

Preface

Recreation and open space are important to the residents of the St. Charles. Recognizing this concern, community officials have led an effort to develop a Parks and Recreation Plan aimed at improving and developing recreational resources in the St. Charles area.

In accordance with the State recommended five-year cycle for recreation planning, this plan covers the five-year period 2008-2012. The content and process follow requirements of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for a community recreation plan.

This document is intended to serve as a guide in the planning for future park and recreation opportunities, services, and implementation. Population shifts, new development, and changing attitudes towards leisure have added additional pressures to the community's existing parks and recreation system, thus increasing the need for both short and long range planning. Recommendations such as land acquisition, facility expansion and construction, and even the design of a neighborhood park improvement, will require additional study or involvement of residents in order to address the site-specific details. This plan lays the foundation upon which these activities can build.

Implementation strategies are identified over the next five years, at which time the plan will again be updated. The delineation of these improvements will aid St. Charles in grant solicitation from the DNR and long-range capital improvement budgeting. Additionally, during the next five years, it is important for the community to reference the plan and make appropriate priority adjustments as conditions change and funding opportunities arise.



Gazebo in Area Park

I. Community Setting

This plan covers all aspects of recreation for the greater St. Charles area. This includes the communities of the Village of St. Charles, St. Charles Township, Fremont Township, Brant Township, and the St. Charles Community School District. These communities are largely rural, and they serve as bedroom communities for residents who work in the Saginaw and Flint metropolitan area. This plan is an update of the 2003 Village of St. Charles Plan that has now been expanded to encompass a larger regional area.

The Village of St. Charles serves as the local recreation provider for the surrounding townships and the residents of the St. Charles Community Schools, because those areas are rural in nature and do not have any park facilities of their own. Further, representatives from St. Charles Township, Brant Township, Swan Creek Township, and the St. Charles Community School District sit on the St. Charles Park Committee. St. Charles Township, Brant Township, Fremont Township, and Swan Creek Township all regularly contribute to the parks and recreation budget in the Village of St. Charles.

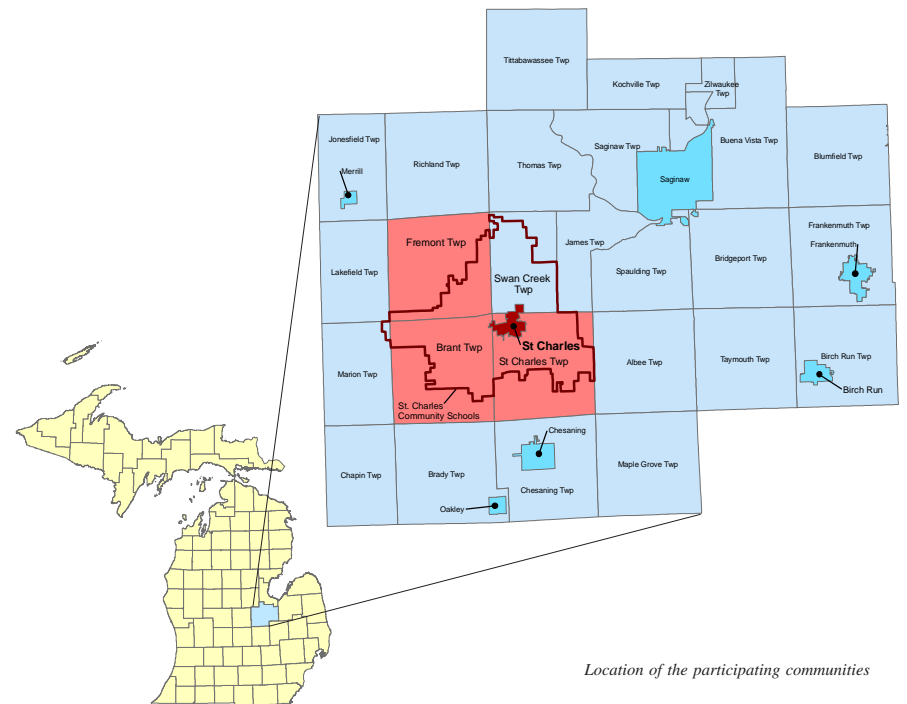
St. Charles is located in central Saginaw County. Fremont Township is northwest of St. Charles. Brant Township is west of St. Charles, and St. Charles Township is south of St. Charles. Most of the Village lies within St. Charles Township. Some of the northern portion of the Village lies within Swan Creek Township and a small portion of the western side of the village lies within Brant Township. The population of the various jurisdictions that are included in this Area Recreation Plan are listed below.

Village of St. Charles	2,215
Brant Township	2,023
Fremont Township	2,099
St. Charles Township	3,383
St. Charles Community School District	6,997

To arrive at the population served by the plan, one must understand how the U.S. Census counts people who reside in a Village and further examine the School District Population. Persons who reside in a village are also counted within the township or townships where they are located. The 2,215 residents of the Village of St. Charles are also residents of the following three townships: 31 are residents of Brant Township, 2,016 are residents of St. Charles Township, and 168 are residents of Swan Creek Township. The St. Charles School District encompasses

all of the Village of St. Charles and portions of Brant, St. Charles, Swan Creek, Fremont, and Marion Townships. (See the map below.)

