

# City of DeWitt



## Parks and Recreation 5-Year Master Plan

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## ***Acknowledgments***

This project is indebted to all the residents of the City of DeWitt who supported this planning effort as well as the following individuals. Without their leadership, this project would not have been possible.

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# Introduction

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History of Parks and Recreation in the City of DeWitt  
Plan Purposes  
Planning Process  
Public Involvement  
Key Persons/Organizations and their Contributions

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## ***History of Parks and Recreation in the City of DeWitt***

“The City of DeWitt developed around the homestead of Captain David Scott, who settled on the north banks of the Looking Glass River in 1833. As the settlement grew, the village was named in honor of DeWitt Clinton, for whom Clinton County was also named. For a time, the DeWitt community flourished as the center of public and legal life in Clinton County serving as the county seat. It also served as an overnight stop for travelers to Ionia County, the Lansing area, St. Johns, Grand Rapids and Flint. In 1857, St. Johns became the county seat. Development in DeWitt stalled, and DeWitt functioned as little more than a farm service community. New major highways bypassed the community, and growth remained slow, from 400 persons in 1906 to 824 in 1950. After 1950, however, DeWitt reflected the rapid growth of Michigan State University and the Lansing area [with] automobile manufacturing growth. In 1965, the village became the City of DeWitt” (1998-2002 City of DeWitt Five Year Recreation Master Plan, 1998).

As with most growing communities in Michigan, the City of DeWitt established a park and recreation department to provide passive and organized leisure and recreation opportunities. Many passive leisure and recreation opportunities came about through the provision of parks in the community. Today, these parks continue to be enjoyed by residents within the City of DeWitt and beyond.

Organized leisure and recreation opportunities, such as soccer or baseball leagues, have traditionally been provided by the City of DeWitt Parks and Recreation Department, which was overseen by the City of DeWitt Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Commission. In 2003, the City of DeWitt partnered with DeWitt Charter Township to form the DeWitt Area Recreation Authority. This Authority was given the responsibility of providing organized leisure and recreation opportunities for all residents of the City of DeWitt and the DeWitt Charter Township.

## ***Plan Purposes***

The current City of DeWitt Parks and Recreation 5-Year Master Plan was proposed for various purposes:

- To solicit community involvement and empowerment;
- To guide future direction of park and recreation endeavors;
- To educate the community and the commission;
- To learn about current community interests, needs, and expectations;
- To continue the ongoing relationship with the community;
- To identify City recreation resources;
- To acquire state/federal and foundation grants.

## ***Planning Process***

The master plan was carried out using the nine elements of the Michigan Park and Recreation Master Plan Model created by Dr. Richard D. Paulsen (Michigan State University), Patrick I. Cudney (Regional Director, MSU-North, MSU Extension), and Ariel Rodriguez (Michigan State University). The nine elements consisted of philosophical orientation, organizing for planning, information collection and analysis, information synthesis, mission, goals and objectives analysis, action plan, draft plan document, approval process, and evaluation plan. By following each of the elements in a chronological order, the master plan document was completed. Although a chronological order was used, the elements are interactive. For example, information collection and analysis may have been occurring at the same time as the draft plan document was being written or the planning process could have been evaluated as the plan was being adopted by the various governmental agencies.

### **Philosophical Orientation**

The philosophical orientation of the master plan was composed of two parts. First, the basis of the organization was revisited. The Parks and Recreation Department along with the Commission discussed, generally, the future of the Parks and Recreation Department. From those discussions, it was agreed that in order to continue providing high quality park and recreation services to the residents of the City of DeWitt, a continuation of the prior 5-year master plan in the form of a new 5-year master plan would be essential.

The second part of the philosophical orientation was concerned with the relationship of the new master plan to the current philosophy of the Department. The question of whether the new master plan would be used to acquire potential grants from the

Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) was only one of the questions that needed to be discussed if the new 5-year master plan was going to meet the needs of the Department. In the next section, "Organizing for Planning," the questions and concerns raised by the philosophical investigation of the Parks and Recreation Department were further explored.

### **Organizing for Planning**

In the prior element, questions and concerns were raised, but few specific decisions concerning the master plan were discussed. There were three basic items to be discussed and agreed upon before the process was to continue: a timeline for the process, organizing participants, and identifying more specific purposes for the master plan. The Commission and the Department agreed to hire an experienced graduate student from the Park, Recreation and Tourism Department at Michigan State University to assist in composing a master plan that was in accordance with the expectations of the Commission and the Parks and Recreation Department. In addition, the Commission created a subcommittee which included several members of the Commission and the Parks and Recreation Director that met directly with the graduate student and made recommendations to the Commission on various aspects of the master plan process.

Once the graduate student was selected and the subcommittee formed, they worked to create a timeline for the master plan and identified the purposes of the master plan. The concluding recommendations were refined and later adopted by the Commission. Results of the identified purposes of the master plan are located in the introduction of this master plan under "Purpose of the Master Plan."

### **Information Collection and Analysis**

Various pieces of information were collected and analyzed. Information such as community focus groups information, community survey data, population trends from the U.S. Census, community recreation resources, etc. were collected and analyzed. The results from these analyses are presented throughout the master plan.

### **Information Synthesis**

Once the various pieces of information were collected and analyzed, the subcommittee proceeded to weigh the various options given the current parameters presented to the Commission and the Parks and Recreation Department. After synthesizing all of the information presented to them, they proceeded toward analyzing the mission, goals and objectives that were established in the prior 5-year master plan and made additional goals and objectives as needed.

### **Mission, Goals and Objectives Analysis**

The mission, goals and objectives analysis is composed of two parts. First, the mission, goals and objectives that were established in the prior 5-year master plan were evaluated. After revisiting these, the Commission agreed that the mission of the Parks and Recreation Department was still appropriate given the needs and

desires of the community and information synthesis results. Furthermore, it agreed that some of the prior goals and objectives were still appropriate for this master plan as they had not been completed in the previous five years and given that they were still appropriate.

The second part of the analysis was to create new goals and objectives given the new needs and desires of the community and information synthesis results. The results are presented in the Action Plan of this master plan under “Mission” and “Goals and Objectives.”

### **Action Plan**

Once the mission, goals and objectives were analyzed, the Commission proceeded to provide implementation and evaluation strategies for each of the goals. In addition, a prioritized capital improvement schedule was recommended.

### **Draft Plan Document**

The potential future recommendations, as well as all of the information that was gathered to this point, were presented to the public through a draft of the master plan. The results are presented in the Plan Approval section under “Public Hearing.”

### **Approval Process**

The draft plan document was reviewed by the public, approved by both the Commission and City Council, and submitted to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. The results are presented throughout the Plan Approval section of the master plan. Approval information can be found in Appendix A.

### **Evaluation Plan**

After the completion of the approval process, the Commission endeavored to evaluate the plan process to determine whether the process was beneficial in assisting the Commission in achieving the various purposes of the master plan. Results and future recommendations are presented throughout the Evaluation Plan section of the master plan.

## ***Public Involvement***

City of DeWitt residents were involved in the master plan process through three methods. First, residents participated in four different focus groups that were established to gather information from the groups regarding various park and recreation issues. Focus group results are presented in the Needs Assessment section under “Focus Group Analysis.” Second, residents participated in a City wide scientific survey. Survey results are presented in the Needs Assessment section under “Survey Analysis.” Finally, residents were involved in a public hearing and were invited to various approval meetings that requested their input into the approval of the City of DeWitt Parks and Recreation 5-Year Master Plan; results are

presented throughout the Plan Approval section of the master plan. A summary of this information is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Summary of Public Input**

Date	Method	Description
April 21, 2003	Focus Group #1 (Institutions)	Thirty-seven members of the community (approximately nine per focus group) were invited via a personalized letter to provide input regarding various questions concerning park and recreation issues in the City of DeWitt. The focus groups were held in City Hall. A description and results of the focus groups are presented in the "Citizen Focus Groups" chapter.
April 23, 2003	Focus Group #2 (Internal City)	
April 30, 2003	Focus Group #3 (Other Nonprofit Agencies)	
May 01, 2003	Focus Group #4 (Recreation Organizations)	
June 30, 2003	Citizen Survey	A survey, which incorporated the various comments from the focus groups, was distributed to each household in the City of DeWitt. Results are presented in the "Citizen Survey" chapter.
November 2003	Public Hearing; Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Commission Meeting	A Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Commission meeting was held at which citizens were given the opportunity to express their opinions on the Park and Recreation Master Plan.
November 2003	City Council	A City Council meeting was held at which citizens were given the opportunity to express their opinions on the Park and Recreation Master Plan.

### ***Key Persons/Organizations and their Contributions***

The key persons and organizations involved in the master plan process were the community residents, the graduate student from the Park, Recreation and Tourism Resources Department from Michigan State University, the City of DeWitt Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Commission, the City of DeWitt Administrator, and the City of DeWitt City Council. Their roles in relationship to the master plan document are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Key Persons/Organizations and their Contributions**

Plan Element	City of DeWitt Residents	MSU Graduate Student	Parks, Recreation, and Cemetery Commission	City Administrator	City Council
Introduction		X	X	X	X
City Description and Resources		X	X	X	X
Administrative Structure		X	X	X	X
Citizen Focus Groups and Survey	X	X	X	X	X
Action Plan	X	X	X	X	X
Plan Approval	X		X	X	X

# City Description and Resources

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Population Trends  
Physical Resources  
Recreation Resources

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## ***Population Trends***

### **Current Community Population**

The total population for the City of DeWitt in 2000 was 4,702 according to the most recent U.S. Census estimates (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

### **Population Trends**

Since the population boom from 1970 to 1980, the City of DeWitt's population increase has been reduced each year (Table 3).

**Table 3: Population Trend**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Population Change</b>
1970	1,829	N/A
1980	3,165	73%
1990	3,964	25.2%
2000	4,702	18.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

### **Gender, Age, Race and Ethnicity, Income Level and Education**

*Gender.* There are slightly more female residents in the City of DeWitt than males (Table 4).

**Table 4: Gender Distribution**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	2,346	49.9%
Female	2,356	50.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4702</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

*Age.* The median age of City of DeWitt residents is 33.8. An age distribution of City residents shows that over 30% of residents are 35 to 54 years (Table 5).

**Table 5: Age**

Age	Frequency	Percent
Under 5 years	347	7.4%
5 to 9 years	434	9.2%
10 to 14 years	523	11.1%
15 to 19 years	398	8.5%
20 to 24 years	226	4.8%
25 to 34 years	502	10.7%
35 to 44 years	883	18.8%
45 to 54 years	775	16.5%
55 to 59 years	230	4.9%
60 to 64 years	129	2.7%
65 to 74 years	154	3.3%
75 to 84 years	75	1.6%
85 years and over	26	0.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4702</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

*Race and Ethnicity.* The majority (95.9%) of residents in the City of DeWitt are white. There are 48 (1.0%) black or African Americans, 30 (0.6%) Asian, and 11 (0.2%) American Indian and Alaska Native. Of these residents, 120 (2.6%) are of Hispanic or Latino(a) ethnicity (Table 6).

**Table 6: Race and Ethnicity**

Race and Ethnicity	Percent
White	95.9%
Black or African American	1.0%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.2%
Asian	0.6%
Hispanic or Latino(a) (of any race)	2.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

*Household Income Level.* The median household income in the City of DeWitt is \$69,174 per year. Approximately 70% of the household incomes are greater than

\$50,000 per year. Approximately 18% of the household incomes are less than \$35,000 per year (Table 7).

**Table 7: Household Income Level**

Household Income Level	Frequency	Percent
Less than \$10,000	78	4.5%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	49	2.8%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	86	5.0%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	91	5.3%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	226	13.1%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	408	23.7%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	369	21.4%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	327	19.0%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	55	3.2%
\$200,000 or more	34	2.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

*Education.* City of DeWitt residents have relatively high levels of education. Approximately 47% of residents have an associate degree or higher. In addition, only 3.6% of the population has not graduated high school (includes equivalency) (Table 8).

