

2009-2013

**Laingsburg Area Parks
& Recreation Plan**

**City of Laingsburg
“Where City and Country Meet”**



**City of Laingsburg
Laingsburg Area Recreation Committee
City Hall
114 Woodhull St.
Laingsburg, Michigan 48848**

Page Intentionally Left Blank

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

City Council

Micheal Culpepper, Mayor
Brian Fredline, Mayor pro-tem
Jessica Bayer
Robert Frank
Timothy Leonard
David Rhodabeck
Thad Rose

Parks and Recreation Sub-Committee

Dave Rhodabeck
Jessica Bayer
Brian Fredline

Laingsburg Area Recreation Committee

Lori Strom
Jodi Frank
Paula Willoughby

Planning Commission

Stephen Laux, Chair
Jessica Bayer
Michael Cassidy
James Cherry
Micheal Culpepper
Lana Kaiser
Randy Meder
Michael Smith
Randy Martin

City Staff

Gary Bendall, Department of Public Works Director
Lana Kaiser, City Clerk
Paula Willoughby, Treasurer/Zoning Administrator

Prepared with Assistance from:

Preston Community Services, LLC
Peter J. Preston, AICP, PCP
Community Planner

Page Intentionally Left Blank

Laingsburg Area Parks & Recreation Plan 2009-2013

Table of Contents

Chapter 1- Introduction	
Mission Statement.....	1
History of Parks and Recreation Planning.....	1
Plan Overview.....	2
Chapter 2- Community Description	
Introduction	1
Physical Characteristics	1
Social Demographics	2
Transportation	6
Future Land Use & Zoning	6
Schools	7
Chapter 3- Parks and Recreation Administration	
Introduction	1
Administrative & Decision Making Roles	1
Budgets, Capital Improvements and Programming	1
Funding Sources	2
Coordination of Public and Private Entities.....	4
Chapter 4- Parks and Recreation Inventory	
Introduction	1
Inventory	1
Accessibility Assessment	7
City Recreation Grant Status Report	8
Chapter 5- Resource Inventory	
Introduction	1
City Owned Land	1
Natural Open Space	2
Natural & Manufactured Pathways and Corridors	3
Chapter 6- Planning and Public Input Process	
Planning Methods	1
Public Input Methods	1
Survey Results.....	2
Community Forum Results.....	4
One Month Public Review	5
Public Meeting/Hearing Prior to Adoption	5

Chapter 7- Goals, Objectives and Actions

Goals, Objectives and Actions	1
Goal No. 1- Maintenance of Parks and Recreation System.....	2
Goal No. 2- Enhance Existing Parks and Recreation System.....	3
Goal No. 3- New Parks and Recreation Facilities.....	6

Appendix A: Maps

Parks and Recreation Inventory Map	A-1
Potential Non-Motorized Routes & Connections	A-2
Survey of Non-Motorized Routes	A-3
Primary and Secondary Linear Park	A-4

Appendix B: Supplemental Documents

Survey Instrument	B-1
Survey Aggregate Results	B-2
Community Forum Agenda & Minutes	B-3
Notice of Draft Plan Availability for One Month Public Review...	B-4
Public Meeting Minutes.....	B-5
Resolution to Adopt.....	B-6

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Mission Statement

It is the mission of the City of Laingsburg (“City”), City Council (“Council”) and Laingsburg Area Recreation Committee (“LARC”) to provide safe and contemporary park facilities and lifelong recreational opportunities that enhance leisure, fitness, and quality of life for the residents of the City as well as the greater community, which includes those students and families of the Laingsburg Community School District (“School District”) and the patrons of businesses and services within the City.

The purpose and intent of this update of the Five (5) Year Parks and Recreation Plan (“Plan”) is to effect the mission as set forth above, continue the parks and recreation efforts of the past, and to have the Plan accepted by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (“MDNR”) in order to be eligible for funding through grants and/or any other feasible funding mechanisms.

History of Parks and Recreation Planning

The City first developed a plan for recreation improvements in 1969 when the original LARC was formed. Since the adoption of that plan, the members of LARC, City Council, Planning Commission, and City staff have made efforts to improve existing parks and recreation opportunities and to explore and develop additional parks and recreational facilities in the City. The following is a time line of parks and recreation planning, improvements and activities by the City between 1969 and 2009:

- (a) 1969- LARC formed as part of the first parks and recreation plan developed by the City.
- (b) 1969- Development of Bates Scout Park and construction of the tennis facility at the existing park area near City Hall.
- (c) 1975- Employment of a recreation director via Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (“CETA”) funds. The recreation director was utilized to initiate recreational programs in cooperation with the School District.
- (d) 1976- Organized recreation was implemented and included open gymnasiums, junior golf program, tennis lessons, and daily summer recreation programs. CETA funds expired and the City was forced to eliminate organized recreation programming.
- (e) 1976- Revision and update to the parks and recreation plan, including recommendations for second City park in addition to Bates Scout Park; development of an existing landfill on the east side of the City; improvements

to existing facilities; and exploration of staffing for a parks and recreation department.

- (f) 1984- Revision and update to the parks and recreation plan, including recommendations for continued development and improvement of facilities at Bates Scout Park; continued development of and improvement to existing mini-parks; and to develop the landfill site for recreational purposes.
- (g) 1993- The City of Laingsburg Development and Tax Increment Financing Plan (“TIFA Plan”) was presented by the Laingsburg Downtown Development Authority (“DDA”) and recommended the following: improve the existing city-owned mini-park in the downtown area; develop an amphitheater in the mini-park; streetscape improvements, such as lighting and landscaping; improve abandoned railroad right-of-way; and explore the development of a community center and/or swimming pool facilities.
- (h) 1993- Development of a five (5) year parks and recreation plan that included social and physical characteristics of the community; inclusion of a public forum; and implementation of a survey to measure perceptions and attitudes of the public. LARC met to develop the action plan and set goals, objectives and priorities.
- (i) 2003- Review and update to the five (5) parks and recreation plan by utilizing new social and physical characteristics; surveying the community for changing attitudes; and examining goals, objectives and priorities in light of potential new information. The process of review and update included participation in the Michigan State University Small Down Design Initiative.

Plan Overview

In keeping with the mission statement cited above, this Plan update is utilized as a forum for the City and its residents and businesses to explore opportunities, develop plans, and describe actions to implement plan in order to provide facilities to meet current and future needs of the community. The Plan is structured to meet the mandated MDNR requirements in order for the City to be eligible for potential funding opportunities. These requirements are as follows:

- (a) Community Description;
- (b) Administrative Structure;
- (c) Recreation Inventory;
- (d) Description of Planning Process
- (e) Description of Public Input Process
- (f) Goals and Objectives

(g) Action Programming

The following is a chapter by chapter summary of the contents of this Plan, which meet or exceed the minimum requirements as set forth by the MDNR for Plan approval:

- (a) Under Chapter 2 of this Plan, a physical and social description of the City and, to an extent, the greater community surrounding the City is provided. Information includes population and housing demographics and a description of physical characteristics, including land use and transportation patterns.
- (b) Under Chapter 3 of this Plan, the administrative structure and decision-making process is described. Budgets, capital improvements, funding sources, and coordination with other entities are also examined.
- (c) Under Chapter 4 of this Plan, a recreation inventory of existing facilities is provided. This inventory includes an assessment of barrier-free accessibility, as well as the status of any on-going parks and recreation improvements utilizing public funding.
- (d) Under Chapter 5 of this Plan, an inventory of resources that could be potentially utilized for parks and recreation purposes is provided. This inventory is optional for MDNR to accept the Plan for funding purposes, but is included in this Plan as a logical effort to extend the goals and objectives and action programming that are also discussed as a part of this Plan.
- (e) Under Chapter 6 of this Plan, planning methods are discussed in detail, including the methods to obtain public input and the results of the public input. The City elected to develop a survey for dissemination to City households, as well as the general public, and to hold a community forum to discuss goals and objectives with the citizenry.
- (f) Under Chapter 7 of this Plan, goals and objectives are outlined based upon data gathered under previous chapters, including demographics, inventories and public input. The goals and objectives section of this Plan update is utilized to identify specific park and recreational improvements designed to:
 - Facilitate fitness and leisure activities through the development of new facilities and maintenance of existing facilities;
 - Protect and conserve to the extent possible green space and environmental integrity of the land;
 - Develop, protect and enhance the community's natural, cultural and historic areas;

- Provide improved accessibility for citizens of all ability, age and activity levels; and
- Enhance the economic development of the community, as the improvement of parks creates aesthetically pleasing green space that provides an attraction to downtown businesses and neighborhoods.

This chapter also outlines how actions are coordinated with the goals and objectives that are set forth and how the City intends to address the objectives through identifiable actions.

CHAPTER 2

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Introduction

The following sections are provided to establish the basic characteristics of the City of Laingsburg (“City”). These basic characteristics not only provide the foundation for consideration of goals and objectives under this Five (5) Year Parks and Recreation Plan (“Plan”), but define the limitations for goals and objectives as well. These basic characteristics of the City include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a.) Natural and man-made physical attributes;
- (b.) Social and demographic make-up;
- (c.) Transportation; and
- (d.) Land use and zoning.

Physical Characteristics

The City is located in Shiawassee County approximately fifteen (15) miles northeast of Lansing/East Lansing. The City encompasses approximately 1.6 square miles and is bordered on three (3) sides by Sciota Township in Shiawassee County and on one (1) side by Victor Township to the west in Clinton County.

Generally speaking, the topography within the City is rolling. The majority of the City's land is not constrained from development by topography. Soils within the City's jurisdiction are made up of two (2) general soil groups as determined by the June 1974 Soil Survey of Shiawassee County completed by the United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service.

Miami-Conover-Brookston Association: Well drained to poorly drained, nearly level to steep, loamy soils on till plains and moraines. With the exception of the southwest corner of the City, the majority of the City's jurisdiction is under this general classification of soils.

