



CITY OF YPSILANTI  
PARKS AND RECREATION  
MASTER PLAN  
2014-2019  
Adopted 17 December 2013





# Acknowledgements

## **PLAN ADOPTION**

The City of Ypsilanti Parks and Recreation Master Plan was adopted on 17 December 2013 by Resolution No. 2013-251 of the City Council of the City of Ypsilanti, Washtenaw County, Michigan.

The plan was approved by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources on 05 June 2014.

## **CITY COUNCIL**

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## **PLAN PREPARATION**

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The plan was prepared by the City of Ypsilanti Recreation Commission with support from the Planning and Development Department and Department of Public Works.

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## **PARK ADOPTERS**

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A special thank you to all of the City's devoted volunteers and neighborhood associations who have provided countless hours of effort to improve Ypsilanti's parks system.



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## Executive Summary

The City aims to provide a high quality parks system and ample recreational opportunities, but is restricted by its current lack of resources and capacity. This plan therefore envisions that the City will play a custodial and facilitating role, focusing limited resources on oversight and maintenance of the underlying parkland, yet poised to take advantage of opportunities as they arise. A key strategy to reach that goal is to develop and foster partnerships with potential partners, from regional entities to Ypsilanti's many talented residents. As implementation of projects will rely on the involvement of these partners and volunteers, the prioritization of projects presented in this plan is a guide, recognizing that opportunity will dictate which projects come to fruition.

This plan addresses the parkland and recreation facilities controlled by the City of Ypsilanti. Together, physical facilities and programming comprise Ypsilanti's recreation system. The system relies upon the participation of and cooperation with a variety of local and regional entities, ranging from local volunteers, volunteer groups, and nonprofits, to neighboring municipalities, universities, and school districts. Some of these partners coordinate formally with the City on recreation provision, while others are historically partners in fact, without active coordination. Considering Ypsilanti's comparatively small physical area, limited fiscal capacity, and close geographic integration with surrounding communities, nurturing and developing working relationships with all of the area's recreation partners is an important part of the City's recreation system.

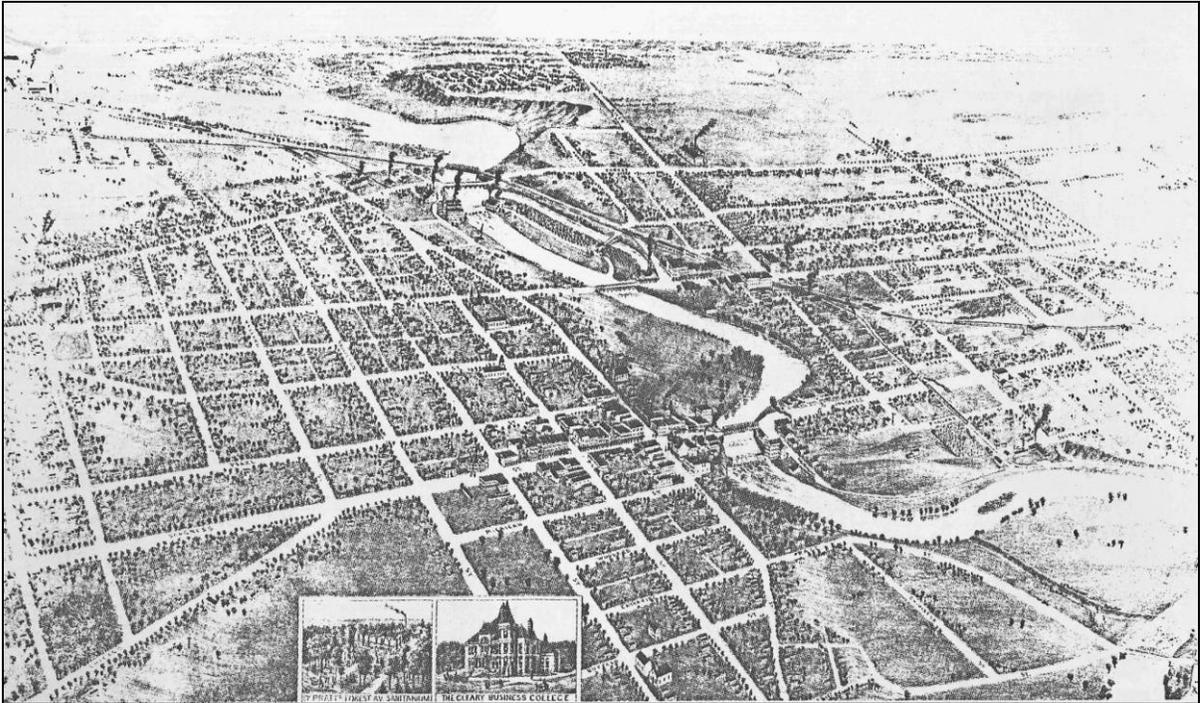
The Recreation Commission can take the lead in executing many of the objectives laid out in this plan. As many of the projects involve prioritization of limited maintenance dollars, involvement of volunteers, or raising funds to pay for needed capital improvements, and active, involved Recreation Commission could devote time to these projects. The City Council makes final decisions on budget and legislation, but the Recreation Commission may choose to make recommendations to them for budget priorities, policies, and legislation.



# Chapter 1: Community Description

This plan addresses the parkland and recreation facilities controlled by the City of Ypsilanti. It focuses primarily on physical facilities; programming is offered by partners and volunteer organizations. Together, physical facilities and programming comprise Ypsilanti's recreation system. The system relies upon the participation of and cooperation with a variety of local and regional entities, ranging from local volunteer groups to neighboring municipalities, universities, and school districts. Some of these partners coordinate formally with the City on recreation provision, while others are historically partners in fact, without active coordination. Considering Ypsilanti's comparatively small physical area, limited fiscal capacity, and close geographic integration with surrounding communities, nurturing and developing working relationships with all of the area's recreation partners is an important part of the City's recreation system.

## HISTORY



Ypsilanti was founded in 1823 and developed first around the intersection between the Great Sauk Trail, now Michigan Avenue, and the Huron River. Ypsilanti is the second village to be incorporated in Michigan and like many older cities founded on rivers, used the Huron River for both power and commerce, fostering a thriving community.



**Figure 1.1: 1913 Olmsted Brothers Huron River Improvement Draft Plan**

Ypsilanti’s history of supporting outdoor recreation stretches nearly as far back as its founding. Ypsilanti established its first public park in the 1890s, and then formed a Parks and Recreation Commission shortly thereafter in the early 1900s. In 1905, the city employed the renowned Olmsted Brothers landscape architecture firm to form a master plan for the Huron River corridor. In the General City Plan of 1913, also completed by the Olmsted Brothers, the city was advised to acquire land along the riverfront to “preserve for posterity natural features of great beauty, such as the steep wooded hillsides and gorges that make the charm of the valley...” At the time, the City began acquiring riverfront land for public use, starting in the 1920s with what is now Riverside Park. Later acquisitions along the river include Waterworks Park, formerly called Tourist Park; Frog Island Park, the former Ypsilanti High School athletic fields; and Peninsular Park, where the Peninsular Paper Company once operated their mill. The City is currently working to develop River’s Edge Park, a linear park linking Riverside to Waterworks along the banks of the Huron, thus constructing a key segment of the Border to Border Trail, a project led by the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission to link the communities of Washtenaw County along the Huron. Although the precise details of the Olmsted plan may never be developed, the City has been faithful to the plan’s larger goals of creating a river-linked parks system for the City’s residents and visitors to enjoy.

Due in large part to Ypsilanti’s history, it is also a relatively compact and walkable community with a substantial sidewalk network that places many residents within an easy walk of City parks. In fact, during this planning process and the concurrent master plan process, it was found that the majority of Ypsilanti’s housing stock is within a quarter-mile of a park. The City’s age and context in a fairly urbanized region also means that its boundaries are fixed, and little undeveloped land is available for additional parks, therefore any new recreational amenities will likely involve refinements or minor expansions of existing resources.

## **PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS**

### **NATURAL FEATURES**

Although Ypsilanti is urbanized, natural features play an important role in the lives of its residents and visitors, in parks and recreation planning, and in land use planning. These include its climate, flora and fauna; the general topography of the city; and its water resources.

## Climate

Southeast Michigan's climate includes both hot, humid summers and frigid winters, and includes a full range of precipitation. This provides many opportunities for different means of recreation throughout the four seasons, ranging from canoeing, fishing, swimming, and outdoor fairs and festivals in the summer, to snowshoeing, sledding, cross-country skiing, and indoor recreational activities in the winter.

## Wildlife

Although the City is urbanized, it provides valuable year-round and migratory habitat for many species. Its diverse urban tree canopy and the Huron River provide habitat for birds, small mammals, insects, and many aquatic species. Although there is little year-round habitat for deer, they are often seen in the north of the City and near Ford Lake in late winter and early spring, as forage becomes scarce elsewhere. Hunting is not permitted in City parks or on City-owned property; however, fishing is both permitted and popular. Fish species found in the Huron include bluegill, sunfish, black crappie, smallmouth bass, bullhead, white perch, yellow perch, carp, white sucker, hog sucker, and the occasional channel catfish.

## Woodlands

Due to its developed state, the City of Ypsilanti has few areas of natural woodlands, most on private property not open to the public. However, extensive woodlands and publicly-accessible natural areas can be found in the surrounding area. A number of regional bodies, such as Washtenaw County, the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy, and the Legacy Land Conservancy are working to preserve these assets, some of which are open to the public.



The City does have a significant urban forest of street and park trees. In 2011, the City used a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant to develop a street tree inventory and management plan, contained in the Urban Forestry Management Plan<sup>1</sup>. In 2012, the City began work planting a City tree nursery using information from the inventory and the recommendations from the management plan. This nursery, to be stewarded over the coming years, will help to provide trees not only for the City's streets, but also for its parks.

## Topography

The majority of the City of Ypsilanti is a gently rolling landscape, with slopes rarely exceeding 6 percent. However, areas adjacent to the Huron River or its floodplain frequently reach slopes upwards of 12 percent. This is moderately steep, yet will support most types of development. Slopes greater than twenty percent are



<sup>1</sup> The Urban Forestry Plan is available on the City website at [cityofypsilanti.com/trees](http://cityofypsilanti.com/trees).

considered steep, and are susceptible to erosion and gully formation. Per 2009 LiDAR data, areas in Parkridge Park, Riverside Park, Frog Island Park, and Peninsular Park have steep slopes, generally at their perimeters.

## **Soils**

Most of the soils present in the City of Ypsilanti are of the St. Clair Series. This series consists primarily of well- to moderately well-drained soils formed in clayey textured glacial till. A great deal of the soil east of the Huron River, as well as areas in the northwest portion of the City, is of the Boyer Series—well-drained, nearly level soils formed in loamy and sandy deposits underlain by gravelly, coarse sand. Other soils include the Sloan Series, primarily along the Huron River; the Blount Series, found in small deposits along the city's northern boundaries; the Morley Series, in the southwest portion of the City; and areas of fill. Notably, Peninsular Park and portions of the Water Street redevelopment area are largely on fill soils, requiring investigation before construction of recreation facilities. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources currently owns mineral rights in an area of the City bounded by Marion, Ecorse, and Towner on the east.

## **Water Resources (see map one)**

### **The Huron River**

Ypsilanti's most prominent natural feature is the Huron River. The Huron River is the only state-designated Scenic River in southeast Michigan. It provides water for approximately 150,000 people, and supports one of Michigan's finest smallmouth bass fisheries. The main stem of the river originates at Big Lake and the Huron Swamp in Springfield Township, Oakland County, meanders through Ingham, Jackson, Livingston, Monroe, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne Counties for approximately 136 miles, then joins Lake Erie.<sup>2</sup> The Huron River Watershed Council has created a Huron River Watershed Management Plan, recently updated in late 2011.

Within Ypsilanti, the river connects Eastern Michigan University, Depot Town, the Water Street redevelopment area, and downtown before finally terminating at Ford Lake. Several parks lie along the river: upstream, Peninsular Park provides a secluded, natural setting in which to picnic, fish, or set off in a canoe. In the heart of Ypsilanti, Frog Island and Riverside Parks provide venues for entertainment, sports, and festivals. South of Riverside Park, the river wraps around the Water Street redevelopment area, which will include the River's Edge Linear Park. The Huron curls around the ballfield and disc golf course of Waterworks Park before flowing through a channelized stretch adjacent to the former Ford plant and under I-94, finally entering the dam-controlled Ford Lake at Ypsilanti's southern boundary.

There is one dam within the City, at Peninsular Park, initially constructed to power the former Peninsular Paper Company, but currently decommissioned. There is a canoe/kayak portage around the dam, but novices may need assistance at this point. This portage may be particularly difficult to paddlers of all skill levels during times of particularly high or low water levels. The City is working with the Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC) and private donors to work to improve this portage.

The Huron River Watershed Council has partnered with the City to maintain the Huron River Watershed. They not only monitor water quality at the Cross Street monitoring point and throughout the watershed, but also have helped the City develop an ordinance to reduce

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<sup>2</sup> Huron River Watershed Council, "Watershed Management Plan for the Huron River in the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti Metropolitan Area (Middle Huron)," Oct 2011.

phosphorous loading and are spearheading the regional effort to develop the Huron River Water Trail. The Huron River Watershed Council has also developed a Middle Huron River Watershed Management Plan (2011), approved by the Department of Environmental Quality. This plan contains detailed technical and narrative information about the River, its watershed, and its impoundments, and outlines management goals. The Middle Huron Watershed Management Plan is a valuable resource, and has helped guide many of the recommendations found in this plan.

The City has taken steps to protect the watershed. In 2011, the City, DDA, and volunteers worked to upgrade stormwater handling in the Depot Town area, installing three rain gardens alongside Cross Street and adjacent to the Freighthouse. In 2009, the City passed an ordinance limiting the use of phosphorus-containing fertilizers to minimize nonpoint source nutrient loading of both the Huron and Ford Lake.

### **Ford Lake**

Only a small portion of Ford Lake is within the City of Ypsilanti bounds, but as the Huron River flows through it, is affected by City of Ypsilanti development patterns. In 1996, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) listed the Middle Huron Watershed, consisting of the Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti metropolitan area, as significantly contributing phosphorus to Ford Lake. MDEQ then placed the lake on the State's 303(d) list of impaired waters, meaning that the water quality is poor enough to warrant establishing a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for certain pollutants. In the case of Ford Lake, the pollutant in question is phosphorus, which comes from both point and non-point sources within the watershed. Since that time, both Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti have passed fertilizer ordinances to help reduce nonpoint pollution sources.

### **Other Waterways**

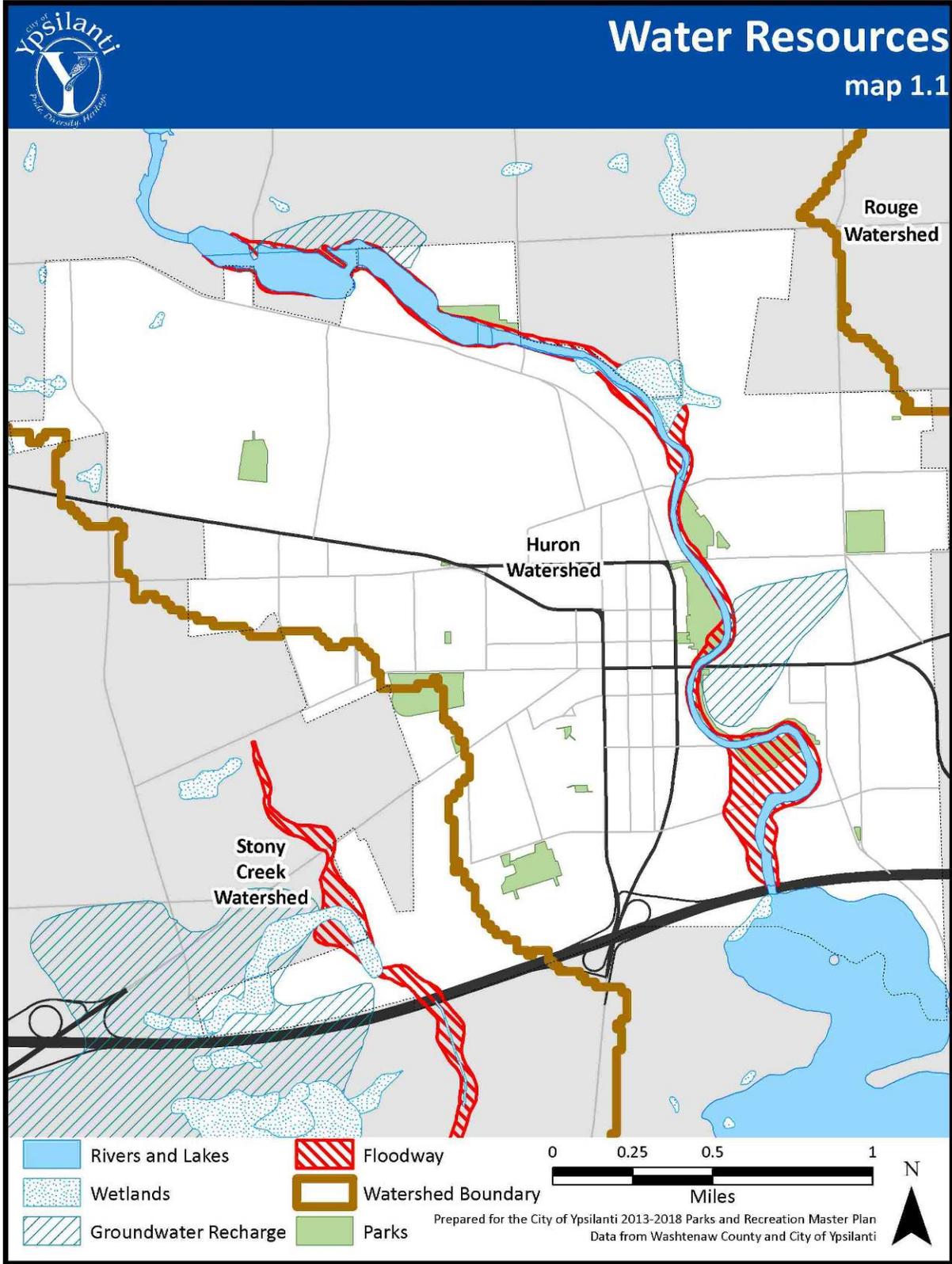
Two minor waterways run through the City: Paint Creek, in the south-west, and Owen Drain in the north-east.

*Paint Creek*, part of the Stony Creek Watershed, collects water from South Hewitt south of Cross/Packard. It is an enclosed drain from Hewitt to Michigan Avenue, and unenclosed from Michigan Avenue to the City boundary at I-94. Paint Creek is a state-designated coldwater trout stream. No City parks are located within this creekshed.<sup>3</sup>

*Owen Drain* is an enclosed drain that is part of the Huron River Watershed. Its headwaters are in the College Heights neighborhood, around the intersection of Mayhew and Cornell; and in the Normal Park neighborhood, along Owendale Street north of South Congress Street. Owen Drain travels eastward through EMU campus and empties into the Huron River just north of Forest Street. Candy Cane Park and portions of the Border-to-Border Trail are within this drainshed.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Stony Creek Watershed: [http://www.michigan.gov/deg/0,1607,7-135-3313\\_3682\\_3714\\_31581-127742--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/deg/0,1607,7-135-3313_3682_3714_31581-127742--,00.html)

<sup>4</sup> Huron River – Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti Watershed: [http://www.michigan.gov/deg/0,1607,7-135-3313\\_3682\\_3714\\_31581-127715--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/deg/0,1607,7-135-3313_3682_3714_31581-127715--,00.html)



## Wetlands

By definition, wetland areas hold water at least part of the time, have hydrolic soils, and sustain vegetative species partial to this type of environment. These regions are primarily associated with Paint Creek in the South Mansfield Avenue area of the City, and west of the Highland Cemetery along the Huron River basin. Both areas are heavily wooded.

## Groundwater Recharge Areas

Groundwater recharge areas permit water to move into an aquifer. There are two significant examples of this land type in Ypsilanti: the larger one occurs east of the Huron River around the intersection of River Street and Michigan Avenue; the other is in the southern portion of the West Commerce Park area, and spreads into Ypsilanti Township. Groundwater is not a source of Ypsilanti's water, aside from a small and decreasing number of personal wells, but proper treatment of this resource is important both as a matter of long-range stewardship and for the interconnectedness of groundwater resources with surface water, such as the Huron River. Soil contamination, management of road runoff, use of fertilizer and pesticides, and soil erosion can all affect groundwater quality.

## Floodplains and Floodways

Due to the presence of both the Huron River and Paint Creek, there are several areas that are part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood hazard areas, both floodways and floodplains. Floodways are shown in Map 1.1, Water Resources, and defined as an area which must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than a designated height. Development is regulated to ensure that there are no increases in upstream flood elevations.<sup>5</sup> Portions of Riverside Park lie within the floodway; Waterworks Park and the adjacent mulch yard are entirely within the floodway. Floodplains are viewable on the FEMA website. Development in floodplains carries less restriction than in floodways.

## BUILT ENVIRONMENT

### Existing Land Use

The City hosts a wide array of land uses. The core of the city is typical of older communities, with a fine-grained mixture of uses around the commercial districts of downtown, Depot Town, and the West Cross/Eastern Michigan campus area, in addition to industrial uses along the rail corridor and the Huron River. Much of the area of these central business districts and neighborhoods make up the Ypsilanti Historic District, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is one of the largest local districts in Michigan, encompassing more than 300 acres and more than 800 properties.

Further from this core are more contemporary land uses: uniform neighborhoods of single-family use; commercial bands along major road corridors, major apartment complexes, and an industrial park. This pattern of land use is fairly stable, as changes of the established use typically occur only on a parcel-to-parcel basis over time.

<sup>5</sup> FEMA. (2013, August 16). *Floodway*. Retrieved from <http://www.fema.gov/floodplain-management/floodway>

## Transportation

The City of Ypsilanti benefits from a location convenient to both a major north/south highway (US-23) and a major east/west expressway (I-94), providing residents with easy access to amenities around the region and carrying visitors to Ypsilanti and Eastern Michigan University. Washtenaw Avenue (Business Route US-23 and M-17) and Michigan Avenue (Business Route US-12) also run east and west through the heart of downtown. The traditional, highly-connected grid pattern generally followed by Ypsilanti's streets lends itself to easy navigability by users of both motorized and non-motorized forms of travel, despite having been split into one-way pairs in the historic core. Portions of the trunklines present significant challenges to non-motorized users, due to high volumes of fast-moving traffic, sidewalk gaps, lack of signed &/or signalized crossings, and lack of bike lanes. The City adopted the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan in 2010 and passed a Complete Streets ordinance in 2011 to help improve nonmotorized transportation for both utility and recreation.

Transit also plays a major role in transportation throughout the City. Recently the City joined The Ride, the area public bus transit service, to provide bus service both to and from Ann Arbor and within the City of Ypsilanti itself. Four routes connect the cities, all terminating at the transit center at Pearl and Adams downtown. The buses run seven days a week, with limited service on Sundays and no overnight service. Four local routes serve Ypsilanti on a more limited schedule, and the A-Ride, a call-ahead program that offers door-to-door service, serves Ypsilanti residents with disabilities. Many routes serve the City's recreation facilities and parks; information about specific routes and their relationship to the parks can be found in the park inventories.

The City is also pursuing rail transit options, through the development of a commuter rail system between Ann Arbor and Detroit, upon which Ypsilanti would be one of five regular stops. As the Ypsilanti stop would be located in Depot Town, thus within the quarter-mile "walking distance" of both Frog Island and Riverside Parks, the Huron River, and the Border-to-Border Trail, the City anticipates increased attendance at seasonal events and overall heavier use of these parks once these stops are in place.

## **SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS**

After a decline from its peak in the 1970s, Ypsilanti's total population is expected to remain constant at around 20,000 residents in coming years, including resident EMU students. As a dense, well-established urban area, the City does not need to plan for new parkland to serve future population, but demographic characteristics help identify neighborhood needs and focus limited resources on existing parks and facilities. Several of these factors are identified below, including overall population distribution, age, income level, and disability status.

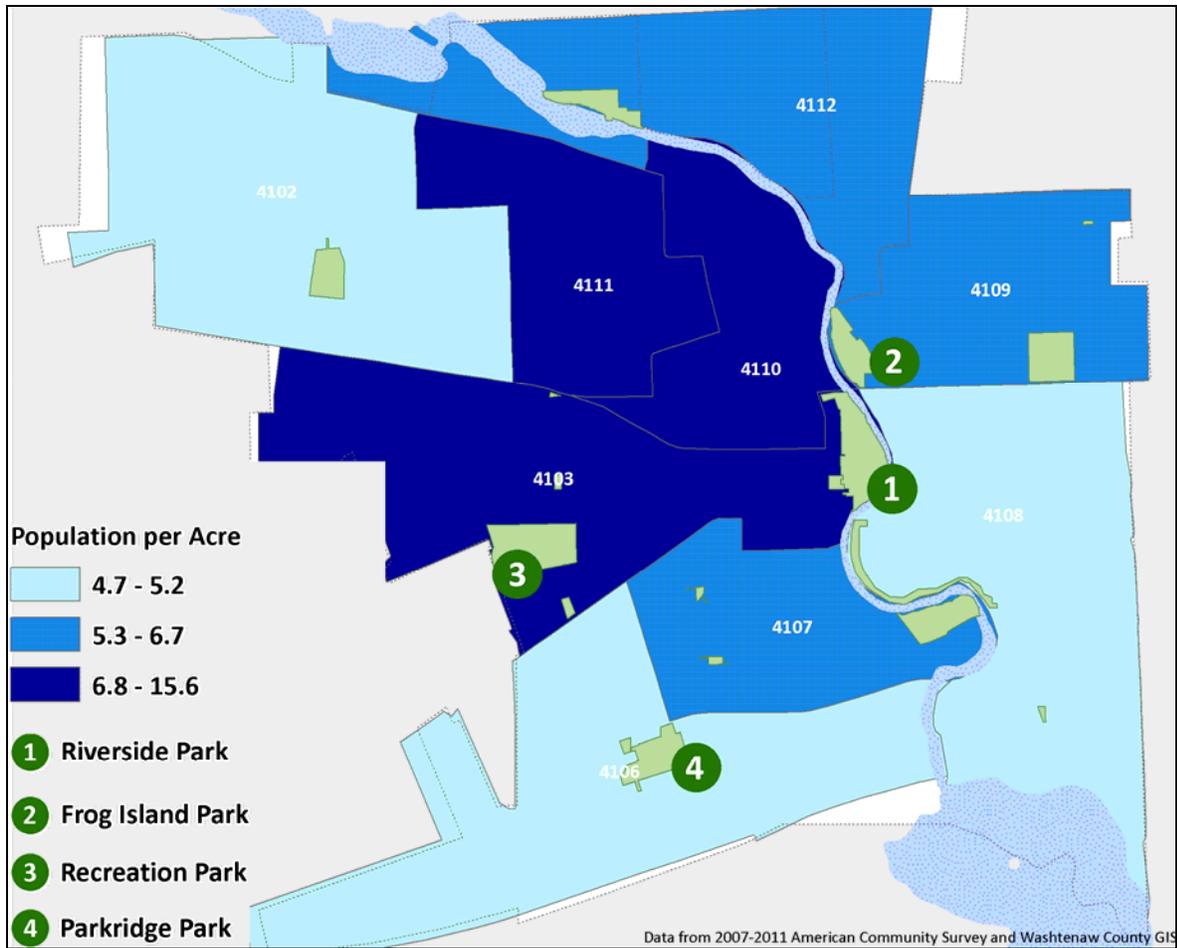
### **Population Size**

The City of Ypsilanti's population has fluctuated over the years, from a high near 30,000 in the 1970 Census to 19,435 in the 2010 Census. Current Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) projections indicate that the overall size of the population will stabilize in the coming years between 19,000 and 22,000 residents.

Eastern Michigan University has a significant influence upon City demographics and recreation. EMU population remained fairly stable around 19,000 students from 1970 to 1980, and has increased to about 23,000 students today. Per a 2008 EMU report<sup>6</sup>, less than 15 percent of students reside near the campus, with up to 35% residing within six miles in 2013. Events such as Heritage Fest, the Ton-Up, Elvisfest, club sports, and running events draw some of these students, and many others, into the parks system.

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<sup>6</sup> Eastern Michigan University. (2008, October 10). *Systems appraisal feedback report*. Retrieved from <http://www.emich.edu/ci/pdf/CAT3.pdf>



**Figure 1.2: Residents per Acre by Census Tract**

### Density

Ypsilanti’s densest residential areas are adjacent to Parkridge Park, Frog Island & Riverside Parks, and Peninsular Park; however, large non-residential areas in those Census Tracts, such as the industrial areas in tract 4106, skew the data.

Near Riverside and Frog Island, there is a dense residential area concentrated in the neighborhoods between downtown and the EMU campus area. The neighborhood has smaller lots and large houses divided into multiple apartments, as well as small purpose-built multifamily structures. Near Peninsular, the neighborhood to the north of the EMU campus has several large apartment complexes, including the university-oriented Peninsular Place, completed in 2005. Near Parkridge, in the southwest portion of the city, the neighborhoods feature mostly dense single family homes, with a few larger housing complexes. The remainder of the City’s residential areas are predominantly single-family housing on lots of less than a quarter of an acre, and the average population density within the City as a whole is 6.4 persons per acre. Overall population density per Census tract, using 2007-2011 ACS data, is shown in Figure 1.2. Note, however, that tracts 4102, 4106, 4108, and 4112 skew low due to the presence of EMU’s athletic campus, the industrial park and the former Ford plant, and Highland Park Cemetery and undeveloped land in adjacent townships, respectively; were these subtracted from the overall acreage, density would be in line with or higher than the City average.

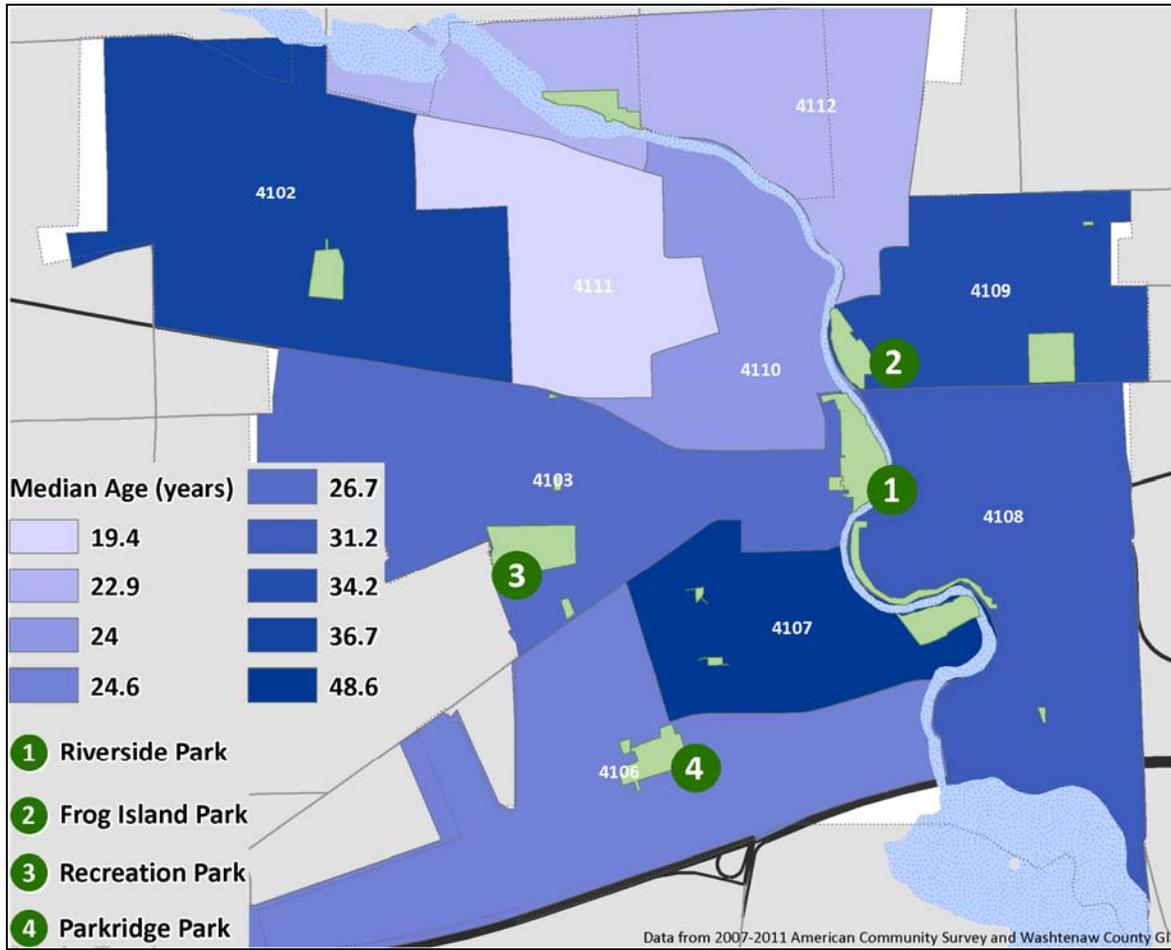


Figure 1.3: Median Age of Residents by Census Tract

### Age

The City’s youngest residents are located near Peninsular Park, Riverside & Frog Island, and Parkridge Park. The City’s oldest residents are likewise located near these parks, but also Waterworks and Candy Cane; near Waterworks are elder care facilities, and many residents of the neighborhood near Candy Cane are aging in place. Furthermore, many survey respondents indicated that they visited the parks with families, indicating that a wide array of age groups are likely using the parks. Children and older residents are traditionally considered important in recreation planning, as these residents typically have more time in which to use recreation facilities, are more limited in their mobility, and have a higher sensitivity for accessible facilities. To safely access recreation facilities, these populations require few obstacles to a path of travel, such as steps, irregularities in a path, or even long distances between resting places.

