

# City of Gaylord Recreation Plan



2024-2028





# City of Gaylord Recreation Plan

## 2024-2028

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*Plan adopted by City Council:*  
**January 22, 2024**

*Recreation Plan assistance provided by:*  
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**Northeast Michigan**  
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

CHAPTER

1

INTRODUCTION



*City of Gaylord Recreation Plan*



**Extent of Plan Focus**

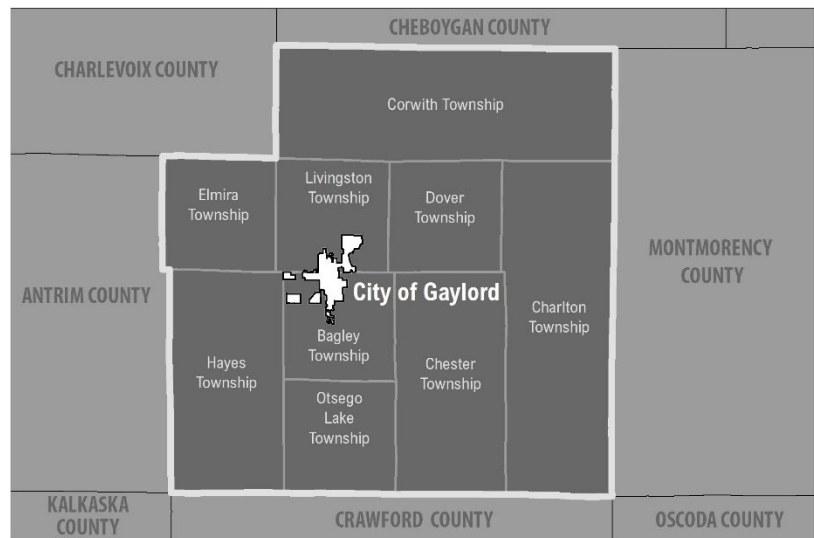
Year-round recreational opportunities abound in the area. The City of Gaylord is dedicated to creating and maintaining a vital recreational system. Planning for these resources is vital for the City’s future. This Recreation Plan addresses recreational facilities and plans within the boundaries of the City of Gaylord. The purpose of the Recreation Plan is to inventory recreational facilities in the community and to provide an action plan for future recreational improvements. In addition, Recreation Plans that have been approved by the Department of Natural Resources allow the city to be eligible for State of Michigan recreational grant funding.

**Location and Regional Setting**

The City of Gaylord is located in the northern Lower Michigan peninsula, in central Otsego County, at the intersection of two major roadways, Interstate Highway 75 that runs north and south, and Michigan Highway 32 that runs east and west. Gaylord is less than 30 miles from Michigan’s prime northwest shoreline tourist region; the Lake Michigan shoreline is approximately 33.4 miles from Gaylord. Traverse City lies approximately 50 miles southwest of Gaylord, and the Straits of Michigan lie just over 50 miles to the north. The larger cities of Grand Rapids and the Detroit metro area are located approximately 175 and 225 miles from Gaylord, respectively.

Gaylord is located less than ten miles from the Pigeon River State Forest and is in close proximity to an abundance of State Forest lands. The Gaylord area, and Otsego County in general, is the location for many lakes, rivers, forested areas, groomed trails, and other recreational opportunities, making the Gaylord area one of increasing importance for tourism from both within and beyond the State of Michigan.

The corporate boundary of the City of Gaylord encompasses approximately 3.95 square miles. The northern boundary extends 1,290 feet north of Fairview Road and as far south as Johnson Road. The eastern City limits extend to Wilkinson Road, while the western boundary extends 1-mile west of Dickerson Road.



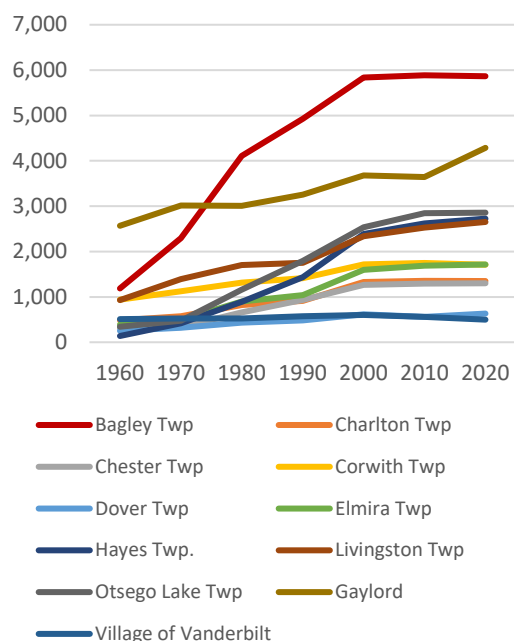
**OTSEGO COUNTY**



**Community Data**

The following data is being presented in support of the General Basis for Action in Chapter 4:

**Figure 2-1: Population Trend by Municipality**



**Table 1-1: Otsego County Municipalities Population, 2010 & 2020**

	2010	2020	Change	#
Bagley Twp	5,886	5,867	-0.32%	-19
Charlton Twp	1,354	1,350	-0.30%	-4
Chester Twp	1,292	1,300	0.62%	8
Corwith Twp	1,748	1,708	-2.29%	-40
Dover Twp	561	632	12.66%	71
Elmira Twp	1,687	1,714	1.60%	27
Hayes Twp.	2,619	2,725	4.05%	106
Livingston Twp	2,525	2,652	5.03%	127
Otsego Lake Twp	2,847	2,857	0.35%	10
Gaylord	3,645	4,286	17.59%	641
Vanderbilt	562	498	-11.39%	-64

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010-2020 (Decennial)

**Table 1-2: Population by Age by Municipality, 2021**

	0-4 yrs	5-19 yrs	20-24 yrs	25-44 yrs	45-64 yrs	65 yrs +
Otsego Co.	5.2%	18.2%	5.1%	22.0%	28.6%	20.9%
Bagley Twp.	5.6%	17.3%	3.7%	23.0%	28.4%	22.0%
Charlton Twp.	7.5%	15.4%	6.6%	12.8%	33.8%	23.8%
Chester Twp.	3.2%	10.9%	2.7%	23.0%	40.4%	19.9%
Corwith Twp.	2.0%	18.1%	5.9%	21.7%	34.3%	17.6%
Dover Twp.	5.0%	15.2%	4.4%	17.7%	33.7%	24.0%
Elmira Twp.	4.7%	23.0%	2.2%	19.5%	30.7%	19.8%
Hayes Twp.	3.4%	16.0%	8.3%	18.4%	35.2%	18.7%
Livingston Twp.	8.8%	20.4%	4.6%	26.3%	24.1%	15.9%
Otsego Lake Twp.	7.8%	16.2%	4.6%	25.7%	24.0%	21.7%
<b>Gaylord</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>21.8%</b>	<b>7.1%</b>	<b>22.6%</b>	<b>21.7%</b>	<b>23.9%</b>



<b>Table 1-3: Population Change, Otsego County, Surrounding Counties &amp; State</b>					
<b>County</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>% Change 2000 - 2010</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>% Change 2010 - 2020</b>
Alcona Co	11,719	10,942	-7.1%	10,167	-7.1%
Alpena Co	31,314	29,598	-5.5%	28,907	-2.4%
Antrim Co	23,110	23,580	2.0%	23,431	-0.6%
Charlevoix Co	26,090	25,949	-0.5%	26,054	0.4%
Cheboygan Co	26,448	26,152	-1.1%	25,579	-3.4%
Crawford Co	14,273	14,074	-1.4%	12,988	-7.7%
Emmet Co	31,437	32,694	4.0%	34,112	4.3%
Kalkaska Co	16,571	17,153	3.5%	17,939	4.6%
Montmorency Co	10,315	9,765	-5.3%	9,153	-2.2%
Oscoda Co	9,418	8,640	-8.3%	8,219	-4.9%
<b>Otsego Co</b>	<b>23,301</b>	<b>24,164</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>25,091</b>	<b>3.8%</b>
Presque Isle Co	14,411	13,376	-7.2%	12,982	-3.0%
Michigan	9,938,444	9,883,640	-0.6%	10,077,331	1.9%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000-2020 (Decennial)

<b>Table 1-4: Median Household Income</b>	
<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Median Household Income</b>
United States	\$69,717
State of Michigan	\$63,202
Otsego Co	\$59,330
Bagley Twp	\$66,825
Charlton Twp	\$62,222
Chester Twp	\$65,729
Corwith Twp	\$52,303
Dover Twp	\$79,063
Elmira Twp	\$74,700
Hayes Twp	\$63,194
Livingston Twp	\$62,083
Otsego Lake Twp	\$66,250
<b>City of Gaylord</b>	<b>\$33,952</b>
Village of Vanderbilt	\$38,750

Source: US Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates



Table 1-5: Percent Below Poverty Level 2021			
	Individuals	Families	Families with Female Head of Household
Bagley Twp	10.0%	8.7%	21.2%
Charlton Twp	9.0%	6.1%	24.3%
Chester Twp	9.0%	10.7%	55.3%
Corwith Twp	14.3%	13.2%	32.4%
Dover Twp	5.2%	2.5%	0.0%
Elmira Twp	3.0%	1.4%	0.0%
Hayes Twp	14.1%	9.0%	37.9%
Livingston Twp	11.7%	8.0%	25.0%
Otsego Lake Twp	6.6%	2.1%	20.5%
<b>Gaylord</b>	<b>16.3%</b>	<b>9.8%</b>	<b>12.3%</b>
Vanderbilt	24.3%	24.5%	15.8%
Otsego County	10.8%	7.6%	21.1%
State of Michigan	13.3%	9.0%	25.3%
U.S.	12.8%	9.1%	24.4%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

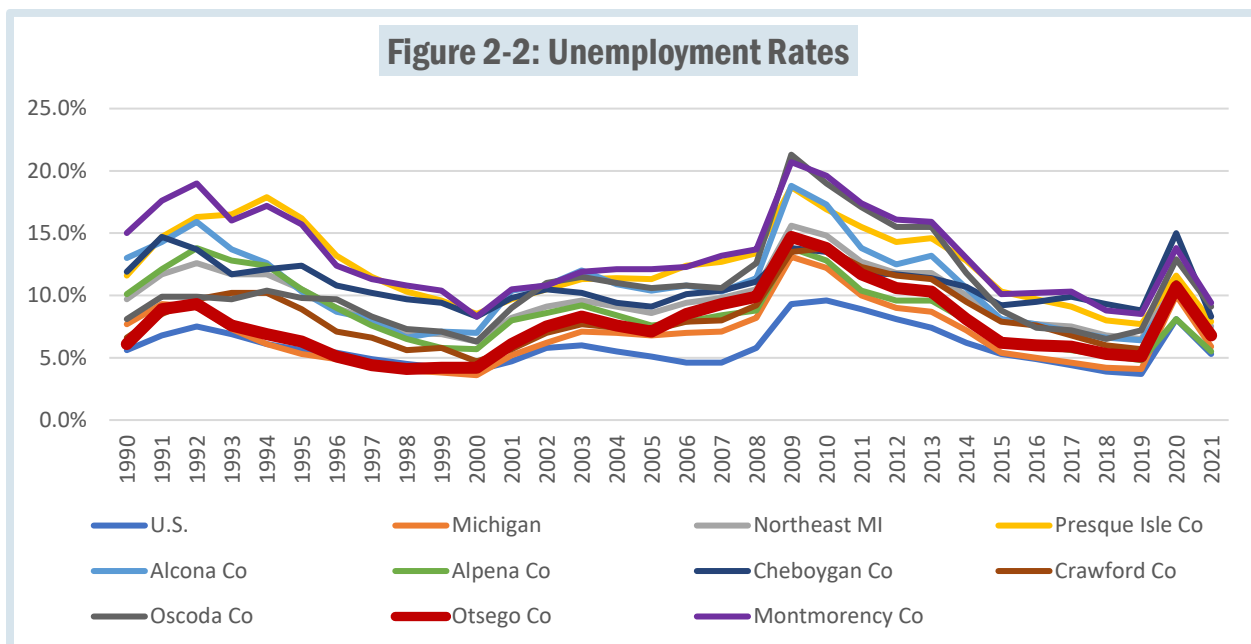




Table 1-6: Disability Status, 2021

	Total persons 0-17 yrs.	# of persons 0-17 with disability	% of persons 0-17 with disability	Total persons 18-64 yrs.	# of persons 18-64 with disability	% of persons 18-64 with disability	% of employed and 18-64 w/ disability	Total persons 65 yrs. & over	# of persons 65 & over with disability	% persons 65 & over with disability
Bagley Twp	1,223	92	7.5%	3,372	500	14.8%	5.0%	1,296	313	24.2%
Charlton Twp	300	9	3.0%	821	95	11.6%	10.2%	351	100	28.5%
Chester Twp	151	3	2.0%	754	136	18.0%	9.1%	225	74	32.9%
Corwith Twp	327	37	11.3%	1,039	173	16.7%	10.7%	294	106	36.1%
Dover Twp	112	0	0.0%	357	30	8.4%	5.7%	148	29	19.6%
Elmira Twp	453	29	6.4%	999	87	8.7%	10.8%	361	115	31.9%
Hayes Twp	976	180	18.4%	2,165	412	19.0%	11.0%	909	481	52.9%
Livingston Twp	442	27	6.1%	1,763	261	14.8%	5.1%	501	155	30.9%
Otsego Lake Twp	654	16	2.4%	1,566	161	10.3%	7.4%	420	183	43.6%
<b>Gaylord</b>	<b>646</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>1,598</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>11.6%</b>	<b>7.7%</b>	<b>621</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>38.5%</b>
Village of Vanderbilt	65	16	24.6%	342	82	24.0%	15.6%	58	45	77.6%
Otsego County	5,284	409	7.7%	14,434	2,040	14.1%	7.3%	5,126	1,795	35.0%

Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimates



CHAPTER

2

# ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE



*City of Gaylord Recreation Plan*

**Recreation Administrative Functions**

The City of Gaylord is organized under the Council/Manager form of government. Operations and staffing of parks and recreation are under the direct supervision of the City Manager, who is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the recreation policy of the City Council is fulfilled.

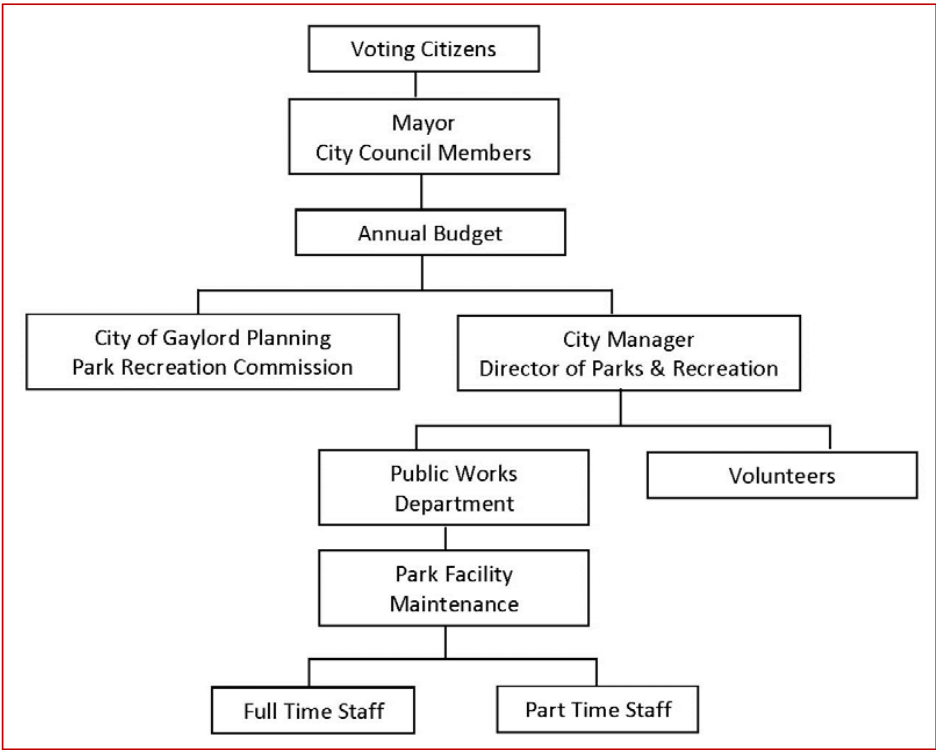
The City Planning Commission serves in an advisory capacity to the City Council regarding recreational planning. Functions of the Planning Commission include planning for the acquisition, location, development, and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities. The Planning Commission solicits input from citizens regarding recreation through public hearings and input from its citizens.

The City Manager recommends and the City Council

approves the annual budget for the Parks and Recreation Department. Programming of the facilities is handled through the annual operating budget which groups the Parks and Recreation Department as a “General Fund” item. Park programs and facilities are not limited to those paying user charges, but are available on a citywide basis to outside residents at no charge. The level of annual funding varies depending on projected capital improvements, as well as property and equipment purchases. Sources of funding include monetary proceeds from gas wells located on property owned by the City of Gaylord, general fund tax revenue, and State of Michigan grant proceeds.

