

OCTOBER 2011

WASHINGTON ISLAND

COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

2011 - 2015



PREPARED BY:

JJR

MADISON, WI

INSERT TOWN
RESOLUTION ADOPTING
CORP PLAN



Rich history awaits both residents and tourists in Town parks



Schoolhouse Beach rivals the Caribbean with clear, turquoise water



Relaxing water vistas encourage visitors to sit and stay awhile

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This planning project would not have been successful without the help of many Town officials, staff, and committee members. JJR would like to thank the following community leaders for their input and commitment to the future of Washington Island's park and recreation facilities.

TOWN BOARD

Joel Gunnlaugsson, Chairman
Elizabeth Holmes
Tom Jordan
Ronald Overdahl
Randy Sorensen

PARKS COMMITTEE

Mary Marik, Chairperson
Ron Overdahl, Secretary
Eric Greenfeldt
Ted Hansen
Lucia Petrie
Randy Sorensen

Where terms referred to in this plan are not defined, the Town adopts the terms, definitions, and standards that appear in the "Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines" published by the National Recreation and Park Association.

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Washington Island is located off the tip of the Door County peninsula, reachable only by boat or by plane

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Washington Island Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan is intended to serve as a guide for planning the acquisition and improvement of park, open space, and outdoor recreation facilities for the five-year period of 2011 through 2015. Periodic master planning of the park system enables the Island to respond to the changing recreational needs of residents and visitors and to opportunities that arise for park expansion or development.

This plan provides guidance for the maintenance and development of Washington Island parks by:

- Inventorying current facilities,
- Offering recommendations for facility and programming improvements, and
- Exploring funding options to achieve these recommendations.

The State of Wisconsin requires communities to prepare and adopt a five-year park and outdoor recreation plan in order to maintain eligibility for State and Federal grants and loans. This plan follows the "Guidelines for the Development of Local Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans" published by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and is intended to meet WDNR criteria for a local park and outdoor recreation plan.

2.0 PARK AND OUTDOOR RECREATION PLANNING GOALS

Park and recreation facilities and programs are often some of the most visible of community services. They can be an indicator to residents and visitors alike of the overall quality of life within the community.

A cohesive, visible, and high-quality parks system offers opportunities for activities that bring neighbors together and form strong community pride. Parks encourage residents to lead a healthy lifestyle by providing places to bike, walk, run, swim, and play. Economic benefits can also be realized as parks and recreation facilities are often used for festivals, gatherings, and other events that bring tourists to shops, restaurants, and public accommodations.

Recognizing these important community services provided by the parks system, this Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan establishes the following goals:

- To provide permanent open space throughout the Town for outdoor recreation and environmental protection.
- To provide sufficient, well-maintained park facilities for active and passive recreational use, serving all ages and interest groups.
- To serve residents of all abilities by encouraging the design of park facilities whenever practical to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- To provide safe and efficient pedestrian and bicycle access between residences, shops, parks, the school, and other recreational sites.
- To preserve the small-town character of the Town while encouraging tourism in the community.

3.0 THE PLANNING PROCESS

In November 2009, the Town reestablished a Parks Committee to meet the recreational needs of the community. The Committee recognized a planning effort was needed to understand the condition of the Town's existing public recreational facilities, to plan for future needs, and to determine potential funding sources for implementation. This document represents the first Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) undertaken by the Town.

The CORP planning process included the following timeline of events:

- May 2011: Parks Committee meeting with consultant to kick off planning process
- May 2011 - June 2011: Inventory of existing park facilities by Committee members
- August 2011: Draft document available for Committee and public review, including a public booth at the annual Island Fair
- September 2011: Committee and Board approval of document
- Note: All meetings listed were posted and open to the public.

Plan amendments are part of the planning process. Future updates and amendments to this plan will be undertaken as necessary, and will be subject to public review.

4.0 COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Zoning and Planning Committee conducted a community survey in 2007 to solicit guidance for future land use, growth, and development decisions from all Island taxpayers and non-taxpayer registered voters. The response rate was over 45%, which far exceeded the minimum 10% return needed for valid results. The survey asked several questions regarding parks and recreation on the Island, with high agreement among respondents on the statements below:

- Natural features such as Little Lake, the Mountain, and the Island's wetlands should be preserved.
- Any changes to the town dock, parking, and adjoining public areas should reflect the historic character of Jackson Harbor.
- Town easements to the lake should be better marked and maintained.

When asked about improvements desired for recreational land uses, both year-round and part time residents showed

a preference for improved biking and walking paths along roadsides, expanded nature trails for birding and hiking, and improved facilities to attract sport fishing. Eco-tourism for birding, biking, kayaking, etc., was considered a business use that should be encouraged to grow. Both groups also agreed that attracting more hunters to the Island was not desired. Under the write-in category, recreational uses not directly listed as a survey question that received a high number of supportive responses included beach improvements for swimming, shore fishing opportunities, kayaking / canoeing, and equestrian trails.

5.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING AREA

The Town of Washington is located in Lake Michigan about 6 miles off the northern tip of Door County, 85 miles northeast of Green Bay. The Town occupies 23.5 square miles.

5.1 DEMOGRAPHICS AND SOCIAL FACTORS

Population

The population of the Town of Washington historically decreased at a slow but steady pace from 1900 to 1970, rising steadily since that time to 708 residents in the 2010 census. Gender is relatively evenly divided, at 48.9% male and 51.1% female. The Town's population is also racially homogenous. In 2010, 98% of residents were white, 0.7% black, 0.8% Hispanic, 0.5% Asian, and 0.1% American Indian. Of households, 83.3% live in owner-occupied housing while 16.7% are rentals.

Age

The 2010 United States Census showed that many Town of Washington residents are elderly. In 2010, 45.5 percent of Island residents were over 60 years old, and the median age was 58.1 years old. Similar to many small Wisconsin communities, Washington Island's younger residents appear to be moving out, while at the same time the Town has attracted new older, retired residents.

These population shifts suggest future needs for the Town park system. If the residents that are under 15 years old are added to the senior group, over half (56.5%) of the population is either elderly (over 60 years old) or very young (under 15 years old). These groups often rely on

dedicated bike paths for transportation. When added to the fact that many tourists leave their cars on the mainland and arrive via ferry either on foot or with bicycles, Washington Island has a greater need for multi-use paths than other communities.

Migration and Employment

The 2010 Census data for migration trends and employment sectors have not been released yet for Wisconsin. The data in this section are from the Social and Economic profiles of the American Community Survey, 2007-2009. As this is a statistical sample, not a full count like the Census, the margin of error on the survey is relatively large given the small Town population size.

In the five year period ending in 2009, 98% of the people on Washington Island were living in the same residence as they were one year earlier; less than 0.5% had moved during the past year from another residence in the same county, 1% from another county in the same state, 1% from another state, and less than 0.5% from abroad. This suggests that the population is relatively stable.



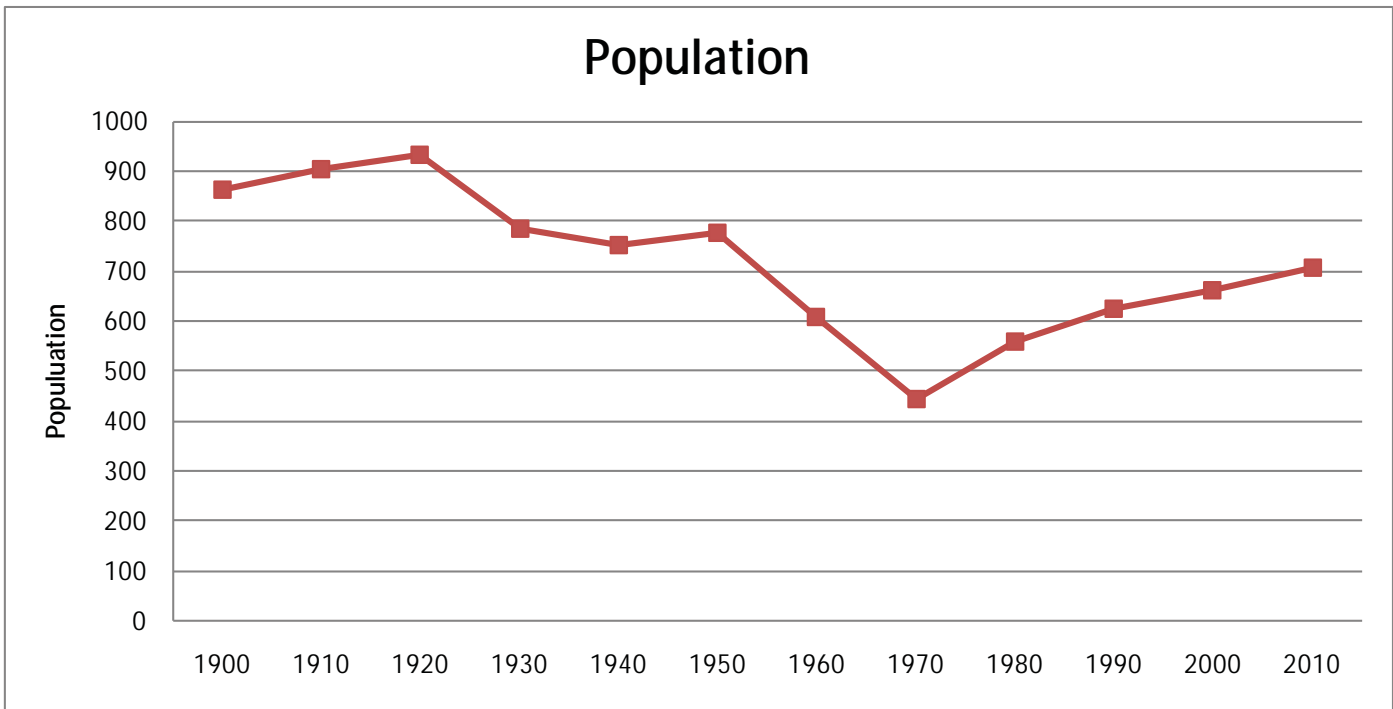
The Door County peninsula is located on the east side of Wisconsin and extends into Lake Michigan

| | Number | Percent |
|-------------------|--------|---------|
| Total population | 708 | 100% |
| Under 5 years | 20 | 2.8% |
| 5 to 9 years | 23 | 3.2% |
| 10 to 14 years | 35 | 4.9% |
| 15 to 19 years | 38 | 5.4% |
| 20 to 24 years | 11 | 1.6% |
| 25 to 29 years | 19 | 2.7% |
| 30 to 34 years | 25 | 3.5% |
| 35 to 39 years | 15 | 2.1% |
| 40 to 44 years | 31 | 4.4% |
| 45 to 49 years | 42 | 5.9% |
| 50 to 54 years | 58 | 8.2% |
| 55 to 59 years | 69 | 9.7% |
| 60 to 64 years | 85 | 12.0% |
| 65 to 69 years | 83 | 11.7% |
| 70 to 74 years | 69 | 9.7% |
| 75 to 79 years | 40 | 5.6% |
| 80 to 84 years | 28 | 4.0% |
| 85 years and over | 17 | 2.4% |

Washington Island's population by age group.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau.