More than a third of Ypsilanti’s population is between the ages of 15 and 24, and more than half of the City’s residents are under 25 years old, in sharp contrast to surrounding areas and the state. This distribution is affected by the presence of a portion of Eastern Michigan University’s student population; those persons aged 18-24 made up 35.7% of the City’s population in 2010, double the proportion found in Washtenaw County as a whole and triple the state rate. The City is following the state and regional trend of an aging population. The 2010 Census noted an increase in the proportion of the population over 50 from 7.1% in 2000 to 8.2% in 2010.

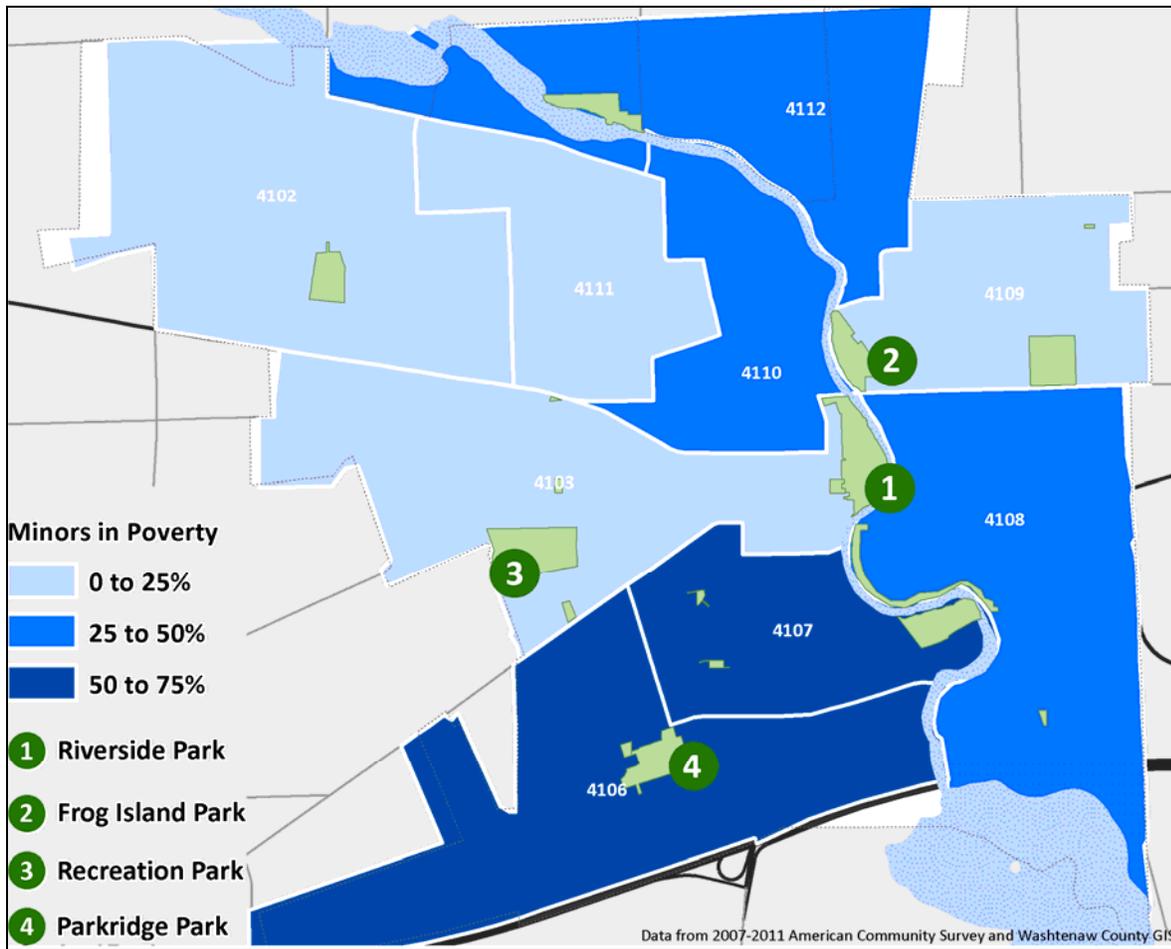


Figure 1.4: Percentage of Minors in Poverty per Census Tract

### Income and Poverty

Household budgets for recreation in Ypsilanti are small, with many survey respondents listing a monthly expenditure of nothing for recreation. Ensuring that access to parks and greenspace is preserved for these users is a continuing priority, but may pose a challenge in face of declining City funds. The areas around Parkridge Park, Waterworks Park, Frog Island & Riverside, and Peninsular Park have the highest percentages of minors in poverty, the lowest per capita incomes, and the highest percentages of persons in poverty.

The City of Ypsilanti has a lower median income and higher level of poverty than many communities in the area. Per the most recent (2007-2011) American Community Survey (ACS) statistics, the City had a median household income of \$33,699, 69% of the State-wide median of \$48,669, and 56% of the County-wide median of \$59,737.<sup>7</sup> On a per capita basis, the City again ranks the lowest at \$21,084, the County much higher at \$32,529, and the State per capita income between the two at \$25,482.

<sup>7</sup> United States Census Bureau. U.S. Department of Commerce, United States Census Bureau. (2013). *State and county quickfacts: Ypsilanti (city), Michigan*. Retrieved from website: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/26/2689140.html>

Approximately 26.4% of the residents of Ypsilanti were in poverty compared to the statewide 15.7%, per the ACS, and 33.6% of the residents under 18 years old were in poverty, significantly higher than Michigan as a whole at 21.8%. Geographically within Ypsilanti, Census tracts 4106 and 4107, in the south and southwest area of the City, contain the highest rates of minors in poverty, at 69.7% and 57.1% respectively (Figure 1.4). Overall, 49% of all residents of Census tract 4106 are in poverty, and 39.1% of residents of Census tract 4110 are in poverty (Figure 1.5). Parkridge Park, classified as a community park, is the only park within tract 4106. Persons over 65 in Ypsilanti are also more likely to be in poverty compared to state levels, at 10.6% versus 8.1%.

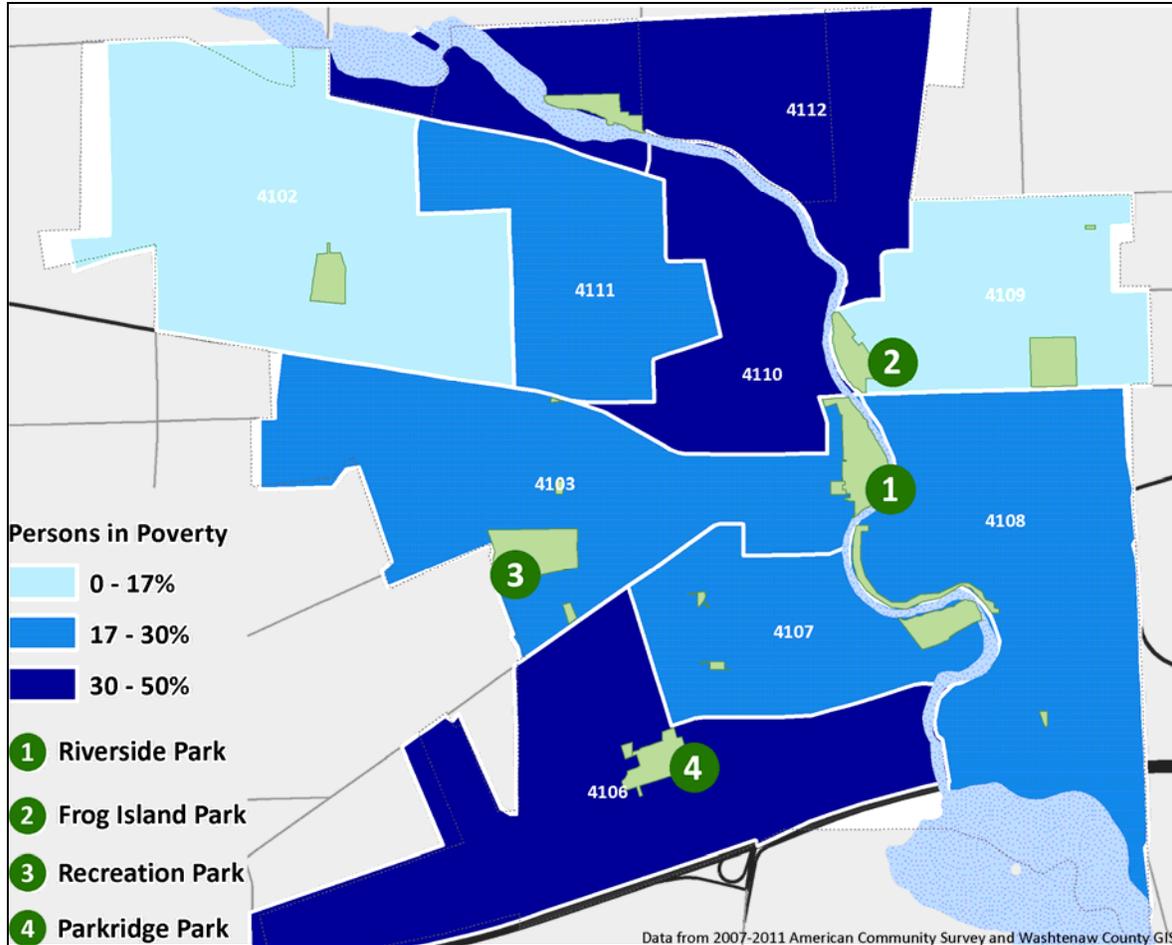


Figure 1.5: Percentage of Residents in Poverty by Census Tract

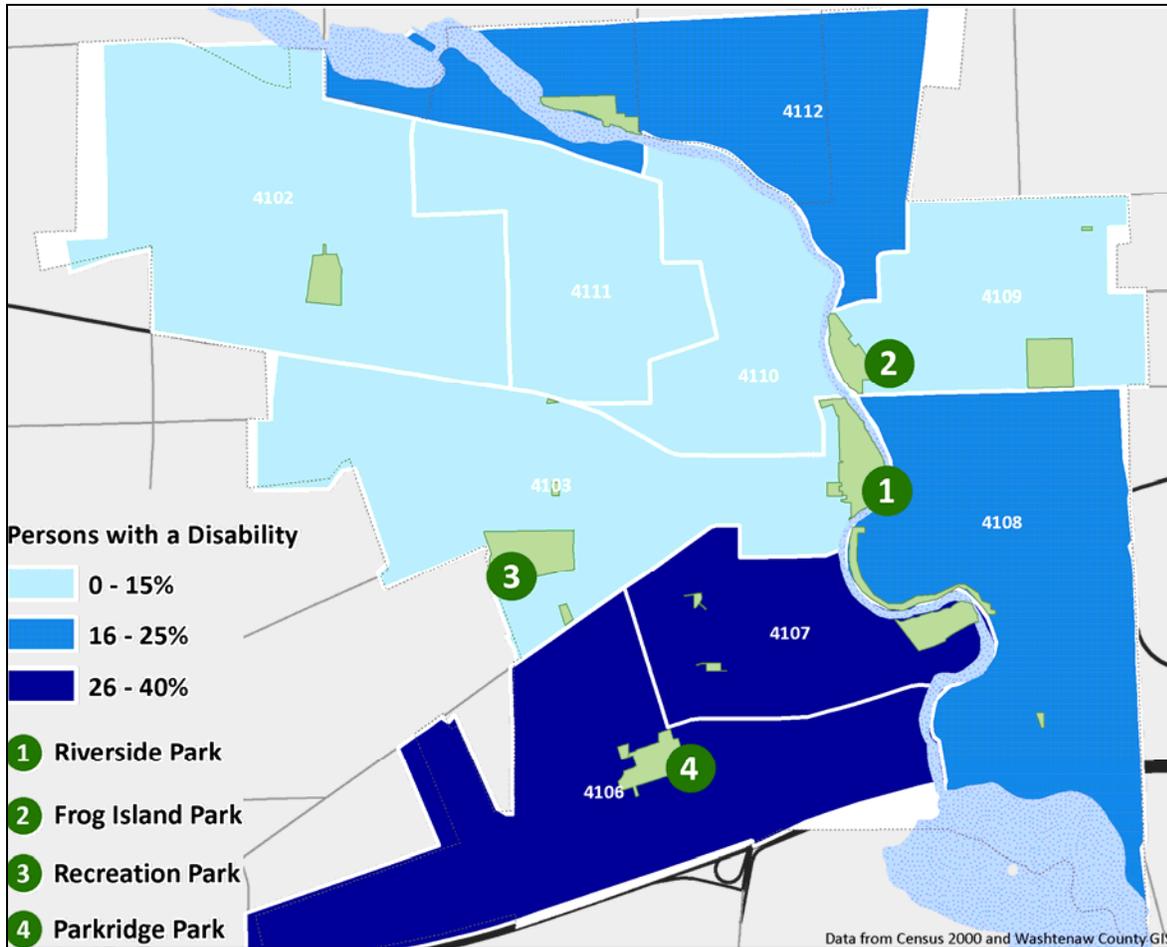


Figure 1.6: Percentage of Persons with a Disability by Census Tract

### Persons with Disabilities

Accessibility is important in park design and redesign. By ensuring parks are accessible, cities can ensure that all residents have the opportunity to enjoy the parks. People with accessibility needs include people with disabilities, but also includes people who use the park with small children, such as families or daycares, and friends and family of people with accessibility needs. Inaccessible facilities restrict access to the parks to a much smaller segment of the population than just those who are able-bodied.

Persons with disabilities comprise a significant portion of Ypsilanti’s population. According to the 2000 Census, nearly 32% of Ypsilanti’s residents had some disability. However, disability was no longer enumerated in the 2010 Census, and ACS data is not available in an Ypsilanti-specific dataset. We presume for the purposes of this plan that disability statistics are relatively unchanged. 13% of survey respondents reported that a member of their household had a mobility, sensory, or other form of disability. It should be noted that a high proportion of respondents were from the College Heights neighborhood and/or families with children in the Ypsilanti Public School district; thus, this number may be artificially low. Figure 1.6 shows the distribution of persons with a disability throughout the City as of the 2000 Census.

## Chapter 2: Administrative Structure

### **MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL**

The City of Ypsilanti employs a council-manager form of government that combines the political leadership of elected officials with the non-political management of an appointed local government manager. The Ypsilanti City Council is comprised of a Mayor, elected by voters in the City at-large, and six Council Members, two elected from each of the City's three voting wards. The Mayor nominates citizens to the City's boards and commissions, and the Council appoints members from those nominations. The City Council has budgeting, programming, operation, and capital improvements power; the Recreation Commission recommends policies and partnerships. The City Manager oversees City staff to work towards Council goals.

### **RECREATION COMMISSION**

Recreation Commission members are appointed by the City Council to ensure recreational programs and opportunities are afforded all citizens by seeking sustainable partnerships and encouraging volunteerism. This Commission was established in 2003, after having been an advisory committee to the Recreation Department since 1990. In 2007, the Recreation Commission was expanded from a six-member body to between nine and eleven members, up to three of whom may be youth members under the age of eighteen. The Recreation Commission meets monthly to advise the Department of Public Services and the City Council; it has no budgeting, programming, operating, or capital improvements powers. City Council may choose to delegate a portion or all of these powers to the Recreation Commission under PA 156 of 1917.

### **STAFF**

Many departments share responsibility for parks and recreation. The Department of Public Services oversees the physical facilities, including maintenance and capital improvements, as well as day-to-day relationships with park users, residents, and Adopt-A-Park volunteers. The Police Department coordinates events and facility rentals, and the City's Community & Economic Development Department helps to coordinate grant applications and long-range land use and transportation planning. The Public Services and Community & Economic Development departments coordinate to work on specific parks and recreation-related projects, such as grant applications and management, coordination with volunteer groups, and administrative oversight. See Figure 2.1 for details.

Non-profit and volunteer organizations fund operations, capital improvements, and staff at the Parkridge Community Center, Senior Center, and Rutherford Municipal Pool.

### **VOLUNTEERS AND PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS**

The City has several long-term relationships with committed recreation partners. Several facilities, such as the Senior Center, Rutherford Pool, Parkridge Community Center, and the Freighthouse have programming and operations managed by volunteer groups, nonprofits, or other agencies; those relationships are expounded upon below. The Ypsilanti Convention and Visitors Bureau partners to attract and promote events that have a regional draw, such as the Michigan Brewer's Guild Summer Beer Festival, the Color Run, and ElvisFest, as part of their mission. The Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti Chamber of Commerce sponsors the annual Ypsi PRIDE Day, a community-wide cleanup effort that includes cleanup and maintenance of City parks. The

YMCA runs summer camps annually in Recreation and Parkridge Parks. A wide array of groups sponsor and organize the annual Memorial Day, Independence Day, Heritage Fest, and other seasonal parades. Individual volunteers also play an integral role in the operation and maintenance of the parks system through the Adopt-A-Park program.

The City has explored other arrangements in the past, such as a contract with the Depot Town Community Development Corporation to manage and improve Frog Island and Riverside parks. Similar partnerships are likely, such as with the proposed partnership with Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation and the YMCA to build and operate, respectively, an indoor recreation facility. The City recognizes the value and passion for recreation that both individual and organizational partners can bring to the parks system.

### **FREIGHTHOUSE**

The Friends of the Freighthouse, a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit, operates under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City to perform many of the repairs needed at the Freighthouse and re-open it for public use. The agreement will be up for renewal in early 2014.

### **PARKRIDGE COMMUNITY CENTER**

The City of Ypsilanti has an operating agreement with Washtenaw Community College, extending through 2015, to provide programming at Parkridge Community Center. The Parkridge Advisory Board, a group of concerned local citizens, continues to contribute to operating expenses, provide outreach support, and advise the City on long-term goals for the facility.

### **RUTHERFORD MUNICIPAL POOL**

The Rutherford Pool had to close its doors in late 2011, but the Friends of the Rutherford Pool, a 501(c)(3), and the City have secured grant monies, donations, and loans sufficient for reconstruction of the pool. An MOU was enacted in 2012, and the pool will be once again open to the public in 2014.

### **SENIOR CENTER**

The Friends of the Senior Center, a volunteer organization, oversees the daily operations of the Senior Center. It also conducts fundraising, plans capital improvements, and seeks out programming partners. An MOU has yet to be completed.

### **SPECIAL EVENTS AND PARK RESERVATIONS**

Currently, City special events and park/facility reservations for those facilities not mentioned above are coordinated by staff in the Ypsilanti Police Department (YPD). This work includes taking registrations for events, reserving space, and working with the YPD, Ypsilanti Fire Department, and Department of Public Services to ensure safety and staffing at events.

Special event administration has been in flux over the years. Prior to 2005, the City's Recreation Department oversaw special events. From 2005 to 2010, the Ypsilanti Jaycees worked to coordinate events, with the Depot Town Community Development Corporation briefly taking over the reservations for Frog Island and Riverside parks in 2008 and 2009. From 2010 to mid-2012, a part-time City employee, overseen by the Assistant City Manager, administered special events. This shifting distribution of responsibility has proved challenging for event organizers.

The settling of responsibility upon the YPD has proven to be a significant improvement, and provides an opportunity to improve the process further.

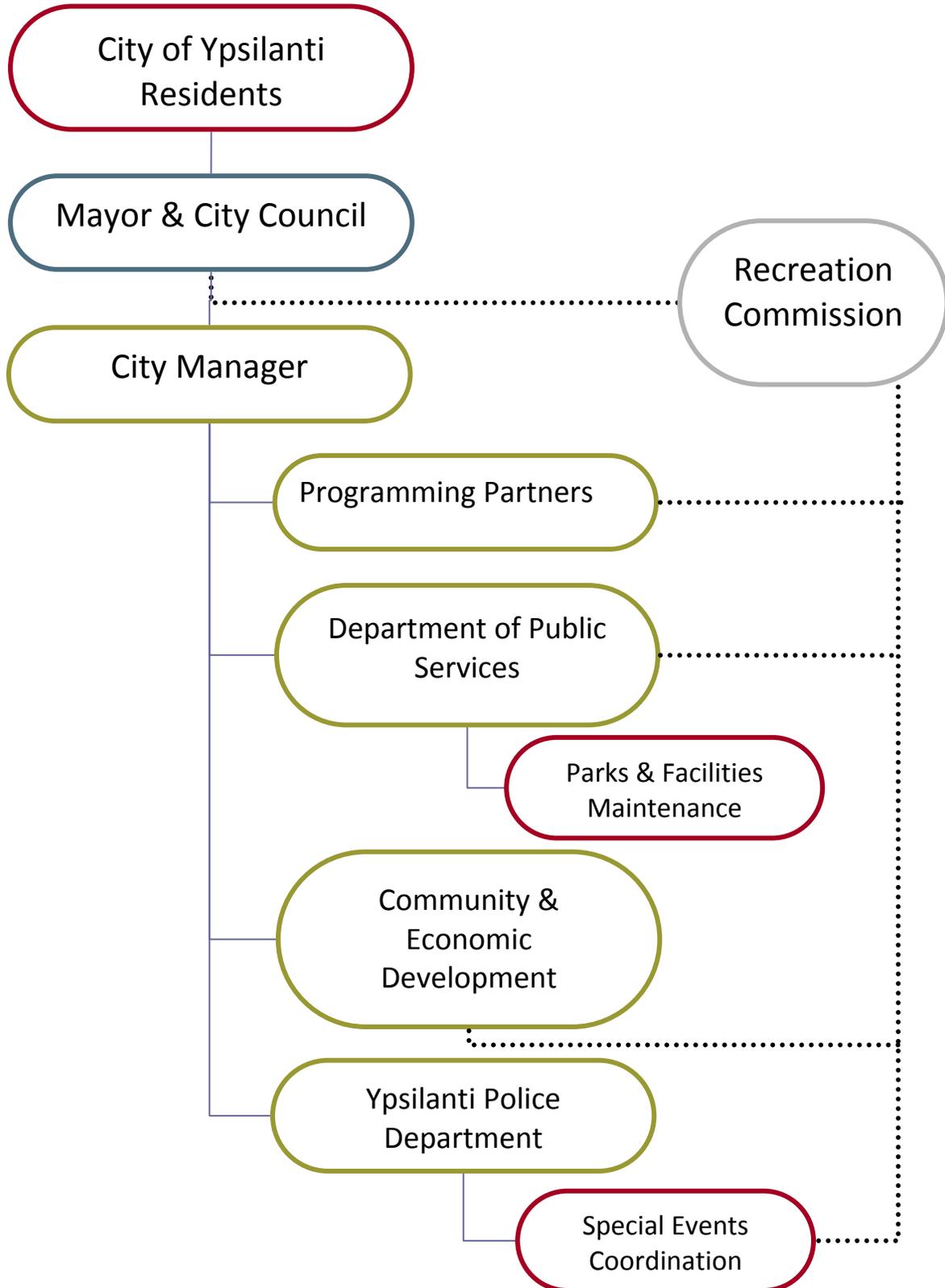


Figure 2.1: Administrative Structure

## **BUDGET AND FUNDING**

	FY 2010-2011 <sup>(1)</sup>	FY 2011-2012 <sup>(1)</sup>	FY 2012-2013 <sup>(2)</sup>	FY 2013-2014 <sup>(2)</sup>
<b>Maintenance (101-7-7170)</b>	\$138,463	\$133,421	\$152,093	\$155,899
<b>Special Events (101-4-4420)</b>	47,605	50,273	58,609	56,420
<b>Total</b>	\$186,068	\$183,694	\$210,702	\$212,319
<small>(1) Using amended 2011/2012 Resource Allocation Plan, p 39, dated 6/30/2011            (2) Using 2013/2014 Resource Allocation Plan, p 41, as of 6/30/2013</small>				

**Figure 2.2: Budget**

The Public Services Department has a Parks Maintenance and Special Events budget totaling \$212,319 for fiscal year 2013-2014. Although this budgeted amount is higher than in the past three years, it is a significant reduction from five years ago. As noted in the 2008 Parks & Recreation Master Plan, the FY2007-2008 maintenance budget alone was \$204,056, almost \$50,000 more than the current year's maintenance budget. The 2003 Parks & Recreation Master Plan was the last plan completed while the City had a Recreation Department and provided some programming; the total for Maintenance and Recreation Administration listed for FY2003-2004 was \$740,109; maintenance alone was \$222,778.

The City no longer funds recreation programming; it is provided through the efforts of nonprofits, educational institutions, volunteers, or other partners. Capital improvements and significant repair or maintenance work are undertaken as specific funding, such as grants, can be obtained for them.

### **CURRENT FUNDING SOURCES**

The primary source of funding for parks and recreation maintenance is the City's general fund. As the City of Ypsilanti's budget has tightened over the past decades, general fund expenditures on recreation improvements, operations, and maintenance have been significantly reduced; programming has been eliminated. While alternative funding has been found for some programming and improvements, via grants and partnerships, none of these are dedicated, consistent, or guaranteed funding sources.

#### **General Fund**

The General Fund supports parks maintenance, which includes mowing the grass, collecting trash, repairing benches, and removing broken items such as benches beyond repair, playground equipment, and fallen trees or limbs. It does not support capital improvements, renovations, or replacements for broken park items. Such activities are usually funded by one-time grants or private fundraising.

#### **User Fees**

Some recreational activities lend themselves well to support through user fees, such as regular programming, facility use, and special events. The City does not provide recreation programming, and its major facilities, such as the Rutherford Pool and Parkridge Community Center, are managed by private nonprofits. However, the City does have a Special Events program through which people can reserve the parks, pavilions, fields, and courts for

everything from small family reunions to large, regional, multi-day festivals. The fees for park reservations vary depending upon the scale of the event and additional services requested or required. There are currently no rate reductions available for this program, however, celebrants of golden wedding anniversaries or 90<sup>th</sup> and up birthdays are eligible for a fee waiver if those individuals have been residents of the city for at least ten years.

### Private Donations and Grants

Businesses, corporations, private clubs, community organizations, and individuals have contributed to parks, recreation, and other improvement programs. A number of projects, ranging from the annual Ypsi PRIDE clean-up day to the recent renovation of the tennis court at Candy Cane Park, have been funded by donations or foundation grants made either directly to the City or to its volunteer organizations. The Friends groups attached to various facilities are almost entirely funded in this way, and a number of one-time projects and capital improvements have been completed through grant funding.

### State and Federal Grants and Funding Sources

The City has been awarded several Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grants in recent years, including almost \$600,000 in 2011/2012, and has been the recipient of several such grants in the past, including the Land & Water Conservation Fund and the DNR Recreation Bond Fund grants. The City has also received grant funds administered by the State Historic Preservation Office for projects such as the Riverside Arts Center renovation and the Freighthouse Renovation.

In the past five years, Ypsilanti has used Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for capital improvements to the Senior Center, Parkridge Park, and Rutherford Pool. Other federal funding sources have been used for recreation and natural areas purposes, such as Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) and Great Lakes Restoration Initiatives (GLRI) funds for bicycle lane installation and reforestation initiatives, respectively.

### DNR Recreation Grant Inventory

Ypsilanti has received several DNR recreation grants for park development, listed in Figure 2.3, below. These grants come from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (26), Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (TF), and the 1988 Recreation Bond Fund (BF). Site inspection reports for each grant-assisted area can be found in Appendix A.

**Figure 2.3: Past grants received from the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources**

Grant	Park Name	Type	Status	Scope
TF12-120	River's Edge Linear Park and Trail	Development	Pending	Construct trail, river overlook, fishing pier.
TF11-083	Rutherford Pool Rebuild	Development	Pending	Demolish and rebuild portions of the Rutherford Pool.
TF11-120	Ypsilanti Heritage Bridge	Development	Pending	Build a bridge across the Huron River to connect the Water Street Redevelopment Area to Riverside Park; construct fishing pier, construct trail.
TF05-054	Riverside Park Capital Improvement Program	Development	Closed, 2011	Lighting and electrical Gazebo construction Landscaping

BF93-352	Prospect Park Improvement	Development	Closed, 1999	Play structures / equipment Court renovations Luna Lake renovations Softball field renovations Parking lot improvements Park structure renovation Landscape / earthwork General construction
BF91-383	Parkridge Park Renovation	Development	Closed, 1999	Shelter renovation Sports facility renovations Asphalt path Lighting Landscaping
26-01542	Rutherford Municipal Pool	Development	Closed, 1999	Pool repairs Site upgrades Facilities building repairs
26-01393	Peninsular Park	Acquisition / Development	Closed, 1992	Shelter construction Parking lot construction Septic system Lighting
26-01269	Frog Island Park Development	Development	Closed, 1990 conversion issue	Lighting Amphitheater construction Bike/walk path Bridge
26-01243	Riverside Park Phases I & II	Development	Closed, 1985	Utility relocation Walking path Dock Landscaping
26-00393	Ypsilanti Swimming Pool	Development	Closed, 1977	Construct outdoor pool

## Chapter 3: Parks and Recreation Facilities

The City's park, recreation, and open space inventory includes City-owned parks and recreational facilities. In addition to City-owned parks and open space, Ypsilanti residents have access to open space at no charge owned by the Ypsilanti Public Schools, Eastern Michigan University, neighboring townships, and Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation; and facilities owned by these bodies and the State of Michigan for low fees. 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 Ypsilanti community are important to understanding the extent of park and recreational opportunities for residents; therefore, they are listed as separate inventories within this chapter.

### **CITY PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES**

The City of Ypsilanti owns or controls 96.5 acres of parkland in 15 parks, and four facilities, for a total of about 4.9 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. When including Eastern Michigan University's open space, that number jumps to almost 20 acres per 1,000 residents. The National Park and Recreation Association standard for park acreage is approximately 10 acres per 1,000 people; by way of local comparison, Ann Arbor has approximately 18 acres of City parkland for 1,000 people. Map 3.1 shows the City's parks and recreation facilities. Figure 3.1 identifies an inventory of recreation facilities and amenities currently available at those locations. Map 3.2 identifies the parks "coverage," those portions of the City that are within one-eighth, one-fourth, and one-half of a mile of a park. This can help determine which neighborhoods have the best access to parks; where accessibility, walkability, and bikability could be improved; and, when read in concert with Census data, help determine where new facilities could be placed.

