Community Description
Newberry is located in the eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan and is one square mile in size. Population in the Village is approximately 1,459. This recreation plan has been developed in cooperation with the Tahquamenon Area Recreation Authority (hereafter TARA), in part for the purpose of cooperatively developing an outdoor recreational complex for the area.

Newberry was named in honor of John Stoughton Newberry, a United States Congressman and industrialist from the state. Newberry is the county seat of Luce County. In broad strokes, Luce County consists of wilderness river country, with approximately 40% of it classified as freshwater swampland. It has remained largely undeveloped, with a little over half of it contained in the Lake Superior State Forest.

The population in Luce County according to the 2010 US Census is 6,631 persons and 2,345 households. As many as 1,150 persons are those institutionalized in the state prison. Luce County is characterized by an aging populace with higher than average numbers of retired residents and veterans and fewer persons in the 20-30 age bracket.

Land acres for Luce County are 578,880 and water acres 14,464, for a total of 593,344. There are 296,922 acres of public recreation land - 10,698 in State parks and recreation areas, 262 acres of State boating and fishing sites and 285,962 in State Forest. Luce County is best known for being the home of the Tahquamenon Falls, second largest waterfall east of the Mississippi. The Village of Newberry, which contains a variety of retail operations and residential neighborhoods, is a central starting point for fishing, sporting and recreational excursions. Other popular areas are the Two Hearted River, considered one of Michigan’s premiere trout streams, and the 31 miles of undeveloped Lake Superior shoreline at the county’s northern edge.

Traditionally, the economy in Luce County is less robust than the state average. The median value of owner-occupied housing units, according to the 2014 census, was $78,300, considerably less than the State median value of $175,700. The median income for a household in the Village was $33,833, and the median income for a family was $38,125. Median household income in the county is $36,398 compared to the state’s median income of $49,087.

The County has historically had higher than average rates of unemployment, alcoholism, and teen pregnancy. In looking at poverty levels, 20.6% of persons live in poverty in Luce County compared to 16.2% at the state level. A full 30% of individuals in the Village of Newberry live below the poverty line. A full 75% of the population of the Village of Newberry are in the low to moderate income range. The largest employers locally are the Newberry correctional facility, Helen Newberry Joy Hospital and Healthcare Center, Tahquamenon Area Schools and the Lousianna Pacific Plant.

Population estimates as of July 1, 2014 for the Village of Newberry are 1,459, down from 1,519 in 2010 and 1,873 in 2000. There are 448 owner-occupied housing units
Village of Newberry Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plan 2016 - 2021 and 204 renter-occupied units. Of 638 households, 181 have received food stamp assistance in the last 12 months.

Wood products and forest-based recreation and tourism are the two primary elements of the overall forest-based economy, and both elements are beneficial for the development and maintenance of strong rural economies.

Scenic resources drive the primary economic industry (tourism and resort trade) of northern Michigan. The scenic quality is also an important economic catalyst for the entire state. It is a land-based industry that shares space with forestry and other land uses. There is a finite area of land in northern Michigan in which to fit a range of uses. Recent development trends are threatening to reduce the scenic quality in the region. The abundant natural resources of the Luce County provide the basis for much of the recreation of local citizens, as well as visitors to the region. The Eastern Upper Peninsula has a world-class snowmobile trail system and there is a growing network of other trails, including those for Off Road Vehicles.

Newberry is surrounded by miles of state and national forests and is a gateway to Tahquamenon Falls. Over half a million people visit Tahquamenon Falls annually. Newberry was designated as the Moose Capital of Michigan by the State Legislature in 2002. Having large tracts of wilderness necessary to support apex species, such as moose, bear, wolves and cougars, is an important asset for the area.

**Administrative Structure**

The Village of Newberry is guided by a Village Council of 7 seats, six council members and the Village President. They employ a full-time Village Manager. The Manager has oversight of the Superintendent of Public Works, who in turn supervises personnel in the Department of Public Works and Newberry Water and Light.

The current Village budget allocates $8,050 out of general funds for building and grounds. There are two Department of Public Works employees who perform the maintenance and up-keep of Village Parks. In recent years the Village has contracted for grass mowing at all the properties. This is reevaluated annually.

Park and recreation property owned by the village includes three parcels within the village limits as well as a newly acquired brown-field property.

Programming – None currently under-written by the Village, although other organizations use the facilities for programmed activities.

Funding sources – Currently, the Village does not devote revenue specifically to parks and recreation.

Role of Volunteers – A local teen center regularly cleans up the volley ball and tether courts at Atlas Park. A local church group also does a big clean-up each summer at Atlas Park. Girl Scouts have planted the raised flower bed in Sherman Park for many years. Several interested community members have met in small groups to discuss various recreation initiatives for the village parks.
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Relationships with school district, other public agencies or private organizations – Recreation Inventory

Newberry has three parks located within the Village, all fitting the “neighborhood” designation.

1. The Curt Kneirim Memorial Park (formerly Washington Park) –
   820 X 292 – 239,440 sq. ft

2. Sherman Park
   296 x 90 – 26,640 Sq. ft.

3. Atlas Park
   1800 x 440 – 792,000 sq. ft
1. Kneirim Park was recently so named in honor of Kurt Kneirim, a long-serving, former Newberry Water and Light Board member who was killed in an accident. His family has sponsored a new sign for the park.

