



CITY OF YPSILANTI

2026-2030 PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN



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INTRODUCTION

Parks and recreation in Ypsilanti provides a wide range of community benefits. Recreation contributes to the mental and physical health of city residents, providing a place for exercise, physical activity, relaxation, play, and sports. Parks provide valuable open space and help to protect environmental resources.

The purpose of the City of Ypsilanti Parks and Recreation Master Plan is to guide recreation planning and development efforts of the city over the next five-year period, through 2030. The Plan identifies existing parks and recreational opportunities, assesses the need for future recreational needs, provides direction for the future development of the city parks, and presents strategies to meet the recreational needs of a growing population.

Past parks and recreation plans for the City of Ypsilanti were adopted in 2008, 2013 and 2020. These plans guided the development of new playground at Riverside Park, accessibility improvements at Parkridge Park, non-motorized transportation improvements and many other park improvements. A new priority which has been shown by the city's governance is the incorporation of the arts into its parks and recreation services and this plan. The purpose of this new updated Plan is to guide parks, recreation and arts planning and development efforts of the city over the next five years. The current Master Plan is intended to meet state standards for community recreation planning that are necessary to gain eligibility for grant programs.

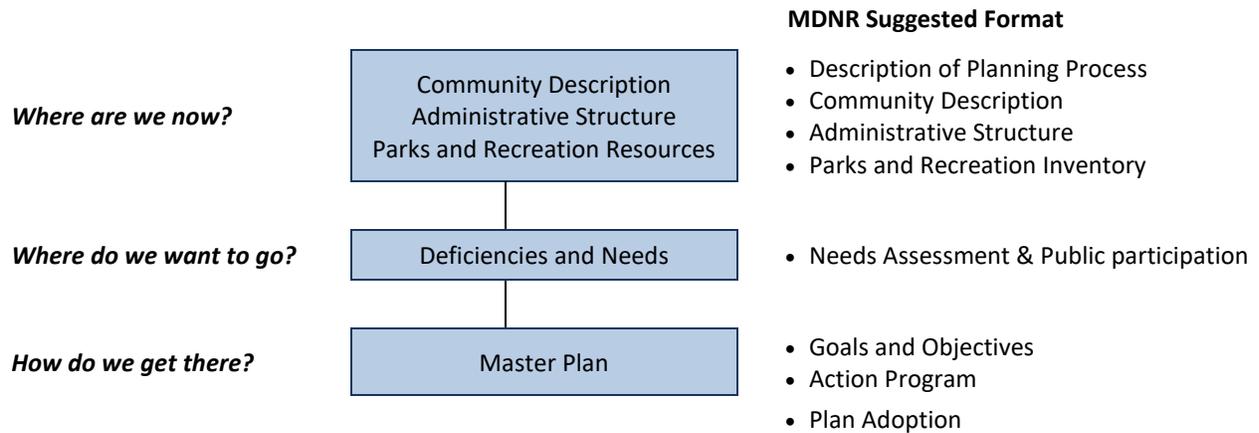
PLANNING PROCESS

The process used to generate the Plan consisted of three phases which are described below.

1. **Where are we now?** In this phase, the community's demographics and the administration of parks were reviewed and updated. The city parks were examined and mapped to document the existing resources. The information is organized into three main categories: community description, administrative structure, and parks and recreation resources.
2. **Where do we want to be?** The second phase in the planning process consisted of an analysis of the community's parks to determine deficiencies and needs. Public input was sought to solicit ideas and suggestions about recreation preferences and desired improvements through an online questionnaire and at a public open house meeting. Input was also solicited from city officials, community stakeholders, and staff.
3. **How do we get there?** Once needs were identified, the final phase involved the development of an action plan to support the community's vision for the parks and recreation system and provide for park development projects. Recommended projects were summarized in a capital improvement schedule, along with strategies for implementation. This phase also included preparation of a full draft of the Plan, which was presented to the city Parks and Arts Commission as well as the public for review and comment prior to adoption.

The following diagram illustrates the planning process and how it corresponds to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) suggested format described earlier.

Figure 1. Planning Process



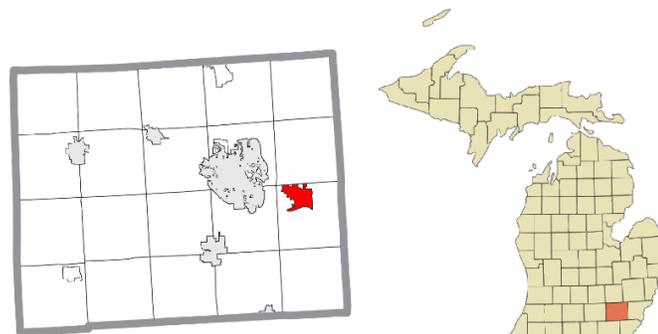
WHAT THIS PLAN CONTAINS

The City of Ypsilanti Parks and Recreation Master Plan follows the format suggested by the MDNR in the *Guidelines for the Development of Community Parks and Recreation Plans* (IC1924, Rev. 4/16/2021). The first chapter, **Community Description**, includes a summary of both the social and physical characteristics of the city. The **Administrative Structure** chapter includes a description of how parks and recreation services are managed in the city, including budget and funding information. The next chapter, **Parks and Recreation Resources**, describes the existing city parks as well as those of the County and other parks located nearby. This chapter also includes an accessibility assessment and a description of the grant-assisted park projects. The **Needs Assessment** portion of the Plan presents the input received from local officials, staff, and residents, which helped in formulating the **Goals and Objectives** and **Action Program** chapters, which outlines an action plan with strategies for implementation.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING AREA

The City of Ypsilanti is located in eastern Washtenaw County and is located just east of Ann Arbor and 35 miles west of Detroit. It is the fourth (4) most populous community in Washtenaw County. The city is bounded to the north by Superior Township and on the west, south and east by Ypsilanti Charter Township. Ypsilanti is part of the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti metropolitan area, the Huron River Valley and is home of Eastern Michigan University.

Figure 2. Regional Setting



COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

The City of Ypsilanti, originally settled as Woodruff Grove, was named Ypsilanti in 1825, and is known for its rich historic facilities, riverside parks and is the home of Eastern Michigan University, which it collaborates with regularly. Ypsilanti prides itself on green initiatives, including city-wide LED streetlights, the use of solar panels to produce energy, and a curbside textile recycling program. Ypsilanti hosts a large number of festivals that take place along the Huron River, bringing in large crowds of citizens and tourists. The City has a growing downtown area and the historic Depot town with many thriving restaurants and attractions such as the Hudson Car Museum and the Michigan Firehouse Museum and Education Center. Ypsilanti is also known for its rich diversity and many artistic endeavors. It has also been awarded a Foodie award for best food destination.

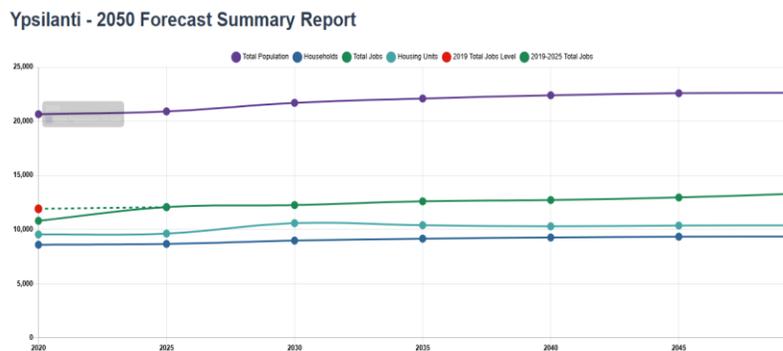
Arts and cultural activity are core to Ypsilanti’s identity and occur throughout the city—not only in the downtown and Michigan Avenue corridors. Neighborhoods across Ypsilanti support a diverse range of creative spaces including community arts centers, print studios, home-based makers, public art installations, and nonprofit arts organizations. The city encourages accessible, walkable, small-scale arts uses within residential and mixed-use districts as part of fostering a vibrant and inclusive cultural ecosystem.

POPULATION TRENDS

Anticipated changes in the size, distribution, and age composition of the population will affect the need for future recreational facilities. According to the most recent census information (2020), Ypsilanti is home to 20,648 people, an increase of 1,213 people from its 2010 population of 19,435. The most recent population estimate for the city is 20,929 (July 2024, SEMCOG), indicating continued growth.

Population projections for Ypsilanti predict continued growth in population, with the number of persons growing at 9.6% to 22,637 between 2020 and 2050 and the number of households increasing by 8.8% from 8,600 to 9,355. These projections, which were developed by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), indicate that the city’s population and household will continue to grow. As a result, the recreational needs of city residents will most likely continue to grow.

Figure 3. Ypsilanti Forecast Summary Report, 2020-2050



Source: US Census Bureau & SEMCOG 2045 Regional Development Forecast

Table 1. Ypsilanti City Population and Households, 2010 and 2020

Community	Population			Households		
	2010	2020	% change	2010	2020	% change
City of Ypsilanti	19,435	20,648	6.2%	9,271	9,236	-0.4%
Washtenaw County	344,791	372,258	8.0%	137,193	147,847	7.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010 and 2020)

Table 2. Ypsilanti Youth and Older Adults Trends, 2020 and 2050

	2020	2050	% Change		2020	2050	% Change
Under 5	960	956	-0.4%	25 to 64	9,792	10,215	4.3%
5 to 17	2,055	2,726	32.7%	65 to 84	1,747	2,205	26.2%
18 to 24	5,885	5,665	-3.7%	85+	209	870	316.3%

Source: SEMCOG 2050 Regional Development Forecast

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

In addition to examining the number and distribution of people, it is important to understand the population characteristics of the community. Table 3 presents information on race, age, education, employment, income, disability status, and housing characteristics of the city.

Table 3. Census Profile, 2020/2023 ACS

	number	%		number	%
TOTAL 2020 POPULATION (Census 2020)	20,648	100.0%			
TOTAL 2023 POPULATION (ACS 2023)	19,937	100.0%			
AGE (ACS 2023)					
Under 5 years	928	4.7%	45 to 49 years	689	3.4%
5 to 9 years	901	4.5%	50 to 54 years	889	4.4%
10 to 14 years	794	3.9%	55 to 59 years	858	4.3%
15 to 19 years	2,616	13.1%	60 to 64 years	610	3.1%
20 to 24 years	3,823	19.2%	65 to 69 years	706	3.5%
25 to 29 years	2,240	11.2%	70 to 74 years	418	2.1%
30 to 34 years	1,596	8.0%	75 to 79 years	331	1.7%
35 to 39 years	1,347	6.8%	80 to 84 years	184	1.0%
40 to 44 years	804	4.0%	85+ years	203	1.0%
MEDIAN AGE (years) (ACS 2023)	27.0				
POPULATION & HOUSEHOLDS (ACS 2023)					
Homeownership Rate	31.0%				
Housing Units	9,352				
Households (Occupied Units)	2,895				
Vacant Housing Units	663				
HOUSEHOLD TYPES (ACS 2023)					

	number	%		number	%
Single Unit	3,399				
Multi-Unit	5,925				
Mobile Homes or Other	28				
RACE AND ORIGIN (ACS 2023)					
White	18,255	57.2%			
Black or African American	4,470	22.4%			
Asian	1,024	5.1%			
Multi-Racial	1,209	6.1%			
Other	54	0.3%			
Hispanic	1,682	8.4%			
TOTAL	19,937	100.0%			
HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL LEVEL (ACS 2023)					
Graduate / Professional Degree		23.3%	Some College, No Degree		25.7%
Bachelor's Degree		22.6%	High School or equivalent		16.0%
Associate's degree		6.1%	Did Not Graduate High School		6.3%
JOBS BY INDUSTRY (ACS 2023)					
Administrative, Support & Waste Services	602	5.0%	Education Services	3,051	25.3%
Healthcare Services	1,453	12.0%	Information & Finance	982	8.1%
Leisure & Hospitality	1,147	9.5%	Manufacturing	669	5.5%
Natural Resources, Mining, Construction	399	3.3%	Other Services	791	6.6%
Professional & Technical Services	1,118	9.3%	Public Administration	635	5.3%
Retail Trade	645	5.3%	Transportation, Warehousing	412	3.4%
Wholesale Trade	166	1.4%			
			Total	12,070	100%
POVERTY (ACS 2023)					
Persons in Poverty	4,427	25.5%			
INCOME (ACS 2023)					
Median Household Income (in 2023 \$)	\$44,141				
ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME (ACS 2023)					
\$200,000 or more	375	4.3%	\$40,000 TO \$44,999	388	4.5%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	391	4.5%	\$35,000 TO \$39,999	572	6.6%
\$125,000 to \$149,000	292	3.4%	\$30,000 TO \$34,999	624	7.2%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	596	6.9%	\$25,000 TO \$29,999	382	4.4%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	786	9.0%	\$20,000 TO \$24,000	372	4.3%

	number	%		number	%
\$60,000 TO \$74,999	855	9.8%	\$15,000 TO \$19,999	655	7.5%
\$50,000 TO \$59,999	626	7.2%	\$10,000 TO \$14,999	584	6.7%
\$45,000 TO \$49,999	350	4.0%	LESS THAN \$10,000	841	9.7%
			TOTAL	8,689	100%
HOUSING TYPE (ACS 2023)					
Single Family Detached	3,399	36.3%			
Multi-Unit	5,925	63.4%			
Mobile Homes or Other	28	0.3%			
TOTAL	9,352	100%			
HOUSING TENURE (ACS 2023)					
Owner occupied	2,895	31.0%			
Renter occupied	5,794	62.0%			
Vacant	663	7.0%			
	9,352	100%			
HOUSING VALUE (ACS 2023)					
Median Housing Value – in 2023 dollars	\$223,700				
Median gross rent	\$1,034				
HOUSING VALUE (ACS 2023)					
\$1,000,000 or more	8	0.3%	\$100,000 to \$124,999	180	6.2%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	101	3.5%	\$80,000 TO \$99,999	51	1.7%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	453	15.6%	\$60,000 TO \$79,999	45	1.6%
\$250,000 to \$299,999	642	22.2%	\$40,000 TO \$59,999	16	0.6%
\$200,000 TO \$249,000	463	16.0%	\$30,000 TO \$39,999	21	0.7%
\$175,000 TO \$199,000	263	9.1%	\$20,000 TO \$29,999	11	0.4%
\$150,000 TO \$174,999	327	11.3%	\$10,000 TO \$19,999	19	0.7%
\$125,000 TO \$149,999	285	9.8%	LESS THAN \$10,000	10	0.3%
			TOTAL	2,896	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2020) & 2020 and 2023 American Community Survey (ACS)

NATURAL FEATURES

Like much of Michigan’s southern Lower Peninsula, the landscape of the Ypsilanti area was formed through glacial action. The glacier’s movement shaped the topography and created the different types of soils. Most of Ypsilanti is developed but some natural features, two surface water rivers and wetlands exist which are shown in Figure 4 below.