The care and maintenance of the City parks and recreation facilities fall upon the City Department of Public Works (DPW).

**Figure 2-1 Administrative Chart**





## Funding

**Table 2-1 Park Recreation Budget**

	<b>2023/2024</b>	<b>2024/2025</b>
Salaries	26,000	26,000
Fringe Benefits	20,250	20,250
Additional Pension	852	852
Additional Pension - Held by the City	500	500
Operating Supplies	6,000	6,000
Materials	2,000	2,000
Contractual Services	28,000	28,000
Elk View Park	150,000	---
Electric Utility	2,500	2,500
Water Utility	2,000	2,000
Equipment Rental	15,000	15,000
Contributions to Other Funds	26,000	26,000
<b>TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS</b>	<b>\$264,602</b>	<b>\$103,102</b>

## Relationship with Other Agencies: Volunteers and Programming

Volunteers, such as the Boy Scouts, have assisted in completing small projects in the parks. While volunteers play an important role, assistance is very limited. Recreational programming is managed by the volunteer organizations and schools. The City works closely with the Gaylord Community School System, Otsego County Park and Recreation Department, and

Gaylord Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau on development and promotion of recreation facilities. In addition, Gaylord cooperates with a number of organizations representing sports like soccer, tennis, basketball, disc golf, and pickleball.

CHAPTER

3

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# INVENTORY

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*City of Gaylord Recreation Plan*



# City of Gaylord Recreational Properties

## Inventory Method & Classification System

The following inventory lists all of the public, semi-public, and private recreation facilities and programs within the City of Gaylord, as well as those recreation opportunities outside the City limits that are available to City residents. The method used to update the inventory entailed communication with various entities in the community. Research was conducted through a review of county, townships and state facilities to seek out their recreational areas and opportunities for inclusion in the inventory. Additional research included contact with the Otsego County Fairgrounds, Otsego County Road Commission, and the Gaylord Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau to ensure that information from private recreation was correct.



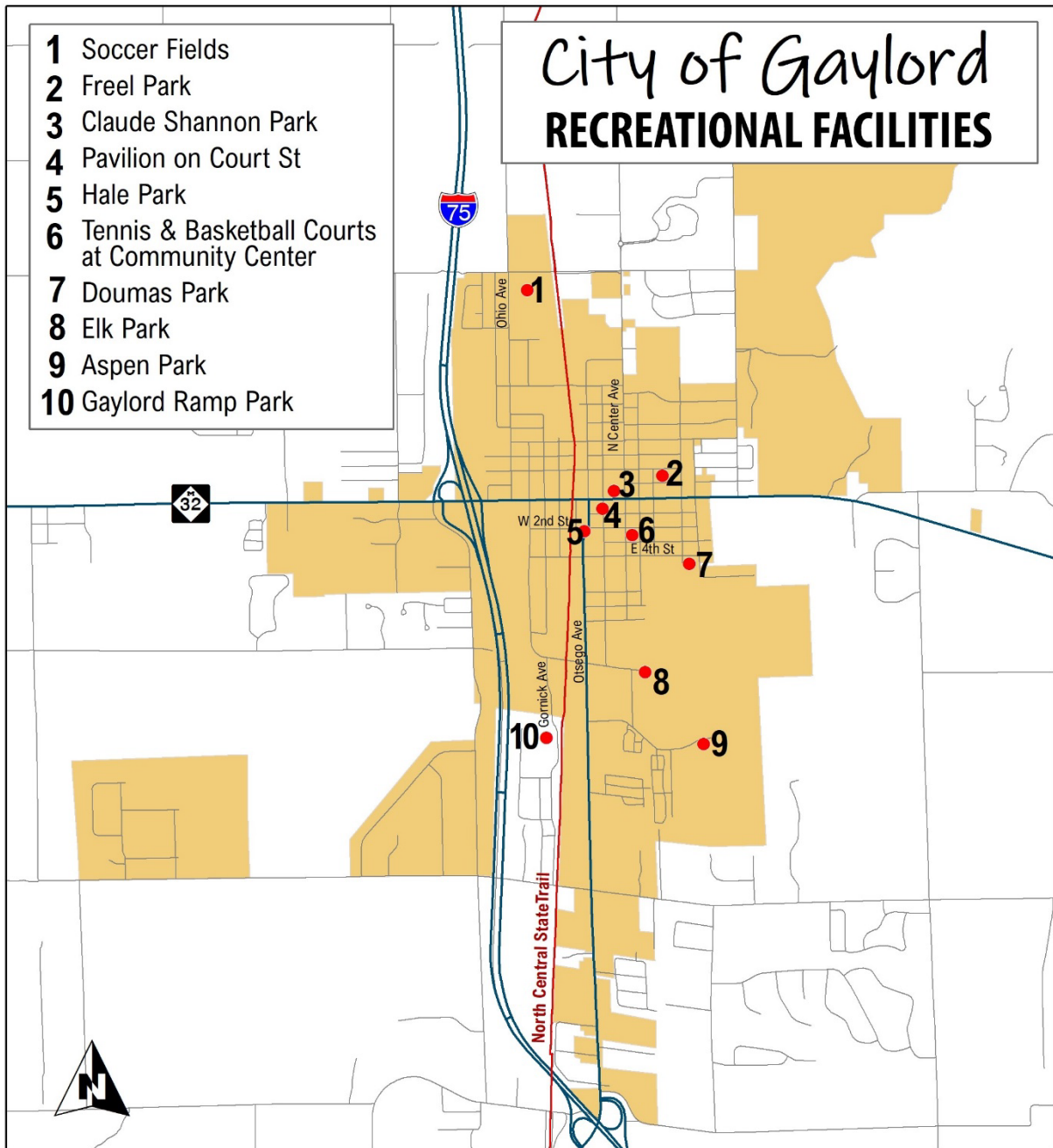
N Hale Park, Otsego County Community Center, AYSO Soccer Fields, Ramp Park at the Sportsplex, and the Pavilion on Court Street. Facilities found at these parks are described below. Per the guidelines published by the State of Michigan, the City’s parks were ranked for barrier-free accessibility using the following scale:

The City of Gaylord has ten city recreational facilities: Aspen Park, Elk Park, Claude Shannon Park, George Doumas Memorial Park, Freel Memorial Park, Joseph

### DNR Accessibility Grading System for Parks and Recreation Facilities

An assessment of the accessibility of each park to people with disabilities. This assessment must consider the accessibility of both the facilities themselves (as appropriate), as well as the access routes to them. At a minimum, use the following ranking system for each park:

Accessibility Grade	Definition
1	None of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines
2	Some facilities meet accessibility guidelines
3	Most facilities meet accessibility guidelines
4	The entire park meets accessibility guidelines
5	The entire park was developed using the principles of universal design





**1** **SOCCER FIELDS**  
 Location: Fairview Road (across from cemetery)

Size (acres)	Purpose/Use	Accessibility Rating	Accessibility Notes
16	Community Park	3	Most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines.

**Description**

This 16-acre piece of property, located opposite Fairview Cemetery and adjacent to North Ohio Elementary School is the home of the Gaylord Soccer League. Although the property is owned by the City of Gaylord, it is leased by the Soccer League which has developed and maintains eight improved soccer fields, pavilion, concession stand, restrooms, and unimproved parking area. Youth from Gaylord and surrounding areas participate in an extensive soccer program at this site during both the fall and spring seasons. The parcel on which the soccer fields are located is considered to be a community park when calculating the numbers of acres of community parkland available to Gaylord residents.



**2** **FREEL MEMORIAL PARK**  
 Location: Huron Street (between Oak & Hazel)

Size (acres)	Purpose/Use	Accessibility Rating	Accessibility Notes
1.2	Mini-Park	4	This facility is barrier-free.

**Description**

Freel Memorial Park is 1.2 acres in size, located on Huron Street, and bordered by both residential and commercial properties. As with George Doumas Memorial Park, Freel Memorial Park was also extensively renovated in 2005 and an important factor in the renovation was to provide elements to ensure this facility could also be utilized by all segments of society and by all age groups. Features of this Park include a restroom, gazebo, play structure, paved pathways, parking area with signed handicapped spaces, irrigation, landscaping, picnic tables, drinking fountain, and fence along its eastern and western boundaries.



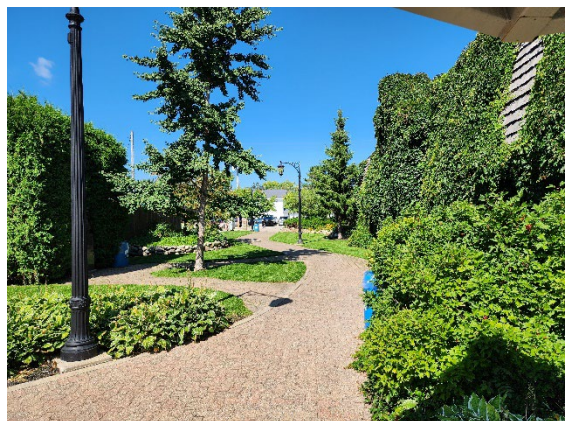
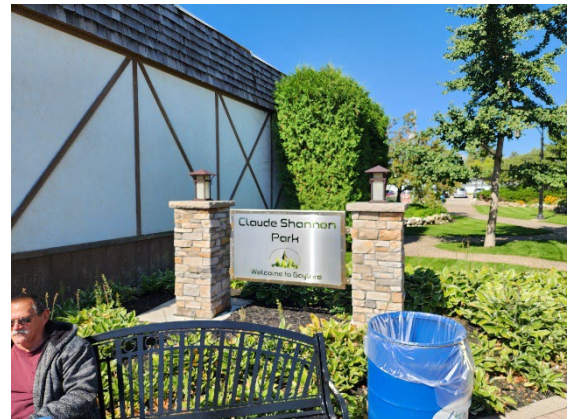


**3** **CLAUDE SHANNON PARK**  
 Location: West Main Street (north side of the 100 block)

Size (acres)	Purpose/Use	Accessibility Rating	Accessibility Notes
NA	Mini-Park	4	This facility is barrier-free.

**Description**

Claude Shannon Park is a small park nestled in the heart of the downtown business district. The park is located on the north side of the 100 block of West Main Street between 1900 turn-of-the-century commercial buildings. The park includes benches, flowers, a water fountain, and a walkway leading from West Main Street to a parking lot north of the Main Street businesses. A bust memorializing Claude Shannon is also displayed in the park. Claude Elwood Shannon (April 30, 1916 – February 24, 2001) was an American mathematician, electrical engineer, computer scientist and cryptographer known as the "father of information theory." A Friday night concert series takes place at the park during the summer.





**4** **PAVILION ON COURT**  
Location: Court Street

Size (acres)	Purpose/Use	Accessibility Rating	Accessibility Notes
NA	Special Use Area	4	This facility is barrier-free.

**Description**

Pavilion on Court is a large open-air pavilion covering a portion of Court Street in Downtown Gaylord and is managed by the Downtown Development Authority (DDA). The idea for the Pavilion on Court came about in February 2000 at a strategic planning meeting of the DDA Board of Directors. The idea was a protected area within the DDA district that could be used for special events to draw additional visitors to the downtown.

Events hosted at the site include the Gaylord Downtown Farmers Market, Alpenfest, the Antiques & Collectibles Show, Caffeine and Octane, and many other events scheduled and hosted by community groups throughout the year. Since the Pavilion on Court is also a City street, the features and amenities available are all portable and vary depending on the needs of the event being hosted.

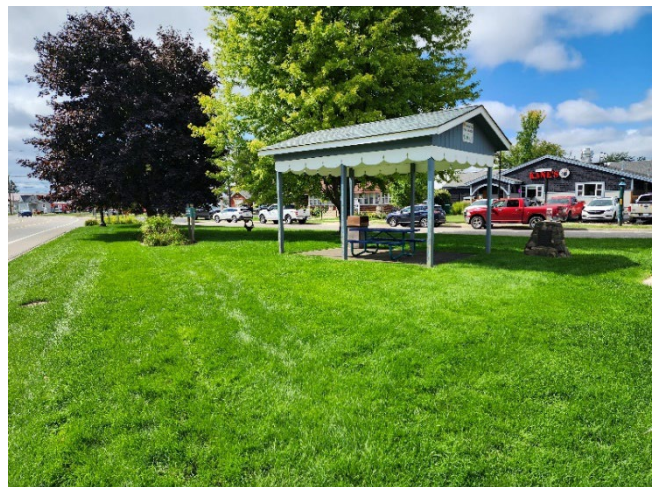
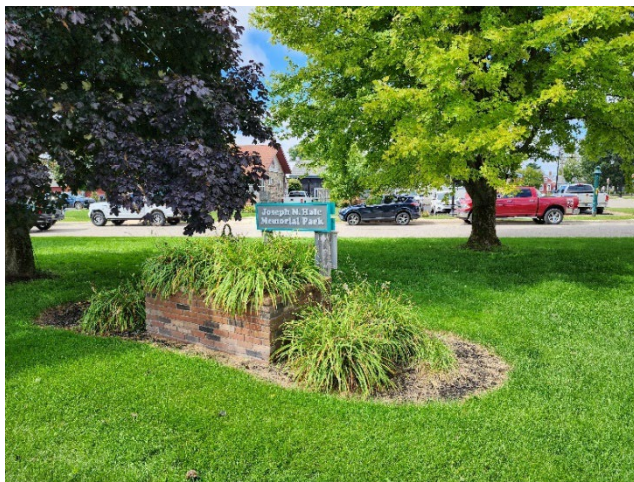


**5** **JOSEPH N HALE PARK**  
 Location: South Otsego Avenue (two blocks south of Main Street)

Size (acres)	Purpose/Use	Accessibility Rating	Accessibility Notes
0.1	Mini-Park	3	Most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines.

**Description**

Hale Park is a 0.1-acre park, triangular in configuration and located in a high-traffic area of South Otsego Avenue, two blocks south of Main Street in the City’s Downtown Development District. Features of this park include a small pavilion, picnic table, park bench, drinking fountain, irrigation, and extensive landscaping.





**6** **OTSEGO COUNTY COMMUNITY CENTER**  
 Location: South Center Avenue (between East Second and East Third Street)

Size (acres)	Purpose/Use	Accessibility Rating	Accessibility Notes
1.6	Community Facility	4	This facility is barrier-free.

**Description**

The City Park associated with the Otsego County Community Center is located on South Center Avenue between East Second and East Third Street. The entire parcel, including the Community Center building, consists of 1.6 acres. Otsego County owns the Community Center and the land on which the building sits, while the City owns the remainder of the parcel. Otsego County Parks & Recreation (OCPR) is responsible for all recreational programming, at both the Community Center and the City-owned portion of the property. On-street parking is available along the perimeter of the facility, but there are no designated accessible parking spaces. OCPR completed a \$55,000+ project in the summer of 2016 which included the resurfacing of the existing tennis courts and the outdoor basketball court with modular polymer mesh (user- and weather-friendly material, allowing users to play on the surface soon after a rain); resurfacing a second basketball court with modular polymer mesh and temporarily converting it to three pickleball courts; replacing damaged fencing around the perimeter of the courts; repainting basketball poles and tennis backing; and replacing two light poles with new lights that face in both directions to light the tennis and basketball courts. The courts were finished in the U.S. Open blue and green color scheme.





**7** **GEORGE DOUMAS MEMORIAL PARK**  
 Location: East Fourth Street and South Maple Avenue

Size (acres)	Purpose/Use	Accessibility Rating	Accessibility Notes
1.3	Mini-Park	4	This facility is barrier-free.

**Description**

This highly utilized 1.3-acre park is located at the intersection of East Fourth Street and South Maple Avenue, in the heart of a large residential district and in close proximity to Gaylord Community School District’s South Maple Elementary, Gaylord Intermediate, and Gaylord Middle School complexes. Adjacent to the Park is a football field and softball field owned and maintained by the Gaylord Community School system. In 2005 an extensive renovation of this park took place, funded in part by a Michigan Department of Natural Resources Recreation grant. An important factor in the renovation was to provide elements to ensure this facility could be utilized by all segments of society, including those with disabilities. A restroom, gazebo, playground structure accommodating all ages and abilities, paved pathways, paved parking area with signed handicap spaces, irrigation, landscaping, picnic tables, and drinking fountain were included as part of the renovation project.





**8** **ELK VIEW PARK**  
 Location: 116 Grandview Blvd

Size (acres)	Purpose/Use	Accessibility Rating	Accessibility Notes
2.05	Community Park	2	Some facilities meet accessibility guidelines, but a DNR Spark Grant, awarded in 2023, is funding improvements in accessibility.

**Description**

In 2003, the City of Gaylord, with assistance from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund, purchased two acres of property for the development of a new park. This property is located at the corner of Elkview and Commerce Boulevard.