The park’s history is somewhat obscured by the passage of time, but the gentle rolling hills were once crisscrossed with stone lined paths and steps. The stone work was a CCC project. Historical photos show a fountain once also stood in the park. It was larger in the 1950’s and 60’s and residents remember it was used as the staging area for an annual carnival and July 4th fireworks.

Over time, the park has lost some area to accommodate placement of vital municipal structures – first the housing authority purchased part for a subsidized public housing apartment building. Recently a new ambulance garage was sited on a small, non-utilized section. There remain some beautiful old trees, areas for picnicking and relaxing. Small children still sled down the gentle hills in winter.

On the property stands the current skating facility. Built in the 1940’s, the large barn-like structure has been home to the Newberry skating rink for decades. The skating program is run by the Luce County Park and Recreation Department, although the building is owned by the Village.

The structure is inadequate for hockey league play, because the skating surface is too small. The structure has been reinforced to correct structural problems nad recently received a new roof. The natural ice limits the usability of the facility to only when conditions are right to make ice. Youth in the Newberry hockey program have been forced to travel one hour each way to practice in surrounding communities. Parents have to transport children several nights per week and most would rather under-write a skating facility in their own town than purchase ice time at other facilities.

For a second year, a synthetic ice product has been installed in the skating facility. This was purchased with the funds awarded through a MNRTF grant. The placement in an indoor facility is temporary and done through a waiver granted by the MDNR. The winter of 2015-2016 is seeing the first year this synthetic ice has been flooded to make natural ice over the top. This procedure has been sanctioned by the manufacturer and will extend the life of the product, as well as giving the community the opportunity to skate on natural ice during the depths of winter when cold enough.

Accessibility Rating - 2 = some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines. Persons are able to access picnicking and shaded areas via wheelchair. There are no special barrier-free design elements at the park. There is no barrier-free access to the skating facility.

2. Sherman Park has a similar history, in that it was once a larger green space within the village. A section was designated to meet community needs, in this case to provide space for a new hospital. A small neighborhood park remains, across the street from the hospital. Amenities are spare in this park, being limited to a couple of picnic tables, some nice old shade trees and a raised flower bed sponsored by the local Girls Scouts.
Independence Day Parade Route in 1916

Newberry News 7/4/16 “The parade formed at the corner of Trueman Avenue and Handy Street and headed by the Newberry State Hospital Band, marched north on Handy Street to Helen, west on Helen to Newberry avenue, south on Newberry Avenue to Harrie street and then west to the city park, (present site of HNJ Hospital) where the patriotic exercises of the day were held”

Other excerpts: “unquestionably the most successful Fourth Newberry has ever experienced. Estimated that over one thousand visitors were in the city to make merry and enjoy the celebration. From the first blare of the band in the morning till the last rocket at night there was a constant hum of activity something going on at all times to keep the crowds entertained and amused.

Civic parade in the morning. Participating in the parade were the city officials and firemen, the Newberry Rifle Club a large number of business floats and decorated automobiles. Audience of over two thousand at patriotic address which was frequently applauded by an audience of over two thousand people.
3. Atlas Park sits on the site of the former Atlas Plywood Plant. In 1989, the Village inquired about the property ownership and discovered the deed was held by a local bank. The bank donated the property to the village to be cleaned up and redeveloped as a park. The Village successfully applied for funds under the Recreation Bond Implementation Act and was awarded a grant in 1990.

A Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment was completed in 1991. In 1994, the rubble from the demolition of concrete slabs and footing walls was used to fill in the basement sections of the old plant with $47,100 in grant funds. In 1995, the Luce County EDC contributed $20,300 to the project. In 1996, the Village of Newberry was awarded a grant for the Atlas Plywood Plant Reuse Project, using a Protecting Michigan’s Future Recreation Bond Grant. Over $40,000 of additional site work was completed, then nearly $18,000 worth of playground equipment was installed. Currently it is used mostly for playing basketball and baseball.

Accessibility Rating - 2 = some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines. Persons are able to access tether ball and playground elements via wheelchair. There are no special barrier-free design elements at the park.

Methods used to conduct the inventory – review of previous plans, maps, and public input surveys; statements of Village President and current and former Manager and Village Council, physical inspection.

**DNR Recreation Grant Inventory**

1. 1996 Village of Newberry, Atlas Plywood Plant Reuse, Protecting Michigan’s Future Recreation Bond Grant No. BF 89-350

Requested One Year Extension to 12/31/96

Amended 3/1/97, reduction in scope and elimination of scope items – picnic area, landscaping and lighting - reason, lack of funds

Elements currently well maintained and in use at the park are: ball-field, swings, slide, tetherball, volleyball and basketball.

2. Tahquamenon Outdoor Recreation Complex – brownfield redevelopment project

The recreation development project has been awarded funds by both the MNRTF program and MDEQ.

The Trust Fund award (TF11-068) was for the maximum amount of $300,000. The original grant agreement has been amended in scope items and amounts and now includes the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Synthetic ice with freight and installation</td>
<td>$231,388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dasher Boards (used)</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rink Base Preparation ($70,000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sand or aggregate, compaction</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geo-textile barrier and underlayment</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Concrete/asphalt rim around rink $20,000
Trailhead and Trail links to entrance, paved $13,500
Access Drive $40,000
Play Area $11,000
Permits $300
Signs $300
Engineering $54,300

MNRTF $300,000
Local
TARA $131,388
Donor $6,000
VON $8,400

$445,788

This grant agreement has been extended several time and is expected to close out in the fall of 2016.

