

Village of Homer, MI
2019-2023
Community Recreation Plan



Adopted by the Village Council -----

Wightman

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PREPARED FOR THE VILLAGE OF HOMER WITH ASSISTANCE FROM:

*Wightman
2303 Pipestone Rd.
Benton Harbor, MI 49022*

IN ACCORDANCE WITH:

Michigan Department of Natural Resources Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plans

January 2019

INTRODUCTION & COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Village of Homer park system was developed and coordinated into a 5-year plan from 1999 to 2004 with funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Youth initiatives Program.

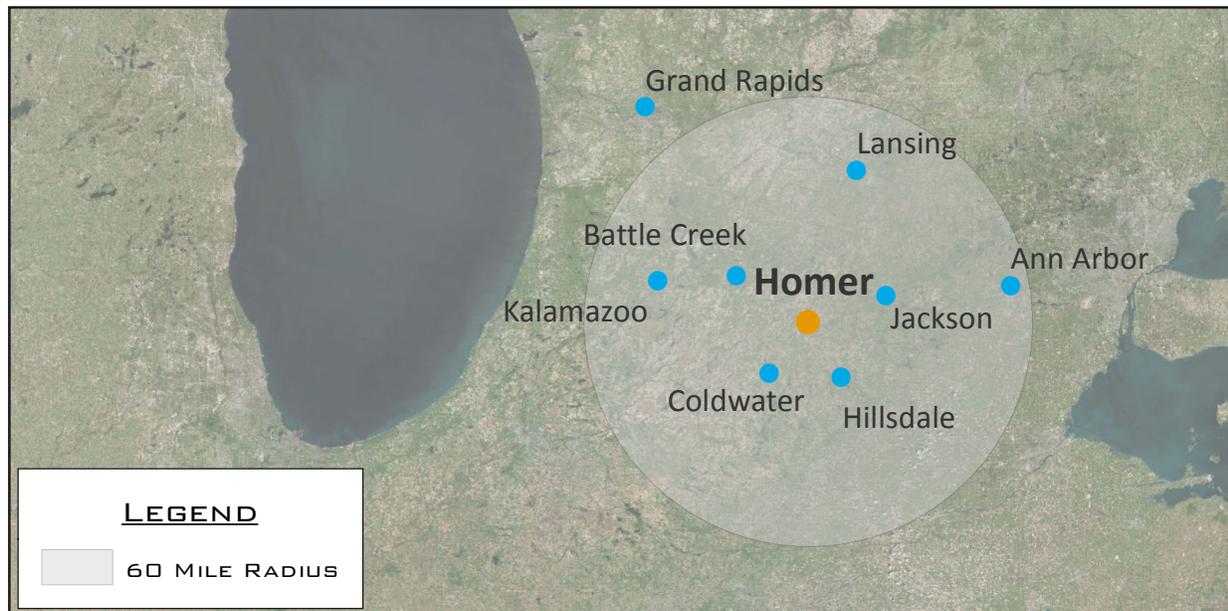
This Community Recreation Plan is a general, long-range development tool used to achieve and maintain a high-quality park, recreation and open-space system. It evaluates the needs of the community and makes strategic recommendations for recreation, beautification and economic development to be implemented over the next five years.

Regional Context

The Village of Homer covers an area of approximately a square mile. The village is located within Calhoun County on the eastern shore of Homer Lake. The south branch of the Kalamazoo River cuts through the eastern part of the Village. Homer is located 9 miles south of Albion, 25 miles west of Jackson and 35 miles southeast of Battle Creek, Michigan with state highways M-60 and M-99 providing access to the Village. Homer is 30 minutes from downtown Jackson and 60 minutes from Kalamazoo and Lansing.

Area To Be Served

The service area of this recreation plan is confined to the Homer Village limits, covering approximately 1.45 square miles.



