The Parks and Public Works Committee shall review and provide recommendations to the City Council on the following:

- Updates to the capital improvement plan as well as to the parks and recreation plan
- Locations for connecting public pathways
- Land acquisition opportunities for parks and recreation
- Reconstruction or addition of park facilities
- Street beautification projects
- Landscaping and groundskeeping for all public grounds
- Other such duties as the City Council may from time to time request

PLANNING COMMISSION

The City of Saugatuck Planning Commission is a 7-member commission empowered by the City Council and is given the authority to establish procedures, standards, and administrative rules whereby applicants are required to submit for review and approval a site development plan. The powers and duties of the Planning Commission are provided by Act No. 285 of the Public Acts of the State of Michigan, as amended.

CITY OF DOUGLAS

PARK SYSTEM INVENTORY

The City of Douglas features 9 parks that include a mix of waterfront parks and sports activities. Refer to figure X.X for a list of uses and accessibility ratings.



MINI PARKS

ALICE MCCLAY PARK

This small park is under an acre and not publicly well known as a park.

Park Features: open space nature viewing, picnic tables, and fishing.

Opportunities: Consider adding parking, accessible paths, and signage.

Accessibility = **1**



VETERANS WALK PARK

This park is a less than 1-acre site that provides public access to the riverfront via boardwalk at the southwest end of the Saugatuck-Douglas Bridge over the Kalamazoo River.

Park Features: Waterfront access, fishing, boardwalk, nature viewing, and parking.

Opportunities: Add a new seawall and memorial flag pole, and make improvements to existing landscaping and parking areas. Improve park public awareness and visibility through wayfinding and interpretive signage. Install a small seating area or several benching for improved wildlife viewing and respite. Repair and improve existing boardwalk with safety features such as kick or guard rails. Create an accessible connection to the bike route on Blue Star Highway.

Accessibility = **2**



UNION STREET LAUNCHING SITE

This site includes a narrow strip of land off of Blue Star Highway providing boat access to the Kalamazoo River.

Park Features: Boat launch, limited parking, fishing, nature observation, port-a-john, and informal connection (turf path) to the Veteran's Boardwalk area.

Opportunities: Signage, expand parking, fishing deck.

Accessibility = **1**



NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

THE BARREL

The Barrel is home to Historic Root Beer Barrel. Built in the 1950s, the barrel-shaped structure is a popular concession stand serving hot dogs and root beer on tap. The site is located along the Beach to Bayou trail. The Barrel has been a subject of curiosity and interest due to its architectural uniqueness and historical ties to the area's tourism industry. It's iconic character and heritage, often featured in photographs and postcards, depicts Douglas's distinctive charm.

Park Features: Concessions, parking, restrooms, yard games, picnic tables, and benches.

Opportunities: Expand parking lot and restrooms, add a pavilion and new structure for food prep and storage, and add barrier-free paths and signage.

Accessibility = **3**



CITY OF DOUGLAS

PARK SYSTEM INVENTORY

WADE'S BAYOU MEMORIAL PARK

Wade's Bayou is a popular 1.8-acre park located along the Kalamazoo River in Downtown Douglas that offers many water-based activities. The park is known for being the perfect fishing or kayak launch spot and is also a beautiful location to watch the sunrise, or view wildlife.

Park Features: waterfront access, fishing, boardwalk, nature viewing, parking, kayak and paddle-board rentals, EZ dock barrier free kayak launch, boat docks, paved trails, gazebo, art sculpture, port-a-john, picnic tables and benches, and interpretive signage.

Opportunities: **Add restrooms?**, additional docks and boardwalk, paved parking lot with designated barrier-free spaces, and wayfinding signage. Consider the addition of a performance space and concessions to create a high-quality entertainment space. Enhance the water's edge with native plantings and plant additional trees for increased shade and habitat. Complete an accessible path through the park space.

Accessibility = **3**





COMMUNITY PARKS

BEERY FIELD

Beery Field is a highly used 1.2-acre park located on Main Street in downtown Douglas. The baseball field is heavily used by Saugatuck Public Schools Community Recreation for baseball, softball, and soccer practices. Parking overlaps with downtown parking use. The park is also the home of the “Douglas Social” and the “Duck Stop” for DUKW Amphibious Vehicle “Harbor Duck Tours”.

Park Features: Softball diamond with bleachers and lights for night games, picnic Area, playground with multi-generational “Expressions Swing”, restrooms, basketball hoop, picnic tables, benches, and art sculpture.

Opportunities: Consider improvements to the ball field including a paved path, and upgrades to the infield, lighting, scoreboard, and bleachers, providing barrier-free pathways throughout the park to connect facilities, mark barrier-free parking spaces, and provide access aisle.



Playground areas are curbed, consider providing barrier-free access.

Accessibility = **3**

SCHULTZ PARK

Schultz Park is a highly used family-friendly 20.0-acre site located on the banks of the Kalamazoo River. The fields are heavily used by the Saugatuck School District and Community Recreation for softball, baseball, and soccer use. The north end of the site includes a MDNR owned public boat launch. The site is also home to the only set of pickleball courts in the area which are heavily used.

Park Features: Boat launch ramp with parking and fishing sites, soccer field, baseball/softball fields with dugouts, bleachers, and lighting, picnic pavilion, restrooms, barbecue grills, children’s playground, nature trails, dog park, sand volleyball, pickleball courts, and a basketball hoop.

Opportunities: Improvements to the baseball/softball field including turf, infield, bleachers, scoreboard, and paving for barrier-free accessibility, barrier access for picnic tables and grills, replacement of the picnic shelter, resurfacing and expand pickleball courts with paved parking and



accessible paths, renovate the sand volleyball court, and add modern play equipment, storage building, and adult outdoor fitness area.

Accessibility = **2**

CITY OF DOUGLAS

PARK SYSTEM INVENTORY

DOUGLAS BEACH

Douglas Beach is located in a quiet waterfront residential and cottage community. The 1.5-acre site provides direct access to the beaches of Lake Michigan and offers opportunities for swimming, viewing sunsets, and rock hunting. The beach is accessed by a small parking lot at the top of the bluff, with a series of boardwalk stairs (recently repaired) descending to Lake Michigan. Despite its tucked away location, small size, limited parking, Douglas Beach is a popular destination for resident and tourists. The beach is about a mile's walk south of Oval Beach.

Park Features: Lake Michigan public access via stairwell, Restrooms, swimming, picnicking, barbecue grills, port-a-john, overlook deck, drinking fountain, scenic views minimal parking (free) along Lake Shore Drive.

Opportunities: Improvements to the access stairwell to replace deck boards, provide barrier-free access from the parking to the restrooms, add and designate barrier-free parking spaces, and consider adding wayfinding, interpretive signs, and lighting. There is no barrier-free access to the beach, and given the elevation changes it is likely not feasible to provide access. Consider providing barrier-free overlook deck to allow for lake viewing. Continued dune erosion efforts.

Accessibility = **1**



ADDITIONAL CITY OF DOUGLAS GREEN SPACES

POINT PLEASANT PARK (DOUGLAS MARINA)

Point Pleasant Park, formally known as the Douglas Marina, is just under an acre and located on the Kalamazoo River. The city purchased the site with the help of a MDNR Trust Fund grant. The site provides opportunities for waterfront activities including seasonal and transient boat slips. The city has developed a master plan for the site that includes boardwalk, marina expansion, pavilion with restrooms, native playscape, accessible parking, and natural/native landscaping.

Park features include: Currently the site has not been redeveloped for the park and contains structures from the previous owner.

Opportunities: Implement elements of the master plan as funds become available.

Accessibility = **1**



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CITY OF DOUGLAS ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

The City of the Village of Douglas operates under a Council/Manager form of government. The Council Manager plan is a system of local government that combines the political leadership of an elected City Council with the professional managerial experience of the City Manager.

DOUGLAS CITY COUNCIL

The City Council consists of seven members (serving two-year terms) including the Mayor and the Mayor Pro-Tem. The City Council is responsible for adopting and amending city laws and ordinances, determining city policies and standards, and authorizing the annual city budget. The Council also directs the City Manager who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the city and is the chief policy advisor to the Council.

DOUGLAS CITY MANAGER

The City Manager serves as the Chief Administrative Officer for the city, ensuring all laws and ordinances are properly enforced, implementing policies and directives of the council, and coordinating the day-to-day activities of diverse city operations and staff. The City Manager is also responsible for the following:

- Administers the day-to-day operations and policies of the City
- Determines and ensures that employees are aware of the City objectives and are performing their functions toward accomplishing these objectives
- Assists in the preparation of the annual budget with the Finance Director / Treasurer; advises the City Council regarding the City's financial condition including the status of major projects and programs
- Prepares and presents periodic and special reports concerning activities of municipal government
- Attends and participates in Council meetings, including presenting special studies and reports requested by the Council or on its initiative.
- Represents the city in intergovernmental relationships with neighboring townships and cities
- Attends and participates in professional meetings/conferences on current developments in municipal government
- Performs special projects as directed by the Council
- Performs a wide variety of relative administrative and executive duties and responsibilities including hiring and supervising the City's staff

DOUGLAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

The City of Douglas Public Works Department is responsible for maintaining streets and roadways, street sweeping, paving, snow removal and salting, pothole repair, crosswalk maintenance, traffic sign placement, and striping. As well as maintaining streets, the DPW is also responsible for performing the following tasks:

- Maintenance of City Hall, DPW Garage, and the Douglas Police building, and City-owned equipment.
- Maintenance of parks, playgrounds, ball fields, boat launch facilities, bridges, public restrooms, and beach.
- Planting new trees in public rights-of-way and maintenance and trimming of City-owned trees.
- Maintenance of downtown street lighting, landscaping, hanging seasonal banners, and parking lots.
- General setup, assistance, and clean-up of civic events.

CITY OF DOUGLAS ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

DOUGLAS DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The Douglas Downtown Development Authority was created to plan for and implement public improvement projects in the downtown area that are considered necessary for future economic growth. The DDA has created an overall development plan that includes improvements for parks, non-motorized facilities, public art, events and festivals, signage, wayfinding and gateway/placemaking.

DOUGLAS COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS

The City relies on citizen participation on many committees and commissions to help serve the community. The citizens serving on the committees and commissions provide the talent and experience needed to meet the diverse challenges facing the community. The recommendations from these groups assist the City Council and Administration in making decisions regarding parks and recreation. These groups include the following:

Douglas Parks Committee

The City of the Village of Douglas Parks Committee is a 6-member ad hoc committee established to provide the City Council with guidance and information on matters relating to parks. Committee members are residents of the City of Douglas appointed by the Mayor with City Council approval. This committee was created specifically to assist in the development of this Tri-Community Parks and Recreation Plan and has been set up for a one-year term.

Douglas Planning Commission

The City of the Village of Douglas Planning Commission is a 7-member commission empowered by City Council and is given the authority to establish procedures, standards and administrative rules whereby applicants are required to submit for review and approval a site development plan. The powers and duties of the Planning Commission are provided by Act No. 285 of the Public Acts of the State of Michigan, as amended.



