



Village of Northport Recreation Plan 2016-2020

Prepared by:
Village of Northport
PO Box 336
Northport, MI 49670
www.leelanau.cc/Northport.asp

Prepared with assistance from:
Networks Northwest
PO Box 506
Traverse City MI 49685-0506
www.networksnorthwest.org

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Village of Northport Recreation Plan 2016-2020

Village of Northport Planning Commission

Consultant

Networks Northwest

GIS Mapping

Networks Northwest

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Introduction

Located in northeastern Leelanau County on the shore of Grand Traverse Bay, the Village of Northport has a rich historical heritage and a wealth of scenic beauty, small-town character, and recreational opportunities. With over two miles of water frontage, an outstanding marina, well-maintained parks, a public school, a wide variety of unique shops, and its beautiful setting amidst beaches, rolling hills, and orchards, Northport offers a high quality of life for its approximately 530 year-round residents—as well as attractive amenities for the town’s many seasonal residents and visitors.

In an effort to enhance and maintain the town’s abundant amenities and quality lifestyle, Northport residents have been engaged in a number of planning initiatives focused on the village’s future. In 2007, Northport residents began work on Michigan State University’s Small Town Design Initiative, a program that offers landscape design and planning assistance for small communities working to address environmental challenges. The Small Town Design Initiative was used as a springboard for a community visioning project, led by the Leelanau Township Community Foundation, called Future By Design. This project created a master plan to address streetscape, waterfront, growth, and trail issues in depth.

This Recreation Plan is intended to build on previous planning initiatives by identifying the Village’s highest recreation priorities and to offer an implementation road map for the recreation goals and objectives identified by the community throughout the various planning efforts. The Plan includes:

Section 1, Community Description, includes information regarding the Village’s history, population, natural features, and plans. The intent of this section is to provide a context for the plan that will assist in establishing goals.

Section 2, Administrative Structure, summarizes the process through which recreation decisions are made.

Section 3, Recreation Inventory itemizes the Village’s existing recreational facilities.

Section 4, Planning and Public Input, explains how public input was gathered and used in developing and prioritizing recreation goals, objectives, and action program.

Section 5, Goals, Objectives, and Action Program describes proposed recreation goals and improvements, and suggests specific implementation activities to achieve those goals.

This Plan was developed according to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources *Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plans*.

Section 1

Community Description

In 1848, a band of Ottawa Indians from Southwestern Michigan began a settlement called Waukazooville along the shore of northeastern Leelanau County. Another settlement was founded a few years later, just north of the Waukazooville boundary, and in 1852, the two settlements combined to become the Village of Northport.

Northport's location near the tip of the Leelanau Peninsula and at the Grand Traverse Bay's first harbor resulted in rapid growth into a vibrant community – by 1860, the village's population had already reached 355 residents. The town was the Leelanau Peninsula's first county seat and the site of its first newspaper, and soon became a favorite summer tourist destination. Today, Northport is home to a public school, thriving marina, an industrial park, a variety of services for its year-round population, and a significant number of seasonal homes.

Population

With hundreds of miles of coastline, beautiful beaches, thousands of acres of forests, rolling hills and orchards, Leelanau County is well-known as a vacation destination—and,

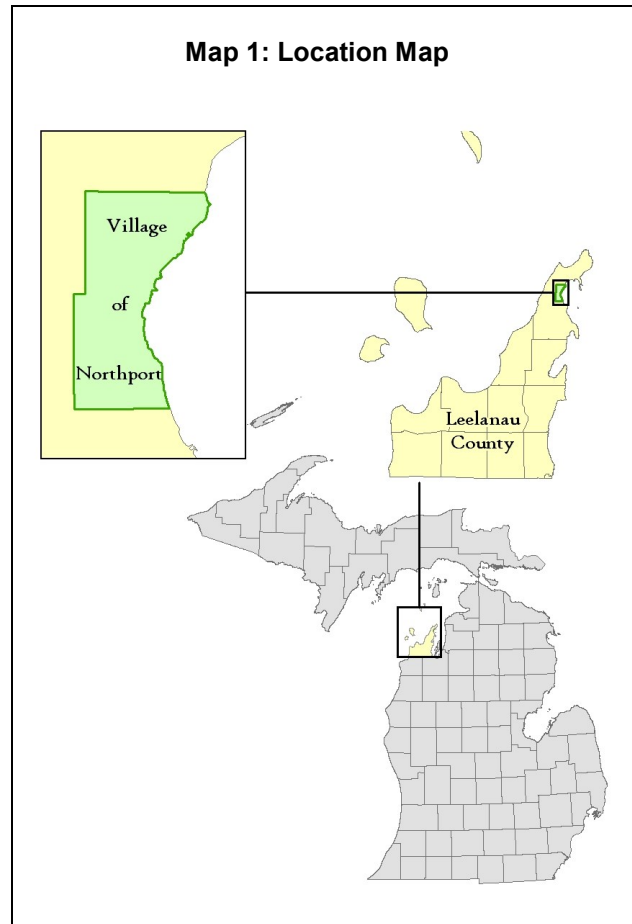


Table 1: Population Change and Projections

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2014 Estimates
Leelanau County Total Population	8,647	9,321	10,872	14,007	16,527	21,119	21,708	21,915
% Change Over 10 years	3%	8%	17%	29%	19%	28%	3%	1.0%
Leelanau Township Total Population	913	659	676	954	1,089	2,139	2,027	N/A
% Change over 10 years	-1%	-28%	3%	23%	8.6%	26.3%	-5.2%	N/A
Northport Total Population	582	530	594	611	605	648	526	530
% Change over 10 years	-4%	-10%	12%	2.9%	-1%	7%	-18.8%	0.8%

Source: US Census Bureau

Section 1—Community Description

increasingly, as a high-quality place to live. Driven in large part by its rural character and scenic beauty, the County’s population has seen dramatic increases over the last several decades. Between 1990 and 2000 alone, population increased by 28% - making the County one of the fastest-growing areas in the State.

However, much of that growth has occurred in the rural areas of the County, while village populations remain stable or decline, reflecting a trend toward sprawling development patterns. As such, over the years, Northport’s population has not reached the high growth rates seen in the townships. In 1950, the town had a population of 582; sixty years later, at the time of the 2010 Census, the population had slightly decreased, with a population of 526 residents.