Village of Homer Geographic Location Map

Plan Focus

The recreation plan was prepared for the Village of Homer. The plan focuses on providing recreation opportunities to residents of the Village of Homer through the acquisition, development, and maintenance of community-owned parks. While the primary focus is on providing the area's residents with recreation opportunities, improvements to the area's park system will benefit adjoining townships and nearby communities, schools, and visitors.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

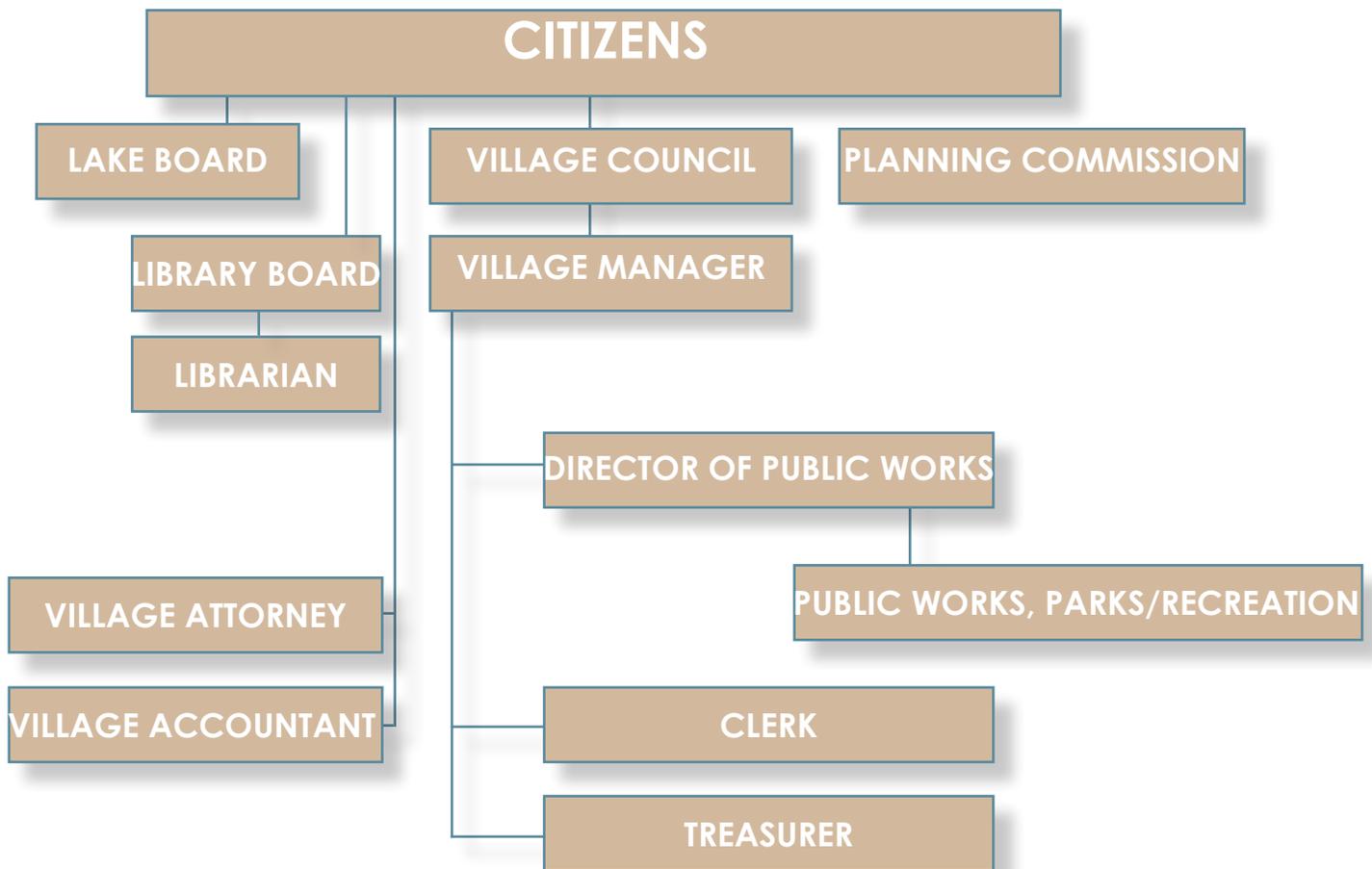
Structure & Functions

The following section identifies the administrative structure for the Village of Homer. It also describes the functions regarding parks and recreation for the Village. The Village of Homer is a General Law Village with a full time manager (Art Kale). There is a permanent staff of 7 full time employees. The current Village Council members are: Brent Michael, Jeff Sherman, Derrek Blashfield, Mike George, Gene Hackworth, and Kyle Renfroe.