MDEQ brownfield redevelopment funding for the project is $438,500. Funds have been used to prepare the site. Contaminated soils have been bermed on-site and capped with clean sand, gravel and topsoil. A large portion of the reclaimed area will be capped by a paved parking lot. The paving of the parking lot, as well as the hiking and biking trail, are scope items of the grant and are scheduled to be completed in the 2016 construction season.

3. A Recreation Passport Grant was recently awarded to the village for improvements to Atlas Park in the amount of $45,000. This will fund several pieces of playground equipment, bring the entire park up to ADA standards and provide for picnic tables, benches and grills. The village match is for $15,000 worth of in-kind labor, materials and equipment to install a parking lot.

Natural Resource Concerns in the Eastern Upper Peninsula

Forest Fragmentation – Changing ownership patterns in the Upper Peninsula are having an impact on the resource. As large tracts of forest land formerly held by timber and paper interests are bought by investment companies, localities are faced with the probability that divestment will eventually occur via sales of smaller parcels for recreational and second home use. Forests become fragmented and diminished as land is cleared for buildings, lawns and roads. Fragmentation hinders ecological functions, especially in providing habitat to wildlife.

Forest Health – Forests suffer from poor cutting practices. Some timber harvesting decisions are made on market value rather than sound management strategies. Diseases and pests are having a significant negative impact on the forests of Luce County, in particular from Beach Bark disease. Heavy losses of this major mast producer will impact wildlife food stocks.
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Water Quality – major threats to surface water quality are sedimentation and run-off of nutrients and chemicals from private homes and farmland.

Invasive species – Exotic pests and plants have the potential to significantly disrupt and degrade eco-systems.

Critical Dunes, Sensitive Wetlands and Original Landscapes with rare, threatened, and endangered species – There are many sensitive habitats in northern Luce County currently threatened by off-road vehicle traffic.

Luce County is experiencing a declining number of farms and its farms are owned and operated by an older segment of society. Loss of active farms and increasing development pressures threaten open and green spaces.

The Village of Newberry has an aging stock of trees, many of those lining the main corridor. Most of those being cut down as they become hazards are not being replaced.

Natural Resource of Primary Focus – The Tahquamenon River

The Tahquamenon River is 94 miles long and drains approximately 820 square miles. It begins in the Tahquamenon Lakes in northeast Columbus Township in Luce County. M-123 runs alongside a portion of the river north of Newberry.

Recorded variously as 'Otkwaminang,' 'Outakwamenon,' 'Tequamenen', 'Tanguamanon,' 'Tanquamanon,' 'Toumequellen' and 'Tahquamenaw,' several suggestions on the meaning of its name have been made over the years:

- The origin of the present spelling can be traced to a Jesuit map of Lake Superior published in 1672 that named the small island lying 5 miles (8.0 km) off the river mouth as "Outa koua minan". The early French travelers called the Great Lakes region natives "Outaouaks".
- "Marsh of the blueberries," though 'menon' (miinan) does mean blueberries in the Ojibwa 'tahqua' does not mean "marsh"
- "Ottawa's good land" (Odaawaag minaang) due to an Ottawa village that used to be located near the mouth of the river

The current name for the Tahquamenon River in the Ojibwa language is Adikamegong-ziibi "River at where the Whitefish are found." This name is also the naming basis for Whitefish Point and Whitefish Bay, both known earlier as "Tahquamenaw".

Tahquamenon Falls State Park is Michigan's second largest park exceeding 40,000 acres. Tahquamenon, the land of Hiawatha, is home to one of the largest waterfalls east of the Mississippi. It stands 200 feet wide and has a drop of nearly 50 feet. Four miles downstream is the Lower Falls, a series of five smaller falls cascading around an island. The Tahquamenon River, which feeds the falls, rises from springs and drains the
Village of Newberry Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plan 2016 - 2021 watershed of an area of more than 820 square miles. From its source, it meanders 94 miles before emptying into Lake Superior.

The Tahquamenon is a natural river, with state designation as a wilderness under consideration. There are only two sources of discharge into the river, Newberry’s municipal waste water treatment plant and Tahquamenon Falls State Park. In the late 1800’s and early 1900’s Newberry, like many Northern Michigan towns, was a lumbering town, with other industrial processes typical for the day. In the one mile stretch between the railroad and the Tahquamenon River to the north of the growing town were the factory and lumber yard grounds.

Historical uses of the brownfield are well known because the original use was the impetus to the creation of Newberry as a town in the late 1800’s. In 1882, some businessmen from Detroit with interests in the railroad, established the Vulcan Furnace Company named for the Roman god of fire. The first industrial process undertaken on the property was making charcoal. The Village of Newberry sprang up around it. Prior to that, the location was known as “Grant’s Camp”. Vice-president of the furnace company was John S. Newberry, later a state congressman, for whom the town is named.

In the 1910’s, another operation was added at the plant – making pig iron. The property had a lumber yard and many railroad spurs. The plant had its own small gauge railroad to move materials around on the property. Slabs that were scrap from the boards sawed was brought to the beehive brick kilns to make charcoal to fire the furnace to melt the iron ore. The molten mix of iron ore and limestone flowed down to the sand casting beds on the floor, producing 90 pound “pigs”. At its height, the plant produced 70 tons per year. When this operation closed in 1945, it was one of the last of its kind in the country.

