

# 7 Public facilities

## 7.1 Introduction

Madison Township, like many exurban and rural communities, does not have the same level of amenities as more densely populated urban and suburban areas. Resident surveys have revealed that there is little dissatisfaction with public facilities in the area; schools, parks, and other municipal facilities. As the population grows, though, existing public facilities may become stretched.

The intent of the Public Facilities element is to ensure that schools, parks, public safety facilities, community centers, and other government-provided amenities continue to meet, if not exceed, the needs of township residents and visitors, contribute positively to enhancing the overall quality of life, and preserve the semi-rural character of the township.

## 7.2 Schools

### 1963 VILLAGE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Madison Local School District encompasses both Madison Township and Madison Village.

Red Bird Elementary School, at 1956 Red Bird Road in North Madison, has a current enrollment of 476 K-5 students. Nearby North Madison Elementary School, at 6735 North Ridge Road, has a current enrollment of 460 K-5 students.

Students in both the village and township attend grades six through eight at Madison Middle School, located at 1941 Red Bird Road at the north end of Madison Township. The capacity of Madison Middle School has a capacity of 574 students, but a current enrollment of 874 students.

Madison High School is located at 3100 Burns Road, north of Middle Ridge Road, in Madison Township. The high school is about two miles (3 kilometers) from the village center. Madison High School has a capacity of 1,073 students, and a current enrollment of 1,324 students.

Some schools located in the Madison Village, such as the Madison Memorial Complex (92 East Main Street, where pre-school programs are held), and Homer Nash Kimball School (94 River Street, K-5), serve some pupils that live in Madison Township. The capacity of Homer Nash Kimball School is 400 students, with enrollment above capacity at the time this plan was written, at 534 students.

### SCHOOL SPRAWL

Throughout the United States, and particularly in Ohio where an ambitious school construction program is underway, school sprawl is becoming a growing issue. As a result of site standards, new schools are built at locations more distant and difficult to reach from the neighborhoods they serve. School siting policies also make it hard for built-up neighborhoods to retain old school buildings, even if they are structurally sound and architecturally impressive.

When the school anchors a neighborhood, both the students and residents benefit. The trend of building shopping mall-sized schools outside town alienates students, encourages sprawl, and impairs the sense of community and place. When schools are placed in a location beyond

walking distance of most residential areas, children lose one source of exercise, and become at added risk for obesity.

### 7.3 Parks

Madison Township has a relatively large amount of parkland. However, the township has few community and neighborhood parks intended to serve primarily area residents. The township includes more than six miles (10 kilometers) of Lake Erie shoreline, but only 1600 feet (490 meters) of frontage, or about 5%, is publicly accessible.

Table 7.1

#### Public parks

Madison Township, outside of Madison Village

<i>Park</i>	<i>Ownership</i>	<i>General location</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Facilities</i>
<b>Tuttle Park</b>	Township	North Madison: west	3.7	Tennis courts. Ball diamond (neglected). Access to Lake Erie shoreline.
<b>Stanton Park</b>	Township	North Madison: west	30	Cabins, pool, playground, picnic area, community buildings. Access to Lake Erie shoreline.
<b>Unionville Park</b>	Township	Central Madison: east	5	Playground
<b>Madison Township Park</b>	Township	North Madison: central	15.6	Ball diamond. Gazebo. Access to Lake Erie shoreline.
<b>Arcola Creek Park</b>	Metroparks	North Madison: east	153	Picnic area. Portable restrooms. Fishing. Observation deck. Access to Lake Erie shoreline.
<b>Hidden Valley Park</b>	Metroparks	Grand River: central	152	Picnic area with grills. Picnic shelter with fire ring. Drinking water. Restrooms. Hiking trails. Playground. Fishing. Sledding hill. Ball/game fields. Canoe access.
<b>Riverview Park</b>	Metroparks	Grand River: central	45	Picnic area with grills. Picnic shelter. Fire ring. Restrooms. Hiking trail. Fishing. Sledding hill.
<b>Hogback Ridge Park</b>	Metroparks	Grand River: east	414	Picnic area with grills. Picnic shelter. Restrooms. Hiking trails. Fishing. Cabin rental.
<b>Erie Shores Golf Course</b>	Metroparks	North Madison: east	106	18-hole golf course
<b>Total</b>			<b>924</b>	

