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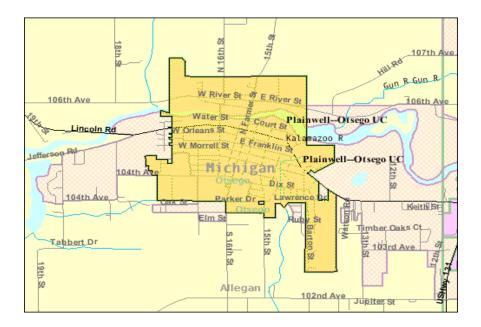
COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Recreation Plan Jurisdiction

This recreation plan brings together three unique but related entities. In 1975, the City of Otsego, Otsego Township, and Otsego Public Schools formed a Recreation Council to oversee the provision of recreational and leisure services within the greater Otsego Community. As part of this Council's endeavor to provide quality services, they undertook the task of preparing a five year community recreation plan for the years of 1998 to 2002, 2005 to 2010 and now through 2015.

Allegan County
Otsego Township

Figure 1 Regional Location Map





Map of Otsego City Limits

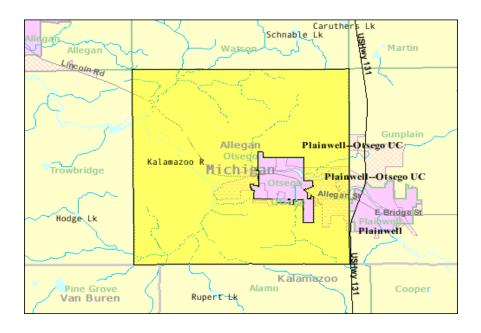


Figure 3 Map of Otsego Township Limits

Recreational Opportunities

The City of Otsego offers park facilities and recreational programs to the public. The facilities include the three city parks - Memorial, Northside, and Brookside Parks - as well as youth and adult recreational leagues. The Township offers recreational opportunities for both children and adults, focusing more on recreational classes or programs, such as youth football (Rocket Football). The school offers athletic fields and building facilities to host games or recreational programs. Through the office of the Otsego Public Schools Community Programs, the following programs are offered:

- _ Adult High School Completion
- _ Adult Enrichment classes designed for Otsego adults to pursue new hobbies and interests
- _ Student Enrichment opportunities for Otsego school children to pursue activities which are not a part of the regular curricula
- Community Recreation several sports leagues and other activities are coordinated for recreational purposes

Community Services - other programs and services for community enrichment. Since the Recreation Council is made up of representatives from the City, Township, and School system, it fosters an atmosphere of working together to meet the needs of the residents.

Community Location

The Otsego Community is located 15 miles north of Kalamazoo and 35 miles south of Grand Rapids along U.S. 131 expressway in the eastern portion of Allegan County. The City of Allegan, the County Seat, is nine miles to the northwest. The City of Otsego is located two miles west of the interchange with the Township located between U.S. 131 and the City of Otsego. A Regional Location Map of the Otsego Community is shown in Figure 1. Additional maps detailing the boundaries of both the City and Township are in Figures 2 and 3 respectively.

Population Statistics

The population of the community includes approximately 9,000 persons. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 3,933 persons reside in the City of Otsego, while and additional 4,854 reside in Otsego Township. This is a population increase of 0.8% from the 1990 census. Growth within the Township is expected to increase at a higher rate than the City, as more undeveloped land is currently available for housing within the Township. Density within the City is much higher with 1,947 persons per square mile compared with 134 persons per square mile in the Township. The Otsego School District covers 85 square miles encompassing parts of Allegan, Kalamazoo, and Van Buren Counties. The Otsego Public School District currently has 2,200 students registered as attending with a School District population of approximately 15,000.

Education

The Otsego Public Schools System has an excellent educational reputation at all levels and offers a full variety of extra-curricular activities. As a class "B" school, it is large enough to offer subjects ranging from theater to advanced computer applications. However, classes are still small enough to provide individual attention to all students. The average student-to-teacher ratio for classes is 23:1.

