

Catalpa Oaks



2008 Catalpa Oaks County Park Master Plan

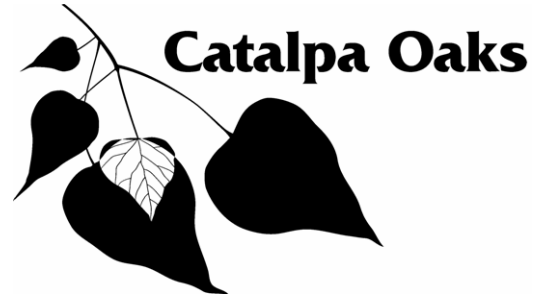


(Page intentionally left blank.)

Acknowledgments

Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission

Pecky D. Lewis, Jr. – *Chairman*
Richard Skarritt – *Vice Chairman*
J. David VanderVeen – *Secretary*
Hugh D. Crawford
Vincent Gregory
Gregory C. Jamian
Eileen T. Kowall
John P. McCulloch
Charles Palmer
Shelley G. Taub



Oakland County Parks and Recreation Administrative Management Team

Daniel J. Stencil – *Executive Officer*
Susan M. Wells – *Operations Administrator*
Frank J. Trionfi – *Services Administrator*
Joseph P. Figa, Jr. – *Chief of Design and Development*
Michael Thibodeau – *Chief of Golf Operations*
Clyde Herb – *Chief of Park Operations*
James Dunleavy – *Chief of Recreation*
Janet Pung – *Marketing and Communications Officer*

Prepared by the staff of Oakland County Parks and Recreation in cooperation with:

Oakland County Planning and Economic Development Services
Oakland County Facilities, Management and Operations
Oakland Trails Advisory Council
The City of Southfield and its Parks and Recreation Department

Oakland County Parks and Recreation

2800 Watkins Lake Road, Waterford, Michigan 48328
ph 248.858.0906 | fx 248.858.1683
<http://www.oakgov.com/parksrec>



Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission 1
- B. History of Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission 1
- C. OCPRC – A Regional Recreation Provider 2
- D. OCPRC – Special Initiatives 3
- E. Catalpa Oaks – The Twelfth County Park 4
- F. Catalpa Oaks County Park Master Plan 5

II. SITE ANALYSIS

- A. Catalpa Oaks County Park 7
- B. Park History and Recreational Management 8
- C. Site Conditions 13
- D. Recreational Opportunities 15
- E. Educational Outreach Opportunities 17
- F. Sustainability 18

III. MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT

- A. Public Participation/Public Input 21
- B. OCPRC Vision for Catalpa Oaks 28
- C. OCPRC Strategic Plan – Goals for Catalpa Oaks 29

III. CATALPA OAKS CONCEPT

A. Site	31
B. Park Concept	33
C. 4-Season Recreation	37
D. Changing Demographics	38
E. Ecological and Recreational Connectivity	39
F. Catalpa Oaks – Quality of Life	41

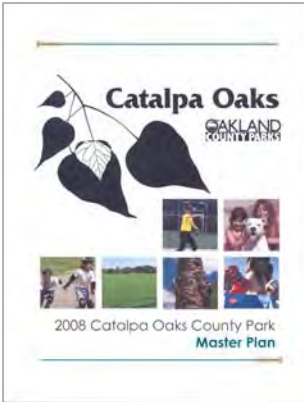
IV. MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

A. Project Costs and Priorities	43
B. Itemized Construction Cost Estimates	44

V. PARK OPERATIONS

A. Rules and Regulations	45
B. Maintenance	45
C. Scheduling and Programs	46

Executive Summary



Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission (OCPRC) acquired **Catalpa Oaks** as the twelfth Oakland County Park in May of 2007. Catalpa Oaks adds to the physical presence of OCPRC in the southeastern portion of the county, and will serve as a regional recreation facility with the ability to draw visitors from around the county. Catalpa Oaks will further OCPRC's **Urban Recreation Initiative**, which focuses on increasing recreational opportunities to the more urbanized portions of the county.

The Catalpa Oaks site presents many challenges in the creation, operation and maintenance of a regional recreation facility in an urban environment which includes limited open space for parkland development, the necessity of maximizing the value of smaller recreation properties and the relative remoteness of current park staff and equipment.



Despite such challenges, Catalpa Oaks offers numerous opportunities unique to its location and new to the county park system. Catalpa Oaks has a demonstrated history of drawing participants from seven municipalities to its soccer field complex; it is close to major transportation corridors; has underutilized parking facilities; and is well suited for hosting large arts and cultural events.



Catalpa Oaks is also well placed for integration into the county-wide Oak Routes trail network as a recreational hub and as an **Urban Trailhead** that promotes recreational connectivity and non-motorized transportation.

OCPRC has developed this master plan to establish a set of core principals for the development, operation and maintenance of Catalpa Oaks County Park, to document the process by which those principals were identified and to detail how Catalpa Oaks will further the mission of the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission.

The Catalpa Oaks Master Plan will guide future development, maintenance, operations and programming at the site by:

- ❑ Analyzing current site conditions
- ❑ Describing recreational opportunities offered by the site
- ❑ Identifying recreational features that will insure regional participation
- ❑ Listing those site amenities necessary to promote the year-round use of the park by county residents of all ages and abilities

The Master Plan makes reference to the visions and goals put forth in the 2008 OCPRC Strategic Plan and describes how Catalpa Oaks will further the mission of the Oakland County Parks as a regional recreation provider.



In keeping with recommendations of the strategic plan, the Master Plan also begins to address issues of sustainability and the development of a business plan for Catalpa Oaks. To this end staff has provided cost estimates for site improvements, identified potential mechanisms for cost recovery and have outlined the rules & regulations and program guidelines that will set the tone for Catalpa Oaks as an integral part of Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission.



Introduction

Oakland County Parks and Recreation

Nearly 90 full-time and 600 seasonal employees maintain Oakland County Parks' quality recreational facilities and programs that welcome more than 1.6 million visitors annually.

A. Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission (OCPRC)

Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission (OCPRC) is a nationally recognized recreational provider and an integral part of a comprehensive recreational system that has shaped quality of life in Oakland County for more than 40 years. Since its inception, OCPRC has strived to provide recreational facilities in a fiscally sound and environmentally responsible manner. As OCPRC approaches its golden anniversary, the Parks and Recreation Commission is reinforcing its commitment to providing equity of access, removing barriers to recreational opportunities, promoting environmental stewardship and creating mechanisms that will ensure the long term sustainability of the county park system.

B. History of Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission

The Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission was established in 1966 under *Public Act 261 of 1965*. The 10-member board, including the Drain Commissioner, Road Commissioner and the County Executive (or their appointed representatives) who serve by virtue of their elected offices, oversees the management of the 13 county-owned parks through the review and approval of budget expenditures, contract awards, program development, fee structures, and park policies.

The commission is also responsible for recommending the acquisition of new parkland, the acceptance of grant funding, and the entrance into use agreements, all of which require the approval of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners.

1976 – OCPRC opens the nation's second public Wave Pool at Waterford Oaks.

1960

1970

1980

1966 – Oakland County Board of Supervisors establishes the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission. Springfield Oaks County Park becomes the first County Park.

1974 – Mobile Recreation is established to provide programming to local communities.

1978 – OCPRC completes its first comprehensive Master Plan.

Funded by a one-quarter mill tax levy, the OCPRC has grown to manage more than 6,300 acres of open space which provides recreational opportunities to more than 1.6 million guests annually.

Park facilities feature campgrounds, picnic facilities, waterparks, golf courses, banquet facilities, lakes/beaches, recreational fields, dog parks, a championship BMX track, a refrigerated toboggan run, the Oakland County Fairgrounds and more than 58 miles of trails through scenic natural areas.

In order to offset the cost of park maintenance and operations, OCPRC institutes fees and charges at many park facilities including vehicle access permits at several park sites. Rates are established in comparison with regional, state and national recreation providers under the guidance of the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission.

C. OCPRC – A Regional Recreation Provider

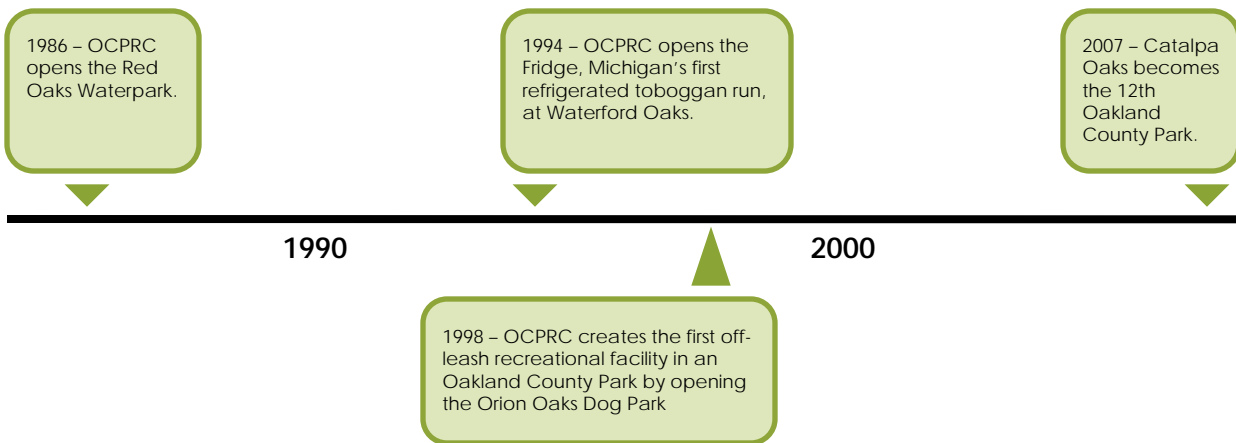
As a county park system, OCPRC focuses on providing **regional recreation facilities** that can service the residents of and guests to Oakland County.