Washington Island is located 6 miles off the tip of Door County



Population trends for the Town of Washington. Source: U.S. Census Data from the Town Archives.

The Town's median household income was \$46,875. Seventy-three percent of households received earnings from employment, 36% received retirement income other than Social Security, and 48% received Social Security. These income sources are not mutually exclusive; that is, some households received income from more than one source. The data suggest that the Town has a significant number of retirees.

In 2009, the most common occupations on Washington Island were:

- 37% Management, professional, and related
- 22% Construction, maintenance, and repair
- 17% Sales and office occupations
- 16% Service occupations
- 6% Production, transportation, and material moving occupations

Tourism

Door County is a well renowned tourist destination in the upper Midwest. A large number of these tourists visit Washington Island, mainly during the summer months. Two ferry services transport visitors from the peninsula to the island. The Island Clipper is a passenger and bicycle-only ferry that serves the Island from Gills Rock. This service transports between 12,000 and 13,000 day-trip visitors to Washington Island each year during the summer months. Once on the Island, the ferry's passengers either ride the Viking Train tour or explore the island on their

own by foot or bike. Because passengers' bicycles are free, the ferry is unable to estimate how many of these visitors bring bicycles. However, the ferry operator estimates that approximately 50% of tourists choose the Viking Train, which leaves around 6,000 visitors needing bike or walking trails.

The Washington Island Ferry Line operates out of the Northport Pier. Approximately 105,000 round-trips are made on the ferry each year (i.e., 210,000 one-way trips), with over 60% of these made during the summer months. The ferry operator believes that about 80% of passengers are tourists and 20% are locals. This equates to approximately 84,000 tourists annually that ride the ferry. Passengers can bring cars and bikes, or choose to explore the Island on foot or by Cherry Train. In 2009 and 2010, there were 3,986 and 3,827 round trip bicycle fares purchased, respectively. The operator conservatively estimates that another 2,000 bikes are transported to the Island annually as personal cargo attached to or in vehicles. The ferry currently has no way of tracking when the second half of a round-trip ticket is used, so they do not know the percentage of day versus overnight trips.

Visitors also arrive on the Island using private boats. Two private marinas serve the island, and the Town operates a public dock at Jackson Harbor for transient boaters. In 2010, 249 boats paid to tie up at the Town Dock; however, no record is kept as to whether boat owners are local or visitors.

The Washington Island Airport reported 316 flights in 2009 and 258 flights in 2010. Several Islanders own airplanes and fly in and out regularly in all seasons, but the airport also sees a number of visitors as well. No record is kept of whether the pilots are local or visitors, and also no record is kept of number of people traveling on each flight.

Given the significant role of tourism in the local economy, the open space system should provide parks and facilities that encourage and support tourism as well as local residents. In particular, biking facilities are critical to provide transportation options to Island visitors.

5.2 PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Washington Island is the largest of a string of islands stretching across the entrance of Green Bay from Lake Michigan. The physiography and topography of the western side of the Island is characteristic of the rocky terrain of the western Door County coastline. The Niagara Escarpment is a steep, westward-facing limestone cliff that defines the east edge of Green Bay, including a point that stands 140 feet above water at Boyer Bluff on the northwestern tip of Washington Island. The southern and eastern shorelines are characterized by sand dunes and complexes of wetlands. The center of the Island features rolling hills, lush fields of pasture and wheat, and extensive natural areas.

The area's climate is controlled by the close proximity to Lake Michigan, which moderates daily extremes in temperature. Spring warming trends are delayed by the cool water of the lake, summers are generally mild, and the lake's residual warmth hinders early frost in fall. The annual average precipitation is 28.5 inches, with 3.4 falling in September, the wettest month.

Topographical relief ranges from 578 feet at the lake edge to 754 feet along Mountain Road in the center of the Island (NGVD29). Silurian dolomite forms the upper layer of bedrock within the region, and is close to the surface or exposed in outcroppings. This rock formation also provides the primary groundwater aquifer.

Door County is classified as a non-attainment zone for ozone air quality by the U.S. EPA. Because the county is a rural transport area, the source of pollutants contributing to these air quality issues is likely to originate from Southeast Wisconsin. Multi-use trails that encourage non-motorized transport may help alleviate any local contributing factors to this designation.



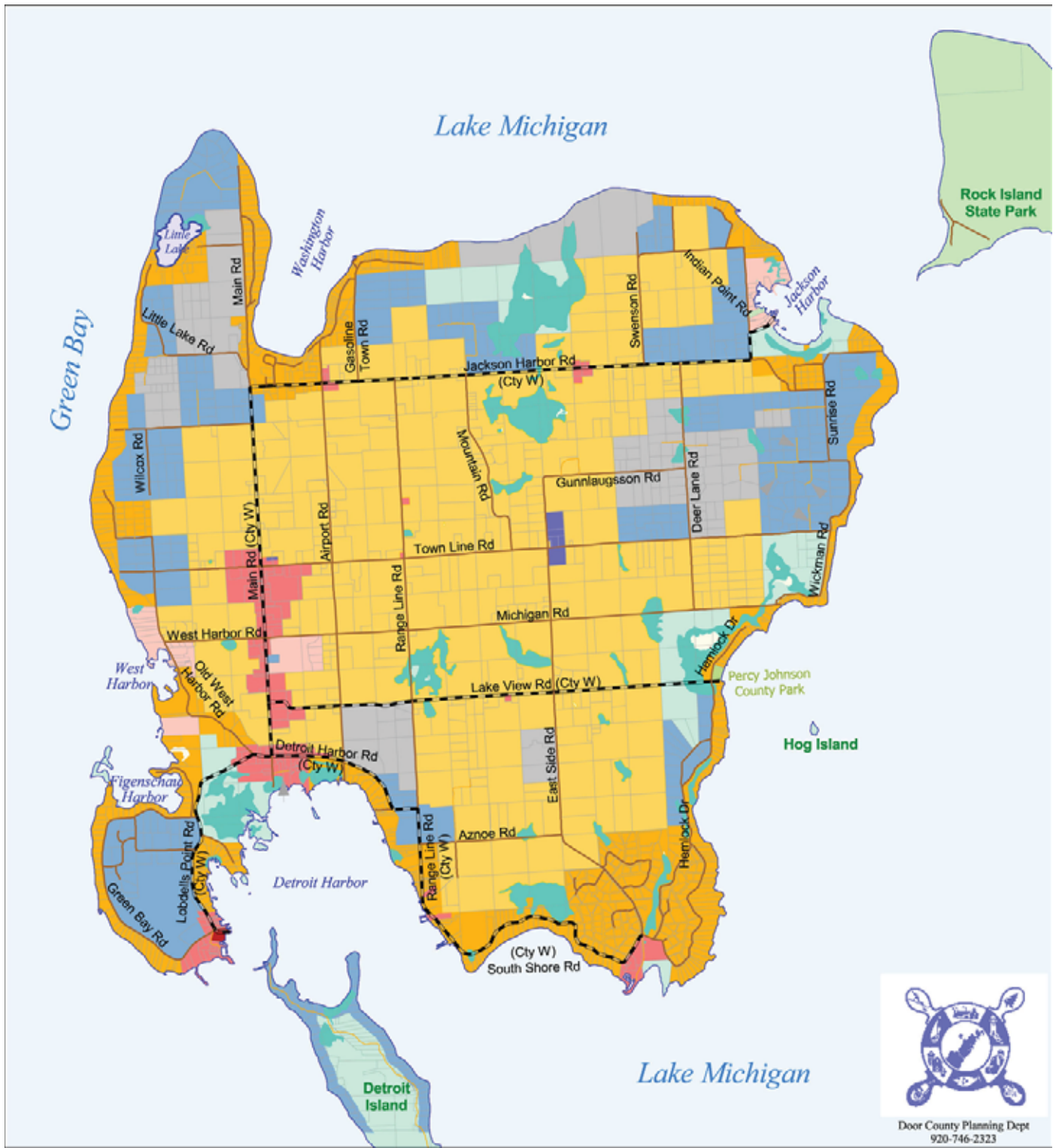
The Washington Island Ferry runs from Northport Pier to Detroit Harbor



The Niagara Escarpment features prominently on the western shoreline of Washington Island

5.3 TOWN ZONING

The Town's current zoning is shown on the facing page. The center of the Island is generally characterized by agricultural and natural areas, with residential uses along the lake edge. The majority of commercial land uses are clustered along Main Road and near the Ferry Dock at Detroit Harbor.



Town of Washington Island Zoning Map. Source: Door County Planning Department, August 2011.

6.0 INVENTORY OF EXISTING PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES

The Town of Washington has many dedicated public park facilities that provide a variety of recreational opportunities. Other recreational lands open to the public on the Island include State Department of Natural Resources lands, Door County Land Trust resources, public right-of-way lake access points, and other privately owned recreation facilities.

