

CITY OF GAYLORD

COMMUNITY RECREATION PLAN 2016-2020

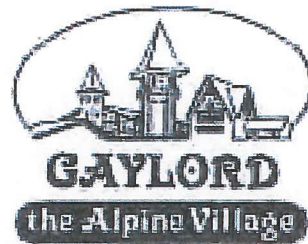


Adopted: February 2016



City of Gaylord 2016-2020 Recreation Plan

City of Gaylord
Otsego County, Michigan



Adopted February ____, 2016

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CHAPTER 1

Community Description

Year-round recreational opportunities abound in the area. The City of Gaylord is dedicated to create and maintain 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.

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. A regional location map is shown as Map 1.

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.

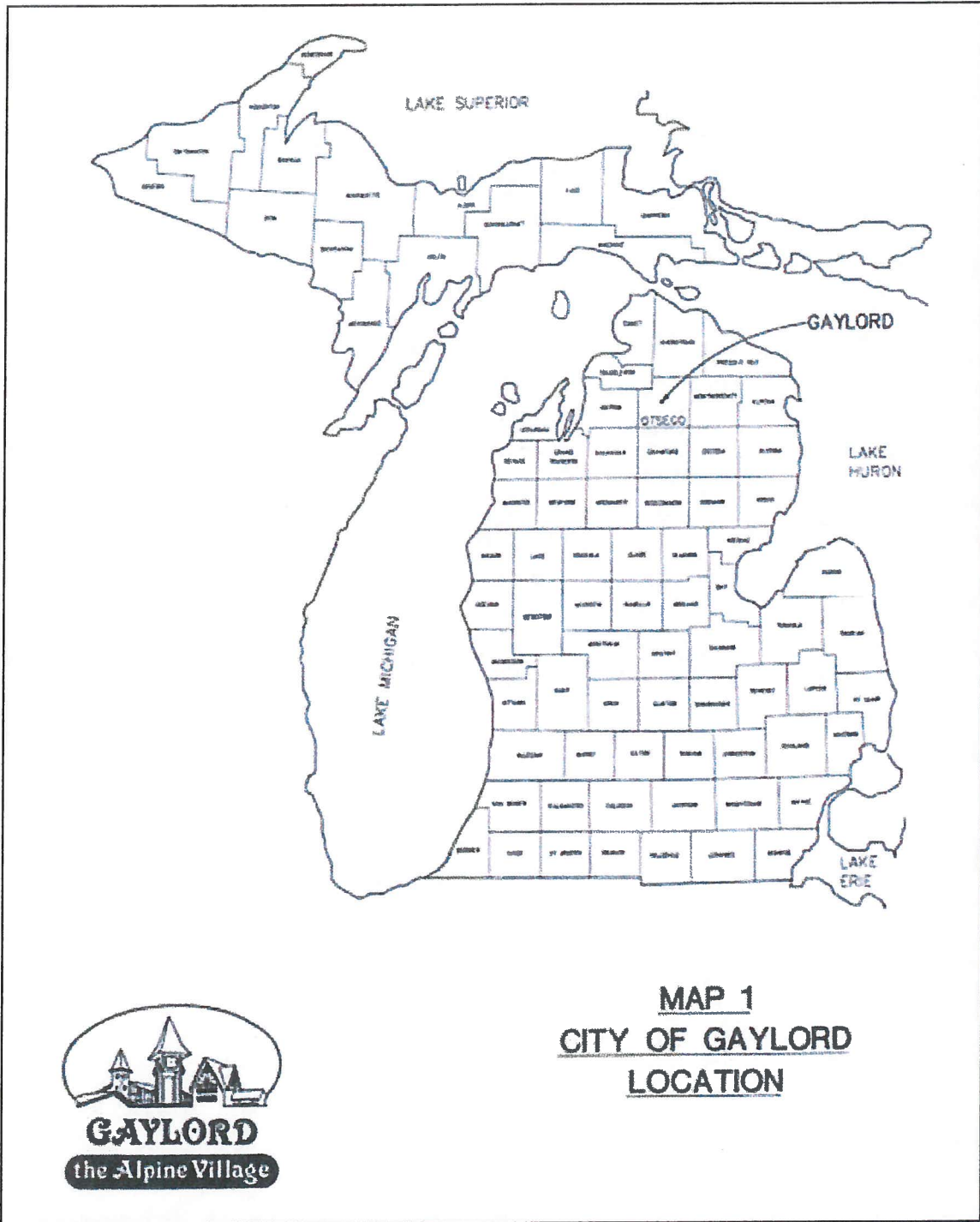
The corporate boundary of the City of Gaylord encompasses approximately 3.95 square miles. The northern boundary extends 1,290 feet north of Fairview Road and as far south as Johnson Road. The eastern City limits extend to Wilkinson Road, while the western boundary extends 1-mile west of Dickerson Road. A map of the City of Gaylord is shown as Map 2.

Recreation facilities within the City are impacted not only by the population of the City proper, but by population in the adjacent townships as well. According to the 2010 US Census, the population of Gaylord was 3,645. Population in the two adjacent townships totaled 8,411, while Otsego County had a population of 24,164 persons. Communities in the County have shown a steady population growth over the last five decades, but unlike Otsego County as a whole, Gaylord experienced a small population loss over the last decade. Individuals who were 19 years of age and younger comprise 26% of the population in the City of Gaylord, which was slightly lower than the State as a whole. However, by comparison the percent population of persons 65 years and older was 20%, which was nearly seven percent higher than Michigan. While Gaylord is a regional employment center, the median household income within Gaylord was approximately \$18,000 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.

Residents of the City of Gaylord and Otsego County are serviced by a public transportation bus system owned and operated by Otsego County. The Bus System limits its area of operation to the County of Otsego and in 2013 served 106,000 passengers.

Otsego County's Gaylord Regional Airport is classified a General Aviation airport with the longest runway being 6,578 feet. Private, Corporate, Government, Charter and Cargo planes receive Full Service at the airport. It is the base operations center for North Country Aviation, Traverse Lakes Aviation, and has component units of Martinaire, FedEx and UPS. The airport offers both Avgas and Jet A fuel with year-round operations. The airport terminal facility offers customer service, flight planning, weather, hotel and rental car coordination in addition to three conference rooms. The airport hosts the "Wings over Gaylord" air show every Father's Day weekend, attracting upward of 8,000 visitors.



CHAPTER 2

Administrative Structure

A. ADMINISTRATION

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 five member 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.