Home to the largest elk population in Michigan, this very spacious, fenced refuge allows visitors to view city-owned elk within a natural habitat but also within an urban area. With multiple viewing areas, visitors can view at a distance from the comfort of their car, or stroll along the fence for an up-close experience. The City received an MNRTF grant in 2002 to purchase an additional two acres of property to further expand the recreational and elk viewing options at Elk View Park. The City was recently awarded a Spark Grant to fund development and improvements at the site. New features to be developed include a paved parking lot, restrooms, a pavilion with fire feature, pathways, picnic areas, playground structures, a viewing area for elk and deer herd, a four-season covered platform for viewing, interpretative signs, and a lighted, paved pedestrian trail to Aspen Park.





9

**ASPEN PARK**

Location: Commerce Blvd (termination point)

Size (acres)	Purpose/Use	Accessibility Rating	Accessibility Notes
105	Community Park	3	Most of this facility is barrier-free and meets accessibility guidelines.

**Description**

Aspen Park is a 105-acre park located at the termination point of Commerce Blvd. This beautiful park features nearly two (2) miles of lighted, barrier-free paved trails, an extensive unimproved trail system, a disc golf course, tennis courts, informational kiosk, benches, trash receptacles, picnic tables, and a lighted, paved parking lot. Many of these elements were constructed in 1999 and funded in part by a Michigan Department of Natural Resources grant. The trail system in this Park is used in the summer by bikers, hikers, and skaters, and in the winter, its groomed cross-country ski trails, ranging in degree of difficulty from beginner to intermediate, provide an opportunity for individuals to journey through both hilly and wooded areas. The park also offers opportunities for snowshoeing. The Northern Michigan Chapter of the Michigan Mountain Bike Association has developed a single-track trail system, rated novice to intermediate, throughout the park. Visible from areas of the park is the City-owned elk and deer herd, contained on property adjacent to the park.





**10** **GAYLORD RAMP PARK**  
 Location: South Wisconsin Avenue

Size (acres)	Purpose/Use	Accessibility Rating	Accessibility Notes
NA	Special Use Area	2	Some facilities meet accessibility guidelines

**Description**

In 2001 the City leased a small piece of property on South Wisconsin Avenue for a period of ten (10) years for the sole purpose of developing a park in which skateboarders, in-line skaters, or those with BMX bikes could practice their skills. Ramp Park operated at this location until 2015 when the property was sold and the ramps were removed and all equipment was stored. The City reached an agreement with Otsego County and Ramp Park was relocated to the Otsego County Sportsplex site in 2017.

Ramp Park currently has various ramps, slides, and rails on a concrete base. There is paved parking available directly adjacent to the Otsego Sportsplex, but there are no marked ADA spaces for Ramp Park.





## Other Recreational Properties

### Public and Private School Facilities

Both the public and private schools in the community provide recreation facilities at various locations both within and near the City. The following is an inventory of those facilities:

**Gaylord High School** is located in Livingston Township, just north of the City limits. Indoor facilities at the school include three basketball courts in the gym, a weight room, and a wrestling room. Outdoor facilities include a football stadium, track, two soccer fields, two practice fields, one softball diamond, and one baseball diamond.

**Gaylord Middle School's** outdoor facilities include basketball courts, a ball diamond, a soccer/practice field, swings, and a nature area. Indoor facilities include a gymnasium

**Gaylord Intermediate School's** indoor facilities include a gymnasium with a basketball court; outdoor facilities include a football field and track, softball field, practice field, basketball courts, play structures, and jungle gym; swings and benches.

**South Maple Elementary School's** outdoor facilities include a ball diamond area, swing sets, slides, climbing/jungle gym structures, sandboxes, basketball hoop, and swinging rings. A gymnasium is located inside the building.

**North Ohio Elementary School's** outdoor facilities include basketball courts, swing sets, slide, jungle gyms, large tires, ball diamond, fitness course, and benches. A gymnasium is located inside the building.

**Board of Education Building** The school district operates a latchkey program in the Board of Education building, including a fenced-in outdoor play area with a play structure.

**GCS Outdoor Class Areas** The Otsego Environmental Learning Site and the Gaylord Adventure Center are located on Gaylord Community Schools district property behind and adjacent to the Gaylord Middle School and South Maple Elementary School. The Environmental Learning Site includes a log cabin, an outdoor classroom area, a mixed hardwood forest, a pond, and prairie grasses. Working windmills add air and water to the pond. Visitors can observe the habitat anytime during daylight hours. The Gaylord Adventure Center is a high and low ropes course used for team-building skills and endurance building. It may only be used when supervised by a Gaylord Community Schools instructor trained specifically in high and low ropes courses.

**St. Mary's High School and Elementary School's** outdoor facilities, north of West Petoskey Street, include swing sets, slides, jungle gym, large tires, ball diamonds, basketball court and practice fields. On the south side of West Petoskey Street, facilities include swings, jungle gym, and climbing structure.

**Otsego Christian School** is an elementary school located in Bagley Township, just east of the City limits on M-32. Indoor facilities include a Multi-Purpose room. Outdoor facilities include a playground with swings and other standard playground equipment, a basketball court, and a soccer practice field.

### Otsego County Parks and Recreation Facilities

**Otsego Lake County Park** is located on the west side of Otsego Lake in Bagley Township. This 27-acre park has 500 feet of waterfront, 80 modern campsites,

four cabins, two pavilions, a boat launch, playground, picnic tables, electric hook-up, showers, and dump station.

**Wah Wah Soo Park** is located on the east side of Otsego Lake. This park is 0.35 acres in size and provides a public swimming beach, picnic area, grills, and porta-jons. Facilities are available to users at no charge.

**Otsego County Fairgrounds** are located within the City of Gaylord on the South side of Fairview Road. The grounds include three exhibit buildings; one with a kitchen, horse barns, a historic building (Little Red School House), camping, an entertainment stage, midway, and grandstand. The Otsego County Fair takes place annually in August. The grounds are also rented from May – September for horse shows, weddings, training seminars, rabbit shows, animal clinics, the Relay for Life, and the Big Ticket Festival. For more information on the Otsego County Fairgrounds, visit [www.otsegocountyfairgrounds.org](http://www.otsegocountyfairgrounds.org) (see Map 2 for location).

**Otsego County Community Center** is located within the City of Gaylord (see City of Gaylord Parks and Recreation section above). This facility offers a wide variety of recreational activities for area residents. Many of the programs offered through the Center are free of charge, while some programs require a nominal fee. Programs, classes, and activities offered at the Community Center include gymnastics, karate, tennis lessons, basketball fundamentals, basketball leagues for 3rd grade and up, volleyball leagues, aerobics classes, baton twirling, senior citizen exercise, table pool, ping-pong, foosball, open basketball, and sports camps. The Center provides meeting space for Scouts, 4-H, and singles groups. Several private schools use the facility for their physical education classes. While the Community Center is a County facility, many of the users are City of Gaylord residents.

**Otsego County Commission on Aging** The Otsego County Commission on Aging administers this meeting place for senior citizens, located on Elkview Avenue. This Center offers numerous activities and services to local senior citizens. Activities offered include meals, arts 7 crafts, billiards, bingo, health and fitness classes, and sponsored trips.

**Dr. Robert S. Libke Memorial Fields** includes nine lined youth flag football fields and one softball diamond. When not in use for flag football leagues, the area is a large green space which can be used for Frisbee, soccer, or any other activities requiring a large space. The fields are located west of the City near the Otsego County Airport.

**Frank H. Wilkinson Roadside Park** is located on Old US-27 approximately 2.5 miles north of Gaylord. This park is comprised of seven wooded acres with a stream. Numerous picnic tables are located on the site.

**Hutchins Field** is located just east of the City limits south of M-32 and has seven baseball diamonds that are operated by the Gaylord Little League.

**The Sportsplex/Energy Outlet** is a multi-use recreational facility located on a 23-acre site, west of the City limits on Gornick Avenue (see Map 2). The Sportsplex is funded through fees and a countywide millage levy. The facility includes a regulation size indoor ice rink for hockey and skating, bleachers for 1,000 spectators, a walking track around the outside of the rink, one regulation-length, six-lane indoor swimming pool, a three-foot deep smaller pool for young children, and locker rooms to serve both the ice rink and pool areas. The Sportsplex also includes two multi-purpose rooms. One is 40' x 60' and is used primarily for pickleball and a variety of exercise classes. The other is 30' x 40' and is used for spin bike classes, meetings, and parties. The Gaylord Community School swim and hockey teams, as well as other intramural teams, use the facility. Located on the Sportsplex property is a large multi-age play structure named Energy Outlet.

**The Louis M. Groen Nature Preserve** is a nearly 800-acre property that was transferred to Otsego County Parks & Recreation. It is located near the community of Johannesburg, east of Gaylord off M-32 at Gingell Road. The property contains Kujawa and Johannesburg Lakes, forestlands, and open fields. The intent of the County is to offer environmental/nature classes, hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and horseback riding along the property's many trails.



The **Otsego Courthouse Plaza** lies in the heart of downtown Gaylord. It features a fountain with plenty of seating. There is also a café-style seating area near the downtown pavilion where a variety of events are regularly held. During the winter months, there is an ice tree, which is very popular with both tourists and local residents.

The **North Central State Trail Trailhead** is located at 360 W. Main Street in Gaylord and offers parking, restrooms, pavilion, picnic tables, firepit, and water. While the Trail is a DNR Trail, Otsego County



## Regional Recreation Facilities

Regional recreational facilities are those located within an approximate thirty-minute drive of the City of Gaylord. Regional recreational facilities are normally in excess of 50 acres, and the primary emphasis is on more passive pursuits.

**Otsego Lake State Park** This is a 62-acre park located on the southeastern shore of Otsego Lake in Otsego Lake Township. The park offers 155 camping sites, a half mile of sandy beach, boat launch, fishing pier, and playground areas.

**Gaylord State Forest Area** is part of the greater Mackinac State Forest. The Gaylord State Forest Area, located primarily south and east of the City of Gaylord, consists of 53,564 acres. Recreation opportunities in the State Forest Area, including hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, scenic drives, rustic and semi-primitive camping, hiking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, ORV trails and scramble areas, horse trails, barrier-free

camping, and elk viewing. A State Forest District office is located on M-32 on the western side of the City of Gaylord.

**Pigeon River County Forest Area**, located northeast of the City of Gaylord, is also a part of the Mackinac State Forest. Consisting of 44,373 acres, this forest area offers the same opportunities as those offered in the Gaylord State Forest Area (see above).

**Other State Forest Areas** The City of Gaylord is located approximately 30 minutes from several other State Forest Areas including the Indian River and Atlanta Forest Areas (both part of the Mackinac State Forest), and the Grayling Forest Area in Crawford County to the south (part of the Ausable State Forest). Opportunities in these State Forest Areas are similar to those described in the Gaylord State Forest Area, above

## State of Michigan Trails

Nonmotorized and motorized trails are promoted in northern Michigan through the **Up North Trails** website. All trails whether they are motorized or non-motorized are depicted on an interactive map. Descriptions of the trail as well as the legal trail uses are included on this website. This site can be viewed at [www.upnorthtrails.org](http://www.upnorthtrails.org).

**Michigan Polar-Equator Trail** is a hiking trail that closely follows the 45th Parallel passes just to the south of Gaylord, along Johnson and Alba Road close to the north end of Otsego Lake. This trail, established and maintained by the Michigan Polar-Equator Club, crosses the State of Michigan from Alpena to the west side of Torch Lake.

### North Central State Trail

(Gaylord-Mackinaw Rail Trail) is a 62-mile crushed limestone trail that begins at the north City limits off Fairview Road and heads north through the Village of Vanderbilt, into Cheboygan County, passing through Wolverine, Indian River, Topinabee, and Cheboygan. Along the way, it passes along the Sturgeon River and Mullett Lake. It then follows the Lake Huron shoreline from Cheboygan to Mackinaw City.



**Pine Baron Pathway** is a hiking trail, west of the City of Gaylord that offers 8.75 miles of groomed cross-country skiing, hiking, and biking trails. This location boasts beautiful scenery with fo rested areas to decrease the wind chill. This novice trail is nearly flat on all but the "Whopping Loop" which has some small hills.

**High Country Pathway** is a 70+ mile trail system that runs through the heart of Pigeon River Country in Montmorency and Otsego Counties. It is designed to provide the more enthusiastic backpacker and mountain biker with about one week of high-quality outdoor adventure. The pathway connects to and is accessible by Jackson Lake State Forest Campground, Pigeon River Bridge State Forest Campground, Pine Grove State Forest Campground, Round Lake State Forest Campground, Shoepac Lake State Forest Campground, Tomahawk Creek Flooding State Forest Campground, and Town Corner Lake State Forest Campground.

**Shore to Shore Trail** is over 220 miles long that connects Lake Huron to Lake Michigan. Primarily used by horseback riders, the trail is also open to hikers as well. The trail features horse camps complete with privies and wells at approximately 18 to 25-mile intervals. Most of the camps overlook lakes or rivers. The east segment of the Shore to Shore Trail begins in Oscoda and generally parallels the AuSable River (south of the river). Some sections of the Shore to Shore Trail

share segments with snowmobile trails. A portion of this trail system traverses north-south in the eastern portion of Otsego County.

**Shingle Mill Pathway** is a series of trail loops for hikers, cross-country skiers, and mountain bikers ranging in elevation from 900 to 1,100 feet above sea level. Though most of the Shingle Mill Pathway is not along a former railroad bed, a small segment (0.3 mile) uses a railroad right-of-way.

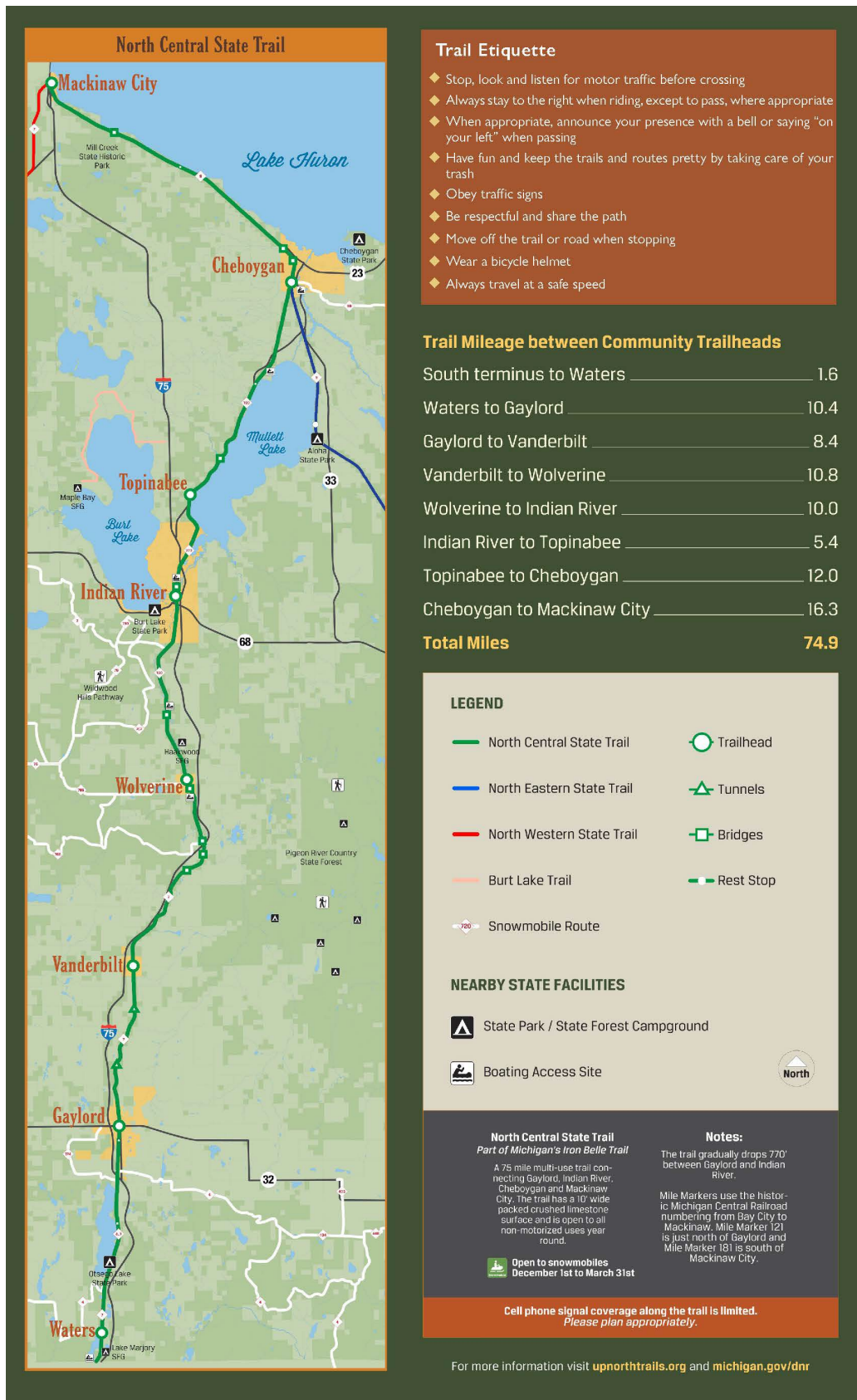
**Pickerel Lake Pathway** is a two-mile-long trail located in Otsego County with the trailhead at the Pickerel Lake State Forest Campground near Vanderbilt. The campground itself offers 39 sites for tents and moderate-sized trailers, with a nice beach area. The two-mile pathway is used for hiking and biking and is only accessible on a seasonal basis. This is a prime location for bird and wildlife enthusiasts to enjoy everything nature has to offer.