Carlisle-Gilford-Tawas Association: Very poorly drained, nearly level, mucky and loamy soils on outwash plains and in glacial drainage ways. The southwest corner of the City along the Looking Glass River is the only area where this classification applies.

Water resources within the City include Diamond Lake (a privately owned lake located at the western limits of the City) and the Looking Glass River. The approximate northern boundary of the City is the watershed divide between the Maple River to the north and the Looking Glass River to the south.

There still exist areas of open fields used for agricultural production in the southern and eastern portions of the City. The southwest corner of the City, including land adjacent to the Looking Glass River, is mostly low land with shrub bushes and cattails. The generalized soil and wetland information indicate that the southwest corner of the City is not suited for urban levels of development. The best areas for development lie north and southeast of the downtown.

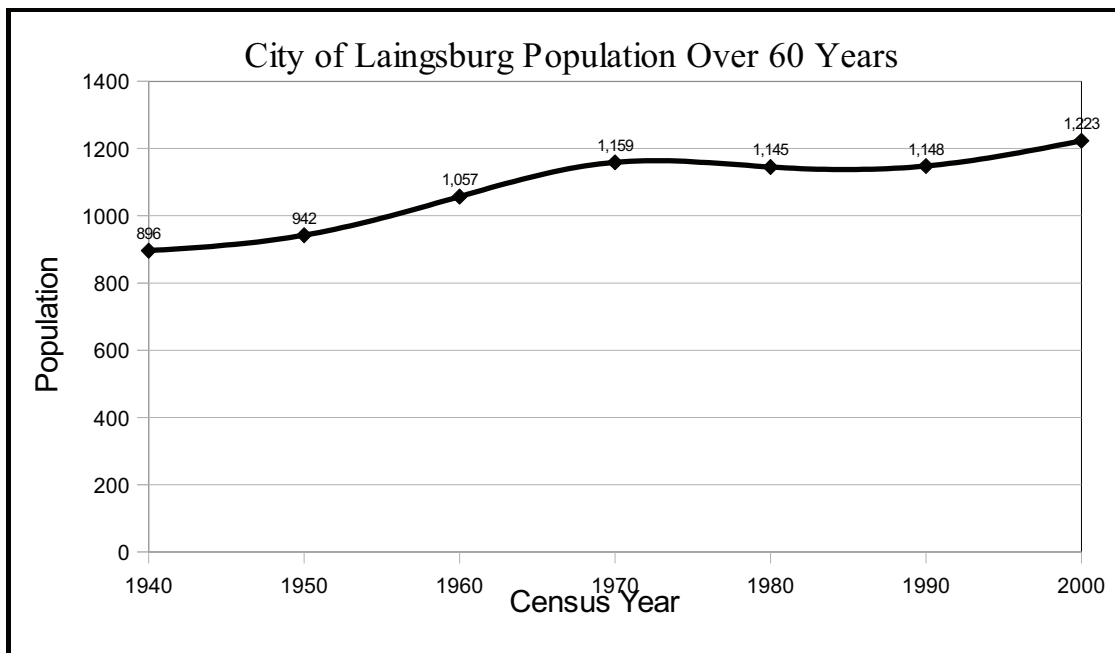
Deciduous trees and forest land are located along the Looking Glass River. Bates Scout Park, located in the northeastern corner is approximately one-half hardwood trees. Mature trees are located throughout the established residential areas of the City.

Social Demographics

The following information is based upon public and published information provided by the United State Census Bureau.

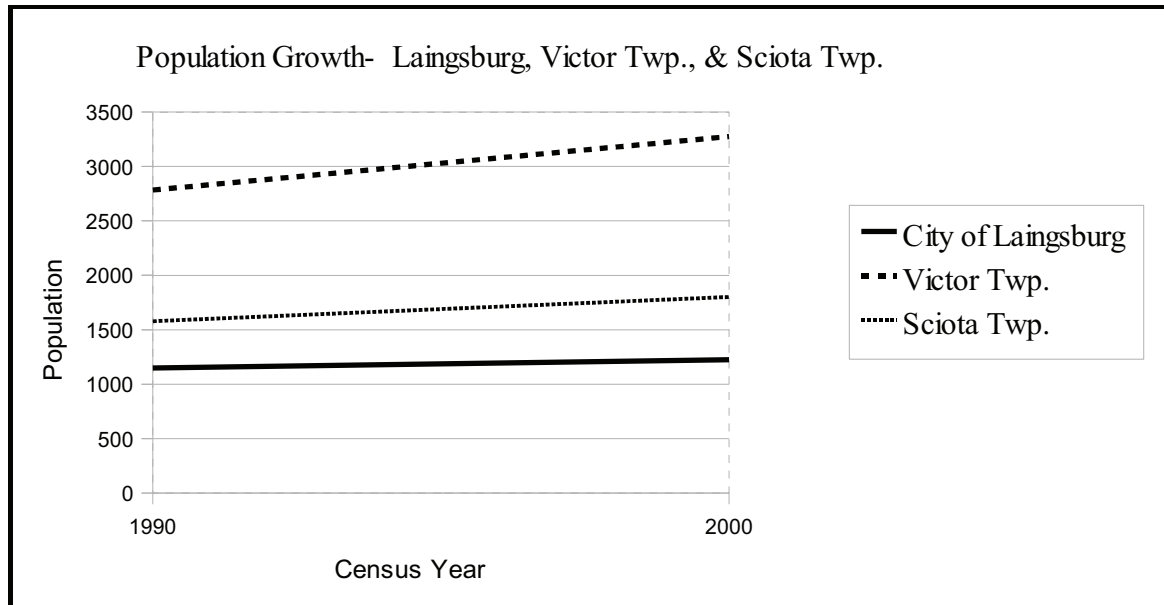
Population Characteristics

Based on the last available census conducted in 2000, the total population of the City is 1,223 persons. As illustrated in the graph provided below, the City has experienced a gradual rise and leveling of population growth throughout the sixty (60) year period described. The population of the City did decrease between 1970 and 1980 and remained relatively unchanged between 1980 and 1990. The population did increase between 1990 and 2000 by a little over six (6) percent.



The City lies between the political subdivisions of Sciota Township in Shiawassee County and Victor Township in Clinton County. Although the City experienced a six (6) percent

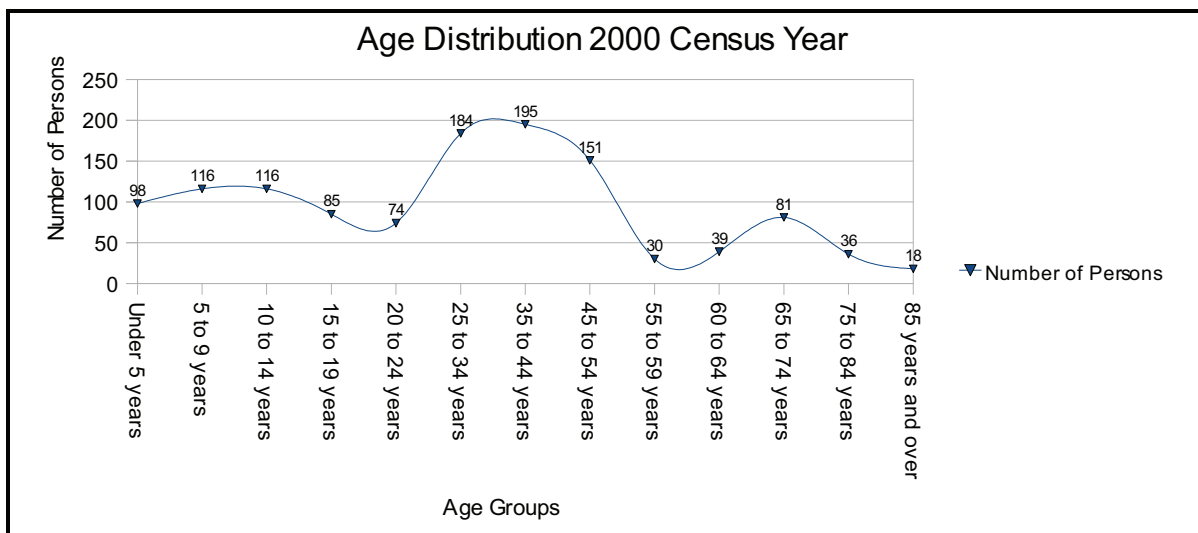
increase in population between 1990 and 2000, these townships respectively saw increases of approximately twelve (12) and fifteen (15) percent. Please see graph below.



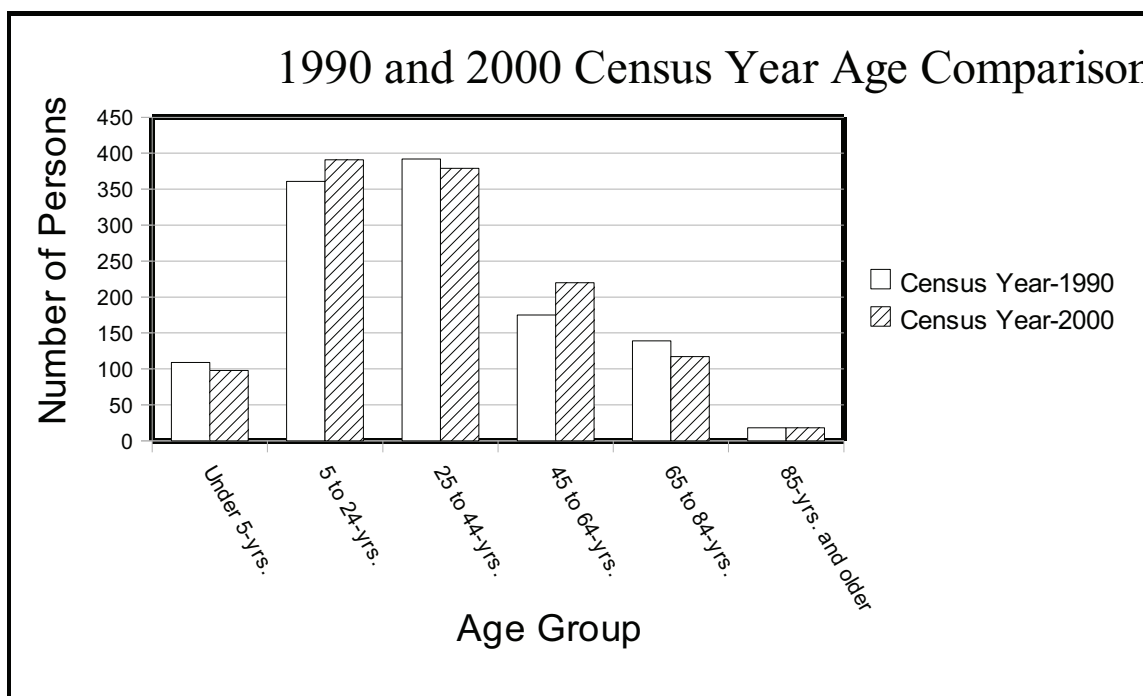
Overall the three (3) communities experienced a total population growth rate of twelve (12) percent as seven hundred and eighty-nine (789) persons were added to the three communities between 1990 and 2000.

