VILLAGE OF BLISSFIELD

PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN

Approved by
Village of Blissfield
Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
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Approved by
Village of Blissfield
Planning Commission
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Approved by
Village of Blissfield
Village Council
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Clearing House: Region II Planning Commission
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I. INTRODUCTION

The objective of this Parks and Recreation Plan is the design and maintenance of a quality parks and recreation system in the Village of Blissfield, through end of the year 2013. The Plan analyzes existing park and recreation resources and demands, identifies areas of need, and proposes goals, objectives, and projects designed to address these needs.

A. Purpose

The purpose of the plan is to go beyond an inventory of existing recreational opportunities and facilities available to Village residents. It will identify problems and future needs in order to develop a plan that will remedy identified problems and generally assure quality recreational services and facilities in a programmed, systematic manner for both the present and expected future population. The plan is intended to be a policy guide for Village officials in developing efficient recreational services and park facilities.

B. Scope

The scope of this plan concerns the evaluation of the recreational needs regarding the Village parks and recreation system. Moreover, it will prescribe an agenda that will address these needs.

C. Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

To obtain citizen input and communication in the preparation of Village Parks and Recreation Plans, a Blissfield Village Parks and Recreation Commission was established in 1989, and re-organized in 1993 as the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. The Blissfield Parks and Recreation Advisory Board currently consists of 6 members. Each Board member is appointed by the Village President, with confirmation, via resolution, by the Village Council. The Board members each serve 2-year terms, beginning January 1 of each odd-numbered year. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board developed this plan, and the Advisory Board serves as a forum that allows for public input in the plan.

II. COMMUNITY DATA

Natural Conditions

A. Location

The Village of Blissfield is located in southeastern Lenawee County approximately 8 miles north of the Ohio-Michigan border, and 10 miles southeast of Adrian (the Lenawee County seat).

B. Soils

The Soil Conservation Service's 1947 Soil Survey for Lenawee County states that the primary soils in the Village are Griffin and Sloan loams, Kibbie and Colwood fine sandy loams, and Wauseon loams. These soils are, in many cases, poorly drained with slopes ranging from 0-7%.

C. Water

The significant water feature within the Village is the River Raisin, which meanders through the center of the community. The river's floodplain, which covers approximately 15 to 20% of the Village's geographical area, has had a very strong impact on the development of the Village.

D. Topography

The topography of Blissfield is relatively flat and varies only slightly in elevation. The highest recorded elevation (USGS) in the Village is 694 ft., and the lowest is 679 ft.

Socio-Economic Conditions

A. Population

Historically, population growth in the Village of Blissfield has occurred at a slow to moderate rate. Since 2000, however, Census estimates show that the Village's population has declined slightly. According to the 2000 Census data, the population in 2000 was 3,223 persons, and in 2007 it was estimated to be 3,205 (see Table 1). The future population trend should be stable; with estimated expansion rates of 1-2 % over the next ten years (see Table 2 on next page).

From a racial and ethnic perspective, of the 3,205 persons in the Village, .1% is black, less than .1% are native-Americans, and .1% are asian-americans. The largest minority is the Hispanic population, at 6.1% (based on the 2000 Census data).

From a gender perspective, Blissfield's population is 47.4% male and 52.6% female. This male-to-female ratio is slightly less than the ratio for Lenawee County (50% male and 50% female) and the state (49% male and 50% female).

For the most part, racial, ethnic, and gender issues should have no affect on recreation planning in the Village. There is, however, one specific population factor that this plan needs to consider. Blissfield's population is generally slightly older than the County. For example, Blissfield's median age is 36.7, while Lenawee County's median age is only 36.4. Also, and more importantly, Blissfield has a higher percentage of its population that is 65 and older (15.8%) than

Table 1
Population Trends
Blissfield Village,
Surrounding Cities and
Towns

	1980	1990	2000	2007	% Change 80-90	% Change 90-00	% Change 00-07
Lenawee County	89,946	91,476	98,890	101243	1.7	8.1	2.4
Blissfield Village	3,107	3,172	3,223	3,205	2.1	1.6	-0.6
Adrian City	21,186	22,097	21,574	21,354	4.3	-2.4	-1.0
Hudson City	2,545	2,580	2,499	2,346	1.4	-3.1	-6.1
Tecumseh City	7,320	7,462	8,574	8,719	1.9	14.9	1.7
Adrian Township	4,612	4,336	5,749	7,141	-6.0	32.6	24.2
Tecumseh Township	1,480	1,539	1,881	1,809	4.0	22.2	-3.8
Blissfield Township	637	677	692	669	6.3	2.2	-3.3
Ogden Township	1,224	1,146	1,063	1,043	-6.4	-7.2	-1.9
Deerfield Township	772	737	765	755	-4.5	3.8	-1.3
Palmyra Township	2,476	2,602	2,366	2,284	5.1	-9.1	-3.5
Riga Township	1,671	1,471	1,439	1,373	-12.0	-2.2	-4.6

Source: US Bureau of the Census.

Table 2
Population Trends
Village of Blissfield and
Surrounding Communities

	2000	2007	2017
Townships			
Adrian	5,749	7,141	8,200
Tecumseh	1,881	1,809	1,900
Cities/Villages			
Blissfield	3,223	3,205	3,300
Adrian	21,574	21,354	21,500
Hudson	2,499	2,346	2,400
Tecumseh	8,574	8,719	8,800

Source: US Census Bureau and local estimates. Village of Blissfield estimates are based on building permit data and include manufactured housing developments, which are not included in MDMB estimates

the County (12.7%). Another indicator of our aging population is the growth in our labor force population. The age group of 18-65 increased to 57.6%. This population data indicates that the Village should continue to plan for the recreational needs of an older population, without ignoring the other age groups.