**Green Timbers Special Use Area** is located in the Pigeon River Country State Forest near Vanderbilt. Green Timbers is managed as a non-mechanized, walk-in-only area. There is a network of management roads behind gates that allow access to the interior of the property, but on foot only.

**A Snowmobile Trail System** traverses Otsego County and connects to other snowmobile trail systems throughout the region. The snowmobile trails give riders close access to the city.

**ATV Trails and Routes** are located in the southeast portion of the county. These systems include the Big Bear-Crapo Creek Trail System along with the North Branch Route.





For more information visit [upnorthtrails.org](http://upnorthtrails.org) and [michigan.gov/dnr](http://michigan.gov/dnr)

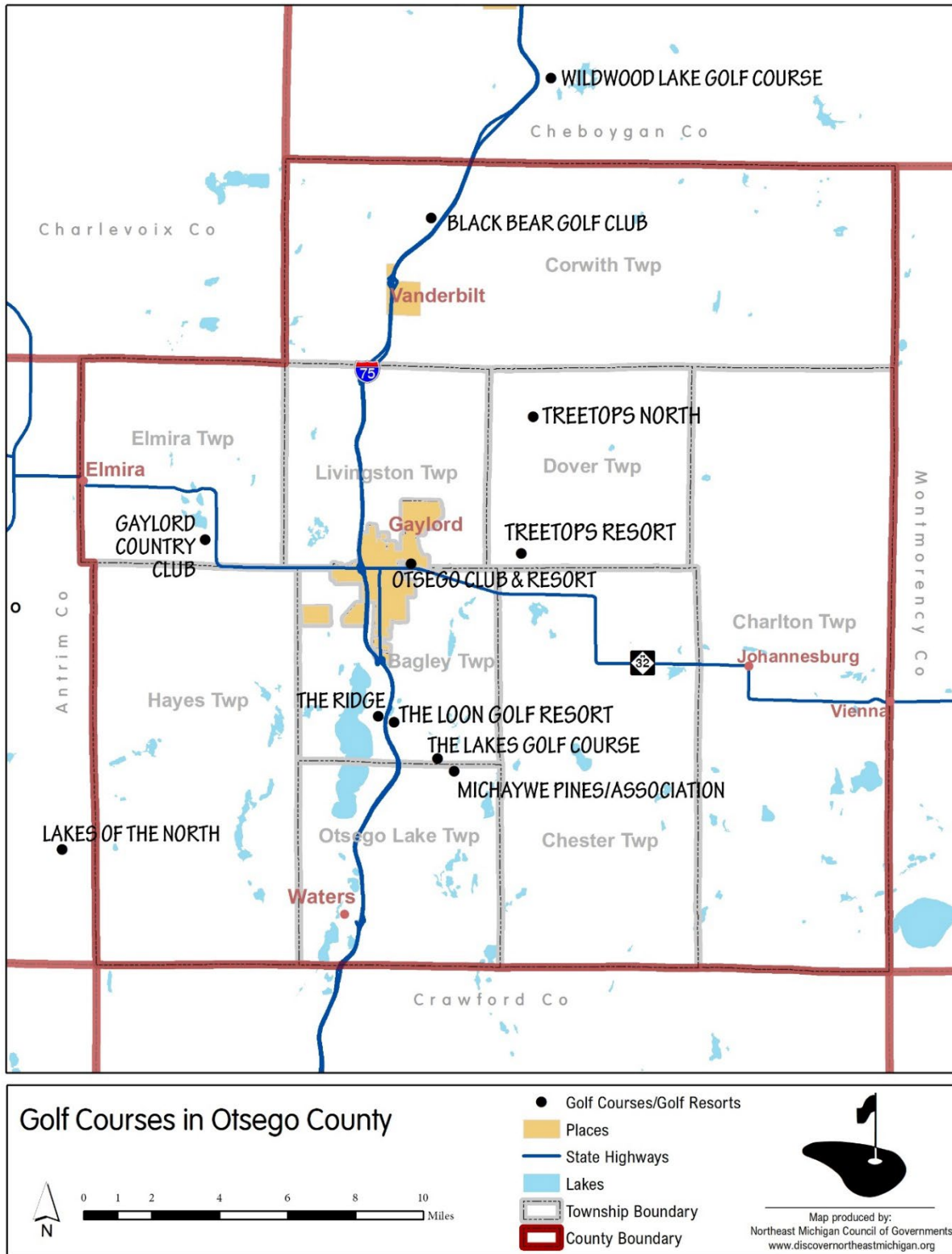
## Golf Courses

The Gaylord area is truly a Golf Mecca, with numerous courses within a 30-minute drive of the City. A list of golf resorts and courses is found below.



GOLF RESORTS AND GOLF COURSES	
Golf Course	Nearby Community
Black Bear Golf Club	Vanderbilt
Black Lake Golf Club	Onaway
Gaylord Country Club	Gaylord
The Loon	Gaylord
The Lakes	Gaylord
Marsh Ridge	Gaylord
Michaywe – The Pines	Gaylord
Otsego Club – The Classic	Gaylord
Otsego Club – The Tribute	Gaylord
Treetops – Rick Smith Signature	Gaylord
Treetops – Rick Smith Tradition	Gaylord
Treetops – Robert Trent Jones Masterpiece	Gaylord
Treetops – Threetops	Gaylord
Treetops – Tom Fazio Premier	Gaylord
Garland Resort	Lewiston
Lakes of the North	Mancelona





## Additional Recreation Facilities

Other recreational facilities that are available to City of Gaylord residents are located in the communities and townships that surround the City. While some of these facilities may be considered to be neighborhood or community parks, many are State of Michigan recreational facilities that, while not as large in size as

a typical regional park, are used on a region-wide basis. These include public fishing access sites. Facilities are listed by municipality in the following table. In addition to the facilities listed in this chapter, there are many small resorts, cabin rentals, and campgrounds throughout the Otsego County area.

ADDITIONAL FACILITIES BY MUNICIPALITY		
Location	Name	Amenities
Bagley Township	Dixon Lake Access Site (State of Michigan)	Fishing, swimming, boat launch, vault toilets.
	Northland Sportsman's Club (Privately Owned)	Skeet shooting, archery range, rifle range, meeting hall.
	Riding and Hiking Trails	Approximately 7 miles of riding and bike trails, cross-country ski trails, southeastern part of Township.
	Hutchins Little League Park	6 little league ball fields and 1 t-ball field.
	Michaywe' Association (partially in Bagley Twp)	4-season recreation and residential community of over 950 homes with an 18-hole golf course "Michaywe' Pines" and cross-country skiing and hiking trail. Clubhouse, beach, tennis courts and pool are for members only.
	Iron Belle Trail	Multi-use, crushed limestone trail.
	Snowmobile trails No 4, 7, and 774	Part of the Big Bear-Crapo Creek Trail and North Branch Route open to motorcycles, ATV, ORV.
	Gaylord Schools Plantation	The school district uses this 62.36 acre site with hiking trails for forestry studies.
	Otsego Christian School	Multi-purpose room; outdoor playground with swings & other standard equipment, basketball court, soccer practice field.
	Arbutus Beach	Small unincorporated resort settlement on east side of Otsego Lake.
Charlton Township	Charlton Township Park (Charlton Township)	Pavilion, slides, swings, climbing structure, basketball court, Fireman's field.
	Johannesburg-Lewiston High School (School District)	Baseball/softball fields, football field, track, gymnasium, playgrounds.
	Big Bear Lake Campground (State of Michigan)	State forest campground, fishing, swimming, hiking, bike and ORV trails.
	Big Bear Point Campground (State of Michigan)	State forest campground, cottages, hiking-biking trails.
	Johnson's Crossing Trail Camp (State of Michigan)	Equestrian camping, camping, fishing.
	West Twin Lake Access Site (State of Michigan)	Fishing, swimming.
	High Country Pathway	Hiking, mountain biking, XC skiing.
	Big Bear – Crapo Creek Trail System and North Branch Route	Part of a 61.5-mile trail system (extends to the west into Chester Twp. and Bagley Twp. and east into Montmorency County) for ORV and motorcycle use.
	Snowmobile Trail #448 & #4	Snowmobile trails; shared with part of Big Bear-Crapo Creek Trail system



<b>Chester Township</b>	Big Lake Access Site (State of Michigan)	Fishing, swimming, boat launch, vault toilets.
	Emerald Lake Access Site (State of Michigan)	Fishing, swimming, boat launch, vault toilets.
	Big Bass Lake Access Site (State of Michigan)	Fishing, swimming, boat launch, vault toilets.
	Lower Chub Lake Access Site (State of Michigan)	Fishing, swimming.
	Au Sable River Access Site (State of Michigan)	Fishing.
	Snowmobile Route No. 4	Snowmobile Route; shared with part of Big Bear/Crapo Creek Trail system.
<b>Corwith Township</b>	North Central State Trail (State of Michigan)	Summer non-motorized pathway, winter snowmobile trail.
	Sturgeon River Access Site (State of Michigan)	Fishing.
	Pigeon River Access Site (State of Michigan)	Fishing.
	Black River Access Site (State of Michigan)	Fishing.
	Pickrel Lake Campground (State of Michigan)	State forest campground, boat launch, vault toilets, hiking, biking, fishing, swimming, picnic tables.
	Elk Hill Equestrian Campground (State of Michigan)	Equestrian group camping, other group camping, fishing.
	Pigeon Bridge Campground (State of Michigan)	State forest campground, hiking, biking, picnic tables, trout fishing.
	Round Lake Campground (State of Michigan)	State forest campground, fishing, swimming, hiking, biking.
	Town Corner Campground (State of Michigan)	State forest campground, fishing.
	North Spur Shore-to-Shore Trail	Hiking, horseback riding, xc skiing.
	High Country Pathway	Hiking, biking, XC skiing
	Shingle Mill Pathway	14 miles of hike/bike trails; consists of 5 trail loops ranging from 0.75 to 11 miles long.
	North Central State Trail/Iron Belle Trail	A multi-purpose, non-motorized pathway in the summer and snowmobile trail in the winter. Crushed limestone surface. NCST extends 62 miles from Gaylord to Mackinaw City.
	North Country State Trail Trailhead Park	Trailhead along the Iron Belle/North Central State Trail.
	Pigeon River State Forest Campground	Rustic campground; hunting; fishing; boat launch; biking, hiking, skiing, and equestrian trails. This State forest has the largest herd of free-roaming elk located east of the Mississippi River.
	Round Lake State Forest Campground	Public access for swimming and fishing. Campground and hiking/biking trails.
	Pigeon River Discovery Center	A 1930's historic log cabin used as a discovery center to promote natural resource and recreation opportunities in the PRCSF, host environmental education programs, and teach visitors about the history of the PRCSF.
Towerman's Watch Pathway	3.2 and 3.8-mile trail loops for hiking through the Pigeon River Country State Forest and along the Pigeon River	

<b>Elmira Township</b>	Elmira Township Park (Elmira Township)	Playground, basketball court.
	Elmira Elementary School Property (School District)	School building has been removed. Playground and softball field on the property.
	Lake 27 Access Site (State of Michigan)	Fishing, swimming, boat launch, vault toilets.
	Fleming Farm (privately owned)	Agricultural tours.
	Snowmobile Trail #76, Chandler Hills Trail, and Kalkaska to Tomahawk MCCCT	These trails are shared and overlap in the northwest portion of the Township. The Chandler Hills Trail is open to motorbikes and motorcycles, and the Michigan Cross Country Cycle Trail (MCCCT) is open to motorcycles.
	Lost Valley Bible Camp	Children's camp and retreat packages for the Christian community. Wooded setting along Pettifor Lake. Amenities include a gym, sports fields, basketball, volleyball, disc golf, softball, soccer, climbing/ropes course, game room, hiking, hayrides, beach, go-carts, RV camping, meeting rooms.
	Camp Sancta Maria	Christian youth camp. 96 acres of wooded property offering ropes course, beach, horseback riding. Grounds border Lake 27 and Martin Lake.
<b>Hayes Township</b>	Gaylord School Plantation (School District)	80-acre plantation, hiking trails, forestry studies.
	Pine Baron Pathway	Jointly operated state/local hiking, mountain biking, and cross-country skiing trails.
	Lake Manuka Access Site (State of Michigan)	Fishing, swimming, boat launch, vault toilets.
	Manistee River Access Site (State of Michigan)	Fishing.
	Snowmobile Trails #774 and #4	Snowmobile trails.
<b>Livingston Township</b>	Demonstration Garden – Conservation Forest (Soil Conservation District)	Community garden, timber stand, pond, hiking/snowshoe trails, cross-country skiing trails.
	Five Lakes Access Site (Livingston Township)	Picnic area, boat launch, fishing, swimming.
	Five Lakes Natural Area (Gaylord Community Schools/Soil Conservation District)	20-acre area, wildlife viewing, picnic tables, trails.
	North Central State Trail (State of Michigan)	Summer non-motorized pathway, winter snowmobile trail.
	Otsego County Fairgrounds	Five exhibit barns, race track horse barns, midway booth and grandstand. Hosts the annual county fair and other major special events from spring-fall. North side of the parking lot is the portion of the fairgrounds within Livingston Township (the fairgrounds is within the City of Gaylord).
	North Central State Trail/Iron Belle Trail	A multi-purpose non-motorized pathway in the summer and snowmobile trail in the winter. Crushed limestone surface. Extends 62 miles from Gaylord to Mackinaw City.
	Gaylord High School	Indoor: Gym with 3 basketball courts, weight room & wrestling room. Outdoor: football stadium, track, 2 soccer fields, 2 practice fields, softball & baseball



		diamonds.
<b>Otsego Lake Township</b>	Remi and Edna Schotte Memorial Park (Otsego Lake Township)	Two pavilions, picnic tables, grills, playground, trails, baseball diamond, basketball court, horseshoe pit, drinking fountain, and vault toilet.
	Heart Lake Access Site (State of Michigan)	Fishing, swimming, boat launch, vault toilets.
	Big Bradford Lake Access Site (State of Michigan)	Fishing, swimming, boat launch, vault toilets.
	Little Bradford Lake Access Site (State of Michigan)	Fishing, swimming
	Big Chub Lake Access Site (State of Michigan)	Fishing, swimming
	Lake Marjory Access Site (State of Michigan)	Fishing, swimming, boat launch, vault toilets.
	Bridge Lake Access Site (State of Michigan)	Fishing, swimming.
	Opal Lake Access Site (State of Michigan)	Fishing, swimming, boat launch, vault toilets.
	Guthrie Lake Access Site (State of Michigan)	Fishing, swimming.
	Section One Lake Access Site (State of Michigan)	Fishing, Swimming, boat launch, vault toilets
	Snowmobile Trail #4	Snowmobile use
	Iron Belle Trail	
	Michaywe' Assn. (Part in Otsego Lake Twp.)	4-season recreation and residential community > 950 homes with 18-hole golf course "Michaywe Pines" & XC ski/hike trail. Clubhouse, beach, tennis courts & pool for members only.
Guthrie Lake Association	A private residential resort community with a clubhouse with indoor recreational amenities and an indoor/outdoor pool for members only.	
<b>Village of Vanderbilt</b>	Vanderbilt Memorial Park (Village of Vanderbilt)	Pavilion, grills, benches, picnic tables, fountain, portable restroom.
	Custer Park (Village of Vanderbilt)	Ball field.
	Vanderbilt Trailhead Park (Kids' Park) (Village of Vanderbilt)	Trailhead for the Iron Belle Trail/NCST and park with a playground, swing sets, spring-mounted fixtures for children, sand play area, basketball court, drinking fountain, and restroom and pavilion.
	Elkland Senior Center (Commission on Aging)	Older adult activities, meals, housing.
	Vanderbilt Area School (School district)	Gymnasium, baseball field, softball field, trails, forestry, study area, picnic area.
	North Central State Trail/Iron Belle Trail	A multi-purpose non-motorized pathway in the summer and snowmobile trail in the winter. Crushed limestone surface. NCST extends 62 miles from Gaylord to Mackinaw City.

### Status Report on Grant-Assisted Recreational Facilities

The following is a listing of DNR Grants received by the City of Gaylord for parks and recreation. Post-

Completion Self Certification Reports can be found for each of these grants in the Appendix.

