

Kalamazoo County, Michigan



Park & Recreation Master Plan 2009-2013



Prepared by the
Kalamazoo County Parks & Recreation Commission

Acknowledgments

The Kalamazoo County Park and Recreation Master Plan, 2009-2013 was the cooperative effort of the Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation Commission, the Master Plan Committee, the Director and staff of Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation, and individual citizens and groups who participated in the planning process.

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Introduction

Planning Process

Planning Process Timeline_____	6
Planning Process Description_____	8

Administrative Structure

Organization Structure_____	10
Staff_____	11
Volunteers & Partnerships_____	12
Budget Information_____	14
DNR Recreation Grant Inventory_____	16

Physical Features

Planning Area/Location_____	19
Climate_____	19
Topography_____	19
Water Features_____	20
Transportation_____	20
Land Use_____	20
Wildlife_____	21
Plant Life_____	21

Social Features

Population Trends and Projections_____	23
Age Distribution_____	26
Physical Disabilities_____	26
Socio-Economic Levels_____	27
County Tourism_____	27

Recreation Inventory

Kalamazoo County Park Locations_____	30
Kalamazoo County Park Inventory_____	31
Municipal Park Inventory_____	37
State Game Areas_____	41
State Parks_____	41
Water Access_____	41
Nature Preserves_____	41
Private Recreation Opportunities_____	42

Basis for Action

Public Input Workshop	44
Kalamazoo County Parks Ten-Year Strategic Plan	46
Park Master Plans	50
County Recreation Trends	56
Barrier-Free Compliance	59
Public Draft Review	60

Action Plan

Goals and Objectives	62
Capital Improvement Schedule	66
Capital Improvement Actions	68

Adoption

Resolution of Governing Bodies	82
Notices of Public Meetings/Hearings	84
Letter to Region and County Planning Commissions	85
Letter to MDNR	87

The Kalamazoo County Park and Recreation Commission was established in 1968 and has a history of providing resource oriented regional parks that are typically the responsibility of county government. Today, Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation takes pride in providing passive park and recreation opportunities in the unique natural settings of Kalamazoo County. The 7 County Parks offer swimming, hiking, multi-use trails, camping, picnicking, boating, fishing, soccer facilities, softball facilities, playgrounds, nature study, tennis courts, disc golf, special events, and the Kalamazoo County Expo Center & Fairground.

Many of the County's active recreation needs are currently met by the cities, villages, and school systems. These entities are unable to satisfy the growing recreation needs that require expansive and natural settings or to

operate parks that protect our valuable natural resources.

The Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation Master Plan identifies the essential issues, defines the County's role and establishes goals and objectives for the Kalamazoo County Park and Recreation Commission. The purpose of the 2009-2013 Kalamazoo County Park and Recreation Plan is to provide a logical framework for guiding decisions concerning park and recreation facilities as well as public open space and natural areas.

The Park and Recreation Commission places emphasis on having a plan that will be a working document that will facilitate action towards improving the recreation facilities available to Kalamazoo County residents and visitors.

Kalamazoo County Parks & Recreation Commission Mission Statement

The mission of Kalamazoo County Parks is to provide responsible stewardship and preservation of our green space and historic resources with recreation, relaxation, and learning opportunities for everyone.

Kalamazoo County Parks Vision

In 2015, Kalamazoo's County Parks will be:

- **A widely recognized value for year-round outdoor recreation, relaxation, and learning.**
- **A respected contributor to the quality of life in Kalamazoo County.**
- **A source of pride for our community.**

We will achieve this vision by:

- **Creating innovative and unique park activities and attractions.**
- **Partnering extensively with community resources.**
- **Becoming financially self-sufficient.**

Section 1

PLANNING PROCESS

Introduction

Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation began the master plan process in 2008. An organized process was followed to collect data, gather public input, and inform appropriate agencies. Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation staff completed the planning process with assistance from the Kalamazoo County Park and Recreation Commission, the Park and Recreation Commission Master Plan Committee, and other Kalamazoo County Agencies.

Planning Process Timeline

January 7, 2008

The Kalamazoo County Park Commission formed a Master Plan Committee with two volunteers, Thomas Matteson and Phillip Gray.

January, 2008

Performed recreation inventory and gathered information.

February 18, 2008

Park & Recreation Master Plan Committee Meeting.

April 17 & 18, 2008

Held the public input workshops.

December 3, 2008

Park & Recreation Master Plan Committee Meeting.

December, 2008

Completed action plan.

January 11, 2009

Plan available for public review.

February 3, 2009

Presented draft of plan to Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners.

February 5, 2009

Met with the Kalamazoo County Planning Commission.

February 12, 2009

Held public hearing.

February 12, 2009

Adopted with a resolution by the Park & Recreation Commission.

March 3, 2009

Adopted with a resolution by the County Board of Commissioners.

March 2009

Provided a copy of plan to Kalamazoo County Planning Commission and Southcentral Michigan Planning Council.

March 4, 2009

Submitted plan to MDNR.

Planning Process Description

The following is a summary of tasks completed to update the Parks and Recreation Plan for Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation.

Task 1 – Administration

A description of Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation operations and recreation services was researched and developed. Relationships between the Park Commission, County Board of Commissioners, County Administration, and Parks and Recreation staff are described. Information on the budget expenses and revenues was also gathered.

Task 2 – Community Description

The community description is divided into two sections that provide basic information on the physical and social features of Kalamazoo County. The physical features include location, climate, water features, transportation, land use, wildlife, and plant life. Social features include population trends and projections, age distribution, physical disabilities, socio-economic levels, and local tourism.

An inventory was taken of all recreation facilities in Kalamazoo County and surrounding areas. A description of the facilities was developed with information gathered from local municipalities. Information was provided by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources regarding regional and State operated facilities.

Task 3 – Basis for Action

The Basis for Action was developed from the previous sections, County recreation trends, current park distribution and facilities, park master plans, the 2004 Ten-Year Strategic Plan for Kalamazoo County Parks, public participation, and barrier free compliance. This section identifies reasoning behind action by looking at a number of different information sources to evaluate recreation needs of Kalamazoo County.

Task 4 – Action Plan

This is the heart of this Kalamazoo County Master plan and was developed by evaluating all of the material gathered, with the majority resulting from the Basis for Action. This section of the plan identifies what actions Kalamazoo County Parks will perform over the five-year planning period. Cost estimates and funding sources were identified.

Task 5 – Adoption of Plan

The County Board of Commissioners and the County Park Commission adopted the plan. Copies of the plan were forwarded to the Southwestern Michigan Planning Commission, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and the Kalamazoo County Planning Commission.

Section 2

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Organization Structure

Kalamazoo County is divided by population into seventeen County Commission districts that are each represented by a County Commissioner elected by the voters. The County Board of Commissioners is responsible for providing statutory, constitutional, and non-mandated services within the context of fiscal responsibility and public trust. The County Administrator/Controller and the Deputy County Administrator work closely with the County Board of Commissioners and the Deputy County Administrator is responsible for the oversight of the Kalamazoo County Parks Department.

In September 1968, the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners created the Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation Commission in accordance with Act 261 of Public Acts of 1965, as amended. The Park and Recreation Commission has ten members that serve three year terms and includes a representative from the County Road Commission, the County Drain Commissioner or a representative from the Drain Office, and a representative from the Planning Commission. The remaining 7 members are appointed by the County Board of Commissioners, and not less than 1 and not more than 3 of whom shall be members of the Board of Commissioners.

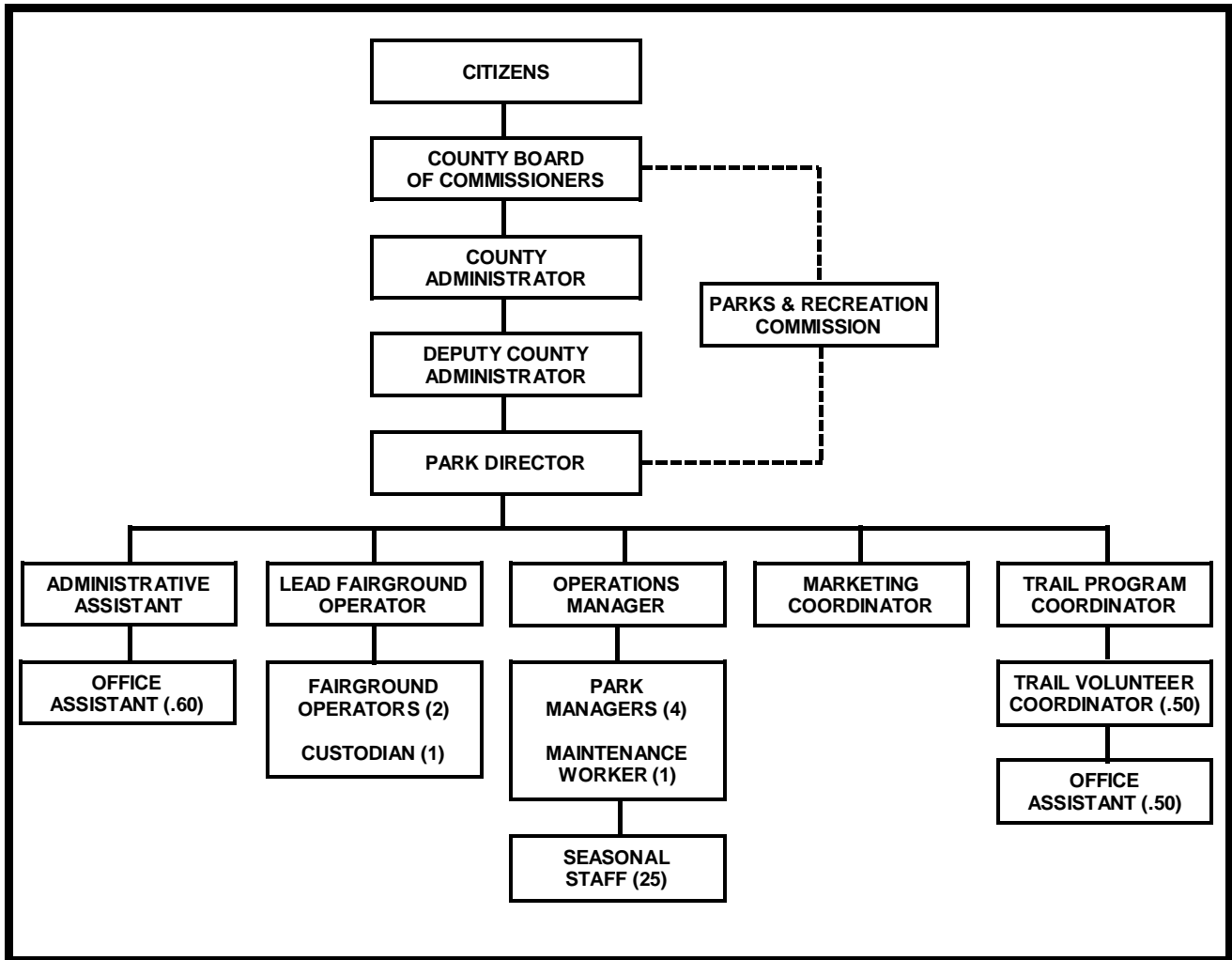
The Park and Recreation Commission meets monthly on the first Thursday of each month at 2:00PM in Room C at the Kalamazoo County Expo Center.

The Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation Commission is responsible for:

- Identification and planning of recreation, open space, and conservation needs in Kalamazoo County.
- Setting Park policies, fees, and procedures.
- The acquisition and management of real and personal property as authorized by the Board of Commissioners.
- Setting rules and regulation governing the use of parks and recreation sites and facilities as authorized by the Board of Commissioners.
- Submitting to the Board of Commissioners fiscal recommendations including general operation and capital improvement budget allocations.

Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation works closely with several boards and organizations that offer important input in areas of specific interest. These include the Kalamazoo County Road Commission, Kalamazoo County Fair, Kalamazoo County MSU Extension, Kalamazoo County Department of Planning, Kalamazoo County Information Services, the Kalamazoo County Finance Department, and the Kalamazoo County Convention and Visitors Bureau. Other departments of Kalamazoo County's government handle Park and Recreation financial responsibilities, payroll, human resources, computer technology, some purchasing, and some building maintenance. The governmental departments and other local organizations/governments of Kalamazoo County have an outstanding cooperative attitude that benefits the residents of Kalamazoo County.

Table 2.1 Kalamazoo County Parks Organization Structure



Staff

The Director of Kalamazoo County Parks works closely with the Park and Recreation Commission, County Commission, and County Administration. The Director is responsible for managing personnel, park planning, capital improvements, the park and recreation budget, special events, and other park related duties. An administrative assistant and part time office assistant (25 hours/week) complete administrative duties including submitting bills,

processing park deposits, park reservations, data entry, and day to day secretarial duties.

The Park Operations Manager coordinates the daily management of the County Parks. There are four Park Managers that each manages one park with the exception of the River Oaks County Park Manager whom also manages Scotts Mill County Park. Twenty-five seasonal park attendants assist with daily operations during the summer months and they work gatehouses, register campers, and perform

park maintenance duties. One full-time park maintenance employee maintains park equipment and completes skilled maintenance repairs and projects.

The Expo Center & Fairground has a Lead Fairground Operator that supervises two Fairground Operators. They perform event setup and post event duties, secure buildings, work to meet the needs of promoters and visitors, perform building and grounds maintenance, make repairs, and complete many special projects. One custodian performs the necessary building maintenance. A Sales and Marketing Coordinator works to book events at the Expo Center & Fairground, promotes events, and markets the Kalamazoo County Parks.

In 2008, Kalamazoo County entered into a new agreement with the Parks Foundation of Kalamazoo County to administer Trail Programming funded with a \$1.5 million dollar grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. The trail programming offices are located in the Nazareth Building on Gull Road and staffing includes a Trail Program Coordinator, an office assistant, and a volunteer program coordinator. These positions and the operating budget are currently funded entirely through the grant with the eventual goal of developing new revenue sources to continue after the grant. It is projected that the grant revenue will fund programming for four years.

Volunteers & Partnerships

Parks Foundation of Kalamazoo County

Formed in 1988, the Parks Foundation of Kalamazoo County is a dedicated group of individuals that are part of a 501C3 organization that has made its mission to raise funds to improve park and recreation facilities in Kalamazoo County.

The Parks Foundation of Kalamazoo County was initially formed to raise the necessary funding to develop Markin Glen County Park. With the recent completion of the final phase for Markin Glen the Foundation raised nearly \$6,000,000 that included an endowment with a current value of \$900,000. The endowment provides annual funds to assist with the operation and maintenance of Markin Glen.

In 1997, the Parks Foundation completed a fundraising drive with Kalamazoo County Parks and Comstock Township Parks for the Wenke Softball Complex. The Parks Foundation raised \$165,048 towards the \$487,675 project.

Currently, the Parks Foundation is fundraising the \$16,000,000 for the construction and endowment of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trailway. The fundraising goals include \$8,000,000 in local fundraising, and \$8,000,000 in State and Federal grants. The \$16 million dollar goal includes \$2 million for a trail operation endowment and \$14 million for trail construction.

Friends of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trailway

The Friends of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trailway is a 501C3 organization with members that work to assist with the development and funding for the Kalamazoo River Valley Trailway.

Friends of Scotts Mill

The Friends of Scotts Mill group is a dedicated group of individuals that are committed to the preservation and protection of Scotts Mill County Park. The group primarily focuses on fundraising and promoting Scotts Mill County Park.

Kalamazoo County Convention and Visitors Bureau (KCCVB)

The KCCVB and Kalamazoo County Parks have the mutual goal of promoting tourism and marketing Kalamazoo as a popular meeting and tourism destination to increase the positive economic impact on the economy of Kalamazoo County. Currently the KCCVB provides event services to many of the activities held at the Kalamazoo County Expo Center and Fairground and the sporting events held at the County Parks. The KCCVB has also actively recruited events to be held at County park facilities. The Director of Kalamazoo County Parks currently serves on the Board of Directors and Advisory Board of the KCCVB.

Soccer Organizations

The United Soccer Foundation was formed to assist with fundraising in Kalamazoo County for soccer field development. AYSO 212, the River Oaks Soccer Club, and the Pfizer League donated to the USF. In 2004 the USF contributed over \$265,000 to the \$633,000 River Oaks Soccer Project. In addition to hosting 5 leagues, River Oaks also facilitates 6 or more large soccer tournaments each year.

