



# City of Hillsdale Recreation Plan

## 2025-2030 Edition

**Plan Approval and Adoption**

Hillsdale City Planning Commission .....	August 20, 2025
Hillsdale City Council .....	October 6, 2025
Michigan Department of Natural Resources .....	

***The 2025-2030 edition of the City of Hillsdale Recreation Plan  
will expire on December 31, 2030***



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Chapter 1

# **Community Description**

City of Hillsdale









A priority of the City of Hillsdale is to develop and implement a recreation plan which responds to the recreational desires of its citizens and to plan for enhancements to parks and recreation programs. A sincere effort was spent in developing this plan which represents the projected needs for recreation facilities and services in the City surrounding areas. For example, the plan provides a clear picture of the recreational opportunities available to residents regardless of who provides them. Nontraditional recreation opportunities such as historic districts/structures and shopping opportunities are also catalogued as well as traditional parks and recreation facilities.

## Location

The City of Hillsdale is located in northwestern Hillsdale County, close to Michigan's border with Northwest Ohio and Northeast Indiana (please see the Regional Location Map). Michigan Highway 99 (M-99) traverses the community and United States Highway 12 (US-12) is located to the north as it traverses the Village of Jonesville. Those thoroughfares provide access to the urbanized areas of Jackson, Ann Arbor, Detroit, Battle Creek, Kalamazoo, and Grand Rapids.

The City of Hillsdale has an area of 6.23 square miles. The communities are surrounded by the following local units of government:

ADJACENT LOCAL UNITS OF GOVERNMENT	
FAYETTE TOWNSHIP	CAMBRIA TOWNSHIP
ADAMS TOWNSHIP	READING TOWNSHIP
JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP	ALLEN TOWNSHIP

## A Brief Socioeconomic Summary

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

## ■ Population History & Projections

The 2020 population for the City of Hillsdale was 8,036 residents, a decrease of nearly 300 residents from 2010. The population of the City increased fairly steadily from 1930 through 2010. The majority of residents in Hillsdale County continue to live in the City, although this majority is steadily decreasing each decade.

## ■ Age & Sex of the Population

~~Baby Boomers (people aged 45 to 64 in 2010) and Gen X or Shadow Boomers (people aged 25 to 44 in 2010) comprised over half of the population of Hillsdale Township (53%) but well under half of the population of the City of Hillsdale (42%).~~ Persons under the age of 18 (25%) comprise well under half of the City of Hillsdale's population. People aged at least 65 in 2010 2020 comprised well under a quarter of the population in the City (14%) and the Township (19%). Just over half of City (53% 51%) and Township (51%) residents were female in 2010 2020.

## ■ Household & Family Composition

Almost two-thirds of Hillsdale Area households (66%) were comprised of 1 or 2 people in 2000. Only a small portion of Area households (10%) contained 5 or more individuals. Almost two-thirds (61%) of Area households were comprised of families.

## ■ Racial & Ethnic Composition

Race and ethnicity are not significant issues for recreation given the homogeneity of the populations of the City of Hillsdale. For example, almost all City (93%) residents considered themselves white in 2020; Black/African Americans (1.4%) and Hispanics/Latino (4.9%) comprised a very small portion of the populations of the City (2%) that year.

## ■ Disabilities of Residents

Disabled residents comprised less than a quarter of City of Hillsdale (13%) residents in 2021. It is important to note that older residents are more apt to have a disability than their younger neighbors.

## ■ Income

The median income for City of Hillsdale households (\$44,494) was less than that for the state of Michigan (\$63,202) in 2021.

## The Health of Residents

A little more than one third of Michigan residents were obese in 2021, according to [Healthy Michigan, Michigan Health & Wellness](#), and people who are overweight or obese comprise two thirds of the population. "Overweight and obesity substantially increase the risk for cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, lipid disorders, stroke, gallbladder disease, osteoarthritis, sleep apnea, respiratory problems, psychological disorders, stress, incontinence, and cancers of the endometrium, breast, prostate and colon," according to that report. <sup>1</sup>The obesity rates for Hillsdale County and the State of Michigan in 2015 were 37.5% and 30.9%, respectively, according to [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org).

A couple factors of particular relevance to community growth, development, and planning contribute to unhealthy weight:

- "Inadequate community infrastructure limits the ability of people to be active. These include lack of accessible indoor and outdoor exercise facilities, neighborhood sidewalks, walking paths, and bicycle trails. Additionally, inclement weather, lack of adequate recreational opportunities, fear of unsafe neighborhoods, and unattractive/unpleasant local environments may prevent people from exercising."
- "Programs and policies are necessary to promote smart community growth and the establishment of urban and rural environments supportive of physical activity. Active community environments provide access to safe favorable conditions for physical activity and promote the development of social support networks that encourage activity."

The report recommends cooperation among state and local units of government and residents in the promotion of active environments, including the following actions:

1. "Develop walkable communities by widening and maintaining or building sidewalks, safe roadway crossings, and aesthetically pleasing areas."
2. "Encourage bicycling by developing, maintaining, and promoting the use of bike paths."
3. "Require [that] all urban planning and re-design incorporate the concepts of active community environments and there by promote physical activity."

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<sup>1</sup>The report, developed by the Institute for Public Policy & Social Research and the Institute for Healthcare Studies at Michigan State University, is part of a series entitled "Informing the Debate: Health Policy: Options for Michigan Policymakers".



Chapter 2

## **Administrative Structure**

City of Hillsdale

## Authorization

In response to identified recreation needs, the Hillsdale City Council formed a Recreation Planning Advisory Committee to develop the City of Hillsdale Recreation Plan under the authority of Public Act 156 of 1917 (Recreation and Playgrounds). The act “authorizes cities, villages, counties, townships and school districts to operate systems of public recreation and playgrounds” (emphasis added) and allows them to:

- “operate a system of public recreation and playgrounds; acquire, equip and maintain land, buildings or other recreational facilities; employ a superintendent of recreation and assistants; vote and expend funds for the operation of such system.”
- “operate such a system independently or they may cooperate in its conduct in any manner which they may mutually agree; or they may delegate the operation of the system to a recreation board created by any or all of them, and appropriate money, voted for this purpose, to such board” (emphasis added).

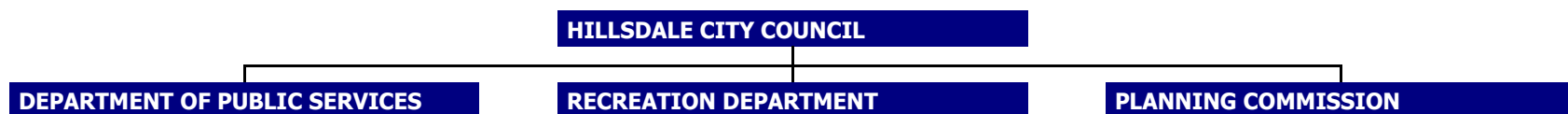
The act also allows park systems to operate on “(1) property under its custody and management; (2) other public property;” and “(3) private property, with the consent of the owners.”

A copy of PA 156 of 1917 is available online at [http://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(jvpdab552soxemek3mee3h55\)/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-Act-156-of-1917.pdf](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(jvpdab552soxemek3mee3h55)/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-Act-156-of-1917.pdf)

## Organizational Structure

The following bodies are involved in the provision of municipal recreation:

### CITY RECREATION STRUCTURE



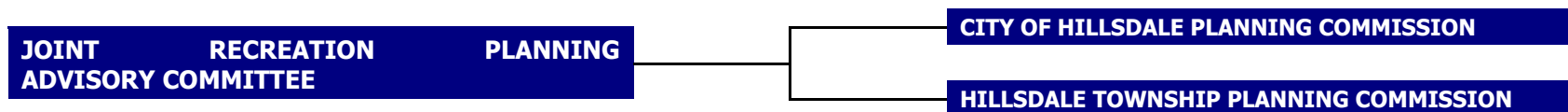
- **City of Hillsdale.** The responsibility for Hillsdale’s parks and recreation programs is divided among several authorities. For example, the Department of Public Services is responsible for parks and recreation facility maintenance and the Recreation Department administers the municipality’s recreation **programming**. Planning for the parks and recreation system is provided by the Planning Commission. The City may also utilize volunteers for specific programs and projects. City Council maintains final authority over Hillsdale’s parks and recreation facilities and programs.



The City Council is comprised of a Mayor and 8 council members representing 4 wards. The Planning Commission is comprised of 7 members, including the following *ex officio* members: the Mayor and City Manager. The Department of Public Services is comprised of a Director, 6 fulltime employees, 2 to 3 seasonal employees, and 2 to 3 temporary workers, annually. The Recreation Department is comprised of a Director, seasonal employees, and relies heavily on numerous volunteers.

- **Headwaters Recreational Authority.** The City of Hillsdale, the City of Jonesville, and the Townships of Fayette and Hillsdale joined together in 2011 to establish an authority to oversee the development of trails within Hillsdale County. The Authority may utilize volunteers for specific projects. The Authority’s Board is comprised of 2 representatives from each municipality and 1 representative appointed by the County.
- **Recreation Planning.** The Recreation Planning Advisory Committee is responsible for the development of the City of Hillsdale Recreation Plan. Membership is comprised of the Planning Commission of the City. The Committee is staffed by the City of Hillsdale’s Planner and Recreation Director.

#### JOINT RECREATION PLANNING STRUCTURE



#### Sources of Funding

The City of Hillsdale and Hillsdale Township identify several potential sources of revenue for their recreation facilities and programs:

- general tax fund dollars
- grants awarded for specific projects; and
- participation fees for recreation programs and use of park facilities; and
- donations from the general citizenry and philanthropic organizations.

General fund tax dollars are used for the maintenance and programming of City parks and recreation facilities, including the cost of producing this Plan. Grants are generally awarded for the acquisition of parkland and the development of a park or recreational fa-

cility (e.g., trails, playgrounds, picnic shelters, sports facilities, etc.). Donations to be used at the discretion of the City or for a specific facility or program are also accepted. A portion of the local match required of most grants may also come from the general funds or donations. Grants for parks and recreational facilities are likely to come from several sources:

- **The Michigan Department of Natural Resources**

- The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund
- The Land and Water Conservation Fund<sup>2</sup>

- **The Michigan Department of Transportation**

- The Transportation Enhancement Program<sup>1</sup>

- **The Hillsdale County Road Commission**

- The 1% annual allocation of state transportation (Act 51) funds for non-motorized facilities.

- **Community Foundation**

## **Parks and Recreation Budgeting**

The parks and recreation budget for the City of Hillsdale is used almost entirely for the maintenance and programming of its parks. The budget for 2024-25 is \$157,000.00. Capital outlays are also made for capital improvements to existing facilities, development and construction of new facilities, preparation of grant applications, and development of new recreational opportunities.

## **Relationships with Other Recreation Providers**

The City is not the only supplier of parks and recreational opportunities to the residents of Hillsdale and the surrounding area.

**Schools.** Hillsdale Community Schools is also a major supplier of parks and recreational opportunities to City and county residents (please see the School Districts map). The Hillsdale County Intermediate School District (which includes Hillsdale Community Schools) provides educational services to residents and local school districts. However, there are many opportunities for area schools

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<sup>2</sup> This is a Federal program administered locally by the State of Michigan.

to utilize local parks and nature sanctuaries to educate students and their parents about the natural environment, especially the plethora of aquatic resources available to area residents. Cooperation with area schools also creates opportunities for new recreation programs.

- **Local, County, State Government and Private Providers.** Hillsdale County and other nearby cities and villages, as well as some townships maintain parks. The State of Michigan also provides a variety of recreational facilities in the form of state game, wildlife, and recreation areas; state historic parks; and state parks throughout the State (although none of those facilities are located in the City). A variety of private entrepreneurs and quasi-public agencies also provide recreation facilities and programs in and around the Township. Recreational activities take place in all of the facilities listed above. Those programs are sponsored by a variety of public, quasi-public, and private boosters. As health awareness continues to be of importance, expansion and promotion of these activities becomes increasingly important.

Please refer to Chapter 3 for a more detailed description of recreation facilities in the Hillsdale Area.

### **Awareness of Recreational Opportunities and Facilities**

A review of Chapter 3 will illustrate the wealth of recreation facilities, recreational programs, and natural resources available to the residents of the City of Hillsdale. Promotion of the wealth of opportunities within the City of Hillsdale and the outlying areas has become a priority. As a selected city of Region 9 for the Governor's Prosperity Project, Rising Tide Initiative, the City of Hillsdale has begun development of placemaking, wayfinding, and branding strategies reflective of the area's many attributes. Quality of Life is considered one of Hillsdale's greatest assets due in large part to its many lakes, parks, and recreational opportunities. The City has hosted public forums with regard to these strategies. Participation has included organizations county-wide, both Hillsdale and Jackson Colleges, Hillsdale Hospital, and the general public. In an effort to further promotion, the City's Recreation Department continues to enhance its webpage, maintains a presence through social media, and public presentations. The Department continually updates its information and includes the web and social media connection information in all its publications and public announcements.

The redevelopment of Sandy Beach on Baw Beese Lake in the City of Hillsdale has been a grand scale effort by Hillsdale Rotary and the City to bring a local gem back to its splendor. In the fall of 2022, the parking lot was paved and a pavilion was erected (paid for by a private citizen with help from the community) marking the final phase of the redevelopment. The newly renovated park has be-

come a “recreation destination” landmark for the entire area and serves as a trail destination as well. This has spurred what seems to be a movement by other service groups and residents to adopt and renovate other parks within the City.

Since the completion of the Sandy Beach project, Hillsdale Rotary has since proposed the development of a fitness park located just outside of the City’s downtown adjacent to Mrs. Stock’s Park and the Baw Beese Trail. Upon the donation of the property by a local businessman, the plans for the park have been rolled out. The park is to include outdoor fitness equipment, a children’s play area, pickle ball courts and a pavilion.

Kiwanis has made great improvements to Cold Springs Park over the last 3 years. This project involved revitalization of some play equipment and replacement of other pieces with ADA approved equipment, pouring of sidewalks for accessibility and installation of certified fall zones. Plans to clear the springs and pond will be the next endeavor.

Hillsdale Exchange Club has “adopted” Waterworks Park with a 3 phase plan for renovation. The first phase of renovation took place in the spring of 2024. This involves the removal of obsolete play equipment, installation of expression swings for inclusive play, new belt swings, fall zone, and benches. A fishing pier has been installed off the shoreline in the summer of 2023. It is the goal of the City to continue working with organizations and the community to update the parks. Special focus will be given to inclusive play and sensory awareness as the parks are redesigned.

Local hardware store, Gelzer’s Hardware, has spearheaded plans to develop an 18 hole professional grade disc golf course within the Baw Beese Park System. The course will be developed on vacant, undeveloped land owned by the City. Funding will be provided by several volunteers, local businesses and the City’s Parks budget. The course will consist of cement golf tees, disc golf baskets and flags and will maintain the natural landscape of the land. The addition of the disc golf course will attract visitors from all around affecting a boost to the local economy in turn.

Chapter 3

## **Recreation and Resource Inventories**

City of Hillsdale

## Recreation Inventory

The recreation inventory is comprised of all of parks and recreation facilities and programs available to the residents of the City and Township, not just those owned and managed by the local units of government (please see the Recreation Facility map). The facilities and programs were identified through local knowledge and review of current and historic documents and maps.

### Municipal Parks and Recreation Facilities

The City of Hillsdale provides ten formal parks which contain a variety of recreation facilities. Waterworks Park, Owen Memorial Park, Sandy Beach Park, and the Baw Beese Trail form an important component of the City's park system centered on Baw Beese Lake. The other parks are distributed throughout Hillsdale.