Elementary and secondary educational opportunities are also provided by three local parochial schools, St. Margaret's Catholic School, Peace Evangelical Lutheran School, and the First Baptist Church Academy.



The Allegan County Area Educational Service Agency, located fifteen minutes west of Otsego, offers extensive training programs in business and industrial skills. The Intermediate School District is also part of the Michigan Business and Industrial Training Program (MBIT).

These services will custom-design training

services for any new or expanding Allegan County business. Among the services offered are referral/selection, company orientation, quality-of-work/life, pre-employment skills, and in-plant training.

Further education opportunities abound near Otsego. The City of Otsego is within a 45 minute drive of several colleges and universities in Western Michigan. A list of some of those available is shown below. Also available, but not listed, are several trade and technical education providers.

Kalamazoo:	Davenport College, Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo Community College, Siena Heights College, Western Michigan University
Grand Rapids:	Aquinas College, Baker College, Calvin College & University, Central Michigan University Satellite, Grace Bible College, Cornerstone University ,Grand Rapids Community College, Grand Valley State University, Jordan College, Michigan State University Satellite, Spring Arbor College Satellite

Note: Educational facility information was taken from the Otsego Municipal Website.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The Administrative Structure section defines the organizational structure for the Recreation Council, City of Otsego, Otsego Township, and Otsego Public Schools. A description of government structure, budgets, and support for recreation is discussed. Organization charts for each of the entities have been included.

Otsego Recreation Council

In 1975 the Otsego community initiated a formal Otsego Recreation Council to address the recreational needs of the local community. The Recreation Council is comprised of two (2) representatives from the city of Otsego, two (2) representatives from the Otsego Township, and two (2) representatives from the Otsego Public Schools, and one (1) representative from each at-large. Ex-officio members of the Council include the City Manager, township Supervisor, and the Community Schools Director.

The responsibility of the council is to provide a variety of educational, recreational, and leisure services for the area residents. The City, Township, and School District jointly fund a full-time Community School Director to provide for recreational programming within the community. The Director is also responsible for administering the meeting and directives of the Council. Meetings of the Council are held regularly.

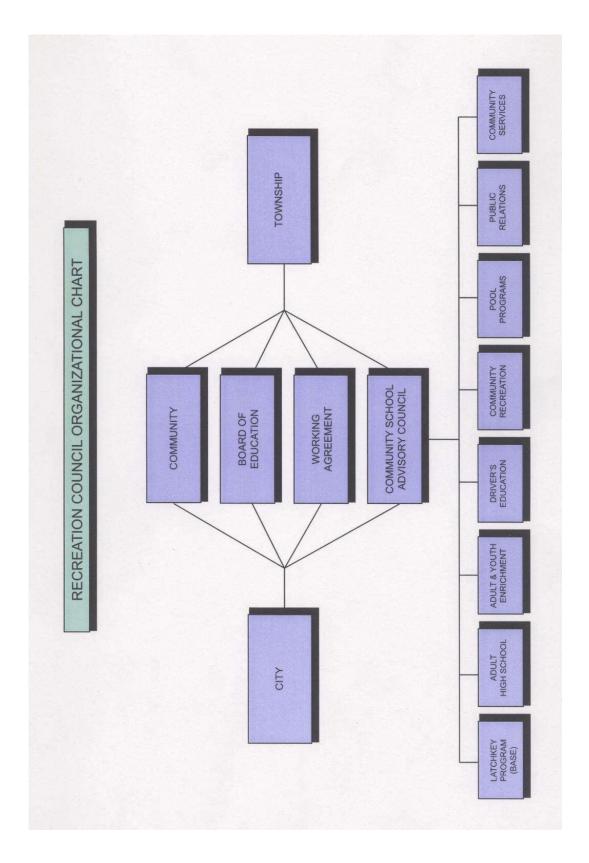
The Council is advisory in nature and makes recommendations regarding the expenditure of funds for recreation programming and facility development. Expenses for programs and staff appear with the Otsego Public Schools annual budget.