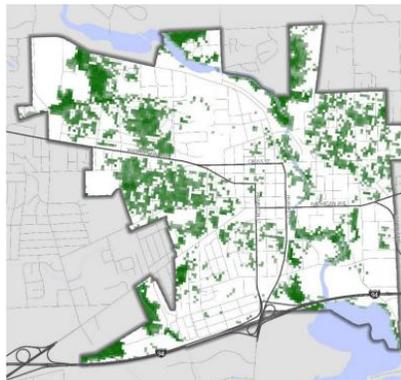
Wooded areas are found along the entire edge of both Huron River. They provide protective buffers for the waterways and protect the watershed from siltation and soil erosion damage caused by stormwater runoff. Approximately 1,058.4 acres or 37.6% of Ypsilanti has tree canopy as of 2022. The wooded areas also serve as a valuable wildlife corridor. Much of the heavily wooded areas around the river are identified as freshwater forested and shrub wetlands that exhibit temporary flooding (a few days to a few weeks) or seasonal flooding (primarily during the early growing season).

Figure 4. Natural Features



The major surface water in City of Ypsilanti is the Huron River. The presence of this river in conjunction with their location determines the type and extent of floodplain within the community. In general, wetlands occur in association with these waterways at many locations. The river passes through downtown Ypsilanti, drains into Ford Lake and is a part of the Lower Middle Huron River Watershed. Paint Creek is also identified as a surface water waterway in the city with its own watershed and floodplain.

While the soil’s poor drainage and wetness present some limitations in the existing riverfront recreation facilities, the Huron River provide great opportunities for outdoor recreation, particularly fishing and canoeing. The city owns and operates five (5) parks along the Huron River; Peninsular, Frog Island, Riverside, Waterworks and Huron Landing Parks.



LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

The City of Ypsilanti is located where an old Native American trail crossed the Huron River. It was a camping and burial ground for several Native American tribes. In 1809, explorers built a long structure on the west bank of an Indian trading post and was one of the first structures in the vast and sparsely populated Michigan territory. Its first written settlement was in 1823 by Benjamin Woodruff and several of his companions along the river just a mile south of the original trading post and named it Woodruff’s Grove. In 1825, settlers combined portions of their own land to form the original plan for a new settlement and called it Ypsilanti.

Ypsilanti is divided into various neighborhoods, corridors and districts. These include the downtown, Depot Town, the Human and Health Services District, various job districts and the railroad area southeast of Depot Town. The city’s boundaries typically fall along major roadways. The Michigan Avenue corridor is host to major destination commercial centers consisting of shops, restaurants and arts & entertainment experiences. While Depot Town is located at the intersection of River and Cross Streets.

Ypsilanti is likely most well-known for being the home of Eastern Michigan University. It is the largest employer in Ypsilanti and is a diverse public university providing a wide range of undergraduate, graduate and doctoral degree options.

Figure 4, on page 10, illustrates the city’s existing land use. This map shows the clear distinction between residential districts, business districts, industrial districts and the city’s primary natural feature, the Huron River. The City of Ypsilanti, boasting 15 parks, are spread throughout the City’s 4.47 square miles.

As presented in Table 4, the City of Ypsilanti has seen slow growth of occupied housing units from 2010 to 2022.

Table 4. Housing Units

Housing Type	Census 2010	ACS 2023	Change 2010-2023	New Units since 2023
Single Family Unit	3,612	3,399	-213	25
Multi-Unit Apartment	5,547	5,925	378	322
Mobile Home or Other	37	28	-9	0
Total Net Housing Units	9,196	9,352	156	347
Units Demolished				-5
NET (Total Permitting Units – Units Demolished)				342

Source: SEMCOG Community Profile

Single family residential, commercial districts and industrial districts take up large portions of the land use in the City of Ypsilanti. The pattern of land uses in Ypsilanti is predominantly built out with a very small portion of the City ready for new development.

Table 5. 2020 Land Use Acreage

	Acres 2020	Percent
Single-Family Residential	719.7	24.52%
Attached Condo Housing	3.1	0.11%
Multi-Family Residential	225.4	7.68%
Mobile Home	0.0	0.0%
Agricultural/Rural Residential	13.6	0.46%
Mixed Use	7.2	0.25%
Retail	60.4	2.06%
Office	40.0	1.36%
Hospitality	9.7	0.33%
Medical	34.0	1.16%
Institutional	312.6	10.65%
Industrial	143.3	4.88%
Recreational/Open Space	272.9	9.3%
Cemetery	89.3	3.04%
Golf Course	0.0	0.0%
Parking	57.5	1.96%
Extractive	0.0	0.0%
TCU	33.8	1.15%
Vacant	166.7	5.68%
Water	157.5	5.37%
Not Parceled	588.5	5.37%
TOTAL	2,935.2	100.0%

Source: SEMCOG Community Profile

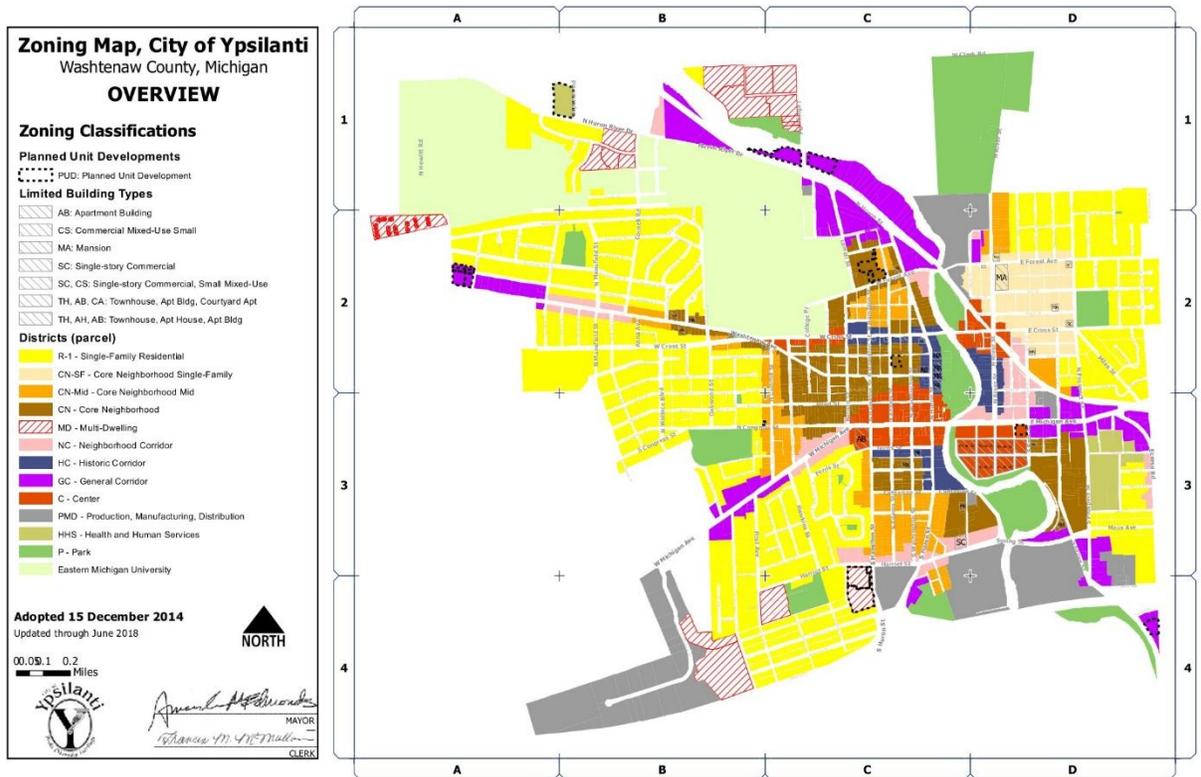
1. **Agricultural / Rural Res** includes any residential parcel containing 1 or more homes where the parcel is 3 acres or larger.
2. **Mixed Use** includes those parcels containing buildings with Hospitality, Retail, or Office square footage and housing units.
3. **Not Parceled** includes all areas within a community that are not covered by a parcel legal description.
4. Parcels that do not have a structure assigned to the parcel are considered vacant unless otherwise indicated, even if the parcel is part of a larger development such as a factory, school, or other developed series of lots.

Table 6. 2020 Land Cover

	Acres	Percent
Impervious (buildings, roads, driveways, parking lots)	1,148.4	40.8%
Trees (woody vegetation, trees)	654.8	23.3%
Open Space (agricultural fields, grasslands, turf grass)	881.2	31.3%
Bare (soil, aggregate piles, unplanted fields)	22.7	0.8%
Water (Rivers, lakes, drains, ponds)	108.8	3.9%
Total	2,816	100%

Source: SEMCOG Community Profile. SEMCOG Land Cover data was derived from SEMCOG's detailed data and imagery. Acreages are approximate and have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Figure 5. Existing Land Use



Source: City of Ypsilanti Website; As Amended to December, 2014

PLANNING INITIATIVES

While change is inevitable and growth in both population and housing will occur, the City of Ypsilanti is committed to managing that growth to enhance economic benefit, recreational activities, and overall quality of life for city residents.

Various initiatives and organizations have relevance to the current plan. They include:

- Shape Ypsilanti Master Plan Update (2021)
- Non-Motorized Transportation Plan Update (2021)
- Initiatives led by the Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority
- Initiatives led by the Historic District Commission
- Initiatives led by the Ypsilanti Housing Commission

Shape Ypsilanti Master Plan

The Shape Ypsilanti Master Plan is the foundation for future land use and planning decisions in the city. The City Framework Map, categories and plan were all updated in 2021. The Shape Ypsilanti Master Plan included several community goals and actions that relate to Culture, Recreation & The Environment in the city, which still have relevance to this plan.

- Eliminate new instances of soil contamination and responsibly deal with the legacy of existing polluted sites
- Protect the watershed from further contamination
- Preserve and expand the city's capacity to deal with heavy rainfall to mitigate negative effects on people and property
- City operations to become carbon neutral by 2035
- Expand and protect natural habitats
- Expand and preserve a resilient tree canopy

Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority

The City of Ypsilanti has a Downtown Development Authority which currently represents three (3) separate adopted TIF Plans; Downtown, Depot Town and West Cross. The Downtown district boundaries and TIF plan were most recently adopted in 2003. The Depot Town district boundaries and TIF plan were adopted in 2015 and include two parks: Frog Island and Riverside Parks. It also includes the Freighthouse and Market Plaza where the Farmer's Market(s) are held. The West Cross district boundaries and TIF plan were adopted in 1992. The Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority is regulated by their own City Ordinance and Bylaws. The board consists of the Mayor of the City of Ypsilanti and not less than eight (8) or more than twelve (12) members as determined by the City Council. The board also employs one (1) Executive Director who serves the pleasure of the board. Most recent accomplishments include Façade and Rehabilitation Grants, Streetscape Beautification, Special Events Sponsorship and Support, Community Engagement, and Business Owner Portraits.

Ypsilanti Historic District Commission

The City of Ypsilanti has a Historic District Commission which guides development and renovation in the Historic District to safeguard Ypsilanti built resources. Any proposed work done on the exterior of a structure within the district must be reviewed by the HDC. This includes new construction, reconstruction, renovation, restoration, or painting of any property or historic landmark within the Historic District, as well as site features such as driveways, retaining walls, and fences.



Ypsilanti Housing Commission

The Ypsilanti Housing Commission provides affordable housing opportunities to moderate and low-income families and individuals in the City of Ypsilanti. The YHC owns 342 units of affordable housing within the city. It is the project sponsor of Hamilton Crossing, a nationally recognized, award-winning 144-unit affordable housing development. The YHC is led by a Board of Commissioners who each serve a term length of five years.

Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Regional Chamber

The Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Regional Chamber is a 1,200 member community organization that actively facilitates, educates, and advocates on behalf of its members through its services and programs. Chamber member offerings include numerous networking opportunities and events, educational seminars, leadership development, and special offers to Chamber members from Chamber members. The Chamber offers multiple ways to get businesses to get noticed and provide networking opportunities. Its mission is to foster great regional economic success, community prosperity, and improved quality of life by advocating for, and supporting the Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti business community. The Chamber is led by a Board of Directors who oversee a full-time professional staff.

Ypsilanti Historical Society

The Ypsilanti Historical Society is a non-profit board led group which works to instill pride in the community by inspiring the future, educating the present and preserving the past. It owns and operates its own museum and archives. The Museum is in the historic district of the city, just north of the downtown. Its goals include:

- To bring together those people interested in the history of the Ypsilanti area.
- To discover and collect materials relating to the events and history of this area, including printed matter, manuscripts, and museum materials illustrative of life, conditions, events and activities of the past and present.
- To provide for the preservation and assembling of such materials and for its public display and accessibility.
- To disseminate historical information and generate interest in the past by publishing historical material in newsletters, the news media, holding meetings, special tours, lectures and demonstrations.
- To hold title to personal and real property, assets and records acquired by the Society, and
- To encourage bequests and contributions to endow the work of the Society.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The City of Ypsilanti is an incorporated city in Michigan whose role it is to serve the residents, businesses and visitors. The City of Ypsilanti is governed by a Mayor, who is elected by voters in the city at-large, and six-member City Council, elected by the voters who represent the city's three (3) voting wards. The Mayor and City Council work together to govern and address the needs of the community. The city employs a council-manager form of government that combines the strong political leadership of elected officials with the strong managerial experience of an appointed City Manager.

The City of Ypsilanti has a Parks and Arts Commission which is created and governed by City Ordinance Chapter 80. It is an advisory board who are appointed by City Council to ensure recreational programs and public arts opportunities are afforded all citizens, by encouraging public-private partnerships between the City, local businesses, organizations, neighborhoods, Washtenaw County, and neighboring townships and by encouraging volunteerism. The goal of the Parks and Arts Commission is to seek sustainable alternatives and methods for making recreational programming and the arts available to the citizens of the City of Ypsilanti. Their primary principal duties and responsibilities include:

- Make recommendations to staff and City Council concerning the recreation and city parks needs of the city, including how park improvement funds are used.
- Make recommendations to staff and City Council concerning the solicitation and selection, funding, partnerships, and promotion of public art in public spaces and/or on City property, including how public art funds are used.
- Prepare, consider, and approve a parks and recreation master plan. An update shall be considered no less frequently than every five (5) years.
- Create and update an arts plan for the City with goals and vision regarding supporting and fostering arts within the City.
- Review and approve "Adopt-A-Park" applications.
- Review applications for public art.
- Review and advise upon plans for capital improvements within the parks.
- Prepare an annual written report to the City Council concerning its operations.
- Expand park and recreation opportunities through Commission-sponsored events
- Work to amend the ordinances of the City to include a definition of public art.