Scotts Olde Tyme Power & Equipment Association (Power Club)

The Power Club hosts three events per year at Scotts Mill County Park and contributes large amounts of time to complete park projects and maintain the mill. In addition, the group helps promote Scotts Mill County Park.

Kalamazoo County Garden Council

The Kalamazoo County Garden Council has utilized the main floor of the Markin House at Markin Glen County Park for meetings, activity space, and as a library for 30 years. They assist with maintenance and repairs to the house. In addition, the group donates time, finances, and plants for park beautification.

Comstock Township Parks

Kalamazoo County Parks created a partnership with Comstock Township Parks to fund and improve the Wenke Softball Complex at River Oaks County Park. The complex includes four lighted softball fields, restrooms, a concession stand, and picnic shelter. The Township performs most of the site maintenance and runs the softball programs.

River Oaks Aeromodelors

The River Oaks Aeromodelors operate the model airplane field at River Oaks County Park. They provide funding to assist the County with maintenance of the facility and provide AMA insurance for members.

Other Volunteers

Kalamazoo County Parks is fortunate to have a number of other individuals and groups volunteer their time and services. These include but are not limited to master gardeners, disc golf course improvement volunteers, scouting groups, corporate community service, and individual park users.

Budget Information

The 2007 park and recreation budget totaled \$1,058,000 with payroll at \$852,100 and operating expenses totaling \$205,900. The 2007 Parks Department Budget is divided into seven (7) accounts, one for each park and one that covers the administrative and support expenses. The administrative and support expense accounts for roughly 39% of the total budget. In 2008, new accounts were created for the operation and maintenance of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail and for trail programming.

Table 2-2: County Parks Accounts

2007	Revenue	Expenditures*
Markin Glen	\$ 124,785	\$ 161,586
Scotts Mill	\$ 16,722	\$ 15,989
Cold Brook	\$ 117,882	\$ 170,503
Prairie View	\$ 60,205	\$ 141,599
River Oaks	\$ 66,000	\$ 121,151
Expo Center	\$ 349,123	\$ 447,178

*Expenditures include prorated administrative/support budget

In 2004 the Ten-Year Strategic Plan for Kalamazoo County Parks established the need for Kalamazoo County Parks to become financially self-sufficient by 2013. This has coincided with less general fund revenue due to reduced State revenue and reductions in revenue sharing. Kalamazoo County Parks has made significant strides towards reducing expenditures, increasing revenues, and reducing the need for the County to appropriate general fund revenue for park operations.

Table 2-3 indicates that over the past five years the County appropriation has decreased from 45% in 2003 to 26% in 2007 and fee

revenue has gone from 50% in 2003 to 66% in 2007. Table 2-4 also shows that County appropriation peaked in 2004 with a total of \$511,750 and through the combination of increased revenue and decreased expenditures the appropriation level in 2007 was reduced to \$284,172.

Table 2-3: History of Operating Revenue Sources

	Appropriation	Fee Revenue	Accommodation Tax
2003	45%	50%	5%
2004	45%	49%	5%
2005	46%	55%	7%
2006	27%	65%	8%
2007	26%	66%	8%

Kalamazoo County Parks has a diverse source of revenue generated with user fees. In 2007, Kalamazoo County Parks generated \$706,395 in revenue. The Expo Center Rental provided the most income with \$284,000, park admissions generated \$165,498, camping provided \$126,745 and athletic field rental generated \$52,841.

The budget challenges faced by Kalamazoo County Parks are expected to have a significant impact on Kalamazoo County Parks. Section 6-3 of this report provides additional information on the Kalamazoo County Parks Ten-Year Strategic Plan. Continuing to increase revenue is essential for the future success of Kalamazoo County Parks. Consideration should be given to improving and growing the strong existing service base and expanding it by providing services that meet the community's need while offering revenue to help offset expenses.

Table 2-4: History of Revenue by Source

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Park Admissions	\$ 134,511	\$ 127,613	\$ 165,724	\$ 145,847	\$ 165,498
Camping	\$ 74,575	\$ 92,359	\$ 110,703	\$ 111,965	\$ 126,745
Picnic Shelters	\$ 13,985	\$ 15,465	\$ 17,589	\$ 14,740	\$ 15,675
Athletic Field Rental	\$ 25,353	\$ 22,911	\$ 30,530	\$ 32,582	\$ 52,841
Endowment Revenue	\$ 25,250	\$ 27,197	\$ 28,320	\$ 29,680	\$ 35,662
Expo Center Rental	\$ 259,916	\$ 242,130	\$ 269,477	\$ 275,268	\$ 282,453
Miscellaneous	\$ 13,951	\$ 22,986	\$ 23,497	\$ 28,288	\$ 27,521
County Appropriation	\$ 485,426	\$ 511,750	\$ 418,511	\$ 267,221	\$ 284,172
Accommodation Tax	\$ 51,121	\$ 60,455	\$ 78,307	\$ 79,381	\$ 84,507
TOTAL	\$ 1,084,040	\$ 1,122,776	\$ 1,142,658	\$ 984,972	\$ 1,075,074

Parks Improvement Fund

In 2006 the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners adopted the following policy and it remains in effect:

At the end of each year, if the actual final appropriation is less than budgeted appropriation, then the Parks Improvement Fund will receive one-half of the difference and the General Fund keeps one-half. If the actual final appropriation from the General Fund is more than the budget, then the Parks Improvement Fund receives nothing.

In 2008, the Parks Improvement Fund received \$12,130.70. These funds are primarily held as a reserve for unforeseen expenses and are also utilized to complete small capital improvement projects or could be used for grant matching funds.

Accommodation Tax Revenue:

The Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners collects a 6% tax on all Kalamazoo County hotel and motel accommodations. In 2008, the projected accommodation tax revenue is \$1,876,700. Currently the Board of Commissioners allocate 77.5% of the revenue to the Kalamazoo County Convention and Visitors Bureau, 1.5% covers the tax administrative expenses, and

the remaining 21% is allocated to Kalamazoo County Parks for marketing expenses, a sales and marketing position, and for capital improvements at the Kalamazoo County Expo Center. In 2008, the Parks Department budget includes \$224,000 for Expo Center & Fairground capital projects and \$169,900 for marketing, operation, promotional, and sales expenses.

Park Endowment Funds

In the past ten years, Kalamazoo County Parks has emphasized future operation plans with development projects. With recognition that competition continues to increase for County General Funds, the Parks Foundation has pioneered funding park development projects and consecutively establishing endowments at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation to help meet future maintenance and operation expenses. In 2006, the Parks Commission established the Kalamazoo County Parks Endowment fund with an initial Gift from the Parks Foundation with a goal of reaching \$50,000 by June 2009.

Table 2-5: County Park Endowment Funds

	Endowment Level	Est. Annual \$ Available
Markin Glen Endowment	\$900,000	\$32,000
KRV Trail Endowment	\$700,000	\$24,000
Kalamazoo County Parks Endowment	\$22,000	

River Oaks County Park

Grant #26-00485 1973

The project included construction of the big picnic shelter, boat ramp, modern restrooms, playground equipment, utilities, furnishings, access road, and parking area. All facilities are still in operation and are in good condition.

Grant #26-00766 1976

Project included development of the Oak Grove picnic area with parking and road asphalt surfacing, restrooms, utilities, picnic equipment, and playground equipment. All facilities are still utilized.

Grant #26-01394 1985

Construction of one softball field, five soccer fields, drive, and parking. All facilities are still utilized.

Grant #BF 93-052 1993

Construction of softball fields, restroom and concession building, gravel parking lot, asphalt walkways, and electrical service.

Grant #26-01603 2002

Completed in 2006, the scope items include site preparation, new soccer fields, new parking lots, roadway improvements, and a restroom/concession building. All items are in excellent condition.

Section 3

PHYSICAL FEATURES

Physical Features

Introduction

The following section describes many of the area's natural and man-made features. The purpose is to provide the users of this Plan with an overview of the physical features since they are related to recreation activities and resources.

Planning Area

The objective of this plan is to serve Kalamazoo County, Michigan. Kalamazoo County covers 368,640 acres or 576 square miles of land. The County contains twenty-four local units of government including fifteen townships, five villages, and four cities. The City of Kalamazoo is the county seat.

Location

Kalamazoo County is in Southwestern Michigan and bounded on the south by St. Joseph County, to the west is VanBuren County, to the east is Calhoun County, and to the north are Barry and Allegan Counties. Kalamazoo County is 140 miles from Detroit, 145 miles from Chicago, 245 miles from Indianapolis, and 75 miles from Lansing.

Climate

Kalamazoo County's weather, like all of Michigan's, influences the recreational opportunities through a wide range of seasonal conditions. The area can support a variety of outdoor activities throughout the year from swimming to cross-country skiing. Table 3-1 identifies information related to the area's climate. In Kalamazoo County, the average daily temperature is 49.7 degrees F with monthly averages varying between 23.7 degrees F in January to 73.2 degrees F in July.

Precipitation averages 34.8 inches per year and snowfall averages 73.1 inches per year. Prevailing winds are from the southwest.

Table 3-1: Temperature and Precipitation

Month	Average Daily Temperature (°F)	Precipitation (Inches)	
		Average	Average Snowfall
January	23.7	2.1	20.5
February	26.5	1.7	13.5
March	36.0	2.4	10.2
April	49.0	3.6	2.9
May	60.2	3.1	0
June	69.2	3.8	0
July	73.2	3.6	0
August	71.5	3.2	0
September	64.6	3.2	0
October	53.4	3.0	0.9
November	40.4	2.7	8.8
December	29.0	2.6	16.3
Annual	49.7	34.8	73.1

SOURCE: Michigan State University Dept. of Geography

Topography

An important element of recreation master planning is a study of the regional topography. Many recreation activities are enhanced by changes in grade. Further, the visual aspects of open space are strengthened by vistas and topography.

The county is quite diverse from a topographic standpoint. With minor exceptions, the entire County lies within a highly-habitable zone of 700 to 1,000 feet above sea level. The largest portion of the county lies between 850-900 feet of elevation. Most of this area is an extensive plain in the south-central part of the county, south of the Kalamazoo River. The major lowland in the County is the trough of the Kalamazoo River and its tributary extensions. The majority of the upland occurs in the

western and northern portions of the County. In essence, most of Kalamazoo County is characterized by gently rolling to level landforms.

The general topographic features in the majority of Kalamazoo County present no significant barrier to recreation improvements or opportunities but should be considered and evaluated when planning recreation facilities.

Water Features

Lakes, rivers, and streams are in high demand to meet today's recreation needs. Kalamazoo County is fortunate to have a large quantity and variety of natural water features.

The river system of Kalamazoo County has 365 miles of rivers and streams including the Kalamazoo River and several of its larger tributaries. The County's other rivers and streams include the Portage River, Davis Creek, Flowerfield Creek, Gull Creek, Portage Creek, and Sand Creek.

The County also has over 88 lakes and reservoirs. Gull Lake is the largest natural lake with 2050 acres and approximately 20 miles of shoreline. Although most of the lakes are surrounded by seasonal and year-round homes, public boat access is available on many of the lakes.

Public access for boating and fishing is available at 20 locations. Of these locations, 16 are on lakes and 4 are on rivers. The abundance of many species of game fish makes the inland lakes and streams extremely popular for recreational fishing. Many of the lakes and streams also have beautiful natural settings making them ideal for park sites. The 20 access sites on lakes and rivers in Kalamazoo County are primarily designated for boat access. There can be a conflict of users between boats and swimmers at these public access sites. Kalamazoo County currently has

eight public swimming beach facilities and three of these sites are operated by Kalamazoo County Parks.

In total the County has 11,712 acres of surface water and this accounts for 3.2 percent of the total surface area of the County.

Although lakes and ponds are plentiful in the County, their distribution is not uniform. Major concentrations occur in Comstock, Richland, Ross, Pavilion, Schoolcraft, and Brady Townships, as well as the City of Portage. Lesser concentrations are found in Alamo, Charleston, Kalamazoo, Oshtemo, and Texas Townships. Wakeshma, Cooper, and Prairie Ronde Townships are virtually lake-less.

Transportation

The primary vehicular access in Kalamazoo County is via Interstate 94 and US-131. Both of these are four lane divided highways with limited access. Two business loops, one from each highway, provide adequate access to the industrial and commercial areas of Kalamazoo.

Kalamazoo County is provided air service from the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport. The County operated airport has commercial and freight services accommodated by a number of commercial airlines.

Land Use

Land use is becoming increasingly important to recreation in Kalamazoo County. Agricultural and open space is being developed as residential. According to Table 3-2, 40% of the land area in Kalamazoo County is used for agricultural purposes and only 8% is used for residential. Kalamazoo County does not have a land use plan but many of the Townships have or are developing land use plans.

Table 3-2: Kalamazoo County Land Use

LAND USE	% OF COUNTY
Residential	8
Commercial	3
Industrial	2
Institutional	1
Transportation	3
Agriculture	40
Wooded Land	23
Open Land	12
Water & Marsh	8

Wildlife

Kalamazoo County's wildlife is typical of that found in most of Lower Michigan. Common wildlife includes deer, raccoons, possums, rabbits, muskrats, beavers, squirrels, rodents and other small mammals. The area is home to a variety of birds including owls, wild turkeys, pheasants, and many others. The area is also a seasonal home to many migratory birds including ducks, songbirds, and Canada geese.

Plant Life

Originally, Michigan was covered with a dense forest of deciduous trees. As the area was cleared for farming and development, the trees were removed for timber, the areas of forest were replaced by farm fields, open field areas, manicured lawns and smaller forested areas containing both deciduous and coniferous trees. There remain many forested areas, especially along the Kalamazoo River and other waterways. The higher well-drained areas consist predominantly of oaks, sugar maple, beach and white pine. Areas of low relief support pine, aspen, basswood, and maples. The floodplain areas consist of ash, silver maple, sycamore, and oaks. According to table 3-2, 23% of the County is forested.

Section 4

SOCIAL FEATURES

Introduction

This section of the plan describes the population of Kalamazoo County Michigan and the State of Michigan. The description focuses on the County and its unique population characteristics that impact recreation needs and planning.

Population Trends and Projections

Recreation requirements are directly related to the size and trends of Kalamazoo County's population. The recreation system should provide adequate services to meet the needs of the current population and should be striving to meet the needs of population trends.

According to table 4-1, since 1970 Kalamazoo County's population has increased by 12.3%. During the 1970's the population decreased .1% which was below the State of Michigan's 4.4% increase. The County saw a significant increase of 5.2% in the 1980's that was higher than the States increase of 0.4%. During the 1990's Kalamazoo's population increased 6.8% that is consistent with Michigan's increase of 6.9%. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the 2000 population of Kalamazoo County was 238,603. In 2006, Kalamazoo County's population is projected to increase to 240,720 and in 2010 the population will reach 241,300.

Table 4-1: Population Projections

	KALAMAZOO COUNTY		MICHIGAN	
	#	%	#	%
1970 Census	212,550		8,881,826	
1980 Census	212,378	-0.1	9,262,044	4.4
1990 Census	223,411	5.2	9,295,277	0.4
2000 Census	238,603	6.8	9,938,444	6.9
2006 Projected	240,720	0.9	10,095,643	1.6
2010 Projected	241,300	0.2	10,121,300	0.3

SOURCE: U.S. Census of Population 2000

Table 4-2 depicts the population growth and change that has occurred within the boundaries of Kalamazoo County. Growth of population within the County has not been even. Between 1990 and 2000 Kalamazoo County's population increased by 6.8%. This is similar to the 6.9% growth for the State of Michigan. During this same period, six communities experienced growth over 30%.

Brady Township	36.0%
Climax Township	56.2%
Prairie Ronde Township	52.8%
Richland Township	40.1%
Ross Township	31.7%
Schoolcraft Township	96.5%
Texas Township	36.4%

The City of Portage (9.4%), Alamo Township (16.6%), Comstock Township (14.1%), Oshtemo (26.9%), the Village of Climax (16.8%), and the Village of Richland (27.5%) also saw growth higher than the County average of 6.8%. Oshtemo Township saw the greatest overall increase with population growth of 3,602. The western portion of Kalamazoo County continues to see significant increase in population. The increases indicate a trend of population moving from the urban settings to more rural Township settings. This is relevant to park planning because these Townships offer limited or no recreation facilities and the shift in population changes the proximity of population to the County Parks.

On the other extreme, there were three communities, which lost population during the decade.