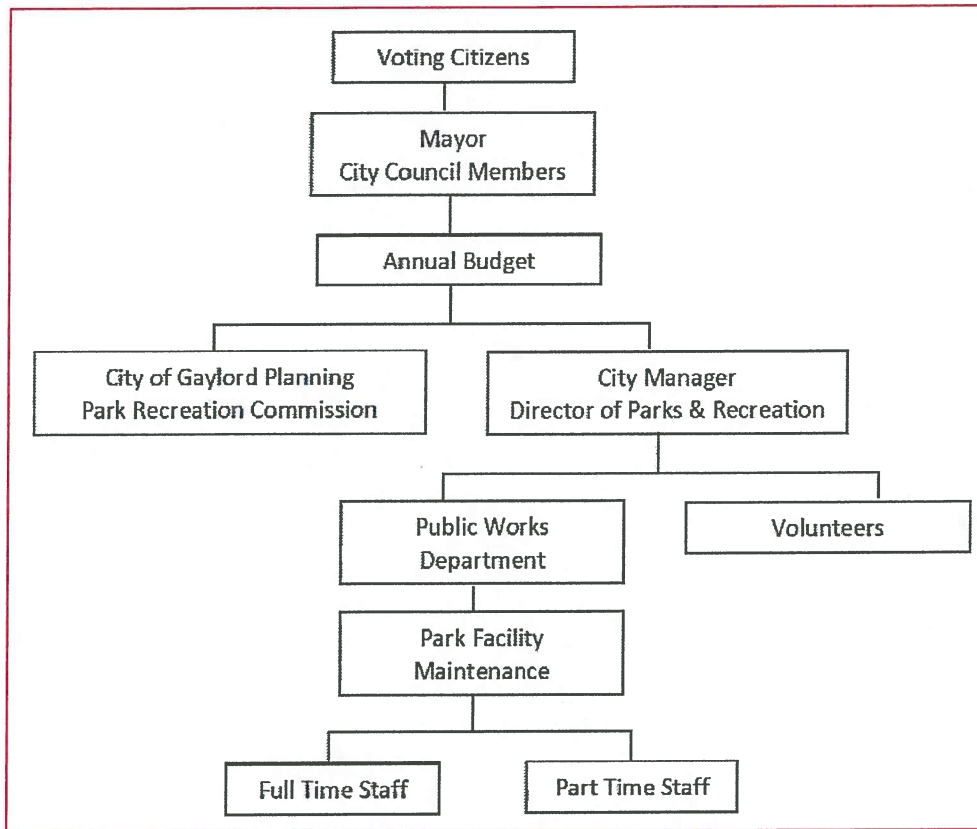
The City Manager recommends and the City Council approves the annual budget for the Parks and Recreation Department. Programming of the facilities is handled through the annual operating budget which groups the Parks and Recreation Department as a “General Fund” item. Park programs and facilities are 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). Since 2007 the DPW has lost over 35% of its employees do to the reductions in State of Michigan Shared Revenues and an over 18% loss in taxable values in our City. This has forced municipality to make do with less. However, the Gaylord is fortunate to have employees who take great prided in their work, and they have been able to maintain the facilities in good working order.

B. 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 and cannot be counted on to fill the void left by a loss of employees. 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, and disc golf.

C. CITY OF GAYLORD ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



D. FINANCES/PARK & RECREATION MAINTENANCE: CURRENT FUNDING

The total 2015-2016 General Fund budget for the City of Gaylord is \$2.7 million. The total budget for all funds is \$9.3 million with the parks and recreation budget being \$41,760, which comes from tax revenues.

CITY OF GAYLORD ANNUAL BUDGET				14/15			
FISCAL YEAR 2015/16		Prior Year	14/15	Actual Thru	15/16	15/16	15/16
		Actual	Budget	March	Requested	Recommend	Approved
<i>Dept.</i>	<i>751 Parks & Recreation</i>						
702.00	Salaries	10,145	12,300	6,507	11,350	11,350	
714.00	Fringe Benefits	5,155	7,750	3,193	6,810	6,810	
740.00	Operating Supplies	1,152	1,700	1,362	2,000	2,000	
775.00	Materials	246	1,500	0	2,000	2,000	
818.00	Contractual Services	5,709	5,000	2,370	5,000	5,000	
921.00	Electric Utility	5,742	5,400	3,891	5,800	5,800	
927.00	Water Utility	1,224	1,100	965	1,500	1,500	
940.00	Equipment Rental	6,046	7,000	5,017	7,300	7,300	
	Subtotal	\$35,419	\$41,750	23,305	\$41,760	\$41,760	\$0

CHAPTER 3

Description of the Planning Process

The City of Gaylord Planning Commission initiated the update of the City of Gaylord Recreation Plan in February, 2014. The City is required to update the previous Recreation Plan, adopted in 2008, 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 2016-2020 Recreation Plan.

A. SCHEDULE

Date	Activity
March of 2014	A committee consisting of members of the City Planning Commission was formed to provide direction to the planning process. City staff contacted the county and the schools to update the recreation inventory. The committee met in March of 2014 to discuss the planning process. The committee reviewed the 2008-2013 Recreation Plan, and discussed other issues relevant to recreation within the City.
November 4, 2015	The planning process was reviewed at the meeting of the planning commission.
November 19, 2015	Meeting with staff and NEMCOG
November 20, 2015	A notice for the public input session was published in the Gaylord Herald Times
December 2, 2015	The Planning Commission held a public input session at their regular monthly meeting.
December, 2015	A draft plan was developed by City staff and City Planning Commission with the assistance of NEMCOG.
December 30, 2015	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 web site.
January 6, 2016	The Planning Commission reviewed the Draft Recreation Plan. City Council was provided a draft copy
February 3 2016	The Planning Commission recommended approval by City Council.
February 4, 2016	Published public hearing notice in local newspaper.
February 22, 2016	The City Council held a public hearing to gather additional public comments on the Plan.
February 22, 2016	The Gaylord City Council formally adopted the 2015-2020 Recreation Plan
February 26, 2016	Plan sent to the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources
February 26, 2016	Plan sent to Northeast Michigan Council of Governments
February 26, 2016	Plan sent to Otsego County.

B. PUBLIC INPUT

Citizen opinion on recreation priorities is key to the development of a recreation plan. The Recreation Committee opted to hold a public input session to gather public opinion and ideas about the future of recreation in Gaylord. The City placed an advertisement in the Gaylord Herald Tribune Newspaper. The input session was held at the City Planning Commission's monthly meeting held on December 2, 2015 at the City Hall. Forty people were in attendance of the planning commission meeting, several provided input. Information gathered at the workshop was used to guide development of recreation goals and proposed projects.