CITY OF DOUGLAS ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

During the master planning process, the project team hosted a focus group session with the ad hoc Douglas Parks Committee to perform a NOISE Analysis to determine internal and external Needs, Opportunities, Improvements, Strengths, and Exceptions within the Douglas Park system. This strategic planning approach involved reviewing existing conditions in order to identify specific requirements (Needs), potential areas for growth or untapped potential (Opportunities), possible enhancements or optimizations (Improvements), inherent advantages or positive attributes (Strengths), and the overall performance or success of the current system and administration (Effectiveness).

By comprehensively analyzing these elements, the NOISE analysis aided in an informed decision-making process and the formulation of an action plan (see page XX) to address shortcomings, capitalize on strengths, and seize opportunities for future development or improvement. This exercise was an important step for committee members as they plan for a permanent parks commission or board that will eventually aid the City in future park project planning and support.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

STRENGTHS THEMES

1. QUALITY PLAYGROUNDS*
2. CREATIVE, INCLUSIVE SPIRIT*
3. PUBLIC WATER ACCESS*
4. DIVERSE SPORTS FIELDS/ COURTS*
5. NON-MOTORIZED TRAILS*
6. NATURAL BEAUTY*

NEEDS THEMES

1. LOCAL MUNICIPALITY OVERSIGHT
2. PUBLIC FUNDING SOURCE
3. IMPROVED + NEW ACCESSIBLE RESTROOMS
4. INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS
5. INDOOR GATHERING SPACE

OPPORTUNITY THEMES

1. ESTABLISH A PARKS AND REC BOARD/COMMISSION
2. FOSTER PARTNERSHIPS WITH NEIGHBORING MUNICIPALITIES + ORGANIZATIONS*
3. APPLY FOR GRANTS TO FILL FUNDING GAPS
4. UTILIZE EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE TO CONNECT NON-MOTORIZED TRAILS*

IMPROVEMENT THEMES

1. COMMUNICATION WITH NEIGHBORING MUNICIPALITIES*
2. INCREASE STAFFING / FUNDING FOR MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP OF EXISTING PARK FACILITIES
3. ENHANCE AND EXPAND THE DOUGLAS HARBOR AND MARINA FOR PUBLIC ENJOYMENT*

*Denotes Effectiveness (areas/initiatives that are currently happening)



SAUGATUCK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SYSTEM OVERVIEW

Saugatuck Public Schools is governed by the Board of Education which is a six-member elected board of trustees. The Board of Education is responsible for policy development and approval, budget oversight, hiring and evaluating personnel, curriculum approval, community engagement, student welfare, ethical oversight, and strategic planning. The Board also directs the Superintendent who is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the district including administrative management, student welfare and safety, facilities, athletics, and programs.

Saugatuck Public Schools operates and maintains numerous athletic and recreational facilities, all of which are available to the public at appropriate times. Many of the area-wide seasonal recreational programs operate on school property. Administration and planning of the district's recreation facilities and programs are the responsibility of the Athletic Director, Recreation Director, Director of Finance and Business, Physical Education teachers, Athletic Booster Club, and the school board. The Superintendent oversees the overall administration of the facilities and programming. Maintenance of Saugatuck Public School's recreational facilities is performed by the district's maintenance staff.

COMMUNITY RECREATION

Saugatuck Public School Community Recreation creates and manages a wide range of high-quality wellness and recreation programs. Programs largely consist of youth and adult sports camps, classes, age-level leagues, lessons, and events that promote citizen involvement and a strong sense of community. The Community Recreation Director oversees the program and manages the day-to-day operations.



TRI-COMMUNITY BUDGETING + FUNDING

Budgets for parks, programs, services, and maintenance are located in the Appendix of this document. The budget includes Operation and Maintenance, Capital Improvements, and Programs and Services. The basic sources for funding to support the operating and capital improvement budgets of the Tri-Community agencies are the following: taxes, fees and charges, government grants, and gifts or bequests.

Taxes: Consisting of income tax and local real estate or property taxes; which are derived by assessing industrial or residential property within the borders of the municipality at a given rate.

Grants: Park development has benefited from a variety of grants as shown in the Park Development Grant Summary in Chapter X.

Fees & Charges: Consisting of monies collected for program participation and facility rentals. Fees and charges are reviewed annually to ensure an equitable system to offset departmental operating costs and provide value to program participants and facility users.

Gifts & Bequests: Included are gifts that come from private sources such as foundations, business firms, or individuals. These are solicited when accompanying stipulations are such that the gift would be determined beneficial to City/Township responsibilities for the provision of park and recreational services.

MAKING THE CONNECTION: NON-MOTORIZED TRAILS

Non-motorized transportation, with facilities designed primarily for pedestrians and bicyclists, is a critical element of an integrated parks and recreation system. A connected system of non-motorized facilities could help promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles, relieve traffic congestion, reduce air pollution, fuel consumption, and improve quality of life. Trails, greenways, and the park systems provide important, carbon-free transportation options and link residents to popular destinations and to one another.

There are a few different types of trails that can provide both transportation and recreation opportunities. Trails may be located within parks, on an independent right-of-way, or within the road right of way. Connector Trails are defined as “multipurpose trails that emphasize safe travel for pedestrians to and from parks and around the Community” (J.D. Mertes and J.R. Hall, Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, 1995). These trails are generally located within the road right-of-way and can be divided into two types. Type I has separate paths for different user types, such as pedestrians and bicyclists. Type II has mixed uses and is suited to lighter use patterns. Park Trails include multipurpose trails located within greenways, parks, and natural resource areas and focus on recreational value and harmony with the natural environment. There are three types of trails within the Park Trail category and include Type I: Single purpose hard surfaced trails for pedestrians or bicyclists; Type II: Multipurpose hard-surfaced trails for pedestrians or bicyclists; Type III: Nature trails for pedestrians that may be hard or soft surface.

There are approximately 42.8 miles of trails within the Tri-Community community, most of which are nature trails, with ownership spread among the City of Saugatuck, City of Douglas, Saugatuck Township, Allegan County, and the State of Michigan. These trails include a mix of paved non-motorized trails and nature trails within parks and natural areas.

PAVED TRAILS

Blue Star Non-Motorized Linear Trail: The Blue Star Trail will be a 20-mile, non-motorized multipurpose recreational pathway that will eventually connect Holland to South Haven. When completed this trail will connect to other regional trails including the Beeline Trail, Kal-Haven Trail, Van Buren Trail, and the Beach to Bayou Trail. The exiting completed section includes a 4.2-mile stretch that starts at the trail head at the Burger King at 136th and 64th Streets, and generally follows the Blue Star Highway south bound on the east side of the City of Saugatuck and into Douglas. Three sections are in progress at various stages of the design process including the Main Street to Maple Street section, the Maple Street to Old Allegan Road section, and the Main Street to Maple Street section. Fundraising, design, and promotion of the trail is championed by the Friends of the Blue Star Trail, and trail ownership includes City of Douglas, Saugatuck Township, and Allegan County.

Beach to Bayou Trail: This 1.6-mile paved path is managed by the City of Douglas and includes a combination of dedicated walking lanes, sidewalks, and paved trails. The trail follows Center Street from Wade’s Bayou on the river along the east side of Douglas Downtown to Douglas Beach at Lake Michigan, passing the Root Beer Barrel on the way.

Beeline Trail: This 6.6-mile paved path is shared by bicyclists, runners, and walkers and is managed by Laketown Township. The trail heads north from the trailhead at the Burger King on Blue Star Hwy and 64th St to 104th St and then east to Beeline Rd which heads to Holland.

New Richmond Bridge Park Trail: This 0.6-mile trail is managed by Allegan County and includes a section of boardwalk. The trail starts at the trailhead parking lot on Old Allegan Rd, crosses the Kalamazoo River on a 400’ swing bridge, and follows the river within the park. Amenities include benches, picnic tables and grills, interpretive signs, and vault restrooms.

NATURE TRAILS

Saugatuck Dunes State Park: Offers four nature trails that offer hiking and dune climbing experiences for both beginners and experienced users. The trails provide stunning views and vistas of Lake Michigan and the surrounding area as well as access to the shore. The trails include:

- North Trail is a 2-mile loop trail on the north end of the park with an inner and outer loop option
- Beach Trail is a 1.2-mile loop trail that offers the easiest access to the beach
- Livingston Trail is a 0.9-mile heavily wooded trail that includes the most direct route to the beach
- South Trail is a 5.2-mile loop trail and is the longest of the four trails

Mount Baldhead and the Peninsula: Multiple nature trails within the Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area, Mt Baldhead Park, and Tallmadge Woods and provide access to Lake Michigan and the Kalamazoo River. The trails include:

- Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area trail includes a 3-mile trail network through the park that connects to the north end of the Oval Beach parking lot
- Crows Nest Trail is a 1.7-mile loop trail within Tallmadge Woods
- East Ridge Trail is a 0.4-mile trail that connects the Crows Nest Trail to the Fishtown Trail
- Fishtown Trail is a 0.5-mile loop trail just north of Mt. Baldhead Park
- North Woods Trail is a 0.5-mile trail from the top of Mt. Baldhead to Oval Beach
- Mount Baldhead Steps 300 steps, divided into 15 flights, with seats for resting every other flight, offers stunning scenic views
- Mount Baldhead Park Trail is a 0.3-mile trail west from the top of Mt. Baldhead to Oval Beach

- South Ridge Trail is a 0.3-mile trail from the top of Mt. Baldhead south to Perryman St. and Oval Beach
- Forward Movement Trail is a 0.3-mile trail starting at Val Dalson and Park Streets and heads west to the John Woolam Trail
- John Woolam Trail is a 0.8-mile trail between Oval Beach and Chain Ferry Landing at Park Street

River Bluff Park: Located in Saugatuck Township, the park includes a 0.7-mile nature trail that goes from the wooded area to the lake.

Peterson Preserve Interurban Trail: A 0.4-mile nature trail that follows the route of the electric interurban train that came from Holland in the early 1900's.

Wade Nature Sanctuary: A 1.2-mile nature trail divided into two loops overlooking Silver Lake.

Farview Nature Park: A 2-mile nature trail in Laketown Township that travels through wooded areas and around a lake. This trail also overlaps with an equestrian trail. This park was also a stop on the Interurban train route.

Huyser Farm Park: Offers a 1-mile nature trail within an undeveloped park in Laketown township.

The Outdoor Discovery Center: Located in Fillmore Township, the site includes eight nature trails totaling 2.5 miles through diverse ecosystems.

Wa-Ke-Nah Preserve: Located in Ganges Township, the property includes 3 miles of nature trails that traverse prairies, woods, and old fields.



RIVERBLUFF PARK, SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP

COMMUNITY-WIDE COMMITTEES + ORGANIZATIONS

Committees that serve all of the agencies in the Tri-Community are listed below.

