# CHARLTON PARK STRATEGIC P







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## Special Thanks

Appreciation is extended to the many individuals and organizations who helped shape this document by participating in the surveys and group exercises the results of which are found in the Appendix.

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## **CHARLTON PARK STRATEGIC PLAN**

This document represents the culmination of several months of work on behalf of the Steering Committee formed for the purpose of developing a Strategic Plan for Charlton Park. Several documents were prepared prior to preparation of the Strategic Plan; these documents were referenced in the writing of the Plan and are available as appendices to the Plan. These documents are:

Current Plans, Policies, and Demographics. This report contained a summary of those existing plans, policies, and facilities that may influence both the current and future condition of Charlton Park. Existing conditions help in understanding the goals and purposes of other institutions as compared to the goals and purposes of Charlton Park. Both local and regional influences were included in the report. Demographics that are important in determining the future of Charlton Park are included in the report.

Community Input Report. This report summarized all public input gathered as part of the strategic planning process. Input was gathered via the following methods:

- ❖ On-line Citizen Survey which was also available as a paper survey
- ❖ Short paper survey on-site at the Irving D. Charlton Museum
- Leadership Visioning Workshop
- Mobile Workshops for stakeholder groups
- Individual stakeholder interviews

Common themes were discovered in order to assist in setting direction for Charlton Park.

Perhaps the most important idea that emerged in the Community Input Report is that expanding the historic focus of Charlton Park is valued equally with adding new and exciting facilities and events at the park. Achieving a balance between these two values is consistently apparent throughout the Strategic Plan.





Architectural Assessments. The purpose of this report was to provide a detailed analysis of the buildings and structures present at the park including historic significance and structural condition. Accessibility for barrier free access was also analyzed for each structure. Maintenance, repair, safety, and renovation recommendations and priorities are included in the report.

Parks and Recreation Trends, Site Accessibility, and General Site Observations. This report provided guidance in trends in recreational facilities with an emphasis on those facilities that may be appropriate for Charlton Park. In addition, accessibility for barrier free access was analyzed for all existing recreational facilities at the park and for the historic village. General site observations include recommendations for new facilities, aesthetics, and maintenance.

Charlton Park Board of Directors Planning Data. Prior to the beginning of the Strategic Planning process, the Charlton Park Board produced a list of long term (ten year) and short term (five years or less) issues, many of which have been affirmed by public input received during the planning process. This list is included in the appendices, and has been drawn upon when developing goals and action steps.

## MAJOR PRIORITIES FOR STRATEGIC ACTION

Desires for Charlton Park as expressed by the public, the Steering Committee, as well as the Charlton Park Board, have resulted in the identification of six major categories for which goals and actions steps have been developed, and for which agents or champions have been identified.

For each action step, a time frame (three, five, or ten years) has been established. While these time frames are important in terms of setting priorities in regard to completion of action steps, the Steering Committee recognizes that adjustments in time schedules may be needed due to availability of funding and staffing, or shifting priorities.

The Charlton Park Board, and the various committees that are charged with carrying out the Strategic Plan, should consult the previously prepared reports for detailed ideas in accomplishing goals. Valuable specific ideas are contained in these reports regarding specific park facilities, expansion of existing park programs, increased accessibility to all users, and increased presence through marketing.





The Strategic Plan is intended to be a strong policy document. However, the Charlton Park Board of Directors should apply an annual review of the Strategic Plan to assess accomplishments, readjust priorities if necessary, and identify roadblocks to success that may emerge during courses of action. The Strategic Plan should be viewed as a document that can assist and support efforts to achieve the vision for Charlton Park, but should be revised as needed to meet the purpose of the Charlton Park Board.

Finally, the Strategic Plan should be consistently coordinated with the activities of the Charlton Park Foundation, in order to assure mutual support of both the goals of the Charlton Park Board and the goals of the Foundation, and to insure efficient expenditure of funds.







## **EXPAND HISTORIC FOCUS AND ACTIVITIES**

#### 1. Goal

Hire and train additional docents and volunteers to expand the times and opportunities for which personnel are available to scheduled groups and the general public.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Determine source of funding necessary to employ additional docents; seek volunteers including retirees, college students, and others.	3-5 yrs.	Charlton Park Board; Volunteers Comm.; Staff
Train docents and volunteers in all aspects of collections maintenance and repair as demonstrations; increase live demonstrations and give-aways that demonstrate historic activities.	3-5 yrs.	Charlton Park Board; Volunteers Comm.; Staff
Explore possibility of outside vendors and providers.	3-5 yrs.	Charlton Park Board; Events and Volunteers Comm.; Staff









#### 2. Goal

Increase interpretation of historic and non-historic structures through a system of uniform, attractive signage both outside and inside structures.