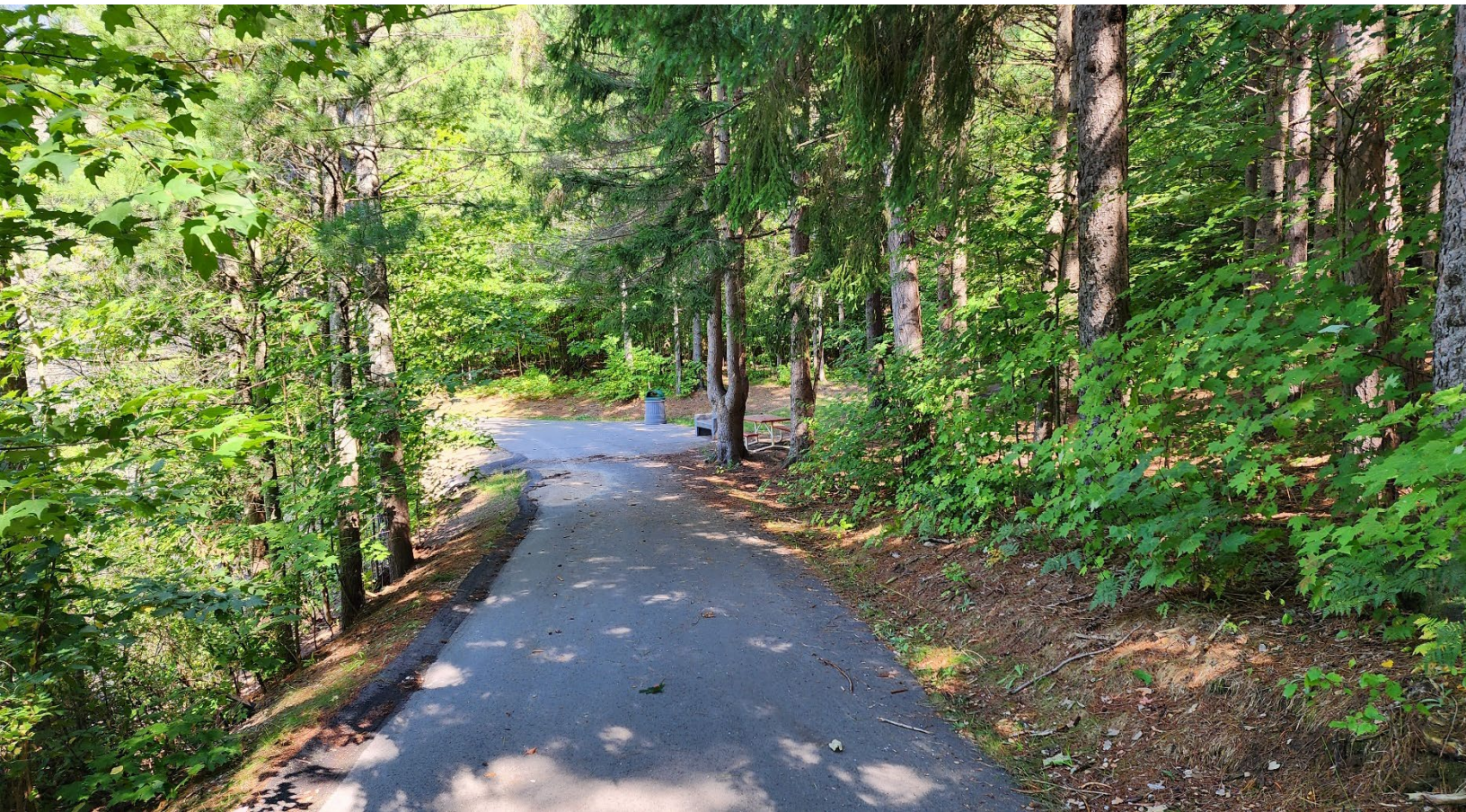
GRANT HISTORY		
Grant Number	Park Name	Description
CM99-377	Aspen Park	Development of Aspen Park trails including lighting, parking, access drive, fencing and gates, trail identification kiosks, and markers.
TF02-083	Elk View Park	Acquisition of approximately 2 acres of land for park development.
TF03-065	Freel Park / Doumas Park	Barrier-free playground structures, pavilions, paved pathways, parking, landscaping, and irrigation.



CHAPTER

# 4

## GOALS & ACTION PLAN



*City of Gaylord Recreation Plan*



## City of Gaylord Recreation Goals

- A. Provide for a parks and recreation system that is representative of the broad recreational needs and preferences of all segments of the community's population.
- B. Provide non-motorized linkages between parks, schools, commercial areas, and residential neighborhoods.
- C. Work with adjacent communities, Otsego County, and organizations to address countywide or regional recreational systems.
- D. Promote accessibility to the City's parks and recreation facilities by persons of all ages and physical capabilities.
- E. Take advantage of acquisition opportunities as they arise to establish open space areas, pocket parks, and neighborhood parks.
- F. Use a combination of funding sources including state, federal, local, foundations, and donations to assist in financing the purchase and development of recreational facilities.
- G. All non-motorized pathways and sidewalks within the City shall be constructed in compliance with ADA standards to provide access to all segments of society in an integrated manner.

## City of Gaylord Recreation Objectives

The following objectives define general actions to be taken relative to the development, redevelopment, or upgrades of recreation facilities on a citywide basis necessary to meet the City's recreation goals.

1. Provide a balance of recreational amenities that are oriented to the aging population to increase the desirability of the community to retirees.
2. Provide recreational amenities that are oriented toward the younger population and families in order to increase the livability of the community to attract young families to the area and retain older youth.
3. Upgrade or expand existing facilities if physically and financially more practical than acquiring or developing new facilities.
4. Design and operate parks and facilities in a manner that promotes efficient operation, is compatible with adjacent land uses, and is consistent with the existing development plans for these facilities.
5. Develop or redevelop parks and recreation facilities that will reduce operating and maintenance costs, while being consistent with the community's ability and desire to support on an ongoing basis.
6. Ensure that sites of existing and proposed parks and other recreational facilities are environmentally safe for all recreational users.
7. Develop facilities that provide services on a year-round, multi-purpose, multi-user basis whenever possible.
8. Make full use of State and Federal grant programs to assist in financing recreation development consistent with the recreation goals and objectives of the City.
9. Seek alternative and creative funding for the development, operation, and maintenance of City recreational facilities to ensure that all users are treated equitably.
10. When practical, encourage service clubs, user groups, non-profit organizations, etc. to implement approved elements of the recreation plan and discourage projects, which are inconsistent with the plan.

11. Promote recreation programs through volunteer recreation organizations.
12. Acquire additional lands or facilities for recreation purposes based on the following criteria. The acquisition:
  - a. promotes an integrated and complementary system of municipal recreation facilities;
  - b. enhances public access, use, and preservation of the unique and special natural resources of the community; or
  - c. satisfies an unmet recreational need which cannot be met through existing recreation facilities or adaptive reuse of existing parks or facilities.

## Basis for Action

### General Basis for Action

Recreation facilities within the City are impacted not only by the population of the City proper but by the population in the adjacent townships as well. According to the 2020 US Census, the population of Gaylord was 4,286 (up over 17 percent from 2010). Only four of the municipalities in the County experienced a population decline over the past 10 years. Otsego County, as a whole, had a 3.8 percent population increase – the third-highest population growth of all of the surrounding counties. Individuals who are 19 years of age and younger comprise 25% of the population in the City of Gaylord. Similarly, the percent population of persons 65 years and older was 24%, so recreational facilities in Gaylord have to cater to a wide variety of ages and abilities.

While Gaylord is a regional employment center, the

median household income within Gaylord was more than \$25,000 lower than the county and adjacent townships. This may be attributed to a higher percentage of retirees along with the concentration of multi-family apartment complexes. Over 16 percent of individuals in Gaylord live below the poverty line and unemployment rates in Otsego County are higher than Michigan and the U.S. but lower than other counties in Northeast Michigan. Therefore, recreational opportunities need to be affordable.

Lastly, when assessing self-reported disabilities, over 2 percent of children up to 17 years old, 12 percent of people 18-64, and over a third of people 65 and up fall into this category. The percentages are even higher in some of the surrounding communities, so universal access to recreational opportunities is critical.

### A Commitment to Recreation for All

As the City of Gaylord realizes the importance of providing diverse recreational facilities and activities that are accessible to all segments of society in an integrated manner, the goal of this Parks and Recreation Plan is to provide a basis to institute renovation of those areas necessary to ensure barrier-free accessibility and to ensure all future additions or renovations to the City's park and recreation system will be constructed to ADA standards. Parking areas in all recreational areas shall be constructed of a firm and stable surface with signed handicap parking spaces provided. It is acknowledged that circulation routes throughout the parks and access routes to their amenities are a necessity for those with a disability. Integrated ground level and elevated play

components accessible by those with or without disabilities are needed and will provide children with disabilities the benefit of increased play and social interaction with other children. Children as well as adults without disabilities will also benefit from a diverse and integrated recreational system that is accessible by all. Height and clearances of tables, seats, and drinking fountains, space for wheelchair maneuverability to, from, and at play structures, restroom accessibility, as well as signage with raised lettering to provide information to the visually impaired are vital aspects to the renovation or development of recreational facilities. Evaluation of City parks and recreation facilities to determine their compliance with barrier-free standards



concluded that those facilities, including pathways and sidewalks used for pedestrian and non-motorized traffic, that have been constructed or renovated since 1989, were done so in compliance with the standards and guidelines set forth. Improvements constructed at Aspen Park in 2001 were also designed to ensure accessibility throughout the park for those who are disabled by providing access routes and elements throughout the park constructed to ADA standards. As Aspen Park is a nature area, particular attention was

given to the slope of the routes to ensure ease of travel by all. Older, established parks such as George Dumas Memorial Park and Freel Memorial Park, identified in the 2002-2006 Recreation Plan as being deficient in barrier-free accessibility, were extensively renovated in 2005. During the renovation amenities from accessible routes through the parks to play structures, from picnic areas and restrooms to parking areas were all designed to allow use by those with moderate to severe disabilities.

### Non-Motorized Pathways/Sidewalks

In a Parks and Recreation Survey conducted in 1995, the desire for a citywide path system ranked first and second respectively as critically needed facilities. Since 1994, the construction or replacement of existing sidewalks has been an important aspect of each year's Street Improvement Project and will be continued in the future. Determination of the location of the non-motorized improvements is made during the winter prior to construction. It is the goal of the City to achieve pedestrian-friendly status and to construct a network of interconnecting sidewalks linking the downtown business district to commercial and residential areas, and schools located in the City limits. Although the construction of sidewalks addresses the needs of pedestrian traffic, some are not adequate to safely handle both two-way non-motorized traffic as well as pedestrians. Some asphalt paths do exist within the City and are used by bicyclists and pedestrians alike. These paths serve various locations around the City and are not connected to each other in any meaningful way. As Gaylord has grown and spread out from the central downtown area the roads have become increasingly congested. As gas prices rise and with a growing emphasis on healthy lifestyles, the need for a non-motorized pathway system to provide alternative methods of transportation, connecting residential areas, either urban or rural, to commercial zones will rise. Realizing the importance of a connected non-motorized pathway and route system, the City of Gaylord has consistently partnered with other entities to plan for a countywide pathway system within the community.

In 2003, the City of Gaylord joined the Michigan Department of Transportation in a study to identify ways to improve pedestrian and non-motorized traffic safety

along two (2) miles of South Otsego Avenue from the Wisconsin/Grandview intersection south to Johnson Road and 0.5 miles of East Main Street from the intersection of Maple Avenue, west to the Lake State Railway tracks. The study titled "Project Pedestrian" will be used as a tool to initiate and implement a planned growth strategy and increase pedestrian and non-motorized traffic in these areas.

- ❖ The study recommended the construction of a mixed-use pathway along both the east and west sides of the South Otsego Avenue Corridor from the Wisconsin/Grandview intersection south to the Johnson Road/I-75 Exit 279 interchange. The project would incorporate downtown streetscape elements and the closure or consolidation of numerous driveway approaches, as well as the addition of boulevards and marked crosswalks. It is felt this would assist in the future growth and development expected to occur within this high-traffic area and help ensure the safety of pedestrian and non-motorized traffic along the corridor. Although the study does not recommend the addition of sidewalks or non-motorized pathways along the East Main Street corridor, it does advise the addition of pedestrian refuge islands, medians, and marked crosswalks to increase pedestrian safety in the area.

The Michigan Department of Transportation will be reconstructing this portion of South Otsego Avenue in 2024 and will be completing the recommended non-motorized facilities as a part of the project. The City of Gaylord is working with MDOT to incorporate up to four pocket parks as

part of the project as well.

The City of Gaylord together with Livingston Township, Bagley Township, the Otsego County Economic Alliance, Otsego County Road Commission, and the Michigan Department of Transportation submitted an application for grant proceeds to fund a four-phased Streetscape Construction Project along West M-32, complete with sidewalks and pathways and other streetscape elements, such as trees and decorative lighting.

- ❖ Phase 1 of the project would consist of the reconstruction of existing pathways under both sides of the I-75 Interchange at Exit 282 that have significantly deteriorated in recent years. Phase 1 would also include the construction of a sidewalk on the north side of M-32 from the I-75 interchange to Murner Road and on the south side of M-32 from the I-75 interchange to the Meecher Road/Edelweiss Blvd. intersection.

The Michigan Department of Transportation will be completing the phase 1 work in 2025 and 2026.

- ❖ Phase 2 of the project would consist of the construction of a non-motorized pathway in Livingston Township from Murner Road to a residential subdivision located to the north. Phase 3 of the project would consist of the construction of a sidewalk along West M-32 from the Meecher Road/Edelweiss Blvd. intersection to Murner Road, and the construction of a non-motorized pathway along the south side of West M-32 in Bagley Township from the Murner Road intersection west approximately 1,100 feet to the Gaylord Cinema complex location. Phase 4 of the project would be the construction of a non-motorized pathway in Livingston Township along the north side of M-32, beginning at Murner Road and ending at North Townline Road. This collaborative effort would effectively enhance, protect, and preserve the scenic up-north visual appeal while creating non-motorized access to commercial and residential areas, not currently accessible to those who depend on this type of transportation to access employment and services.

The construction of a non-motorized pathway along Elkview Blvd., adjacent to the City's wildlife viewing area

is planned for the future.

- ❖ This non-motorized pathway beginning at the intersection of Elkview and Grandview Blvd., continuing south on Elkview to Commerce Blvd., with connecting pathways to Aspen Park and South Otsego Avenue to both the east and west is recommended in this action plan.

The City of Gaylord has recently been awarded a Spark Grant to fund the development of Elk View Park and these recommended pathway connections.

- ❖ Another key area of non-motorized pathways being planned is a link to the Aspen Park trail system to the north, across both city-owned property and the property owned by Gaylord Community School. This would connect the trail system at Aspen Park to both the Gaylord Intermediate and South Maple Elementary Schools. The trail would run parallel to the natural resources learning center on school property that includes a pond and nature center building, then continue east to the area of Gaylord Little League's Hutchins Field.

### Elkview Park Development

In 2003, the City of Gaylord, with assistance from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund, purchased two acres of property for the development of a new park. This property is located at the corner of Elkview and Commerce Boulevard and provides individuals with the opportunity to see the City-owned elk and deer herd in a natural setting while being located within an urban area. Plans to develop this park include a lighted non-motorized pathway to Aspen Park, sidewalk, grills, interpretive displays, benches, picnic tables, play structure retaining wall, asphalt parking area, and street lighting.

The City of Gaylord has continued to plan for the development of what we consider this "one-of-a-kind" park. One that not only incorporates new trails and connections to our Aspen Park, but one that provides handicap accessible playgrounds, restrooms, interpretive displays, picnic facilities, and public viewing

of Michigan’s only known municipally owned elk herd maintained by the City of Gaylord’s Public Works Department. We feel that this multifaceted park is a tremendous addition and provides recreational opportunities for the young and old and tourists and residents alike. The City was tremendously fortunate to secure this land with the assistance of the MNRTF. The City was recently awarded a Spark Grant to fund

development and improvements at the site. New features to be developed include a paved parking lot, restrooms, a pavilion with fire feature, pathways, picnic areas, playground structures, a viewing area for elk and deer herd, a four-season covered platform for viewing, interpretative signs, and a lighted, paved pedestrian trail to Aspen Park.

**Spray Park**

This plan recommends the addition of a Spray Park to the inventory of park facilities. Spray Parks are also known as aquatic parks, fountain parks, or water playgrounds. These parks are safe, interactive play areas where water is sprayed from structures, ground sprays, or fountains and then drained away before it can accumulate. Spray Parks provide a cost-effective alternative to pools, which are expensive to construct and operate, requiring a full-time staff and costly maintenance expenditures. Because Spray Parks are operated through the use of computerized control systems, the operating season is extended and the need for lifeguards is eliminated. Spray Parks create an environment that children of all ages and abilities can

enter with equal enthusiasm. With activators low enough for all, children in wheelchairs can easily access and maneuver through spray parks, those who are sight impaired can enjoy the cool sense of touch and those who have hearing disorders can enjoy the bright colors, and the spray of water on a hot day. Spray Parks do not discriminate against age, size, or disability. As some children fear large pools of water, Spray Parks provide a comfortable and casual environment in which children can build their confidence about being in water without the fears associated with swimming. Benches, picnic tables, and trash receptacles should also be features of the park. It is also recommended that a Spray Park be constructed where restroom facilities are available.