INTERURBAN BOARD

Interurban's Board of Directors is appointed by Saugatuck Township, the City of Saugatuck, and the City of Douglas. Each municipality appoints one member for a 4-year term every two years for a total of 6 members. The Interurban Transit Authority is a demand-response public bus system providing transportation for Saugatuck, Douglas, and Saugatuck Township.

KALAMAZOO LAKE HARBOR AUTHORITY

The Kalamazoo Lake Harbor Authority was created by an Inter-Local Agreement between the City of Saugatuck, the City of Douglas, and Saugatuck Township and includes a six-member board made up of members of each agency. The Harbor Authority was established to address issues such as low water levels, dredging, soil sedimentation, and navigation markers.

SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS DISTRICT LIBRARY BOARD

The governing Library Board is made up of 7 trustees and includes members from the City of Saugatuck, the City of Douglas, and Saugatuck Township. The board adopts policies, rules, and regulations regarding the use of the library, approves an annual budget, controls the expenditure of funds, and manages the maintenance of the building and grounds.

The Tri-Community has a number of dedicated private volunteer groups and organizations who contribute to the betterment of the parks and recreation system of the Tri-Community Area.

FRIENDS OF THE BLUE STAR TRAIL

Friends of the Blue Star Trail (FOTBST) is a 501(c)(3) organization that acts as a catalyst to promote and fund the Trail, in partnership with Tri-Community agencies.

The Tri-Community has a number of dedicated private volunteer groups and organizations who contribute to the betterment of the parks and recreation system of the Tri-Community Area.

FRIENDS OF THE BLUE STAR TRAIL

Friends of the Blue Star Trail (FOTBST) is a 501(c)(3) organization that acts as a catalyst to promote and fund the Trail, in partnership with Tri-Community agencies. Friends raises money for engineering and local match funding required for state/federal matching construction grants. FOTBST also assists municipalities to prepare and submit applications for state/federal matching grants. Friends of the Blue Star Trail hold two annual fundraising events and the proceeds from these events are used to secure matching government funds to help build the Blue Star Trail. FOTBST is a volunteer group of local residents that includes a 7-member board.

RIVERWOOD COUNCIL

The Riverwood Council is a group of seven active members and a host of dedicated supporters and volunteers who work as a collective to advise and consult with numerous organizations to augment trail and conservation efforts.

RADAR HIKING CLUB

The Radar Hill Hiking Club is an informal group that works with the Riverwood Council to promote the use of trails in the greater Saugatuck-Douglas area. This group sponsors monthly hikes and volunteers to maintain local trails. The name comes from the big white radar tower that is located at Mount Baldhead.

THE DOUGLAS PARK PROJECT

The Douglas Park Project Committee is a volunteer group of local residents focused on fundraising and support of park improvements. The Committee received approval from Douglas City Council to move forward with the replacement of play equipment at Beery Field and the creation of a playground and adult workout area at Schultz Park.



VOLUNTEERS WITH THE DOUGLAS PARK PROJECT

SAUGATUCK DUNES COASTAL ALLIANCE

The Saugatuck Dunes Coastal Alliance is a coalition of individuals and organizations working cooperatively to protect and preserve the natural geography, historical heritage, and rural character of the Saugatuck Dunes coastal region in the Kalamazoo River Watershed, beginning with the Saugatuck Dunes.

DOUGLAS LAKE SHORE ASSOCIATION

The Douglas Lake Shore Association brings together the Lake Shore and the surrounding communities to work through the issues and concerns of its membership, all while encouraging an atmosphere of social interaction. A 12-member board of trustees leads the association which is comprised of homeowners and property owners with vested interests either on or nearby Lake Shore Drive.

LAKE MICHIGAN SHORE ASSOCIATION

The Lake Michigan Shore Association was created to protect, preserve, and enhance the aesthetic qualities of the area and the property values of the lakeshore community. The 11-member board advocates and encourages actions that enhance the quality of life and the environment along the lakeshore.

TRI-COMMUNITY FACILITIES MATRIX

	Size (Ac)	Accessibility Rating	Category	Baseball / softball	Soccer	Football	Stadium / Track	Basketball	Tennis	Pickleball	Sand Volleyball	Playground	Restrooms	Picnic Shelter	Off-Street Parking	Waterfront Access	Beach / Swimming	Picnic Tables / Grills	Benches	Paved Paths	Nature Trails	Nature Area / Observation	Fishing	Boat / Kayak Launch	Boardwalk / Dock	Dog Park	Art / Interpretive Signs	Open Space	
SAUGATUCK TWP																													
Amelanchier	4.0	2	NR																		X	X							
Blue Star Hwy Memorial	0.5	1	SU											1													X	X	
River Bluff Park	27.0	2	C									1	1*	1	X	X		X			X	X	X	X			X	X	
Sundown Park	0.3	1	M												X			X	X			X						X	
Tails and Trails	39.5	2	C										1*	2	X						X					1			
TOTAL	71.3											1	2*	4												1			
CITY OF DOUGLAS																													
Alice McClay Park	1.0	1	M															X				X	X					X	
Douglas Beach	1.5	1	M										1		X	X	X	X				X			X				
Harold Beery Field	2.7	3	N	1			1					2	1					X	X								X		
Howard Schultz Park	20.0	2	C	1	1		1		8	1	2	1	1	1	X	X		X			X		X	X	1				
Point Pleasant Park	0.8	1	SU												X	X							X	X					
The Barrel	1.0	3	M										1		X			X	X	X							X		
Union St Launch Site	0.2	1	SU										1*		X								X	X					
Veteran's Walk	1.0	2	M												X		X						X	X					
Wade's Bayou	1.8	3	N										1*	1	X	X		X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X		
TOTAL	30.0			2	1		2		8	1	4	7	2													1			
CITY OF SAUGATUCK																													
Airport Property	154.0	0	NR																			X	X					X	
Coghlin Park	0.5	2	M											1		X		X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	
Cook Park	1.0	2	M													X		X					X	X	X	X	X		
Jones Park	0.5	4	M															X	X			X				X			
Mildred Peterson Nature Preserve	16.0	2	NR															X		X	X	X							
Mize Rose Garden	0.2	4	M															X		X	X					X			
Mt. Baldhead	100.0	2	LU										1	2	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Oval Beach	50.0	3	C									1	1	1	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X		
Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area	173.0	2	NR													X						X							
Village Square Park	2.5	3	N				2	1	1			1	1						X	X						X			
Wicks Park	0.5	2	M										1	1		X		X	X				X	X	X	X	X		
Willow Park	0.2	3	M													X		X	X				X	X					
TOTAL	498.4						2	1	1		2	4	5																
SAUGATUCK SCHOOLS																													
Douglas Elementary	8.6	3	SP	1			1					3			X														
Saugatuck M.S. / H.S	12.7	3	SP	1	1	1	1		4						X														
TOTAL	21.3			2	1	1	1	1	4			3																	
TRI-COMMUNITY TOTAL																													
	621.0			4	2	1	1	5	5	9	1	10	11	11												2			

Mini Park (M), Neighborhood Park (N), Community Park (C), Special Use (SU), Natural Resource Area (NR), Large Urban (LU), School Park (SP)

* = Port-a-john

School facilities includes 3 indoor gyms, indoor concessions, and a performing arts center

	Size	Accessibility Rating	Category	Baseball / softball	Soccer	Football	Stadium / Track	Basketball	Tennis	Pickleball	Sand Volleyball	Playground	Restrooms	Picnic Shelter	Off-Street Parking	Waterfront Access	Beach / Swimming	Picnic Tables / Grills	Benches	Paved Paths	Nature Trails	Nature Area / Observation	Fishing	Boat / Kayak Launch	Boardwalk / Dock	Dog Park	Art / Interpretive Signs	Open Space
SAUGATUCK DUNES STATE PARK TRAILS																												
Beach Trail	1.2 mi	1	NT												X	X					X	X						
Livingston Trail	0.9 mi	1	NT												X	X					X	X						
North Trail	2 mi	1	NT										X	X	X	X					X	X						
South Trail	5.2 mi	1	NT													X					X	X						
TOTAL	9.3 mi																											
MT BALDHEAD & THE PENINSULA TRAILS																												
Crows Nest Trail	1.7 mi	1	NT																		X	X						
East Ridge Trail	0.4 mi	1	NT																		X	X						
Fishtown Trail	0.5 mi	1	NT																		X	X						
Forward Movement Trail	0.3 mi	1	NT											X							X	X						
John Woolman Trail	0.8 mi	1	NT											X				X			X	X		X				
Mt Baldhead Trail	0.3 mi	1	NT											X							X	X						
North Woods Trail	0.5 mi	1	NT											X							X	X						
Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area	3.0 mi	1	NT																		X	X						
South Ridge Trail	0.3 mi	1	NT											X							X	X						
TOTAL	7.8 mi																											
REGIONAL / PARK TRAILS																												
Beach to Bayou	1.6 mi	4	PT																	X								
Beeline Trail	6.6 mi	4	PT																	X								
Blue Star Trail North	4.2 mi	4	PT																	X								
Farview Nature Park	2.3 mi	1	NT																		X							
Huysen Farm Park	1.0 mi	1	NT																		X							
New Richmond Bridge Park	0.6 mi	4	PT																	X								
Outdoor Discovery Area	3.0 mi	1	NT																		X							
Peterson Preserve Interurban Trail	0.8 mi	2	NT																		X							
River Bluff Park	1.4 mi	1	NT																		X							
Wade Memorial Nature Sanctuary	1.2 mi	1	NT																		X							
Wau-Ke-Na Preserve	3.0 mi	1	NT																		X							
TOTAL	25.7 mi																											
BOATING FACILITIES																												
Chain Ferry		3												X	X							X						
Coghlin Park	0.5	2											1		X		X	X	X				X		X		X	X
Douglas Point Pleasant Marina	0.8	1												X	X							X	X					
Douglas Schultz Park Boat Launch	9.0	2										X		X	X							X	X	X				
MDNR 63rd St Boat Launch	0.2	2												X	X							X	X					
New Richmond Bridge Park Launch		2												X	X							X	X					
River Bluff Park Access	27.0	2												X	X							X	X					
Spear St Boat Ramp	0.2	2													X							X	X					
Union St Boat Launch	0.2	1												X	X							X	X					
Wades Bayou Launch and Dock	1.8	3										X		X	X							X	X	X				
TOTAL	39.7																											

Nature Trail (NT), Paved Trail (PT)

COMMUNITY INPUT STRATEGIES

The Tri-Community encourages its residents to take an active role in planning their community's recreational opportunities. The Tri-Community appreciates the fact that recreation planning plays an important role in maintaining the quality of life in a community and therefore tries to be responsive to citizen needs and desires for parks and recreation. Community outreach is one way of obtaining a perspective on the needs and desires of the community and engaging in a process that includes developing realistic alternatives; formulating goals, policies, and recommendations for public and private decisions; developing criteria to measure change; and involving people in the planning, design and decision processes. To ensure that the parks and recreation offerings are aligned with the needs of the community, and to understand the community's perception of the level of service being provided, the Tri-Community engaged in a public input process.