B. Residential Areas

According to the 2007 Blissfield Comprehensive Plan, prepared by the Blissfield Planning Commission, residential land uses account for 26.8% of the Village's total land area. Of the 385.8 acres of residential land in Blissfield, 364.8 acres, or 94.6%, are single-family residences. The remaining 21 acres have multi-family land uses.

C. Commercial Areas

Commercial/office/institutional land use in Blissfield represents only a small portion of the Village's total area. The 45.4 acres of commercial land represent 3.1% of the total land area, and are generally found near the Village's center and along US223.

D. Industrial Areas

Industrial land use occupies 118.1 acres, or 8.2% of Blissfield's total area, as of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan. That acreage is comprised of both light and heavy manufacturing industries.

E. Agriculture, Forests, and Vacant Areas

Agricultural lands, forests, and vacant lands represent the largest total land area for any land use category in Blissfield. According to the Comprehensive Plan, 781.3 acres, or 54.1% of the Village's land, is used for these purposes.

F. Employment Trends

According to 2000 Census data, manufacturing and related employment constituted 28.7% of the local workforce, while in 1990 it was 32.1%. While manufacturing employment decreased, non-manufacturing employment increased from 41.6% in 1990 to 44.3% in 2000, and professional/public service employment grew from 25.3% in 1990 to 27.0% in 2000.

Other Characteristics

A. Transportation

The major road serving Blissfield is US223, which travels southeast/northwest through the center of the Village. According to the Michigan Department of Transportation, US223 has an average daily traffic volume of approximately 15,000 vehicles.

B. Schools

The Blissfield Community School District provides educational facilities for residents of the Village, as well as portions of 5 surrounding townships. Located within the Village are an elementary school, a middle school, and a high school, as well as various recreational facilities.

C. Health Care

Bixby Hospital, located about 11 miles away in the City of Adrian, is the closest major health care facility to Blissfield. Several other major hospitals are located in Toledo, Ohio (about 18 miles southeast of Blissfield), and in Ann Arbor, MI (about 35 miles northeast of Blissfield).

D. Police and Fire

The Village of Blissfield presently has 6 full-time police officers that provide 24/7 police protection for its residents. In addition, the Lenawee County Sheriff's Department and the Michigan State Police provide additional protection upon request. The 27-member Blissfield Township Fire Department provides fire protection for the Village. The BTFD serves not only the Village, but the Blissfield Township as well. The Village and Township have entered into mutual-aid agreements with other area Police and Fire Departments.

III. EXISTING RECREATION FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

Existing Facilities

Existing Village-owned recreational facilities include Ellis Park, Clara Bachmayer Memorial Park, Bachmayer Little League Park, Farver Little League Field, the Downtown Mini-Park, and a tennis court facility located on Blissfield Middle School property. Other facilities include the Blissfield Community High School/ Middle School/Elementary School campus; owned by the Blissfield Community Schools (see Map 1 on Page 10).

Ellis Park contains baseball and softball fields, volleyball courts, shuffleboard courts, basketball courts, picnic facilities, playground equipment, a boat launch, an outdoor community swimming pool, restroom facilities, and a skateboard complex. Ellis Park can also be configured for youth soccer fields. Directly across the River Raisin is Clara Bachmayer Memorial Park, which contains picnic facilities, restroom facilities, and playground equipment. Two pedestrian bridges connect these two parks. Bachmayer Little League Park contains a Boundless Playground, picnic facilities, restroom facilities, and a baseball field. The Farver Little League Field also contains a baseball field and restroom facilities. There is a "mini-park" in the Village's downtown area, and a tennis court complex on Blissfield Middle School property.

Though the Village-owned facilities are in many respects handicapped-accessible, according to the Village ADA transition plan, there are some areas that need to be addressed. In general, these areas include the approaches to a pedestrian bridge between Ellis and Clara Bachmayer Parks, and access between the picnic shelters, athletic fields, playgrounds, and benches along the River Raisin, in Ellis and Clara Bachmayer Parks. Restroom facilities in Ellis Park, Clara Bachmayer Park, and Bachmayer Little League Park also require upgrading for handicapped accessibility. Ellis, Clara Bachmayer, and Bachmayer Little League Parks are rated as "Level 2", and Farver Little League Field and the Downtown Mini-Park are rated as "Level 4", in terms of handicapped accessibility)

The Blissfield School complex contains both playground and athletic facilities (these include gymnasiums and baseball, softball, football, soccer, and track facilities – some of which the Village uses for its own recreational programming). The school complex also includes a Village owned and operated tennis court facility. Table 3 on the next page provides a list of the local recreation resources available to Village residents.

In addition to the Village and School recreational facilities, there are several Lenawee County and State of Michigan recreational facilities within a half-hour's drive. Available regional facilities include State Parks, an MSU arboretum facility, Lenawee County Parks, Toledo/Lucas County (Ohio) Metroparks, and Ohio State Parks (see Map 2 on Page 11). Although these facilities are not located within the Blissfield Village limits, Blissfield residents do use them with some regularity. Table 4 on the next page lists the major regional recreational facilities that are used by Blissfield residents. Another facility that Blissfield residents use is the Bliss-Liewert Senior Center, located in Blissfield. This Senior Center offers recreational programs for the Blissfield area senior population.

Last, Blissfield has been fortunate enough to have received 3 state recreation grants in the past. In Ellis Park, a LWCF grant was used to construct restroom buildings in both Ellis Park and Clara Bachmayer Memorial Park, while a CMI grant was used to renovate Gail Giles Swimming Pool and bathhouse in Ellis Park. A MNRTF grant was also used to construct a boat launch on the River

Raisin in Ellis Park.

