

Appendix E

COMMUNITY FACILITIES and SERVICES

Introduction

This Chapter provides an overview of the principal community facilities and services in Cass County. An awareness of the general scope of community facilities and services is important. The type and extent of community facilities and services can shape perceptions about the desirability of the county and its local municipalities as a place of residence and business, and shape policies for the proper accommodation of growth, development and preservation interests. See County Public Facilities Map, Appendix H, for the location of many of the county's public facilities.

Administrative Buildings and Services

City, Village and Township Halls

Each of the fifteen townships, along with Dowagiac and the county's four villages, maintains an administrative hall at which government administration is performed. These facilities typically include the offices of various elected officials and support staff and departments, in addition to public meeting rooms.

Cass County Building

Located at 120 N. Broadway Street in the Village of Cassopolis, the Cass County Building provides office space for a variety of governmental functions including the following:

- **Administrator / Controller:** Executes the policies and directives of the County Board of Commissioners, oversees the day-to-day operations of county government activities, and manages fiscal matters for the county.
- **Adult Probation:** Administration of probation services through the Michigan Department of Corrections.
- **C.A.S.A. / Court Appointed Special Advocate:** Provides factual, independent and objective information about the status of children involved in child protective proceedings (appointed by the Family Court Judge), complimenting the duties of other professionals involved in neglect and abuse cases.
- **Clerk Register:** Serves as the clerk for numerous entities such as the Circuit Court, Board of Commissioners, Election Commission, Jury Board, Gun Board, Plat Board, Transportation Authority, and Building Authority, and serves as Chief Election Officer; maintains vital records; and issues marriage licenses, birth and death certificates, assumed business names and partnership certificates, concealed gun permits, veteran discharge records, notary commissions, genealogy records and voter registration records.
- **Drain Commissioner:** See discussion on Environmental Services in this Appendix.
- **Equalization Department:** Equalizes the real and personal property assessments of all assessing units in both Cass and St. Joseph County, and assists local units of government concerning assessment and taxation administration.

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- **Information Systems Department:** Provides information services to county and local governmental units and departments including mapping services.
- **MSU Extension Service:** Provides informational resources to individuals, communities and businesses to improve quality of life including in such areas as agriculture, health, safety, natural resources, sustainability, and community planning.
- **Treasurer:** Serves as the custodian of all monies with responsibility for investing and maintaining an adequate cash flow, collects delinquent real property taxes, maintains debt service accounts for bonded indebtedness of the county, certifies warranty deeds, and administers the sale of dog licenses.
- **Veteran Affairs / Counselor:** Assists *veterans* and their families in obtaining county, state, and federal benefits to which they are entitled.

Cass County Complex

In recent years, Cass County has consolidated many of its services and facilities in the northwest corner of the Village of Cassopolis along the south side of M-62.

The Law and Courts Building houses the following:

- **43rd Judicial Circuit/Family Court**
- **4th Judicial District Court**
- **Friend of the Court**
- **Probate Court**
- **Prosecuting Attorney**

Four other facilities comprise the complex and include:

- **Cass County Health Department.** See discussion on Environmental Services in this Appendix.
- **Cass County Department of Human Services.** See discussion on Human Services in this Appendix.
- **Cass District Library.** Cass District Library serves the Cass County townships of Calvin, Howard, Jefferson, LaGrange, Mason, Milton, Newberg, Ontwa, Penn, Pokagon, Porter, and Volinia. Aside from the main branch/office in Cassopolis, branches are also located in Edwardsburg, Howard Township, and Mason Township. The District also operates an affiliated computer learning center at the Cass County Council on Aging in Cassopolis.
- **Cass County Sheriff's Department.** See discussion on Emergency Services in this Appendix.
- **Cass County Animal Control Department.** The Cass County Animal Control Department provides for the enforcement of the Cass County Dog Ordinance and State statutes relating to dogs and other animals including the rescue and care of dogs and cats, educational services, protection of the public, prevention of animal cruelty, and the sheltering of homeless and owner-released dogs and cats while attempting to locate owners or find homes for unwanted animals.

Environmental Services

Cass County Drain Commissioner

Housed in the Cass County Building in Cassopolis, the Drain Commissioner is responsible for the administration of the Drain Code including the construction and maintenance of drains, determining drainage districts, apportioning costs of drains among property owners, receiving bids and awarding contracts for drain construction, and approving drainage plans in association with development projects including the administration of the Cass County Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Program.