#### MADISON TOWNSHIP PARKS

Madison Township Trustees has ownership of four community parks, three of which are in North Madison. Tuttle Park, at the western end of North Madison, includes two tennis courts, and a neglected baseball/softball diamond. Stanton Park is also near the western end of north Madison and has yet to realize its recreational potential. Township Park, at the northern end of Hubbard Road, includes one ball diamond and a gazebo. Unionville Park is a smaller facility located near the township border near Countyline Rd. Baseball fields also exist at the Township Service Dept. on Hubbard Rd.

Stanton Park is an underutilized park with a rental cabin, public swimming pool and various community hall facilities that can be used by the general public. Increased coastal erosion, beach creation and a more active land use, along with interaction with adjacent Rabbit Run

Theatre would yield more visitors to this park. This plan recommends a site specific master plan for the park to address the feasibility of a tourist oriented destination. This may include new energy efficient rental cottages, modern community building for weddings, public meeting space and performances and a new public beach. Ultimately, this park could be an economic driver for the community. The 2005 Lake County Coastal Plan also identifies this amenities as a potential for Stanton Park (see adjacent graphics).



Madison Township Park is bounded on two sides by Lake Road and Hubbard Road, and one side by Lake Erie. It is ideally positioned to serve as a traditional village square for the central end of North Madison. With the right mix of land uses surrounding it – buildings fronting the sidewalk, housing cafes, bars and small shops – Madison Township Park has the potential of being the centerpiece for redevelopment of North Madison. In accordance with the Lake County Coastal Plan, this plan recommends retrofitting Madison Township Park as a key element in town square node for North Madison. This includes placing more human-scaled amenities at the park, such as a rose garden, playground, fountain and sculpture garden. Increased safe, public beach access is recommended for the via offshore breakwaters.



**LAKE COUNTY METROPARKS**

Madison Township is home to five Lake County Metroparks parks; Arcola Creek Park, Hidden Valley Park, Riverview Park, Hogback Ridge Park, and the Erie Shores Golf Course. Together these parks comprise about 870 acres (352 hectares).

Except for Arcola Creek Park and Erie Shores Golf Course, the Metroparks are all located along the Grand River, away from the township’s population center in North Madison. The Metroparks serve as regional parks, greenbelts and nature preserves more so than neighborhood and community parks with active recreation.

**ACQUIRING NEW PARKLAND**

The sprawling nature of Madison Township, and the costs involved in maintaining roads and public safety services, make it challenging to generate and allocate revenue needed to create and operate a larger park system.

Townships in Ohio may now impose impact fees on new development. The township may impose park impact fees or parkland acquisition/park-in-lieu fees from new residential development. Open space needs should be discussed during initial planning meetings between the developer and village for new subdivisions. Agreed upon open space areas should be a part of the overall development plan and ultimately be turned over to the local homeowners association.

State and federal grants may be available to help fund the acquisition of parkland. The township should use every opportunity it has to find and acquire funding for new parkland where appropriate.

School grounds provide valuable opportunities for active recreation. However, there are constraints to their use as community recreational space. With educational use of school grounds as the primary use, schools are often unavailable for general public use.

### **STANDARDS FOR NEW PARKS**

In many new subdivisions in Lake County, open space is often unusable; it may include areas behind houses that serve as an extension of a rear yard, areas under high tension power lines, and other areas that are wasted space. Parks and open space should be accessible, visible, defensible and usable. The following standards are recommended as the basis for siting new mini-parks, neighborhood parks and community parks.

