Onota Township Recreation Plan 2019-2024

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Onota Township has developed the following five-year Recreation Plan. This Township Recreation Plan shall serve several constructive purposes. It will serve as (1) a source of information, (2) a guide for correcting deficiencies, (3) an indicator of goals and policies, (4) a framework for making decisions, and (5) a means of stimulating public interest and participation in local community recreation projects.

Located in northwestern Alger County along the south shore of Lake Superior, the Onota Township area is inhabited by approximately 350 people. The Township is adjacent to Chocolay and Skandia Township in Marquette County, as well as Rock River and AuTrain Township in Alger County. Total area of Onota Township is 92 square miles (or 56,719.7 acres). The location of Onota Township is illustrated at the bottom of Map 3-1**,** found in Appendix A.

Natural resources abound in Onota Township. In addition to the many inland lakes, rivers, and streams, there is an abundance of wild game, birds, and fish. The area supports a variety of wildlife - including game animals such as whitetail deer, black bear, ruffed grouse, beaver, muskrat, squirrels, snowshoe hare and rabbits. Non-game species found within the Township include raccoon, pine marten, pileated woodpecker, mink, red squirrel, fox, mink, coyote, cougar, and moose. Game fish found within the Township include rainbow trout, lake trout, brown trout, brook trout, coho salmon, and northern pike. Lake trout and whitefish are fished for commercial purposes within the county, with two charter fishing services based in Onota Township.

The shoreline of Lake Superior underscores the natural beauty of the Township. Residents and visitors participate in a range of outdoor pursuits within the community, such as snowmobiling, off-road vehicle (ORV) riding, bicycling, and hiking. The leisure needs and interests of residents are an important factor in the recreation planning process.

SECTION 2: ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

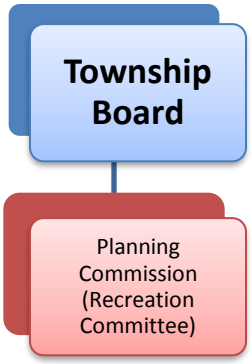
Planning and providing recreation services and open spaces for a community requires staff (or volunteers) as well as funds to purchase land to develop, operate and maintain sites. Part of this process is determining how parks & recreation functions of the township will be performed.

2.1 Organizational Structure

Over the years, Onota Township has little history of organized recreational activities. The Onota Township Planning Commission first developed a Recreation Plan in 2006. This was the initial step by Onota Township to establish public recreation facilities - providing access to the natural resources of the area, as well as future recreation opportunities for both township residents & visitors. The Township opted out of Alger County Parks and Recreation Department program participation due to lack of use or interest by residents.

In 2012 (under Public Act 156 of 1917), Onota Township designated the Planning Commission to serve as the Recreation Committee and advise the Township Board on recreation matters. The Planning Commission has been assigned the task of updating the Township's five-year Recreation Plan and soliciting public input on recreation from Township residents.

Figure 2-1



2.2 Community Recreation Partners

Onota Township plans to work cooperatively with the main public landowners – the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and US Forest Service – to develop recreational opportunities in the area.

2.3 Parks and Recreation Budget

Onota Township assigns approximately $3,000 annually to the Recreation line item of the General Fund budget for recreational programming and services. Additional funding may be allocated for improvement or maintenance projects, on an as-needed basis.

2.4 MDNR Grant Status

Onota Township has not received any recreation grants from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) at this time.

SECTION 3: RECREATION INVENTORY

3.1 Parks and Recreation Facilities

Onota Township does not currently own any recreational areas or facilities. There are numerous recreation sites located in the Township that are owned and maintained by various entities. Recreation sites discussed below are shown on Map 3-1 in Appendix A *(unless starred)*. If the township develops recreation facilities at a future time, they will be evaluated for accessibility.

A rating scale (1-5) will be used to determine what extent the recreational area and/or facility meets accessibility guidelines:

1 - none
2 - partially
3 - mostly
4 - entirely
5 - developed/renovated using the principles of universal design [for accessibility]

Table 3-1: Recreational Sites in Onota Township

SITE/OWNERSHIP	FACILITIES	IMAGE
Deer Lake Public Access Site Michigan DNR	Hard surface ramp with a courtesy pier – Parking for nine vehicles (with trailers) – Unisex outhouse – Use: fishing, boat/water sports	
Deer Lake Roadside Park Michigan Dept of Transportation	Roadside rest area on Deer Lake – Infrastructure: Picnic tables, grills, garbage cans, male/female dual outhouse – Beach use: swimming & boat/water sports	
John H. Hammer Public Access Michigan DNR	Gravel ramp on Laughing Whitefish River – Parking for 4-6 vehicles – Use: small boats, ice fishing, canoes/kayaks	
Tyoga Historical Pathway Michigan DNR	1.5 mile hiking trail (loop) – Interpretive signs detail history of Tyoga as brief logging & lumber mill site – 3 bridges across rivers, extensive boardwalk system in swampy areas	
Hiawatha National Forest * United States Forest Service	Western section of the Hiawatha Forest – Alger County: 128,606 acres – Onota Township: nearly 15,000 acres	
Lake Superior Boat Launch Hiawatha National Forest	Hard surface ramp with a courtesy pier – Parking for 14+ vehicles (with trailers) – Frequent maintenance due to lake damage – Significant use by residents – Township funds and grants used to support site	

Table 3-1: Recreational Sites in Onota Township		
SITE/OWNERSHIP	**FACILITIES**	**IMAGE**
Rock River Canyon Wilderness Hiawatha National Forest	Protected wilderness area consisting of two canyons (Rock River & Silver Creek). Highly variable elevation and steep terrain. Contains: – Rock River Falls trail – Ice caves – part of the North Country Trail	
Rock River Kilns Hiawatha National Forest	Historical site of charcoal kiln operation – Has short trail and interpretive sign – Graves nearby – 3 child victims of diphtheria	
ATV / Snowmobile Trails * Hiawatha National Forest Michigan DNR	– East-west trail converted from railroad – Trail systems and forest roads in Hiawatha NF	
North Country Trail * National Park Service North Country Trail Association	The North Country Trail System (4600 miles, NY to ND) travels through nearly 20 miles of the township, from Sand River to Rock River Road.	
Laughing Whitefish Lake Preserve The Nature Conservancy	1,728 acres of lake, river, wetlands, & forest. Hiking trail is 1 mile marked loop with observation deck and interpretive signs.	
Harry & Hattie Hanford Memorial Nature Sanctuary Michigan Nature Association	40+ acre site, 1270 feet of Lake Superior coast – Marked trail to rocky shoreline – Access via Malette Point Trail	
Tory's Woods UP Land Conservancy	233-acre forested site near Section 5 Road with looped trail system and interpretive signs	
Playground Au Train Onota Public School	School providing pre-K through 8th grade education with two playground areas – Front: pre-fabricated plastic play structure – Back: swings, slide, monkey bars, jungle gym	

SECTION 4: COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

4.1 Community Data

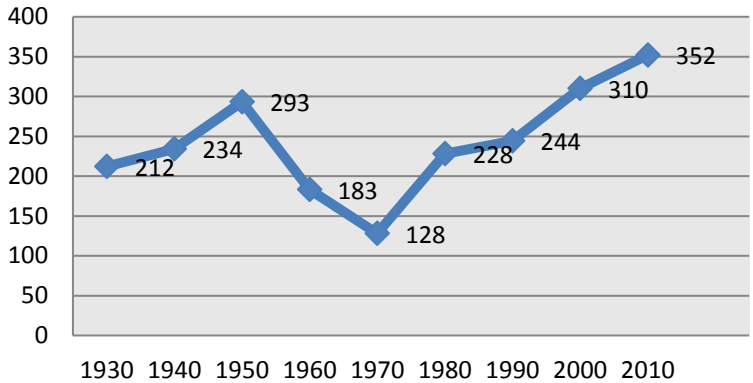
4.1.1 Population

For any planning endeavor, careful attention must be given to the analysis of population trends and projections. Such an analysis is necessary to determine existing or future needs based on the characteristics of the area population. Population analysis assists with determining the direction of local capital improvements and related expenditures. For recreation planning, population data is also useful when applying recreation standards to a community.

