



**2012
2016**

Parks and Recreation Plan

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF ROYAL OAK OAKLAND COUNTY, MICHIGAN



ADOPTED MARCH 22, 2012

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF ROYAL OAK PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

2012-2016

Approved by the Charter Township of Royal Oak Parks and Recreation Commission on March 14, 2012

Adopted by the Charter Township of Royal Oak Board of Trustees on March 22, 2012

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Prepared By:

The Parks Commission of the Charter Township of Royal Oak, Oakland County,
Michigan
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The participation and cooperation of community leaders, residents, and members of civic organizations in the preparation of the Royal Oak Township Recreation Master Plan is greatly appreciated. In particular, we acknowledge the efforts of the following individuals:

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SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

DESCRIPTION OF PLANNING PROCESS

This analysis is the most recent planning document pertaining to parks and recreation in the Charter Township of Royal Oak. The Royal Oak Township Parks and Recreation Commission is responsible for guiding existing and future conditions of parks and recreation facilities and programs for Township residents. The previous Master Recreation Plan was prepared by the Royal Oak Township Parks and Recreation Commission and the Charter Township of Royal Oak Board of Trustees with assistance from McKenna Associates, a planning consulting firm with expertise in parks planning. The plan was submitted to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and approved in 1997.

The Township's Master Plan was updated in 2008. Through the planning workshops and public hearings, the need to develop an approved Parks and Recreation Master Plan was identified. In November 2011, the Township's Park Commissioners Board authorized the development of a five year Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

The 2012-2016 Recreation Master Plan was prepared with the assistance of McKenna Associates, a planning consulting firm located in Northville, and with the active involvement of the Township, Parks and Recreation Commission, and Parks and Recreation Director. Citizen input, through a community survey, focus groups and a public hearing, also contributed to this plan.

Following initial reviews by the Parks and Recreation Commission, the plan was submitted to the Charter Township of Royal Oak Board of Trustees for review and adoption. Throughout the process, all meetings were open to the public. Notices were posted beforehand, and advertised in the newspaper, as required by the Open Meetings Act.

SECTION II

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. LOCATION

The Charter Township of Royal Oak is located in Southeast Michigan, in the southeast quadrant of Oakland County. The Township, which is approximately .55 square miles (354 acres) in size and is bounded by Eight Mile Road and the City of Detroit to the South, the City of Ferndale to the north and east and the City of Oak Park to the west. (See Map 1).

The Township is within two miles of Northland Center, a regional shopping center, in addition to major office complexes located in nearby Southfield. The Detroit Zoological Park and the Horace Rackham Municipal Golf Course are just two of the numerous regional recreational facilities nearby. Map 1 lists many of the nearby recreation facilities.

B. HISTORY

The Township, established in 1833, was originally 36 square miles in size. However, as a result of incorporation by surrounding cities, the Township today is comprised of one distinct segment which has been imprinted with the social history of the country. It reflects the social status and the physical segregation of people of color throughout the country's history. The small, almost rectangular, Eight Mile segment was settled by African-American families in advance of Detroit's outward growth. Its initial development represented a hopeful "leapfrog" movement of African-American families from the inner city to outlying areas beyond the normal growth area of the city.

Taking advantage of the Housing Act of 1954, in 1959 the Township approved an urban renewal project covering the majority of the Eight Mile segment. Activities were carried out over a 16 year period in accordance with the officially adopted urban renewal plan. The renewal project (which had been officially amended for the seventh time in 1972) was terminated under "closeout procedures" as a federally supported urban renewal project in 1975. Project activities have been completed as part of the Township's Community Development Program.

Until 2004, the Township consisted of two small non-contiguous parcels of land within Oakland County. The first portion, along Eight Mile Road, is adjacent to Detroit, Oak Park, and Ferndale. The second portion, along Ten Mile Road, was located northwest of the Eight Mile Road portion, adjoining Oak Park and Southfield. On November 1, 2004, voters approved the annexation of Ten Mile Road portion of the Township, which became part of Oak Park.

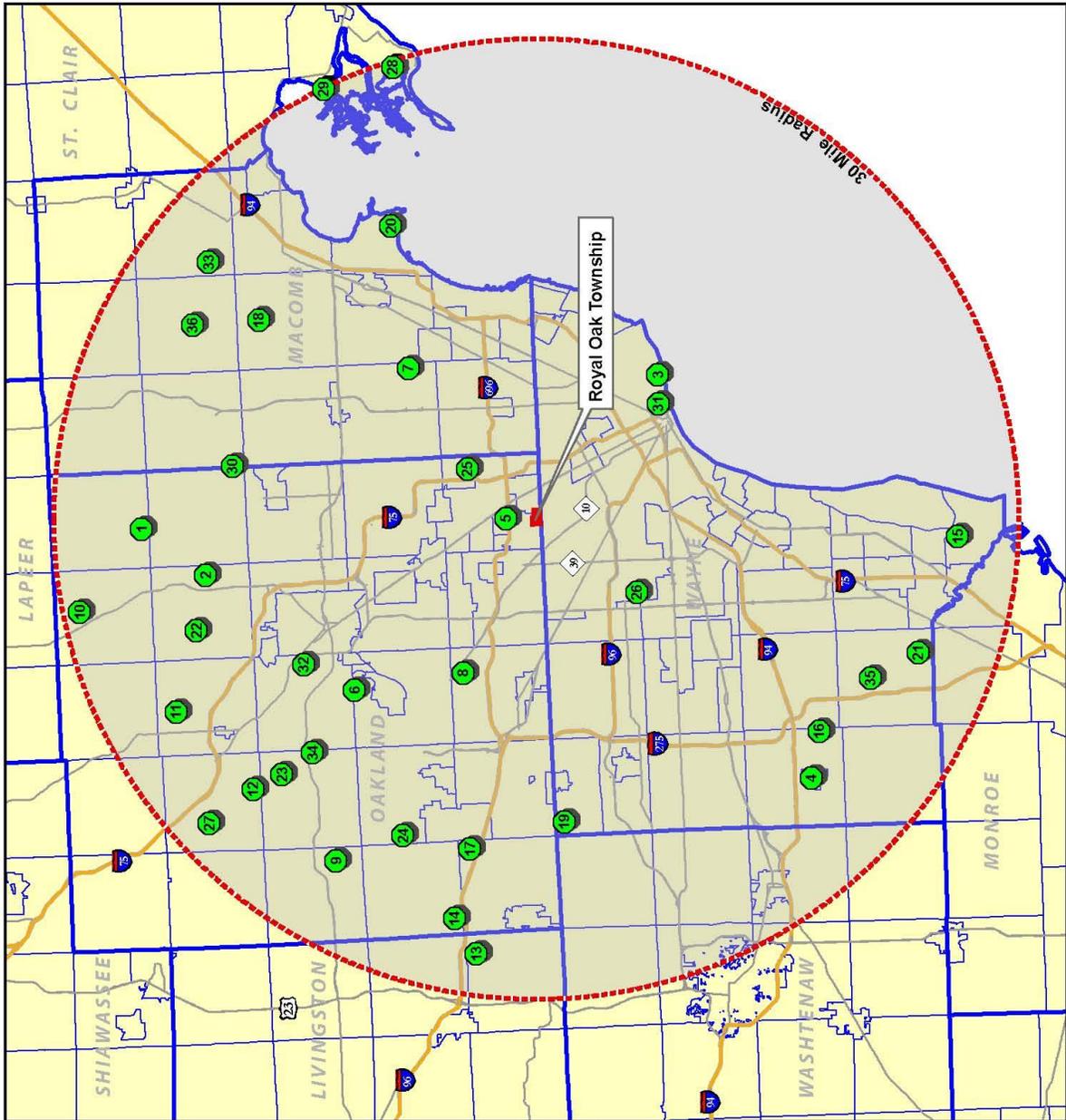
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Map 1 Township Location & Existing Regional Recreation Facilities

Charter Township of Royal Oak,
Oakland County, Michigan

February 13, 2012

- 1 Addison Oaks County Park
- 2 Bald Mountain State Recreation Area
- 3 Belle Isle
- 4 Belle Isle Lake Boat Launch
- 5 Detroit Zoological Park
- 6 Dodge Brother State Park #4
- 7 Freedom Hill County Park
- 8 Glen Oaks County Park
- 9 Highland State Recreation Area
- 10 Horseshoe Lake State Game Area
- 11 Independence Oaks County Park
- 12 Indian Springs Metropark
- 13 Island Lake State Recreation Area
- 14 Kearsington Metropark
- 15 Lake Erie Metropark
- 16 Lower Huron Metropark
- 17 Lyon Oaks County Park
- 18 Macomb Township Park
- 19 Maybury State Park
- 20 Metro Beach Metropark
- 21 Oakwoods Metropark
- 22 Orion Oaks County Park
- 23 Portae Lake State Recreation Area
- 24 Proud Lake State Recreation Area
- 25 Red Oaks County Park
- 26 River Rouge County Park System (Hines Parkway)
- 27 Springfield Oaks County Park
- 28 St. Clair Flats State Wildlife Area
- 29 St. Johns Marshland Wildlife Area
- 30 Stony Creek Metropark
- 31 Tricentennial State Park
- 32 Waterford Oaks County Park
- 33 Wetzel State Park
- 34 White Lake Oaks County Park
- 35 Willow Metropark
- 36 Wolcott Mill Metropark



C. PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Environmental Features

The Township is relatively flat. The land has been modified from its natural state as the Township was developed. Royal Oak Township lies in the Erie-St. Clair plain, an even surface that rises from 570 to 900 feet above sea level. The Township lies 600 feet above sea level.