It is interesting to note how the industries utilized the by-products from one process as raw materials for the next. There was also a chemical company on the property which produced wood alcohol from by-products of the other industrial processes. The smoke from the kilns was captured and condensed. There were underground pipelines for tar, “liquor” and water.

But in the end, there were wastes. The tars were “disposed of” in one corner, while aqueous wastes flowed down a wooden pipeway into a “chemical ditch”. This emptied into the Tahquamenon River, less than 1 mile north. Indeed the entire 1 mile stretch between the railroad tracks and the River was the industrialized area, all along the east side of M-123. Today there still stand a couple of company houses where the workers with families lived. In the company town, paying company script, it was the only place to stay for $25/month. Referred to as “Red Row” houses, they faced what is now the M-123 highway.

There are old written accounts of the Tahquamenon being “killed off” from the pollution. The neighboring river bottom lands once yielded the vast celery crops that Newberry was known for. There are records of the Iron company paying damages to farmer with failed (i.e.: polluted) crops.
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Chain of title records, historical maps and other records identify the following companies which operated in all or a portion of the property from 1882-1940's:

- Vulcon Furnace Company (1882 – 1888)
- Newberry Furnace Company (1888 – 1900)
- Burrell chemical Company (1888 – 1900)
- Michigan Iron Company (1900 – 1907)
- Superior Chemical Company (1903 – 1915)
- Lake Superior Iron and Chemical Company (1907 – 1915)
- Charcoal Iron Company of America (1915 – 1929)
- Newberry Lumber and Chemical Company (1929 – 1945)
- Newberry Manufacturing Company (1945 – 1946)
- West End Iron and Metal Company (1946 – 1950)
- Duluth SS&A Railroad/ now Canadian National (1880 – present)
- Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company (1932 – 1933)

The industrial processes conducted on the premises were intensely polluting to the surrounding soil and wetlands. Cleanup of the site was conducted in the 21st century by State funds through the MDEQ.

All photos courtesy of Jim Dwyer
Village of Newberry Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plan 2016 - 2021

Development Plan for Brownfield Site

Tahquamenon Outdoor Recreation Complex

The new Tahquamenon Outdoor Recreation Complex is located on a 43 acre site on the northern edge of the Village of Newberry. The site is a brownfield, having been the location of lumbering, iron ore smelting and chemical plant operations over many decades into the 1950s. The site underwent major clean-up efforts during the past decade including removal or capping of contaminated soils, removal of buildings and removal or reduction of building foundations, and capping or removal of abandoned industrial below-grade infrastructure.

The park site is essentially flat. Vegetation is relatively sparse and includes a significant amount of non-native plants. The contaminated soils and sand or gravel used to replace or cap them have generally not provided favorable growing conditions for native plants. Eighteen acres of the site have been identified in broad terms as wetlands. Specifically, the northeast quadrant of the site was a railroad yard consisting of parallel tracks running north – south. It is the areas between the old railroad beds, constructed in significant part of gravel and slag, that have reverted to wetlands. The northern edge of this wetland area, along County Road 462, has evolved into the most mature section of wetland. Wetland areas in the southern part of this area are less mature and harbor a broader mix of non-native plants.

The park site is bordered by M-123 and the Newberry Bottling Company to the west, railroad tracks immediately along its southern edge, downtown Newberry immediately on the other side of the railroad tracks, and a mixture of woodlands and farms to the east and north. The railroad tracks are active and need to be considered relative to safety concerns as they relate to park access and development. An overhead electrical line runs approximately north – south through the non-wetland portion of the site. Both water and sanitary sewer are directly available to the park site.

The development of this site as a park was first seriously proposed and planned for in 2001. That initial interest gave momentum to site clean-up efforts four years later. Fund-raising began in earnest and public discourse ensued regarding specific recreation objectives for the project. Over time, numerous objectives were identified and considered. This process ultimately resulted in the formation of the Tahquamenon Area Recreation Authority and an effort between the Authority and the Village of Newberry to have a master plan prepared for the park site. This step was initiated in early 2011.

The goals set forth for the project can be summarized as follows:

- Provide recreation opportunities for local and regional residents and for tourists
- Provide recreation opportunities for as diverse a set of population characteristics as possible
- Create opportunities for social interaction
- Restore the ecological health of the site through improvement of the soil, safe management of remaining contaminants, the introduction of native plantings on a
Village of Newberry Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plan 2016 - 2021

- site-wide basis, the restoration of wetland areas, and the expansion of habitat for native fauna
- Protect water resources in terms of ground water and wetlands
- Provide environmental education opportunities through the story of the site’s industrial history and reclamation efforts
- Provide historical education opportunities through the stories of the many former uses of the site, the role of those uses in terms of regional economic development, World War II support, and so on
- Provide recreation opportunities accessible to people with physical limitations and disabilities
- Provide universally-accessible play/exercise opportunities for children and adults
- Provide recreation opportunities to people who cannot afford to pay for such opportunities
- Provide recreation opportunities that are accessible via walking and biking
- Provide recreation opportunities that can result in lower obesity in children and adults through active recreation activities

With the establishment of these goals, the plan for the park was developed. The centerpiece of the park is an ice rink. The rink will utilize synthetic ice, offering year-round skating under any weather conditions. The rink will be configured as a regulation hockey rink, suitable for practice, games, and local and regional tournaments. (Local residents currently must make at least a 100 mile round trip to enable their children to play on a regulation-size hockey rink.) The rink will be perfectly suitable for recreational skating. Synthetic ice rinks enabling year-round skating are relatively rare. Thus, it is anticipated that the rink will attract a broad range of users from both the local area, the region and from tourist activity.

