



*We will enhance community and quality of life through people, parks, and programs.*

**October 18, 2017**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Be Heard! County Residents' Suggestions Sought about County Parks and Facilities**

**Traverse City** – Grand Traverse County Parks and Recreation is updating its master plan, and is inviting all county residents and parks and recreation-related organizations and businesses, regardless of whether they visit or use county parks, to participate in a community input session on Thursday, October 26. Community members also are encouraged to participate in a County Parks and Recreation Master Plan Survey to contribute to the planning process.

“This is an exciting, important time – a wonderful opportunity for us to connect with and hear our residents, whose help we need shaping the future of our park properties and facilities,” said Kristine Erickson, Director of Grand Traverse County Parks and Recreation. “We want to hear from as many as possible about our parks, because that important data will contribute to a collective vision that will help us best serve our county’s residents.” Erickson explained that County Parks and Recreation Commissioners and the Parks Department are stewards of: Beitner Park, Civic Center Park (including Easling Pool and Howe Arena), Keystone Soccer Complex and adjacent Birmley-Keystone property, Maple Bay Park and Natural Area, Medalie Roadside Park, Meyer Property, Nature Education Reserve and Boardman River Nature Center, Power Island, Twin Lakes Park, and the VASA Trailhead.

Commonly referred to as a “Five-Year Recreation Plan,” an approved master plan on file with Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Grants Management Department is necessary for County Parks and Recreation to qualify for certain state and federal grants to develop public outdoor recreational facilities and properties. According to Erickson, County Parks and Recreation’s current *Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenways Plan* expires at the end of this year. The revised plan, due to the MDNR during the first quarter of 2018, goes beyond qualifying Parks and Recreation for grants. Erickson said it also serves as a five-year guide for park management and “a foundation for Parks and Recreation’s strategies and goals for future park maintenance and improvements that will help support and provide health, wellness, and recreational opportunities for our community.”

Two community input sessions will be held on Thursday, October 26 – one at 3 p.m. and one at 5 p.m. – in the training room on the second floor of the Governmental Center, 400 Boardman Avenue. Each session begins with an overview of the county’s parks, followed by informal discussion, questions, and answers, about each park. County Parks, Senior Center, and Planning staff, along with Master Planning Team members representing Parks and Recreation community partners (City of Traverse City, Conservation District, TART Trails, Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, and LIAA) will be on hand to engage with participants. Participants are encouraged to offer suggestions and ideas for park improvements. Copies of the survey will be available. Light refreshments will be served.

Take the master plan survey and review the current County Parks master plan on line at [www.grandtraverse.org/parks](http://www.grandtraverse.org/parks) (once on the page, scroll down to locate links). Those who wish to receive a paper copy of the survey may request one by calling 231-922-4818.

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