OUTREACH STRATEGIES

The community outreach process included the following: an online survey, a public input open house, a 30-day public review period, and open public hearings. In addition, eight (8) focus group meetings were held with the three communities to discuss the plan, which was open to the public. The input and opinions received through this community outreach helped the administration and facilitator provide the basis for revising the goals and objectives from the previous plans.

On-Line Survey: In September of 2023, the Tri-Community developed an online survey to solicit input and ideas from its residents regarding the current use and future needs of the Tri-Community parks, recreational programs, services, maintenance, and facilities. The survey was conducted over 90 days using an online survey tool (Survey Monkey). The survey was promoted to the community using several methods including newsletters and publications, posting at Douglas and Saugatuck City Hall and the Township Hall, standard press release notification, distribution to local businesses, yard signs, and through social media platforms including websites and Facebook pages, both of which receives heavy user engagement. XX (XX) individuals elected to fully complete the survey. Respondents were XX% female and XX% male. XX (XX) percent of the

respondents were Saugatuck City residents, XX (XX) percent were Douglas City residents and XX (XX) percent were Saugatuck Township residents. XX of the survey respondents were between 25-64 years old with XX% in the 25-34 age group, XX% in the 35-49 age group, and XX% in the 50-64 age group. See Figures XX through XX for more detailed results of selected categories. The Appendix contains the full survey results.

Public Input Workshop: The Tri-Community understands the importance of meaningful citizen input and is committed to using this input to assist in evaluating trends and forming goals and actions. Prior to the development of the plan, the Tri-Community solicited input and participation from the residents of the area by hosting a public input open house. The open house was intended to develop a consensus among the participants as to the current issues, needs, desires, and deficiencies regarding parks and recreation in the Tri-Community. VIRIDIS Design Group provided meeting materials and facilitated the discussions. The workshop took place on September 21st at 5:30 pm at the Community Library, with approximately 50 citizens participating. The meeting followed a typical format to ensure a productive outcome but encouraged an open and informal atmosphere. Attendees were encouraged to engage in the process to provide perspective and to think about the big picture, in other words, the attendees were asked to dream big.

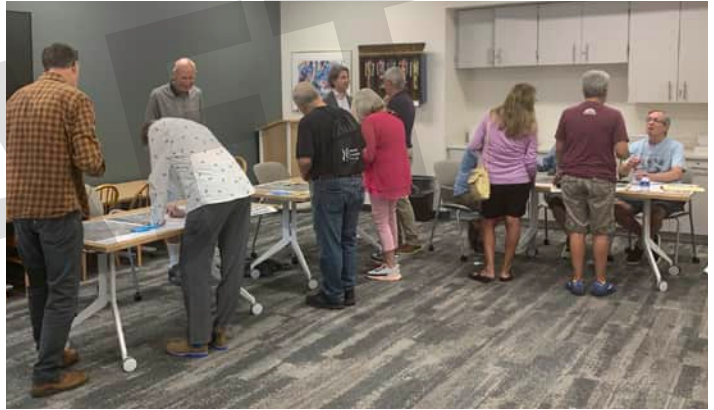
The public workshop was set up as an open house format which allowed participants to come and go during the allotted time and spend as much or as little time as they needed to provide input. Upon checking into the meeting, each participant was provided with a packet of information that included the purpose of the meeting, poling dots, comment cards, post-it note pads, and a questionnaire that asked for information about the park system. Seven interactive stations were set up and participants were able to move through the meeting at their own pace. Tri-Community staff and VIRIDIS facilitated the stations. The first station included two aerial maps of the Tri-Community area and participants were asked to provide feedback regarding opportunities and constraints. Feedback was written on post-it notes and stuck on the maps. Station 2 included a "dream big" board where several large Tri-Community initiatives were described, and attendees

TRI-COMMUNITY VOICES

The Tri-Community encourages its residents to take an active role in planning their community's recreational opportunities. The Tri-Community appreciates the fact that recreation planning plays an important role in maintaining the quality of life in a community and therefore tries to be responsive to citizen needs and desires for parks and recreation. Community outreach is one way of obtaining a perspective on the needs and desires of the community and engaging in a process that includes developing realistic alternatives; formulating goals, policies, and recommendations for public and private decisions; developing criteria to measure change; and involving people in the planning, design and decision processes. To ensure that the parks and recreation offerings are aligned with the needs of the community, and to understand the community's perception of the level of service being provided, the Tri-Community engaged in a public input process.

OUTREACH STRATEGIES

The community outreach process included the following: an online survey, a public input open house, a 30-day



PARTICIPANT COMMENTS AT THE SEPTEMBER 21ST PUBLIC WORKSHOP

DRAFT



3/

ACCESS, EQUITY, + OPPORTUNITY

Park Equity Standards

Park and Open Space Acreage

Park Amenities

PARK EQUITY STANDARDS

Park access equity refers to the fair and inclusive distribution of parks, green spaces, and recreational facilities within a community, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of race, income, age, or location, have equal opportunities to access and benefit from these resources. Achieving park equity within the Tri-Community involves addressing disparities in the availability, quality, and proximity of parks and recreational areas across diverse neighborhoods.

There are several key elements that contribute to an equitable park system:

Geographic Distribution: Ensuring that parks and recreational facilities are evenly distributed across neighborhoods, including both urban and suburban areas. This means providing adequate green spaces in under-served or marginalized communities where there might be fewer resources.

Proximity and Accessibility: Making parks easily accessible by promoting walkability, bikeability, and public transportation to reduce barriers for residents to reach these spaces. Ensuring that everyone, regardless of their location, can access parks within a reasonable distance from their homes.

Quality and Maintenance: Maintaining high-quality parks and recreational areas, irrespective of the neighborhood's socioeconomic status. This includes providing amenities, such as playgrounds, trails, sports fields, picnic areas, clean restrooms, and well-maintained landscaping, to enhance the overall park experience for all visitors.

Community Engagement and Inclusivity: Involving local communities in the planning, design, and programming of parks to ensure they reflect the needs and preferences of the diverse populations they serve. Creating spaces that are welcoming, inclusive, and culturally relevant to the communities they serve.

Equitable Investment and Funding: Prioritizing equitable allocation of resources and funding for the development, enhancement, and maintenance of parks and recreational facilities in under-served areas. Addressing historical disparities in investment to uplift communities that have been historically overlooked.

The **JUST** and **FAIR** quantity, proximity and connections to quality parks and green space, recreation facilities, as well as programs that are **SAFE, INCLUSIVE, CULTURALLY RELEVANT** and welcoming to everyone. When people have just and fair access, our health and social wellbeing improve, and our communities can protect and better recover from environmental, social and economic challenges.

NRPA's Working Definition of Equitable Park & Recreation Access

Efforts to achieve park access equity involve collaboration among local governments, community organizations, and residents to develop strategies that prioritize fairness, inclusivity, and the well-being of all community members when planning and managing parks and recreational spaces.

During the early phase of the planning process, background data was gathered from site investigations and available reports to develop a current snapshot of the Tri-Community's need for parks and recreation facilities against existing facility availability and program offerings. There are a variety of methods for accessing community needs for recreation services. This Plan uses a combination of the following methods:

1. Location and distribution of park space throughout the Tri-Community
2. Quantity of park acreage and amenities
3. Analysis of demographic trends

ACCESS AND EQUITY ANALYSIS

Level of Service Standards are guidelines that define service areas based on population that support investment decisions related to parks, facilities, and amenities. Standards may change over time as demographics, program life cycles, and needs of the community change. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) maintains a database of park system data in the U.S. which, combined with a yearly agency performance review report, has taken the place of outdated park standards. VIRIDIS used information from the NRPA Park Metrics database as well as the 2023 NRPA Agency Performance Review to understand national trends and metrics in park and recreation elements and to benchmark the Tri-Community with comparable communities. The NRPA Park Metrics and Agency Performance Review helps inform conversations and policies about the role of parks and recreation planning, land acquisition, and development of parks, recreation, and open space property at the local level.

Building on data from the park and recreation system inventory, the Tri-Community was compared to similar systems (communities of less than 20,000 people) in the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA)'s park metrics database. The NRPA database contains self-reported information from parks and recreation departments across the country. This comparison allows the project team to benchmark the level of service in terms of park acreage and amenities per capita between the Tri-Community and peer communities nationally to evaluate the relative adequacy or inadequacy of the recreation system. It should be noted that these comparisons are to be used as a guide and should be interpreted according to local needs, trends, and current situations. The purpose of recreation planning is to address the specific needs of the community, based on its resources and resident preferences/demands so that the plan best suits the community's desires for recreation.

Service Area Analysis NRPA guidelines classify parks, open spaces, and greenways per their size and the role they play in the overall park system. They include associated service areas for each park type that indicate a minimum standard for geographic balance and availability of each park type in the community. Classifying parks in the system ensures the

entire community is served by a wide range of park and recreational facilities. Figure X delineates the service area for each park in the Tri-Community. Service areas for the park types include:

- **MINI PARKS: 1/4 MILE OR LESS**
- **NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS: 1/4 -1/2 MILES**
- **COMMUNITY PARKS: 1/2 TO 3 MILES**
- **LARGE URBAN PARKS: VARIES BASED ON USE**
- **NATURAL AREAS: VARIES BASED ON AVAILABILITY**
- **SPECIAL USE PARKS: VARIES BASED ON USE**

PARK AND OPEN SPACE ACREAGE

Analysis of the geographic distribution of park facilities throughout the Tri-Community area reveal that while overall park coverage is good in the urban areas around the waterfront, areas around the east and south areas of the Township are lacking coverage. The Tri-Community should consider addressing the following:

- Most of the existing parks are clustered in the northeast area of Douglas and the eastern side of Saugatuck, which is understandable due to the population density and waterfront.
- The northwest section of Douglas and the southwest section of Saugatuck have coverage gaps for the residences in these areas.
- Although Schultz Park and River Bluff Park provide community park coverage for most of the area, the east central and southern half of the township does not have any parks. Given that these areas are mostly rural without housing clusters, additional parks in these areas may not be needed. Although the school district indicated they have a need for additional space for sports fields, so finding a site in the rural area of the Township with available acreage may be worth investigating.
- The Township can use a neighborhood park in the northern area west of I-196, and the east central area to service the residential areas in these locations.

A basic measure of the level of service is the amount of park and open space acreage available per resident. In this Master Plan, the analysis begins by considering “accessible”, usable acreage, which excludes golf courses, cemeteries, undeveloped land, school sites, and county parks.

The analysis showed that “accessible” park acreage per capita in Tri-Community is extraordinarily high when compared to comparable communities and all communities in the database. The NRPA database demonstrated a median of 13 acres per 1,000 residents in similarly sized communities and 10.8 acres per 1,000 residents in all communities. This would require a minimum of 74 acres of parkland for the Tri-Community to meet this metric. The Tri-Community provides 621 total acres of parkland which far exceeds the data in the NRPA database.