The soil survey for the Township indicates the presence of clay loam soils. As a result of the clay deposits, the soils do not typically drain well when wet.

2. Climate

The climate of the region is characterized by cool and humid weather conditions. During the winter, the average monthly temperature is 26.6 degrees Fahrenheit while the average summer temperature is over 50 degrees. Annual precipitation is approximately 32 inches with the heaviest occurrences during the months of May, June and July. The areas annual snowfall is 42 inches. Snowfall is sporadic, which makes it difficult to sustain outdoor winter activities that require adequate snowfall. Prevailing winds are from the southwest, and tornados, while known to occur occasionally, are not frequent.

The climate in the Township is affected by the numerous large bodies of water in the immediate vicinity. Area water resources include Lake St. Clair, the Detroit River and Lake Erie. In addition, there are 40 square miles of inland water areas within Wayne and Oakland Counties.

3. Existing Land Use Characteristics and Zoning

The Township is a mix of land uses. Higher intensity commercial and industrial uses are located on the periphery of the Township. The interior portion of the Township has varying residential densities along with scattered public, semi-public and park uses. Within the residential area, particularly in the eastern half of the Township, there are a number of vacant parcels of land which are targeted for medium density single family residences in the future. This may lead to the greater need for mini-parks in the eastern portion of the Township.

4. Transportation

Roads

Located in metropolitan Detroit, the Township is served by a developed street network. Eight Mile Road, a major east/west route, not only serves as the Township's southern boundary, but is also a physical boundary between the Township and the City of Detroit. The eight lane boulevard, four lanes in each direction, carries approximately 70,000 vehicular trips per day. Woodward Avenue, located about two miles east of the Township, is a main transportation corridor that extends from Detroit to Pontiac. In addition, access to two major highways, US-10 and I-696, is located within two miles of the Township.

The street network of the Township is laid out on the grid system which allows efficient access to internal Township streets as well as the regional street network. Only two streets (north/south streets), Westview and Wyoming Avenues, extend through the Township from Eight to Nine Mile Road. The Kroger Shopping Center closed off three local streets to Eight Mile Road.

Buses

The Township is serviced by two public bus agencies. The Suburban Mobility Authority Regional Transportation system (SMART) provides public transit services to the Royal Oak Township area. The Township is serviced along Eight Mile Road, by the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) buses. DDOT also provides service to Northland and Eastland Malls. Access to SMART buses, from DDOT, is provided via transfer points along Coolidge, Greenfield and Woodward Avenue. In addition, the Township owns buses that are used to transport senior citizens.

Railroads

There are no railroad tracks within the Township. Amtrak service is provided in the City of Royal Oak, approximately five miles northeast of Royal Oak Township.

Airports

Oakland Pontiac Airport, located 23 miles northeast of Royal Oak Township, is used primarily for private aircraft and cargo deliveries. Passenger airline service is available at Detroit Metropolitan Airport, 22 miles southeast of the Township

Pedestrian Circulation

The Township is served by a good network of sidewalks.

5. Historic and Cultural Features

Recreation Center

The Recreation Center was constructed in 1944 as the George Washington Carver Elementary School. In 1968, the Oak Park School District renovated the school and divided into two sections. The southern portion was used for kindergarten through eighth grades, while the northern portion was sold to the Township to be used as a Recreation Center in 1971. The center offers limited programs of various types. These programs are in the broad, general categories of athletics, cultural enrichment and education. The center also houses a federally funded summer lunch program.

In terms of facilities, the Recreation Center has a billiards room, day care room, arts and crafts room, teen lounge, outdoor swimming pool, dance/music room and a gymnasium.

Library

The Township library is located within Township Hall at 21131 Garden Ln, Second Floor and serves Township Residents Tuesday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

George Washington Carver Elementary School (Former Academy of Oak Park Charter School)

The former elementary school, constructed in 1944, has been vacant on and off for approximately 30 years (since 1982) and until recently was the home of the Academy of Oak Park Charter School. The Master Plan identifies renovating the building for use as a new recreation center, however due to extensive repair needed, the Recreation Commission may not pursue this option.

The Carver School and Recreation Center is listed on the State Register of Historic Sites as a building “associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.”

D. IMPLICATIONS FOR RECREATION PLANNING

According to the 2006-2010 American Community Survey (A survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau), 30.9% of the residents living in the Township are living below the poverty level. This is more than three times the percentage of people living below the poverty level in the County. This suggests that access to private recreational facilities, services, and programs is severely limited. Thus, the need for accessible quality public recreation facilities is critically needed in both segments of the population. Access to adjacent community facilities is also limited due to physical barriers such as major thoroughfares, political boundaries and social barriers.

Typically, higher density areas and apartment complexes require public open spaces and recreational facilities be provided. These facilities can fulfill some of the leisure time activities of apartment residents.

Finally, the large senior citizen population suggests the need for specialized recreation facilities that provide accessible pathways, seating areas and protection from the natural elements.

1. Identification of Persons with Disabilities

Although persons with disabilities make up a small portion of the Township’s total population, other citizens may face some form of temporary disability during their lifetime: seniors, young children, pregnant women, individuals with broken bones, and individuals using crutches.

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which took effect on January 26, 1992, prohibits discrimination, both intentional and unintentional, against individuals with disabilities in all programs, activities and services provided by public entities. It applies to all state and local governments, their departments and agencies and any other agencies or special purpose districts of state or local governments.

Public recreation providers must eliminate any eligibility requirements for participation in programs, activities and services that screen out, or tend to screen out, persons with disabilities, unless they can establish that the requirements are necessary for the provision of the service, program or activity due to legitimate safety requirements. Furthermore, individuals with disabilities may not be excluded from services, programs and activities because existing buildings or park facilities are inaccessible.

In order to comply with the ADA, municipalities have the following alternatives: alteration of existing facilities, acquisition or construction of new facilities, relocation of services or programs to an accessible facility, or provision of services at accessible sites.

The implications of the ADA for The Charter Township of Royal Oak are significant. Parks, parking lots, pathways, picnic facilities, playgrounds (equipment and surfaces), and other recreation facilities must be examined to determine if their design creates barriers that prevent use by all segments of the population, including seniors. Programs must also be examined to be certain they provide recreation and leisure opportunities to all residents regardless of their social, economic, or physical status.

In essence, the ADA and MDNR policies mandate that communities work toward developing "inclusive recreation programs." Inclusive recreation programs identify residents' interests and needs, then address these interests and needs with facilities and programs that are not only barrier-free, but also are adaptable so that everyone can have a pleasant recreation experience together.

SECTION III

INVENTORY OF RECREATION FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

A. OVERVIEW

An inventory of existing local and regional recreation facilities was conducted by personnel from McKenna Associates from December 2011 to February 2012, with additional input from members of the Parks and Recreation Commission. The regional inventory consisted of review and compilation of regional park facilities, brochures. The physical inventory of local facilities consisted of site inspections to all Township recreation, school district sites and adjacent community recreation facilities. An inventory of playground equipment and park facilities was recorded and reviewed with regard to location, acreage, quantity, quality, accessibility, and condition.

The Royal Oak Township Recreation Center, Civic Center Park, Mack-Rowe Memorial Park, Pearl Wright Senior Center comprise the Charter Township of Royal Oak parks facilities (See Map 2). There are also indoor and outdoor recreation facilities located at Grant School, located within the Township, and four elementary schools, one middle school and a high school adjacently located in Oak Park. The Academy of Oak Park Charter School is a vacant school facility that is located near the center of the Township. Although the school facilities in the Oak Park School District are not located within the Township boundaries, these facilities are open to, and used by, residents of Royal Oak Township. Ferndale Public School facilities are also located directly adjacent to the Township, most notably Ferndale High School and Thomas Jefferson School. However, these facilities are not included in the parks and recreation inventory or analysis because their use is not encouraged given because the facilities are used by Ferndale High School for after school events. As a result, Royal Oak Township residents do not use these facilities.

The Township does not have any regional recreation facilities, yet there are a number of regional recreational areas within an hour drive. These regional facilities offer a variety of recreational opportunities for all age groups. Four public golf courses and a number of inland lakes are also within a short drive of the Township. In addition, there are private and commercial recreation facilities that fulfill certain recreational needs.

B. MUNICIPAL AND SCHOOL FACILITIES

Municipal and public school recreation sites within the Township are located on Map 2. For the purpose of this analysis three City of Oak Park facilities and a number of Oak Park public schools are included in this plan as they were identified by Township residents as serving a segment of the Township's recreational needs. While these facilities are important to Township residents this plan will primarily focus on facilities within the Township boundaries.

Where applicable, recreation facilities outside the Township, in the City of Oak Park, will be addressed.

In terms of total acreage, public facilities within the Township account for 59% of all public recreation facilities while school district facilities (including Oak Park School facilities used by Township residents) account for 41%. The community facilities within the Township range in size from .9 acres to 4.7 acres.

The following table describes the existing conditions at all recreational facilities, public and private, within the Township. The Township owns four of the inventoried park facilities. Much of the play equipment in these parks does not meet current safety and accessibility standards. There is great potential to work within the confines of the existing facilities to upgrade the opportunities in these parks to greater serve the needs of Township residents.

