

S T A T E O F M I C H I G A N

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF ALLEGAN

**CITY OF OTSEGO - LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR SPARK GRANT APPLICATION TO REPLACE
NORTHSIDE PARK PLAYGROUND STRUCTURE**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners authorizes the release of the letter of support, as attached.

DRAFT

Allegan County Board of Commissioners



County Services Building
3283 – 122nd Avenue
Allegan, MI 49010
269-673-0203 Main Office
269-686-5331 Main Fax
<http://www.allegancounty.org>

*Jim Storey, Chairperson
Dean Kapenga, Vice Chairperson*

June 23, 2023

DISTRICT 1

Jim Storey
616-848-9767
jstorey@
allegancounty.org

State of Michigan
Michigan Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 30028
Lansing, MI 48909

DISTRICT 2

Mark DeYoung
616-318-9612
mdeyoung@
allegancounty.org

RE: City of Otsego, Michigan SPARK Grant Application to replace the aging Northside Park playground structure

Dear Funding Agency,

The Allegan County Board of Commissioners submit this letter of support for the City of Otsego as they endeavor to secure funding to replace the aging Northside Park playground structure. The City of Otsego is seeking a SPARK grant that will significantly change the course of Northside Park, one of the more popular parks within the City park system.

DISTRICT 3

Dean Kapenga
616-218-2599
dkapenga@
allegancounty.org

Northside Park is located at the corner of Watson Rd. and River Rd. It is the only City park located north of the Kalamazoo River and the heart of the City of Otsego. Making it incredibly important and vital for the surrounding community. This is only a couple hundred feet from a large “once in a generation” 400+ residential unit development. Those new residents will greatly increase the use of this park. The park’s main attraction is the 30-year-old large wooden playground structure. This large piece of playground equipment is beloved by the City of Otsego residents and visitors. It has been a fixture for small children for multiple generations. Its life has been steadily extended by intentional maintenance by the City’s Department of Public Works employees. However, it is now at a point where maintenance is not going to be an option for much longer. The age is catching up to the structure and is not far from being needed to be replaced or removed entirely if funding for replacement is not available. The large and dated piece of equipment was installed as a community effort by having community volunteers assemble and install the wooden structure, which was rather common in the mid-1990s. However, trends have taken playground structures away from being composed of wood and towards more permanent materials such as metal or plastic. These newer materials are not eligible to utilize in-kind donations, which makes the replacement of this playground structure much more difficult financially. If awarded the DNR SPARK grant for \$1M, the City will be able to replace the 30+ year-old piece of playground equipment that has become a growing liability and unlock the park’s potential for the next generation of families.

DISTRICT 4

Scott Beltman
616-292-1414
sbeltman@
allegancounty.org

DISTRICT 5

Gale Dugan
269-694-5276
gdugan@
allegancounty.org

This effort is consistent with the goals and objectives below from within the Allegan County Board of Commissioners approved Parks 5-Year Recreation Plan:

Goal 1: Continue Park Maintenance to increase efficiency and reduce costs to ensure our current parklands are in safe, functional, and aesthetic condition.

Mission Statement

“The Allegan County Board of Commissioners shall plan, develop, and evaluate the necessary policies and resources to ensure our county continues to progress and prosper”

- a. Objectives: Evaluate & prioritize the replacement and maintenance of playground equipment, structural amenities/buildings, and site amenities

Goal 2: Provide safe, broad community-based recreation opportunities, facilities, and programs that improve the overall quality of life year-round for all Allegan County residents and tourists.

Objectives:

- a. Add recreational opportunities/amenities which fall in line with the purpose of the park and are based upon recreation needs, trends, and input from the community.
- b. Increase recreational opportunities for people with disabilities.
- c. Continue efforts to find and enhance recreation opportunities throughout Allegan County
- d. Continue to add structural amenities, such as pavilions and restroom buildings, to the park facilities based upon community input and need to ensure that there are sufficient park and recreation opportunities for all current and potential users.

Goal 3: Provide leisure time activities with special consideration given to improving health, wellness, and fitness.

Objectives:

- a. Provide both passive and active activities for a variety of ages and abilities of the community.

Goal 4: Provide non-motorized and/or multi-use pathways/waterways for recreational and transportation use.

Objectives:

- a. Expand non-motorized and/or multi-use pathways/waterways through Allegan County with a focus upon linking parks, schools, neighborhoods, cities, business areas, regional trails, and local destination points.
- b. Support the efforts of trail groups (Friends of the Blue Star Trail, River to River trail committee, etc.) to connect Allegan County to parks, schools, neighborhoods, cities, business areas, regional trails, and local destination points.

Based on alignment with these goals and objectives, including increasing community-based recreation opportunities, increased tourism, economic growth, and public health improvements, the Allegan County Board of Commissioners supports your effort to move this project forward.

Sincerely,

Jim Storey, Board Chairperson