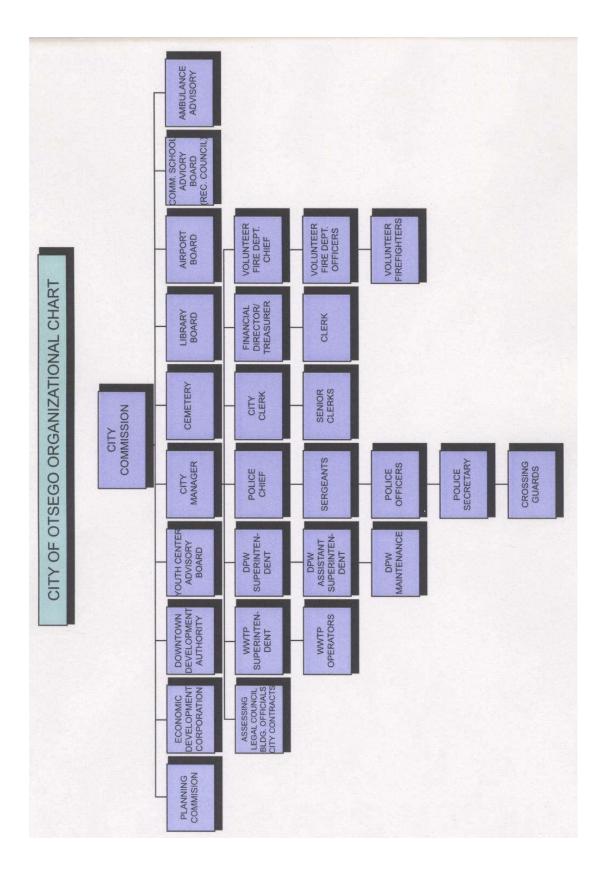
An administrative organizational chart of the Recreation Council is shown on page 7.

City of Otsego

The City of Otsego is governed by a commission-manager form of government with five (5) elected commissioners who elect a mayor from among themselves; each elected to fill 2- or 4-year terms. The City Commission appoints the City Manager to fulfill the position of Chief Administrator for the City. An organizational chart of the administrative structure of the City of Otsego is shown on page 8.

In the City of Otsego, the Commission holds the sole authority for appropriating funds for Parks and Recreation purposes supported by the City. Two of the representatives serve on the Recreation Council. Specific funding provided by the City includes maintenance and development of the City parklands and facilities and support of joint projects undertaken by the





Recreation Council. Funding for the yearly budgets and special projects is approved by the City Commission and is the responsibility of the City Manager to implement.

The Departments of Public Works, under the direction of the City Manager, provides for the maintenance of all City-owned recreation properties. Properties owned by the School District are maintained by the District. Otsego Township currently does not own any recreation properties or facilities. Security for the parks is provided by the Otsego Police Department. Maintenance for the parks is carried out by 750 hours of Department of Public works employees. The Community School Program provides programming of the parks. Community volunteers provide additional recreational maintenance and programming.

The City of Otsego maintains a very stable annual budget, which has shown an increase yearly. The annual general fund budget for 2009-20010 is approximately \$2 million. Items within the budget directly expended for recreation include Department of Public Works salaries attributable to parks, operating expenses, utilities, and support of the community school program for a total of \$113,000.

Otsego Township

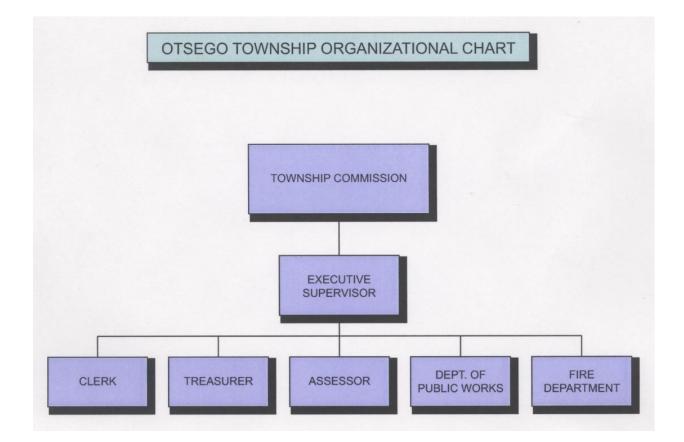
Otsego Township is governed by a five (5) member elected Township Board consisting of the offices of Supervisor (1), Clerk (1), Treasurer (1), and two (2) Trustees. The Township board appoints the Supervisor to implement the directives received from the Board and maintain the daily operations of the Township. An organization chart of the administrative structure of the Township is shown on page 10.