The 2007 Oakland County Parks and Recreation Master Plan defines regional parks as *“parks that serve a broader area than community parks and focus on meeting the recreation needs of the region as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.”* Regional park facilities *“provide opportunities such as camping, swimming, boating, hiking, and golfing which are typically beyond the ability of the local municipality to provide.”*

Planning

To identify and respond to the recreational interests of Oakland County residents OCPRC conducts:

- Regular public meetings, forums, events and publications
- Annual special park initiatives
- 2-year countywide recreational interest survey
- 5-year system-wide recreational master plan
- 5-year strategic plan
- 10-year park master plans



The Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission acquired Catalpa Park in the City of Southfield to create **Catalpa Oaks County Park** because the facility had a demonstrated history of providing access to a recreational field complex that serviced seven local municipalities.

With appropriate site improvements, operation and maintenance, the park has the potential to create opportunities unique in Southeast Oakland County and could significantly expand recreational services provided by OCPRC.

D. OCPRC – Special Initiatives

The 2007 Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission Master Plan identifies several special initiatives OCPRC is undertaking to address changing recreational and demographic trends and to continue providing the diversity and quality of recreational opportunities residents of Oakland County have come to expect. These initiatives include stewardship, Green Infrastructure Planning, water resources, trails and urban recreation.

OCPRC staff has considered these initiatives in the development of the **Catalpa Oaks Master Plan** and in the prescription of future park operations, maintenance and programs.

2007 Park Initiatives

To improve upon the recreational resources provided, OCPRC has implemented several special initiatives to address certain issues and needs:

Natural Resources Stewardship Program

The system-wide program insures stewardship of park resources through the appropriate management of park facilities and natural areas.

Green Infrastructure Planning

The county-wide visioning project, led by Oakland County Planning and Economic Development Services, works with local stakeholders to identify an interconnected system of green spaces that preserve environmental quality in Oakland County communities.

Water Resource Management

The system-wide program ensures appropriate management of park water resources including activities that promote compliance with state and federal storm water regulations.

Trail Connectivity

The effort to promote the creation and use of the county-wide trail network *Oak Routes*.

Urban Recreation Initiative

The program to promote recreational opportunities in urbanized and rapidly urbanizing areas of Oakland County.

E. Catalpa Oaks – The Twelfth County Park

Located in the City of Southfield, in the highly urbanized southeastern portion of Oakland County, Catalpa Park was brought under the management of the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission in May 2007.

The 25-acre site has been managed by the City of Southfield since 1978. The park features a baseball and a softball diamond as well as a complex of six soccer fields used extensively by leagues in Southfield and the surrounding communities.

As part of the management transfer agreement, Southfield Parks and Recreation continued to maintain the grounds through the start of Fiscal Year 2008 (FY2008).



▲ Catalpa Oaks Park Sign – Catalpa road access

OCPRC staff began the process of developing a master plan for Catalpa Oaks in June of 2007.

In October of that year, OCPRC assumed responsibility for grounds maintenance and recreational programming for the park.



▲ Oakland County Executive – L. Brooks Patterson speaking on the role of parks during the Catalpa Oaks Grand Opening Celebration



▲ Oakland County Board of Commissioners attendees at the Catalpa Oaks Grand Opening Event



▲ Recognition of the Director of Southfield Parks and Recreation – _____ and the Mayor of the City of Southfield - _____ by OCPRC Executive Director – Dan Stencil.

Grand Opening

On August 16, 2007 OCPR held a Grand Opening to dedicate Catalpa Oaks as the twelfth Oakland County Park.

The celebration featured county officials, OCPRC staff, representatives of local municipalities and more than two hundred school children who enjoyed playing on OCPR's mobile recreation units.

Vision for the Master Plan Process

The vision for the **Catalpa Oaks County Park Master Plan** is the establishment of a set of core design principles that will guide the development, operation and maintenance of Catalpa Oaks County Park for the next 10 years in order to ensure its sustainability and continued use as a regional recreation facility.

F. Catalpa Oaks County Park Master Plan

The intent of the master plan development process is to systematically investigate site conditions, describe local and regional context, seek public input, identify potential user groups, describe recreational opportunities and to propose design, operational and management plans that ensure the most appropriate use of park facilities in realizing the goals of the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission.

In the development of park master plans, OCPRC staff work through the following steps:

1. Site analysis

Park staff, recreational partners and planning consultants (if contracted) utilize aerial photos, demographics, transportation statistics, development trends and GIS mapping data together with site visits to document and interpret the condition of the park and the context in which it functions as part of the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission system.

2. Local information gathering – Public Forum

Park staff, recreational partners and planning consultants (if contracted) host a public gathering at the park site to present the results of the Site Analysis, provide information on OCPRC and its mission as a regional recreation provider and utilize engaging, interactive exercises to solicit local opinions on the operation of a county park as part of their community.

3. Concept development

Park staff utilize the information gathered through the site analysis and public forum to draft a concept for the development, operation and maintenance of the park over the next 10 years.

4. Policy review and Staff revisions

Park staff evaluate the conceptual master plan in light of OCPR's current five year recreational master plan and the visions and goals stated in the current 10-year strategic plan.

5. Concept review by Parks Commission

Park staff provide the revised conceptual master plan to the OCPR Commission for its consideration prior to a 30-day public comment period.

6. 30-Day public comment period

After the OCPRC board has commented on proposed plan, copies of the draft are made available for public review and comment for a period of 30 days. Prints are available for public review at OCPRC's administrative office in Waterford and electronic copies are available on the OCPRC website at www.oakgov.com/parksrec

7. Staff revisions

Park staff document all of the comments received during the public comment period, make appropriate modifications and prepare a synopsis for consideration by the Parks and Recreation Commission at a public hearing for the plan's formal adoption.

8. Parks Commission Review/Public Hearing

During a regularly scheduled meeting of the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission, public comment on the master plan is received during an public hearing. The Commission also receives a synopsis of the 30-day review period from park staff along a final revised master plan and an explanation of how public comment has been addressed in the final version of the plan.

9. Master Plan Adoption

If the Parks and Recreation Commission contends staff has appropriately addressed public comment and the revisions suggested by the Commission itself, the board will vote to adopt the plan as a guiding document.

These nine standard components of the master planning process allow park staff to:

- Become familiar with the park, its history and neighborhood context
- Consider the local and regional recreational opportunities provided by Catalpa Park and to envision its continued value as a county park
- Identify public and private partnerships that could continue to play an important role in providing recreational opportunities at the park
- Receive the direct input of local residents, regional constituents and representatives of a variety of recreational groups



Site Analysis

Site Analysis

The Site Analysis phase of the development of the **Catalpa Oaks County Park Master Plan** included the documentation and interpretation of the historical, social and physical characteristics of the park and the surrounding area.

Information was cataloged for consideration in the development of conceptual designs and for use in public communication material.

A. Catalpa Oaks County Park

Located adjacent to the Oakland County Health Department, the park is bounded by residential roads to the north and south (Catalpa and San Quentin), residential development to the west and a major connector road (Greenfield) to the East.

► Catalpa Oaks Location Map



Previously operated by the City of Southfield, the 25-acre site consists of a relatively level sports complex surrounded by a gently undulating earthen berm that rises as much as 10 feet above the surface of the recreational fields.

The park provides local green space while accommodating the need for sports fields from several nearby municipalities.



B. Park History and Recreational Management

In 1964, the Oakland County Board of Supervisors purchased a 30-acre parcel in the City of Southfield from the Berkley School District to provide opportunities for the construction of county-owned facilities. In 1965, Oakland County utilized approximately 7-acres of the site, at the corner of Catalpa and Greenfield Roads to construct a building, parking lot and landscaped grounds for the Oakland County Health Department – Southfield Office. That same year Oakland County entered into a five-year lease with the Southfield Little League for use of 22 acres of the site and the construction of baseball fields at the western portion of the property.



◀ 1963 Aerial Photo with current park boundary overlay that indicates agricultural use of the property

1964 – Oakland County purchases approximately 30 acres at the corner of Catalpa and Greenfield roads from the Berkley School District for the expansion of county services.

1973 – Oakland County renews lease with the Southfield Little League for an additional five years.

1960

1965

1970

1965 – Oakland County enters into a five year lease with the Southfield Little League; baseball diamonds are constructed; Oakland County begins construction on the Southfield Office of the Oakland County Health Department.

