

# CHAPTER 6



The Bartlett-Travis House

## Trends and Goals

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### Canton Leisure Services Strategic Plan

Canton Leisure Services has created a Strategic Plan that serves as an administrative tool to guide the department for years to come. It is intended to be an interactive, dynamic and viable document with measurable results of progress and success along the way. The plan analyzes the local and regional community and identifies the department's goals, values, mission and vision. Strategic plan sub-committees have been formed to ensure the successful implementation of that plan.

Trends that may impact the department were identified, analyzed and interpreted in how they would impact the Township's ability to meet its goals for Canton residents.

#### Trend 1 – Demographic, Cultural and Social

##### Trend 1A: Population Growth

With a population growth of more than 420 percent since 1970, Canton Township has been and continues to be one of the fastest growing communities in the state. The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) estimates project that Canton growth will top out with a population of 110,000 by the year 2030.

*Implications:* Demands for services will continue to increase. Canton will need to be creative in meeting those demands both in maintenance and operation of existing facilities and in development of new facilities and projects.

##### Trend 1B: Growing Ethnic Diversity

Canton is becoming an increasingly diverse community.

*Implications:* Leisure Services staff must be sensitive to recreational preferences, based on cultural differences. Greater emphasis will need to be placed on programs and services that enrich all residents in the community.

##### Trend 1C: Increase in Senior Population

Canton, like most communities in the United States, will continue to grow older. In 1900, the life expectancy was 47; today, it is over 75. Today, more than 80 percent of Americans will live past 65. In addition to increased life expectancy, the "baby boomers" are now reaching retirement age. Learning, volunteer work and leisure will all become lifelong activities. The "new" senior will represent a large group that is generally financially secure, with considerable free time and in good health.

*Implications:* As Canton seniors change, their definition of leisure continues to expand, becoming progressively more active, both in physical and intellectual activities. The "new" senior will look for a variety of activities that range from fitness and sports, to hobbies and crafts, to computer clubs and travel.



**Trend 1D: Providing Services for At-Risk Populations**

Statistics have proven that providing leisure services for at-risk populations can reduce crime. Additionally, the cost to provide leisure services is far less expensive than incarceration.

*Implications:* Partnerships with Public Safety and use of data (Geographic Information Systems – GIS mapping, etc.) is critical to identifying at-risk populations. Specifically designed programs for at-risk communities and active solicitation of grant dollars will allow leisure to act as a preventative tool.

**Trend 2 – The Changing Economy**

Michigan's economy was strong in the 1990's. However, since September 11, 2001, Michigan's economy, like the rest of the country, has been in a recession. Though there are indications of recovery, the process will be a slow one and Michigan communities are struggling. While Canton is financially strong, we have been impacted by the recession and must change the way we do business to remain economically viable.

**Trend 2A: Efficient Use of Resources/Cost Saving Measures**

The Township Board is committed to providing the necessary resources for a first-class Leisure Services Department. However, manpower, funding, equipment, and supplies must be justified and utilized efficiently.

*Implications:* There are several ways Canton Leisure Services can more efficiently use its resources:

- Cooperative use of resources between Divisions
- Review and adjust work schedules and staffing levels as well as supplement with volunteers to better utilize manpower
- Properly maintain and operate equipment (through employee training) to extend equipment life
- Inventory tracking to ensure the proper use of supplies and reduce waste.
- Review common purchases between Divisions and utilize group purchasing/bids to increase savings
- Implement technology to operate more efficiently.

**Trend 2B: Revenue Enhancements/ Alternative Funding Sources**

As general operating funds are limited, it becomes imperative to find ways to increase revenue through grants, user fees, partnerships, donations, etc.

*Implications:* Canton Leisure Services should expand its marketing efforts to establish partnerships for donations of funds and services, while also increasing the number of user paid service fees.