Onota Township has experienced population increases each decade since 1970. The largest increase occurred from 1970 to 1980 (78%). From 2000-2010, the population increased by 13.5% to 352 persons *(as recorded in the 2010 census).* Many townships in the Upper Peninsula have experienced similar growth, while cities in the region have observed a population decline over the same period. The City of Munising is an example in terms of a significant population decrease. With a peak of 4,409 residents in 1940, the city has since experienced continual population decline (46.6% total) to 2,355 in 2010.

Figure 4-1

Onota Township Population: 1930-2010



Major events such as World War I, World War II, and the Great Depression influenced where people lived, how they lived and what jobs they pursued to support themselves and their families. Economic factors of a more local nature such as available timber resources and markets for farm products were primary determinants as well. Official population counts for Onota Township since 1930 are presented below (Table 4-1).

Table 4-1 Population, Selected Areas, 1940-2010

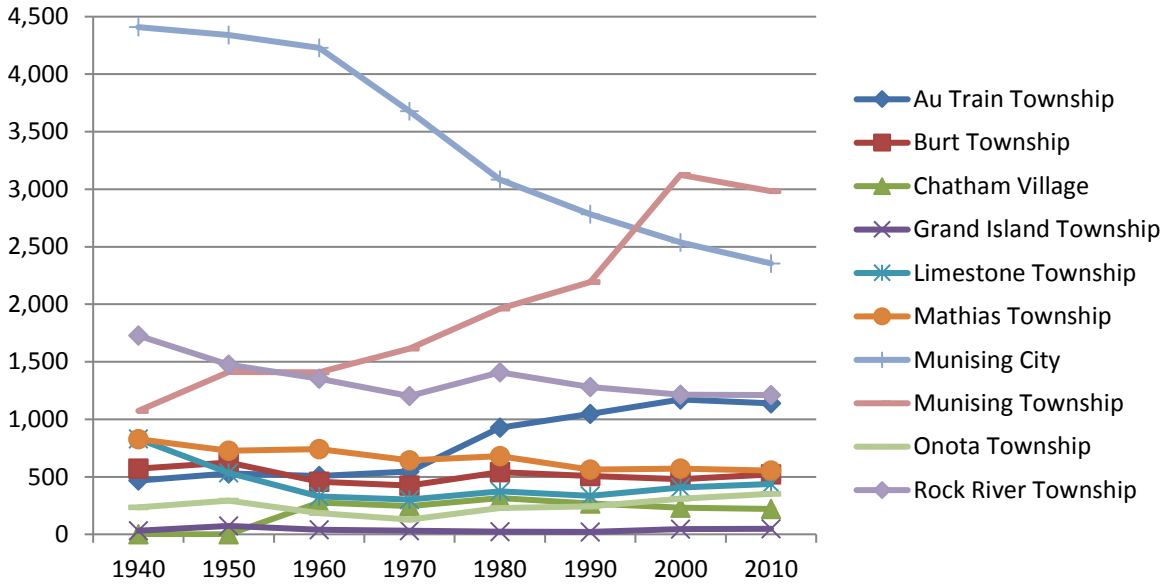
Governmental Unit	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	% change
Onota Township	**234**	**293**	**183**	**128**	**228**	**244**	**310**	**352**	**50.4**
Au Train Township	467	529	508	545	928	1,047	1,172	1,138	143.7
Burt Township	570	624	457	424	539	508	480	522	-8.4
Grand Island Twp	31	73	40	32	23	21	45	47	51.6
Limestone Township	829	535	330	302	373	334	407	438	-47.2
Mathias Township	827	726	742	644	680	563	571	554	-33.0
Munising City	4,409	4,339	4,228	3,677	3,083	2,783	2,539	2,355	-46.6
Munising Township	1,073	1,412	1,408	1,614	1,963	2,193	3,125	2,983	178.0
Rock River Township (+Village of Chatham)	1,727	1,476	1,354	1,202	1,408	1,279	1,213	1,212	-29.8
Alger County	10,167	10,007	9,250	8,568	9,225	8,972	9,862	9,601	-5.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, years cited.

4.1.2 Age Characteristics

According to data from the 2010 Census, the population of Onota Township is significantly older than Alger County as a whole. In 2010, Onota Township's median age was 56.6 years, higher than that of Alger County (45.0), as well as Michigan (37.6) and the United States overall (37.2). From 1980 to 2010, the Township experienced a 25-year increase in the median age of its residents. While the median age rose in every municipality in Alger County, Onota Township's increase was the most dramatic. Burt Township is the only Alger County municipality with a higher median age (62.9). Comparative data on median age is presented below (Figure 4-2, Table 4-2).

Figure 4-2
Population: Alger County Municipalities (1940-2010)



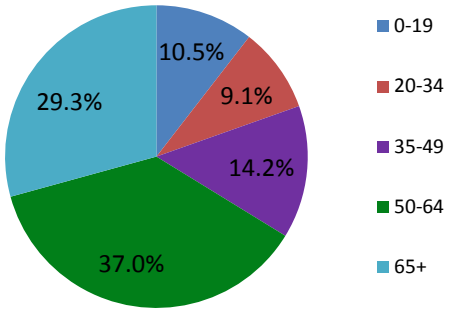
Longer life expectancies and smaller family sizes are the major sociological reasons that the overall population is statistically getting older. Moreover, the largest segment of the population, the "baby boomer" generation *(born 1946 to 1965)* is approaching retirement age. The examination of a community's age structure is critical to sound decision making within a community. Persons aged 5 through 18 make up the school age portion of the population (which is further divided into elementary, middle and high school age groups). The working age population is generally accepted as being from 20 to 64 years old (as defined by the Census Bureau). The eligible voting population is defined as persons 18 or older. Although not everyone between 20 and 64 is in the labor force, and not everyone 18 or older actually votes, this breakdown does give communities a sense of how their population is distributed for planning and comparative purposes.

Table 4-2 Median Age, Selected Areas, 1980-2010

Area	1980	1990	2000	2010	Change
Onota Township	**31.4**	**38.6**	**49.8**	**56.6**	**+25.2**
Au Train Township	30.1	36.2	42.3	51.7	+21.6
Burt Township	42.2	48.1	56.7	62.9	+20.7
Grand Island Twp.	42.5	37.5	45.8	50.5	+8.0
Limestone Township	32.8	37.8	45.5	51.5	+18.7
Mathias Township	31.6	39.9	44.6	49.1	+17.5
Munising City	34.3	39.7	43.8	45.7	+11.4
Munising Township	28.7	32.4	35.2	37.5	+8.8
Rock River Township	29.9	36.1	42.3	46.3	+16.4
Alger County	31.6	36.7	41.2	45.0	+13.4
State of Michigan	28.8	32.6	35.5	37.6	+8.8
United States	30.0	32.9	35.3	37.2	+7.2

An analysis of the information in Figure 4-3 – percentages of population by age group – provides another perspective on age distribution within the population. By studying the population fluctuations within this and other groups, it is possible to evaluate the important factors of in-migration and out-migration.