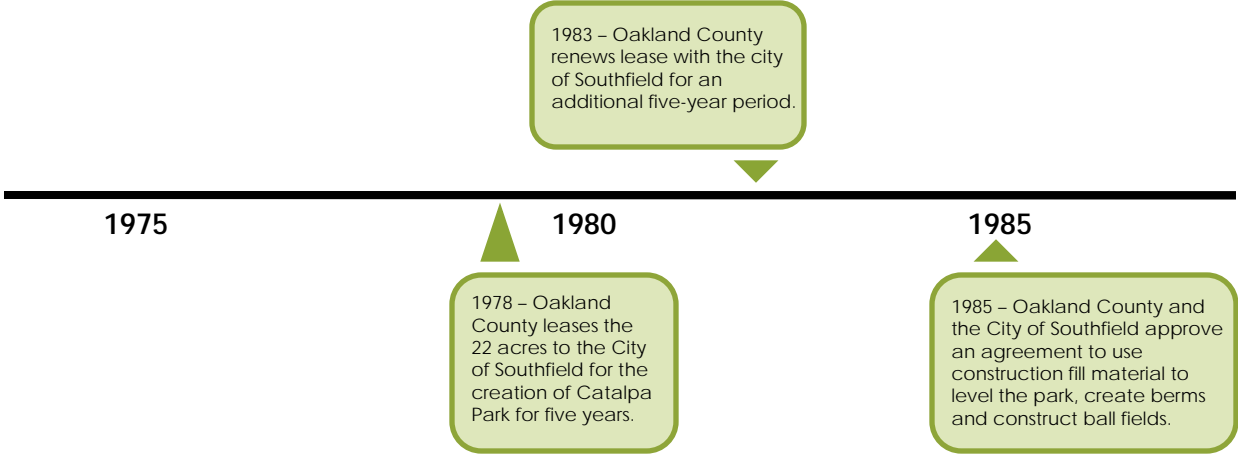
Accounts from local residents indicate that even before its acquisition by Oakland County, the field on Catalpa Road was being used by local residents for recreation including biking and ballgames. Leases with the Southfield Little League and later with the City of Southfield formalized the use of the Catalpa property for field sports.

In 1978 the City of Southfield negotiated an agreement with Oakland County to manage 25 acres of the property as a city park. The City of Southfield Parks and Recreation Department provided two baseball diamonds, a parking area and several acres of open lawn at Catalpa Park for city residents.



◀ 1974 Aerial Photo with current park boundary overlay indicating the Southfield Little League ball fields and parking lot in proximity to the Oakland County Health Department

In 1985, the City of Southfield and the Oakland County Board of Commissioners entered into an agreement with a contractor to utilize Catalpa Park as a repository for soil resulting from the excavation of the nearby I-696 interchange. As part of the bargain, the fill material was used to level the site and improve its use for sports fields.



On three sides of the park the fill was also used to create a buffer between the local neighborhood and the games that would be played at the park. The City of Southfield provided \$250,000 to pay for the landscaping of the resulting berm and construction of two ball diamonds and six soccer fields.



◀ 1990 Aerial Photo with current park boundary overlay indicating the expanded parking, reorientation of the ball diamonds and the construction of six soccer fields

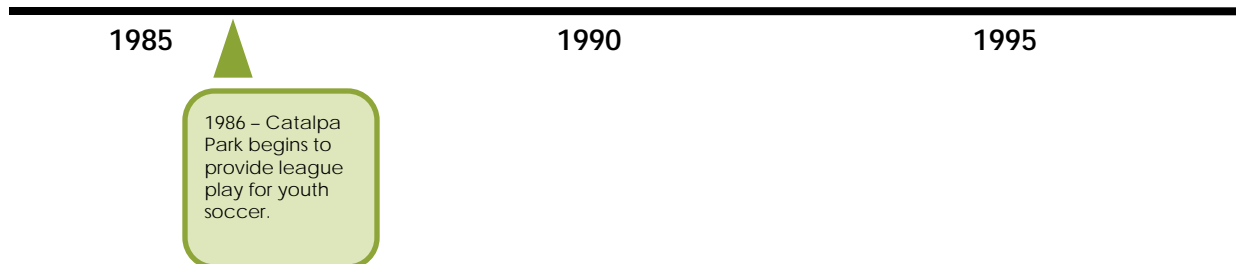
The City of Southfield Parks and Recreation Department operated and maintained Catalpa Park as a complex for field sports and a passive recreation park for local residents.

Shortly after the construction of the soccer fields, Catalpa Park became an important facility for supporting youth leagues in the surrounding communities.



In 2006, the City of Southfield petitioned the Oakland County Board of Commissioners to consider the management of Catalpa Park as part of the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission system.

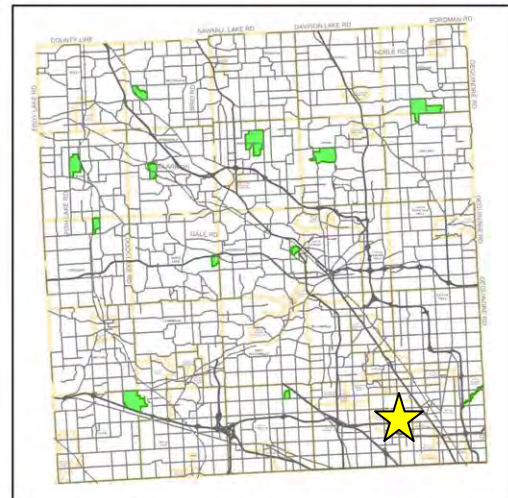
1988 - Oakland County establishes a 10-year lease extension with the City of Southfield for the operation of Catalpa Park.





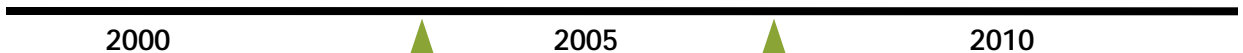
▲ 2002 True Color Aerial Photo with current park boundary overlay indicating the popularity of youth soccer at Catalpa Park

As Catalpa Park had a demonstrated history of providing recreational opportunities to the youth of several communities, in 2007 the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission negotiated an agreement with the County Executive to take over management of Catalpa Park under its new name: **Catalpa Oaks County Park.**



1998 – Catalpa Park lease is extended for an additional five years.

2006 – Oakland County government is asked to establish the Catalpa property as a county park.



2000

2005

2010

2003 – Catalpa Park lease is extended for a two-year period

2007 – The Oakland County Board of Commissioners, the Office of the Oakland County Executive and the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission reach an agreement to establish Catalpa as the 12th Oakland County Park.

The transfer of park operations and maintenance between the City of Southfield Parks and Recreation and OCPRC occurred over a five-month period that was completed at the beginning of fiscal year 2008 (October 1, 2007).

During that time, park staff was able to glean information on the care of the park grounds from city staff that had managed the park for the past 19 years.

Financial reports, scheduling details for sports leagues, and information on the turf/soil conditions and mowing was particularly helpful.

OCPRC staff undertook the development of a master plan for Catalpa Oaks in June 2007.

OCPR staff from Glen Oaks Golf Course began park maintenance in fall 2007.

Landscape management contracts will be utilized during the first few years of operation as a county park.

Field scheduling will be a cooperative effort between OCPR staff, Southfield Parks and Recreation and local soccer organizations.



▲ Swale and Turf Drain



▲ Ball Diamond Dugout



▲ Vegetation Assessment



▲ Catalpa Oaks Entrance Sign

Passive Recreation at Catalpa Oaks

Dog walking is one of the most popular passive recreational activities at the site, according to local residents, with sidewalk access from north, south and west.

Other recreational activities taking place at the site include:

- Walking
- Running
- Picnicking
- Cross-country skiing
- Sledding

C. Site Conditions

The park landscape is dominated by sports fields encircled by elevated berms that create a visual barrier and sound buffer. The relatively level grading of the sports fields, limited number of turf drains and the predominance of compacted fill has produced poorly drained areas and challenging growing conditions.

A 780' gravel parking lot can accommodate more than 150 cars but a lack of striping decreases parking efficiency.

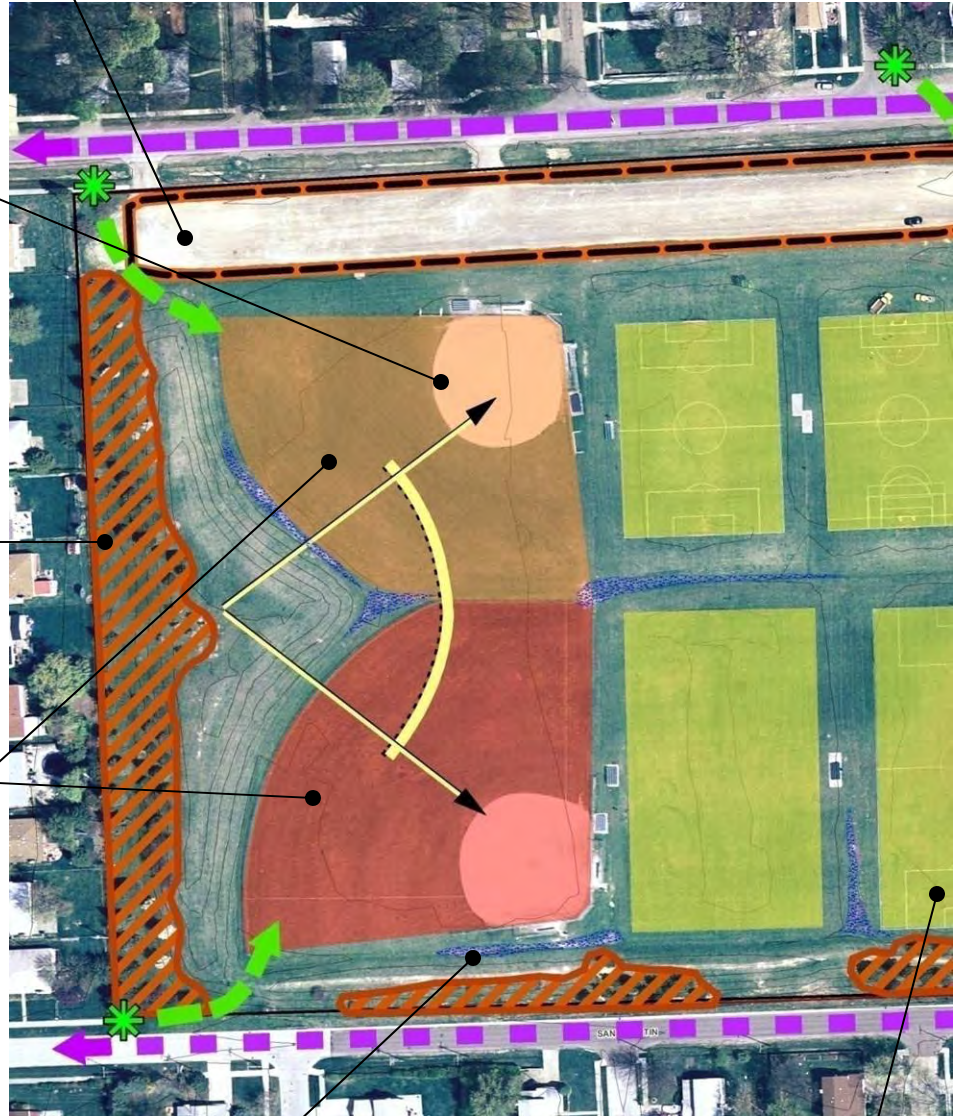
Pitchers mounds and base distances currently allow for one field to be used for baseball and the other for softball.