Although national standards, such as the parkland per resident statistic above, can be helpful in developing new parks and facilities, Ypsilanti is largely built-out, so community interests and needs will take a higher priority than national standards. This inventory, however, can be helpful to the Recreation Commission and community groups in understanding what is currently available within the community.

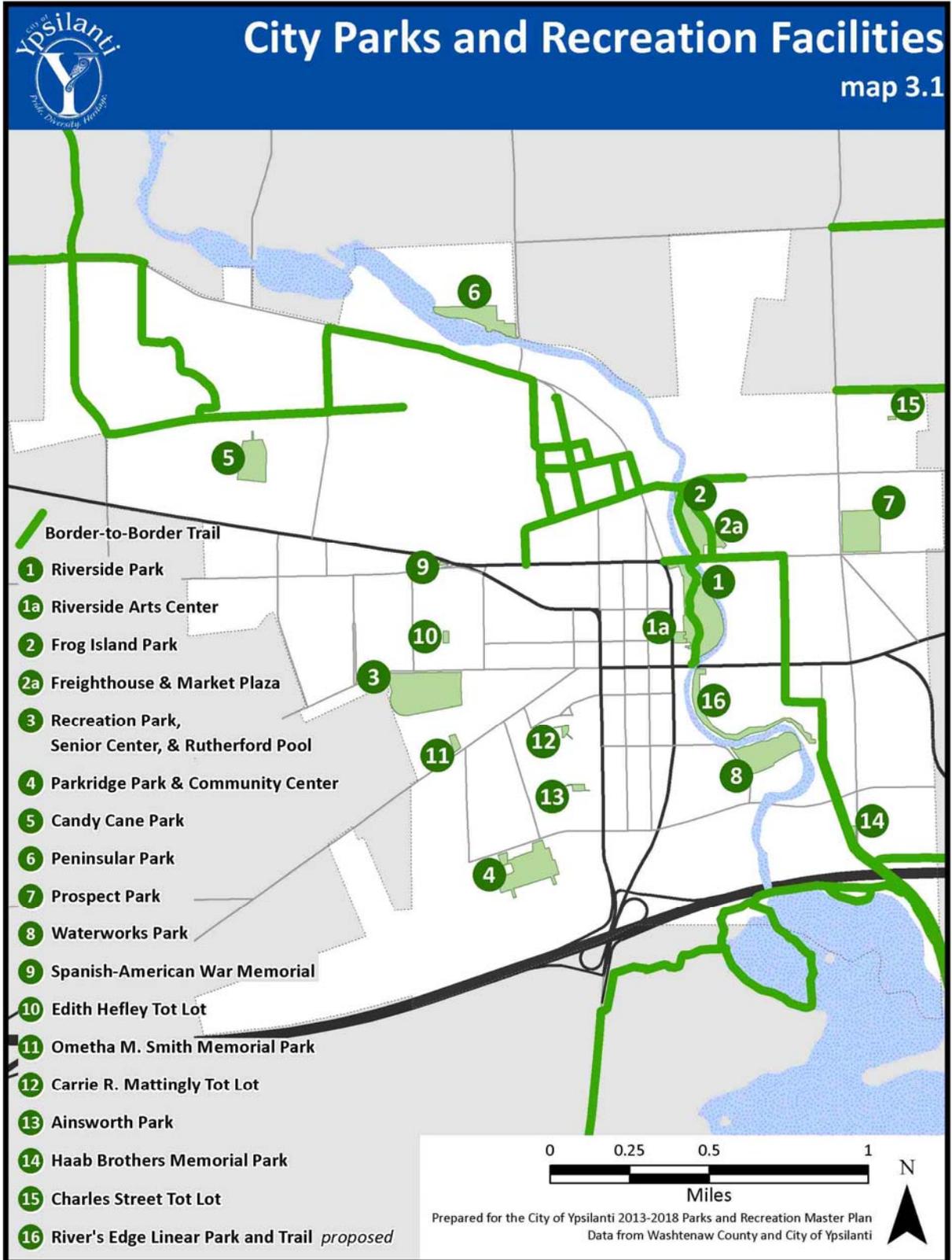
Park classifications as used in this plan are as follows: *Community*, where the draw for these parks or facilities regularly includes visitors from throughout the whole City as well as from outside it; *Neighborhood*, where the draw is primarily from surrounding neighborhoods within an approximate one-mile radius; *mini-parks or tot lots*, which draw primarily from areas within walking distance; and connectors/trails.

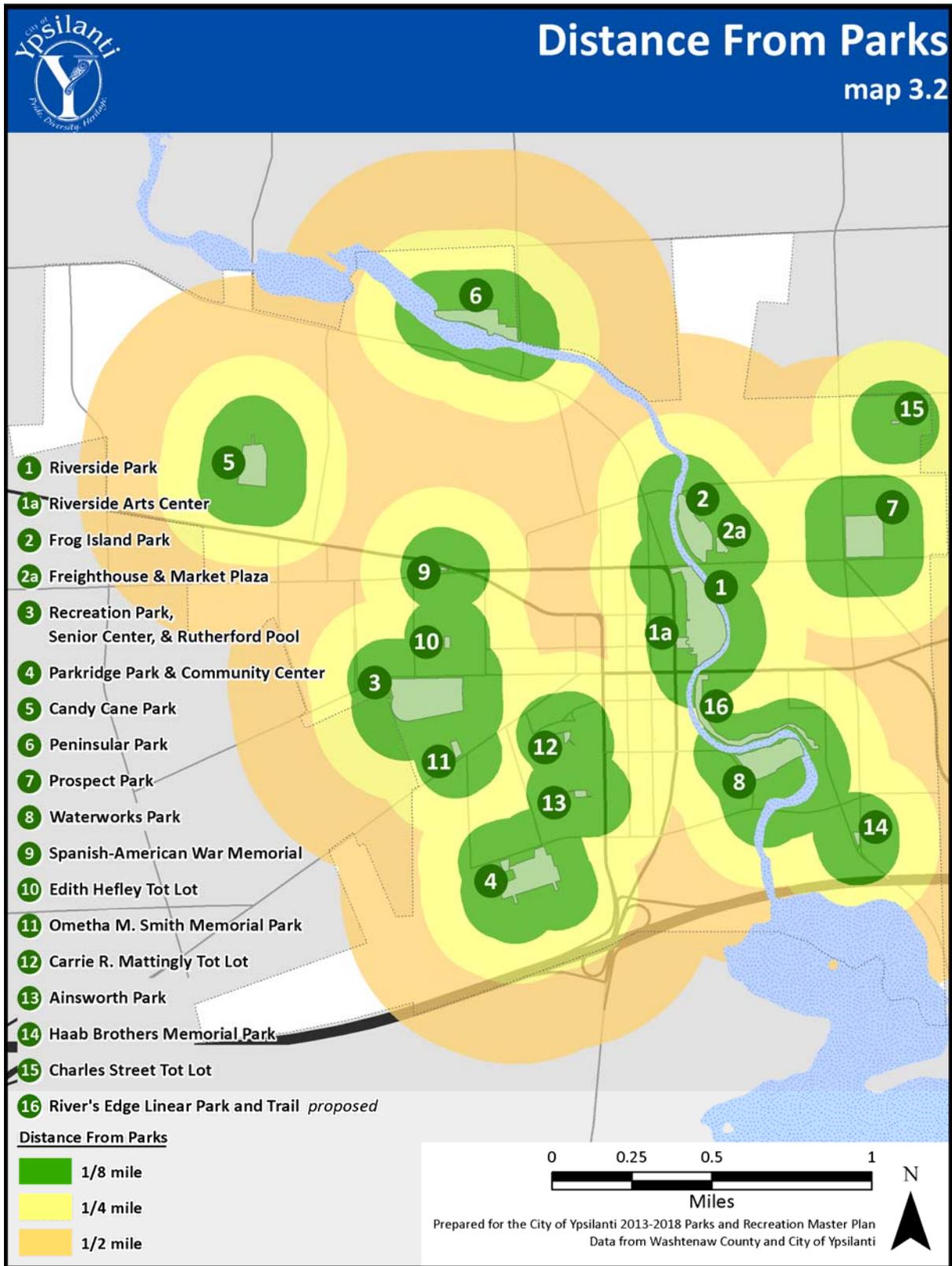
The grading scale for accessibility used in this document is the DNR proposed grading scale from DNR Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plans (MDNR, 2006)

#### **ADA Accessibility Scale**

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

A thorough Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance assessment of the City's park system was conducted in 2002, and can be found in the 2003 and 2008 Parks & Recreation Master Plans. Park accessibility is considered to be largely unchanged, as the City's fiscal situation has precluded many capital improvements. The grading scale for accessibility used in this document draws from that inventory and takes into account projects that have occurred since. Any future capital improvement planning or projects will necessarily address accessibility issues.





## COMMUNITY PARKS AND FACILITIES

Ypsilanti has four parks and five facilities classified as community-wide assets, hosting events and facilities that draw their audience from the entire city and surrounding area. These parks generally offer active and passive recreation activities and are large relative to other Ypsilanti parks. Parking is available on-site, but access can be from a variety of modes. They contain larger-scale or unique amenities such as fields for soccer, football, softball, or baseball; tracks or trails; a swimming pool; or community gathering and event spaces. Community parks also contain the everyday amenities found in smaller parks, such as play and picnic areas, and can see regular daily use by the immediate neighborhood; several have river access. Within Ypsilanti, Riverside Park, Frog Island Park, and Recreation Park have the strongest community-wide draw. Several facilities also draw on the entire community for their audiences, including the Senior Center, Rutherford Pool, Parkridge Community Center, Freighthouse, and Market Plaza. Parkridge Park and Recreation Park, although smaller, are in this category due to their unique assets.



### 1 Riverside Park

Riverside Park has a long history in Ypsilanti. The parcels that make up the park were acquired by the City from the early 1900s to the 1990s, as a result of recommendations from the Olmsted Brothers landscape design firm, who also wrote the first development plan for the park. It was originally known as Quirk Park, after the original owners, or colloquially as “the river flats,” but today is simply Riverside. It currently serves as a nonmotorized transportation link between downtown, Depot Town, and the Water Street Redevelopment Area, as well as individual outdoor recreation space for adjacent neighborhoods and is the City’s primary outdoor event and gathering space. The gazebo and dock by the river is a popular site for weddings. It hosts major annual regional events, such as the Ypsilanti Heritage Festival, ElvisFest, Brewer’s Guild of Michigan Summer Beer Festival, car and motorcycle shows, such as the Ton-Up and Orphan Car Show, and kicks off run/walk events, such as the Color Run.

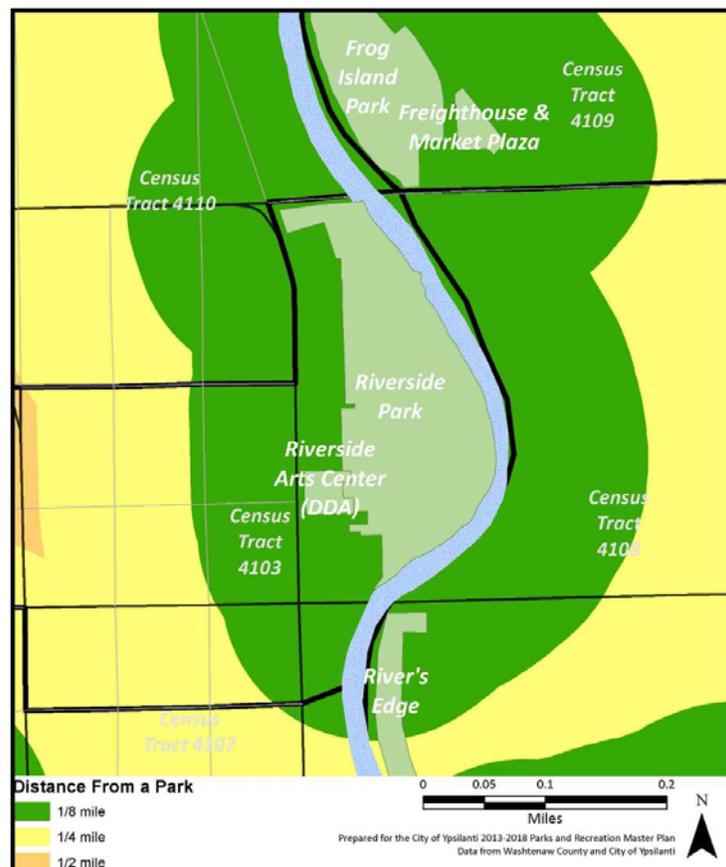
As a result of the 2008 - 2010 partnership with the Depot Town CDC, Frog Island Park and Riverside Park have had extensive charette-driven development plans created. The recommendations for Riverside Park aim to enhance its role both as a passive retreat for residents, a public commons, and as a versatile setting for community events. These recommendations include stormwater improvements, a playspace for children, and entryway and accessibility enhancements. Appendix B contains further detail on each of these items, as well as the full Conceptual Site Plans. Interconnected improvements at the Riverside Arts Center, to the west, and the Freighthouse, to the north, are also detailed in these plans. Survey and interview feedback concurs with the above recommended enhancements, and further recommends that deferred maintenance on the pavilion and trails be performed.

In 2009, work was completed on Natural Resources Trust Fund grant-funded improvements to the park, including lighting and electrical systems upgrades and construction of a gazebo on the existing dock, which itself had been constructed as part of a 1981 DNR Land & Water Conservation Fund grant (LWCF). A bridge connection to the Water Street Redevelopment Area at the south end of the park is currently underway, courtesy of a 2011 Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant, with match generously provided by the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission. This bridge will connect to the proposed Washtenaw County Recreation Center and River's Edge Linear Park and Trail, both part of the Water Street Redevelopment Area, as well as increase the park's visibility from US-12 and serve as a complement to the pedestrian bridge on the north side of the park, linking it to Frog Island.

Riverside Park is adjacent to Census Tracts 4103, 4110, and 4108, and is within 1/8 mile of Census Tracts 4109 and 4107. 4110 and 4103 in particular have a

### Riverside Park At A Glance

- 17 acres
- Known for the Huron River, passive recreation, events space, and the Tridge
- Accessibility ranking: 2
- Owned and operated by the City
- Adjacent to Huron River, downtown, Depot Town, and US-12
- Part of Border-to-Border Trail
- Prioritized projects include stormwater control, accessibility and entryway upgrades, completion of deferred maintenance projects, and installation of a children's play area.



very high population density, due in part to their proximity to EMU, downtown, and a dense existing housing stock. The median age in 4110 is a mere 22.9 years; but 4103, 4108, and 4109 have a median age in the low-thirties. Between 25 and 50% of the minors in 4110 and 4108 live in poverty, and between 50 and 75% of the minors in 4107 live in poverty. Overall poverty levels are between 30-50% in tract 4110. In tract 4108, between 26-40% of the residents have a disability. Availability, affordability, and accessibility should be prioritized concerns here for long-term improvements.

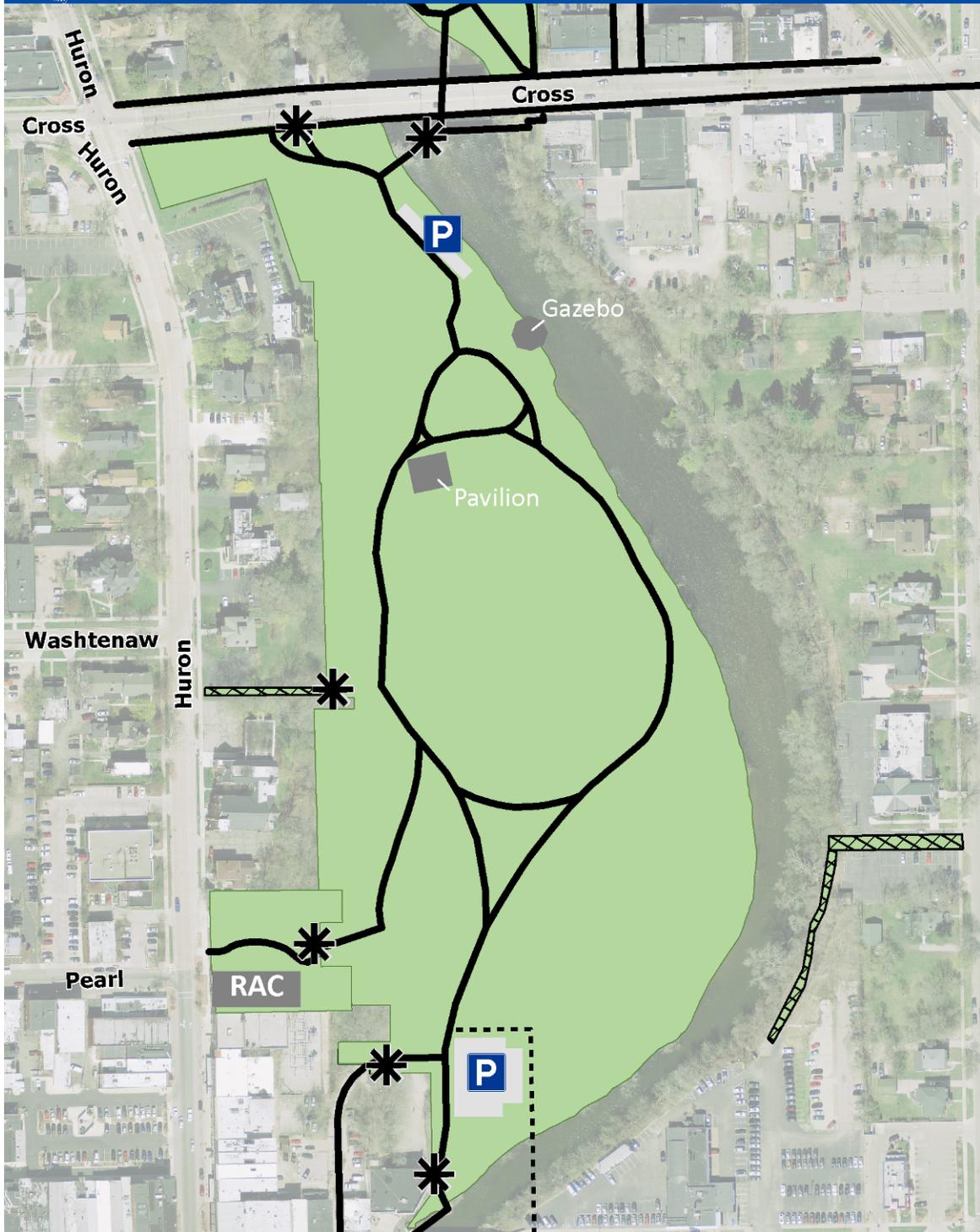
### **Priority Projects**

- Partner with the CVB to provide wayfinding signage.
- Install signage at Riverside Arts Center entrance.
- Repair directional signage at the Tridge.
- Pursue implementation of the site plan proposed in the 2008 Parks & Recreation Master Plan.
- Open gate at top of north entrance during summer; install second gate at end of parking area.
- Install bollards along drive (both sides) to prevent unauthorized access.
- Construct ADA-compliant barrier-free access from street sidewalk at north and south ends of park.
- Repair existing entryway signage at Cross (both east and west of the bridge) and at Michigan Avenue.
- Provide barrier-free access at north, west, and south entrances.
- Link pavilion to trails.
- Mark barrier-free spaces in parking areas.
- When reconstructing trails, bring to current barrier-free standards.
- Investigate slope stabilization plantings to prevent erosion.
- Install small signs or notices advertising the reservation system at reservable areas, such as the gazebo and pavilion.
- Address ongoing stormwater issues in Riverside and Frog Island Parks.
- Provide lighting under pavilion and gazebo.



# Riverside Park

map 3.3



- Path/Sidewalk
- Future Path
- Park
- Easement
- Entrance
- Parking
- Structure



Prepared for the City of Ypsilanti 2013-2018 Parks and Recreation Master Plan  
Data from Washtenaw County and City of Ypsilanti

## **1a** Riverside Arts Center

The Riverside Arts Center (RAC) is an arts facility owned by the Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority (YDDA) adjoining Riverside Park, and operated by the Riverside Arts Center nonprofit. The YDDA purchased and renovated this former Masonic Temple in the early 1990s, with grant aid from a number of organizations including the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, to provide not only a local, public art facility, but also a west link into Riverside Park. The RAC is connected to the park via a landscaped plaza and terraced stairway, providing access from North Huron Street. The Riverside Arts Center is a 501(c)(3) group that operates the center, providing exhibit, studio, and reception space for artists and art cultural organizations. The City neither owns nor controls this facility, but it is an important part of the cultural and recreational landscape of the City.



## 2 Frog Island Park

Frog Island is another park with extensive history located along the Huron River, and envisioned by the Olmsted Brothers in 1905 as a public greenspace. Originally a true island, bordered on the east by a millrace and used by a neighboring mill for storage, it was acquired and used by the Ypsilanti High School from 1933 to 1975 as their sports field, having tennis courts, a football field, and a track. The City acquired it in 1975, and with assistance from a DNR LWCF grant in 1983, built the amphitheater, paved pathway, and the three-terminus bridge known as the Tridge. In 2007, a neighborhood group established the Frog Island Community Garden at the north end of the park.

Frog Island hosts more active uses than Riverside, in addition to serving as an overflow area for events occurring in Riverside. At the north end of the park is a set of steps leading down to the River, as well as the aforementioned community garden. The soccer field and track in the center of the park are well-used, with organized groups or pick-up games on most days with good weather. The amphitheater at the southern end of the park is underutilized, due to its lack of electrical service and sound system, but has the potential to host events that do not need power or amplification. A paved path runs the length of the park along the berm that separates the park from the Huron; this path and the berm need repair. At the far south end of the park, Frog Island is connected to Riverside via the Tridge, and to Depot Town through both a paved path leading to a parking area and a small concrete bridge, originally constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

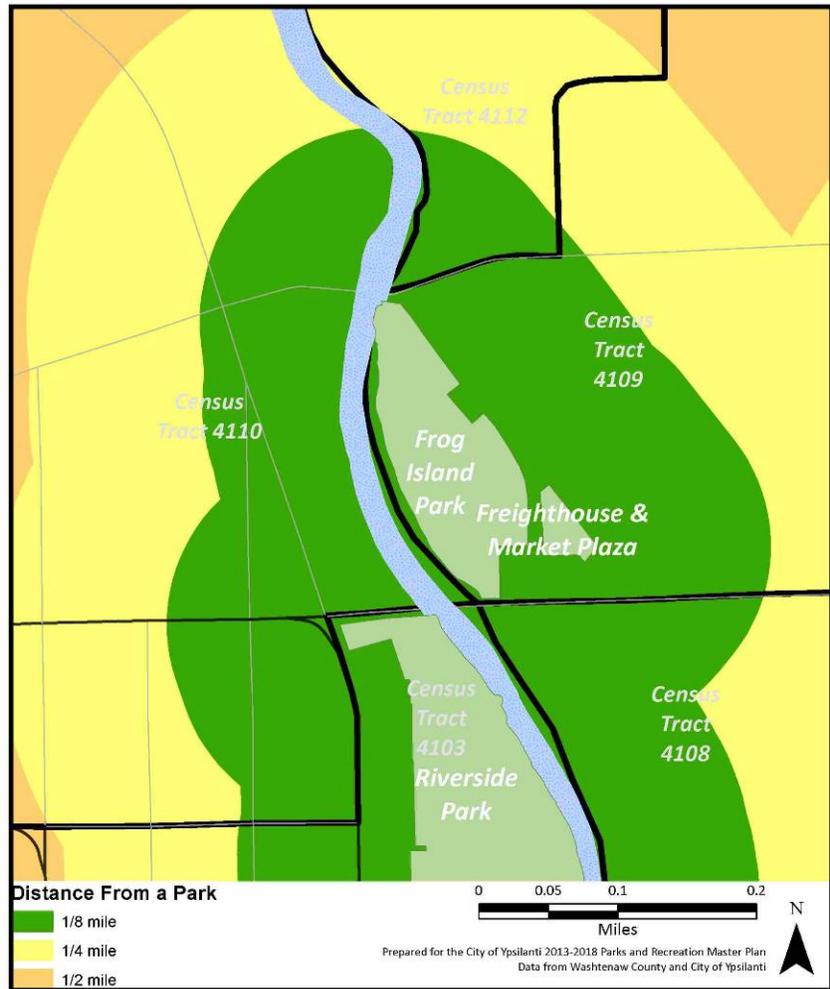
### *Frog Island At A Glance*

- 5 acres
- Known for its sports field and track, the Tridge, community garden and amphitheater
- Accessibility ranking: 2
- Owned and operated by the City; Frog Island Community Garden operated by Riverside Neighborhood Association
- Adjacent to Huron River and Depot Town; shares parking with Freighthouse and Market Plaza
- Part of Border-to-Border Trail
- Prioritized projects include stormwater control, accessibility and entryway improvements, and completion of deferred maintenance projects.

Demographics in the neighborhoods surrounding Frog Island are substantially similar to those surrounding Riverside. Frog Island is slightly further away from Census Tract 4107, however, and closer to Census Tract 4112. Tract 4112 has a relatively high population density, a low median age, high poverty levels, and a disability rate of 16-25%.

**Priority projects:**

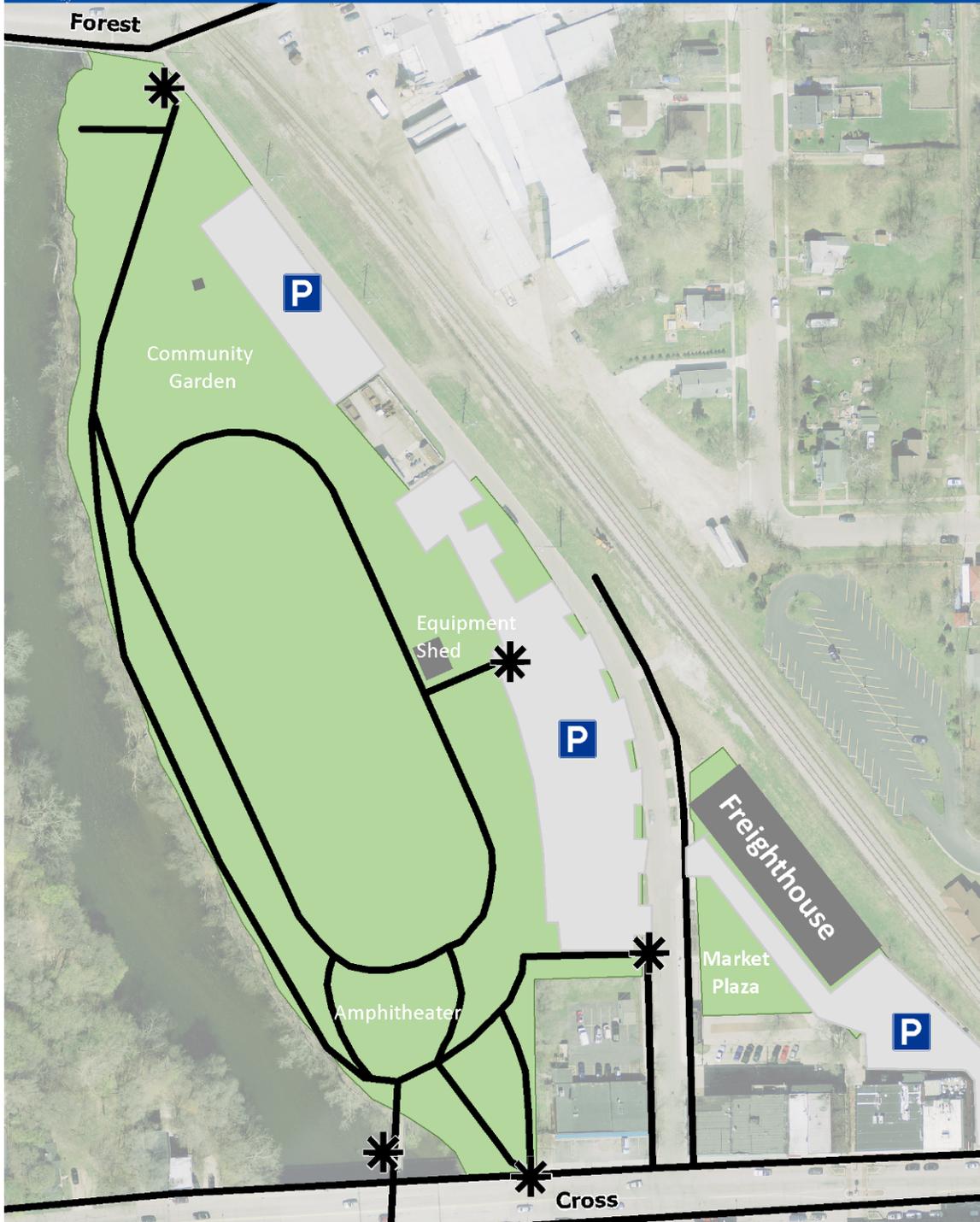
- Partner with the CVB to provide wayfinding signage.
- Repair signage at Forest Street entrance, at center parking lot entrance, south parking lot entrance, and Cross Street entrance.
- Improve directional signage at the Tridge.
- Pursue implementation of the site plan proposed in the 2008 Parks & Recreation Master Plan.
- Construct sidewalk along west side of Rice Street.
- Construct pedestrian crossing from Frog Island parking to Freighthouse at Market Street.
- Provide barrier-free access at north, east (center) and south entrances.
- Improve parking area at north end of park; provide barrier-free spaces.
- When reconstructing trails, bring them to current barrier-free standards.
- Install small signs or notices advertising the reservation system at reservable areas, such as Market Plaza.
- Work with Friends groups, Adopters, and regular event-holders to help ensure the ongoing maintenance of facilities such as the Freighthouse and community garden areas.
- Address ongoing stormwater issues.
- Provide lighting at entrances and along paths.
- Create sound standards, and investigate dedicated sound system for events to ensure compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods.
- Investigate slope stabilization plantings to prevent further erosion of trail.
- Relocate or renovate the Recycling Center; consider combining dropoff recycling services with EMU.



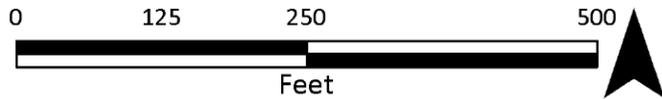


# Frog Island Park

map 3.4



- Path/Sidewalk
- Future Path
- Park
- Easement
- Entrance
- Parking
- Structure



Prepared for the City of Ypsilanti 2013-2018 Parks and Recreation Master Plan  
Data from Washtenaw County and City of Ypsilanti



## 2a Freighthouse and Market Plaza

The Michigan Central Railroad (MCR) came to Ypsilanti in 1838, spurring the area economy. The Freighthouse, built in 1878, increased the freight-handling capacity of the MCR's Ypsilanti station. The City acquired the building in 1979 and opened it as a community center and farmers' market the following year. Due to deferred maintenance, however, it was closed in 2004.

The nonprofit Friends of the Ypsilanti Freighthouse (FOYF) has been working under a 2008 agreement with the City to raise funds to restore, re-open, and operate the Freighthouse. It is anticipated that it will re-open in the next 18 months. The City is also working with SEMCOG and Amtrak to institute a passenger and commuter rail stop at or near this location.

The Market Plaza, a paved open space owned by the City and operated by the FOYF under the terms of the 2008 MOU, lies between the Freighthouse and the southern parking area for Frog Island Park; it is used for the seasonal outdoor Depot Town Farmers' Market and other civic events.



### 3 Recreation Park

Recreation Park, known as the Ypsilanti Fairgrounds until approximately 1905, and used by the Normal College (now Eastern Michigan University) in the early 1900s as their track & field facility, today serves a wide array of recreational purposes. Recreation Park houses two ballfields, a walking path, the outdoor Rutherford Pool, a basketball court that was curbed and designed to double as an ice rink in winter, a picnic pavilion, the Senior Center, and a community garden. Located next to the former Chappelle Elementary School, it also adjoins a well-maintained school playground.

