

Bay County Area Recreation Plan 2019 - 2023



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Bay County Board of Commissioners

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Participating Communities

City of Auburn
City of Bay City
Bay County
Bangor Township
Beaver Township

City of Essexville
Frankenlust Township
Fraser Township
Hampton Township
Kawkawlin Township

Merritt Township
Monitor Township
City of Pinconning
Portsmouth Township
Williams Township

For the Bay County Recreation Plan

Jim Barcia, Bay County Executive
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Public meeting held on 1-8-19. Adopted by Bay County on 1-8-19
Adopted by Hampton Township on 1-14-19



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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Community Description.....	5
Administrative Structure	8
Recreation & Resource Inventory	13
Community Input.....	24
Goals & Objectives	30
Action Plan.....	35
City of Auburn	41
Bangor Township.....	50
City of Bay City	57
Beaver Township.....	81
City of Essexville	86
Frankenlust Township	93
Fraser Township	99
Hampton Township	105
Kawkawlin Township.....	112
Merritt Township.....	118
Monitor Township.....	124
City of Pinconning.....	130
Portsmouth Township	136
Williams Township.....	142
Summary of the Planning Process and Adoption.....	150

Appendix A – Trail Maps

Appendix B – Community Input Survey Results

Appendix C – Potential Funding Sources for Parks and Recreation Projects

Appendix D – Bay City Park Concept Plans

Appendix E – Advertisements, Minutes, and Adoption Documentation



Introduction

With rich natural features including over 30 miles of Saginaw Bay shoreline, Bay County has abundant opportunities for recreation. The natural features and shoreline are a regional tourism draw and serve as an important component and contributor to the County's economy and overall quality of life.

According to the National Park and Recreation Association, parks and recreation have three values that make them essential services to communities:

1. Economic Value

- Parks improve the local tax base and increase property values. It is proven that private property values increase the closer such land is to parks. This increase in private property value due to the proximity to parks increases property tax revenues and improves local economies.
- Parks and recreation programs and facilities provide significant indirect revenues to local and regional economies from sports tournaments and special events such as arts, music, and holiday festivals. Economic activity from hospitality expenditures, tourism, fuel, recreational equipment sales, and many other private sector businesses is of true and sustained value to local and regional economies. This indirect economic value is in addition to direct revenues that are gained from park facilities and programs.

2. Health and Environmental Benefits

- Parks are the places that people go to get healthy and stay fit.
- Parks and recreation programs and services contribute to the health of children, youth, adults, and seniors.
- Parks and protected public lands are proven to improve water quality, protect groundwater, prevent flooding, improve the quality of the air we breathe, provide vegetative buffers to development, produce habitat for wildlife, and provide a place for children and families to connect with nature and recreate outdoors together.

3. Social Importance

- Parks are a tangible reflection of the quality of life in a community. They provide identity for citizens and are a major factor in the perception of quality of life in a given community. Parks and recreation services are often cited as one of the most important factors in surveys of how livable communities are.
- Parks provide gathering places for families and social groups, as well as for individuals of all ages and economic status, regardless of their ability to pay for access.
- Parks have a value to communities that transcend the amount of dollars invested or the revenues gained from fees. Parks provide a sense of public pride and cohesion to every community.

Geographically, Bay County is well-positioned to exemplify these benefits. Bay County is located within a unique and diverse ecological area within Michigan. It is part of the Saginaw Bay watershed. Its rich resources support agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, outdoor recreations, and a vast variety of wildlife. The Saginaw Bay watershed is Michigan's largest watershed (8,709 square miles), including a part of 22 counties. The Bay contains sections of white sandy beach shorelines as well as freshwater coastal wetland areas. The watershed drains approximately 15% of Michigan's total land area.

Regional Plan with 15 Participating Communities

Recognizing the importance of regional recreation and cooperative planning efforts, community officials from across the County have joined together in an effort to develop a Parks and Recreation Plan aimed at improving and developing recreational resources in Bay County.

Bay County led the effort to complete this recreation plan. Fourteen of the governmental jurisdictions within Bay County have also participated in this multi-jurisdictional recreation plan. Those 14 governmental jurisdictions include 10 townships and four cities:

1. Auburn
2. Bangor Charter Township
3. Bay City
4. Beaver Township
5. Essexville
6. Frankenlust Township
7. Fraser Township
8. Hampton Charter Township
9. Kawkawlin Township
10. Merritt Township
11. Monitor Charter Township
12. Pinconning
13. Portsmouth Charter Township
14. Williams Charter Township

Figure 1 shows a map of Bay County and the communities that are participating in the recreation plan.

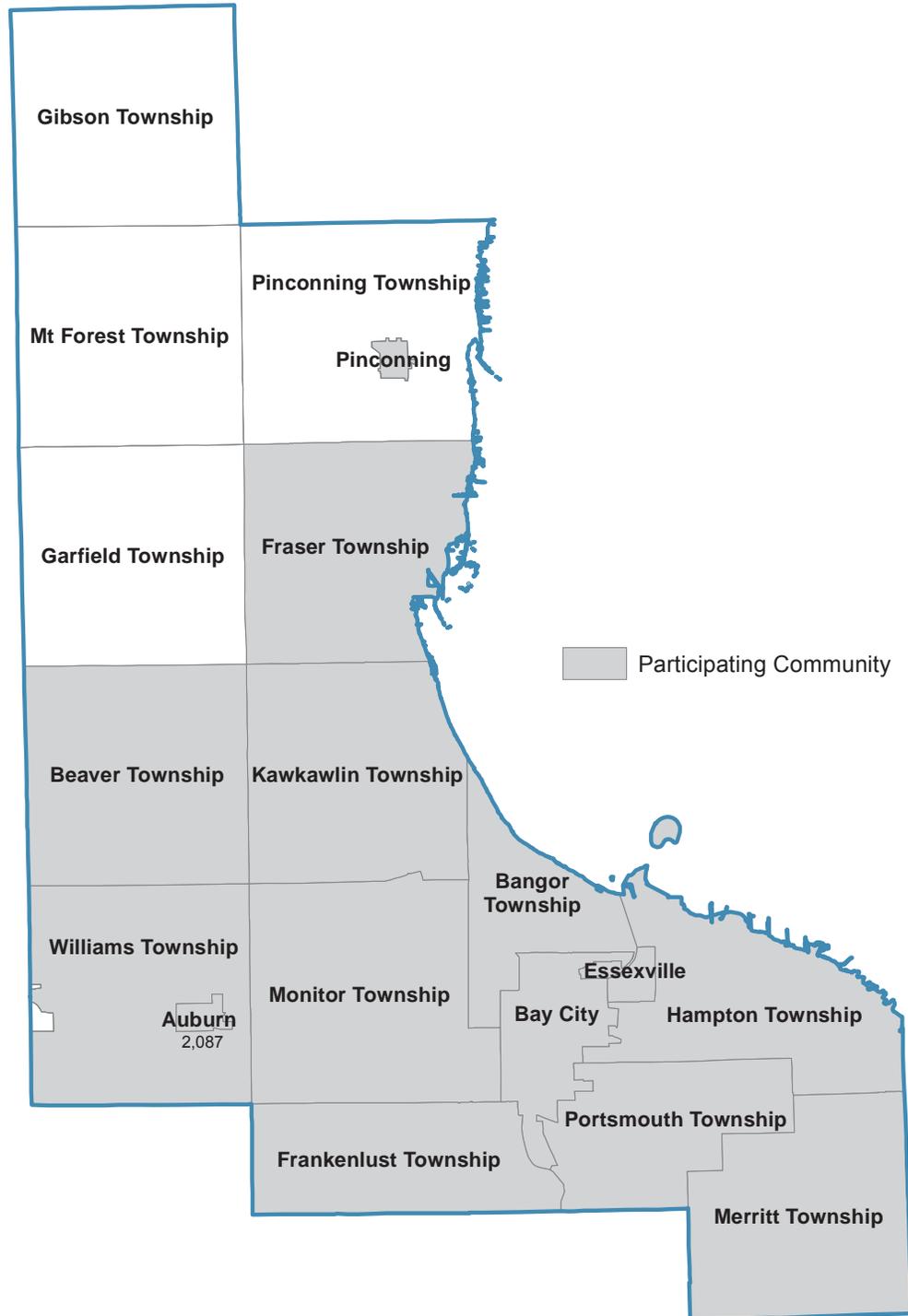


Figure 1 – Communities that are participating in the Bay County Area Recreation Plan

About this Plan

In accordance with the State recommended five-year cycle for recreation planning, this updated plan covers the five-year period 2019-2023. The content and process follow requirements of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for a community recreation plan.

This document is intended to serve as a guide in the planning for future park and recreation opportunities, services and implementation. Population shifts, new development and changing attitudes towards leisure have added additional pressures to the community's existing parks and recreation system, thus increasing the need for both short and long-range planning.

Recommendations such as land acquisition, and facility expansions and construction, and even the design of a neighborhood park improvement, will require additional study or involvement of residents in order to address the site-specific details. This plan lays the foundation upon which these activities can build.

Implementation strategies are identified over the next five years, at which time the plan will again be updated. The delineation of these improvements will aid Bay County and the other communities participating in the plan in grant solicitation from the DNR and other granting agencies, as well as with long range capital improvement budgeting. Additionally, during the next five years, it is important for Bay County and the participant communities to reference the plan and make appropriate priority adjustments as conditions change and funding opportunities arise.

The plan is an update of the 2014 Recreation Plan that included Bay County and 15 constituent communities. The document is formatted such that data related to the overall County comprises the first portion of the Plan. The second half of the plan provides detailed information regarding each of the participating communities, including the inventory, goals and objectives, and action plan for each community. The document concludes with an overall summary and description of the adoption process.



Community Description

Bay County is located in east central lower Michigan along the mouth of the Saginaw Bay. The County is largely rural, with the majority of the land being used for agricultural purposes. There are 444 square miles in Bay County and approximately 35 miles of Saginaw Bay/Lake Huron shoreline. Bay City is the county seat of Bay County and it serves as the commercial and employment center of the County. Bay County is part of the Great Lakes Bay Region, which consists of Bay, Saginaw, and Midland Counties.

Fourteen townships and four cities are located within Bay County. A small portion of a fifth city, Midland, is also located within Bay County.

According to the 2010 Census, Bay County has a population of 107,771 in 44,603 households, giving it an average household size of 2.38 persons. The July 1, 2017, population estimate was 104,239. The population has seen a slight decline each decade since 1980, when the population peaked at 110,157 people.

According to the 2016 population estimates program the median age of residents in Bay County is 42.7 years. This is more than three years greater than the median for Michigan, which is 39.5 years. It is five years greater than the median age of the United States which is 37.7 years. This is worth noting because an older population may have differing needs in terms of recreation facilities and programs.