Cass County Conservation District

The Conservation District's mission is to protect and enhance Cass County's natural resources by providing educational and technical services to all land users through sound land use management practices. The County Conservation District is devoted to protecting the County's water quality, forestry and wildlife resources. The offices of the County Conservation District are located at 1127 East State Street in Cassopolis.

HEALTH and HUMAN SERVICES

Cass County Health Department

Housed at the Cass County Complex at 201 M-62 in Cassopolis, the Cass County Health Department is part of the Van Buren and Cass County District Health Department. The Department provides a wide range of health and environmental promotion and assessment services including clinical services, dental services, substance abuse, and environment health including the issuance of well and sewage disposal permits. Within Cass County, the Department maintains the Cassopolis office in addition to a Dowagiac office at 520 Main St.

Cass County Department of Human Services

Operated under the Michigan Department of Human Services at the Cass County Complex at 325 M-62 in Cassopolis, the Department offers assistance to persons and families on a temporary basis during times of need, including food assistance, financial assistance, child care, medical assistance, rehabilitation services, and children and adult services.

Cass County Council on Aging / Senior Center

The Cass County Council on Aging is a County supported agency providing various activities, programs and assistance to senior residents of Cass County. The agency is located in the Lowe Center at 60525 Decatur Road in Cassopolis and also operates a facility (Front Street Crossing) at 227 S. Front St. in Dowagiac. The agency strives to provide support for seniors in their effort to remain in their own home and maintain independence, health, and dignity. Services include adult day services including fitness facilities, food services including home delivered meals, home care, transportation and other support services.

Borgess-Lee Memorial Hospital

Located in the City of Dowagiac (420 W. High St.), the Borgess-Lee Memorial Hospital is a 25-bed care facility licensed by the State of Michigan and accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. The facility offers a wide range of services including emergency services, surgical services, cardio-pulmonary services, orthopedic services, laboratory support, radiology, rehabilitative services, and education and health promotion services.

The Pokagon Band Department of Health Services

The Pokagon Band Department of Health Services is operated by the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians, with a medical clinic located at 57392 M-51 south of Dowagiac. The Department serves as a primary care provider for the Native American population in Allegan, Van Buren, Berrien and Cass counties as well as a number of counties in Indiana. Services include behavioral health, community health, diet and nutrition, and medical services.

Cass County Medical Care Facility

The Cass County Medical Care Facility is located on a 140-acre farm southwest of Cassopolis at 23770 Hospital Street. Within a rural backdrop, the facility provides physical, occupational, speech and restorative therapy services on a short and long term basis. The facility offers counseling to residents and their families and residents may participate in classes, day trips, and social events.

TRANSPORTATION

Cass County Road Commission

The Cass County Road Commission (CCRC) is responsible for maintaining the public county road system not otherwise part of the state highway system or within Dowagiac and the county's four villages. The CCRC operates an office and service facility at 340 N. O'Keefe Street in Cassopolis. The CCRC is responsible for the construction and maintenance of approximately 1,000 miles of county primary and local roads. At the direction of the townships, the CCRC also constructs and improves local roads (as financial resources permit). The work of the CCRC includes not only snow removal and road repair, but also the upgrading and building of new and existing roads to current standards. The CCRC is one of the few road commissions in Michigan to have its own asphalt operations including its own sand/gravel extraction facility. See Appendix B for a review of the Cass County road network and other county transportation features.

UTILITIES

Public Water and Sewer

Limited areas of Cass County are served by public sewer and water service. These areas are principally limited to Dowagiac and the county's four villages. Public sewer and/or water in each of the county's townships are non-existent or otherwise very limited. Where sanitary services has been extended to township areas, it is typically limited to specific lake areas such as, but not limited to, Barron Lake in Howard Township, Indian Lake and the Sister Lakes area in Silver Creek Township, the Finch Lake area in Volinia Township, the lakes of Pine, Hemlock, Saddlebag and Fish in Marcellus Township, Diamond and Donnell Lakes in Penn Township, and the Christiana/Juno lakes area in Mason and Ontwa townships. Sewer and water services are provided by local municipalities through agreements with sewer/water authorities operating within the county. Ontwa Township has recently initiated efforts to establish sewer service.

Electricity and Natural Gas Service

All of Cass County receives electrical power from the Indian-Michigan Power Company and Midwest Energy Company. Nearly all of Cass County receives natural gas service from the SEMCO Energy Gas Company. Marcellus Township receives gas service from Consumers Energy Company. Even in those communities where natural gas service is present, service may not extend to many if not the majority of households within the community. Volinia Township does not have access to natural gas service.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Police Protection

Cass County Sheriff's Department: The Cass County Sherriff's Department provides emergency services county-wide. These services include road patrols; the investigation and enforcement of state and local laws in association with crimes against persons and property and violations of the Motor Vehicle Code; operation of the county's 911 dispatch system; and the support of emergency responders and the local citizenry in association with efforts to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies and disasters.

Cass County Central Dispatch (Emergency 911) System: Operated by the Cass County Sheriff's Department, the Cass County central dispatch system is located on M-62 north of Cassopolis. The system is operated by a full-time director and staff, providing central dispatching of all law enforcement, fire, and medical services within the county.

Michigan State Police Department (MSPD): The MSPD does not operate a post in Cass County, but the county receives state police services through the Niles Post in Berrien County. There are two other State Police posts in adjacent counties -- the White Pigeon post in St. Joseph County and the Paw Paw Post in Van Buren County.

The MSPD is generally responsible for enforcing the criminal and traffic statutes of the state. The typical citizen is most aware of its presence in association with traffic enforcement along the county's state highways but the Department's efforts extend far beyond state highway monitoring. The MSPD maintain numerous divisions as part of its enforcement efforts including, but not limited to, a Traffic Safety Division; Special Operations Division including an Aviation Unit, Canine Unit, Underwater Recovery Unit, and the Emergency Support Team; a Forensic Science Division including laboratories for crime scene and 'post-blast' investigations, drug analysis, document examination, polygraph testing, finger print examination, toxicology and blood/alcohol analysis, firearms examination, and arson evidence analysis; and a Training Division. The MSPD is responsible for providing protection services to the state governor and the state capitol complex.

Local Police Departments: As previously noted, the Cass County Sherriff's Department provides emergency services county wide and nearly all local municipalities rely on the department for police services (in addition to state police as may be needed). There are only *four* local municipal police departments operating in Cass County – the Cassopolis, Dowagiac, *Silver Creek Township*, and Ontwa Township-Edwardsburg police departments. The Pokagon Band provides support police services throughout the county as well. Some of the other municipalities have hired off-duty police officers on a part-time basis.

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Fire Protection

There are eleven local fire departments in Cass County. These fire departments, collectively, provide fire protection services across the county. Most of the departments provide service to multiple municipalities and/or portions of multiple municipalities. The table below identifies the fire departments along with the approximate area and population served by each. Not included in the table is the fire authority currently being formed by Cassopolis and the townships of Jefferson and LaGrange.

Fire Department (FD)	Approximate Area Served (Square Miles)	Approximate Population Served	Approximate Number of Fire Fighters (Volunteer/Paid)
Cassopolis FD	24	4,260	21
Dowagiac FD	13	7,900	16
Edwardsburg FD	63	8,000	31
Howard Township FD	36	7,500	23
Indian Lake FD	25	4,000	30
Marcellus FD	81	5,160	55
Newberg Township FD	81	1,900	23
Pokagon FD	25	2,500	16
Southeast Public Safety Authority (Mason/Porter Townships area)	65	5,210	30
Penn Township FD	72	5,000	14
Wayne Township FD	71	3,800	18

Source: State of Michigan, Dept. of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs

EDUCATION

School Districts

Cass County is served by nine different public school districts. The table below identifies the school districts serving Cass County in addition to the principal areas served by each and their approximate total enrollment.

School District	Principal Cass County Areas Served	Approximate Enrollment
Brandywine Community Schools	Western portions of Milton Twp.	1,500
Cassopolis Public Schools	Cassopolis and the townships of Penn, Calvin, Jefferson, and LaGrange.	1,300
Constantine Public Schools	Porter Township	1,500
Decatur Public Schools	Wayne and Volinia Twps.	1,100
Dowagiac Union School District	Dowagiac and townships of LaGrange, Pokagon, Silver Creek and Wayne.	2,600
Edwardsburg Public Schools	Edwardsburg and townships of Howard, Jefferson, Ontwa, Mason, and Milton.	2,700
Marcellus Community Schools	Marcellus and townships of Volinia, Marcellus and Newberg.	1,000
Niles Community School District	Majority of Howard Twp. and parts of SW quarter of Pokagon Twp.	4,100
White Pigeon Community Schools	Porter Township	900

Southwestern Michigan College (SMC)

Founded in 1964 by a number of Cass County residents, SMC has developed two modern campuses – a 240 acre campus outside the Dowagiac and approximately 5 acres in the Niles area. Originally established to provide courses and curricula for students who wish to pursue their first two years of a four-year degree at the school before transferring to a four-year college or university, SMC now also offers a limited number of Baccalaureate degree programs in conjunction with some of the state's four-year institutions. SMC also offers occupational skills training in numerous technical, business and health care fields and offers more than 30 Associates Degrees. SMC is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and is also a member of the American Association of Community Colleges. There are approximately 3,300 undergraduate students at the college's two campuses.

RECREATION and OPEN SPACE FACILITIES

Cass County

The Cass County Parks Commission operates seven parks within the county, offering a variety of natural resource-based recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

Dr. T K Lawless Park: Comprised of a 720-acre nature preservation area, Dr. T. K. Lawless Park is located on Monkey Run Road along M-60, nine miles east of Cassopolis, on M-60 and Lewis Lake Road. The park provides a variety of outdoor activities including hiking and biking trails, group campsites, fishing and sports fields.

Fred Russ Forest Park: Located within the 580-acre Fred Russ research forest (operated by Michigan State University) on Marcellus Highway, eight miles east of Dowagiac in Volinia, this 13-acre natural resource area is adjacent to Dowagiac Creek and includes picnic facilities, play equipment, fishing, horseshoe pits, canoe landing, rustic restrooms, and over four miles of hiking, equestrian, and cross-country trails.

Arthur Dodd Memorial Park: Located on Creek Road, five miles northeast of the City of Niles, this 51-acre park is located along the Dowagiac River and includes facilities devoted to picnicking, play equipment, canoe landing, fishing, horseshoes, hiking trails, and fishing.

Veteran's Memorial Park: This special-use park is located on M-62 just west of Cassopolis and four miles southeast of the City of Dowagiac. This small park is well shaded with benches.

Stevens Lakeside Memorial Park: This two-acre park provides picnic facilities and a beach along the north side of Little Fish Lake in Volinia Township, in addition to public access to the lake for swimming and fishing.

Henry Sears Boat Launch: This mini- park serves as a boat launch along the south side of Birch Lake in Porter Township.

Harmon Park East: This mini- park provides public swimming access along the Shavehead Lake peninsula in Porter Township.

Persons interested in a more detailed accounting of county park facilities, and other recreation opportunities in the county, and proposed improvements to the county park system, are encouraged to review the 2013 – 2017 Cass County Recreation Plan prepared by the Cass County Parks and Recreation Department.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

Crane Pond State Game Area: The State of Michigan maintains the Crane Pond State Game Area (SGA). The SGA occupies approximately 4,100 acres in Newberg Township, comprised of approximately eight land holdings throughout the township including along several lakes. The facility is available for hunting, hiking, boat launching and other interpretive activities.

Boat Launches: The DNR maintains 21 public boat launch sites throughout Cass County:

- Big Fish Lake
- Chain Lake
- Corey Lake
- Dewey Lake
- Diamond Lake
(access requires boaters to purchase an annual \$24 launch access permit or a \$6 daily permit, available at the site).
- Donnell Lake
- Dowagiac Creek
(at the Arthur Dodd Memorial Park)
- Driskels Lake
- Harwood Lake
- Hemlock Lake
- Juno Lake
- Long Lake
- Magician Lake
- Mill Pond
(at the Dowagiac Heddon Memorial)
- Paradise Lake
- Stone Lake
- Belas Lake
(Crane Pond State Game Area)
- Bogart Lake
(Crane Pond State Game Area)
- Forked Lake - no fish
(Crane Pond State Game Area)
- Fox Lake - no fish
(Crane Pond State Game Area)
- Kirk Lake
(Crane Pond State Game Area)

The three launch facilities that comply with the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act are Diamond Lake, Juno Lake, and Magician Lake.