

PART 6 - RECREATION PLAN

The Recreation Plan includes both a Long Range Plan, which outlines the 20 year needs of the Township and an Action Plan which is a short range plan that outlines specific projects to be undertaken within a five year period.

LONG RANGE PLAN

Planning of recreational facilities is an on-going process of identifying and satisfying the need for parks and open spaces within a community that is undergoing constant change. Long range plans are guided by a statement of goals that establish a policy framework for future decisions, plans and implementation efforts concerning parks and recreational facilities.

STATEMENT OF LONG RANGE GOALS

GOAL 1

Coordinate recreation planning and development with federal, state and local governments as well as the private sector to ensure availability and access of a total range of recreational opportunities for all users.

GOAL 2

Make recreational use of the Saginaw Bay shoreline more readily available while at the same time preserving the natural assets of the area to the fullest possible extent.

GOAL 3

Provide for a wide-range of both active and passive recreational activities for all age groups and for year around use.

GOAL 4

Create a community atmosphere in which people can live, work and relax.

GOAL 5

Encourage the maximum use of all facilities by ensuring proper operation and maintenance.

GOAL 6

Encourage the development of private recreation facilities at apartment projects, mobile home parks and condominium projects to help satisfy the needs of Township residents.

GOAL 7

Encourage the development of commercial recreational facilities such as archery ranges, bowling alleys, golf courses, marinas, boat launches and campgrounds to help satisfy both the active and passive recreational needs of Township residents.

GOAL 8

Continually work with other agencies, user groups and individuals to establish priorities for specific needed facilities.

LONG RANGE PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Various types of parks and open spaces and numerous types of recreational activities are necessary to serve the long range needs of Township residents. The provision of these facilities in a cost effective manner will require a balanced and coordinated approach by the Township and other public, semi-public and private recreational providers. Finally, and in order to maximize the benefits from these facilities, several changes should be made in the administration, operation and maintenance of park facilities. The major proposals include the following:

COMMUNITY PARKS

At the present time the Township does not have any community parks serving the entire area. It is proposed that the Township work towards the acquisition and development of a 75 to 120 acre site. Ideally, it would be a site of diverse

environmental quality and would provide a multitude of intense recreational facilities such as athletic complexes, large swimming pools or ice skating rinks as well as natural areas for walking, viewing, sitting and picnicking. It should also be large enough to allow for art and craft shows, auto exhibits and so forth. Simply put, it should be a showpiece, enticing enough to even attract those residents that normally refuse to participate in any type of outdoor recreational activities.

The 1985 Recreation Plan, proposed that this type of facility be developed around the existing Finn Road Park. All residents are located within a five mile radius of this park, which is not considered excessive in consideration of the benefits attributable to a waterfront location. Efforts made to acquire additional land during the last five years have not been successful. These efforts should continue however, because this area, along the Saginaw Bay, offers the most diverse area of environmental quality.

If it is determined that land along the bay cannot be acquired, consideration should be given to acquiring land generally located north of Center Avenue and west of Knight Road. About 90 percent of the total residents are located within a three mile radius of this area. As shown on the Recreation Plan Map, there are no existing parks within this area. A community park located in this area could also serve the dual purpose of a neighborhood park for the more immediate area.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Pondside Park and **Ridge Road Park** are excellent neighborhood parks, although additional recreational activities should be provided to better serve the neighborhoods and increase their use. These parks and their immediate service areas, which is a one-mile radius of the parks are illustrated on the Recreation Plan Map.

Also shown are existing elementary schools and the immediate service areas around these schools. The ballfields and playground areas located at these schools satisfy part of the recreational needs of the kids living nearby. Because of the limited range of recreational activities and particularly the lack of passive activities, such as picnicking, they do not completely eliminate the need for neighborhood parks. At the same time, because of economic constraints, no new neighborhood parks are proposed for these areas.