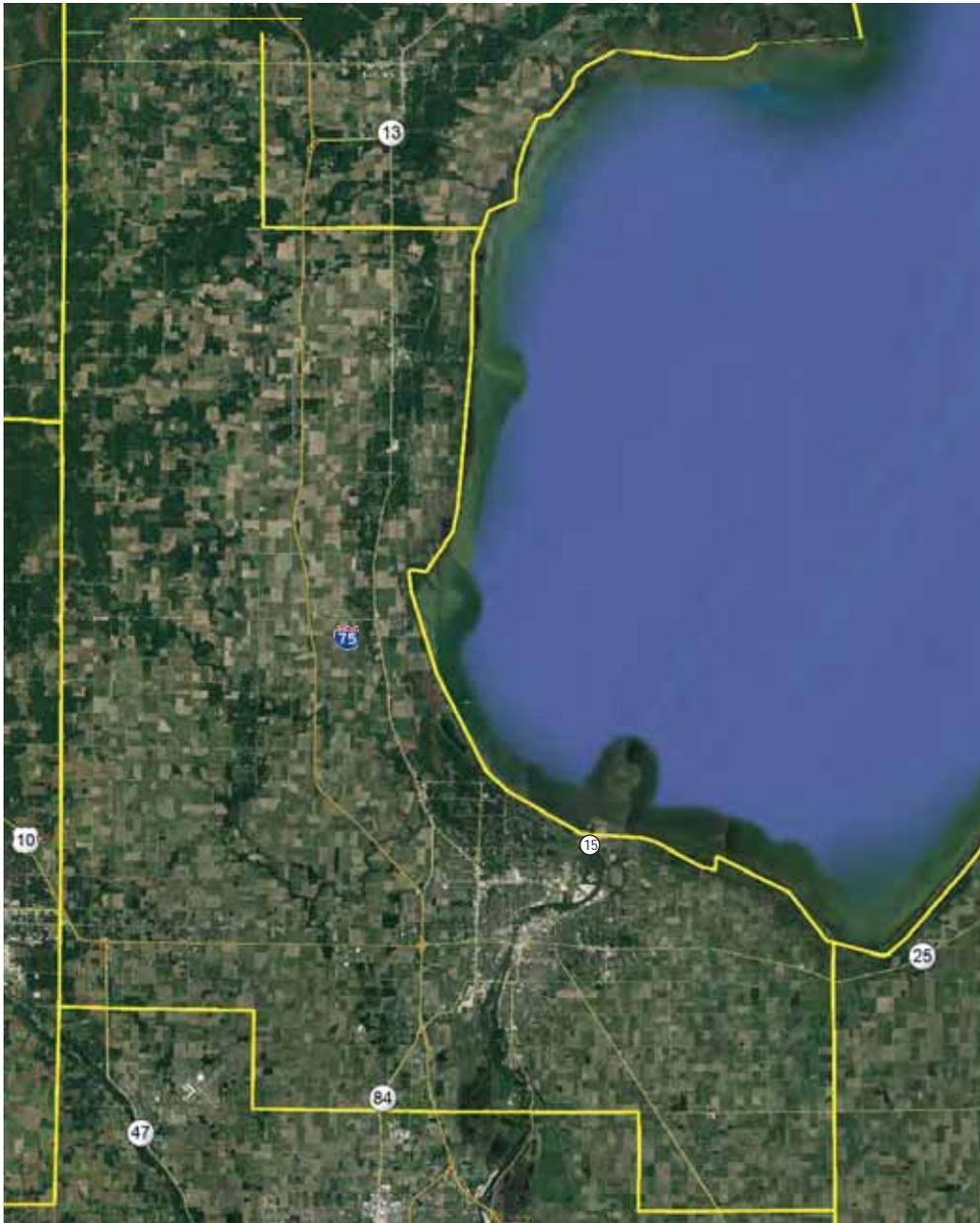


Figure 2 – An aerial image shows the rural nature of Bay County, Bay City as the population center, and the location of major thoroughfares. *Image Courtesy of Google Earth*

Another population that can have differing needs in terms of recreation facilities and programs is the disabled. At 16.6%, Bay County ranks higher than Michigan and the United States in the percent of the population with a disability. This statistic generally correlates directly with age. The higher the median age, the larger the disabled population.

Figure 3 shows some of the significant demographic data regarding the residents of Bay County as they compare to Michigan and the United States.

	Bay County	Michigan	United States
Median Age	42.7	39.5	37.7
% of Population 65+	18.3%	15.4%	14.5%
% of Population under 18	21.0%	22.5%	23.1%
Owner Occupied Homes	77.9%	73.0%	65.10%
Average Household Size	2.39	2.51	2.64
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	18.1%	27.4%	30.3%
Median Household Income	\$45,851	\$50,803	\$55,322
Per Capita Income	\$24,753	\$27,549	\$29,829
Disabled	16.6%	14.2%	12.5%
% Below Poverty Level	15.8%	16.3%	15.1%

Figure 3 – Demographic data comparisons for Bay County, Michigan and the United States. *Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.*



Administrative Structure

Governing Bodies and Administration

Bay County Board of Commissioners

A seven-member elected Board of Commissioners governs the Bay County. As the elected governing body, the Board of Commissioners is responsible for establishing countywide policy, articulating priorities, and adopting an annual operating and capital improvement budget. Through its policy setting functions, the Board of Commissioners establishes recreational opportunities through land and facility use decisions and funding appropriations for programs. The Board of Commissioners is organized into different committees. Recreation planning and programming generally falls in two of these committees. Specifically, the Personnel and Human Services Committee reviews recommendations made by the County Executive for personnel matters, including staffing and filling of vacancies and other planning functions. Budget appropriations, authorizations for grant applications, the establishment of fees and other financial matters are the responsibility of the Ways and Means Committee.

County Executive

In 1978, Bay County voters approved the optional unified form of County government as specified by PA 139 of 1973, with an elected County Executive. The County Executive is responsible for the

administrative oversight of recreational facilities and programming, community planning and economic development. Day-to-day management decisions affecting recreational facilities and activities is the responsibility of the Facility Manager and Recreation Facilities Director. Broad community development and recreational planning, including non-motorized trails, Saginaw Bay shoreline access and land use improvements is under the direction of the Environmental Affairs and Community Development Director.

A recreation staff organization chart is shown at the end of this chapter in Figure 6.

Programming

Bay County offers a variety of programs at its park facilities and it cooperates with other communities and school districts to expand those offerings.

At the Civic Arena

The Bay County Civic Arena, established in 1997, provides ice skating opportunities in the form of figure skating, speed skating, and hockey. These programs provide opportunities for skaters of all ages. Non-profit collaboration occurs with the SK8 Bay Figure Skating Club, the Bay County Hockey Association, local school districts and others.

Three youth summer camps are offered each summer, and learn-to-skate is available on a year-round basis. A youth 3 on 3 hockey league is offered as well as four seasons of adult hockey. The Civic Arena serves as the home ice for the SK8 Bay Figure Skating Club and four hockey teams: Bay City Wolves high school team, the Bay Area Thunder high school team, Bay County Blizzard, and Icehawks Junior hockey. The Civic Arena also hosts numerous hockey tournaments and exhibits each year.

At the Community Center

Bay County owns and operates the Bay County Community Center, located adjacent to Veterans Memorial Park (which is owned by the City of Bay City) at 800 John F. Kennedy Drive. Constructed in the 1970's, the Community Center is home for the county operated summer youth recreation programs during June, July and August each year. It also serves as the home of the original portion of Bay County Sports Hall of Fame. An outdoor swimming pool is operated each summer at the Community Center site. Programs for young people and families are offered, as well as use by BAYS, the Bay Area Youth Swim team.



Other programs offered at the Community Center include fitness classes, pickleball, badminton, and knockerball. Shuffleboard is offered in conjunction with the Department of Aging. The Community Center is also used by men's basketball, volleyball, and church league basketball groups.

At the Golf Course

Bay County owns and operates the Bay County Golf Course, an 18-hole public golf course established in 1966. It serves as a host site for local high school golf programs, and it is home to many leagues as well as open golf opportunities for the public. The course is home to group golf outings for businesses and a variety of tournaments. The golf course also offers youth golf clinics.

At the Bay County Fairgrounds

Bay County owns and operates the Bay County Fairgrounds, located at 800 Livingston Avenue. This multi-use facility serves as home to the Bay County Fair and Youth Exposition each year in early August. Other activities include use of the handicapped accessible grand stands for shows and events such as tractor pulls and demolition derbies. The site also has a canteen building used for events. It is often rented for private parties and it is used as a congregate nutrition site for Senior Citizens operated by the Bay County Division on Aging.

Bay County works cooperatively with the Bay County Fair Board, Humane Society of Bay County, and other groups on programs offered at this location.

Other Cooperative Programs

Bay County works collaboratively with the Bay County Softball Association to provide softball league play using the lighted diamonds in Veterans Memorial Park. These diamonds are owned by the City of Bay City but maintained by the Bay County Parks and Recreation maintenance staff. The Bay County Softball Association covers the cost of that maintenance.

Current Funding Sources and Budgets

Sources of revenues for Parks and Recreation in Bay County include the county general fund, user fees, rental fees and donations. A breakdown of two years of budget data for revenues and expenditures is shown in Figures 4 and 5.

Figure 4		
BAY COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION BUDGETED REVENUES		
	2017 Budget	2018 Budget
User Fees	\$832,280	770,231
Rental Fees	\$653,481	593,000
Donations	\$21,727	\$8,900
Other Revenues	\$20,008	\$12,732
TOTAL	\$1,527,496	\$1,384,863

Figure 5
BAY COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION BUDGETED EXPENDITURES

	2017 Budget	2018 Budget
Operation, Maintenance & Programming	\$2,252,276	\$2,223,169
Capital Expenditures	\$35,085	\$29,800
TOTAL	\$2,287,361	\$2,242,969

Role of Volunteers and Relationships with School Districts, Other Public Agencies, or Private Organizations

The County serves the population within its geographical and political boundaries. To serve its citizens, elected officials and staff seek out the input and involvement of others. On-going communication with citizen groups, other elected officials and staff of the surrounding municipalities, schools, private non-profit organizations, and private sector assures a coordinated effort. Although the community does not have a formally recognized recreational advisory group, several other groups of citizens fulfill essentially comparable responsibilities.

These other groups including associations, collaborations, and fund-raising efforts, provide countless volunteer hours developing, maintaining and providing recreational opportunities for the citizens of Bay County. The Bay County Volleyball Association and Basketball Association of Bay County meet with staff, at a minimum, twice each year. Similarly, meetings with Golf League Secretaries and the Bay County Softball Association occur at season opening and closure. Efforts are directed at developing programming. These efforts are fostered by strong relationships with the local schools and non-profit community that provides access to other facilities and programming. Activities also occur on a weekly basis with the Division on Aging, which is located on the north side of the Community Center.



In addition to the County operated summer recreation program, Bay County provides funding for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Bay County with site locations in Bay City, Essexville, and Pinconning. In 2018, funding for these programs was \$13,000. Several hundred children are served each year.

Outside the Community Center, Bay County maintains, by contract, lighted softball diamonds which are owned by the City of Bay City. This City/County/Softball Association collaboration at this location has been a long-standing arrangement for many years.

At the Bay County Fairgrounds, the County works in concert with the Bay County Fair Board, MSU Extension and 4-H, and the Humane Society of Bay County. In 2006, the County established a dog park at the site with funding provided by the Humane Society and labor by the County staff.

Recreation Policies and Procedures

Generally, policies and procedures fall into two categories. First, there are those established by the Board of Commissioners and County Executive that apply to all county departments such as the County purchasing policy, annual budget, and schedule of fees. Facility Managers, along with other county administrators, develop other department specific procedures. Examples of these procedures include fee waivers, rules of facility use, and cash handling practices.

Recognizing the County's limited financial resources, the organization has adopted a general practice that prioritizes lower or no cost opportunities for youth while adult opportunities generally require payment. Adult sports activities such as softball are responsible to cover all program cost through user fees.

In general, when planning recreational opportunities, programs always provide opportunities for the needs and the skills of each individual enrolled. Programs are broad based, and every effort is made to provide updated programs to meet the changes in recreational trends. Programs are planned and offered for the following:

- Elementary, Middle School, High School & Adults
- Senior Citizens 60 and above
- Individuals with disabilities

Seminars, classes and other planned activities will involve well-trained and educated instructors to provide the participant with the best possible experience. The program will involve opportunities for everyone educationally and recreationally. Opportunities for team competition will be programmed. Currently, adult basketball and volleyball are played at the Community Center and adult hockey at the Civic Arena. Additional athletics will be planned where interests exist and when facilities are available. Bay County programming strives to improve the physical and social well-being of the individual.

Bay County has continued to focus on wellness activities for county employees, as well as county residents. Under this initiative, employees will be offered incentives to utilize county recreation facilities for physical activities which promote good health and wellness. This includes use of the fitness centers at the Community Center and Civic Arena, free fitness classes, lap swim, and noon ice skate, and discounted golf.

