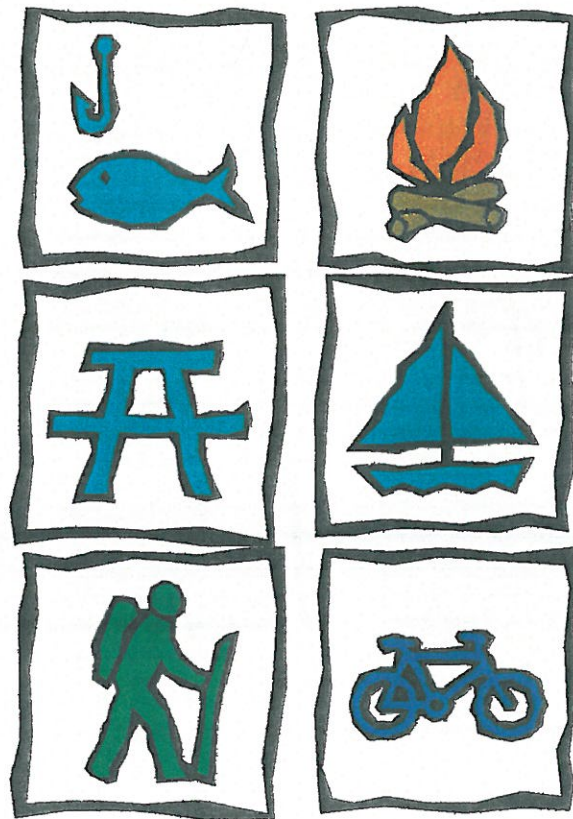


RECREATION PLAN
FOR
LAKE TOWNSHIP, HURON COUNTY
MICHIGAN



2003 – 2007

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Lake Township, in Huron County is creating a new Community Recreation Plan. This new plan will examine the recreation needs of the citizens of Lake Township and will provide for a planned approach to meet those needs.

This plan will be prepared to conform to Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) guidelines for community recreation plans. A MDNR approved recreation plan will allow Lake Township to be eligible to apply for recreation grants which are administered through the MDNR's Recreation Grants Section. In order to remain eligible for MDNR grants a community must have an up to date recreation plan. A recreation plan is current for five years. At the end of these five years a new plan must be created. The new Lake Township Recreation Plan will cover the years 2003-2007.

In addition to maintaining grant eligibility, there are a number of other purposes for having an up to date recreation plan. These purposes include:

- Analyze current facilities and compare them to needs and desires of Lake Township residents.
- Providing a rational basis for improvements to Lake Township's recreation facilities.
- Establish priorities for budgetary needs.
- Establish long-term goals.

A. COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

An overview of Lake Township's social, geographic, and physical characteristics provides an important basis for the future development of its recreation infrastructure. The social characteristics section documents a number of relevant demographics including population, racial and ethnic distribution, age and gender distribution, and employment and unemployment data.

The physical factor section will examine such pertinent issues as land use planning and zoning, transportation, soil types, and climate.

A. 1. Social Characteristics

In addition to examining the physical context of Lake Township, the social context also needs to be examined. Population figures, ages, racial and ethnic backgrounds, and other demographic information should and will be taken into account when planning for recreation facilities.

A.1.a. Age

Another important demographic which needs to be examined is that of age distribution. This will help guide the community towards the type of recreational facilities needed for appropriate age groups.

According to the U. S. Census Bureau figures, the population of Lake Township is aging. This is consistent with national trends, which show that the population is aging. This will be taken into account when planning for future facilities. These changes are illustrated in the following chart
Table 1: Age Distribution.

A.1.b. Employment

Table 2 illustrates employment by industry for Huron County inclusive of Lake Township, and the State of Michigan as a whole. As can be seen from the chart the second largest number of people in Huron County are employed in agriculture. In Lake Township agriculture ranks as the highest employment category. There are a number of family farms in Lake Township with over one-half (57.7%) of the Township currently used for agricultural purposes. Residential construction ranks close to agriculture in employment due to the development of shoreline properties over the past four decades.