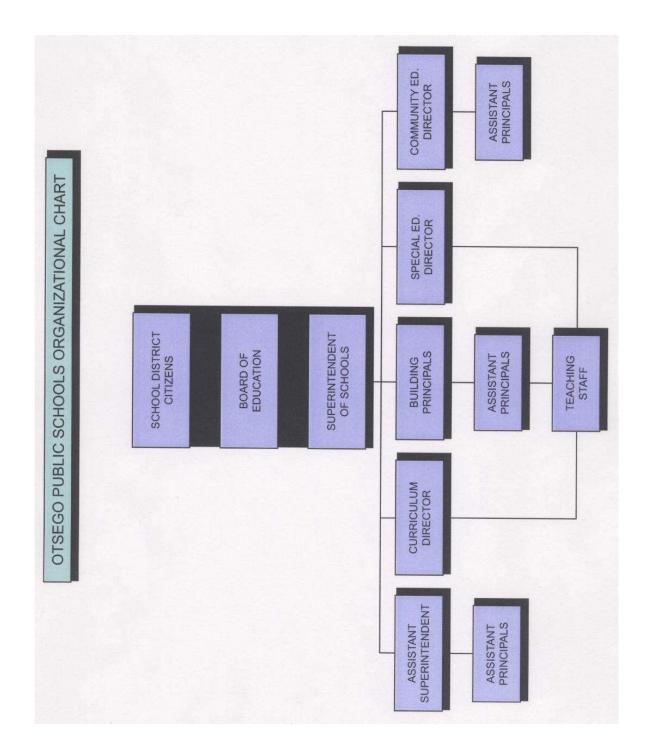
The Township does not currently own or maintain any recreation facilities, but does jointly support the Community Education Director at the School District and has two (2) members on the Recreation Council.

The Township budget has been increasing as both commercial and residential growths continue. The annual general fund budget for 2009 - 2010 is around \$980,000. Items within the budget directly expended for recreation include \$14,000 toward the Community Education program.

Otsego Public Schools

The Otsego Public Schools serve approximately 2,128 students and the District is considered a B class district. The School District is governed by a seven (7) member elected Board of Education, which appoints a Superintendent of Schools to fulfill administrative functions. The organization structure for the School District is shown on page 11.





Under the direction of the Superintendent, the full-time Community Education Director coordinates programs including adult high school completion, alternative education, adult and youth enrichment, leisure time classes, senior citizen programs, driver's education, and recreation.

The annual general fund budget for 2009 will be \$19.0 million with approximately \$424,817 being allocated toward community recreation for staff and programs. Recreation facilities located on School District properties are maintained by the School District. The budget for the maintenance is lumped into the total maintenance budget of the district. Full-time and part-time employees assist in the maintenance of the facilities. The School District also employs a full-time summer recreation director, an evening supervisor, and approximately 50 part-time employees who program and facilitate community recreation activities and are assisted by 75 to 80 adult community volunteers.

RECREATION INVENTORY

The Recreation Inventory section provides an inventory of existing public and private recreation opportunities as well as available athletic programs. Location maps for public parks and school sites have been included.

Public Parks

Public Recreation and open space within the Otsego community includes three parks within the City of Otsego and four public school sites. The parks are include Memorial Park, Brookside Park, and Northside Park.

Memorial Park

Memorial Park is a 20.38-acre multi-purpose facility located in the southern region of the City of Otsego bordered by Dix Street and Farmer Street. Prior to 1969 this park consisted of baseball, softball diamonds, track, tennis courts, beach volleyball and football field was used by the schools as a practice and game facility and by the City for summer recreation.

