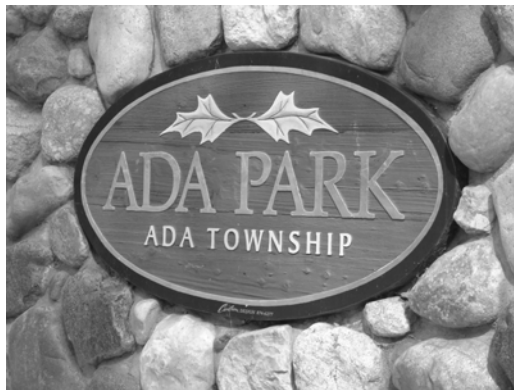


2007 *Ada Township Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan*

Adopted February 26, 2007



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Township greatly appreciates the participation of the following Park Committee members who devoted their time and effort to the preparation of this Plan:

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Adopted by Resolution of the Ada Township Board: February 26, 2007

2007 ADA TOWNSHIP PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

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2007 ADA TOWNSHIP PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The 2007 Ada Township Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan has been prepared by the Ada Township Parks Committee as an integrated guide for Township decision-making in the areas of park and recreation land and facility development, as well as the development of a network of coordinated open space lands in the Township. Since adoption of the Township's Open Space Protection Plan in 2000, the Township has maintained separate planning documents for parks and recreation planning and open space planning, even while recognizing that there is a high degree of inter-relatedness between these two resource-based program areas.

This Plan addresses Ada Township's parks, other recreation facilities and network of open space lands in an integrated manner. The Plan considers existing park, recreation and open space lands and facilities in and around the Township (public and private), the need for additional or improved facilities, and the means for providing those facilities during the course of the five-year planning horizon. The Plan also considers the existing land resource base in the community, and the many important values and functions that are served by having a significant base of natural lands in the community.

This Plan will guide the Township's expenditures on park, recreation and open space facilities and programs in the coming years. It also enables the Township to apply for Federal and State grant funds for acquisition and development of park, recreation and open space land and facilities, most of which are administered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Description and Location

Ada Township is located in the southeastern portion of Kent County, on the eastern edge of the Grand Rapids urbanized area. Figure 1 shows the location of Ada Township in relation to other Kent County communities.

Ada Township is characterized by abundant natural resources and a unique environment created by a combination of rivers, rolling terrain, woodlands, wetlands, and scenic vistas. While much of Ada Township is rural and sparsely populated, the southwestern quarter of the community has become increasingly urbanized over the last 30 years. In addition, substantial residential development at low densities continues in the more rural parts of the Township, and over time has significantly reduced the acreage of undeveloped natural land in large blocks.

During the 1990's, the healthy West Michigan economy, Ada's easy access to the Grand Rapids area via M-21 and the township's natural beauty and small-town character drew many new residents to the community. Although the State and local economies have experienced a substantial decline in the last 4 years, the township's beauty and character remain as draws to the area, and the Township has continued to experience a significant level of new residential construction, countering regional trends.

While Ada's generally rural setting offers many opportunities for informal and passive recreational opportunities, the continued influx of residents is generating a demand for expanded active recreational facilities and programs in the Township.

Demographics, Housing and Income

Tables 1 through 9 provide information on important demographic, socioeconomic and housing characteristics of the township that are relevant to park and recreation planning.

Historical Population Growth:

The Township's population growth rate increased significantly in the 1990's, in comparison to the growth that occurred in the 1980's. Table 1 summarizes population growth over the last 20 years in Ada Township and surrounding communities. The Township population increased by 2,304 persons between 1990 and 2000, a 30% increase, compared to a much smaller 17% increase during the 1980's.

This high rate of growth has continued since 2000, with the population having grown by 19% just in the last 5 years.

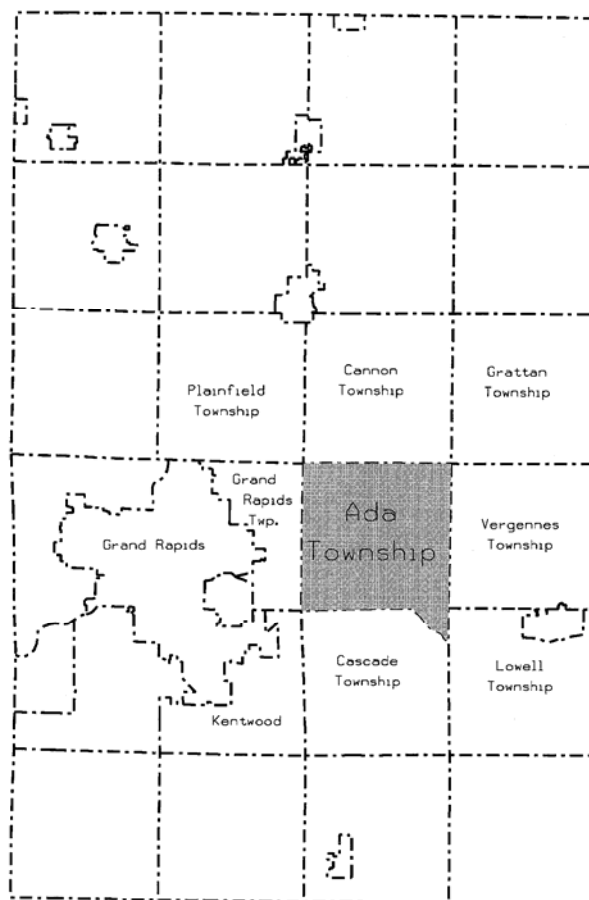


Figure 1 - Location of Ada Township in Kent County

Table 1
Historical Population
Ada Township and Surrounding Communities, 1980-2005

Community	1980	1990	% Change 1980-90	2000	% Change 1990-00	Estimated 2005	% Change 2000-05
ADA TOWNSHIP	6,472	7,578	17.1%	9,882	30.4%	11,762	19.02%
Cannon Township	4,983	7,928	59.1%	12,075	52.3%	13,233	9.59%
Cascade Township	10,120	12,829	27.2%	15,107	17.8%	16,571	9.69%
Grand Rapids Township	9,294	10,760	15.8%	14,056	30.6%	14,787	5.20%
Lowell Township	3,972	4,774	20.2%	5,219	9.3%	6,203	18.85%
Vergennes Township	1,819	2,492	37.0%	3,611	44.9%	4,120	14.10%
Kent County	444,506	500,631	12.6%	574,335	14.7%	596,666	3.89%

Source: 1980, 1990, 2000: U.S. Census
2005: U.S. Census Bureau estimates

Building Permit Data:

Table 2 summarizes residential building permit data for Ada Township, back to the early 1980's. Building activity from 1998-2000 was greater than at any time in the last 25 years. The total number of housing units started during the last 3 years of the 1990's was 2 1/2 times the number of units started in the first three years of the decade. Since 2000, the level of new home construction in the Township has declined to about 100 new dwelling units per year in the last 3 years.

The data also shows that the median value of newly-constructed single-family residences (excluding land value) in the Township has increased steadily over the last 5 years.

Household Size Trends:

After decreasing significantly between 1980 and 1990, average household size in Ada Township remained relatively unchanged through the 1990's. Historical data and 2000 Census comparison data for the County and State are shown in Table 3. The Township's average household size of 3.03 persons remains well above the State and County averages. The Township has a high percentage of its households that are family households (85.9%), compared to Kent County overall (67.7%). This indicates that the Township has relatively few single person households. The average family size in the Township, at 3.3 persons per family is only slightly larger than the overall Kent County average of 3.2 persons per family. In summary, families in the Township are not particularly larger than families in the County overall, but Ada Township has a higher than average proportion of its total households that consist of families.

Table 2
Residential Construction History and Trends
Ada Township, 1981-2006

Year	Single Family Permits	Total Valuation (\$ million)	Average Value per Single Family Unit	Median Value of New Single Family Homes	Multiple Family Permits
1981	25	Not Avail. (NA)	NA		-
1982	20	NA	NA		-
1983	38	NA	NA		-
1984	48	\$3.54	\$73,750		-
1985	61	\$5.21	\$85,410		-
1986	65	\$6.31	\$97,077		-
1987	91	\$10.51	\$115,495		-
1988	104	\$13.77	\$132,404		-
1989	88	\$11.45	\$130,114		13
1990	50	\$8.46	\$169,200		-
1991	53	\$9.43	\$177,925		-
1992	65	\$11.46	\$176,308		6
1993	72	\$13.92	\$193,319		7
1994	87	\$15.92	\$182,989		Not Avail.
1995	63	\$11.82	\$187,573		0
1996	113	\$24.61	\$217,816		42
1997	86	\$23.64	\$274,894		4
1998	123	\$27.65	\$224,823		0
1999	152	\$33.62	\$221,180		15
2000	175	\$38.48	\$219,878		19
2001	123	\$34.87	\$283,531		39
2002	150	\$34.57	\$230,453	\$168,500	8
2003	146	\$45.42	\$311,067	\$189,000	4
2004	106	\$34.04	\$321,169	\$288,000	0
2005	95	\$31.35	\$330,024	\$300,000	0
2006	101	\$35.46	\$351,124	\$310,000	0

Source: Ada Township Building Department

Table 3
Household Size Trends in Ada Township, 1970-2000

	Ada Township				Kent County 2000	Michigan 2000
	1970	1980	1990	2000		
Persons Per Household	3.55	3.32	3.10	3.03	2.64	2.56

Source: U.S. Census, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000

Race:

In 2000, 95.6 percent of Ada Township residents were white, 0.5 percent black, 2.3 percent Asian or Pacific Islander, and 1.1 percent of Hispanic origin, according to the 2000 Census. The Asian and Hispanic proportions of the Township's population grew slightly from 1990 to 2000. Countywide, the Hispanic proportion of the population grew significantly, from 2.9% to 7.0%, from 1990 to 2000, while the Asian/Pacific Islander proportion grew from 1.1% to 2.0%.

Age Distribution:

Data in Table 4 indicate the general aging of the Township's population that has occurred over the last 30 years. The median age of the population has increased significantly, from 23 years in 1970 to 37 years in 2000. The Township in 2000 had a significantly lower percentage of its population less than 18 years old, and a higher percentage age 65 or over, than was the case in 1970. Even so, the Township has a lower percentage of its population age 65 or over than is the case for Kent County or the State overall, and a higher percentage of children, compared to the County and State overall.

Tables 5 and 6 provide more detailed information regarding the age distribution of the Township's population in 2000 compared to 1990, and compared to the State and County distributions.

Table 4
Median Age Trends in Ada Township, 1970-2000

	Ada Township				Kent County 2000	State of Michigan 2000
	1970	1980	1990	2000		
Median Age	23	28.5	33.2	37.2	32.5	35.5
% under 18	41.3%	35.6%	32.3%	32.6%	28.3%	26.1%
65 and over	5.6%	5.1%	6.2%	7.1%	10.4%	12.3%

Source: U.S. Census

The age distribution data in Table 6 shows that Ada Township has a very strong representation of the 45-54 age group in its population, compared to the age distribution in the County and State overall. Data in Table 5 shows that the number of persons in this age group nearly doubled between 1990 and 2000, from 943 persons to 1,811 persons. This would tend to indicate that the Township has a high proportion of its residents in peak earning years.

The data in Table 5 also show that the 20-24 age group is under weighted in the Township, compared to the State and County percentages. This may be a reflection of the relative lack of housing stock in Ada Township that would be affordable for young, first-time home buyers. Overall, the number of persons age 18-44 in the Township changed very little between 1990 and 2000, increasing by slightly less than 3%, compared to the overall 30% increase in total population.

Table 5
Population Age Distribution
Ada Township, 1980-2000

Age Groups	2000 Number of Persons	2000 % of Total	1990 Number of Persons	1990 % of Total	1980 % of Total
Under 5	760	7.7%	663	8.7%	9.1%
5-17	2,465	24.9%	1,785	23.6%	26.5%
18-24	530	5.4%	503	6.6%	9.0%
25-44	2,728	27.6%	2,664	35.2%	32.6%
45-54	1,811	18.3%	943	12.4%	10.1%
55-64	886	9.0%	550	7.3%	7.2%
65+	702	7.1%	470	6.2%	5.1%

Source: U.S. Census: 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000

Disabled Population

In 2000, according to the U.S. Census, of a total of 6,250 persons aged 16-64 in Ada Township, 4.99%, or 312 persons, had an employment disability. This percentage is somewhat lower than the 10.1% disabled adult population in Kent County overall. 2.3% of Ada Township residents age 16 or older had a disability affecting their ability to go outside the home, compared to 6.4% for the County overall.

Education Levels:

As shown in Table 7, in 2000, only East Grand Rapids ranked higher than Ada Township among nearby Kent County communities in the percentage of its population having high school diplomas. Ada Township also ranks high among communities in Kent County in the percentage of its residents having college degrees.

Income:

Ada Township has a relatively affluent population when its median household income is compared to that of other communities in Kent County. The Township had the third highest median household income in the county in 1999, trailing only Cascade Township and East Grand Rapids. Ada's median household income of \$83,357 was 81 percent greater than Kent County's median level of \$45,980.

Table 6
2000 Age Distribution
Ada Township, Kent County and Michigan

Age Group	Percentage of 2000 Population		
	Ada Twp.	Kent County	Michigan
Under 5	7.7%	7.8%	6.8%
5-19	27.2%	23.6%	22.2%
20-24	3.1%	7.4%	6.5%
25-44	27.6%	31.1%	29.8%
45-54	18.3%	12.7%	13.8%
55-64	8.9%	7.0%	8.7%
65+	7.1%	10.4%	12.3%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Ada Township also had the third highest 1999 per capita income among all Kent County communities, at \$37,840, again exceeded only by that of East Grand Rapids and Cascade Township, according to the U.S. Bureau of the Census. The income level of a community can be an important determinant of demand for recreational opportunities. Greater amounts of leisure time and disposable income can create a demand for quality, variety, and adequacy of recreational facilities and programs.

Employment:

Occupational characteristics of Ada Township residents in 2000 are given in Table 8. In 1990, white collar occupations (managerial and professional specialty; and technical, sales and administration) accounted for 71.3% of the Township's employed persons. This percentage increased to 79% by 2000. The percentage of employed persons in blue collar occupations (production, transportation, material moving, construction, extraction and maintenance) decreased from 18.4% in 1990 to 13.4% in 2000.

The numerical increase in the numbers of higher-paying white collar professions gives validity to the Township's strong ranking among Kent County communities in housing values, education, and income levels.

The industries employing Ada Township residents in 2000 are shown in Table 9. The industry groups employing the largest numbers of Ada Township residents include education, health and social services, responsible for nearly 22% of employed residents, and manufacturing, at 18.4%. Industry groups that are more heavily represented in Ada Township residents' employment compared to Kent County overall include the professional, scientific, management and administrative category, and finance, insurance and real estate.

Table 7
Education Attainment of Persons 25 Years and Older
Ada Township and Surrounding Communities, 2000

Community	Percentage of Persons 25 Years & Older	
	High School Graduate or Higher (%)	Bachelor's Degree or Higher (%)
Ada Township	96.5%	50.6%
Cannon Township	95.8%	37.9%
Cascade Township	96.0%	54.6%
East Grand Rapids	99.0%	71.1%
G.R. Township	91.6%	46.0%
Vergennes Township	94.1%	27.4%
Kent County	84.6%	26.7%
Michigan	83.4%	22.6%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Table 8
Occupation of Employed Persons 16 Years and Over, 2000
Ada Township

Occupation	Number Employed, 2000	% of Total Employed
Management, professional, and related occupations:	2,509	51.7%
Service occupations:	354	7.3%
Sales and office occupations:	1,321	27.2%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	16	0.4%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations:	221	4.6%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations:	429	8.8%
Total:	4,850	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census

Table 9
Industry of Employed Persons
Ada Township, 2000

Industry Category	Number of Employees	Percent of Total Employment		
	Ada Township	Ada Township	Kent County	Michigan
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining:	38	0.8%	0.6%	1.1%
Construction	172	3.5%	5.6%	6.0%
Manufacturing	894	18.4%	23.7%	22.5%
Wholesale trade	263	5.4%	5.5%	3.3%
Retail trade	628	12.9%	13.2%	11.9%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities:	166	3.4%	3.4%	4.1%
Information	73	1.5%	2.0%	2.1%
Finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing:	457	9.4%	6.0%	5.3%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services:	550	11.3%	7.8%	8.0%
Educational, health and social services:	1060	21.9%	18.8%	19.9%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services:	237	4.9%	7.1%	7.6%
Other services (except public administration)	156	3.2%	4.4%	4.6%
Public administration	156	3.2%	2.0%	3.6%
Total:	4850	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census

Natural Features

Climate:

Recreational opportunities in Ada Township benefit from the temperature-moderating and snowfall-enhancing influences of Lake Michigan. The average daily high temperature during July is about 83° F in Kent County. Average January low temperature is about 15° F. Average annual rainfall is 34 inches, with an annual snowfall of 78 inches. The growing season averages 154 days.

Topography:

The topography of much of Ada Township is characterized by hilly, undulating terrain formed by glacial activity. The Township's relief is an important natural feature, providing visual interest and privacy. In addition, these conditions can be utilized in recreational facility planning to provide challenging hills for activities such as cross-country skiing. This terrain makes planning of bicycling facilities more difficult.

While the Township's hills seem to be particularly attractive to those aggressive cyclists who seek out difficult terrain for training purposes, the steep hills can be a daunting challenge to more casual cyclists. Care should be taken to ensure that facilities limited to advanced skiers and cyclists are balanced with facilities for those with limitations such as beginners, children, and the elderly. In much of the Township, the terrain makes design of non-motorized trails in conformance with AASHTO design guidelines difficult to achieve.

Other areas of the Township are of relatively moderate terrain, providing suitable areas for recreational fields for organized sports activity.

Soils:

Deep dry sands predominate in Ada Township. These sandy soils are found primarily on the hilly moraines on either side of the Grand River through most of the Township. These soils are generally well-suited for construction of building foundations, septic disposal fields, and facilities for active recreational opportunities.

Other soils in the Township generally present limitations to development. Heavy clay loam soils, found in the southwestern and northeastern parts of the Township, are not suited to on-site disposal of sewage effluent. Potential for residential development is limited in these areas, some of which may never be serviced by public water or sewer. Areas with limitations on development in some cases may be suitable for public ownership for provision of passive recreational facilities.

Organic soils are found along the rivers, streams, and drainage courses throughout Ada Township. There also is a concentration of organic peat and muck around the lakes in the northeastern portion of the township. These soils can pose severe limitations on development; floodplains and wetlands associated with these soil types can serve as important habitat for plants and animals and form greenways that can be utilized for their recreational values. Public or private trust acquisition can protect some environmentally sensitive areas.

Vegetative Cover:

Woodlands are a prominent natural feature in Ada Township. Riparian forest cover is concentrated along the banks of the Grand River and in ravines associated with drainageways. The dry oak-hickory forests in the northeastern part of the Township are typical of the forest cover that once occupied most of the Township area with sandy soils. Scattered stands of northern hardwoods (maple, hickory, and beech) are located in the southwestern corner of the Township.

Water Resources:

The Grand and Thornapple Rivers are the major water features in Ada Township. Approximately 10.5 miles of the Grand River lie within Ada Township. The Thornapple River is also an important resource in the community. The river's Ada dam creates a backwater area that has limited recreational use by river frontage property owners. There is no public boating access to the Ada dam backwater area. Public boat access to the Grand River is available at two locations in the Township, at Fulton St. and Knapp St. These two public access sites are well-used for recreational access to the Grand River, primarily for sport fishing and for recreational paddlescraft. The Grand River upstream of Fulton St. is used by the Forest Hills Public Schools crew teams for training.

There are a few small lakes and many small ponds in Ada Township. Chase Lake, about 50 acres in surface area, is the largest lake in the Township. It is surrounded by extensive wetlands. The lake is shallow and is in an advanced state of eutrophication. Although not well suited for intense water sports use (power boating or waterskiing), the lake is a very attractive setting for quiet enjoyment of nature. However, the lake and

surrounding wetland contains habitat for some species considered endangered by the Michigan DNR. There is no improved public access to Chase Lake.

Floodplain:

Floodplains in Ada Township are associated with the Grand and Thornapple Rivers. The Grand River floodplain in some places is almost 4,000 feet wide. Extensive development has occurred in some portions of the Grand River floodplain, such as most of the Alticor Corp. complex, but most of the floodplain is undeveloped. The approximate boundary of the 100-year floodplain on the Grand and Thornapple rivers is shown on the Natural Features map.

High Quality Natural Communities:

In 1992, the Michigan Natural Features Inventory program of the Michigan DNR Wildlife Division conducted an inventory of natural areas in Kent County. This inventory identified a total of 25 high quality natural area sites in the County. Three of the 25 sites are located in Ada Township. They include natural prairie fen and inundated shrub swamp adjacent to Chase Lake, a small (3-acre) hillside prairie on a steep hillside west of Grand River Dr., and a southern mesic forest containing red, white and black oak, as well as sugar maple and American beech located between Pettis Ave. and the Grand River, north of Knapp St. There are several other areas of mature forest with high species diversity in the Township, that were not included as part of this inventory. Many of these areas have been identified through the Summer, 1999 field investigation conducted by Calvin College scientists, as described below.

Grand Rapids Foundation/Metro Council/Land Conservancy Inventory of Important Natural Sites:

An initial reconnaissance-level inventory of important natural areas in the Township was conducted in the summer of 1999 by a team of scientists from Calvin College. This group conducted a review of mapped natural features information and follow-up site visits to identify unique natural sites and sites that are representative of pre-settlement conditions in 11 townships in the Grand Rapids area. This study was a pilot project jointly sponsored by the Land Conservancy of West Michigan, Grand Valley Metropolitan Council and the Grand Rapids Foundation, to develop a study methodology that will be used to inventory important natural lands on a metropolitan-wide basis.

The results of this study in Ada Township identified a number of sites that were found to have significant natural features. These sites were placed in three categories of relative significance, as shown on the “Land Conservancy Natural Areas Inventory” map contained in the Appendix. This map also identifies the location of the three sites within Ada Township identified in the State of Michigan Natural Features Inventory. Of note in these findings is the fact that many of the sites designated as “high priority” and “moderate quality” natural areas coincide with areas highly ranked in the citizen survey results, including lands along the Grand River and the Chase Lake area.

Visual Resource Inventory:

The process of preparing the Township’s 2000 Open Space Protection Plan also included the conduct of a visual resource inventory, carried out in January, 1999 by student teams from Aquinas College. The survey was conducted as a “windshield survey,” in that the student teams conducted the inventory from vehicles driven along the Township’s section line road network. The results of this survey are depicted on the map titled “Visual Resource Inventory and Analysis,” contained in the Appendix.

The visual resource inventory results show that significant visual resources are widely distributed through

the Township, and coincide with many of the areas ranked highly on other criteria discussed above.

Historic Resources

Historic sites often are associated with recreational facilities and activities. While there are a variety of historic resources located in Ada Township, ranging from historic homesteads to turn-of-the-century commercial buildings, official designation of these resources is limited. There is only one site listed on the National and State registers of historic places, the Ada Covered Bridge site, at Leonard Field Park in the Ada Village area.

Perhaps the most significant of the Township's un-designated historic sites is the site along the south bank of the Grand River, west of Alticor Corp., which was the location of Rix Robinson's trading post. Robinson was one of the first European settlers in all of West Michigan, and is regarded as the original founder of the Ada community.