A.1.c. Households

Another related statistic is that of number of households. The 2000 Census indicates that there were 483 households in Lake Township. The Census Bureau defines households as a person or group of persons who live in a housing unit. There were an additional 875 housing units used seasonally.

A.1.d. Persons With Disabilities

The U. S. Census Bureau breaks the population into two age categories when it considers persons with disabilities. The first age group is people aged 16 to 64 and the second group is those aged 65 and over. In addition, **Table 3**, breaks this into those people with a work disability as well as those people with mobility or self care limitations.

A.1.e. Population Trends

Population trends play an important role when planning for future recreation needs of a community. This section examines population trends based on 1980 Census, 1990 Census, and 2000 Census. Trends in Lake Township, Huron County, and the State of Michigan are examined.

The population for Lake Township has increased sharply over the past ten years. This growth rate is much higher than the trends of the county. This rate is also much higher than the population growth trend of the state.

Table 6 illustrates the projected population for the years 2010 and 2020. The Office of the State Demographer predicts that while the population of the State of Michigan, as a whole will continue to increase, the population of Huron County will decrease slightly. However, due to the desirability and rate of land acquisition and development in Lake Township, it is likely that the population of the Township will continue to increase.

One factor, which may impact the growth of the Lake Township area in the near future, is the aging of the overall population in general and the Baby Boomer generation in particular. As this cohort ages, more retirees move north: Especially from the Metro Detroit area. Lake Township's physical location makes it an attractive area for a number of these retirees.

A.1.f. Racial / Ethnic Distribution

The racial and ethnic makeup of the Lake Township is very homogeneous. Of 996 residents 986 are white. The next largest ethnic group is American Indian / Alaskan Native, of which there are 7 (seven) in Lake Township.

A.1.g. Gender

The 1990 Census shows that out of the 996 Lake Township residents, 489 were male and 507 were female.

A.1.h. Senior Citizens

The senior citizen population is illustrated in **Table 1: Age Distribution**. The over 65 population in Lake Township, according to the 2000 Census was 357 people or 35.84 % of the

population. This is compared to Michigan as a whole, which had 12.27 % of the population over the age of 65. This statistic is very important when considering recreation plans for Lake Township. This indicates that there will be a higher than ordinary need for more passive recreation activities.

A.1.i. Summer Population

One other factor, which needs to be taken into account, is the large influx of additional residents during the summer. According to the 2000 Census, Lake Township has a total of 1,393 residences. Only 483 of these are occupied year round. This means that 910 are considered vacant housing units. 875 of these vacant housing units are considered seasonal dwellings. Following the assumption that there is an 80% occupancy rate and three (3) persons per unit on average, the population of the Lake Township probably swells by more than 2000 during the summer.

In addition to the seasonal residential population more than 75,000 campers register at Sleeper State Park throughout the year and more than 200,000 use the day-use facilities according to the park manager. Sleeper State Park is a 723-acre park within Lake Township featuring 223 modern campsites and is open from April through November.

Oak Beach County Park located at the east end of Lake Township has 55 camping sites, some rented seasonally and others for transient campers. According to Huron County records, the average usage is approximately 1856 campers from May 1st to October 15th. The County also rents and maintains a pavilion at this park with yearly usage at 2400 people.

There are also numerous cottages rented on a weekly basis throughout the summer season within Lake Township.

A. 2. Physical Factors

Lake Township is located in Huron County, Michigan east of the Village of Caseville, along the coast of Lake Huron. (**Map # 1: Location Map**)

A.2.a. Land Use and Zoning

Land use and zoning are important factors that need to be considered when planning for future recreation facility development. Included, as **Map # 2**, is a current zoning map of Lake Township.

A.2.b. Topography

Most of the Lake Township area is relatively flat land. Development has so far been concentrated along the shoreline. Much of the surrounding land is used for farming. Included as **Map #3**, is a general topographical map of the Lake Township Area.