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Map 2 Existing Parks & Recreation Facilities with Service Areas

Royal Oak Charter Township,
Oakland County, Michigan

February 13, 2012

LEGEND

- Park, Recreation and Open Space
- Publicly/Quasi Public

KEY

- 1 Township Administrative Offices (Library/
Pearl Wright Center)
- 2 Civic Center Park
- 3 Grant School Recreation
- 4 Macle-Rowe Memorial Park
- 5 Royal Oak Township Recreation Center
- 6 Academy of Oak Park Charter School
- 7 Vacant Lot

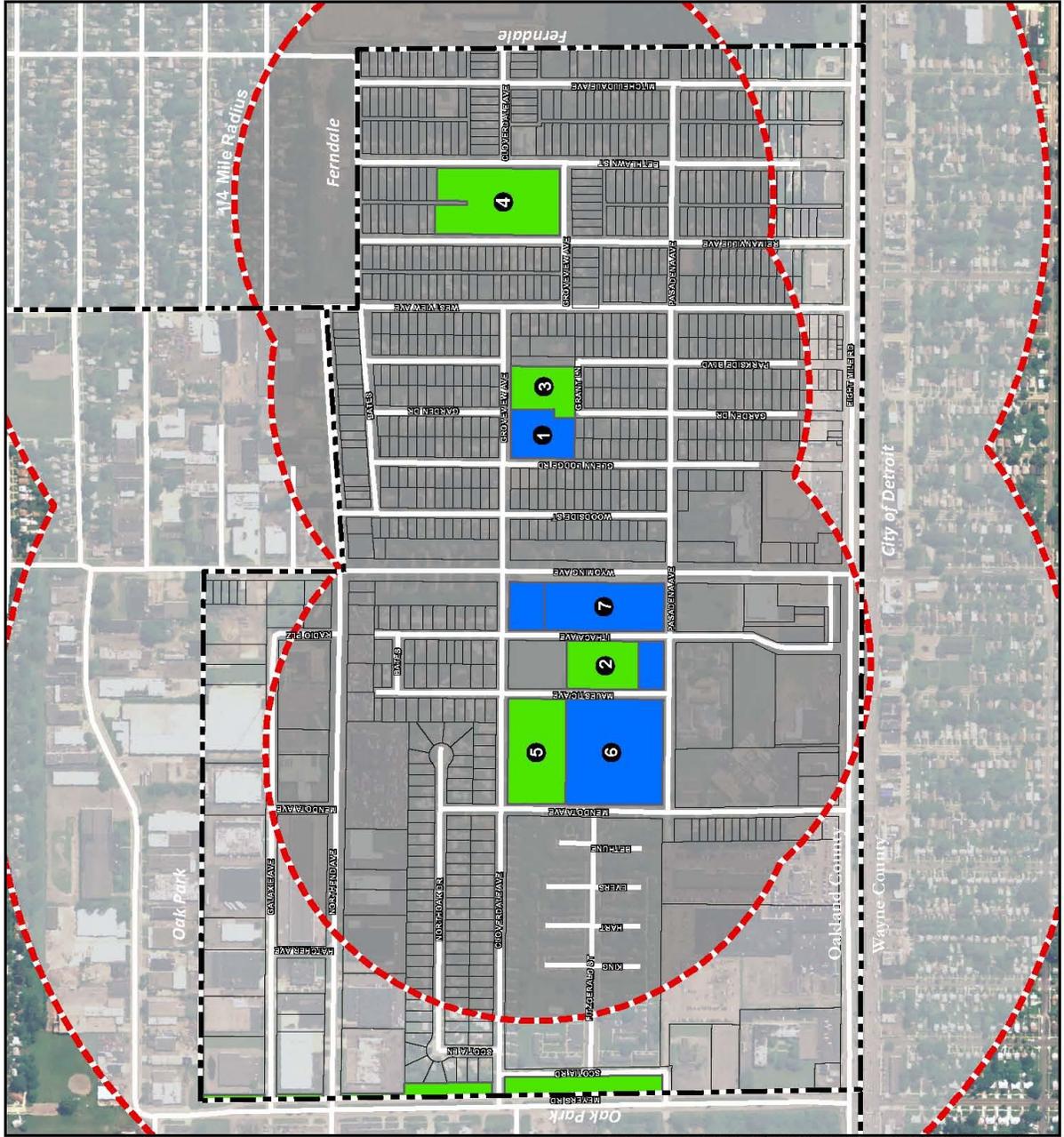
1/4 Mile Radius

1/2 Mile Radius



McKenna
ASSOCIATES

Base Source: Oakland County GIS, 2005
Data Source: McKenna Associates, Inc., Field Survey 5/10/07



In addition to municipal facilities, Grant Early Childhood Center is located near the center of the Township. The schools facilities mainly serve the residents of the neighborhood. Middle and high schools typically serve a broader population base. Three elementary schools, one middle school and one high school in Oak Park Schools fulfill some recreational needs of Township residents. Even though a Ferndale middle school and high school are located within walking distance of the Township without having to cross main roads, these facilities are not utilized by Royal Oak Township residents because these facilities are used for primarily school related activities. Oak Park Schools facilities, which require crossing busy roads or use of a car, are used more often by Township residents than Ferndale school facilities. There are no private schools located within the Township.

C. PRIVATE RECREATION FACILITIES

Several privately-owned recreation facilities are also located adjacent to Royal Oak Township. Although use of these facilities is limited to those who can afford the fees, they do address certain recreation needs. Private recreation facilities include the Jewish Community Campus (City of Oak Park), Northwest Activities Center (Detroit), Oakland YMCA (City of Royal Oak), Rackham Golf Course (Huntington Woods), Palmer Park Golf Course (Detroit) and the Chandler Park Golf Course (Detroit). Private recreation facilities including tot-lots, basketball courts, tennis courts and outdoor swimming pools are also located within multiple family residential complexes at the Oakdale cooperatives in the Township. These private open spaces serve the needs of the apartment residents.

D. REGIONAL RECREATION RESOURCES

Regional recreation areas are large facilities serving people within a broad geographic area. The region has been defined as the area within roughly an hour driving radius of Royal Oak Township. Table 10 summarizes these regional facilities. The size and type of facilities vary, but in general these facilities are 200 acres or more in size. The regional park facilities closest to Royal Oak Township include the Detroit Zoo, Belle Isle Park and a number of public golf courses.

E. RECREATION PROGRAMS

The Royal Oak Township Recreation Department, located at the Recreation Center, offers a variety of programs available to Township Residents. The Recreation Center, located at 21272 Mendota, was formally part of Carver School which was built in 1944. Recreation programs include open gym, basketball leagues, jazz, exercise classes, boxing, bowling instructions and weight lifting. There is also a demand for softball and baseball leagues, however in the past couple years there have not been enough adult volunteers to coach teams. The Recreation Department also offers silk screening classes, arts and crafts, ceramics, summer tutorial clinics, guitar lessons, a nutritional program and field trips during the summer. The department sponsors youth day trips to places such as Detroit Zoo, Niagara Falls and a Detroit Tiger baseball game. Recreation programs are offered year around, with extended recreation center hours during the summer months. Although a variety of programs are offered, assessing the number of participants in each program and the associated fees collected is difficult to determine as records are not kept on a regular basis. Accurate tracking of participants is important in order to recognize trends in programs offered and which programs are cost effective based on the number of people enrolled.

The City of Oak Park Recreation Department also offers an extensive recreation program in which Township residents are eligible to participate. In addition to the registration fees, Royal Oak Township residents must pay an additional five dollars as a non-resident to participate in the programs offered by the City of Oak Park Recreation Department. The Oak Park Community Center is located approximately 1½ miles northwest of Royal Oak Township.

The Oak Park School District maintains recreation facilities and conducts various programs at the high school, middle school and three elementary schools within the district. The school facilities contain a variety of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, all of which are available to school district residents either at no charge or for a nominal fee. Use of these facilities are first available to school athletic teams and scheduled programs, then open to the general public on a request basis.

Table 2
Existing Regional Recreation Facilities
within 30 Miles of the Charter Township of Royal Oak

1	Addison Oaks County Park
2	Bald Mountain State Recreation Area
3	Belle Isle
4	Belleville Lake Boat Launch
5	Detroit Zoological Park
6	Dodge Brother State Park #4
7	Freedom Hill County Park
8	Glen Oaks County Park
9	Highland State Recreation Area
10	Horshoe Lake State Game Area
11	Independence Oaks County Park
12	Indian Springs Metropark
13	Island Lake State Recreation Area
14	Kensington Metropark
15	Lake Erie Metropark
16	Lower Huron Metropark
17	Lyon Oaks County Park
18	Macomb Township Park
19	Maybury State Park
20	Metro Beach Metropark
21	Oakwoods Metropark
22	Orion Oaks County Park
23	Pontiac Lake State Recreation Area
24	Proud Lake State Recreation Area
25	Red Oaks County Park
26	River Rouge County Park System (Hines Parkway)
27	Springfield Oaks County Park
28	St. Clair Flats State Wildlife Area
29	St. Johns Marshland Wildlife Area
30	Stony Creek Metropark
31	Tercentennial State Park
32	Waterford Oaks County Park
33	Wetzel State Park
34	White Lake Oaks County Park
35	Willow Metropark
36	Wolcott Mill Metropark

