

Chapter 1

Community Description

Heart of the Lakes Area Recreation Plan

The Townships of Columbia, Napoleon, and Norvell; the Village of Brooklyn; and the Columbia School District comprise the Heart of the Lakes Recreation Commission (please see the map below). A five-mile buffer around the four local units of government extends the study area to include at least portions of the following local units of government:

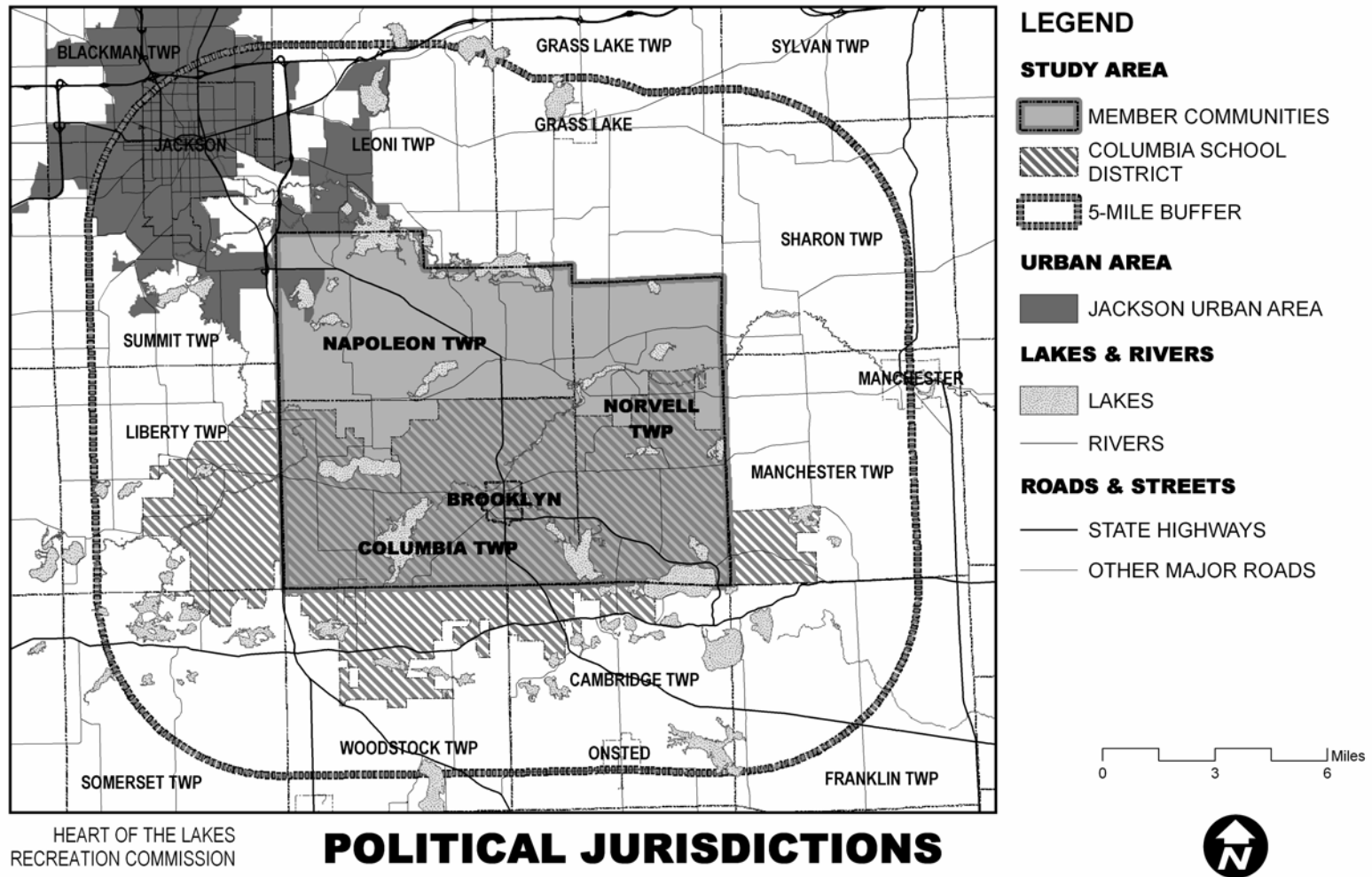
OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WITHIN THE STUDY AREA