#### CITY OF HILLSDALE PARKS

	NAME	ACRES	FACILITIES	BFA*
A	SAM LOPRESTO FIELD	5.8	2 BASEBALL DIAMONDS, GREEN SPACE	N/A
B	MRS. STOCKS PARK	8.8	PAVILION WITH ELECTRIC, PICNIC TABLES, GARDENS AND LANDSCAPING, SCULPTURES, POND WITH FOUNTAINS, ISLAND, ST. JOSEPH RIVER	3
C	WATERWORKS PARK	8.3	PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT, GRILLS, DNR BOAT LAUNCH, FISHING AREAS, SWIMMING AREA, PICNIC TABLES, PARKING AREA, PORTABLE RESTROOM FACILITIES	2
D	OWEN MEMORIAL PARK	37.3	2 PLAY AREAS, 2 PAVILIONS WITH ELECTRIC AND WATER, GRILLS, PICNIC TABLES, BENCHES, FISHING AREAS, SWIMMING AREA, DISC GOLF COURSE, GREEN SPACE, BOAT SLIPS, 2 WHARF, PORTABLE RESTROOM FACILITIES	
E	SANDY BEACH PARK		BEACH, PLAYGROUND, GRILLS, PICNIC TABLES, 2 SAND VOLLEYBALL COURTS, REGULATION SIZE BASKETBALL COURT, BOAT SLIPS, DOCKING SYSTEM, CONCESSIONS/PLUMBED RESTROOMS	5
F	KEEKOOSE PARK	3.3	BASEBALL DIAMOND WITH SEATING, PLAYGROUND, GREEN SPACE	1

G	FIELDS OF DREAMS	58.6	3 BASEBALL FIELDS (2 SCOREBOARDS), 2 SOCCER FIELDS (1 SCOREBOARD), PAVILION, BLEACHERS, BENCHES, PLAYGROUND, CONCESSIONS, PLUMBED RESTROOMS, IRRIGATION 2 SYSTEM, STORAGE BUILDING WITH INDIVIDUAL UNITS	
H	COLD SPRINGS PARK	2.1	PICNIC TABLES, PLAYGROUND, GRILLS, OPEN PLAY AREA, STREAM, POND	3
I	ORVILLE MYER PARKWAY	13.4	GREENSPACE	N/A
<i>*PLEASE SEE PAGE 22 FOR THE BFA (BARRIOER FREE ACCESS) KEY</i>				

## CEMETERIES

	NAME	ACRES
J	LAKE VIEW CEMETERY	13.0
K	OAK GROVE CEMETERY	51.2
L	KING LAKE CEMETERY	7.0
M	SAND LAKE CEMETERY	51.2

Many people do not consider cemeteries to be recreational facilities. However, they are also utilized as places to exercise and commune with nature. The City of Hillsdale maintains Lake View and Oak Grove Cemeteries and Hillsdale Township maintains the King Lake and Sand Lake Cemeteries

A variety of other municipal facilities can be used recreationally, even though that is not their primary use. For example, recreational flyers can use the airport, many people read for pleasure, and the nature paths in the outdoor education center can be used for exercise.

## OTHER MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

	NAME	ACRES	FACILITIES
N	HILLSDALE COUNTY SENIOR SERVICES CENTER PERENNIAL PARK	12.2	ADA COMPLIANT FACILITY WITH: CONVENTION ROOM, MULTI-PURPOSE MEETING AREAS, RENTAL FACILITIES, COMPUTER LAB, COMMERCIAL KITCHEN, FITNESS CENTER, WEIGHT ROOM, LIFE ENRICHMENT CLASSES, WALKING PATHS (PET FRIENDLY), AND GARDENS, ADULT DAY CARE, 24 HOUR RESPITE, IN-HOME SERVICES, EQUIPMENT LOAN LIBRARY, NON-EMERGENCY TRANSPORTAION
O	HILLSDALE MUNICIPAL AIRPORT	441.6	5,000 FOOT RUNWAY WITH FUELING/HANGAR/FLIGHT INSTRUCTION SERVICES, TERMINAL
Q	HILLSDALE COMMUNITY LIBRARY/	1.2	COLLECTIONS OF BOOKS, PERIODICALS, AUDIO BOOKS, AND VIDEOS; ASSISTANCE



	MITCHEL RESOURCE CENTER		IN GENELOGICAL RESEARCH, HISTORICAL DOCUMENT PRESERVATION, AND ARCHIVAL SERVICES; COMPUTER/INTERNET ACCESS; AND PUBLIC MEETING ROOMS, TEEN AND YOUTH SUMMER PROGRAMS
R	SIMPSON OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTER	6.0	NATURE PATHS AND OUTDOOR EDUCATIONAL LAB.

### County Parks and Recreation Facilities

The County of Hillsdale provides park and recreation facilities to its residents and visitors. Lewis Emery Park is located within Hillsdale Township, just east of the City of Hillsdale. Kathe and Cali Hillsdale County Park, Bird Lake Park, and Hemlock Beach Park, also maintained by Hillsdale County, are located elsewhere in the county.

### COUNTY OF HILLSDALE PARKS

	NAME	ACRES	FACILITIES
S	LEWIS EMERY PARK	87.5	PLAYGROUND, BASEBALL DIAMOND, PAVILIONS, PICNIC TABLES, GRILLS, COMMUNITY BUILDING, FISHING PIERS, SLEDDING HILLS

Hillsdale County Agricultural Society owns the fairgrounds for the Hillsdale County Fair are located in the City of Hillsdale. The fairgrounds are used for a variety of purposes throughout the year —many of which are recreational in nature— as well as during fair week. The fairgrounds for the Hillsdale County Fair are located in the City of Hillsdale. Other than the annual Agricultural Fair, the fairgrounds are used for a variety of purposes throughout the year; 4H Programs, camping, horseshoes, equestrian events, fireworks display, RV Sales, auctions, and weddings.

## HILLSDALE COUNTY FAIR

	NAME	ACRES	FACILITIES
T	HILLSDALE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS	42	EQUESTRIAN ARENA, PICNIC AREA, LIVESTOCK BARNES, 4H BUILDINGS, HISTORICAL BARNES/BUILDINGS, HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM, FAIRGROUND MUSEUM, GRANDSTAND, BAND SHELL, CAMPING SITES, HORSESHOE PAVILION, HORSE RACE TRACK, FARMERS MARKET/AUCTION, DINER, WEDDINGS, PLUMBED RESTROOMS

## School Recreation Facilities

A variety of educational institutions provide recreation facilities to the residents of the City of Hillsdale and the surrounding areas.

## Hillsdale Community Schools

Hillsdale Community Schools educate the majority of children in the City.

## HILLSDALE COMMUNITY SCHOOL FACILITIES

	NAME	ACRES	FACILITIES
U	HILLSDALE HIGH SCHOOL	37.9	FOOTBALL FIELD WITH LIGHTS, BASEBALL FIELD, SOFTBALL FIELD, GYMNASIUM, TRACK, AND TENNIS COURTS (JIM INMAN PARK), COFFEE SHOP, LIBRARY
V	DAVIS MIDDLE SCHOOL	3.9	TWO GYMNASIUMS, AUDITORIUM, OUTDOOR BASKETBALL COURTS, PLAYGROUND, LIBRARY
W	HORIZON ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL	-	HOUSED INSIDE HILLSDALE HIGH SCHOOL
X	GEIR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	5.8	GYMNASIUM, OUTDOOR BASKETBALL COURTS, MULTIPURPOSE ROOM (GYMNASIUM/CAFETERIA/STAGE), PLAYGROUND
Y	BAILEY EARL CHILDHOOD LEARNING	1.6	GYMNASIUM WITH STAGE, OUTDOOR BASKETBALL COURTS, PLAYGROUND,

## Other School Facilities

A variety of other school facilities are also located in and around the City. The Hillsdale County Intermediate School District (ISD) maintains several of those facilities. Greenfield School is a special education facility, the Hillsdale Workforce Development and Technology Center is a career education facility. Will Carleton Academy (K-12) and Hillsdale Preparatory School (K-8) are chartered by the ISD and Hillsdale Academy is a private K-12 school operated under the auspices of Hillsdale College. The Community Action Agency (CAA) operates the local Head Start program for Hillsdale County. All of the above institutions provide recreational facilities and programs for their students.

## Local Colleges

Some people take classes for recreational as well as educational purposes. City residents can avail themselves of the learning opportunities and recreational facilities and programs provided by local colleges. Hillsdale College is located in the City. Jackson College (JC) maintains a local presence in Hillsdale County through its Hillsdale Center also located within the City of Hillsdale. Hillsdale College provides a wide variety of recreational facilities (e.g., weight/fitness room, climbing wall, indoor pool, athletic fields, courts, tennis facility etc.) and programs to its students and the general public. Some facilities, such as the Slayton Arboretum and the Children's Arboretum are also listed separately in this inventory.

## OTHER SCHOOL FACILITIES

	NAME
Z	WILL CARLETON ACADEMY
AA	HILLSDALE ACADEMY
AB	LOCHHAVEN CENTER (ISD)
AC	GREENFIELD SCHOOL (ISD)
AD	HILLSDALE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER (ISD)
AE	HEADSTART (CAA)
AF	HILLSDALE PREPATORY SCHOOL

## LOCAL COLLEGES

	NAME
AG	HILLSDALE COLLEGE
AH	JACKSON COLLEGE

### Private and Quasi-Public Recreation Facilities

A wide variety of private and quasi-public institutions also provide recreation facilities to their members and/or the general public.

Perennial Park Senior Center is a private nonprofit organization that provides a multitude of recreational activities including: fitness center, computer lab, multi-purpose meeting areas, full commercial kitchen and large dining area, walking paths and life enrichment programming that incorporates the mental, physical, emotional, and intellec-

### CLUBS, LODGES, AND CHURCHES

	NAME
AI	ELKS LODGE
AJ	ST. PAUL'S CHURCH
AK	HILLSDALE UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH
AL	AMERICAN LEGION
AM	FREE METHODIST CHURCH
AN	BANKERS BALLFIELD

### CAMPS AND CAMPGROUNDS

tual needs of Hillsdale County residents. Many life enrichment classes are offered through volunteers willing to share their talents and experiences with other and have included; golf conditioning, genealogy, artworks, strength training, public speaking, music, tap dancing, foreign policy discussion groups, health fairs, and special event days highlighting seasonal holidays/ themes throughout the year. Perennial Park is an American with Disabilities compliant facility with long range vision plans in place to build an in-door pool/gymnasium, pickle ball courts, affordable senior housing and outdoor fitness equipment stations.

#### Clubs, Lodges, and Churches

A number of private and quasi-public institutions also provide recreation facilities to City and Township residents. For example, the lodge maintained by the Elks contain a bar, restaurant, and banquet hall. Local churches may have gymnasiums, classrooms, and other facilities available to clubs and for other formal and informal recreational programs.

#### Camps and Campgrounds

Gateway Campground is located along South Sand Lake in Hillsdale Township. Other facilities, such as Hillsdale County Fairgrounds, 6 Lakes Campground, Marble Springs Campground, and Way Back In are other camping options located in and around Hillsdale County. Camp Michindoh and Kimball Camp are facilities that provide recreational/educational experiences for youth from all around.

	NAME	ACRES	FACILITIES
AQ	GATEWAY PARK CAMPGROUND	95.5	CABIN,TRAILER AND TENT SITES, SWIMMING POOL, LAKE FRONT, CANOING, BIKING, HIKING, WAGON RIDES, YOUTH FUNCTIONS/ACTIVITIES, GIFT STORE AND RESTAURANT

### Arboretums and Sanctuaries

Slayton Arboretum —which displays and preserves living plant collections and native plant communities— is located on the Hillsdale College Campus and is open to the general public. The Wildlife Park Sanctuary and the Wildlife Sanctuary, which lie along the St. Joseph River, preserve wildlife habitat and open space within the City of Hillsdale. Future plans are being laid to extend the Baw Beese Trail through the Wildlife Sanctuary and connect with the newly constructed Jonesville Rail Trail.

### Golf Courses

The Hills of Baw Beese Lake and White Oaks Public Golf Course are located in Cambria Township are to the south of the City of Hillsdale. A total of 12 other courses are located within 20 miles of Hillsdale, including the nearby Mill Race Golf Course in Jonesville and Litchfield Greens, a municipally owned golf course in Litchfield. Cottage Inn Pizza provides dining, rental space for parties, arcade, and go carts.

### ARBORETUMS AND SANCTUARIES

	NAME
AR	SLAYTON ARBORETUM
AS	WILDLIFE PARK SANCTUARY
AT	WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

## GOLF COURSES

	NAME	ACRES	FACILITIES
AU	HILLSDALE GOLF CLUB	55.5	9-HOLE COURSE, PRO SHOP, RESTAURANT, PUSH CARTS, AND RIDING CARTS.
AV	WHITE OAKS PUBLIC GOLF COURSE	118.8	18-HOLE COURSE, PRO SHOP SNACK SHOP, PULL CARTS, AND RIDING CARTS.

## Other Private Recreation Facilities

A variety of other recreational facilities are also located within Hillsdale and Hillsdale Township. Together, they provide opportunities for bowling, dance/fitness classes, roller skating, arcade games, billiards/pool, video rentals, and movie theaters.

The Well Activity Center is a state of the art fitness center and court complex in a 5,000 square foot facility offering memberships and drop in rates featuring a workout room, basketball and pickle ball courts, trainers, and a café.

## PRIVATE RECREATION FACILITIES

	NAME	ACRES	FACILITIES
AW	COTTAGE IN PIZZA	1.1	RESTAURANT, ARCADE, ROOM RENTALS, GO KARTS
AX	HILLSIDE LANES	4.1	BOWLING LANES, PRO SHOP, POOL TABLES, ARCADE GAMES, RESTAURANT AND SNACK BAR.
AY	THE WELL ACTIVITY CENTER	2.9	BASKETBALL COURTS, PICKLE BALL COURTS, PERSONAL TRAINING, CAFÉ', FITNESS EQUIPMENT, FITNESS CLASSES, WALKING TRACK
AZ	SALVATION ARMY	0.8	MULTIPURPOSE ROOM
BA	HILLSDALE GYMNASTICS CENTER	0.1	MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM, GYMNASTIC EQUIPMENT, CLASSES
BB	PREMIER THEATERS	--	SIX-SCREEN THEATER, STATE OF THE ART SEATING

BC	ANYTIME FITNESS	--	EXERCISE/FITNESS EQUIPMENT, PERSONAL TRAINERS
BD	PRIME	--	EXERCISE/FITNESS EQUIPMENT

## State Parks

Michigan maintains a number of recreational facilities within the region. For example, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) maintains the Lost Nation, Somerset, and Adams state game areas in Hillsdale County. Additional state game and recreation areas and state parks are located in neighboring counties. The DNR also maintains 9 boat launches in Hillsdale County.

### STATE OF MICHIGAN RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

#### STATE PARKS

CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL (LENAWEE CO)	WALTER J. HAYES (LENAWEE CO)
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### STATE OF MICHIGAN RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

#### STATE GAME AREAS

ADAMS (MINI) (HILLSDALE CO)	SHARONVILLE (JACKSON CO)
-----------------------------	--------------------------

LOST NATIONS (HILLSDALE CO)	SOMERSET (HILLSDALE CO)
-----------------------------	-------------------------

ONSTED (LENAWEE CO)

#### STATE RECREATION AREAS

LAKE HUDSON (LENAWEE CO)	WATERLOO (JACKSON CO)
--------------------------	-----------------------

## Other Local Parks

The nearby City of Jonesville also contains a couple of municipal parks. Other nearby cities, villages, and townships may also provide parks and recreational facilities for their residents.



## CITY OF JONESVILLE PARKS

NAME	NAME
CARL FAST MEMORIAL PARK	WRIGHT STREET PARK

### Trails and Sidewalks

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) maintains the "Hill-Jo" Trail, which connects the City of Jonesville to the City of Hillsdale along the M-99 corridor. The Baw Beese Trail connects Downtown Hillsdale with city parks along Baw Beese Lake while the Jerry Russell Trail connects Downtown Jonesville to the "Hill-Jo" Trail. The addition of the new trail plays a key role in the larger plan of Headwaters Recreational Authority to connect the Hillsdale and Jonesville communities. In 2019, Headwaters Recreational Authority will make application to the DNR Trust Fund and MDOT TAP Program to secure funding to begin construction of the trail connecting the two cities and their recreational opportunities. The project will also include designating a trail head at [Cottage Inn Pizza](#). These trails are part of the greater North Country Scenic Trail – a multi-state facility that traverses New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and North Dakota.

Many City of Hillsdale streets are also served by sidewalks. However, there are opportunities for additional connections to other parks and the creation of non-motorized loops for exercising. Improved way-finding and the development of printed and electronic mapping systems are also important projects.

### NON-MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL TRAILS

	NAME	MILES	FACILITIES
BE	HLL-JO TRAIL	5.5	BIKE/WALKING/JOGGING TRAIL.
BF	BAW BEESE TRAIL	7.5.	BIKE/WALKING TRAIL.
BG	JERRY RUSSELL TRAIL (JONESVILLE)	1.4	BIKE/WALKING TRAIL

## Shopping and Eating

Many people enjoy shopping and going out to eat, making Downtown Hillsdale and nearby Downtown Jonesville recreation destinations with their restaurants, shops, and other attractions. The proximity of Hillsdale and Jonesville to the commercial areas of larger nearby communities increases the opportunities for this type of activity.