Sheila Simpson, Gaylord-The tennis association would like the City tennis courts to be included in the plan in order to have them maintained

Kathy Johnson, Gaylord-Would like to see some sort of watering stations in Aspen Park

C. LIST OF DOCUMENTATION

See Appendix for copies of the following items

- Public Input Session Notice
- Comments from Public Input Session
- Notice of Availability of Recreation Plan for at least 30 days
- Resolution of the Planning Commission Recommending Adoption of the Recreation Plan
- Public Hearing Notice for City Council meeting
- Public Hearing Press Release
- Resolution of the City Council Adopting the Recreation Plan
- Minutes from the City Council Meeting
- Copy of Submittal Letter to MDNR
- Copy of Submittal Letter to NEMCOG
- Copy of Submittal Letter to Otsego County Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Department

CHAPTER 4

Recreation Inventory

A. INVENTORY PROCEDURES

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 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 insure that information from private recreational was correct.

Tables 1, 2, & 3 summarize the information described below. Map 2 shows the location of recreation sites within and immediately adjacent to the City, as well as two (2) cemeteries owned and operated by City. Map 3 shows other Otsego County Park and Recreation Facilities beyond City boundaries. Map 4 shows the locations of golf resorts near the City, Map 5 shows the location of the Polar – Equator Trail in relation to the City of Gaylord and Map 6 shows the North Central State Trail.

B. CITY OF GAYLORD PARKS AND RECREATION

The City of Gaylord has seven (7) parks within its City limits: Aspen Park, Claude Shannon Park, George Doumas Memorial Park, Freel Memorial Park, Hale Park, Otsego County Community Center and AYSO Soccer Fields. 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:

1 = none of the facilities / park areas meet accessibility guidelines;

2 = some of the facilities / park areas meet accessibility guidelines;

3 = most of the facilities / park areas meet accessibility guidelines;

4 = the entire park meets accessibility guidelines;

5 = the entire park was developed / renovated using the principles of universal design.

1. **Aspen Park** – Aspen Park is a large park located within the City limits of a relatively small City. This 105-acre park is located at the termination point of Commerce Blvd., and its features include nearly two (2) miles of lighted, barrier-free paved trails, an extensive unimproved trail system, disc golf course, tennis court, 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 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.

Barrier-Free Evaluation: (3)

2. **George Doumas Memorial Park** – This highly utilized 1.3-acre park is located at the intersection of East Fourth Street and South Maple Avenue, in the heart of 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 insure this facility could be utilized by all segments of society, including those with disabilities. A restroom, gazebo, playstructure accommodating all ages, paved pathways and parking area with signed handicap spaces, irrigation, landscaping, picnic tables, and drinking fountain were included as part of the renovation project.

Barrier-Free Evaluation: (4)

3. **Freel Memorial Park** – 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 insure 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 and parking area with signed handicapped spaces, irrigation, landscaping, picnic tables, drinking fountain and fence along its eastern boundary.

Barrier-Free Evaluation: (4)

4. **Hale Park** - 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.

Barrier-Free Evaluation: (3)

5. **Claude Shannon Park** – 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, water fountain and 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. Barrier-Free Evaluation: (4).

6. **Soccer Fields Opposite Fairview Cemetery** – 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 who 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 numbers of acres of community parkland available to Gaylord residents.

Barrier-Free Evaluation: (3)

7. **Otsego County Community Center** – 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 is responsible for all recreational programming, at both the Community Center and City owned portion of the property. Facilities on the City owned portion of the park include two tennis courts, sand volleyball courts, picnic tables, basketball court, small play structure, horseshoe pits and shuffleboard court. Further information regarding the Community Center may be found below under the section entitled *Otsego County Recreation Facilities*.

Barrier-Free Evaluation: (4)

8. **Ramp/Skate Park** – 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. This lease agreement has been on a year-to-year basis since the original lease expired. A half-pipe, ramps and slides on an asphalt base provide the basis for the Park. In 2015 this property was sold and the City currently has removed this park. The equipment is being retained with hopes of relocation to an alternate site at the Otsego County Sportsplex.

Barrier-Free Evaluation: (NA).

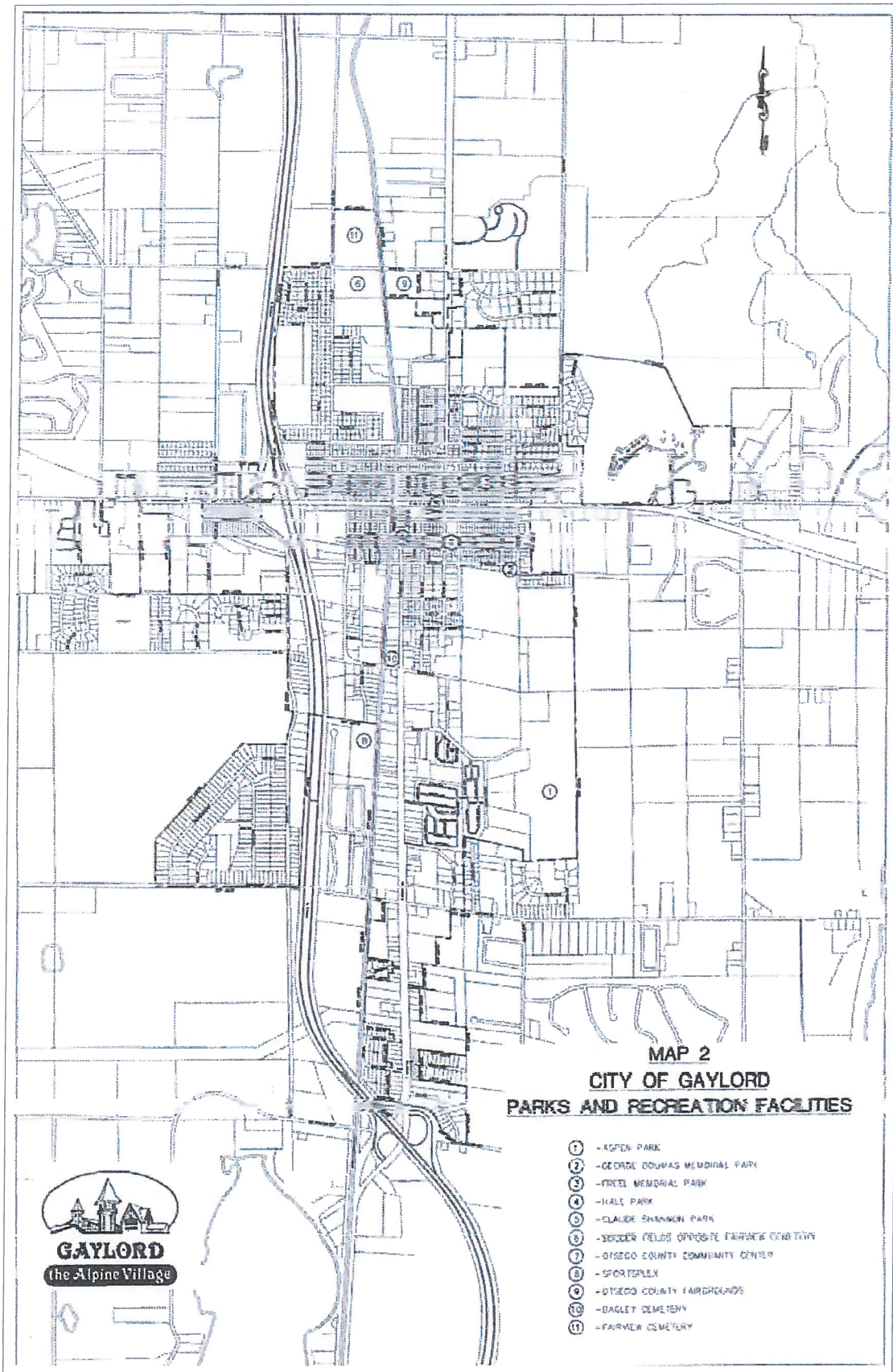
9. **Elk View Park Property** - The City proposes to develop a community park. Features would include the following: parking lot, restrooms, pathways, picnic areas, playground structures, climbing wall, viewing area for elk and deer herd, interpretative signs, and a lighted, paved pedestrian trail to Aspen Park.