Action Steps Time Frame Agent/Champion

Develop comprehensive sign plan.

3-5 yrs.

Charlton Park Board; Facilities Comm.; Staff





#### 3. Goal

Identify those events which enhance the historic focus and mission of Charlton Park.

Evaluate special events for relevance to stated goals and mission of Charlton Park.

Annually

Charlton Park Board; Events Comm.; Staff

#### **Key Challenges for this Category:**

Funding for additional docents; recruiting and administering volunteers; increase in facilities and attendance will result in an increase in maintenance; considering increased hours of operation; staffing new events; balancing free events with gate fees.





## INTERPRETATION, EDUCATION, AND COLLECTIONS

This section was prepared by the Collections and Education Committee of Historic Charlton Park.

#### A. Goal

Employ multiple methods of interpretation in historic & non-historic areas.

Action Steps Time Frame Agent/Champion

Create a robust interpretation program On-Going Staff, Education Committee

a. Recruit docents for hands on demonstrations in the historic village

b. Hire and train seasonal staff to offer interpretation on non-event days

Provide Virtual tours of the historic structures and grounds to assist with ADA compliance

2-5 years

Staff, Education Committee

a. Determine scope of project: inaccessible buildings and certain spaces? Or every building and grounds?

- b. Contact outside vendors for bids
- c. Determine time necessary to complete inhouse
- d. Purchase wide angle lens for camera and a new digital camera
- e. <a href="http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Virtual-Tour">http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Virtual-Tour</a>
- f. <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jr">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jr</a>
  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jr">1HGk2zYJq</a>



Staff, Education & Collections Committee, Facility Committee, Board

Develop comprehensive sign plan

5-10 years

- a. Identify areas of greatest need/interest (i.e. building interiors)
- b. Create design and style of signs for consistency in all areas
- c. Determine level of funding needed by consulting printers experienced with indoor and outdoor signage.
- d. Plan to print and install on a yearly basis with available funds
- e. Write and research story of each building or topic





Consider Audio/Cell Phone Tours and the use of emerging technologies

5-10 years

Staff, Education & Collections Committee, Facility Committee, Board, Consultant

- a. Meet with OnCell and other tour providers to determine scope and level of funding needed. Potential maintenance costs.
- b. Consult constituents through Facebook, newsletter, local paper, Volunteers
- c. Is cell phone reception good enough to even consider
- d. Do a test run of QR codes in specific buildings for 6 months and track usage. Online content and code development
- e. If deemed necessary, develop online content for QR codes and create narration for the audio/cell tour.



#### B. Goal

Expand scope of program offerings for schools & other organized groups.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Determine type and scope of current and		
new programs, such as Indian Landing,		
Environmental History, Early		Staff, Education &
Transportation, etc.	1-5 Years	Collection Committee

- a. Survey all county schools (all grades) to see what programs they would be interested in not just groups that currently attend programs at the Park.
- b. Discuss with Education/Collections Committee to create a viable timeline to roll out new programs.
- c. Research and develop new programs, using the resources we have in our collection as a starting point.
- d. Complete testing phase of new programming by offering the program for free to a select number of groups, ask for feedback at the completion of the program.
- e. Assess test program and make changes, then offer to a wider range of schools.





Determine source of funding necessary to employ additional docents; Seek volunteers including retirees, college students, and others

Staff, Education & Collections Committee,

3-5 Years

Board

- a. Research to see if there are grant opportunities that would help create a self-sustaining pool of money with which to pay docents
- b. Consult with director to see if there are areas of the current budget where funds could be drawn
- c. If funds exist, write a proposal to the Charlton Park board asking for permission to move those monies to a docent fund
- d. Post-employment opportunities onto area college websites and in local papers for Historic Interpreter positions
- e. Arrange visits to local Rotary/Historical Societies/etc. groups to drum up interest for new volunteers and docents.

Hire and train additional docents and volunteers to expand times and opportunities for which personnel are available to scheduled groups and the general public.

3-5 Years

Staff, Consultant

- a. Consult with current volunteer corps to hear why they started volunteering at the Park; use that as a basis for a promotional campaign for new volunteers and docents.
- b. Do a study of when the buildings are most active outside of school groups and special events, and work towards staffing buildings during that time.
- c. Train docents and volunteers in different live demonstrations and giveaways that demonstrate historic activities.
- d. Explore the possibility of outside vendors and providers.

