



**2021 Annual Report  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Ypsilanti, Michigan**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Parks & Recreation Commission of the City of Ypsilanti is empowered by Chapter 78 of the Code of Ordinances to make recommendations concerning the recreation and parks needs of the city, including how park improvement funds are used; update the parks and recreation master plan; review and approve "Adopt-A-Park" applications; expand park and recreational opportunities through commission sponsored events when appropriate.

In 2021, the Parks & Recreation Commission's membership was as follows:

Evan Sweet (chair)	Julia Collins
Ben Connor-Barrie (vice-chair)	Kurt Kohlmann
Cathy Thoburn (secretary)	Brian Merlos (appointed November)
Cherisa Allen (resigned July)	Dillon Navarre

Per Chapter 78- 49(6), the Commission must provide an annual report to City Council.

**OPERATIONS**

The Commission held regular monthly meetings during 2021 virtually via Zoom, with the exception of September, which was cancelled. The Commission was regularly updated by the Friends of the Rutherford Pool and the Friends of the Ypsilanti Senior Center, and also heard regular updates on the status of the Peninsular Dam removal project. The Commission recommended an update to Chapter 78 of the Code of Ordinances to address process changes/updates and remove gendered and potentially discriminatory language; this amendment was adopted by Council in October. The Commission also reviewed ordinance language regarding the potential renaming of parks in February, this was adopted by Council as well. In March, the Commission heard and supported a grant application to the Natural Resources Trust Fund for improved accessibility at Frog Island. Huron River Day, an event that the Commission traditionally supports, was held as a "choose your own adventure" project with interpretive signage this spring; the fall event was cancelled due to the pandemic.

The Commission reviewed Adopt-A-Park applications from several groups and individuals, and in April, passed a resolution to permit staff to administratively approve such applications that do not substantially alter the park, such as clean-up days. Applications reviewed included an Eagle Scout application for a Ga-Ga Ball Pit in Candy Cane Park; an Eagle Scout application for a pollinator garden adjacent to the Senior Center; placement of a celebratory monument to the contributions of the Kiwanis in Recreation Park; EMU Honors College performed multiple clean-up days throughout the parks system.

Included in this year's annual report is the implementation matrix from the 2020 Parks Master Plan.

**LOOKING FORWARD**

The Parks and Recreation Commission looks forward to future progress on the following projects and goals:

- Progress on the removal of the Peninsular Dam and the plans for the expanded Peninsular Park
- Capital budget review on parks improvements

**ACTION**

The Parks and Recreation Commission adopted this report at its regular December 2021 meeting and approved transmittal to City Council.

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE	STATUS
<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 pedestrian crossing from Frog Island parking to Freighthouse at Market Street.	\$	★	✓	
Riverside Park				
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.	\$	★	✓	South access complete 2017
Recreation Park				
Connect walking track to sidewalk along Woods Road at both east and west ends.	\$	★	✓	Feasibility study complete 2021
Waterworks				
Construct sidewalk along Catherine Street frontage; continue to Factory Street.	\$	★	✓	
Haab Brothers Memorial Park				
Construct sidewalk on both sides, to Factory Street.	\$	★	✓ ✓	
North Bay Park				
Construct accessible crossing of driveway north of bridge over I-94, and sidewalk from driveway to bridge.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓ ✓	Completed 2021
<b>Objective 2: Ensure each park has a visible presence, entrance, and sign on adjacent rights-of-way.</b>				
All Parks				
Design and place consistent signage about rules, hours, and other information for each park.	\$	★	✓	In progress 2021

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE	STATUS
Riverside Park				
Install signage at Riverside Arts Center entrance; improve visibility.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓	
Frog Island				
Place signage at center parking lot entrance.	\$	★	✓	
Relocate north entrance signage as part of 2020 project.	\$	★	✓	Completed 2020
Parkridge				
Landscape and improve access at south Hawkins entrance.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓	
Peninsular				
Repair and consider reorienting the LeForge Street signage to be legible to vehicular traffic.	\$	★	✓	
Prospect				
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.	\$	★	✓	Sign installed on Prospect frontage midblock
Install secondary park identification signage at the parking lot on the southeast corner of the park, near the parking lot.	\$	★	✓	
The Spanish-American War Memorial, Edith Hefley Tot Lot, Ainsworth Park, Carrie R Mattingly Tot Lot, and the Haab Brothers Memorial Park				
Install signage indicating that these are public parks, consistent with signage at other locations.	\$\$	★	✓	
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.	\$	★★	✓ ✓	

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE	STATUS
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.				Staff added 2021-22
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 an annual cleanup event, should be encouraged.	\$	★★★	()	
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.	\$	★	()	Added additional waste cans in 2021
Engage volunteers or service groups for periodic litter cleanup days.	\$	★★★	()	
Encourage special events to make use of non-profit or service organizations in post-event clean-up efforts.	\$	★★★	()	
Encourage special events to coordinate with ZeroWaste efforts.	\$	★★★	()	
<b>Objective 4: Ensure all parks, park shelters, trails, and other facilities are physically accessible to people of all ages and ability levels.</b>				
Riverside Park				
Provide barrier-free access at north and west entrances.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓ ✓	
Link pavilion to trails.	\$	★	✓	
Mark additional barrier-free spaces in parking areas.	\$	★	✓	

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE	STATUS
When reconstructing trails, bring to current barrier-free standards.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓ ✓	
Frog Island Park				
Provide barrier-free access at north, east (center) and south entrances.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓ ✓	North 50% and south complete.
Improve parking area; provide additional barrier-free spaces.	\$\$\$	★	✓ ✓	Grant awarded 2021
When reconstructing trails, bring to current barrier-free standards.	\$\$\$	★	✓	Trail improved 2020
Recreation Park				
Provide additional 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.	\$\$	★★	✓	
Pave walking path and connect to sidewalk system to the south	\$\$	★	✓ ✓	Feasibility study complete 2021
Parkridge Park				
Provide barrier-free access at south Hawkins entrance.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓ ✓	
Link pavilion to trails.	\$\$	★	✓	
When reconstructing trails, bring to current barrier-free standards.	\$\$\$	★	✓	Frog Island 2020.
Upgrade play area and surfacing to barrier-free standards.	\$\$\$	★★	✓	Complete 2020

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE	STATUS
Candy Cane Park				
Provide barrier-free access at south and north entrances.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓	
Provide handicap placard parking.	\$\$	★	✓	
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.	\$\$\$	★★	✓	Complete 2020
Peninsular Park				
Provide barrier-free access from LeForge.	\$\$\$	★★	✓ ✓ ✓	
When constructing or reconstructing trails, bring to current barrier-free standards.	\$	★	✓	
Link pavilion to trails.	\$	★	✓	
Improve parking area; provide barrier-free spaces.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓	
Provide barrier-free access to dock	\$\$\$	★	✓ ✓ ✓	
Prospect Park				
Provide barrier-free access from entrances to south pavilion and link to trail.	\$\$	★	✓	
Improve parking area at south-east corner; provide barrier-free spaces.	\$\$\$	★	✓ ✓	
Work with YCS to upgrade the play area and its surfacing to barrier-free standards.	\$\$	★★	✓	
Pave sidewalk along south side of Oak, Vought to Charles	\$\$	★	✓	
Waterworks Park				
Provide sidewalk along east side of Catherine.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓	
Improve parking area; provide barrier-free spaces.	\$\$\$	★	✓ ✓	

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE	STATUS
<b>GOAL 2: PROVIDE PARKS THAT MEET YPSILANTI'S RECREATION NEEDS</b>				
<b>Objective 1: Ensure existing facilities can continue to meet the needs of park users.</b>				
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.	\$	★	✓	
Work with Friends groups, Adopters, and regular event-holders to help ensure the ongoing maintenance of facilities.	\$	★★★	()	
Address ongoing stormwater issues in Riverside, Frog Island, and Recreation Parks.	\$\$\$	★★	✓ ✓ ✓	
Clarify boundary between Parkridge Park and Perry School.	\$	★	✓ ✓ ✓	
Consider installing an intergenerational playground in Recreation Park, adjacent to and with the aid of the Senior Center.	\$\$	★★	✓ ✓	
Consider installing a dog park in Waterworks Park.	\$\$	★★	✓ ✓	
Work with the Ypsi-Arbor Little League to develop plans for continuing use of Recreation Park and Candy Cane Park, including scoreboard installation or replacement, fencing improvements, lighting improvements, and ballfield improvements.	\$\$	★★	✓ ✓	
Continue to work with the adjoining public schools to ensure that children have safe, accessible, and appropriately challenging places to play during the school year and year round.	\$\$	★★	()	

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE	STATUS
Continue to expand the network of shared use paths and connectors.	\$\$	★	()	
<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.	\$\$\$	★★	✓ ✓ ✓	Lighting added at Frog Island 2021.
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				
Evaluate the need for lighting on a per-park basis.	\$\$	★★	✓ ✓ ✓	
Improve sightlines				
Clear brush at entrances, bends in trails, and at park borders.	\$\$	★★★	()	Ongoing
When renovating or replacing pavilions, maintain at least three open sides.	\$\$\$	★	()	
Redesign area at top of Riverside Arts Center/Riverside Park stairway to improve visibility and feelings of safety.	\$\$\$	★	✓ ✓	
Address vandalism issues promptly and thoroughly.	\$	★★	()	Ongoing
Create standards for amplified sound in Frog Island and other parks 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.	\$	★	()	



PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE	STATUS
Consider replacing decommissioned restrooms with accessible and durable facilities, either permanent or seasonal.	\$\$\$	★★	✓ ✓ ✓	
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.	\$\$	★★	✓ ✓	
Investigate slope stabilization plantings for Frog Island, Riverside, Peninsular, 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.	\$\$	★★	✓ ✓	
Plant trees to replace those lost in the past decade.	\$\$	★★	()	Ongoing
<b>Objective 4: Provide upgrades to the parks that increase recreation opportunities.</b>				
Ensure each park has sufficient benches, picnic tables, waste cans, dog waste stations, lighting, barrier-free parking, and bike parking.	\$\$	★★★	()	
Ensure each park has sufficient trees.	\$\$	★★	()	
Ensure each park's attractions are accessible.	\$\$	★	()	
Riverside				
Pursue implementation of the vision proposed in the 2008 Parks & Recreation Master Plan, particularly stormwater improvements and trail repair, and consider updating the site plan.	\$\$\$	★★	()	
Frog Island				
Pursue implementation of the vision proposed in the 2008 Parks & Recreation Master Plan, and consider updating the site plan.	\$\$\$	★★	()	

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE	STATUS
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.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓	
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, work with Little League to ensure adequate fencing is provided.	\$	★★★	✓	
Stripe additional barrier-free spaces in both parking lots.	\$	★	✓	
Parkridge Park				
Install picnic tables &/or benches and shade trees near the play area in southwest area of the park.	\$\$	★★★	✓	
Update the play area; expand the playground facilities and ensure they are accessible and appeal to a broad range of ages and abilities.	\$\$	★★★	✓ ✓	Updated summer 2020
Finish and landscape the parking area off of Monroe Street, or close curb cut and use as pedestrian entrances.	\$\$\$	★★	✓ ✓ ✓	
Create ADA-accessible connections to Monroe Street via paved pathways.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓	
Provide needed repairs to ballfield, basketball courts, tennis courts, and pavilion; remove disused sand volleyball court.	\$	★	✓ ✓	Volleyball court removed 2021; basketball court repaired 2021. Funding obtained for softball field repairs.
Candy Cane				

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE	STATUS
Install an accessible pathway through Candy Cane, linking the pavilion, the existing sidewalk to the north, the playground, and the sidewalk to the south.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓	
Replace play equipment.	\$\$	★★★	✓	Complete 2020
Work with Little League to provide needed updates to the ballfield.	\$	★★★	✓ ✓	
Work with partners to mark historic Little League/Carolyn King events.	\$	★★★	✓	
Peninsular Park				
Remove the dam.	\$\$\$	★★	✓ ✓ ✓	
Create a barrier-free walking path along the Huron River.	\$\$	★	✓ ✓ ✓	
Install an accessible canoe/kayak launch.	\$\$\$	★★	✓ ✓ ✓	
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.	\$	★★★	✓ ✓	
Following dam removal, work to restore the newly exposed impoundment area.	\$\$	★★★	✓ ✓	
Seek a private partner for re-use of the historic Powerhouse.	\$	★	()	
Repair the access to the concrete dock downstream of the dam, and add an accessible path to the dock.	\$\$\$	★	✓ ✓	
Prospect Park				
Work with YCS to ensure the play equipment is maintained and replaced as needed.	\$	★	✓	
Continue to work with YCS on other projects to improve the park's functionality as both a school playground and a community playground.	\$\$	★★★	()	
Work with the skate park volunteer group on maintenance, improvement, and expansion projects.	\$	★★★	()	
Repair the existing basketball courts.	\$	★	✓	
Repair the pathways and ensure they are linked throughout the park.	\$	★	✓	

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE	STATUS
<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.	\$\$	★ ★ ★	✓ ✓ ✓	
<b>Tot Lots and Mini-Parks</b>				
Maintain and replace play equipment as needed.	\$\$	★ ★ ★	()	
<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.	\$\$\$	★	()	Ongoing
Continue to expand the City's bike lane and trail system, linking parks and the B2B Trail to the City's commercial and cultural centers, as well as to regional resources.	\$\$\$	★ ★	()	Ongoing
<b>Huron River Shoreline</b>				
Continue assembling access and/or conservation easements on private shoreline.	\$	★ ★ ★	()	Ongoing
Pursue opportunities to construct a riverfront trail system as they arise.	\$\$	★ ★ ★	()	Ongoing

PROJECT	COST	VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT	TIME TO COMPLETE	STATUS
<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.	\$	★ ★ ★	()	MOU with the Senior Center adopted 2021
Continue to help provide resources to established partners, such as expertise, historical information, and joint purchasing where feasible.	\$\$	★ ★ ★	()	Ongoing
Work with adjacent schools, daycare centers, and other institutions in parks improvements and maintenance.	\$	★ ★ ★	()	Ongoing
Coordinate with neighboring communities and the County to implement regional planning goals.	\$	★ ★ ★	()	Ongoing
<b>Objective 2: Encourage volunteerism.</b>				
Strengthen and streamline the Adopt-A-Park program.	\$	★ ★ ★	()	Ongoing
Create a volunteer manager position, or merge volunteer management responsibilities with a new position that will also coordinate Special Events.	\$	★ ★	✓ ✓	
<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.	\$	★ ★	()	Ongoing
Continue to work with well-established partners to support and promote recreation in the City.	\$	★ ★ ★	()	Ongoing