The rink will be an outdoor facility, but will be covered by a roof structure. Heavily vegetated berms will surround the edges of the rink to reduce the effects of prevailing winds. An area around the rink will also be covered by the roof structure accommodating team benches and spectator areas. Most notably, a walking path around the rink will also be covered by the roof structure and protected by the vegetated berms, thus providing year round opportunity for walking as exercise.

A support building will be developed in close association with the skating rink, providing restrooms, skate rentals, concessions and locker facilities. This support building should also have a modest welcome center component in service to the park as a whole. The ice rink will provide recreation opportunities for local and regional residents as well as for tourists. Sled hockey opportunities are also being explored for wounded warrior programs. It will provide numerous opportunities for social interaction and could function as a means to reduce obesity through both its skating and walking components.

In addition to the skating rink, the facility can shelter a farmer’s market and other community activities/events. Other recreation opportunities envisioned for the site include a skate park, a practice/learning disc golf course, a sports field, boundless universally accessible play apparatus and areas for children, accessible, multi-generational play/exercise apparatus and areas for adults – particularly older adults, a dedicated dog park area, horseshoe facilities, extensive walking, biking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing trails, spaces for community events, festivals and concerts, the
Village of Newberry Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plan 2016 - 2021 development of environmental and historical education displays, and the restoration of wetlands, native plantings and wildlife habitat.

The park will be accessible from downtown Newberry via pedestrian and bike paths along M-123. Vegetation and fencing will be used to safely separate park activities from the railroad. All park facilities will be, at a minimum, ADA accessible. Specific play facilities for children and adults will be designed to be universally accessible. Environmental and historical education displays will be integrated along trails and at nodes throughout the site. The development of this park site makes active recreation and social interaction opportunities readily available to Village residents and opens opportunities to attract regional and tourist-based use, thus offering an economic development potential to the community as well. Park development will transform brownfield conditions into a recreational and environmental asset.

Description of the Planning Process

The planning process for the village’s new Community Park, Open Space and Greenway Plan has been conducted over the past year and more, by the Village and volunteers interested in the parks. Volunteers had met to discuss plans for Atlas Park when preparing the successful Recreation Passport Grant Application last year. A community meeting for improving village parks was advertised, but sparsely attended. Previous recreation use surveys were reviewed, as well as other community plans. Village Council members were interviewed and public input was sought.

The author of this plan also consulted the Michigan Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2013 – 2017.

Listed below are the top outdoor recreation activities in Michigan identified by survey participants (Public Sector Consultants 2012).

Top 10 Rated Michigan Outdoor Recreation Activities Percentage participating
1) Biking, all types, combined 25%
2) Camping 24%
3) Fishing 23%
4) Walking outdoors, including dog walking 21%
5) Hiking, all types, combined 20%
6) Play outdoor games/sports (soccer, basketball, baseball, etc.) 17%
7) Hunting or trapping 15%
8) Swimming , all types, combined 13%
9) Boating 11%
10) Visit playgrounds 10%

Discussion: Local planning will integrate the state information on the activities engaged in most by Michigan residents. Development of biking assets will be given a high priority. In the summer of 2016, the VON will receive a MDOT-recommended modification of the town’s major roadway. The north-south highway through Newberry is M-123, also known as Newberry Avenue. It is to undergo a four-to-three lane conversion. Recommended to improve safety, the change is also expected to function as a traffic calming intervention. As a result, Newberry will gain bike lanes going north and south through its commercial district, right up to the entrance to the new park.
Trails designated for walking and biking are funded for the TORC and it will function as a trailhead for bicyclists heading north to Tahquamenon Falls and Paradise.

The VON is also incorporating more playground facilities in its plan for improvements at all the local parks.

State Goal: Protect and manage Michigan’s diverse and abundant natural assets to meet the fun, relaxation, and health needs of Michigan’s residents and visitors, and the economic development needs of the state and local communities. This goal is best achieved by meeting the following objectives:

- Improve the collaboration and cooperation between all outdoor recreation providers to ensure that Michigan’s recreation system meets the needs and desires of its residents and visitors, and that users are made aware of opportunities throughout Michigan’s outdoor recreation system
- Ensure the maintenance and continuous improvement of outdoor recreation facilities
- Improve access to and connectivity between recreational opportunities
- Integrate the provision of outdoor recreation with economic development plans and activities to advance economic prosperity
- Market outdoor recreation opportunities and their associated amenities to ensure that residents and visitors alike are aware of all opportunities and communities are realizing the economic benefits associated with those opportunities
- Contribute to the protection of Michigan’s high-quality natural resources and help residents and visitors gain appreciation of those resources through interpretation and programming

The Tahquamenon Area Recreation Authority (TARA) functions in partnership with the Village of Newberry. TARA is the developer of the Tahquamenon Outdoor Recreation Complex, having supplied the matching funds for TF11-068. TARA board members were instrumental in the development of the survey and included questions specifically so the public would give input into the on-going development of the new public recreation asset.