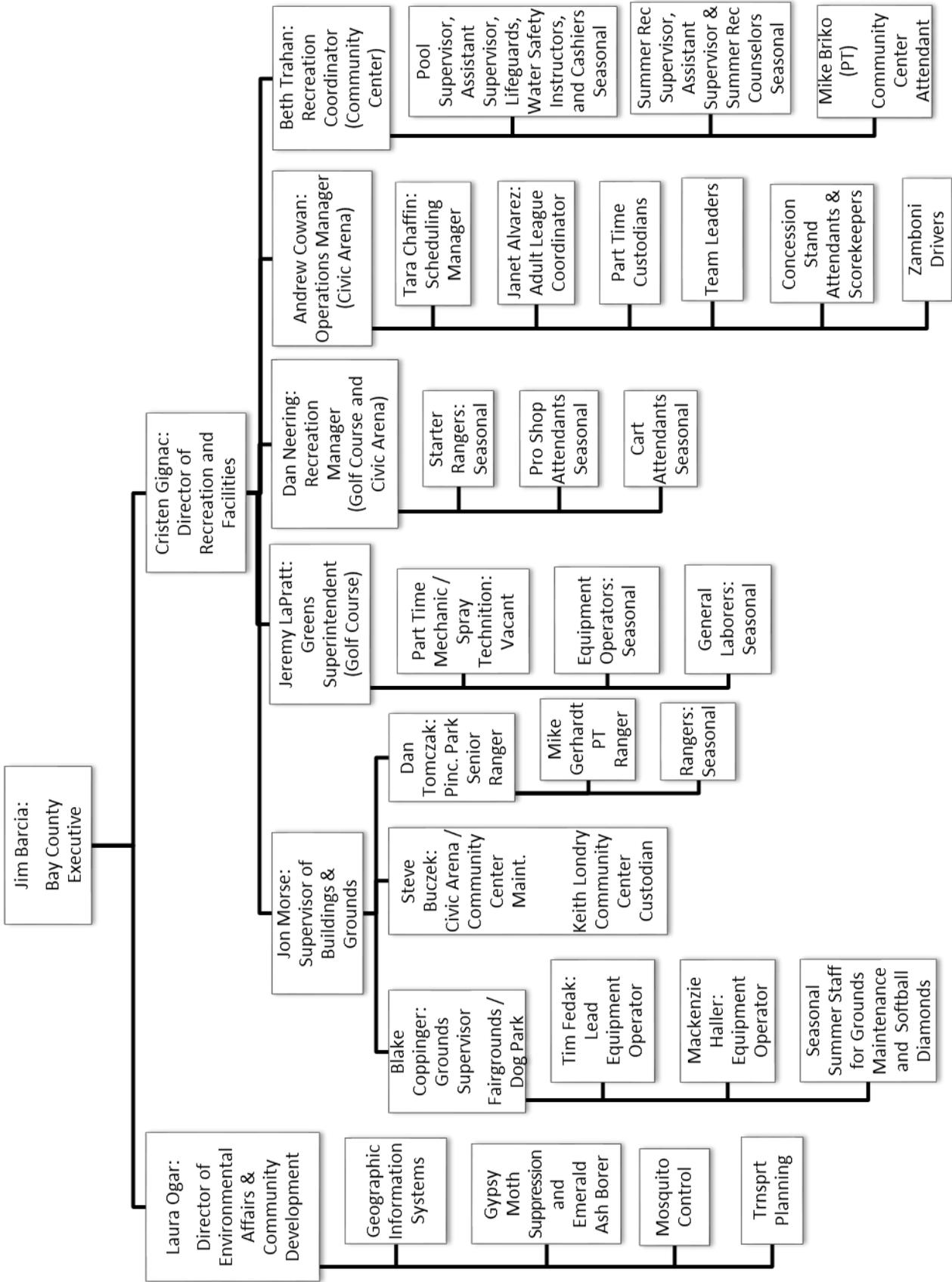


Figure 4 – Recreational staff organization chart for Bay County.



Recreation Inventory

In order to plan for parks and recreation in the future, communities need to examine the types of facilities that currently exist in Bay County. It is also helpful to compare these existing facilities to various standards as one measure of the adequacy of the parks and recreation facilities in the community. The inventory was completed by updating the inventory used in the previous plan. The consultant and County staff worked together to complete any updates or revisions. They also completed an accessibility review of each park's facilities.

Park Classification

The Recommended Classification System for Local and Regional Open Space from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources defines seven types of parks that may be applicable to parks within Bay County.

A **Mini-Park** is less than one acre in size and is less than 1/4 mile from a residential setting. It is used to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs. **Neighborhood Parks** are generally 5 - 10 acres in size and they serve as the recreational and social focus of a neighborhood. Their service area is generally 1/4 to 1/2 mile. **School-Parks** can combine parks with school sites to help meet the recreational space needs for the community. **Community Parks** serve a broader purpose than Neighborhood Parks. They have more amenities and usually serve two or more neighborhoods within 1/2 to three miles and are generally 30 - 50 acres in size. Neighborhood Parks, Mini-Parks and Community Parks tend to be provided by local governing jurisdictions. This can be seen in the inventories of many of the communities that are included in this plan. Their parks are smaller and tend to meet the needs of the local community.

A **Special Use** facility is oriented toward single-purpose use. The Bay County Community Center/Swimming Pool, the County Golf Course, and the Civic Arena are all classified as Special Use Parks in Bay County. A **Natural Resource Area** is land set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics/buffering. The Discovery Preserve (formerly known as the Keit Wetland Preserve/Euclid Linear Park) is a Natural Resource Area. A **Large Urban Park** is typically 50 to 75 acres and its focus is on meeting community-based recreational needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces. In Bay County, the County Fairgrounds and the Pinconning Park are classified as Large Urban Parks. A **Park Trail** is located within a greenway, park, or natural resource area and its focus is upon recreational value and harmony with the natural environment. The trails in the Discovery Preserve and the Pinconning Park are park trails.

A Bay County park location map is provided at the end of this section.

Bay County Parks

Bay County Community Center and Pool



Area: 4 acres

Location: 800 John F. Kennedy Drive, Bay City

Park Classification: Special Use

Accessibility: 4

Service Area: Entire County

The Community Center was developed jointly by the State of Michigan, City of Bay City, and Bay County. Now owned and operated by Bay County, the Community Center offers a variety of recreational facilities. The large gym provides an excellent location for basketball, pickleball, volleyball, fitness classes and other team sports. A smaller, multi-purpose sized gymnasium is suitable for basketball, and

gatherings such as wedding showers, trade shows, and card tournaments. The facility also houses a batting cage and a weight room/fitness center. Meeting rooms of various sizes can accommodate groups up to 240 people. The outdoor pool features a lap swim area, slide, and wheelchair access ramp.

Each summer the Community Center hosts a summer recreation program for area youth. Young people enjoy many social building skills, make new friends, and enjoy fun activities like arts and crafts, sports, and field trips.

Bay County Civic Arena



Area: 5 acres

Location: 4231 Shrestha Drive, Bay City

Park Classification: Special Use

Accessibility: 4

Service Area: Entire County

The Bay County Civic Arena offers two ice surfaces year-round. An Olympic sized ice surface (100' x 200') and NHL sized ice surface (85' x 200') provide opportunities for hockey, figure, speed, and open skating. The facility also offers concessions, an arcade area, pro shop and nine locker rooms. A community room can seat up to 40 people comfortably for birthday parties and other special events like wedding showers. A 20,000 square foot dry floor surface is available for a variety of events, such as concerts, auto/boat/rv shows and trade shows.

Working in partnership with the Bay County Hockey Association, the arena offers year-round hockey programming for youth of all ages. The facility also includes an arena pro shop with skating equipment, repair, and sharpening, a concession area, and an arcade.



Bay County Fairgrounds

Area: 42 acres

Location: 800 Livingston Street, Bay City

Park Classification: Large Urban Park

Accessibility: 3

Service Area: Entire County

The Fairgrounds features a grandstand with race track, various barns, campsites, pavilions and exhibit halls that are used primarily for the Bay County Fair. Other amenities include a walking path, playground, open playfield, a dog park and a canteen building that is used as a congregate meal site for the Division on Aging, for wedding receptions, showers, graduation parties, reunions, etc.



Pinconning Park

Area: 205 acres

Location: 3041 E. Pinconning Road, Pinconning

Park Classification: Large Urban Park

Accessibility: 3 (lacking accessible pathway to beach, no push button entry doors to bath house)

Service Area: Entire County

Pinconning Park features year-round back to nature facilities and amenities located on Saginaw Bay. The park is popular for birdwatching, nature viewing, waterfowl hunting, swimming, and fishing. It includes 62 campsites and 6 camping cabins for overnight stays. Nature features include two trails (1.4 miles and .4 miles) that wind through the woodlands and delicate wetland ecosystem. Two observation towers are placed along the trails. Other amenities at the park include two pavilions, playground, boat launch, canoe/kayak rental, and bathroom with showers.

Bay County Golf Course



Area: 145 acres

Location: 584 West Hampton Road, Essexville, MI 48732

Park Classification: Special Use

Accessibility: 3 (does not have accessible picnic tables in the pavilion)

Service Area: Entire County

The Bay County Golf Course is an 18-hole facility located in Hampton Township. It features continuous cart paths winding throughout the course and a full fleet of golf carts. The course also features a practice putting green adjacent to the clubhouse. Three local high schools use it for their home golf course.

Other Bay County Owned Recreation Facilities

Discovery Preserve – The 9-acre Discovery Preserve at 1701 Euclid Avenue in Bay City was formerly known as the Keit Nature Preserve & Euclid Linear Park. In 2015, the Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy began managing the park so that it could become a learning landscape for children and families. It includes a nature playground, boardwalk, spotting scope, birdhouses, and a pavilion. It is one of the Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy’s Outdoor Urban Recreation (O.U.R.) projects.

Stoney Island – This is a seven-acre island located within the Saginaw River west of Harry Browne Airport. It is undeveloped.

Par 3 Golf Course – This 17-acre parcel was formerly a private golf course driving range that included three golf holes. It is currently undeveloped.

Grant History

Bay County has received nine DNR recreation grants. They are listed below:

1. LWCF 26-00163 – Veterans Park, \$27,796, Development
2. LWCF 26-0075 – Pinconning Park, \$44,000, Acquisition
3. LWCF 26-00561 – Veterans Park, \$17,539, Development
4. LWCF 26-00809 – Pinconning Park, \$33,845, Development
5. TF88-110 – Pinconning Park, \$60,000, Development
6. BF92-311 – Pinconning Park, \$71,900, Development
7. TF95-255 – Keit Linear Park, \$375,000, Acquisition
8. CM00-164 – Pinconning Park, \$95,538, Development
9. TF00-354 – Bay County Wetlands Improvements (Keit Linear Park), \$88,226, Development
10. TF01-087 – Bay County Trail Improvements (Fairgrounds), \$22,000, Development
11. TF09-027 – Pinconning Park Improvements, \$325,000, Development

All of the improvements are open, functional and operational. It should be noted that the encumbrances associated with the two Veterans Park projects are in the process of being transferred to the City of Bay City since the City owns Veterans Park.

Water Trails

Due to the rise of paddling sports and recreation activities in the past decade, considerable effort has been spent to develop water trails on the Saginaw Bay and its tributaries. In 2015, Bay County completed the Saginaw Bay Blue Water Trail Development Plan. It was undertaken by Bay County and its partners to identify sites and to create a preliminary map of ready-to-use landing sites. The plan investigated each of those sites and add others that were not identified. The plan also identified deficiencies in each site and proposed possible site improvements that would make each landing more usable by paddlers. A map of the water trail access sites is included in the Appendix.

Non-Motorized Trails

Trails are generally identified as one of the most desirable recreation facilities in any community. Many of the communities within Bay County have developed stand-alone trails in their community or they have developed trails that are part of a larger network. These are listed below and described within each jurisdiction's section of the plan.

- Bay County Riverwalk Trail System consisting of:
 - Riverwalk/Railtrail Loop – Bay City
 - Portsmouth Township Rail Trail
 - Bangor Township Rail Trail
 - Bay City State Park Trails

A map of the Bay County Riverwalk Trail System is included in the Appendix.

- Hampton Rail Trail – Hampton Township
- Fraser Township Rail Trail – Fraser Township
- BayZil Rail Trail – Frankenlust Township

In recent years Bay County has joined with Midland and Saginaw Counties in the Great Lakes Bay Regional Trail (GLBRT) Alliance to develop a plan to link the three counties in a combined trail network. Several sections of the trail have been completed. The Bay Zil Rail Trail is part of the GLBRT Trail. A map of the GLBRT Trail is included in the Appendix.