A.2.c. Water Resources, Fish, and Wildlife

Also included is a map of area water resources as **Map # 4**.

A.2.d. Soils

Soil types should also be considered when planning for development. A map of the various soil types is included as **Map # 5**.

A.2.e. Transportation Systems

The major access route to Lake Township is M-25, which starts in Bay City and follows the shoreline of the Thumb through neighboring Caseville and then through Lake Township on to Port Austin. This physical location has proved to be an attractive setting and the area enjoys a reputation as a popular resort and retirement community. These transportation systems are illustrated in **Map # 6**.

A.2.f. Climate

The climate of Lake Township is typical of the Midwestern United States. However, the proximity of Lake Huron influences this climate. Lake Township's summer temperatures tend to be cooler because of the effect of Lake Huron. During winter the area also tends to receive a greater amount of snow due to Lake Huron.

Precipitation tends to be well distributed throughout the year.

A.3. Implications for Recreation Planning

A number of the social characteristics examined will have an impact on future recreation facilities. One of the factors, which Lake Township needs to continually address, is achieving a balance between residents and tourists. The tourism industry brings a significant number of people and income. While both residents and tourists alike enjoy many of the recreation facilities, there are some differing needs and desires. The summer residents and summer tourists are probably most interested in typical summer resort types of facilities and activities. These include such things as beaches, boat launches, marinas, and camping facilities. While many Lake Township residents enjoy these activities there is also a need for diversification to include facilities and activities for the rest of the year. These may include such items as walking / bicycling paths, a community recreation center, and a museum.

Another of these social characteristics is the age distribution of the population in the Township. When compared to the State of Michigan as a whole it can be seen that the Township has a significantly older population. According to 2000 Census figures the median age for Michigan is 36 years while the median age for the Township is twenty years older at 56 years. This would indicate that there is a need for more passive recreation activities such as walking and bicycling paths. In addition, any paths that the Township would construct would be handicap accessible to accommodate residents and visitors who may have a mobility limitation. These types of facilities are also very conducive to more active recreation activities such as inline skating and jogging.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

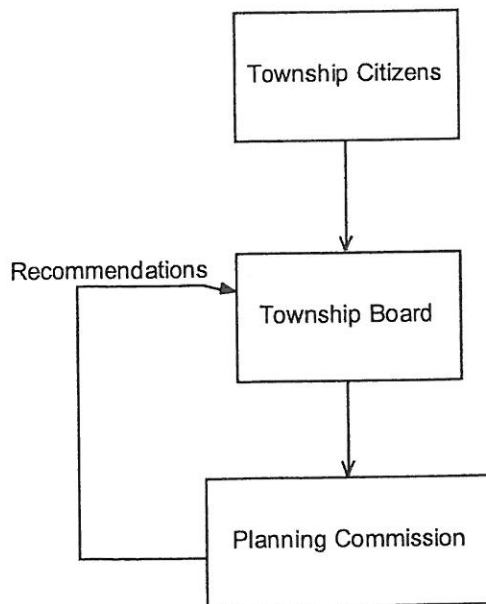
B.1. Budget

Lake Township does not have a separate recreation budget. The Township Board would fund all new projects through separate appropriations.

B.2. Organizational Chart

An organizational chart of Lake Township's Recreation system is included below.

Organizational Chart of Lake Township Recreation System



B.3. Standard Operation Procedures

The administrative structure for Lake Township is very direct. The Township Planning Commission is responsible for community planning. Decision-making and overall responsibility rests with the Township Board.

B.4. Commission or Advisory Board

The Township Planning Commission has been given the responsibility of updating the recreation plan. They also act as an advisory board to the Township Board of Trustees.

B.5. Relationships with Other Agencies

In the past, Lake Township has had a working relationship with the Huron County Board of Commissioners and the Huron County Parks Division through the Road Commission, as well as Sleeper State Park. Sleeper State Park and Oak Beach County Park are both within the Township limits, Oak Beach being managed by the Parks Division of the Huron County Road Commission. These positive relationships have benefited both Township residents and visitors.

