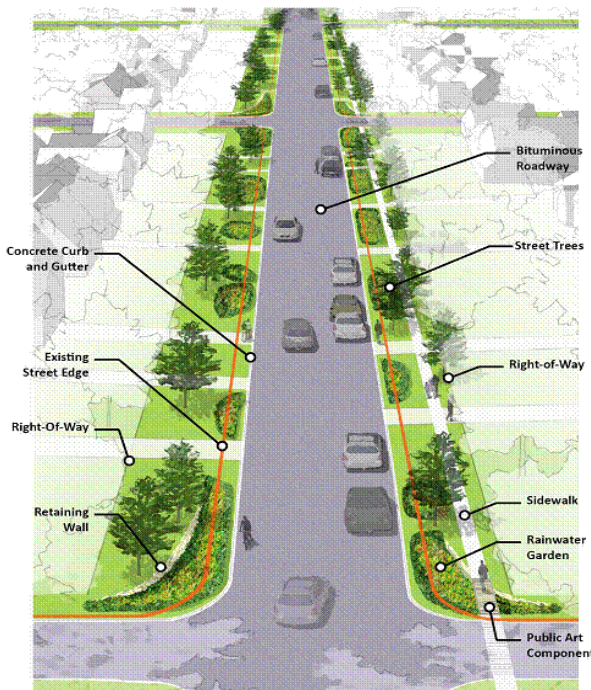


Chapter 7. Capital Improvements and Recreation Strategy.

7.1 Capital Improvements Projects

The Capital Improvements Project section provides a comprehensive list of each of the projects identified within the planning process. This data will assist the City in the identification and allotment of needed funds for the development of park facilities and recreational opportunities. The list is meant as a guideline and may be adjusted to meet changing parks and recreation goals and objectives or budgetary considerations.



Given limited resources, the City will evaluate capital improvement project lists on an annual basis and determine which projects should receive priority based on numerous factors. Projects will be evaluated and prioritized based on factors including public safety, value to the community, cost, frequency of use, etc. Ultimately City Council will determine which projects are completed on a yearly basis consistent with the fiscal year of April 1 thru March 31.

Michigan Beach

Michigan Beach currently has a covered pavilion, a concession stand, a volleyball net and very limited and outdated playground equipment.

To continue to attract people and be a point of pride of the community, new playground equipment is necessary. Also, due to the temperature of the water at this beach, additional playground equipment would bring people down to enjoy the view and have physical activities for the kids to do.



Another issue that needs to be addressed is the condition of the grass area at Michigan Beach. It is often burned out, especially if it is a dry, hot summer. Some type of a watering system needs to be installed so that the grass is lush and attracts more people to utilize the picnic area at this beach. Given the expense of traditional sprinkling systems the City may want to low water grasses here and in other parks.

Additional improvements at Michigan Beach include the following:

- Add Shuffleboard courts.
- Install a world-class state of the art playground structure.
- Evaluate signage and make any needed changes/additions.
- Relocate and upgrade basketball courts.
- Improvements to the West end parking lot/wooded area at Michigan Beach. Easier to monitor – clear some trees between beach and parking lot, etc.

- Improve and widen the Lake Michigan Park-walking trail. Improve and widen trail.
- New stair cases going down to beach along Park Avenue.
- Enhance and identify the trail head.
- Barrier free access.
- New paint, roof and doors on concession building.
- Improve viewing platform.
- New paint and roof on pavilion.
- Replace or add parking bumpers.
- New lifeguard chairs.
- Permanent benches.
- Excavate and level sand near retaining walls.
- New grills.
- New drains in front of openings.
- New swim buoys.

Ferry Beach

Ferry Beach Park is a highly valued and busy park due the beach, close proximity to the boat launch, access to Lake Charlevoix, pavilions, volleyball and basketball courts, and numerous other amenities. Capital improvements to this park include the following.

- Removal of the pier.
- Roof replacement and new grinder pump at the fish cleaning station.
- New bathroom facilities with windows.
- New retaining walls.
- Boat launch upgrades.
- New paint, roof and doors on concession building.
- New paint and roof on pavilions.
- Replace or add parking bumpers.
- New lifeguard chairs.

- Permanent benches.
- New grills.
- New swim buoys.

Charlevoix Golf Club Improvements

In the coming years, capital improvements are needed to extend the life of the course, make it more functional, and increase the safety of the course's users. Over the past several years the course has made the following capital improvements:

- New roof installed in the fall of 2011.
- Recent upgrades were completed at the maintenance buildings, including the pesticide storage and loading buildings are completely code compliant, and serve as safe and productive areas to store and load the associated supplies and equipment.

