



City of Ann Arbor

# Parks and Recreation

# Open Space Plan

2023-2027



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# PARKS AND RECREATION OPEN SPACE PLAN 2023-2027

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## Overview of the Parks & Recreation Open Space Plan

The Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan (PROS) is the City's vision for parks and recreation in Ann Arbor and is officially part of the City of Ann Arbor Comprehensive Plan. The PROS Plan provides an overview of the Park System, including a physical description of the City, administrative structure and budget information, and a detailed inventory of existing parks, facilities and programs. It describes the relationship between the parks and recreation system and surrounding municipalities and recreation providers, identifies parks and recreation needs and deficiencies, and proposes major capital park projects for existing and new parks. It outlines the progress that has been made, as well as goals and objectives for future planning guided by input gathered through an extensive public process. It also establishes criteria to evaluate open space and natural features for optimum land use and potential parkland acquisition. The plan is updated every 5 years, as required by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to be eligible for grants.

## Summary of chapters

### Introduction

This section describes the relationship of the PROS Plan to the City Comprehensive Plan, and lists projects completed during the PROS Plan cycle from 2016 through 2022. Completed projects range from large new capital improvements, such as Universal Access Playground at Gallup, to projects aimed at preserving the infrastructure of the park system such as replacing pool liner at Veteran's Memorial Park, reconstructing over a mile of the Border to Border Trail through Gallup Park, resurfacing tennis courts, adding pickleball courts, renovating playgrounds, and repairing bridges.

### Section I: Community Description

This section describes social and economic characteristics of the City, transportation planning initiatives, information about the built and natural environment, demographic data and development characteristics by planning area. A short history of Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation provides context for present and future planning, and shows the growth and development from a few parks to an extensive and complex park system.

## Section II: Administrative Structure

This section explains the administration of Parks and Recreation and how the park system fits within the overall structure of the City. Organizational charts show the roles of staff within Parks and Recreation, as well as descriptions of the various boards and commissions, including the Park Advisory Commission and Recreation Advisory Commission, and those whose function is to support specific park amenities, such as the Public Market Advisory Commission. It also outlines input opportunities available to the public.

## Section III: Budget and Funding

This section explains the budget process, detailing funding sources, revenues and expenditures, as well as the relationship between Park Millages and the General Fund. It explains, through charts and text, the percentages of funding that are utilized by each unit of the park system. The appendix contains detailed budget charts for fiscal year 2022.

## Section IV: Inventory of the Park, Recreation and Open Space System

This section provides a complete inventory of the Park System properties, recreation offerings, and park amenities. It also provides information about other recreation providers, such as the Washtenaw County Parks, Ann Arbor public schools and neighboring townships and cities. The inventory demonstrates the wealth of recreation opportunities available to residents and visitors, and the extensive list of grants procured through the years as well as certifications and awards, highlights successful efforts to obtain additional funding and provide award winning parks and programs.

## Section V: Land Use Planning and Acquisition

This section describes how parkland is acquired in the City as well as in the Greenbelt. Information includes funding sources, a summary of land purchased, and the criteria used to evaluate land for potential acquisition. The criteria utilized by staff and the Land Acquisition Committee provides an explanation of how land is evaluated for potential acquisitions, such as method of acquisition, access, connectivity, potential operational costs, and if an area is underserved for parkland. The section also describes the various methods of acquiring land, including outright purchase, donation, or purchase of development rights. It explains parkland dedication requested of residential developers to offset the additional population, and how that request is calculated. A description of the Greenbelt program is included, as well as how scoring criteria is used to rank applications for the program.

## Section VI: Planning Process for the PROS Plan

This section provides in depth details of the public process used for developing the PROS Plan. Public input for this plan relied heavily on electronic media, including a survey which garnered 2,382 responses. The survey asked questions pertaining to quality of the facilities, parks and programs, as well as maintenance and desired recreation amenities. Two public meetings were held, as well as numerous focus groups including parks boards and commissions, the Park Advisory Commission, Recreation Advisory Commission and Planning Commission. Recreation supervisors and maintenance staff also provided input on infrastructure needs. The major issues that meeting participants and survey takers voiced are summarized, and the focus groups, public meetings and email responses are included and paraphrased. Additionally, task forces and study groups that met

## Executive Summary

during the past few years on topics including downtown parks and open space, and bike recreation are summarized. This input provides crucial information for future planning and helps staff to prioritize maintenance and capital improvements.

### Section VII: Goals and Objectives

This section states the overriding goals for the park system, including rationale and objectives. Five overriding goals are included: provide exceptional user experience; ensure that the park system is diverse, equitable, and inclusive; ensure that the park system is comprehensive, distinctive, and innovative; ensure that the park system is financially sustainable; and foster environmental stewardship and meet the City's A2 Zero sustainability goals. Each goal is followed by a series of objectives towards achieving the stated goals.

### VIII: Major Park and Recreation System Infrastructure Needs Assessment

This section is a comprehensive listing of needs by recreation facility, community wide parks, natural areas and park amenity types such as game courts and playgrounds, and provides a snapshot of what is needed to both maintain the existing infrastructure of the park system, as well as provide improvements to keep the system current and meet the needs and desires of the park patrons. The listing is gathered from input received from the public survey and meeting, as well as from maintenance staff and recreation facility supervisors. The list is a valuable resource guide for future renovation projects, provides justification for grant applications, and helps to prioritize capital improvements.

### IX: Action Plan

The Action Plan explains how projects are prioritized for implementation. The process aligns with the City's Capital Improvement (CIP) Plan process. The CIP is updated on a yearly basis to reflect current needs and priorities. Staff from all areas of the City participate in the process, proposing and rating potential projects using criteria that reflects the values of the City, such as sustainability framework goals, comprehensive plan objectives, improving customer level of service and user experience, and addressing safety. For the park system, capital improvements are categorized to ensure that funding is distributed in a manner that addresses infrastructure needs as well as programming and citizen desires. Categories include recreation facilities, park roads and parking lots, trails and pathway repair and new construction, athletic field renovations, playground improvements, and tennis and basketball court renovations, community-wide parks, historic preservation projects, and park bridge repair.





# INTRODUCTION

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## **The Parks & Recreation Open Space Plan and the City of Ann Arbor Comprehensive Plan**

A community's comprehensive plan is an official document adopted by a local government to establish long range, general policies for the physical development of the community. The City of Ann Arbor Comprehensive Plan is composed of eight documents, or "elements," that cover the City's major geographical areas and its essential City-wide facilities. These supporting documents provide a framework for preserving the City's unique character, ensuring its diversity, supporting investment, and promoting desired change. The Comprehensive Plan elements and a description of each are provided below:

- ◆ **NATURAL FEATURES MASTER PLAN (2004)** – Provides a framework to guide the City and its citizens in their policy making and stewardship of natural features protection activities.
- ◆ **LAND USE ELEMENT (2009)** – Provides information and guidance to residents, decision-makers, developers, and property owners about land use issues facing the City, including goals, objectives, action statements, and site-specific land use recommendations.
- ◆ **DOWNTOWN PLAN (2009)** – Sets goals, objectives, and land use recommendations for Ann Arbor's downtown area, including the boundaries of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA). Updated as part of the Ann Arbor Discovering Downtown (A2D2) effort; a subarea of the Comprehensive plan.
- ◆ **COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (2021)**– Defines the city's mobility values and goals and details the strategy for managing, operating, upgrading, and maintaining our transportation system today and into the future.
- ◆ **PARKS & RECREATION OPEN SPACE PLAN (2016)** – Provides a comprehensive inventory of Ann Arbor's park and recreation facilities and presents issues, needs, and opportunities for the City's park and recreation system.

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- ◆ STATE STREET CORRIDOR PLAN (2013) - Proposes ideas and strategies that can be used to build upon existing strengths and address current challenges to enhance the image, economic vitality, and sustainability of the corridor.
- ◆ SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK PLAN (2014) - Lays out a set goals that focus on climate and energy, community, land use and access, resource management to help Ann Arbor become more sustainable.
- ◆ TREELINE ALLEN CREEK URAN TRAIL MASTER PLAN (2017) - Lays out a plan to connect City-owned properties, neighborhoods, and downtown businesses while linking to the Huron River and the regional Border-to-Border trail (B2B Trail).
- ◆ Each of the City's comprehensive plan elements has a significant relationship with the Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan. Existing and future land use, transportation, and natural feature systems are essential components in assessing the parks and recreation needs and desires for any community.

## Goals of the Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan

The Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan (PROS) is the City's vision for parks and recreation in Ann Arbor. The PROS Plan provides an inventory of existing parks and facilities, describes the relationship between the parks and recreation system and surrounding municipalities and recreation providers, identifies parks and recreation needs and deficiencies, and proposes major capital park projects for existing and new parks.

The 2023-2027 PROS Plan is intended to facilitate discussion and evaluation of major issues, problems and potentials, to set priorities for the next five years, and to identify goals and objectives that reach further into the future. The intention of the plan is to celebrate history while responding to the needs of today; to provide balance of parks, facilities and programs; and to set a direction for the future. It also provides background information while delineating system needs that may qualify for state and federal grant funding. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) requires all municipalities applying for recreation grants to have a current plan on file with the MDNR and to update that plan every five years. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related staffing challenges, the City continued under the previous PROS Plan for an additional year. This planning effort is directed towards the formal adoption of an updated PROS Plan by the Park Advisory Commission, the City Planning Commission, and the Ann Arbor City Council.

Ann Arbor has a long history of planning for parks, recreation, and open space, with plans in 1920, 1939, 1952, 1962, 1978, 1981, 1988, 1994, 2000, 2006, 2011, and 2016. Many factors necessitate the updating of the old plan, including the City's desire to retain the parks, open space, and recreational amenities that continue to attract people to Ann Arbor.

## Focus of the Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan

The PROS Plan provides an overview of the Ann Arbor park system, including the physical description of the City, administrative structure and budget information, and an inventory of parks and programs provided both by City of Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation and by the Ann Arbor Public Schools Community Education and Recreation program. It also describes goals and objectives for

## Introduction

future planning guided by input gathered through an extensive public process.

The plan, by identifying valuable natural and cultural resources, is a tool for the preservation and improvement of amenities. Natural and cultural amenities are a necessary aspect of a balanced community and are considered a legitimate land use along with housing, business, and industry. An evaluation of open space and natural features is essential in the planning process for optimum land use and potential parkland acquisition. The plan also provides an opportunity to update relevant recreational services and facilities so they better meet the community's needs.

Other local, state, and regional agencies provide additional park and recreational opportunities for the broader community. Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation is a provider of parkland in various locations throughout the County, including County Farm Park in the City of Ann Arbor and Parker Mill just east of the City. The Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Parks Authority provides parkland near Ann Arbor along the Huron River, including Delhi, Dexter-Huron, and Hudson Mills Metroparks. The State of Michigan owns and operates the Pinckney and Waterloo Recreation Areas and the Chelsea State Game Area in the western half of the County. While the PROS Plan does not address the recreational needs for other entities, it recognizes common goals and linkages, including shared open space, trails, and natural features, such as the Huron River.

### **Projects Completed Since the last PROS Plan Cycle**

Numerous projects were completed since the last plan was updated in 2017. The vast majority of projects completed during this cycle were prioritized in the 2016-2020 Plan. Other projects were completed because of maintenance issues or changes in identified needs.

### **Parks and Recreation Facility Improvements**

- Bryant Community Center – New addition added to connect the two existing Bryant Community Center buildings together, as well as extensive renovations throughout.
- Buhr Park Ice Arena – Front counter area updated, automatic doors were installed at entry for ADA accessibility.
- Burns Park – Renovated senior center restrooms for barrier free access, replaced windows, installed new roof and ceiling, constructed new storage shed.
- Cobblestone Farm – Bathroom renovations completed and an accessible stand alone stall was added for ADA compliance. UV Air filters installed in HVAC units. Service stair added to the back of the building. Generator installed.
- Farmers Market – Bathroom renovations completed to bring up to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards. Large wooden market doors were replaced. Parking lot was resurfaced. Fifth & Detroit plaza was added during streetscape redesign. Seating added on the west side of the market building. Storm sewers were upgraded. LED Light fixtures installed under market canopy. Gutter system was replaced on the market canopies.
- Fuller Park Pool – Six sheds were added to the facility. The concession stand was turned into an office space.
- Gallup Park – Sections of the wooden dock and stairs to the fishing dock were replaced. Easy Kayak Launch installed. Siding on the Livery has been replaced.
- Huron Hills Golf Course – Computers and operating systems have been improved to be competitive with other facilities. Stormwater project completed on golf course to expand holding capacity and retain sediment before getting into Huron River.

## Introduction

- Kempf House – Front porch was repainted. Second floor wall plaster was repaired.
- Leslie Golf Course – Computers and operating systems have been improved to be competitive with other facilities. Inefficient lighting has been replaced with LED light fixtures. Ramp to maintenance barn has been rebuilt. The maintenance barn was also painted. Patio installed to accommodate small events.
- Leslie Science and Nature Center – insulated roof, renovated basement of Leslie House
- Mack Pool – replacement of major mechanical components of the pool including sand filter and main pump as well as adding a low pressure UV treatment system.
- Northside Community Center – The floors in the entry, kitchen, and main room were replaced. Walls and baseboards were patched and painted.
- Ann Arbor Senior Center – Floors in the hallway and bathrooms were replaced. Kitchen updated to better accommodate rentals. Lighting was replaced for energy efficiency and user experience.
- Veterans Memorial Park Pool and Ice Arena – New Zamboni machine purchased. Gutters were to the ice arena were replaced. Arena lights were not energy efficient and were replaced.

## Park Acquisitions

- Oakwoods Nature Area addition
- Buttonbush Nature Area
- Hickory Nature Area
- Hansen Nature Area addition
- Ruthven Nature Area addition
- Leslie Golf Course addition
- 2570 Dexter Road
- Marybeth Doyle addition

## Neighborhood Park and Playground Improvements

- Bromley Park – renovated playground
- West Park – renovated playground
- Kelly Park – renovated playground
- Churchill Downs Park – renovated playground

## Community Park Renovations and New Amenities

- Argo Park and Livery – constructed universal access improvements to the site and facilities including, expansion and renovation of the existing restroom facilities, new accessible fishing pier, accessible kayak launch, and new beach/launch area. The existing parking lot was paved with water directed to a newly constructed rain garden.
- Bandemer Park – Solar sun-shade picnic table installed with charging stations. BMX Park upgrades led by volunteer efforts. Six boat lockers were added for rental. Fire ring updated to meet fire code. Gallup Park – construction of a universal access playground on the south side of the river. Remediated a sinkhole that appeared along the border-to-border trail between the Huron River and railroad.
- Gallup Park – New Rotary Centennial Universal Access Playground

## Introduction

- Island Park – restored Greek Revival Shelter and pedestrian bridge, new canoe/kayak pullout along Huron River Water Trail
- Veterans Memorial Park – improved the stairs and structure that support the pool slide. Pool liner and mechanicals replaced.
- West Park – completed a structural study on the integrity of the West Park Bandshell. Improvements made to the existing playground.
- Olson Park - Application of heavy sand top dressing to improve root zone material of soccer field.

## Storm Water Improvements and Rain Gardens

- Churchill Downs –Storm Detention basin added to the north side of Churchill downs park.
- Stormwater project completed at Huron Hills Golf Course to expand holding capacity and retain sediment before getting into Huron River.
- Retention pond was added to Leslie Park to capture stormwater runoff between holes 14, 15, and 16.

## Pathways, Parking Areas and Bridge Renovations

- Gallup Park – Renovated the pathway from the islands to the livery. Improved and repaved the Border-to-Border path from the vehicular bridge to Mitchell Field. Existing vehicular bridge had repairs made to extend the life of the bridge. Mitchell Field bridge was renovated.
- Riverside Park – Repaved the Border-to-Border path along the river. Rebuilt the existing wooden boardwalk.
- Cranbrook Park – Repaved the main path through the park.
- Wurster Park – Created a barrier free access to the playground, modified the existing path by widening and rerouting away from sensitive habitat.
- Barton Nature Area – The north and south pedestrian bridges were renovated.
- Argo Nature Area – The pedestrian bridge near the end of the cascades was replaced.
- Bandemer Park – Renovated pedestrian and vehicle bridges.

## Tennis and Pickleball court renovations

- Sylvan Park
- Leslie Park
- Burns Park

## Basketball court renovations

- Burns Park
- Southeast Area Park
- Leslie Park
- Creal Park

## Natural Area Preservation Stewardship Activities

- Stewardship activities - inventoried plants and animals, revegetated native plants, ecological restoration, invasive species removals, native species planting and seeding, trash pickup, trail restoration, and other active volunteer coordination in 111 park areas.
- In a typical year, inventories over 200 bird species, 25 species of reptiles and amphibians, and almost 2,000 species of plants.
- In a typical year, coordinates over 2,300 individual volunteers, who, together, contribute a total of over 11,000 hours of time to restoration efforts.
- Fostered native plant growth through the control of invasive species, planting native plants and sowing native seed on roughly 750 acres of land in 86 parks annually.
- Held controlled burns in over 669 acres of parkland in 54 parks.
- Removed over 83,000 pounds invasive species.

## Summary of chapters

This update to the Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan has largely remained the same in format and content. The previous PROS Plan underwent a major revision to the format to align more closely with the City's Comprehensive Plan Documents. This Plan will continue to follow the same format, with updates to specific projects and planning efforts.

### Introduction

This section includes a description of the relationship of the PROS Plan to the City Comprehensive Plan, and details projects completed during current PROS Plan cycle (2016-2020).

### Section I: Community Description

This section includes a short history of the City and park system, social and economic characteristics, transportation planning, and descriptions of the built and natural environment. Demographic information and development characteristics by planning area are included in text and chart form.

### Section II: Administrative Structure

This section outlines the administration of the City and how Parks and Recreation fits within the overall structure of the City.

### Section III: Budget and Funding

This section explains the budget process and funding sources, revenues and expenditures in detail, as well as the relationship between the millages and the General Fund. It explains, through charts and text, the percentages of funding that are utilized by each unit of the park system.

### Section IV: Inventory of the Park, Recreation and Open Space System

This section provides a complete inventory of the Park System properties, recreation offerings, and park amenities. It also provides information about other recreation providers, and grants awarded to parks.

## Introduction

### Section V: Land Use Planning and Acquisition

This section describes the funding, summarizes land purchased, and details the criteria used to evaluate land. A summary of a document provided to developers to help to understand the park contribution program is included.

### Section VI: Planning Process for the PROS Plan

This section provides in depth details of the input received. Public input for this plan relied heavily on electronic media, and all the ways in which outreach was accomplished are detailed. The major issues that staff heard from meeting participants, survey takers are summarized, and the focus groups, public meetings and email responses are included and paraphrased. Additionally, summaries of the task forces and study groups that met during the past few years are included as they provide significant input for future planning and are important sources of public input.

### Section VII: Goals and Objectives

This section includes the overriding goals for the park system, including rationale and objectives. This chapter was rewritten to reflect current City Comprehensive plans, goals and objectives for the City.

### VIII: Major Park and Recreation System Infrastructure Needs Assessment

This section includes the input received from maintenance staff, recreation facility supervisors, and input from the survey and public meetings and provides a guide for future renovation projects.

### IX: Action Plan

This section now aligns with the City's Capital Improvement (CIP) Planning process, which was updated to include all City Service Areas. The CIP is updated on a yearly basis to reflect current needs and priorities.

## Ann Arbor Parks & Recreation at a Glance

- 164** Park Properties
- 2,210** Total Acres of Park Land
- 1,400** Acres of Natural Area
- 17.96** Acres of Parkland / 1000 Residents

79	Playgrounds	2	Ice rinks
70	Miles of multi-use paths	2	18 - Hole Golf Courses
42	Miles of nature trails	2	Canoe liveries
32	Ball fields	2	Cemeteries
29	Tennis courts	2	Community centers
24	Soccer fields	1	Skate Park
19	Picnic shelters	1	Farmers Market
8	Pickelball Courts	1	Science Center
4	Swimming pools	1	Senior Center
3	Historic Properties		





## SECTION I: COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

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The Community Description section of the PROS Plan describes the geographic boundaries, demographic composition, and physical characteristics, including the built and natural environments, to provide background and an overview of the City to assist with planning efforts.

### A. Geographic Planning Boundaries

The City of Ann Arbor is located in southeast Michigan, approximately 30 miles west of the Detroit metropolitan area and 50 miles north of Toledo, Ohio. Ann Arbor is bounded primarily by roads and freeways, including M-14 on the north, US-23 on the east, Interstate-94 and Ellsworth Road on the south, and Interstate-94, M-14, and Wagner Road on the West. Ann Arbor is centrally located in Washtenaw County and is the county seat.

Both the City's *Comprehensive: Land Use Element* and the *Parks and Recreation Open Space (PROS) Plan* examine geographic sub-areas of the City, referred to as the Central, South, Northeast, and West planning areas.

1. The Central Area is made up of the Central Business District of Ann Arbor, the South State Street and South University areas, and surrounding neighborhoods. This area contains the highest density of population, and has been growing rapidly in the past 5 years, including condominiums and apartments and private student apartment high rises. Its parks are characterized as urban plazas, catering to visitors and businesses. Several parks are within walking distance to the downtown core, such as West and Wheeler Parks, and green space is also provided by the University of Michigan Diag and the Community High School yard. Other types of open space in the downtown include the Dean Promenade on Main Street and the Farmers Market. The Downtown Development Authority uses tax increment financing for public projects, including park projects and pedestrian improvements.
2. The Northeast Area consists of a wide variety of neighborhoods, including both the oldest and newest in the City. Commercial centers are primarily located along Plymouth Road, Washtenaw Avenue, and Broadway Street. This area contains the highest amount of park acreage, partially due to the location of both municipal golf courses and significant natural areas in this sector of the City. Gallup Park, the City's most popular park, is located along the

## SECTION I: Community Description

Huron River, North Campus, Nichols Arboretum (33 acres of which are owned by the City), and Mitchell Field, owned by the University of Michigan, also greatly contribute to the open space.

3. The West Area developed primarily from the 1920's to the 1960's, with historic homes typical of the 'Old West Side' historic district, to multi-family dwellings including larger apartment and condominium complexes. Commercial centers are located primarily along Stadium Boulevard, Maple Road, and Jackson Avenue. Parkland dedication with residential development provided many of the neighborhood parks resulting in most homes having a park or school playground within walking distance. The West Area includes a significant length of the Huron River as well as two of the three Sister Lakes.
4. The South Area developed primarily between the 1940's and mid 1970's, with at least 600 housing units added in the 1980's. This planning area contains the largest concentration of senior care and senior housing facilities in the City. The main commercial areas are along Packard and Eisenhower, and include Briarwood Mall. The larger parks include Mary Beth Doyle and Buhr, as well as the County Farm Park, managed by the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission.

### **C. Social Characteristics of Planning Areas**

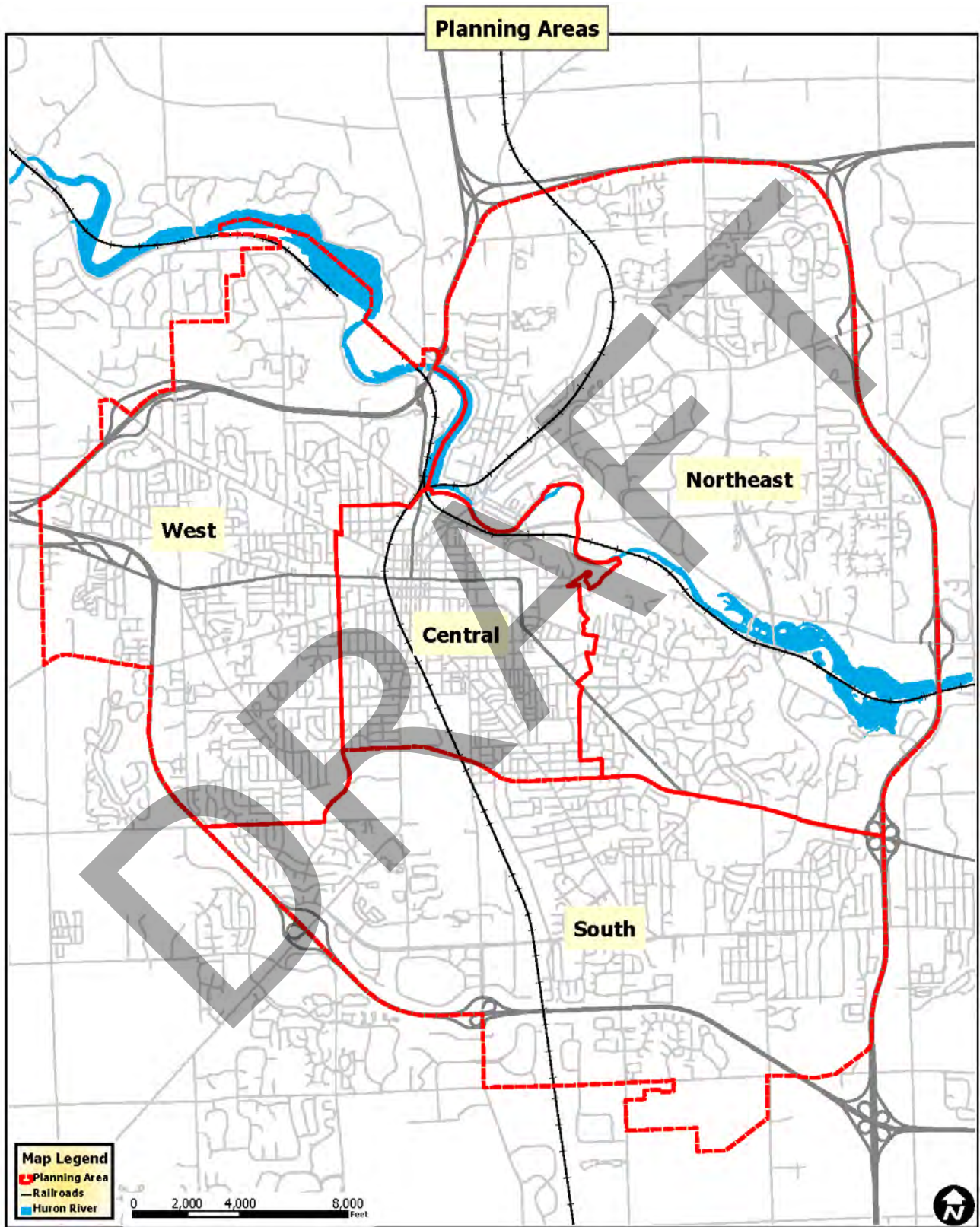
Understanding the demographic and socio-economic composition within each planning area contributes to assessing park and recreational needs within each subsection of the City. The total population of Washtenaw County in 2010 was 368,385. The City of Ann Arbor population (about 35 percent of the county population) slightly increased to 123,851 from 113,934 by 2020.

**STATISTICS FROM 2020  
CENSUS**

Planning Area	Central	Northeast	West	South	Outside City (1)	Citywide
Population	37,253	35,214	23,019	27,565		123,051
Number of housing units	13,485	15,194	10,805	14,193		53,677
Owner occupied	2,742	6,605	6,850	5,987		22,184
Renter	8,942	7,185	3,088	7,090		26,305
Average household size	2.52	2.21	2.03	1.62		2.10
Median household income	50,906	68,569	108,657	72,898		75,258
Person density per acre	18	5	5	5		8.35
% of households with children	4%	14%	19%	18%		14%
Disability status - ages 5-64	4%	4%	5%	6%		5%
Disability status - ages 65 & up	21%	24%	25%	21%		23%
Minority comp. African American	5%	5%	6%	11%		7%
Minority composition - Asian	13%	25%	5%	13%		14%
Percent student population	73%	47%	13%	27%		40%
Number of Parks	24	58	38	39	5	164
Acreage of Parks	152.99	941.01	614.87	343.09	158.34	2210.30
Acreage parkland/1000 residents	4.11	26.72	26.71	12.45		17.96
Greenbelt acreage					6829	

1. Outside City refers to the Brokaw, Marshall, and Forest Natures Areas, along with the Ellsworth Tree Nursery and Storage which are outside of the official City limits of Ann Arbor, but are still part of the park system as well as the Greenbelt

SECTION I: Community Description



## D. Physical Characteristics

This section describes the physical characteristics, including both the built and natural environment, found throughout the City of Ann Arbor and discusses their relevance to parks and recreation programming.



### 1. The Built Environment

- a. **LAND USE.** Ann Arbor serves as the business/economic, cultural, entertainment, and recreation center for the greater Washtenaw County area. Approximately 50% of the land within the City is used for residential purposes. The center of the City contains a mixture of commercial, office, residential, and public land uses, including the University of Michigan Central Campus. The combined office, commercial, and industrial land accounts for 9.9% of the land in Ann Arbor.

The University of Michigan owns approximately 1,700 acres of land within the City limits and an additional 1440 acres including the Botanical Gardens and Golf Course. Roughly 485 acres are used for indoor and outdoor recreational purposes, including parkland (portions of Nichols Arboretum) and sports complexes such as the football stadium and Crisler Arena.

The Ann Arbor park system has a significant presence in Ann Arbor, with nearly 2210 acres dedicated as public park land. The park system includes pools and sport complexes such as Fuller, Veterans Memorial and Buhr Parks, as well as numerous athletic fields, recreational facilities such as Cobblestone Farm, the Farmers Market, golf courses, and community centers.

- b. **TRANSPORTATION.** The Ann Arbor area is heavily dependent on the automobile, however, public transit and non-motorized transportation are important means of transportation in the City, with approximately 30% of the workers who live in Ann Arbor choosing non-motorized or public transportation for their commute.

A transportation plan called “Moving Together Towards Vision Zero” was completed and adopted in 2021. This comprehensive plan is focused on 5 core tenants: 1) safety; 2) mobility; 3) accessibility for all; 4) healthy people and sustainable places; and 5) regional connectivity. The Moving Together Plan addresses the infrastructure deficits of the pedestrian and bicycling system with an emphasis on safety and comfort of the users.

## SECTION I: Community Description

Additionally, the City adopted the A2Zero carbon neutrality plan in 2021. This plan identifies a strategy to reduce or offset all carbon emissions by 2030. A big part of this strategy is to cut the vehicle miles driven in the community by half. The Moving Together Towards Vision Zero transportation plan and the A2Zero carbon neutrality plan are synchronized to expand upon the opportunities for sustainable transportation options.

To this end, the City has an extensive and expanding network of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. There are over 100 miles of bike facilities (protected, buffered, standard, and advisory bike lanes, shared use paths, and sharrows) and over 437 miles of sidewalks accompanied by 175 enhanced crosswalks. This level of dedication to non-motorized transportation has earned the City a gold level bicycle friendly community designation from the League of American Bicyclists and a gold level walk friendly community designation from the Walk Friendly Community program supported by the UNC Highway Research Center.

Another key mobility strategy for the community is transit. Bus service is provided by three major public agencies: the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (AAATA), the University of Michigan, and the Ann Arbor Public Schools. The AAATA, which runs the community-wide public fixed route transit and paratransit services, updated its long range plan in 2022. Central to this plan is a high-frequency transit network with transit priority features. Other key features of the plan are improved service, enhanced accessibility, transit supportive land use, and first and last mile connections.

Two railways traverse the City, including the Ann Arbor Railroad, running north/south, and the former Norfolk Southern Railroad, operated by the Michigan Department of Transportation since 2014, running east/west. Throughout the City, the railroad tracks cut off access to the river parks. A major non-motorized connection was made in late 2020 when the Allen Creek Berm Opening was completed. This project addressed significant floodplain issues while providing a critical bicycle and pedestrian path which connects the Border-to-Border Trail and downtown under the east/west railroad tracks.

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### 2. The Natural Environment

The City contains a variety of landforms, the most prominent being the Huron River valley. Other natural features include steep slopes, woodlands, wetlands, meadows, fens, and seven creeksheds that flow to the Huron River.

- a. **NATURAL FEATURES PLAN.** The City's Natural Features Plan, adopted in June 2004, identifies significant natural features located within the City, including the Huron River, wetlands, floodplains and floodways, woodlands, landmark trees, native plants, and greenway linkages. The plan provides a general description of each natural feature and identifies protection measures through goals and implementation strategies.

Within the park system, as well as other City owned-land, the Natural Area Preservation Division works as stewards of the natural areas. They maintain and improve natural areas by removing invasive species, landscaping with native vegetation, and inventorying flora and fauna.

- b. **WATER RESOURCES.** The Huron River is the central natural feature of the City, running diagonally from the northwest to the southeast. The tributaries that feed into the Huron River include Allen Creek, Mallets Creek, Honey Creek, Traver Creek, Millers Creek, Fleming Creek, and Swift Run. In some parts of the City, streams have "disappeared" into storm sewer pipes beneath the surface. The Allen Creek is one such example, whereby the stream was buried during the 1920's through much of the west and south branches.

The river within the Ann Arbor area contains four dams: Barton, Argo, Geddes, and Superior. The resulting impoundments are used for drinking water as well as recreational pond activities.

Green space dominates the shores of the river through much of the City, with ownership either by the City or the University, although both single family and multi-family developments back up to the river in several locations. Pedestrian and visual access to the Huron River is limited due in part to the railroad corridor blocking access and industrial development that was a part of the history of the river.

- c. **ELEVATION AND STEEP SLOPES.** Elevations of the City range from approximately 749 feet above sea level near the Huron River to about approximately 1,000 feet above sea level in areas near the water treatment plant (Sunset and Newport Roads) and near Maple Road and Liberty Street. Higher elevations within the City provide opportunities for dramatic views of the City's river valley. These areas of the City are located within parkland at several locations, such as the capped landfill at the Swift Run Service Center in the southeast

## SECTION I: Community Description

area, Leslie Park in the northeast area, Cedar Bend Nature Area in the central area, Ruthven Nature Area and Huron Hills Golf Course in the northeast area, and Wurster, Hunt, and Bluffs Parks and Bird Hills Nature Area in the west area.

- d. **VEGETATION AND TREE COVER.** The City contains over 43,000 street trees, 6,900 in mowed areas of parks as well as hundreds of thousands of trees in forested urban parks.

The City's tree cover varies geographically: in the downtown, large buildings, streets and parking lots dominate with mostly younger trees. Trees in the downtown area grow in disturbed soils under harsh conditions so that tree survival, let alone healthy tree growth, is difficult. In residential areas of the City, especially the older neighborhoods, tree cover is more prominent.

Between 2002 and 2008, the Emerald Ash Borer decimated thousands of Ash trees. A massive effort to remove and replant both street and park trees has helped to mitigate the loss; however, it will take many years to regenerate the urban forest. Because of this issue, a greater emphasis has been placed on diversifying the urban forest to prevent massive loss of single tree species.

There has also been an effort to convert lawn areas to native species, and to create and maintain prairies as well as wetlands and rain gardens. The change is a result of a growing awareness of the ecological benefits of deep-rooted plants that result in increased storm water filtration, as well as a desire to preserve the natural heritage of the region by restoring plant communities that were common when Ann Arbor was settled. These restoration efforts include removal of invasive species as well as collection of seeds from native species.

- e. **OPEN SPACE, GREENWAYS AND LINKAGES.** The City of Ann Arbor has always prided itself in maintaining a green image through the preservation of open space, parkland, and natural features. The Huron River provides scenic views from both the water and from areas throughout the valley. The preservation of open space along some transportation corridors has contributed to the sense of openness, including Huron Parkway, Geddes Road, Fuller Road, and Glazer Way.

The City's parks play a significant role in providing open spaces through parkland acquisition and preservation. Parks also provide natural and recreational linkages. These linkages help to protect wildlife and preserve a variety of ecological systems, while recreational linkages provide greater opportunities for alternative transportation, accessibility to parks, neighborhood connections, and enhanced community participation.

In 2003, an Open Space and Parkland Preservation Millage was passed to protect and preserve open space outside and within the City. The millage, discussed in detail in the chapter on Land Acquisition, has so far resulted in the protection 1,863 acres of farms and natural areas.

- f. **POLLINATORS.** The City of Ann Arbor recognizes the critical role of pollinators, such as bees, birds, and butterflies, in providing significant environmental benefits that are necessary for maintaining healthy, biodiverse ecosystems. Pollination plays a vital role for the trees and plants of our community, enhancing our quality of life, and creating recreational and economic development opportunities. In 2015, the City of Ann Arbor signed on to the Mayors' Monarch Pledge, an initiative of the National Wildlife Federation to engage cities and communities in monarch and pollinator conservation. Every year, the City commits to



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specific action items that will be taken in order to advance the conservation of monarch butterflies and other pollinators. At the end of the year, a report is provided back to the NWF on the actions taken. Ann Arbor has been part of the Leadership Circle of communities that have taken the pledge almost every year since 2015.

### E. History of the Parks and Recreation System

The City of Ann Arbor's parks and recreation system originated soon after the City's settlement in 1824. According to City records, the first park was Hanover Square, dedicated in 1836 and located at Division and Madison Streets, now bisected by Packard Street. By 1905, when the first Board of Park Commissioners was appointed, the park system had grown to approximately ten acres with the additions of Felch Park (now the University of Michigan's Power Center), Cedar Bend/Island Park, Fairview Cemetery, the City's first garden cemetery, and several scattered small triangular areas like "The Rock" at Washington Park located at Washtenaw Avenue and Hill Street.

In 1910, the City purchased the County Fairgrounds to create Burns Park. By 1918, the system had expanded to 122 acres and included Douglas Park, Argo Bathing Beach, the Glen (the City-owned portion of Nichols Arboretum), Riverside Park, and West Park.

In 1928, markers were erected to indicate the old Native American trail through West Park and the site of the City's original settlement on Huron Street, west of Ashley.

Federally-funded work programs in the 1930's resulted in improvements to West, Fuller and Riverside Parks, Plymouth Parkway, lawn extensions, and several smaller projects. Demand for outdoor recreation facilities greatly increased after World War II, especially ball diamonds. Substantial acquisitions in the 1950s included Buhr Park and Veterans Memorial Park (the former County Fairgrounds). The City established a tree nursery on the airport property for park and street plantings.

In 1957, the City of Ann Arbor and the Ann Arbor Public Schools Board of Education collaborated to provide a summer recreation program. They jointly established the Recreation Board, which was charged with advising all City and school recreation programming issues. The Recreation Advisory Commission has functioned continuously since its inception to advise both the City Council and the Board of Education regarding public recreational concerns.

The 1960's saw continued City growth, further major expansion of the parks and recreation system, and several particularly significant events. In 1962, the City Planning Commission published Ann Arbor's first Parks and Open Space Plan. The plan envisioned a program of



1915 Boat Livery on Argo Pond

## SECTION I: Community Description

acquisition and development to meet a 20-year need for parks and open space. It recommended acquiring approximately 710 additional acres of parkland, including a third golf course. The Leslie Golf Course, Leslie Park and Leslie Woods Nature Area, and the Detroit Edison properties along the Huron River were purchased pursuant to this plan.

In April 1966, City voters approved a \$2,500,000 bond issue for park acquisition and development. With over \$800,000 in federal matching grants, about 400 acres of new park properties were obtained, three outdoor swimming pools and three artificial ice rinks were constructed, eight major parks underwent new development, and 15 more parks were improved.

In April 1971, voters approved another \$3,500,000 bond issue for parks and recreation. Of these funds, \$400,000 was spent for the Mack Swimming Pool, \$1,000,000 was anticipated for land acquisition, and \$2,100,000 for park improvements and development with emphasis on public access to undeveloped parks along the Huron River valley (e.g., Geddes, Argo, and Barton Pond areas) in addition to neighborhood parks and playgrounds (e.g., Huron Highlands, Glacier Highlands, Lansdowne, Esch, and Sugarbush). Several parks were improved or renovated through bond funds.

Since the 1962 plan, there has been a concerted effort to complete the pattern of recreational open space along the Huron River from Barton Pond to Geddes Pond. Other significant natural areas, such as Bird Hills and Marshall Woods, have been acquired. Although Ann Arbor lacks a completed system of connected natural areas, City residents take pride in the preservation of substantial open space along the Huron River (now a State-designated Country Scenic Natural River over most of its length upstream from the City).

In 1981, the Parks and Open Space Plan was updated, laying the groundwork for a 1983 millage for Park Rehabilitation and Development. This plan also established the Citizens' Park Advisory Commission.

The 1988 Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan recommended acquisition of key parcels to enhance existing parks and serve areas that were lacking in parkland. In 1988, a ½ mil for parkland acquisition was approved by City voters. Over 306 acres of park land were acquired through this millage. Subsequent acquisition millages were approved in 1993 and 1998. Additional parkland has been acquired through the development process and via developer dedication.

In 1989, voters approved renewal of the ½ mil for park rehabilitation and development. The ½ mil that was approved for six years by the voters has allowed rehabilitation and development of neighborhood parks, as well as facilities such as the Veterans Memorial Park Arena and Pool, Cobblestone Farm, Buhr Ice Arena, and Furstenberg Park. In 1993, a .4725 mil for park maintenance and repair was approved to repair park features and facilities, catch up on deferred maintenance, protect natural areas, and increase accessibility to park and recreation resources. Voters approved a renewal of the Park Rehabilitation and Development Millage in 1995 for six more years. A major feature of the millage program was the renovation of Fuller and Buhr Park Pools.

The 1993 millage included the addition of the Natural Area Preservation Program, tasked with developing a systematic manner in which to manage natural areas. The program has

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evolved over the years to include a devoted following of volunteers and park stewards, and has expanded its reach to incorporate other City-owned land.

In 2002, a four-year Park Repair and Restoration Millage was approved to address natural area preservation, forestry and horticulture in parks, and non-routine repair and restoration for the park system. The inclusion of these activities marked a recognition that the park system had grown and evolved to the point where funding for maintenance was no longer sufficient and restoring natural areas and the urban forest was given greater emphasis. In 2006, a 1.25 mil six-year Park Maintenance and Capital Improvements millage was approved which combined the functions of the two expiring millages. In November 2012, the Millage was again renewed for the 6 year period 2013-2018. Some of the major accomplishments to date of this millage include replacement of pool liners at Buhr and Fuller Park, new siding and roofs at Cobblestone Farm, renovations to the pathways and drives at Buhr Park, renovations to the Gallup Park playground, livery and pathway, development of the Argo Cascades, and construction of the Veterans Memorial Park Skatepark.

Between 2002 and 2004, the City staff was reorganized into administrative areas instead of departments. As part of this reorganization, the Parks Department was split into two service areas, with the planning and recreation functions being part of the Community Services Area and the maintenance functions being part of the Public Services Area.

In 2007, the Park Ranger system was eliminated due to budget reductions, and the Police Department took over the role of providing security for the park system. Although controversial at the time, the change was accepted by the public and a cooperative relationship developed between service areas.

In 2008, the volunteer program was expanded into a formal Adopt-A-Park program, and included neighborhood parks and community parks in addition to natural areas. The change resulted in many more residents becoming involved with community projects. In 2011, the Give365 Volunteer Program was established, expanding volunteerism into park facilities. The program has grown quickly, broadening the scope of volunteer opportunities and projects each year. Special events staffing, programming at facilities, Adopt-A-Park, and park maintenance and beautification work days are the major areas in which residents have become involved with park stewardship.

In 2015, the Huron River was designated by the National Park Service as a National Water Trail, and Ann Arbor was named a Trail Town. The Water Trail is a 104-mile inland paddling trail, and is a project of the Huron River Watershed Council. Several locations are designated along the trail, including Argo Park, Island Park and Gallup Park. In the same year, the Border to Border trail was officially incorporated into the Iron Belle Trail, a new statewide hiking and bicycling trail stretching hundreds of miles through Michigan. The trail will run from Belle Isle Park in Detroit to Ironwood in the western Upper Peninsula along the border with Wisconsin.

Several new programs were introduced to the park system, including Foot Golf at Huron Hills Golf Course, outdoor concerts at Burns Park, natural ice rinks in several parks, swim teams and log rolling at Mack Pool, and a Passport Program encouraging park patrons to try new activities at the recreation facilities.

## SECTION I: Community Description

Significant new park amenities included the Argo Cascades, which converted an existing mill race into a series of pools and drops thereby eliminating a portage; a 30,000 square foot in-ground skate park at Veterans Memorial Park; and a third dog park located at Broadway Park. These new amenities had significant public involvement and have proven to be extremely popular additions to the park system.

In 2017, the Rotary Centennial Playground opened in Gallup Park. The playground was the City's first Universally Accessible Playground, and provides recreational opportunities for all children, regardless of ability. This project was made possible with funding contributions from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund and the Rotary Club of Ann Arbor. Several new programs were introduced to the park system supporting accessibility, including adaptive kayaking at the liveries, Gerofit aquatic classes at Fuller and Mack pools, and sled hockey at Veterans' Memorial Park. Additionally, we update a number of facilities to provide more gender neutral spaces for transgender and non-binary individuals.