- At least 50% of the perimeter of a neighborhood park, and at least 30% of the perimeter of a community park, must front on a public road. Exceptions could be made for large parks (more than 20 acres, or with more than 500 feet/150 meters of street frontage), and linear parks (rails-to-trails, lakefront corridors, riparian corridors, etc.).
- Excepting trails and riparian corridors, parks must not take the form of narrow strips.
- Convenient pedestrian and vehicular access to parks must be provided.
- Parks and open space must not function as de facto backyards for adjacent residents.
- Parks and open space must be welcoming, and have adequate safety features.
- Retention ponds, wetlands that stay saturated through half the year or more, areas under high tension power lines, traffic islands and medians, and entrance features cannot be used in meeting total park or open space area requirements.
- Linking new parks to existing parks or other desirable land uses (schools, retail areas, cultural or institutional centers) will be encouraged.
- Parks must be improved with water, sanitary sewer (if available), storm sewer (if available) and electrical service. All utilities must be underground.

## **7.4 Public safety**

### **FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Fire protection in Madison Township is provided by the Madison Fire District, which also serves Madison Village. The Fire District has 13 full-time and 21 on-call firefighters.

### **POLICE PROTECTION**

Police protection in Madison Township is provided by a staff of 30 including clerks, office manager, chief of police, sergeants, detectives and patrolmen and women. The Lake County Sheriff Department provides specialized services, such as a SWAT team and bomb squad. Madison Township is also served by the Lake County Crime Lab, a division of the Lake County Prosecutor's Office. The Lake County Crime Lab is funded by a countywide tax levy.

This plan recommends that if a new public safety facility is built, it should be located as close as possible to the population center of the township, near North Ridge Road/US 20. A public safety facility should house both the police department and a fire station. This could create a unified, centrally-located public safety complex.

## 7.5 Township facilities

Township Hall is located in a former office building on Hubbard Road (2.3 acre) south of Chapel Road. The road department is located on an 16 acre site at on Hubbard Rd., north of Chapel. This plan recommends that if a new town hall is built in the future, it should be placed at a prominent location that would reinforce the identity of the township, and validate the importance of township government. A location fronting or near Madison Township Park, preferably on the shoreline, would be ideal.

Facilities that may include large parking and storage areas, such as vehicle yards, should be located in an area with low visibility, and heavily landscaped and screened.

## 7.6 Goals and policies

### **PF-1      The Madison School District will continue to offer high quality, conveniently located public schools.**

PF-1-01      Work with the Madison School District to ensure potential expansion needs are fulfilled should enrollment projections change.

### **PF-2      Parks must not be considered a luxury, but an essential component needed to improve residents' quality of life, maintain and enhance the desirability of residential areas, attract new middle and upper income residents, and offset the visual impact of blighted and abandoned industrial areas. Parkland must be expanded to meet the present and future needs of township residents, serve the recreational needs of residents and visitors, protect irreplaceable natural resources, and preserve the low-density suburban character of the township.**

PF-2-01      Parkland should be distributed evenly throughout the township, with locations and facilities based on the recommendations of this plan.

PF-2-02      Ensure that new parkland and open space is accessible, defensible, and centrally located, with a sizeable percentage of its perimeter fronting a street. Discourage the use of marginal land, narrow linear tracts, and areas hidden behind back yards for parkland and open space

PF-2-03      Use every opportunity to find and acquire outside funding to acquire open space and new parkland.

PF-2-04      Reconfigure Madison Township Park to function as a village square, similar to the square in Madison Village.

PF-2-05      To the extent feasible, coordinate lakefront park planning in accordance with the Lake County Coastal Development Plan.

**PF-3 Urban-quality public safety facilities and services should continue to be offered.**

- PF-3-01 Site a future joint public safety facility, accommodating both police and fire agencies, in the population center of the township. Ensure adequate land is available for future expansion of the facility.
- PF-3-02 Work with the Fire Department to maintain and improve the fire class rating, to lower insurance costs for residents and businesses.

**PF-4 Town government facilities will be improved.**

- PF-4-01 Locate the town hall in a visually and symbolically prominent location, should a new facility be built. The site should contribute to creating a sense of place, and play an important role in reinforcing the identity of Madison Township. A preferred site for a relocated town hall is across the street from or near Madison Township Park.
- PF-4-02 Locate township maintenance and yard facilities in an area that is inconspicuous as possible. Arrange yard facilities so equipment, garages, vehicle and raw material storage areas, and heavily traveled internal access aisles are screened from the public right-of-way and nearby residences. Use landscaping and screening to soften the visual impact of such facilities.