

2002-2007  
PARKS AND  
RECREATION  
MASTER PLAN

ONTWA TOWNSHIP  
CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Southwestern Michigan Commission  
185 E. Main Street, Suite 701  
Benton Harbor, MI 49022

FEBRUARY 2002

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### Ontwa Township Parks Plan Steering Committee

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Mr. Dick Cox, Edwardsburg Village Council  
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Mr. Myron Elliott, Little League  
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Mr. Wayne Hardin, Citizen Representative  
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### Ontwa Township Board

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Ms. Pat Michael, Treasurer  
Mr. Jerry Duck, Trustee  
Mr. Jeffrey Kozinski, Trustee  
Mr. Norman Krupp, Trustee  
Mr. Jim Ralph, Trustee

## Visioning Session Participants

A Visioning Session was held at the Edwardsburg Intermediate School on January 9, 2002. We would like to acknowledge the following citizens that were present at this session.

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## **PURPOSE OF PLAN**

Community recreation plans serve a number of purposes. They guide local decision-making regarding recreational opportunities for five years. A thorough plan for a community's recreational facilities contributes greatly to the vitality of that community. Completion of a recreation plan also establishes five-year eligibility for recreation grants administered through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Ontwa Township has undertaken this Parks and Recreation Master Plan in an effort to:

- Complete their first recreation plan;
- Assess the recreation facilities and programs of the Township, including barrier-free compliance;
- Identify recreation deficiencies for the residents of the Township, surrounding communities and visitors;
- Determine a course of action for the development of a large parcel of land (Kraus Memorial Park) donated to the Township;
- Establish a course of action regarding recreation for the Township Board for the next five years;
- Solicit input from the public and Edwardsburg Public Schools regarding recreation in Ontwa Township; and
- Prioritize recreation improvements and acquisitions and identify potential funding sources.

The Ontwa Township Board contracted with the Southwestern Michigan Commission, the regional planning agency serving Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties, to guide the Township through the planning process. After a series of meetings, a community survey, a visioning session and a public hearing, the 2002-2007 Ontwa Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan was completed. The result is a five-year plan that reflects the desires of the community's schoolchildren, young adults, middle aged, and elderly.



## COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

### PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

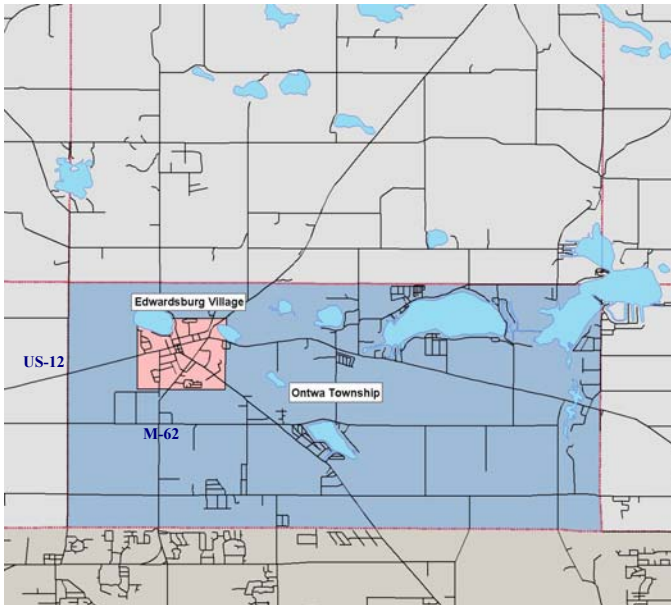
#### *Regional Location*

Ontwa Township, which includes Edwardsburg Village, is located in southwest lower Michigan, in southern Cass County. The Village is located entirely within the boundaries of Ontwa Township. Ontwa Township's southern border is the Michigan-Indiana state line. The Township and Village are only two hours from the Chicago area, while cities such as South Bend, St. Joseph, and Kalamazoo are no more than one hour away. The Lake Michigan coastline is also within one hour of the area. The city of Niles is approximately 10 miles from Edwardsburg.

Figure 1. Regional Locator Map



Figure 2. Ontwa Township & Edwardsburg Village



Within the Edwardsburg Village limits is a major crossroads in southern Cass County. US-12 is the major east-west route in southern Cass County and it passes directly through the center of Edwardsburg Village and Ontwa Township. Prior to the construction of Interstate 94, US-12 was the only major highway connecting the cities of Detroit and Chicago. Today, nearly 7,000 vehicles pass through the Township and Village on US-12. Additionally, M-62 bisects the Village and Township. As the major north-south route in the

area, nearly 9,000 vehicles travel this route between Edwardsburg and the Indiana border. Because of their close proximity to the urban areas of South Bend, Granger, and Elkhart, Indiana, the Township and Village are a popular place to live.

#### *Topography*

Over 10,000 years ago glaciers advanced southward from Canada and covered Cass County. Because this glaciation was so extensive, the landscape was heavily impacted. There are three major outwash plains within the County, the largest one covering most

of the southern townships from Porter to Ontwa. Evidence of this includes the slight variations in relief in the Village and Township as well as surrounding areas. There is a slight gradation downward in elevation from the western edge of the Township (840' above sea level) to the eastern edge (820' above sea level). There is a slightly greater difference in elevation from the northern edge of the Township (830') to the Indiana line (800').

The numerous lakes that dot the landscape in Ontwa Township and Edwardsburg Village are a result of the extensive glaciation. These points are obviously the topographic lows right around 800' above sea level. Among the larger lakes are Pleasant, Spring, Coberts, Eagle, Christiana, and Garver. The Christiana Creek flows directly south out of Christiana Lake into Indiana where it joins the St. Joseph River.

### *Soils*

The soils in the area are also the result of glaciers; therefore, soil types vary widely in texture, permeability, stability, composition and other characteristics throughout the community. Soils in the area are fairly well suited for construction purposes and have the potential for agricultural uses as well. To determine the suitability and soil conditions of a particular site further investigation would be needed.



### *Climate*

Cass County is far enough inland that it is generally not affected by the lake effect associated with Lake Michigan. Four full and distinct seasons are present in Cass County. The climate in Ontwa Township is very similar to that of South Bend, Indiana. The average temperature of the coldest month (January) is 24.4° Fahrenheit. In the summer, the average temperature of the warmest month (July) is 73.3°F. The annual total precipitation is 36.52 inches, while the average seasonal snowfall is 70.9 inches.



### *Water Resources*

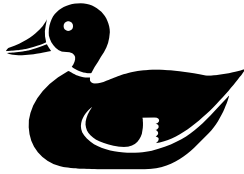
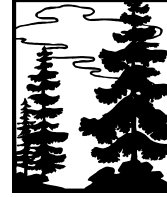


The Edwardsburg area as well as all of Cass County is blessed with an abundance of freshwater lakes, rivers and streams. Within 10 miles of Edwardsburg there are a number of lakes, including Juno, Eagle, and Christiana. In all of Cass County there are 54 lakes and many miles of rivers and streams. This bounty of freshwater serves as a haven for wildlife and is a valuable recreational resource. Wetlands also play a key role in environmental quality and are quite common throughout the Edwardsburg area. They help in flood prevention and supply key habitat areas for wildlife to thrive.

### *Vegetation, Wildlife and Fish*

The wealth and diversity of natural resources found in and around the Edwardsburg area provide excellent opportunities for recreation. Vegetation in the area varies greatly

depending on land use. Forested areas can easily be found with a large variety of different species of hard and softwood trees, including cherry and dogwood. The most dominant associations are oak-hickory and beach-maple. Many factors influence the types of vegetation that are found in an area. Examples of these factors are soil types, availability of water, history of land use, logging and slope.



Wildlife and fish in the region are equally as diverse as the vegetation. White-tailed deer and wild turkeys are frequently seen near Edwardsburg and are a popular game species for many hunters. This area is also a major migratory route for a large variety of songbirds and waterfowl, and is a popular destination for bird watchers. The numerous lakes are popular areas for sport fishermen and boaters. Lunkers, a sporting goods store located in Edwardsburg, is also a popular destination associated with the wildlife and fish in the area.

### Zoning/Land Use

The location of Edwardsburg Village and Ontwa Township as well as their natural features have contributed greatly to the way in which it has evolved and been developed. The residential sections of town are located in areas that can take advantage of the natural beauty of rivers, streams, and lakes in the area, while the commercial districts, as well as industrial zones, are more strategically positioned on or near the major transportation routes in the township. (See Figure 3 for current zoning.)

Figure 3. Ontwa Township Current Zoning



Source: Cass County GIS

### Transportation

Edwardsburg is located in close proximity to many major transportation routes that make for easy access to large urban areas. US-12 is the major road that runs east-west through Ontwa Township and Edwardsburg Village connecting them to White Pigeon,

Sturgis, and Coldwater to the east and Niles to the west. In 2000, US-12 had a 24-hour annual average traffic volume of 7,000 according to Michigan Department of Transportation figures. Additionally, M-62 is the major north-south trending road, bisecting the Village and Township. M-62 connects the Edwardsburg area to Cassopolis and Dowagiac to the north and Elkhart and South Bend, Indiana to the south. Nearly 9,000 cars and trucks traveled this route through Edwardsburg in 2000.

Detroit is located 200 miles to the east and Chicago is 110 miles to the west. Both of these cities can be reached by traveling US-12 or Interstate 80/90. I-80/90 is located approximately 10 miles south of Edwardsburg.



Air travel in the area is most easily accessed at the South Bend Regional Airport. Other options include airports in Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids, Lansing, Chicago and Detroit, which are all within 200 miles of Edwardsburg. Elkhart, Niles, and Benton Harbor each have airports available to non-commercial flights, and are also easily reached.

## SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

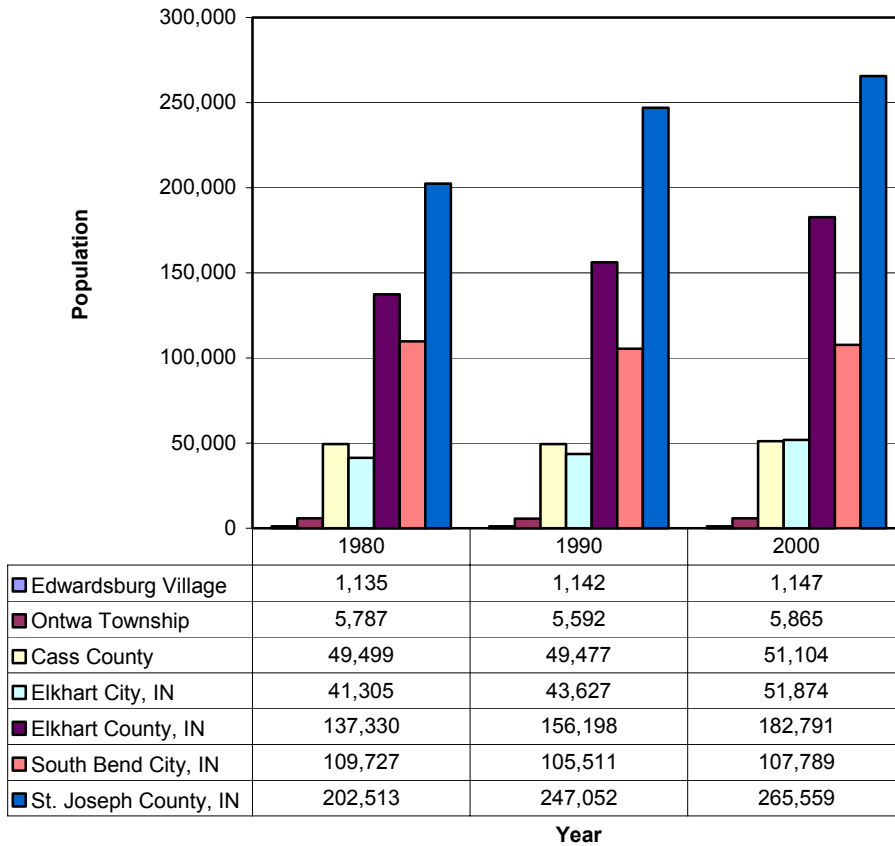
### *Population*

The Village of Edwardsburg has not seen any significant growth in population over the past 20 years. In 1990 the Village's growth rate was 0.6%, rising from 1,135 in 1980 to 1,142 in 1990. From 1990 to 2000 the growth of the Village's population was again very minimal rising only 0.4%. Ontwa Township has seen uneven growth over the past 20 years. In 1990 the Township experienced negative growth losing 3.4% of its population. The years between 1990 and 2000 saw an increase of 4.9% for an overall change of 1.3% between 1980 and 2000. Examining the Village and Township's figures alone it would appear that the area is experiencing very little growth. However, upon further inspection it is evident that the surrounding areas have grown substantially (see Figure 4). A substantial number of people in the greater Edwardsburg area work and shop in Indiana. Migration figures are not yet available for the 2000 Census but it is anticipated that they will indicate a number of people moving out of the more urban areas of Indiana into the more rural areas of southern Michigan, specifically Ontwa Township and Edwardsburg Village. Table 1 indicates the percent change in population between 1980 and 2000 in the neighboring cities of South Bend and Elkhart, Indiana as well as the counties of Cass (MI), Elkhart (IN) and St. Joseph (IN).

Table 1. Percentage Change in Population 1980-2000

	Change in Percent		
	1980-1990	1990-2000	1980-2000
Edwardsburg Village	0.6	0.4	1.1
Ontwa Township	-3.4	4.9	1.3
Cass County	0.0	3.3	3.2
Elkhart City, IN	5.6	18.9	25.6
Elkhart County, IN	13.7	17.0	31.1
South Bend City, IN	-3.8	2.2	-1.8
St. Joseph County, IN	22.0	7.5	31.1

Figure 4.  
1980-2000 Change in Population

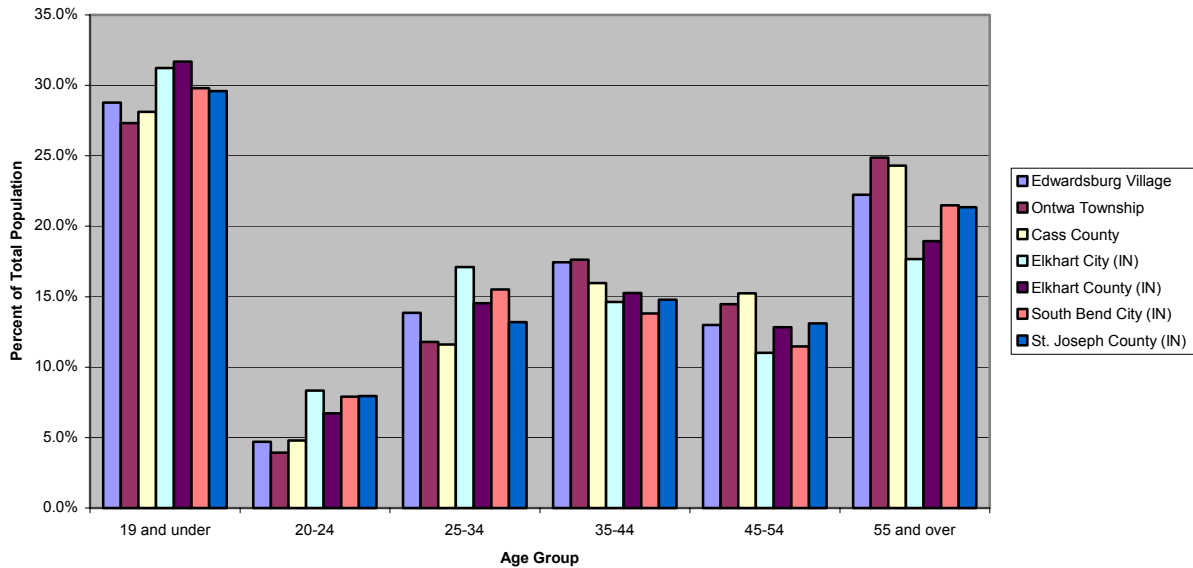


Age

In 2000, the 19 and under age group, as well as the 55 and over age group, had the largest number of people in the greater Edwardsburg area. Nearly 52% of the population falls into these two age groups (see Figure 5). A trend that is expected for the future is a

continued growth in the number of persons 55 and over. The age group of 35 to 54 is currently one of the larger in the Edwardsburg area, and because of the aging of the “Baby Boomers” coupled with the fact that people are living longer, it is likely that a growth in the senior population will be seen in Edwardsburg in the coming years.

**Figure 5.**  
**Population by Age as a % of Total Population**



*Persons with Disabilities*

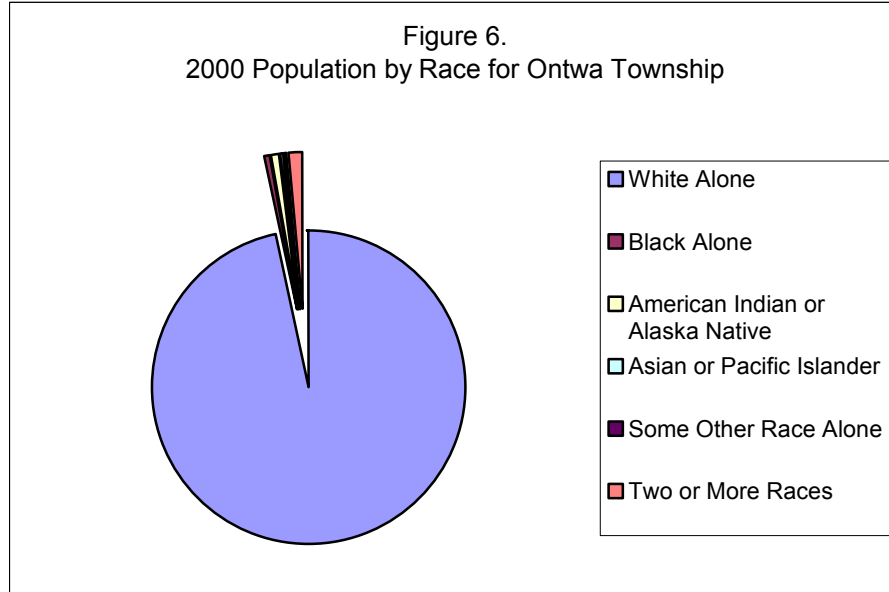
As part of the 1990 Census, mobility and self-care limitations for persons 16 years and over who are not institutionalized was reported. In 1990, there were 13 people in Ontwa Township between the ages of 16 and 64 that suffered from a mobility limitation, 81 people within the same age group that suffered from a self-care limitation, and 5 people who suffered from both mobility and a self-care limitation. Of those individuals ages 65 and over, 28 had a mobility limitation; 51 a self-care limitation; and 46 suffered a mobility and self-care limitation. Figures from Census 2000 are not yet available.

*Race and Ethnicity*

For the first time in history, respondents to the decennial census were able to indicate each race in which they identified themselves. In previous censuses, respondents were asked to identify with only one race. The results presented in Figures 6 reflects the ability of respondents to indicate that they associated themselves with more than one race.

An overwhelming majority (96.8%) of the population in Ontwa Township as well as in the surrounding townships identified themselves as White alone. Those identifying

themselves as two or more races make up the next largest segment of the population (1.5%). Those identifying themselves as Black alone, American Indian or Alaskan Native alone, Asian or Pacific Islander alone, or some other race alone each make up less than 1% of the population.



A concept that can be confusing is the difference between Race and Hispanic origin. Hispanic origin refers to one’s ethnicity. One who considers himself to be of Hispanic origin is from or has ancestors that were from Spanish-speaking countries. Less than 1% of the population in Ontwa Township identified themselves as being of Hispanic origin.

*Housing*



There are 2,653 housing units in Ontwa Township according to Census 2000 with an occupancy rate of 90.2%. A percentage of the vacancy is due to the presence of homes used only occasionally for recreational and seasonal purposes. In 2000, 159 homes were classified as vacant due to seasonal purposes, which represents 6% of all the vacant housing units in Ontwa Township. Owner-occupied units represent 86.7% of the housing units in the Township. This means that only 13.3% of all housing units in the Township are renter occupied.

*Income*

The median household income in and around Ontwa Township had a wide range in 1989. Table 2 shows that the median household income was \$30,885 for Ontwa Township. This income level is more consistent with median household income levels in neighboring Elkhart and St. Joseph counties, Indiana than with Cass County, Michigan. This indicates further that the economy in Ontwa Township is linked with those two

northern Indiana counties. Edwardsburg Village had a significantly lower median household income in 1989 (\$22,460).

Table 2: Median Household Income in 1989

Median Household Income	
Ontwa Township	\$30,885
Edwardsburg Village	\$22,460
Cass County	\$25,963
Elkhart County (IN)	\$30,973
St. Joseph County (IN)	\$28,235

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 3: 1990 Households by Income Level for Ontwa Township

Income Level	% Of Township's Households
\$0-\$15,000	21.0
\$15,000-\$25,000	17.1
\$25,000-\$35,000	21.5
\$35,000-\$45,000	14.1
\$45,000-\$60,000	13.0
\$60,000 and over	13.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

As the median household income level indicates there are a large number of households in Ontwa Township for which the income is higher than the County median. In 1990, 61.9% of the households in Ontwa Township had an income over \$25,000. Table 3 details the breakdown of households by income level for Ontwa Township in 1990.

In 1990 poverty status was determined for 5,542 of the people who lived in Ontwa Township. Out of this group 91.5% were determined to be above the poverty level while 8.5% of the population was determined to be below the poverty level. Table 4 shows the poverty status for Ontwa Township by age.

Table 4: 1990 Poverty by Age for Ontwa Township

Age	# Below Poverty Level
Under 5	74
5 to 11	67
12 to 17	71
18 to 64	215
65 to 74	31
75 and over	11

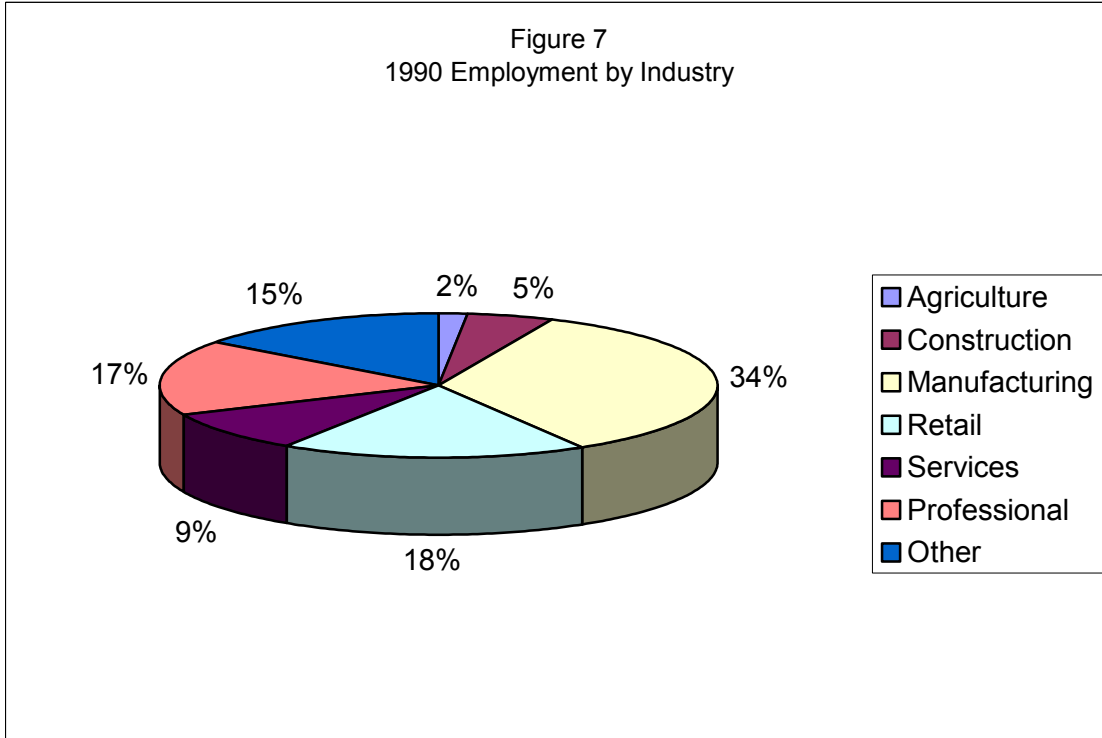
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Employment Trends

Employment in Ontwa Township is diverse with the manufacturing sector employing the largest percentage of the workforce. Figure 7 indicates the breakdown of employment by industry in 1990. Manufacturing was the largest employment category in 1990 employing 34% of employed persons over 16 years old. This category includes manufacturing of both durable and non-durable goods. Retail trade employed 18% of the workforce and was the second largest category in 1990. The third largest category was



Professional with 17%. The “other” category (i.e. public utilities, entertainment, public administration) included 15% of the workforce and was the fourth largest category in 1990. This category includes persons in fields such as health and education along with many others. The service industry employed 9% of the workforce, construction 5%, and agriculture 2%.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Unemployment in recent years has begun to rise throughout the United States and Michigan. The Edwardsburg area has not been immune to the change in the economy; this is evident in the number of people who are out of work. Table 5 demonstrates that Ontwa Township had an average unemployment rate of 3.4% in 1999 and 2000. The 2001 average through October has risen to 3.5%. Although the trend in Ontwa Township is similar to that of Cass County, Michigan and the Nation, the unemployment level is still much lower than these averages.

Table 5: Unemployment Rates (Data are not seasonally adjusted.)

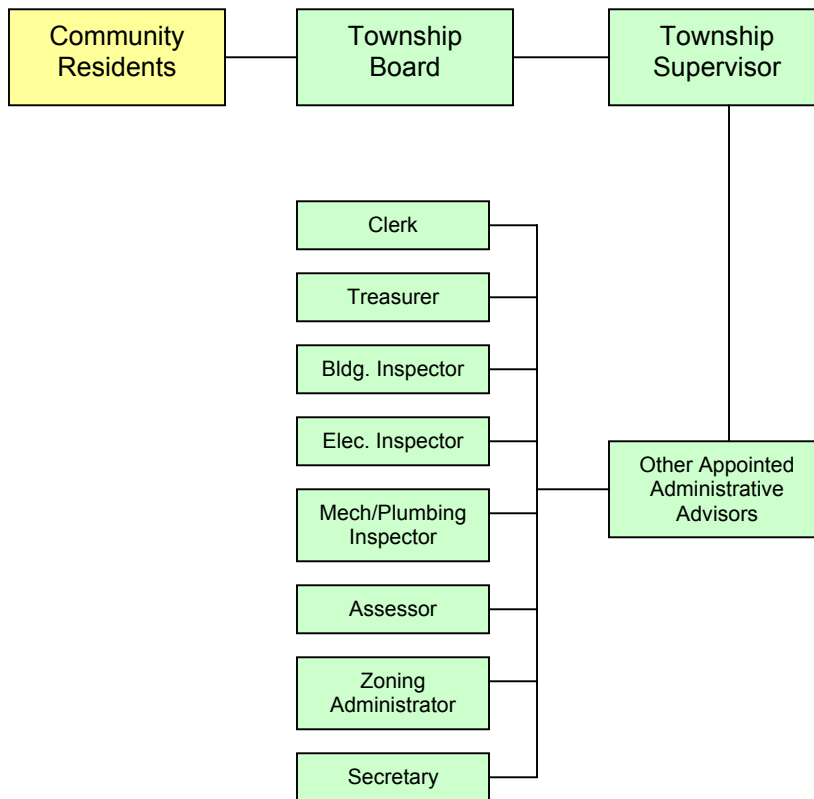
	2001 Average	2000 Average	1999 Average
Ontwa Township	3.6	2.5	2.5
Cass County	4.8	3.4	3.4
Michigan	5.6	3.6	3.8
United States	5.4	4.0	4.2

Source: Michigan Department of Career Development—Labor Market Information [www.michlimi.com](http://www.michlimi.com)

## ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Ontwa Township is organized under a general law form of government, and provides a full range of urban services including general government activities, public safety, public works, and recreation. The Township Board sets policy and directs the staff to take action in support of those policies. The Township Supervisor is the direct link between the Board and the Township’s operations, and is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Township. (See Figure 8.)

Figure 8. Ontwa Township Administrative Structure



In addition to the Supervisor, the Township employs a clerk, a treasurer, a building inspector, an electrical inspector, a mechanical/plumbing inspector, an assessor, a zoning administrator, and a secretary. The Township Board consists of a supervisor, clerk, treasurer, and four trustees.

The Township and volunteers maintain township parks. Park maintenance and recreation activities received approximately \$6,000 of the Township’s \$552,000 general fund budget in fiscal year 2001. Of this, nearly all was used to provide new equipment. Park maintenance and recreation are funded entirely from general tax levies. In addition, a 20-acre parcel of land was recently donated to the Township for use as a park. Kraus Memorial Park has an estimated value of \$120,000.

Currently, a formal parks council does not exist within the Township government. It is suggested that the Township establish such a council in the future in order to more efficiently manage recreation opportunities within the Township. Options for the Township include establishing either an Advisory Board (with no power to take action on its own authority) or a Parks Council that will actually oversee the parks portion of the budget and have sole discretion over parks and recreation activities.

The Edwardsburg Public School District also houses various recreation opportunities. Adult and student recreation programs and special activities are all sponsored by the Edwardsburg Schools. Funding for the Athletic Program is included in the school district's operational budget.

In addition to the Village, Township, and School District, additional groups in the area provide recreation programs for the youth. Edwardsburg Little League, Eagle Football, and the Edwardsburg Youth Soccer Association are three of the groups that offer these programs.

The Edwardsburg Little League affords the five- to eighteen-year-old boys and girls living in Edwardsburg the opportunity to participate in organized baseball and softball. The service area is the Edwardsburg Public School district limits. More than 400 children participate on approximately 32 teams each spring. Sponsors, fundraising, registration fees and concession sales supply the program cost of approximately \$25,000 annually. Fields are located on Edwardsburg Public School property; however, the Little League maintains them.

Eagle Football offers boys and girls between the ages of seven and twelve the opportunity to play football. As with Little League, the service area is the Edwardsburg Public School limits. The program is limited to only sixty-four participants each year due to space constraints. Try-outs are held each year, but there are almost always enough spots open for each child to make a team. Registration fees, fundraisers, donations, and concession sales are the sources of revenue for Eagle Football. The school owns the fields used by the Eagle Football program.

By far the largest youth sports organization, approximately 700 children participate in the Edwardsburg Youth Soccer Association (EYSA) annually. The program is available to five- to fourteen-year-old children in the greater Edwardsburg area. Soccer participation is not limited to children living in the school district, but is available to children living in Niles, Granger (IN), Elkhart (IN) and the surrounding areas. As with both Little League and Eagle Football, the EYSA does not currently own the land on which its fields are located. Fundraisers, sponsors, and registration fees are the sources of revenue for the EYSA.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

In August 2001, Ontwa Township began the process necessary to complete their first recreation plan in order to be eligible for funding from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. The Township contacted Southwestern Michigan Commission, the regional planning and development agency serving Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties, to provide technical assistance in the completion of the 2002-2007 Recreation Plan.

The planning process began in August when a steering committee comprised of representatives from the Edwardsburg Village Council, Ontwa Township Board, Edwardsburg Intermediate School District, Chamber of Commerce, Little League, Eagle Football, EYSA, and Southwestern Michigan College was formed. It was important to the community leadership to ensure that the needs of all the residents of the area were being met.

Steering Committee meetings were held in October and December 2001 and January 2002 (see Appendix I for meeting materials). The purpose of these meetings was to determine the questions to be used and the method for disbursement of the recreation survey; to determine the date, time, location, and method of advertising for the community visioning session; and to conduct brainstorming sessions for possible recreation opportunities.

In an effort to solicit citizen input, one community visioning session was held in January at the Edwardsburg Intermediate Elementary School. Community input was also solicited through the use of a recreation survey. The survey was distributed at an Edwardsburg High School football game in October. Additionally, the school distributed the survey to the students and to parents.

A draft of the plan was submitted to the Township Supervisor, Village President, Edwardsburg Assistant Superintendent and steering committee in February for their review and comments. Suggestions received to improve the plan were incorporated into the document, which was then revised and finalized. The Ontwa Township Board adopted the plan on February 11, 2002.

## VISIONING SESSION

### *Approach*

Community Visioning Sessions are conducted to elicit ideas that can be translated into a set of Goals and Objectives that can further be incorporated into the development of a community's Recreation Plan. The meeting is an opportunity for the public to voice opinions, comments, and suggestions on the current status of the Township and to provide insight toward the desired future of recreation opportunities in Edwardsburg and possible ways to attain them.

## Organization

A visioning session was held in Edwardsburg focusing on general recreation opportunities. The session began with introductory information about recreation planning. Participants were then asked to brainstorm by coming up with “We could...” statements. The participants were then asked to vote for five ideas that they thought were the most important. Finally, the participants were asked to give each potential project a difficulty rating based on factors such as cost, materials required, volunteer spirit, and time to completion. Projects that are *most* difficult receive a difficulty rating of *1* while projects that are the *least* difficult receive a difficulty rating of *3*. The results of each tabulation are highlighted in this section.

## End Product

The visioning session is the first step in the process to develop an effective recreation plan. This section is intended to relate those findings from the visioning session that will ultimately develop into a set of goals and objectives for inclusion in the Township and Village’s recreation plan. Additionally, the visioning session is an attempt to develop a consensus on the major issues relating to recreation in the community.

Table 6. Visioning Session Results

Project	Rank	Difficulty Rating	Score
Lighted Sports Complex (soccer, baseball, etc.)	41	3	123
Off-road Motorized Path System	19	3	57
Non-motorized Path System	19	3	57
Max. Coop. Between Comm. & Schools	16	3	48
Rec/Community Center	14	3	42
Acquire Tobert Property North of Kraus (30+ acres)	33	1	33
Parks Board	10	3	30
Concession Stand for Complex	9	3	27
Shooting & Archery Range	8	3	24
Improve Beach @ Pleasant Lake (including boat landing)	7	3	21
Bathroom facility at Kraus Park	7	3	21
Enclosed Skate Rink	9	2	18
Tubing/Sledding Hill	6	3	18
Bandshell	2	8	16
Indoor/Outdoor Swimming Pool	14	1	14
Acquire Radebaugh (54 acres) as community asset	13	1	13
Day Care @ Comm. Center	4	3	12
Kids Play Area (all ages)	4	2.5	10
Dog Run	4	2.5	10
Rollerblade/Skateboard Facility	3	3	9
Full Court Indoor Wooden Basketball Courts (multi-purpose)	3	3	9

Miniature Golf	4	1	8
Shuffleboard	3	2	6
Exercise Trail	3	2	6
Game Room (i.e., pool tables, arcade style games, etc.)	2	3	6
Boardwalk + viewing platforms around wetlands @ Kraus Park	2	3	6
Indoor Swimming Pool	5	1	5
Bowling Alley	2	2.5	5
Sidewalk Improvements/Additions	2	2	4
Indoor Roller Skating Rink	2	1.5	3
Covered (5-month) ice rink	2	1.5	3
Climbing Wall	1	3	3
Horseshoe Pits	1	3	3
Sand Volleyball Courts	1	3	3
Fishing/Canoeing on Christiana Creek	1	3	3
Paid, Parks Board Coordinator	1	3	3
Paintball Park	1	2	2
Additional Tennis Courts	1	2	2
Enclosed Performing Arts Theater	1	1	1
Coach Training Program	0	-	-
Driving Range (Golf)	0	-	-
Frisbee Golf	0	-	-
Racquetball Courts	0	-	-
Health Club w/sauna, whirlpool, aerobics classes	0	-	-
Indoor Track	0	-	-
Picnic Area	0	-	-

## COMMUNITY OPINION SURVEY

As a second way to better understand the desires and interests of the residents of the Edwardsburg area, an opinion survey was conducted. The survey asked residents to identify the activities in which they currently participate; whether or not there are enough opportunities for respondents, children, and senior residents; and what methods of funding respondents would support for the development of recreation programs and facilities. (See Appendix I for a copy of the survey.)

The survey was distributed at an Edwardsburg High School football game in October. Additionally, Edwardsburg students and their parents filled out the survey. The following is a tabulation of the results.

Question 1—Where do you live?

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Edwardsburg Village	414	39.54%
Ontwa Township	285	27.22%
Other	342	32.66%
Left Blank	6	0.57%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1047</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Question 2—Sex

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Female	491	46.90%
Male	515	49.19%
Left Blank	41	3.91%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1047</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Question 3—Age

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
19 and Under	925	88.35%
20-24	1	0.10%
25-34	10	0.96%
35-44	65	6.21%
45-54	35	3.34%
55 and Over	11	1.05%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1047</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Question 4—Do you feel that the area recreational facilities meet your needs?

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>19 and Under</u>	<u>% 19 &amp; Under</u>	<u>20-24</u>	<u>% 20-24</u>
No	459	43.84%	386	41.72%	0	
No Opinion/Don't Know	257	24.55%	234	25.29%	0	
Yes	330	31.52%	304	32.86%	1	100.00%
Left Blank	1	0.10%	1	0.11%	0	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1047</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>925</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

	<u>25-34</u>	<u>% 25-34</u>	<u>35-44</u>	<u>% 35-44</u>	<u>45-54</u>	<u>% 45-54</u>	<u>55 and Over</u>	<u>% 55 &amp; Over</u>
No	5	50.00%	40	61.54%	22	62.86%	6	54.55%
No Opinion/Don't Know	1	10.00%	15	23.08%	6	17.14%	1	9.09%
Yes	4	40.00%	10	15.38%	7	20.00%	4	36.36%
Left Blank	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Question 5—Do you feel that there are sufficient opportunities for children living in the area to use their spare time constructively?

	Total	Percentage	19 andUnder	% 19 &Under	20-24	% 20-24
No	482	43.09%	386	41.72%	0	
No Opinion/Don't Know	154	24.90%	234	25.29%	0	
Yes	410	31.91%	304	32.86%	1	100.00%
Left Blank	1	0.10%	1	0.11%	0	
Totals	1047	100.00%	925	100.00%	1	100.00%

	25-34	% 25-34	35-44	% 35-44	45-54	% 45-54	55 and Over	%55 & Over
No	4	44.44%	32	57.14%	19	59.38%	2	40.00%
No Opinion/Don't Know	1	11.11%	14	25.00%	6	18.75%	1	20.00%
Yes	4	44.44%	10	17.86%	7	21.88%	2	40.00%
Left Blank	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Totals	9	100.00%	56	100.00%	32	100.00%	5	100.00%

Question 6—Are there enough recreational and social activities for the senior residents of this community?

	Total	Percentage	19 andUnder	% 19 &Under	20-24	% 20-24
No	351	33.52%	304	32.86%	0	
No Opinion/Don't Know	504	48.14%	450	48.65%	1	100.00%
Yes	187	17.86%	167	18.05%	0	
Left Blank	5	0.48%	4	0.43%	0	
Totals	1047	100.00%	925	100.00%	1	100.00%

	25-34	% 25-34	35-44	% 35-44	45-54	% 45-54	55 and Over	%55 & Over
No	5	50.00%	23	35.38%	16	45.71%	3	27.27%
No Opinion/Don't Know	4	40.00%	34	52.31%	13	37.14%	2	18.18%
Yes	1	10.00%	7	10.77%	6	17.14%	6	54.55%
Left Blank	0	0.00%	1	1.54%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Totals	10	100.00%	65	100.00%	35	100.00%	11	100.00%

Question 7—What methods of funding would you support for the development of recreational programs and facilities.

Respondents could select more than one response. The following results indicate the number of respondents indicating which funding methods they would support as well as the total number of respondents. Please note that the age breakdowns differ for this question than previous questions.



<b>Bonds</b>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>19 and Under</u>	<u>% 19 &amp; Under</u>	<u>20 &amp; Over</u>	<u>% 20 &amp; Over</u>
	167	15.95%	135	12.89%	32	3.06%
Total	1047		925		122	
<b>User Fees</b>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>19 and Under</u>	<u>% 19 &amp; Under</u>	<u>20 &amp; Over</u>	<u>% 20 &amp; Over</u>
	270	25.79%	202	19.29%	68	6.49%
Total	1047		925		122	
<b>Taxes</b>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>19 and Under</u>	<u>% 19 &amp; Under</u>	<u>20 &amp; Over</u>	<u>% 20 &amp; Over</u>
	387	36.96%	351	33.52%	36	3.44%
Total	1047		925		122	
<b>Grants</b>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>19 and Under</u>	<u>% 19 &amp; Under</u>	<u>20 &amp; Over</u>	<u>% 20 &amp; Over</u>
	372	35.53%	304	29.04%	68	6.49%
Total	1047		925		122	

Question 8—Do you feel that the parks in the community are safe enough?

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>19 and Under</u>	<u>% 19 &amp; Under</u>	<u>20-24</u>	<u>% 20-24</u>
No	205	19.58%	191	20.65%	1	100.00%
No Opinion/Don't Know	330	31.52%	278	30.05%	0	0.00%
Yes	511	48.81%	455	49.19%	0	0.00%
Left Blank	1	0.10%	1	0.11%	0	0.00%
Totals	1047	100.00%	925	100.00%	1	100.00%

	<u>25-34</u>	<u>% 25-34</u>	<u>35-44</u>	<u>% 35-44</u>	<u>45-54</u>	<u>% 45-54</u>	<u>55 and Over</u>	<u>% 55 &amp; Over</u>
No	2	20.00%	4	6.15%	6	17.14%	1	9.10%
No Opinion/Don't Know	2	20.00%	29	44.62%	16	45.71%	5	45.45%
Yes	6	60.00%	32	49.23%	13	37.14%	5	45.45%
Left Blank	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Totals	10	100.00%	65	100.00%	35	100.00%	11	100.00%

Question 9—Do you feel it is important to preserve and protect natural areas for future generations to enjoy?

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>19 and Under</u>	<u>% 19 &amp; Under</u>	<u>20-24</u>	<u>% 20-24</u>
No	33	3.15%	30	3.24%	0	0.00%
No Opinion/Don't Know	57	5.44%	55	5.95%	0	0.00%
Yes	954	91.12%	837	90.49%	1	100.00%
Left Blank	3	0.29%	3	0.32%	0	0.00%
Totals	1047	100.00%	925	100.00%	1	100.00%

	<u>25-34</u>	<u>% 25-34</u>	<u>35-44</u>	<u>% 35-44</u>	<u>45-54</u>	<u>% 45-54</u>	<u>55 and Over</u>	<u>%55 &amp; Over</u>
No	1	10.00%	1	1.54%	0	0.00%	1	9.09%
No Opinion/Don't Know	0	0.00%	1	1.54%	1	2.86%	0	0.00%
Yes	9	90.00%	63	96.92%	34	97.14%	10	90.91%
Left Blank	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Totals	10	100.00%	65	100.00%	35	100.00%	11	100.00%

Question 10—Circle the activities in which you presently participate.

ACTIVITIES	<u>19 &amp; Under</u>	<u>20-24</u>	<u>25-34</u>	<u>35-44</u>	<u>45-54</u>	<u>55 &amp; Over</u>
1. Arts & Crafts	290	1	1	11	8	1
2. Baseball/Softball	273	0	2	13	7	0
3. Basketball	389	1	2	19	3	1
4. Bicycling	490	1	2	19	8	4
5. Boating/Sailing/Canoeing	296	0	4	21	9	4
6. Camping	393	1	4	29	12	2
7. Concert/Drama/Lectures	164	0	0	15	6	5
8. Cross-Country Skiing	72	0	0	7	2	1
9. Day Camps/Youth Activities	181	0	2	8	3	0
10. Fishing	436	0	4	26	10	1
11. Football	315	1	4	10	7	0
12. Golf	232	1	4	12	10	3
13. Gymnastics	126	0	1	2	1	0
14. Handball/Racquetball	64	0	0	3	2	0
15. Horseback Riding	182	1	1	11	6	0
16. Horseshoes	149	0	1	12	4	1
17. Hunting	229	0	4	15	6	1
18. Ice Skating/Hockey	212	1	0	11	4	1
19. Picnicking	199	0	3	19	7	5
20. Rollerblading/Skateboarding	430	1	1	9	1	0
21. Sledding	453	1	2	19	4	0
22. Snowmobiling	338	0	2	9	6	2
23. Soccer	336	1	3	7	4	0
24. Swimming	537	1	2	28	10	4
25. Target Shooting/Archery	215	0	1	9	6	0
26. Tennis	211	1	0	10	6	0
27. Volleyball	302	0	2	6	2	0
28. Walking/Hiking/Running	410	0	5	30	15	4
29. Water Skiing	228	0	0	8	2	1
30. Weekend Festivals	235	0	1	18	9	1
31. Wildlife Watching	220	0	2	20	13	3

Survey Summary

In keeping with the desire of the steering committee to include both residents and non-residents, it is noted that nearly one-third of the survey respondents do not live within Ontwa Township or Edwardsburg Village. Because the recreation programs and facilities are used by people in the surrounding areas, the responses of those indicating that they live somewhere other than in Ontwa Township and Edwardsburg Village are included in all of the calculations. Also, as expected and desired, the majority of

respondents (88%) were 19 and under. Of the remaining respondents, 53% indicated an age of 35-44, 29% indicated an age of 45-54, 9% are 55 and over, 8% are 25-34, and 1% indicated an age of 20-24.

Regarding the question “Do you feel that the area recreational facilities meet your needs”, each of the age groups (except 20-24) indicated that they did not believe that the recreational facilities met their needs. Both the children and the adults in the community believe that there are not sufficient opportunities for children living in the area to use their spare time constructively. Only 18% of respondents believe that there are enough recreational and social activities for the senior residents of the community. The majority of respondents indicated that they either had no opinion or did not know if the senior residents had enough recreational and social activities. The few senior residents that responded to the question indicated that they believed that there are enough opportunities.

Funding methods for recreation were the topic of the next question. Respondents were able to select more than one funding method. In order from most to least respondents, the preferred funding mechanisms were taxes, grants, user fees, and finally bonds. Among residents ages 20 and over, the order of preferred funding mechanisms changed to grants and user fees (tied), taxes, and finally bonds.

The majority of respondents either felt that the parks in the Edwardsburg area were safe or they had no opinion/did not know. Overwhelmingly, the majority of respondents felt that it was important to preserve and protect the natural areas in Ontwa Township for future generations to enjoy.

The activities in which respondents currently participate varied widely among the age groups. Of those respondents age 19 and under, the top activity was swimming. This is not unexpected with the large number of lakes in the Edwardsburg area. Bicycling, sledding, fishing, rollerblading/skateboarding, walking/hiking/running, camping, basketball, snowmobiling, and soccer rounded out the top ten activities in which the youth of Edwardsburg participate. Respondents over the age of 20 chose walking/hiking/running as their most participated in activity. Rounding out the top ten for the over 20 age group are camping, swimming, fishing, boating/sailing/canoeing, bicycling, golf, weekend festivals, sledding and hunting and concert/drama/lectures (tie) and arts/crafts and baseball/softball and football (tie).

## RECREATION INVENTORY

During the development of any recreation plan, it is crucial to take a close look at recreational facilities and opportunities already in place, both public and private, as well as those facilities located within the community and in the greater region. Establishing such an inventory will keep duplication to a minimum while potentially identifying gaps in the provision and delivery of leisure services.

### OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN ONTWA TOWNSHIP

#### Public Properties/Facilities

1. ***Krauss Memorial Park*** is the most recent addition to the Ontwa Township Parks System. Located on a 20-acre parcel on the northeast corner of M-62 and May, this land was donated by the Kraus family. Open play areas and natural resources (including water and open fields) abound. The Lions Club recently constructed a picnic shelter and the Snowmobile Club grooms trails throughout the year.
2. ***Gunn Park***, located in the Edwardsburg Village limits, is on the south side of Pleasant Lake. Open play areas and picnic facilities are available at this site, as are a basketball hoop and volleyball court.
3. ***Library Park*** is an open space adjacent to the library in Edwardsburg Village. Bike racks are available for the many children who utilize the space to play pick-up games of football and soccer.

Table 7. Public Parks within Ontwa Township and Edwardsburg Village

FACILITY NO.	NAME	ACTIVITIES/EQUIPMENT
1	Krauss Memorial Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Open Play Areas <input type="checkbox"/> 1 ADA-compliant Play Structure <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Picnic Tables <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Picnic Shelter <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle Access <input type="checkbox"/> Paved Road Access <input type="checkbox"/> Parking
2	Gunn Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Open Play Areas <input type="checkbox"/> Sanitation Facilities <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Picnic Tables <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Basketball Hoop <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Volleyball Court <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle Access <input type="checkbox"/> Paved Road Access <input type="checkbox"/> Parking <input type="checkbox"/> Water Available <input type="checkbox"/> Boat Launch <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing
3	Library Park	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Bike Racks <input type="checkbox"/> Open Play Areas <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle Access <input type="checkbox"/> Paved Road Access <input type="checkbox"/> Parking

### *School Properties/Facilities*

School facilities include an athletic complex consisting of softball diamonds, baseball diamonds, several large playing fields, several tennis courts, a football stadium, and a rubberized track. All of these facilities are open to the public for community recreation when not in use by the schools.

## OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE IN SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

### *City of Niles*

The city of Niles has a number of recreation opportunities available. Located fewer than 10 miles from Edwardsburg, Niles is the home of Riverfront Park, Plym Park, Island Park, and Fort St. Joseph. Riverfront Park is located along the banks of the St. Joseph River and contains walking paths, a play area, a new dock, and by late summer 2002 will house the area's first skate park.

### *City of Elkhart*

Elkhart, Indiana, just south of Ontwa Township, is a city built on rivers. The St. Joseph River and the Elkhart River come together in Elkhart. It is natural, then, that numerous river parks have been established in the area. For passive recreation lovers, there are also museums to visit in Elkhart.

### *City of South Bend*

The city of South Bend, Indiana, is also just south of Ontwa Township. Home of the University of Notre Dame, sports fans flock to the city many weekends out of the year to catch Irish football and basketball. East Race, a white-water kayak route used by many, including some Olympic athletes, is also located in nearby Mishawauka. Potawatomi Park and Zoo in addition to a number of museums can also be enjoyed in South Bend. As with Elkhart and Niles, the St. Joseph River is home to many river parks in the area.

### *Cass County*

Cass County has a number of parks in the county. The crown jewel is Dr. T. K. Lawless Park. This park has a number of beautiful open spaces and is used by many as a place to go and relax. Arthur Dodd Memorial Park and Russ Forest County Park are two more parks in Cass County. Russ Forest County Park also has an extensive trail system.

## BARRIER-FREE EVALUATION

A review of the Township's park facilities revealed that most of the recreation areas meet current ADA requirements. The play structure that was recently erected at Kraus Memorial Park is ADA compliant. The other parks have paved access and are mostly

open spaces. Additionally, school recreation areas also are in compliance with ADA standards. Any future development of Edwardsburg's recreation system will be in ADA compliance, using other communities' projects as models. Existing park spaces and equipment will be brought up to current ADA requirements as the budget permits.

## RECREATION INVENTORY ANALYSIS

Numerous tools can be used in order to determine the recreational needs of a community. Among these are comparisons to the recreation classification system and facility development standards. Conducting surveys and visioning sessions can also determine a community’s needs. Both of these methods are employed in the Ontwa Township and Edwardsburg Village Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

### COMPARISON WITH RECREATION STANDARDS

#### *Recreation Classification System*

##### **MINI-PARK**

Use	Specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population or specific group such as tots or senior citizens.
Service Area	Less than ¼ mile radius
Desirable Size	1 acre or less
Acres per 1,000 Population	0.25 to 0.5 acres per 1,000 population
Desirable Site Characteristics	Within neighborhoods and in close proximity to apartment complexes, townhouse development or housing for the elderly.

Mini-Parks in, or near, Ontwa Township

- Library Park

##### **NEIGHBORHOOD PARK/PLAYGROUND**

Use	Area for intense recreational activities such as field games, court games, crafts, playground apparatus area, skating, picnicking, wading pools, etc.
Service Area	¼ to ½-mile radius to serve a population up to 5,000 (a neighborhood).
Desirable Size	15+ acres
Acres per 1,000 Population	1 to 2 acres per 1,000 population
Desirable Site Characteristics	Suited for intense development. Easily accessible to neighborhood population geographically centered with safe walking and bike access. May be developed as a school park facility.

Neighborhood Park/Playgrounds in, or near, Ontwa Township

- Gunn Park

**COMMUNITY PARK**

Use	Area of diverse environmental quality. May include areas suited for intense recreational facilities, such as athletic complexes, large swimming pools. May be an area of natural quality for outdoor recreation, such as walking, viewing, sitting, picnicking. May be any combination of the above, depending upon site suitability and community need.
Service Area	Several neighborhoods. 1 to 2 mile radius.
Desirable Size	25+ acres
Acres per 1,000 Population	5 to 8 acres per 1,000 population
Desirable Site Characteristics	May include natural features such as water bodies and areas suited for intense development. Easily accessible to neighborhood served.

Community Parks in, or near, Ontwa Township

- Kraus Memorial Park

**REGIONAL/METROPOLITAN PARK**

Use	Area of natural or ornamental quality for outdoor recreation such as picnicking, boating, fishing, swimming, camping, and trail uses; may include play areas.
Service Area	Several communities. 1 hour driving time.
Desirable Size	200+ acres
Acres per 1,000 Population	5 to 10 acres
Desirable Site Characteristics	Contiguous to or encompassing natural resources.

Regional/Metropolitan Parks in, or near, Ontwa Township

- Russ Forest County Park
- Arthur Dodd Memorial Park
- Warren Dunes State Park



**REGIONAL PARK RESERVE**

Use	Area of natural quality for nature-oriented outdoor recreation such as viewing and studying nature, wildlife habitat, conservation, swimming, picnicking, hiking, fishing, boating, camping, and trail uses. May include active play areas. Generally, 80% of the land is reserved for conservation and natural resource management with less than 20% used for recreation development.
Service Area	Several communities. 1 hour driving time.
Desirable Size	1,000+ acres; sufficient area to encompass the resource to be preserved and managed.
Acres per 1,000 Population	Variable
Desirable Site Characteristics	Diverse or unique natural resources such as lakes, streams, marshes, flora, fauna, and topography.

Regional Park Reserves in, or near, Ontwa Township

- Sarrett Nature Center
- Dr. T.K. Lawless Park

**LINEAR PARK**

Use	Area developed for one or more varying modes of recreational travel such as hiking, biking, snowmobiling, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, canoeing and pleasure driving. May include active play areas.
Service Area	No applicable standard.
Desirable Size	Sufficient width to protect the resource and provide maximum use.
Acres per 1,000 Population	Variable
Desirable Site Characteristics	Built or natural corridors such as utility rights-of-way, bluff lines, vegetation patterns, and roads that link other components of the recreation system or community facilities such as school, libraries, commercial areas and other park areas.

Linear Parks in, or near, Ontwa Township

- Extensive snowmobile trail network
- Russ Forest Trail

**SPECIAL USE**

Use	Areas for specialized or single purpose recreational activities such as golf courses, nature centers, marinas, zoos, conservatories, arboreta, display gardens, arenas, outdoor theaters, gun ranges, or downhill ski areas, or areas that preserve, maintain, and interpret buildings, sites, and objects of archeological significance. Also plazas or squares in or near commercial centers, boulevards, parkways.
Service Area	No applicable standard.
Desirable Size	Variable depending on desired size.
Acres per 1,000 Population	Variable
Desirable Site Characteristics	Within communities.

Special Use Areas in, or near, Ontwa Township

- Edwardsburg Area Historical Collection
- Edwardsburg Public Library
- Four Flags Museum, Niles
- Pioneer Log Cabin Museum and Interpretive Center, Cassopolis
- Cass County Fair Grounds, Cassopolis
- Lowe Foundation Council on Aging

*Facility Development Standards*

Facility development standards are based on an area’s population. The population at the time of evaluation determines a community’s need. In this case, Ontwa Township has a population of 5,865; this figure can be rounded to 6,000 for ease of calculation. Once the need has been determined, an inventory of existing facilities is conducted. A community’s deficiency is determined by subtracting existing facilities from needed facilities.

Table 8. Facility Development Standards

Activity/Facility	Standard	Need	Existing	Deficiency
Badminton	1/5,000	1	0	1
Basketball (Youth)	1/5,000	1	1	0
Basketball (High School)	1/5,000	1	1	0
Handball	1/20,000	-	-	-
Ice Hockey	1/100,000	-	-	-
Tennis	1/2,000	3	3	0
Volleyball	1/5,000	1	1	0
Baseball (Official)	1/5,000	1	>1	0
Baseball (Little League)	1/5,000	1	>1	0
Field Hockey	1/20,000	-	-	-
Football	1/20,000	-	1	0
Soccer	1/10,000	-	>1	0
Golf-Driving Range	1/50,000	-	-	-
¼ Mile Running Track	1/20,000	-	1	0
Softball	1/5,000	1	>1	0
Multiple Recreation Court	1/10,000	-	1	0
Trails	1 system	1	0	1
Archery Range	1/50,000	-	-	-
Skeet and Trap Field	1/50,000	-	-	-
Golf	1/25,000	-	-	-
Swimming Pools	1/20,000	-	-	-

## ACTION PROGRAM, CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE AND BASIS FOR ACTION

### ACTION PROGRAM

The following is the five-year capital improvement plan for the Ontwa Township parks system. Each project or proposed action is listed along with a priority level, target year, and estimated cost. The rationale for each action or project is discussed on the pages following the schedule. With regard to funding sources, it is the intention of the Township Board to match local funds with state, federal, and/or private funds whenever possible.

### CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE (CIS)

To rank the importance of these projects, a three-level priority system has been utilized.

*Level A*        *Essential* improvements to the Township and Village park system; may cause undesirable consequences if not attended to.

*Level B*        *Very desirable* improvements to the park system.

*Level C*        Desirable improvements to the park system, but *supplemental* to larger projects; would not cause undesirable consequences if not completed in the timeframe of this plan.

Table 9. Capital Improvement Schedule

<i>PROPOSED ACTION</i>	<i>PRIORITY LEVEL</i>	<i>TARGET YEAR</i>	<i>PROJECTED COST</i>	<i>FUNDING SOURCE</i>
<p><u>Develop linear park/multi-use path</u></p> <p>1. Make improvements to the existing trail network at Kraus Memorial Park. This could include wood chips, benches, nature signs, a gazebo, and off-the-path picnic areas.</p>	A	2002-2003	\$10,000	General taxes, service club contributions, private donations
<p>2. Develop a trail linking the school, village, and Kraus Park. This path would hook into the existing sidewalk system in Edwardsburg</p>	B	2003-2004	\$100,000	General taxes, service club contributions, private donations, grant sources
<p>3. Develop a non-motorized path along US-12 the entire length of the Township.</p>	C	2004-2006	\$240,000	General taxes, service club contributions, private donations, grant sources

<u>Develop a lighted sports complex</u>				
1. Acquire property to satisfy the space requirements for Little League, Football, and Soccer.	A	2003	\$250,000	General taxes, service club contributions, youth sport program contributions, private donations, grant sources
2. Develop sports fields.	A	2004-2005	Unknown	
3. Build concession stand.	B	2004-2005	\$25,000	
4. Install lights.	C	2006	\$20,000	
<u>Continue Making Improvements to Kraus Memorial Park</u>				
1. Install restroom facilities.	A	2002	\$25,000	General taxes, service club contributions, youth sport program contributions, private donations, grant sources
2. Install ADA-compliant boardwalk and a nature viewing area (platform) along Weed Lake.	B	2004	\$50,000	
<u>Improve coordination of and communication about community recreation opportunities</u>				
1. Develop a Recreation Advisory Board.	A	2002	\$1,200	Existing budget
2. Develop a community calendar.	A	2002	\$1,000	Existing budget, recreation program contributions

Table 10. Program Cost by Year & Priority

Year	Estimated Project Cost by Priority			
	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>Total</i>
2002	\$32,200	-	-	<b>\$32,200</b>
2003	\$255,000	\$50,000	-	<b>\$305,000</b>
2004	-	\$112,500	\$80,000	<b>\$192,500</b>
2005	-	\$12,500	\$80,000	<b>\$92,500</b>
2006	-	-	\$100,000	<b>\$100,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$287,200</b>	<b>\$175,000</b>	<b>\$260,000</b>	<b>\$722,200</b>

**BASIS FOR ACTION**

*Linear Park/Multi-Use Path*

Make improvements to the existing trail network at Kraus Memorial Park: The basis for action for this project includes, but is not limited to:

- ◆ This project fulfills the desire of visioning session participants to develop and enhance and off-road motorized and non-motorized path system.

These two items tied for a second-place ranking at the visioning session, each scoring 57 points.

- ◆ Among the under 19-year-old age group, the activities most participated in included walking/hiking/running, and snowmobiling. Both of these activities will benefit from improvements made to the existing trail network.
- ◆ Adults over the age of 19 participate in bicycling as well as walking/hiking/running. Additionally, there is a large snowmobile club in the area that currently utilizes the trails at Kraus Memorial Park.

Develop a trail linking the school, village, and Kraus Park: For each of the reasons listed above, as well as because of the large number of rollerbladers/skateboarders in the under 19 age group, it only makes sense to link the school, village, and Kraus Park.

Develop a non-motorized path along US-12 the entire length of the Township: Recently, a group of people in southern Berrien and Cass counties dedicated themselves to the effort of gaining historical heritage route designation for US-12. This project has received a great deal of support at both the local and state levels. In keeping with the desires of the residents of Ontwa Township to develop a non-motorized trail system, a nonmotorized trail adjacent to US-12 is a natural project to undertake. Additionally, because of the large number of residents who enjoy biking, walking, hiking, and running, this project is more than worthy of being completed.

### *Lighted Sports Complex*

Currently, children participating in soccer, Little League, and football utilize facilities on Edwardsburg Public School property. Because the school district continues to grow due to the number of people moving into the Edwardsburg area, it is a very real possibility that the schools will need to utilize the property to house anticipated expansion. It has been noted at community visioning sessions, steering committee meetings, and with informal conversations with the community's residents, that developing a Township-owned facility is in the best interests of the programs and participants. The development of a lighted sports complex received the highest score at the visioning session by a huge majority. At 123 points it received more than twice as many points as the action items tied at second place. Therefore, the purchase of property on which to build the sports complex is a top priority. Once the land has been purchased, the sports fields will need to be developed. The costs associated with this action item are unknown at this time. It will be dependent upon what property is acquired and how much earthwork will be required. A concession stand will need to be built in order to meet the needs of the spectators as well as to continue with the fundraising required by each of the programs. Finally, it is hoped that the fields can be lighted in order to increase the amount of time that the complex can be utilized.

### *Kraus Memorial Park*

Kraus Memorial Park is the crown jewel of recreation in Ontwa Township at the current time. This generous donation is seen to be the point from which recreation in the community can emanate.

Install restroom facilities: Recently, the Lions' Club constructed a beautiful picnic shelter complete with a number of picnic tables. Additionally, a wonderful play structure has been built. Moreover, the snowmobile club that is active in the Edwardsburg area utilizes the trails available at Kraus Memorial Park throughout the winter. It is an expected next step to install restroom facilities at this location.

Install ADA-compliant boardwalk and a nature viewing area: In addition to the trails, picnic shelter, and play structure at Kraus Memorial Park, Weed Lake is a beautiful natural area accessible from Kraus Memorial Park. In order to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by such a wonderful natural resource, it is the intent of the citizens of Ontwa Township to build a boardwalk and a nature viewing area. It is hoped that Kraus Memorial Park can function as not only an active recreation site, but also as a passive recreation location in the community.

### *Coordination and Communication*

Coordination among and communication between the Township, Village, schools, and the citizens of the Edwardsburg area is paramount to the success of parks and recreation. At the visioning session, steering committee meetings and during informal conversations with the citizens of the area, a common concern was the lack of coordination and communication. In an effort to remedy this situation, the following projects have been chosen to be included in the CIS.

Develop a Recreation Advisory Board: The purpose of the advisory board is to introduce a more formal structure to parks, recreation, and open space development within Ontwa Township/Edwardsburg Village. This board will be able to more efficiently manage recreation opportunities. The Advisory Board will not have power to take action, however, it will make formal recommendations to the Township Board and Village Council. Additionally, the Recreation Advisory Board will act as a liaison between the community and the schools on matters of recreation (it is recommended that at least one seat on this board be reserved for a member of the school community). This action is based on the following findings of the recreation steering committee:

- ◆ Maximum cooperation between the community and schools was suggested at the visioning session and received the fourth highest ranking in the voting (48 points).
- ◆ The formation of an advisory board was also suggested at the visioning session and received the seventh highest ranking in the voting (33 points).

- ◆ Meetings with the steering committee also yielded this as an important step to take in order to more efficiently devote resources to the parks, recreation and open space effort.
- ◆ The fact that a school representative will sit on this board will address several of the issues relating to recreation in the area, including the fact that the youth sports programs currently utilize space made available by the school.

Develop a Community Calendar: Throughout the entire planning process, comments such as “I didn’t realize...” or “I had no idea...” were made regarding recreation opportunities within the Township. A course of action to remedy this situation is the development of a community calendar. This action is based on the following findings:

- ◆ Maximum cooperation between the community and schools ranked rather high at the visioning session (48 points).
- ◆ In answering the question, “Do you feel that the area recreational facilities meet your needs,” a large majority of respondents indicated either “no” or “no opinion/don’t know.” It is hoped that a community calendar or newsletter will help develop an effective communications network.



*Appendix I*  
*Meeting Materials*

**Ontwa Township  
Recreation Planning Committee**

**Wednesday, October 10, 2001  
7:00 PM**

**Ontwa Township Hall**

7:00 PM	Call to Order
7:00-7:15	Getting Organized <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Review of the Plan Components</li><li>2. Schedule</li><li>3. Work Activities</li><li>4. Role of the Committee</li><li>5. Role of the Facilitator</li></ol>
7:15-7:35	Determination of Community Survey Questions
7:35-7:40	Discussion Regarding Public Sessions
7:40-7:45	Preliminary Recreation Inventory
7:45-8:00	Questions from Committee Members
8:00 PM	Adjournment

**Ontwa Township  
Recreation Planning Committee**

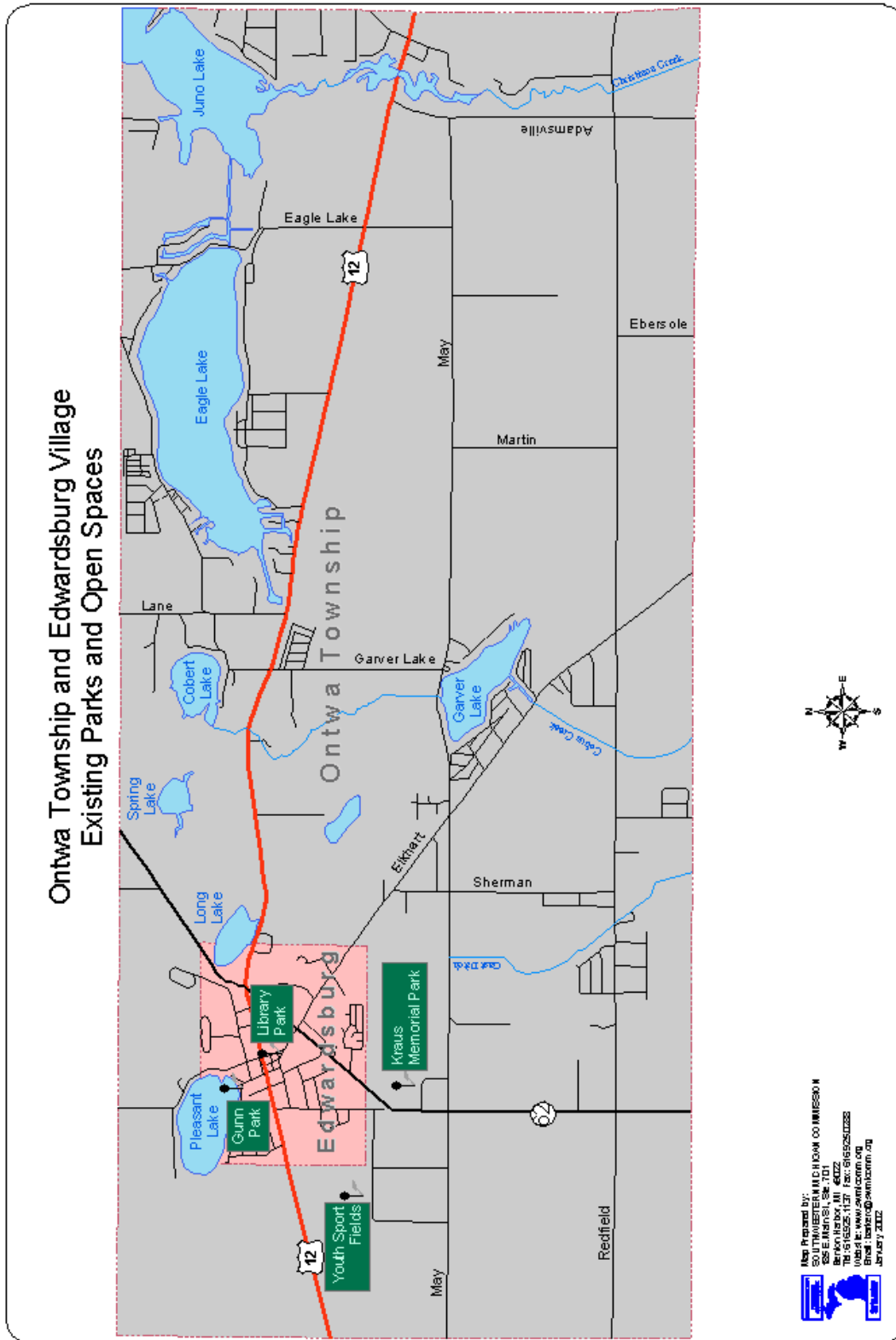
**Wednesday, December 12, 2001  
7:00 PM**

**Ontwa Township Hall**

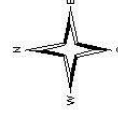
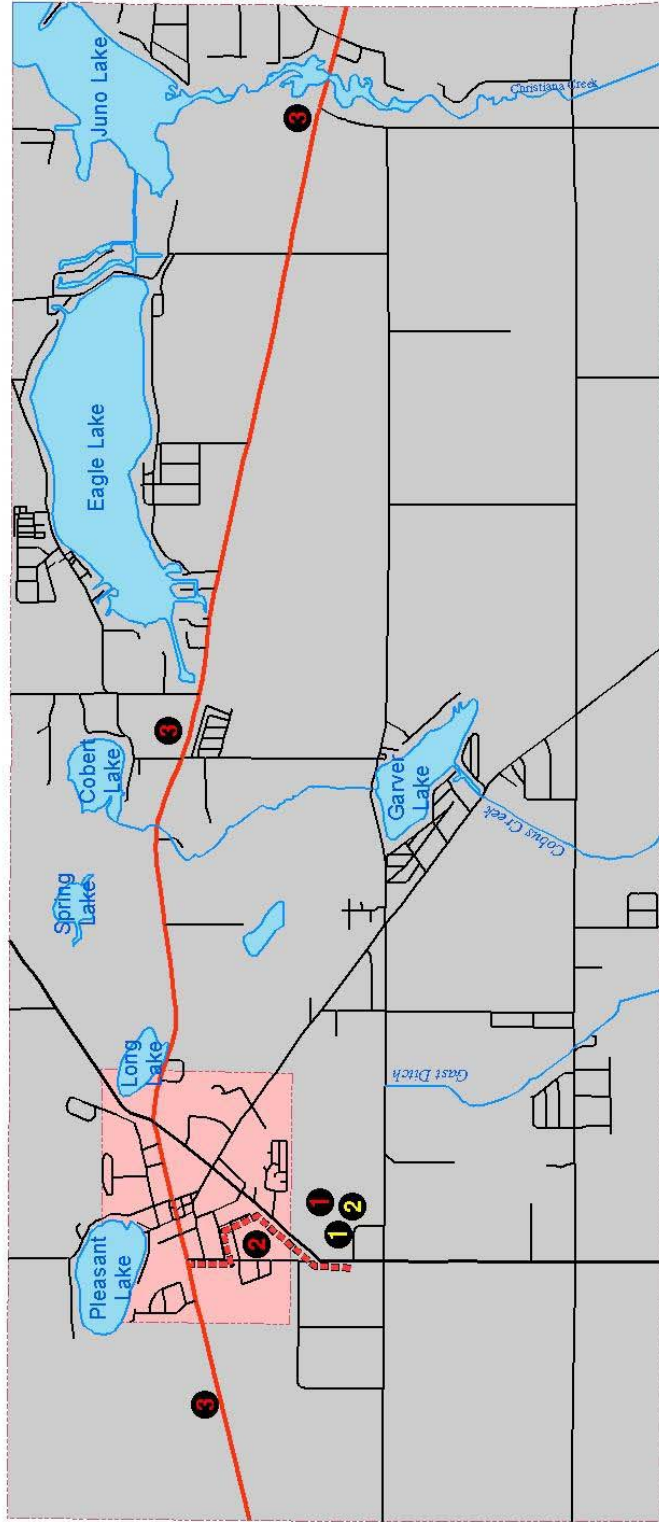
7:00 PM	Call to Order
7:00-7:20	Review of Survey Results
7:20-7:35	Finalize Plans for January 9, 2002 Visioning Session
7:35-7:50	Review of Recreation Inventory and First Sections of Plan
7:50-8:00	Questions from Committee Members
8:00 PM	Adjournment

## *Appendix II*

### *Maps*



**2002-2007  
Project Locations  
Ontwa Township, Michigan**



**Develop linear park/multi-use path**

- 1** Make improvements to existing trail network at Kraus Memorial Park
- 2** Develop trail linking the school, village, and Kraus Park
- 3** Develop nonmotorized path along US-12 the entire length of the Township

**Continue Making Improvements to Kraus Memorial Park**

- 1** Install restroom facilities
- 2** Install ADA-compliant boardwalk and nature viewing platform along Weed Lake

Map Prepared by:  
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