

**Chapter 5**  
**Goals and Objectives**

Heart of the Lakes Area Recreation Plan

**Goals**

The following goals were developed for the recreation plan:

**Goal #1**

Develop a local trail network which:

- × fits into the proposed countywide trail system and connects to other local trail networks,
- × improve, augment, and upgrade existing trails and other non-motorized facilities (i.e., sidewalks and bike lanes in urbanized areas) within the Heart of the Lakes Area where needed,
- × connects parks, recreation facilities, and other attractions (e.g., schools, libraries, and other municipal buildings as well as commercial and residential areas) within the Heart of the Lakes Area together, and
- × provides opportunities for a healthier lifestyle through exercise.

**Goal #2**

Investigate the possibility of providing new local recreation facilities for the general public within existing local, state and county parks and schoolyards (and even on private property), within the Heart of the Lakes Area in addition to acquiring more local parkland:

- × mutual use of village and township parks;
- × Columbia and Napoleon Schools;
- × Jackson County Parks;
- × Michigan State Parks and State Game & Recreation Areas; and
- × interested and appropriate private recreation providers.

**Goal #3**

Develop additional facilities in the Heart of the Lakes Area (to increase opportunities for meaningful recreational experiences and overall healthier lifestyles through exercise) such as, but not limited to:

- × a community center,
- × a skateboard park and other active sport facilities,
- × four-season water facilities/park, and
- × restrooms in parks.

## Background Information

Input into developing the goals and objectives listed above included:

- ✘ existing recreational facilities within the Heart of the Lakes Area regardless of the provider — the private sector as well as public entities (i.e., village, township, school district, county, and state) (please see Chapter 3);
- ✘ a recreation survey of Heart of the Lakes Area households (please see Chapter 4);
- ✘ possible funding and land/facility acquisition opportunities;
- ✘ the Jackson Community Comprehensive Plan, a countywide cooperative planning effort of the County of Jackson and its municipalities (please see Chapter 4 and Appendix B);
- ✘ the Jackson County Regional Trailway Study 2002 (please see Chapter 4 and Appendix D);
- ✘ the 2005-2009 Recreation Plan: Jackson County, Michigan (please see Chapter 4)
- ✘ the community survey commissioned for Columbia Township's master plan (please see Chapter 4); and
- ✘ the Village of Brooklyn Comprehensive Plan and the community survey commissioned for that report (please see Chapter 4).

For example, the Jackson Community Comprehensive Plan cites obesity as a major health concern and the following objectives were developed to address that issue:

- ✘ "Sidewalks should be encouraged to be provided in neighborhoods, subdivisions, and site condominium projects; and commercial areas."
- ✘ "Pedestrian networks are encouraged to be developed which link subdivisions, neighborhoods, business districts, downtown areas, recreational areas; and connected to a system of regional pedestrian and bicycle trails."
- ✘ "Within downtown areas of the County pedestrian travel should be given priority over automobile and vehicular travel."
- ✘ "Several recreation plans for local units of government call for the construction of recreational trails. In addition, the Jackson County Trailways Plan recommends several additional trails and trail extensions. These recommendations should be implemented as funding becomes available. Finally, trailways should be coordinated with the plans for trails in adjacent counties."

Responses to the recreation survey conducted for this effort indicate that there is a need for more local recreational opportunities within the Heart of the Lakes Area. One of the most popular recreation facilities identified by survey respondents is trails (i.e., multiuse trails, obstacle courses, etc.). Trails were also identified as priorities in Jackson County's current recreation plan and the Village of Brooklyn's comprehensive (master) plan. The Jackson County Regional Trailway Study 2002 provides the framework within which the local trail network will be developed (please see Chapter 6); this accommodation will ensure that the local system will link with other trails within Jackson County.

Survey respondents also indicated the need for additional aquatic facilities and services. Swimming, ice skating, water parks, and paddle boats were identified specifically; those requests reflect the fact that even though the Heart of the Lakes Area hosts a plethora of lakes, public access is limited to a few points. However, a survey comment states that no action should be taken which would make Area lakes more crowded. This is a known public sentiment. All of these factors point to the need for a 4-season water park, as well as new aquatic facilities in existing parks, as long as they are designed to limit their impact upon Area lakes.

The recreation survey conducted for this report (please see Chapter 3) illustrates that there are already a wealth of recreational facilities located within the Heart of the Lakes Area. However, the target audiences for many of those facilities do not include Area residents, nor are their adequate local recreation facilities for those residents. Fortunately, there is an opportunity to located local recreation facilities in county and state parks as well as on school sites. This type of cooperation would fund improvements in existing parks at a reduced cost to their owners as well as providing new local recreational opportunities. The opportunity to share municipal parks among the member governments of the Heart of the Lakes Area also exists. These improvements could include needed amenities such as restrooms as well as recreational facilities

The survey of recreational facilities (please see Chapter 3) reveals that Brooklyn and the surrounding area lacks a community center which could house various programs, such as the summer teen (activity) recreation program proposed by a respondent to the Commission's recreation survey (please see Chapter 5). The old Ford mill in Brooklyn is a possible location for such a center which would also provide access to the millpond and retrofit/preserve a local landmark. The survey also indicates that there is some support for a skateboard park and the Brooklyn survey shows wide support for such a facility; Brooklyn's Swains Memorial Park has been identified as the location for a skateboarding facility by local boosters.