10. **North Hazel Property** – The City proposes to develop the 66' x 132' parcel as a neighborhood park, which may include a community garden, picnic table and swing set. Neighborhood residents will be asked for input into the final design.

C. 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.

1. **Gaylord High School** – 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.
2. **Gaylord Middle School** – Outdoor facilities at the Middle School include basketball courts, ball diamond, soccer/practice field, swings and nature area. Indoor facilities include a gymnasium.
3. **Gaylord Intermediate School** – Indoor facilities include a gymnasium with basketball court; outdoor facilities include a football field and track, softball field, practice field, basketball courts, play structures and jungle gym; swings and benches.
4. **South Maple Elementary School** – Outdoor facilities include a ball diamond area, swing sets, slides, climbing/jungle gym structures, sand boxes, basketball hoop and swinging rings. A gymnasium is located inside the building.
5. **North Ohio Elementary School** – 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.
6. **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.
7. **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.
8. **St. Mary's High School and Elementary School** – 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.
9. **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.



D. OTSEGO COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

A variety of County owned and operated facilities are available to City of Gaylord residents. These are described below.

1. **Otsego Lake County Park** – Located on the west side of Otsego Lake in Bagley Township, this 27-acre park has 500 feet of sandy beach, 80 modern campsites, two pavilions, a boat launch, playground, picnic tables, electric hook-up, showers and dump station.
2. **Wah Wah Soo Park** – Located on the east side of Otsego Lake, this park is four acres in size and provides a public swimming beach, picnic area, grills and porta-jons. Facilities are available to users at no charge.
3. **Otsego County Fairgrounds** – The 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 (see Map 2 for location).
4. **Otsego County Community Building** – 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.
5. **Alten Zimmer Senior Center** – The Otsego County Commission on Aging administers this meeting place for senior citizens, located on Grandview Boulevard east of South Court Avenue. This Center is built in association with 60 senior citizen housing units. Activities offered include bingo, square dancing and other recreational activities.
6. **Dr. Robert S. Libke Memorial Fields** – This facility 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.
7. **Frank H. Wilkinson Roadside Park** – 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.
8. **Hutchins Field** – Located just east of the City limits south of M-32, this facility has five baseball diamonds that are operated by the Gaylord Little League.
9. **Sportsplex/Energy Outlet** – The Sportsplex 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

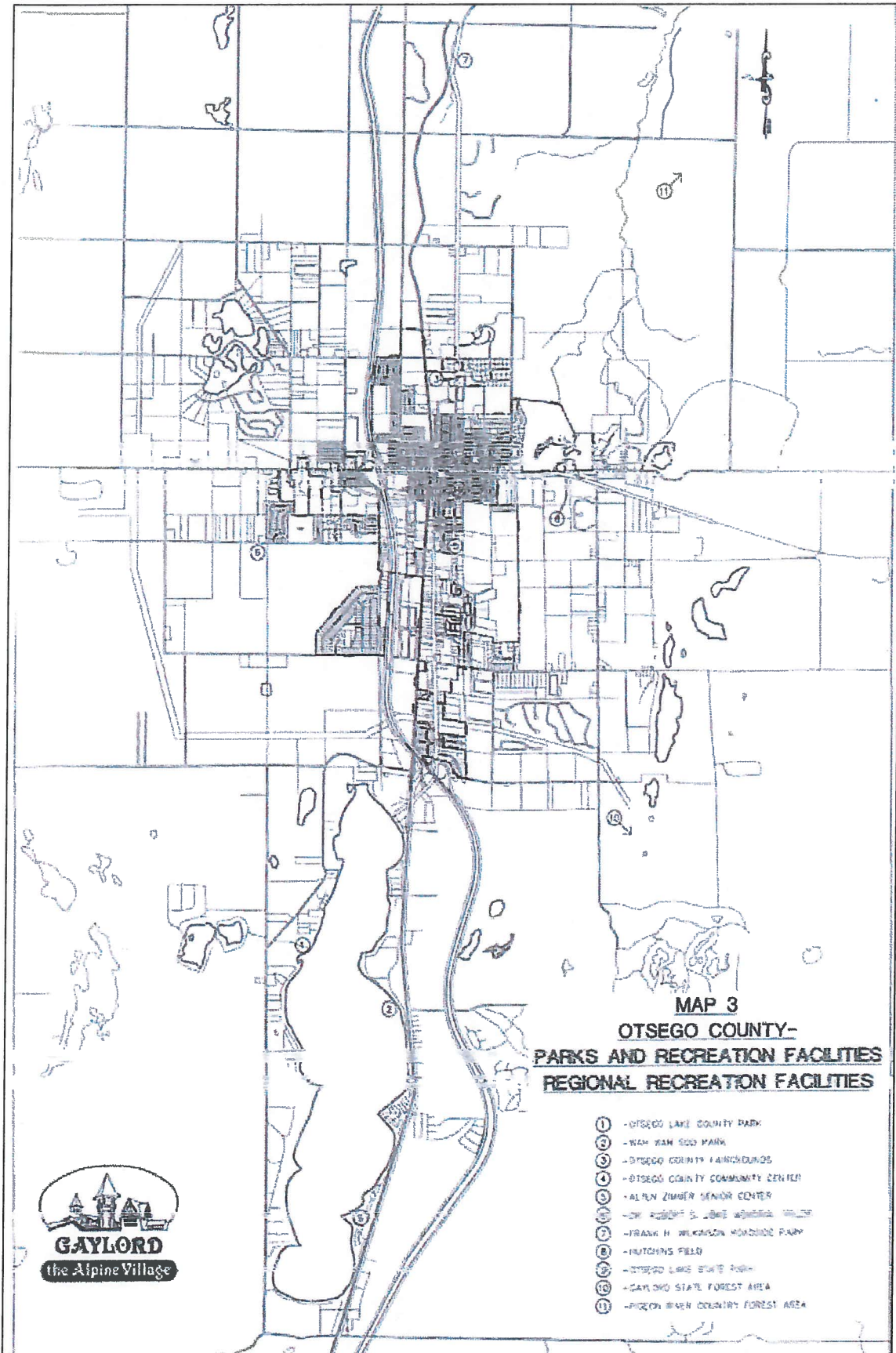
funded through fees and a countywide millage levy. The facility includes a regulation size indoor ice rink for hockey and skating, bleachers for 1,000 spectators, a walking track around the outside of the rink, one regulation length, six-lane indoor swimming pool, a three-foot deep smaller pool for young 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.