B.6. Staff Description

Lake Township is staffed with three full-time and two part-time persons who oversee the day-to-day operations of the Township. The Township Board of Trustees upon recommendation of the Planning Commission appropriates funding to institute programs.

C. PLANNING PROCESS

C.1. Process And Key Persons

The Lake Township Recreation Plan was developed by the Lake Township Planning Commission with the input of the citizens of the Township. The Planning Commission of Lake Township was responsible for the oversight of development of the new plan.

C.2. Public Involvement Process

On Wednesday, **October 24th, 2001** the public was invited to attend a meeting of the Planning Commission in order to provide input into the recreation planning process. Many of the suggestions from the public have been included in this new recreation plan in the planning results section. This citizen input, as well as input from the Planning Commission, provided the base information used in the creation of the action program.

On January 24, 2002 and January 29, 2002 the planning commission held a recreation planning workshop and offered suggestions for improvements and corrected errors in the rough draft of the new recreation plan.

On **February 13, 2002** the plan was once again made available for review by the public. At this time the Lake Township Planning Commission adopted the plan. It was then sent to the Lake Township Board, which adopted the plan on **June 17, 2002**.

C.3. Planning Results

Public input for the new Lake Township Recreation Plan was actively sought. These meetings were well attended by the public. The public identified a number of desires for recreation facilities in Lake Township. These include:

- Bicycle Paths
- Boat Ramp
- Nature trails
- Recreation Center
- One room Schoolhouse / Museum

D. RECREATION INVENTORY

D. 1. Recreation Facilities in the Lake Township

D.1.a. Public Facilities

Sleeper State Park

Hiking/Cross-Country Ski Trails through the park

Thumb Jam (Monthly)

Halloween Weekends (October)

Philp County Park

Oak Beach County Park

Rush Lake Game Management Area (Lake Township)

D.2. Other Recreation Facilities in Huron County

Other recreation facilities within the county have an impact on Lake Township. The following is a partial list.

D.2.a. Public Facilities

1. Caseville County Park
2. Sebawaing County Park
3. McGraw County Park
4. Bird Creek County Park
5. Lighthouse County Park
6. Stafford County Park
7. Wagener County Park
8. Port Crescent State Park (Campground and **Day Use Park**)
9. Huron County Nature Center and Wilderness Arboretum
10. Verona State Game Management Area
11. Wildfowl Bay Game Management Area
12. Gagetown State Game Management Area

D.2.b. Harbors

1. Harbor Beach Harbor
2. Port Austin Harbor
3. Sebewaing Harbor
4. Caseville Harbor

D.2.c. School Facilities

Lakers

Caseville Public School

Junior Varsity and Varsity Sports

North Head

Art Festival

Music Concerts

Plays

D.2.b. Private Facilities

In addition to the recreational opportunities provided by the public sector a number of private facilities exist within the Lake Township area.