Other Significant Public Bay County Recreation Facilities

In addition to the park and recreation facilities owned by the local jurisdictions that are described elsewhere in this plan, there are five significant large state-owned recreation facilities in Bay County:

Bay City State Recreation Area – 540-acre state park just north of Bay City on Saginaw Bay. Includes a spray park, observation towers, fishing, hunting, trapping, visitor center, pavilions, beach, and approximately 135 campsites.

Tobico Marsh Nature Area – 1,848-acre wildlife refuge that is located adjacent to the Bay City State Recreation Area. Tobico Marsh State Game is undeveloped and contains a variety of habitat, from small pockets of cattail marshes and oak/maple climax forest to Tobico Lagoon, a 900-acre body of water and the largest remaining wetland along Saginaw Bay. The entire area is home to deer, beaver, muskrat, and mink, but it's the wide variety of birds, especially waterfowl, that makes this refuge significant. It includes 4.8 miles of trails.

Quanicassee Wildlife Area – Approximately 980 acres in two separate areas in Bay County's Hampton Township. Additional acreage is located in Tuscola County. The Quanicassee Wildlife Area features large wetland tracts and Saginaw Bay frontage.

Nayanquing Point Wildlife Area – Approximately 1,040 acres in Fraser Township. Nayanquing Point is a collection of farm fields, diked pools, mud flats and Saginaw Bay marshland. It is known as an important bird area by the Audobon Society. It includes an observation tower and waterfowl hunting areas. An additional 130 acres is located to the north in Pinconning Township.

Crow Island State Game Area – Approximately 25% of the 3,489-acre game area lies within Frankenlust Township in Bay County. It is managed to promote safe nesting, brood rearing and migration stop-over habitat for local and migratory waterfowl and shorebirds and to provide for myriad hunting and non-consumptive wildlife related recreational pursuits.

Accessibility

Creating a park system that is safe, accessible and usable to all individuals within the community, including those with disabilities, is essential. Bay County has done considerable work to meet the requirements of the ADA and provide barrier free access to many of its facilities. Among its efforts includes a review of all buildings and programs.

A grading system has been developed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to easily identify those parks and facilities which are most and least handicap accessible and usable, based on the ADA guidelines. The accessibility grading system uses a five point system ranging from one, none of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines, to five, the entire park was developed/renovated using the principals of universal design.

MDNR Accessibility Grading System for Parks and Recreational Facilities	
Accessibility Grade	Definition
1	None of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines.
2	Some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines.
3	Most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines.
4	The entire park meets accessibility guidelines.
5	The entire park was developed/renovated using the principles of universal design.

An Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance assessment of Bay County’s parks was conducted during the spring of 2008, reviewed in 2013 and again in 2018. The assessment consisted of a visual inspection of each park in regards to access and circulation in relation to the park facilities. This was done so that the Recreation and Facilities Department would have a basis when considering any physical improvements to make park facilities more readily usable by persons of all abilities. As noted in the inventory listing, some of the parks do not meet all criteria for handicap accessibility. The County Board of Commissioners will continue its efforts towards improving accessibility at all County parks.

Natural Resources Inventory

A resource inventory can be used to identify open space areas that may be desirable for protection and/or public access through acquisition or other means. In Bay County, the most significant natural resource is the Saginaw Bay, and its shoreline. Public access to the 38 miles of Bay County shoreline is extremely limited. Private residential development occurs along much of the beachfront shoreline except for the Bay City State Recreation Area. In other areas, the shoreline is predominantly state-owned wildlife refuge area where public access is restricted.

The Bay provides habitat for large populations of waterfowl, birds, and more than 90 fish species. It provides a wide variety of year-round recreational activities which comprise an important component of the Bay County economy. The Saginaw and Kawkawlin Rivers are two large rivers in Bay County that drain into Saginaw Bay. These rivers and the wetlands that surround them are also significant natural resources in Bay County. As described above, the Michigan DNR controls significant natural resource lands in Bay County, most of which are along the bay and river shorelines. Bay County and all of the communities that contain bay or river shoreline should take care to preserve and protect these unique resources so they can be enjoyed for generations to come, while also keeping options available for creating public access.

Lastly, there are some large stands of woodlands scattered across Bay County that can also be considered significant natural resources. These may be worthy of public preservation, especially if there is concern that they may be lost due to development or agricultural use. The state-owned lands and the large woodland tracts can be viewed in the aerial image in Figure 7.



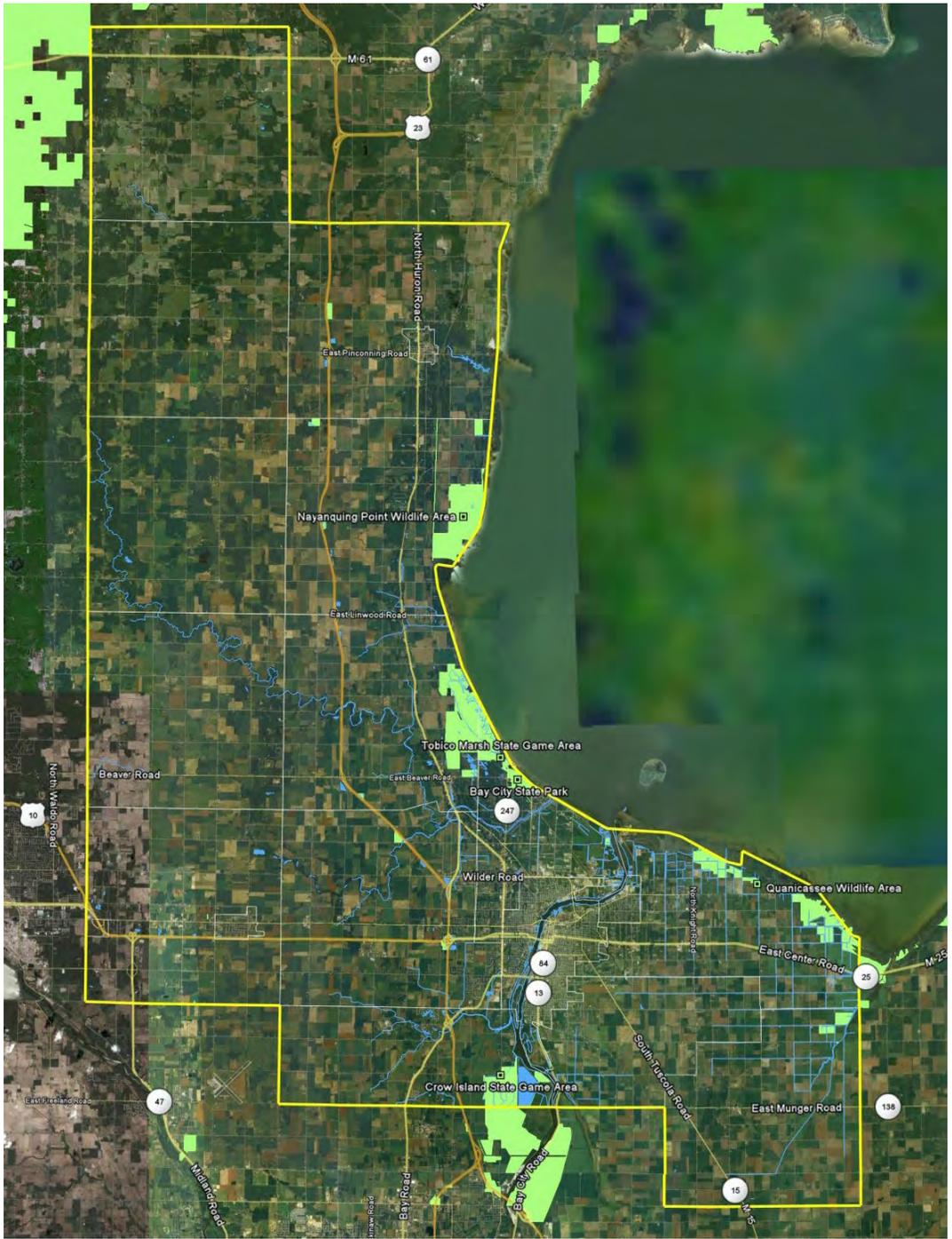
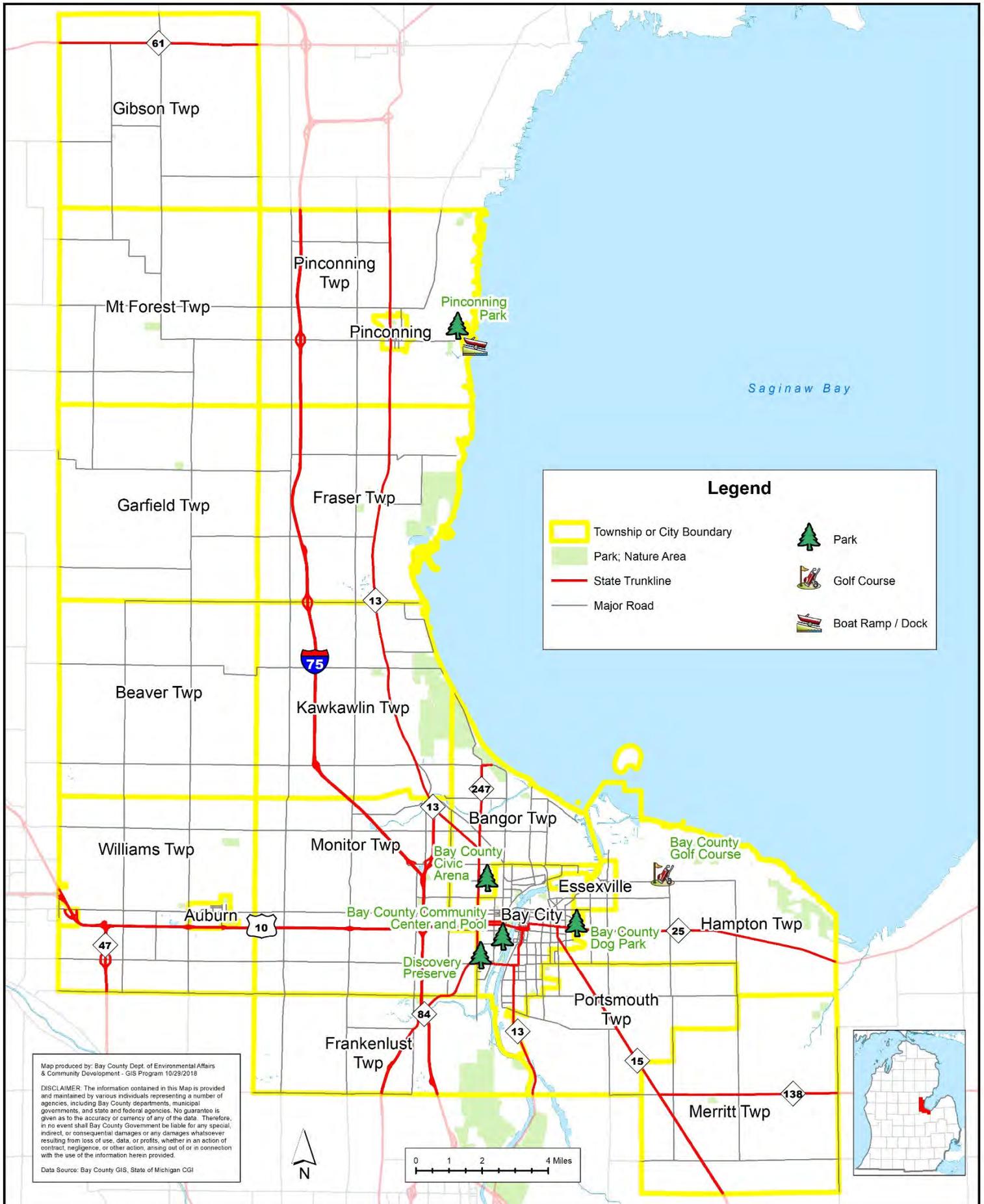


Figure 7 – The natural resource lands protected by the Michigan DNR are highlighted in light green. *Source: Nature Conservancy Conservation and Recreation Lands Database*

Bay County Recreation Facilities



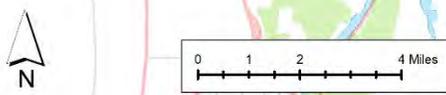
Legend

	Township or City Boundary		Park
	Park; Nature Area		Golf Course
	State Trunkline		Boat Ramp / Dock
	Major Road		

Map produced by: Bay County Dept. of Environmental Affairs & Community Development - GIS Program 10/29/2018

DISCLAIMER: The information contained in this Map is provided and maintained by various individuals representing a number of agencies, including Bay County departments, municipal governments, and state and federal agencies. No guarantee is given as to the accuracy or currency of any of the data. Therefore, in no event shall Bay County Government be liable for any special, indirect, or consequential damages or any damages whatsoever resulting from loss of use, data, or profits, whether in an action of contract, negligence, or other action, arising out of or in connection with the use of the information herein provided.

