



1 Introduction



Parks, Recreation and Open Space are important elements of all communities and reflect positively on the quality of life for residents. In recent years, a more holistic approach to recreational planning has been encouraged, stretching beyond the boundaries of traditional parks to include sidewalks, linear trails, greenways, town squares, plazas and other publicly and privately owned lands including schools and county facilities. A variety of indoor facilities also serve the recreational and social needs of the public. In addition to the human benefits of recreation and open space, there are also important environmental benefits; such as water resource protection, open space preservation, reduced vehicular traffic, and plant and wildlife protection.

Parks and recreation facilities provide a host of benefits to people and the natural environment. Community wide they provide economic, health, environmental, and social benefits to its citizens. They provide people with a gathering place to be physically active, socialize, relax and connect with the community. Maintaining a green infrastructure enhances the livability of a community increasing property values. Parks have been shown to improve overall mental and physical health by reducing obesity brought on by inactivity and improving air and water quality. A sense of belonging and ownership is fostered through bringing together various age groups and cultures. Parks and recreation facilities improve the overall quality of life.



The Parks and Recreation Department is dedicated to providing quality recreational and leisure opportunities to the citizens of Holland Charter Township. Numerous recreational programs are provided throughout the Township. The Department is responsible for acquiring, developing and maintaining a wide range of parklands and open spaces. The Department holds itself responsive



to the requested needs of all the citizens while creating a balance of programs, facilities, and park land.

Plan Purpose

Holland Charter Township, with the assistance of the Parks and Recreation Department, has undertaken this update of the 5-year Community Parks and Recreation Plan.

The Township, together with the West Ottawa and Zeeland School Districts, provides recreational facilities and programs for Holland Charter Township and neighboring residents.

The Community Parks and Recreation Plan is regularly updated to reflect the changing needs and goals of the Township, and to meet the Michigan Department of Natural Resources requirements for qualifying for Federal and State funding assistance. These funds are available for land acquisition, facility development and improvements to new and existing parklands.

This 2014 Holland Charter Township Community Parks and Recreation Plan is a guide for the future development of recreation opportunities for Township residents and visitors. The plan addresses current recreation issues and identifies future needs of the community and the means for meeting those needs over the up-coming five-year period. It addresses both short and long-range goals and objectives and identifies an action program by which these goals and objectives can be accomplished. In addition, the plan serves as an educational tool to acquaint local officials and residents of the need for a sound and balanced recreation program.





Plan Scope

The scope of this plan includes the Township’s active and passive recreation facilities, undeveloped open space and linear “green” corridors. Recreational programming is also an important consideration. The area of the plan is essentially limited to the Township boundaries. However, consideration is also made of neighboring municipal facilities and regional facilities that influence use patterns. In terms of time, the Capital Improvement Schedule of this document covers development over the next five years. However, the Goals and Objectives developed to guide recreation planning may continue to be relevant for many more years to come.



The following Parks and Recreation Plan is an outgrowth of the impending need for increased recreational programs and facilities as the population of Holland Charter Township and the surrounding area grows and diversifies. A well-conceived strategy for the acquisition of land, the development of facilities, expansion of programs, and the continuation of on-going operation and maintenance practices will assist the Township in meeting future recreational and leisure-time needs as they develop.



This recreation plan identifies facility and program needs that are expected to occur, develops short and long-range goals and objectives, and presents an action plan and justification for the implementation of the goals and objectives and the maintenance of existing and resulting facilities. The plan is task specific on the short range elements and more generalized on the long range elements to allow some degree of flexibility to respond to changes in need or interest at the local level. Deviations to the plan would, however, be subject to review and analysis prior to the modification of this plan.



Community Description



Holland Charter Township covers 28.7 square miles in the southwest corner of Ottawa County in southwestern Michigan. It is separated from Lake Michigan by Park Township to the west, which is approximately 4 miles wide. Roughly two-thirds of the southern boundary of the Township is formed by the City of Holland, which comprises approximately eight sections of the thirty-six section township area. A significant feature in the southwest corner of the Township is Lake Macatawa, a 1,200 acre lake, roughly one quarter of which is in Holland Charter Township. The north and east boundaries of the Township are formed by Olive and Zeeland Townships respectively.