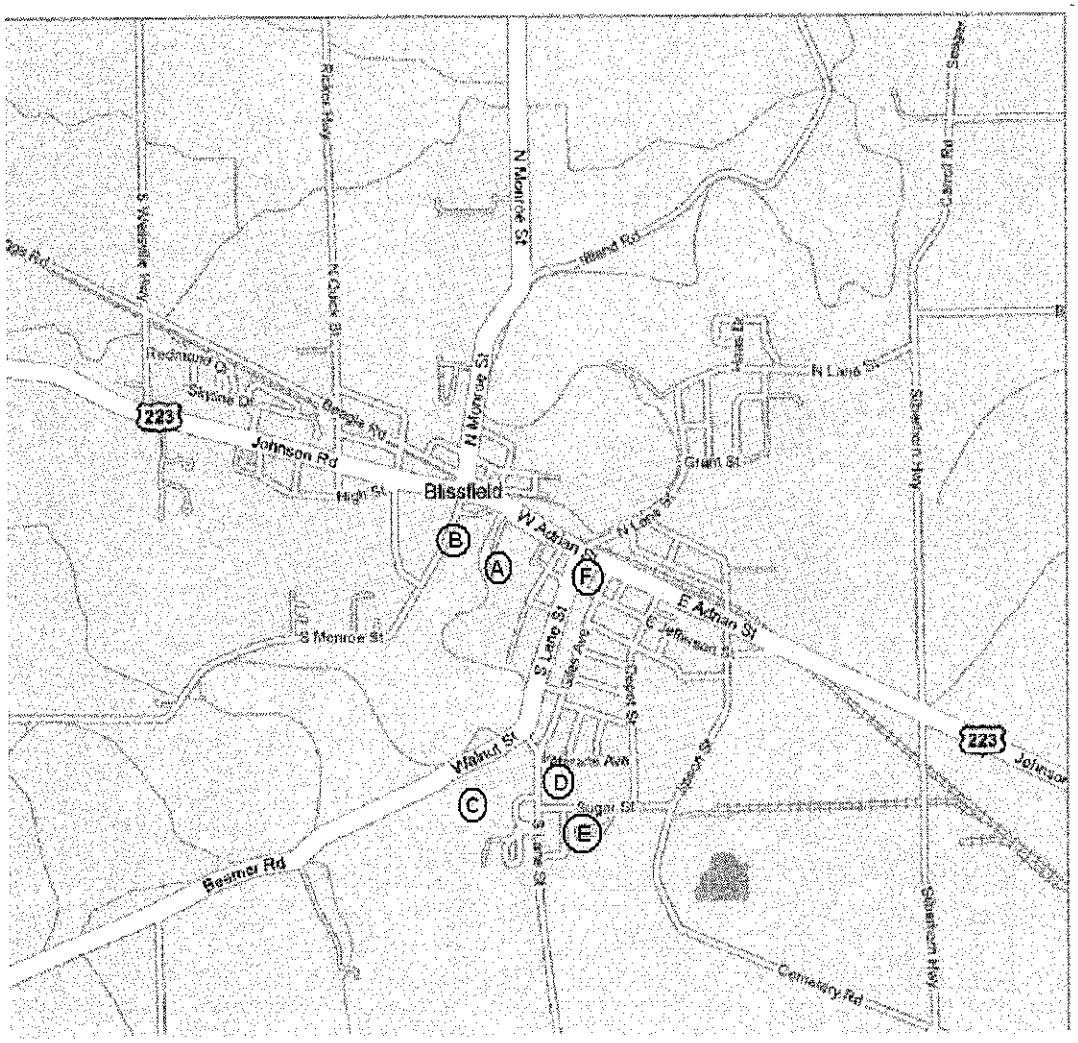
Table 3
Village of Blissfield
Inventory of Recreation Facilities

Name	Classification	Acreage	Facilities
Ellis Park	Community park	17.5	Swimming pool, playground, picnic shelters, baseball, softball, shuffleboard, volleyball, basketball, skateboard park, boat launch, benches.
Clara Bachmayer Memorial Park	Community park	6.9	Picnic shelters, playground, benches.
Bachmayer Little League Field	Neighborhood park	4.4	Baseball, picnic shelter, Boundless Playground.
O. W. Farver Little League Field	Neighborhood park	4.7	Baseball.
Downtown Mini-Park	Mini-Park	0.2	Benches, picnic facilities.
Blissfield High School	Community park School-park	70.0	Football, baseball, softball, soccer, track, exercise.
Blissfield Middle School	Community park School-park	1.7	Village tennis courts.
Blissfield Elementary School	Neighborhood park School-park	2.0	Playground.
	Total acres	107.4	

Table 4
Regional Recreation Facilities

Map #2	Facility	Type of Facility
Michigan		
1	Bicentennial County Park	Picnic, athletic fields, nature trails.
2	Gerber Hill County Park	Picnic, athletic fields, nature trails.
3	Ramsdell County Nature Park	Picnic, nature trails.
4	Hidden Lake Gardens (MSU)	Arboretum, nature trails.
5	Sharonville State Game Area	Nature trails.
6	Hayes State Park	Picnic, nature trails.
7	Petersburg State Game Area	Nature trails.
8	Point Mouillee State Game Area	Nature trails.
9	Sterling State Park	Picnic, beach.
10	Erie State Game Area	Nature trails.
Ohio		
11	Wildwood MetroPark	Picnic, nature trails, Manor House
12	Secor MetroPark	Picnic, nature trails.
13	Oak Openings MetroPark	Picnic, nature trails.
14	Maumee State Forest	Nature Trails.
15	Irwin Prairie State Nature Preserve	Nature Trails.