In 1969, with the development of new facilities at the high school, the football field was removed and from 1969 to 1976 the park was used primarily for passive recreation, rocket football, and summer recreation. In 1976 - 77 the City applied for and received a Land and Water



Conservation Fund Grant to complete a restroom/concession building and four softball/baseball diamonds. Since the initial grant award, which was completed in 1979, many improvements have been made through mini-grants, player fees, the Otsego Umpire Association, and donations. These improvements include the fencing of two additional softball diamonds, irrigating six ball diamonds, renovation of the picnic area, a storage building, basketball courts, a large children=s play structure, a field to serve the Rocket Football program, paving of one parking lot, walks, and two shuffleboard courts for senior citizens.

The youth and adult summer recreation program activities held at Memorial Park are administrated by the Otsego Public School's Community Education Program. Currently at Memorial Park there is barrier free access to the play structure, the two basketball courts, the tennis courts, and two of the six ball fields.

Brookside Park

Brookside Park is located on the north side of M-89 at the eastern edge of the corporate city limits. The northern portion of the 74-acre property is bordered by the wetlands formed by the Kalamazoo River. In 1988 - 89 the City of Otsego received a \$138,000 grant for the



purpose of improving the park. In the fall of 1990 the project was completed and included the construction of a small gazebo, repaving of existing roads, parking, pathways, play equipment, wetlands overlook, canoe launch, nature trail, security lighting, landscaping, and eight overnight campsites. The City is often assisted in financing park improvements by many area businesses, industry, and organizations.

The master plan for a linear riverwalk park, which includes the connection of Brookside Park with downtown by way of a scenic riverwalk. Currently at Brookside Park there are no barrier free access walks within the park. The safety surfacing under the play structure is not barrier free.

Northside Park

Northside Park is a 4-acre parcel of land located at the intersection of Watson Road and River Street. This park boasts a large community built playscape, which was completed in 1996. It also includes a modular skate park, and roller



hockey rink, basketball courts, two open air pavilion, and paved sidewalks. Currently at Northside Park there is barrier free access to the play structure and to the large pavilion. The safety surfacing under the play structure is barrier free.

Otsego Public School Facilities

Otsego Public School Facilities include a high school and middle school complex and three elementary school facilities. Each of the schools is located on sites which provide additional recreational opportunities for the community including gyms, classrooms, libraries, pool and outdoor facilities. A new high school complex includes a new school, new baseball, softball, soccer, and football fields, auditorium and a renovated football and track facility. The school has also developed a 6-foot wide trail through a wooded area to serve as an interpretive trail for the school science classes.

Privately-Owned Facilities

Privately owned recreation facilities in the Otsego area include the following:

<u>131 Motor Park</u> is located North of Otsego off US 131. This racing facility provides weekend racing, high school cross country races and other related activities.

Bittersweet Ski Resort is located on West River Road in Otsego Township, 2.5 miles from the City of Otsego. Bittersweet consists of a main lodge, bar, restaurants, snack bar, full rental ski shop, and equipment repairs. Three triple lifts, two double lifts, and two rope tows service the many downhill runs that range from beginner to expert. At this time, Bittersweet is strictly a winter operation with the resort being closed during the off-season.

<u>Timer Ridge Ski Resort</u> is located six miles south and three miles west of the City of Otsego off D Avenue in Alamo Township, which is located in the southern portion of the Otsego School District. Timber Ridge has 15 ski runs that are serviced by 4 chair lifts, 1 pommel lift, and 3 rope towns. They also have a bar, restaurant, ski shop, full rental, and equipment repairs. Unlike Bittersweet, Timber Ridge has been open for special events during the off-season.

<u>Prairiewood Golf Course</u> is a developed 18-hole golf course that is located off 104th Street in Otsego Township adjacent to the southwestern boundaries of the corporate city limits. In addition to the 18-hole golf course, there is a full service clubhouse and a single-family housing development.

<u>Eagle Creek Golf Course</u> is a semi-private 9-hole course located 5 miles west of Otsego on M-89. In addition to the course, there are plans for a full service restaurant that is open throughout the year.