The Tri-Community measures 78.4 acres of developed parkland per 1,000 residents (not including schools or the Airport Property). When including the undeveloped Airport Property and the School District property, the Tri-Community measures 109.2 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. This works out to 0.1 acres of parkland per person! This calculation is based on permanent residents of the area. It is estimated that the population may double or triple due to seasonal visitors from spring to fall. Even accounting for the seasonal increase of population, the available parkland in the Tri-Community far exceeds the NRPA comparisons at 36.4 acres per 1,000 residents. It must be taken into consideration that 70% of the park land acreage is in natural areas that cannot support certain types of recreation.

	Population	Park Acres	Ac/1,000	Ac/1,000 w/ seasonal	NRPA All Communities	NRPA Comparable
City of Saugatuck	865	498.4	398.0		10.8	13
City of Douglas	1,378	30.0	21.8		10.8	13
Saugatuck Township	3,443	71.3	20.7		10.8	13
Tri-Community	5,686	621.0	109.2	36.4	10.8	13

In addition to overall acreage, NRPA metrics recommend a certain number of park acres per units of population for different types of park classifications. NRPA standards state that per 1,000 residents, 0.25 acres of mini parks, 1 acre of neighborhood parks, and 5 acres for community parks is needed to meet the needs of the community. There are no standards for natural resource or special use parks.

	Mini Park Ac Required	Mini Park Ac Provided	Mini Park / 1,000 Required	Mini Park/ 1,000 Provided
City of Saugatuck	0.22	2.9	0.25	3.35
City of Douglas	0.34	4.5	0.25	3.26
Saugatuck Township	0.86	0.3	0.25	0.08
Tri-Community	1.4	7.7	0.25	1.35

	Neighborhood Ac Required	Neighborhood Ac Provided	Neighborhood Park / 1,000 Required	Neighborhood Park/ 1,000 Provided
City of Saugatuck	0.87	2.5	1.0	2.9
City of Douglas	1.38	4.5	1.0	3.27
Saugatuck Township	3.44	0	1.0	0
Tri-Community	5.69	7.0	1.0	1.23

	Community Ac Required	Community Ac Provided	Community Park / 1,000 Required	Community Park/ 1,000 Provided
City of Saugatuck	4.32	50.0	5.0	57.8
City of Douglas	6.89	20.0	5.0	14.5
Saugatuck Township	17.22	66.5	5.0	19.3
Tri-Community	28.43	136.5	5.0	24.0

As shown in figures x.x – x.x, the Tri-Community exceeds the standard for the mini park, neighborhood park, and community park types. Also shown in the data is that Saugatuck Township on its own is deficient in mini parks and neighborhood parks and may consider looking for opportunities to acquire land to meet these needs. It should be noted that these standards are to be used as a guide and interpreted according to local needs, character, trends, and current Department capacity, and the demand may be greater or less than the national standard.

PARK AMENITIES

Park amenities are the built elements within the Tri-Community parks that support various forms of recreation. Passive recreation and active recreation are the primary types of recreational uses. Passive recreation includes less intense activities that are more quiet and non-exertive for a limited number of users. Active recreation requires space and facilities capable of accommodating exertive activities. Examples include sports fields, play equipment areas, open areas, special facilities, such as pools and court areas, and areas for organized activities.

Recreation areas should provide for both types of use and preferably include a variety of opportunities for each to respond adequately to a wide range of interests and age groups. For many users these are crucial components that help them feel welcome and safe. It is critical that the Tri-Community agencies supply the right number and types of amenities to meet the needs of their users. As the demographics of the Tri-Community change over time (race, age, population, etc.) park amenities need to be assessed for their relevance to the changing user groups.

Figure x.x Park and Recreation Facilities - Population per Facility

Facility	NRPA all agencies	NRPA < 20,000	City of Saugatuck	City of Douglas	Saugatuck Township	Total Tri-Community
Tennis	5,860	2,805	865	-	-	1,137
Pickleball	13,922	3,252	865	172	-	632
Baseball	6,863	3,114	-	1,378	-	2,843
Softball	11,384	5,079	-	1,378	-	2,843
Soccer	7,228	3,600	-	1,378	-	2,843
Football	26,780	6,955	-	-	-	5,686
Playground	3,759	2,014	433	345	3,443	569
Basketball	7,404	3,729	433	689	-	1,077
Volleyball	17,475	5,093	-	1,378	-	5,686
Dog Park	43,532	11,100	-	1,378	3,443	2,843
Skate Park	53,144	10,726	-	-	-	-
Outdoor Ice Rink	17,741	8,045	-	-	-	-
Rec. Center Inc. Gyms	31,215	9,745	-	-	-	-
Swimming Pool	38,635	9,745	-	-	-	-
Community Center	29,494	8,829	-	-	-	1,895
Amphitheater	67,862	11,100	-	-	-	-
Senior Center	59,727	14,000	-	-	-	-

Note: School District facilities were included in the Tri-Community column.

To understand gaps and surpluses among amenities in the Tri-Community, Level of Service metrics from the NRPA benchmarking database were used. The analysis showed that in the Tri-Community overall “basic” park amenities per capita, in categories with comparable NRPA benchmarks, are on par or with comparable communities, without major gaps in service by number or by geography, when you include all the communities and the school district together. However, in reviewing each Tri-Community agency, the City of Douglas has the most balance as Saugatuck Township has gaps with courts and ball fields, and the City of Saugatuck has gaps in sports fields. It is also important to consider that Figure XX is based on year-round resident populations and that the seasonal influx of visitors and tourists puts additional strain on the park system that may require additional facilities.

While the NRPA benchmarking analysis is limited by the availability of amenity categories in the database and focuses mostly on active recreation facilities, discussions during the engagement process, revealed community interest in specialized amenities such as a splash pad, pickleball, a community center, and additional nature-based activities.

The combination of benchmark analysis and public input gives clear direction for the Tri-Community. The Tri-Community agencies have done a good job of providing basic park amenities and sharing resources across the community. There is a desire, however, for new, innovative, and specialized amenities to add diversity to the system. At the same time, the community has demonstrated the need for more trails, access to natural areas, and gathering spaces. Focusing on walking and biking trails within the system would provide the greatest benefit for the largest number of residents within the Tri-Community. Respondents indicated they were very supportive of expanding walking and biking trails and the community has also voiced that restrooms and outdoor facilities for fitness and sports are high priorities for the future. (Additional details on public engagement are discussed within the following chapter). Additionally, although not shown in the benchmark analysis, the community has expressed the need for additional sports field space for practices to better accommodate school district athletics and community recreation. Seeking opportunities to acquire land to meet this need should be a priority for the Tri-Community.



GEORGES SEURAT MURAL AT WICKS PARK, CITY OF SAUGATUCK



4/

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Master Plan Vision

Tri-Community Pillars


MASTER PLAN VISION AND TRI-COMMUNITY PILLARS

TRI-COMMUNITY PARKS AND RECREATION VISION

Cultivate a unified park system that offers diverse recreational opportunities for our vibrant and engaged community, expands upon our legacy of coastal conservation and environmental stewardship, and welcomes and inspires all who visit.

Crafted by the Tri-Community Parks and Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee, 2023





**FOSTER
COMMUNITY
WELL-BEING**

ENSURE PEOPLE OF ALL AGES, ABILITIES, AND IDENTITIES HAVE ACCESS TO SAFE AND WELCOMING GREEN SPACES. CREATE PROGRAMS AND EVENTS THAT PROMOTE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, MENTAL HEALTH, AND SOCIAL INTERACTION



**COASTAL
CONSERVATION
AND
ENVIRONMENTAL
STEWARDSHIP**

MAINTAIN AND PRESERVE THE NATURAL BEAUTY OF THE SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS LAKESHORE AND STEWARD THE GREATER KALAMAZOO WATERSHED




**INTER-LOCAL
COLLABORATION**

STRENGTHEN TIES BETWEEN THE TRI-COMMUNITY ENTITIES AND SAUGATUCK PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND WORK COLLABORATIVELY TO FOSTER A THRIVING REGIONAL PARK SYSTEM



**IMPROVED
CONNECTIVITY**

PROVIDE SAFE, CONNECTED NON-MOTORIZED INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT USE AND ACCESS THROUGHOUT THE TRI-COMMUNITY



**NURTURE
EXISTING
GREEN
SPACES**

INVEST QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND CARE OF OUR EXISTING PARKS, TRAILS, AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Pillars are the fundamental principles or core values that guide the development, planning, and management of parks and recreational programs within a community. The Tri-Community Pillars serve as the foundation for creating a comprehensive vision for the future of parks and recreation system, aligning with the community's goals and aspirations. They serve as guiding principles that inform the long-term vision, strategic planning, and decision-making processes related to parks and recreation. By integrating these core values into planning efforts, the community can create vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable parks and trails that contribute positively to the overall well-being and quality of life for residents and visitors.



5/ TAKING ACTION

Making it Happen

Tri-Community Pillars

MAKING IT HAPPEN

An action plan creates a road map for implementation and creates a framework for decision making based on equity, needs and level of service, park conditions and strategic opportunities. Each municipality's action plan was crafted through analysis of park system distribution, quality and history of investments, bringing in measures of diversity, community welfare, access and ecological sensitivity.

ACTION PLAN AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Action Plan focuses on the reduction of deficiencies, and expansion and improvements of facilities in a manner that not only meets current needs but also diversifies the type and quality of recreational opportunities within the Tri-Community. These needs were recorded during the public input process and were identified during the review and comparison of park standards and demographic / population trends.

As stated in the Action Program, improvements and development will occur as funds and opportunities evolve. Assistance will be solicited from all available sources and will include both physical and financial support. Local businesses, service organizations, land developers, and governmental agencies will be solicited for monetary and material support. The Tri-Community will also seek funding assistance from all available sources such as trusts, charitable foundations, and all Federal and State funding programs. The Capital Improvement Plan shows a breakdown of the anticipated projects, priorities, estimated costs, and projected funding sources for the next five years. All projections are based on year 2024 costs and will be refined as the program progresses. It should be noted that changes in the program may occur if projected funding levels increase or decrease, but it is anticipated that the changes would be related more to adjustments in the time schedule rather than specific projects.

The action plan items for the 2024 Parks and Recreation Master Plan are as follows (not listed in particular order):

Action A: Expansion of Non-Motorized Trails

The development of non-motorized facilities including sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and off-road pathways was strongly supported by the results of the community outreach process. Projects that include transportation/

recreation trail planning and development are a priority including projects that enhance greenway corridors, connect parks and lakes, support existing trail extensions, eliminate barriers, and enhance the overall trail system.

Non-Motorized Transportation/Walkability: The Tri-Community agencies will look for and capitalize on opportunities to implement non-motorized trail facilities to connect parks, schools, residential areas, and commercial hubs and to neighboring communities. In addition, the Tri-Community will encourage the development of pathways within existing parks to facilitate universal accessibility and promote a healthy lifestyle.