Northport’s population differs in several other respects from county-wide trends. The population is significantly older and less affluent than the County as a whole, with more than half (55.3%) of the population over the age of 65 in 2010. Statewide, the percentage of those over age 65 is 13.8%; county-wide, the figure is 23.5%. And the median age of Northport’s population is 57.5 years, while the median age of the County is 51.2 years—which is itself considerably higher than the statewide median age of 39.1 years.

The higher-than-average percentage of those over age 65 may contribute in part to the small household size. At 2.1 persons per household, Northport’s residents are generally part of smaller households than residents of other parts of the County or State (see table 3).

At \$49,167, income is slightly higher than the State average, but well below the median household income of the county. And at 12.9%, the percentage of families

Table 2. Age Profile

Age	Number	Percent of Village Population
Under 5	17	3.2
5 to 9 years	18	3.4
10 to 14 years	21	4.4
15 to 19 years	26	4.9
20 to 24 years	27	5.1
25 to 34 years	28	5.3
35 to 44 years	43	8.2
45 to 54 years	54	10.3
55 to 64 years	100	19.1
65 to 74 years	94	17.9
75 years and older	96	18.3
Total	536	

Source: US Census, 2010

below the poverty level was higher than the County level of 11.2%. The majority of those living in poverty were members of a female-headed household with school-age children.

When planning for recreation facilities, the community’s age and income levels are important factors to consider. As the population ages, needs move from active recreation facilities like

Table 3: Social Characteristics

	Northport	Leelanau Twp	Leelanau County	Michigan
Median Age	57.5	63.1	51.2	39.1
Avg. Household Size	2.10	2.16	2.31	2.49
Total Households	251	1,898	14,988	4,529,311
Median Household Income	\$49,167	\$57,974	\$55,018	\$48,411
% of Families Living Below the Poverty Level	12.9%	7.7%	11.2%	16.8%

Source: US Census, 2010

ball fields and playgrounds, toward more passive recreation types like walking and boating. Barrier-free access to recreation is particularly important for an aging population. Activities and amenities should also be within the financial means of the majority of residents.

Physical Features

Soils within the Village belong to the East Lake – Eastport – Lupton soils association, which are characterized by well-drained and moderately well-drained, nearly level to gently-sloping sandy soils. Very poorly drained, nearly level mucky soils are found on lake terraces and beach ridges.

The Village’s topography consists largely of gently rolling terrain, with elevations at about 580’ (275 meters) along the lakeshore with steadily increasing elevations further inland. Some very steep slopes are located in the southern portions of the village and along Northport Creek running through the central part of the village.

The village consists of about 1,137 acres of residential, commercial, undeveloped land, industrial areas, parks, and public facilities. Residential and commercial uses are located at a fairly high density at the village center, with significant areas of forestland, open land, and agriculture along the bay front and surrounding the developed areas of the town. Land use in the village is primarily residential, with 391 housing units accounting for about 47% of the village’s acreage. Commercial acreage exists primarily within the village center or downtown area, located between Shabwasung and Bay Streets, with additional commercial areas near M-201 north and south of the village center. An industrial area is located along M-201 at the north end of the village. Parks, designated open space, public facilities, and institutional uses including the school, township and village buildings, the former hospital site, fire hall, post office, and library, are found throughout the village, totaling close to 100 acres and accounting for nearly 9% of the land area.

Table 4. Village of Northport Land Use, 2011

Classification	Acres	Percent
Vacant land, non-wetland	186.5	16.4
Wetlands	186.9	16.4
Single-family residential	538.77	47.4
Multi-family residential	8.7	0.7
Commercial	53	4.7
Industrial	65	5.7
Institutional	40.13	3.5
Park land or designated open space	58	5.2
Total	1,137	100

Source: 2011 Village of Northport Master Plan

Vacant or undeveloped land—both agriculture and open space— covers the remaining areas of the village.

Transportation

Because of Northport’s small size, relatively high-density development patterns, and available sidewalks, opportunities for walking, biking, and other non-motorized forms of transportation are plentiful for residents and visitors alike. However, personal automobile is the primary means of transportation from the village to other parts of the County and the region.

The Village road system consists of village-maintained roads along with two Michigan State Highways—M-22 and M-201. M-22 is part of the Leelanau Scenic Heritage Route, which is intended to protect and enhance the scenic, historical, and recreational characteristics of the highways through Leelanau County.

Northport is served by the Bay Area Transportation Alliance. On weekdays, a fixed bus route runs two times daily, Monday through Friday, from Northport to Suttons Bay, with

connections available to Traverse City. Dial-a-ride service is also available.

Woolsey Memorial Airport is located about 3 miles north of the Village in Leelanau Township. A 4,000 foot turf runway is available for public use from April through October.

Planning and Zoning

2011 Master Land Use Plan

In 2011, the Village of Northport adopted a Master Land Use Plan, which established policies and goals for 13 different planning categories (see Map):

- Rural Residential
- Village Residential
- Single Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Village Commercial/Residential
- Village Center
- Commercial/Resort/Residential
- Bayshore Residential
- Multi-Development
- Public and Quasi Public Lands
- Conservation/Recreation
- Wetlands
- Gateway Corridor

Recreation is an intended use for both Public and Quasi-public land and Conservation/Recreation designations.

The Land Use Plan states that **Public and Quasi-Public Land** is intended to provide recreation, parklands, and open space for public use within the Village. This area will provide for continual use of the marina, boat ramp, beach, Mill Pond, and waterfront park. Parcels belonging to the Village, school, and hospital are also included in this designation on the Future Land Use Map (see Map).

Conservation/Recreation lands are designated by the Land Use Plan with the intent of encouraging the conservation, management and utilization of the natural resource base and corridors. Some may be available for recreation

use, while others should remain in their natural state, relatively undisturbed. The primary use for this category is to remain as open space. The Land Use Plan encourages the acquisition of these lands by Conservation Groups and the Village, with recreation uses such as trails and parks recognized as secondary uses. The Plan states that the preservation of these lands is important to ensure that the Village does not lose its natural beauty as it grows.

The Plan also identifies general policies for residential, commercial, and industrial development; the environment; and facilities and services. Recreation is addressed in the Plan's facilities and services policy. Chapter 4 of the Plan, Facilities and Services, stresses the importance of maintaining and improving village assets at levels needed to service existing residents and visitors alike, while supporting the growth of the community.