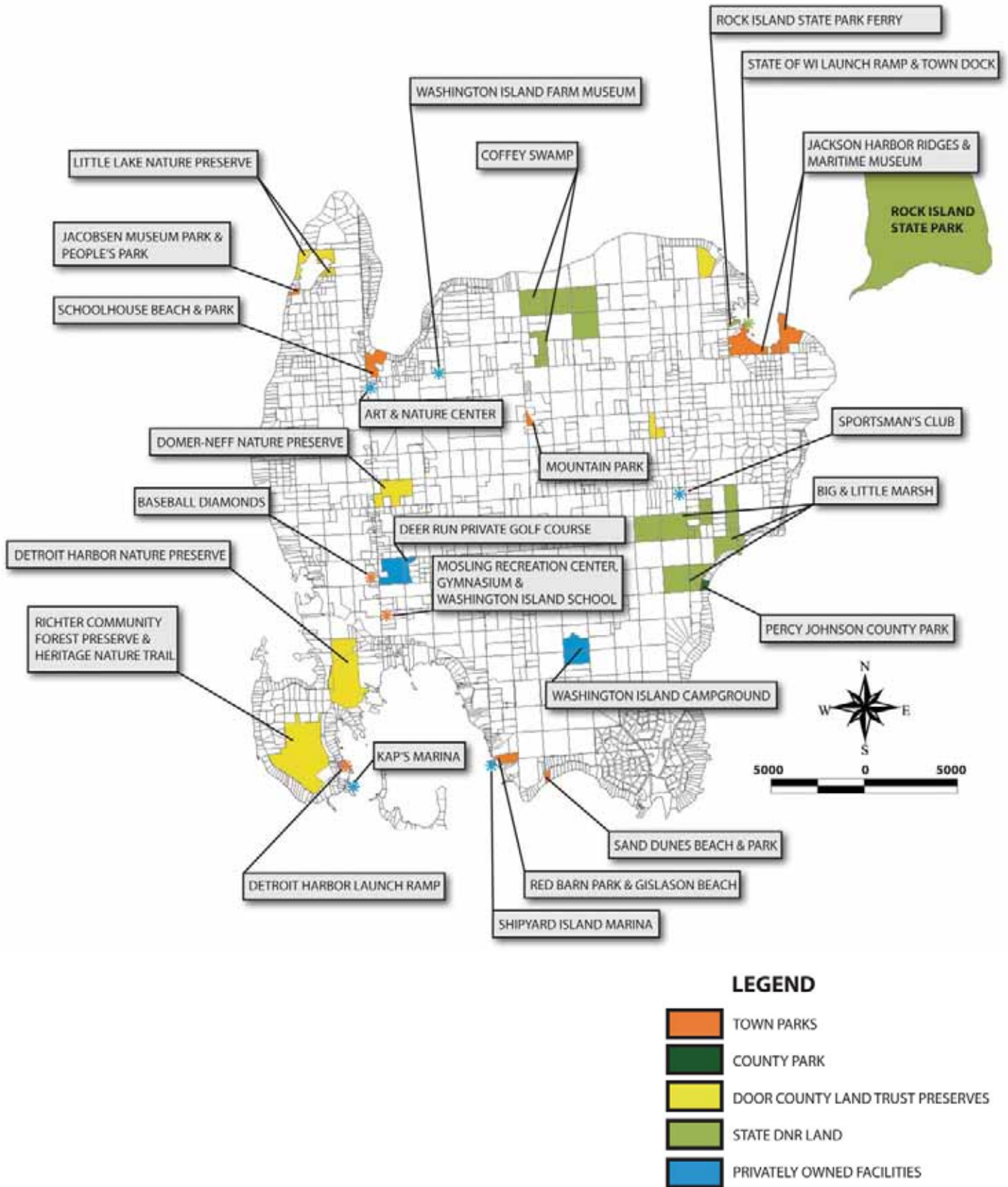
This section provides an inventory of existing recreational lands illustrated on the map at right, using the classification system of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). The following definitions specific to the Town parks are based on NRPA guidelines:

Community Parks. Provide for active and passive recreational needs of the entire community on a large site that is easily accessible by automobile.

Shared School-Park Facilities. Provide for efficient and cost effective park and recreational facilities by combining school district and municipal resources at a single site so both public agencies benefit by sharing the land and maintenance costs.

Natural Resource Facilities. Provide for the preservation and public use of significant natural resources or land formations for trails and other passive recreational and educational benefits.

Special Use Facilities. Special purpose parks are publicly-owned recreation and open space facilities that are designed to serve a specific purpose, which may include a public plaza, memorial, swimming area, or other discrete recreational use. The special purpose designation also includes cultural parks, which feature historic structures or serve as interpretive facilities for tourists and residents.



Locations of existing park and recreation facilities

6.1 COMMUNITY PARKS

Red Barn Park and Gislason Public Beach – 20 acres

This is a family park and beach area on the south side of the island. It includes a children's playground, picnic tables, grills, and benches along the shore as well as a rustic theater in a red barn that offers family-style performances during the summer. Local and visiting artists perform country, jazz, gospel, original music and also perform theatrical productions. Another structure, an old ice house, has been restored and is used for storage, rehearsals, and some classes.

The small beach suffers from the current low water level of Lake Michigan, with vegetation clogging the former swim area. Because of the distance to the water's edge and the overgrown shoreline, the beach is no longer used by swimmers. This represents a real loss to the community, as many remember when the beach was the primary location on the island for children's swimming lessons. The beach is still able to be used for quiet watercraft launch, especially during the kayak festival held in June. Benches and swings face the water for visitors to enjoy the water view.

Other facilities in the park are also in poor condition. A volleyball court has become overgrown with grass and there is no net and the lights do not work. Although the children's play area is serviceable, the equipment is becoming outdated and the fall zone is in need of weeding and replacement of wood chips.

A three-quarter-mile nature trail starts at the Red Barn complex. The Town of Washington also leases three acres to a private marina complex across the road from the Red Barn. Operation of the park is overseen by the Red Barn Subcommittee of the Washington Island Community Center. One part-time employee is hired by the Community Center Committee to administer the programs.

Facilities:

- Red Barn for lectures and performances
- Structure for storage, rehearsals, and classes
- Restroom facility (pit toilets)
- Parking lot (± 20 vehicles)
- Picnic tables (±12) and grills
- Children's play area
- Outdoor drinking fountain - regularly tested, safe-to-drink well water
- Small beach, partly obscured by vegetation
- Small launching area



Aerial view of Red Barn Park and Gislason Public Beach



The Red Barn is used for theater and music performances



Gislason Beach, showing low water level of Lake Michigan

Mosling Recreation Center – ±2 acres

This multipurpose indoor recreation center was a gift to the Island community in 1988 from a longtime vacationer to Washington Island. Operation of the center is overseen by the Washington Island Recreation Center Board, which hires a director. Additional employees staff the front desk and maintain equipment and grounds.

The facility is a year-around center for both exercise and relaxation. It features a 32' × 60' indoor swimming pool, whirlpool, exercise room, locker rooms, a meeting and game room, and two outdoor tennis courts.

A wide range of classes and programs are offered throughout the year; they range from health and fitness to the arts. The recreation center is open to the public; entry fees, either annual or on a per-visit basis, are required.

Facilities:

- Indoor restrooms and locker rooms with showers
- Indoor pool and hot tub
- Indoor weight and exercise room
- Indoor meeting room
- Outdoor tennis courts

Baseball Diamonds – 4.9 acres

Two baseball fields located on Main Road are used for games that are part of the Door County Baseball League and the local Little League program. The diamond complex is sponsored by the Lions Club.

Facilities:

- Two fenced baseball diamonds with bleachers
- Night lighting and electric scoreboard
- Two concession stands, serving both the adult and Little League fields
- Restroom facilities with flush toilets
- Picnic tables (5)



Aerial view of the Mosling Recreation Center, Washington Island School Sports Facilities, and Gymnasium



Aerial view of the Baseball Diamonds



Baseball fields serve both adult and Little League teams



Restroom facilities are centrally located to serve both diamonds

6.2 SHARED SCHOOL-PARK FACILITIES

Sports Facilities near

Washington Island School – 6.2 acres

The grounds adjacent to the Washington Island School include a soccer field, a small soccer field for young children, and playground equipment. The school maintains these fields, and they are available for public use when the school is not using them.

Facilities:

- Concession stand combined with storage shed
- Benches donated by town businesses for spectators to use
- Off-road parking for about a dozen vehicles

Gymnasium (Indoor)

This is a non-regulation-size gymnasium that is part of the Community Center complex of buildings in the immediate vicinity of the Mosling Recreation Center and the Island school building. The school uses the gym for classes, sports groups use it during other times, and the community uses it for large meetings, fund-raisers, and get-togethers.

The gym offers small lockers and showers, and restroom facilities are the public facilities that also serve the Town office and the library. Because it is not large enough, with a high enough ceiling for regulation basketball games, the school team plays non-league games during the winter. Hours are limited to the times of day that the building is open.

Jacqueline Cornell Foss Memorial Stage (outdoor)

This concrete outdoor stage is used for various activities and performances; the stage has night lighting.



Aerial view of Mountain Park

6.3 NATURAL RESOURCE FACILITIES

Mountain Park and Lookout Tower – 6.6 acres

This park in the north central part of Washington Island takes advantage of the highest point on the Island. Visitors can climb 186 wooden steps to the top of the tower to enjoy views of the land, water, and islands to the north and northeast. There is no well or other source of water at this park; also there are no bike racks at the park or diagram at the tower of what viewers are seeing.

Facilities:

- Benches on the ground as well as at several points on the steps
- Picnic tables and grills (2 each)
- Restroom (portable toilet set up during summer)
- Landscaped grounds



186 Steps Lead to the Top of Mountain Park

People's Park – Acreage is included in Jacobsen Museum, ±1 acre for People's Park only

This is a small park on a bluff on the west side of the island, facing Green Bay just south of Jacobsen Museum. It is heavily wooded, with picnic tables and grates for fires. Currently there is no approved access to the water. Restroom facilities and parking are at the nearby Jacobsen Museum.

Facilities:

- Picnic tables and grills



Aerial view of People's Park



People's Park offers fantastic views of Lake Michigan

Heritage Nature Trail – 0.7 miles

This 0.7-mile woodland walk begins near the Welcome Center, a Chamber of Commerce facility. Brochures are available at both ends of trail for a self-guided tour of plant life. Donations are accepted. Currently the Town of Washington does basic maintenance on the trail, and the Art and Nature Center maintains the supply of brochures and collects the donations.