A new neighborhood park is required, however, within the general area between Center Avenue and Hampton Road and between Pine and Wagner roads. This area, which is fairly densely developed, is not served by any park or school facilities at the present time. This is also an area where considerable future development is anticipated. A proposed service area is indicated on the Recreation Plan Map.

MINI-PARKS

There are no public mini-parks within the Township at the present time. Five housing developments, however, maintain private facilities for the use of their residents. These private facilities essentially serve the same functions as mini-parks. The five developments are:

EAST BAY VILLAGE APARTMENTS.....	208 DWELLING UNITS
HUNTINGTON PLACE APARTMENTS.....	211 DWELLING UNITS
OLD ORCHARD BY THE BAY (APTS).....	288 DWELLING UNITS
VILLAGE SQUARE APARTMENTS.....	92 DWELLING UNITS
SAGINAW BAY ESTATES (MOBILE HOME PARK).....	318 SPACES

A mini-park is proposed to serve a concentrated development area in the collegetown area which is in the extreme west portion of the Township.

COLLEGETOWN AREA

The Collegetown Area is a concentration of small, single family homes on small lots in the extreme western portion of the Township. Many of these homes have been acquired by young families with small children and many of these homes have been drastically improved during the past few years.

It is proposed that land for a small park be acquired and developed to serve these families. The proposed Bay-Hampton Railtrail, which will be discussed later, passes along the east boundary of this neighborhood and ideally the park would be located adjacent to the trail. It then could serve the needs of the immediate neighborhood as well as providing a landscaped rest area for trail users.

SPECIAL OR UNIQUE FACILITIES

FINN ROAD PARK

This park, which includes 12 acres, is located on the Saginaw Bay and provides boat launching facilities, a fishing pier, a campground, a picnic area with pavilion, a play area and the necessary support facilities such as public water, sanitary sewer, bathhouses and restrooms, ample parking facilities and a sanitary pump-out station. A full-time park manager is responsible for all park operations during the summer months. The original plan included the acquisition of additional land to allow the development of a complete community park. To date, acquisition of other lands has not been possible.

In the event lands continue to be unavailable, this site will remain a limited use, unique facility and a community park will be developed at another location. In spite of somewhat limited activities, this facility also serves the purpose of a neighborhood park for persons living in the near vicinity including residents of the Saginaw Bay Estates mobile home park.

JONES ROAD BOAT LAUNCH

For several years private developers attempted to develop a commercial boat launching facility at the north end of Jones Road. Present plans are for the Department of Natural Resources to acquire the necessary land, develop a boat launching facility and turn it over to the Township for operation and maintenance. It is anticipated that this facility will primarily be used by transient fishermen whereas the Finn Road Park facility will tend to be used more by campers, spending more than one day at the park. It is proposed that the development of this facility be limited to boat launching and the necessary support facilities. No other recreational activities are proposed.

PRIVATE FACILITIES

There are also several privately owned unique facilities that are either located along the bay or Saginaw River. Existing facilities include Gidley Boat Works and Saginaw Bay Yacht Club, both of which have frontage on the Saginaw River and Knight Harbor which is a boat launch and marina located at the north end of Knight Road. In the same general area, Consumers Power Company has recently developed a limited nature trail along the banks of the Saginaw River. This trail is open to the public on a limited basis and is accessed from their

main gate at Weadock Road. Finally, a new marina is presently proposed with a location along the Saginaw River. This project is presently proceeding through the permitting process and it is not known if final construction permits will be issued.

UNIQUE **FACILITY** FEASIBILITY STUDY

Both the Department of Natural Resources and the Waterfront Committee of the Bay County Growth Alliance are placing special emphasis on recreational development of the Saginaw Bay. These strategies are aimed at developing the Bay as an economic resource while at the same time preserving the important environmental features which make the Bay a unique resource.

Hampton Township has participated in the development of these strategies and fully supports them. It is believed that through careful and thorough planning there may be an opportunity, in the long range, to develop an economically significant water based recreation and tourist facility. The study area is outlined on the Recreation Plan Map and includes approximately 1500 acres of land. It includes about 1 1/2 miles of frontage on the Saginaw River and 2 1/2 miles of frontage on the Saginaw Bay.