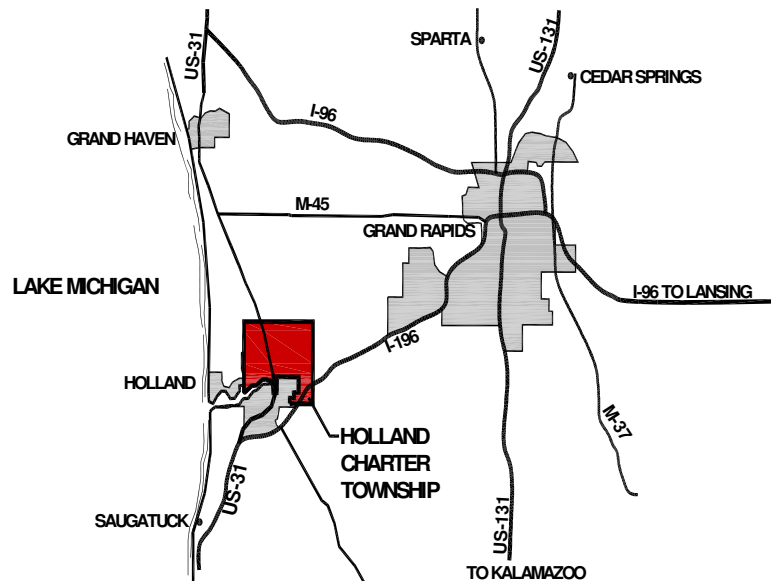
Holland Charter Township is the second largest political unit in Ottawa County, surpassed only by Georgetown Township in the Grand Rapids metropolitan area. According to the 2012 U.S. Census Bureau population estimates, the combination of the City of Holland, Park and Holland Charter Townships in the area immediately around Lake Macatawa represents a total of over 87,500 people, which is more than 32% of the total 2012 estimated population of Ottawa County.

Since 1960, as the population has more than tripled, the Township has become more urban in character. In the last 45 years, the community has evolved from a largely rural and agricultural community, to a highly diverse community containing both urban and rural characteristics.

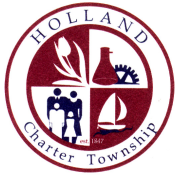


Location

The Township is located within the coastal corridor that is directly affected by the tourism industry. The following location map indicates the relationship of Holland Charter Township to neighboring communities. The City of Grand Haven is approximately 14 miles to the north, Grand Rapids approximately 25 miles northeast, and Holland immediately to the south.



Location Map



History

The Michigan Legislature created Holland Township in 1847. The Township was named at the behest of the Reverend Albertus C. Van Raalte, who earlier in 1847 led the first of what would become many groups of colonists from the Netherlands. Although the Dutch ancestry still has significant influence in the area (the annual Tulip Festival is one of the largest of its kind) the population has shown increased diversification in recent years.

Manufacturing has been the basis of the Holland area economy since the entrepreneur Jan Rabbers built a dam and sawmill on Frenchman's Creek and opened a store and manufacturing enterprise in 1847. During the 1850's others started a furniture factory, grist mills, a tannery and a brickyard.

The geographical boundaries of Holland Township changed throughout the 19th century. Originally included within its boundaries were all of present-day Park and Zeeland Townships. Holland Township became a charter township by election in 1968. The current Township office building was built in 1976 and was most recently expanded in 1998.

Transportation

Access to the Township from other areas along the shoreline or inland is from U.S. 31 and via I-196 BL respectively. These limited access, high-speed expressways provide easy access to the neighboring metropolitan areas of Grand Rapids, Grand Haven and Muskegon. U.S. I-196 cuts through the southeast corner of the Township with an intersection at Adams Street and access to the more central area via Chicago Drive (U.S. 21). U.S. 31 provides north/south transportation along the Lake Michigan shoreline. North of Lakewood Boulevard it becomes Business 31 and provides numerous access points to the Township.





The Macatawa Area Express (MAX) is the public transit system for the greater Holland/Zeeland area. Fixed route buses run hourly Monday through Saturday and passengers may transfer between fixed routes at the Padnos Transportation Center in downtown Holland. MAX also offers Reserve-A-MAX curb-to-curb service for persons with disabilities, seniors 70 years or older, and those whose origins and destinations are farther than 1/2 mile of a bus stop. All MAX vehicles are wheelchair accessible and larger buses are equipped with bike racks to enable passengers to bike and ride to their destinations, taking advantage of the Holland area's bike path system.

Holland is also served by the Indian Trails passenger coach service and Amtrak passenger trains with links to major cities in Michigan and Chicago.

Population

The study of population growth trends and changing indicators such as age, education, income and employment are primary to developing a basic understanding of the recreational needs for Holland Charter Township's population. Failure to assess the impact of changing conditions will result in inadequate solutions to existing problems and failure to avoid problems in the future.