10. **Louis M. Groen Nature Preserve** – This nearly 800 acre property was recently 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.

E. REGIONAL RECREATIONAL 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. Map 3 shows the location of a majority of the facilities located within close proximity to the citizens of Gaylord.

1. **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, half mile of sandy beach, boat launch, fishing pier and playground areas.
2. **Gaylord State Forest Area** – This 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.
3. **Pigeon River County Forest Area** – This 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).
4. **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.



5. *North Central State Trail (Gaylord-Mackinaw Rail Trail)* – This 62 mile crushed limestone trail 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. The trail is shown on Map 6.

F. MICHIGAN POLAR-EQUATOR TRAIL

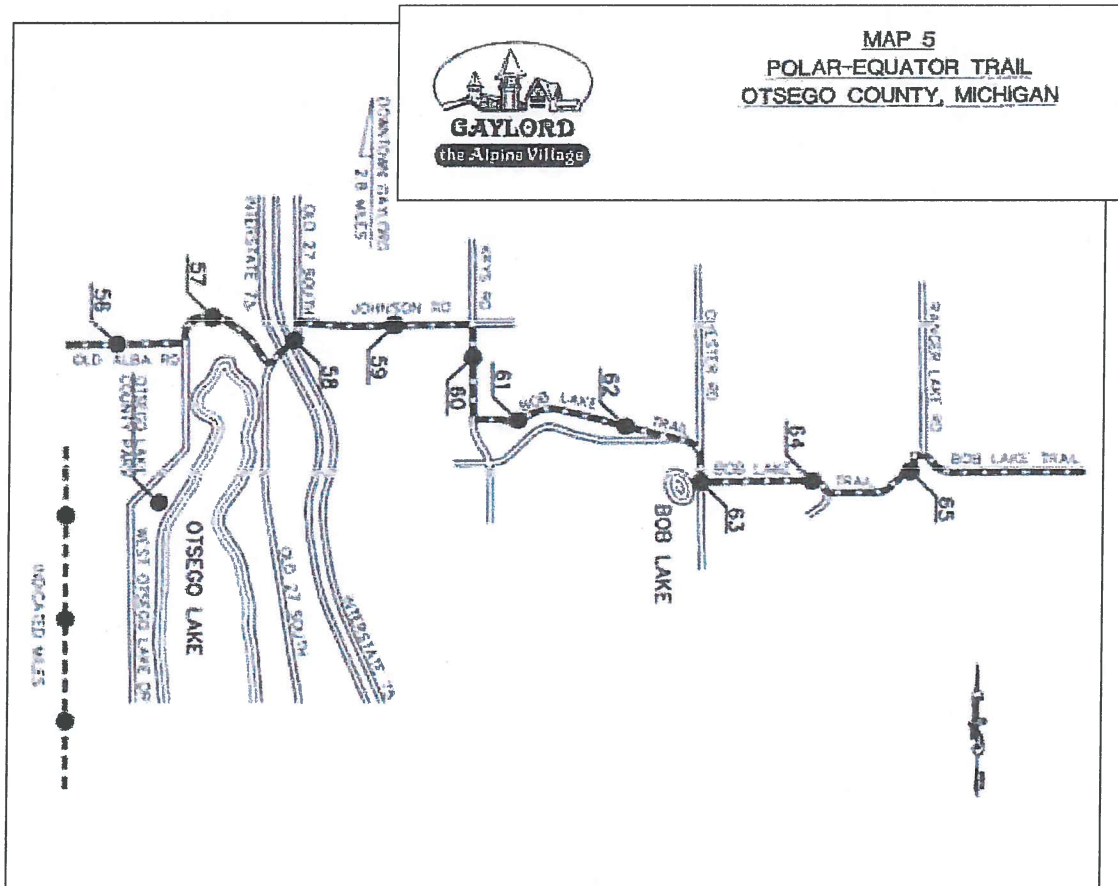
A hiking trail that closely follows the 45th Parallel passes just to the south of Gaylord, along Johnson and Alba Road close to the north end of Otsego Lake. This trail, established and maintained by the Michigan Polar – Equator Club, crosses the State of Michigan from Alpena to the west side of Torch Lake. The trail is shown on Map 5.