The Ada Township Board has appointed a Historic District Study Committee, as provided under State statute, to investigate and report to the Township Board with a recommendation as to whether one or more historic districts should be established in the Township.

Existing Land Use

Understanding existing and projected future land use patterns is important to properly locating future park and recreation facilities, particularly neighborhood parks. The attractive natural features found in Ada Township are the setting for a varied existing land use mix, ranging from agriculture to large scale manufacturing. Following is a summary description of current land use in Ada Township, as depicted on the Existing Land Use map in the Appendix.

Agriculture

Although Ada Township has historically not been one of the most important areas of agricultural production in Kent County, there remains today a substantial amount of land in either active farming use, or that is currently idle but capable of crop production. However, the acreage of land in agricultural use has continued to decline in the last 10 years. Nearly 500 acres of farmland has been taken out of the PA 116 Farmland and Open Space Preservation program since 1990. Another 200 acres still in the program will have their agreements with the State expire in the next two years. The majority of the Township's remaining farmland is in the far northeast portion of the Township. Land along Ada Drive that was in agricultural production 10 years ago is now fallow, or has been developed for residential, school or church use. There are also several large parcels in agricultural use in the Grand River floodplain, along both Pettis Ave. and Grand River Dr.

Farm operations in the Township include raising of grain and forage crops (primarily corn, hay and alfalfa fields), grazing of livestock, a small dairy cattle operation, and several fruit orchards.

Residential

Over 96 % of all housing units in the Township in 2000 were detached, single-family units, according to the 2000 Census. There has been a slight increase in the diversity of housing types in the Township compared to 1990, when over 98% of the housing units in the Township were detached, single-family units. The construction of 100 attached condominiums in the Clements Mill development is largely responsible for this modest change in the makeup of the Township's housing stock.

Residential neighborhoods of an urban character are concentrated in the southwest quadrant of the

Township, where public water and sewer service are available. Development densities in this area are typically in the range of 2 to 2.5 homes per acre, on a gross density basis. Older residential neighborhoods on both sides of Cascade Road in the far southwest corner have somewhat higher density of about 3 units per acre. The largest single-family subdivisions in the Township, north of Ada Dr., were developed and built out in the 1970's and 1980's. In the 1990's, most of the housing construction in the urban portion of the Township has taken place in three developments: Clements Mill, a 200-acre development with over 280 single-family homes, 100 attached condominiums, and approximately 250 apartment units to be developed in the future. The condominium and detached single-family portions of the development are now completed; Ada Moorings, located immediately east of the Ada Village area off Grand River Dr., with over 180 homes; and West Village, a 150-home development on the north side of Ada Dr., west of Spaulding Ave.

Residential development north of M-21 and east of the Grand River is more rural in character. Through the end of the 1980's, the Greentree Subdivision south of Conservation St. was the only planned residential subdivision of significant size in this part of the Township. The balance of residential land use in this area was on large, multi-acre parcels, a few smaller, 1-acre lot splits along major roads, or farmsteads. Within the last 10 years, several new planned developments have been built, many using condominium form of ownership of single-family home sites, served by private roads owned in common by the homeowners. The attractive natural features and rural character of the area north and east of the Grand River has resulted in a high percentage of the Township's new home construction occurring in this area in recent years. This increase in population in the rural part of the Township creates a need for neighborhood park facilities in this area.

Multiple family development in the Township is currently limited to 41 attached condominium units in 4-6 unit buildings in the Country Homes of Ada development, on the north side of Fulton St., west of the Ada Cemetery, 36 rental town home units in the Ada Place Town Homes, on the north side of Cascade Rd., west of Spaulding Ave., and 100 condominium units in the Clements Mill development.

Commercial

Ada Township experienced little of the rapid commercial growth experienced by other West Michigan suburban communities in the last 20 years. This is due in large part to the expressed preferences of the community for limited commercial growth and the small amount of suitable land for large scale commercial use.

Commercial uses are concentrated in the Ada Village area, which serves as the service and convenience retail center of the community. Major retail and service uses in the Village include banks, hardware store, restaurants, cafes, dry cleaning, dental and optometric services, hair salons, day spas and barber shop, real estate, accounting and insurance offices. There are also several specialty retail shops in the Village area catering to a destination clientele. In addition, a number of small professional offices are located in the Village area.

There are several small commercial nodes on Fulton St., such as the Kulross/M-21 intersection, where a convenience grocery store/meat market/deli and a building materials center are located, as well as the Ada Hillside Center on the north side of Fulton St. Another small commercial node exists east of the Grand River on the south side of Fulton St., where the Ada East Business Center, a tavern and a small office building are located.

There are a few other isolated commercial uses in the Township, including the following:

- a small grocery store at the northwest corner of Egypt Valley Rd. and Knapp St. in the north end of the Township

- the Lena Lou restaurant and bar at Honey Creek Ave. and Pettis
- Ada Body Shop, north of Fulton St., west of Carl Dr.
- B. J. Roark's Landscape Center on Fulton St. at the eastern boundary of the Township.

In general, the concentration of commercial uses in the Village Area contributes to the uncluttered appearance of the M-21 corridor, and smooth traffic flow along the highway.

Office and Service Uses:

Office and service uses in the Township are concentrated along both sides of Cascade Rd., from Spaulding Ave. west to the Township line, and along the west side of Spaulding Ave., north of Cascade Rd. Uses in the area include banks, small medical offices, a photographer's studio, mortgage lender's offices and other miscellaneous small professional offices. Several churches are also located along the Cascade Rd. corridor, intermixed with the office uses. There has been a considerable amount of office center development along Cascade Rd. in the last 10 years.

As noted earlier, there are also several small office uses in the Ada Village Area, including the Township Hall. Although the area is zoned Industrial, there are also several office uses along the south side of Fulton St. west of Kulross Ave. The largest concentration of office use in the Township is the Alticor Corporation World Headquarters offices adjacent to Alticor's manufacturing complex for Amway products on Fulton St.

Industrial

Ada Township has a significant manufacturing/industrial land use base, much of which is the facilities of the Alticor Corporation. Alticor's manufacturing facilities occupy approximately 300 acres between Fulton St. and the Grand River. An additional 100 acres is occupied by the Alticor Catalog Distribution Center on the west side of Spaulding Ave., south of the Grand Rapids Eastern rail line. Aside from Alticor's facilities, a number of smaller industrial land uses are also found along the south side of M-21, from Kulross Ave. west to Alta Dale. Some uses which are more properly categorized as office or service uses are also found along M-21, including an auto repair facility and several contractor's offices and equipment yards.

In 1998, one of the Township's oldest industrial facilities, the Ada Beef Co., a beef cattle slaughterhouse and processing facility, terminated its operations on Grand River Dr. Ada Township has acquired the 230 acres of Grand River corridor land formerly owned by the company, and has converted it to Roselle Park.

Public/Semi-Public

This land use category includes churches, public and private schools and facilities of local government. It also includes the major overhead power transmission lines and electrical substations in the Township.

About 2/3 of the Township is within the Forest Hills School District, with the remaining nearly 1/3 served by Lowell Area Schools. A very small area west of the Grand River in the northwest corner of the Township is in the Northview Schools district. Only the Forest Hills District has school buildings located within Ada Township.

The Forest Hills Central High School and Middle School, collectively serving over 1,500 students, are located in the southwest part of the Township, between Hall St. and Ada Dr. Forest Hills Central Woodlands School, serving about 600 students in Grades 5-6, is located on Alta Dale Ave., south of Fulton St.

Ada Vista Elementary School and Ada Elementary School, both public schools, are located just south of the Ada Village area. Ada Christian School is a K-8 private primary school located near the southwest corner of

Ada Dr. and Colner Ave.

The Forest Hills Eastern campus, developed in 2002-2003 and first occupied in Fall, 2004 on 100 acres at the southeast corner of Knapp St. and Pettis Ave., includes the Eastern High School and Eastern Middle School.

Park, Recreation, Open Space

Public and private parks and recreation facilities are identified on the Existing Land Use map. A complete inventory map and description of these facilities is contained in the following section of this report.

Resource Processing

Rieth-Riley Construction Co. operates an asphalt manufacturing plant on Pettis Ave., as well as gravel crushing and screening operations. Pettis & Associates owns a property used for a concrete crushing operation adjacent to the Reith-Riley facilities. Both of these operations are the subject of ongoing litigation between their owners and Ada Township.

Vacant Land

Land placed in this category is intended to show parcels of 40 acres in size or more, which are not in current farm use.

Planned Future Land Use

Ada Township's 1995 Master Plan identifies a desired future land use pattern in the community. The geographic distribution of future residential development in the Township will strongly influence park and recreation facility needs.

The planned Future Land Use map is included in the Appendix. The Master Plan anticipates that the existing water and sewer service areas will not be significantly expanded within the next 5-10 years. In the long term, it is anticipated that the Grand River will remain the eastern limit of public utility services in the Township. Since public water and sewer service are available only in the southwest quadrant of the Township, it is anticipated that this area will gradually become more urban in character in the future, with residential development in the range of 2-3 dwelling units per acre. North of the Grand River, residential development at low densities in the range of 1 unit per 2-3 acres will continue.

Transportation System

Street Network:

Fulton St., a State trunkline highway (M-21) is the major east-west traffic route in the Township, connecting Ada Township to the greater Grand Rapids metropolitan area to the west, and to the Interstate Highway system. M-21 extends east from Ada Township through the cities of Lowell, Saranac and Ionia, and eventually, to Port Huron. Fulton St. is heavily used by commuters to the Grand Rapids area from Ada Township and areas further east. It is also heavily traveled by employees and visitors to Alticor Corporation's manufacturing facilities and world headquarters, including substantial volumes of truck traffic. Traffic volumes on M-21, on the most-heavily traveled portion between Pettis and Ada Dr., was 29,000 vehicles per day (vpd) in 2004. Volume drops off east of Pettis Ave. to about 17,000 vpd. Further west, near Spaulding Ave., the volumes on M-21 are over 26,300 vpd.

The remaining major east-west roads in the Township include Ada Dr., Knapp St., Vergennes St. and Bailey Dr. Ada Dr. is a major collector route in the Township, serving the more densely-developed portion of the community. Ada Dr. connects the Ada Village area to the Forest Hills area. It also provides access to several churches along its length, as well as the Forest Hills Central Middle School. Traffic volumes on Ada Dr., measured east of Colner Ave., have increased significantly in recent years, from about 6,500 vpd in 1997, to 9,000 vpd in 2004.

Knapp Street provides the second means of crossing the Grand River in the Township. It also is used by commuters to the Grand Rapids area from points further east, such as Belding and Greenville. Knapp St. traffic volumes during peak times have been impacted significantly since 2004 by the opening of the Forest Hills Public Schools Eastern campus. Traffic volumes east of Pettis Ave. were about 6,600 vpd in 2004, up significantly from 4,600 vpd in 1997, and about 2,900 vpd in 1992. Full-cycle traffic signal systems were installed within the last 5 years at the Knapp St. intersections with Grand River Dr. and Pettis Ave.

Although its length extends only 1.5 miles, Hall St. on the south boundary of the Township is also a significant east-west street, as it provides access to Forest Hills Central High School. Although 2-way traffic volumes measured in 2003 were only 4,600 vehicles per day, there is a pronounced peak volume in the morning and afternoon due to high school campus traffic.

In the southern, more urbanized portion of the Township, major north-south routes include Spaulding Ave., Thornapple River Dr. and Buttrick Ave. Spaulding Ave., in the southwest part of the Township, connects Fulton St. to Cascade Rd., and continues south to Burton St. in Cascade Township. In addition to local traffic, it is used for longer trips between the Ada and Cascade areas, including travel to the southeast end of the 28th St. commercial corridor. Spaulding Ave. also provides access to the Alticor Catalog Distribution Center, located just south of the Grand Rapids Eastern rail line. All truck traffic to the facility is via Fulton St. Traffic volumes on Spaulding Ave. have increased significantly in the last several years. Volumes in 1990-93 ranged from 4,120 vpd north of Ada Dr., to 5,100 vpd south of Ada Dr. 2003 counts indicate volumes have increased to 8,000 vpd north of Ada Dr. and nearly 11,000 vpd south of Ada Dr.

Thornapple River Dr. is the most heavily-traveled County road in the Township. Measured traffic volumes have grown from 7,500 vehicles per day in 1992 to about 11,800 vpd in 2005. It is one of the few north-south routes connecting the Ada and Cascade areas.

Major north-south travel routes in the northern, more rural part of the Township include Grand River Dr., Pettis Ave., Egypt Valley Ave., Honey Creek Ave. and McCabe Ave. All five of these paved roads extend north to Cannonsburg Rd. in Cannon Township. Traffic volumes on these streets are in the range of 1,000-3,500 vehicles per day, with Vergennes St. being the more heavily-traveled. With the exception of Pettis Ave. south of Knapp St., many of the roads in the northern part of the Township have sections of severe grades and limited sight distances from adjacent properties.

Natural Beauty Roads:

Several roads (approximately 14 miles) in Ada Township are enrolled as natural beauty roads with the Kent County Road and Park Commission under the provisions of the State Natural Beauty Roads Act (Act 150 of the Public Acts of 1970, as amended). Designated natural beauty roads are maintained under Michigan Department of Natural Resources guidelines designed to preserve native vegetation in the right-of-way "from destruction or substantial damage by cutting, spraying, dusting, salting, mowing, or by other means."

These roads, along with many other scenic roadways in the Township, contribute to the area's increasing popularity with bicyclists (both road and off-road/mountain). Roads designated as natural beauty roads in Ada Township include Bailey Drive, Giles Avenue, Dogwood Avenue, Leonard Street, Cramton Avenue,

and portions of three east-west roadways between Pettis and Honey Creek Avenues: Three Mile Road, Two Mile Road, and Conservation Street.

Non-motorized Transportation:

Non-motorized trails were first given planning attention in the Township's 1990 Community Recreation Plan. At that time, a plan for a Township-wide system of non-motorized trails was conceived. Since then, limited progress on completing a Township-wide trail system has been made. Most recently, the Township installed an 8-foot wide trail along Ada Drive, from the Ada Village area west to the Township boundary, with a north-south extension from Ada Drive to Hall St. along the Consumers Energy power line right-of-way.

The Township's other off-street non-motorized trails are limited to a trail along Buttrick Ave. from Thornapple River Dr. to Ada Township Park and Grand River Drive. In addition, a connecting trail through Ada Township Park to the entry to the Ada Moorings development was completed in 2002, with cost-sharing between the Township and the developer of Ada Moorings.

In November, 2006, Township voters approved a dedicated millage for a period of 15 years, to be used exclusively for expansion, operation and maintenance of the Township's non-motorized trail system. The expansion plans are discussed in more detail as part of the Recreation Action Plan.

Rail:

Within the last several years, the rail line through Ada Township was acquired from the Central Michigan Railroad Company by Mid-Michigan Railroad. Previous efforts to abandon the rail line through the Township, between Owosso and Downtown Grand Rapids, have been dropped. The line now receives regular traffic serving Alticor Corporation and Downtown Grand Rapids. As a result, the line is no longer planned to be a non-motorized trail corridor, although such a use should be considered if abandonment plans are ever resurrected.

Transit:

Ada Township is not served by fixed route public transit service. The Interurban Transit Partnership (ITP), also known as "The Rapid," provides on-demand transit service to people with disabilities in the Township through its "GOBUS", dial-a-ride service. The ITP also operates a service called County Connection, which provides curb-to-curb transportation to all residents in Kent County for a flat per-ride fee, with reservations made a day in advance.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCING STRUCTURE

Organizational Structure

Ada Township's park, recreation and open space protection programs are administered by the Township Supervisor. The Township Supervisor implements recreational policies and budgets established by the Township Board of Trustees, administers the township parks, recreation and open space protections budgets, submits grant applications, and oversees completion of park improvement projects and acquisition of park and open space lands. The Township Board adopts park rules and regulations, which address such matters as hours of operation, alcoholic beverage prohibition, animal control rules and other operating matters. The adopted Park rules are available for inspection at the Park Office and in the Township Clerk's office.

The Township Supervisor also appoints, subject to Township Board approval, citizen representatives to the Township Parks Committee, which advises the Supervisor and Board on Parks-related matters. The Committee advises the Supervisor and Township Board regarding major park operating policies, establishment and adjustment of user fees, and planned capital improvement projects. The Parks Committee is also charged with responsibility for preparation of the Ada Township Community Recreation Plan and keeping it updated. In addition to the citizen appointees, two Trustees and the Supervisor sit on this Committee. The Committee meets approximately 10 times per year.

The Township's open space protection efforts receive advisory input from the Open Space Preservation Advisory Board, which was created by Township Ordinance in 2004. This 9-member Board, which consists of two Township Board members, one member of the Park Committee, and six residents at large, evaluates candidate open space sites for possible acquisition and promotes public awareness of the Township's open space protection goals and efforts.

In 1998, the Township re-established and filled a full-time Park Director position, in place of the former part-time staffing arrangement for programming of park activities. The Parks Director is responsible for the management and operation of the Township's park facilities and recreation programs, including recruitment and supervision of seasonal employees. Park programs include beginning tennis lessons, and a variety of nature appreciation, wildlife and natural history programs. A part-time Summer Recreation Director organizes and manages the Township's softball league.

With the addition of over 300 acres of parkland in 2002, the Board realized that maintenance issues were to grow also. In 2004 a full-time park maintenance position was added, which is overseen by the Parks Director. This position executes daily park maintenance tasks and minor repair issues that arise. Major maintenance tasks which are contracted out include: mowing of softball and soccer fields and the Arboretum, solid waste disposal and periodic inspection/treatment of tree specimens in the Park Arboretum.

Figure 2 is an organizational chart that illustrates the administrative structure of Ada Township's parks, recreation system and open space.

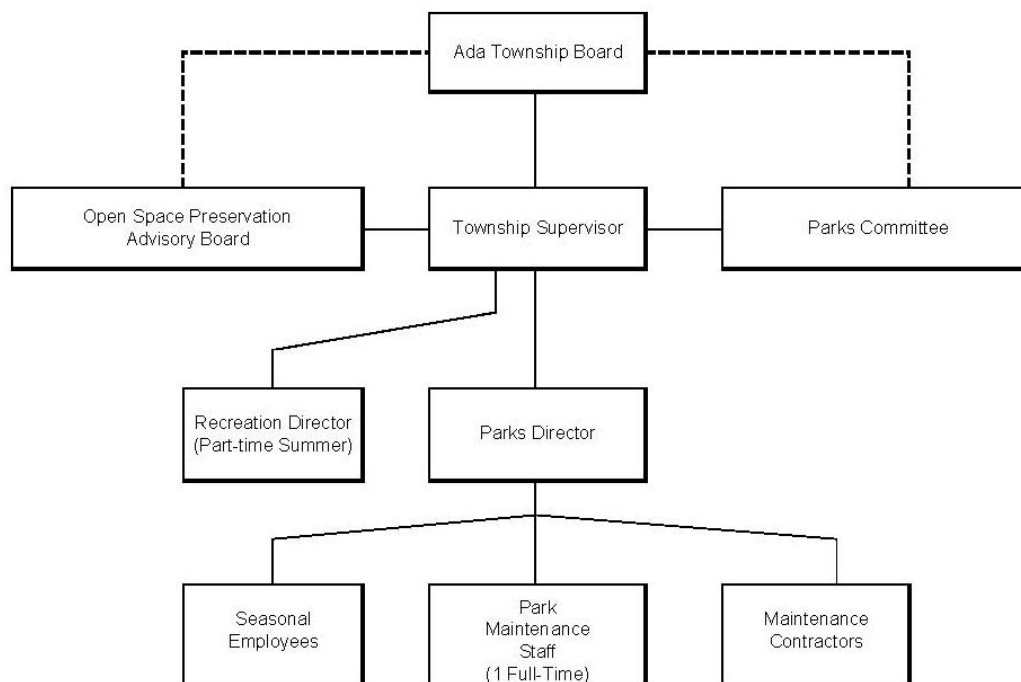


Figure 2 – Organizational Chart for Parks, Recreation and Open Space Protection Programs

Parks, Recreation and Open Space Protection Budgets

Ada Township funds park and recreation programs and operation and maintenance costs for park and recreation facilities through a combination of revenue sources:

- A dedicated millage of .25 mills for park operation, originally approved by the voters for 5 years in 1996, was re-authorized for 5 more years, in both the November, 2000 general election and the August, 2006 primary election. This millage is expected to generate about \$197,000 of revenue in the current budget year (2006-07).
- A dedicated millage of .40 mills was approved for 15 years by voters in November, 2002. The funds generated by this millage will be used for the purchase of park and open space lands and the development of future parks. This millage is expected to generate about \$318,000 of revenue in the current budget year (2006-07). An informal allocation of 58% of the revenues generated by this millage has been established for use in the Township's open space protection program, with the balance of 42% allocated for parks and recreation. As discussed elsewhere in this document, a need exists to establish a coordinated mechanism for administering these funds, in light of the high degree of overlap that exists between park, recreation and open space protection functions of many sites.
- Fees charged to participants in the Township's summer recreational softball leagues and other park programs and park shelter reservation fees generate about \$37,500 per year.
- Interest income of about \$14,000 per year also supports park and recreation programs.
- The balance of the Township's park and recreation operating budget is funded from general revenues. In recent years, the Township has allocated rental income from leases with wireless communications providers to parks and recreation programs.

The following is a summary of Ada Township expenditures for the past three completed fiscal years, as well as budgeted expenditures for the current fiscal year ending March 31, 2007 and projected operating expenditures for the next five years.

With regard to projected expenditures for the future, it is likely that expenditures for the recreation programs will grow at a modest rate in future years, in proportion to Township population growth, and as influenced by general inflation rates. Participation in the major area of expenditure, the summer softball program, has remained relatively stable for the past 10 years.

Future operating expenses for the Parks and Arboretum budget will be greatly influenced by the Township's improvement programs for parks and trails. For planning purposes, recreation program expenditures are projected to grow at a 3%/year rate as shown below for the following five years. The projected expenses for the parks and arboretum fund include park operating funds (which are projected to grow at 5%/year rate) and funds for projects listed in the action plan.

	<u>Recreation Department</u>	<u>Parks and Arboretum Department</u>	<u>Capital Outlays</u>
• FY 2003-04 (Actual):	\$35,489	\$249,472	\$0
• FY 2004-05 (Actual):	\$32,714	\$301,671	\$0
• FY 2005-06 (Actual):	\$34,736	\$91,730	\$147,122
• FY 2006-07 (Budgeted):	\$38,651	\$147,065	\$209,175
• FY 2007-08 (Projected):	\$38,912	\$714,383	
• FY 2008-09 (Projected):	\$40,079	\$1,191,500	
• FY 2009-10 (Projected):	\$41,281	\$952,000	
• FY 2010-11 (Projected):	\$42,519	\$375,000	
• FY 2011-12 (Projected):	\$43,795	\$635,000	

Role of Volunteers

Volunteerism within the Parks Department has been limited to grounds maintenance and programming presentation. Members of Riverside Fellowship maintain the Woodland Garden located at Ada Township Park. Students in the MSU Extension's Master Naturalist program perform invasive species removal. Students from Calvin College have installed a Butterfly Garden at Ada Park and have performed several botanical and wildlife surveys at Ada Township Park and Roselle Park. Several programs have been presented to the public at Ada Township Park by volunteers.