The study area presently includes two developed marinas, a private boat launch, which is being converted to public ownership, and an 18 hole county owned golf course. Most of the remaining land is undeveloped at the present time. The study strategy envisions a cooperative effort by the Township, the County, Consumers Power Company and private land owners. The basic purpose of the study will be to determine the feasibility of developing a major tourist based recreational complex by developing and testing several alternative land use concept plans against known and predicted economic and environmental parameters. It is presumed that the unique and somewhat fragile environmental characteristic of the River and Bay can be preserved and enhanced by the development of landward channels and lakes. Land uses and activities might include golf course expansion, lodging, residences, marinas, wildlife preserves, hiking trails, hunting and fishing and many other tourist driven uses and activities.

The Study team will primarily consist of a land use and environmental planner, a civil engineer, and an architect. The team will be working under the direction of a study committee made up of the various owner groups identified above. The Township has agreed to be the sponsoring agency for such an endeavor.

TRAILS & LINEAR PARKS

The development of Trails & Linear Parks is often a cost effective way of expanding recreational activities and also improving the aesthetic appearance of a community.

BAY-HAMPTON RAILTRAIL

This proposed trail originates at Veterans Memorial Park, on the Saginaw River in Downtown Bay City and extends southeasterly about 3.6 miles to the south boundary of Hampton Township. The trail will be used for jogging, walking, bicycling and cross-country skiing.

Funding is already in place for the Bay City portion of the trail and the Hampton portion is expected to be approved in mid 1991. This phase includes paving an 11 foot wide trail along with providing the necessary gateways at each street crossing. Future phases include landscaping, lighting and the development of several rest stations and a mini-park, which was previously discussed. It is also proposed that this trail be extended from its south terminus at Youngs Ditch Road north to Ridge Road which is 1/2 mile. This extension is proposed to be within an abandoned railroad right-of-way and will terminate near the entrance to the Ridge Road neighborhood park.

HAMPTON-KNIGHT-BORTON TRAIL

As previously discussed, the Verellan Elementary School is located near the intersection of Knight & Borton roads. The Essexville-Hampton Little League has developed four little league ballfields on the school property and these ballfields generate a lot of bicycling and walking traffic along these roads, none of which are provided with sidewalks.

It is therefore proposed that a 5 mile long, closed-loop, trail be constructed. It would begin at Pine and Borton roads, extend 2 miles east to Knight Road, south 1/2 mile to Borton Road, west 2 miles to Pine Road and north 1/2 mile to the point of beginning.

CENTER AVENUE BUSINESS CORRIDOR

The Township Comprehensive Plan proposes that service roads be constructed parallel to and on both sides of Center Avenue to help alleviate traffic

congestion. It is proposed that these service roads be made more pedestrian oriented by the provision of sidewalks on one side of these streets. Further, in the development of these roads, a number of irregular shaped parcels will be created that are too small for development. It is proposed that these parcels be landscaped and provided with benches to encourage pedestrian use and to make the appearance of the overall area more harmonious and to establish greater identity of the business area.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

During the last 15 years Hampton Township has responded in a very positive and aggressive manner in satisfying the recreational needs of Township residents. During this period, over \$1,000,000, including state and federal grants, has been spent in the development of three separate parks. The Township, through its Department of Public Works, has also done an excellent job of operating and maintaining these facilities.

In the future, as the capital investment in facilities and operating and maintenance costs increase, the administrative structure for parks and recreation should be fine tuned by implementing several relatively minor changes. These include the following:

1. CREATION OF A RECREATION BOARD OR COMMISSION

At the present time the Township has an appointed Recreation Committee or Board, acting in an advisory capacity to the full Township Board. Day-to-day maintenance is provided by the Department of Public Works, which also undertakes various improvement projects under the direction of the Township Board. This system has worked extremely well. While no major changes are suggested, consideration should be given to the creation of a Recreation Board under one of several state enabling statutes. A complete set of bylaws and specific statement of duties should be adopted in the ordinance creating the Board. The ordinance should also provide for the appointment of some members that are not members of the Township Board.