City of Kalamazoo	-3.9%
City of Parchment	-1.1%
Village of Augusta	-3.0%

The City of Kalamazoo's population decreased by 4,977. The decreases further substantiate the shift of population from the urban centers to the outlying townships.

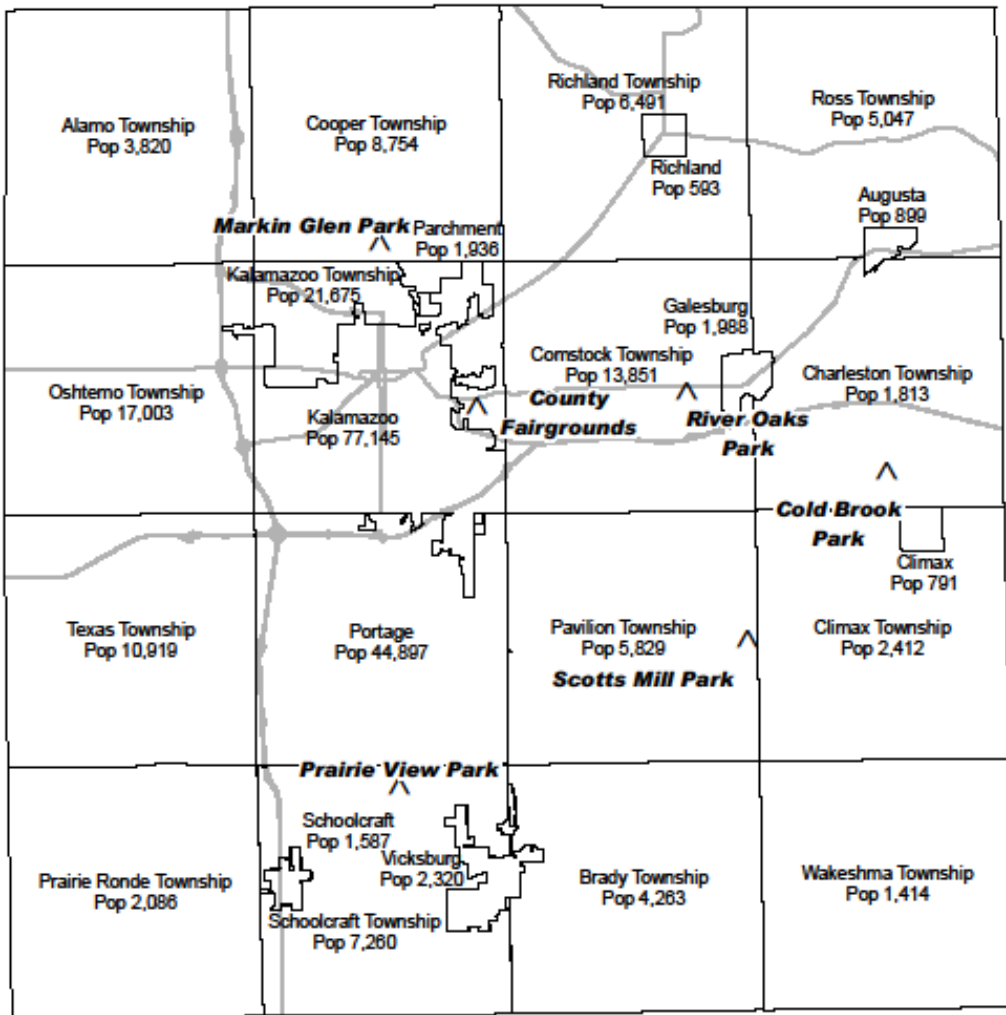
Table 4-2: Population Growth and Change

LOCATION	1970	1980	% Change 1970-1980	1990	% Change 1980-1990	2000	% Change 1990-2000	2006 Projected
Kalamazoo County	212,550	212,378	-0.1%	223,411	5.2%	238,603	6.8%	240,720
Cities								
Galesburg	1,355	1,822	25.6%	1,863	2.3%	1,988	6.7%	1,920
Kalamazoo	8,555	79,722	89.3%	80,277	0.7%	77,145	-3.9%	72,168
Parchment	2,027	1,819	-11.4%	1,958	7.6%	1,936	-1.1%	1,797
Portage	33,590	38,157	12.0%	41,042	7.6%	44,897	9.4%	45,236
Townships*								
Alamo	2,413	2,909	17.1%	3,276	12.6%	3,820	16.6%	3,963
Brady	2,235	3,116	28.3%	3,134	0.6%	4,263	36.0%	4,137
Charleston	2,667	1,719	-55.1%	1,756	2.2%	1,813	3.2%	1,968
Climax	1,224	1,359	9.9%	1,544	13.6%	2,412	56.2%	2,397
Comstock	10,465	11,162	6.2%	11,825	5.9%	13,851	17.1%	15,119
Cooper	7,668	8,434	9.1%	8,442	0.1%	8,754	3.7%	10,071
Kalamazoo	22,301	20,942	-6.5%	20,976	0.2%	21,675	3.3%	21,521
Oshtemo	6,237	10,958	43.1%	13,401	22.3%	17,003	26.9%	19,657
Pavilion	3,691	4,811	23.3%	5,500	14.3%	5,829	6.0%	5,667
Prairie Ronde	777	1,189	34.7%	1,365	14.8%	2,086	52.8%	2,113
Richland	3,000	4,191	28.4%	4,634	10.6%	6,491	40.1%	6,410
Ross	3,485	3,863	9.8%	3,832	-0.8%	5,047	31.7%	5,141
Schoolcraft	2,698	3,588	24.8%	3,695	3.0%	7,260	96.5%	6,967
Texas	3,187	5,643	43.5%	7,711	36.6%	10,519	36.4%	12,998
Wakeshma	1,214	1,375	11.7%	1,378	0.2%	1,414	2.6%	1,472
Villages								
Augusta	1,025	913	-12.3%	927	1.5%	899	-3.0%	848
Climax	594	619	4.0%	677	9.4%	791	16.8%	742
Richland	728	486	-49.8%	465	-4.3%	593	27.5%	713
Schoolcraft	1,277	1,359	6.0%	1,517	11.6%	1,587	4.6%	1,495
Vicksburg	2,139	2,224	3.8%	2,216	-0.4%	2,320	4.7%	2,172

*Township population data includes Townships and Incorporated Villages.

SOURCE: U.S. Census of Population

KALAMAZOO COUNTY
Cities, Villages and Townships
and Populations, 2000 Census



PRODUCED BY: Kalamazoo County
 Dept of Planning and Community Development
 Printed April 18, 2008.

Of the 238,603 residents of Kalamazoo County, 55% reside in cities and villages and 45% reside in township settings. This is significant because only 55% of the population is serviced by local municipal park facilities and programs while the remaining 45% of the population residing in townships have no or limited existing recreation opportunities. The shift in population is expected to continue and some townships are projected to grow at a significantly higher percentage than the County as a whole. Kalamazoo County Parks should plan appropriately to provide parks and recreation opportunities for these residents.

Age Distribution

While the overall population is the most important consideration, there are other characteristics to consider when planning for a community's recreation needs. The age distribution of a community influences the types of facilities and programs needed. Table 4-3 shows that the County's median age of 32.7 is only slightly lower than Michigan's 35.5. Overall the distribution of age groups in the County is very similar to Michigan's with only slight variations. A total of 29% percent of the County's population is under 19 and 19% percent is 55 or older.

The recreation services of Kalamazoo County should provide a variety of facilities and designs to accommodate the needs of each age group. Age distributions are expected to have a typical impact on Kalamazoo County's recreation needs. As with state and national trends, the senior citizen population will continue to increase and consideration should be given when planning for Kalamazoo County's recreation needs.

Table 4-3: Age Distribution

	Kalamazoo County		MICHIGAN
	#	%	%
Under 5	15,447	6.5	6.8
5-9	16,254	6.8	7.5
10-14	16,453	6.9	7.5
15-19	20,363	8.5	7.2
20-24	25,197	10.6	6.5
25-34	32,311	13.5	13.7
35-44	35,091	14.7	16.1
45-54	31,513	13.2	13.8
55-59	10,719	4.5	4.9
60-64	8,107	3.4	3.8
65-74	13,912	5.8	6.5
75-84	9,640	4.0	4.4
85+	3,596	1.5	1.4
Total	238,603	100	100
Median Age	32.7		35.5

SOURCE: U.S. Census of Population 2000

Physical Disabilities

The disability status of a population is significant when considering recreation needs for a community. With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), all areas of public service became subject to barrier-free requirements, including parks and recreation facilities.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, 36,403 people comprising, 15.3% of the County's population of persons who were five years or older were faced with a physical disability compared to 17.2% of the State of Michigan's population. In addition, many of the elderly experience reduced mobility, limited physical strength and changes in hearing and sight.

A special section of this report, on page 6-16, addresses the needs of persons with disabilities. Specific attention is placed on inclusive design considerations consistent with ADA regulations.

Socio-Economic Levels

The County's household income levels are lower than Michigan's. Table 4-4 shows Kalamazoo County's 1999 median household income was \$42,022. This figure is slightly lower than Michigan's median household income of \$44,667. The County also has a lower per capita income than Michigan. Kalamazoo County has a higher percentage of people below the poverty level than Michigan.

This information indicates many people in Kalamazoo County can benefit from affordable recreation opportunities. While Kalamazoo County Parks increasingly depends on user fees to fund the Parks & Recreation budget, careful consideration should be given to maintain accessibility to all socio-economic levels.

Table 4-4: 1999 Socio-Economic Levels

	Kalamazoo County	Michigan
Median Household Income	\$42,022	\$44,667
Per Capita Income	\$21,739	\$22,168
Percent of Population Below Poverty Level	7.4%	6.5%

SOURCE: U.S. Census of Population 2000

County Tourism

A key area of emphasis for Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation is to provide parks and facilities that directly benefit the tourism industry. Tourism is the second largest industry in the State of Michigan and generated over \$5.1 billion in direct pleasure expenditures in Michigan in 1996. During this same period, Kalamazoo County had 1,753,000 estimated number of pleasure trip-nights with estimated direct expenditures of \$95,235,000. In Kalamazoo County there are 24 hotels/motels/lodges and 3 bed and breakfasts. (Source: The Kalamazoo County Tourism Profile, 2001, Tourism Resource Center, Michigan State University.)

The Kalamazoo County Convention and Visitors Bureau is directly responsible for

promoting tourism in Kalamazoo County and strives to increase revenues for Kalamazoo County and positively impact the economy of Kalamazoo County by marketing the community as a popular meeting and tourism destination. The KCCVB is overseen by a board of directors and employs a full time president. The KCCVB has 10 additional staff members with five dedicated to sales. In 2008 the Board of Commissioners allocated \$1,454,400 to the KCCVB from the County wide accommodation tax.

Kalamazoo County Parks has several significant areas of impact on the tourism industry. The Kalamazoo County Expo Center & Fairground annually attracts over 100 events with 250,000 visitors. Ten of the larger shows alone utilize 8,471 room nights with 83,150 in attendance and generate approximately \$7,000,000 in economic impact. The eighteen Park special events and the six River Oaks Soccer Complex tournaments also attract large numbers of participants and spectators.

The County parks have an impact on tourism by providing access to lakes, historical attractions, and parks with outstanding natural beauty. Kalamazoo County Parks has the opportunity to directly impact tourism by providing the facilities that can capitalize on the County's natural features. Visitors may be drawn to the County for the primary purpose of visiting a park or parks, camping, or attending a group function at a park. In 2007, Kalamazoo County Parks hosted 339 picnic reservations and 6337 nights of camping.

The relationship between Parks and tourism is cooperative with benefits for each organization and the community in general. As the park facilities improve and provide greater regional opportunities, visitors to the County will benefit from the added facilities. The County Parks are a substantial component of the wide variety of tourist attractions in Kalamazoo County. Increasing visitors will increase the amount of

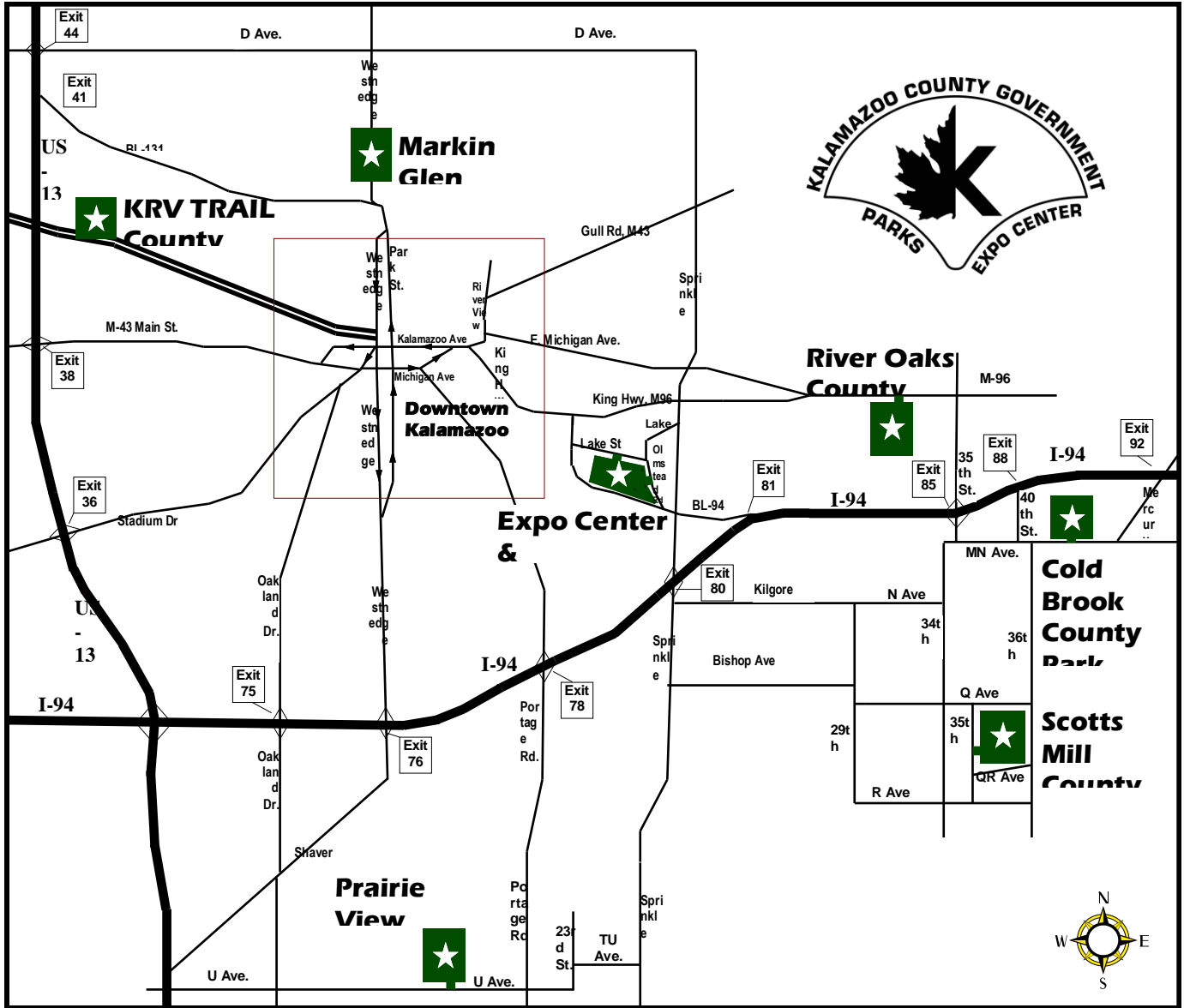
money that is annually spent in the County and greater economic prosperity will result.

Kalamazoo County Parks and the KCCVB should continue to work together to retain existing events, attract new events and

activities, and promote regional recreational facilities. Development of future park plans should consider tourism impacts with emphasis on adding facilities that will benefit the tourism industry.