Relationships with Other Public Agencies

The Parks Director has been working with the Forest Hills Public School's Community Services Department to coordinate programming and marketing of park programs. The park's summer program brochure is distributed to students through the local elementary schools.

DESCRIPTION OF PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process used to prepare the 2007 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan involved four basic phases: data collection; analysis; needs identification; and plan development. The data collection phase involved collection and analysis of demographic data, including data from the 2000 U.S. Census. Contact was made with representatives of the Forest Hills Public Schools district and private recreation facility owners in the area to obtain current information regarding existing facilities in the area.

The analysis phase of the planning process included comparison of the park and recreation facilities inventory data to the guidelines contained in the “Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines” published by the National Recreation and Park Association in 1996, considered in light of the Park Committee’s knowledge of local needs and interests, and tempered by input from the public. From this analysis a preliminary list of recreation deficiencies and needs was developed, and a preliminary set of plan goals and objectives was formulated.

Public input regarding park and recreation needs was solicited through a written survey inserted in the Township newsletter in Fall, 2006, and through contact with citizens at information booths at community-wide events, such as the Fourth of July celebration. Comments received in the survey and open house event were considered by the Parks Committee in developing the Draft Plan.

The Parks Committee completed development of the proposed 5 Year Action Plan at a meeting on February 16, 2007. The Board of Trustees reviewed the draft plan and solicited public input on the plan at the February 26, 2007 Township Board meeting, prior to adopting the Plan.

RECREATION INVENTORY

Ada Township contains over 1,000 acres of public land available for recreational pursuits. The community's outstanding natural features have resulted in a number of regional recreational facilities being located in the area, including a large County park and extensive State Game Area lands. In addition, Ada Township has four community parks operated by the township government and several school facilities available to the public. There are numerous private recreational facilities as well. An inventory of the publicly-accessible park and recreation facilities located in Ada Township is contained in Table 10, and shown on the Recreation Facility Inventory Map contained in the Appendix.

Regional Facilities

Cannonsburg State Game Area:

Cannonsburg State Game Area is a natural area used for hunting, hiking, mountain biking and cross-country skiing. It is located in the north end of the Township, between 3 Mile and 4 Mile Roads. Nearly 500 acres of the game area are located within northern Ada Township, with a larger area of the park located in adjacent Cannon Township.

Seidman Park:

Seidman Park is owned and operated by the Kent County Road and Park Commission. With 530 acres, Seidman Park is one of the largest parks in the Kent County system. The heavily wooded site contains a trail network used for hiking and cross-country skiing. Horses, motorized vehicles and bicycles are prohibited in the park. There are several interpretive display boards along the trail network. Restroom facilities are located at both the northern and southern ends of the park. The trail network includes a boardwalk extending through one of the several wetlands which occur within the park.

Chief Hazy Cloud Park:

One of two Kent County parks located in Ada Township, Chief Hazy Cloud Park is a 22-acre facility located on the north bank of the Grand River near the center of the Township. The park contains picnic tables and grills, play equipment, and restrooms. Fishing is also a popular activity at this park. Negotiations are underway between the Kent County Road and Park Commission and the neighboring landowner to purchase the 97-acre parcel to the north of this riverfront park for park expansion and land preservation.

Grand River Public Access Sites:

There are two public access boat launch sites on the Grand River, under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Waterways Division. The Knapp St. Bridge Public Access Site is located south of the Knapp Street Bridge on the east side of the river. The site contains 14 parking spaces. The Ada Grand River Public Access Site (47 parking spaces) is located just north of Fulton Street (M-21), on the river's west bank. Each site contains a boat launch ramp and pit-type restrooms.

MDOT Roadside Rest Area Park:

This MDOT roadside rest area is on a three-acre site along M-21 near the extreme southeast corner of the Township. Picnic tables, grills and restroom facilities are available at the park.

Table 10 – Public Recreation Facility Inventory

Type of Facility	Ada Township Park	Grand River Nature Trail and Preserve	Leonard Field	Roselle Park	Chief Hazy Cloud Park	Seidman Park	Cannonsburg State Game Area	Grand River Access - Knapp St.	Grand River Access - Fulton St.	MDOT Roadside Park (M-21)	FH Central Schools
ACRES	57	120	2	247	22	530	472	1	5	3	53
Hard Surface Play Areas											
Basketball (Outdoors)	1										
Tennis Courts (Outdoors)	6										8
Racquetball Courts											
Baseball Fields											2
Softball Fields	2		1								2
Football Fields											2
Soccer Fields	3										
Open Playfields	X										X
Grills	10				X					4	
Shelters	3										
Tables	38				X					4	
Pedestrian/Ski Trails	X	X		X		X	X				
Bicycle Trails											
Fishing	X				X			X	X		
Accessible River Overlook			X								
Boat Launch								X	X		
Indoor Swimming Pool											
Swimming Beach											
Ice Skating			X								
Classrooms/Meeting rooms	1										2
Community Center											
Gymnasium											2
Horseshoe Pits	1										
Playgrounds	1				1						
Restrooms	X		X Portable		X Portable	X Pit-Type		X Pit-Type	X Pit-Type	X Pit-Type	
Auditorium											1
Track											1
Equestrian Trails											
Arboretum	X										
Concession Building											
Trap/Skeet Ranges											
Archery Range											
Sporting Clays											
Volleyball Courts											
Natural Areas	X	X		X		X	X				

Table 10 – Public Recreation Facility Inventory, Cont'd.

[illegible]

Township Facilities

Ada Township Park:

The most utilized of the Township-owned parks, Ada Township Park is a 57-acre site located on the southern border of the Township, southeast of the Village, at Buttrick Ave. and Grand River Dr. This park has become popular with persons and groups from throughout the Grand Rapids metro area, not only for its many recreational opportunities but for its barrier-free design and complete access. In 2003, readers of *On-The –Town* magazine named Ada Park the best park in the greater Grand Rapids area.

Existing facilities at the park include:

- 1 Park office building, containing Park Director's office, with adjacent classroom/meeting room with natural history displays, and a barrier-free, unisex restroom.
- Storage and maintenance building,
- 1 half-court basketball court
- 6 tennis courts
- 2 softball diamonds with bleachers
- Large open field area used by AYSO soccer organization for practice and games, with two fields for ages 7-14 and two fields for kindergarten-age players.
- 7 picnic areas, each with a grill and picnic tables (18 tables total)
- 1 shelter with grill, electric service, water, 12 picnic tables and barrier-free restrooms
- 3 connected gazebos, near ponds, with grill, electric service and 6 picnic tables
- 1 stand alone gazebo in arboretum, with grill and 2 picnic tables
- Paved paths and nature trail (barrier free)
- Fishing ponds with barrier free fishing deck
- 1 children's' playground with barrier-free play structures
- Arboretum
- 2 paved parking lots; 1 gravel parking lot
- Wildflower prairie

The children's playground and 1 full-size soccer field were improved in the early 1990's, with the assistance of grant funds provided by the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. The playground facilities were completely rebuilt. Antiquated, unsafe play equipment was replaced with new play structures, including several which meet Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements. The soccer fields were re-graded and re-seeded to level the play surface and remove large rocks near the ground surface.

More recently, the Park office building was improved by converting the former garage/storage area to a 1,060 square foot multi-purpose classroom/meeting room. All of the natural history display cases were relocated from the Director's office to the adjacent classroom space. A barrier—free restroom serving the new classroom was also added. A new 2,175 square foot garage and storage building was also constructed, adjacent to the parking area east of the softball fields. Finally, a deteriorated treated wood climber and play structure were recently replaced with a new simulated rock climber and play structure. These improvements were locally-funded.

The restrooms in the main Park shelter were completely renovated in 2001 and made barrier-free, with funding assistance from the Community Development Block Grant program. Parking area paving, landscaping, lighting and storm water management improvements were completed, with funding assistance from the CMI (Clean Michigan Initiative) Recreation Bond program. In addition, the paved pathway system through the park was resurfaced with an asphalt overlay.

A unique attraction of Ada Township Park is the remnant prairie located at the southeast end of the park, between the Grand Rapids Eastern rail line and Grand River Dr. This area contains many wildflower and native grass species characteristic of the original prairie landscape which once extended through much of the Midwest, nearly all of which has since been lost to urbanization and agricultural clearing. Management practices are being implemented by the Township to maintain and enhance this unique habitat.

Grand River Nature Trail & Preserve:

A major addition to the Township's park lands took place at the end of 2001, with the donation by Eastbrook Homes of approximately 120 acres of natural land along the Grand River to Ada Township, for use as public park land. The largely wooded land is located in the Grand River floodplain between the Ada Moorings development and the river. It extends east to the boundary with Cascade Township, where an adjacent 70 acres was donated by Eastbrook Homes to Cascade Township, as well as a 4-acre parcel donated to Forest Hills Public Schools, for development of a crew boat launch and boat storage facility, with sufficient parking for holding of crew meets. The total 194 acres donated for public use includes over 1 mile of river frontage.

This preserve will remain in a largely natural condition, with facility improvements limited to non-motorized trails to facilitate public access to and enjoyment of this natural site. A paved trail connection from Ada Township Park to the entry to the Ada Moorings development was completed in 2002 adjacent to Grand River Drive, as well as a paved trail from one of the streets in Ada Moorings to the natural area, and extending through the natural area to connect to the Forest Hills Public Schools crew facility in Cascade Township. Other trails in the natural area are to be limited to a mowed grass surface. Directional signs to get visitors from the parking area to the trail head have been installed. Interpretive signs that will educate the public on habitats, cultural history and the flora and fauna of the preserve will be installed along the paved trail.

Leonard Park:

This park is a two-acre site adjacent to the Thornapple River just east of Ada's village business district. The Township's only lighted softball diamond is located here. When winter temperatures permit, the ball diamond is flooded for use as an ice skating rink. The park's unique asset is a replica of a historic covered bridge which spans the Thornapple River and links the park with the village business district. This bridge is a focal point for the entire community.

The park has a paved parking area, ball field bleachers, period lighting and a barrier-free river overlook. A drinking fountain was relocated to make it barrier-free in 2006. Plans are currently underway to construct a barrier-free restroom facility here in the spring of 2007, to replace the portable toilets that have been in use.

Roselle Park:

Ada Township's parklands more than doubled in size in 2002 with the purchase of the former Ada Beef property located on Grand River Drive NE. The purchase of this 230-acre property was made possible through the generosity of local residents. A donation of \$500,000 was made by Ryven "Carl" Ezinga in memory of his late wife, Roselle. Additional funds were secured through the fund raising efforts of a few local residents. Combined, the funds raised allowed the Township to purchase this large tract of land. In 2006, an additional 17-acres along the Grand River and adjacent to Roselle Park were purchased from neighboring property owners with funds from the dedicated millage for parks and open space. With the purchase of this additional floodplain property, Roselle Park now totals 247-acres with 1.75 miles of frontage on the Grand River.

The Township completed a master plan for Roselle Park in 2004. The first issues to be addressed by the Township were the removal of contaminated soil and the demolition of the abandoned factory. This work was completed in the fall of 2004.

Most of the property is in the floodplain, which limits the area where development of park facilities can occur. When completed, Roselle Park will be home to an enclosed pavilion, playground, fishing pond and covered picnic area. The existing silos will be renovated to create an observation deck and climbing walls. Trails, both paved and natural, will provide access to the floodplain areas and the Grand River.

In 2006, enhancement of existing prairies, meadows and wetlands was accomplished with funding from the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited, West MI Wetlands Foundation, Macatawa Bay Waterfowlers and Pheasants Forever. A Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant for Phase I of the master plan was awarded in December 2005. Work will begin in spring 2007 and will include asphalt paving of approximately 1.3 miles of pedestrian trails, construction of a river overlook and canoe landing, and the placement of a seasonal toilet. In addition to the grant funded work, a large barrier-free wildlife observation deck will be built overlooking the enhanced wetlands. This structure will be built with donated funds from a resident in memoriam of a relative.

Barrier-Free Status of Township Facilities:

Ada Township has made considerable progress in recent years in improving the accessibility of its facilities by persons with disabilities. In October, 1999, at the invitation of the Parks Director, an assessment of the Township's recreation facilities was completed by the Grand Rapids Center for Independent Living, a local advocacy group for disabled persons. Of the recommendations by the Center, the only item remaining to be accomplished at Ada Township Park is placement of information signs in advance of steeply-sloped portions of paved pathways, informing path users of the steep grade conditions.

Barrier-free improvements at Ada Township Park include remodeling of the Park shelter restrooms, completed in 2001, and paved pathway improvements to provide barrier-free access to one of the softball fields, also completed in 2001. The remodeling in 2000 of the Park Office and Classroom also made this building barrier-free. Other barrier-free facilities at Ada Township Park include the fishing ponds, the tennis courts, a wheelchair accessible swing and an accessible children's play structure.

At Leonard Field Park, the overlooks on the Thornapple River and the covered bridge are all barrier-free. A drinking fountain was relocated in 2006 to make it barrier free. Construction of a barrier free restroom is to begin in spring of 2007.

Construction will begin in spring 2007 to make a portion of the trails at Roselle Park barrier-free. Structures to be built in this first phase of construction (wetland overlook, river overlook and restroom facilities) will all be barrier-free.

Based on the above discussion, following is the Township's assessment of the accessibility status of each of the Township's parks:

Park Name:	Assessment Rating:
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Ada Township Park:	3
Grand River Nature Trail and Preserve:	3
Leonard Field:	4, upon completion of restrooms in 2007.
Roselle Park:	4, upon completion of grant-funded project in 2007.

School Facilities

Ada Elementary School:

The Township's public elementary school provides some neighborhood recreational opportunities. The portion of the site not occupied by buildings or parking is about 15 acres. Recreational facilities include a hard-surfaced play area, one children's ball field, an open playfield, a gymnasium, and a playground. The ball field is used by the Little League, and the open playfield is used for practice by the AYSO youth soccer league and the area youth football league. Playground equipment is used by neighborhood children.

Ada Vista Elementary:

The Spanish Immersion magnet school for elementary grades K – 6 is located in the former Ada Christian School building. The school is located on Bradfield Street between Ada Elementary and the village and is home to 550 students.

The playground, basketball courts and two soccer fields are available for use by residents of the surrounding neighborhood. The AYSO league uses the soccer fields for practices and games. The school also has a gym, an outdoor track and two ball fields.

Ada Christian School:

Completed in 2002, Ada Christian School's 36-acre campus is located southwest of the Ada Congregational Church at Ada Drive and Colner Avenue. The building has a gymnasium, while the outdoor recreation facilities include a large playground, an irrigated turf softball field, a hard-surface play area and a multi-purpose athletic field with irrigated turf.

Forest Hills Central Middle and High Schools:

These two schools are located on a single 80-acre site in the southwest corner of Ada Township between Hall Street and Ada Drive. Excluding the area devoted to buildings and parking, approximately 53-acres are devoted to or available for recreational pursuits. Existing recreation facilities include the following:

- 8 tennis courts
- 2 baseball diamonds
- 2 softball diamonds
- 1 football field
- 1 open playfield
- 2 gymnasiums
- 1 auditorium
- 1 track

It should be noted that classrooms, auditoriums, and other indoor school facilities are generally unavailable for public use. However, gymnasium facilities are open to the public through the Community Education Program. The school district's gyms are "booked solid" with community activities. The community track is used by non-students for walking and jogging activities.

Forest Hills Central Woodlands School:

This building houses about 600 students in grades 5 and 6. The indoor facilities include a gymnasium and cafeteria. Outdoor facilities include a playground tailored to the older age group attending this school, a

baseball field, a soccer field, 6 basketball hoops and a volleyball court. A sidewalk links this school site to the nearby Clements Mill neighborhood to the west, and an asphalt trail connects the school campus to Adacroft Commons to the east.

Goodwillie Environmental School

Opened in 2001, the Environmental School offers Forest Hills Public School fifth and sixth graders the unique opportunity to use the outdoors as a “living classroom.” Enrollment is limited to 97 students that are selected to attend through a 5-step evaluation process. The school sits on a 28-acre parcel on Two Mile Road in the Northeastern section of the Township, adjacent to the 530-acre Seidman Park.

Forest Hills Eastern Middle and High Schools

Completed in 2004, the two schools are located on 115-acres in the Northwest quadrant of the Township, on Pettis Avenue and Knapp Street. Existing recreation facilities include the following:

- 8 tennis courts
- 1 soccer field
- 1 baseball diamond
- 1 softball diamond
- 1 football field
- 2 open playfields
- 2 gymnasiums
- 1 auditorium
- 1 track

Forest Hills Community and Aquatic Center:

This indoor pool facility, completed in 1990, is owned and managed by Forest Hills Public Schools. It is located adjacent to the Township boundary, northeast off Ada Drive and Forest Hills Avenue. This quality facility receives heavy usage and is open to the public six days a week. This facility, along with the Southeast YMCA pool, satisfies Ada Township's demand for indoor swimming facilities. A walking/biking path to the facilities along Ada Drive from Spaulding Avenue was completed in 2005.

Private Recreational Facilities

Adacroft Association:

Some limited private facilities are located south of M-21 in the Adacroft subdivision. In addition to several "commons" areas consisting of wooded ravines throughout the development, the Adacroft Association maintains a small pond and surrounding lawn area that can be used for picnicking. The pond is not of sufficient size or quality for any water-based recreational activities.

Lions Field:

Lions Field is a privately-owned facility that contains four baseball diamonds. The ball fields are used primarily by over 20 area Little League baseball teams. The ball fields were recently improved with irrigation, new backstops, dugouts and a batting cage. A new building was constructed in 2005 that contains restroom facilities, a concession stand and an indoor batting area. The park also has a picnic shelter, 12 picnic tables, a grill and 2 children's playground areas.

Kent County Conservation League:

The Kent County Conservation League is a private sportsman's organization with trap, skeet, sporting clays, rifle, pistol and archery ranges on its 171 acre tract immediately east of Seidman Park. The clubhouse building has kitchen facilities, and is rented out for private receptions.

Creston Rod and Gun Club:

A small rod and gun club with outdoor shooting facilities is also located in northern Ada Township, adjacent to the Grand River on Pettis Ave. north of Knapp St.

Egypt Valley Country Club:

Egypt Valley Country Club, located in the northern portion of Ada Township, is a private club with a 27-hole golf course, tennis courts, outdoor swimming pool and large clubhouse. Until 2006, the course had been the site of a Senior PGA tournament. After 15 years the tournament was cancelled due to the loss of corporate sponsorship. As a private facility, the club has very little impact on public recreation opportunities in the Township.

Alticor Corp. Employee Softball Field:

Alticor has a softball field for use by its employees. It is located on the north side of Grand River Dr., at the west end of the Alticor manufacturing facilities.

Alticor Corp. Employee Fitness Center:

Alticor Corporation has a recently-constructed employee wellness and fitness center on its corporate headquarters site on M-21 at Ada Drive. As one of the largest employers in Kent County, this facility serves over 3,000 people, many of whom live within the Township. The facility includes a weight room, a cardio fitness room and a group fitness center that includes a variety of top-of-the-line exercise equipment.

Boarding Stables:

The rural areas of Ada Township offer an excellent setting for horseback riding. A couple of the Township's boarding stables have closed in recent years, including the Open Ridge stables on 2 Mile Rd. and the Willow Creek stables on Pettis Ave., near Conservation St. The Township's remaining equestrian facilities include a large boarding facility and arena, Thomet Stables, located on Pettis Ave. at 2 Mile Rd., and the Kentree Riding Stables, on Michigan St.

Southeast Metropolitan YMCA:

The Southeast YMCA is located just west of the Township Boundary, on Forest Hills Ave. The "Y" facilities include a 25-meter indoor swimming pool, gymnasium, 15-station weight machine circuit, free weights, saunas, a children's gym with climbing wall, treadmills, stationary bikes and stair simulators.

Orchard Hills Swim and Sports Club:

This private membership facility is also located outside Ada Township, but near enough (4 miles from Ada Village) to serve many Township residents. It is part of the Saint Mary's Health Care Network of recreation/fitness facilities that includes the Michigan Athletic Club and the East Hills Athletic Club. It is located on Crahen Avenue, north of Fulton St. Indoor facilities include eight hard tennis courts and six

racquetball courts. The outdoor, summer club has a zero depth–entry pool with a water slide and kids play features, a sand play area for kids, a soccer and softball field, a sand volleyball court, running track, an outdoor cafe, 4 clay tennis courts and four hard tennis courts and locker room facilities. The summer facility has a wide variety of camp and sports programs for members and guests.

Contours Express

This private women’s fitness club is located on Pettis Avenue and Fulton Street. It contains an 18-station circuit for cardio exercise. Trainers instruct members on their workout routines and a variety of equipment is available for non-cardio exercise styles. There are several other private women and coed fitness clubs located nearby in both Cascade and Grand Rapids Townships that serve many Township residents.

East Hills Athletic Club:

This private membership facility, also part of the St. Mary’s Health Care Network, is located 5 ½ miles from Ada Village, on East Paris Ave., north of Burton St. It services the larger southeast metropolitan area, with its full variety of facilities that include weight training center, cardio fitness equipment, 25 meter indoor pool, basketball gymnasiums, volleyball and wallyball, 6 indoor tennis courts, 2 racquetball courts, platform tennis, dance studio, spin studio and gymnastics room, a spa facility, supervised children’s playroom and nursery.

MVP Sportsplex:

The MVP Sportsplex is another private, membership-based, full-service fitness and recreation center, located at the corner of East Paris Ave. and Burton St., 6 miles from Ada Village. The facility has 3 group exercise studios, 6 indoor tennis courts, a large fitness floor with 300 pieces of cardio-vascular and strength training equipment, a 25-meter, 5-lane indoor pool, and an outdoor aquatic center with water slides and 0-depth entry pool.

Patterson Ice Arena

Located within two miles of the Township border with Cascade Township is the only local indoor ice arena. This facility provides skating lessons, adult league and open hockey.

Private Passive Open Space

A significant acreage of open space land has been permanently protected in Ada Township, through conservation easements that are held by either Ada Township or the Land Conservancy of West Michigan, and land that is designated through zoning approvals as common open space in residential developments approved under the Township’s Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning regulations. Over 350 acres of land is protected in the Township as permanent open space, using one or both of these two mechanisms. These lands are identified in the “Private” open space category on the map in the Appendix titled “Inventory of Existing Open Space Lands.” Examples of open space in new development include the following:

- Common areas in Adacroft Commons Subdivision protect the steep, wooded hillsides in the subdivision from disturbance, and provide physical separation between abutting lots. Adacroft Commons, which was developed in the 1970’s, was the first open space development in the Township.

- A large wetland, as well as floodplain land along the Grand River, are protected open space in Egypt Creek Estates, located on the west side of Pettis Ave., north of Knapp St. The open space in this development provides over 800 feet of separation between the homes and Pettis Ave., and provides a recreational trail corridor along the Grand River.
- Over 30 acres of permanent open space are part of The Conservancy Subdivision, on the west side of McCabe Ave., north of Conservation St. A 200-foot wide open space buffer separates the home sites from McCabe Ave., to maintain the rural character of the road frontage. A 33-acre open space area at the west end of the development includes rugged, wooded hills of maple, beech and oak stands, with a variety of wildlife.

Other residential developments with protected open space include Brookside, Catamount, Copper Valley, Darby Farms, East River Ridge, Grand Valley Estates, Longleaf, The Preserve, The Sanctuary, Treebrook Estates, Valley Ridge Country Club Estates, Wedgefield and West Village.