The population served by this plan is the sum of the entire population of Fremont Township (2,099), Brant Township (2,023), and St. Charles Township (3,393) as well as the portion of Swan Creek Township and Marion Townships that are in the St. Charles Community School District. School district populations are not broken down by governmental units, so an estimate will need to be made. Geographically, approximately 75% of the land in Swan Creek Township is within the St. Charles School District. There are 2,536 people in Swan Creek Township according to the 2000 census. Seventy-five percent of that number is approximately 1,900. Marion Township has a population of 925 people and approximately 5% of the land in Marion Township is in the St. Charles School District. Five percent of 925 is approximately 45 people. Thus, the population served by the plan could be estimated at 9,460 which is the sum of 2,099 and 2,023 and 3,393 and 1,900 and 45.



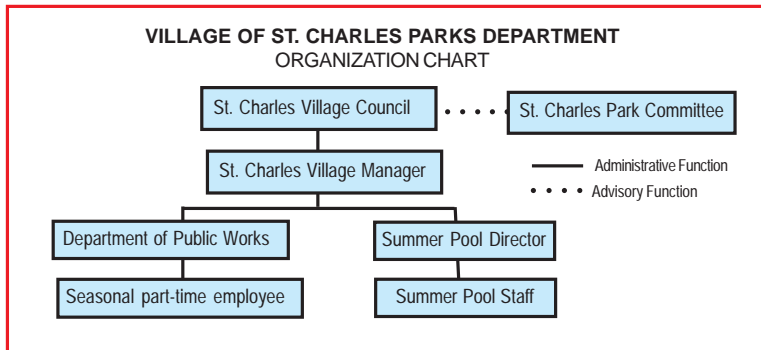
Location of the participating communities

II. Administrative Structure

St. Charles is organized as a General Law Village in the State of Michigan. The Village Council is comprised of a Village President and six council members. Day-to-day operations of the Village are handled by the Village Manager. The Village Council is ultimately responsible for the policy and financial decisions relating to parks and recreation in the Village.

An Ad Hoc Park Committee meets regularly to provide guidance and policy advisement for the St. Charles Parks. Several communities are represented on the Park Committee. This includes the Village of St. Charles, St. Charles Township, Swan Creek Township, Brant Township, and the St. Charles School District. The three townships each contribute to the overall parks budget. Additionally, Fremont Township is not currently represented on the Park Committee, but they do make an annual contribution to the St. Charles Parks. St. Charles Township, Brant Township, and Fremont Township do not have any parks in their communities, so they rely upon the Village of St. Charles to be the provider of parks and recreation facilities for their residents.

The day-to-day operation of the parks in St. Charles is handled by the Village Manager. The Department of Public Works is responsible for maintenance of the facilities and grounds and they hire an extra person in the summer for mowing grass. A pool director is hired for the summer along with 8 to 10 lifeguards.



Budgets

Parks and recreation functions in St. Charles are funded from the general fund of the Village of St. Charles and contributions from the general funds of St. Charles, Brant, Fremont, and Swan Creek Townships. Revenue is also generated from pool admission, swimming lessons, pavilion rentals, and donations.

Budgets for the past year, current year, and upcoming year are listed below. The only programming expenditure in St. Charles are those associated with summer swimming lessons. The majority of those costs are part time wages and are included with operation and maintenance costs. The capital expenditure cost for 2007 - 2008 are much higher than the two previous years because the Village is purchasing new park property.

St. Charles Parks & Recreation Budget			
	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Operation & Maintenance	\$60,542	\$99,875	\$83,646
Capital Expenditure	\$12,910	\$13,500	\$121,459

Programming & Volunteers

The only recreational programming currently offered by the Village of St. Charles is summer swimming lessons. Other recreational programs in the community include a men's softball league, youth baseball and softball, youth wrestling and Music in the Park. These programs are run by a wide variety of community volunteers. Community volunteers also help with an annual beautification day in May. Many high school students clean up the public spaces and plant flowers across town, including in the park areas.



The Village offers swimming lessons at the pool in Area Park.

III. Recreation Inventory

In order to plan for parks and recreation in the future, one needs to examine the types of facilities that currently exist in St. Charles. It is also helpful to compare these existing facilities to various standards as one measure of the adequacy of the parks and recreation facilities in the community. The inventory below was completed by the Village and the Consultant. It is based upon the prior recreation plan with research and input for updates and additions.

Parks and Recreation Facilities

The Village of St. Charles owns and operates two parks. The large park is known as St. Charles Area Park, and the smaller is known as Lumberjack Park. Specific details about each park are described below

Name: St. Charles Area Park

Type: Community

Size: 25 acres in existing park plus an additional 8 acres recently acquired for expansion for a total of 33 acres

Service Area: Greater St. Charles Area

Purpose/Use: All-purpose park that meets community based recreational needs.

Recreational Facilities:

- Playground
- 3 Ball Diamonds
- 2 Tennis Courts
- Outdoor Swimming Pool
- Gazebo
- 2 Picnic Pavilions
- Walking Trails
- In-line Skating Surface
- Horseshoe Pits
- 2 Basketball Courts
- Volleyball Court

Support Facilities:

- Paved & Gravel Parking
- Restroom Building
- Water fountain
- Other park amenities: benches, trash receptacles, bike racks

Accessibility: 3 - most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines (see accessibility discussion on page 9)

Grants Received:

- 26-01236, 1981
- BF90-232, 1990, Pool Renovation, Paved Walking/Parking
- BF93-193, 1993; Emergency Pool Repairs - Replace underground pipes, rehabilitate gutters, etc. The pool continues to be operational.
- 26-01571, 2001; Park Pathway and Restroom Renovation - The pathway is still in place and is a popular feature in the park. The restrooms are open and operational.
- TF05-010, 2005; St. Charles Area Park Land Acquisition, \$45,700 For the acquisition of two separate parcels that are contiguous to the St. Charles Area Park. The purchase was completed in September of 2007. The newly added parcels are shown in the aerial photo below.