SECTION IV

PARKS AND RECREATION ADMINISTRATION

A. ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

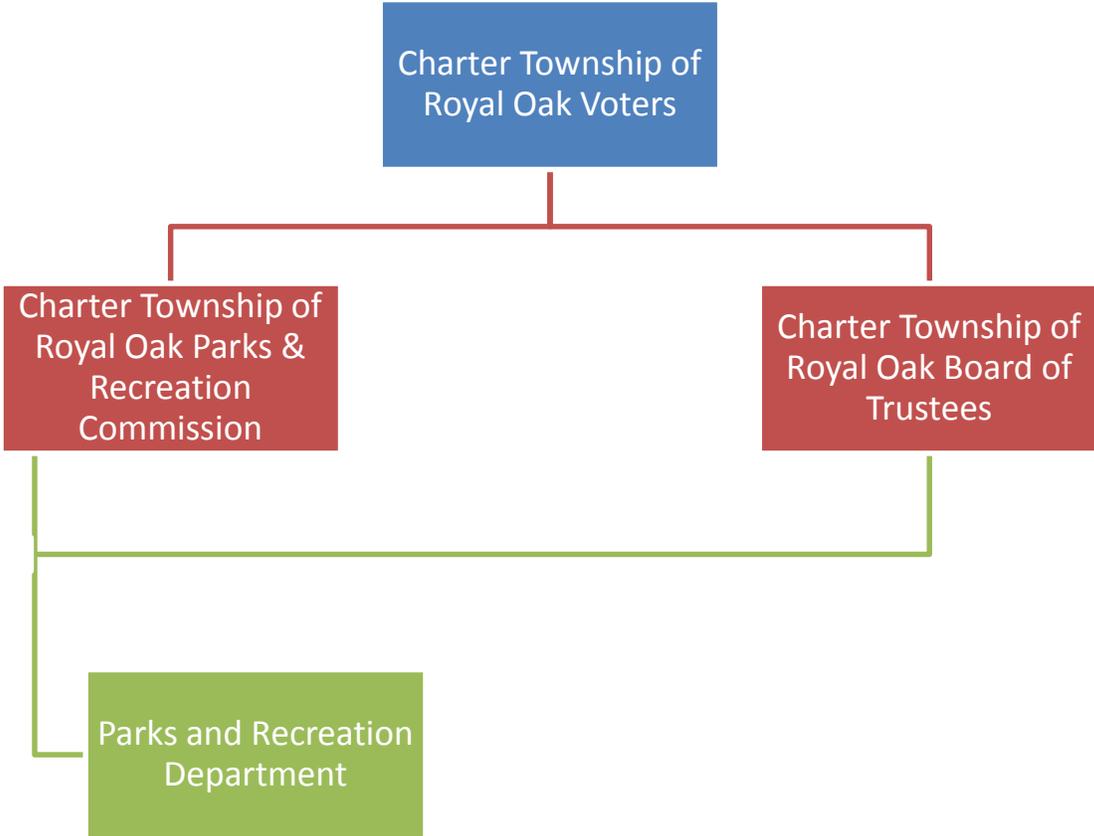
The Department of Parks and Recreation operates under the Charter Township of Royal Oak Parks and Recreation Commission. (See Figure 1). The Parks and Recreation Commission consists of six elected residents who oversee the daily operation of the Department of Parks and Recreation in Royal Oak Township. Commission members are elected to four year terms. Duties of these elected members include approval of all expenditures, generating additional revenue, establishing policy/procedures and monitoring daily recreation operations. The funding for the Recreation Department is administered by the Township Board of Trustees, with direction from the Financial Manager. Two members of the Board of Trustees are appointed to the Recreation Commission to serve as liaison between the two governing bodies.

B. PARKS AND RECREATION FUNDING

In Royal Oak Township, the operations and maintenance of all Township park facilities is by the Parks and Recreation Department which operates under the auspices of the Charter Township of Royal Oak Parks and Recreation Commission. The Board of Trustees is responsible for levying operational funds for the Department. The Recreation Department Staff consists of one part-time Recreation Director, one part-time Recreation Aid, two part-time lifeguards (during the summer months) and a small number of budgeted seasonal workers. For additional help and staffing the department must rely on volunteers. Currently, the Royal Oak Township Parks & Recreation Commission operates with an annual budget of approximately \$151,913 for fiscal year ending December 31, 2012. As previously mentioned, the Recreation Center is currently very costly to operate. Typically, the Recreation Department has exhausted its annual budget by August or September, a large portion of which is used to maintain the Recreation Center. A breakdown of the budget is outlined in Table 3.

Table 3 Charter Township of Royal Oak Recreation Department Budget		
Revenues	2011	2012 (Proposed)
Current Property Tax	\$149,636	\$143,461
PILOT Tax	\$3,441	\$3,402
Donations	\$1,000	\$1,000
Interest Income	\$50	\$50
Rental Fees – Recreation Facilities	\$4,000	\$4,000
Total	\$158,127	\$151,913
Expenditures	2011	2012 (Proposed)
Salary - Recreation Director	\$28,600	\$28,600
Wages - Recreation Supervisor	-	\$7,500
Wages - Recreation Aid	\$12,480	\$12,480
Per Diem - Park Commissioners	\$4,200	\$4,200
Wages - Summer Life Guards	\$3,600	\$3,600
Wages - Rec Bldg & Grounds	\$3,600	\$3,600
Social Security	\$4,015	\$4,588
Unemployment Compensation	\$350	\$350
Workers Compensation	\$2,600	\$2,600
Office Supplies & Expense	\$1,000	\$1,000
Operating Supplies & Expense	\$4,000	\$4,000
Programs	\$10,000	\$10,000
Fireworks Display	\$2,500	\$2,500
Audit Fees	\$1,245	\$1,245
Assessor Fees	\$1,000	\$1,000
Telephone	\$2,400	\$2,400
Conference	\$300	\$300
Printing & Publishing	\$700	\$700
Liability Insurance	\$4,000	\$4,000
Electricity	\$16,000	\$16,000
Heating	\$22,000	\$25,000
Repairs & Maintenance - Other	\$43,000	\$5,000
Equipment Maintenance	\$5,000	\$5,000
Rental - Alarm	\$3,000	\$3,000
Misc Expense	\$500	\$500
Various Misc Expense	\$1,000	\$1,000
Equipment	\$2,500	\$1,500
Total	\$179,590	\$151,663
Other Transactions:	-	-
Cash Revenue Transfer In	(\$47,000)	-
Operating Transfer Senior	\$25,000	-
Grand Total Expenses & Others	(\$22,000)	-
Surplus (Deficit) For The Year	\$537	\$249

Figure 1
Royal Oak Township Operational Flow Chart



In the Charter Township of Royal Oak, Voters elect both the Township Board of Trustees and the Parks and Recreation Commission. The Parks and Recreation Commission sets policy and priorities for the Parks and Recreation Department and assists the Township Board of Trustees with setting the Parks and Recreation Department Budget annually.

Funding Sources

There are several existing or potential funding sources available for parks and recreation facility improvements. In addition to the General Fund, other sources of funding for parks and recreation are a dedicated millage (such as a land acquisition millage), user fees, revenue bonds, donation of land and/or easements, and contractual agreements involving privatization. Following is a brief description of current funding sources and other sources the Township may consider:

General Fund

General Fund revenues are derived from property taxes, state-shared revenues, federal grants, license and permit fees, charges for services, interest on investments, and court fines or forfeitures. Recreation program user fees are usually channeled through the General Fund.

Millage

An additional property tax millage can be used to finance specific parks and recreation projects or for operation of recreation facilities. The dedicated millage has gained favor in many communities because voters are increasingly wary of approving millage increases for non-specified purposes. Approval by voters is required before a millage can be assessed. A millage is subject to periodic renewal by a vote of the people. Currently, the Recreation Department levies 2.50 mills on real property, 2.50 mills on personal property, and a 1.25 mills special assessment on real property within the township. These millages provide the Recreation Department with approximately \$143,461 to maintain and operate its programs.

User Fees

Fees can be charged by the Community to the users of specific recreation facilities or for enrollment in recreation programs. User fees can provide substantial support for park facilities. Other communities in southeast Michigan have established user fees for swimming pools, tennis courts, wave pools, use of lighted athletic fields, and use of indoor facilities. User fees are a promising source of funding in the municipality if used selectively for specific facilities and services.

Bond Programs

A number of bond programs can be used to finance construction of parks and recreation facilities:

1. General Obligation Bonds

General Obligation Bonds are issued for specific community projects and may not be used for other purposes. These bonds are usually paid off with property tax revenues.

2. Revenue Bonds

Revenue Bonds are issued for construction of public projects that generate revenues. The bonds are then retired using income generated by the project. For example, revenue bonds could be issued for the renovation of the restroom facility at the Mack-Rowe Park.

3. Special Assessment Bonds

Special Assessment Bonds are issued to pay for projects that benefit a particular segment of the population. For example, recreation improvements that benefit a defined subdivision or neighborhood could be financed using special assessment bonds, in which case the residents who receive the benefit would be assessed.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources Grants

Following is a summary of the two viable recreation grant programs now available through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) for communities that have an up-to-date recreation plan:

1. Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

Eligible projects include community recreation and trail way improvements. These are grants of \$10,000 - \$250,000 to local units of government for development of facilities such as ball fields, tennis courts, playgrounds, trails and picnic areas; and including support facilities; renovation of existing facilities and retro-fitting of existing facilities to make them accessible to persons with disabilities. Funds are provided through Federal appropriations. Grant match basis is 50 percent MDNR/50 percent local. *Note: The MDNR reports that funding for LWCF is not available in 1997 due to the depletion of the \$70 million Recreation Bond money and Congress not appropriating LWCF money.*

2. Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF)

Eligible projects include acquisition of land or rights in land for recreational uses or for protection of the land because of its environmental importance or scenic beauty, including additions to existing parks, forest lands or wildlife areas. Development of public outdoor recreation facilities is eligible (such as picnic areas, beaches, boating access, fishing and hunting facilities, winter sports areas, playgrounds, ball fields, tennis courts, and trails). Funds are provided through sale of oil and mineral leases on State land. Local contributions equal to at least 25 percent of the project cost are required.