**Table 8: Education**

Education	Percent
Less than 12th grade	3.6%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	20.6%
Some college, no degree	28.5%
Associate degree	10%
Bachelor's degree	22.7%
Graduate or professional degree	14.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

## **Employment Status**

According to the last U.S. Census (2000), 59 (2.1%) individuals in the civilian labor force within the City of DeWitt are currently unemployed. There are 2,710 (97.9%) individuals in the civilian labor force within the City of DeWitt are currently employed

(U.S. Census, 2000). There are currently 732 (20.8% of individuals over 16 years) that are not in the civilian labor force.

### Household Distribution

The City of DeWitt has approximately 1,700 households (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Table 9 provides information regarding the past 10 years of building permits issued in the City of DeWitt. Furthermore, Figure 1 provides a visual of building permit trends for the past 20 years in the City of DeWitt.

**Table 9: Building Permits Issued During the Past 10 Years**

Year	Single-Family Residential		Multi-Family Residential		Total Residential
	BLDGS.	UNITS	BLDGS.	UNITS	UNITS
1992	29	29	N/A	N/A	29
1993	36	36	N/A	N/A	36
1994	38	38	N/A	N/A	38
1995	30	30	N/A	N/A	30
1996	26	26	4	32	58
1997	17	17	N/A	N/A	17
1998	8	8	N/A	N/A	8
1999	8	8	N/A	N/A	8
2000	80	80	14	68	148
2001	6	6	4	11	17
2002	8	8	N/A	N/A	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>397</b>

Source: Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, 2003



Produced By: Tri-County Regional Planning Commission  
 Source: US Bureau of the Census, Construction Statistics Division  
 Date of Publication: 5/2000

**Figure 1: Building Permit Trends for the Past 20 Years**

## **City Residents with Unique Needs**

*Low Income.* There are currently 48 (3.6%) families within the City of DeWitt that are in poverty. This is the same percentage of the population that was determined to be in poverty in the 1990 U.S. Census. The per capita income for City of DeWitt residents has increased from \$16,744 to \$26,997 since the prior 1990 U.S. Census (U.S. Census, 2000).

*Senior Citizens.* There are 384 (8.2%) individuals over 65 years in the City of DeWitt. Of these individuals, 33 (8.6%) are in poverty (U.S. Census, 2000).

*Persons with Disabilities.* There are 64 (4.4% of people 5 to 20 years) people with disabilities between the ages of 5 and 20 within the City of DeWitt. There are 262 (9.3% of people 21 to 61 years) people with disabilities between the ages of 21 and 64 within the City of DeWitt. Of these individuals, eighty-eight percent (87.8%) are employed. This employment percentage is higher for people with disabilities than those without disabilities for this age group. There are 122 (43.9% of people 65 or over) people with disabilities 65 and over within the City of DeWitt.

*Ethnicity.* There are 48 (1.0%) black or African Americans, 30 (0.6%) Asian, and 11 (0.2%) American Indian and Alaska Native. Of these residents, 120 (2.6%) are of Hispanic or Latino(a) ethnicity (Table 6).

## ***Physical Resources***

“DeWitt is a peaceful, historic bedroom community located just north of Lansing. Our family-friendly city boasts first-rate schools, scenic parks and the opportunity to build lifelong ties with welcoming neighbors” ([www.dewittmi.org](http://www.dewittmi.org)).

The City of DeWitt is a relatively small community (approximately 2.7 square miles). It has 6.22 miles of major streets and 14.68 miles of local streets. Various parks have been placed throughout the City so that all residents can easily access these parks. A recent survey indicated that residents felt that having the City parks close to home was moderately important to them (see p. 51 in this master plan). In addition, they felt that the City was doing a very good job at keeping them close to their homes (see p. 52 in this master plan).

## **Land Use Patterns and Zoning**

See Appendix B.

## **Topography**

The City of DeWitt consists of relatively flat to undulating slopes with the elevations rising up and away from the Looking Glass River flood plain (Figure 2)

## **Water Resources**

The City of DeWitt water resources include one river, the Looking Glass River, and two small lakes, Lake Geneva and Springbrook Lake. The river flows from east to west and is fed by several drains within the City of DeWitt including Prairie Creek. Both small lakes are located within subdivision developments and surrounded by residential lots (Figure 2).

## **Soils and Vegetation**

According to the Clinton County Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan (2002), the City of DeWitt contains soils of mostly Marlette-Capac-Parkhill association. These soils are well drained to very poorly drained and are nearly level and gently sloping loams on till plains.

The vegetation within the City is primarily urban planted materials. A small amount of undeveloped agricultural land remains within the City limits (Figure 2).

## **Transportation Systems**

The major transportation system for the City of DeWitt has not changed much in the past five years. Automobile transportation links still primarily include US Highway 27 (east of the City of DeWitt) and I-69. US-27 intersects with Interstate 69 which provides east and west access to various major cities in Michigan including Grand Rapids and Flint (Figure 2).

There are currently no railroads that cross the City of DeWitt or any metropolitan public transportation system.

## **Climate**

The City of DeWitt has a climate similar to most of the Lower Peninsula in Michigan. Specifically, it has a monthly average temperature of 46.8F. Annually, the City of DeWitt gets approximately 50 inches of snow, and approximately 30 inches of rain per year (Midwest Regional Climate Center, 2003).

## **Environmentally Sensitive Areas**

The City of DeWitt is home to various parks, some forest area, two lakes and a stream that pass through the heart of the City (Figure 2). Protection of these natural resources should be addressed when developing recreation programs and services. The City recognizes this and promotes development that is consistent with environmental regulatory laws.

## ***Recreation Resources***

### **Description of Community's Barrier-Free Compliance**

The City of DeWitt currently complies with all Federal and State laws which prohibit the discrimination of people with disabilities in programs and services, including parks, which are provided by the City.

### **City of DeWitt Recreation Programs**

The City of DeWitt is no longer providing direct provision of recreation programs. Recreation services are limited to park rentals for general leisure activities. Recreation programming duties are currently provided by the DeWitt Area Recreation Authority. Further information regarding the merger of recreation programs between the City of DeWitt and DeWitt Charter Township can be found in the Administrative Structure section of this master plan.

### **City of DeWitt Recreation Facilities**

The City of DeWitt offers an extensive number and type of recreational opportunities to local residents. Numerous parks are available, as well as recreation programs ranging from soccer leagues to baseball leagues and special activities such as summer concerts in Memorial Park. There are also numerous private recreational facilities within the community, which are mainly parks of recent subdivision developments. The City has made a concerted effort to connect all of the City parks with a bicycle trail and walking paths and has created a very attractive and efficient park system for local residents (Figure 2).

1. **McGuire Park** is a neighborhood park which functions as a community park along the Looking Glass River. This park has recently been redeveloped to include a new play structure, two picnic pavilions, portable restrooms, two zone soccer fields and a pedestrian pathway along the river.
2. **City Hall** has approximately 4.5 acres of land that is shared with the City Hall. The property is currently undeveloped with the exception of the river trail, which leads to River Trail Park. The City Hall lot provides parking.

3. **River Trail Park** has undergone a tremendous amount of development since it was first acquired in 1992. The park has been developed into a nine acre park with a play structure, picnic pavilion, restroom facility, parking lot and open spaces, as well as bicycle/walking trails to City Hall and River Side Park.
4. **DeWitt Sports Park** is a 14.5 acre complex that provides a soccer field, two adult-size softball fields, a maintenance/restroom facility, concession stand, a large playground structure and a swing set, as well as a large parking area. This facility has extensive use by local residents and is connected to the other City parks by way of the bicycle/walking trail.
5. **Riverside Park** is a 2.98 acre neighborhood park which functions as a community park located along the Looking Glass River. The park has had recent upgrades, including a new picnic pavilion, a new playground structure, a barrier-free playhouse and restroom facilities. Large multi-use open space and parking lot are available as well. This park is linked with a trail to the River Trail Park and is located across the street from Memorial Park.
6. **Memorial Park** is a small one-acre park that contains a gazebo, sidewalks and gardens and serves as a passive recreation area, just south of the downtown business district. The City recently acquired approximately .5 acres in addition to the existing park area.
7. **City Park** is currently an undeveloped piece of property containing 0.42 acres of property. It is located on Cherry St.
8. **Percy Carris Park** is a 1 acre site with serves as a mini-park and contains play equipment.
9. **Elmwood Park** is a 0.7 acre primarily undeveloped site which is linked to Percy Carris Park via a paved pathway.
10. **Millbrook Park** is a neighborhood park located in the Millbrook Meadows subdivision. The park contains a playground structure and open space. Access to the park is from either Manchester Drive or Westbrook Drive. This public park supplements private park and open areas owned and maintained by the Millbrook Meadows Association.

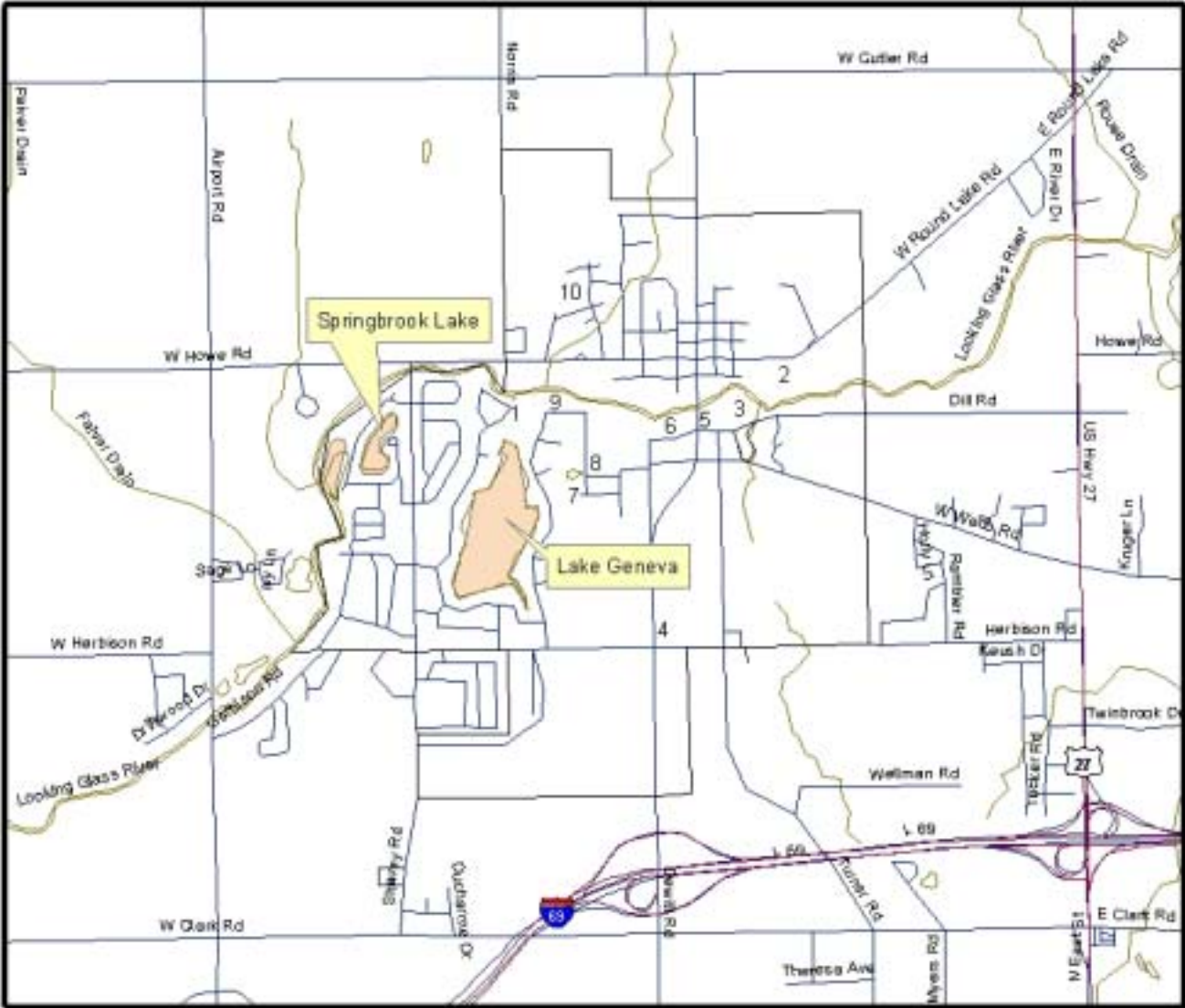
### **Public School Facilities**

Information regarding public school facilities in the City of DeWitt is included in Appendix C.

### **DeWitt Charter Township Facilities**

Information regarding DeWitt Charter Township facilities is included in Appendix D.

# City of DeWitt



## Legend

- City of DeWitt
- Lakes
- Highways
- Roads
- Drains and River

## City of DeWitt Parks

1. McGuire Park
2. City Hall
3. River Trail Park
4. DeWitt Sports Park
5. Riverside Park
6. Memorial Park
7. City Park
8. Percy Carris Park
9. Elmwood Park
10. Millbrook Meadows Park

Figure 2: City of DeWitt

## Private and Non-profit Programs and Facilities

The following is a list of the various agencies and facilities in and near the City of DeWitt that provide recreation and leisure opportunities to residents of the City of DeWitt.

Agency	Address	City	Activity
DeWitt Youth Baseball Association		DeWitt	Baseball
Little League		DeWitt	Baseball
Dance World	1161 E Clark Rd # 150	DeWitt	Dance
Family Golf Center	11890 S US Highway 27	DeWitt	Golf
Highland Hills Golf Club	1050 E Alward Rd	DeWitt	Golf
Prairie Creek Golf Course Inc	800 E Webb Dr	DeWitt	Golf
Twistars USA Gymnastics Club	1161 E Clark Rd # 330	DeWitt	Gymnastics
Boy Scouts		DeWitt	Health/Fitness
Girl Scouts		DeWitt	Health/Fitness
Powerhouse Gym Of DeWitt	12900 S US Highway 27 # 10	DeWitt	Health/Fitness
The Summit	9410 Davis Hwy	Dimondale	Health/Fitness
Munn Ice Arena	Michigan State University	East Lansing	Ice Skating
American Martial Arts Academy	1011 Northcrest	DeWitt	Martial Arts
DeWitt Taekwondo Center	13171 Schavey Rd	DeWitt	Martial Arts
Mickey's Bar	11189 S US Highway 27	DeWitt	Pubs and Clubs
Relli's Sports Bar	202 E Main St	DeWitt	Pubs and Clubs
Church Of God	11733 S US Highway 27	DeWitt	Religion/Spiritual
Christ United Church	200 W Webb Rd	DeWitt	Religion/Spiritual
DeWitt Community Church	505 E Webb Dr	DeWitt	Religion/Spiritual
DeWitt United Brethren	206 W Washington St	DeWitt	Religion/Spiritual
East DeWitt Baptist Church	1380 E Round Lake Rd	DeWitt	Religion/Spiritual
First Baptist Church	11068 N DeWitt Rd	DeWitt	Religion/Spiritual

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Lei. Activity</b>
Hope Lutheran Church	1180 W Herbison Rd	DeWitt	Religion/Spiritual
Mt. Hope Church	115 N Bridge St	DeWitt	Religion/Spiritual
Presbyterian Church	162 N Bridge St	DeWitt	Religion/Spiritual
Redeemer United Methodist Church	13980 Schavey Rd	DeWitt	Religion/Spiritual
South DeWitt Church Of Christ	2931 W Herbison Rd	DeWitt	Religion/Spiritual
South Riley Bible Church	6517 W Chadwick Rd	DeWitt	Religion/Spiritual
St Jude Catholic Church	801 N Bridge St	DeWitt	Religion/Spiritual
To God Be The Glory Church	14333 Turner Rd	DeWitt	Religion/Spiritual
Valley Farms Baptist Church	1141 E State	DeWitt	Religion/Spiritual
Mid Michigan Roller Arena	1475 Lake Lansing Rd	Lansing	Roller Skating
AYSO Soccer	312 Riverview Dr	DeWitt	Soccer
DeWitt Soccer Club	P O Box 644	DeWitt	Soccer
USSF Soccer		DeWitt	Soccer
East Lansing Family Aquatic Center	6400 Abbott Road	East Lansing	Swimming
Hunter Park Swimming Pool	1400 E Kalamazoo St	Lansing	Swimming
Moore's Park Swimming Pool	600 Moore's River Dr	Lansing	Swimming

# Administrative Structure

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Park and Recreation Policies and Procedures  
Role of the Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Commission  
Relationship(s) with Other Agencies  
Staff Description and Organizational Chart  
Annual and Projected Budgets for Operations

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## ***Park and Recreation Policies and Procedures***

The City of DeWitt is a Home Rule City that operates under a Mayor-Council form of government. The City Council consists of six members elected at-large with an elected Mayor. The Mayor and Council are responsible for approving annual budgets and setting policies for the expenditure of funds. To facilitate the operation of the City, the Mayor and Council appoint a City Administrator who is responsible for the day to day operations of the City.

In 1977, the City of DeWitt, by council resolution, formed the Parks and Recreation Board to advise the City Council on parks and recreation related issues. In July 1997, the City approved an ordinance establishing the Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Commission. The seven member advisory commission is comprised of one representative from the city council and six at-large residents who serve three year terms. Members are appointed by the Mayor with the approval of the City Council. The Commission meets monthly at 7:00 p.m. at DeWitt City Hall.

### **Current Funding Sources**

The City of DeWitt park and recreation programs and services are currently funded through the City's General Fund.

### ***Role of the Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Commission***

The Parks, Recreation & Cemetery Commission has the following functions (<http://www.dewittmi.org/boardcom.htm#parks>):

- To develop a broad variety of facilities and services.
- To inform and update the public on the purposes of and needs for parks and recreational programs, as well as the cemetery facilities.
- To coordinate opportunities for the public to be involved in the planning and development of the City's parks and cemetery.
- To seek out and plan the use of financial resources needed to enhance and expand the existing park system, recreational programs and cemetery.
- To act as a liaison and coordinate with other agencies.
- To evaluate the Commission's operations, facilities, services and relationships to ensure that goals and objectives are being met.
- To provide encouragement, support and work in partnership with city staff to provide a team approach to problem solving.

## ***Relationship(s) with Other Agencies***

### **DeWitt Area Recreation Authority (DARA)**

The DARA is governed by a six member Board of Commissioners who act as the governing body of DARA. The Board is comprised of three representatives from the City of DeWitt and three representatives from DeWitt Charter Township. Terms are generally three years.

DARA was formed by the City of DeWitt and DeWitt Charter Township in 2003 and is responsible for providing recreational and leisure services to the residents of the City of DeWitt and DeWitt Charter Township. They are also responsible for establishing policies and rules governing the various recreational programs sponsored by DARA (<http://www.dewittmi.org/boardcom.htm#dara>)

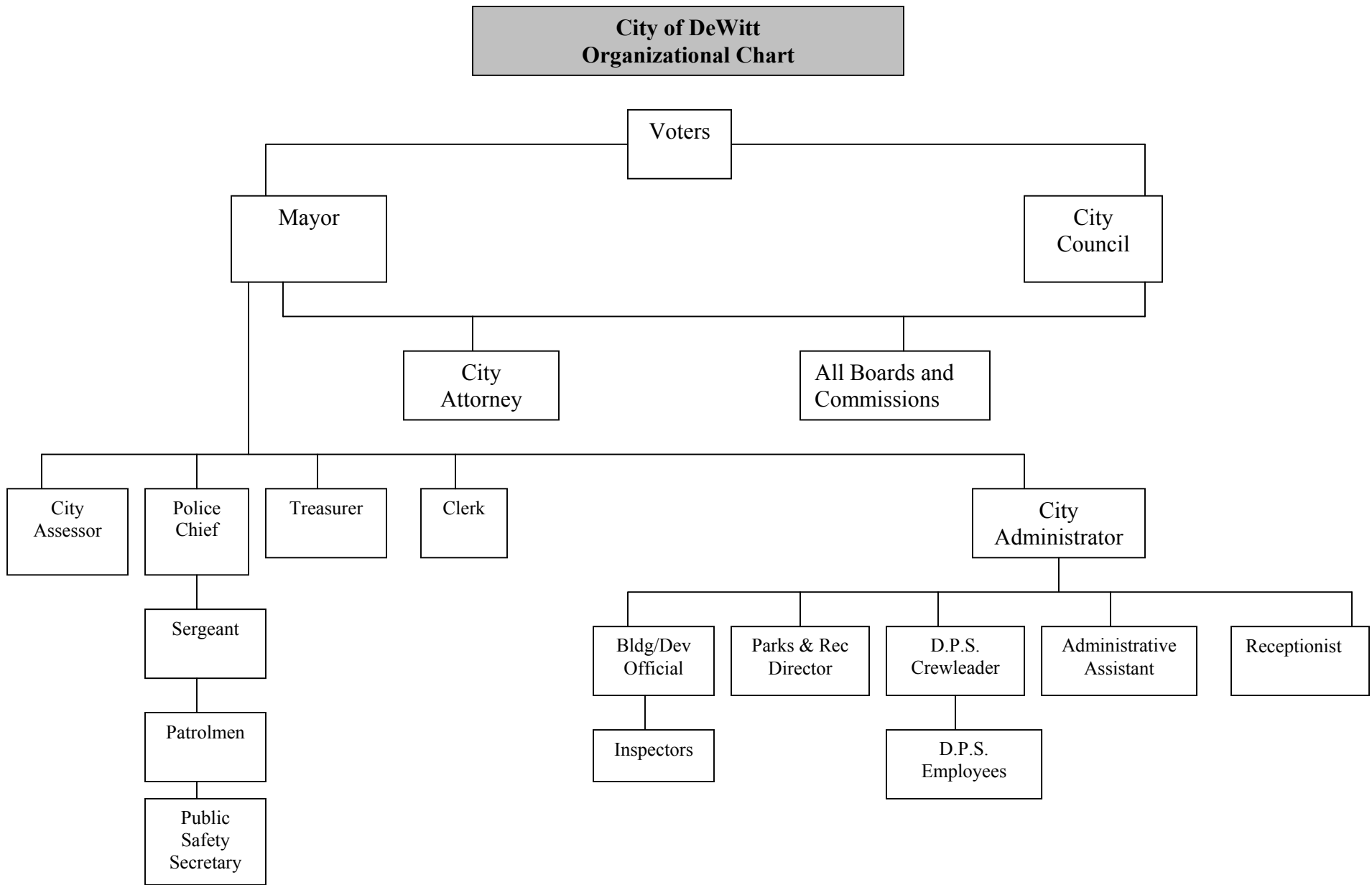
### **Tree Commission**

The Tree Commission consists of six members, one of whom is a member of the City Council. The term of each member is three years. The Commission has the following responsibilities (<http://www.dewittmi.org/boardcom.htm#tree>):

- To study, investigate, counsel, develop, administer and annually update a written plan for the care, preservation, pruning, planting, replanting, removal or disposition of trees and shrubs in parks, along streets and in other public areas.
- Make recommendations to the City Council that a registered state forester be engaged as a consultant to assist the Commission in the technical matters of forestry management.
- Reveal findings or recommendations upon any special matter or question within the scope of its work.

## ***Staff Description and Organizational Chart***

Figure 3 provides the City of DeWitt organizational chart.



**Figure 3: City of DeWitt organizational chart**

## ***Annual and Projected Budgets for Operations***

*City of DeWitt  
Fiscal Year 2003-2004*

*General Fund  
Recreation and Parks Facilities Budgets*

### **Parks Facilities**

Salaries/Part-Time	\$5,100
Social Security	\$408
Operating Supplies	\$6,125
Utilities	\$4,200
Repair/Maintenance	\$3,250
Capital Outlay-Land	\$1,500
TOTAL	\$20,583

### **Recreation**

Professional Services	\$80,000*
Projects/Programs	\$1,000
TOTAL	\$81,000

GRAND TOTAL                    \$101,583

\*Payment to the DeWitt Area Recreation Authority for recreation programming.

# Citizen Focus Groups

## *Focus Group Descriptions*

Four focus groups were completed during April and May 2003 with the sole purpose of obtaining a better understand of what citizen groups' perspectives on current park and recreation issues in the City of DeWitt. The letter of invitation for the focus group participants can be found in Appendix E. The following is a list of focus groups and those agencies that were invited:

### **Institutions**

- Mayor and City Council
- Building Authority
- DeWitt Public Schools (Superintendent)
- DeWitt Board of Education
- DeWitt Downtown Development Authority
- MSU Extension-Clinton County
- DeWitt Charter Township
- DeWitt Township Parks & Recreation
- DeWitt District Library

### **Internal City**

- Police
- City Administrator
- Planning Commission
- Tree Commission
- Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Commission
- Planning Commission
- City Attorney

## **Other Nonprofit Agencies**

- DeWitt Memorial Association (Board)
- American Legion
- Friends of Looking Glass
- DeWitt Lions and Lioness Clubs
- Lake Geneva Property Owners Association
- DeWitt Sister City Board
- Springbrook Association
- DeWitt Community Church
- DeWitt United Brethren
- Mt. Hope Church
- South DeWitt Church Of Christ
- St Jude Catholic Church
- DeWitt Garden Club

## **Recreation Organizations**

- Boy Scouts
- DeWitt Youth Baseball Association
- Girl Scouts
- DeWitt Junior Panthers
- USSF Soccer
- AYSO Soccer
- DeWitt Travel Basketball
- DeWitt Soccer Club

## ***Focus Group Questions***

Each of the focus groups were asked the same seven questions. These questions are as follows:

1. What programs or services, regarding parks and recreation, would you like to see the City continue to provide?
2. What are the gaps and challenges that are currently not met by the City?
3. Which agencies/organizations do you feel the City should collaborate with?

4. Are there any groups that are not being reached or underserved in the City in relation to recreation programming?
5. If the City were to create new recreation facilities, what would you suggest? Where should they be located?
6. How should the City pay for new programs, facilities, and staff?
7. Are there any other issues, suggestions, concerns that you would like to share with the City?

### ***City of DeWitt Focus Group Summary***

#### **Question #1**

**What programs or services, regarding parks and recreation, would you like to see the City continue to provide?**

Do they still offer programs for the children during the summer? This was a very nice program.

Out of the loop older generation and is not a good person to ask because she doesn't have young children.

Soccer, baseball, basketball programs.

Focus on sports for young people to teach good sportsmanship for future participation.

Sports go in fads so the City needs to stay up to speed with needs.

Deliver programs that residents want.

Intergenerational activities.

Need to provide one-day event that focuses on specific topics (family focused).

Single Events should be continued (make these traditional "Like Ox Roast") (\*Big Truck Day, Big Box Day – for sense of humor)

Continue youth programs

- Cost to participate is too high –try to lower
- Beginning programs at lower levels seems reasonable-starter programs (\*at mid-level/travel teams costs increase)
- Maintain sponsorships(helps to reduce costs)
- Low cost foundation programs to begin kids in sports
- Continue all existing programs (\*Townships added floor hockey, softball/T-ball, Rec. Basketball)

Continued organized sport activity

Develop parent/child activities like (Big Truck Day)

- Things that they can do together
- Inter generational activities

## Exercise Program for Kids

### Little kids soccer (Little kickers)

- Physical fitness is good for them
- Everyone is running

Variety of opportunities should be made available.

- Serve their interests
- May be combined parent child activities (orienteering offered as an activity)

None competitive activities

## **Question #2**

### **What are the gaps and challenges that are currently not met by the City?**

DeWitt doesn't have a senior building or get together. The old middle school and luncheon and play for seniors. Bath has a community center and has activities for the seniors.

My husband would love horseshoe for seniors-more activities for older adults.

Would be nice to have senior activities and it would take a while to get the word and [the older adults would] possibly need transportation.

Fishing seminar was neat idea-need activities for parents and kids together is a good idea

I applaud the programs and any programs like this is a plus

Previously had concerts in the park and should change music styles

Possibly have an ice cream social and different organizations could help

Need to appeal to the youth on Friday night or families on a weeknight or Sunday. Have group of kids play which would get the entire family to participate. We have good local talent and shouldn't need to pay.

Need to provide a canoe launch. Could also provide tubing opportunities.

May need location (safe) for paintball which is up and coming-teaches life lessons.

Need for open space-passive recreation area.

Skate park- organized/developed area for this activity

Youth golf lessons

Ox Roast challenge for space-need single area.

Open space acquisition/green space; acquisition-multi-space complex.

Tie tournaments into the Ox Roast (Tennis) (Brings people into the city)

Development of a Tennis league and tourney (\*other sports also)

5/10k run during Ox Roast

Develop Ox Roast/ Sports festival as a future event (\*a constellation of sports tourneys-Soccer, Tennis, Softball)

Build a larger open pavilion at the sports park

Larger groups

Multiuse facility

Toddler age park equipment (\*at least one place has appropriate equipment)

Add programs at the feeder level

- 5 yrs. Old wrestling (ex.)
- Let parent led groups provide activities for 8, 9, 10 year olds.
- Tennis-recreation
- More winter sports
- Add variety year round

Provide less confusion in who is offering what

- School programs
- Authority programs

More consolidation of program (\*Differentiate between city/township)

After school time is a challenge for all organizations (2:30 to 5 p.m. & summer) (\*Providing meaningful activity for children)

Share philosophies and visions amongst organizations

- Develop information on nature of activity (competition level)
- Expectations of participants/spectators/providers/officials

Establish an attitude of service provision (define our position on the nature of the activity – what it is designed to do – set expectations)

### **Question #3**

**Which agencies/organizations do you feel the City should collaborate with?**

They cooperate with the garden club and all of them were invited

They have been working extremely well the memorial assn and the Ox Roast

The school is stingy with the property and some of the ball diamonds and fields should cooperate

Collaborate with schools for facilities

The City works well with the Lioness Club and Garden Club

Need to have good relationship with people and this type of person is a plus.

Parent lead group- win/win situation. Allows the City to save money.

Need to follow rather than lead (the City that is) the parent lead group.

Non-profit groups

Possibly has more parental involvement with facility care and maintenance.

Collaborate with everyone (\*Problem – wisdom of parent led groups)

Seek positive relationships with all parent led groups

Scout groups (e.g. canoe fest)

River cleaning

River is unused, but is a great resource (\*part of City identity)

Lions Club (mission may be different) (\* City has been formed an youth almost completely)

Band Concerts

How will school districts cooperate?

- School will assist with facilities during times other than right after school and summer day activities
- Pat Howard, Director of Communication Education, will be liaison with DARA
- Make an effort to work together
- School could be a source of faculty development – It has green space (use property to develop programs)
- Leadership assistance via communication education director

Ox Roast and other activities to enhance commerce in the downtown area

Downtown development authority

Adult activities that bring people to downtown

- Thursday night stroll
- Entertainment (music, jugglers)

Skate boarders

- Don't have a place to go
- Find a way to support their activity in appropriate areas (\*Insurance is expensive)

Rollerbladers

- Use bike paths
- Adult activity

City committees don't work together as much as needed to coordinate comprehensive planning.

Bike path (Riley and Olive townships)

Library has an adult lecture series (\*Promote this activity through city and DARA)

Community Board concerts in parks

- Family
- Adult
- Variety of music

People prefer to stay in town for activities than go to Lansing (concerts) (e.g. East Lansing concerts on MAC)

Local musicians might participate

Civic groups/clubs/churches are some organizations that should be included in planning

- Kiwanis
- Lions
- Enhance civic involvement

Sister City Park develops ex.

Collaboration with PTO's

- 3rd grade reunion
- Ice cream socials

Involvement with business community!

- Sponsorships (leagues, teams, events)
- Advertising
- Lifts
- To partner on park development and improvement
- 4 – H/Extension

Friends of the Looking Glass as an organization to become involved with (River is a rec. facility)

## **Question #4**

**Are there any groups that are not being reached or underserved in the City in relation to recreation programming?**

A little more concentration on the seniors – kids and adults

A senior is generally anyone over 50

70 or 80 [years old] do not want to play softball. Bowling maybe tennis, senior golf league. Possibly offer a senior day for golf or possibly a travel day where seniors would go on a fieldtrip.

Senior citizen-senior programming.

Senior Citizens

- Yoga
- Euchre tournaments
- Square dancing
- Memorial Bldg used for some alternative programs

Adult programs- 50+ / Seniors programs

Offer programs to adults (50+)

- Dancing
- Hiking
- Cards/Board games
- Lecture programs

Adult Tennis program

Divide adults by physical capability and level of competitiveness.

Involve participants (adults) in the design of Adult programs

Centralized grant program for kids that cannot afford to participate.

Previously mentioned Toddlers and 35/50 + (Adults)

Teenagers need something = is there a need?

Nothing offered  
Coordinate with school sys.

“Teen Dance”

City's function should be to serve everyone (\*educate& train; minimize competition)

Adults (50+)/ Active Adults, Sedentary Adults

- Dance
- Fierstenan, 1st floor will have a low impact surface
- Learn more about their interests

Youth out of school time is a great challenge

- Changing interests
- Collaborate with a youth board?

Library offers class for computer use

Can honor requests for activities where there is not enough interest (pool with other communities to get #'s)

Services for activities (1, 2, 3, years of age)

- Family activity and develop a sense of community
- Like a “welcome wagon”
- Service groups could assist in welcoming families to the city
  - A real-estate company
  - Homeowners Association
  - School
  - Fire Department /EMS
  - Market through newsletters

Athletic activities for adults over 50

- Activity that doesn't include younger participants
- Regional activities (\*horseshoes and free throw contests)

Handicappers? Not mentioned

## **Question #5**

**If the City were to create new recreation facilities, what would you suggest? Where should they be located?**

I wish the gazebo would have been a band shelter (larger) to be used for concerts.

I wish the gazebo at Riverside would have been designated more like the one at Memorial Park.

Tear down the Memorial and replace with community center. One or two rooms for meetings and a pool. Grant money would be available.

Really, really great would be to buy DeWitt and Herberon and use as fair grounds and put up a community building and carnival.

Japanese garden will be another spot for congregating. Need a year round facility.

Sledding hill for the kids/with activities

Swim and racquet club

Cooperation with schools for facility use should alleviate the need for new facilities

Outdoor swimming pool

Bldg. a larger pavilion at sports park (previously mentioned)

Downtown recreation facility

Bike path is used heavily

Any path has the potential for use (\*ID mileage)

Expand river trail/park trail (\*Expand into Township)

Link township parks

Expand to school property?

Green space requirements for developers

- Small spaces for paths
- Passive water absorption areas

Not an athletic facility (school facility)

- Building something that is a gathering place
- Large open space (\*Dancing and wedding receptions)

Dewitt community cater complimentary to changes at Fuerstenan (replacement of memorial building)

Band still in a park (Involve community orchestra)

Skate board facility (outdoor/indoor)

## **Question #6**

### **How should the City pay for new programs, facilities, and staff?**

#### Grants

We don't know what grants are available.

What percentage are these grants? How about 70/30. Various grants are available at 70/30?

Other issues- grant funded positions

Look for grant funding for facilities.

#### Millage

Millage increase and everyone screams.

Property taxes

City taxes

#### User Fees

Increased user fees should be competitive with other areas.

Facilities should be leased by Authority- Provide revenue to city for use of facilities

Sponsorships provide support (\* Sponsors are "hit up" regularly by a large # of groups)

Scholarships for economically under privileged

People need value for their money

Hire staff who can operate (referee)

Effectively- manage the program and parents

City could develop a fund for scholarships through the community foundation

- There is need in DeWitt
- Low income needs

Volunteers should be continuously encouraged and should be continue in lieu of \$ resources

Seek Americorp support – seek a grant with Soh/city/township

Seek Federal and because of pays and collaboration of organizations

Use community leaders to leverage \$ resources

- Kellogg
- Meijer
- State government

Seek seed \$ through foundations (\*Wealth in Dewitt makes it difficult)

Use MSU resources

Need ½ time person to coordinate resource identification and acquisition.

If you have a vision you can work locally to generate money via fundraisers

- Community vision/develop common goal
- Can get more people involved if there is a goal to be accomplished

Seek business sponsorship to help to support budgets

DDA/Parks and Recreation shared person to make things happen

Developers (Foresburg and Builders) seek their support for a community building

Small businesses can provide some support that directly affects them

Reasonable user fees (not too low)/ free is not good

Millage to support program (this related to as DARA reference)

- Enables continuity
- Provides long term stability
- There was support for Park improvement – Recreation is a natural extension

## **Question #7**

**Are there any other issues, suggestions, concerns that you would like to share with the City?**

I think we need more input from more people

Intergenerational day to have seniors and possibly teach some things to the children

Seniors could show how to crochet, face paint, balloon animals, etc. – senior would be the teachers – went over very well for all involved – helped with children who don't have grandparents.

[I am] representing the garden club to get an overview and then to appoint a person to represent [to come to the Commission meetings]

Challenge of drawing in new people to participate in activities.

Advertising of programs is important.

Develop clear missions for parent lead, school and recreation authority.

Last 5/10 yrs. DeWitt has vastly improve its facilities

Zoomerang – computer based survey for community, survey to enhance responses

- Public computer – library, school, personal
- Good ongoing method to gain information

Develop 10-12 minutes video to communicate vision to community members and organizations

- Tell the story of the community (this was made in reference to DARA)
- Use student talent (H.S./LCC/MSU)

City has accomplished much with parks (\*Parks are places for spontaneous activity)

Parks are a marketing device – a place for people to congregate and enjoy one another

At some point, survey people about these issues

Don't know what programs are offered

- Softball/baseball (T-ball)
- Rec. Basketball
- Golf
- Bike Day
- Big Box Day
- Big Truck Day

# Citizen Survey

## ***Survey Description***

Mail surveys were sent out on June 30, 2003 to each resident household within the City of DeWitt (1,500). Surveys (see Appendix F) were included with utility bills in order to minimize costs to both the City and its residents. Residents returned their completed surveys using three different methods: enclosed with their utility bill, dropping it off at City Hall, or dropping it in the drop box in the City Hall driveway. In order to keep responses anonymous, several techniques were used. First, only one individual was in charge of collecting and safely keeping all of the surveys together. Second, surveys did not have identification numbers attached to them, neither were they put on after they were received by mail with their utility bills. Third, only aggregate information was provided in the report. Finally, information that was provided by respondents in the open comments' section that could lead to the identification of that individual were covered with "\*\*\*\*'s."

Surveys included questions about two main areas, City parks and recreation activities and programs. In addition, an open ended comment area was provided at the end of the survey for residents to voice their opinions about their perceptions of parks and recreation in the City of DeWitt.

A total of 185 (12.3% response rate) usable surveys were returned to the City of DeWitt. This is approximately twice as many surveys as were returned in the 1998 parks and recreation master plan.

## ***Description of Respondents***

### **Age and Gender**

The average (mean) age of each respondent was 49. The youngest respondent was 25 years old, and the oldest was 85 years old. The majority of respondents were women (64%). This percentage is higher than the percentage of women (52%) in the City of DeWitt (U.S. Census, 2000).

### **Households**

Survey respondent have on average (mean) two adults and one child living in their households. In addition, the majority (98%) owned their homes. The number of adults and children are slightly lower than the average of the City of DeWitt population, 2.89 adults and 3.25 children per household (U.S. Census, 2000). In

addition, respondents over represented home owners vs. those that rent their homes. According to the latest U.S. Census (2000), seventy-nine percent of City of DeWitt residents own their homes.

## Education

The majority of survey respondents (over 65%) had Bachelor's degrees or higher. Therefore, individuals with higher education degrees were overrepresented in the sample (Table 10).

**Table 10: Education level of survey respondents.**

Education Level	Frequency	Respondent	U.S. Census	Difference
Less than 12th grade	2	1%	4%	-2%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	13	7%	21%	-14%
Some college, no degree	34	19%	28%	-10%
Associate degree	14	8%	10%	-2%
Bachelor's degree	57	31%	23%	8%
Graduate or professional degree	63	34%	15%	20%
Total	183	100%	100%	0%

## Employment

The majority of survey respondents were employed full-time (58%). The second largest response came from individuals who are retired (20%). According to the U.S. Census (2000), of the civilian work force in the City of DeWitt, ninety-eight percent of them are employed. Of the survey respondents who are part of the civilian work force, ninety percent of them were employed. Therefore, individuals who are not employed were over represented in the sample (Table 11).

**Table 11: Employment status of survey respondents.**

Employment Status	Frequency	Percent
Employed, Full-time	106	58%
Semi-retired	5	3%
Self-employed	5	3%
Stay-at-home parent	12	7%
Employed, part-time	17	9%
Retired	37	20%
Unemployed	2	1%
Total	184	100

## City Parks

### Importance of Various Reasons for Using City Parks

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the importance of various reasons for why they and other member of their household use City parks. Response categories were based on a five-point Likert scale (1=Not at all important, 2=Slightly important, 3=Moderately important, 4=Very important, 5=Extremely important). Means were calculated for each reason to create a ranked list of activity participation. Results are outlined below in Table 12.

From the seven reasons provided, respondents felt that fun and enjoyment and enjoying nature were the two most important reasons to use City parks. Studying other cultures and training for sports was not as important reasons to use City parks.

**Table 12: Importance of various reasons for using City parks by rank.**

Rank	Activity	Mean	SD
1	Fun and enjoyment	3.93	1.12
2	Enjoy nature	3.71	1.07
3	Relax	3.61	1.09
4	Be with family/friends	3.56	1.21
5	Exercise	3.40	1.19
6	Train for sports	2.30	1.39
7	Study other cultures	1.67	0.98

### 2003 Visitation to City Parks

Survey respondents were asked how many times they or other members of their household have used various City parks within the past year. Response categories were based on four categories which were used in the prior 5 year master plan. Comparisons are made between applicable parks (i.e., various current parks did not exist 5 years ago, so comparisons cannot be made with these parks).

In 2003, the parks most frequently visited included Riverside Park, River Trail Park, DeWitt Sports Park, and McGuire Park. Percy Carris Park and Millbrook Park were not attended frequently (Table 13).

**Table 13: City parks by number of visitations, 2003.**

City of DeWitt Parks	Not at all		1or 2 times		3 to 5 times		6 or more times		Total	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
DeWitt Sports Park	63	36.2%	32	18.4%	35	20.1%	44	25.3%	174	100%
McGuire Park	64	37.0%	41	23.7%	28	16.2%	40	23.1%	173	100%
Memorial Park	88	50.9%	55	31.8%	21	12.1%	9	5.2%	173	100%
Millbrook Park	136	80.0%	11	6.5%	8	4.7%	15	8.8%	170	100%
Percy Carris Park	155	94.5%	2	1.2%	3	1.8%	4	2.4%	164	100%
River Trail Park	65	36.9%	33	18.8%	32	18.2%	46	26.1%	176	100%
Riverside Park	22	12.4%	46	25.8%	40	22.5%	70	39.3%	178	100%

**Comparison Between 1998 and 2003 Visitation to City Parks**

Overall, compared to 1998, a higher percentage of residents are visiting the parks identified in Table 14.

There were significant increases of individuals who have used DeWitt Sports Park and Riverside Park one to two times (12.4% and 11.4% increases respectively). McGuire Park saw a slight decrease (-1.3%) in this category.

DeWitt Sports Park saw the most significant increase (12.9%) compared to the other parks where respondents visited three to five times. McGuire Park and Percy Carris Park saw a slight increase of respondent visitors in this category.

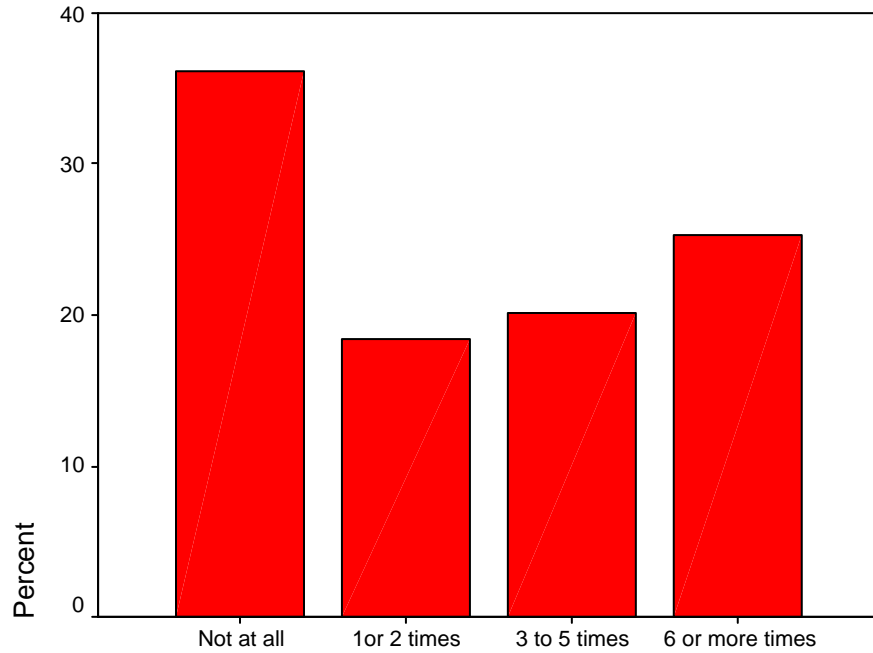
Regarding visitation to parks six or more times, all of the parks, except for DeWitt Sports Park, saw increases in visitation percentages. Comments 42 and 66 provide information regarding the DeWitt Sports Park.

**Table 14: City parks by differences between 1998 and 2003 visitations.**

City of DeWitt Parks	Not at all			1or 2 times			3 to 5 times			6 or more times		
	1998	2003	Diff.	1998	2003	Diff.	1998	2003	Diff.	1998	2003	Diff.
DeWitt Sports Park	44.6%	36.2%	<b>-8.4%</b>	6.0%	18.4%	<b>12.4%</b>	7.2%	20.1%	<b>12.9%</b>	42.2%	25.3%	<b>-16.9%</b>
McGuire Park	46.3%	37.0%	<b>-9.3%</b>	25.0%	23.7%	<b>-1.3%</b>	13.8%	16.2%	<b>2.4%</b>	15.0%	23.1%	<b>8.1%</b>
Percy Carris Park	88.9%	94.5%	<b>5.6%</b>	11.1%	1.2%	<b>-9.9%</b>	0.0%	1.8%	<b>1.8%</b>	0.0%	2.4%	<b>2.4%</b>
Riverside Park	23.7%	12.4%	<b>-11.3%</b>	14.5%	25.8%	<b>11.4%</b>	25.0%	22.5%	<b>-2.5%</b>	36.8%	39.3%	<b>2.5%</b>

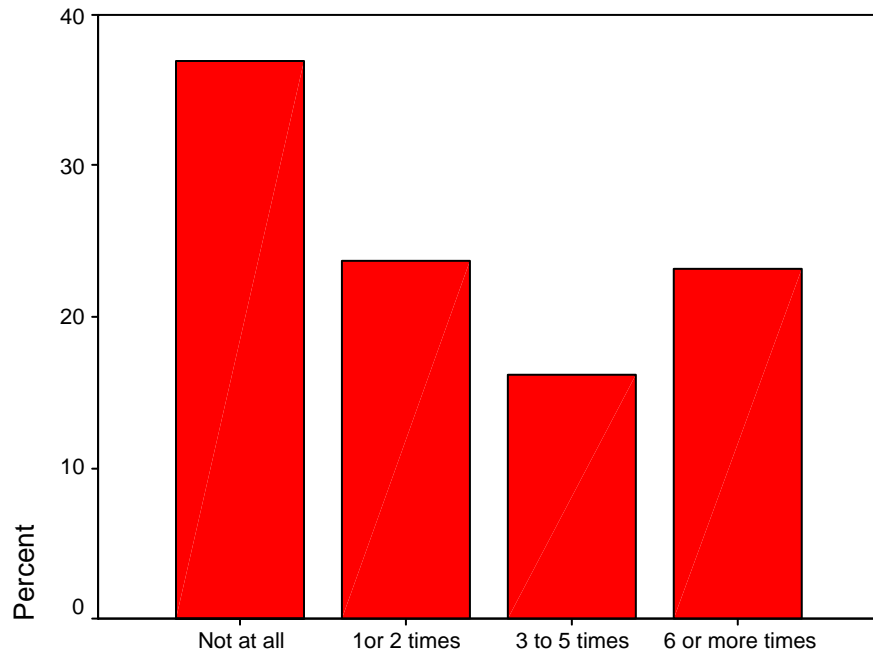
### City Parks Visitation Graphs

Graphs are provided to visually show the differences between visitations to each park in 2003 (Figures 4-10). The differences between visitations can be seen.



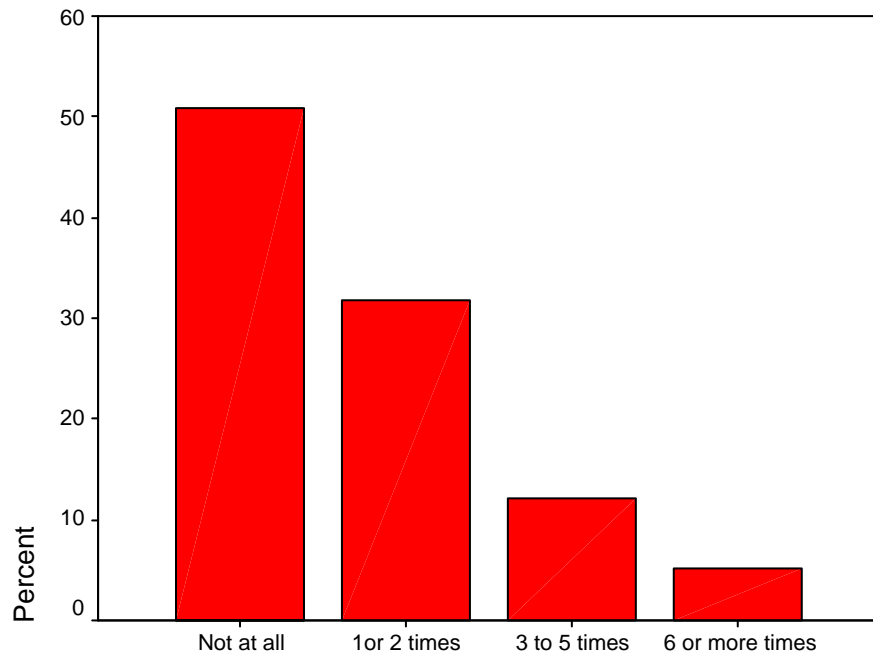
DeWitt Sports Park (Corner of DeWitt/Herbison Roads)

**Figure 4: DeWitt Sports Park 2003 visitation graph.**



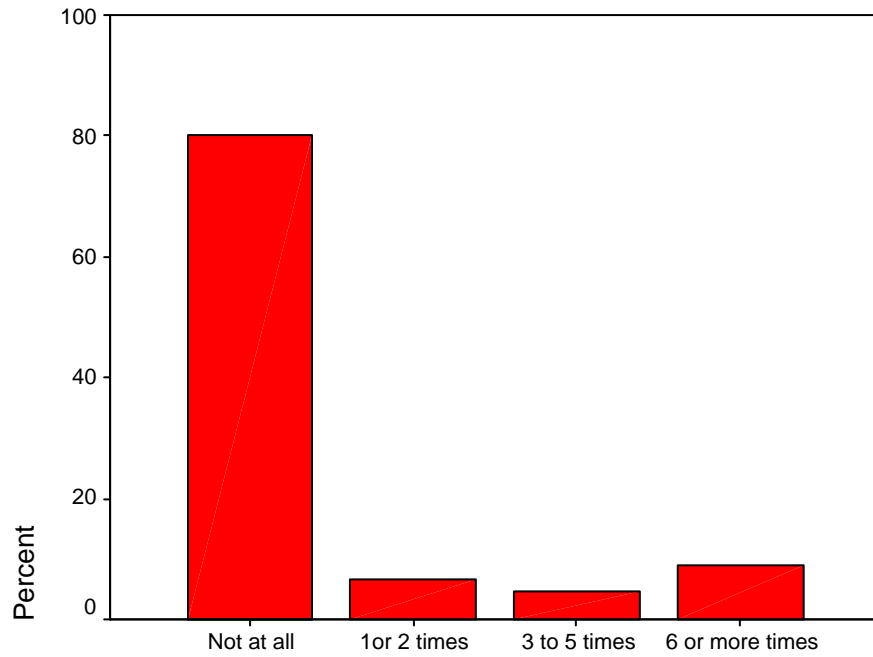
McGuire Park (West Main Street by Fire Station)

**Figure 5: McGuire Park 2003 visitation graph.**



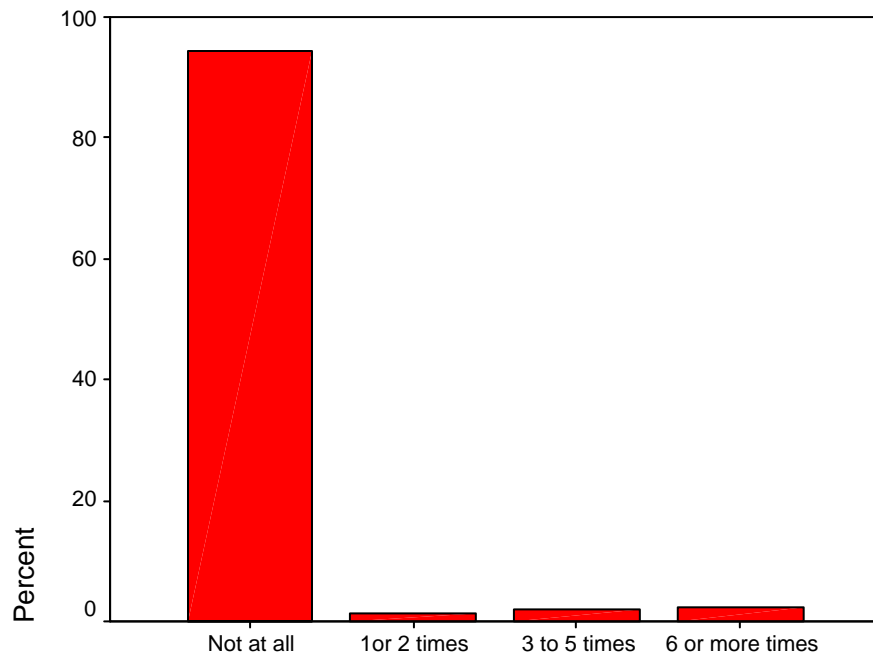
Memorial Park (South Bridge Street - White Gazebo)

**Figure 6: Memorial Park 2003 visitation graph.**



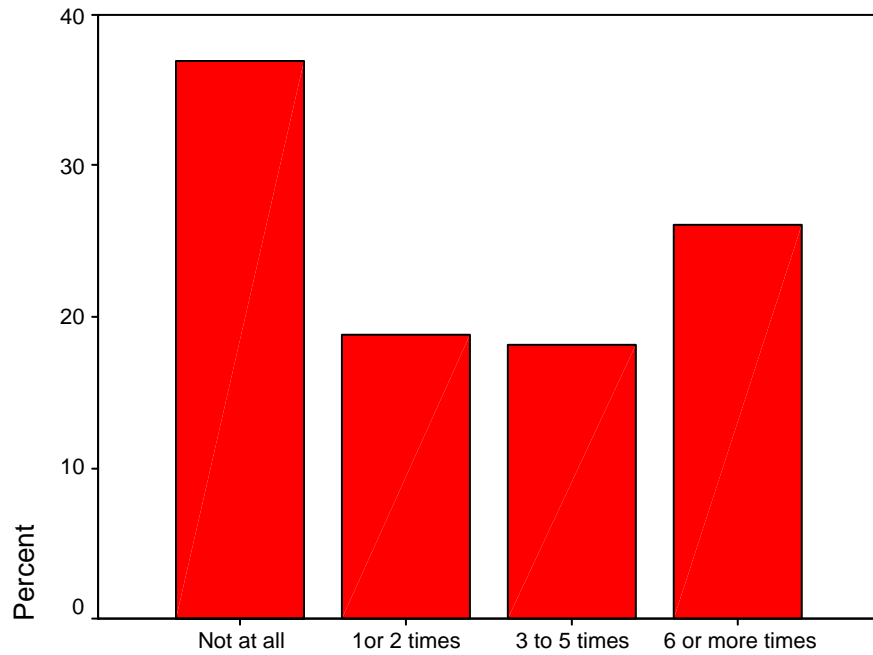
Millbrook Park (Manchester Drive)

**Figure 7: Millbrook Park 2003 visitation graph.**



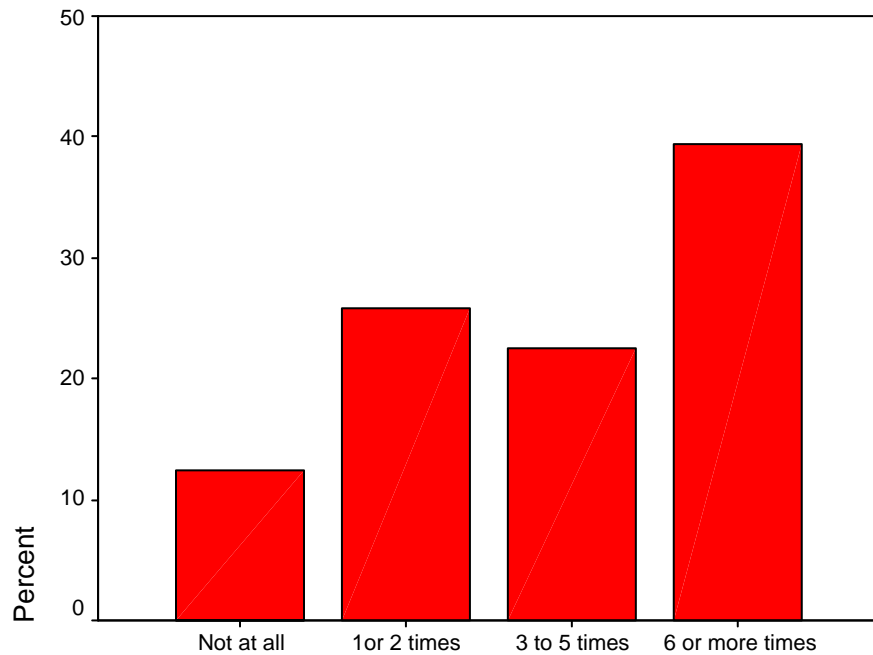
Percy Carris Park (Cherry Street)

**Figure 8: Percy Carris Park 2003 visitation graph.**



River Trail Park (East Dill Drive)

**Figure 9: River Trail Park 2003 visitation graph.**



Riverside Park (South Bridge Street by Bridge)

**Figure 10: Riverside Park 2003 visitation graph.**

## Park Characteristic Importance

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the importance of various park characteristics when choosing a park to visit. Response categories were based on a five-point Likert scale (1=Not at all important, 2=Slightly important, 3=Moderately important, 4=Very important, 5=Extremely important). Means were calculated for each reason to create a ranked list of activity participation. Results are outlined below in Table 15.

From the 10 potential park characteristics, respondents felt that condition of facilities and safety and security were among the most important park characteristics when choosing a park to visit. Park rental fees and closeness to home were of lowest importance.

**Table 15: Overall park characteristic importance by rank.**

Rank	Importance	Mean	SD
1	Condition of facilities	4.31	0.77
2	Safety & security	4.31	0.88
3	Sufficient restrooms	3.96	0.95
4	Overall beauty of the park	3.87	0.83
5	Sufficient things to do	3.73	1.03
6	Sufficient parking	3.62	0.89
7	Noise level	3.47	1.01
8	Not crowded	3.45	0.95
9	Close to home	3.35	1.05
10	Park rental fees	2.99	1.19

## Park Characteristic Performance

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the overall performance of City parks regarding the same characteristics respondents answered regarding the importance of various park characteristics when choosing a park to visit. Response categories were based on a five-point Likert scale (1=Poor, 2=Fair, 3=Good, 4=Very good, 5=Excellent). Means were calculated for each reason to create a ranked list of activity participation. Results are outlined below in Table 16.

Respondents felt that City parks performed better in closeness to home, not being crowded, and safety and security. Among those characteristics respondents felt the City did not perform as well included providing sufficient things to do, having appropriate park rental fees, and providing sufficient restrooms.

**Table 16: Overall park characteristic performance by rank.**

Rank	Performance	Mean	SD
1	Close to home	4.27	0.77
2	Not crowded	4.04	0.73
3	Safety & security	4.03	0.74
4	Condition of facilities	3.97	0.70
5	Noise level	3.97	0.72
6	Overall beauty of the park	3.92	0.70
7	Sufficient parking	3.78	0.88
8	Sufficient restrooms	3.72	0.98
9	Park rental fees	3.72	1.00
10	Sufficient things to do	3.53	0.95

**Park Characteristic Importance-Performance Figure**

Figure 11 visually represents the differences between the performance and importance of various park characteristics.

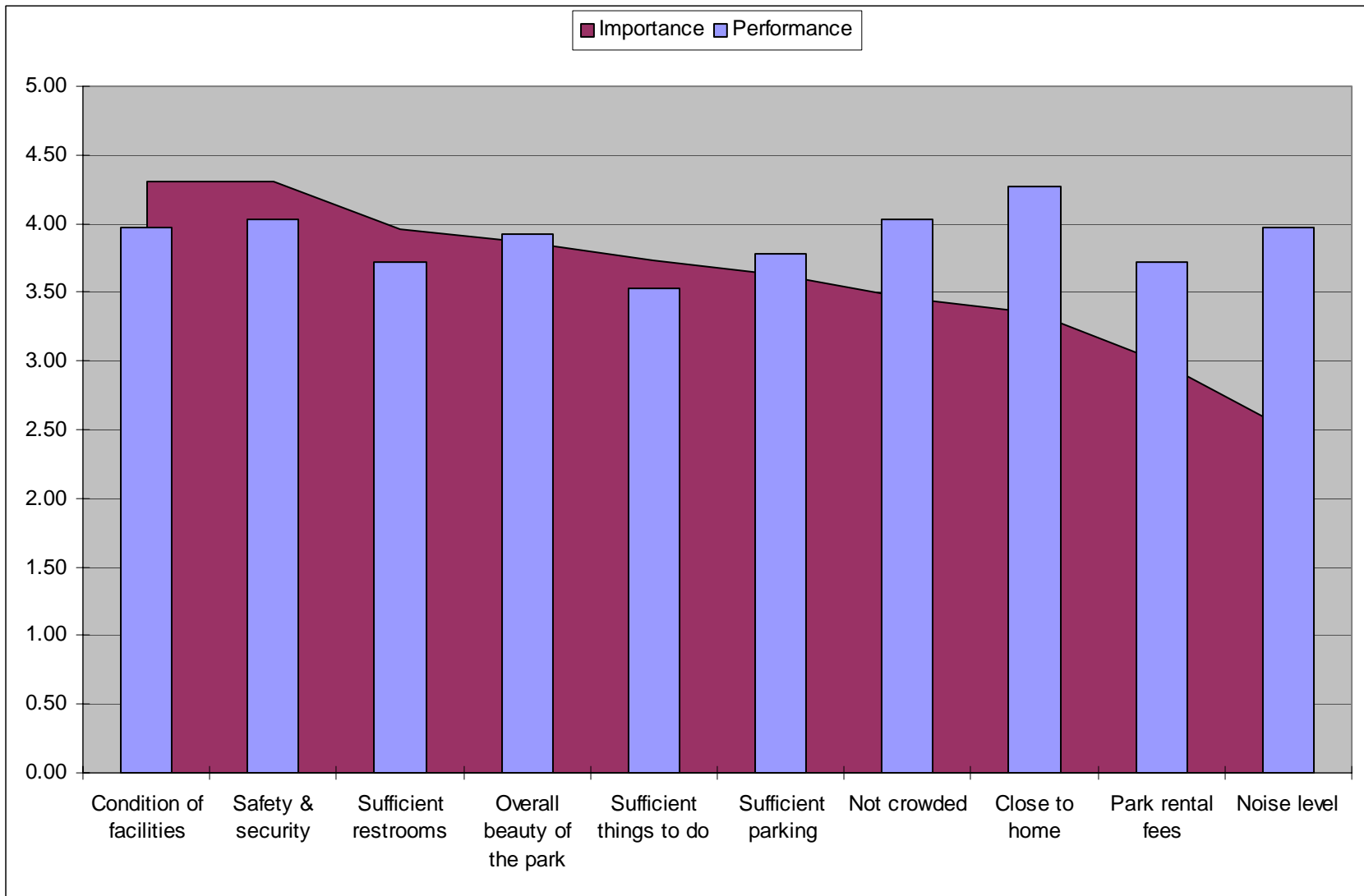


Figure 11: City of DeWitt Parks' Services Importance/Performance Comparison Graph

## ***Recreation Programs and Activities***

### **Current Recreation Activities**

Survey respondents were asked about the recreation activities they and those in their household have participated in within the past year in the City of DeWitt. Frequencies and percents were calculated for each recreation activity to create a ranked list of activity participation. Results are outlined below in Table 17.

The top five most frequently participated recreation activities are attending the Ox Roast (87.7%), walking/running/jogging (79.9%), using playgrounds (60.9%), bicycling (53.6%), and nature observation (53.1%).

**Table 17: Current resident recreation activities by rank.**

Rank	Activity	Frequency	Percent
1	Attend Ox Roast	157	87.7%
2	Walk/Run/Jog	143	79.9%
3	Use playgrounds	109	60.9%
4	Bicycling	96	53.6%
5	Nature observation	95	53.1%
6	Walk a pet	67	37.4%
7	Soccer	61	34.1%
8	Golf	55	30.7%
9	Picnicking	52	29.1%
10	Baseball/softball	52	29.1%
11	Scenic drive	40	22.3%
12	Attend family gathering	39	21.8%
13	Inline skating	33	18.4%
14	Fishing	33	18.4%
15	Swimming	33	18.4%
16	Religious/Spiritual	31	17.3%
17	Attend a concert	30	16.8%
18	Boating	27	15.1%
19	Canoe/Kayak	24	13.4%
20	Ice skating	23	12.8%
21	Cross country skiing	19	10.6%
22	Skateboarding	9	5.0%
23	Other	9	5.0%
24	Ice fishing	8	4.5%
25	Roller hockey	6	3.4%
26	Archery	3	1.7%

## Current Recreation Participation Barriers

Survey respondents were asked about several barriers that prevent them from participating in activities inside the City of DeWitt. Frequencies and percents were calculated for each barrier to create a ranked list of participation barriers. Results are outlined below in Table 18.

The most frequently indicated barriers to participation included schedule conflicts (46.8%), not aware of opportunities (41.3%), personal motivation (31%), and lack of interest (21.4%).

**Table 18: Current barriers to recreation participation.**

Rank	Activity	Frequency	Percent
1	Schedule conflicts	59	46.8%
2	Not aware of opportunities	52	41.3%
3	Personal motivation	39	31.0%
4	Lack of interest	27	21.4%
5	Lack of facilities and/or natural areas	15	11.9%
6	Lack of necessary skill/knowledge	11	8.7%
7	Other	10	7.9%
8	Lack of equipment	8	6.3%
9	Lack of access to facilities and/or natural areas	7	5.6%
10	Cost of the activity	6	4.8%
11	Distance to the activity	0	0.0%
12	Lack of transportation	0	0.0%

## Current Recreation Programs

Survey respondents were asked about several programs the City of DeWitt currently provides. In specific, they were asked which programs they would like to continue being provided. Frequencies and percents were calculated for each program to create a ranked list of programs. Results are outlined below in Table 19.

The most frequently indicated programs respondents would like to continue being implemented include baseball/softball/teeball (73.1%), concerts in the park (71.2%), basketball (62.2%), and Little Kickers soccer (61.5%). There were interesting results for the programs which were ranked the lowest. Despite their low rank, their percentages were still fairly high. For example, Big Box Day and Diamond Skills Competition both had over 25% approval by respondents. It is therefore recommended that these programs not be dismissed simply because of their low ranking given their percentage of approval by respondents.

**Table 19: Activities residents would like for City to continue providing by rank.**

Rank	Activity	Frequency	Percent
1	Baseball/Softball/Teeball	114	73.1%
2	Concerts in the Park	111	71.2%
3	Basketball	97	62.2%
4	Little Kickers Soccer	96	61.5%
5	Youth Zone Soccer	89	57.1%
6	Punt, Pass & Kick	67	42.9%
7	Men's Softball Leagues	66	42.3%
8	Coed Softball Leagues	62	39.7%
9	DeWitt Night at Potter Parks "Wonderland of Lights"	60	38.5%
10	Tennis League	58	37.2%
11	Big Truck Day	58	37.2%
12	Soccer League	55	35.3%
13	Horse Shoe Leagues	46	29.5%
14	Diamond Skills Competition	41	26.3%
15	Big Box Day	41	26.3%

### Recreation Opportunities

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the level of priority the City of DeWitt should place on various types of recreation opportunities. Response categories were based on a four-point Likert scale (1=Low, 2=Somewhat low, 3=Somewhat high, 4=High). Means were calculated for each opportunity to create a ranked list of opportunities. Results are outlined below in Table 20.

Mean responses for each recreation opportunity fell between the categories of somewhat low priority and somewhat high priority. Regardless, recreation opportunities including musical concerts, winter family activities and toddler park (ages 2-3) were the highest ranked. A skate park, teen dance, and intergenerational activities were ranked the lowest in level of priority.

**Table 20: Resident perception on various recreation opportunities by rank.**

Rank	Activity	Mean	SD
1	Musical concerts	2.84	0.90
2	Winter family activities	2.77	0.95
3	Toddler park (ages 2-3)	2.59	1.03
4	Indoor swimming pool	2.57	1.16
5	Intergenerational activities	2.45	0.90
6	Teen dance	2.38	0.93
7	Skate Park	2.34	1.00

## Groups of Individuals

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the level of priority the City of DeWitt should place on various groups of individuals regarding the provision of recreation services. Response categories were based on a four-point Likert scale (1=Low, 2=Somewhat low, 3=Somewhat high, 4=High). Means were calculated for each group to create a ranked list of groups. Results are outlined below in Table 21.

Overall, respondents felt that City of DeWitt services should be targeted at youth. In specific, adolescent (ages 13-18) and elementary and middle school years (ages 7-12) were the highest ranked in level of priority.

**Table 21: Resident perception on level of priority City should serve different groups by rank.**

Rank	Activity	Mean	SD
1	Adolescent (ages 13 - 18)	3.41	0.74
2	Elementary and Middle School Years (ages 7 - 12)	3.35	0.75
3	Early Childhood (ages 4 - 6)	2.97	0.88
4	Young Adults (ages 19 - 40)	2.87	0.85
5	People with Disabilities	2.81	0.86
6	Older Adults (ages 65 and over)	2.76	0.86
7	Middle Adults (ages 41 - 64)	2.75	0.86
8	Toddlers (ages 2 - 3)	2.53	1.01

## Senior Recreation Opportunities

Survey respondents ages 55 or older were asked about several senior recreation opportunities they would like the City of DeWitt to provide. A total of 47 individuals responded. Frequencies and percents were calculated for each senior recreation opportunity to create a ranked list of senior recreation opportunities. Results are outlined below in Table 22.

The most frequently indicated senior recreation opportunity respondents would like for the City of DeWitt to implement included walking/hiking (70.2%), lecture programs (46.8%) and yoga (40.4%). It is important to recognize that the majority of the senior recreation opportunities had more than a 35% approval by respondents. It is therefore recommended that these recreation opportunities not be dismissed simply because of their low ranking given their percentage of approval by respondents.

**Table 22: Activities residents 55 years or older would like for the City to provide by rank.**

Rank	Activity	Frequency	Percent
1	Walking/Hiking	33	70.2%
2	Lecture programs	22	46.8%
3	Yoga	19	40.4%
4	Cards/board games	18	38.3%
5	Dancing	18	38.3%
6	Euchre tournament	17	36.2%
7	Other	8	17.0%

### ***Open Ended Comments***

The following comments were made by respondents in response to the question, “Are there any other ideas that you would like to share that were not covered in this survey?” Comments were included verbatim with an effort to correct for misspellings and minor grammatical errors. In addition, information was covered with “\*\*\*\*s” when information was provided by respondents that could potentially give away who wrote the specific comment.