The Village Council is responsible for appropriations of Parks and Recreation funding. The Department of Public Works is responsible for park maintenance and operates with an annual operating budget of \$25,000.

A Kellogg Youth Initiative Program Grant for park improvements has allowed for the employment for a youth coordinator in the past for implementation of a grant, as well as coordinating other activities. The management of Homer Lake, an important natural feature of the Village, is handled by the Lake Management Board.

The following is the Organizational Chart for the Village of Homer.



ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Annual Budget

Below is the current year and projected annual budgets for parks and recreation operations and maintenance, recreation programming, and capital improvements. The fiscal year runs from January 1st - December 31st.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Salaries & Wages	\$9,500	\$9,785	\$10,079	\$10,381	\$10,692
Medicare Taxes	\$140	\$144	\$149	\$153	\$158
FICA Taxes	\$600	\$618	\$637	\$656	\$675
Health Insurance	\$2,120	\$2,184	\$2,249	\$2,317	\$2,386
Life Insurance	\$55	\$57	\$58	\$60	\$62
W/C Insurance	\$120	\$124	\$127	\$131	\$135
Repair & Maint. Supplies	\$2,590	\$2,668	\$2,748	\$2,830	\$2,915
Professional Services	\$2,400	\$2,472	\$2,546	\$2,623	\$2,701
Insurance & Bonds	\$1,700	\$1,751	\$1,804	\$1,858	\$1,913
Equipment Rental	\$7,500	\$7,725	\$7,957	\$8,195	\$8,441
TOTAL	\$26,725	\$27,527	\$28,353	\$29,203	\$30,079

Funding Source

The funding for the Parks and Recreation budget are provided by the Village of Homer and does not have any outside sources of funding for their recreational park improvements. They expect to receive funding from private sources to match state funds. They also have a sinking fund and foundations.

Volunteer Programs & Community Relationships

The area recreation programs were established in 1980. Initial funding for the summer recreation programs was provided by a collaboration of the townships and Village through the Homer Community School system. Subsequently the municipal funding lapsed and the school system continues to sponsor the programs with the assistance of user fees.

Currently community volunteers oversee the administration of recreation programs with input from the School staff. The Homer Community Schools employs the a director to administer the recreation programs.

Operation of the recreational programs and maintenance of the school recreational facilities are under the direction of the School District and volunteers. The Homer Community Schools has assumed the responsibility for the administration of some recreational programs in the Homer area. The school administration employs a Recreation Director from their annual budget. The programs are additionally funded through entry fees of participants and candy sales.

RECREATION INVENTORY

Village Owned Recreation Facilities

Below is a list of recreation facilities within the Village of Homer that are owned by the Village.

ROADSIDE PARK

Size: 2 acres

Facilities: This proposed park (currently undeveloped) is located adjacent to Webster Street along the Kalamazoo River.

WEBSTER STREET PARK

Size: 1 acre

Facilities: This park is located in the northeastern section of Homer, is bounded by N Webster Street, E Platt Street, E Sprague Street and Sophia Street. The park contains a shelter, playground, sand volleyball courts, a parking lot, restroom facilities and walking paths.

GRIST MILL PARK

Size: 1 acre

Facilities: This park is located on the shores of the Kalamazoo River adjacent to M-60. It has two shelter areas, one for picnicking and one as a scenic overlook of the park and historic grist mill dam along with covered bridges, canoe launch, fishing pier, scenic pedestrian trail, park benches and picnic tables. The Kalamazoo River flows through Homer and offers opportunities for hiking, canoeing and fishing. A 0.5 acre improved canoe launch is located along M-99/M-60 in Grist Mill Park.

WATER TOWER PARK

Acres: .25 acres

Facilities: This park is located adjacent to Sophia Street and the Water Tower area along State Highway M-60. It acts as a gateway into downtown Homer. Current developments include parking, benches and a kiosk. It is part of the Linear Park and Trail System. There is a beautiful indoor Farmers Market in the park which was made possible with grants from the FireKeepers Local Revenue Sharing Board and the local Homer Area Community Foundation.

LAKEFRONT PARK

Size: 3.5 acres

The largest of the Village parks at 3.5 acres, Lake Front Park offers Public access to Homer Lake for fishing, boat launch, picnicking, observation deck and parking lot.