Evergreen and flowering tree plantings create important visual buffers.

Both ball diamonds have back stops, baseline fencing and modest seating. The southern diamond also has a fenced outfield.

The sports fields are separated by shallow swales which direct surface run off to a series of turf drains.

The compacted fill material, from which the fields have been built, drains poorly creating muddy conditions for sports activities during rain events.



There are no buildings on the park site to accommodate equipment storage, no potable water taps or permanent restroom facilities. Portable toilets are available, although only during large recreational events. The close proximity to the Health Department and residential neighborhoods could provide relatively easy access to utility infrastructure.

The site does provide signed accessible parking spaces but does not provide accessible routes to the sports fields, viewing areas or portable bleachers.

Maintaining turf on the sports fields is extremely difficult due to poorly drained heavy soils and the lack of irrigation. Yearly field rotations to create resting phases have been necessary to preserve turf cover.



Site Analysis - Key

- Vegetative Buffers
- Scenic Views
- Drainage Issues
- Vehicular Routes
- Pedestrian Access
- Existing Parking
- Soccer Fields
- Softball Field
- Baseball Field

2006 Color Aerial

Limited seating is provided at the site through portable bleachers, owned by the City of Southfield, which can be oriented to either the ball diamonds or the soccer fields.

Due to its limited size and focus on field sports, Catalpa Oaks could not support the construction and operation of a playground that would have a regional draw.

The provision of a playground at Catalpa Oaks could, however, enhance the use of the park as a regional field sports complex by families and youth league participants.

Seasonal recreation amenities that could be augmented at the site would include sledding on the perimeter berm, cross-country skiing and even ice skating (if surface quality and site control issues can be sufficiently addressed).

The 25-acre site could also accommodate the addition of 1.2 miles of compacted aggregate or paved trails including sidewalks and a perimeter loop on the top of the berm. Multi-use accessible park trails could promote the use of Catalpa Oaks as an Oak Routes trailhead while providing opportunities for Cross-country skiing, running, walking and in-line skating (if paved).

D. Recreational Opportunities

As OCPRC considers recreational opportunities that could be created at Catalpa Oaks, it is important to note the difference between regional attractions at recreational facilities and site amenities that can enhance their use.



Restrooms, potable water, irrigation and the possible addition of concessions could significantly enhance Catalpa Oaks as a regional soccer complex. Re-grading to promote universal accessibility and improve drainage would further enhance the quality of the facility and create opportunities for additional youth soccer fields and the incorporation of alternative field sports such as cricket, bocce, lawn bowling and sand volleyball.



The location of Catalpa Oaks adjacent to urban centers and major transportation conduits, together with convenient parking and expansive open fields, creates significant opportunities for the park to serve as a venue for artistic performances.

OCPRC's Mobile Stage could easily be located at the site with perimeter berms providing amphitheater-like seating.

Tables and benches with chessboard surfaces or concrete slabs with embossed marble rings are additional site amenities that could add low impact active recreational opportunities to enhance the use of Catalpa Oaks as a regional recreation facility.

Green Infrastructure

Oakland County's Green Infrastructure Planning process identifies habitat "hubs", "links" and "corridors" that are important to the sustainability of Oakland County's environmental quality and ecological diversity.

The identification and stewardship of Oakland County's Green Infrastructure is essential to maintaining the quality of life and economic development that Oakland County residents enjoy.

E. Educational Outreach Opportunities

OCPRC's Educational Outreach has traditionally focused on environmental education and interpretation of rural natural areas. Catalpa Oaks offers opportunities to expand current outreach programs to include the function of Green Infrastructure and naturalized spaces in urban environments.



▲ Natural Resources Interpretive Signage at Independence Oaks County Park

Interpretive signage, audio tours (available on-line) and educational outreach events could be provided to emphasize the role of parks in:

- ❑ *Creating habitat*
- ❑ *Providing ecological connectivity*
- ❑ *Mitigating the effects of urban development*

Catalpa Oaks offers significant opportunities to demonstrate environmentally sustainable practices including the incorporation of stormwater management into park planning, low impact landscape/architectural design and the use of green materials.



▲ Waterford Oaks Parking Lot Improvements (Scheduled for Fall 2008)
Funded in part through a Clean Michigan Initiative Grant

Educational opportunities should be included as scope items in future development projects and considered for their potential role in fundraising development for capital improvements.

F. Sustainability

The implementation of environmentally sustainable practices not only could provide educational opportunities, but could also improve the overall sustainability of Catalpa Oaks by reducing operational and maintenance costs and preventing the degradation of park resources.

For this reason, Best Management Practices (BMPs) such as stormwater reclamation, alternative energy production, energy conservation, low impact design, the use of “green” materials and native landscapes should be evaluated in the development, operation and maintenance of recreational facilities at Catalpa Oaks.



▲ Red Oaks Golf Course Vegetative Swales (Stormwater BMPs)

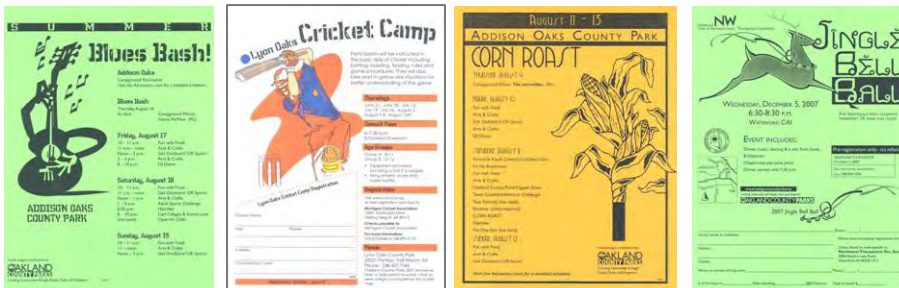
As OCPRC manages Catalpa Oaks, staff will emphasize fiscal sustainability by considering operational and maintenance cost reductions through consolidation (efficiency of scale), low-maintenance landscapes and architectural designs, cost sharing arrangements, volunteer/community service programs and the implementation of green practices.

Staff will also consider methods of cost recovery including the implementation of program fees, equipment/facility rental, vehicular access permits, and the pursuit of philanthropic support, grants and corporate sponsorship.

Together with statistics on the services provided by the park, such initiatives would constitute a large part of a business plan for Catalpa Oaks.



▲ 2007 Vehicle Permit Pass



▲ Examples of 2007 Program Flyers

To ensure the social sustainability of Catalpa Oaks as a regional recreation facility it is necessary to **determine and communicate the value of the park** to the local community and county residents.

The evaluation of park resources starts by using the master plan process to ensure there is a good fit between the park facility and the recreational opportunities it provides (or could provide). The Catalpa Oaks master plan process identifies the role of the park facility in addressing the needs of various recreational groups and incorporates local and regional input through a public forum and the public review/comment period.

County-wide interest surveys continue to help determine public attitudes toward recreation in Oakland County and public perceptions of OCPRC facilities as recreational attractions. These results, when applied to the existing and proposed facilities at Catalpa Oaks, can suggest the current recreational value of the park to county residents as well as the potential value of the park if modifications to the facility were implemented.

Targeted educational and marketing programs based on the biannual survey results will be necessary to:

- ❑ Identify current demands for recreational services in Oakland County
- ❑ Acknowledge the unique perspectives on recreation held by county residents, public officials and the business community
- ❑ Define the role of OCPRC as a regional recreation provider and a significant contributor to recreational opportunities in Oakland County
- ❑ Describe the value of each county park in enhancing Oakland County's quality of life and economic development opportunities

In order to communicate the value of Catalpa Oaks as a County Park, promotional efforts will need to identify the recreational features that have a regional draw and the site amenities that make the park a valuable part of the local community.



▲ Visitors participating in Public Forum

In order to determine the effectiveness of communication programs and the role of Catalpa Oaks in furthering OCPRC's vision and goals, it is necessary to **track park patronage** and **public perception**. Information, gathered in the form of visitor counts, participation lists and user surveys will be utilized by park staff to fine tune the management of Catalpa Oaks and adjust future development efforts.



