

7.0 RECREATION DEFICIENCIES

RECREATION DEFICIENCIES, NEEDS AND JUSTIFICATION OF PROPOSED ACTIONS

At this juncture of this document, community data, land use, the area's economy, demographics and recreation open space/facility standards have been identified. To further



Harbor Hideout at Ludington Park

define the basis for the City's Action Program, needs must be identified and an explanation why certain deficiencies, or needs, has become a priority for our City.

The opening segment of this plan described in some detail the planning process involved with this document. The recreation needs, subsequent priorities and desired actions identified in this plan are representative of what our citizen's desire, attempts to be imaginative in projecting what might be and is realistic in recognizing what is possible.

This segment offers identification of recreation deficiencies and needs. More importantly it provides recommended solutions and justification of proposed actions. Each solution or action has a PROJECT CODE that coincides with the Five Year Capital Improvement and Financial Plan, which is located in the final segment of this plan.

Access Deficiencies and Needs

Impact of the ADA The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has played a major role and impact within the City of Escanaba's park and recreation planning and project implementation over the past five-year period, 1999 through 2005. The inclusive nature of the ADA stressed barrier-free access to facilities and accommodations regardless of ability level. A major emphasis of the 1998 Recreation Plan was to upgrade recreation and park facilities in accordance with the intent and spirit of the ADA.

ADA

Accomplishments of 1999-2005 Plan

During the period FY 1999 through FY2005, the following notable projects were implemented to insure barrier-free use and inclusive participation by all, regardless of ability.

Barrier-Free Planning

In keeping with this same spirit and intent of the ADA, the Recreation Department staff, the Recreation Advisory Board, the City Engineering Department, the local RIC Council and citizens have identified barrier-free and/or inclusive deficiencies in our park and recreation areas which are in need of alteration and demands priority.

Complete Upgrade Barrier-Free/Inclusive Program at Neighborhood Parks	Major new playground equipment installations and modifications of existing acceptable equipment at park/playground have been completed at six (6) of the City's seven (7) neighborhood park sites.
Barrier-Free Renovations at Civic Center	PROJECT 99-C , at the Civic Center requires attention in several areas to meet ADA standards. The east restrooms must be remodeled to meet minimum ADA standards.
City Bikeway Master Plan	In February 1998, the City adopted a Bikeway Master Plan outlining the need to provide non-motorized transport routes throughout the City. The Bikeway Plan featured and highlighted the need to construct pathways, separate from the roadway, wherever possible and practical. This plan recognizes the need and right of the handicapped to also traverse the City for recreational and utilitarian purposes safely. Pathway projects will be planned and implemented when opportunities to do so are present and where practical.
8 th Avenue South/Southwest Quadrant Pathway System	Non-motorized access in the southwest quadrant of the City bounded by 5 th Avenue South (north), South Lincoln Road (east), 14 th Avenue South (south) and City limits (west) Continues to be an important recreational feature. Apartment complexes, trailer courts, modular development complexes, low-income housing clusters and the rapid growth of single family development in this region proposes to install a pathway system suitable for the able-bodied and the handicapped, PROJECT 99-F .

Outdoor Recreation Deficiencies and Needs

Outdoor recreation and park facility deficiencies and needs are identified within this section with a recommended action, justification of the action and project code key to the Five Year Capital Plan. Outdoor deficiencies and needs will be categorized by facility, facility type or by seasonal facilities.