Age Characteristics

Of the 1,223 persons counted in the 2000 census: 98 (8.0%) of the residents were under the age of five years; 232 (19%) between the ages of five and fourteen years; 159 (13.1%) between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four years; 379 (30.9%) between the ages of twenty-five and forty-four years; 220 (18%) between the ages of forty-four and sixty-four years; and 135 (11%) were sixty-five years or older. Please see the graphs and charts provided below.



The shift in age distribution between the 1990 and 2000 census is shown in the chart below.



Gender Characteristics

Of the 1,223 persons counted in the 2000 census, 614 (50.2%) of the residents were male and 609 (49.8%) were female. As a rule, the population is often distributed with a higher ratio of female to male as the life expectancy of a female is greater than that of a male. Due to the fairly equal distribution of gender, no chart or graph is provided.

Race/Ethnicity Characteristics

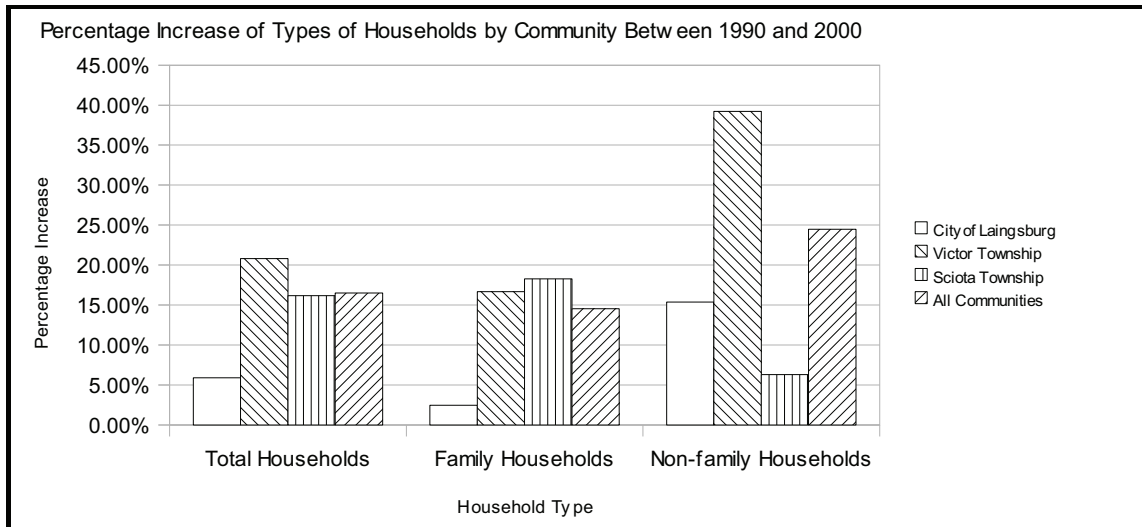
Of the 1,223 persons counted in the 2000 census, 1,210 (98.9%) identified themselves as one race. Of those declaring to be one race, 1,199 (98%) of the individuals identified themselves as “White” alone. The remaining 11 (2%) were identified as follows: Two (2) Black or African American; two (2) American Indian and Alaska Native; two (2) as Asian and five (5) as some other race. Thirteen (13) people identified themselves as two or more races. Seven (7) as White, Black or African American; five (5) as White, American Indian and Alaska Native and one (1) as White and Asian. This information is based strictly on responses received from resident completion of U.S. Census surveys. Due to the relatively homogeneous nature of the distribution of race, no chart or graph is provided.

Household Characteristics

In consideration of the number of households, the 2000 census cited that 441 households were maintained within the City. This represents an increase of six (6) percent over the 415 households cited in the 1990 census. This is essentially the same percentage of increase in population during the same period of time. What may be significant for the City though is that even though the percentage increase was similar to the population, there appears to have been a transition in the type of households in the City. While households overall increased

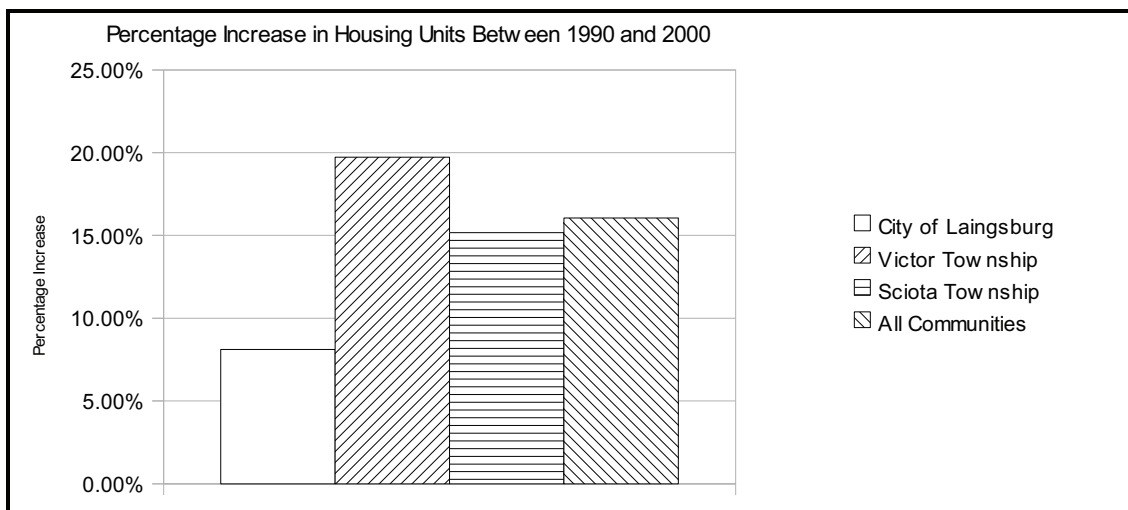
by six (6) percent, the number of family households increased by approximately two and a half (2.5) percent while non-family households increased by approximately fifteen and a half (15.5) percent.

Overall, the three (3) units of government experienced an increase in the number of households by approximately sixteen and a half (16.5) percent. Family households increased approximately fourteen and a half (14.5) percent, while non-family households increased by approximately twenty four and a half (24.5) percent. The following graphs illustrate some of the changes that have taken place between 1990 and 2000.



Housing Unit Characteristics

The total number of housing units within the City has increased a total of 38 units from 430 in 1990 to 468 in 2000.



Transportation

Based upon the Michigan Department of Transportation (“MDOT”) classification system for public roadways, the street system of the City of Laingsburg is comprised of approximately six (6) miles of local streets and approximately four (4) miles of major streets. The major streets are as follows:

Grand River Road is an east-west major street that bisects the developed areas of the City and can essentially be considered the City's “Main Street” as it is the primary transportation route into and through the City's downtown. Grand River Rd. intersects with M-52 approximately six (6) miles to the east. As Round Lake Rd., Grand River Rd. intersects US-127 approximately ten (10) miles to the west. In October of 2008, Grand River Rd. was repaved from the intersections of Woodhull St. and Grand River Rd. to West St. and Grand River Rd.

Woodbury Road is a north-south county primary road along the eastern edge of the City. Woodbury Rd. can be taken from the City south to a major interchange with I-69. I-69 is an interstate highway that provides access to the cities of Flint, Lansing, and East Lansing. These cities are major metropolitan areas with a wide variety of cultural and employment centers, including industrial, university and government complexes.

Meridian Rd. is a north-south county primary road that proceeds north from Grand River Rd. Meridian Rd. intersects with M-21 in the Village of Ovid approximately five (5) miles to the north. Meridian Rd. does not continue south of Grand River Rd. due to wetlands and flood plains associated with the Looking Glass River. Meridian Rd. derives its name from the north-south survey line that was instituted through the entire length of Michigan to develop the town and range system in the 1800's.

Future Land Use & Zoning

The City adopted a revised and updated Zoning Ordinance in 2008. This revision and update was undertaken to create a consistent and user-friendly document for use by the City, its residents and businesses, and those wishing to develop within the City. The 2008 Zoning Ordinance is in compliance with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act No. 110 of the Public Acts of Michigan of 2006 (MCL 125.3101 et. seq.), as amended, and the Michigan Planning Enabling Act No. 33 of the Public Act of Michigan of 2008 (MCL 125.3801 et seq.), as amended.

The Zoning Ordinance divides the City into a number of uniform districts. These districts have within them certain uses that are permitted by-right, or permitted through special consideration of their particular attributes. All regulations within the districts are uniform unless specifically addressed as part of use that is permitted through special consideration. For new development within the City, the Zoning Ordinance does require landscaping and provisions for open space. Sidewalks are encouraged to be implemented at the time of development and in areas where future connections to other pedestrian transportation routes may be feasible.

