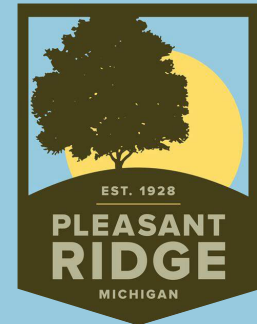




Draft December 17th, 2024



Parks & Recreation Master Plan

City of
Pleasant Ridge,
Michigan

Acknowledgments

The participation and cooperation of community leaders, residents, and members of civic organizations in the preparation of the 2025-2029 Parks and Recreation Master Plan is greatly appreciated and we thank everyone who participated in its development. The content in this Plan reflects the ongoing collaboration between City residents, stakeholders, the Recreation Commission, and the City Commission.

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1 Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Pleasant Ridge's 2024–2029 Parks and Recreation Plan outlines the city's vision for its parks and recreational facilities over the next five years. Serving as a strategic roadmap for decision-making, the plan takes into account existing resources and anticipated community needs. Additionally, it positions the city to seek recreation grants from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and other funding sources, adhering to MDNR guidelines for developing community parks and recreation plans.

Purpose: Planning for Parks and Recreation

The purpose of planning for parks and recreation is to create a strategic framework that ensures the development, maintenance, and enhancement of recreational spaces meet the needs of the community, both now and in the future. Thoughtful planning helps identify current resources, assess future demands, and establish clear goals for improving the quality and accessibility of parks and recreational facilities. It promotes sustainable land use, environmental stewardship, and fosters healthier lifestyles by providing diverse opportunities for physical activity and social interaction. Additionally, a well-structured plan can attract funding and support, ensuring long-term investment in community well-being and quality of life.

The Pleasant Ridge 5-Year Parks and Recreation Plan was developed by the city in conjunction with the community's Recreation Commission accompanied by strong citizen participation. The plan seeks to build upon the high level of quality Pleasant Ridge residents and visitors have enjoyed in the park's facilities and through the recreation programming.

Key Recommendations

Generations in Pleasant Ridge have enjoyed the tradition of a commitment to excellence when it comes to providing the highest level of parks and recreation opportunities. This plan seeks to build on this legacy by charting a path forward that ensures the maintenance of existing facilities and by defining aspirational goals that address the present and future needs of the community. The planning process resulted in recommendations that highlighted the following principles:

Sustainability

A dedication to environmentally responsible practices that will help our parks and recreation facilities flourish for years to come.

Inclusivity and Accessibility

Ensuring that everyone in the community can enjoy our parks, regardless of their background or abilities.

Continued Improvement

Implementing gradual enhancements as needed, with a strong focus on maintaining existing facilities to ensure all resources are kept at the highest quality.

Map 1. Parks and Recreation Facilities







Pleasant Ridge Community Today



Community Description

Pleasant Ridge is a 0.57 square mile inner-ring suburb of Detroit, nestled beneath I-696 and 10 Mile Road and bisected by the historic Woodward Avenue. The City is bordered by several other Metro-Detroit communities, including Royal Oak and Huntington Woods to the north, Ferndale to the east and south, and Oak Park to the west. Only 11 miles from downtown Detroit, Pleasant Ridge is a quiet residential enclave with access to countless urban amenities. A tight-knit community with a “small town” feel, the City’s 2022 population rested at 2,609 people, according to ACS estimates. Community members value the progressive, LGBTQIA+ welcoming neighborhoods as well as the natural and designed features of the City. The unique architectural character of homes and charming tree-lined streets are among the most valued amenities by current residents; in fact, according to SEMCOG, about 48% of Pleasant Ridge is covered by tree canopy. Further, Pleasant Ridge is valued for its walkable and bikeable interior neighborhoods, with plenty of eyes on the street. Currently, over 60.7% of the City’s land use is dedicated to single-family residential use, with only 0.13% of land use covered by multi-family or condo structures. About 6.9 acres (1.9%) of Pleasant Ridge’s footprint is dedicated to industrial uses, 2 acres (0.55%) are dedicated to retail use and another 2.3 acres (0.63%) are dedicated to office use.

Despite its small footprint, Pleasant Ridge currently boasts a vibrant, 8.8 acre parks and recreation system, which includes a community pool and swim team, a wellness center, community gathering areas and pavilions, age-appropriate playgrounds, team sports facilities, and a full calendar of recreational and entertainment activities. The City offers numerous parks—including its very own dog park—but has limited vacant land available for the development of additional park space.

Demographics

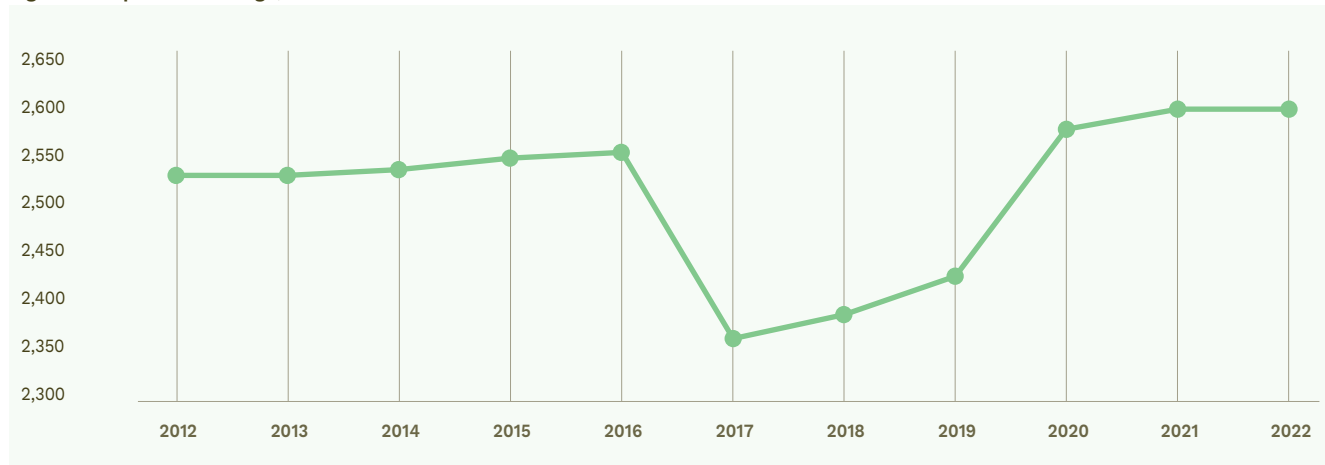
Potential implications of community structure on future parks and recreation investments through the lenses of population (especially age distribution), economics, differing abilities.

The Pleasant Ridge community's current demographics help to inform the strengths and opportunities of the Recreation Department as well as the types of amenities, programming, and facilities to channel investment towards for the next 5+ years.

Population

Over the past decade, Pleasant Ridge has demonstrated population stability and modest growth, indicating a well-established community base with desirable amenities. From 2012 to 2022, the total population of Pleasant Ridge has increased 2.7% to 2,609. SEMCOG estimates that the community's population will increase to 2,642 by 2030, 2,762 by 2040, and back down to 2,716 by 2050. While the fluctuations in Pleasant's Ridge's population are relatively small, these trends do help to inform a suitable size and scale of parks and recreation amenities and programming today and into the future.

Figure 1. Population Change, 2012-2022



Source: ACS 2022, Table DP05

Age Distribution

Despite its stable population size, Pleasant Ridge has an aging population that is outpacing younger generations.

- » As of 2022, about 17.4% of the population was above the age of 65, and since 2012, the number of residents 85 years and older has grown by 26%. The number of households with one or more people 65 years jumped by 10.7%. SEMCOG projects a 203.1% growth in individuals over the age of 85 by 2050. Additionally, SEMCOG projects a 22.3% increase in the 65- to 85-year-old population by 2050.
- » Since 2012, Pleasant Ridge experienced a 64% increase in the number of children under 5 years old, and a 13% increase in the number of children from 5 to 9 years old. However, SEMCOG projects a 33% decline in children aged 5 through 17 by 2050.
- » The number of households with children is declining by 3.4%, while the number of households with seniors is increasing by 10.7%.

Pleasant Ridge has an immediate opportunity to begin adapting its parks system for a quickly growing base of aging residents. In addition to ensuring quality, accessible recreational amenities for seniors to encourage Aging in Place, the City should look to design park facilities and programming to meet the needs of elementary-age children and to provide safe and comfortable spaces for recreation and connection for a growing base of teenagers. Further, in the coming years, Pleasant Ridge aspires to attract and retain younger residents and families with children; having family-oriented park amenities and programming in place for these demographics will increase the value of Pleasant Ridge for these groups.

Table 3. Age Distribution Change, 2012-2022

AGE GROUP	POPULATION		
	2012	2022	CHANGE
Under 5 years	129	212	64%
5 to 9 years	121	137	13%
10 to 14 years	140	129	-8%
15 to 19 years	113	84	-26%
20 to 24 years	50	52	4%
25 to 34 years	252	351	39%
35 to 44 years	497	361	-27%
45 to 54 years	333	391	17%
55 to 59 years	266	210	-21%
60 to 64 years	223	235	5%
65 to 74 years	268	294	10%
75 to 84 years	118	114	-3%
85 years and over	31	39	26%

Source: ACS 2022, Table DP05



Halloween Hayride in Pleasant Ridge



Halloween Hayride in Pleasant Ridge

Economic Characteristics

The economic characteristics of Pleasant Ridge are uniquely useful in determining the types of programming most desired by the community.

- » According to the 2022 ACS Estimates, Pleasant Ridge has a median income of \$164,861, which is significantly higher than that of the County and most surrounding communities. A higher median income may indicate higher expectations for the quality of parks and recreation offerings. Further, households with increasing disposable income have the ability to purchase upscale, private recreational activities, signaling competition for public parks.
- » Pleasant Ridge has a highly educated population (93.2% with at least some college education), signifying a potential desire for specialized education opportunities and cultural programming through the Recreation Department.
- » The majority of Pleasant Ridge's labor force works in management, business, science, and art occupations. Considering the potential for remote work in these positions, there may be an opportunity for the Parks and Recreation Department to offer outlets and charging stations, extended Wi-Fi, and other remote work amenities.
- » About 25% of the population 16 and over is not in the labor force, indicating a sizable retired population. Parks programming can adjust the types and timing of their programming to better align with the schedules of retirees and the aging population.

Ability

Inclusivity is a core principle of the Pleasant Ridge community, including the Recreation Department. The differing abilities of Pleasant Ridge residents informs the types of accessibility needs and accommodations that all parks and recreation offerings must meet.

- » Over 68% of Pleasant Ridge's aging (65 and over) population has a disability. To address the needs of senior residents, parks and recreation planning must ensure accessible design and should consider programming that is designed to accommodate mobility, hearing, and independence concerns while facilitating senior-to-senior and intergenerational connections.
- » A total of 7.6% of residents—including 27.5% of seniors—have either self-care or independent living difficulty. This signals a need for recreational programming that offers additional services, like transportation, for residents needing extra participation assistance and that accommodate caretakers.
- » Because 5.1% of children and 5.9% of the young adult (18-34 years) population in Pleasant Ridge have a cognitive difficulty, park planning must focus on inclusive and equitable playground and park design features and programming accommodations to ensure universal safety and comfortability for all users.
- » 4.1% of all residents—including over a quarter of seniors—have ambulatory difficulty, pointing to the need for continued adaptive facilities and programming, accessible, well-maintained pathways in and around all city parks, as well as ample shaded seating options.





Administrative Structure

City Structure

Parks and Recreation Services

The mission of the Recreation Department is to “enhance the leisure, lifestyle, and quality of life for residents through active and passive recreational opportunities. As part of this mission, the Department is responsible for managing, maintaining, and operating all parks and recreation facilities in Pleasant Ridge, and developing and implementing programs for cultural and recreational activities. Current activities include, but are not limited to, recreational classes, sports and swim teams, summer camps, and senior events.

The Recreation Department Director is responsible for program development, budget preparation, operation of the Community Center Complex at 4 Ridge Road, hiring part time and seasonal recreation employees, and curating the quarterly newsletter, sent to all City residents. The Director maintains the master schedule of all programs and facilities, and oversees staffing and leadership development for the wide variety of recreational classes, sports leagues and teams, and other activities available through the Department. The Director is supported in these responsibilities by the Assistant Recreation Director.

Finances

The Recreation department budget is financed principally from the general fund revenues of the City’s annual budget, which runs from July 1st to June 30th each year. The budget process for the Recreation Department begins with the previous year’s budget as a base, which is adjusted by the City’s financial consultant for known additions and subtractions. Park operations and maintenance are included in the City’s general fund. The City Commission holds a study session with the Recreation Director to review the proposed budget, and as part of the City’s total budget proposal, the budget is discussed at a public hearing and then presented to the City Commission for approval and adoption.