Facilities:

- Signage and brochure kiosk at both ends of the trail
- Nearest restrooms are at the Welcome Center, about 100 yards away from one of the ends of the trail



Aerial view of Heritage Nature Trail



The Heritage Nature Trail provides a self-guided woodland tour



Aerial view of Jackson Harbor Ridges State Natural Area



View of Jackson Harbor, with the Ridges State Natural Area at the right of the photo

Jackson Harbor Ridges – ±60 acres

Jackson Harbor Ridges, a state of Wisconsin scientific area, is an outstanding example of beach, dune, boreal and shore meadow communities. The topography contains areas of dry to moist sand ridges and low, wet swales. Twelve ridges and swales can be seen and are the result of changes in Lake Michigan water levels. The swales contain an unusual plant community that prefers wet calcareous soils.

The nature trail is open daily for nature study, photography, and walking. Jackson Harbor Ridges is owned by the Town of Washington and was designated a state natural area in 1973. The Ridges is currently divided into two sections, with a small, privately owned plot separating the two public areas.

Each section of Jackson Harbor Ridges provides a hiking trail, and the owner of the private land between them allows access between the two sections on a defined path.

6.4 SPECIAL USE FACILITIES - BEACHES

Schoolhouse Beach – ±30 acres

Schoolhouse Beach is a rarity: a beach made up of smooth limestone rocks. It is at the south end of a protected harbor – Washington Harbor – which was the Island's original commercial port. The water deepens fairly quickly and diving, rafting, and snorkeling are popular here. There is an old shipwreck underwater close to the shore.

Swimming is permitted in a marked area, and a diving raft is tethered offshore. Many picnic tables and grills encourage picnicking beneath the trees just off the beach. Approximately half of the acreage of Schoolhouse Beach Park is undeveloped woods away from the shoreline, and is not heavily used as part of the active beach area.

Facilities:

- Restroom facilities (new)
- Changing rooms
- Parking among trees and in designated lot
- Demarcated swimming area
- Diving raft
- Picnic areas
- Soda vending machine
- Signage with historical information



Aerial view of Schoolhouse Beach



The beach features picturesque white rocks and intense blue water



Interpretive signage tells of lost ships



Memorial benches offer relaxing views of the water



New restroom facilities are nestled into the landscape



Picnic areas are located among the cedar trees



Aerial view of Sand Dunes Beach

Sand Dunes Beach – 3.6 acres

This is a sand beach on the south side of the Island. The dunes slope fairly steeply toward the water. About 20 years ago this was a popular park for families because of the shallow water. However, in recent years, Lake Michigan has approached record low water levels and the beach can no longer be used for swimming. The water line is a substantial distance from the edge of the dunes, and the near shore area is a mucky stretch of decaying *Cladophora* algae that creates an unpleasant smell. The beach is still popular during winter months, as the steep slopes provide excellent terrain for sledding.

The beach is reached by a short, sandy trail over a dune and through a wooded area. Daytime picnics are permitted although campfires are not. There is no well or other source of water at this park.

Facilities:

- Restroom facility (pit toilets)
- Parking (17 spaces)
- Picnic tables (2); one bench



The Island's south shoreline features rugged sand dunes

Gislason Beach

See Red Barn Park



Aerial views show how the waterline has receded with low lake levels

6.5 SPECIAL USE FACILITIES - MUSEUMS

Jacobsen Museum Park – 2.25 acres

This museum, housed in an old log building, is located on the south shore of Little Lake (see Section 6.3 for map with People's Park and Section 6.8 for the Little Lake Nature Preserve on the north shore of Little Lake). It exhibits a collection of natural and historical artifacts of the region. A series of steps leads up to the entrance to Jacobsen Museum which limits accessibility; there is no other entrance.

In addition, a small log cabin has been restored with authentic furniture. The museum is open daily from Memorial Day weekend through Columbus Day. Outside are examples of machinery used by some of the first European settlers of Washington Island.

Also across the parking lot from the Jacobsen Museum is the Veblen study cabin, a small structure in which the world-famous economist, Thorstein Veblen, worked while he spent his summers on Washington Island from 1896 to 1926. The study cabin was relocated to this spot and is being restored by the Washington Island Heritage Conservancy, a local nonprofit organization.

The director of the museum is a part-time Town employee; additional employees are hired for the months it is open.

Facilities:

- Museum and two other buildings
- Restroom facility
- Parking (±10 cars)
- Short path to a small pier on Little Lake



The rustic Jacobsen Museum building is accessed by steps

Jackson Harbor Maritime Museum – ±3 acres

This former fishing village at Jackson Harbor continues to expand into refurbished buildings with artifacts from the era of commercial fishing as well as photographs and videos on local maritime history.

The museum is located in two renovated fishing sheds located in Jackson Harbor. (See Section 6.6 for map with Town Dock and list of facilities.) In 2009 a third nearby building—formerly an ice house—was opened to the public. Another building that was formerly a fisherman's cottage was opened more recently. The museum is open daily from Memorial Day weekend through Columbus Day weekend.

Admission to the museum is free. Restorations have been funded by a grant and visitor donations. The director of the museum is a part-time Town employee; additional employees are hired for the months it is open.

Currently both automobiles and pedestrians have to share the same road access to the museum and dock.



The Jackson Harbor Maritime Museum offers fishing displays



Pier provides access to Little Lake at Jacobsen Museum Park

6.6 SPECIAL USE FACILITIES - LAUNCH RAMPS AND DOCKS

Detroit Harbor Town Launch Ramp

This is a small launch ramp for boats. Daily parking is across the road near the Welcome Center; no other Town facilities. Boaters have commented that the Detroit Harbor area does not offer a public dock where boaters can tie up for a short time and stock up on supplies.

State of Wisconsin Launch Ramp at Jackson Harbor – ±1 acre

This dock owned by the State of Wisconsin is at Jackson Harbor, in the northeast quadrant of the Island. Boats can be launched at this facility, and there is ample parking on site. Restroom facilities are available. The passenger ferry to Rock Island State Park also docks at this facility, see Section 6.10.

Town Dock at Jackson Harbor – ±1 acre

This dock owned by the Town of Washington is at Jackson Harbor, facing Lake Michigan. It is in the northeast quadrant of the Island. The dockmaster is a part-time town employee.

The dock offers 'wall docking' in a quiet setting, with no restaurants or entertainment nearby; only a privately owned concession stand, open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. from Memorial Day through Columbus Day, provides food and soft drinks that visitors can purchase. The dock area was dredged before the 2009 season and now can accommodate up to 15 boats with eight-foot drafts.

The following facilities can be used by boaters tied up at the Town Dock, visitors to the Jackson Harbor Maritime Museum, and visitors to the Jackson Harbor Ridges:

- Restroom facilities (pit toilets)
- Parking for about two dozen vehicles
- Open, grassy play area suitable for children and families; no play equipment
- Picnic tables (±8)
- Concession stand (seasonal)
- One building awaiting renovation is currently used for storage by the craftsman who has renovated many of the buildings in the museum complex
- Wooden walkway over wetlands to small ice house and toward a fisherman's cottage; currently this is difficult for wheelchair users to navigate; the problem seems to be in the surfacing and the transitions from surface to surface.



The narrow Detroit Harbor Town Launch Ramp is sandwiched between two private properties



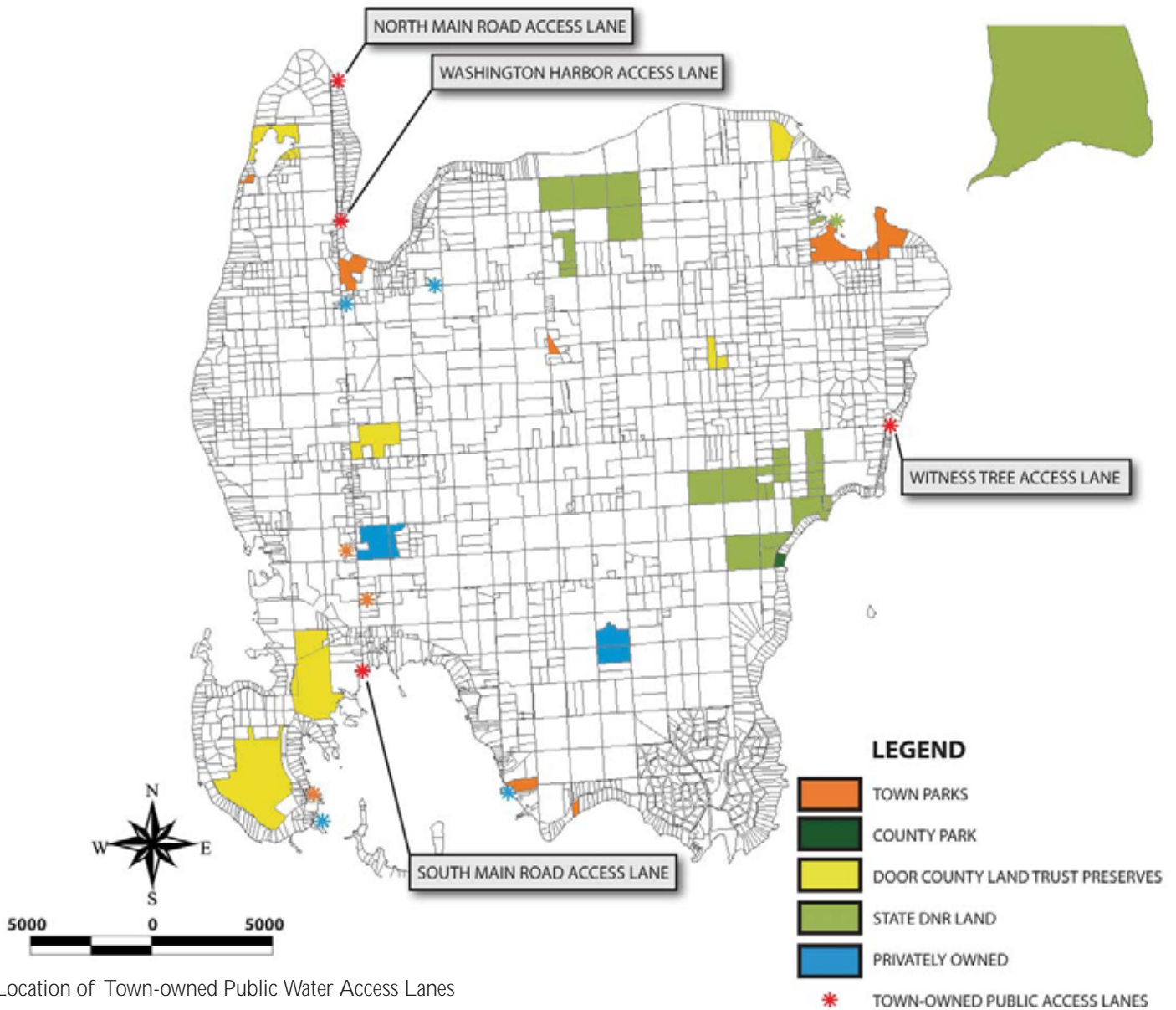
Aerial view of Jackson Harbor facilities



Jackson Harbor Museum, Town Dock, and Rock Island Ferry

6.7 SPECIAL USE FACILITIES - PUBLIC WATER ACCESS LANES

The Town owns several properties that adjoin the lake edge, primarily at the ends of public road right-of-way corridors. While all of these parcels provide public water access, few have been surveyed to accurately locate property boundaries, are signed appropriately, or have any facilities to serve users. The Community Survey conducted in 2007 showed a high interest in reclaiming these access points for public use. A memo from the Washington Island Zoning and Planning Committee to the Town Board in 2009 documented 17 access lanes that could likely be proven to be Town-owned, as well as 3 more that require more research.