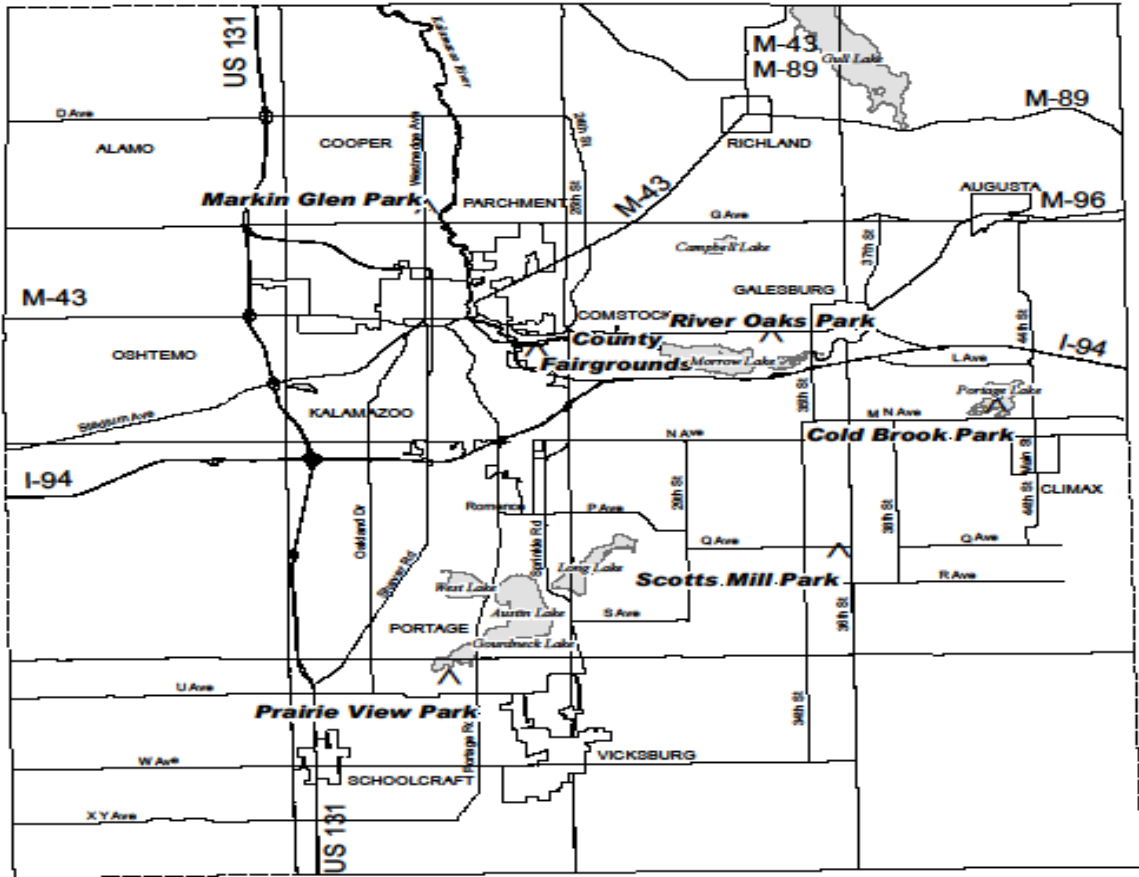
Section 5

RECREATION INVENTORY



- Cold Brook County Park
- Kalamazoo County Expo Center & Fairground
- Kalamazoo River Valley Trail (KRV Trail)
- Markin Glen County Park
- Prairie View County Park
- River Oaks County Park
- Scotts Mill County Park

KALAMAZOO COUNTY
Location of Parks



PRODUCED BY: Kalamazoo County
Dept of Planning and Community Development
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Introduction

The Plan includes a recreation inventory that identifies a comprehensive list of available publicly and privately owned recreation facilities in Kalamazoo County and close vicinities.

Kalamazoo County Parks

Kalamazoo County Parks is directly responsible for the operation of seven recreation areas that encompass 1300 acres. Parks vary with emphasis on natural resources, tourism, historical resources, and sports facilities.

Markin Glen County Park

This 160 acre park is located in Cooper Township, north of G Avenue, east of Douglas Drive, west of the Kalamazoo River and is bisected almost evenly by Westnedge Avenue. Markin Glen County Park was originally owned by the City of Kalamazoo and the County purchased the property in 1988. The development of the park has been funded largely through the efforts of the Parks Foundation of Kalamazoo County. Facilities at Markin Glen include fishing and swimming in two man-made lakes, camping, hiking trails, and picnic shelters.

The parks strengths include well-kept modern facilities, ADA accessible facilities, variety of recreation opportunity, and maintenance endowment. Weaknesses include the division of the property by Westnedge Avenue, and lack of restrooms near picnic areas.

Facilities Summary:

- 160 Acres
- Regional Park
- 38 Modern Campsites
- Fishing and Swimming Lakes

- Swimming Beach with Beach House
- 3 Modern Restrooms
- 6 Picnic Shelters
- 3 Playgrounds
- 2 Softball Fields
- 4 Tennis Courts
- 3 Volleyball Courts
- 1 Mile Hiking Trail
- 1 Mile of Paved Multi-Use Trail
- 3 Fishing Pier/Platforms
- Shoreline Fishing
- Markin House
- Paved Parking

Kalamazoo County Expo Center & Fairground

The Kalamazoo County Expo Center & Fairground is located on Lake Street just north of the I94 Business Loop in Kalamazoo Township. It is home to the Kalamazoo County Parks Office and the departments maintenance operations. It was acquired by the County in 1940 and contains 125 acres. Facilities include the 54,000 square foot expo center that features 37,000 square feet of exhibit space. Additionally there are 14 barns, 54 campsites, 150 special event campsites, a grand stand with ½ mile track, and 4 horse arenas. Annually, 110 events are hosted with over 403 event dates and attendance of 215,000. The Expo Center & Fairground is a significant contributor to the tourism industry and local economy in Kalamazoo County. Six of the major shows alone generate over \$5.5 million dollars in revenue for Kalamazoo County. The facility is improved and promoted with a percentage the accommodation tax collected by Kalamazoo County.

In 2006, Kalamazoo County Parks developed a site master plan for the property. Some of the proposed projects include updating existing facilities, improving site utilities, expanding the campground, developing outdoor event space,

and constructing additional indoor exhibit space. The first phase of the plan was completed in December 2007 and included a complete renovation of the existing Expo Center.

Facilities Summary:

- 125 Acres
- Regional Park
- 54,000 Square Foot Expo Center with 37,000 Square feet of Exhibit Space
- Outdoor Special Event Space
- 54 Campsites
- 150 Special Event Campsites
- Grandstand and ¼ Mile Track
- 14 Livestock Barns
- 5 Horse and Livestock Arenas
- 6 Modern Restrooms
- Paved Parking Areas

Prairie View County Park

The 210 acre park is located on U Avenue between Portage Road and Oakland Drive in Schoolcraft Township. Prairie View is located between Gourdneck and Hogsett with significant frontage on both lakes. The park offers swimming, group picnic areas and group activities. Prairie View opened in 1962.

The strengths are the site's natural beauty, access to lakes, quality of swimming beach, great location, large picnic areas and number of picnics hosted. Weaknesses include low revenue return for the amount of operating expenditures, need for additional recreation facilities, and lack of comprehensive site master plan.

Facilities Summary:

- 210 Acres
- Regional Park
- Hogsett and Gourdneck Lakes
- Swimming Beach with Beach House
- Boat Ramp (unimproved)
- Shoreline Fishing
- 6 Modern Restrooms
- 7 Picnic Shelters
- 6 Playgrounds
- 2 Softball Fields
- 6 Volley Ball Courts
- 1 Soccer Field
- 2.5 Mile Hiking Trail
- Cross-County Skiing
- Sledding Hill & Warming Shelter
- Row Boat Rentals
- Paved & Gravel Parking

River Oaks County Park

The 330 acre park is located between Comstock and Galesburg on M96 just west of 33rd Street in Comstock Township. River Oaks is by far the largest of all county Parks and has direct access to Morrow Lake along the north shore. River Oaks offers a soccer complex, boating and fishing facilities, ball fields, play equipment, and special events. This site was designed as a county park in 1972 even though it has been owned by the County since 1906. In 1998, the four field Wenke Softball Complex was opened as a joint project that is now operated and maintained by Comstock Township Parks.

The strengths are the River Oaks 22 field soccer complex, the large picnic facilities available, scenic location on Morrow Lake, and expansive hiking trails. The park's weaknesses include lack of regular park day users, limited regional attractions, and lack of comprehensive park master plan.

Facilities Summary:

- 330 Acres
- Regional Park
- Morrow Lake (Kalamazoo River)
- 22 Soccer Fields
- 4 League Softball Fields, 2 Softball Fields
- 3 Modern Restrooms
- 4 Picnic Shelters
- 2 Playgrounds
- 2 Volleyball Courts
- 6.5 Mile Hiking Trail
- Model Airplane Field
- Shoreline Fishing
- Boat Ramp
- Paved Parking and Gravel Parking

Cold Brook County Park

Cold Brook County Park is located in Charleston Township, north of MN Avenue and south of 1-94. The 276 acre park is located on three large lakes that provide boating, swimming, and camping facilities. Those lakes are Portage, Blue and Long Lakes. The park also offers softball fields, playgrounds, picnic shelters, disc golf, and open areas for large picnics and events. Winter activities include ice fishing. The park was acquired in 1962 and opened to the public in 1963. Since 1968, a variety of amenities have been added to the park.

Strengths of Cold Brook County Park include the outstanding natural features, access to inland lakes, high number of visitors, and the diversity of recreation opportunities. In addition, Cold Brook produces the largest amount of park revenue. Weaknesses include aging facilities, limited parking, and environmental impact from large number of users.

Facilities Summary:

- 276 Acres
- Regional Park
- Blue, Long, & Portage Lakes
- 44 Campsites
- Swimming Beach with Beach House
- 4 Modern Restrooms
- 3 Picnic Shelters
- 4 Playgrounds
- 2 Volleyball Courts
- 24 Hole Disc Golf Course
- 2.5 Mile Hiking Trail
- Boat Ramp
- Fishing Dock
- Shoreline Fishing
- Paved & Gravel Parking

Scotts Mill County Park

Scotts Mill County Park is located south of Q Avenue on South 35th Street in Pavilion Township. The park derived its name from the working 1870's water wheel-powered grist mill that is located on site. Scotts Mill was acquired in 1973 and with the help of local foundations, was opened to the public in 1976. The park is also the home of three events hosted by the Scotts Olde Tyme Power and Equipment Association. This club also has some storage on site and has constructed a log cabin. The park's natural features include approximately 25 acres of mixed hardwood forest and 40 acres of tillable land. The tillable acreage is currently leased for private agricultural purposes.

The park's strengths include the rich history of the mill and grounds, natural beauty, access to water and low operating expense. Weaknesses include lack of regional recreation attractions, lack of park master plan, limited use and revenue, lack of public knowledge, long-term maintenance expense.

Facilities Summary:

- 110 Acres
- Regional Park
- Historic 1870's Mill
- Modern Restrooms
- 1 Picnic Shelter
- 1 Playground
- 1 Volleyball Court
- .75 Mile Hiking Trail
- Shoreline Fishing
- Miller House
- Log Cabin
- Paved & Gravel Parking

Kalamazoo River Valley Trail (KRV Trail)

The KRV Trail is Kalamazoo County's newest County Park. The first mile of gravel trail was opened for public use in the fall of 2004. It began at 10th Street, utilized a tunnel under US 131 and ended at Drake Road. In September 2008, the existing trail was paved and an additional 4 miles of trail were constructed. The completed project includes a 12' wide asphalt trail that begins at 10th Street and ends at Westnedge Avenue. The trail connects Downtown Kalamazoo to the Kal-Haven Trail, linking 53 miles of trail.

The KRV Trail Master Plan was completed in 1998 and the completed project will include 40 miles of paved multi-use trail within Kalamazoo County that will link over 140 miles of regional trails. The major connections include the Kal Haven Trail, Portage Bi-Centennial Trail, and Battle Creek Linear Trail. Users will be able to ride a bike to travel to Lake Michigan or Battle Creek.

Funding and construction of the KRV Trail is a joint project between Kalamazoo County Parks, the Parks Foundation of Kalamazoo County, the Kalamazoo County Road Commission, the City of Kalamazoo, the Friends of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trailway, and other local units of government. Construction plans for 2009 include developing the trail from Gull Road to D Avenue.

In addition to fundraising for trail construction, the Parks Foundation is also funding a \$2,000,000 endowment at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation for operating expenses of the trail. There are currently no user fees planned for the KRV Trail.

	Acres	Park Classification	Restrooms	Campground	Dogs Permitted	Dog Park (off leash)	Flower Gardens	Playground	Picnic Areas	Picnic Shelters	Shelter/Reservations	Boat Ramp	Shore Fishing	Fishing Pier	Swimming Beach	Swimming Pool	Splash Park	Bath House	Boat Rentals	Volleyball	Ball fields	Basketball	Soccer	Football	Tennis	Disc Golf	Roller Hockey	Skateboard Park	Hiking Trails	Paved Multi-Use	Mountain Bike	Outdoor Stage	Shedding	Ice Skating	Cross Country Ski Trails	Ice Fishing			
Comstock Township (Continued)																																							
River Villa Preserve	40												X																										
Robert Morris Park	40	1	X				X	X	X	X			X		X			X		X	X	X	X	X		X		X											
Wenke Park	1.5							X	X				X																										
Kalamazoo Township																																							
Eastwood Park	1.5	1			X		X	X																	X			X											
Lakewood Park	0.5	1			X		X	X	X												X																		
Stroud Family Park	1.5	1			X		X	X	X															X															
Oshkemo Township																																							
Flesher Field	9	1	X				X	X	X												X		X					X											
Oshkemo Township Park	65	1	X				X	X	X																	X		X											
Richland Township																																							
Richland Township Park	9	1	X				X	X	X	X											X		X						X										
Ross Township																																							
Ross Township Park	4	2	X					X	X				X		X			X																					
Texas Township																																							
Texas Drive Park	5	1					X	X	X													X	X	X					X										

State Game Areas

The Gourdneck State Game Area is in the southwestern portion of the County, the Fulton State Game Area is located in the southeastern portion of the County and the Augusta Creek Fish & Wildlife Area is located in the northeastern portion of the County. The Allegan, Fulton, Keeler, Middleville, and Three Rivers State Game Areas are located in neighboring counties.

- Augusta Creek Fish & Wildlife
- Barry State Game Area
- Fulton State Game Area
- Gourdneck State Game Area
- Allegan State Game Area
- Crane Pond State Game Area
- Keeler State Game Area
- Middleville State Game Area
- Three Rivers State Game Area

State Parks

Fort Custer Recreation Area is located in the western portion of Kalamazoo County. The State of Michigan provides six other parks within 50 miles of Kalamazoo County. Yankee Springs is the closest at 30 miles, Van Buren State Park is 36 miles and the remaining four are all within 50 miles from the County.

Fort Custer Recreation Area	3033 ac.
Grand Mere State Park	985 ac.
Holland State Park	142ac.
Saugatuck Dunes State Park	880ac.
Van Buren State Park	400 ac.
Warren Dunes State Park	1952 ac.
Yankee Springs Recreation Area	5200 ac.

Water Access

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources provides 15 public access sites on lakes and rivers in Kalamazoo County. The County and other municipalities provide additional public access sites.

LAKE ACCESS

- Austin Lake, MDNR
- Barton Lake, MDNR
- Blue Lake, KCPD
- Eagle Lake, MDNR
- Eagle Lake, MDNR
- Hogsett Lake, KCPD & MDNR
- LeFever Lake, MDNR
- Lawler Lake, MDNR
- Long Lake, MDNR
- Morrow Lake, MDNR
- Morrow Lake, KCPD
- Paw Paw Lake, MDNR
- Rupert Lake, MDNR
- Sherman Lake, MDNR
- Sugar Loaf Lake, MDNR
- Whitford Lake, MDNR

RIVER ACCESS

- Kalamazoo River, Fort Custer, MDNR
- Kalamazoo River, Comstock, MDNR
- Kalamazoo River, Comstock, Comstock Twp Parks
- Kalamazoo River, Verburg Park, City of Kalamazoo

Nature Preserves

Al Sabo Nature Preserve	741 ac.
Bow in the Clouds Preserve	60 ac.
Chipman Preserve	228 ac.
Kalamazoo Nature Center	1,100 ac.
Kellogg Forest	716 ac.
Kleinstuck Preserve	48 ac.

Winter Recreation Areas

Echo Valley, located in Comstock Township, offers toboggan runs, snow tubing, and ice skating. There are no ski areas within Kalamazoo County but Timber Ridge and Bittersweet are regional downhill ski facilities located just outside of Kalamazoo County and both facilities also offer snow tubing.