Five properties within the Township have land that is permanently protected by recorded conservation easements held by the Land Conservancy of West Michigan.

While not publicly-accessible, this private protected open space in the Township is a valuable natural and recreational resource, which will be increasingly appreciated by Township residents in the future. This private open space is an important supplement to public lands in providing wildlife habitat, protecting river and stream corridors, protecting natural plant communities and providing recreational opportunities for Township residents. It is also becoming an important tool in helping to preserve the rural, open and natural character of Ada Township, characteristics which are highly valued by its residents.

Township Recreation Programs

Ada Township Park:

The great majority of Ada Township's recreation programming occurs at Ada Township Park. An adult softball league (detailed below) and tennis camps and lessons are held here. Ada Park is also home to the Forest Hills Girl Scout Day Camp that is held for 4-days in early summer. Several major events that were held in the park in the past have folded or moved in recent years. The Rogers Department Store Fishing Derby was cancelled in 2005 after 25 years, when the Store went out of business. Park staff is currently looking for a corporate sponsor to take over this event. The Relay for Life event outgrew the Ada Park facilities and moved in 2006 to nearby Cascade Township Park.

Roselle Park:

With the removal of the old factory at the site, the park was opened up for residents to hike. Several naturalist led hikes have been conducted here to introduce the site to residents. In 2006, nature-based programs were started here although participation was low due to weather conditions. The Grand Rapids Audubon Club has held a spring birding hike here since 2005.

Grand River Nature Trail and Preserve:

The floodplain forest habitat of this park attracts a wide variety of migratory birds. Based on this and the spring wildflowers that cover the forest floor, several naturalist led hikes are scheduled here each year.

The average annual attendance for programs includes:

EVENT	YEARLY PARTICIPATION
• Girl Scout Day Camp	160
• Grand Rapids Audubon Roselle Park Bird Hike	30
• Forest Hill's Northern Girl's Fast-pitch Tournament	100
• Thornapple Valley Baseball League Tournament	400

Township-Sponsored Programs:

• Tennis Lessons	75
• Seasonal nature programs for children and families	50
• Programming for School Groups	150
• Craft programs for children and adults:	50
• Nature hikes for families	50
• Summer nature and craft programs for area children:	625

Total Annual Participation	1,690
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Township Summer Softball Program:

By far the largest Township-sponsored recreation program is the summer softball league. Leagues are organized for coed slow pitch, men's slow pitch, men's fast pitch and high school girl's fast-pitch teams. The season begins with practice in April and runs to August. Slow pitch leagues play a 13 game schedule, while fast pitch leagues play 12 games. In addition, a six-week schedule is offered for high school girl's fast pitch teams. Township softball leagues play all games at Ada Township Park (two diamonds) and Leonard Park (one diamond).

Thirty-two league games are played each week on Monday-Thursday. Three games are played at each of the two diamonds at Ada Park each day, and two-three games are played at Leonard Field. Softball fields are also rented to several local boys' baseball teams for league play on days that Township league play is not using them.

In addition to the Township-sponsored leagues, there are two weekend tournaments held, all involving use of all three Township ball fields. These include:

1. A high school girl's fast-pitch tournament in April
2. A boy's baseball tournament in July

Weekly participation on the Township's softball fields totals approximately 700 players.

Additional Recreation Programming

American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO):

When the Ada-Cascade area AYSO program was established, all games were played at Ada Township Park. Since then, the dramatic growth of the league has outgrown the capacity of the available space at the park. The AYSO league now schedules games at several locations in Ada and Cascade Townships, including a full schedule at Ada Township Park. Other locations used by the league include Cascade Township Park, Grand

Rapids Township Park, Ada Vista School, Pine Ridge Elementary School and Forest Hills Northern High School. Games are played at Ada Township Park on Saturdays for 8 weeks in the fall and 8 weeks in the spring. Practices are held at Ada Township Park weekdays during the league's soccer seasons.

Participation grew from 16 teams and about 275 participants in the fall, 1989 season, to 97 teams and 1,500 players in the fall, 1995 season. Since then growth has reached a plateau, with approximately 1,000 players in the fall and 1,150 in the spring. The age range of participants runs from 4 1/2 years to 18 years. AYSO relies totally on volunteer parents for coaching, game officiating and equipment and field management.

Thornapple Valley Baseball League:

In 1954, Raymond and Bertha Brach willed the property now known as Lions Park to the Lions Club for the sole purpose of youth recreation. For the past 52 years the Thornapple Valley Baseball League has offered children ages 6–14 the opportunity to learn and play baseball. With over 600 children in five different age divisions, the TVBL is one of the largest youth baseball leagues in Michigan.

Community Education:

The Forest Hills School District offers a variety of community education programs, a number of which are recreation or fitness oriented. These programs are generally conducted at school sites.

YMCA:

The Southeast Metropolitan YMCA uses school facilities for some of its recreation programs, in addition to its own facilities in Grand Rapids Township. Its youth recreation programs include hosting a competitive swim team, swimming lessons for all ages, fitness and wellness classes and programs, and youth sports programs in floor hockey, soccer, t-ball, baseball, flag football, basketball, tennis, soccer and gymnastics.

Recreation Grant Inventory:

The following table summarizes the DNR grants that have been received by the Township since 1988:

Table 11 – Recreation Grant Project History and Status

Grant No.	Park Name	Scope Items	Condition
TF 05-106	Roselle Park	Asphalt Trail, River Overlook, Benches, Parking Lot Striping, Modular Toilet	Construction Scheduled for Spring, 2007
99-438	Ada Township Park	Parking Lot Paving, Curbing, Lighting and Landscaping	Asphalt paved lots in Good Condition, as is lighting and landscaping; “Gravelpave II” system using plastic honeycomb grid on gravel lot is in poor condition.
		Storm Drainage System	In good condition
		Trail Resurfacing	In good condition
BF 90-266	Ada Township Park	Re-Constructed Playground Area Surface	In good condition, with annual mulch replacement
		New Playground Equipment	Fair condition; one major play structure in need of replacement; some spring-mounted toys have required replacement
		Landscaping	Good condition; some thinning has been required over the years.

BASIS FOR ACTION PROGRAM

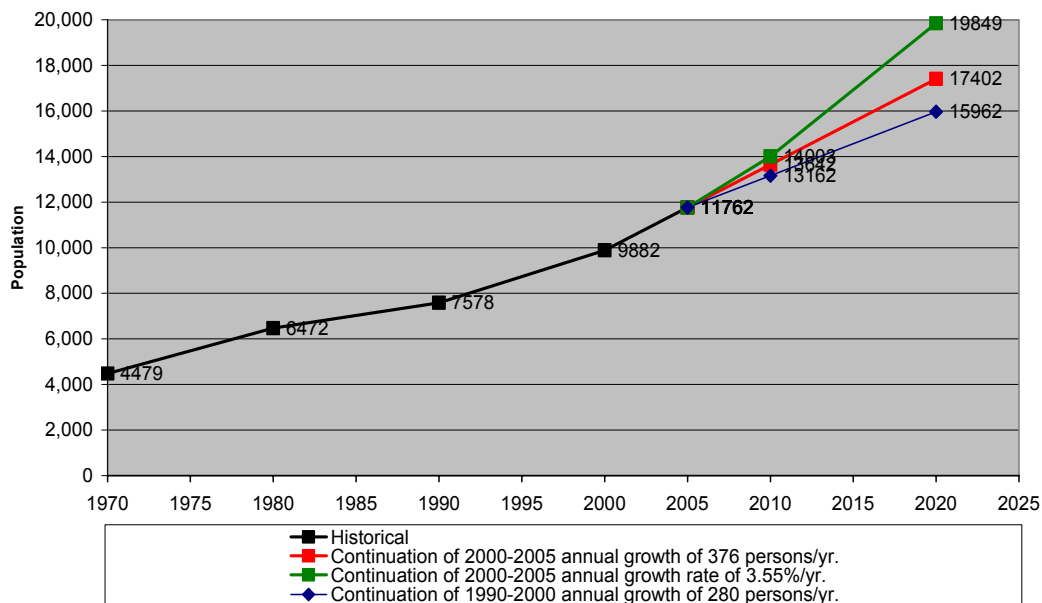
Projected Population Growth

A range of projected population for the Township in the years 2010 and 2020 is depicted on the graph shown in Figure 3. Three alternative projection methods result in a projected 2020 population ranging from 15,962 to 19,849. Projected year 2010 population ranges from 13,162 to 14,003. The methods used in preparing these projections were as follows:

- The method yielding the lowest projected population growth is based on a continuation of the average annual increase of 280 persons per year experienced between 1990 and 2005.
- The middle range of projections is based on assumed annual growth of 376 persons per year, which is the average annual increased experienced in the more recent 2000 to 2005 period.
- The highest projected population for 2010 and 2020 is based on a geometric growth rate of 3.55% per year, which is the growth rate from 2000-2005.

For purposes of evaluating recreation facility needs 5 years into the future, a 2012 population of 14,400 is assumed.

**Figure 3 -
Historical and Projected Population
in Ada Township, 1970-2020**



Recreation Facility Standards

Recreational facility standards provide a means for evaluating the relative adequacy or inadequacy of a community's park and recreation system. Recreational facility standards identify suggested numerical or acreage standards for facilities relative to population. Facility standards used in this analysis are derived from the "Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines," published by the National Recreation and Park Association, 1996, as well as "Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plans," 1/27/06 Revision, prepared by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. These standards were evaluated against existing recreational facilities and compared to the Township's 2005 estimated population and projected 2012 population of 14,400.

There are two general categories of recreational facilities: active and passive. Active recreational facilities are capable of accommodating exertive activities. Such facilities include athletic courts and fields, playgrounds, open playfields, swimming pools, and other areas for organized recreational activities. Passive recreational facilities require little more than space and furniture for quiet, non-exertive activities for more limited numbers of users. Communities have traditionally provided both active and passive recreational opportunities to meet a wide range of interests and age groups.

Park and recreation facilities are also categorized according to their primary function in serving either a local neighborhood, the entire community or the broader region. The facilities in the Township in particular should address both neighborhood and community-wide needs. Region-wide facility needs may be met either within the Township or by facilities elsewhere in the West Michigan region. Existing park facilities in the Township are placed in these three categories as follows:

		Acreage:
Neighborhood Parks	Ada Elementary School playground	3
	Ada Vista Elementary School playground	4
	Ada Christian School play areas	4
	Central Woodlands 5-6 Middle School play areas	5
Subtotal, Neighborhood Parks:		16
Community Parks:	Ada Township Park	57
	Grand River Natural Area	120
	Leonard Park	2
	Chief Hazy Cloud Park	22
	Grand River Access - Fulton St.	1
	Grand River Access - Knapp St.	5
	Forest Hills Central School Facilities	53
	Forest Hills Eastern School Facilities	60
	Lions Field	16
Subtotal, Community Parks:		336
Regional Parks:	Roselle Park	247
	Seidman Park	530
	Cannonsburg State Game Area	472
Subtotal, Regional Parks:		1249
Total Acreage:		1601

Analysis of Existing Facilities

The quantitative evaluation of recreation facility deficiencies in Ada Township is contained in Table 12. The standards used in the analysis are guidelines which need to be considered in light of other factors affecting recreation needs in the Township. The numerical analysis, therefore, is not to be used as an absolute determinant of deficiencies in facilities. However, the analysis is a useful guide to evaluating the Township's facilities. The quantitative analysis leads to the following observations about the mix of facilities in Ada Township:

- The Township has an abundance of facilities of a regional service scale, particularly those facilities which provide passive recreation opportunities (Roselle Park, Seidman Park; Cannonsburg State Game Area). The analysis indicates that the Township's need for large-scale, regional sites for passive recreational use is satisfied.
- The analysis shows a slight deficiency in the acreage of neighborhood parks. The Township has long recognized that there is a need for conveniently-located neighborhood playground facilities along the populated Ada Drive corridor. In addition, although blessed with an abundance of public natural areas, the northern 2/3 of the Township is without nearby playground facilities.
- The population-based standards also indicate that a surplus of soccer fields exists in the Township. This, coupled with the fact that the growth rate in youth soccer participation has levelled off in recent years indicates that provision of additional soccer fields by the Township is not a high priority.
- The Township is well-served by community-wide park lands. Ada Township Park, the "flagship" of the Township park system, provides a wide variety of facilities for both active and passive recreation, serving the entire Township population. Leonard Field, recently improved, showcases the Ada Covered bridge, overlooks the Thornapple River and hosts summer evening softball league games. The Township parks are supplemented by additional County and State facilities located in the Township.
- The analysis indicates that the Township population is not large enough to support several major types of facilities, such as an outdoor swimming pool and indoor ice rink. However, these facilities should be available within a reasonably convenient distance. Many of them are provided within a reasonable distance, by either public agencies, private non-profit organizations or the private sector. For example, the Patterson Ice Arena is an indoor facility located about 4 miles southwest of Ada Village. However, a community center is unlikely to be provided by any entity other than Township government, and should be located within the community. For several years, the Township has sought to acquire a vacant County Road Commission garage, located within the Ada Village area, for possible use as a community center.

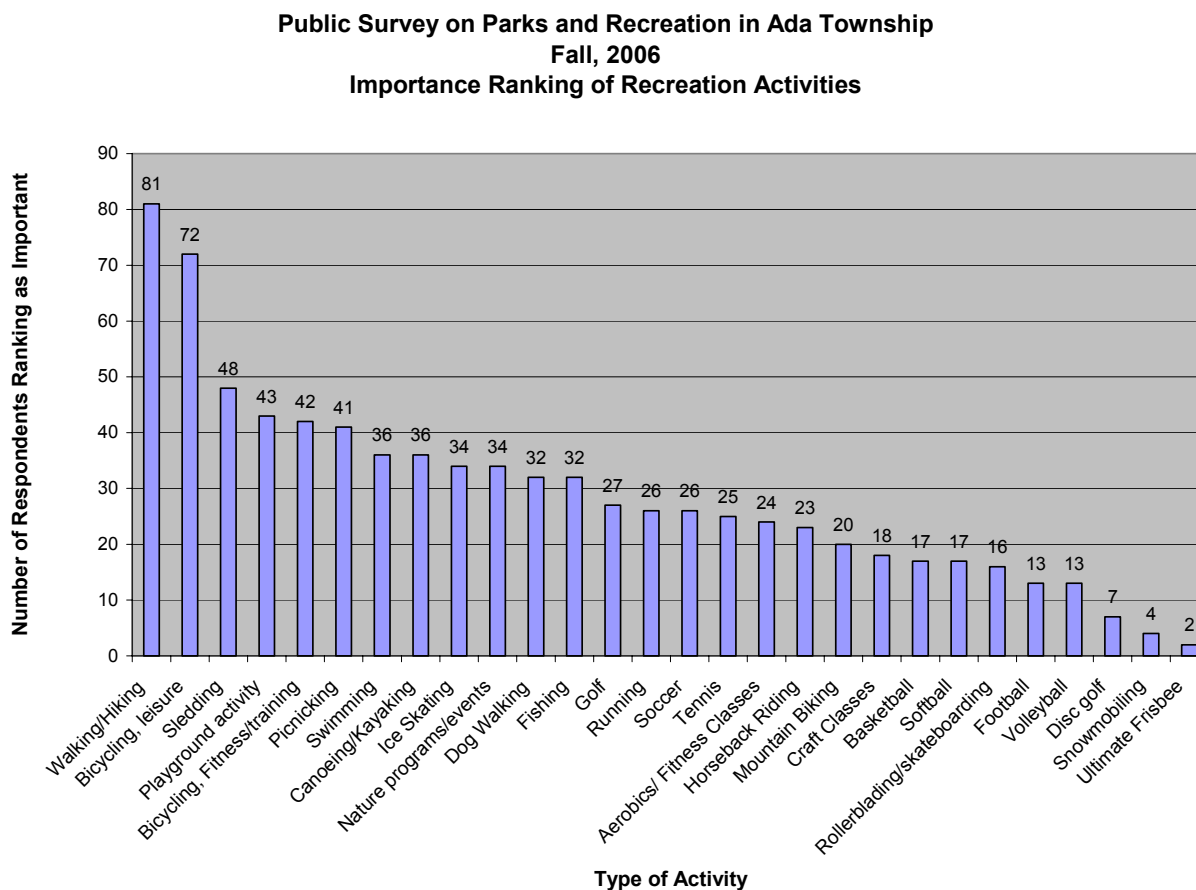
Table 12
Evaluation of Park/Recreation Facility Needs in Ada Township

Type of Facility	Standard	Number Existing	Year 2005 Population (11,762)		Year 2012 Population (14,400)	
			Number Needed	Surplus or Deficiency	Number Needed	Surplus or Deficiency
Hard-Surfaced Play Areas	1 per 10,000	3	1	2	1	2
Outdoor Basketball	1 per 5,000	11	2	9	3	8
Outdoor Tennis Courts	1 per 4,000	6	3	3	4	2
Volleyball	1 per 5,000	0	2	-2	3	-3
Badminton	1 per 5,000	0	2	-2	3	-3
Racquetball	1 per 10,000	3	1	2	1	2
Baseball	1 per 5,000	6	2	4	3	3
Softball	1 per 5,000	8	2	6	3	5
Football	1 per 20,000	0	1	-1	1	-1
Soccer	1 per 10,000	6	1	5	1	5
Grills	1 per 500	16	24	-8	29	-13
Shelters	1 per 2,000	4	6	-2	7	-3
Tables	1 per 200	50	235	-185	288	-238
Indoor Pool	1 per 10,000	2	1	1	1	1
Outdoor Pool	1 per 20,000	2	1	1	1	1
Indoor Ice Rink	1 per 50,000	1	0	1	0	1
Outdoor Ice Rink (Artif.)	1 Per 20,000	0	1	-1	1	-1
Community Center	1 per 25,000	0	0	0	1	-1
Gymnasium	1 per 10,000	6	1	5	1	5
Playgrounds	1 per 3,000	7	4	3	5	2
Outdoor Track	1 per 20,000	2	1	1	1	1
Neighborhood Parks (Ac.)	2 Acres per 1,000	16	24	-8	29	-13
Community Parks (Ac.)	5 Acres per 1,000	336	59	277	72	264
Regional Parks (Ac.)	10 Acres per 1,000	1249	118	1131	144	1105
Source: Michigan DNR, Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plans, (Rev. 01/27/06), Appendix E, Suggested Facility Development Standards Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, National Recreation and Park Association, 1996						

Summary of Citizen Survey Input

The following graph summarizes the rankings of relative importance of various types of recreation facilities and participation in various recreation activities, based on the responses to a Township-wide survey conducted in Fall, 2006. Completed surveys were obtained from 99 respondents.

Figure 4



The survey results underscore the popularity of trail-related activities such as walking, hiking, bicycling and fitness training, in addition to such traditional park-oriented activities like picnicking and playground use. Paddling sports have also increased in popularity in recent years, which has particular relevance in Ada Township, with its abundance of river frontage.

In July of 1999, as part of the Township's initial open space planning process, a written survey was distributed by first class mail to the homes of all registered voters in the Township, and to absentee property owners. The survey sought nominations from the public of candidate sites which should be considered for permanent open space protection in the community. Respondents were asked to identify the geographic location of their top 3 priority sites. The map in the Appendix titled "Citizen-Ranked Sites for Open Space Protection" identifies the 10 specific areas of the Township that received the highest number of nominations as either 1st or 2nd priority for protection. The 10 highest ranked areas, in priority order, were as follows:

1. Ada Drive corridor
2. Grand River floodplain
3. Area bounded by Honey Creek Ave., Dogwood Ave., Conservation St. and Pettis Ave.
4. Chase Lake area
5. Area bounded by Pettis Ave., 2 Mile Rd. and Egypt Valley Ave.
6. Area bounded by Knapp St., Honey Creek Ave., Conservation St. and Egypt Valley Ave.
7. Land north of 3 Mile Rd., west of Egypt Valley Ave., to the Grand River
8. Land in the vicinity of the Ada Village business district and residential neighborhoods
9. Land in the area of Kulross Ave, Rix St. and Scarborough Dr.
10. McCabe Ave./Bailey Dr./2 Mile Rd. area.

Following are some analysis comments regarding the survey results, and background information that places the survey results in the proper perspective.

- The survey results are somewhat reflective of the geographic distribution of population and housing in the Township, and the tendency of respondents to give high priority for protection to areas near their location of residence. For example, the highest ranked area is also located in the most densely-populated portion of the Township. The 3rd-highest ranked area is also in an area of the Township that is relatively highly-populated.
- Other aspects of the survey results, however, indicate that the public recognizes the value of important community open spaces, regardless of proximity to their own neighborhoods. For example, the Grand River floodplain corridor was ranked very highly in importance, despite the fact that few people live in close proximity to the river. Similarly, the Chase Lake and adjacent wetland complex were relatively highly ranked in the citizen survey, even though the lake is not highly visible from public areas, and is in the most sparsely-populated area of the Township.
- The survey was conducted at the same time that extensive publicity was being given to a developer-sponsored public design charrette for a potential large-scale development on over 400 acres in the number 5-ranked area. The public attention focused on the area at the time of the survey in all likelihood resulted in its being ranked of higher importance for open space protection than would otherwise be the case.

Important Functions of Open Space Lands:

In addition to considering citizen input, identifying open space lands that are important to preserve also requires an understanding and consideration of the variety of important functions that open space serves and the human values that are associated with open land. An accepted definition of the term “open space” is also needed. For purposes of this plan, open space is considered to be:

land that is free from intense development, and where the natural or cultural characteristics of the landscape are predominant.

The benefits of open space extend far beyond simply providing a pleasant vista out one’s window. These functions and values cover a broad range, from providing land for public recreational activities, to less tangible functions such as enhancing appreciation of the natural world. The following important open space functions were considered in identifying high priority lands for protection in the Township:

1. Natural Systems Preservation

Open space lands can provide important habitat for plant and animal species whose habitat areas are decreasing due to conversion of land to residential use and other developed uses.

2. Aesthetic Quality Preservation

Natural lands have an inherent attractiveness and value to many people. Experiencing natural surroundings is an important activity enjoyed by many, including many residents in the Township who value living in relatively natural surroundings. Certain features of the cultural landscape are also valued by many, such as mowed meadows, agricultural barns, animal pastures and paddocks, and even maintained residential lawns.

3. Surface Water Quality Protection

Open lands contribute greatly to maintaining the quality of rivers and streams in the community. The natural vegetative cover on undisturbed land shields the soil against the eroding impacts of rainfall, holding the soil in place and protecting against washing of soil into streams. Natural vegetative cover promotes infiltration of rain and snowmelt into the ground, providing protection against flooding and wide swings in stream flow that disturb stream systems.

4. Flood Control

By promoting infiltration of rain and snowmelt into the ground, natural land helps protect against flooding. Flood prone lands adjacent to rivers and streams provide storage volume for floodwaters. The extensive placement of fill in the floodplain diminishes the water storage capacity of the floodplain, thereby exacerbating downstream flooding.

5. Maintenance of Groundwater Systems

By encouraging infiltration of precipitation into the soil, natural land cover promotes replenishment of natural groundwater supplies. Groundwater systems in turn have an impact on surface water systems. Many wetland areas are fed by groundwater supplies. Groundwater seeps slowly from springs into the surface water system, helping maintain year-round flow in streams.

6. Recreation Opportunities

Natural lands are a valuable recreational resource for such activities as hiking, ski touring, hunting, bicycling, bird watching, horseback riding and others. While less natural in character, parks that are improved with playground and sports fields may still retain some attractive natural features.