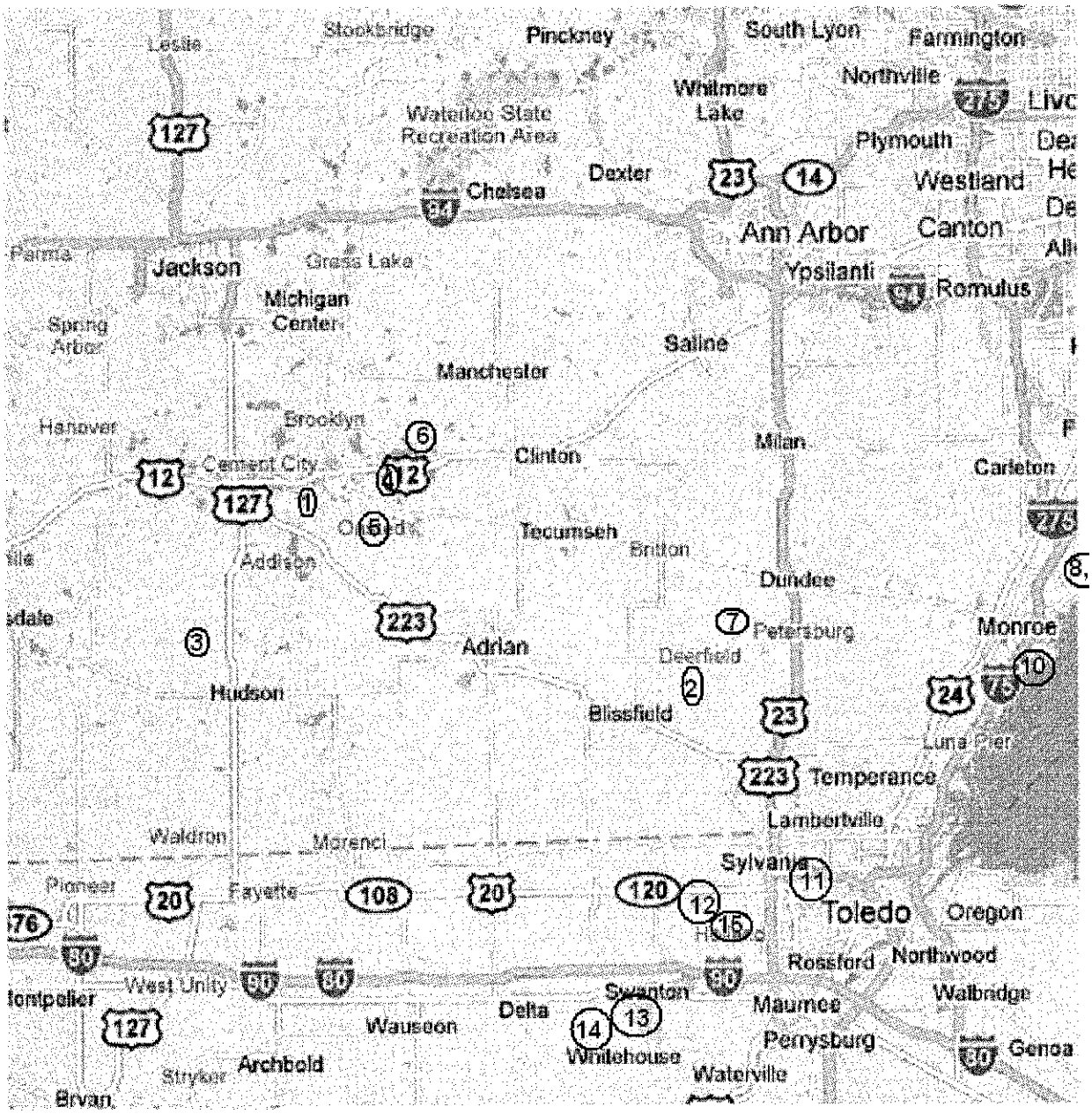
Map 1
Recreational Facility Inventory
Village of Blissfield



Recreation Inventory Key

A – Ellis Park
B – Clara Bachmayer Memorial Park
C – Blissfield Schools Complex
D – Bachmayer Little League Park
E – OW Farver Little League Field
F – Downtown Mini-Park

Map 2
Regional Recreational Facility Inventory
(See Table 4 on Page 9 for legend)



Current Recreation Program

The Village Council has established a Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, which is responsible for recommendations to the Village Council on the planning, administering, and evaluating the Village's recreation programs and facilities. The Advisory Board also serves to facilitate citizen participation in, and comment on, recreation matters. In addition, this group studies various recreational needs and park usage, and makes recommendations to the Village Council for improvements in this area.

The Village Council also created a Parks & Recreation Department in 2003, hiring a part-time Recreation Coordinator at that time. The Recreation Coordinator's duties include the development, implementation, and evaluation of Village recreation programming, working with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board while doing so. This includes the supervision and management of dozens of volunteers, who help manage and implement the Village's recreation programming (i.e., sports coaches, program coordinators, etc.) The Recreation Coordinator's duties also include coordinating with outside groups who use Village recreational facilities.

The Village of Blissfield is committed to a planned and growth-oriented approach to recreational activities. Over the past five years, park and recreation expenditures have averaged approximately $225,121. These funds have been used for staff salaries, acquisition, capital improvements, general maintenance and upkeep of facilities, and recreation programming. In the current fiscal year (October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2009), $168,690 is budgeted for parks and recreation programming, operations, and maintenance. That budgeted figure for programming, operations, and maintenance should remain stable (adjusted for inflation) for the next five years. There are no capital projects in FY08-09's budget, although capital projects are considered for out-years as part of this plan. Funds for parks and recreation come from General Fund tax revenues, state revenue-sharing, grants, donations, sponsorships, and program fees and charges.

IV. LONG-RANGE GOALS

The general goal of the recreation plan is to provide the space, facilities, and opportunities for Village residents to satisfy their recreation needs. The provision of recreation facilities should be accomplished through the coordination of various levels of government together with the private sector. Comprehensive and coordinated planning among these groups is essential in assuring a system of adequate recreation facilities that provide citizens of the Village with diverse choice and maximizing the potential for utilization. Some of the general long-range goals of this plan include:

1. Provision of Recreational Facilities

An effort should be made to provide local recreation facilities in a systematic fashion, which compliments existing county and regional facilities. The residents of Blissfield require diversity in the types of areas and facilities provided for recreation activities. Both active and passive recreation areas should be provided within convenient distance of Village residents.