Section 6

BASIS FOR ACTION

Public Input Workshop

Issues Identified

Ranked in Order of Importance

1. *Increase park usage by offering new facilities, activities, and programs.*
2. *Increase funding and explore new opportunities.*
3. *Provide new and expanded features and park facilities.*
4. *Improve parks marketing.*
5. *Ensure park facilities are well maintained, clean, and safe to use.*
6. *Assure parks are ADA compliant and accessible.*
7. *Preserve and acquire natural resources and green space.*
8. *Maximize use of collaborative relationships and volunteers.*

Justification

On April 17 and 18, 2008, the Park and Recreation Commission held two Public Input Workshops. The workshops had a total of 42 participants and 29 Kalamazoo organizations were represented.

Participants developed a list of the top issues related to parks and recreation in Kalamazoo County as individuals. Groups were then randomly formed and each group narrowed the individual issues to come up with the group's top five issues. Each group presented their issues and duplicates between groups were combined. Each person then voted to identify which issues the group felt were most important to Kalamazoo County Parks. Groups were then assigned issues and developed goals and actions for each.

The number one issue identified at the workshops was to increase park usage. The goal identified was to encourage diversification of park facilities and programs to meet the needs of County population with emphasis on the uniqueness and features of each park.

Recommendations to reach this goal included developing diverse programs that will attract more people, target programs for youth and families, provide a variety of facilities that will attract new users, analyze where needs are to develop new facilities and programs with emphasis in low usage seasons.

The second issue identified was the need to increase funding and explore new funding opportunities. The goal identified was to increase funding to reach the goal of self-sufficiency by 2013. Recommendations to reach the goal included increasing attendance to generate more user fees, utilize grants, sponsorships, and endowments, explore a millage, develop new facilities and activities, increase promotion and sales of season passes.

The third issue identified was the need to acquire and expand parks and continue the development of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail. The goal is to provide attractive facilities and to achieve geographic diversity to accommodate areas of concentrated population growth. Recommendations to reach the goal include acquiring a park in the west or northwest areas of the county, expand and provide new facilities at existing parks to increase usage and serve more people.

The fourth issue identified was the need to improve parks marketing. The goal is to develop a comprehensive marketing plan based on resident research and objective fact finding. Recommendations to reach the goal included improving knowledge of what the public wants, informing public with information on industry trends, developing effective strategies based on cost-benefit, increasing publicity and promotion, and creating messages appropriate to market segments.

The other issues identified were ensuring park facilities are well maintained, clean, and safe to use, assuring parks are ADA compliant and accessible, preserving and acquiring natural

resources and green space, and maximizing use of collaborative relationships and volunteers. Each of these goals were studied by the group and goals and actions were established.

Kalamazoo County Parks Ten-Year Strategic Plan 2004-2013

Issues Identified

1. *Need to provide innovative and unique park activities and attractions.*
2. *Need to improve existing and develop new park facilities.*
3. *Need to become financially self-sufficient.*
4. *Need to offer new special events and programming.*
5. *Need to increase park use through all seasons.*
6. *Need to improve parks marketing to increase use of existing facilities and to attract new events and visitors.*
7. *Need to develop master plans for all County Parks.*
8. *Explore alternative funding sources.*
9. *Need to address goals and vision as interconnected components.*

JUSTIFICATION

In January 2004 the County Board commissioned a strategic plan for the Kalamazoo County Parks system. The County Board appointed a Parks Strategic Planning Committee, with 15 participants. The strategic plan process included five public forums, dialogue with park professionals and input from local community leaders. The purpose of the plan was to set forth guidelines for the parks operation and development.

The vision for the plan, indicated on the Strategic Map, page 6-6, challenges Kalamazoo County Parks to be a widely recognized value for year-round outdoor recreation, relaxation, and learning, to be a respected contributor to the quality of life in Kalamazoo County, and to be a source of pride for our community. The plan indicates the vision can be achieved by creating innovative and unique park activities and attractions, by partnering extensively with community

resources, and by becoming financially self-sufficient.

Current local and State funding challenges have challenged many local government units to evaluate how services are offered and funded. The Strategic Themes and Goals, page 6-5, identifies the strategy for the County Parks to become self-sufficient by 2013. The strategy includes the goals of improving marketing efforts, providing revenue-generating activities and events, reducing operating costs, utilizing volunteers, partnering with other organizations, and pursuing alternative funding streams.

Table 6-1 indicates the progress that has been made toward the goal since 2004. Funding for the operations of the County Parks from the County General Fund has decreased from 46% in 2004 to 26% while actual expenses during this same period decreased by 2.6%. The progress has been achieved primarily in park operations by improving the quality of existing facilities, improving park maintenance, focusing on providing family friendly environments, changing marketing methods, reducing operating costs and through partnering with community resources.

Table 6-1: History of County Park Revenue Sources

	County Appropriation	Other County Park Revenue
2004	46%	54%
2005	38%	65%
2006	27%	73%
2007	26%	74%

Over the next five years the County Parks must focus on the development of quality, innovative park facilities and programs that attract visitors to the County Parks and meet the identified needs. The services must attract regional users and not duplicate facilities offered by other park and recreation providers. Future park master plans and development should include operation expense and revenue analysis.

Ten-Year Strategic Plan Mission and Vision

The Mission describes the purpose of the County Parks and outlines the reason County Parks exist. The Vision, on the other hand, builds upon the County Parks' unique potential and draws a picture of their future role in the community.

Mission

The mission of Kalamazoo's County Parks is to provide responsible stewardship and preservation of our green spaces and historic resources with recreation, relaxation, and learning opportunities for everyone.

Vision

In 2015, Kalamazoo's County Parks will be

- A widely recognized value for year-round outdoor recreation, relaxation, and learning.***
- A respected contributor to the quality of life in Kalamazoo County.***
- A source of pride for our community.***

We will achieve this vision by

- Creating innovative and unique park activities and attractions.***
- Partnering extensively with community resources.***
- Becoming financially self-sufficient.***

Ten-Year Strategic Plan Strategic Themes and Goals

Based on input from the five public forums, the Committee’s dialogues, review of literature, and Committee discussions, the Committee developed the following strategic themes and goals. These themes allowed members to group the numerous ideas and suggestions into specific goals and objectives that flowed into the strategic timelines on the following pages.

Recreation

- Complete Kalamazoo River Valley Trailway
- County Parks are family-friendly
- County Parks provide various sports facilities
- **County Parks provide well-maintained nature trails**

Relaxation

“passive recreation”

- County Parks campsites are fully utilized
- Water options are fully utilized

Learning

- County Parks provide a variety of interpretive and educational opportunities

Community and Customer Service

- County Parks provide a service to the community
- Customer service is first-class

Financial Sustainability

Sell More

- Marketing targets revenue-generating events
- Provide revenue-generating activities and events for unique recreation, relaxation, and learning opportunities

Spend Less

- Reduce operating cost whenever possible
- County Parks utilize volunteers whenever possible

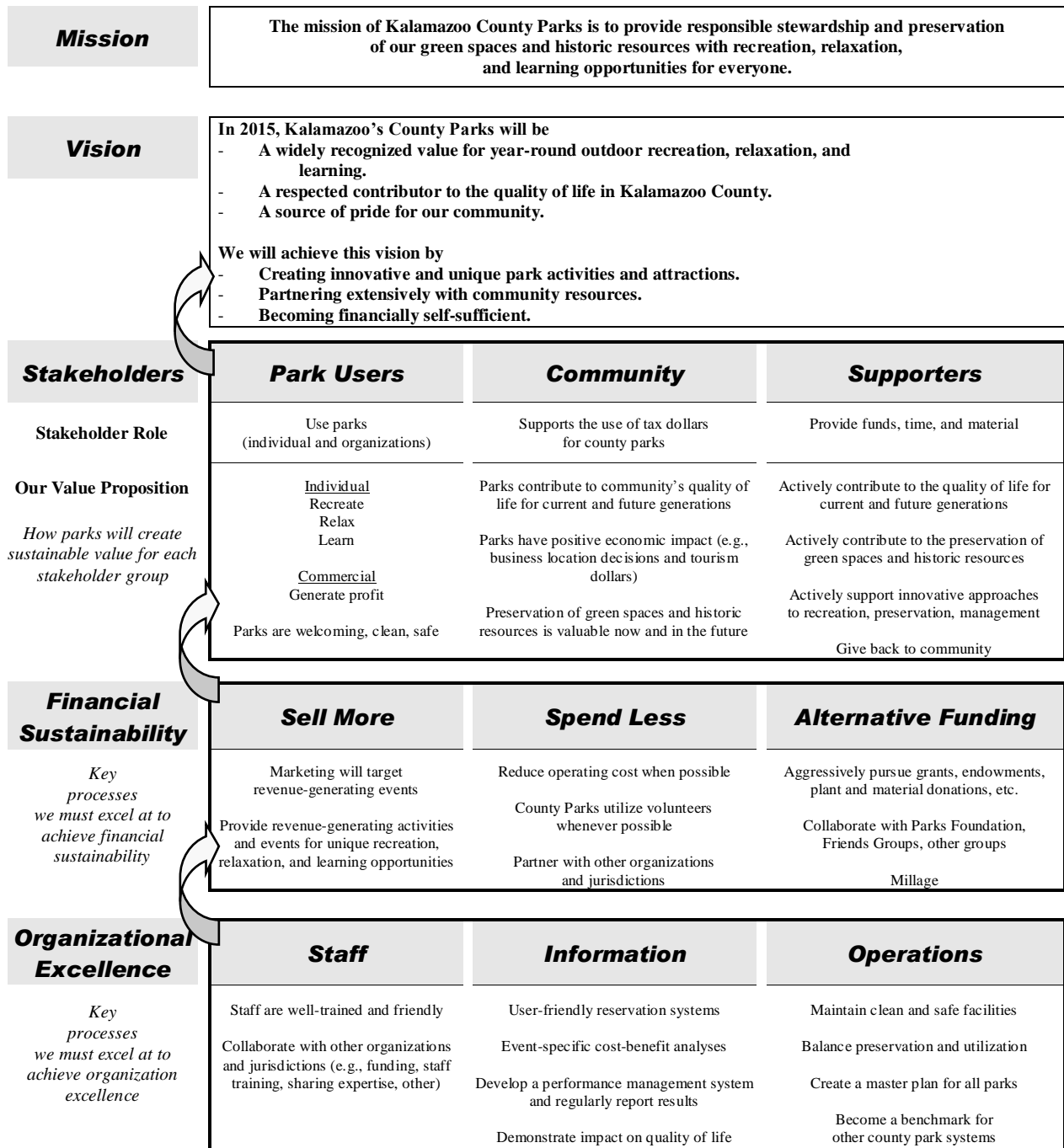
Aggressively pursue alternative funding streams

Organizational Excellence

- All County Parks have a master plan
- Staff are well-trained and knowledgeable
- Maintain adequate infrastructure and equipment
- Preserve green space

Ten-Year Strategic Plan Strategy Map

This map, based on the strategic themes on the opposite page, shows the logic behind the Ten-Year Plan: Operational Excellence and Financial Sustainability are the foundation for creating value for the Parks' stakeholder groups and for accomplishing the Parks' Mission and Vision.



Park Master Plans

Issues Identified

1. *Develop Kalamazoo County Expo Center & Fairground and the Kalamazoo River Valley Trailway in accordance with site master plans and phases.*
2. *Develop site master plans for Prairie View, Scotts Mill, Cold Brook, and River Oaks County Parks.*

Justification

A site master plan was developed in 2006 for the Kalamazoo County Expo Center & Fairground through the professional services of the architectural firm Slocum Architects. The planning process included public participation and public preliminary plan presentations. A summary is provided in the master plan. The goal of the process was to develop a site master plan that will enable the County Parks to increase net operating revenue, increase tourism in Kalamazoo County, improve the sites marketability, and provide facilities that will meet the identified needs. A long-range vision will allow development and improvements in an orderly manner based on the clearly established goals and priorities.

During 2003, Kalamazoo County contracted with Economics Research Associates (ERA), to do a feasibility study on the County's Fairground operations. ERA concluded that the Kalamazoo County Fairground has considerable potential to expand its current events as well as to add new activities for both the local and regional demographic markets. The study also indicated that failure to continue to modernize the facility would lead to eventual loss of currently desirable and profitable events.

In January 2004, the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners established a Fairground Focus Group to review ERA's recommendations, to determine how to

proceed with the recommendations, and to establish a timeline to accomplish the recommendations. A major task defined by the Focus Group was to complete a new master plan for the Kalamazoo County Fairground. The completed master plan is broken into three distinct projects with Project one focused on improvements to existing facilities, project two addresses additional expo space needs, and project three addresses regional planning and transportation.

Project one is broken into seven phases and the total planned improvements are estimated at 3.3 million dollars. Phase 1 included renovations of the 55,000 sq. ft. Expo Center and was completed in 2007.

Project three included development of a multi-jurisdictional plan for grant funding opportunities with the City of Kalamazoo, the Township of Kalamazoo, and MDOT for the I-94-BL corridor from Sprinkle Road to Michigan Avenue. The plan was adopted by the Kalamazoo County Park Commission, Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners, the City of Kalamazoo, and the Charter Township of Kalamazoo in 2007 and implementation efforts are ongoing.

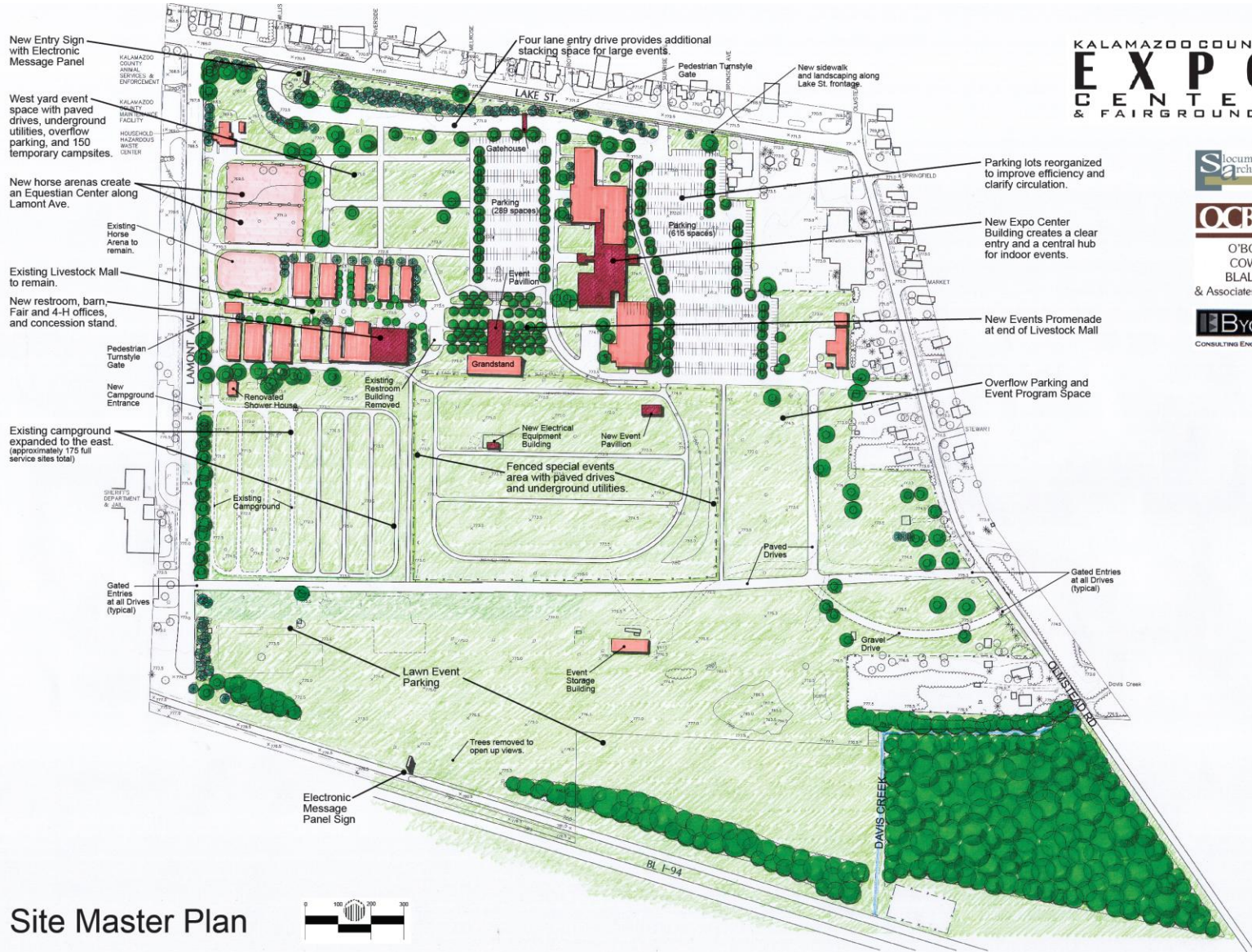
The Kalamazoo River Valley Trailway(KRVT) Master Plan was developed between 1997-2001 by the City of Kalamazoo, the Forum for Kalamazoo County, and the Kalamazoo River Valley Trailway Partnership. The planning process included extensive public input through large citizen forums, local government participation, focus groups, public meetings, local citizen community planning teams, and public plan input sessions. In November 2000, the Kalamazoo Board of Commissioners directed the Kalamazoo County Parks Commission to pursue the implementation of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trailway as a County Park.