The City is also undertaking the revision and update of the City's Master Plan. The Master Plan is a document developed by the Planning Commission that seeks to act as a guide for decision-making regarding the physical development of the City, and other areas where applicable, through a coordinated set of policies. Although the Master Plan will be completed following the adoption of this Plan, the two (2) plans will be consistent and harmonious. Both Plans will be adopted by the City Council.

Schools

The Laingsburg Community School District (“School District”) occupies approximately forty-five (45) square miles and includes all of the City and portions of following communities: Sciota, Woodhull, Victor and Bath Townships. Existing school district facilities include a high school (grades 9-12), a middle school (grades 6-8), an elementary school (grades 1-5), and an early childhood education center (preschool-K). Enrollment over the nine year period described below has remained fairly stable ranging from a low of 1,284 students in 2000-2001 to a high of 1,336 in 2005-2006.

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>School Year</u>	<u>Students</u>
2000-2001:	1,284	2005-2006:	1,336
2001-2002:	1,286	2006-2007:	1,296
2002-2003:	1,305	2007-2008:	1,316
2003-2004:	1,318	2008-2009:	1,278
2004-2005:	1,331		

The high school, which is not within the City, was initially constructed in 1993 with space for four hundred (400) students. In 2001, a bond was passed that allowed for the construction of a new middle school and complete restoration of the gymnasium at the existing middle school. The bond money also provided for additional classroom space at the high school, remodeling two wings of the former middle school into an early childhood education center, and extensive remodeling and improvements at the elementary school.

Page Intentionally Left Blank

CHAPTER 3

PARKS AND RECREATION ADMINISTRATION

Introduction

The following sections detail the administrative structure of the City of Laingsburg (“City”) for the management and administration of parks and recreation activities in the City.

Administrative and Decision-Making Roles

The primary legislative, executive and financial authority of the City is the City Council. By Charter, the City Council is enabled to establish a sub-committee of the City Council as deemed necessary. The first parks and recreation sub-committee was established in 1969. This sub-committee as it exists today consists of three (3) members appointed by the Mayor for two-year terms. The primary role of this sub-committee is to address parks and recreation issues and make recommendations to the City Council concerning the same.

The City Planning Commission is primarily responsible for future land use planning and development of the City's Master Plan. The Planning Commission is also responsible for administering the City Zoning Ordinance (“Ordinance”). Given these responsibilities, the Planning Commission functions and performs duties to guide and regulate residential and commercial development. The Planning Commission therefore does impact the provisions of the Parks and Recreation Plan (“Plan”) as the City develops overtime.

The Laingsburg Area Recreation Committee (“LARC”) is a citizen recreation advisory group that volunteers to work with the parks and recreation sub-committee and the Planning Commission to support the City’s efforts to plan and provide recreational opportunities and facilities for the residents, business owners and visitors of the City.

The City does not have a permanent dedicated employee or position for the management and administration of the City's parks and recreation activities. The Department of Public Works (“DPW”) director, which is a full-time position with the City, has been and is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the parks, including the scheduling of maintenance, supervision of construction projects and supervision of DPW staff.

The City clerk, treasurer and administrative support staff also support parks and recreation activities by scheduling ball fields for organized play, scheduling McClintock Park and Bates Scout Park pavilion and facilities, and administering the summer swim program. The City's police department also plays a role through the monitoring of activities and enforcement of local ordinances established to protect the use and enjoyment of the City's parks, recreation and open space areas.

Budgets, Capital Improvements, and Programming

The City maintains a yearly budget from the general fund for the administration of parks and recreation. Funds not appropriated in a given fiscal year (July 1st to June 30th of a given year)

are often carried over in restricted reserve for use in future budget years in a variety of ways, including utilization as matching funds for potential grants. The following table illustrates the commitment of the City to fund parks and recreation programming and capital improvements overtime. Please note these figures represent general fund expenditures as well as expenditures of grant funds that were available to the City.

FUNDING TABLE	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Maintenance	\$2,473	\$1,167	\$3,304	\$3,465	\$1,666	\$6,015	\$1,855
Operations/Supplies	\$13,586	\$12,253	\$17,445	\$28,498	\$30,723	\$13,730	\$14,514
Capital Improvements	\$4,290	\$7,000	\$14,112	\$2,185	\$121,000	\$1,920	\$1,141
Annual Totals	\$20,349	\$20,420	\$34,861	\$34,148	\$153,389	\$21,665	\$17,510

Funding Sources

The operation, maintenance and development of parks and recreation in the City are funded by three (3) funding sources. These include:

- (a.) General Fund- The general fund is the primary funding source for the majority of activities and expenditures in the City. The revenue sources for the general fund include property taxes (including state revenue sharing) and fees for services.
- (b.) Grants- With an established and properly updated Plan, the City is eligible for a variety of grants for acquisition, development and operation of parks and recreation facilities. A summary of major grant resources are provided below. The listing of these grants do not prevent the City from seeking and receiving other grants from other resources, including foundations and donations.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (“LWCF”)

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (16 U.S.C. 4601-4 et seq) established a fund from which the United States Congress can make appropriations for outdoor recreation and authorizes federal grants for the support of outdoor recreation capital improvements at all levels of government. The program is administered at the federal level by the United States Department of the Interior and allocation is made to participating states. The program is administered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (“MDNR”) and grants are offered to local communities on a competitive basis. LWCF funds are primarily utilized for development.

Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF)

Originally a state law (Michigan Public Act 204 of 1976, Kammer Recreational Land Trust Fund) for the purpose of public acquisition of land for outdoor recreation, the fund was later incorporated into the Michigan Constitution. The MDNR is constitutionally mandated to administer the fund.

Public Act 451 of 1994, Part 19, is the enabling statute for fund operations. Distribution to local communities is based on a competitive grant process. MNRTF funds are utilized for acquisition and development. It is constitutionally mandated that no more than twenty-five (25) percent of the projects funded are to be for development purposes.

Transportation Enhancement Program (TE)- Administered by the Michigan Department of Transportation (“MDOT”), the funds are derived from state's Surface Transportation Program (“STP”) funds allocated by the federal government under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (“SAFETEA-LU”). Of the twelve (12) activities eligible under the SAFETEA-LU, the following may be relevant to this planning effort:

- Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Preservation of abandoned railway corridors (Including the conversion and use thereof for pedestrian or bicycle trails)
- Provision of safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Landscaping and other scenic beautification
- Acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites, including historic battlefields
- Scenic or historic highway programs (including the provision of tourist and welcome center facilities)
- Historic preservation
- Rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures, or facilities (including historic railroad facilities and canals)

Safe Routes 2 School

The Safe Routes 2 School (“SR2S”) was enacted in 2005 as part of SAFETEA-LU. Its passage provided \$612 million in funding nationwide for five (5) years. Each state is proportioned funding based on its share of national student enrollment in grades K-8. The program is administered by the Office of Transportation Economic Development and Enhancement (TEDE) of MDOT.

The stated purpose of the program is:

- To enable and encourage children to walk and bicycle to school;
- To create an environment where bicycling and walking to school is a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age;

- To facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of elementary schools.

Examples of projects and programs that are eligible for SR2S funding include:

- Sidewalks;
- Traffic calming and speed reduction;
- Pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements;
- On-street and off-street bicycle facilities;
- Off-street pedestrian facilities;
- Traffic diversion improvements in the vicinity of schools;
- Activities to encourage walking and bicycling to school;
- Public awareness campaign, community outreach;
- Traffic enforcement operations in the vicinity of schools;
- Traffic education;
- Student training sessions (bicycle and pedestrian safety); and
- Funding for training volunteers and managers of SR2S programs.

Waterways Fund Grants-in-Aid

Administered by the MDNR, this grant program assists local communities in developing locally owned water access sites by having funds available for engineering studies and infrastructure improvements.

- (c.) Fund Raising/Donations- From time to time various groups have raised funds for parks and recreation activities and improvements in the City. These groups include: Laingsburg Lions Club, Downtown Development Authority, Laingsburg Youth Baseball League, local Boy Scouts of America and Girl Scouts of the USA troops, and individual donations.

Coordination of Public and Private Entities

There exists a variety of recreation providers and supporters (in and within close proximity to the City) that range from public agencies, such as the City and Laingsburg Community Schools, to private entities, such as churches, civic groups and business owners. The principal public and semi-public recreation sites are outlined in Chapter 4, Parks and Recreation Inventory.

Public

City of Laingsburg

Laingsburg Public Library
Laingsburg Community School District

Private

Teddy Bear Den Preschool
First Baptist Church/Laingsburg Christian School
Pine Hills Golf Course
Looking Glass Sportsman Club
Expressions Studio of Dance
Curves for Women

Service & Volunteer Groups

Lions & Lionesses Club
Laingsburg Business Association
Laingsburg Sports Boosters
Friends of the Library
Parents Association of Laingsburg Students
Laingsburg Educational Advancement Foundation (LEAF)
American Legion & Auxiliary/Sons of the American Legion
Laingsburg Area Recreation Committee (LARC)
4-H
Girl Scouts of the USA
Boy Scouts of America
American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO)
Laingsburg Youth Baseball League

Page Intentionally Left Blank

CHAPTER 4

PARKS AND RECREATION INVENTORY

Introduction

The following sections provide an inventory of parks and recreation facilities in the City of Laingsburg ("City"). This inventory describes what presently exists within the City and provides a fundamental foundation to move forward with the examination of goals and objectives under this Five (5) Year Parks and Recreation Plan ("Plan").

Inventory

The City maintains four (4) public parks. The following is a description of each park, including physical characteristics and available facilities. A parks and recreation inventory map is provided in Appendix A, Pg. A-1.

Bates Scout Park- Located in the northwest quadrant of the City, the park is comprised of approximately eighteen and a half (18½) acres and is considered a community park serving not only the residents of the City, but those of neighboring townships and the Laingsburg Community School District ("School District").