With Collections staff, develop teaching kits

for use in local schools

5-10 Years

Staff

- a. Determine primary source needs by consulting local educators, all grades
- b. Pull artifacts (2D/3D) from storage and photograph/scan those intended for use.
- c. Create CDs or use another digital format
- d. Consult local educators on an annual basis to make sure needs are still being met.





#### C. Goal

Insure events and exhibits are relevant to the mission of Historic Charlton Park

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Assess Current events; consider adding or		
eliminating special events that no longer fit		
the goals of Historic Charlton Park	1 Year	Staff, Board, Consultant

- a. Taking community ties and the mission statement into account-Eliminate events from the published calendar
- b. Based on survey results and public input, determine cost to bring in outside events (i.e. Lumberjack Show)
- c. Determine if cyclical events would be possible and what those would be

Find traveling exhibits that enrich the local community or complement the historic village and recreation areas, providing an outside voice.

Staff, Collections
1-5 Years Committee, Board

- a. Examine mission statement to determine focus
- b. Use resources of outside organizations (MMA and AASLH) or online searches and inquiry to locate exhibits
- c. Determine costs, budget, potential partners, size, time of year (audience)
- d. Staff commitment reporting, marketing materials, installation, storage, security (personnel/cameras), construction

Staff, Collections
Insure in-house exhibits make use of existing
collections and resources
1-5 Years
Volunteers

- a. Consider the strengths of the collection
- b. Determine via press release whether the local community would be interested or able to provide additional information/materials on exhibit topics
- c. Determine costs, budget, potential partners, size, time of year (audience)
- d. Staff/volunteer commitment research, sign creation, design, marketing materials, installation, storage, security (personnel/cameras), construction





Create a schedule of exhibits and events that cover a two or three year period at minimum.

2-5 Years

Staff, Collections
Committee

- a. Continue to search out and inquire on traveling exhibits
- b. Seek input and information from the local community to support In-house exhibits
- c. Consult the mission statement
- d. Make sure payment plan is in order



## **Action Steps**

Develop a use plan for an interpretation and education facility; determine anticipated maintenance costs, utilities costs, staffing needs, and income revenues from rentals and other uses.

#### Time Frame

Staff, Collections & Education Committee, Facilities Committee, Board, Consultant

Agent/Champion

- 1-5 years
- a. Organize a listing of all possible uses for the building, (i.e. Education programs [programs or lunchroom for outdoor programs], rental space for meetings, wedding preparation, storage for education programs or special events)
- b. Research buildings similar in use to estimate maintenance costs
- c. Consult with local utilities companies to estimate utility costs





d. Create a matrix that spells out potential maintenance/utility costs for each type of event held in the building versus the amount of revenue that will come in (i.e. figure out a minimum number of people required to use the building)

Determine specifications such as location and size for a new education building.

3-5 years

Staff, Collections & Education Committee, Facilities Committee, Board, Consultant

- a. Consult with an expert to determine the best location for the proposed building, including proximity to Collections building
- b. Using the list of possible uses for the building, consult with an expert to determine what the layout should look like i.e. number/size of rooms
- c. Ensure ADA compliance of new building and possible use as a severe weather shelter

Staff, Collections & Education Committee, Facilities Committee, Board, Consultant

Search for funding sources and partners

3-10 years

#### E. Goal

Develop plan for completion of collection inventory

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## Time Frame

## Agent/Champion

Develop hierarchy of greatest need

3-5 years

Staff, Collection Committee, Board

- a. Those artifacts/buildings deemed of greatest value historic/monetary
- b. Consider time of year and time needed to complete inventories (physical inventory, photograph, research, data entry, storage resources)
- c. Create spreadsheet delineating projects over the next 5 years







Train additional volunteers, students, and potential part-time staff to assist with inventory program

1-5 Years

Staff

- a. Pay for additional licenses and set up an additional computer for cataloging
- b. Upgrade server memory
- c. Consider staff time needed to supervise and schedule additional helpers
- d. Recruit students with the offer of internships for credit
- e. Train additional volunteers and interns

#### F. Goal

Establish a collecting plan to include future collecting and de-accessioning goals

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Determine time span of collecting activities	1 Year	Staff, Collections Committee, Board
Identify strengths and weaknesses within existing collection	5-10 Years	Staff, Collections Committee, Board

- a. As the buildings and storage spaces are inventoried, compile a list of surplus artifacts and a list of artifacts we are lacking to tell a complete story
- b. Consider the scope of collecting activities and mission prior to making any decisions or searching out additional artifacts
- c. Create working document to guide the future of collecting

Eliminate excessive duplicates, artifacts beyond repair, and those outside the scope of determined collecting span

5-10 Years

Staff, Collections Committee, Board



- a. Educate the public on the de-accession process through various news sources
- b. Once the collecting plan is complete, systematically remove artifacts that fit the above criteria from the permanent collection following best practices.