7. Education/Spiritual Enrichment

Open lands provide opportunities for learning more about our natural surroundings and developing a greater sense of wonder and awe about the world and humanity's place in it.

8. Historic/Cultural Resource Protection

There may be specific open space sites in the Township with historical or other cultural importance that merits their retention as open space. For example, land along the Grand River in Ada Township played an important role in Native American society, in the settlement of the West Michigan area by Europeans and in the interactions between the two cultures.

9. Maintain Community Separation/Identity

Open space land can help maintain a distinct boundary between urban and rural areas, and avoid the gradual loss of community identity that can result from a sprawling development pattern that consumes large quantities of land in the rural areas between our communities.

10. Property Value Enhancement

Proximity to open space is an important criterion that affects the choice of residence location for many people. Its importance was underscored in a citizen survey undertaken in 1993 as part of the Township's master planning process. Survey respondents were asked to rank the relative importance of a variety of factors in affecting their choice of home location in Ada Township. Ninety-one percent of respondents ranked "surrounding open space" as "very important" or "important" in their choice of home location. This ranked second only to "personal safety/low crime rate" in a listing of 15 different factors ranked by survey respondents. Given this importance, the proximity of open space is likely a contributing factor to the value of residential property in the community.

11. Agricultural Production

Open land is a necessity to the production of food crops and agricultural commodity crops used for livestock production and many other purposes. While the most important function of agricultural land is its role in sustaining the human population through food production, it also contributes greatly to the visual qualities of the community. It also provides a livelihood and a lifestyle for a declining number of farm families. Americans have traditionally placed a high value on maintaining the viability of family farms and the agrarian values sustained by family farms.

Open Space Protection Priorities:

Based on consideration of public input, the analysis and inventory of the Township's significant natural features, and the important values and functions which are advanced by the development of a network of open lands, the following priorities for open space protection have been established:

1. Floodplain, wetlands, and woodlands along the Grand River.
2. Wetlands surrounding Chase Lake in the northeast part of the Township.
3. 20-30 acres for public park use on the north side of Ada Drive, east of Alta Dale Ave.
4. Agricultural land in the northeast quadrant of the Township, generally north of 2 Mile Rd. and east of Honey Creek Ave.
5. Over 200 acres of wooded hills and river bottom wetlands, along the east side of the Grand River, north of 3 Mile Rd. (Sunny Creek Overlook).
6. Over 60 acres of wooded land and Honey Creek frontage, between Dogwood Ave. and Honey Creek Ave.
7. An undetermined acreage for a community Township park, along Pettis Ave., south of Knapp St.
8. Other small sites scattered throughout the Township, which serve important open space functions.

Non-Motorized Trail System Plan:

Ada Township has planned for the development of a non-vehicular trail system in the community for over 10 years. The concept of a system of off-street pedestrian and bicycle trails was first proposed in the Township's 1990 Community Recreation Plan. At that time, abandonment of the Central Michigan railroad line through the township was being considered, and the Township's trail plan recommended that the railroad right-of-way be converted to a recreational trail corridor, in the event it were abandoned. An east-west trail along Ada Drive, from the Village business district to the west Township boundary, was suggested as an alternative to the rail line trail corridor, if the line were to remain in service. Other trail projects identified in the 1990 Plan were a recreational trail corridor along the north side of the Grand River, from Honey Creek Ave. to Knapp St., through a Grand River greenbelt, an "out-and-back" recreational trail through wooded floodplain land on the south side of the Grand River, east of the Village business district, and a pedestrian bridge over the Grand River, at the DNR public access boat launch located north of the M-21 bridge.

Progress has been made on some of these priorities, with completion of the Ada Drive trail (the rail line having remained in service) and the installation of a paved trail from Ada Township Park through the Grand River Nature Trail and Preserve. In addition, an important trail segment between Spaulding Ave. and the Forest Hills Aquatic Center property was completed as part of the West Village development.

With voter approval of a 15-year property tax millage in November, 2006 for construction, operation and maintenance of non-motorized trails, the Township is now pursuing a more aggressive schedule for expansion of its trail network.

In the Spring of 2006, the Township's Non-Motorized Trail Committee reviewed and updated plans for the Township's trail network. The following criteria were used by the Trail Committee in updating the Township-wide non-motorized trail plan:

1. locations of major population concentrations in the Township.
2. locations of existing and planned parks, schools and other activity centers.
3. physical features affecting trail location, such as steep terrain.
4. existing and planned trails in surrounding communities.

The draft Trail Plan developed by the Trail Committee includes the following trail segments, in priority order:

Major components of the Plan include the following:

- extending a trail along Thornapple River Dr. to connect to Cascade Township's completed trail to the south. Transportation Enhancement Grant funding has been obtained by the Township to assist in completing this project in 2007.
- Completing a trail loop over 13 1/2 miles in length through the more-populated parts of the northern 2/3 of the Township. This loop includes trails paralleling Grand River Dr., Knapp St., Honey Creek Ave., Conservation St., McCabe Ave. and Bailey Dr.
- Construction of a non-motorized trail facility across the Grand River at Fulton St. is planned in conjunction with replacement of the bridge that is programmed by MDOT in the next 4 years.
- Construction of a trail from Leonard Field Park to the Grand River Nature Trail and Preserve, provided that open space land adjacent to the Thornapple river for the trail route can be obtained.

- Completion of a trail along Hall St., planned and financed jointly with Cascade Township and Forest Hills Public Schools.

Other Identified Needs

Redevelopment of Leonard (Covered Bridge) Park:

The concept of redeveloping Leonard Park to accommodate a wider variety of community uses has been included in the Township's park planning since the mid 1980's. Improvements made within the last 15 years partially accomplish that goal, and are consistent with the long-term concept plan for the park. These improvements, completed in 1995, included concrete paving brick approaches to the Covered Bridge, period lighting, landscaped planting areas, and a paved walkway leading to a deck overlooking the Thornapple River. The key location of the park adjacent to the Thornapple River, the Covered Bridge and the Village Business District provide the opportunity to create a facility which is a visual centerpiece in the Township and a focus of community activity.

The long-term plan for the park proposes redevelopment of the park with a variety of uses, including:

- A Village Commons.

The creation of a band shell/gazebo and gathering space is proposed, for more passive recreational use, such as community events, art fairs, outdoor concerts, and the like.

- Outdoor ice rink.

The use of the existing softball diamond as a surface for natural ice has proven to be less than satisfactory in the past. Provision of a more suitable surface for ice skating is proposed, perhaps designed as part of a plaza around the gazebo-band shell. The concept of incorporating a labyrinth design into the surface of the plaza has also been suggested, to provide a space for contemplative, "centering" activity.

Relocation of Leonard Park Softball Field:

The Township recognizes that the summer softball leagues are a very important community recreational activity. Redevelopment of Leonard Park for the facilities described above would necessitate removal of the existing softball field - the only lighted field in the Township. The Township recognizes the need to replace the lighted softball field if redevelopment of Leonard Park is pursued, and to do so prior to elimination of the field at Leonard Park. The Township's goal is to redevelop Leonard Park without disruption of the existing softball program.

Replacement lighted softball fields could be provided at a new Township park developed in the northern half of the Township, or added to one or more of the existing fields at Ada Township Park.

Community/Senior Center:

General community meeting space and indoor activity space for seniors and others in the community is currently lacking. The need for indoor gathering space has been made more acute in the past couple years, since the Township converted half of the Rix Robinson Room in the Township Offices to staff office space. The remaining general-purpose space has been reduced from 1,800 square feet to about 900 square feet.

The Township has long considered the County Road Commission garage, located at the end of Fase St., as a potential community center. Within the last 15 years, the Road Commission considered selling the site, and the Township was given the opportunity to purchase the site. Environmental contamination and a cleanup program interfered with a purchase of the property. The Road Commission has since taken the property off the market, and now uses it on a limited basis for storage of road maintenance material.

If the property is disposed of by the Road Commission in the future, it is the Township's intent to seek to acquire the site. The property is opposite the railroad tracks from Ada Township Park. A creatively designed pedestrian crossing could be made to link the two sites. Use of the site for development of elderly housing has also been suggested. The Township currently lacks housing for the elderly. The location of the site in the Village area lends it to use for this purpose. If the site is acquired by the Township, consideration to all of the uses mentioned above should be given.

Neighborhood Park/Playground in the Ada Drive Corridor:

There is a long-standing and growing need for a neighborhood park in the southwestern quadrant of the Township, where a large and growing percentage of the Township's population is located. Given a desired service radius of 1/2 mile for a neighborhood park, the subdivisions west of the village along Ada Drive are currently under-served. A new neighborhood park of 20-30 acres along Ada Drive would meet this need.

The site targeted for an Ada Drive neighborhood park is on the north side of Ada Drive, and south of the Forest Hills Central Woodlands school campus.

North Neighborhood Park:

Given the location of Ada Township Park in the southeastern end of the Township, this park does not conveniently serve residents of the northern half of the Township. A need exists for neighborhood park facilities in closer proximity to the residents of the northern half of the community. The recent acquisition and ongoing development of Roselle Park partially addresses this need. However, Roselle Park is not conveniently accessed by residents who live east of the Grand River.

An opportunity may exist to work cooperatively with the school district to develop a neighborhood park on or adjacent to the Eastern school campus. Another approach to meeting neighborhood park needs for residents east of the Grand River would be to provide a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the Grand River between Roselle Park and Pettis Ave.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS

Starting in 2004, the Ada Township Parks Committee undertook a strategic planning process to provide guidance regarding park and recreation facilities and programs over a 5-year timeframe. The first step taken in the process was a joint meeting with representatives from neighboring townships, the Kent County Parks Department and the Forest Hills Public School District, as well as from different Boards and Committees within Ada Township to discuss long range plans and ideas. The information gathered at that meeting was then used to develop the following mission statement for the Ada Township Parks Department:

“To provide all community members with diverse recreational opportunities including access to premier natural, historical and cultural areas that enhance our quality of life and inspire the preservation of nature.”

The Committee then established goals to achieve the mission. Quantifiable objectives were then established by which achievement of the goals can be measured. The recreation actions are specific measures which implement the recreation objectives. The results of the strategic planning process were utilized along with input from the general public obtained in the citizen survey and outreach efforts conducted at community events, to prepare the following statement of Goals and Objectives.

GOAL: INCREASE PARKLAND AREA VIA ACQUISITION OF TITLE OR ACCESS PRIVILEGES.

OBJECTIVE: Establish one pocket park.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Advocate for the inclusion of parks in Planned Unit Developments.
- Solicit private contributions for purchase of property.
- Purchase property with Township funds.
- Seek grant funding for property purchase and/or park development.
- Cooperate with Forest Hills School District.

OBJECTIVE: Establish limited access to privately owned natural areas under voluntary cooperation with property owners.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Seek access agreements (gratis) with property owners.
- Seek access agreements (lease) with property owners.

GOAL: COMPLETE PHASE 1 & 2 OF ROSELLE PARK DEVELOPMENT AND WORK TOWARDS COMPLETION OF PHASE 3.

OBJECTIVE: Meet the design goals for Phase 2.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Use funds from the Parks & Land Preservation millage.

- Seek additional Government funding.
- Solicit private funding.

GOAL: CONTINUE LEONARD FIELD REDEVELOPMENT.

OBJECTIVE: Construct permanent restroom facility.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Utilize Park & Recreation millage funding.

OBJECTIVE: Produce a plan for redevelopment of Leonard Field and relocation of lighted ball field.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Establish Leonard Field Redevelopment Committee.

GOAL: INCREASE PROPORTION OF RESIDENT PARTICIPATION IN RECREATION PROGRAMS.

OBJECTIVE: Increase resident participation in programs to exceed 50% of all participants.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Promote programs via local media, Township publications and park postings.

GOAL: INCREASE DIVERSITY AND QUANTITY OF RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES BY OFFERING A FULL SPECTRUM OF ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

OBJECTIVE: Increase facility based offerings.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Provide a full-court basketball area at Ada Park.
- Install a sand volleyball court at Ada Park.
- Explore feasibility of installing an ice rink at Ada Park.

OBJECTIVE: Increase natural area based programming.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Establish cross-country ski trails at Roselle Park or Grand River Nature Trail & Preserve.
- Establish bird observation area at Roselle Park.
- Continue paddle trail on rivers through the township by establishing canoe/kayak

- landings.
- Establish hiking trails with interpretive signage.
- Establish an additional pond-based fishing area.

OBJECTIVE: Increase classroom based programming.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Schedule adult oriented programming, e.g. travel lectures.
- Schedule children oriented programming, e.g. Holidays.
- Schedule family oriented programming, e.g. bike or canoe trips.
- Schedule teen/young adult oriented programming, e.g. rock climbing.
- Schedule senior oriented programming, e.g. health-based programs.
- Schedule programs for those with disabilities.

GOAL: COMPLETE A COORDINATED SYSTEM OF NON-MOTORIZED TRAILS IN THE TOWNSHIP.

OBJECTIVE: Complete 5-6 miles of trail construction per year in the next 3 to 4 years.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Develop trail phasing plan and construction schedule.
- Issue bonds to finance construction.
- Involve the citizen-based Non-Motorized Trail Committee in implementation of trail construction plans.
- Hold neighborhood public input meetings for each phase of trail construction.

OBJECTIVE: Establish pedestrian/cyclist crossings over the Grand River at Fulton St., Knapp St. and Roselle Park.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Provide input into State planning for reconstruction of M-21 Bridge to request pedestrian/cyclist access crossing bridge.
- Apply for MDOT Transportation Enhancement grant funding to retrofit the Knapp St. bridge over the Grand River with a pedestrian/bicycle lane.
- Seek public/private sector funding partnership to construct a pedestrian/bicycle bridge across the Grand River, to connect Roselle Park to the Pettis Ave. corridor.

GOAL: PRESERVE THE OPEN SPACE QUALITIES OF THE TOWNSHIP WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO ITS CHARACTER AND ATTRACTIVENESS.

OBJECTIVE: Identify and target for acquisition or protection through other means high priority open space lands that contribute to the character and attractiveness of the Township.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Increase public awareness of tools available for land protection (conservation easements), and public awareness of Township funds available for open space acquisition.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage voluntary stewardship actions by property owners to maintain and enhance the natural character and qualities of their property.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Promote the formation of a citizens group to become involved in the National Wildlife Federation's Community Habitat Registration and Certification program.

OBJECTIVE: Identify modifications to zoning and other growth management regulations that will encourage open space preservation and protection of important natural features as part of new development design.

GOAL: **ENCOURAGE THE PROTECTION OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS AND THE VIABILITY OF AGRICULTURAL LAND USE IN THE TOWNSHIP.**

OBJECTIVE: Protect important agricultural lands in the Township through participation in the Kent County Purchase of Development Rights program.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Encourage property owners to participate in the Kent County PDR Program.

GOAL: **PROTECT SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENTAL AREAS AND AREAS WHICH SERVE IMPORTANT ECOLOGICAL FUNCTIONS IN THE TOWNSHIP, INCLUDING WETLANDS, FLOODPLAINS, STREAM CORRIDORS AND STEEP, WOODED SLOPES, TO SUPPORT THE NEEDS OF THE NATURAL COMMUNITY WITHIN THE TOWNSHIP.**

OBJECTIVE: Protect a continuous open space corridor extending along Honey Creek and Egypt Creek, with an open space connection at the upper reaches of the watersheds of these 2 streams, in the Chase Lake/Seidman Park area.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Conduct educational efforts to inform property owners along Honey Creek, Egypt Creek and other major streams of the benefits of natural riparian buffers along stream corridors.
- Permanently protect natural open lands along the Grand River Corridor, through acquisition of land or by obtaining conservation easements on land.

GOAL: **DEVELOP A SHARED VISION AND MISSION BETWEEN THE PARKS COMMITTEE AND THE OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD FOR THE PRESERVATION OF TOWNSHIP NATURAL RESOURCES AND A**

MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL DISTRIBUTION PROTOCOL FOR THE PARKS & OPEN SPACE MILLAGE FUNDS.

OBJECTIVE: Adopt a joint Open Space Preservation Advisory Board/Parks mission statement in regards to preservation of township natural resources.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Establish joint conference committee.
- Conduct periodic joint work sessions.

OBJECTIVE: Adopt a joint Open Space Preservation Advisory Board/Parks distribution protocol for the Parks & Open Space millage funds.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Establish joint conference committee.

GOAL: **INCREASE COLLABORATION WITH REGIONAL PARKS, RECREATION AND LAND PRESERVATION ORGANIZATIONS/AGENCIES IN ORDER TO PROVIDE INCREASED RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES FOR TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS.**

OBJECTIVE: Regularly publish recreational opportunity schedules that reflect Ada Township, bordering townships and county recreation opportunities.

OBJECTIVE: Develop liaisons/contracts with area governmental bodies for use of their recreation areas as needed.

OBJECTIVE: Co-sponsorship of recreation opportunities.

OBJECTIVE: Maintain cooperative relationships with the Kent County Parks Department, the Land Conservancy of West Michigan and the Green Infrastructure Leadership Council created by the West Michigan Strategic Alliance.

GOAL: **INCREASE PROCUREMENT OF GRANTS, DONATIONS AND ALTERNATIVE FUNDING STRATEGIES.**

OBJECTIVE: Submit grant proposals to fund, on average, 15% of the parks and recreation capital funding.

OBJECTIVE: Solicit non-township funds to contribute to the parks and recreation capital funding (in addition to the aforementioned 15%).

GOAL: **MAINTAIN THE BUD LOCKE ARBORETUM AT OR ABOVE THE CURRENT LEVEL OF SPECIES DIVERSITY AND NUMBER OF SPECIMENS.**

OBJECTIVE: Increase diversity of species displayed in the arboretum.

OBJECTIVE: Repair/replace specimen identification plaques.

OBJECTIVE: Produce and display map of specimen locations.

OBJECTIVE: Include area of origin, natural history of each specimen on display signs.

GOAL: FINALIZE ACCESS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE GRAND RIVER NATURE TRAIL AND PRESERVE.

OBJECTIVE: Install obvious signage indicating route to trail.

OBJECTIVE: Establish trailhead with map, interpretive signage and navigation signage.

OBJECTIVE: Provide adequate parking area for users.

OBJECTIVE: Establish canoe landing.

OBJECTIVE: Establish pedestrian path around Ada Moorings entrance to join sidewalk to trailhead.

GOAL: EXPAND RECREATIONAL ACCESS AND CONSERVATION EASEMENTS TO GRAND RIVER CORRIDOR.

OBJECTIVE: Obtain river access between DNR boat launch and Roselle Park to establish corridor of access points.

OBJECTIVE: Provide advocacy for the transfer of the Pettis property (contiguous with Chief Hazy Cloud Park) to public ownership.

GOAL: ESTABLISH TWO NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS.

OBJECTIVE: Establish northern park.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS:

- Advocate for the inclusion of parks in Planned Unit Developments.
- Solicit private contributions for purchase of property.
- Purchase property with Township funds.
- Cooperate with Forest Hills Public Schools.

ACTION PROGRAM AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

Many of the plan actions stated in the Goals, Objectives, and Actions section above represent recreational facility development or acquisition projects. Most of these projects, listed below, have been prioritized; costs for development or acquisition have been estimated; and potential funding sources have been identified. This information is summarized in tabular form in Tables 13a and 13b. These two tables divide the planned Park and Recreation Actions into two categories: Park Development and Parkland Acquisition, and Trail System Development. The Recreation Action Plan Maps (see Appendix) identify the locations of development or acquisition projects mentioned in the Capital Improvement Schedule. Following are some general comments regarding the rationale for the priorities and phasing of projects shown on the Action Plan:

- High usage of Leonard Field Park by tourists for views of the covered bridge and by softball league players/spectators and community picnickers make the construction of restrooms here a high priority. Since the parking areas were upgraded in 1996, this park has only been serviced by portable toilets. In order to better service park users, a barrier-free restroom facility will be constructed in 2007.
- The first phase of construction at Roselle Park is a high priority. Ada Township took possession of the property that makes up Roselle Park late in 2002. After removal of the factory on the site and the completion of the Master Plan in 2004, the property was opened up for use by hikers and cross-country skiers. Residents are anxious to see work begin on this property to make it more accessible to everyone. Funding for the multiple projects in phase one will come from a 2005 Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant, donors and Township funds. Future phases are scheduled so the completion of the park should occur within four years.
- In 2006 voters approved a 15-year half-mil property tax request to construct additional non-motorized trails in the Township, moving the trail projects into the high priority category. In order to complete all the trail work in a timely manner, the Township plans to issue bonds so that construction may be completed in 3 – 4 years, beginning in 2007. It is anticipated that the northern trail loop will be completed in 2011 with construction of a pedestrian/bike lane on the M-21 Bridge.
- To create additional recreational opportunities at Ada Park, the half-court basketball court will be expanded to full-court and a sand volleyball court will be added. As smaller projects they hold a high priority.
- To educate park users on habitats, area natural history and the flora and fauna of the parks, interpretive signage will be installed along trails in both Roselle Park and the Grand River Nature Trail and Preserve.
- Lower in priority is the development of a neighborhood park in the Ada Drive corridor. The need for this park is high, but currently no land is available. If land becomes available it may move this project up in priority.
- If additional land can be acquired to complete the Grand River Greenbelt east of the Village Business District on the south side of the Grand River, development of a recreational trail with a trailhead at Leonard Park extending east to connect to the trails planned within the natural area and connecting to the Forest Hills Crew Facility would become a high priority.

- Re-location of the lighted softball field out of Leonard Park and completion of Leonard Park re-development are scheduled beyond the next 5 years as long-term projects. This should not preclude earlier acquisition of land for new lighted softball fields if an opportunity to acquire land arises. A concept plan for Leonard Park redevelopment is contained in the Appendix.
- The development of a neighborhood park in the northern part of the Township is not anticipated for at least 5 years, as this is not a current need but a long-term anticipated one.
- Ongoing acquisition of additional land for purposes of protecting important natural open space land in the Township is proposed, including the creation of a greenbelt/trail corridor along the north side of the Grand River, between Pettis Ave. and Knapp St.

Completion of all projects planned for the next 5 years is projected to cost about \$9.8 million - \$6.1 million for trail construction, and about \$3.7 million for park projects and open space acquisition. The Township's portion of this cost is projected to be about \$ 7.4 million, or an average of just under \$1.5 million per year. Of this amount, about \$1 million per year is for trail projects, and about \$.5 million per year is for park development and land acquisition projects. Anticipated funding sources are indicated in the Action Plan tables and discussed in the next section.