The park is accessible from both West St. running east and west and Meridian Rd. running north and south. The principal access to the site and all facilities is via a one-



way gravel circle drive intersecting with West St. There is another drive along West St. that provides access to one of the ballfields, but not the rest of the park. The other drive into the park provides access to from Meridian Rd. and points west of the City. The park is identified by signage along West St.

The following facilities are available at the park-

- Two (2) pavilions are located in the park. The first pavilion is approximately thirty-five (35) feet by sixty-five (65) feet and the second is approximately thirty (30) by forty (40) feet. Both pavilions combined



provide almost thirty-five hundred (3,500) square feet of usable space for picnics, family reunions and other organized events.

- Parking is accommodated in both small gravel pull-offs from the circle drive and in a larger unmarked grass parking area to the north of the apex of the circle drive near the ball fields. Two other parking areas are available. One is located off of Meridian Rd. on the far western edge of the park and the other is located off of West St. servicing one of the ballfields. One (1) designated barrier-free parking space is provided adjacent to the structure containing restroom facilities.
- The Lions Club maintains a thirty (30) foot by forty (40) foot storage facility at the park. This facility is used for the storage of materials utilized by the Lions Club in pursuit of their activities in the community.
- Restrooms are provided in a cinder block building near the middle of the park. Portable restrooms are provided from time to time, especially during periods when the baseball fields are most active. Note in the photo below the barrier-free parking sign in the center of the structure.



- Sporting venues include: five (5) baseball diamonds with backstops and fencing and a basketball hoop on a concrete quarter-court. The open space areas have also been utilized for general recreation and considered for use as soccer fields. A concession stand and bleachers are available for patron use at the baseball fields.



- Playground equipment includes swings, slides, a merry-go-round, spring mounted rides, climbing structures and a play structure. These facilities are generally located along the eastern perimeter of the park.
- Additional facilities located throughout the wooded area of the park include a number of picnic tables, grills, trash receptacles, benches, a monument and a rustic hand lever water pump.



McClintock Park- Located north of the City's downtown business district, the four (4) plus acre park is a community park that serves the greater Laingsburg area, including those who reside and work in the City, residents of surrounding townships, and the School District. The park is directly accessible from McClintock St., High St. and Woodhull St. As can be seen in the photographs below, the park is surrounded by existing residential neighborhoods and is essentially at the heart of the City.

The following facilities are available at the park:

- A pavilion is located at the southern end of the park and across the street from City Hall. The building provides ample covered space for organized gatherings and has available restroom facilities. Paved parking is



provided west of the park structure and an elementary and toddler age playground is located between the parking lot and the pavilion.

- Paved parking is also provided at the north end of the park. The primary parking for the sporting and playground facilities is located at the northern end of the park and the primary parking for the pavilion is at the southern end.
- A walking path connects the northern and southern portions of the park. The walking path also intersects with public sidewalk systems at each end of the park.



- Sporting venues include: Two (2) tennis courts, two (2) sand volley ball courts, and a skateboard/bicycle ramp, grind, and step facility.



- Playground equipment includes age appropriate playground structures for infant, toddler and elementary age children. Organized events include

“movie night at the park” and the park is often part of planned holiday events. A small sledding hill is also made available for use.

- The park also has available picnic tables, benches, grills and trash receptacles.

Memorial Park- Located within the central business district, this mini-park (less than a tenth of an acre) is landscaped with a lighted pathway. Included in the park is a brick memorial honoring the veterans of foreign wars and a flag box for the disposal of unrepairable and/or unserviceable U.S. Flags. The flag box was implemented as part of Eagle Scout project. Seven (7) flagpoles are also incorporated into the design of the park flying the flags of the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Flag, as well as a Prisoner of War (“POW”) flag.

Abbott/Treat Street Park- This park located southeast of the City's downtown business district is situated in a residential area at the intersection of two (2) dead-end streets. The park, which is approximately three (3) acres in size, is essentially a neighborhood park and for the most part maintained open space. Through the addition of goal structures, the park is utilized for special purposes as a practice field by the local chapter of the American Youth Soccer Organization (“AYSO”). There are no defined facilities for access or parking and no restroom facilities on-site.



Other principal recreation areas in the City include public schools, churches and private establishments. The following is a description of these other principal recreation areas, including physical characteristics and available facilities. Smaller facilities, such as small playgrounds associated with pre-schools, daycares, churches and multiple-family developments are not included in the description below.

Laingsburg Elementary School- The public elementary school is located in the north central part of the City and borders the northern limits of the City. In that the recreation area is part of an active elementary school, the school park is comprised of elementary age appropriate equipment in two (2) playground areas and expanses of open space. The equipment includes swing sets, jungle gyms, and other typical playground apparatus. The open space is also utilized by organized groups, such as AYSO, for

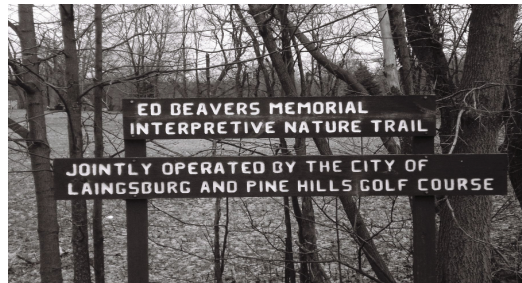


soccer practice and games for younger age groups that do not require full size soccer fields. A cinder walking path is provided around the open space area and a walking path/nature trail is located to the north of and behind the school through a wooded area.



Laingsburg Middle School- Situated south and east of the downtown business district, the public middle school as a school park has basketball facilities and a large open space area. The open space is typically used for a variety of recreation purposes by the surrounding residential neighborhood.

Pine Hills Golf Course/Ed Beavers Walking Trail- The Pine Hills Golf Course is an eighteen (18) hole facility located in the northeast quadrant of the City. Forty (40) acres of the golf course is owned by the City and is under a one hundred (100) year lease to Pine Hills Golf Course. There is a path called the Ed Beavers Memorial Interpretive Nature Trail that was developed as part of the City's lease and an Eagle Scout project.



This trail is approximately two-thirds (2/3) of a mile with the types of trees marked along its path.



Baptist Church- Located at the northwest corner of Grand River Rd. and Woodbury Rd., the church has playground equipment and an open field used for soccer. These facilities are provided as part of the church operated school and/or daycare. The facilities, however, are utilized by neighborhood children and adults.

Accessibility Assessment

Parks and recreation facilities within the City are intended to be used by the widest variety of individuals that seek recreation. This includes individuals with disabilities. All new recreational facilities in the City will be developed to meet the American Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”) and where insofar as feasible, the City will strive to ensure that existing facilities will be improved overtime in accordance with the American with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (“ADAAG”).

In order to address barrier-free and accessibility issues within the City's existing parks, it is necessary to review those parks and assign a rank. This assessment will assist in establishing goals, objectives and priorities in the future. Each existing park under the management and/or ownership of the City is ranked according to the schedule below.

Rank - 1: None of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines

Rank - 2: Some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines

Rank - 3: Most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines

For each park ranked, some commentary is provided based on general knowledge of the park as well as general provisions outlined in the ADAAG. It is the desire of the City to develop a citizen committee similar to the Laingsburg Area Recreation Committee (“LARC”) that advises the parks and recreation sub-committee of the City Council on such accessibility and barrier-free issues in the future.

Bates Scout Park (Rank - 2)

Due to the age of the park, lack of paved surfaces, and dedicated parking areas, it is anticipated that the majority of the park is not barrier-free. However, due to some barrier-free accommodations, such as the barrier-free parking space and possible restrooms, the site is not provided with the lowest ranking as not meeting any of the accessibility guidelines.

McClintock Park (Rank - 3)

The majority of McClintock Park is barrier-free and does meet accessibility guidelines. Appropriately sloped paved surfaces are used to access the park and the pavilion. Restroom facilities meet requirements for barrier-free accessibility and the sports facilities and playground equipment provided allow for unencumbered access. All of McClintock Park was upgraded between 2004 and 2008.

Memorial Park (Rank - 3)

Due to its urban nature and a specific use lacking facilities and equipment, Memorial Park is in substantial compliance with the accessibility guidelines.

Abbott/Treat Street Park (Rank - 1)

This park is relatively unimproved and lacking of accessible routes to the open space facilities that do exist. It is assumed that the park does not meet accessibility requirements set forth in the ADAAG.

City Recreation Grant Status Report

In the last thirty (30) years, the City has participated with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources ("MDNR") to obtain and utilize grant funds from available funding sources. Participation has been limited to the Land and Water Conservation Fund ("LWCF").

Please find below a listing of each grant received and applicable information as to where and how the funds were utilized.

LWCF Grant Id. #852- Bates Park Expansion

In 1977, the City was approved for \$5,037.00 to expand the approximately eight (8) acre Bates Scout Park by acquiring additional property. The City acquired more than ten (10) acres to the west of the existing park at the time.

LWCF Grant Id. #1613- Laingsburg McClintock Park Improvements

In 2004, the City was approved for \$307,000 to develop and improve the existing park. Improvements to the park included: demolition and removal of outdated equipment and facilities and construction of a plaza entrance, pavilion, restrooms, parking, sidewalks, playground equipment, tot lot, picnic tables, fencing, lighting and an improved sledding hill.

LWCF Grant Id. #1629- Laingsburg McClintock Park Improvements

In 2005, the City was approved for \$337,700 to develop and improve the existing park. Improvements to the park included: construction of new parking, tennis courts, volleyball court, playground, skate park, walking trail, benches and landscaping.

CHAPTER 5

RESOURCE INVENTORY

Introduction

The following sections describe the possible resources that may be available to the City of Laingsburg (“City”) for future recreational use. The intent of the resource inventory is not to identify areas already utilized for purposes of parks and recreation, but to identify areas that have the potential to be utilized for parks and recreation purposes. These can include areas of open space, natural features, and other areas that may be desirable to protect or acquire for future use.