**Aspen Park Residual Property**

The 2002-2006 Parks and Recreation Plan detailed plans to extensively renovate the largest parkland area in the City of Gaylord, Aspen Park. With assistance from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund, these recommended items were completed and Aspen Park has evolved into a highly utilized four-season park that attracts thousands of individuals from Otsego County and areas beyond, on a consistent and year-round basis. The previous plan recommended improvements be made on the 5-acre piece of property, immediately adjacent to Aspen Park.

interpretive area on the residual property and in Aspen Park proper.

- ❖ This action plan suggests that a partnership be established between the City, area schools, and local non-profit organizations to develop an

- ❖ A natural trail system connecting the nature area located on adjacent school property should be developed and continued into the Park.
- ❖ Throughout Aspen Park land management techniques that provide for biodiversity and direct human uses with protecting the ecosystem should be utilized.
- ❖ A pump track for bicycles should be developed at this park.

**Ice Skating/Street Hockey Rink**

The operation of both an outdoor ice skating and hockey rink was discontinued after the completion of the Otsego County Sportsplex in 1996. Ice-skating lessons

and hockey leagues at the Sportsplex have promoted the hockey and skating program, greatly increasing its popularity in recent years. With the expansion of the



hockey program, interest in playing street hockey by youth in the community during warmer months has accelerated. Since a designated area for the sport does not exist, goals are placed on the roadway and removed when traffic approaches, creating a potentially hazardous situation for motorists and players alike.

- ❖ The construction of an asphalt or concrete area surrounded by an interlocking panel rink would serve a dual use by providing a designated area for street hockey in the warmer months and ice skating during winter months. Therefore providing an alternative to indoor skating at the Sportsplex.
- ❖ The use of refrigeration units would provide an

excellent skating surface throughout the winter months.

- ❖ A proposed location for the park has yet to be identified but should be in an area accessible by a pathway or sidewalk since it is believed the majority of the street hockey participants will be less than 18 years of age.
- ❖ A small warming hut, as well as water, portable restroom facilities, and picnic tables should be available at the site. The rink could also be used during promotional events in the community. The design and construction of all facilities will be in compliance with ADA standards.

### Proposed New City Parks

An analysis of parkland within the City of Gaylord showed the City is lacking in neighborhood parkland. National Recreational Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines recommend that a community have at least 2 acres of neighborhood parkland for every 1,000 persons. Even with Gaylord's present population, the City lacks 3.3 acres of neighborhood parkland. If Gaylord develops completely within its present boundaries under current zoning, the City will be lacking 5.9 acres of neighborhood parkland. Existing city parks with playgrounds are all located in the southern and eastern portions of the City, while the northern and western portions are not served by public playgrounds, except that which is located at North Ohio Elementary School.

- ❖ One recommendation is that a park be developed in the Downtown Development District, preferably along the M-32 corridor between the Lake State Railway tracks and I-75. An uncluttered greenspace area with minimal park features, including only elements such as landscaping, irrigation; trash receptacles and benches would provide a pleasant visual break between the expansive area of commercial and retail businesses, signs, and parking lots in this high-traffic area of the City. A park in the downtown district is also thought to encourage pedestrian traffic in the area, provides a welcome respite for employees and patrons of neighboring businesses, and provides an area in the downtown area on which people could picnic or

simply congregate.

- ❖ This Plan recommends a park be constructed in the City-owned 240-acre Gaylord Industrial Park. A pavilion, picnic tables, and portable restroom facilities should be available. An irrigation system should be installed and the park landscaped. The size of the park should be large enough to accommodate picnics or events sponsored by employers of the Gaylord Industrial Park.
- ❖ This Plan recommends that a park be considered on property owned by the City of Gaylord around the Otsego County Community Center.

To encourage additional parkland or open space areas, pocket parks should be established in numerous residential areas. The City should consider a long-term lease of private property, provide tax incentives to property owners who participate in the program, or obtain the property through donation or direct purchase. Pocket parks would be considered public property and would provide areas where children could play or those who reside or work in the area could congregate. Pocket parks could range in size from a City lot to larger tracts of property. The property could remain in its natural state with minimal maintenance or be developed, depending upon individual leases or agreements with property owners. Improvements may include landscaping, installation of irrigation systems, community gardens, playground equipment, and/or picnic tables. Before the development of a pocket park,

a public hearing to obtain input from property owners in the area should be held to help determine which improvements will occur at the specific location. This will provide diversity of park areas throughout the City. While no design yet exists for these proposed City parks, an alpine design playscape structure or

playground equipment, water park/fountain equipment, parking, picnic areas, fitness trails, restroom facilities, and landscaping are being proposed. Design and construction of all facilities shall comply with ADA standards.

### Snowmobile Trails

Snowmobiling is one of the premier winter sports in northern Michigan, especially given the average annual snowfall and winter season lasting most years in excess of three (3) months. The DNR Snowmobile Trail System enters the City at its southern limits and terminates in the area of Second Street and Exit 282 interchange. From these locations by traveling a designated route along secondary City streets, snowmobilers can access the trailhead for the highly utilized Rails to Trails system, located at the northern City limits. Snowmobiles are prohibited from traveling in certain areas within the City limits, severely limiting access to many commercial businesses within the City and creating potential safety concerns for motorists and snowmobilers.

- ❖ While this action plan does not suggest snowmobilers have free access to all areas of the City, it does recommend the ongoing collaborative effort by City and County officials, as well as the Gaylord/Otsego County Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau to evaluate the designated, off-road route system in order to provide greater access to key points throughout the City for tourists and residents alike. Any expansion of the route system should include strict controls mandating travel at minimum speeds and the possible prohibition of snowmobile travel inside the City limits between the hours of midnight and 7:00 a.m.

### Renovation and Maintenance of Existing City Parks

Although it is acknowledged that extensive renovations of Aspen Park, George Dumas Memorial Park, Freeland Park, and to a lesser extent, Hale Park have occurred since the adoption of prior Parks and Recreation Plans, this plan recommends a regular schedule of maintenance be established for the equipment and facilities located at all existing City parks.

- ❖ It is imperative that all playground equipment, gazebos, restroom facilities, pathways, irrigation systems, lighting, asphalt parking lots, and other features be routinely inspected and steps taken to ensure that all features are maintained in a manner to enhance the quality and safety of all City Parks.
- ❖ With a renewed interest in tennis and the support of the Alpine Regional Tennis Association (ARTA), the City will work with the group to make improvements to tennis courts at Aspen Park and the Otsego County Community Center and construct new courts at the Otsego County Sportsplex.
- ❖ The public input survey showed interest in developing pickleball courts throughout the community, so the City will look at revamping existing parks to include pickleball courts.

### Tourism and Economic Development

Thousands of tourists visit the Gaylord area each year. Gaylord is a popular stopping place for people on their way to points further north, such as Mackinac Island and the Upper Peninsula in general. In addition, Gaylord is a destination in itself, with many coming to the area to golf, ski, hike, snowmobile, shop, and enjoy the Alpine Village atmosphere that has been established.

Visitors to the area use the parks and recreation facilities during their stay, whether it is a one-half hour stop or a several week stay. The types of recreation opportunities, as well as the conditions of the facilities, serve to contribute to the overall impression of the City as a whole and will encourage people to return to the City year after year.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE		
Project	Supporting Goal	Supporting Objective
<b>Elkview Park</b> - Develop the park to include a lighted non-motorized pathway to Aspen Park, sidewalk, grills, restrooms, pavilion with fire feature, interpretive displays, benches, picnic tables, play structure, retaining wall, asphalt parking area and street lighting. Tentatively funded by DNR Spark Grant.	A,D,F,G	1, 2, 3, 4, 7
<b>Non-Motorized Pathways and Sidewalks</b> - Acquire easements, apply for grant funding, construct pathways and sidewalks in conjunction with annual street improvement project and grant awards.	A,B,C,D,F,G	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7
<b>Non-Motorized Pathways and Sidewalks</b> - Construct pathway around perimeter of Gaylord Industrial Park, dedicate property for park within Industrial Park.	A,B,C,D,F,G	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7
<b>Acquisition</b> - Take advantage of acquisition opportunities as they arise to establish open space areas, pocket parks and neighborhood parks, including property for an outdoor ice skating/street hockey rink.	A,C,E,F	1, 2, 7, 12
<b>Skating (outdoor)</b> - Acquire property for outdoor ice skating/street hockey rink if not completed. Design development and begin construction of asphalt parking area, warming hut and rink.	A,C,E,F	2, 12
<b>Cemeteries</b> - Develop and institute landscape plan in Fairview Cemetery and Bagley Cemetery, install sprinkler system in Bagley Cemetery, construct asphalt parking area in Bagley Cemetery, install interpretive displays and signage. Seek funding for memorial to Civil War veterans.	A,F	4, 5
<b>Aspen Park</b> - Construct platforms and boardwalk with interpretive displays; designate observation points around wetland area in Aspen Park. Protect development area from intrusion into Scott's Pond.	A,D,F	1, 2, 3, 4, 7
<b>Aspen Park</b> - Connect the trail system at Aspen Park to both the Gaylord Intermediate and South Maple Elementary Schools.	A,B,D,F,G	1, 2, 3, 4, 7
<b>Aspen Park</b> - Expand and improve trails (including mountain bike trails, side by side groomed ski trails, and family-friendly trails)	A,D,F,G	1, 2, 3, 4, 7
<b>Pickleball Courts</b> - Explore options to construct pickleball courts at various location in the city.	A,D,E,F	1, 3, 7



CHAPTER

# 5

## PLANNING PROCESS



*City of Gaylord Recreation Plan*

## Planning Schedule

The City of Gaylord Planning Commission initiated the update of the City of Gaylord Recreation Plan in March of 2023. The City is required to update the previous Recreation Plan in order to remain eligible for grants through the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Following is a description of the planning process that was used in developing the 2024-2028 Recreation Plan.

### March 2023

The City contracted with the Northeast Michigan Council of Governments to update the recreation plan.

### April 2023

The City, working with NEMCOG, created a draft public input survey. The survey also included questions for the Master Plan update, a process which is concurrent with the Recreation Plan update.

### May 2023

NEMCOG staff met with the City Planning Commission to review the draft survey.

### June 2023

Additional questions were drafted and included in the public input survey. The online survey was opened up to the public in late June.

### June – August 2023

The public input survey remained open throughout this time period. The survey link was included in the

summer tax bills mailed to all City residents. In addition, the City posted the survey link on its Facebook page. A press release was issued on July 27, 2023.

During this time period, NEMCOG staff performed the recreation inventory by visiting each park, recording amenities at each park, taking photos, and performing a barrier-free assessment.

### September – November 2023

A draft plan was developed by City staff and the City Planning Commission with the assistance of NEMCOG.

### December 6, 2023

The City Planning Commission reviewed the draft plan and approved it to be made available for the 30-day review period.

### December 14, 2023

A draft of the Recreation Plan was made available to the public for a 30-day review period. The plan was at the City Hall and on the website. A notice was published in the Weekly Choice announcing the availability of the Recreation Plan for review and announcing the public hearing.

### January 22, 2024

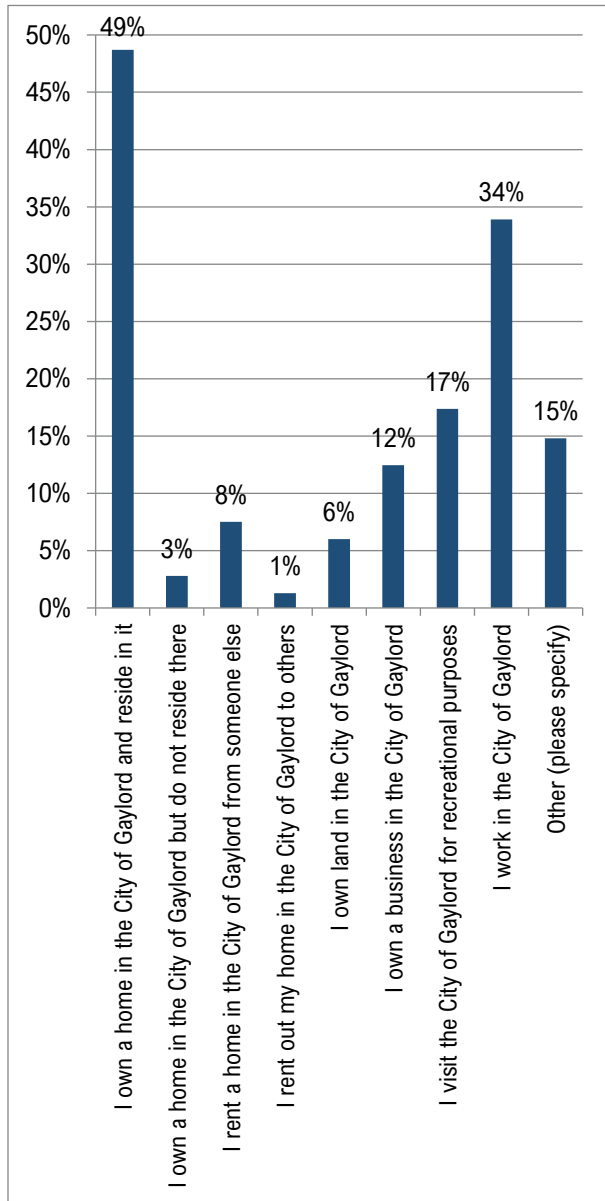
The City Council held a public hearing to gather additional public comments on the Plan. The Gaylord City Council formally adopted the 2024-2028 Recreation Plan.

### Survey Results Summary

The results of the recreation questions from the public input survey are summarized below. A total of 466 people responded to the survey (out of a population of 4,286).

#### Question 1

Please indicate your property interest in Gaylord.

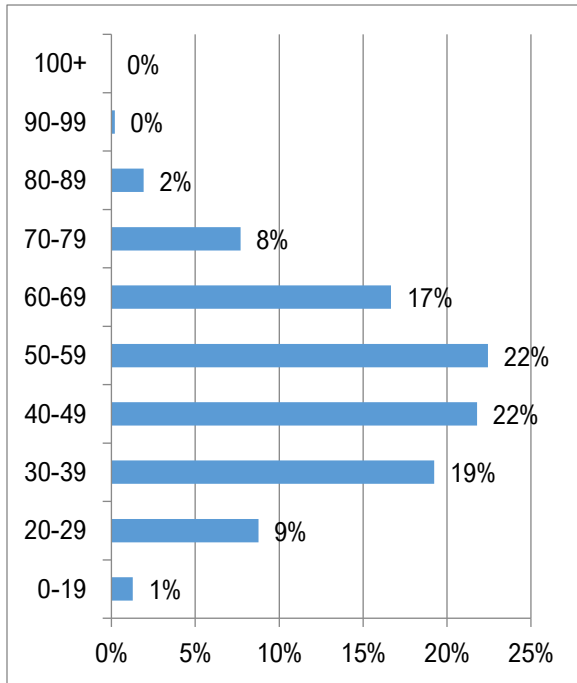


332 respondents were homeowners, property owners, or business owners within the City of Gaylord. Respondents who are residents of the City totaled 262 people which is over six percent of the population of the City. 158 people who responded to the survey work in the City of Gaylord. Business owners totaled 58 respondents. 81 people who visit the City for recreational purposes only responded to the survey. Of the respondents choosing the “other” category, most live in the surrounding townships.



**Question 2**

**What is your age group?**



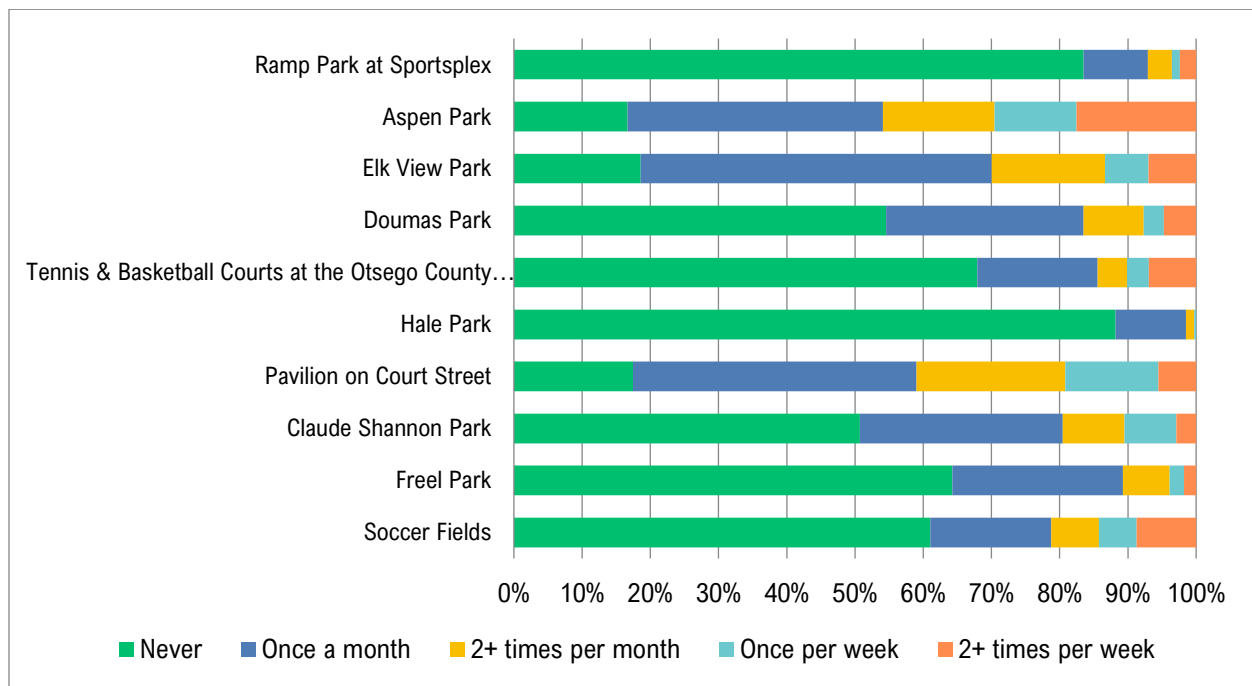
Survey respondents represented a very good distribution of age groups. These results show that the jurisdictions within the City of Gaylord should be planning recreational facilities for a wide variety of age groups. Over a quarter of the survey respondents were in the retirement age group. This indicates that planning for an aging population is critical.