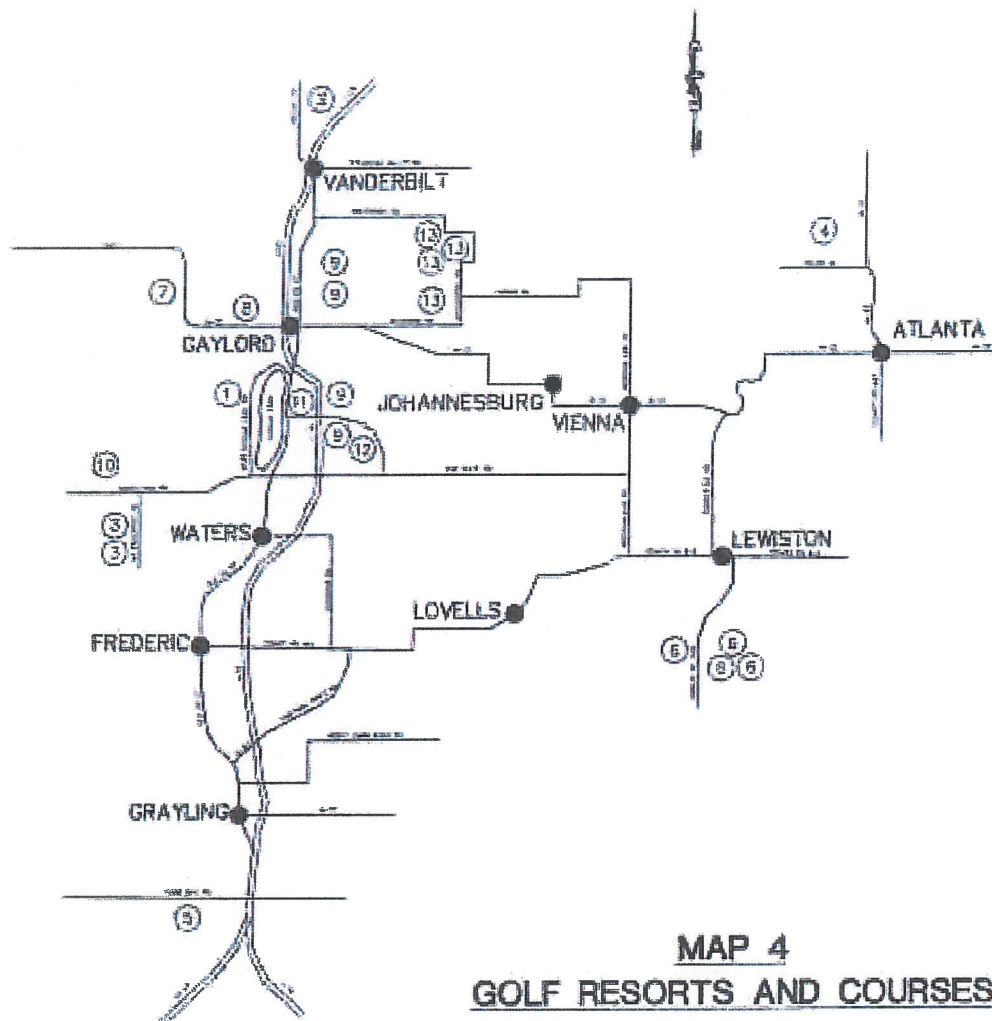
G. PRIVATE CAMPGROUNDS, RESORTS AND GOLF COURSES

The Gaylord area is truly a Golf Mecca, with approximately 20 courses within a 30-minute drive of the City. A list of golf resorts and courses is found in Table 1; these numbers correspond to numbered locations on Map 4. Private campgrounds and resorts apart from golf courses are listed in Table 2.

TABLE 1 – GOLF RESORTS AND COURSES		
Map #	Golf Course	Nearby Community
2	Black Bear Golf Club	Vanderbilt
3	Black Forest	Gaylord
	Black Lake Golf Club	Onaway
4	Elk Ridge	Atlanta
7	Gaylord Country Club	Gaylord
12	The Loon	Gaylord
12	The Lakes	Gaylord
11	Marsh Ridge	Gaylord
12	Michaywe – The Pines	Gaylord
9	Otsego Club – The Classic	Gaylord
9	Otsego Club – The Tribute	Gaylord
1	The Natural	Gaylord
13	Treetops – Rick Smith Signature	Gaylord
13	Treetops – Rick Smith Tradition	Gaylord
13	Treetops – Robert Trent Jones Masterpiece	Gaylord
13	Treetops – Threetops	Gaylord
13	Treetops – Tom Fazio Premier	Gaylord
3	Wilderness Valley	Gaylord
8	Alpine Meadows Golf (Green Trees)	Gaylord
6	Garland Resort	Lewiston
5	Fox Run	Grayling
10	Lakes of the North	Mancelona

TABLE 2 – PRIVATE CAMPGROUNDS AND RESORTS	
Name	Nearby Community
Gaylord KOA	Gaylord
Headwaters Camping and Cabins	Waters
Corey Cove Shores Resort	Gaylord
DerMiner’s Parkside Resort	Gaylord
Gaylord Area Rentals, LLC	Gaylord
Great Northern Rentals	Gaylord
Heart Lake Resort Cottages	Gaylord
Lambert Lakeside Lodges	Gaylord
Pine Cone Accommodations	Gaylord
Sojourn Lakeside Resort	Gaylord





MAP 4
GOLF RESORTS AND COURSES

- ① - BEAVER CREEK
- ② - BLACK BEAR
- ③ - BLACK FOREST-WILDERNESS VALLEY
- ④ - ELY RIDGE
- ⑤ - FOX RUN
- ⑥ - GARLAND
- ⑦ - GAYLORD COUNTRY CLUB
- ⑧ - GREEN TREES GOLF
- ⑨ - OTSEGO CLUB
- ⑩ - LAKES OF THE NORTH
- ⑪ - MARCH RIDGE
- ⑫ - MICHAEL
- ⑬ - TRITONS RESORT



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 Table 3.

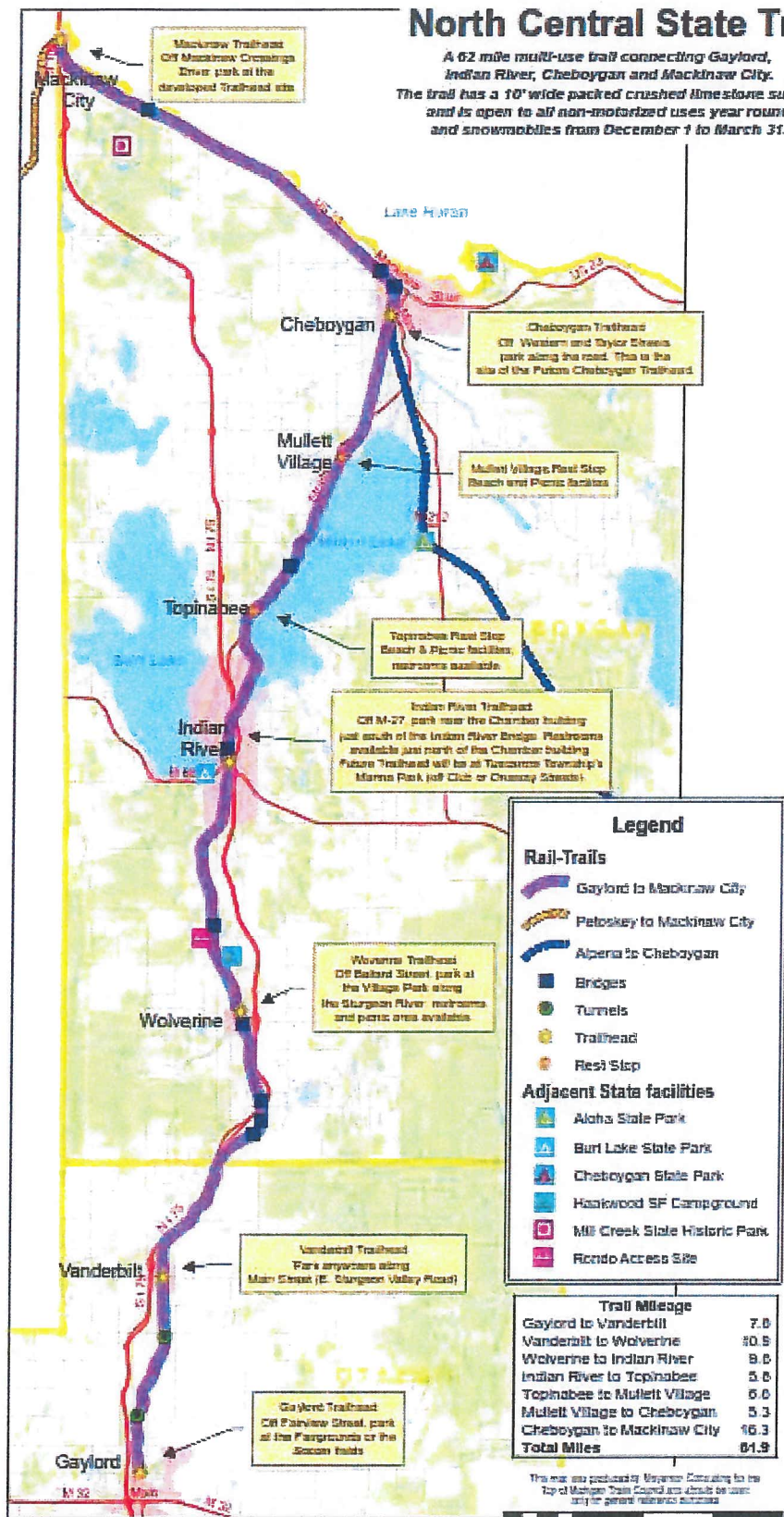
Location	Name	Amenities
Bagley Township	Dixon Lake Access Site (State of Michigan)	Fishing, Swimming, Boat Launch, Vault Toilets
	Northland Sportsman’s Club (Privately Owned)	Skeet shooting, archery range, rifle range, meeting hall
	Riding and Hiking Trails	Approx. 7 miles of riding and bike trails, cross-country ski trail, southeastern part of Township.
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.
Chester Township	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