The resource inventory can also be used to identify routes and corridors that connect existing or future recreation areas. These routes should be acquired, protected, or implementation programmed to ensure adequate connectivity and a robust system of access to enhance existing and future recreation opportunities. A parks and recreation inventory map is provided in Appendix A, Pg. A-1 and a potential non-motorized route and connectivity map is provided in Appendix A, Pg. A-2.

City Owned Land

Other than land currently being utilized for parks and recreation purposes, the City owns land for municipal purposes other than parks and recreation.

City Hall - The City Hall, which houses all departments of the City, is located on the southeast corner of Woodhull St. and McClintock St. south of McClintock Park. The site is essentially built-out and there would appear to be limited future use of the site for recreation purposes.

Irene St.- In 2008, the City acquired a vacant residential structure and lot at the southeast corner of McClintock Park immediately north of City Hall. It is anticipated that upon demolition of the structure that the lot will be incorporated in some fashion with the existing facilities at McClintock Park. Initial consideration of uses include sledding hill and basketball court.

Grand River Rd. Property- The City also owns property to the west of Memorial Park on Grand River Rd. This site was acquired by the City in 2008 for future public use. Such future development may include the expansion of Memorial Park, utilization of grounds as a gathering place or open space, or as the future site of a public facility. Given its central location downtown, location near the post office, and proximity to McClintock Park, the site has the potential to be a regional draw and therefore imperative to be connected to other recreational facilities in the City.

Waste Water Treatment Facility- The City does own a large portion of land in its southwest quadrant. This area is generally located between the former railroad right-of-way south to the Looking Glass River. The primary access for this property is

from Railroad St. This property is primarily used as the lagoon system for City's municipal wastewater treatment.

Though it is necessary that the wastewater treatment facility be a secure area and have limited exposure to the general public, there may be opportunities at the fringes of the property to provide routes to connect use and recreation areas to the south. This area is also the only land that is within the City's jurisdiction that has access to the Looking Glass River. There may exist opportunities for a boat launch that is both accessible to the public by way of the public road and by a possible nature trail connecting the City's downtown with the boat launch. This connection is discussed in greater detail below under the section titled "natural and manufactured pathways and corridors".

Reclaimed City Landfill- The City also owns forty (40) acres of property at the far eastern portion of the City. This property was once a City owned landfill, but is now reclaimed for use and leased to the Pine Hills Golf Course for recreational purposes. At the southern boundary of the golf course, there is a dedicated trail known as the Ed Beavers Memorial Interpretive Nature Trail, which is described in the preceding parks and recreation inventory. The remnants of a previous railroad bed exists along the northern boundary of the golf course. The City may wish to explore enhancing the trail and/or increasing its length by exploring opportunities around the fringes of the property leased to the proprietors of Pine Hills Golf Course.

Hogsback- The City owns property commonly identified as the "hogsback" to the south of the City's downtown. The name is derived from the topographical ridge line through the property. The hogsback lies between and connects the City's wastewater treatment facility property and Woodhull St. The City has discussed the potential use of this property for recreational purposes in the past. Such suggestions have included open space, trails and sledding due to its topography. The DDA has discussed the possibility of development of the area as a community center.

Natural Open Space

Utilizing the City's Master Plan as the primary source of information, there are areas of natural open space, under private ownership, that due to their particular traits may not be suitable for future development without great implementation cost or are regulated areas by the State of Michigan due to flood plains or wetlands. The two (2) areas that are most notable are located on the west side of the City.

The first area is immediately north of the City owned property that contains the wastewater treatment facility and includes lands south of Grand River Rd. This area is low-lying and subject to intense flooding. This area may wish to be considered for preservation in conjunction with the portions of the City's property to the south. Such preservation could be through acquisition, donation by private landowners or dedication of a conservation easement. The area should be considered under land use controls of both the City and state as undesirable for development. Between this

area and the City's property was previously used as a railroad. Portions of the railroad bed remain in place but are under private ownership.

The second area includes portions of a small private lake commonly known as Diamond Lake. This lake is partially located within the Sciota Township jurisdictional island formed by the City limits on three (3) sides and Victor Township to the west. This area is low-lying with portions prone to flooding.

Natural and Manufactured Pathways & Corridors

The intent of identifying possible corridors to connect existing and future recreation areas is to create a system of accessibility. Like many communities, the City has a number of parks, each with their own particular function. Though some facilities are duplicated in the existing parks, each park typically has a primary function. In order to make all these functions available and accessible, it is necessary to provide adequate connections and routes. Moreover, it is necessary to ensure that user's of the parks have safe and convenient routes to access each other, as well as other uses of land, such as linking residential and commercial areas, and linking residential areas with schools and churches.

Possible corridors are located throughout the City. These exist along roadways and sidewalks and as part of the natural open space areas noted in the preceding section. Some of the possible routes are along roadways that do not currently have parallel sidewalks or paths and could create possible hazards. Some existing sidewalks that are or could be used for connecting recreation and other land uses are inadequate either due to functional size or state of disrepair. The non-motorized route and connections map in Appendix A, Page A-2 shows the general location of possible corridors and routes to connect use areas in the City. The map provided in Appendix A, Page A-3 describes general condition and availability of routes and connections for non-motorized facilities.

The following are specific connections between use areas, including residential, recreational, commercial and school properties, that are in place or should be explored to better connect the City.

Bates Scout Park to Elementary School

Portions of the route between the park and the elementary school are improved with sidewalks. These sidewalks are predominately along the north and south side of West St. and where more recent subdivision development has taken place off of West St.



The portion of the route along 3rd St. between West St. and the elementary school does not have off-street paths or sidewalks. Shown below, there is a sidewalk on the south side of Prospect St. starting at Church St. and continuing to Elm Street.

Elementary School to McClintock Park

The route between the elementary school and McClintock Park would follow the south side of Prospect St. east to Elm St. and then south. The entire route does have available sidewalks. The sidewalks, however, are older and appear to have some maintenance issues and features (width and slope) that may prove to be a deterrent for barrier-free use.



McClintock Park to Ed Beavers Trail

The most logical route between McClintock Park and the trail would be from the park to High St. to Sciota St. to Shiawassee St. and then past the established cemeteries and across Woodbury Rd. to the trail. There is a newer sidewalk along the east side of McClintock Park and the west side of High St. The route along Sciota St. and Shiawassee St. does not have off-street pedestrian ways. The route is used none-the-less for recreational purposes. This may be due in part that Shiawassee St. is a boulevard street lined with mature trees. The street also has views of open fields, bisects the City's only cemeteries, and connects to the Ed Beavers Trail and the golf course.

McClintock Park to Downtown & Middle School

There are two (2) routes that can be taken from the park to the middle school. Existing sidewalks are provided along both Woodhull St. and High St. and provide unrestricted access to Grand River Rd. and across to both the east and west sides of the middle school.

Middle School to Abbott/Treat St. Park

Both Abbott St. and Treat St. have relatively low traffic counts and the park is a fairly short distance from Grand River Rd. and/or the middle school. There are, however, no off-street paths or sidewalks. Although the park is somewhat unimproved, it is none-the-less a usable open space and, as discussed below, a possible gateway to a connection to the high school to the south.

Abbott/Treat St. Park to Laingsburg High School

The principal vehicular entrance to the high school is from Woodbury Rd. and is a fair distance south of Grand River Rd. The high school property though is much closer to the City's jurisdictional boundary than the vehicular entrance. The southern boundary of the park is adjacent to two (2) large privately owned properties. These properties abut the park and either abut or are close to abutting the school property. Consideration could be given to obtaining an easement across one or both of these properties to connect the park to the high school. There already exists a connection to the high school via Benson Lane south of Grand River Rd. to behind a commercial establishment and the School District's bus garage. This connection however is not developed to standards or maintained by a single entity.

If a connection can be made to the park from the middle school and the downtown, then there is the opportunity for a non-motorized access point between the City and the high school. Such an alternative not only provides safe routes to school, but may be beneficial to encourage walking to and from activities, such as sporting events, at the high school.

Downtown to Looking Glass River

The only property within the City's jurisdiction that fronts on the Looking Glass River is owned by the City. If a water access site was desired along the river, the property owned by the City is continuous from the potential water access site to the City's downtown. A potential path could be created along the fringe of the City's property so as not to interfere with the use and operation of the wastewater treatment facility.

Looking Glass River to the Middle School

If a water access site was implemented along the river and a path was implemented along the fringes of the City's property as described above, the hogsback area could be utilized to connect the system to the middle school without accessing downtown streets.

Page Intentionally Left Blank

CHAPTER 6

PLANNING AND PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

Planning Methods

In establishing this Parks and Recreation Plan (“Plan”), the City of Laingsburg (“City”) utilized a systems approach. In using such an approach, the following tasks were performed in order to readily identify the desires of the community as well as practically address programming for improvements to meet those desires:

Identify parks, recreation and open space needs of the community through a variety of public input methods;

Develop an inventory of existing recreational facilities; and

Develop an inventory of potential opportunities for new recreational facilities.

Public Input Methods

Public input for this Plan included a survey, community forum and the public hearing prior to adoption. The City developed a compact survey to gather public views on issues related to parks and recreation in the City. This survey was distributed with a similar survey that sought public comment on issues related to land use and development in the City. These surveys were distributed to all taxpayers in the City along with their December 2008 tax notices as well as distributed to local businesses where the survey could be completed by those utilizing the services of the businesses. These two methods of distribution were chosen in an effort to receive the input of those who own residences and businesses in the City and to also measure the views of those who may work and or use City services, but do not reside within the City proper.

The survey instrument was directed toward individuals as well as their families and was comprised of questions ranging from which existing parks and recreation facilities does the respondent and family use in the City to what facilities are used outside of the City. Other questions sought comment concerning desired improvements to existing facilities and desired new facilities. The parks and recreation survey instrument is provided for review in Appendix B, Page B-1 and a summary of the results provided in Appendix B, Page B-2.