Kayak Rental

1. Crew's Nest Kayak Rental
Pigeon River

Canoe Rental

1. Tip-A-Thumb Canoe Rental
Pinnebog River

Go-Carts

1. Caseville Bumper Boats
2. Caseville Family Fun Center

Roller Skating

1. Caseville Roller Skating Arena

Water Slides

1. Jet Stream Water Slide

Miniature Golf

1. Putt-Putt Golf Course, Caseville
2. Sandy Dunes Adventure Golf, Pt Austin

Golf

1. Caseville Golf Course
2. Hidden Harbor Golf Course
3. Scenic Golf Course

Movies/Theaters

1. Bay Theatre
2. Port Austin Community Players

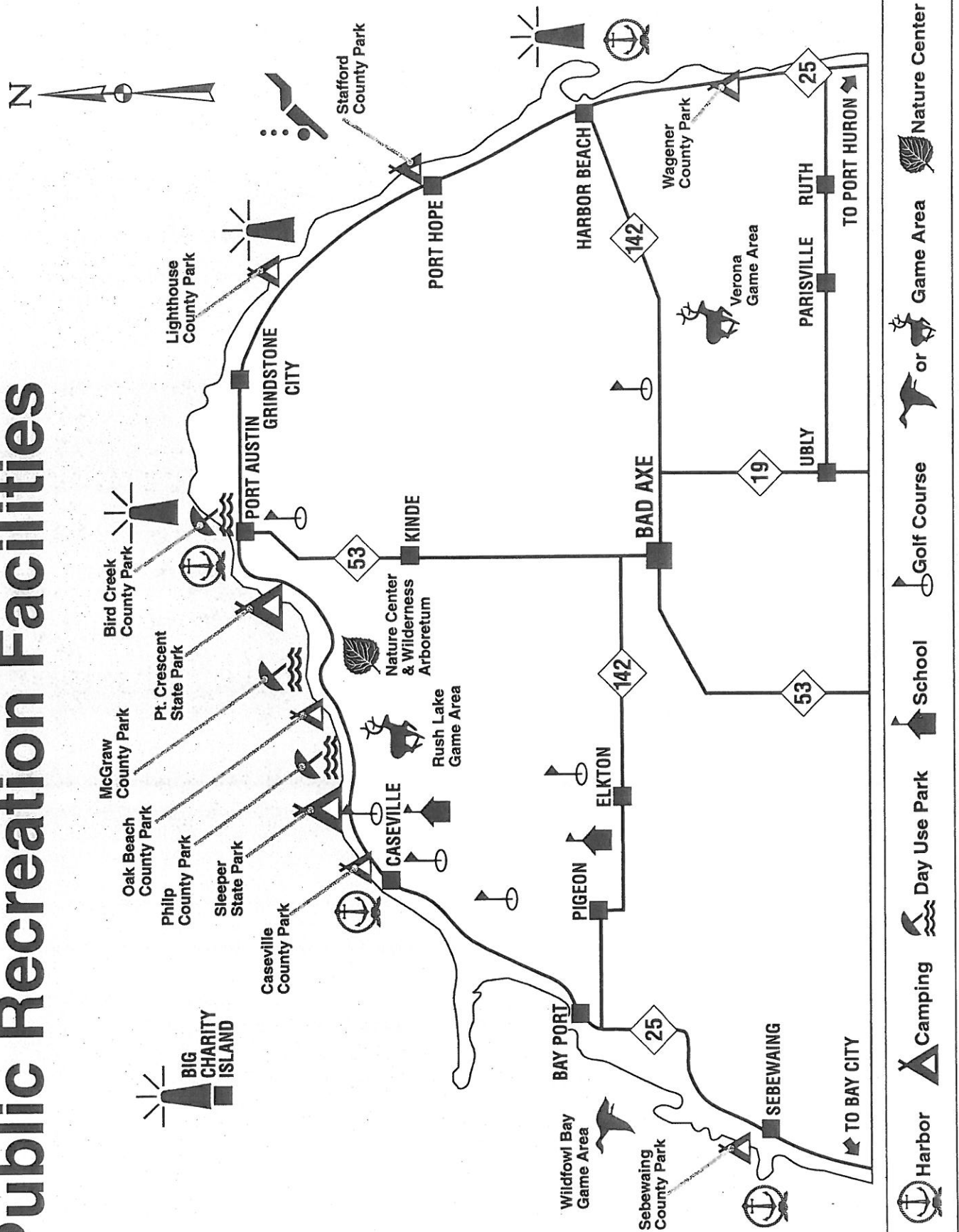
Festivals

The Thumb area hosts several festival activities throughout the year that draw tourists and seasonal residents from the metropolitan areas. During many of the summer festivals the local campgrounds are booked well in advance. The following is a list of some of these festivals:

1. Shanty Days, Caseville (February)
2. Perch Festival, Caseville (April)
3. Autofest, Port Austin (May)
4. Sugar Festival, Sebewaing (June)
5. Bayport Fish Festival (July)
6. Farmers Festival, Pigeon (July)
7. Huron County Fair, Bad Axe (August)
8. Cheeseburger in Caseville (August)
9. Autumnfest in Elkton (Labor Day Weekend)
10. Halloween Weekends at Sleeper State Park (Lake Township)

UPDATE

Public Recreation Facilities



D.4. Barrier Free Compliance Status

D.4.a. Evaluation of Existing Facilities

All existing facilities are handicap accessible.