North Main Road Access Lane showing plastic fence and lake view

The following lanes are currently signed for access and are actively used by the public:

Washington Harbor Town Access Lane (west side)

There are no facilities except a trail down to the water and parking for two vehicles. The site needs signage describing the right of way and area of public access.

North Main Road Access Lane

This public access point is an unmarked trail ending at a high cliff above Lake Michigan. Only a steel cable protects users from falling off the bluff, and a picnic table in poor condition provides seating. The adjacent property owner has erected orange plastic fencing to denote the property line and deter trespassing.

Witness Tree Access Lane

The stump of the witness tree used in the original land survey of Washington Island still stands at the east end of Town Line Road, protected by a small roofed structure. A path provides an easy walk to the lake edge.

South Main Road Access Lane

No facilities exist at this access lane. The lane is used primarily in winter by ice fishermen to drive onto the ice sheet at Detroit Harbor. Heavy traffic during periods of thaw has caused rutting far out into the lake.



The Witness Tree stump is marked by a small, roofed structure



South Main Road Access Lane is rutted from high use for ice fishing



Soft conditions have resulted in wider than necessary fishing access

6.8 COUNTY PARKS

Percy Johnson County Park – 5.3 acres

This park, Washington Island's only county park, is on the east shore of Washington Island, halfway between the north and south shores of the island. The park offers a view of Hog Island, a bird sanctuary. The water of Lake Michigan is shallow and would be good for swimming and canoe and kayak launches, but the park is experiencing water level and vegetation problems similar to Sand Dunes Beach.

Town employees perform maintenance work at this park, and Door County reimburses the Town of Washington for expenses. The county provides some supplies.

Facilities:

- Restroom facility (pit toilets)
- Parking lot (±6 vehicles)
- Picnic tables (7)
- Fire rings (6)
- Water supplied by well and hand pump
- Small beach, partly covered with vegetation
- Kiosk for notices and signs



Aerial view of Percy Johnson County Park



Percy Johnson County Park offers a beach and picnic facilities

6.9 DOOR COUNTY LAND TRUST PRESERVES

Little Lake Nature Preserve – 33 acres

This nature preserve is on the north and east shores of Little Lake. (The Jacobsen Museum complex is on the south shore of Little Lake.) Little Lake, a shallow, 24-acre lake, was formed as glacial waters receded and a narrow ridge was formed to create the lake. The lake is fed primarily by underwater springs and surface runoff, and the lake level is three feet above the level of Lake Michigan. The preserve includes 5,000 feet of shoreline. This area was once home to a large village of Native Americans, and archaeologists have discovered artifacts that show the site was used around the years 1000 to 1300. Also, the Veblen cabin (see Jacobsen's Museum) was originally located on land now in the nature preserve.

Little Lake Preserve is owned by the Door County Land Trust and was designated a state natural area in 2007. A hiking trail is accessible from Main Road; it is almost a mile long.



Aerial view of Little Lake Nature Preserve



View across Little Lake towards the Nature Preserve

Detroit Harbor Nature Preserve – 117 acres

This nature preserve, owned by the Door County Land Trust and designated a state natural area in 2005, encompasses land on both Washington Island and neighboring Detroit Island. A marked half-mile trail on the Washington Island portion is accessible from Lobdell Point Road. This land features a diverse complex of intermittent, emergent, and forested wetlands that support numerous rare species. It is also an important migratory stopover site and breeding habitat for numerous rare bird species.



Aerial view of Detroit Harbor Nature Preserve

Domer-Neff Nature Preserve and Bird Sanctuary – 48 acres

This is an old field north of Town Line Road and south of the Island airport. A loop hiking trail just over one-half mile takes visitors past native trees and shrubs. Parking at the trailhead is along the roadside.



Aerial view of Domer-Neff Nature Preserve

Richter Community Forest Preserve – 158 acres

This is one of the largest tracts of undeveloped land on Washington Island; it has always been covered by trees and has never been agricultural land. This was a gift to the Door County Land Trust in 2002. An educational kiosk at the Green Bay Road trailhead provides a map and preserve information. The hiking trail through this preserve connects to the Heritage Nature Trail maintained by the Town of Washington and administered by the Art and Nature Center.



Aerial view of Richter Community Forest Preserve



Quiet trails wind through the Richter Community Forest Preserve

6.10 STATE DNR LAND

Big & Little Marsh – 315 acres

Big and Little Marsh, owned by the DNR and designated a state natural area in 2003, is home to numerous rare species. An extensive lowland conifer swamp is dominated by white cedar, and soft-stem bulrush dominates the unusual aquatic marsh. Many birds funnel through this area during spring and fall migrations, and a diversity of neotropical migrants breed here in summer. No trails are maintained by the DNR, and no improvements have been placed on this land, but the public can use the land for activities such as hiking, hunting, fishing, trapping, and skiing.



Aerial view of Big & Little Marsh State Natural Area

Coffey Swamp – 189 acres

Coffey Swamp, owned by the DNR and designated a state natural area in 1994, occupies a former embayment of Lake Michigan along the northern coast of Washington Island. The natural area features a shallow, hard water seepage pond with a substrate of pure marl that nearly dries up in late summer and during years when the water level of Lake Michigan is low. No trails are maintained by the DNR, and no improvements have been placed on this land, but the public can use the land for activities such as hiking, hunting, fishing, trapping, and skiing.



Aerial view of Coffey Swamp State Natural Area

Rock Island State Park - 912 acres

Rock Island is a 912-acre state park located off the northeast side of Washington Island. The passenger ferry to access Rock Island docks at Jackson Harbor, on the same parcel that provides the State of Wisconsin Launch Ramp described earlier. As cars are not allowed on Rock Island, the parking lot accommodates Rock Island ferry customers, as well as launch users. Restrooms are also provided. (See Section 6.6 for map with Jackson Harbor Launch Ramp.)

6.11 PRIVATELY-OWNED RECREATION FACILITIES

Art and Nature Center – ±1 acre

The ANC was established in 1965 for the preservation and promotion of the creative arts and natural history of Washington Island. The building housing the ANC dates back to 1904 and was used as the Island's high school until 1964.

The ANC art gallery features the work of local artists and provides a sales outlet for Island artists and crafts people. The Nature Center is family friendly, with hands-on exhibits. A naturalist leads hikes and classes in the summer. One fund-raising event—Art in the Park—is held each year; it offers children's activities as well as picnic-type refreshments. The building is open from mid-June to mid-September.

Facilities:

- Restroom facilities (pit toilets)
- Parking (± 10 spaces)
- Picnic tables and swing seating outdoors
- Center needs a new well; safe drinking water available only some of the time
- Accessible ramp, newly painted with sand mixed in with the paint to achieve a rough surface, in addition to historic stairs at the entry

Washington Island Farm Museum – 3 acres

This nonprofit museum was founded with the goal of educating visitors about early farm life on Washington Island. It offers live animals and six original buildings, including a pioneer log cabin, blacksmith shop, weaving shed, and sawmill. Field machinery, hand tools, and photos are on display. The site also features a picnic area, weekly farmers market, and children's programs.

The museum is open daily, from Memorial Day weekend through Columbus Day. Admission is free, but donations are appreciated.

Facilities:

- Portable toilet
- Parking (ample, but unpaved)
- Horse-drawn wagon rides on additional 10 acres purchased in 2010
- Picnic areas and tables; soda vending machine
- Generally handicap accessible although two buildings have upper floors that are not accessible
- Garden plots available for summer 2011



The Art and Nature Center is located in the historic high school



The Farm Museum features displays on early Town life

Deer Run Golf Course and Resort

This is a regulation nine-hole, par 36 course. Course amenities include gas and pull carts, rental clubs, and a pro-gift shop. Lunch and refreshments are served on an outdoor deck or in a clubhouse. A motel adjoins the course. An 18-hole miniature golf course is part of the complex.

Washington Island Campground

Privately owned campground offers cabins, water and electric hookups, showers, laundry room, game room, mini golf, playground, RV dump station, and a fish cleaning station. Seasonal sites are available. Open from May through October.

Kap's Marina

Kap's Marina is a full-service private marina located just south of the Washington Island Ferry Line dock. It offers slip rentals, boat storage (indoor and outdoor), boat launch, boat and car rentals, bait, food, beer, gifts, boat and motor repairs, and charter fishing service. A restaurant is also located on site.

Shipyard Island Marina

This private marina is a year-round facility located adjacent to Red Barn Park and Gislason Public Beach. The marina offers a full-service maintenance and repair shop, heated and unheated storage and winterization, slip rental (seasonal or transient), fuel and pumpouts, new and used boat sales, a ship's store, and restaurant.

Sportsman's Club - 20 acres

The Washington Island Sportsman's Club is dedicated to improving and protecting wildlife and wildlife habitat on Washington Island. They raise and release about 300 pheasants each year to enhance the Island's hunting experience, and provide DNR approved hunter safety classes, learn to hunt programs, and mentor youth hunts.

The Sportsman's Club provides its members access to an 100-yard outdoor shooting range. Facilities are open daily from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., with trap shooting one evening per week during summer months. Club membership currently costs \$10 annually.