The City also held a community forum following receipt and processing of survey responses. This community forum was advertised in the local paper as a meeting in which the City was seeking input from the public concerning parks and recreation activities in the City. The community forum was held on February 18, 2009. A copy of the notice for this meeting can be found in Appendix B, Page B-3. The sub-committee discussed the results of the survey as well as various aspects of parks and recreation activities and identifying key areas in which to focus future efforts.

Survey Results

Sixty-three (63) responses to the survey were received. As a measure of representation of families, the respondents were asked to identify the number and age range of individuals in their household. One-hundred and fifty-nine (159) persons were identified as residing in the same household as the respondent. The following table describes the age distribution in the households of those responding to the survey:

<u>Age Range</u>	<u>Number in Range</u>	<u>Percentage of Total</u>
Persons under 5 years old-	3	2%
Persons 5 to 12 years old-	19	12%
Persons 13 to 17 years old	25	16%
Persons 18 to 24 years old	13	8%
Persons 25 to 44 years old	21	13%
Persons 45 to 64 years old	56	35%
<u>Persons 65 years & older</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>14%</u>
Total	159	100%

When questioned which recreational facilities were used in the City, the respondents indicated that McClintock Park (65%) and Bates Scout Park (63%) were primary recreational use areas. Other facilities that scored high percentages were part of the Laingsburg Community School District (“School District”) facilities- Laingsburg Middle School (29%) and Laingsburg Elementary (27%).

These facilities, which were indicated as predominate recreation activity areas, were used in the following manner by the respondent and their families:

McClintock Park

6% Organized Events/Sports
42% Play/Sport Structures
37% Exercise (walking/jogging)
29% Open Space/Out of Doors
24% Social Gathering/Picnic
Other- Use of restroom

Laingsburg Middle School

24% Organized Events/Sports
8% Play/Sport Structures
5% Exercise (walking/jogging)
5% Open Space/Out of Doors
2% Social Gathering/Picnic
Other- Adult Basketball

Bates Scout Park

32% Organized Events/Sports
19% Play/Sport Structures
16% Exercise (walking/jogging)
15% Open Space/Out of Doors
31% Social Gathering/Picnic
Other- Geo Caching

Laingsburg Elementary

26% Organized Events/Sports
23% Play/Sport Structures
13% Exercise (walking/jogging)
5% Open Space/Out of Doors
5% Social Gathering/Picnic
Other- None

When questioned concerning the days of the week and the time of the day in which facilities are used, the following results were obtained:

	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Weekdays	37%	50%	31%	13%
Weekends	39%	53%	47%	24%
Day	29%	37%	27%	18%
Evening	35%	52%	37%	13%

When questioned as to other public, non-public, private or commercial facilities or areas that are used by the respondent or their family, a large majority indicated that the public sidewalk (68%) and road (42%) system is used for recreational activities. Other facilities, such as the Pine Hills Golf Course (27%) and church property (24%), also gained respectable numbers. Of these recreation areas, the respondents noted that exercise (55%), organized events/sports (24%), and enjoyment of open space and the outdoors (23%) were the primary uses.

In consideration of parks and recreation activities outside of the City, Sleepy Hollow State Park (53%), Victor Township Hall property (34%), and the East Lansing Aquatic Center (19%) ranked the highest. Sleepy Hollow and the Victor Township Hall are within a short drive of the City and are assumed to be frequently utilized. The aquatic center in East Lansing is located at a greater distance and is very unique to the region. It is not anticipated that this facility is used as frequently as Sleepy Hollow and the Victor Township Hall property.

Upon being asked what would encourage the respondent and their families to use City parks and recreation areas more frequently, it was found that the respondent felt that the facilities would be used more if additional equipment (24%) and safety measures, such as lighting and security (21%) were available or implemented. Other improvements indicated to increase the use of parks and recreation facilities included the providing of more park and recreational activity information (18%) and more social gathering/picnic areas (15%).

Following the question concerning what would encourage additional use of facilities, the respondent was asked to rank three (3) specific improvements by importance. Under the category of “most important”, basic maintenance (63%) and safety (lighting, security, etc.) (45%) ranked highest. Under the category of “important”, safety (lighting, security, etc.) (32%) ranked highest with basic maintenance (24%) and additional activities (24%) scoring the same. Under the categories of “somewhat important” and “not important”, only the provisions for “additional activities” under the “somewhat important” category reached a double-digit percentage (31%).

Community Forum Results

At the community forum held on February 18, 2009, the parks and recreation sub-committee reviewed the status of the project to update the Plan, the results of the survey, discussed future parks and recreation issues, and sought input from the public. The intent of the forum was to establish the basis of the goals and objectives of the Plan, which in turn are utilized to formulate actions that are necessary to implement the Plan. The discussions focused on three (3) principal areas of concern.

Maintenance of Existing Facilities

The sub-committee identified the maintenance of existing facilities as an important aspect of the Plan. In order to continue the positive feedback from the public and continue the active use of the parks and recreation facilities, it is necessary to keep parks accessible, maintained, clean and safe. The following maintenance issues were identified:

1. Maintaining positive perception of cleanliness and safety.
2. Emphasizing community involvement by persons using the park to prevent vandalism and other activities that discourage use of the park.
3. Keep equipment modern and in good working order.
4. Resolve drainage issues at Bates Scout Park.

Improvements to Existing Facilities

The sub-committee identified improvements to the existing facilities as an important aspect of the Plan. In order for existing parks to remain active and utilized, it is necessary to continue to examine the needs and desires of the community to ensure that activities are appropriate and modernized. If harmonious with existing activities, it is also economical and pragmatic to improve areas already established as important recreation areas rather than develop new recreational areas. The following improvements to existing facilities were discussed:

1. Additional playground equipment at Bates Scout Park.
2. Additional playground and skate boarding equipment at McClintock Park.
3. Entertainment venue at McClintock Park.
4. Develop a wayfinding program to increase accessibility to existing improvements.
5. Improve sidewalks to assist in providing better access to existing and future facilities.

Implementation of New Facilities

The sub-committee identified the need for new facilities where certain recreational activities cannot be accommodated by existing facilities or where new facilities would be used to enhance the use of existing facilities. The City conducted an existing recreation inventory and a resource inventory in order to be able to identify activities in existing facilities and identify opportunities that may be located in the community for future use. The following new facilities were identified:

1. Full-size soccer field at either Bate Scout or Abbott/Treat Street parks.
2. Basketball court at McClintock Park.
3. Entertainment venue at McClintock Park or other location central to the downtown.
4. Develop a water access site on the Look Glass River.
5. Develop new path and trail connections to existing and future facilities.

One Month Public Review

On July 15, 2009, the sub-committee of the City Council recommended that the City Council take action at their regular August 3, 2009 meeting to establish a thirty (30) day review period for consideration by the public of the draft Plan. On August 3, 2009 the City Council moved to establish the thirty (30) review period and set the public meeting/hearing date for September 14, 2009. Advertisements noticing the review period, where information was available for review, and the public meeting/hearing date were placed in a newspaper of local circulation. The advertisement can be viewed in Appendix B, Page B-4.

Public Meeting/Hearing Prior to Adoption

The public meeting/hearing was held September 14, 2009 to allow for comment from the public and others having interest in the Plan presented for adoption. Comments were received from members of the Laingsburg Area Recreation Committee and the City Council discussed the provision of the Plan. No other public comment was received. The minutes of this meeting can be found in Appendix B, Page B-6.

Page Intentionally Left Blank

CHAPTER 7

GOALS, OBJECTIVES & ACTIONS

Goals, Objectives and Actions

The following goals, objectives and actions are established for the City of Laingsburg (“City”) Five (5) Year Parks and Recreation Plan (“Plan”). These goals, objectives and actions are based on discussions by the parks and recreation sub-committee based upon review of the following:

- (a) The physical and social description of the City, including population, housing, land use patterns and transportation systems;
- (b) A recreation inventory of existing facilities, including an assessment of barrier-free accessibility and the status of any on-going parks and recreation improvements utilizing public funding;
- (c) An inventory of land, routes and other resources that could potentially be utilized for parks and recreation purposes or utilized to enhance existing or future recreation facilities; and
- (d) A survey of households and the general public, including information obtained through a publicized community forum.

The goals, objectives and actions were also developed in accordance with the mission of the City and its public bodies, departments and staff to provide safe and contemporary park facilities and lifelong recreational opportunities that enhance leisure, fitness and quality of life for the residents of the City as well as the greater community, which includes those students and families of the Laingsburg Community School District (“School District”) and the patrons of businesses and services within the City.

It is to be understood that these goals, objectives and actions are those identified at the time of the preparation of this Plan and considered as reasonable to be accomplished within the five (5) year revision life of this Plan. Other projects may arise within the revision life of this Plan that are not listed below. If those projects are opportunities that satisfy the intent, purpose and goals of this Plan as determined by City Council, the City reserves the right to move forward on securing those opportunities that were not specifically addressed below without amendment to the Plan.

Provided below is a description of the goal that is sought to be reached and following each goal is an objective that is intended to satisfy meeting all or a portion of the described goal. Following each objective is a description of actions necessary to achieve the intended objective and therefore satisfy all or a portion of the described goal. Either the terms “continuous”, “annually” or a specific year is noted in bold font following the listing of the actions necessary to achieve the objective. This is an anticipated projection of when such action should occur.

Goal No. 1- Maintenance of Parks and Recreation System

Maintain accessibility, cleanliness and safety of existing and future parks and recreation facilities to secure their continued and active use, as well as encourage additional use by the residents of and the visitors to the City.

Objective 1

Continue City funding of park maintenance, staffing and scheduling of events.

Action Program

1. As part of the City's annual budget, continue to dedicate funding for maintenance of the parks and recreation facilities based upon assessment by staff of identified issues over the proceeding year.
(Annually)
2. Continue to support activities, such as “movies in the park” or incorporating park space as part of holiday celebrations, to encourage the active use of the park by a broad cross-section of the population.
(Continuous)

Objective 2

Maintain and enhance the perception of the parks and recreation area as being clean, safe and properly managed.