St. Charles Area Park

Name: Lumberjack Park

Type: Neighborhood

Size: 8 acres

Service Area: Greater St. Charles Area

Purpose/Use: All purpose park that also serves as the southern trailhead for the Saginaw Valley Rail Trail which is a linear park owned and operated by the Saginaw County Parks Department. Lumberjack Park is actually two parcels that surround the entrance to the Rail Trail.

Recreational Facilities:

- Playground
- Picnic Area
- River Frontage

Support Facilities:

- Paved parking
- Portable Restrooms
- Other park amenities: benches, trash receptacles, bike racks

Accessibility: 2 - some of the park meets accessibility guidelines (see accessibility discussion on page 9)



Lumberjack Park

Grants Received: TF-87-164, 1987; Bad River Acquisition

Other Recreational Facilities

Several other recreational facilities are located within St. Charles or in the nearby area. They provide additional recreational facilities and services to area residents. The Saginaw Valley Rail Trail runs through St. Charles. Its southern trailhead is located in Lumberjack Park, and the trail runs approximately 10 miles north and east out of St. Charles through Swan Creek Township.

Another County Park, Ringwood Forest, is located two miles west of St. Charles in Brant Township. It is a 160-acre wooded parcel with three miles of trails, a picnic pavilion, and a canoe launch on the Bad River.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) owns a nine-acre parcel of land in St. Charles on the north side of the South Branch of the Bad River. A boat launch, waterfowl observatory and local MDNR field office are also located there. This field office serves as the headquarters for the Shiawassee River State Game Area which is located east of St. Charles. The Shiawassee River State Game Area abuts the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge. These two wildlife areas encompass more than 12,000 acres and are havens for migratory birds and other wildlife. Controlled goose hunts and deer hunts are held each year. Visitors use the trail system for birdwatching, cross country skiing, and hiking.

The Hartley Outdoor Education Center is a 223-acre facility owned and operated by the Saginaw County Intermediate School District. The facility contains an education center, one-room schoolhouse, log cabin, Coal Mine Museum, an extensive trail network, and sledding hills. It includes overnight facilities and is used primarily as an outdoor education center for Saginaw County school children.

Private recreational facilities in the St. Charles area include Kimberley Oaks golf course, an 18-hole facility located just west of the village limits. A Curves women’s fitness center is located in St. Charles as well as the STC Pro Bowling Center.

School District Facilities

St. Charles Community Schools owns several recreational facilities that are used by the community. These include ball diamonds, playground, track, gymnasium and



Bad River Boat Launch at the MDNR property in St. Charles



St. Charles Elementary School Playground

football fields. These facilities are located at the complex located south of Walnut Street. Three separate school buildings are housed within this complex: St. Charles High School, Thurston Middle School, and St. Charles Elementary School. The district complex also includes a large stand of woodlands on the western and southern side on the property.

Accessibility

Creating a park system that is safe, accessible, and usable to all individuals within the community, including those with disabilities, is essential. An Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance assessment of the St. Charles parks was conducted during 2007. The assessment consisted of a visual inspection of each park in regards to access, circulation in relation to the park facilities.

A grading system has been developed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to easily identify those parks and facilities which are most, and least, handicap accessible and usable, based on the ADA guidelines. The accessibility grading system uses a five-point system ranging from one to five as shown below. As noted in the inventory listing, the St. Charles Area Park was rated a “3”, most of the park meets accessibility guidelines and the Lumberjack Park rated a “2”, some of the park meets accessibility guidelines. The primary area that is not accessible in the St. Charles Area Park is the pool facility and the access to it. Additionally, the handicap parking spots do not have signs. At Lumberjack Park, the parking lot is fully accessible. However, there is no access to the playground area or the portable restroom.

Accessibility Grade	Definition
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.

The Village’s intent is that future improvements at the parks in St. Charles will meet accessibility guidelines. The village may wish to develop future improvements using the principles of universal design. Universal access to outdoor recreation has been defined as creating environments that are usable by all people of all abilities, to the greatest extent possible, by enabling independent use and ensuring full, inclusive participation in all aspects of the outdoor recreation experience. In other words, providing universal access means going beyond the minimal legal requirements of existing state laws and regulations to create environments in which there is not separation or stigmatization of people with differing abilities.



The Bad River is a significant natural resource in the St. Charles area.

Natural Resources

The most significant natural resource in St. Charles is the Bad River. The North and South branches of the Bad River flow into the village from the west and join in downtown St. Charles. The River and its branches have many scenic views, and they are popular spots for fishing, boating, canoeing, kayaking, and snowmobiling. They also provide access into the Shiawassee State Game Area and the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge. Other natural resources in the area include various stands of woodlands, some of which are located within the St. Charles Village limits. The State Game area and the National Wildlife refuge discussed earlier in this section are also important natural resource areas that are already protected from development.

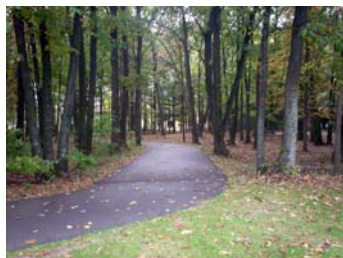
Comparison to Standards

The Recommended Classification System for Local and Regional Open Space from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources defines five types of parks that may be applicable to St. Charles.