Data Source: Bay County GIS, State of Michigan CGI





Community Input

To comply with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation Open Space and Greenway Plans, Bay County provided two public input opportunities – an online survey and an advertised public meeting held prior to adoption of the plan. The online survey was used as its primary method for community input. The survey was developed with general questions about parks and recreation. All respondents were also presented with survey questions about Bay County Parks and Bay City Parks. Bay City chose to present its survey questions to all survey respondents because its larger parks tend to be used by all county residents.

Each other participating community was also offered the opportunity to add questions to the survey that would be seen only by those respondents that indicated they lived in that community. The following communities added questions to the survey that were specific to their community: Auburn, Beaver Township, Hampton Township, Kawkawlin Township, and Monitor Township.

The survey was primarily distributed online. Paper copies were also developed for those communities who indicated a need for them. The survey was available from September 10, 2018 until October 2, 2018. It was publicized with a variety of methods:

- Bay County website
- Bay County individual park website pages
- Bay County Park Facebook posts
- Bay County Facebook posts
- Spicer Group Facebook boosted posts (advertisements)
- Participating community websites

- E-mail blasts with survey links from Bay County and participating communities
- Via the Environment Report on Delta College Q-90.1 FM radio
- Fliers that were distributed to all local communities for posting in public places
- Postcards for distribution

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Bay County is updating its Parks and Recreation Plan. This plan will document what we want to do with parks and recreation across the County and in **your community** in the upcoming years. Please take a few minutes to take our online survey so we know what you think about the County and local parks in Bay County. It will help us to plan for the future!

Go to www.BayCountySurvey.com

Mobile device users
scan here!







Notifications about the survey included a QR code that could be scanned by mobile device users.

The survey received 956 complete responses and another 315 partial responses, whereby the respondent completed at least one question. This is a huge increase over the input received in 2013, when the survey had 342 responses. A compilation of all survey responses is given in the Appendix. Highlights of the survey are described in the paragraphs below.

General Park Questions

Satisfaction with Parks

When asked to rate their feelings regarding statements about County and local parks, the respondents had varied opinions. More than 35% of respondents were neutral regarding their satisfaction with County Parks. Slightly less than one-third agreed that they were satisfied with County park and recreation facilities in Bay County. Approximately 23% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that they were satisfied with County park and recreation facilities in Bay County.

Thirty-eight percent of respondents agreed that they were satisfied with local parks in their community. Slightly more than 31% were neutral regarding that statement and 27% disagreed. See Figure 8.

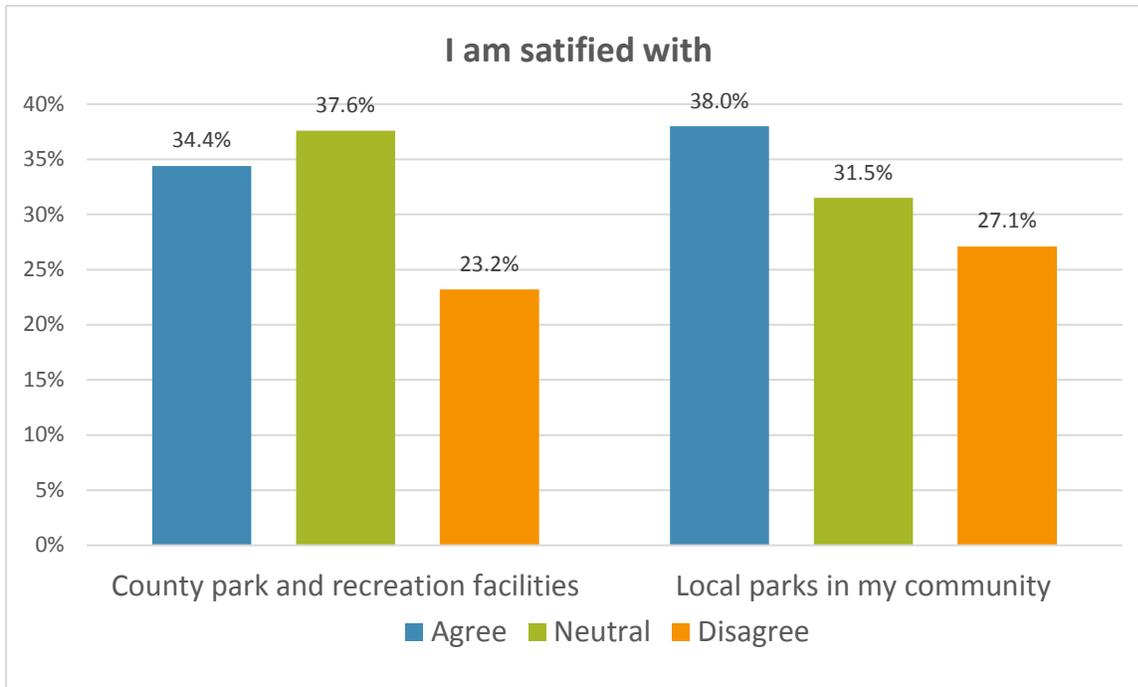


Figure 8 – Respondents opinions were mixed regarding their satisfaction with County and Local parks.

Natural Areas

Survey respondents had strong positive feelings about improving access to and enhancing natural resources and recreation opportunities on the Saginaw Bay and Saginaw River as well as how preserving natural areas and water resources have a positive effect on their quality of life. Nearly three-fourths of the respondents agreed with the statement that the preservation of natural areas and water resources in our community has a positive effect on my quality of life. More than 90% agreed with the statement that It is important to improve access to and enhance the natural resources and recreation opportunities on the Saginaw Bay and Saginaw River.

Recreation Opportunities Missing

Respondents were presented with 16 potential recreation facilities and asked to check those that were missing or that they wanted more of in their area. Respondents could also fill in a response that had not been indicated. Walking and biking trails/paths was, by far, the most popular facility checked with nearly 57% of the respondents checking that item. The top seven items needed are shown in Figure 9.

One hundred ninety-eight respondents wrote in other recreation opportunities that were missing in their area. Frequent other responses that were written in included a clean beach, access to water or waterpark, and tennis courts.

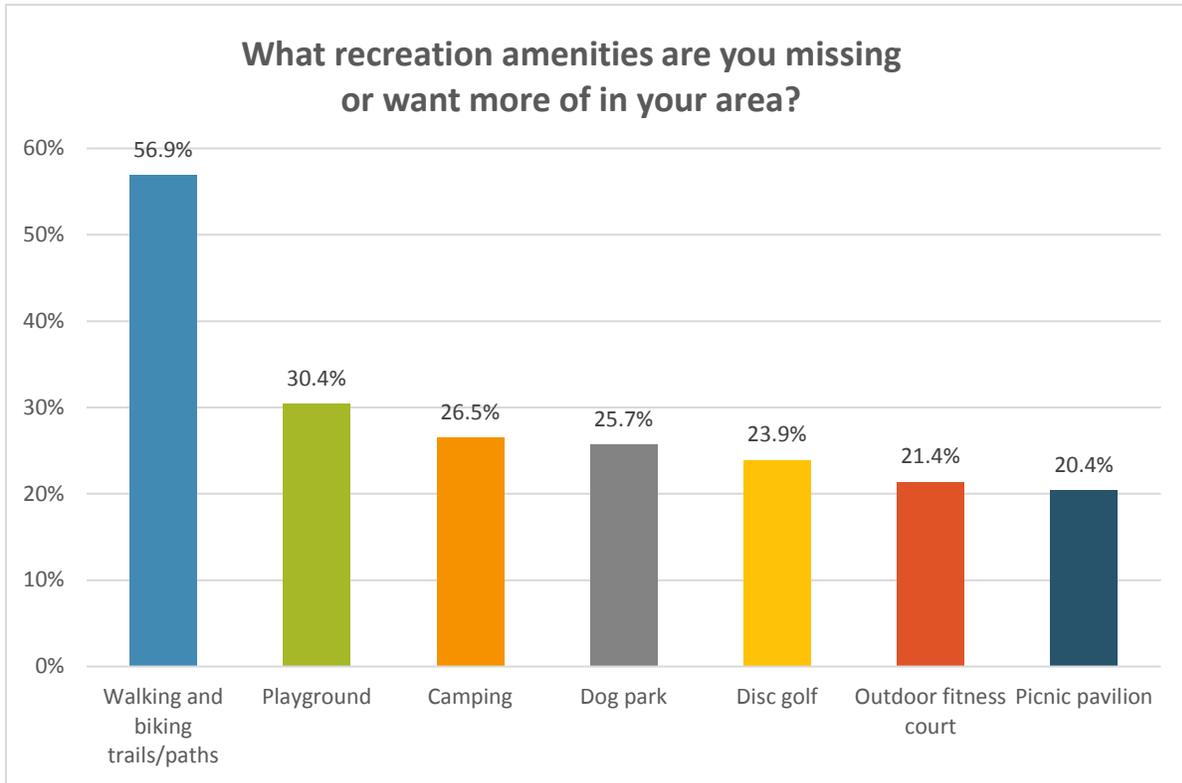


Figure 9 – Top seven recreation amenities missing or wanting more of.

Programs

Question 4 of the survey was a fill in the blank question that asked what kind of recreational programs the respondents would like to see added to their community. Nearly 550 respondents provided an answer. Many of the more popular answers mentioned facilities as opposed to programs. For example, more than 100 respondents again mentioned the need for a path or walking trail. Fifty-two mentioned the need for disc golf. The most popular response in terms of programs was fitness, aerobics, or yoga classes. Other answers were widely varied including such items as a ladder ball tournament, golf league, fishing clinics, cheerleading, and archery.

Seniors and Active Older Adults

Question 5 asked respondents to write in the types of recreational opportunities that wanted to see added in Bay County for senior citizens and active older adults. Three hundred sixty-nine responses were received. Answers here were similar to the things that were needed for the general population. Walking programs and trails were mentioned nearly 150 times. Other responses included fitness and exercise classes, yoga, pickleball, and dancing.

Bay County Parks

The next section of the survey asked questions about the five recreation facilities that are operated by Bay County: the Civic Arena, Community Center and Pool, Bay County Fairgrounds and Dog Park, the Bay County Golf Course and Pinconning Park. Respondents were provided space to provide written feedback about each facility. More than 100 written comments were received about each park. The Fairgrounds received the most comments at 222.

Respondents were asked to rate two factors as good, ok, or poor for each park: maintenance and appearance and handicap accessibility. Figures 11 and 12 show the result for those questions for those people **who had an opinion**. It should be noted that at least 30% of the respondents checked “don’t know” for their response. For some of the questions the percentage who indicated “don’t know” was over 70%.

In terms of maintenance and appearance, the County Golf Course had the highest percentage of respondents who rated the park as good (59.7%). The County Fairgrounds and Dog Park had the smallest percentage of respondents who rated the park as good in maintenance and appearance at 26.6%.

Handicap accessibility was rated good by the most respondents for Pinconning Park at 57.2%. The County Fairgrounds and Dog Park had the smallest percentage of respondents rating handicap accessibility as good at 36%.