HOMER LINEAR PARK

Size: 1.5 miles long

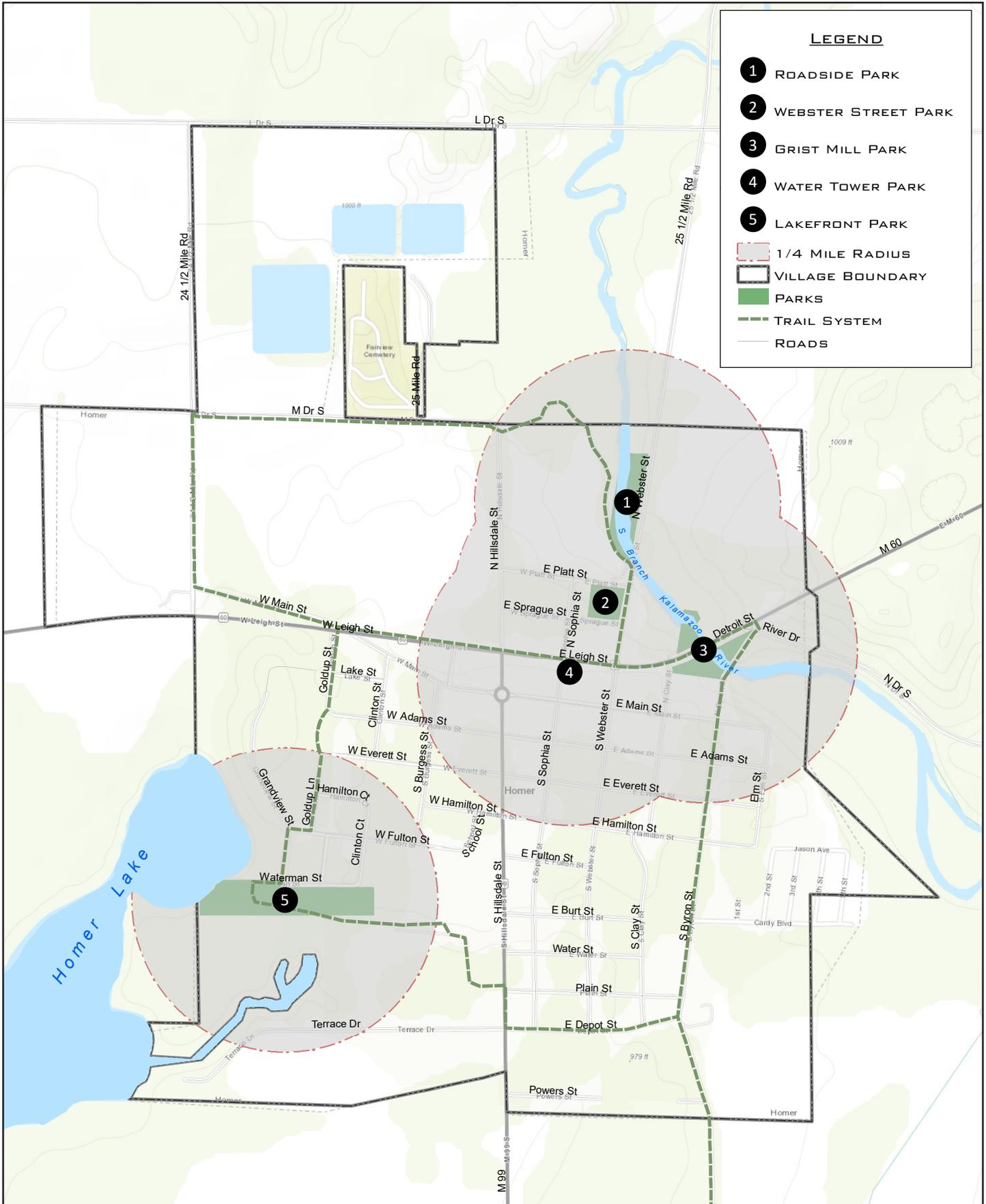
Facilities: This park is a linear park/trail which begins at Webster Street Park, running north to M Drive S, running west along M Drive S, then turning south along 24 1/2 Mile Rd to West Main St. Additional trail sections are required to complete this linear park: including new trail from Grist Mill Park along M-60 and Webster Street. The trail includes benches along it.