D.4.b. Evaluation of Existing Programs

Not applicable. No existing programs.

D.4.c. Transition Plan

Not applicable. All existing facilities are handicap accessible.

D.4.d. Barrier Free New Facilities Design

It is the policy of Lake Township to make its recreation facilities available to all segments of the population. In particular, Lake Township is committed to ensuring that all new facilities will be barrier free. One necessary component of all future recreation facilities within Lake Township is that they will be barrier free. The issue of barrier free access is especially important to Lake Township because of the aging population and the number of retirees relocating to the area.

D.4.e. Accessibility issues at existing facilities addressed

Not applicable. All existing facilities are handicap accessible.

E. ACTION PROGRAM, CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE, AND RATIONALE

E.1. & E.2. Action Program and Capital Improvement Schedule

Table 7: Action Program and Capital Improvement Schedule
Year 2003

Project	Benefits	Anticipated Cost and funding sources
Sand Road Bicycle Trail Phase I – Quarry Road to Rush Lake	Provide access to hikers and cyclists to Rush Lake	Local, DNR & Grants (Public & Private) \$100,000
Phase II – State Park Road to Quarry Road	Impr.	Local, DNR & Grants (Public & Private) 150,000

Table 8: Action Program and Capital Improvement Schedule
Year 2004

Project	Benefits	Cost and anticipated funding sources
Oak Beach Boat Launch	Location midway between neighboring villages	Local, County, DNR & Grants (Public & Private) Costs Unknown
Acquisition of parcel east of Oak Beach park in conjunction with Huron County and Hume Township	Preservation of waterfront Land for public use	County & Grants (Public & Private) \$500,000
Sand Road Bicycle Trail – Phase III - Gagetown to State Park Road	Safer, scenic & historic route for hiking or biking rather than along State Highway (M-25)	Local, County, DNR & Grants (Public & Private) \$300,000 – 400,000

Table 9: Action Program and Capital Improvement Schedule
Year 2005

Project	Benefits	Cost and anticipated funding sources
Sand Road bicycle trail - Phase IV – Oak Beach Road to Quarry Road	Provide a safe, scenic, and historic route through LakeTownship	Local & Grants (Public & Private) \$300,000-450,000
Rush Lake	Provide a location within Lake Township for birdwatching and viewing nature	Local, DNR & Grants (Public & Private) \$400,000

Table 10: Action Program and Capital Improvement Schedule
Year 2006

Project	Benefits	Cost and anticipated funding sources
Rock City School House	Preserve historic building in Lake Township, HuronCounty	Local & Grants (Public & Private) Costs Unknown

Table 11: Action Program and Capital Improvement Schedule
Year 2007

Project	Benefits	Cost and anticipated funding sources
Recreation Activity Center and Library		Local & Grants (Public & Private) Costs Unknown

E.3. Rationale for Action Program and Capital Improvement Schedule

The rationale for the preceding charts is based on comments from the public hearings regarding the recreation plan held on **October 24, 2001** and **February 13, 2002**. A Planning Commission Workshop on the new recreation plan was held on **January 24, 2002** and **January 29, 2002**. In addition this program takes into account the unique demographic, social, and physical characteristics of the Lake Township area. This action program covers the five years from (2002 - 2007).

2003

The first item on the capital improvement schedule for the year 2003 is the Sand Road Bicycle Trail – Phase I and II. Development of Phase I will begin at Quarry Road and Sand Road and continue south to Rush Lake. Phase II would begin at State Park Road proceeding east to Quarry Road.