There are three special initiatives approved by the Trust Fund Board of Trustees. Proposals will receive special attention if they:

- Are located within U.S. Census Bureau Metropolitan Statistical Areas;
- Increase environmental education facilities statewide; but particularly in urban areas; and
- Acquire land or develop trail ways that contribute to the development of a statewide trail network.

Create a Regional Recreation Authority

The Commission may wish to continue pursuing agreements with the surrounding municipalities to create a broader funding base. Creation of a regional authority could assist in this goal.

Community Development Block Grant

Revenues obtained through the Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program can be used for a variety of community improvement projects, including development of recreation facilities or land acquisition for new parks or athletic fields in low and moderate income neighborhoods that qualify under the program. Royal Oak Township may be able to use CDBG funds for improvements to recreational facilities serving low income areas of the Township.

Donations

Businesses, corporations, private clubs, and community organizations will often contribute to recreation and other improvement programs to benefit the communities in which they are located. Private sector contributions may be in the form of monetary contributions, the donation of land, the provision of volunteer services, or the contribution of equipment or facilities.

Foundations

A foundation is a special non-profit legal entity that is established as a mechanism through which land, cash, and securities can be donated for the benefit of parks and recreation services. The assets are disbursed by the foundation Board of Directors according to a predetermined plan. Funding for recreation facilities through foundations is very limited.

Lease or Contractual Agreements

The Township may increase the availability of recreation facilities to its residents by leasing sites and facilities from other recreation providers. For example, the Township could agree to help maintain school recreation facilities in exchange for guaranteed availability of the facility to the public. The Commission could also contract with private entrepreneurs to provide services at Township-owned park facilities, such as recreation programming, food service, or facility maintenance. Privatization of services can increase recreation opportunities available to residents, while minimizing Commission administrative costs.

Public Use Conveyances

Administered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, this program provides state lands acquired through delinquent taxes for local government units for public use. Acceptable uses of land acquired under this program include development of local parks.

Historic Preservation Fund

The purpose of the Historic Preservation Fund grants is to identify, register and protect resources eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The funds that are sub-granted are used to help to strengthen preservation at the local level.

SECTION V

BASIS FOR ACTION PLAN

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) has adopted a set of standards, based upon those developed by the National Parks and Recreation Association (NPRA), to determine the need for recreation facilities in each community. These standards establish 1) the specific recreation facilities such as tennis courts or soccer fields, which should be available based upon the population of the community; and 2) the “service areas,” or number and type of parks that should be available to residents within a certain distance of their homes. Each of these standards will be applied to the existing inventory of township-wide and school district recreation facilities to determine if deficiencies are present. The results of this analysis will be incorporated, in part, into the Action Plan that follows.

A. SUMMARY OF SURVEY, FOCUS GROUPS AND PUBLIC HEARING

During December 2011 and January 2012, the Township issued a survey that was distributed to township residents via the Township Recreation Center and all Township buildings. There were a total of 120 respondents. The Township also held a public hearing to update the Plan. The public hearing was held by the Parks and Recreation Commission on March 14, 2012 at the Royal Oak Township Recreation Center. During the public hearing and throughout the planning process the Commission received comments and input from citizens with regard to existing and future parks and recreation facilities and programs in the Township. The highlights of the survey results and focus groups are summarized below.

Survey Results

General Questions

- 31.1% of respondents rated existing township parks as ‘fair’.
- 30.3% of respondents rated programs and activities offered by the township as ‘fair’.
- 30.3% of respondents rated the Township Recreation Center as ‘fair’.
- 50.5% of respondents indicated that ‘weekends’ were the best time for themselves or their household to participate in activities or use the recreation building.

Activity/Program Questions

- When asked about health, social and assistance programs for seniors currently available within the township, 28.4% of respondents were ‘undecided’.
- When asked about programs/activities for people with disabilities currently available within the township, 34.8% of respondents felt that such programs/activities ‘fell short’.
- When asked about programs/activities for teens and after school programs currently available within the township, 31.6% of respondents felt that such programs/activities ‘fell short’.

- When asked about youth and adult sports programs currently available within the township, 32.2% of respondents felt that such programs/activities ‘fell short’.
- When asked about summer programs currently available within the township, 30.4% of respondents felt that such programs/activities ‘meets the needs’.
- When asked about environmental/nature education programs currently available within the township, 33.0% of respondents were ‘undecided’.
- When asked about art, music, concerts, theatre and dance programs currently available within the township, 36.6% of respondents felt that such programs/activities ‘fell short’.
- When asked about wellness and fitness programs currently available within the township, 34.2% of respondents felt that such programs/activities ‘fell short’.
- When asked about aquatic programs for all ages currently available within the township, 29.8% of respondents felt that such programs/activities ‘fell short’.
- When asked about community special events and festivals currently available within the township, 32.5% of respondents felt that such programs/activities ‘fell short’.
- When asked about family programs and activities currently available within the township, 34.8% of respondents felt that such programs/activities ‘fell short’.

Open Ended Questions

- When asked to select programs that they wanted to see more of in the township, respondents used keywords and phrases such as ‘fitness’ and ‘teen and after school programs’ in 34% of responses.
- When asked what could be done to improve existing programming and activities in the township, respondents used keywords and phrases such as ‘increase programming’, ‘improve recreation center’ and ‘modify opening times’.
- When asked to select the most important facilities for the future of the township, respondents used keywords and phrases such as ‘playground’ (21%), ‘athletic fields’ (20%) and ‘park’ (17%).
- When asked what could be done to improve existing facilities in the township, respondents used keywords and phrases such as ‘clean’ (6%), ‘fix’ (2%), ‘upgrade’ (2%) and ‘reconstruct’ (2%).
- When asked if there were any facilities that were not mentioned in the survey (or available in the township), respondents used keywords and phrases such as ‘dance’ (5%), ‘basketball’ (3%) and ‘football’ (3%).

Focus Groups

Children

On February 2, 2012, the Parks and Recreation Department Director held a focus group with 15 boys ranging from 8 to 14 years old. The boys identified that they use the recreation center on a regular basis and were asked what improvements and modifications they would like to see occur at the Recreation Center.

The boys had a high interest in seeing an updated facility that consisted of:

- A new gym floor
- Swimming pool updates
- Updated locker room
- Non-leaking roof
- More efficient heating system
- Availability of air conditioning
- Additional recreational programming i.e.; video games

Senior Citizens

On February 13, 2012, the Parks and Recreation Department Director held a focus group with 22 senior citizens, 80% female and 20% male. The senior citizens identified improvements that they would like to see at the Recreation Center.

- Working heating system
- Central air conditioning
- Non-leaking roof
- A creation of a wellness center that included stationary bikes, treadmills, and other cardiovascular exercise equipment

Parks and Recreation Commission Public Hearing

On March 14, 2012 at 6 p.m., the Parks and Recreation Commission held a Public Hearing to hear comments on the 2012-2016 Parks and Recreation Master Plan at the Recreation Center located at 21272 Mendota. The meeting was noticed in a newspaper of general circulation and available for township residents. Members of the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Parks and Recreation Director, the Township Clerk, the Parks and Recreation Consultants and two members of the public were present.

Commission members' discussion focused on the primary importance of improving the Recreation center. Commissioners discussed the need for bathrooms at the parks, but worries that there is not enough staff to properly monitor the facilities to ensure safety and cleanliness. The Township Clerk mentioned that the Township and other municipalities in southeastern Oakland County have been actively exploring options for shared and collaborative services, but that Parks and Recreation services were not a priority for communities and were not explored after initial conversations. The board discussed looking for corporate sponsors as a means to expand programming augment park facility maintenance.

After the public hearing was closed, the board made a motion to recommend that the Charter Township of Royal Oak 2012-2016 Parks and Recreation Plan be forwarded to the Township Board for approval and adoption.

B. ANALYSIS OF EXISTING FACILITIES AND SERVICE AREAS

Recreation facilities serving the Charter Township of Royal Oak residents are compared to the MDNR standards in Tables 4 and 5. These comparisons provide a general idea of deficiencies, but it must be understood that the MDNR standards are not intended to be followed to the letter. Needs of the population vary from one community to the next.

The analysis of existing recreation facilities is summarized in Table 6. Map 2 provides general service area boundaries based on national standards for mini-parks, neighborhood parks and community parks. The central and eastern areas of the Township are underserved by mini-parks. The mini-park designated on the western edge of the Township is located within the Oakdale Cooperatives and even though these facilities are private, and intended for use by residents, they do provide recreational opportunities for cooperative residents.

The entire Township is served by neighborhood parks.

In terms of community park service areas, the Township does not have community parks located within the Township boundaries. However, Township residents and Recreation Commission members, indicated that Shepard Park, located approximately 1 ½ miles northwest of the Township in the City of Oak Park, is used by residents of the Township. Shepard Park provides a variety of recreational opportunities which, along with its size, classifies it as a community park.