RECREATION INVENTORY

VILLAGE OF HOMER PARK LOCATION & WALKABILITY MAP

The map on the next page shows the parks located in the Village of Homer as well as a 1/4 mile radius around each park to show each parks primary service area.



RECREATION INVENTORY

Accessibility Evaluation

An accessibility assessment was conducted at the time of the recreation inventory. The Village of Homer has worked to increase accessibility to the parks as they are updated and further developed. A brief description of the park accessibility is below along with a rating based on the following guidelines criteria.

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 principals of universal design

Roadside Park

Park is currently undeveloped.

Webster Street Park

This park has paved pathways throughout. Picnic shelter areas are accessible however the park would benefit from both ADA picnic tables as well as extended pads under the benches to allow a wheelchair user to sit next to the benches. The playground area itself is accessible however the playground could be updated to provide more diverse and accessible play opportunities long with access ramps. Restroom facilities are not accessible. Parking lot is lacking both designated handicapped parking spaces and handicapped signage.

Rating: 3

Grist Mill Park

This park has paved pathways throughout. Picnic shelter areas are accessible however the park would benefit from both ADA picnic tables as well as extended pads under the benches to allow a wheelchair user to sit next to the benches. The canoe launch does not meet accessibility guidelines, a curb needs to be installed between sidewalk and river to provide a wheelstop for wheelchairs at the edge of the water. Parking lot is lacking both designated handicapped parking spaces and handicapped signage.

Rating: 2

Water Tower Park

This park has paved pathways throughout. The park would benefit from extended pads under the benches to allow a wheelchair user to sit next to the benches. Parking lot is lacking both designated handicapped parking spaces and handicapped signage.

Rating: 3

Lakefront Park

This park has paved pathways throughout. Picnic areas are accessible however the park would benefit from ADA picnic tables. Parking lot is lacking both designated handicapped parking spaces and handicapped signage. The fishing pier and observation deck both meet accessibility guidelines.

Rating: 3

Homer Linear Park

This park has paved pathways throughout. The park would benefit from extended pads under the benches to allow a wheelchair user to sit next to the benches.

Rating: 4

The Village of Homer will look to continued public comment throughout the implementation process, especially from those with special needs. Their suggestions play a key role in developing and implementing proposed barrier-free improvements.

DNR Recreation Grant Inventory

HOMER RECREATION AREA, 1975, #26-00629, \$23,824.39

Develop one softball diamond, 1 baseball field, 2 lighted tennis courts, and LWCF sign.

CURRY PARK, 1977, #26-00899, \$54,030.44

Develop lighting for softball field, and boat ramp, access road, and parking/ with lighting, LWCF sign.

LAKEFRONT PARK IMPROVEMENTS, 1999, #TF99-070, \$89,690.00

Development of existing park property on Homer Lake, including paved parking facilities, wetland boardwalk, observation platform and picnic shelter.

RECREATION INVENTORY

Other Village Owned Facilities

HOMER COMMUNITY HOUSE

This local effort to renovate this 1930's structure has a stage, small kitchen, restrooms, and improved sound system. It is available to the community for social events, reunions, elections, private family events, dances and other special events. The Community House capacity is between 250 - 500 persons, and is used approximately 35 times per year.

Recreation Facilities Not Owned By The City

A variety of significant recreational resources are either owned privately, owned by a non-profit organization, or owned by another governmental unit that are located within or nearby the Village of Homer. The following is a brief description of some nearby parks and recreation opportunities.

HOMER FIRE MUSEUM

The Homer Fire Museum is a historical site open from July 4th and through the month of September. Annual attendance to the museum is approximately 100 persons. The Village owns the building and leases it to the Homer Area Fire Authority for the museum.

BLAIR FARM & HISTORIC HOUSE

The Blair Farm is sponsored by the Homer Historical Society. Three main events are scheduled annually to celebrate the heritage of the Homer Area.

HISTORIC BRIDGE PARK

Historic Bridge Park, formerly known as "County Park" is located at 14930 Wattles Road. The park is located along the Kalamazoo River and Dickinson Creek. The park offers a variety of passive recreational opportunities including: picnicking, walking/hiking, bike riding, fishing, boating and wildlife observation. The park also serves as a trailhead for the County Linear Trailway that will eventually connect to the Battle Creek Linear Trail to the west and the Marshall Riverwalk to the east. The park is unique in that it contains a number of restored iron or steel bridges. The park when fully developed will have a total of 15 bridges.