▲ Example of OCPR context based thematic elements

Implementing designs that are sensitive to the park's place within a **local and regional context** is also important in ensuring the viability of Catalpa Oaks. By being cognizant of factors that have contributed to and continue to influence the character of the park site, it is possible to design, plan and operate the park in a manner that integrates it into the local community while communicating the park's role as part of a larger recreational system.

Planning patterns, artistic trends, architectural features and historical events should all be considered in the development of park facilities. By doing so, OCPRC will be able to establish connections with the local community and develop marketable thematic elements while maintaining essential brand identity of the county parks.

Efforts to integrate context-based marketing and branding into the design, operation and maintenance of Catalpa Oaks will in turn support OCPRC programs that identify the role of recreation in defining an economically and socially vibrant community.



Master Plan Development

Survey Methodology:

- ❑ Questions on full range of usage, customer satisfaction, needs, unmet needs, and priorities
- ❑ Administered by mail and phone
- ❑ Goal of 600 completed surveys.
- ❑ Actually completed 607 surveys. Results have 95% level of confidence with margin of error of +/-4.0%

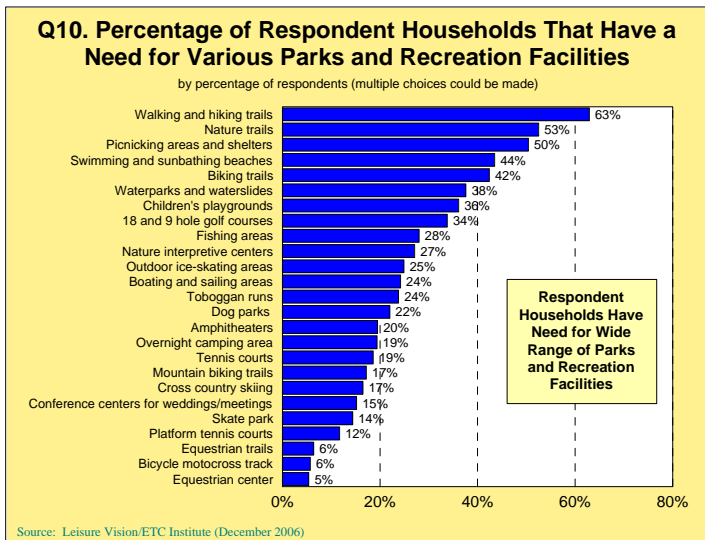
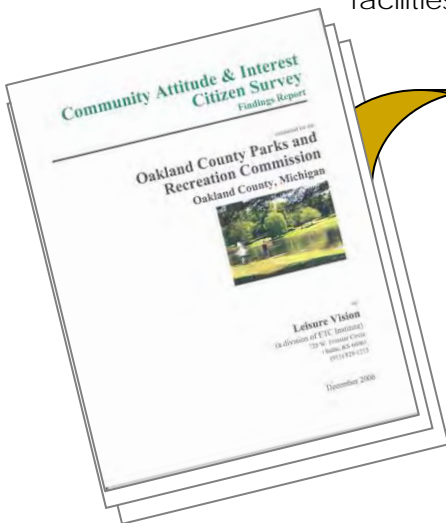
A. Public Participation/Public Input

Countywide public interest survey results

In order to identify the recreational needs of the residents of Oakland County, OCPR conducts a biannual community attitude and interest survey. The results of these surveys are incorporated into park planning, the development of the park systems 5-year recreational master plan and the development of a 10-year strategic plan. In the fall of 2006, over 600 residents were randomly surveyed about park usage, un-met needs, customer satisfaction and priorities.

Survey results indicate:

- The need for additional trail development
- An acknowledgement of the health, safety and quality of life benefits of parks
- An interest in open space acquisition
- An emphasis on the importance of safe, well maintained park facilities



Respondent Households Have Need for Wide Range of Parks and Recreation Facilities

2007 Oakland County Parks and Recreation Master Plan

OCPD updates its systemwide recreational master plan every five years in order to clarify its position as a regional recreation provider and to maintain eligibility for state grants. The updated plan identifies changes in local and regional demographics, emphasizes state and national recreational trends and describes current park facilities as part of a larger network of recreation providers. The recreational master plan also identifies the recreational initiatives and strategic goals that will enable OCPD to better serve the residents of Oakland County.

During the development of the 2007 update, consumer input was gathered at a public Vision Fair advertised in newspaper and on-line notices.

This input was incorporated into the proposed plan which was evaluated by the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission and the general public during a 30-day public comment period (electronic copies were available on-line at www.oakgov.com/parksrec and hard copies were available for review at OCPD's administrative office – 2800 Watkins Lake Rd, Waterford).



The public comment phase of the recreational master plan confirmed the results of the 2006 countywide interest survey including the importance of trail access, open space preservation and maintaining high quality park facilities.

Public Forum Event

On July 19th, 2007 shortly after the operational transfer of the Catalpa property, OCPD staff held a Public Forum at the park site to gather local input on the management of Catalpa Oaks as a county park and the development of the park's first master plan.

Under a large tent from OCPD's mobile recreation unit, staff set up a series of display boards to introduce participants to the Oakland County Parks and Recreation system, to describe the potential role of Catalpa Oaks as a regional recreation facility and to present the results of the Catalpa Park site analysis.

Staff provided information on the Catalpa Oaks park site including:

- ❑ Local and regional context
- ❑ Natural resources management and preservation
- ❑ Passive/Active recreation opportunities
- ❑ Design alternatives and management priorities

Staff introduce the Oakland County Parks and Recreation system by providing information on:

- ❑ Maintaining high quality regional **Facilities and Programs**
- ❑ Providing **Exceptional Services**
- ❑ The stewardship of **Natural Resources**
- ❑ Enhancing **Communications** with businesses and agencies
- ❑ Insuring the **Fiscal Sustainability** of the county park system

Despite a brief windstorm the Forum was well attended. Fifty-nine visitors were willing to sign-in at the entry table and to provide their contact information. A number of local and county officials also stopped by to participate and a many families with young children were able to browse displays between trips through OCPR's Mobile Recreation inflatable units.

1. What do you like best about the park? (items to respond to may include: open character of the site, recreation fields, landscaping, others)

- Soccer fields 18
- Open character of the site 17
- Baseball 13
- Landscaping/berms/hills 13
- Location 9
- Cleanliness 7
- Everything 4
- Dog walking 3
- Basketball 2
- Few rules 1
- Safety 1

2. What do you like least about the park? (items to respond to may include: open character of the site, lack of park amenities, lack of wildlife habitat, others)

- No restrooms 17
- No site amenities 12
- Parking conditions 11
- Field conditions 10
- Lack of other sports opportunities 5
- No play facilities 5
- No trails or paths 4
- No shelters 4
- Uncontrolled use by dogs (poop) 2
- Other 2
- Lighting 1
- Wildlife opportunities 1

Of the 59 participants, 47 provided written responses to survey questions



Attendees were asked to sign-in, provide their contact information and to complete a one-page survey regarding their use and impressions of the Catalpa site (results summarized below).



Information was provided in the form of:

- Tabletop displays
- Promotional videos
- Staff presentations
- Interactive model building demonstration

3. The Master Plan will identify existing park features and possible new features. What features would you like to see that currently do not exist at the park, or are existing but not in sufficient quality & quantity? (items to consider may winter activities, picnic facilities, benches, interpretive signage/displays, soccer fields, baseball fields, softball fields, cricket field, others)

- Restrooms 13
- Field irrigation/improve drainage 12
- Trails 10
- Picnic tables 9
- Play facilities 9
- Amenities 5
- More baseball fields 5
- Benches/bleachers 5
- Improved parking 5
- Volleyball 5
- Other 3
- Shelter 3
- Court games 2
- Cricket 2
- Dog Park 1

4. How many times each year do you visit the park?

- 165+ 15
- 20 to 40 times 13
- 6 to 10 times 8
- 1 to 3 times 5

5. Other comments: provide a description of any of anything else you feel is important in the development of the master plan.

- Restrooms 4
- Site amenities 3
- Secure park at night 3
- Public safety 3
- Kid friendly recreation 3
- Continue dog access 3
- Cleanliness 2
- Maintain soccer 2
- More baseball 2
- First aide station 1
- Improve parking 1
- Maintain integrity 1
- Multi use 1
- Picnic shelter 1
- Track 1

Staff recorded public participation through:

- Pin boards
- Survey questionnaires
- Photographs (of model designs and visitor interactions)
- Staff notes



It was interesting to hear complaints by local community members regarding the inability to access the sports fields due to league scheduling while at the same time receiving complaints by soccer representatives that non-league play was adding to field deterioration.

New recreational opportunities or site amenities seemed to generate the most excitement whereas accommodating those features into the existing layout (and emphasis on field sports) created the most disagreement between model building participants.

There was universal acknowledgment of the challenges of maintaining turf without irrigation and proper drainage.



▲ Visitor participating in Public Forum

Park staff saw the forum as an opportunity to not only introduce the local community to the park system but also to feature agency partners and recreational initiatives that influence the services provided by OCPR.

Suggestions for modified operations or maintenance:

- Improve parking efficiency by modifying the layout
- Share parking with the Health Department
- Improve convenience of field scheduling
- Create open blocks for field use by non-league play
- Improve field conditions through the addition of irrigation and better maintenance



◀ Visitors participating in Public Forum

Representatives of Oakland County Planning and Economic Development Services (OCPEDS), the Office of the Oakland County Drain Commissioner (OCDC) and the Oakland Trails Advisory Council (OTAC) presented information on the countywide efforts to promote ecological connectivity, stormwater management and the interconnected trail network *Oak Routes*. Specific reference to the role Catalpa Oaks would play in these efforts was presented and participant comments were noted.