#### G. Goal

Design and construct a new Collections Storage Building sufficient for current and future needs while incorporating a conservation lab and possible open storage for public viewing

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Determine specifications, based upon scope		
and types of use, for a new Collections		Staff, Consultant,
storage facility and complete a preliminary		Board, Foundation,
design	1-5 Years	Consultant

- a. Examine collection composition and group artifacts into similar types of storage
- b. Consult experts on storage solutions and architects that design collection storage buildings
- c. Determine need for a conservation lab/work space, cold storage, offices, Restrooms, storage space, loading dock, etc.
- d. Develop building plans
- e. Create press materials

Identify the best location for proposed building Outside experts	3-5 Years	Staff, Consultant, Board, Foundation, Consultant
		Staff, Consultant,
Determine level of funding required by		Board, Foundation,
capital campaign and seek funding	3-10 Years	Consultant







#### H. Goal

Develop a Disaster Preparedness Plan

Work with professionals to determine the areas of the collection under greatest threat	
for natural or manmade disaster, and the	Staff, Collections
recommended actions for preserving the	Committee, Board,
collections. 1-5 Years	Consultant
Create procedural document and attend	Staff, Collections Committee, Board,
workshops as needed 2-5 Years	Consultant

- a. Use existing sources (i.e. Dplan) to create template document
- b. Examine disaster plans of other institutions
- c. Contact outside sources and gain support in the event of a disaster (i.e. freezer truck)
- d. Using 2009 MAP assessment and workshop knowledge, create Document

Develop emergency response kit and train
Staff, Consultant,
staff and volunteers
5-10 Years
Volunteers

- a. Kits will include those items necessary to triage storage and artifacts
- b. Training will include documentation, triage locations, handling, etc.
- c. Train staff and volunteers

#### I. Goal

Increase public accessibility to the collections

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Expand the number of computers with database access available to the public	1-3 Years	Staff, Board

- a. Requires more licenses for Past Perfect or another solution
- b. Requires installation of another computer using outside source





Make collection available online through

Past Perfect; resolve security issues

3-5 Years

Staff, Board

- a. Determine cost, set up and maintenance needs for online database
- b. Consult other museums using Past Perfect online
- Work with county IT, Firespring, and Past Perfect to complete set up

Offer "reading room" hours once per week

for hands on research

5-10 Years

Staff, Board

- Train any additional/volunteer staff how to search the database
- b. Train staff to identify when visitors need to have access to actual artifact or when the use of the database is preferable.
- c. Create press materials and have reading hours on a trial basis
- d. Consult museums/archives that offer similar opportunities to the public to determine the best policies and procedures.

With education staff, develop kits/CDs of primary materials for use in the classroom, both on-site and at public and private schools

5-10 Years

Staff, Board

- Determine primary source needs by consulting local educators, all grades
- b. Pull artifacts (2D/3D) from storage and photograph/scan those intended for use.
- Create CDs or use another digital format
- d. Consult local educators on an annual basis to make sure needs are still being met.





## MARKETING, PUBLICITY, IMAGE, AND EVENTS

#### 1. Goal

Increase awareness and "market reach" of Charlton Park to both a local market of up to 30 miles and a regional market of up to 60 miles in order to build local support by strengthening regional image.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Define "what" should be marketed; create an image that equals the mission of Charlton Park.	3 yrs. or less	Charlton Park Board
Shape strategy for marketing for millage increase; advertise accomplishments and direction for the future; direct strategy to recognize new-comers to Barry County.	3 yrs. or less	Charlton Park Board
Utilize traditional forms of media such as the newspaper, along with social media such as Facebook and Twitter, to reach different age-group segments of visitors.	3 yrs. or less	Staff
Utilize the "Pure Michigan" campaign and other state or county tourism efforts to increase visibility to both local residents and out-of-town vacationers.	3 yrs. or less	Staff
Increase staff for marketing efforts through student interns or hired staff.	3 yrs. or less	Charlton Park Board; Staff

## Key Challenges in this Category:

Reaching a new generation; lack of knowledge about the facility even among Barry County residents; successful millage campaign; sufficient staff to allow dedication to marketing tasks; funding for additional marketing efforts and staff.