Regional Impact of Ludington Park	<p>LUDINGTON PARK</p> <p>Ludington Park is the City of Escanaba's 120-acre multi-purpose park facility approximately one mile in length entirely fronting Little Bay de Noc. The City has effectively demonstrated that Ludington Park serves citizens from the south-central portion of the Upper Peninsula including all of Delta County, most of Schoolcraft County, south Marquette County, east Menominee County and portions of Dickinson County. Ludington Park has a service population radius of 50 miles. No other governmental unit, whether it be another city, county, state or federal government has a facility as large and as diverse as Ludington Park. It is estimated Ludington Park services a permanent population of 50,000 residents in the south-central corridor of the Upper Peninsula.</p>
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Ludington Park Planning Goals	<p>Over the past two decades, Ludington Park has received the installation of major new facilities and the reconditioning/remodeling of existing facilities. New facility development, reconditioning and activity planning for Ludington park must proceed at a pace sensitive to all segments of the population. The 120 year history of Ludington Park has seen past generations provide activities and park and recreation facilities but also were very cognizant of the need to balance the park with naturalist space exempt from development. This is a very delicate balance with excellent stewardship exhibited by City Councils, Recreation Boards, City Administration and, most importantly, citizens and users of the park.</p> <p>Projects and renovations included within this plan for Ludington Park have, for the most part, been debated and discussed in public forums in an attempt to maintain a reasonable balance between facility development/active recreation areas and those natural areas of Ludington Park featuring its open environment, trees, beaches and open space.</p>
Municipal Dock Maintenance	<p>Major reconstruction of shoreline protection facilities is not the only concern in Ludington Park. PROJECT 99-H proposes to initiate a program of maintenance and repair to the Municipal Dock area to maintain the structural integrity and aesthetics of the area.</p>
Southwest Shoreline of Harbor Basin	<p>In keeping with the priority to maintain the integrity of the Ludington Park shoreline, PROJECT 02-A, proposes to return the Southwest Shoreline of the Harbor Basin to a natural state. The approximately 600' of deteriorating and unused wooden revetment wall is in various stages of collapse and is unsafe. Returning this portion of the park's shoreline to natural setting will remove a hazard and improve the overall natural aesthetics and setting in the park.</p>
Aronson Island North/Northwest shoreline	<p>Aronson Island's North and Northwest Shorelines, exposed to Little Bay de Noc and the harbor channel, is also in a deteriorating state and requires replacement. Again, lake levels and severe storms ravaged shore protection structures and are in various stage of collapse. PROJECT 03-A proposes to reconstruct, protect and preserve the Aronson Island North and Northwest exposures.</p>
Ludington Park Phased Irrigation System	<p>The 120-acre Ludington Park and its expansive, open grassy areas are subjected to hot, dry summers along with heavy use. Drought conditions in especially active areas of Ludington Park have seen whole areas of lawn/grass destroyed. To solve the problem of drought/heavy use, the following irrigation projects are proposed to keep green areas healthy and withstand heavy use. PROJECT 99-K, Phase I of the Ludington Park Irrigation System, proposes to install irrigation at the Court area to the Harbor Hideout area. The area also encompasses the park restroom and pavilion areas. Phase I would resolve drought and lawn damage problems in this most heavily used and trafficked area of the park. PROJECT 00-E, Phase II of the Ludington Park System, proposes to install irrigation at the Band shell and Soccer Field areas of the park, also a heavily trafficked region of the park. PROJECT 01-C, Phase III of the park irrigation system, proposes to install irrigation at the picnic/open space area between the playground/court area and 4th Street as it intersects the park. PROJECT 02-C, Phase IV of the irrigation system, proposes to irrigate the Municipal Dock area of Ludington Park. The Municipal Dock is highly susceptible to drought and damage as a</p>

result of frequent large gatherings and festivals. **PROJECT 03-B**, Phase V proposes to irrigate the area between 4th Street and Lake Shore Drive utilized as a picnic/open space area.

Aronson Island Walkway Lighting System The existing Ludington Park Pathway extending from Lake Shore Drive/Fourth Street to the end of Aronson Island continues to be heavily used by citizens walking/biking/roller-blading all hours of the day and night. **PROJECT 01-D** proposes to install low-level pedestrian lighting along the entire 5,000' walk to permit safe use of the pathway during dark hours.

Neighborhood Parks and Recreation Facilities

Neighborhood Parks Contributing to Life Quality The City of Escanaba is extremely fortunate as past generations set aside park, open space and recreation areas within the City's neighborhoods. The concept of park and recreation facility development within the City's neighborhoods has made access to facilities convenient. The City and its citizens are challenged to continue this stewardship and further challenged to provide leadership and resources to protect, preserve and acquire new park, open space or recreation area parcels where needed.

Old State Road Park Development One of the top priorities within the 1994 Recreation Plan was to acquire park/open space in the southwest quadrant of the City bounded by South Lincoln Road (east), 5th Avenue South (north), Mobile Home Park/14th Avenue South (south), and City Limits/Reservation Housing (west). This area contains the highest density of population in the City with apartment complexes, low-income multi-family and single-family housing, planned unit housing and Sioux Tribe Reservation housing. The southwest quadrant of the City is also the fastest growing area of the community.

In 1996 and 1997, a 460' X 300' parcel, representing a city block and a half, was purchased in this area for a neighborhood park. **PROJECT 99-N** proposes to develop the Old State Road Neighborhood Park to include a playground, ball field area, basketball court; open space and an ice rink/hockey play area in the winter months. Development of the Old State Road Park is intended to be complete within the time frame of this plan.