In general, the public forum confirmed the importance of continuing to provide a field sports complex at Catalpa Oaks but it also emphasized that if such a complex is going to be valued as a regional recreation feature, park infrastructure must be improved and maintained to ensure a safe and enjoyable park visit.

The forum also emphasized the importance of considering alternative recreation/site amenities that could be incorporated into the park's layout in order to broaden its use, to prepare for changing recreational trends and to create a richer recreational experience for visitors to the park (whether they are members of the local community or drawn to the regional field sports complex).

Staff was particularly impressed at the ideas generated by the participants of the model building station.

Overlapping sports fields, bike racks, water features/native vegetation buffers, hill endurance training, BBQ grills and picnic pavilions were all suggestions identified as recreational opportunities in the site analysis.

The public forum also provided an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the potential social implications of park planning decisions.

Strong opinions were expressed over such site amenities as:

- Basketball
- Sand volleyball
- Vegetation
- Trails
- Lighting
- Staffed recreational centers
- Fencing
- Restrooms and Drinking Fountains

The Public forum demonstrated to staff the importance of clearly defining the role of Catalpa Oaks as a county park and a provider of regional recreational opportunities. Staff was also made aware of potential for conflicts over the use of the site, particularly related to perceptions of entitlement that have developed with past management practices and the payment of sports user fees.



▲ Visitors participating in Public Forum

B. OCPRC Vision for Catalpa Oaks as Regional Recreation Facility

OCPR, with the help of planning consultants, considered the results of countywide surveys and interviews with recreational providers, community stakeholders, recreational use groups and political leaders to develop a strategic plan that will guide the park system over the next ten years. In this document, the OCPR Commission has set forth the vision and mission of the Oakland County Parks as a world class recreational provider.

OCPR creates a range of recreational experiences for the county's 1.2 million residents by striving to create facilities centered around features that have regional draw while at the same time providing site amenities that encourage year round use by all age groups.

Catalpa Oaks was acquired by OCPR, in part, because the park already had a demonstrated history of an operational soccer complex that drew participation from the five surrounding municipalities.

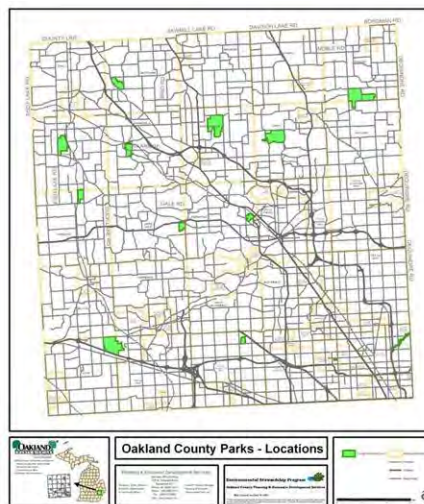
The OCPR Commissioners saw that as a county park, Catalpa Oaks could enhance the regional draw of the sports complex, through facility improvements such as restrooms and improved parking and the introduction of additional field sports including cricket.

As part of the OCPR system, Catalpa Oaks provides a significant opportunity to increase access to recreational programs and facilities in Southeast Oakland County.

Oakland County Parks are recreational facilities that focus on features that have regional draw and site amenities that encourage year round use by all age groups.

In the master planning of Catalpa Oaks, OCPR has described the process by which the recreational potential of the site was evaluated.

OCPR has listed the modifications required to enhance the regional use of the park and has provided a rationale for the proposed site amenities that will enable Catalpa Oaks to address the goals of OCPR's 2008 Strategic Plan.



▲ Oakland County Park locations

Oakland County
Parks & Recreation
Vision Statement

Oakland County Parks strives to be recognized and viewed by citizens as a *World Class* park system that:

- ❑ Meets the standards for high quality parks, natural areas and open spaces;
- ❑ Provides safe, clean, accessible, and affordable parks, trails, recreational facilities and services; that creates community through people, parks, and programs;
- ❑ Connects the community to a variety of outdoor recreation experiences while supporting economic development, connectivity of residents, and health and wellness in a financially sustainable system.

To ensure the success of Catalpa Oaks as part of the Oakland County Parks and Recreation system it will be necessary to focus on the regional opportunities provided by the park and to communicate the value of the park to all of the county residents.

In order to reach a countywide audience it will be critical to establish branding that defines and emphasizes the character of Catalpa Oaks.



C. OCPRC Strategic Plan – Goals for Catalpa Oaks

In the development of its strategic plan, OCPR and its planning consultants distilled the public input into four guiding visions and established four corresponding goals to establish a course toward the operation of a sustainable, world class park system.

The development, operation and management of Catalpa Oaks has to be considered in light of each of these principles.

Land: Catalpa Oaks was acquired and will be maintained to promote equity of access to recreational opportunities to the residents of Oakland County while promoting the role of parks in the preservation of greenspace in a rapidly developing area of the state.

In order to create a range of recreational experiences for park guests, Catalpa Oaks will feature a regional field sports complex and a variety of site amenities that are linked to a large recreational system through the Oak Routes trail network.

Recreation Facilities: Catalpa Oaks will be developed and maintained to maximize its value as a regional provider of active and passive recreation.

In order to promote healthy lifestyles and to reinforce the role of recreation in shaping the quality of life in Oakland County, OCPR will promote Catalpa Oaks as a gateway to urban recreation and as a means of advertising the larger county park system to residents of southeast Oakland County.

Community Vision for Land:

To acquire, improve and maintain quality parks that support the community's values for the preservation of natural areas and open spaces, equity of access, and the natural heritage of Oakland County

Goal:

Acquire, maintain and improve park land for active and passive recreation to provide a variety of park experiences and to meet a land acreage goal of an additional 800 acres in the next ten years, contingent upon full funding.

Community Vision for Recreation Facilities:

To develop and maintain year round recreation facilities that support passive and active recreation pursuits for people of all ages

Goal:

Upgrade existing recreation facilities and add additional recreation facilities and amenities that energize the community to want to live, work, and play in Oakland County.

Community Vision for Recreation Programs & Services:

To develop the following core recreation services in the most productive and efficient manner:

- Natural Resource Education and Interpretive Programs
- Outdoor Adventure Programs
- Fitness and Wellness
- Active Adults for older populations
- Youth oriented programs and camps
- Facility Rentals and Reservations
- Special Events
- Family Programs
- Therapeutic Recreation Programs
- Volunteer Services
- Golf Programs & Services
- Aquatics.

Goal:

Develop each core program to the highest level possible that will provide residents with a quality experience that will last a life time.

Community Vision for Operational and Financial Sustainability:

To maximize the efficiency and revenue capability of each park, recreation facility, program and service that will create a sustainable park system for all residents in the county to enjoy

Goal:

Build and manage a sustainable park system that creates "World Class" parks, recreation facilities and programs for residents and visitors to the county to enjoy.

Programs and services: OCPR will utilize Catalpa Oaks to host core programs in a manner that makes efficient and productive use of the site and its links to broader ecological, social and recreational networks.

To this end OCPR will provide programs and services at Catalpa Oaks that:

- Enhance the value of the park as community greenspace
- Encourage individuals of all ages and abilities to recreate outdoors
- Encourage fitness through a range of recreational pursuits
- Meet the needs of a diverse, aging population
- Recruit young people and families to become regular visitors to Oakland County Parks
- Demonstrate the value of parks as an essential resource in Oakland County
- Build a sense of community

Sustainability: In order to achieve operational and fiscal sustainability of Catalpa Oaks, OCPR will:

- Develop a business plan that clearly identifies and prioritizes the recreational features that will ensure regional participation and outlines an effective cost recovery strategy
- Provide site amenities that encourage year round recreational use and the recruitment of individuals of all age groups and abilities
- Standardize maintenance and operational practices to insure high quality facilities and programs
- Institute a tracking program that will help to determine the efficacy of park facilities and programs
- Develop a branding and marketing program that maximizes the regional use of the park
- Implement an educational program that communicates the economic, social and ecological value of the Oakland County Parks and Recreation system

Oakland County Parks & Recreation

Mission Statement

Our mission is to deliver quality parks, recreation, facilities, programs, services and maintenance through a dedicated professional Park commission and staff that listens to the needs of citizens creates innovative parks, recreation facilities and programs and energizes the community for the value of living in Oakland County.

Catalpa Oaks Concept

Catalpa Oaks Site Amenities

Amenities proposed for the site have been selected based on their ability to further align the operation of Catalpa Oaks with O CPR's strategic plan for the role of parks in:

- ❑ Promoting four-season recreation
- ❑ Matching active and passive recreational opportunities with changing demographics
- ❑ Enhancing ecological and recreational connectivity
- ❑ Creating vibrant communities

A. Catalpa Park Site

The general concept for the Catalpa Oaks Master Plan is to improve, maintain and operate the park facility as a field sports complex. Staff has determined that the field sports complex is, and will continue to be, a feature that has a regional draw and broadly meets the vision and goals of the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission as outlined in the 2008 Strategic Plan.

A variety of site amenities would be maintained, augmented and/or added to the site in order to increase the use of the park as a regional recreation facility.