2. Coordination of Programs

Over the period of time covered by this plan, the Village should encourage the coordinated effort of recreation planning between itself, the township, the county, the state, and the school system, so as to avoid unneeded duplication of recreation facilities and services.

These goals serve as a backdrop for the recreation plan. The plan itself establishes the future location of facilities and the type of programs needed by the Village of Blissfield. The range of activities which contribute to the attainment of these goals includes the following:

a. Indoor and outdoor individual and team sports/games.
b. Activities that involve nature, such as fishing, hiking, nature study, and wildlife observation.
c. Other sedentary types of recreation that can be enjoyed by all, including senior citizens and the physically challenged. These activities could include arts and crafts, the performing arts, and historical and re-enactment events.

All of these activities were considered in addition to the economic and social characteristics of Blissfield's population when formulating the Village's Parks and Recreation Plan.

3. Conservation of Natural Resources

In order to preserve irreplaceable natural features as vital components in the operation and interaction of the natural system, areas should be preserved for the appropriate use and enjoyment of residents and visitors. Marginal use areas, such as the River Raisin floodplain, are particularly sensitive to development, and should be protected because of their intrinsic value as open space.

4. Retention of Parks and Open Spaces

Potential park and open space areas should be set aside for open space purposes, and should not be considered as potentially available for other uses. Park and open space land is frequently consumed by more intensive uses, and should be protected as a matter of public policy. The only exceptions to this are public improvements for which there are no reasonable economic

alternatives, or where the character of an area has changed (i.e., from residential to industrial) and the open space no longer fulfills the functions for which it was intended.

V. PUBLIC INPUT

The residents of Blissfield were invited to provide their input primarily through 4 different ways. First, residents were asked to let their opinions be known in the Village's quarterly newsletter (which is sent to every address in the Village). The articles in the newsletters let residents know about the activities of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and urged residents to inform the Board on current public opinion. The newsletters also advised the recipients of the Public Hearing process.

Second, the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, working with the University of Toledo Recreation and Leisure Education Department, conducted a series of three focus group sessions. The purposes of the sessions were both to gather input and to develop topics to include on a residents' survey. One session was geared towards community leaders, one was geared toward recreation providers/users, and the last was geared toward the general public.

Third, the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, also working with the University of Toledo Recreation and Leisure Education Department, conducted a survey of Village residents regarding Village parks and recreation facilities and programming.

Last, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board held a Public Hearing for the consideration and adoption of this plan. The Public Hearing was held in December, 2008. After this hearing, the Village Planning Commission held a Public Hearing in February 2009, and the Village Council conducted a public meeting in March 2009, after the required 30-day public review and comment period.

The public had numerous opportunities to provide input into the development of this plan. Through the Village newsletters, focus groups, the survey, and the Public Hearing process, Village residents provided valuable input into this plan.

VI. STANDARDS FOR RECREATION AND THE PLANNING PROCESS

In order to identify areas of need and attention, it is reasonable to compare existing recreation facilities with a set of nationally accepted standards. The standards recommended by the National Parks and Recreation Association (NPRA) are 10 acres of parkland per 1,000 persons, and include both public and private recreational facilities. This acreage represents the total recreation needs in terms of area and must be broken down for various types of facilities.

The primary recreation planning area, defined as those areas within the municipal limits of the Village of Blissfield had a 2007 Census estimated population of 3,205 persons. Using these standards (requiring approximately 10 acres per 1,000 population), the Village should have a minimum of 32 acres of recreation land to satisfy current recreation needs. The secondary recreation planning area, defined as the Village of Blissfield and the surrounding Blissfield Community School District, had a 2007 Census estimated population of 8,574 persons. Using these standards (requiring approximately 10 acres per 1000 population), the Village should have a minimum of 86 acres of recreation land available to satisfy current recreation needs.

In addition, the Parks and Recreation Plan recognizes three levels of recreation service. First, neighborhood parks and school playgrounds respond to neighborhood needs. Second, Village-wide facilities respond to the needs of the Village as a whole. Last, community-wide parks and recreation facilities, such as those at the high school, are available for those who reside in the Village and/or the school district.

Table 3 on Page 9 provides both the inventory and classification of these facilities. According to the recreation facility inventory, the Blissfield Planning Area has 107.4 acres of recreation land. Therefore, the recreation facility inventory indicates a more than sufficient amount of recreation land to satisfy the present population's needs.

In addition to the parks and recreation industry standards, there are several other factors that can indicate the status of a community's recreation facilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act, along with Michigan's Barrier Free Act, provide guidelines for making facilities accessible to individuals with disabilities. Also, public input is an important way to measure the success of recreation facilities and programs.

While according to the NPRA standards, the Village has sufficient acreage dedicated to parks and recreation facilities, the focus groups and the community survey demonstrate that additional types of facilities are in demand. Many of these facilities (i.e., community center, indoor swimming pool, etc.) can be constructed in existing Village and/or school property, while others will require additional property (i.e., walking trails along River Raisin). In addition, the survey and barrier-free requirements demonstrate the need for improvements to existing parks and recreation facilities.

VII. PARKS AND RECREATION ACTION PLAN

A. Assessment

Development of the Village's Parks and Recreation Plan required consideration of several basic planning factors, which include:

a. The configuration and density of the neighborhoods.
b. The size and location of existing recreation facilities.
c. Public input.
d. The Village's level of compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations.
e. The ability of the community to physically and financially realize improvements in recreation services and facilities.

The following Recreation Action Plan outlines a 5-year(+) program for the improvement of parks and recreation facilities within the Village of Blissfield. The Action Plan addresses the short-, medium-, and long-term recreation needs of the community, and also considers necessary maintenance and repairs to existing facilities. The Plan is the result of input from the public, the application or applicable standards, and consideration by the Parks and Recreation Commission/Advisory Board, the Village Planning Commission, and the Village Council. The Action Plan also takes into account the inventory of existing facilities to determine the adequacy of these facilities in better serving the needs of the community. The inventory was presented in Section III of this document.