## National and State Historical Sites

Hillsdale Township and the City of Hillsdale contain 15 historic sites that have state and/or national significance. Michigan's State Historic Preservation Office provides more information on the following sites as well as the other 12 sites in Hillsdale County.<sup>3</sup>

### NATIONAL AND STATE HISTORICAL SITES

STRUCTURE	ADDRESS/LOCATION	REGISTERS*	
FREE WILL FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH	204 N MANNING STREET	SR	HM
FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH	45 N MANNING STREET	SR	
GRANGE HALL	115 S BROAD STREET (FAIRGROUNDS)	SR	
HALLETT-STEVENSON HOUSE	101 W HALLETT STREET	SR	
HILLSDALE CITY HALL	97 BROAD STREET	SR	

### NATIONAL AND STATE HISTORICAL SITES (CONTINUED)

STRUCTURE	ADDRESS/LOCATION	REGISTERS*	
HILLSDALE COLLEGE INFORMATIONAL DESIGNATION	FRONT STREET CAMPUS	SR	HM

<sup>3</sup> Historic Sites Online page of the State's website([www.mcgi.state.mi.us/hso](http://www.mcgi.state.mi.us/hso))

HILLSDALE COUNTY COURTHOUSE	COURTHOUSE SQUARE	NR	SR	HM
HILLSDALE DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT	DOWNTOWN HILLSDALE	NR		
SAINT ANTHONY CATHOLIC CHURCH	11 N BROAD STREET		SR	HM
ST PETER'S CHURCH	3 BROAD STREET		SR	HM
FREDERICK W STOCK HOUSE	3 S BROAD STREET		SR	
HILLSDALE COUNTY POOR HOUSE	180 WRIGHT STREET		SR	
JAMES W WINSOR STORE	27 N BROAD		SR	
18TH MICHIGAN INFANTRY REGIMENT, 1862	LEWIS EMERY COUNTY PARK		SR	
WILLIAM R. KIRBY SR HOUSE	377 STATE ROAD		SR	

\*NR = NATIONAL REGISTER ; SR = STATE REGISTER; AND HM = HISTORIC MARKER

## Park Standards and Types

A park and recreation plan should also recognize and use appropriate park standards. The National Parks and Recreation Association (NPRA) recommends a minimum of 10 acres per 1,000 people (please see Appendix B). This means that Hillsdale Township and the City of Hillsdale should have approximately 92.4 acres to meet the needs of their combined population in 2015. The parks provided by the City of Hillsdale and Lewis Emery County Park have a combined acreage of 228.3 acres. Hillsdale Community Schools and the cemeteries maintained by the City and Township add another 137.6 acres. Recreational facilities located on school grounds generally function as community parks as do all of the City's parks and Lewis Emery County Park. The various private and quasi-public facilities have a community-wide or even a regional function.

## Grant-Assisted Parks and Recreation Facilities

The following recreation grants were awarded to the City of Hillsdale through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

## RECREATION GRANT HISTORY

PARK NAME	PROJ. NO.	YEAR	USAGE
WATERWORKS PARK	26-00455	1973	BOAT LAUNCH
WILDLIFE SANCTUARY	TF98-051	1998	WILDLIFESANCTUARY/WILDLIFE PRESERVE

### Barrier-Free Access

It is important that the parks and recreation facilities operated by the City of Hillsdale be accessible to people with disabilities and remain safe for all users. Accordingly, the parks and recreation facilities operated by the City of Hillsdale were also rated according to their level of barrier free access.<sup>4</sup> The number listed under the BFA column in that table equates to the barrier-free rating listed below:

### BARRIER FREE ACCESS (BFA) ANALYSIS

KEY	DESCRIPTION
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 AREA MEET ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES
4 =	THE ENTIRE PARK MEETS ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES
5 =	THE ENTIRE PARK WAS DEVELOPED/RENOVATED USING THE PRINCIPAL OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN
PLEASE SEE PAGE 12 FOR THE TABLE INVENTORYING CITY OF HILLSDALE PARKS	

<sup>4</sup> The analysis of barrier free access was provided by the City of Hillsdale, based upon its knowledge of the parks and understanding of barrier-free access. A professional analysis may produce different results.

## Resource Inventory

In addition to recreation facilities, The City of Hillsdale is also home to a wide variety of cultural and natural resources.

### Recreational Programming

The City of Hillsdale provides the following recreation programs to the general public.

#### CITY OF HILLSDALE RECREATION PROGRAMS

PROGRAM	AGE/GRADE	DESCRIPTION
YOUTH BASKETBALL	K-3RD GRADE	A 5-WEEK PROGRAM ON THE BASIC FUNDAMENTALS OF BASKETBALL
BOYS/GIRLS BASKETBALL	3RD -6TH GRADE	YOUTH LEAGURE BASKETBALL
WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL	ADULTS 16 YRS. +	UPPER/LOWER DIVISION VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE PLAY
FIELDS OF DREAMS TOUNAMENT SERIES	14 & UNDER	BASEBALL TOURNAMENTS (4 ANNUALLY)
GIRL'S SOFTBALL	AGES 8-14	SUMMER LEAGUE PLAY – COUNTYWIDE PARTICIPATION
BOY'S BASEBALL	AGES 8-14	SUMMER LEAGUE PLAY – COUNTYWIDE PARTICIPATION
YOUTH TENNIS	K-8TH GRADE	ONE WEEK INSTRUCTION CAMP HELD IN JULY
TACKLE FOOTBALL	3RD -6TH GRADE	YOUTH LEAGUE WITH HILLSDALE COLLEGE INVOLVEMENT
MEN'S BASKETBALL	ADULTS 16 YRS. +	UPPER AND LOWER DIVISION LEAGUE PLAY
T-BALL/COACH PITCH	AGES 4-8	4-WEEK SUMMER LEAGUE, PREPARING KIDS FOR KID PITCH BALL
ADULT SAND VOLLEYBALL	ADULTS 16 YRS. +	SUMMER TOURNAMENTS
ADULT SUMMER LEAGUE BASKETBALL	ADULTS	UPPER/LOWER DIVISIONS
3 ON 3 BASKETBALL TOURNAMENTS	YOUTH/ADULT	SUMMER TOURNAMENTS

## Soils

The primary soil types within the City of Hillsdale as well as significant portions of Hillsdale Township are placed in the Fox-Boyer Association which is characterized as “nearly level to steep, very deep, well drained sandy loams and loamy sand outwash plains.” The remaining soils are placed in the Riddles-Hillsdale Association which is characterized as “gently sloping to steep, very deep, well drained, loamy soils on ground moraines and end moraines.”<sup>5</sup>

## Topography

Middle and South Sand Lakes and the wetlands around the St. Joseph River in the City of Hillsdale are also low points with an elevation of 1,066 feet. Baw Beese Lake and portions of the City of Hillsdale have an elevation of 1,099. ~~The highest point in Hillsdale Township, found along Hallett Road east of Lake Wilson Road, is 1,230 feet.~~ Other High points are located along the western edge of the City of Hillsdale and the eastern boundary of Hillsdale Township with an elevation of 1,197 feet.

## Land Use

Commercial uses predominate along M-99 (please see the Future Land Use map) and industrial uses are recommended adjacent to that area. Public/quasi-public uses are recommended along parts of the St. Joseph River, the Barber Lakes, and Baw Beese Lake. Residential uses are recommended for the majority of the City of Hillsdale ~~and Hillsdale Township~~. Finally, agriculture is recommended for south central Hillsdale Township. The future land use map from the Hillsdale County Comprehensive Plan was used for this analysis. However, it should be noted that Hillsdale Township’s future land use plan concentrates suburban residential development around the City of Hillsdale as well as Middle Sand Lake and South Sand Lake. Agricultural land uses and conservation areas were recommended for the majority of the Township.

## Water Resources

The St. Joseph Watershed covers the entire Hillsdale area. The river flows through Hillsdale Township and the City of Hillsdale south to north and the Hillsdale Mill Pond is an impoundment of the river (please see the Hydrology and Topography map). Baw Beese Lake, Bull Head Lake, Winona Lake, and the Barber Lakes are located on the periphery of the City of Hillsdale. Middle Sand Lake and South Sand Lake are located in the western edge of the Township and King Lake is located on the southern boundary of the Township. Wetlands are located primarily along the peripheries of local rivers and streams. These resources offer the opportunity

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<sup>5</sup> All information is adapted from the Soil Survey of Hillsdale County, Michigan.

to educate students about the importance of aquatic resources, the natural and manmade features which affect them, and the need to protect them.

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<sup>1</sup> All information is adapted from the Soil Survey of Hillsdale County, Michigan.

Chapter 4

## **Descriptions of the Planning and Public Input Processes**

City of Hillsdale



### **Description of the Planning Process**

The development of this initial edition of the City of Hillsdale Recreation Plan included the following steps:

- The City of Hillsdale recognized the need to update the 2018-2023 Recreation Plan
- The Recreation Planning Advisory Committee was formed; it is comprised of the Hillsdale City Planning Commission.
- The City conducted an online community survey.
- A mission statement and goals and objectives were developed based upon those surveys and other information available to the Joint Recreation Planning Advisory Committee.
- City staff reviewed, updated, and drafted a revised plan.
- The Recreation Planning Advisory Committee verified the mission statement and goals and objectives on August 20, 2025 based upon the drafting of the Plan.
  - The Recreation Advisory Committee provided the plan for public review from August 20 through September 17, 2025 and held a public hearing on September 17, 2025. The Plan was approved by the Committee and recommended for adoption by the City Council.
- The City Council adopted the Plan on October 6, 2025.

### **Description of the Public Input Process**

- An online survey was developed by the Recreation Planning Advisory Committee and made available to the public.
- The City of Hillsdale posted the survey on its home website, City Facebook page, and Recreation Facebook page.

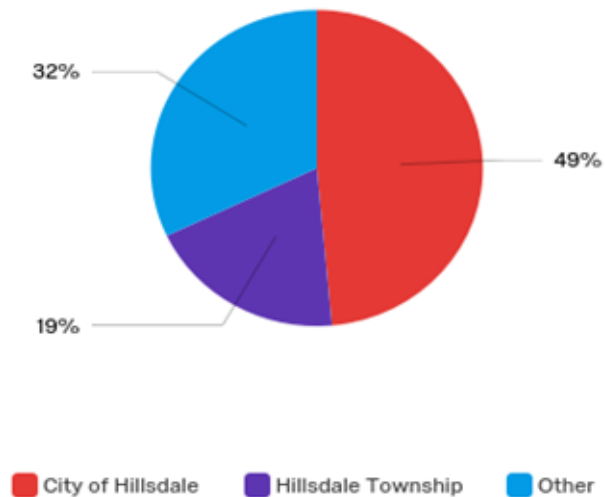
The survey was also shared with the Hillsdale County Senior Services Center seeking response from the senior community. Having received no response, this information was not included in the survey results.

# Hillsdale City Recreation Report

*Posted 2017-11-28 (last recorded entry 2018-01-23)*

February 5th 2018, 10:19 pm EST

## 1 - Are you a resident of? (select one)



### OTHER

Adams Township  
Cambria Township  
City of Jonesville  
Comstock Township  
Kalamazoo County

Hillsdale County  
Fayette Township  
Jefferson Township  
Litchfield  
Pittsford Township

Reading  
Scipio  
Somerset Township  
Woodbridge



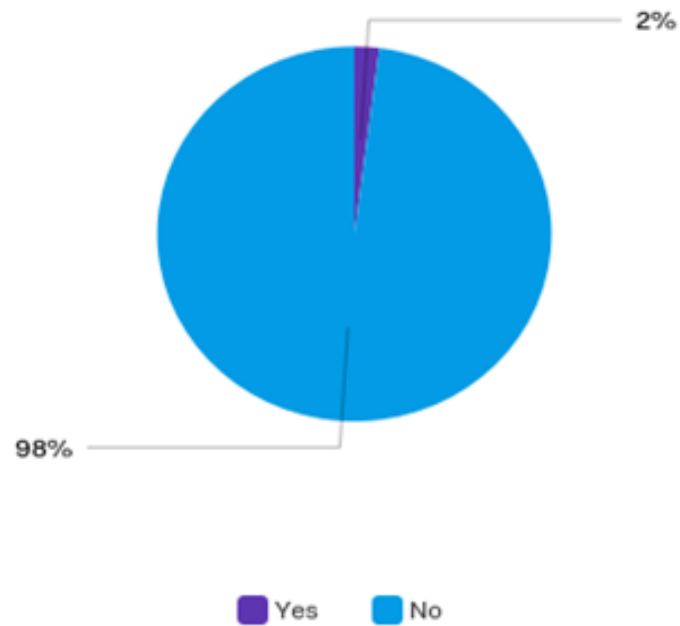
**2 - Please note the number of people in each age group that are living in your household:**

	1		2		3		Total
5 and under	16%	16	6%	6	1%	1	31
6-9	18%	17	5%	5	0%	0	27
10-14	18%	18	4%	4	0%	0	26
15-17	14%	14	1%	1	0%	0	16
18-24	11%	11	1%	1	1%	1	16
25-34	8%	8	6%	6	1%	1	23
35-44	19%	18	13%	13	0%	0	44
45-54	20%	20	12%	12	0%	0	34
55-64	15%	15	7%	7	0%	0	29
65+	11%	11	12%	12	1%	1	38

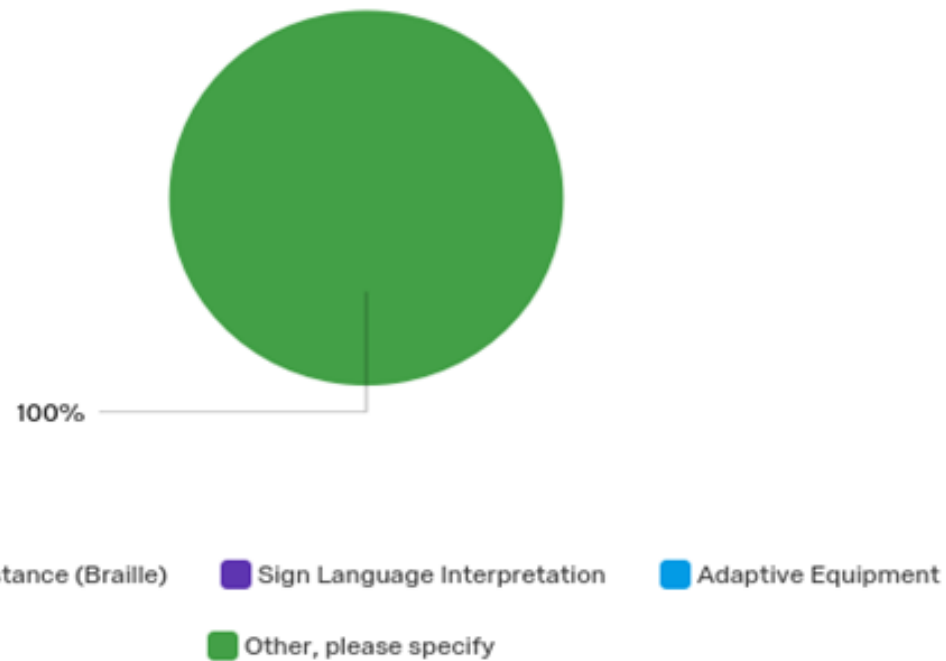
**Demographic breakdown** *(284 total people living in respondent households)*

9 and under ..... 20%  
 10-17 ..... 15%  
 18-24 ..... 6%  
 25-44 ..... 24%  
 45 and over ..... 36%