Figure 4-3
Township Residency by Age Group



In 2010, the age group of 50-64 made up the largest portion of the total population in the township, at 130 people (37%); the 65 plus group was the second largest at 103 people (29.3%). The data indicates that the average age of the township is increasing at a greater rate than county-wide. Growth of older segments of the population influences the type and cost of services offered by the township and other providers.

In recent decades, there has been a shift in population from the school age and working age population into the retired age group. This change has occurred almost universally across the country. The proportion of individuals in the preschool and school age groups continues to shrink which contributes to declining school enrollment. The forces of migration – in and out – are important to consider. In rural areas where job opportunities are limited, younger adults find it necessary to move away *(out-migration)* to further their educations or careers. In 2010, the number of residents in the 25-34 year old age group represented only 9.1% of the Township population.

As the baby boomer generation begins to reach retirement age, a smaller proportion of the population is participating in the workforce. Persons of retirement age have shown a preference for rural areas such as Onota Township, and further impact the age structure through *in-migration*. With a diminishing workforce, there are fewer people to contribute to pension funds and additional programs that support retirees. As the number of working persons decreases in comparison to retirees, there is uncertainty over the future of programs such as Social Security.

The sole education provider within the township is the AuTrain-Onota school in Deerton. As of the 2009-10 school year, the AuTrain-Onota School offers education to pre-K through 8th grade at the Deerton School. After this, the students have options of attending school at Marquette, Superior Central, or Munising school districts. In recent years, the school population of the AuTrain-Onota School District has held fairly constant. Enrollment data is presented in Table 4-3 *(Source: Marquette-Alger RESA)*.

Table 4-3 AuTrain-Onota School Enrollment

School Year	Students
2017-18	42
2016-17	34
2015-16	31
2014-15	32
2013-14	34
2012-13	43
2011-12	38
2010-11	43
2009-10	49

4.1.3 Gender

The population of Onota Township is 52.3% female (184 persons) and 47.7% male (168). The median ages are: 55.7 years (female) and 57.5 years (male).

4.1.4 Household Characteristics

Evaluation of changes in household characteristics within a community can often provide additional insights about population trends. Household relationships reflect changing social values, economic conditions, and demographic changes - such as increased lifespan and the increasing mobility of our society.

The Census defines a *household* as all persons who occupy a housing unit - i.e., a single family, one person living alone, two or more families living together, or any group of related or unrelated individuals sharing living quarters. A *family* consists of a householder and one or more persons living in the same household who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption. A *non-family household* can be one person living alone, or any combination of people not related by blood, marriage or adoption.

In 2010, only 9.8% of Onota Township family households included children under 18 years of age, which is a sharp decline from 2000 Census (17.8%). The rates for family households with children under 18 are 20.1% for the county and 28.6% for the state. Statistically, households are slightly smaller in Onota Township (2.03 persons) than the county (2.20 persons) and the state (2.49 persons). On both a regional and national level, smaller household sizes have been a trend, partly due to an increase in the number of single-parent households. Non-family households have increased from 46 to 50 (from 2000-10), with an increase in the number of householders living alone. There was also a slight increase in the number of householders over 65 yo living alone in this same time frame (2000-10).

Table 4-4 Household Characteristics (Selected Areas) 2000 vs. 2010

Household Type	Onota Township				Alger County		Michigan
	2000		2010		2010		2010
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Percent
Family Households	100	68.5%	123	71.1%	2,479	63.6%	66%
With children under 18	26	17.8%	17	9.8%	785	20.1%	28.6%
Married-couple family	93	63.7%	111	64.2%	2,035	52.2%	48%
With children under 18	22	15.1%	14	8.1%	95	24%	18.9%
Female householder *(no husband present)*	4	2.7%	7	4.0%	276	7.1%	13.2%
With children under 18	2	1.4%	2	1.2%	151	3.9%	7.3%
Non-Family Households	46	31.5%	50	28.9%	1,419	36.4%	34%
Householder living alone	36	24.7%	40	23.1%	1,232	31.6%	27.9%
Householder 65+ years old	13	8.9%	16	9.2%	593	15.2%	10.2%
Total Households	146	*100%*	173	*100%*	3,898	*100%*	*100%*
Average Household Size	2.12		2.03		2.20		2.49

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Profile of General Demographic Characteristics for Michigan: 2010, Table DP-1 and Profile of General Demographic Characteristics for Michigan: 2000, Table DP-1.

4.1.5 Economic Characteristics

Household Income

The median household income was $50,313, while approximately 16.1% of individuals had an income below the established poverty level, as reported in the 2013-17 American Community Survey estimates.

Economic Base

Historically, the local economy, like that of Alger County, is closely related to natural resources and features. The proximity and abundance of forest products provide much of the raw material utilized in commercial enterprises such as paper and lumber mills.

Tourism has been, and continues to be, a major and growing industry in the area. Once limited primarily to the summer season, tourism has become much more of a year-around industry due at least in part, to the popularity of fall color tours and winter sports, especially snowmobiling *(Michigan leads the nation in the number of licensed snowmobiles)*. Onota Township offers several resorts and cabins for daily and weekly rental opportunities.

As an industry, tourism is among the leaders in Michigan. The term *tourism* is comprehensive and includes a range of activities associated with natural and man-made attractions - such as products and services for leisure and recreational pleasure. Alger County has many recreational sites – camping areas, hiking trails, off-road vehicle (ORV) routes, and water bodies for sports such as fishing, boating, canoeing/kayaking and swimming. There are also a multitude of scenic natural areas to explore – waterfalls, rivers, cliffs, caves, forests, and so on.

Tourism and recreation have changed over the years as transportation options increase personal mobility. Today, tourists are more likely to travel frequently, take shorter trips and stay closer to home. Heritage-tourism and eco-tourism have increased in popularity. Heritage-tourism draws those interested in the historic and cultural offerings of a community or institution. Eco-tourism is popular among those desiring to experience nature through quiet activities such as bird watching, hiking, and kayaking.

Kimar's Resort and Charters

There are limited commercial establishments within Onota Township (including Brownstone Restaurant; Seacoast Motel; Rock River Beach Cottages; Kimar's Resort & Charters, Marine Sales and Excavating; Whitefish Lodge; Compass Land Consultants; Shelter Bay Charters and General Repair; Deerton Guest House; the Post Office) as well as gravel pits, logging operations, junkyards, and several private residential rentals. The Township began with a natural resource-based economy, which continues to this day with regular logging, charter fishing operations and sand & gravel pits. With 29.3% of the population being age 65 or greater, the Township is transitioning to a retirement community as well as a commuter area for both the Marquette and Munising areas. In fact, approximately 46% of workers find employment outside of Alger County *(presumably in Marquette County)*. The average employed resident of the township spends around 25 minutes traveling to work.

4.1.6 Land Use & Zoning

About 27% of the land area in the township is publicly-owned. State and federal lands are open to public use and not available for residential, commercial, or industrial development. The largest federal landowner is the US Forest Service with Hiawatha National Forest. The Hiawatha Forest area within the township is approximately 14,850 acres. The majority of state land is part of the Escanaba River State Forest. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources owns about 1,550 acres; 1,024 are part of the Escanaba River State Forest, with the remaining 440 acres in the Laughing Whitefish Falls Scenic Park. The Township owns a 10 acre parcel on Deerton Road, the Deerton Cemetery and the parcel where the township hall and fire hall are located.