KIMBALL PINES COUNTY PARK

Covering nearly 100 acres of plantation pines planted in 1930's and 1940's. Planted in the 1930's and 1940's, Kimball Pines Park is one of the oldest stands of urban pines in Michigan. The park also contains deciduous woodlands, ponds and a creek that is a tributary of the Kalamazoo River. Kimball Pines offers scenic areas, hiking trails, picnicking facilities, cross-country skiing, and nature observation. The park is located off of Michigan Avenue behind the Calhoun County Medical Care Facility in Emmett Township.

OTT BIOLOGICAL PRESERVE

Ott Biological Preserve is often considered to be “hidden jewel” in Calhoun County. Located just east of Battle Creek, at the end of Arlington Street, off of Michigan Avenue in Emmett Township. The undeveloped park covers approximately 300 acres of natural habitat shaped by glaciers. Within the park there are two spring fed kettle lakes, as well as the east edge of Dexter Lake, wet peaty lowlands and dry, sandy uplands. Activities available in the park include: hiking on trails and boardwalks and wildlife viewing. In 2013 the trail in the preserve was extended to connect to the Linear Park in Battle Creek to the west and to Kimball Pines to the south.

HOMER COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

The Homer Public Schools are all located at 403 S Hillside Street. They have a wide variety of outdoor and indoor recreation facilities.

R.K. Curry Athletic Facility

Acres: 60 acres

Facilities:

- One all-weather 440-yard track with multi-purpose field
- Four softball diamonds
- Two baseball diamonds
- Two outdoor tennis courts
- Two soccer fields and/or a football field
- Two basketball courts

Lilian Fletcher Elementary School

- 1 gymnasium
- 3 playgrounds (lower, middle and upper elementary)

Homer Area High/Middle School

- 1 weight room
- 1 cafeteria for special programs
- 2 full size gymnasiums

HOMER LAKE

The south branch of the Kalamazoo River flows through the northeast corner of the Village of Homer, flowing in a northerly direction. Homer Lake, on the western edge of the Village, is the other significant body of water within the Village. A DNR (Michigan Department of Natural Resources) Public Access site is provided as access to the lake for the general public at the Village's Lakefront Park, where a boat launch, fishing pier and scenic lookout on a nature preserve are located.

The restoration of Homer Lake has been a priority for a number of years and is a top priority for the Homer Lake Management Board (HLMB). Two Village storm drains have been rerouted that had been discharging storm water into the lake for over forty years. Prior to the re-routing, these drains had left the lake with excessive nutrient-laden buildup impacting lake activities. The HLMB continues to evaluate all options to address these concerns, including dredging. The Homer Lake Management Board has been established with participation from local citizens, governmental units, businesses and the Calhoun County Drain Commissioner. The HLMB is committed to finding a way to restore the beauty of Homer Lake for the public to enjoy for summer and winter recreational activities.

PLANNING & PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

Planning Process

The planning process for this recreation plan update began in 2018 with the development of the 2019 Homer Master Plan. Wightman created question boards each with 1 question. Along with the community input gathered, Wightman collected detailed recreation inventories and deficiencies. Wightman used a systems approach to planning which incorporated the information gained from the various forms of public input and the detailed recreation inventories and deficiencies as well as demographic information to determine the recreation needs of the City.

Public Input Process

PUBLIC INPUT BOARDS

Three 24x36" sized poster boards were created for public input from 5-7pm during JV and Varsity boys basketball games at Homer Community High School on December 10th, 2018. One member of the consultant team and three community members who were involved with the recent Community Master Plan were in attendance to gather public input. The poster boards asked questions about the park and recreation in Homer and asked the respondents to write in the answers. The boards provided open-ended, candid responses. The poster boards with the questions and responses can be found on the next 3 pages.

What I want to see in Homer's Park System.

X Country SKI +
Snow Shoe TRAILS

Dog PARK

Archery Range
Frisbee Golf PARK

Baseball/softball

Bike Jumps
Bike RACKS
Bike maintenance station

Updated Boat Launch
New Docks.