▲ Playground



▲ Paved trail use



▲ Cricket



▲ Soccer



▲ Event shelter



▲ Sledding



▲ Picnic tables and grills

B. Park Concept – Layout

Re-grading and added irrigation/drainage will allow for maximizing the efficiency and flexibility of field layout.

A cricket pitch of artificial turf will be integrated into the layout of soccer fields to maximize the use of the complex and to create opportunities for non-traditional field sports.

A 75' x 130' maintenance area would allow staff to store field equipment and materials.

Fencing, ornamental plantings and a decorative berm would help the facility blend with the surrounding community.

The addition of a 30' x 40' maintenance building set into the existing berm would provide critical support to park operations.

Retaining walls would double as material storage bins.

A portion of the berm would be augmented to raise the elevation by 10 feet and improve the use of the berm as a local sledding hill.

Paved paths adjacent to the hill would provide accessible routes to the hill's midpoint.



One ball diamond would be maintained as a site amenity to provide opportunities for pick up games and community leagues. Re-orienting the diamond will improve the use of the berm for seating.

Small brick circles would be centrally located adjacent to the trail network and would feature park signage, trash receptacles, bench seating and drinking fountains.

Three open-air shelters will provide opportunities for picnicking and group rentals while also providing some refuge for spectators during storm events.

Trail recreation will be fostered by the creation of accessible pathways (stable surfaces less than 5%) including 4800' of asphalt paved trails and 2690' of sidewalk. Paved trails will be 8-feet wide with an additional 8-feet of reinforced turf shoulders to accommodate a range of recreational activities.



A 40' X 60' concessions pavilion will provide guest services including refreshments during special events.

Brick seating areas will create convenient picnic opportunities.

The pavilion will provide a location for the educational displays and trailhead information that will be included in future grant applications.

The concessions pavilion could also host skate and/or bike rental if funding was secured for the creation of an urban trailhead at the park.

The pavilion will be designed to promote energy efficiency and other green practices in order to achieve fiscal sustainability and maximize educational opportunities.

The building will be accessed by a wide promenade of porous pavers that will provide access for visitors and maintenance/safety/delivery vehicles while demonstrating best management practices.

Parking lot reorientation would also create the opportunity for the installation of a 14,000 square foot bio-swale for the treatment of stormwater runoff.

Re-orienting and paving the parking lot will accommodate 140 cars including accessible spaces.

Re-construction of the parking lot will also allow for the installation of underground stormwater detention.

Seasonal ice-skating would be provided across the U10 size soccer fields.

The perimeter berm will be augmented during the grading of the sports fields to enhance sledding opportunities.

A 40' X 60' concessions pavilion will provide restroom facilities during normal park hours.

A 60' x 90' universally accessible playground will be located close the concession & restroom building, parking area and youth soccer fields.

A 40' x 25' picnic shelter will provide a buffer between the playground and parking lot.



The picnic shelter near the sledding hill will have the capability to serve as warming hut for seasonal events.

The U6 size soccer field adjacent to the concessions building would be maintained and striped to provide use as a croquet field and three bocce courts. Backstop and wicket mounts would be installed below surface to eliminate trip hazards.

Gated access to the Health Department Lot will create additional parking opportunities for night and weekend events.

Use agreements would have to be negotiated between OCPR and the Health Department clearly identifying hours of operation, monitoring and site cleanup/maintenance.

Additional brick paving will provide a sustainable surface around park signage and trash receptacles at the community entry points.

Perimeter berms will provide natural amphitheater seating for park arts & culture events.

Standard OCPR signage will be placed on Greenfield Road to advertise the park and provide critical branding and way-finding elements.



Decorative fencing will be installed to emphasize the character of Catalpa Oaks as an urban park, to provide management delineation and to communicate a sense of security.

Utility hookups will be located adjacent to the soccer fields to facilitate the operation of Mobile Recreation equipment including the stage, puppet mobile and inflatable structures.

C. Four – Season Recreation

To maximize the recreational use of parklands, to facilitate healthy lifestyles and to promote the appreciation of Michigan’s environment, OCPR will be promoting Catalpa Oaks as a four – season park.

Spring and fall will feature use by soccer leagues interspersed with cricket matches and baseball practices.

Summer will be prime for rollerblading on the asphalt paths and hosting seasonal programs like Music in the Park.

Late summer and fall are also the busy times for Cross Country running; parking and concession upgrades will make Catalpa Oaks a viable venue for hosting Cross Country events.

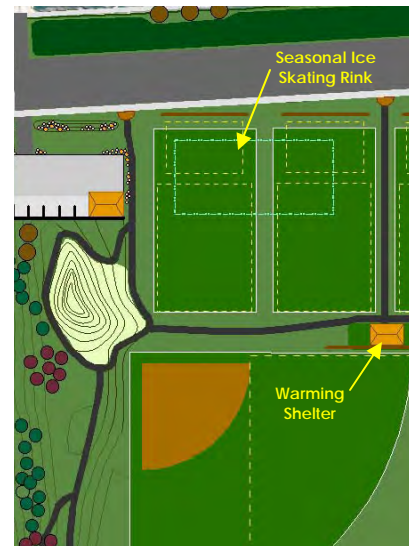


▲ *Overlapping Field Sports*

Winter will provide opportunities for x-country skiing on the grass shoulders of the paved pathways and sledding on the berm. The picnic shelter adjacent to the sledding hill will feature a fireplace and optional seasonal enclosures that will transform it into a warming lodge for winter events.

The U10 soccer field adjacent to the warming shelter and maintenance facility will provide a suitable surface for the construction of an open air ice skating facility (although issues of maintaining ice quality will have to be addressed).

The ski-mobile rental and recreational programs will create opportunities to teach skiing to residents of Southeast Oakland County and slide shows will advertise the 52 miles of ski trails (10 miles groomed) operated by OCPR within a 45-drive from the city of Southfield.



▲ *Winter Site Amenities*

Park paths are designed to allow snow plowing by park staff if there is interest in year-round walking opportunities at Catalpa Oaks.

D. Changing Demographics

The master plan for Catalpa Oaks attempts to match opportunities for active and passive recreation with Oakland County's changing demographics. O CPR has put forward a plan for Catalpa Oaks that enhances its role as field sports complex with regional appeal while providing sufficient site amenities to meet the needs of a population that is aging, increasingly ethnically diverse, representing a greater variety of lifestyle choices and including a greater percentage of individuals with physical, social or cognitive disabilities.

Universal accessibility and site amenities such as restrooms, concessions, seating, drinking fountains and paved pathways are a means of encouraging continued and new participation by the elderly community members as well as families with small children or those with special needs.

Leveling the site and standardizing field sizes will create opportunities for multiple sports to use the same play surfaces including bocce, croquet, soccer, field hockey, rugby, lacrosse and cricket.

Providing a range of field sizes that emphasize youth participation is also critical to ensuring recruitment and retention in turf sports.

SEMCOG estimates that the number of resident 65 & older will increase from 12-24% by the year 2035.

Designing park facilities to promote flexibility in use and scheduling will allow Catalpa Oaks to adapt to changing recreational trends and demographics.

Because of a lack of facilities across southeast Michigan, the cricket pitch will be a feature with regional draw. Approximately 15% of county residents have ties to British Commonwealth countries.

With further development of Oakland County's information economy, this percentage is expected to continue to grow over the next decade.

▶
*Cricket at
Lyon Oaks*



Oakland County Urban Trail Initiative

Because of its urbanized nature, there is a lack of facilities for traditional trails in Southeast Oakland County. However, the area does have a significant amount of schools, city parks, libraries, downtowns and other amenities that attract visitors, both by car and on bike or foot.

Parks staff has recently created a Southeast Oakland County Urban Trail Initiative as an effort to create and promote non-motorized connectivity between the local units of government in this area.

The southeast has an extensive sidewalk system and many residential neighborhoods that could serve as part of an Urban Trail Network to connect people with the many amenities available in this part of the county.

Promotion of these resources could also be used to guide users through the southeast communities north to the Oak Routes trail network, and south to the developing trail network in the city of Detroit.

E. Ecological and Recreational Connectivity

Catalpa Oaks is not contained within the interconnected network of natural areas identified through Oakland County's Green Infrastructure planning process, however that does not diminish the value of Catalpa Oaks in providing valuable green space to the local community.

Within the highly urbanized southeast portion of Oakland County parks like Catalpa Oaks will continue to contribute to stormwater management, a reduction in urban heat build up and improvements in air quality.

Maintaining healthy, diverse tree cover at the park will provide valuable refuge for migrating birds and the use of native plants in bio-swales and other Best Management Practices will encourage a variety of beneficial insects.



▲ Green Infrastructure Mapping
- Lack of Connectivity with Catalpa Oaks

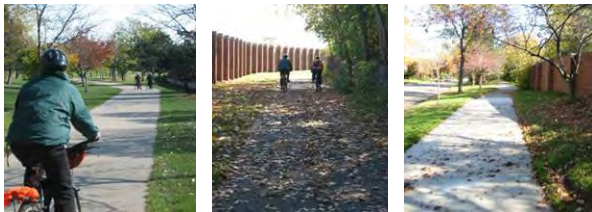
Catalpa Oaks will also play a significant role in promoting recreational connectivity by providing access to the Oak Routes Trail Network.

Catalpa Oaks is in a unique position to be able to serve as a trailhead location for the developing Urban Trail Initiative. The park is situated in the middle of the Initiative's study area, making it an ideal "hub" for non-motorized activity.