Lynx Golf Course is an 18-hole course 5 miles west of Otsego with a new clubhouse.

<u>Thornapple Creek Golf Course</u> is an 18-hole championship course located on F Avenue in the southeastern corner of the Otsego School District, 1 mile southwest of U.S. 131 and Ravine Road. Thornapple Creek is host to several tournaments throughout the year and has a full service pro-shop as well as a restaurant and banquet facilities. Cross-country skiing is available in the winter.

<u>Kalamazoo Speedway</u> is a 3.8 mile paved track for stock car racing. It is located on D Avenue, 3 miles west of U.S. 131. In addition to the normal weekend racing, some special NASCAR sponsored events are hosted at the track.

<u>The Moose Lodge</u> is located on M-89 in Otsego Township, 3 miles west of the city. The Kalamazoo River flows through the south side of the property. Over 50 campsites, as well as a skeet shooting range, are located on the properties. The facilities are open to members and guests only.

<u>Gun River Conservation Club</u> is located in Otsego Township near the intersection of River Road and 12th Street. The Conservation Club promotes skeet and range shooting and provides hunter safety programs for area youth.

<u>Gym</u> downtown, karate and dance studio, Curves and Otsego Health and Fitness are available.

County Park Facilities

<u>West Side Park</u> is located on the Lake Michigan shoreline on Lakeshore Road about 1.5 miles south of M-89. The park has 11 acres with 360 feet of beach on Lake Michigan and includes a baseball diamond, restroom facilities, children's play area, 100 picnic tables, barbeque grills, and a dune stairway.

<u>Gun Lake Park</u> is located on the west shore of Gun Lake near the corner of Patterson and Shelbyville roads. The 4-acre park contains 450 feet of swimming beach, a playground, picnic tables, restrooms, and a boat launch.

Little John Park is located on Little John Lake in southwestern Allegan County on 113th Avenue, west of 34th Street. The park contains 113 acres including 150 picnic tables with grills and pavilion, swimming beach, bathhouse, restrooms, two softball diamonds, a basketball area, and facilities for volleyball.

<u>Dumont Lake Park</u> is located on the northeast shore of Dumont Lake with a boat launch at the northern end of 33rd Street, north of 122nd Avenue. The park contains 18.6 acres, 550 feet of sandy beach, picnic area and grills, pavilion, playground, and restrooms.

<u>Silver Creek Park</u> is located on 134th Avenue, 3.5 miles east of M-40 North, and provides access to a spring fed trout stream and equestrian trails. The park contains 320 acres, 4,500 feet of river frontage, 25 licensed campsites, picnic tables, grills, and a playground area. In keeping with the rustic setting of the park, there are no restrooms or running water, but there are pumps and outhouses.

Regional Recreation

Because of Otsego's close proximity to the metro area of Battle Creek, Grand Rapids, and Kalamazoo, area residents have the opportunity to enjoy college and professional sports, cultural activities, and the many special event programs that are offered in these larger communities.

<u>Churches</u> All major denominations are represented and actively involved in the welfare of the community.

Recreation Programs

Under the direction of the Community School Director, programs offered throughout the

year include:

Playground Programs Facility Rentals Junior Hoopster Basketball (boys and girls) BASE Program (Before and After School Enrichment) Soccer (AYSO) Men's and Women's Softball **Open Gyms** Co-Ed Volleyball Recreational and Instructional Swimming Summer Baseball **Recreational Tennis** Instructional Tennis Drama Plays **Community Meetings** Summer Voyagers Enrichment Program Instructional Basketball Driver's Education Hunter's Safety Spiker's Volleyball Sports Camps Adult basketball **Open Gyms Computer Classes Technology Courses**

DESCRIPTION OF THE PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

Initial Public Meeting

During September 2009, the Rec Board held a public hearing at 7 p.m. on September 23rd at City Hall. In attendance at this first meeting were representatives from the City, including the City Manager, the Township, the Schools, and the Otsego Recreation Council. There were also private citizens in attendance. The group reviewed the goals that were previously established in the 2005 Recreation Plan, and asked for input regarding changes or modifications that they felt should be made to those goals.