Composed of four governmental units, the Village of Newberry, Luce County, Pentland Township and McMillan Township, the Tahquamenon Area Recreation Authority also includes five additional entities. They are the Tahquamenon Area School District (which encompasses portions of five counties and is the largest school district geographically east of the Mississippi), the Newberry Area Chamber of Commerce, the Tahquamenon Area Youth Hockey Association, Helen Newberry Joy Hospital and Healthcare Center and one At-Large seat. The TARA governing board is comprised of nine board members, with one representative from each entity.

The TARA was created for the expressed purpose of developing recreational and economic opportunities in the Tahquamenon region through the construction of a multi-purpose facility. Various surveys and studies have documented the need. The community fully supports the goal of developing this facility, as is evidenced by the
Village of Newberry Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plan 2016 - 2021

number of municipalities and organizations collaborating on the project. TARA strives to represent the Tahquamenon region, which has no formal boundaries, but which local people could agree expands beyond Newberry and Luce County to encompass other small communities located across county lines into Chippewa, Schoolcraft and Mackinac Counties. These small communities include Paradise and Hulbert to the northeast, Eckerman to the east, Grand Mairis to the northwest, McMillan, Seney and Germfask to the west and Engadine, Naubinway and Curtis to the southwest.

Description of the Public Input Process

The first public input method was a 10 question survey developed using the on-line service of Survey Monkey. The survey was promoted via social media. A print version was published in the community paper of record, the Newberry News. The on-line survey was available for more than one month, during the fall of 2015. The first two questions asked about utilization of the village parks and barriers to use. Several people commented on the lack of signage or not knowing there were village parks.

Questions 3 – 5 asked respondents to rate each of the three village parks in terms of safety, cleanliness, convenient location, and quality and variety of recreational experiences available.

Atlas Park:

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<tr>
<th>In Percentages</th>
<th>very good</th>
<th>good</th>
<th>average</th>
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Sherman Park:

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Knierim Park

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**Discussion:** For the most part, the respondents find the parks conveniently located. The variety of recreation experiences is low across all parks. Safety is of greatest concern at Atlas Park. One reason for this may be its location along the railroad tracks. One of the scope items funded by the new 2015 Recreation Passport grant is a fence separating the park from the tracks. Several people commented on the inappropriate behaviors of children and teens at this park and general lack of supervision.

Sherman Park is rated the lowest of the three parks currently in use. A full 90% of respondents rated the quality of recreation experience as poor or very poor. Accessibility and convenient location were rated by most as average and above, making this park ripe for improvements. Several people made comments about its location next to the hospital as lending it to a convenient lunching and relaxation place for employees, as well as residents of the community’s extended care facility.

Knierim Park is the location of the current skating facility and has the most use. However, the kinds of recreation are limited and it received poor ratings in variety of experiences offered.

New playground equipment was called for in the comments section for each park. There were also calls for more family-friendly activities.

The survey was also used to assess the public perceptions and levels of support for the new park under development. Fully 70% of respondents answered “yes very much” or “somewhat” to the four items asking if they knew about the project, did they think the public had been kept well-informed, whether the project was important to the community and did they understand what was being planned for the park.

One question was devoted to funding of recreation in the village. Given four sources of funding, the results indicated 94% supported the use of grants, 70% agreed with user fees, 69% thought general fund/village taxes should be used to support recreation and 56% supported a special millage. Fully 80% did not agree with the statement that the village should not provide public parkland.
Support for future developments were:
71% Pocket park with public restrooms and picnicking downtown
71% Greenway trail system through and around the village to natural features to the north and south of town
76% Wayfinding signs to make finding the parks easier
71% Splash-park
58% Dog-park

Several people commented that they would like to see the existing facilities improved before creating anything new.

Copy of Notice of the Availability of the Draft Plan for Public Review and Comment

Date of the Notice  - January 6, 2016
Type of Notice      - Newberry News, Public Notice
Plan Location       - Public Library
Draft Plan was available for download at the VON website: www.villageofnewbrry.com
and the TARA website – www.torcitup.com
Public review of plan was promoted through social media – TARA facebook page, and Newberry 360 facebook page.

Copy of Notice for Public Meeting held after the one month public review period and before the plan’s adoption by the governing body

Date of notice – February 3, 2016
Name of Newspaper – Newberry News
Date of Meeting – February 15, 2011
Copy of the minutes from the public meeting – see attachments

Findings: The Plan - Interpretation of Results and Plan Development

Outdoor recreation is big business in Michigan and the United States as a whole. Parks and outdoor recreation resources and opportunities contribute to state and local economic prosperity primarily by:

- Attracting visitors to specific locations and regions, bringing new dollars into the state
- Helping to create vibrant communities that attract businesses and talented workers
- Spurring recreation-serving business creation and expansion through direct demand and expenditures by recreationists for gear, vehicles, and recreation services
- Increasing property values (and resulting tax revenues) for adjacent properties and neighborhoods