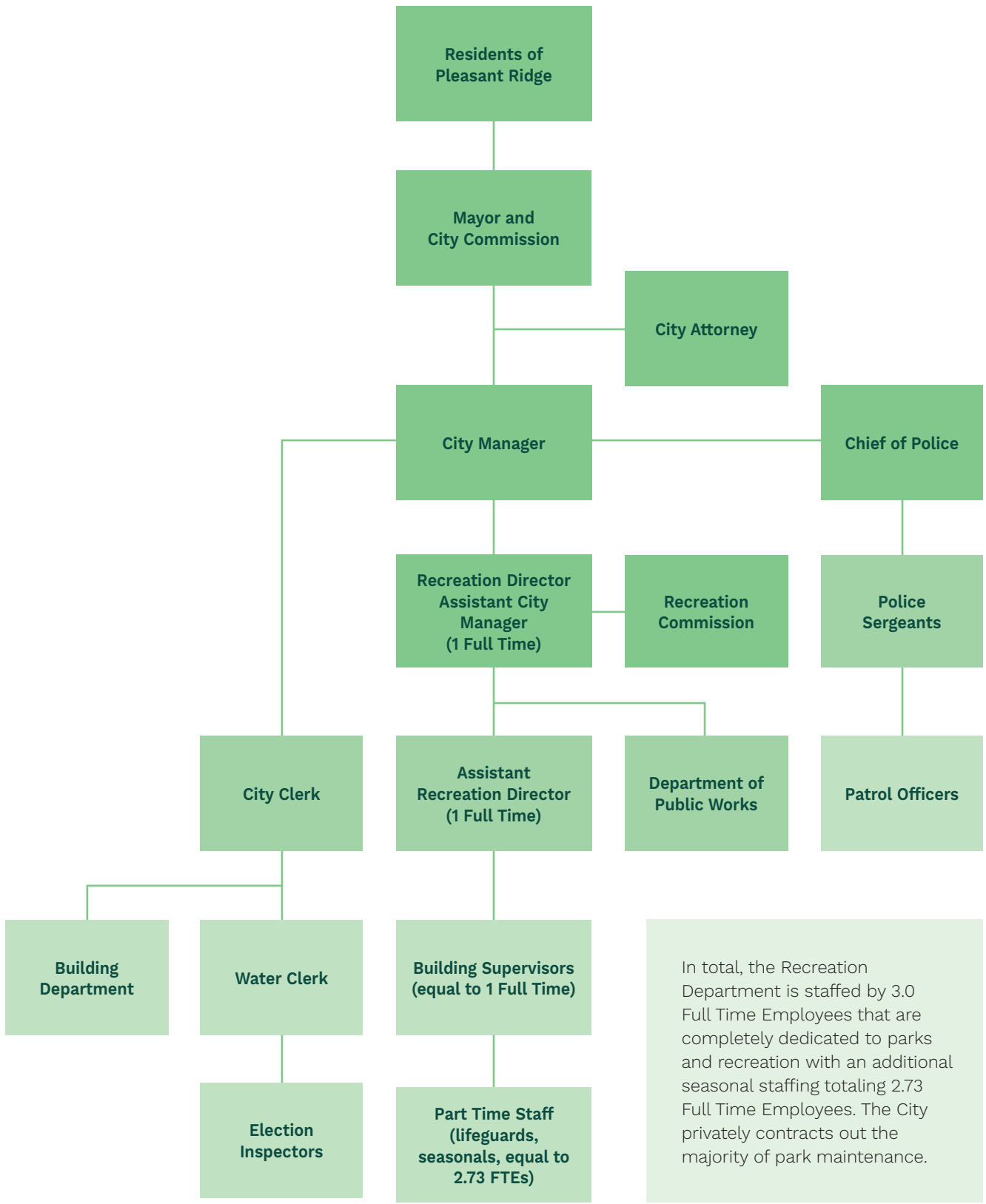
The Recreation Department derives additional income from participant fees collected for certain activities sponsored by the Department, as well as from rental of the Community Center at 4 Ridge Road for special events. Further, the department also receives funding from an operating Millage for the Pool and Wellness Center.

Operations expenditures have ranges between \$565,000-\$663,000 over the past 3 years with between \$251,000-\$353,000 recovered with operations revenues. Capital improvement expenditures have focused on xxx in the past several years. Parks and recreation has been subsidized with approximately \$350,000 by the general fund since 2019.

Role of the Recreation Commission

Established by the City Charter, the Recreation Commission is composed of nine members appointed to three-year staggered terms by the City Commission. All members are residents of the City. The Recreation Commission advises the Recreation Director in public program development, assists the Director in preparing budget requests and monitoring expenditures, and holds regular quarterly meetings.

Figure 2. City of Pleasant Ridge Organizational Chart



Community Partnerships

Volunteers and Organizations

Community volunteers are an integral part of the functioning and vibrancy of the Recreation Department throughout the calendar year. The Recreation Commission volunteers their time at all City events in need of additional support. Sports coaches are volunteers who contribute a significant amount of time, effort, and leadership to recreational programming and support the health and character development of local youth. Further, special teen groups within the City, such as Volunteering in Pleasant Ridge (V.I.P.), perform community service for the Recreation Department and for the greater community. Pleasant Ridge is home to several other community organizations, including but not limited to:

- » **Pleasant Ridge Foundation:** Members contribute to the betterment of the community through fundraising initiatives in support of infrastructure improvements and other special projects
- » **Garden Club:** The Club spreads knowledge of biodiversity, gardening, and environmental conservation through meetings and programming and supports the maintenance of gardens in City Parks.



Annual Budget and Funding Sources

The estimated Recreation Department operating budget for the 2024-2025 fiscal year is \$501,519. Primary funding for the maintenance and programming of Pleasant Ridge's recreation facilities comes from a mixture of subaccounts of the City's general fund, recreation specific millage, and registration fees. Private clubs, community organizations, and individuals will also at times contribute to recreation and other improvement programs to benefit the City.

FUND DETAIL	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
OPERATING REVENUES			
Dog Park	4,095	3,790	5,000
Program Fees	119,309	138,400	65,000
Building Rental	17,830	18,143	15,000
Swim Team & Pool Fees	70,693	68,702	68,500
Pool & Wellness Center Operating Millage	192,835	203,720	221,181
Other Revenues	4,457	3,581	1,000
TOTAL OPERATING REVENUES	409,219	436,336	375,681
OPERATING EXPENDITURES			
Recreation Staff & Administration	256,342	264,421	324,178
Recreation Programs	47,404	51,480	51,213
Facilities Operating Expenses	76,774	39,559	59,125
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES	380,520	355,460	434,516
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT			
Parks Improvement Taxes	23,062	24,865	24,896
Grants	0	0	0
Contributions	20,000	0	0
Capital Improvement Fund	100,000	100,000	100,000
Capital Fund Outlay	54,726	146,059	30,000
TOTAL REVENUES (ALL FUNDS)	552,281	561,201	500,577
TOTAL EXPENDITURES (ALL FUNDS)	435,246	501,519	464,516





Parks & Recreation Inventory

Recreation Inventory Collection Process

Developing a complete inventory of the Pleasant Ridge parks and recreation facilities is an essential component of a Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This inventory serves as a foundational dataset for crafting the Action Plan. Gaining clarity on the existing parks, recreational amenities, and programs accessible to the City's residents will facilitate informed decision-making for the future. The inventory encompasses the subsequent components for each park:

- » Location
- » Park area
- » Amenities available
- » Accessibility
- » General condition

The City of Pleasant Ridge owns and maintains nine parks and recreational facilities, including one community center with a park on site. The inventory of these parks and facilities is displayed on Map 2 – Parks and Recreation Facilities. In 2024, each park and facility was assessed through field surveys and subsequently verified with pertinent city departments, such as Planning, Parks and Recreation, and Public Works.

Map 2. Parks and Recreation Facilities



Facilities Inventory

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Community Center Park and Pool

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9



LOCATION:

4 Ridge Road

SIZE:

1.9 acres

ACCESSIBILITY:

Pool: 5

Park: 3

The modern community center in Pleasant Ridge offers a range of amenities, including an outdoor swimming pool, a water spray area, and an artificial turf deck. The facility also includes picnic areas, a playground (added in 2017), a sand volleyball court (added in 2017), and an outdoor patio with a walkway leading to the front parking lot. Inside, the center features a wellness center with workout equipment (installed in 2017), as well as showers, restrooms, lockers, concessions, a prep kitchen, and meeting rooms for community groups and public gatherings. It provides a variety of educational and fitness programs for residents of all ages.

Amenities:

- » Outdoor patio
- » Playground (5-12 year old)
- » Volleyball court
- » Open space



Hessel Park



- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9

LOCATION:
Corner of Ridge + Oxford Roads

SIZE:
0.5 acres

ACCESSIBILITY:
3

This mini-park, situated on Ridge Road, provides passive recreation for the surrounding neighborhood with seating and picnic areas. Its large, well-maintained lawn and landscaping create an inviting space for both passersby and local residents.

- Amenities:**
- » Open Space
 - » Walking Path
 - » Seating
 - » Little Free Library



Woodward Greenbelt Parks



LOCATION:

West side of Woodward Avenue.

SIZE:

2.8 acres

ACCESSIBILITY:

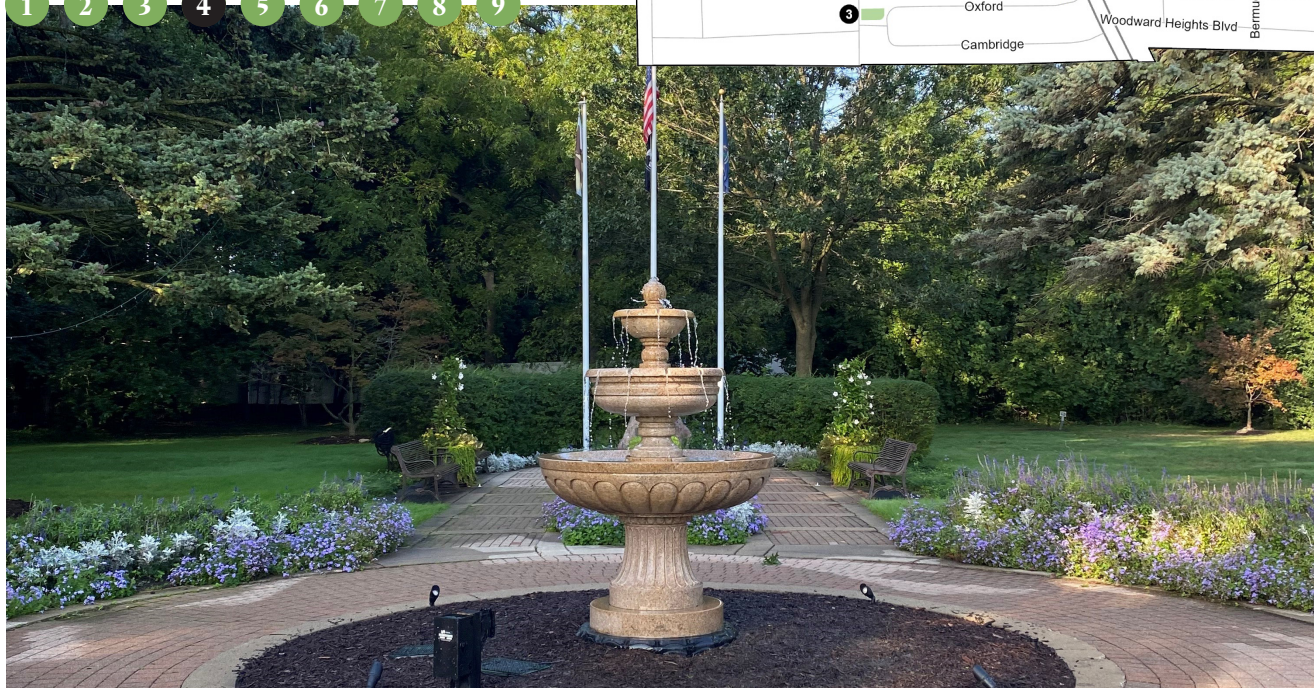
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The Greenbelt Parks are located along the western edge of Woodward Avenue, between Elm Park and I-696. These interconnected passive spaces include Memorial Park and Stevenson Park. Each of these parks features a walkway, benches, and pedestrian lighting.