- Collaborate with other Tri-Community agencies, Allegan County, Saugatuck Public Schools, and other stakeholders to develop non-motorized facilities that can connect to existing trails, parks, and natural areas.
- Continue work to complete the Blue Star Trail through the Tri-Community area and beyond.
- Support expansion of the Beach to Bridge non-motorized facility.
- Consider the development of a Tri-Community Area Non-Motorized Transportation Master Plan.
- Collaborate with Tri-Community agencies to develop the Wiley Rd Pathway.
- Look for opportunities for trailheads at existing park sites.
- Identify gaps in existing sidewalk networks and work to fill gaps.
- Provide safe pedestrian crossing facilities where existing trails cross roadways.
- Make the inclusion of new bike lanes and signage a priority of future roadway reconstruction projects.

Action B: Improvements to Existing Facilities

The most efficient use of resources is to focus on projects that improve existing facilities and maximize the potential of Tri-Community-owned property. Projects that renovate existing facilities are considered a high priority. This may include improvements that eliminate barriers to increase accessibility for all users, renovations, and upgrades

to existing equipment and features to ensure modern and clean facilities, and redevelopment or expansion of existing parks to eliminate redundancy and maximize the potential of the site. See pages XX-XX for individual municipality action and capitol plans.

Action C: Reduce or minimize operating costs

With budgets getting tighter and grants becoming more competitive, projects that can help reduce operating costs are a priority. Examples include: projects that increase efficiency in operations and reduce maintenance, removal or replacement of equipment or features that are costly or inefficient to maintain, projects that consider the use of alternative energy sources and use of recycled materials, and projects that could generate revenue.

Action D: Conserve, preserve, and enhance natural features and environmentally sensitive areas.

During the community outreach process, the community expressed a strong desire to further utilize and protect the area's extensive natural areas and features and to implement environmentally sustainable maintenance practices. This includes invasive species management, nature programming, additional trails including soft trails, use of native plantings, interpretive signage, recycled materials, and alternative sources of energy. Additionally, consider employing environmentally sustainable design and maintenance practices such as developing and implementing a unified Dark Skies Ordinance for all communities, waste management and recycling programs, coordinated park conservation designations, and invasive species and native plantings education for the public.

Action E: Planning for future parks and recreational needs

As the community continues to grow and change over time, the Tri-Community continues to dedicate itself to improving recreational offerings for the community. The Tri-Community understands that to continue to ensure that park and recreation offerings adapt to and meet the needs of the growing community, they must be willing to continually invest in and look for new opportunities in parks and recreation programs, facilities, and services. This makes planning for future parks and recreation facilities a high priority. The following are examples of projects the Tri-Community is considering to meet this focus:

Land Acquisition: The Tri-Community will look for opportunities to purchase additional land for recreational or preservation purposes as it becomes available. Land acquisition may focus on areas adjacent to existing parks, Lake Michigan, and the Kalamazoo River waterfront. Future

land acquisitions are planned to grow current parks and trails for neighborhood connections to recreation and natural areas and increase parkland. Other land acquisitions may include easements for trail development, environmentally sensitive areas, or green space to support community recreation and sports activities.

Pickleball: It was conveyed during the public engagement process that there is a need for developing pickleball courts, with an emphasis on courts dedicated to pickleball (not line markings on tennis courts).

Wayfinding Signage: Create cohesive signage throughout 3 municipalities to connect downtown district, parks, and schools in a safe and useful way.

Sports Complex: Developing a dedicated sports complex to serve the Tri-Community area would help provide adequate practice facilities for the school district teams as well as community recreation.

Action F: Develop diverse, balanced, and innovative park facilities

Given that the area park system is a mostly mature system, developing diverse park facilities and incorporating new innovative park features is a high priority for the Tri-Community. In addition, during the community engagement process, it was conveyed that the residents desire a balanced park system with newer features. The following are examples of projects the Tri-Community may consider in response to resident needs:

Tri-Community Foundation: Development of a Tri-Community Foundation to provide an endowment for future parks and recreation development and maintenance.

Outdoor Amphitheater: The development of an outdoor performance space could enhance the Tri-Community area by providing opportunities for live entertainment. The focus may be placed on locating the facility along the waterfront if land could be secured.

Community Recreation Center: As part of a collaboration between the Tri-Community Agencies, a Community Recreation Center could be developed to create year-round, indoor sports and social activities.

Winter Sports Complex: Evaluate locations to have winter sports available to residents and tourists- cross-country skiing, sledding, skiing, tubing, etc.

Mountain Bike Trails: An addition to the outdoor experiences found in the Tri-Community parks system, a mountain bike trail could be developed that will appeal to bikers of all levels from gentle grades through a peaceful forest setting to trails for the more adrenaline-charged. This area may include programs on bicycle safety and building cycling skills.

Outdoor Gym: An Outdoor Gym could be developed and feature fitness equipment available all year for adults, children, and the disabled. Fitness areas may also be set within a forested area and encourage stretching and strength exercises to accompany walking and biking experiences.

Edible Trail: Creating edible forest landscapes of fruit and nut trees, berry bushes, and more along existing trails to encourage stops along the route to pause and enjoy nature, while enjoying some of what nature provides. An Edible Trail project could provide learning opportunities for nurturing the ecosystem while increasing access to local, sustainable food. In addition, providing space for community gardens can provide many benefits to the community including stress relief, promotion of healthy lifestyle and wellness, education, environmental stewardship, and landscape beautification.

Disc Golf Course: The development of an 18-hole Disc Golf course may enhance the area's attractiveness to hold large tournaments and attract professional players from a wider area. Disc Golf is also growing as sports programs increase in area schools.

Other Amenities

The following were mentioned as being desirable concepts worth further exploration during the public engagement process:

- Splash pad
- Dog Park
- Swimming pool
- WiFi in parks
- Increase park marketing and awareness
- Interpretive signs for historic, cultural, and environmental education

- Habitat Restoration
- Wildlife viewing platforms
- Nature-based activities

Action G: Continue to provide a diverse slate of programs for all ages and seasons

In addition to providing cutting-edge park facilities, it is equally important to provide exciting programs and activities. This need was discussed during the community outreach process and the Tri-Community recognizes the need for diverse programs that cover all ages and seasons.



SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP

ACTION PLAN + CAPITOL INVESTMENT PLAN

AMELANCHIER PARK

Develop a recreation master plan to support trailside amenities, picnic shelter, and integrated uses by trail and cemetery users.

CEMETERY COLLABORATION

Collaboration of cemetery master planning with non-motorized access, trail master planning, walkable access, and integrated amenities such as picnic shelters and gathering spaces.

RIVER BLUFF PARK

Implement shoreline and habitat restoration as recommended in the recently completed Phase 1 Conservation Land Study. Develop a recreation master plan for River Bluff Park in parallel with restoration efforts. Improvements may include: widen trails for accessibility and emergency access, 8 court pickleball facility, picnic shelter, vault restroom building, electricity. Waterfront may include: viewing platforms, fishing pier, and kayak landing.

SUNDOWN PARK

Develop a recreation master plan to support walking and biking along Lakeshore Drive. Improvements may include: picnic area, overlook, landscaping, restroom (portable in enclosure).

TAILS AND TRAILS DOG PARK

Implement improvements as proposed in 2022 DNR Spark Grant Application, which includes: improved entry and parking, picnic area, and main loop trails. Additionally, replace and reinforce fencing in the dog park areas, add a vault restroom, develop trail and wayfinding signage, and continue development of main loop trails (not included in grant) per the park master plan. Collaborate with the City of Saugatuck on potential recreational uses of adjacent "Old Airport Property." Future phase improvements may include: enhanced natural areas, ponds, wetland, water management, larger shelter, and additional parking.

TOWNSHIP HALL POCKET PARK

Develop Township Hall Site as a Pocket Park consistent with a newer zoning vision for the Blue Star Highway Corridor. Consider future sidewalk locations, crossings of Blue Star Highway, and landscaping.

Tri-Community Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Saugatuck Township 2024 - 2028 Capital Improvement Schedule - Potential Future Projects

	Project	Year	Estimated Cost	Relates to Action
PARKS				
Outdoor Discovery Center Signage Project - River Bluff Park	Signage project approved in July 2023 for trail, kiosk, and interpretive maps for River Bluff Park developed by Outdoor Discover Center.	2023-2024	\$11,000	B
River Bluff Park- Shoreline Restoration Feasibility Study (Phase 1)	Kalamazoo River Trustees (KRT) Grant administered by NOAA and NFWF to evaluate park property and 1,200 feet of Kalamazoo River frontage for ecological restoration opportunities. Includes topo survey and study of improved public access and recreation.	2023-2024	-	B, D
River Bluff Park - Shoreline Restoration Construction & Design (Phase 2)	Implement shoreline and habitat restoration as recommended in Phase 1 Study and as funded by Trustees including, design, permitting, and construction.	2025-2027	-	B, D
River Bluff Park - Recreation Master Plan	Develop a master plan for River Bluff Park in parallel with restoration efforts. Use plan for DNR Trust Fund Grant application.	2024-2025	\$25,000	B, C, E
River Bluff Park - Recreation Improvements	Implement master plan. May include: widen trails for accessibility and emergency access, 8 court pickleball facility, picnic shelter, vault restroom building, electricity. Waterfront may include: viewing platforms, fishing pier, kayak landing.	2025-2027	\$300,000	B, E, F
Tails & Trails - Trail Development & Signage	Continue development of main loop trails per the park master plan including grading, landscaping, topsoil, grass planting. Develop trail and wayfinding signage. Collaborate with the City of Saugatuck on potential uses of Old Airport Property.	2023-2025	\$150,000	A, B
Tails & Trails - Fencing Replacement	Replace and reinforce fencing in the dog park areas.	2023-2025	\$50,000	B, C
Tails & Trails - Park Renovation (Phase 1)	Improvements per 2022 DNR Spark Grant Application. Includes: improved entry and parking, picnic area, and main loop trails. Add vault restroom. Refer to 12/5/2022 Phasing Plan. Development of main loop trails not included in grant application.	2024-2026	\$200,000	B, E
Tails & Trails - Park Renovation (Phase 2)	Future improvements per 12/5/2022 Phasing Plan. Includes: enhanced natural areas, ponds, wetland, water management, larger shelter, and additional parking.	2028-2030	\$200,000	B, D, E
Sundown Park - Recreation Master Plan	Develop a recreation master plan for Sundown Park (126th Avenue) road end park to support walking and biking along Lakeshore Drive.	203-2024	\$15,000	B
Sundown Park - Recreation Improvements	Implement Master plan. May include: picnic area, overlook, landscaping, restroom (portable in enclosure). Potentially eligible for EGLE Coastal Management Low Cost Construction grant program.	2025-2028	\$50,000	B, D, F
Amelanchier Park - Recreation Master Plan	Develop a master plan for Amelanchier Park to support trailside amenities, picnic shelter, integrated uses by trail and cemetery users. See initial plan by Viridis.	2023-2024	\$15,000	B, D, F
Amelanchier Park - Recreation Improvements	Implement improvements envisioned in plan. Potential alignment with Blue Star Trail construction in 2025-2026.	2025-2028	\$100,000	B, D, F
Township Hall - Pocket Park	Develop Township Hall Site as a Pocket Park consistent with a newer zoning vision for the Blue Star Highway Corridor. Consider future sidewalk locations, crossings of Blue Star Highway, and Landscaping.	2029	-	A, B, D, F
Cemetery Collaboration	Collaboration of cemetery master planning with non-motorized access, trail master planning, walkable access, and integrated amenities such as picnic shelters and gathering spaces.	2029	-	A, B, D
Communication Plan - Parks & Trails	Improve Township website and email distribution to communicate and build awareness of parks and recreation opportunities and existing facilities within the community. Integrate into community mailing lists, newsletters, social media, etc.	Ongoing	-	C, G
LAND ACQUISITION				
Park Property Acquisition	Work to acquire additional park and land conservation properties. Emphasis on land adjacent to existing parks, Lake Michigan & Kalamazoo River frontage for view/water access, and other high value natural resource properties.	Ongoing	TBD	D, E
Community Green Space Collaboration	Collaborate with Saugatuck Public Schools and Cities to acquire property for additional green space to support community recreation, school athletic programs, and community events.	Ongoing	TBD	E, F
Community Parks & Trails Master Plans / Maps - Parks, Sidewalks/Pathways, Hiking / Water Trails	Collaborate with Saugatuck Public Schools and Cities to create master plans for public use and to coordinate future planning of sidewalks, pathways, hiking and water trails to interconnect points of interest, parks, and beaches. Add potential wayfinding plan.	2023-2025	\$15,000	A, D, E
Saugatuck Township Public Access and Conservation Lands Study	Coastal Management Program Grant administered by EGLE and NOAA to evaluate lands in Saugatuck Township for improved public access and conservation. Develop criteria to prioritize land strategies and processes to encourage conservation of lands.		TBD	D, E