Recreation Park's mix of facilities and activities is popular throughout the community. The Senior Center attracts users from both the City and the neighboring township, and the Rutherford Pool has an even wider service area, being one of the few public swimming pools on the east side of Washtenaw County. The two ballfields are heavily used in the spring and early summer by participants in the Ypsilanti American Little League, which serves western Ypsilanti and eastern Ann Arbor, including parts of Ypsilanti and Pittsfield Townships. The park is surrounded by residential neighborhoods with many children, and is within walking distance of Ypsilanti Middle School, Estabrook Elementary School, and Ypsilanti High School.

#### ***Recreation Park At A Glance***

- 17.3 acres
- Known for Rutherford Pool and the Senior Center, as well as its ballfields
- Accessibility ranking: 2
- Owned and operated by the City; Rutherford Pool and Senior Center operated by Friends groups
- Within walking distance of downtown, located within a residential neighborhood
- Prioritized projects include accessibility and entryway improvements as well as completion of deferred maintenance projects.

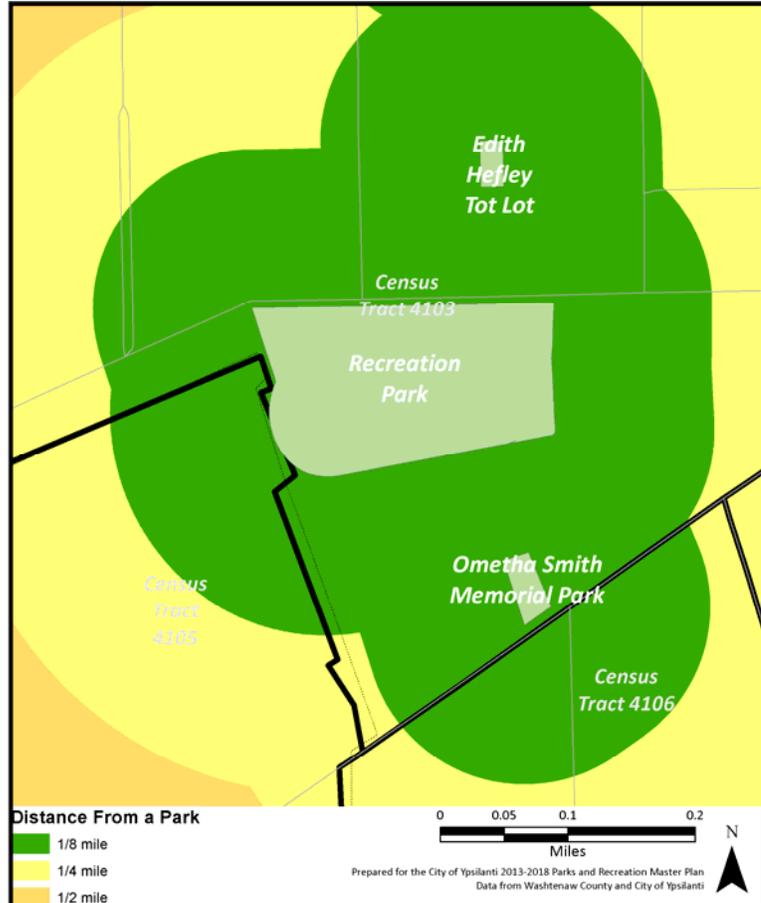
Recreation Park is located within Census Tract 4103, and is quite close to Census Tracts 4110 and 4106 within the City, and 4105 within Ypsilanti Township. Tract 4103 has a relatively high population density, a median age in the mid-to-high twenties, and low disability rates. The tract has a relatively high percentage of minors in poverty (25-25%) and overall residents in poverty (17-30%). In the long term, affordability should be prioritized; as the facilities in the park draw a large number of residents and visitors from throughout the City and surrounding areas, accessibility is also a concern.

#### Priority Projects:

- Connect walking track to sidewalk along Woods Road at both east and west ends.
- Provide barrier-free parking spaces near facilities, such as playgrounds, Senior Center, and the Rutherford Pool.
- When reconstructing trails, bring to current barrier-free standards.
- Upgrade play area and surfacing to barrier-free standards.
- Provide lighting under pavilions, at entrances, and along paths.
- Pave walking path around park; ensure that the path width is a consistent ten feet wide and that the grade meets accessibility standards.
- Resurface former tennis courts- currently basketball courts – and remove curbing or provide fencing around the perimeter.
- Work to improve stormwater drainage in the open playing fields to the south of the Rutherford Pool and baseball fields.
- Work with YCSD to ensure the play equipment is maintained and replaced as needed.

#### Rutherford Municipal Pool

The Rutherford Municipal Pool was built in 1972 with a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant. The bathhouse was renovated in 1993 with the aid of another Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant, and the pool is currently undergoing a significant renovation and reconstruction thanks to a Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant awarded in 2011 and significant fundraising done by the Friends of the Rutherford Pool (FORP). The volunteer-led nonprofit's efforts secured matching funds for the Trust Fund Grant from a wide array of stakeholders,



including Ypsilanti Township, Washtenaw County, the Ann Arbor Community Foundation, and many private donors. FORP will provide for utilities, staffing, and other costs through pool fees and additional fundraising, under the terms of the 2012 MOU. Although the pool has been closed since summer 2011, it is expected to re-open for the 2014 season.

In the past, the pool has hosted open swimming, lap swimming, swim lessons, CPR and lifeguard training, water aerobics, water polo, and could be rented for activities ranging from birthday parties to fundraisers. Upon reopening, it shall resume these offerings. A fee is charged for admission; discounted rates are available for season passes, punch cards, and for those who meet income guidelines. The accessibility rating for the pool is significantly higher than that of the park as a whole; the current renovations have been planned with Universal Design standards in mind, and renovations to the bathhouse in the past five years have increased its accessibility as well.

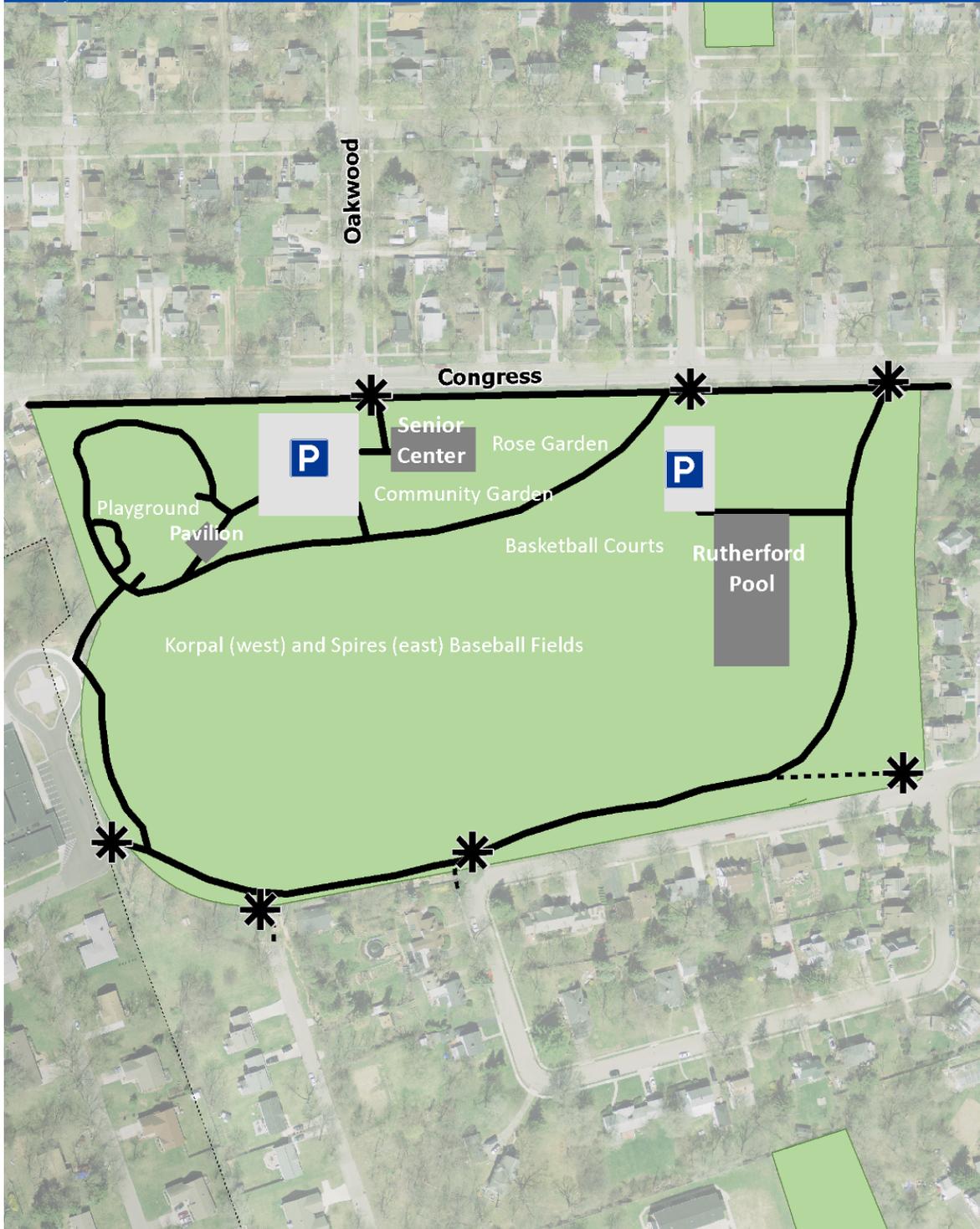
### **Senior Center**

Originally built as a Girl Scout house, the Senior Center has been an integral part of the City for many years. It was expanded from its original footprint approximately 50 years ago, at the time it became the Senior Center. Run by the City for many years, the volunteer-led Friends of the Senior Center formed in 2003 to operate the Center. They provide for operating costs through fundraising, and help to oversee staffing, allowing the Center to be open daily for fitness activities, crafts, cooking classes, meals, and social events. The Senior Center also provides hot lunches to area senior citizens through Washtenaw County's Department of Human Services. A fee is charged for admission to some events and for rental of the facility. The Center hosts meetings and events for various neighborhood and community groups. CDBG funding has been secured in FY2011-2012 to begin significant kitchen upgrades in 2013; and grants obtained in the past five years have improved both its energy efficiency and its accessibility.

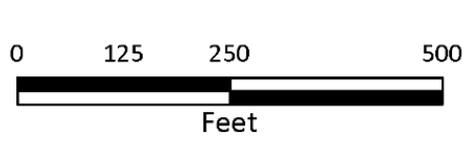


# Recreation Park

map 3.5



- Path/Sidewalk
- Future Path
- Park
- Easement
- Entrance
- Parking
- Structure



Prepared for the City of Ypsilanti 2013-2018 Parks and Recreation Master Plan  
Data from Washtenaw County and City of Ypsilanti



#### 4 Parkridge Park

Parkridge Park, owned by the Ypsilanti Housing Commission and the Ypsilanti Community School District, has been leased by the City of Ypsilanti since 1991 to make grant-funded improvements. Adjacent to over 200 units of affordable housing controlled by the Ypsilanti Housing Commission, almost 150 affordable housing units at the recently-redeveloped Hamilton Crossing, the pre-school to first grade Perry Childhood Development Center, the Parkridge Community Center, and near the intersection of Huron Street and I-94, this park has a wide potential user base. It contains basketball and tennis courts, a baseball field, jogging and walking track with exercise stations, playground equipment, and a community and educational garden.

Although relatively few survey respondents identified Parkridge as their primary park, this is likely a product of low response rates from that neighborhood rather than a lack of use. The area immediately around Parkridge, wholly within Census Tract 4106, ranks at the top of all of the demographic demand factors, including total number of residents, concentration of children, seniors, children in poverty, households without access to a car, and residents with disabilities; limited access to other parks is also a concern. During the Recreation Commission and staff's tour of the parks in March, we found significantly more use of Parkridge than other parks. This heavy use, demographic indicators, and location demonstrate that maintenance of Parkridge's existing facilities

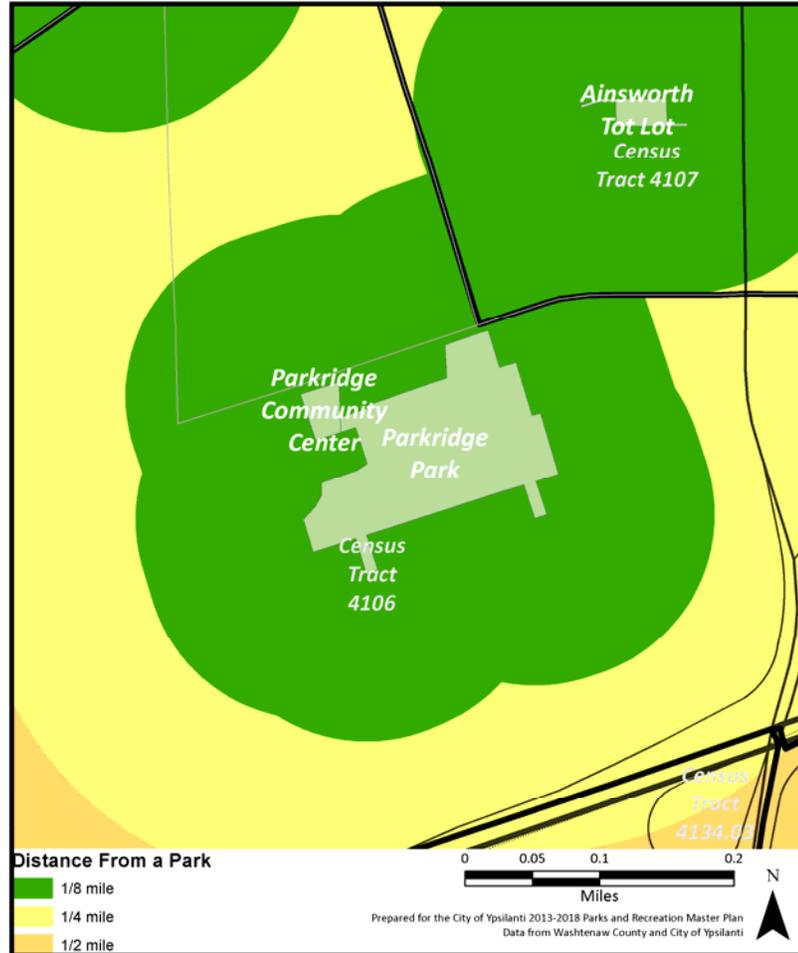
##### *Parkridge Park At A Glance*

- 11.7 acres
- Known for Parkridge Community Center, playground area, basketball courts, and picnic pavilion.
- Accessibility ranking: 2
- Owned by the Ypsilanti Housing Commission and Ypsilanti Public Schools; leased to and operated by the City; Parkridge Community Center is owned by the City and operated by Washtenaw County Community College with aid from the Parkridge Advisory Board.
- Less than a mile walk to downtown, located within a residential neighborhood, near I-94 access
- Prioritized projects include accessibility and entryway improvements as well as completion of deferred maintenance projects.

should be a high priority for the City, and that development of any new facilities or significant changes to existing facilities should be done with public input.

### Parkridge Community Center

Built in 1943 and expanded in 1981, the Parkridge Community Center offers recreational and educational programs, with a focus on after-school and summer activities and education. Washtenaw Community College (WCC) provides day-to-day administration of Parkridge. A broad variety of community organizations help WCC to provide programming at Parkridge, including the YMCA, Hope Clinic, and Growing Hope. Volunteers work to help raise funds, secure teachers, and



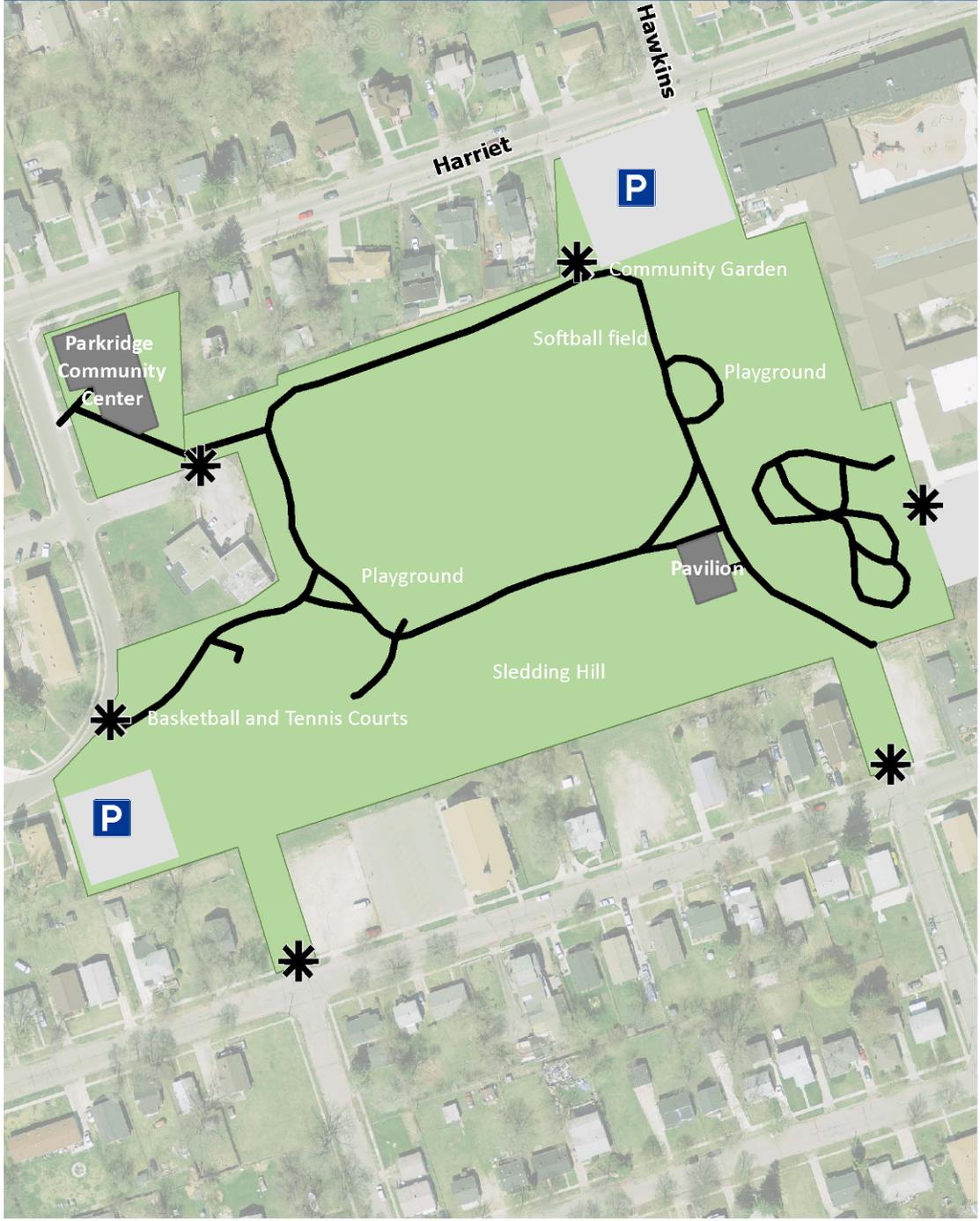
propose programming. Programming is diverse, serving a wide array of interests, including health and fitness classes, cooking courses, job and literacy training, senior citizen activities, youth camps, social and neighborhood events, and even sewing and cooking classes. It has served as major institution for the City's predominantly African-American south side for almost seventy years, and the partnership with Washtenaw Community College's will help to expand the Center's reach and impact.

### Priority Projects:

- Install signage at the Brooks and Hawkins Street entrances.
- Repair signage at Hawkins Street parking lot entrance.
- Provide barrier-free access at south entrances.
- Link pavilion to trails.
- When reconstructing trails, bring to current barrier-free standards.
- Upgrade play area and surfacing to barrier-free standards.
- Provide lighting under pavilions, at entrances, and along paths.

- Install picnic tables &/or benches and shade trees near the play area in southwest area of the park.
- Ensure play area includes play equipment suitable for children of all ages.
- Finish and landscape the parking areas off of Monroe Street, or close curb cuts and use as pedestrian entrances.
- Create ADA-accessible connections to Monroe Street via paved pathways.
- Revisit lease of Parkridge Park from the Ypsilanti Housing Commission and Ypsilanti Community School District.

**Ypsilanti**  
 Parks & Recreation  
**Parkridge Park**  
 map 3.6



Path/Sidewalk	Entrance	0      125      250      500 Feet	N 
Future Path	Parking		
Park	Structure		
Easement			

Prepared for the City of Ypsilanti 2013-2018 Parks and Recreation Master Plan  
 Data from Washtenaw County and City of Ypsilanti

## NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

In addition to these city-wide parks, Ypsilanti has a number of parks that are smaller in scale. Typically, the most frequent users come from the adjoining residential neighborhoods, distances of a quarter- to a half-mile, although unique or very popular features within these parks may attract users from the City as a whole.



### 5 Candy Cane Park

Candy Cane Park, acquired at the initial plat of the land, is 6.7 acres in size and is used primarily for active recreation. It has seen extensive renovations in the past year: Ypsilanti American Little League replaced the scoreboard; an Eagle Scout renovated the tennis courts, the City renovated the play equipment, and the neighborhood restored the signage. There is also a picnic pavilion on the site, which groups can reserve for events. Little League games have been held at Candy Cane in spring and early summer for over sixty years, and the league provides portable toilets during the season. The Border-to-Border Trail passes within 50 yards of the northern entrance, but the park itself is relatively secluded and known primarily to nearby residents or those seeking it out for Little League or other events. The park currently lacks a sidewalk on the south side, along Roosevelt, but is overall a fairly flat and grassy park. It ranks as a two on the DNR accessibility scale.

The demographic analysis showed low residential density in the immediate neighborhood around Candy Cane Park. A large proportion of survey respondents identified it as their primary park, but a similarly large proportion of survey respondents were residents of the adjacent neighborhood.

#### Priority Projects:

- Construct sidewalk along Roosevelt Street frontage.
- Provide barrier-free access at south and north entrances.

#### *Candy Cane*

- 6.7 acres
- Accessibility ranking: 2
- Prioritized projects include sidewalk construction and accessibility improvements.

- Provide sidewalk along Roosevelt.
- Provide parking areas with barrier-free spaces or eliminate small paved areas.
- Create a paved path linking north & south ends of park, pavilion, and play area.
- Upgrade play area and surfacing to barrier-free standards; provide barrier-free access.
- Replace play equipment.
- Provide lighting under pavilions, at entrances, and along paths; these lights can be motion-sensitive, photocell, on a timer, or a combination.



## 6 Peninsular Park

Peninsular Park, acquired in 1986 from the Peninsular Paper Company, is a 7 acre wooded area on the shore of the Huron River, anchoring the northern end of the riverfront park system. This park is largely undeveloped, having a fishing pier, canoe dock and picnic pavilion. It is relatively secluded, being separated from most of Ypsilanti by the river, railroad tracks, and major roadways; and from nearby multifamily residential developments by significant grade changes.

An empty powerhouse remains on the site, a legacy of the Peninsular Paper Company, connected to a deteriorated dam, built in the 1800s to power the Peninsular Paper mill across the river. The 2,500 square foot Powerhouse and the sign atop it together are a historic landmark, reflecting Ypsilanti's industrial past. Although the mill site was redeveloped in the early 2000s to student housing, the dam and Powerhouse remain. As the dam is attached to the Powerhouse, any plans to remove the dam must consider preservation of the Powerhouse, a condition not normally encountered during many other dam removals. Likewise, as several parks downstream are adjacent to the river, a dam removal project could cause dramatic changes to the both the upstream impoundment and the downstream low-lying areas, and would require study.

Peninsular Park serves a wide array of regional users due to its location on the river and scenic overlooks. The decommissioned dam requires that canoe and kayakers portage around it, using a floating dock on the upstream side of the dam and a concrete dock on the downstream side.

### *Peninsular Park*

- 7 acres
- Accessibility ranking: 1
- Prioritized projects include accessibility improvements and completion of deferred maintenance projects, particularly at the kayak/canoe portage.

The concrete dock also serves as a popular fishing pier – on any given day there can be anywhere between five and ten individuals casting their lines in the Huron River.

Demographic analysis shows a very high potential user base in the immediate area surrounding Peninsular Park. The neighborhood is dominated by large apartment complexes, many of which were built in the 1970s to accommodate EMU students during Ypsilanti's population peak. This is reflected in the area's high overall population density; there are also a high number of children, households in poverty, and households without access to an automobile – all factors that indicate demand for accessible and affordable neighborhood park space.

**Priority Projects:**

- Repair and consider reorienting the LeForge Street signage to be legible to vehicular traffic.
- Provide barrier-free access from LeForge as well as at canoe/kayak portage.
- When constructing or reconstructing trails, bring to current barrier-free standards.
- Link pavilion to trails.
- Improve parking area; provide barrier-free spaces.
- Provide lighting under pavilions, at entrances, and along paths; these lights can be motion-sensitive, photocell, on a timer, or a combination.
- Create a barrier-free walking path along the Huron River.
- Replace the existing floating dock upstream of the dam with one that is accessible.
- Install an accessible dock downstream of the dam.
- Work with local stakeholders such as volunteer groups to install functional plantings, such as butterfly/pollinator gardens and raingardens, as well as interpretive and educational signage.
- Seek a private partner for re-use of the historic Powerhouse.
- Continue to work with MDEQ and the HRWC to monitor the dam.



## 7 Prospect Park

Prospect Park is the City's oldest park. Originally a privately-owned graveyard, it was acquired by the Park Improvement Society in 1892, a women's charity organization. Over the next two years, they moved the graves to Highland Cemetery, performed significant work, including installation of Luna Lake, fed by the City water system, and deeded it to the City in 1894. A historic cannon, a former coast defense gun from Fort McClery in Kittery, Maine, was placed on the west side of the park in 1902 and remains there to this day as a memorial to the mayor who placed it there, Oliver E. Thompson.

### *Prospect Park*

- 10 acres
- Accessibility ranking: 3
- Prioritized projects include accessibility improvements and completion of deferred maintenance projects.

Today, this 10-acre expanse is a popular destination for neighborhood residents. Within this park are a skate park, two picnic shelters, basketball courts, the Luna Lake native plant garden installed and cared for by the neighborhood associations, a baseball diamond, and a play area shared with the neighboring Adams School (grades K-6).

### Priority Projects

- Install signage at the Prospect/Cross corner as well as the Oak/Prospect corner, consistent with signage at other locations, to distinguish this location as a public park.
- Install secondary park identification signage at the parking lot on the southeast corner of the park, near the parking lot.
- Provide barrier-free access from entrances to south pavilion.
- Improve parking area at south-east corner; provide barrier-free spaces.
- Work with YCSD to upgrade the play area and its surfacing to barrier-free standards, and to maintain and replace play equipment as needed.
- Provide lighting under pavilions, at entrances, and along paths; these lights can be motion-sensitive, photocell, on a timer, or a combination.
- Consider constructing an additional flex space, either in Prospect or at a west side park such as Recreation.
- Work with the skate park volunteer group on maintenance, improvement, and expansion projects.
- Repair the existing basketball courts.
- Work with Ypsilanti-area little leagues and/or other partners to renovate the existing ball diamond.



## 8 Waterworks Park

Waterworks is located on the Huron River at the southern end of the river's course through the City. It is secluded, separated from the nearest major thoroughfare, Factory Street, by the mulch yard for the City, formerly a water treatment plant. Sidewalk connectivity in the immediate area is poor, due to a history of industrial use to the east and south, steep slopes to the west, and the Huron River to the north. The park is linked to the proposed River's Edge Linear Park area, to be developed in the coming five years, by an existing steel truss pedestrian bridge. The park has a baseball field, recently renovated by the Ypsilanti American Little League, and a picnic shelter. A disc golf course was built in 2007 by volunteers, and draws players from around the Ann Arbor and eastern Washtenaw County area.

Several groups have expressed interest in constructing a dog park in Ypsilanti. Currently it appears that Waterworks may be an ideal location, due to its relative isolation and a relatively large, approximately half-acre vacant, grassy space. Should a dog park be developed, careful attention must be paid to preserving existing uses; the disc golf course is unique in Ypsilanti's parks, as is the existing forested area. This and any other proposals for future uses must also consider that this park is entirely within the floodway of the Huron River.

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### Priority Projects:

- Construct sidewalk along Catherine Street frontage; continue to Factory Street.
- Provide sidewalk along east side of Catherine.

### *Waterworks Park*

- 9.3 acres
- Accessibility ranking: 1
- Prioritized projects include accessibility improvements and completion of deferred maintenance projects.

- Provide barrier-free link between pavilion and both sidewalk and parking area.
- Improve parking area; provide barrier-free spaces.
- Continue to work with the Ypsilanti American Little League and private partners to renovate the existing ball diamond.
- Continue to work with the Ann Arbor Area Disc Induced Sports Club (A3 Disc) to ensure the disc golf course is maintained.
- Work with area stakeholders and potential partners to explore the need for, design of, and potential fundraising mechanisms for a dog park.

## MINI-PARKS

In Ypsilanti, mini-parks and tot lots are small parks, generally less than an acre. Mini-parks may be simply greenspace or single-feature; others, called tot lots, have playgrounds meant to serve the population within an eighth to a quarter mile.

**9 The Spanish-American War Memorial**, known as “The Hiker,” stands on a 0.3 acre parcel at the intersection of Cross and Washtenaw. It was gifted in 1940 by veterans of the Spanish-American War to memorialize its veterans. One such veteran, Walter Pierce, was a member of Ypsilanti’s first police force. The plaque describing the memorial is worn, and the bronze statue itself is falling victim to corrosion brought about by outdoor pollution. There is minimal signage, but sidewalks are present on both sides; it has an accessibility ranking of 3.



**10 Edith Hefley Tot Lot**, a 0.4-acre parcel on Elm Street, is heavily used by neighbors. It has play equipment, including a swing set and a slide, as well as a Peace Pole. The play equipment has issues related to deferred maintenance, and should be replaced when possible. Sidewalks are present on the north and south ends of the parcel, but not along Elm Street itself. There is no signage; it has an accessibility ranking of 1. Projects include installing signage and a sidewalk, as well as updating play equipment.

**11 Ometha M. Smith Tot Lot**, 0.7 acre play space on West Michigan Ave next to the Ypsilanti Housing Commission-owned Paradise Manor, is controlled and operated by the Ypsilanti Housing Commission but owned by the City. Separated from West Michigan by both a chain link and a wrought iron fence due to a portion of the area having recently been used for construction storage, it is accessible only through Paradise Manor. The park is visible and has a sign on Michigan Ave, but the entrance is not signed, nor is the entrance accessible to persons using mobility assistive devices due to the slope; it has an accessibility ranking of 1.



**12 Carrie R. Mattingly Tot Lot** is a 0.4-acre play area in the center of a residential block in the Ainsworth Street neighborhood. It has little play equipment left; what exists is older, and if it is to be kept, should be replaced. There is almost no visibility or access from the street. There are two access points; one has been encroached upon by a driveway and garage; the other is poorly maintained and overgrown. Signage is minimal; it has an accessibility ranking of 1.



**13 Ainsworth Park** is a 0.55-acre center-block parcel similar in layout to and one block south of Carrie R. Mattingly. There are two access points, but neither is signed; there is nothing to indicate from the street that there is a park nearby. This park appears to generally be used by adjacent homeowners as an extension of lawn or garden space. This park should be assessed whether it can continue to or begin to serve a recreation need in the neighborhood. There is no play equipment. It has an accessibility ranking of 1.



**14 Haab Brothers Memorial Park** is a 0.3 acre triangular parcel at the intersection of Grove and Prospect. Previously a gas station, the site was remediated and deeded to the City in 1996, with the condition that it be used as a public green space or city park, named in memory of the Haab Brothers, Otto and Oscar. There are no sidewalks on either side of this park, nor is there signage in place or a place to park a vehicle or a bicycle. It has an accessibility ranking of 1. Priority projects include improving access to the park and signing it.

**15 Charles Street Tot Lot**, a 0.16-acre parcel to the east of the intersection of Charles and Thomas streets, was deeded to the City in 1979. It has a prominent sign, is connected to the street network via a sidewalk, and has play equipment. The play equipment here, as in the other tot lots, is nearing the end of its useful life, and needs replacement.. It has an accessibility ranking of 1.

## TRAILS, BIKEWAYS, AND LINEAR PARKS

Ypsilanti’s parks are generally well-connected to both their surrounding neighborhoods and each other. Overall, the city is very walkable and bikeable, due in part to its age, the long-term efforts to create a river-connected park system, and partnerships with Washtenaw County

Parks and Recreation and neighboring jurisdictions to create the County-wide Border-to-Border (B2B) Trail. In recent years, the City has also adopted a non-motorized transportation plan and a Complete Streets ordinance. The City has a relatively complete sidewalk network, several shared-use paths both in the parks and as part of the Border-to-Border Trail, and an ever-expanding network of on-road bicycle lanes.

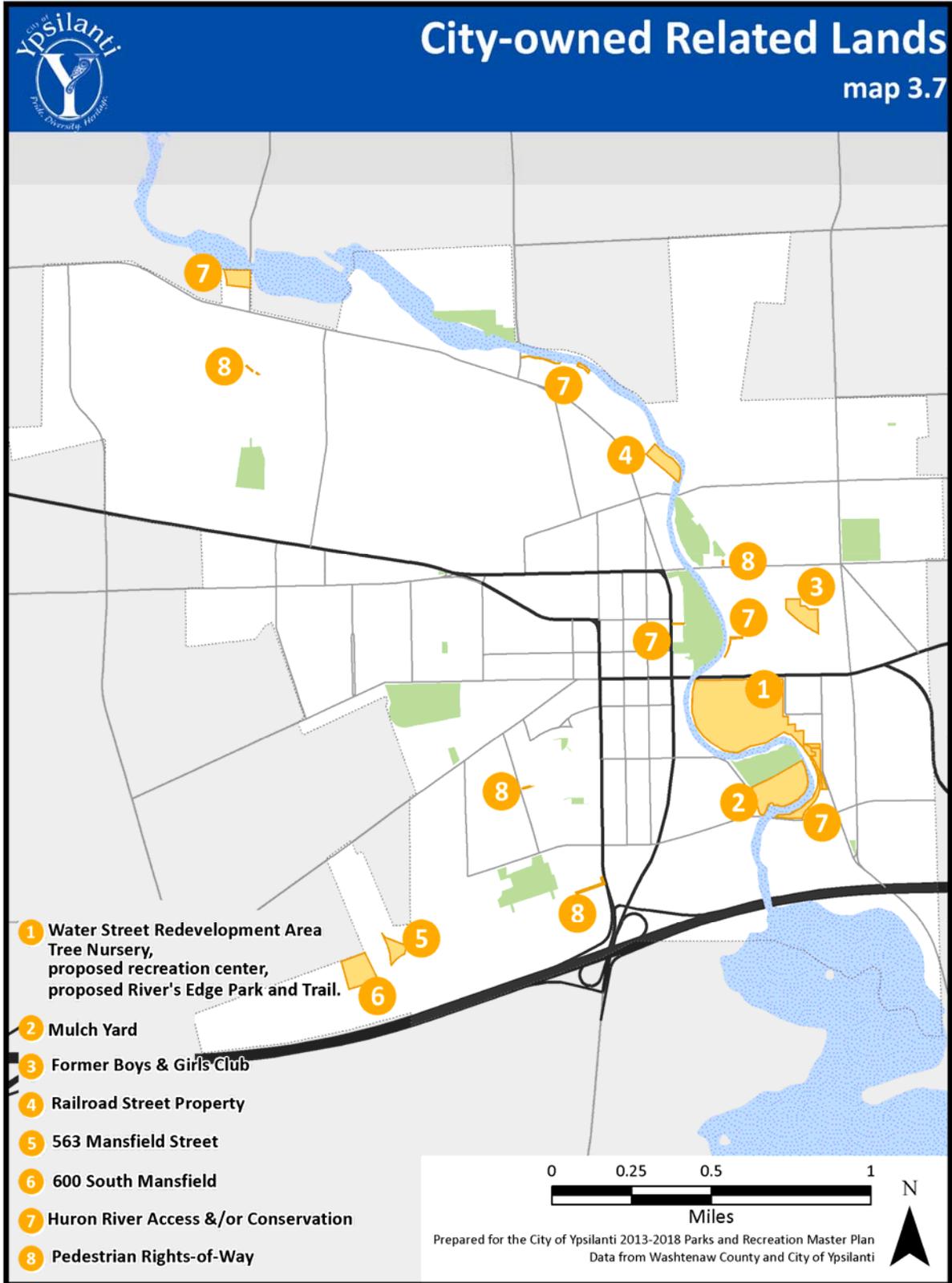
### **Border-to-Border Trail**

The B2B Trail runs through the City from the north-west to the south-east. In the north-west and through EMU, it's predominantly an off-road asphalt shared use path. As it leaves EMU campus, near the intersection of Huron River Drive and LeForge, it becomes reliant upon the sidewalk and bicycle lane network. The current route of the B2B Trail passes the north entrance of Frog Island and City-owned property on Grove between Park and Factory/Spring, a trek of over a mile. The DNR-funded Ypsilanti Heritage Bridge Project and River's Edge Linear Park and Trail project, combined, will shift that on-street route to an off-street shared-use path alongside the Huron River- a safer, less stressful, and more scenic route than the current sidewalk and on-street network. As the B2B exits the City to the south, it connects to a shared-use path south of I-94 alongside Ford Lake.

Ypsilanti is working to expand its network of bike lanes. Accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians – as well as all legal road users – are considered during the design phase of any road reconstruction project, per the requirements of the City's Complete Streets ordinance. The City currently has more than 3.7 miles of on-street bike lanes and expects to add more as road reconstruction and reconfiguration projects occur.

### **SPECIAL EVENTS**

Special events are held throughout the year, both in the City parks and recreation facilities and elsewhere. Riverside and Frog Island Parks host large events, such as the Ypsilanti Heritage Fest, ElvisFest, Michigan Brewer's Guild Summer Festival, car and motorcycle shows, music performances, and fun runs. Partners such as the YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, and the Ypsilanti American Little League hold regular reoccurring events for youth, such as summer camps and baseball series, in Candy Cane, Parkridge, Prospect, and Recreation Parks, amongst others. Two farmers' markets currently operate; one in the City's Market Plaza, and the other on the downtown Ferris Street.



## CITY-OWNED RELATED LANDS

A few publicly-owned properties around Ypsilanti serve recreational functions or have significant natural features, but are not currently considered parkland. These properties are noted for completeness; some have potential for formal inclusion in the parks system in the future. Locations are noted in Map 3.7.

### 1 Water Street Redevelopment Area

The City's Water Street Redevelopment Area, along the Huron River consists of more than 38 acres and includes nearly a half mile of frontage on the Huron River and 1,500 feet of frontage on Michigan Avenue. Although the vast majority of the site is slated for redevelopment, three parks and recreation-related projects are currently in development. In the south-east corner, a 1.5 acre area will be used as a **tree nursery** to provide both street and park trees for the City. The nursery is an interim use of the site; once stock is exhausted, its use will be revisited by the City. At the north-west corner, the City is partnering with Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation to construct a **recreation center**. This center will include a gym, swimming pool, and other indoor recreation facilities, the only such public facility to operate within the City. This facility is expected to serve eastern Washtenaw County. Linking these two features is an extension of the Border-to-Border (B2B) Trail. Currently, the B2B follows City streets, sidewalks, and bike lanes for much of its route through the City; the proposed **River's Edge Linear Park and Trail** and **Heritage Bridge** projects will move 1.5 miles of that trail from the streets to a shared-use path along the Huron River, as well as provide safe and accessible fishing piers and river overlooks – a project that was called out in the 2008 Parks & Recreation Master Plan. These projects will not only provide new or improved recreation opportunities for residents of and visitors to the City, but will help to spur redevelopment in and near our historic urban core.

### 2 Mulch Yard

The City runs its minor composting, woodchipping, and mulching operations from the southern half of the parcel that contains Waterworks Park. The space the compost yard occupies was formerly occupied by the City's wastewater treatment plant. This area would be a natural expansion of Waterworks Park and expand parkland frontage along the river. However, the City would have to relocate the facility or make other arrangements for composting, chipping, and mulching.

### 3 Former Boys & Girls Club

The 3.7-acre site of the former Huron Valley Boys & Girls Club, at 220 N. Park Street, once provided recreational programming for area youth. Currently the building is empty and requires maintenance and repairs. It is currently being marketed for private redevelopment.

### 4 Railroad Street Property

This 3-acre, heavily forested property was acquired by the City of Ypsilanti Economic Development Corporation in 1994 from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, who at the time handled tax-foreclosed land. Two key deed restrictions were included in the sale: that the property must be put to a public purpose, which includes economic development, and that "the people of the State of Michigan (have) the rights of ingress or egress over and across" it. This land has been referenced as a "future park" in parks plans since 1991, but has not been developed. It is listed as a "protected land" per provisions laid out by the City Charter; an explanation of protected lands is contained in Appendix C.

### **5 563 Mansfield Street**

The City of Ypsilanti Economic Development Corporation, a subsidiary of the City of Ypsilanti, owns a 1.8-acre parcel at 563 South Mansfield Street. This parcel is wooded, undeveloped, and near Paint Creek, Arbor Manor, and Forrest Knoll. It is currently zoned R4, High-Density Residential, located at the south-east of the Mansfield Industrial Park adjacent to both industrial and multifamily uses, and currently walled off from Mansfield, but accessible from Mansfield, Manor, and Monroe Streets. Consider partnering with these neighboring multifamily housing developments to develop this area as a public park, as this parcel could help to serve the adjacent high-density multifamily residential with recreation opportunities; alternatively, this area could be repurposed to provide access between the neighborhood and the adjacent industrial park. Currently, the adjacent 80-unit Arbor Manor provides a small park for the use of its residents, and the adjacent 231-unit Forrest Knoll provides ample open space but few recreation opportunities. Both are within a half-mile of Parkridge Park.

### **6 600 Mansfield Street**

The West Commerce Park Owners Association, a second-tier subsidiary of the City of Ypsilanti, owns a 5-acre parcel on the north side of Mansfield between 580 and 612 Mansfield. The Upper Paint Creek runs through the east side of this parcel, and the remainder consists of undeveloped, vegetated space, with minimal development potential. It is currently zoned M1, Light Manufacturing, located in the middle of the Mansfield Industrial Park, adjacent to industrial uses, and accessible from Mansfield Street. Consider partnering with WCPRC or a nonprofit, such as a land conservancy, to preserve this area as a public natural area, as it could help to protect the limited undeveloped natural resources within the City.

### **7 Huron River Access and Conservation Easements**

A long-standing goal of both the City's recreation master plans and 1998 Master Plan is to preserve and protect the beauty of the Huron River and to provide access when possible. In recent years, the City has assembled various access and conservation easements, in addition to the parks, to this purpose. In the north end of the City, the City worked with two separate property owners to secure access easements along the Huron. Further south, at the intersection of Forest Street and the Huron River, the City owns a conservation easement on the high banks opposite Frog Island. Across the river from Riverside Park, the City has reserved an easement to provide access and conservation along the west bank from the vacated North Street to approximately 300 feet south. The City is currently working with other property owners along the Huron River to ensure that it is protected and accessible.

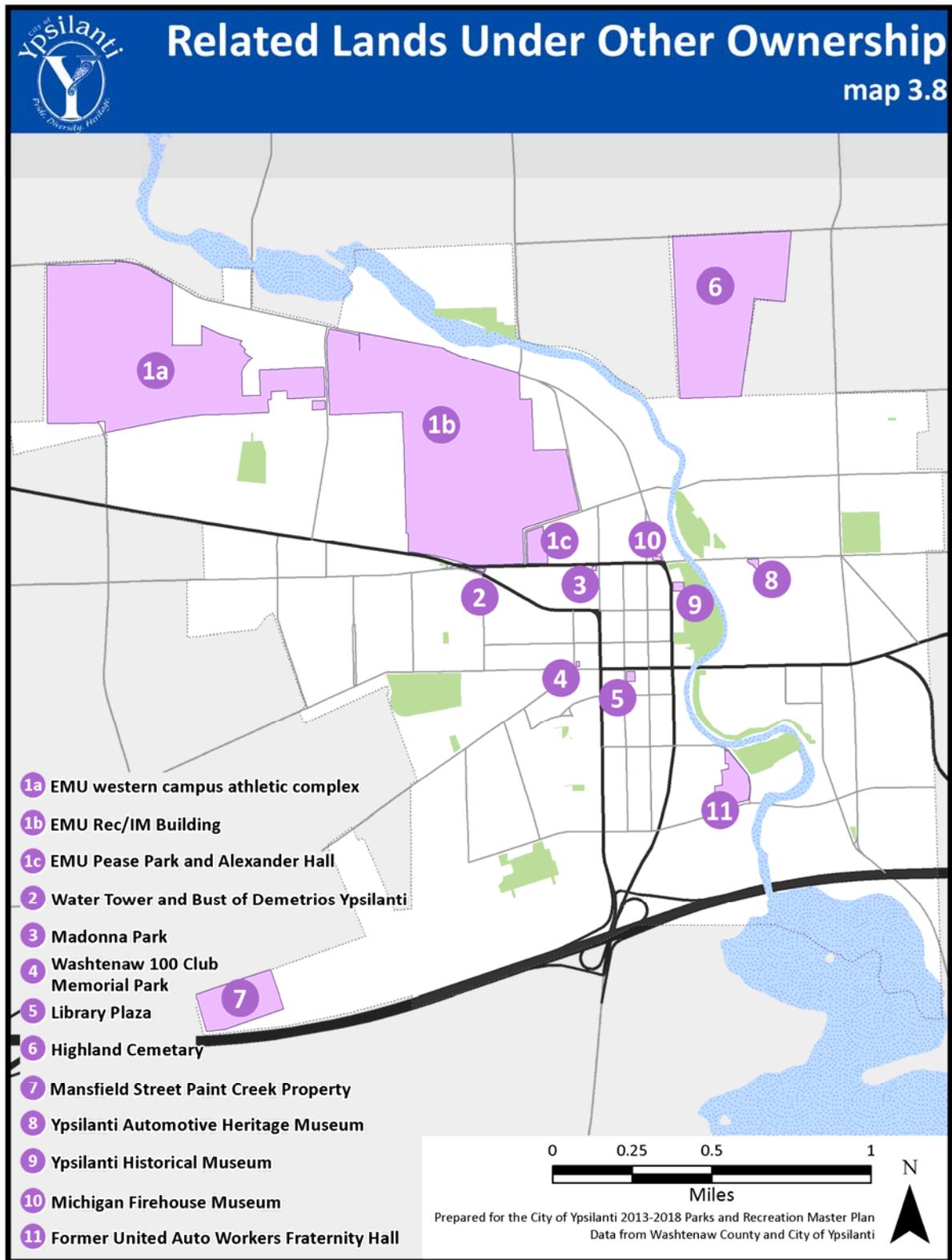
The City itself owns fee-simple parcels along the Huron River at both Superior Road and Grove Road. The City is currently attempting to sell the Superior Road property, as it is prime developable land, and will ensure that Huron River access is protected by an easement once the property is sold. The Grove Road properties incorporate a former railbed along the Huron River, which will be preserved for future public use; the City is exploring disposition options for the portions of the properties that front along Grove Road.

### **8 Pedestrian Rights-of-Way**

The City owns parcels, easements, and rights-of-way throughout the City that are unconnected to the Huron River. These were often granted to the City to ensure pedestrian connectivity was maintained, despite a lack of street network connectivity. Some of these serve or could serve a valuable purpose and should be maintained; others, such as those in the Gerganoff subdivision, should be re-evaluated and likely vacated.

**Traffic Islands and Medians** *(not mapped)*

There are many traffic islands and medians within the City of Ypsilanti. As these are often part of the transportation right-of-way, they will likely remain in public ownership for the long term. Some are small, grassy spaces; others are extensively landscaped with mature trees. Still others serve as mini-parks for the adjacent neighbors. Many have been adopted via the City's Adopt-A-Park program. These are important pieces of the City's open space and transportation networks.



## RELATED LANDS UNDER OTHER OWNERSHIP

Eastern Michigan University, other public institutions, and private organizations own and control several properties in the City that are popular landmarks, open space, or recreation areas. As the City has no control over these spaces or plans to acquire them, they are described for completeness' sake. The locations of these resources are shown in Map 3.8.

### 1 Eastern Michigan University

Eastern Michigan University (EMU) owns more than 395 acres within the City. Significant portions of that land, such as the **western campus athletic complex**, are set aside for recreation. The west campus facilities include a football stadium and track; an indoor football training facility; no less than six full-size baseball diamonds; an indoor basketball facility and convocation center, a disc golf course, and a fitness circuit adjacent to the B2B Trail; On central campus there is the **Rec/IM building**, an indoor gym and recreation facility that includes an indoor track, an indoor pool, and racquetball; two outdoor basketball courts; a sand volleyball court; and University Park. Off West Cross at College Place is **Pease Park**, a passive outdoor park, and **Alexander Hall**, a music performance venue. EMU's campus also contains many miles of walking and jogging paths, including almost 2 miles of the B2B Trail. Several of their facilities are available for rent, such as the outdoor University Park adjacent to the Student Center, and the Rec/IM offers for sale annual memberships to community members. For all facilities, University-scheduled events and classes take precedence over community use.

### 2 Water Tower and Bust of Demetrios Ypsilanti

This Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority-owned 0.13-acre area at the intersection of Cross, Summit, and Washtenaw hosts two of the most memorable landmarks in Ypsilanti: the historic water tower and a bust of the City's namesake, Demetrios Ypsilanti. The tower was constructed in 1890, and a state historic marker on its south side describes its history. The bust, to the west of the tower, commemorates both the naming of the City and Demetrios Ypsilanti's role in the Greek War of Independence (1821-1832). The grounds are open to the public.



### 3 Madonna Park

Madonna Park is a 0.14-acre park at the south-west corner of Hamilton and West Cross. Owned and maintained by the Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church across the street, the park prominently features a statue of the Madonna and provides a place of peaceful contemplation. It is open to the public.

### 4 Washtenaw 100 Club Memorial Park

This 4,500 square foot garden and memorial wall at the north-east corner of Michigan, Ballard, and Congress was developed in 2005 to memorialize police officers and firefighters who lost their lives in the line of duty. It provides a place of contemplation and hosts memorial services. It is open to the public.

### **5 Library Plaza**

Adjacent to and owned by the downtown branch of the Ypsilanti Public Library, this 4,000 square foot plaza contains benches and tables, a fountain, and a space for a children’s story hour. In addition, it features a life-size bronze statue of Harriet Tubman, memorializing Ypsilanti’s role in the Underground Railroad, and a historical marker commemorating Elijah McCoy, a local man whose lubrication inventions kept the trains running and were the origin of the phrase “the real McCoy.” The Plaza is open to the public, but library-scheduled events take precedence over community use.

### **6 Highland Cemetery**

Highland Cemetery is well-landscaped, well-maintained, and as one of the highest points in the City, overlooks the Huron River and the city. As a peaceful low-traffic area, it attracts runners, bicyclists, and others in search of contemplative space. It is open to the public seven days a week, during posted hours, and does not charge an admission fee.

### **7 Mansfield Street Paint Creek Property**

The Ypsilanti Free Methodist Church owns a 20-acre parcel located at the southern terminus of Mansfield Street. Paint Creek runs through this property, which is largely wooded wetlands, rendering the site difficult to develop. The City may consider working with the property owner and WCPRC to preserve this relatively undisturbed natural area in the long term. It is not open to the public; it is currently listed for sale and zoned M1, Light Manufacturing.

### **8 Ypsilanti Automotive Heritage Museum**

The Ypsilanti Automotive Heritage Museum, located at the south-east corner of East Cross and River tells the story of the birth of the auto industry in Michigan, with an Ypsilanti focus. It also includes Miller Motors, a fully preserved pre-war automobile dealership, which still sells and assists with the service of vintage Hudson Motors vehicles. The museum preserves and exhibits a rotating inventory of classic vehicles. The museum helps to put on many automobile-related events such as the Orphan Car show in Riverside Park, the weekly Cruise Night in Depot Town. It is open to the public seven days a week and charges an admission fee.

### **9 Ypsilanti Historical Museum**

The Ypsilanti Historical Museum, located at 220 North Huron Street, is dedicated to local history. The Museum presents a snapshot of daily life in the 1860s, and the Fletcher-White Archives contain an extensive collection of atlases, newspapers, government documents, and other ephemera. The museum is operated by the all-volunteer Ypsilanti Historical Society, and is free and open to the public five days a week.

### **10 Michigan Firehouse Museum and Education Center**

The 26,000 square foot Michigan Firehouse Museum and Education Center is located at the north-west corner of Cross and Huron and incorporates the City’s original 1898 firehouse. The museum’s mission is to enhance the appreciation of firefighting history through engaging and informative exhibits, as well as teaching and promoting fire safety and prevention. It is open to the public six days a week and charges an admission fee.

### **11 Former United Auto Workers Fraternity Hall and Baseball Field**

This property was owned by the United Auto Workers (UAW) and operated as a fraternity hall with outdoor recreation space when the Ford/Visteon/Automated Components Holdings (ACH) plant was operating. This property has changed hands since that time; it is not now nor is it anticipated to be open for public or private recreation. It is included in this plan for reference only; due to its location it is often mistaken for Waterworks Park.

## **REGIONAL RECREATION RESOURCES**

In addition to the City's parks and facilities, a number of regional recreational opportunities maintained by Washtenaw County, the Huron-Clinton Metroparks Authority, the State of Michigan, or area colleges and universities are available to Ypsilanti residents.

### **YPSILANTI COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

The recently combined Ypsilanti and Willow Run School Districts, now known as Ypsilanti Community School District, provide an additional 165 acres of public grounds, all within a five-minute drive of the City. The outdoor play areas and facilities, such as tracks, ballfields, and tennis courts, are available for public use when school is not in session and when no other school-scheduled event, such as a practice or game, is scheduled.

### **BORDER TO BORDER (B2B) TRAIL**

In recent years, communities throughout southeast Michigan have been working to create regional trail systems. Within Washtenaw County, the WCPARC and the Washtenaw County Greenways Advisory Committee (GAC) have been trailblazers. They coordinate local efforts to complete the Border to Border Trail, which will eventually run along the Huron River through Washtenaw County. Large portions of the trail within the City of Ypsilanti and Ypsilanti Township have been completed or are underway; west of Ypsilanti, the portions through Superior Township, Ann Arbor Township, Dexter, and the City of Ann Arbor are complete. A map of the B2B Trail is provided in Appendix D-1.

### **HURON RIVER WATER TRAIL**

The Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC) has spearheaded efforts to develop and promote tourism along the Huron River, in addition to their commitment to river stewardship and public education. These efforts have led to the creation of the Huron River Water Trail (HRWT), a 104-mile inland paddling trail connecting people to the river's natural environment, its history, and the communities it touches in Michigan's Lower Peninsula.

Development of this water trail will help to improve recreational access to the river, including projects such as adding interpretive, way-finding, and historical signage, creating linkages between the City, its attractions, and other municipalities and tourist attractions along the river, and creating economic development opportunities related to river tourism. The trail will help to reconnect communities in Oakland, Livingston, Washtenaw, and Wayne Counties to the Huron River and its recreational, economic, historic, and cultural values, as well as each other. The City is currently working with the HRWC on this project, currently to improve the portage at Peninsular Park, and anticipates a lasting partnership in this as in other areas. A map of the trail is in Appendix D-2.

### **YPSILANTI TOWNSHIP PARKS**

The Charter Township of Ypsilanti, which surrounds the City on three sides, maintains 30 parks totaling over 900 acres. As in the City, parks along the Huron River and Ford Lake make up the core of the Township's park system, including North Bay, Ford Lake, Loonfeather Point, North and South Hydro, and Lakeside Parks; portions of North Bay Park and Ford Lake are within the City boundaries. Several additional Township parks are located in the northern, more heavily populated portion of the Township, including the Community Center at 2025 E. Clark Road. The Township's Recreation Department offers activities for children, adults, and seniors, including

sports, fitness classes, and educational and social activities. Township parks and programs are open to City residents, though some parks require vehicle entry fees, and programming also typically requires registration fees. Notably, entry fees for City of Ypsilanti residents are the same as those for Ypsilanti Township residents at certain parks surrounding Ford Lake, including North Bay, Loonfeather, and North Hydro. Maps of the Ypsilanti Township park system are included in Appendix D-3.

### **SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN LAND CONSERVANCY**

The Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy owns over 1,300 acres in southeastern Michigan, and holds conservation easements over an additional 1,200 acres. A significant concentration of these lands is in Superior Township, just to the north of Ypsilanti. These lands include the Conservancy Farm, a 99 acre historic farmstead, much of which is still being farmed; the Smiley Nature Preserve, a 100-acre nature preserve and farm; LeFurge Woods Nature Preserve, 325 acres of farmland and nature area, including woodlands, wetlands, and meadows; and Springhill Nature Preserve, 30 acres that contain cattail and buttonbrush swamp. These are part of the Superior Greenway project, a collaborative effort to protect high-quality natural areas and farmland in the area between Ann Arbor and Detroit. A brochure and map describing the Superior Greenway project is in Appendix D-4.

### **WASHTENAW COUNTY PARKS, FACILITIES, AND NATURAL AREAS**

The Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission (WCPRC) and Natural Areas Preservation Program (NAPP) maintain a number of recreational amenities that are accessible to Ypsilanti residents. Some of these facilities require annual or daily entry fees. WCPRC and NAPP facilities within one mile of Ypsilanti include the Rolling Hills County Park, which contains both nature trails and a recently improved and extensively renovated water park; Parker Mill County Park, which includes nature trails and seasonal tours of a functioning grist mill. Also relatively accessible to Ypsilanti residents are County Farm Park, containing many nature trails, and the Meri Lou Murray Recreation Center, which provides fitness equipment and classes, both off of Washtenaw Ave and a major bus route. A map of these facilities is included in Appendix D-5.

### **HURON-CLINTON METROPARKS**

The Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority is a regional special parks district that maintains 13 parks around the Detroit region. The Metroparks system includes 24,000 acres of parkland, funded by a regional millage, annual and daily vehicle entry fees, and user fees for some facilities. These parks supplement local parks by offering a diverse range of activities that most local governments cannot provide, though are typically smaller and less wilderness-oriented than the DNR's recreation areas. Within a half-hour drive from the City of Ypsilanti, this system includes the Delhi, Dexter-Huron, Hudson Mills, and Lower Huron Metroparks; notably, the Lower Huron Metropark offers camping. Washtenaw County's Border to Border Trail and a planned trail along the Huron in Wayne County will provide hiking and biking connections from Ypsilanti to these Metroparks; the Huron River Water Trail will help to guide paddlers as well.

### **STATE RECREATION AREAS**

Within and near Washtenaw County the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provides large natural areas for activities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, snowmobiling, and camping—activities that cannot be accommodated well in an urban setting such as Ypsilanti.

These DNR facilities typically require entrance fees, which are available daily or annually, and fees for some amenities, such as camping.

The Waterloo Recreation Area, about a half-hour drive away, near Chelsea on the western side of Washtenaw County, is the largest park in Michigan's Lower Peninsula. The park's 20,000 acres include campgrounds, rustic cabins, and group use camping; picnic areas and playgrounds; multiple lakes for swimming, fishing, and boating; and more than 40 miles of interpretive nature, equestrian, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, and general hiking trails. Waterloo also includes the Gerald E. Eddy Discovery Center, a year-round facility offering geology and natural history exhibits, as well as educational programming by the Waterloo Natural History Association.

The Pinckney Recreation Area spans 11,000 acres north of Chelsea in western Washtenaw and Livingston Counties, also about a half-hour drive away. Like Waterloo, Pinckney includes numerous lakes, campgrounds, and trails to accommodate a variety of users. The Pinckney and Waterloo Recreation Areas are connected via the 35-mile-long Waterloo-Pinckney Trail.

A number of smaller DNR parks are located north of Ypsilanti: the Brighton and Island Lake Recreation Areas, in Livingston County near Brighton, and Maybury State Park, near Northville in Wayne County. These state facilities also offer a range of activities, from swimming and fishing to hiking and picnic areas. Maybury, as a smaller, more "suburban" recreation area, does not provide space for hunting or camping.



## Chapter 4: Planning and Public Input Process

The Parks & Recreation Master Plan was developed from March 2012 to December 2013 by the Recreation Commission and aided by Planning & Development staff and the Public Service Department.

### **INITIAL ANALYSIS**

The Recreation Commission and staff began with a review of the City's 2008-2012 Parks & Recreation Master Plan, and with a March 2012 tour of the City's existing parkland and recreation facilities. The Commission and staff also reviewed other related City and regional plans, such as the City's *1998 Huron River Corridor Master Plan*, the *Watershed Management Plan for the Huron River in the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti Metropolitan Area (Middle Huron)*, recreation plans of neighboring jurisdictions, past City recreation plans, the City's *Non-Motorized Transportation Plan (2010)* and the *1998 Master Plan*. In light of the budgetary constraints facing the City, the planning process focused heavily on existing facilities and amenities, current relationships with volunteer organizations, and on strengthening and maintaining both in the future.

### **PUBLIC SURVEY**

Over the course of June, July, and August of 2012, the Commission and staff surveyed Ypsilanti residents and other users of the recreation system. The survey was designed gain insight into public perception and use of City parks, as well as to collect resident feedback on the Adopt-a-Park program, alternative funding models, and other ideas for future recreation provision.

The survey was available to participants both online and in paper format. The survey was distributed through City Hall and on the City's website, and at the downtown public library, HOPE Clinic, Parkridge Community Center, Michigan WORKS!, the Senior Center, the Ypsilanti Housing Commission, to Ypsi PRIDE Day volunteers, the Downtown Ypsilanti Farmer's Market, via e-mail to families of Ypsilanti Public Schools attendees, via e-mail to neighborhood associations, and through Facebook.

### **SURVEY REPRESENTATION**

In total, over 400 paper surveys and as many quarter-sheets with online survey information were distributed. 347 people completed the survey, the majority online. The majority of respondents noted that they received the survey via their neighborhood association; following distantly were the City website, Ypsilanti Public Library, City Hall, the Senior Center, and Parkridge Community Center. Responses, however, predominantly seemed to be from neighborhood associations which have strong presences on Facebook or e-mail, suggesting a survey bias to households which not only have internet access, but those who choose to engage in their neighborhood association online. This survey's distribution methods relied heavily upon residents being engaged to some degree in the community at large, either through their neighborhood or local institutions, rather than simply being parks users. As many who use the parks may not otherwise be engaged with the community, or not engaged through the institutions used, perhaps other survey distribution and/or publicization methods should be used, such as survey-takers positioned in the parks themselves or going door-to-door, or an expanded partnership with the public school district, local charter schools, daycare providers, and senior citizen facilities. Demographic information was not collected by the survey.

## **RESULTS**

A discussion of the survey results as they apply to park usage and priorities is provided in Chapter 5, under the discussion of individual parks; the complete survey form is provided in Appendix E.

## **PUBLIC MEETING**

A public meeting was held on Thursday, August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012, during the regularly scheduled Recreation Commission meeting time. It was publicized on AnnArbor.com and via email to neighborhood associations and those who had signed up to receive updates on the planning process. Attendance was very low; six people attended, and all had completed the survey and were familiar with the project. As a result, after a brief overview of the project, its timeline, and the survey, staff solicited general feedback on recreation, then solicited specific feedback for two parks that had not had any recent design work and lacked survey feedback, Waterworks and Peninsular. Participants indicated an interest in improving Waterworks for more active recreation, and Peninsular for ecological preservation and education.

## **PLAN CREATION**

This plan was largely based upon the 2008 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, drawing also information from other local and regional plans and public input as described above. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analysis and inspections of the parks were also performed. As the plan progressed, drafts were submitted to the Recreation Commission for review and their comments were incorporated.

## **REVIEW AND ADOPTION**

The draft plan was approved for release by the Recreation Commission on July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013. An electronic copy was posted on the City website on July 22, 2013; the Ypsilanti Courier ran an article publicizing the release with information about how to access the plan and methods for providing feedback; staff was also interviewed on WEMU on August 14, 2013 about the parks plan; information on the draft and how to comment were provided. Within the city, copies of the draft were placed at City Hall, EMU's Halle Library, and the Downtown branch of the Ypsilanti Public Library; were provided to members of the Recreation Commission, Planning Commission, and City Council, and an electronic (pdf) copy was made available for download from the City's website. Notice of the plan's availability for public comment and review was sent as a press release to those signed up on the City listserv, the Recreation Plan listserv, and staff was interviewed on local radio about the draft plan. The plan was also sent to a number of regional entities for review, including Washtenaw County, Ypsilanti Community School District, Eastern Michigan University, and the Planning Departments of Ypsilanti and Superior Charter Townships.

On October 10, 2013, the Recreation Commission held a public hearing on the draft plan. Notice of the hearing was published in the Ypsilanti Courier on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013. At this meeting, comments were heard from community members, and a summary of written comments received was read to the Commission and the community members in attendance; feedback was positive. As a result of comments received on the draft plan, the Commission clarified and expanded upon potential funding sources. The implementation priorities at the end of Chapter Five of the plan were also guided in part by the public comment process. The Commission recommended adoption of the plan to City Council.

On December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013, the final draft of the plan was presented to the City Council along with the Recreation Commission's recommendation of adoption. The Council adopted the plan with Resolution Number 2013-251.

The notices, resolutions, and minutes for the meetings mentioned above are included in Appendix F for reference.



## Chapter 5: Vision, Goals, and Objectives

The City aims to provide a high quality parks system and recreational opportunities, but is restricted by its current lack of resources and capacity. The plan therefore envisions that the City will play a custodial and facilitating role, focusing limited resources on oversight and maintenance of the underlying parkland, yet poised to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

A keystone strategy of this plan is to develop and foster shared interests with regional partners and the energy and talents of Ypsilanti residents. As implementation of projects from the Action Plan will rely on the involvement of these partners and volunteers, the prioritization of projects presented in this plan is only a rough guide, recognizing that opportunity will dictate which projects come to fruition.

### **VISION**

Residents and visitors to the City can enjoy the plentiful recreation opportunities the City and its partners provide, regardless of age, gender, socio-economic level, ethnicity, or abilities.

### **MISSION**

The City of Ypsilanti is committed to preserve and maintain the existing parks, while pursuing partnerships to provide necessary capital improvements and recreation programming. The City ensures that recreation opportunities will be provided to residents and visitors, and offered to all regardless of age, gender, socio-economic level, ethnicity, or abilities. This is achieved through cooperative efforts between the City and public schools, Eastern Michigan University, other agencies and institutions, volunteers, the private sector, and the general public.

### **GOAL 1: ENSURE PARKS ARE ATTRACTIVE AND ACCESSIBLE**

**Objective 1: Ensure safe routes to parks and recreation facilities from neighborhoods, schools, and business districts, for people of all ability levels.** The City's road network can be considered complete; however, gaps exist in the sidewalk network, often at park frontages. These gaps can discourage potential park users from using these parks entirely, or may encourage nearby residents to only access them via motor vehicle. Even access via motor vehicle or bicycle can be challenging at several parks, due to lack of facilities, poor condition of pavement, lack of signage, or a combination of those factors.

- *Frog Island, Freighthouse & Market Plaza:* Frog Island's large parking lot is bordered to the east by Rice Street, which is part of the Border to Border Trail. On the opposite side of Rice Street are the railway, Market Plaza, and the Freighthouse. There are no sidewalks connecting Frog Island's main entrance on Rice Street north to Forest Street, and the only crossing to Market Plaza and the Freighthouse is to the south at Cross- but no sidewalks connect that main, central entrance south to Cross. By constructing a sidewalk along the west side of Rice Street and constructing a pedestrian crossing from the parking area to the Freighthouse service drive (Market Street), this will help ensure both the safety of crossing the street and the accessibility of these amenities and the planned rail stop. Improving the accessibility of both the north entrance, off Forest Street, and the central entrance, off the parking lot off Rice, should be examined as well.

- *Riverside Park:* Access to this park is limited, especially to people who are travelling by vehicle or who use an assistive device, such as a wheelchair or walker. From the south, access is via steps or a small alleyway meant for motor vehicle traffic. From the west, access is only available via steps or an unmarked entrance's steep, grassy hill. From the north, pedestrians can access the park either via the Tridge – itself primarily accessible via steps, from a set of steps on the west end of the Cross Street bridge, or from a steep trail just west of those steps. Vehicle access from the north is via an oft-gated drive at the west end of the Cross Street bridge, west of both the trail and the steps. To improve access for persons with mobility considerations, consider leaving this gate open the majority of the time, and closing it only when weather conditions make the drive unsafe, or when weight restrictions are in place. To limit vehicle encroachment into the park beyond the parking area, install appropriate bollards &/or barricades along both sides of the drive and at the trailhead. The proposed Ypsilanti Heritage Bridge at the south of the park will improve access from Michigan Avenue, but additional work is needed at the other entrances. This work includes regrading at the unmarked entrance, or installation of ramps, at the other entrances to ensure accessibility to all users.
- *Recreation Park:* The southern boundary of the park, along Woods Road and adjacent to Warner Street, does not have a traditional sidewalk. However, part of the paved walking track runs for much of this length. Connecting this path to the existing sidewalk on Woods Road and paving a small connector path to Warner Street would provide a significant increase in accessibility from the south side, as well as an increase in visibility.
- *Candy Cane:* The southern side of Candy Cane Park along Collegewood, which makes up the majority of the park's frontage, does not have a sidewalk. As sidewalks exist to both the east and west, and the park primarily services neighborhood residents, filling this sidewalk gap is likely to be a relatively simple project.
- *Waterworks:* Although Waterworks is connected to the Water Street Trail, part of the Border to Border Trail, via the bridge over the Huron River, is inaccessible to pedestrians from the south and west. It lacks sidewalks along its Catherine Street frontage, as does the Department of Public Works compost yard to the south, thus blocking access from Factory/Spring Street. Further, there are significant gaps in the sidewalk westward along Catherine linking the park to Huron Street. These are significant barriers to access.
- *Edith Hefley Tot Lot:* This small park lacks a sidewalk along its Elm Street frontage. Due to its small size and intended audience of young children, a sidewalk would not only be an important accessibility upgrade, especially for stroller users, but would also provide a visual cue to park users, separating the play area from the street.
- *Ometha M. Smith Memorial Park:* The frontage of this park is along West Michigan Avenue, and has an adequate sidewalk on that frontage. However, as access is only from a small gate towards the rear, up a short, steep, grassy slope from Paradise Manor, it sees little use. Removing the chain-link fence at the front of the site and providing an accessible entrance from either or both the Paradise Manor parking lot and the West Michigan sidewalk would improve its usability and its image.
- *Haab Brothers Memorial Park:* Situated at the "Y" intersection of Grove and Prospect Streets and adjacent to the Border to Border Trail, access to this park is challenging at best. For those approaching the park by motor vehicle from Prospect Street, there is a place to pull off and park for a single compact car. There is no other public parking available nearby, nor access from South Grove. Furthermore, there are no sidewalks along either side of the park, nor along most of the length of the block north to Factory Street.

- *North Bay Park:* Although North Bay Park is owned and operated by Ypsilanti Township, it lies within the City boundaries. Furthermore, it is an important part of the Border to Border Trail. However, access to this park by City residents is limited by a gap in the sidewalk along the west side of South Grove Road, just north of the I-94 bridge. This gap also restricts access to the City by Township residents.

**Objective 2: Ensure each park has a visible presence, entrance, and sign on adjacent rights-of-way.** Many parks have understated entrance points or are entirely lacking signage.

All parks should have consistent, well-maintained identifying signage at each entrance, oriented perpendicular to the street, for maximum visibility. Each entrance should also be signed with standardized information about the parks, including hours of operation, rules, and contact information; parks that have specific rentable spaces should be signed to promote those programs as well.



- *Community Parks:* Partner with the Ypsilanti Area Convention and Visitors Bureau on their in-progress area wayfinding program. Updated signage for Riverside, Frog Island, Parkridge, and Recreation parks, as well as directional signage to these parks, their parking areas, and entrances, may be able to be incorporated in this program.
- *Riverside Park:* Riverside Park has many public access points: Cross Street on both sides of the bridge near the river, an access easement at 130 N Huron St, the Riverside Arts Center West Link, and Michigan Avenue on the west side of the river. Signage at the Cross Street and Michigan Avenue entrances has faded, and is in need of repair; signage on Huron Street, including directional signage, is completely absent. Although these entrances could remain understated- secret entrances of sorts – signing them has the potential to connect park users to downtown, and residents and visitors to the park more strongly. Improving signage at the Cross and Michigan entrances, as well as considering adding signage on Huron, is a prioritized visibility upgrade. Directional signage from nearby major streets or intersections may be appropriate as well. Signage on the Tridge, guiding visitors between the park and Depot Town, could be improved, as could signage indicating the link to Frog Island.
- *Frog Island:* Although many visitors to Depot Town are familiar with the Frog Island parking lot, fewer are familiar with Frog Island Park. Frog Island is most visible from the intersection of Rice Street and Forest, but signage at this entrance is minimal and geared to pedestrians. The two entrances from the Frog Island parking lot are less visible due to landscaping; only one is signed. Signing all three entrances off Rice Street to an equal level will help improve the park's visibility. The pedestrian entrance from Cross Street is adequately signed for its purpose, but is in need of repair. Directional signage from nearby major streets or intersections, as well as from the Freighthouse and Market Plaza, may be

appropriate as well. Signage at the Tridge directing visitors to Riverside is in need of repair.

- *Parkridge*: Visitors to Parkridge Park from outside the neighborhood have access to two parking lots at the park's perimeter: to the south of Perry School on Perry Street; off Harriet, west of Perry School. Neighborhood residents and visitors can also access the park from off Armstrong Drive in the Parkridge Housing Complex, from the point at the intersection of Brooks and Monroe, and from the point at the intersection of Hawkins and Monroe. There is no signage at either the Brooks or the Hawkins entrance.
- *Peninsular*: There are two access points to Peninsular Park: the main pedestrian/vehicular entrance from LeForge to the east; and a pedestrian stairwell from Huron View Apartments to the north. As the stairwell is not a public access point, it needs no signage; however, signage at the LeForge Street entrance could be improved, and include directional signage from nearby major streets or intersections.
- *Prospect*: Prospect has only one identifying sign: a historic plaque at the Cross, Prospect, and Miles intersection. Signage in a similar style to that at other parks, such as Riverside, should be installed at this intersection as well as at the Prospect & Oak intersection. As it is used by the nearby Adams elementary school as a playground, and its picnic area is adjacent to a church, some form of signage indicating that it is a public City park is strongly recommended. Directional signage from nearby major streets or intersections, such as River/Cross in Depot Town, may be appropriate.
- *Ometha M. Smith Memorial Park*: This park along West Michigan Avenue is very visible. However, it sees little usage from any but Paradise Manor residents, as it is hidden behind both a layer of chain-link fence and a layer of wrought-iron fence. Potential users must access it through the adjacent Ypsilanti Housing Commission-owned Paradise Manor. Requesting that the Ypsilanti Housing Commission remove the interior chain link fence would increase the available play area and improve its presentation to the street.
- *The Spanish-American War Memorial, Edith Hefley Tot Lot, Ainsworth Park, Carrie R Mattingly Tot Lot, and Haab Brothers Memorial Park*: All of these parks lack adequate signage; some have no signage at all. These parks should be signed if they are to continue as parks.
- *Charles Street Tot Lot*: Of all of the tot lots, this location is the only one that has signage consistent with that at other City parks. However, this signage is in need of repair.
- *Pavilions, gazebos, and other park facilities available for rent*: Currently, the City does not publicize facility rental information anywhere but the website, although it is a long-standing program. Facility and park rental information is spread through either the Convention & Visitors Bureau, for large events, or via word-of-mouth, for smaller or private events. By placing signs with rental and reservation information in relevant locations, the City can raise awareness of this service.
- *Nonmotorized connections*. In several subdivisions within the City, such as Gerganoff and Ainsworth, the original developer deeded small lots to the City for use as nonmotorized connections to other neighborhoods. Some of these small lots have been neglected by the City and encroached upon by neighbors, others have simply been forgotten, still others are used for their original purpose. None are signed. Each should be evaluated to see if it still can provide a valuable connection; if not, disposition or vacation options should be explored.

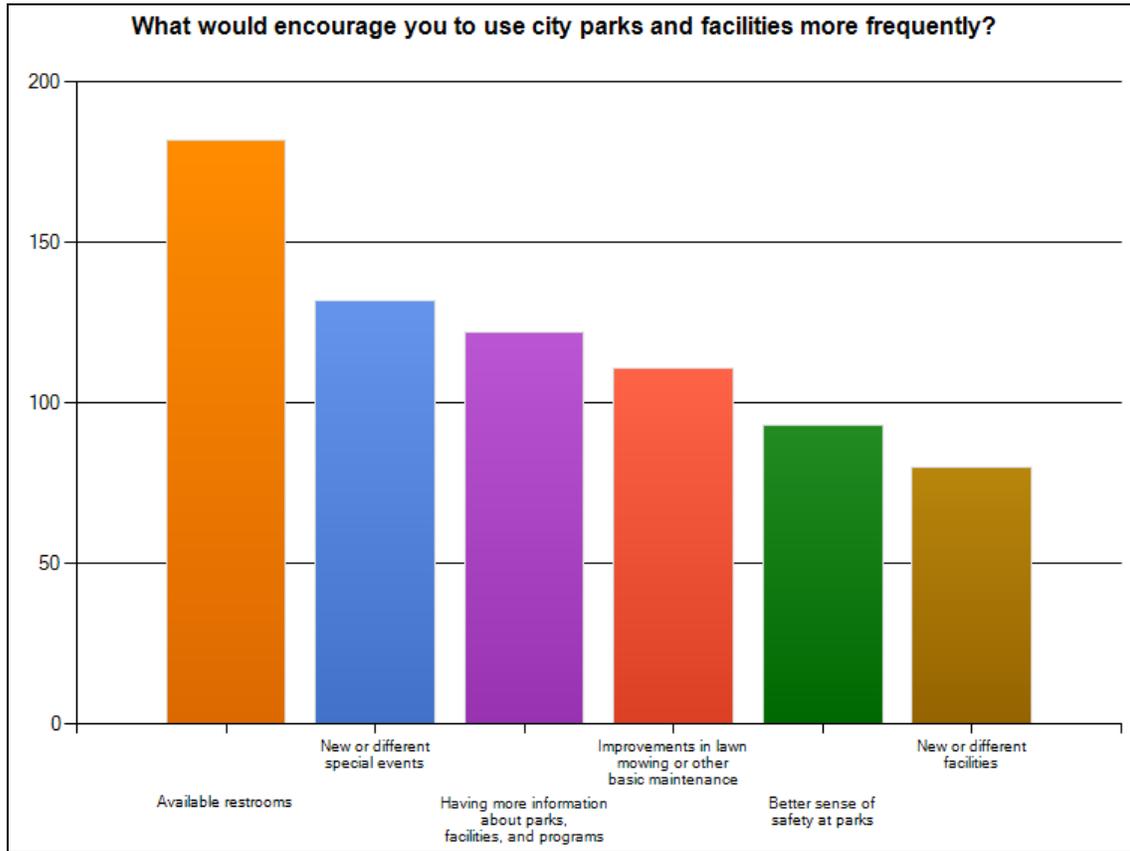
**Objective 3: Ensure that each park presents a well-maintained and clean image.** Each park should have adequate waste collection facilities and pickup, and all facilities should be kept free of graffiti, well-maintained, and in good operating condition. Research has shown that well-maintained parks and open spaces have a net positive impact upon neighboring properties. Generally speaking, large natural areas have the greatest net positive impact, and smaller playgrounds have the smallest impact. In all cases, poorly maintained parks had a negative impact on property values. Beautifying the parks, then, has a net positive impact upon property values, as well as contributing to overall quality of life.

- *Improve maintenance, either through engaging additional volunteers, adding staff time, or a combination of both.* The majority of the City's parks contain picnic pavilions, playgrounds, or other structures, as well as some landscaping or plantings. Many of the structures are in need of significant repair or replacement, which will be addressed elsewhere, but until repair or replacement is feasible, cosmetic maintenance issues could be addressed. Engaging volunteers for beautification projects, such as those below, could help both maintain the facilities and increase the sense of community ownership around these facilities.
  - Peeling/rusting paint on signage and structures is addressed in annual maintenance schedules, but is often de-prioritized as other projects take precedence. Regular scraping and repainting of structures and facilities, perhaps as part of Ypsi PRIDE Day, should be encouraged.
  - Landscaping maintenance, including weeding, planting, and invasive species removal, are also regular maintenance tasks that are often de-prioritized for other concerns. These are often part of Ypsi PRIDE Day, but often entirely volunteer-initiated and guided, with little or no oversight or direction from the City. Working to integrate these volunteer efforts into longer-term or broader landscaping plans should help to alleviate potential conflicts and improve the overall appearance of the parks.
  - Regular annual or seasonal inspections should be performed with an eye for these and other issues that can be addressed by volunteers. The results of these inspections should guide both volunteer and staff workplans and budgets for the year, and include the beautification issues described above.
- *Improve waste collection in all parks.* Community Parks, such as Riverside, could benefit from additional, strategically placed waste cans. Recycling options could also be explored in these parks. Neighborhood Parks, such as Prospect, could benefit from optimizing trashcan placement, adding waste cans, and possibly adding recycling options. Placement of waste cans in mini-parks should be evaluated on a case-by case basis. Placement of waste cans in all parks should be evaluated on two major criteria: where waste is generated (picnic areas, parking areas, entrances/exits, trail midpoints), and where those waste cans will be accessible to staff for removal. Inaccessible waste cans will have a tendency to overfill or be vandalized; waste cans not located near waste generation areas will be underutilized. Waste generation areas without waste cans will contribute to litter issues.
  - Volunteers could be engaged for periodic litter cleanup days. However, if litter cleanup days need to be scheduled more frequently than every month, this could be taken as an indicator that there could be more waste cans, that the existing waste cans are placed suboptimally, or that schedules should be altered to include regular Monday or after-holiday pickups.

- Special events could be encouraged to make use of outside organizations in clean-up efforts as well. Various service organizations and/or non-profits will often be willing to field volunteers in exchange for a donation; this amount may reduce the monetary cost of cleanup to the special event and the time cost of cleanup to the City.
- *Relocate or renovate the Recycling Center.* The recycling center at 651 Rice Street sees heavy traffic on the three days per week when it is open, and occasional dumping on those days when it is not. A high fence surrounds it, screening the interior quite well, but neither the structures nor the fencing complement its context adjoining Depot Town, one of the City’s most prominent parks, and the Border-to-Border Trail. The area upon which it sits could be converted to additional parking, or used to enhance the central entrance to Frog Island. As EMU handles many of the same recyclable items through its Physical Plant, any renovation or relocation should be executed with them as a partner.

**Objective 4: Ensure all parks, park shelters, trails, and other facilities are physically accessible to people of all ages and ability levels.** As more people are able to use the parks, more people will use the parks. Each park in Ypsilanti needs at least some level of accessibility upgrades. It may be best to focus on improving one park at a time, thus ensuring, for instance, that an accessible play structure is not obstructed by a lack of an accessible trail, sidewalk, or ramp.

Accessibility Improvements Needed, by Park.					
Park Name	Entrance	Pavilion	Parking lot	Trails	Play Areas
Riverside	north, west, and south	link to trails	ensure barrier-free spaces marked	ensure even surface	n/a
Frog Island	north, east, and south + sidewalk along Rice	n/a	north parking lot	ensure even surface and slopes within acceptable ADA limits	n/a
Recreation	No improvements needed	link to trails	ensure barrier-free spaces near attractions	ensure even surface	upgrade to accessible play equipment and surfacing
Parkridge	southern entrances	link to trails	provide accessible parking at all entrances that are adjacent to parking	ensure even surface and slopes within acceptable ADA limits	upgrade to accessible play equipment and surfacing
Candy Cane	create sidewalk along Roosevelt; make entrance from parking area	link to trails	delineate and ensure barrier-free spaces marked	create a trail system, link to north entrance	upgrade to accessible play equipment and surfacing
Peninsular	from LeForge & portage	link to trail	ensure barrier-free spaces marked, surface barrier-free	install trails, link to waterfront + water trail. Install barrier-free portage in the long term.	n/a
Prospect	No improvements needed	link to trails and parking area	link to trails/sidewalk; surface	ensure ADA-compliant ramps at corners/crossings	upgrade to accessible play equipment and surfacing
Waterworks	create sidewalk along Catherine	link to (new) sidewalk &/or parking lot	ensure barrier-free spaces and even surface provided	n/a	n/a

**GOAL 2: PROVIDE PARKS THAT MEET YPSILANTI'S RECREATION NEEDS.**

**Source: 2012 Survey**

**Objective 1: Ensure existing facilities can continue to meet the needs of park users.**

- *Develop a parks-specific maintenance and capital improvement plan, to be integrated with the larger City-wide Capital Improvements Plan.* Such a document would help to guide budget, staffing, and maintenance scheduling internally. This document could also help to provide transparency to the public regarding both budgeting decisions and maintenance concerns. This document would also guide the equipment replacement and facility upgrade schedule and budget.
- *Continue to perform regular, scheduled safety inspections of playground and sports equipment, repairing, removing, or replacing equipment as necessary and as resources permit.* Playgrounds are heavily used, and are evaluated on a regular basis by a Certified Playground Inspector on staff to ensure that they are safe to use. However, several playground facilities are more than 20 years old, do not conform to current play equipment standards, require frequent maintenance, are inaccessible to children and caregivers with mobility disabilities, or may be limited to children of certain age groups. An inventory of these deficient facilities will help to inform the Capital Improvements plan, as well as annual budgets and workplans.
- *Perform annual safety inspections of picnic pavilions.* All of the picnic pavilions are more than 20 years old and need significant repairs. Several pavilions have closed-off restrooms and roofs and support structures in need of repair or replacement. It may be that many of

these structures are at the end of their useful lives. The cost to renovate or remove and replace these facilities – or simply remove – should be considered as a capital cost that will be incurred within the next five to ten years.

- *Perform annual or seasonal inspections of electrical systems used in festivals and events.* Festivals in Riverside Park are challenged by insufficient or unreliable power hookups, which can be damaged during storm and flooding events. By providing reliable, controllable electrical service for events, the City can help foster their growth and success. Costs for this maintenance should be included in the fees charged to the events that use the electrical system.
- *Institute a “move in and move out” checklist for large events, such as Class III and IV events.* This will help to ensure that developing maintenance concerns can be addressed promptly.
- *Work with Friends groups, Adopters, and regular event-holders to help ensure the ongoing maintenance of facilities such as the Freighthouse, the Rutherford Pool, Parkridge Community Center, ballfields, and community garden areas.* This may take the form of an annual meeting with these partners to develop a workplan, or periodic check-ins before and after major events to address maintenance issues as they arise. The Recreation Commission, City staff, and partners should reference MOUs, Adopt-A-Park agreements, Special Events agreements, or other similar documents to ensure that expectations on both sides are clear and well understood.
- *Address ongoing stormwater issues in Riverside and Frog Island Parks.* Both of these parks are adjacent to the Huron River and only slightly above its banks. Both have issues with flooding in low-lying areas, but the issue is more pronounced in Riverside Park, as a portion of this park is in the FEMA-designated floodway. Flooding in Riverside, at its worst, can strand fish in the parks, but even during the most mild storm event, drainage issues including standing water present themselves. In Frog Island Park, flooding is usually limited to the track, which is the lowest point in the park. The flooding can complicate both everyday use of the parks and scheduled events, and presents significant maintenance challenges – use of the parks during or after a storm event can result in damage to the turf, trees, and trails. Stormwater controls could be placed in these parks directly, but depending on the type of control used, could be located upstream, perhaps in the Railroad Street property. Diverting stormwater from the storm drain system and into retention, detention, or infiltration systems throughout the City would also benefit water levels in the parks.
- *Revisit lease of Parkridge Park from the Ypsilanti Housing Commission and Ypsilanti Community School District.* The City leases Parkridge Park to ensure continuing service and accountability. This lease enables the City to spend grant monies in the park, and grants that have been used in this park require that the City maintain either a lease or an ownership interest in perpetuity.

**Objective 2: Ensure that parks are safe and appear to be safe.**

- *Lighting should be consistently provided in parks.* This should be done in such a way as to improve safety- both from crime and from other hazards- without impacting light levels in surrounding neighborhoods. Lighting should be energy-efficient, cost-effective, and context-sensitive; solar lighting should be considered for long-term sustainability.
  - *Community Parks:* Lighting under pavilions, at entrances, and along paths.

- *Neighborhood Parks:* Lighting under pavilions, at entrances. Lights could be placed on a timer, be motion-sensitive, or a combination of the two.
- *Mini-parks:* The need for lighting should be assessed on a per-park basis for these smaller parks.
- *Improve sightlines.* The lack of a clear field of vision around areas such as pavilions, parking areas, or even bends in trails can lead to people feeling unsafe.
  - Brush and overgrown landscaping affects sightlines in several parks, especially at park borders and entrances. Regular clearing of this brush will not only improve sightlines but also reduce litter accumulation by these overgrown areas, helping to present a well-maintained image for the park. Areas that need clearing can be identified during annual inspections and recommended as projects for volunteers; borders with rights-of-way or parking areas should be prioritized over those with private property, unless an alternate screening method is provided. In some areas, these overgrown areas could be replaced with tended gardens, but volunteer stewards should be secured for gardened areas.
  - Most of the picnic pavilions in the City are open on at least three sides. When renovating or replacing these facilities, maintain that open character.
- *Address vandalism issues promptly and thoroughly.* The Department of Public Services currently responds to issues of vandalism as staffing permits. This effort should be continued and intensified, and could be expanded as part of volunteer beautification efforts. Efforts to reduce vandalism, such as using easy-to-repair surfaces when renovating or reconstructing equipment and facilities, or increasing enforcement, should also be continued as the budget permits.
- *Create sound standards, and investigate dedicated sound system for events to ensure compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods.* Ypsilanti's parks host events that engage residents and the region, including the Heritage Festival, Michigan Summer Beer Festival, Elvisfest, and many others. However, these events have the potential to be a nuisance to neighbors, particularly where amplified music is featured. Creating and enforcing clear standards for sound levels during events can help prevent nuisances. Where regular events are held or anticipated, such as the amphitheater in Frog Island Park, a dedicated sound system or even a set of standard layouts may be appropriate. Consider issuing an RFP to secure design services for this project, with an emphasis on ensuring the standards are easy to understand and follow as well as being effective, and scalable for large and small events alike.

**Objective 3: Provide upgrades to the parks that increase their long-term durability and reduce operation costs.**

- *When renovating pavilions or other structures in the parks, consider long-term maintenance and operating costs.* An initial investment in better-quality or different materials may be able to present significant savings in the long-term. These can be included in the Capital Improvements Plan, referenced in Objective 1. Some examples include:
  - metal roofs, which may require less ongoing maintenance than do shingle roofs;
  - solar power, which can offset the cost of lighting and seasonal electric uses;
  - careful attention to structure placement and landscaping can reduce the need for powered lighting;

- use of weathering steel for structural supports can minimize the need for rust-removal and painting, but must be balanced against the likelihood of graffiti, as graffiti is difficult to remove from weathering steel.
- *Consider replacing decommissioned restrooms with accessible and durable facilities.* The restrooms as they currently exist- contained as part of the picnic pavilions – has proven not to be a sustainable solution in Ypsilanti. These restrooms had high maintenance costs and were frequently targets of vandalism. As accessible restrooms are in high demand in public spaces, any renovation of these spaces should consider reinstatement of restrooms. A potential model for a low-maintenance, highly-durable restrooms is the Portland Loo<sup>8</sup>.
- *Use landscaping to beautify the parks, help to provide shade, improve the ecology of the parks, and offset stormwater impacts.* In recent years, the City has been unable to provide landscaping services beyond simple mowing and tree/branch removal. Volunteers provide some landscaping, often via one-time spring plantings as part of Ypsilanti PRIDE. This service is valuable, but could be expanded. Some projects have already been identified by the plans for Riverside and Frog Island Parks in the 2008 Parks Plan (Appendix B); however, similar projects could suit other parks as well. Volunteers could be incorporated in all phases of a given project, or only during certain phases, depending on the project. Some examples include:
  - Invasive species removal, such as garlic mustard and buckthorn, and seed or plant in their stead native plants.
  - Streambank restoration efforts, including plantings, in Peninsular, Frog Island, Riverside, and Waterworks parks.
  - Slope stabilization plantings in Frog Island, Riverside, and Parkridge Parks.
  - Installation and maintenance of attractive perennial beds throughout the parks. These plantings could be purely aesthetic or serve other purposes, such as butterfly gardens, shade tree groves, rain gardens, or permaculture installations.
  - Lawn in little-used parts of the parks could be converted to low-maintenance prairie, reducing the amount of mowing needed; however, this should be balanced against the need for open space and visibility.
  - Raingardens could be designed, constructed, and maintained by volunteers.

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<sup>8</sup> City of Portland Environmental Services. (2012). *The Portland Loo*. Retrieved from <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/59293>

#### Objective 4: Provide upgrades to the parks that increase recreation opportunities.

- *Ensure each park has sufficient benches, picnic tables, waste cans, lighting, and bike parking.* Many parks, but not all, already have these features. Parks that already have these amenities may not have enough, or enough in good repair. Parks without these features may be underutilized due to the lack. Ensuring that each park has enough of these amenities, as well as other park-specific amenities, can help to ensure that the parks remain useful in the years to come.

#### Riverside

- *Pursue implementation of the site plan proposed in the 2008 Parks & Recreation Master Plan, included in Appendix B. This plan includes a proposal for construction of a new pavilion and removal of the existing pavilion; extensive shoreline improvements, including river overlooks and streambank stabilization projects; integration of the parcel at the intersection of Huron and Cross; extensive stormwater controls; trail improvements, including improvements for events service; and an accessible children's play area. In particular, residents and visitors have expressed the most interest in stormwater improvements and a new children's play area. Of necessity, stormwater control should be pursued before any additional projects or impervious surfaces are added, but planned with these future projects in mind, as was presented in the 2008 plan. The plan should be updated to reflect the changed bridge location.*



#### Frog Island

- *Pursue implementation of the site plan proposed in the 2008 Parks & Recreation Master plan, included in Appendix B. This plan includes improvements to spectator seating at the soccer/football field, streambank and stormwater improvements, entrance improvements at the north, east, and south entrances, path improvements, a fishing pier, and improvements to the existing amphitheater.*

### **Recreation Park**

- *Pave walking path around park; ensure that the path width is a consistent ten feet wide and that the grade meets accessibility standards.*
- *Resurface former tennis courts- currently basketball courts – and remove curbing or provide fencing around the perimeter.* The former tennis courts in Prospect Park have been able to serve as a vital flex space due to the fencing around them. They've hosted sports, such as roller hockey and bike polo, where keeping the puck or ball within the space is vital, as well as a skatepark, where keeping control of the site and its fixtures is required. Basketball hoops could easily remain in place; the addition of fencing could help to ensure that less-experienced basketball players, such as children, spend less time chasing the ball. There should be a minimum of two entrances to the court, and the fence should be between 8 and 10 feet tall. The existing curb, once intended to allow the courts to serve as an ice skating rink in winter months, has deteriorated and is a tripping hazard and barrier to entry. Furthermore, winter temperatures have not been cold enough for long enough to ensure a safe skating surface. Regardless of fence installation, the curb should be removed.
- *Work to improve stormwater drainage in the open playing fields to the south of the Rutherford Pool and baseball fields.* Currently, this portion of the park does not drain well, leading to issues with standing water. There are storm drains located within Recreation Park; portions of the park could be regarded to drain to these areas. In areas where regarding is impractical, either due to the extent of regarding needed or the distance, explore providing raingardens or vegetated drainage swales.
- *Remove or repair nonfunctional lighting poles.*
- *Repair or replace outfield fencing.*
- *Work with YCSD to ensure the play equipment is maintained and replaced as needed.*

### **Parkridge Park**

- *Install picnic tables &/or benches and shade trees near the play area in southwest area of the park.* Providing areas for guardians, family, and friends to sit and observe children at play helps to foster a safe environment.
- *Ensure play area includes play equipment suitable for children of all ages.* Currently, much of the play equipment present is for children younger than five years old; play equipment for older children should be added as well.
- *Finish and landscape the parking areas off of Monroe Street, or close curb cuts and use as pedestrian entrances.* Consider using a permeable system such as GrassPave for any areas to be used as parking. Coordinate this effort with the churches along this street.
- *Create ADA-accessible connections to Monroe Street via paved pathways.* By improving the pedestrian connections with the neighborhood to the south, not only the multifamily housing to the east and west, a wider array of people will be able to use the park.

### **Candy Cane**

- *Install an accessible pathway through Candy Cane, linking the pavilion, the existing sidewalk to the north, the playground, and the proposed sidewalk to the south.*
- *Replace play equipment.*

### ***Peninsular Park***

- *Create a barrier-free walking path along the Huron River and around the park.* Consider using GrassPave, GravelPave, or another stable, ADA-accessible permeable substance to do so, and ensuring that the pathway is clearly marked.
- *Replace the existing floating dock upstream of the dam with one that is accessible.* Universal design floating docks are available; although they are slightly more expensive to purchase and install than inaccessible docks, ensuring that the amenities of the park and the river are fully accessible is important given both Ypsilanti's and the surrounding area's demographics.
- *Install an accessible dock downstream of the dam.* Preserve fishing access at this point; currently, the concrete dock is a very popular fishing spot.
- *Work with local stakeholders such as volunteer groups to install functional plantings, such as butterfly/pollinator gardens and raingardens, as well as interpretive and educational signage.* Volunteer groups should be able to commit to maintaining the plantings and signage for a minimum of five years; plantings can take three to five years to become fully established, and this time frame enables the group to establish and communicate a clear maintenance schedule for future volunteers or staff.
- *Seek a private partner for re-use of the historic Powerhouse.* An RFP could be issued for private development of the powerhouse, with the stipulation that it be for a recreation, education, or otherwise public use, including concessionaires. Many options exist for the powerhouse: ideas for re-use mentioned in public meetings for the Parks & Recreation Master Plan and the Master Plan included a river-oriented café, restaurant, or brewpub that also served as a concessionaire; a canoe/kayak livery; an industrial museum; or an environmental education center.
- *Continue to work with MDEQ and the HRWC to monitor the dam.* The dam in Peninsular Park will shortly be evaluated for safety; its condition should continue to be monitored. In the long-term, the City may wish to explore and compare the possibility of removing the dam, returning it to use generating hydropower, or allowing it to remain.

### ***Prospect Park***

- *Consider constructing an additional flex space.* A former tennis court on the north side of Prospect Park has been home to "pop-up" or temporary uses over the past five years, due to the adaptability of the paved, fenced space, and is currently a well-established skate park. Creating another flex space at Recreation Park on the west side of the City would provide another outlet for these types of activities. However, having a flex space available on the east side of the City is important; if the skate park continues to operate, the construction of a similar fenced and paved flex space should be explored.
- *Work with the skate park volunteer group on maintenance, improvement, and expansion projects.*
- *Repair the existing basketball courts.*
- *Work with Ypsilanti-area little leagues and/or other partners to renovate the existing ball diamond.* This open, shaded ball diamond, in need of maintenance and an outfield fence, could be restored to serve as a ball diamond, either for league play or for tee ball. Work with a little league or a similar partner to explore the possibility of restoring it and returning it to use.

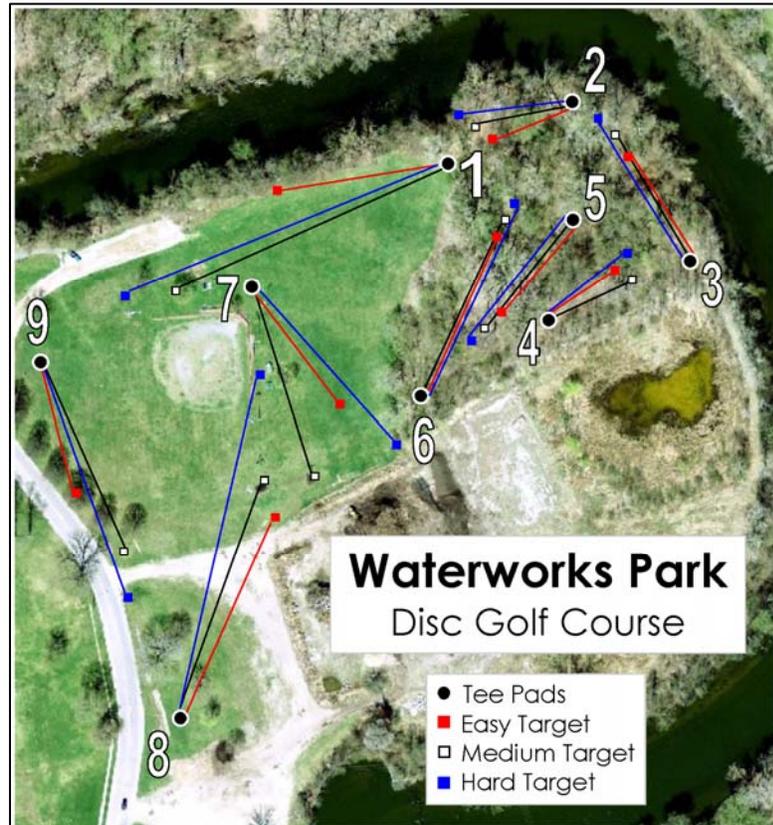
- *Work with YCSD to ensure the play equipment is maintained and replaced as needed.*

### **Waterworks Park**

- *Continue to work with the Ypsilanti American Little League and private partners to renovate the existing ball diamond. The YALL has expressed an interest in expanding the number of fields they play on to accommodate an expanding player base, and to this end, have adopted the Waterworks Park ball diamond and begun work. Continue to support these efforts.*

- *Continue to work with the Ann Arbor Area Disc Induced Sports Club (A3 Disc) to ensure the disc golf course is maintained. A3 Disc has recently reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring the disc golf course at Waterworks Park is maintained.*

- *Work with area stakeholders and potential partners such as Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation, dog-sitting or boarding services, and interested individuals to explore the need for, design of, and potential fundraising mechanisms for a dog park. In recent years, the City has seen several*



groups come forward to explore the possibility of locating a dog park or off-leash run within the City, as the nearest runs are located 5-8 miles away in nearby Ann Arbor. Waterworks Park seems a natural fit, as it has a half-acre of unused open space that would be relatively easy to fence off. Other parks have been considered and rejected due to their lack of available parking, space, or neighborhood support. Although half an acre is well below the American Kennel Club recommended minimum size of one acre<sup>9</sup>, the dog park will likely draw mainly local users, due in part to its relatively secluded location and limited parking facilities. Preliminary research indicates that a clear parking area, a minimum 8' tall chain link fence with at least one airlock-style entrance/exit, a covered trash container, and clearly posted rules may well be the only physical components needed for a dog park. However, programmatic elements such as insurance, funding, fees, rule development, rule enforcement, and maintenance need to be worked out before construction.

<sup>9</sup> American Kennel Club. Government Relations Department, (2008). *Establishing a dog park in your community* (GLEG01). Retrieved from website: <http://classic.akc.org/pdfs/GLEG01.pdf>

### **Tot Lots and Mini-Parks**

- *Replace aging play equipment.*

### **Border-to-Border Trail**

- *Ensure that the portions of the Border to Border trail that run through Frog Island and Riverside Parks are in good repair.* These trails should be widened and brought to current barrier-free standards.
- *Shift portions of the Border to Border trail that are split between bike lanes and sidewalks to shared-use paths wherever possible.* These splits are brief in some places – such as along Cornell St – and much longer in others – such as along Grove Street. Alternatives should be explored wherever possible; where alternatives do not exist, maintenance of both bike lanes and sidewalks should be a priority.
  - *Cornell:* It may be advantageous to create a shared-use path along the south side of Huron River Drive from Westview to Cornell. In the short and medium term, work with EMU to complete the non-motorized network along the east side of Cornell from Mayhew north to Huron River Drive, and work with property owners to prioritize sidewalk construction and maintenance along Cornell from Mayhew south to Washtenaw.
  - *Huron River Drive:* Eastern Michigan University has constructed and maintains a shared-use path along the south side of Huron River Drive for most of its length. However, significant gaps exist, primarily on private property between Westview and Cornell; in several places there are not even sidewalks. This would result in an easily-traversable neighborhood “loop” of the B2B trail, increasing access to the Border-to-Border Trail and the destinations along it, such as the parks, and encourage its use for not only recreation and fitness, but also transportation.
  - *Forest Street to Grove Road:* Efforts to connect the trail system in Frog Island and Riverside to South Grove Road are underway, via the Ypsilanti Heritage Bridge and the River’s Edge Linear Park and Trail projects, funded through grants from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust fund and the generous partnership with the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission, with contributions from the Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority. However, from approximately the middle of the 100 block of South Grove to the south boundary of the City, there will still exist a portion of the Border to Border trail that is split into bike lanes and sidewalks. The City should work with both the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission and the private property owners along the west side of the street to create a shared-use path in lieu of the sidewalk there.
- *Link the Border-to-Border Trail with the parks and to the nonmotorized transportation system.* Robust connections between the parks, Ypsilanti’s nonmotorized transportation network, and the Border to Border Trail would provide for easy access to and through the City and its parks by both visitors and residents. By connecting the Border to Border Trail with the parks not directly in its path, such as Parkridge, Recreation, and Candy Cane, via well-maintained sidewalks and bike lanes, we increase the accessibility of these parks. This is also a goal of the *Nonmotorized Transportation Plan (2010)*.

### ***Huron River Shoreline***

- *Continue assembling access and/or conservation easements on private shoreline.* This process relies on donations of easements by property owners either spontaneously or during the development or redevelopment process. Crucial easements, such as the one currently being pursued by the City as part of the Ypsilanti Heritage Bridge project, can be obtained on a project-by-project basis as funding allows. Easements for access should be particularly sought-after along the river where it would be advantageous for a shared-use path, such as the south shoreline parallel to Railroad Street, or along the west shoreline of the Huron River south of Factory Street; conservation easements should be sought in other cases, such as across the river from Frog Island, Riverside, and River's Edge.
- *Pursue opportunities to construct a riverfront trail system as they arise.* The completion of a riverfront path between LeForge Road and Forest Avenue continues to be a long-term recreation goal that is not likely to be achieved in the scope of this plan, as does one linking River's Edge and Waterworks to Ford Lake. However, the incremental assembly of riverbank access and construction of trails will need to continue to enable completion. As access easements along the riverfront are obtained, work to integrate them with the nonmotorized system, constructing trails as possible.
- *Consider development of certain City-owned properties along the Huron River, while preserving recreational access.* The City and its assigns, such as the Ypsilanti Economic Development Corporation (YEDC), currently own two parcels along the Huron River north of Forest Ave. The first, a vacant parcel at the end of Railroad Street, was acquired in 1994 from the MDNR by the YEDC. The other, a vacant parcel at the northwest corner of Superior and Huron River Drive, was formerly used by YCUA, and has been listed for sale by the City. Both parcels – or rather, portions of them - have significant recreation value; the Superior parcel due to its position near the Border to Border Trail and the Huron River, and the Railroad Street parcel due to its location along the Huron River and potential future use as a linkage between the Huron River shoreline trail and the Border to Border Trail in Frog Island. When these sites are redeveloped, ensure that both the shoreline and the trailway assets are protected and developed.

### **GOAL 3: WORK WITH VOLUNTEERS AND ORGANIZATIONS TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES TO CITY RESIDENTS**

One of the many strengths of Ypsilanti is its volunteers. Many individual volunteers, volunteer groups, nonprofits, and other organizations have come forth in the wake of ongoing budget cuts to help provide recreation programming, capital improvements, and maintenance in the City's parks. These efforts are greatly appreciated and widely admired in the community, but both these volunteers and the City have expressed a need for better coordination of activities and communication. The Commission wishes to pursue formalization of relationships between the City and the various entities working in the City parks and recreation facilities, in order to provide a clear channel for authorizing groups to undertake activities, reduce duplication of effort, clarify responsibility for costs and maintenance, provide liability coverage, and ensure effective communication.

#### **Objective 1: Improve relationships with entities that provide recreation opportunities within the City.**

- *Continue to formalize relationships wherein another entity is operating a city-owned facility.* Currently, the Rutherford Pool, the Freighthouse, and the Parkridge Community Center are

being operated by other entities under Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) for public uses that are the same or substantially similar to the City's. Such agreements set expectations for both parties and help to ensure continuity of services to the public. Evaluate the renewal of the Freighthouse MOU, which expires in spring 2014; pursue an MOU with the Friends of the Senior Center; and continue to pursue MOUs with other partners as opportunities arise.

- *Continue to help provide resources to established partners, such as expertise, historical information, and joint purchasing where feasible.* Although this plan document contains information about the individual parks and the parks system as a whole, space and time limitations prevent us from going in to the detail that organizations may need. By being poised to help provide information to partners, the City can help partners be successful, but can only do so within the constraints of available staffing and other resources.
- *Work with adjacent schools, daycare centers, and other institutions in parks improvements and maintenance.* Parkridge, Prospect, and Recreation Parks are all immediately adjacent to Ypsilanti Community School District buildings. Others, such as Riverside and Frog Island, are adjacent to churches and businesses. Still others may provide valuable outdoor space to daycare centers. As primary users of the parks, the school district, parent groups, and student groups, and other neighbors should be involved in the future of those parks. These stakeholders may provide insight into how to implement various recommendations from this plan, and may also be partners in programming and maintenance.
- *Coordinate with neighboring communities and the County to implement regional planning goals.* This plan identifies a number of regional plans relevant to the provision of recreation to Ypsilanti residents and visitors. These plans address regional needs and approaches to open space, non-motorized transportation, and mass transit. The City's limited resources may in some cases be most effectively used to cooperatively work towards these region-wide goals.

**Objective 2: Encourage volunteerism.**

- *Strengthen relationships with current volunteers and volunteer groups, and work to encourage new individual and group volunteers.* Currently, park adopters, neighborhood groups, and other volunteers receive sporadic feedback on project ideas and work, and are seldom recognized for their efforts. The Recreation Commission can work with staff to improve feedback and play a leadership role in working to strengthen the recruitment and recognition process.
- *Strengthen and streamline the Adopt-A-Park program.* The Recreation Commission launched the current Adopt-A-Park program in 2009. This has served the City well for organized groups who wish to perform recurring work in the parks, such as neighborhood associations, but is less suited to groups who wish to perform a single project or for individual one-time volunteers. Furthermore, the applications have no concrete standards for approval or denial: approval is at the discretion of the Recreation Commission and the Department of Public Services. Although this system has not yet presented any apparent problems, it does create uncertainty in those who may be otherwise eager to volunteer. This uncertainty limits the number of willing applicants. Work to create a standard list of projects that individual volunteers or small groups can undertake, create and share standards for successful applications, and work to streamline the application process for smaller projects. Keeping track of past projects and noting where they have succeeded or failed can help both to inform this process and future projects. Additional guidelines, such

as minimum recommended volunteer time commitment, should be considered for certain projects, such as plantings.

- *Create a volunteer manager position, or merge volunteer management responsibilities with a new position that will also coordinate Special Events.* One of the key components of many of this plan's objectives is a reliance on volunteer support and support from outside organizations. Currently, responsibility for working with volunteers is distributed: individual volunteers and smaller groups may coordinate directly with the Department of Public Services, or sometimes with DPS through the Recreation Commission via Adopt-A-Park. Events are coordinated through the Special Events Coordinator, but several recurring events, such as YALL, may also work directly with DPS through the Adopt-A-Park program. Other ongoing commitments, such as the tree nursery, are led by the Planning Department with DPS and outside consultant support; some, such as YMCA's use of the parks for day camps or the DT CDC's past efforts, are coordinated through City Council and the City Manager's Office. Prioritization of work is entirely based upon the volunteer group's interest and ability; there is currently no concerted effort to recruit or direct volunteers to prioritized projects. This lack not only fails to further City goals, it can also lead volunteers to feel devalued and disengaged from the "big picture".

Having one point of contact to help gather and disseminate information about City resources, volunteer opportunities, grant opportunities, media and publicity information; to integrate volunteer work with larger, long-term goals; to coordinate the efforts of disparate groups operating in overlapping spheres; and to provide recognition and feedback to both volunteers and staff could help the system reach its full potential. A volunteer manager could also coordinate volunteering by those uninterested in the perceived long-term commitment of the Adopt-A-Park program. Furthermore, concentrating this work in one position- rather than spreading it amongst departments – reduces the risk of miscommunication or duplication of effort, as well as reduces staff opportunity costs. A skilled volunteer manager would be able to maximize the potential of existing volunteers, both individual and organizational, retain existing volunteers, and encourage new volunteers. This could be a new staff position within the Department of Public Services or, with the right person, a volunteer position. Given current staffing levels and distribution of job responsibilities, it is highly unlikely that these job tasks could be rolled into an existing position; it is possible, however, to create a staff position that also assumes the duties of coordinating Special Events. Any such transition should be carefully handled and monitored, due to the many changes in the position and special events policies in recent years.

### **Objective 3: Continue to improve the Special Events and park reservations program.**

- *Increase the visibility of and publicize the Special Events program.* By ensuring that policies and standards for organizational use of parks, such as day camps or other special events, from family reunions to the Elvisfest, are public, clear, and consistent, the City has increased compliance with its standards and reduced confusion and misunderstandings. However, due to the changes in special events coordination since 2006, many potential events organizers are still unfamiliar with the process to stage a special event of any scale or frequency. Although many of those who serve as liaisons for potential organizers, such as the Convention and Visitor's Bureau, have been excellent partners in guiding events to the City's events coordinator, there remains a knowledge gap with the general public. A press release, plus a Frequently Asked Questions page on the website regarding park reservations, special events, and recurring events, may serve to increase use of this service, as well as signage in reservable spaces such as pavilions, ballfields, and the gazebo.

- *Ensure that the City website can be a resource to those seeking to volunteer, to reserve a park, or simply to find a park or an event.* The events and activities that take place in Ypsilanti's parks and recreation facilities are numerous, organized by many groups, and diverse. Many survey respondents stated that they did not know about the parks in the system or the amenities available at them, with many stating that they felt more information would encourage them to use the parks and programs more. Making this and other information easy to find, in a centralized location, is important for success. The Recreation Commission can, alone or with community partners, inventory recreational programs; publicize opportunities to reserve parks or facilities for private events; network with and coordinate various efforts within the city; and otherwise assume a facilitating role.
- *Continue to work with well-established partners to support and promote recreation in the City.* Partnerships with entities such as EMU, WCC, Ypsilanti Public School District, Ypsilanti Township, Washtenaw County, the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti Chamber of Commerce, the Ypsilanti Convention and Visitor's Bureau, the YMCA, and countless others have helped to ensure that there are recreation opportunities in Ypsilanti. The Ypsilanti Convention and Visitors Bureau in particular is instrumental in attracting and retaining many of the city's most popular events, such as the Michigan Brewer's Guild Summer Beer Festival and the Color Run.
- *Consider making the Special Events Coordinator a full-time temporary/seasonal position, or possibly combining the duties of this position with that of a Volunteer Manager.* Due to the complexities of the events and the demands of coordinating many disparate stakeholders and City departments, Special Events require quite a bit of dedicated time and attention. As the duties of special events coordination have been assumed by the Police Administrative Services Manager, the process has improved significantly, but places a significant time demand on that position, and may not be sustainable in the long-term. In the short term, explore taking on an intern to help with administrative tasks, perhaps from Eastern Michigan University's Recreation and Park Management Program.

Figure 6.1: PRIORITIZATION QUESTIONNAIRE	
Criteria	Points Awarded
Does this project align with or fulfill one of the stated goals of this plan?	10
Is the project a repair of an existing facility?	10
Is the project located in an area with an above-Ypsilanti-average concentration of...	
those living below the poverty level	5
the elderly	5
disabled persons	5
households with children	5
Is the project in an area not currently served by a similar park or facility? (choose only one)	
More than 1 mile away	5
More than ¾ mile away	4
More than ½ mile away	3
More than ¼ mile away	2
More than 1/8 mile away	1
Is the park or facility adjacent to a school or another public recreation facility?	5
Does the project remedy an issue that presents a significant barrier to access to the facility? (ex, curb cuts, paths, sidewalks)	5
Does the project remedy an issue that presents a significant barrier to use of the facility? (ex, bike parking, lighting, restrooms)	4
Does the project remedy a potential safety issue?	5
Has there been an incident(s) resulting in injury or property damage resulting from a deficiency in this project site, and would this project remedy that deficiency?	10
Is there immediate funding for the <i>total cost</i> of the project?	
The funding will pay for 100% of the project	5
The funding will pay for 75-100% of the project	4
The funding will pay for 50-75% of the project	3
The funding will pay for 25-50% of the project	2
The funding will pay for less than 25% of the project	1
Will this project have an impact upon the annual maintenance cost of the park or facility?	
Yes, the project will save more than 25% of the current annual maintenance budget for this park or facility	10
Yes, the project will save less than 25% of the current annual maintenance budget for this park or facility	5
This project will have little or no impact upon the current annual maintenance budget for this park or facility	0
This project will increase the cost of annual maintenance by less than 25% for this park or facility	-5
This project will increase the cost of annual maintenance by more than 25% for this park or facility	-10

## Chapter 6: Action Plan

### PRIORITIZATION

As Ypsilanti prepares to undertake the projects identified by this plan, it will need to prioritize. The questionnaire in Figure 6.1 may be useful in determining where to begin work, or how to evaluate projects as opportunities arise or budgets are decided. Projects which garner more points with “yes” answers are likely to have a more significant positive impact than those projects which garner fewer points with “no” answers. This questionnaire may also be useful when revisiting and revising this plan at the proscribed five-year intervals. The language in this questionnaire is designed to address not only financial ability or pressing facility repairs, but also to address issues of socioeconomic disparity, as provision of recreation infrastructure, or lack thereof, can often affect those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged to a much greater degree than those who are not, because their recreation choices may be far more constrained. However, this questionnaire should not be relied wholly upon to determine whether a project is worth pursuing: less quantifiable factors

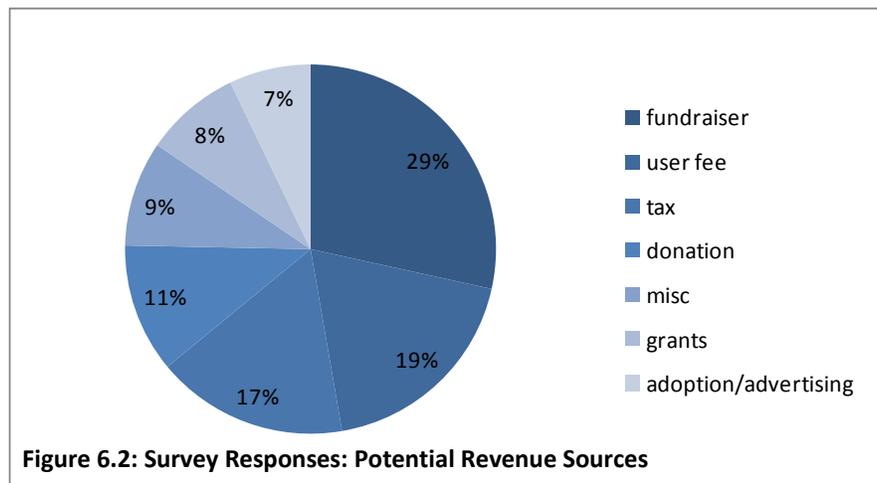
### POTENTIAL FUNDING APPROACHES

As the City of Ypsilanti’s budget has only continued to tighten, general fund expenditures on recreation improvements and operations have been reduced. Sustainable financing for our parks and recreation system outside of the general fund should be pursued. Although many of these have been used by the City at some point in the past, some would require action by voters, in cooperation with another agency, or by a higher level of government.

The City’s parks budget, wholly funded from the general fund, currently supports a minimal level of maintenance, including grass cutting and trash removal. If play equipment or other amenities become unsafe or are too damaged to use, the budget supports removal, but neither repair nor replacement. The vast majority of capital projects in the parks, including repaving of walking paths and repair of basketball and tennis courts, are funded through grants, donations, volunteer effort, or a combination of the three. No money is currently budgeted for recreation programming.

Survey respondents were asked how the City might raise additional money to pay for park and facility maintenance, improvements, or programming. Responses varied greatly. The majority of comments were positive, with diverse and innovative suggestions; others were negative, expressing dissatisfaction with current City and/or personal finances, a frustration with current level of service, or a combination.

Potential revenue streams suggested were diverse, but fell into several identifiable categories. These categories are adoption/advertising, wherein a person or a business donates a sum of money in return for acknowledgement;



donation, wherein a person or a business donates money for no other consideration; fundraiser, wherein a person or a business donates a portion of a larger purchase; grants; taxes, including income, property taxes as well as bonds; and user fees. Full results as well as classifications are in Appendix E.

## **ONGOING FUNDING**

### **General Fund**

Currently, all park and recreation activities that are funded by the City are done so through the General Fund. The amount budgeted has stabilized over the past years, but if no other funding sources have been identified to address deferred maintenance needs, this amount can be expected to increase to address significant maintenance issues.

### **Dedicated Property Millage**

A property tax millage can be used to finance either specific park and recreation projects, such as parkland enhancements or land acquisition, or the ongoing operation of recreation facilities. This option is available to local governments, counties, and regional authorities. The City of Ypsilanti does not currently levy a parks and recreation millage. At the current time, it appears that the current parks maintenance budget is roughly equivalent to the amount generated by 0.5 mills. The City, however, is capped at the amount that it can levy for operations at this time; it may only pursue a levy to pay debt already accrued.

By comparison, many neighboring communities do have a millage dedicated to parks and/or recreation. The City of Ann Arbor has a 1.1 mill dedicated property tax for parks maintenance and capital improvements, generating approximately \$5 million annually. Pittsfield Township has a 0.25 mill dedicated property tax for parks and recreation, generating approximately \$890,000 annually. Ypsilanti Township levies approximately 0.9 mills for sidewalks, paths, roads, and parks and recreation; notably, however, there is no minimum amount of the funds generated that must go towards parks and recreation. Further afield, the City of Wayne levies one mill and partners with the City of Westland to support their joint parks and recreation system. Garden City does not have a dedicated parks millage, but receives a small dedication from the Wayne County millage.

Regionally, Washtenaw County levies a tax of approximately 0.5 mills for parks and recreation and approximately 0.25 mills for natural areas preservation on all properties within Washtenaw County. The Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority, which controls the Huron-Clinton Metroparks, levies a tax of approximately 0.25 mills on all properties within Washtenaw, Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, and Livingston Counties. In total, Ypsilanti property owners currently pay approximately one mill for regional recreation opportunities.

### **Joint Recreational Authority**

As Ypsilanti residents use parks and recreation resources outside the community, and visitors from nearby communities use Ypsilanti's, regional cooperation could be explored. Chief among regional cooperation and funding models is a regional recreation authority, which could be formed with neighboring communities under Public Act 321 of 2000. This authority would have the ability to seek a regional millage, much as the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority has done, and would have the power to acquire, maintain, operate, and improve parks. As the authority's funding stream would be drawing funds from the same source as before- Ypsilanti's tax base, either via a general fund allocation from the City budget or via a direct millage- the primary benefit to this approach would be the regional coordination of resources and a more predictable revenue stream.

In the 1970s and '80s, The City participated in a joint recreation authority with Ypsilanti Township, called JYRO, limited to specific properties surrounding Ford Lake. Although the City and the Township could choose to participate together in another joint recreation authority, partners are not limited to those that share a geographic boundary, per the state act.

### **User Fees**

Some recreational activities lend themselves to support through user fees, and user fees are common for recreation facilities and programming locally, regionally, and even at state parks. User fees are fees that are charged to offset the cost of providing a space, service, or programming. Many survey respondents indicated that user fees could be a source of revenue for the parks.

The City and its partners do charge some user fees. Special events charges are user fees; as prior to claiming exclusive use of a park, pavilion, gazebo, or similar facility for any length of time, users must pay a fee. If additional services are required, such as police, fire, or waste removal, those too must be paid for. For certain classes of event that attract large numbers of people, or that serve alcohol, additional fees may be imposed to offset the additional wear and tear on the parks. Fees for such activities are set by the City Council annually.

Once a capital improvement plan is developed, the fee schedule for special events, including the capital improvements surcharge currently levied for certain events in Frog Island and Riverside Parks, can also be updated to account for those costs. As an example, assume a piece of equipment, such as a pavilion, is anticipated to need replacement within five years at a total cost of \$75,000, and is rented 25 times per year. We could divide the dollar cost of replacement by the total number of rentals- in this case,  $\$75,000 / (25 \times 5)$  – for a total of \$600 in capital fees per rental. An alternate equation would be to divide the anticipated cost of replacement over the total useful life of a structure. In this case, let us assume that a pavilion has a 20-year useful life and the cost to replace the pavilion is again \$75,000. Dividing that amount by the total number of uses in a 20 year period yields a more manageable \$150. Staff also notes that other factors can affect these capital costs, including but not limited to inflation, changing market forces, and even user demand, so this amortization, although relatively simple, is also only an approximation. As bearing the entirety of capital improvements through user fees may result in prohibitively high fees, we recommend that the Recreation Commission determine a target percentage of capital improvement costs to fund via user fees when recommending special events and parks reservation fees to City Council.

Many of the City's facility-operating Friends groups charge user fees as well. The Friends of the Rutherford Pool charges fees for admissions, programs, and facility rental; the Friends of the Senior Center charges for programming and facility rental; and the Friends of the Ypsilanti Freighthouse plan to charge a facility rental fee. The City does not have direct control over these fees, but could influence them, should it choose to alter terms of the memoranda of agreement under which such entities operate. These methods could include levying a fee on these entities to support capital improvement of the grounds, parking areas, or utilities, potentially causing user fees to be increased; requirements to establish a sliding fee scale for residents who cannot afford the full fee; or to establish a scholarship fund to ensure that residents who cannot afford fees at all can still participate.

Charging user fees is generally a fairly intuitive process and common experience, and was the second most popular potential revenue source discussed by survey respondents. Many respondents specifically mentioned adding fees that the City does not currently charge, including an annual pass or admission fee, similar to the Township and the State. Although this premise does have merit on its face, it is not a good fit for the City. The City prioritizes

providing access to its parks for all residents, and a fee has the potential to exclude many. Furthermore, such a fee would likely bring in very little revenue: the City's parks are generally accessible by walking, biking, or taking the bus, and often have many entry points or permeable boundaries. However, user fees should be borne in mind, should the City expand its scope of services or park holdings.

### **Lease Arrangements and Concessions**

Some communities successfully lease parkland or particular operations to private companies. These leases can take a variety of forms, ranging from leasing a small corner of a park to site a cell tower, to paying for the right to run a commercial canoe livery from a public park, operate a concessionaire, or other similar uses. Since Ypsilanti's current parkland is limited, leasing portions of parkland to private concerns should be carefully considered to ensure that it does not impede the park's ability to serve the community in addition to providing a service in high demand that the City cannot otherwise offer.

A clear and public process to evaluate any proposal to operate a private business on publicly-owned land should be followed. A three-step approach could be used to evaluate these proposals. First, the business interested in locating in a park should come before the Recreation Commission. The Recreation Commission can evaluate the proposal in the context of the Recreation Plan, current and past grant obligations, and other current projects, then make a recommendation to City Council as regards the proposal. City Council may then hear the proposal and decide whether to enter into an agreement with the business. Any agreement made between the business and the City should be made contingent upon the project receiving approval in the third, administrative step of the process; construction of new facilities or establishment of a new use, for instance, could require a Capital Improvements or site plan review by Planning Commission; building plan review, or even Michigan Department of Environmental Quality wetlands permit review. This or a similar process will help to ensure that opportunity for public involvement and scrutiny exists.

## **PROJECT-BASED**

### **Federal Funding Programs**

A number of federal programs provide money that may be used for recreation-related projects. For example, Ypsilanti has used **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** funds for facility repair and capital improvements; and **Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)** funds for the urban forestry initiative, including tree canopy inventory and tree nursery. Each of these funds is limited in the types of projects that it can be used for, and may place long-term obligations upon the projects funded.

### **State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources Grants**

The **Natural Resources Trust Fund (NRTF)** utilizes royalties from oil, gas, and other mineral developments on state-owned lands to help finance the acquisition and development of outdoor recreation facilities. Matching local funds are required in the amount of at least 25% of the total project cost. Two types of projects are supported by this grant: acquisition of land for outdoor recreation, and development of land for outdoor recreation. Both types of projects proposed under this program should be directed towards helping meet statewide goals, including natural resource protection, water access, urban recreation, economic development, trails, and community recreation. A state-approved recreation plan is a prerequisite for applying for this grant.

The **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)** is funded at the federal level by receipts from offshore oil and natural gas. Grants are then made to states, which then may make grants to subordinate, units of government. In Michigan, the granting body is the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. This program provides funds on a 50/50 reimbursable matching basis for the development of outdoor recreation facilities. Funds are awarded once per year. The local share of a project can be cash, approved donations of service and material, credit for locally assumed costs, and/or donations after project approval. The minimum grant amount is \$15,000 and the maximum grant amount is \$500,000. A state-approved recreation plan is a prerequisite for applying for this grant.

The **Recreation Passport** grant program may only be used for local development projects. The program is focused on renovating and improving existing parks, but development of new parks is eligible. The minimum grant request amount is currently \$7,500, and the maximum amount is \$45,000. This amount changes from year to year depending upon the amount of revenue generated from sales of the Recreation Passport, which replaced the Motor Vehicle Permit for state park entrance in 2010. Matching funds are required in the amount of at least 25% of the total project cost. A state-approved recreation plan or current five-year capital improvements plan is a prerequisite for applying for this grant.

All of the above grants require that previously received Department of Natural Resources grants be in good standing. This means that all previously-funded improvements, be they trails or tennis courts, be in useful physical condition and in the form originally approved by the granting body. Should such a facility be closed, removed, or significantly altered, referred to as a "conversion" by the DNR, the City is obligated to restore it or replace it. Thus, DNR grants should not be sought to fund improvements that are not intended to be permanent. Furthermore, selling parkland that has been improved by a DNR grant is prohibited; and changing the use of any part of a DNR-funded park from outdoor or indoor recreation to another use is also prohibited. There are methods to remedy or address these issues, but such situations should be avoided.

### **Special Assessment Districts**

Although the majority of Ypsilanti's budget is drawn from property taxes, the amount of tax-exempt land has a significant impact upon the City's finances. As many tax-exempt properties benefit either directly or indirectly from the parks system, capturing monies to support access and improvements to these assets could offset free rider costs. One such tool to do so would be a special assessment district. A potential use for special assessments could be for improvements at the neighborhood tot lots, such as Edith Hefley, Charles Street, or Carrie Mattingly, where the benefits of improvements would overwhelmingly accrue to residents of the immediate neighborhoods. As the City has applied special assessment districts only sparingly in the past, and many of these parks may be relatively unknown, extensive neighborhood outreach would need to take place, and public support for the project and its scope would need to be garnered prior to any action.

### **Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority**

Two of the City's Community Parks, Frog Island and Riverside, are wholly or partially within Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Tax Increment Finance (TIF) districts. Due to legislative restrictions, DDAs may only spend money within their boundaries, and only on projects described in their TIF plans, created when those TIFs were enacted. As such, the potential the YDDA has to be involved in the parks system as a whole is constrained, but support can be sought for certain projects in Frog Island, the Freighthouse and Market Plaza, Riverside Arts Center, River's Edge, and portions of Riverside as they arise, provided they

conform to goals set forth in the TIF plans. These TIF plans are available on the YDDA's website. As TIF plans are revised and renewed, such as the upcoming Depot Town TIF plan renewal, opportunities should be sought to integrate parks and recreation goals into the plan that support or complement DDA goals.

### **Leverage Private Development**

Private development can also help to satisfy the demand for a complete recreation system. As development occurs near desired amenities, such as planned right-of-ways for the Border-to-Border Trail or water resources such as the Huron River, the City can work with the developer to obtain access or conservation easements. Furthermore, if multifamily residential development occurs, the City can work with the developer to ensure that adequate open space is provided and encourage the provision of outdoor play areas for children. As these arrangements tend to benefit the City, its inhabitants, and the developer, private developers are often willing to help provide these public goods.

### **Private Partnerships and Grants**

Businesses, corporations, private clubs, community organizations and individuals may contribute to recreation and other improvement programs to benefit their communities. Private sector contributions may be in the form of financial contributions; the donation of land, equipment, or facilities; or the provision of volunteer services.

A number of recent projects in Ypsilanti have been funded by donations or foundation grants made either to the City or private groups. The Friends groups attached to various facilities are almost entirely funded in this way, and a number of one-time projects are completed through grant funding.

### **Potential partners or resources (see Appendix G):**

- Aetna Foundation Obesity Prevention Grant Program
- Allen Foundation
- Allstate Foundation Grants
- American Express
- Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation's Ypsilanti Community Fund
- Ann Arbor Arts Alliance
- ArtPlace
- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Baseball Tomorrow Fund
- Bikes Belong Coalition Grants
- Bill Bowerman Track Renovation Program
- Build A Bear Workshop
- Campbell Soup Foundation
- Corporation for National & Community Service
- Darden Restaurants Foundation Grants
- Detroit Lions Charities
- Detroit Pistons Basketball Company Contributions Program
- Detroit Red Wings Inc.: Red Wings in the Community
- Detroit Tigers Community Outreach
- Finish Line Youth Foundation
- Hasbro Children's Foundation
- Home Depot Foundation
- Kaboom! Playground Opportunities
- The Kresge Foundation
- Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation

- Michigan Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Grants
- Miracle's Grants for America's Children
- National Recreation and Park Association
- National Center for Boundless Playgrounds
- NFL Charities Youth Education, Recreation, and Physical Fitness Grants
- Nike Donations Corporate Giving Program
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Safeco Community Grants
- Saucony Run for Good Foundation
- Trust for Public Land
- United States Soccer Foundation Grants
- USA Football Association
- Wal-Mart
- Women's Sports Foundation Funding Opportunities

### **Equipment Suppliers**

It may be useful to review the catalogs of these and other equipment manufactures to get a sense of pricing, accessibility, and availability. Note that site work, including surfacing, grading, and installation, is a separate cost. Note that all play equipment supplied in the parks must conform to certain state and national standards. Generally speaking, play structures designed for personal or family use, often purchased at national retailers, do not conform to those strict standards of safety and accessibility. Note that this is not a comprehensive list of equipment suppliers, nor does it constitute an endorsement of any particular product or supplier.

- Recreation Creations, LLC (Michigan-based)
- Superior Play, LLC (Michigan-based)
- BCI Burke
- BYO Recreation
- Flaghouse
- Gametime
- Kids Gotta Play
- Landscape Structures, Incorporated

## IMPLEMENTATION

This section summarizes the overall system recommendations as well as specific improvements to specific parks, grouped by objective. Parks-specific improvements grouped by parks are listed with the parks in Chapter 3. Some are multi-year efforts that will involve time and coordination, while others are improvements that require largely monetary investment. Priorities should be reviewed annually by the Recreation Commission, and recommendations made by them to City Council. These priorities and recommendations should take into account updated findings and conditions, available funding sources, and volunteer or partner availability, interest, and involvement. Costs should be closely monitored, as the proposed plan estimates are simply that- rough estimates of price ranges. No quotes or bids have been solicited for any of these projects at this time. Actual costs for each project will be more specifically determined as site surveys and engineering or construction plans are develop, as applicable, as well as further analysis of the proposed improvement. If funding levels are lower than required to implement the Plan based on the schedule provided, the implementation could be stretched over additional years.

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE
<b>GOAL 1: ENSURE PARKS ARE ATTRACTIVE AND ACCESSIBLE</b>			
<b>Objective 1: Ensure safe routes to parks and recreation facilities from neighborhoods, schools, and business districts, for people of all ability levels.</b>			
Frog Island, Freighthouse & Market Plaza			
Construct sidewalk along west side of Rice Street.	\$\$	★	✓
Construct pedestrian crossing from Frog Island parking to Freighthouse at Market Street.	\$	★	✓
Riverside Park			
Move gate at top of north entrance to end of parking area.	\$	★	✓
Install bollards along drive (both sides) to prevent unauthorized access.	\$	★	✓

**Cost:** \$ = <\$50,000; \$\$ = \$50-150,000; \$\$\$ = >\$150,000 | **Volunteer Involvement:** ★ = minimal, <25%; ★★ = moderate: 25-75%; ★★★ = high, >75%

**Time to Complete:** ✓ = 1-3 years; ✓✓ = 3-5 years; ✓✓✓ = >5 years; (∞) = ongoing

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE
Construct ADA-compliant barrier-free access from street sidewalk at north and south ends of park.	\$	★	✓
<b>Recreation Park</b>			
Connect walking track to sidewalk along Woods Road at both east and west ends.	\$	★	✓
<b>Candy Cane</b>			
Construct sidewalk along Roosevelt Street frontage.	\$	★	✓
<b>Waterworks</b>			
Construct sidewalk along Catherine Street frontage; continue to Factory Street.	\$	★	✓
<b>Edith Hefley Tot Lot</b>			
Construct sidewalk along Elm Street frontage.	\$	★	✓
<b>Ometha M. Smith Memorial Park</b>			
Work with the Ypsilanti Housing Commission to construct an accessible entrance.	\$	★	✓
<b>Haab Brothers Memorial Park</b>			
Construct sidewalk on both sides, to Factory Street.	\$	★	✓ ✓

**Cost:** \$ = <\$50,000; \$\$ = \$50-150,000; \$\$\$ = >\$150,000 | **Volunteer Involvement:** ★ = minimal, <25%; ★★ = moderate: 25-75%; ★★★ = high, >75%  
**Time to Complete:** ✓ = 1-3 years; ✓ ✓ = 3-5 years; ✓ ✓ ✓ = >5 years; (∞) = ongoing

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE
North Bay Park			
Construct accessible crossing of driveway north of bridge over I-94, and sidewalk from driveway to bridge.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓ ✓
<b>Objective 2:</b> Ensure each park has a visible presence, entrance, and sign on adjacent rights-of-way.			
Community Parks			
Partner with the CVB to provide wayfinding signage for Riverside, Frog Island, Recreation, and Parkridge Parks.	\$\$	★	✓
Riverside Park			
Repair existing entryway signage at Cross (both east and west of the bridge) and at Michigan Avenue.	\$	★★★	✓
Install signage at Riverside Arts Center entrance.		★	✓
Repair directional signage at the Tridge.	\$	★★★	✓
Frog Island			
Repair signage at Forest Street entrance, at center parking lot entrance, south parking lot entrance, and Cross Street entrance.	\$	★★	✓
Improve directional signage at the Tridge.	\$	★★	✓
Parkridge			
Install signage at the Brooks and Hawkins Street entrances.	\$	★★	✓
Repair signage at Hawkins Street parking lot entrance.	\$	★★	✓

**Cost:** \$ = <\$50,000; \$\$ = \$50-150,000; \$\$\$ = >\$150,000 | **Volunteer Involvement:** ★ = minimal, <25%; ★★ = moderate: 25-75%; ★★★ = high, >75%  
**Time to Complete:** ✓ = 1-3 years; ✓ ✓ = 3-5 years; ✓ ✓ ✓ = >5 years; (∞) = ongoing

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE
<b>Peninsular</b>			
Repair and consider reorienting the LeForge Street signage to be legible to vehicular traffic.	\$	★	✓
<b>Prospect</b>			
Install signage at the Prospect/Cross corner as well as the Oak/Prospect corner, consistent with signage at other locations, to distinguish this location as a public park.	\$	★	✓
Install secondary park identification signage at the parking lot on the southeast corner of the park, near the parking lot.	\$	★	✓
<b>Ometha M. Smith Memorial Park</b>			
Work with the Ypsilanti Housing Commission to remove the chain link fence behind the wrought iron fence.	\$	★	✓
<b>The Spanish-American War Memorial, Edith Hefley Tot Lot, Ainsworth Park, Carrie R Mattingly Tot Lot, and the Haab Brothers Memorial Park</b>			
Install signage indicating that these are public parks, consistent with signage at other locations.	\$\$	★	✓
<b>Charles Street Tot Lot</b>			
Repair existing signage.	\$	★★★	✓

**Cost:** \$ = <\$50,000; \$\$ = \$50-150,000; \$\$\$ = >\$150,000 | **Volunteer Involvement:** ★ = minimal, <25%; ★★ = moderate: 25-75%; ★★★ = high, >75%  
**Time to Complete:** ✓ = 1-3 years; ✓✓ = 3-5 years; ✓✓✓ = >5 years; (∞) = ongoing

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE
Pavilions, gazebos, and other rentable or reservable facilities.			
Install small signs or notices advertising the reservation system.	\$	★★	✓
Nonmotorized connections			
Evaluate City-owned parcels for their ability to serve as nonmotorized connections between neighborhoods.	\$	★★	✓ ✓
Provide signage for those parcels determined to be needful to serve a nonmotorized transportation purpose.	\$	★	✓
<b>Objective 3: Ensure that each park presents a well-maintained and clean image.</b>			
Improve maintenance, either through engaging additional volunteers, adding staff time, or a combination of both.			
Regular annual or seasonal inspections should be performed with an eye for cosmetic and other issues that can be addressed by volunteers.	\$	★★★	()
Regular scraping and repainting of structures and facilities, either by volunteers or as part of Ypsi PRIDE Day, should be encouraged.	\$	★★★	()

**Cost:** \$ = <\$50,000; \$\$ = \$50-150,000; \$\$\$ = >\$150,000 | **Volunteer Involvement:** ★ = minimal, <25%; ★★ = moderate: 25-75%; ★★★ = high, >75%  
**Time to Complete:** ✓ = 1-3 years; ✓ ✓ = 3-5 years; ✓ ✓ ✓ = >5 years; () = ongoing

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE
Integrate volunteer efforts into long-term landscaping plans.	\$	★★★	()
Improve waste collection in all parks.			
Regularly evaluate location and number of trash receptacles; eliminate those in low-volume or inaccessible areas and add more where need seems to be greater.	\$	★★★	()
Engage volunteers or service groups for periodic litter cleanup days beyond Ypsi PRIDE day.	\$	★★★	()
Encourage special events to make use of non-profit or service organizations in post-event clean-up efforts.	\$	★★★	()
Relocate or renovate the Recycling Center; consider combining services with EMU.	\$\$\$	★	✓ ✓ ✓

**Objective 4: Ensure all parks, park shelters, trails, and other facilities are physically accessible to people of all ages and ability levels.**

Riverside Park

Provide barrier-free access at north, west, and south entrances.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓ ✓
Link pavilion to trails.	\$	★	✓

**Cost:** \$ = <\$50,000; \$\$ = \$50-150,000; \$\$\$ = >\$150,000 | **Volunteer Involvement:** ★ = minimal, <25%; ★★ = moderate: 25-75%; ★★★ = high, >75%  
**Time to Complete:** ✓ = 1-3 years; ✓ ✓ = 3-5 years; ✓ ✓ ✓ = >5 years; () = ongoing

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE
Mark barrier-free spaces in parking areas.	\$	★	✓
When reconstructing trails, bring to current barrier-free standards.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓ ✓
<b>Frog Island Park</b>			
Provide barrier-free access at north, east (center) and south entrances.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓ ✓
Provide sidewalk along Rice.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓ ✓
Improve parking area at north end of park; provide barrier-free spaces.	\$\$\$	★	✓ ✓
When reconstructing trails, bring to current barrier-free standards.	\$\$\$	★	✓
<b>Recreation Park</b>			
Provide barrier-free spaces near facilities, such as playgrounds, Senior Center, and the Rutherford Pool.	\$	★	✓
When reconstructing trails, bring to current barrier-free standards.	\$\$	★	✓
Upgrade play area and surfacing to barrier-free standards.	\$\$	★★	✓
<b>Parkridge Park</b>			
Provide barrier-free access at south entrances.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓ ✓
Link pavilion to trails.	\$\$	★	✓
When reconstructing trails, bring to current barrier-free standards.	\$\$\$	★	✓

**Cost:** \$ = <\$50,000; \$\$ = \$50-150,000; \$\$\$ = >\$150,000 | **Volunteer Involvement:** ★ = minimal, <25%; ★★ = moderate: 25-75%; ★★★ = high, >75%  
**Time to Complete:** ✓ = 1-3 years; ✓ ✓ = 3-5 years; ✓ ✓ ✓ = >5 years; (∞) = ongoing

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE
Upgrade play area and surfacing to barrier-free standards.	\$\$\$	★★	✓
Candy Cane Park			
Provide barrier-free access at south and north entrances.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓
Provide sidewalk along Roosevelt.	\$	★	✓
Provide parking areas with barrier-free spaces or eliminate small paved areas.	\$\$	★	✓
Create a paved path linking north & south ends of park, pavilion, and play area.	\$\$	★	✓
Upgrade play area and surfacing to barrier-free standards; provide barrier-free access.	\$\$\$	★★	✓
Peninsular Park			
Provide barrier-free access from LeForge as well as at canoe/kayak portage.	\$\$\$	★★	✓ ✓ ✓
When constructing or reconstructing trails, bring to current barrier-free standards.	\$	★	✓
Link pavilion to trails.	\$	★	✓
Improve parking area; provide barrier-free spaces.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓
Prospect Park			
Provide barrier-free access from entrances to south pavilion.		★	✓
Improve parking area at south-east corner; provide barrier-free spaces.	\$\$\$	★	✓ ✓

**Cost:** \$ = <\$50,000; \$\$ = \$50-150,000; \$\$\$ = >\$150,000 | **Volunteer Involvement:** ★ = minimal, <25%; ★★ = moderate: 25-75%; ★★★ = high, >75%  
**Time to Complete:** ✓ = 1-3 years; ✓ ✓ = 3-5 years; ✓ ✓ ✓ = >5 years; (∞) = ongoing

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE
Work with YCSD to upgrade the play area and its surfacing to barrier-free standards.	\$\$	★★	✓
<b>Waterworks Park</b>			
Provide sidewalk along east side of Catherine.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓
Provide barrier-free link between pavilion and both sidewalk and parking area.	\$	★	✓ ✓
Improve parking area; provide barrier-free spaces.	\$\$\$	★	✓ ✓

**GOAL 2: PROVIDE PARKS THAT MEET YPSILANTI'S RECREATION NEEDS**

**Objective 1: Ensure existing facilities can continue to meet the needs of park users.**

Develop a parks-specific maintenance and capital improvement plan, to be integrated with the larger City-wide Capital Improvements Plan.	\$\$	★	✓
Continue to perform regular, scheduled safety inspections of playground and sports equipment, repairing, removing, or replacing equipment as necessary and as resources permit.	\$	★	()
Perform annual safety inspections of picnic pavilions.	\$	★	()
Perform annual or seasonal inspections of electrical systems used in festivals and events.	\$	★	()
Institute a “move in and move out” checklist for large events, such as Class III and IV events.	\$	★	✓

**Cost:** \$ = <\$50,000; \$\$ = \$50-150,000; \$\$\$ = >\$150,000 | **Volunteer Involvement:** ★ = minimal, <25%; ★★ = moderate: 25-75%; ★★★ = high, >75%  
**Time to Complete:** ✓ = 1-3 years; ✓ ✓ = 3-5 years; ✓ ✓ ✓ = >5 years; () = ongoing

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE
Work with Friends groups, Adopters, and regular event-holders to help ensure the ongoing maintenance of facilities such as the Freighthouse, the Rutherford Pool, Parkridge Community Center, ballfields, and community garden areas.	\$	★★★	()
Address ongoing stormwater issues in Riverside and Frog Island Parks.	\$\$\$	★★	✓ ✓ ✓
Revisit lease of Parkridge Park from the Ypsilanti Housing Commission and Ypsilanti Community School District.	\$	★	✓
<b>Objective 2: Ensure that parks are safe and appear to be safe.</b>			
Lighting should be consistently provided in parks.			
Community Parks			
Provide lighting under pavilions, at entrances, and along paths at Riverside, Frog Island, Recreation, and Parkridge Parks.	\$\$\$	★★	✓ ✓ ✓
Neighborhood Parks			
Provide lighting under pavilions, at entrances, and along paths; these lights can be motion-sensitive, photocell, on a timer, or a combination.	\$\$\$	★★	✓ ✓ ✓
Mini-parks			

**Cost:** \$ = <\$50,000; \$\$ = \$50-150,000; \$\$\$ = >\$150,000 | **Volunteer Involvement:** ★ = minimal, <25%; ★★ = moderate: 25-75%; ★★★ = high, >75%  
**Time to Complete:** ✓ = 1-3 years; ✓ ✓ = 3-5 years; ✓ ✓ ✓ = >5 years; () = ongoing

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE
Evaluate the need for lighting on a per-park basis.	\$\$	★★	✓ ✓ ✓
Improve sightlines			
Clear brush at entrances, bends in trails, and at park borders.	\$\$	★★★	()
When renovating or replacing pavilions, maintain at least three open sides.	\$\$\$	★	()
Address vandalism issues promptly and thoroughly.	\$	★★	()
Create sound standards, and investigate dedicated sound system for events to ensure compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods.	\$	★★	✓
<b>Objective 3: Provide upgrades to the parks that increase their long-term durability and reduce operation costs.</b>			
When renovating pavilions or other structures in the parks, consider long-term maintenance and operating costs as well as the initial cost.	\$	★	()
Consider replacing decommissioned restrooms with accessible and durable facilities.	\$\$\$	★★	✓ ✓ ✓
Use landscaping to beautify the parks, help to provide shade, improve the ecology of the parks, and offset stormwater impacts.			
Remove invasive species, and replace with gardened spaces.	\$	★★★	✓ ✓
Pursue streambank restoration.	\$\$	★★	✓ ✓

**Cost:** \$ = <\$50,000; \$\$ = \$50-150,000; \$\$\$ = >\$150,000 | **Volunteer Involvement:** ★ = minimal, <25%; ★★ = moderate: 25-75%; ★★★ = high, >75%  
**Time to Complete:** ✓ = 1-3 years; ✓ ✓ = 3-5 years; ✓ ✓ ✓ = >5 years; () = ongoing

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE
Investigate slope stabilization plantings for Frog Island, Riverside, and Parkridge Parks.	\$\$	★★	✓ ✓
Work to install shade tree plantings adjacent to play and picnic areas.	\$\$	★★★	✓
Use raingardens to control stormwater and drainage issues; work with skilled volunteers to install and maintain.	\$\$	★★	✓ ✓
<b>Objective 4: Provide upgrades to the parks that increase recreation opportunities.</b>			
Ensure each park has sufficient benches, picnic tables, waste cans, lighting, and bike parking.	\$\$	★★★	( )
Riverside			
Pursue implementation of the site plan proposed in the 2008 Parks & Recreation Master Plan.	\$\$\$	★★	( )
Frog Island			
Pursue implementation of the site plan proposed in the 2008 Parks & Recreation Master Plan.	\$\$\$	★★	( )
Recreation Park			
Pave walking path around park; ensure that the path width is a consistent ten feet wide and that the grade meets accessibility standards.	\$\$\$	★	✓ ✓

**Cost:** \$ = <\$50,000; \$\$ = \$50-150,000; \$\$\$ = >\$150,000 | **Volunteer Involvement:** ★ = minimal, <25%; ★★ = moderate: 25-75%; ★★★ = high, >75%  
**Time to Complete:** ✓ = 1-3 years; ✓ ✓ = 3-5 years; ✓ ✓ ✓ = >5 years; ( ) = ongoing

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE
Resurface former tennis courts- currently basketball courts – and remove curbing or provide fencing around the perimeter.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓
Work to improve stormwater drainage in the open playing fields to the south of the Rutherford Pool and baseball fields.	\$\$\$	★	✓ ✓
Repair or remove nonfunctional lighting poles.	\$	★	✓
Repair or replace outfield fencing.	\$	★★★	✓
<b>Parkridge Park</b>			
Install picnic tables &/or benches and shade trees near the play area in southwest area of the park.	\$\$	★★★	✓
Ensure play area includes play equipment suitable for children of all ages.	\$\$	★★★	✓ ✓
Finish and landscape the parking areas off of Monroe Street, or close curb cuts and use as pedestrian entrances.	\$\$\$	★★	✓ ✓ ✓
Create ADA-accessible connections to Monroe Street via paved pathways.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓ ✓

**Cost:** \$ = <\$50,000; \$\$ = \$50-150,000; \$\$\$ = >\$150,000 | **Volunteer Involvement:** ★ = minimal, <25%; ★★ = moderate: 25-75%; ★★★ = high, >75%  
**Time to Complete:** ✓ = 1-3 years; ✓ ✓ = 3-5 years; ✓ ✓ ✓ = >5 years; (∞) = ongoing

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE
<b>Candy Cane</b>			
Install an accessible pathway through Candy Cane, linking the pavilion, the existing sidewalk to the north, the playground, and the proposed sidewalk to the south.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓
Replace play equipment.	\$\$	★★★	✓
<b>Peninsular Park</b>			
Create a barrier-free walking path along the Huron River.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓ ✓
Replace the existing floating dock upstream of the dam with one that is accessible.	\$\$	★★	✓ ✓
Install an accessible dock downstream of the dam.	\$\$\$	★★	✓ ✓ ✓
Work with local stakeholders such as volunteer groups to install functional plantings, such as butterfly/pollinator gardens and raingardens, as well as interpretive and educational signage.	\$	★★★	✓ ✓
Seek a private partner for re-use of the historic Powerhouse.	\$	★	( )
Continue to work with Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the Huron River Watershed Council to monitor the dam.	\$	★	( )

**Cost:** \$ = <\$50,000; \$\$ = \$50-150,000; \$\$\$ = >\$150,000 | **Volunteer Involvement:** ★ = minimal, <25%; ★★ = moderate: 25-75%; ★★★ = high, >75%  
**Time to Complete:** ✓ = 1-3 years; ✓ ✓ = 3-5 years; ✓ ✓ ✓ = >5 years; ( ) = ongoing

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE
<b>Prospect Park</b>			
Consider constructing an additional flex space, either in Prospect or at a west side park such as Recreation.	\$\$\$	★★	✓ ✓
Work with Ypsilanti-area little leagues and/or other partners to renovate the existing ball diamond.	\$	★★★	( )
Work with YCSD to ensure the play equipment is maintained and replaced as needed.	\$	★	✓
Work with the skate park volunteer group on maintenance, improvement, and expansion projects.	\$	★★★	( )
Repair the existing basketball courts.	\$	★	✓
<b>Waterworks Park</b>			
Continue to work with the Ypsilanti American Little League and private partners to renovate the existing ball diamond.	\$	★★★	( )
Continue to work with the Ann Arbor Area Disc Induced Sports Club (A3 Disc) to ensure the disc golf course is maintained.	\$	★★★	( )
Work with area stakeholders and potential partners to explore the need for, design of, and potential fundraising mechanisms for a dog park.	\$\$	★★★	✓ ✓ ✓

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**Time to Complete:** ✓ = 1-3 years; ✓ ✓ = 3-5 years; ✓ ✓ ✓ = >5 years; ( ) = ongoing

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE
<b>Tot Lots and Mini-Parks</b>			
Replace aging play equipment.	\$\$	★★★	✓ ✓ ✓
<b>Border-to-Border Trail</b>			
Repair and maintain the portions of the Border to Border trail that run through Frog Island and Riverside Parks.	\$\$\$	★	✓ ✓
Shift portions of the Border to Border trail that are split between bike lanes and sidewalks to shared-use paths wherever possible.	\$\$\$	★	✓ ✓ ✓
Link the Border-to-Border Trail with the parks and to the nonmotorized transportation system.	\$\$\$	★	()
<b>Huron River Shoreline</b>			
Continue assembling access and/or conservation easements on private shoreline.	\$	★★★	()
Pursue opportunities to construct a riverfront trail system as they arise.	\$\$	★★★	()
Consider development of certain City-owned properties along the Huron River, while preserving recreational access.	\$	★	()

**Cost:** \$ = <\$50,000; \$\$ = \$50-150,000; \$\$\$ = >\$150,000 | **Volunteer Involvement:** ★ = minimal, <25%; ★★ = moderate: 25-75%; ★★★ = high, >75%  
**Time to Complete:** ✓ = 1-3 years; ✓ ✓ = 3-5 years; ✓ ✓ ✓ = >5 years; () = ongoing

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE
<b>GOAL 3: WORK WITH VOLUNTEERS AND ORGANIZATIONS TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES TO CITY RESIDENTS</b>			
<b>Objective 1: Improve relationships with entities that provide recreation opportunities within the City.</b>			
Continue to formalize relationships wherein another entity is operating a city-owned facility.	\$	★★★	()
Continue to help provide resources to established partners, such as expertise, historical information, and joint purchasing where feasible.	\$\$	★★★	()
Work with adjacent schools, daycare centers, and other institutions in parks improvements and maintenance.	\$	★★★	()
Coordinate with neighboring communities and the County to implement regional planning goals.	\$	★★★	()
<b>Objective 2: Encourage volunteerism.</b>			
Strengthen and streamline the Adopt-A-Park program.	\$	★★★	()
Create a volunteer manager position, or merge volunteer management responsibilities with a new position that will also coordinate Special Events.	\$	★★	✓✓

**Cost:** \$ = <\$50,000; \$\$ = \$50-150,000; \$\$\$ = >\$150,000 | **Volunteer Involvement:** ★ = minimal, <25%; ★★ = moderate: 25-75%; ★★★ = high, >75%  
**Time to Complete:** ✓ = 1-3 years; ✓✓ = 3-5 years; ✓✓✓ = >5 years; () = ongoing

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE
<b>Objective 3: Continue to improve the Special Events and park reservations program.</b>			
Increase the visibility of and publicize the Special Events program.	\$	★★	✓
Ensure that the City website can be a resource to those seeking to volunteer, to reserve a park, or simply to find a park or an event.	\$	★★	( )
Continue to work with well-established partners to support and promote recreation in the City.	\$	★★★	( )

**Cost:** \$ = <\$50,000; \$\$ = \$50-150,000; \$\$\$ = >\$150,000 | **Volunteer Involvement:** ★ = minimal, <25%; ★★ = moderate: 25-75%; ★★★ = high, >75%  
**Time to Complete:** ✓ = 1-3 years; ✓✓ = 3-5 years; ✓✓✓ = >5 years; ( ) = ongoing