- Mini-Park
- Neighborhood Park
- School-Park
- Community Park
- Large Urban Park

A mini-park is less than one acre in size and is less than 1/4 mile from a residential setting. It is used to address limited, isolated, or unique recreational needs. Neighborhood Parks are generally five to ten acres in size and they serve as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood in more densely populated urban settings. Their service area is generally 1/4 to 1/2 mile. School-Parks can combine parks with school sites to help meet the recreational space needs for the community. Community Parks serve a broader purpose than Neighborhood Parks. They have more amenities and usually serve two or more neighborhoods within 1/2 to 3 miles and are generally 30 - 50 acres in size. Large Urban Parks are generally 50 acres or more in size, and they serve a broader purpose than a community parks. They focus on meeting community based recreational needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.

St. Charles has approximately 42 acres of park land for its 2,215 citizens. General industry standards would suggest five to ten acres of regional park land per 1000 citizens, or approximately 11 - 22 acres of regional park land for St. Charles. This would imply that St. Charles has adequate regional park land for its citizens.



Walking trails in Area Park

More recent park guidelines indicate that one must also consider the "Level of Service" desired by the community. If St. Charles residents' recreational needs are met with the existing amount of park land and facilities, then that amount may be considered sufficient. However, if their needs are greater, the Village may need more park land. This is why the community input portion of a recreation plan is so important. The Village needs to understand the wishes of the community it serves in order to provide the level of service desired by the residents.

As a supplement to the recommended standards for park acreage, data from the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (SGMA) is another way to help understand recreation trends. It is important to be aware of national recreation trends to be able to anticipate activities which will incorporate a large number of participants and those which show the greatest growth in popularity. The SGMA conducts an annual survey that analyzes the size of sports product markets in order to determine sports participation trends. The table on the following page shows the results of the latest SGMA survey conducted in January 2006, which monitored 115 sports and fitness activities. The top 30 sports and activities in the nation, based on participation in 2005, are listed. The definition of *participation* includes persons six years and older who have participated in the activity at least once during the year of the survey. Sports activities that are growing in popularity may require a facility expansion.

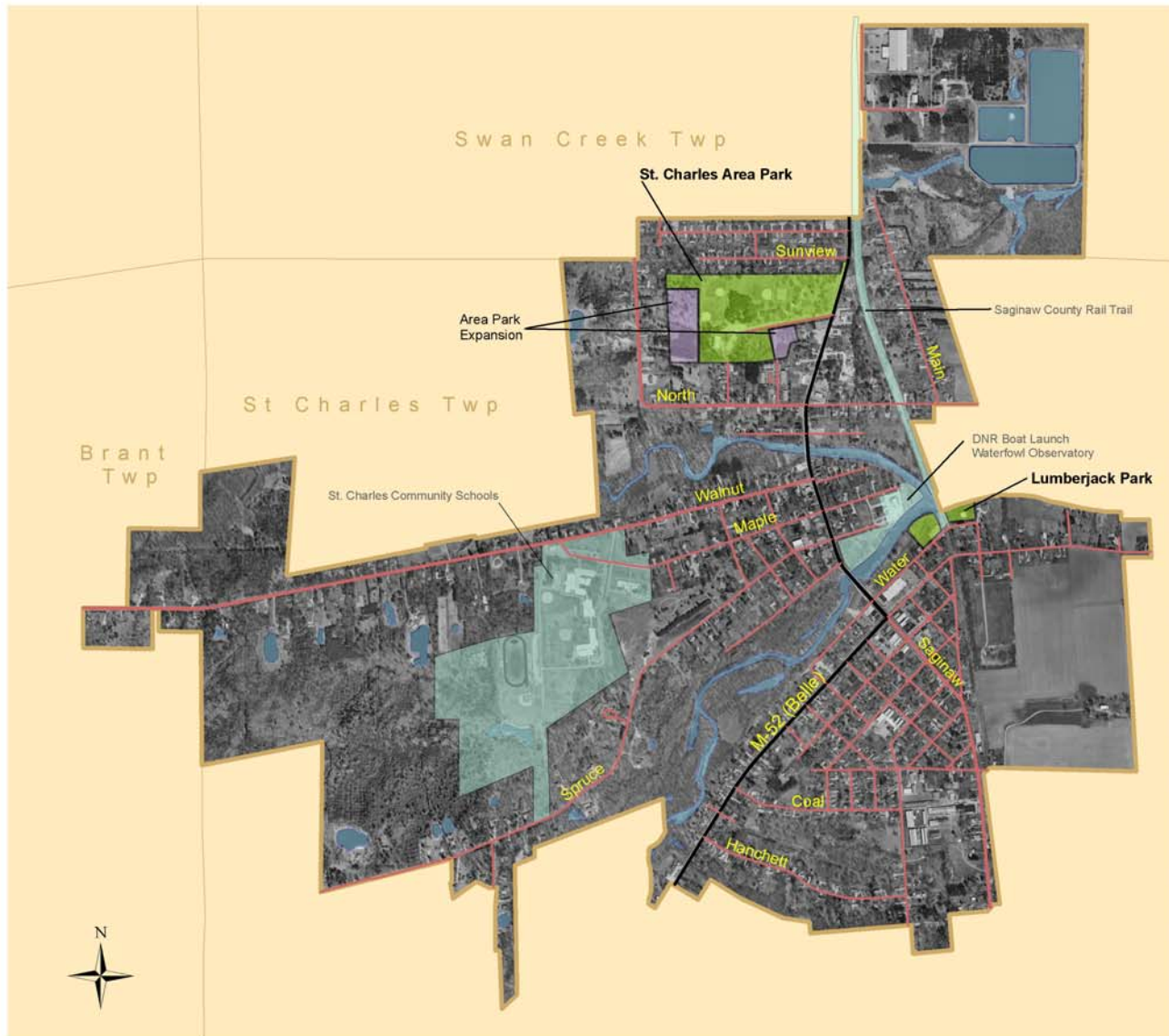
Figure 1

Top 30 Sports by Participation
U.S. Population, 6 years and older, at least once per year