**3 - Do any members of your household have a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?**

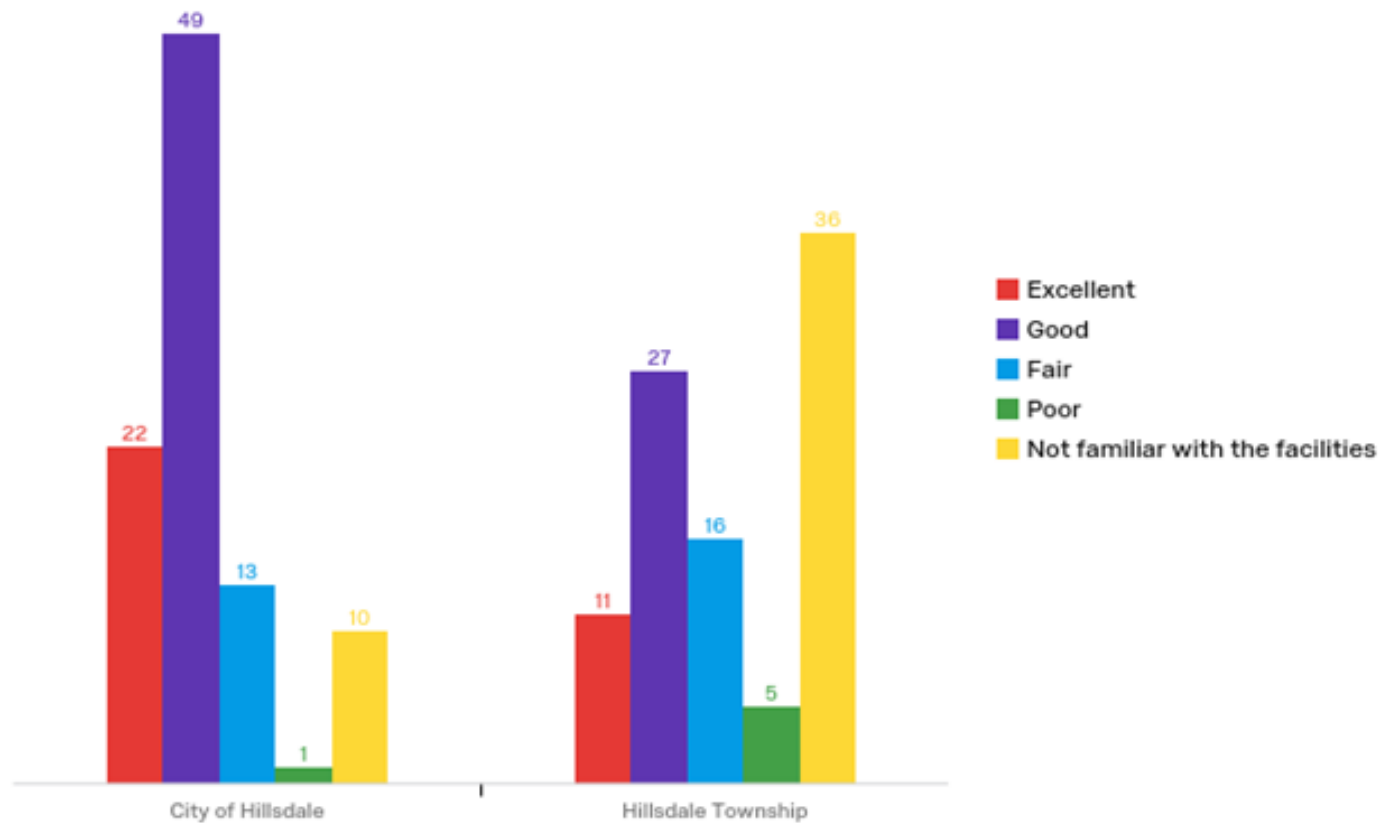


### 3A - What type of accommodation is needed to serve people with disabilities in your family?

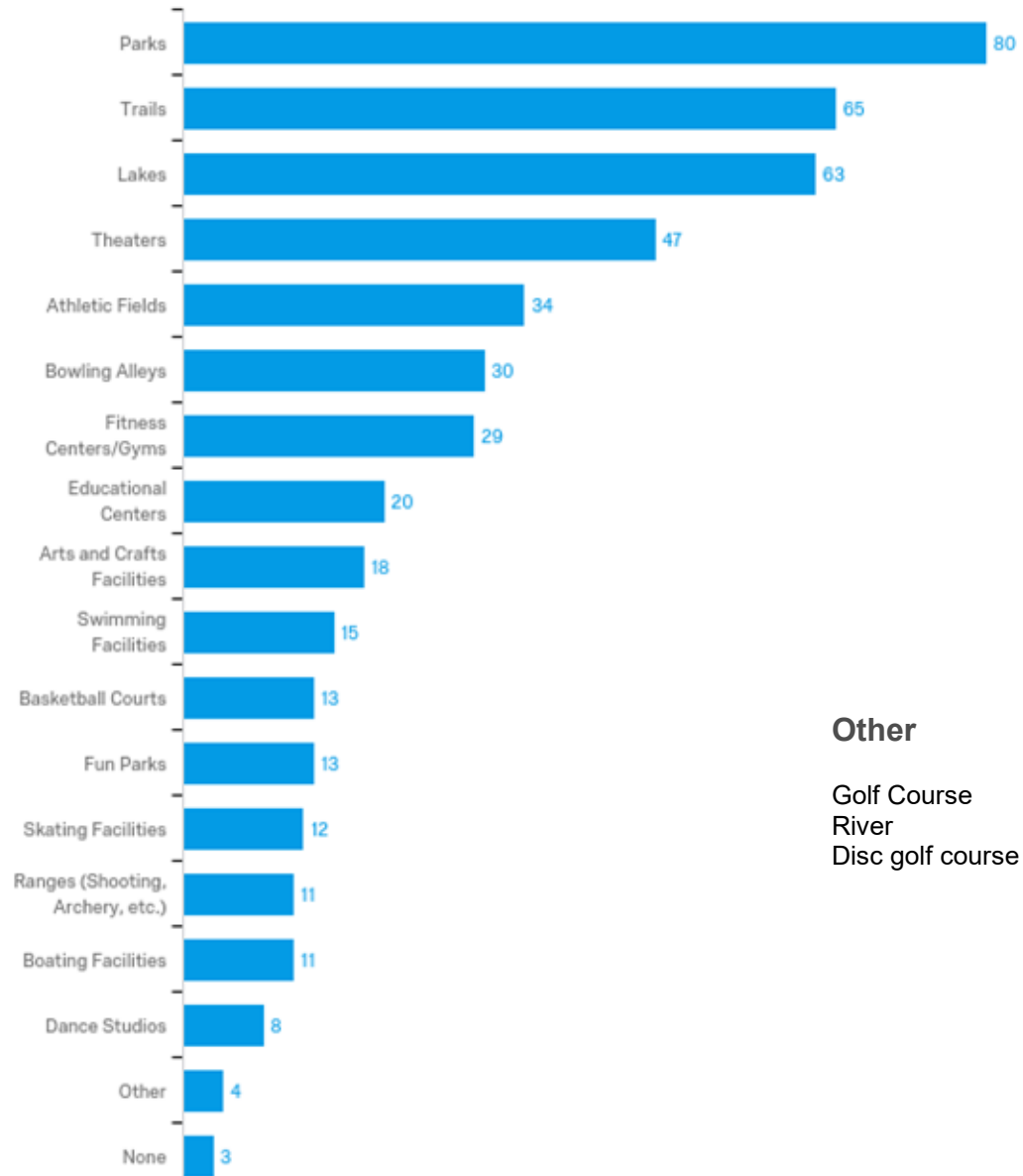


Other, please specify  
one level living  
None

**4 - Generally speaking, how do you rate the recreational facilities in the City of Hillsdale and Hillsdale Township?**



## 5 - What recreational facilities do you use within the two communities?



Other

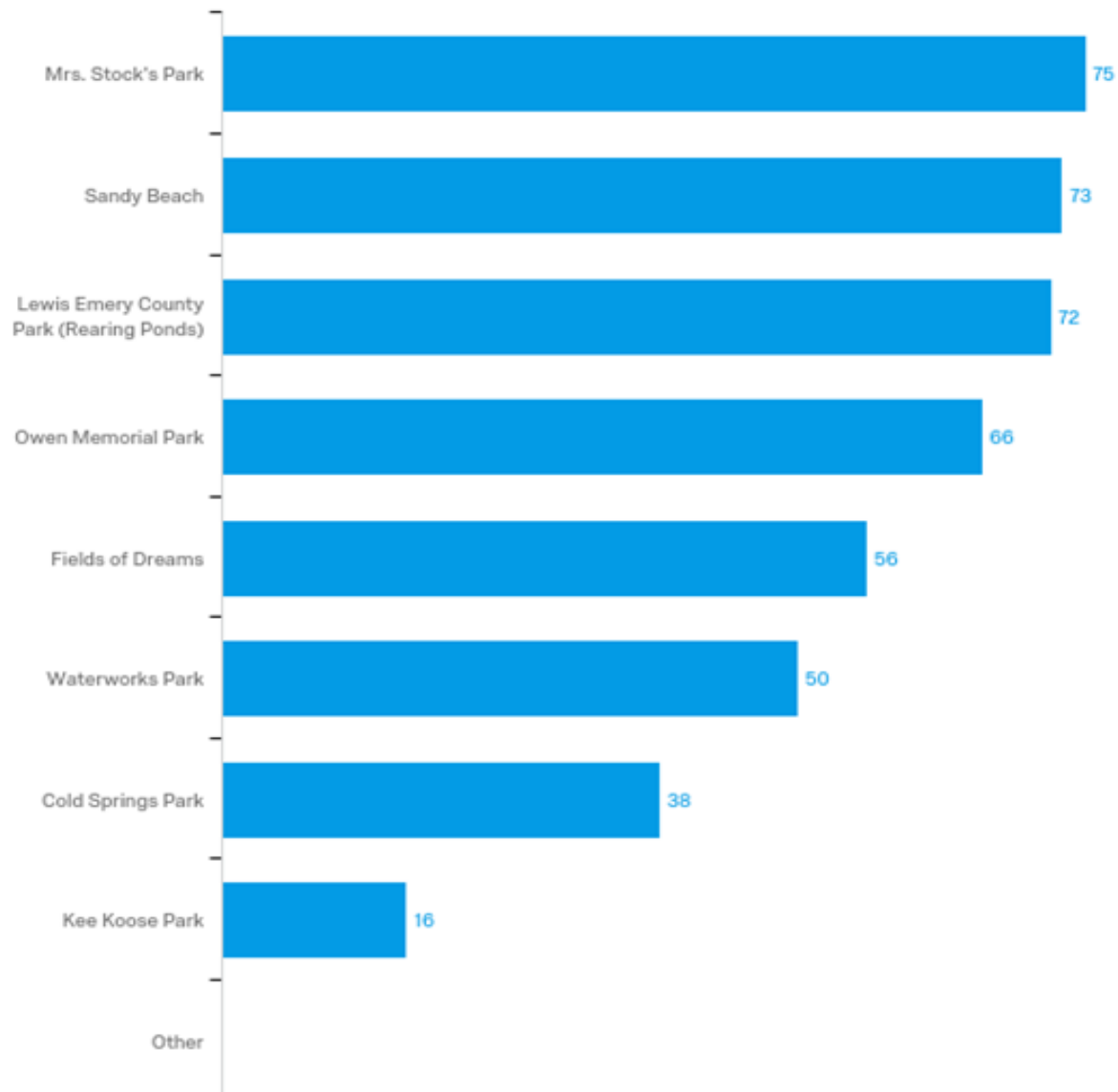
Golf Course

River

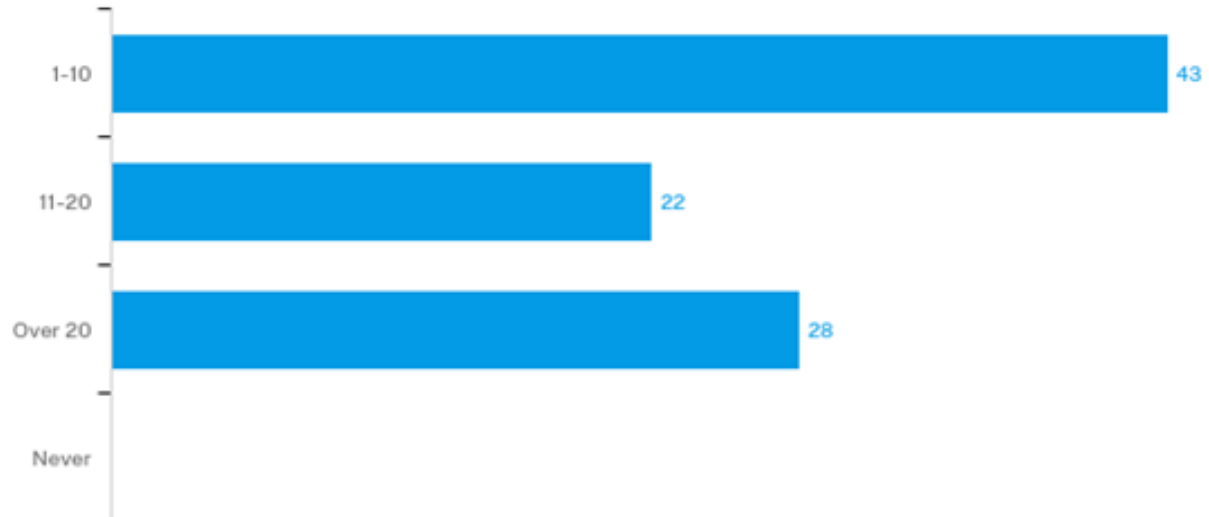
Disc golf course



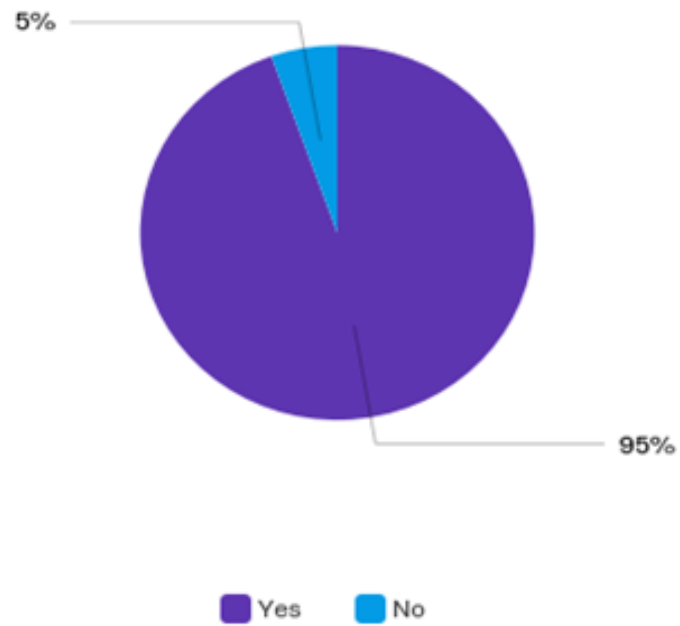
## 6 - Our communities offer a number of parks. Which park(s) have you visited?



**7 – How often have you visited these facilities within the last 12 months?**



## 8 - Did the parks(s) meet your expectations?



## City Recreation Survey, Fall 2017

### FAMILY SURVEY

#### 9. What did you enjoy most about the park(s)?

Total Responses: 69

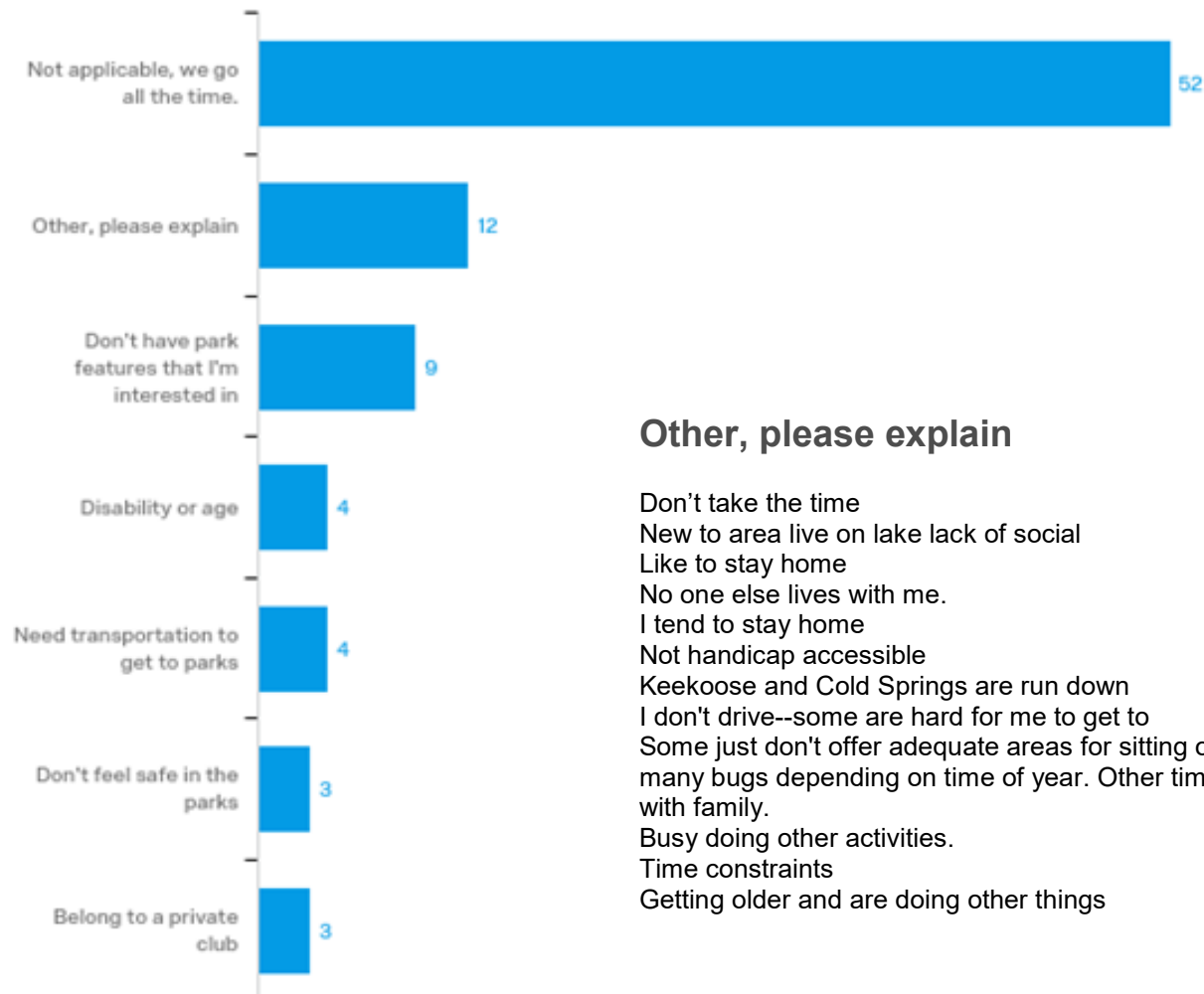
Maintained		Trails		Misc. Opportunities		Play Equipment	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
26	37.68%	11	15.94%	19	27.54%	7	10.14%
<b>Environment/Scenery/Landscaping</b>							
No.	%						
30	43.48%						