#### 2. Goal

Design Parks Master Plan showing location of existing and proposed facilities in campus arrangement to maximize park topography as well as use and access to planned facilities.

## Action Steps Time Frame Agent/Champion

Prepare preliminary plan suitable for presentation to public and elected and appointed officials.

3 yrs. or less

Charlton Park Board; all Board Committees; Staff; Consultant







## 3. Goal

Identify and provide vibrant recreational facilities, structures, and events which enhance the recreational mission of Charlton Park, and assist in attracting visitors from a local and regional area.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Prepare and prioritize desired facilities and events utilizing Parks and Recreation Trends/ General Site Observation Report; determine funding and staffing		
levels necessary.	3 yrs. or less	Charlton Park Board; Facilities Comm.; Events Comm.; Staff
Explore possibility of outside vendors and providers.(amusement rides, ziplines, etc.)	3-5 yrs.	Charlton Park Board; Facilities Committee; Events Comm.; Staff
Update playground equipment and identify funding sources	3-5 yrs.	Charlton Park Board; Facilities Committee
Determine feasibility of campground facility; determine funding and staffing levels necessary.	5-10 yrs.	Charlton Park Board; Facilities Committee
Update playground equipment and identify funding sources	3-5 yrs.	Charlton Park Board; Facilities Committee
Design and construction phasing for those facilities not provided by outside vendors.	5-10 yrs.	Facilities Committee





# **Key Challenges for this Category:**

Funding sources-millage or Capital Campaign?; topography and location of buildings; increased maintenance and staffing required for expansion of facilities; liability issues.







## MAINTENANCE, SITE IMPROVEMENTS, ACCESSIBILITY

#### 1. Goal

Construct new Maintenance Facility sufficient for current and future maintenance needs for entire Charlton Park grounds and structures.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Complete design; determine funding source for new building; complete construction.	3 yrs. or less	Charlton Park Board; Facilities Comm.; Consultant

#### 2. Goal

Prioritize and complete improvements to all park facilities to insure accessibility for all users, as required or recommended by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and as embraced by Universal Design principles.

**Action Steps** Time Frame Agent/Champion

Utilize the recommendations of the Architectural Assessments and the Site Accessibility Assessment reports in order to set priorities for improvements in access; determine

funding source and construction schedule. 3-10 yrs. Charlton Park Board; Facilities Comm.;







Improve beach area by enlarging useable area, and providing ADA accessible water activities and playgrounds. Determine funding; explore grant funding opportunities.

3-5 yrs. Facilities Comm.;

Consultant

When planning for trail improvements, include portions designed for all users.

3-5 yrs.

Facilities Comm.; Consultant

#### 3. Goal

Provide both inclement weather and severe weather shelter for visitors to the park.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Include severe weather shelter areas as part of design in one or more newly constructed buildings.	5-10 yrs.	Charlton Park Board; Facilities Comm.;
		Consultant
Construct inclement weather shelter;		
determine location on park campus		
Master Plan and in coordination with		
other planned structures.	5-10 yrs.	Charlton Park Board;
Laborator - Artif		Facilities Comm.;
		Consultant







#### 4. Goal

Prepare trails plan that reflects anticipated users; provide trail access along Thornapple River; provide connections to regional trails such as the Paul Henry Thornapple Trail.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Inventory existing trail system; define the anticipated users of the trail.	3 yrs. or less	Charlton Park Board; Facilities Comm.; Staff
Determine improvements and expansions to the trail system; determine funding sources; work with consultant on design and		
construction.	3-10 yrs.	Charlton Park Board; Facilities Comm.; Staff; Consultant







#### 5. Goal

Increase number of staff trained for on-going maintenance and repair tasks; reduce the need for outside contractors over time.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Develop policy for determining when to invest in training rather		
than contracting for certain services.	3 yrs. or less	Charlton Park Board

#### 6. Goal

Establish schedule of repair and improvements especially as they relate to painting, smoke and fire detection, moisture barriers, and heating historic buildings.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
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3-10 yrs.

Utilizing the recommendations of the Architectural Assessments report, prioritize repairs and improvements. Determine funding needs and, working with the Charlton Park Foundation, determine availability of funds.