Facilities:

- Club house
- Trapshooting and rifle ranges
- Indoor restrooms



Kap's Marina is located on the southern tip of the Island at Detroit Harbor

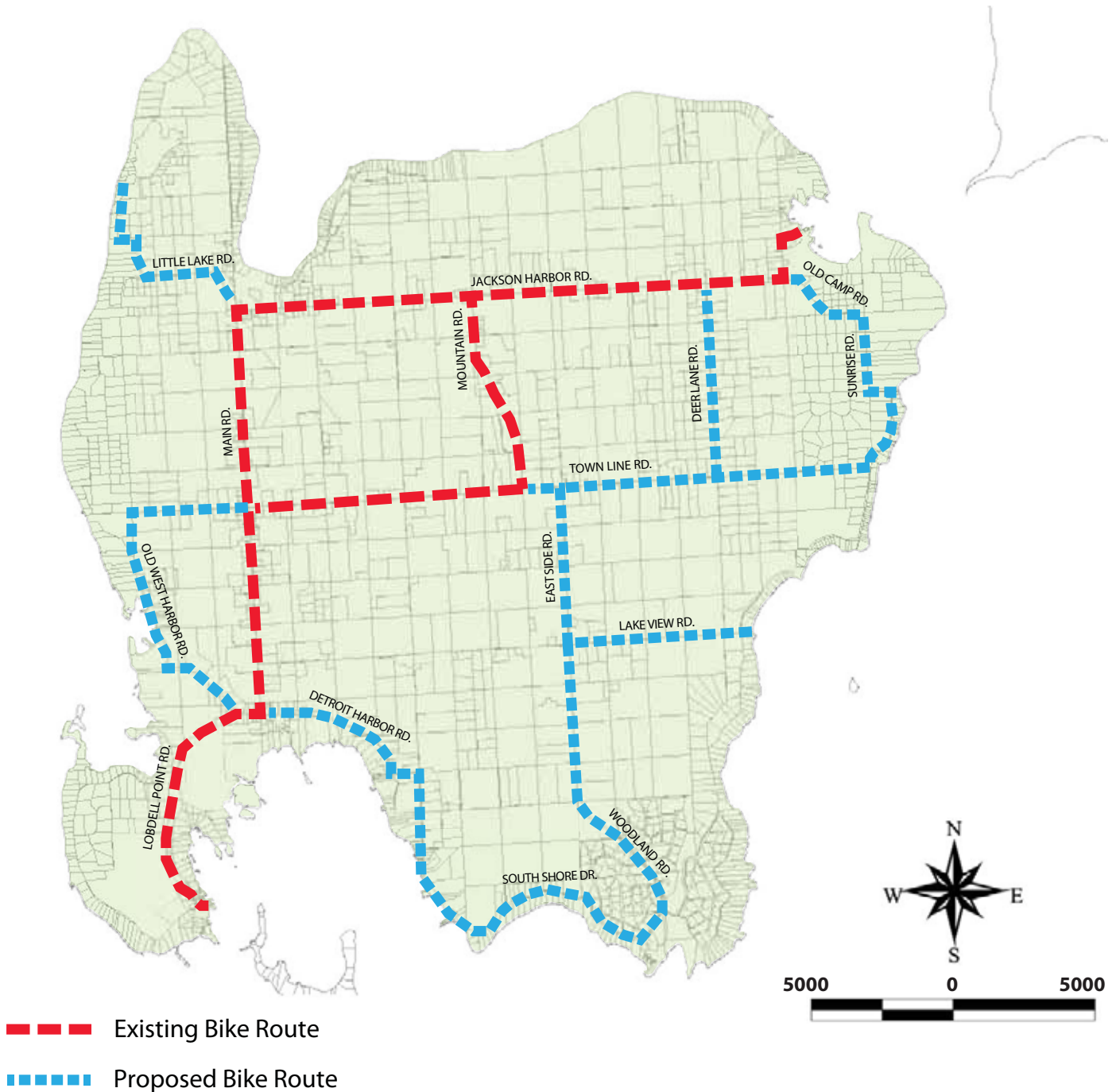


Shipyard Island Marina is located adjacent to Gislason Beach

6.12 BICYCLE FACILITIES

Washington Island has several designated bike routes that connect vital attractions around the island. The bike routes connect to all ferry terminals, run through the commercial area, and link to several natural and historic attractions, including the Art and Nature Center, Mountain Park, Schoolhouse Beach, and the Washington Island Farm Museum. These signed routes are all on-road trails; no off road paths are located on the Island. Bikers are encouraged to ride single file, and only Lobdell Point

Road and Main Road have paved shoulders that provide any extra safety for riders. However, speeds limits on Washington Island are all below 45 mph, which supports a conducive environment for biking.



Existing and proposed bike routes on Washington Island. Source for existing routes: Washington Island Chamber of Commerce Visitors Flyer, 2011.

7.0 RECOMMENDED FACILITIES AND IMPROVEMENTS

By using different and complementary methods, recreational planners make recommendations for the quantity and types of parks that are needed for a community. These recommendations are then compared to the existing park inventory, and specific capital improvement projects are proposed based on community needs and the condition of park facilities.

7.1 PUBLIC INPUT, NRPA STANDARDS, AND STATE CORP ANALYSIS

Washington Island's open space needs are influenced by the voiced needs of residents, the number and sizes of parks, and location of those parks.

Public Input

Based on public input from the community survey in 2007, facilities recommendations should include:

- Better signage and use of the Public Water Access Lanes. This would also support the public's expressed desire for more canoe/kayak launches.
- Improved biking and walking paths along roads.
- Improved facilities for sport fishing, including shore fishing.
- Beach improvements for swimming.

NRPA Park Size and Distribution Standards

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has established standards that serve as a general guide for the amount of recreational land based on population. The NRPA recommends the following acreages of parkland per 1,000 community residents:

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| ▪ Mini-Parks | 0.5 acres |
| ▪ Neighborhood Parks | 2.0 acres |
| ▪ <u>Community Parks</u> | <u>10.0 acres</u> |
| ▪ Total | 10.5 acres / 1,000 residents |

These standards do not include special use parks or natural resource areas, as these are specialized land uses.

Because of the highly rural character of the island, the Town of Washington currently does not have any mini-parks or neighborhood parks within its system. These parks are typically small urban open spaces or playgrounds that serve a concentrated or limited population, or a specific group such as tots or senior citizens. Since these parks are intended to serve their immediate surroundings, they can be replaced by service areas of community parks and of shared school-park facilities.

In a 2010 estimate, Washington Island had a population of 708 residents. Considering only those parks that focus on the needs of town residents (as opposed to tourists):

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ▪ <u>Community / School Parks:</u> | |
| ▪ Red Barn Park/Gislason Beach | 20.0 acres |
| ▪ Mosling Recreation Center | 2.0 acres |
| ▪ Baseball Diamonds | 4.9 acres |
| ▪ <u>School Sports Facilities</u> | <u>6.2 acres</u> |
| ▪ Total | 33.1 acres / 708 residents |
| ▪ Standardized Total | 46.8 acres/1,000 residents |

The Town of Washington has nearly four times as many resident-serving parks as recommended by NRPA standards. When considering population trends, the Town will continue to provide a sufficient amount and variety of park areas into the near future. With the addition of the special purpose parks, the natural resource areas, and State and County owned lands, the size of park facilities on Washington Island are sufficient to serve both the resident population and the annual tourist populations.

Although the NRPA also establishes guidelines for the spatial distribution of parkland throughout a community, these standards are more applicable to urban municipalities than to the rural character of Washington Island. Because residents of the Island are accustomed to driving to access facilities, an analysis of service areas is not warranted as all parks are within easy driving distance.

Wisconsin State CORP

Wisconsin prepares a statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, which assesses recreational facilities and demand throughout the state. By comparing regional demand, regional supply, local park and recreation plans, and public comment data with recreational and population forecasts, the State CORP suggests both rural and urban recreational facilities that are in relative short supply in eight separate state divisions.

Washington Island is located within the Upper Lake Michigan Coastal division, which consists of Brown, Door, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Marinette, and Oconto Counties. Within these six counties, the following urban recreational facilities are in relatively short supply:

- Basketball courts
- Boat equipment providers
- Dog parks
- Playground facilities
- Horseback riding clubs
- Shooting ranges
- Soccer fields
- Tennis courts

- Volleyball courts
- Water parks

The Town does provide several of these uses, including playground facilities and the active sports fields and courts. Although the Island does not have any water parks, three beaches are included in the existing park inventory. However, water quality has been compromised at two of these locations so that swimming is no longer feasible, leaving the island without a usable sand beach.

Summary

Based on the NRPA standards, this plan does not recommend the purchase of additional park land to satisfy basic recreation needs. However, purchases should be considered if they fulfill a specific use that meets the community's expressed desires, such as land that could support additional transient boat slips for sport fishermen. Any proposed purchases should undergo public notice to verify support for expansion of Town facilities.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations for capital improvements are based on the conditions of individual parks and the public survey results.



Illustration of expanded paved shoulders that create a safer biking experience



Example of existing park signage that can be difficult to read

7.2 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

The following capital improvements are recommended for the entire park system and for individual Town-owned parks and facilities. These improvements can be phased over the near future as funding becomes available. Anticipated costs given for improvements are based on publicly bid work performed by contractors; if volunteer labor or material donations are available, these costs may be substantially reduced. Sources of funds may include various state and federal grants, local service or charitable organizations, and general budget allocations.

System-Wide Park Recommendations

Given the high number of tourists that visit Washington Island, bicycle facilities and signage are two critical components to the overall park system. All parks should be provided with bike racks that allow for locking of bicycles. Safe bike routes should be provided to all park facilities. This includes expanding the designated bike routes as shown on Page 26 to include the South Shore Drive connection to Red Barn Park and Sand Dunes Beach, an extension along Little Lake Road to Jacobsen Museum Park, and an extension from Townline Road to East Side Road and Lakeview Road to serve Percy Johnson County Park. Currently, only Main Road and Lobdell Point Road provide wider paved shoulders for bicycles. When roadway improvements are planned for major roads on the Island, consideration should be given to widening the shoulders for use as a bike lane, especially on Jackson Harbor Road, Mountain Road, Town Line Road, and South Shore Drive.