#### 10. What improvements, if any, would you like to see in the park(s)?

Total Responses: 58

None		Park Updates/improvements		Signage/Information		Benches/Seating	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
15	25.86%	8	13.79%	4	6.90%	4	6.90%
<b>Dog Parks</b>		<b>Kayak/Canoe/Paddle Board</b>		<b>Restrooms</b>		<b>Other</b>	
2	3.45%	2	3.45%	6	10.34%	21	36.21%

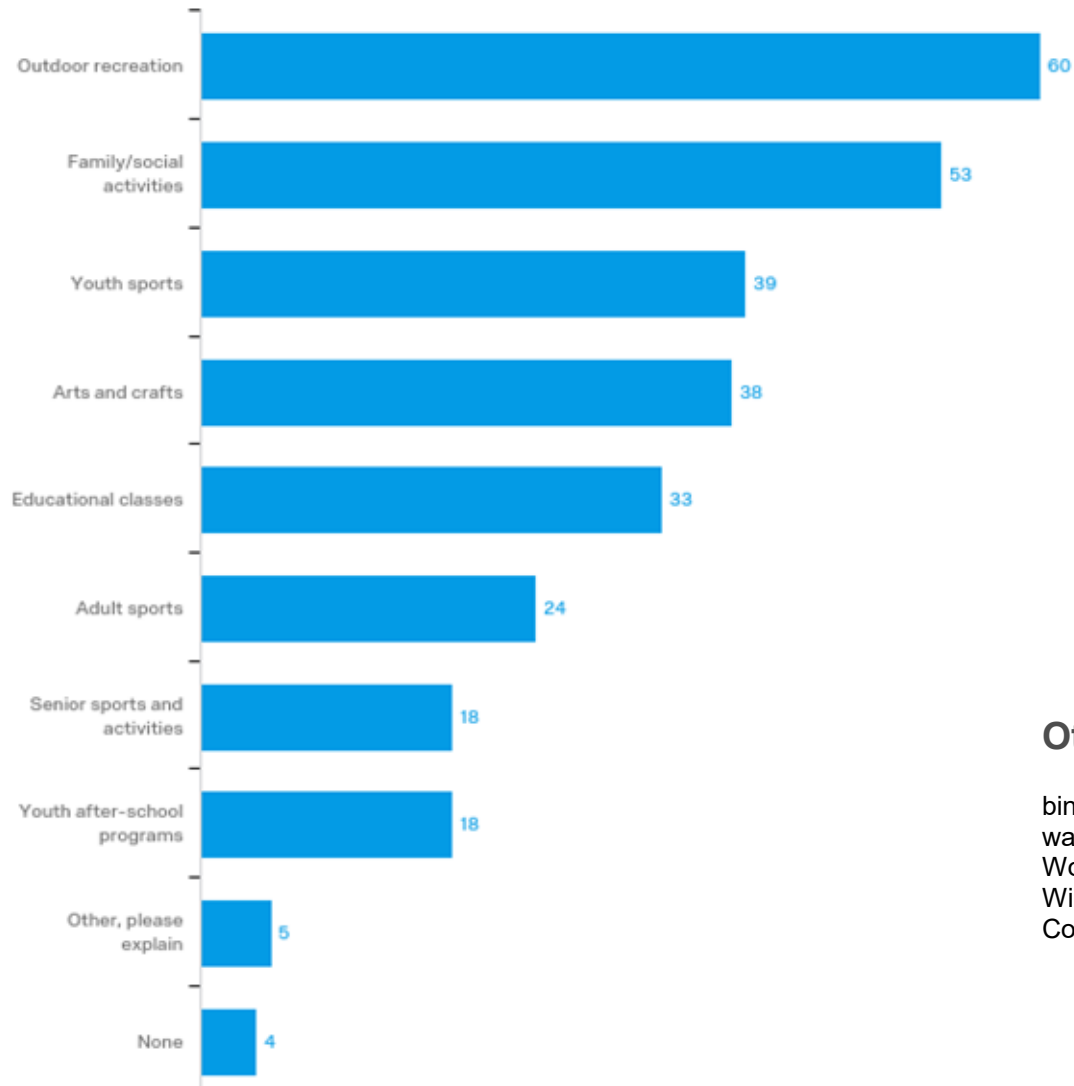
**11 - If members of your household seldom use—or do not use—any of the parks, what are the reasons? Please check all that apply.**



### Other, please explain

Don't take the time  
 New to area live on lake lack of social  
 Like to stay home  
 No one else lives with me.  
 I tend to stay home  
 Not handicap accessible  
 Keekoose and Cold Springs are run down  
 I don't drive--some are hard for me to get to  
 Some just don't offer adequate areas for sitting or to gather a small group. Some Get to many bugs depending on time of year. Other times it's simply too crowded to enjoy time with family.  
 Busy doing other activities.  
 Time constraints  
 Getting older and are doing other things

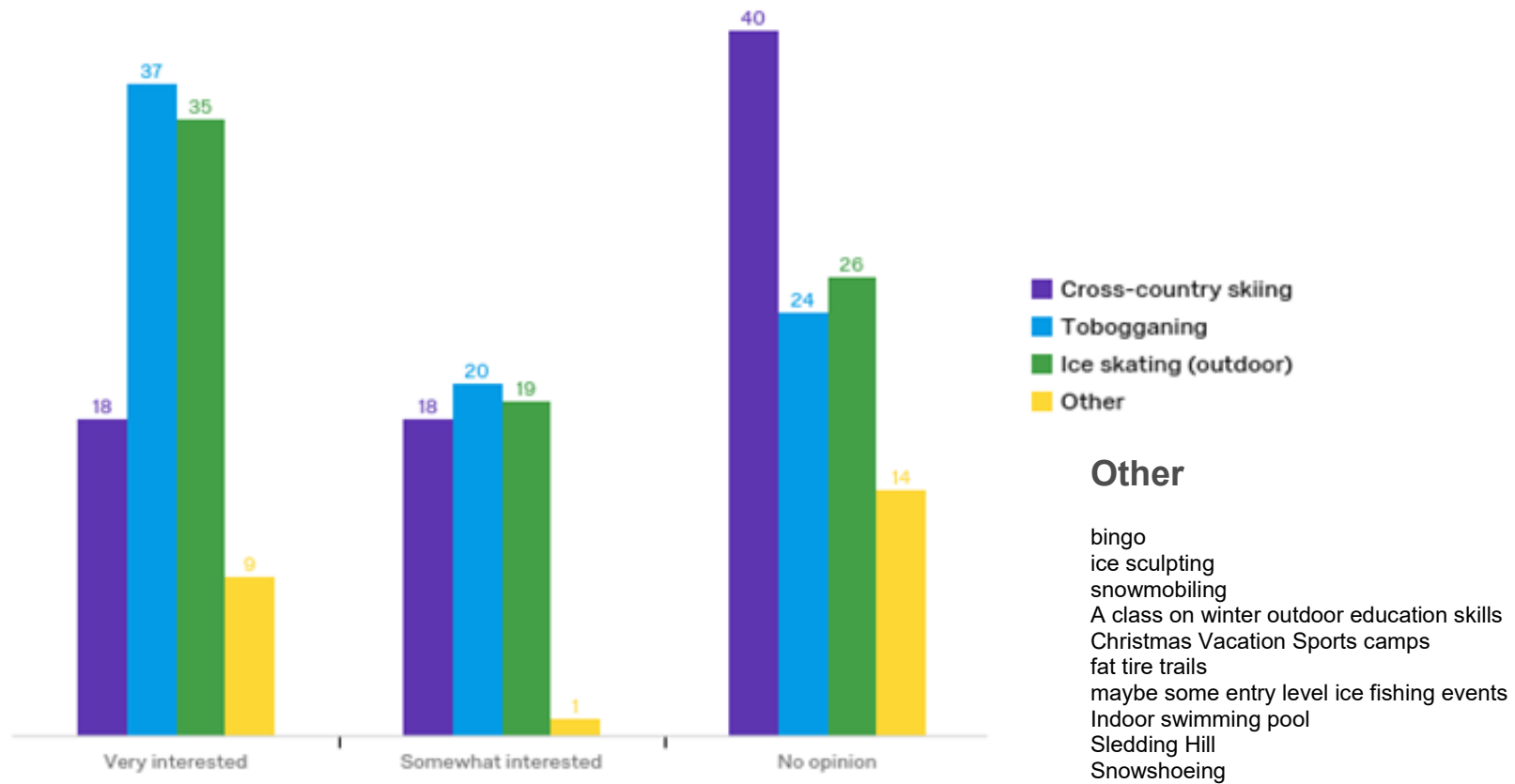
**12 - What types of recreation programs are you and members of your household interested in?  
Please check all that apply.**



**Other, please explain**

bingo  
water park like in coldwater  
Would like pickle ball courts (similar to tennis)  
Winter sports  
Concerts, markets, events

13 - The City and Township are interested in providing winter activities, please rate the suggestions below and share any ideas you might have:



**City Recreation Survey, Fall 2017**  
**FAMILY SURVEY**

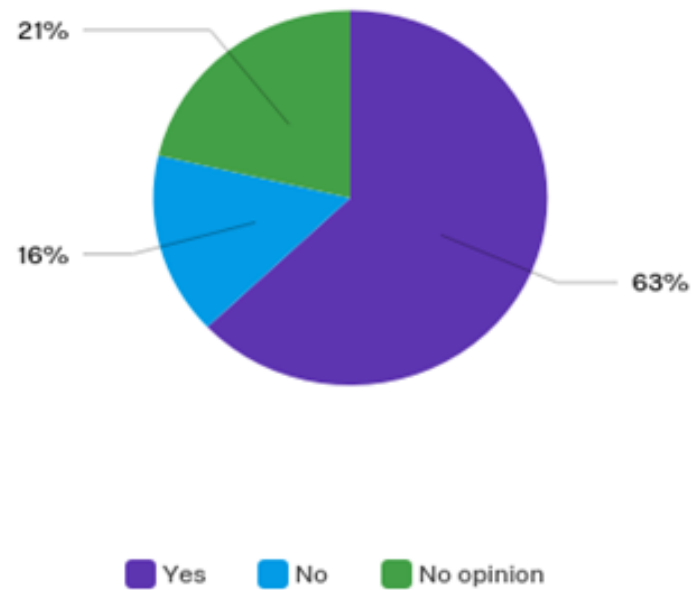
**14. Where would you like to see winter activities developed?**

Total Responses: 52

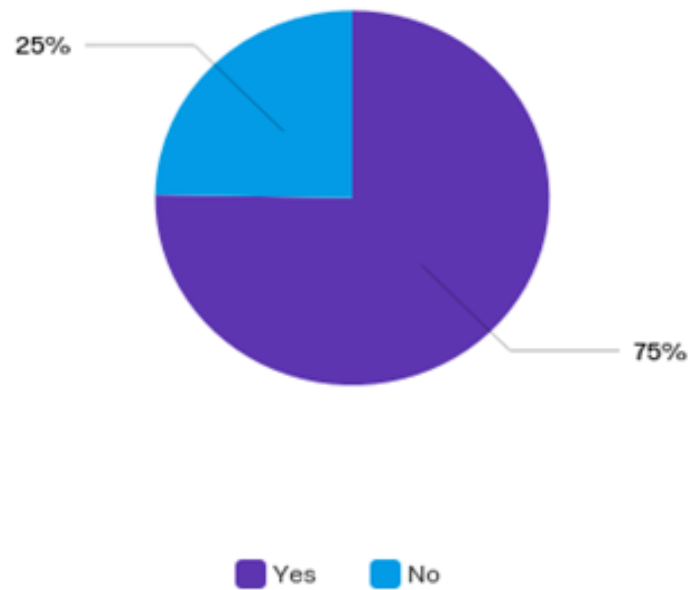
Fields of Dreams		Baw Beese Parks		Lewis Emery Park		Mrs. Stock's Park	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
7	13.46%	7	13.46%	6	11.54%	4	7.69%
Owen Memorial		In the City		KeeKoose Park		LoPresto Field	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
2	3.85%	5	9.62%	1	1.92%	1	1.92%
Fair Grounds		Baw Beese Trail		Downtown		Other	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	1.92%	1	1.92%	1	1.92%	8	15.38%



**15 - Would you be willing to support a recreational millage in order to ensure continual improvement and maintenance of parks and recreational facilities?**



**16 - Millage or not, would you be willing to make a personal donation by way of time and/or money to support continued recreation in your community?**



Chapter 5

## **Goals and Objectives**

City of Hillsdale

## Goals and Objectives

The following mission statement was developed for the joint recreation plan:

***To work collaboratively to provide diverse, year-round recreational opportunities for all, enhance our natural setting and make the Hillsdale area a destination for recreation.***

The following goals and objectives were developed to implement the mission statement:

#1	<b>Enhance current and develop new opportunities for Hillsdale area residents and visitors to participate in a variety of recreational activities.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Continue to manage website and social media sites providing up to date information with regard to activities and facilities; and</li><li>b. Develop a youth advisory board; and</li><li>c. Assist in the development of community festivals and events; and</li><li>d. Partner with local entities, including schools to develop environmental education/nature center and other community wide recreation programs; and</li><li>e. Partner with other organizations to develop recreation and wellness programming and facilities for senior citizens; and</li><li>f. Explore funding opportunities for the improvement and development of recreational facilities; and</li><li>g. Continue with park renovations/improvements/developments creating recreation destinations within the City and Township; namely the Baw Beese component and trails connectivity (Headwaters Recreational Authority).</li><li>h. Continue to explore new recreation program opportunities.</li></ul>
#2	<b>Create a community identity that enhances the City's positive attributes and natural resources.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Identify and promote existing recreation opportunities as they relate to what makes the area unique; and</li><li>b. Create branding, wayfinding, logos, etc.... as they relate to that which sets the area apart; and</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Collaborate with area businesses, industry, and educational institutions that serve the recreational consumer; and</li> <li>d. Develop a signature festival; and</li> <li>e. Continue to develop the Recreation website.</li> </ul>
<b>#3</b>	<p><b>Improve the area park system by enhancing existing facilities and planning for expansion of additional recreational spaces.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Continue to develop and promote the Baw Beese component of the park system as a recreation destination; and</li> <li>b. Explore and determine feasibility of campground development/expansion; and</li> <li>c. Improve existing parks and facilities and equipment; and</li> <li>d. Explore funding of recreational opportunities; and</li> <li>e. Promote connectivity of the park system through trails; and</li> <li>f. Create uniform way finding and parks identification systems; and</li> <li>g. Encourage year-round use of parks; and</li> <li>h. Encourage public participation in renovation of local parks.</li> </ul>
<b>#4</b>	<p><b>Expansion and improvement of trails in the City.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Headwaters Recreational Authority to continue to promote trail system development with emphasis on loops; and</li> <li>b. Construct a trail connecting the Jonesville Rail Trail to the Hillsdale Baw Beese Trail; and</li> <li>c. Participate in place making focus groups to design and help implement ability to walk/Promote opportunities to walk/bike to destinations, i.e. downtown districts, parks, schools, etc.; and</li> <li>d. Encourage non-motorized transportation to destinations through promotion (i.e.; signage, bike racks, parking); and</li> <li>e. Develop printed and electronic mapping systems of current and proposed trails available to the public via publication and internet.</li> </ul>

## Background Information

Input into developing the goals and objectives listed above included:

- existing recreation facilities available to City residents, regardless of the provider;
- the health, age, and disabilities of City residents;
- possible funding and acquisition opportunities for land and facilities; and
- responses from the recreation survey and the trail network map.