The Plan's recreation policy also notes the growing desire of developing more neighborhood type facilities away from more heavily-used areas; and recognizes the importance of low-cost family-oriented recreation. Recreation goals of the 2011 Master Land Use Plan are as follows:

- Encourage an adequate range of recreational opportunities for the residents and visitors of the community
- Maintain all existing facilities in peak condition
- Preserve and maintain the scenic and natural areas within the Village.

Other policies identified in the plan include the importance of preserving land for parks and open space, emphasizing natural and historical features that define the village, and working cooperatively with Leelanau Township.

Zoning

Zoning is the primary means of implementation of the Master Land Use Plan. The village is zoned into 9 districts as follows:

- Conservation District (CN-1)
- Rural Residential (R-1)
- Village Residential (R-2)
- Single-Family Development (R-3)
- Multi-Family Development (R-4)
- Commercial Residential (CR-1)
- Core Commercial (C-1)
- Commercial Resort/Residential (C-2)
- Development (D-1)

Specific development controls relative to lot size, height, bulk, setbacks, parking, and allowable uses are established for each district. Parks and playgrounds are permitted uses in every district with the exception of M-1, Manufacturing.

The Planning Commission provides recommendations on zoning-related issues to the Village Council. The Village Council issues final approval based on the provisions of the zoning ordinance, objectives of the Land Use Plan, and needs of the community.

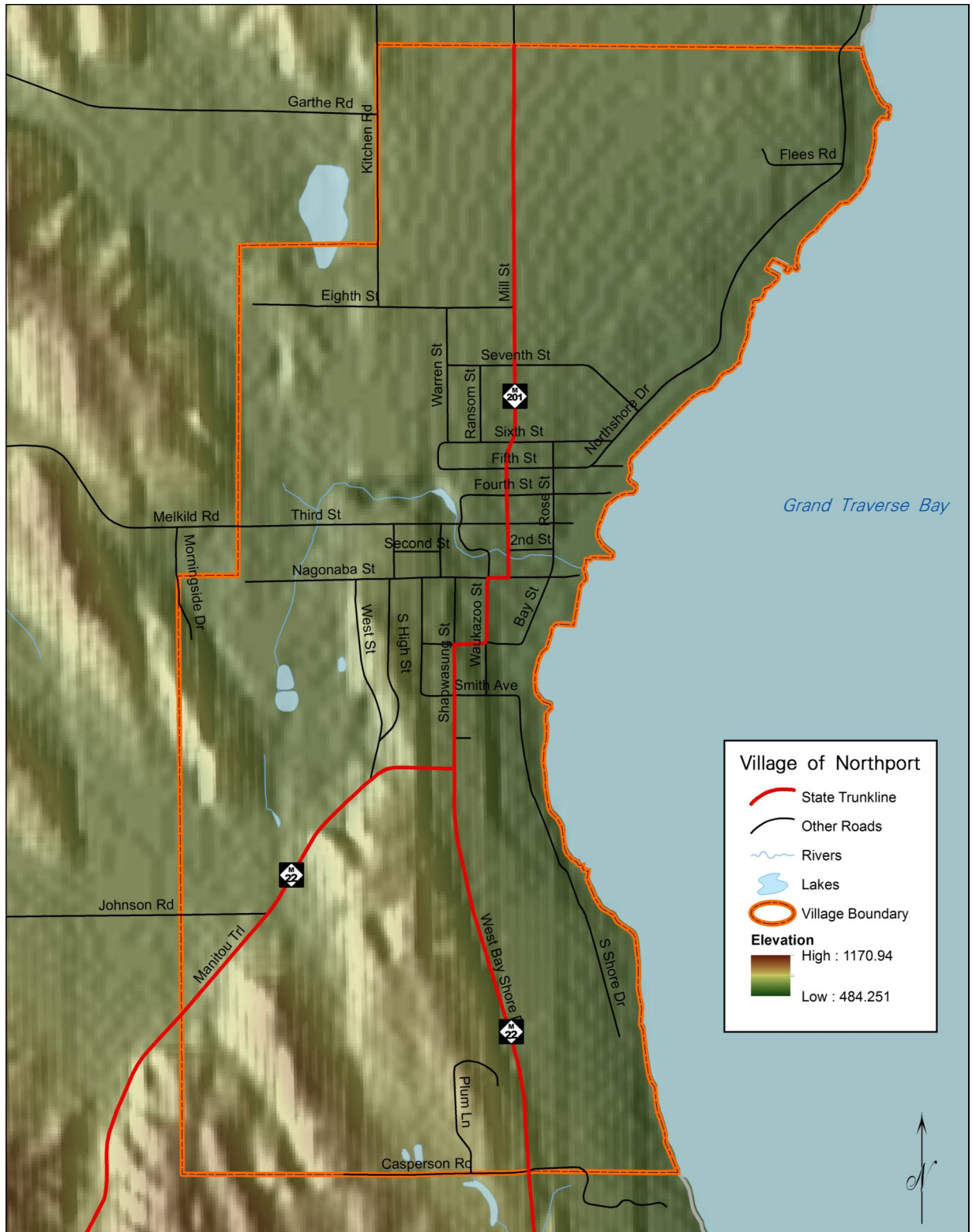
Small Town Design Initiative

The Small Town Design Initiative (STDI) is a program offered through Michigan State University's landscape design school to provide design assistance in community development and land use planning projects for small communities in Michigan. Through STDI, students work with communities to develop designs that address local issues such as streetscape improvements, park systems, and trail development, in a consensus-based approach. Through 2007 and early 2008, MSU students worked with Northport residents to develop a number of concepts that would enhance and maintain the character of the community.