Private landholdings enrolled in the Commercial Forest Reserve (CFR) are about 30% of the entire Township land area, or nearly 19,000 acres. Land that meets the CFR designation requirements in state law must be: (1) devoted to commercial forest management, (2) consist of at least 40 contiguous acres, (3) guided by a professionally prepared management plan, and (4) open for public use for hunting and fishing (on foot only) when not being actively logged.

Residential land use is found in the unincorporated community of Deerton as well as along the Lake Superior shoreline. Concentrated residential use can be found at Sand River, Laughing Whitefish Point Road, Onota Hill, Shore Drive, Shelter Bay, Deer Lake, AuTrain Trail, and Brownstone Bay. A significant portion of township residental structures are used only part of the year for recreational purposes or due to seasonal migration of residents *("snowbirds")*. There is limited commercial land use within the township *(businesses are as listed previously)*. Agriculture is not a significant land use, and there are no large agricultural operations within the township.

Non-profit privately owned lands include those of The Nature Conservancy with approximately 1,400 acres surrounding and adjacent to Laughing Whitefish Lake and the Michigan Nature Association, a non-profit conservation organization, with about 46 acres just west of the mouth of the Laughing Whitefish River on Lake Superior. Additionally, Michigan State University owns 440 acres for hardwood research.

Land use is regulated by the Onota Township Zoning Ordinance. The Township Zoning Administrator is responsible for its implementation and enforcement. The Planning Commission holds hearings on conditional use permits, zoning amendments, and various other requests. The Zoning Board of Appeals hears variance requests.

4.1.7 Local Transportation System

M-28 is an east-west state trunkline highway that nearly traverses the Upper Peninsula, from Wakefield to near Sault Ste. Marie. Along with US-2, M-28 forms a pair of primary highways crossing the Upper Peninsula, providing a major access route for traffic from Michigan and Canada along the southern shore of Lake Superior. M-28 is the longest state trunkline in Michigan with the "M" designation - 290.43 miles.

Within Alger County, there are 197.15 miles of county primary roads, with 10.10 miles located within the township. Deerton Road is the only paved primary road within the township, with a distance of about 1.25 miles. It was repaved in 2011. Peter White Road and Rock River Road, the other two primary roads, are gravel.

SECTION 5: PLANNING & PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

5.1 Planning Methods

One method to assess community recreation needs is a systems approach to planning. The systems approach to planning incorporates information gained from citizen input and detailed recreation inventories to determine the recreation needs of a community.

5.1.1 Public Input Process

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources requires that two methods be used to incorporate public input into the recreation planning process. Onota Township used two different methods - a mailed survey and a public hearing.

Onota Township sought input via a survey mailed to township residents. This survey was mailed to all township landowners in July 2017. A copy of the survey form that was sent may be found in Appendix B-1. The results of the survey are in Appendix B-2 (charted response data & actual comments) and were taken under consideration when updating the plan prior to releasing the draft.

It was advertised that the draft plan was available for review as of April 1, 2019, by posting a notice at three public locations (outside the township hall, Deerton Post Office, AuTrain Post Office) as well as posting a notice on the website. A copy of the posted notice and website notice can be found in Appendix B-3.

A notice of the public hearing to be held after the 30 day public review period was published in the Munising News on (see Appendix B-4). Through this public hearing, the Onota Township Planning Commission secured additional public input on the draft plan, making any amendments as necessary, then passed a resolution recommending the plan to the Township Board for adoption at their regular meeting on May 14, 2019 (Appendix C-1, 5/14/19 minutes).

The Township Board formally adopted the Recreation Plan by resolution at a meeting held on (Appendix C-2, minutes)

SECTION 6: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals that follow are guides for recreation-related decision making. Consideration and observance of recreation policies should ultimately lead a community toward the attainment of its goals.

Specific development projects and programs should initially be evaluated with respect to the recreation goals, and then in terms of the contribution to the future recreation system of Onota Township. Goals and objectives developed by Onota Township are listed below.

Goal & Objective: Establish recreational opportunities that help residents improve their physical, emotional, & mental health and cultural awareness through individual and community recreation.

Goal & Objective: To protect and conserve natural resources while creating opportunities for residents and visitors to explore, learn about, and appreciate the local environment and its benefits.

6.1 Identified Recreation Needs & Recreation Development Plan

Onota Township, through the recreation development schedule, has determined a number of necessary and valuable recreation projects that have the potential to enhance the quality of life for all demographic groups.

Onota Township places accessibility and barrier-free facilities and programs very high in priority. It is the policy of the Township to provide recreational opportunities to residents and visitors regardless of their age, sex, financial or physical abilities. All future construction will have the goal of being a barrier-free environment. Engineering and architectural firms must comply with or exceed all ADA guidelines to receive contract consideration.

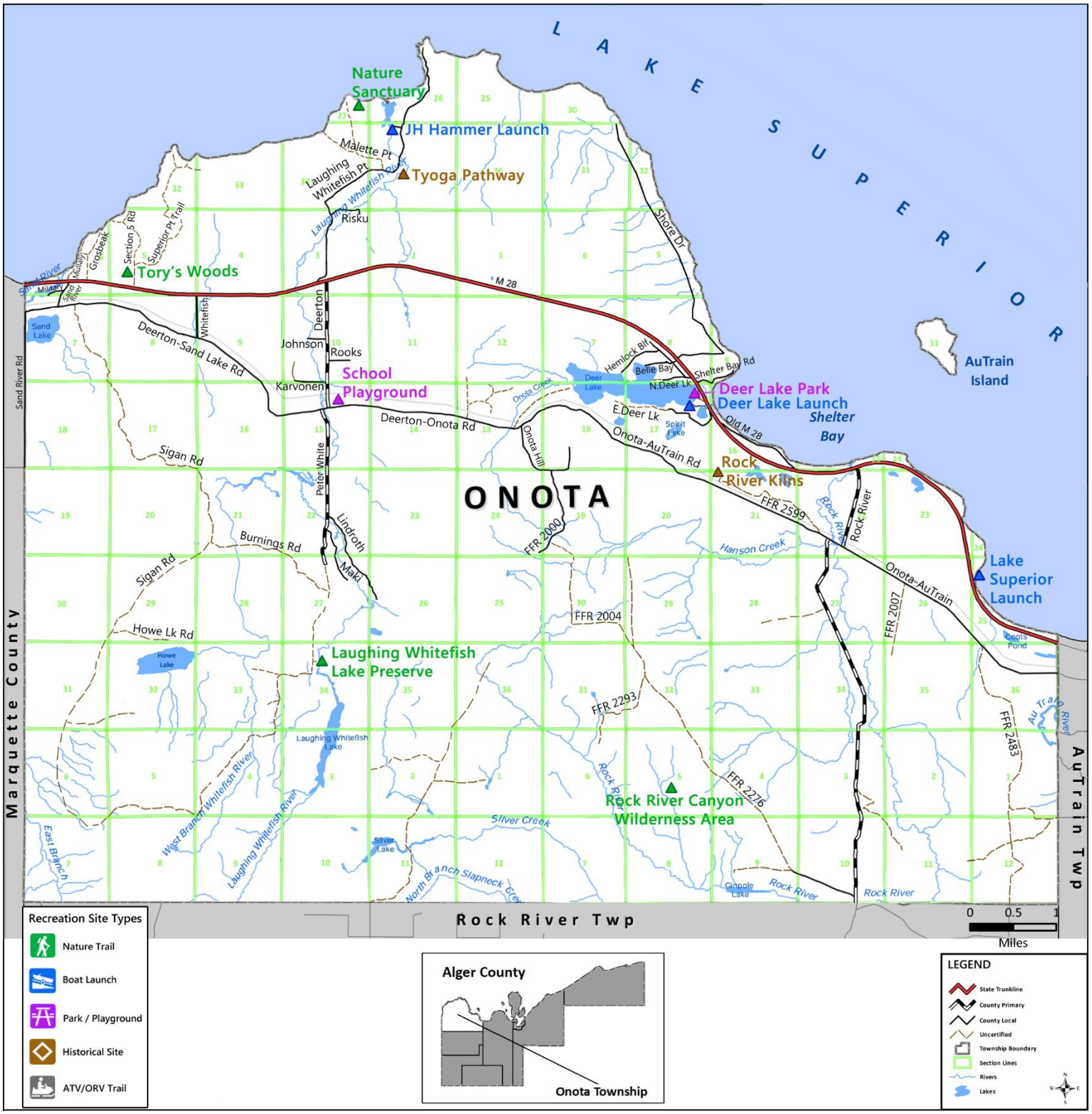
After careful consideration of public input, resident needs and interests, township resources, and other factors, the following significant potential projects have been chosen *(note: projects are not listed by priority or any other order)*.