Although some signage currently exists at park facilities, many of these signs are placed above eye level, are confusing to read as regulation text is split onto multiple boards, and are not placed in highly visible locations. A detailed signage plan should be developed for the Island parks and other recreational attractions so that signage improvements can be included in future capital improvement budgets. This plan should address the following components:

- Wayfinding signage along roads to mark designated bike routes and directions / distances to park facilities.
- Standard, highly visible signage to mark park entrances and public lake access points.
- Signage on park rules and regulations that is easily readable.
- Interpretive sign format to be used for future educational display boards.

Red Barn Park and Gislason Public Beach

Facilities within Red Barn Park that are in poor condition should be removed or repaired. This includes the volleyball court poles and light fixtures. Although old, the children's play equipment is in relatively good repair and does not require replacement in the near future. However, the fall zone needs replacement of wood chips to resolve safety concerns. The road crossing between the barn and the beach should also be signed and painted with a pedestrian crosswalk to increase safety. Costs for these improvements are relatively minor.

The beach area cannot be used for swimming based on the low water condition of Lake Michigan. Climate projections indicate that these levels are likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Because the sand beaches at Sand Dunes Park and Percy Johnson County Park are similarly suffering, there are no sand beaches on the Island that currently support recreational swimming, which was expressed as a public desire in the community survey and is a large draw for tourists. Of these three beaches, it is recommended that any improvements be prioritized first for Gislason Beach for the following reasons:

- The beach is a smaller, more manageable size than Sand Dunes Beach to improve and maintain.
- There was less observed impact of decaying *Cladophora* algae.
- Other facilities are located near to the beach, which would promote increased awareness and use. These include the performance center at Red Barn Park and the private Shipyard Island Marina.
- The beach is more accessible than Sand Dunes Beach. The entire area slopes gently, potable water is available, and the parking area and restroom facilities are located within view of the beach. In contrast, a large hill separates Sand Dunes Beach from its service facilities, and walking is difficult due to the sandy character of the path surface.

Creating a restoration plan for Gislason Beach will require additional studies and discussions with Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regulatory staff. However, a general concept that can be further explored would be to remove the shoreline vegetation and import sand fill to recreate a sandy beach profile from the existing water line towards land. Additional site explorations necessary in order to complete the analysis include a wetland delineation to assess the shoreline vegetation, a topographical and bathymetric survey to locate site features, grades, and water depths, and sediment samples to evaluate chemical and engineering properties of the existing beach

material. These studies, along with engineering design and permit submittals, could cost approximately \$40,000; Construction of the imported sand concept is estimated to be around \$100,000. Wisconsin Coastal Management Grants may be available to help finance beach restoration planning or construction.

Mosling Recreation Center

No improvements recommended in the near term.

Baseball Diamonds

No improvements recommended in the near term.

Sports Facilities near Washington Island School

No improvements recommended in the near term.

Gymnasium (Indoor)

No improvements recommended in the near term.

Jacqueline Cornell Foss Memorial Stage

No improvements recommended in the near term.

Mountain Park and Lookout Tower

Mountain Park is on a designated bike route, but no racks are currently available at the park for users to lock their bikes while climbing the tower steps. Racks should be provided for 10 to 12 bikes, with further assessment after installation to see if more are needed. Racks should be installed on concrete pads to facilitate maintenance and increase durability. Also, interpretive signs should be provided at the top of the tower to educate visitors on the view and island geography. The cost of the bike rack and signage would be approximately \$3,700.



Interpretive signs describing geography or natural systems could be mounted on the railings of the Mountain Park tower



Concept sketch for Schoolhouse Beach improvements

People's Park

Facilities at People's Park are in relatively good repair, including fencing, picnic tables and grills. Discussions were held whether stairs should be provided for visitors to access the water's edge. Water levels are currently close to record low elevations, which provides a rock beach at the park. Although projections show these levels will continue for the foreseeable future, even a small increase in water levels would likely place the waterline close enough to the base of a stair structure to present safety concerns. Also, wave and ice action on the stairs would lead to high maintenance responsibilities. For these reasons, a stair to the beach is not recommended at this time, and no other improvements are suggested in the near term.

Heritage Nature Trail

The trail could be designated for cross country skiing as permitted by winter conditions.

Jackson Harbor Ridges

Boundaries of the Jackson Harbor Ridges preserve can be unclear to visitors. A trail plan for the park and signage would help define the public areas and the access across the private parcel located between the two sections of the preserve. Also, a small gravel parking area should be considered for the access point on Old Camp Road, providing space for 2 to 3 vehicles. Trail signage and planning could be completed for less than \$2,500, with volunteer or Park Committee assistance. A gravel parking area would cost approximately \$1,500.

Schoolhouse Beach

Schoolhouse Beach is the Island's premier park and a major destination for residents and tourists alike. However, the high amount of public use could potentially degrade the lake edge forest over time with the amount of uncontrolled parking under the tree canopy. Also,

very few cedar seedlings were observed in the understory. This indicates that vehicle and foot traffic or deer browse are preventing regeneration of the forest canopy. A demonstration project should be considered where a section of the forest floor is fenced off to see if seedlings grow. Educational signage should be provided to tell about the project.

Parking is the largest issue facing the park. On busy summer days, parking is needed for around 100 cars. A general concept for parking that limits potential damage to the park's beauty is shown by the sketch at left. Drop off zones may be located throughout the park to allow park users to drop off gear and supplies, with a centralized parking lot located near the park entrance. Costs for this revised parking scheme are dependent on the pavement surface material selected. Gravel allows infiltration of storm water and would have the lowest initial installation cost. Permeable concrete pavers would provide a more easily maintained surface while still allowing infiltration of stormwater and preventing runoff to the sensitive beach habitat. This hard surface paving option would provide more parking than the gravel surface, as cars park closer together when stalls are striped. However, this would be a more expensive option; Grant funding sources could be pursued to decrease direct costs to the Town. Given that the sketch in this report was created using available base data from the Door County website at a less detailed scale, further refinement of these options should include a survey of the existing park as well as public meetings to discuss traffic flow patterns and design solutions.

The local Lions Club has also expressed interest in funding a new picnic shelter for the beach. A potential location is shown on the concept sketch. This location allows for water views while providing the least impact to the surrounding forest. Also, the shelter acts as a gateway to the park, by being located at the primary entrance to the beach. As with the parking concept, this design should be verified through public input given the high interest in Schoolhouse Beach.

Sand Dunes Beach

As discussed under Red Barn Park and Gislason Beach, although swimming is no longer possible at Sand Dunes Beach due to low water levels, it is recommended that improvements at this beach should be given lower priority than Gislason Beach. However, if funding becomes available, a beach assessment can be performed to determine the best method for restoration. As opposed to the sand fill proposed for Gislason Beach, a potential solution for Sand Dunes Beach may be to mechanically dredge to create deeper water closer to the dunes because

the nearshore zone is very flat. Based on site observations alone (no available survey data), it appears that 6,000 cubic yards of material may need to be removed. The overall project construction cost associated with this amount of material removal would likely be in the range of \$250,000 to \$300,000, with \$40,000 in initial survey and engineering services similar to those needed at Gislason Beach.

If the investment is made in the water's edge, other improvements may be considered to increase usability of the park. A boardwalk or cordwalk over the dunes to connect the parking area to the beach would greatly increase accessibility. Also, a beach sand volleyball court and additional picnic tables may provide a recreational draw for users.

Jacobsen Museum Park

The existing small pier on Little Lake could be replaced with a longer pier extending into deeper water, which would provide opportunities for a canoe and kayak launch. A 60-foot long, 5-foot wide pier with terminus platform could cost approximately \$30,000 to \$40,000, depending on materials and anchorage details. DNR Stewardship funding may be available for assistance with construction.



Improvements to the pier at Jacobsen Museum Park could include an end platform designed to maximize accessibility for all users



A boardwalk similar to the ice house access could be constructed to connect the Maritime Museum to the Rock Island ferry launch. However, the ends of the walk should be constructed without a step.

Jackson Harbor Maritime Museum

The museum facilities are in generally good condition and the Town continues to add to the displays. However, the boardwalk connection to the ice house requires a minor regrading effort at the ends of the walk to eliminate a step that impacts accessibility, as well as maintenance repairs to the railing. The seating along the walk is popular and could be increased. The addition of children's play equipment would complement the existing picnic tables on the museum grounds. The landowner of the private parcel between the museum grounds and the Rock Island ferry launch has indicated that he would be receptive to the construction of a boardwalk to facilitate pedestrian movement between the two recreational sites. A 5-foot wide, 180-foot long boardwalk between these sites would cost approximately \$30,000 to \$35,000 to construct, depending on materials and anchorage. The local Lions Club could provide donations of time and materials to complete these projects.

Detroit Harbor Town Launch Ramp

Due to the narrow piece of property owned by the Town at the Detroit Harbor Launch Ramp, the ramp does not meet standard criteria for boat launch circulation or provide any parking for launch users. Expansion is not possible on the current parcel. Rather than improve the current facility, the Town should explore opportunities for potential land purchase at the south end of the island to replace the launch. One option might be to explore a public-private partnership to implement a land purchase. Important criteria for evaluating properties for this use include:

- Adjacency to the Detroit Harbor West Channel (a Federal Navigation Channel) and Harbor of

Refuge.

- Ability to provide marked, accessible recreational shore fishing from a dock structure.
- Access to deep water for launching.
- Ability to provide transient tie-up docks for boaters to access nearby businesses for supplies or services.

Town Dock at Jackson Harbor

No improvements recommended in the near term.

Town Access Lanes

Per the suggestions of the Washington Island Zoning and Planning Committee to the Town Board, the Town could verify all access lane locations and ownership. Signage, fencing, parking, and other site improvements could then be evaluated for the individual access lanes that are verified. Of the four lanes currently used by the public, the following capital improvements are suggested:

- Washington Harbor Town Access Lane: Signage for public access should be posted and property lines should be marked with fencing.
- North Main Road Access Lane: To eliminate conflicts with users trespassing on private property, the town should erect a fence along the property line on the north side of the access to replace the temporary orange fence provided by the owner. Fencing should also be continued along the face of the bluff to provide better safety over the existing steel cable. The picnic table should be replaced.
- Witness Tree Access Lane: Interpretive signage and a more aesthetic building should eventually be provided to mark the location of the Witness Tree. These improvements are not critical to public use of the space.
- South Main Road Access Lane: To mitigate the rutting damage caused by ice fishing access during thaw conditions, a gravel access drive should be provided through the nearshore area. Assuming a 200-foot long by 12-foot wide gravel drive, these improvements would cost around \$5,000. Permitting will be required with the WDNR to place the gravel fill material.