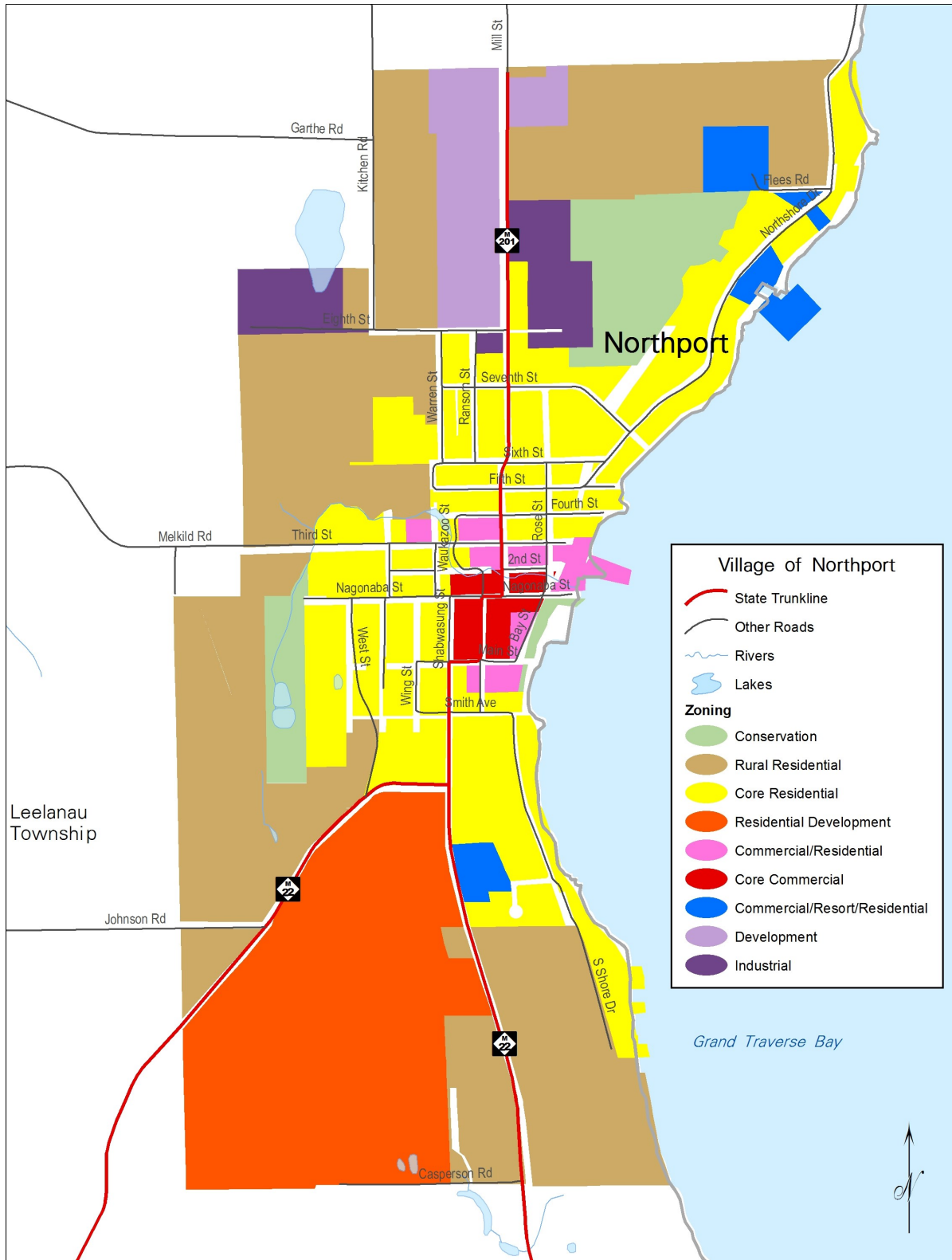
Future By Design

In 2007, as part of the Small Town Design Initiative, the Leelanau Township Community Foundation appointed a group called Future By Design to lead community visioning efforts. Future By Design is using the work completed by the Small Town Design Initiative as a foundation for more detailed planning and design visioning, with four committees focused on trails, growth, waterfront development, and streetscapes and wayfinding projects. Future By Design consultants and volunteers held a number of public visioning and work sessions to develop draft goals related to these issue areas. The results of this effort helped guide development and public improvement activities in the Village.

Map 2: Village of Northport Topography



Map 3: Village of Northport Zoning



Map 4: Village of Northport Future Land Use

Administrative Structure

Organizational Structure

Village Council: The 7-member Northport Village Council is elected to oversee village budgets, approve contracts, adopt policies and plans, and oversee staff. The parks, marina, and other village facilities are overseen by the Village Council.

Committees: The Village Council operates 4 committees—Infrastructure, Waterfront, Finance, and Employee Relations—all composed of three Village Council members. Each committee focuses on specific Village issues and make recommendations to the full council on facility planning, capital improvements, staffing, and policy. Most relevant to parks and recreation, the Waterfront Committee addresses marina budgeting and activities, and the Infrastructure Committee makes recommendations regarding other Village-owned parks. Recommendations from these committees are presented to the Village Council for final approval.

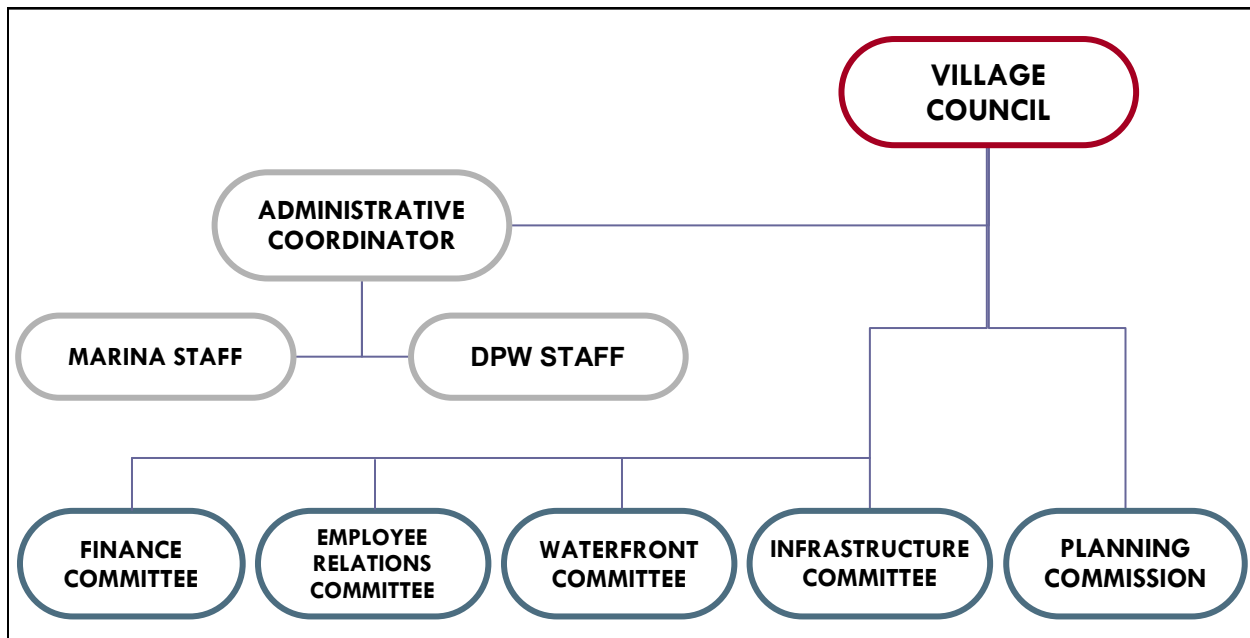
Planning Commission: The Northport Planning Commission is appointed by the Village President with consent of the Village Council to serve in an

advisory role in planning, land acquisition, and park development.