### #1. **Enhance current and develop new opportunities for Hillsdale area residents and visitors to participate in a variety of recreational activities**

The Hillsdale Area is rich with a multitude of recreation facilities and programs as well as natural resources, however; more needs to be done to promote and increase opportunities to enjoy those community assets. Ongoing development of the website must continue providing current recreation information which will peak the interest of its viewers.

The development of a youth advisory board, development of community festivals, and environmental education are examples of areas of improvement and expansion of the recreational experience in the area. These objectives bring forth the realization of the importance of alternative funding be it through business/industry, fee structures, grants or volunteer services.

The renovation of Sandy Beach has created a recreation destination along the Baw Beese Lake park system in the City of Hillsdale. It has spawned the creation of a comprehensive Baw Beese Park System Master Plan outlining a plan for all of the 3 parks and the Baw Beese Trail for upgrades and continuity, enhancing the entire system while implementing inclusive and universal play. The City of Hillsdale provides a wide variety of programs and the Hillsdale Community Schools provide additional recreation programming to its student body.

Since the completion of the Sandy Beach project, Hillsdale Rotary has since proposed the development of a fitness park located just outside of the City's downtown adjacent to Mrs. Stock's Park and the Baw Beese Trail. Upon the donation of the property by a local businessman, the plans for the park have been rolled out. The park is to include outdoor fitness equipment, a children's play area, pickle ball courts and a pavilion.

Kiwanis has made great improvements to Cold Springs Park over the last 3 years. This project involved revitalization of some play equipment and replacement of other pieces with ADA approved equipment, pouring of sidewalks for accessibility and installation of certified fall zones. Plans to clear the springs and pond will be the next endeavor.

Hillsdale Exchange Club has “adopted” Waterworks Park with a 3 phase plan for renovation. The first phase of renovation will take place in the spring of 2024. This will involve the removal of obsolete play equipment, installation of expression swings for inclusive play, new belt swings, fall zone, and benches. A fishing pier has been installed off the shoreline in the summer of 2023. It is the goal of the City to continue working with organizations and the community to update the parks. Special focus will be given to inclusive play and sensory awareness as the parks are redesigned.

Local hardware store, Gelzer’s Hardware, has spearheaded plans to develop an 18 hole professional grade disc golf course within the Baw Beese Park System. The course will be developed on vacant, undeveloped land owned by the City. Funding will be provided by several volunteers, local businesses and the City’s Parks budget. The course will consist of cement golf tees, disc golf baskets and flags and will maintain the natural landscape of the land. The addition of the disc golf course will attract visitors from all around affecting a boost to the local economy in turn.

As improvements are made and programming is expanded, funding becomes crucial. Building strong relationships with business and industry is of most importance. Promotion of recreation is a key factor in a stable, healthy environment and its impact on business and industry is key.

## **#2 Create a community identity that enhances the City’s positive attributes and natural resources**

The creation of a community brand promoting area recreation opportunities and natural resources will help to create this identity. The drafting of this plan which highlights nontraditional as well as traditional recreation facilities and programs and natural resources is an important first step. Sustaining a webpage on the City’s, Township’s, and/or Chamber of Commerce’s websites is also needed if the creation of a brand for the community is to be realized. The cooperation of area businesses is also needed

to create a brand, especially those that serve recreational consumers (please see the recreation inventory). Another way of creating a community identity is through a signature festival. The promotion of recreation and natural resources should also encourage greater usage of recreational facilities and programs which will result in a healthier community.

**#3 Continue to improve the area park system by enhancing existing facilities and planning for expansion of additional recreational spaces**

The City of Hillsdale, in collaboration with local service clubs, has spent the last five (5) years focusing on the enhancement and renovation of its park system. Re-energizing the parks, many of which have historical value within the City, will help to improve recreational opportunities for residents of all ages and attract visitors into the area. The Baw Beese component of the park system is comprised of three (3) parks: Waterworks Park, Sandy Beach, and Owen Memorial Park, along with a large portion of the Baw Beese Trail. The completion of the Sandy Beach has been a milestone for the local Rotary Club. With vast improvements which include a renovated beach front, a new play area, enhanced sand volleyball courts, the addition of an outdoor basketball court, and a revitalized concession stand/restroom facility, and pavilion. Renamed Hillsdale Rotary Park at Sandy Beach, the park has regained its vitality winning 2 "Best of the Best" awards; Local Tourist Attraction and best Family Amusement Destination. Playground equipment at Owen Memorial Park has experienced a facelift by painting play equipment with the help of Key Opportunities, a local non-profit organization that helps those citizens who are handicapped/disadvantaged. New playground equipment is part of a bigger plan for park improvements, but will have to be done as funding becomes available. Plans being made in collaboration with a local business to make drastic improvements to the 9 - hole disc golf course and plans to repurpose the vacant house that sits on the property is on the horizon. Bronze nature sculptures created and donated by a local artist (Heritage Association) will begin to appear along the Baw Beese Trail for users to enjoy as they use the trail.

A strong partnership between the City of Hillsdale, Hillsdale Garden Club, and the Mrs. Stock's Park Committee has resulted in an award winning renovation to Mrs. Stock's Park in downtown Hillsdale over the last several years. Expansion of the gardens continues and projects such as plumbed restrooms, sheltered picnic tables, and additional entertainment areas are being planned for and funding being obtained.

Cold Springs Park, one of a handful of neighborhood parks has been adopted by the local Kiwanis Club. The park consists of 2 artesian wells, a stream, pond, and vintage play equipment. A multi-phase restoration of the park in an attempt to bring the park back to life as it once was and make it a place for the neighborhood to enjoy once again. Hillsdale Exchange Club has also begun making improvements to Waterworks Park, installing inclusive play equipment, a fishing pier and benches. Projects such as these have sparked conversation with regard to refurbishment of other small parks in the City as well.



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As improvements to the parks are being made, special attention is also being placed on improving and creating barrier free access to restroom facilities, parking, and the implementation of play equipment. Also significant in the planning is compliance with recreation guidelines for safety. Due to budget constraints, safety upgrades have not been what they should throughout the park system. The City's Recreation Department is in the process of and will continue to inventory and evaluate the needs for safety upgrades with a certified playground inspector. Because of the vastness of play areas in the City, these improvements,

particularly ground cover, will have to be made in phases and included in each new project is planned. Environmental awareness is also a focus in the design process, particularly along the waterfront and parks containing ponds and streams. Areas of interest and concern are preserving/restoring natural habitats and shoreline erosion restoration/prevention. A marina exists along Baw Beese Lake consisting of 152 dock slips. With shoreline erosion being an ongoing issue, construction of new seawalls and refurbishment of existing seawalls is one step toward slowing the erosion problem currently facing the City's waterfront parks.

The MDOT Hill-Jo Trail, a transportation/commuter trail, is a non-motorized connection from Hillsdale to Jonesville with access to recreation and commercial facilities located in the City of Hillsdale and Jonesville. The Baw Beese Trail connects Downtown Hillsdale with its Baw Beese park component and Hillsdale College. Many City of Hillsdale streets are also served by sidewalks, providing further connections. However, there are opportunities for additional connections to other parks. The Headwaters Recreational Authority, a multi-jurisdictional corporation focused on trails connectivity within Hillsdale County, seeks to provide new connections to recreation facilities and communities (please see the Trail Network map).

Encouraging the year-round use of parks is a goal of the City of Hillsdale. While none of the city parks offer organized winter activities, Hillsdale County Lewis Emery, located inside Hillsdale Township, offers tobogganing. Residents occasionally pick up some cross country skiing in the parks and on private property as well as sledding/tobogganing, and ice skating.

#### **#4 Expansion and improvement of trails in the City and Township**

It has been demonstrated that existing trails and sidewalks already connect many of the recreational facilities located in the Hillsdale Area. However, there are opportunities for additional connections to other parks. Hillsdale County GIS and Michigan State University Extension collaborated in 2009 for the purpose of developing trail connectivity throughout the Hillsdale County area. The Headwaters Recreational Authority, a four (4) jurisdiction body (e.g., City of Hillsdale, City of Jonesville, Hillsdale, and Fayette Townships) was formally established in 2011. A State approved Recreation and Pathways Plan details a trail network for the Hillsdale County Area, highlighting a trail connecting the newly constructed Jonesville Rail Trail with the existing Baw Beese Trail of the City of Hillsdale. The plan proposes trails which connect the participating jurisdictions creating a sense of connection among the communities, promoting recreation destinations and encouraging health and fitness. The Authority is currently in the engineering/funding process in the development of the connecting trail from the City of Hillsdale Baw Beese Trail to the City of the Jerry Russell Trail in the City of Jonesville (please see the Trail Network map) with hopes of beginning construction in 2019. The enhanced network will also create the need for printed and electronic mapping systems as well as way-finding.

Chapter 6

**Action Program**

City of Hillsdale

## Action Program

The action program selected for the 2024-29 planning period contains the following initiatives:

1. Continue to enhance current informational websites with links to other sites within the County (CIS, GIS, Senior Services Center, businesses, etc.) highlighting available recreational opportunities and natural resources. Continue open and current dialogue with the public through social media.
2. Develop a Festival Committee to create and promote a signature festival in the area. Work through Hillsdale Business Association in the Downtown District and local vendors to create and develop community involvement and a sense of unity.
3. Work with schools on the development of nature centers and environmental projects. Develop a Youth Advisory Board representative of all ages to participate in the development of the above mentioned activities as well as expansion of new recreational opportunities in the area.
4. Continue to work on expansion of recreational programs and opportunities made available to the community. Work with business owners and artisans to collaborate on and promote workshops and classes.
5. Continue to develop a way finding signage system throughout the community through *Project Rising Tide* and focus groups thereby creating visibility to local sites and vendors as well as flow and continuity within the area.
6. Continue renovation and development to the chain of lake front parks in accordance with the adopted Baw Beese Park System Improvement Master Plan and encouraging expansion of recreational opportunities. Continue "adopt a park" projects through service groups and residential districts in order to improve and maintain local/neighborhood parks.
7. Continue to develop community identity by way of branding, logos and festivals through involvement with *Project Rising Tide* and local focus groups.
8. Continue to partner with Headwaters Recreational Authority in regard to trails connectivity within Hillsdale County. Offer continued support as the Authority moves forward with its project timeline for connection of the City of Jonesville Trail and Hillsdale's Baw Beese Trail. Maintain discussion with MDOT concerning improvements to the Hill-Jo Trail along M99. Continue to prioritize future trails projects based on topographical and community need thereby creating opportunity for economic networking and growth throughout the area.



Appendix A

## **Population Summary**

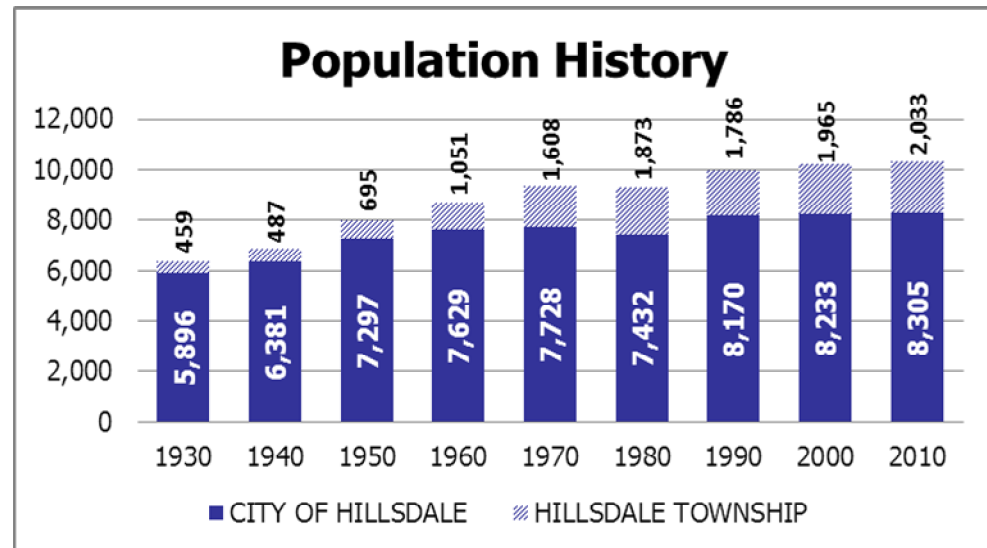
City of Hillsdale

The demographic composition of Township and Village residents has an effect upon their recreational needs. For example:

- **Population History & Projections** – establish the need for general recreational facilities (standards for which are based upon the size of the population).
- **The Age & Sex of the Population** – further refine the need for general recreational facilities balanced among various age groups and gender interests.
- **Household & Family Composition** – further refine the need for general recreational facilities balanced between family-oriented and individual activities.
- **Racial & Ethnic Composition** – further refine the need for general recreational facilities balanced among the various interests of racial and ethnic groups.
- **The Disabilities of Residents** – establish the need for special recreation facilities and disability accommodations to general recreation facilities.
- **Income** – helps to illustrate the need for publicly-funded recreational facilities.

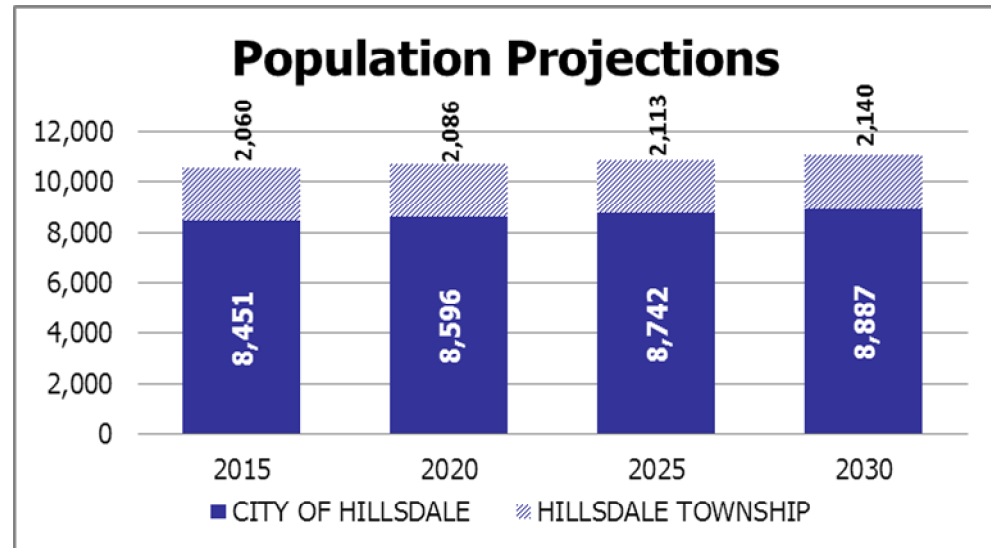
### Population History & Projections

The combined population of the City of Hillsdale and Hillsdale Township was comprised of 10,338 people in 2010, with approximately 4 out of 5 residents living in the City. The adjacent figure shows fairly steady population increases in both the City and the Township since 1930. It is interesting to note that a greater percentage of residents lived in the Township in 2010 than 1930.



A simple projection model has been used to estimate population growth that might reasonably be expected in the future for the City and the Township.

This model describes a pattern of population growth in which the population level will continue to change at a given rate based upon the estimated changes in population between 1980 and 2010. Based upon this information, it is reasonable to expect that the populations of the City of Hillsdale and Hillsdale Township will continue to increase slightly (please see the adjacent figure). It is also reasonable to expect that the 2020 population for Hillsdale Area will be around 10,662 and the 2025 population will be around 10,855. Approximately 80% of the population will continue to live in the City.