Table 13 a – Recreation Action Plan – Park and Open Space Land Acquisition and Facility Improvements

ITEM DESCRIPTION	RANK	TOTAL COST	COST BY YEAR (\$000)					FUNDING SOURCES		
			2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	LONG TERM	GRANTS	TWP. OTHER
Install permanent restroom building at Leonard Field Park	1	\$95.0	\$95.0							\$95.0
Roselle Park - Trailhead, Trail and River Overlook (1)	2	\$277.8	\$277.8						\$122.3	\$155.5
Roselle Park - Install Riverbank Pedestrian Safety Barrier	3	\$5.0	\$5.0							\$5.0
Roselle Park - Woodrick Memorial Birding Platform (2)	4	\$50.5	\$50.5							\$3.5 \$47.0
Roselle Park – Convert Silo to Observation Deck	5	\$80.0	\$80.0							\$80.0
Expand Ada Township Park Basketball Court	6	\$6.5	\$6.5							\$6.5
Sand Volleyball Court at Ada Township Park	7	\$5.0	\$5.0							\$5.0
Establish water trail map and signage on the Grand River	8	\$5.0	\$5.0							\$5.0
Portable Plastic Ice Sheet for Leonard Field Park	9	\$60.0	\$60.0							\$60.0
Interpretive signs, Grand River Nature Trail/Preserve and Roselle Park	10	\$25.0	\$12.5	\$12.5						\$25.0
Replace Ada Park Playground Structures (1)	11	\$50.0		\$50.0					\$22.0	\$28.0
Roselle Park - Finish Wildlife/Habitat Enhancements (3)	12	\$160.0		\$160.0					\$120.0	\$40.0
Roselle Park - Enclosed Pavilion Bldg. w Restrooms, Serving Kitchen and Fireplace (1) (4)	13	\$810.0		\$810.0					\$356.4	\$226.8
Roselle Park-Picnic Area, Gazebo, Playground, Parking (1)	14	\$475.0			\$475.0				\$209.0	\$266.0
Roselle Park - Fishing Pond and Stream Restoration (1)	15	\$317.0			\$317.0				\$139.5	\$177.5
Roselle Park - Riverbank Erosion Control	16	\$200.0				\$200.0			\$20.0	\$180.0
Acquire 20-30 ac. for Ada Dr. area park (1) (4)	17	\$450.0					\$450.0		\$198.0	\$126.0 \$126.0
Develop Ada Drive area neighborhood park (1)	18	\$250.0						\$250.0	\$110.0	\$140.0
Re-develop Leonard Park with bandshell/gazebo and ice rink/labyrinth surface. (1)	19	\$250.0						\$250.0	\$110.0	\$140.0
Acquire land to connect Grand River Nature Trail and Preserve to Leonard Field Park (20 ac.)	20	\$80.0						\$80.0		\$80.0
Acquire Kent County Road Commission garage site for use as a community center / senior center	21	\$85.0						\$85.0		\$85.0
Acquire land for north neighborhood park, to include lighted softball fields. (1)	22	\$600.0						\$600.0	\$264.0	\$336.0
Develop north neighborhood park (5)	23	\$300.0						\$300.0	\$30.0	\$135.0 \$135.0
Acquire other high priority open space properties		\$1,710.0	\$190.0	\$190.0	\$190.0	\$190.0	\$190.0	\$760.0		\$1,710.0
TOTAL:		\$6,346.8	\$787.3	\$1,222.5	\$982.0	\$390.0	\$640.0	\$2,325.0		
POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES		Grant Funds:	\$122.3	\$498.4	\$348.5	\$20.0	\$198.0	\$514.0	\$1,701.2	
		Township Funds:	\$618.0	\$497.3	\$633.5	\$370.0	\$316.0	\$1,676.0		\$4,110.8
		Other Sources:	\$47.0	\$226.8	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$126.0	\$135.0		\$534.8

Notes: (1) 44% grant-funded from Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (DNR MNRTF)

(2) Private donations supplementing Township funds.

(3) 75% grant-funded through Partners in Wildlife program.

(4) Assumes 1/2 of Township 56% local match provided by private donations.

(5) Assumes 10% grant funding., supplemented by private donations.

Table 13 b – Recreation Action Plan – Non-Motorized Trail Projects

ITEM DESCRIPTION	RANK	TOTAL COST	COST BY YEAR (\$000)						PROJECTED FUNDING SOURCES (1)		
			2007-2008	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	LONG TERM	GRANTS	TWP.	OTHER
Thornapple River Dr. - Buttrick to Township Boundary (2)	1	\$239.3	\$239.3						\$124.3	\$115.0	
Northern loop trail - Ph. 1 - Grand River Dr., Fulton St. to Knapp St.	2	\$1,125.0	\$1,125.0							\$1,125.0	
Northern loop trail - Ph. 2 - Knapp St. to Honey Creek Ave. to Conservation St. at Greentree	3	\$1,700.0		\$1,700.0					\$170.0	\$1,530.0	
Knapp St. Bridge - Trail/Bike Lane Retrofit (2)	4	\$500.0		\$500.0					\$368.0	\$132.0	
Spaulding Ave. and Carl Dr.	5	\$400.0		\$400.0					\$40.0	\$360.0	
Hall St. - Cascade Rd. to Colner (3)	6	\$375.0		\$375.0						\$175.0	\$200.0
Northern loop trail - Ph. 3 -Conservation St. to M-21 at Bronson St.	7	\$1,250.0			\$1,250.0				\$250.0	\$1,000.0	
M-21 Bridge - Pedestrian/Bike Lane on New Bridge	8	\$500.0				\$500.0			\$400.0	\$100.0	
Riverfront trail, from Leonard Field Park to Grand River Nature Trail and Preserve	9	\$315.0						\$315.0	\$31.5	\$283.5	
TOTAL:		\$6,404.3	\$1,364.3	\$2,975.0	\$1,250.0	\$500.0	\$0.0	\$315.0			
POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES			\$124.3	\$578.0	\$250.0	\$400.0	\$0.0	\$31.5	\$1,383.8		
		Township Funds:	\$1,240.0	\$2,197.0	\$1,000.0	\$100.0	\$0.0	\$283.5		\$4,820.5	
		Other Sources:	\$0.0	\$200.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0			\$200.0

Notes:

1. 90% of total project costs assumed to be from local funds, with 10% grant support, with the following exceptions:
2. Assumes 80% funding from MDOT Transportation Enhancement Program.
3. Cost sharing with Cascade Township and Forest Hills Public Schools

IMPLEMENTATION AND FINANCING

Implementation Strategy

This Plan outlines an ambitious program of recreation improvements for the Township over the next 5 years. Completion of these improvements will make the recreation facilities of the Township an even greater source of enjoyment and pride for Township residents.

Realization of the improvements called for in the Plan would require a significant financial expenditure by the Township, even with significant grant assistance for some projects. Just as important as the financing needed is the commitment of time and effort that will be required to organize and carry out the many tasks needed to complete any complex project.

This section of the Plan identifies projected financing sources and a suggested organizational framework to accomplish the projects identified in the Plan. A combination of funding sources is also suggested to supplement the Township's own financing capabilities.

Major Capital Improvement Projects

The Township already has in place a Committee structure for carrying out major park, trail and open space protection projects. The Parks Committee advises the Township Board on park development and operations issues. A Non-Motorized Trails Committee has been formed to develop and implement an overall non-motorized trail system in the community. An Open Space Preservation Advisory Board has been formally established by Township Ordinance, to advise the Township Board on expenditure of dedicated park and land preservation millage revenues for acquisition of permanent open space lands or conservation easements on land.

In the future, consideration might also be given to creating a Committee whose focus is on development of a replacement lighted softball field, at the time that Leonard Field re-development is completed.

For development of new neighborhood parks, such as the planned Ada Drive corridor park and the planned park in the northern half of the Township, it would be advisable to include representation from the areas that would be served by these new facilities on a review Committee involved in the design of the facilities.

Improvements to Existing Facilities

Smaller capital projects, such as most of the proposed improvements to Ada Township Park, should be undertaken with the review and participation of the existing Parks Committee, which assisted in the preparation of this document. This group has a long-standing and continuing interest in this major Township Park.

Financing Sources

Completion of the 5-year Action Plan contained in this Plan is based upon use of a variety of funding sources, including Township general funds, State and Federal grant funding, contributions of a portion of property value by property owners, private contributions and County Parks participation in several projects.

Dedicated 5-Year Park Millage

Ada Township has a dedicated property tax millage of .25 mills, to be used for construction, operation and maintenance of park and recreation facilities in the Township. This millage, first authorized for 5 years in 1996, was renewed for an additional 5 years in the November, 2000 general election, and again in the August, 2006 primary election. The funding provided by this revenue source, however, falls far short of being adequate to finance all of the project needs identified in this and in previous Community Recreation Plans.

Dedicated 15-year Parks and Land Preservation Millage:

A 15-year millage for “parks and land preservation” was approved by Township voters in November, 2002. This millage (initially approved at .4 mills, and with about 10 years remaining) generates approximately \$275,000 per year in annual revenue. As specified in the voter-approved ballot language, this millage is to be used exclusively:

to provide funds for parks and land preservation, including the purchase of land, the purchase of voluntary conservation easements and the construction, operation, maintenance and equipping of improvements on land, and any related financing for these purposes.

Although there is no binding allocation of the millage revenues between parks and land preservation expenditures, the analysis prepared by the citizens Millage Task Force which developed the ballot proposal recommendation projected that \$150,000 of the initial year’s revenues of \$258,084 would be allocated to open space projects. On a percentage basis, this represents 58.12% of the total revenue generated by the millage.

Both the Parks Committee and the Open Space Preservation Advisory Board recognize that many potential land acquisitions may serve both park/recreation and natural land preservation functions, and that a need exists to develop a mutually-agreed upon distribution protocol for these funds, as expressed in the Goals and Objectives section of this document.

Dedicated 15-Year Trail Millage:

In November, 2006 Township voters authorized a 15-year property tax millage of .5 mills, to finance the construction, operation, maintenance and long-term replacement of an expanded trail system in the Township. The millage is estimated to generate \$416,283 in its first year. The Township is in the process of issuing 15-year bonds to finance construction of the expansion of the Township’s trail system. A portion of the millage revenue is also planned to be budgeted annually for trail maintenance and in a reserve fund for trail surface replacement.

Major Recreation Grant Programs

Two major grant funding programs are administered by the Michigan DNR, through a single annual application process:

- Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF).
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

The MNRTF Fund is a State grant program, funded by oil and gas lease and royalty revenues.

The LWCF program is a Federal grant program administered jointly by the State and the National Park Service. Established in 1965, the program is intended to provide funds for acquisition of land and development of facilities for public outdoor recreation. The U.S. Congress annually appropriates funding for this program. The funds are apportioned to the States based on a formula established in the enabling legislation. The LWCF program has been sporadically funded by the U.S. Congress for a number of years.

Transportation Enhancement Grant Funding:

The Transportation Enhancement (TE) program was established with passage of the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991, reauthorized in 1998 in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), and again in 2005 under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Michigan's allocation of TE funding is about \$20-\$25 million annually. The funds are administered by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

Enhancement funds may be used for nonmotorized transportation facilities, conversion and use of abandoned rail corridors for pedestrian or bicycle trails, transportation facility-related landscaping and other scenic beautification, acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites and historic preservation, among other uses.

Eligible applicants include county road commissions, cities, villages, transit agencies, MDOT, Native American tribes, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and metropolitan planning organizations. The Township is required to work through one of the above agencies who must act as the grant applicant.

The program requires matching funds of at least 20% of project cost from the sponsor organization.

Private Sources

Another important source of funds for community recreation projects is the private sector. This approach is already being successfully used by the Township for improvements to the Bud Locke Arboretum in Ada Township Park.

Private foundations, at the local, state and national level, are another potential source of funding which should be pursued.

Implementation Tools for High Priority Open Space Lands

The lands that have been identified as being of highest priority for permanent retention as open land in Ada Township cover a broad range of land types, throughout the Township. Accordingly, a broad range of implementing measures needs to be drawn upon to encourage and accomplish the protection of these priority open lands. The range of tools available to accomplish open space protection include those that are costly, as well as those that are inexpensive to implement. They include actions that are regulatory in nature, as well as measures that are strictly voluntary. Following is a discussion of the various implementing tools available for use in permanently preserving important open space lands, and recommended measures for specific open space lands in the Township. Suggested measures for each of the high priority open space areas identified in the Township are summarized in the table at the end of this chapter.

Fee Simple Acquisition

Fee simple acquisition of property provides for the greatest degree of control by the purchasing entity and the least risk of disagreement or conflict over use of the property.

Acquisition of land is most appropriate in cases where development of public facilities for public use is anticipated, as in the case of a public park. Purchase of property is the only mechanism proposed for development of the public park sites identified as priority needs on the north side of Ada Dr., and in the north part of the Township, on Pettis Ave.

Although acquisition of property by purchase for market value may be needed in some cases, donation of property to the Township or other appropriate entities should be sought, or sale for less than market value, through a “bargain sale.”

A donation of property to the Township, other governmental entities or a non-profit land trust is a charitable contribution that may have beneficial tax consequences for the donating party. In a bargain sale, the difference between fair market value and the purchase price may also constitute a charitable contribution, providing tax benefits to the seller.

Fee simple acquisition has also been identified as a possible means of protecting Grand River/Sunny Creek Overlook property, because of its outstanding features and potential for use as public park land, and for addition of property to the Cannonsburg State Game Area. In the case of the State Game Area, it is anticipated that land acquisition of property to square the boundaries of the Game Area would be accomplished by the Michigan DNR, using Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund funding allocated for this purpose.

Conservation Easement Acquisition by a Non-Profit Land Trust or Ada Township:

Conservation easements are a very flexible tool that can be tailored to the specific desires of a property owner and to the unique characteristics of a specific site. Although conservation easements may be accepted by local governments, conservation easements are most effectively used when the easement is held by an organization whose sole or primary mission is the protection of open lands. In West Michigan, the Land Conservancy of West Michigan, a non-profit land trust, actively pursues this mission.

Conservation easements are legally-binding restrictions on the use and alteration of property. The landowner retains his/her ownership of the property, and the right to use it in a manner not in conflict with the easement provisions. Conservation easements typically place limitations on the extent of permissible alteration and physical disturbance of the property, in essence precluding its development in perpetuity. The land owner may retain the right for specific uses under the terms of the easement, such as hunting rights.

To the extent that it limits development of property, a conservation easement may reduce the market value of property. The donation of a conservation easement to a non-profit land trust or governmental entity thereby constitutes a donation of a portion of the property value, that may provide tax benefits, in the form of a deduction from income for income tax purposes, and a possible reduction in the taxable value of the property. A property owner desiring to donate a conservation easement should consult with the Township Assessor and seek professional tax planning advice.

Public Access Easement Acquisition by Ada Township:

The acquisition of a public access easement across all or a portion of open space land may be an effective means of providing public access to open space, particularly in cases where development of the property is unlikely. This technique may be well-suited for providing public access to land within the floodplain of the Grand River, achieving the Township's goal of developing a recreational trail corridor and greenbelt along the river corridor.

A public access easement may be as limited as a 20-foot wide strip of land for trail development, or may extend across an entire parcel. A public access easement does not necessarily preclude development of property or protect its open space values. Therefore, it is best suited as a means of providing public access to land that is already precluded from being developed, because of its wetland character or location in the regulatory floodway, for example.

Purchase of Development Rights:

Recent state legislation specifically authorizes local governments to expend funds for purchase of development rights (PDR) in agricultural lands. The value of development rights in agricultural land represents the difference between the value of the property when limited solely to agricultural use, and its value for other development, typically residential use. The purchase of the development rights of property is accompanied by the placement of a permanent deed restriction on the property, prohibiting its development.

A PDR program may provide an agricultural land owner who is committed to staying in agriculture for the long term the opportunity to realize the monetary value of his/her land for development purposes, while permitting the land to remain in agricultural use in perpetuity. A development rights purchase may be structured to either provide the land owner with a lump sum payment for the development rights, or provide an income stream that is provided over a number of years. After the purchase of the development rights is consummated, the land is likely to have far less value than it did prior to the purchase, and it will therefore be assessed at a much lower value for property tax purposes.

A drawback to use of a PDR program to protect farmland or open space is its relatively high cost, particularly in areas where development pressure and land values for development are high. Another disadvantage is the scattered pattern of agricultural lands that may result from its use, unless it can successfully be applied to a large contiguous block of agricultural land, with incompatible uses excluded from the area. The northeastern quadrant of Ada Township has such a concentration of significant agricultural lands that a PDR program could be an effective tool to help maintain the economic viability of the area's agriculture, and discourage incompatible uses.

Although the 1996 legislation that specifically authorized PDR programs applies only to agricultural lands, local governments probably have authority to implement such a program for any type of open space land. In fact, Peninsula Township in Grand Traverse County established a PDR program, including a dedicated millage to fund the program, prior to the passage of the State enabling legislation for PDR programs.

Farmland and Open Space Preservation Agreements under Public Act 116:

Easement agreements between the State of Michigan and property owners under P.A. 116 of 1974, the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act, can be an effective means of encouraging land to remain in

agricultural or open space use.

P.A. 116 agreements provide a credit against state income taxes for landowners who agree to retain land for a minimum of 10 years in either agricultural or open space use. This Act enables a landowner to enter into a development rights easement (for open space) with the State. These agreements or easements are designed to ensure that the land remains in a particular open space related use or uses for an agreed upon period.

Open space land has been divided into two categories under the Act. The first category deals with historic, riverfront and shoreland areas. This type of land requires that the property be undeveloped and either historic in nature and recognized as such by appropriate federal or state laws, front on a river designated under Act 231, the Natural Rivers Act of 1970, or be designated as an environmental area under Act 245, the Shorelands Protection and Management Act of 1970.

The second category of open space land is more general in definition and includes lands which conserve natural or scenic resources, enhance recreational opportunities, promote the conservation of soils, poorly drained lands and beaches, or preserve historic sites and idle potential farmland of not less than 40 acres. The designation of this particular type of open space is primarily the responsibility of the local governing body and the interpretation of qualified lands may vary from location to location, depending on local circumstances. Interested landowners must file an application with the township.

The acreage of land subject to P.A. 116 agreements has declined in recent years in Ada Township. The public school finance reform enacted under "Proposal B" greatly reduced the financial benefits and incentives for participation in the P.A. 116 program. As agreements have expired in the Township, few have been renewed.

Exclusive Agricultural Zoning:

Exclusive agricultural zoning refers to zoning regulations which greatly restrict the extent to which non-agricultural uses are permitted in agricultural areas, including restrictions on residential development. Through use of very low density limits on residential development (or very large lot area requirements), non-farm residential development is in essence prohibited. The structure of such zoning regulations can take several forms. Commonly used techniques include the following:

- Quarter/quarter zoning: limits non-farm residential development to 1 residential lot for each quarter of a quarter-section, or 40 acres. There may also be a maximum lot size permitted for this lot.
- Sliding scale zoning: allows progressively less residential density for a parcel of land, as the size of the subject parcel increases. For example, a 10 acre parcel may be permitted to be divided into a maximum of 2 lots, while an 80 acre parcel may be limited to 2 lots for the first 10 acres, 1 lot for the next 30 acres, and 1 additional lot for the next 40 acres. The maximum density permitted for the 10 acre parcel is 1 lot per 5 acres, while the 80 acre lot is limited to a total of 4 lots, or 1 lot per 20 acres.

Both of the above techniques are suitable for use only in large contiguous areas of agricultural land use, where there is a core constituency of agricultural land owners who are committed to staying in agriculture as a livelihood. These regulatory techniques may also be best used in combination with financial incentives that enhance the economic viability of agricultural production, such as the measures called for in the Governor's recent proposal for legislation authorizing "Agricultural Development Districts," described above.

Open Space Development Provisions in Zoning Regulations:

Zoning ordinance provisions can be structured in a way to either encourage or require use of site design in new development that achieves open space protection objectives. Given that the financial resources available for open space acquisition will likely fall far short of the amount required to protect all high priority open space areas in the community, this technique will need to be relied upon to seek a balance between development and open space protection.

The Planned Unit Development regulations contained in Ada Township's zoning ordinance provide a means for encouraging residential development design that protects open space, through reduction of lot sizes and clustering of home sites. This technique has already been extensively used in the rural portions of the Township, resulting in the protection of over 300 acres of open land.

The effectiveness of these regulations in protecting open space could be strengthened in one or more of the following ways:

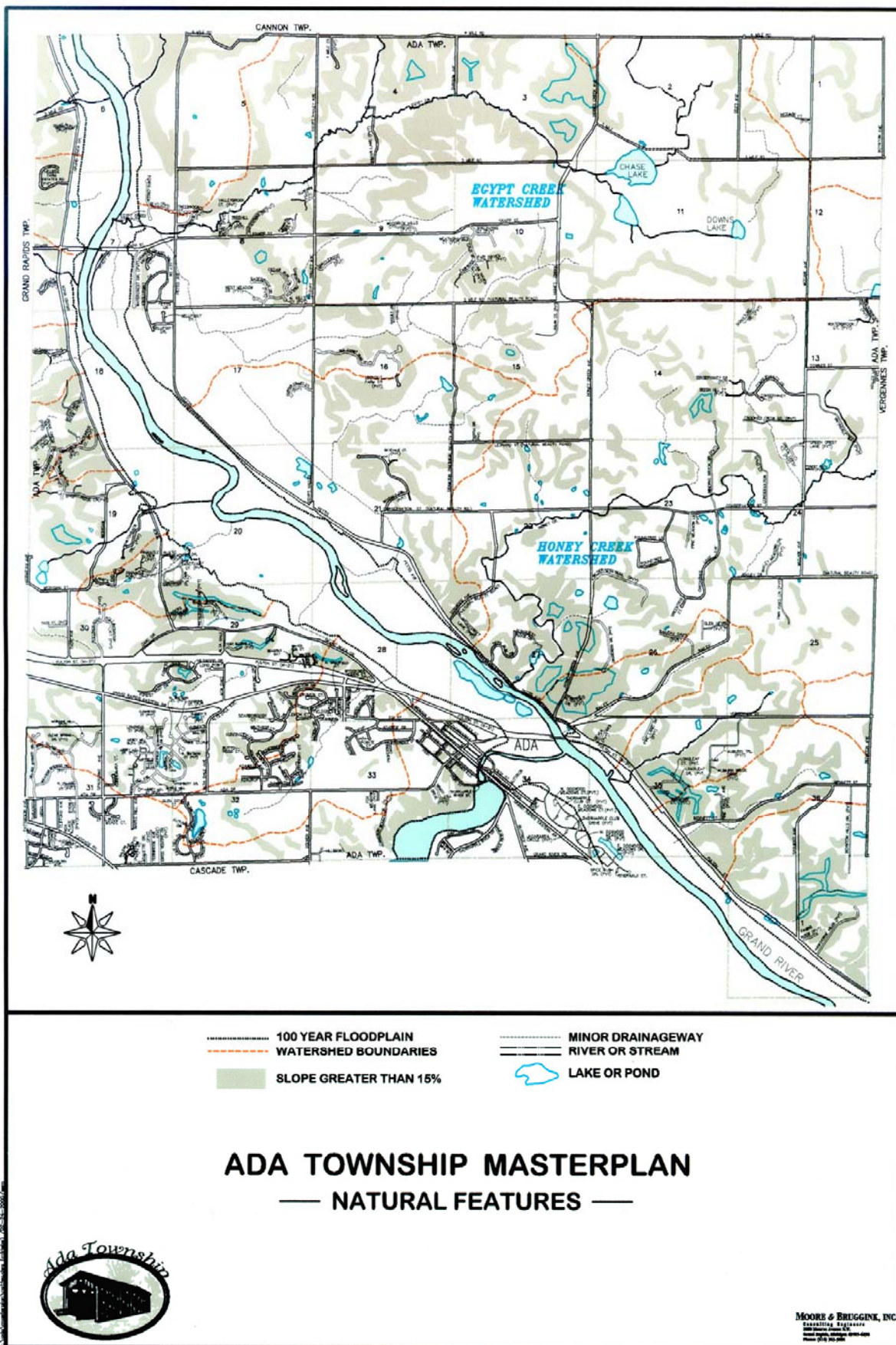
- provide a greater incentive for use of open space design instead of conventional lot layout in new development, by offering a density bonus.
- provide a review and approval process for open space development design that is no more lengthy or complicated than the process for review and approval of conventional development layouts. At present, the Township's regulations have the opposite effect, by requiring use of the PUD review and approval process for open space development design.
- mandate open space development design in new development, rather than simply providing it as an option.
- apply open space design standards to all forms of residential development, whether in subdivision plats, site condominiums or "metes-and-bounds" land divisions that are exempt from platting.