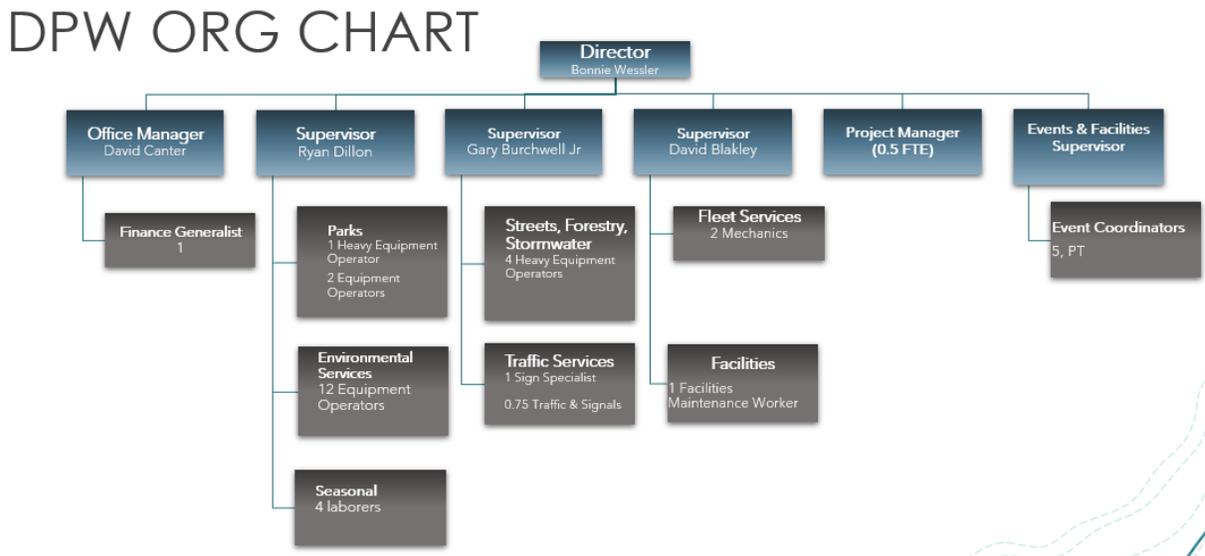
ADMINISTRATION

The City of Ypsilanti’s parks and recreation operation is overseen by the Department of Public Works. The establishment and governance of parks and public property is established in Chapter 78 in the code of ordinances. The Department of Public Works (DPW) is responsible for the maintenance of all City-owned and operated buildings, facilities, and infrastructure as well as the provision of solid waste services. Routine responsibilities of this Department include:

- Solid Waste Services, Recycling & Yard Waste Composting
- Capital Improvements
- Street Maintenance
- Traffic signal and sign maintenance
- Maintenance of stormwater conveyance facilities and structures
- Public Tree Maintenance
- Facilities maintenance
- Equipment Maintenance
- Parking lot & meter maintenance
- Parks Maintenance

The Public Works Department is organized and operates by the leadership of one (1) Director. The department is broken into five (5) divisions which are all led by a division supervisor. They include Administration, Parks and Environmental Services, Streets, Forestry, Stormwater and Traffic Services, Fleet and Facilities Maintenance, and Events & Facilities Operations. Within the Department of Public Works, park maintenance is completed by the Parks and Environmental Services division which includes one full-time (1) supervisor, one full-time (1) heavy equipment operator, fourteen full-time (14) equipment operators and four (4) seasonal laborers. Special events, park rentals and programming are led by the Events & Facilities Division, which includes one full-time (1) Events & Facilities Supervisor and five (5) part-time event coordinators.

Figure 6. Organizational Chart



FUNDING AND BUDGET

The City of Ypsilanti’s fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30 of each year. Funding for parks and recreation is appropriated within various departments within the city’s general fund. These include DPS-Parks, Freighthouse, Senior Center, Parkridge, Swimming Pool and Special Events. The General Fund’s primary revenue sources are taxes, state grants, special assessments, investment income and other revenues. The parks & recreation amended budget in FY 2025 was \$1,889,784. In FY2026, the parks & recreation budget is \$1,002,783, a decrease of 46.9%.

Expenditures for equipment replacement and capital improvements are submitted each budget cycle and identified in both a one-year Capital improvement plan and a five-year Capital Improvement Plan. Projects are financed through a variety of funding sources outside of the General Fund. They include bonds, support from other department budgets, Community Development Block Grants, Washtenaw County Parks Grants, mDNR Grants and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

Table 7. Parks and Recreation Budget Summaries

Special Events	Desc.	24-25 Council Approved	25-26 Approved
Revenue			
101-4420-4676-01	SPECIAL EVENTS ADMIN FEE	\$1,000	\$1,000
101-4420-4676-04	REIMBURSEMENT	\$2,250	\$0
101-4420-4676-20	SPECIAL EVENTS APP & UTILITIES	\$10,000	\$10,000
101-4420-4676-32	SPECIAL EVENTS - DPW	\$8,500	\$1,000
101-4420-4676-38	PUB PKING LOT/SPACE RENTAL	\$1,000	\$1,000
101-4420-4676-46	STREET CLOSURE FEE	\$3,750	\$3,750
Expenditure			
	PERSONNEL	\$46,335	\$41,932
101-4420-7757-00	OPERATING SUPPLIES	\$950	\$1,000
101-4420-7775-01	REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE	\$1,000	\$1,000
101-4420-7799-01	SOFTWARE CITYWIDE	\$5,500	\$5,500
101-4420-7818-00	CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	\$5,000	\$7,500
101-4420-7900-01	PRINTING	\$800	\$800
101-4420-7920-00	PUBLIC UTILITIES	\$4,000	\$4,000
DPS-Parks			
Desc.	24-25 Council Approved	25-26 Approved	
Revenue			
101-7170-4607-06	PARK CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT	\$9,000	\$7,500
101-7170-4607-08	CDBG FUNDING PROSPECT PARK	\$10,000	\$0

Expenditure			
	PERSONNEL	\$294,649	\$310,940
101-7170-7757-00	OPERATING SUPPLIES	\$1,425	\$3,000
101-7170-7768-00	UNIFORMS, LAUNDRY & CLEANING	\$5,000	\$5,000
101-7170-7768-01	PPE	\$1,000	\$1,000
101-7170-7775-01	REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE	\$15,000	\$15,000
101-7170-7818-00	CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	\$56,000	\$50,000
101-7170-7818-10	PARK CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT EXP	\$25,000	\$10,000
101-7170-7920-00	PUBLIC UTILITIES	\$5,000	\$5,000
101-7170-7943-00	MOTORPOOL RENTAL	\$177,394	\$198,653
101-7170-7958-00	MEMBERSHIP AND DUES	\$750	\$800
Senior Center	Desc.	24-25 Council Approved	25-26 Approved
Expenditure			
	PERSONNEL	\$10,712	\$10,883
101-7510-7757-00	OPERATING SUPPLIES	\$95	\$100
101-7510-7775-01	REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE	\$1,000	\$1,000
101-7510-7818-00	CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	\$11,900	\$40,000
101-7510-7943-00	MOTORPOOL	\$4,000	\$2,500
Parkridge Center	Desc.	24-25 Council Approved	25-26 Approved
Expenditure			
	PERSONNEL	\$51,439	\$52,853
101-7520-7757-00	OPERATING SUPPLIES	\$1,188	\$1,250
101-7520-7818-00	CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	\$20,000	\$20,000
101-7520-7852-00	ALARMS	\$0	\$2,000
101-7520-7853-00	TELEPHONE	\$6,398	\$5,241
101-7520-7920-00	PUBLIC UTILITIES	\$14,000	\$14,000
101-7520-7932-00	JANITORIAL SERVICE	\$15,000	\$20,000
101-7520-7943-00	MOTORPOOL	\$0	\$2,500
Recreation Pool	Desc.	24-25 Council Approved	25-26 Approved
Revenue			
101-7530-4653-01	R. POOL PERSONNEL O/H REIMB	\$77,661	\$73,500
Expenditure			
101-7530-7706-00	WAGES	\$70,000	\$73,500
101-7530-7818-00	CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	\$0	\$500

Freighthouse	Desc.	24-25 Council Approved	25-26 Approved
Revenue			
101-7551-4667-00	FREIGHTHOUSE RENTALS	\$115,000	\$115,000
101-7551-4667-01	FREIGHTHOUSE APPLICATION	\$12,000	\$12,000
Expenditure			
	PERSONNEL	\$65,149	\$65,763
101-7551-7757-00	OPERATING SUPPLIES	\$7,125	\$7,500
101-7551-7768-00	UNIFORMS, LAUNDRY & CLEANING	\$0	\$0
101-7551-7775-01	REPAIR & MAINTENANCE	\$5,000	\$5,000
101-7551-7799-01	SOFTWARE CITYWIDE	\$5,500	\$5,000
101-7551-7818-00	CONTRACTUAL SERVICE	\$5,000	\$20,000
101-7551-7850-00	INTERNET	\$2,350	\$2,500
101-7551-7852-01	ALARM	\$1,500	\$3,500
101-7551-7900-01	PRINTING AND PUBLISHING	\$800	\$800
101-7551-7920-00	PUBLIC UTILITIES	\$11,400	\$12,000
101-7551-7932-00	JANITORIAL SERVICE	\$15,000	\$15,000
101-7551-7943-00	MOTORPOOL RENTAL	\$10,000	\$5,000

VOLUNTEERS & PARTNERSHIPS

Volunteers, service clubs, community groups and government agencies, play an active role in supporting parks and recreation in the City of Ypsilanti. They include:

Civic and Other Organizations: Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti Regional Chamber of Commerce
Ypsilanti Historical Society
Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority
Ypsilanti Convention and Visitors Bureau
Ypsilanti Senior Center
Rutherford Pool
Parkridge Community Center

Community Arts Partners: Eastern Michigan University (EMU)
Riverside Arts Center
Riverside Fine Arts Club
University Musical Society (UMS)
Ypsilanti Symphony Orchestra

Community Sports Partners: Ypsi-Arbor American Little League
Soccer Shots
Michigan FC

Local Service Clubs: Rotary Club of Ypsilanti
Ypsilanti Kiwanis Club
Friends in Deed
Fed-Up Ministries

Fraternal Organizations: St. Andrews No. 7 Masonic Lodge
American Legion Post 282

Scouting Groups: Troop 243 of Ypsilanti
Troop 240 of Ypsilanti
Troop 290 of Ypsilanti

PARK AND RECREATION INVENTORY

The residents of the City of Ypsilanti have a variety of available parks and recreational resources. These facilities vary in terms of ownership (Federal, State, County, local, schools, and private), size (small neighborhood playgrounds of less than one acre to large community parks with thousands of acres), and type (playgrounds, sports facilities, community parks, etc.). The purpose of this chapter of the plan is to describe the full range of recreational facilities in and around Ypsilanti.

PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES WITHIN YPSILANTI

The City of Ypsilanti owns and operates sixteen (16) parks and open spaces totaling 91.59 acres. They currently include community, neighborhood and mini parks with play equipment, picnic facilities, sports fields, river access and landscape areas. Ypsilanti’s four (4) community parks are the largest green spaces in the city and offer the greatest array of recreational amenities. The city’s four (4) neighborhood parks are those that provide residents with convenient access to green space within walking distances of nearby homes and neighborhoods. Seven (7) mini parks are sprinkled throughout the city, creating small green spaces in developed areas. This includes two (2) memorial parks. Additionally, the city has trails, bikeways and linear parks identified in its inventory.

Figure 7. Ypsilanti City Parks



Community Parks

Riverside Park

Riverside Park is a 14.64-acre community park located at 5 East Cross Street. 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, because 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 non-motorized transportation link locally between downtown and Depot Town, and regionally as part of the Border to Border & Iron Belle trail network. It also serves as outdoor recreation space for adjacent neighborhoods and is the City’s primary outdoor event and gathering space, and the gazebo and dock by the river are together a popular site for weddings. The Liz Dahl MacGregor Playground, completed in 2018 with grant aid from Washtenaw County, is the first accessible playground in the city and has been extremely popular with residents and visitors alike. The Ypsilanti Heritage Bridge, constructed in 2015 with grant aid from the Michigan DNR, is not only the Ypsilanti’s downtown. The park hosts major annual regional events, such as the Brewer’s Guild of Michigan Summer Beer Festival; car and motorcycle shows such as the 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 charrette-driven development plans created. The recommendations for Riverside Park aim to enhance its role both as a recreation resource for residents and as a versatile setting for community events. Appendix B contains further detail on each of these items, as well as the full conceptual site plans. With the construction of the accessible Liz Dahl MacGregor Playground in late 2018 and the Ypsilanti Heritage Bridge in 2015 changing the landscape of the park, this development plan remains a vision and inspiration.



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). In 2015, a pedestrian bridge connection from the south side of Riverside Park across the river to the north side of Michigan Ave was constructed, courtesy of a 2011 Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant, with match generously provided by the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission. This enables pedestrians to cross from Riverside Park, across Michigan Ave via a HAWK crossing, and onwards to the River’s Edge Linear Park and Trail. This is the only entrance that is ADA-accessible without a motor vehicle and increases the park’s visibility from US-12. This bridge complements the pedestrian bridge

known as the Tridge on the north side of the park, linking it to Frog Island. Also in 2015, the HRWC placed a rock vane in the river adjacent to the dock, as part of a larger project that also included felling and anchoring trees at the riverbank to improve fish habitat. In December 2018, the Liz Dahl MacGregor Playground was completed, following three years of fundraising effort by a dedicated group of residents, including Liz Dahl MacGregor, who passed away suddenly in June of 2018.



Frog Island Park

Frog Island Park is an 8.55-acre community park located at 699 River Street. 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, pathway, and the three-terminus bridge known as the Tridge. The millrace was culverted and the channel filled with concrete debris sometime before 1980. In 2007, a neighborhood group established the Frog Island Community Garden at the north end of the park.