Sport/Activity	Number of Participants in 2006 (thousands)	1-Year Change (2005-2006)	6-Year Change (2000-2006)
1 Walking (Fitness)	100,239	10.8%	11.3%
2 Bowling	54,305	5.4%	4.8%
3 Treadmill Exercise	49,798	19.0%	39.9%
4 Billiards/Pool	46,990	10.3%	3.5%
5 Free Weights (Hand Weights)	45,222	19.0%	38.0%
6 Fishing (Freshwater-other)	44,597	3.1%	-1.4%
7 Weight/Resistance Machines	41,385	18.0%	35.8%
8 Bicycling (Road/Paved surface)	39,398	9.1%	na
9 Running/Jogging	37,922	9.4%	22.8%
10 Camping (w/in 1/4 mile of vehicle/home)	36,107	2.1%	na
11 Free Weights (Dumbbells)	33,941	14.7%	29.1%
12 Stretching	32,570	15.0%	33.5%
13 Hiking (Day)	29,406	na	na
14 Golf	28,743	-2.0%	2.4%
15 Free Weights (Barbells)	27,402	11.8%	16.5%
16 Stationary Cycling	25,845	14.1%	-0.8%
17 Home Gym Exercise	25,654	22.1%	29.4%
18 Basketball	24,665	6.1%	-9.7%
19 Elliptical Motion Trainer	22,751	23.3%	233.1%
20 Abdominal Machine/Device	22,539	22.0%	10.8%
21 Darts	22,195	10.1%	na
22 Aerobics (Low impact)	21,569	10.4%	2.7%
23 Exercise to Music	21,552	15.8%	35.4%
24 Swimming (Fitness/Competition)	18,694	9.0%	12.9%
25 Camping (Recreational Vehicle)	17,328	-1.0%	-5.3%
26 Baseball	16,114	-2.3%	-8.0%
27 Table Tennis	15,107	16.0%	18.7%
28 Soccer (outdoor)	14,665	90.0%	na
29 Tennis	14,665	1.8%	12.2%
30 Yoga/Tai Chi	14,152	19.1%	135.9%

Source: SGMA Superstudy of Sports Participation

St. Charles Recreation Plan Park Location Map



Data: Saginaw Area GIS Authority



IV. Community Input

To comply with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation Open Space and Greenway Plans, the St. Charles Park Committee offered three different opportunities for public input along with a 30-day period for review and comment on the draft plan.

The first public input opportunity was a mailing sent to each of the communities involved in the plan (Brant Township, Fremont Township, St. Charles Township, St. Charles Community Schools, and the Village of St. Charles). The letter invited the communities to the Open House described below, and it included copies of a one-page survey to be completed by board members from each of the jurisdictions. The survey and results are included in Appendix A.

The second public input opportunity was an Open House to gather input regarding recreation in the St. Charles area. The Open House was held on November 7, 2007 at St. Charles Elementary School. Flyers were made available for distribution. A copy of the flyer is included in Appendix A. The date and location were

chosen to coincide with parent-teacher conferences at the school. Citizens were asked what kinds of improvements that they would like to see for recreation in the area and other relevant questions. Tables and displays were set up in the hallway, along with large sheets of paper tacked on the wall whereby suggestions were added as they were received. Citizens could also take a moment to complete the same survey that was sent to the individual community board members.



The parent-teacher event brought a lot of traffic into the school, and the consultants were able to obtain input from more than 50 parents and children, groups that are high users of the parks. This input session went very well and was well received by the school district and the people involved. A summary of the comments received at that input session is included at the end of this section.

After the draft was completed in February of 2008, it was made available for public review and comment for 30 days in the offices of each of the communities participating in the plan. The final public input opportunity was at an advertised public meeting held on _____, 2008, at the St. Charles Village Hall.

Recreation Plan Community Input

November 11, 2007

St. Charles Elementary School

PARK IMPROVEMENT SUGGESTIONS & COMMENTS (RECREATIONAL FACILITIES)

- Area park has a lot to offer.
- We play ball at the park.
- We use the baseball diamonds.
- Need lights at the ball fields.
- Would like "soft surface" for play equipment.
- More playground equipment / improve playscape. (+4)
- Would like a larger playscape – with different levels for different age kids.
- Like new playscape equipment. (+3)
- Kids love big boat.
- Replace teeter totter at Lumberjack Park.
- Fix light near Lumberjack Park.
- Like swings / tire swing – Like Boat & Merry-Go-Round.
- Would like a bigger slide.
- Play equipment at Lumberjack Park.
- Would like a "BIG" Jungle Jim
- Upgrade tennis courts. (+2)
- Would like a sledding hill, more winter activities (i.e. ice skating, snowboarding, etc.). (+8)
- Like ice skating rink.
- Increase size of ice skating rink.
- Warming house for skating area.
- Need a real skate park for kids.
- .More equipment / improvements at Skate Park. (+2)
- Do not use the pool much.
- Please improve pool – use for lessons.
- Pool is pretty good.
- Need nets for basketball courts, like to use them.
- Would like volleyball area. (+1)
- The paved paths to all park amenities are very important, it helps my wife, who's in an Amigo, get close to kids.

