

Chapter 1

Community Description

Grass Lake Area Recreation Plan

2016-2020 edition

The Grass Lake Area encompasses Grass Lake Charter Township and the Village of Grass Lake, comprising an area of approximately 48 square miles. The Township occupies approximately 47 square miles. The Village has an area of approximately 1 square mile.

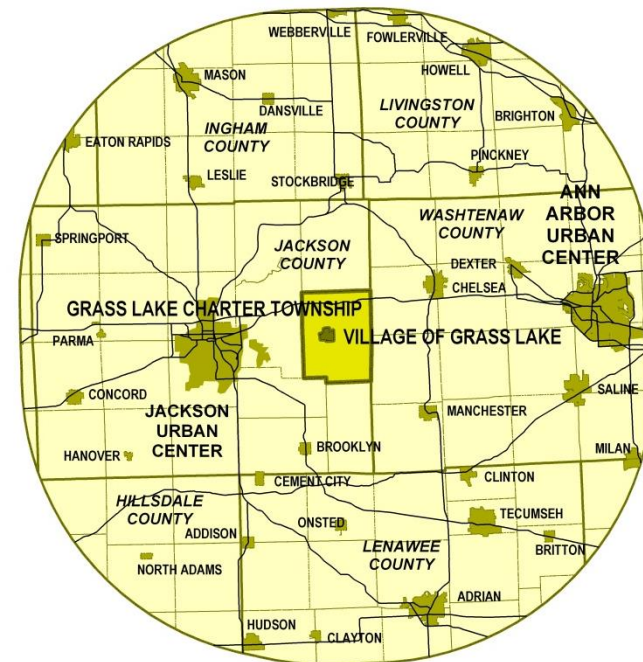
The first priority of the Village of Grass Lake and Grass Lake Charter Township is to jointly develop a plan which responds to the recreational desires of their citizenry and to plan for enhancements to the parks and recreational programs of the municipalities. The recreation plan will also provide a clear picture of the recreational opportunities available to residents regardless of who provides them. That review will catalogue nontraditional recreation opportunities such as historic districts/structures and shopping opportunities as well as traditional parks and recreation facilities.

In addition to its rich network of aquatic features and close proximity to a couple of nearby urban centers, the Grass Lake Area is home to a variety of neighborhoods and developments. Further, the presence of a wide variety of recreational facilities and opportunities requires an intensive review of how those assets can be successfully integrated into the Area. With all those issues in mind, a sincere effort was spent in developing this plan which represents the projected needs for recreation facilities and services in the Village and Township during the early years of the 21st Century.

Location

The Grass Lake Area is located on the eastern border of Jackson County (please see the Location Map). Grass Lake Charter Township surrounds the Village of Grass Lake. Grass Lake comprises the northwestern border of the Village. Interstate 94 (I-94) and other regional roadways connect the Area to the nearby urban centers of Jackson and Ann Arbor (please see the Base Map).

LOCATION



A Brief Socioeconomic Summary

The demographic composition of Grass Lake Area residents affects its recreational needs. Accordingly, pertinent demographic components are listed below along with a brief description of the local situation. Each of the components is described in greater detail in Appendix A of this document.

■ **Population History & Projections**

The 2010 population for the Grass Lake Area was 5,864, with the population increasing steadily between 1930 and 2010. Based upon this pattern, the population in 2020 is projected to be around 5,778 residents. Villagers comprised 20.6% of Area residents in 2010.

■ **Age & Sex of the Population**

'Baby Boomers' (people aged 45 to 64 in 2010) and 'Millennials' (people aged 5-24 in 2010) were the largest generations, estimated to comprise 57.3% of Area residents between 2009 and 2013. The median age of a Grass Lake Villager was 38.2 years compared to 41.9 years for all Area residents. The Area's population was almost evenly split between male and female residents.

■ **Household & Family Composition**

Families comprised an estimated 75.1% of Area households between 2009 and 2013. Children were present in an estimated 33.7% of households. Single-person households comprised 22.2% of households. The average household size was 2.58 people as compared to 2.45 people in the Village.

■ **Racial & Ethnic Composition**

Race and ethnicity were not significant issues between 2009 and 2013 regarding recreation given the estimated homogeneity of the population.

■ **Disabilities of Residents**

Grass Lake Area residents with at least one disability between 2009 and 2013 comprised an estimated 9.0% of the population. It is also important to note that older residents are more apt to have a disability, including an ambulatory difficulty, than their younger neighbors.

■ Income

The median household (\$61,332) and family (\$71,354) incomes for the Grass Lake Area was greater than that for the average American household between 2009 and 2013. The Area's per capita income (\$28,816) was also greater than that for the entire nation. Incomes are lower in the Village.

The Health of Jackson County Residents

Obesity describes ranges of weight that are above healthy guidelines given a certain height. Body Mass Index is used to calculate an individual's ratio of height to weight. Generally, a person with a Body Mass Index score of 25.0 or greater is considered obese.¹ In 2010, 31.1% of Michigan residents were considered obese (the tenth highest in the nation),² with 34% of adults in Jackson County reporting being obese.³ According to a report published by Michigan State University's Institute for Public Policy and Social Research and Institute for Health Care Studies, being overweight or obese substantially increases the risk for cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, lipid disorders, stroke, gallbladder disease, osteoarthritis, sleep apnea, respiratory problems, psychological disorders, stress incontinence, and cancers of the endometrium, breast, prostate and colon.⁴ In 2008, the Jackson Community Comprehensive Plan showed that a poor diet and physical activity were second only to tobacco as the greatest cause for actual death in the United States in 1990 and 2000. Furthermore, a publication by the World Health Organization states that physical inactivity and a poor diet are large contributors to overweight and obesity.⁵ According to the National Center for Chronic Disease

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2012). Obesity and Overweight for Professionals: Adult: Defining – DNPAO - CDC. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/adult/defining.html>

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2014). Obesity and Overweight for Professionals: Data and Statistics -- DNPAO - CDC. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/adult.html>

³ County Health Rankings. (2014). Adult obesity in Michigan | County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. Retrieved from <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/michigan/2014/measure/factors/11/data>

⁴ Kreulen, G. J. (2002). *Promoting healthy weight in Michigan through physical activity and nutrition (Informing the debate : health policy options for Michigan policymakers)*. East Lansing: Institute for Public Policy & Social Research and Institute for Health Care Studies at Michigan State University.