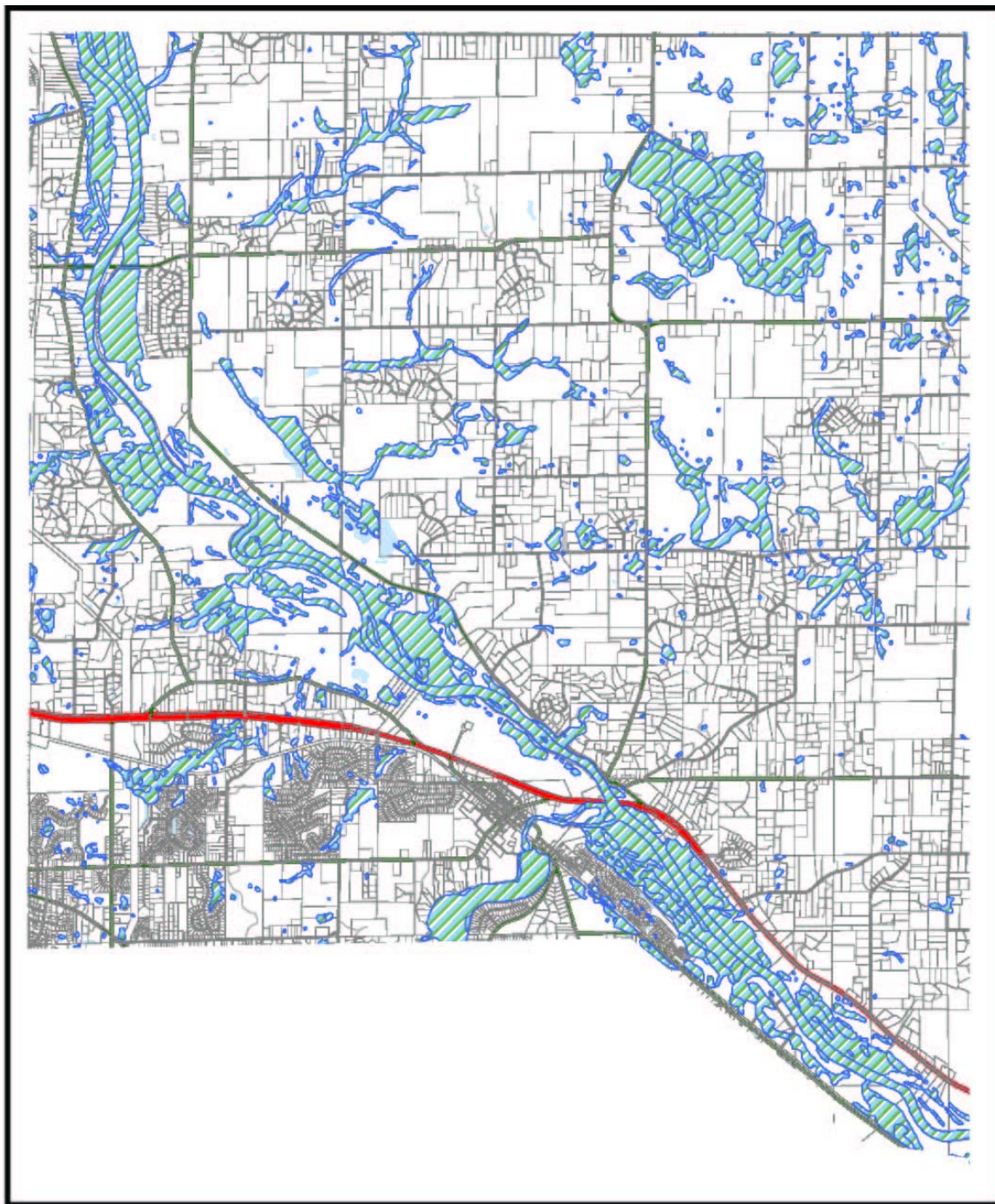
Public Education; Encouragement of Voluntary Practices:

Many property owners might view their property in a different light, and manage it in a different manner, if they were more aware of its unique natural attributes and the open space values their land serves. Education of property owners and the general public about the value of high priority natural areas and their proper stewardship may go a long ways toward accomplishing protection of these areas, with little public expense, and without the use of regulatory techniques that may be viewed as heavy-handed.

Awareness and good stewardship practices may also be raised through recognition programs, similar to the National Wildlife Federation's backyard habitat certification program. In fact, the NWF habitat certification program has been expanded from the individual property owner level to a community-wide scale, in its Community Wildlife Habitat Certification program.

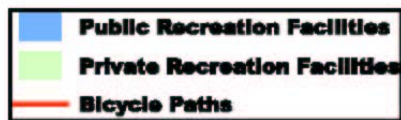
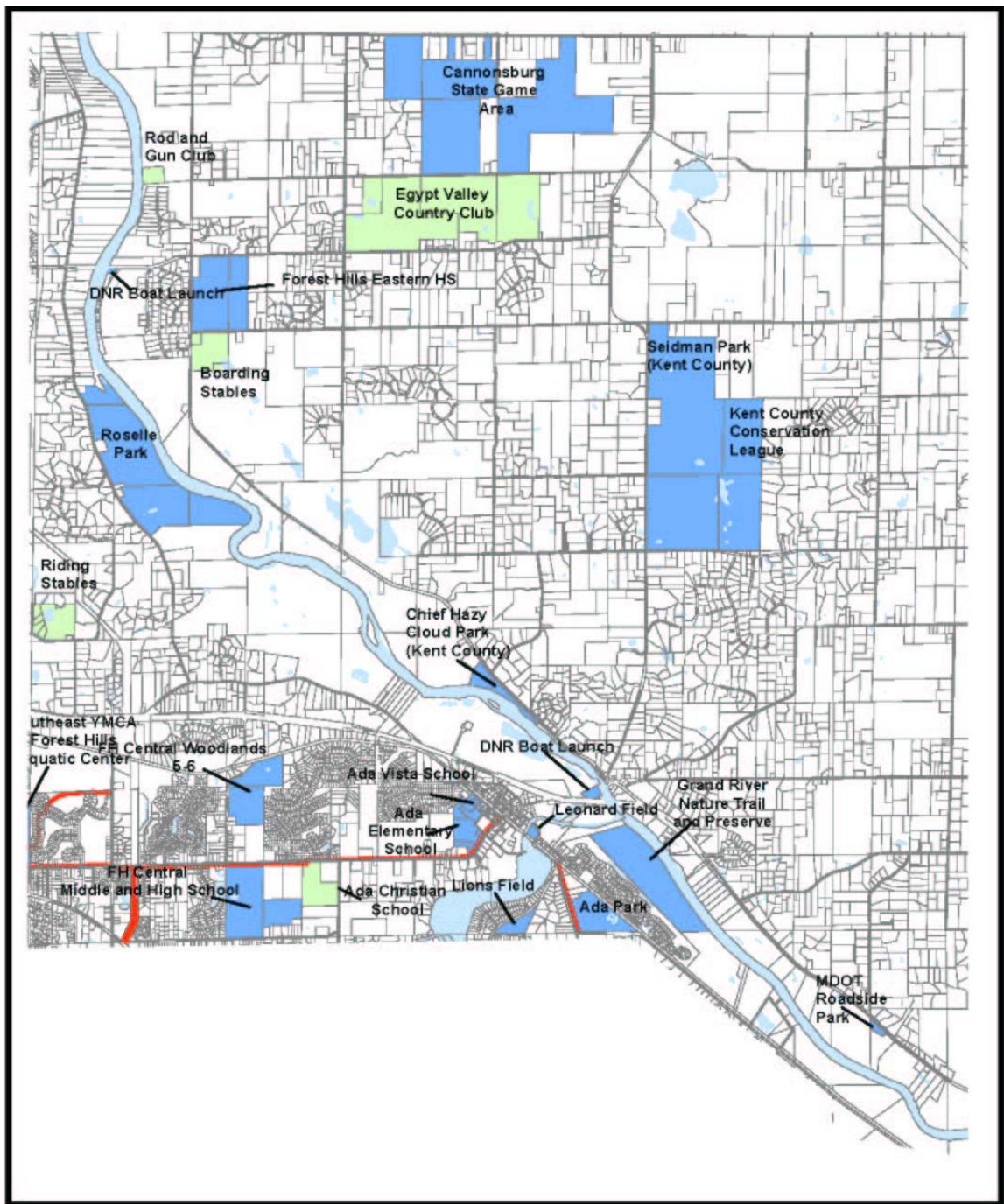
APPENDIX





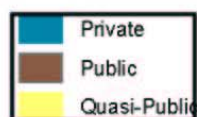
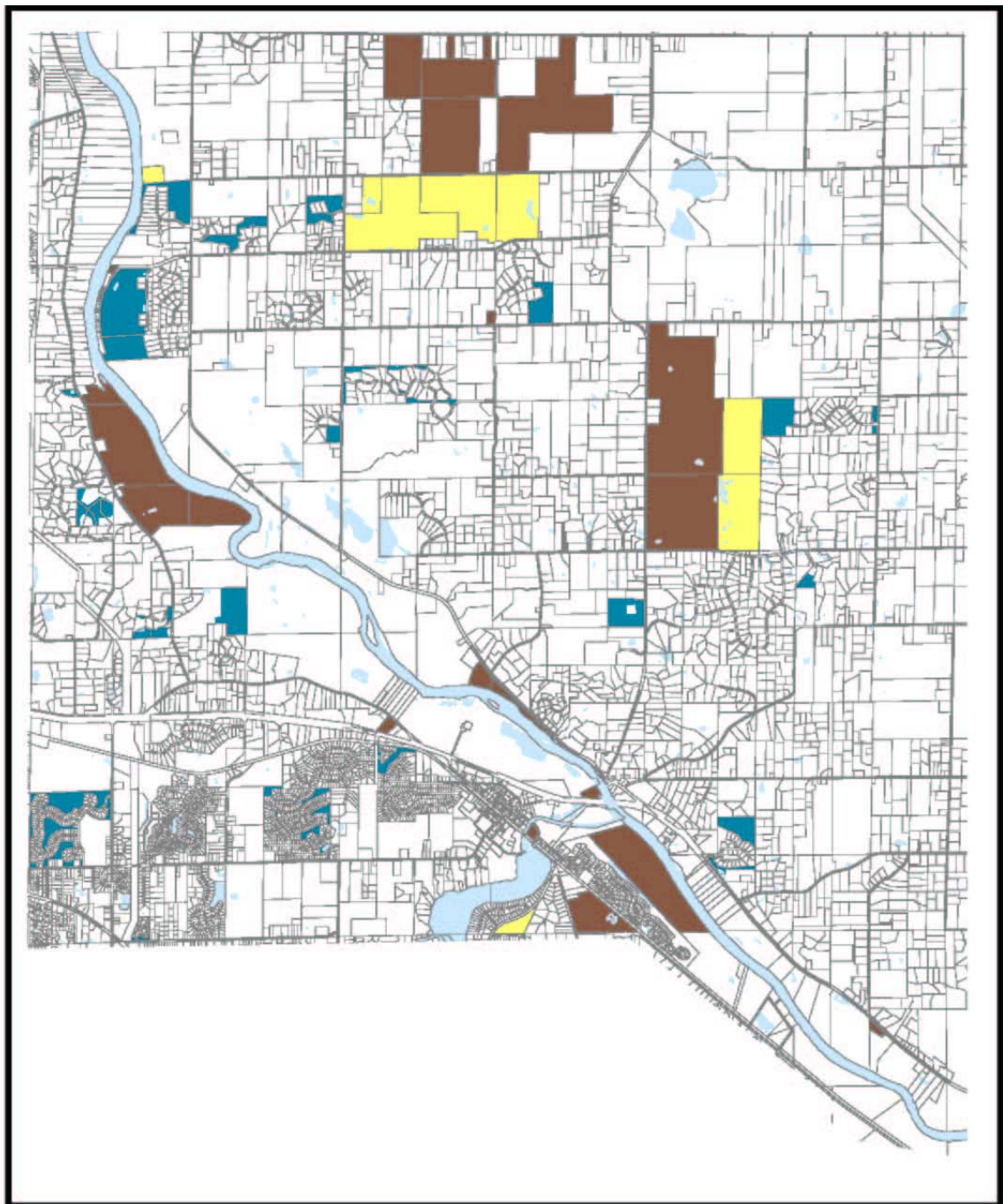
**ADA TOWNSHIP
2007 PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN
WETLAND INVENTORY MAP**





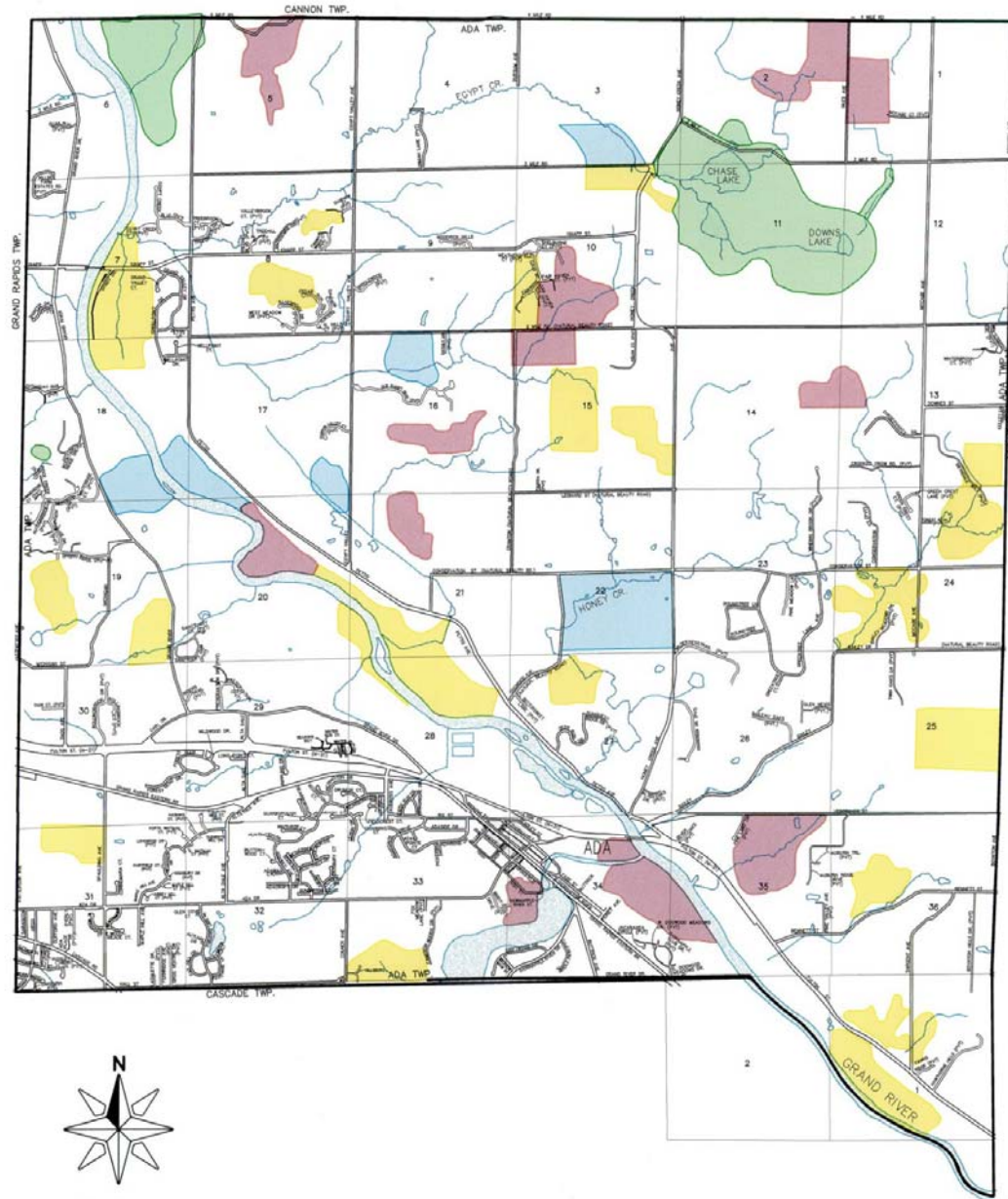
**ADA TOWNSHIP
2007 PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN
RECREATION FACILITIES INVENTORY**





**ADA TOWNSHIP
2007 PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN
INVENTORY OF EXISTING OPEN SPACE**



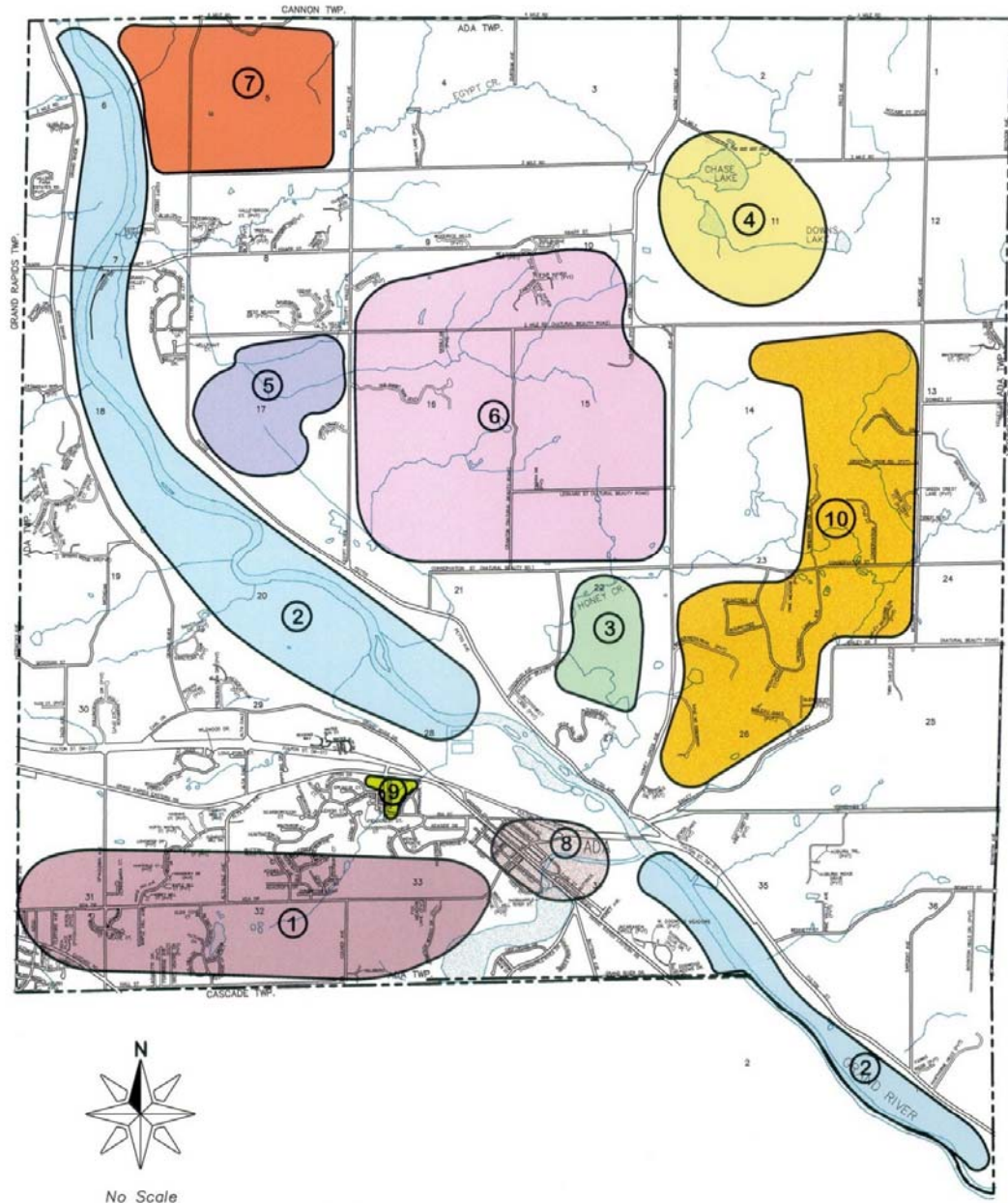


- MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY FEATURES SITES OF STATEWIDE SIGNIFICANCE
- HIGH PRIORITY LAND CONSERVANCY INVENTORY SITES SUBJECTED TO FIELD REVIEW
- MODERATE QUALITY LAND CONSERVANCY INVENTORY SITES - NOT SUBJECTED TO FIELD REVIEW
- LAND CONSERVANCY INVENTORY SITES OF POTENTIAL INTEREST - NOT GIVEN EXTENSIVE REVIEW

ADA TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE PROTECTION PLAN LAND CONSERVANCY NATURAL AREAS INVENTORY



MOORE & BRUGGINK, INC.
Consulting Engineers
2020 Monroe Avenue N.W.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49505-6298
Phone: (616) 365-9991