2. BUDGET

The Township has a very thorough and detailed budget, however, funds for parks are included within several other department budgets. A

separate and consolidated Recreation Budget should be prepared which includes all recreational activities such as capital projects, minor improvement projects, maintenance, operations, salaries and administration.

3. RECREATION DIRECTOR

At present, recreational services are administered by the Recreation Committee, acting in an advisory capacity to the Township Board. Specific day-to-day duties are carried out by the Township Supervisor, Township Clerk, Chairman of the Recreation Committee and several others. Consideration should be given to hiring a part-time Recreation Director to carry out many of the day-to-day duties such as: rental and reservations of various parks, the senior citizens center and township hall facilities; coordination of various activities with the County, both School Districts and other recreation providers; the planning and implementation of various recreational events and programs; promotion and public information; and, the preparation of materials for the Recreation Board.

ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan is a short-range (6 year) plan for completing specific recreation improvement projects. The various Action Plan projects are generally the highest priority projects contained within the long-range plan. The priorities were established based on the analysis of recreational needs and deficiencies and the following short-range goals.

ACTION PLAN GOALS

Complete all essential elements at the Finn Road Park to provide a wide range of recreational activities and to enable an efficient and cost effective operation.

Complete site acquisitions for all planned parks while considerable land is undeveloped and available at reasonable prices.

Complete the Hampton portion of the Bay-Hampton Railtrail at the earliest possible date to coincide with the completion of the Bay City portion of the trail.

Develop the Collegetown mini-park because this concentrated development area

is not served by any nearby facilities.

Undertake an economic and environmental study to determine the short and long range feasibility of developing a major tourist facility along the Saginaw Bay which would be consistent with the goals and strategy of the Bay County Growth Alliance, Waterfront Committee and the Saginaw Bay Strategy developed by the Department of Natural Resources.

Complete 5 mile trail sector within or adjacent to existing road rights-of way to provide safe access to the **Verellan** Elementary School.

Add additional activities at **Pondside** Park to encourage participation by a broader range of Township residents.

Enhance the overall aesthetic appearance of the Township and make the Center Avenue Business Corridor more "pedestrian friendly" by developing walkways, landscaped open-spaces and pedestrian rest areas.

Based on these goals and previously determined needs a prioritized list of improvements have been identified for the 1991-1996 period.

ACTION PLAN PRIORITY PROJECTS

There are 15 separate projects identified in the 5 year Recreation Plan Improvement Program. The total estimated cost of these projects is nearly \$1,500,000 with costs to the Township of about \$350,000. Each project, along with the proposed year of completion, estimated cost and method of financing is shown in the following table.