Soccer Fields A high priority item in the 1999 Plan, as with this plan, is the development of soccer fields within the City. Currently, the City provides an area in Ludington Park for soccer play but is not suitable because it is not of regulation size and presents several hazards to those players on the park field. The City also leases property from the Escanaba School District, which features four junior size fields west of the high school. These fields present some hazards to the players because of the deteriorating condition of the fields. **PROJECT 00-I** proposes the development of two regulation size soccer fields. The soccer field site is the only publicly held parcel within the City large enough to accommodate these fields. No other regulation soccer fields are present within the south-central Upper Peninsula. The City is working with organizations to acquire a field site large enough to accommodate the proposed fields.

Courts Resealing & Maintenance	The City of Escanaba is fortunate to have a series of tennis and basketball courts located in neighborhood parks. These courts require periodic, major maintenance to retain quality and safe playing surfaces. PROJECT 99-P proposes resealing and color surfacing the Rose Park Tennis Court (1 battery). PROJECT 00-J , proposes to reseal and color surface the Royce Park Basketball Court. Sealing the court's surfaces preserves the asphalt base, prevents expensive repairs and reconstruction and provides a safe play surface.
City Ball fields and Youth Leagues	The Escanaba area has been a growing hotbed of youth baseball and softball activities. Over the past five-year period, youth baseball and softball leagues have leveled off or in some age groups, decreased annually in leagues between the ages of 5 through 18 years. It is also noted that youths enrolled in City programs are indeed City residents. The City of Escanaba possesses nine (9) baseball/softball field facilities serving thirteen (13) youth baseball and softball leagues.
East Jefferson Field/Ness Field Parking	Over the life of the 1994 Recreation Plan, considerable improvements were made at the East Jefferson Ball field and the Al Ness Ball field. Both facilities are located next to each other on the far south portion of the City. New residential development occurring in the area along with renewed fan interest has created a serious vehicle-parking problem. PROJECT 00-N proposes to provide a combined parking/roadway area for the East Jefferson and Ness Field facilities.
Bleacher Replacement for Ball fields and Special Events	The City currently possesses sixteen (16) ball field/special event bleacher systems ranging from 5 rows to 10 row sets. Twelve (12) of the units are transportable and are shifted around the City to various park and recreation activities, festivals and tournaments. Replacement bleachers were last purchased more than a decade ago. Over half of the units are 30 to 40 years old. PROJECT 00-O proposes the purchase of two to three bleacher sets replacing the oldest units.
Park Parcel Purchase North of Ludington Street	The area north of Ludington Street is in critical need of a neighborhood park and open space. PROJECT 02-D proposes the purchase of at least a half-block parcel to a full block parcel as the near-north side is nearly devoid of any park and open space. Bounded by Ludington Street (south), Stephenson Avenue (west), North 10 th Street (east) and 3 rd Avenue North (north), this area contains a high concentration of rental housing units with a large concentration of low-income families.
Pocket Park at Northwest Quadrant of City	The northwest quadrant of the City bounded by North Lincoln Road, 15 th Avenue North, 12 th Avenue North and North 23 rd Street is an isolated portion of the City containing single-family homes and a large mobile home development. No accessible park or open space or recreation facilities are available to residents in this area, especially the young. North Lincoln Road is an effective barrier. PROJECT 03-G proposes to acquire the necessary property for future pocket park development.

Non-Motorized Transportation/Recreation Facilities

City Bikeway Master Plan

In February 1998, the City formally adopted its first Bikeway Master Plan. The plan identifies those portions of the City most suitable for the development of bicycle facilities for recreation and utilitarian purposes. The plan further recognizes the City's street; road and pathway system has tremendous potential for integrating multi-use paths, bike lanes and bike routes within the existing transportation system and city rights-of-way. The Bikeway Master Plan identifies each quadrant and neighborhood within the City and proposes to provide safe and adequate access to other regions of the City. The Bikeway Master Plan is attached to this document as further evidence the City has taken a critical and important first step recognizing the need for safe and adequate bicycle facilities.

Winter Recreation Facilities

Cross Country Ski/Snowshoe Pathway/Year Round Trail Development

PROJECT 03-C proposes to implement major improvements to the Cross Country Ski/ Snowshoe Pathway with the raising of trail routes through swamps/marshes and the construction of permanent bridges across creeks. **PROJECT 03-C**, further proposes to develop the Pathway Trail to year round use by improving wetlands, creating ponds, and establishing walking trails capable to year round use.