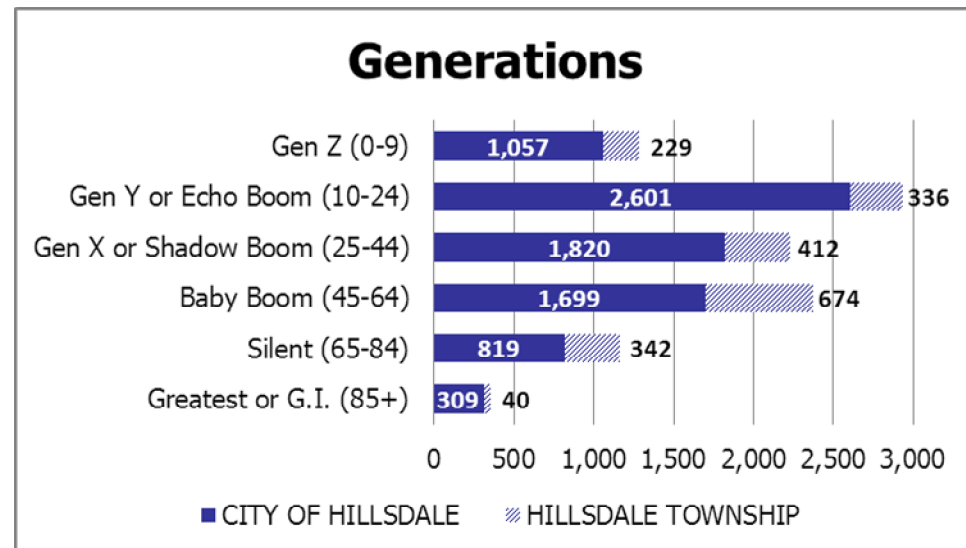
## Age & Sex of the Population

The median age of Hillsdale Township residents in 2010 was much greater than the median age of City residents. Township residents had a median age of 46.1 years while the median age of City of Hillsdale residents was 30.2 years. In comparison, the median age of Township and City residents was younger in the Year 2000 (41.9 years and 29.7 years, respectively).

As the figure below illustrates, 'baby boomers' –people between 45 and 64 years of age in 2010– accounted for 20% of City residents and 33% of Township residents. 'Gen X' or 'Shadow boomers' –people between 25 and 44 years of age in 2010– accounted for 20% of all Township residents and 22% of the City residents. 'Gen Y' or 'Echo boomers' –people between 10 and 24 years of age in 2010– accounted for 31% of City residents and 17% of Township residents. 'Older generations' –people at least 65 years of age in 2010– accounted for 14% of City and 19% of Township. 'Younger generations' –people less than 10 years of age in 2010– accounted for 13% of City residents and 11% of Township residents. Over half of City and Township residents were female in 2010.

### AGE OF THE POPULATION

	HILLSDALE TOWNSHIP	CITY HILLSDALE
TOTAL	1,965	8,305
MALE	994	3,901
FEMALE	1,039	4,404
Under 5 YEARS	87	519
5 to 9 YEARS	142	538
10 to 14 YEARS	130	485
15 to 19 YEARS	122	904
20 to 24 YEARS	84	1,212
25 to 34 YEARS	165	942
35 to 44 YEARS	247	878
45 to 54 YEARS	363	927
55 to 59 YEARS	149	445
60 to 64 YEARS	162	327
65 to 74 YEARS	224	464
75 to 84 YEARS	118	355
85 YEARS & OVER	40	309



### Household & Family Composition

There were 3,729 households in the Hillsdale Area in 2010 and 2,970 of them were located in the City. Approximately two-thirds of all households were comprised of 1 (33%) or 2 (33%) people. Approximately one-quarter of all households were comprised of 3 (14%) or 4 (11%) people.

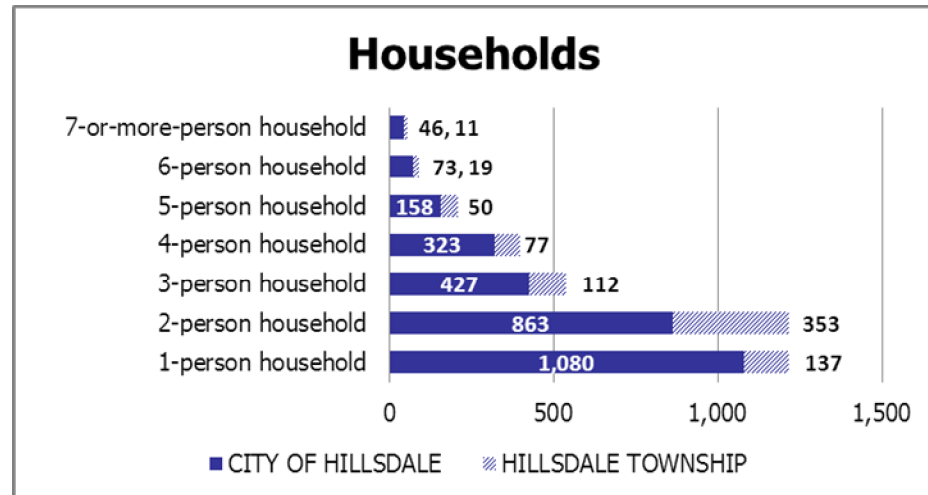
Although families comprised the overwhelming majority of Hillsdale Area households in 2010, more than a third (39%) was not. The average household size in Hillsdale Township was 2.55 people and the average family size was 2.86 people. The average household size in the City was 2.35 people and the average family size was 3.03 people.

### Racial & Ethnic Composition

Race and ethnicity are not significant issues given that the overwhelming majority of the population of the Hillsdale Area was white in 2010 and only a small minority considered themselves to be Hispanic. For example, 97% of Township residents and 96% of City residents were white in 2010 and only approximately 2% of the populations of the City and the Township were Hispanic.

### Disability of Residents<sup>6</sup>

Disabled individuals comprised 22% of City of Hillsdale residents five years old or older in 2000. However, age is often a determining factor in the distribution of disability. For example, disabled individuals comprised 56% of Hillsdale Township residents sixty-five years or older in 2000 and 54% of Hillsdale residents. Disabled individuals only comprised 16% of Hillsdale Township residents aged from twenty-one to sixty-four years in 2000 and 20% of Hillsdale residents. Finally, disabled individuals only comprised 14% of Hillsdale Township residents and 12% of Hillsdale residents aged from five to twenty years in 2000.



**DISABLED POPULATION AS OF 2000**

	CITY OF HILLSDALE
5 TO 20 YEARS	280
WITH A DISABILITY (% OF POPULATION)	12%
21 TO 64 YEARS	868
WITH A DISABILITY (% OF POPULATION)	20%
65 YEARS AND OLDER	543
WITH A DISABILITY (% OF POPULATION)	54%

**Income**

The median household income in the City of Hillsdale (\$32,061) was less than the median income for Michigan (\$45,413) in 2010, although the median household income in Hillsdale Township (\$55,913) was higher. The median family income in the City (\$44,034) in 2010 was also less than the median family income statewide (\$56,101), and the median family income in the Township (\$67,083) was higher.

Appendix B

## **Recreation and Resource Inventories**

City of Hillsdale

## NRPA PARK STANDARDS

TYPE OF AREA	USE	SERVICE AREA	SIZE	ACRES/ 1,000	SITE FEATURES
MINI-PARK	SPECIALIZED FACILITIES THAT SERVE A CONCENTRATED OR LIMITED POPULATION OR SPECIFIC GROUP SUCH AS TOTS OR SENIOR CITIZENS.	LESS THAN ¼ MILE RADIUS.	1 ACRE OR LESS	0.25 TO 0.50	WITHIN NEIGHBORHOODS AND IN PROXIMITY TO APARTMENT COMPLEXES, TOWNHOUSES OR HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY.
NEIGHBORHOOD PARK OR PLAYGROUND	AREA FOR INTENSE RECREATION ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS FIELD GAMES, COURT GAMES, CRAFTS, PLAYGROUND APPARATUS AREA, SKATING, PICNICKING, WADING POOLS, ETC.	¼ TO ½ MILE RADIUS TO SERVE A POPULATION UP TO 5,000 — A NEIGHBORHOOD.	15 ACRES	1 TO 2	SUITED FOR INTENSE DEVELOPMENT. EASILY ACCESSIBLE TO NEIGHBORHOOD POPULATIONS. GEOGRAPHICALLY CENTERED WITH SAFE WALKING AND BIKE ACCESS. MAY BE DEVELOPED AS A SCHOOL PARK FACILITY
COMMUNITY PARK	AREA OF DIVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY. MAY INCLUDE AREAS SUITED FOR INTENSE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, SUCH AS ATHLETIC COMPLEXES, LARGE SWIMMING POOLS. MAY BE AN AREA OF NATURAL QUALITY FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION, SUCH AS WALKING, VIEWING, SITTING, AND PICNICKING. MAY BE ANY COMBINATION OF THE ABOVE, DEPENDING UPON SITE SUITABILITY AND COMMUNITY NEED.	MORE THAN ONE NEIGHBORHOOD — 1 TO 2 MILE RADIUS.	15+ ACRES	5 TO 8	MAY INCLUDE NATURAL FEATURES, SUCH AS WATER BODIES, AND AREAS SUITED FOR INTENSE DEVELOPMENT. EASILY ACCESSIBLE TO NEIGHBORHOOD SERVED.

SOURCE: ROGER A. LANCASTER, ED; 1983. RECREATION, PARK AND OPEN SPACE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES. ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA: NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION, P. 56-57.

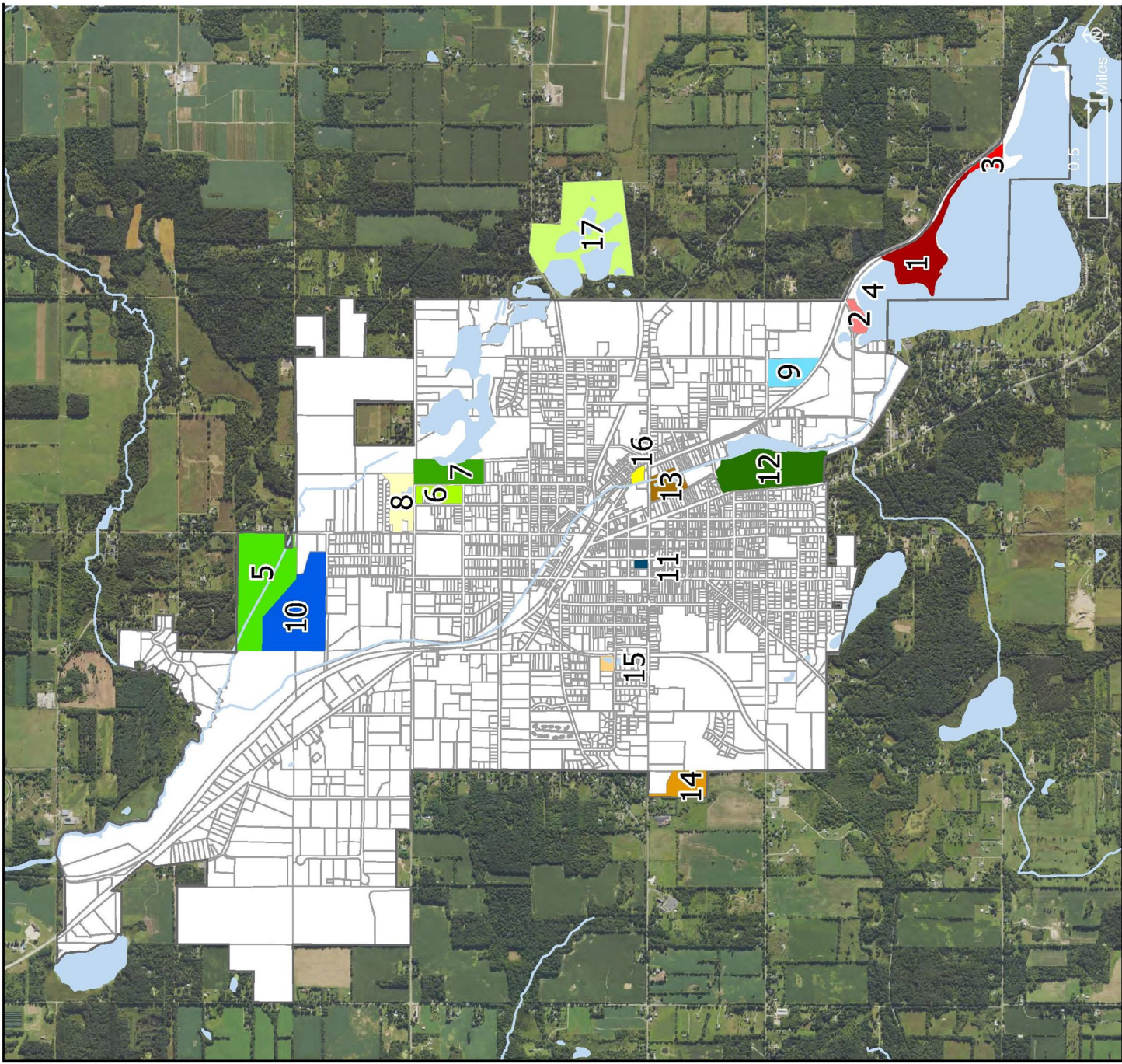
Appendix C

## **Maps**

City of Hillsdale & Hillsdale Township Joint Recreation Plan







## City of Hillsdale Recreation Facilities

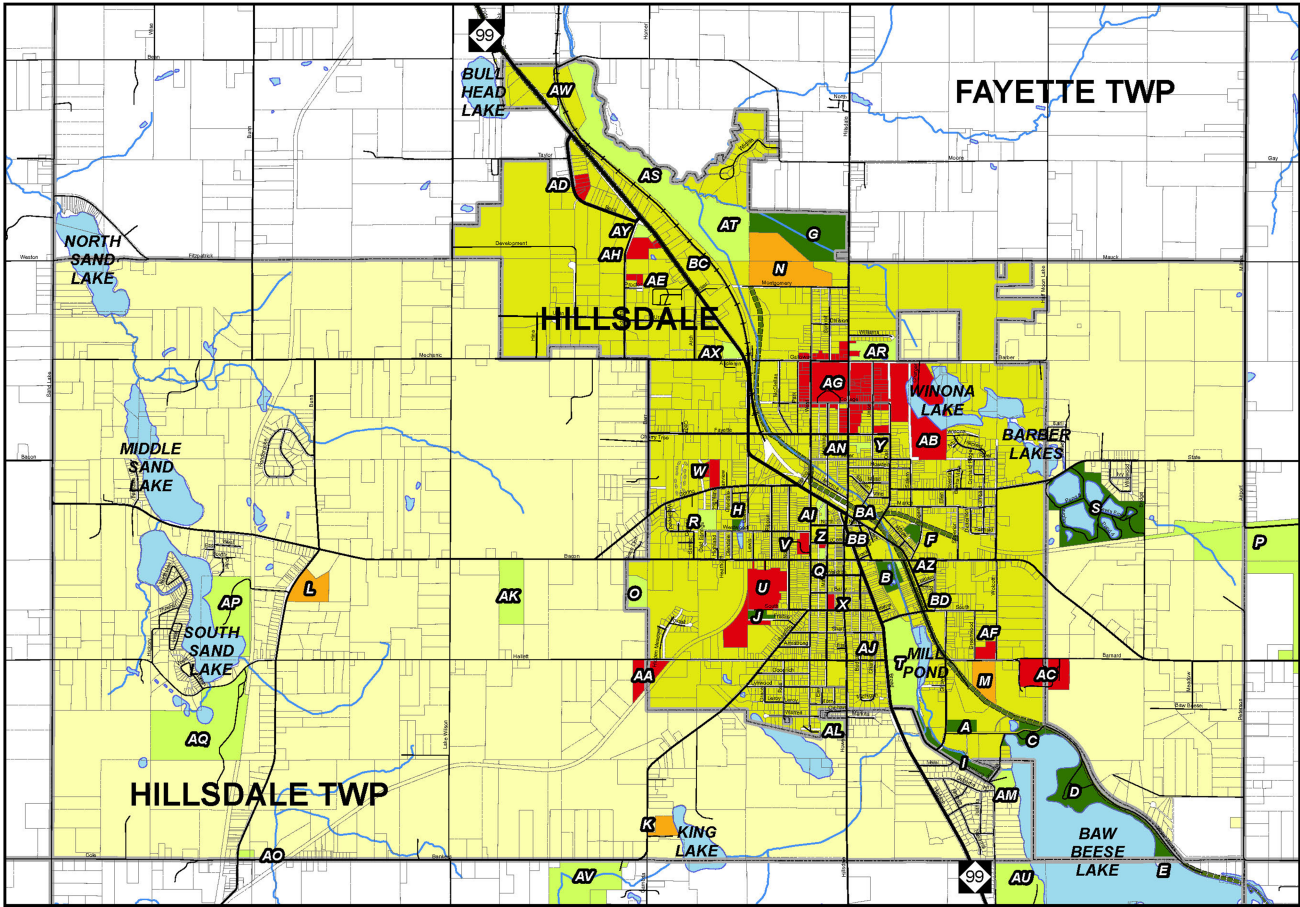
1	Owen Memorial Park	12	Hillsdale County Fairgrounds	17	Lewis Emery Park
2	Waterworks Park	13	Mrs. Stock's Park	16	Future Rotary Club
3	Sandy Beach	14	Perennial Park	15	Cold Springs Park
4	Baw Beese Lake Dock	9	Lakeview Cemetery	10	Hillsdale Community Library
5	Fields of Dreams	7	Frank "Muddy" Waters Stadium	11	
6	Hillsdale College Sports Complex	8	Slayton Arboretum		
		15	Oak Grove Cemetery		
		16	Hillsdale Community Library		
		17			