In 2018, Ann Arbor voted to amend the City Charter to designate that a central city block be developed as an urban central park and civic center, known as a "commons". This area, known as the Center of the City, consists of city-owned land within the block which is bounded by Fifth Avenue, and William, Division and Liberty Streets, and includes Liberty Plaza, the Kempf House, the surface of the Library Lane parking structure (known as the "Library Lot") and Library Lane itself. City Council appointed a Center of the City Task Force to determine how to implement this decision, which resulted in a report to City Council in 2020 that included a recommendation for an advisory body. City Council responded by establishing the Council of the Commons by Resolution R-20-397.

Since that time, the Council of the Commons and the Ann Arbor City Council have created a unique administrative structure in which the Council of the Commons is responsible for recommendations and funding for the "Library Lot" portion of Center of the City, while Liberty Plaza and the Kempf House remain under the jurisdiction of Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation. Therefore, the City of Ann Arbor's Parks and Recreation Services Area and the Parks Advisory Commission are not currently responsible for the maintenance, planning, or programming of the "Library Lot" space. This has created a unique public space managed by an agency other than Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation. While the Center of the City and the Council of the Commons have been included in this PROS plan, it is not included at the same level as other park properties are because of this unique administrative structure.

In 2019 a Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund grant was awarded to Ann Arbor Parks & Recreation to make accessibility improvements to the Argo Livery. The project looked to implement improvements based on the principles of universal design at the busiest livery in the state. Improvements included accessibility updates to the existing restrooms, as well as an addition with family restrooms. A new barrier-free fishing dock, accessible kayak launches, accessible parking lot, and improved circulation in the park all improved operations as well. A rain garden was also added to manage runoff from the parking lot. The project was initially delayed in 2020 due to Covid impacts on the legislative appropriation of grant funds, and construction began in fall of 2021 and was completed in 2022.

The 2020 COVID Pandemic impacted Ann Arbor Parks & Recreation in a monumental way – much like it did the rest of the world. There were many negative impacts – constant

## SECTION I: Community Description

fluctuations in rules and policies, greatly reduced revenue due to closures and limited capacities, staffing shortages, construction postponements, to name a few. Staff worked incredibly hard through trying times to keep park operations running as best as possible. Efforts paid off, and we saw increasing park usage across the board – especially in our outdoor facilities, nature areas, and parks. Successful programming efforts, such as the contactless pick-up at the Farmers Market showcased how parks are much more than just a place to recreate. Give365 started a “Visit Every Park” initiative to re-introduce the park system to the community, promote outdoor recreation, and give people something fun to do. The Visit Every Park program was incredibly popular, with participants even providing valuable feedback to staff about park access, wayfinding, and the condition of the parks.

In 2022, building on the success of the above-mentioned accessibility projects, the City hired a consultant to develop an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan for the entire Ann Arbor Park System. The Transition Plan involves evaluating all city parks, nature areas and facilities to identify barriers and set forth a plan for correction. The study also looks at all programs, services and activities hosted by Ann Arbor Parks & Recreation, to identify accessible shortcomings. The ADA Transition Plan will help the department to plan for and budget future accessibility projects.



## SECTION II: ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

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The provision of parks and recreation services in Ann Arbor is a collaborative effort between the City of Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation Services Unit, and the Community Education and Recreation Department of the Ann Arbor Public Schools. This chapter outlines the structure of each unit as well as how these divisions fit into the City as a whole.

### A. City Administration

The City of Ann Arbor administrative structure includes five service areas covering the broad range of services provided by the City. They include the City Administration Services Area, overseeing executive management of the City; the Community Services Area, which includes Parks and Recreation, Planning and Development, and Community Development; the Financial and Administrative Service Area, overseeing the financial functions of the City; the Public Services Area, covering the infrastructure functions of the City, such as solid waste, and street maintenance; and Safety Services, which includes fire and police. Within each service area are a number of service units which carry out specific administrative and community duties. Parks is located within Community Services Area. Parks and Recreation Services Unit and includes the Recreation Facilities, Parks Customer Service, Natural Area Preservation, Planning, Administration, Greenbelt management and Park and Public Space Maintenance.

#### 1. Parks and Recreation Service Unit

The Parks and Recreation Services Unit operates under provisions established in the Ann Arbor City Charter, amended and adopted by the electorate in April 1956. The Charter establishes a department as a General Tax Fund entity, administered by the Community Services Administrator reporting to the City Administrator and, ultimately, the City Council.

The mission of the Parks and Recreation Services Unit focuses on several key elements: quality, efficiency, stewardship of natural resources, accessibility and affordability of programming, customer service and cooperation with other City service units and public and private organizations, volunteers, and the general public. The Parks and Recreation Services Unit includes Parks Administration, Recreation Facilities and Park Maintenance and consists of 40 full-time employees and approximately 350 part-time and seasonal employees. Parks

## SECTION II: Administrative Structure

Administration is responsible for the development of park policy, park planning and improvements, and the Parks and Recreation boards and commissions, including the Park Advisory Commission and Land Acquisition Committee. The Administration staff coordinates and manages the service unit while overseeing short and long-term planning, capital projects, infrastructure improvements, and budget.

The recreation facilities, which include four pools, two ice rinks, two golf courses, two canoe liveries, two community centers, a farmers market, a special events space, a senior center, an historic house, and a farm site, are managed by Parks and Recreation Services staff.

The mission of Natural Area Preservation (NAP) is to protect and restore Ann Arbor's Natural Areas and to foster an environmental ethic within the community. Their mission is advanced through various efforts such as conducting plant and animal inventories, ecological monitoring, and stewardship projects in Ann Arbor parks. These tasks are performed by 4 full-time and 15 seasonal staff, with over 12,938 hours of work.

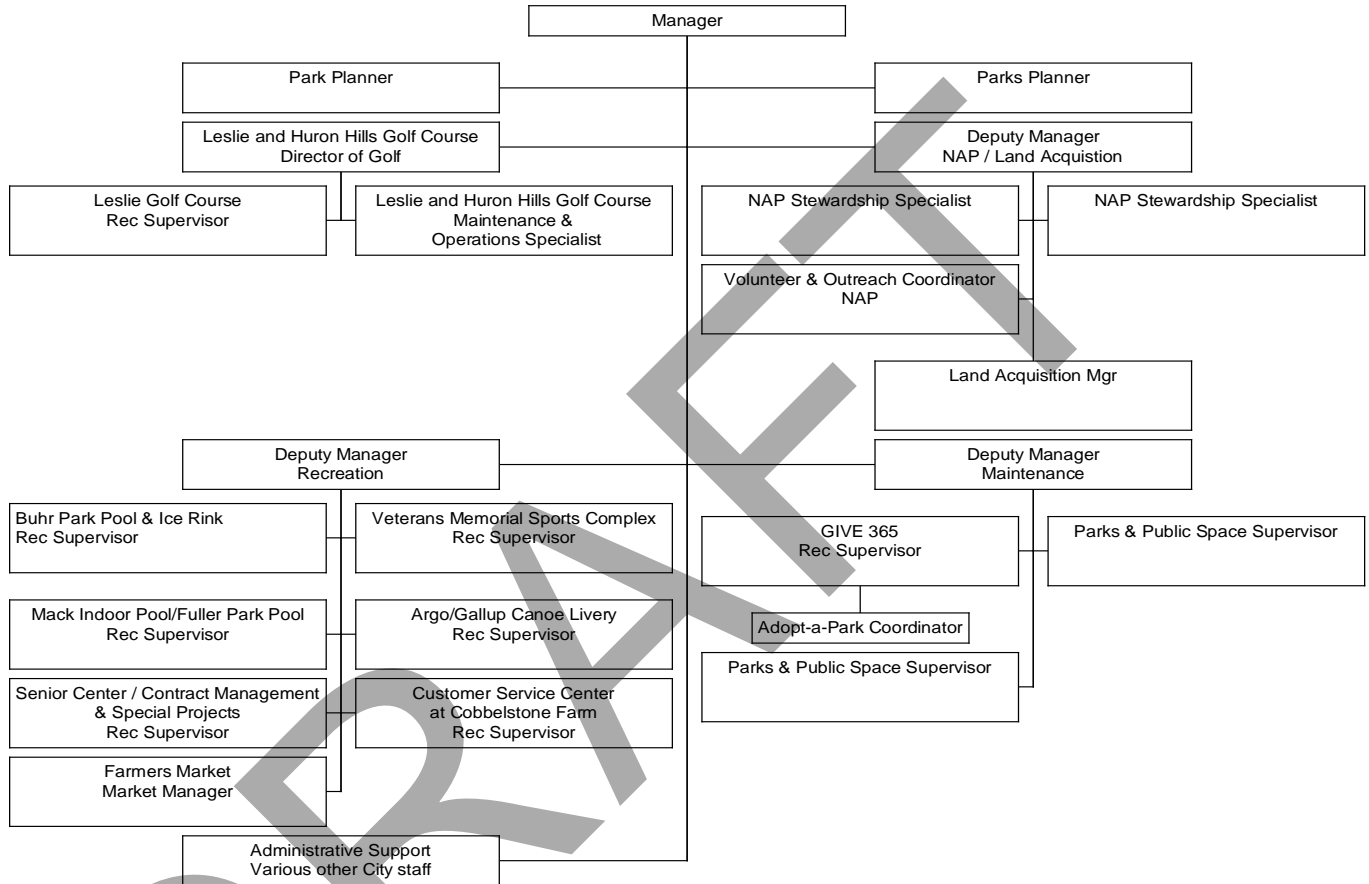
In 2011, the GIVE365 Volunteer program was established to expand volunteerism into park facilities. The program includes park maintenance, beautification work days, special event staffing, programming at facilities, and Adopt-A-Park events.. Give 365 oversaw 4,522 volunteer hours, with a recently added full time Adopt-a-Park coordinator plus 7 seasonal/temporary staff.

PARK AND PUBLIC SPACE MAINTENANCE cares for and maintains the City parks. Park maintenance is responsible for play equipment, trails and pathways, park security, snow and litter removal, turf mowing, rest rooms and shelter care, athletic field maintenance, and facility maintenance.

Prior to 2018, Park and Public Space Maintenance was housed in the City of Ann Arbor Public Services unit along with all of Forestry. To bring all park staff and operations under one unit, Park and Public Space Maintenance moved to the Parks and Recreation Unit under Community Services area. While Urban Forestry staff remained in Public Services, funding for park's forestry was allocated to the Parks and Recreation unit. This funding is for trimming and other care to maintain health of trees, removing hazardous trees, and planting of park trees.

SECTION II: Administrative Structure

**ORGANIZATIONAL CHART: PARKS AND RECREATION UNIT**





## **B. Boards and Commissions**

Citizen participation occurs at many levels, ranging from individual to organized group participation. The Parks and Recreation Service Unit engages several advisory panels to assist in decision-making that is representative of all citizens. It seeks informal advice from the public through daily contact and meetings with individual citizens, neighborhood associations, service clubs, and special interest groups. Hundreds of other citizens are involved in volunteer activities throughout the system, including performing prairie burns, acting as docents for Cobblestone Farm, cleaning up debris from the Huron River, removing invasive species, and sprucing up the downtown parks.

Officially, four formal mechanisms exist for citizen input, including the Ann Arbor City Council, the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission, the Park Advisory Commission, and the Recreation Advisory Commission. Additionally, several boards and task forces provide guidance to Parks and Recreation for specific facilities and programs.

### **1. Ann Arbor City Council**

As the policy-setting authority for the Parks and Recreation Service Unit, the Ann Arbor City Council makes all operational, development, and financial decisions after providing opportunities for public comment and hearings.

### **2. Ann Arbor City Planning Commission**

The City Planning Commission is a group of citizens appointed by the Mayor and approved by City Council that reviews the Capital Improvements Plan, including improvements by the Parks and Recreation Service Unit, as well as proposed private development projects that involve public parkland.

### **3. Park Advisory Commission**

The Park Advisory Commission was created by a resolution of City Council on August 17, 1981. The purpose of the Park Advisory Commission is to provide a consistent and formal opportunity for public involvement and perspective regarding community park and recreation services. The Commission makes advisory recommendations to the City Council and to the Parks and Recreation Service Unit regarding park administration and development.

The Park Advisory Commission is composed of nine members; eight members to be appointed by the Mayor with the approval of City Council. The Commission is responsible directly to the Mayor and City Council. Members must be residents of the City of Ann Arbor. One member of the Recreation Advisory Commission serves on the Commission as an official member. Two members of City Council (appointed by the Mayor), the Manager of Parks and Recreation, and the Executive Director Student & School Health and Community Divisions or the Executive Director's designee, serve as ex-officio members without vote. The membership consists of representative citizens who have demonstrated their interest in Ann Arbor's parks and recreation services.

The Park Advisory Commission provides advisory recommendations regarding the following issues:

- a. Park rules and regulations.
- b. Community park and recreation services philosophy.

## SECTION II: Administrative Structure

- c. Park and recreation facility policies, including, but not limited to, fees and charges, hours of operation, and scheduling.
- d. Park maintenance and forestry standards.
- e. Annual operating budget.
- f. Annual capital improvement budget.
- g. Parkland acquisitions and parkland easements or controls. A separate Land Acquisition Committee, which is a subcommittee of the whole, advises on purchases within the City.
- h. Park development/rehabilitation projects.
- i. Capital improvement and acquisition funding, including millages, bond issues, park foundation, or related programs.
- j. Major new development projects (residential, transportation, commercial, etc.) which significantly impact park and recreation services.
- k. Public information and interpretation of the total parks and recreation program to the community.
- l. Any other item which may be referred to the Park Advisory Commission by City Council or the City Administrator, or any park policy matter of concern to a commission member or community citizen.

In 2009, the Park Advisory Commission revised its bylaws to include a standing Budget Committee to facilitate communications between staff and the commission on important aspects of the parks budget and financial accounting systems. The committee makes recommendations regarding the annual operating budget, the annual capital improvement budget, and special millages for capital improvements and acquisitions. The chair of the Budget and Finance Committee is nominated by the chair of PAC, and approved by a two-thirds majority of the full Commission.

#### **4. Recreation Advisory Commission**

The Ann Arbor Public Schools Community Education and Recreation (Rec & Ed) program is an integral component of recreation planning within the City. It is governed and administered by the Board of Education. The Rec & Ed program offers a number of recreational and educational opportunities to the Ann Arbor community, including team sports, camps, pre-school and childcare programs, and life-long learning and enrichment classes for youths and adults. Many of these programs take place in City parks and facilities.

The program serves community members who reside in the Ann Arbor Public School district. The Ann Arbor school district includes all of Ann Arbor Township, the City of Ann Arbor, the Village of Barton Hills, and portions of seven other townships including the Charter Townships of Pittsfield, Scio, and Superior, and the Townships of Lodi, Webster, Northfield, and Salem.

## SECTION II: Administrative Structure

The Recreation Advisory Commission (RAC) was established and modified by City Council and Board of Education resolutions of 1957. Six members are appointed by the City Council and six by the Board of Education. The purpose of the RAC is to provide a consistent forum for citizen input regarding recreation services. The commission provides advisory recommendations and serves the following roles:

- a. Assume positive leadership in formulating a philosophy of recreation suitable to this community.
- b. Consider Ann Arbor's year-round recreation needs, both immediate and long term.
- c. Serve as an advisory body to the Parks and Recreation Service Unit, the Community Education and Recreation Department, and their staff in developing a program to meet such needs.
- d. Implement the recreation plan by recommending a budget showing the amounts financed by the City, the School Board, and by the income from fee-based programs.
- e. Communicate findings relative to needs, programs, and implementation to the City Council and Board of Education.
- f. Inform the City Council and Board of Education of essential and desirable expansion of recreational facilities involving the expenditure of capital funds.
- g. Consult and cooperate with private agencies and local sports clubs in their development of recreational programs and activities.
- h. Interpret the entire recreation program to the citizens of Ann Arbor and the Ann Arbor School District.

### **5. Park and Facility Advisory Boards and Commissions**

Several recreation facilities have boards and associations dedicated to overseeing the mission of each particular facility. These consist of the following:

- a. COBBLESTONE FARM ASSOCIATION was formed over 30 years ago and coordinates the programming and restoration efforts of the historic Cobblestone Farm property. The association integrates authentic artifacts, stories, and lives which capture the spirit of mid-nineteenth century living, and hosts educational historic programs for children and adults.
- b. DEAN FUND COMMITTEE was established in 1964 to oversee the donation from Elizabeth Dean, who willed nearly two million dollars to the City. The interest income from this bequest is used to repair, maintain, and replace trees on City property.

## SECTION II: Administrative Structure

- c. PUBLIC MARKET ADVISORY COMMISSION exists to cultivate relationships among vendors, the public, local and national governmental agencies, the Kerrytown area businesses and residential neighborhood. The Commission advises the Market Manager in advertising and promotion of the market, offers input on musical, educational, and other special events at the market, engages in strategic planning for the market, and reviews market policy.
- d. KEMPf HOUSE BOARD OF DIRECTORS is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving, interpreting, and celebrating the Bennett-Kempf house, its garden and collections. The 1853 Greek Revival house is a unique resource because of its national architectural significance, downtown location, and the contributions of the Kempf family to the musical culture of Ann Arbor. By making the house accessible to the public, the board seeks to promote understanding and appreciation of local history.
- e. COUNCIL OF THE COMMONS is an advisory body to City Council that provides recommendations for City-owned land within the Center of the City block which is bounded by Fifth Avenue, and William, Division and Liberty Streets, and includes Liberty Plaza, the Kempf House, the surface of the Library Lane parking structure (known as the “Library Lot”) and Library Lane itself. City Council established the Council of the Commons by Resolution R-20-397.

Three park facilities are owned by the City but run by private non-profits. These organizations have boards that shape policy and direction for the organization as well as to solicit input from residents.

- a. BRYANT COMMUNITY CENTER NEIGHBORHOOD ADVISORY GROUP AND NORTHSIDE COMMUNITY CENTER – Community Action Network (CAN) programs the two parks community centers while involving the neighborhood through meetings to solicit input for programs that they oversee. CAN runs a total of six community centers in Ann Arbor and is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with a board of directors to oversee the organization as a whole.
- b. TRUSTEES OF THE ANN ARBOR HANDS-ON MUSEUM AND LESLIE SCIENCE & NATURE CENTER – Leslie Science & Nature Center (LSNC) is governed by our united Ann Arbor Hands-On Board of Directors, who provide oversight and work in partnership with staff to achieve our mission. LSNC staff and united board works in partnership with Ann Arbor City staff to achieve their mission of providing environmental education and experiences for children, families, and other individuals to honor and perpetuate the legacy of Dr. and Mrs. Eugene Leslie by fostering understanding, appreciation, stewardship and respect for the natural world.

### **C. Public Input Opportunities**

Public input is considered an integral part of planning in Parks and Recreation Services. These forums are a standard part of the planning for projects involving changes to a park or facility.

1. Surveys are conducted intermittently to evaluate the entire park system, as well as specific facilities and issues. This tool has become much more widely used by Parks and Recreation

## SECTION II: Administrative Structure

Services with the availability and popularity of electronic media.

2. Public meetings are held for any capital improvement involving change of an existing facility or park. Meetings allow citizens to voice opinions and concerns directly to staff and provide an opportunity to have dialog with residents.
3. Social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and NextDoor, are used to advertise meetings, share information, and survey users about particular issues. These sites allow real time updates for programs and activities and facilitate citizen interaction with staff, providing forums for comments and opinions about park projects and programs. An added advantage is that the tools are free of charge and they eliminate the use of paper.

DRAFT



## SECTION III: BUDGET AND FUNDING

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### A. Budget Process

The Parks budget is one of the more complex within the City. The diversity of services and operations, the fact that the Parks system is budgeted in two distinct service areas, and the mixture of funding sources and revenues, makes the task of preparing the Parks budget a significant endeavor.

The budget process consists of an examination of operations to determine any new initiatives, modifications, or service level changes projected to impact the budget.

### B. Budget Calendar

The City operates on a July 1 to June 30 fiscal year and a two-year budget cycle; the first year is adopted by City Council, and the second year is an adopted plan. The budget process begins in the winter, with extensive staff time spent on budget preparation in January, February, and March. The City Administrator submits a recommended budget to the City Council in April and the Council is required to adopt the budget by their second meeting in May.

*July 1, 2022*

Fiscal Year 2023 Begins

*January –  
March 2023*

Budget Preparation – Budget is entered in financial system, impact sheets and scenarios are created, and fees are evaluated. Impact sheets are shared at a working session of City Council for feedback and direction.

*March 2023*

Staff meets with members of the Budget and Finance Committee, a standing committee of the Park Advisory Commission to review budget information.

*April 2023*

City Administrator's Budget submitted to City Council for

## SECTION III: Budget and Funding

review.

<i>April 2023</i>	PAC makes recommendation to City Council on proposed City Administrator’s Budget. Opportunity for public commentary on proposed budget.
<i>May 2023</i>	City Council adopts Fiscal Year 2024 Budget and Fiscal Year 2025 Plan
<i>June 30, 2023</i>	Fiscal Year 2023 Ends
<i>July 1, 2023</i>	Fiscal Year 2024 Begins

### **C. Annual Budgets**

#### **1. Parks and Recreation Services Funding Sources**

The Parks and Recreation Services budget includes five funding sources:

- Fund 0010 – General Fund: the General Fund supports Parks Administration, along with the all of the recreation facilities.
- Fund 0024 – Land Acquisition Funds: Revenue results from the Open Space and Parkland Preservation Millage and is used to purchase new parkland within the City limits.
- Fund 0025 – Bandemer Park Fund: this fund is designated for use specifically at Bandemer Park.
- Fund 0034 – Gifts and Memorials Fund: this fund constitutes donations and developer contributions. Expenses cannot exceed revenue recognized through donations and gifts.
- Fund 0071 – Parks Maintenance and Capital Improvements Millage: Revenue is generated through a millage levy that is then used to support capital projects, park planning functions, natural areas management and volunteer outreach.

### **D. Sources of Funding for the Parks and Recreation Budget**

The parks and recreation system is funded through a combination of general fund dollars, millages, and revenues from recreation facility programs, grants, and donations.

#### **1. General Fund**

The General Fund in Fiscal Year 2023 provides 50% of all parks funding. The General Fund is the major source for financing the City's routine operations. The largest source of revenue for the General Fund is property tax. A small portion of the overall City General Fund revenue is from sources other than local property taxes.

SECTION III: Budget and Funding

Parks & Recreation Services generates over \$5M in revenue annually through admissions, program fees and other revenue generating activities in the General Fund. No General Fund support is available for capital improvements for park rehabilitation, development, or acquisition. Functions and activities funded from the General Fund within Parks and Recreation Services have changed over the years with the closing of the Market Fund and Golf Courses Fund into the General Fund. With the passage of the current Parks Maintenance and Capital Improvements Millage more park maintenance functions and activities have become eligible for millage funding. With more routine maintenance activities eligible for millage funding, administrative guidelines that protect the total general fund contribution that Parks receives were approved by City Council. The guidelines state that “if future reductions are necessary in the City’s general fund budget, not including the budget for Safety Services, during any of the six years of this millage, beginning in the fiscal year of 2007-2008, the general fund budget supporting the Parks and Recreation System, after subtracting the revenue obtained from fees for parks and recreation, will be reduced no greater than the average percentage reduction, for each particular year, of the rest of the City general fund budget, not including the budget for Safety Services, for each of the applicable six years of this millage.”

	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	EST FY2023
General Fund: Parks and Recreation Services	\$3,838,426	\$3,334,659	\$4,040,149	\$5,148,507

**2. Property Tax Millages**

The Parks and Recreation System currently have two millages; the Park Maintenance and Capital Improvements Millage and the Open Space and Parkland Preservation Millage.

**a. PARK MAINTENANCE AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS MILLAGE**

In November 2018, Ann Arbor voters approved the six-year (2018-2024) Park Maintenance and Capital Improvements Millage. The millage annually levies a tax of 1.10 mills (as reduced by Headlee) on all taxable real and personal property within the City for the purpose of financing park maintenance activities in the following categories: forestry, natural area preservation, park operations, park security, and recreational facilities, and for the purpose of financing park capital improvement projects throughout the park system. The annual cost to a homeowner based on a median home valuation of \$250,000 is approximated to be \$137.50 for fiscal year 2017 (or \$11.46/month).

Property taxes are based on taxable valuation of properties in the City and the millage rates. Consequently, revenues increase or decrease as the total taxable value of property changes.



SECTION III: Budget and Funding

	FY2018	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	EST FY2023
MILLAGE REVENUE	\$5,744,747	\$6,125,098	\$6,977,259	\$6,703,826	\$7,000,523	\$7,803,630

Ann Arbor City Council approved guidelines for the administration of the Parks Maintenance and Capital Improvements Millage for the duration of the 6-year period, including the following:

- Annual allocation for maintenance is to be between 60% and 80% and for capital improvements between 20% and 40%, with a total annual allocation being 100%.
- If future reductions are necessary in the City’s general fund budget, not including the budget for Safety Services, during any of the six years of this millage, beginning in the fiscal year of 2007-2008, the general fund budget supporting the Parks and Recreation System will be reduced no greater than the average percentage reduction, for each particular year, of the rest of the City general fund budget, not including the budget for Safety Services, for each of the applicable six years of this millage.
- If future increases occur in the City’s general fund budget, not including the budget for Safety Services, during any of the six years of this millage, beginning in the fiscal year of 2007-2008, the general fund budget supporting the parks and recreation system will be increased at the same rate as the average percentage increase, for each particular year, of the rest of the City general fund budget, not including the budget for Safety Services, for each of the applicable six years of this millage.
- The millage is not subject to a municipal service charge, but is subject to appropriate information technology and fleet charges.

b. OPEN SPACE AND PARKLAND PRESERVATION MILLAGE

In November 2003, the City of Ann Arbor voters approved a ballot proposal commonly known as the Greenbelt Millage that authorized a .5 mil tax for 30 years. The millage provides funds for preservation and protection of parkland within City limits and farmland, open space, natural habitats, and City source waters outside the City boundaries by the acquisition of conservation easement or purchase of development rights within the designated Greenbelt District. Approximately one-third of the money raised by the millage is apportioned to purchasing parkland within the City limits, and approximately two-thirds are appointed to the acquisition of land outside the City limits.

The Greenbelt Program focuses on three areas: the purchase of development rights on farmland, building 1,000-acre blocks of protected land, and protecting natural areas and open space throughout the Greenbelt District in partnership with other local agencies. While it is difficult to assign a percentage of focus of the greenbelt

## SECTION III: Budget and Funding

acquisitions as the program is dependent upon applications, the Greenbelt Program will strive to have approximately 90 percent of the funds focused on preserving blocks of land to include farmland purchase of development rights, as well as natural areas and open space within those blocks. The remaining funds will be used to focus on open space and natural areas of other value as they fit into a broader regional plan.

On May 3, 2004, the Ann Arbor City Council adopted Chapter 42 of the Ann Arbor City Code, titled “Open Space and Parkland Preservation.” The Chapter establishes and defines a Greenbelt District and the criteria and selection process for purchase of development rights and other property rights within the district.

Chapter 42 of the City Code also established a nine-member Greenbelt Advisory Commission, their duties, and the relationship between the role of the Greenbelt Advisory Commission and the previously established Parks Advisory Commission. The Land Acquisition Committee of the Park Advisory Commission recommends purchasing parkland within the City limits, while the Greenbelt Advisory Commission recommends purchasing land outside the City limits.

### 3. Other Funding Sources

- a. Parks and Recreation Services charges fees for entrance to recreation facilities, rental of equipment, memberships, and programs, along with other activities, rentals, and special events. Revenue is also generated from concession sales, merchandise sales, and contract agreements. User and Permit Fees will continue to be evaluated as part of the budget process to make sure competitive fees are being charged, but that they also remain affordable for residents.
- b. State and federal grants have accounted for several million dollars to match local millage funds for projects. Grant programs administered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment (MDNR) have included the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, which derives income from oil and gas leases and matches local funds for parkland acquisitions and park improvements, and the state income tax-supported Clean Michigan Initiative Recreation Bond, which provides grant opportunities. Federal programs such as the Transportation Enhancement Act, the Clean Lakes Program, Urban Forests, and Small Business Administration have contributed to multiple projects. Major projects assisted by grants in recent years include the Gallup Park Livery Renovations, the Veterans Memorial Park Skatepark construction, and the Gallup Park Border to Border Trail renovations.
- c. Gifts, donations, and bequests also provide funding resources. Large bequests have recently funded the construction of a new picnic shelter and playground at Gallup Park, landscaping at all of the recreation facilities, and acquisition of a natural area on Huron River Drive. Gifts and memorials for specific tree plantings, park benches, playgrounds, picnic shelters, picnic tables, bridges, trails, etc., have allowed improvements that could not otherwise be funded. Gifts from businesses help to fund a scholarship program that provides access to recreation programs to Ann Arbor

### SECTION III: Budget and Funding

residents who are income eligible. Gifts and donations also contribute to publication of special brochures, maps, and presentation of special events.

- d. Developer parkland dedications and cash in lieu of dedication have provided much of the neighborhood parkland and improvements for over 40 years. The policy of requesting that developers provide parkland as part of the infrastructure to support new neighborhoods has helped the Parks and Recreation System keep pace with development in the City. Examples of park dedications include Cranbrook, Ward, and Foxfire Parks. Examples of cash in lieu include funding for the Farmers Market structure, playground equipment at North Main Park, and improvements to the tennis courts and playground at Woodbury Park.
- e. Volunteers assist by adopting flower beds in parks and throughout the City, as well as through natural area stewardship; helping with clean-up activities in the downtown, along the river, and elsewhere; by serving on committees and commissions such as the Park Advisory Commission; and serving as docents and instructors. Thousands of hours per year are graciously provided for various projects throughout the park and recreation system.
- f. Public/Private partnerships can help defray operating expenses and increase visibility of programs and events throughout the community as well as create potential new sources of revenue.

Examples of public/private partnerships include the food truck rallies at the Farmers Market, and the LGPA amateur qualifier held at Leslie Park Golf Course that benefits park programs. Other examples of public/private partnerships include the Leslie Science and Nature Center, which is run by a private non-profit, and Bryant and Northside community centers, which are programmed by Community Action Network.

With the exploration of partnerships, however, there is an awareness of potential associated issues. For example, cell tower companies have approached the City to discuss the feasibility of placing cell towers on park land. The proposals were reviewed by staff and shared with PAC, but it was decided that although it would have provided a source of revenue, this was not something that the City was interested in pursuing as the visual impact on the parks was undesirable.

- g. Local matching funds continue to benefit the park system. The Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority works with the City to accomplish a range of goals, including the enhancement of the downtown area for pedestrians. The DDA has contributed funding for design, construction, and maintenance for park properties within the DDA area including renovations to Liberty Plaza, Sculpture Plaza, and the Farmers Market. This partnership remains an important collaborative relationship and Parks and Recreation continues to work with the DDA to identify and develop parks open spaces and streetscapes within the downtown area as well as to maintain existing downtown park facilities.

## **E. FUTURE FUNDING**

The continuing growth of the area surrounding Ann Arbor has resulted in an increased demand for parks and recreation facilities and services at a time when operating budgets are being reduced, millage revenue is decreasing, and fixed operating costs are increasing. Additionally, our facilities, and infrastructure continue to age and will need major capital re-investment to ensure continued use in the coming years. Many of our facilities were originally built together and then needed initial updates around the same time period will all come due again for updates within the next 2 – 8 years creating a significant capital expense. Through the dedicated park acquisition millage, the City has been able to acquire land for dedicated park, recreation and open space uses. However, the cost of developing and maintaining park land and recreational facilities has reached a point where traditional funding means (e.g., property taxes, millages/bond issues, fees, etc.) are potentially no longer able to completely support the current and future needs of the Parks and Recreation System.

The current millage expires in 2024. Staff and PAC will be evaluating funding levels to determine whether the existing millage rate is adequate to maintain the current level of service, or whether an increase in the millage rate is needed to address some of the most pressing infrastructure needs. In order to provide the level of services and facilities that the community is accustomed to, staff and PAC will also be evaluating various means of additional funding sources, such as public-private partnerships, grants, dedicated millage or bond and sponsorships, beyond the current methods to help address the pressing capital infrastructure needs is viable. Each of the options bring opportunities and challenges to the department and must be thoroughly evaluated to determine if they are worth pursuing.



## SECTION IV: INVENTORY OF THE PARK, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

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The City's park, recreation, and open space inventory includes City-owned parks, natural areas, and recreational facilities. In addition, Ann Arbor residents have access to open space owned by the Ann Arbor Public Schools, the University of Michigan, neighboring townships, Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation, and State of Michigan land. Some of these facilities are located within the City's boundaries; others are located throughout Washtenaw County. Non-City owned park and recreational resources accessible to the greater Ann Arbor community are important to understanding the extent of park and recreational opportunities for Ann Arbor residents; therefore, they are listed as separate inventories within this section of the PROS Plan.

### **A. Park Inventory Overview**

As of 2016, the City's parks, recreation, and open space holdings were comprised of 159 parks (including the Tree Nursery and the Ellsworth storage facility) two of which portions are leased – Olson Park and Marybeth Doyle Park, totaling approximately 2,154 acres of land. The properties include 91 structures, including the Leslie Science and Nature Center campus, 32 ball fields, including smaller neighborhood fields, 32 tennis courts, 24 soccer fields, including youth soccer fields and informal neighborhood fields, 79 playground areas, 19 picnic shelters, approximately 70 miles of multi-use paths, 21 miles of which are in parks and the remainder outside of parks, such as Huron Parkway and Fuller Road, 38 miles of nature trails, four swimming pools, two artificial ice rinks, two 18-hole golf courses, and two canoe liveries. Approximately 72 percent of the land is unstructured and serves as open space, with approximately 1904 acres of woodland/shrubland, and 250 acres of green space, as well as wetlands, savannas, prairies, and bogs, while some 800 acres of Huron River water

## SECTION IV: Inventory of the Park, Recreation and Open Space System

surface are accessible with strategically located boat launching sites. Special facilities include a senior center, two community centers, historic houses, a farm, and a cemetery.

### **B. Park and Open Space Classification**

The PROS Plan classifies park holdings by size, level of use, type of recreation experience, degree of naturalness, and location within the City. These classifications aid Parks and Recreation in determining land acquisitions, levels of maintenance, planning for amenities in the various parks, and balancing the recreation needs throughout the City.

These classifications, however, are not always clear cut, and overlap in several instances. Several community-wide parks, for example, also serve as neighborhood parks for the residents who live in close proximity. The classifications are meant as a guide for staff and the public to understand the breadth and scope of the park system.

The classification system includes the following:

#### **1. Community-wide Parks**

Community open space serves the recreational needs of the greater Ann Arbor community by offering diverse opportunities in a more natural setting. These spaces are often much larger than neighborhood parks and can accommodate greater numbers of people for a wide variety of uses. The goal is for these spaces to be accessible by non-motorized transportation and by public transportation and also provide parking facilities and other amenities such as restrooms and shelters. These open spaces are distributed as evenly as possible throughout the City. Typical amenities include scheduled softball or soccer fields, picnic shelters, playground areas, and recreation facilities within the park. Examples of this type of open space include Fuller Park, Buhr Park, and Veterans Memorial Park.

#### **2. Historic Sites**

The purpose of labeling an area as an historic site is both to protect it and to describe its significance for interpretive programming. These facilities may be located within parks, such as the West Park Bandshell, or encompass the entire facility, such as the Kempf House. Although the facilities are historic, they often serve multiple purposes. Cobblestone Farm, for example, has both an historic house and a modern constructed barn. Although the house is used purely as an historic showcase, the barn, which was built as part of the farm, is used as a multipurpose facility for parties, meetings, and weddings. The older facilities require special care in their maintenance and daily use. The facilities are open to the public; however, some limitations are placed on their use due to their fragile nature. Additional examples of historic amenities include the Greek Revival Shelter at Island Park and the historic pergola at West Park.

#### **3. Natural Areas**

The classification of natural area provides for protection of the City's most significant natural resources. Natural areas are managed by the Natural Area Preservation division to improve their ecological integrity. Typical activities for this purpose include invasive

## SECTION IV: Inventory of the Park, Recreation and Open Space System

plant removal, prescribed burning, and seeding or planting of native species. These activities may be performed by the City or by volunteers acting under the guidance of City staff. Wildlife inventory information about birds, butterflies, frogs, and salamanders are collected to help guide land management decisions.

Some of the natural areas that are of higher floristic quality or have sensitive ecological qualities, such as steep slopes or a rare species of plant or animals, have limitations on use. Bicycles, for example, are prohibited in Bird Hills, Furstenberg and Argo Nature Areas.

### **4. Neighborhood Parks**

Neighborhood parks provide open space areas within approximately one-quarter mile of each resident. These areas are generally smaller in size and designed to attract a limited population. Parking is generally along the street. Typical amenities include a playground, basketball or tennis court, open grassy play areas, park benches and picnic tables, and a path to access the park amenities. Examples of neighborhood parks include Arbor Oaks, Bromley, Meadowbrook, and Waterworks Parks.

### **5. Recreation Facilities**

Recreation facilities serve a defined use or program which may be more specific or serve a limited segment of the population. Their use and access are generally more tightly controlled. These facilities vary in size and character depending on the intended use. Examples of these facilities include the Leslie Park and Huron Hills golf courses, the Farmers Market, the pools and ice rinks, senior center and canoe liveries.

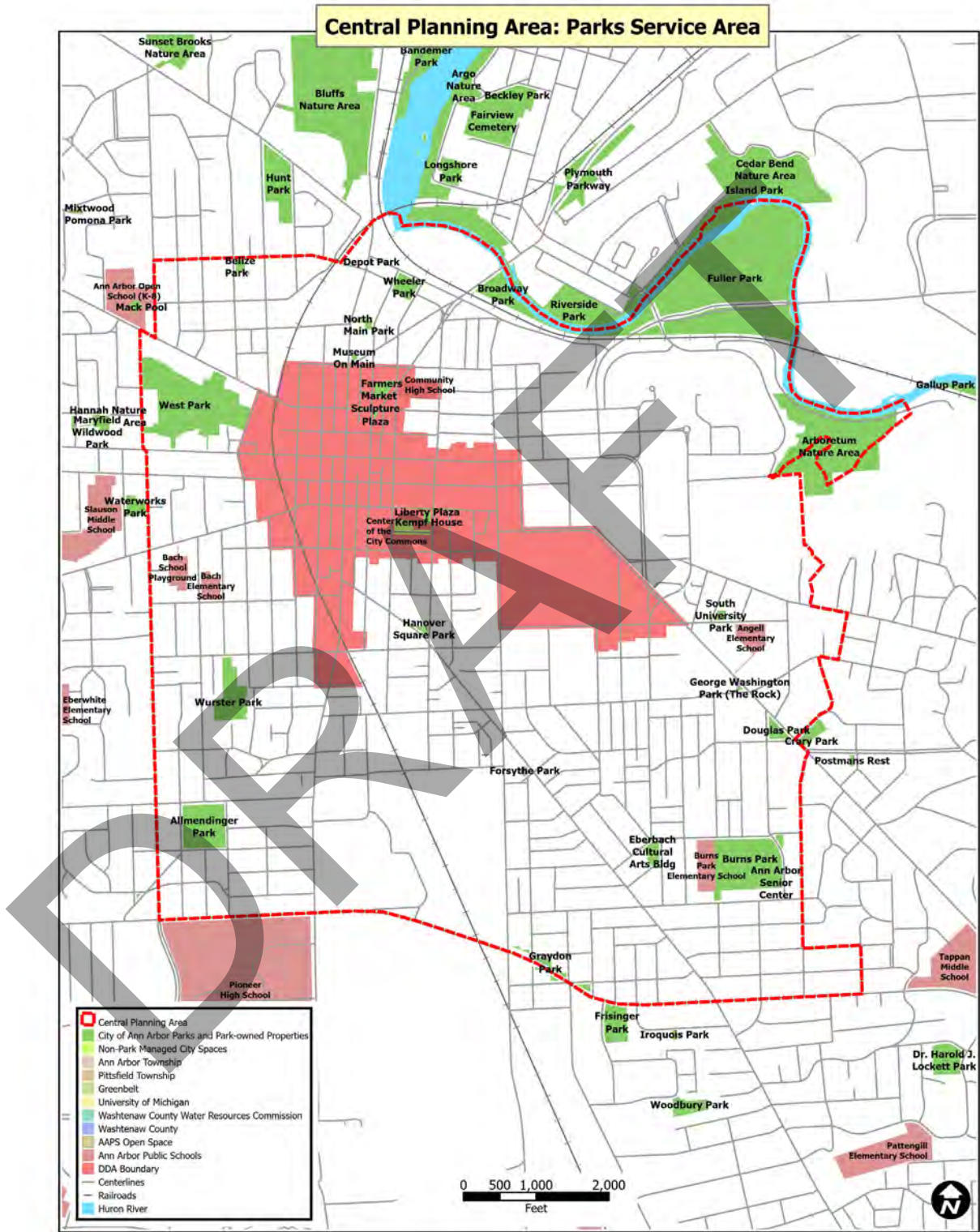
### **6. Urban Parks/Plazas**

Urban parks and plazas provide open space and pedestrian-oriented amenities in the downtown area where the surrounding population includes high-density residential and commercial districts. These areas are defined by the presence of a significant infrastructure, a greater formality, and furniture to serve a greater density of people at peak times. The plazas are generally the smallest type of park in the system and are designed to integrate with the urban setting. Plazas are characterized by harder materials such as concrete, contained flower beds, a lack of open grassy areas and play equipment. Residents and downtown employees utilize these areas as a gathering space for eating and work breaks and often serve as a location for public art and performances. They function in concert with the surrounding businesses, especially restaurants and cafes, where a cooperative effort energizes the physical space. Examples of urban plazas include Liberty Plaza, Sculpture Plaza, and Forsythe Park.

## **C. Planning Area Maps**

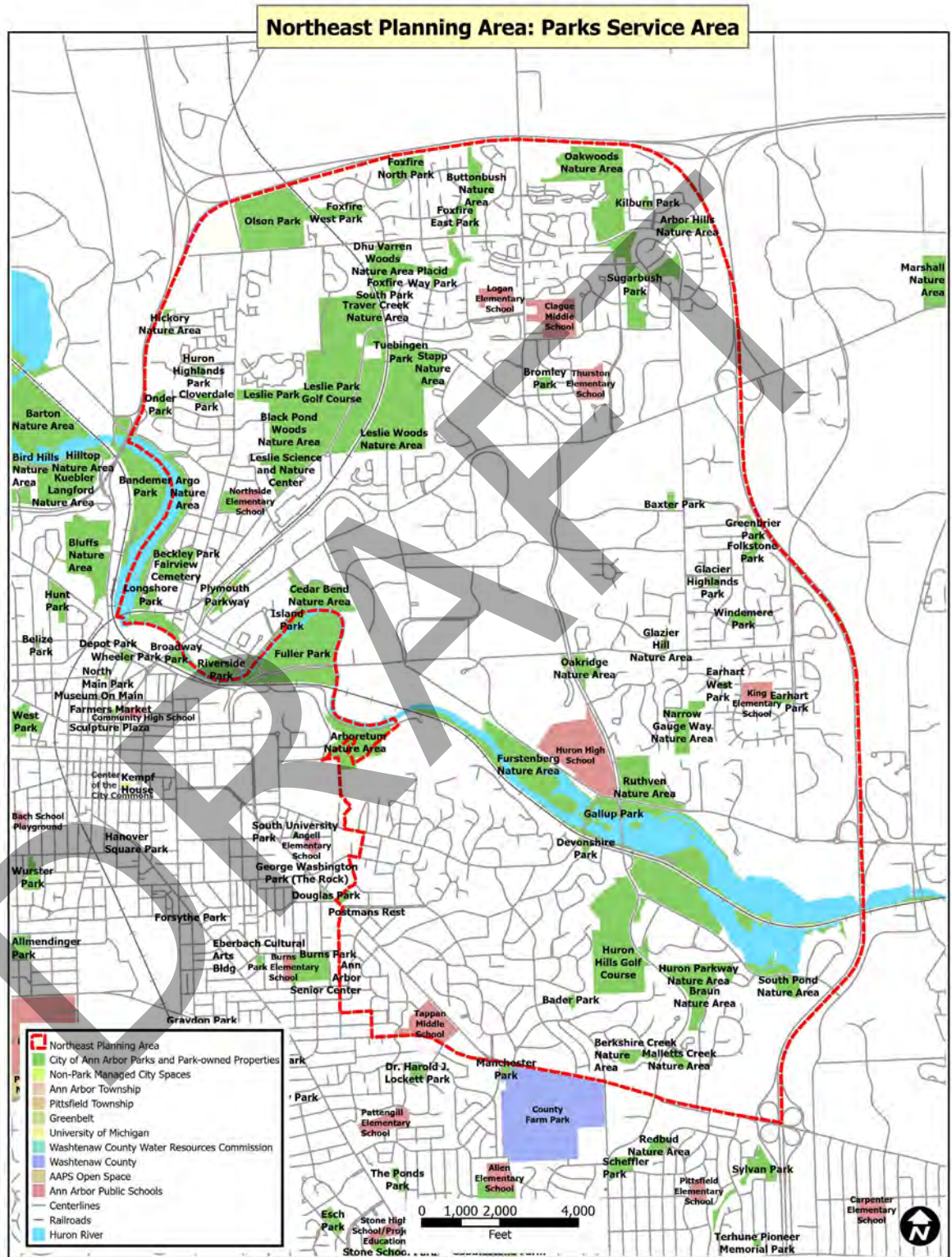
The following series of maps show the park system and other open space, including public schools, university property, and county park property in the City by planning area.