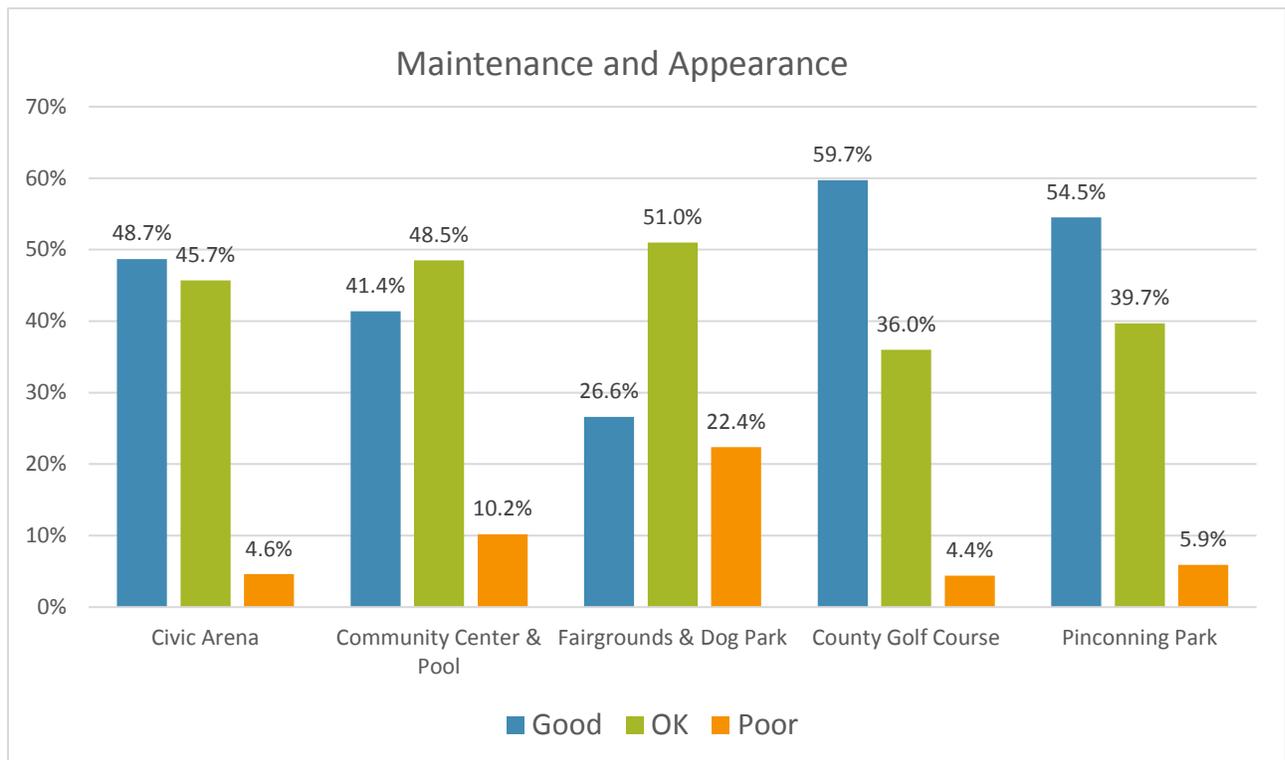


Figure 10 – Respondents were asked to rate the maintenance and appearance of the five park facilities that are owned and managed by Bay County.

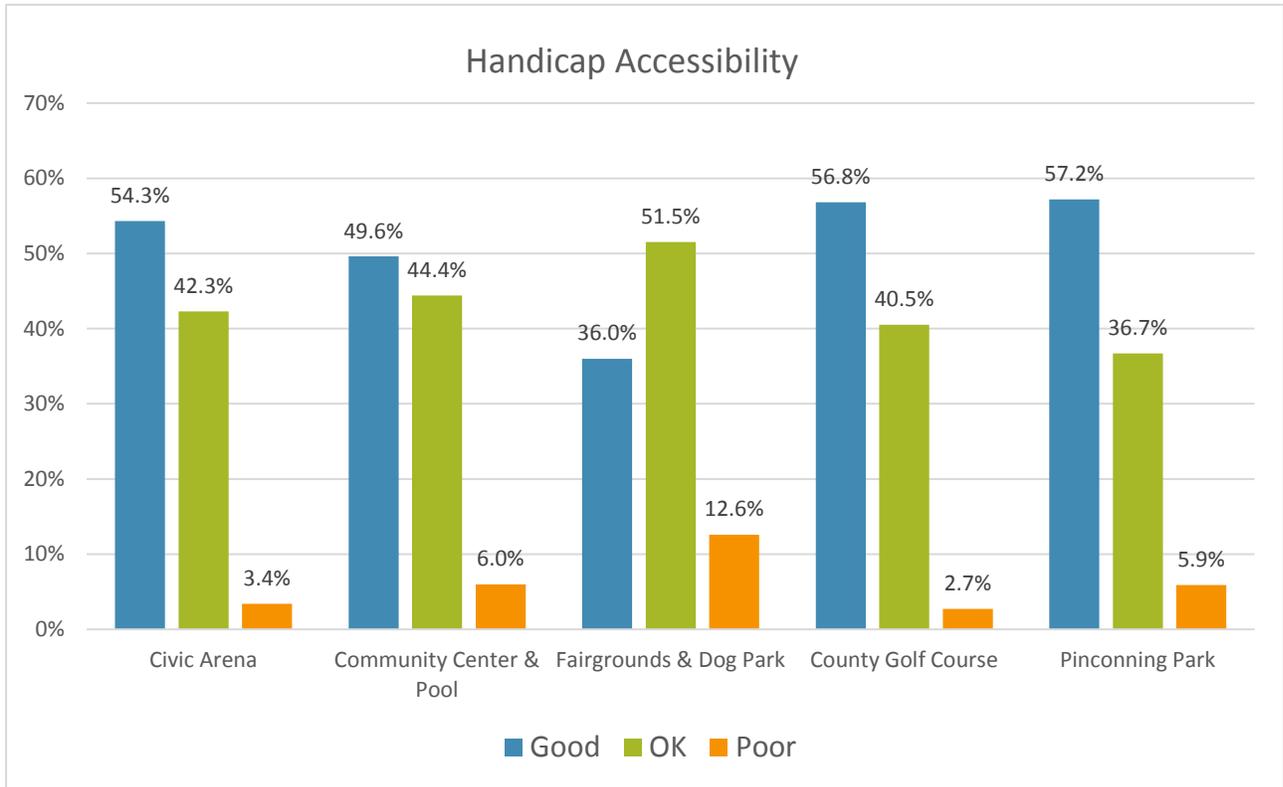


Figure 11 – Respondents were asked to rate the handicap accessibility of the five park facilities that are owned and managed by Bay County.

Other Communities

The following communities asked specific questions as part of the online survey:

- Auburn
- Bay City
- Beaver Township
- Hampton Township
- Kawkawlin Township
- Monitor Township

Since many of its parks are regional in nature, the Bay City questions were offered to all survey respondents. The other individual questions were offered only to those who responded that they were residents of that community.



Goals and Objectives

Introduction

Developing goals and objectives is an important part of the recreation planning process. The overall goal of a parks and recreation department is to provide recreation opportunities for the community and/or region it serves. More specific goals must be based on the demographic characteristics of the population served, the physical and environmental characteristics of the area, and the input of the community.

Goals are the broadest level. They are overarching and general. Objectives carry out the purpose of the goal. The Action Program is the last level and it identifies specific projects, acquisitions, and programs. The Action Program can include organizational, staffing, programming, public information, and operation and maintenance actions. Bay County formulated the following goals and objectives in 2014 based upon the characteristics of the overall community, the input received at the community input sessions and the survey. They were reviewed for the 2019 Recreation Plan. These goals are applicable for Bay County parks and recreation and many of them also apply for the individual participating communities.

GOAL 1

Retain public land for future generations.

Objectives:

1. Retain existing parkland and acquire new public lands to meet the recreational needs of the community.
2. Promote and enhance the financial stability of Bay County's Parks and Recreation Division.
3. Preserve and protect open space and significant natural features in Bay County.
4. Increase access to the Great Lakes shoreline.

Comments and Justification

Residents of Bay County are proud of their parks and recreational facilities. They realize they are part of the quality of life in the area. New parcels of land may need to be acquired so specific facilities can be added or so that special natural features can be preserved.

GOAL 2

Provide quality leisure time activities with special consideration given to activities improving health and fitness.

Objectives:

1. Provide passive and active programming for a variety of ages and abilities of the population.
2. Continue to work with existing recreation partners in the community to provide programs, leagues, and special events. Explore options for new and expanded partnerships to provide additional recreational opportunities.

Comments and Justification

Due to limited resources and staffing, recreational programming and facilities in Bay County are provided by several different organizations and entities. Some of them work with the County in some capacity. The County wishes to continue facilitating and enhancing these relationships, where feasible, so as to meet the needs of residents without offering duplication of services. One successful example from recent years is the Great Lakes Bay Regional Trail group which is working together with Bay County to establish trail connectivity across Bay, Saginaw, and Midland Counties.

GOAL 3

Provide safe, broad, community-based recreation opportunities that improve the overall quality of life for all residents of Bay County.

Objectives:

1. Continue to add amenities to Bay County park facilities based upon community input and need.
2. Maintain and upgrade existing facilities to provide park facilities that inspire a sense of community pride.

Comments and Justification

The county will use community input along with recreational trend data to formulate recreational capital improvement plans for the future. It will also work to improve and maintain existing facilities to keep them current, functional, and efficient.

GOAL 4

Provide trails and multi-use paths for recreational and transportation use.

Objectives:

1. Update the Bay County non-motorized trail plan.
2. Where possible, connect trails to regional trails and destinations.
3. Where feasible, encourage the County Road Commission to provide easements for trails and trail corridors that will connect to regional trails and destinations.



Comments and Justification

All forms of non-motorized transportation are becoming increasingly important across the United States. Multi-use paths, trails, and bike lanes are used for recreation and transportation. Paths can be used for active and passive recreation and they are just one of many ways that can increase the health and fitness of a community.

GOAL 5

Make Bay County a better place to live for seniors and people with disabilities.

Objectives:

1. Promote the development of an inventory of services and opportunities in our community that promote the independence and quality of life for older adults and the disabled.
2. Initiate partnerships with other units of government and recreation providers to promote the development of senior friendly community amenities.
3. Provide recreational opportunities for people with disabilities, developing improvements and upgrades to park facilities that are handicap accessible.
4. Continue program development for special needs populations.

Comments and Justification

According to the 2016 ACS 5-year estimate, the median age of Bay County residents is 42.7 years. That is more than three years greater than that of the State of Michigan at 39.5 years and 5 years greater than the median age of the United States which is 37.7 years. As the baby boom population continues to age, there will be increased demand for recreational facilities and services that meet the needs of aging adults. There was strong support for programs for senior citizens and active older adults in the online

survey comments. Further, Figure 3 shows that the 16.6% of County residents have a disability. This population also has special needs in terms of recreational facilities.

Bay County is attentive to the needs of its senior citizens and all those who have some diminished capacity that may limit their access to recreational resources in the community. Designs will incorporate the philosophies and principals of universal design and they will address Communities for a Lifetime goals. Communities for a Lifetime is an assessment and improvement planning process that helps make a community more “aging-friendly”.

GOAL 6

Provide youth development programming and expand recreational facilities for such in Bay County.

Objectives:

1. Encourage new sports leagues in Bay County based upon community input, recreation trends and general need.
2. Encourage the addition of one-day recreation events for youth in the community.
3. Provide a mechanism to assist youths with financial need to participate in County recreational activities.

Comments and Justification

Recreational opportunities for youth in Bay County are both numerous and diverse. The inventory of recreational resources substantiates both diverse recreational opportunity and geographic distribution of youth recreational facilities. This recreation plan supports the inclusion of new and emerging new youth recreational projects and facilities, like the skate park constructed in Bay City, that further diversify the types of recreation in which youth can engage and/or expand the geographic distribution of existing recreational opportunities in Bay County.

GOAL 7

Develop recreation opportunities that focus upon and take advantage of Bay County’s natural assets.

Objectives

1. Develop public fishing opportunities in Bay County.
2. Develop public hunting/shooting range opportunities in Bay County.
3. Develop opportunities, alone or in partnership with others, to educate citizens about natural resources and environmental stewardship in Bay County.
4. Develop recreation opportunities that take place along the Great Lakes Shoreline.
5. Continue to work to develop the Saginaw Bay Blueways Water Trail.

Comments and Justification

Bay County has some unique natural resources and habitats. It is part of the Mississippi and Atlanta flyway for migratory birds. The Saginaw Bay provides a shoreline wetland habitat and a great location for sport fishing – especially walleye. Woodlands provide habitat for deer, raccoons, muskrat, squirrels, rabbits, and other small game. Bay County wishes to incorporate these features into its parks and recreation facilities. Further, it wishes to educate the public about the unique environments in Bay County.