Amenities:

- » Walking paths
- » Lighting
- » Open Space

Memorial Park



LOCATION:

23925 Woodward Ave

SIZE:

2.3 acres

ACCESSIBILITY:

4

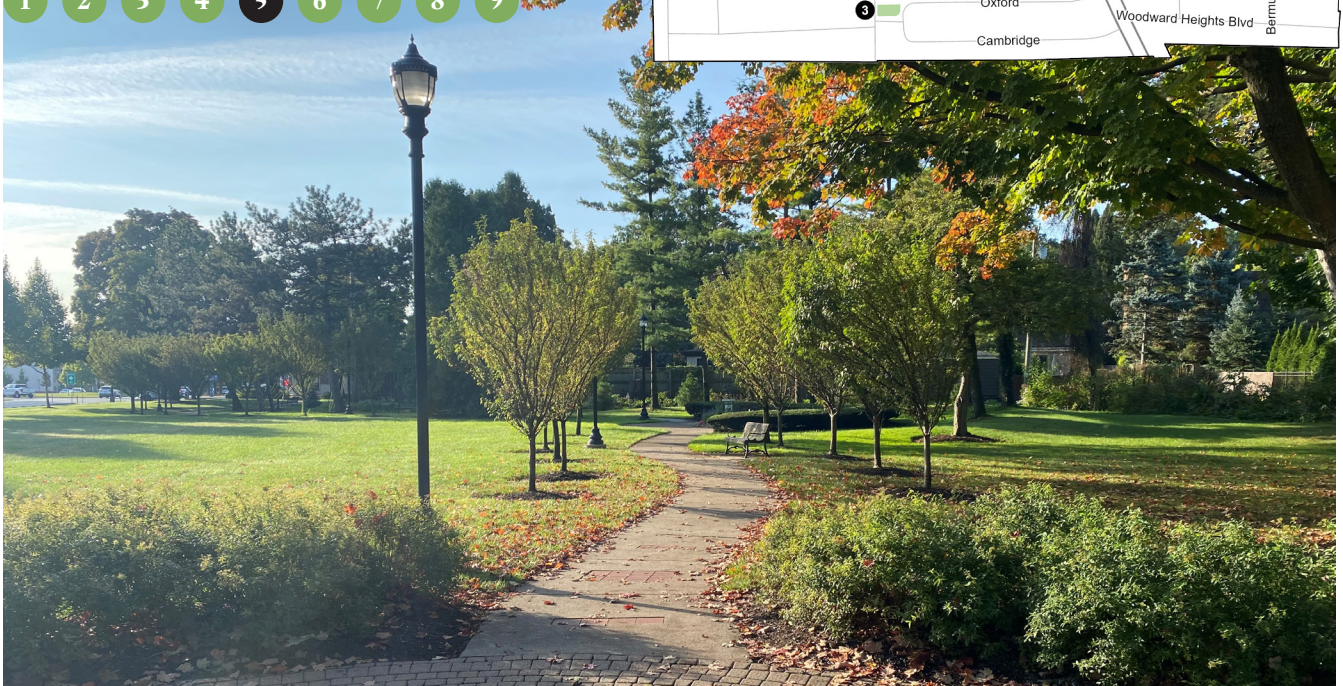
Memorial Park is situated at the corner of Woodward Avenue and Oakland Park Blvd. It features City Hall, the Police Station, a historical museum, and passive greenspace with gardens, seating areas, and memorials honoring veterans from the city and beyond.

Amenities:

- » Walking paths
- » Lighting
- » Open space
- » Veteran Memorial
- » Water fountain
- » Natural garden
- » Historical museum
- » Seating



Stevenson Park



LOCATION:
West side of Woodward between Oakland Park + Oxford

SIZE:
1.25 acres

ACCESSIBILITY RATING:
4

Stevenson Park is a passive park that enhances the Woodward Avenue corridor by creating a green buffer between the avenue and nearby neighborhoods. The park provides opportunities for picnicking and recreational activities.

- Amenities**
- » Walking paths
 - » Lighting
 - » Open space
 - » Seating
 - » Gardens



Gainsboro Park



LOCATION:
East side of City, adjacent to the railroad tracks

SIZE:
8.5 Acres

ACCESSIBILITY RATING:
4

MDNR GRANT:
BF90-346 1992
\$76,800

In 2014, residents approved a 0.75 millage to fund substantial improvements across City parks. Gainsboro Park, the only large outdoor active recreation park in the community, underwent significant renovations in 2016 as part of this initiative. Key updates included resurfaced tennis and basketball courts, additional playground equipment, and a trail system connecting the park with nearby neighborhoods. Gainsboro Street was converted into a pedestrian walkway, and the community garden was relocated to the park's less shaded northern end. The ballfield fencing and backstop were also upgraded. Today, Gainsboro Park features a soccer field, a fenced off-leash dog area, and a public restroom building, and is heavily used by residents.

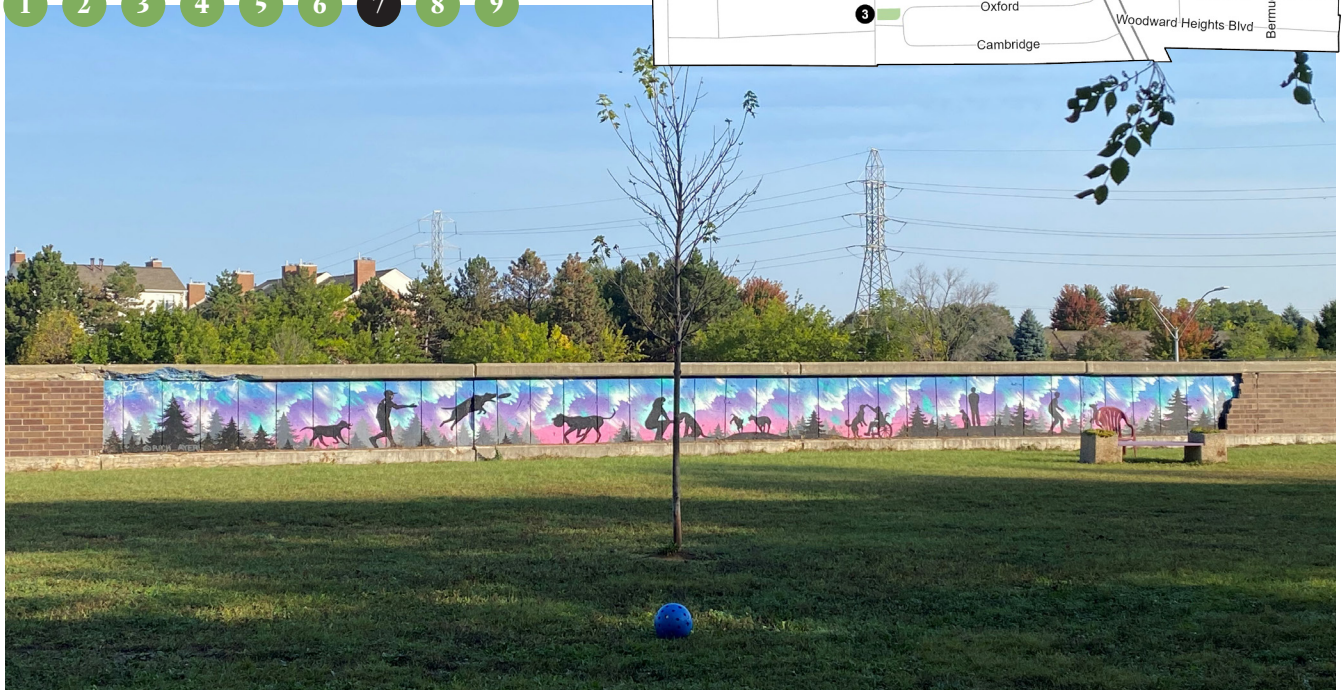
Amenities

- » Baseball diamond
- » Soccer fields
- » Basketball courts
- » Tennis courts
- » Patio gathering space
- » Shelter/ bathroom building
- » Playgrounds (2-5 and 5-12 year old)
- » Walking paths
- » Open recreation space
- » Community garden
- » Dog park
- » Water station



Dog Park & Community Garden at Gainsboro Park

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9



LOCATION:
North end of Gainsboro Park

SIZE:
-

ACCESSIBILITY RATING:
1

The dog park is located at the north end of Gainsboro Park, and has entrances at the west end of Kensington by the train tracks and near the north end of Indiana. There is an annual membership fee to access the dog park, which is generally only available to residents. Next to the dog park is a community garden. Residents may purchase plots in the garden, which is coordinated by Pleasant Ridge Parks and Recreation.

- Amenities:**
- » Dog park
 - » Seating
 - » Community Garden



Regional Opportunities

Regional parks near Pleasant Ridge offer unique natural features ideal for outdoor activities like nature viewing, fishing, boating, hiking, and trail use. Many also include active play areas, such as ball fields or courts. Although these parks are not used for formal programming by the City of Pleasant Ridge, they provide both active and passive recreational opportunities for community residents. Regional facilities are provided by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority, and the Oakland County Parks System.

Michigan State Parks/ Recreation Areas

Bald Mountain Recreation Area. Bald Mountain Recreation Area is known for its rugged terrain, extensive trail system, and beautiful lakes, making it an ideal spot for hiking, mountain biking, and fishing. With over 4,600 acres of diverse landscapes, it offers a scenic retreat for outdoor enthusiasts.

Belle Isle Park. Belle Isle Park, located on an island in the Detroit River, features lush gardens, historic structures, and stunning waterfront views. This urban oasis offers activities like kayaking, picnicking, and visiting cultural attractions like the Belle Isle Aquarium and Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory.

Dodge #4 State Park. Dodge #4 State Park is a popular destination for swimming, boating, and fishing, with access to Cass Lake's clear waters. The park also has sandy beaches, picnic areas, and trails, providing a perfect setting for a day of family fun on the water.

Highland Recreation Area. Highland Recreation Area spans over 5,900 acres of forests, wetlands, and rolling hills, providing ample opportunities for horseback riding, mountain biking, and hiking. Its diverse landscape includes rustic campsites and picturesque lakes, perfect for fishing and boating.

Island Lake Recreation Area. Island Lake Recreation Area is a popular spot for outdoor adventures, offering trails for hiking, mountain biking, and cross-country skiing. Known for its serene lakefronts, the park also has sandy beaches, a canoe and kayak launch, and scenic picnic spots.



Belle Isle State Park



Highland Recreation Area



Pontiac Lake Recreation Area

Pontiac Lake Recreation Area. Pontiac Lake Recreation Area features rugged trails for hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding, along with a large lake for swimming, fishing, and boating. This park's mix of open fields, wooded areas, and sandy beaches offers a diverse setting for a range of outdoor activities.

Proud Lake Recreation Area. Proud Lake Recreation Area offers serene woodland trails along the Huron River, ideal for hiking, canoeing, and birdwatching. With its tranquil campsites and extensive river access, the park provides a peaceful escape into nature.

Wetzel State Recreation Area. Wetzel State Recreation Area is a haven for nature lovers, with open fields, wetlands, and wooded areas that support diverse wildlife. The park is popular for hunting, fishing, and exploring the various habitats through its network of trails.

William G. Milliken State Park. William G. Milliken State Park, Michigan's first urban state park, is located along the Detroit Riverfront. It features a river walk, a harbor for boats, and a scenic lighthouse, making it a great spot to enjoy views of the city skyline and the waterfront.

Oakland County Parks

Addison Oaks. Addison Oaks is a scenic park with over 1,000 acres of rolling terrain, woodlands, and lakes, offering hiking trails, picnic areas, and campgrounds. The park also features a disc golf course and paddle boat rentals, making it a versatile destination for outdoor recreation.

Catalpa Oaks. Catalpa Oaks provides open green spaces, playgrounds, and sports fields, ideal for family gatherings and community events. Located in an urban area, it's a convenient spot for picnics and casual outdoor activities.



Highland Oaks



Lyon Oaks

Highland Oaks. Highland Oaks offers a tranquil escape with its wooded areas, wetlands, and walking trails. Known for its diverse wildlife, the park is a popular location for birdwatching and enjoying the serene natural surroundings.

Independence Oaks. Independence Oaks, one of Oakland County's largest parks, features an expansive trail system, fishing spots, and a beautiful lake for kayaking. The park also includes picnic areas and playgrounds, providing ample amenities for visitors.



Orion Oaks

Lyon Oaks. Lyon Oaks boasts a mix of forests, wetlands, and prairies, along with an 18-hole golf course. The park's trails are ideal for hiking and cross-country skiing, while its off-leash dog park makes it a favorite among pet owners.

Orion Oaks. Orion Oaks is well-known for its large off-leash dog area and scenic trails. The park offers a blend of wooded areas and open meadows, ideal for hiking, birdwatching, and enjoying a peaceful day in nature.

Pontiac Oaks. Pontiac Oaks provides access to a variety of sports fields and open green spaces, suitable for recreational activities and community gatherings. Its central location makes it a convenient destination for outdoor enthusiasts.

Red Oaks. Red Oaks features a popular waterpark, as well as picnic areas, sports fields, and playgrounds. The park's amenities and urban setting make it a lively spot for family outings and recreational fun.

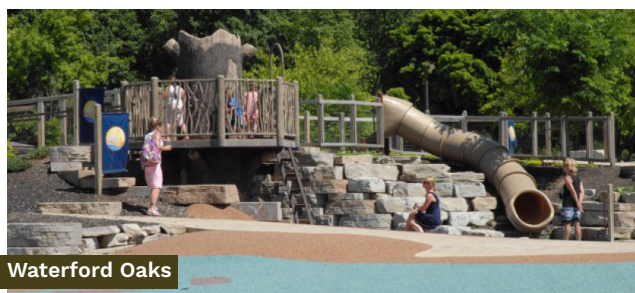
Springfield Oaks. Springfield Oaks offers a unique mix of recreational facilities, including a golf course, fairground, and trails for hiking and cross-country skiing. The park also hosts various events throughout the year, making it a vibrant community hub.

Waterford Oaks. Waterford Oaks is home to a tropical-themed waterpark, hiking trails, and sports fields. The park's amenities and natural surroundings provide a balanced mix of active and passive recreational opportunities.

White Lake Oaks. White Lake Oaks features a scenic 18-hole golf course, picnic areas, and a clubhouse. With its well-maintained landscapes and picturesque views, it's a popular destination for golfers and outdoor enthusiasts alike.



Red Oaks



Waterford Oaks



Kensington Metropark

Huron-Clinton Metroparks

Indian Springs Metropark. Indian Springs Metropark offers visitors a nature center with interactive exhibits, a scenic golf course, and miles of paved trails through wetlands and woodlands. This park is perfect for hiking, biking, and exploring local ecology.

Kensington Metropark. Kensington Metropark features a large lake with sandy beaches, boating, and fishing opportunities, as well as over 4,400 acres of trails and picnic areas. With a nature center, disc golf, and year-round activities, it's a favorite destination for outdoor enthusiasts.