Corwith Township	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.
Elmira Township	Elmira Township Park (Elmira Township)	Playground, basketball court.
	Elmira Elementary School (School District)	School is closed. Playground, softball field on property.
	Lake 27 Access Site (State of Michigan)	Fishing, swimming, boat launch, vault toilets.
	Fleming Farm (privately owned)	Agricultural tours.
Hayes Township	Gaylord School Plantation (School District)	80 acre plantation, hiking trails, forestry studies.
	Pine Baron Pathway	Jointly operated state/local; hiking, mountain biking, cross country skiing.
	Lake Manuka Access Site (State of Michigan)	Fishing, swimming, boat launch, vault toilets.
	Manistee River Access Site (State of Michigan)	Fishing.
Livingston Township	Demonstration Garden – Conservation Forest (Soil Conservation District)	Community Garden, timber stand, pond, hiking / snowshoe, cross country ski trails.
	Five Lakes Access Site	Picnic area, boat launch,

	(Livingston Township)	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 Lake Township	Remi and Edna Schotte Memorial Park (Otsego Lake Township)	Two pavilions, picnic tables, grills, playground, trails, baseball diamond, basketball court, horseshoe pit, drinking fountain, 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
Village of Vanderbilt	Vanderbilt Memorial Park (Village of Vanderbilt)	Pavilion, grills, benches, picnic tables, fountain, portable restroom.
	Custer Park (Village of Vanderbilt)	Ball field
	Kids Park (Village of Vanderbilt)	Playground, benches, picnic table, basketball court, drinking fountain, portable restroom.
	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

A 62 mile multi-use trail connecting Gaylord, Indian River, Cheboygan and Mackinaw City. The trail has a 10' wide packed crushed limestone surface and is open to all non-motorized uses year round and snowmobiles from December 1 to March 31.



Map used with permission of the Top of Michigan Trails Council

H. 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.

Table 4 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 Viewing	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 5

Goals and Action Program

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 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 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. Insure 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 insure 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

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 insure barrier-free accessibility and to insure 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 to 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 insure 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 insure ease of travel by all. Older, established parks such as George Doumas Memorial Park and Freil 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 address 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 side 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 insure 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.

Bagley Township has worked on plans to construct a non-motorized pathway from the I-75 Exit 279 interchange south to Charles Brink Road. Otsego Lake Township has expressed interest in the construction or designation of a non-motorized pathway system beginning at the termination point of Bagley Township's pathway at Charles Brink Road and continuing it southward to the Village of Waters.

- ❖ The construction of the non-motorized pathways along the South Otsego Avenue Corridor by the City, along with the further construction or designation by both Bagley and Otsego Lake Townships of non-motorized pathways would provide approximately thirteen (13) miles of pedestrian and non-motorized pathways, from Gaylord's downtown to the southern-most portion of the County, and allow area residents and tourists alike to utilize safe, alternative methods of transportation to residential, commercial, manufacturing and recreational areas of the County.

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 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.
- ❖ 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 the 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. This project would tie into internal pathways planned to be constructed during the development of a big box commercial and retail project scheduled for 2008.

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.

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.

The inclusion of non-motorized sidewalks and pathways were a critical part of the development of both the Edelweiss Village Shopping Center and the Gaylord Industrial Park in 2003.

- ❖ The continuation and linkage of the non-motorized pathways constructed during these projects along both Dickerson Road and Milbocker Road is a vital component, connecting the commercial and manufacturing districts of the City, and to the City pathway system as a whole. The construction of this non-motorized pathway would provide those who live in various areas of the City or adjacent townships who are employed in this vital manufacturing sector of the City and adjacent township, to utilize alternative methods of safe transportation in high traffic areas. This system would also provide greater freedom for those with disabilities to travel throughout the County for either recreational or employment purposes.

Elkview Park Development

In 2003 the City of Gaylord, with assistance from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund, purchased 2-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. This plan recommends that a Spray Park, as detailed below, be strongly considered in the design and construction of Elkview Park.

The City of Gaylord submitted applications to the MNRTF in 2004, 2005, and 2006 to assist us in 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 would be a tremendous addition and would provide for recreational opportunities for the young and old and tourist and residents alike. The City was tremendously fortunate to secure this land with the assistance of the MNRTF. We only hope that their assistance can again assist us in the development of this unique park as well.

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 fulltime 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. This plan recommends that a Spray Park be strongly considered in the development of Elk Park.

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.

- ❖ It is recommended that this property be used to extend the trail system that currently exists throughout Aspen Park and to aid in the protection of the wetland area, Scott's Pond, which borders the park to the south and west.
- ❖ Improvements to the Scott's Pond area should provide accessibility to the area, but should not be intrusive to the natural habitat. Platforms, designated observation points and the construction of a boardwalk with interpretive displays around the wetland area are recommended. Natural barriers such as knolls and plantings should be utilized to prohibit entry into the area surrounding the pond, prevent erosion around the path areas and preserve the natural characteristics of the area while providing an increased level of protection for the wildlife that inhabit the wetland area.
- ❖ This action plan suggests that a partnership be established between the City, area schools and local non-profit organizations to develop an interpretive area on the residual property and in Aspen Park proper.
- ❖ 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.