JACKSON COUNTY	WASHTENAW COUNTY	LENAWEE COUNTY	HILLSDALE COUNTY
CITY OF JACKSON	VILLAGE OF MANCHESTER	VILLAGE OF CEMENT CITY	SOMERSET TOWNSHIP
VILLAGE OF GRASS LAKE	MANCHESTER TOWNSHIP	VILLAGE OF ONSTED	
BLACKMAN TOWNSHIP	SHARON TOWNSHIP	CAMBRIDGE TOWNSHIP	
GRASS LAKE TOWNSHIP	SYLVAN TOWNSHIP	FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP	
LEONI TOWNSHIP		WOODSTOCK TOWNSHIP	
LIBERTY TOWNSHIP			
SUMMIT TOWNSHIP			

A large portion of the Jackson Urban Area is also included within the 5-mile study area. In fact, the urban area extends into the Heart of the Lakes Area in the vicinity of Ackerson Lake.

The first priority of the Commission is to develop a parks and recreation plan which responds to the recreational desires of its citizenry and to plan for enhancements to the parks and recreational programs of its members. The recreation plan will also provide a clear picture of the recreational opportunities available to the residents of the Heart of the Lakes Recreation Area regardless of who provides them. That review will catalogue nontraditional recreation opportunities such as historic districts/structures and shopping opportunities as well as traditional parks and recreation facilities.

In addition to its rich network of aquatic features, the Heart of the Lakes Area is home to a variety of unique communities, neighborhoods, and Downtown Brooklyn, as well as portions of Michigan International Speedway and the Irish Hills. Further, the presence of potential trail corridors throughout the Region require an intensive review of how those natural assets can be successfully integrated into the Heart of the Lakes Area.



With all those issues in mind, a sincere effort was spent in developing this recreation plan which represents the projected needs for recreation facilities and services in the Heart of the Lakes Area during the early years of the 21st Century.

Location

The Heart of the Lakes is a one hundred and four square mile district located in the southeast corner of Jackson County. The Area is a part of the border area between Southeast and South-Central Lower Michigan. The five-mile study area (please see the map above) also includes portions of Hillsdale, Lenawee, and Washtenaw Counties. The Heart of the Lakes Area is also close to Michigan's border with Northwest Ohio and Northeast Indiana.

US Highway 127 (US-127) parallels the western border of the Heart of the Lakes Area, providing access to the Toledo Urban Area via US Highway 223 (US-223). Freeway access to the Jackson and Lansing Urban Areas, as well as Interstate 94 (I-94), is also provided by US-127. The Urban Areas of Detroit, Ann Arbor, and Battle Creek can easily be accessed via I-94.