TRAILS				
Support "Beach to Bridge" Trail Vision	Support community partners to build interconnected trails, walkways, and natural areas from Lake Michigan (Beach) to New Richmond Bridge Park (Bridge) along Kalamazoo River. Potential pedestrian crossing of I-196 at 134th Avenue.	2023-2024	\$15,000	A, D
Lakeshore Drive - Trail & Emergency Access Planning	Connect dead-ends of Lakeshore Drive (near Old Owl Drive) by acquiring private easements necessary for a non-motorized and emergency access connection.	2023-2025	\$50,000	A
Lakeshore Drive - Trail & Emergency Access Improvements	Build paved pathway inland of washout to reconnect non-motorized route inland. Dependent on easement acquisition.	2025-2026	\$100,000	A
Blue Star Trail - Maple St. to Old Allegan & North St. to Holland St. through Amelanchier Park (North Connection)	10' Paved separated path (Maple St. - Old Allegan Rd.) and North St. to Holland St (through Amelanchier Park). Township contribution to Road Commission roundabout includes some path. Township FY24 DNR Trust Fund Grant. Other funds provided by Friends of the Blue Star Trail, City of Saugatuck, and MDOT TAP grant.	2023-2025	\$125,000	A
Blue Star Trail - Wiley Road to M-89, crossing I-196 (South Township with City of Douglas)	3 miles of 10' Paved separated path. Matching funds provided by Friends of the Blue Star Trail. Anticipated FY25 DNR Trust Fund applications (both Township and City). Anticipated FY25 MDOT TAP applications. Collaborate with City of Douglas.	2024-2026	TBD	A
Wiley Road Pathway - Blue Star Highway to Lakeshore Drive (with City of Douglas)	4,400' of 8' Paved separated shared use path. Collaborate with City of Douglas. Connect to Blue Star Trail. Location in north or south right of way is undetermined.	2025-2026	\$550,000	A
Old Allegan Road Pathway - Blue Star Highway to River Bluff Park	4,400' of 8' Paved separated shared use path. Collaborate with City of Douglas. Connect to Blue Star Trail. Location in north or south right of way is undetermined.	2029	\$450,000	A
Clearbrook Drive Sidewalk - Holland Street to 64th Street	4,400' of 5' concrete sidewalk.	2028	TBD	A
Blue Star Highway - Additional Sidewalks	Add 5' concrete sidewalks as to be master planned along Blue Star Highway corridor between Exit 41 and Maple Street. Collaborate with Road Commission on pedestrian safety improvements and crossings of Blue Star Highway.	2029	TBD	A
Lakeshore Drive - Maintain Existing Recreational Access	Collaborate with stakeholders to preserve the existing Lakeshore Drive right of way for recreational access during and after future shoreline erosion events.	Ongoing	TBD	A, D
126th Avenue to Wiley Road - Future Road and Pathway Corridor (with Road Commission)	Collaborate with stakeholders in the planning and development of a 10' Paved separated shared use path as part of a new roadway corridor inland from Lakeshore Drive between 126th Avenue and Wiley Road.	Ongoing	TBD	A

Estimated costs include only Township funds. Grants and other funding sources will be sought after to supplement costs.

DRAFT

CITY OF SAUGATUCK

ACTION PLAN + CAPITOL INVESTMENT PLAN

AIRPORT PROPERTY

Develop an overall master plan for the property, open and legitimize trails for public use, and collaborate with the Saugatuck Township Park Commission and Saugatuck Public Schools to develop and maintain cross-country trails.

COGHLIN PARK

Provide a public restroom and a fish cleaning station.

MIZE ROSE GARDEN

Develop a long-term maintenance plan.

MOUNT BALDHEAD PARK

Proposed improvements to this park include: Repairs and maintenance to the bathrooms, stairs, viewing deck, parking (permeable material surface that works with the natural cleaning of storm water); Invest in a plan to activate the entire park into a cohesive experience - history museum, stairs, pavilion, river viewing; Create “shopper docks” at the river viewing so people can come by boat to hike; and Incorporate educational opportunities with pavilion used as a learning center.

PETERSON PRESERVE

Coordinate with EGLE and the DNR on improvements to existing dams.

OVAL BEACH

Create plan to use Oval Beach at its’ highest value by exploring ways to upgrade existing restaurant and bathrooms, revenue streams, public/private partnerships for amenities, ADA compliance, and a pathway from Perryman St.

VILLAGE SQUARE

Create plans to maintain, repair, upgrade and activate the park as one cohesive space with timeline, budget and priorities.

WICKS PARK

Improvements to include repair and maintenance to meet ADA requirements for the bathroom, and repair and maintenance of the gazebo.

Tri-Community Parks and Recreation Master Plan				
City of Saugatuck 2024 - 2028 Action Program - Potential Future Projects				
	Project	Year	Estimated Cost	Relates to Action
PARKS				
Airport Property	Develop cross-country trails for use by School District	Ongoing	\$50,000	A, B, E
	Nature trails, parking, benches, waste receptacles	Ongoing	\$100,000	B, D
Coghlin Park	Add restroom and a fish cleaning station	Ongoing	\$500,000	B
Jones Park	Develop a maintenance plan and add site identification	Ongoing	\$100,000	B, D
Mize Rose Garden	Develop a maintenance plan	Ongoing	\$20,000	B, D
Mt Baldhead Park	Repairs to restrooms, parking, replace decking on stairs and viewing deck	Ongoing	\$500,000	B
	Develop a master plan that promotes the activation of the park	Ongoing	\$20,000	B, E, F
	Replace aging pavilion, new trails, interpretive signs for education	Ongoing	\$600,000	B
Oval Beach	Renovate existing restaurant and restrooms, barrier free access	Ongoing	TBD	B
	Develop marketing plan to understand opportunities to increase revenue and create public/private partnerships	Ongoing	\$30,000	B, C, G
	New playground, restrooms, repave parking lot	Ongoing	\$800,000	B, E
Peterson Preserve	Paved trail for barrier free access	Ongoing	\$200,000	B
	Add benches, picnic tables, and interpretive signs	Ongoing	\$100,000	B, E
Village Square	Replace existing playground equipment	2024	\$300,000	B
	Development of new use areas	Ongoing	TBD	B, E, F
	Resurfacing of tennis and basketball courts	Ongoing	\$150,000	B
Wicks Park	ADA improvements and maintenance to existing restroom and gazebo	Ongoing	\$200,000	B
	Add bandshell / performance space	Ongoing	TBD	B, F
Willow Park	Replacement of boardwalk decking and rails	Ongoing	\$150,000	B
All Parks	Removal of invasive species, add wayfinding signs and park maps.	Ongoing	TBD	B, D, F
LAND ACQUISITION				
Park Property Acquisition	Seek additional park and land conservation properties. Emphasis on land adjacent to existing parks, Lake Michigan & Kalamazoo River frontage for view/water access, and other high value natural resource properties.	Ongoing	TBD	D, E
Community Green Space Collaboration	Collaborate with Saugatuck Public Schools, Douglas, and the Township to acquire property for additional green space to support community recreation, school athletic programs, and community events.	Ongoing	TBD	E, F
Community Parks & Trails Master Plans	Collaborate with Saugatuck Public Schools, Douglas and the Township to create master plans for public use and to coordinate future planning of sidewalks, pathways, hiking and water trails to interconnect points of interest, parks, and beaches. Add potential wayfinding plan.	2023-2025	TBD	A, D, E
TRAILS				
Support "Beach to Bridge" Trail Vision	Support community partners to build interconnected trails, walkways, and natural areas from Lake Michigan (Beach) to New Richmond Bridge Park (Bridge) along Kalamazoo River.	2023-2024	TBD	A, D
Blue Star Trail - Maple St. to Old Allegan & North St. to Holland St. through Amelanchier Park (North Saugatuck)	10' Paved separated path (Maple St. - Old Allegan Rd.) and North St. to Holland St (through Amelanchier Park).	2023-2025	TBD	A
Blue Star Trail - Wiley Road to M-89, crossing I-196	3 miles of 10' Paved separated path. Matching funds provided by Friends of the Blue Star Trail. Collaborate with City of Douglas and Saugatuck Township.	2024-2026	TBD	A

Estimated costs include only City funds. Grants and other funding sources will be sought after to supplement costs.

CITY OF DOUGLAS

ACTION PLAN + CAPITOL INVESTMENT PLAN

BEERY FIELD

Upgrade lighting, electric, fencing, and scoreboard, add a storage facility for DPW, and consider adding an outdoor skating rink.

DOUGLAS BEACH

Improvements to bathroom facilities (ADA compliant), explore installation of additional parking, install potable water and irrigation, upgrade lighting and electric, enhance dune resiliency through additional plantings and erosion control measures, and acquire adjacent land when available.

DOUGLAS MARINA

Demolish or restoration of existing unsafe structure(s), install bathroom facilities (ADA compliant), new pavilion and landscaping, expand the docking system, install a new seawall, pave the parking area(s), install irrigation, and upgrade water and electric to docking system.