PARK IMPROVEMENT SUGGESTIONS & COMMENTS (SUPPORT FACILITIES)

- Need more picnic tables/grills at the main park.
- Would like restrooms to be more available. (+1)
- Would like flushable bathrooms.
- Need good drinking fountains, fountain near ball park has bad water. (+2)
- Much less dirt and dust at parks.
- Need to control vandalism done to the parks.
- Possibly put in bags for dogs.

OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS

- Love the concerts in the Park.
- Improve the bank area on the Bad River.
- Fishing opportunities (i.e. dock, boat launch). (+2)
- Extend rail trail.
- Rail trail is a safe place for children to ride.
- Love the rail trail. (+12)
- Would like more landscaping, especially at school.
- Interested in basketball league for kids.
- Need more activities for older kids.
- There's a lack of things to do in this area.
- Overall, everything is very good in St. Charles.

V. Goals & Objectives

Developing goals and objectives is an important part of the recreation planning process. The overall goal of a parks and recreation department is, obviously, to provide recreation opportunities for the community and/or region it serves and possibly for tourists/visitors. More specific goals must be based on the demographic characteristics of the population served and the physical and environmental characteristics of the area.

Goals are the broadest level. They are overreaching and general. Objectives carry out the purpose of the goal. The Action Program is the last level and the most specific. It identifies specific projects. The action plan can also include organizational, staffing, programming, public information, and operation and maintenance actions.

The St. Charles Park Committee formulated the following goals and objectives based upon the various methods of community input and the demographic and physical characteristics in the area.

GOAL 1

Provide safe broad community-based recreation opportunities that improve the overall quality of life for all residents of the St. Charles area.

There are very few other public or private recreational opportunities outside of the public parks St. Charles. The Park Committee wishes to provide facilities that appeal to the largest proportion of potential recreational participants so as to improve the quality of life for those in the St. Charles area.



Lumberjack Park

Objective – Continue to add amenities to the St. Charles park facilities based upon community input.

Community input is a solid indicator of what residents in the community want in terms of recreational facilities and programming. The Park Committee will continue to plan its improvements based upon the needs expressed in formal and informal input sessions.

Objective – Acquire more park land to meet the needs of the St. Charles area residents.

Objective – Expand riverfront recreational opportunities in St. Charles. The Bad River is a wonderful natural resource in the St. Charles area. The Village’s existing park on the river, Lumberjack Park, could offer more in terms of taking advantage of the riverfront. If other riverfront property becomes available, the Village may want to consider acquiring it.

GOAL 2

Provide recreational facilities and programming that allows for social interaction for all age groups.

The St. Charles parks serve as community gathering points and social center for the Township. Formal and informal programs and facilities allow for social interaction of participants (i.e., swimmers, picnic-goers) and also for spectators (i.e., little league fans and concert-goers). These help to provide a sense of togetherness and connectivity to the area.

Objective – Investigate options for providing more recreational programs for St. Charles area residents.

Objective – Add recreational facilities that appeal to an aging population.

Most of the current programming in the area is focused on youth. As the population in the area ages, the Park Committee and other groups in the community may want to consider adding more programs and facilities for other age groups. Many residents who are of the “Baby Boom” generation are retiring and are looking for leisure time activities.

GOAL 3

Continue to improve and upgrade St. Charles recreational and support facilities so as to offer the community parks that it can be proud of.

Park facilities are among the most visible indicators of a community’s identity and pride as well as local tax dollars at work. The Park Committee wishes to provide quality facilities that show that St. Charles is an active community that takes pride in its public facilities.

Objective – Keep park facilities safe and well maintained.

Objective – Add support facilities so as to improve the ease of use in the parks.

GOAL 4

Provide recreational opportunities for people with disabilities.

The Park Committee wishes to provide recreational opportunities for all area residents, including those with disabilities. The aging population will have increased needs for accessible facilities. Over the years, the Park Committee has improved the accessibility of the facilities in the park and wishes to continue to do so.

Objective – Make sure that all improvements and upgrades to park facilities are handicap accessible.

GOAL 5

Improve the health and fitness of St. Charles area residents.

Because there are limited opportunities for fitness and recreation in the St. Charles area, the Park Committee wants to continue to provide and expand its programs and facilities so that residents of the community can enjoy the health benefits of physical fitness.

Objective – Continue to add multi-use paths to encourage non-motorized transportation in St. Charles.

Objective – Evaluate existing facilities and programming in terms of fitness opportunities for the community.

Objective – Look for partnering opportunities among local communities, the School District, and other organizations who wish to provide recreational programming.



St. Charles Area Park

VI. Action Program

With goals and objectives in place, the St. Charles Park Committee was able to develop a 5-year action program to work toward accomplishing the goals and objectives. The Action Program details the direction the community wishes to take over the next five years in order to maintain and improve the quality and diversity of area park and recreation opportunities.