Staff: The Administrative Coordinator selects and supervises Department of Public Works staff and marina staff. Marina staff consists of a harbor master, assistant harbor master, dock attendants, and maintenance personnel. Marina staff provide some park upkeep; other maintenance work such as mowing is performed by the Department of Public Works (DPW). Village DPW staff also provides some maintenance to the Leelanau Township-owned park Braman Hill Recreation Area.

Recreation Funding and Budgeting

Parks and marina activities are funded from the general budget approved by the Village Council. Committees make recommendations to the Village Council regarding annual expenditures as well as any planned improvements, such as restroom upgrades, which are identified as separate line items in the budget. Budgets are adopted by the Village Council in March of each year. Funding for parks and recreation has remained stable, with \$35,000 budgeted for fiscal year





Recreation Inventory

Village Facilities

The following data is an inventory of existing recreational facilities within the Village of Northport. Data was gathered from the 1993 Northport Recreation Plan, the 2003 Village of Northport Land Use Plan, the 2008 Leelanau County Recreation Plan, Village staff, the Northport Visitor Center, the Leelanau Conservancy, and site visits. Parks are identified on Map 5.

Included with each Village-owned recreational facility is a photo, the size of the property, a short description, and an accessibility rating.

Accessibility Assessments were based upon criteria provided in the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenways Plans (Appendix D). Assessments must consider the accessibility of each park to people with disabilities, in respect to both the facilities themselves, and the access routes to them.

ADA Ranking system:

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

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources requires separate reports for all Village-owned properties that have received grant assistance. These Post-Completion Self-Inspection Reports will be submitted along with the Recreation Plan. A complete Michigan Department of Natural Resources grant history for the Village of Northport is listed after the Village-owned recreation facility inventory and map.

G. Marsten Dame Marina



Located along the shoreline of Northport Bay, the Village-owned G. Marsten Dame Marina is an important community asset. Linked to the downtown and residential areas by sidewalks and park space, the marina is a major economic engine and functions as a community focal point during the summer months. During the summer months, the docks are busy and slips full, and the open space and pavilion host many social gatherings including community events such as Music in the Park.



The marina underwent a large renovation in 2009 and has received significant improvements including a new dock house, boardwalk, gazebo (gifted to the marina), additional boat slips, landscaping and more.

Size: 4 acres

Service Area: Leelanau County

Accessibility: 3

Amenities:

- Boat launch ramp
- 125 boat slips
- Pavilion and gazebo
- Picnic tables & grills
- Toilet/shower facilities (marina users only)
- Water
- Gasoline & diesel
- Wireless
- Parking



Northport Municipal South Beach

Northport Municipal Beach is about 2 acres in size and includes about 200' of Grand Traverse Bay frontage. The beach offers opportunities for swimming and is well used during the summer months. Space was provided on South Beach for the Northport Youth Sailing School program, which uses the two buildings on the south end of the property.



Recent improvements to the park have included new public restrooms, parking landscaping, and a boardwalk that provides access to the beach, parking lot, and restrooms, and is contiguous with the marina walkway. The park is located just south of the marina on Bay Street.



Respondents to the Recreation Plan Questionnaire suggested improving the park's basic amenities, such as the addition of picnic benches and a sun cover. Additional comments and discussion in the planning process addressed improving signage to identify the park and beach, as well as its accessibility.

Size: 2 acres

Service Area: Leelanau Township

Accessibility: 3

Amenities:

- Playground
- Picnic tables
- Beach volleyball court
- Boardwalk
- Public restrooms
- Northport Youth Sailing School facilities
- Parking
- Mobi-Mat



Old Mill Pond

Old Mill Pond is part of Northport Creek, a DNR designated trout stream. The park is just over 1 acre in size, and is used for picnicking, fishing, and special events such as the annual Fishing Derby sponsored by the Northport Sportsmen’s Club. The park is also the staging place for the Dog Parade.

In 2013, volunteers installed a new landing/walkway over the dam; however, the dam itself has not been redone.



Algae growth is a problem in the pond. Results of the Recreation Plan Questionnaire indicate a strong public interest in addressing this issue and water quality here. Comments and discussion during the planning process also indicate a need for improved signage, picnic tables, benches, and possibly a trail.



Size: 1 acre

Service Area: Village of Northport

Accessibility: 1

Amenities:

- Landing/walkway over dam
- Picnic tables and grills
- Life saving ring

Haserot Waterfront Park



Haserot is a community park with beach frontage on Grand Traverse Bay. It is located on Rose Street and is adjacent to G. Marsten Dame Marina and the Visitors Center. The park is used for its green space.

The beach and green space at Haserot were altered by the renovation of the marina. Comments and discussion during the Recreation Plan process indicate an interest in planting trees and restoring the beach. Suggestions for improvements also included more benches and picnic tables, adding a pathway, having a dog run, and installing a Mobi-Mat to allow for greater water accessibility.

Size: 1 acre

Service Area: Village of Northport; Leelanau Township

Accessibility: 2

Amenities:

- Open space
- Picnic Tables, benches, and grills
- Flush toilets
- Water fountain
- Visitor Center
- Bike rack



Nagonaba Walking Trail

The Walking Trail is a footpath that runs half mile from Braman Hill to the west end of Nagonaba Street. The trail goes through a forested area. Part of the trail is along a creek.

Trail maintenance includes placing woodchips along the trail. However, due to the ecology of the area, drainage remains an issue.

Results of the Recreation Plan Questionnaire indicate that trail users are concerned about muddiness and directional signage, and also that there is an interest in the trail being expanded.