The City of  
**HILLSDALE**  
MICHIGAN

Assistance by:  
**Region 2**  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
Serving Hillsdale, Jackson & Lenawee Counties

Date Printed: February 2024





# LEGEND

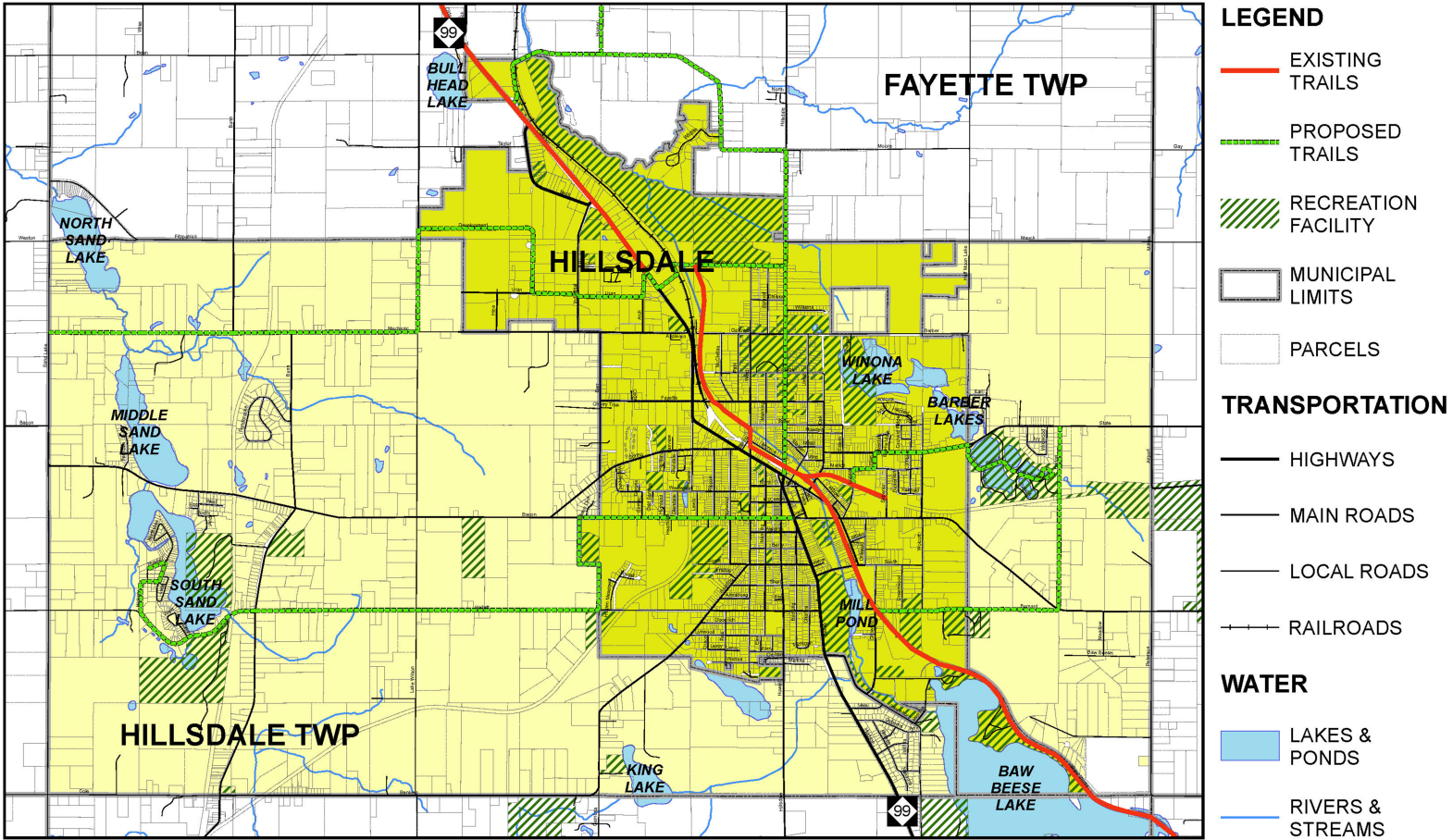
- CITY OR COUNTY PARK
- SCHOOLS
- OTHER RECREATION FACILITY
- TRAIL
- CEMETARY
- MUNICIPAL LIMITS
- PARCELS
- HIGHWAYS
- MAIN ROADS
- LOCAL ROADS
- RAILROADS
- LAKES & PONDS
- RIVERS & STREAMS

CITY OF HILLSDALE AND  
HILLSDALE TOWNSHIP

# RECREATION

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



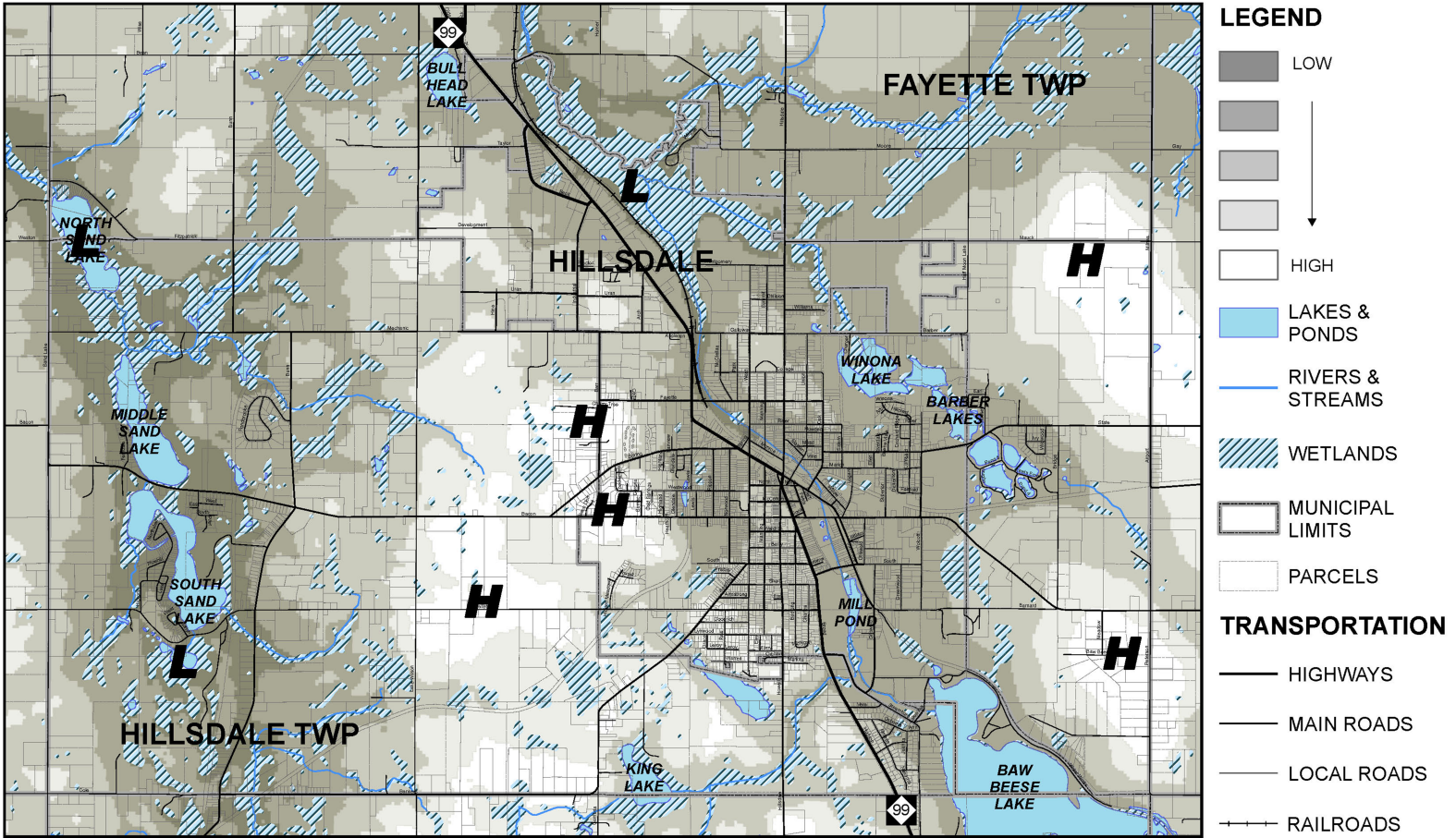


CITY OF HILLSDALE AND  
HILLSDALE TOWNSHIP

# TRAIL NETWORK

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles





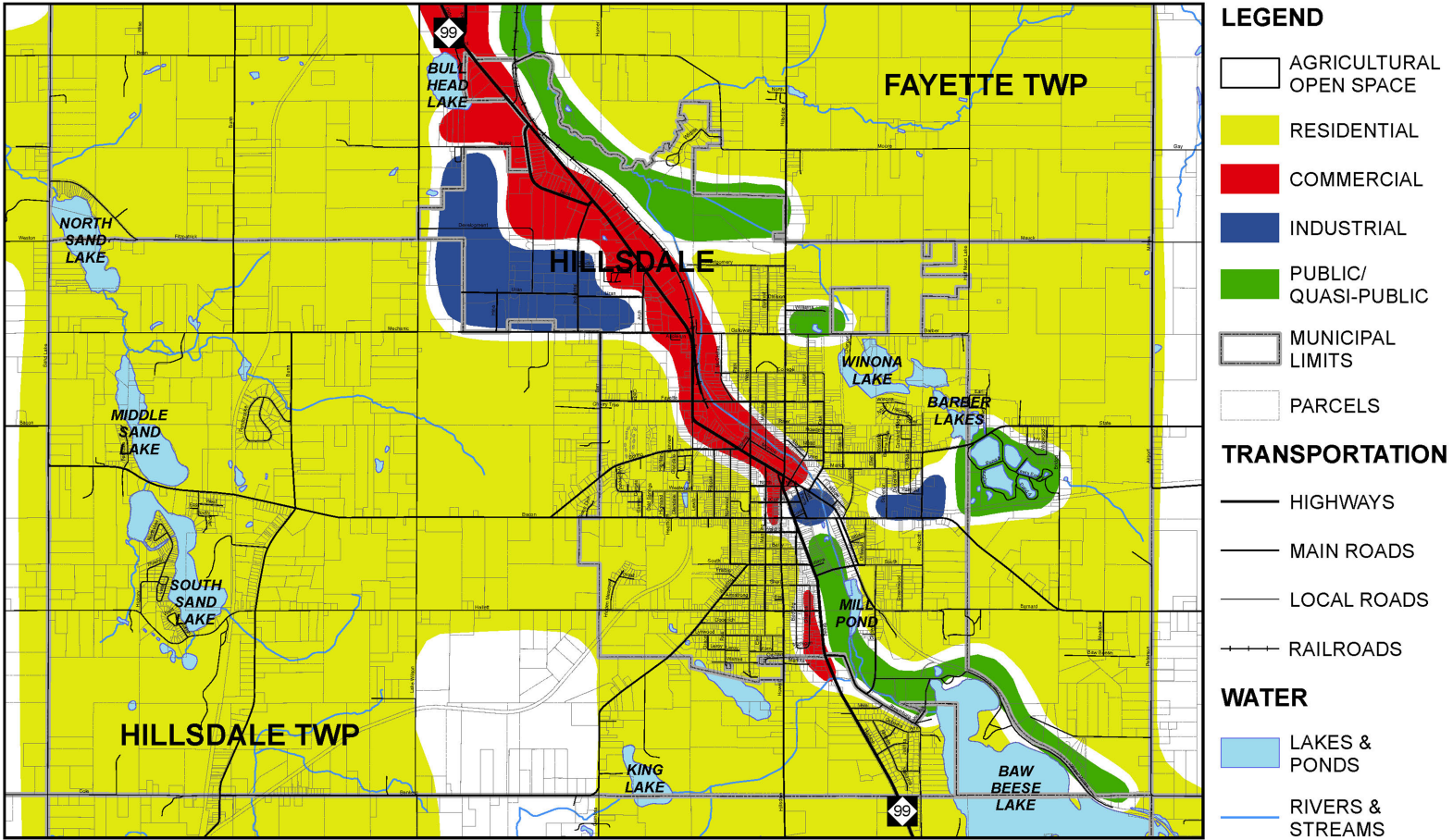
CITY OF HILLSDALE AND  
HILLSDALE TOWNSHIP

# HYDROLOGY & TOPOGRAPHY

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles





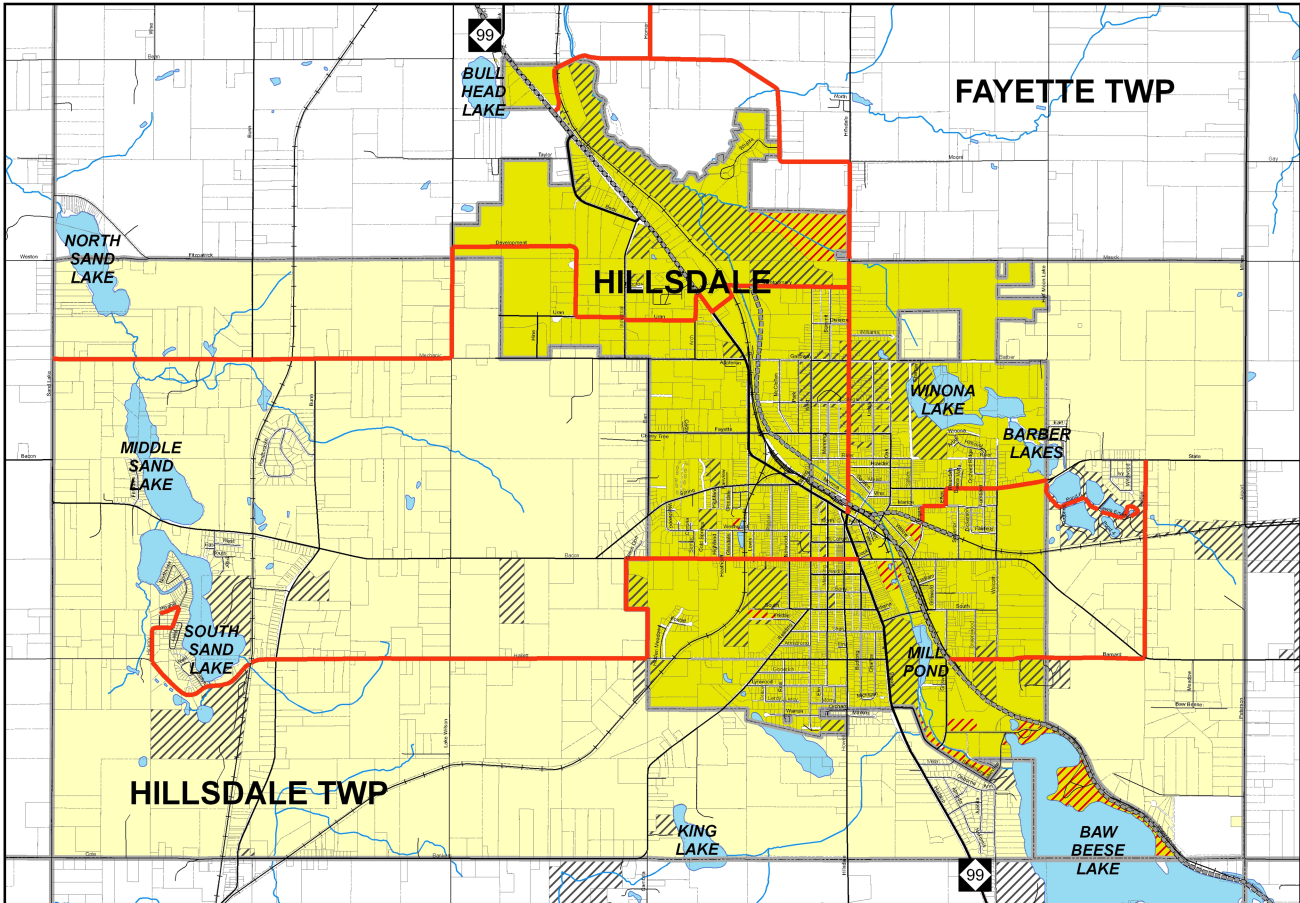


CITY OF HILLSDALE AND  
HILLSDALE TOWNSHIP

# FUTURE LAND USE

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles





## LEGEND

POSSIBLE PARKS

PROPOSED TRAILS

MUNICIPAL LIMITS

PARCELS

## TRANSPORTATION

HIGHWAYS

MAIN ROADS

LOCAL ROADS

RAILROADS

## WATER

LAKES & PONDS

RIVERS & STREAMS