Holland Charter Township is located in the fastest-growing region in the State of Michigan. The Township's population grew by 25% in the 1970's, and 27.5% between 1980 and 1990. The greatest rate of growth in recent years occurred between 1990 and 2000 with a population increase of 65% over the ten-year period. This population increase has changed since the recent economic slow down, but due to the continued availability of undeveloped land and the location near





significant employment centers, the population has continued to increase, although if at a slower rate. The Townships population grew by 23.3% between 2000 and 2010 to 35,636 people.

The 2010 population figure is 35,636, with projections for the year 2015 expected in the region of 45,000. This suggests a continued need to acquire sufficient recreational land in the appropriate locations throughout the Township and further develop recreation facilities prior to the impending need.

The following table demonstrates the general population characteristics of Holland Charter Township compared to Ottawa County and surrounding municipalities from 1970 to 2010.

Population Growth

Holland Charter Township and Selected Communities, 1970 – 2010

Community	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	% Change 2000 – 2010
Holland Township	10,849	13,739	17,523	28,911	35,636	23.3%
Park Township	6,639	10,354	13,541	17,579	17,802	1.3%
Zeeland Township	2,934	3,711	4,472	7,613	9,971	31%
City of Holland	26,337	26,281	30,745	35,048	33,051	-5.7%
Ottawa County	128,181	157,174	187,786	238,314	263,801	10.7%



Until 1990, the racial makeup of the Township’s population was over 90% White. With the 2010 Census, the White population was found to be 73.5%. This change is a result of a significant growth in both the Asian and Hispanic populations of the Township over the last twenty years.



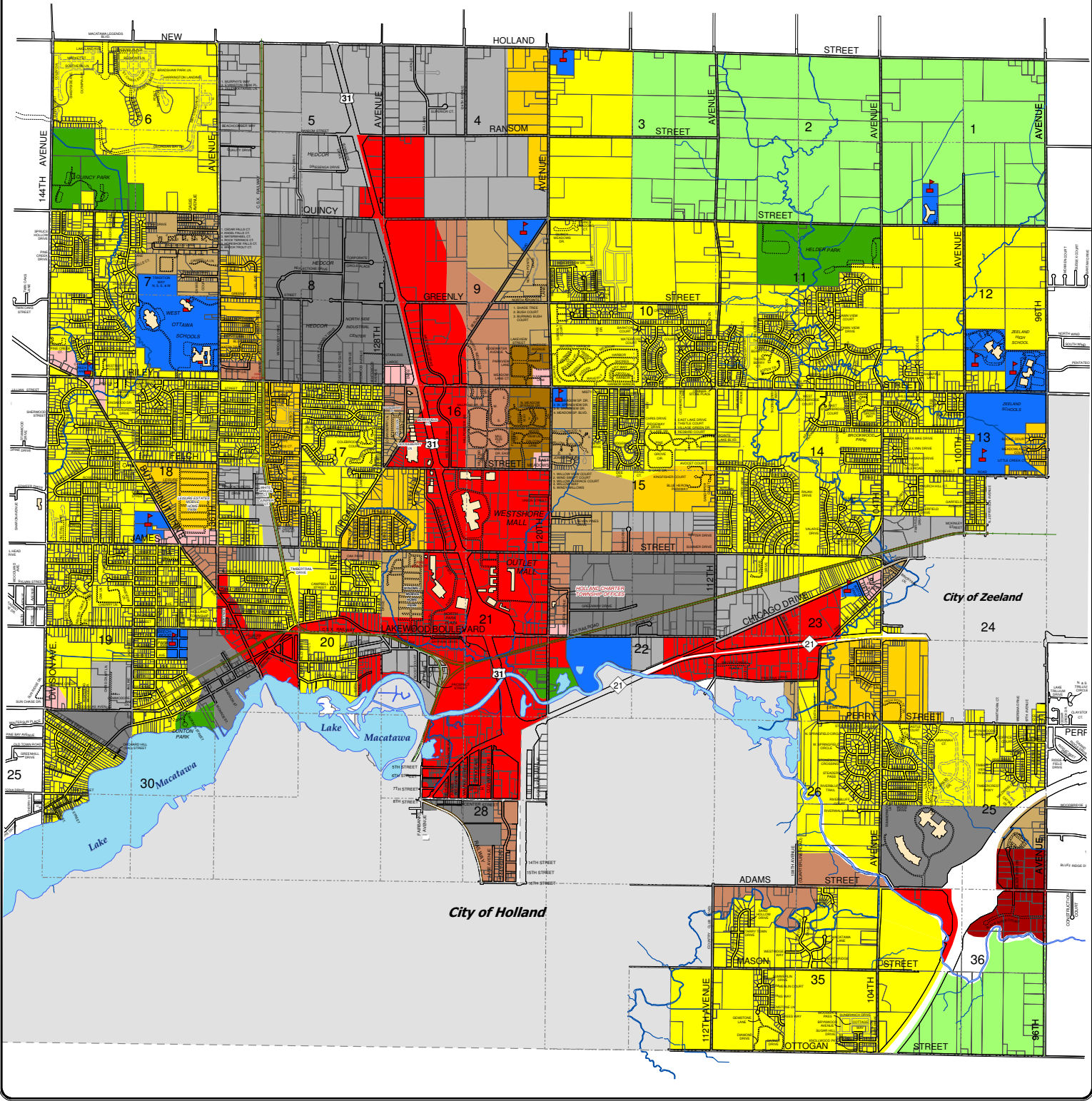
The composition of the population of Holland Charter Township, as determined by the 2010 Census, indicates that there is a slightly above average percentage of people under 18 years of age (30.3%) and a lower than average number of people over 65 years of age (8.9%) when compared to Ottawa County. This results in a slightly lower median age than that of Ottawa County. It is important to note that over 30 percent of the Holland Charter Township population is 18 years of age or under. This suggests a higher than normal need for park and recreation facilities for the young. In addition, 69 percent of the population is under 45 years of age; suggesting the need for recreational programs and facilities that also meet active family needs.