Table 6-1 Recreation Development Plan: Proposed Projects

LOCATION	POTENTIAL PROJECTS	PARTNERS
Tyoga Trail	* Maintain / improve access & signage * Advocate for Campground re-opening via Partnership or Purchase	MI DNR Friends of Tyoga
John H. Hammer Public Access Site	* Maintain / improve ramp, access & signage	MI DNR
ATV / Snowmobile Trail System	* Seek grant funds for trail maintenance and snowmobile trail grooming	UP Trails, Inc MI DNR
Rock River Canyon Wilderness	* Maintain existing hiking trails (Rock River Falls, North Country Trail)	Forest Service, Hiawatha NF

	∗ Advocate for forest road maintenance to improve access	Forest Service, Hiawatha NF
Rock River Kilns Historical Site	∗ Maintain access & signage ∗ Work with USFS to mitigate ORV/ATV damage	
Lake Superior Boat Launch	∗ Maintain launch dock for users & clear ramp ∗ Seek grant funding to repair parking area	
Township History	∗ Build & maintain interpretive signage at varied significant historical sites ∗ Create brochure that details history of area for self-guided driving tour in township	Alger County Historical Society, Twp Board
Deer Lake Roadside Park + Boat Launch	∗ Buoys to protect swimmers from boat traffic ∗ Repair or replacement of picnic tables	MDOT MI DNR
Sand River	∗ Public site for canoe/kayak access – create a "water trailway"	MI DNR

APPENDIX A: MAP



APPENDIX B-1: SURVEY FORM *(2 pages)*

Dear Neighbors,

The Onota Township Recreation Plan has four goals:

- To establish recreation programs and opportunities
- To protect the natural resources in our area and to create opportunities for community residents/visitors to benefit from and learn about the local environment and its resources.
- To help residents improve their physical/emotional/cultural health and awareness through community recreation.
- Raise awareness of the Plan's objectives and assure there is Public support.

The current Onota Township Master Plan has a list of potential projects for our community. The specific requirements and commitments will vary greatly between these different projects, as will the associated development costs and resources required by the Township. As we explore options for receiving recreational grant funds available from the Department of Natural Resources and other governmental agencies, we understand that most grants require the community to assist with a percentage of matching funds.

As the Planning Commission moves forward in developing our 2018-2022 Recreation plan, **we are seeking citizen input on prioritizing these recreational opportunities**. On the next pages of this letter, we ask you to rate these projects as noted and to **return this survey to us by July 31**. We will tally the results and post them on our township website (onotatownship.org) soon afterwards.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. Onota Township is our community and together we will continue to make it a quality place to live.

Best regards,

Your neighbors on the Onota Township Planning Commission.

Onota Township Recreation Plan Priority Survey - 2017

Please read though the projects below and then rank each on a scale of 1 - 5 by their importance to you.

Sand River M-28 Bridge: promote state funded MDOT refurbishment and repairs

1	2	3	4	5
Least important	Somewhat important	Moderate importance	High importance	Most important

AuTrain Boat Launch (east end off M-28): work with Forest Service to maintain access ramp & area facilities

1	2	3	4	5

John C. Hammer Boat Launch (off Laughing Whitefish Pt Rd): work with DNR to upgrade ramp from gravel to hard surface to improve access to mouth of Laughing Whitefish River and Lake Superior

1	2	3	4	5

Laughing Whitefish Campground (off Laughing Whitefish Pt Rd by Tyoga Trail): provide sanitary disposal services to support 4 campsites

1	2	3	4	5
Least important	Somewhat important	Moderate importance	High importance	Most important

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Onota Township Recreation Area: obtain property for development of community recreational facilities and structures

1	2	3	4	5

Shelter Bay - Lake Superior public access: obtain property for boat launch and related facilities

1	2	3	4	5

Rock River Canyon and Ice Caves (off Rock River & Sandstrom Rd): work with Forest Service to build and maintain Hiking and Ski trails to access canyons and caves

1	2	3	4	5

Tyoga Trail (off Laughing Whitefish Pt Rd): work with DNR to upgrade trail and maintain access & signage

1	2	3	4	5

Onota and Union Fuel Company Kilns (off Deerton-Onota Rd): develop historic site with access and signage

1	2	3	4	5

Additional comments or other projects? Please provide suggestions for future recreational projects and/or programs:

Would you support a millage increase to support the required match for grant funding? Y N

Name and address (REQUIRED)