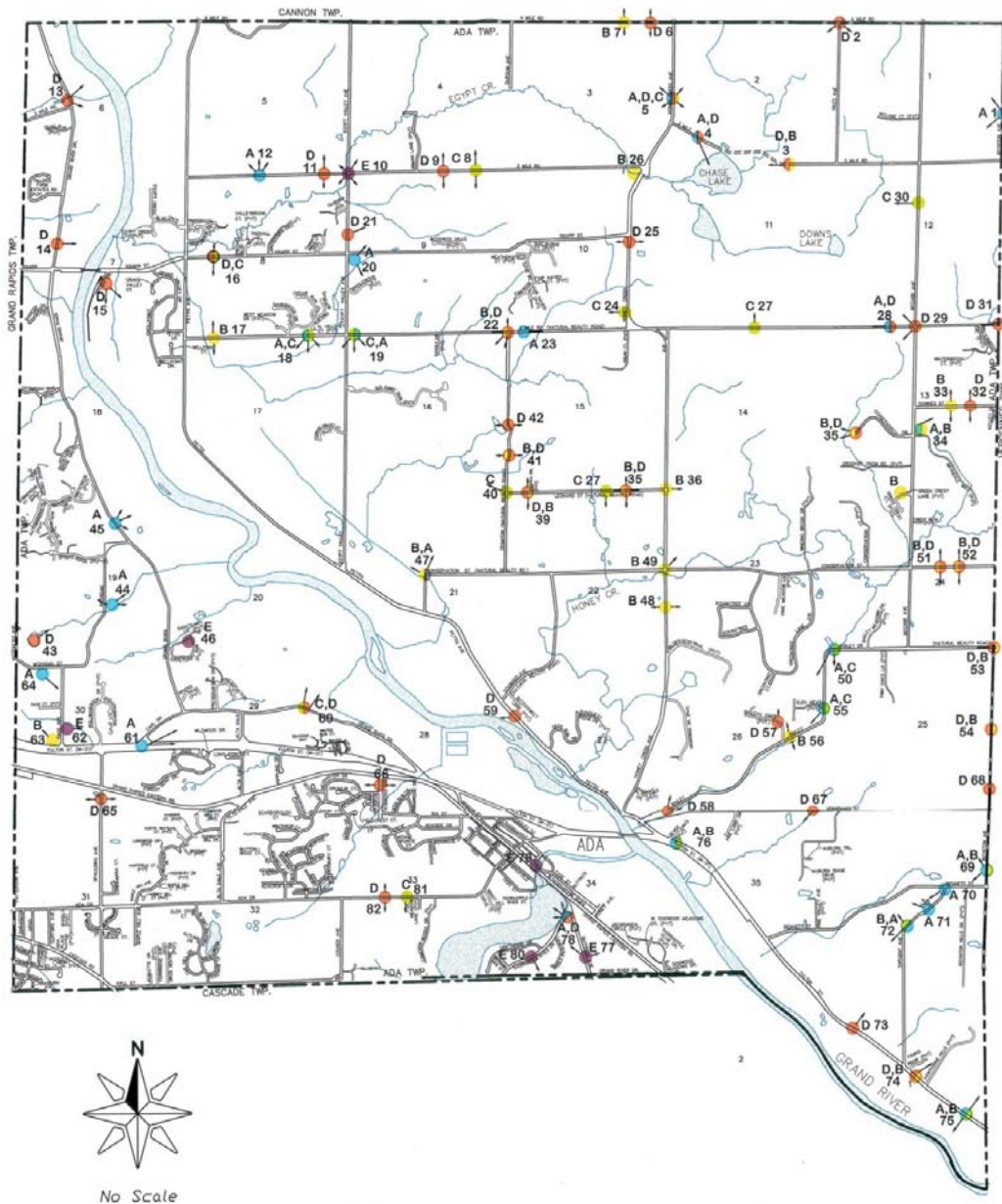


- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Ada Drive Corridor | 6. Honey Creek Ave./Conservation St./Dogwood Dr. Area |
| 2. Grand River Floodplain | 7. 3 Mile Rd./4 Mile Rd./Egypt Valley Ave./Grand River Area |
| 3. Honey Creek Ave./Conservation St./Dogwood Dr. Area | 8. Ada village Area |
| 4. Chase Lake Area | 9. Kulross Ave./Rix St./Scarborough Dr. Area |
| 5. Pettis Ave./2 Mile Rd./Egypt Valley Ave. Area | 10. McCabe Ave./Bailey Dr./2 Mile Rd. Area |

ADA TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE PROTECTION PLAN **CITIZEN-RANKED SITES FOR OPEN SPACE PROTECTION**



MOORE & BRUGGINK, INC
 Consulting Engineers
 2020 Monroe Avenue N.W.
 Grand Rapids, Michigan 49505-6298
 Phone: (616) 363-9801

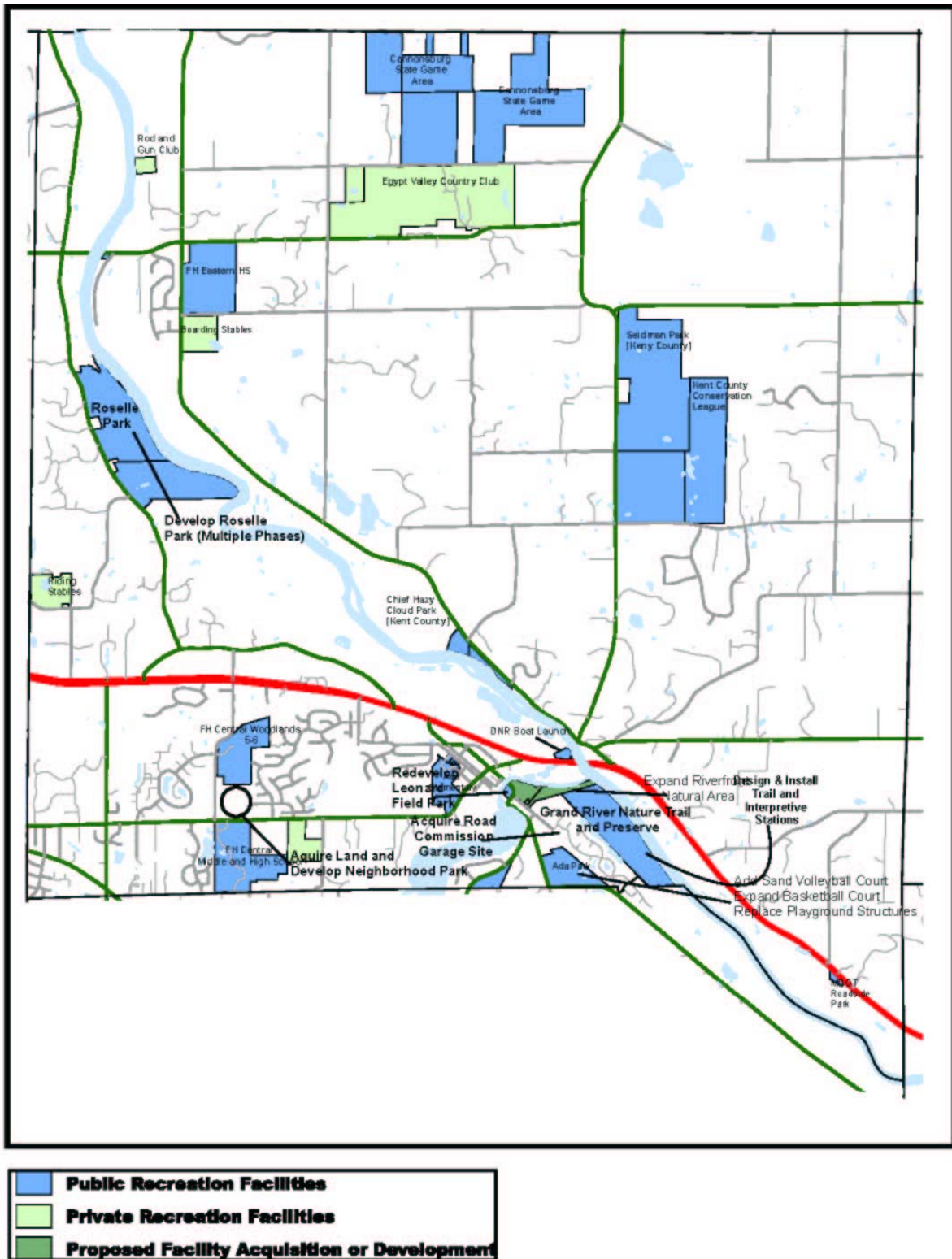


- A - PANORAMIC VIEWS
- B - NATURAL LANDSCAPES
- C - AGRICULTURAL LANDS
- D - SIGNIFICANT NATURAL FEATURES
- E - OTHER: HISTORICAL, ETC.

ADA TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE PROTECTION PLAN VISUAL RESOURCE INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

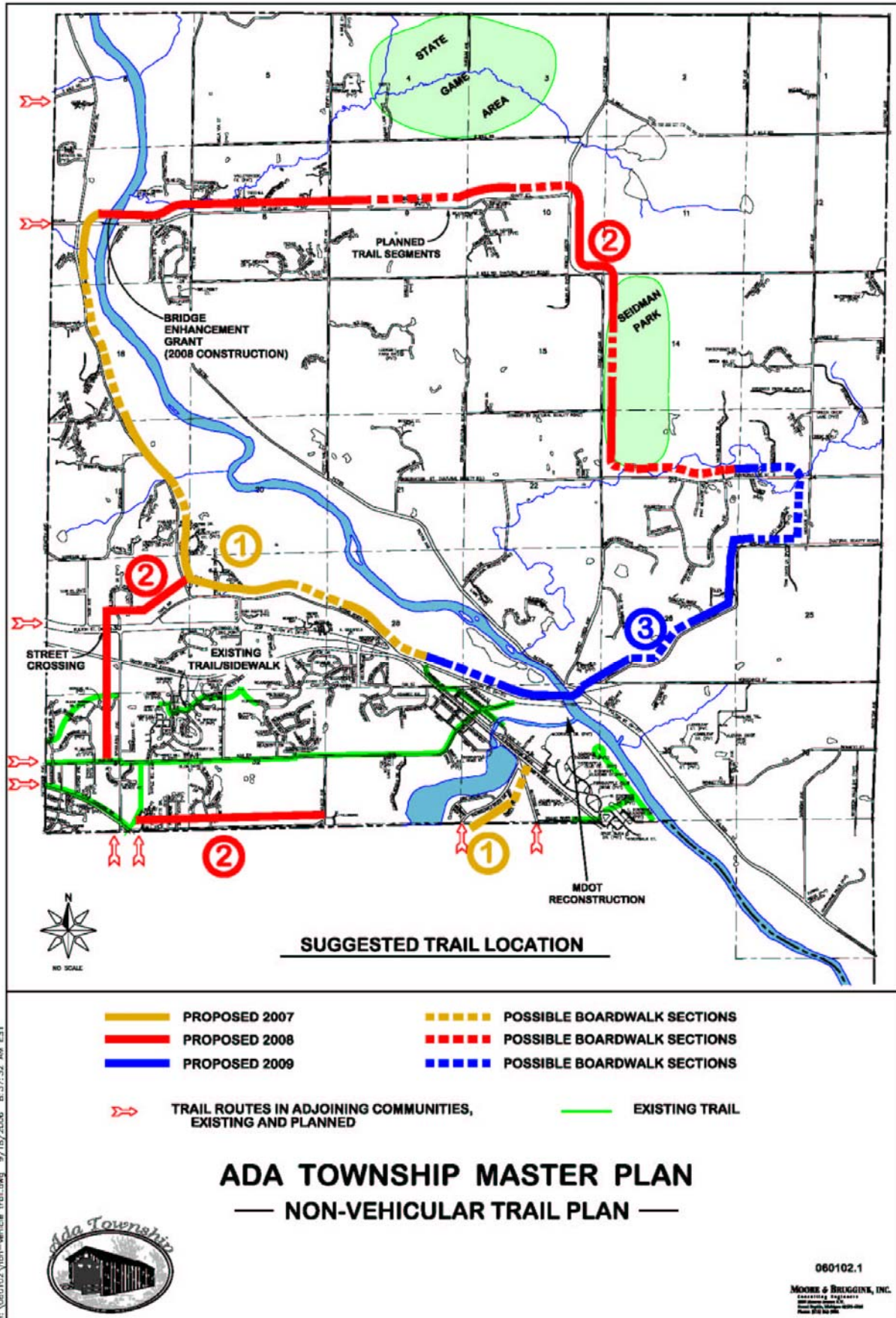


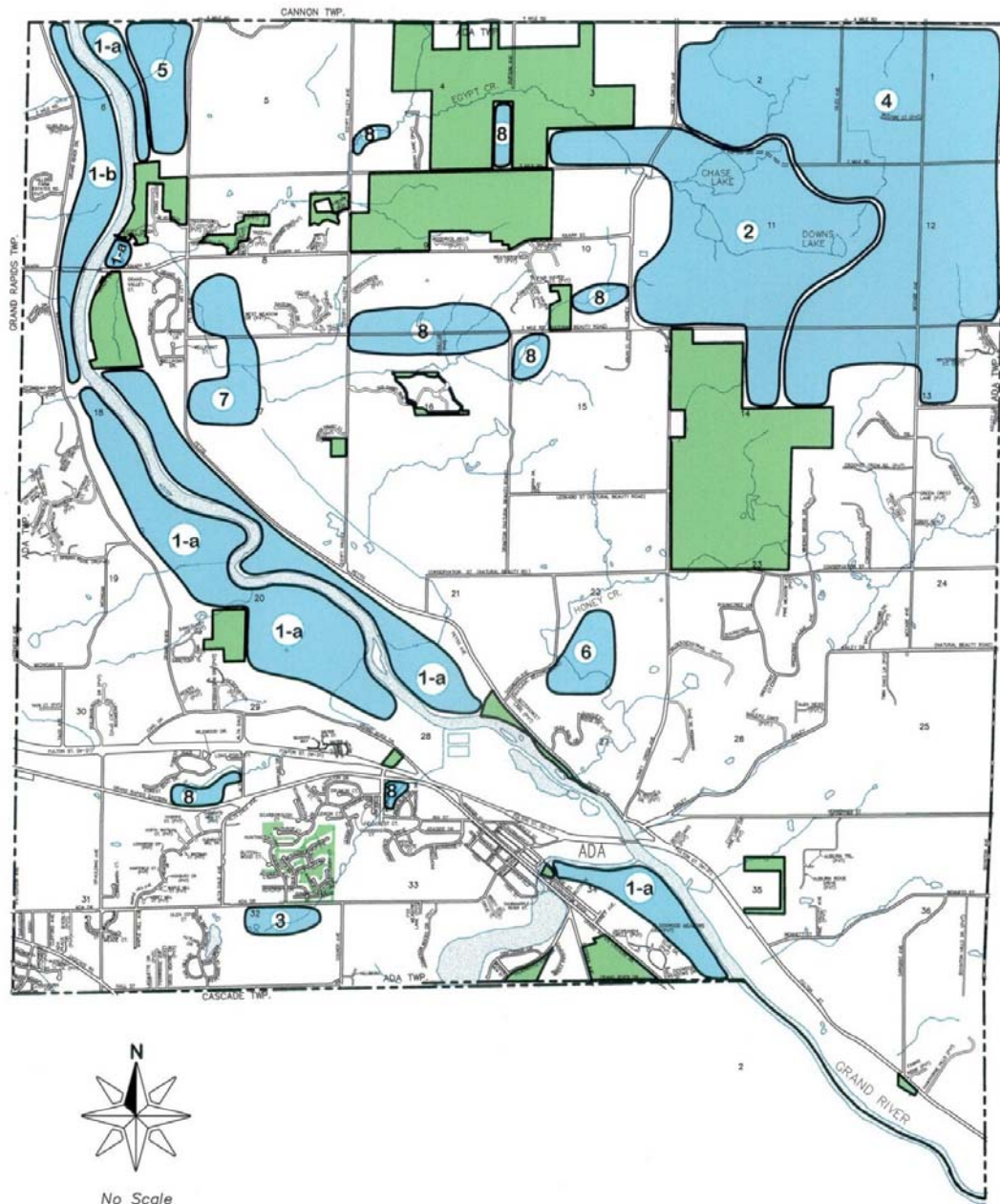
MOORE & BRUGGINK, INC.
Consulting Engineers
2610 Monroe Avenue N.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49505-4298
Phone: (616) 363-9901



**ADA TOWNSHIP
2007 PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN
RECREATION ACTION PLAN
PARK DEVELOPMENT AND LAND ACQUISITION**







EXISTING OPEN LANDS

PRIORITY LANDS FOR PROTECTION

ADA TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE PROTECTION PLAN PRIORITY LANDS FOR PROTECTION



MOORE & BRUGGINK, INC.
Consulting Engineers
3030 Monroe Avenue N.W.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49505-4298
Phone: (616) 263-9901

PARKS AND RECREATION PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY

Which of the following types of recreational activities are most important to you and your family? Place a ✓ mark next to any item which is important to you.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aerobics/fitness classes | <input type="checkbox"/> Basketball | <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycling, leisure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycling, fitness/training | <input type="checkbox"/> Canoeing/kayaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Craft classes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disc golf | <input type="checkbox"/> Dog walking | <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Football | <input type="checkbox"/> Golf | <input type="checkbox"/> Horseback riding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ice skating | <input type="checkbox"/> Mountain biking | <input type="checkbox"/> Nature programs/events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Picnicking | <input type="checkbox"/> Playground activity | <input type="checkbox"/> Rollerblading/skateboarding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Running | <input type="checkbox"/> Soccer | <input type="checkbox"/> Softball |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming | <input type="checkbox"/> Sledding | <input type="checkbox"/> Snowmobiling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis | <input type="checkbox"/> Ultimate Frisbee | <input type="checkbox"/> Volleyball |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walking/hiking | | |

Please list any other recreational activities your family enjoys that are not listed above:

How often do you or your family members visit each of the following parks in Ada Township?

(fold here to mail)	Twice per week or more	About 1 visit per week	About 1 visit per month	Less than once per month	(fold here to mail)
Ada Township Park	___	___	___	___	
Cannonsburg State Game Area	___	___	___	___	
Grand River Nature Trail					
and Preserve/McGraw Park	___	___	___	___	
Leonard Field (Covered Bridge) Park	___	___	___	___	
Roselle Park	___	___	___	___	
Seidman Park (Kent County)	___	___	___	___	
Chief Hazy Cloud Park (Kent County)	___	___	___	___	

Are there new facilities or improvements to current facilities you would like to see in Ada Township?

What is your age group?

___ 18-24 ___ 25-34 ___ 35-44 ___ 45-54 ___ 55-64 ___ 65+

How many children under 5 are in your household? _____

How many children from 6-17 are in your household? _____

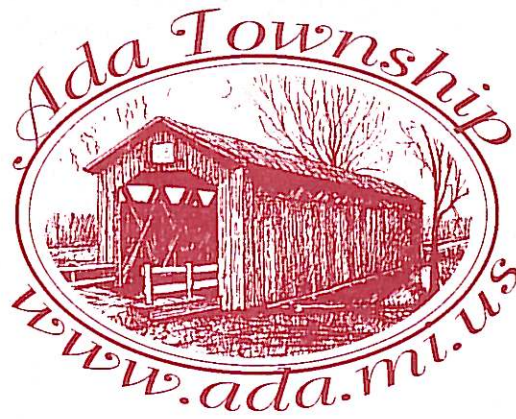
What street do you live on? _____

Thank you for your help!



**Ada Township
PO Box 370
Ada, MI 49301**

tape here



February 27, 2007

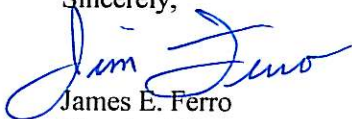
Mr. Dave Bee, Executive Director
West Michigan Regional Planning Commission
820 Monroe Ave. NW, Suite 214
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Dear Mr. Bee:

Enclosed for your use is a copy of the adopted 2007 Ada Township Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan. The Ada Township Board adopted the plan on February 26, 2007.

If you have any questions or would like additional copies, please give me a call at 676-9191, Ext. 31.

Sincerely,


James E. Ferro
Planning Director

RESOLUTION OF THE ADA TOWNSHIP PARKS COMMITTEE

A Resolution to recommend approval of the 2007 Ada Township Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.

At a meeting of the Ada Township Parks Committee held in said Township on Friday, February 16, 2007, 12:00 noon, there were:

Present: Chairperson Clerk Ensing Millhuff, Supervisor Haga, Dr. Greg Forbes, Bob Gaskell, Bette Roberts, Park Director Wendy Tatar.

Absent: Wayne Nowak, Trustee Damstra

The following resolution was offered and supported.

WHEREAS, the Committee has worked with Township staff in the development of the proposed 2007 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, and

WHEREAS, the Committee has solicited and considered public input in the identification of park, recreation and open space needs in the community,

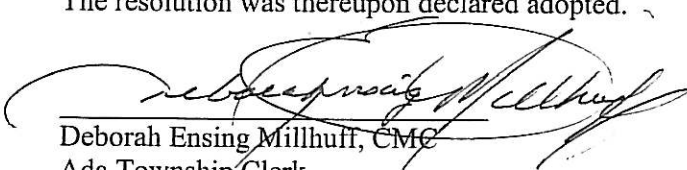
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,

1. That the Ada Township Parks Committee hereby recommends that the Township Board adopt the 2007 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.

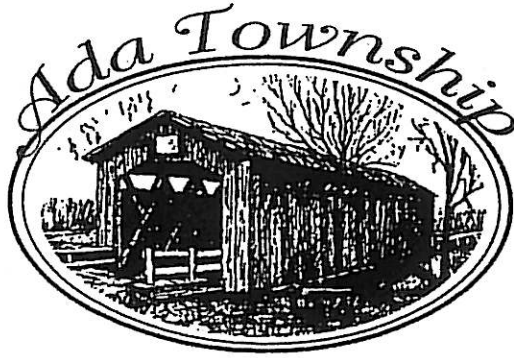
Upon a vote for the adoption of said resolution, the vote was:

Motion Carried.

The resolution was thereupon declared adopted.



Deborah Ensing Millhuff, CMC
Ada Township Clerk



ADA TOWNSHIP RESOLUTION R- 02-26-07-1

A Resolution to approve the 2007 Ada Township Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.

At a Regular Meeting of the Township Board of Ada, Kent County, Michigan, held in said Township on Monday, February 26, 2007, at 7:30 p.m., there were:

PRESENT: Supervisor Haga, Clerk Millhuff, Treasurer Pratt, Trustees Damstra, Sytsma, Proos and Westra

ABSENT: None

The following Resolution was offered by Member Westra and supported by Member Sytsma.

WHEREAS, Ada Township is a rapidly-growing community, resulting in the need for a periodic re-examination of the Township's needs for parks, recreation facilities and open space lands, and

WHEREAS, the Ada Township Parks Committee has conducted a comprehensive examination of the community's park, recreation and open space needs, including the soliciting of public involvement in the planning process, and has prepared the proposed 2007 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, and

WHEREAS, the Parks Committee has recommended that the proposed 2007 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan be approved, and

WHEREAS, the Township Board has held a public hearing on the proposed Plan and has obtained and considered comment and input from the public;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,

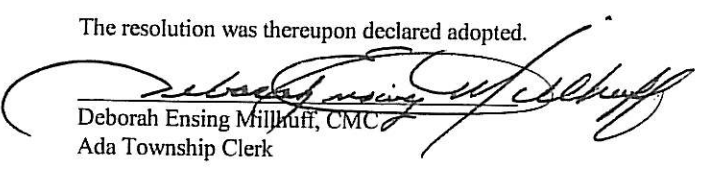
1. That the Ada Township Board hereby adopts the 2007 Ada Township Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, and authorizes the Supervisor to submit the Plan to the Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources for approval

Upon a vote for the adoption of said resolution, the vote was:

AYES: 7

NAYES: 0

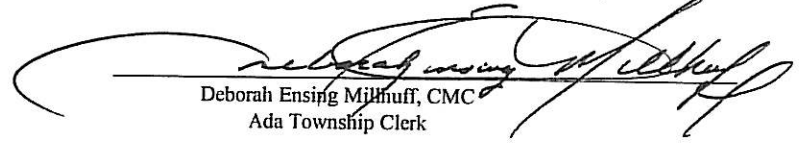
The resolution was thereupon declared adopted.


Deborah Ensing Millhuff, CMC
Ada Township Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I certify that the foregoing is a complete copy of a resolution adopted by the Township Board at a public meeting held on Monday, February 26, 2007. The original resolution is on file in my office and available to the public. Public notice of the meeting was given in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

Dated: February 26, 2007


Deborah Ensing Millhuff, CMC
Ada Township Clerk



STATE OF MICHIGAN

JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING

REBECCA A. HUMPHRIES
DIRECTOR

March 15, 2007

Mr. James E. Ferro
Planning Director
Ada Township
7330 Thornapple River Drive
P.O. Box 370
Ada, MI 49301

Dear Mr. Ferro:

SUBJECT: Ada Township Recreation Plan

Please find attached your copy of the recreation plan checklist recently submitted to our office for approval. Your recreation plan has been approved.

Your recreation plan will expire **December 31, 2011.**

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Our address is: **Grants Management, Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 30425, Lansing, MI 48909-7925.**

Sincerely,

Monica Day, Grant Coordinator
Grants Management
517-335-3039
daym1@michigan.gov

MD:lh
Attachment