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.
- ❖ 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. Design and construction of all facilities will be in compliance with ADA standards.

Former Lake State Railroad Property Downtown Gaylord – Main St. (M-32)

Otsego County has been working with the MDNR and the Gaylord Area Chamber and Tourism Bureau in planning a Gateway Trailhead facility on property formerly owned by Lake State Railway. Included is the attainment of additional easements and right of ways from the railroad enabling an extension of the North Central Trail now called the “Iron Belle Trail”. The City at one time was interested in this property to renovate and develop an Open Air Market in our Downtown. Unfortunately funding for both the purchase and development were not forthcoming.

The City now is working as an interested party and involved with the discussions on this emerging recreational trail development. We are excited about the possibilities of having a Trailhead not only in our City but in our Downtown.

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 at Gaylord’s present population, the City is lacking 3.3 acres of neighborhood parkland (see Table 8, City of Gaylord Recreation Land Standards and Needs). 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.

- ❖ In **2003** the City of Gaylord, with assistance from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund, purchased 2-acres of property on Elkview Blvd. for the development of a new park. The development of this park is detailed separately in this Plan.
- ❖ One location for a proposed park is in the northwestern portion of the City on land that is already owned by the City along the I-75 corridor. The possibility of a private donation of land in this area also exists. A second location for a proposed park location is in the northeastern portion of the City, again on land that is already owned by the City. This property is in the vicinity of a developing, single-family residential neighborhood. This plan suggests the development of these parks occur simultaneously with residential development on adjacent properties in these areas.

- ❖ Additionally, it is recommended 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, provide a welcome respite for employees and patrons of neighboring business, 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, 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.

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 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.

- ❖ Through a donation from the resident the city has acquired a 66' x 132' parcel located on North Hazel Street. The City proposes to develop the lot as a neighborhood park, which may include a community garden, picnic table and swing set. Neighborhood residents will be asked for input into the final design.

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.

New Tennis Court Complex – Otsego County Sportsplex

The Alpine Regional Tennis Association (ARTA) is working with the City, the Otsego County Sportsplex, and the Otsego County Parks and Recreation Department in trying to secure funding for the construction of four (4) new tennis courts to be located at the Sportsplex property on Gornick Avenue in the City of Gaylord. The courts will allow for continued growth of the tennis

programs currently operating county wide. They will allow for increased access for people of all ages to learn to play tennis thus contributing to physical fitness reducing obesity. A tennis facility would also allow for the development of a high school tennis program, USTA play, as well as a site for tennis tournaments. Such tournaments would bring tennis players to our community which would boost our local economy significantly. The property at the Sportsplex is County owned. This project has wide support from both City and County residents.

Ramp/Skate Park Redevelopment

The City of Gaylord had unfortunately lost its lease on the property which once housed our Ramp/Skate Park do to the property being sold. The City then worked with Otsego County and found that the Park could be relocated to the Otsego County Sportsplex. Unfortunately the City could not find any individuals or organizations willing to assist us in the estimated \$60,000 costs so associated with the placement of a new 100' by 100' concrete/asphalt surface, refurbishing of the existing ramps, relocation and reassembly of the ramps and fencing. The City then put the equipment up for sale since little or no interest seemed to be forthcoming.

At the last moment before the decision on the sale was to occur a group of approximately 30 young adults stepped forward. They promised to work with the City on all aspects of funding and park relocation. The immediate goal of park relocation and dismantling has taken place. The Skate Park Friends Group is now busy working on refurbishing and fund raising to the park reinstalled at the new location.

This new energy has excited a great many in this project. The City desires to continue work with the Skate Park Friends Group and make even greater improvements to the new site by adding new equipment, a sheltered covering over the skate area, and better service area for more people to enjoy this remarkable athletic activity.

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 extension renovations of Aspen Park, George Doumas Memorial Park, Freel Park and to a lesser extent, Hale Park, has occurred since 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 insure 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. .

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 persons to return to the City year after year.

**TABLE 5
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE**

Priority	Year	Project	Estimated Cost	Source of Funding
TBD	TBD	Elkview Park - develop the park to 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.	\$582,230	Local \$174,669 MNRTF \$407,561
TBD	TBD	Construct Spray Park in the development of Elk Park. Include benches, picnic tables and trash receptacles.	\$300,000	Local \$90,000 MNRTF \$210,000
1	TBD	Non-motorized Pathways and Sidewalks. Acquire easements, apply for grant funding, construct pathways and sidewalks in conjunction with annual street improvement project and grant awards.	\$720,000	Local \$200,000 Donations \$70,000 MNRTF \$200,000 LWCF \$50,000 MDOT \$200,000
2	TBD	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 and Open Air Market.	\$350,000	Local \$125,000 MNRTF \$225,000
1	TBD	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.	\$350,000	Local \$ 65,000 MDNRTF \$285,000
4	TBD	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.	\$45,000	Local \$10,000 Federal/State/ Historical/Arts/ MUSTOME \$35,000
1	TBD	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.	\$75,000	Local \$15,000 Volunteer State/Wildlife Program \$60,000
TBD	TBD	Connect the trail system at Aspen Park to both the Gaylord Intermediate and South Maple Elementary Schools.	TBD	TBD
1	TBD	Construct pathway around perimeter of Gaylord Industrial Park, dedicate property for park within Industrial Park.	\$200,000	Local Funds \$100,000 EDA; Industrial Park Grant \$100,000
TBD	TBD	Hazel Street Property – Meet with neighborhood representatives to discuss types of development for the new park.	TBD	TBD

TBD	TBD	Tennis Court Complex – Develop working with the Otsego County Parks and Recreation, the Sportsplex, and the Alpine Regional Tennis Association the development of 4 new tennis courts adding backboards, bleachers, scoring boards, and fencing to so accommodate a quality tennis complex for our community. Work will include site preparation and the purchase of miscellaneous equipment to maintain this facility.	\$384,653	Local \$115,395 MNRTF \$269,258
TBD	TBD	Ramp/Skate Park Redevelopment – Continue to refurbish and prepare new concrete pad and site development for relocation of existing equipment. Repaint and refurbish all equipment and install new fencing, additional new equipment, and shelter purchase and construction.	\$240,000	Local \$72,000 MNRTF \$168,000

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Recreation Plan Certification Checklist

Appendix B: Community Background

Appendix C: Post-Completion Self-Certification Reports