Projects were assigned a priority of 1 through 5 with 1 being most important and 5 being least important. Each action item relates to one or more of the numbered goals from Section V. Potential capital improvements described in this Plan have been established not only to provide a framework for decision makers but also to enable the Village to apply for grant funding for these proposed projects. The project list is not a fixed element and is neither all inclusive or exclusive. The schedule reflects the results of the input received from Village Staff, participating communities, board members, and input from the community open house.

1. ACTION ITEM – Extend paths in Area Park into the recently acquired parcels.

Priority – 2

Relates to Goal – All

Rationale/Discussion

The existing paths in Area Park are well used. Residents have expressed a need for more paths and creating extensions and loops from the existing paths will allow for walking and biking in the new areas.

2. ACTION ITEM – Convert the former Water Tower to an Observation Tower/Deck.

Priority – 3

Relates to Goal – 1, 3

Rationale/Discussion

Providing a new use for the existing tower structure could be very beneficial for the community. The former water tower could be used as a vantage

point over the wide ranging flatlands in the community. Users could view the Shiawassee Flats State Game Area and the Shiawassee National Wildlife Area. The vantage point would become a destination point on the Saginaw County Rail Trail which can serve to increase visitors and tourism in the area.

3. ACTION ITEM – Construct a new museum building at Lumberjack Park.

Priority – 4

Relates to Goal – 2

Rationale/Discussion

The St. Charles area is rich in lumbering and coal mining history. Adding a museum near the Saginaw Valley Rail Trail would add an additional destination point on the Saginaw Rail Trail, encouraging visitors and tourism in the area. A building could also provide meeting space for civic groups and recreational classes.



Walking Trail in Area Park

4. ACTION ITEM – Construct a series of ponds and waterfall in Area Park near the old well house.

Priority – 4

Relates to Goal – 1,3,4

Rationale/Discussion

Ponds and waterfalls to Area Park would be an interesting and aesthetically pleasing feature to add to Area Park. An existing vein well provides a continual source of water in the park.

5. ACTION ITEM – Construct a series of ponds and waterfalls in Lumberjack Park near the parking lot running north to the river.

Priority – 2

Relates to Goal – 1,3

Rationale/Discussion

Ponds and waterfalls would take advantage of the view from the Parking Lot in Lumberjack Park, looking at the Bad River. This feature would also add to the attraction of the Saginaw Valley Rail Trail, further enhancing its potential as a tourist attraction.

6. ACTION ITEM - Install fountains on the South Branch near the highway bridge and the Rail Trail.

Priority – 1

Relates to Goal – 3

Rationale/Discussion

The Bad River is a wonderful natural resource in the St. Charles area, and it is very visible when crossed on M-52. Fountains in the river would add aesthetic interest to the area and become another feature for visitors to the area.

7. ACTION ITEM – Construct a Fishing Platform on the existing Rail Trail Bridge.

Priority – 2

Relates to Goal – All

Rationale/Discussion

The need for additional fishing opportunities was mentioned at the community input open house.

8. ACTION ITEM - Create a multi-use path loop that runs from the Rail Trail connector near Sunview on the east-side of M-52 following south along M-52 through St. Charles to the waterfowl observatory and then west along the north bank of the South Branch connecting to a new bridge that crosses the North Branch to meet back at the Rail Trail.

Priority – 2

Relates to Goal – All



Location of potential multi-use path that would create a loop through St. Charles connecting to the Rail-Trail

Rationale/Discussion

Construction of a bridge over the North Branch of the Bad River would provide an important piece of a route that would take Rail Trail Users into downtown St. Charles. The path described above would provide a safe loop through downtown so that Rail Trail users could detour through that area to stop at local restaurants and other businesses.

9. ACTION ITEM - Acquire DNR Waterfowl Observatory Property.

Priority – 1

Relates to Goal – All

Rationale/Discussion

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) owns a nine-acre parcel of land in St. Charles on the north side of the South Branch of the Bad River. A boat launch, waterfowl observatory, and local MDNR field office are also located there. The DNR has indicated that they wish to sell the portion of the property that contains the waterfowl observatory. The Village of St. Charles helped develop the observatory in the 1990's and it would like to see the parcel preserved as park land in the community. Further, this parcel would provide waterfront access on the north side of the South Branch of the Bad River. Acquiring the parcel would also help with the Village's goal to connect the Rail Trail to downtown St. Charles, because the parcel lies between the Path and the downtown area. Thus, part of any path extensions could be constructed on the waterfowl observatory property after it was acquired.

10. ACTION ITEM - Construct a disc golf course in the Area Park.

Priority – 1

Relates to Goal – 1,2,3,5

Rationale/Discussion

Disc Golf is an increasingly popular fitness activity in the United States. It can be enjoyed by nearly all age groups and fitness levels, and it costs very little to participate in the activity. Disc golf courses in nearby communities are quite popular.

11. ACTION ITEM - Improve ball diamonds at Area Park.

Priority – 1

Relates to Goal – 1,2, 3, 5

Rationale/Discussion

Several people at the Open House expressed a need for improving and upgrading the ball diamonds at Area Park. Some of these improvements would include watering the diamonds using the vein well water source in the Park. This water flows freely, and it would cost little to pump it onto the diamonds. Another improvement would be to add lights for night use at the ball diamonds.

12. ACTION ITEM - Pave gravel parking areas in the Parks.

Priority – 3

Relates to Goal – 3,4

Rationale/Discussion

A large lot in the Area Park and a portion of the lot in Lumberjack Park are unpaved. Paving these lots would improve the aesthetics in the park and would improve accessibility.