**HAMPTON TOWNSHIP
RECREATION PLAN
ACTION PROGRAM**

Year	Improvement	Local	Grants	Other	Total
1992	Renovate Carstakers Residence & Construct Storage Building at Finn Road Park	\$7,500	\$22,500		\$30,000
1992	Construct Bay-Hampton Railtrail Paving, Signage & Entries	17,875	53,625		71,500
1992	Complete Electrical Services to All Campsites & Complete Remaining Campsites at Finn Road Park	15,000	45,000		60,000 135,000
1992	Complete Lighting & Landscaping of Bay-Hampton Railtrail	20,000	50,000	10,000	80,000
1993	Acquire & Develop 1-1/2-2-Acre 7 1/2 A Collegetown Mini-Park	15,000	60,000	5,000	80,000 140,000
1993	Prepare Tourist Feasibility Study of Saginaw River/Bay	12,500	12,500		25,000
1993	Construct Tennis Court Backstop at Pondsides Park	5,000			5,000
1994	Construct Trail Along Borton Road From Pine to Knight Roads, Along Knight Road from Borton to Hampton Roads & Along Hampton Road From Knight to Pine Roads.	30,000	90,000		120,000
1994	Provide Additional Playground Equipment At Ridge Road Park	10,000			10,000 40,000
1995	Landscaping & Lighting Along Center Avenue Corridor	100,000	200,000	100,000	400,000
1995	Construct 2 Tennis Courts at Ridge Road Park	27,500	27,500		55,000
1996	Construct Ice/Roller Skating Rink Site at Pondsides Park	30,000	90,000		120,000
1996	Provide Additional Landscaping & Playground Equipment At Pondsides Park	5,000	10,000	5,000	20,000 40,000
1996	Acquire 80 Acres For A Community Park	40,000	240,000	40,000	320,000
1996	Acquire 15 Acre Neighborhood Park Site Near Hampton and Jones Roads	20,000	60,000		80,000
Total		\$365,375	\$081,126	\$180,000	E1,478,600

These projects can be categorized into four basic groups including; Park Development, Acquisition, Linear or Non-Park and Studies.

PARK DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

There are 7 proposed development projects, with a total estimated cost of \$300,000, which represents about 20 percent of the total recreation improvement costs for the 1992-1996 period. Each of these projects has a high priority based on the analysis of needs and deficiencies. Improvements are scheduled for each of the three existing parks.

ACQUISITION PROJECTS

The estimated cost of the three acquisition projects is \$480,000 or about 33 percent of the total 5 year costs. These projects will satisfy the long-range acquisition needs of the Township. Both the Collegetown and Hampton/Jones acquisitions are needed because they are concentrated development areas that are not provided with any local, recreational facilities at the present time. The largest proposed expenditure is to acquire 80 acres for the development of park to serve the entire community.

LINEARINON-PARK

Nearly 45 percent of the total cost is for the development of trails and other linear parks. Four projects are proposed with a total cost of about \$671,500. Two of these projects relate to the development of the Bay-Hampton Railtrail and are currently planned. Another project will result in the development of a 5 mile trail loop along Hampton, Knight and Borton roads. In addition to providing recreational activities this trail is also proposed to eliminate a safety hazard resulting from joggers and bicyclists using these heavily traveled streets. The final project, representing nearly half of the total cost in this group, is planned to help make the Center Avenue business corridor more pedestrian friendly. Most of the financing will be provided by the Downtown Development Authority. Funds coming from the recreation budget are intended for benches and landscaping small spaces to provide rest stations for pedestrian users of the corridor.

STUDIES

\$25,000 has been allocated to undertake a detailed tourist feasibility study of the Saginaw Bay Area within the township.

While the 5 year plan is ambitious it is necessary to satisfy the existing short range needs and to acquire sites necessary to satisfy the long-range needs.

FINANCING

Hampton Township has funded existing parks through the Township's General Fund and various state and federal grants. Considering current economic conditions it is unlikely that these sources can be continually relied upon to support the total recreational needs of the Township. The recent development of four little league ballfields was a recent example of the Essexville-Hampton Little League and the Essexville-Hampton School Board working together to satisfy a particular recreation need. Present plans call for soliciting donations to help fund portions of the Bay-Hampton Railtrail and additional fundraisers will be necessary to fully implement the recreation plan.

The proposed financing of recreational improvements is summarized in the following table.

HAMPTON TOWNSHIP
PARK FINANCING SUMMARY

Source	% Of Total	Total \$	Avg. \$/Year
Township	24	\$355,375	\$ 71,075
Grants	65	961,125	192,225
Other	11	160,000	32,000
Total	100%	\$1,476,500	\$295,300

While the proposed financing indicates substantial contributions from the Township and other sources it places the largest burden on grants from various state and federal sources. While all of the projects shown utilizing grants are eligible it is unlikely that the proposed level of funding from grants can be achieved throughout the 5 year period. In the event that grants do not become available the Township should start a reserve account for the future acquisition of park land.