SECTION IV: Inventory of the Park, Recreation and Open Space System

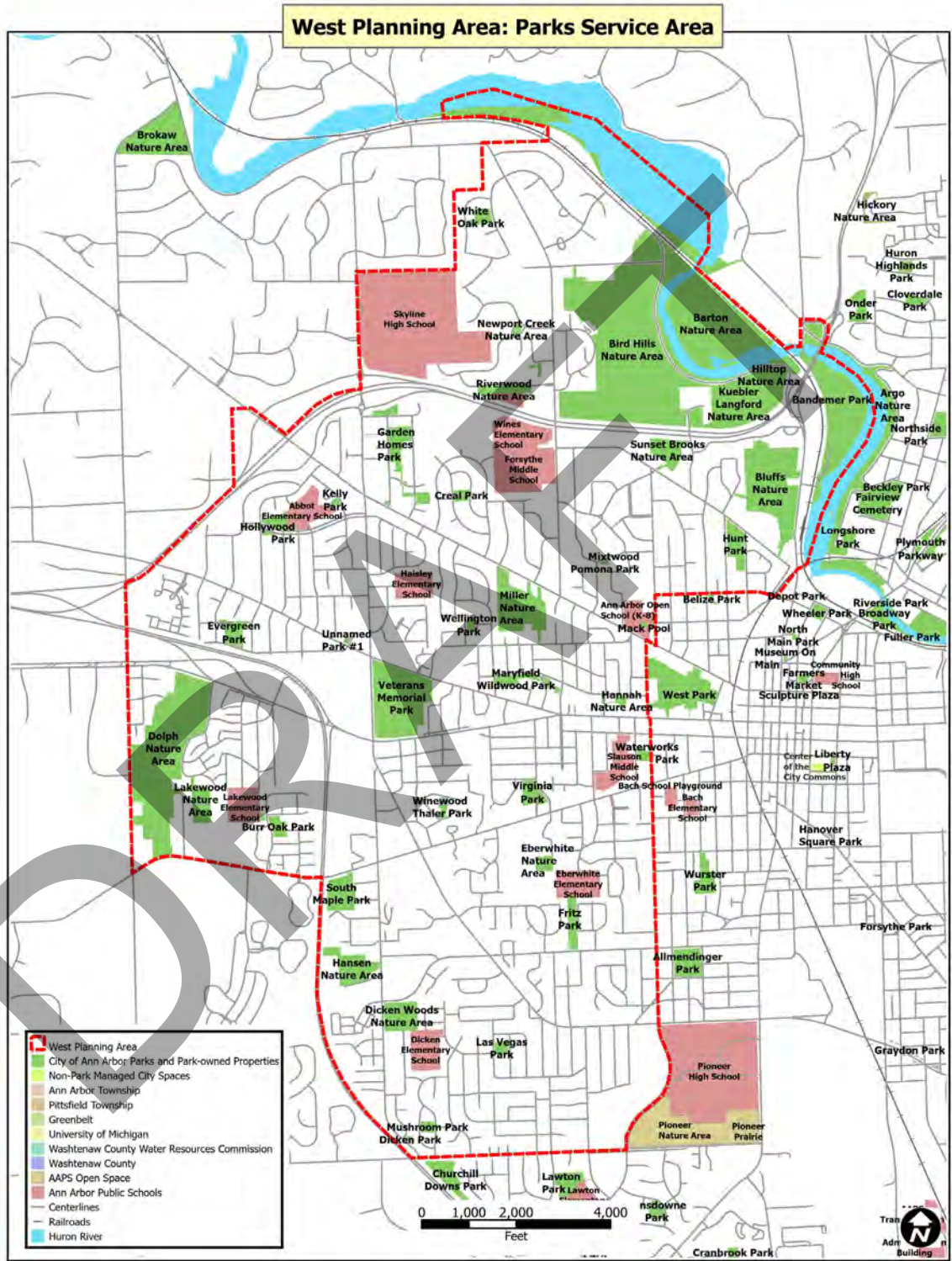




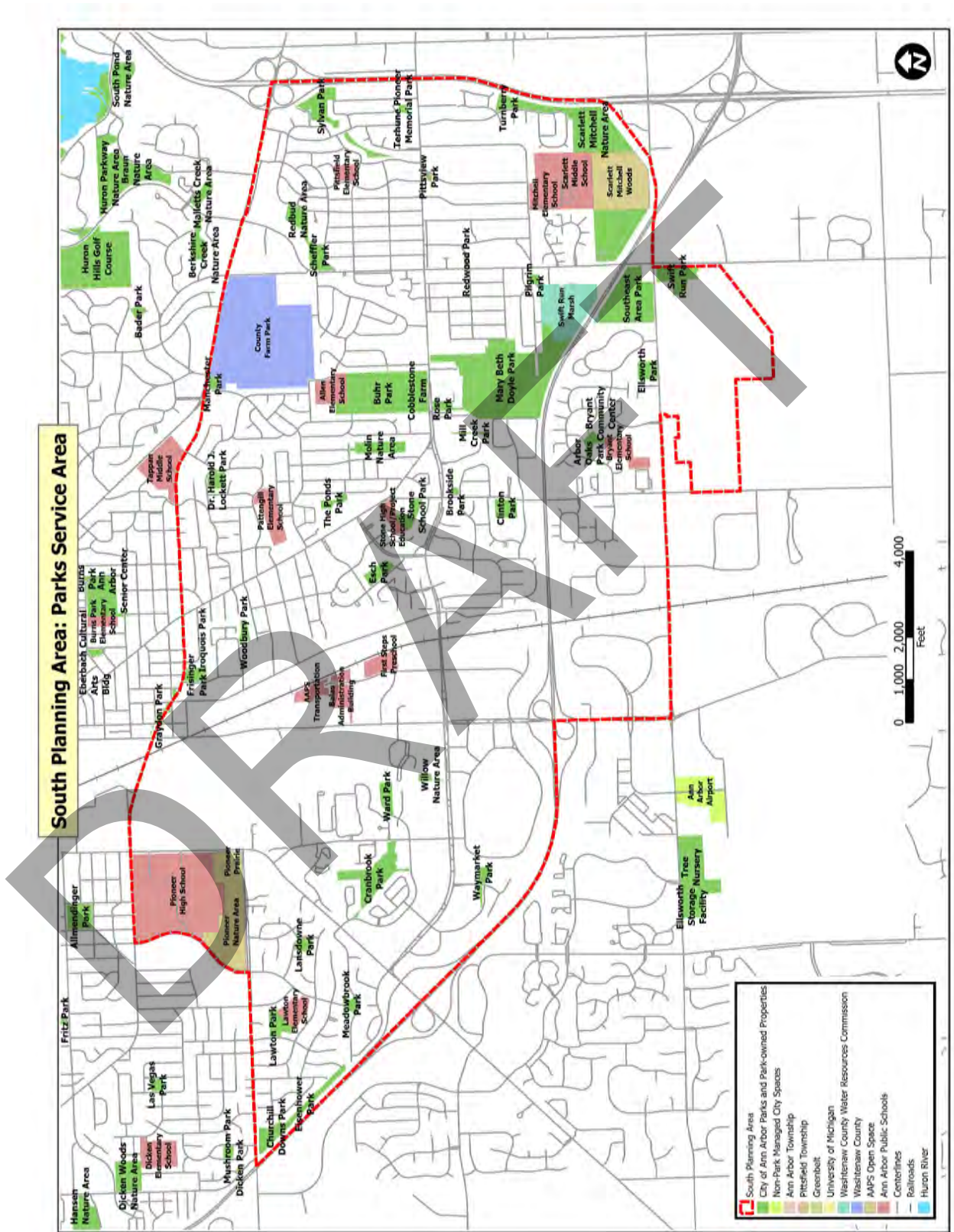
SECTION IV: Inventory of the Park, Recreation and Open Space System



SECTION IV: Inventory of the Park, Recreation and Open Space System



SECTION IV: Inventory of the Park, Recreation and Open Space System



## D. Facility Listing

### Ann Arbor Senior Center 1320 Baldwin Avenue

The Ann Arbor Senior Center is located in the Burns Park neighborhood and provides meeting space for programming that includes enrichment and educational classes, fitness programs, social programs, entertainment and special events.

### Argo Canoe Livery 1055 Longshore Drive

The facility provides canoe and kayak rentals and consists of a livery building, storage yard, and picnic shelter. Day camps are also run out of the livery and focus on river activities for teens.

### Bryant Community Center 3 West Eden Court

The Bryant Community Center is a multi-use building that provides space for youth and adult programs, community meetings, health clinics, and day camps. It is managed by the Community Action Network.

### Buhr Pool and Ice Arena 2751 Packard Road

Buhr Pool includes a zero depth tot pool with spray toys and a 25-yard lap pool. The facility offers day camps, swim classes and swim teams, as well as public swim time. The ice arena is an NHL regulation size covered outdoor facility whose activities include public ice skating, drop-in hockey, league play, and rental hours. There are four separate locker rooms, a heated lobby, and vending.

### Cobblestone Farm 2781 Packard Road

The farm includes an 1845 classic revival style cobblestone farmhouse and a replica barn used for special events, weddings and rentals. The site houses farm animals and volunteers provide interpretive programming. The Parks and Recreation Customer Service center is located within the barn.

### Farmers Market 315 Detroit Street

The market facilities include an office and meeting room as well as restrooms. There are 144 vendor stalls under the market shed structure. The market operates Saturdays the entire year, and Wednesdays from May 1 to December 31. Parking is leased to the Downtown Development Authority when the market is not in operation.

### Fuller Pool 1519 Fuller Road

Fuller Pool consists of a 50-meter lap pool, a zero depth tot pool, and a water slide. There are locker rooms, a picnic shelter, and restrooms. The facility runs day camps, Masters Swimming, swim teams, swim classes, as well as public swim time.

### Gallup Canoe Livery 3000 Fuller Road

The Gallup Canoe Livery rents canoes, kayaks, and pedal boats and was renovated in 2013 to provide universal access to docks and boats. A café and meeting room are located in the livery building. Camps, special events, and open hours for the public are offered at this facility.

## SECTION IV: Inventory of the Park, Recreation and Open Space System

### Huron Hills Golf Course 3465 East Huron River Drive

Huron Hills is an 18-hole, par 67 course located along the Huron River. The facility includes adult and junior golf instruction, special events, league play, and open golfing.

### Kempf House 312 South Division Street

The Kempf House is a local history museum with a focus on the Victorian era (1850-1910) and Ann Arbor History. The museum offers guided tours for individuals and groups and is used for special events and monthly lectures.

### Leslie Park Golf Course 2120 Traver Road

Leslie Golf Course is a championship 18-hole, par 72 golf course and was recently ranked as the Golf Digest best municipal golf course in the State of Michigan. It is located along Traver Creek, in the northern part of Ann Arbor. The facility includes adult and junior golf instruction, special events, league play and open golfing.

### Leslie Science and Nature Center (LSNC), 1831 Traver Road

The center contains 50 acres of fields, woodlands and prairie, as well as the Leslie Homestead, Critter House, office space, and Nature House. The LSNC became a 501c3 to afford better fundraising opportunities. Parks maintains the grounds and buildings. The Leslie Homestead was donated to the City in 1976, and runs camps and events, including a raptor center and programs focusing on environmental education.

### Mack Pool 715 Brooks Street

Mack Pool is connected to the Ann Arbor Open School at Mack and contains a six-lane, 25-yard pool for adults, a 30-foot by 40-foot children's pool, locker rooms, and pool office. The school uses the pool for students during school operating hours. Programs include Masters, swimming lessons, aquatic exercise classes and public swim.

### Northside Community Center 809 Taylor Street

The center is managed by Community Action Network and runs programs for youth and adults. The facility contains meeting rooms, offices, and restrooms.

### Veterans Pool and Ice Arena 2150 Jackson Avenue

Veterans Ice Arena contains a regulation 85' by 200' ice rink with spectator seating for 2,000, locker rooms, skate rental, concession area, and fitness room. Programs include ice hockey leagues and skating instruction, open skating, and special events. The 25-yard pool contains a waterslide and zero depth tot pool area with spray toys. Programs include swimming lessons, lap swim, and swim teams.

## **E. Ann Arbor Parks Inventory Chart**

The following chart shows the vast array of parks and activities offered by the City of Ann Arbor. It also summarizes the degree to which the parks are barrier free.

SECTION IV: Inventory of the Park, Recreation and Open Space System

PARK INVENTORY	ACREAGE	PLAY AREA	BASKETBALL	TENNIS	SOFTBALL/BASEBALL	TRAILS	PAVED MULTIPLE USE PATH	PICNIC TABLES	SHELTERS	RESTROOMS	DRINKING FOUNTAIN	NATURAL AREA	PARKING	SOCCER	DISC GOLF	BMX COURSE	SWIMMING POOL	CANOE RENTAL	BARRIER FREE ACCESSIBILITY*	OTHER**
Allmendinger	7.89	*	*	*	2		*	*		*	*		*						2	
Ann Arbor Senior Center	0.60									*	*		*						2	
Arbor Hills Nature Area	6.29					*						*							1	
Arbor Oaks	3.24	*	*				*	*		*	*								2	
Arboretum Nature Area	28.40					*					*	*							1	
Argo Nature Area	25.79					*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*				*		3	BL
Bader	1.64	*	*		*		*	*											2	
Bandemer	38.70					*	*	*	*	P	*	*	*	*	*				2*	CD
Barton Nature Area	98.72					*	*	*	*	P	*	*	*	*	*				1	CD
Baxter	2.00	*	*				*	*											2	
Beckley	3.17	*					*	*											2	
Belize	0.51	*					*	*			*								2	
Berkshire Creek Nature Area	5.33											*							1	
Bird Hills Nature Area	146.06					*						*	*						2	
Black Pond Woods Nature Area	32.21					*						*	*						1	
Bluffs Nature Area	41.01					*						*							1	MB
Braun Nature Area	6.59					*						*							1	
Broadway	3.78						*	*											2	
Brokaw Nature Area	23.81					*						*							1	
Bromley	2.30	*					*	*											2	
Brookside	0.70	*					*	*											2	
Bryant Community Center	0.48	*					*	*			*								2	
Buhr	42.32	*		2	4		*	*		P	*	*	*				*	*	2	
Burns	14.27	*	*	4	2		*	*	*	*	*		*						2*	
Burr Oak	3.31	*					*	*											2*	
Buttonbush Nature Area	15.30					*													1	
Cedar Bend Nature Area	19.03					*						*	*						1	
Churchill Downs	1.18	*	*								*								2	
Clinton	4.81	*	*	2	*		*	*			*		*						2	
Cloverdale	1.72	*	*				*	*					*						2	
Cobblestone Farm	3.73									*			*						2	
Cranbrook	17.87	*	*	*			*	*				*							2	
Crary	1.30																		2	
Creal	1.71	*	*		1		*	*			*								2	
Depot	0.07																		2	
Devonshire	1.12						*					*							2	
Dhu Varren Woods Nature Area	13.11					*						*							1	
Dicken	0.42						*												2	
Dicken Woods Nature Area	9.76					*						*							2	
Dolph Nature Area	76.32					*		*		P	*	*	*						1	
Douglas	1.07						*	*											2	
Dr. Harold J. Lockett	3.56	*			*		*	*											2	
Earhart	2.23											*							2	
Earhart West	0.90						*	*				*							2	
Eberbach Cultural Arts Bldg	1.21									*	*	*	*						2	
Eberwhite Nature Area	2.64					*						*							1	
Eisenhower	10.11											*							2	
Ellsworth	4.21	*	*				*	*			*								2	

SECTION IV: Inventory of the Park, Recreation and Open Space System

PARK INVENTORY	ACREAGE	PARK AMENITIES																		
		PLAY AREA	BASKETBALL	TENNIS	SOFTBALL BASEBALL	TRAILS	PAVED MULT-USE PATH	PICNIC TABLES	SHELTERS	RESTROOMS	DRINKING FOUNTAIN	NATURAL AREA	PARKING	SOCCER	DISC GOLF	BMX COURSE	SWIMMING POOL	CANOE RENTAL	BARRIER FREE ACCESSIBILITY	OTHER**
Esch	4.51	*	*		*		*			*									2	
Evergreen	5.10	*				*					*								2	
Fairview Cemetary	8.64																		2*	
Farmers Market	1.06								*	*									2	
Folkstone	3.17					*		*			*								2	
Forest Nature Area	18.99					*	B												1	
Forsythe	0.31							*			*								1	
Foxfire East	3.17					*					*								2	
Foxfire North	10.68	*	*					*											2	
Foxfire South	18.96							*			*								2	
Foxfire West	7.67										*								2	
Frisinger	3.60	*			*			*											2	
Fritz	4.95	*				*					*								2	
Fuller	59.22	*						*		*	*	*	7			*			2	
Furstenberg Nature Area	38.08					*	B		*	*	*	*							1	
Gallup	55.13	2				*	*	*	2	*	*	*					*		3	BL
Garden Homes	11.45	*						*			*								2	
George Washington (The Rock)	0.08																		2	
Glacier Highlands	1.67	*						*											2	
Glazier Hill	1.72										*								1	
Rose Park	2.34	*				*		*			*	*							2	
Greenbrier	3.18	*				*		*		*	*								2	
Hannah Nature Area	1.10										*								1	
Hanover Square	0.28																		2	
Hansen Nature Area	9.55	*				*		*			*								1	
Hickory Nature Area	2.00					*		*			*								1	
Hilltop Nature Area	7.70					*		*			*								1	
Hollywood	3.55					*		*			*								2	
Hunt	6.75	*	*	*	*			*	*	*	*								2	
Huron Highlands	1.60	*						*											2	
Huron Hills Golf Course	116.04								*	*	*	*							2	
Huron Parkway Nature Area	18.84					*		*			*								1	
Iroquois	0.19							*											2	
Island	5.64	*				*		BL	*	*	*	*							1*	
Kelly	0.56	*																	2	
Kempf House	0.13								*										2	
Kilburn	1.53	*						*											2	
Kuebler Langford Nature Area	30.46					*		*			*	*							1	
Lakewood Nature Area	7.60					*		*			*								1	
Lansdowne	2.48	*	*					*			*			*					2	
Las Vegas	1.75	*	*					*		*									2	
Lawton	5.28																		2	
Leslie Park	38.82	2	2	3	2	*	*	*	P		*	*							2	
Leslie Park Golf Course	149.54								*	*	*	*							2	
Leslie Science Center	14.69					*		*	*	*	*	*							2	
Leslie Woods Nature Area	23.12					*		*			*								1	
Liberty Plaza	0.26							*		*									2	
Longshore	2.27	*						*											2	

SECTION IV: Inventory of the Park, Recreation and Open Space System

PARK INVENTORY	ACREAGE	PLAY AREA	BASKETBALL	TENNIS	SOFTBALLBASEBALL	TRAILS	PAVED MULTUUSE PATH	PICNIC TABLES	SHELTERS	RESTROOMS	DRINKING FOUNTAIN	NATURAL AREA	PARKING	SOCCER	DISC GOLF	BMX COURSE	SWIMMING POOL	CANOE RENTAL	BARRIER FREE ACCESSIBILITY	OTHER
Mack Pool	0.31									*	*		*				*		2	
Malletts Creek Nature Area	3.40											*							1	
Manchester	1.17																		2	
Marshall Nature Area	88.51					*					*	*	*						1*	
Mary Beth Doyle	80.85	*	*			*	*	*			*	*	*		*				2	
Maryfield Wildwood	4.74	*	*		*		*				*	*	*						2	
Meadowbrook	2.18	*	*				*												2	
Mill Creek	1.09																		2	
Miller Nature Area	22.53					*						*							1	
Mixtwood Pomona	0.34	*					*												2	
Molin Nature Area	7.11					*						*							2	
Museum On Main	0.15												*						2	
Mushroom	1.54	*					*												2	
Narrow Gauge Nature Area	12.92					*						*							1	
Newport Creek Nature Area	1.00											*							1	
North Main	0.47	*					*												2	
Northside	5.21	*	*	*	2		*	*	*	*	*								2	
Oakridge Nature Area	7.51					*						*							1	
Oakwoods Nature Area	22.44					*						*							1	
Olson	54.58	*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	2					2*	MB
Onder	4.24																		1	
Pilgrim	1.38	*	*				*				*								2	
Pittsview	0.59																		2	
Placid Way	1.32	*					*	*					*						2	
Plymouth Parkway	6.02	*					*	*											2	
Postmans Rest	0.23						*												2	
Redbud Nature Area	5.11					*						*							1	
Redwood	0.54					*													2	
Riverside	9.49	*		*		*	*		P			*							2	
Riverwood Nature Area	4.71											*							1	
Graydon Park	1.14	*					*				*								2	
Ruthven Nature Area	20.58					*						*							1	
Scarlett Mitchell Nature Area	49.37					*						*							1	
Scheffler	5.91	*	*		*		*		P	*	*	*	*						2	RH
Sculpture Plaza	0.09						*												2	
South Maple	9.43	*		2	*		*				*	*	*						2	
South Pond Nature Area	18.37					*						*							2	
South University	0.44		*				*												2	
Southeast Area	28.05	2	*		2	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	2					2*	
Stapp Nature Area	8.10					*						*							1	
Stone School	4.62					*						*							2	
Sugarbush	30.29	3	*	2	*	*	*	*			*	*	*						2	
Sunset Brooks Nature Area	7.82					*						*							1	
Swift Run	9.86																		2	
Sylvan	12.05	*		*		*	*	*				*							2	
Terhune Pioneer Cemetery	0.90																		2	
The Ponds	2.26	*					*					*							2	
Traver Creek Nature Area	5.10					*						*							1	



SECTION IV: Inventory of the Park, Recreation and Open Space System

PARK INVENTORY	ACREAGE	FACILITIES																		
		PLAY AREA	BASKETBALL	TENNIS	SOFTBALL/BASEBALL	TRAILS	PAVED MULT-USE PATH	PICNIC TABLES	SHELTERS	RESTROOMS	DRINKING FOUNTAIN	NATURAL AREA	PARKING	SOCCER	DISC GOLF	BMX COURSE	SWIMMING POOL	CANOE RENTAL	BARRIER FREE ACCESSIBILITY*	OTHER**
Tuebingen	7.13										*								2	
Turnberry	8.27	*						*			*								2	
Unnamed Park #1 (Dexter & N Maple)	0.34																		2	
Veterans Memorial	36.77	*		3	5	*		*	*	*		*					*		2	SP
Virginia	4.94	*	*		*			*		*		*							2	
Ward	4.37	*				*		*											2	
Waterworks	1.48	*						*											2	
Waymarket	2.95	*						*											2	
Wellington	1.19	*						*											2	
West	23.17	*	*	2	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	2	BS
Wheeler	1.93	*	*			T		*	*	*									2	T
White Oak	3.07	*				*					*								2	
Willow Nature Area	1.29																		1	
Windemere	3.96	*		2	*			*	*	*									2	
Winewood Thaler	1.75	*	*					*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	2	
Woodbury	2.11	*	*	2				*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	2	
Wurster	5.91	*						*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	2	

\* Barrier-Free Accessibility

- 1 = None of the facilities / park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 2 = Some of the facilities / park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 3 = Most of the facilities / park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 4 = The entire park meets accessibility guidelines
- 5 = The entire park was developed/renovated using principles of universal design

Other Key Items:

BL=Boat launch, BS=Band Shell, BW=Boardwalk, CD=canoe dock  
 MB=Mountain bike trails, P=portable restrooms, RH=Roller hockey court, T=track, SP=skate park

\* Barrier Free Scores with an asterisk have not been finalized in the ADA Transition Plan. Score given is an estimate

**ADA Transition Plan**

An ADA Transition Plan will be developed over an approximately 10-month period which began in May 2022 and is scheduled to continue into February 2023. Altura Solutions (Altura) is based in Austin, Texas and serves as the sole consultant providing project management and accessibility consulting services, develop a plan to include stakeholder participation through public meetings, open houses, and online surveys, and provide staff training opportunities regarding ADA Title II compliance.

Altura Solutions has completed a self-assessment of all park properties, including neighborhood parks, community parks, facilities, and nature areas. Each park property was given a Barrier Free Accessibility Score that relates to the MDNR Scoring matrix.

SECTION IV: Inventory of the Park, Recreation and Open Space System

Two different technical accessibility standards were used based on the date of construction. The 2010 Standards for Accessible Design (2010 Standards) were applied to parks and facilities that were constructed or renovated after March 15, 2012, and the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) were applied to parks and facilities that were constructed or renovated between 1991 and March 2012. Technical accessibility standards refer to different types of architectural elements and how to make them compliant. Several elements that were not previously scoped in the ADAAG now have technical requirements within the 2010 Standards. Those elements are not safe harbored by the ADA and must comply with the latest standards. Where dates of construction and alterations of the facilities could not be determined, the 2010 Standards were used as the technical standard for those facilities.

**F. Ann Arbor Public Schools Inventory**

The Ann Arbor Public Schools have 32 sites, including elementary, middle, and high schools. The school grounds contain open spaces used by the public, including ball fields, play areas, and nature areas with trails.

<b>Public School Facilities</b>	Acreage	Play Area	Basketball	Tennis	Softball	Baseball	Soccer	Natural Area	Swimming Pool	Parking	Artificial Turf Field	Other
<b>ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SITES</b>												
Abbot School	12.00	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Allen School	10.50	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Angell School	3.00	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ann Arbor Open School at Mack	7.00	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Bach School	7.80	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Bryant School	7.40	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Burns Park School	4.00	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Carpenter School	11.00	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Dicken School	10.00	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Eberwhite School	42.20	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Haisley Elementary School	10.00	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School	9.96	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Lakewood Elementary School	18.00	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Lawton Elementary School	7.70	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Logan Elementary School	9.75	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Mitchell Elementary School	10.00	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Northside Elementary School	7.76	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Pattengill Elementary School	11.33	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Pittsfield Elementary School	4.00	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Thurston Elementary School	24.75	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Wines Elementary School	10.00	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<b>MIDDLE SCHOOL SITES</b>												
Clague Middle School	23.50	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Forsythe Middle School	26.00	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Scarlett Middle School	69.70	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Slauson Middle School	12.00	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Tappan Middle School	20.00	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<b>HIGH SCHOOL SITES</b>												
Community High School	3.20	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Huron High School	55.50	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Pioneer High School (includes Greenview)*	177.00	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Skyline High School	110.00	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Stone High School	6.50	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<b>OTHER FACILITIES</b>												
Pre-School & Family Center		*						*		*		*

\*The City historically maintains walking trails and other portions of Greenview

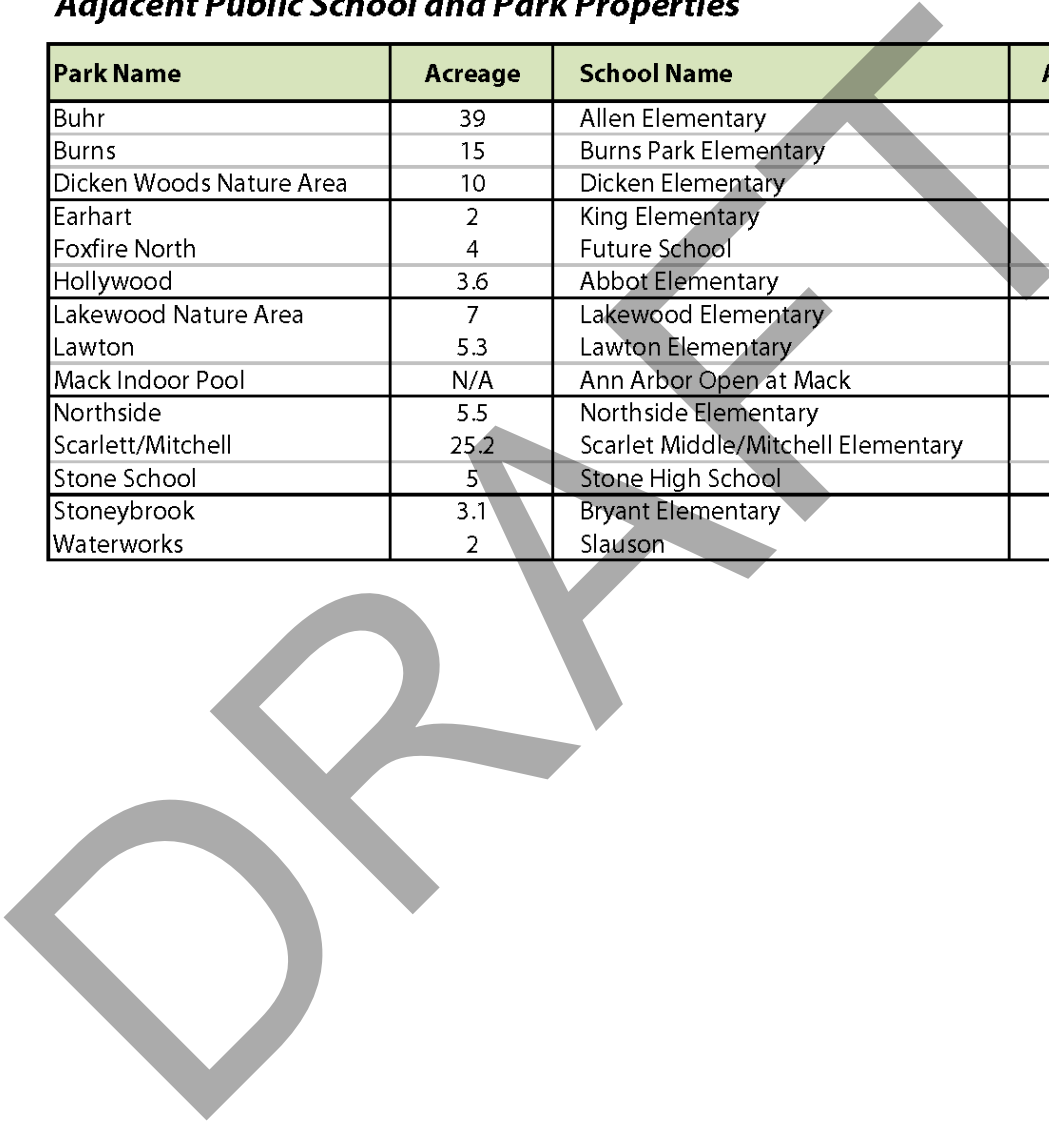
SECTION IV: Inventory of the Park, Recreation and Open Space System

**1. Adjacent School and Public Park Properties**

Both the City park system and the Public Schools system share several sites that are utilized by both the community and the students. Sites contain active recreation, such as softball fields, tennis courts, playgrounds, and natural areas.

***Adjacent Public School and Park Properties***

<b>Park Name</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>School Name</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
Buhr	39	Allen Elementary	10.5
Burns	15	Burns Park Elementary	4
Dicken Woods Nature Area	10	Dicken Elementary	12.4
Earhart	2	King Elementary	10
Foxfire North	4	Future School	6
Hollywood	3.6	Abbot Elementary	12
Lakewood Nature Area	7	Lakewood Elementary	18
Lawton	5.3	Lawton Elementary	7.7
Mack Indoor Pool	N/A	Ann Arbor Open at Mack	7
Northside	5.5	Northside Elementary	2.2
Scarlett/Mitchell	25.2	Scarlet Middle/Mitchell Elementary	79.7
Stone School	5	Stone High School	6.5
Stoneybrook	3.1	Bryant Elementary	10.4
Waterworks	2	Slason	12



SECTION IV: Inventory of the Park, Recreation and Open Space System

**2. Recreation Inventory of School and City Program Offerings**

Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation Services and the Ann Arbor Public Schools Community Education and Recreation Program jointly offer the following activities to City residents and to families and individuals residing within the Ann Arbor Public School District:

**Recreation Program Inventory**

	Day Camps	Athletic Leagues for Adults	Cultural Arts Programs	Instructional Programs	Adapted Recreation Programs	Special Events	Athletic Activities for Youth	Exercise Classes	Senior Adult Programs	Swim Teams	Environmental Education	Historic Programs
<b>Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation</b>												
Ann Arbor Senior Center			•	•		•		•	•			
Argo Canoe Livery	•			•	•	•	•					•
Bandemer Park				•		•	•					
Bryant Community Center	•			•		•		•				
Buhr Pool and Ice Rink	•	•		•		•	•	•		•		
Cobblestone Farm			•	•		•						•
Farmers Market				•		•						
Fuller Park Pool	•			•		•	•	•				
Gallup Canoe Livery	•			•	•	•						•
Huron Hills Golf Course		•		•		•	•		•			
Kempf House			•			•						•
Leslie Golf Course		•		•		•			•			
Leslie Science and Nature Center	•			•		•	•					•
Mack Indoor Pool				•	•	•				•		
Northside Community Center	•			•		•						
Veterans Pool and Ice Rink	•	•		•		•	•			•		
<b>Community Education &amp; Recreation</b>												
Eberbach Cultural Arts			•	•	•			•				
Public School Buildings	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•

## **G. OTHER AGENCY OPEN SPACE INVENTORY**

Other public and semi-public agencies provide a significant amount of public space used by the community as they are within close enough proximity that Ann Arbor residents consider them part of the open space/recreation landscape.

Four public agencies that provide recreation and open space opportunities in and around Ann Arbor include the University of Michigan, which owns significant acreage of open space within the City; the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission, which oversees 13 parks, including natural areas, water parks, golf courses, and parks within the City limits; Huron Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA), which provides large-scale, regional recreation facilities; and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment, which provides a system of state parks, forests, and recreation and game areas.

### Center of the City:

In 2018, Ann Arbor voted to amend the City Charter to designate that a central city block be developed as an urban central park and civic center, known as a “commons”. This area, known as the Center of the City, consists of city-owned land within the block which is bounded by Fifth Avenue, and William, Division and Liberty Streets, and includes Liberty Plaza, the Kempf House, the surface of the Library Lane parking structure (known as the “Library Lot”) and Library Lane itself. City Council appointed a Center of the City Task Force to determine how to implement this decision, which resulted in a report to City Council in 2020 that included a recommendation for an advisory body. City Council responded by establishing the Council of the Commons by Resolution R-20-397.

Since that time, the Council of the Commons and the Ann Arbor City Council have created a unique administrative structure in which the Council of the Commons is responsible for recommendations and funding for the “Library Lot” portion of Center of the City, while Liberty Plaza and the Kempf House remain under the jurisdiction of Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation. Therefore, the City of Ann Arbor’s Parks and Recreation Services Area and the Parks Advisory Commission are not currently responsible for the maintenance, planning, or programming of the “Library Lot” space. This has created a unique public space managed by an agency other than Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation. While the Center of the City and the Council of the Commons have been included in this PROS plan, it is not included at the same level as other park properties are because of this unique administrative structure.

SECTION IV: Inventory of the Park, Recreation and Open Space System

**H. NEIGHBORING TOWNSHIPS AND CITIES**

Communities adjacent to and within the proximity of Ann Arbor provide open space for their residents that are also used by the local community. Trail systems connect some of these park spaces to Ann Arbor, including the Border to Border trail, which aims to link park systems along the Huron River.

<b>Neighboring Townships and Cities</b>	Play Area	Basketball	Tennis	Softball	Baseball	Soccer	Trails	Paved Multi-use Path	Picnic Tables	Shelters	Restrooms	Drinking Fountain	Natural Area	Swimming Pool	Ice Rink	Canoe Rental	Parking	Undeveloped	Other
<b>Ann Arbor Township</b>																			
Braun Park																			•
<b>Pittsfield Township</b>																			
Lillie Park							•			•									•
Montibeller Park	•		•		•		•		•		•							•	•
P.G Palmer Park																			•
Pittsfield Preserve	•						•		•	•			•						
Firehall Park/Township Hall																			•
Township Park & Community Center	•				•				•	•								•	•
<b>Scio Township</b>																			
NO FACILITIES																			
<b>Ypsilanti Township</b>																			
Appleridge	•	•			•				•										
North Hydro Park									•										•
Big Island Park													•						
Ford Lake Park	•		•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•			•		•		•
North Bay Park	•						•		•	•	•								•
Bud and Blossom	•				•				•										
Burns	•		•		•				•										
CC Complex	•		•		•				•	•	•								•
Clubview	•		•		•		•												•
Fairway Hills																			
Ford Heritage																			
Harris Road	•				•				•	•	•								
Lakeside	•								•	•	•								•
Lakeview	•				•				•										
Loon Feather Park	•								•	•	•						•		•
Nancy	•				•				•										
Pines	•				•				•										•
Rambling Road	•	•			•				•										
South Hydro Park																			•
Sugarbush	•	•			•				•										
Tot Lot	•								•										
Water Tower	•								•										
Southwest Park																		•	

SECTION IV: Inventory of the Park, Recreation and Open Space System

<b>Neighboring Townships and Cities (con't.)</b>	Play Area	Basketball	Tennis	Softball	Baseball	Soccer	Trails	Paved Multi-use Path	Picnic Tables	Shelters	Restrooms	Drinking Fountain	Natural Area	Swimming Pool	Ice Rink	Canoe Rental	Parking	Undeveloped	Other
<b>City of Saline</b>																			
Brecon Park	•	•	•				•		•								•		
Curtiss Park	•		•		•		•		•	•		•							
Mill Pond Park	•					•	•		•	•		•						•	
Peoples Park		•	•						•			•						•	
Canterbury Park	•								•										
Marlpool Tot Lot	•	•																	
Colony Park	•								•			•							
Stonecliff Park																			•
Tefft Park	•	•	•	•					•				•	•				•	•
<b>City of Ypsilanti</b>																			
Candy Cane Park	•			•	•					•									
Carrie Mattingly Lot	•																		
Charles Street Tot Lot	•								•										
Edith Hefley Park	•								•										
Frog Island Park						•													•
Gilbert Park	•				•														
Parkridge Park/Community Center	•	•	•	•					•	•									•
Penninsular Park									•	•									•
Prospect Park	•	•	•	•	•				•	•									
Riverside Park	•								•	•									•
Waterworks Park				•					•	•									

**I. Private and Nonprofit Recreation Service Providers**

The Ann Arbor area has a wealth of private recreation, arts, and fitness providers. In some cases, they offer the community a more advanced level and more intensive or frequent opportunities to participate in recreational outlets, as well as offer facilities and programs that municipal agencies do not, such as bowling. In many cases the City and/or schools provide spaces for these groups. They also tend to be more expensive than the programs offered by Community Education and Recreation and Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation. The PROS Plan does not include an inventory of these private facilities.

SECTION IV: Inventory of the Park, Recreation and Open Space System

**J. Natural Area Inventory Data**

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Acres Burned	164	138	130	106	64	67
Number of Parks Burned	23	23	18	17	7	18
Pounds of Invasive Plants Pulled	NA	7.77	5.01	7.22	4.4	17.33
Volunteer Hours	10726	11366	11056	11103	7447	13055
Individual Birds Observations	8109	11544	11190	13304	16553	16539
Individual Reptile/Amphibian Observations	414	245	313	237	1291	1354

Number of Species in All Parks	quantity
Birds	248
Plants	1114
Reptiles/Amphibians	30
Butterflies	81

**K. Grant Inventory**

Below is a list of grants that have been received by the Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation system from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Clean Michigan Initiative Recreation Bond Fund, and the 1988 Recreation Bond Fund.

**GRANT INVENTORY**

Project	Project Number	Application Year	Grant Amount	Project Description
Geddes Pond Development	26-00499	1973	\$ 150,000.00	Development of Gallup Park, including pathways, docks, park furniture
Gallup Park Pathway	26-00870	1977	\$ 25,191.18	Development of pathway along Huron River
Leslie Park Development	26-01023 A4	1977	\$ 39,247.08	Tennis courts, sidewalk, landscaping, picnic equipment, parking lot delineations



SECTION IV: Inventory of the Park, Recreation and Open Space System

Riverside Park Redevelopment	26-01080	1978	\$ 22,609.79	Shoreline stabilization and restoration, play area, pathway, park furniture
Hunt Park Redevelopment	26-01060 G2	1978	\$ 12,501.87	Play area, picnic area, pathway, drinking fountain, benches, relocate ball diamond, picnic equipment
Straight Property Acquisition	26-01060 P1	1978	\$ 27,000.00	To acquire approximately 9 acres of land to be used for public outdoor recreation purposes.
Green/Baxter Park Development	26-01107	1980	\$ 15,086.00	Walkway, landscaping, game court, playground, picnic area
Johnson-Greene Parkland	TF624	1982	\$ 250,000.00	Acquisition of 32 acres for first phase of Bandemer Park
Gallup Park Improvements	26-01257	1983	\$ 58,312.00	Construction of canoe livery, interpretive displays, docks, play area, landscaping, park furniture
Island Park Improvements	26-01385	1985	\$ 134,556.47	Play equipment, river stabilization, walkway, shelter renovations, barrier free modifications to restroom, pedestrian bridge, park furniture
Bandemer Park Development	BF89-411	1989	\$ 380,000.00	Development of Bandemer Park, including pathways, picnic shelter, docks, parking area, park furniture
Veterans Park Ice Arena	BF90-371	1990	\$ 700,000.00	Replace ice arena slab, upgrade sound system, renovate pool and filtration system, barrier free access improvements, locker room and fitness area renovations
Hawkins Property	TF88-132	1990	\$ 281,250.00	Addition of 8 acres to Bandemer Park
Black Pond Woods Acquisition	TF90-373	1990	\$ 875,000.00	Acquisition of 32.21 acres of natural area

SECTION IV: Inventory of the Park, Recreation and Open Space System

				adjacent to Leslie Science Center
Sias Parcels A and B (Dhu Varren Woods)	TF91-274	1991	\$ 321,000.00	Acquisition of 13.5 acres for Dhu Varren Woods Natural Area
Gunn Property Acquisition (Huron Parkway Park Nature Area)	TF91-275	1991	\$ 517,600.00	Acquisition of 13.11 acres for Huron Parkway Nature Area
West Park Bandshell Renovations	26-01500	1991	\$ 93,276.00	Renovation of historic bandshell, included rebuilding arch, resurfacing stucco
Ganzhorn Subdivision Lots (Kuebler Langford Park)	TF92-115	1992	\$ 87,300.00	Acquisition of 29.97 acres for Kuebler Langford Park
Evergreen Sub. Lots	TF92-116	1992	\$ 37,400.00	Acquisition of 3.14 acres of land for Evergreen neighborhood park
Furstenberg Park	TF92-117	1992	\$ 375,000.00	Development of Phase II of Furstenberg Park, including restroom building, boardwalk, interpretive signage, and landscaping
SE Area Park Improvements - Phase II	26-01554	1994	\$ 266,476.00	Development of Southeast Area Park including game courts, playgrounds, ball fields, picnic shelter, pathways
Traverwood Woods Acquisition	TF94-226	1994	\$ 280,000.00	Acquisition of 8.1 acres of natural area
Renovate Neighborhood Parks (Clinton Park)	TF95-225	1995	\$ 70,000.00	Renovations to play areas and park amenities at Winewood Thaler, Bromley, Clinton and Wurster Parks
Main Street Property Acquisition	TF95-227	1995	\$ 726,000.00	Addition of 17.77 acres of natural area to Bluffs Park
Southeast Area Park Addition	TF96-130	1996	\$ 293,250.00	Addition of 25.69 acres to Southeast Area Park for active recreation
Leslie Environmental Center	TF96-132	1996	\$ 500,000.00	Construction of Nature House - state-of-the-art sustainable construction for programs and functions
Scarlett-Mitchell Addition	TF98-089	1998	\$ 675,500.00	Addition of 25.07 acres of natural areas to Scarlett-Mitchell Nature Area

SECTION IV: Inventory of the Park, Recreation and Open Space System

Northeast Area Park (Olson Park) Development	CM00-142	2000	\$ 380,000.00	Development of Olson Park, including pathways, picnic shelter, play area, parking, fishing dock, soccer fields
Bluffs Park Addition	TF00-350	2000	\$ 550,000.00	Withdrawn
Addition to Dolph Nature Area	TF02-113	2002	\$ 688,000.00	Addition of 18.2 acres to provide access from south and for neighborhood adjacent to park
Veterans Memorial Park Skatepark Development	TF 11-013	2011	\$ 300,000.00	Development of a 30,000 SF in ground concrete skate park at Veterans Memorial Park
Gallup Park Livery and Site Renovations	TF11-014	2011	\$ 300,000.00	Improvements to the Gallup Livery, docks, meeting room, service drive and entry, fishing dock for barrier free access, landscaping
Gallup Park Universal Access Playground and Site Amenities	TF15-0046	2015	\$ 300,000.00	Development of a universal access playground, including barrier free pathways, fishing dock, park furniture, landscaping, and kayak pullout
Allen Creek Railroad Berm Opening Trail Development	TF17-0086	2017	\$ 300,000.00	Development to install two culverts under the railroad berm
Universal Access and Site Improvements at Argo Nature Area	TF19-0154	2019	\$ 300,000.00	Development at the Argo Livery site to provide barrier-free access and improve universal design within Argo Nature Area.