Note – Questions 3 – 31 were pertaining specifically to issues addressed in the Master Plan. The Recreation Plan questions began at question 32.

Question 32 asked about park usage. Aspen Park is a highly used park with 60 people indicating that they use it two or more times per week. A total of 285 people indicated use of the park. 280 people indicate use of Elk View Park with 177 people saying that they use it at least once a month. The other parks with high “once-a-month” numbers are the Pavilion on Court Street, Claude Shannon Park, and Doumas Park.

**Question 32**

**How often do you visit the following recreational facilities?**



**Question 33**

**What improvements do you feel are needed at the soccer fields?**

Restrooms (17 responses)
Better seating area (8 responses)
Options for concession or food trucks (5 responses)
Pavilion/shelter (4 responses)
Better maintenance including grass/weeds and painting (9 responses)
Parking area improvements (13 responses) - paved area, more convenient location
No smoking/no vaping signage.
Water (responses)
Other single responses: walking track, security cameras, signage, disc golf baskets, more coaches/clinics, and more fields.

**Question 34**

**What improvements do you feel are needed at Freel Park?**

Regular maintenance (8 responses)
Law enforcement presence (2 responses)
Security Cameras (2 responses)
Disabled access (2 responses)
Wood chips (2 responses)
Single responses: flooding, water, splash pad, shade, signage, disc golf baskets, and open the restroom for more hours.

**Question 35**

**What improvements do you feel are needed at Claude Shannon Park?**

Seating (benches, pavilion, etc.) (8 responses) (note – difficulty seeing music events with landscaping)
Regular maintenance (6 responses)
Expand park area (4 responses) (The park needs to be expanded into the back alley to allow more walking space and space to listen to music. We currently have cars in the alley which is a direct conflict of interest with the music in the park and people trying to walk downtown.)
Public restrooms/access to restrooms (3 responses)
Single responses: security cameras that are functional; handicap access on pavement, bike locks, disc golf baskets.
Keep the downtown music all year. Invest in heaters or mobile/temporary fire pits. Keep people downtown. Snowmobilers would love a stop with stuff going on. Businesses will stay busy when people need to eat or warm up. Keep the social district year-round (the government shouldn't have so many sanctions over business. Let the economy do what it's going to do. This will allow you to see when the natural waxes and wanes in our local economy so companies can market in those bull seasons.)

**Question 36**

**What improvements do you feel are needed at the pavilion on Court Street?**

Responses were varied, so most individual responses have not been grouped.

More events with more promotions/year-round use. Encourage people to hang out and play games, do more things (5 responses)
Regular maintenance.
More parking
Updated sound system
Better farmer’s market
They need benches
More activities such as live music
Improve acoustics - Musical or mic’d up events are difficult there.
Video cameras and the ability to control music remotely
The Farmers Market used to be very successful. I’ve noticed less vendors than before. When talking to those vendors still there they mention vendors leaving due to management issues. Time for a change? More Antique shows might help. They seem popular. How about a rock and agate show? Better bands. Maybe a Blues festival. Chilli cook-off. Regular car shows. Sidewalk sales. It seems very underutilized for what we paid for.
Security cameras that are functional Security cameras that are functional
I would love to see more use of this space.
No thru traffic.
Pickleball courts
Allow food trucks in the area, more concerts
Paint on curbs. And more usage of wind rain curtains.
No improvements, just better use - or more use of it
Windbreaks sometimes the wind will blow you away
Does the pavilion have its own page/website/calendar? Is there a transparent way that the public can see that it’s available for use with consideration of the city? I recommend improving communication and transparency. Let me know if I can help develop that. -Sarah Harding
Better farmers market
More rock and roll concerts.

**Question 37**

**What improvements do you feel are needed at Hale Park?**

Maintenance
Parking (2 responses)
Maybe instead of picnic tables, more of a conversation seating arrangement. Twinkle lights.
Needs a restroom, and more shade
Very cute, concerned about being close to a busy road. Maybe install a cute fence?



**Question 38**

**What improvements do you feel are needed to the tennis and basketball courts at the Community Center?**

Pickleball Courts (37 responses)
Restrooms (10 responses)
Pavilion or shaded area (6 responses) for sitting and play.
Regular maintenance and cleaning (5 responses)
Beautification (4 responses)
More supervision (4 responses)
Better parking (4 responses)
Lights/signage (3 responses)
Basketball courts (preserve and upgrade) (2 responses)
Night lighting for play after dark
Tennis courts – more, revamp (5 responses)
Simply better knowledge of when the public (including adults) can go to use it
Trash receptacles
Develop a rack card with all of the parks and public recs. The CVB can host it in the visitor center. Give them to schools for welcome packets in the new year. Include sources like the community garden. Design it like a tourism piece and not a “government resource” reference.

**Question 39**

**What improvements do you feel are needed at Doumas Park?**

Equipment (9 responses) (slides, trampoline, swings, benches, playground equipment)
Security (9 responses) (police presence, cameras, lights)
Maintenance (6 responses)
Picnic tables and benches (3 responses)
More sunlight, less trees (3 responses)
Bathroom (2 responses)
Pickelball (2 responses)
Barrier-free access (2 responses)
Beautification
Updated drinking fountains

**Question 40****What improvements do you feel are needed at Elk Park?**

Upgrade viewing/seating areas (25 responses) (benches, viewing platforms, tables, handicap accessible viewing, picnic areas, binoculars)
Parking improvements (7 responses) (including ramp from parking to elk)
Landscaping (6 responses)
Interpretive signage (6 responses)
Bathrooms (3 responses)
Maintenance (2 responses) (Clean-up of the dump piles in the fence, litter clean up)
Access (2 responses) (More access points; better access from Elk Park to Aspen Park)
Get rid of the fallow deer. Treat the animals for ticks.
Provide information on how to access the elk webcams online.

**Question 41****What improvements do you feel are needed at Aspen Park?**

Parking improvements (17 responses) (1 response for access road improvements)
Pickleball courts (16 responses)
Trail improvements/expansion (14 responses) (family-friendly trails, mountain bike trails, side-by-side groomed ski trails, enhance single-track, add mountain bike features/ramps)
Bathrooms (10 responses)
Safety improvements (8 responses) (emergency response stations, security, security cameras, emergency phones)
Trail maintenance (7 responses) (removal of downed trees)
Better informational signage (7 responses) (Mileage, direction, uses allowed in specific areas)
Tennis courts (7 responses)
Benches/seating areas (6 responses)
Lighting (5 responses)
Parking improvements (3 responses)
Regular park-wide maintenance (3 responses)
Trail connections into and out of park (3 responses)
Enforcement of rules (2 responses)
Winter improvements (2 responses) (Maintain for winter recreation)
Water station (2 responses)
Disc golf course (2 responses)
Allow electric mobility devices (2 responses)
Mountain biking for novice riders
Picnic area
Trash receptacles
General maintenance
Children's play area
Keep encouraging events

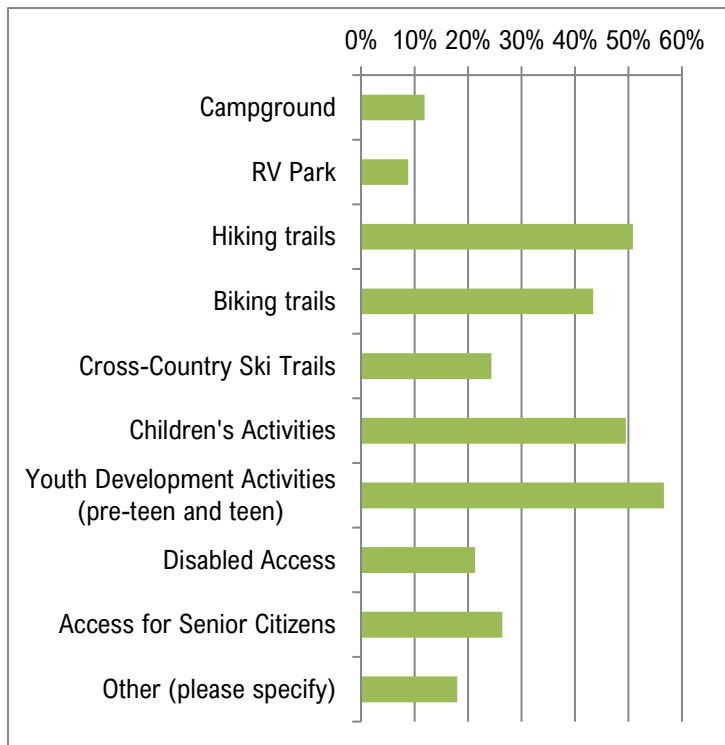
**Question 42**

**What improvements do you feel are needed at Ramp Park at the Sportsplex?**

Permanent pickleball courts (4 responses)
Events (2 responses)
Lights (2 responses)
Offer rentals
The sports plex needs to be upgraded
Expansion
Basketball courts
Bathroom
Beautification

**Question 43**

**What additional recreational facilities would you like to see in Gaylord?**



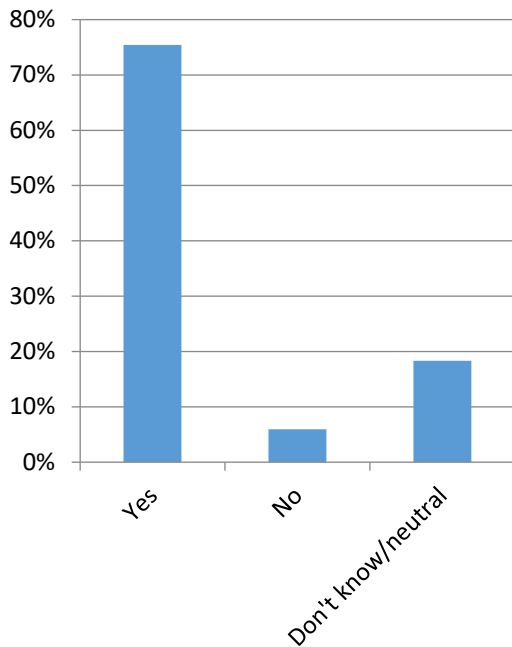
Question 41 asked about what types of additional recreational facilities respondents would like to see in Gaylord. The most given response was “youth development and activities – pre-teen and teen) followed by hiking trails, children’s activities, and biking trails. 53 people specified “other” which are listed in the following table.



<b>Other:</b>
Pickleball courts (18 responses)
Indoor winter activity center (3 responses)
Disc golf course (2 responses)
Dog parks (2 responses)
Interior multi-use recreational facility (3 responses)
Splash pad (2 responses)
Indoor athletic field/field house (2 responses)
Paved walking/running trail system (2 responses)
Ice skating rink outside in the winter
Groomed fat bike trails
Skate-Ski trails rather than Cross Country.
Bike access without having to ride in busy streets - the rails to trails is awesome but it is hard to get there
Powersports and motorsports areas.
Outdoor concerts at the community gardens
Childcare.... Affordable.
Fix the farmer's market and allow only vendors selling produce, food, etc.
YMCA
More safe places to store bikes while going into stores
Healthy Aging exercise equipment for older adults in area parks
We need more bike paths, indoor tennis courts, and a splash pad in Gaylord.
Electric scooters
Archery Park
Veteran & senior citizen activities
Ski trails
Finish the city park next to the Commission on Aging
Snowshoe areas
ATV/orv access
City vegetable garden

**Question 44**

**Should the City look to expand indoor recreation options?**



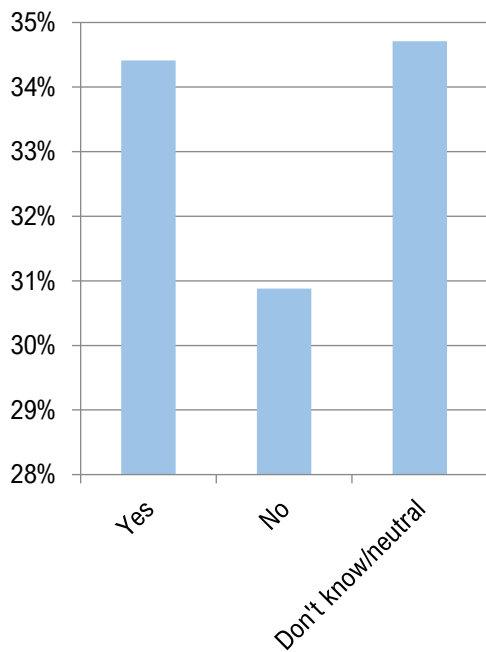
Question 44 asked whether the City should expand indoor recreation options. The respondents overwhelmingly said “yes” (many indoor options were listed in the previous question as the answer to “other.” The following table shows the list of indoor recreation options listed in response to this question. This question has significant importance due to the cold climate for a significant percentage of the year.

Pickleball (36 responses)
Soccer (16 responses)
Many responses mentioned a facility that offered multiple sports at once (15 responses)
Roller/Ice skating (14 responses)
Tennis courts (13 responses)
Trampolines/bounce house (12 responses)
Rock climbing (9 responses)
Walking track (8 responses)
Basketball (7 responses)
Laser tag (5 responses)
Golf (4 responses)
Football (4 responses)
Playground area (4 responses)
Arcade (4 responses)
Volleyball (3 responses)
Racquetball (3 responses)
Baseball/softball (3 responses)
Gymnastics (2 responses)
Museums/discovery centers (2 responses)
Swimming (2 responses)

Martial arts
Teen hangout
Lacross
Lawn games
Curling rink
Go carts
Escape room
Splash pad/water park
Zoo
Archery range
Dance
Dodgeball
Obstacle course
Darts
Music and theater
Boxing
Game space
Exersize space

**Question 45**

**Should the downtown area be more pet-friendly?**

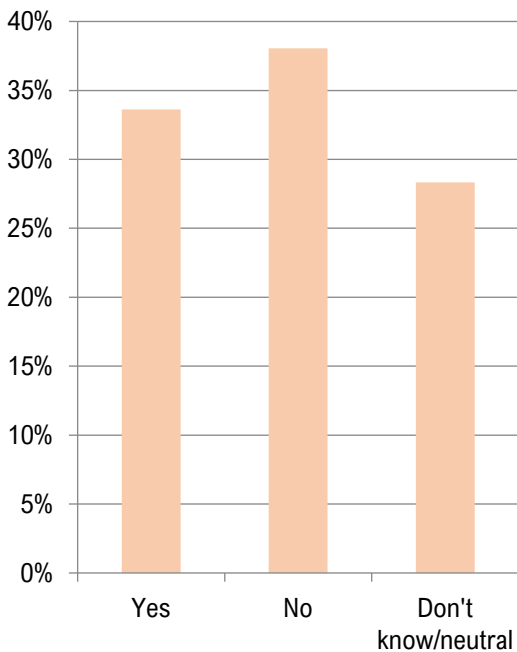


Respondents were split between answering yes to Question 45 or giving a neutral response. Comments to this question indicated that people would like to see more waste stations, enforced leash laws, and accessibility to water.



**Question 46**

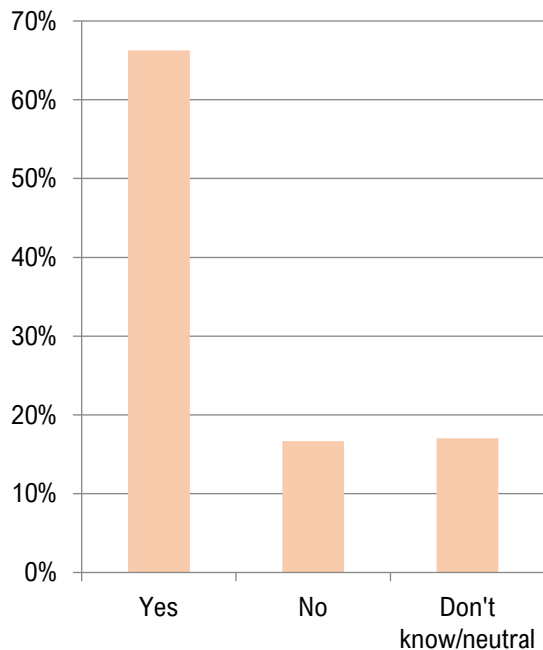
**Should pets be allowed in all city parks?**



The most common answer (38 percent) to Question 46 is that people did not want every park to allow dogs. However, 34 percent do want dogs allowed in all city parks. However, question 47 showed that, of the people who think dogs should be allowed in city parks, 66 percent of them feel that the city should provide options for cleanup.