The Golf Club Staff will have to continue to explore options to increase revenues and decrease expenditures with the ultimate goal of being a self-sustaining operation. In planning for the future operation and success of the Charlevoix Golf Club, course Staff have identified both short-term and long-term projects. Short-term improvements include the following:

- Cart path improvements are needed to accommodate the growing number of carts being used on the course.
- Irrigation upgrades, mainly the replacement of sprinkler heads are needed to comply with the current industry standard and prolong the

life of the aging system currently in place.

- Tree and brush removal is a growing concern as many of the trees become older, rotted, and unstable.
- Storm door and window replacements.
- Addition of insulation, carpeting and décor.



The long term improvement projects include the following:

- The old maintenance/storage buildings needs to be demolished.
- A heated office, bathroom, and the equipment service area needs to be added to the existing pole building.
- Tee surfaces need surface reconstruction and additional tees need to be installed.
- The parking lots need resurfacing and some parking areas need to be converted from dirt to asphalt.
- Remove aging trees at various locations and replace with appropriate species. (Potentially through a local tree planting program).

- The current practice putting green located immediately west of the clubhouse is substantially undersized.
- The practice green will eventually need to be moved, enlarged, and irrigated to accommodate course patrons.
- The installation of lighting in and around the pavilion area east of the clubhouse is necessary to accommodate larger golf outings, parties, and fundraisers. The pavilion is heavily used during large outings, parties, and ceremonies, many of which conclude after dusk, further demonstrating the need for a safely lit area.
- One of the most significant long term improvements could be the addition of a two-way tunnel system that would allow golfers to cross US-31 without having to walk across the four lane highway. The US-31 speed limit in the vicinity of the golf course is 45 mph, and as a consequence, crossing the highway as a pedestrian can be a dangerous endeavor. Discussions with the Michigan Department of Transportation regarding lowering the speed limit in the golf course vicinity have been met with opposition. The addition of a tunnel system would create a much safer environment not only for golfers, but also for City maintenance crews, as well as other pedestrians using the city sidewalks in the area
- The course's close proximity to the public tennis courts provides a prime opportunity to combine the

recreation areas to function as one entity. Although the tennis courts are located only a few hundred feet from the clubhouse, they are not staffed, do not have bathrooms on site, and lack appropriate signage. Upgrades to the golf clubhouse and installation of bathrooms and appropriate signage would serve as an asset to accommodate patrons of the tennis courts. The courts do not require full-time staff and could be managed by golf personnel due to the fact that the two facilities share the same seasonal operating schedules and locations.

- Located on the southern portion (south of US-31) of the golf course property immediately southwest of the intersection of US-31 and Mercer Boulevard is an area where banners are displayed and provide information for upcoming events in and around the City. The current banner location is not well landscaped, nor does it stand out to people passing by. The banner location should be lit and heavily landscaped with trees, hedges, and bright flowers providing a beautiful welcome to visitors and residents of the City.



All recreational facilities face inherent challenges that can affect future operations, expansion or improvements. Golf Club staff has identified the following challenges:

- The course's practice center provides limited, but much needed space for golf lessons as well as a practice area for everyday patrons to utilize. Although the practice space is limited, there is little to no room for expansion unless the entire space is moved from its current location which is unlikely given the course layout and available acreage.
- Another limitation to the course has been the lack of a driving range forcing patrons to utilize other ranges in the area and ultimately play those courses rather than the City's. Again, due to limited space and available acreage, the course lacks a suitable area and location for a driving range.

Many of the course updates described in this section provide essential upgrades and services that would assist in bringing the course back "into the black" and keep residents and visitors golfing in the City of Charlevoix. The Charlevoix Golf Club staff have worked hard to maintain the quality of the course today, but future improvements are necessary for this historic and valued course to stay viable.

Marina Improvements

The City Marina is a state of the art marine facility located in the heart of downtown Charlevoix. Despite being only a few years old, facility upgrades and improvements will be needed as the City looks toward the future. The following capital improvement projects have been identified for the City Marina:

- Currently the marina does not contain enough slip capacity needed to allow for numerous vessels greater than 60 feet in length. Additional floating dock sections similar to the current dock style are needed to accommodate large sized vessels. The installation of a new floating dock section on the marina's north end approximately 200' – 250' in length, 10' – 12' wide with 80' long "T" style center and end sections would allow sufficient space needed to accommodate large sized vessels. Also, the addition of the aforementioned dock section would be needed if Charlevoix is afforded the opportunity to host a new Coast Guard cutter in the future. The Coast Guard cutter

would be docked autonomously, on the opposite side of the dock from public's vessels. The cutter would have the ability to get underway and dock independently from local charter boats and public watercraft. The cutter would also continue to maintain emergency positioning near the Pine River Channel giving easy access to Lake Michigan and the other Great Lakes.