Outdoor recreation-based tourism is a particular asset and opportunity for Michigan. As the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)-sponsored Pure Michigan campaign persuasively demonstrates, Michigan has beautiful natural resources and
recreational amenities that attract people to this state in all four seasons. Tourism is one of the top three industries in the state (behind only manufacturing and agriculture) (Library of Michigan 2011), and our outdoor recreation opportunities – from world class trout streams, to Great Lakes beaches, to more than six thousand miles of connected snowmobile trails, to iconic places such as Pictured Rocks National Seashore – underpin much of the state’s tourist activity. A report prepared for the MEDC by D.K. Shifflett & Associates indicated that Michigan ranked eleventh in the nation among states for U.S. leisure visitor days in 2010, with an estimated total of more than 187 million visitor days. The study found that: Direct spending by leisure travelers equaled $12.6 billion dollars. This is up 13 percent from 2009 and compares to only a 4.5 percent increase for the United States as a whole. Out-of-state visitors make a substantial impact on the state’s leisure market. Overall number of out-of-state person-day visits increased by 24 percent in 2010, and spending by out-of-state leisure visitors increased by 30 percent (D.K. Shifflett & Associates 2011). Beyond tourism, outdoor recreation also adds to community vitality and helps grow local economies by attracting businesses and workers. Michigan’s outdoor recreation resources provide a competitive advantage in today’s new economy paradigm, where “place” and quality of life are key drivers of talent and business location decisions. There is an emerging sector of people, particularly young “millenials” and retirees, who are more mobile and are making decisions about where to live based on quality-of-life amenities, including access to parks, trails, and other outdoor recreation areas. Companies are also increasingly recognizing that their ability to attract talent is connected to the quality of the community, and associated entertainment and recreational amenities are often an important part of their recruiting package (Florida 2002; Adelaja et. al. 2009; Michigan Recreation and Park Association, 2009).

Although less tangible, recreation resources play a role in increasing participation in exercise and reducing stress, thereby providing economic benefits by lowering the costs of addressing chronic health care issues. This could be particularly relevant for a state such as Michigan, which has the fifth highest obesity rate (31.3 percent) in the United States (Stobbe 2012).

Several focus areas have arisen from the research and public input for this plan, as well as adding impetus to the brownfield redevelopment project currently underway. Unlike many other areas, the Upper Peninsula has continually suffered from lack of economic resources. While most places contain a manufacturing, commercial or agricultural base, the U.P. relies primarily on tourism and limited forestry and mining operations. Furthermore due to the lack of business(es) and employment opportunities, this region experiences a sparse population, with limited tax revenues, resulting in limited resources to develop community assets such as a recreation facility. The actual formation of the Tahquamenon Area Recreation Authority is a direct result of the effort to pool resources and funding sources to serve a larger population and spread the risk and responsibility for undertaking the brownfield redevelopment recreation project.

Health and fitness issues of the citizenry are of concern to public officials. The Village Council would like to try to maximize public assets to meet public needs. Obesity and life-style related health problems occur in above-average numbers locally. To help motivate youth and adults to greater physical activity, easily-used and fun recreational facilities should be developed.
Safety and cleanliness are always concerns and are addressed by regular maintenance. This is an important key to encouraging use. The low incomes of Village residents must be factored in to any fee schedules developed, with scholarships and sponsorships options explored. This project serves the population of Village of Newberry, which has a low to moderate income percentage of 75%.

The brownfield redevelopment project underway responds to these community needs. The variety of outdoor recreation activities envisioned for the complex is geared toward youth in many ways. Non-traditional elements are planned in hopes of encouraging increased physical activity, specifically skateboarding. Disc golf is a fun activity that can be enjoyed by people of almost any age and ability level. The paved walking trails can be utilized for any number of wheeled activities, including bicycle riding, roller skating and pushing baby strollers. The path will also be accessible to persons with limited mobility using wheelchairs and walkers. The TORC pathway is the only paved walkway available for recreation in the county.

The first feature to be developed on the property is the four-season, outdoor skating rink, with a sheltering cover. Because hockey has been the impetuous to all the fund-raising over the years, the rink is the principle feature. Youth hockey is the user group responsible for sustaining the drive for the project to move forward and has devoted 100's of hours to the project. The ice arena was the top priority element in the 2005 survey.

The plan for the Tahquamenon Outdoor Recreation Complex (TORC) is to energize our town and stimulate the economy while providing needed programming for youth and physical fitness opportunities for all in a sustainable facility. The outdoor, four-season skating rink will utilize a cutting edge synthetic material to keep energy use to a minimum, making the project earth-friendly and fiscally-sustainable for our small town. The year-round availability will be a unique training opportunity for hockey programs, bringing in people and dollars and creating jobs. A sheltered fitness track will encircle the rink, encouraging physical activity by all age groups, no matter the harsh winter weather here in northern MI.

The multi-use facility will offer events, youth programming and open-air summer markets. The rink is envisioned as the first of many recreation elements to be developed on the outdoor recreation complex grounds.

In the initial survey asking which outdoor recreation elements should be developed next as collected in 2011 were:

Skateboarding park, disc golf, walk/bike trails, splash-park, paintball, 3-D Archery range and rock climbing.
Village of Newberry Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plan 2016 - 2021

The current survey, titled Village of Newberry, Michigan Parks and Recreation Survey, asked respondents to indicate how important various features were in the TORC park. Results to this question (#7) indicated:

1. The items ranking first, second and third in importance were outdoor pavilion, community use space and paved walking/non-motorized trail. They were ranked as “very important” by 69%, 68% and 67% respectively.
2. The new skating facility with synthetic ice was ranked as “very important” by 52% of respondents and “somewhat important” by just under 23%.
3. Of the four remaining choices, the following received “very important” rankings of:
   a. universal access play area - 42%
   b. skatepark – 35%
   c. archery range – 34%
   d. disc golf – 28%

Discussion: When the results from the pavilion, community event space and skating facility are combined, it becomes clear that the multi-use structure planned for the park is a high priority for the survey respondents. The needs of the community have not changed and the planned park and facility remain a high priority.