When compared to national recreation standards, the Village of Blissfield offers adequate acreage for parks. The NPRA recommends a minimum standard of 10 acres of parkland per 1000 in the community. The Village now has approximately 33.7 acres of parkland and 73.7 acres of school property, which is used for athletic, and outdoor recreational activities.

Using the above standards and the Village's current population, approximately 32 acres of parkland would be needed for the Village proper. On an overall basis, the Village, then, has slightly more than sufficient recreation acreage (33.7 acres) when compared to the national standards. With the school district property and population included, the recommended acreage is substantially exceeded (88 acres needed vs. 107.4 acres available). Therefore, from this perspective, a large-scale Village program of land acquisition is not needed.

However, other areas need to be addressed because of public input. These areas include improving the condition of some Village recreational facilities, compliance with barrier-free requirements, the provision of additional areas for walking, bicycles, in-line skates, and other "pedestrian" or "non-motorized" recreation facilities, and indoor recreational facilities (i.e., community center, indoor swimming pool, and a performing arts center)

In addition to these factors, the Village must insure that the needs of an aging population are met (see "population" section in Part "II" above).

B. Goals and Objectives

In summary, there is a general agreement that the parks and recreation facilities within the Village, for the most part, serve the needs of the community. However, there are some areas that

need to be addressed. Future recreation goals should focus on these areas. The first goal is to maintain and improve existing facilities. This area includes general facility and equipment maintenance, parking, and compliance with such laws as the ADA. This area is also the primary way in which the Village will provide for an aging population (in conjunction with the support of the Bliss-Liewert Senior Center). The second goal is to develop a walkway and lineal park system, which would provide connection between the various recreational facilities within the Village. The third goal is to develop a recently acquired and cleared parcel located at the US223 entrance to Ellis Park. The fourth and final goal is to work in coordination and cooperation with the Blissfield Community Schools to provide indoor recreation facilities, such as a community center, an indoor swimming pool, and a performing arts center.

More specifically, the objectives that would help reach the goals include:

Goal 1: Improvements to existing facilities.

This goal provides for the maintenance of and improvements to existing facilities. Objectives that will reach this goal include:

a. Renovate park facilities to accommodate individuals with disabilities (restrooms, paths, bridge approaches, etc.) - $200,000.
b. Add additional parking in Ellis, Clara Bachmayer, and Bachmayer Little League Parks - $90,000.
c. Improve concession stands in Ellis and Bachmayer Little League Parks, and Farver little League Field - $75,000.
d. Add additional shade trees in Ellis and Clara Bachmayer Parks - $10,000.
e. **Estimated total costs - $375,000.**

Goal 2: Development of walkways and linear park system.

This goal includes projects for linear parks and walkways along the River Raisin, to and from other school and parks facilities, and inside existing parks. Objectives for this goal include:

a. Construct walking/biking trails within Ellis and Clara Bachmayer Parks- $80,000.
b. Acquire property (or easements for property) and develop nature trails along west bank of River Raisin, from the end of River St. northward - $80,000.
c. Construct bridges for non-motorized traffic across the River Raisin, in the vicinity of the Water Plant and the dam - $500,000.
d. Acquire property (or easements for property) and develop nature trails along the west bank of River raisin, from the south boundary of Clara Bachmayer southward - $80,000.
e. **Estimated total costs - $740,000.**

Goal 3: Development of parcel at entrance to Ellis Park.

This goal includes the development of the recently acquired and cleared parcel located at the US223 entrance to Ellis Park. Objectives to reach this goal include:

a. Study to determine best recreation use of the property - $10,000.
b. **Estimated total cost - $10,000.**

Goal 4: Work with Blissfield Schools to develop indoor recreation facilities.

a. Construct indoor swimming pool - $1,000,000.
b. Renovate part of existing school building into community center - $1,000,000.
c. Construct performing arts center - $5,000,000.
d. Estimated total cost - $7,000,000.

The goals and objectives in this 5-year plan will be accomplished through 6 major capital improvement projects, in addition to the study of the lot at the entrance to Ellis Park and the tree planting project. The first highest priority project will be the renovation of Village park restroom facilities (Ellis, Clara Bachmayer, and Bachmayer Little League Parks), so these facilities comply with relevant barrier-free requirements. Funds would come from the Village's general fund, as well as state recreation and foundation grants, and community contributions.

The second highest priority capital project will be the installation of paved trails between facilities within Village park facilities (Ellis and Clara Bachmayer Parks), so these facilities comply with relevant barrier-free requirements. This project would also serve as Phase 1 of the walkway/linear park system project. Funds would come from the Village's general fund, as well as state recreation and foundation grants and community contributions.

The third highest priority project is the construction of additional parking in Ellis, Clara Bachmayer, and Bachmayer Little League Parks. The need for additional parking is evidenced by the overcrowded conditions of existing parking areas during peak use periods, as well as the survey results. These improvements would be funded through the Village's general fund.

The fourth highest priority project is the renovation of the concession stands at Ellis and Bachmayer Little League Parks, and Farver Little League Field. This project is would keep the concession stands in Bachmayer Little League Parks and Farver Little League Field in compliance with relevant standards, and to bring the concession stand in Ellis Park into compliance with those standards. It would be funded through the Village's general fund and community contributions.

The fifth highest priority project will be the development of the walkway and linear park system. This project will include walkways within the existing Clara Bachmayer and Ellis Parks (to be done as a separate project), walkways along the west bank of the River Raisin both north and south of the parks, and 2 bridges across the River Raisin. These are some of the new facilities that citizens called for in the 2008 citizen recreation survey results. This project would include both land acquisition (fee simple title or easements) and development. Funding will come from the Village's general funds, street funds, MDNR recreation grants, and SAFETEA-LU grants.