**Question 47**

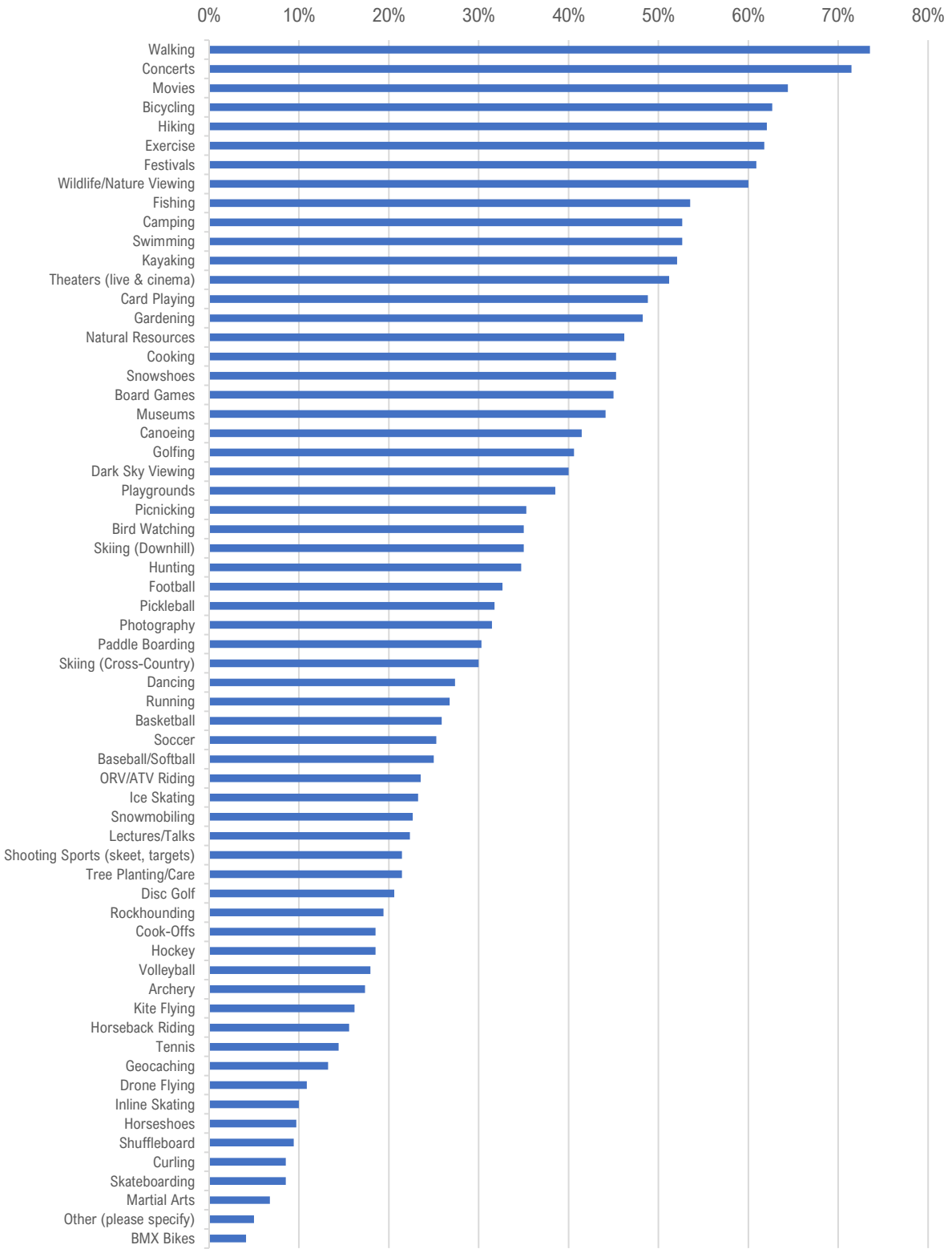
**If you think pets should be allowed in city parks, should the city provide options to cleanup after pets?**



Question 48 (see graph on the next page) asked what recreational activities people enjoyed. Over 50 percent of respondents answered the following as the top activities: walking, concerts, movies, bicycling, hiking, exercise, festivals, wildlife/nature viewing, fishing, camping, swimming, kayaking, and theaters (live and cinema).

**Question 48**

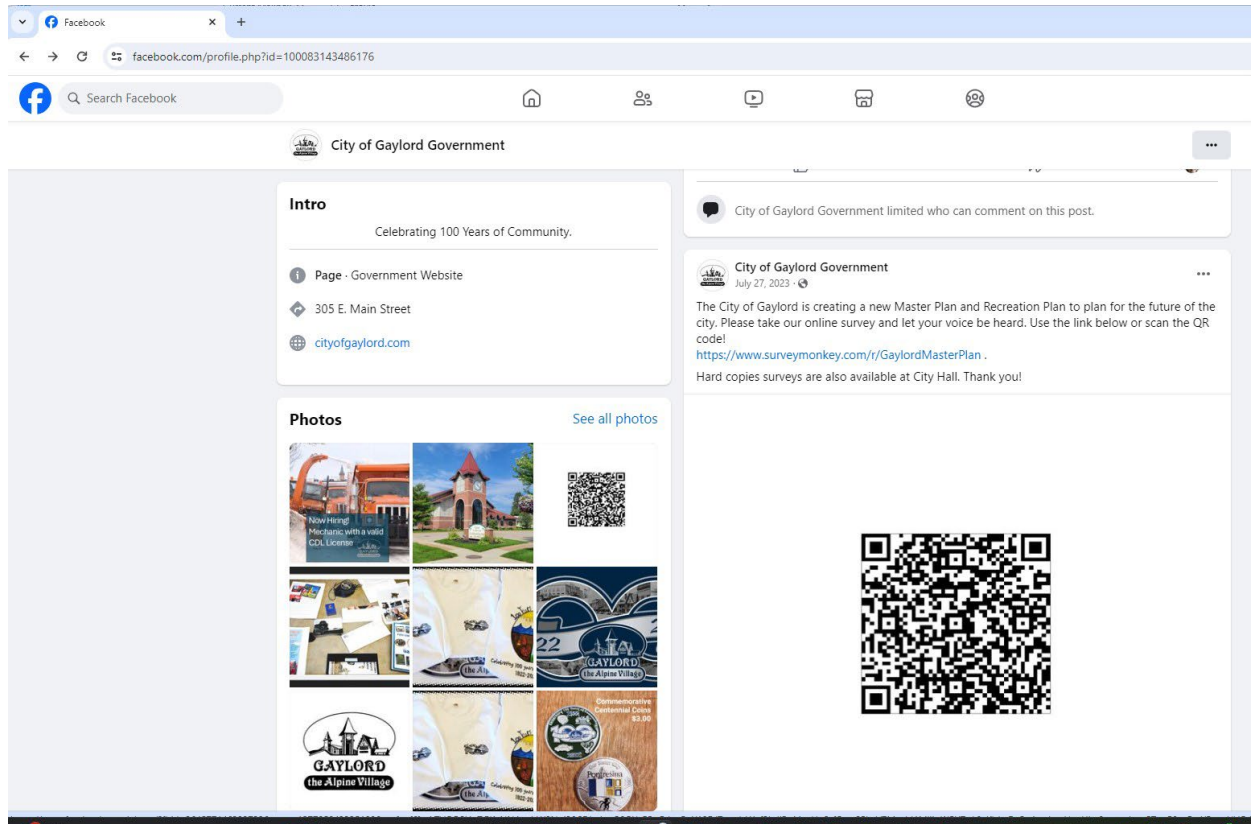
**What recreational activities do you and/or your family enjoy?**



# DOCUMENTATION

## Public Input Survey

### Facebook Post on City of Gaylord Facebook Page:





Press Release:

July 27, 2023

Tell our advertisers you saw their ad in the Weekly Choice • Page 3

# LOCAL NEWS

## Cheboygan Police Department Hosts National Night Out

BY LINDA ROGERS

National Night Out (NNO) started in 1984 in Philadelphia as a community building campaign that promotes police – community partnerships, neighborhood camaraderie and safer communities. This is a national event that takes place on the first Tuesday of August. Some states hold the event in October. The first-annual NNO included 2.5 million neighbors across 400 communities in 23 states. Now, it involves 38 million neighbors across

16,000 communities in all 50 states.

Cheboygan's event kicks off at 4:00 pm on Tuesday, August 1. Come to Festival Square in downtown Cheboygan to join your Cheboygan Police Department team and neighbors. There will be hot dogs, chips, water and lemonade. Music will be provided by DJ Dan Frazier who is a retired Cheboygan Police officer. There will also be games and giveaways. The event wraps up at 7:00 pm.

Mainstreet DDA Director Polly Schneider is assisting Police Chief Scott Rifenberg



coordinate the celebration. Schneider stated that "National Night Out is an opportunity to advocate for and promote safer commu-

nities, which is the motto of our Police Department "Building a Safer Community". This also allows us to highlight partnering organizations to show their support of the Police and community."

On National Night Out the police department is suggesting that people leave their porch lights on from 9 pm until 7 am to show their support of the Police and raise awareness for neighborhood safety.

The Cheboygan Police Department serves the City of Cheboygan but Chief Scott Rifenberg stated that

"This is a nationwide event and open to everyone that wants to attend. We of course want to connect with everyone that lives, works, and plays(recreate) in the City of Cheboygan. This is a positive event meant to bring Law Enforcement and Community together."

This year's event is sponsored by the Cheboygan Police Department, Mainstreet DDA and the City of Cheboygan. While you are at the celebration at Festival Square, be sure to take a look across the street at the Police Department. There is a nice sign identify-

ing where the police department is. Rifenberg stated "The sign is new, and we have had positive comments about it. Several people have said that they have had a hard time finding the Police Department and we definitely want to be open and accessible to the community."

Get out on August 1 to celebrate Cheboygan's top notch police department. Stay tuned for a future article on what has been happening since Chief Rifenberg took the helm.

## Gaylord Asks For Citizen Input on Master Plan and Recreation Plan

July 24, 2023 – The City of Gaylord is working on planning for the future of the city by working with the Northeast Michigan Council of Governments to update both the Master Plan and the Recreation Plan. A Master Plan sets goals and action items to help guide the future of the city in such areas as planning, zoning, government services, community development, and more.

A Recreation Plan needs to be approved by the Michigan DNR in order for Gaylord to qualify for grant funding for recreational improvements. Citizen input is critical to help the City formulate these plans. So, here's how you can help! The City has made an online survey avail-

able to gather public opinion about issues which are important to the community, and they are hoping to hear from residents, business owners, workforce, and visitors.

Please take the anonymous online survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GaylordMasterPlan>. Printed surveys are also available at City Hall located at 305 E. Main Street. The survey deadline has been extended to August 11, 2023. Thank you for your participation!

We pride ourselves in keeping everyone involved. Please take the time to ensure your community is going in the direction that you would like to see it go.



Cheboygan County Community Foundation sponsored table.



Libby's on Main sponsored table.



Mulligans sponsored table and happy ladies!



# Shared HOPE, Shared PURPOSE

Recently a fundraising luncheon for the Women's Resource Center of Northern Michigan was held at Pier 33 in Cheboygan. This greatly anticipated annual luncheon is a hit every year. The main attraction is the elaborate table decorations. The Women's Resource Center of Northern Michigan is committed to equality, justice, and the well-being of women. Photos Contributed.





Resolution of Adoption

RESOLUTION 24-1  
CITY OF GAYLORD CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF GAYLORD RECREATION PLAN

WHEREAS, the City of Gaylord has undertaken a planning process to determine the recreation needs and desires of its residents during a five year period covering the years 2024 through 2028, and

WHEREAS, the City of Gaylord began the process of developing a community recreation plan in accordance with the most recent guidelines developed by the Department of Natural Resources and made available to local communities, and

WHEREAS, residents of the City of Gaylord were provided with a well-advertised opportunity during the development of the draft plan to express opinions, ask questions, and discuss all aspects of the recreation plan, and

WHEREAS, the public was given a well-advertised opportunity and reasonable accommodations to review the final draft plan for a period of at least 30 days, and

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held by the the City of Gaylord on January 22, 2024 at Gaylord City Hall to provide an opportunity for all residents of the planning area to express opinions, ask questions, and discuss all aspects of the City of Gaylord Recreation Plan, and

WHEREAS, the City of Gaylord has developed the plan as a guideline for improving recreation in the City of Gaylord, and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Gaylord City Council hereby adopts the City of Gaylord Recreation Plan.

JAGUES moved to adopt the above resolution, seconded by AWREY.

Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Absent: 2

Resolution declared adopted by the the Gaylord City Council at a meeting held January 22, 2024.

JANINE MORSE  
Gaylord City Clerk



January 22, 2024

Mayor Sharrard opened the regular meeting of the Gaylord City Council with a prayer by Councilmember Awrey at 7:00PM on Monday, January 22, 2024. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United State of America followed the invocation. The meeting was held in the City Council Chambers, located at City Hall, 305 East Main Street, Gaylord, Michigan.

Members Present: Sharrard, Awrey, Ouellette, Jaques, and Ryan.

Motion by Ouellette, supported by Jaques to dispense with the reading of the minutes from the January 8, 2024 meeting and accept them as presented.

Ayes: Unanimous. Motion Carried.

Motion by Awrey, supported by Ryan to excuse Councilmembers Witt and Wilson from tonight’s meeting.

Ayes: Unanimous. Motion Carried.

A public hearing regarding the 2024-2028 Recreation Plan opened at 7:02PM. No comments were offered and the hearing closed at 7:08PM.

The public hearing regarding the CDBG CHILL Grant has been postponed to a later date.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

New Business:

Motion by Jaques, supported by Awrey to approve the adoption of the 2024-2028 Recreation Plan and following Resolution:

WHEREAS, the City of Gaylord has undertaken a planning process to determine the recreation needs and desires of its residents during a five-year period covering the years 2024 through 2028 and

WHEREAS, the City of Gaylord began the process of developing a community recreation plan in accordance with the most recent guidelines developed by the Department of Natural Resources and made available to local communities and

WHEREAS, residents of the City of Gaylord were provided with a well-advertised opportunity during the development of the draft plan to express opinions, ask questions and discuss all aspects of the recreation plan and

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City Council Minutes

WHEREAS, the City of Gaylord has developed the plan as a guideline for improving recreation in the City of Gaylord and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the City of Gaylord hereby adopts the City of Gaylord Recreation Plan.

Ayes: 5 Nays: 0 Absent: 2 Motion Carried.

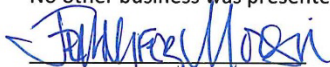
Motion by Ouellette, supported by Jaques to approve the purchase of a 2000 Sterling Salt Truck from Sackrider Excavating in the amount of \$25,000.00

Ayes: Unanimous. Motion Carried.

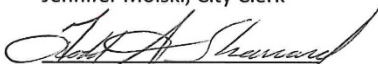
Motion by Ouellette, supported by Awrey to approve the purchase of a new plow truck.

Ayes: Unanimous. Motion Carried.

No other business was presented, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.



Jennifer Molski, City Clerk



Todd Sharrard, Mayor

Transmittal Letter to Otsego County



Northeast Michigan Council of Governments

80 Livingston Blvd Suite U-108 | PO Box 457 | Gaylord, MI 49734 | Voice: 989.705.3730 | Fax: 989.705.3729 | nemcog.org

January 25, 2024

Mr. Thomas Marquard, Planning & Zoning Director  
225 W. Main Street, Suite 203  
Gaylord, Michigan 49735

On behalf of the City of Gaylord, we are pleased to inform you that the city has approved and adopted a 5-year Recreation Plan. This plan received public input from an online survey, an in-person public hearing, and other public meetings.

Please find enclosed a complete copy of the final Recreation Plan. The plan will serve as a guide for improvements of recreational opportunities and facilities in the City of Gaylord over the next five years.

Please let us know if you have any questions about the Recreation Plan.

Sincerely,

Nico Tucker  
Senior Planner  
Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG)

Regional  
Cooperation  
Since  
1968

Alcona \* Alpena \* Cheboygan \* Crawford \* Emmet \* Montmorency \* Oscoda \* Otsego \* Presque Isle

An  
Equal Opportunity  
Employer



Transmittal Letter to NEMCOG



Northeast Michigan Council of Governments

80 Livingston Blvd Suite U-108 | PO Box 457 | Gaylord, MI 49734 | Voice: 989.705.3730 | Fax: 989.705.3729 | nemcog.org

January 25, 2024

Doug Baum, Executive Director  
NEMCOG  
PO Box 457  
Gaylord, MI 49734

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