Splash Pad +1
@ Webster

Improved Dock
and Boat Access
at Lake

Update Handicapped fishing
area @ Homer Lake

Dredge 1st Lake

Sledding hill

Trap/Skeet Range

ICE SKATING Rink ✓

SKATE BOARD PARK

BAND Shell

swimming pool

Net climber

BIKE PATHS
+
DOG PARKS



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What I want to see in Homer's Trail System.

Path on N. side of M-60
From Webster/PF
to Tube under River.

Side walk along w. main
Batter Crossing @ M-60 &
MAIN.

TRAILSIDE CAMPING AREAS

Trailside phone & alarm

Path along N. side of D3s
updated w/ tree posts.

TRAILS need to be
better marked
(North Country)

Mountain Biking AREA

SAT
 safer Crossing of M-60



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My favorite recreation activity in Homer.

Trails.
Well Played in winter

Walking TRAIL
SYSTEM

Boating + Fishing
Homer LAKE

Baseball
Diamonds

Access + Lakes & Rivers

Up GRADe Track / Locker
Rooms ETC.

Horse shoe pit

shuffe board

Talk Tubes

PLANNING & PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

PUBLIC REVIEW

A draft Community Recreation Plan for Homer Township was available at the Homer Municipal Building for public review from **December 28th 2018 through January 28th, 2019**. Members of the public were invited through an announcement in **The Village Index and Village of Homer Website** on **January 28th, 2019** to comment on the draft Community Recreation Plan. They were encouraged to submit written communication with Wightman and Associates, Inc., the City's consultant, and/or by attending the public hearing.

A copy of the notice of availability of the draft Community Recreation Plan for comment as well as the affidavit of public comment are included in Appendix A.

PUBLIC HEARING

The second public input method used by the **Homer Village Council** was the public hearing. The Council advertised a public meeting notice in **INSERT PAPER OR WEBSITE NAME** on **INSERT DATE** to present the Community Recreation plan for the Village of Homer for public input on **INSERT DATE**. The plan was presented for adoption during the regularly scheduled Village Council meeting on **INSERT DATE** where all Board Members approved the resolution to adopt the Community Recreation Plan.

A copy of the notice of the public meeting and the affidavit of publication for the public meeting have been included in Appendix A.

A copy of the Village Council meeting minutes have been included in Appendix B.

A copy of the resolution adoption the Community Recreation plan dated x has been included in Appendix C.

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GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The goals and objects were developed using the public input received and discussed earlier in this document as well as demographic information provided in the 2019 Master Plan.

GOAL #1: MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE TRAILWAY NETWORK BY PROVIDING A WIDE RANGE OF WAYS TO USE THE NETWORK

OBJECTIVES:

- Connect Iron Belle, North Country and Homer Trail systems and parks throughout the Village
- Install bike racks and bike fix stations throughout trailway network
- Provide safe road crossing at M-60
- Provide new opportunities such as camping areas along trails
- Improve perceived safety by adding call buttons and other safety features

GOAL #2: IMPROVE PUBLIC ACCESS TO WATER IN THE VILLAGE OF HOMER

OBJECTIVES:

- Provide recreational access to Homer Lake, the Kalamazoo River and the St. Joseph River
- Current dock area at Homer Lake is inundated by weeds and is difficult to use, update the dock or remove the weeds
- Update and add to handicapped fishing areas in the Village

GOAL #3: PLAN FOR THE RECREATIONAL NEEDS OF ALL AGES AND ABILITIES OF PEOPLE BY PROVIDING A WIDE RANGE OF ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES THAT SPAN ALL OF MICHIGAN'S FOUR SEASONS

OBJECTIVES:

- Serve an aging population with social, recreation, active and healthy options
- Ensure that all parks are accessible to people with a range of physical capabilities
- Offer a new recreational opportunity within the City
- Plan for each of Michigan's seasons to ensure residents have year-round recreation opportunities

ACTION PROGRAM

Year	Action Item	Cost Per Item	Cost per Year	Funding Source
2019	Add dog park in Grist Mill Park	\$30,000.00	\$35,000.00	Local Funding Sources, MDNR Grants
	Add handicapped parking at all parks	\$5,000.00		
2020	Add bicycle racks and maintenance stations along trail	\$15,000.00	\$90,000.00	Local Funding Sources, MDNR Grants
	Iron Belle Trail Extension	\$50,000.00		
	Add better trail crossing at M-60 and Main Street & M-60 and Sophia Street	\$25,000.00		
2021	Update boat launch at Lakefront Park	\$65,000.00	\$115,000.00	Local Funding Sources, MDNR Grants
	Add new docks at Lakefront Park	\$50,000.00		
2022	Update hadicapped fishing area at Lakefront Park	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00	Local Funding Sources, MDNR Grants
2023	Update 5-Year Recreation Plan	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	Local Funding Sources, MDNR Grants