**Table 4
Recreation Facilities Evaluation
Charter Township of Royal Oak**

	Recommended Standard ¹	Existing Municipal/ Public Facilities*	Existing School Facilities**	Total Existing Public Facilities***	Recommended Need ^{2,4}	Surplus/ (Deficiency)
Basketball Courts ^{3,5}	1/5,000	2.0	1.5	3.5	1	2.5
Tennis Courts	1/2,000	1	0	1	1	(1)
Volleyball Courts	1/5,000	0	0	0	-	(1)
Baseball Fields	1/5,000		5	6	1	5
- Lighted Fields	1/30,000	1	0	0	1	(1)
Softball	1/5,000	0	1	0	1	-
Football Fields	1/20,000	0	1	1	1	-
Soccer Fields	1/10,000	0	1	1	1	-
Golf Courses ⁶ - 9 hole	1/25,000	0	0	0	1	(1)
- 18 hole	1/50,000	0	0	0	1	(1)
Driving Range ⁶	1/50,000	0	0	0	1	(1)
Swimming Pool - Indoor	1/20,000	0	1	1	1	-
- Outdoor	1/40,000	1	0	1	1	-
Ice Rinks - Indoor	1/50,000	0	0	0	1	(1)
- Outdoor	1/20,000	0	0	0	1	(1)
Archery Range ⁶	1/50,000	0	0	0	1	(1)
Running Track (1/4 mile) ⁶	1/20,000	0	1	1	1	---
Playgrounds	1/3,000	4	3	7	1	4
Picnic Areas	None Published	3	0	3	X	---
Cross-Country Ski Trails (miles) ⁶	1/10,000	0	0	0	1	(1)
Nature Trails (miles) ⁶	1/20,000	0	0	0	1	(1)
Sledding Hills ⁶	1/40,000	0	0	0	1	(1)
Bicycle Trails (miles) ⁶	1/40,000	0	0	0	1	(1)
Horseback Riding Trails (miles) ⁶	1/50,000	0	0	0	1	(1)

- Footnotes:
- ¹ Recommended number of each facility per unit of population (National Recreation and Park Association/Michigan Recreation Opportunity Standards).
 - ² Based on U.S. Census 2010 population count of 2,419.
 - ³ Two backboards were considered to be equal to 1 court for the purposes of this analysis.
 - ⁴ Rounded up to the nearest whole number.
 - ⁵ Not regulation courts
 - ⁶ May be satisfied by regional facility.
 - X Not determined
 - ** Includes facilities at Grant Elementary School (Royal Oak Township), Ferndale High School (City of Ferndale), Thomas Jefferson Middle School, (City of Ferndale), and Lessenger Elementary School (City of Oak Park).
 - *** This figure includes only facilities that are functional.

Table 5 Comparison to Accepted Standards Charter Township of Royal Oak				
Royal Oak Community Comparison to Accepted Standards	Recommended Minimum Acreage per 1,000 Residents¹	Existing Acreage²	Recommended Acreage for Proposed Population³	Surplus (Deficiency) Based on Proposed Population
Mini-Parks ⁴	0.25	0.9	0.6	.3
Neighborhood Parks	1.0	9.7	2.4	7.3
Community Parks ⁵	5.0	0	12.1	(12.1)
Regional Parks ⁵	5.0	0	12.1	Not Applicable
Special Use Facilities	Variable	Pearl Wright Senior Center	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Linear Parks	Variable	0 miles	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

- Footnotes:
- 1 Based on National Recreation and Parks Association recommendations.
 - 2 Includes all existing public acreage excluding school acreage.
 - 3 Based on U.S. Census 2010 Population of 2,419.
 - 4 The need for mini-parks is also addressed partially by apartment and condominium recreation areas and school recreation facilities (acreage not determined).
 - 5 It would be misleading to assess the adequacy of a community and regional park resources based on recommended acreage for the Charter Township of Royal Oak's population, since the regional resource must serve a much broader segment of the metropolitan area.

Table 6
Analysis of Existing Facilities
Charter Township of Royal Oak

Type of Facility	Recreation Standards ¹	Royal Oak Township Facilities	Comments/Recommendations
Mini-Parks	Mini-Parks are small, specialized parks, usually less than an acre in size, that serve the needs of residents in the surrounding neighborhood. A mini-park may serve a limited population or specific group such as tots or senior citizens.	These areas function as mini-parks for the residents of the surrounding neighborhoods.	<p>The NRPA recommends 0.25 to 0.50 mini-park acreage per 1,000 residents. Old playground equipment in all parks should be replaced with play structures that meet current safety and accessibility standards. Resilient surfacing must be installed or replaced as needed at all playgrounds.</p> <p>Grant Park is currently neglected and unused. Grant Park has the potential to be upgraded and serve as a mini park for residents living to the north and south of Cloverdale Avenue. Development of a tot-lot, community garden, passive park, and walkway should be explored.</p>
<p>1. Michigan Department of Natural Resources: <u>Recreation Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines</u>, 1983, Lancaster, National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).</p>			
Neighborhood Parks	Neighborhood parks are typically multi-purpose facilities that provide areas for intensive recreation activities, such as field games, court games, crafts, playgrounds, skating, picnicking, etc. Neighborhood parks are generally 15 acres or more in size and serve a population up to 5,000 residents located within ¼ to ½ mile radius from the neighborhood they serve.	<p>Mack-Rowe Memorial Park and Civic Center Park are good examples of neighborhood parks. The Recreation Center is also classified as a neighborhood park due to its programs and the outdoor pool that attracts residents, primarily from the Eight Mile Segment of the Township.</p> <p>Grant Elementary School, located within the Township boundary, Lessenger Elementary (City of Oak Park) and Thomas Jefferson Middle School (City of Ferndale) provide similar recreational opportunities typically found in neighborhood parks.</p>	<p>One to two acres of neighborhood parks are recommended per 1,000 residents. Mack-Rowe Memorial Park and Civic Center Park are centrally located to residents in the Eight Mile segment. An opportunity exists to upgrade the existing recreational facilities to serve a wider range of residents. Park improvements at Mack Rowe Memorial Park include refurbishing the existing restroom building, cleaning up the tennis court area, removing the old bleachers near the ball field and installing new modular play equipment. The picnic shelters, grills, benches and play equipment at Civic Center Park should be upgraded. The central location of Civic Center Park and its proximity to Township Hall and the Pearl Wright Senior Center is important to the Township and provide opportunities for intergenerational facilities and activities. The open fields at both parks provide an area for active recreational opportunities.</p> <p>Annual festivals, such as an “Easter Egg Hunt”, may be conducted at Civic Center Park.</p> <p>Currently, the privately owned Carver Elementary School is vacant and the existing few pieces of playground equipment are in disrepair. The Township is interested in purchasing this former</p>

**Table 6
Analysis of Existing Facilities
Charter Township of Royal Oak**

Type of Facility	Recreation Standards ¹	Royal Oak Township Facilities	Comments/Recommendations
			school and developing it into a multi-use community facility: Recreation Center, Senior Center, Library and Social Services. The existing Recreation Center, needing extensive repairs, is too small to accommodate these uses.
1. Michigan Department of Natural Resources: <u>Recreation Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines</u> , 1983, Lancaster, National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).			
Community Parks	Community Parks typically contain a wide variety of recreation facilities to meet the diverse needs of residents from several neighborhoods. Community parks may include areas for intense recreation facilities, such as athletic complexes and swimming pools. These parks usually contain other facilities not commonly found in neighborhood parks such as nature areas, picnic pavilions, lighted ball fields, and concession facilities.	Even though Victoria Park and Shepherd Park are located in the City of Oak Park, they provide excellent recreational opportunities for the Township. In addition, Ferndale High School with its proximity to the residents of the Eight Mile segment serves as a community park to some degree.	The NRPA's standard requirement for community parks is 5 to 8 acres per 1,000 residents. The Township's recreation program may be able to reduce costs by entering into a partnership with the City of Oak Park to provide services and programs.
Regional/ Metropolitan Parks	Regional parks are typically located on sites with unique natural features that are particularly suited for outdoor recreation, such as viewing and studying nature, wildlife habitats, conservation, swimming, picnicking, hiking, fishing, boating, camping and trail use. Many also include active play areas.	The Township does not have any regional recreational facilities within the Township boundaries. However, many regional facilities offering a variety of recreational opportunities exist within a one hour drive of the Township	Regional parks typically serve several communities within a one hour drive. The Detroit Zoo, Rackham Golf Course and Belle Isle, etc. are examples of regional facilities used by Township residents.
Special Use/ Conservancy Parks	Special use recreation facilities are typically single-purpose recreation facilities, such as golf courses, nature centers, outdoor theaters, interpretative centers, or facilities for the preservation or maintenance of the natural or cultural environment. Protection and management of the natural/cultural environment may be the primary focus with recreation use as a secondary objective.	The Pearl Wright Senior Citizen Center may be considered a Special Use Park as it specifically serves the needs of the Townships older residents. A variety of programs, including transportation and daily hot lunches are offered.	Accessible outdoor facilities are lacking for the Townships Senior population. One goal of the Township is to provide intergenerational recreation facilities and opportunities for Township residents, especially at Civic Center Park.

Table 6
Analysis of Existing Facilities
Charter Township of Royal Oak

Type of Facility	Recreation Standards ¹	Royal Oak Township Facilities	Comments/Recommendations
Passive Parks	The primary purpose of passive areas is to provide relief from highly developed residential and commercial neighborhoods. Facilities may include sitting areas and other pedestrian amenities, landscaping, monuments and fountains, and historical features.	Currently, the Township does not have any passive park areas.	The opportunity exists to develop Grant park or the vacant parcel behind Township Hall as an area for passive recreation. The location of Grant Park, adjacent to an elementary school, and the vacant parcel near Township Hall, with its proximity to the Senior Center, is an ideal location for this type of recreational activity.
1. Michigan Department of Natural Resources: <u>Recreation Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines</u> , 1983, Lancaster, National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).			
Linear Parks	A linear park is any area developed for one or more modes of recreation travel, such as hiking, bicycling, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, canoeing, horseback riding, and pleasure driving.	Currently, the Township currently does not have any linear park systems.	Built along natural corridors, such as utility rights-of-way, abandoned railroad easements, bluff lines, vegetation patterns, and roads that link other components of the recreation system or community facilities, such as schools, libraries, commercial areas, and other park areas and desirable site characteristics may be developed into linear parks.
1. Michigan Department of Natural Resources: <u>Recreation Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines</u> , 1983, Lancaster, National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).			