_____

_____

_____

Phone (optional):_____

Please complete survey by July 31st,

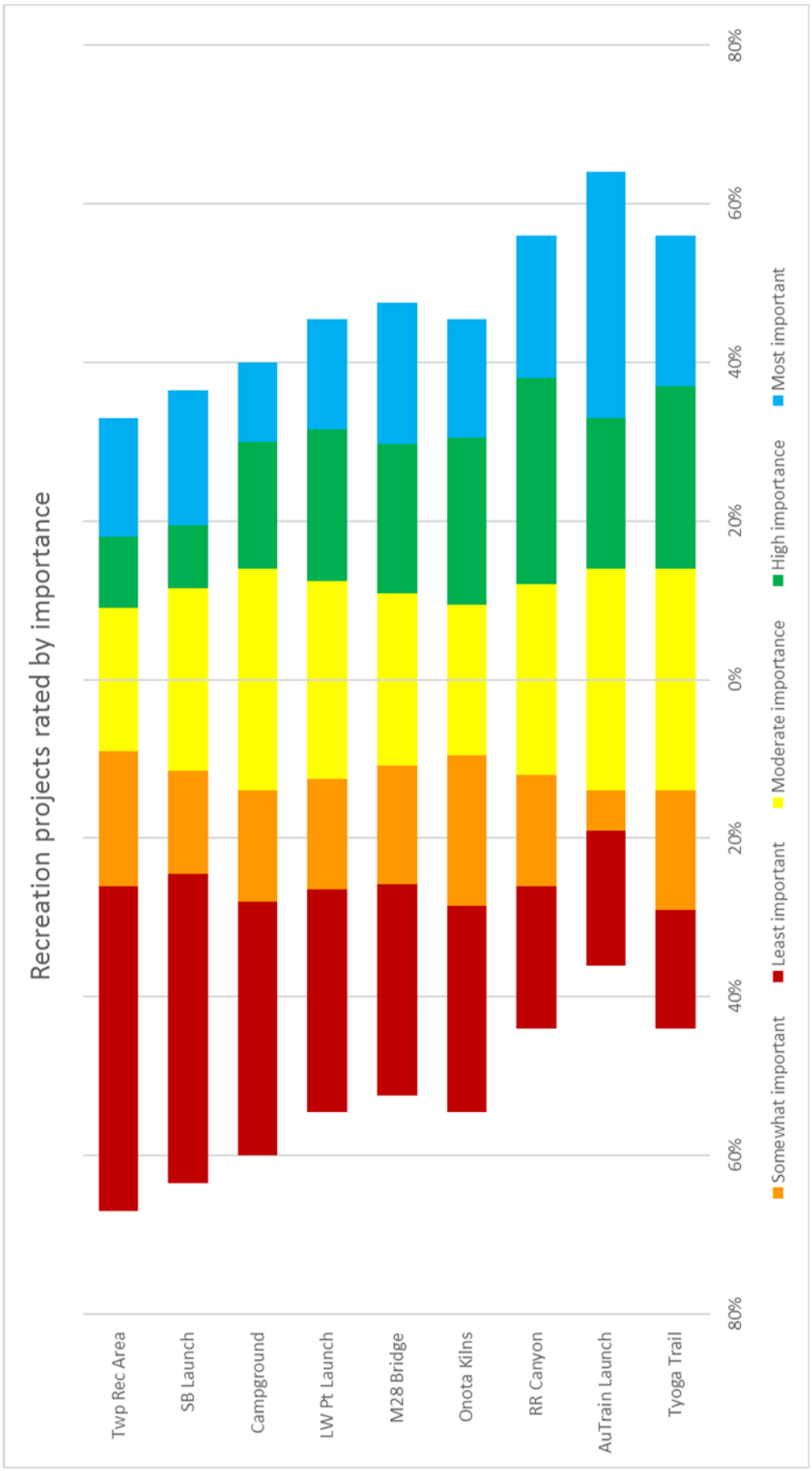
and mail to:

Planning Commission, PO Box 100, Deerton, MI 49822

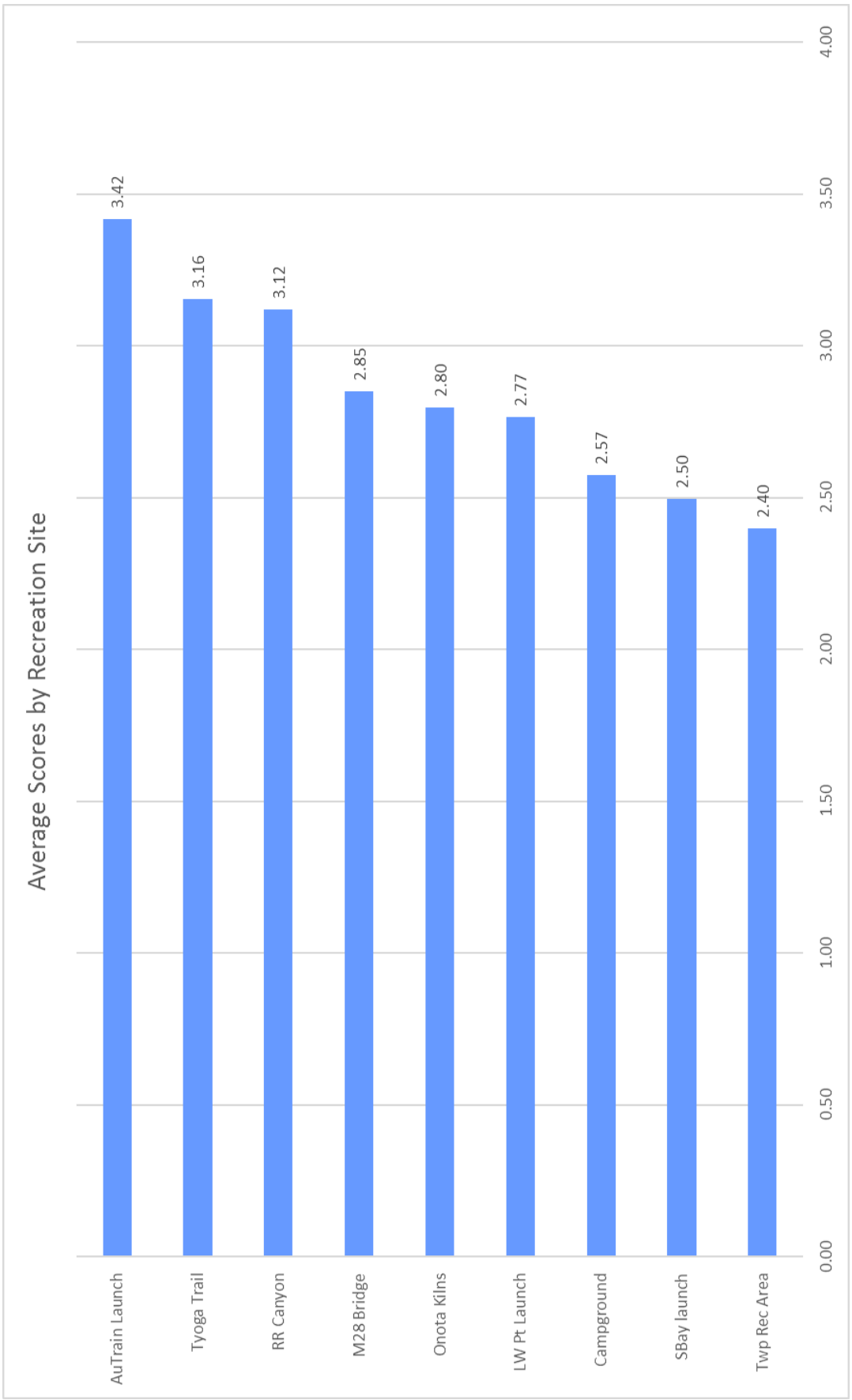
OR

Complete online at Onota Township website:
www.onotatownship.org/

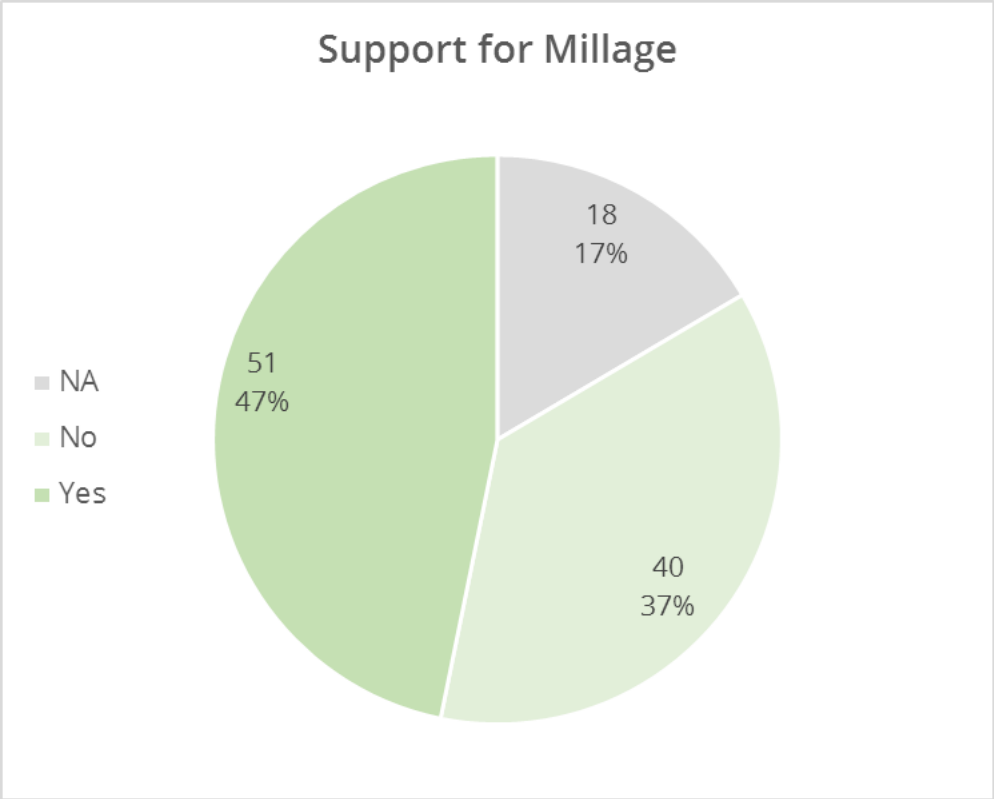
APPENDIX B-2: SURVEY RESULTS

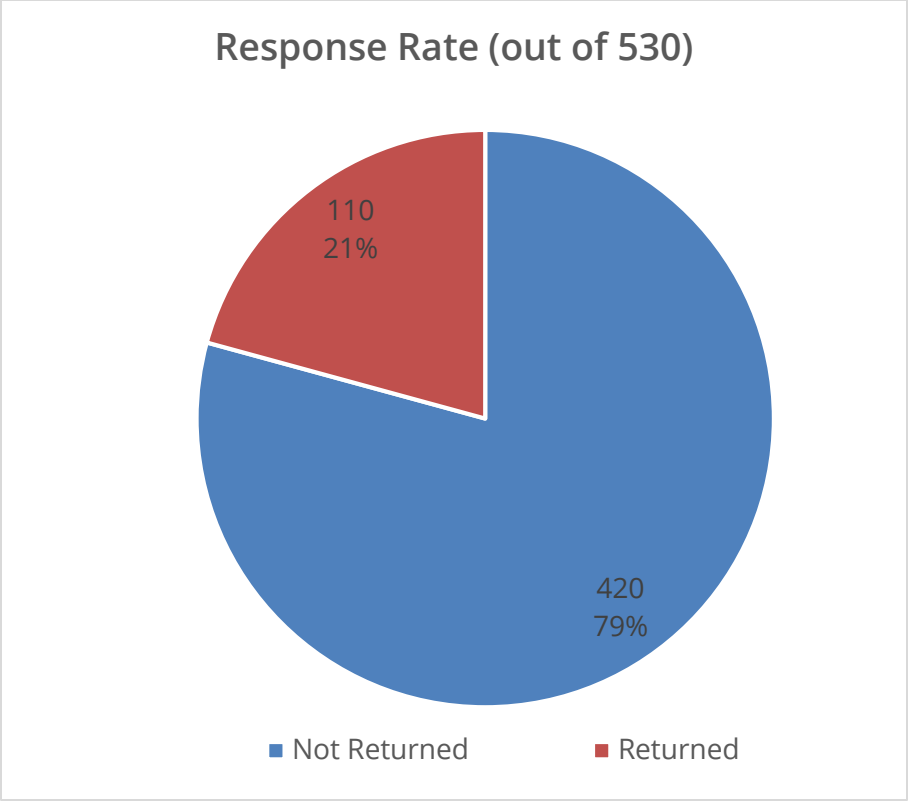


APPENDIX B-2: SURVEY RESULTS *(continued)*



APPENDIX B-2: SURVEY RESULTS *(continued)*





APPENDIX B-2: SURVEY RESULTS ~ COMMENTS & RESPONSES

Onota Township Recreation Survey: Public Comment Summary

Below are all recreation-related comments & responses submitted on the Recreation Survey. Comments that included multiple topics were split and categorized (*no portions omitted*). All names are omitted from this summary to preserve anonymity and encourage future response.

Project-specific comments

Sand River Bridge on M28*: promote state funded MDOT refurbishment and repairs*

* How is state BRIDGE repair a recreational opportunity & a township responsibility? I think *NOT.*
* Everyone uses this bridge – but have state pick up cost.
* What is the relation to recreation plan??
* Remove sand river bridge from plan – not related to recreation

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AuTrain Boat Launch *(east end off M28)*: *work with USFS to maintain boat ramp & facilities*

* Is this in Onota Township?
* What percent of the users of the Au Train Boat Launch live in Onota Township?
* AuTrain Boat Launch is a good investment, it is used by many.
* Need to widen boat ramp. Getting very busy.

John Hammer Boat Launch: *work with DNR to upgrade ramp (gravel to hard surface) to improve Laughing Whitefish River / Lake Superior access*

* Leave this ramp alone. Improve the ramp, lose the beach to Uncle Ducky.
* River is shallow for boats, that would require upgrade.
* Are there that many who use this site?
* There is not enough water in the river. Waste of money.

Laughing Whitefish Campground *(former DNR campground): work with DNR to re-open campground by providing outdoor latrine to support 4 campsites*

* Leave closed or then campers want access to private beaches.
* This could be used by boaters too.

Township Recreation Area*: obtain property to develop community recreational facilities*

* Important only if there is a plan or idea prior/specific to the property sought – i.e. don't buy land *then* try to figure out what to do with it.
* Only if centrally located off M28 to increase visibility and usage.
* Upgrade existing Onota schoolyard facility for community use on weekends & after school hours

Shelter Bay*: obtain property for Lake Superior boat launch & related facilities*

* Shelter Bay is a small bay with sport/commercial fishermen anchored in the bay, as well as other fishing boats. A public access to the bay would open this small, lovely bay to jet skiers and heaven forbid, allow Uncle Ducky to come in. We are totally OPPOSED to a public access on the bay. Fix and enlarge the already existing AuTrain dock / launch.
* Only if this can be done with minimal impact on homes
* We already have two launch sites.
* We have an adequate one. [*in reference to AuTrain boat launch providing Lake Superior access*]

Rock River Canyon/Ice Caves: *work with USFS to build/maintain hiking & ski trails for access*

* This is a USFS wilderness area - no new trails are allowed.
* Wilderness areas should not have any trails.
* This site is a draw - let's promote it. *[in reference to tourism]*

Tyoga Trail: *work with DNR to upgrade trail and maintain access & signage*

* One bridge has been out since last fall. Van Riper State Park said they didn't have money to replace it last season and hoped to this year.
* Maintaining will develop confidence in twp commitment to facilities.
* Really isn't much of a trail going any where. *[note: trail is a loop with signs about area history]*

Onota (Union) Kilns: *develop historic site with access and signage*

* The Onota and Union Fuel Company Kilns are on my private property which is not open for development and further it is posted No Trespassing. I am sure this information will clarify the need to remove this issue from further discussion. Thank you.
* Onota Kilns are in terrible shape - owner has no interest in preserving them.
* I don't know if this is going to draw much attention. *[in reference to tourism]*

General Comments

* I believe our primary efforts should be to update and maintain the recreational opportunities we already have (or had). New opportunities (*Shelter Bay boat launch, new Rock River trails, etc.)* can be addressed in the future. We also need to focus on historic sites before they are gone.
* As most of our residents are of an age group where most of these things would not be utilized, I cant support spending township money on them. If you are looking to bring outsiders into the area by using township money to do that, I cant support that either.
* The area is beautiful as it is. Most of these projects will bring visitors in, however it is the locals that end up cleaning up & maintaining this projects for the long term. Why should we pay any

extra so a person from Detroit can walk a trail and throw their trash out? If you really want to see these things, it is already possible.