13. ACTION ITEM - Refurbish tennis courts and basketball courts in Area Park.

Priority – 2

Relates to Goal – All

Rationale/Discussion

The existing tennis courts and basketball courts are old and outdated. People who attended the open house noticed this and mentioned a need to update these facilities.



Pavilion in Area Park

14. ACTION ITEM - Construct Skate Park in Area Park.

Priority – 5

Relates to Goal – 1,2,3,5

Rationale/Discussion

Community members have expressed interest in having a skate park. It would provide the youth of the activity with opportunity for physical activity.

15. Action Item - Add fishing platform, canoe launch, and boat dock at Lumberjack Park.

Priority – 3

Relates to Goal – All

Rationale/Discussion

The community has expressed interest in having expanded and improved waterfront amenities in St. Charles. A fishing platform, canoe launch, and boat dock would provide increased waterfront access to the Bad River and provide low cost opportunities for fishing.

16. Action Item - Add playground equipment to both parks.

Priority – 3

Relates to Goal – 1,2,3

Rationale/Discussion

Playground improvements were mentioned many times at the Community Input Session. Some of the existing equipment is old and outdated, and attendees expressed a general need for more equipment at both Area Park and Lumberjack Park.

17. Action Item - Replace roof on small pavilion at Area Park.

Priority – 2

Relates to Goal – 1,2,3

Rationale/Discussion

The roof is old and deteriorating and in need of replacement.

VII. Summary & Adoption

In its continuing effort to provide quality recreational opportunities for its citizens, St. Charles has developed a Community Parks and Recreation Master Plan as a tool to guide the development of community park and recreational facilities and locations over the next five years. This plan is the latest effort by the St. Charles area to establish recreational goals and objectives for the community. The plan will also provide the St. Charles and the participating communities eligibility for grants from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to assist the community in reaching its recreational goals.

The Village of St. Charles contracted with Spicer Group of Saginaw, Michigan, to assist them with completion of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The consultant met with the parks and recreation committee five times during the course of the project.

Data was collected about all the participating communities including maps, demographics, park information and an inventory of existing facilities. This data was collected from a number of resources such as: village staff, the existing St. Charles Recreation Plan, Saginaw County GIS Authority, various web sites (census, city and school district) and through field observations. This information helped determine where the community was deficient or providing a surplus of various recreation facilities in comparison to various national standards.

Community input was collected via a survey that was mailed to the leaders of the participating communities and at an open house held November 7, 2008, at the St. Charles Elementary School. Based upon the existing information and the community input, the park committee developed goals and objectives for parks and recreation in St. Charles. The group also planned for an action program to accomplish the goals and objectives of the plan.



Playground area at Area Park

The consultant completed the draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan document and it was made available for review at _____ for at least 30 days. A draft was also available on the Village’s web site. This was advertised in the _____. The final opportunity for community input occurred at the advertised public meeting held prior to adoption of the plan. This meeting was held on _____, 2008.

After the public meeting, the Park Committee adopted a resolution recommending approval of the plan by each participating community. In the following weeks each participating community adopted the joint recreation plan. Copies of those resolutions are included in Appendix ____.

Appendix A
Community Open House Advertising Flyer

St. Charles Area Recreation Plan COMMUNITY INPUT OPEN HOUSE

**November 7
3:30 - 6:30 p.m.
St. Charles
Elementary School**



You are invited - Stop in
for just a few minutes

St. Charles is developing a recreation plan to guide us for the next 5 years and beyond. We would like to hear from residents and key stakeholders to get your ideas about park facilities and recreational programs in the St. Charles area.



Please stop in at your convenience to talk with the recreation leaders in your community. **We want to hear from you!**

ST. CHARLES AREA RECREATION PLAN COMMUNITY INPUT SURVEY Tabulated Results*

St. Charles and the surrounding communities are developing a recreation plan to guide them for the next 5 years and beyond. We would like to get your input regarding park facilities and recreational programs in the St. Charles area.

1. How important is it that the following facilities are added or expanded in the St. Charles parks? (please circle the appropriate response)

	very important	important	doesn't matter	not needed
Trails/multi-use paths	6	4	1	0
Picnic areas	5	6	0	0
Basketball courts	4	6	0	0
Playground equipment	10	2	0	0
Roller blade/skate park	2	6	2	0
Ball diamonds	5	3	0	0
Disc golf	1	4	3	2
Shuffleboard Courts	0	4	6	0
Tennis Courts	1	6	2	0
Shoreline fishing access	4	7	0	0
Restrooms	7	4	0	0
Splash/Spray park	1	6	3	0
Conversion of old water tower to observation deck	2	2	4	1

Are there any other recreational facilities that are not listed above that you would like to see added to the St. Charles area parks?

Ice skating rink

2. What do you like best about the parks and recreational facilities in St. Charles?

Trails & paths; they are clean; they are clean – well organized; rail-trail, ball fields; I love the cleanliness and the rail trail, it is very family oriented; the atmosphere; playground, trails;

3. What would you do to improve parks and recreational facilities in St. Charles?

Expand rail trail to Chesaning; have mosquito control frequently spray parks; cleaner, less young "hoodlums" which make people nervous to use areas; more night time lighting if possible; clean up the restrooms & pool; playscape, fishing;

*The responses above were received from a mailing sent to the boards of the participating communities & those who filled out a survey at the community input open. Fourteen surveys were received. Two were not tabulated because they were not completed correctly.