Sand Road is a Township road consisting of improved sand/gravel portions and unimproved portions. It is a historic trail, being the original road from Bayport to Port Austin prior to M-25 being built. Sleeper State Park is located at M-25 and State Park Road. Campers and residents use the M-25 shoulder to hike, bike or rollerblade, often times as far as to the Village of Caseville. Distances in Lake Township to the Village of Caseville are as follows:

5 miles from State Park Road (the location of Sleeper State Park)

6 miles from Quarry Road (Smalley Quarry Shores Subdivision)

8 miles from Champagne Road

9 miles from Oak Beach Road (location of Oak Beach County Park and the halfway point between the Villages of Caseville and Port Austin)

A Sand Road trail would provide a safer, shorter, more direct scenic route to Caseville for local residents and tourists, as proposed for Phase III in 2004. By beginning with a trail

to Rush Lake, it will provide access to this area for a larger population, since access is currently limited much of the year to four-wheel drive vehicles or hikers.

2004

The plan for 2004 calls for recreational development around the Rush Lake area. The envisioned development would need to be in cooperation with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). This plan expands upon the bike trail access to Rush Lake. Additional items include an observation platform overlooking Rush Lake and a ½ mile nature trail loop.

Development of the Sand Road bicycle trail will also continue in 2004 under this plan with Phase III which extends the bike trail from State Park Road west on Sand Road to Gagetown Road (the Township limits). It is anticipated that Caseville Township will eventually pick up the bike trail at this point and extend it to the Village of Caseville.

In 2004 the plan also calls for improvement of the Oak Beach County Park Boat Launch. Oak Beach Road dead-ends at the shoreline of Oak Beach County Park. Within the right-of-way a rustic boat ramp has existed for a number of years. Numerous requests from surrounding residents as well as visitors have been made over the years to improve this facility. An improved boat ramp at this midway location between the Villages of Caseville and Port Austin would provide an alternative access for residents and tourists and alleviate congestion at the village boat launches.

Plans call for construction of a protected harbor or jetty to prevent erosion from continued wave action, along with a double lane boat launch.

Along with the development of the boat launch, it is recommended that the ½ acre of land adjoining the Oak Beach County Park to the east be purchased for development of parking facilities.

2005

The major project proposed for 2005 is the completion of the Sand Road Bicycle Trail. Development of Phase IV will begin at Oak Beach County Park proceeding south to Sand Road to intersect Phase II at Quarry Road.

The final project for 2005 is the Rush Lake development – Phase II. Individual items recommended for this project include a picnic area, nature trails, bird blinds and boardwalks. Boardwalks would offer an access to wildlife for birdwatching.

2006

The capital improvement schedule for the year 2006 includes the possible purchase of the Rock City School House and restoration into a historical museum. This unique structure, located at the corner of State Park Road and Etzler Road will provide a unique opportunity for area students and local residents as well as tourists to enjoy a first hand experience in a 100 year old one-room school house while preserving a piece of Huron County and Lake Township history.

2007

The final year of the recreation plan calls for acquisition and development of a recreation /activity center. One possible location for the facility is the current site of the Oak Beach Sports Bar on Oak Beach Road. This location could serve as a parking/access point for the bike trail to Caseville as well as a future central stopping point along a Caseville-Port Austin trail. A variety of year round recreation activities would be offered to local residents and tourists of all ages.

Table 1: Lake Township / Age Distribution

	LAKE TOWNSHIP	% OF POPULATION	MICHIGAN	% OF POPULATION
Under 18 years	132	13.25	2,595,767	26.12
18 - 24 years	48	4.81	932,137	9.38
25 - 44 years	163	16.37	2,960,544	29.79
45 - 64 years	296	29.72	2,230,978	22.44
65 + years	357	35.84	1,219,018	12.27
MEDIAN AGE	56		36	

Source: 2000 Census