- The location of the City Marina allows for easy access to central downtown on foot and bicycle, as well as offers services such as rides in the battery powered "Gem Car," where patrons of the Marina are able to travel to areas in the City which may be located outside of general walking distance. The "Gem Car" service is well utilized by most patrons and is especially important to handicapped and elderly patrons; however, the "Gem Car" itself is in currently in less than optimal condition. At nearly a decade old, nearing its battery life expectancy, and after many seasons of repairs, the car is in need of replacement.

The facility maintenance and upgrades described above will be required to keep continued interest in the City's marina as a major boating destination for patrons throughout the local area, state, and beyond.



Other Parks and Sports Facility Improvements.

One of the City's greatest assets is its parks system and sports facilities. The parks and sports facilities provide both active and passive recreation opportunities. The City should anticipate making necessary improvements to the parks in the coming years.

Any future planning should take into consideration some of the significant issues associated with the City's parks. Maintaining the City's parks is labor intensive, and the costs to maintain facilities and to irrigate grass can be prohibitive.

Furthermore, although most parks, including beaches, are enjoyed by residents from all over the County and beyond, maintenance and operations are paid for only by City residents. As the City makes plans for the future of its parks, attempts should be made to try and alleviate these issues by securing additional sources of funding (especially for future capital improvements), or

begin cost sharing programs with neighboring townships, counties and other organizations.

Park or sports facility improvements may include the following:

- Upgrade/repair steps off West Dixon.
- Install a flagpole at facilities.
- Masonry repair at all parks.
- Handrail installation and repair at various parks.
- Turf protection mats in East Park during special events.
- Portable bleachers for ball fields and other events.
- Improve dugouts at ball fields.
- Additional picnic tables at all parks.
- Permanent benches in select locations.
- Potential to rebuild structure at Bridge Park that had information about Charlevoix's historical fishing roots.

Mt. McSauba Recreation Area Improvements

Recreation planning should take into account Mt. McSauba's financial solvency. McSauba has difficulty operating "in the black," and as a result, is often subsidized by the General Fund. Like the City's beaches and parks, it is used by residents from nearby counties, as well as the rest of the State; however, several townships that once participated in funding this recreation area have stopped contributing. This places increased financial burden on the City taxpayers to continue operations and

programs. The following section discusses future projects both large and small that will be necessary for this valued recreation area.



Mt. McSauba Disc Golf Course

Disc Golf is a very fast growing sport and interest continues to grow in our part of the state. However, there are currently only a few public disc golf courses in the area, and none in Charlevoix. An eighteen-hole disc golf course is currently (as of June 2011) being installed at the Mt. McSauba Recreational Area using exclusively volunteered contributions and labor. The course will not require an admission fee, thereby furthering the goals to provide multi-generational opportunities and recreation for all ages at no cost to the visitor. The course design will minimize the use of the hiking trails, the area used by the wintertime ice rink, the west face of Mt. McSauba, and the sledding hill.

The City's intent is to construct the disc golf course in a way that balances Mt.

McSauba's many uses. The holes are designed so that users of the course always have a clear line of sight, limiting the likelihood that they might accidentally strike or injure a hiker or other McSauba user. Additionally, the City is fully invested in limiting the environmental impact of the course. The course is designed in such a way to avoid the most sensitive areas, winding through the most stable ground, less-dense hardwood forests, and already well-used recreational areas. Abundant trash and recycling receptacles are to be placed along the trail, encouraging users to keep the course and trails clean.

Additional capital projects at Mt. McSauba include the following:

- Create and implement a comprehensive trail plan for the entire recreation area, thereby expanding the cross-country trail network at McSauba and the township preserve.
- Upgrade restrooms.
- Kiosk with paid ads.
- Plan and conduct required safety classes for skiing and snowboarding.
- Improve skating rink – expand area of rink.
- Change the grade (steepness) at the top of the sled hill.
- Assist Pole for sledding hill (Railings).
- Dedicated Cross Country Ski Trails.
- Groom Cross County Trails.
- Additional parking.
- Additional trails (Comprehensive Trail plan.)

- Additional signage & evaluate effectiveness of all area signage.
- Upgrade Basketball court area and provide lighting with a paid timer.
- Additional playground equipment including play structures.
- Tow rope on sled hill.
- Chair lift on ski hill.
- Pave parking lot.
- Additional ski and sliding hills.
- Additional snow making equipment.
- Barrier free access.