Following the goal setting exercise, the group established a prioritized list of proposed improvements that they wanted to see addressed in the recreation plan

Presentations

A power point presentation used at the public meetings, was also used during presentation at local meetings of the Rotary, Senior Citizen meetings and by classroom teachers prior to the surveys.

School Questionnaire

In addition to the public planning meeting, the Recreation Council worked to develop a questionnaire that could be distributed in the school system to get input from school aged park users. Over 125 questionnaires were completed by 4th and 7th grade students. The questionnaires offered specific information and suggestions from a group that uses the recreational facilities on a more consistent basis. It's no surprise that the BMX park is the most desired activity, with basketball, baseball and football falling in behind. The surveys were tabulated so their input was critical when the plan was developed. One area of concern to the students was the maintenance of the playground equipment at the parks.

Second Public Meeting

The second public input meeting, was held at Otsego Public Schools on October 23, at 1 p.m. to give the public an opportunity to comment on the draft plan and the CIP. The second meeting yielded a much greater turnout. A total of 35 students from a 7th grade social studies class were invited to attend. Input included comments on Brookside Park, playground equipment and maintenance of facilities.

From both public meetings, as well as the questionnaires, the suggestions offered focused on the improvements at Memorial Park. One theme consistent with the meetings and the surveys included upkeep of the Memorial Park facility and playground equipment. Comments were also focused on the development of the riverfront in the downtown area of Otsego.

Plan Adoption

Following the second public meeting, members of the Recreation Council modified the plan, and presented it to the City for distribution to the Recreation Council, the Township, and the Schools for adoption. Copies of the resolutions are included as part of this section.

OTSEGO COMMUNITY PARKS & RECREATION SURVEY

- 1. Which park or school facility do you use/visit most frequently?
- 2. What types of recreational programming is needed the most in Otsego?
- 3. If you could identify one area of improvement what would it be?
- 4. What is the most important part of the park/recreation system?
- 5. What is the least important part of the park/recreation system?

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Mission Statement

The mission of the Otsego Recreation Council is to provide a variety of recreational, educational, and leisure programs and facilities that meet the needs of the entire community of children, young adults, adults, and senior citizens.

Long Range Goals and Objectives

As a result of the public input meetings, and through the course of regular planning meetings held by the Recreation Council, the following goals (in italics) and objectives (regular font) have been established:

- 1. To conserve existing land and water resources for future generations and begin to actively participate in land acquisitions of vital pieces of property available along the river and within the Township. As listed in the CIP, the Township is always seeking to acquire river front property, specifically to add to or extend the river front path.
- 2. To seek out the assistance and cooperation of other agencies and organizations within the community in order to continue to provide more varied and increased recreational opportunities. This goal is not addressed specifically in this plan.
- 3. To seek out various available federal, state, and foundation grants to aid in funding for the development of facilities and for providing programs. By utilizing the City and Township staff, as well as professional consultants, the Recreation Council will continue to explore grant funding opportunities to assist with future park and facility development.
- 4. To enhance the overall physical appearance of the community in order to improve the overall quality of life and vitality of the community.
 - a. Specific objectives outlined in the Plan to achieve this include:
 - 1. Proposed construction of river front walking trail.
 - ii. Site improvements at Memorial Park.
 - iii. Proposed development of downtown park on old Department of Public Works site.
- 5. To encourage the development of balanced recreational opportunities for both active and passive participation, and for all levels of physical and mental abilities, by enhancing or constructing natural and built facilities.
 - a. Specific objectives outlined in the Plan to achieve this include:
 - 1. Proposed construction of river front walking trail.
 - ii. Site improvements at Memorial Park.
 - iii. Additional skate park ramps proposed for Northside Park.
 - iv. Construct interpretive trail at middle school/high school campus.
 - vi. Proposed development of downtown park on old Department of Public Works site.

Construct ADA compliant sidewalks as necessary at the three City parks.

vii. To provide visitors to the Otsego community with comfortable and attractive places for rest and refreshment.