Snowmobile Access and Related Issues

During the period 1999 through 2005, great strides were made creating snowmobile access to the city proper. The DNR's Felch Grade Trail, whose start/finish is located U.P. State Fairgrounds, permits snowmobilers access to the U.P. wide trail system. In 1994, the City further authorized the construction and has assumed the annual maintenance of a four mile trail spur off the Felch Grade Trail permitting snowmobile access to lodging in the west portion of the City in the fairgrounds.

Two important snowmobile issues remain. First, North Lincoln Road, which is also U.S. 2 & 41 and M35, is a physical barrier to snowmobilers. The Felch Grade and City Spur Trails can lead snowmobilers to the area west of North Lincoln Road; however, the highway at this time cannot be safely crossed. Most lodging, restaurants and gas stations are located on the east side of the highway. Secondly, a regional and state effort is necessary to link the Felch Grade Trail with snowmobile trails to the east and north of Escanaba. A concentrated effort is needed to obtain properties and funding to cross the Escanaba, Whitefish and Rapid Rivers to link the south-central U.P. with other major trail networks.

PROJECT 01-H proposes that the City would provide the state DNR with an easement to allow for snowmobile access through the property if the County Landfill expands and/or alters the current trail system.

Indoor Recreation Facilities and Needs

Indoor Recreation During Winter Months	Indoor recreation opportunities are of critical importance to a cold weather community. Our community's quality of life must be measured by not only the outdoor park and recreation opportunities it can offer, but also Indoor Recreation Facility during the winter months. The concept of a large multi-use facility at the Wells Sports Complex was discussed previously as an overwhelming need to provide indoor activities such as tennis, soccer, and other indoor turf-type sports. A needs assessment may need to be conducted to determine the serviceability of future indoor recreation services.
Civic Center as Focal Point	The City of Escanaba is extremely fortunate to have a 26,000 square foot community center featuring a full-size gymnasium, locker and shower room, meeting rooms, full-equipped game room and a senior citizens center. The 40-year-old structure is the focal point of the City indoor recreation programs.
Civic Center Restroom Modifications for ADA Compliance	The Civic Center has been a major City commitment to staff and maintenance. The four-decade old facility is in need of updates and remodeling to meet current demands and ADA standards. PROJECT 99-C proposes to remodel and modify the Civic Center's west restroom facility to comply with current ADA standards. PROJECT 99-D further proposes to replace main entry doors and foyers at the north and west main entrances, which are outdated and worn and intended to meet ADA standards.
Civic Center Entry Doors for ADA Compliance	
Civic Center - 2 nd Locker room	The Civic Center gymnasium was originally constructed with only one locker room/shower room. Scheduling and planning activities is difficult with only a single locker room/shower room. PROJECT 03-D proposes to remodel a portion of the Civic Center intends to include a second locker room/shower room.
Recreation Department Office Work Stations	PROJECT 99-T proposes the installation of workstations and cabinetry in the Recreation Department Office replacing outdated and inefficient furniture.
Civic Center Pistol Range Civic Center Storage Building	PROJECT 02-F proposes to replace the existing pistol range ventilation system to comply with indoor airborne lead standards. PROJECT 01-G proposes to replace the existing storage building with a large and more functional facility.

Municipal Marina and Boating Access Deficiencies

Marina Data and Regional Impact	The Escanaba Municipal Marina and its related facilities has had an active decade transformed from a 1930's vintage facility to a modern seasonal and transient recreational boat harbor. The Municipal Marina has moved from
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approximately 60 docks and slips to 165 docks and slips over the past 10 year period. The Marina now serves 130 seasonal vessels and 750 visiting vessels annually. Escanaba has become a destination point for cruising vessels who ply the waters of northern Lake Michigan and the Green Bay. The Aronson Island Boat Launch, located near the Marina at Ludington Park, also serves nearly 10,000 launches and retrievals annually.

Marina
Evaluation of
Deficiencies

The Escanaba Marina's purpose is to provide adequate and accessible boat slips, docks and moorings and launching facilities for local boaters and to provide attractive accommodations for the visiting boater. Marina and other boating access deficiencies and project priorities identified within the plan addresses the needs of all boaters. However, needs, deficiencies and project proposals must continue to be balanced and subjected to rigorous financial scrutiny.

Marina Fuel
Tanks

The Marina is currently equipped with two 4,000 gallon fuel tanks holding both gasoline and diesel fuel. With increased transient traffic and a new harbor of refuge installed at Cedar River, transient traffic is expected to increase over the next 5-year period. The Marina's fuel storage capacities may not be sufficient. **PROJECT 03-E** proposes the installation of two, large-capacity above ground (beamed) fuel tanks to meet this expected demand.



Ludington Park Band Shell