GOAL 8

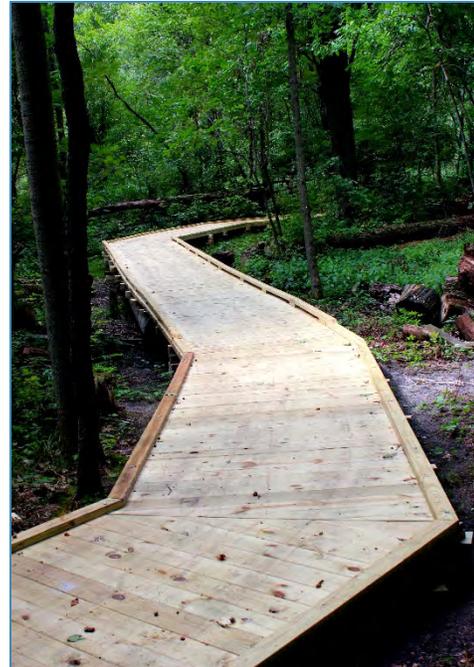
Promote community awareness for all the recreation opportunities that Bay County has to offer.

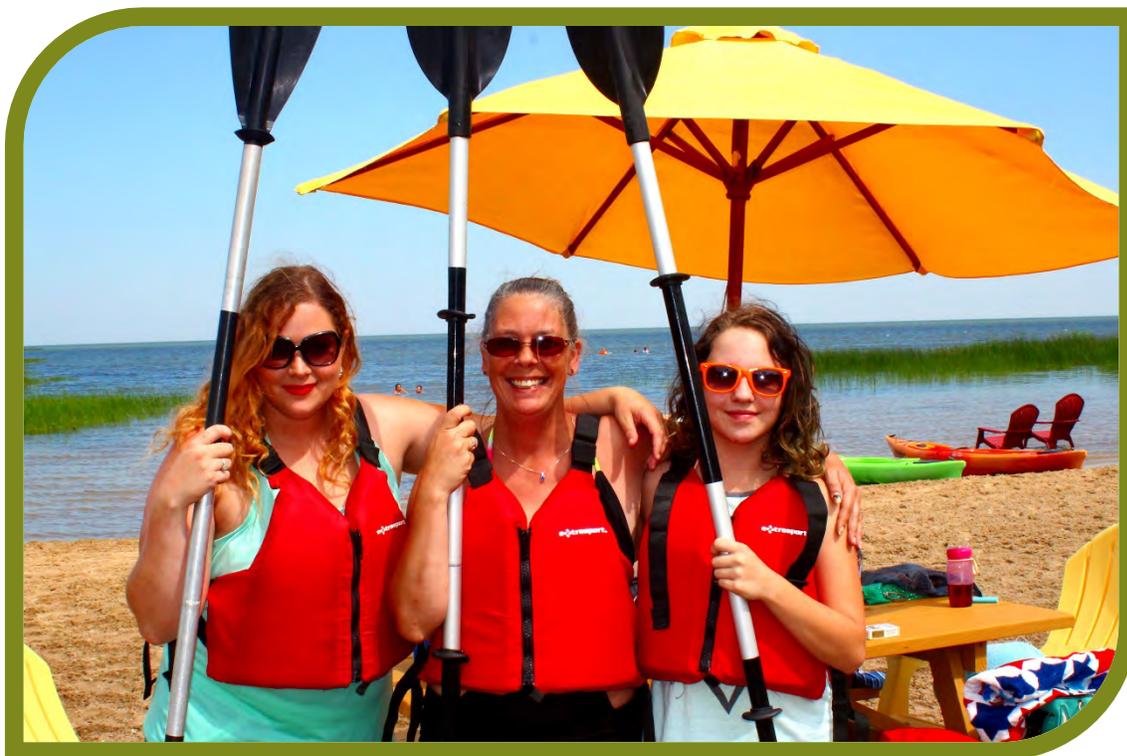
Objectives:

1. Work with the local convention and visitor's bureau to promote recreation opportunities in Bay County.
2. Keep the county web site and recreation database updated regarding recreation opportunities in Bay County.
3. Use social media to promote recreation opportunities in Bay County.

Comments and Justification

In order for citizens to take advantage of recreation opportunities, the community must be aware of them. Several survey respondents commented that they were not sure of what recreational opportunities were available in the County. As improvements and upgrades are undertaken, the County and its constituent communities need to celebrate their accomplishments and share their successes at meetings, on web sites, and with the media. Further, since Bay County has abundant shoreline and unique natural resources, it attracts recreational tourists and visitors from across the state, creating the secondary economic benefits talked about earlier in this document. The County needs to continue to promote all that it has to offer across the state.





Action Plan

With goals and objectives in place, Bay County was able to develop a 5-year action program to work toward accomplishing the goals and objectives. County staff reviewed the Action Plan items from the 2014 plan and updated and added to them as needed. The Action Program details the direction the community wishes to take over the next five years in order to maintain and improve the quality and diversity of area park and recreation opportunities.

Potential projects were assigned a priority of 1 through 5 with 1 being most important and 5 being least important. Each action item relates to one or more of the numbered goals from the Goals and Objectives chapter. Potential capital improvements described in this Plan have been established not only to provide a framework for decision makers but also to enable the County to apply for grant funding for these proposed projects.

The project list is not a fixed element and it is neither all-inclusive or exclusive. The schedule reflects the results of the input received from the online survey and County staff. Future circumstances, especially availability of funding, may change priorities or require reprioritization of items.

The action program is shown in the table at the end of this section.

Financing Potential Improvements

Funding for parks and recreation capital improvements can come from a range of local, state, and federal programs. Grant funding is available for parks and recreation projects. However, applicants need to target potential funding agencies and programs very carefully so as to meet the specific criteria

required. The Appendix contains a current listing of programs and agencies that can provide funding for parks and recreation projects.

Bay County Recreation Plan Action Items			
Action Item	Priority	Relates to Goal	Justification
Pinconning Park			
ADA accessible kayak launch	1	2, 3, 5, 7	Increase water access.
Add locational, informational, and interpretive signage.	1	3, 5	Increases usability of parks.
Additional bathhouse	1	3, 5	To meet increased demand.
Floating walkway and fishing pier	1	1, 3, 5, 7	Community input requested shore fishing.
Add cabins and campsites (rustic and modern)	1	3, 7	Based on need.
ADA bathhouse updates	1	3, 5	To make facilities more accessible and functional.
Expand shoreline access	2	2, 3, 5, 7	To enjoy the opportunities on the Bay.
Day Use Activities	2	2, 3	More activities for visitors.
Playscape	2	3, 6	Additional play opportunities needed for children.
Expand the trail system	2	2, 4	Community input.
Interpretive building	2	1, 7	Adds educational element.
Dog park/beach.	2	3, 5	Additional facility for park users.
Parking lot redesign and reseal, including additional ADA parking	3	5	Deteriorated. More spaces needed. To make facilities more accessible.
Audio interpretive displays	3	3, 7	To enjoy unique natural resources.
Spray park.	3	3, 6	Mentioned in community input.
Additional telescopes	4	3, 7	To enjoy unique natural resources.
Basketball area	5	2, 6	Provides an additional recreational opportunity.
Low voltage electrical lighting	5	1, 3, 5	Improves park safety & access for those with disabilities.

Bay County Recreation Plan Action Items

Action Item	Priority	Relates to Goal	Justification
Bay County Fairgrounds			
Improve existing facilities such as bleachers, grandstand, track and stables. (Includes roofs, electrical and utility upgrade, path and driveway resurfacing).	1	2, 3, 5	Facilities are outdated, old, and unsafe.
Additional ADA parking spaces	1	5	To make facilities more accessible.
Universal Access playscape area with fitness area, playscape, surfacing, water fountain, fencing, signage, benches and picnic tables	1	3, 5, 6	Existing playground equipment is old and outdated.
Add recreation/leisure activities such as permanent yard games.	3	2, 3	Community input survey.
Expand the dog park.	3	3, 5	Community survey. Need to separate large and small dogs.
Add bleachers at corrals.	4	2, 3	To allow people to sit and watch.
Civic Arena			
Replace one Zamboni.	1	2, 3, 5	Improve maintenance and ice condition.
Upgrade old and outdated systems including heating, AC, solar, foam, and parking lot.	1	2, 3, 5	Aging and not functional.
New seating with universal accessibility	1	3, 5	Improves functionality and accessibility.
Fitness room upgrades	3	2, 3	Improve functionality.
Community Center & Pool			
New gym floor in small and large gym	1	3, 6	Existing is old and outdated.
Marketing and advertising campaign to increase usage	1	8	Increased awareness and revenue.
Add promotional signage.	1	8	Community is not aware of what is offered here.
Accessible tables	1	3, 5	Improves accessibility.
Building upgrades: roof, heating, AC	2	2, 3	Needed capital improvements. Existing is old and outdated.
Shower replacement in pool locker room	2	3, 5, 6	Existing is old and outdated.
Improve fitness equipment.	2	2	Existing equipment is old and outdated.

Bay County Recreation Plan Action Items

Action Item	Priority	Relates to Goal	Justification
Community Center and Pool (continued)			
Add an outdoor recreation experience.	2	2, 3	Additional amenity. Take advantage of outdoor space.
Spray Park	4	3, 6	Mentioned in community input.
Golf Course			
Two fairway mowers	1	3	Maintain existing course condition.
Netting for driving range	1	3	Improves safety.
Pathway to pavilion	1	5	Improves accessibility.
Replace member barn roof	1	3	Existing is old and outdated.
2nd ADA cart	2	5	Improves accessibility.
New tractor and greens mower	2	3	Maintain existing course condition.
New golf carts	2	3	Replace old and outdated.
Construct new pavilion with light, power and grills.	3	3, 5	To allow for group gatherings.
Consider offering cross-country skiing, foot golf, disc golf, or other alternative recreation.	3	2, 3	Adds additional activities to increase usage.
Remodel existing outdoor restrooms.	3	3, 5	Improve accessibility.
Trails			
Expand motorized and non-motorized trail opportunities.	ongoing	2, 3, 4	Community input priority.
Develop trail between Delta College and SVSU.	2	2, 3, 4	Connect the two universities.
Complete the Bay-Zilwaukee Trail to Bay City Railtrail/Riverwalk. (Iron Belle Trail link).	2	2, 3, 4	Part of Great Lakes Bay Regional Trail Plan.
Begin to develop the Bay City to Midland Connection of the Great Lakes Bay Regional Trail.	3	2, 3, 4	Part of Great Lakes Bay Regional Trail Plan.
Signage, lighting, and non-motorized facility improvements for the Urban Recreation Heritage Route to the Bay	3	2, 3, 4	Improvements to enhance the trail.

Bay County Recreation Plan Action Items

Action Item	Priority	Relates to Goal	Justification
Trails (continued)			
Enhance the Saginaw Bay Blue Water trail system including signage, portages, etc.	3	2, 3, 4, 7	Part of 2015 Bay County Saginaw Bay Blue Water Trail Development Plan.
Programming			
Explore programming for senior citizens and disabled by forming partnerships with applicable groups such as MI Sports Unlimited and Bay County Division on Aging.	1	2, 3, 5	Adding programs not currently available. Mentioned in community input.
Develop partnership with local community recreation and tourism providers.	1	2, 3, 6	Adding programs not currently available.
Promote Bay County recreational opportunities, especially Saginaw Bay access.	1	8	Community is not aware of what is available. Tourism and economic growth opportunities.
Develop a partnership with local community education providers for programming at county facilities.	1	2, 3, 6	Adding programs not currently available.
Explore offering hunter safety classes.	2	6, 7	Mentioned in community input.
Miscellaneous			
Develop outreach brochure that describes parks in Bay County.	1	1, 8	To communicate with residents and visitors about facilities offered.
Begin a Parks & Recreation Endowment fund.	1	1	To provide financial stability for the Parks and Recreation functions in Bay County.
Develop social media awareness campaign.	1	8	Improve awareness and usage of county facilities.
Work with community groups to develop an additional disc golf course in Bay County.	1	3	Requested in community input survey; takes advantage of current recreational trend.
Continue to purchase lands for cultural opportunities.	1	1, 7	To meet need for specific cultural opportunities.
Acquire lands to increase public shoreline access to the Saginaw Bay.	1	1, 7	To reduce the shortage of public access points on Saginaw Bay.

Bay County Recreation Plan Action Items

Action Item	Priority	Relates to Goal	Justification
Miscellaneous (continued)			
Improve existing access to Saginaw Bay including beach maintenance equipment, swimming access, seasonal fishing docks, and ADA Kayak launches.	1	1, 3, 7	To increase access to the Saginaw Bay. Requested on survey. Taking advantage of unique natural resource.
Continue to invest in community enhancement and recreational features.	1	1 - 7	To meet community needs.
Convene local public sector recreation providers to implement a joint purchasing program for recreation suppliers.	2	1	Cost saving measure.
Develop interactive web site or social media platform to communicate with residents regarding parks and recreation.	2	1, 8	To communicate with residents and visitors about facilities offered.
Explore opportunities for environmental education in the parks.	2	2, 7	To educate youth and adults and provide a different type of recreational opportunity.
Develop an inventory of significant open space and natural resources in Bay County.	3	2, 7	So as to document potential sites for preservation and/or acquisition.



City of Auburn

Community Description

The City of Auburn is located in southwestern Bay County between Midland and Bay City. It is surrounded by Williams Township. Auburn largely serves as a bedroom community for people who work in the nearby cities of Midland, Bay City, and Saginaw. According to the American Community Survey, the 2016 5-year population estimate for Auburn is 1,935.

Other significant demographic data for Auburn as compared to the county, state, and country is shown in Figure 12 on the following page.

	Auburn	Bay County	Michigan	United States
Median Age	40.1	42.7	39.5	37.7
Population 65+	16.7%	18.3%	15.4%	14.5%
Population under 18	21.2%	21.0%	22.5%	23.1%
Owner Occupied Homes	62.7%	77.9%	73.0%	65.10%
Average Household Size	2.13	2.39	2.51	2.64
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	18.7%	18.1%	27.4%	30.3%
Median Household Income	\$52,396	\$45,851	\$50,803	\$55,322
Per capita income	\$29,536	\$24,753	\$27,549	\$29,829
Disabled	14.4%	16.6%	14.2%	12.5%
Poverty level	7.3%	15.8%	16.3%	15.1%

Figure 12 - Selected Census Data for the City of Auburn as compared to the county, state and country.

Administrative Structure

The City Commission and the Auburn-Williams Recreation Board are responsible for all parks and recreation functions of the City, including the City parks. The Auburn-Williams Recreation Board is composed of twelve members representing the City of Auburn and Williams Township. As the administrative head of the City, the City Administrator carries out the policies that are made by the Commission and directs and coordinates the work of all City departments. It is the City Administrator's job to keep the Commission informed of the conditions and needs of the City and to make recommendations for action as the need arises. The City Administrator also prepares the annual budget for Commission recommendation and upon its enactment sees that its provisions are upheld.

Maintenance activities for parks and recreation are implemented by the Auburn Department of Public Works (DPW) and designated work is contracted with private service companies. Three full-time employees of the DPW currently carry out maintenance activities at the parks.

Programming, Volunteers, and Cooperative Relationships

The City of Auburn/Williams Township Recreation Board administers recreational activities. This is a joint 12-member recreation board with equal representation from both units of government, each having 6 members on the board. Five of the Auburn representatives on the board are at-large members appointed by the City Commission and the sixth member is appointed from the City Commission. Each unit provides \$9,000 a year for planning and implementation of recreational activities. The board currently provides organized baseball/softball activities, organized gun range programs, summer day-camp program and organized outings. The recreation board also provides recommendations for recreational facilities, maintenance and improvements to the City's administrative staff.

Volunteers assist the parks through coaching, the gun range programs, and flower bed maintenance throughout the year. The Auburn Chamber of Commerce and the Auburn Jaycees own a 20-acre piece of property adjacent to the Auburn Community Park. They sponsor the annual Auburn Corn Festival which uses their property and the Community Park property. Soccer fields were added to the Jaycees property in 2013.

The City of Auburn and Williams Charter Township have strong relationships through the school district and civic organizations that help to facilitate recreational activities in the area. This is illustrated with the new community recreation building that was recently constructed in the main park on Jaycee Drive. The pavilion serves many groups in the area from the Lions Club, Jaycees, Special Olympics and many more. It features heated bathrooms, kitchen, educational training/meeting room, and a sizeable roof structure. Various recreational activities are held in the facility including basketball, pickle ball and hockey. During the summer months, the facility is host to the local Farmer’s Market. In the winter, the facility and the surrounding area will feature a choreographed Holiday Light and Sound Display. It will serve as the gathering place for festivals and the Holiday Tree lighting.

Budgets

The sources of funding for parks and recreation in Auburn are the city general fund, park rental fees, and donations. The current and next year parks and recreation budgets are shown below.

Figure 13 AUBURN PARKS AND RECREATION BUDGETS		
	2018 (proposed)	2017 (actual)
Operation & Maintenance	\$98,121	\$101,158
Programming (leagues, special events, etc.)	\$9,000	\$9,000
Capital Expenditures	\$0	\$80,000*
Total	\$107,121	\$171,158

*This is a contribution from the DDA used as part of the overall funding of a new community recreational pavilion with a covered hockey/basketball/multiuse area, enclosed and heated ADA compliant bathrooms, kitchen space and meeting rooms. The new facility built in 2017-18 will exceed a total cost of \$750,000 finance through the USDA loan and grant program and DDA funding support.

Recreation Inventory

The City of Auburn reviewed its recreation inventory from the 2014 plan and updated it accordingly. The inventory data as compiled from those forms is shown on the following page.

Grant History

The City of Auburn has received two DNR grants for its Auburn City Park. All improvements are still in place and functional.

- BF98-247 - \$22,500, Auburn City Park Fishing Pier Development
- LWCF 26-01736 - \$62,000, Auburn City Park Pond Improvements

**Figure 13
AUBURN RECREATION INVENTORY**

	Auburn Community Park	Auburn Recreation Area	Auburn Shooting Range**
Park Type*	Community Park	Neighborhood Park	Special Use Park
Acreage	20	4	30
Accessibility*	4	4	
Service Area	Auburn / Williams Twp.	Auburn / Williams Twp.	Auburn / Williams Twp.
Ball Diamond	2		
Multi-use Path	1 mile	Yes (on dikes)	
Pavilion	3		
Picnic Area	Yes		
Ice Skating	Yes		
Horseshoes	12		
Sledding		Yes	
Archery/Gun Range			Yes
Pond/Observation Docks	Yes		
Restrooms	Yes		
Playfield (open space)	Yes		
Basketball Courts	3		
Fishing	Yes		
Sand Volleyball	1		
Pickleball	2		
Playground	1		
Grills	6		
Dog Walking	Yes		Yes
Farm Market	Yes		

*See County inventory section on pages 14, 1 and 21 for definitions of park type and accessibility.

** The Auburn Shooting Range is located north of the City of Auburn on the east side of 9-Mile Road south of W. Wheeler Road.

Goals and Objectives

The City of Auburn developed the following goals and objectives for parks and recreation in 2013. The goals were reviewed for the 2018 plan.

GOAL 1

Continue to improve and upgrade the City of Auburn’s recreational and support facilities in order to offer parks and recreational activities the community can be proud of.

Objectives:

1. Retain and maintain the existing Auburn City Park and acquire new public lands to fulfill the recreational needs of the city and local community.
2. Provide multi-use recreational opportunities at park facilities.
3. Make active and passive park facilities available to as many individuals as possible.
4. Ensure that improvements and upgrades to the Auburn City Park are handicap accessible.
5. Provide adequate maintenance of all City parks and recreational facilities.
6. Consider the long-term or on-going maintenance costs of all future park improvements to City recreational facilities prior to making such improvements.
7. Utilize volunteers to assist with special events and maintenance opportunities.

GOAL 2

Promote coordination of recreational facilities, programs and activities with other recreation providers to avoid duplication and use City resources wisely.

Objectives:

1. Provide facilities that complement those of Bay County, Williams Township, the school district and other groups.
2. Cooperate and contribute to community wide recreation projects.
3. Seek active participation in the planning of recreation facilities and/or opportunities that affect the City and Williams Township residents.
4. Initiate interaction and cooperation with the school system.
5. Develop and formalize an agreement to jointly share and support mutually beneficial facilities.
6. Work with the schools to improve the recreational facilities available to the community at the school sites, particularly elementary schools.
7. Engage in joint purchasing with other governmental units when feasible with the goal of saving tax dollars.

GOAL 3

Provide quality recreational opportunities to improve health and fitness with extra emphasis placed on organized youth activities.

Objectives:

1. Provide organized programs and activities for a variety of ages with an emphasis on youth programs through the Auburn-Williams Recreation Board.
2. Continue to partner with existing recreational partners to provide recreation programs, events, and leagues.

GOAL 4

Develop a recreation system that will be responsive to, and effective in, meeting the present and future needs of residents.

Objectives:

1. Update the recreation plan as needed and entirely review the plan every five years.
2. Develop an interactive web site to communicate with residents regarding park and recreation opportunities.
3. Explore marketing services and sponsoring special events.
4. Use the City newsletter to identify what is happening, what's available, who to talk to, and to seek community input.
5. Use local newspaper to highlight recreation news whenever possible.



GOAL 5

Provide access trails and multi-use recreational paths.

Objectives:

1. Cooperate and participate in intergovernmental efforts to establish a non-motorized greenway and trail system connecting Midland County to Bay County.
2. Coordinate possible routes, methods, and funding to connect non-motorized greenway and trail systems in Bay and Midland Counties to the Auburn City Park.
3. Identify possible non-motorized routes, methods, and funding to connect Auburn City Park with the Williams Township Park.

GOAL 6

Develop methods to meet future recreational needs in the City.

Objectives:

1. Pursue a variety of possible funding sources, including state and federal grant programs.
2. Explore a means for evaluating and accepting private donations of land, time and monies.
3. Budget funds for a recreational capital improvement program each year to improve recreational facilities and eliminate deficiencies.



Action Plan

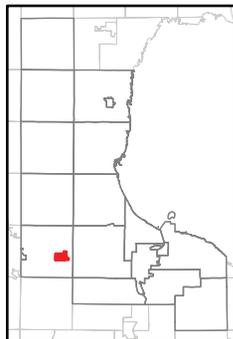
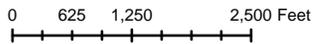
The City of Auburn developed the following items that it wishes to consider for improvements for the next five years. This list is based on known issues and needs in the parks and feedback from the community input survey.

1. Develop an ADA compliant fishing dock/pier connected and accessible by means of the paved walking path.
2. Resurface and widen the walking path for better ADA accessibility complete with lighting.
3. Improve baseball fields by replacing outfield and dugout fencing and adding designated fenced in "on deck" areas. This will help protect against injury and provide a safe and enclosed area for swinging bats.
4. Update the playground equipment near the ball diamonds with handicap accessible equipment. This will ensure a safe place for children to play.
5. Install a fountain in the City park pond for not only aesthetic purposes but also for beneficial aeration. This project would enhance the existing fishing docks.
6. Complete projects for the improvement of drainage throughout the City parks.
7. Reconfigure the entrance to the Community Park utilizing curb and gutter, islands, spacing and safe walkways to provide a safer more restricted roadway for the park facilities on Jaycee Drive. This will increase safety, direct and reduce traffic speed, provide more appropriate and defined parking.
8. Add a spray park feature to compliment the play scape area.
9. Acquire additional property when available and feasible to expand community park offerings.
10. Replace and install ADA Picnic tables near the play scape and the new pavilion while also upgrading benches.
11. Landscape for better wind and sound barriers around the new pavilion.
12. Develop an outdoor fireplace area for gathering and warming at the Community Park.
13. Develop a disc golf course.

Park and Trail Locations in Auburn Michigan

Legend

-  Township
-  State Trunkline
-  Major Road
-  Minor Road
-  Railroad
-  Non-Motorized Trail
-  Park
-  Golf Course
-  Boat Ramp / Dock
-  Park; Nature Area



Map produced by: Bay County Dept. of Environmental Affairs & Community Development - GIS Program 10/29/2018

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Data Source: Bay County GIS, State of Michigan CGI