One of the major routes being considered for promotion and increased visibility is an existing trail along I-696 which links three plazas over the freeway. This trail is easily accessible through residential streets and a bridge over I-696 that link to Catalpa Oaks.



In the Catalpa Oaks area of the City of Southfield, trails and non-motorized transportation routes consist of local side walks and bike lanes on major connector roads. Non-motorized pathways/trails have been identified as critical components of promoting healthy lifestyles and equity of access to recreational opportunities and governmental services.



▲ Bike route experience

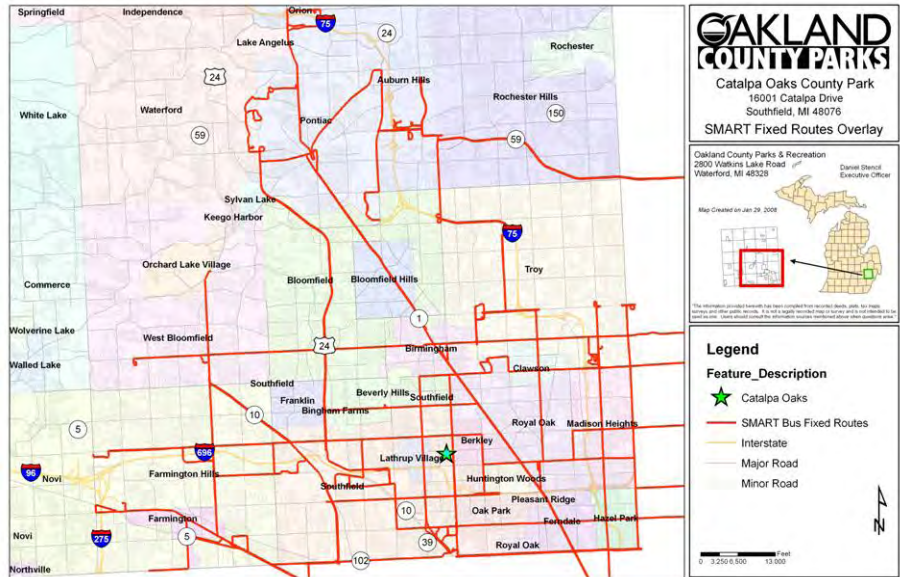
Potential pathways/trails have been identified for the Catalpa Oaks area in recent Greenways planning and are being considered in the development of the 2008 Oakland County Trails Master Plan.

Parking opportunities, sidewalk connections and the development of restroom facilities will facilitate the use of Catalpa Oaks as an Urban Trailhead and an Oak Routes recreational hub.



▲ Conceptual bike route

Catalpa Oaks is also currently serviced by bus routes with connections to 21 nearby communities through the SMART system. Bus stops are located on Greenfield adjacent to the park.



▲ Southeast Oakland County SMART bus routes

F. Catalpa Oaks – Quality of Life

Catalpa Oaks will further OCPR’s effort to provide recreational facilities that “energize the community to want to live, work and play in Oakland County” by providing a diverse range of recreational features and site amenities that will encourage resident participation regardless of age, ability or background.

The walking paths, benches and picnic shelters in close proximity to the Oakland County Health Department and other office buildings will allow Catalpa Oaks to promote healthy behaviors by providing lunch break recreational opportunities.

The county’s Oak Fit program has been a model for demonstrating the benefits that can result from small changes in lifestyle.



▲ Healthy lifestyles programs at Waterford Oaks

Improved parking, utility connections, accessible pathways and restrooms will allow for the large open fields of Catalpa Oaks' sports complex to host local and regional community arts and cultural events.

Such events are increasingly recognized for their role in creating strong vibrant communities that attract energetic residents and workers.

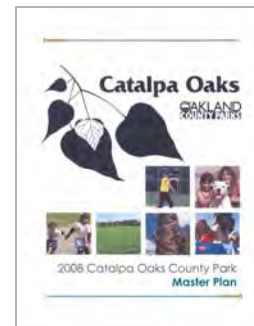


Master Plan Implementation

A. Project Costs and Priorities

The master plan offers a long term vision for the future improvement of both programming and facilities at Catalpa Oaks County Park. As with all master plans it is not a permanent document but one that is has been developed according to current recreational trends, public input and the OCPR's strategic plan.

OCPR has attempted to establish in this master plan a set of agreed upon core principals for the improvement, operation and maintenance of Catalpa Oaks in order to guide activities at the site over the next ten years while providing the necessary flexibility for park staff to adjust to changing recreational, social and financial conditions.



Proposed park improvements include:

- Construction of the standard Oakland County Parks sign on Greenfield Road
- Re-orienting and paving the parking lot to include stormwater management best practices
- Re-grading and irrigating the sports fields including appropriate drainage technology
- Implementation of a multi-use sports field layout and marking
- Construction of a maintenance yard and storage building
- Installation of an artificial turf cricket pitch
- Installation of an adaptable restroom/concessions pavilion
- Installation of a barrier free pathway system within the park
- Design and construction of a universally accessible playground
- Construction of three picnic shelters
- Installation of decorative fencing

The 2008 Catalpa Oaks Master Plan identifies several improvements that will be necessary if Catalpa Oaks is to be sustainable as a regional recreational facility.

The order in which improvements have been listed does not necessarily imply their priority. Project cost, scheduling and availability of funds will have to be considered along with the regional value of proposed park improvements. This analysis would form the basis of a business plan for Catalpa Oaks.

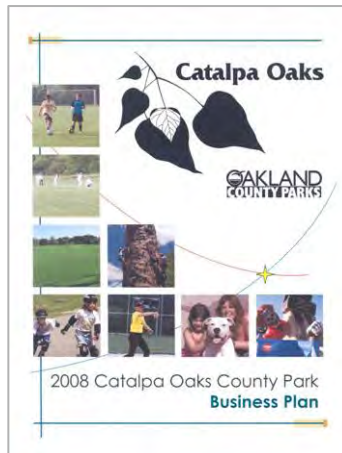
B. Catalpa Oaks Business Plan

Even though park staff draw on more than 40 years of experience in the design, management and implementation of recreational features for the development of itemized cost estimates, economic volatility, changes in project scope and extreme fluctuations in material costs can significantly reduce the value of incorporating such estimates in a park Master Plan.

In order to provide a more complete picture of the financial ramifications for implementing the Catalpa Oaks Master Plan, OCPD staff have developed the **Catalpa Oaks Business Plan** as a compendium to this document.

Park Business Plans will be based on the recommendations of the park master plan and will include the following:

- ❑ Itemized construction estimates
- ❑ Proposed implementation phases
- ❑ Cost recovery analysis for existing facilities and proposed park improvements including:
 - Earned-income strategies:
 - ✓ Operational and maintenance cost reductions
 - ✓ True-cost pricing
 - ✓ Cost sharing
 - ✓ Fundraising
 - Life cycle cost evaluation
 - Break-Even Point (BEP) identification



Park Business plans will be developed on a ten year cycle that coincides with that of the park master plans, however, business plans will be reviewed as part of the annual budget process amendments made on a regular basis to insure that staff can adjust to changes in the recreational and economic climate.

Park Operations

A. Rules and Regulations

Catalpa Oaks will be operated in accordance with all OCPR rules and regulations as approved by the OCPR Commission. Rules and regulations will be posted at the park site, on park maps and will be available through the Oakland County Parks and Recreation website.

Normal hours of operation will be dawn to dusk. Special event hours will be posted.

The Catalpa Oaks parking lot will be regularly patrolled by officers of the Oakland County Sheriff's department. Park staff will visit the site regularly to conduct spot inspection, remove trash and respond to maintenance issues.



▲ Informational Kiosk at Catalpa Oaks

Oakland Owls PARK WATCH

Additional site supervision will be provided through Oakland Owls, the community volunteer program that solicits the involvement of park neighbors and frequent visitors to monitor park activities and site conditions and to provide a mechanism for rapid communication to park staff and law enforcement personnel.

B. Maintenance

Park maintenance will, for the present, be coordinated by OCPR staff from nearby Glen Oaks County Park. Cooperative arrangements will also be implemented with sports groups and the city of Southfield to conduct field marking and collect trash.

Portable toilets are being contracted to a private vendor through a blanket service contract authorized by the Oakland County Purchasing department.

Regional maintenance crews may be utilized in the future to promote efficiency and cost savings. Private maintenance contracts for mowing and tree trimming (for example) will be also be evaluated for potential cost saving.

Future improvements that have been outlined in this master plan, including restrooms and concessions, will increase the cost of maintaining Catalpa Oaks (in staff time and materials) and will be considered as part of a cost recovery plan.



▲ *Ornamentally shaped tree at Catalpa Oaks*

C. Scheduling and Programs

Similar to the operation of the field sports complex at Lyon Oaks (that also includes soccer and a cricket pitch), OCPR recreation staff will schedule blocks of time for use by sports leagues or organizations. Within those block periods, the respective organizations will be responsible for scheduling and coordinating individual field use.



▲ *Field signage at Catalpa Oaks*

Until grading, irrigation and drainage improvements are made at the site, block scheduling will continue to include the "resting" of two out of the four large soccer fields. The reduction of playable surface is necessary to maintain the long term health of the sports turf under difficult growing conditions.

Informal recreation will be allowed on fields during their resting periods as long as those activities do not involve the concentrated wear associated with portable goals.

Upon the full implementation of Phase I field improvements described in this plan, OCPR will reserve block periods for open use of the fields by special events and non-organized forms of play in order to ensure equity of access to the recreational opportunities provided by Catalpa Oaks.