Action Program

1. Establish a statement of “expected conduct” for parks and recreation areas of the City. Such statement can be posted to influence behavior and empower persons to report incidence that would damage facilities or effect perceptions of the parks. Items, such as signage, can be erected in the parks displaying statement and/or other information, such as “call 911” for assistance or reporting. **(2009)**

Objective 3

Establish a “friends of the parks” group to assist the City in maintaining, monitoring and keeping the appearance of parks and other recreational facilities.

Action Program

1. Identify established groups, such as the Laingsburg Area Recreation Committee (“LARC”), that may wish to organize or be part of a “friends of the park” group to participate with the City in the maintenance and upkeep of the City's parks and recreation areas.
(Continuous)

2. Support a “friends of the parks” group by advertising, promoting and providing other types of support to encourage participation from the public. **(Continuous)**

Objective 4

Repair on-going maintenance issues and identified problem areas that inhibit the full use and functioning of the park or park system. Such on-going issues should be, as described in the first objective, included by staff in annual reporting to the City Council to ensure that adequate funding is made available or sought to make such repairs.

Action Program

1. Bates Scout Park has a storm water and flooding problem. The cause of this ongoing problem should be documented and repair cost assessed. **(2009)**
2. Implement improvements to address storm water and flooding issue in Bates Scout Park. No additional capital improvements should be made to the park until issues are resolved. **(2010)**
3. Address vandalism by tracking number of incidents and the cost of repair. Information can be utilized in conjunction with other actionable items, such as friends of the parks and enforcement of park rules by the City Police. **(Annually)**

Goal No. 2- Enhance Existing Parks and Recreation System

Continue to enhance and improve existing parks and recreation facilities to ensure that activities are appropriate to the community's needs and desires; facilities are modernized to accommodate changing needs and desires, and that recreation areas are connected to a greater system of activities for use by all. For use with discussion of objectives concerning non-motorized transportation, see maps found in Appendix A.

Objective 1

Improve existing pedestrian accessibility from new residential development to the east and west of the elementary school to the elementary school, and from the elementary school to McClintock Park.

Action Program

1. Work with the School District to identify partnerships and establish a cooperative working relationship to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes as it pertains to access to schools via a walkable community. **(Continuous)**

2. Under the City's capital improvement program for sidewalk repair and replacement, prioritize monetary and staff resources to the identified priority areas. **(2010)**
3. Where applicable, apply for funding available through the Safe Routes 2 School (“SR2S”) grant program to fund repair and replacement. **(2009)**

Objective 2

Conversion of Abbott/Treat St. Park into a soccer field or some other active recreational area.

Action Program

1. Develop a preliminary site plan for possible use as a soccer field for ages twelve (12) and above. Soccer fields for younger age groups are accommodated at the elementary school. **(2009)**
2. If the size of the existing park is appropriate for such size field, contact known groups associated with organized soccer and hold public input meetings. **(2010)**
3. Seek development grants from appropriate sources for the development of a soccer field. **(2010)**
4. If a soccer field cannot be accommodated, other alternatives are to be reviewed and discussed. Residents in the surrounding neighborhood should be specifically invited to provide comment. Upon determination of a feasible use, development grants could be sought. **(2011)**

Objective 3

Establish a wayfinding program to identify recreational areas, including parks, trails, golf course, etc.

Action Program

1. Develop a coordinated plan and implementation strategy for wayfinding signs for all existing and future parks and recreational facilities in the City. Such plan should also include other considerations, such as identification of downtown, municipal parking, library, post office and city hall. **(2010)**

2. Seek funding for implementation of a wayfinding plan as part of parks and recreation grants, transportation grants and/or partnerships with the Downtown Development Authority (“DDA”). **(2010)**
3. Implement wayfinding plan with the purchase and installation of signage in and at the City's boundaries. **(2011)**

Objective 4

Incorporate vacant property commonly known as the “Irene St. property” into McClintock Park.

Action Program

1. Develop a preliminary site plan for possible uses of the property in conjunction with the activities of McClintock Park and hold public input meetings to discuss possible uses. Past considerations and surveys have noted the inclusion of a basketball court in the McClintock Park area. **(2009)**
2. Seek development grants from appropriate sources for the demolition and reclamation of property for recreational use. **(2009)**
3. Demolish vacant structure and construct a basketball facility and court upon determination of funding source. **(2010)**

Objective 5

Conversion of a portion of Bates Scout Park into a soccer field.

Action Program

1. Develop a preliminary site plan for possible use as a soccer field for ages twelve (12) and above. Soccer fields for younger age groups are accommodated at the elementary school. **(2009)**
2. If the size of the existing park is appropriate for such size field, contact known groups associated with organized soccer and hold public input meetings. **(2010)**
3. Seek development grants from appropriate sources for the development of a soccer field. **(2010)**
4. If a soccer field cannot be accommodated, other alternatives are to be reviewed and discussed. Upon determination of a feasible use, development grants could be sought. **(2011)**

Objective 6

Establish an entertainment venue, such as an amphitheater, gazebo, bandshell, in McClintock Park.

Action Program

1. Develop a preliminary site plan for possible entertainment venues in conjunction with the activities of McClintock Park and hold public input meetings to discuss possible uses. **(2009)**
2. Seek development grants from appropriate sources. **(2010)**
3. Construction of chosen improvement. **(2011)**

Goal No. 3- New Parks and Recreation Facilities

Procure, improve and/or implement opportunities for recreational activities and facilities that cannot be accommodated by existing facilities or where new facilities can be used to enhance the use of existing facilities. For use with discussion of objectives concerning non-motorized transportation, see maps found in Appendix A.

Objective 1

Connect Bates Scout Park from the northwest corner of the City to the high school beyond the southeast corner of the City in Sciota Township. This linear park would bisect the City and along the primary route would access the two (2) major City parks, the three (3) schools and the downtown. Secondary routes would have the potential to access existing facilities (Ed Beavers Memorial Park) and anticipated facilities (Looking Glass River access site, hogsback trail and use area, etc.)

Action Program

1. Work with the School District to identify partnerships and establish a cooperative working relationship to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes as it pertains to access to schools via a walkable community. **(Continuous)**
2. Develop a plan for the primary route and identify and apply for potential grant sources for acquisition and development tasks. **(2010)**
3. Procure easements or property where the primary route identified from Bates Scout Park to the Laingsburg High School is not in the City's right-of-way or on City property. **(2010)**
4. Improve all existing sidewalks along the primary route from Bates Scout Park to the high school. Portions of the sidewalk system are also accounted for under the second goal, first objective to improve

sidewalks from new development east and west of the elementary school. **(2011)**

5. Implement sidewalks in areas where the City has right-of-way along the primary route from Bates Scout Park to the Laingsburg High School. **(2012)**
6. Implement sidewalks in procured areas along the primary route from Bates Scout Park to the Laingsburg High School. **(2013)**

Objective 2

Develop sidewalk and/or trail from McClintock Park to the Ed Beaver Memorial Trail and Pine Hills Golf Course with route involving Shiawassee St. Boulevard.

Action Program

1. Develop a route and course plan, including identifying existing easements and rights-of-way to be improved. **(2012)**
2. Seek funding for implementation of new sidewalks, repair of existing, and construction of new pathways, which depending on their location and intended use, may be asphalt or other barrier-free material. **(2013)**
3. Develop pathway for connection between the established recreational areas. **(2014)**

Objective 3

Develop a water access site along the Looking Glass River on property owned by the City.

Action Program

1. Research existing lease of property by the City to an adjacent private land owner. As part of this research, the City should also conduct appropriate land survey to establish boundaries of the anticipated property to accommodate the water access site. **(2010)**
2. Develop a preliminary site plan for use of the property for purposes of a water access site, including space for parking. The City should also hold public meetings and invite those located in the surrounding areas to comment on the proposed use. **(2010)**
3. Seek funding for development of a water access site through appropriate sources. **(2011)**
4. Develop a water access site. **(2012)**

Objective 4

Develop a trail from the Looking Glass River (and potential water access site) to the City's downtown. Whether or not a water access site is implemented at the Looking Glass River, a trail from the potential site to the downtown would provide a non-motorized corridor for exercise and enjoyment of open space and natural features.

Action Program

1. Develop a route and course plan, including identifying potential wetlands, flood plains, and conflicts with the City's lagoon system. **(2011)**
2. Seek funding through appropriate sources and develop a pathway for recreational use. **(2012)**

Objective 5

Develop the area owned by the City commonly known as the "hogsback" as a trail, open space area, and active recreation area, such as use as a sledding hill. The trail would connect with the future Looking Glass to Downtown trail as well as create an opportunity for future connection to the middle school and Abbott/Treat Street Park.

Action Program

1. Develop preliminary site plans for the use of the hogsback area. Preliminary site plans should be used to discuss intended development with persons residing in the surrounding neighborhood. **(2010)**
2. Seek funding from appropriate sources and develop hogsback trail and recreation area. **(2011)**

Objective 6

Expansion of Memorial Park by way of development of City owned property to the west of Memorial Park.

Action Program

1. As part of the planned development the City owned property adjacent to Memorial Park, seek to incorporate the park into the design concept. **(2009)**
3. Seek funding from appropriate sources to expand Memorial Park **(2009)**
2. Expand Memorial Park in conjunction with the development of the City owned property and ensure that the structure design not only

expands Memorial Park, but enhances the use of the park by providing siting areas and maintaining public access from Grand River Rd. to McClintock Park. **(2010)**

Objective 7

Develop an area for entertainment utilizing space on and around Roosevelt Row.

Action Program

1. Develop preliminary site plans for the use of Roosevelt Row and surrounding area to establish if an entertainment venue is feasible. Preliminary site plans should be used to discuss intended development with persons residing and owning businesses in the surrounding neighborhood. **(2010)**
2. Seek funding from appropriate sources to develop such a venue. It may be necessary to seek funding for acquisition or conservation easement depending on space needs. **(2011)**

Page Intentionally Left Blank