Frog Island hosts more sports 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 and unpaved path leading down to the Huron River and a canoe/kayak takeout adopted by the Huron River Watershed Council, as well as the community garden. The soccer field and running track in the center of the park are well used, with organized groups or pick-up games on most days with good weather. The running track is unique to the area due to its “cinder” surfacing and true quarter-mile length. The amphitheater at the southern end of the park is underutilized despite having electrical power available by reservation but has the potential to host events. A paved path runs the length of the park along the berm that separates the park from the Huron. 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). The Recycling Center, located near the east entrance of the park, presented a grant conversion issue and was demolished in 2018.



Recreation Park

Recreation Park is a 16.9-acre community park located at 1017 Congress Street. 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 play equipment, two ballfields, an unimproved walking path, the outdoor Rutherford Pool, a basketball court, a picnic pavilion, the Senior Center, and a community garden. Located next to the former Chapelle Elementary School, it also adjoins a school playground.

Recreation Parks' mix of facilities and activities is popular throughout the community and for a broad range of ages. The Senior Center attracts users from both the city and the neighboring townships, 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 daycares, Washtenaw International High School & Middle Academy, Estabrook Elementary School and Ypsilanti High School. The current tenants of the Chapelle school building consist of several daycare and nonprofit facilities; they do not currently use the park for their programming.

Due to Recreation Park's broad appeal, stakeholders have suggested that it be prioritized for accessibility updates, including a paved trail and further expressed a desire to pursue intergenerational play opportunities. Stormwater control, dog waste, and tree succession issues were also brought up frequently in both surveys and during visioning sessions. The Little League has expressed interest in pursuing further playing field improvements including reconfiguration and adding a field.



Parkridge Park

Parkridge Park is an 11.7-acre community park located at 791 Harriet Street. Adjacent to over 300 units of affordable housing controlled by the Ypsilanti Housing Commission, the pre-school to first grade Perry Early Learning Center, the Parkridge Community Center, and near the intersection of Huron Street and I-94 (and planned bike lanes and non-motorized crossing), this park has a wide potential user base. It contains basketball and tennis courts, a softball field, jogging and walking track, playground equipment, an educational garden, and a picnic pavilion.

Perry ELC borders the park directly to the east, and some facilities- such as parking, a small “tot lot” playground, community garden, and paths, are freely accessible to the public and appear part of the park, but were installed by YCS, who currently maintains those grounds. West of there- with the easternmost north-south pathway being the approximate boundary line- ownership is clearly the City’s. On paper, however, records are less clear and put the boundary further west. The City and YCS are currently working together to ensure boundaries and responsibilities are clear going forward.



Neighborhood Parks

Candy Cane Park

Candy Cane Park is a 6.72-acre neighborhood park located at 1620 Roosevelt Street. Candy Cane Park, acquired at the initial plat of the land and originally called College Heights Park, is 6.7 acres in size and is used primarily for active recreation. The Ypsilanti American Little League maintains the scoreboard and ballfield, and the neighborhood is active in parks maintenance projects. There is a small picnic pavilion on the site, which groups can reserve for events. 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 for its play equipment. There is one paved pathway to the newly built accessible play structure.

Little League games have been held at Candy Cane in spring and early summer for over seventy years and was the setting for a historic struggle for gender equity in sports. In 1973, Ypsilanti resident Carolyn King tried out for a place on the Ypsilanti Orioles, having been granted special permission by the league president, as girls were not allowed to try out or play. She outperformed many boys and was placed on the roster. When Little League International officials learned that King had been placed on the team, they threatened to revoke YALL's charter unless she was removed. Begrudgingly, YALL removed Carolyn; however, Ypsilanti City Council responded by saying that if King was not allowed to play, YALL was not permitted to use City fields. YALL relented, and King played in May of 1973. Little League International officials then revoked the YALL charter, and the city joined a suit with King against Little League International alleging discrimination. Although Little League International won the suit, they dropped the prohibition of girls beginning with the 1975 season. A documentary about this event was released in 2011 called *The Girls in Centerfield*.

The accessible play structure and connector trail was installed in 2020.

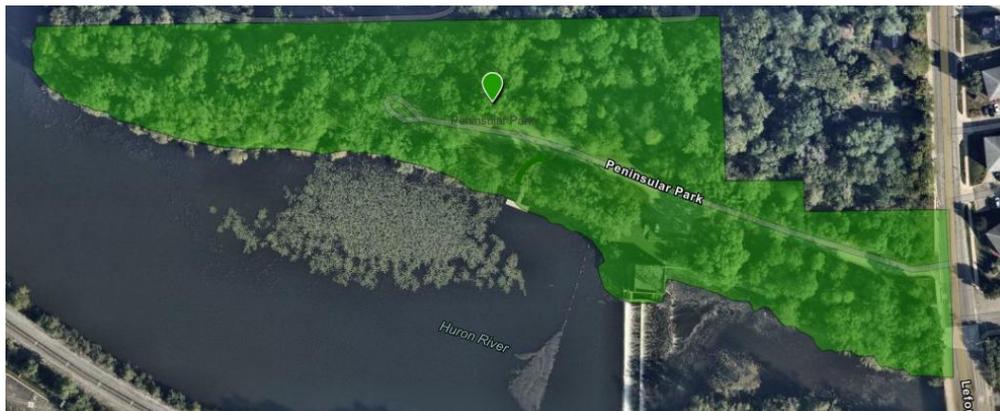


Peninsular Park

Peninsular Park is a 7.6-acre neighborhood park located at 1265 LeForge. 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.

Peninsular Park serves a wide array of regional users due to its location on the river and scenic overlooks. The decommissioned dam requires 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. The concrete dock also serves as a popular fishing pier, although lately fishing has been diminished due to concerns surrounding PFAS.

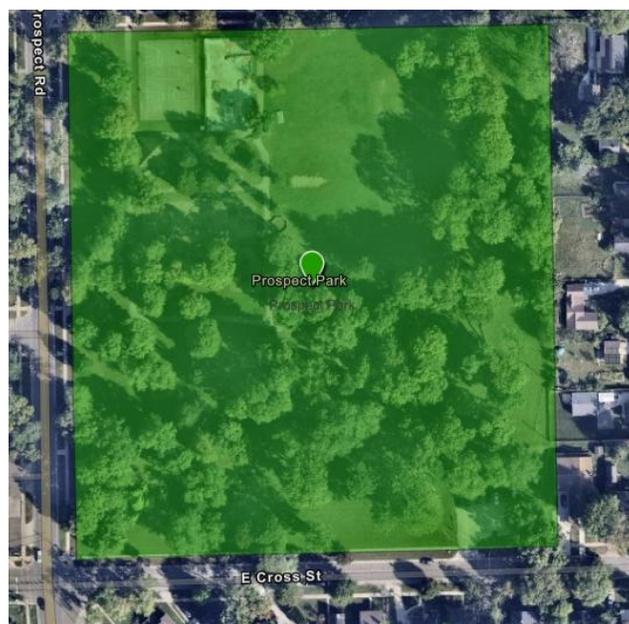
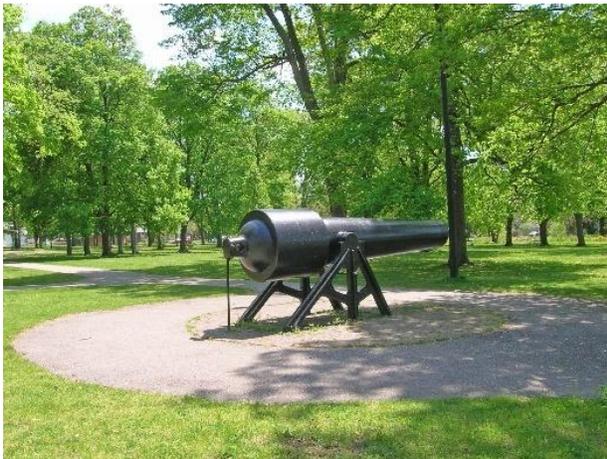
An empty powerhouse remains on the site, a legacy of the Peninsular Paper Company, connected to a deteriorated dam, built in 1920 to power the Peninsular Paper Mill across the river. The 2,500 square foot Powerhouse and the sign atop it together is a historic landmark, reflecting Ypsilanti's industrial past, although not officially designated or protected as such. Although the mill site across the river was demolished and redeveloped in the early 2000s as student housing, the dam and Powerhouse remain. The dam is considered a high-hazard dam by the State, and the city is legally obligated to make repairs or to remove it. A feasibility study was completed in 2018 by Princeton Hydro with support from the Huron River Watershed Council. This feasibility study is contained in Appendix I. In May 2019 City Council resolved to remove the dam and has been awarded grants to do so. Efforts for that are currently underway.



Prospect Park

Prospect Park is a 9.97-acre neighborhood park located at 550 N. Prospect. 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.

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 Ypsilanti International Elementary School (PK-5)



Waterworks Park

Waterworks Park is a 10-acre neighborhood park located at 40 Catherine Street. 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 compost/mulch yard for the city where once a water treatment plant operated. 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 River's Edge Trail by an existing steel truss pedestrian bridge. The park has a disused baseball field, a picnic shelter and a disc golf course built in 2007 by volunteers. This course 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, vacant, grassy space. Should a dog park be developed, careful attention must be paid to preserving existing uses; the disc golf course is unique to Ypsilanti's parks, as is the existing forested area. This and any other proposals for future uses must also be considered that this park is entirely within the floodway of the Huron River.



Mini Parks

Ainsworth Park

Ainsworth Park is a 0.55-acre mini park located in the center of Ainsworth Circle. 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 as to whether it should continue or better be served as a recreational need in the neighborhood. There is no play equipment or other park amenities.



Huron Landing Park

Huron Landing Park is 3.19-acre neighborhood park located on 101 Spring Street. It was acquired and created as a park by the city in 2024. It is a riverfront park with a small parking lot and direct river access. This park would benefit by the installation of floating docks and other accessibility improvements such as paving the parking lot and connecting the park from the Spring Street sidewalk.



Edith Hefley Tot Lot

Edith Hefley Tot Lot is a 0.42-acre mini park located at 107 Elm Street. The park 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 was replaced in 2017. Sidewalks are present on the three street sides of the parcel, and signage exists on the north-west corner. There are no paths internal to the park.



Carrie R. Mattingly Tot Lot

The Carrie R. Mattingly Tot Lot is a 0.46-acre mini park located at 206 Ainsworth Street. The park is at the center of a residential block in the Ainsworth Street neighborhood. Its play equipment was replaced in 2017. 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. Maintenance equipment can only access the park via the entrance encroached upon by the driveway, due to guy wire placement at the west entrance.



Charles Street Tot Lot

The Charles Street Tot Lot is a 0.1-acre mini park located at 800 Charles Street. The park is east of the intersection of Charles and Thomas Streets and 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 that was mostly replaced in 2017. Some equipment, such as the rockers and climbers should be removed due to the lack of fall surfacing and other updated safety standards.



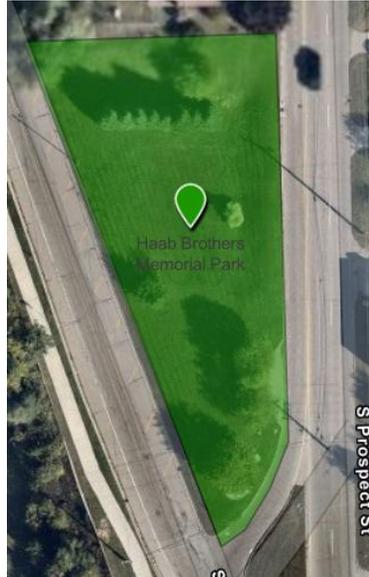
Spanish American War Memorial

The Spanish American War Memorial is a 0.1-acre mini park located at 944 West Cross Street. 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.



Haabs Brothers Memorial

The Haabs Brothers Memorial is a 0.49-acre mini park located at 413 Grove Road. It is a triangular parcel at the intersection of Grove and Prospect. Previously a gas station, the site was 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.



Linear Parks

River's Edge Park/Water Street Trail

River's Edge Linear Park and Trail, opened in 2018 with grant aid from the DNR's NRTF and several other partners. It connects on the north to Riverside Park via a HAWK crossing of Michigan Avenue, and to the south it connects to Grove Road. This shared-use path also connects to Waterworks Park via a pedestrian bridge at about its midpoint. There are two accessible fishing piers along its length, as well as a small plaza with a bench at the Waterworks bridge. This trail was created to move several miles of Border-to-Border Trail from a mixed bike-lane and sidewalk experience to a shorter, more scenic shared-use path.



Other Parks & Recreation Facilities

Freighthouse & Market Plaza

The Freighthouse, located at 100 Market Place and next to Frog Island Park on the north side of Depot Town, has been used as a community center, hosting the Depot Town Farmers Market, a café, and various community meetings and events. The Freighthouse is part of the Ypsilanti Historic District, and is listed in the National Register of Historic Sites.

The building's condition forced its closure in 2004. The Friends of the Ypsilanti Freighthouse (FOYF), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and the City, have raised money and received grants for the various repairs required to re-open the building. In April of 2020, management of the Freighthouse transitioned from the Friends of Ypsilanti Freighthouse to the City of Ypsilanti. Today the Freighthouse is once again available for community and private events.



Ypsilanti Senior Center

Located in Recreation Park, the Ypsilanti Senior Center is a 501(c)(3) organization that leases the building from the City of Ypsilanti. The Center is a home away from home for area seniors, providing a community of peers for connection, education, and active living. The mission of the Center is to create great experiences for older adults in a welcoming environment that encourages learning, active engagement, fitness, and healthy living.

It has been serving older adults in Washtenaw County for over 60 years, originally founded in 1960 as a space for retirees to gather and stay active. The Ypsilanti Senior Center is the primary senior programming organization within the city. Their offerings include fitness classes, occupational therapy, arts and crafts classes, collaborative intergenerational storytelling and more.



Rutherford Pool

Located in Recreation Park, Rutherford Pool is a community pool within Recreation Park leased to the Friends of Rutherford Pool 501(c)(3). The city operated the pool until 2003. The pool was proposed by Jesse A Rutherford in 1971 to provide recreation to the community of Ypsilanti MI and the surrounding areas. Sadly, the pool had to close in 2011 due to numerous failures. The pool was completely rebuilt and reopened in May of 2014. The Friends of Rutherford Pool remained committed to ensure that the pool provide swim lessons, exercise programs and most of all a safe, enjoyable recreational experience to all Ypsilanti area residents no matter their age or ability.

Friends of Rutherford Pool raises funds and organizes programming opportunities to keep the pool accessible and safe. It's a central part of Ypsilanti's summer and hosts events like the Kids Triathlon and offers scholarships for swimming lessons and exercise programs. Rutherford Pool has been a cornerstone of the Ypsilanti community for over 50 years.



Parkridge Community Center

Parkridge Community Center is a vital resource in Ypsilanti. Washtenaw Community College and the City of Ypsilanti partnered to create WCC at Parkridge to enhance the ability to serve the community. Located at 591 Armstrong in the northwest corner of Parkridge Park, the facility offers recreational and educational programs to Ypsilanti youth, with a focus on after-school and summer activities. The facility has a gym, kitchen, library, and meeting rooms.

For over 75 years, the Parkridge Community Center has been a cornerstone in the city's south side. And is one of the primary recreational programming organizations in the city. It offers a wide range of virtual and in-person programs and services for community members of all ages. Offerings are designed to engage youth in safe, positive, and structured activities with a focus on education, health, leadership, empowerment, and social development. The City of Ypsilanti owns the facility while Washtenaw Community College leases and operates it.



Riverside Arts Center

Riverside Arts Center (RAC) began in 1995 to spur the cultural and economic revitalization of downtown Ypsilanti with an emphasis on the arts. During this early phase, Riverside Arts Center facilitated several focus groups to determine how the facility could best meet community needs and generate more public opportunities for the involvement in the arts. The Riverside Arts Center, located in the heart of Ypsilanti, currently occupies the former Masonic Temple and the adjacent former Detroit Energy Building for \$1/year lease. These buildings are connected by an elevator system making every space accessible.

For the first 18 years of existence, Riverside Arts Center was run entirely by a dedicated Board of Directors and a part-time Gallery Coordinator. In 2014, RAC hired its first Executive Director and today employs three full-time staff members (Executive Director, Operations Manager, Marketing and Administrative Coordinator), one part-time staff member (Rental and Facilities Coordinator), and several independently contracted teaching artists. In August 2017, Riverside Arts Center incorporated FLY Children’s Art Center, which offered youth and family programs on-site and in the community.

The Riverside Arts Center provides many artmaking opportunities, classes and workshops. It is the location of the Riverside Fine Arts Club, the Art Explorers Summer Camp and more. They also provide rental space for events, gatherings and performances. The facility is connected to Riverside Park via a plaza. It is operated by a 501(C)(3). The city neither owns nor controls this facility.



Schools and Churches

In addition to the City parks there are schools, churches, and private properties and open spaces offering recreation opportunities to the residents of Ypsilanti. The following is a brief overview of these facilities.

Public School Facilities

Ypsilanti Community Schools (YCS) is the public school district serving the City of Ypsilanti where enrollment is approximately 3,700 students with a K-12 curriculum. There are twelve total schools including 3 preschools, 8 elementary, 5 middle and 3 high schools. YCS aims to empower students through equitable education, community partnerships, and innovative learning environments. The district has deep community roots and has a focus on inclusive, forward-thinking education.

Ypsilanti International Elementary School immediately borders the cities Prospect Park and utilizes it for its classes daily recess. Perry Elementary School immediately borders the city's Parkridge Park.

Huron Valley Catholic School

Huron Valley Catholic School (HVCS) is a private parent-governed Catholic school in the community. It serves students from preschool through eighth grade. Founded in 1982, it emphasizes academic excellence, faith formation, and character development in a nurturing environment. Its enrollment is around two hundred students and offers a strong blend of faith, academic and community.

Eastern Michigan University

Eastern Michigan University (EMU) is a public research university located in Ypsilanti known for its career-focused programs, diverse student body, and historic commitment to teacher education. Founded in 1849, EMU now offers two hundred majors across undergraduate and graduate levels. Its enrollment as of fall of 2024 was 10,470 undergraduate and 2,193 graduate students.

The city has and continues to partner with Eastern Michigan University in several ways including through its arts programming, EMU holds a seat on the city's DDA board, community, and economic development initiatives and with student engagement programs.

Ypsilanti Area Churches

The City of Ypsilanti includes approximately eighty churches representing 31 different denominations, some of which incorporate recreation facilities such as playgrounds, picnic areas, and open grass areas.

Private Recreation Facilities

Private Gym Facilities

There are several private gym facilities within the City of Ypsilanti including The Mix Fitness Studios, Powerhouse Gym, Planet Fitness and Crunch Fitness. These facilities provide opportunities for residents and visitors to visit these full-service fitness centers to participate in weightlifting, yoga, or group fitness classes.

Nearby Public Recreation Facilities

Eagle Crest Golf Club

Eagle Crest Golf Club is a part of the Eagle Crest Resort overlooking Ford Lake, known for its scenic layout and challenging design. The land it sits on is owned by Ypsilanti Township but is operated and affiliated with Eastern Michigan University. The course offers panoramic views and a tranquil setting with several holes running along Ford Lake.

Green Oaks Golf Course

Green Oaks Golf Course is an 18-hole course owned and operated by Ypsilanti Township. It offers a mix of challenges and historic charm, making it a favorite among local golfers and visits alike. Green Oaks Golf Course is located on the same campus and is connected to the Ypsilanti Township Community Center.

Ypsilanti Township Community Center

Owned and operated by Ypsilanti Township, this facility offers recreation, enrichment, and community engagement programming for residents and visitors. The Township's Recreation Department offers programs of all ages including sports, adult fitness, arts, and senior activities. The facility has a gym, racquetball courts and classrooms and meeting rooms.

Eastern Washtenaw Recreation Center

Coming soon to Eastern Washtenaw County is the Eastern Washtenaw Recreation Center. It's going to be a new multi-use facility on the former Cheney Elementary School site in Ypsilanti Township. A collaborative project between Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation, Ypsilanti Township and Superior Township, it is aimed at expanding recreation opportunities and access in the region.



Recreation Programs

The city does not directly offer recreation programs but does so through its partnerships:

- Parkridge Community Center Programs:**
- GED Preparation Programs
 - Senior Focus Program
 - Dance
 - Strength and Conditioning for Seniors
 - In-School Programming
 - Hustle to Success
 - Financial Literacy
 - Ypsilanti District Library Programs
 - African Dance Program
 - Girls Groups
 - Summer Camps
 - Tutoring
 - Youth Leadership Academy
 - Mentor2Youth
- Rutherford Pool Programs:**
- Swim Lessons
 - Swim Team
 - Baby Bubbles
 - Water Exercise
 - Water Polo
 - Inner Tube Water Polo
 - Kids Triathlon
 - National Night Out
- Ypsilanti Senior Center Programs:**
- Food Delivery Programs
 - Exercise Classes
 - Bingo
 - Euchre
 - Educational Speaker Series
 - Occupational Therapy
 - Arts & Crafts Classes
- Facility Rentals:**
- Candy Cane Park Shelter
 - Parkridge Park Shelter
 - Peninsular Park Shelter
 - Prospect Park Shelter
 - Recreation Park Shelter
 - Waterworks Park Shelter
 - Riverside Park Gazebo
 - Frog Island Park Amphitheater
 - Ypsilanti Freighthouse
 - Ypsilanti Senior Center
 - Parkridge Community Center

PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES AROUND YPSILANTI

Washtenaw County Parks

Washtenaw County is fortunate to have an abundance of parks, natural areas, recreation facilities, trails and programs available for its residents. Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation (WCPARC) has strategically developed and enhanced its parks system which provides public access to nearly 7,100 acres of parks, preserves, trails, rivers and lakes. It also holds an additional 3,200 acres of open space and agricultural lands through purchase of conservation easements.

Ypsilanti does have a portion of one Washtenaw County Park within its boundary and several others that are just outside. The Janice Anschuetz Highland Preserve is a 75 acre preserve with its southern parcel within the City of Ypsilanti limits. This preserve is named after the long-time Parks Commissioner and City of Ypsilanti resident, Janice Anschuetz. The property has a variety of landforms and characteristics including meadow and remnant prairie habitats. Amenities include natural ground, unimproved areas and boardwalk trails.



Parker Mill County Park is a 44 acre park (26 acres owned by WCPARC and 18 leased from City of Ann Arbor) in Ann Arbor Township just northwest of the city's boundary. The Parker gristmill located in this park was built in 1873 and is one of the historic treasures in Washtenaw County. Various programming events are held throughout the year and several trails are available at this park.

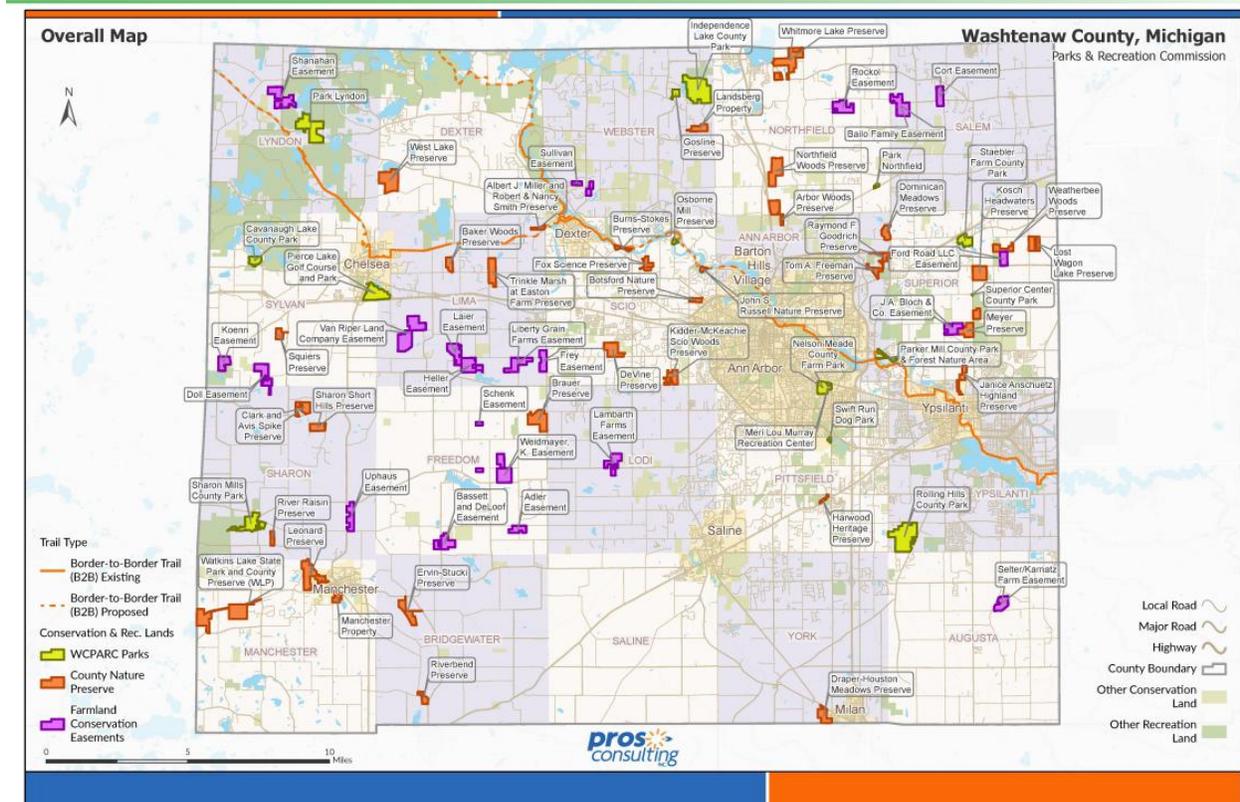


The most visible Washtenaw County recreational amenity that goes through the City of Ypsilanti is the Border to Border Trail (B2B). In 1999, it was suggested linking 400 of public land in the Huron River corridor from the Livingston County border to the Wayne County border. The B2B is a shared-use, non-motorized trail network that connects various cities, parks and other destinations throughout Washtenaw County, including through downtown Ypsilanti and its River's Edge, Riverside, and Frog Island Parks.



Figure 8 depicts the location of the Washtenaw County parks and recreation facilities

Figure 8. Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Facilities



Federal, State and Regional Parks and Recreation Areas

The United States government owns and operates no outdoor recreational facility in Washtenaw County.

The State of Michigan is the largest provider of recreational land in Washtenaw County. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) operates 21 state parks in southeast Michigan, of which eight (8) are located wholly or partially within Washtenaw County. These include State Recreation areas Waterloo, Pinckney, Walter J. Hayes, Watkins Lake (managed in park with WCPARC), and four state game areas: Chelsea, Sharon, Little Goose Lake, and Gregory. In total, the state has approximately 18,000 acres under its management in Washtenaw County and near the City of Ypsilanti. Most of the acreage is undeveloped and provides wildlife habitat for nature study; about 1,200 acres are developed for active recreation.

Additionally, the Huron Clinton Metroparks serves the City of Ypsilanti and Washtenaw County with 13 parks across southeast Michigan that provide year-round recreation and educational opportunities. The Metroparks are funded by a tax levy and vehicle entry fees. It includes over 7.3 million visitors annually, nearly 25,000 acres of parks and nearly 400 miles of trails. While there are no Metroparks in the City of Ypsilanti, there are three (3) that are in Washtenaw County. They include Delhi Metropark, Dexter Huron Metropark and Hudson Hills Metropark.

Delhi Metropark: Located at 3902 E. Delhi, Ann Arbor, MI 48103. Nestled in a quiet bend of the Huron River, Delhi Metropark offers natural beauty to enjoy. You'll find mature stands of oak trees, open lawns and well-maintained ecosystems along the water that herons, turtles and deer call home. Come relax in the fresh air with family and friends under our picnic shelter or give kids the space to explore on our playground. Start a bike ride from the park or explore the river by canoe or kayak.

Dexter Huron Metropark: Located at 6535 Huron River Drive, Dexter, MI 48130. Peace and rejuvenation are waiting for you at Dexter-Huron Metropark. Get out into nature and experience the rich ecosystems along the Huron River. Our dense woodlands, open fields and gently flowing waters are home to a variety of unique plants and animals. Spend the day picnicking, biking, fishing or paddling the Huron River.

Hudson Hills Metropark: Located at 8801 N. Territorial Road, Dexter, MI 48130. Discover the best of the Huron River at Hudson Mills Metropark. This park features some of the most picturesque spots on the Huron and is popular with anglers, hikers and paddlers alike. Spend your day navigating the greens of our 18-hole, par-71 golf course or spin by playing two 24-hole disc golf courses. Hikers and bikers have access to well-maintained trails that connect to downtown Dexter and sports enthusiasts will find plenty of space to play ball. In winter, our cross-country ski trails provide great ways to stay fit.



LAND AND WATER TRAILS

Non-motorized trail systems in Washtenaw County are extensive with major trails, complete streets visioning and within existing parks. Several plans helped build the land trail vision including the SEMCOG Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Plan for Southeast Michigan (2020) the City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Transportation Master plan (2021) and the Border to Border (B2B) trail initiative lead by Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission (WCPARC) and the Huron Waterloo Pathways Initiative.

The Ypsilanti Corridor, within the B2B, is an 11.67-mile corridor which goes through the City of Ypsilanti and Ypsilanti Township. It is a combination of paved and road-separated pathways for non-motorized use with on-road/sidewalk segments. Frog Island and Riverside Parks offer direct access to the B2B trail.

Figure 9 illustrates the network within the City of Ypsilanti developed by these plans which consist of neighborhood, community, and regional connectors.

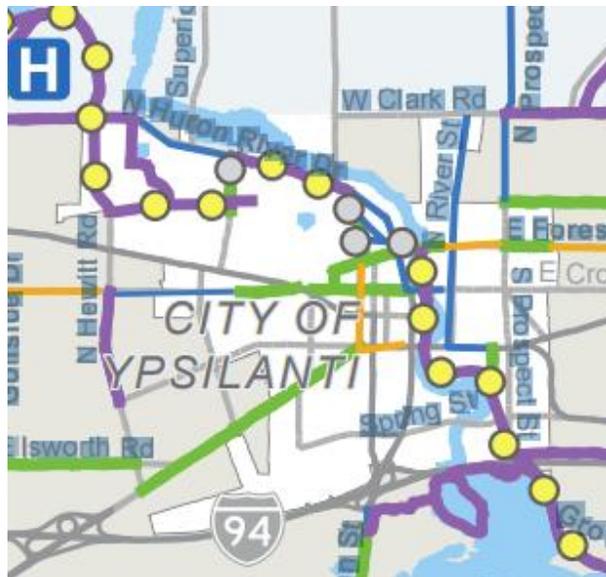
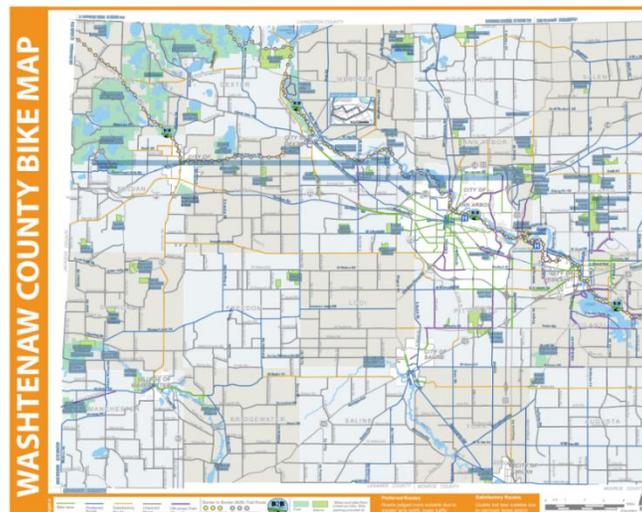


Figure 10. City and Regional Trail and Bike Lane Connectivity Map

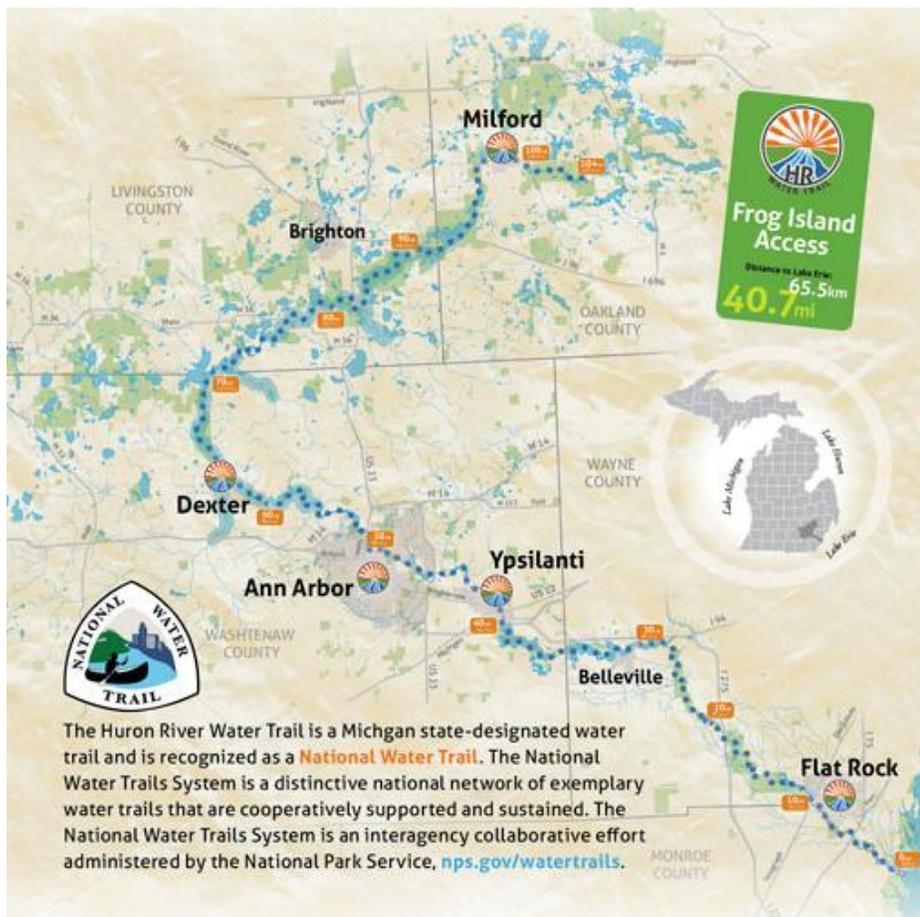


Water trails have become an important recreation resource in Michigan. Water trails are designated routes along a river, lake, canal, or bay specifically designed for people using small boats like kayaks, canoes, single sailboats or rowboats.

The Huron River Water Trail is a 104-mile inland paddling trail connecting people to the river's natural environment, history and the communities it touches. It runs through the City of Ypsilanti and was added as the 18th trail to the National Water Trail System in 2015, joining a network of national exemplary water trails. It is a project of the Huron River Watershed Council and is managed by a consortium of interested groups and communities, including the City of Ypsilanti. A comprehensive water trail and program has been developed including water safety tips, leave no trace, river conditions updates, special events and more.

Figure 11 depicts the lower route paddling map which includes Ford Field Park

Figure 11. Huron River Water Trail



Source: Huron River Water Trail

ACCESSIBILITY ASSESSMENT AND GRANT-ASSISTED PROJECTS

The city park system is intended for use by all people, regardless of their disability status. It is the intent of the city to comply with the appropriate accessibility standards and guidelines for play areas, outdoor developed areas, parking areas, and other facilities, which fall under the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All recent improvements to the city parks have been designed to comply with or exceed accessibility guidelines and standards, and to retrofit, when appropriate, those facilities which pre-date ADA standards.

A critical component in planning for recreation facilities is providing access to accommodate the needs of all people, including those with disabilities. The ranking system suggested by the MDNR Guidelines was used to evaluate the accessibility of the city parks. The ranking system ranges from 1 to 5 as follows:

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

Each of the parks was evaluated using the MDNR ranking system. The elements evaluated include parking areas, paths of travel from parking to activity areas, the activity areas themselves, and support facilities such as restrooms and surfacing. Table 8 presents the results of this evaluation. It is the intent of the City of Ypsilanti that current and future park projects comply with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations. Deficiencies will be corrected with park renovation and improvements.

Table 8. Accessibility Assessment

<u>Park</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Park</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Park</u>	<u>Rating</u>
Riverside Park	3	Frog Island Park	3	Freighthouse & Market Plaza	3
Recreation Park	3	Parkridge Park	4	Candy Cane Park	2
Peninsula Park	1	Prospect Park	3	Waterworks Park	2
Spanish-American War Memorial	1	Edith Hefley Tot Lot	2	Carrie R. Mattingly Tot Lot	1
Ainsworth Park	1	Haab Brothers Memorial	1	Charles Street Tot Lot	1
River's Edge Park	2	Huron Landing Park	2		

The City of Ypsilanti has received many grants that have been used to develop and improve the city parks. Table 9 lists the grants which have been awarded to the City of Ypsilanti. These include various types of grants from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (mDNR), including from the Trust Fund, Land and Water Conservation Fund and Bond Funds. Corresponding Post Completion Self Certification Report Forms can be found at the end of this plan.

Table 9. Grant Assisted Projects

Park	Year	Grant Type	Project elements	Grant Award
Rutherford Pool	1972	mDNR 26-00393	Develop one acre to include swimming pool, bathhouse and fencing	\$150,000
Parkridge Park	1978	mDNR 26-01060	Two Softball Fields, tot lot, picnic area, landscaping and sign	\$28,000
Riverside Park	1981	mDNR 26-01243	Site development, walkways, parking, landscaping, dock, utility line relocation and sign	\$98,250
Frog Island Park	1983	mDNR 26-01269	Shed and tennis courts demo, water and electric service, lawn river walk, bike loop, grading, amphitheater, lighting, entry plaza, steps, ramp, dock and bridge and sign	\$68,901
Peninsular Park	1985	mDNR 26-01393	Acquisition of 7 acres and develop lighting, paths, parking, bollards, shelter and steps	\$100,000
Water Street Community Park	1987	mDNR TF87-304	Acquisition of land as links to Huron River Corridor System	\$105,000
Parkridge Park	1991	mDNR BF91-383	Renovation of park including security, ballfields, paths, grills, flag pole, landscaping, lighting, play equipment, sand volleyball, soccer, tennis and trash	\$279,000
Rutherford Municipal Pool	1993	mDNR 26-01542	Renovation of bathhouse and pool for ADA access, mechanical upgrades and paving of parking lot	\$159,850
Prospect Park Improvement	1993	mDNR BF93-352	Renovations of courts, luna lake, play structure, parking lot and softball field	\$250,000
Riverside Park	2005	mDNR TF05-054	Development of lighting, electrical upgrades, playground and landscaping.	\$80,300
Rutherford Pool	2011	mDNR TF11-083	Renovation of docks and pool deck	\$300,000
Heritage Bridge Development	2011	mDNR TF11-120	Development to include bridge over the river and under Michigan Avenue fishing pier.	\$289,400
River's Edge Linear Park and Trail	2012	mDNR TF12-120	Development including trail, plaza, fishing pier, river overlook, signage and site amenities	\$300,000
Rutherford Pool Bathhouse	2018	mDNR 26-01802	Development of bathhouse	\$300,000
I-94 Non-Motorized Crossing	2020	mDNR TF20-0162	Development of non-motorized pathway along Huron Street over I-94	\$300,000
Frog Island Trailhead	2021	mDNR TF21-0187	Development of accessible canoe/kayak launch, fishing space, paving the parking lot, green stormwater and accessibility improvements.	\$300,000

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A critical component in the recreation planning process is determining the needs and desires of the community as a basis for an action plan to improve the parks and recreation system. Needs and preferences provide the rationale for the formulation of goals and objectives that lead to an action plan. To assess needs and desires, consideration was given to current recreation trends and input from community stakeholders, public officials, and residents of Ypsilanti.

PARK ACREAGE COMPARISON

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommend a minimum amount of parkland to adequately serve a given population size. The NRPA guidelines provide minimum recommended parkland and facility development standards that are applicable nationwide for recreation planning purposes. While the standards are useful benchmarks addressing minimum park acreage, a park and recreation system should be tailored to meet the needs of the community it pertains to.

According to the NRPA, parks are categorized as mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, and regional parks. The mini, neighborhood, and community parks are *close-to-home* parks, designed to satisfy the recreational needs of local communities as described on the right. *Close-to-home* parks would include all the city parks. According to NRPA standards, the suggested amount of *close-to-home* parkland is 6.25 to 10.5 acres for every 1,000 residents.

NRPA Close-to-home Parkland:

Mini-Park: Addresses limited recreational needs; serves an area less than ¼-mile distance.

Neighborhood Park: Is the basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreation and social focus of a neighborhood; focus is on informal active and passive recreation; serves an area ¼ to ½ mile distance and is uninterrupted by non-residential roads or other physical barriers.

Community Park: Serves a broader purpose than neighborhood parks; focus is on meeting community-based recreation needs and preserving unique landscapes and open spaces; usually serves two or more neighborhoods at ½ to 3-mile distance.

Regional parks serve a broader area (40-mile distance) and focus on meeting the recreation needs of the region as well as preserving unique areas. Regional parks would include the County parks as well as the federal and state-owned recreation areas described in the preceding chapter. The NRPA also recognizes other types of parks such as school properties that can contribute to the parks and recreation system.

Table 10 presents a comparison of the NRPA suggested parkland standards with existing parks based on a city population of 20,929 in 2024 and project population of 22,637 in 2050. According to these standards, local City of Ypsilanti parks do not meet the recommended acreage for total *close-to-home* parkland. Ypsilanti residents are, though, well-served by the regional park facilities provided by Washtenaw County, federal, and state governments that are located nearby.

Table 10. Comparison to Suggested Parkland Acreage Standards

Type of Park	NRPA standard Acres/ 1000 Pop.	Suggested 2024 Pop. 20,929	Suggested 2050 Pop. 22,637	Existing
Close to Home Parkland	6.25 - 10.5 Acres	5.09 acres	4.70 acres	106.5 Acres
Regional Parks	15 - 20 Acres	339.2 acres	313.6 acres	7,100 Acres

STATE AND NATIONAL RECREATION TRENDS

In 2024, the outdoor recreation participant base grew 4.1% to a record 175.8 million participants: 57.3% of all Americans aged six and older. The number of participants increased through demographics and activities as new, more casual participants began hiking, biking, camping, running, and fishing. In 2023, 7.7 million Americans tried one or more outdoor recreation activities for the first time. New and young outdoor recreation participants are driving growth and increased diversity in the outdoor recreation participant base, including increasing numbers of women, people of color, and seniors. The growth that began in 2016 and accelerated during the COVID pandemic is showing few signs of slowing.

Table 11. National Sports Participation, 2024

Activity	Participation Percent
1. Hiking	20.0%
2. Fishing	18.2%
3. Running, Jogging, and Trail Running	17.9%
4. Camping	17.7%
5. Bicycling	17.2%

Source: Outdoor Participation Report, 2024, the Outdoor Foundation

These trends are consistent with trends observed in Michigan. According to a survey of Michigan residents conducted as part of the 2023-2027 Michigan Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, Michigan’s overall outdoor recreation participation rate is 95%. Eighty-six percent of Michiganders are involved in trail activities and “other” outdoor activities. Water activities logged 80% participation, snow activities 40% and wildlife activities 52%. The top 10 activities by frequency were ranked (see appendix B), with the percentages of Michigan residents participating and total annual occasions of participating included. From this list, the top three, in ascending order, were visiting the beach but not swimming (60% – 49,959,236), going for a walk on local unpaved trails or paths (62% – 380,532,847) and going for a walk on local streets or sidewalks (80% – 1,156,390,531).

Monitoring parks and recreation trends is important in determining how parks and recreation services should evolve. The implication of the trends noted above along with the demographic and physical characteristics of the Ypsilanti area can be summarized as follows:

- Recreation facilities and programs should respond to the high number of young families with children currently living in Ypsilanti as well as the expected increase of seniors in the future.
- There is a need for more parks to accommodate the shortage in the national park acreage standards..
- The Huron River is the greatest natural asset within the city. Encouraging its use for recreation while maintaining its ecological functions should be a priority.

PUBLIC INPUT

A critical component in the recreation planning process is to determine the needs and desires of the community as a basis for an action plan to improve the parks and recreation system. Needs and preferences provide the rationale for the formulation of goals and objectives that lead to an action plan. To assess needs and desires, consideration was given to current recreation trends and input from community stakeholders, public officials, staff, and residents of Ypsilanti.

Online Survey

Residents were invited to provide ideas and suggestions for the city parks and recreation system through an online survey available throughout the development of this plan starting in June of 2025. A Spanish and Arabic version of the survey was also provided. The survey was advertised on the city’s website, through social media and with signage throughout the park system. The online questionnaire was designed to solicit feedback on suggestions for improvements to the city park system. 356 surveys and comments were received and compiled. Key findings from the survey are outlined below. A full review of the survey with responses can be found at the end of this plan.

Park & Facility Visitation

The most visited park and facility:

2025 Survey Result	
1	Riverside Park
2	Frog Island Park
3	B2B Trail
4	Recreation Park
5	Prospect Park

The least visited park and facility

2025 Survey Result	
1	Carrie Mattingly Tot Lot
2	Haabs Brothers Park
3	Spanish American War Memorial
4	Charles Street Tot Lot
5	Parkridge Community Center

Park & Facility Improvements

Frog Island Park Improvement Priority

2025 Survey Result	
1	Addition of permanent restrooms
2	Pedestrian Connectivity
3	Stormwater Management
4	Bike Connectivity
5	Improvements to Parking Lot

Parkridge Park Improvement Priority

2025 Survey Result	
1	Pedestrian Connectivity
2	Bike Connectivity
3	Improvement to existing trails
4	Improvements to existing play shelter
5	Improvements to existing picnic shelter

Prospect Park Improvement Priority

2025 Survey Result	
1	Pedestrian Connectivity
2	Improvements to existing play structure
3	Bike Connectivity
4	Improvements to existing picnic shelter
5	Improvements to existing trails

Recreation Park Improvement Priority

2025 Survey Result	
1	Pedestrian Connectivity
2	Bike Connectivity
3	Improvements to existing play structure
4	Improvements to existing trails
5	Improvements to existing picnic shelter

Riverside Park Improvement Priority

2025 Survey Result	
1	Addition of permanent restroom
2	Stormwater Management
3	Pedestrian Connectivity
4	Improvements to existing trails
5	Bike Connectivity

Waterworks Park Improvement Priority

2025 Survey Result	
1	Addition of permanent restrooms
2	Pedestrian Connectivity
3	Bike Connectivity
4	Improvement of existing trails
5	Stormwater Management

Park Facility and Program Preference

Respondents top five choices for programs and/or events currently offered:

2025 Survey Result	
1	Ypsilanti Farmer's Market
2	Ypsi Pride
3	Freighthouse Events
4	Community Garden Plots
5	Ypsilanti Symphony Orchestra

Respondents top five choices for preferred recreation programs in order of importance are:

2025 Survey Result	
1	Children programs
2	Concerts, Movies and Shows
3	Special Events
4	Senior Programs
5	Family Programs

Park Priorities

Respondents top priorities for general park improvements in order of importance are:

2025 Survey Result	
1	Maintain/renovate existing City parks
2	Prioritize improvements of community parks
3	Work to enhance the management of the parks' trees and natural habitat
4	Prioritize improvements of neighborhood parks
5	Prioritize public art in the parks, along trails and in the downtown

Arts Priorities

Respondents top priorities for the arts in the City of Ypsilanti in order of importance are:

2025 Survey Result	
1	More performing arts opportunities to attend
2	Public art in the Downtown/Depot Town
3	Art events
4	Art classes or programs for myself or my family to attend
5	Public art in parks

As part of the survey, an open ended question was asked about any other considerations for the City of Ypsilanti Parks & Recreation System:

Common Comments

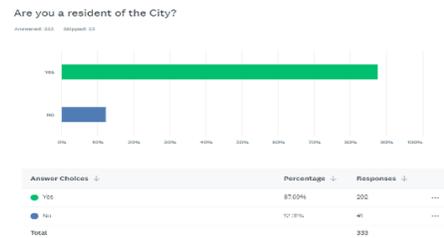
- Improve maintenance of parks including trash collection and graffiti cleanup
- Update picnic tables and benches throughout the park system
- Upgrade and improve existing park amenities and play structures
- Improved pedestrian and bicycling connectivity to the parks and trails
- Invest more into the city owned facilities including Rutherford Pool and Senior Center
- More childrens sports offerings
- More natural play spaces that aren't traditional play structures
- Replace the trees that are taken out and provide natural shade

New Park and New Park Amenity Ideas

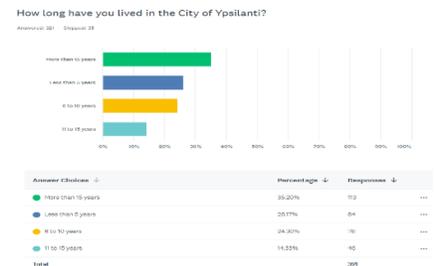
- Dog Park
- Permanent Restrooms
- Full size soccer field
- Nature based park(s)

Demographics

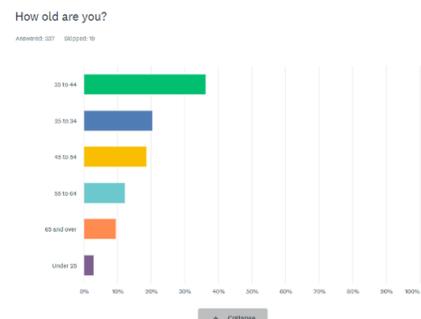
87.7% of respondents are City of Ypsilanti Residents



35.2% of respondents have lived within the City of Ypsilanti for more than 15 years



75.36% of respondents are between the ages of 25 to 54



Public Input Meetings

Three (3) public input meetings were hosted throughout the city during the master plan process. Potential improvements derived from the online survey, current park conditions and needs were presented at a public meeting. A voting and comment charrette exercise was held with attendees to gather more public feedback with similar questions that were asked in the survey.

1. Monday, May 19 at a regular Parks and Arts Commission Meeting at Ypsilanti City Hall
2. Thursday, August 14 at Ypsilanti City Hall
3. Tuesday, August 19 at Ypsilanti City Hall

Suggestions were received from meeting attendees through the charrette exercise and open comment. Some of the top themes from these meetings include:

1. Increase and improved existing accessibility in the parks and their amenities
2. Update existing park amenities
3. Increase levels of services, specifically safety and cleanliness
4. Addition of a dog park
5. Create areas of non-traditional play
6. Update benches and seating options within the parks
7. Increase volunteer opportunities
8. Addition of permanent restrooms
9. More awareness and outreach from the city about the parks, events and programming

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

Separate stakeholder meetings were held with partner organizations. These included the Parkridge Community Center, Rutherford Pool, and the Ypsilanti Senior Center. A conversation about their relationship with the city, park and facility improvements, facility usage and organizational priorities were all discussed. A synopsis of those stakeholder meetings is below:

June 23, 2025: Parkridge Community Center

1. WCC has an operating Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City of Ypsilanti
2. Future MOU needs to specify more detail with roles and responsibilities
3. WCC does not have the resources to take care of the building and are reliant on grants
4. Capital Improvements:
 - a. Electrical systems
 - b. Roof renovation
 - c. Painting
 - d. Kitchen expansion
 - e. ADA access and updates

June 24, 2025: Ypsilanti Senior Center

1. Operators have an operating Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City of Ypsilanti
2. Future MOU needs to specific more detail with roles and responsibilities
3. The Senior Center does not have the resources to take care of the building and are reliant on grants
4. Capital Improvements:
 - a. ADA access and updates
 - b. Renovation of small meeting room
 - c. Painting
 - d. Improvements to Recreation Park could greatly benefit the senior center users and programs including the pathway, benches and seating and mobile exercise equipment

June 25, 2025: Rutherford Pool

1. Friends of Rutherford Pool have an operating Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City of Ypsilanti
2. City of Ypsilanti does not provide regular funding
3. Friends of Rutherford Pool have completed major capital improvements and renovation projects
4. Capital Improvements:
 - a. Pump room renovations
 - b. Parking lot renovation
 - c. Improvement to the sidewalk from the road to the pool

PUBLIC REVIEW AND PUBLIC HEARING

Once a draft Parks and Recreation Plan was completed, it was made available for the required 30-day public review from November 13, 2025 to December 13, 2025. The availability of the draft plan for public review was advertised in the December 4, 2025 publication of the Washtenaw Legal News and available on the city’s website. Copies of the draft plan were available for consultation at City Hall.

The Parks and Arts Commission hosted a public hearing and considered the comments received from the public at a scheduled meeting on Decmeber 15, 2025, where minor changes were made to the document and the plan was recommended to the City Council at their January 20, 2026 meeting. The City Council subsequently adopted the Plan.

Copies of the Parks and Arts Commission and City Council resolutions, as well as the public notices regarding plan availability and public hearing, the minutes of the public hearing, and letters of transmittal are uploaded to the MDNR MiGrants website as required.



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals and objectives were formulated to provide direction and a long-term vision for the City of Ypsilanti's park system. They are broad enough to encompass the suggestions expressed from the public, city officials, staff, as well as to meet the observed deficiencies in the recreation resources of the area.

GOAL 1. PARK MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS

Maintain and improve the city parks to ensure clean, safe, attractive, and high-quality recreational experiences.

It is important to maintain and improve existing park facilities to ensure public safety and continued enjoyment. This includes upgrading aging equipment, removing barriers, and general park upkeep.

- 1.1 Upgrade or repair aging play equipment, paved surfaces, park structures, and furnishings.
- 1.2 Improve the parks' accessibility by removing barriers to universal access.
- 1.3 Continuing renovations and improvements to outdoor aquatic facilities
- 1.4 Create and establish a volunteer program to support city staff
- 1.5 Green Infrastructure improvements across the park system using native vegetation.

GOAL 2. ASSIST PARTNER GROUPS WITH FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

The City of Ypsilanti should seek alternative funding sources to support the facility improvements necessary at the city owned facilities that are operated by community partners.

Stakeholder feedback supported throughout this planning process supports the need to support the community partners through facility improvements. The facilities in most need include the Ypsilanti Senior Center and the Parkridge Community Center. These community partners are the primary recreation programmers for the residents of the city.

- 2.1 Assess facility conditions and identify project priorities
- 2.2 Upgrade and repair the facilities in collaboration with feedback from the community partners
- 2.3 Identify funding opportunities including grants, public funding or private funding to complete capital improvements

GOAL 3. PENINSULAR PARK RENOVATION

Following the removal of the Peninsular Park dam, the city should prioritize this park as its next major development.

The removal of the Peninsular Park dam allows a renewed attention to be placed at this park. A survey question during this master plan process was specifically asked about this park and the dam removal.

- 3.1 Master Plan Peninsular Park to gather input and feedback from the public and stakeholders
- 3.2 Complete feasibility studies to assess site conditions, soil quality, drainage and topography
- 3.3 Secure funding through grants, city funds or private donations and sponsorships for acquisition and/or improvements.

GOAL 4. PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CONNECTIONS TO THE PARKS

Make it safer and easier for more residents to walk and bike to the parks

There is an opportunity to plan for and continue to develop an interconnected network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities that provide safe and efficient travel between key places within Ypsilanti including parks, neighborhoods, schools, downtown, and neighboring communities.

- 4.1 Ensure parks are bicycle-friendly with pathways that are sufficiently wide, available bicycle parking, and appropriate amenities such as drinking fountains, fix-it stations, and rest areas.
- 4.2 Utilize the city-wide non-motorized transportation plan containing a mix of on street and off-street bicycle accommodations to connect the city parks, neighborhoods, and community facilities; and
- 4.3 Create more natural trails for hiking, mountain biking or nature walks.

GOAL 5. INCREASE ART OPPORTUNITIES

Create an established organizational structure and processes for arts opportunities within the City of Ypsilanti.

Arts are a priority within the City of Ypsilanti and with the Parks and Arts Commission. Time and energy should be spent creating a framework for local artists to be more engaged, partners should be identified, and an arts master plan should be completed in coordination with this plan.

- 5.1 Create subcommittees that can assist with commission specific goals and objectives.
- 5.2 Collaborate with the Riverside Arts Center, city partners and local artists to create a framework and plan for public arts and art programming opportunities.
- 5.3 Identify funding from community partners, city agencies, or private funding sources to support local arts in the parks, downtown or along trails.

GOAL 6. RE-ESTABLISH THE RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Bring back the Recreation Department underneath the management of the City Manager. Keep park maintenance within the Department of Public Works.

There is feedback through this master planning process to support the re-establishment of the Recreation Department. This should include park rentals, special events and recreation programming.

- 6.1 Work with City Administration and the City Council to brainstorm the goals and objectives for the department and plan the budgeting and organizational framework.
- 6.2 Discuss with community partners the priority of the city's programming efforts as to not create unnecessary competition.
- 6.3 Take the feedback from this survey to build the basis for recreational programming opportunities.

ACTION PROGRAM

The following describes the specific projects and actions which are recommended to be accomplished during the planning period. Illustrations and plans showing the proposed park improvements and actions are also included to depict the proposed actions.

1. Maintain and upgrade existing city parks

This action includes replacing old equipment which is in a state of disrepair, outdated, or is dangerous, as well as improving the appearance of the parks and properties through appropriate landscaping and upkeep. All upgrades must be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and efforts should be taken to remove all existing barriers to universal access. Proposed projects include:

- A. Replace or upgrade aging play equipment as needed.
- B. Replace or upgrade seating, benches and picnic tables as needed.
- C. Remove barriers to universal access.
- D. Ensure safety surfaces under playground equipment meet regulated depth and fall zones.
- E. Refurbish parking, walkways, sports courts, and other concrete and paved surfaces as needed.
- F. Replace and add park furnishings such as benches, trash cans, pet waste dispensers and signs.
- G. Maintain buildings, structures, and picnic shelters in good condition with roof repair, exterior painting, and other renovations.
- H. Manage and improve existing tree canopy and vegetation.
- I. Green Infrastructure opportunities and improvements to the park system.

Park improvements were identified during the park site audits and are denoted below as immediate action items, intermediary action items and long-term action items:

<u>Park</u>	<u>Immediate Action</u>	<u>Intermediary Action</u>	<u>Long-Term Action</u>
Riverside Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New bike rack • Clean up brush pile • Update picnic tables and benches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create access to riverfront gazebo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crack fill walking trail • Stormwater mitigation • Permanent restrooms
Frog Island Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update picnic tables and benches • Replace or remove bleachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resurface of pave walking trail • Improve access from B2B trail to field and walking track • Create access to B2B Trail from parking lot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovate storage building • Create full-size soccer field • Permanent restrooms
Freighthouse & Market Plaza	N/A		
Recreation Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update picnic tables and benches • Add EWF to play areas • Weed play areas • Replace basketball nets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crack fill basketball court • Crack fill walking trail and connectors • Add exercise equipment along trail • Add intergenerational play equipment and swings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete paved walking trail • Improve wet meadows • Replace or renovate picnic shelter • Mill and fill parking lot • Permanent Restrooms

Parkridge Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update GIS map parcel and legal boundary • Replace basketball nets and backboards • Update picnic tables and benches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crack fill walking trail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mill and fill basketball court • Mill and bill tennis court • Permanent restrooms
Candy Cane Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update picnic tables and benches • Fill gaga pit with mulch • Trim brush around tennis courts • Take down dead trees 	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace picnic shelter • Create connectivity through the park • Mill and fill tennis courts • Improve wet meadows
Peninsular Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add picnic tables and benches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master Plan the park following dam removal • Create better visibility into and within the park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovate or remove the pump house
Prospect Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update picnic tables and benches • Fill gaga pit with mulch • Seed the goalmouths of soccer field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crack fill basketball courts • Create accessibility throughout the park, main play areas, picnic pads and to Cross Street • Replace skatepark fencing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace picnic shelters • Upgrade play equipment • Upgrade skate park concrete crumbling • Permanent restrooms
Waterworks Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move bike rack • Add gravel and grade parking lot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update disc golf baskets, pads and signage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add permanent restrooms • Add connectivity to ball fields
Spanish American War Memorial	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create connectivity to the memorial 	N/A
Edith Hefley Tot Lot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add EWF to play area • Add sand to sand box 	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add connectivity from sidewalk to play features
Carrie R. Mattingly Tot Lot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add EWF to play area • Replace picnic tables 	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create connectivity from sidewalk to play features
Ainsworth Park	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create connectivity to and through the park for neighborhood use
Haab Brothers Memorial	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create connectivity to what will be the memorial • Master Plan the park 	N/A
Charles Street Tot Lot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add picnic tables • Add EWF to play area 	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace play equipment • Create connectivity through the park to play features
River's Edge Park	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master plan the park along with potential development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor museum space and signage
Huron Landing Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add gravel and grade parking lot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add accessible docks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pave parking lot

2. Maintain and upgrade existing city park facilities

This action includes updating facilities which may be in a state of disrepair, outdated, or is dangerous, as well as improving the appearance of the facilities. All upgrades must be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and efforts should be taken to remove all existing barriers to universal access.

Facility improvements were identified during the park site audits and are denoted below as immediate action items, intermediary action items and long-term action items:

Park	Immediate Action	Intermediary Action	Long-Term Action
Rutherford Pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renovate sidewalk connector from the road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mill and fill parking lot Upgrade pump room equipment 	N/A
Ypsilanti Senior Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ADA compliance Outside painting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renovate and improve the small meeting room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future building expansion
Parkridge Community Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update electrical systems, wiring and outlets ADA Compliance Painting New Roof 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the bathrooms Update the gymnasium Update water fountains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the kitchen and create commercial kitchen Expansion of multi-purpose room

3. Peninsular Park Renovation

This action includes taking the feedback from the survey completed during this master plan and using it as a starting point for the renovation of Peninsular Park. It is recommended that the city invest in a park specific master plan which would include public input and concept designs. Some of the ideas noted in the survey for Peninsular Park include:

1. Add Huron River access for canoe, kayak and tubing.
2. Permanent restroom structure
3. Turn the pump house into an event space or lease it for a riverfront restaurant/bar
4. Additional seating and picnic tables
5. Keep the park as a natural/passive recreation space with hiking trails
6. Nautre based play area or structure
7. Expand the existing docks for dedicated fishing
8. Pave the parking lot
9. Connect the park to LeForge sidewalk



4. Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity

This action includes steps to include bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to the parks:

1. Update the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan from 2021
2. Identify sidewalk or connectivity gaps and walkability to each of its parks
3. Identify sidewalk or connectivity gaps to the Border 2 Border Trail
4. Identify funding to fill sidewalk gaps and/or connect to existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure

5. Increase Art Opportunities

Arts are a core value and increasing opportunities and supporting local artists is a goal of the Parks & Arts Commission. This action includes:

1. Define the arts goals of the Parks & Arts Commission either within its bylaws, strategic plan or the city code of ordinances
2. Create a process for public art in parks and in the city
3. Create a database of local artists or art organizations which the Parks & Arts Commission supports
4. Work with city leaders to create an Arts District where arts goals and priorities can be focused
5. Work to create an arts master plan which will assist with all previous action items

6. Re-establish Recreation Department

Throughout this master planning process, it was mentioned in various areas of the feedback that residents would like to see a return of a parks & recreation department. While I believe the parks are well served by the Department of Public Works, the city should work to investigate the re-establishment of its Recreation Department

1. Work with the City Manager and City Council Liaison to see if there is an appetite for its return
2. Determine an organizational structure of the department
3. Determine the budgeting and finance of the department and where it will sit within the citywide budget (General Fund, Special Revenue Fund, etc.)
4. Create a business plan or strategy for the re-establishment of the Recreation Department determining primary goals and objectives, revenue streams, staffing levels, levels of service.
5. Study existing rental rates, fees and special event processes for a streamline opportunity for all residents, non-residents and non-profit organizations.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Shown below are a list of accomplishments since the last parks & recreation plan was adopted in 2021:

- Worked with Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation to upgrade the B2B in Frog Island and along Grove from the end of the River's Edge Linear Park/Water Street Trail to the south side of the I-94 Bridge (North Bay Park) (2020)
- Added lighting to Frog Island Park pathway and parking lot (2020/21)
- Widened the sidewalk on the south side of the Forest Ave bridge to improve the B2B pathway (22/23)
- Awarded grants to remove the Peninsular Park dam, currently in design and expected removal in 2027
- Replaced the outdated play equipment in Candy Cane Park with an accessible structure, and added a paved sidewalk to the structure (2020)
- Replaced the outdated play equipment in Parkridge Park with more extensive and engaging equipment (2020)
- Two of our employees certified as Certified Playground Safety Inspectors (2023 and 2025)
- Completed design work to add native wet meadows in Recreation Park and Candy Cane Park (2024/5)
- Added Huron Landing Park (2024)
- Created a standalone position for Freighthouse and Parks special events, moved to DPW; resolved many user complaints regarding special events (2025)
- Contracted with Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner's office to restore and take over maintenance of the Freighthouse rain garden (as well as Cross St rain gardens) (2024-2025)
- Launched a trial volunteer workday program (2025)
- Began officially working with Huron River Watershed Council and United Way for one-off volunteer opportunities
- Hosted the winter warming center at the Freighthouse with the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County
- Installed recycling bins in the parks (2020)
- Launched an annual city information mailer, which includes information about the parks

Underway Durign the Development of this Master Plan

- Applied for funding for construction of wet meadows in Recreation Park and Candy Cane
- Working with Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation and Water Resources to identify and secure funding for repaving B2B trails in Riverside Park
- Updating event policies and fee structures for park reservations and event support
- Working with volunteer group for wet meadow in Riverside Park
- Awarded grants for and in design phase for accessibility improvements at the north end of Frog Island Park
- Awarded grants for and in design phase for parking lot improvements at Frog Island park

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE

Table 12 lists the individual projects scheduled to be accomplished, are currently funded, a cost estimate, and the identified funding source(s). Annually, the city adopts a One-Year and Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan where more parks and recreation projects will be identified for future funding.

Table 12. Capital Improvement Schedule

Project/Tasks	Goal	Cost Estimate
Parkridge Community Center Classroom Expansion	2	\$300,000
Senior Center Capital Improvements	2	\$130,000
Riverside Park Access to Gazebo	1	\$1,000
Riverside Park crack fill walking trail	1	\$5,000
Frog Island Park Resurface Walking Trail	1	\$10,000
Frog Island Park access to B2B Trail from Parking Lot	1	\$1,000
Recreation Park Crack Fill walking trail	1	\$3,000
Recreation Park complete paved walking trail	1	\$12,000
Recreation Park improve wet meadows	1	TBD
Recreation Park replace picnic shelter	1	\$30,000
Recreation Park Mill and Fill Parking Lot	1	\$150,000
Parkridge Park mill and fill basketball and tennis courts	1	\$150,000
Candy Cane Park picnic shelter renovation	1	\$40,000
Candy Cane Park connectivity	1	\$15,000
Candy Cane Park mill and fill tennis court	1	\$112,000
Peninsular Park master plan	3	\$50,000
Prospect Park accessibility and concrete improvements	1	\$50,000
Prospect Park tennis court fence	1	\$50,000
Prospect Park picnic shelters	1	\$100,000
Waterworks Park disc golf improvements	1	\$25,000
Waterworks Park connectivity	1	\$2,500
Waterworks Park paving of parking lot	1	\$115,000
Spanish American War Connectivity	1	\$1,000
Edith Hefley Tot Lot Connectivity	1	\$2,500
Carrie R. Mattingly Tot Lot Connectivity	1	\$2,500
Ainsworth Park Connectivity	1	\$5,000
Haab Brothers Memorial Connectivity	1	\$2,500
Charles Street Tot Lot Connectivity	1	\$2,500
Huron Landing accessible docks	1	\$10,000
Huron Landing parking lot paving	1	\$65,000

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

To accomplish the recommended actions during the next five years, it will be necessary to secure adequate funding. The current budget provides a limited amount of money for parks and recreation facilities. Therefore, the following strategies are recommended in order to proceed as planned.

Apply for Federal Funding

At the federal level, MDOT, in conjunction with SEMCOG, funds Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). A minimum 20 percent local match is required for proposed projects and applications are accepted online on an on-going basis. Activities may include:

- Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles including new or reconstructed sidewalks, walkways, curb ramps, bike lane striping, wide paved shoulders, bike parking, off-road trails, bike and pedestrian bridges, and underpasses;
- Provision of safety and educational programs for pedestrians and bicyclists designed to encourage walking and bicycling; and
- Acquisition, planning, designing and constructing abandoned railway corridors.

Apply for State Funding

At the state level, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) and the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) continue to be the primary funding sources for park land acquisition and development. The Recreation Passport grant also offers some state funding to local units of government.

The MNRTF provides funding for the purchase and development of parkland for natural resource-based preservation and recreation. Grant proposals must include a local match of at least 25% of the total project cost. There is no minimum or maximum for acquisition projects. For development projects, the minimum funding request is \$15,000 and the maximum is \$300,000 in 2025. Applications are typically due by April 1st each year.

The LWCF is a federal appropriation to the National Park Service, which distributes funds to the MDNR for development of outdoor recreation facilities. The focus of the program has recently been on meeting community recreation needs such as playgrounds, picnic areas, skate parks, ball fields, soccer fields, and walking paths. Minimum grant requests were \$30,000 and maximum grant requests were \$500,000 in 2025. The match percentage is 50% of the total project cost. Applications are due by April 1st each year.

The Recreation Passport grant program offers funding for the development of outdoor public recreation facilities for local units of government. Minimum grant requests are \$7,500 and maximum requests are \$150,000 in 2025. The local match obligation was 25% of the total project cost. Applications are usually due by April 1st each year.

Other funding programs conducted in partnership with the MDNR are available through other state government divisions, such as the Fisheries Division (Fisheries Habitat Grant Program) and the Forest Resources Division (Community Forestry Grant Programs).

Other funding conducted in partnership with the MDNR is available through other state government divisions, such as the Fisheries Division (Inland Fisheries Grants) and the Forest Resources Division

(Community Forestry Grants). The Inland Fisheries program considers projects that enhance habitat and fisheries, riparian property for public fishing use, water quality, and ecology. Minimum grant requests are \$25,000 and maximum requests are \$1.5 million depending on the theme in 2025. The local match obligation is 10% of the total project cost. Applications are due in early 2026.

Municipalities may use Community Forestry grants to develop a management plan for a municipal forest which would include a component targeting outreach to private landowners. Grant requests range from \$5,000 to \$30,000 depending on project category.

DTE Energy Foundation and Consumers Energy (CE) also offer tree planting grants for up to \$4,000 for DTE and \$3,000 for CE to local municipalities in its service areas. Applications are due in October (DTE) or July (CE) with awards announced in June for the DTE Energy Foundation program.

Apply for Other Grant Funding

There are also a variety of smaller grant programs available for the establishment of greenways/ pathways or greenway-related facilities such as PeopleForBikes. PeopleForBikes is sponsored by the American Bicycle Industry. Their mission is to put more people on bikes more often. The program funds projects in three categories: facility, education, and capacity building. In the past, requests for funding could be up to \$10,000 for projects such as bike paths, trails, lanes, parking, and safe routes to school. Applications for 2025 are not yet announced.

The DALMAC Fund also contributes grants to expand bicycling in Michigan. A total of \$173,079 were awarded in 2025 with typical grant awards ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000. The next round of applications will be due on March 1, 2026.

The Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation provides active lifestyle grants including for Parks, Trails & Green Design projects. The Foundation launched its Parks & Trails Initiative in southeast Michigan with an \$100 million commitment. In addition, the Foundation is beginning to explore green infrastructure investments that focus on improving water quality, reducing combined sewer overflows, improving habitat and improving climate resiliency. The Foundation is now accepting requests for trail projects or planning projects that; 1. Are regionally significant; 2. Connect Communities and Key Anchor Assets; 3. Have significant community support; 4. Demonstrate capacity to operate and maintain the spaces after they are built; and 5. Garner additional leverage investment that is at or near 2/3 of the total project cost.

Seek Other Sources of Funding

The City of Ypsilanti should investigate additional sources of funding. Seeking donations, attracting sponsors, and seeking out other revenue sources are methods that should continue to be pursued aggressively to raise funding for park acquisition and development.