TARA has successfully been fund-raising for the play area and skate-park. These two elements will be installed in the park by Fall 2016. The archery range appears to have a good deal of support locally and may be the next small feature for which funding is pursued.

The structure to house the rink is not currently funded and is the most pressing need. Funding this is the highest priority among the Village's system. The TARA board is currently conducting extensive investigations into the most cost effective and energy efficient option. A fabric structure is under consideration, as is the more traditional metal pavilion.

The brownfield redevelopment project has always been seen as a means to stimulate the local economy. Directly by creating jobs in maintenance, vendors and marketing. Indirectly by bringing people to town for special events and sporting competitions. Open air markets, shoulder season events and other uses will be developed.

In addition to all the above, early on in the process project leaders determined that an energy-efficient facility would be the only affordable facility for the Newberry area. The synthetic ice purchased for the facility will lead to significant operational energy savings. It will allow our small community an affordable, efficient and sustainable alternative to an artificial ice arena that cannot be afforded locally.

Trailways leading around the recreation complex and points north also provide opportunities for conservation education. Kiosks explaining the value of our prized Tahquamenon River, the early uses by the indigenous peoples, the injuries caused by industrial practices and our community’s determination to clean up past mistakes could enlighten visitors and residents alike.
Plan Goals and Objectives

1. Goal One – To provide recreation facilities to meet the needs of the community:
   a) By providing safe, well-maintained grounds which attract use of recreation facilities by individuals, families and groups.
   b) By maintaining adequate staff and equipment to perform maintenance requirements.
   c) By increasing the types of activities available and appealing to a broader range of people of differing ages and abilities, by adding new equipment to the village’s parks.
   d) By expanding the number of organized events and activities offered to increase participation in recreational activities.

2. Goal Two – To develop a green infrastructure of non-motorized trails that provide alternate access routes to schools, residences, shops, libraries, and other destinations in addition to parks. When possible and practical, all municipal publicly-owned green space should be connected by trails and greenways in order to form a walking path system which serves the transportation needs of the community. Objectives:
   a) By the development of new trails with cooperative agreements or acquisitions with local landowners and groups and/or municipalities and linear park areas when possible to create green-space trails within and across the community and to connect park areas.
   b) By supporting the development of user groups to the help develop and maintain greenways system.

3. Goal Three – to increase utilization and support of assets by residents and visitors.
   Objectives:
   a) By increasing programming for children and teens.
   b) By improving/developing the assets closest to the population center by expanding amenities and support structures, facilities.
   c) By increasing the number of users and hours of recreation enjoyed at each facility.

4. Goal Four - to improve cost-efficiency and effectiveness by working with community groups which share our goals and mission. Work to solve community problems sustainably and with others.
   Objectives:
   a. By supporting the Tahquamenon Area Recreation Authority as the organization continues to develop the TORC. The project is poised to meet many community needs in terms of economic development, increasing opportunities for physical activity and improving facilities for community gatherings and events
   b. By working cooperatively with user groups to develop and expand facilities to meet their needs.
Action Plan

A. To secure funding to accomplish the improvements to local parks and public green spaces as identified by community input and that will further the health and wellness and economic development goals of the village.

The highest priority is the structure to house the skating/community space surface at the Tahquamenon Outdoor Recreation Complex. Next is the support building for the complex with amenities, including locker rooms and restrooms, concessions, and visitors center.

Another high priority is to continue to make improvements to the walkability of our community. To encourage everyone in making walking a habit for health and energy reasons, it is crucial that the village invest in sidewalk repair and replacement.

Explore all avenues (grants, contests, etc.) to expand amenities at existing parks and green spaces. The improvements could include playground equipment and benches at all the parks, the creation of a pocket park downtown, the addition of a splash-park.

B. Develop a way-finding system for the Newberry area, making recreational and cultural attractions easy for visitors and residents to locate. Continue to work with multi-jurisdictional and regional organizations to jointly develop assets and events.

C. Continue to practice regionalism and place-making strategies. Explore new relationships for projects to further develop the Tahquamenon Region’s identity, with Newberry as the Gateway to Wilderness, promoting respectful exploration of our beautiful area while appreciating the natural resources.

D. To support the Intergovernmental Tahquamenon Area Recreational Authority and assist in the implementation of the Tahquamenon Outdoor Recreation Complex Master Plan. Specifically to:

1. Work with TARA and its agents to complete and submit applications to the MNRTF and other granting agencies to fund recreational development.
2. To develop a management agreement with TARA for operation of the recreation facilities.
3. To provide support to the project through provision of one or more of the following services: road maintenance; electricity; water and sewer; grounds maintenance.
4. Provide bookkeeping and billing support for grants administration.

E. To work with individuals and entities to bring soccer to the community as another option for recreation.
F. To continue to work with TARA to complete the master plan for the TORC and add more activities, such as an archery range and a nature trail.

G. To assist in developing recreational trails coming and leaving Newberry, by working with state departments to link the TORC as trailhead to points north.

Comments: