



VILLAGE OF
LAWTON

MASTER

Adopted XX XX, 2023



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Statement of Thanks:

This plan was developed through hard work and coordination with Village Staff, Planning Commission, Village Council, the DDA, and (most importantly!) its residents. We are deeply grateful for their thoughtful direction, constant engagement, and commitment to the Village of Lawton's future.



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RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION

Copy of resolution to be included on this page once the plan is adopted.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Village of Lawton 2023 Master Plan was created to guide the village toward a future that our residents, property and building owners, developers, and other stakeholders want to see emerge. Input from residents and local stakeholders have identified a desire for growth and change while also maintaining the village's existing small-town character and community-minded culture. Our goals for the future of Lawton are reflected in this plan.

Our village is a tight-knit, family-centered community. Of the utmost importance during the planning process was the need to achieve the right balance between capitalizing on Lawton's roots and existing character, while also advancing the right type of change and growth for the built environment. This plan presents a tailored strategy to continue to make Lawton a great place to live, work, and play.

This plan would not have been possible without many contributing voices. Together, we've crafted a vision to enhance the quality of life for all and embrace an action-oriented path forward. Over the course of two public engagement events, a community survey, and six steering committee meetings, the input and feedback received were analyzed to craft five guiding themes that serve as the backbone of this document. These themes encompass the overarching values held by the community, with the aim to enhance Lawton as it moves into the future. These guiding themes are Growth, Enhance, Invest, Sustain, and Unique.

Our philosophy as we developed Lawton's 2023 Master Plan is reflected in the following quote by Mahatma Gandhi: "The future depends on what you do today." In this document you will find a thoughtful, forward-thinking plan. We begin with an introduction to the village, detail our planning process, connect feedback received with formulating a vision, and outline the goals and objectives to make that vision a reality.

VISION:

Building on a strong sense of community and our unique character, Lawton will proactively adapt to change, enhance its assets, and facilitate strategic, positive growth to benefit all people in our village.



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1. INTRODUCTION

What is a Master Plan?

The Master Plan is a policy guide. It is intended to create a framework for land use, capital improvements, and capital investment decisions over a long-range period (10 to 20 years).

The Master Plan includes various core elements, such as the Vision, Goals, and Guiding Principles (or Themes) representative of the community. These give the plan direction and provide recommendations for land use, redevelopment, maintaining community character, driving economic and community development, and action items designed to guide future decisions.

In contrast, the Zoning Ordinance is a legal document containing specific, current regulations within a jurisdiction. It contains clear, enforceable local rules detailing how land within different zones can be utilized. The rules of the Zoning Ordinance serve as the primary tool to achieve the vision of the Master Plan over time.

MASTER PLAN	ZONING ORDINANCE
Provides general policies and is a guide.	Provides specific regulations; the law.
Describes what should happen in the future – recommended land use for the next 20 years, not necessarily the recommended use for today.	Defines how land can be used today.
Includes recommendations that involve other agencies and groups.	Deals only with development-related issues under Village control.
Flexible to respond to changing conditions.	Fairly rigid and requires formal amendment to change.

THE MASTER PLAN IS USED TO:

- Evaluate development proposals against the goals of the community
- Review zoning changes for consistency with the Future Land Use Map
- Determine how land is to be developed or redeveloped in the future
- Identify physical improvements to achieve the vision and goals (e.g., streets, sidewalks, parks, utilities, public facilities)
- Consider design standards for development and redevelopment throughout the Village



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2. VILLAGE OVERVIEW

History + Existing Conditions

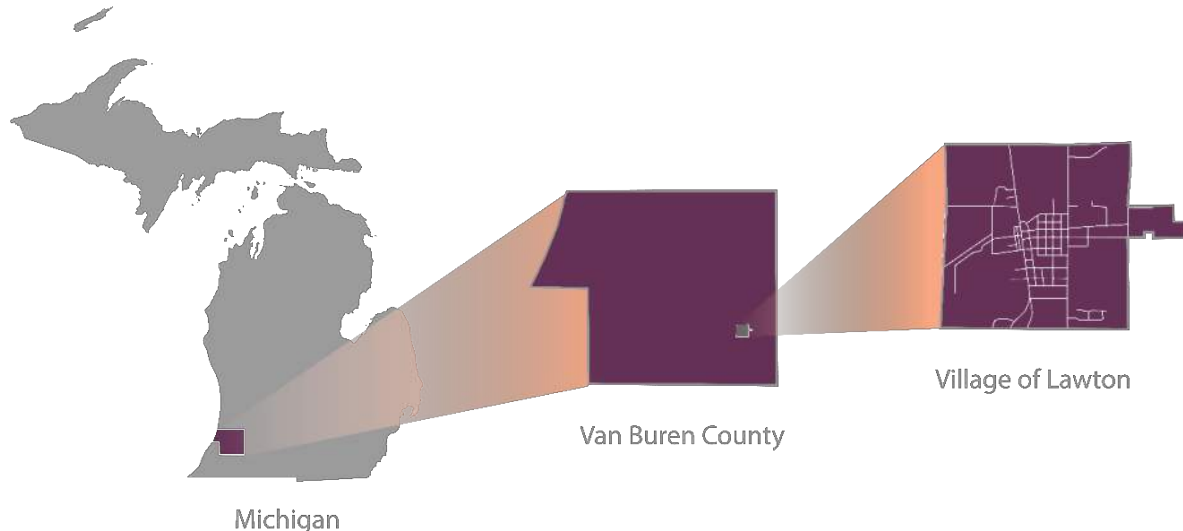
The Village of Lawton was established by Nathan Lawton in 1853. A train station was constructed in Lawton in 1848, which made the founding of the Central Iron Company possible in 1867. Lawton is the birthplace of the Michigan grape and wine industry, with the first grapes being planted shortly after the Civil War when A. B. Jones planted the area's first grape vines. In 1903, the Lawton Vineyard Company constructed the first winery at 646 North Nursery. Several years later, the Houppert family purchased the site and expanded into the Houppert Winery Complex that was later owned by Michigan Wineries, Inc. and Warner Vineyards. The Lawton Heritage Community Center currently occupies the complex and is designated as a Michigan State Historic Site and on the National Register of Historic Places.

The area continues today as a center for fruit harvesting and is currently home to Welch's Foods and Honee Bear Canning. The Lawton Heritage Museum is located within the village, in the Old Winery Heritage Event Center, which is the state's oldest standing winery building.

Just over 2.3 square miles, the Village of Lawton is characterized by its small-town charm and a warm, friendly community atmosphere. Known throughout Michigan for its local eateries and small-town charm, the village is frequented by guests coming to enjoy a variety of outdoor activities and beautiful natural settings. Lawton's downtown forms the center of activity and connection within the community.

Lawton is well-networked and easily accessible. Located on state highway M-40, which runs north and south, the village is only three miles south of I-94 (a major federal highway) and is within thirty minutes of the nearby hub of Kalamazoo. Chicago and Grand Rapids can be accessed from Lawton within two hours. The village's central location provides a great opportunity to reside and/or work in a family-centered atmosphere while also being close to larger attractions and amenities.

LOCATION MAP



COMMUNITY PRIDE

Residents have a warranted sense of pride in their beautiful natural surroundings, vibrant locally owned eateries, school system and associated athletic programs, community-minded activism, and numerous well-attended events. In many ways, the village of Lawton is the best-kept secret in Southwest Michigan.



VILLAGE COMMUNITY EVENTS

- Memorial Day Parade / Veteran's Memorial Service at Cemetery / Family BBQ
- Summerfest Celebration including 5K and Fireworks
- Best of Michigan Wine Tasting Event - Lion's Club
- Veteran's Day Salute - VFW
- Fall Escapade Golf Cart Parade
- Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting

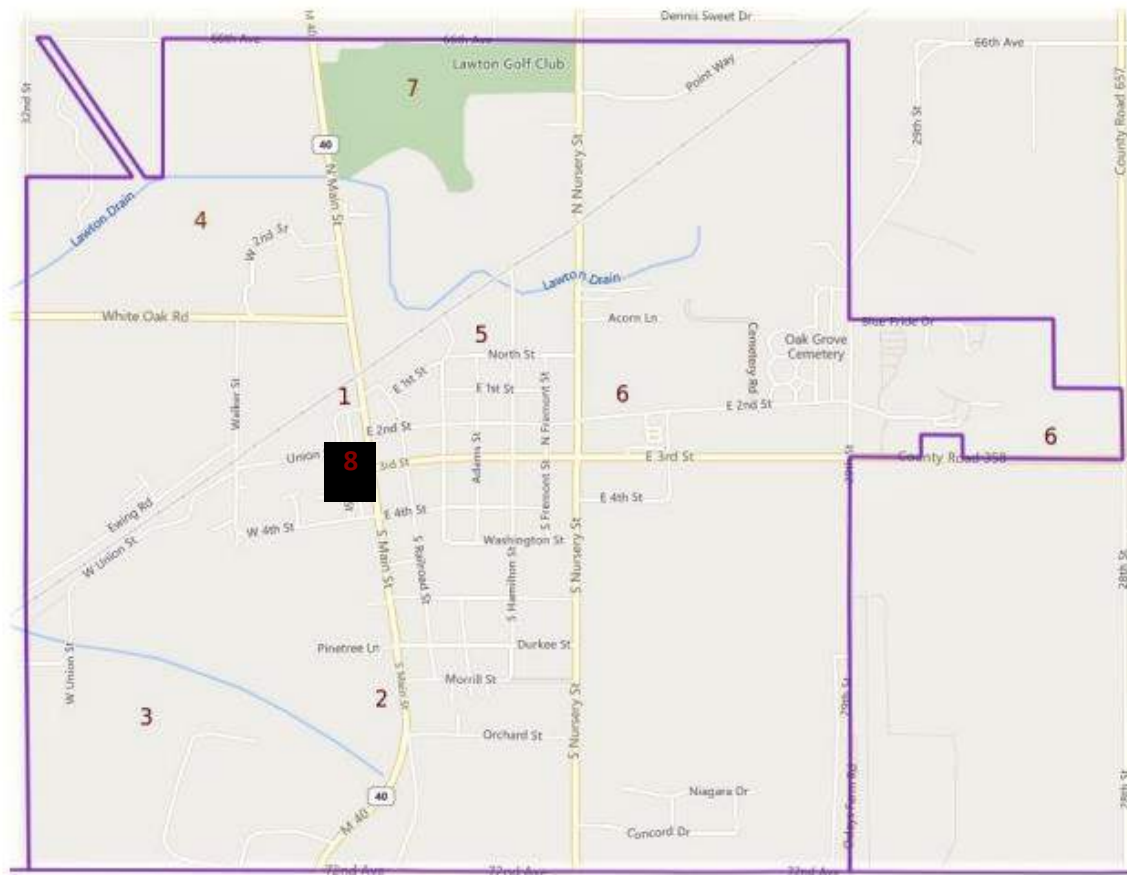


PARKS AND RECREATION

The Village of Lawton currently has five public parks, a privately owned golf course, and several public school facilities. With the successful construction of the splash pad in Chancy Lewis Park, the use of Village park facilities has increased. Energized by the community's enthusiasm, the Village Council adopted Lawton's first Parks and Recreation Master Plan in 2021.

In addition to local parks, there are a number of nearby hiking/biking and snowmobile trails, nature preserves, and State Parks. Former rail corridors have been repurposed for non-motorized and snowmobile activities. The Village of Lawton's restaurants serve as a draw for recreational users to visit Lawton.

VILLAGE OF LAWTON PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES MAP



- 5. Cannon Park
- 6. Chancy Lewis Park
- 7. Village Conservation Area
- 8. Stephayn Sports Complex

- 5. Rocket Football Fields
- 6. Lawton Community Schools
- 7. Lawton Golf Club
- 8. Reid's Square (future)

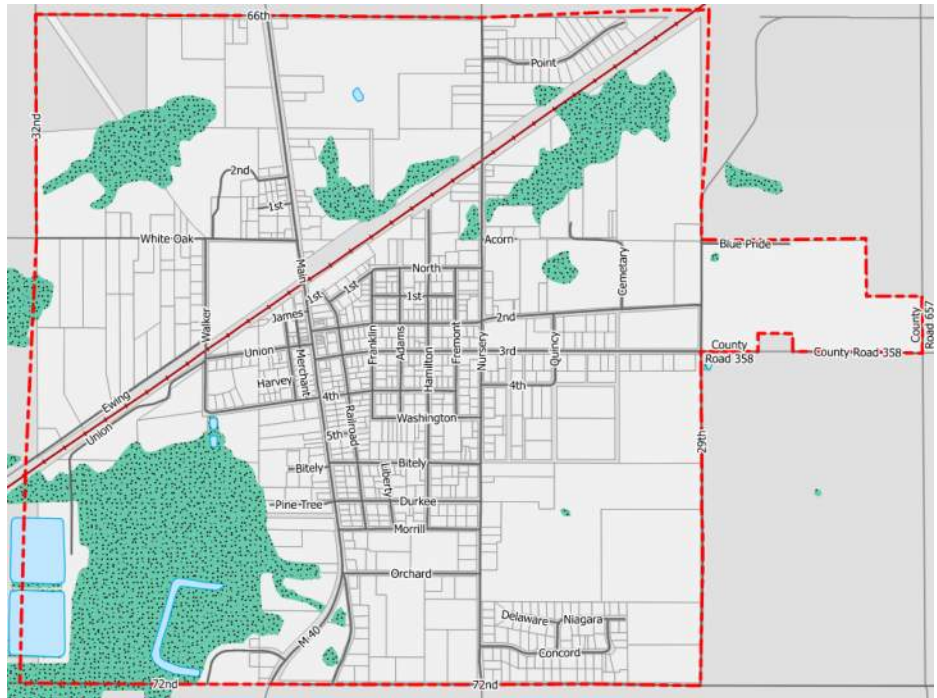


NATURAL FEATURES

Lawton is composed of rolling fields and an assortment of wetlands. Its topographic features, rich soils, and climate allow for the growing of grapes, among other fruits, which has defined the village's history.

The village is a short trip away from many inland lakes and prime agricultural lands. Village leaders seek to establish an extensive trail network to encourage multi-modal travel options within the area. The 2021-2025 Village of Lawton 5-Year Parks & Recreation Master Plan further outlines the many opportunities for the enjoyment of Lawton's natural features.

Lawton is currently conducting a wetland analysis to determine which of their publicly owned land is buildable. This assessment will identify if this land can be preserved and offer more details on the environmental factors influencing the land.



VILLAGE WETLAND AREAS
Currently being evaluated



INFRASTRUCTURE

Lawton's utility systems, both water and sewer, are oversized for current needs. The Village has an excellent water source consisting of four (4) groundwater wells. The water is stored in a 500,000-gallon elevated storage tank and distributed through approximately 11 miles of water main. Our water is pumped fresh from the wells and no treatment is utilized at this time. Wells #4, #8, #9, and #10 are all located south of town in Chancy Lewis Park and the wells vary in depth from 110 ft. to 155 ft. The wells are situated in a sandy, rocky till resultant from the retreat of the glaciers, known as the Kalamazoo Moraine. In 2021 these wells pumped 168,518,000 gallons of water for Lawton's residents, businesses, and industries.

It is estimated that the Village has substantial excess capacity of 3,500 +/- REU's (Residential Equivalent Units) where 1 REU is equivalent to 250 gallons per day (GPD) and assumes a person uses 100 gallons with an average household of 2.5 persons (7,500 gallons per month). One new home would therefore equal one (1) REU. Our water system's large excess capacity gives the Village flexibility to pursue additional industrial partners that have high water consumption needs, as well as the potential to add more housing units within the Village.

Lawton's wastewater treatment plan is designed for 250,000 gallons per day, however; the system's maximum use for the year 2021 ranged from 70,000 to 140,000 gallons per day. Similarly, this excess capacity for water treatment gives the Village the flexibility to pursue additional industrial partners as well as support additional housing development. Using the standard 250 REU (Residential Equivalent Unit) per household. Lawton's sanitary sewer system could support an additional 400 households.

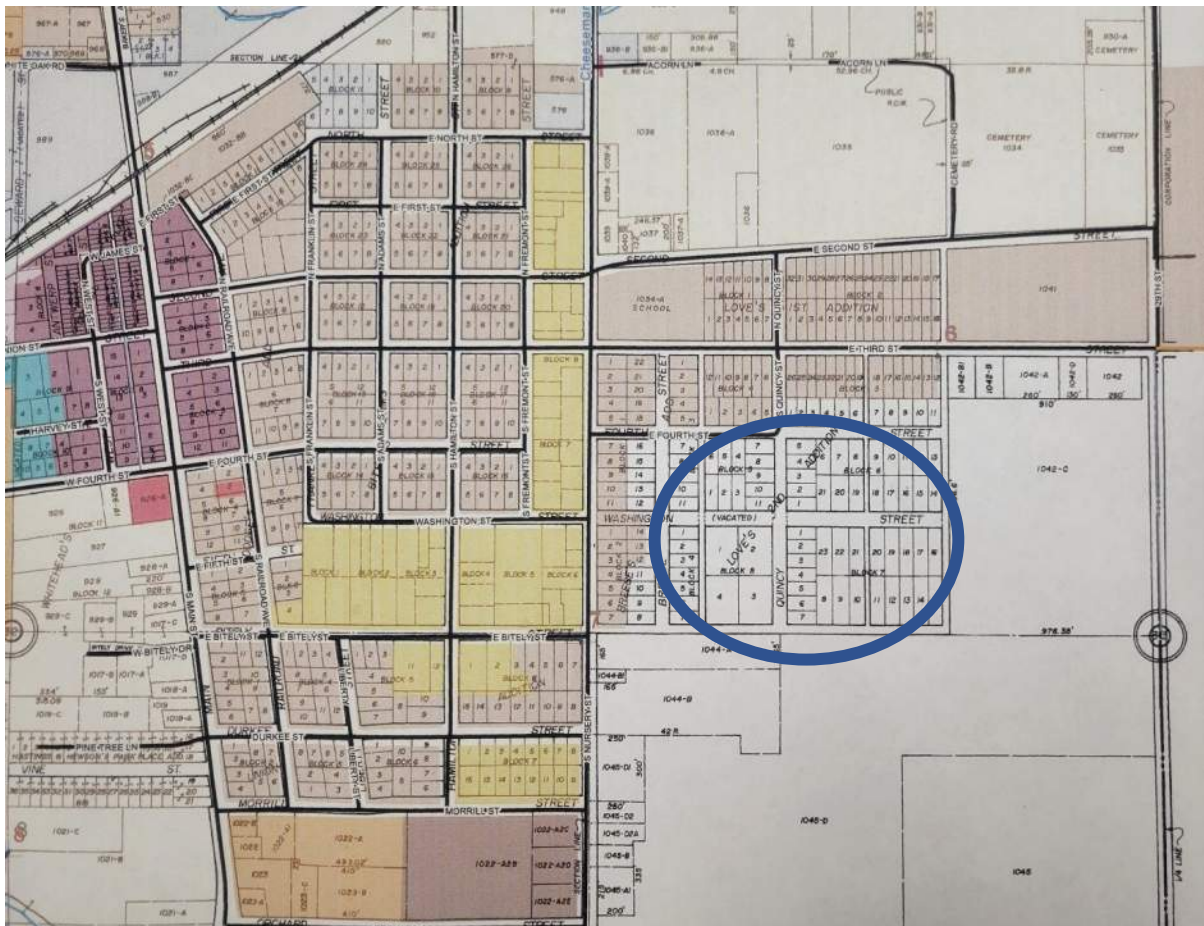


STREET NETWORK

The majority of Lawton's street network is laid out in a traditional grid pattern. This design promotes walkability because buildings and homes are placed on short, interconnected blocks, allowing for multiple routes to reach the same destination. This is different than the use of cul-de-sacs, which are not connected to one another and routes all traffic onto a major road. Pedestrians must then walk along major roads because residential streets become dead ends.

Continued development of the village's traditional street grid system is important to ensure that a variety of different routes can be used by residents to access their homes, businesses, schools, and other amenities. Portions of the village have "paper streets" – streets that appear that have been platted, but never built – many of which are located to the East of Nursery Street (see below image). As development occurs, there is the opportunity to expand the grid network, turning these paper streets into actual roads.

Some right-of-way areas exist, but adjoining neighbors have assumed the right-of-way to be a portion of their yard. The Village of Lawton does not derive any additional tax revenue from these larger lots.

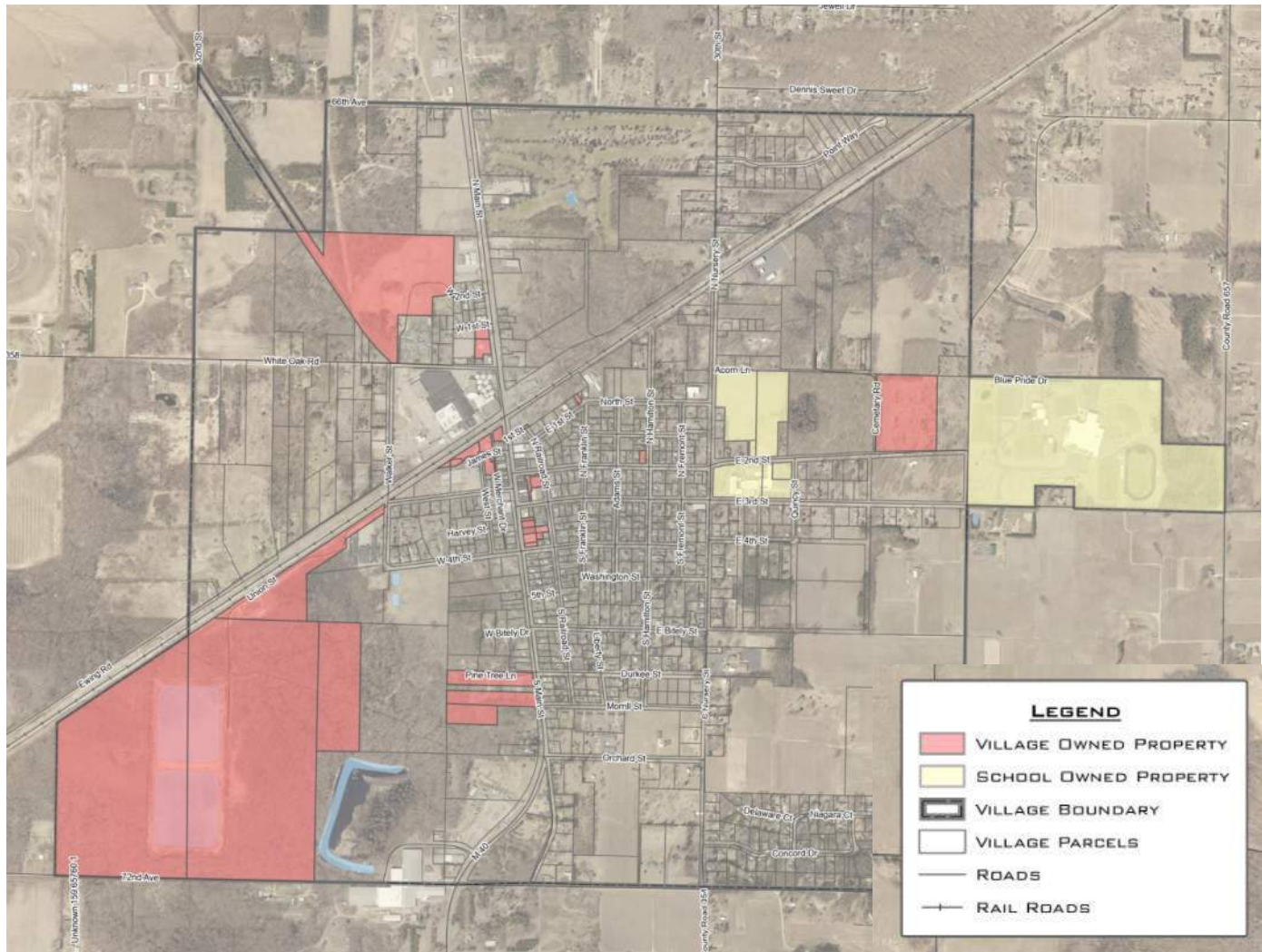


Lawton's streets are laid out in a grid pattern, with some that have been platted but not constructed.



DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Below is a map of parcels owned by the Village of Lawton. The Village has approximately 30 parcels of land under its ownership totaling approximately 358.24 acres. The Village is open to plans for development that align with the Master Plan and the community's vision for the future. Additionally, several privately-owned parcels are underutilized or vacant and offer additional opportunities for investment. The following page has an enlarged map of the Downtown area for clarity.

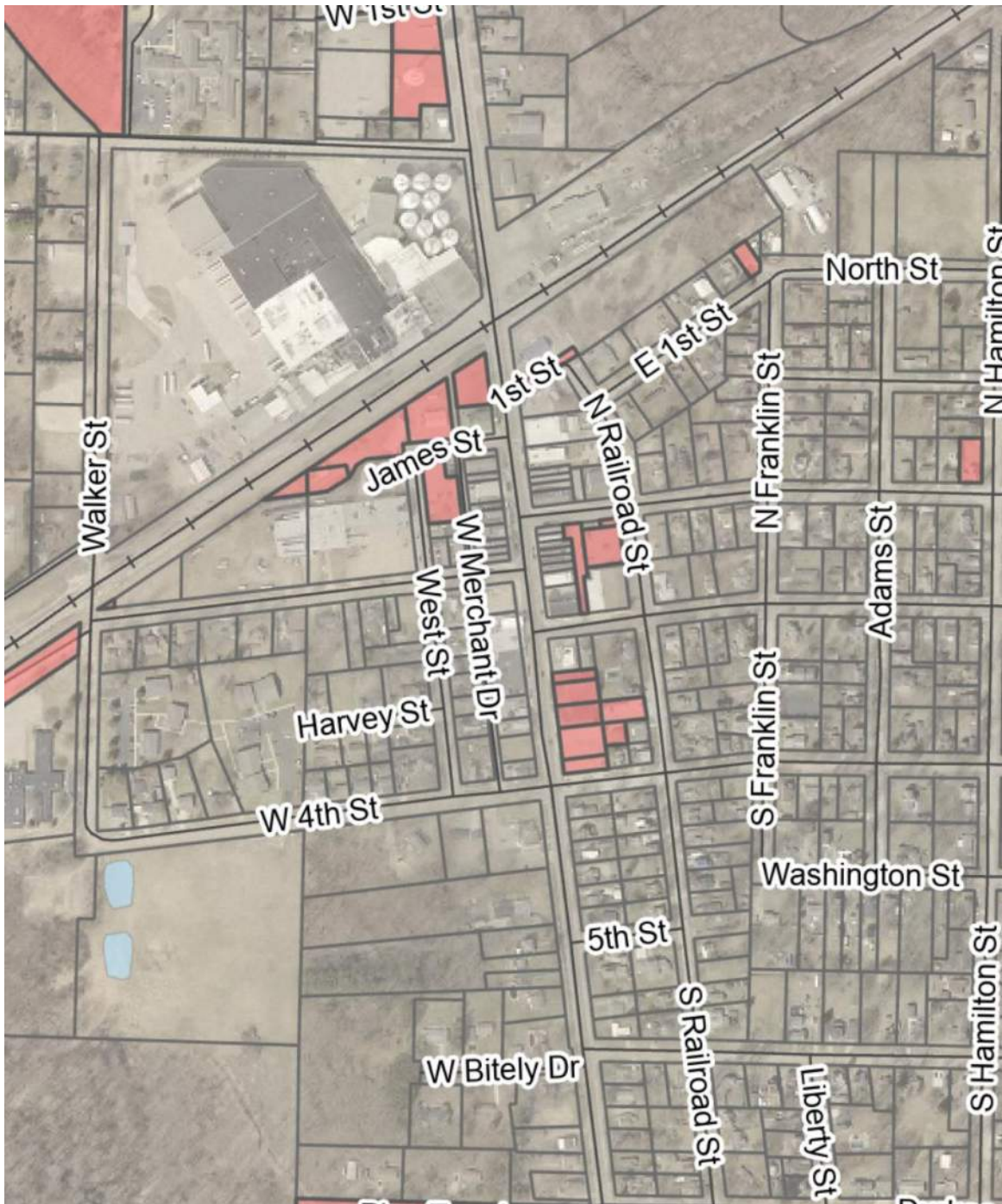


Existing Average Parcel Size:

B-1 parcel: 21,901 square feet

B-2 parcel: 16,359 square feet

Central Business District: 5,665 square feet



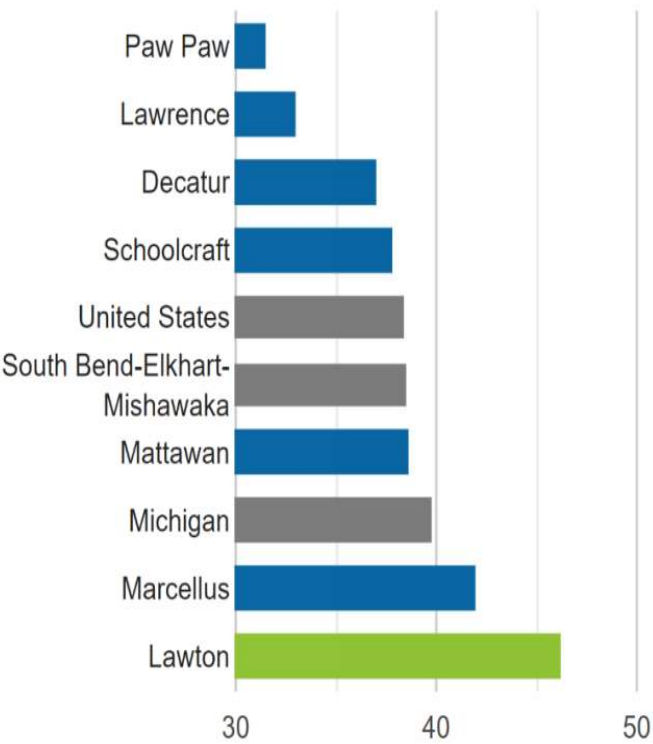
Enlarged excerpt of Village + School-owned Properties



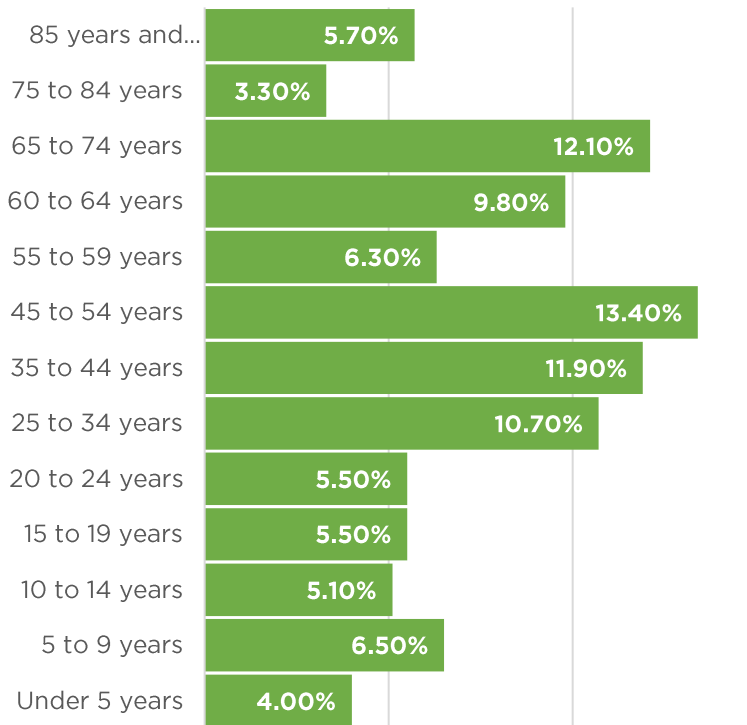
Demographics and Quality of Life

According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2022 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, the total population of the Village of Lawton is 1,805. Lawton has seen a decrease in population by 95 people (5%) since 2010. Nearby Schoolcraft and Paw Paw also lost population during this time, with Schoolcraft experiencing a 14.8% loss and Paw Paw a 4.1% loss in population. Conversely, Mattawan saw a substantial increase of 24.2% in new residents.

The median age of the Village of Lawton’s residents differs substantially from neighboring communities. In 2021, the median age in the village was 46.2 years, a 7.3-year increase from 2010. Paw Paw’s median age is 31.5 years, Schoolcraft’s is 37.8 years, and Mattawan’s is 38.6 years. There is an interesting difference between the median ages of men and women in Lawton; 39.1 years for men versus 51.3 years for women, even though the population is nearly evenly split.



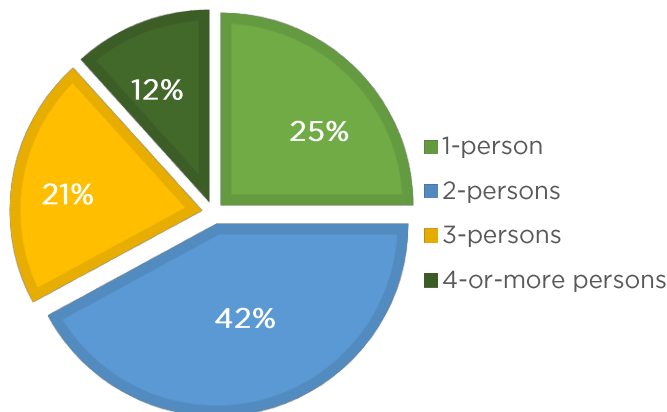
AGE DISTRIBUTION



The age distribution chart to the left shows the significant number of people who are aging in the community. One in every five (5) people is over the age of 65 in Lawton.

Lawton has the smallest average family size in the region, with 2.8 people per household. This is below the average size in Paw Paw as well as the State of Michigan at 3.2. This coincides with the average household size. In Lawton, this is 2.3 people per household; a number that is slightly less than neighboring communities with household sizes of 2.5 in Paw Paw all the way up to 2.8 persons per household in Lawrence. Local, state, and national trends have seen a decline in the number of people per household over the last four (4) decades. Correspondingly, there has been a rise in the number of one- and two-person households.

PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD



A quarter of Lawton's households are comprised of one-person, while 42 percent of its households are two people; equating to two-thirds of all households in the village. The remaining one-third of households have three or more people in them.

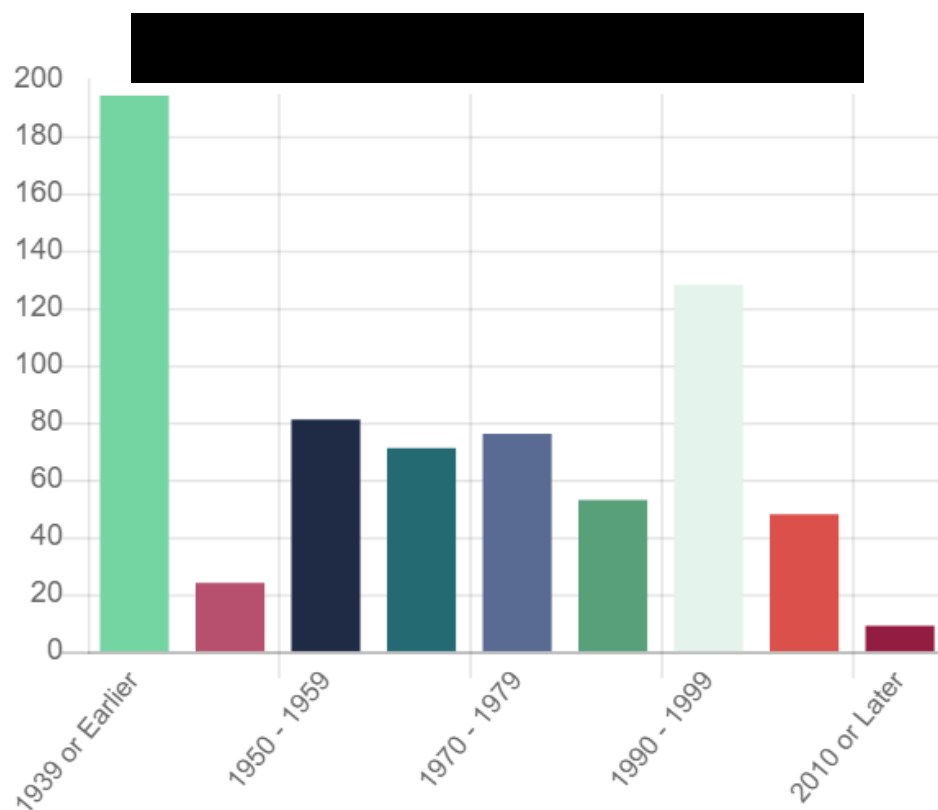
Seventy percent (70%) of Lawton's households contain no children under the age of 18. Given the aging population, it is unsurprising that nearly half (48.1%) of all of Lawton's occupied housing units have people over the age of 55 living in them. This raises questions and concerns about aging in place. Many people do not desire to move out of their neighborhood or community as they age. However, one out of every three people over the age of 65 will suffer some sort of disability as they age. To understand if Lawton's housing stock can accommodate an aging population, it is important to look at the age of structures, as most older homes have stairs and were not designed for persons with mobility challenges. Homes may also be too

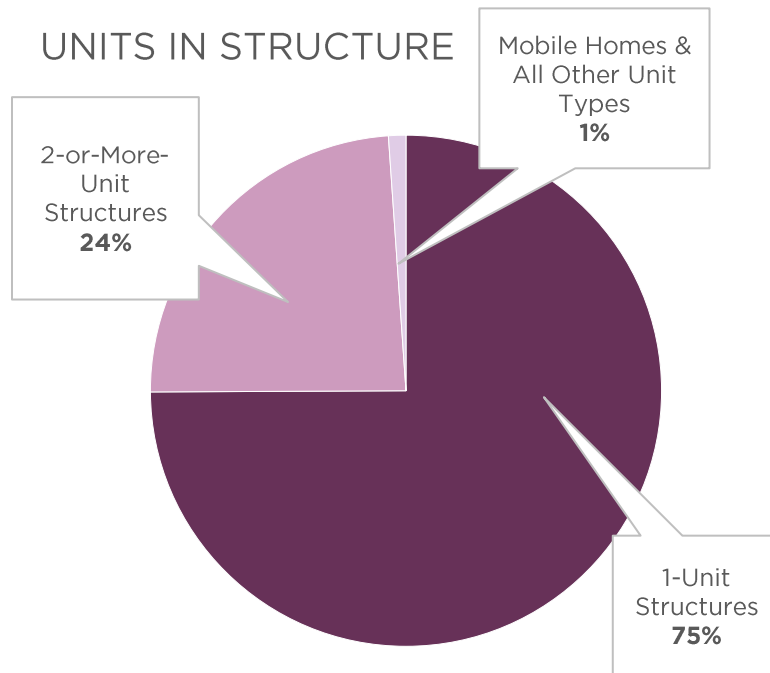


large and become difficult to maintain for older individuals. This can result in an increasing need for code compliance and home repair assistance.

HOUSING

The Village of Lawton's housing units were primarily built pre-1939, with a second wave of residential construction happening in the 1990s. Prior to the Great Recession, about 75 new housing units were constructed each decade. Since 2009, however, Census data shows that only 8 new housing units have been built in Lawton. This finding aligns with statewide and national trends. Housing production has not kept up with demand.

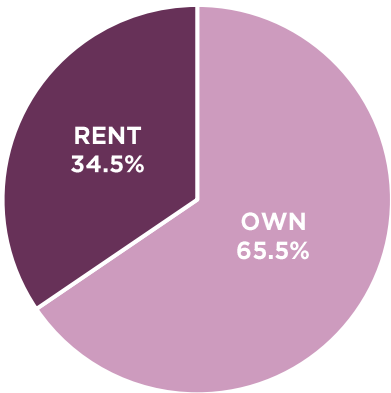




There are 764 housing units in Lawton, according to the 2021 American Community Survey. An estimated 711 of these are occupied (~93%), with values of \$50,000 - \$199,999. Three-fourths of Lawton's housing stock is comprised of detached single-unit structures. Just under 11 percent of the housing stock is a one-bedroom or efficiency. Seventy percent (70%) of homes have 2 or 3 bedrooms, and 18 percent have 4 or more bedrooms. Given Lawton's aging population, there is an opportunity for additional dwelling units to be incorporated into Lawton's neighborhoods in the form of "gentle density." This term refers to accessory dwelling units (granny flats), as well as various housing types of smaller sizes, such as cottage courts (small bungalow houses around a common greenspace) or efficiency units.



Most of the units in Lawton are owner-occupied at 65.5 percent, with 34.5 percent occupied by renters. Per Census data, the average home in Lawton is valued at \$111,800, with an average median resident income of \$48,008. Roughly 26 percent of owner-occupied homes are owned without a mortgage, and just over 40 percent of homeowners spend less than 20 percent of their monthly income on home-ownership costs (ranging from \$500-\$990). Typical monthly rent costs are comparable to a mortgage payment, constituting roughly 30 percent of gross renter income. This makes Lawton an affordable place to live.



RENTAL VS. OWNER-
OCCUPIED UNITS



Planning Process

Community planning is an art, rather than a science. Every community, regardless of size, is different with respect to character, philosophies, and resources. Therefore, it is essential that any planning process respects the unique conditions in the community, the character of the land, and the interests, desires, and values of its people.

Throughout the Lawton planning process, residents, business owners, school district representatives, Village staff, property owners, service providers, and elected and appointed officials were engaged to identify issues, share ideas, and to craft a common vision. Interviews, small group discussions, open houses, and surveys were employed to gather input from all sectors of the community.

In December of 2021, a Holiday Open House was held to kick-off the planning process. Initiating a year-long round of community engagement, the December event was organized in conjunction with the Village's holiday parade and tree lighting. Community members identified both the "naughty" (dislikes) and "nice" (likes) aspects of Lawton. An online community survey was also launched at this time.

Utilizing this information, the consultant planning team presented initial Master Plan Themes derived from the feedback collected from the community. These findings were paired with a demographic overview and lively discussions around what's best for the future of Lawton.

After the themes were calibrated, **we** set to work on establishing goals related to the themes. Master Plan goals are written statements of intent, action-oriented statements with a purpose of implementation. These themes and goals were presented again to the community at an engagement event in mid-April. Themed to coincide with the Easter holiday, the Open House featured four activities, along with an egg hunt



HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE
Community Engagement Event
December 2021

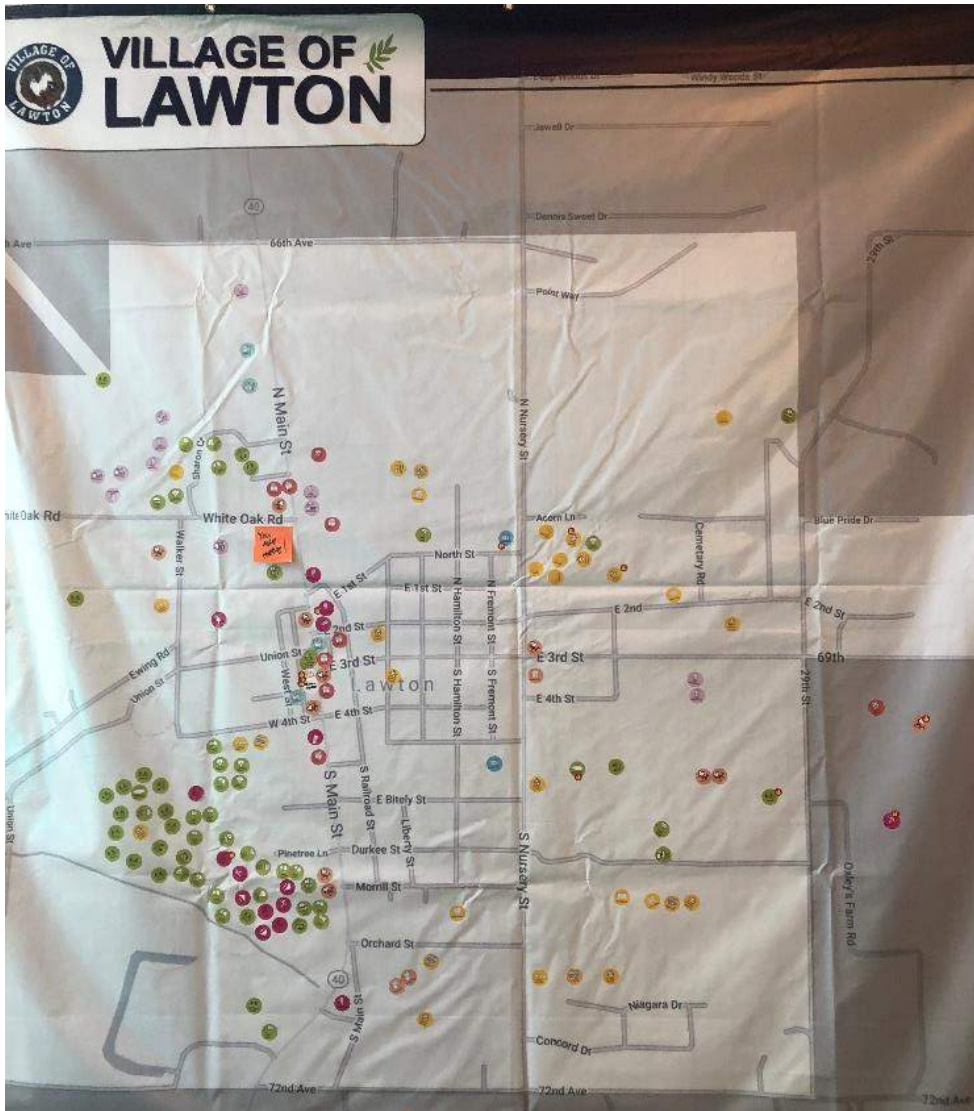


SPRING FLING EVENT
Community Engagement Event
April 2022



for kids. The exercises prompted attendees to review the feedback received thus far, evaluating the proposed guiding themes and validating the proposed goals.

The April 2022 Open House also featured an interactive mapping exercise, shown in the image below. In this activity, attendees were prompted to place specific uses and amenities in locations where they would like to see them in the village. Uses such as retail, mixed-use, various types of housing, greenspace, parks, and placemaking elements were shown on custom stickers for participants to place at their desired location. A set of stickers with kid-friendly uses were available as well. This mapping exercise helped to inform the creation of the Future Land Use Map, a key element of any Master Plan that dictates how and where a community wants to grow.



Throughout the process, the community identified the village of Lawton as a highly desirable community both currently and in the future. In effect, the guiding themes defined the resident's vision for a high-quality, people-focused community. The guiding themes also provided criteria for evaluating key characteristics of future developments. While future development is a key interest of the community, the desire to remain true to Lawton's family-focused, small-town character was also demonstrated in the feedback gathered.

It is understood that improving the quality of development increases property values and therefore increases tax revenues as a result. Encouraging a variety of housing choices to meet the needs of the changing population of Lawton can also increase property values. For

example, by allowing two to four units on a piece of property normally allowing only one, the cost of land is reduced and the value of total improvements increases. Allowing this type of "gentle density" advances the principles voiced by residents for a high-quality, sustainable community, while maintaining its small-town character.



Community Input

The following is a synthesis of the input received for the Village of Lawton's Master Plan. The outreach identified a range of issues, opportunities and visions for the village, which were captured as part of our planning process. Several key themes developed, and helped shape the plan, informing the projects, policies, and recommendations. The content within this section is intended to characterize and organize the input received from the participants in this work.

ALTERNATIVE MOBILITY OPTIONS: While the village is a relatively small geographic area, concern was expressed throughout the process regarding a lack of connectivity. A desire for a larger, more consistent sidewalk network for pedestrians and the ability to walk to downtown was expressed. A variety of modes are used for transportation currently (bicycles, golf carts, snowmobiles). A larger network of trails to and through Lawton emerged as a priority to make connections between key destinations in the village and beyond.

RESIDENTIAL OPTIONS: Most of the residential options within the village are single-family homes (75%). Yet two-thirds of Lawton's population lives in one-to-two-person households and 70 percent of households have no children under the age of 18. There is a mismatch between housing options and household characteristics. As Lawton plans for its future, it will want to increase the availability of choices for the aging population and the smaller household sizes.

GATHERING PLACES: The pride and energy within the village is contagious, and a common frustration of residents is not having a place to gather and celebrate their identity and unity as a community. Efforts to address this include the current downtown streetscape improvements and the development of the recently donated Reid's Square into a gathering place for the community.

CHARACTER + IDENTITY: Maintaining the overall character of the downtown and the village is a top priority. Along M-40, the more urban center is well regarded, apart from a handful of vacancies. A desire was expressed to keep the village unique with a preference for locally owned and operated businesses and restaurants.



UNDERUTILIZED PROPERTIES: There are a number of underutilized and vacant parcels in the village that would benefit from additional investment. Concerns heard during engagement efforts centered around deferred maintenance and upkeep of buildings that may or may not be occupied. As was noted in the demographics section, one in five residents are senior citizens and Lawton's housing stock has had little new construction. Thus, upkeep of properties may prove to be an issue. Redevelopment and the establishment of design and maintenance standards were discussed as opportunities to improve downtown.

INFRASTRUCTURE: There is a strong desire to attract an industrial partner or develop further housing to capitalize on the excess capacity of the Village's water and sewer systems. Utility upgrades, extensions where needed, and public internet connections were also discussed as integral parts of planning for Lawton's future.



3. VISION

VISION STATEMENT

Building on a strong sense of community and our unique character, Lawton will proactively adapt to change, enhance its assets, and facilitate strategic, positive growth to benefit all people in our village.

Guiding Themes

During community planning events, participants identified features that are integral to the Village of Lawton. These features, and how to protect, grow and showcase them, became our foundational framework, guiding the vision for this Master Plan document. The resulting five Themes were identified as the organizing elements for the Village's plan for the future. Our Guiding Themes are:





GROW in a balanced way, with a responsibility to the village's values and character.

The Village of Lawton will provide an admirable quality of life, well-suited to the needs of its citizens and businesses. This includes great schools, efficient services, proactive leadership and government, significant open spaces, and the programs to support them. We are committed to preserving our identity and diversity.

- Encourage development that enhances the quality of the village's natural beauty and small-town atmosphere.
- Preserve the character of Lawton's downtown.
- Attract development and support entrepreneurship that expands the economic, cultural, and civic purposes of the Village of Lawton.
- Focus development and redevelopment into areas best suited to support it.
- Ensure that Lawton has access to high-quality infrastructure, including high-speed internet.
- Provide support for enhancing existing homes and businesses and aggressively maintain existing shared resources.
- Promote residential expansion and improvement of existing housing within the community.



Adjacent are the word map responses to our survey question:

“What are your favorite things about Lawton?”

What makes it unique?”





ENHANCE *community character and quality of life for residents and guests.*

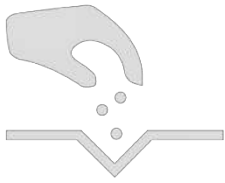
One of Lawton's strengths is its abundant small-town charm. This character is what brought families and businesses to Lawton, and what keeps them here. The emphasis should be on maintaining these attributes and expanding the community's ability to provide services to its residents and businesses that are affordable, efficient, and consistent.

- Promote Lawton's historic and cultural assets as leverage for economic and community development.
- Provide a variety of housing options for a variety of incomes, ages (including aging-in-place), abilities, family sizes, and needs.
- Enhance mobility and accessibility through increased safety, maximizing transit/bicycle/pedestrian/golf cart access and other modes of active transportation and connection.
- Develop and implement a strong program for establishing the unique character and identity of the Village of Lawton through community branding.
- Be a destination for families, businesses, and visitors that want to share in who we are and what we continue to aspire to be.



"It would be great to have a safe trail to ride my bike or golf cart into town. Part of it what makes this area great is that we are all surrounded by nature!"

- Community Member



INVEST *and identify opportunities for positive change and development.*

The Village of Lawton will effectively build on its strengths by providing and leveraging community services and infrastructure to encourage positive change. The community's capital investments will continue to be forward-looking and of enduring quality, in keeping with the character and values of the people, businesses, and places in Lawton.

- Ensure that the Village of Lawton's neighborhoods, commercial areas, and infrastructure are developed in harmony with its natural resources and heritage.
- Treasure, maintain, and expand our public parks, trails, and recreation areas and enhance walkable streetscapes.
- Create and maintain lovable places for all residents to connect, meet, play and grow.
- Continue to be proactive in driving positive change for the Village of Lawton.
- Invest in green infrastructure to ensure a healthy and prosperous future.
- Support investments that enhance quality of life.
- Increase safe and efficient access/transportation/circulation choices for the people and businesses of Lawton.

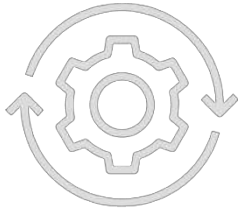
Below are some highlighted responses to the survey question: "What would you change about Lawton? Where are our opportunities for improvement?"

"I would like to see more opportunities for attracting new businesses to the area while maintaining the friendly/small town vibe. Perhaps improvements to 'curb appeal' throughout the Village may assist in this area."

"We'd like to have a place where the community could gather on a Friday or Saturday night in the summer and just have a good time."

"I would like to see more parks or improvements to existing parks, walking trails and road improvements that connect residential areas with the businesses throughout the Village."





SUSTAIN *the long-term viability and vitality of the Village of Lawton.*

The Village of Lawton will ensure that our practices, investments, developments, and redevelopments are true to our values, sensitive to our environment, and are crafted for longevity. Lawton will change holistically and incrementally, with a focus on the redevelopment of underutilized parcels. Streets, sidewalks, and community spaces will serve as an interconnected network of resources that support and provide recreational linkages, and serve as opportunities for community interaction and economic development.

- Lawton will use sustainable planning and engineering practices to manage our natural and built environments.
- We will be good stewards of the natural and built environments so that we can adapt to climate change, be resilient to natural disasters, and thrive in times of uncertainty.
- Our development approval processes will be clear, consistent, and predictable to attract appropriate forms of development in the Village.
- Lawton will use these principles to promote a healthy and sustainable quality of life and business environment.
- The community will foster and pursue mutually beneficial relationships between its organizations, promoting public health and well-being.





UNIQUE *destination experiences will be enhanced and curated to showcase the village.*

The Village of Lawton will continue to do what it does best – cultivating a special place for the people and businesses of the community. Lawton will continue to excel as it advances its quality of life for all residents through high-quality and efficient public services, an excellent and expanding educational system, and diverse opportunities for citizens of all ages.

- Focus the redevelopment of the Downtown District as the “Heart of Lawton/”
- Further establish and promote the downtown as a focused activity node within the community that showcases its unique character and charm.
- Encourage and celebrate community gathering opportunities in our parks, Main Street, and Reid’s Square.
- Focus on local products and services that will improve the tax base, promote economic vitality, and increase the economic capacity of local enterprises.



“The Village is a Hallmark town. Family-oriented with community events. It’s a place where everyone helps their neighbors...”

- Community Member



4. LAND USE PLANNING

Overview

Communities employ land use planning as the primary tool to define sustainable and supportive land use arrangements and minimize or correct conflicts. By clearly articulating distinct character differences and communicating them in advance, property owners, developers, and investors will have a much better understanding of the kind of community the Village of Lawton wants to be. This will facilitate the review and approval of future development and redevelopment projects.

The Future Land Use Map represents the desired land use pattern for the village to achieve the community vision, goals, and guiding principles articulated in this plan. Subsequent pages in this chapter describe the individual character and land use categories established.

General Development Framework + Future Land Use Map

The Village's scenario planning exercise illustrated that land use planning involves choices and options. Clearly, there is no one "right" way to develop a community. By considering the many options and evaluating the implications of each based on the long-range vision, goals, and guiding principles of this plan, a desired course was defined that not only achieves the functional, environmental, and quality of life goals of the plan, but is fiscally responsible as well.

Our scenario proposes a more concentrated development pattern in specific locations. This creates higher property values, more population in a centralized area, and creates less demand for new services. The distinct character of downtown Lawton's as a mixed-use center should be enhanced, surrounded by strong neighborhoods that provide a variety of housing choices. New development should be located where existing services are provided. While some areas are intended to be more intensely developed, other areas of the village are proposed to retain a lower-density, single-family detached residential pattern.

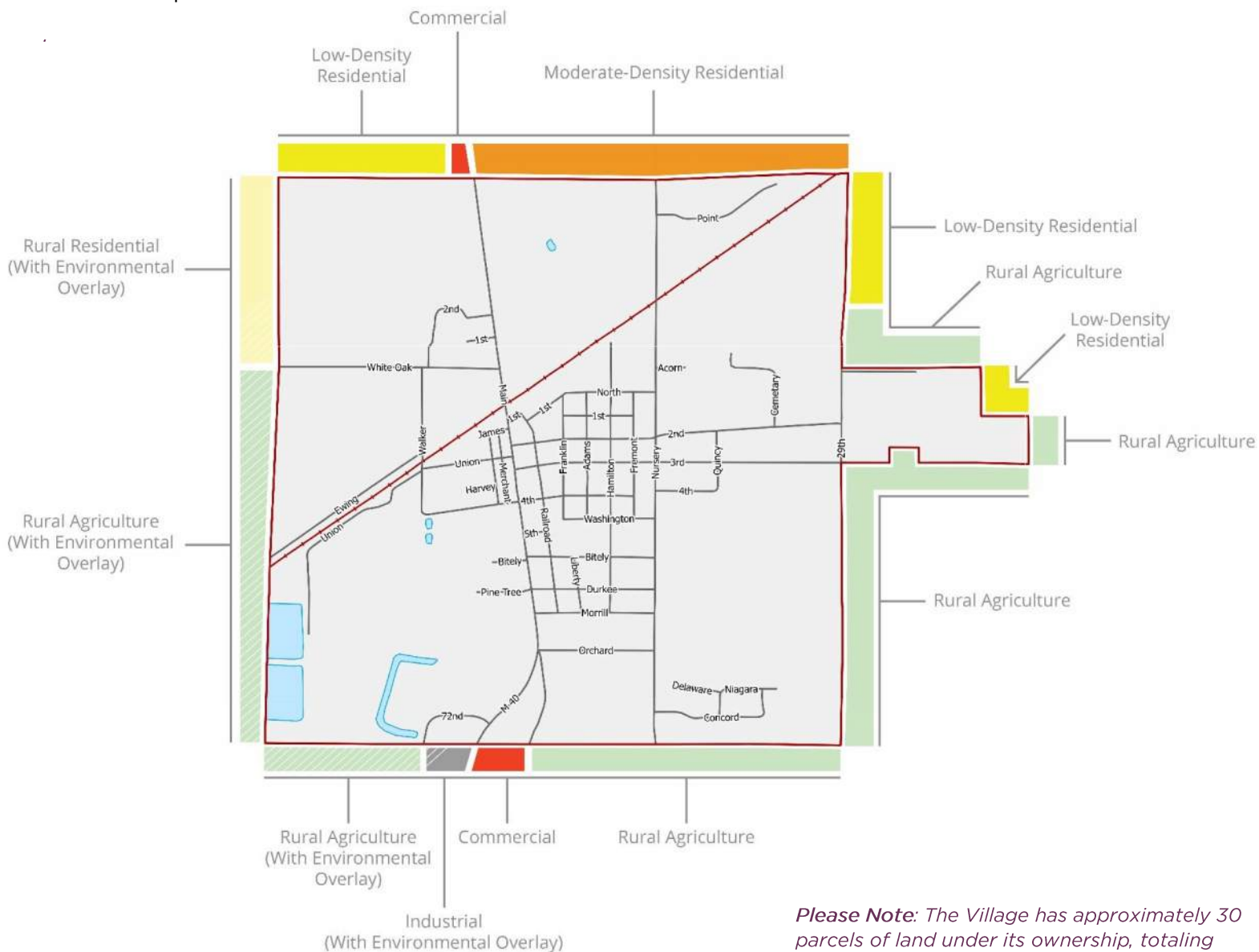
The attractiveness of the General Development Framework is found in its balance. It supports the Plan's vision, goals, and guiding principles without sacrificing the established character of the community. Yet, it introduces important desired elements – a focused activity center, housing variety, and employment opportunities – some features which are not currently found in the established land use pattern or allowed by zoning.

These recommendations support the needs of Lawton residents and leverages the Village's infrastructure. The population of Lawton is changing, and a variety of different housing types are needed to enable "lifecycle" neighborhoods where people can age in place and young people can return to make Lawton their home. Additional development will assist in defraying expensive legacy costs associated with the Village's ownership of the water and sewer systems, and its streets.



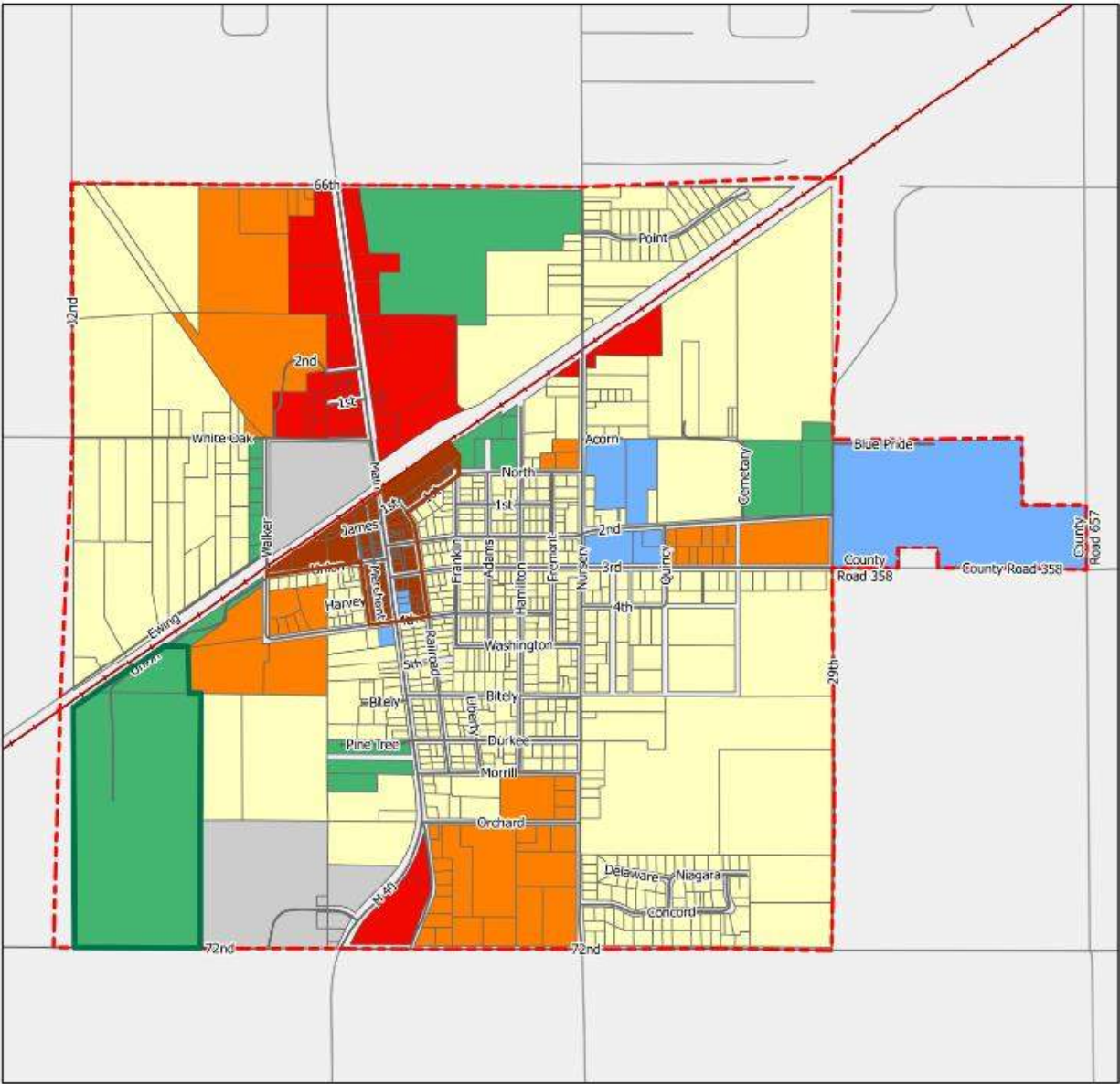
Surrounding Land Uses

The following map displays the context of the areas surrounding the Village of Lawton. These surrounding uses have the potential to influence and contribute to future land uses within the Village and if considered accordingly, will benefit those living in and around the subject area. As previously mentioned in this document, much of the land surrounding the Village is used largely for agriculture. As the Village of Lawton continues to modernize and diversify from its initial agricultural roots, the surrounding townships will remain as farming-centric counterparts.



Please Note: The Village has approximately 30 parcels of land under its ownership, totaling approximately 358.24 acres. The Village is open to plans for development that align with the Master Plan and the community's vision for the future. See also Development Opportunities.

Future Land Use Map



Future Land Use Map
Village of Lawton, Van Buren County, Michigan

- LEGEND**
- Downtown (D)
 - Village Residential (VR)
 - Residential (R)
 - Commercial / Light Industrial (CI)
 - Industrial (I)
 - Connection / Open Space (CO)
 - Public / Institutional (P)

0 0.25 0.5
Miles

Data Source: Van Buren County GIS, 2022. Michigan Geographic Data Library, 2022. Progressive AE, 2022.

progressive | ae



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5. GENERAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The General Development Framework includes: a concentrated, mixed-use activity center in Lawton's existing downtown center; walkable neighborhoods with a mix of housing types and choices for new/existing residents; public space for community events; expansion of utilities, especially high-speed internet; thriving industrial uses, and transportation investments that support varying travel modes. The General Development Framework will also consider the preservation of the historic character of Lawton as a resource by focusing on the design and character qualities of future development (i.e., building architecture and site design).

Classifications

To regulate the character and performance of the built environment and to achieve the coordinated development and growth visions adopted as part of the Village of Lawton Master Plan, the Village is divided into the following future land use categories, which are shown by the district boundaries on the Future Land Use Map. The categories include:

- Downtown (D)
- Village Residential (VR)
- Residential (R)
- Commercial and Light Industrial (CI)
- Industrial (I)
- Connection and Open Space (CO), and
- Public/Institutional (P)



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Downtown Lawton is the *Heart of Lawton*. The Downtown (D) serves as an anchor for village and will be a walkable village center. A mixture of retail, restaurants, upper floor housing, Reid's Square, and civic functions contribute to the place as a dynamic and vibrant center of Lawton.

Buildings in the D district typically stand one to two stories in height with the potential for greater building heights (up to 4 stories) that include residential units or offices above the storefronts on upper floors. Parking is satisfied using on-street parking and shared rear-lot parking with pass-throughs between buildings when available. Pass-throughs should be pleasant spaces with plantings and seating areas. Large blank walls should feature murals or vertical landscaping.

Location:

The Downtown (D) is in the *Heart of Lawton* along both sides of Main Street.

Strategies:

- Build upon existing civic uses by strengthening adjacent commercial areas
- Develop Reid's Square as a location for community activities, gatherings, public programming, and green space
- Widen sidewalks
- Introduce tactical urbanism to promote pedestrian-friendly activity
- Maximize the opportunity for window shopping in the Downtown
- Integrate "softscape" (landscape plantings) into the Downtown as much as possible
- Provide for mid-block crossings (on-demand) on Main Street

Key Best Practice Tools:

- Pedestrian-friendly/walkable streetscape
- Destination, first-floor retail, and services (e.g., grocery, pharmacy)
- Pedestrian-scale building design, including expression lines, visible entries, and façade transparency
- Placemaking tactics such as tactical urbanism, unified signage/banners/flags, and outdoor seating
- Encourage mixed-uses (upper-story residential or office above commercial)
- Program public/civic activities
- Provide public open space and street trees
- Connectivity between the downtown and adjacent neighborhoods

Parking:

- Shared parking in the rear and short-term parking on Main Street
- Rear-loaded parking, no drive-throughs
- Provide bicycle parking racks and designated parking areas for micro-mobility options



Primary Uses:

- Sit down restaurants/pubs
- Community-serving retail
- Professional offices (residential located on upper floors)
- Civic buildings (Village building, library, etc.)
- Office and businesses

Secondary Uses:

- Farmers market/community garden
- Places of public assembly (churches, event halls)
- Residential (upper floor)
- Banks/financial institutions



The Village-Residential (VR) areas of Lawton will have infill development in existing, built-out portions of the village and new development in undeveloped areas. The VR areas are characterized by a variety of different housing types that accommodate the needs of Lawton's households. This area is served by existing infrastructure.

These neighborhoods will promote a range of housing choices: townhouses, cottage courts, smaller-lot single-family units, duplexes, senior/aging-in-place units, and accessory dwelling units that reflect a traditional development pattern typical of a village as a small urban center. Development is characteristic of "gentle density" missing middle housing types that integrate well into the existing context. Large apartment buildings should be approved selectively. Streets should be laid out in a street-grid pattern. Limited home occupations that require minimal parking may be allowed.

Location:

The majority of the VR areas are served by existing public water and sewer, can accommodate a street grid network, and are connected by sidewalks to the downtown.

Strategies:

- Smaller lots and/or properly scaled buildings with multiple dwelling units
- Traditional design typical of mixed housing types found in a village
- Cluster or pocket neighborhood development typologies
- Sidewalks
- ADU (Accessory Dwelling Units) and live/work units are allowed
- Affordable comfort

Key Best Practice Tools:

- Provide a mix of housing types to accommodate a wider range of household needs in different stages of life and household arrangements (single, two-person, single-parent, ADA accessible units, etc.)
- Promote high-quality housing types that respect the character of existing neighborhoods and support the existing village context
- Pedestrian-friendly/walkable streetscape
- Diverse housing types/design
- Shared open space
- Connectivity, including maintaining grid streets

Parking:

- Associated with the individual units or at the periphery of the development
- Shared between uses based on time-of-day usage (e.g., office during the day and residential in the evening)
- Reductions in required parking when located near to downtown



Primary Uses:

- Variety of different residential housing types and price points
- Aging-in-place/senior housing
- Townhomes/attached housing
- Pocket neighborhoods/cottage courts
- Home offices

Secondary (Special) Uses:

- Live/work units
- Home-based businesses
- Churches and schools
- Natural/conservation areas
- Pocket parks and recreation areas

Housing Choice and Gentle Density

Missing middle formats can be used to gently integrate more housing choice into an existing context while maintaining the existing character. For example, accessory dwelling units which are contained entirely within the residential structure are undetectable from the street, as are well-designed detached units. A duplex with two small households may function identically to a single-dwelling unit with a large household, and a cottage court of four bungalows housing retirees may generate less traffic and noise than a large single household. Adjusting these districts to permit new household configurations in structures that align with the existing pattern can provide more housing choice for residents.



The Residential areas of Lawton are less intense neighborhoods than the Village Residential areas and are characterized primarily by existing single-family residential structures. Housing units may have attached, or detached garages, and may be located on lots in a range of sizes and widths. These neighborhoods are generally developed with single-family, detached homes that range from farmhouses to modest ranches. There are some structures that have been divided into multiple units. Limited commercial activity can be found in these neighborhoods.

Homes will be located centrally on individual sites. New construction should infill or abut existing development, radiating from the existing village center. Homes will be connected to public infrastructure and be laid out in a consistent grid pattern where topography and natural features will allow. There may be landscaping or fences that provide separation from adjoining residential development. Development should be of similar character to nearby structures. Any secondary uses will be of similar character to those of the residential units. Sidewalks are expected; where not present, attempts should be made to install them. Trees and landscaping are important features.

This is a predominant land use area in the village, comprised of existing and new residential development.

Strategies:

- Sidewalks
- Single-family detached housing units
- Lots in a variety of different sizes
- In-home occupations are allowed if excessive traffic is not generated
- ADU (Accessory Dwelling Units)
- Infill and new housing that meets the needs of Lawton residents



OPPORTUNITIES FOR GREEN SOLUTIONS

- ❶ Energy efficient furnace + appliances
- ❷ Energy Star rated structure
- ❸ High R insulation
- ❹ Insulated windows + doors
- ❺ Shade Trees
- ❻ Downspout disconnect/rain barrel
- ❼ Rain garden/bioswale
- ❽ Permeable paving

Key Best Practice Tools:

- Provide a mix of housing types to accommodate a wider range of household makeups and people in different stages of life
- Promote high-quality housing types that respect the character of existing neighborhoods
- Pedestrian-friendly/walkable streetscape
- Shared open space
- Pedestrian-friendly connectivity

Parking:

Associated with individual units. On-street parking is allowed but will not interfere with sidewalks or bike lanes.

Primary Uses:

- Detached single units and cottage courts
- In-character, aging-in-place/senior housing
- In-character, townhomes/attached housing
- In-home offices are allowed

Secondary (Special) Uses:

- Churches
- Schools
- Natural/Conservation areas
- Pocket parks
- Recreation areas



The Commercial and Light Industrial areas of Lawton include many of the areas that have grown out of the expansion of local entrepreneurship in the community. Many of these developments are local businesses taking advantage of an idea and the creative reuse of existing lots and buildings. Many of these investments fill a need for industrial facilities, or the needs of commercial, retail, and even residential users. These businesses are often mixed-use in nature: light manufacturing, fabrication, and/or service providers with office support and some associated “showroom retail.” Many of these uses will require truck access with shipping/receiving capabilities.

The Commercial and Light Industrial areas do not demand high visibility but do need easy access to arterial circulation. The CI will expect a level of flexibility in regulations around size and structure to allow for the creative combination of their business functions. These uses are prime candidates for alternative energy and stormwater management functions. Landscaped front yards with parking located to the side or rear is expected.

A future development in this District could be the development of an “Eco-Industrial Park,” that brings together compatible businesses to co-locate with each other to efficiently, effectively, environmentally, and economically utilize resources.

Location: Currently, these are somewhat dispersed locations throughout the village but could become a more concentrated District.

Strategies:

- Hard to develop lots and buildings being put to productive use
- Potential for entrepreneurial support
- Potential as a commercial/industrial land bank for future development
- Site remediation
- Adaptive reuse

Key Best Practice Tools:

- Integrate green infrastructure
- Green roofs
- Support the needs of existing businesses and residents
- Eco-industrial development/industrial ecology

Parking: On-site parking is encouraged with integration of green stormwater management.

Primary Uses:

- Light manufacturing, industrial, fabrication
- Product development/processing
- Shipping/receiving/warehousing
- Showroom display
- Office

Secondary Uses:

- Hotel/motel
- Self-storage
- Auto/RV/motorcycle sales
- Auto repair
- Churches



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The Industrial areas of Lawton are both light and heavy in nature. Currently, primary industrial activities are associated with food processing and packaging. The I classification is characterized primarily by food processing facilities, with supportive shipping, receiving, and storage areas. The current facilities vary in size and scope, but all are characterized by frequent large truck traffic and worker traffic at shift change. These areas are located at the northern and southern ends of Main Street. Desired future industrial activities include food-related industries or other businesses that require abundant water and sanitary sewer capacity. Businesses, particularly those that receive any local or State subsidies, should be job-dense to provide employment opportunities.

Clusters of uses that support one another are encouraged to locate near the industrial centers. These industrial centers provide opportunities to concentrate employment on normal workdays. Ancillary uses that support industrial activities and their employees are allowed, such as office uses, laboratories, company outlet stores, daycare/senior care, and coffee shops.

Location:

The I classification includes light and heavy industrial uses in the village, typically located at Lawton's northern and southern edges along, or just off of, Main Street.

Strategies:

- Concentrate industrial activities
- Encourage self-contained activities
- Manage traffic, especially at shift change
- Integrate better visual and noise features
- Buffering on-site
- Integrate with Village economic and community development strategies

Key Best Practice Tools:

- Visual and noise buffering
- Traffic management
- Shared impact reduction responsibilities
- Environmentally conscious waste control systems

Parking: On-site.

Primary Uses:

- Light and heavy industrial
- Job-dense businesses (not storage)



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This future land use category is for the different types of roads, streets, alleys, trails, sidewalks, parking, etc. that are in use within the village. The primary goal of this category is to provide safe, efficient means of providing access, and connecting all the people and businesses of Lawton to each other, and to/from the surrounding area(s). *Active Transportation*, which includes pedestrian-friendly and bicycle-friendly modes of transportation that complement the vehicular-oriented modes of transportation, should be considered, along with overall access and circulation.

Lawton's parks and open areas provide not only land expressly dedicated for recreation and conservation but are a resource for community resilience and education. There are several areas within the village of Lawton that have been identified as parks, recreational areas, and open spaces. In several cases these areas serve as buffers between incompatible land uses and provide opportunities for both passive and active recreation. These areas are often more sensitive to natural disasters and are often the areas least suitable for development. Wetlands, woodlots, and similar areas within the village of Lawton are important for enhancing the Village's resilience to flooding and similar phenomena.

Strategies:

- Develop and implement a *Complete Streets*® program in Lawton
- Size the streets and roads to best match their needs
- Integrate active transportation as much as possible
- Facilitate commercial and industrial logistics to be the safest and most efficient possible
- Facilitate pedestrian-friendly access
- Make the access/circulation system aesthetically pleasing to enhance the general quality of life of Lawton
- Facilitate parking to provide maximum access while being environmentally friendly

Key Best Practice Tools:

- Minimize pedestrian/vehicular conflicts
- Facilitate mid-block crossings and pedestrian-friendly crossings, especially in the DD
- Provide off-street parking in the DD as well as sidewalks and bike lanes throughout Lawton
- Connect to local and regional trail systems
- Mid-block connections
- Connect active and passive greenspace with trails, greenways, and Safe-Routes-to-Schools®
- Preservation/conservation of unbuildable areas
- Floodplain management
- Develop safe and pleasant connections between rear-loaded parking and Main Street
- Environmental education programs in conjunction with schools and conservation organizations

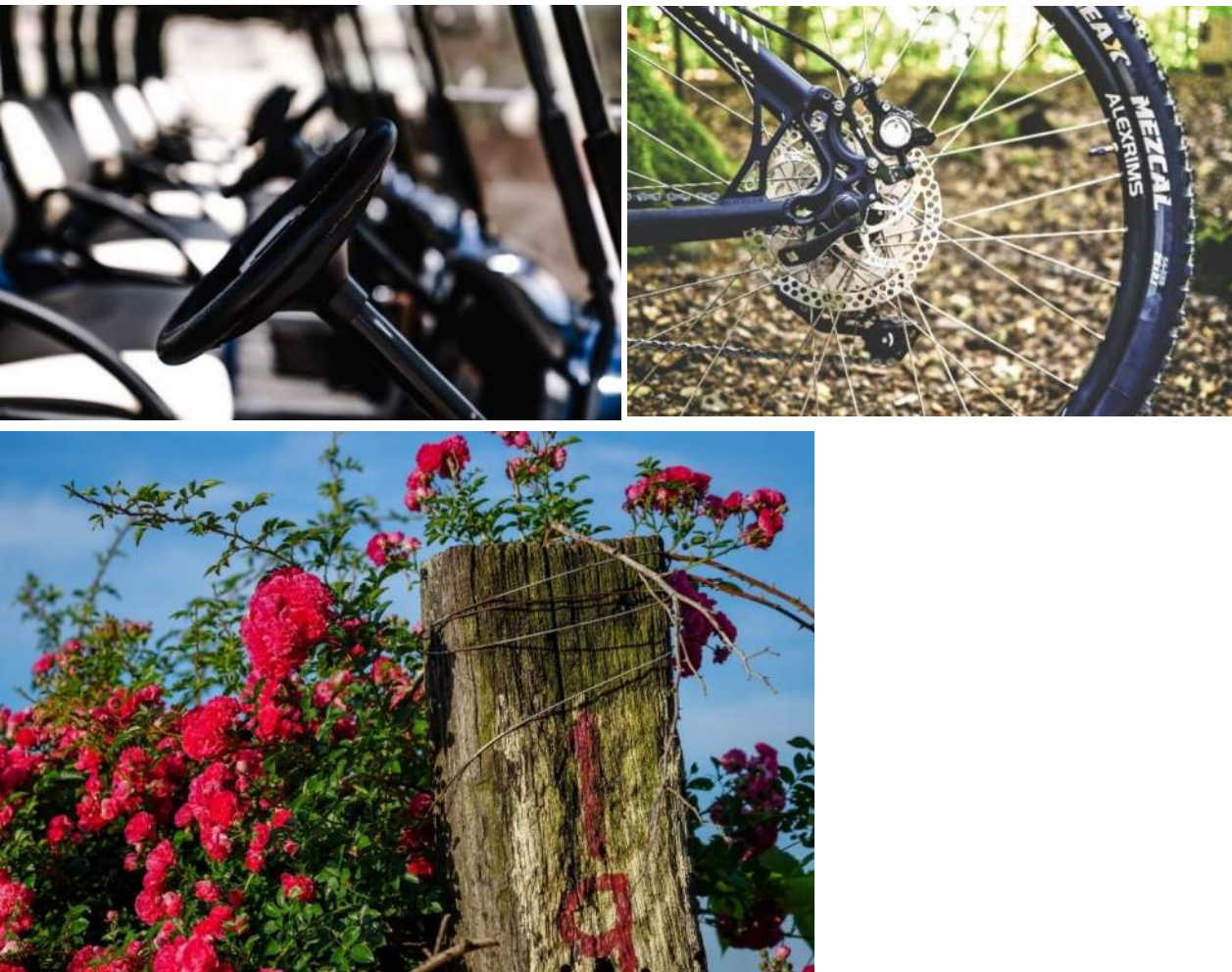


Primary Uses/Components:

- Sidewalks + bike lanes throughout Lawton
- Active recreation such as splash parks and recreation fields
- Passive recreation such as wetlands and woodlots
- Wildlife corridors/migratory layovers
- Stormwater retention/detention
- Civic gathering places

Secondary Uses/Components:

- Bike parking racks and golf cart parking in the DD
- Develop pedestrian-activated crossings in the DD
- Wildlife observation
- Greenway(s)



6. ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

The Zoning Ordinance is a key mechanism for achieving the desired land use pattern and quality of development advocated for in the Plan. This section provides a useful guide to bridge the gap between current zoning regulations and proposed future land use and character designations.

The Future Land Use Plan is a long-range vision of the Village that evolves over time and should not be confused with the Village's Zoning Map, which is a current (short-term) mechanism for regulating development. Therefore, some properties may follow an incremental development strategy and should not be immediately rezoned to correspond with the Plan. The Future Land Use Plan is intended to serve as a guide for land use decisions over a longer period of time (5 to 20 years).

Realizing the desired future land use pattern will be gradual, particularly because established businesses and homes are in areas that might be better suited for other types of uses in the long term. In addition, the Future Land Use Map is generalized. A more detailed evaluation would be required as part of any rezoning consideration.

Zoning changes in accordance with the Master Plan can be made gradually so that change can be managed with minimal disruption to the normal life of Lawton. The Future Land Use Map and the Plan's goals and recommendations should be consulted to judge the merits of a rezoning request. In review of rezoning and development proposals, the Village should consider the following sequencing standards:

- *Any rezoning or development proposal must be compatible with the Master Plan as a whole and be able to stand and function on its own without harm to the quality of surrounding land uses.*
- *There must be sufficient public infrastructure to accommodate any proposed development or the types of uses that would be allowed under the requested zoning change. This must include sufficient sewer and water capacity, a transportation system to support impacts, and a stormwater system to limit impacts.*
- *For sites near natural features and areas best suited for conservation and community resilience, the environmental conditions of the site should be capable of accommodating the types of development or potential uses allowed with a zoning change. The impact to natural features should be minimized to the greatest extent practical.*

This Chapter should be referred to when considering potential changes to the Zoning Ordinance. Additional dialogue and analysis is recommended prior to adopting ordinance amendments to ensure that an abundance of nonconformities are not created and that there is synchronicity between other ordinance provisions. The Future Land Use categories and Themes described in the preceding chapters serve as the foundation for suggested ordinance creation.

Additionally, the Village of Lawton has chosen to participate in the **Redevelopment Ready Communities®** program of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). Integrated into this process are the RRC Best Practices. These Best Practices should serve as a checklist of "to do" items within the Zoning Ordinance.



Given that development regulations are among the most effective regulatory tools that can be used by the Village to help implement the vision, goals, and design concepts in this Plan, it makes sense to reconsider the zone districts that currently exist and how they align with the goals of the Master Plan. The Village of Lawton's Zoning Ordinance is currently comprised of:

- Six (6) residential zone districts (R-1, R-2, R-3, RT, RM-1, and RM-H)
- One (1) zone district for agricultural operations (AG)
- Four (4) commercial business districts (OS-1, B-1, B-2, and B-3)
- Two (2) districts that address industrial and intense land uses (I-1 and I-2)
- One (1) parking zone district (P-1)

In some cases, zone districts that are listed in the ordinance are not designated in any location on the zoning map. In other instances, there is very little distinction between zone districts that make it worth having a unique designation. To that end, the following items should be considered regarding the organization of the Village's Zoning Ordinance:

- Keep the AG district to align with existing uses and allow for the timing of appropriate development in future for residential uses as the village center grows outward;
- Consider collapsing and simplifying the residential zone districts to align with the future land use categories of Village Residential (VR) and Residential (R), including thoughtful consideration of different housing types using the Special Land Use process and/or performance standards;
- Evaluate the uses in the commercial business district categories to determine which uses are most compatible and supportive of downtown and those that would be suitable for other locations in the village that would not compete or draw away from downtown's vibrancy;
- Consider collapsing the commercial districts into two districts – one for downtown and the other where commercial, office/service and/or light industrial activities would be acceptable;
- Introduce performance-based and/or design regulations for uses and buildings to ensure compatibility within the same zone district; and
- Eliminate the parking zone district and simply reference parking standards and requirements as a section in the zoning ordinance.

There are a number of approaches that could apply to each suggestion for consideration. In addition to the above-listed zoning recommendations, the Goals/Objectives/Actions section of this Master Plan identifies more recommended zoning changes as they align with the priorities set by the community. The Planning Commission will need to engage in its own process to consider text and map amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, as required by State law, and then provide a recommendation to the Village Council.



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7. SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

The Village of Lawton's Master Plan was developed through a highly interactive process that engaged the community in defining a preferred future. Through this collaborative effort, the Village, community leaders, and the public have contributed both resources and personal time to formulate a useful, exciting, and visionary blueprint for the coming decades. This level of participation signals Lawton's commitment as a community that seeks creative solutions to its challenges. The Plan will position Lawton to manage future development, redevelopment, capital improvements, collaborative partnerships, and programs on a solid foundation of fiscal, social, and environmental sustainability.



STEERING COMMITTEE
Workshop in March 2022

This Plan is intended to be a policy guide for moving the Village of Lawton forward, guiding decisions about physical, community, and economic development. But the Plan is more than just a policy guide for Village officials and staff. With the commitment of resources to this planning effort comes the high expectation that the recommendations will be implemented, some soon, others over a longer period, some by the Village on its own, some with the help of the ***Redevelopment Ready Communities***[®] program of the State of Michigan.

The success of this Plan and its accompanying ordinances will help turn the Village's goals into reality and will require a long-term commitment and political consensus. These documents are meant to be used, reviewed, and placed into ACTION. The Plan is designed to be a road map for incorporating strategies, specific projects, and programs that will achieve the desired results. This chapter synthesizes the many Plan recommendations and identifies the actions and timing needed to transform the Plan's vision into reality.



Commitment

While the input received through the various activities of the Master Plan process provided a foundation to help achieve the Village's vision, community support and involvement must continue. Successful Plan implementation will be directly related to committed Village leadership, not limited to its elected and appointed officials and staff. While elected and appointed officials (Village Manager, Village Council, and Planning Commission) will have a strong leadership role, many others (Village department directors, staff, and leaders from the community's institutions and organizations) will also be instrumental in supporting and implementing the Plan and its many parts. However, commitment reaches beyond just these individuals and includes individuals with an interest and stake in the future. Citizens, landowners, developers, and business owners will impact how the Village of Lawton changes and must unite toward the Plan's common vision. Momentum and enthusiasm from the constituency engaged in the planning process must be sustained to guarantee the Plan will remain the important action-oriented document it is intended to be.

Continued Community Involvement

Citizen involvement was the cornerstone of this planning process, and continued involvement by the public is essential to ensure the Plan's success. Adoption of the Plan marks the end of the initial phase of the process, but it is only the beginning of the evolutionary process to focus on the Plan's vision and recommendations and to promote community participation in making the Plan a reality.

Guidance for Development Decisions

This plan is designed for routine use and should be consistently employed during any process affecting the Village of Lawton's future. Private investment decisions by developers, corporations, and landowners should consider the plan's direction. Other planning efforts for neighborhoods, corridors, and community facilities should be conducted in harmony with the Master Plan. Finally, the plan should be used as a key criterion when reviewing development proposals and be referenced in related reports and studies.



Integrate with Capital Improvements

Village officials and departments must embrace the Plan, applying its recommendations to help shape annual budgets, work programs, and the design of capital improvements. For example, the Village's engineering partner can support implementation through infrastructure improvements, streets, and storm systems designed consistently with Plan policies and recommendations. The Village will have a direct connection through site plan review and other zoning decisions. Each department, staff person, and elected official should find it a benefit, if not an obligation, to reference the Plan when making decisions and setting priorities.

Partnerships

Ideally, this Plan will be endorsed by the many organizations in the Village as a "shared vision," the foundation of future efforts. Entities such as the Lawton Public Schools, Van Buren County, MDOT, MSU Cooperative Extension, Southwest Michigan First, Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Market VanBuren, Cornerstone Alliance, local and multi-national businesses, and many others have something to contribute relative to their role in Lawton's future. Partnerships may range from sharing information to funding and shared promotions or services. What can these partnerships do that the Village cannot do alone?

- ***Solve Larger Issues:*** Many issues are beyond the control of individual jurisdictions and require cooperation, including major infrastructure improvements, nonmotorized and other transit options, and economic development.
- ***Improve the Vitality of Each Entity:*** Working together, community leaders can become more acquainted with the Village's vision and the role each has to offer, working toward more cooperative, rather than competitive, relationships. A vibrant urban core and unified, attractive corridors will benefit not only the Village of Lawton, but its suburbs and the region as a whole.
- ***Meeting Expectations for Public Services:*** Economic conditions make it more difficult for individual communities to meet resident's needs and expectations. More sharing of resources and eliminating duplicative efforts may result in more cost-effective ways of providing essential community services.
- ***Maximize Investments:*** The Village government and many organizations and institutions have all made significant investments in the community, publicly and privately. Ongoing relationships can help ensure those contributions continue to attain a high rate of return in terms of financial and social capital.



Evaluation + Monitoring

This Plan has been developed with a degree of flexibility, allowing nimble responses to emerging conditions, challenges, and opportunities. To help ensure the Plan stays fresh and useful, periodic reviews are essential and amendments should be made when needed. This will ensure Plan goals, objectives, and recommendations reflect changing community conditions, needs, expectations, and financial realities. The Plan should be reviewed annually, ideally by the Planning Commission and Village Council, to keep it fresh and remind those involved of the importance of the document. The Planning Commission will review the Master Plan yearly to review the status of the Plan's implementation, discuss funding opportunities, refine priorities, and to involve new implementors and participants to ensure all organizations and key players remain committed. This report will be sent to the Village Council with the Planning Commission's recommendations.

Roles of Village Officials

The Lawton Village Council must be firmly engaged in the process of implementing the Plan. Their responsibilities will be to prioritize various action items and establish timeframes by which each action must be initiated and completed. They must also consider and weigh the funding commitments necessary to realize the Village's vision, whether involving capital improvements, facility design, municipal services, targeted studies, or changes to development regulations, such as municipal codes and procedures, including the Zoning Ordinance.

The Planning Commission is charged with overseeing Plan implementation and is empowered to make ongoing land use decisions. As such, it has great influence on how sustainable the Village of Lawton will be. As an example, the Planning Commission is charged with preparing studies, ordinances, and certain programmatic initiatives before they are submitted to the Village Council. In other instances, the Village Manager and the Planning Commission play a strong role as "Plan Facilitators," overseeing the process and monitoring its progress and results. Together, Village staff and the Planning Commission must be held accountable, ensuring the Village's Master Plan impacts daily decisions and actions by its many stakeholders.



8. GOALS, OBJECTIVES + ACTIONS

The following goals, objectives, and actions establish next steps the Village can take to shape its future. These strategies are intended to ensure the Master Plan is integrated into day-to-day planning and decision-making for the Village and its residents. Furthermore, they assist with implementing core recommendations and key projects over the lifespan of the Plan.

This Master Plan includes several recommended policies, projects, and strategies. The following matrix identifies the key actions that can be undertaken to achieve the community's vision. The Village should use the matrix to assign tasks, explore strategic partnerships, and identify funding sources relevant to each action. As actions are completed, and the Plan is updated, the matrix should be revised to prioritize the remaining actions and add new ones as needed.

Organized by key development priorities, these tables encompass a variety of actions related to our established vision and goals. For ease of access and clarity of direction, the goals and actions have been organized into these key priorities: economic vitality, residential, placemaking, and transportation and mobility. The Master Plan themes of Grow, Enhance, Invest, Sustain, and Unique were kept in mind as these goals and actions were articulated.



PRIORITY	
Most Important	A
Very Important	B
Important	C

TIMEFRAME	
1-5 Years	1
6-10 Years	2
Ongoing	3
As Available	4

ECONOMIC VITALITY

- Lawton will preserve the character of Lawton's downtown.
- Lawton will promote its historic and cultural assets as leverage for economic and community development.
- Lawton will attract and encourage development that supports entrepreneurship and expands the economic, cultural, and civic aspects of the community.
- Lawton will promote a healthy and sustainable quality of life and business development.
- Lawton will implement new branding to promote its unique character and identity to attract families, businesses, and visitors that want to share who we are and who we continue to be.
- Lawton will target economic development toward existing and compatible activities, small-scale entrepreneurial endeavors, and local value-added processing.
- Lawton will encourage development that enhances the quality of life of the Village's natural beauty, small-town atmosphere, and sense of belonging.

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
GOAL 1: PROMOTE A BALANCED, MIXED-USE DOWNTOWN			
1	Redevelop Village owned parking lots in conjunction with privately owned parking lots to balance the needs of residents, employees, and visitors.	C	1
2	Provide for adequate bicycle, golf cart, and snowmobile parking facilities.	B	1
3	Develop well-screened, shared waste receptacles for downtown businesses.	A	1
4	Encourage small to medium scale retail storefronts associated with on-site production and manufacturing.	B	4
5	Create a sign and graphics system for wayfinding that highlights the historical, cultural, and natural features of the community.	A	1
6	Incorporate art into the downtown.	A	1
7	Actively promote the DDA's facade improvement program.	A	3
8	Update signage and storefront design standards and codes to meet or exceed generally accepted industry standards.	B	2
9	Develop vacant lots and restore / adaptively reuse historic structures.	B	4

GOAL 2: UNIQUELY MARKET, GROW, AND SUSTAIN			
1	Identify opportunities to sell Village-owned properties for development to increase tax base.	B	1
2	Explore opportunities for public/private partnerships that advance efforts to invest in and redevelop high priority sites.	A	1
3	Promote Lawton to prospective employers and families based upon its livability, high quality of life, quality schools, and strong sense of place.	A	3
4	Expand/develop an indoor/outdoor Lawton Community Market for locally produced food, flowers, crafts/art, etc. to serve as a small business incubator.	C	2
5	Develop a community kitchen/processing facility (small business incubator) to facilitate garden/farm-to-table retail activities.	C	2
6	Enhance Village gateways by implementing placemaking strategies like signage, wayfinding, and streetscape upgrades.	B	4
7	Establish branding and design standards for signage; include in signage guidelines in the Zoning Ordinance.	A	1
8	Develop, promote, and market Lawton products and activities.	B	3
9	Foster stronger relationships between the public schools, local government, student groups, and community groups.	A	3
10	Collaborate with nearby government entities and local organizations to improve regional collaboration.	B	3
11	Consider creating a sinking fund from the sale of Village property to provide financial resources to acquire property for parks and trails.	C	2
12	Promote and install solar and green technologies as cost-effective alternatives and as potential business/job focus.	B	4
GOAL 3: SUPPORT ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITY AND HELP SMALL BUSINESSES THRIVE			
1	Create a retail attraction strategy to sustain a healthy and diverse local business community.	B	1
2	Support the development of entrepreneurship networks and assistance to startup firms.	C	4
3	Identify pilot projects for placemaking in targeted areas.	B	3



RESIDENTIAL – HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

- Lawton will be a place that attracts people “to” our Village.
- Lawton will provide a variety of housing options for a variety of incomes, ages (including aging-in-place), abilities, family sizes, and needs.
- Lawton will focus on development and redevelopment in areas supported by or near existing infrastructure.

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
GOAL 1: PURSUE AND ENCOURAGE NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES			
1	Perform a Housing Target Market Analysis (TMA) to inventory available housing and conduct analysis of conditions and gaps in market.	B	1
2	Identify areas with excess capacity and/or those that would complement adjoining properties as Targeted Redevelopment Areas (TRA's) and find developers.	A	1
3	Use the revised Zoning Ordinance to encourage increases in housing density in the Targeted Redevelopment Areas and to encourage affordable and age-friendly housing.	A	1
4	Provide infrastructure support for housing in Targeted Redevelopment Areas.	A	4
5	Create design guidelines for “small lot” infill housing.	A	1
6	Integrate more housing options into the Downtown.	B	4
7	Provide incentives for incorporating “silver living” options (barrier-free, independent living, cottage clusters, etc.) in new development and the construction of housing units that implement universal design.	A	4
8	Provide incentives for affordable housing development / redevelopment.	A	4
GOAL 2: PROMOTE NEIGHBORHOODS AND EXPAND LOCAL CAPACITY			
1	Revise the Zoning Ordinance and development guidelines to provide diversified housing options at reasonable densities.	A	1
2	Encourage pocket neighborhoods (A pocket neighborhood is a type of planned community that consists of a grouping of smaller residences, often around a courtyard or common garden, designed to promote a close-knit sense of community).	C	4
3	Allow ADUs (Accessory Dwelling Units), also known as “granny flats” and “mother-in-law” apartments in all residential districts. (Attached is preferred, but detached units are allowed if they meet specifications).	A	1
4	Permit a balanced mix of housing types within neighborhoods (e.g., duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes), provided high standards of architectural and site design characteristics are maintained throughout, such as stone and brick facades, usable open spaces, distinctive features, decorative landscaping and sidewalks.	B	1



5	Promote and facilitate Universal Design in housing construction (i.e., design that can be accessed by all people regardless of ability, disability, or age).	B	2
6	Prohibit "cookie-cutter" development by requiring ample variations in building architecture, materials, and colors.	A	1
7	Incentivize conservation-based design principles in the Zoning Ordinance and promote conservation-based design in general.	C	2
8	Promote neighborhood amenities, such as parks, schools, and other quality of life elements.	B	3
GOAL 3:			
SUPPORT EXISTING RESIDENTS AND PRESERVE THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK			
1	Enforce the Village Zoning Ordinance and International Property Maintenance Code to ensure that the existing housing stock is maintained.	B	1
2	Develop and implement a rental housing inspection and licensing program.	C	1
3	Permit properties in the Village Residential future land use category to include limited, small scale, mixed-density development that complements the surrounding residential character and epitomizes Lawton's small-town charm, which abide by the zoning requirements for signage, fencing, screening, storage, and parking.	C	1
4	Provide support for homeowners to update and remodel their homes and properties.	B	4
5	Assist residents in need with maintenance and repairs.	B	4
GOAL 4:			
EXPAND HOUSING SERVICES FOR HOMEOWNERS, RENTERS, AND LANDLORDS			
1	Promote Lawton as a great place to live.	A	3
2	Support new landlords and renters with "Welcome to Lawton" resources.	B	1



PLACEMAKING

- Lawton will treasure, maintain, and expand our public parks, trails, and recreation areas and enhance walkable streetscapes.
- Lawton will invest in green infrastructure to ensure a healthy and prosperous future for its citizens and businesses.
- Lawton will use sustainable planning and engineering practices to manage both natural and built resources.
- Lawton will ensure that its residents have access to high-quality infrastructure.
- Lawton will revise the Zoning Ordinance to encourage development, streamline requirements, and support Lawton in being an inviting, walkable, and vibrant community.

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
GOAL 1: IMPROVE EXISTING PARKS, RECREATION FACILITIES, AND OPEN SPACE			
1	Repair and replace worn out and damaged equipment and amenities as necessary, beginning with the Kid's Dream Playground.	A	1
2	Continue to review and expand a proactive inspection and maintenance program to keep the parks and facilities aesthetically appealing.	B	3
3	Improve barrier-free access to parks and recreation amenities.	B	4
4	Consider creation of an "Adopt-A-Park" program for all Village parks.	C	1
5	Promote the installation of public art, especially by local artists/craftspeople, in public and private places and use existing community spaces as venues.	B	4
6	Update the Parks and Recreation Plan every five years and continue to implement the Plan.	A	1
7	Seek grant funding and other financial assistance to help acquire and develop Village recreational facilities.	A	3
8	Develop a comprehensive park identification program to provide consistent, uniform park signage with additional instructional / directional, watershed, educational, and wayfinding signage.	B	1
GOAL 2: PURSUE LONG-TERM OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW PUBLIC SPACES			
1	Construct a public space on the empty lot in the middle of the Downtown that offers opportunities for community gathering and activities, establishes a strong sense of place, and fosters social interaction and community pride: "Reid's Corner."	A	1
2	Establish a Parks and Recreation Board to help develop and program common spaces, parks, playgrounds, trails, and recreation areas in partnership with the schools and surrounding townships.	C	1
3	Seek opportunities to share facilities with other public agencies (school district / townships / Van Buren County), non-profit organizations, and other institutions, first targeting the development of new baseball fields.	A	3



4	Work cooperatively to create a network of parks and non-motorized routes around Lawton and between neighboring communities.	A	3
5	Engage in public/private partnerships to secure funding for recreation facilities.	B	4
GOAL 3: MAINTAIN QUALITY VILLAGE SERVICES, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND FACILITIES WITH FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE STRATEGIC GROWTH			
1	Repair, replace, and expand infrastructure in order to properly service the community with advanced, state-of-the-art Infrastructure and materials, including the most advanced communications technology.	A	4
2	Maintain a six-year forward-looking, realistic Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), balancing community and economic development goals with infrastructure and social capacity.	A	3
3	Incorporate a public building and facility rehabilitation plan into the comprehensive CIP, prioritizing the Village Hall and Department of Public Works.	B	1
4	Identify a new location for a community well to provide redundant infrastructure to source the Village's water supply.	B	1
5	Establish a facility maintenance fund with yearly contributions to fund future necessary public facility improvements.	C	4
6	Continue and expand collaboration with surrounding communities and the County to provide public services.	A	3
GOAL 4: IMPROVE COMMUNICATION RESOURCES			
1	Locate a digital message sign in the new development, Reid's Square, to share community information.	B	1
2	Improve communication efforts to residents, businesses, and visitors to promote events, recent achievements, and Lawton's best assets.	A	3
3	Improve the user experience of the Village's website to be an efficient resource for information, transparency, and basic functions.	B	3
4	Develop a comprehensive social media strategy.	C	1
5	Create an online and hard cover "welcome package" that highlights community information, events, organizations, activities, and other community attractions for perspective residents and entrepreneurs.	B	1
6	Upgrade records keeping, data management, and sharing between Village departments.	B	3
GOAL 5: IMPLEMENT AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY DESIGN AND RAISE AWARENESS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY			
1	Create promotional materials for residents and businesses describing sustainable practices.	B	3
2	Investigate contract with single hauler for refuse and recycling, increasing recycling options.	B	1
3	Increase business recycling through code requirements and/or incentive programs.	C	1



4	Work with Van Buren County Conservation District to offer additional collection programs for less common recycling items.	B	3
5	Convert street lighting and public facility lighting to LED.	C	2
6	Develop zoning incentives to integrate natural drainage and green stormwater infrastructure into development projects.	C	2
7	Encourage the development and installation of green roofs, solar, and other green technologies within Lawton.	B	1
8	Integrate green stormwater infrastructure into parks.	C	2
9	Promote the use of permeable pavement and other options for limiting the amount of stormwater runoff.	C	1

GOAL 6:

LAWTON WILL CONTINUE TO BE A DYNAMIC MIX OF HOUSING, BUSINESSES AND ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO BE ATTRACTIVE TO A VARIETY OF DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

1	Rewrite Zoning Ordinance per the Zoning Plan in Chapter 6. of this Plan and as other goals and objectives in this Chapter instruct.	A	1
2	Simplify the Zoning Ordinance to address appropriate uses, dimensional requirements, design, and connectivity between properties.	A	1
3	Incorporate Smart Growth principles into Village planning processes, regulations, and ordinances.	B	3
4	Control development densities and locations through updated zoning districts and regulations based on the future land use plan.	B	3
5	Establish site and building design guidelines to ensure that new development is of a high quality, both in appearance and function.	B	1
6	Provide an appropriate mix of businesses, including industrial, commercial, and office uses, that provide employment opportunities and a sound tax base for the Village.	A	3
7	Clearly lay out the process for site plan review, special land use review, rezonings, variances, and text amendments, with clearly defined review standards and expectations.	A	1
8	Update and implement the most current building codes available for the State of Michigan.	A	1
9	Create a fee schedule that is easily found and reviewed at least annually.	A	3



TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

- Lawton will enhance mobility, accessibility, and safety for travel by transit, bicycle, walking, and other modes of active transportation.
- Lawton will encourage alternative modes of transportation (including pedestrian, bicycle, ride sharing), where practical, and design that promotes, rather than prevents, their use.
- Promote Lawton as a walkable community.

PROJECT		PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
GOAL 1: IMPROVE MOBILITY			
1	Reconstruct M-40/Main St.	A	1
2	Develop and implement a Safe-Routes-to-School program.	B	1
3	Adopt a Complete Streets Policy.	B	1
4	Ensure that all streets in Lawton, especially Downtown, are pedestrian friendly.	B	4
5	Adopt access management standards/requirements for all new development and major redevelopment projects, especially along main street (M-40).	B	1
6	Integrate access and circulation (connectivity) standards into all land use, zoning, and development ordinances as a part of the plan/development review process for all development and redevelopment proposals.	A	1
GOAL 2: IMPROVE CONDITIONS			
1	Complete a Village-wide sidewalk assessment and develop a prioritized list of needed improvements, prioritizing areas existing within the Village without sidewalks.	B	1
2	Require the installation of sidewalks in all new commercial and residential developments, as well as the maintenance of current sidewalks through a sidewalk improvement and maintenance program.	B	1
3	Provide a safe and efficient non-motorized pathway and sidewalk system that provides connectivity, access, and mobility to various land uses, including parks and recreation, civic institutions, commercial and residential developments.	B	1
4	Tie non-motorized pathway system into the regional trail system.	C	4
GOAL 3: IMPROVE STREETScape			
1	Install enhanced streetscape along M-40 in Downtown.	A	1
2	Install bike racks on Main Street as part of new streetscape program.	A	1





TACTICAL URBANISM TOOLS

Tactical Urbanism is an approach to building neighborhoods and communities that utilizes short-term, low-cost and scalable interventions and policies to initiate long-term change.

Using a variety of tools and readily available resources, we can advance future goals as related to street safety, public space and more!

The following list is a starting point for ideas to continue Place-making in the Village of Lawton:

BARRIER ELEMENTS - Objects used for physical or visual separations between motor vehicles and people. Items could include (but are not limited to):

Traffic cones/barricades, cardboard cylendars, plastic barriers, Wooden crates, tire planters, straw wattle, and relocated parking stops

SURFACE TREATMENTS - Colorful applied markings help define spaces and enhance aesthetic appeal. Great for volunteer projects, consider the following list of materials as application options:

Duct and traffic tape, floor mats, spray paint, sidewalk chalk, and stencils

SIGNS - Wayfinding can be used for cohesive branding, help communities understand how to use spaces, and are easy to come by!

LANDSCAPE + FURNITURE - Street amenities are crucial to lingering, sitting and interaction within any environment. Opt for comfort, and don't be afraid to keep it simple!

9. STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan tables of the preceding chapter summarize the recommendations from throughout the Plan into specific categories, outlining individual tasks to be accomplished within the 20-year planning period. This format serves as a useful checklist to track accomplishments and reassign priorities. It also serves as a checklist to facilitate annual reviews of the Plan. The Long-term/Ongoing recommendations should be evaluated annually for progress with the actions set to “expire” that year.

Regulatory

Recommendations are provided for amending Village ordinances to better support Plan proposals. Most of these actions could be implemented as part of an update to the Zoning Ordinance and other Village regulations related to land use, streets, and infrastructure and the Village is the primary responsible party.

Capital Improvements

Streets, trails, utilities, parks, and municipal buildings are the integral framework that supports quality development. Two key objectives are that:

- 1) Design must complement the context of the surrounding area; and
- 2) Sustainable materials and practices should be employed to the degree practical.

Partnerships

Intergovernmental cooperation has become more important as each jurisdiction struggles with increased service demands and limited resources. Shared concerns cut across jurisdictional boundaries and affect many communities and the metro area overall. Frequently, the actions, or inactions, of one jurisdiction can have a tremendous impact on others. Increasingly, public and local officials are becoming more aware of the widespread, rather than localized, ramifications of individual community decisions on finances, service delivery, and quality of life. Watersheds and ecosystems, economic development efforts, housing, infrastructure, and transportation improvements all cross community borders, impacting not only Lawton, but the county, and the surrounding region. Cooperation with neighboring and regional entities is encouraged by this Plan.



Promotion/Programmatic

Redevelopment Ready Communities® (RRC): The Village of Lawton has chosen to participate in the Michigan Redevelopment Ready Communities® program. Integrated into this process are the RRC Best Practices. The RRC program was developed by experts in the public and private sector and are the best practices to achieve certification. They're also designed to create a predictable and straightforward experience for investors, businesses, and residents working within a community. These best practices challenge the Village of Lawton to be flexible while seeking quality development that supports a sense of place.

A driving force in Lawton's planning efforts is to be more vibrant and competitive, which means it must be ready for development. To this end, the Village of Lawton has used this planning process to attract new investment and reinvestment, identify assets and opportunities, and focus limited resources. Certified Redevelopment Ready Communities® attract and retain businesses, balance growth, and have a streamlined development approval process making pertinent information available for anyone to view. These are the foundations of this process.

Economic Incentives: Economic development initiatives can be created or refined to achieve specific implementation goals. For example, incentives could encourage employers or businesses to locate on targeted redevelopment sites. Preferred infill and redevelopment sites should include areas that can be most efficiently served by existing infrastructure and have the greatest potential to stimulate investment on nearby properties.

Funding: Plan implementation will require adequate funding from current revenue sources, state and federal grants, or public/private sector partnerships. Annual appropriations and capital improvement funds should rely on the Plan recommendations as a guide for setting priorities.



CITATIONS + CREDITS

Special thanks for photography included: Chloe Schulz, Bill Dolak, Chris McComis
<https://www.facebook.com/LawtonFarmMarket/>

Trail Town information, with thanks to : https://michigantrails.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/trail_town_manual_1.pdf

Precedent photography from the following sources:
<https://www.southhaven.org/experience/trails-town>
<https://gowightman.com/projects/moso-village>
<https://smartgrowth.org/main-street-holland-michigan/>

Stock Photography via Pexels, by Jopwell and Lum3n

Tactical Urbanism Toolkit, <https://www.translink.ca/-/media/translink/documents/rider-guide/travelsmart/tactical-urbanism-toolkit.pdf>

Tactical Urbanist's Guide, <http://tacticalurbanismguide.com/>



APPENDICES

Appendix A. Downtown Streetscape Sub-Area Plan

Appendix B. 5 Year Parks and Recreation Plan

Appendix C. Community Input

Survey comments

Engagement boards





Community Vision

The Village of Lawton

is a vibrant community

in the

...with ample sidewalks, shade trees, public art, and other amenities that increase the number of daily outdoor activities in downtown (main streets and side streets) with added tables and chairs, benches, and other amenities. Development and the rehabilitation of existing structures will be done in a way that reinforces the village's traditional character and pedestrian orientation. New land uses will be carefully controlled.

Street parking and shared parking lots will be used to reduce the number of on-street parking spaces that do not serve the entire downtown.

Downtown Lawton will be a 4-season destination that celebrates the flag on the Fourth of July just as much as the first big snowfall for snowmobiles.

Local businesses will be attracted to Downtown because of Village and DDA investment in infrastructure and street amenities.

The Zoning Ordinance to reflect Master Plan recommendations more accurately.

CONCEPTS





...ions to increase community pride.

...in new street infrastructure for events and holidays.

...the center of downtown and public parking areas with s...

...ments to provide intuitive wayfinding.

...regional trails and recreational amenities to downtown.

...the idea of an art festival.

...Lawton's history and community pride through events and/or art.

Market/Vineyard Square

...the Farmer's Market to the highly visible corner of Main Street and Union...

...use space.

...downtown community gathering space can be used for both public as well as private...

...rt local businesses, generate activity and energy, and provide additional parking f...

...tion to the market structure/canopy, include numerous elements that allow for...

...ound programming and activity options, such as:

- ...Live music and movies (using the north wall of Wagoner's)
- ...Light poles for festoon lighting
- ...Food trucks and beer garden seating
- ...cornhole and other yard games on synthetic turf
- ...hanging tables or clear plastic "igloos" and heaters
- ...Additional parking off west alley, which could flex as additional for...
- ...for farmer's market setup

Implementation Matrix: VIBRANT

Initiation	Timeline	Completion
Farmer's Market	2021	
Policy		
Ordinance		
Facade		

...ed to soften the views of cars.

...ide shade for pedestrians and outdoor dining.

...continue to invest in efforts to plant flowers and other greenery.

...movement program will assist business and property owners to improve storefronts.

...building maintenance ordinance that includes monthly monitoring of structures and property will be created to reduce property damage and maintenance issues.

...ible building facades, storefronts, and signs to create a cohesive image for downtown business district will be encouraged.

...programming that encourages the use of murals, street art, and other formats will be developed.

...ers and/or flags will be installed on light poles and buildings to add color and movement.

CONCEPTS



for potential non-...
where power would be needed at the...
spots, approximately 36 to 42 inches in diameter and...
high
Landscape Forms "Rosa" planter, Tournesol Siteworks "Village...
planter or similar
plant annuals and ornamental grasses, consider 4-season displays
use self-watering planter inserts, "adoption" of planters by business owners...
(with an agreement), and/or regular contractor watering supported by the...
trees approximately 44 feet on-center
planting trench between trees, 3-feet deep for a...
in hardscape zones (CU Structure...
(soil) underneath reinforced...
Porous Pavement...
of water...

ing lots	2022		
s	2021	DDA	
trees	2023	Village	
improvement program	2022	DDA	
maintenance code	2021	Village	
oming	2023	TBD	
allations	2023	DDA	
uccess	2022		
lowers			



...to appeal that attracts residents. Public seating, and shade that encourages... transformed from being a barrier to a "seam" to bring them together.

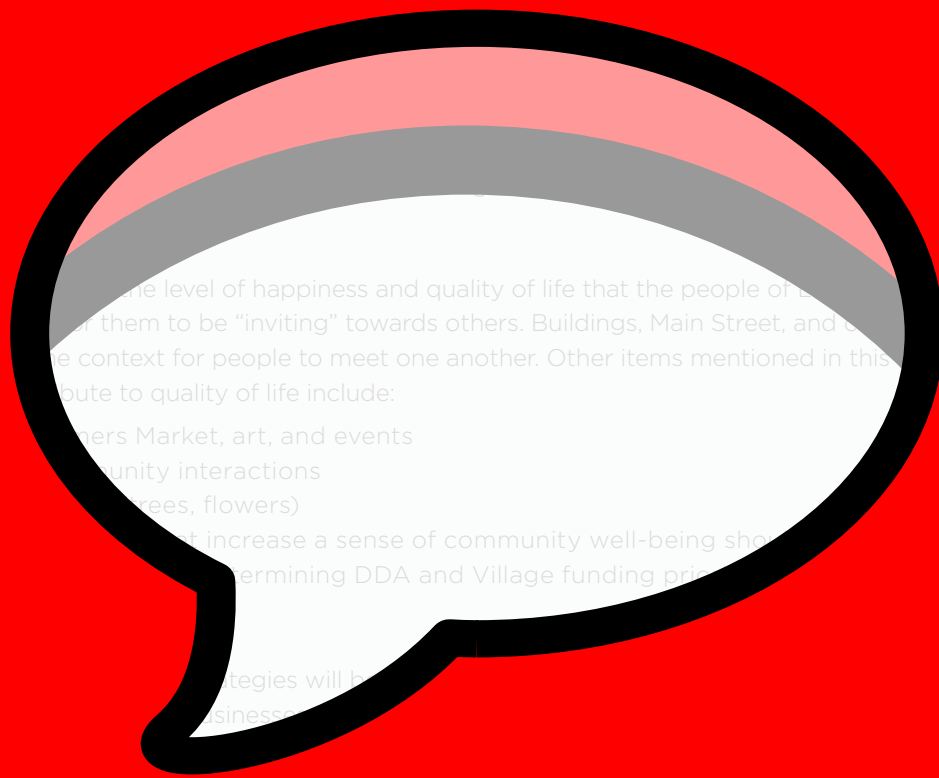
...gateways will represent the Village of Lawton with pride. Spaces will connect to dining and entertainment options. Connections between surrounding neighborhoods and downtown will be encouraged. Wellings above storefronts and behind businesses will be encouraged to encourage for customers and employees.

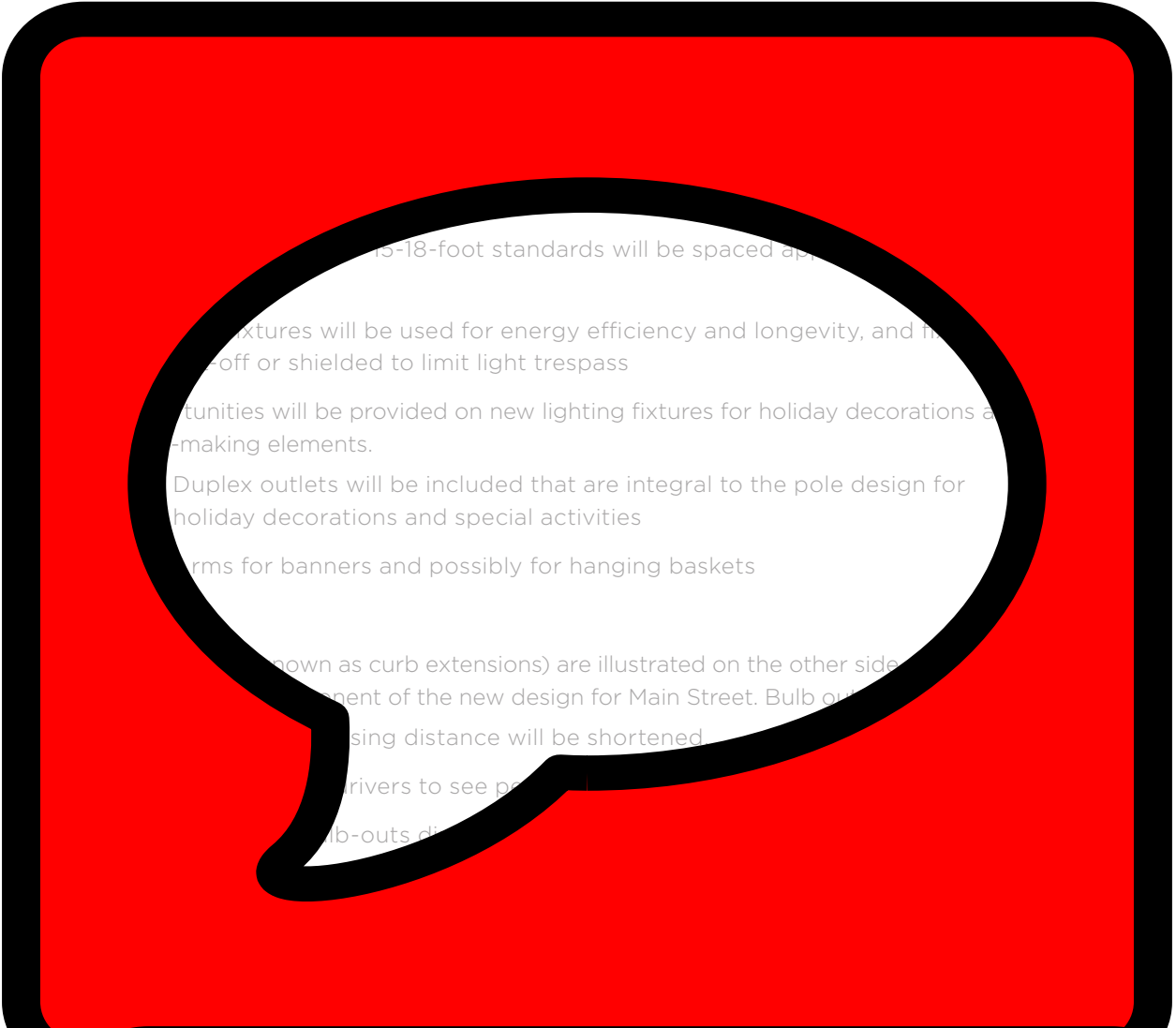
...ity of public parking areas will be improved with signage. Public parking (car, bicycle, golf cart and snowmobile) will be provided that gives a "park once" philosophy reinforced with Downtown's walkable spaces. Electric charging stations will be installed.

...assistance to improve building accessibility for persons with disabilities should be considered, perhaps in conjunction with the façade improvement program.

CONCEPTS







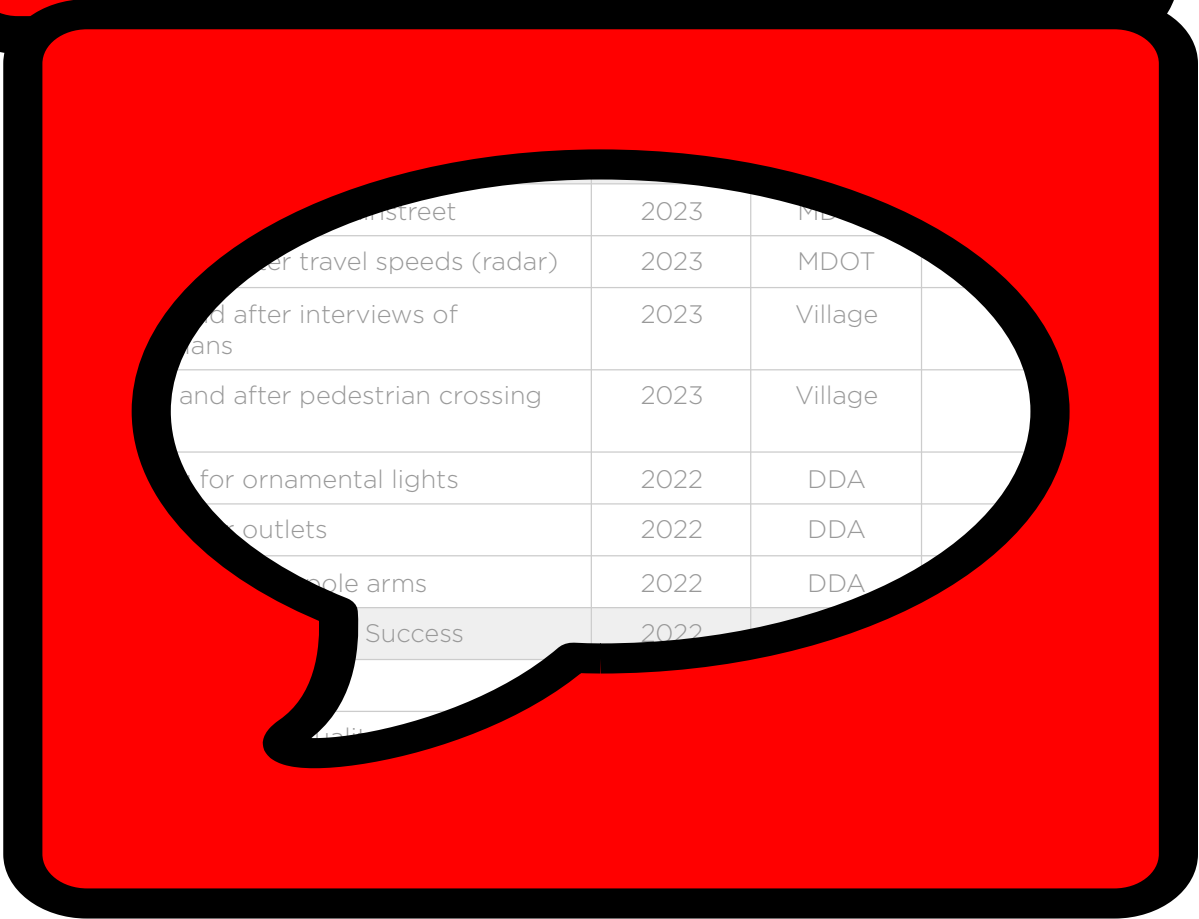
15-18-foot standards will be spaced ap...

fixtures will be used for energy efficiency and longevity, and fixtures will be off or shielded to limit light trespass

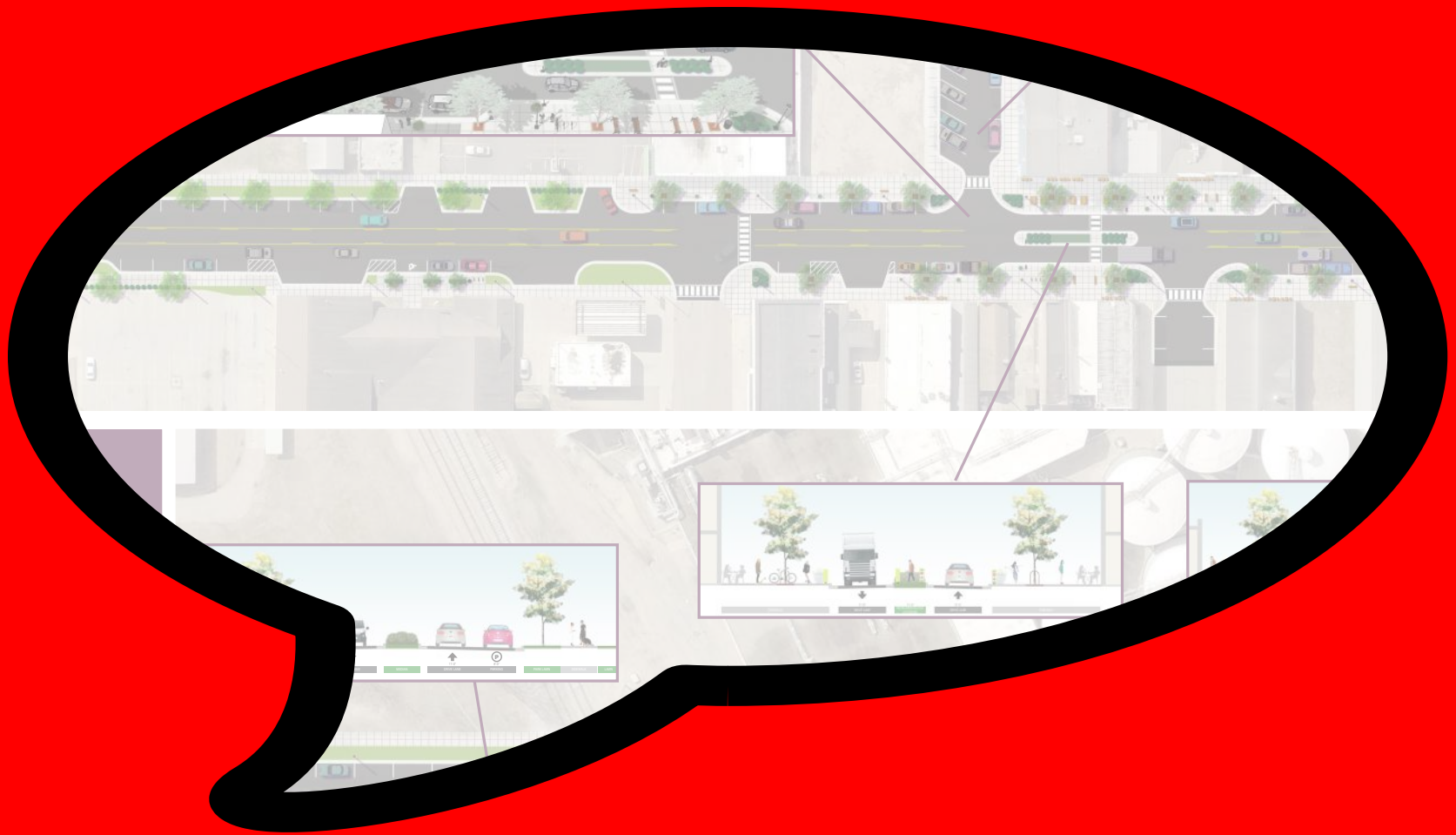
opportunities will be provided on new lighting fixtures for holiday decorations and other community-making elements.

Duplex outlets will be included that are integral to the pole design for holiday decorations and special activities

arms for banners and possibly for hanging baskets



on Main Street	2023	MDOT	
average travel speeds (radar)	2023	MDOT	
collected after interviews of residents	2023	Village	
before and after pedestrian crossing	2023	Village	
for ornamental lights	2022	DDA	
lighting outlets	2022	DDA	
lighting pole arms	2022	DDA	
Project Success	2022		



VILLAGE OF LAWTON

5 year Parks & Recreation Master Plan



2021 - 2025

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Introduction

The 2021 – 2025 Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a guide for the future development of parks and recreation facilities, operations, and maintenance in the Village. The Village recognizes the significant role that recreation plays in providing a high quality of life and improved physical health of its citizens, so this effort to create the Village of Lawton's first Parks and Recreation Master Plan was undertaken to guide the orderly development of such facilities and programs.

This plan provides the data and direction to ensure that parks and recreation offerings are aligned with the community needs and values. The plan addresses current recreation issues and identifies and prioritizes future needs of the community and the means for meeting those needs over the upcoming five-year period. This plan will form the basis for future applications for recreation grant funding from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and other granting agencies. The Plan was prepared in accordance with the MDNR's Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plans.

The foundation for the development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is to develop a strategy to further enhance the health and recreational opportunities within the village and to provide a common direction for future development and enhancements to parks, trails, and routes. The intent of this plan is to develop parks, recreational opportunities, and trail systems (non-motorized) to provide safe facilities and more choices for healthier lifestyles.

Village of Lawton staff has taken on the duties of drafting this document. To gather information regarding programming and park development, the Village utilized the online services of Survey Monkey to collect public opinion. The plan represents the best interpretation of the desires of the clients being served. This plan will provide a road map that staff and elected officials will use to guide these services for the next five years.

Community Description

Historically, Lawton was first identified as a village in 1853 when Nathan Lawton filed a description of a plat of land in the office of the County Clerk of Cayuga County New York. It was officially incorporated on November 3, 1858. Its wonderfully rich soils made it perfect for

growing grains and fruits, making Lawton renowned for its vineyards and harvests. Today, Lawton is home to the oldest standing winery and remains a premier grape growing area in the Midwest.

The Village of Lawton is a General Law Village incorporated within Antwerp Township on three sides, with Porter Township boarding to the south. Lawton is in Van Buren County, which is bordered by Allegan County, Kalamazoo County, Cass County, Berrien County, and Lake Michigan. Located in Southwest Michigan, Lawton is home to approximately 1,852 residents (based on the 2010 US Census).

Lawton is a desirable place to live with historic small-town charm. The Downtown District is the heart of the community. It is regionally known for its fine dining establishments and a premier microbrewery. In addition to outstanding dining options, downtown is home to several service industries and some shopping. Welch's Foods is a large industrial grape cooperative, producing tens of thousands of gallons of sparkling juices each year in downtown Lawton.

Lawton is located on M-40, a State Highway that runs North/South. It is three miles south of I-94 a federal Highway. These two main transportation arteries give Lawton easy access to more populated urban amenities while maintaining its individual small-town identity.

Many visitors come to the greater Lawton area during the summer to enjoy outdoor recreational opportunities such as boating, fishing, and swimming. Wintertime activities include ice-fishing and snowmobiling.

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

The Village of Lawton's Parks and Recreation facilities not only serve the Village residents but also residents of the Greater Lawton Area. While the Village of Lawton is located in the Township of Antwerp, Van Buren County, the greater Lawton Area is comprised of the Village of Lawton, Antwerp Township, and neighboring Porter Township. The population swells in the warm weather months as summer residents and visitors flock to the area.

The table below shows the population of each Census since 1980 for the three municipalities as well as Van Buren County. As of the 2010 Census, the Village of Lawton had a total population of 1,900 people. While this was a small increase from the population at the 2000 Census, it still represents a 22% increase since 1980.

Population Trends - 1980 to 2010					
	1980	1990	2000	2010	% change since 1980
Village of Lawton	1,558	1,685	1,859	1,900	22%
Antwerp Township	7,744	9,293	10,813	12,182	57%
Porter Township	3,857	3,857	2,406	3,798	-2%
Van Buren County	66,814	70,060	76,263	76,258	14%
Totals	79,973	84,895	91,341	94,138	18%

In 2010, the median age in the village was 38.9 years. 25.4% of residents were under the age of 18; 7.6% were between the ages of 18 and 24; 24.5% were from 25 to 44; 23.1% were from 45 to 64; and 19.2% were 65 years of age or older.

The gender makeup of the village was 45.1% male and 54.9% female. The spread of population based on age is important to take account of because each age group has different recreational needs and it is important to provide an opportunity for all ages, especially in a community in which all age groups are near equally represented.

The 2010 Census revealed that there were 730 households, of which 35.2% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 40.8% were married couples living together, 16.4% had a female householder with no spouse present, 5.3% had a male householder with no wife present, and 37.4% were non-families.

The median property value in Lawton, MI was \$101,000 in 2018, which is 44% smaller than the national average of \$229,700. Between 2017 and 2018 the median property value increased from \$98,100 to \$101,000, a 2.96% increase.

People in Lawton, MI have an average commute time of 22.2 minutes, and they commute by driving alone. Car ownership in Lawton, MI is approximately the same as the national average, with an average of 2 cars per household.

Within the Village of Lawton, over 33% of households are renter occupied. Renters often have less of an opportunity to provide their families with recreation as they are limited in the amount of household improvements they can make. It is important for those who are in rental situations to be provided with adequate opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Communities with high instances of poverty is one that should have a focus on creating low-cost recreation opportunities for families. While Van Buren County has an estimated 19% of the population living below the poverty level (based on the 2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate), in Lawton 10.1% of persons are below the poverty level, and that rises to 12% for children under 18.

NATURAL FEATURES

Lawton enjoys a picturesque hilly topography that is characteristic of vineyards. The slopes of the hills are gently rolling and are very inviting for outdoor activities like hiking or snowmobiling.

Lawton is surrounded by many lakes which are a draw for in state and out of state visitors who enjoy these waters for fishing, swimming, and skiing. Lawton is one of the few communities in Michigan that allow snowmobiles to drive on local streets.

ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK

Lawton is a bedroom community. Most people use their personal vehicle to drive to and from work. People can easily commute to larger metropolitan areas for work and still have a lifestyle that is not available in larger employment centers.

The Village of Lawton is comprised of many different types of building and land uses. Housing is primarily single- or two-family homes with a multi-unit apartment complex that is subsidized and provides affordable housing as well as a subsidized senior apartment complex.

The greater Lawton Area and Van Buren County are home to many regional tourism destinations such as wineries, breweries and micro-breweries, lakes, resorts, auto racing and snowmobiling. There are over 3,000 homes held for seasonal or vacation uses. Many out of state residents own summer houses in the lakes area surrounding Lawton.

Due to its unique soils, the greater Lawton area is home to numerous vineyards, fruit farms and other agriculturally based businesses. Grape/fruit processing and vegetable preservation and canning are important industries and provide many jobs and a large tax base for the community.

Administrative Structure

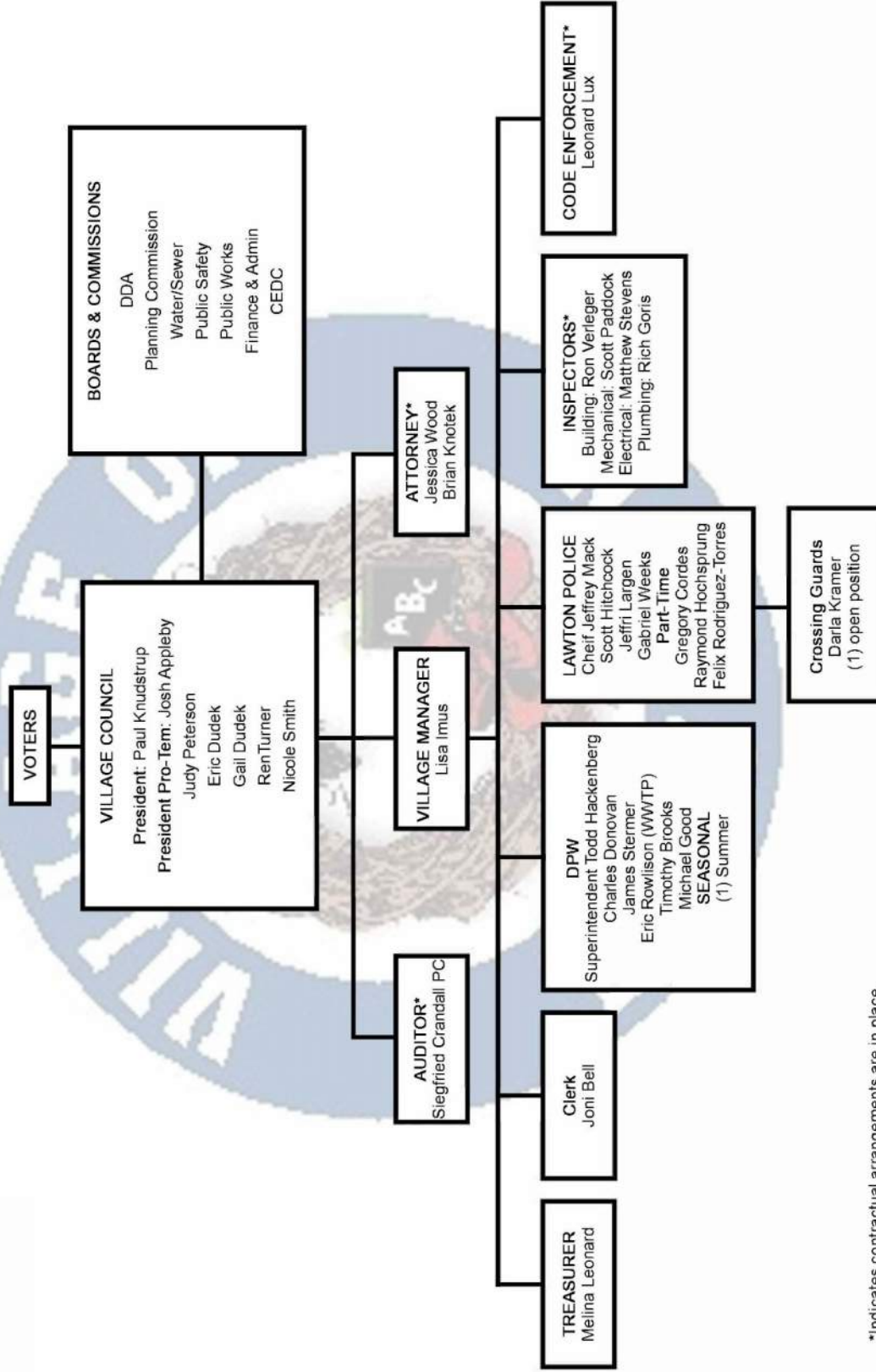
The Village of Lawton is a General Law Village, governed by a Village Council which consists of six Trustees and one Village President. These positions are elected to four-year terms by the residents. The Village operates under a Council/Manager form of government, hiring a Village Manager to oversee all village departments. The Village currently employs twelve full-time employees, several seasonal employees, two crossing-guards during the school year, and one part-time employee.

The Village does not have a special commission responsible for parks and recreation but utilizes an "ad-hoc" Village Council Committee to develop plans and goals for municipal recreation sites. The committee, however, has no direct authority to implement any proposal or expense.

Daily operations and maintenance of Lawton's parks and recreation facilities are the responsibility of the Department of Public Works (DPW). The DPW is responsible for the maintenance of the parks, streets, the municipal water/sewer system, and consists of a staff of five full time individuals as well as seasonal staff as needed. As with most small communities, the Village relies on volunteers to organize and maintain most of the recreation programs and events provided within the Village limits.



VILLAGE OF LAWTON ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



*Indicates contractual arrangements are in place.

PROJECTED BUDGET

The Village Council is responsible for determining the operating budget and capital improvements for the parks and recreation programs for Village facilities. They are also responsible for appointing the Village Manager, serving on various committees, approving projects and grants, appointing community members to Board and Commissions, and approving the purchase or sale of land.

Funding for the Village of Lawton Parks and Recreation comes from Village tax dollars distributed through the General Fund.

	2019-20 AMENDED BUDGET	2020-21 AMENDED BUDGET	2021-22 PROPOSED BUDGET
PARKS DEPARTMENT			
FICA	1,250	1,500	1,650
DEFERRED COMPENSATION	700	700	770
M.E.S.C.	250	250	275
OPERATING SUPPLIES	2,500	2,500	3,000
ELECTRIC	2,000	3,000	3,000
EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE	1,000	1,000	1,100
VEHICLE RENT	10,000	10,000	11,000
KID'S DREAM IMPROVEMENTS	2,000	2,000	2,200
PARKS TOTAL:	33,700	37,950	41,745

During fiscal year 2020-2021 the Parks and Recreation budget was \$37,950. Maintenance of the parks was the largest expense. For the previous five years, this has been the Villages' practice with budgeted expenses relatively flat in the General Fund.

During the 2019 – 20 Fiscal year, the Downtown Development Authority began raising funds to construct a splash pad at the Chancy Lewis Park. The success of these efforts resulted in an MEDC Patronicity matching grant for \$40,000. In total, \$142,000 was raised to construct the new Splash Pad. It officially opened in June of 2020 and came in under-budget at \$116,000. The remaining DDA fundraising revenue is being reserved for additional park and recreation improvements in Chancy Lewis Park.

CURRENT FUNDING HISTORY

The Village has not previously received any grant funding from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR).

VOLUNTEERS IN THE PARKS AND RECREATION PROGRAM

The Village of Lawton often utilizes volunteers in maintenance and beautification roles in Village Parks and downtown. DDA Board members volunteer to plant and maintain flower beds and planters in the Downtown District, Cannon Park, and the North and South gateways to the Village. Clubs and teams (football, basketball, baseball/softball, National Honor Society) from the high school often volunteer for special events and park “clean-up” days.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH NON-PROFIT AND OTHER PUBLIC AGENCIES

Lawton Youth Baseball and Softball is the organization that arranges and operates the youth baseball program within the Stephayn Sports Complex on property owned by the Village. Approximately 200 participants are involved from the region, including a portion residing outside of the Village of Lawton. The Lawton Rocket Football organization runs and manages the Village’s rocket football fields on the corner of E First Street and Hamilton.

Senior citizen activities are coordinated through Senior Services of Van Buren County and include but are not limited to Adult Day-care services, counseling, health and fitness, Meals on Wheels, congregate meals and transportation.

A local Farmer’s Market is held weekly at Chancy Lewis Park from July through October.

The Village of Lawton Museum is a volunteer organization that is available year-round by appointment.

The Lawton Lions Heritage Community Center & Grape and Wine Museum is a regionally renowned facility that hosts large events such as weddings. The museum portion is nestled in the huge former wine cellars of the complex. The center itself is a unique architectural structure of cobblestone located in the heart of the “Fruit Belt” of southwest Michigan. The 1903 structure, a state and national historic

site, is the state's oldest standing winery building which makes it a most appropriate setting for the Museum.

Other programs that occur during the year include:

- Easter Egg Hunt – organized by a local church and volunteer group
- Memorial Day Parade – a parade through the Village ending with a ceremony at the Oak Grove Cemetery
- Ride for Wishes – A fundraising bike ride for terminally ill children – usually in June
- Summerfest – A 4th of July Celebration with a one-day street festival with parade, concerts, craft fair and fireworks.
- Veteran's Day Remembrance Ceremony at Oak Grove Cemetery
- Fall Homecoming Parade – a tradition provided by the Lawton Community School District in honor of Lawton Alumni
- Christmas Parade – A winter evening parade featuring lights and sounds of the season that winds through downtown



Recreation Inventory

In order to plan for parks and recreation in the future, the types of facilities that currently exist in the Village need to be examined. It is also helpful to compare these existing facilities to various standards as one measure of the adequacy of the parks and recreation facilities in the area.

PARK CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

The Recommended Classification System for Local and Regional Open Space from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)

defines various types of parks. Five of these are applicable to and found within the parks owned and operated by the Village of Lawton.

They include:

- ✓ A Mini-Park is less than one acre in size and is less than 1/4 mile from a residential setting. It is used to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs.
- ✓ School-Parks can combine parks with school sites to help meet the recreational space needs for the community.
- ✓ Community Parks serve a broader purpose to an area. They have more amenities and usually serve two or more neighborhoods within 1/2 to three miles and are generally 30 - 50 acres in size.
- ✓ A Special Use facility is oriented toward single-purpose use, such as a football complex.
- ✓ A Natural Resource Area is land that is set aside for the preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics or buffering.

COMPARISON TO STANDARDS

Comparison to Standards – Park Acreage				
	Recommended Acres Per 1,000 Population	Existing Acreage	Recommended for Lawton	
			Population 1,852	Deficiency
Entire Park System	5 to 20	243.0	9.3 to 37	none
Community Parks	5 to 8	7.2	9.3 to 14.8	none
Mini-Parks	.25 to .5	0.3	.5 to 1	slight
Natural Resource Areas	Variable	173.0	1.9 to 3.7	none
Special Use Facilities	Variable	32.6	Variable	none
School Facilities	Variable	30	Variable	none

The Village of Lawton has approximately 243 acres of total park space for its 2010 population of 1,852 residents. General industry standards would suggest 5 to 20 acres of total park space per 1,000 citizens, or Approximately 10 to 37 acres of total park land for the Village of Lawton.

From this standpoint, the Village exceeds standards in each of its categories of parks and recreational facilities, except for one. Mini parks should be at .5 acres and is slightly under at .3 acres. In general, the centrally located school playground and other open space make up for that deficiency. (See the table below) One area for growth may be in Lawton's trail facilities and senior activities.

As discussed later in the public input section, there is high support in Lawton to begin a formal trail network and interest in providing increased pedestrian access.

The satisfactory amount of existing open space should not inhibit the Village from seeking new recreational lands when conditions are appropriate.

ACCESSIBILITY

Creating a park system that is safe, accessible, and usable to all individuals, including those with disabilities, is essential. A grading system has been developed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) to simply and effectively rate park facilities based on their ease of use and accessibility for handicapped residents, based on the American Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines. Each park facility was evaluated and compared to the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design by Village staff.



Included in the Recreation Inventory is an accessibility of each park. The accessibility grading system uses a five-point system ranging from one (none of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines), to five (the entire park was developed/renovated using the principles of universal design).

MDNR Accessibility Grading System for Parks and Recreational Facilities	
Accessibility Grade	Definition
1	None of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines.
2	Some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines.
3	Most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines.
4	The entire park meets accessibility guidelines.
5	The entire park was developed/renovated using the principles of universal design.

The Village of Lawton is dedicated to increasing accessibility at each of its parks when improvements are made. This includes accessible parking, paths, restrooms, activity areas, amenities, and signage. As noted in the inventory listing, Lawton's parks do not meet all criteria for accessibility to the disabled. The Village of Lawton is committed to improving the accessibility of its facilities and is considering a variety of options to make this possible at its varied park and recreational facility locations.

PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES INVENTORY

The Village of Lawton currently has five public parks, a privately owned golf club, and several public-school facilities scattered throughout the Village. On the following page is a Park Facilities Chart providing an inventory of recreational opportunities. A map with park and school locations follows on the next page.

Village of Lawton

Parks and Recreation Facilities

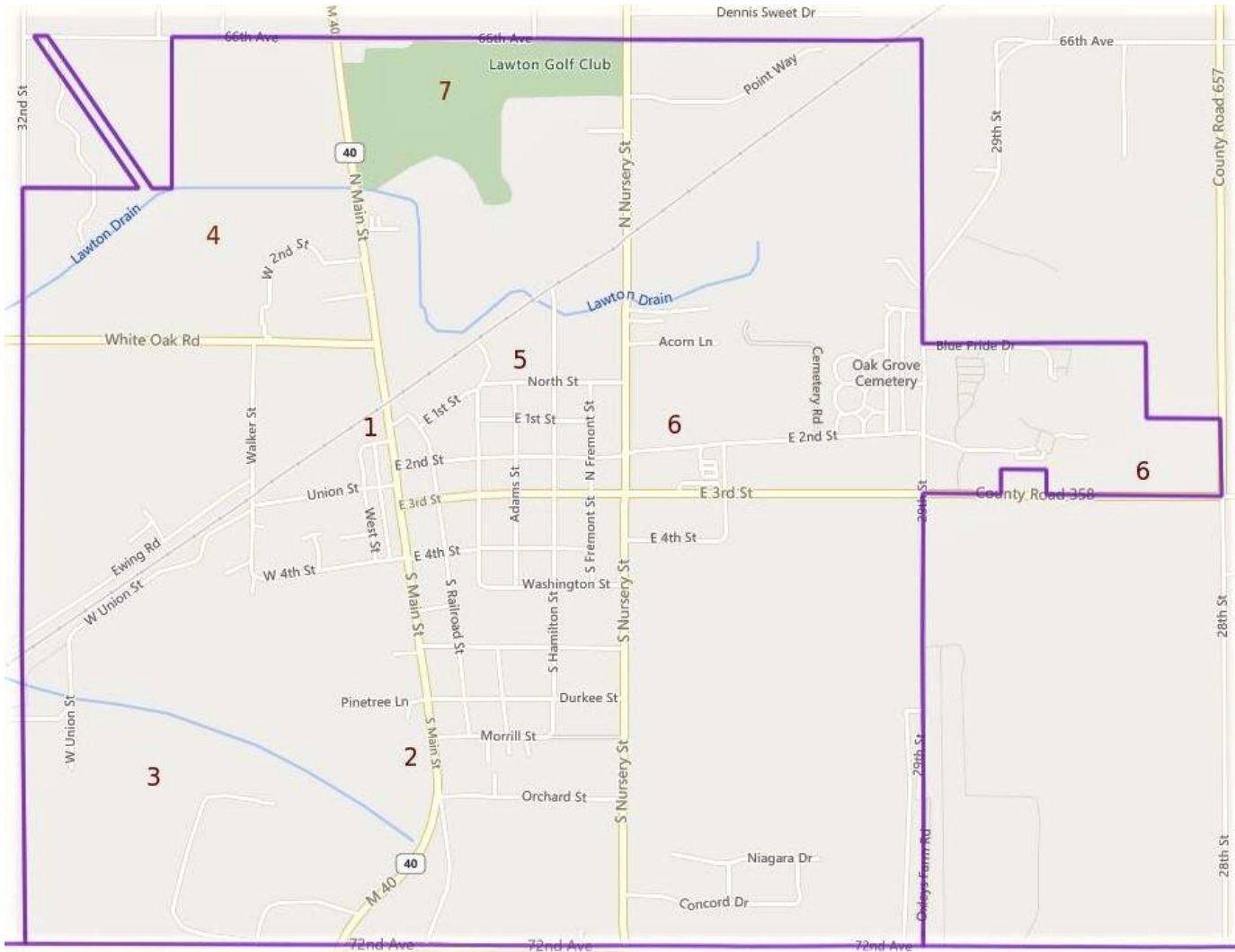
Inventory

Village of Lawton Parks and Recreation Facilities Inventory						
	Cannon Park	Chancy Lewis Park	Village Conservation Area	Stephayn Sports Complex	Rocket Football Fields	Lawton Community School Facilities
Accessibility	3	2	1	1	1	3
Park Type*	MP	CP	NRA	SUF	SUF	SP
Area (Acres)	0.3	7.2	173.0	30.0	2.6	30.0
Water Access	No	No	No	No	No	No
Service Area	Village	Community	Community	School District	School District	School District
Ball Diamonds				7		2
Pavilion		2				
Basketball Court		4				2
Benches	1	5		2	2	
Bike Rack		2				
Bleachers		4		4		Various
Concession Area				1		2
Disc Golf Course						9 holes
Football Field					1	1
Grill		4				
Horseshoe Pits		4				
Park Sign	1	1		1		
Parking		Yes		Yes		Yes
Picnic Tables		22				
Playground		1				1
Restrooms	**	1		1	**	Various
Soccer Field				1		1
Splash Pad		1				
Storage Area		1		2		Various
Tennis Courts		1				
Volleyball						2
Water Access						
Other	Veteran's Memorial					
*Park Type: MP=Mini Park; CP=Community Park; NRA=Natural Recourse Area; SUF=Special Use Facility; SP=School Park ** = Portable Restroom.						

VILLAGE OF LAWTON

PARKS AND RECREATION

FACILITIES MAP



- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Cannon Park | 5. Rocket Football Fields |
| 2. Chancy Lewis Park | 6. Lawton Community Schools |
| 3. Village Conservation Area | 7. Lawton Golf Club |
| 4. Stephayn Sports Complex | |

PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES: DESCRIPTIONS

Lawton offers its residents 5 recreational facilities with a variety of capacities for active and passive recreation. Below is a description of each facility, which includes a brief description of its amenities.

Cannon Park

Type of Park: Mini-Park

Accessibility Rating: 3/5

Area (acres): 0.3

Cannon Park is a mini park that features Lawton's Veteran's Memorial at the northern gateway to downtown. Holiday displays are created in the park for the summer, fall, and Christmas seasons. It also serves as a snowmobile trailhead in the winter, which is maintained by the Southwest Michigan Snow-stompers.

Chancy Lewis Park

Type of Park: Community Park

Accessibility Rating: 2/5

Area (acres): 7.2

Chancy Lewis Park is situated at the southern edge of the Village. The park was the site of Lawton's first baseball park in the late 1800's and continued with that use until the 1950's. During the 70's the location was used for showing outdoor movies and had an ice-skating rink until the 1980's when it fell into disrepair and was removed.



The Park now offers two covered pavilions with picnic tables, a large 'community built' play structure, horseshoe pits, a tennis court, and 3 half-court basketball courts.

During the summer of 2020, a splash pad was constructed. The park also offers picnic tables, grills, and several large open space fields for

various recreational uses. There is a heated barrier free bathroom that is available year-round. The Farmer's Market is also held in the park July through October, and snowmobilers use portions of the park for parking during the winter.

Village Conservation Area

Type of Park: Natural Resource Area

Accessibility Rating: 1/5

Area (acres): 173

This property is a large, wooded area along the west side of the Village. Local residents often hike here to relax, bird watch and view wildlife in their natural habitat. While the area is not maintained by the Village, many traversable paths have been carved over the years.

Stephayn Sports Complex

Type of Park: Special Use Facility

Accessibility Rating: 1/5

Area (acres): 30

The Lawton Youth Baseball and Softball organization manages and maintains the Stephayn Sports Complex. The park has 7 ball fields and a soccer field. It also has a concessions and restroom facility and a storage area.

Rocket Football Field

Type of Park: Special Use Facility

Accessibility Rating: 1/5

Area (acres): 2.6

The Rocket football Field is a Special Use Facility that is primarily used in the fall for rocket football and cheerleading practices and games. The rocket football organization owns and maintains the fields.

Lawton Community Schools

Type of Park: School Park

Accessibility Rating: 3/5

Area (acres): 30

There are two primary areas for recreation offered by Lawton Community Schools. A large playground is located to the north of the elementary building. This is open for neighborhood use when school is not in session. A soccer field is located at the Middle School, and there is a Disc Golf on both the Middle School and High School grounds. The High School also offers 4 Gymnasiums (3 for competitions, 1 for community events such as youth sports), 1 multipurpose room (available to rent), a Weight Room, space for vocal and instrumental music, the Owen Bray Auditorium (seats 400), 4 baseball and softball fields, and Packer Stadium for football, soccer, and track (seats 1200).

Public Facilities Outside of Lawton

Huzzy Lake, Bankson Lake, Bankson Lake, Cedar Lake, Gravel Lake, Eagle Lake, and Three Mile Lake – all within five miles of Lawton Village - have public access for fishing and boating. Maple Lake has a public access for fishing and swimming

Private Facilities in or near Lawton

Pin High Golf Course is a nine-hole golf course located within the Village limits.

Lake Cora Golf Course is an eighteen-hole public golf course that is within ten miles of the Village limits.

Copper Grille has a banquet facility specializing in weddings and other private parties located downtown in the historic Village Hall.

Staff affiliated with the local Lions Club operate the regionally renowned Lawton Community Center that annually host wedding receptions, Wine-Tasting festivals and many other events. The Lions make the facility available for community sponsored events at no charge.

A snowmobile trail runs through Lawton that annually attracts thousands of snowmobilers; Lawton is one of the few communities in Michigan that allow snow mobiles on the public side streets.

There are numerous grape vineyards and fruit farms that offer roadside markets and u-pick opportunities for those interested in agritourism.

Community Input

With the successful construction of the Splash Pad in Chancy Lewis Park, use of Village park facilities has soared. The Village Council has since decided to increase emphasis on parks and recreation and initiate its first Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This Plan will provide the basis for public policy decisions and technical coordination in recreational development within the Village.

One of the most important aspects of a community's Recreation Plan is the inclusion of resident's opinions about how they view the future of their parks and recreation system. To comply with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation Open Space and Greenway Plans, the Village of Lawton offered two opportunities for public input, along with a 30-day period for review and comment on the draft Recreation Plan.

An online community input survey was offered to the community for three weeks during December 2020. The survey was publicized in a variety of methods, including Facebook sharing and advertisements, community flyers with QR code link to the survey, the Village Newsletter mailed with water bills, an article in local newspaper, as an item on the DDA, Planning Commission and Council Agendas, and an Email blitz to City contacts.

The survey gathered information about the community's priorities with regard to the Village's park and recreation system and received 333 responses.

A second means of input was provided during the required public review period of the draft from December 23rd, 2020 to January 26, 2021. A third opportunity for public input was made available at a public hearing on January 26th, 2021.

SURVEY

In order to have an understanding of the demographics and geographic qualities of the respondents, the survey asked respondents several general questions about themselves. Over 93% of the respondents identified themselves as residents from either the Village or two surrounding townships (115 from Village of Lawton, 106 from Porter Township, and 75 from Antwerp Township.) The survey was well represented by older adults (83% were over 35 years of age), and the Village will continue to seek input from younger adults and youth

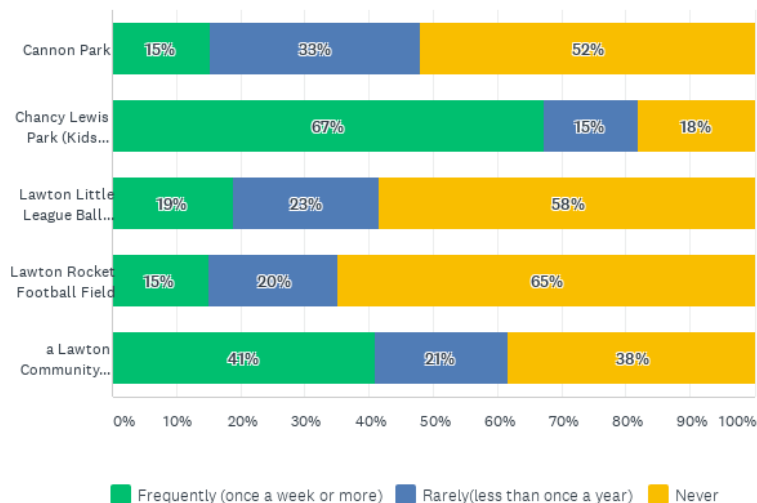
in the planning and development of our Parks and Recreation endeavors.

When asked how important parks, trails and open space were as a factor to their household's quality of life, 94% indicated it was important to them.

Of primary concern to the Village Council was parks accessibility. In answer to the question "have you noticed any physical (or other) obstacles to accessing or enjoying the parks?", a majority of the respondents collectively said "no", or 271 of the 315 who chose to answer the question. Of the 30 people who commented on specific items, 10 mentioned unruly teens; 8 commented on maintenance and the remaining 12 comments were related to various safety concerns.

The Village of Lawton has six park and recreation facilities. The Conservation Area is large and rural, two are at the gateway to our downtown - Cannon Park to the north and Chancy Lewis Park to the south. The other three are special use facilities (football and baseball fields) and the Lawton Community Schools facilities. This is how often respondents visit each park:

Q8 How often do you and your family use the following parks and recreation facilities?



Perhaps not unexpected, Chancy Lewis Park with the splash pad and large playground was the most popular, with the Lawton Community Schools facilities being the second most visited park. More than 150 respondents said they did not visit the baseball/softball fields at the

Stephayn Sports Complex or the Rocket Football Field at all. A fair number of people---over 100---said they visited Cannon Park a few times per year.

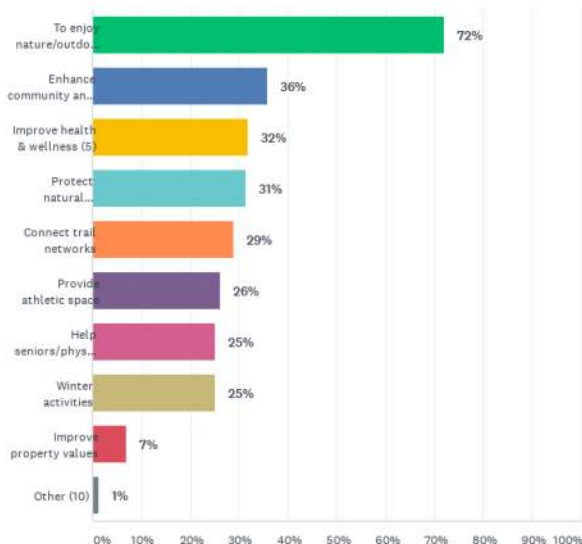
Most of the respondents typically use the Village parks for the playgrounds (173), and 132 people said they frequent the new Splash Pad. Many people use the parks to walk/bike/run (103) or just visit the parks for relaxation (192). Following those activities is use of the Special Use Facilities (Baseball/Softball/Football). Forty-three people said they used parks for "other" reasons.

The Village Council also asked what types of parks and recreation amenities the community thought were important. The survey listed 10 items, including "other". Respondents could pick and prioritize all, some or none of the listed amenities.

By far, the highest response overall was to enjoy nature and outdoors (72%).

Most of the remaining categories all ranged from 36% to 25% and were (in order) Enhance Community and Sense of Place; Improve Health and Wellness;

Q9 Which of the following of parks and recreation amenities are the most important to you?



Protect the Natural Environment and Wildlife; Connect to Regional Trail Networks; Provide Athletic Space and Opportunities; Help Seniors and Physically Challenged Individuals remain Active; and Provide Winter Activities. Improve Property Values only received 7% of the votes. Several "Other" responses included ATV trails.

Next, the Village Council asked what the community's preferences were to improve the parks and recreation system. The survey listed 11 items, including "other", and asked people to list the items according

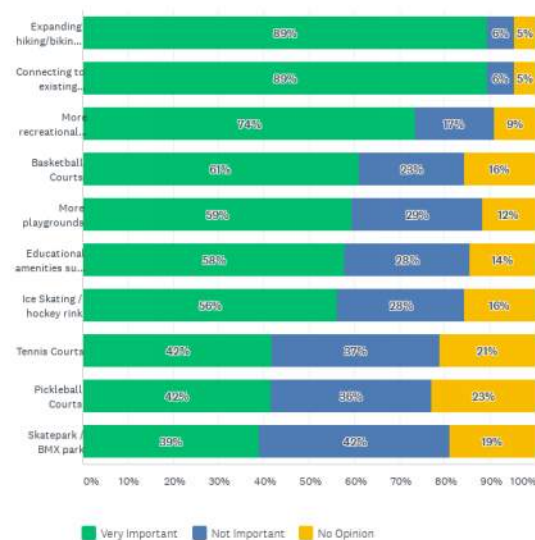
to priorities from: Very Important, Somewhat Important, Important, Not Important and No Opinion. Respondents could pick and prioritize all, some or none of the listed amenities.

The highest response overall was a tie between “expanding Hiking/biking trail network” and “connecting to existing hiking/biking trail networks. The second highest responses were to “expand availability of recreational equipment such as shuffleboard, playground equipment, etc.”. Respondents listed the Skate Park and Tennis Courts as their lowest priority, however due to the low number of youths responding to the survey, the Council will revisit the demand for a Skate Park. Other popular responses supported improving/adding basketball courts and more playgrounds.

Another way to determine priorities for the Village's parks system was to ask respondents to select goals that were most important to them and their families.

Maintaining existing parks and facilities was ranked the highest priority, and close behind was preserving natural areas. The community also felt strong about emphasizing the development of a multi-use trail system, followed by the need for new parks and recreation facilities as well as acquiring land for future parks.

Q7 Indicate your preferences to improve our parks and recreation system.



The final question of the survey was open-ended so that respondents could add general comments about parks in the Village. There was a wide range of discussion topics, some indirectly related to parks, such as concerns about the speed on M40 and the ability to cross the street and unruly teens. Notably, the most common comment was the need for additional hiking/biking trails and to connect them regionally (20 mentions). Additionally, Pickleball Courts, ATV accommodations, an ice rink, and a dog park were requested multiple times.

Goals and Objectives

Developing goals and objectives is an important part of the recreation planning process. The overall goal of a parks and recreation department is to provide recreation opportunities for the community it serves. More specific goals must be based on the demographic characteristics of the population served, the physical and environmental characteristics of the area, and the input of the community.

Goals provide overarching and general ideas of the desires and needs of community members in relation to their parks. Objectives carry out the purpose of these goals. The action plan is the most specific level of planning and it identifies specific projects and programs. These can include organizational, staffing, programming, public information, and operation and maintenance actions.

An overall guide for the recreation goals for the Village of Lawton will be to focus efforts on developing additional programs and recreational opportunities within the community; leveraging development and maintenance efforts by pursuing partnerships, grant funding, and volunteer efforts when appropriate.

The goals and objectives were developed through the Village Council and Administration and incorporate recreation planning best practices and the results of the public input process. The following goals and objectives are numbered for identification purposes only. Each goal is considered to carry an equal degree of importance.

Goal 1: Take advantage of economic development opportunities presented by downtown and commercial development in order to enhance and further parks and recreation objectives.

Parks and recreational facilities are viable economic development tools contributing to an increased quality of life in a community and inspire community pride. Parks and recreational facilities attract visitors to a community to spend money at local businesses.

Objectives

- Develop public access and strong connections to downtown.
- Target development of multi-functional parks and recreational facilities
- Upgrade deteriorating facilities

- Continue to add amenities to park facilities based upon community input and need.

Goal 2: Provide non-motorized trails and bicycle routes for recreational and transportation use.

Trails and bike routes are especially important for the residents of Lawton. They were mentioned frequently by survey respondents as an improvement they would like expanded in the Village. This is a component of a parks system that can be used by people of all ages and abilities.

Objectives

- Expand walking trails and multi-use paths within existing parks.
- Develop a walking and biking trail network across the Village to connect all parks, schools and downtown.
- Improve path surfaces when appropriate.
- Work with neighboring and regional governmental and non-profit entities to develop regional trail network.

Goal 3: Provide multi-generational recreational opportunities and quality leisure time activities with special consideration for activities that improve health and fitness and appeal to all ages within the village.

Health and well-being are an important component of one's quality of life. Lawton can use its parks and recreation facilities to offer activities and programs that will improve the health and fitness of its citizens.

Objectives

- Develop programs and facilities for multi-generational uses.
- Provide both passive and active programming for a variety of ages and abilities of the population.
- Continue to evaluate unmet recreation needs and recommend various programs in line with current trends.
- Provide recreational opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Ensure that improvements and upgrades to park facilities are handicapped-accessible, where feasible.
- Look at new amenities to satisfy various age groups.
- Ensure public parks are safe.

Goal 4: Create community awareness of Lawton recreational opportunities and promote them to citizens and visitors.

Communicating with the public is an important component of any municipal parks and recreation organization. As our population increasingly relies on the Internet for information, the Village needs to take advantage of online opportunities to communicate and interact with citizens.

Objectives

- Work with local education, arts and culture, and civic organizations to provide unique programming opportunities at the Village's recreational sites and other venues.
- Work to enhance social media, web site, and other online opportunities to communicate with the public about Lawton park facilities and events.

Action Plan

ACTION PLAN LIST		
Land Acquisition Priorities		
Chancy Lewis Entrance to expand driveway		
Downtown property for recreational facility expansion		
Project Priorities		
High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Cannon Park		
New benches and trash receptacles	Construct Gazebo	
Chancy Lewis Park		
Pickleball Courts	Investigate ways to improve safety and security	
Fence along M-40 sidewalk	Sight lighting	
Improve restroom facilities	Increase parking	
Tree Trimming		
Expand driveway entrance to improve safety	Create user fees and other revenue sources from park rentals	
Village Conservation Area		
Improve/Create trails	Create regional trail connections	
Stephayn Sports Complex		
Upgrade facilities / consider relocation to downtown	Create regional trail connections	
Pathways / Trails		
Establish a Committee to Master Plan Community Trail Project	Create regional trail connections	
Other Needs & Desires		
Downtown Common Space, a year-round flexible space that will allow for passive recreation, music events, dining, and public gathering		
Facilitate participation in regional park and recreation projects		
Upgrade all park facilities to meet barrier free accessibility requirements, using universal design principals where possible.		

Conclusion

In an effort to provide quality recreational opportunities for its citizens, the Village of Lawton has developed this recreation plan as a tool to guide the development of park and recreational facilities over the next five years. This plan represents the ongoing commitment by the Village to establish recreational goals and objectives for the community. The Plan will also provide the Village of Lawton eligibility for grants from the Department of Natural Resources to assist the community in reaching its recreational goals.

Community input was collected via an online survey conducted in December of 2020. Goals and objectives for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan were then identified based on existing priorities and from the input collected through the survey. From there, Action Plan items were developed and prioritized.

The Village Manager completed the draft Recreation Master Plan document, and it was made available for review at the Village Hall and on the Lawton Village website beginning on December 23, 2020.

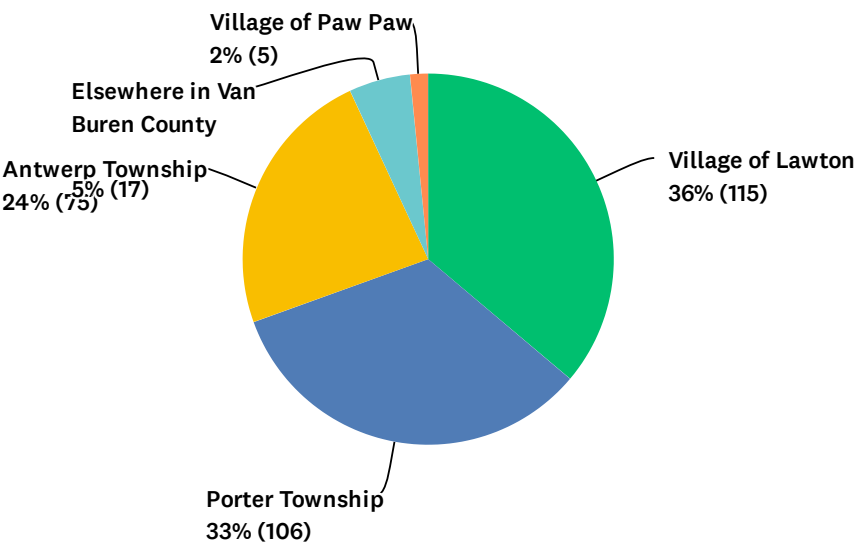
The opportunity to review the draft plan and the notice of the public hearing were advertised in the *Courier Leader*, on the Village Website, and in the Village Newsletter. The final opportunity for community input occurred at the advertised public meeting during a Village Council Meeting held prior to adoption of the plan on January 26, 2021. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, this meeting took place virtually from the Lawton Village Hall.

On January 26, 2021, the Lawton Village Council passed a resolution adopting the 2021 – 2025 Village of Lawton Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Appendix A – Survey Results

Q1 Please indicate where you live

Answered: 318 Skipped: 0



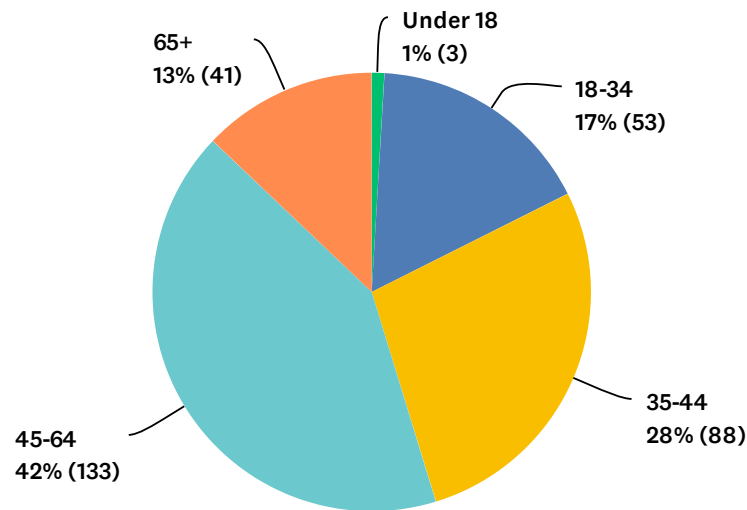
ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Village of Lawton (1)		36%	115
Porter Township (3)		33%	106
Antwerp Township (2)		24%	75
Elsewhere in Van Buren County (5)		5%	17
Village of Paw Paw (4)		2%	5
Other (please specify) (6)		0%	0
TOTAL			318

BASIC STATISTICS				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.00	5.00	2.00	2.16	1.10

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
	There are no responses.	

Q2 What is your age?

Answered: 318 Skipped: 0

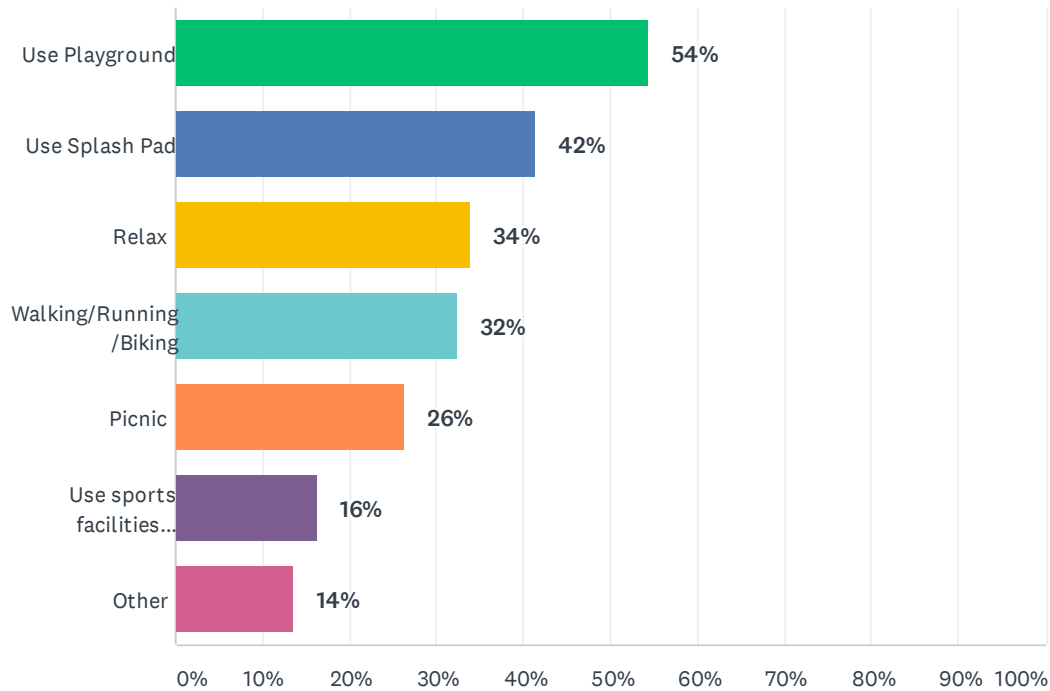


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Under 18 (1)		1%	3
18-34 (2)		17%	53
35-44 (3)		28%	88
45-64 (4)		42%	133
65+ (5)		13%	41
TOTAL			318

BASIC STATISTICS				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.00	5.00	4.00	3.49	0.95

Q3 What do you typically do in Village of Lawton parks?

Answered: 318 Skipped: 0



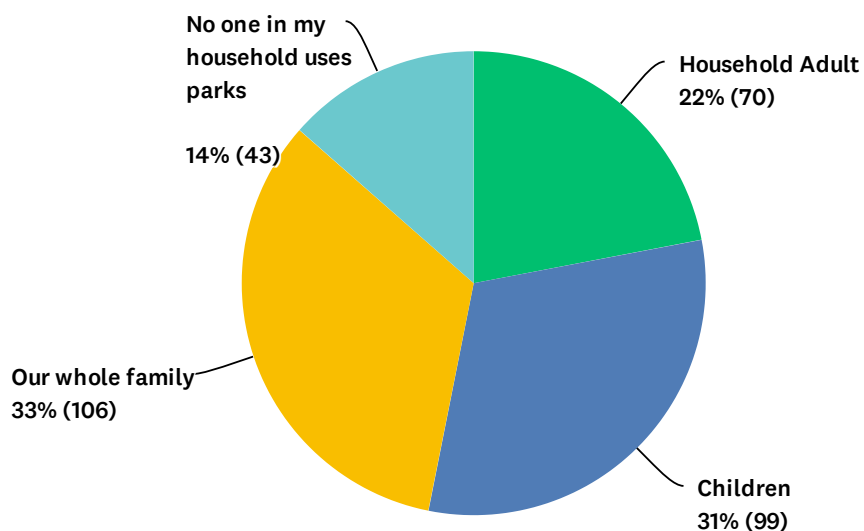
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Use Playground (2)	54%	173
Use Splash Pad (3)	42%	132
Relax (5)	34%	108
Walking/Running/Biking (1)	32%	103
Picnic (6)	26%	84
Use sports facilities (baseball, football, basketball, etc) (4)	16%	52
Other	14%	43
Total Respondents: 318		

BASIC STATISTICS				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.00	7.00	3.00	3.45	1.85

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	n/a	1/9/2021 1:04 PM
2	Love how it enhances community	1/8/2021 2:09 PM
3	Nature walks, picking berries, etc.	1/5/2021 3:26 PM
4	I honestly have never been	1/4/2021 8:37 PM
5	Farmers market	1/4/2021 8:17 PM
6	Nothing. Did not know about any trails	1/4/2021 12:40 PM
7	None	1/4/2021 11:16 AM
8	Boating	1/4/2021 9:48 AM
9	None	1/4/2021 8:35 AM
10	We use the shelter for family reunions, birthdays, etc.	12/24/2020 12:03 AM
11	Nothing	12/23/2020 3:02 PM
12	Place to let dogs off leash	12/23/2020 10:56 AM
13	Tennis	12/23/2020 10:14 AM
14	NEw to area so haven't usedany	12/23/2020 9:39 AM
15	Look forward to using splash pad	12/20/2020 5:48 PM
16	we used to play tennis, but the courts need work	12/18/2020 1:40 PM
17	Don't use your park.	12/18/2020 9:49 AM
18	We don't use the park much...teenagers smoking and cussing	12/18/2020 9:13 AM
19	WORK	12/18/2020 8:39 AM
20	Don't use it	12/16/2020 11:39 PM
21	Nothing	12/16/2020 12:20 PM
22	Waiting for Covid to get under control	12/16/2020 11:53 AM
23	we don't use the parks	12/16/2020 9:14 AM
24	Lawton Bootcamp indoor facility	12/16/2020 12:04 AM
25	I would walk if we had a trail!	12/15/2020 10:05 PM
26	Meet with students & families for learning activities during COVID-19- prior did not use park	12/15/2020 10:00 PM
27	Na	12/15/2020 10:00 PM
28	Not much to do	12/15/2020 9:24 PM
29	Going to big T	12/15/2020 7:24 PM
30	watch grandkids play	12/15/2020 4:17 PM
31	I don't use the parks	12/15/2020 4:14 PM
32	Nothing	12/15/2020 3:31 PM
33	Kids used to use park but have outgrown	12/15/2020 2:52 PM
34	nothing	12/15/2020 2:35 PM
35	just moving into to Lawton so really haven't used any yet	12/15/2020 2:18 PM
36	Farmer's Market	12/15/2020 1:46 PM
37	Don't use often	12/15/2020 1:08 PM

Q4 Who in your household is the most active user of our parks?

Answered: 318 Skipped: 0

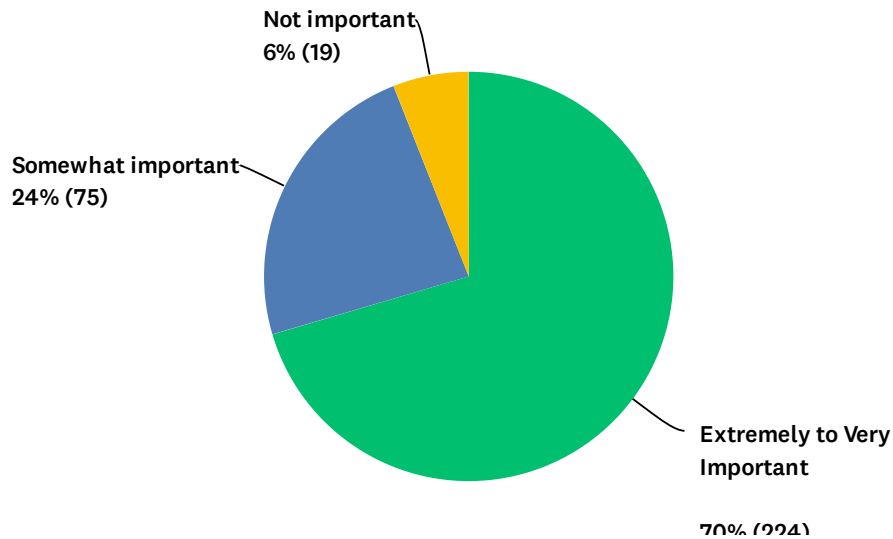


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Household Adult		22%	70
Children		31%	99
Our whole family		33%	106
No one in my household uses parks		14%	43
TOTAL			318

BASIC STATISTICS				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.00	5.00	3.00	3.19	1.28

Q5 How important are parks, trails, and open space to you and your household's quality of life?

Answered: 318 Skipped: 0

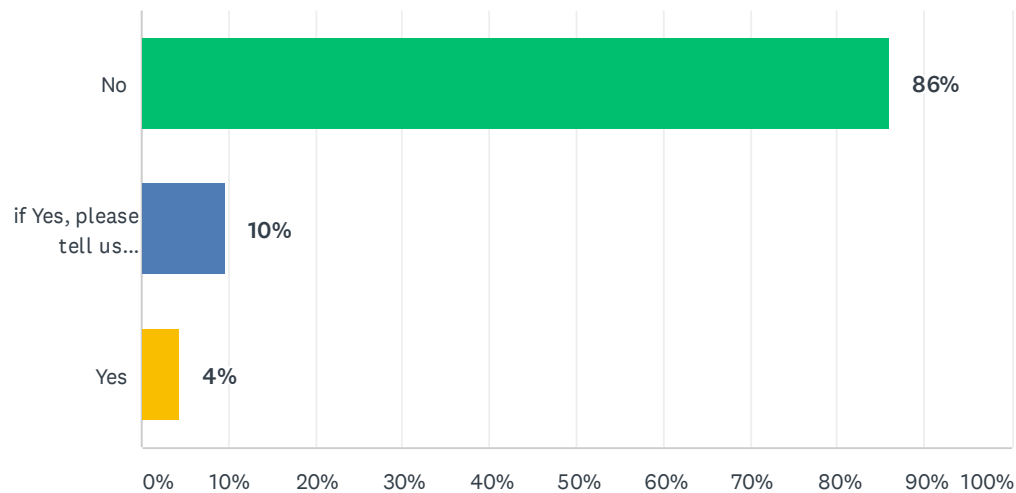


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Extremely to Very Important	70%	224
Somewhat important	24%	75
Not important	6%	19
TOTAL		318

BASIC STATISTICS				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.00	5.00	2.00	2.02	0.95

Q6 Have you noticed any physical (or other) obstacles to accessing or enjoying the parks?

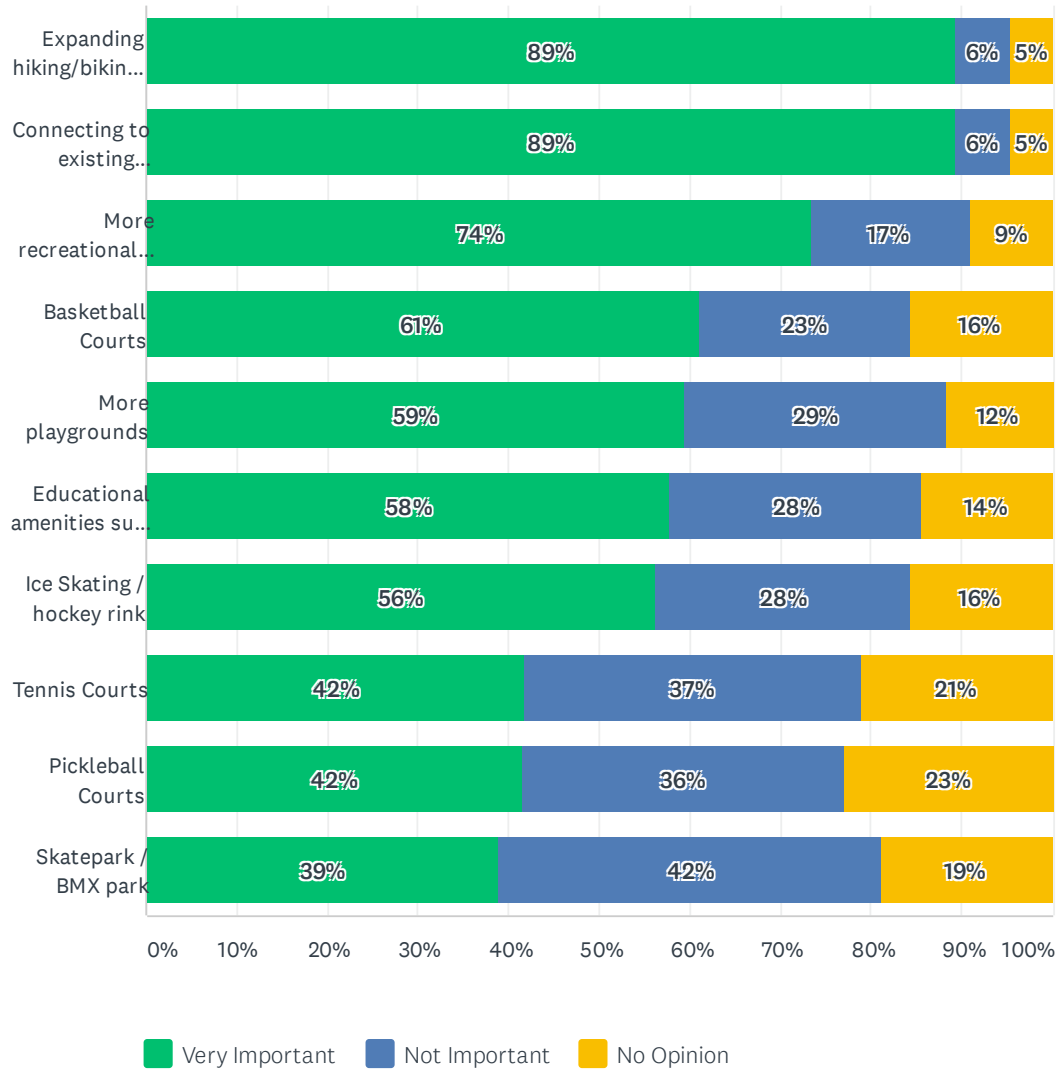
Answered: 315 Skipped: 3



#	IF YES, PLEASE TELL US...	DATE
1	trails trails seem minimal, not connected or convenient	1/4/2021 3:50 PM
2	maintenance The Wasps sometimes fight us for the playground equipment	12/29/2020 2:31 PM
3	unruly youth Too many teenagers hanging around cussing and smoking.	12/24/2020 12:03 AM
4	limited parking Limited parking in Lewis Park	12/23/2020 5:48 PM
5	Covid 19	12/23/2020 12:26 PM
6	unruly youth Smoking and cussing teenagers being rude	12/18/2020 9:13 AM
7	limited parking They are small, parking is limited, I don't know where they all are. Mostly I am aware of the Chancy Lewis Park.	12/18/2020 8:39 AM
8	maintenance Broken nets	12/18/2020 7:37 AM
9	unruly youth Teenagers smoking in front of children	12/16/2020 8:27 PM
10	maintenance Graffiti,	12/16/2020 11:45 AM
11	unsafe Too far from town	12/15/2020 10:01 PM
12	limited parking Traffic / parking	12/15/2020 7:20 PM
13	limited parking Parking	12/15/2020 5:41 PM
14	unruly youth big kids are rude	12/15/2020 3:12 PM
15	unruly youth I think all of the signage regarding NO ____ is off putting. I realize there must be rules, and I don't want the parks abused or to encounter abusive people, but the signs seem offensive.	12/15/2020 2:53 PM
16	maintenance Cleanliness	12/15/2020 2:47 PM
17	unruly youth Sometimes when we visit the playground there are older kids there that make it inappropriate for younger children.	12/15/2020 2:45 PM
18	unsafe Narrow driveway to the park	12/15/2020 2:31 PM
19	unruly youth Riff Raff that hangs out at the park and defaces the property.	12/15/2020 2:28 PM
20	unruly youth Teenagers being on the playground making out while young children are trying to play.	12/15/2020 2:15 PM
21	limited parking Handicapped parking at park	12/15/2020 2:15 PM
22	unsafe traffic speed on M40	12/15/2020 12:59 PM
23	maintenance mosquitos and poison ivy in kids dream	12/15/2020 12:59 PM
24	unsafe Speedy M40	12/15/2020 12:16 PM
25	unruly youth We don't go to kids dream. It's over ran with older kids saying and doing inappropriate things.	12/15/2020 12:05 PM
26	limited parking Parking	12/15/2020 11:49 AM
27	Need to add topsoil along sidewalk from rest room to fountain, and seed for grass	12/15/2020 11:38 AM
28	unruly youth Teens should have another place to go not near the young kids. Too many drugs and vaping being done there	12/15/2020 11:31 AM
29	maintenance The playground is dark and hold a lots of moisture	12/10/2020 6:22 PM
30	maintenance Too many trees over playground area	12/9/2020 8:21 PM

Q7 Indicate your preferences to improve our parks and recreation system.

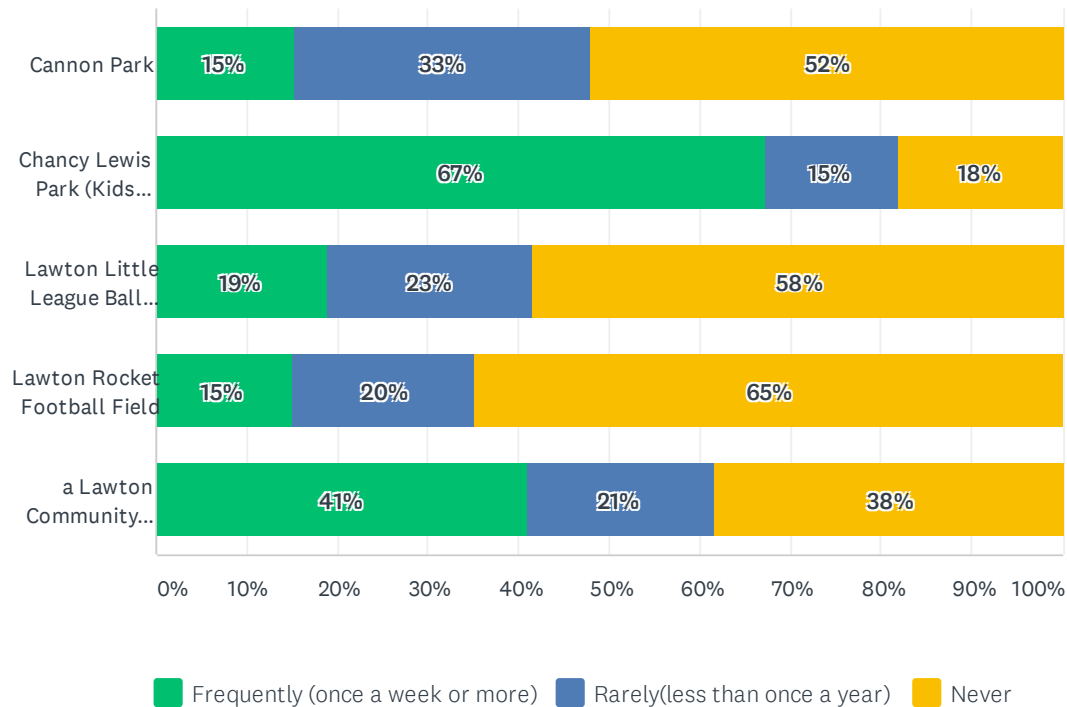
Answered: 318 Skipped: 0



#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Atv/utv trails	1/15/2021 10:13 AM
2	Dog Park	1/9/2021 1:04 PM
3	ORV/ATV Trails/Parks	1/8/2021 12:44 PM
4	atv/orv trails	1/8/2021 12:38 PM
5	Would love to see a small area for skateboarding since it's illegal downtown	1/5/2021 3:26 PM
6	Lighting, security cameras, improved bathroom facilities , fencing	12/23/2020 5:48 PM
7	walking trails with pets	12/21/2020 9:29 PM
8	A safe area for kids to ride bikes/scooters	12/16/2020 8:34 AM
9	Toddler park	12/15/2020 8:51 PM
10	Place to ride ATV	12/15/2020 4:38 PM
11	Encouragement for pet owners to visit designated animal-friendly areas. Education about how tax dollars support and maintain parks - even info on the relevant yearly budgets and if/how they've changed. Personally, I think it's important that people make the connection between taxes and positive, successful initiatives that directly improve residents' quality of life.	12/15/2020 3:45 PM
12	I would like to see work out stations on trails	12/15/2020 3:07 PM
13	A park/playground area in the actual "heart" of the residential area of the Village would be GREAT! Also, a band shell or covered stage area/amphitheatre for future concerts, stage plays/dramas/cultural activities - with potential for lighting and sound - would be extremely positive and a great addition to our park/Village.	12/15/2020 2:53 PM
14	Great to get more varied options for teens and adults that are healthy and constructive! We have good play equipment and basketball areas between schools and Kids Dream already!	12/15/2020 2:52 PM
15	Golf cart trails	12/15/2020 1:11 PM
16	ice hockey that is floor hockey in summer!	12/15/2020 12:59 PM
17	Adding pickleball and shuffleboard may seem boring but it adds a more well rounded age participation in our parks. A tennis court can double for pickleball, just add color specific lines. Adding a shuffleboard pad might be the most cost effective addition that gets used.	12/15/2020 12:12 PM
18	These extra things will are only worthwhile if they are maintained by public works and controlled with police presence. I don't have much faith in public works taking on more responsibilities.	12/15/2020 12:05 PM
19	Upgrade rest rooms, and develop better horse shoe pits.	12/15/2020 11:38 AM
20	Basketball Courts and Baseball fields need improvement	12/9/2020 10:38 AM

Q8 How often do you and your family use the following parks and recreation facilities?

Answered: 318 Skipped: 0



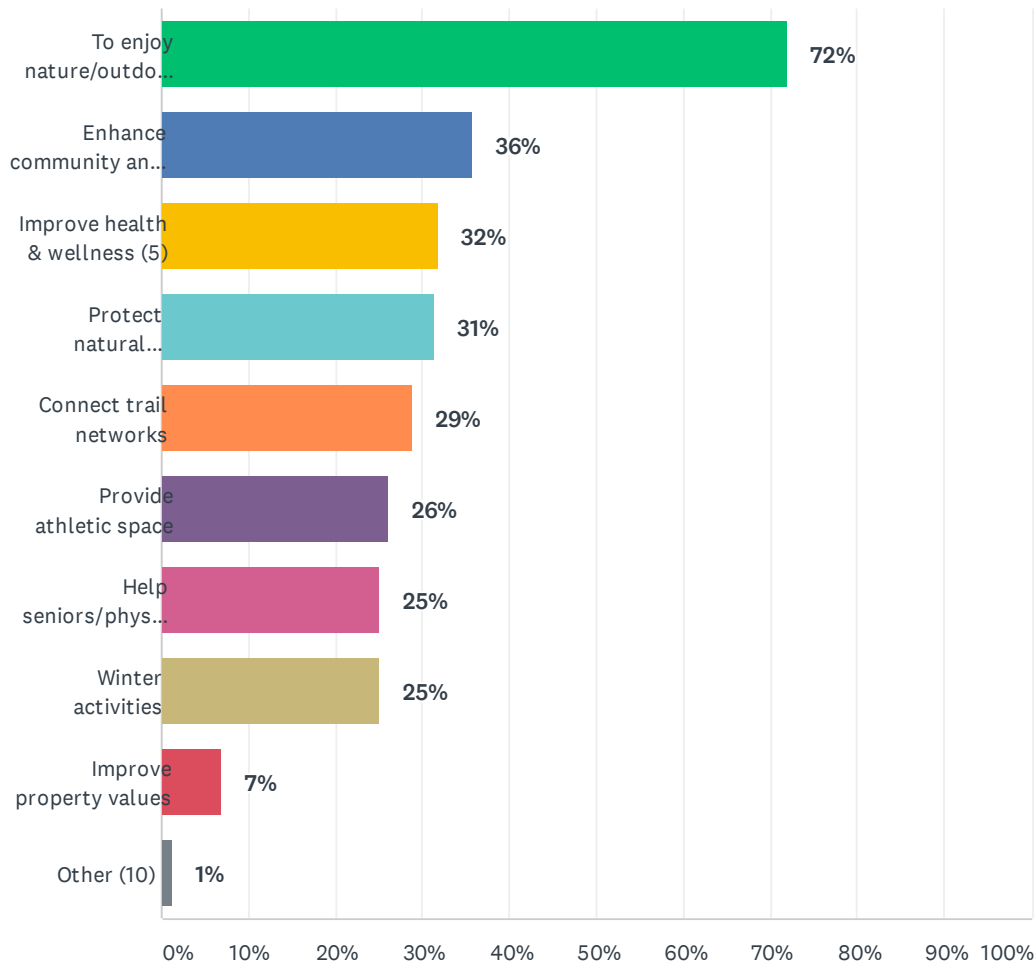
	FREQUENTLY (ONCE A WEEK OR MORE)	RARELY(LESS THAN ONCE A YEAR)	NEVER	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Cannon Park	15% 37	33% 79	52% 126	242	4.06
Chancy Lewis Park (Kids Dream Playground/Splash Pad/Pavilions/Basketball and Tennis Courts)	67% 130	15% 28	18% 35	193	2.16
Lawton Little League Ball Diamonds	19% 52	23% 63	58% 161	276	4.02
Lawton Rocket Football Field	15% 43	20% 57	65% 185	285	4.20
a Lawton Community Schools recreation field/facility	41% 95	21% 48	38% 89	232	3.16

BASIC STATISTICS					
	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM	MEDIAN	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
Cannon Park	1.00	5.00	4.00	3.94	1.08
Chancy Lewis Park (Kids Dream Playground/Splash Pad/Pavilions/Basketball and Tennis Courts)	1.00	5.00	3.00	2.79	1.11
Lawton Little League Ball Diamonds	1.00	5.00	5.00	3.97	1.30
Lawton Rocket Football Field	1.00	5.00	5.00	4.14	1.25
a Lawton Community Schools recreation field/facility	1.00	5.00	3.00	3.26	1.40

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	What is Cannon Park?	1/8/2021 7:49 AM
2	cross country trail for walking	12/21/2020 9:29 PM
3	I walk the sidewalks of the village.	12/18/2020 8:39 AM
4	Just moved here	12/15/2020 10:12 PM
5	Often spectators	12/15/2020 5:41 PM
6	During sports seasons, the ball fields are most important	12/15/2020 3:41 PM
7	didn't know that we could use LCS facilities	12/15/2020 3:39 PM
8	During sports seasons, the ball fields are 100% most important.	12/15/2020 3:07 PM
9	just moved to Lawton	12/15/2020 2:18 PM
10	No idea what/where Cannon Park is?	12/15/2020 12:24 PM

Q9 Which of the following of parks and recreation amenities are the most important to you?

Answered: 318 Skipped: 0



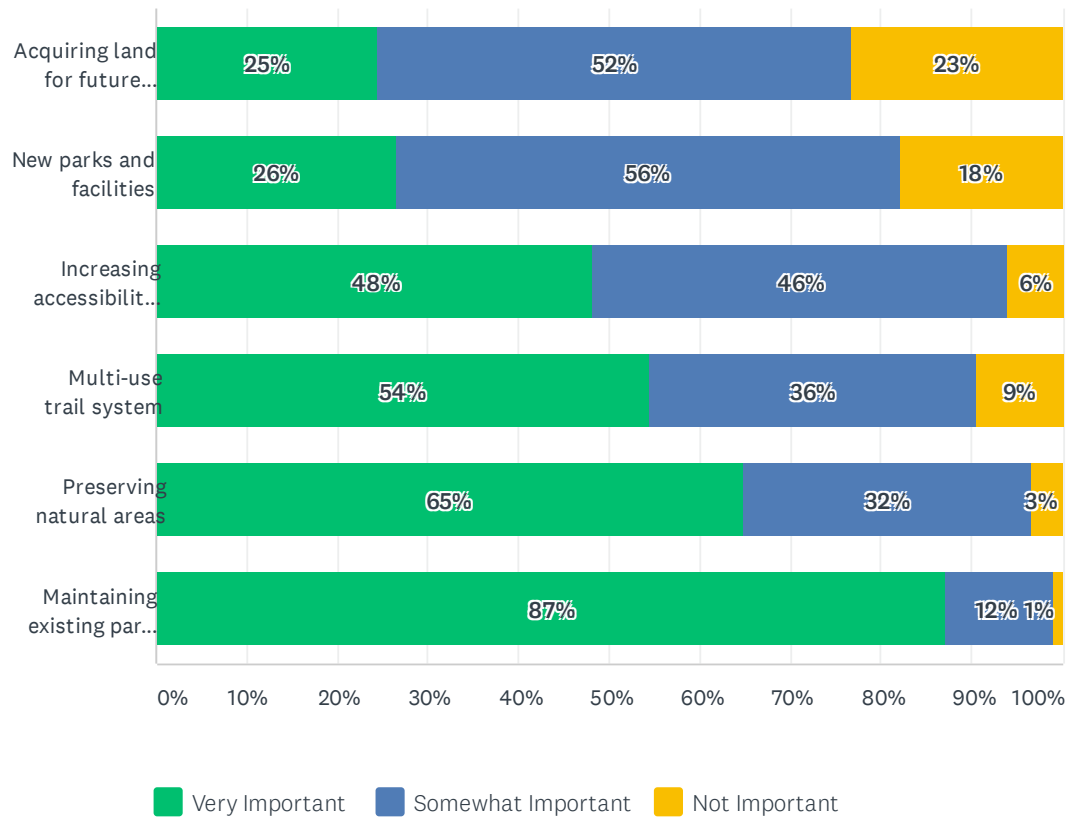
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
To enjoy nature/outdoors (1)	72%	229
Enhance community and sense of place (9)	36%	114
Improve health & wellness (5)	32%	101
Protect natural environment/wildlife (4)	31%	100
Connect trail networks	29%	92
Provide athletic space	26%	83
Help seniors/physically-challenged remain active (2)	25%	80
Winter activities	25%	80
Improve property values (8)	7%	22
Other (10)	1%	4
Total Respondents: 318		

BASIC STATISTICS				
Minimum 1.00	Maximum 10.00	Median 4.00	Mean 4.32	Standard Deviation 2.77

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	ATV/ORV trails	1/8/2021 12:38 PM
2	A place to take my granddaughters when they visit.	12/15/2020 5:33 PM
3	Place to ride ATV	12/15/2020 4:38 PM
4	Na	12/15/2020 3:31 PM

Q10 How important are the following to improve parks and recreation in the Village of Lawton

Answered: 318 Skipped: 0

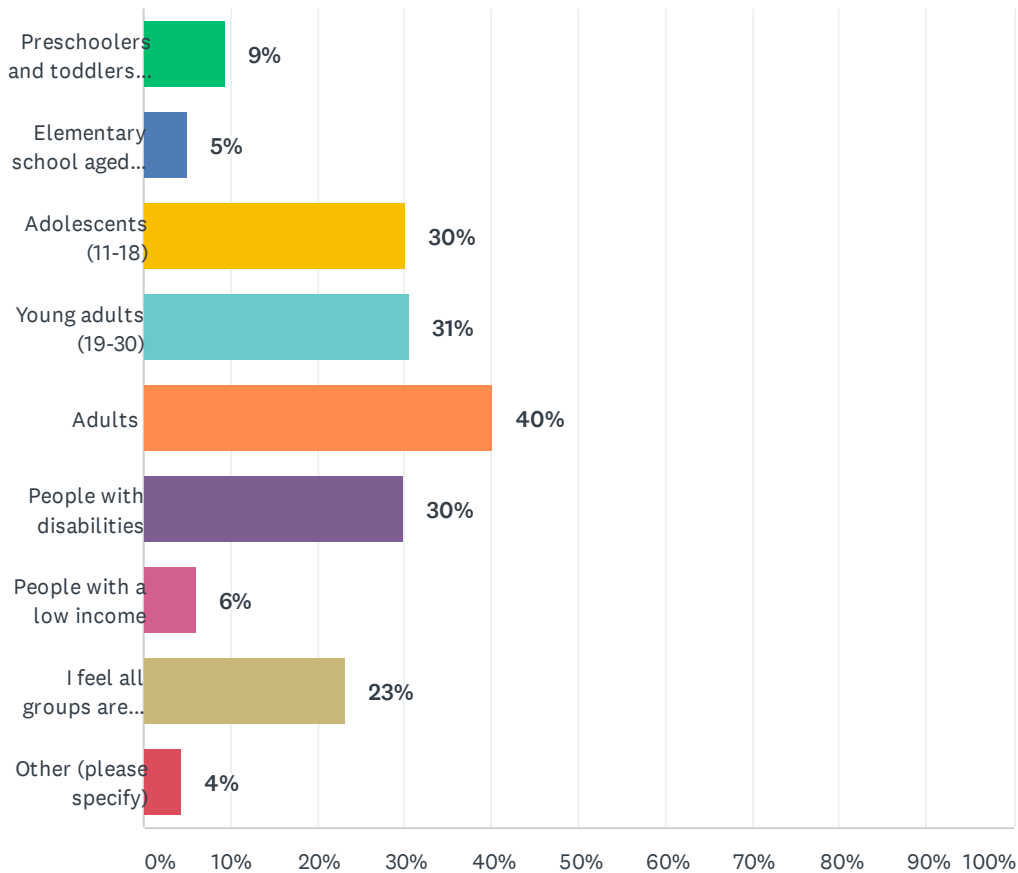


	VERY IMPORTANT (1)	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT (2)	NOT IMPORTANT (3)	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Acquiring land for future parks	25% 78	52% 166	23% 74	318	1.99
New parks and facilities	26% 84	56% 177	18% 57	318	1.92
Increasing accessibility for all abilities	48% 153	46% 146	6% 19	318	1.58
Multi-use trail system	54% 173	36% 115	9% 30	318	1.55
Preserving natural areas	65% 206	32% 101	3% 11	318	1.39
Maintaining existing parks and facilities	87% 277	12% 38	1% 3	318	1.14

BASIC STATISTICS					
	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM	MEDIAN	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
New parks and facilities	1.00	3.00	2.00	1.92	0.66
Maintaining existing parks and facilities	1.00	3.00	1.00	1.14	0.37
Acquiring land for future parks	1.00	3.00	2.00	1.99	0.69
Increasing accessibility for all abilities	1.00	3.00	2.00	1.58	0.60
Multi-use trail system	1.00	3.00	1.00	1.55	0.66
Preserving natural areas	1.00	3.00	1.00	1.39	0.55

Q11 Which groups do you feel are under-served by current recreation services and amenities?

Answered: 318 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Preschoolers and toddlers (under 5) (1)	9%	30
Elementary school aged children (5-10) (2)	5%	16
Adolescents (11-18) (3)	30%	96
Young adults (19-30) (4)	31%	97
Adults (5)	40%	128
People with disabilities (6)	30%	95
People with a low income (7)	6%	19
I feel all groups are adequately served (8)	23%	74
Other (please specify) (9)	4%	14
Total Respondents: 318		

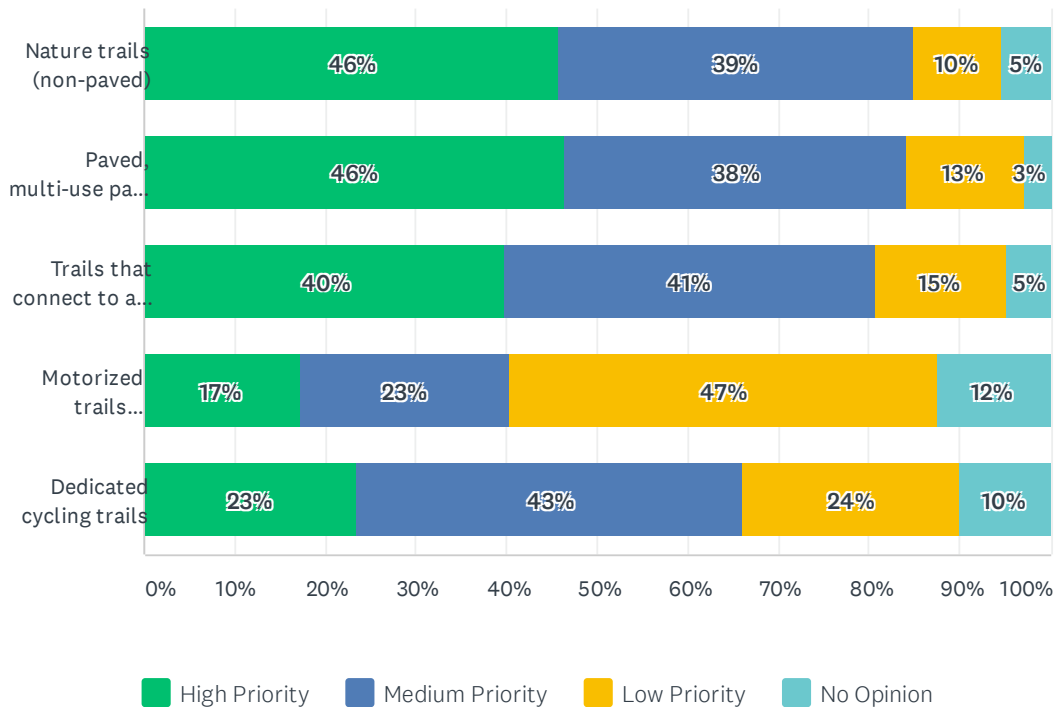
BASIC STATISTICS

Minimum 1.00	Maximum 9.00	Median 5.00	Mean 4.92	Standard Deviation 1.95
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#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Atv/Utv	1/15/2021 10:13 AM
2	ATV/ORV owners	1/8/2021 12:38 PM
3	Teenagers are a bad influence and I can't let my grandkids go to the park without being there to supervise.	12/24/2020 12:03 AM
4	Seniors seem underrepresented in park users	12/23/2020 5:48 PM
5	Older adults	12/16/2020 11:39 PM
6	older folks who would like to be active in a safe environment	12/16/2020 4:36 PM
7	I don't know enough about the parks to answer this.	12/16/2020 9:14 AM
8	Elderly	12/15/2020 11:50 PM
9	ATV riders	12/15/2020 4:38 PM
10	Senior Citizens	12/15/2020 3:39 PM
11	seniors	12/15/2020 2:35 PM
12	no opinion	12/15/2020 2:18 PM
13	elderly	12/15/2020 12:59 PM
14	I would consider 50+ a group in themselves.	12/15/2020 12:12 PM

Q12 How should different types of trails or pathways be prioritized in the Village of Lawton?

Answered: 318 Skipped: 0



	HIGH PRIORITY (1)	MEDIUM PRIORITY (2)	LOW PRIORITY (3)	NO OPINION (4)	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Nature trails (non-paved)	46% 144	39% 123	10% 30	5% 17	314	1.75
Paved, multi-use paths (bikes, walking, etc.)	46% 146	38% 119	13% 41	3% 9	315	1.72
Trails that connect to a regional trail system	40% 125	41% 129	15% 46	5% 15	315	1.84
Motorized trails (snowmobile, four wheeler, etc.)	17% 54	23% 73	47% 148	12% 39	314	2.55
Dedicated cycling trails	23% 74	43% 135	24% 75	10% 32	316	2.21

BASIC STATISTICS					
	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM	MEDIAN	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
Nature trails (non-paved)	1.00	4.00	2.00	1.75	0.84
Paved, multi-use paths (bikes, walking, etc.)	1.00	4.00	2.00	1.72	0.79
Trails that connect to a regional trail system	1.00	4.00	2.00	1.84	0.84
Motorized trails (snowmobile, four wheeler, etc.)	1.00	4.00	3.00	2.55	0.92
Dedicated cycling trails	1.00	4.00	2.00	2.21	0.91

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Multi-use trails (walking, hiking, biking) make sense; prefer non-paved with wooden walkways over low areas	12/23/2020 5:48 PM
2	I see that walking is included with biking. I must disagree with this idea. Bikes and walkers do not mix well. It is unsafe.	12/18/2020 8:39 AM

Q13 Please share any other comments regarding parks and recreation in the Village of Lawton.

Answered: 67 Skipped: 251

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Shooting	1/11/2021 6:19 PM
2	Na	1/10/2021 10:34 PM
3	Consider allowing Geocaching on park lands as a way to attract visitors.	1/10/2021 8:35 PM
4	Increasing the ability for people to enjoy their ATV/ORV/golf carts in the village would greatly increase satisfaction. The northern areas that allow those vehicles to travel helps to make them a destination spot in Michigan. Which then brings more income to those communities.	1/8/2021 12:38 PM
5	Would love to see the hiking/biking trail realized on the large wooded property SW of town, as discussed a couple of years ago	1/5/2021 3:26 PM
6	Love the new splash pad.	1/4/2021 4:47 PM
7	None	1/4/2021 4:08 PM
8	None	1/4/2021 12:40 PM
9	Y	1/4/2021 11:59 AM
10	Connecting bike trails	1/4/2021 10:25 AM
11	Pickleball courts would be great!	1/4/2021 8:58 AM
12	Connect to trails. Help Lawton grow and bring more people through town which helps small businesses grow. While play grounds are nice...they won't bring outside people through town spending money.	1/4/2021 8:32 AM
13	We have a super sidewalk system that we can expand and put more bench seats along	12/29/2020 2:31 PM
14	Commented above. Too much drug and sexual activity taking place by teenagers in Chancy Lewis park.	12/24/2020 12:03 AM
15	The gradual evolution of Lewis Park has been good to see - Splash Pad wonderful; Pickle Ball courts on a resurfaced tennis court makes sense. Developing trails in the adjacent land a high priority; connecting with regional trails would be a huge benefit and would likely attract grant funding.	12/23/2020 5:48 PM
16	None	12/23/2020 3:02 PM
17	A community pool and ice rink would be amazing!	12/23/2020 2:51 PM
18	We need places for families to get out and enjoy nature together. Not all families have children, some are adults with senior parents. Let's find a way to add multigenerational activity/gathering places.	12/23/2020 2:30 PM
19	Alot of people already hang out in the woods where there not supposed to be. More trails might add to that.	12/23/2020 9:42 AM
20	Our family loves the idea of an ice rink. Skating is a lifetime sport and fun for all ages. A skate rental hut could even bring some income in for the community. Sounds like a super fun winter option! We could certainly use more options for winter fun.	12/22/2020 7:41 PM
21	There is nothing to do here. We must have lovely places to play outside and encourage movement for all ages. If we want young families to move here we must offer something for them to do.	12/20/2020 5:48 PM
22	N-A	12/19/2020 6:51 PM
23	None	12/19/2020 10:19 AM
24	Regarding recreation in the Village: the entire village could be considered to be a "recreational facility." I wouldn't call it a park, but it could be 'park-like,' by which my thought is that it could be more conducive to residents and neighbors being better acquainted and more involved. The need for going to small parks dotted around the village might be mitigated if people found park-like settings at their home which may be accessed at a moment's notice, without traffic issues. RE: Chauncy Lewis Park, I find that the need to cross M-40 to get to it from most of the village is not a safe condition for children and other pedestrians.	12/18/2020 8:39 AM

25	I would like to see the streets in the Village of Lawton all to have pedestrian side walks on both sides of each street. When there are even two or three walkers, going in differing directions on the one side walk that is available, someone has to step out onto the street. If you want the Village to be appealing to possible new residents, they are looking for safe walking conditions for them and for their children throughout the village. There are too many streets without sidewalks both sides of a street. It shouts neglect for the residents, regardless of whether they are using your parks or not. They need safe and pleasurable conditions near to home. Who wants to have to drive everywhere, and to a park especially when they have their own neighborhoods to possible enjoy?	12/16/2020 4:36 PM
26	Think the splash pad is great happy the kids have a fun place to play in the summer !!	12/16/2020 4:33 PM
27	Na	12/16/2020 8:50 AM
28	We LOVE Kids Dream and the splash pad! I have 3 little kids and we go there almost daily! It would be nice to have paved paths/trails somewhere though to go and walk with the kids without having to worry about traffic - some place that is easy to push a stroller and for the young ones to ride bikes.	12/16/2020 8:34 AM
29	We would love to see pickle ball courts that specifically cater to seniors but can be utilized by all ages.	12/16/2020 7:21 AM
30	How does this department share information with the public? I was not aware there was a parks and recreation department until I received this email to take survey.	12/15/2020 10:00 PM
31	It would be great to have a bike trail connect to Paw Paw.	12/15/2020 9:41 PM
32	More toddler swings	12/15/2020 8:51 PM
33	Bicycle trails paved would be so nice	12/15/2020 8:44 PM
34	Proud of our community and our parks	12/15/2020 7:45 PM
35	We need public walking paths that are safe and well maintained.	12/15/2020 5:55 PM
36	My granddaughters love the splash pad!	12/15/2020 5:33 PM
37	Splash Pad is great addition would like to see more improvements to park surrounding it including upgrading bathrooms.	12/15/2020 5:32 PM
38	None	12/15/2020 4:43 PM
39	Currently there is no local place for ATV riders to go in this area. The closest trail is over 3 hours away. Closes park is 2 hours away. ATV trail would bring in more people and provide increase to local economy.	12/15/2020 4:38 PM
40	Maintaining our youth fields is most important. Our children deserve the best.	12/15/2020 3:41 PM
41	None	12/15/2020 3:34 PM
42	Little league and rocket are definitely highest priority, but it would be nice to see improvements to trails.	12/15/2020 3:07 PM
43	The playground that we have now is poorly taking care of. I think you need to take care of what you have before you build new things.	12/15/2020 3:07 PM
44	None	12/15/2020 3:04 PM
45	I would love to see more nature and walking trails. Also more promotion of these trails.	12/15/2020 3:00 PM
46	We would LOVE to have pickle ball courts/updated tennis courts! Right now we drive to Paw Paw or Kalamazoo to play pickle ball, but we'd LOVE being able to play here. We'd also frequently use walking/biking trails!! If we had kids, I think my husband and I would use the current parks more often because they look so fun. At this point though, my husband and I wish there were more things available for adults who like to get outside (other than walking around the village).	12/15/2020 3:00 PM
47	I wouldn't categorize "Canon Park" as a "park" - it holds a picnic table and a refuse can. And a monument. For it to be a "park" it would seem that there might need to be a bit more space there and definitely an amenity or two. I had to puzzle a minute to identify this "park" in my	12/15/2020 2:53 PM

	mind; I would guess that most folks recognize only one park in the Village, and it is on the outskirts of the Village at that.	
48	Keep working on trimming trees for better visibility into activities in the park. Great work on updates and improvements!	12/15/2020 2:52 PM
49	Parks always seem to be clean and maintained.	12/15/2020 2:31 PM
50	We love the parks in Lawton and would appreciate some walking and biking trails as well.	12/15/2020 2:30 PM
51	Would love to see kids dream have a face lift, and re-create activities there, now that the water park is there!	12/15/2020 2:21 PM
52	Why not use the current green space in town across from barn brewers as a sitting area with tables or benches and offer outdoor seating for the local restaurants. It would be a VERY welcoming site for visitors and make our small town very likable. Take carry out food over to that area to enjoy by all. You could fit ALOT of tables and landscaping to make it beautiful.	12/15/2020 2:19 PM
53	Thank you for your focus on this important issue.	12/15/2020 1:08 PM
54	We've occasionally seen older kids hanging out at the dream not really playing, just sitting. I didn't notice any mischief going on, but if they had a skate park or floor hockey area maybe they wouldn't be bored and open to finding trouble to get into. This could turn into games during summer fest or all summer long. A floor hockey tournament during summer fest over the weekend, or just a small league all summer/winter long for those who can skate on ice or just can't and want to play on foot.	12/15/2020 12:59 PM
55	Would love to see a dog park!	12/15/2020 12:24 PM
56	I think Lawton has and is doing a great job with it's parks and recreation.	12/15/2020 12:12 PM
57	Over all I think the addition of the splash pad has been a huge asset to the community. I have seen a lot more people using the park even in a pandemic	12/15/2020 11:54 AM
58	Maybe a band stand and an activities coordinator	12/15/2020 11:49 AM
59	Would love to have ATV park or trails. Walking and bike trails would be amazing	12/15/2020 11:45 AM
60	Walking trails would be good, if you are going to connect to other trail networks, then they should be a multi use trail. (ie- bicycle, horseback, snowmobile.	12/15/2020 11:38 AM
61	Basketball courts should be moved to Field near HS. Similar to Hartford Schools set up. Current ones fill with water too easily and are too near little kids	12/15/2020 11:31 AM
62	This is a vital initiative to ensure our town continues to thrive and our citizens remain active and connected to one another! So important for maintaining a strong sense of community!! Bravo!	12/15/2020 11:26 AM
63	It would be great to have a trail system that loops from our parks to the high school with meandering in between, this would be great for hiking, biking and running, Portage has an excellent system and it is very popular	12/15/2020 9:18 AM
64	Need to attempt some volunteer monitoring during high usage times. Have heard of several complaints reference of older kids and improper behavior. The police have checked it often but they can't be there all the time. It would add to the use of our parks to try and obtain a few presentations every summer, regarding any number of things. I.e. local history, natur	12/14/2020 8:01 PM
65	I think that the restrooms should be expanded to accommodate more users at one time.	12/14/2020 6:31 PM
66	Maintaining Kids Dream and the Splash Park are very high priorities. There are parts of Kids Dream that need repairs now.	12/14/2020 12:08 PM
67	Na	12/10/2020 6:31 PM

**COMMUNITY PARK AND RECREATION PLAN****CERTIFICATION CHECKLIST**

By Authority of Parts 19, 703 and 716 of Act 451, P.A. 1994, as amended, submission of this information is required for eligibility to apply for grants.

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete, obtain certification signatures and submit this checklist with a locally adopted recreation plan.

All recreation plans are required to meet the content and local approval standards listed in this checklist and as outlined in the *Guidelines for the Development of Community Park and Recreation Plans* provided by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Plans must be submitted to the DNR through MiRecGrants with a completed checklist that has been signed by an authorized official(s) of the local unit of government(s) submitting the plan. Plans may be submitted at any time of the year, but no later than February 1 of the year the local unit of government is applying for grants.

PLAN INFORMATION

Name of Plan:

Village of Lawton Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2021 - 2025

List the community names (including school districts) that are covered under the plan and have passed a resolution adopting the plan.	County	Month and year plan adopted by the community's governing body
Village of Lawton	Van Buren	January 2021

PLAN CONTENT

INSTRUCTIONS: Please check each box to certify that the listed information is included in the final plan.

✓ **1. COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION**

✓ **2. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE**

- ✓ Roles of Commission(s) or Advisory Board(s)
- ✓ Department, Authority and/or Staff Description and Organizational Chart
- ✓ Annual and Projected Budgets for Operations, Maintenance, Capital Improvements and Recreation Programming
- ✓ Current Funding Sources
- ✓ Role of Volunteers
- ✓ Relationship(s) with School Districts, Other Public Agencies or Private Organizations

N/A Recreation Authorities or Trailway Commissions Only:

N/A ☐ Description of the Relationship between the Authority or Commission and the Recreation Departments of Participating Communities

N/A ☐ Articles of Incorporation

✓ **3. RECREATION INVENTORY**

- ✓ Description of Methods Used to Conduct the Inventory
- ✓ Inventory of all Community Owned Parks and Recreation Facilities
- ✓ Location Maps (site development plans recommended but not required)
- ✓ Accessibility Assessment

N/A Status Report for all Grant-Assisted Parks and Recreation Facilities

N/A Waterways Inventory (if applicable)

N/A 4. RESOURCE INVENTORY (OPTIONAL)

✓ **5. DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING PROCESS**

✓ **6. DESCRIPTION OF THE PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS**

- ✓ Description of the Method(s) Used to Solicit Public Input Before or During Preparation of the Plan, including a Copy of the Survey or Meeting Agenda and a Summary of the Responses Received

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

Date of the Notice December 24, 2020

Type of Notice Legal Notice in Courier Leader

Plan Location Lawton Village Hall or Website

Duration of Draft Plan Public Review Period (Must be at Least 30 Days) 32 days

- ✓ Copy of the Notice for the Public Meeting Held after the One Month Public Review Period and Before the Plan's Adoption by the Governing Body(ies)

Date of Notice December 24, 2020

Name of Newspaper Courier Leader

Date of Meeting Tuesday, January 26, 2021

- ✓ Copy of the Minutes from the Public Meeting

✓ **7. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

✓ **8. ACTION PROGRAM**

N/A 9. POST-COMPLETION SELF-CERTIFICATION REPORT(S)

PLAN ADOPTION DOCUMENTATION

APPROVAL DOCUMENTATION: For multi-jurisdictional plans, **each** local unit of government must pass a resolution adopting the plan. Prepare and attach a separate page for each unit of government included in the plan.

- ✓ 1. Official resolution of adoption by the governing body dated: January 26, 2021
2. Official resolution of the N/A
recommending adoption of the plan by the governing body, dated: N/A
- ✓ 3. Copy of letter transmitting adopted plan to County Planning Agency dated: January 27, 2021
- ✓ 4. Copy of letter transmitting adopted plan to Regional Planning Agency dated: January 27, 2021

OVERALL CERTIFICATION

NOTE: For multi-jurisdictional plans, Overall Certification must include the signature of each local unit of government. Prepare and attach a separate signature page for each unit of government included in the plan.

I hereby certify that the recreation plan for

Village of Lawton

(Local Unit of Government)

above and as set forth by the DNR.

includes the required content, as indicated


Authorized Official for the Local Unit of Government

January 26, 2021
Date

This completed checklist must be uploaded in MiRecGrants.

PUBLISHER'S AFFIDAVIT

OFFICE OF
THE COURIER-LEADER

PAW PAW, MI 49079

STATE OF MICHIGAN

COUNTY OF VAN BUREN,

Robin L. Racette Griffin

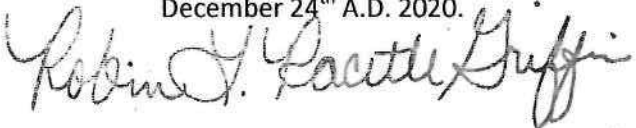
Being duly sworn, says I am the printer of

THE COURIER-LEADER,

a weekly newspaper printed and circulating in

said county, that the annexed is a printed copy

December 24th A.D. 2020.

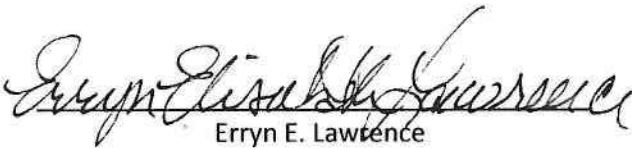


Printer.

Robin L. Racette Griffin

Subscribed and sworn to before me on this

24th day of December A.D. 2020.



Erryn E. Lawrence

NOTARY PUBLIC, VAN BUREN COUNTY,

MICHIGAN

ERRYN ELISABETH LAWRENCE
Notary Public, Van Buren Co., MI
My Commission Expires 02/15/2024

**VILLAGE OF LAWTON
5 YEAR PARKS and RECREATION
MASTER PLAN
NOTICE of PLAN AVAILABILITY
for PUBLIC REVIEW and COMMENT**

A draft of the 5 Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the Village of Lawton will be available for public review and comment for 30 days beginning on December 26th at 12 noon. Anyone interested may review the plan and forward comments.

Written comments may be sent to Village of Lawton, 125 S. Main Street., P.O. Box 367, Lawton, MI 49065, c/o Lisa Imus. Email comments may be sent to ImusL@LawtonMI.gov. Copies of the plan are on file at Lawton Village Hall or online at: www.LawtonMI.gov.

For more information contact:

Lisa Imus, Village Manager
(269) 624-6407

Joni Bell
Village Clerk

Dec. 24, 2020

PUBLISHER'S AFFIDAVIT

OFFICE OF

THE COURIER-LEADER

PAW PAW, MI 49079

STATE OF MICHIGAN

COUNTY OF VAN BUREN,

Robin L. Racette Griffin

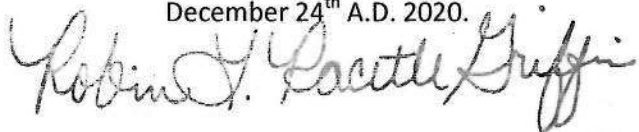
Being duly sworn, says I am the printer of

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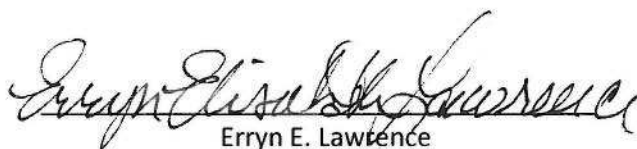


Printer.

Robin L. Racette Griffin

Subscribed and sworn to before me on this

24th day of December A.D. 2020.



Erryn E. Lawrence

NOTARY PUBLIC, VAN BUREN COUNTY,

MICHIGAN

ERRYN ELISABETH LAWRENCE
Notary Public, Van Buren Co., MI
My Commission Expires 02/15/2024

Village of Lawton NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING Parks and Recreation 5-year Master Plan

The Village of Lawton will conduct a Public Hearing during the regular Council meeting on Tuesday, January 26th, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. The meeting will be held virtually and can be accessed by phone - dial (312) 626-6799 and enter meeting ID#223 344 0545) or by computer at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2233440545> and enter meeting ID# 223 344 0545.

The purpose of the Public Hearing is for the Village Council to hear comments and make a determination to accept the Parks and Recreation Plan for the Village of Lawton. Written comments will be received at Lawton Village Hall, 125 S. Main St., PO Box 367, Lawton, MI 49065 until 3 p.m. on January 26th, or may be presented during the public hearing. For additional information contact the Village Manager at lmusL@LawtonMI.gov.

Copies of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan are available for review at the Village of Lawton office or on the Village website at www.LawtonMI.gov. Necessary and reasonable aids and services for disabled persons upon 7 days prior notice to the City Offices at (269) 624-6407.

Joni Bell
Lawton Village Clerk

Dec. 24, 2020



VILLAGE OF LAWTON

Regular Meeting Minutes – Tuesday January 26, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting was held remotely and in person

Lawton Village Hall – 125 S Main Street, Lawton MI 49065

WWW.LAWTONMI.GOV 269.624.6407

MINUTES

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** President Knudstrup called the January 26, 2021 Meeting of the Lawton Village Council to order at 7:03 p.m.
- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** - The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- III. **ROLL CALL:** Present: President Knudstrup. Trustees: J Appleby, E. Dudek, G. Dudek, N. Smith, J. Peterson and R. Turner. Absent: None. Others present: Village Manager Imus, Superintendent Hackenberg, and 3 other guests.
- IV. **CONSENT AGENDA:** The Consent Agenda included the approval of the January 26, 2021 Council Agenda, the January 12, 2021 Council Meeting Minutes. Peterson, supported by E Dudek, made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. A roll call vote was taken with unanimous approval.
- V. **COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE:**
- VI. **CITIZENS' COMMENTS:**
- VII. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**
 - A. Manager Imus gave a brief summary of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Appleby made a motion to open the public hearing to discuss the Master Parks and Recreation Plan with support from Peterson. A roll call vote was taken with all in favor.
 - B. Public comment for the proposed Parks and Recreation plan, Paul Harvey commented on the importance of trails and that adjacent townships are also working on the development of trails. Pam Stermer from the County Planning Commission was curious when it will coming their way to take a look at, she thinks it looks like a great plan. Councilman Appleby applauded Manager Imus on what a great job has been done putting this all together, he had commented on the trails and the ability to walk. President Knudstrup agreed with Appleby noting that it was extremely well done and furthers the village to be a Redevelopment Ready Community (RRC). E Dudek also is very happy with how this turned out. With no further comment, Turner with support from G Dudek made a motion to close the Public Hearing on the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. A unanimous roll call vote was taken.

VIII. EXISTING BUSINESS:

- A. Resolution 01-2021: A Resolution to Approve the Village of Lawton 5 Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Turner made a motion to Approve Resolution 01-2021, supported by Appleby. A roll call vote was taken with all in favor.

IX. BOARD, COMMITTEE, AND STAFF REPORTS

Village Manager – Manager Imus reminded everyone that there will be a ribbon cutting ceremony on Saturday, January 30th at 10:00 a.m. to welcome The Allen Group to the Village.

- X. **COUNCIL COMMENTS** – E Dudek noted that Duane Packer stopped into the Village Office, thinking this was an in-person meeting. Duane commented that he is extremely happy about the Parks and Recreation Plan and he is willing to help in any way he can. Appleby commented he would like a reminder to go to village residents regarding parking, making sure they are not parking on the sidewalks now that the snow has fallen.

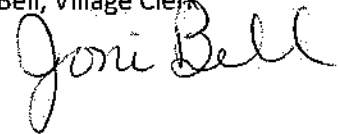
XI. CLOSED SESSION

Peterson moved that Council go into a Closed Session in accordance with the provisions of Section 8(d) of the Open Meetings Act to consider purchase/lease of real property, with support from G Dudek at 7:30 p.m. A unanimous roll call vote taken.

Turner made motion to end the closed session at 8:26 p.m. supported by E Dudek. A unanimous roll call vote was taken.

- XII. **ADJOURNMENT** – Appleby, supported by Turner, made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 p.m. A roll call vote was taken with unanimous approval of those present. The next regular scheduled meeting is February 9, 2021.

Respectfully Submitted by Joni Bell, Village Clerk



**VILLAGE OF THE VILLAGE OF LAWTON
COUNTY OF VAN BUREN
STATE OF MICHIGAN**

RESOLUTION NO. 01-2021

**RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VILLAGE OF LAWTON
5-YEAR PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN (2021 - 2025)**

At a regular meeting of the Village Council for the Village of Lawton, Michigan, held via a virtual Zoom meeting in Lawton, Michigan, on the 26th day of January 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: President Knudstrup. Trustees: J Appleby, E. Dudek, G. Dudek, N. Smith,
J. Peterson and R. Turner.

ABSENT: None.

The following Resolution was offered by Councilperson Turner and supported by Councilperson Appleby.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Village Council of the Village of Lawton, County of Van Buren, State of Michigan has undertaken a planning process to determine the recreational and natural resource conservation needs and desires of its residents during a five-year period covering the years 2021 through 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Village of Lawton began the process of developing a five-year community parks and recreation master plan in accordance with the most recent guidelines developed by the Department of Natural Resources and made available to local communities, and;

WHEREAS, residents of the Village of Lawton were provided with a well-advertised opportunity during the development of the draft plan to express opinions, ask questions, and discuss all aspects of the 5-year Parks and Recreation Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the public was given a well-advertised opportunity and reasonable accommodations to review the final draft plan for a period of 30+ days from the dates of December 23, 2020 to January 26, 2021, and

WHEREAS, a Virtual Public Hearing was held during a regular Village Council Meeting on January 26th, 2021 to provide an opportunity for all residents of the planning area to express opinions, ask questions, and discuss all aspects of the Village of Lawton 5-year Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2021 – 2025), and

WHEREAS, the Village of Lawton has developed the plan as a guideline for improving recreation and enhancing natural resource conservation for the Village of Lawton, and

WHEREAS, after the public hearing, the Village of Lawton Village Council publicly considered the adoption the Village of Lawton 5-year Parks & Recreation Master Plan (2021 – 2025).

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Village of Lawton hereby adopts Village of Lawton 5-year Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2021 – 2025).

YEAS: P. Knudstrup, J. Appleby, E. Dudek, G. Dudek, N. Smith, J. Peterson and R. Turner.

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: None.

ADOPTED this 26th day of January 2021.

VILLAGE OF THE VILLAGE OF LAWTON

BY: _____

Paul Knudstrup, President

BY: _____

Joni Bell, Village Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I, Joni Bell, the duly appointed Clerk of the Village of Lawton, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a Resolution adopted by the Lawton Village Council at a regular meeting held January 26th, 2021, in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, Act No. 267 of the Public Acts of Michigan, 1976, as amended, the minutes of the meeting were kept and will be or have been made available as required by said Act.

VILLAGE OF LAWTON

BY: _____

Joni Bell, Village Clerk



VILLAGE of LAWTON

P. O. Box 367 • 125 S. Main Street • Lawton, Michigan 49065 • (269) 624-6407

www.LawtonMI.gov Follow us on Facebook [@VillageofLawtonMI](https://www.facebook.com/VillageofLawtonMI)

January 27, 2021

Mr. Ted Thar, Director of Land Management
219 Paw Paw Street
Suite 302
Paw Paw, MI 49079

Dear Mr. Thar:

Enclosed for the Van Buren County Planning Commission's and your review is a copy of the Village of Lawton's first 5-year Park and Recreation Master Plan (2021 – 2025) adopted by the Village Council on January 26th, 2021. The plan has recently been created based on the established guidelines by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), and we would appreciate your review and any comments you may have concerning the Plan's contents. The plan is also located on the Village's website at www.lawtonmi.gov.

If you need have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Lisa Imus
Lawton Village Manager



VILLAGE of LAWTON

P. O. Box 367 • 125 S. Main Street • Lawton, Michigan 49065 • (269) 624-6407
www.LawtonMI.gov Follow us on Facebook @[VillageofLawtonMI](https://www.facebook.com/VillageofLawtonMI)

January 27, 2021

Marcy Hamilton, Deputy Executive Director
Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
376 West Main Street
Suite 130
Benton Harbor, MI 49022-3651

Dear Ms. Hamilton:

Enclosed for your review is a copy of the Village of Lawton's first 5-year Park and Recreation Master Plan (2021 – 2025) adopted by the Village Council on January 26th, 2021. The plan has recently been created based on the established guidelines by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), and we would appreciate your review and any comments you may have concerning the Plan's contents. The plan is also located on the Village's website at www.lawtonmi.gov.

If you need have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Lisa Imus
Lawton Village Manager

The plan is also located on the Village's website at www.lawtonmi.gov.

Village of Lawton is an equal opportunity employer