### Trend 3 – Technology

#### **Trend 3A: Utilize Technology to Enhance Services and Communicate with Residents**

It is estimated that 90 percent (and increasing) of homes in Canton have a computer and 85.5 percent have access to the internet (based on a 2001 survey in the *Canton Focus* with 413 respondents of 1,000 issues). Computers and the Web provide a myriad of opportunities to inform residents and offer services on-line.

*Implications:* Offer services such as program registration and tee-times on-line. Utilize broadcast e-mails to distribute newsletters and keep residents and program participants informed.

#### **Trend 3B: Utilize Technology and Software for Analysis, Evaluation, and Mapping of Services**

Calculated statistical data is critical to establishing the importance of Leisure Services in the community. Data analysis will provide insight into the community's perception of services, and help the department identify changes that need to be made.

*Implications:* Maximize utilization of software such as CIT and Safari for efficient and up-to-date reporting. Data should be evaluated and interpreted by supervisory staff on a regular basis. Partner with Engineering Services for mapping of potential service areas, users by geographic area, and site planning for special events.

### Trend 4 – Environmental Stewardship

#### **Trend 4A: Development of Trails and Opportunities for Passive Park Use**

Canton Township residents have ranked walking/hiking/nature trails the number-one park facility need for the community. This was evident in visioning workshops conducted for the Master Plan development of Patriot Park. In addition, a survey was conducted during Canton's Liberty Fest in June, 2002, that asked residents to vote for their top priorities for the park. The survey results again showed walking/hiking/nature trails as a top priority.

*Implications:* The demands for passive park facilities cannot be ignored. Canton Leisure Services staff should emphasize the construction of passive trail systems during park facility development. The following Parks Division projects are in the planning stages and attempts to secure funds should be followed to fruition to include passive trail systems: Patriot Park Master Plan, Fellows Creek Wetland Nature Trail, Rouge River Recreational Trails, and Edison Corridor Connector Trails.



**Trend 4B: Wetland Preservation**

Canton Township, along with many communities in southeast Michigan, has been working to preserve and protect the natural quality of the Rouge River and its watershed. Wetland preservation is designed to enhance water quality and protect wildlife habitat.

*Implications:* Leisure Services properties should include preservation as evident in the following: Fellows Creek Wetland Nature Trail, Pheasant Run Golf Club (holes 15 and 16), and Patriot Park Master Plan.

**Trend 4C: Re-introduction of Native Species**

Important to Canton residents is the restoration, preservation, and creation of natural ecosystems on Township properties. This protects the wooded areas, creeks, and native ecosystems such as wetlands and meadows, and allows the re-introduction of native species.

*Implications:* As part of the Pheasant Run Golf Club development project on holes 15 and 16, natural ecosystem restoration was implemented. In addition, similar efforts should be adhered to during development of Fellows Creek Wetland Nature Trail and Patriot Park Master Plan.

**Trend 5 – Historic Preservation**

Preservation of Canton's heritage is important as the community continues to grow. The Township Board's continued support of Canton's Historic District Commission is evidence of the community embracing its heritage. The success of the traditional style development Cherry Hill Village.

*Implications:* Leisure Services should continue partnerships with the Canton Historical Society and the Historic District Commission through programming events and maintaining historical sites.



Cherry Hill Village



## Canton Leisure Services Goals

Another purpose of the Leisure Services Strategic Plan was to identify overall goals for the department and how it will serve the Canton community into the future. Creating Community through People, Parks and Programs is the Canton Leisure Services vision. We have established seven departmental goals that help us meet this vision. Each item on the Five Year Action Program (pages 85-86) identifies the specific goal that the item helps to achieve.

Goal 1: Create a sense of community and belonging

Goal 2: Provide premier facilities

Goal 3: Develop and cultivate partnerships

Goal 4: Efficiently utilize resources and demonstrate fiscal responsibility

Goal 5: Create a healthy community

Goal 6: Provide excellent customer service

Goal 7: Develop and empower staff

To help achieve our goals and vision, specific objectives and action steps have been developed for each department division. Services, programs, capital improvements, etc. are directly tied to our goals and are vital components of the department's decision making process.