Facilities Comm.; Charlton Park Foundation

## Key Challenges in this Category:

Making sure historic structures are not compromised; expenses related to ADA accessibility; legal issues with ADA exemptions; expenses related to heating.







# Financing and Fundraising

## 1. Goal

Prepare for increased millage request necessary to improve facilities and operations beyond current operations and facilities.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Identify project goals for increased millage.	3 yrs. or less	Charlton Park Board; Facilities Comm.; Staff
Identify millage committee.	3 yrs. or less	Charlton Park Board



## 2. Goal

Prepare for and conduct Capital Campaign.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Identify projects and structures for completion.	3 yrs. or less	Charlton Park Board; Facilities Comm.; Staff
Seek assistance with Capital Campaign, consultant or otherwise.	3-5 yrs.	Charlton Park Board; Consultant





## 3. Goal

Continue seeking funding through grants.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Research available grants available through Federal, State, and local sources.	3-5 yrs.	Staff; Consultant
Apply for grants for projects that advance the stated goals and vision of Charlton Park.	3-5 yrs.	Staff; Consultant

#### 4. Goal

Provide space and rental opportunities for special events appropriate for the size, location, and mission of Charlton Park.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Evaluate special events for relevance to stated goals and mission of Charlton Park.	Annually	Charlton Park Board; Staff
Rotate special events based upon popularity and relation to mission		
of Charlton Park.	3-5 yrs.	Charlton Park Board; Staff







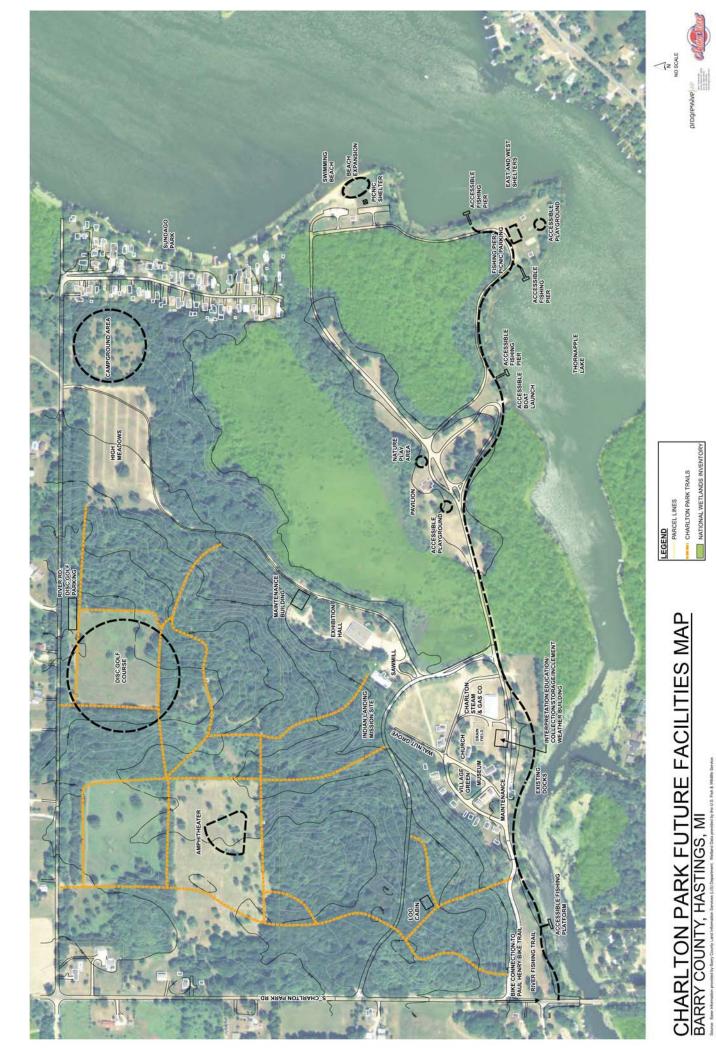
#### 5. Goal

Coordinate planning and projects with Charlton Park Foundation to help insure efficient expenditures and unity of purpose.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Meet annually to review progress on projects and to review future projects.	Annually	Charlton Park Board; Charlton Park Foundation

## Key Challenges for this Category:

Effectively providing rationale for a higher millage; clarifying to the public the reality of the limits of funding from the millage and the Charlton Park Foundation; effectively structuring the millage committee; limited staff time to write grants; determining the leaders in conducting a Capital Campaign.



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