The lowest priority project is the construction of indoor recreation facilities, in conjunction with the Blissfield Community Schools. These could include an indoor swimming pool, a community center, and a performing arts center. This project, if proven feasible, would be funded jointly by the Village and the Schools, through bonds that would need to be approved by Village and School district voters.

The projects in this 5-year plan will require external funding assistance in order to accomplish them. Additionally, these projects' timetables are flexible, and the costs included are only estimates. Actual costs may vary somewhat from the estimates in this plan. These projects can be modified, if necessary, and completed as funds become available.

VIII. ACTION PLAN: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE

DATE	PROJECT	COST	FUNDING SOURCE
2009	Restroom renovations - Ellis Park - Clara Bachmayer Memorial Park - Bachmayer Little League Park	$120,000	General fund Recreation grants Foundation grants Donations
2011	Park paved pathways - Ellis Park - Clara Bachmayer Memorial Park	$80,000	General fund Recreation grants Foundation grants Donations
2011	Additional parking - Ellis Park - Clara Bachmayer Memorial Park - Bachmayer Little League Park	$90,000	General Fund
2012	Renovate concession stands	$75,000	General Fund Donations
2013	Linear park system	$740,000	General fund Street funds SAFETEA-LU Recreation grants
2013(+)	Indoor recreation facilities (schools) - Indoor swimming pool - Community center - Performing arts center	$7,000,000	Bonds

IX. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

To develop and maintain a successful recreation program, a legal and fiscal administrative structure has been established to assure availability and maintenance of recreation facilities and programs. The Village must have the appropriate financial resources to adequately provide maintenance and programming, so it can assure optimum recreation opportunity. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board therefore is the body of representative citizens that works with the Recreation Coordinator and Village Administrator, as well as professional consultants, in order to recommend, maintain, and evaluate recreation programs, services, and facilities. As a collective entity, the Advisory Board offers the following advantages:

a. It provides the Village with collective wisdom.
b. Good decision-making is more likely with several individuals.
c. It provides citizen input into recreation planning.
d. It is an effective means of achieving public support within the Village.
e. It provides for continuity of policy and programs.

The Village of Blissfield also recognizes that park and recreation services are people-to-people services, and need the involvement and support of citizens. The functions of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board are as follows:

a. To define the objectives of public recreation services and recommend the recreation policy of the Village.
b. To develop and recommend a sound fiscal plan to achieve recreation goals.
c. To provide for an adequate system of recreation facilities and areas.
d. To recommend recreation goals (short-, medium-, and long-term) of the Village, and to work toward those goals.
e. To provide the link between the Village residents and the Village government.

It is also necessary to have legal authority in order for the Village of Blissfield to provide a public recreation system, to acquire land, and to develop facilities. The Village can only do these tasks through the authority granted by the laws of the State of Michigan. The operation of our public recreation agency must be within the legal framework as provided for by enabling legislation. An example of this is Public Act 156 (1917), "The Recreation and Playground Act". Also, the Blissfield Village Council's resolution that created the Blissfield Parks and Recreation Advisory Board included the following elements:

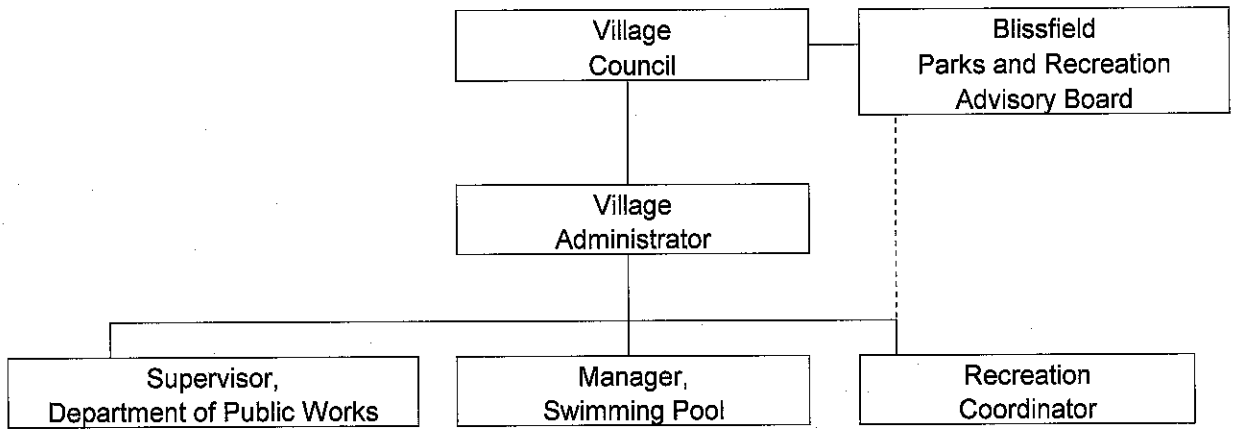
a. A delineation of the powers and duties of the Board.
b. A provision for the composition of the Board, and the method of appointment and term of office.
c. A provision for meetings, records, and quorums.

Presently, the Village Administrator oversees Village parks and recreation activities and staff. Parks and recreation facility maintenance is accomplished by the Village Department of Public Works. There is also a seasonal pool staff, as well as a seasonal parks maintenance staff. Additionally, the Recreation Coordinator administers recreation programming. Including the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, this organization includes approximately 23 individuals.

Ultimately, the Village Council provides the Village Administrator with policy guidelines to follow. With the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, public input is gathered from a wide variety of sources, and presented in recommendation form to the Village Council for consideration. The Village Council is the final policy-maker, though public input is invited at every level of policy formulation (see Chart 1 below).

Chart 1

Village of Blissfield
Parks and Recreation
Organizational Chart



X. THE FINANCIAL PLAN

The financial plan is a guide for local recreation budgeting. The plan must account for any available sources of revenue, as well as budgeting operation/maintenance and capital projects.