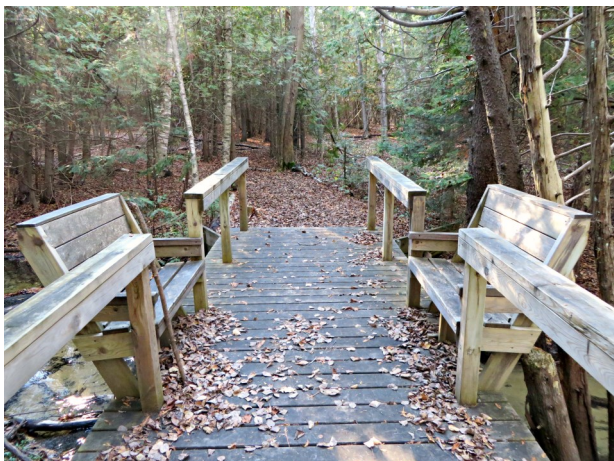
Size: 1/2 mile

Service Area: Surrounding neighborhoods; Village of Northport

Accessibility: 1

Amenities:

- Bridge with benches
- Boardwalk sections
- Art installation



Northport Creek Golf Course



Northport Creek Golf Course is a par 35, 9-hole golf course that was constructed on the 63-acre property in 2014. Solar power is used for irrigation and electric golf carts. The property and course was donated to the Village by a Village resident. Admission is charged. Memberships are available. The clubhouse is occasionally used for public events.

Comments received through the Recreation Plan Questionnaire were focused on building a full driving range. Discussion during the process indicated that management and the Village have been exploring and pursuing this on the adjacent property.

Size: 63 acres

Accessibility: 4

Amenities:

- 9-hole golf course
- Enclosed driving pit
- Clubhouse
- Cross-country skiing in winter

Visitors Center

The Northport Visitor Center provides information to visitors on lodging, dining, and recreation in and around the Village of Northport, along with additional information provided by local communities, businesses, and the State of Michigan. The Center operates from May through October, and is run entirely by volunteers. It is located on Rose Street, next to Haserot Waterfront Park.



Comments and discussion during the Recreation Plan process were largely focused on upgrading the interior of the building and improving the organization of services. There were also several comments about the location of the building, as citizens expressed concern over the visibility and use of the facility.

Size: <1 acre

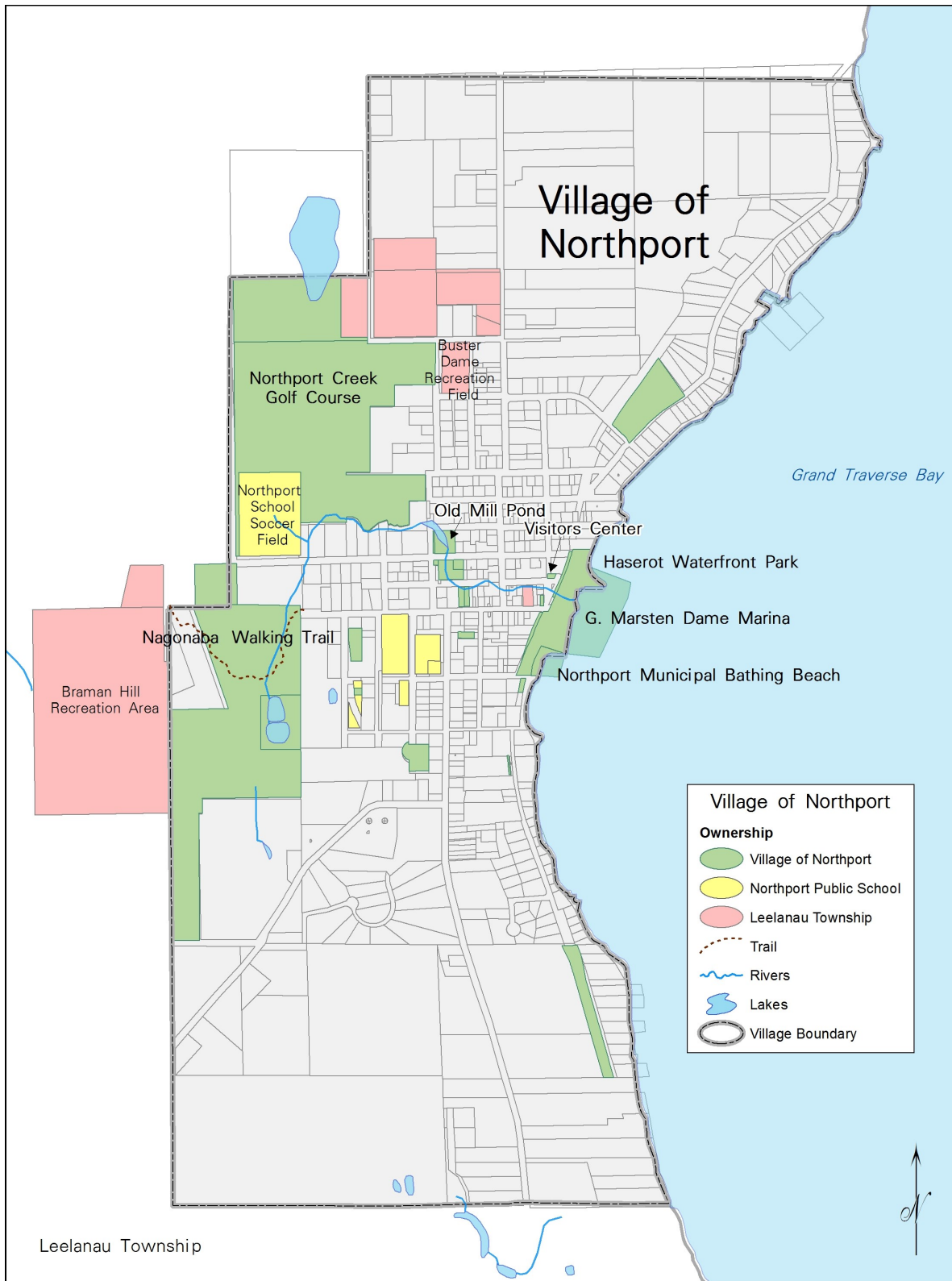
Accessibility: 3

Amenities:

- Maps and informational brochures
- Displays
- Access ramp
- DNR plaque



Map 5: Village of Northport Parks



DNR Recreation Grant History



**Grants Management
Department of Natural Resources**

Friday, August 28, 2015

Recreation Grant History

Applicant

Village of Northport

Project No. 26-00800

Project Year: 1976

Project Title: Northport Marina Acquisition

Project Status: Closed

Grant Amount: \$95,108.25

Project Description: Acquire 4.9 acres for marina expansion

Project No. 26-01060 F1

Project Year: 1978

Project Title: Northport Waterfront Park

Project Status: Closed

Grant Amount: \$12,419.10

Element

sidewalks
benches
picnic tables
toilet
fountain
fence

Element

picnic equipment
trash containers
parking

Project Description:

Project No. TF10-053

Project Year: 2010

Project Title: Waterfront Improvement Project

Project Status: Closed

Grant Amount: \$500,000.00

Element

Public restroom and parking lot
Sidewalk and trails
Utility relocation
Waterfront promenade
Benches, trash cans, and bike racks
Restoration/erosion control

Element

Permit fees
MNRTF sign

Project Description: Development to include new public restroom, parking lot, 15' wide promenade along marina walkway and access walkways through the open space area.