Number	Comment
1	Swim at Lake Geneva High School; Park restrooms need soap or hand sanitizer
2	Cross country skiing-no groomed trails; soccer-no adult women’s league or coed league; Mt.Bike-no trail
3	need more bike paths
4	Thanks for great parks and activities!
5	[pool] water too cold
6	Meridian Township has an excellent program. May want to explore offering some of the same events-I attend many of them
7	You should use DeWitt Sport for soccer games.
8	I am out walking in DeWitt nearly every day, many times using the trails around Riverside Park. Another park of its size, perhaps a park with trails through a meadow-like setting, would be marvelous. The City has done a GREAT job with sidewalks and that is much appreciated. As the population increases a dog park would be nice although it is not necessary at the moment.
9	Add more sidewalks; outdoor movie night
10	Just that I think the parks are very important to DeWitt-at various stages in my children’s life a great deal of time each day has been spent in the parks! Summer programs during the day for children in the parks is very much needed.
11	Keep up the good work with kids programs
12	Emphasis on middle school and high school activities
13	A) Ice skating for winter? B) Concerts in summer at Riverfront; Just moved here in October.
14	Would like restrooms at McGuire Park
15	Need better area for fishing, boating, and hunting. Man made lakes and snowmobile trails would be nice.
16	Please! An outdoor pool! :)
17	I think we should have a skate park on the NW corner of Herbison and DeWitt Roads instead of 60 "condos" aka duplexes.
18	We have plenty of parks though not much equipment for children ages 2 to 6. We do not need a city indoor pool as we have use of the high school.
19	It would be nice if more energy were put into maintaining ice in winter.

20	After hour Boxes at parks/fields with information fliers about events
21	Possibly lighting the entire walking loop (4 mile) side walk
22	I think you are doing a fine job. I like the sidewalks to walk around the town. That's my preference.
23	Park fees are too high; A public swimming area
24	Not much for seniors to exercise, swim, dance, play cards, shuffle board, table tennis, pool, go on outings by bus
25	Since the Twp. and City has a grown so-has a senior center ever been considered with planned programs - there are a lot of us! Maybe become a volunteer center (old laundromat??); [for additional senior activities] pinochles tournament and a senior center
26	It would be nice to have the sidewalk chalk contest back, and have the ice rink back, with a small warming house; [under activities, would like to have been able to ice skate and roller hockey]
27	Town needs to be more walkable - especially on major roads, i.e. Herbison (east), Webb, Main (east of city hall) - the parks are, at times, dangerous and difficult for children to get there on their own. They either need to walk, rollerblade or bike in the streets (see above) to get to a park.
28	How about a frisbee golf course. Will we have ice skating this winter at McGuire Park?
29	Status of river trail development?; Thanks for the survey.
30	Dog issue in this city is very bad as many owners do not obey laws. Boom box autos are still not controlled as the law requires.
31	Do the best you can to maintain parks. No additions.
32	Open lap swim for adults who work in day, evening and weekends
33	Seem to be lacking in activities for seniors and teenagers!
34	Park rental of [\$]50.00 for a family reunion is too high
35	It would be nice if the restrooms at parks were open the same time as [the] park. Many times [I] have used [the] park and no restrooms available!
36	DeWitt has excellent parks - very well maintained with exception of Percy Carris. That park is a disgrace to DeWitt and area residents. The equipment is old-doubt if it meets safety standards. City needs to pay some attention to Carris Park and update it like the others.
37	Tennis courts need to be fixed!!
38	I can see coop arrangements with the Comm. Ed. Program - right now it seems like the city/township programs compete/conflict with youth sports like the AYSO or BYBA, Comm. Ed., etc. How can all the groups work together to make it a big strong entity rather than 3 smaller ones vying for participants. Also, how about a few more rec. opportunities for ages 8-16 in the summer. DeWitt has very little for the preteen and teens. And perhaps there could be an "open park/rec" session where you hire cool teen boys and girls to play organized games at a park with the school age kids - maybe water day, kickball, softball, frisbee golf. The teens get a job and teach younger kids how to play some rec. games...
39	Bring back Big Truck Day!
40	I feel that DeWitt needs an outdoor swimming pool that would be funded by community membership dues.
41	Tennis courts again at DeWitt Park would be wonderful - there is no where in DeWitt to play tennis while your kids play on a playground! Perhaps, the N. & E. Geneva Lakes could be used with ea. City/township residence paying a small additional upkeep/maintenance tax covering life guards etc.
42	Maximizing availability of DeWitt Sports Park help prevent need for soccer teams to travel (to Gunisonville) for weekly practice.
43	When the City walking survey was done, plans had included a bridge over the river at McGuire Park to connect at that area. City tennis courts. An event board that is updated frequently.
44	Do not use any of the Parks; Volunteer at Potter Park Zoo
45	We don't need a swimming pool. The jr. high just filled theirs in and there too expensive to operate. I would NOT support a river trail in residential area.
46	It seems that since DeWitt Twp. And City of DeWitt have joined, all the children soccer games are at Valley Farms which is not as convenient or nice of facilities. We would like to see that changed.
47	More walking trails. How about a fitness/walk/run with stations.
48	More youth baseball fields of all levels; Keep sidewalk sides mowed (ex. Herbeson Rd.); Make Looking Glass River canoeable (i.e., Clean fallen trees and debris from river); Make walking trails

	or hiking trails, and bike trails; young adult tennis leagues.
49	I'd like to see something added to accommodate toddlers. Something like Patriarch Park or St. Johns would be really nice.
50	Most of the play structures in Town are not safe for toddlers.
51	We would like to see handicapped accessible playground equipment installed in [at least] one of the parks
52	My daughter participated in **** this week, and I would have liked her to also take tennis lessons at the high school. Unfortunately, they were scheduled at the same time.
53	There is almost nothing here for seniors.
54	I enjoy using the bike trail and sidewalks but getting to them by walking is difficult. Where we live the road is very busy and there is no sidewalk. So we must drive to them first and then walk or ride bikes.
55	Publicity has been not as effective with joint City/Twp. Agreement! Have lost interest in programs since Twp/City activities are joined. Being a City of DeWitt resident I enjoyed close proximity in Tee-Ball and soccer; Also miss family activities like "Big Truck Day," for example.
56	Is it possible to spray for bees at the riverwalk?
57	Would like to see the view of the river cleaned up by the fire station.
58	The parks and programs are super. Good Job.
59	Concerts in the park for adults would be nice; A yearly 5k or 10k walk/run.
60	I think that children's sport programs are wonderful, but not all children are old enough [under 4 years old] or are into sports. So other programs for fun or education for children are needed and you can take donations at the event or use revenues from paid programs; [Additional activities include] bike parade with side walk chalk and hot dog lunch afterwards; Fall family fun fest.
61	Use playground equipment with grandchildren
62	Need to offer more adult education community ed programs and need to offer programs that use the parks and emphasize and utilize the resources there.
63	What about tennis courts?
64	1) I wish to strongly encourage the City to identify and coordinate "teen activities." 2) Regular (every other week) summer time concerts in the park would be appreciated by the community. 3) A more focused Looking Glass River program would be good, including City livery for canoeing and kayaking. 4) Summer time (every week) "drive-in type" movies at Riverside would be wonderful. 5) More organized sledding/tobogganing at Riverside (toboggan hill) would be great.
65	We do not use City parks.
66	Need to clarify use of Sports Park. Soccer, baseball/softball - adult vs. children. It is such a nice facility but seems to be underused.
67	Need a DeWitt community center with indoor pool and exercise facilities (or get the YMCA to get a DeWitt branch).
68	Need more infant/toddler play equipment at the park. Right now, mainly for older kids (5+ years)

# Action Plan

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Goals and Recommendations  
Capital Improvement Schedule

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## ***Goals and Recommendations***

### **Goal 1**

Provide for year-round passive and active recreation for the residents of DeWitt.

#### *Recommendations*

- DeWitt Area Recreation Authority has been established to provide these services.
- Commission will collaborate with and make recommendations to the DeWitt Area Recreation Authority regarding recreation activities.

### **Goal 2**

Provide a balance of activities which meet the needs of all residents from children, youth, young adult, adult, through senior citizens.

#### *Recommendations*

- DeWitt Area Recreation Authority has been established to provide these services.
- Commission will collaborate with and make recommendations to the DeWitt Area Recreation Authority regarding recreation activities.

### **Goal 3**

Seek to provide for recreational park lands which are balanced throughout the City to provide access to recreational facilities for all residents. Encourage the development of neighborhood recreation spaces within new residential developments.

#### *Recommendations*

- Continue to initiate recreation/conservation planning and design for new residential and commercial development.
- Complete, maintain and enhance the City of DeWitt Bicycle/Pedestrian Path system.
- Development of inclusive recreation facilities for people with and without disabilities, such as the proposed Allkids Playground.

### **Goal 4**

Promote the preservation, conservation and further education of residents regarding the community's natural and cultural resources.

#### *Recommendation*

- Develop a portion of the park land around the design theme of preservation, conservation and education. Span the range of available ecosystems and utilize interpretive signage and sponsor occasional field tours with knowledgeable local citizens as guides.

## **Goal 5**

Continue to actively support and work cooperatively with the DeWitt Charter Township, the DeWitt Area Recreation Authority, the DeWitt School District, and the volunteer-organized youth athletic associations.

### *Recommendation*

- The City of DeWitt should maintain communication among the entities.

## **Goal 6**

Continue to maintain, upgrade, and improve existing park facilities and undeveloped park lands.

### *Recommendations*

- Continue to utilize the City's parks maintenance plan that schedules specific annual maintenance tasks for each park.
- Partner with DeWitt Garden Club and Tree Commission in developing Triangle Park.
- Assist in the development of the Japanese Garden behind City Hall.

## **Goal 7**

Continue to support the beautification of the City through increased tree plantings, improvement of public spaces, and river cleanup.

### *Recommendation*

- Work with the Tree Commission and the DeWitt Garden Club to promote urban forestry concepts throughout the parks and in the City and create an urban forestry master plan that targets reforestation and tree replacement.

## **Goal 8**

Work toward the development of shared and combined City of DeWitt, DeWitt Charter Township, and DeWitt School District recreational facilities to achieve mutual goals. The possibility of shared development and acquisition costs should be explored.

### *Recommendation*

- Cooperative efforts between the City of DeWitt, DeWitt Charter Township, and DeWitt School District should be further developed. Periodic joint meetings of the two recreation commissions and Community Education should be established.

## **Capital Improvement Schedule\***

**Table 23: City of DeWitt park's capital improvement schedule.**

Year	Priority	Park	Action	Estimated Cost	Funding Source(s)
2004-2006	1	Memorial Park	Develop recently acquired parcel that is contiguous to the park by adding a parking lot, sidewalks, irrigation and landscaping.	\$200,000	General Fund, recreation grants **
2004-2006	1	Allkids Playground Project	Identify the property location for this playground and construct it.	\$100,000	General Fund, recreation grants **
2004-2006	1	Riverside Park	Construct overflow parking on the recently acquired parcel on East Dill Drive which is located south of the park. Install decorative lighting at the new parking lot area.	\$200,000	General Fund, recreation grants **
2005-2007	2	Elmwood Park	Develop master plan.	\$20,000	General Fund, recreation grants **
2005-2007	2	McGuire Park	Remove old sewer plant building, construct restroom facilities and install irrigation throughout the park.	\$325,000	General Fund, recreation grants **
2005-2007	2	Percy Carris Park	Update the playground equipment.	\$40,000	General Fund, recreation grants **
2006-2008	3	Sports Park	Complete the final phase of the playground equipment.	\$50,000	General Fund, recreation grants **
2006-2008	3	DeWitt City Cemetery	Develop Sections K and L which includes drive installation, water line installation and surveying.	\$100,000	General Fund, recreation grants **
2006-2008	3	River Trail Park	Complete another phase of improvements by continuing the pathway system through the undeveloped area of the park, constructing observation piers and adding interpretive signing.	\$650,000	General Fund, recreation grants **
Total				\$1,685,000	

\*It is important to recognize that funding opportunities change on an annual basis and this may affect the priority of various City of DeWitt park improvement projects.

\*\* Recreation grants include State and Federal funds.

# Appendices

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- Appendix A: Master Plan Approval (including MDNR checklist)
  - Appendix B: Land Use & Zoning
  - Appendix C: Public School Facilities
  - Appendix D: DeWitt Charter Township Facilities
  - Appendix E: Focus Group Letter of Invitation
  - Appendix F: Survey
  - Appendix G: DeWitt Soil Map
  - Appendix H: DeWitt Code
  - Appendix I: City of DeWitt Census 2000
-