The plan outlines development of a 40-mile non-motorized trail system that will connect over 140 miles of regional trails. The trail will connect Battle Creek to South Haven and is an important link for the Lake Michigan to Lake Huron Airline Trail. Planned funding for the proposed \$16,000,000 budget included \$8,000,000 in government grant funding and \$8,000,000 from local fundraising by the Parks Foundation of Kalamazoo County. Future operation and maintenance of the County Park trail will be funded with revenue from a \$2,000,000 endowment that will be held at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation.

In 2004, the first mile of the KRV Trail from 10th Street to Drake Road opened in an

unimproved state. In 2008, a 4.8 mile section of 12 foot paved KRV Trail was constructed and opened for public use. The trail begins at Westnedge Avenue and ends at 10th Street and connects to the Kal-Haven Trail making 38.3 miles of trail available from Downtown Kalamazoo to Lake Michigan. In 2008 the plan budget and schedule was updated.

Scotts Mill County Park, Prairie View County Park, Cold Brook, and River Oaks County Park have not had comprehensive site master planning for extended periods and each site has significant planning needs that will benefit from appropriate planning efforts. The lack of plans is an immediate need and is a high priority.



Summary of Master Plan Projects & Projected Budget

PROJECT I

Phase 1	Kalamazoo County Center Expo Center Renovations	\$ 737,043
Phase 2	Restrooms, Barn, Fair & 4H Office with Concession Stand	\$ 714,285
Phase 3	Site Utilities Upgrade	\$ 462,106
Phase 4	Campground Improvements & Expansion	\$ 451,259
Phase 5	West Yard & Outdoor Event Space	\$ 460,284
Phase 6	Outdoor Event Space	\$ 276,144
Phase 7	Parking & Road Improvements	\$ 244,200

PROJECT I TOTAL \$ 3,345,321

PROJECT II

New Exposition Space & Central Hub – 36,000sq.ft.

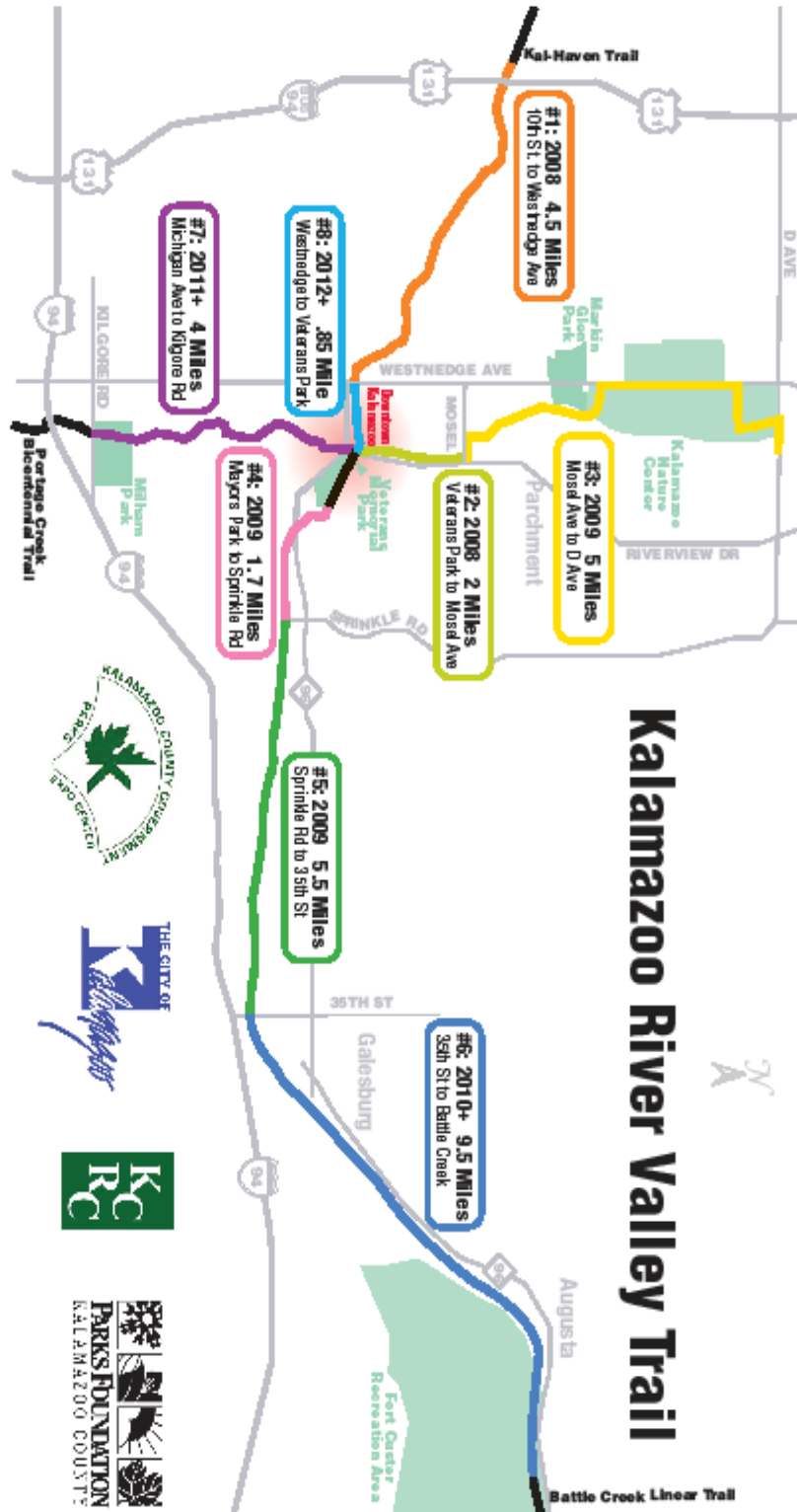
PROJECT II TOTAL \$ 3,796,320

PROJECT III

Lake Street Improvements

PROJECT III TOTAL \$ 246,576

Grand Total \$ 7,388,217



UPDATED KRV TRAIL BUDGET & SCHEDULE

12/1/2008

2008 Construction

10th St. to Westnedge Ave \$1,600,000

2009 Construction

Veterans Park to Moel Ave. \$ 2,400,000

2009 Construction

Mosel to D Avenue \$2,200,000

2009 Construction

Mayors Riverfront Park to Sprinkle Rd \$1,640,000

2010 Construction

Sprinkle to 35th St. \$ 2,600,000

Beyond 2010

35th St to Battle Creek \$ 2,500,000

Portage Creek Trail \$ 1,600,000

Downtown Connection \$ 460,000

Operation & Maintenance Endowment \$ 2,000,000

TOTAL **\$17,000,000**

County Recreation Trends

Issues Identified

1. *Need for updated group picnic facilities in parks that provide a variety of quality recreation experiences.*
2. *Need to develop new facilities, recreation opportunities that will increase use and offset operating expenses at parks and during seasons that are underutilized.*
3. *Need to eliminate dated facilities that are in poor condition and no longer used.*
4. *Need to upgrade existing facilities.*
5. *Some of the current County Parks are underutilized due to limited recreation opportunities.*
6. *Need to develop indoor rental lodges to service group reservations and to increase recreation opportunity through all seasons and weather.*

Justification

When planning for future park and recreation needs, Kalamazoo County’s current park use, recent recreation issues, and existing facility needs are used to determine the services that are needed and desired by the community.

Park Use Trends

Kalamazoo County’s park use trends were gathered from park reservation statistics, analysis of park attendance, revenues, expenses, and through the experience and knowledge of Kalamazoo County’s park staff.

Table 6-2 indicates that Markin Glen and Prairie View have the highest number of reserved group picnics. Both parks are primarily used for family and company picnics in the peak summer months. The parks provide a wide variety of recreation opportunities, including beaches and campgrounds that are desired for group outings. Each of these parks also offer five picnic areas available for reservation.

Underutilized facilities with the greatest potential are the River Oaks Oak Grove Shelter, the Scotts Mill Gregersen Shelter and Wedding Site, and Prairie View Shelter Five. In 2007 the County Parks began replacing picnic shelters and to date area #1 at Prairie View and the Boat Ramp Shelter at Cold Brook have been replaced. Conditions of existing facilities requires that the River Oaks Oak Grove Shelter, Shelters 3 and 4 at Prairie View, the Gregersen Shelter at Scotts Mill, and the Woods Shelter at Cold Brook should also be replaced. Shelters 2 and 8 at Prairie View and shelters 1 and 2 at River Oaks should be permanently removed.

The seasonality of picnic shelter rentals suggests the need for year-round picnic facilities that could be used for large family gatherings and company outings. The beach house at Prairie View is currently rented between Labor Day and Memorial Day. In 2007 there were only 4 reservations but this is limited primarily because occupancy of the building is limited to 40 people.

Table 6-2: # of Picnic Area Reservations by Park

County Park	Picnic Area	# Res.
Cold Brook	Beach Shelter	10
	Boat Ramp Shelter	21
	Woods Shelter	15
Markin Glen	Beach Shelter	7
	Comm. Found. Shelter	18
	Meijer Shelter	17
	Thorne	16
	Tyler	13
Prairie View	Shelter 1	25
	Shelter 3	25
	Shelter 4	13
	Shelter 5	9
	Shelter 9	16
River Oaks	Big Shelter	30
	Oak Grove	7
Scotts Mill	Gregersen Shelter	3
	Weddings	5

Table 6-3 indicates the cost of operating each County Park and the revenue that is generated primarily through user fees. Overall, 70% of park operating expenses are offset by revenue. Cold Brook's revenue funds 77% of expenses, Markin Glen's revenue funds 86% of expenses and Scott's Mill revenue exceeds expenses by 23%. Revenue at River Oaks funds 60% of expenses and Prairie View revenue funds 47% of expenses.

The greatest opportunities to provide new revenue to offset the operational expenses are at Prairie View and River Oaks County Parks. These parks differ from Markin Glen and Cold Brook by offering fewer recreational opportunities. Prairie Views primary uses are the swimming beach and picnic areas and use is concentrated from Memorial Day to Labor Day. River Oaks primary use is the soccer facilities and slow times at the park are the middle of June through the middle of September and during the winter months. These limited uses and seasons suggest that additional facilities and recreation opportunities are appropriate at both.

While Scotts Mill revenue is funding the operation expenses of the park, the attendance at 12,819 is far below the other parks. This indicates there is an opportunity to attract new visitors.

Table 6-3: 2007 Park Budget and Attendance Statistics

PARK	OPERATING EXPENSE	OPERATING REVENUE	ATTENDANCE
Cold Brook	\$153,098	\$117,882	130,527
Markin Glen	\$145,138	\$124,785	45,156
Prairie View	\$127,350	\$ 60,205	79,377
River Oaks	\$109,333	\$ 66,000	278,940
Scotts Mill	\$ 13,570	\$ 16,721	12,819
TOTALS	\$548,489	\$385,593	546,819

Localized Recreation Trends

The need for the following recreation facilities and recreation uses for Kalamazoo County Parks have been identified through the Ten-Year Strategic Plan for Kalamazoo's County Parks, input from County Park's staff, recreation trends, recreation needs/opportunity based on evaluation of the completed recreation inventories, and public input. Development of these facilities are appropriate within the Kalamazoo County Parks and should be incorporated into site master plans or developed independently as determined appropriate by the Kalamazoo County Parks Commission.

- **Dog Parks**
- **Splash Parks**
- **Destination Playground**
- **Company, family and group picnics facilities**
- **Non-motorized multi-use trails**
- **Recreation Programs and Special Events**
- **Mountain Biking Facilities**
- **Kayaking and Canoeing**
- **Disc Golf Facilities**

Existing Facility Needs

Existing facility needs have been established through the Ten-Year Strategic Plan for Kalamazoo's County Parks and through input from Kalamazoo County Parks Employees. The following improvement projects are warranted based on the condition of existing facilities, age of existing facilities, and impact on recreation uses and visitors.

Picnic Shelter Upgrades

Kalamazoo County Parks currently has 22 picnic shelters. Shelter 1 at Prairie View and the Cold Brook Boat Ramp Shelter were replaced since 2007 and the 6 picnic shelters at Markin Glen are also newer structures. The remaining shelters were primarily constructed in the late 1960's or early 1970's and are in need of replacement. Shelters in very poor condition that have very limited uses and lack adequate support facilities should be removed. This includes shelters 1 and 2 at River Oaks County Park and Shelter 2 and 8 at Prairie View County Park. Future needs for these areas should be addressed through site master plans.

Cold Brook Campground Upgrades

With the large number of users, changes in types of camping units, and the age of existing infrastructure, the restrooms, electric system, water system, and site parking areas are in need of renovation.

Cold Brook Rustic Campground

Limited improvements to the Cold Brook Rustic Campground were completed in 2006 and additional needs include new restroom facilities, site development and improvements, water improvements, and erosion control.

Markin Glen Group Campground

The Markin Glen group campground was originally developed during phase I on the west side of the park. The camping area was not properly licensed by the MDEQ, had limited use, and lacks potable water. The area has been closed to public use due to these limitations and limited use/revenue. Camping should be re-opened as a youth organization camping area.

River Oaks Soccer Irrigation

In 2005 the River Oaks Soccer Improvement Project was completed. The project included installation of a new 4" municipal water line along the north soccer fields. The 4" municipal lines supply the current irrigation for the 20 fields and they feed two real irrigators. This system is extremely limited by hours available to irrigate, low irrigation rate, manual operation, and fees for municipal water use. With the recent dramatic increase in soccer field use, adequately irrigating the soccer turf is essential. Consideration for a new system should include automation, zone irrigation, and ground or surface water supply.

Parks Maintenance Building

The Parks maintenance building located at the Kalamazoo County Expo Center & Fairground is in need of replacement or renovation.

Beach Accessibility

Access to the beaches at Prairie View and Cold Brook County Park does not meet current ADA requirements.

Markin Glen Restroom Building for Picnic Shelters

The existing beach house at Markin Glen County Park services the 4 picnic areas on the East side of the park. For picnickers to use these facilities they must cross the parking area and travel a long-distance. With the increase in group outings and park visitors, consideration should be given to additional restroom facilities closer to group picnic areas.

Barrier-Free Compliance

Issues Identified

1. *Current parks and facilities must be updated to meet ADA barrier-free requirements.*
2. *As park areas are planned and developed, they will meet the varying needs of people with disabilities and the elderly.*

JUSTIFICATION

With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities act of 1990 (ADA), all areas of public service and accommodation became subject to barrier-free requirements, including parks and recreation facilities and programs. An important step of this plan was the evaluation of the County's park and recreation system's accessibility to persons with disabilities.

Common park components that need to be provided barrier-free include: parking, paths of travel from parking, street or sidewalk to activity areas, the activity areas themselves, signage, support facilities such as restrooms, surfacing, and communications required for recreation programs and general use of a facility.

Table 6-4 indicates the overall status of each County Park. Prairie View County Park has several facilities and access routes that do not meet current accessibility guidelines. The greatest deficiencies are access to the swimming beach, picnic shelters, shelter restrooms, playgrounds, and trails.

Table 6-4: County Park Accessibility

COUNTY PARK	ACCESIBILTY RANKING
Cold Brook County Park	3
Kalamazoo County Expo Center & Fairground	3
Kalamazoo River Valley Trail	5
Markin Glen County Park	5
Prairie View County Park	2
River Oaks County Park	3
Scotts Mill County Park	3

Ranking Guidelines

- 1 = none of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 2 = some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 3 = most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 4 = the entire park meets accessibility guidelines
- 5 = the entire park was developed/renovated using the principals of universal design

Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation is committed to providing facilities that are barrier-free and accessible for the enjoyment of all persons. Removal of some current barriers is readily achievable while others will require more time and planning to accomplish. Kalamazoo County Parks is integrating the accessibility target needs into the Capital Improvement Schedule and future park master plans.

As new park and recreation facilities are planned and constructed, features must be included that create opportunities rather than barriers for participation and enjoyment. As park areas are planned and designed, they will meet the varying needs of people with disabilities and the elderly. Construction and plans will conform to the standards established by the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board.

Public Draft Review & Comments

A draft of the Kalamazoo County Park and Recreation Master Plan was made available on the Kalamazoo County Parks Website and a copy was available for review at the Kalamazoo County Parks Office. Public Workshop participants and stakeholders were notified that the draft was available for review. Notice was also sent to local media and was published in the Kalamazoo Gazette. Comments were accepted in written format and through the Kalamazoo County Parks Website by way of email.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

1. Need for park in Western portion of the County. Consider property owned by Kalamazoo County adjacent to KL Landfill.
2. During design phase of future park development projects, include the Disability Network Southwest Michigan for suggestions.
3. The Boat Ramp at Prairie View County Park needs to be improved.
4. Hours of parks are open should be extended for fishermen.

Section 7

ACTION PLAN

Goals and Objectives

The information gathered in the development of the Basis for Action has been analyzed and broken down into a series of goals and specific operational objectives. These goal statements relate to the park department's funding, facility development, property acquisition and review of current parks, public awareness, barrier free compliance, and administration. The goals are printed in **bold text**, followed by very specific and attainable objectives.

Funding

Develop and strengthen current funding sources and opportunities.

1. Become financially self-sufficient by 2013.
2. Successfully maintain and provide new facilities to increase support for new investment in parks, increase park use, and increase operating revenue.
3. Increase the amount of funding available by using State, Federal, and private grants where feasible.
4. Continue to utilize user fees as necessary and where appropriate to increase revenue for park operations and improvements.
5. Place emphasis on increasing current park endowment funds.
6. Reduce operating expenses whenever possible. Utilize volunteers when possible.
7. Partner with other organizations and jurisdictions.

Consider new funding sources and opportunities.

1. Develop and finance new endowment funds to support operations and future park improvement projects.
2. Provide revenue-generating activities and events for unique recreation, relaxation, and learning opportunities.
3. Evaluate operation expenses and potential revenue income with proposed park projects.
4. Target marketing towards revenue generating events. Work closely with the Kalamazoo County Convention and Visitors Bureau.
5. Explore a County-wide millage proposal to finance new parks, facilities, and operations. Explore the feasibility of a County-wide millage that would share revenue between Kalamazoo County and local government units.

Facility Development

Develop facilities to meet the current and future recreation needs of Kalamazoo County.

1. Complete phases outlined in the Kalamazoo Expo Center & Fairground and Kalamazoo River Valley Trailway Master Plans.
2. Continue to promote the development and improvement of regional, nature based activities, such as swimming beaches, camping, group picnics, fishing, hiking, playgrounds, picnicking, and winter related activities such as sledding, cross-country skiing, and support facilities such as parking lots, road access, and infrastructure.
3. Provide innovative recreational opportunities on a regional scale as appropriate. Regional nature and wildlife areas, campgrounds, mountain bike areas, historical displays, winter activities, and other unique or innovative ideas.
4. Continue development of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail linear park comprised of a paved multi-use trail for biking, walking, in-line skating, and other non-motorized uses.
5. Give priority to facilities that will meet the greatest resource oriented recreation need.
6. Develop park facilities with the purpose of encouraging year-round and multiple uses.

Develop facilities that are appropriate for a resource based County Park system in a responsible manner.

1. Design facilities to be appropriate with the natural or historical features of each site.

2. Develop facilities that are cost effective. Strive for low maintenance costs and fee revenue potential.
3. County Parks provide a variety of interpretive and educational opportunities. Interpretive signage should be a part of County Parks. These facilities provide the opportunity to better understand the natural or historical significance of the site and the resources protected.
4. Develop resource management goals and plans.
5. Prepare and maintain park master plans for each park.

Acquisition

Acquire property to meet the present and future recreation needs of Kalamazoo County

1. Acquisition of property adding to existing parks. This approach will improve management efficiency, reduce costs, increase revenue potential, better protect resources, and provide a wider range of recreational opportunity at a site.
2. Critical types of sites to be acquired include waterfront properties and land in portions of the County underrepresented in the system, especially the growing western portion of the County.

Public Awareness

Promote the visibility and image of the park system to existing and potential users within the County and region.

1. Develop annual marketing plan and goals with measurable performance indicators.
2. Marketing targets revenue-generating events.
3. Promote the visibility and image of the park system to existing and potential users within the County and region.
4. Increase the awareness of the park system with identification signs at key vehicle and pedestrian locations, not limited to park entrances. Maintain directional signs from cities and state highways.
5. Use park logo on all brochures, literature, signage, displays, and County vehicles.
6. Park literature should be updated and upgraded regularly. Provide an overall park brochure for each park, literature for targeted activities, and literature targeted to key market segments.
7. Promote parks through special events and seasonal activities.
8. Regularly use press releases to promote general park features and activities as well as special events and seasonal activities.
9. Promote the benefits of preserving and protecting natural features and cultural heritage.
10. Continue to work with the Kalamazoo County Convention and Visitors Bureau to promote tourism opportunities in Kalamazoo County.

11. Communicate regularly with County government and local governments to raise awareness and support.
12. Develop partnerships with other park entities and municipalities within the County, recreational user groups, public service organizations, corporations, and special interest groups.

Barrier-Free Status

Meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

1. Bring all parks and facilities up to standards established by the ADA.
2. Plan and develop facilities that are truly universal in accessibility.
3. Consult with experts during facility design phase.

Administration

Maintain quality staff.

1. Provide training and development of staff.
2. Customer service is first-class and County Parks provide a service to the community.
3. Add professional parks supervisor for the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail.
4. Maintain membership with professional associations including the National Recreation and Park Association, the Michigan Recreation and Park Association, and the Michigan Association of County Park and Recreation Officials.
5. Hire professionally trained people to perform specific tasks.

Improve and develop new partnerships.

1. Work closely with Parks Foundation of Kalamazoo County.
2. Continue or develop partnerships with County Park user groups, special interest groups, special events, and youth sport organizations. Partnerships should be mutually beneficial and revenue should offset operating expenses.
3. Recognize and encourage involvement of County and township law enforcement personnel to continue the tradition of safe recreation opportunities.
4. Continue to work closely with the Kalamazoo County Road Commission, the Finance Department and other departments of Kalamazoo County that provide specialized and expert skills.

5. Coordinate efforts of park departments, cities, villages, townships and user group organizations to develop County-wide multi-use, non-motorized trail system.

Continue to use planning tools to meet the recreation needs of Kalamazoo County in a logical, responsible manner.

1. Establish park development plans for all County parks.
2. Update Kalamazoo County Park and Recreation Master Plan every 5 years.

Continue to meet high park maintenance standards.

1. Continue and increase landscaping around park facilities and entrance signs.
2. Add benches to parks.
3. Develop a tree maintenance and replacement strategy.
4. Continue replacing aged picnic tables.
5. Continue training for park's staff.
6. Hire professionally trained people to perform specific tasks.

Table 7-1

Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation – Capital Improvement Schedule 2009-2013				
Year	Proposed Project		Cost Estimate	Funding Sources
2009	1	Phase II of the Kalamazoo County Expo Center & Fairground Master Plan	\$750,000	Accom Tax, Local Funds
	2	Kalamazoo River Valley Trail: Gull Road To Mosel (2 miles)	\$2,200,000	Parks Found, MDOT, Local Funds
	3	Complete master plan for Prairie View County Park	\$12,000	Local Funds
	4	Complete master plan for Scotts Mill County Park	\$10,000	Local Funds
	5	Cold Brook County Park Boat Ramp Improvement Project	\$50,000	MDNR-Grants, Local Funds
	6	Replace Picnic Shelter at River Oaks County Park, Oak Grove Picnic Area	\$21,000	Local Funds
	7	Prairie View County Park Walking Trail	\$20,000	State of Michigan Grant
	8	Explore addition of Park Programming/Special Events	Scope Dependent	Local Funds
	9	Markin Glen County Park group camping area	\$10,000	Local Funds
2010	1	Implement Phase I of the Prairie View County Park Master Plan	Scope Dependent	MDNR-Grants, Local Funds
	2	Kalamazoo River Valley Trail: Mayor's Riverfront Park to Sprinkle Road	\$1,700,000	Parks Found, MDOT, Local Funds
	3	River Oaks County Park Irrigation Updates Phase I	Scope Dependent	Local Funds, Soccer Organizations
	4	Replace Picnic Shelter at Prairie View County Park Area #3	\$22,000	Local Funds
	5	Implement Park Programming and Special Event goals	Scope Dependent	Program Revenue, Local Funds
	6	Cold Brook County Park Campground Upgrades	Scope Dependent	Local Funds
	7	Parking Lot Repairs	\$40,000	Local Funds
2011	1	Phase I Scotts Mill County Park Master Plan	Scope Dependent	MDNR-Grants, Local Funds

2011	2	Phase III of the Kalamazoo County Expo Center and Fairground Master Plan	\$485,000	Accom Tax, Local Funds
	3	Kalamazoo River Valley Trail: 35 th Street to Sprinkle Road	\$2,550,000	Parks Found, MDOT, Local Funds, MDNR-Grants
	4	Develop River Oaks Master Plan	\$12,000	Local Funds
	5	Replace Picnic Shelter at Prairie View County Park, Picnic Area #4	\$25,000	Local Funds
	6	River Oaks County Park Irrigation Updates Phase II	Scope Dependent	Local Funds, Soccer Organizations
	7	Cold Brook County Park Campground Updates	Scope Dependent	Local Funds
	8	Parking Lot Repairs	\$40,000	Local Funds
2012	1	Implement Phase I: River Oaks County Park Master Plan	Scope Dependent	MDNR-Grants, Local Funds
	2	Kalamazoo River Valley Trail: 35 th Street to Fort Custer	\$2,500,000	Parks Found, MDOT, Local Funds, MDNR-Grants
	3	Replace Picnic Shelter at Cold Brook County Park, Woods Picnic Area	\$25,000	Local Funds
	4	River Oaks County Park Irrigation Updates Phase III	Scope Dependent	Local Funds, Soccer Organizations
	5	Parking Lot Repairs	\$40,000	Local Funds
2013	1	Implement Phase II: Prairie View County Park Master Plan	Scope Dependent	MDNR Grants, Local Funds
	2	Phase IV of the Kalamazoo County Expo Center and Fairground Master Plan	\$450,000	Accom Tax, Local Funds
	3	Kalamazoo River Valley Trail: Downtown Connection and Portage Creek Connection	\$2,000,000	Parks Found, MDOT, Local Funds, MDNR-Grants
	4	Develop Cold Brook County Park Master Plan	\$15,000	Local Funds
	5	River Oaks County Park Irrigation Updates Phase IV	Scope Dependent	Local Funds, Soccer Organizations
	6	Parking Lot Repairs	\$40,000	Local Funds

Local Funds: Includes County Appropriation, cash donations, local service clubs, fund raising, cooperative agreements with local municipalities

Parks Found: Parks Foundation of Kalamazoo County

MDNR-NRTF: Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Natural Resource Trust Fund Grant

MDOT: Michigan Department of Transportation Grant Programs

Accom Tax: Kalamazoo County Accommodation Tax

Parks Found: Parks Foundation of Kalamazoo County

Capital Improvement Actions

2009	1. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will complete Phase II of the Kalamazoo County Expo Center & Fairground Master Plan.</p> <p>Location: Kalamazoo County Expo Center & Fairground</p> <p>Justification: Proposed facility upgrades at the Kalamazoo County Expo Center & Fairground is a high priority based on the 2006 Kalamazoo County Expo Center & Fairground Master Plan, the Ten-Year Strategic Plan for Kalamazoo County Parks, public input workshop, County Recreation Trends, and Barrier-Free Compliance. Phase two includes a new livestock exhibit building and new event restrooms.</p>

2009	2. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will complete Gull Road to Mosel Avenue (2 miles) of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail.</p> <p>Location: Kalamazoo River Valley Trail</p> <p>Justification: Completion of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail was identified as a high priority through the public input workshop, in the Kalamazoo County Parks Ten-Year Strategic Plan, in the Kalamazoo River Valley Trailway Master Plan and additional justification is offered in the County Recreation Trends, and Barrier-Free Compliance. The linear park will also offer outstanding recreation opportunities to a large portion of the County as indicated in analysis of Current Park Distribution and Facilities.</p>

2009	3. PARK PLANNING
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will complete development of a new master plan for Prairie View County Park</p> <p>Location: Prairie View County Park</p> <p>Justification: The development of a park master plan is essential to meet the current and future recreation needs of Kalamazoo County established in the Basis for Action. Public input and the County Park and Recreation Master Plan will be the foundation of the park's master plan.</p>

2009	4. PARK PLANNING
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will complete the development of a new master plan for Scotts Mill County Park.</p> <p>Location: Scotts Mill County Park</p> <p>Justification: The development of a park master plan is essential to meet the current and future recreation needs of Kalamazoo County established in the Basis for Action. Public input and the County Park and Recreation Master Plan will be the foundation of the park's master plan.</p>

2009	5. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will complete the Cold Brook County Park boat ramp improvement project.</p> <p>Location: Cold Brook County Park</p> <p>Justification: Current boat ramp facilities are in poor condition, do not meet the needs of current users, and do not meet Barrier-Free Compliance goals. Improved facilities are a high priority based on input from the public workshop, the Ten-Year Strategic Plan, County Recreation Trends, and Barrier-Free Compliance.</p>

2009	6. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will replace the picnic shelter at River Oaks County Park, Oak Grove Picnic Area.</p> <p>Location: River Oaks County Park</p> <p>Justification: Upgrading existing facilities was identified as a priority through the Public input Workshop, the Kalamazoo County Parks Ten-Year Strategic Plan, County Recreation Trends. Current facilities do not comply with ADA standards.</p>

2009	7. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will complete a Prairie View County Park walking trail.</p> <p>Location: Prairie View County Park</p> <p>Justification: Development of multi-use trails was identified as a priority at the public workshop and through County Recreation Trends. Prairie View has a good base of walkers and potential trail users. New facilities will provide needed Barrier-Free access.</p>

2009	8. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will explore addition of park programming and special events.</p> <p>Location: All county park locations.</p> <p>Justification: Park programs and special events were identified as important priorities at the Public Input Workshops and in the Kalamazoo County Parks Ten-Year Strategic Plan. Current administrative structure does support programming efforts. Successful programs and events will require appropriate resources.</p>

2009	9. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will develop Markin Glen group camping area.</p> <p>Location: Markin Glen County Park</p> <p>Justification: Most infrastructure is already in place for a Markin Glen group Camping area and there is a need for these facilities established in the County Recreation Trends. There is little opportunity for youth group camping facilities in the Kalamazoo County region. Group camping is supported in the Ten-Year Strategic Plan and the Public Input Workshop.</p>

2010	1. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will implement Phase I of the Prairie View County Park Master Plan.</p> <p>Location: Prairie View County Park</p> <p>Justification: Recreation facilities at Prairie View County Park are not adequately meeting the recreation needs of Kalamazoo County. The desire for improved facilities was a high priority based on the Public Input Workshop, Kalamazoo County Parks Ten-Year Strategic Plan, the County Recreation Trends, and Barrier-Free Compliance, and Current Park Distribution and Facilities. Improvements will be identified in the Parks Master Plan. Existing opportunities will be enhanced and based on needs, new opportunities will be provided.</p>

2010	2. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will complete construction of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail from Mayor’s Riverfront Park to Sprinkle Road.</p> <p>Location: Kalamazoo River Valley Trail</p> <p>Justification: Completion of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail was identified as a high priority through the public input workshop, in the Kalamazoo County Parks Ten-Year Strategic Plan, in the Kalamazoo River Valley Trailway Master Plan and additional justification is offered in the County Recreation Trends, and Barrier-Free Compliance. The linear park will also offer outstanding recreation opportunities to a large portion of the County as indicated in analysis of Current Park Distribution and Facilities.</p>

2010	3. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will complete River Oaks County Park Irrigation Update, Phase I.</p> <p>Location: River Oaks County Park</p> <p>Justification: Existing River Oaks irrigation system utilizes city water and does not adequately irrigate turf. With increase recreational use of facilities, it is essential to properly maintain turf. Maintaining existing facilities is a priority established through the Public Input Workshop, County Recreation Trends, and the Ten-Year Strategic Plan.</p>

2010	4. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will replace the picnic shelter at Prairie View County Park Area #3.</p> <p>Location: Prairie View County Park</p> <p>Justification: Upgrading existing facilities was identified as a priority through the Public input Workshop, the Kalamazoo County Parks Ten-Year Strategic Plan, County Recreation Trends. Current facilities do not comply with ADA standards.</p>

2010	5. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will implement the park programming and special event goals established in 2009.</p> <p>Location: All county park locations.</p> <p>Justification: Park programs and special events were identified as important priorities at the Public Input Workshops and in the Kalamazoo County Parks Ten-Year Strategic Plan. Current administrative structure does support programming efforts. Successful programs and events will require appropriate resources.</p>

2010	6. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will complete Cold Brook County Park campground upgrades.</p> <p>Location: Cold Brook County Park</p> <p>Justification: Cold Brook County Park Campground is a popular recreation facility and infrastructure is reaching the end of life. Maintaining and improving existing facilities was identified as a priority at the Public Input Workshop, in county Recreation Trends, and in the Ten-Year Strategic Plan.</p>

2010	7. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will complete parking lot and park drive repairs.</p> <p>Location: All County Parks based on evaluation of greatest need.</p> <p>Justification: Maintaining existing is a priority established through the Public Workshop, County Recreation Trends, and the Ten-Year Strategic Plan. Appropriate planning and phasing will ensure long-term longevity of infrastructure.</p>

2011	1. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will complete Phase I of the Scotts Mill County Park Master Plan</p> <p>Location: Scotts Mill County Park</p> <p>Justification: Recreation opportunities at Scotts Mill County Park are not adequately meeting the recreation needs of Kalamazoo County. The desire for improved facilities was a high priority based on the Public Input Workshop, Kalamazoo County Parks Ten-Year Strategic Plan, the County Recreation Trends, and Barrier-Free Compliance, and Current Park Distribution and Facilities. Improvements will be identified in the Parks Master Plan. Existing opportunities will be enhanced and based on needs, new opportunities will be provided.</p>

2011	2. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will complete Phase III of the Kalamazoo County Expo Center & Fairground Master Plan.</p> <p>Location: Kalamazoo County Expo Center & Fairground</p> <p>Justification: Proposed facility upgrades at the Kalamazoo County Expo Center & Fairground is a high priority based on the 2006 Kalamazoo County Expo Center & Fairground Master Plan, the Ten-Year Strategic Plan for Kalamazoo County Parks, public input workshop, County Recreation Trends, and Barrier-Free Compliance. Phase two includes upgrading site utilities to build foundation for future development.</p>

2011	3. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will complete the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail from 35th Street to Sprinkle Road.</p> <p>Location: Kalamazoo River Valley Trail</p> <p>Justification: Completion of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail was identified as a high priority through the public input workshop, in the Kalamazoo County Parks Ten-Year Strategic Plan, in the Kalamazoo River Valley Trailway Master Plan and additional justification is offered in the County Recreation Trends, and Barrier-Free Compliance. The linear park will also offer outstanding recreation opportunities to a large portion of the County as indicated in analysis of Current Park Distribution and Facilities.</p>

2011	4. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will develop a River Oaks Master Plan.</p> <p>Location: River Oaks County Park</p> <p>Justification: The development of a park master plan is essential to meet the current and future recreation needs of Kalamazoo County established in the Basis for Action. Public input and the County Park and Recreation Master Plan will be the foundation of the park's master plan.</p>

2011	5. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will replace picnic shelter at Prairie View County Park, Picnic Area #4.</p> <p>Location: Prairie View County Park</p> <p>Justification: Upgrading existing facilities was identified as a priority through the Public input Workshop, the Kalamazoo County Parks Ten-Year Strategic Plan, County Recreation Trends. Current facilities do not comply with ADA standards.</p>

2011	6. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will complete River Oaks County Park Irrigation Update, Phase II.</p> <p>Location: River Oaks County Park</p> <p>Justification: Existing River Oaks irrigation system utilizes city water and does not adequately irrigate turf. With increase recreational use of facilities, it is essential to properly maintain turf. Maintaining existing facilities is a priority established through the Public Input Workshop, County Recreation Trends, and the Ten-Year Strategic Plan.</p>

2011	7. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will complete Cold Brook County Park Campground Updates.</p> <p>Location: Cold Brook County Park</p> <p>Justification: Cold Brook County Park Campground is a popular recreation facility and infrastructure is reaching the end of life. Maintaining and improving existing facilities was identified as a priority at the Public Input Workshop, in county Recreation Trends, and in the Ten-Year Strategic Plan.</p>

2011	8. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will complete parking lot and park drive repairs.</p> <p>Location: All County Parks based on evaluation of greatest need.</p> <p>Justification: Maintaining existing is a priority established through the Public Workshop, County Recreation Trends, and the Ten-Year Strategic Plan. Appropriate planning and phasing will ensure long-term longevity of infrastructure.</p>

2012	1. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will construct phase one of the River Oaks County Park Master Plan.</p> <p>Location: River Oaks County Park</p> <p>Justification: Recreation opportunities at River Oaks County Park are not adequately meeting the recreation needs of Kalamazoo County. The desire for improved facilities was a high priority based on the Public Input Workshop, Kalamazoo County Parks Ten-Year Strategic Plan, the County Recreation Trends, and Barrier-Free Compliance, and Current Park Distribution and Facilities. Improvements will be identified in the Parks Master Plan. Existing opportunities will be enhanced and based on needs, new opportunities will be provided.</p>

2012	2. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will complete the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail from 35th Street to Fort Custer.</p> <p>Location: Kalamazoo River Valley Trail</p> <p>Justification: Completion of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail was identified as a high priority through the public input workshop, in the Kalamazoo County Parks Ten-Year Strategic Plan, in the Kalamazoo River Valley Trailway Master Plan and additional justification is offered in the County Recreation Trends, and Barrier-Free Compliance. The linear park will also offer outstanding recreation opportunities to a large portion of the County as indicated in analysis of Current Park Distribution and Facilities.</p>

2012	3. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will replace picnic shelter at Cold Brook County Park, Woods Picnic Area</p> <p>Location: Cold Brook County Park</p> <p>Justification: Upgrading existing facilities was identified as a priority through the Public input Workshop, the Kalamazoo County Parks Ten-Year Strategic Plan, County Recreation Trends. Current facilities do not comply with ADA standards.</p>

2012	4. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will complete River Oaks County Park Irrigation Update, Phase III.</p> <p>Location: River Oaks County Park</p> <p>Justification: Existing River Oaks irrigation system utilizes city water and does not adequately irrigate turf. With increase recreational use of facilities, it is essential to properly maintain turf. Maintaining existing facilities is a priority established through the Public Input Workshop, County Recreation Trends, and the Ten-Year Strategic Plan.</p>

2012	5. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will complete parking lot and park drive repairs.</p> <p>Location: All County Parks based on evaluation of greatest need.</p> <p>Justification: Maintaining existing is a priority established through the Public Workshop, County Recreation Trends, and the Ten-Year Strategic Plan. Appropriate planning and phasing will ensure long-term longevity of infrastructure.</p>

2013	1. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will construct phase two of the Prairie View County Park Master Plan.</p> <p>Location: Prairie View County Park</p> <p>Justification: Recreation opportunities at Scotts Mill County Park are not adequately meeting the recreation needs of Kalamazoo County. The desire for improved facilities was a high priority based on the Public Input Workshop, Kalamazoo County Parks Ten-Year Strategic Plan, the County Recreation Trends, and Barrier-Free Compliance, and Current Park Distribution and Facilities. Improvements will be identified in the Parks Master Plan. Existing opportunities will be enhanced and based on needs, new opportunities will be provided.</p>

2013	2. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will complete Phase II of the Kalamazoo County Expo Center & Fairground Master Plan.</p> <p>Location: Kalamazoo County Expo Center & Fairground</p> <p>Justification: Proposed facility upgrades at the Kalamazoo County Expo Center & Fairground is a high priority based on the 2006 Kalamazoo County Expo Center & Fairground Master Plan, the Ten-Year Strategic Plan for Kalamazoo County Parks, public input workshop, County Recreation Trends, and Barrier-Free Compliance. Phase two includes a new livestock exhibit building and new event restrooms.</p>

2013	3. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will complete the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail Downtown Connection and Portage Creek Connection.</p> <p>Location: Kalamazoo River Valley Trail</p> <p>Justification: Completion of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail was identified as a high priority through the public input workshop, in the Kalamazoo County Parks Ten-Year Strategic Plan, in the Kalamazoo River Valley Trailway Master Plan and additional justification is offered in the County Recreation Trends, and Barrier-Free Compliance. The linear park will also offer outstanding recreation opportunities to a large portion of the County as indicated in analysis of Current Park Distribution and Facilities.</p>

2013	4. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will develop a Cold Brook County Park Master Plan.</p> <p>Location: Cold Brook County Park</p> <p>Justification: The development of a park master plan is essential to meet the current and future recreation needs of Kalamazoo County established in the Basis for Action. Public input and the County Park and Recreation Master Plan will be the foundation of the park's master plan.</p>

2013	5. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will complete River Oaks County Park Irrigation Update, Phase IV.</p> <p>Location: River Oaks County Park</p> <p>Justification: Existing River Oaks irrigation system utilizes city water and does not adequately irrigate turf. With increase recreational use of facilities, it is essential to properly maintain turf. Maintaining existing facilities is a priority established through the Public Input Workshop, County Recreation Trends, and the Ten-Year Strategic Plan.</p>

2013	6. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
	<p>Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation will complete parking lot and park drive repairs.</p> <p>Location: All County Parks based on evaluation of greatest need.</p> <p>Justification: Maintaining existing is a priority established through the Public Workshop, County Recreation Trends, and the Ten-Year Strategic Plan. Appropriate planning and phasing will ensure long-term longevity of infrastructure.</p>

Property Acquisition

Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation realizes that property acquisition goals must be flexible. Land for acquisition may become available on short notice or may be difficult to obtain. Due to the short notice of property availability for purchase, funding may be difficult to obtain. It may be necessary to purchase property ahead of development schedule and create a land bank for future park development.

Acquisition Goals

1. Acquire necessary property for the Kalamazoo River Valley Trailway.
2. Add land to existing County Parks to provide regional facilities and better protect natural resources. This will help to achieve the goal of providing a wider range of recreation opportunities.
3. Acquire land, for future development of a new County Park in the western portion of the County with primary emphasis given to property with unique natural characteristics.

Section 8

ADOPTION



PARKS AND EXPO CENTER

2900 LAKE STREET • KALAMAZOO, MI 49048

PHONE: (269) 383-8778 • FAX (269) 383-8724

www.kalcounty.com/parks

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT RECREATION PLAN

WHEREAS, the County of Kalamazoo has undertaken a Five-Year Parks and Recreation Plan which describes the physical features, existing recreation facilities and the desired actions to be taken to improve and maintain recreation facilities during the period between 2009 and 2013, and;

WHEREAS, public comment sessions were held on April 17 and 18, 2008 to provide an opportunity for citizens to express opinions, ask questions, and discuss all aspects of the Recreation Plan;

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held on February 12, 2009 at the Kalamazoo County Park Commission Meeting and;

WHEREAS, the Kalamazoo County Parks & Recreation Commission has developed the plan for the benefit of the entire community and to adopt the plan as a document to assist in meeting the recreation needs of the community and;

WHEREAS, after the public meetings the Kalamazoo County Park & Recreation Commission voted to adopt said Recreation Plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Kalamazoo County Park & Recreation Commission hereby submits said plan to the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners for their consideration and approval.

Date of Adoption

Kalamazoo County Park & Recreation Commission

Thomas Matteson, Chairman

Karen L. Ward, Secretary

Kalamazoo County Park & Recreation Commission

County of Kalamazoo
Board of Commissioners
Park & Recreation Commission Five-Year Recreation Plan

Resolution of Adoption

WHEREAS, the County of Kalamazoo, Park & Recreation Commission has undertaken a Five-Year Parks and Recreation Plan which describes the physical features, existing recreation facilities and the desired actions to be taken to improve and maintain recreation facilities during the period between 2009 and 2013, and;

WHEREAS, two public comment sessions were held on April 17 and 18, 2008 to provide an opportunity for citizens to express opinions, ask questions, and discuss all aspects of the Recreation Plan, and;

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held on February 12, 2009 at the Kalamazoo County Park Commission Meeting, and;

WHEREAS, the Kalamazoo County Park & Recreation Commission has developed a Five-Year Plan for the benefit of the entire community and to adopt the plan as a document to assist in meeting the recreation needs of the community and;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners hereby accepts the recommendation of the Kalamazoo County Park & Recreation Commission and adopts the Five-Year Recreation Plan as a guideline for improving recreation for the residents of Kalamazoo County.

Date

David Buskirk, Chairman
Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners

I, Timothy Snow, Kalamazoo County Clerk, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and original copy of a resolution adopted by the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners at a Regular Meeting thereof held on the 3rd day of March, 2009.

Date

Timothy Snow, Clerk
Kalamazoo County



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Kalamazoo County Parks & Recreation 2009-2013 Master Plan - Public Workshop

The Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation Commission is currently developing a parks and recreation plan and needs public support and input. The County will hold Public Workshops to identify issues and establish goals specific to parks and recreation on **March 31, 2008, in Room A located at the Kalamazoo County Expo Center & Fairground, 2900 Lake Street, Kalamazoo MI, at 11:00a.m. or 7:00p.m.** Everyone is encouraged to attend this informal process to express his or her ideas.

Kalamazoo County Parks & Recreation 2009-2013 Master Plan - Review and Public Comments

The proposed Kalamazoo County Park and Recreation Master Plan 2009-2013 is available for public review and comments until February 11, 2009. The plan is available online at www.kalcounty.com/parks or it can be reviewed at the Kalamazoo County Parks Office located at 2900 Lake Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49048.

Comments, ideas, or suggestions, may be emailed to the County Parks Director at cntyparks@kkzo.com or may be submitted in writing to Kalamazoo County Parks, 2900 Lake Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49048.

Kalamazoo County Parks & Recreation 2009-2013 Master Plan - Public Hearing

The Kalamazoo County Parks & Recreation Commission will hold a public hearing to review the Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation Master Plan on **February 12, 2009, in Room B, located at the Kalamazoo County Expo Center & Fairground at 3:00PM.** Plans are available for review prior to the meeting at the Kalamazoo County Parks Office or online at www.kalcounty.com/parks .



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March 4, 2009

S.C.M.P.C.
Rand Bowman
P.O. Box 2137
Portage, MI 49081

Dear Mr. Bowman,

Kalamazoo County has recently completed a five-year Park and Recreation Master Plan. The enclosed copy is for your Council's review and allows the County to comply with the Michigan Department of Natural Resource's regulation relating to the review and adoption of a Recreation Plan.

Please contact me if you have any further questions or comments.

Sincerely,

David Rachowicz, Director
Kalamazoo County Parks



PARKS AND EXPO CENTER

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PHONE: (269) 383-8778 • FAX (269) 383-8724

www.kalcounty.com/parks

March 4, 2009

Kalamazoo County Planning Commission
201 West Kalamazoo Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Dear Planning Commissioners,

Kalamazoo County has recently completed a five-year Park and Recreation Master Plan. Thank you for your assistance and cooperation. The enclosed copy is for your Commission's review and allows the County to comply with the Michigan Department of Natural Resource's regulation relating to the review and adoption of a Recreation Plan.

Please contact me if you have any further questions or comments.

Sincerely,

David Rachowicz, Director
Kalamazoo County Parks



PARKS AND EXPO CENTER

2900 LAKE STREET • KALAMAZOO, MI 49048

PHONE: (269) 383-8778 • FAX (269) 383-8724

www.kalcounty.com/parks

March 4, 2009

Jim Wood, Manager
Grants Management Section
Michigan Department of Natural Resources
PO Box 30425
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Mr. Wood,

Kalamazoo County has recently completed a five-year Park and Recreation Master Plan. The enclosed copy of the plan and Recreation Plan Certification Checklist is for your review and allows the County to comply with the Michigan Department of Natural Resource's regulation relating to the review and adoption of a Recreation Plan.

Please contact me if you have any further questions or comments.

Sincerely,

David Rachowicz, Director
Kalamazoo County Parks