ROOT BEER BARREL

Increase paved parking, acquire adjacent land, excavate, level, and landscape surrounding land, install new potable water service, construct additional building for food prep/storage, and add a pavilion, restroom, and Wi-Fi.

SCHULTZ PARK

Improvements to this park may include dog park upgrades, including construction of pavilion, providing potable water, adding shade trees, new bathroom facilities (ADA compliant), replacement and expand pickleball courts, adding disc golf course, excavating, level, and landscape areas near pavilion, add a 5-12-year old section to the playground, add an adult fitness area, replace bleachers and install a concrete base, pave and increase parking around pickleball courts and pavilion, upgrade lighting and electric service, upgrade ball field scoreboard, build a storage facility for DPW, shared use path connection from Wiley Rd, and make improvements to the sand volleyball court.

VETERANS PARK

Install a new seawall and memorial flagpole and make improvements to the parking area and landscaping.

WADES BAYOU MEMORIAL PARK

Acquire adjacent land to the south for expansion, install bathroom facilities (ADA compliant), improve landscaping, finish irrigation, pave parking area, relocate the iron removal plant (IRP) off-site, upgrade lighting and electric, construct an amphitheater.

Tri-Community Parks and Recreation Master Plan				
City of Douglas 2024 - 2028 Capital Improvement Schedule - Potential Future Projects				
	Project	Year	Estimated Cost	Relates to Action
PARKS				
Beery Field	Upgrades to fencing, lighting/electric service, scoreboard	Ongoing	\$ 150,000.00	B, C
	Storage facility for DPW	Ongoing	\$ 200,000.00	B, C
	Install a winter Ice Rink	Ongoing	TBD	B, F
Douglas Beach	Restroom improvements, water service, irrigation, lighting and electric	Ongoing	\$ 300,000.00	B, C
	Add parking and install dune preservation drainage	Ongoing	\$ 150,000.00	B, D
Douglas Marina	Demolish existing buildings	Ongoing	\$ 50,000.00	B, C, D
	Install restrooms, pavilion, landscaping, and pave parking areas	Ongoing	\$ 500,000.00	B
	Expand docking system, install new sea wall, upgrade water/electric at dock	Ongoing	\$ 300,000.00	B, E
Root Beer Barrel	Install restrooms, pavilion and new water service	Ongoing	\$ 500,000.00	B
	Expand parking lot, regrade and landscape surrounding land, add irrigation	Ongoing	\$ 300,000.00	B
	Construct additional building for food prep/storage, add broadband internet	Ongoing	TBD	B, F
Schultz Park	Install restrooms, water service, landscaping near pavilion, electric/lighting	Ongoing	\$ 500,000.00	B
	Replace/expand pickleball courts, pave/increase parking at courts	Ongoing	\$ 850,000.00	B, E
	Add 5-12yr age playground, add adult fitness area, improve volleyball courts	Ongoing	\$ 400,000.00	B, E
	Improvements to the dog park including pavilion, water, shade	Ongoing	\$ 200,000.00	B, C
	Replace bleachers and concrete pad, upgrade scoreboard, storage facility for DPW, add disc golf	Ongoing	\$ 150,000.00	B, C, E, F
Veterans Park	Add a new seawall and memorial flag pole, and make improvements to existing landscaping and parking areas	Ongoing	\$ 150,000.00	B, F
Wades Bayou	Install restrooms, improve landscaping, upgrade lighting/electric, irrigation	Ongoing	\$ 300,000.00	B
	Relocate the iron removal plant off site	Ongoing	TBD	B, C
	Construct an new amphitheater	Ongoing	TBD	B, F
All Parks	Removal of invasive species, add wayfinding signs and park maps.	Ongoing	TBD	B, E, F
LAND ACQUISITION				
Douglas Beach	Acquire adjacent land for future expansion	Ongoing	TBD	D, E
Root Beer Barrel	Acquire adjacent land for future expansion	Ongoing	TBD	E
Wades Bayou	Acquire adjacent land to the south	Ongoing	TBD	D, E, F
TRAILS				
Blue Star Trail	Extend to southern City limits	Ongoing	\$ 500,000.00	A
Bayou Trail	Connect Bayou Trail to Douglas Beach	Ongoing	\$ 500,000.00	A, F
New Trail	Connect Douglas Beach to future developments	Ongoing	\$ 400,000.00	A, F
New Trail	Continue non-motorized path from Wiley Court over Tannery Creek to Schultz Park Drive	Ongoing	\$ 150,000.00	A

Estimated costs include both funds provided from the city, and well as grants and other funding sources

FUNDING SOURCES

A variety of funding sources and resource partners may exist to assist with the implementation of proposed recreation projects. A summary of the primary sources are listed below:

Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund

The MNRTF can assist with outdoor recreation projects, including land acquisition and physical development of park facilities. This assistance is intended to bolster existing facilities, protect critical natural resources, and establish new parkland. Development project grants may range between \$15,000 and \$300,000; there is no limit to acquisition requests. The minimum required local match is 25%.

Michigan Natural Resources Passport Grant

The Passport grant fund program is primarily focused on renovating and improving existing parks, however, the development of new parks is considered eligible. The Minimum grant request is \$7,500 and the maximum grant request is \$150,000. The minimum required local match is 25%.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

The LWCF is similar to the Trust Fund grant described above, in that it is meant to help fund land acquisition and park development. The minimum grant request amount is \$30,000 and the maximum grant request amount is \$300,000. The minimum required local match is 50%. Natural feature preservation has historically been the primary award criteria; and as such, this opportunity should especially be taken into account when planning for new passive recreation facilities. In addition, the LWCF now places emphasis on trails, “green” technology in outdoor recreation, universal design, and coordination among recreation providers.

MDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

The TAP fund is a grant program that funds non-motorized paths and streetscapes that enhance the community’s intermodal transportation system and provide safe alternative transportation options. The program uses federal funds to promote walkability, alternative transportation options, and place-based economic development to improve the quality of life for communities. The minimum required local match is 20%.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Funding

The State and Community Highway Safety Grant Program supports State highway safety programs designed to reduce traffic crashes and resulting deaths, injuries, and property damage. Grant funds are provided to states, the Indian Nations, and Territories each year according to a statutory formula based on population and road mileage. Funds may be used for a wide variety of highway safety activities and programs including those that improve pedestrian and bicycle safety. The minimum required local match is 20%.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)

The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program assists areas designated as non-attainment or maintenance under the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 to achieve and maintain healthful levels of air quality by funding transportation projects and programs. Projects funded under the CMAQ program must be located in areas that were designated as non-attainment areas. Construction of bicycle and pedestrian facilities; non-construction projects related to safe bicycle use; and the establishment and funding of state bicycle/ pedestrian coordinator positions, as established by ISTEA, for promoting and facilitating the increased use of non-motorized modes of transportation. The minimum required local match is 20%.

Clean Michigan Initiative Local Recreation Grants

The program provides funding for the development and renovation of indoor or outdoor public recreation facilities and infrastructure. The goal of the program is to enhance or develop recreational opportunities by improving or replacing an existing public facility, meeting the recreational needs of the local residents, or by attracting tourists. Grants are awarded for non-acquisition projects in amounts between \$15,000 to \$750,000, based on the need for the project, the capability of the local community to operate and maintain the improvement, and quality of the site and project design.

Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)

HSIP funds can be used for pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements. States may obligate funds under the HSIP to carry out any highway safety improvement project on any public road or publicly owned bicycle or pedestrian pathway or trail; or Safety projects, as provided under the

Flexible Funding for States With a Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

Michigan Natural Resources Tree Planting Grants

Through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), there are two tree planting grant programs that will assist in funding park landscape enhancements and reforestation projects. Applicants must provide at least 50% of the total project cost.

- Arbor Day Mini-Grants. This mini-grant program is designed to provide information and technical assistance to municipal governments and volunteer groups for urban and community forest activities related to Arbor Day. Applications are due in July with a maximum grant request of \$20,000.
- Urban Community Forestry Program. This program provides the same services as above plus management plans, inventories, and maintenance activities. These activities do not have to be related to Arbor Day. Applications are due in July with maximum grant requests of \$20,000.

Wetland Program Development

The goals of the Environmental Protection Agency's wetland program and the Clean Water Action Plan are to increase the quantity and quality of wetlands in the U.S. by conserving and increasing wetland acreage and improving wetland health. State, tribal, and local governmental agencies, and interstate, intertribal, and local government associations are eligible to receive grant funds. Applications are due in the fall with a required 25% minimum local match. For more information, visit their website at: www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/grant guidelines.

Community Development Block Grant

The Allegan County Community Development Department implements the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program in all Allegan County communities. Funds are distributed from the federal government to the County on a formula basis. The formula considers the extent of poverty, population, housing overcrowding, age of housing, and population growth lag about other metropolitan areas. The funded activity must meet one of the CDBG national objectives (i.e., benefit its low and moderate-income persons, prevention or elimination of slums or blight, or a particular urgency because existing conditions pose a serious and immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community).

Baseball Tomorrow Fund

This fund, which is provided through a joint partnership between Major League Baseball and the Major League

Baseball Players Association, awards annual grants to projects aimed at increasing the number of youth participating in and improving the quality of baseball and softball programs. The program is specifically aimed at children ages 10 to 16 and to those using innovative approaches or providing opportunities to minorities and women. Tax-exempt and 501(c)3 organizations are eligible, and Baseball Tomorrow strongly encourages at least 50% matching funds.

People for Bikes

The People for Bikes Grants Program strives to put more people on bicycles more often by funding projects that leverage federal funding and build momentum for bicycling. They seek to assist local organizations, agencies, and citizens in developing bicycle facilities projects. Bikes Belong Coalition accepts applications for grants quarterly for up to \$10,000 each and will consider successor grants for continuing projects.

West Michigan Trails and Greenways Coalition

The West Michigan Trails & Greenways Coalition (WMT&GC) is a non-profit group of donors, organizations, and volunteers dedicated to developing non-motorized trails and greenways into a linked system connecting wilderness areas, parks, historic landmarks, and cultural sites throughout West Michigan. Their vision is to develop a regional trails and greenways network to connect communities and to the natural areas, parks, historic landmarks, cultural venues, and civic destinations throughout the region.

American Hiking Society National Trails Fund

The National Trails Fund, sponsored by the American Hiking Society, provides support to grassroots non-profit organizations working toward establishing, protecting, and maintaining foot trails in America. Grants help give local organizations the resources they need to secure access, volunteers, tools, and materials to protect America's public trails. Support is provided for projects that increase trail lands, including the cost associated with the acquisition of trails, trail corridors, and conservation easements.

Local Fundraising

The Tri-Community is full of active, community-minded residents. Businesses, corporations, private clubs, community organizations, and individuals often contribute to recreation and other improvement programs to benefit the communities in which they are located. Private sector contributions may be in the form of monetary contributions, the donation of land, the provision of volunteer services, or the contribution of equipment or facilities.