Elm Street Tennis Courts

The Elm Street Tennis Courts have been significantly underutilized in recent years. The courts are in dire need of upgrades and repairs in order to be enjoyed by residents, as well as visitors to the area. Resurfacing of the courts, new nets, and simple bathroom facilities would greatly enhance the use of these courts. In addition, to serve multi-generational populations and people of various physical abilities to be engaged, it is recommended that we allow pickleball to be played on these courts as well.

That would entail painting of extra boundaries and the ability to easily lower and raise the nets accordingly. Pickleball is one of the fastest growing sports in retirement communities. Lastly, proper signage will need to be installed on site.

- Resurface courts
- New nets
- Improve signage
- Add simple restroom facilities
- Allow pickle ball to be played
- Barrier free access

Complete Streets and the Lake to Lake Trail

As explained in Chapter 5, establishing a transportation network encouraging non-motorized travel will be an important investment in Charlevoix's future. These capital investments are a major but worthwhile investment considering the physical, economic, environmental, and traffic safety benefits that result from this infrastructure. The following capital improvements are the most important long-term investments necessary to provide alternative transportation options and quality recreation activities.

- Provide support for the construction of the Lake to Lake Trail and necessary connections to the City.
- Design and construct additional bike lanes based on the overall transportation plan when
- Plan for and construct additional paths or sidewalks to improve the City's walkability.



North side Multi-use Tunnel

The golf course is surrounded by well-placed sidewalks that allow for high density pedestrian access, making a tunnel crossing US 31 even more imperative to safely connect City residents to parks, beaches, and recreation areas, as well as schools, neighborhoods, churches, and other locations. The tunnel system would also allow for the students living in the neighborhoods south of US-31 to safely access the Charlevoix Elementary School without having to cross the highway, as well as promote additional daily exercise for hundreds of young people in the community.

The tunnel system would require engineering studies at various locations along the north and south sides of US-31. At the present time, golfers and pedestrians are forced to cross the highway at two locations to access the entire golf course as well as area neighborhoods. Past engineering and environmental studies show the potential for brownfields in the immediate vicinity of the golf course, giving the opportunity

to redevelop the land into useable greenspace. The tunnel system would also provide a safe highway crossing for the overall bike system giving bikers much needed continuity through the City of Charlevoix and making the City one of the top destinations along the trail.

- Work with MDOT and seek grant funding for the construction of an underpass under US 31 adjacent to the City Golf Course accommodating a variety of recreational users.

7.2 Future Recreation Strategy.

Annual Recreational Planning and Budgeting

On a yearly basis appropriate City officials should meet with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to discuss upcoming projects and seek their input in establishing parks and recreation priorities. Working cooperatively with Staff, this group could come up with specific recommendations and capital improvements that should be included in the budget. These recommendations could be shared with the public to gauge support or opposition to particular improvements. The City should actively rely on this Parks and Recreation Master Plan for guidance.

Recommendations to City Council and the public should include the rationale or reasoning behind the decision. This cooperative approach will be instrumental in the future given shrinking

budgets and the potential need to streamline operations and focus on attainable improvements.

Future Programs and Events.

The Future Programs and Events list identifies planned and proposed City-initiated functions and events. This list will act as a way for the City to identify funding needs and, like the Capital Improvement Projects, help in the allotment of needed funds and possible grants in order to assist with these programs and events.

- *Festivals*
- *Sporting Events, etc.*
- Ultimate Frisbee
- Open Gym for Basketball
- Soccer
- Golf League – already in existence
- Sports Workshops
- Beach Volleyball
- Pond Hockey League
- Men’s Basketball league at the Middle School
- Women’s Basketball league at the Middle school
- Coed basketball league at the middle school
- Indoor Soccer league
- “Gate” night at Mt. McSauba around lessons and middle school ski team.
- Mt. McSauba to house a local ski academy
- Distance Running Day Camp/Track and Field Day Camp at High School track leading up to Venetian race(s).

Strengthen Relationships with Neighboring Governmental Agencies

The City of Charlevoix seeks to strengthen relationships with neighboring governmental agencies, and in particular with the Charlevoix Township, which has several park properties just outside the City limits. Building strong relationship with the Township would facilitate the City's desire to acquire additional land for trails in the southwest quadrant of the City.

Relationships with the City of Charlevoix and neighboring jurisdictions are also important to seek benefits from shared development and political support. This may include exploring the potential for a recreation authority with surrounding townships.

The City should also coordinate with Charlevoix County on a regional approach to recreation planning to seek common goals and avoid repetition in activities, facilities, or programs.

Finally at the State level, coordination and cooperation with MDOT and the MDNR will be instrumental in implementing transportation projects and grant funding. Working relationships with key staff people and effective communication will have a positive influence on parks and recreation activities and facilities.