Nearby Recreation Facilities

Recreation opportunities outside the village limits are plentiful. The State of Michigan, Leelanau Township, and the Leelanau Conservancy all maintain land accessible to the public for hiking, swimming, hunting, picnicking, nonmotorized boating, camping, and other activities; while private facilities offer additional opportunities for boating. Farther south of the village, the public has access to both state and federal land: the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore covers over 45,000 acres of southwestern Leelanau County, and the Pere Marquette State Forest consists of 5,000 acres of forested land for hunting and hiking in the central southern areas of the County. State, local, and conservancy-owned recreation areas located in Leelanau Township are as follows:



Grand Traverse Lighthouse; photo from Leelanau County Planning and Community Development

State of Michigan

Leelanau State Park

The Leelanau State Park covers about 1,300 acres of woodlands, beaches, and sand dunes at the northern end of Leelanau County, north of Northport.

- 8.5 miles of trails for hiking, biking, snowshoeing, and skiing
- Rustic campground with 42 campsites along Lake Michigan and two mini-cabins
- Picnic pavilion and grills
- Bird watching
- Hunting
- Grand Traverse Lighthouse museum
- Lake Michigan/Fox Island overlook
- Beaches
- Playground

Leelanau Scenic Heritage Route

60 miles of M-22, M-109, and M-204 have been designated as the Leelanau Scenic Heritage Route.

- Driving tours
- Scenic views
- Historical sites

Leelanau Township

Braman Hill Recreation Area

Braman Hill offers tennis courts, sledding, a sportsman's club, and picnic facilities. Braman Hill is also used for special events, including the Northport Winter Carnival. The park is located just west of Northport between Melkild and Johnson Roads and serves both Village and Leelanau Township residents. The park is owned by Leelanau Township, but the Village provides some maintenance including snowplowing.

- Tennis courts
- Basketball courts
- Skateboard park
- Ice skating
- Tot lot
- Scenic Overlook
- Sledding
- Firing range
- Picnic area

Christmas Cove

Christmas Cove is a Lake Michigan beach with 200 feet of sandy shoreline located at the end of Christmas Cove Rd, northwest of the Village of Northport.

- Swimming
- Picnic area
- Restrooms

Omena Bay Beach

Omena Bay Beach consists of about 100' feet of sandy beach along M-22 on the shoreline of West Grand Traverse Bay in Omena.

- Swimming
- Picnic area
- Toilet

Peterson Park

Peterson Park includes about 1,000' of beach frontage on Lake Michigan, with stairs to the beach, at the end of Peterson Park Road west of Leelanau Township.

- Water frontage
- Picnic tables
- Outdoor grills
- Picnic pavilion
- Scenic views
- Swimming

Woolsey Memorial Air Field

Woolsey Memorial Airport is located about 3 miles north of the Village in Leelanau Township. A 4,000 foot turf runway is available for public use from April through October.

Northport Public School

- Community auditorium
- Soccer fields
- Softball fields
- Concession stand
- Gymnasiums
- Track
- Playground

Leelanau Conservancy

Clay Cliffs Natural Area

Clay Cliffs is a 105-acre natural area north of Leland. The property has a 1.5-mile trail systems and includes 1,700 feet of shoreline on both Lake Leelanau and Lake Michigan.

- Hiking, snowshoeing, skiing
- Birdwatching

Houdek Dunes

The Leelanau Conservancy-owned Houdek Dunes Natural Area covers 330 acres of dunes, sandy plains, wetlands, and woodlands between northern Lake Leelanau and Lake Michigan. The Natural Area is located several miles southwest of the Village off of M-22.

- Hiking, snowshoeing, skiing
- Hunting
- Birdwatching

Kehl Lake

Kehl Lake Natural Area is owned by the Leelanau Conservancy and is open to the public. The Natural Area includes 180 acres of land and 1,700 feet of shoreline.

- Hiking, snowshoeing, skiing
- Kayaking, canoeing, rowboating
- Birdwatching

Finton Natural Area

The Finton Natural Area, located north of Northport off Northport Point Road, covers 35 acres of hardwoods and cedar swamp.

- Hiking, snowshoeing, skiing
- Birdwatching

Lighthouse West Natural Area

The 45-acre Natural Area includes 640 feet of Lake Michigan shoreline near the Leelanau State Park, and is known for its birding. It has a 1 mile trail network.

- Hiking, snowshoeing, skiing
- Cobble beach
- Birdwatching

Jeff Lamont Preserve

The Jeff Lamont Preserve includes 40 acres of forest and wetlands north of Northport on Christmas Cove Rd. The preserve has a short trail through hemlock forest.

- Hiking, snowshoeing
- Birdwatching

Planning & Public Input

The recreation plan was developed by the Northport Village Planning Commission, with assistance from Networks Northwest. Meetings were held throughout 2015 to discuss and develop the plan timeline, content, draft goals, public input, and other details.

Public Input Meeting

An online questionnaire was developed by a recreation planning committee of the Northport Village Planning Commission in May 2015, in order to obtain input on Village recreation facilities and improvements. The survey was distributed via email as well as made available in hard copy at various outlets through August 2015. 83 responses were collected; 61% of respondents were full-time Village residents.

Survey results and a summary are included in Appendix A.

Recreation Plan Comment Period

At their November meeting, the Northport Planning Commission reviewed the draft plan, goals and objectives, and actions, and agreed to release the draft plan and schedule a public hearing. Notice was posted in the Leelanau Enterprise indicating that copies of the draft plan were available at the Northport Village offices, and online at the Networks Northwest website. Copies were also made available at other public offices throughout Leelanau Township and the County. Comments were received from December 17, 2015 to January 18, 2016.

Public Hearing & Adoption

Following the 30-day public review period, the Village of Northport Planning Commission held a public hearing on the plan to obtain additional public input and to review and discuss comments

received during the public comment period for inclusion in the plan. Notice for the public hearing was posted in the Leelanau Enterprise on December 17, 2015 and again on January 7, 2016. Changes were recommended based on comments received during the 30-day comment period. On January 19, the Planning Commission took action on the draft Recreation Plan, and forwarded it to the Village Council for their review and action. On _____, the Village Council voted to approve/not approve the Recreation Plan.

Section 5

Goals, Objectives, & Action Program

Goal #1: Encourage an adequate range of recreation opportunities for the residents and visitors to our community

Objective	Explore opportunities to enhance recreation facilities and programming at existing parks
Action	Continue exploring opportunities to partner with and support organizations to facilitate and further recreation programs for all population groups, such as the Northport Sailing School, in order to incorporate programs specifically targeted for youth
Action	Explore potential sites for an RV park and campground
Objective	Provide facilities to meet the needs and abilities of all park users
Action	Consider and incorporate universal access at all parks
Action	Improve sidewalks and walkways for universal accessibility
Action	Work with community organizations and volunteers to provide a broad range of recreation activities for all population groups
Action	Regularly identify recreation needs and gaps
Action	Install Mobi-Mats at remaining beach and signage identifying the Mobi-mats
Objective	Explore funding opportunities and partnerships that support and enhance recreational opportunities in the Village
Action	Seek funding opportunities through grants and donations to supplement recreation funds budgeted annually by the Village Council
Action	Seek and/or leverage funding for park improvements, and develop or enhance park facilities
Action	Work with Traverse Area Recreation and Transportation Trails (TART), the Leelanau Conservancy, the Leelanau Township Community Foundation, and other agencies

Goal #2: Maintain and improve existing parks and recreation facilities

Objective **Ensure a high level of maintenance and management at all parks and recreation facilities**

- Action** Continue to provide funding for maintenance and improvements at Village parks and recreation facilities
- Action** Enhance and connect waterfront recreation areas with consistently designed landscaping, interpretive signage, and pathways
- Action** Request Planning Commission review and make recommendations to the Village Council regarding expenditures for planned improvements and maintenance activities
- Action** Seek funding opportunities through grants and donations to leverage budgeted recreation funds
- Action** Continue partnerships with Leelanau Township to maintain Township-owned Braman Hill.

Objective **Provide improvements to existing parks and recreation facilities as needed**

Old Mill Pond

- Action** Maintain and improve existing facility
- Action** Explore options and take action to reduce algae growth in pond
- Action** Install additional benches and picnic tables
- Action** Address parking and signage needs
- Action** Explore opportunities for trail development that would connect with current or future trail systems
- Action** Explore developing a picnic and family-oriented space, while considering cross-use for other events
- Action** Evaluate the dam, determine functionality, and identify repairs needed to keep the pond in healthy state

Northport Municipal South Beach

- Action** Maintain and improve beach
- Action** Improve picnic and playground areas by adding picnic tables, benches, and shade structures, and updating swings
- Action** Explore maintenance options for beach improvements
- Action** Evaluate adequacy of signage

Marsten Dame Marina

- Action** Maintain and improve existing facilities
- Action** Consider additional landscaping

Section 5—Goals, Objectives, & Action Program

<i>Haserot Waterfront Park and Beach</i>	
Action	Maintain and improve existing facilities
Action	Restore and maintain beach area
Action	Improve landscaping by restoring grass and planting trees
Action	Improve and maintain public restrooms
Action	Provide additional picnic tables and benches
Action	Consider the addition of play structures, boat moorings, fire pits, and pathways
Action	Explore designating park space for a dog run
Action	Add Mobi-Mat for improved accessibility to water
<i>Nagonaba Walking Trail</i>	
Action	Maintain and improve existing facilities
Action	Consider expanding footpath to provide greater connections from Village streets and neighborhoods
Action	Improve entrance and wayfinding signage
Action	Address drainage along trail
Action	Explore options to create a hook-up with Johnson Road
<i>Northport Creek Golf Course</i>	
Action	Maintain existing golf course
Action	Pursue the addition of a driving range on adjacent property
Action	Investigate additional recreation opportunities on adjacent Village-owned property
<i>Visitor Center Visitor Center</i>	
Action	Maintain and improve existing facilities
Action	Remodel and improve the interior

Goal #3: Ensure high-quality natural areas, scenic corridors, and open spaces to meet the community’s existing and future needs

Objective	Explore opportunities to acquire acreage for additional recreation areas
Action	Identify properties for potential purchase based on identified community priorities
Action	In partnership with the Leelanau Conservancy and other interested agencies, study the feasibility of the acquisition of property for recreation or other civic use
Action	Explore public and private partnerships and grant opportunities for the acquisition of property or easements for the purpose of creating passive recreation facilities, natural areas, or other parks
Action	Determine the public’s interest in a dog park; based on the outcome, explore and acquire acreage to establish a dog park
Objective	Develop an interconnected system of trails and pathways
Action	Continue to maintain, improve, and expand existing trails
Action	Identify potential trail routes to link existing trails
Action	Identify potential trail connectors to parks, schools, neighborhoods, and other community resources
Action	Participate in coordinated trail planning efforts with regional agencies, such as Traverse Area Recreation and Transportation Trails (TART), neighboring communities, and other stakeholders to develop and link trail systems
Action	Explore partnerships and grant opportunities for the acquisition of property or easements for the purpose of creating trail networks
Objective	Preserve and maintain the scenic and natural open areas within the village
Action	Manage parks and recreation areas to protect and enhance natural resources and environmentally sensitive features
Action	Explore partnerships and grant opportunities to help protect and enhance natural resources and environmentally sensitive features at Village owned or managed recreation areas



Appendices*

Appendix A: Public Input Documentation

- Legal Notices
- Copy of Public Input Survey
- Responses Received from Questionnaire
- Comments from Public Input Meeting

Appendix B: Barrier Free Accessibility Requirements

Appendix C: Approval Documentation

- Minutes from Northport Village Planning Commission; release of the Recreation Plan for public review
- Minutes from Northport Village Council public hearing
- Resolution from Northport Village Council to approve Recreation Plan

***To be included with final report:**