C. RECREATION DEFICIENCIES

Table 4 compares the existing community park land acreage to recommended standards, based on current and projected population. The figures indicate that if the school sites are counted in the park acreage figures, the community has adequate mini-parks and neighborhood park acreage for the current and projected population.

The system is deficient in the amount of acreage allocated for community parks. According to accepted standards, the Township should contain about 25.87 acres of community parks. Although many facilities have been identified as Township needs, the primary needs include three tennis courts, a volleyball court and bike paths with the parks. Even the slight population increase projected for the Township will increase the demand for park and recreational services.

The raw numbers do not address the *quality* of existing parks and recreation facilities. Upon closer examination, deficiencies or limitations are apparent because of the location, accessibility, maintenance, level of development and individual size of existing park lands. These include:

Reliance on School Sites. Cooperation between the Township and the Ferndale school district (Grant Elementary School) provides for efficient use of the land. The Township owns the playground land and equipment adjacent to the school and the building is owned by the Ferndale School District. The schools central location within the Township provides playground equipment and ballfields for residents. Nevertheless, there are limitations associated with utilizing the interior of school because use of the facilities are first available to school athletic teams and scheduled programs, and then open to the general public on a request basis. Jefferson Middle School and Ferndale High School are also located within walking distance of the Township, however the use of these facilities are not encouraged by the City of Ferndale. As a result, these facilities are not used by Township residents.

Accessibility Assessment. The existing playgrounds located at park and school facilities are not completely accessible to children with disabilities. Modern equipment with transfer points and ramps, resilient surfacing, and accessible pathways are required to ensure “integrated play” by all residents of the Township. Currently, the Recreation Building is not completely accessible to persons with disabilities. Township recreation facilities we assessed and we have included their ranking below (also found in Table 4).

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Assessment</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
Civic Center:	5	(entire facility was developed/renovated using principles of universal design)
Grant School / Grant Park:	2-3	(some/most of the park facilities/areas meet accessibility guidelines)
Mack Rowe:	2-3	(some/most of the park facilities/areas meet accessibility guidelines)
Recreation Center:	2-3	(some/most of the park facilities/areas meet accessibility guidelines)

Program Deficiencies. Program deficiencies identified by recreation staff and community residents include, team sports for girls, educational and entertainment programming for youth, and job training. There is a demand for other programs, such as basketball and baseball, but it is difficult to get adults to coach or otherwise participate in the recreational programming.

Facility Deficiencies. The majority of the park facilities and the Recreation Center are out-of-date with old and malfunctioning equipment. Many of the existing facilities need to be updated in terms of equipment and ADA accessibility. The Recreation Center has many unsafe conditions that should be addressed as it is used daily by Township residents.

Conclusions

Table 4 compares facilities available to recommended standards, based on a 2010 population of 2,419. The table reveals some deficiencies, some of which are being addressed by recreation resources in the adjacent community of Oak Park. Tennis courts, volleyball courts and pedestrian paths are examples of deficiencies the Township can potentially address itself.

Over the past several years, the Township has been discussing the possibility of acquiring the vacant George Washington Carver Elementary School. Due to extensive repairs and removal of asbestos required before the building is operational, the Recreation Commission is rethinking the viability and cost-effectiveness of this option. Rather, the Commission would like to pursue renovating the existing Recreation Center to adequately provide programs and facilities for Township residents.

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) in the past has contributed funding for improvements that are adjacent to park and recreation facilities. It is possible that such projects will continue and when they do, the Parks and Recreation Department would like to collaborate.

SECTION VI

ACTION PROGRAM: MASTER RECREATION PLAN

This Chapter of the plan is the culmination of a comprehensive planning effort that began with the thorough analysis of the physical and demographic attributes of the Township. Existing parks and recreation facilities and programs were inventoried and evaluated. An assessment of need was then developed that considered both accepted recreation standards and the specialized needs of persons with disabilities. Finally, these needs were analyzed and reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Commission with input from the public.

The results of this effort are presented in the following statement of Long Range Goals, Parks and Recreation Objectives, Recreation Priorities, and a detailed list of Recreation Project Recommendations with a related Capital Improvement Program and General Recommendations.

Goals should be broad and address general needs and establish the basis for setting specific programmed objectives. Objectives are measurable results that the Township works toward accomplishing.

A. LONG-RANGE GOALS

1. **Upgrade Existing Facilities.** Maximize the use of parks and recreation facilities by upgrading existing facilities to make them safer and more accessible, such as the Community Center.
2. **Improve Public Perception.** Increase public awareness of the Parks and Recreation Commission in order to gain community support for parks and recreation programming.
3. **Promote Community Involvement.** Work toward increasing the number of people involved in recreation, including young adults, parents and senior citizens.
4. **Provide Recreation Opportunities.** Offer Township residents a variety of activities that meet the needs of all segments of the population including youth, young adults, families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.
5. **Address Residents' Preferences.** Provide parks and recreation facilities and programs that are based on the preferences of Royal Oak Township residents.
6. **Maintain Fiscal Responsibility.** Develop parks and recreation facilities and programs based on a sound fiscal policy. Consider the use of volunteers, state and federal funding programs, and other private funding sources.

7. **Reduce Duplication of Services.** Strive to reduce duplication in recreation services. Overall recreation planning should consider existing facilities and programs offered by the school district, adjacent municipalities (especially the City of Oak Park), and other agencies (such as the Jewish Community Center).
8. **Consider Maintenance Needs.** Consider the cost of maintenance and operation in designing and locating new recreation facilities and programs. Projections of costs should be compared to future revenue projections.
9. **Improve Accessibility.** Improve the accessibility to parks, recreation facilities, and programs by residents of the Township particularly for youth, young adults, families, elderly, and persons with disabilities. Encourage inter-generational facilities.
10. **Continue the Planning Process.** Maintain the ongoing parks and recreation planning process. The parks and recreation master plan should be reviewed and updated annually.
11. **Promotion.** Develop and promote annual activities and special events sponsored by Royal Oak Township Parks and Recreation Commission and local organizations.

B. PARKS AND RECREATION OBJECTIVES

1. **Recreation Center.** This is the Township’s most important objective and would involve renovations at the existing recreation center in order to provide a safe environment for indoor recreational opportunities by renovating the existing facility in order adequately address the programming needs of the Township. In 2010, the Township had an energy assessment of the Recreation Center by the Retired Engineer Technical Assistance Foundation (RETAF) to determine what techniques could be completed to increase energy efficiency and decrease operational costs. Some of their recommendations have been completed while the Township is exploring funding options for the others, such as window replacement and HVAC efficiency.

After reviewing the RETAF report and the public’s desire for other facility upgrades, necessary repairs include:

1. Roof replacement
2. Instillation of new gymnasium floor
3. Heating system repairs
4. Installation of an air conditioning system,
5. New drywall and ceiling tiles in the administration offices
6. Installation of new windows and window screens

2. **Community Parks.**

Improve the existing facilities and expand the recreational opportunities in the area of Civic Center Park. Even though it is currently only 3.7 acres in size it has the potential to serve as a community park and “Town Center” of the Township due to its central location

and proximity to Township Hall and the Pearl Wright Senior Center. Currently, the Master Plan identifies this area for redevelopment into a larger recreation area that will increase the size of the park through land transfer. The plan identifies renovating the existing George Washington Carver Elementary School, active recreation, play equipment and picnic areas as potential uses within the park. The Commission is looking to pursue renovating the current recreation center instead of Carver School, because it will be more cost-effective.

3. Neighborhood Parks.

Mack-Rowe: Improve the existing facilities at this park including renovation of the restroom building, repairing the tennis court, replacing the obsolete bleachers and make improvements to the football/soccer field so it is available for practices and games. Additional park facilities may include installing accessible play equipment, creating an internal pedestrian path, providing bike lockers and picnic facilities.

4. Mini-Parks.

Grant Park: Construct a tot-lot with a seating area, pathway and community garden plots. The location of this park is ideal for this use as it is easily accessible by residents living to the north and south of Cloverdale Avenue.

- 5. Additional Recreation Facilities.** Continue to expand the range of recreation facilities available to Township residents. Facilities that are identified include tennis courts, volleyball courts, ball field improvements and pedestrian pathways. Construction of adequate support facilities, such as restrooms, concession stands, off-street parking, and barrier-free facilities are also very important to make the best use of the parks. In addition, adult volunteers are needed to carry out the programs provided.
- 6. Optimize Park Use.** Optimize the use of all parks and recreation facilities through multiple use of park space, adequate maintenance, and timely repair and replacement of facilities.
- 7. Recreation Programs.** Continue to support and expand recreation programs in cooperation with residents and the business community. Investigate the possibility of joint ventures with the City of Oak Park and the Jewish Community Center.
- 8. Park Design and Landscaping.** Enhance the appearance of all parks, recognizing the significance of parkland to the overall character and image of the Township. A five-year landscaping/tree planting and lighting program should be developed for all parks.
- 9. Promotion.** Actively promote the new direction of parks and recreation within the community. A list of key officials and phone numbers should also be included. A brochure and newsletter should be provided in English and Russian.

10. **Festivals.** Develop 2-4 annual festivals (Winter Festival, Easter Egg Hunt, Fourth of July Picnic, Halloween Event, etc.) to bring the community together to celebrate existing recreation facilities and attract new volunteers to participate in Township recreation programs and facilities.