- a. Specific objectives outlined in the Plan to achieve this include:
 - i. Proposed construction of river front walking trail.
 - ii. Proposed development of downtown park on old Department of Public Works site.

To preserve historic and scenic areas within the community.

Specific objectives outlined in the Plan to achieve this include:

Proposed construction of river front walking trail.

Proposed development of downtown park on old Department of Public Works site.

Designated bike lanes on city streets to promote access to bike traffic throughout the city.

ACTION PROGRAM

In this section we describe the proposed projects, as indicated in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and how the Otsego Recreation Council plans to implement or develop them over the next five years.

Proposed Projects

Project: Prepare master plan for Memorial Park.

<u>Long term goal(s) and objective(s) met:</u> To enhance the overall physical appearance of the community in order to improve the overall quality of life and vitality of the community; to encourage the development of balanced recreational opportunities for both active and passive participation, and for all levels of physical and mental abilities, by enhancing or constructing natural and built facilities.

<u>Recreation Council Action</u>: As part of this plan, the Recreation Council is looking into contracting with a consultant to have a master plan/study prepared for Memorial Park. During the development of this plan, the Council determined that developing a master plan for the park would be the logical first step in determining the best sequence for the proposed park improvements.

<u>Project:</u> Enhance an interpretive trail for middle school/high school campus.

<u>Long term goal(s) and objective(s) met:</u> To encourage the development of balanced recreational opportunities for both active and passive participation, and for all levels of physical and mental abilities, by enhancing or constructing natural and built facilities.

<u>Recreation Council Action</u>: This work is already planned an under way as part of a recent school bond issue.

<u>Project:</u> Enhancement of West Campus including fencing and pavilion.

<u>Long term goal(s) and objective(s) met:</u> To encourage the development of balanced recreational opportunities for both active and passive participation, and for all levels of physical and mental abilities, by enhancing or constructing natural and built facilities.

<u>Recreation Council Action</u>: The Council is investigating grant funding opportunities.

<u>Project:</u> Construct Phases II and III of the River Front Trail ultimately connecting Northside Park and Brookside Park .

<u>Long term goal(s) and objective(s) met:</u> To enhance the overall physical appearance of the community in order to improve the overall quality of life and vitality of the community; to encourage the development of balanced recreational opportunities for both active and passive participation, and for all levels of physical and mental abilities, by enhancing or constructing natural and built facilities; to provide visitors to the Otsego community with

comfortable and attractive places for rest and refreshment; to preserve historic and scenic areas within the community.

<u>Recreation Council Action</u>: The Council is investigating property acquisition and grant funding opportunities.

Project: Construct new downtown park on old DPW site.

<u>Long term goal(s) and objective(s) met</u>: To enhance the overall physical appearance of the community in order to improve the overall quality of life and vitality of the community; to encourage the development of balanced recreational opportunities for both active and passive participation, and for all levels of physical and mental abilities, by enhancing or constructing natural and built facilities; to provide visitors to the Otsego community with comfortable and attractive places for rest and refreshment; to preserve historic and scenic areas within the community.

<u>Recreation Council Action</u>: The Council is investigating property acquisition and grant funding opportunities.

Project: Multiple site improvements at Memorial Park.

<u>Long term goal(s) and objective(s) met:</u> To enhance the overall physical appearance of the community in order to improve the overall quality of life and vitality of the community; to encourage the development of balanced recreational opportunities for both active and passive participation, and for all levels of physical and mental abilities, by enhancing or constructing natural and built facilities;

<u>Recreation Council Action</u>: In addition to the master plan described above, the Council is investigating grant funding opportunities.

Project: Enhance barrier free access at all City parks.

<u>Long term goal(s) and objective(s) met:</u> To encourage the development of balanced recreational opportunities for both active and passive participation, and for all levels of physical and mental abilities, by enhancing or constructing natural and built facilities;

<u>Recreation Council Action</u>: The Council is investigating funding opportunities. They are also communicating with the City Department of Public Works to see about including this work with other future City sidewalk construction.