Total 5-year Cost: \$280,000.00

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APPENDIX



**NOTICE OF PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT
AND NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING
ON THE VILLAGE OF HOMER PROPOSED
2019-2023 FIVE-YEAR COMMUNITY
RECREATION PLAN**

The proposed Village of Homer 2019-2023 Community Recreation Plan will be available for public review and comments beginning Friday, December 28th, 2018, through Monday, January 28, 2019, during normal business hours at the Homer Village Hall, 130 E. Main Street, Homer, MI 49245, and online at www.hommerrichigan.org.

The public is invited to review and comment on the plan. Written comments received through January 28, 2019 will receive responses in the final Five-Year Community Recreation Plan. Written comments should be sent to Art Kale, Village Manager at Homer Village Hall, 130 E. Main Street, P.O. Box 155, Homer, MI 49245.

The Village of Homer will hold a Public Hearing on the proposed 2019-2023 Five-Year Community Recreation Plan on Monday, January 28th, 2019, at 6:00 p.m. at the Homer Village Hall, 130 E. Main Street, Homer, MI 49245.

OFFICE OF
The Homer Index

Homer, Michigan 49245

STATE OF MICHIGAN } ss.
County of Calhoun,

Sharon Warner

being duly sworn, says I am the general manager of

The Homer Index

a weekly newspaper published and circulating in said county, and that the annexed is a printed copy of a notice published in said paper on

December 26, 2018



General Manager

Sharon Warner

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 22nd day of January A.D. 2019



Eugenia M. Halstead
Notary Public for Calhoun County, Michigan
Acting in Calhoun County, Michigan

My Commission expires October 14, 2021

Public Notice

NOTICE OF PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT AND NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE VILLAGE OF HOMER PROPOSED 2019–2023 FIVE-YEAR COMMUNITY RECREATION PLAN

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The Village of Homer will hold a Public Hearing on the proposed 2019–2023 Five-Year Community Recreation Plan on Monday, January 28th, 2019, at 6:00 p.m. at the Homer Village Hall, 130 E. Main Street, Homer, MI 49245.

Legal Notices



January 23, 2019

South Central Michigan Planning Council
300 South Westnedge Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Attention: Lee Adams, Director

RE: VILLAGE OF HOMER COMMUNITY RECREATION PLAN

Dear Lee Adams:

Enclosed please find one copy of the 5-year Community Recreation Plan for the Village of Homer. This plan will be on file with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Please review the plan and retain it for your records.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Very truly yours,

BEN BAKER

Ben Baker, PLA
bbaker@gowightman.com

BENTON HARBOR

▲ 2303 PIPESTONE ROAD
BENTON HARBOR, MI 49022
○ 269.927.0100

ALLEGAN

▲ 1670 LINCOLN ROAD (M-40)
ALLEGAN, MI 49010
○ 269.673.8465

KALAMAZOO

▲ 433 E. RANSOM STREET
KALAMAZOO, MI 49007
○ 269.327.3532

GOWIGHTMAN.COM

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January 23, 2019

Calhoun County Community Development
315 West Green Street
Marshall, MI 49068

Attention: Doug Ferrall, Program Manager

RE: VILLAGE OF HOMER COMMUNITY RECREATION PLAN

Dear Doug Ferrall:

Enclosed please find one copy of the 5-year Community Recreation Plan for the Village of Homer. This plan will be on file with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Please review the plan and retain it for your records.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Very truly yours,

BEN BAKER

Ben Baker, PLA
bbaker@gowightman.com

BENTON HARBOR

▲ 2303 PIPESTONE ROAD
BENTON HARBOR, MI 49022
○ 269.927.0100

ALLEGAN

▲ 1670 LINCOLN ROAD (M-40)
ALLEGAN, MI 49010
○ 269.673.8465

KALAMAZOO

▲ 433 E. RANSOM STREET
KALAMAZOO, MI 49007
○ 269.327.3532

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