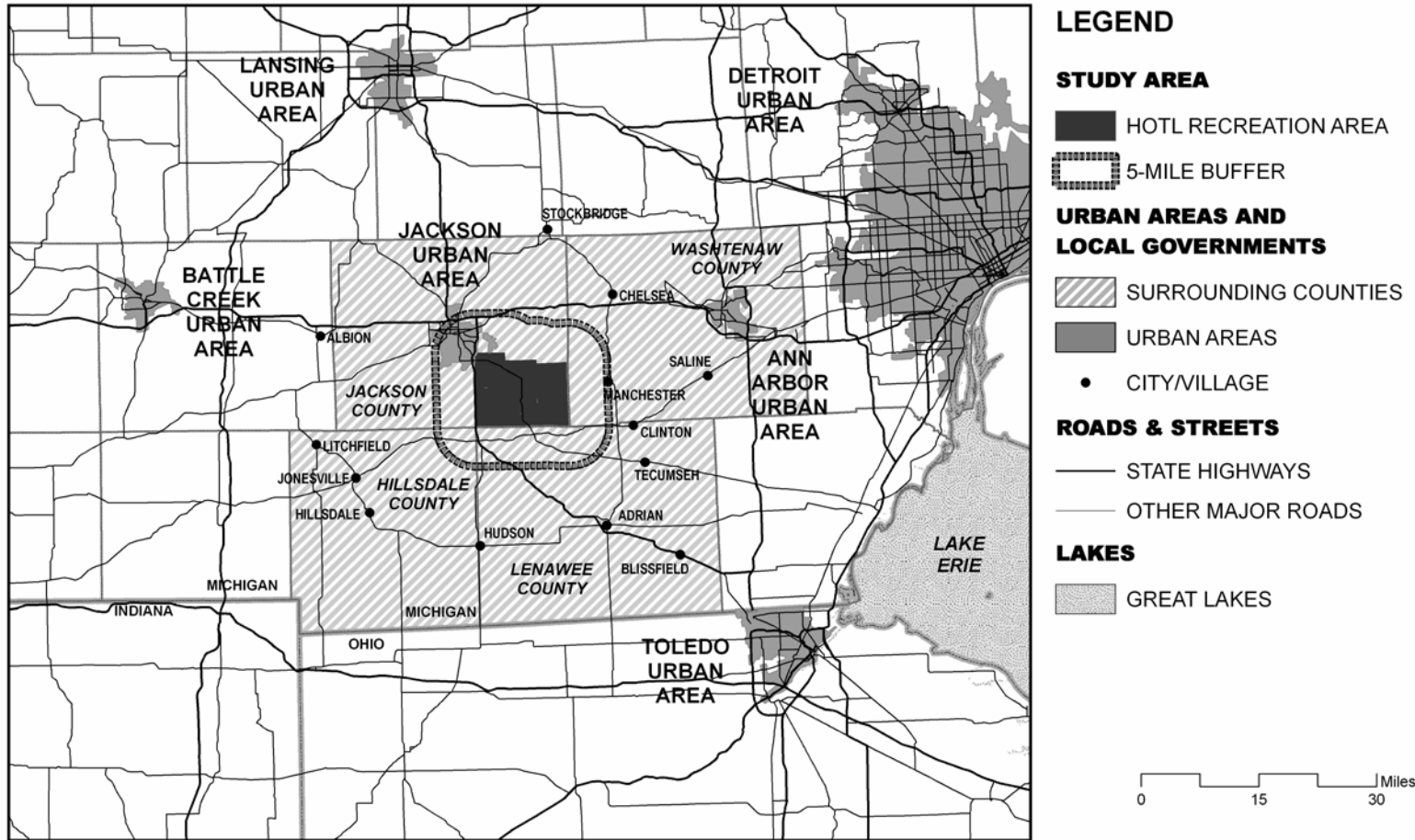
Michigan Highway 50 (M-50) provides easy access to the interior of the Heart of the Lakes Area. Tecumseh, a nearby community, is also located on M-50. The communities of Adrian, Clinton, and Hudson in Lenawee County; Hillsdale, Jonesville, and Litchfield in Hillsdale County; and Chelsea, Manchester, and Saline in Washtenaw County are accessed by other state highways similar to M-50.

A Brief Socioeconomic Summary

The demographic composition of the population of the Heart of the Lakes Area has an effect upon its recreational needs. Six demographic components are listed below along with a brief paragraph describing the local situation. Each of the components is described in greater detail in Appendix A of this document.

× Population History & Projections

The 2000 population for the Area was 17,118. The population has steadily increased since 1930 although the greatest population increases occurred between 1950 and 1980. Based upon this pattern, the population in 2010 is projected to be around 18,388.



HEART OF THE LAKES
RECREATION COMMISSION

REGIONAL LOCATION



× Age & Sex of the Population

Baby boomers (people aged 35 to 54 in 2000) and Shadow boomers (people aged 15-34 in 2000) comprised well over ½ of the population. However, people aged at least 55 in 2000 comprised almost ¼ of the population. Just over ½ of the Area's residents were male in 2000. However, it is interesting to note that the older the generation in 2000, the greater the percentage of females.

× Household & Family Composition

Well over ½ of Area households were comprised of one or two people in 2000. However, almost ¾ of households were comprised of families.

× Racial & Ethnic Composition

Race and ethnicity are not significant issues for recreation given the homogeneity of the Area's population.

× Disabilities of Residents

Less than 18% of Area residents have at least one disability. Older residents are more apt to have a disability than their younger neighbors.

× Income

The median income for Village of Brooklyn residents was less than that for the average American in 2000 although the median income for each township was greater. However, the per capita income for Brooklyn and Norvell Township were less than that for the entire US.

The Health of Area Residents

The obesity rate for the State of Michigan in 2001 was 24.4%, the third highest in the nation, according to the Jackson Community Comprehensive Plan (please see Appendix B). The Plan also showed that a poor diet and physical activity are second only to tobacco as the greatest cause for actual death in the United States in 1990 and 2000. These statistics point to a need for more active recreational opportunities in all communities. Those opportunities may include providing more walkable neighborhoods as well as the provision of actual recreational opportunities such as athletic fields (e.g., soccer, baseball, etc.) and courts (e.g., basketball, tennis, etc.).