Lake Erie Metropark. Lake Erie Metropark provides access to Lake Erie's shoreline, offering a wave pool, a golf course, and excellent fishing spots. Trails and picnic areas make it a popular spot for family outings and enjoying waterfront views.

Lake St. Clair Metropark. Lake St. Clair Metropark boasts sandy beaches, a marina, and a boardwalk along the waterfront. The park includes a swimming pool, picnic areas, and trails, making it an ideal destination for enjoying water activities and scenic views.

Lower Huron Metropark. Lower Huron Metropark offers a scenic riverfront, biking and hiking trails, and a popular waterpark. With expansive picnic areas and playgrounds, it's a great spot for family gatherings and enjoying the outdoors.

Oakwoods Metropark. Oakwoods Metropark features a nature center, wetlands, and woodlands that are perfect for birdwatching and hiking. The park's extensive trail system provides a peaceful setting for exploring diverse habitats and wildlife.

Stony Creek Metropark. Stony Creek Metropark has a large lake for boating, fishing, and swimming, as well as a variety of trails for hiking, biking, and cross-country skiing. Its year-round facilities and diverse landscapes make it a popular destination for outdoor recreation.



Lake Erie Metropark



Oakwoods Metropark



Wolcott Mill Metropark

Willow Metropark. Willow Metropark offers open fields, wooded areas, and trails for hiking and biking, as well as a golf course and water slide. It's a scenic location along the Huron River, ideal for outdoor activities and family fun.

Wolcott Mill Metropark. Wolcott Mill Metropark features a historic grist mill, a working farm center, and picturesque trails. This park provides a glimpse into Michigan's rural heritage, along with opportunities for hiking, picnicking, and exploring nature.

Relationships

The City collaborates with and provides meeting spaces and facilities for several local organizations, including:

- » The Pleasant Ridge Club
- » The Pleasant Ridge Foundation
- » The Pleasant Ridge Garden Club
- » The Pleasant Ridge Women's Club
- » The Pleasant Ridge Historical Commission
- » The Pleasant Ridge 50 Plus Club

Beyond its coordination with the City's planning and budgetary commissions, the Recreation Department fosters important partnerships with groups like the Ferndale School District and neighboring municipalities, including Ferndale, Huntington Woods, Berkley, and Hazel Park. The department also works with local organizations such as Berkley Youth Soccer, Ferndale Youth Assistance, the Michigan Recreation and Park Association, and the Northwest Recreation and Park Association.



Pleasant Ridge Programs

The Pleasant Ridge Recreation Department offers an extensive array of recreational programs catering to all age groups throughout the year.

During the summer, the department provides activities such as T-ball, youth baseball, tot lot programs, swimming, and tennis. Children ages 6–14 can also participate in a camp-style program at the community center, where they enjoy a mix of structured and unstructured activities, including field trips, all under the guidance of counselors.

The Pleasant Ridge Community Pool is open daily from Memorial Day through Labor Day and is available to residents with a membership card. The pool features a zero-depth entry, two lap lanes, diving boards, locker rooms, a concession area, and a grassy picnic spot. It hosts various activities like lap swimming, swimming lessons, open swim, and special events. Additionally, the Pleasant Ridge Swim Team, the Piranhas, competes in the Northwest Suburban Swim League, with practices held at the pool.

In the spring and fall, the recreation department offers youth soccer and baseball. The Community Center also hosts numerous fitness and wellness classes, including aerobics, Pilates, karate, yoga, foam rolling, and art enrichment. The Wellness Center, available to residents from 5:00 a.m. to midnight every day via key fob access, is equipped with treadmills, stationary bikes, free weights, weight machines, and free Wi-Fi.

Throughout the year, a variety of seasonal events bring the community together. These include a Halloween hayride, an art fair, an appraisal fair, events for the 50+ club, an ice cream social in the summer, children's Halloween and Christmas parties, an Easter pancake brunch and egg hunt, the Woodward Dream Cruise, a father/daughter dance, and the annual Christmas tree lighting.

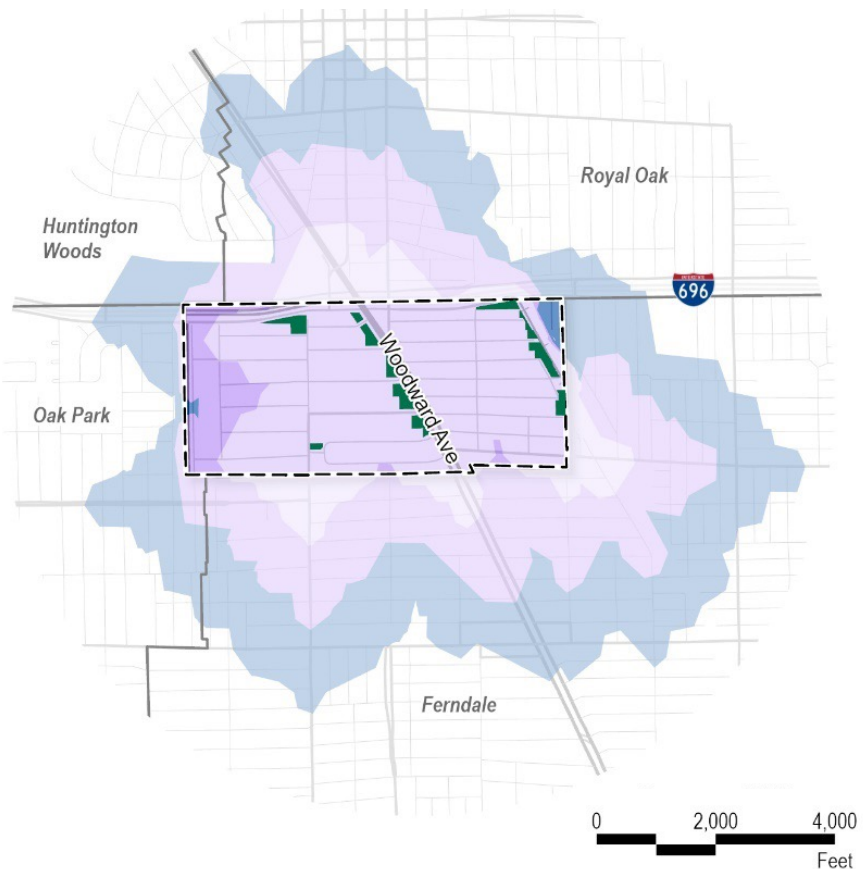
Walkability Analysis

Parks are essential components in healthy communities—access to parks facilitates increased physical activity and many health benefits. If access to a park is convenient without the use of an automobile, those benefits also include reduced car trips and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Pleasant Ridge residents are generally very well served in their ability to access a park close to home. The walkability analysis presented in Map 3, showing 5-, 10-, and 15-minute walking times from Pleasant Ridge parks, shows that very few residents are more than a 5-minute walk from a City-owned park of some type, and all are within a 10-minute walk.

Map 3. Walkability Analysis

LEGEND

-  City of Pleasant Ridge
-  Parks
-  5 Minute Walk from Park
-  10 Minute Walk from Park
-  15 Minute Walk from Park



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Systems & Facilities Analysis

Systems & Facilities Analysis

The needs of the community and recommended future actions were determined through several analyses, benchmarking, and consideration of current best practices. In this section, Pleasant Ridge's parks and recreation system is evaluated through the lenses of opportunity for:

1. Facilities provision,
2. Accessibility and Inclusion in park and facility design,
3. Environmental sustainability

Facilities

This section compares the parks and recreation facilities in Pleasant Ridge to national benchmarks for facility provision. In 2020, the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) launched a nationwide benchmarking tool called NRPA Park Metrics. Each year, NRPA publishes the Agency Performance Review, which summarizes benchmarking data from 1,000 park and recreation agencies in the Park Metrics database. This database categorizes data based on the size of the served jurisdiction. NRPA Park Metrics enables a comparison of Pleasant Ridge's parks and recreation facilities with data from similarly sized communities, offering valuable insights. This data will serve as a foundation, complemented by community-specific insights and experiences to identify the optimal combination of facilities.

Indoor Facilities Analysis

Pleasant Ridge, given its size exceeds expectations for indoor recreation facilities. Looking at the benchmark when anticipating the presence of these indoor facilities by population size it is clear most smaller communities cannot accommodate the investment and staffing. Consequently, fewer peer communities have these types of facilities, as indicated by the percentages in Table X. This table specifically captures indoor facilities owned and operated by the Pleasant Ridge Parks and Recreation Department, so there may be other private facilities that help meet the indoor recreation needs of residents.

Outdoor Facilities Analysis

Pleasant Ridge meets or exceeds the needs of residents for outdoor park and recreation facilities as shown in Table X. The facilities that are different are more specific uses, such as a skate park or outdoor ice rink. They also are not provided by as many peer communities, as evidenced by the lower percentage of agencies that provide the facility. Similar to indoor facilities, this analysis only provides for City owned facilities, so the outdoor recreation needs may be being met by private facilities or nearby parks in adjacent cities.

How To Interpret The Facilities Analysis Data

The data in the Table X has been compiled by the National Recreation and Parks Association. It contains four key pieces of information:

1. **Percent of Agencies with Facilities:** This percentage reflects the number of surveyed agencies that have a specific facility in their inventory.
2. **Median Number of Residents per Facility:** This figure indicates how many people each facility serves in communities with populations under 20,000.
3. **Facilities Benchmark:** To contextualize Pleasant Ridge's situation, we established a benchmark by dividing the total population of Pleasant Ridge by the median number of residents served by agencies in the under 20,000 population range. These numbers have been intentionally left as decimals to help estimate the expected presence of each facility in Pleasant Ridge based on its population size, though it should be noted that Pleasant Ridge is at the lower end of this population bracket.
4. **Actual Facilities:** The last column of the table shows the actual number of facilities in Pleasant Ridge, allowing for straightforward comparison with the benchmark.

Map 4. Facilities Analysis

FACILITY TYPE	PERCENT OF AGENCIES THAT PROVIDE FACILITY	PRESENCE OF FACILITY IN PLEASANT RIDGE	MEDIAN NUMBER OF RESIDENTS/FACILITY	BENCHMARK	CURRENTLY IN PLEASANT RIDGE	
INDOOR FACILITIES						
Recreation centers (including gyms)	62%	Yes	9,685	0.27	1	
Community centers	59%	Yes	8,908	0.29	1	
Senior centers	40%	Yes	14,286	0.18	1	
Performance amphitheaters	40%	No	12,769	0.2	0	
Nature centers	34%	No	9,430	0.28	0	
Aquatic centers	30%	No	12,618	0.21	0	
Stadiums	19%	No	10,633	0.25	0	
Teen centers	12%	Yes	14,797	0.18	1	
Indoor ice rinks	12%	No	8,004	0.33	0	
Arenas	9%	No	7,057	0.37	0	
OUTDOOR FACILITIES						
Playgrounds	93%	Yes	1,990	1.3	2	
Tot Lots	53%	Yes	5,323	0.5	2	
Basketball Courts	84%	Yes	4,366	0.6	1	
Tennis Courts	72%	Yes	3,074	0.8	1	
Pickleball Courts	42%	No	3,390	0.8	0	
Volleyball Courts	23%	No	9,250	0.3	1	
Diamond Fields	85%	Yes	1,833	1.4	1	
Regulation Ballfield	55%	No	20,228	0.1	0	
Ballfields (youth)	79%	Yes	19,556	0.1	1	
Rectangular Fields	Multipurpose	42%	No	5,248	0.5	0
	Soccer (youth)	51%	No	4,947	0.5	1
	Football	35%	No	18,785	0.1	1
	Multipurpose - Synthetic	25%	No	25,330	0.1	0
Dog Parks	68%	Yes	10,327	0.3	1	
Swimming Pool (outdoor)	49%	Yes	9,500	0.3	1	
Community Gardens	52%	Yes	8,800	0.3	1	
Skate Parks	46%	No	11,284	0.2	0	
Ice Rinks (outdoors)	19%	No	8,015	0.3	0	
Golf Course (18-hole)	29%	No	9,626	0.3	0	

Inclusion in Pleasant Ridge Parks and Recreation

Why Plan for Inclusive Parks?

Pleasant Ridge's Parks and Recreation can play a crucial role in creating welcoming and inclusive spaces that promote positive physical, social, and mental health outcomes while connecting people to the City's natural habitats, with a focus on reaching all community members.

Aiming to provide not only physical access but also a culture of inclusivity is essential. This approach ensures that individuals from all backgrounds and abilities feel welcome and can actively participate in recreational activities. Prioritizing accessible facilities accommodates the city's diverse resident base, including those with mobility challenges and cognitive disabilities. This approach includes designing pathways suitable for individuals with varying motor skills and offering spaces that support the development of fine motor skills, extending inclusivity to everyone, regardless of their physical abilities. Effective communication materials within park spaces further strengthens access and inclusion.

In addition to physical considerations, fostering social-emotional development is key. Outdoor environments should be intentionally designed to encourage emotional expression, support relationship-building, and facilitate positive social interactions. Prioritizing interaction and cooperation provides opportunities for individuals to connect through recreation activities, enhancing essential relationship skills.

Moreover, inclusive, universally designed playgrounds can boost self-confidence by enabling children to interact with others and their surroundings in diverse ways. Creatively designed recreation spaces should also embrace the sensory domain, incorporating the seven senses to cater to varying sensory needs. This approach benefits all visitors, including those with sensory sensitivities. Parks and playgrounds should also thoughtfully consider cognitive development by incorporating features that promote problem-solving and abstract thinking.

Equity and Inclusion: Foundations for a Vibrant Recreation System

Creating universally inclusive recreational spaces is the aspirational goal, but the journey begins by embracing the core principles of equity and inclusion to foster a thriving community.

Equity involves understanding that a one-size-fits-all approach is ineffective, as each individual has unique needs and starting points. This means creating opportunities tailored to those needs, ensuring that everyone has access to the necessary resources for their success, and distributing resources accordingly.

Inclusion focuses on cultivating a sense of belonging by actively encouraging everyone to participate and contribute. It involves creating environments where individuals can access facilities and engage in programs that make them feel safe, welcome, and respected.

When equity and inclusion come together, they create a vibrant community dedicated to fostering inclusive spaces where all feel valued and respected.



How Can Pleasant Ridge Parks and Recreation be More Inclusive?

Universal design is essential for making parks and recreation facilities accessible to individuals of all ages and abilities. While Pleasant Ridge already incorporates many of the following key strategies, the City should consider ways to make facilities more inclusive. Effective implementation of universal design includes several key strategies:

Inclusive Play Areas: By incorporating universally designed playground equipment, parks can enable children of all abilities to play together, fostering an inclusive environment for everyone.

Accessible Trails and Pathways: Ensuring pathways are maintained in a way that allows everyone to explore and enjoy the natural surroundings. Pathways should include curb cuts accessible from parking areas and crosswalks.

Seating and Rest Areas: Placing seating and rest areas at regular intervals throughout the parks ensures that individuals with varying mobility needs can comfortably navigate and enjoy their visit.

Accessible Restrooms: Building or upgrading restroom facilities to include accessible stalls, changing tables, and clear signage helps visitors stay longer and fully enjoy the park's amenities.

Universal Signage: Implementing signage with clear language, large fonts, and high-contrast colors makes it easier for everyone to locate park facilities and navigate the area independently.

Shade and Shelter: Providing shade structures and shelters with accessible seating areas offers park visitors a comfortable retreat from the sun or rain.



Best Practices for Accessible Pathways

To ensure park facilities are able to be enjoyed by users of all ages and abilities, accessible paths and walkways should be primary considerations in park design and capital improvements. MDNR guidelines for accessible paths include:

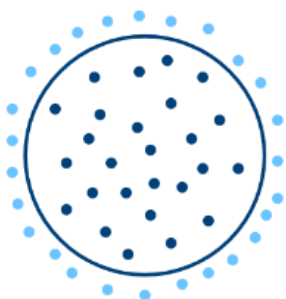
Dimensions

- » Walkways within a site: at least 6 feet wide with cross-slopes under
- » 2% and running slopes under 5%
- » Multi-use trail: at least 8 feet wide, with cross-slopes under 2% and running slopes under 5%
- » Regional trail system: at least 10 feet wide, with 1-foot buffers on either side, with cross-slopes under 2% and running slopes under 5%

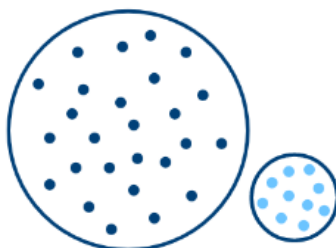
Materials And Design

- » Unitary surface like concrete, boardwalk or asphalt, crushed aggregate/screenings that have been "stabilized" or natural soils enhanced with soil stabilizers
- » Transition plates between trail and pedestrian bridges, decks, etc.
- » Contrasting color treatment of the surface and textured surface treatments such as brushed concrete at intersections or interpretive stations to cue people who have vision impairments that there is something to pay attention to at that spot
- » Larger (greater than 60 x 60") level areas at all turns and intersections thoughtfully laid out on the site to maximize the experience with minimal difficulty

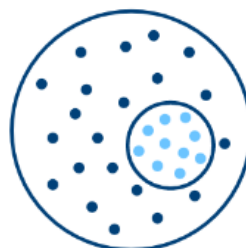
Exclusion



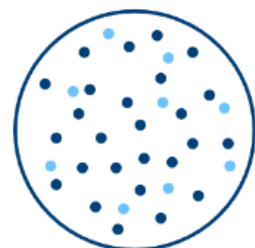
Segregation

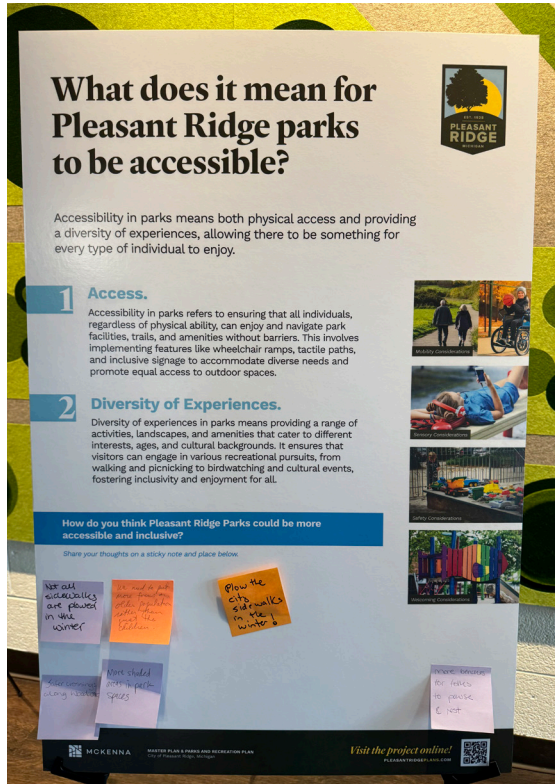


Integration



Inclusion





What We Heard: Accessibility

Throughout several in-person events and an online survey, residents have provided feedback on how Pleasant Ridge can be more inclusive and accessible.

From the May 21 Visioning Workshop:

Residents offered the following ideas and concerns.

- » Maintaining the sidewalks in winter
- » Safer crossings
- » Benches and shade
- » Planning for seniors as well as children

From the July 17 Ice Cream Social:

Residents were asked to rank the following inclusive elements. The rankings from highest to lowest priority are as follows.

- 1) Shade Sails
- 2) Benches and Sitting Areas
- 3) Inclusive Playground
- 4) Bench Fitness
- 5) Welcoming Programming
- 6) Sensory Activities
- 7) Fenced Play Areas

From the online survey:

Pleasant Ridge residents offered key ideas around accessibility and inclusivity, with a focus on identifying new opportunities for community building as well as improving the functionality of existing facilities.

- » Regularly scheduled community gatherings
- » Family-friendly activities (i.e. food trucks)
- » Displays of LGBTQIA+ flags and other welcoming symbols
- » Expanded group activities like bocce, pickleball
- » Permanent yard games
- » A running track
- » More garbage receptacles and pet waste stations
- » Operational water fountains/water-bottle filling stations
- » Additional benches and picnic tables
- » Water bottle filling stations
- » Improved pathway lighting
- » Mitigated noise from highways
- » Timely snow removal on pathways/bike lanes
- » Braille signage and tactile paths
- » Handicap accessible tables, seating, and play areas

Accessibility Evaluation of Existing Facilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 requires barrier-free accessibility in all public service areas, including parks and recreation facilities. In summer 2024, an evaluation of Pleasant Ridge's parks and recreation facilities was conducted as part of the inventory process. Following Michigan Department of Natural Resources guidelines, each facility was assessed to determine if individuals with the following conditions can access and use the facilities safely and independently:

- » Limited sight or blindness
- » Wheelchair use
- » Hearing impairment or deafness
- » Use of a walking aid
- » Cognitive disabilities

A five-point evaluation system was applied to rank each facility's accessibility, as outlined in the table below. The specific accessibility rankings are provided in the following table, with a quick-reference rating found on each park's description page in the Facilities Inventory section.

Overall, Pleasant Ridge's parks are rated at levels 3 and 4. The lowest rated park is the dog park and community garden at Gainsboro Park. This is due to the gravel entrances and lack of accessible pathways. While the overall accessibility rankings are positive, there is always room for improvement to further enhance accessibility for all park visitors.



LEVEL 1	The park is not accessible to people with a broad range of physical disabilities. The site includes little paved areas and the facilities such as play equipment or picnic areas are not accessible.
LEVEL 2	The park is somewhat accessible to people with a broad range of physical disabilities. Either the parking area or pathways are paved, but not both. Many of the facilities such as play equipment or picnic areas are not easily accessible.
LEVEL 3	The park is mostly accessible to people with a broad range of physical disabilities. Most of the parking areas and pathways are paved, and some of the facilities such as play equipment or picnic areas are accessible but may not be completely barrier-free.
LEVEL 4	The park is completely accessible to people with a broad range of physical disabilities. Parking areas and pathways are paved, and most of the facilities such as play equipment or picnic areas are easily accessible.
LEVEL 5	The entire park was developed or renovated using the principles of universal design, a design approach which enables all environments to be usable by everyone, to the greatest extent possible, regardless of age, ability, or situation.

Sustainability in Pleasant Ridge Parks and Recreation

Why Plan for Sustainable Parks?

Climate

The climate of Pleasant Ridge and southeast Michigan is shaped by its position within the metro Detroit urban “heat island.” As climate change drives rising temperatures, health impacts become more apparent, with hotter days and increased pollution affecting individuals with respiratory conditions.

The expansion of urban development contributes to the heat island effect, as natural vegetation is replaced by buildings and pavement. This phenomenon arises from two main factors: the reduction of trees and vegetative cover, which cool cities by shading and transpiring water, and the proliferation of dark surfaces, such as pavements and rooftops, that absorb and re-radiate heat. A 2020 study in Scientific Reports revealed that greenery alone can reduce the urban heat island effect by up to 21%.

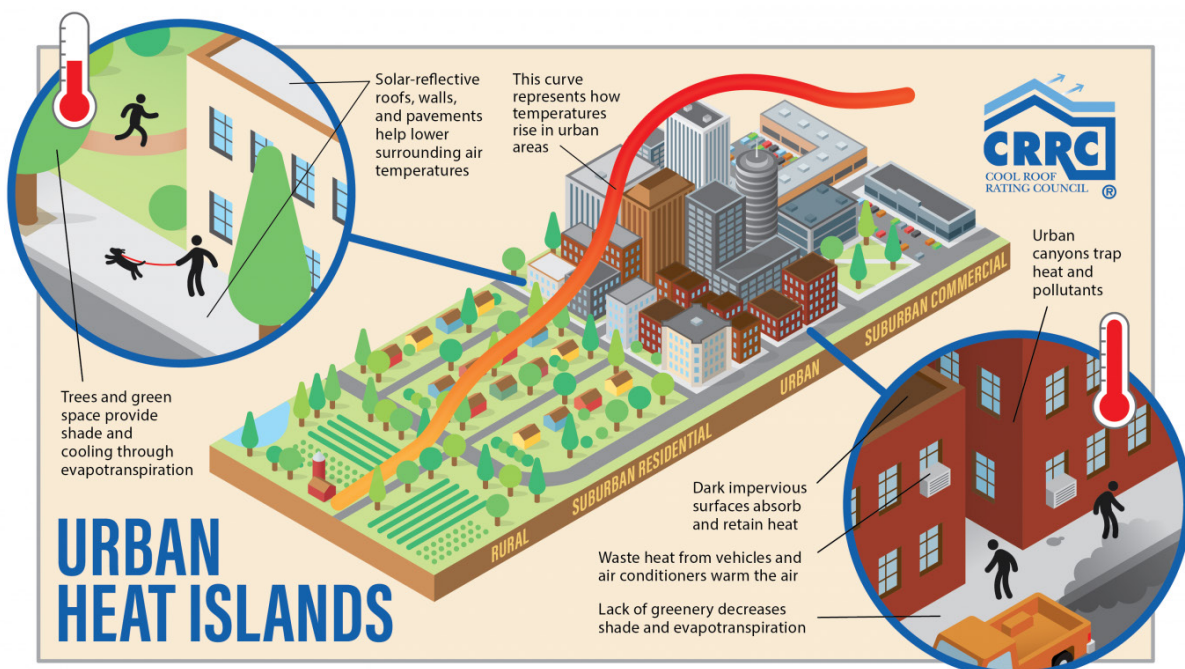
One of the most effective strategies to combat this effect is planting new trees in parks, which help to cool the city. Preserving mature trees is also crucial, as their established canopies provide significant cooling benefits and are more cost-effective than new plantings. Thoughtfully selecting and positioning new trees can maximize their impact; for example, research has shown that planting deciduous trees on the west side of heat-prone surfaces, such as parking lots and buildings, offers optimal shade and cooling.

Life Cycle

Maintenance

Lawn care is a significant responsibility for most suburban park systems, requiring substantial investment of both time and resources. Costs for labor, fertilizer, pesticides, and equipment can make turf grass an expensive feature to maintain. Additionally, if irrigated, lawns can be water-intensive and increasingly costly as the climate warms. Replacing turf areas with drought-resistant, low-maintenance plants is one of the most effective ways to reduce park maintenance costs. While this doesn’t mean eliminating all lawns—since they’re still needed for sports fields, recreational spaces, and future amenities—some underused areas can be converted. Michigan State University has compiled an extensive list of visually appealing, drought-tolerant plants suitable for parks and gardens, along with guidance on soil conditions for each.

The impact of heat on maintenance is also noteworthy, particularly in surface parking lots and asphalt roads. Higher temperatures can reduce the structural integrity of asphalt, leading to buckling and cracking. When possible, using concrete for park roads and sidewalks can be more sustainable, as it’s significantly more durable than asphalt, even though the initial construction costs are higher.



Building Materials

Over the past five years, new environmentally-conscious building techniques have emerged, incorporating bio-conscious materials and designs that blend with natural habitats. These innovations could be applied to future construction in Pleasant Ridge parks. Beyond green roofs that capture stormwater, some engineers are exploring roof ponds, which can capture water and provide habitat for waterfowl in areas lacking open water. Early research indicates that roof ponds offer thermal comfort similar to other passive heating and cooling techniques. Additionally, some construction companies are modifying materials to reduce carbon emissions and support plant growth on building surfaces.

For parks prone to frequent flooding, new parking lots could benefit from permeable pavement materials, which allow stormwater to filter into the soil and minimize pavement wear. The type of permeable pavement used—such as pavers, porous asphalt, or pervious concrete—can impact surface durability. While permeable pavement is about twice as costly as standard options and requires regular maintenance to prevent debris from clogging the surface, it can be highly effective in areas where it is suitable.



Permeable Pavers

Ecosystem

As development pressures along bird migration corridors increase and encroach on pollinator and wildlife habitats, scientists, conservationists, and gardening enthusiasts are encouraging people to replace their often lifeless lawns with native shrubs and plants. These native plants offer numerous benefits to both property owners and the environment. Pleasant Ridge can also support these efforts by enhancing habitat quality in parks and on other public lands.

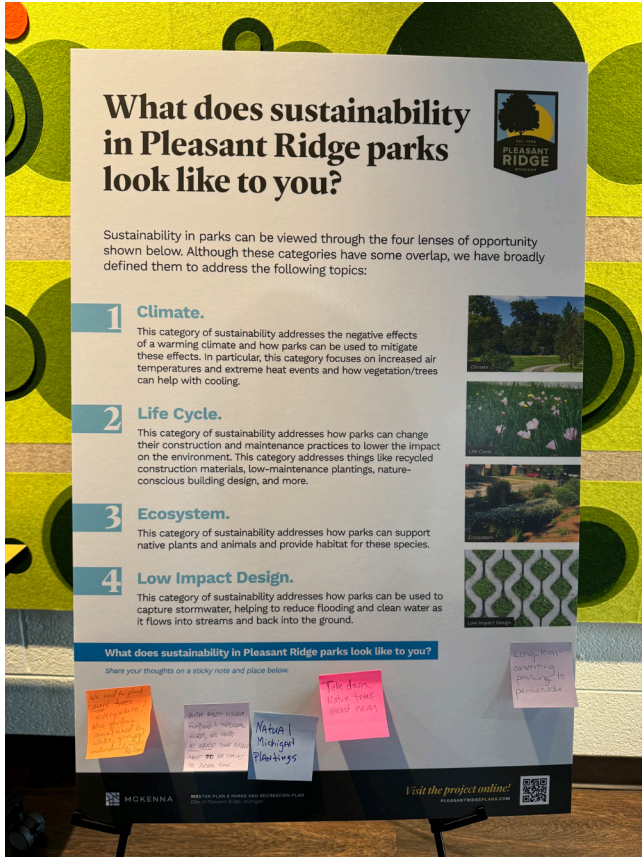
Land Habitat

Simply planting trees is not enough to significantly improve habitat quality or attract new species to parks. Transforming sections of lawn into a mix of native plants, shrubs, and trees of varying sizes is essential to support native birds, insects, and wildlife. A diverse range of plantings is crucial for creating a sustainable habitat. The current best practice among park planners is to design “multi-functional” green spaces—areas that cater to both human visitors and wildlife. Features like gardens and nature trails can provide benefits to all.

Water Habitat

While Pleasant Ridge does not have any water features in any of its parks or recreation, even smaller water management features, such as rain gardens, can provide important habitat in local parks, offering a refuge for native species and contributing to overall biodiversity. Further, if the City did ever install a retention pond, these features can provide habitat for marine animals, native plants, and birds. Planting these ponds with native wetland grasses provided habitat for birds and small amphibians in particular which take refuge in the tall brush. To keep both retention ponds and detention basins clear of mosquito breeding, it is necessary to keep the inlets, outlets, and the bottom of the pond clean of debris; maintain erosion; and maintain the vegetation around the ponds.





What We Heard: Sustainability

Throughout several in-person events and an online survey, residents have provided feedback on how Pleasant Ridge can be more sustainable.

From the May 21 Visioning Workshop:

Residents offered the following ideas and concerns.

- » Plant more trees
- » Native plantings
- » Preserve mature trees
- » Permeable parking areas
- » City-wide compost program

From the July 17 Ice Cream Social:

Residents were asked to rank the following inclusive elements. The rankings from highest to lowest priority are as follows.

1. Pollinator Gardens
2. Rain Gardens and Bioswales
3. Low Maintenance Plan / No Mow Options
4. Reduced Pesticide and Fertilizer Use
5. Solar Lighting
6. Recycling Bins
7. Permeable Pavement
8. Educational Gardens

From the online survey:

Pleasant Ridge residents offered key ideas around sustainability including the following.

- » Limited development
- » Native plantings
- » Pollinator gardens



Strategic Opportunities for Improvement

Low-Impact Design

Stormwater infrastructure, often unnoticed on dry days, is essential to every community, including Pleasant Ridge, Michigan, being one of the most water-rich and rain-prone states, relies heavily on these systems. Traditionally, stormwater infrastructure has consisted of drains and pipes that directly channel water into the Clinton River. However, permeable, vegetated surfaces that capture stormwater are now recognized as integral parts of the system. These green infrastructure features—such as rain gardens, detention ponds, and swales—not only help control flooding but also naturally filter rainwater before it reaches the river. By slowing down water flow, vegetation allows water to be absorbed back into the soil. This approach enhances water quality, supports urban wildlife habitats, and helps to cool urban areas, all while adding to the community’s visual appeal.

Green infrastructure features help mitigate the impact of storms on the community by lessening the strain on stormwater pipes, reducing flooding, and offering a range of environmental benefits. A key issue in stormwater management is the connection between increased runoff volume and the degradation of downstream surface water bodies, even when discharge rates and water quality are controlled. To address this, low-impact practices—managing stormwater at its source rather than on a site-wide or regional basis—are increasingly preferred for effective stormwater management.

LOW-IMPACT DESIGN TERM	DEFINITION
RAIN GARDENS	An attractive, sunken landscape filter planted with flowers and blooming shrubs. Rain gardens are designed to absorb storm water run-off from impervious surfaces such as roofs and parking lots
SWALE (AKA BIOSWALE)	An attractive, sunken landscape filter planted with grasses and other low-maintenance shrubs. swales are designed to absorb storm water run-off from impervious surfaces such as roofs and parking lots.
GREEN ROOF	Green roofs are roofs planted with vegetation that absorbs stormwater. Green roofs provide a 50%-90% annual runoff reduction and reduce energy for heating and cooling.
DETENTION POND	A man-made pond which is used to collect and store stormwater during heavy rains. Detention ponds store water for a limited amount of time, after which it soaks into the soil.
URBAN FOREST	Areas of tree canopy cover that exist in multiple forms throughout the city, such as woodlots, private landscapes, street trees, and park trees.
PERMEABLE PAVEMENT	Paving surfaces that are made of either a porous material that enables stormwater to flow through it, or nonporous blocks spaced so that water can flow between the gaps.



Continuous Planting Example

Urban Forest

Preserving the existing urban forest and promoting new growth in Pleasant Ridge are essential steps toward enhancing the community's environmental resilience and quality of life. Urban forests provide numerous benefits, including improved air quality, reduced urban heat, and increased stormwater absorption, which helps mitigate flooding. To sustain these benefits, it's crucial to protect mature trees, which play a vital role in providing shade, habitat for wildlife, and a sense of natural beauty. At the same time, planting new trees will ensure the long-term health and expansion of the urban canopy. By incorporating native species that are well-suited to local conditions, the city can support biodiversity and create a sustainable green infrastructure. Community involvement through tree-planting initiatives and educational programs can further enhance efforts, fostering a shared commitment to the care and growth of Pleasant Ridge's urban forest. These initiatives should be aligned with Pleasant Ridge's Street Tree Manual, when the location is applicable.

Low-Maintenance Plantings

Low-maintenance plants do not need mowing, fertilizing, or irrigation to thrive; they are selected for their visual appeal and resilience to extreme weather. These plants require fewer city resources for upkeep and contribute to

the overall sustainability of the park system. While low-maintenance planting beds are not required to capture stormwater, some do provide this added benefit.

No-Mow Areas

In addition to low-maintenance plantings, implementing no-mow areas in parks can further reduce maintenance demands and promote environmental sustainability. No-mow areas are sections of grass or natural vegetation left uncut, allowing them to grow naturally and provide habitat for pollinators and small wildlife. These areas require minimal resources and reduce fuel consumption and emissions from mowing equipment. Moreover, no-mow zones contribute to biodiversity by encouraging the growth of native plants and wildflowers, which support local ecosystems. While they might not have the manicured appearance of traditional lawns, no-mow areas offer aesthetic appeal through their natural look and help enhance the overall ecological health of the parks. Incorporating no-mow zones in less-trafficked areas or alongside trails can be a strategic way to reduce costs while benefiting the environment.

Continuous Plantings

Continuous plantings, which consist of vegetated areas uninterrupted by large expanses of lawn or pavement, play a crucial role in the well-being of both people and



Parking Lot Landscaping Example

wildlife. Stands of trees provide shade and relief on hot summer days, making parks more accessible and enjoyable for visitors. Additionally, these continuous plantings create safe “highways” for birds, small mammals, and insects, allowing them to move freely and expand their habitats. By breaking up large open lawns and paved areas, continuous plantings also offer diverse views and experiences for park-goers.

While most parks have a continuous tree canopy, very few, have continuous ground cover. Parks that do have ground cover are in segmented areas rather than continuously throughout the park. This consideration is particularly important for larger parks, such as Gainsboro Park or the Woodward Avenue Parks.

Buildings

In the past decade, local governments nationwide have been consistently upgrading their buildings and facilities to improve energy efficiency by incorporating features like LED lighting and low-flow faucets. However, few have advanced from merely efficient to fully sustainable operations. Currently, the City’s Community Center has incorporated solar panels. There may be an opportunity for improvement in site-level sustainability. This not only decreases the buildings’ environmental impact but can also provide a crucial backup power source during outages.

Bicycle Racks

Pleasant Ridge has a comprehensive biking network, and part of improving the network is providing bike racks at destinations like parks throughout the City. Bike racks encourage people to cycle instead of drive, which reduces greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution, and traffic congestion. Additionally, cycling is a form of active transportation that supports public health by encouraging physical activity. Many of the more frequented parks, such as Gainsboro and the Community Center do currently provide bike racks, but some type of bike facility could be incorporated at other parks.

Parking Lot Landscaping

In parking lots, bioretention areas, bioswales, and porous pavement are techniques that can significantly reduce stormwater runoff. Inset parking lot islands can double as bioretention areas when coordinated with engineering design. Most of Pleasant Ridge Parks do not include parking areas, so this provision is most relevant for the Community Center and Gainsboro Park.



The Planning Process

The Planning Process

The Plan's recommendations are guided by the feedback from the extensive community engagement process. Community engagement is a crucial aspect of the planning process as it ensures that decisions and initiatives are rooted in the diverse perspectives and needs of the community. It promotes transparency, inclusivity, and effective problem-solving, leading to more sustainable and successful outcomes in planning for the future of Pleasant Ridge's parks and recreation endeavors.



Summary of Public and Stakeholder Engagement

This Plan is built on a foundation of robust engagement and a thorough, multi-pronged effort to solicit input from a wide variety of stakeholders over several months in 2024. The timeline below outlines the outreach methods that were utilized for both the Master Plan and the Parks and Recreation Plan. The Strategic Visioning Workshop, Roundtables, Ice Cream Social, and Policy Workshop were all in-person events, while the Community Survey was an online outreach effort.

Summary of Activities: Virtual Engagement

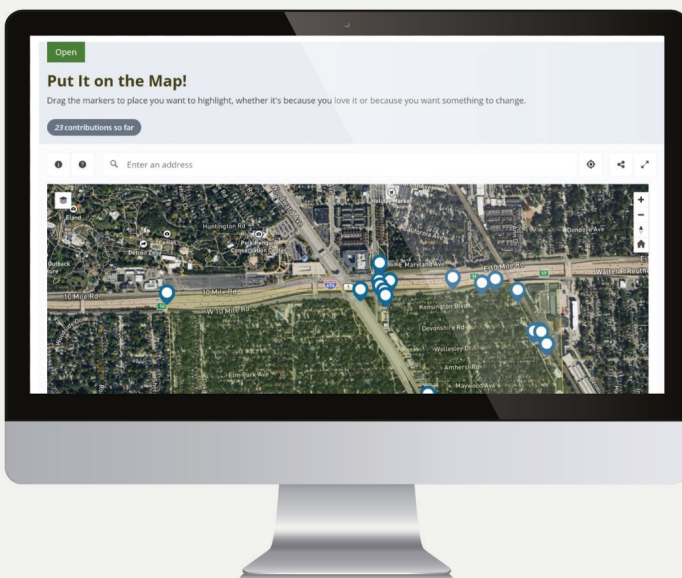
From May to June, 2024, the community was able to offer input through a dedicated project website. Two primary communication outlets were offered, which mirrored the exercises conducted at the in-person Strategic Visioning Workshop: A Comment Map and a Community Survey

Comment Map

Pleasant Ridge residents were invited to interact with a virtual map of the community by marking places of interest. The Pleasant Ridge Comment Map was available online through Social Pinpoint and collected 23 responses. Popular comment locations included Gainsboro Park, Pleasant Ridge Dog Park, the intersection of S Main Street and 10 Mile Road, I-696, and the Woodward Corridor

Community Survey

Participants took a brief visioning survey that sought to capture qualitative information about what residents value about parks and recreation provisions, and their own experiences with Pleasant Ridge parks.



Summary of Activities: In-Person Outreach

Strategic Visioning Workshop

A public workshop for all Pleasant Ridge residents was held on May 21, 2024 at the Pleasant Ridge Community Center to solicit feedback on residents' vision for the future of the community and identify specific concerns and goals as the City conducts its 2024 Master Plan and Parks & Recreation Master Plan process. Residents were asked about inclusive and sustainable park considerations, as well as asked about park-specific improvements.

Roundtables

On June 24, 2024 and July 17, 2024, 5 roundtables were conducted with the following different community stakeholders.

1. **Aging in Place**
2. **Community Groups**
3. **Youth**
4. **Parks and Recreation**
5. **Housing & Neighborhoods**

At the roundtable discussions, participants were asked a variety of questions related to their vision for Pleasant Ridge. The discussion was kept conversational to allow for new topics to be explored.

Ice Cream Social – Field Day

A field day was held on July 17, 2024, in conjunction with the Pleasant Ridge Ice Cream Social. This event ran from 6:00 PM to 8:00PM and was open to all residents of Pleasant Ridge. Four self-guided boards were provided to refine the feedback gathered from the Community Survey and Strategic Visioning Workshop. Areas identified in previous engagement efforts include sustainability in parks and accessibility in parks.

Policy Workshop

On October 16, 2024, a public meeting was held to discuss draft goals and objectives and prioritize draft policy recommendations. This meeting was also live-streamed so residents could participate virtually. Attendees were invited to provide feedback on draft policy recommendations, which was shown in real-time during the presentation. Parks and Recreation goals and objectives focused on providing inclusive activities for all residents, maintaining existing facilities, and implementing low-impact improvements to parks.



The Planning Process





What We Heard

Several key themes and points of agreement emerged from the engagement conducted for this process.

- » Access to Neighborhood Parks: Pleasant Ridge residents greatly benefit from the abundance of parks and recreational facilities in their community and place high value on this accessibility.
- » Sustainability Initiatives: Many stakeholders appreciate the City's visible efforts toward sustainability. This was especially evident in the positive feedback regarding naturalized areas and strategies like 'no-mow' zones and low-maintenance plantings.
- » Accessibility and Inclusivity Improvements: The community expressed a strong desire for enhancements to parks, with common suggestions including additional seating, restrooms, accessible paths, bike infrastructure, and increased shade and tree canopy.
- » Opportunities at Hessel Park: Hessel Park was identified as the park most in need of improvements. Currently featuring a small path, a little free library, and some seating, residents commonly suggested adding pop-up games, native plantings, and a bocce court.
- » Recreational Programming for All Ages: Stakeholders emphasized the importance of continuing to offer recreational programs that cater to both youth and seniors, ensuring inclusivity for all age groups.
- » Maintenance: Maintenance discussions focused on keeping pathways clear during winter and addressing the age and condition of playground equipment and other park amenities.

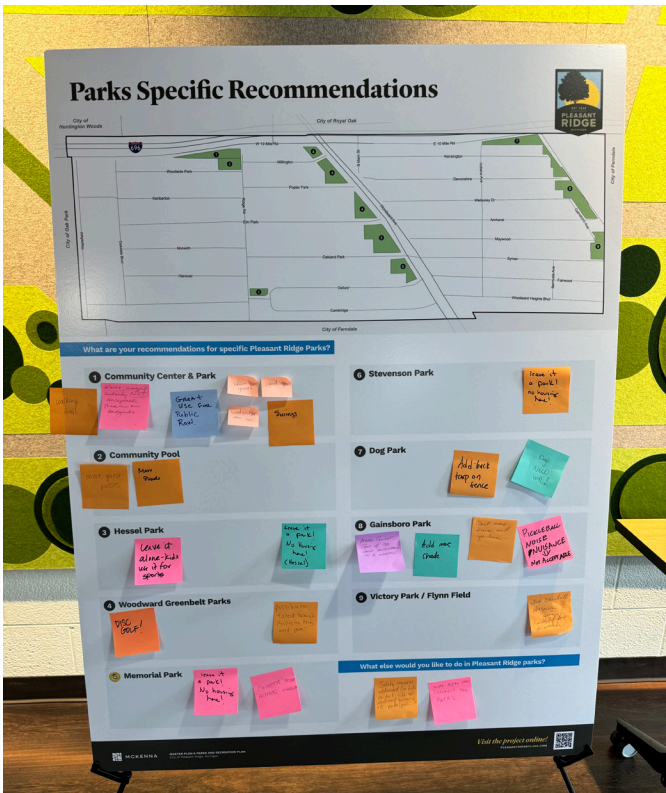


Early Community Input Exercise: What does it mean for Pleasant Ridge parks to be accessible? Sustainable?

During the Strategic Visioning Workshop, participants were asked about accessible and inclusive park elements. The board described the definition of accessibility and diversity in relation to parks and recreation and prompted residents to describe how they think Pleasant Ridge parks can be more accessible. Similarly, a second board described common sustainability elements that can be incorporated into Pleasant Ridge’s parks and prompted residents to describe how the parks can be more sustainable.

Key Results

- » **Tree Canopy.** Residents conveyed that they strongly value Pleasant Ridge’s tree canopy and efforts should be made to preserve the existing canopy and encourage new tree plantings. It is also important to provide connectivity within the tree canopy.
- » **On-going maintenance.** Residents expressed that ensuring pathways are maintained and clear in winter is important. Additionally, residents are generally satisfied with Pleasant Ridge’s recreation offerings, and want to focus on maintaining the high-quality of the parks system.
- » **Native Plantings.** One sustainability element that residents favored was native plantings. While Pleasant Ridge parks do have some native plantings currently, there is a desire to increase the plantings.

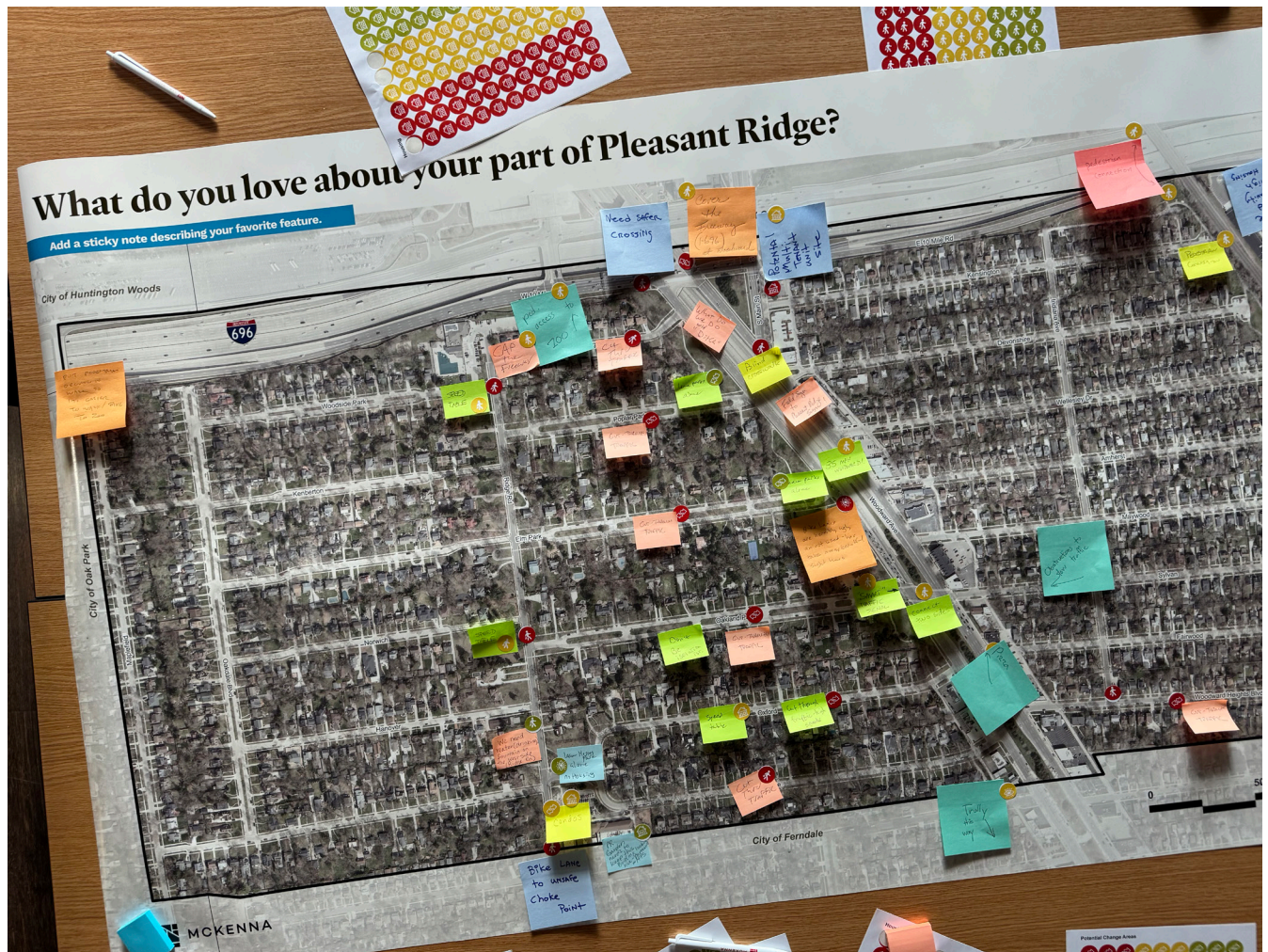


Early Community Input Exercise: Park Specific Recommendations

Residents who attended the Strategic Visioning Workshop were also asked to provide park-specific feedback on recommendations for improving the parks.

Key Results

- » **Satisfaction with Existing Parks.** Residents expressed the desire for several parks, including Hessel Park, the Woodward Greenbelt Parks, Stevenson Park, and Memorial Park, to remain the same.
- » **Pathways and Crossings.** Additional pathways and connections were also identified as a potential improvement. One barrier identified was Woodward Avenue, and residents proposed recommendations to add crossings at the Woodward Avenue parks.
- » **Community Programming.** Residents commented that they are interested in offering recycling receptacles in parks. Additionally, a city-wide composting program was also proposed, indicating interest in community sustainability programming.



Roundtable Discussion Results

Roundtables are an informative engagement method because they foster open dialogue, encourage diverse perspectives, and create collaborative environments where stakeholders can share ideas and reach consensus on community issues. While there was a round table focused on parks and recreation stakeholders, the other four roundtable also addressed parks and recreation considerations.

Key Results

- » **Programming.** Several groups expressed interest Pleasant Ridge adding inclusive recreation programming for residents of all ages. Specifically, feedback was focused on providing recreation opportunities for adults and seniors, as well as children.
- » **Walkability.** The pedestrian network and ensuring that it is safe and well maintained was a concern of several roundtable groups. In particular, stakeholders want to improve the Woodward Avenue crossings and ensure that the sidewalks and pathways are well maintained, even in winter.
- » **Sustainability.** Stakeholders in four of the five roundtable groups identified various sustainability provisions that they feel the City should prioritize. These range from a sustainable programming, to public transit, to rain gardens, to pollinator gardens.

Stakeholder Roundtable Groups

1. Aging in Place
2. Community Groups
3. Youth
4. Parks and Recreation
5. Housing & Neighborhoods



Community Input Refinement Exercise: What does it mean for Pleasant Ridge parks to be accessible? Sustainable?

At the July 17, 2024 field day during the Ice Cream Social, residents were asked to rank inclusive and sustainable park elements. This exercise built off the feedback heard at the Strategic Visioning Workshop. Below are the results.

Inclusivity Priorities:

1. Shade Sails
2. Benches and Sitting Areas
3. Inclusive Playground
4. Bench Fitness
5. Welcoming Programming
6. Sensory Activities
7. Fenced Play Areas

Sustainability Priorities:

1. Pollinator Gardens
2. Rain Gardens and Bioswales
3. Low Maintenance Plan / No Mow Options
4. Reduced Pesticide and Fertilizer Use
5. Solar Lighting
6. Recycling Bins
7. Permeable Pavement
8. Educational Gardens

Community Input Refinement Exercise: Policy Validation

Draft goals, objectives, and policies were validated at the Policy Workshop. During this event, which was also live streamed for virtual participation, residents were asked to rank proposed policy, goals, and objectives that were created from the feedback heard in-person and online.

Online Engagement Results

The residents of Pleasant Ridge are passionate about their city, parks, and neighborhood. As part of community engagement efforts, an online survey and online comment map were made available. These online engagement opportunities garnered 231 survey responses and 23 place-based comments.

Survey: Key Results

Overall Satisfaction

Most respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with Pleasant Ridge's parks. In fact, only 5% responded that they were unhappy with the City's parks, as shown in the chart below. The satisfaction with current parks and recreation offerings is also reflected in the top recommendation for each park and recreation facility as detailed in the table below. Respondents indicated contentment with four of the nine park facilities.

Table 4. Top Recommendations for Parks

PARK	TOP RECOMMENDATION
Gainsboro Park	Additional native flower gardens
Pleasant Ridge Dog Park	Nothing; content with the current state of the park
Woodward Greenbelt	Pathway lighting
Memorial Park	Nothing; content with the current state of the park
Stevenson Park	Nothing; content with the current state of the park
Community Center	Nothing; content with the current state of the park
Community Center Park	Permanent yard games (cornhole, chess, shuffleboard, etc.)
Community Center Pool	Additional shade
Hessell Park	Additional native flower gardens

Heavily Utilized Parks

Respondents also indicated that they visit Pleasant Ridge Parks on a regular basis. 58% of respondents indicated they visit a park 2-3 times a week and 21% of respondents indicated they visit a park once a week.

Figure 3. How Satisfied with Parks and Recreation Offerings Are You?

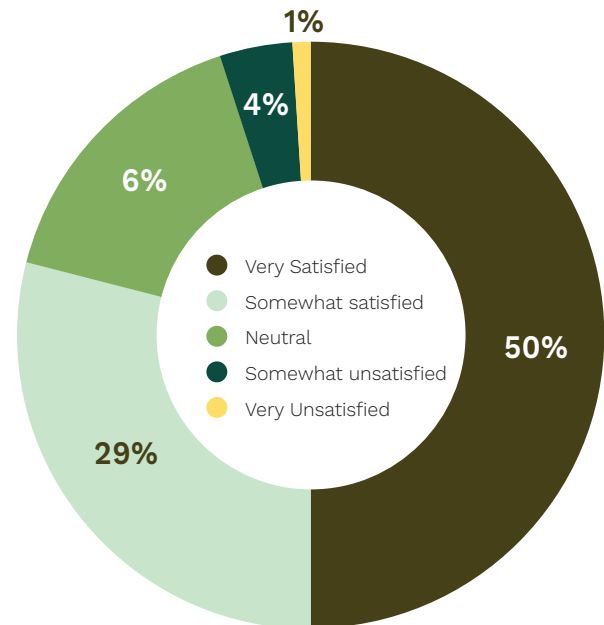
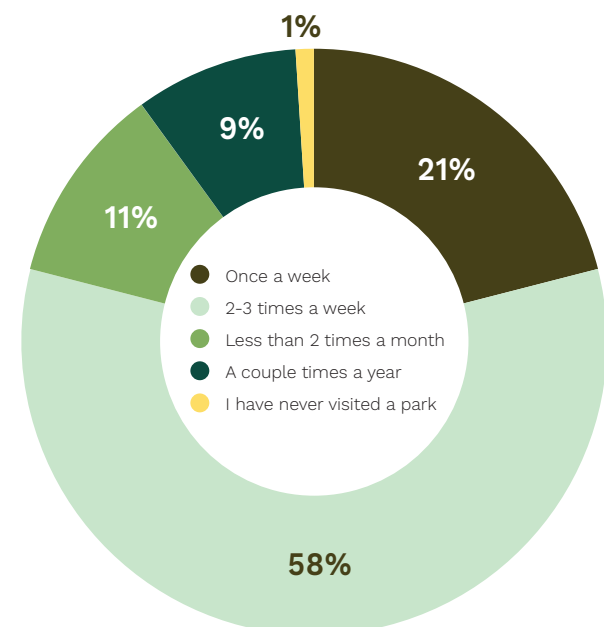


Figure 4. How Frequently Do You Visit a Park?



Sustainability and Inclusivity

Beyond park-specific recommendations, Pleasant Ridge residents offered key ideas around accessibility, inclusivity, and sustainability, with a focus on identifying new opportunities for community building as well as improving the functionality of existing facilities. These key ideas are synthesized in the table below.

Table 5. Facility Improvements

CATEGORY	IMPROVEMENT
Community Building	Regularly scheduled community gatherings
	Family-friendly activities (i.e. food trucks)
	Displays of LGBTQIA+ flags and other welcoming symbols
Diverse recreational offerings	Expanded group activities like bocce, pickleball
	Permanent yard games
	A running track
Enhanced Facilities and Amenities	More garbage receptacles and pet waste stations
	Operational water fountains/water-bottle filling stations
	Additional benches and picnic tables
Environmental Sustainability	Limited development
	Water bottle filling stations
	Native plantings and pollinator gardens
Safety and Accessibility Enhancements	Improved pathway lighting
	Mitigated noise from highways
	Timely snow removal on pathways/bike lanes
	Braille signage and tactile paths
	Handicap accessible tables, seating, and play areas

Comment Map: Key Results

- » Hessel Park. Hessel Park was identified as an area needing improvements, such as a tennis or pickleball court.
- » Gainsboro Park. Respondents identified Gainsboro Park as needing more accessible features such as seating, shade, and park communications, such as signage to identify how to report concerns. Additionally, concerns were raised regarding the tennis court lighting adjacent to residences. Respondents also expressed a desire to diversify the recreation offerings at this park.
- » Dog Park. The dog park is a well-utilized facility in Gainsboro Park. Respondents indicated they want the tarp along the fence re-installed. Additionally, residents want a designated and paved entrance to the dog park.





Goals & Objectives

Goals & Objectives

Goal 1:

Ensure safe, inclusive recreational spaces and activities for all ages and abilities.

OBJECTIVES:

- a) Continue to improve accessibility at all parks by continuing to maintain clear pathways, benches, etc.
- b) Explore opportunities to update the types of programs offered with thoughtfulness to the type of participant.
- c) Aspire to update equipment using universal design standards.
- d) Increase seating opportunities and provide strategic shade at parks.

Goal 2:

Focus on maintenance of existing recreational facilities to continue to ensure high-quality standards.

OBJECTIVES:

- a) Repair and replace equipment as necessary, including regular inspections, cleaning, and repairs to prevent deterioration and extend the lifespan of equipment and infrastructure.
- b) Explore sustainable landscaping techniques, and energy-efficient tools to maintain facilities while minimizing environmental impact.

Goal 3:

Implement targeted, low impact enhancements to improve existing parks.

OBJECTIVES:

- a) Introduce more native plant species and drought-tolerant landscaping to improve aesthetics, support local wildlife, and reduce maintenance needs.
- b) Develop flexible-use areas where appropriate within parks that can accommodate a variety of activities, enhancing park functionality without significant impact on the landscape.
- c) Install rain gardens, permeable pavement, and efficient irrigation systems to manage stormwater, reduce runoff, and promote sustainable water use strategically throughout the parks.

Goal 4:

Collaborate with local recreation providers to offer a variety of programs and facilities

OBJECTIVES:

- a) Continue to foster relationships with the Pleasant Ridge Foundation, Garden Club, Ferndale Schools, and other organizations.
- b) Continue to practice fiscal responsibility by seeking alternative revenue sources through donations, grants, fees, and partnerships.
- c) Continue to provide joint program offerings with neighboring cities when appropriate.





Strategic Action Plan

Strategic Action Plan

This section describes recommendations for a set of actions for improvement and enhancement to the Pleasant Ridge parks and recreation system according to the analysis conducted during the planning process. System wide actions support the plan's goals and objectives and can be implemented throughout the system.

Park-specific actions relate to specific capital improvement projects. Some projects are multi-year efforts that will involve time and coordination to secure funding.

Priorities should be reviewed on an annual basis and adjusted to respond to updated findings and identification of funding opportunities.

System-Wide Strategic Actions

ACTION/RECOMMENDATION	SCALE OF INVESTMENT	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE(S)
Organize garden club volunteers to help adopt parks, certain parts of parks, natural green areas, or gardens.	\$	ASR, V
Develop (and publicize) an approved list of native plant species appropriate for park and recreation applications.	\$	ASR, GF
Deploy Recycling Bins at all parks with litter receptacles.	\$\$	G, GF
Install bicycle racks in remaining parks, strategically located near active and passive recreation opportunities.	\$\$	G, GF
Install bicycle repair facilities where appropriate.	\$\$	G, GF

Park Specific Actions

PARK	ACTION/RECOMMENDATIONS	SCALE OF INVESTMENT	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE(S)
Gainsboro Park	Rebuild Tennis Courts	\$\$\$	GF
	Plant additional native flower gardens	\$	GF, V, D
Community Center	Consider updates to fitness center equipment	\$\$	
	Consider update to concession area	\$\$\$	
	Consider update to locker rooms/bathrooms	\$\$\$\$	
Community Pool	Install additional shade	\$\$	GF, D
	Consider installation of speaker system	\$\$\$	GF, D
Community Center Park	Consider incorporating toddler friendly play features	\$\$	GF, D, G
	Consider inclusion of permanent yard games	\$	GF, D
Hessel Park	Enhance the field space to allow for a variety of play options	\$\$	GF
	Consider landscape features with seating and other areas of interest	\$\$\$\$	GF, D, G
	Create intentional pathways accompanied by plantings and lighting	\$\$\$	GF, D, G
Dog Park	Install additional shade	\$\$	GF, D
Woodward Greenbelt	Install additional pathway lighting	\$\$	GF, D
	Plant additional native flower gardens	\$	GF, V, D

Scale of Investment:

- \$ - < \$25,000
- \$\$ - \$25,000 - \$50,000
- \$\$\$ - \$50,000 - \$250,000
- \$\$\$\$ - \$250,000+

Funding Sources:

- ASR – Additional Staffing Resources
- D – Donations
- G – Grants
- GF – General Fund
- V – Volunteers

Funding Opportunities

There are several existing or potential funding sources available for parks and recreation facility improvements. In addition to the City’s General Fund, other potential funding sources for parks and recreation include: a dedicated millage (such as a land acquisition millage), user fees, revenue bonds, donation of land and/or easements, and grants.

Grant Funding

In addition to the funding sources mentioned above, grant funding can be an important funding resource. Securing grant funding for parks and recreation initiatives is a pivotal component in seeking to enhance facilities and recreation opportunities throughout the city. There is a variety of Local, State, and National grants that can help achieve the installation of universally designed playgrounds, adult fitness equipment, dog parks, nature trails, and amenities like shade and suitable surfacing. The following is a non-exhaustive list of potential grant resources for the city to explore.

- » Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF): The MNRTF provides grants for the acquisition of land for public recreation and the development of outdoor recreational facilities. It's a key funding source for projects that improve parks, trails, and other outdoor spaces across Michigan.
- » Michigan DNR Recreation Passport Grant Program: This program offers funding to local governments and school districts to enhance public outdoor recreation facilities.
- » Spark Grants: These Michigan Department of Natural Resources support projects that aim to create safe, accessible recreational spaces, improve community health, introduce new recreational experiences, enhance existing park infrastructure, and make indoor and outdoor recreation more accessible for residents and visitors alike.
- » Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC): MEDC provides grants and incentives to support various community and economic development projects. While not exclusively for parks and recreation, MEDC grants can be a valuable resource for matching funds that are crowdsourced for projects that enhance the quality of life within communities, including park improvements.
- » Land and Water Conservation Fund: Administered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, this fund provides financial assistance for the acquisition and development of outdoor recreation sites and facilities. It's an important resource for communities looking to create or enhance parks and recreational areas.
- » National Fitness Campaign: the National Fitness Campaign offers grant opportunities and resources specifically to support fitness equipment.
- » Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs (MCACA): MCACA offers grants for arts and cultural projects that can enhance parks and recreation facilities through art installations, cultural programs, and more.
- » Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program: This grant supports projects related to managing and preventing invasive species in parks and natural areas.
- » PetSafe Bark for Your Park Grant: PetSafe assists in development and construction of safe and fun spaces for dogs and their owners.
- » National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Grants: NRPA offers several grant programs for park and recreation agencies, including the 10-Minute Walk Campaign and the Parks Build Community initiative.
- » AARP Community Challenge: AARP provides small grants to fund projects that improve livability and enhance the quality of life for older adults, including those related to parks and recreational amenities.
- » Outdoor Foundation Grants: This organization offers various grants aimed at getting more people outdoors and supporting initiatives that enhance outdoor recreation opportunities.
- » Nature Michigan Grant Program: The Michigan Environmental Council provides grants for projects that focus on conservation, wildlife, and outdoor experiences.
- » Healthy Food Access Grant Program: This program, offered by the Michigan Fitness Foundation, supports projects that increase access to healthy food in community areas such as community gardens, which can complement park spaces.

Community foundations and local charitable organizations are also vital contributors to parks and recreation initiatives. Many of these organizations offer grants and sponsorships tailored to community development projects. Their support can be instrumental in financing specific amenities. Furthermore, the establishment of partnerships with nonprofit organizations and local businesses can open up additional funding avenues. Collaboration can lead to sponsorships, in-kind donations, and volunteer support for park projects, which can significantly offset costs and increase community engagement.

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