7.3 OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

The public park system is maintained by Town employees, funded by the general fund line item for parks except as noted for individual locations noted in the description of existing facilities. The maintenance and operations budget for 2011 includes the following direct costs:

- Parks Maintenance:

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Wages and Fringe Benefits (Actual 2010) | \$57,397 |
| Equipment | \$1,000 |
| Equipment Repairs | \$500 |
| Landscaping Supplies / Planning | \$5,000 |
| Supplies & Electric | \$8,500 |
| <u>Insurance</u> | <u>\$3,726</u> |
| Total | \$76,123 |

- Maintenance provided for County Park:

| | |
|--|----------------|
| <u>Wages and Fringe Benefits (Actual 2010)</u> | <u>\$2,727</u> |
| Total | \$2,727 |

Separate funds exist to staff and operate the following facilities, which also provide revenue back to the Town to offset costs:

| Facility | Budget | Revenue |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Jacobsen Museum | \$13,725 | \$6,000 |
| Red Barn Programming | \$4,700 | \$4,700 |
| Art & Nature Center | \$2,000 | \$2,000 |
| Recreation Center | \$282,116 | \$281,696 |
| Jackson Harbor Museum / Dock | \$14,630 | \$20,000 |
| Total | \$317,171 | \$314,396 |

While the capital improvements proposed under Section 7.2 meet the needs of the public and correct deficiencies with the existing facilities, the Town needs to balance the capital costs and increased maintenance demands of these improvements with other obligations and responsibilities to taxpayers.

7.4 FUNDING

There are a number of potential funding sources available to help finance land acquisition and capital improvements of recreation facilities. Funding sources specific to potential improvements for Island park facilities are shown in the table beginning on page 35. The matrix provides basic information on grant programs, matching requirements, application cycles, and agency contacts. Specifics for the grant opportunities that have the highest likelihood to achieve funding for proposed projects are discussed below.

Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program

Through the Stewardship program, the WDNR provides up to 50% funding assistance for local land acquisition or facility development for nature-based outdoor recreation purposes. Under grant restrictions, the land must be kept in outdoor recreation permanently. Competition for acquisition and park development funds are by WDNR region, meaning that the Town will only compete against other projects in the Northeast Region for funding. Land acquisition grants require the Town to secure the grant funding before the property is purchased. However, an exception can be made to this rule if a letter of retroactivity is received from WDNR prior to purchase if the landowner is under pressure from other parties to sell the land for development. Upon receipt of a letter of retroactivity, the Town would have one year to submit a grant application for funding.

New regulations in the reauthorization of the Stewardship program added language that grants must specifically provide for "hunting, trapping, fishing, hiking, cross country skiing, and other activities where the primary focus or purpose in the appreciation or enjoyment of nature." Because of this clause, projects must allow hunting and trapping activities unless specifically prohibited by local ordinance. If the Town wishes to exclude any of these activities from parks purchased with grant funds, they must provide a copy of the ordinance restricting these activities on park properties with the Stewardship grant application.

For facility development, the following components are generally able to receive funding:

- Beach construction
- Covered outdoor picnic shelters
- Walks and picnic areas
- Parking lots
- Utilities and lighting
- Interpretive signs

- Landscaping
- Land surveys, pre-engineering and project design activities (Cost may be incurred prior to award.)

Active sports recreation facilities are excluded from Stewardship funding, which would limit funding for sand volleyball nets and playground equipment. Marina projects are also not eligible.

Coastal Management Grant Program

The Wisconsin Coastal Management Program sponsors several different grants targeted at the management, protection, and restoration of Wisconsin's Great Lakes. The most applicable funding categories within this program for the Town are Coastal Land Acquisition and Public Access/Historic Preservation. Land acquisition grants may be explored in the future to help purchase property for a replacement boat launch at the south end of the Island. Public Access/Historic Preservation grants fund low-cost construction projects such as parks, walkways, trails, piers, viewing decks, removal of pilings or outdated structures, historic building restorations, and public access facilities. Projects must include an educational or resource protection component. Funds cannot be used for dredging, marinas, or breakwater construction. Feasibility studies for activities such as beach improvements are eligible for funding.

Coastal Management Grants for construction projects typically range in size from \$7,000 to \$150,000. Informational workshops are held annually in September to discuss potential projects, the application process, and funding priorities with program staff. For grant applications submitted in November 2011, construction projects would need to be completed by June 30, 2013.

C.D. Besadny Conservation Grant

The C.D. Besadny Conservation Grants fund small-scale conservation projects, with a typical grant size of \$100 to \$1,000. Grants must be fully matched with local funds or volunteer labor and/or material donations. These funds could be used for construction of trail markers or interpretive signs which discuss natural history, geography, or local flora/fauna. Specific projects at the Mountain Park tower, Gislason Beach, or Jackson Harbor Ridges identified above could use these funds.

Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BIG)

The BIG is a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service program that provides up to a 75% match for transient recreational boating facilities, including slips, breakwaters, restrooms, utilities, and fueling stations. State agencies must apply to the USFWS for funding, which is given in both nationally

competitive and non-competitive formats. Each state can apply for up to \$100,000 in non-competitive Tier 1 funds per year for eligible projects. After awarding the non-competitive funds, approximately \$9 million remains to be distributed in a nationally competitive Tier 2 application program. Grants under the Tier 2 program typically range from \$30,000 to \$1.5 million. There are no maximum or minimum limits set on project construction costs; however, all applications must go through the WDNR. If transient dockage is incorporated in a new boat launch facility, the Town could pursue funds through this program for construction of slips or a restroom facility.

Recreational Boating Facilities Program

The RBF program provides funding for feasibility studies and construction projects for improvements such as:

- Boat ramps and boarding docks.
- Structures such as bulkheads and breakwaters necessary to provide safe water conditions.
- Initial dredging for project development.
- Demolition of existing shoreline structures.
- Support facilities including parking lots and signage, sanitary facilities, fencing and lighting.
- Aids to navigation.
- Site surveys, site planning, preparation of cost estimates, engineering studies, preparation of construction plans and specifications, and construction administration.

Baseline grants are provided for up to 50% of the total eligible cost for a recreational boating facility project. The Commission may increase the cost share rate from 50% to 80% if it determines that the project is of statewide or regional significance and the project meets all of the following criteria:

- The project is located on Lake Michigan.
- The project site has, or will have as a result of the project, a boat launching facility protected by a breakwater structure.
- The project provides the minimum number of car-trailer unit parking spaces required under Wisconsin Administrative Code NR 1.91.

The Commission may also approve an additional 10% cost sharing for a construction or dredging project if the municipality conducts a WDNR-approved boating safety enforcement and education program.

| Program Name | Administered By | Applies To | Matching Requirements | Application Cycle | Contact |
|--|--|---|---|---|--|
| Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BIG) | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources | Development of facilities for transient recreational boaters (26' length or greater), including slips, breakwaters, restrooms, utilities, fueling stations, and pumpout stations. | Up to 75% Federal Match | Yearly Next Application October 2011 | Chris Halbur WI Department of Natural Resources PO Box 10448 Green Bay, WI 54307-0448 (920) 662-5121 christine.halbur@wisconsin.gov |
| C.D. Besadny Conservation Grant | Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin | Local conservation projects including kiosks and interpretive signs, installation of natural vegetation, trail construction, and other projects that benefit the public. | 50% State 50% Local (cash or volunteer effort), Grants of \$100 to \$1,000 | Yearly Next Application January 15, 2012 | Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin PO Box 2317 Madison, WI 53701-2317 (866) 264-4096 http://www.wisconservation.org/ |
| Coastal Management Grant Program | Wisconsin Department of Administration, WI Coastal Management Program (WCMP) | Coastal land acquisition, wetland protection, habitat restoration, nonpoint source pollution control, coastal resource and community planning, education, public access and historic preservation. | 50-60% match, depending on project size Grants typically range from \$7,000 to \$150,000 | Yearly Next Application for 2012-2013 Grants November 2011, pre-submittal workshops September 2011 | Wisconsin Coastal Management Program PO Box 8944 Madison, WI 53708-8944 coastal@wisconsin.gov |
| Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program | Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources | Acquiring land for conservation and recreation purposes and developing and improving outdoor recreational facilities. Includes engineering design services, which may be incurred prior to grant award. | Up to 50% State Match | Yearly Next Application May 1, 2012 | Chris Halbur WI Department of Natural Resources PO Box 10448 Green Bay, WI 54307-0448 (920) 662-5121 christine.halbur@wisconsin.gov |
| Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) | Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources | Federal appropriation program that applies to the planning, acquiring, and developing of State and local recreation areas. | 50% State 50% Local | Yearly Next Application May 1, 2012 (same application form as Stewardship) | Chris Halbur WI Department of Natural Resources PO Box 10448 Green Bay, WI 54307-0448 (920) 662-5121 christine.halbur@wisconsin.gov |

| Program Name | Administered By | Applies To | Matching Requirements | Application Cycle | Contact |
|---|--|---|------------------------|---|--|
| Recreational Boating Facilities Program | Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, WI Waterways Commission | Construction of water and land-based facilities for recreational power boat users (boat ramps, breakwaters, etc.). Will also fund engineering costs for construction documents. Maintenance dredging and finger pier construction are not eligible. | Up to 50% State Match | Quarterly Rolling application process | Chris Halbur WI Department of Natural Resources PO Box 10448 Green Bay, WI 54307-0448 (920) 662-5121 christine.halbur@wisconsin.gov |
| Recreational Trails Act | Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources | Funded by Federal gas excise taxes to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities. | 20%-50% Local Match | Yearly Next Application May 1, 2012 (same application form as Stewardship) | Chris Halbur WI Department of Natural Resources PO Box 10448 Green Bay, WI 54307-0448 (920) 662-5121 christine.halbur@wisconsin.gov |
| Urban Forestry Assistance Grants | Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources | Urban forestry plans, inventories, public awareness programs or materials, and tree planting, maintenance or removal. | 50% Local Match | Yearly Next Intent to Apply July 1, 2012 | Tracy Salisbury 2984 Shawano Ave., P.O. Box 10448 Green Bay, WI 54307 (920) 662-5450 Tracy.Salisbury@Wisconsin.gov |