Land Use



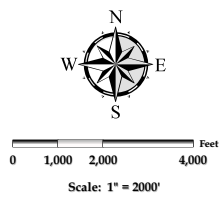
The 2004 Land Use Survey of Holland Charter Township indicates a significant decrease in the amount of farmland and vacant land between 1996 and 2004. This corresponds to an increase in single family residential, commercial, office and industrial land uses. Agricultural and vacant land is located primarily in the northeast of the Township. Commercial land use is concentrated along the major transportation routes, while industry is scattered around the periphery of the City of Holland and near Lake Macatawa, along Chicago Drive and in the northwest of the Township along Business 31.

The last ten years has seen the Township experience significant and sustained residential development. Although this has begun to slow, continued residential growth is expected during this five-year planning period.



Legend

	Surface Water		School
	Agriculture		Office
	Parkland / Open Space		Neighborhood Commercial
	Public		Community Commercial
	Low Density Residential		Highway Service Commercial
	Moderate Density Residential		Light Industrial
	Medium Density Residential		General Industrial
	High Density Residential		



Holland Charter Township
Ottawa County, Michigan
Future Land Use Map

January 2008



Physical Characteristics

The landform of Holland Charter Township is primarily flat in character. The terrain varies from a low, rolling inland dune character in the western part of the Township to a flat sandy-loamy type in the east. Moderate variations in elevation occur in association with the primary water sheds.



The major water resource in the Township is Lake Macatawa, which covers approximately 1,200 acres. The east portion of the lake is located in Holland Township. Access to the lake is provided at Howard B. Dunton Park, which includes over 2000 feet of lake front property. Lake Macatawa is a product of the dunes which pinched off the mouth of the Black River trapping the water in the flats behind and is termed a "drowned river" lake. It is a lake that makes an excellent refuge harbor for boats on Lake Michigan, and its quiet waters provide a variety of marine related opportunities including fishing and other water sports. A considerable portion of the shoreline is dominated by year around residences with portions of the west end and north sides being devoted to the boating industry.



The Macatawa River meanders through the lower portion of the Township and empties into Lake Macatawa. The river is a major collector of the area run-off feeding Lake Macatawa and has potential for viewing, fishing and canoeing. The waterfront and marshlands within the Greater Macatawa Watershed Area include some significant areas of natural undeveloped lands and wildlife habitats.

Pine Creek is a small stream flowing through the western portion of the Township, originating in Park Township and eventually emptying into Lake Macatawa. It flows through high value natural areas as well as residential areas, and is subject to seasonal level fluctuations. Other smaller creeks and drains flow through the Township,



creating significant features in both Helder and Quincy Parks.

The major masses of vegetation in the Township are located near or along the western boundary; near the east end of Lake Macatawa; and in the poorly drained lowlands in agricultural areas which are generally unsuitable for farming. Wooded wetlands are found alongside the Macatawa River and adjacent to Noordeloos Creek in Helder Park.