⁵ World Health Organization. (2009). Unhealthy Diets & Physical Inactivity. Retrieved from http://www.who.int/nmh/publications/fact_sheet_diet_en.pdf

Prevention and Health Promotion, 26% of Jackson County residents reported being physically inactive,⁶ placing it in the top 25 counties in Michigan for this measure. These statistics point to a need for more active recreational opportunities in all communities. Those opportunities may include providing more walkable neighborhoods as well as the provision of actual recreational opportunities such as athletic fields (e.g., soccer, baseball, etc.) and courts (e.g., basketball, tennis, etc.) Factors of particular relevance to community growth, development, and planning contributing to unhealthy weight according to the 2006 Jackson Community Report Card produced by the United Way of Jackson County include:

- “Inadequate community infrastructure limits the ability of people to be active. These include lack of accessible indoor and outdoor exercise facilities, neighborhood sidewalks, walking paths, and bicycle trails. Additionally, inclement weather, lack of adequate recreational opportunities, fear of unsafe neighborhoods, and unattractive/unpleasant local environments may prevent people from exercising.”
- “Programs and policies are necessary to promote smart community growth and the establishment of urban and rural environments supportive of physical activity. Active community environments provide access to safe favorable conditions for physical activity and promote the development of social support networks that encourage activity.”

The Michigan State University Report: *Promoting Healthy Weight in Michigan Through Physical Activity and Nutrition* (Kreulen, 2002), recommends cooperation among state and local units of government and residents in the promotion of active environments, including the following actions.

- “Develop walkable communities by widening and maintaining or building sidewalks, safe roadway crossings, and aesthetically pleasing areas.”
- “Encourage bicycling by developing, maintaining, and promoting the use of bike paths.”
- “Require [that] all urban planning and re-design incorporate the concepts of active community environments and thereby promote physical activity.”

⁶ County Health Rankings. (2014). Physical inactivity in Michigan | County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. Retrieved from <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/michigan/2014/measure/factors/70/data>

Chapter 2

Administrative Structure

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Authorization

In response to identified recreation needs, the Grass Lake Township Board, the Grass Lake Village Council, and the Grass Lake Community Schools Board formed a Joint Recreation Committee to develop the *Grass Lake Area Recreation Plan* under the authority of Public Act 156 of 1917 (Recreation and Playgrounds). Grass Lake Charter Township also maintains its own parks and recreation committee under the authority of the legislation. The Act:

- “authorizes cities, villages, counties, townships, and school districts to operate systems of public recreation and playgrounds” (emphasis added) It also allows those entities to:
 - “operate a system of public recreation and playgrounds; acquire, equip and maintain land, buildings or other recreational facilities; employ a superintendent of recreation and assistants; vote and expend funds for the operation of such system.”
 - “operate such a system independently or they may cooperate in its conduct in any manner which they may mutually agree; or they may delegate the operation of the system to a recreation board created by any or all of them, and appropriate money, voted for this purpose, to such board.”
- The act also allows park systems to operate on “(1) property under its custody and management; (2) other public property;” and “(3) private property, with the consent of the owners.”

A copy of PA 156 of 1917 is available online at:

[http://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(jvpdab552sox_emek3mee3h55\)/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-Act-156-of-1917.pdf](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(jvpdab552sox_emek3mee3h55)/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-Act-156-of-1917.pdf)

Please note that other state enabling legislation allows for the joint provision parks and recreation facilities in addition to planning for them. The Township, Village, and Schools may choose to form one of those organizational arrangements in the future.

Organizational Structure

The following bodies are involved in the provision of municipal recreation:

- **Grass Lake Charter Township.** A Recreation Board is responsible for planning, constructing, maintaining, programming, and administering the Township’s recreation facilities. The Board is also charged with studying various recreation needs, advising the Township Board on recreation issues, and making appropriate budget requests.

GRASS LAKE CHARTER TOWNSHIP RECREATION STRUCTURE



The Recreation Board is comprised of the Township Supervisor and representatives from the GLSYL (Grass Lake Summer Youth League, the local AYSO (American Youth Soccer Organization) program, and local trail enthusiasts. Maintenance concerns brought before the Recreation Committee are addressed through the Township Supervisor. Recreational programs are coordinated through the various representatives serving on the Committee. The Township Board maintains final authority over Grass Lake Township’s facilities. The Township Board is comprised of a Supervisor, a Clerk, a Treasurer, and 4 Trustees. The Township utilizes volunteers for specific projects and programs.

- **Village of Grass Lake.** The Village of Grass Lake does not have a recreation committee but is developing a Village Events Park. The Village Council is comprised of a President and 6 Trustees. The Village may utilize volunteers for specific projects.
- **Grass Lake Community Schools.** Grass Lake Community Schools serve the overwhelming majority of the Grass Lake Area. Although it is not served by a recreation committee, it does provide extensive recreation facilities to its students and the community. This coordination is the responsibility of the School’s Community Services Director. The School Board is comprised of a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and 3 Trustees. The Community Schools may utilize volunteers for specific projects.