The Village of Blissfield needs to utilize multiple revenue sources in order to fund local recreation. No single revenue source can assure an appropriate recreation services program. The multiple sources of revenue include general fund tax dollars, bonds, grants, state revenue-sharing funds, foundation grants, program fees and charges, and gifts and donations. A successful parks and recreation program, such as Blissfield's, includes all of these revenue sources.

Recreation expenditures fall into two major categories: operations and maintenance, and capital projects. Operations and maintenance includes three types of spending: recreation programming, administration, and facilities maintenance. Within these groups, funds are necessary for salaries and wages, supplies, equipment and miscellaneous expenses, and other program concerns.

Capital projects are the second of the two major budgetary expenditure categories. They include expenditures for land acquisition, as well as for construction and major improvements. Capital projects are lengthier in term and broader in scope physically and fiscally.

Current capital projects are, simultaneously, a response to needs and the groundwork for future recreation opportunities. A shift from one to the other of the two types of capital expenditures implies the movement from one stage to another in the process of facility and resource and development. Emphasis upon land acquisition implies an initial stage in the development process, intent to provide passive forms of recreational opportunities, and an attempt to bank land for the future. Emphasis on construction and improvement of existing land infers intent to provide BOTH active AND passive recreation opportunity.

A successful recreation program, based on a sound plan, involves a programmed approach to estimating revenues and budgeting expenditures. It will also include a careful balance between operating and capital project budget appropriations.

XI. CONCLUSION

This Parks and Recreation Plan details the intentions of the Village of Blissfield regarding the acquisition, development, and maintenance of quality recreational facilities. The Village is committed to these goals in its pursuit of a higher quality of life for all of those persons affected by this plan. In addition to governmental commitment, the private sector and the general citizenry have also demonstrated their dedication to this goal, as evidenced by the donation of Farver Field in 1994 (by a local foundation), donations for the Giles Swimming Pool, the support of local service clubs for Village park facilities, and the new community-built playground facilities and skateboard park in the Village park system. In spite of the commitment by the community as a whole, Blissfield cannot carry out the projects outlined in this plan unless we receive supplemental funding from the State of Michigan. It is primarily for this reason that this plan is in place, in order to take advantage of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' available recreation grant programs.

APPENDIX A

Survey Results Executive Summary

Overall a majority of respondents were female middle aged adults with a median household income ranging from $50,000-$54,000 who spend under $1,500 annually on recreation services and activities. In regard to recreation programming respondents reported greatest interest in opportunities for youth, lifelong athletic activities, enrichment and self improvement, health and fitness, and travel and tourism. In regard to specific recreational activities a majority of respondents reported greatest interest for themselves or their family in reading, natural environment education, landscaping, gardening, photography, biking, hiking, in-line skating, walking, intermediate aerobics, water aerobics, and low impact aerobics, choir, music lessons, theater movies, and home movies. In regard to sports (i.e., basketball, baseball, golf, soccer, volleyball, tennis, softball) respondents reported little interest except for sporting opportunities for youth.

Further, respondents indicated that 4:00pm to 8:00pm, Monday through Friday, and 8:00am to 4:00pm on Saturday and Sunday were the times most convenient for them and/or their family to participate in recreational services or activities. Respondents also indicated they preferred to receive information related to recreational services and activities via direct mailings and local newspaper advertisements, and if constrained from recreation participation, constraint was due to personal time constraints or lack of service and activity information. Respondents also indicated most frequently that they utilized village recreational facilities and programs one day a week, primarily during the summer months.

Overall respondents agreed that Village recreational areas and facilities meet there recreational needs; they felt safe using facilities, programs and services; that the Parks and Recreation department had a satisfactory image; that park and recreation areas and facilities were well maintained; and that facilities for recreation compare favorably to those of surrounding communities. In regard to opportunity for public input on Village recreation decisions, respondents were split in regard to agreement. In regard to park acreage, respondents agreed that park acreage was adequate in their neighborhood and the Village. In contrast less than a majority of respondents found the Village to be responsive to community recreational needs or an important recreation provider to themselves or their families.

Respondents also indicated that the Village should collaborate extensively with local businesses to sponsor recreation opportunities and that the Village should provide more recreational activities for youth, adults, women, seniors and the family. Further, respondents indicated that the Village does a good job of marketing and advertising recreation programs and services and that they receive timely information about Village recreation programs and services.

Related to finances, respondents indicated they were not sure if the Village was spending an adequate amount of money on recreation or if the Village should increase recreation-related spending. Further uncertainty was reported in regard to whether or not developing new facilities for recreation should be a Village priority. While not a majority, respondents did advocate for improving current facilities for recreation. Further respondents advocated for increased recreational programs and services. Respondents indicated user fees and charges are adequate and affordable for recreational programs and services and that non-Village residents should pay higher recreational user fees and charges than Village residents. Respondents also advocated that

fees should not be collected on a sliding-scale based on household income. When asked if they were willing to pay increased user fees to support recreation program and/or service expansion, respondents were almost evenly split in terms of agreement, disagreement, and uncertainty. Further, a respondents indicated they were unwilling to pay increased taxes for the improvement of Village park and recreation areas and facilities or the development of new Village park and recreation facilities. Finally, respondents indicated an almost even split in terms of agreement, disagreement, and uncertainty in regards to the Village hiring a full-time park and recreation director.

In regard to Future facility planning a respondents indicated the Village should develop a paved river walk trail, an indoor community / recreation center, a community trail system, areas along the river more extensively, educational trails along the river, and improve or expand support facilities. While less than the majority, respondents did advocate for the updating of all existing park and recreation facilities, the development of an indoor pool, and the development of more playgrounds and play areas. Further, respondents disagreed the Village should invest in an indoor ice rink and the expansion of the skate park. Respondents were almost evenly split in terms of agreement, disagreement, and uncertainty in relation to the development of a fine arts center and the installation of digital information signs within the community.