**GRANT INVENTORY: OTHER SOURCES**

Project	Application Year	Grant Amount	Project Description
Transportation Enhancement Program	1993	\$ 98,000.00	Construction of non-motorized path through Bandemer Park
Transportation Enhancement Program	1993	\$ 98,000.00	Construction of non-motorized path through Bandemer Park
Transportation Enhancement Program	1996	\$ 20,000.00	Water quality improvements under M-14 bridge at Bandemer Park

SECTION IV: Inventory of the Park, Recreation and Open Space System

Moore Family Foundation	1999	\$	65,000.00	Environmental Education Classroom Facility Leslie Science Center
MichCon Foundation	1999	\$	150,000.00	Environmental Education Classroom Facility Leslie Science Center
Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan	2001	\$	25,375.00	Engineering and construction documentation for Argo Dam crossing and pathway
Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan	2003	\$	31,000.00	Development of trail over Argo Dam and bicycle path to Lakeshore Drive
Detroit Edison Foundation	2003	\$	4,500.00	Huron River Day Festival
Detroit Edison Foundation	2004	\$	4,500.00	Huron River Day Festival
State of Michigan	2005	\$	2,252.00	Volunteer river, stream and creek cleanup
Ann Arbor Community Foundation	2005	\$	1,500.00	Provided Ann Arbor area nonprofit youth groups canoe instructional program
Detroit Edison Foundation	2005	\$	4,500.00	Huron River Day Festival
Detroit Edison Foundation	2006	\$	4,500.00	Huron River Day Festival
Michigan Section of Public Waterworks	2006	\$	1,000.00	Design and implementation of river education curriculum form Ann Arbor Public Schools middle school students
Detroit Edison Foundation	2007	\$	4,500.00	Huron River Day Festival
State of Michigan	2007	\$	3,896.00	Volunteer river, Stream and creek cleanup
Downtown Development Authority	2007	\$	30,000.00	Historic Kempf House foundation replaced
Transportation Alternatives Program	2014	\$	447,500.00	Border to Border Trail from Geddes Dam to Gallup Park
Downtown Development Authority	2016	\$	175,000.00	Farmers Market Structure Construction

SECTION IV: Inventory of the Park, Recreation and Open Space System

Double up Food Bucks Farmers Market	2017	\$ 50,000.00	Grantee: Fair Food Network
Double up Food Bucks Farmers Market	2018	\$ 40,000.00	Grantee: Fair Food Network
Monarch Habitat Enhancement Grant	2018	\$ 6,250.00	Grantee: National Wildlife Federation Awarded funding to purchase native seeds to enhance monarch habitats.
Day of Service Grant	2018	\$ 498.73	Grantee: Michigan Community Service Commission Awarded funding to purchase volunteer workday tools and a popup tent.
Senior Center Interior Painting	2019	\$ 5,000.00	Grantee: Helen McCalla Trust Contracted professional painting services from Five Star Painting.
Double up Food Bucks Farmers Market	2019	\$ 45,000.00	Grantee: Fair Food Network
Day of Service Grant	2019	\$ 247.48	Grantee: Michigan Community Service Commission Awarded funding to purchase volunteer workday tools.
mParks Foundation Play is Essential for All Grant - Adapted Kayaking	2021	\$ 1,500.00	Purchase adaptive kayaking paddling gear which included outriggers, paddle hand adaptations, toe ropes and light weight kayak paddles.
Double up Food Bucks Farmers Market	2021	\$ 30,000.00	Grantee: Fair Food Network
Pollinator Habitat Enhancement	2021	seed	Grantee: Project Wingspan Awarded native seed to enhance pollinator habitats.
Senior Center Exercise Equipment	2022	\$ 5,000.00	Grantee: Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Purchase of rolling mirrors for senior classes.
Senior Center Exterior Siding	2022	Requesting any portion towards \$47,800.00, quoted cost	<b>* CURRENTLY APPLYING FOR*</b> Grantee: Helen McCalla Trust Replace rotted and missing siding around the entire exterior.
Double up Food Bucks Farmers Market	2022	\$ 45,000.00	Grantee: Fair Food Network
Milkweed Plantings	2022	\$ 451.00	Milkweed plantings from Monarch Watch

**GRANT INVENTORY: CUSTOMER SERVICE GRANTS**

SECTION IV: Inventory of the Park, Recreation and Open Space System

City of Ann Arbor Customer Service Grant Recipient	Application Year	Grant Amount	Project Description
Senior Center, Farmers Market, Mack and Fuller Pools	2008	\$ 4,611.00	Piano, Signage at Farmers Market, Swim teaching tools at Pools
Buhr Park, Mack Pool, Cobblestone, Senior Center, Leslie Park Golf Course	2011	\$ 2,565.00	Speakers, splash day pool toys, bulletin board, Wii game, Golf Course speed of play
Huron and Leslie Golf Course, Cobblestone, Farmers Market, Argo and Gallup Liveries, Mack and Fuller Pools, Give 365	2012	\$ 3,405.00	Ball Mark Repair, coffeemaker, bridge card magnets, river briefing stations, outreach marketing, life jackets, fins, yoga mats, t-shirts
Golf courses, Farmers Market, Canoe Liveries, Senior Center, Buhr Ice Arena, Give 365, Leslie Science and Nature Center	2013	\$ 5,500.00	Divot repair tools, coat rack translation software, signage, speakers, ladders
Mack Pool, Gallup Park, West Park, Veterans Memorial Pool	2014	\$ 7,241.00	Bleachers, tables and shade umbrellas, interpretive signage, swimsuit dryers
Golf course, Mack Pool, Senior Center, Canoe Liveries	2015	\$ 5,000.00	Foot golf cups, starting blocks, bridge software, livery briefing sign

**AWARDS AND CERTIFICATIONS**

- Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation, Citizen Pruner Program was awarded the MRPA's Innovative Park Resource Award in 2015.
- Leslie Park Golf Course was certified as an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary by Audubon International.
- Leslie Park Golf Course and Huron Hills Golf Course both participate in the Monarchs in the Rough program, organized by the Audubon International and the Environmental Defense Fund, by donating an acre of land to plant milkweed to create healthy butterfly habitat.
- Leslie Park Golf Course was certified as an Environmental Steward in the Michigan Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Program (MTESP) in 2012, and obtained Legacy Status in the MTESP in 2016.



## SECTION V: LAND USE PLANNING AND ACQUISITION

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### A. Philosophy and Guiding Principles

The City's park system has evolved over more than a century, with acquisition of park parcels gradually building a system known for its diversity, preservation of green space and recreation opportunities. This chapter outlines the philosophy and guiding principles as well as the methods used to acquire land.

Acquisition is a term that describes the various methods of bringing parcels of land under public control, including outright purchase, lease, easement, swap, or other methods. Many factors are considered when evaluating potential acquisitions, such as economic and health benefits provided by green space, consideration of when the City has adequate parkland, what types of land would complement existing parks, when the loss of tax revenue might outweigh the benefits, and the amount of funding required.

National standards exist, although there are wide variations in their application, for the ideal amount of park acreage per resident. The National Park and Recreation Association standard for park acreage is approximately 10 acres per 1000 people. Ann Arbor's park system ratio is much higher, at over 18 acres per 1000 people, but this is based on Ann Arbor residents placing parks as an important value for the community. Having a neighborhood park within  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile of every resident is a goal that is nearly achieved as this is considered a reasonable distance for pedestrian access. However, there are a myriad of factors that influence that distance, including major streets that need to be crossed, other public open space, such as public schools with play areas, and amount of private green space available to residents.

In order to evaluate and prioritize how parkland is acquired, a series of criteria have been developed. These criteria are revisited according to the public input received during each PROS Plan update to reflect trends, current conditions, and park system needs.

**B. History of Parkland Acquisition**

Between 1988 and 2022, Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation acquired just over 460 acres. The land was valued at \$21,911 million, with just over \$17 million paid by acquisition millages. The remaining \$4.5 million was generated through grants, donations and other funding sources. The table below summarizes the parcels that were acquired during this period.

<u>Use Group</u>	<u>Total Acres</u>	<u>% of Total Acres</u>	<u>Total Value</u>	<u>% of Total Value</u>
Natural	358.17	77.93	\$17,002,611.69	77.60
Active	56.94	12.39	\$ 1,021,718.72	4.66
Neighborhood	12.92	2.81	\$ 1,315,859.00	6.00
Museum	0.15	<.01	\$ 75,622.00	.35
Linkage/Access	31.21	14.73	\$ 2,419,053.00	9.06
Community Center	0.23	<.01	\$ 76,22.00	.35
<b>Total</b>	<b>459.62</b>		<b>\$21,911,126.41</b>	

The chart on the next page is a summary of land acquired since 1988.



SECTION V: Land Use Planning and Acquisition

Acquired Property	Acres	Use	Total Cost	Amount From Millage	FY
Krause (Dolph addition)	0.98	Access	\$ 24,105.00	\$ 24,105.00	88-89
Kimberly-Colony (Molin Nature Area)	7.20	Natural Area	\$ 85,113.00	\$ 45,000.00	88-89
Bird Hills addition	31.25	Natural Area	\$ 622,000.00	\$ 622,000.00	89-90
Redwood Park	0.54	Neighborhood	\$ 32,734.00	\$ 32,734.00	89-90
Bird Hills addition	4.30	Natural Area	\$ 86,839.00	\$ 86,839.00	89-90
North Main @ Beakes (WCHS)	0.15	Museum	\$ 75,622.00	\$ -	90-91
Katz (SEA Park)	25.69	Active	\$ 313,600.00	\$ 156,800.00	91-92
Black Pond Woods	26.76	Natural Area	\$ 1,211,127.00	\$ 336,127.00	91-92
Worden (Stone School Park)	5.06	Neighborhood	\$ 148,528.00	\$ 148,528.00	91-92
Westover Lots (Dolph addition)	0.55	Linkage	\$ 32,104.00	\$ 32,104.00	91-92
Belize addition	0.37	Neighborhood	\$ 71,000.00	\$ 33,401.00	91-92
Sias A&B (Dhu Varren Woods/Traver Creek)	20.03	Natural Area	\$ 646,200.00	\$ 354,514.00	92-93
Gunn (Huron Parkway Nature Area)	18.68	Natural Area	\$ 941,000.00	\$ 464,005.00	93-94
Hawkins (Bandemer addition)	8.00	River Access	\$ 675,000.00	\$ 393,725.00	93-94
Bader	1.70	Neighborhood	\$ 174,570.00	\$ 174,570.00	94-95
WCRC Pit (NE Area Park)	24.00	Active	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 150,000.00	95-96
Verle (Brown Park)	10.00	Natural/Access	\$ 216,000.00	\$ 216,000.00	95-96
S. Main (Cranbrook addition)	1.14	Natural/Neighborhood	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	95-96
Evergreen Lots (10 lots)	1.65	Neighborhood	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	95-96
Beechwood Lots (Kuebler-Langford)	0.89	Linkage	\$ 70,636.00	\$ 36,304.00	96-97
St. Thomas (Bluffs)	20.01	Natural/Neighborhood	\$ 1,100,000.00	\$ 363,000.00	96-97
SEA Park additions	1.68	Active	\$ 287,378.00	\$ 81,103.00	98-99
Hearthstone III addition to Ponds Park	0.20	Neighborhood	\$ 124,839.00	\$ 124,839.00	98-99
Audobon Woods (Redbud Nature Area)	4.98	Natural	\$ 346,722.00	\$ 346,722.00	00-01
Scarlett-Mitchell addition	25.07	Natural	\$ 1,111,253.00	\$ 486,253.00	00-01
Bluffs Park addition	17.77	Natural/Linkage	\$ 1,507,037.00	\$ 1,507,037.00	00-01
Huron Parkway ROW	13.11	Linkage	\$ 26,924.00	\$ 26,924.00	01-02
Sunset Brooks	7.60	Natural/Linkage	\$ 410,000.00	\$ 410,000.00	03-04
Stapp (Traverwood)	8.10	Natural/Linkage	\$ 550,000.00	\$ 550,000.00	03-04
Dolph addition	18.20	Natural/Linkage	\$ 1,274,000.00	\$ 586,040.00	04-05
Evergreen Lot 108	0.24	Neighborhood	\$ 39,300.00	\$ 39,300.00	04-05
Evergreen Lot 118	0.22	Neighborhood	\$ 57,247.00	\$ 57,247.00	04-05
Evergreen Lot 120	0.22	Neighborhood	\$ 49,668.00	\$ 49,668.00	04-05
Brookside	0.70	Neighborhood	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 150,000.00	05-06
Onder	4.75	Linkage	\$ 489,985.00	\$ 489,985.00	06-07
Girl Scouts (Hilltop Nature Area)	7.71	Natural Area	\$ 2,239,249.00	\$ 2,239,249.00	06-07
Andres (Evergreen addition)	0.53	Neighborhood	\$ 158,435.00	\$ 158,435.00	06-07
Zion Lutheran (Eberwhite Nature Area)	2.64	Natural Area	\$ 597,664.00	\$ 597,664.00	07-08
Narrow Gauge Way (Narrow Gauge Nature Area)	12.73	Natural Area	\$ 1,844,376.00	\$ 1,844,376.00	07-08
Crary (Crary Park)	1.30	Neighborhood	\$ 12,032.00	\$ 12,032.00	07-08
Botsford (conservation easement)	10.42	Natural Area	\$ 158,900.00	\$ 158,900.00	08-09
219 Chapin (West Park addition)	0.19	Neighborhood	\$ 277,506.00	\$ 277,506.00	09-10
Linker (Scheffer Park addition)	0.35	Natural/Linkage	\$ 10,063.00	\$ 10,063.00	09-10
Elks (220 N. Sunset/Bluffs addition)	0.58	Access/Natural	\$ 376,969.00	\$ 376,969.00	10-11
Riverview Bursing (Bluffs addition)	1.10	Natural Area	\$ 5,755.00	\$ 5,755.00	10-11
Wes Vivian (South Pond addition)	2.00	Access/Natural	\$ 599,656.00	\$ 599,656.00	10-11
Bryant Community Center	0.23	-	\$ 76,262.00	\$ 76,262.00	11-12
Braun Park	10.60	Natural Area	\$ -	\$ -	12-13
C. Claire North (Hampstead Lane-Kuebler addition)	0.91	Natural/Linkage	\$ 118,944.00	\$ 118,944.00	12-13
1240 Orkney (Bluffs addition)	0.35	Linkage	\$ 123,674.00	\$ 123,674.00	12-13
Brokaw	24.45	Natural Area	\$ -	\$ -	13-14
Stapp Nature Area	2.02	Natural Area	\$ -	\$ -	13-14
BRE Nixon Road Associates aka Woodbury Club Apartments	25.67	Natural Area	\$ 284,824.00	\$ 284,824.00	16-17
Toll Brothers (Buttonbush Nature Area)	10.17	Natural Area	\$ 35,808.00	\$ 35,808.00	18-19
Toll Brothers (Buttonbush Nature Area)	5.90	Natural Area	\$ 322.00	\$ 322.00	18-19
North Sky (Hickory Nature Area)	2.07	Natural Area	\$ 322.00	\$ 322.00	18-19
Hickory Way Apartments (Avalon Housing - Hansen addition)	1.51	Natural Area	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	18-19
Windy Crest (Ruthven addition)	8.48	Natural Area	\$ 83,396.70	\$ 83,396.70	19-20
BRE Nixon Road Associates (Oakwoods Nature Area)	6.58	Natural Area	\$ 492.00	\$ 492.00	20-21
Hosford Trust (Leslie Golf Course addition)	5.23	Active/Natural Area	\$ 156,996.87	\$ 156,996.87	20-21
St. Joseph Mercy Health System	0.34	Active	\$ 113,743.85	\$ 113,743.85	21-22
Malletts 2 LLC (Marybeth Doyle addition)	3.77	Natural Area	\$ 1,494,704.99	\$ 1,494,704.99	21-22
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>459.62</b>		<b>\$ 21,911,126.41</b>	<b>\$ 17,385,469.41</b>	

### C. Proposing Land for Acquisition

Potential parkland acquisitions are identified in various ways, with a process that has been developed through staff and public input. In each scenario, land owners submit applications, after which a team of staff reviews the merits of the parcel and scores them according to criteria that were developed by staff and PAC members. PAC is then provided the property information and the staff summary review and recommendations. If the land is seen as meeting the criteria developed to evaluate land for public benefit, PAC may recommend the purchase to City Council. Three ways in which land may be brought before PAC include the following:

1. Staff researches land parcels to identify sites that meet particular objectives, such as floristic quality, connectivity, or balancing needs within the system. Staff may contact landowners to provide information to them regarding the City’s program if they are interested in selling their land. This is a strictly voluntary process.
2. Property owners may nominate their land to be considered for purchase.
3. Through the City development review process, land is reviewed and identified as potential parkland. Land then may be acquired through developer contribution, purchase or a combination of several methods.

Land transfers may be at no cost or may be for considerations other than cash. All land acquisition must have both an independent real estate appraisal report to establish fair market value and an environmental assessment before land can be purchased per City Council resolution. The City often applies for grant funding to offset the purchase price, in which case there generally additional review requirements. All purchases and acquisition of land rights require City Council approval.

### D. Acquisition Criteria for Parkland Property within the City Limits

In 2014-5, staff and PAC members met to develop a scoring system to rate proposed properties. The scoring system aligns closely with the process used to rank capital improvement projects, but the criteria are tailored to property acquisition. Properties score between 0-10, with discreet numbers assigned to each description. The following criteria and scoring are utilized for Active Park areas:

SCORING ACTIVE PARK AREA		Low ← → High			
1	<b>Connectivity</b> to a natural area, riparian area, park, other land with public access, existing trail system, wetland area, or a tributary of the Huron River ("defined areas")	0	5	7	10
		Site does not provide connection to any of the defined areas	Site connects to one type of defined area	Site connects to 2 or more types of defined areas	Connects to one or more type of defined areas AND to the Huron River
2	<b>Access to Subject Parcel</b>	0	3	5	7
		Site does not have adequate access	Site provides adequate street frontage (min. lot frontage or greater per underlying zoning)	Site provides adequate street frontage AND opportunities for barrier free access	Site provides adequate street frontage AND opportunities for barrier free access AND multiple points of access
3	<b>Access to an Existing Park</b>	0	10		
		Subject parcel DOES NOT increase access to an existing park	Subject parcel DOES increase access to an existing park		

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4	<b>Method of Acquisition</b>	2 Full fair market value paid for property	5 Partial donation of property value OR cost share opportunity	8 Complete donation of property	10 Complete donation of property AND endowment/contribution by donor to cover post-acquisition costs
5	<b>Capital Improvement Costs</b>	2 Capital improvement costs needed to provide adequate and safe public use/access will be greater than \$100,000	4 Capital improvement costs needed to provide adequate and safe public use/access will be greater than \$50,000 but less than \$100,000	8 Capital improvement costs needed to provide adequate and safe public use/access will be between \$25,000 and \$50,000	10 Capital improvement costs needed to provide adequate and safe public use/access will be less than \$25,000
6	<b>Operational Costs</b>	0 No opportunity for cost sharing of operational costs or management of the site		1-10 Partnership opportunities for shared operational costs and management of the site with another City department, County, or a private organization  Note: Sliding scale based on percent of cost shared where 10% =1; 20% =2, etc.	
7	<b>Sustainability Framework Goals</b>	0 Does not meet any Sustainability Framework goals	4 Meets 1 - 2 Sustainability Framework goals	7 Meets 3 - 4 Sustainability Framework goals	10 Meets more than 4 Sustainability Framework goals
8	<b>Site Suitability</b>	0 Site DOES NOT meet any need identified in the PROS Plan or identified by the community		10 Site meets at least 1 need identified in the PROS Plan or identified by the community	
9	<b>Underserved Neighborhood</b>	0 Site is NOT located in an area that is underserved for the intended use of the park as identified in the PROS plan	5 Site is located in an area that is moderately served for the intended use of the park as identified in the PROS plan	10 Site is located in an area that is underserved for the intended use of the park as identified in the PROS plan	

**Assessing the quality of Natural Areas:**

The City of Ann Arbor makes decisions such as whether to preserve undeveloped or "natural" parkland, and how to manage it, by assessing its environmental integrity and potential to support a well-functioning native ecosystem. The City also evaluates how each natural area compares with others in terms of ecological significance, including such measures as biological diversity, presence of rare or unusual species, presence of invasive exotic species, and other factors. Once a comprehensive Natural Area Inventory has been completed, it becomes much easier to determine how significant any particular natural area is for the City of Ann Arbor, and how to best care for it. The City has developed a natural area assessment process based on a well-established scientific protocol for evaluating plant inventory data, called the Floristic Quality Assessment System, or FQAS, coupled with an evaluation of other natural features such as birds, butterflies, and amphibians, and other scientific information relating to the potential for ecosystem restoration and sustainability.

The plant inventory and assessment system used by the City is based on a system in use in the Chicago region since the late 1970s, which was developed at the Morton Arboretum in Lisle, Illinois by Dr. Gerould Wilhelm and others. This system uses scientific and ecological principles, and is simple enough to be used by interested citizens yet thorough enough to realistically assess the floristic or botanical significance of an area. Wilhelm's assessment system from the Chicago region has been modified and used in other areas throughout the Midwest, including by the Natural Heritage Program of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (*Michigan Floristic Quality Assessment*, Herman,

## SECTION V: Land Use Planning and Acquisition

et. al., 1996 and 2001). The City uses the Michigan FQAS for assessing the ecological quality of plant communities in the parks.

The FQAS is based on the principle that many plant species have evolved over time to be specifically adapted for the natural ecological conditions present in Michigan (including soil conditions, temperature, moisture, humidity, presence of fire, and faunal interactions, etc.). These species are considered to be native to Michigan, as confirmed by botanical records prior to extensive European settlement. Different plant species display varying degrees of fidelity to specific habitats and varying degrees of tolerance to disturbance. The FQAS assigns a “coefficient of conservatism” (“C”) from 0-10 to each species in accordance with that species’ tendency to be found in the types of natural communities that existed pre-European settlement. For example, White Lady's-Slipper orchid, which is a threatened species in Michigan and requires a very specific set of habitat conditions, has a C value = 10. But the more “weedy,” yet still-native Box Elder tree, which is extremely common and grows in a wide range of habitat conditions, has a C value = 0.

Natural areas with more plant species of higher C values tend to be far less disturbed by human activities than a site dominated by plant species with lower C values. These C values are part of the calculations used in the FQAS. To use the FQAS, we simply conduct an inventory of all plant species present in a natural area, and feed that information into a formula that takes into consideration the number of native plant species and their various C values. This generates a “Floristic Quality Index” (or FQI) which is a measure (or at least an estimate) of the ecological integrity of that site – how closely it approximates pre-European settlement conditions. The comparison of scores from a range of natural areas provides a tool for distinguishing between areas that have the right conditions to allow native species to flourish, and those areas that appear green, but have been highly disturbed and may never support a well-functioning “natural” ecosystem.

Many of the undeveloped areas within Ann Arbor have been assessed using the FQAS, to identify which are of greater floristic significance than others and thus have a higher priority for protection or restoration. This information is valuable when considering future acquisitions of land for the park system. It is also useful for establishing various categories of natural areas, each with a different set of management practices. Natural Area Preservation (NAP) began compiling plant inventories of the park natural areas in 1994, for incorporation into City park natural area management plans. To date, they have catalogued over 1,100 species of plants in 125 City parks and other natural areas. FQI scores for natural areas in the City reveal both natural areas that are highly disturbed and those that closely resemble high quality pre-European settlement plant communities.

In addition to assessing vegetation, NAP has conducted wildlife surveys in many parks. Since 1995, data on the butterflies, breeding birds, reptiles and amphibians that inhabit our natural areas have been compiled. Although there is no counterpart to the Floristic Quality Assessment for interpreting wildlife data, the information is useful in evaluating the wildlife value of each site, and in helping to establish a baseline of existing wildlife use in the parks. These inventories will continue into the future to help monitor the changes that occur in our natural areas.

For parkland acquisition, one goal for this inventory effort is to be able to rank and compare various natural areas based on their floristic quality, but also their value to wildlife and potential for restoration. The inventory data, including the FQI and the presence of rare species, are primarily used to evaluate the ecological quality of a site. Other important criteria that affect the ecological or recreational value of an area may include: whether the site has a wetland, serves as a wildlife corridor, provides a buffer around existing natural areas, acts as a preserve for landmark trees, or

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simply provides green space in an urban neighborhood. Factors that may negatively affect the ecological quality of an area may be its position relative to other highly disturbed or developed areas, such that it is landlocked or fragmented in a way that interferes with ecological function, or its past disturbance history.

Consequently, when evaluating natural areas for acquisition, the ‘Underserved Neighborhood’ criterion is replaced by the following criteria:

1. **Existing Plant Communities**  
If the Floristic Quality Index is less than 20, it receives a 2, if between 20 and 40, a 5, if between 40 and 60 an 8, and if greater than 60, a 10.
2. **Coverage of Invasive Plants**  
If coverage of invasive plants is extensive (>75%), a score of 0 is assigned, if moderate (between 50-75%) a 5, between 25-50%, an 8, and less than 25% a 10.
3. **Rare Flora and Fauna**  
If the site contains no rare flora and fauna, a score of 0 is assigned, if the site contains flora and fauna classified as rare locally, a 7, and if classified by the state or federal government as an endangered or threatened species or as a species of special concern, a 10.

### **E. Property Acquisition Options for Parkland and Greenbelt Properties**

There are many tools available to secure land for public park and open space use. The following are the most common. Any single acquisition may involve more than one of these methods.

#### **1. Outright Acquisition of Parcels**

In many cases, the City may opt to purchase property outright and maintain full ownership and rights of a piece of land. Bluffs Park is an example of an outright acquisition. (this criterion is for parkland acquired in the City only)

#### **2. Bargain or Charitable Sale (Less Than Fair Market Sale)**

A landowner may choose to sell to the City at a price less than the full market value of the property. Marshall Park is an example of land that was sold to the City for park use at less than market value.

#### **3. Outright Donation (Fee Simple Transfer)**

Outright donation involves the provision of public land at no cost to the City. The donor may receive tax benefits in the form of federal income tax deductions, potential estate tax benefits, and relief from property taxes. Many neighborhood parks in Ann Arbor were donated as a part of the development review and approval process. Crary Park and parts of Scheffler Park are examples of park donations by individuals.

#### **4. Donation by Will (Bequest)**

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A gift of land made through a will entitles the donor to retain full use of the land during his or her lifetime. The donor is responsible for real estate and income taxes for the property during his or her lifetime. The Leslie Science Center site was bequeathed to the City in the Leslie's will.

### **5. Installment Sale**

An installment sale allows an agency or organization to purchase property over a period of years. The use of the land and the responsibility for payment of property taxes until the sale is complete are negotiable terms of the agreement. The seller benefits financially by spreading the income and the taxable gains over several years.

### **6. Purchase of Development Rights/Conservation Easement**

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) is primarily used to protect farmland and allows owners of farmland or open space to retain their land for agricultural or open space purposes while receiving payment equal to the difference between that land's value if sold for development and if sold for agriculture. This technique has frequently been used in Michigan and is a major tool in the preservation of agricultural land and open space around Ann Arbor.

Protecting land through easements or deed restrictions may not necessarily include public access or other public uses. The landowner retains title to the property but retains certain development rights in the property. Easements typically restrict dumping, mining, paving, and development of residential houses, while allowing traditional agriculture or open space uses of the property. The restricted land can be sold, gifted, or bequeathed to the next generation of landowners, but the restriction remains with the land to the new owner. An example of this type of conservation easement is the Botsford Property, located just outside the City limits, and was acquired in partnership with Scio Township.

### **7. Life Estate**

A life estate is where a property is purchased but the seller retains the right to occupy the property (usually a residence) as long as he or she is living and able to occupy the property. The drawbacks include the limited use of the property and the unknown duration of the life estate. Responsibility for maintenance, insurance, taxes, and utilities are negotiated as a part of the agreement. A life estate agreement was a part of the purchase of the Leslie Science Center site, portions of the Farmers Market site and South Pond Park.

### **8. Scenic Easement**

A scenic easement is the acquisition by purchase, dedication, or other means of the right to an unhindered view at a particular location or over a certain area of land. This may include purchasing development rights restricting advertising signs or other obstacles at strategic locations to protect views. Scenic easements can be considered for floodplains along major rivers where the combination with flood protection reinforces their benefit to the public. Scenic easements may also be used to preserve aesthetic values of wetlands, promote recreation, preserve natural areas, and protect water quality. The Michigan Natural Rivers and Scenic Roads designations are examples where views are protected in a form of scenic easement.

## **F. Alternative Methods of Acquiring Property**

### **1. Transfers of Property from Other Public Agencies**

On occasion, public agencies will declare land they control to be excess and can offer it to another agency at a bargain price if it remains in public use. In other cases the agency may decide to sell their property on the open market.

### **2. Exchanges of Property with Other Agencies or Individuals**

The City has use agreements with other agencies to utilize under used or excess land. Examples include Mary Beth Doyle and Olson Parks, leased from the Water Resources Commission, and Forest Park, leased by the City to the Washtenaw County Park and Recreation Commission.

### **3. Multiple, Alternating or Sequential Uses of City and/or Other Public Properties**

Examples are playgrounds on subsurface water storage sites or on County Drain Commission lands, game courts on school parking lots, street closings and relocations (as in Wheeler Park and in Sugarbush Park at Lexington), and un-built street right-of-way (as in Placid Way Park or Tuebingen Park).

### **4. Tax Foreclosures**

Property where the owner has defaulted on taxes may become available; however, in the Ann Arbor market, tax sale parcels that would make desirable parks are rare.

## **G. Parcels Donated through Dedication for Parkland within the City**

The City of Ann Arbor provides park and recreation resources to enhance the quality of life and its environment for its residents. To achieve this mission, numerous financial and administrative "tools" are employed. One of these tools is the identification of guidelines for parkland dedication designed to help provide new neighborhoods with sufficient recreation space close to home. Dedication does not necessarily meet all neighborhood parkland needs, however, the parkland guidelines aid in providing park spaces in an equitable manner by all developers of residential property.

During the City's review of residential development plans such as a final plat of a subdivision, a planned unit development, or a site condominium, the City may ask a developer to consider dedicating land for parks and recreation purposes to serve the immediate and future needs of the residents of the development in question. These donations are not mandatory in the absence of state enabling legislation but rather are a discretionary contribution by the petitioners.

The 1981 PROS Plan established a rationale for dedication of land in new residential developments based on the ratio of households in the City to acres of neighborhood-scale parkland. The ratio then was 4.9 acres of neighborhood parkland for every 408 households or 1,000 new residents or .012

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acres of neighborhood park per household. This amount of new parkland was felt to be the minimum amount to maintain the existing level of service for neighborhood parks. With subsequent updates of the PROS Plan, the formula for neighborhood parkland was adjusted to reflect changes in demographic and land acquisition patterns. The current formula was updated based on 2000 Census data and an average of current land values. The development contribution formula will be reviewed by staff to see if updates should be made to ensure it continues to meet City park needs.

In December 1985, City Council adopted an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance that allowed developers to donate land for parks and still receive the dwelling unit density that would be allowed before the dedication in terms of gross lot area. This amendment effectively reduced the cost of parkland dedication to developers. Large-acreage developments could accommodate an on-site park and still achieve a density of dwelling units as though the park did not exist. The parkland is counted as part of the open space required by the Zoning Ordinance. The amendment has made negotiating for parkland much easier as a part of larger developments. Smaller developments of under 15 acres have less flexibility in site layout and often have difficulty providing an adequate park site while still building the maximum permitted number of dwelling units. There have been some instances where the dedication of land or cash in lieu of land has been inadequate, but generally the new developments are provided parkland through this process.

### 1. **Formula for Land Dedication through Development**

The process used to devise the goal for neighborhood park acreage was to inventory the neighborhood parkland that exists in Ann Arbor and project that ratio forward to new development. The rationale is that future residents should be as well served in their neighborhoods as current residents, and current residents should not bear the full cost of providing neighborhood parks for future residents.

The current formula is composed of the following variables:

- 18.3 acres of parkland exist per 1,000 residents (based upon 2,088.37 total park acres divided by a population of 114,024 from the 2000 US Census)
- 639 acres is considered neighborhood parkland
- Divide 639 acres by 114,024 residents to equal 5.60 acres per 1000 residents.
- Based on a household size of 2.2 people per dwelling unit, 450 households generate 1,000 residents
- Total neighborhood park acreage per 1,000 population, or 450 households, is 5.60
- The current total acreage of neighborhood parkland per dwelling unit is .0124 (5.60 acres divided by 450 dwelling units)

Therefore, to maintain the existing amount of neighborhood parkland, .0124 acres of neighborhood park/dwelling unit is needed to keep pace with the existing amount of land available.

An example of how this calculation is applied based on a hypothetical development of 120 new dwelling units would look like this:

$$\mathbf{120 \text{ dwelling units} \times .0124 \text{ acres} = 1.49 \text{ acres}}$$

*of neighborhood parkland needed to maintain ratio*

The parkland calculation for group quarters such as fraternities, sororities, cooperatives, and



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senior citizen housing is calculated similarly: The total number of new beds will be divided by the 2.2 persons per household to figure an equivalent number of dwelling units. Day care centers and private schools may be asked to contribute cash in lieu of land if on-site facilities and open space are not sufficient for the recreational needs of the students. For affordable housing projects, the City would waive the request for a cash or land contribution. However, staff have requested that for these projects developers include recreational amenities as part of the site plan, such as a playground, picnic tables and benches for resident use, but that they also be open to the public. Because each of these proposals is unique, they need to be evaluated case-by-case with on-site facilities and special needs of the residents considered.

Proposed park dedication sites are conveyed to the City either by warranty or trustee's deed. The subdivider or developer is responsible for conveying good merchantable title to such sites, along with a complete legal description for the recording of said deed with the Washtenaw County Register of Deeds. The subdivider or developer is responsible for payment of all real estate taxes to the date of conveyance including any agricultural roll back taxes that might be extended or levied against such sites for any tax years or periods prior to the time of conveyance. The developer is also responsible for furnishing title insurance.

Contributions of land have included portions of Cranbrook Park, Foxfire North Park, Ponds Park and Newport Creek Nature Area.

### 2. Contributions in Lieu of Land - Justification for Land Cost

Land costs vary considerably. Whether they are located in the central business district or outlying neighborhoods, the suitability of the land for development, the proximity to utilities, and the quality of natural features play a role in the cost of land. To derive a fair land value for the purposes of cash contributions, the land costs from appraisals performed on land both in and outside of the City were averaged so that center city land cost would not unfairly raise the cost for all developers. The average over the past five years has been approximately \$12,000 per acre for greenbelt purchases, and for in-City parkland has been \$200,000 per acre. If combined, the average cost for parkland purchase is \$50,000. This number is used to calculate contributions in lieu of land. The formula then would be as follows using the example above:

$$\begin{aligned} &120 \text{ dwelling units} \times .0124 \text{ acres} = 1.49 \text{ acres} \\ &\text{of neighborhood park land needed to maintain ratio} \\ &1.49 \text{ acres} \times \$50,000/\text{acre} = \$74,500 \end{aligned}$$

Developer contributions have helped achieve some recent projects that would not have otherwise been possible including recent improvements to the tennis court at Woodbury Park, playground equipment at North Main Park, and construction of the Farmers Market winter enclosure.

### 3. Criteria for Requesting Dedication and a Cash Contribution

There will be situations in site plan subdivisions or planned unit developments (PUDs) when a combination of land dedication and a cash contribution in lieu of land are both desirable. These occasions will arise when:

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- a. Only a portion of the land desired as parkland is proposed by the developer for a park. The balance can be made up through a cash contribution equal to the value of the additional amount of land that would have otherwise been dedicated.
- b. A major part of the local park or recreation site has already been acquired and only a small portion of land is needed from the development to complete the site. The remaining portions should be requested by dedication, and a cash contribution in lieu of the developer's remaining contribution should be requested.

The amount of land and cash contribution would be derived by applying the formula above to the amount of land that is available for donation, with the balance being paid through a cash contribution.

### **4. Open Space, Parks and Development Contributions within the Urban Core**

Parks and open spaces in downtown Ann Arbor are difficult to acquire because of high land cost and fewer available open spaces. Additionally, providing large open space areas in the downtown is not necessarily appropriate given that density is a goal of downtown planning efforts, as outlined in the City of Ann Arbor Comprehensive Plan, 2009 Downtown Plan. Traditionally, downtown parks have taken the shape of smaller plazas that serve employees and visitors and provide outdoor eating and resting spots. Streetscapes also serve as downtown passive recreational spaces, where both private and public entities provide sitting areas in the form of street furniture, planters, and café tables. For these reasons, the central area park acreage is lower than the rest of the planning areas of the City, and the formula for population/park acre should be adjusted to reflect the differences in planning goals.

Several larger parks are located in or within walking distance to the downtown core, including Wheeler and West Parks, which provides a neighborhood park within a ¼ mile radius; one of the goals of the park planning for the City. The University of Michigan Diag is approximately 9 acres and is open to the public. This space is also located in the downtown core, and provides opportunities for unstructured games and passive recreation. Development contributions have traditionally funded improvements to downtown parks such as Liberty Plaza and Sculpture Plaza. However, there are few existing parks to which contributions may be directed. Consequently, streetscape and plaza projects that will benefit both new and existing residents are being considered as an alternative way to provide passive recreational amenities for downtown residents and visitors.

The Downtown Development Authority has opted to participate in the development and execution of several park projects, including renovations to Liberty and Sculpture Plaza and the Farmers Market. They also participate in non-parkland developments, such as the Forest Street Plaza in the South University area, which would provide open space amenities for residents in the immediate vicinity. With more residential projects coming on line in the downtown, the ability to negotiate with developers for both park and non-park amenities will aid in determining what improvements would provide the greatest benefit to downtown residents.

### **5. Credit for Private Open Space and Recreation Areas**

When subdivisions or developers provide their own open space for recreation areas and facilities, it has the effect of reducing the demand for local public recreational services. Depending on the size of the development, a portion of the park and recreation area in subdivisions or planned unit developments may, at the option of the City Council, be

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provided in the form of "private" open space in lieu of dedicated "public" open space. The extent of the private recreation space to be credited should be based upon the needs of the projected residents and in conformance to the total park and recreation land for all citizens in the general area. Open space which may be required due to zoning setback and building separation regulations may not be "counted" as fulfilling parkland needs, but parkland dedicated to the City may be included in the required open space for a development.

In general, a substitution of private open space for dedicated parks will imply a substantially higher degree of improvement and the installation of recreational facilities, including equipment, by the developer as part of the contribution. Detailed plans of such areas, including specifications of facilities to be installed, must be approved by the City, and before credit is given for private recreation areas, the subdivider or developer must guarantee that these private recreation areas will be permanently maintained for such use by the execution of the appropriate legal documents. An example of this type of agreement is a playground proposed for a subdivision on Pontiac Trail, in which a playground and landscaped open space is being constructed by the developer, but will be open to the public.

**6. Dedicated Park Site Preparation**

The City may ask that the parkland site be rough graded per plans prepared by Parks and Recreation. The City reserves the right to deny parkland gifts which are not satisfactory for development of active recreational facilities, based upon needs or facility deficiencies identified in the PROS Plan.

Where appropriate, sites are requested to be dedicated in a condition ready for full service of electrical, water, sewer, and streets (including enclosed drainage and curb and gutter) as applicable to the location of the site and its proposed use.

Design considerations for dedicated neighborhood parkland shall follow the criteria developed to assess any acquisition. Generally, the idea behind requesting the dedication of land is to provide neighborhood park opportunities for residents of the new development so that they are served to a comparable level as existing neighborhoods.

In 2014, staff developed a document summarizing the park contribution request for developers to access prior to site plan submittal. The document outlines the information in this chapter of the PROS Plan and provides examples (see chart below) of amenities that may be donated in lieu of a cash contribution.

Additional pedestrian walkways that would enhance the streetscape and make additional connections or fill in sidewalk gaps in the neighborhood of the development
Additional trees and landscaping on public property, such as a park or plaza, or as part of a streetscape
Streetscape improvements, such as benches, picnic tables, planters, waste receptacles, decorative pavers and pavement
Public art, such as sculptures, murals, or other permanent art installations
Enhancements to existing parks, such as playgrounds, game courts, pathways, landscaping, park furniture

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Creation of new downtown public parks and or open spaces, such as plazas, parklets and mews
Contribution to a fund for park maintenance activities in the downtown, such as flower plantings, landscape maintenance, and irrigation systems

**\*Any public amenity shall be over and above what is required by code.**

Proposed amenities must be located within ¼ mile of the development, or be located in a community wide park in the region of the development. Examples could include parks such as Fuller Park, Buhr Park, Gallup Park or Veterans Memorial Park.

The developer is responsible to show how the proposed amenity is commensurate with the contribution requested. The Parks and Recreation Services Manager will make the final determination as to the donation equivalence.



## H. Land Acquisition Outside of Ann Arbor City Limits: The Ann Arbor Greenbelt

In 2003, residents of Ann Arbor approved the Open Space and Parkland Preservation Millage, also known as the Greenbelt Millage, which authorized a 30-year, 0.5 mil tax levy to provide funds for the preservation and protection of open space, natural habitats, agricultural lands, and the City’s source waters outside of City limits, and the purchase of parkland within City limits.

As delineated in City Council Resolution 377-9-031, one-third of the millage revenue is expected to be used for parkland acquisition within the City, and two-thirds of millage revenue for land preservation within the Greenbelt District outside the City (Figure 2). Chapter 42 (Open Space and Parkland Preservation Ordinance) of the City Code provides the parameters for the use of Open Space and Parkland Preservation Millage funds. Chapter 42 establishes the Greenbelt Advisory Commission, charged with making recommendations to City Council on the use of Open Space and

1 [https://a2gov.legistar.com/ViewReport.ashx?M=R&N=Master&GID=55&ID=264752&GUID=BEA595A1-E269-4DB9-8F64-B31031A5E141&Extra=WithText&Title=Legislation+Details+\(With+Text\)](https://a2gov.legistar.com/ViewReport.ashx?M=R&N=Master&GID=55&ID=264752&GUID=BEA595A1-E269-4DB9-8F64-B31031A5E141&Extra=WithText&Title=Legislation+Details+(With+Text))

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Parkland Preservation Millage funds within the Greenbelt District, known as the City’s Greenbelt Program.

Chapter 42 Section 3:63 of the City of Ann Arbor’s Open Space and Parkland Preservation Ordinance authorizes City Council to:

“Expend revenue to acquire greenbelt district land in accordance with the criteria and procedures established in this chapter. The interest acquired may either be fee title, development rights, conservation easements, or any lesser interest, easement, covenant or other contractual right pertaining to such rights. Acquisition of land and land rights may be achieved through donation, in whole or in part; or by purchase, grant, covenant or contract but only at a price that is equal to or less than the qualified appraisal. In particular, the city can acquire development rights to agricultural land and other eligible land. The revenue shall be used to acquire greenbelt district land only upon application of the owner and as authorized by this chapter.”<sup>2</sup>

To date, Ann Arbor City Council has approved more than 75 acquisitions conserving over 6,500 acres in the Greenbelt District. Much of this work has been accomplished through purchase of developments rights via conservation easements. To date, all conservation easements have been secured on private property after a willing applicant has submitted the property for consideration by the Greenbelt Advisory Commission and City Council.

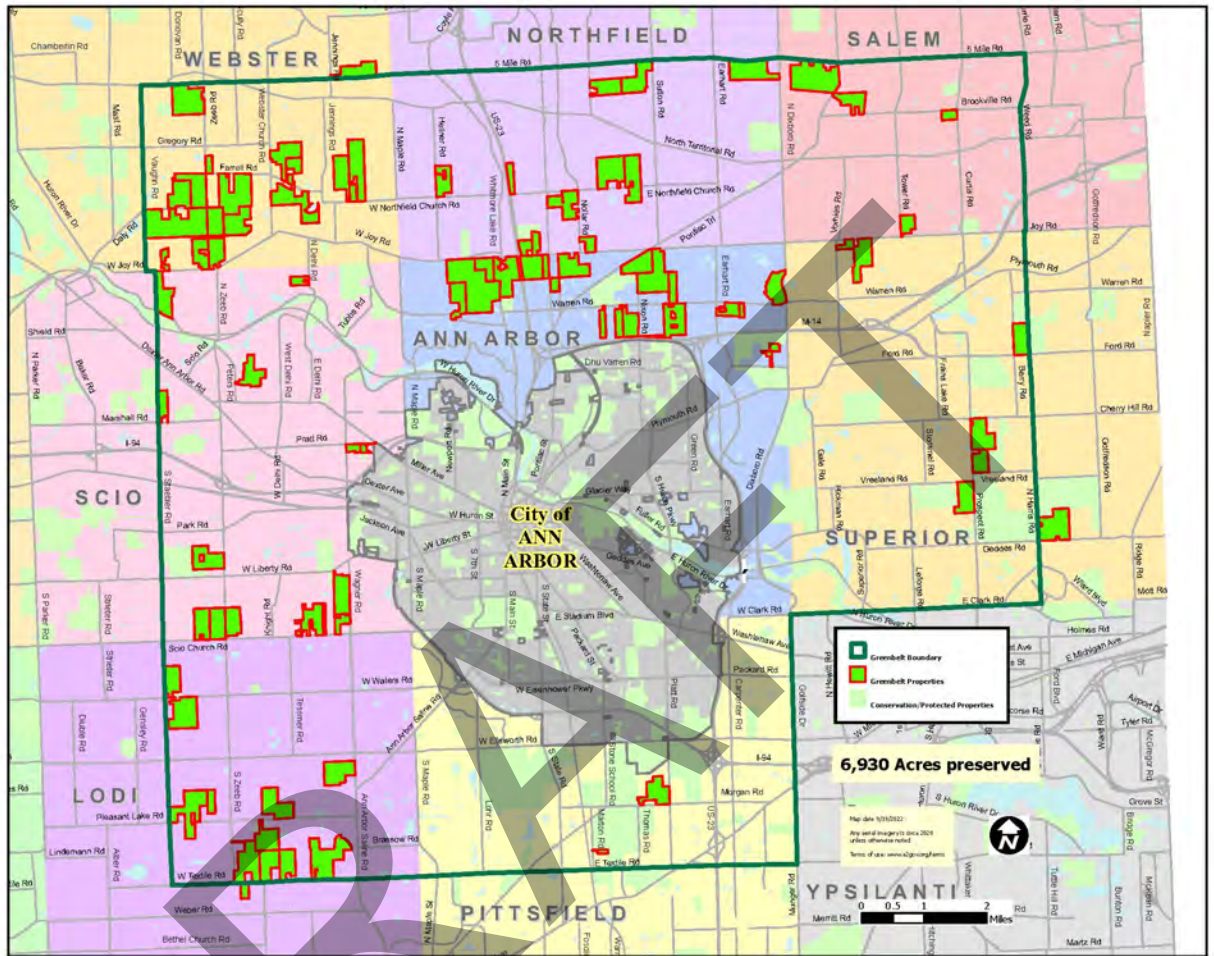
The Greenbelt’s priorities and strategy for land preservation are detailed in the program’s 2019 Strategic Plan available online [here](#).

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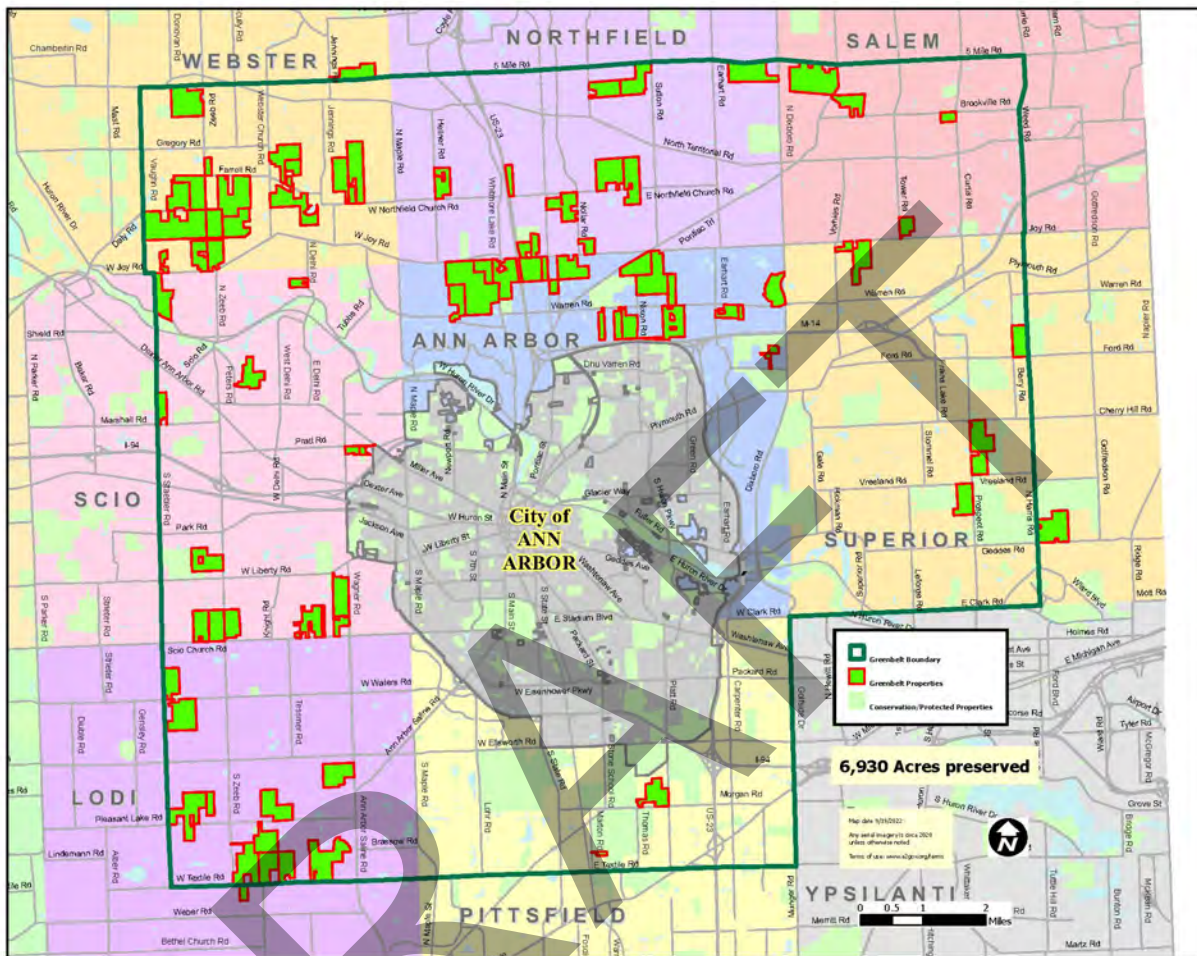
2

[https://library.municode.com/mi/ann\\_arbor/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=TITIIPAPUGR\\_CH42OPSPPA\\_PR](https://library.municode.com/mi/ann_arbor/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TITIIPAPUGR_CH42OPSPPA_PR)

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**1. Acquisition Criteria for Greenbelt Properties**

The Greenbelt Advisory Commission developed scoring criteria to rank the applications received. The scoring criterion focuses the selection of applications based on the following parameters:

- **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LAND:** type of agricultural land or mature forests, parcel size, road frontage, wetlands and/or floodplain, groundwater recharge and natural features.
- **CONTEXT:** proximity to City limits and other protected land, adjacent zoning and land use, scenic and/or historical value, proximity to Huron River or tributary.
- **ACQUISITION CONSIDERATIONS:** matching funds, landowner contribution, recreation potential.

The Greenbelt’s priorities for land preservation are broken down into three major priority areas which are discussed in more detail below: 1) creating large blocks (1,000 acres or greater) of protected farmland; 2) protection of Huron River Watershed; and 3) leveraging City dollars through grants and Partnerships.

**FARMLAND PRESERVATION:** Agricultural land traditionally has been the most threatened land by development within the Greenbelt District. This has been due not only to the sale of individual parcels for

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development, but also by a need for large blocks of land to sustain agricultural production. The Greenbelt Program continues to focus on forming 1,000-acre blocks (or larger) of protected farmland in order to make agriculture viable for future producers in the Ann Arbor area. In addition, recognizing that the Greenbelt's mission and direction is solely the protection of land, the Greenbelt has identified the protection of farms that are producing foods for local markets as a priority.

**HURON RIVER WATERSHED:** The protection of the Huron River is another top priority for the Greenbelt Program. The Huron River is an important recreational and natural resource in the Ann Arbor area. Over the last decade, the City has focused on protection of the land along the Huron River within the City limits. The Huron River is also part of a larger effort with Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation to establish a Border-to-Border trail through the county.

**PARTNERSHIPS:** Washtenaw County and some townships within the Greenbelt that have passed millages or dedicated funds to land preservation, and they play a critical role in maximizing the Greenbelt impact on land preservation. These partnerships are also key to providing management for lands outside the City limits and to continuing the goal of developing a regional park, open space, and farmland system throughout Washtenaw County.

### **I. Charter Amendment Concerning Sale of City Parkland**

The sale of parkland continues to be an important topic for the community. In August of 2008, City Council passed a resolution placing an amendment of the City Charter on the November election ballot. The ballot language asked “shall section 14.3(b) of the Ann Arbor City Charter be amended to require voter approval for the sale of any land within the City purchased, acquired or used for park land, while retaining the Section’s current requirement for voter approval of the sale of any park land in the City of Ann Arbor Master Plan at the time of the proposed sale?”. The City Charter amendment passed in November 2008, and section 14.3(b) now reads, “The City shall not sell without the approval, by a majority vote of the electors of the City voting on the question at a regular or special election, any City park, or land in the City acquired for park, cemetery, or any part thereof”.

This charter amendment provides significant protection for parkland. Not only would park land require a majority vote in order to be sold, but a public process would need to take place prior to any park land being placed on an election ballot, including a Park Advisory public hearing and recommendation, a Planning Commission public hearing and action, and a City Council public hearing and majority vote.

The community has also had conversations regarding the zoning of park land and has questioned if parks should have a unique zoning designation. The current zoning of ‘PL’ (public land) allows for multiple public uses not necessarily associated with parks, such as transportation and airports. The question of zoning is primarily in response to community concerns over the appropriate use of park land.





## SECTION VI: PLANNING PROCESS FOR THE PROS PLAN

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The planning process for the PROS Plan included several different methods to engage the community and solicit input, as well as assess the existing park system. The Plan documents the information received from the community, including public meetings, email comments, focus groups, and surveys, in addition to recreation and open space inventories to determine recreational and open space desires of the community.

### **A. The PROS Plan Steering Committee**

Staff created a steering committee to help draft the citizen survey, review goals and objectives, and develop an action plan. Members included a representative from the Equitable Engagement Steering Committee, City Council, and two representatives from the Park Advisory Commission, in addition to staff from Planning and Development Services, Park Operations, Natural Area Preservation, Systems Planning, and Park Administration. The steering committee met periodically to discuss the community engagement approach and planning effort.

### **B. Public Notification and Involvement**

Public input is essential to help determine priorities for park and recreation programs, services, capital improvements, infrastructure improvements, and land acquisitions. Staff notified the community of the PROS Plan planning process in a number of ways, including press releases to local media outlets; postings on Parks and Recreation Facebook page, Nextdoor, and Twitter; email notifications through Gov Delivery (a voluntary email subscription for citizens, which sends notifications about City events and news); postcards, flyers, and posters at all recreation facilities and other City facilities; the City's park planning webpage; and notifications on the Parks and Recreation website.

#### PROS PLAN MEDIA SITES:

- Ann Arbor Parks & Recreation's Facebook ([www.a2gov.org/annarborparks](http://www.a2gov.org/annarborparks)), Twitter, ([www.twitter.com/a2parks](http://www.twitter.com/a2parks)) Instagram, ([www.instagram.com/annarborparks](http://www.instagram.com/annarborparks)) and Nextdoor

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([www.nextdoor.com](http://www.nextdoor.com)).

- City of Ann Arbor's Facebook ([www.facebook.com/cityofannarbor](http://www.facebook.com/cityofannarbor)) and Twitter ([www.twitter.com/cityofannarbor](http://www.twitter.com/cityofannarbor)) accounts.
- City of Ann Arbor's e-mail subscription service ([www.GovDelivery.com](http://www.GovDelivery.com)) to send out general bulletins to thousands of people who voluntarily sign up to receive information about City and, more specifically, parks and recreation news.
- City of Ann Arbor Open City Hall online survey tool ([https://www.opentownhall.com/portals/116/Issue\\_11734](https://www.opentownhall.com/portals/116/Issue_11734)) to allow the community to provide input on the PROS plan.
- City of Ann Arbor's website ([www.a2gov.org](http://www.a2gov.org)), and web page on the Parks & Recreation homepage ([www.a2gov.org/parks](http://www.a2gov.org/parks)) and on the Park Planning project page (<https://www.a2gov.org/ParkPlanning>).

The PROS Plan planning process engaged residents, park users, City staff, advisory groups, and various stakeholders through public meetings, focus groups, individual comments, and an online survey. The findings provided significant understanding and direction necessary to evaluate and prioritize the future direction of the park and recreation system. Major findings and trends are identified below:

- **TAKING CARE OF WHAT WE HAVE:** Ann Arbor residents continue to emphasize the importance of maintaining and improving our existing parks. This is likely a reflection of our robust and broad park system with over 160 park properties available to our community, that there is not a strong desire for additional acquisitions and development. As such, any proposed acquisitions should be carefully evaluated while weighing the cost of maintenance and development associated with any purchase.
- **PARK ACCESSIBILITY:** Making sure that parks and facilities are accessible to people of all abilities is a high priority for the park system. The City is currently undergoing an ADA Transition Plan for the entire park system that looks at physical barriers, as well as how to improve accessibility of programs and customer service. Several significant projects to improve accessibility were completed during this PROS cycle, including the Gallup Park Rotary Centennial Playground and accessibility improvements to the Argo Livery, both of which were funded with DNR Trust Fund grants.
- **PARK CONNECTIVITY:** Improving non-motorized connections for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users is important for the future of the park system, especially when considering the carbon impacts of individual vehicles and the limited parking available in most of our heavily used parks. Trails connecting to and through river parks as well as connecting natural areas to create hiking and wildlife corridors continue to be strongly desired by the community. There is potential for properties adjacent to parks to have improved and formalized connections, such as access easements, to connect parks to each other and the community. The Border to Border trail continues to be a high priority for connections westward towards Dexter via the Barton/Bandemer connection, as well as linkages to the City's non-motorized network.

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- **FUTURE FACILITIES:** A highly requested amenity per the online survey was a splash pad or spray park, noting that several surrounding communities have these but there are none currently in Ann Arbor. Pickleball courts, dog parks and runs, and trails were all frequent requests. Additionally, a group has formed to advocate for the addition of a bike pump track in the park system. Pump tracks are a circuit of rollers, banked turns, and features designed to be ridden completely by riders "pumping"—generating momentum by up and down body movements, instead of pedaling or pushing. At the request of the Parks Advisory Commission, the City has established a Bicycle Recreation Task Force to explore opportunities to improve bike recreation opportunities in the City parks.

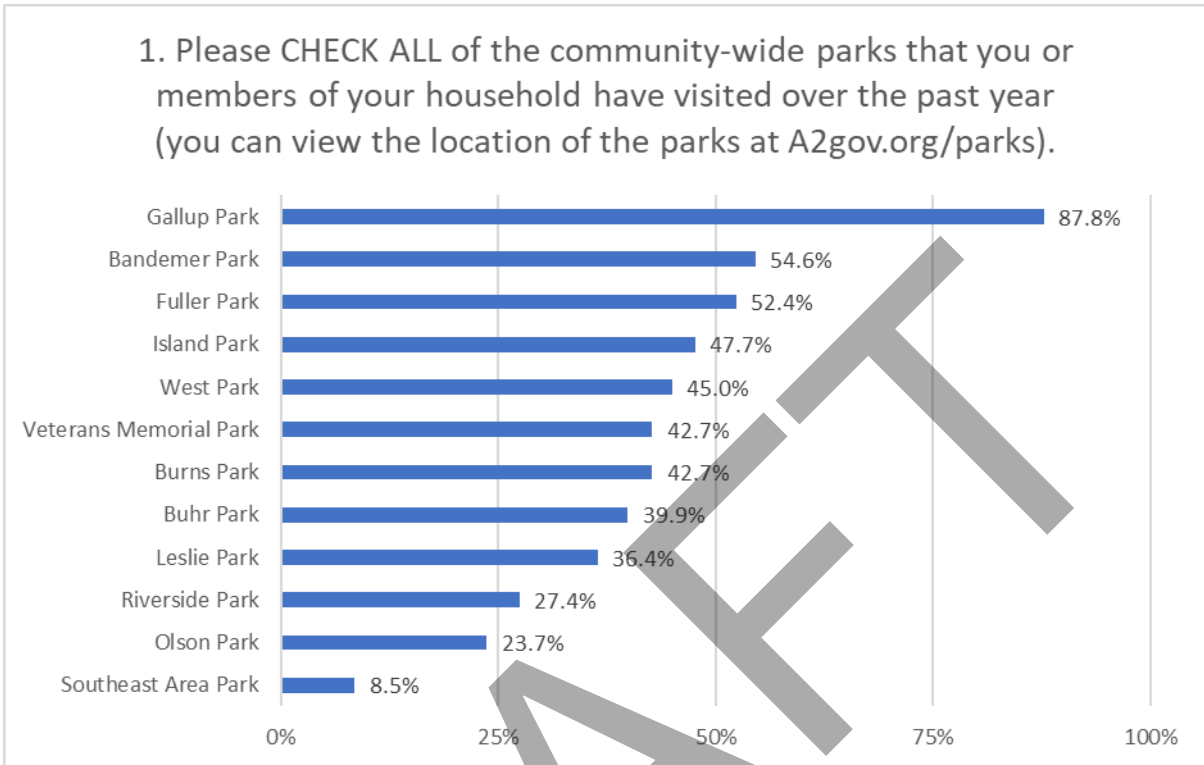
### 1. **ONLINE SURVEY**

The online survey was the primary tool used to gain feedback from residents and park users. It was posted online from April 5 through June 5, 2022. A total of 2,382 interested citizens completed the survey. Survey results and additional comments from the survey helped provide the direction of park programs, amenities, and future initiatives. Below is a summary of the findings.

**Question #1 asked which community-wide parks that respondents and their households have visited over the past year.**

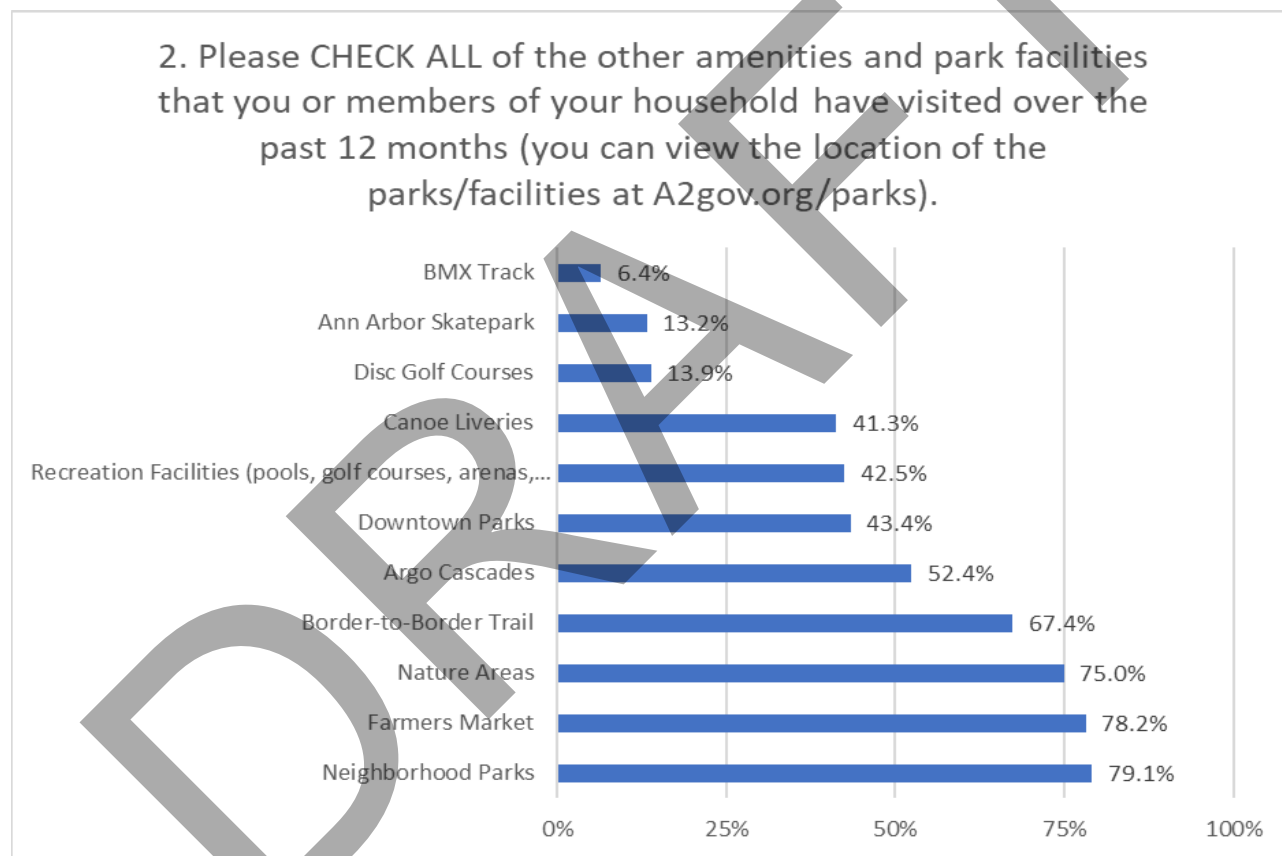
The overwhelming majority of respondents had visited Gallup Park, and other Huron River-adjacent parks in the past year. Community-wide parks that are not along the river and that are further from the city core have less self-reported visitors overall. Bandemer Park, Island Park, West Park, and Burns Park all had high reported numbers of visits despite not having staffed facilities. Southeast Area Park was the least visited by survey respondents.

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**Question #2 asked which other amenities and park facilities respondents and their households have visited over the past 12 months.**

This question listed a mix of highly specialized facilities (i.e., BMX track) and broader recreational categories (i.e., neighborhood parks). Unsurprisingly, the broader categories tended to be more popular, with almost 80% of respondents visiting their neighborhood park and 75% visiting Nature Areas. The Farmers Market, Border to Border Trail, and Argo Cascades also continue to be very popular. Specialized facilities, such as the skatepark and BMX track, received the least reported visits on the survey, despite the skatepark having very regular and active users. This could be because the skatepark users tend to be younger and there are markedly fewer survey responses from young people.



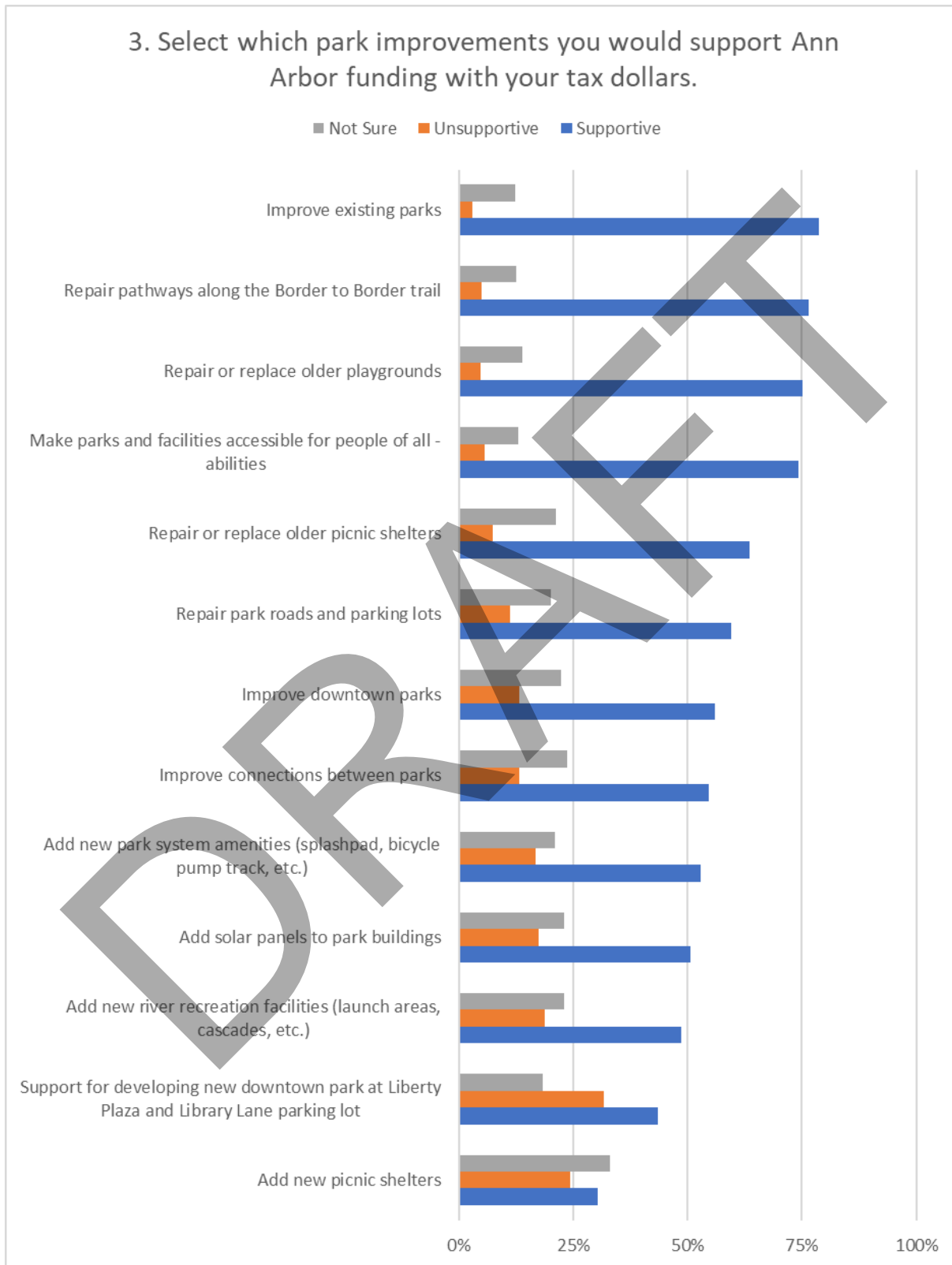
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**Question #3 rated which park improvements respondents would support Ann Arbor funding with tax dollars.**

Of the 13 options provided, survey participants showed the highest level of support (between 74-79% of all respondents) for the following: make parks and facilities accessible for people of all-abilities, repair or replace older playgrounds, repair pathways along the Border to Border trail, and improve existing parks. Correspondingly, there was lower support for developing a new downtown park at the “Center of the City” site which includes Liberty Plaza and the parking lot site known as the “Library Lane Lot”.

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**Question #4 expanded on Question #3 by having respondents prioritize their top three park improvements to be funded with Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation tax dollars.**

The top four responses in Question 3 remained consistent for Question 4.

Question 4 did not allow opportunity for respondents to provide comment.

Improvements were ranked as follows:

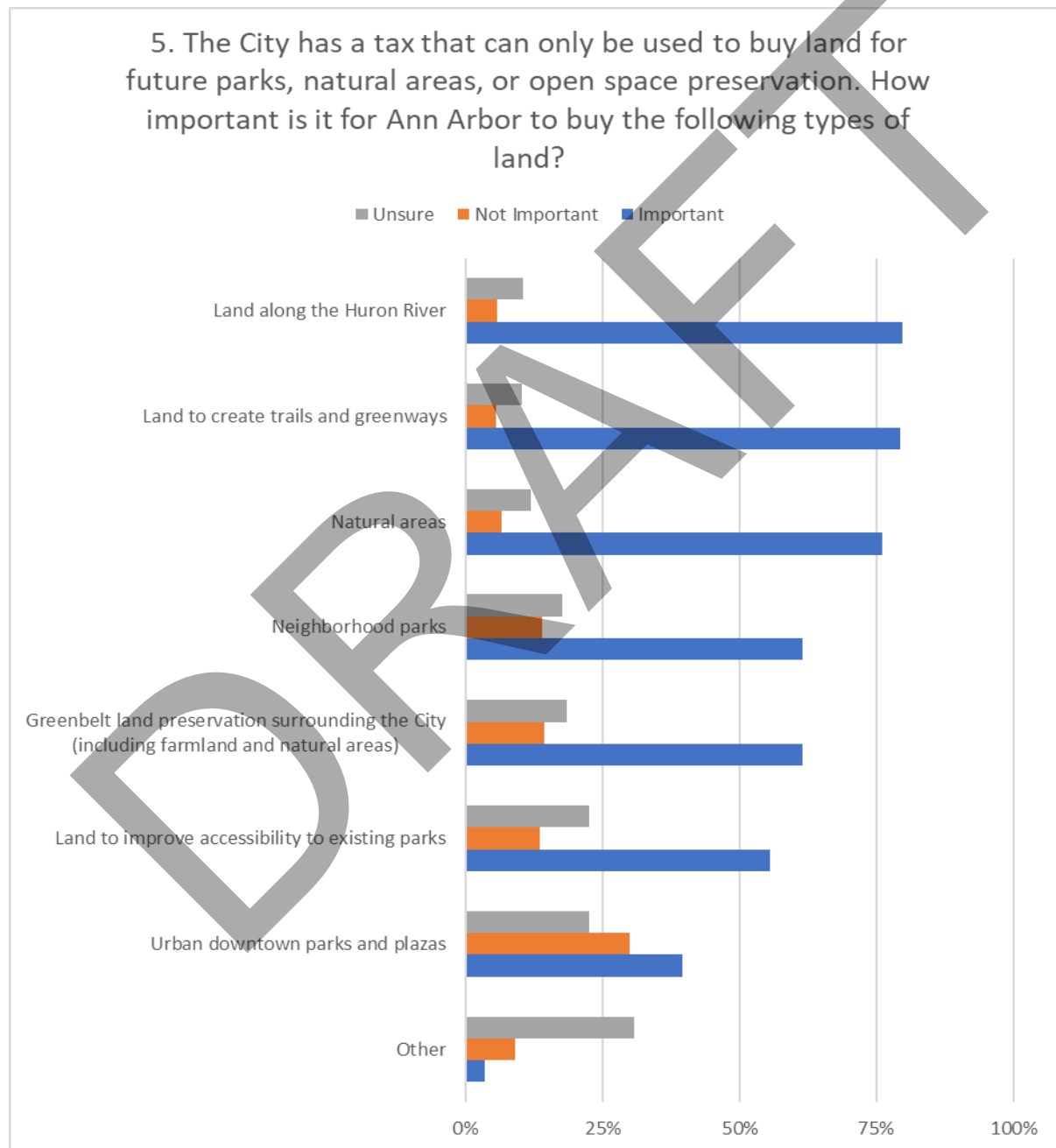
1. Improve existing parks
2. Repair pathways along the Border to Border trail
3. Make parks and facilities accessible for people of all abilities
4. Repair or replace older playgrounds
5. Add new park system amenities (splashpad, bicycle pump track, etc.)
6. Improve connections between parks
7. Support for developing new downtown park at Liberty Plaza and Library Lane parking lot
8. Repair park roads and parking lots
9. Add new river recreation facilities (launch areas, cascades, etc.)
10. Add solar panels to park buildings
11. Improve downtown parks
12. Repair or replace older picnic shelters
13. Add new picnic shelters



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**Question #5 asked which types of land should be prioritized for acquisition with the City’s tax that is dedicated to buying land for future parks, natural areas, or open space preservation.**

Question 5 did not allow opportunity for respondents to provide comment. Respondents feel strongly that acquiring land along the Huron River, land to create trails and greenways, and land for natural areas is the most important. This suggests a preference for using parkland to preserve nature over the development of urban and neighborhood parks. :

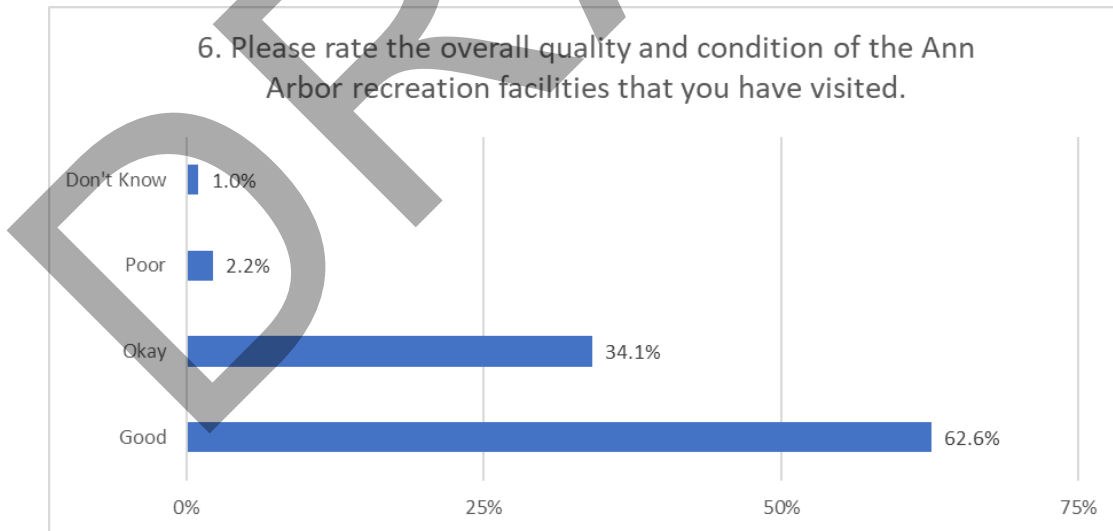


**Question #6 asked respondents to rate the overall quality and condition of the Ann Arbor recreation facilities they had visited.**

Consistent with the previous survey, the majority of respondents rate the quality and condition of recreation facilities as “good”.

**General comments on all facilities** – Survey participants would like to see additional bathrooms, drinking fountains, and improved accessibility at facilities. They also noted that parking, road, and car access needs improvement, especially at facilities serviced by dirt roads (e.g., Bandemer) or areas that experience heavy crowds (e.g., Argo Livery).

- **Argo Livery** - People expressed appreciation for the recent accessibility improvements to the livery but would like to see continued improvement, including better parking (expanded options and improvements to existing). Respondents also commented that they would like more regular cleanup, especially on the weekends when the Livery is most heavily-used.
- **Border to Border Trail** – The recent improvements have been well-received. Survey-takers want continued replacement of trail where it has deteriorated,.
- **Farmer’s Market** - Responses were split on whether to enclose/heat the market or leave it as is. Many noted that the market needs more parking for cars and covered bike parking..
- **Gallup Park: Playground and Livery** – Survey-takers enjoy the new playground but also wish there were improved bathrooms near the playground and that the road is repaved.
- **Golf courses: Huron Hills and Leslie** – Generally, respondents felt the golf courses were well maintained with a few expressing that with the amount of space it takes up, it could be better used for something else.
- **Pools: Mack, Fuller, Vets, Buhr** - People are grateful for the city’s pools and wish for longer operating hours and a longer season. They noted that the locker rooms need improvements and better maintenance.



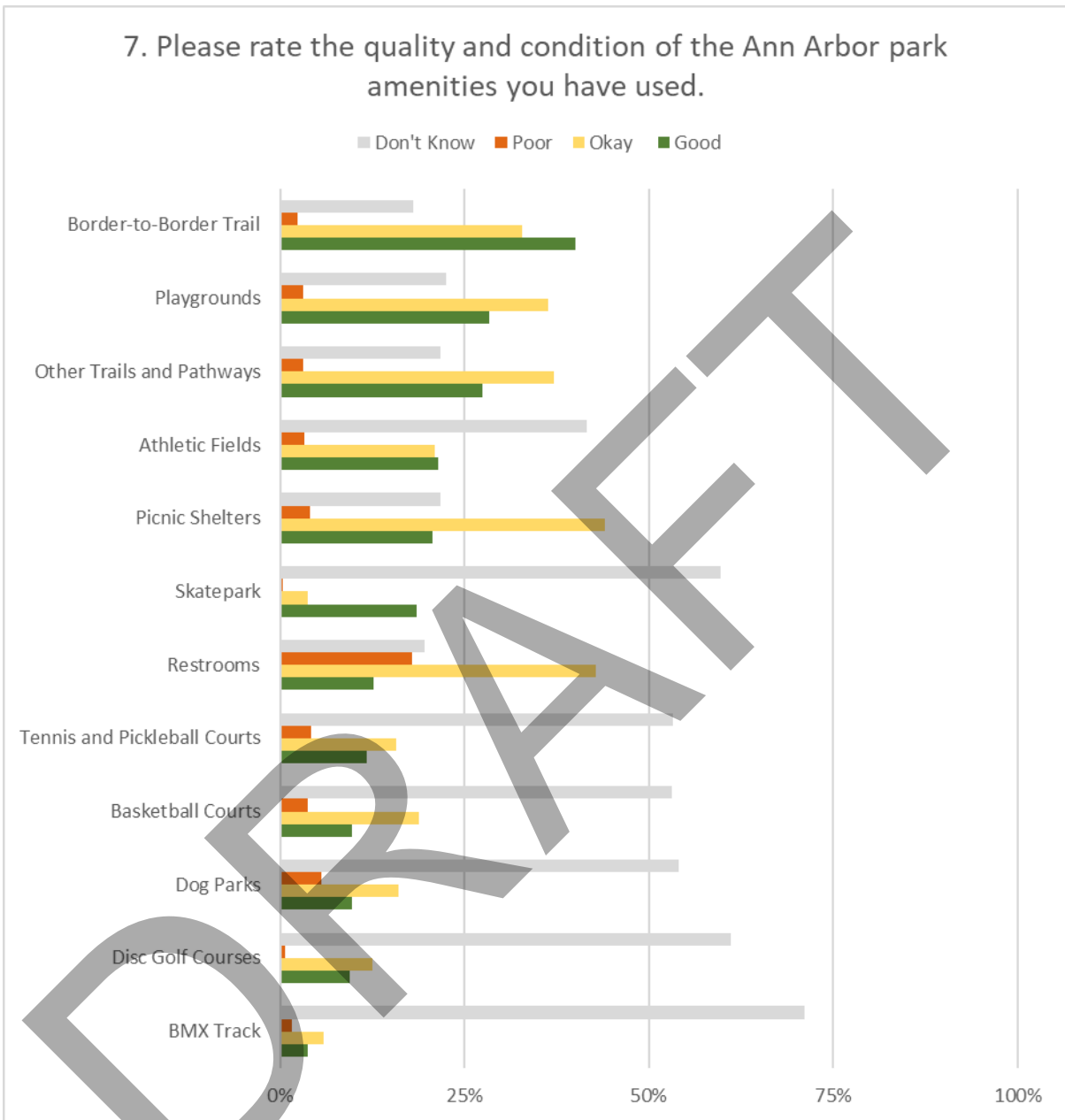
**Question #7 asked respondents to rate the quality and condition of specific Ann Arbor park amenities they have used.**

Consistent with the previous survey, most respondents rated the quality and condition of park amenities as ‘good’.

Question 7 also allowed an opportunity for respondents to provide comment. A high-level qualitative summary of comments on the quality of specific park amenities includes:

- **West Park Bandshell** – References to the West Park bandshell note that it is currently closed, and it’s future needs to be addressed.
- **Dog Parks** – Similar to previous PROS Plans, more dog parks are desired. The quality of the existing parks is seen as adequate, with the strongest desires being better maintenance, improvements to drainage, and drinking water at all dog parks.
- **Court Sports** – More proactive maintenance is needed, especially in regard to cracked pavement and basketball net repairs. Many respondents would also like to see more pickleball courts, including considering converting underused tennis courts to pickleball.
- **Restrooms** – It is understood that regular public restroom maintenance is challenging but greatly appreciated. The most common request is for restrooms to be open year-round.
- **Skatepark** – Many people want to see the Skatepark have lighting, which is a project that is currently under construction. The Skatepark’s success can make it quite crowded; users would like to see it expanded with more trash cans, permanent seating, restrooms, and shade.
- **Athletic Fields** – Comments indicated that the quality is variable throughout the City. Drainage, uneven surfaces, and overgrown weeds were the most frequent concerns cited.
- **Other Trails and Pathways** - Survey-takers are generally pleased with the trails, however many would like to see more trails with increased connectivity between parks. It was also noted that low lying and muddy areas need to be repaired.
- **Playgrounds** - Quality varies throughout the City, with Gallup Park and County Farm Park (a Washtenaw County Park, not City-owned) being cited as the high bar for playground improvement throughout the city. In addition to improved regular maintenance, people want to see more accessible equipment, fenced-in toddler areas, and creative/nature-based play spaces.
- **Border-to-Border Trail** - Newly improved sections are greatly appreciated, and people would like to see continued improvement along with the construction of new connections within the City. Additionally, some think the trail should be widened to accommodate mixed types of users.

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**Question #8 asked how well Ann Arbor parks maintenance is doing.**

Consistent with the previous survey, most respondents rated all park maintenance as ‘good’ or ‘okay’. Question 8 also allowed an opportunity for respondents to provide comment. A high-level qualitative summary of comments on the quality of specific park amenities includes:

- **Natural Area Invasive Species Management** - Many comments acknowledge how difficult it is to remove widespread invasive species while also stating that they would like better invasive management throughout the park system.
- **Snow Removal** - Respondents would like to see more consistent snow removal on paved trails, sidewalks, and park connections.
- **Tree Trimming** - Many comments called out specific areas that needed trimming and dead or fallen trees removed.
- **Trash Removal / Cleanliness** - Most comments mentioned the need for more trash cans (at least one at each park) and the need to empty them more frequently. In particular, summer trash buildup at popular parks was noted as a problem. .
- **Natural Surface Trail Management** - Given our long winter season, people would like trails maintained so they can be used in the cold season (i.e., surfaced so they can drain or limit muddiness or plowed if paved). Overgrown trails were mentioned as needing maintenance, particularly at Gallup Park and along the Border-to-Border trail.
- **Mowing** – The No-Mow May program in spring of 2021 was mentioned with several responses calling for less mowing in Parks generally, and the consideration that underused lawn areas could transition to prairie spaces. Additionally, some respondents would prefer more frequent mowing, especially at neighborhood sports fields. Lastly, in areas where mowing is less frequent, educational signs were suggested to clarify why.
- **Miscellaneous** - Numerous comments imply that maintenance needs more funding in order to improve the inconsistent level of service across the system. It was perceived by some that larger parks are better maintained than smaller, neighborhood parks. .

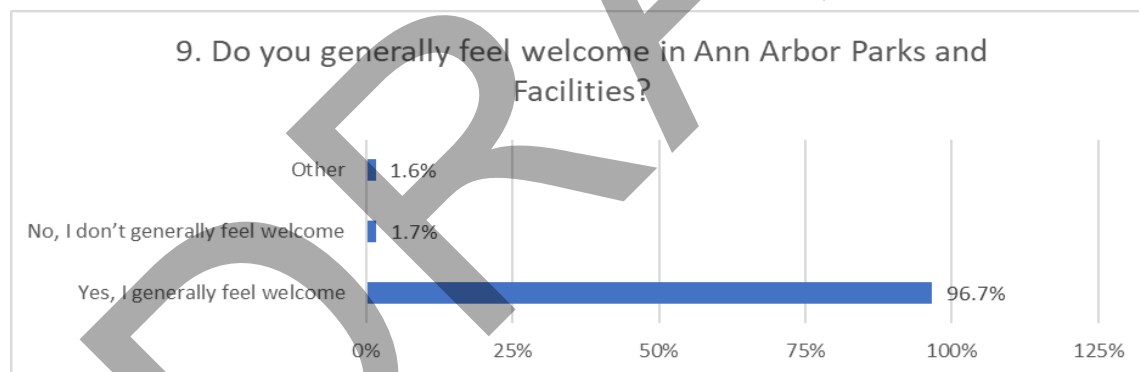
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**Question #9 asked if respondents generally feel welcome in Ann Arbor Parks.**

The majority of respondents feel welcome in Ann Arbor parks, but comments also indicate this is not true for everyone.. A high-level qualitative summary of comments on the quality of specific park amenities includes:

- **Maintenance** - Respondents associate physical maintenance with a welcoming atmosphere, particularly with regards to trash pick up, vegetation maintenance, lightning, and bathroom cleanliness. A better maintained park contributes to a feeling of safety.
- **Atmosphere** - Some people find the atmosphere of parks unwelcoming, particularly at Liberty Plaza, Wheeler Park, West Park, and Dolph Nature Area. Some respondents referred to illicit activity that makes them feel unsafe at these parks such as drug use or solicitation. Others mention the concentration of unhoused persons or aggressive panhandling. There is recognition that the unhoused population is a result of an inequitable system that requires better city services. While there is compassion for their circumstances, survey-takers still report feeling unwelcomed. Adding more police presence to makes parks safer is not a wholly accepted approach, as it makes minoritized groups often feel less welcomed.
- **Unleashed dogs** - Survey respondents expressed feeling uncomfortable around unleashed dogs, and would like to see leash laws enforced.
- **Marginalized peoples feel less welcome** – Seniors, disabled persons, and minoritized groups shared instances of feeling unwelcomed. Specific instances mentioned include switching basketball hoops to a style for children, which was interpreted as limiting use for Black and Latino men. Black parkgoers report being followed by police in parks, seniors report difficulty finding places sit, and wheelchair users mention difficulty in being able to reach amenities.



**Question #10 asked if there any changes or accommodations that could be made to allow you or another member of your household to use park facilities or participate in recreation?**

- **Accessibility** – Populations with limited mobility replied with a need for accessible surfaces, including walking trails, paved parking at all parks that are close to facilities and amenities, curb cuts, and shaded benches and water fountains spaced out for rest.
- **Young populations with special needs** – Build fenced-in play areas for children on autism spectrum, who are more likely to run from caretakers. Add adaptive playgrounds for children with special needs.
- **Improve restrooms** – An increase in quantity of restrooms that are accessible year-round would make parks more accommodating.
- **Increase connectivity to parks** - Many survey-takers remarked on the need for safer and stronger pedestrian and biking connections to parks and within parks. . This would include an increase in bike racks and sidewalks that lead to parks.

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- **Increase access for dogs** - Dog owners would like to see existing dog parks improved, number of dog parks increased (even if with a small dog run), and off-leash hours in areas not specifically designated for dogs.
- **Improve playgrounds** - Updates to playgrounds that include enclosed play areas and universal play areas for improved safety and accessibility for children, as well as considerations for those with special needs.
- **Increase amount and type of programming**- The responses were varied but there were a few calls for increased winter programming and extended hours for popular options to expand availability for users.

### **Question #11 asked what, if any, new programs, activities, or amenities Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation should prioritize for future implementation.**

Requests for amenities and programming were diverse, and included the following:

- **Additional Recreation Programs** - Common requests include adding adult fitness classes (yoga, calisthenics, low impact aerobics) and youth programs that are affordable and centrally located.
- **Additional Amenities / Facilities**
  - The following amenities received sizeable support (10+ comments)
    - Cross country skiing: groomed trails
    - Dog parks and dog runs
    - Pickleball :expanded courts and classes
    - Playground: enhance existing with natural play, improved equipment
    - Pools :expanded hours and season, programming
    - Splash pad – this was the most requested amenity by far
    - Biking :improve bike connectivity in and between parks.
- **Border to Border Trail** - Most comments about this trail are a request to complete it.
- **Educational Programming** – Respondents recommend all ages environmental education and stewardship for the public in the form of signage and programs (such as Leslie Science Center campfires and nature walks).
- **Events** – Music festivals are the most popular request, but other suggestions include movie nights and stewardship events. Additionally, respondents would like to see more options to eat in the parks. Ideas included food truck events at parks, vending machines, and concessions along the Border to Border Trail, among others.
- **Natural Areas** - Survey participants identified a need to have more and various types of opportunities to commune with natural areas, such as preservation, nature walks/tours, and invasive species management..
- **River Amenities** – Respondents desire a stronger connection to the river through amenities. Some ideas include a public beach at Argo, paths, , canoe/kayak storage, sites for river viewing, and canoe/kayak/river skills lessons
- **Media Outreach/Reservations** –The following features were described to improve the functionality of the Parks and Recreation website:
  - how to connect between parks and nature areas,
  - bikes routes,
  - any mobility constraints on the paths,
  - up-to-date parks maps,
  - an online system to reserve park facilities,
  - an application to help community engage the parks more easily,



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- search function that lets them search/map all A2 parks and their amenities,
- calendar of events,
- notifications of when improvements are being made and get completed,
- one-stop reservation system for pool passes, ice skating, and other bookable amenities.

### **Question #12 asked what would make it easier for people to engage with the city.**

- **Feeling Included** - There was general sentiment about wanting to be heard, with more “bottom up” opportunities for input and feedback from all segments of the Ann Arbor community.
- **Newsletter** – Several survey participants suggested regular e-newsletters with project updates, decisions and how they were made, and information on park events and activities. This could include email listservs for residents to select more specifically what type of updates to receive.
- **Online meetings** - There is some support for virtual meetings, and suggestions for creating a better opportunity to speak at them and converse with city officials.
- **Better transportation and parking options** - These comments refer to the price and availability of parking at City Hall, and a public transportation system that includes greater bus frequency and infrastructure that makes the city safely walkable and bikeable.
- **Phone** – Survey-takers noted that phones are answered less frequently since the pandemic. They want to speak to a person on the phone to ask questions and get information.
- **Surveys** – Many respondents appreciate this survey format to engage but worry about whether dissemination methods reach them every time. There is a request for the city to use multiple channels for outreach.
- **Website** – People want the website to be easier to navigate to find relevant information, including contact information for staff.

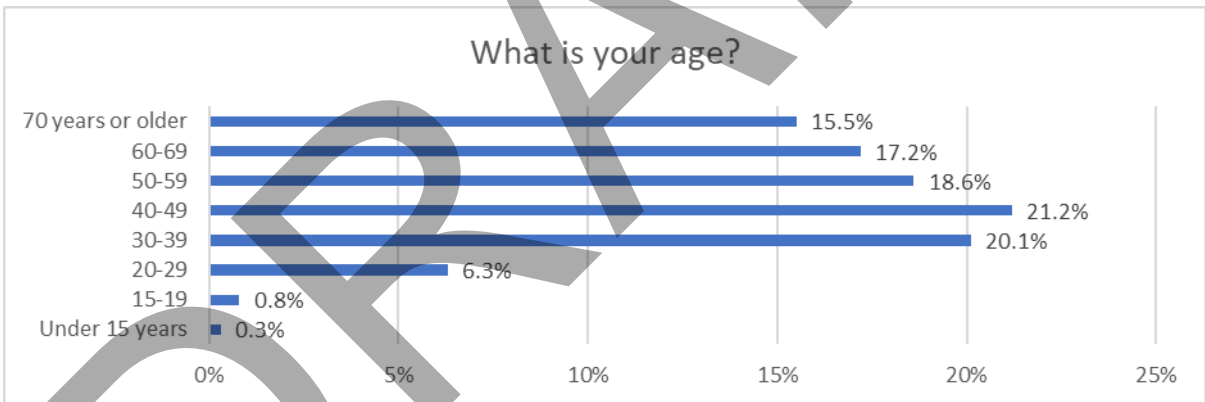
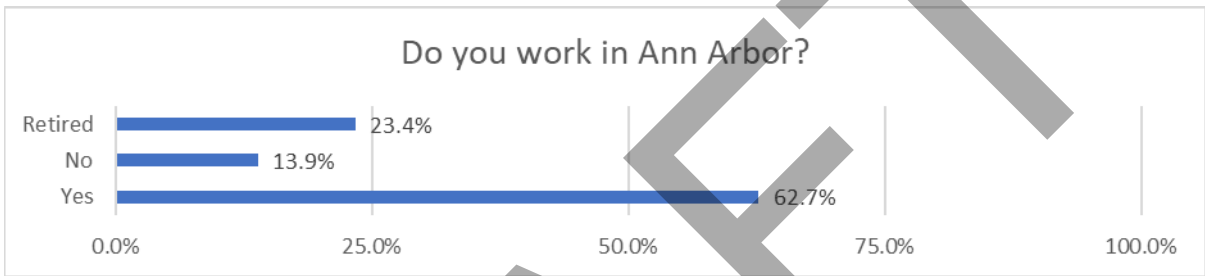
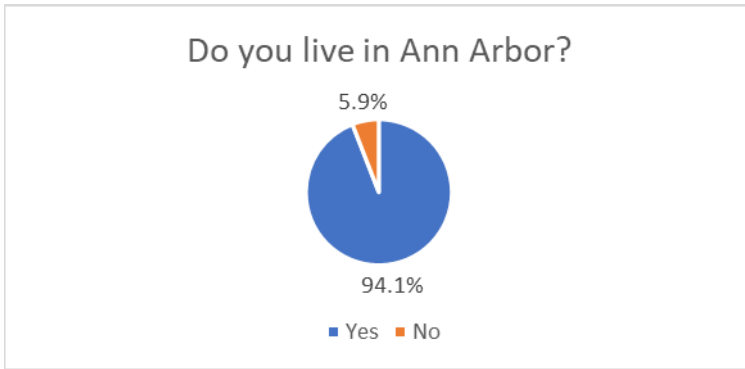
### **Questions # 13-18 were demographic, including zip code, length of residency in Ann Arbor and age.**

The City has developed voluntary demographic questions that were included in the PROS Plan for the first time. This survey asks for information on several categories, including whether they lived and worked in Ann Arbor, race, sexual orientation, household income, and information on housing tenure.

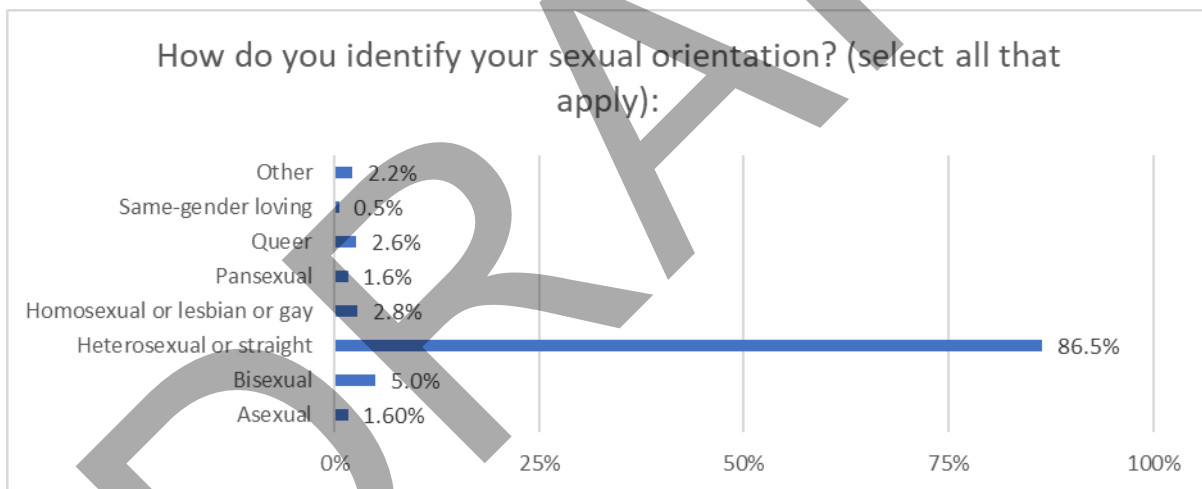
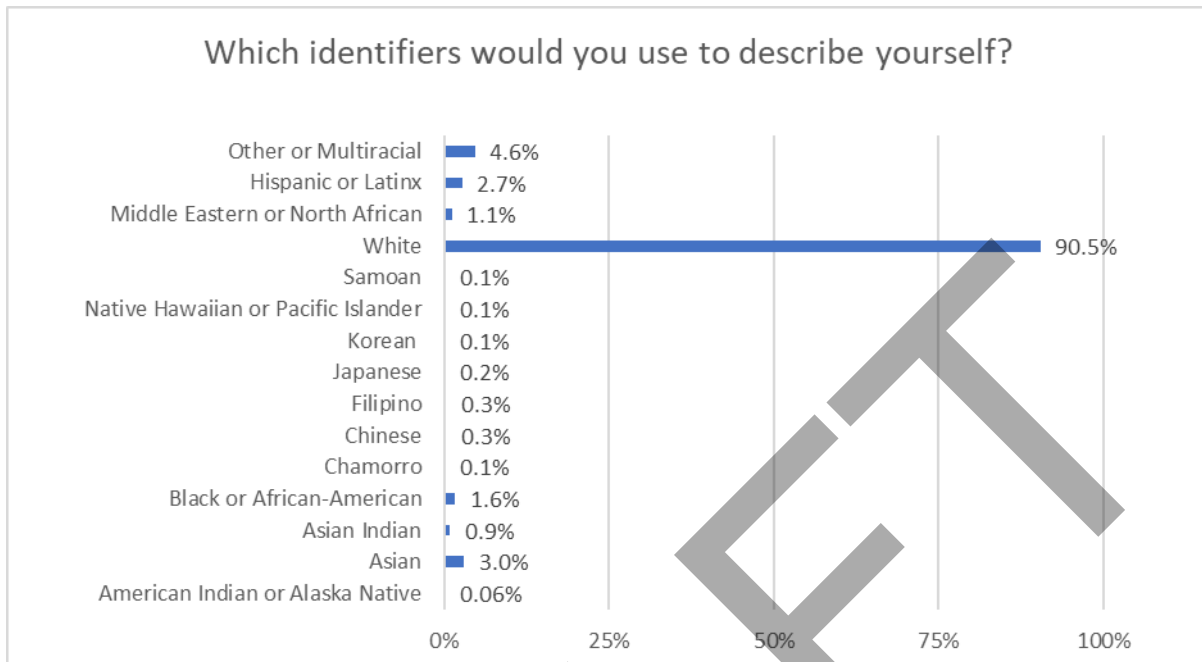
Most respondents are homeowners that lived and worked in Ann Arbor. A combined 41% of survey-takers were in the 30 to 40 age group, representing the highest rate of participation compared to other age cohorts. Participation for those under 20 years of age was lower than most other age brackets, but compared with the 2016 survey, there was a significant increase in the number of respondents in these age ranges.

Survey respondents were disproportionately white (90.5%), whereas the 2020 census showed that the City population was only 66.6% white. Additionally, survey respondents had disproportionately high incomes, with the 60.7% of respondents having a household income over \$100,000, compared to the median household income per the 2020 census at \$68,824. These findings suggest that the demographics of those answering the survey do not necessarily reflect the demographics of the City as a whole, and that additional work must be done to get feedback and input from a broader swath of our community.

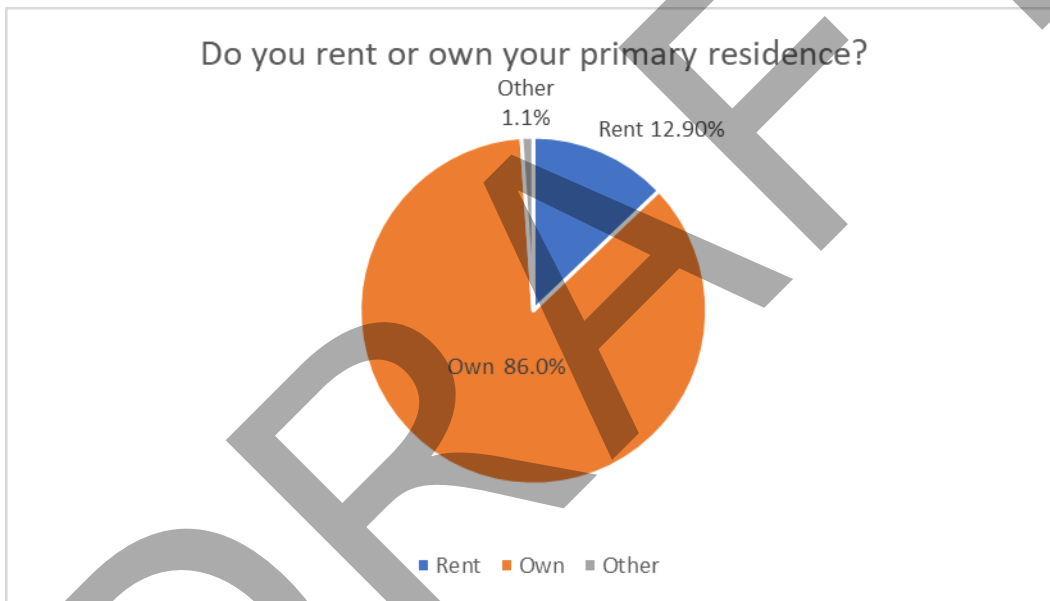
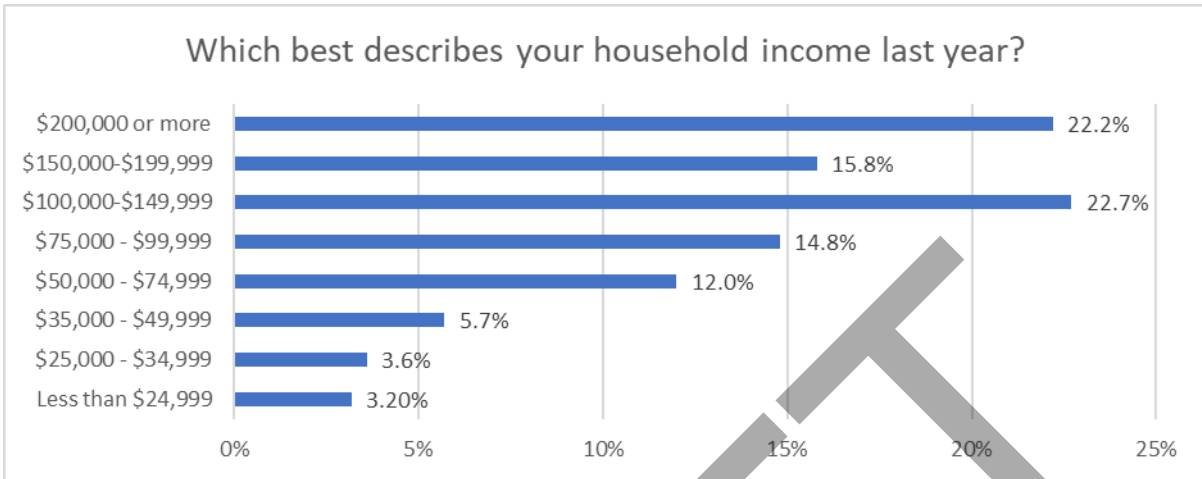
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## 2. FOCUS GROUPS

### a. Park Advisory Commission

Staff met with the Park Advisory Commission to discuss a series of questions related to issues of equity and the need for additional funding to support the ongoing costs of capital improvements to aging park infrastructure. A summary of some of the comments during the discussion is included below:

1. *What are the most immediate needs for Parks to focus on to improve equity in our parks?*
  - Consider how to improve access to popular riverfront parks for those who may not live within walking/biking distance. Consider improved bus access.
  - Ensure that all neighborhood parks meet the City's standards, because some of the

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higher income neighborhoods tend to have more vocal park advocates than lower income areas.

- Improve communication with traditionally underrepresented populations, both from a customer service standpoint as well as community engagement.
- Consider spreading park volunteers to areas in need.
- Consider partnering with organizations that provide child supervision to remove barriers for families to participate in recreation and experience parks.

### 2. *How can we foster local park advocates for traditionally underrepresented populations?*

- The City needs to be intentional about going to underrepresented groups and building relationships, rather than asking them to attend public meetings and “come to us”.
- Consider ways to reach younger populations (under 20) and non-English speakers that may not use traditional communication channels.

### 3. *What should Parks consider in in the process of exploring options for additional funding?*

- There is concern that City taxes have become too high and especially long-time residents feel financially squeezed, leaving little appetite for a large bond or expanded millage
- The City should pursue private partnerships, philanthropy, grants and fundraising efforts, and planned giving. It would be useful for Parks to ask for support from Council to develop public/private partnerships, like a conservancy model. There is also a need for additional staff to support these efforts as they require special skillsets.
- There were mixed feelings about whether parks should consider allowing sponsorships for naming rights of select park amenities and facilities as part of a funding campaign. There was concern that the named/funded facilities would receive special treatment compared to other parks. Another concern is the public perception of corporate interests. It was noted that there would need to be very specific processes and procedures developed and it would be important to communicate this purpose to the public.

## **b. Recreation Advisory Commission**

The Recreation Advisory Commission answered several questions about equity, strengths and weaknesses, and park system needs. A summary of comments/discussion is included below:

- Ensure parks are a safe, comfortable, and accessible for all to interact, including those with behavioral, mental, and physical disabilities.
- The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of parks ; reinforce diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Consider how the park system can contribute to the City’s A2Zero climate action goals.
- Winter is a very long season in Michigan, and there is a desire to focus on indoor sports in the winter, providing more recreational offerings than private clubs with tennis, volleyball, soccer, swimming, etc. Additionally, opportunities for indoor playgrounds and open fields, such as at the 242 Church Community Center, would be appealing for families.
- There are opportunities to be more proactive with our scholarship program to make sure families in need are aware of these offerings.

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- There is a need to create programming that introduces underrepresented communities to different recreational experiences (i.e., a guided family hike in one of the nature areas, or a guided tour of the Border-to-Border trail.)

### c. City Planning Commission

The Recreation Advisory Commission answered several questions about equity, potential zoning changes and their impacts on parks and open space, public-private partnerships for open space development, downtown parks, and transportation. A summary of comments/discussion is included below:

- If the new TC-1 (Transit Corridor) zoning districts are enacted, high-density residential will be added to areas that currently have little to no residential presence. The City should consider what types of public open spaces it would like to incorporate when new residential areas are developed. The South State area in particular - where TC-1 is being considered - lacks parks that are accessible within a 10-minute walk. It's important to not lose track of development of future neighborhood parks, which are important for creating a sense of community and building relationships.
- Parks needs to be strategic and specific in locating desired areas for parks, so that when opportunities come up, acquisitions or partnerships are possible. Acquiring land could become a barrier to development.
- The City needs to make sure that we look at the safety and usability of walking and biking routes to parks.
- Heat island affect is a large issue impacting the city. Especially when we look at the potential new TC-1 zones, where we have a lack of green space. Providing public space and parks to these regions – especially along South State Street, is a great tool to mitigate the effect of rising temperatures.
- There are three things to consider when looking for new parkland, especially in the proposed TC-1 Zones: zoning that encourages increased density, access to parks/public open space, and mitigation of rising temperatures / heat island. Parks and Planning should consider how to best address these issues.
- An important part of what parks can accomplish is to increase connectivity. The Border-to-Border trail for instance, is a park that can move people across town to destinations, connecting businesses, parks, and institutions. Providing connections also increases the health, safety, and welfare of the park system. At South State Street, a low-hanging fruit could be the development of a trail along Oak Brook Road.
- Parks are currently serving as a connector both at a high level – Border-to-Border, and as small respites from traffic with some of our smaller parks.
- As the comprehensive plan gets underway, planning needs to ensure that all departments have a seat at the table, including Parks.
- Equity needs to be considered as far as the quality and offerings/amenities at parks. There is a sense that the parks in wealthier neighborhoods have disproportionately greater resources and amenities in their parks, compared to lower-income areas.
- The City, through its most recent transportation plan, has adopted a goal of a 20-minute walk to a park or open space from any point in the city. Additionally, in 2017, Ann Arbor joined 133 other cities to "10-Minute Walk" parks advocacy campaign urging all mayors to actively pursue the goal. Currently, the majority of neighborhoods already meet this goal, as is evidenced by the walking distance maps on Pages 134-135.

**d. Downtown Parks Focus Group**

A Downtown Parks Focus group was created to get feedback from various city stakeholders, including representatives from the Center of the City/Council of the Commons, Downtown Development Authority, City Council, Planning and Development, Community Services Administration, and Park Staff. Several questions were asked regarding the activation of downtown open space, building on successful open spaces downtown, and opportunities for developing downtown open space. A summary of comments/discussion is included below:

- To have downtown parks activated on a regular basis, we need to dedicate staffing and remove barriers, such as current insurance requirements for special events at park sites, that are more difficult for smaller groups.
- It's important to maintain flexibility and minimize fixed objects and seating, as well as provide access to water and electricity for event users.
- The City of Detroit has an intentional plan for the unhoused users of a park during events, that can help provide services and support to them.
- The new seasonal street closures downtown really function as public open space in a new way. Their success can be attributed to already established destinations and restaurants and businesses to activate the space. It tends to be more difficult to create a new destination, rather than build on existing ones.
- Outdoor dining furniture that is open to the public, rather than restaurant patrons, is important to consider for creating a downtown that is open to all.
- Consider opportunities to infuse green lawn space and shade, not just paved surfaces.
- For the development of new downtown spaces, such as the Center of the City, it's important to look for partners in the private sector who can support fundraising and management of the spaces, which is beyond the capacity of City staff. A non-profit conservancy model is another format that has been successful in other cities. The proposed development at the former Mich-Con (now DTE) site downtown is an example of open space that is privately-owned with a public access easement and a conservancy to manage ongoing maintenance and operations.
- The City's downtown alleys provide another opportunity to infuse open space in underutilized spaces. They could be a canvas for additional public art downtown as well.

**e. Parks Staff, including Recreation Facility Supervisors, Natural Area Preservation, Give365/Adopt-A-Park, and Park Operations**

Park staff discussed ideas related to the general themes below:

Providing an Exceptional User Experience:

- Overall, our parks could use additional picnic shelters, restrooms, and parking as these are always in short supply.
- Improved signage is needed at picnic shelters, trails, and facilities.
- A splash pad has been a long-desired amenity that the City currently lacks. Fuller Pool could be a potential location due to space and parking availability, as well as pool infrastructure.

Ensure the park system is comprehensive, inclusive, and engaging:

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- Improve collaboration internally among city staff in other departments
- Planning for future projects could be more proactive based on park system needs and priorities, and less reactive to political whims.
- Increase awareness of programs and offerings in underserved neighborhoods and engage them to better understand their needs and desires for programming and events .
- Incorporate more nature into our playgrounds with natural materials and sites that are more integrated into the landscape.

### Ensure the park system is financially sustainable:

- Expand the park gifts and memorials program and develop a plan for sponsorships and park naming rights to assist in raising funds.
- Consider hiring a professional grant writer to assist parks in getting more grant funds
- Consider the development of additional rental facilities, such as at the golf courses, which could add additional revenue streams.

### Foster environmental stewardship and sustainability:

- Partner more deeply with Office of Sustainability and Innovation to be engaged in ideas and decision making.
- Consider opportunities for City staff and office practices to minimize their environmental footprint, such as the use of electric vehicles and E-bikes for transportation, using less paper and plastic for events and concessions, or even expanding composting.

### Provide a Safe Park System:

- Regularly inspect park infrastructure to monitor quality and safety.
- Provide adequate signage at entry points and trail openings.
- Consider emergency code blue light phones.
- Consider adding park rangers to city staff to provide visitor services and help create a safe park experience.
- Remove overgrown vegetation.

## **f. Park Boards and Associations**

Staff met with the staff from the Community Action Network and Leslie Science and Nature Center, as well as Park Operations staff to discuss maintenance and capital project needs at the Kempf House and Cobblestone Farm.

## **3. PUBLIC MEETINGS**

Staff held two public meetings to gather public input on the PROS Plan: an online open house on Wednesday, June 29<sup>th</sup> via Zoom and an in-person open house held outdoors at Buhr Park Pool on Thursday, August 25<sup>th</sup>.

The format of the online meeting consisted of a short presentation explaining the purpose and content



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of the Plan, a summary of the survey input, and then posed open-ended questions to allow participants to provide feedback. Input included the following:

- There is a desire to improve connectivity across the park system, and especially along the riverfront parks.
  - Desired connections included providing safe and legal pedestrian connections across the Amtrak railroad, including the Barton/Bandemer underpass which is currently in design, and the Gallup/Arboretum underpass which has been studied previously.
  - The City should evaluate potential for acquisitions or easements on small parcels that provide connectivity between existing parks.
- There is a desire to improve the accessibility of trails, particularly in nature areas.
- There is a desire for more green open space in downtown Ann Arbor.
- There is a desire for improved signage and wayfinding systems, especially in nature areas
- Consider selective reduction of mowed lawn areas or alternative plantings or practices to reduce carbon footprints and support pollinators.
- There was a lot of discussion about the City's NAP program and a desire to ensure that NAP is integrated into the parks system and planning process.
- There is community concern about the future of the West Park historic bandshell which has substantial structural issues.

The in-person open house at Buhr Park included the following input:

- Would like staff to consult with park stewards in establishing priorities and identifying park needs.
- Consider opportunities to convert select lawn space to alternative land cover such as low-mow mixes or wildflower areas.
- Improved signage and wayfinding, especially in natural areas.
- One accessible trail in each of the nature areas.
- Natural surface trail maintenance needs more resources.
- communicating connections between parks in a map format.
- Opportunities to collaborate with the public schools on the Scarlett Mitchell nature areas, and investigate the potential for NAP to support maintenance on the school-owned Mitchell Scarlett Woods. Would specifically like the language in any future park millage to not prohibit NAP from working on school property, because of shared ownership in areas such as these.
- Look for ways to increase awareness of parks and nature areas throughout the community so that more people can use and enjoy them.
- NAP spread management resources to natural areas that are further from the riverfront parks.
- Continue to proactively manage invasive species such as Phragmites and Oriental Bittersweet

### 4. Email Comments

Residents and park users were able to send individual comments to Parks and Recreation staff, in addition to receiving email notices for public meetings. Below is a summary of issues received via email during the planning process and as well as those received during the public comment period on the draft plan. While a few comments were received prior to the draft plan being available, most of these comments were received as part of the public comment period on the draft plan. When possible, items were summarized and combined

## SECTION VI: Planning Process for the PROS Plan

under general themes, however, some comments and recommendations are included as written.

### 4A. COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING PLANNING PROCESS (PRIOR TO DRAFT PLAN):

- Consider a splash pad/spray park at a walkable and centrally located park
- Consider locations for additional dog parks, especiall on the west side of the city.
- Several neighborhood associations contacted us with requests for improvements to their neighborhood parks, including Lockett Park and Dolph Nature Area, as well as a desire to re- envision what the park could be.
- Consider additional pickleball courts and overstriping of pickleball court lines onto existing tennis courts.

### 4B. COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING PUBLIC REVIEW OF DRAFT PLAN:

1. Requests for new park amenities and improvements:
  - Consider adding horseshoe pits
  - Request for more and improved disc golf amenities.
  - Request for specific improvements at Dolph Nature Area.
  - The PROS Plan does not adequately represent the desire for additional dog exercise opportunities and there was no question relating to dog ownership in the online survey.
2. Sustainability:
  - Requests for Parks to work to comply with the International Dark-Sky Association's intelligent outdoor lighting principles.
  - Parks should implement programs and practices benefit monarch butterflies and other pollinators.
  - Consider ways to better control the spread of invasive species.
  - Consider opportunities to plant trees to provide shade, shelter, and respite along park pathways.
  - Parks should consider climate change's impact on the resilience of plant communities as well as increased usage and more people in parks.
3. Center of the City and Downtown Open Space:
  - There is a lack of downtown park areas. However, the Center of City is a poor site for many recreational activities because of the huge expanses of concrete and how it is cut up by stairwells, elevators, vehicle ramps, etc.
  - Resource investments to downtown parks and urban plazas should be prioritized to established parks/plaza like Liberty Plaza. The Center of the City is a poor candidate for resource investments until such time as an established park/plaza is created on the site. Additionally, there is poor public support, as measured by the recent survey, for making resource investments in Library Lot at this time.
  - Note that the majority of the parks enumerated are on the edges of the central planning area and require users to cross several major roadways to get to them.

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- Include language that indicates the boundaries of the center of the city space - enumerating the city-owned public land bounded by Fifth avenue, William, Division and Liberty streets including the Library parking structure surface, Library Lane, the Kempf house and Liberty Plaza.
- Include greater enumeration of details as it pertains to urban plazas, indicating that there are differences in spaces that fall into this classification, noting things like the differences between the Farmer's Market and Liberty Plaza, as well as large variations within the properties that currently make up the Center of the City.
- Add a subsection in the Land Use Planning and Acquisition chapter that indicates acquisition of land for park use via ballot proposal.
- The Open Space, Parks and Development Contributions within the Urban Core section seems to indicate that the city's intent with increasing density downtown is in conflict with open space use, aside from defined urban plazas for outdoor eating. This language should probably be significantly reworded or deleted altogether, as it reflects only one policy argument when there are many solutions that increase housing density in downtowns and also include open space that is not plaza-focused, as is evident in local communities such as Detroit, Plymouth, Royal Oak, etc. and many other communities across the country.
- A separate formula could be used to calculate ratios of population density-to-parks is a very slippery slope that if done, could easily disenfranchise residents who live in the urban center by denying them opportunities to open spaces as close to their homes as residents who live in other neighborhoods.
- Please include a description of the Center of the City space, similar to the Diag, as an item for note within the Development Contributions section, as this is currently designated for park use.
- Please indicate more details on timeframes, etc for when developers or the Downtown Development Authority have contributed to improvements to plazas, urban parks or streetscapes. It would be helpful to readers to better understand how and when improvements to these areas are being funded.
- Please indicate some examples or include descriptions of areas where developers have created open spaces as part of agreements with the city on development projects, as well as indications of which are for private use and which are for public use.
- Please clarify in question 3 that the support levels are related to the survey respondents' prioritization of the use of their taxpayer dollars for park improvements.
- Please include a description noting the differences in responses from residents who chose 'unsure' as a response in question 3, especially noting that there are varying degrees of 'unsure' responses on priorities throughout the question.
- It may be helpful to keep high level result summaries on questions like 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, etc consistent - focusing summary statements more neutrally than positive or negative.
- Please include some descriptions highlighting the variations, and in some cases, conflicts, between responses to survey questions 3, 4 and even 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, etc. There is not insignificant variation in responses between these questions; variations that affect the placement of participants' priorities for spending existing (or any new) taxpayer dollars on parks. These variations affect top priorities, mid-level priorities and lower priorities of improvements or purchases.
- Under the description of the Downtown Parks Focus Group, please alter the sentence

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to indicate that Detroit's plan is based on intentionally engaging with all park users - including those experiencing homelessness - to ensure that no one is pushed out of parks and that those who are interested in receiving public services (that they qualify for) can receive them.

- Please include notes that the Parks Advisory Commission, Parks Department staff and the Council of the Commons are working together to support recommendations for the area designated as the Center of the City block, including any alterations and activation/use.
- Please include goals (or sub-goals) pertaining to park activation, maintenance, and planning - including how to do so through the use of public and private partnerships in order to reduce cost to taxpayers. The Council of the Commons would be happy to assist in helping staff create these goals.
- Request to delete the sentence "Focusing resources on one urban park will just re-locate issues to neighboring parks", as it could be misinterpreted.
- Enumerate city advisory bodies (such as the DDA, Council of the Commons, Parks Advisory Commission) and city staff in the planning and programming work that is to be done in conjunction with the Downtown Park and Open Space Subcommittee report. Additionally, enumerate the Center of the City Task Force report.
- The Council of the Commons recognizes that the city's Parks Department is likely very tightly staffed and supports a PROS plan that includes ensuring there are sufficient staff, support of community volunteers, and resources to build, activate and maintain a city parks system that enhances and reflects the vibrancy, diversity and uniqueness of the Ann Arbor community.

### 4. Formatting and Plan Structure:

- Consider including a list or table of the top opportunities, challenges, goals and issues in the executive summary.
- Consider providing an overall cost for the future renovation/replacement of park infrastructure that is needed.
- Park metrics could be improved.
- Include updated census data consistent with prior PROS plans that were separated by planning area including number of parks, density and population-to-acreage of open space.

### 5. General Comments:

- Consider options to save the West Park bandshell as it is considered by many to be a landmark and those users find it's events hugely popular.
- Like mentioning of additional seating, which is important for the City's aging population.
- Baseball/softball diamonds seem underused at many parks.
- Given 1/3 of Greenbelt Program and millage funding must be allocated to new parkland acquisitions in the city and the population of the city is growing, park operations and demands on services will continue to grow and thereby likely exacerbate the current 'scissor effect" between needed and available resources and its negative impacts.
- Address issues presented by the railroad, including both physical and visual access being cut off. This is a huge impediment.
- Consider creating a Riverfront Conservancy that would combine public and private

## SECTION VI: Planning Process for the PROS Plan

interests and resources to collaboratively envision, implement improvements to, manage and maintain the riverfront area, including its natural features and parks, much like other conservancies across the county, including in Detroit, have done.

- The concept of expanding the Treeline Trail into an expanded multi-modal Loop Trail with links to nearly all major arteries into / out of A2, most major employment centers and (close) to many parks should also be considered
- There is no mention of deer population impacts on natural areas and their management in the plan and it should be included, along with solutions explored.
- MDOT is studying the Barton Drive/Whitmore Lake Rd M-14 interchange at the river, and I see in the news that the City is interested in taking over the MDOT Business 23 Corridor. Ann Arbor should be proactive in working with MDOT to make sure that access and connectivity to Parks is improved, valuable habitats are protected, and parkland is dedicated to the city, etc.
- Connectivity to and between parks should be a focus, especially across large infrastructure barriers like railroads.
- Continue to invest in all the parks along the river, including fishing access points.
- Look for ways to connect the Border to Border trail to economically diverse neighborhoods and consider reaching out to groups like CAN and Peace Neighborhood Center to assist.
- Measure the usage of parks and activities and invest most where usage justifies the investment. Also strongly support investing in natural greenspaces and historic areas.
- Concern about how parks can coexist with unhoused population and the impact on urban parks.
- Concern about enclosing farmers market.
- Would like to encourage more outside groups to volunteer with parks.

### **6. PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION COMMENTS – 12/20/2022**

- Caller 1 supported Center of the City being in the PROS plan more and the desired inclusion of demographics that were in previous PROS plans
- Caller 2 also supported Center of the City's inclusion in the plan along with that appreciation staff included language regarding reducing mowed areas when possible.

## **6. TASK FORCES AND STUDIES**

### **a. Bike Recreation Subcommittee**

In 2022, a subcommittee of the Park Advisory Commission was formed in response to public desire for additional bike recreation opportunities such as a bike pump track and mountain biking trails. The subcommittee researched best management practices from around the country to inform and provide guidelines for locating, developing, and maintaining pump tracks, as well as best management practices for natural surface trails that are used by mountain bikes. The committee is meeting throughout the course of the year and intends to produce a set of recommendations to help guide the Parks going forward.

### **b. Center of the City Task Force and Council of the Commons**

In 2018, Ann Arbor voters amended the City Charter to designate that a central city block be developed as an urban central park and civic center, known as a “commons”. City Council

## SECTION VI: Planning Process for the PROS Plan

appointed a Center of the City Task Force to determine how to implement this decision, which resulted in a report to City Council in 2020 that included a recommendation for an advisory body.

The Council of the Commons was formed as an advisory body to City Council that is intended to build upon the work of the Center of the City Task Force and provide recommendations to Council for the public spaces on the Center of the City block. The Center of the City block includes Liberty Plaza which is a public park, the Kempf House, as well as the parking lot known as the “Library Lane Lot”. As such, the parkland is also under the jurisdiction of the Park Advisory Commission (PAC), who is an advisory body to City Council and the City Administrator on parks and recreation policies as well as park development.

### c. **Downtown Development Authority – People Friendly Streets**

The DDA developed protected bikeways on several downtown streets as part of their “People Friendly Streets” initiative. The City’s first protected bikeway was along William Street from the Old West Side through Downtown Ann Arbor. A second protected bikeway was built along First Street and additional ones are planned at Division St., State St., and Miller/Catherine St.

## C. **Approval Process**

The approval process for the PROS Plan is determined by Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, which contains a single set of procedures for all entities of government to follow. The City requires these procedures to be followed for the plan to become an element of the official City of Ann Arbor Comprehensive Plan. It is also determined by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Grant Management that outlines the format that the plan must follow in order to be approved by the state and enable the City to apply for grants.

A 42-day approval period must be provided for governing agencies, such as the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study, Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation, neighboring communities, and utility companies within the jurisdiction of the plan.

The plan is also made available to the public through posting on the City’s website, and hard copies at the libraries and City facilities.

After the public review period is over, the Park Advisory Commission, the City Planning Commission, and City Council must all hold public hearings prior to approval of the plan.



## SECTION VII: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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The City of Ann Arbor parks, recreation and open space system exists to serve the needs and desires of the residents of the City and the Ann Arbor community by providing a full spectrum of recreational opportunities, preserving the natural environment, and enhancing the visual quality of neighborhoods and the City as a whole. The PROS survey showed that nearly 90% of respondents felt that Ann Arbor's parks, recreation and open space system is extremely important to their quality of life. A primary goal of the City is to maintain or improve upon this percentage, as it reflects how well the parks mission statement is being met.

### CORE VALUES & MISSION STATEMENT

In 2012, Parks and Recreation staff developed a set of core values reflecting the desire to provide high quality, inclusive and enjoyable recreational experiences for the entire community. These values inform operations and focus staff's energy on areas of importance while striving to achieve the parks mission statement: Together we enrich life by cultivating exceptional experiences.

- a. Stewardship: Responsibly manage and care for natural, cultural, and physical resources for current and future generations.
- b. Exceptional Customer Service: Interact with all people in a professional, friendly and respectful manner, while striving to exceed expectations.
- c. Innovative Improvements: Foster an environment that supports and encourages innovation and dynamic creative solutions.
- d. Integrity: Build trust and maintain accountability by doing the right thing.
- e. Community: Work collaboratively to include and engage the full diversity of our community.
- f. Excellent Parks and Spaces: Provide safe environments, beautiful spaces, and a welcoming atmosphere.
- g. Fun: Have fun!

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals and Objectives for the Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation system reflect the values of staff and the public, and provide direction for priorities to meet the expectations of the Ann Arbor community.

## SECTION VII: Goals and Objectives

The Goals and Objectives were developed from a number of sources, including the Parks and Recreation Mission Statement and Core Values, the Sustainability Framework Plan, the City's Organizational Strategic Plan, the Capital Improvement Plan rating criteria, and input received from the PROS survey and public comment from various meetings, surveys, task forces, and focus groups.

### **GOAL 1: Provide an Exceptional Park Experience**

#### Objectives

- a. Ensure access for all by prioritizing accessibility improvements to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, while striving for Universal Accessibility.
- b. Improve accessibility through staff training and the development of programming.
- c. Continuously assess and improve maintenance of parks and facility amenities.
- d. Improve natural surface trails for multiple uses including hiking and mountain biking.
- e. Establish protocols to promptly address safety concerns, as well as inspect and monitor park assets for safety compliance.
- f. Preserve the unique historic and cultural amenities within the park system by allocating resources for maintenance and restoration, and exploring alternatives if rehabilitation is not financially feasible.
- g. Maintain the ecological integrity of natural areas within the parks for the benefit of park users, natural communities and wildlife.
- h. Invest in rehabilitating aging park infrastructure including bridges, access roads, parking, and restrooms.
- i. Coordinate park enhancements with capital improvement projects, such as adding new trees, seating, and other amenities.
- j. Develop and implement a cohesive signage and wayfinding plan for the park system.
- k. Invest in staff development and retention, including recruitment, training, and mentoring, as well as providing technology and tools to improve workflow.

### **GOAL 2: Ensure that the Park System is diverse, equitable, and inclusive**

#### Objectives

- a. Collect and analyze data to ensure that access to parks, park facilities and amenities, and programming, is equitably distributed throughout the park system.
- b. Develop and implement Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training for park staff to create an inclusive culture and provide a welcoming experience for all park users.
- c. Increase diversity of park staff at all levels through targeted hiring, development, mentoring, and retention processes.
- d. Establish partnerships with historically underrepresented groups to foster engagement, improve communication, and develop targeted programming.
- e. Provide diverse cultural, recreational and educational programming for all that is both affordable and accessible.
- f. Diversify volunteer opportunities to increase inclusion and participation by diverse groups.



## SECTION VII: Goals and Objectives

### **GOAL 3: Ensure that the park system is comprehensive, distinctive, and innovative**

#### Objectives

1. Increase park connectivity through strategic parkland acquisitions and easements, as well as by connecting existing parks and trails into the City's non-motorized transportation and public transit systems.
2. Identify needs and develop partnerships to support the creation of additional public open space in areas that are currently underserved or projected to have increased demand through residential development.
3. Provide and promote a variety of year-round recreation experiences that promote an active and healthy lifestyle throughout the seasons.
4. Support intergenerational opportunities in parks with additional seating, trail accessibility improvements, and programming.
5. Respond to changing recreation trends with innovative amenities and programming that provide new experiences and create regional destinations.
6. Support design that is distinctive and reflective of the community and its unique character and natural features.
7. Develop cohesive planning and visioning for the City's riverfront parks and community-wide parks.
8. Develop natural playground features that connect children to the natural world and encourage creativity and imagination.
9. Explore the feasibility and potential location for a splash pad or other water play feature.
10. Program and activate parks, especially downtown, through community partnerships.
11. Expand staffing capacity to support park system growth and goals.

### **GOAL 4: Ensure that the park system is financially sustainable**

#### Objectives

1. Secure short-term, mid-term, and long-term park capital improvement funding to bridge the gap in the City's existing Parks Maintenance and Capital Improvement Millage.
2. Develop new revenue streams for renovating and improving park amenities, such as through philanthropy and sponsorships, as well as developing public-private partnerships and strengthening current partnerships.
3. Increase capacity to identify, secure, and administer grants.
4. Develop a comprehensive infrastructure asset management program and prioritization model for capital improvements that monitors conditions, identified preventative maintenance, and budgets for the replacement of existing assets.
5. Prioritize limited resources and staff capacity on maximizing community benefits.

### **GOAL 5: Foster Environmental Stewardship and meet the City's A2 Zero Sustainability Goals**

#### Objectives

## SECTION VII: Goals and Objectives

- a. Develop volunteer opportunities to enhance appreciation and maintenance of natural, historic, and cultural resources.
  - a. Engage volunteers in the City's natural areas to assist with ecological restoration, environmental education and species inventory efforts.
  - b. Create opportunities for volunteers to assist with park beautification and maintenance.
  - c. Support volunteer efforts to assist the City with maintaining historic or cultural resources.
- b. Explore options for alternative lawn maintenance and turfgrass use, including consideration of alternative plant species and groundcovers, conversion of select turfgrass into native grass prairie or wildflower beds, and increasing un-mowed areas of turf.
- c. Work with City's Office of Sustainability and Innovation to meet the City's A2 Zero Carbon Neutrality Plan goals in the park system
  - a. Strive to incorporate renewable energy, such as solar infrastructure, at park facilities
  - b. Update fleet and equipment to electric/alternative fuel sources
  - c. Significantly improve energy efficiency when renovating and when possible in new construction
  - d. Support alternative transportation through non-motorized infrastructure and connections.
  - e. Encourage recycling at parks and facilities by providing recycling containers and minimizing use of disposable products.
  - f. Increase resiliency of park facilities.
  - g. Quantify carbon storage and/or sequestration capacities of both City parkland and Greenbelt lands
- d. Use best practices for stormwater management when renovating existing parks or building new structures or amenities.
- e. Promote the provision of local food by supporting the Ann Arbor Farmers Market, providing space for community gardens and edible plants, and offering economic incentives for lower income individuals to purchase produce at the market.
- f. Restore and steward park natural areas for ecological resilience and conduct species inventories to assess biodiversity.
  - a. Utilize Integrated Pest Management approaches in stewardship activities
  - b. Leverage prescribed fire as an ecological restoration and management tool
  - c. Coordinate volunteers to support species inventory efforts and collaborate with partner agencies that support species-specific inventory efforts
  - d. Maintain databases of all species-related inventory data to inform ecological restoration activities.
- g. Implement the International Dark Sky Association lighting principles where feasible, to minimize the ecological impact of lighting in parks and natural areas.



## SECTION VIII: MAJOR PARK AND RECREATION SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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This purpose of this section is to provide a comprehensive listing of the park system needs incorporating public and staff input that was gathered through the survey, focus groups, public meetings, email, letters and comments described in the Public Process section. This overview reflects both improvements that will help preserve the life of amenities, such as resurfacing game courts, to providing space and structure for new programming opportunities. There is far more to do than can be accomplished in this PROS Plan cycle and so documenting needs in the plan assists to prioritize future improvements.

### A. Facilities Needs Assessment

Several existing recreation facilities have been renovated in recent years, however, much remains to be accomplished. The intensive maintenance required includes repair of aging buildings and mechanical systems, compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and restoration of historic structures.

#### 1. Recreation Facilities General Infrastructure Needs

- The City of Ann Arbor is committed to building facilities that are in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act standards. All new facilities are built to meet or exceed ADA standards. Older facilities are brought into ADA compliance as they are renovated. The City will continue to renovate facilities so that all park and recreation facilities are fully accessible. In 2022, the City hired an ADA consultant to analyze all Park properties including city parks, nature areas and facilities. The final report will identify elements that are out of compliance, prioritizing issues so that staff can work towards compliance.
- Mechanical, heating and cooling systems have ongoing infrastructure needs. A comprehensive assessment of the pool and ice arena infrastructure was

## SECTION VIII: Major Park and Recreation System Infrastructure Needs Assessment

- completed in 2012 and work is ongoing to renovate aging infrastructure.
- Environmental sustainability is a high priority. Increasing energy efficiency, improving recycling efforts, and reducing impacts on the storm water system are considered when facilities are renovated.
- Renovations at facilities are needed to accommodate changing trends and to facilitate innovative programming.

### 2. Recreation Facilities Infrastructure Needs

Recreation supervisors as well as board members from Cobblestone Farm, the Kempf House, and the Farmers Market provided input to the following prompts: the condition of the facilities; improvements that would help the operation and ease of maintenance of the facility; remove barriers to accessibility; facilitate programming; reflect of current trends; modernize the facility, and increase energy efficiency.

#### a. Ann Arbor Senior Center

- Parking lot pavement needs renovation and will need to be repaved in the coming years.
- Entrances and exits need improvements to facilitate access for persons with disabilities. Issues include uneven steps and an inaccessible upstairs office.
- Coat room is not temperature controlled and is uncomfortable for users.
- Wood floors are worn in the large program room and need refinishing.
- Tile floors in the entry way and coat room need replacement.
- Exterior siding trim paint is in need of renovation.
- Back door is in disrepair and needs to be replaced with an energy efficient door.
- Wall and ceiling tiles in the middle program room do not match the rest of the facility.
- Downstairs office space layout is inefficient.
- Ventilation system does not work well and needs to be evaluated for repairs / replacement.
- Accordion doors between gallery room, lobby and middle room are outdated and difficult to operate.
- The Ann Arbor Senior Center is aging and in need of a major renovation. Repairs and modifications have happened on an as-needed basis, however there has never been a cohesive Comprehensive plan performed.

#### b. Argo Canoe Livery

- There is a need for sidewalks along Longshore Drive to accommodate heavy pedestrian circulation.
- Overflow parking lot on Longshore Drive – east of the livery – is not controlled by the City of Ann Arbor, and may not be available in the long-term. Existing building and parking lot are privately owned. This could be a potential property for acquisition.
- The site is too crowded for the public boat launch to be located at Argo and consideration should be given to moving it to another park such as Bandemer Park.
- The Argo Cascades needs to have an inspection done and a maintenance plan in place. Water flow has changed over time and need to make sure that it is operating

## SECTION VIII: Major Park and Recreation System Infrastructure Needs Assessment

correctly. Inspection should be completed to ensure that the placed rocks are not leaking and have not significantly shifted.

- There is a demand for formal seating along the cascades. Consider adding in shade structures or trees for relief from the sun.
- Install interpretive / educational signage for river users to explain the impacts of humans on the river. Consider adding additional waste and recycling receptacles.
- Provide a map of the river to orient river users.
- Develop a comprehensive plan for river parks. Consider adding river trailheads and entry/exit points at additional parks such as Island Park, Furstenberg Nature Area, Mitchell Field.

### **c. Bryant Community Center**

- High-traffic surfaces such as walls and floors need regular maintenance and repairs.
- In conjunction with the Office of Sustainability (OSI), there is a desire to become carbon neutral as a facility. This includes a shift to electrification of the facility, which is now mostly run with natural gas.
- Bryant Community Center was identified as a location for adding electric vehicle (EV) charging stations both for a community resource and a demonstration for the community. The cost of electrical vehicles has decreased and is projected to be substantially lower in the coming years. By making EV charging stations available to the neighborhood, under-resourced families can more easily afford purchasing electric vehicles, reducing dependency on fossil fuels.

### **d. Buhr Park Pool and Ice Arena**

- The pool gutter grating is in need of renovation and has sharp edges creating safety issues for pool patrons.
- The entry plaza has trip hazards and does not provide an aesthetically pleasing entrance.
- The front desk does not function efficiently and is not accessible. Reconfiguration is required.
- Enhanced lighting throughout building and locker rooms is needed – most is outdated and does not meet the needs of facility users.
- Area between the building and parking lot requires additional lighting for safety. Too dark at night.
- Lighting needed between the building and the ice arena to improve visibility at night.
- Locker room tiling and flooring throughout the facility is 20 years old and appears tired and worn. Needs replacement.
- Tot pool boiler needs to be replaced and is an immediate need. Main pool boiler replacement will be needed in the next 5-10 years.
- Ice rink cooling system – chiller – is aging and will need to be replaced in the near future.
- ADA access needs to be implemented to the pool deck. Current doors do not have automatic openers.
- ADA access needs to be implemented from the building to the ice rink.
- Accessibility needs to be created for use on the ice rink.
- Barrier free spectator seating is needed for the rink. High school hockey games are being played at the ice rink – due to COVID – and ADA seating is required.
- HVAC in the facility needs to be updated – old. Better ventilation is needed, especially in the locker rooms.

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- Covered three-season room between the ice arena and the building would allow for outside gathering, meeting space, conditioned outdoor space for ice rink use. This area was used during COVID to provide additional gathering space for both visitors and staff.
- Covered walkway from the building to the ice arena to prevent snow and ice buildup. Current conditions create an un-accessible and sometimes dangerous route.
- TOT Pool (zero depth entry pool) needs to have updated spray features. Existing spray features are old and need replacement. Parts are hard to get for fixing.
- Explore adding solar panels to the facility to reduce energy demand.
- Updating the plumbing in the facility. Toilets, urinals, sinks do not function well and are in need of repair/replacement. Showers are old and could also use replaced plumbing.
- Additional single use locker room would improve ADA accessibility.
- Existing lockers are rusted and need to be repaired or replaced with new. New barrier free lockers would improve accessibility.
- Existing wheel-chair lift for pool will need replacement in the next 5-10 years.
- Update to the pool mechanic system (pump and filtration) – these will need to be improved or replaced in the near future.
- Parking Lot will need to be repaved and restriped in the next five years
- Increase the size and height of the Zamboni garage. The current configuration does not allow for proper storage.
- Rink boards and glass will need replacement in the near future.
- Player benches need to be rebuilt due to heavy use.

### **e. Cobblestone Farm Event Barn**

#### **Event Barn and Customer Service Office:**

- The elevator does not provide adequate access for motorized wheelchairs, is undersized, and needs repair.
- The HVAC Units are undersized and need to be replaced. Testing for COVID requirements showed that the facility was under the threshold for acceptability.
- The pine flooring in the staircase and loft is in need of renovation and needs to be replaced with oak flooring to match the replacement that was completed on the first floor.
- Upgrade current fluorescent lighting with energy efficient LED lighting fixtures.
- Existing split rail fence along north and east sides of property needs to be replaced.
- Animal barn is in need of major renovation. Renovation should take place before new livestock return. Cobblestone Farm, Parks Customer Service Office and Park Rentals would benefit from having an additional full time staff person to manage increased work load due to more users of the parks.

#### **Historic Site:**

- The historic cobblestone house needs to be tuck-pointed to protect infrastructure.
- Plaster is cracking throughout historic house and needs to be repaired to protect the integrity of the structure.
- Windows in the historic house are in need of renovation and need to be re-glazed. (Over Labor Day 2022 17 windows are vandalized and are in need for a full repair.
- Historic interpretation of the site with signage would enhance the visitor experience and increase awareness of the historic significance of the site.
- Cars often drive too fast on the entry road, creating unsafe conditions for families

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crossing the road. Providing signage and/or speed bumps along the entry road to go slowly could increase safety.

- Barrier free access improvements to the historic house would facilitate tours of the museum.

### **f. Farmers Market**

- Accessibility improvements are needed to assist mobility-challenged users access the market. The ADA spaces might not be in the best location, as they do not have direct access to the pedestrian sidewalk.
- Replacing office building windows and installing a window that would better facilitate the sale of tokens without the public entering the office.
- Organizing the space and improving aesthetics would help to identify the Farmers Market as a vibrant urban downtown park, especially on non-market days.
- Existing Farmer’s Market signage is in need of renovation and is needed of replacement.
- The wood paneling in the office and hallway is outdated and needs repair. Renovations would improve the aesthetics of this area for patrons as well as prolong the life of the materials.
- Improvements to the seasonal/winter comfort of the market is desired to increase the comfort of both vendors and visitors. Future improvements could include winterization of part or all of the existing canopies.
- During rain events, water enters the breezeway of the market building. A stormwater analysis needs to be conducted of the site. Consider addition of raingardens or other stormwater management interventions.
- Need to explore options or alternatives to curbs along vendor stalls to minimize tripping.
- Parking demand is currently high, and future development on adjacent parking lots will further exacerbate problem. Explore options for improving transportation access.

### **g. Fuller Park Pool**

- Parking lots have severely cracked asphalt and potholes, and need repaving. The paved portion needs to be replaced, and the gravel portion should be paved.
- The pool light poles should be upgraded possibly with solar powered lights to improve energy efficiency.
- Large area on northeast side of the facility is underutilized. Providing a new amenity such as a splash pad would serve a wide array of customers, especially those with disabilities.
- The picnic shelter is undersized for the number of parties and the growing day camps. An additional shelter would help accommodate the growth.
- Locker rooms and showers are out of date and in need of renovation. The lockers need replacing. The demand for showers is greater than the capacity. Plumbing in walls routinely leaks and should be completely replaced.
- Pool slide is aging and needs replacement in the near future.

### **h. Gallup Park Canoe Livery**

- The exterior restrooms need renovations to meet ADA compliance.
- There is a severe parking shortage, and currently patrons need to find alternative solution

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on and off-site.

- Sections of the wooden dock and the stairs to the fishing dock are beginning to wear and may need replacement in the coming years.
- Energy efficiency could be improved at the facility through evaluating windows, lighting and insulation.
- Desire for solar panels to be integrated into the trellis/ pergola replacement project.
- Permeable pavers in the van turnaround area are difficult to maintain. Look into replacing with concrete or asphalt, and adding rain gardens to capture stormwater.
- Add formal seating near the livery for park users who are waiting for van pick-up / drop-off.
- Furstenberg Nature Area is underutilized while Gallup Park is very busy. Explore adding a picnic shelter to Furstenberg Nature Area for events.
- Create a stronger connection between Furstenberg Nature Area and Gallup Park.
- Improve directional signage to livery front door and to public restrooms

### **i. Huron Hills Golf Course**

- Maintenance barn needs renovating and expansion.
- Site needs a chemical storage barn for use by golf course and Natural Area Preservation staff.
- Parking lot is in disrepair and needs renovation.
- Although the course does not have cart paths, there are a few aggregate maintenance paths that need to be replaced with asphalt or concrete. The aggregate washes out with a negative impact on the recently completed stormwater improvement project.
- The existing patio needs to be replaced.
- Cross beams on the west side of the clubhouse have minor structural issues and need a structural assessment completed.
- Replace existing halogen and fluorescent lighting to new energy efficient LED fixtures.
- A covered teaching pavilion would allow for instruction and classes to take place throughout the year.
- The existing club house is too small for programming of events. Expansion of the interior and/or exterior space would allow for additional seating and allow the hosting of events.
- The existing lightning detection system is no longer operating and needs to be replaced. Current lighting forecasts are completed by hand, and have a potential for human error, exacerbated by staffing issues.
- The irrigation system for Huron Hills is old and needs to be replaced. Replacement parts for the old system are getting hard to find, and will soon be impossible. An irrigation plan needs to be created so that a new irrigation system can be phased into action.
- Existing gas powered golf carts should be replaced with new electric carts to fit with the City's sustainability initiatives. In order to switch to electric carts, a new storage shed with electric charging stations is required

### **j. Kempf House**

- The front porch decking is deteriorating and needs to be renovated and painted.
- On the second floor, leaks from the roof (since repaired) damaged the wallpaper and the wallpaper needs replacing.



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- The plaster on the second floor is cracked and needs to be repaired and painted.
- The brick at the foundation needs to be tuck pointed.
- The historic piano needs major renovations.
- The exterior of the house is showing wear and is scheduled to be painted in 2023.

### **k. Leslie Park Golf Course**

- There is inadequate space to accommodate events, programs, and rentals. A pavilion/patio/banquet hall, as well as an expanded deck for food and beverages overlooking third green could provide opportunities for these initiatives.
- The barn and club house paint is peeling and unsightly. Cosmetic repairs are needed.
- Some cart paths on the course need to be extended and curbed, all need to be repaired and seal-coated. Cart paths should be expanded throughout the course to protect the course during rain events.
- The irrigation system for Leslie Park Golf Course is old and needs replacing. Replacement parts for the old system difficult to source and will soon be unavailable. An irrigation plan needs to be created so that a new irrigation system can be phased into action.
- Solar panels are expected to be installed in fall of 2022.
- Existing gas-powered golf carts should be replaced with new electric carts to fit with the City's sustainability initiatives. In order to switch to electric carts, a new storage shed with electric charging stations is required.
- Bridge inspections need to be completed throughout the course, as many are old and require regular maintenance to keep operational.

### **l. Leslie Science and Nature Center**

- Site issues, including erosion, barrier-free access, and wayfinding, make the site difficult for patrons to access.
- Entry pathway needs to be reconstructed.
- Lighting in the parking lot is not energy efficient. Consider LED lighting.
- The parking lot needs to be renovated to address drainage and erosion issues. A vernal pond adjacent to the parking lot should be considered when looking at drainage. Additional parking is required, especially with the popularity of the outdoor classroom and natural playscape.
- Additional space, including an outdoor classroom, would facilitate programming.
- A comprehensive interpretive plan was completed in 2011, and implementation should be prioritized.
- The water pressure to the Critter House and Raptor Area is low (has been for years). Loss of pressure occurs due to a leak underneath of the raptor enclosure. The waterline needs replacement.
- The electrical load for the site is too low to sustain the activities on the site. New solar panels anticipated to be installed in 2023 may offset some demand. A likely deficit will still exist to supply enough power for building and outdoor demands.
- The main entrance to Black Pond woods needs to be reworked, due to the location of the Project Grow gardens.
- A sewer line tie-in is needed to the Energy House. This connection would open the

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possibility of adding bathrooms at the pavilion and natural playscape.

- Caretaker house roof, siding, windows and entrance need renovations for safe accessibility and structural integrity.
- Water is leaking into the basement at the southeast corner of the Leslie House – near the existing walnut tree.
- HVAC at the critter house does not meet the demand. It is difficult to heat and cool. The housing of animals was not considered when the system was originally designed.
- All five buildings need to have siding problems and need replacement / repairs.
- A plan for a natural playscape was completed in 2022. Phase I of construction was completed in 2021. Phase II remains and needs to be completed when funding is identified.
- Additional spaces, including an outdoor classroom, and convening pavilion, would facilitate programming and rental potential.

### **m. Mack Pool**

- Locker rooms are in need of renovation and lockers should be replaced.
- To separate the public from the school children, the office should be reconfigured and the entrance should be moved to the pool deck.
- Pool deck and locker room tiles have loosened causing trip hazards and issues for bare feet. Replacement with an alternative material, such as textured concrete, would decrease slipperiness and tripping hazards.
- Walls of the pool deck are not insulated and leak heat, increasing energy costs. There are also large stress fractures in each wall that may be affecting the structural integrity.
- The lack of a family changing room is challenging for customers.
- Water heater for the facility breaks down every year. Water heater controls both air and water temperatures.
- Programmable space has been maxed out, and would require a complete rebuild of Mack Pool to create more space. Explore options to enclose Fuller Pool as a long-term solution to allow more programming during winter months

### **n. Northside Community Center**

- The kitchen is outdated. The cabinets are deteriorating, and there is no oven, which would assist with the food program as well as other programming.
- The exterior is showing age and needs to be painted.
- There is currently insufficient seating space for food program operations.
- The roof is nearing the end of its life and will need to be replaced in the next few years.
- A full-scale renovation should be considered for the structure as there are many issues, including the settling of the foundation – caused by a small sinkhole in the crawl space. Prior to any work on walls, floors, or structure should wait until the foundation has been repaired.

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### **o. Veterans Memorial Park Pool and Ice Arena**

- Arena lights are inefficient and should be replaced with high efficiency LED lighting.
- There is no air conditioning in the bathrooms or office area making the space uncomfortable for staff and patrons.
- Plumbing upgrades are needed in locker rooms 3 and 4, including urinals, showers, sinks and tile. Plumbing is consistently breaking down and in need of full replacement. Locker rooms are also in need of upgraded exhaust system.
- Rink boards and glass are old and battered and need a full replacement in the near-term.
- Pool deck is deteriorating and needs repair. Patching occurs every year, but ultimately will require a full replacement.
- Pool slide needs repair or replacement, including both slide supports.
- Ice plant system needs full replacement. The current system is 5 years past the 30-year life expectancy. Replacement parts are no long available.

## **B. Community-wide Parks**

### **a. Buhr Park**

- A picnic pavilion could provide additional rental and programming opportunities.
- Accessible toilets for visitors to use while outside, without needing to access the building.
- Continue implementation of the goals and elements as identified in the Buhr Park Stormwater Management Plan.
- Dog water fountain needed to avoid dogs using human drinking fountain.
- The tennis courts need resurfacing or replacement.
- The existing dirt lot should be paved, especially if a new picnic pavilion is installed.

### **b. Fuller Park**

- An improved trail connection to Island Park would improve safety and provide a desired linkage.
- Parking lots needs repaving.
- The old timber structure playground is 30+ years old and is approaching the end of its life. Repairs are difficult due to the material. A full replacement will be needed in the next few years.

### **c. Gallup Park**

- The pathways throughout Gallup Park are in need of renovation and are too narrow causing crowded and unsafe conditions for pedestrians. This is especially true for the section of path from the Universal Access Playground to the vehicular bridge.
- The surface road and parking lots need to be replaced.
- Wayfinding signage and historic interpretive signage would help to direct people to amenities throughout the park, and provide interesting information about the history of the park.
- The boat launch and parking area needs renovation. The shoreline is eroded in this area of the park and could use improvements, including riprap and native plantings. Consider paving the parking lot and adding in ADA parking spaces.

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- Development of a water trail or canoe trail with interpretation stopping areas/resting areas for canoes would provide a desired amenity.
- The service road and parking lots need to be repaired/replaced.
- There is a severe shortage of parking. Creating additional parking areas would help alleviate the crowding. Explore providing off-site parking spaces.
- The existing lighting system is not energy efficient and is not sufficient for park patrons attending meetings at night.
- Seawall underneath recently completed dock needs replacement.
- Remove the existing permeable pavers at the kayak/canoe turn-around lot. Pavers were not designed for vehicular turning, and cause problem. Replace with an asphalt or concrete surface, add raingardens to treat stormwater.
- Explore adding additional toilets near the Universal Access Playground due to the high volume of users of both the playground and adjacent shelters.

### **d. Island Park**

- The bridge connecting to Fuller Park needs repair and upgrades.
- The historic bridge concrete is spalling and needs to be repaired to maintain the integrity of the structure.
- Consider adding a standalone restroom to Island Park, or possibly include in a shelter renovation/replacement.
- The concrete on the historic bridge is spalling and needs to be repaired to maintain the integrity of the structure.
- Steel truss bridge needs repairs such as:
  - Reconstructing the approach surfaces
  - Replacing bridge decking
  - Replacing the railings on the bridge
  - Repairing the approach railings

### **e. Olson Park**

- The mountain bike trail network is extremely popular and could use improvements. Encouraging a relationship with core group of local mountain bike riders volunteers could aid in developing and maintaining trails.
- Vegetation management and controlling invasive species continues to be a challenge and ongoing maintenance is needed.
- Existing parking lot is starting to deteriorate, and permeable pavers are become hard to maintain. Consider repaving the parking lot and removing the permeable pavers. Stormwater runoff is already diverted to existing raingardens.

### **f. Riverside Park**

- Existing parking lot was removed due to heavy flooding issues. Explore options for adding parking back in some capacity.
- Consider selective plantings to enhance the experience of the park. Shade trees near seating could help provide relief from the sun.

**g. Southeast Area Park**

- The existing gravel parking lot and driveways are dusty, do not allow for marking of parking spaces, and don't comply with ordinance requirements.
- The existing paved parking lot has many potholes and needs to be repaved.
- Explore feasibility of extending a trail connection along the northern boundary of the University Townhouses residential property and I-94 toward the existing pedestrian overpass bridge at I-94 to Mary Beth Doyle Park.
- New amenities could be added to SE Area Park to help activate. Potential amenities could include a splashpad or pickleball courts.
- The paved asphalt area west of the shelter and playground needs to be repaved. Explore adding shade structures to this area.

**h. Veterans Memorial Park**

- The parking lot serving the skatepark and baseball fields on Maple Road is unpaved and gets muddy and rutted and should be paved to improve function and appearance.
- The existing picnic shelter is rarely rented. The structure is not salvageable and is scheduled for demolition in spring 2023. Veterans Memorial Park is quite popular, and a new picnic shelter should be considered.
- Adding restrooms to the park could be a big benefit. The restrooms in the existing shelter are no longer serviceable.
- Electrical Service that is suitable for Food Trucks will help attract food vendors for events that occur throughout the year.
- There is a need for a storage shed at the park.
- Issues of erosion around the skatepark need to be addressed to prevent further damage.
- There is currently no permanent seating at the skatepark. A seating plan would help organize the space and provide a needed amenity for skaters as well as visitors observing the skatepark.
- The skatepark is quite popular, and the idea of expanding skate opportunities within the parks system could be considered.
- Several trees that were planted around the skatepark died and need to be replaced.
- The rain gardens throughout the park get weedy and overgrown and need a plan for ongoing maintenance.
- LED light fixtures are desired to replace the existing metal halide lighting. LED fixture are more energy efficient and require less maintenance. They cannot be installed on the existing wood poles and would require new light poles to be installed.
- The parking lot near the Zamboni garage needs to be repaved.

**i. West Park**

- The bioswales and prairie areas are overgrown and have significant invasive species. A plan to maintain the plantings is needed to preserve the integrity of the design.
- Interpretive signage for storm water features, including the burial of Allen Creek, would help explain the history of the park and how the stormwater features operate.
- The Native American Trail is deteriorated and needs restoration.
- The bandshell was closed due to a failing foundation in fall of 2021. A structural analysis was completed and determined that the foundation needs to be replaced. Community

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Engagement is going to take place in Fall/Winter 2022 to help determine the future of the Bandshell.

- There are no seating areas on the boardwalk, and benches would improve the pond overlook.
- Turtle basking structures need to be added to the pond.
- The existing basketball court needs repairs and recoating.
- Additional seating areas and shade is needed throughout the park, especially near the basketball court and playground
- The existing boardwalk is starting to show wear and in need of maintenance. Consider having a structural evaluation completed.
- The stairs leading up to the tennis courts need to be replaced in the near term.
- The existing paved paths throughout the park are deteriorating and need to be replaced or repaired.

### **C. Natural Areas**

- For newly-acquired natural areas, resources should be identified to start ecological stewardship activities and install infrastructure (such as parking lots, trails, signage, or boardwalks/bridges) where appropriate.
- Where city-owned natural areas are adjacent to natural areas under different ownership, it would be helpful to develop and implement complementary management plans.
- Enhance management of city-owned nature areas by continuing to extend ecological stewardship activities to areas adjacent to high-functioning ecosystems.
- Identify areas appropriate for construction or alteration of trail systems to facilitate greater connections to a system-wide trail network.
- Establish and enhance wildlife corridors to provide greater habitat.
- Where needed, establish and enhance native vegetation buffers along the Huron River and tributaries.
- Develop a tool to assess unpaved trails through natural areas. This would help to establish a plan for regular maintenance. Trail system assessments need to be conducted to look at repairs, accessibility, and sustainability.
- Development and implementation of a comprehensive wayfinding and signage plan both for Nature Areas and for the Park System as a whole. The current system is lacking and is not consistent.
- A number of pedestrian footbridges are in poor condition due to years of heavy use. Critical repairs, maintenance, and possible replacement will be needed in the coming years. New bridges will need to be constructed to accommodate new trail systems. Locations include:
  - Sugarbush Park
  - Brokaw Nature Area
  - Traver Creek Nature Area
  - Sunset Brooks Nature Area
  - Cedar Bend Nature Area
  - Bird Hills Nature Area
  - Lakewood Nature Area
  - Kuebler Langford Nature Area
  - Braun/Huron Parkway Nature Areas

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- A number of pedestrian boardwalks are in need of repair, replacement, or installation in the coming years, including at:
  - Hansen Nature Area
  - South Pond Nature Area
  - Ruthven Nature Area
  - Scarlett Mitchell Nature Area
  - Oakwoods Nature Area
  - Dolph Nature Area
  - Kuebler Langford Nature Area
  - Barton Nature Area
  - Cranbrook Park
  
- Several existing parking lots in our nature areas are in need of improvements, and others have yet to be constructed. Locations include:
  - Dolph Nature Area (at Liberty Rd.)
  - Brokaw Nature Area
  - Braun Nature Area
  - Marshall Nature Area
  
- The NAP Headquarters will need repairs and improvements in the coming years, including a new roof, exterior painting, new energy efficient doors and windows, and electric car charging stations.
- New electric vehicles, including off-road electric vehicles are a desire when looking to replace gas powered vehicles.
- There is also a desire to switch from gas-powered maintenance equipment and tools to electric tools as technology improves.
- NAP has identified small parcels that, if acquired, would enhance connectivity throughout the park system.
- Old fencing in some nature areas is in poor shape and in need of replacement or removal. Fencing modifications will improve pedestrian safety and could benefit wildlife by enhancing connectivity between natural areas.
- A new viewing platform for safe wildlife and habitat observation is desired at Oakwoods Nature Area.
- DEI initiatives and opportunities should be increased both within NAP and in the park system as a whole. There is a desire to make NAP programs more accessible to a diverse community. This might include new programs or internships.
- Wildlife habitat enhancements are needed within the natural areas, such as turtle nesting mounds, bird houses, and snake hibernacula. Where other projects, such as solarization, have the potential to impact wildlife habitat, work in conjunction with the need to protect natural habitats.
- Develop or study ways to prevent the accumulation, and facilitate the removal of, trash from natural areas. Many natural areas come from old landfills or dump sites, and there is a need to safely clean and dispose of waste while maintaining the integrity of natural areas.
- New technology is needed to assist in NAP programming and stewarding of natural areas. Needs include new GPS antennas, tablets, and volunteer database Software. This would aid in more accurate data collection and efficient sharing of new

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opportunities with volunteers.

- Explore adding restroom facilities at larger Natural Areas, such as Bird Hills Nature Area or Mary Beth Doyle Park

### **D. Parkland Acquisitions**

- Acquisition criteria should be used to rate all potential park acquisitions.
- Any parkland acquisitions should consider the additional burden on park system maintenance.
- Purchase property to increase both visual and physical access to existing parks.

### **E. The Huron River and Other Greenways**

- The Huron River Impoundment Management Plan identifies challenges and opportunities for access improvements to the Huron River and river parks. Recommendations for improvements from the plan should be considered.
- Several important path connections are missing from the Border-to-Border Trail and other non-motorized connections, such as the connection from Bandemer Park to Barton Park, and from Fuller Park to Riverside Park.
- Segments of the B2B trail need renovation and are too narrow for the use they receive. The trails do not currently meet AASHTO standards.
- The North Main Task Force Report identified non-motorized opportunities along the North Main Street corridor including connections to river parks and makes recommendations for future planning that should be considered.
- A pedestrian underpass connection is desired between Gallup Park and Nichols Arboretum to address non-motorized connections and improved safety.

### **F. Neighborhood Parks and Urban Plazas**

- Gaps in neighborhood park service (for residents that do not have a neighborhood park within one-quarter mile or where they need to cross a busy street) exist in several areas of the City and should be considered in the acquisition process.
- Liberty Plaza and all downtown parks need dedicated resources, staffing and funding, to increase activation and programming of the space for a variety of users and events to ensure a better experience by all. Focusing resources on one urban park will just re-locate issues to neighboring parks. Working with various stakeholders and other city department to incorporate the recommendations from the Downtown Park and Open Space Subcommittee for development and programming of downtown open space could help resolve some of the issues with downtown parks and plazas.
- Work with the Downtown Development Authority in any planning for renovation or acquisition of downtown open space.
- In 2018, voters supported a proposal to create a “Center of the City” area which included the City-owned public land bounded by Fifth Avenue, and William, Division and Liberty Streets. Plans and programming for this area need to be considered in conjunction with the Downtown Park and Open Space Subcommittee report.
- Investigate drainage issue at Hunt Park near backstop.



## **G. General Infrastructure Needs**

### **a. Athletic Fields/Ball Fields**

- Athletic fields used by Ann Arbor Rec and Ed are often overused, which impacts turf quality. Fields need to be rested on a regular schedule, and preventative maintenance needs to be performed such as aeration and overseeding. Another option would be to condense use to fewer fields and increase regular maintenance such as aeration and overseeding.

### **b. Game Courts**

- Regular preventative maintenance is needed at game courts, including periodic crack repair, resurfacing and color coating.
- Courts that need to be fully reconstructed should engage with the community to determine if the current needs are being met.
- Game courts develop cracks and pavement deteriorates over time. A game court audit is being completed in 2022 to help identify and plan for future repairs.
- Vegetation on fencing surrounding game courts compromises the court surfacing, causing cracks and impacting playing surface. Vegetation needs to be cleared regularly and mow strips installed to prevent regrowth.

### **c. Park Safety**

- Providing park users with a safe environment is at the core of Parks values. Parks staff will continue to work with various other city departments to address safety concerns in parks.
- Wayfinding and Signage are important components to providing for a safe experience. Improving signage across all parks is a key element.

### **d. Picnic Shelters**

- The picnic shelters at Gallup Park are heavily used. Consider adding a shelter to Furstenberg Park to provide an additional river park shelter.
- Consider new shelters at Bandemer Park south, Fuller, Furstenberg and Buhr Parks for programming and public rentals.
- There is a lack of barrier free tables in and around picnic shelters.
- The Parking Lot and pathway to the shelter at Southeast Area Park needs to be replaced / repaired.
- Warming hut at Burns Park needs new site furnishings.
- The Burns Park parking lot and drop-off area needs to be redesigned to better accommodate accessibility.
- The Burns Park warming hut could be utilized better if there was a larger indoor space. The boat/kayak lockers near the shelter at Bandemer Nature Area are quite popular. There is a demand to add more lockers at Bandemer or perhaps another river park.
- The parking lot and drive leading up to the shelter at Almendinger Park needs replacement.

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### **e. Play Areas**

- Some existing play areas are aging and out of compliance with safety regulations, do not adequately meet ADA, or exhibit unsafe conditions and need to be renovated or replaced. In order to keep playgrounds safe, regular inspections need to be performed to stay ahead of safety issues including training and certifying additional staff to be Certified Playground Safety Inspectors.
- Wood fiber playground surfacing decomposes and gets weedy. Surfacing needs to be weeded and replenished on a regular basis to maintain a safe depth and clean surfacing conditions.
- Playground that have Poured-in-Place (PIP) surfacing need to be monitored for replacement. The Gallup Universal Access Playground needs regular repairs and has an end of life of approximately 5 years before full replacement is required.
- Identify non-chemical weed control methods to assist in playground maintenance. GIVE365, with the aid of Park Operations and Volunteers works to control weeds growing through engineered wood fiber. The City of Ann Arbor does not allow for chemical herbicides to be applied, but weeds need to be removed for playground safety.

### **f. Restrooms**

- Heavily used restroom facilities are more difficult to keep clean and maintain and need to be cleaned and repaired on a frequent basis.
- Restrooms that are outdated should be upgraded on a rotating/as-needed basis for energy efficiency, cleanliness, barrier free compliance and aesthetics.
- Prioritize construction and/or renovations of restrooms in heavily used parks or regional park facilities.
- Consider alternative means – temporary or permanent - for placing restroom facilities at parks and park spaces that do not have access to utility infrastructure.
- Restroom Facilities at parks and park spaces that do not have access to utility infrastructure. Permanent and / or temporary basis.

### **g. Signage**

- Interpretive signs at locations such as West Park and Gallup Park would enrich the understanding of the history and natural environment of these parks.
- Rule signs need to be consistent throughout the park system and to explain appropriate uses of parks and natural areas.
- Signage systems should be developed in a systematic way that provides consistent content and appearance and is readily identifiable as an Ann Arbor Park.
- Develop a consistent wayfinding strategy for the park system. Wayfinding is needed both for in-park use, and for navigating park system connections and linkages.

### **h. Snow Plowing**

- Continue to coordinate with facility supervisors to maintain safe, clear pathways and parking lots.
- Strive to minimize damage to pathways through parks caused by snow plows, and ice removing chemicals/salt mixture by considering alternative equipment, ice melters and installing markers at edges of trails.

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### **i. Trails and Pathways**

- Pathways throughout the park system are in need of renovation. .
- The Non-motorized Transportation Plan from 2013 details desired trail connections to connect parks and greenways throughout the City. This plan should be consulted when renovating streets and pathways.
- Coordination with other City departments to repair or replace deteriorated pathways in conjunction with street improvements should be a priority.
- Many pathways do not comply with AASHTO standards. When renovating existing pathways or constructing new pathways, these standards should be followed.
- Work to secure and increase safety at railroad crossings that access parks. As the discussion to make the MDOT rail line into a high-speed corridor, securing these public crossing is crucial.

### **j. Turf Maintenance**

- Improving turf maintenance would increase safety and usability of athletic fields and un-programmed open space.
- In 2022, the City of Ann Arbor adopted “No-Mow May”, in an effort to extend habitat for nesting insects and animal life, and reduce emissions from lawn maintenance. Parks needs to evaluate the effectiveness of this program, and determine the benefits and consequences of participating in park spaces.

### **k. Trash Pickup**

- Trash barrels in several parks are different styles. Old style barrels should be replaced with uniform, attractive trash containers throughout park system. All new barrels should be designed to easily remove the liner, secure the container in place, and be attractive.
- Placement of trash barrels should facilitate ease of trash pickup as well as ease of use and access.
- Strive to expand recycling and composting in all parks by providing recycling containers and coordinating regular pickup.

## **H. Volunteer Programs**

- As volunteer programs continue to grow, it is important that staffing to increase when possible to meet the new programmatic demands. . Due to the programming scope, it is important that a variety of skills sets are identified when adding staff.
- Edible Plants are being requested by citizens, and they work with GIVE365 to install special projects. A horticulturalist that has knowledge of edible plants would be a benefit to the program.
- Form a team dedicated to special events as well as to create new programs and events.
- Programming and events at facilities as well as city-wide would benefit from improved consistency and additional training. This could include facility programming, camp staff training, and other events such as coordinating food trucks.
- Dedicate a park maintenance team to work on beautification projects, such as facility landscaping, park and river cleanup, invasive plant removals, tree plantings, and maintaining trails outside of natural areas. In conjunction with this new

## SECTION VIII: Major Park and Recreation System Infrastructure Needs Assessment

programming, new resources, such as a second truck, computers and storage space would be beneficial.

- Two programs would benefit from staff volunteer coordinators, including the Citizen Pruner program, and the rain garden program. Staffing to maintain the proliferation of rain gardens in the city has not been adequate. A crew to maintain rain gardens would help improve the quality and aesthetics and minimize invasive species.

### **I. Potential New Recreational Facilities and Park Amenities**

#### **a. Pickleball Courts**

Pickle ball is a fast-growing sport, and more facilities are consistently asked for. Currently, two parks have permanent pickleball courts. When a tennis court is repaired or resurfaced, the local neighborhood is engaged about adding in permanent pickleball court. In addition, several tennis courts have temporary striping added to existing tennis courts.

#### **b. Bike Recreation**

In 2022, the Park Advisory Commission created an Ad-Hock Bike Recreation Subcommittee to analyze current bike recreation in the parks and make suggestions on how to enhance programming. The committee developed the following recommendations:

- Improve connectivity and safety for biking in the city. This includes improved and consistent wayfinding and formalizing existing connections.
- Design and create a Bike Pump Track, which would bring a new recreational opportunity to the area.
- Create new intentional mountain bike trails, improve existing trails.
- Develop a coordinator program allowing for community members to have a point person related to all biking inquiries. This person could help with coordinating events and volunteer efforts.
- Increase Outreach to the community to share biking opportunities.
- Work with local advocacy groups to promote bike recreation opportunities.
- Improve infrastructure – such as increased bike repair stations and bike parking – to help promote non-motorized transportation.

#### **c. Additional Dog Parks**

- The three off-leash dog parks are currently located in the north and south part of Ann Arbor at Swift Run Park, Olson Park and Broadway Park. Requests have been made additional dog parks to be located in the city.

#### **d. Splash Pad**

- There have been several requests to explore adding a splash pad to the park system. Splash pads provide an opportunity for water play in an area with little or no standing water, typically with ground nozzles that spray water upwards, eliminating the need for lifeguards & other supervision because of the low drowning risk. A splash pad would provide an alternate means of engaging and playing with water, outside of the City's existing pools.

## SECTION VIII: Major Park and Recreation System Infrastructure Needs Assessment

### **e. Other New Facility Needs**

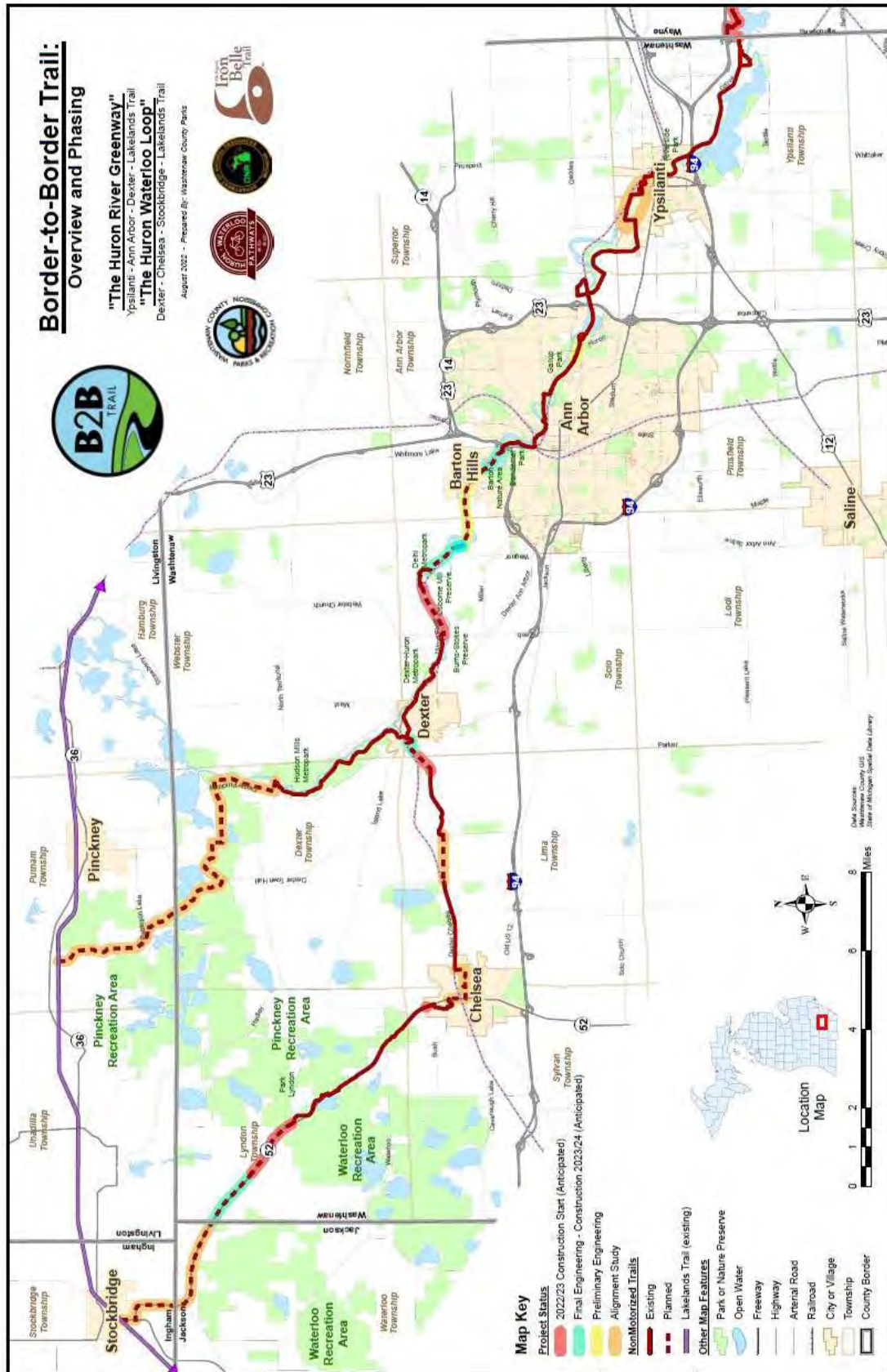
- As the City of Ann Arbor has grown, there is a need for a new facility, serving under-resourced households. Both Bryant Community Center and Northside Community Center are at maximum capacity. CAN has identified a need in the southeast region of Ann Arbor for a future neighborhood community center.
- GIVE365 needs a dedicated facility with storage and office space. Due to the limited current options a new facility may be necessary. Ideally this would be at a non-staff park, such as Southeast Area Park to help further activate the park.
- Look for opportunities to add playgrounds in areas where playgrounds are not easily accessible. For example, the Arbor Hills neighborhood does not have a close playground and requires crossing Washtenaw to access Burns Park. Crary Park may be a good location to explore adding a new playground.

### **f. Border to Border Trail**

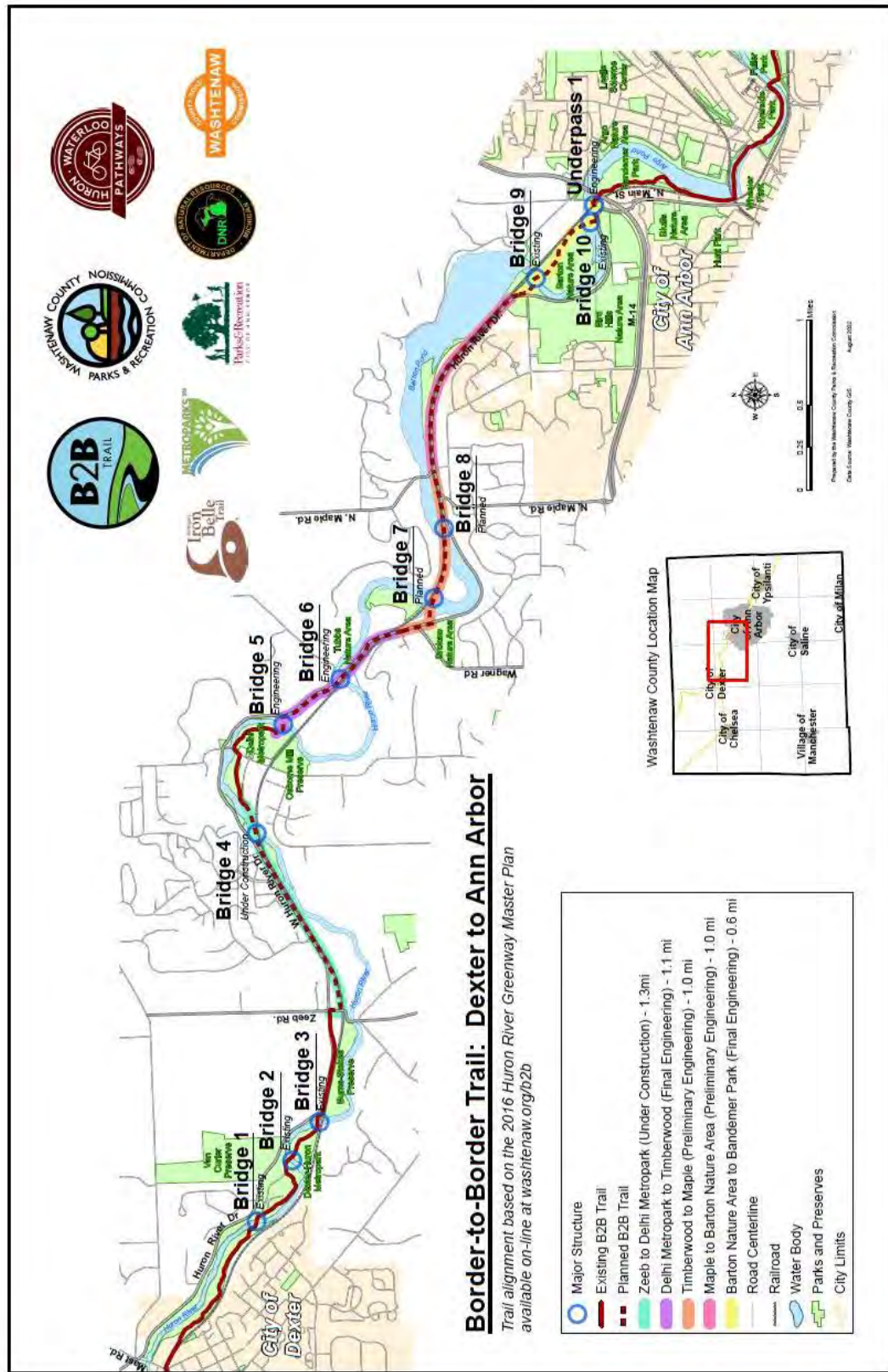
The Border to Border Trail (B2B Trail) through the City of Ann Arbor is largely complete. However there are several areas where the public has expressed a desire to establish a more road separated path or create a grade separated crossing, create important connections to other facilities, and extend the B2B Trail to connect to other cities as part of the County-wide vision. Some of the most prominent public desires are outlined below:

1. Barton Nature Area to Maple Road – this trail extension is part of the Dexter to Ann Arbor regional trail connection. Currently, the trail is proposed between Huron River Drive and the MDOT Railroad. An alternative alignment is to route the trail north of the railroad and adjacent to the river however that option has numerous technical challenges and substantially increased cost.
2. Barton-Bandemer Tunnel and Trail – this trail extension is part of the Dexter to Ann Arbor regional trail connection. The project consists of a pedestrian tunnel under the MDOT Railroad and subsequent extension of the trail from the north end of Bandemer Park through Barton Nature Area to the existing parking lot near Barton Dam.
3. Fuller Road at Maiden Lane intersection – There are several opportunities to route trail users beneath this intersection to improve safety. They use the existing road bridge abutments on the south side of the river and would require the construction of a new pedestrian bridge to connect to Riverside Park.
4. Fuller Road – proposed re-routing of the trail away from the roadway using Fuller Park and providing better river access. This project could directly tie in to the Fuller Road at Maiden Lane intersection project. There is also an opportunity to establish a grade-separated crossing of Fuller Road on the west side of the river, to the west of Mitchell Field, by routing the trail under the road bridge, using its existing abutments.
5. Gallup Park Nichols Arboretum Connection – A proposed pedestrian underpass near the river to connect Gallup Park and the Arboretum is desired by many city residents to allow for a safe and legal crossing of the MDOT Railroad. This project would require full support of the University of Michigan (owners of the Arboretum), MDOT Rail, and the City of Ann Arbor in order to advance this complex project.

SECTION VIII: Major Park and Recreation System Infrastructure Needs Assessment



SECTION VIII: Major Park and Recreation System Infrastructure Needs Assessment



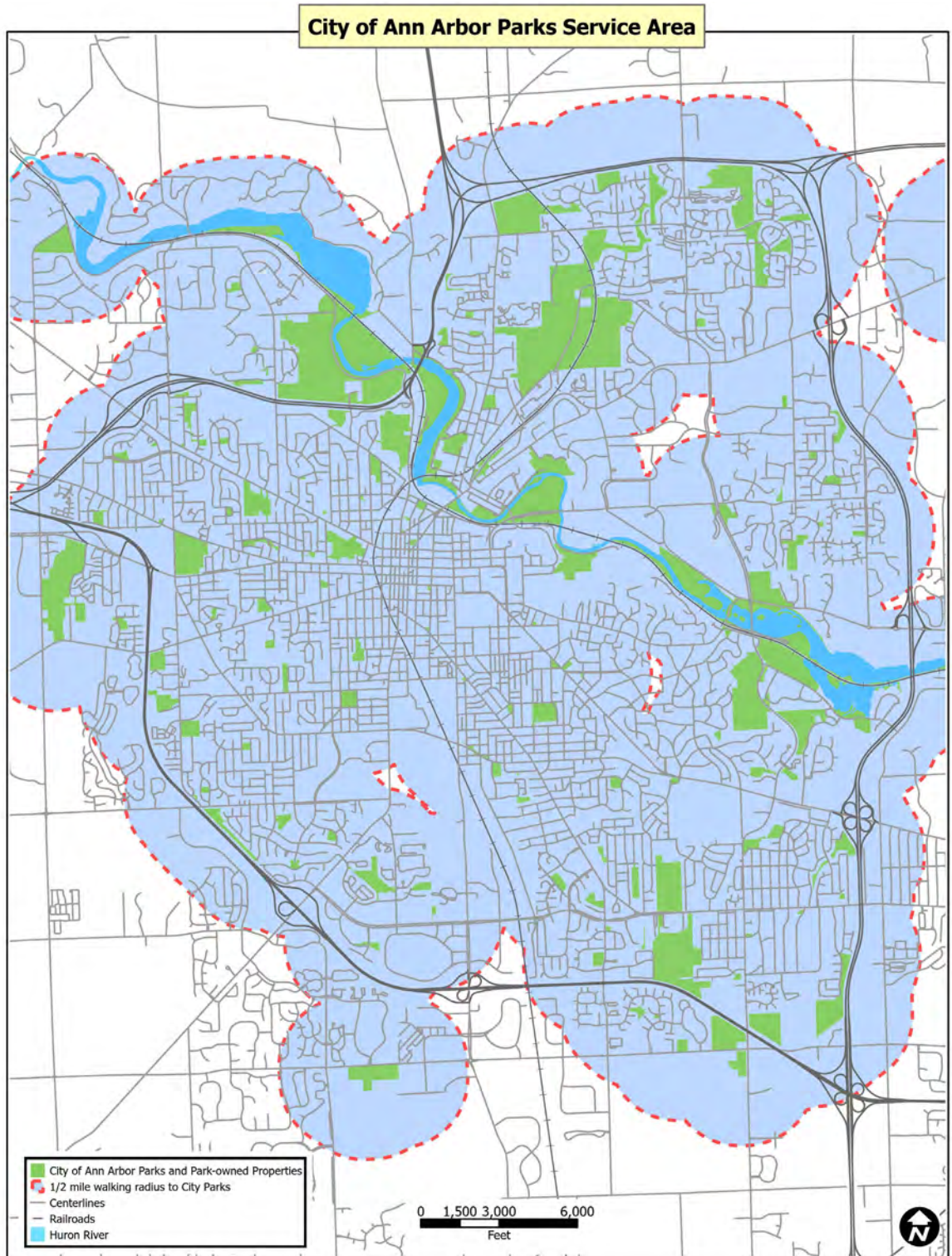
**g. 10-Minute Walk Campaign**

In 2017, The City of Ann Arbor joined The Trust for Public Land, National Recreation and Park Association and Urban Land Institute by participating in the historic "10-minute walk" parks advocacy campaign. The campaign sets the ambitious goal for a high-quality park or natural area to be within a 10-minute walk (equivalent to a ½ mile) of all U.S. residences.

As of December 2022, the majority of the City of Ann Arbor falls within a 10-minute walk of a City of Ann Arbor park. Areas showing a gap in walkable parks include land outside of the City's control such as Washtenaw County Parks and property owned by the Ann Arbor Public Schools and the University of Michigan. Additionally, it doesn't necessarily represent a lack of walkable parks and recreation opportunities as some of these gaps include the University of Michigan Golf Course, University of Michigan Nichols Arboretum, County Farm Park, and Pioneer Woods. When future park acquisitions are made, gaps in the 10-minute walk campaign should be considered.



SECTION VIII: Major Park and Recreation System Infrastructure Needs Assessment





## SECTION IX: ACTION PLAN

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Numerous projects are completed in City parks every year including capital improvements requiring large amounts of funding, renovation projects completed by City staff, and special or ongoing projects completed by volunteers. As demonstrated in Section VIII (Major Park and Recreation System Infrastructure Needs Assessment), there are far more projects than can be completed over the course of this PROS Plan cycle, and it is a challenging task to determine priorities. Making matters more complicated, unanticipated projects arise that must be completed to maintain the operation of a facility or to assure safety of citizens.

In order to provide flexibility while addressing park system needs, projects in the capital improvements plan are identified in categories rather than as specific park projects. For example, maintenance of existing trails and pathways is a high priority for residents, however there is also a desire to complete path systems such as the Border-to-Border trail. Consequently, two categories were developed to address both repair of existing and construction of new trails. Trail projects are prioritized based on the amount of use they receive, their condition, and safety. These are then reviewed each year to determine how much can be accomplished given the budget allocation.

A balance must also be achieved between maintaining existing facilities, keeping current with trends, and providing desired new amenities. For example, every year several recreation facilities, such as a pool or an ice arena, receive some upgrade or modernization to improve customer experience, increase energy efficiency, provide barrier free access, and maintain the viability of the resource. Basic infrastructure, such as parking lots and restrooms, must also be repaired and updated and require significant financial resources. Additionally, larger new amenities, such as the Ann Arbor Skatepark, Argo Cascades, and Universal Access Playground, are periodically constructed to bring new experiences to the park system and provide regional amenities. To provide a balance, the capital budget is divided between the different types of resources to assure that the entire system is addressed at some level. The exhaustive list provided in the previous chapter helps staff to identify priorities stated during the public process while developing the Capital Improvements Plan.

## **A. Staff Projects**

Staff projects include replacing, renovating or repairing amenities such as drinking fountains, restrooms, and park furniture. These projects are completed on a rotating basis to keep facilities updated and to improve barrier free accessibility. Larger projects, such as constructing stairs or boardwalks, playground renovations, and building renovations, are also periodically performed by staff.

## **B. Volunteer Projects**

Three volunteer programs engage individuals and groups in the park system. Natural Area Preservation, Adopt-A-Park and GIVE365 are three volunteer programs within the Parks and Recreation Services Unit that offer a variety of projects and support the park system. Volunteers include diverse groups, such as service organizations, schools, fraternities and sororities, and individuals who complete diverse tasks.

- Adopt-A-Park – Neighbors volunteer to plant flowers at park signs, help to spread woodchips surfacing at playgrounds, mulch around trees and advocate for their local park. Some groups plan work days for the neighborhood while other volunteers work individually with the support of Ann Arbor parks and recreation staff.
- Give365 - Established in 2011, the program incorporates volunteers into programming and special events, coordinates park and facility maintenance and cleanup efforts, maintains flower beds, clears overgrown brush, collects trash along the river and provides for other park maintenance needs. Give also supports and staffs the Adopt-A-Park program, which now has a full-time dedicated staff member.
- Natural Area Preservation – Staff and volunteers work to improve the quality of natural areas by removing invasive plants, performing controlled burns, and inventorying flora and fauna to better understand the condition of natural areas. Eagle scouts often partner with NAP to do construction projects that complete their badge requirements. Projects have included boardwalks, signs, small bridges, pathways, and building of benches.

## **C. Capital Projects**

The City of Ann Arbor’s Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) provides a starting point for the capital projects portion of the budget. Every two years the complete six-year plan is reviewed, modified, and updated. Projects considered to be capital improvements are generally large, expensive, and relatively permanent in nature.

In 2020, the City made the transition to a new CIP software called Allovance, with a web-based platform that allows for ease of scoring and decision making. Allovance also allows each of the City’s largest asset groups (Parks and Recreation, Active Transportation, Streets, Sanitary, Stormwater, and Water) to configure their own project prioritization criteria. The prioritization criteria now allow for

## SECTION IX: Action Plan

incorporation of goals from plans, such as the PROS Plan, into the capital decision making process. It also provided the opportunity to incorporate goals from other City strategic documents such as the A2Zero Carbon Neutrality Action Plan. Each year, staff meet to propose and rate projects to be included in the CIP, as well as to ensure that efficiencies are gained by coordinating between service areas.

The chart below outlines how proposed projects are scored and prioritized.

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SECTION IX: Action Plan

City of Ann Arbor CIP 2022 - Parks & Recreation				
Priority	Objective			
Quality of Life	Provides Access	Provides ADA access <b>AND/OR</b> Provides amenities not easily found within 1 mile radius from the project location	Provides ADA access plus limited Universal access <b>AND/OR</b> Provides amenities not easily found within 1/2 mile radius from the project location	Provides full Universal access <b>AND/OR</b> Provides amenities not easily found within ¼ mile radius from the project location <b>AND/OR</b> Provides an amenity in a neighborhood with a high percentage of households in poverty (greater than 10%) per Neighborhoods at Risk
	Enhances Customer Experience and Satisfaction	Response to a localized need	Provides a larger area opportunity for play and learning <b>AND/OR</b> enhances the visitor Experience (comfort / cleanliness / enjoyment) <b>AND/OR</b> improves overall customer Satisfaction	Creates diverse Recreation Opportunities and Experiences <b>AND/OR</b> provides new recreation opportunities or experiences
	Creates Excellent Parks & Spaces	Provides a respite from Built Environment <b>AND/OR</b> provides a connection to natural world	Meets Low Desirability <b>PLUS</b> helps to enhance human connection, gatherings and events <b>AND/OR</b> aesthetic/Place Making	Meets Medium Desirability <b>PLUS</b> helps support Innovation <b>AND/OR</b> stewardship of cultural resources
Sustainability	Protect Natural Systems	Project meets rules and regulations regarding stormwater runoff <b>OR</b> project has minimal positive impact on existing natural system and biodiversity <b>OR</b> project has minimal positive impact on natural resources	Meets at least 2 of the 4 following objectives: - Project exceeds rules and regulations on stormwater runoff by reducing volume of stormwater and improving quality of stormwater runoff <b>AND/OR</b> - Project links together two or more high quality natural areas <b>AND/OR</b> - Project creates natural systems which increases the biodiversity of an area <b>AND/OR</b> - Project has a positive impact on natural resources	Meets at least 3 or 4 of the 4 following objectives: - Project exceeds rules and regulations on stormwater runoff by reducing volume of stormwater and improving quality of stormwater runoff <b>AND/OR</b> - Project links together two or more high quality natural areas <b>AND/OR</b> - Project creates natural systems which increases the biodiversity of an area <b>AND/OR</b> - Project has a positive impact on natural resources
	Contribute to A2Zero Goals	Project does not contribute to an A2Zero Strategy* <b>AND</b> project does not contribute to the City's interconnected non-motorized transportation network <b>AND</b> Does not play a role in the production of local food <b>AND</b> energy sources from the project come from the existing power grid  *Power Our Electrical Grid with 100% Renewable Energy; Switch our Appliances from Gasoline, Diesel, Propane, Coal, and Natural Gas to Electric; Significantly Improve the Energy Efficiency in our... Recreational Sites and Government Facilities; Reduce the Miles we Travel in our Vehicles by at least 50%; Change the Way We Use, Reuse, and Dispose of Materials; Enhance the Resilience of Our People and Our Place	Project contributes to at least one of the A2Zero Resilience Strategies as outlined above <b>AND/OR</b> project improves and enhances the City's interconnected non-motorized transportation network <b>AND/OR</b> improves or expands existing local food production projects <b>AND/OR</b> project operates with partial renewable energy sources (less than 50%) or does not require power	Project contributes to two or more of the A2Zero Resilience Strategies as outlined above <b>AND/OR</b> project extends the City's interconnected non-motorized transportation network (Another level - Extending the City's interconnected non-motorized transportation network to underserved communities) <b>AND/OR</b> generates opportunities to add to the City's local food production programs <b>AND/OR</b> project operates with partial renewable energy sources (greater than 50%) or generates a surplus of energy that can be used to offset energy demands elsewhere in the Park System.
Financial Health		- Partnerships & Grants: City assumes all capital costs <b>OR</b> - Impacts Operating Budget: Project increases operating budget expenditures, generates no additional revenue. (example - a new boardwalk in a nature area)	- Partnerships & Grants: Partnerships and/or grant funding cover less than 50% of the capital project cost <b>OR</b> . - Impacts Operating Budget: Project decreases operating budget expenditures with little or no impact on revenue (example - mechanical upgrades to Vets Pool that reduce utility and chemical costs - revenue might increase slightly if there is less pool down time). <b>OR</b> increased operating expenditures as a result of the project are offset by new revenues for a net zero effect.	- Partnerships & Grants: Partnerships and/or grant funding cover more than 50% of the capital project cost <b>OR</b> . - Impacts Operating Budget: Project generates new revenues that exceed new expenditures (example, Argo Cascades).
Park System Infrastructure	Regulatory Compliance & Industry Standards	Results in meeting minimal current industry standards	Results in meeting all current industry standards	Results in exceeding all current standards and adopts recommended practices that are not required
	Maintain Infrastructure Condition	Provides minimal infrastructure condition improvement	Provides moderate infrastructure condition improvement	Provides substantial infrastructure condition improvement

## **E. Major Categories of Capital Project Improvements**

In order to prioritize projects and assure that funding is distributed in a manner that addresses infrastructure needs as well as programming and citizen desires, staff from recreation facilities, operations and maintenance, planning and administration, meet annually to evaluate needs identified in the PROS Plan. A potential list of projects is then compiled that furthers the goals of the PROS Plan. The general categories listed below help ensure that the broad scope of needs within the park system are addressed.

1. Recreation Facility Renovations – With the number and variety of facilities in the park system, there are multiple renovations that are needed to maintain infrastructure, provide for programming opportunities, and update appearance. Examples include the pool slide repair, and pool liner & equipment replacement at Veterans Memorial Park.
2. Park Roads and Parking Lots – Several of the community-wide parks and facilities contain entry roads and parking lots that are in need of renovation. In order to maintain safety and provide a positive user experience, these surfaces need to either be replaced or repaired, depending on their condition. An example is resurfacing the parking lot at the Swift Run dog park as well as the design for reconfiguring the Gallup Park road and parking lots to reduce conflicts between vehicles and non-motorized transportation.
3. Trails and Pathways: Repair and Reconstruction – With of the extensive network of trails and pathways in the park system, it is important to implement renovations for safety by eliminating trip hazards, to comply with code for barrier free access, and to meet current traffic standards. An example is the renovated and expanded shared-use trails in Gallup Park and Riverside Park along the Border-to-Border/Iron Belle trail.
4. Trails and Pathways: New Construction – The PROS Plan as well as the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan outline trail connections to complete the Border to Border Trail, provide desired greenway connections, and provide connections to and through parks. These improvements are of high importance to the community as shown though the public input received. An example is the proposed Border-to-Border trail expansion through Barton Nature Area that is currently in design.
5. Athletic Field Renovations – The park system contains multiple athletic fields, including baseball and softball fields that have deteriorated over the years from heavy use. Rebuilding and renovating fields are important for safety and to improve user experience. Examples include athletic field renovations at baseball fields at Veterans Memorial Park, Southeast Area Park and West Park.
6. Playground Improvements – Federal guidelines that determine design of playground equipment change periodically, and consequently playgrounds must be updated or replaced. Replacement may also occur if equipment requires such significant change that it is more cost effective to install new equipment. Playgrounds are generally replaced on an approximately 15-20 year cycle. Examples of playgrounds that were recently improved include West Park, Bromely Park, Kelly Park, Churchill Downs Park,
7. Tennis and Basketball Court Renovations – In order to maintain the quality of the surface and

## SECTION IX: Action Plan

safety of play, the surfacing as well as other court amenities such as basketball hoops, tennis posts and nets are replaced and/or repaired. Examples include the reconstruction of courts at Leslie Park, Sylvan Park, Creal Park, Burns Park, and Southeast Area Park.

8. Community-wide parks – Infrastructure includes picnic shelters, restrooms, landscaping, lighting, signage, pathways, parking lots as well as proposed new elements. An example is the recently completed renovations at the Argo Canoe Livery to provide universal access at the livery, including the boat docks and launches, pathways, fishing pier, and restrooms.

9. Historic Preservation Projects – The structural integrity of historic structures, such as the Kempf House and the historic house at Cobblestone Farm, is undermined over time due to weather, wildlife, and vandalism. These structures are renovated periodically to preserve them for future generations to enjoy. Projects include restoration of the historic bridge at Island Park.

10. Park Bridge Repair – Bridges throughout the park system along the Huron River and tributaries deteriorate over time and need to be repaired or replaced for safety. Projects included repairs and renovation at the Gallup Park, Bandemer Park, and Barton Nature Area bridges, as well as replacement of a bridge at Argo Nature Area.

### **F. Capital Improvements for 2022-2026**

Each fiscal year, projects from the categories listed above will be assigned a budget based on the needs identified and prioritized by staff outlined in the needs assessment chapter. The projects will be rated using the Capital Improvements Criteria with input from Parks and Recreation staff as well as staff from other departments where there may be overlap and efficiencies, such as construction or replacement of a pathway in the right of way where a street renovation project is planned, allowing for savings in funding, as well as reducing impact on residents.

Additionally, the City is undergoing an ADA Transition Plan for all parks and park-owned properties and will be developing a plan to prioritize the identified accessibility improvements. The City also intends to engage a consultant to perform a park infrastructure assessment focused on our aging recreation facilities, as well as develop an asset management program for ongoing monitoring, planning, and budgeting.

# PARKS AND RECREATION OPEN SPACE PLAN 2023-2027

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX

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1.	Park Advisory Commission.....	vii
2.	City Planning Commission.....	viii-ix
3.	City Council.....	x-xi

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**PARKS AND RECREATION  
OPEN SPACE PLAN 2023-2027**

**APPENDIX A  
FY 2022 BUDGET CHARTS**

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# PARKS AND RECREATION OPEN SPACE PLAN 2023-2027

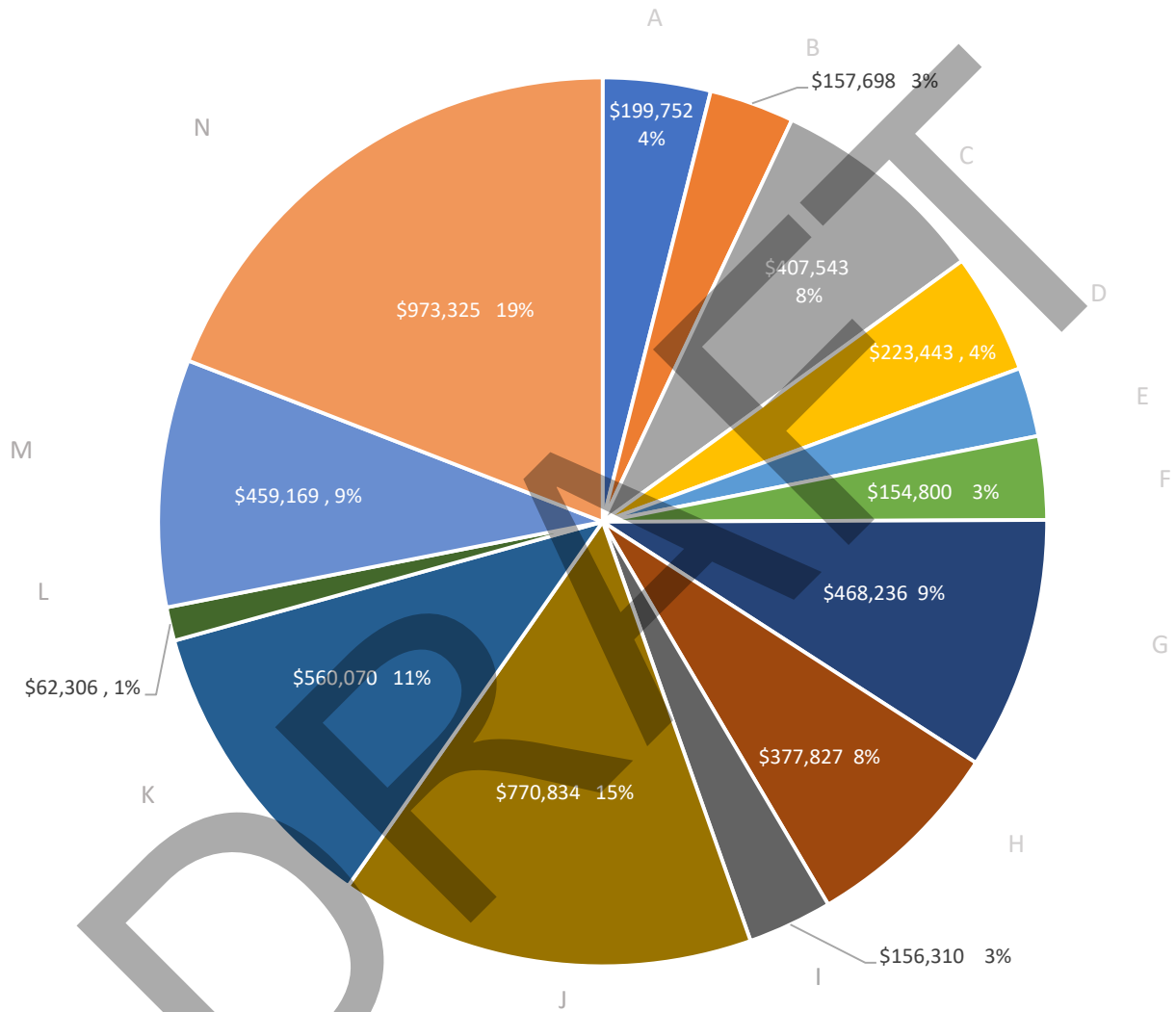
## APPENDIX B RESOLUTIONS

**At time of draft, the resolutions are not available.  
They will be added as part of the final 2023-2027  
Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan**

1.	Park Advisory Commission.....	vii
2.	City Planning Commission.....	viii-ix
3.	City Council.....	x-xi

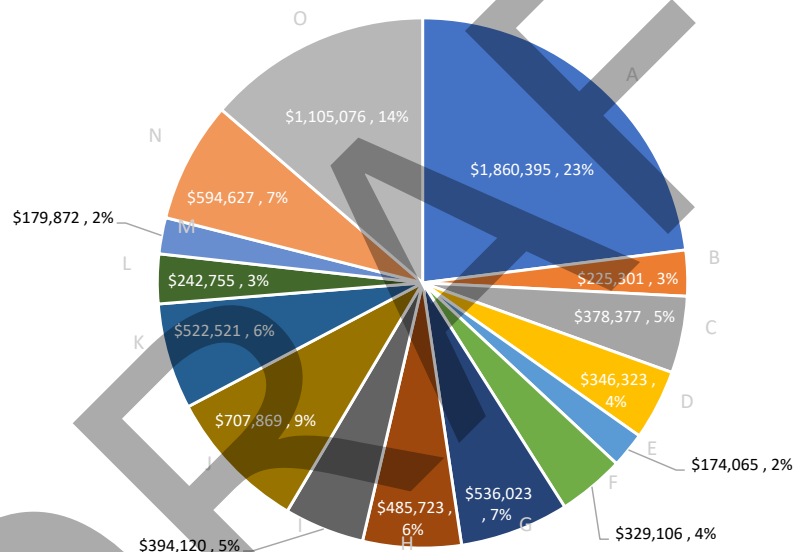
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**Parks and Recreation Services  
General Fund  
FY 2023 Revenue Budget  
Total \$5,099,670.00**



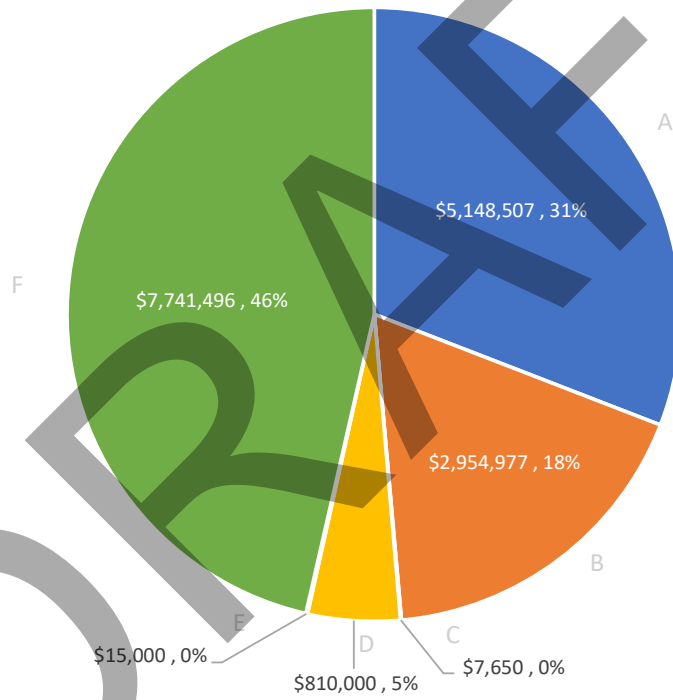
- A 1000 Administration
- B 1646 Farmer's Market
- C 6100 Facility Rentals
- D 6231 Buhr Pool
- E 6232 Buhr Rink
- F 6234 Veteran's Pool
- G 6235 Veteran's Ice Arena
- H 6236 Fuller Pool
- I 6237 Mack Pool
- J 6242 Argo Livery
- K 6244 Gallup Livery
- L 6315 Senior Center Operations
- M 6503 Huron Golf Course
- N 6504 Leslie Golf Course

**Parks and Recreation Services  
General Fund  
FY 2023 Budget  
Total \$8,082,153.00**



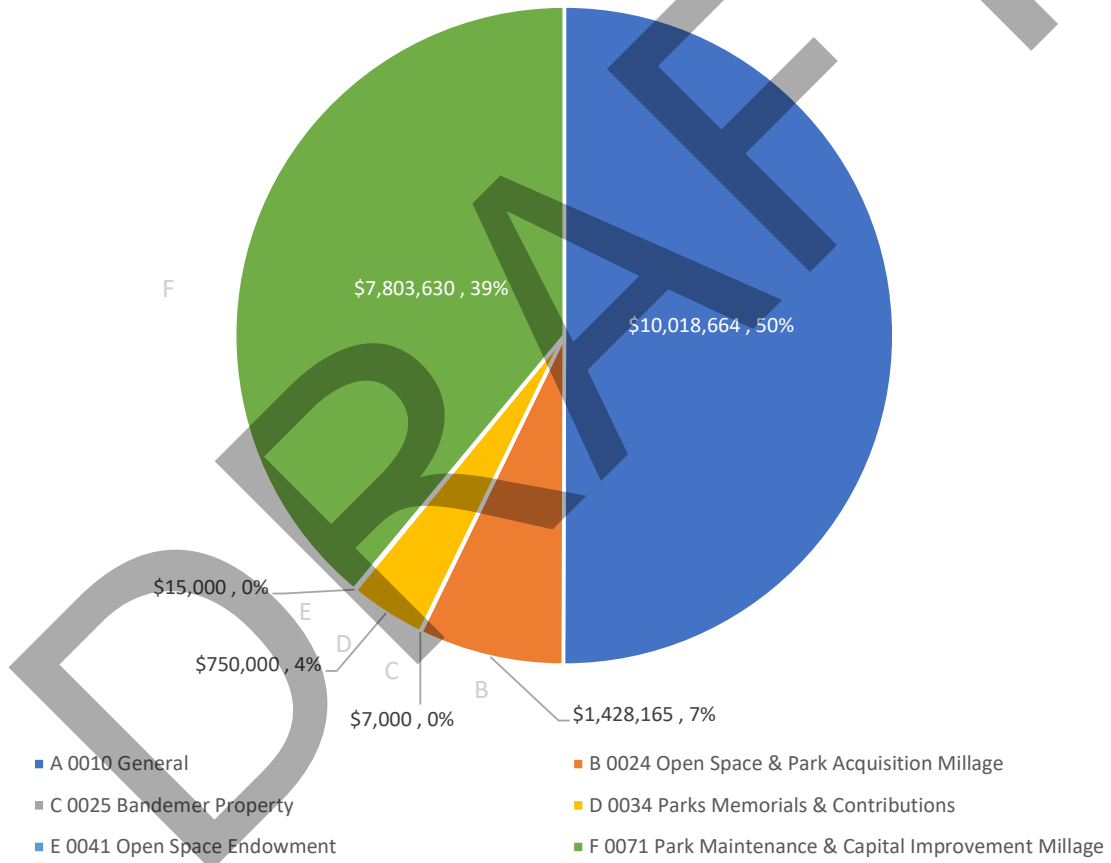
- A 1000 Administration
- B 1646 Farmer's Market
- C 6100 Facility Rentals
- D 6231 Buhr Pool
- E 6232 Buhr Rink
- F 6234 Veteran's Pool
- G 6235 Veteran's Ice Arena
- H 6236 Fuller Pool
- I 6237 Mack Pool
- J 6242 Argo Livery
- K 6244 Gallup Livery
- L 6315 Senior Center Operations
- M 6403 Community Outreach Services
- N 6503 Huron Golf Course
- O 6504 Leslie Golf Course

**Parks and Recreation Services  
All Funds  
FY 2023 Revenue Budget  
Total \$16,677,630**

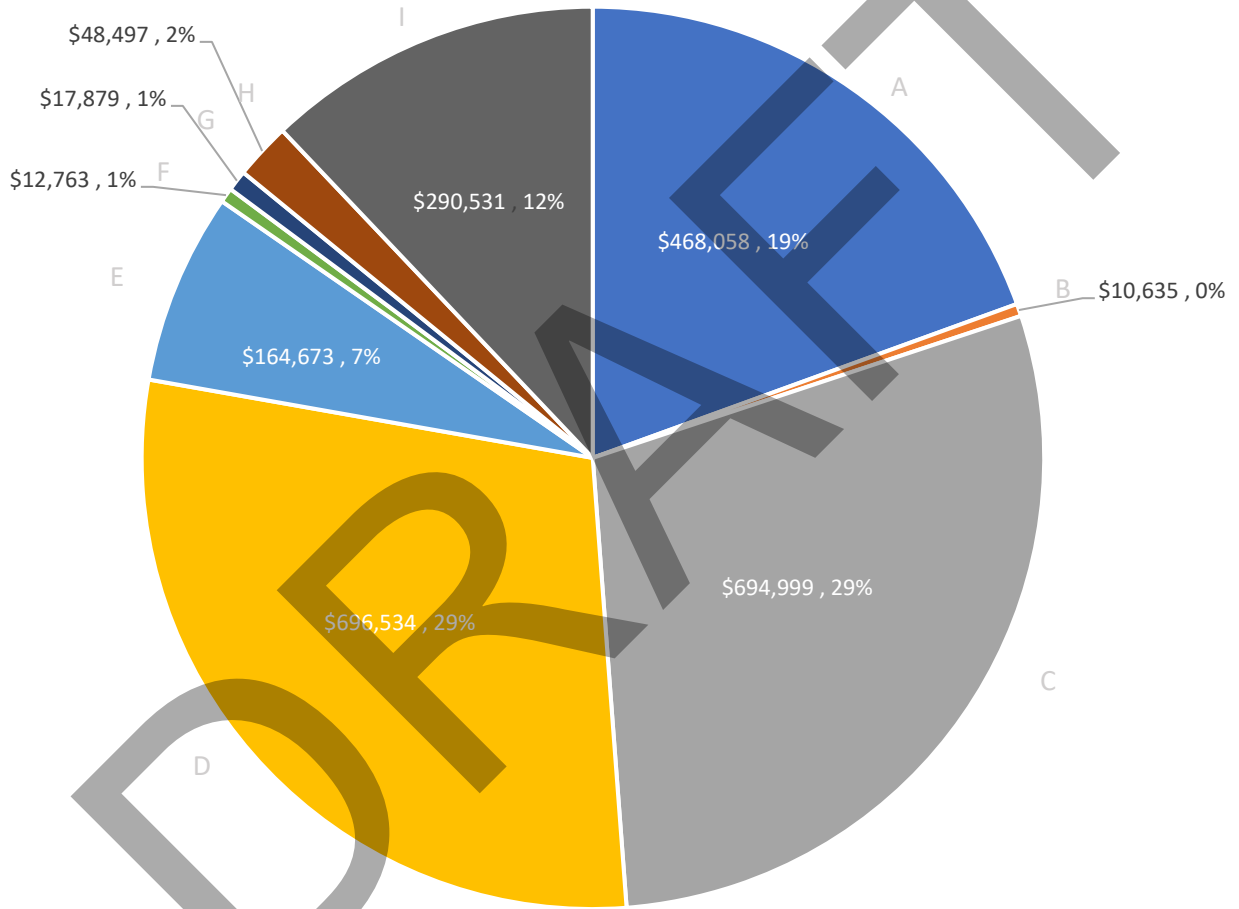


- A 0010 General
- B 0024 Open Space & Park Acquisition Millage
- C 0025 Bandemer Property
- D 0034 Parks Memorials & Contributions
- E 0041 Open Space Endowment
- F 0071 Park Maintenance & Capital Improvement Millage

**Parks and Recreation Services  
All Funds  
FY 2023 Expenditure Budget  
Total \$20,022,459**



**Park Operations  
General Fund  
FY 2023 Expenditure Budget  
Total \$2,404,569**



- A 1000 Administration
  - D 6210 Operations
  - G 6335 Athletic Fields/Game Courts
- B 4146 Football/Special Events
  - E 6222 Snow and Ice Control
  - H 6365 Playground Maintenance
- C 6209 Parks-Mowing
  - F 6328 ROW Maintenance
  - I 9500 Debt Service

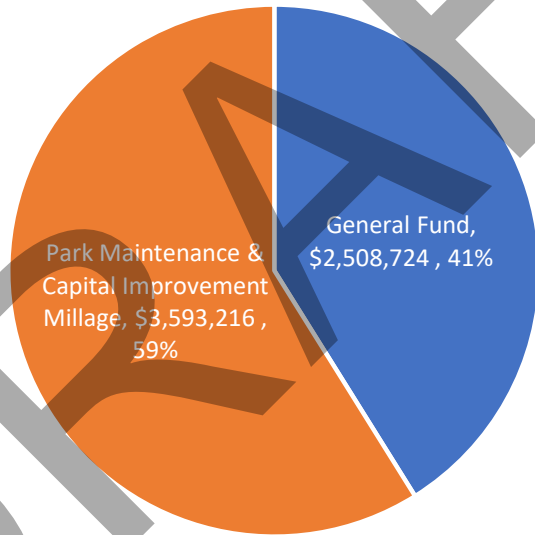
**Park Operations and Park Forestry  
Park Maintenance & Capital Improvement Millage Fund  
FY 2023 Revenue Budget  
Total \$4,097,930**



\$4,097,930.00



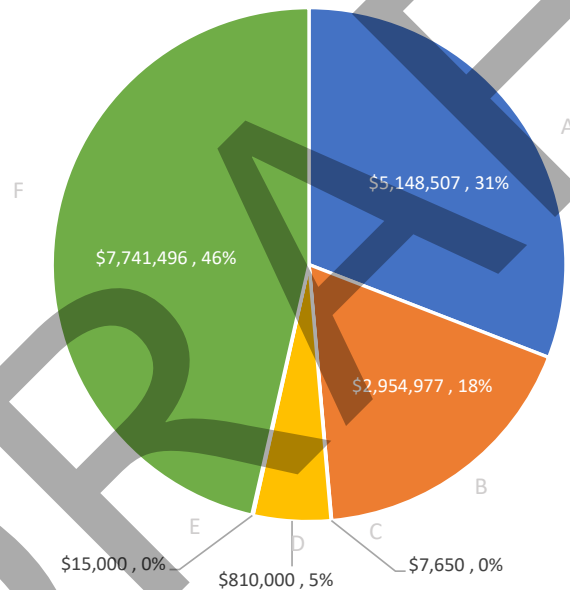
**Park Operations and Park Forestry  
All Funds  
FY 2023 Expenditure Budget  
Total \$6,101,940**



■ General Fund

■ Park Maintenance & Capital Improvement Millage

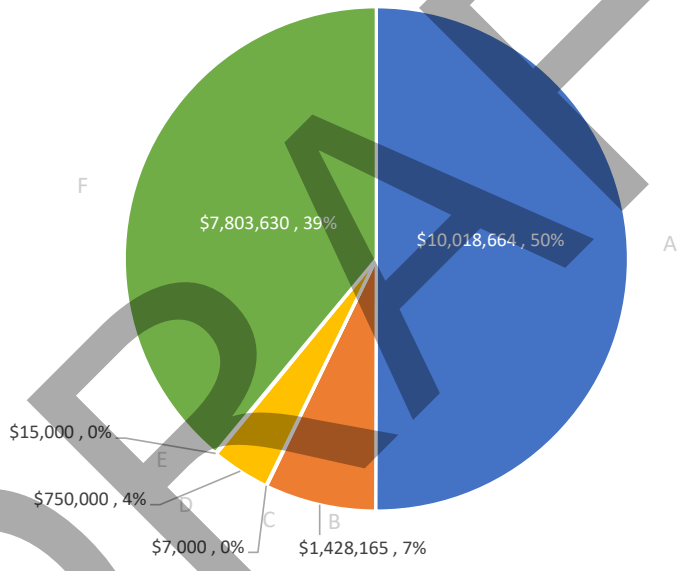
**Total Parks System  
FY 2023 Revenue Budget  
Total \$16,677,630**



- A 0010 General Fund
- C 0025 Bandemer Fund
- E 0041 Open Space Endowment

- B 0024 Open Space & Park Acquisition
- D 0034 Parks Memorials & Contributions
- F 071 Park Maintenance and Capital Improvement Millage

**Total Parks System  
FY 2023 Expenditure Budget  
Total \$20,022,459**



- A 0010 General Fund
  - C 0025 Bandemer Fund Parks & Recreation Services
  - E 0041 Open Space Endowment
- B 0024 Open Space & Park Acquisition Millage
  - D 0034 Parks Memorials & Contributions
  - F 0071 Park Maintenance & Capital Improvement Millage