* I believe most area residents know how to recreate and prefer a lower rather than a higher profile to attract tourists...less is more.

Suggestions

* A **fenced-in dog park** would be great for dog owners in the township and near-by communities. There are no fenced dog parks in Marquette or Alger County. This would be a welcome feature for travelers, too - so that they wouldn't have to worry about losing their dogs in a far away place.
* Provide **canoe / kayak access** to Sand River - create a water trail
* **Hiking:** Engage in co-operative trail related endeavors with land conservancy *(ie Nature Conservancy & UP Land Conservancy)* to create a network of trail systems with related signage & access.
* **History:** Promote historical interpretation with signs and/or a self-guided driving tour
* **Bikes / walking:** work with the DNR to have a good surface on the railroad right of way for bicyclists. Promote silent sports like biking and walking.
* Promote **mountain biking** on the old railroad trail south of highway (snowmobile trail).
* **4wheelers / snowmobiles:** Parking area for access to railroad grade
* **Baseball field & park:** Previously the Planning Commission tried to get a facility with baseball field and park time setting across from present town hall, it would have been great, but I guess it wasn't a priority, but I think this would be beneficial for people visiting in the UP and hopefully the school could use it at times.
* **Outdoor bread oven** at township hall

Millage (*Would you support a millage increase to provide the required match for grant funding? Y/N)*

* it would depend on which program the millage would support.
* Millage would depend on which projects were supported.
* As far as supporting a millage match for a grant, it depends on what project the millage is for
* Support for millage would depend on the project.
* I'd have to know what projects are chosen first. Probably would [support it].
* Yes, depending on the project.
* Yes if it supports something we feel is of need.
* Yes depending on how much.
* yes if millage is restricted to MATCH grant funds & not a perpetual millage.
* Yes to a very small increase
* we would support millage increase on all 3 & above projects as noted *(respondent rated these projects 3+: Twp Rec Area, Rock River Canyon, Tyoga Trail, Onota Kilns)*
* Work within guidelines of existing funds.
* Please do not increase the millage for funding projects that the township cannot afford.

LETTERS: The two letters sent with surveys are included below as received *(all names omitted)*.

LETTER #1

Dear Onota Township Planning Commission,

It would be grand if land would be donated to Onota Township at site of previous Pine Beach/Shelter Bay Grocery store - there about 50 years. It is a fine place for boat launch (already there) picnic tables, swim, & the fall Wave Surfers who visit.

Noted that 6 of the 9 listed projects are nearer to Deerton. Deerton also has the school, Town Hall, & Fire Department, plus a number of bridges we maintain. Yet if we consider WHERE most development has occurred in Onota Township in the past 20-30 years – it's the Shelter Bay – Deer Lake area & southeast to AuTrain Township line. Here too, perhaps, is where the bulk of our tax base now comes from.

It's time that this area of Onota Township deserve the consideration of equality in projects & services. Thank you.

--Shelter Bay resident since 1945

LETTER #2

To the Planning Commission / To whom it may concern:

I will give you a heads up on a recreation area. Clean up the mess down M-28, from boats to cars, and for heaven's sake, get rid of the port-a-jon that's sitting 5 feet from the door of the post office, which is owned by a private owner that is leasing it to a government agency, that is doing nothing to solve the problem.

Also our twp supervisor is doing nothing to solve the twp's problems. He is living in the 19th century, excuse me, we are living in the 21st century. All these buildings that are vacant and not being used should be demolished. They are a menace to our twp. You know who you are, these buildings are dangerous as well as disease infested by animals that live in them.

If you want a recreational area, clean up the area so you can have a recreational area and be more friendly to the public, tourists, that come here. I have lived here for 25 years as well as my son and this area hasn't expanded or improved since we have been here. There are too many local people that want to control the area.

I've been eye balling the area, no one is fixing the Tioga Trail, the bridge is out; Shiras Institute and Van Riper is taking care of our boat ramp down Whitefish River. Why isn't our twp board and Planning Commission board fixing these areas? What are we paying you to do? To sit and procrastinate. If you ask me, your not doing your job. I heard our twp has a lot of money. I'm still waiting to see what your going to do with it. I know I'm not a Yooper and my voice will fall on deaf ears. If you ask me, it's time for a change.

-- A concerned citizen and resident

APPENDIX B-3: POSTED NOTICES

NOTICE OF PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD: DRAFT RECREATION PLAN

PLAN: As of 4/1/19, a draft copy of the [2019-2024] Onota Township Recreation Plan, as updated by the Planning Commission, is available for public review and comment by contacting the township clerk via phone (906) 343-6535 or email (onotatwp@tds.net). It is also available on the township website under public notices (onotatownship.org).

COMMENT: Written comments concerning this plan may be mailed (address: Planning Commission Chairperson, PO Box 100, Deerton, MI 49822), emailed (onotatwp@tds.net), or may be made in person at the meeting listed below.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING & HEARING (FOLLOWING PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD)

Date: May 14, 2019

Time: 7:00 pm

Place: Onota Township Hall

Purpose: The Onota Township Planning Commission will hold a public hearing to receive public comment regarding the draft Recreation Plan for the period of 2019 through 2024.

Any & all public input on the draft 5-year Recreation Plan will be reviewed by the Onota Township Planning Commission. The plan will be revised as needed and then recommended to the Onota Township Board for adoption.

The draft plan is available for public review at the Onota Township Hall, by appointment with the clerk (906-343-6535, onotatwp@tds.net). Any interested person may appear or be represented at the hearing to make comment on or ask any questions regarding the draft Recreation Plan.

Posted: April 1, 2019

This notice is posted in compliance with PA 267 of 1976 as amended (Open Meetings Act), MCLA 41.72a (2) (3) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Onota Township will provide necessary, reasonable auxiliary aids and services for disabled individuals given five (5) days of notice. Any individuals requiring auxiliary aids or services may make a request by contacting the Onota Township Clerk by mail: PO Box 100, Deerton, Michigan 49822; by phone: (906) 343-6535, or by email: onotatwp@tds.net.

Public Notices

Draft Recreation Plan: The 2019-2024 draft recreation plan is available for public review and comment until May 14. The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the recreation plan on May 14 at 7:00 pm. Please send any comments via mail (Planning Commission, PO Box 100, Deerton, MI 49822) or email (onotatwp@tds.net). If you need a hard copy of the plan instead of the PDF copy, please contact the township clerk via phone (906-343-6535) or the email listed above.

APPENDIX B-5: PUBLISHED NOTICES

APPENDIX C-1: ONOTA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING ADOPTION

APPENDIX C-2: ONOTA TOWNSHIP BOARD RESOLUTION OF RECREATION PLAN ADOPTION