C. RECREATION PRIORITIES

Recreation Priorities

The Parks and Recreation Commission established the following priorities for the next five years:

a. Physical Priorities:

1. Renovate existing Recreation Center so it is safe and accessible to the public or construct a new facility in the same location.
2. Offer a diverse mix of recreational opportunities for all Township residents.
3. Improve deteriorated and out of date facilities within the parks.

b. Policy Priorities:

1. Develop a maintenance plan to include upgraded recreational facilities.
2. Provide recreational opportunities, including programs, to underserved groups and locations.
3. Increase community involvement in recreational programs.

D. ACTION AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Community's Action Program is presented in Table 7 and summarized below:

2012: Recreation Center: This is the Township's most important and extensive recreation capital project and would involve renovations at the existing recreation center. The Recreation Department began collecting estimates and lining up funding to begin some of the improvements. The priority and necessary repairs include:

1. Upgrade the roof.
2. Heating system upgrades.
3. Installation of an air conditioning system.
4. Upgrade swimming pool and swimming pool locker room.
5. Install gymnasium floor.
6. Install exterior lighting.
7. Increase barrier free access.
8. Replace drywall and ceiling tiles in the administration offices.
9. Install energy efficient windows with window screens
10. Purchase cardiovascular exercise equipment for an exercise room

Estimated Cost: \$400,000

Civic Center Park: Make park improvements including constructing roofs on the two existing picnic shelters, removing obsolete play equipment and installing grills and picnic tables.

Estimated Cost: \$7,500

Grant Park: Clean up park by removing damaged asphalt, fencing and debris to improve the visual appearance of this facility.

Estimated Cost: \$3,000

Mack-Rowe Park: Conduct playground improvements to remove obsolete equipment, paint/repair damaged equipment and provide resilient surfacing.

Estimated Cost: \$3,500

Programming: Improve registration and fee collection procedures.

Estimated Cost: \$2,500

Develop annual events programming to include a “special” event each season.

Estimated Cost: \$2,000

Actively recruit adult volunteers/coaches to meet recreational programming demands.

Estimated Cost: \$1,000

Expand current team sports to include co-ed softball and track.

Estimated Cost: \$3,000

2013: Mack-Rowe Park: Make improvements to the existing baseball diamond to include construction of covered dugouts and replacement of obsolete bleachers.

Estimated Cost: \$13,500

Replace existing restroom facility so it is fully operational and repair the existing drinking fountain.

Estimated Cost: \$10,000

Other park improvements to include constructing on-site vehicle parking, providing benches and planting additional landscaping.

Estimated Cost: \$25,000

Programming: Develop job training and education enrichment programming.

Estimated Cost: \$24,000

Develop target programs for girls and young women.

Estimated Cost: \$1,500

2014: Civic Center Park: Expand current park facilities to include two full size basketball courts, one baseball diamond with covered dugouts and bleachers, an equipment storage facility, internal pedestrian pathway, bike racks, benches, drinking fountain and parking.

Estimated Cost: \$130,000

Install additional landscaping and a park entrance sign.

Estimated Cost: \$10,000

2015: Recreation Center: Purchase outdoor patio furniture for the swimming deck.

Estimated Cost: \$3,000

Civic Center Park: Construct an area for organized street hockey.

Estimated Cost: \$5,000

Install modular play equipment and resilient surfacing.

Estimated Cost: \$100,000

Mack-Rowe Park: Construct a volleyball court.

Estimated Cost: \$3,500

Install modular play equipment and resilient surfacing.

Estimated Cost: \$100,000

2016: Master Plan Update: Update five year plan.

Estimated Cost: \$9,500

Grant Park: Establish a redevelopment plan for the park.

Estimated Cost: \$2,000

Install a tot-lot, benches and an internal pedestrian pathway.

Estimated Cost: \$42,500

Develop a community garden, install additional landscaping and a park entrance sign.

Estimated Cost: \$5,800

Table 7 Parks & Recreation Capital Improvements Program Charter Township of Royal Oak			
2012			
Facility/Program	Proposed Improvements	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Recreation Center	Renovate existing Recreation Center: new roof, upgrade heating and cooling system, upgrade swimming pool and swimming pool locker room, upgrade gym floor, install exterior lighting, paint the exterior/interior of the building, provide barrier-free access, replace windows and electrical systems throughout the building and purchase cardiovascular equipment for an exercise room.	\$400,000	MIL, LOC, LWCF, PD, TCC, HPF
Civic Center Park	Repair existing picnic shelters, remove obsolete equipment	\$5,000	PD, CS
	Install picnic tables and grills	\$2,500	LOC, PD, CS, PRGF
Grant Park	Remove damaged asphalt, fencing and debris	\$3,000	OSHEA
Mack-Rowe Park	Paint and repair damaged equipment, remove obsolete equipment, provide resilient surfacing	\$3,500	PRGF, PD, CS
Programming	Improve registration and fee collection procedures	\$1,000	LOC, PRGF
	Expand Annual Festivals to provide one per season.	\$2,000	PRGF, PD, CS
			LOC, PD
	Recruit adult volunteers/coaches to meet recreational programming demands.	\$1,000	LOC
	Expand current programming to include co-ed softball and a track.	\$3,000	

2013			
Facility/Program	Proposed Improvements	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Mack-Rowe Park	Replace/repair bleachers	\$7,000	PD, PRGF
	Install picnic tables and grills	\$2,500	LOC, PRGF
	Replace drinking fountain	\$5,000	MNRTF, TCC, LOC
	Replace restroom facilities	\$5,000	MNRTF, TCC, LOC
	Construct covered dugouts at baseball diamond	\$6,500	PD, CS
	Install additional parking, landscaping, benches	\$25,000	LOC
Programming	Develop job training and educational programming	\$24,000	TCC
	Target programs for girls and young women	\$1,500	PRGF

2014			
Facility/Program	Proposed Improvements	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Civic Center Park	Install a drinking fountain	\$5,000	DDA
	Install landscaping and park entrance sign	\$10,000	DNR, PD
	Expand park facilities to include two full size basketball courts, one baseball diamond with covered dugouts and bleachers, equipment storage facility, internal pathway, bike racks, benches and parking	\$125,000	MNRTF, DDA, CDBG, CS
Mack-Rowe Park	Provide on-site parking for 20 cars	\$20,000	MNRTF, CDBG
	Install new goal posts, re-grade, repair field	\$5,000	LOC

2015			
Facility/Program	Proposed Improvements	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Recreation Center	Purchase outdoor patio furniture for the swimming pool deck	\$3,000	CDBG, PRGF
Civic Center Park	Provide an area for street hockey	\$6,000	PD
	Install modular play equipment and resilient surfacing	\$100,000	MNRTF, MIL
Mack-Rowe Park	Construct a volleyball court	\$3,500	DDA
	Install modular play equipment and resilient surfacing	\$100,000	MNRTF, MIL

2016			
Facility/Program	Proposed Improvements	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Master Plan Update	Update five year plan	\$9,500	PRGF, LOC, DDA
Grant Park	Establish a redevelopment plan for the park.	\$2,000	LOC
	Install tot-lot	\$35,000	MNRTF, CDBG
	Create internal pathway with benches		
	Develop Community Garden	\$7,500	LOC, MNRTF

KEY	
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant Funds
CS	Corporate Sponsor
DDA	Downtown Development Authority
DNR	DNR Replanting Grant
HPF	Historic Preservation Fund
LOC	Local Revenue
LWCF	Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund
MIL	Township Millage
MNRTF	Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Program
PD	Private Donations
PRGF	Parks and Recreation General Fund
TCC	Training Career Center

SECTION VII

APPENDIX

- A. LIST OF MDNR GRANTS STATUS
- B. COPY OF SURVEY DISTRIBUTED TO RESIDENTS
- C. TABULATED SURVEY RESULTS
- D. RECREATION CENTER UPGRADE ESTIMATES
- E. RECREATION CENTER ENERGY ASSESSMENT REPORT (RETAP)
- F. AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION FOR 30-DAY COMMENT PERIOD AND PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING
- G. MINUTES FROM MARCH 14, 2012 PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING
- H. RESOLUTION OF PLAN RECOMMENDATION BY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION ON MARCH 14, 2012
- I. MINUTES FROM MARCH 22, 2012 TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
- J. RESOLUTION OF PLAN ADOPTION BY TOWNSHIP BOARD ON MARCH 22, 2012
- K. LETTERS OF SUBMISSION TO MDNR, OAKLAND COUNTY AND SEMCOG

A. LIST OF MDNR GRANTS STATUS

Project Year	Project #	Project Title	Grant Amount	Project Status	Description
1986	TF86-152	Mack Rowe Memorial Park	\$22,000	Closed	---
1999	CM99-170	Civic Center Park	\$106,565	Closed	Development included removal of obsolete facilities, instillation of a picnic shelter, landscaping, picnic area, paved footpaths, tot lot and playground.

REFERENCES

Charter Township of Royal Oak

Charter Township of Royal Oak Parks and Recreation Commission

Charter Township of Royal Oak Master Plan

Michigan Department of Natural Resources

National Recreation and Park Association

City of Oak Park Parks and Recreation Department

2010 U.S. Census

Oakland County Parks and Recreation

Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority

Wayne County Parks Department

City of Detroit Parks and Recreation Department

State of Michigan Historic Preservation Department

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- John Jackson, AICP Executive Vice President
- Michael Gradis Associate Planner
- Sabah Aboody-Keer Senior Urban Designer
- Kacy Smith..... Senior Administrative Assistant

NOTES: