



# RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

CITY OF PORTAGE 2023 PARK MASTER PLAN UPDATE

YOUR BACKYARD  
IS BIGGER  
THAN YOU THINK

1,000 Acres. 20 Parks. One City.



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# Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<i>PAGE 1</i>
<b>2</b>	<b>Community Description</b>	<i>PAGE 7</i>
<b>3</b>	<b>Administrative Structure</b>	<i>PAGE 29</i>
<b>4</b>	<b>Recreation Inventory</b>	<i>PAGE 41</i>
<b>5</b>	<b>Parks Environmental Management</b>	<i>PAGE 99</i>
<b>6</b>	<b>Non-Motorized Trail and Bikeway Transportation Plan</b>	<i>PAGE 103</i>
<b>7</b>	<b>Description of the Planning Process</b>	<i>PAGE 111</i>
<b>8</b>	<b>Description of Public Input Process</b>	<i>PAGE 119</i>
<b>9</b>	<b>Goals and Objectives</b>	<i>PAGE 125</i>
<b>10</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>	<i>PAGE 129</i>
<b>11</b>	<b>Appendix</b>	<i>PAGE 141</i>
	Operating Budget	
	Programs	
	Documents from Public Hearings and Public Meetings	
	Community Survey Results	

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# Introduction

**Parks**, Recreation, and Open Space are important elements of all communities and provide many recreational, social, and environmental benefits that contribute to a high quality of life. The City of Portage has recognized the importance of recreation planning and has chosen to take an active role in the delivery of recreational opportunities by updating the Recreation and Open Space Plan. Recreation planning is an exercise engaged by local governments to anticipate change, and to promote the development and expansion of recreational facilities and services for the benefit of its community. Parks and recreation facilities provide many benefits to the community and the natural environment. Parks provide people with a place to gather, be active, socialize, and connect with the environment and community. Green infrastructure also enhances the livability of a community by increasing property values and

connecting the community. Having the ability to recreate has also been shown to improve the quality of life by contributing to overall mental and physical health and reducing obesity brought on by inactivity. As the community continues to grow and change over time, the city continues to dedicate themselves to improving recreational offerings for its citizens. This plan represents the culmination of the planning efforts of the community and local officials; and reflects the city's desire to blend the available recreational resources and activities with the environmental and cultural elements of the community.

## PLAN PURPOSE

The 2023-2027 Recreation and Open Space Plan is a guide for the future of recreation facilities in Portage. It is an adaptive tool to help the Parks Department prioritize future park improvements in a way that elevates the role of the parks

and recreation system in the daily lives of all Portage residents in the years to come. Driven by community priorities and the mission of the Parks Department, the Open Space Plan will serve as a guiding document for policy decisions, prioritizing and balancing demands and opportunities, and providing a framework for evaluating future land acquisitions, park improvements, and recreation programs.

The plan also provides recommendations for park facilities, programs, and services; maintenance operations; administration and management; and capital improvements. The city recognizes the significant role that recreation plays in providing a high quality of life and improved physical health of its citizens. This appreciation has been manifested in this effort to update the Recreation and Open Space Master Plan with the hopes of improving park systems and public trails, promoting the preservation of natural areas, and establishing a strong commitment to strengthening a sense of community. This plan provides the data and direction to ensure that parks and recreation offerings are aligned with the community needs and values. The plan



addresses current recreation issues and identifies and prioritizes future needs of the community and the means for meeting those needs over the upcoming five-year period.

In addition, the Open Space Plan aligns with the statewide planning process. Every five years the city is required to submit a master plan to the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) to become eligible for recreation grant funding. The planning process incorporated community feedback toward the development of all MDNR plan components and was submitted to the State in February 2023.

## PLAN SCOPE

The scope of this plan includes suggestions for the management, improvement, and expansion of the recreation system within the City of Portage. The plan also considers recreational facilities within the county and neighboring townships, that are available to citizens of the Portage community. Key planning issues are identified, a clear set of goals and objectives are outlined, and specific implementation strategies are delineated. The scope will include all of the city's recreation facilities, undeveloped open space, trail systems, and recreational programming. The scope of the planning effort is limited to the city boundaries. However, consideration is also made of regional facilities that influence use patterns. The use of city facilities by residents living in the surrounding communities, which may have limited recreation facilities of their own, is also a consideration of the planning process. In terms of an implementation time line, the Action Program section of this document covers development over the next five years.

## CITYWIDE COORDINATION

The Open Space Plan comes during a time of multiple citywide planning efforts that invest in community health and equitable access to natural resources. Key ideas from the plan build

on and reinforce investment in connectivity improvements and preservation of natural areas. The Open Space Plan builds upon the following recent citywide planning efforts that have established a strong framework for the future of Portages' public realm:

### **City of Portage 2022 Master Plan Update**

The city's Comprehensive Master Plan is currently in the process of being updated outlining the community's vision for the future of Portage. The current plan was updated in 2014 and focuses on issues on which city policy can have direct impact such as land use, economic development, zoning, and other quality of life aspects. The update will have significant public input and respond to the current and future needs of the City of Portage and is expected to commence in the fall of 2022. The Open Space Plan will be an informative tool that plugs into the greater Community Master Plan for how city leaders approach public green space in the future.

### **2022-2028 Capital Improvement Plan**

In 2022 the city developed the 2022-2028 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), a 6-year community plan focusing on projects that represent continued investment in the Portage community to help enhance the local economy and improve the quality of life for residents of Portage. Of the many goals established in the CIP, several align with the Open Space Plan including sidewalks, bikeways and trails, park improvements, and dam work along the Portage Creek.



### **Invasive Species Management Plan**

In 2018 the city completed the Invasive Species Management Plan for all of the parks in the city with the purpose of providing guidance, information, and the steps to be taken to remove, mitigate, and suppress invasive species. Each park within the city was examined for their amount of support for wildlife, level of threat posed by invasive species, and the extent, abundance and effective control methods. The plan reinforces the city's commitment to maintaining healthy natural features and parks with quality habitat, healthy soil chemistry, natural hydrological patterns, and native ecosystems.

### **2015 Complete Streets Policy**

The Open Space Plan also aligns with the city's 2015 Complete Streets Policy, an effort to make city streets safe and friendly for all modes of transit. The policy identifies elements of complete streets and reinforces the city's commitment to enhance the safety, access, convenience and comfort of all users of all ages and abilities through design, operation, and maintenance of the transportation network. Ultimately the goal of the policy is to enhance connectivity throughout the city to encourage citizens to fully utilize all available forms of transportation that will provide safe access for all users, promote healthy living, increase capacity and efficiency of the roadway network, and reduce negative environmental impacts.



## THRIVING PARK SYSTEM

The 2023 Recreation and Open Space Plan considers all aspects of the previous 2018 plan update including physical assets and community needs within Portage. Many elements and goals of the 2018 plan remain relevant when considering improvements to today's park system and community. This updated plan maintains and expands upon these components where appropriate. The previous plan documented conditions and trends at the time and contained many ideas for improvements; some of which have been realized. The following identifies changes to the park system since the previous update:



### 2018:

- » Betty Lee Ongley Park Land Donation / Dedication
- » Celery Flats Pavilion Construction
- » Celery Flats Parking Lot Expansion
- » Eliason Nature Reserve Pavilion Construction
- » Hayloft Restroom Renovation
- » Lexington Green Pickle ball/Tennis Court Renovation
- » Celery Flats Historic Stuart Manor Roof
- » Trail Deck Bridge Decking
- » Portage Creek Bicentennial Park Overlook 3 and 4 Decking
- » Millennium and Milham Trail Maintenance
- » Romence Trail Maintenance



### 2019:

- » Lexington Green Pickle ball and Basketball Court Renovation
- » Lexington Green Park Bike Course Construction
- » Ramona Park Playground Replacement Installation
- » Haverhill Park Playground Replacement Installation
- » Ramona Park Contact Station Entrance Driveway Expansion
- » Ramona Park Beach Expansion
- » MDNR Gourdneck State Game Area Collaboration
- » Park Invasive Species Removal Program Launched
- » Park Wayfinding Signs (All parks and citywide)
- » Park Entrance Signs (All parks)
- » Historic Area Hayloft Ramp Rebuild
- » Portage Creek Bicentennial Park Restroom Remodel
- » Kilgore Trailhead Restroom Remodel
- » Schrier Park Parking Lot Maintenance
- » Schrier Park Trail Renovation
- » Lakeview Park Overlook Decking
- » Garden Lane Trail Maintenance
- » Millennium Park Roof

**2020:**

- » Portage Road Trail Construction
- » Schrier Park Chip Path Renovation
- » Eliason Nature Reserve Boardwalk Construction
- » Romence Road Trailway Extension
- » Bike Repair Station Addition - Eliason Nature Reserve
- » Portage Creek Bicentennial Trail Overlook Decking
- » Ramona park Parking Lot Maintenance



**2021:**

- » South Westnedge Park In-line Hockey Rink Renovation
- » Bike Share Rental Addition
- » Eliason Nature Reserve Entrance Landscaping
- » Ramona Park Entrance Landscaping
- » Bishops Bog Nature Boardwalk Replacement
- » Elijah Root Dam Feasibility Study
- » Portage Creek Bicentennial Trail Overlook Decking
- » Lakeview Park Boardwalk Decking
- » East Centre at Cox's Trail Maintenance



**2022:**

- » Eliason Nature Reserve North Entrance/ Parking Construction
- » Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park Construction
- » Amphitheater Feasibility Study
- » Ramona Park Pickle ball Tournament Court Expansion
- » Ramona Beach House Concessions Expansion
- » Bike Repair Station Addition - Celery Flats
- » South Westnedge Park Softball Building Roof
- » Westfield Basketball Court Renovation
- » Schrier Park Building Roof
- » Bishop Bog Super Decking Replacement
- » Angling Boardwalk and Hand Rail Maintenance



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# Community Description

## Plan Jurisdiction

This section is intended to describe the jurisdiction and focus of the plan, provide a brief overview of the community, and identify important community based factors that should be considered in parks and recreational planning. This Recreation and Open Space Master Plan has been prepared to serve the City of Portage and is planned to focus on all aspects of the city's parks and recreation facilities and programs. Recreational facilities and programs that serve adjacent communities have also been considered and incorporated into this planning document. The plan is intended to contribute to the quality of life for the residents and visitors of the Portage community, but also provide recreational experiences to the residents in adjacent communities within the county.

## Regional Setting

The City of Portage, containing approximately 33.65 square miles of land and water area, is located in southwest Michigan in the County of Kalamazoo approximately 130 miles equidistant to Chicago and Detroit. Portage is bordered by the City of Kalamazoo to the north, Pavilion Township to the east, Schoolcraft Township to the south, and Texas Township to the west. The location map on page 8 (Figure 2.1) shows the city's location in a regional context. Regional accessibility to the community is provided by several interchanges along the US-131 and I-94 expressways. The city is also distinguished by multiple "neighborhoods", which define specific areas based on land uses within the city. Refer to Figure 2.2 for the City Neighborhood Map in relation to existing park facilities.

## History

The earliest European settlers arrived in the Portage area during the 19th century. Before they came, the Potowatami Indians occupied the area. Austin Lake is in the southeast part of the city and was named for Moses Austin, who emigrated to Portage Township from Genesee County, New York in 1833. A settlement grew on the north shore of the lake, known as Austin or Austin Lake. A post office named "Austin's Lake" was established on May 18, 1850, with Austin as postmaster. The rich soil of the area proved to be excellent for growing celery, and Portage came to be known as the Celery City of the Nation in the 1880s. The city was incorporated in December of 1963 from Portage Township.

## Physical Characteristics

The topography within the City of Portage is characteristically flat, ranging between 850-900 feet above sea level. Much of the existing topography is to a large extent the result of glaciation. Out wash plains, laid down by glacier meltwater washing earth materials forward of the melting front of the ice sheet, cover most of the Portage area (see Figure 2.3). In the northern and eastern portions of the city, small segments of another glacial deposit known as "till plains" can be found. Unlike out wash plains, till plains are not washed by meltwaters into layers. In this situation, the deposits are laid down as a fairly flat plain of unstratified glacial drift. Till plains are typically undulating land forms.

**Figure 2.1 - Location Map**

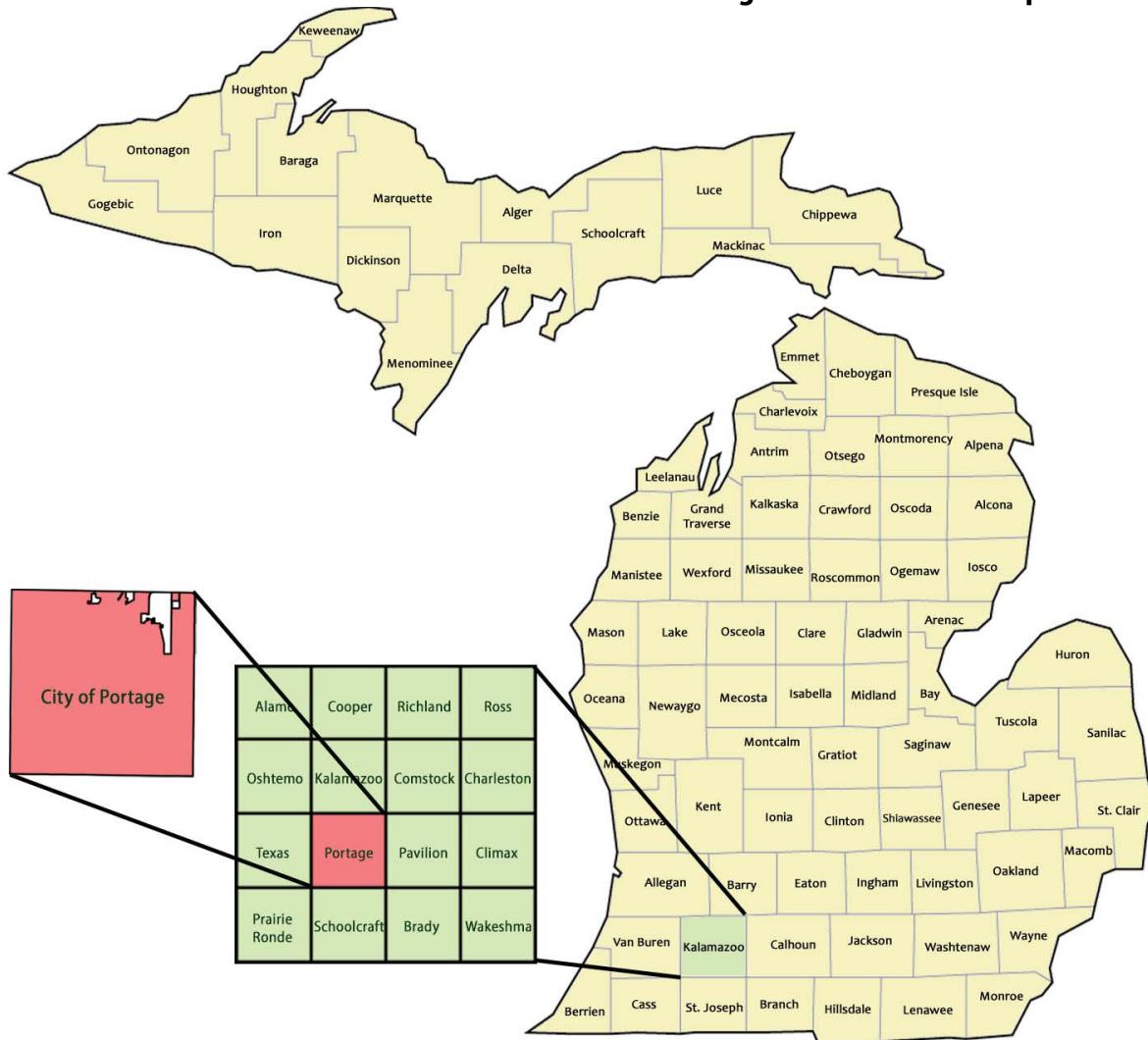
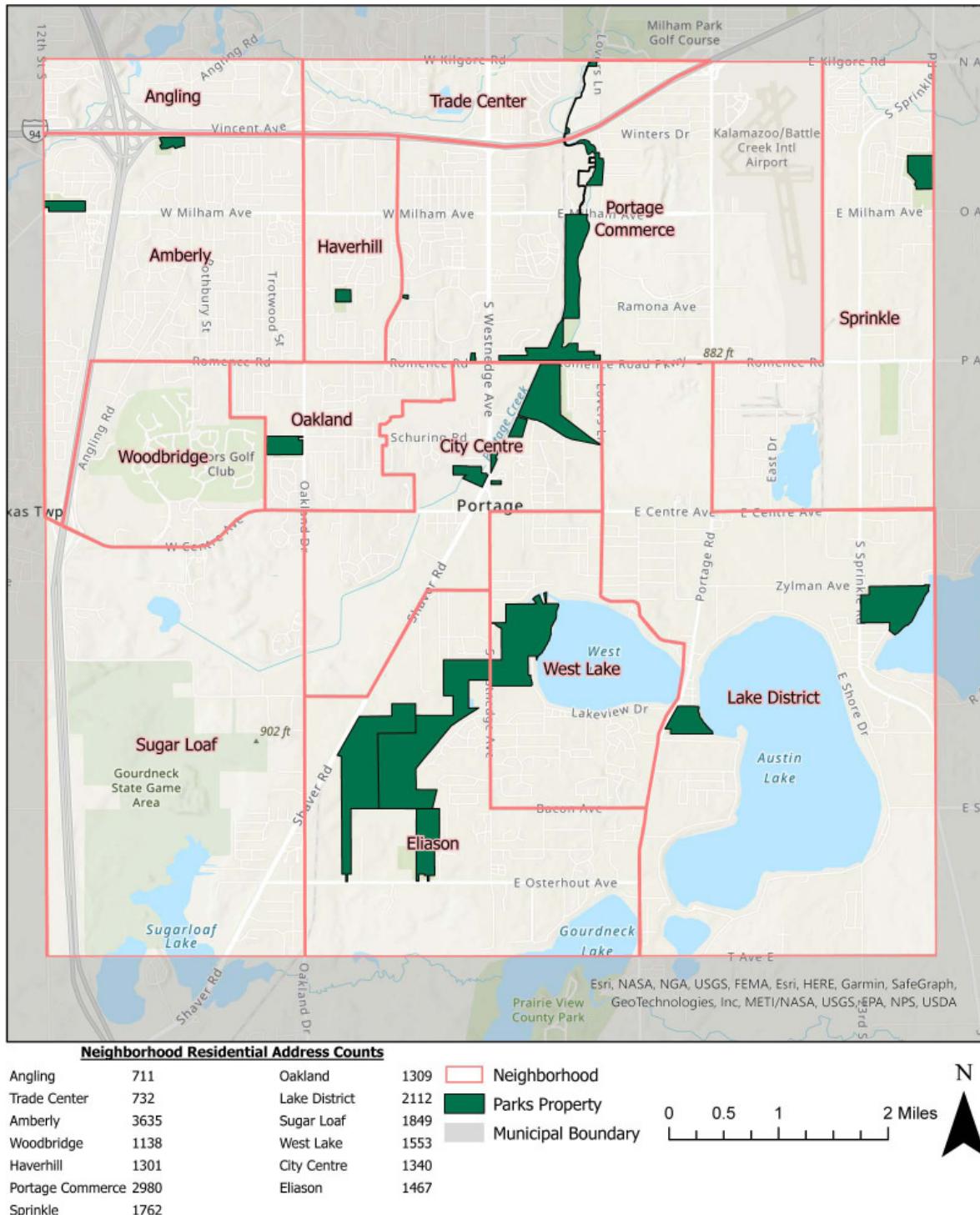


Figure 2.2 - Portage Neighborhood Map

# City of Portage Neighborhoods



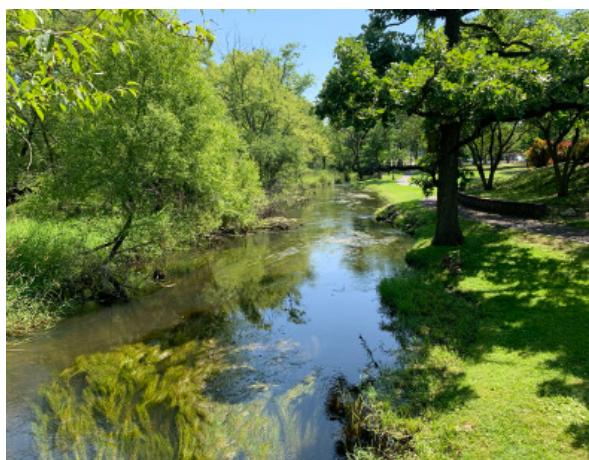
Glacial drainage channels, which resulted from receding glaciers, now tend to be occupied by organic soils. Water-filled pits were also created. Some of these pits were below the water table and formed the basins of many of the lakes in the area, including: West, Austin, Gourdneck and Long Lake.

### Climatology

Lake Michigan, which is about 50 miles west of Portage, has a significant influence on the climate of the study area. The lake temperature, together with the prevailing westerly winds, moderates early seasonal temperature extremes. The frequent and sometimes rapid changes caused by storms traveling across the lakes from the west and southwest are typical of a humid continental climate. Seasonal temperature variations and precipitation patterns are typical of this climate type.

### Soils

The characteristics of the majority of soils within Portage impose minor constraints on development. In general, loam, sandy loam and loamy sand soils are most common. Loamy soils are found primarily in the northern half of the city, sandy loam most commonly in the southeast quadrant and loamy sand soils predominately in the city's southwest quadrants. These soils are, for the most part, well drained. Physical limitations to their development, when they do occur, exist because of excessive slopes.



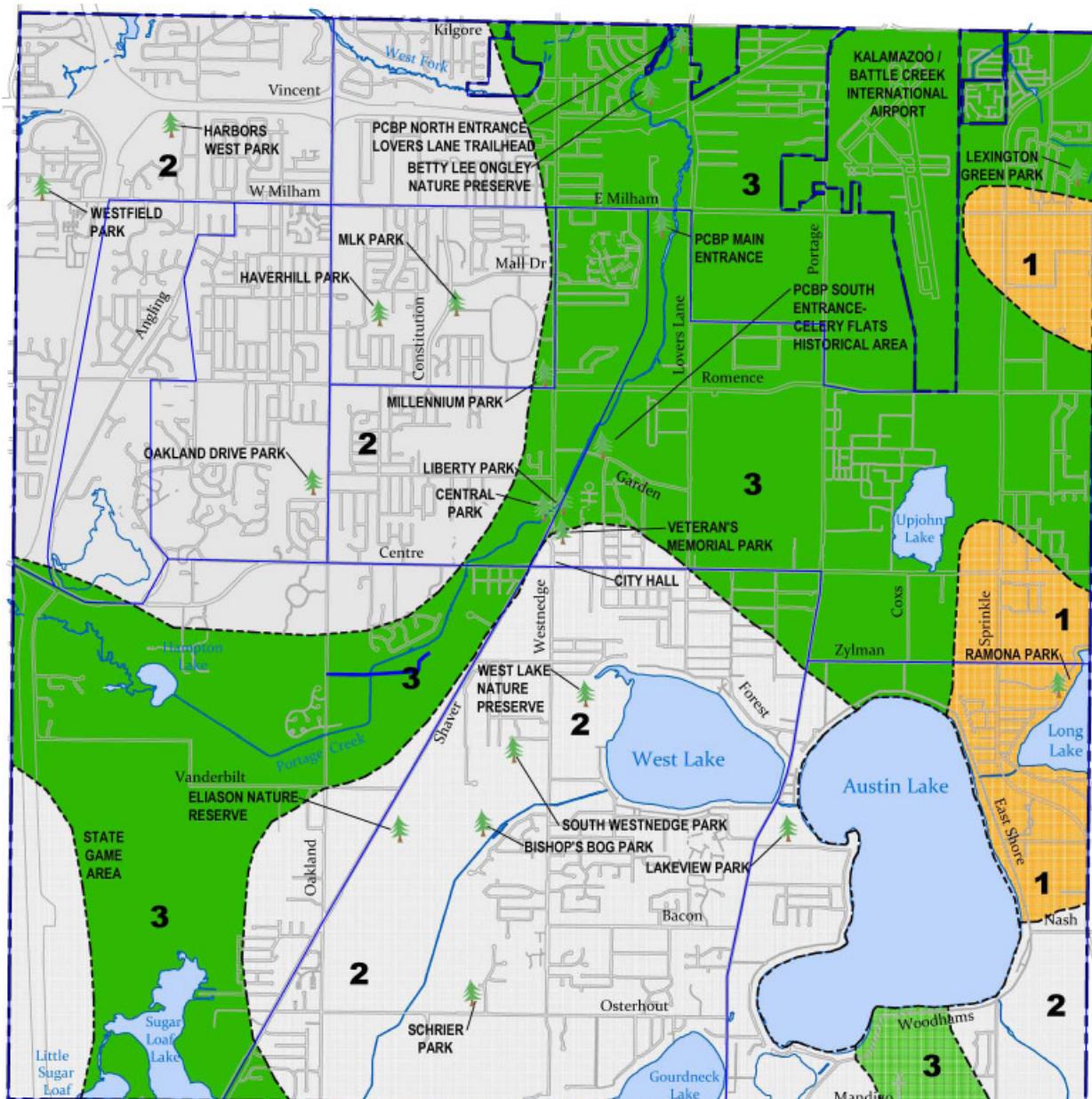
Organic soils offer the greatest physical constraint to development within the city. These soils are generally poorly drained, occurring primarily in depression areas. Most often these soils coincide with the wetland and floodplain areas of the city. Severe limitations are attached to development on organic soils due to poor drainage, low bearing capacity and frost action commonly exhibited.

### Water Resources

A relatively large number of lakes are located in Portage. These include Austin, West and Hampton as well as portions of Long, Gourdneck, Sugarloaf and Little Sugarloaf. The lakes have historically been a valuable natural feature in the city. One of the earliest development in the city consisted of the construction of seasonal homes along the shorelines of Long Lake, Austin Lake and West Lake. This trend is still evident from the high market value of property adjacent to city lakes.

Careful planning in an effort to prevent the negative aspects of urbanization is essential to protect these valuable resources. In 1988, the City of Portage enacted a sewer connection program. All structures within the city were required to connect to the municipal sanitary sewer system. This was particularly important for the residents of Austin and West Lakes in an effort to reduce the introduction of nutrients into

**Figure 2.3 - Glacial Deposits Map**

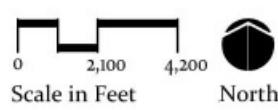


**LEGEND**

- 1 - GROUND MORAINE**
- 2 - OUTWASH AND GLACIAL CHANNELS**
- 3 - GLACIAL LAKE BEDS**

**CITY BOUNDARY**

**City of Portage  
Recreation and Open Space Plan  
Glacial Deposits**



the lakes from adjacent septic systems.

Portage is also characterized by a fairly extensive stream system including Portage Creek, the West Fork of Portage Creek and Davis Creek. Like the lakes, streams have proven to be a valuable resource for the community. Where the physical conditions permit, residential development has tended to congregate along these streams. Such a trend is quite common in view of the aesthetic and recreational advantage these areas have to offer.

Figure 2.4 provides the location of the water resources in the city. The city has contributed significantly to maintaining the quality of the water resources over the past several years. Protecting these city resources is appropriate as they enhance the quality of life.

### Austin Lake

Austin Lake is a shallow lake of approximately 1,090 acres, having a maximum depth of nine feet and subjected to dense growth of aquatic plants throughout much of the lake. It is a naturally eutrophic (nutrient rich) lake, but the nutrient loading process has been increased by cultural eutrophication resulting from concentrated residential development along most of its periphery. The bottom has a large layer of dead organic material known as detritus, which is nutrient rich. In most of the areas where the aquatic plants, known as macrophytes (plants that are large enough to be



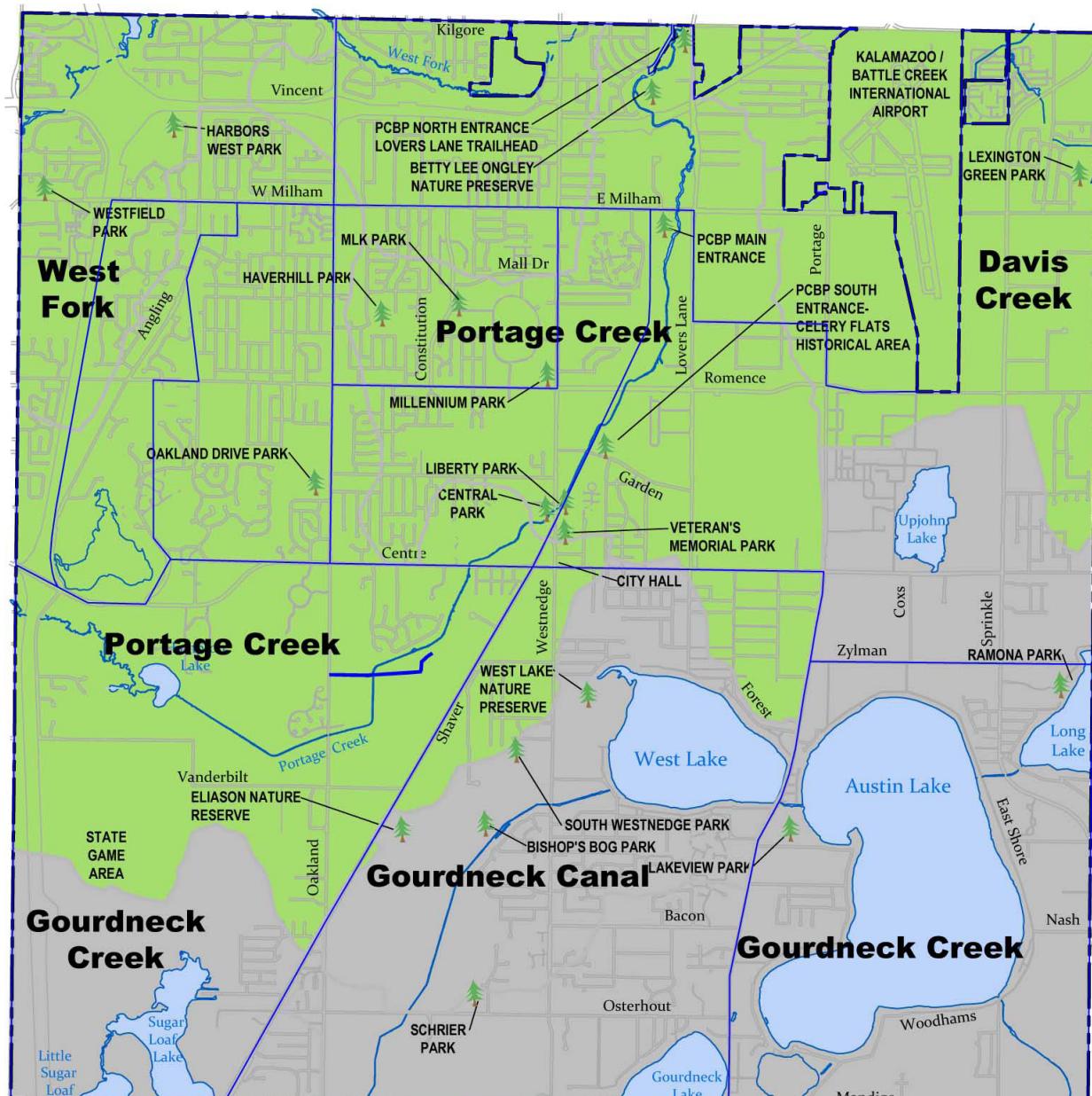
seen with a natural eye), are not present, algae concentrations are common. Plant growth has been abnormally increased by the provision of nutrients from septic tank seepage, lawn fertilizer runoff and the rich lake bottom. As the plants die and decompose, the bottom layer of detritus increases in thickness until a marsh is eventually created. The aging process is common to most lakes, but the extent of eutrophication for Austin Lake is so pronounced that this body of water is ranked among the major problem lakes of this county and region.

Austin Lake has been the subject of numerous studies in an effort to identify long- and short-term lake management strategies. Following an extensive review of available lake management

### Common fish in Austin Lake:



Figure 2.4 - Water Resources Map



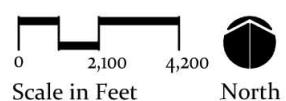
**LEGEND**

KALAMAZOO RIVER WATERSHED

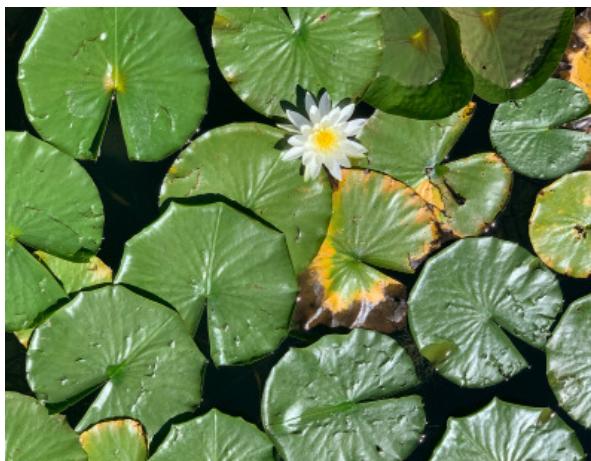
ST JOSPEPH WATERSHED

CITY BOUNDARY

**City of Portage  
Recreation and Open Space Plan  
Water Resources**



options, in 2011 an aeration/bioaugmentation feasibility study was prepared for the Austin Lake Governmental Lake Board by Lakeshore Environmental, Inc. Aeration/bioaugmentation is a method used to introduce oxygen into a water system with the intent of enhancing microbial feeding and decomposition of organic sediment. The aeration is introduced into the lake bottom in conjunction with natural bacteria and enzymes to reduce lake bottom sediment and improve overall lake depth and water quality. The aeration/bioaugmentation was completed in 2017.



### West Lake

West Lake is a shallow, naturally eutrophic lake with a total area of 335 acres and a maximum depth of ten feet. It also has substantial macrophyte growth through the lake. However, there are also large areas of clear water where no macrophytes or algae concentration are present.

Although most of the lakeshore is residentially developed, the large area of clear water indicates that cultural eutrophication is not as severe as in the case of Austin Lake. A five-year treatment program initiated by the City Administration in 1989 has resulted in a significant decrease in plant volume of nuisance weed species. At the same time, native lake plants were observed to have made a strong comeback. This treatment program, funded by a special assessment district, has contributed significantly to maintaining the quality of West Lake. New treatment programs in

five-year increments were approved by the city, at the request of West Lake residents, to continue the lake management efforts.

### Long Lake

Long Lake has a maximum depth of 60 feet and a mean or average depth of 11.8 feet. Long Lake consists of 562 acres, approximately 76 of which are located with the City of Portage, making it the fourth largest lake in Kalamazoo County. It is classified as a mesotrophic inland lake and substantially residentially developed. Water quality for Long Lake is fair to good thanks in part to a weed control program that has stabilized the lake. The weed control program was funded through an annual assessment of residential properties. The level of Long Lake declined 4.5 feet in 1998-1999 due to a variety of factors creating concern for riparians and local governmental agencies. An aquifer-pumping program has been implemented to restore lake levels to court-approved levels.

### Gourdneck Lake

This lake is a moderately shallow bog lake. It has undergone some eutrophication. A substantial amount of shoreline outside the city limits remains undeveloped. Large beds of macrophytes are apparent, but the lake has one of the highest rankings in the area for water quality and is not strongly eutrophic. Gourdneck Lake contains 222 acres, approximately 101 of which are located in Portage and is owned by the State.



### **Sugarloaf Lake and Little Sugarloaf Lake**

These two lakes are moderately deep bog lakes which are not showing disturbing signs of cultural eutrophication. Normally, bog lakes are nutrient poor and eutrophication is relatively slow. The lakes have substantial concentrations of macrophytes and algae, however. Residential development of these lakes is slight, and the source of nutrients is not known, but the lakes are more eutrophic than would be expected. Little Sugarloaf Lake contains a total of 93 acres, 17 of which fall within the City of Portage. Sugarloaf Lake contains 148 acres, 109 of which are located in Portage.

### **Hampton Lake**

This is a small, cold water lake approximately 25 acres in area. Although it is relatively shallow with a maximum depth between the range of 20-30 feet, water temperatures are lower than would be expected due to the lake being spring fed. The shoreline of Hampton Lake remains primarily undeveloped. Although there have been no known studies conducted on the water quality of this lake, it appears to demonstrate a high standard. The lake supports a wide variety of game fish. In addition, that segment of Portage Creek flowing from Hampton Lake has been ranked as a top-quality, cold water stream. These indicators suggest that Hampton Lake should have one of the highest quality ratings of all the lakes in Portage.

### **Portage Creek**

Portage Creek is the dominant waterway in the city stream system. Flowing from the central-western portion of the city, it meanders to the center of Portage and then proceeds in a northerly direction until it crosses the northern municipal boundary. Overall, this stream reflects a fairly good rating for environmental quality, but one segment is of particular value. As mentioned in the section on Hampton Lake, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) has identified the segment of Portage Creek flowing out of Hampton Lake as a top-quality cold water stream for game fish populations. Very few streams in southwestern Michigan have been placed in this classification.



The MDNR regularly stocks Portage Creek with trout along this branch. The classification for Portage Creek changes to a second-quality cold water stream south of the stream's intersection with Centre Avenue. It may be of interest to note that the point of reclassification occurs in the vicinity of the first storm drain entering Portage Creek. Storm water runoff is receiving increasing attention as a potential source of surface water and groundwater pollution.

A survey and assessment of Portage Creek and the West Fork of Portage Creek was completed in 1991. The study provides an analysis of existing creek system conditions and provides recommendations for development of appropriate year-round monitoring/protection activities. Data obtained from the study is used to ensure that future development in the city will not result in degradation of the stream system. Due to this study, a concentrated city effort has been directed to eliminate storm water discharge into Portage Creek and restore altered stream banks to a more natural condition.



In 1998, an assessment of Portage Creek was completed from Hampton Lake to Portage Central Park. The focus of the assessment was to identify the factors responsible for the ability of Portage Creek to support trout and identify practices that may interfere with or diminish this quality. The report found that the portion studied has good water quality and the stream should continue to support trout and the food supply for trout. Future concerns should focus on maintaining shade, preventing stream bank erosion, limiting sources of sedimentation and managing stormwater discharge quality. Several of these issues have been addressed. Shade through natural growth continues as development along the creek is limited.

The city has taken proactive measures to minimize sedimentation into the stream and stormwater discharge has been eliminated in several locations. A study of the Portage Creek watershed was completed in 2006 by a regional committee of City of Portage, City of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo County Road Commission and other interested agencies. This study will be used to further protect the sensitive nature of Portage Creek.

A Storm Water Management Review was initiated in 1992 with respect to environmental impacts and existing drainage programs to ensure an environmentally sensitive, efficient, cost-effective municipal storm water system.



A University of Michigan study of the creek has also been completed. The storm water management review and University of Michigan study were the impetus for the Consolidated Drain Improvement Project. The Consolidated Drain Improvement Project completed in 2001 provides regional storm water improvements and environmental enhancements while addressing Environmental Protection Agency and National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) mandates. In addition, the consolidated drain creates additional bikeway/walkway trail linkage to Portage Creek Bicentennial Park and reclaims approximately 14 acres of land for prime business development.

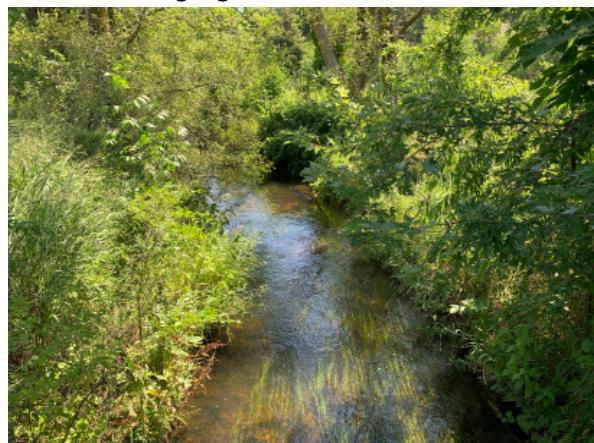
A second major NPDES project, the Storm Water Treatment/Enhancement Project (STEP) was completed in November 2004. Through STEP, storm water treatment systems have been designed to reduce pollution entering Portage Creek from the surrounding 29 acre watershed. Two other streams are also located in Portage. The West Fork of Portage Creek, is located north

of I-94. This segment has been rated as a second-quality warm water stream. The second, Davis Creek, is located in the northeastern corner of the city. Little information is available on this stream. The West Fork and Davis Creek are likely to serve as vital environmental links in the ecology of the areas through which they pass.

## Land Resources

In addition to substantial water resources, Portage contains significant areas of land that have remained relatively undisturbed. Collectively these areas are not only significant in size but also demonstrate a wide variety of natural habitats. Several kinds of grasslands, forest and wetland communities can be identified in these areas. Such environmental diversification results in a wide array of wildlife that inhabit the City of Portage including a number of rare plants and animals. In addition, significant populations of game animals, such as deer and pheasant, can be found. These areas can serve a multitude of needs for the community simultaneously. This can provide educational, recreational, aesthetic and wildlife preservation benefits with minimal development or maintenance costs.

Natural areas are primarily located in the southwestern quadrant of the city, although several are located in the north central and southeastern sections. The southwest quadrant can be classified into three primary locations demonstrating significant natural resources.



These include the Hampton Lake area, the Sugarloaf area and Bishop's Bog Preserve. The Hampton and Sugarloaf lands are primarily under state ownership and are used as game areas. Bishop's Bog Preserve is a wetland area largely under public ownership. In the southeast quadrant, Mandigo Marsh and the West Lake Nature Preserve also demonstrate significant and unique natural resources.

### Hampton Lake Area

This area may be generally classified as a wetland, but it demonstrates wide environmental diversification. A number of ecosystems can be identified, including bog, pond, wet meadow, hydric (considerably moist) forest, mesic (moderately moist) forest and open field. In addition to game species such as deer and pheasant, sizable populations of rare vertebrates, including the Blue-Spotted Salamander, Wood Frog, Chorus Frog, Box Turtle and Spotted Turtle have been found inhabiting the Hampton Lake area. More importantly, this locale is known as one of the outstanding centers for rare plant species in Michigan. It is the only known site in the state for the Climbing Fern. Other rare plants include Large Yellow Lady's Slipper, Small White Lady's Slipper, Pink Lady's Slipper, Snowy Lady's Slipper, Nodding Lady's Tresses, Indian Paint Brush, Small Fringed Gentian, Closed Gentian, Autumn Coral Root, Ground Pine, Running Pine, Michigan Holly, Rattlesnake Master, American Columbo and Clasping Leaved Milkweed.

The environmental quality of this vicinity is not only important to the natural resources within its boundaries but also to those of the Sugarloaf Lake area to the south. It is quite probable that game populations depend on both of these areas, in conjunction, for food and concealment. These areas are essentially separated by Vanderbilt Road which poses only minor constraints to game since it has remained largely undeveloped except at the west end and is moderately traveled. If these populations do rely on both areas, then loss of territory in

either vicinity could effectively diminish the combined ability of the two areas to support game populations. Urbanization of this vicinity has become increasingly evident. Both multiple family and single family structures have been built to the north of Hampton Lake on property separating two state-owned tracts of land. In addition, single family residential development is





taking place along the southwestern and southeastern edges of the Hampton Lake area. As a result, the natural lands of the Hampton Lake area are becoming increasingly isolated from the Sugarloaf Lake region to the south.

### **Sugarloaf Lake Area**

The Sugarloaf Lake area, in many respects, may be viewed as a continuation of the Hampton Lake area to the north. They both demonstrate similar environmental features. The Sugarloaf Lake vicinity has a comparable mixture of ecosystems including bog, pond, wet meadow, hydric forest, mesic forest and open field. Correspondingly, the same rare vertebrates as found in the Hampton Lake area are also found here, and resident game populations may inhabit both of these areas concurrently.

The Sugarloaf Lake region is also an outstanding location for rare plants. This area was extensively studied by Hanes in preparation of his book, *Flora of Kalamazoo County, Michigan*. He has reported over 20 species of orchids and an equal number of ferns, as well as many other rare plants in this vicinity. The Sugarloaf Lake area has realized increased urbanization along its eastern borders. Like the Hampton Lake area, it contains state-owned property, but the state tracts in the Sugarloaf region demonstrate a greater combined area and a higher degree of continuity. This may imply greater stability for natural resources in the Sugarloaf vicinity as compared to the Hampton Lake area, even though development in both areas is quite prominent.



### West Lake Preserve

An inland fresh water marsh area bordering the west bank of West Lake is the only remaining portion of West Lake which is presently undeveloped. H. Lewis Batts, Jr. of the Kalamazoo Nature Center noted that "the West Lake marsh area (i.e., the Matteson property) is a beautiful area with unusual plant associations and animal communities for this urban area. This property should be preserved for public benefit especially as a natural area of extreme value to the total, overall West Lake ecosystem. Present are dense, extensive areas of flowering dogwood, some of which are unusually large for this species. In addition, mature oaks, hickories and scattered maples and many younger maples and black gum trees exist. Marsh flora consists predominantly of Heather (*Chamaedaphne calyculata*) with Steeplebush (*Spirea tomentosa*) and scattered ferns."

In December 1979, the City of Portage acquired approximately 80 acres of this marsh area. An additional 30 acres was acquired in 1992. This area collectively forms the 110 acres of the West Lake Nature Preserve. There is over 1,400 feet of frontage along West Lake, all of which is a unique wetland bog. From a high point of 875 feet above sea level, the Preserve topography falls to the west and northwest to an elevation below 856 feet above sea level. Since the water level of West Lake fluctuates around 855, the marsh area often has large areas of standing water. The parcel has a significant contribution to make to Portage because of its wetland environment close to the City Centre. Providing recreational opportunities while preserving the natural amenities of the Preserve will illustrate by example the importance of wetland habitat to the total community. The marsh habitat is ideal for waterfowl production and important in feeding and brood rearing. It is also used extensively by migrating waterfowl. In addition to game species such as duck and pheasant, non-game species including muskrat, raccoon, beaver, rails and snipe benefit from this area. Dominant

plants for this habitat include cattail, sedges and lesser duckweed.

### Bishop's Bog

A substantial portion of the wetland area west of S. Westnedge Avenue can be attributed to an extensive bog. Bishop's Bog Preserve has gained a reputation as an important location for many rare plant species including native orchids in the genus *Cypripedium* and *Habenaria*. In addition, this type of habitat is often used in the spring by black ducks and ring-necked ducks. Common non-game species also found in bogs are bog lemming, mink, raccoon, tree swallows and snakes. This particular wetland area has remained essentially intact. Most of its approximately 210 acres is located in the floodplain and is characterized by organic soils. A majority of Bishop's Bog is under city ownership. Bishop's Bog Preserve was established in 1997 and in 2011, the Eliason Nature Reserve property was donated to the city.

In 2001, Bishop's Bog and the bog portion of West Lake Nature Preserve were studied for ecological value and potential by Dr. Barbara J. Madsen, Adjunct Professor for the University of Michigan Biological Station. Ms. Madsen stated that it was amazing that such fine wetland areas have survived in an urban area. With care, research and monitoring these wetlands will provide long-term benefits. The report recognized concerns with invasive plants that are being monitored by the city. Since 2002, the city has worked with a class from Kalamazoo College to conduct periodic research in Bishop's Bog to determine potential environmental changes and concerns. Several independent studies have also been conducted by college students and copies of the reports received by the city.

These ongoing studies will help with future management needs.

### Mandigo Marsh

Mandigo Marsh is a historically well-known wetland area south of Austin Lake, comprising many acres of wildlife habitat for the region. It is home to a wide variety of marshland birds and other types of waterfowl, and harbors an unusual assembly of plants that are peculiar to this area. Aside from its biological values, the marsh and its surroundings offer residents of this increasingly urbanized area opportunities to visit a natural setting which is comparatively "wild" for its location.

Mandigo Marsh has been classified by the Nature Conservancy as an example of a coastal plain marsh community. The community has historically been common along the Atlantic coast. The community and many of its characteristic plant and animal species have also long been known from the southwestern Great Lakes region, especially in the southwestern Lower Michigan Peninsula. Several are known in Kalamazoo County, including Mandigo Marsh, but none have been completely protected. Many of the species typifying the community are themselves far removed – often thousands of

## RARE AND PROTECTED SPECIES AT BISHOP'S BOG:



Orange-fringed Orchid  
(Rare)



Red-shouldered Hawk  
(Michigan - threatened)



Stemless Pink Lady Slipper



Blanchard's Cricket Frog  
(Michigan - threatened)



Tamarack Tree Cricket  
(Michigan - Special Concern)



Flying Squirrel



Purple Pitcher Plant



Spotted Turtle  
(Threatened)

miles – from their main range along the Atlantic coast, as a fluke of early plant migration and changes in geologic and weather conditions. Many of these species are listed by the State of Michigan and are protected under the Michigan Endangered Species Act. Other natural communities noted in and adjacent to the Mandigo Marsh basin include dry-mesic/mesic southern forest and the southern swamp/southern floodplain forest. The southern wet meadow community does not occur in the basin but is found along the Gourdneck Creek drainage channel to the south.

### **Additional Land Resources**

Two other natural areas should be noted. Although these areas are of a smaller size and little information is available in comparison to those lands previously described, they may provide significant benefits to the city.

The Gourdneck Game Area is an undeveloped section of state land extending between Sugarloaf Lake and Gourdneck Lake. Although a majority of this game area is south of the Portage municipal boundary, the state does own a tract of approximately 1,500 acres that

is within the city limits. The natural resources of the segment located in Portage are likely to be more significant when viewed in relation to the larger section to the south. This northerly portion is primarily a wetland area that borders Gourdneck Creek and may serve as an important environmental component to game populations that inhabit the general vicinity and Mandigo Marsh in particular. There are also a number of undeveloped areas bordering both Portage Creek and the West Fork of Portage Creek. Most of these areas are too small to support game populations, although deer and pheasant have been sighted along portions of the creek. Geographically these areas are significant, however, because they represent some of the only undisturbed land in the northern half of the city. Since this northerly portion demonstrates the highest degree of urbanization, the utilization of these natural resources for recreational, aesthetic and educational purposes is of special value. In addition, some of these areas may be of distinct ecological significance.

A segment of land bordering Portage Creek in the vicinity of the city northern municipal boundary has been identified as a prime habitat possessing





scarce species such as Belted Kingfisher and Queen Snake. It also is a site for wintering waterfowl. Other segments of land along Portage Creek might also demonstrate special attributes if investigations were conducted.

### Sensitive Land Areas

The City of Portage completed a sensitive land areas inventory in November of 1995 to improve its capability to consider natural resources protection during development review and long-term planning and zoning processes. Three types of areas were determined as sensitive (1) wetland, (2) a 400-foot wide corridor along Portage Creek, and (3) the 100-year floodplain of Portage Creek and other drainage areas (see Figure 2.5).

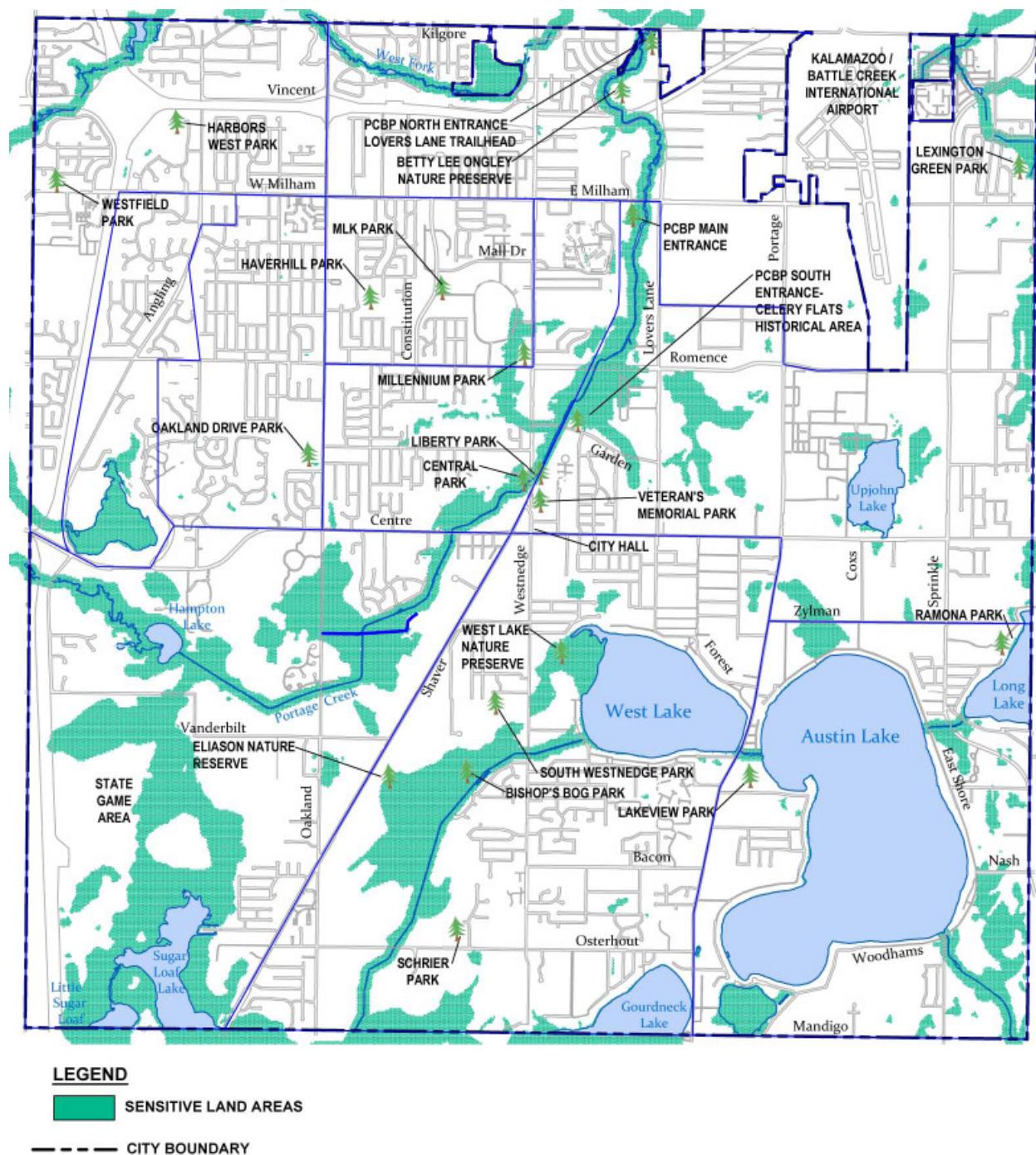
Few Michigan cities contain the quality and diversity of wetlands found in the City of Portage. The sensitive land inventory identified 161 individual wetland complexes within the city which include forested wetlands, marshes, bogs, fens and wet meadows representing all of the important types found in southern Michigan. Several of these wetlands, in particular the large complexes around Hampton Lake, Austin Lake, West Lake, Sugarloaf and Portage Creek have been studied intensively by consultants. The natural features of these wetland complexes, some of which contain rare or threatened plant and animal species, are well-documented in associated reports. These wetlands are also important to local groundwater recharge and as wildlife habitat.



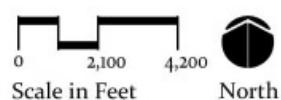
The value of Portage Creek has also been documented by a previous study conducted. Portage Creek is a trout stream, a very rare resource in a southern Michigan city the size of Portage. At present, the chief threat to the stream is temperature increase which could result from the combined effects of direct industrial discharge of heated water, additional summer storm water runoff and water withdrawal from the basin aquifer. Loss of shade from removal of riparian vegetation could also negatively impact certain stretches. The Inland Lakes and Streams Act protects Portage Creek; however, the potential importance of Portage Creek as a recreational resource suggests that additional measures to maintain stream temperatures, protect water quality and maintain an aesthetically pleasing corridor along the stream should be considered. The sensitive land areas inventory therefore includes all lands within 200 feet of the stream as sensitive.

The 100-year floodplain as delineated on the FEMA Flood Insurance Maps is also included in the sensitive land areas inventory. Although primarily aimed at discouraging potential loss of property due to floods, the FEMA-mapped floodplain also represents a topographically-defined area where activities could add sediment or other pollutants to Portage Creek or other water bodies in the city.

**Figure 2.5 - Sensitive Areas Map**



**City of Portage  
Recreation and Open Space Plan  
Sensitive Land Areas**



## Socioeconomic Characteristics

The review of trends in population growth is helpful in developing an understanding of the city's recreational needs. Also reviewing other demographic indicators such as age, education, income, and employment trends can assist in determining the type of recreational facilities that may be needed or desired and will allow facilities and programs to keep pace with demand.

### Population Trends

Demographic information was gathered from the 2020 US Decennial Census. As of 2020, the City of Portage has a population of 48,891 which represents a 8.9% increase from the 2000 Census. The city has experienced a modest increase in population since 1990. Table 2.1 delineates population growth in the city over the last 30 years.

Table 2.1: Population Growth - Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau				
Year	Population	# Change	% Change	
1990	41,042	2,885	7.6%	
2000	44,897	3,855	9.4%	
2010	46,292	1,395	3.1%	
2020	48,891	2,599	5.6%	

To put the city's rate of growth into perspective, it is important to compare growth comparisons with other adjacent communities. This is useful in attempting to forecast areas of future growth in the area as well as future demands on the city's park system. Table 2.2 illustrates population growth comparisons with adjacent communities as well as the County and State. The table shows the growth rate in Portage has been slower than Schoolcraft and Texas Townships, but stronger than the City of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo County, and the State of Michigan. As the population continues to grow in Portage, as well as in adjacent communities, the Parks Department is faced with the challenge of providing additional park facilities to keep up with the growth trends. Strategic acquisition of park land and continued enhancement of current parks and trails should continue to be a focus.

Table 2.2: Population Comparison- Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau					
Community	1990 Population	2000 Population	2010 Population	2020 Population	% Change 2010-2020
Pavilion Twp	5,500	5,829	6,222	6,387	2.6%
Schoolcraft Twp	3,695	7,260	8,214	9,183	11.7%
Texas Twp	7,711	10,919	14,697	17,691	20%
City of Kalamazoo	80,277	77,145	74,262	73,598	-1.0%
Kalamazoo County	223,411	238,603	250,331	261,670	4.5%
State of Michigan	9,295,297	9,938,444	9,883,640	10,077,331	1.9%

## Age

The median age of the City of Portage is 37.1, which is 7.5% older than Kalamazoo County as a whole (34.5) but 7% younger than the State of Michigan (39.8). The median age represents the mid-point in the range of all ages within the city. Understanding the age demographics is useful in identifying the type of recreational facilities that may be needed, desired, or over provided. For example, a younger population may desire more active types of facilities while an aging population may desire more passive types of facilities. Table 2.3 illustrates the breakdown of population based on age (based on 2020 census).

Table 2.3 Population by Age - Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau		
Age	Persons	Percentage
Male	23,859	<b>48.8</b>
Female	25,032	<b>51.2</b>
Under 18	11,196	<b>22.9</b>
18 and over	37,695	<b>77.1</b>
18-24	5,183	<b>10.6</b>
25-34	6,796	<b>13.9</b>
35-49	8,898	<b>18.2</b>
50-64	8,849	<b>18.1</b>
65 and over	7,969	<b>16.3</b>

A strong pattern for outdoor fitness based recreation is reflected in the age distribution with 32.1% of the population in the 25-49 range. Almost 23% of the population falls in the under 18 age group suggesting there may be a need for youth-oriented facilities. Conversely about 34.4% of the population is within the 50 and over age group suggesting the need for passive and senior based activities. The 18-24 group makes up the smallest portion of the population, likely due to the lack of higher education institutions located in Portage. These results reflect a need for a well-balanced park and recreation system that provides facilities for young, active households, as well as accessible facilities for the aging population.

## Persons with Disabilities

The proportion of the population with some type of disability should be considered when planning parks and recreational facilities and programs. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 mandates that all public services, including park facilities, be barrier-free. As the population ages, the proportion with one or more disabilities generally increases, and this trend is consistent for the city. Disabilities include vision, cognitive, auditory, ambulatory, self care, and living independently difficulties. According to the U.S. Census data, it is estimated that approximately 11.5% of city residents live with a disability, which is close to the State of Michigan at 14.5% and lower than the national 26%. In Portage, approximately 43% of those individuals living with a disability are 65 years and older. These figures indicate that, while the city population is modest, there still exists an important contingent of residents who rely on more accessible places to recreate.

## Income

A successful parks and recreation system includes providing affordable recreational opportunities to the community. It is important to understand the availability of disposable income for recreation within the community as household incomes vary within the region. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the estimated median household income level for 2020 is \$65,571 for the city, which is about a 21% increase from 2010 (\$54,040). The median household income in Portage is about 13% higher than Kalamazoo County (\$58,836) and about 12% higher than Michigan (\$59,234). Table 2.4 illustrates the median household income of the city, compared to other nearby communities.

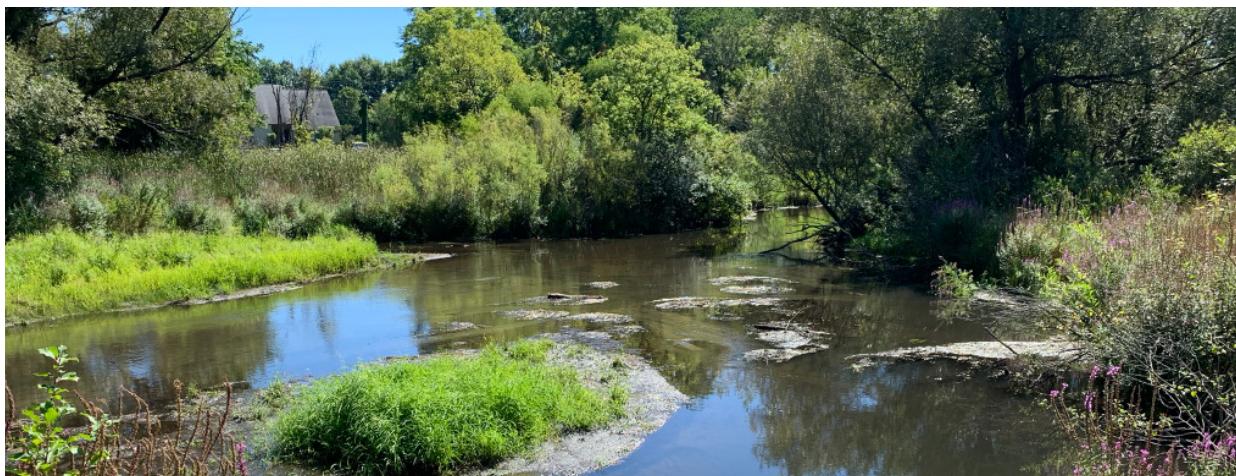
<b>Table 2.4 Median Household Income - Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau</b>	
City of Portage	\$65,571
Pavilion Township	\$75,833
Schoolcraft Township	\$62,306
Texas Township	\$120,863
City of Kalamazoo	\$43,222
Kalamazoo County	\$58,836

As shown in the table, income is lower in the city compared to adjacent Pavilion and Texas Townships but slightly higher than Schoolcraft. This level of income in the city could make it possible to secure certain types of grants, but may not support the concept of a park millage.

## Employment

Approximately 69.1% of city residents are employed in a range of employment categories. The most common industries in Portage include: manufacturing, health care and social assistance, educational services, retail trade, and professional, scientific, and technical services. The most common occupation groups, by number of people living in Portage, are management, sales, and office and administrative support. Major employers in the city include Stryker Instruments, Pfizer, Portage Public Schools, KRESA, Meijer, State Farm Insurance, Summit Polymers, and Wal-Mart. According to the U.S. Census the average commute time to work is approximately 19.1 minutes, which is lower than the national average of 25 minutes. The primary destination for employment for Portage workers is the city of Kalamazoo (33%). Approximately 25% of Portage residents are able to work in the City of Portage. Other destinations include Battle Creek, Grand Rapids, Mattawan, and other neighboring Townships.

According to the U.S. Census, about 94.7% of the workforce drive automobiles to work (88% alone and 6.7% carpool), and 3.2% work from home. The remaining 2.1% use public transit, walk, bicycle, or use other means of transportation to get to work. Given this data was collected for the 2020 census and pre-pandemic, the percentage of the workforce working from home is likely currently higher and on the rise. According to the



U.S. Census, the estimated rate of unemployment in the city is 4.7%. The relative strength of the employment picture in the city suggests that the local economy is stable and that residents should be able to continue to fund the parks and recreation budget.

### Land Use

The land use distribution and development pattern of a community is important when considering the geographic distribution of parks and recreational facilities because they should be placed where there are concentrations of residents and the related places of public gathering.

The City of Portage provides a variety of different housing opportunities based on both age and density. According to the U.S. Census data there are a total of 21,323 housing units in the city of which 94% are occupied and 68% is owner occupied. Single family structures make up 74% of the housing units in the city with 25% multi-family units and 1% mobile homes. Numerous single-family neighborhoods are located throughout the city, with the largest concentrations located in the northwest and southeast quadrants of the city.





# Administrative Structure

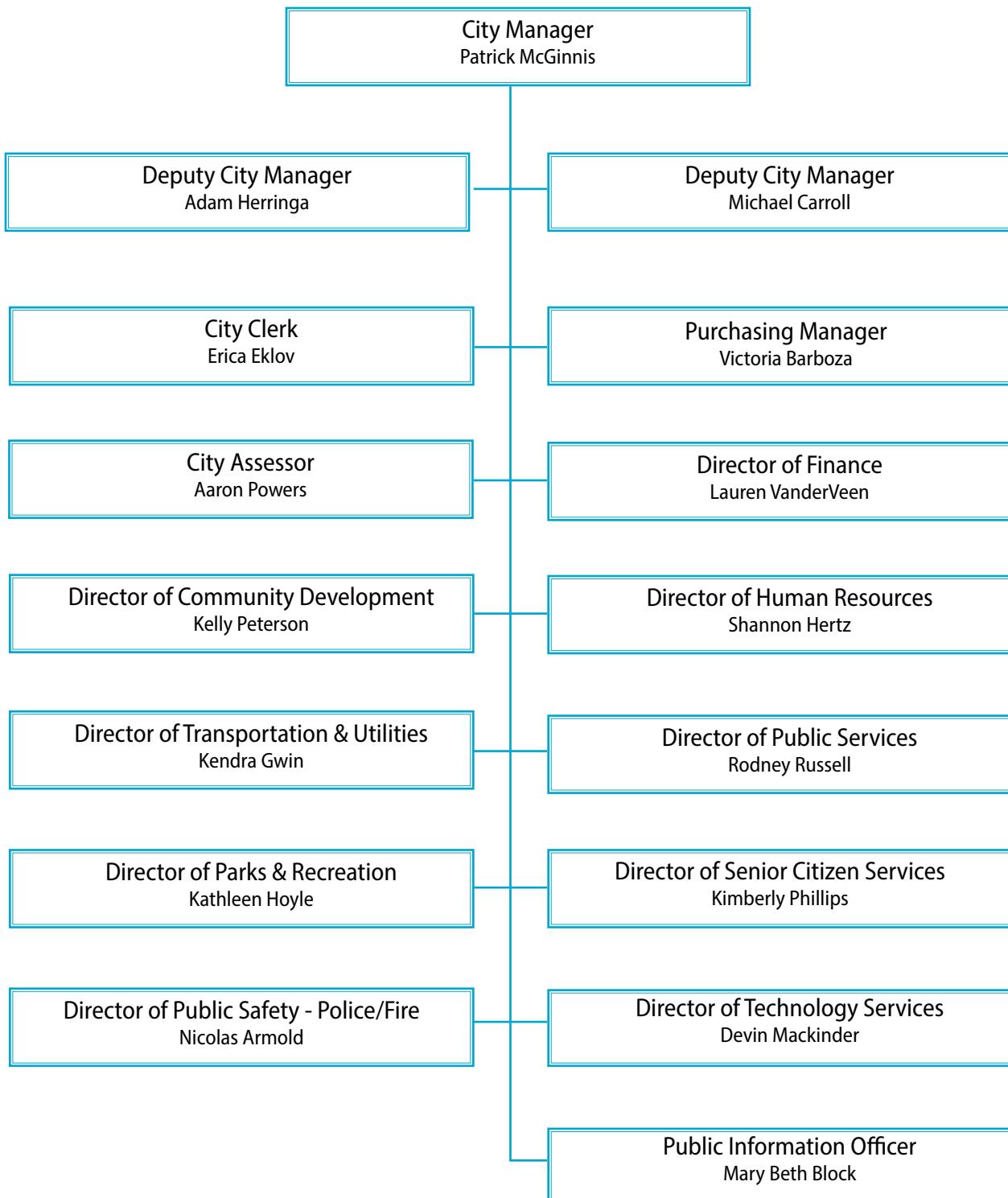
The City of Portage operates under the Council/Manager form of government. The Council/Manager Plan is a system of local government that combines the political leadership of an elected City Council with the professional managerial experience of the City Manager. In order to understand how park and recreation functions are administered in Portage, we must look at the administrative structure of the city (refer to Figure 3.1 for the City Organizational Chart)

## **City Council**

The Portage City Council consists of a Mayor and six (6) council members, all elected at-large. The Mayor serves a term of two years, while members of the council serve four-year terms. The City Council is the legislative and policy making body of the city and is responsible for the performance of all obligations and duties imposed on the city by the State of Michigan.

## **City Manager**

The City Manager serves as the chief administrative officer and is responsible to the City Council for all administrative functions and business of the city. City employees are hired and discharged by the City Manager and are responsible to the City Manager in all aspects of job performance. The City Manager prepares and submits the annual budget proposal of the city. The City Manager acts as the chief purchasing agent of the city, seeks federal funds and represents the city in all contract and labor negotiations. The City Council appoints the City Manager who is responsible for advising the City Council on various matters facing the city and implementing the policies of the City Council. The City Manager is responsible for the day-to-day operation of all city services and programs.

**Figure 3.1 - City Organizational Chart****City Management & Department Directors**

## Departmental Organizational Structure

Under the direction of the City Manager, three (3) municipal departments are actively involved in the administration, planning, and maintenance of the city's parks, recreation, programs, and services.

- Department of Parks and Recreation
- Department of Public Services: Parks Maintenance Division
- Department of Community Development

## Parks and Recreation Department

The Parks, Recreation & Property Management Department was officially established in November 1969 with the hiring of its first full-time professional. From 1969 through 2012 duties of the Parks, Recreation & Property Management Department expanded to include senior citizen services, cemetery maintenance, municipal buildings and public grounds maintenance. In April, 2012, a transition occurred where the Parks, Recreation & Property Management Director assumed added supervisory responsibility for another department. This transition created the Department of Parks, Recreation & Public Services. In 2015, with the retirement of the director, another transition occurred in which Parks and Recreation became its own department again. In 2022 the Senior Center became its own department and is no longer under the Parks and Recreation Department. Figure 3.2 presents the current organization structure of the Parks and Recreation Department.

Today, the Parks & Recreation Division of the Department of Parks and Recreation oversees 20 park sites located throughout the City of Portage; manages the protection of natural and physical city assets and provides recreation, cultural and leisure programs for resident enjoyment. The department manages the popular Celery Flats Historical Area, Ramona Park beach and the Millennium Park Ice Rink. Numerous rental facilities are available to residents, schools and groups for a variety of events including

weddings, banquets, graduations and meetings.

Responsibilities of the City of Portage Parks and Recreation Department may be summarized as follows:

- To create and maintain the finest recreation system which can be economically realized and which can effectively serve all citizens of Portage;
- To provide city-wide park areas which contain ample space for all passive and active recreation activities and such unique facilities as are deemed appropriate; to develop and maintain recreation facilities which are recognized to possess unique or unusual characteristics not generally available to the citizens in any other recreation facilities or by usual means of procurement;
- To establish suitable recreational and cultural programs for all citizens of the community.

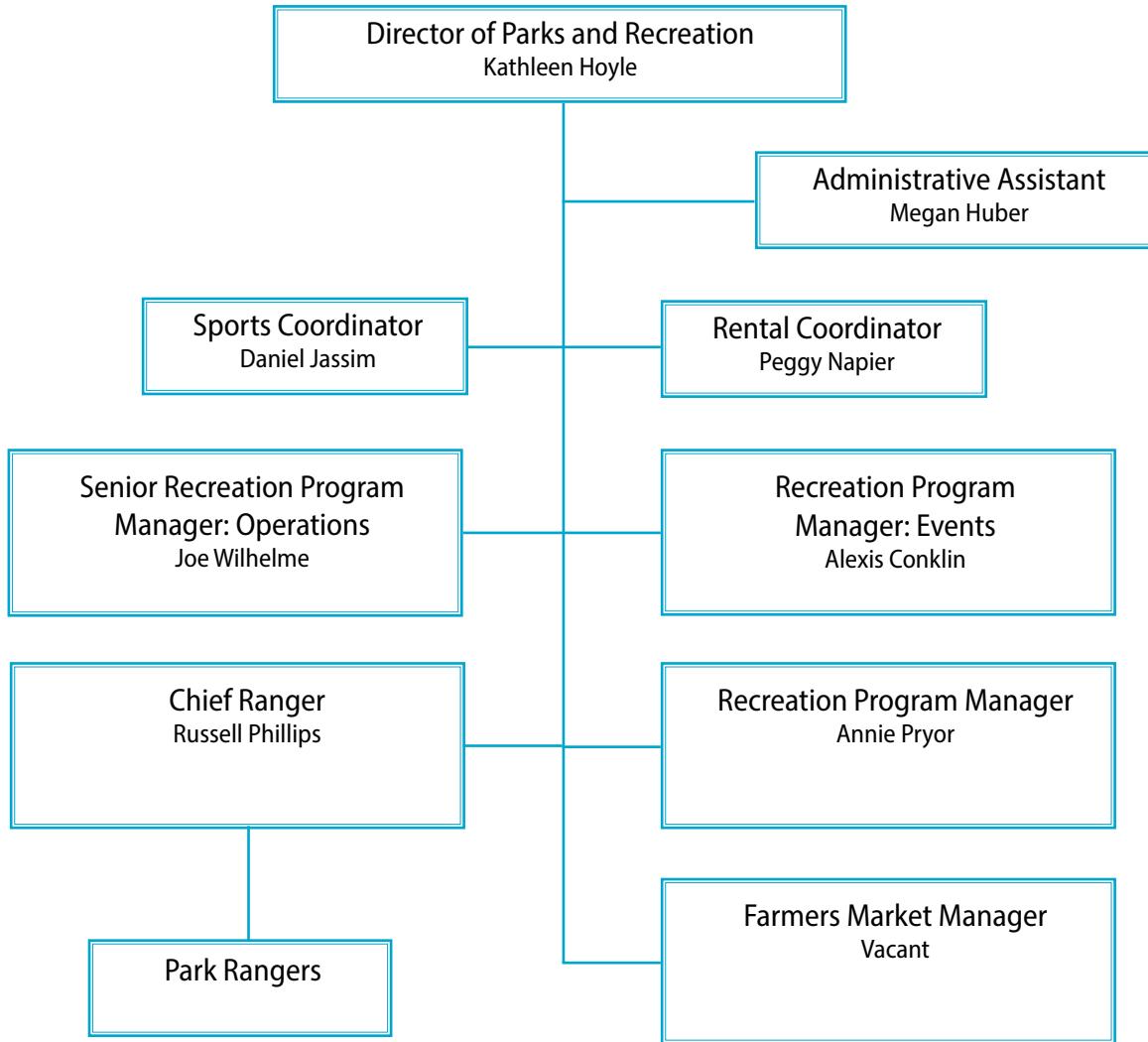
The Parks and Recreation Department fulfills its responsibilities through the performance of six primary functions. These include:

1. Planning and financial operations
2. Development operations
3. Recreational programming operations
4. Cultural programming operations
5. Public information operations
6. Property management operations

## Vision and Mission of the Parks and Recreation Department

**Vision** - To connect people to each other and to the natural world.

**Mission** - Through a unique, vibrant and well managed parks and public space system, we promote environmental stewardship through public awareness and participation in engaging activities. We reach for excellence in providing a range and depth of recreation, leisure and cultural programs for people of all ages and abilities.

**Figure 3.2 - Parks Organizational Chart****Parks and Recreation Department**

The primary services of the department are:

- Acquisition, development and maintenance of parks and open spaces being sensitive to effective planning and environmental integrity;
- Development and operation of recreation facilities; - Provision of varied recreation programs, activities and services for all ages and abilities;
- Facilitation of positive promotional and public relations activities that highlight the quality of life in Portage;
- Enhancement of cultural/historical facilities and operation of special cultural programs and activities.
- Provision of a range of services, activities and volunteer opportunities which promote personal growth, friendship, health and independence for adults aged 50 and older.

The operating philosophy of the department can be summarized by the following statements:

- We reach for excellence and take a quality approach toward providing services, opportunities and facilities.
- We are customer-oriented and aware of public wants and needs, balancing our responsibility to our clients and the taxpayer.
- We are visionary, dependent upon the use of innovation and creativity in management and planning for the future, recognizing the shift of emphasis from providing services toward facilitating or encouraging groups and individuals to meet their needs and interests.
- Our programs, activities and services are value-oriented, focusing on the human potential of each citizen, the importance of the natural environment, community self-help and the significant roles that parks and recreation, leisure and cultural programs provide.
- We value the use of teamwork, supporting and involving staff to ensure a healthy and productive work environment.

### **Financial Commitment**

Sources of funding for the department are (in order of magnitude): municipal taxes (see General Fund Budget – Appendix); user fees and charges; and state and federal grants (see Figure 3.3 – Grant Summary). Additional resources are derived from community contributions and donations, including volunteer support. The department strives to offer services in the most cost effective manner, minimizing the impact on the tax rate and seeking alternative sources of revenue enhancement. The Parks and Recreation and Department annually prepares budget requests for City Manager review and recommendation to the City Council for adoption. Included are proposed comprehensive operational and special revenue budgets for the coming fiscal year and a ten-year capital improvement program for land acquisition and major capital projects.

### **Activities / Depth Drivers**

The department responds to the needs and/or demands of the public, which are influenced by a variety of social and economic factors such as demographic shifts, disposable income and recreational leisure interests. Recreation and cultural program planning and park acquisition and development are tied closely to the Parks and Recreation Department long-range planning and park master planning. Community collaboration and volunteerism will be critical needs as the departmental responsibilities expand

### **Recreational Programming**

The Parks and Recreation Department with review and recommendation of the City Manager and approval by City Council, develops a comprehensive leisure service program in accordance with planning and financial operations. Recreation programming is directed under the supervision of the Parks Director and Senior Center Director. These operations include the provision of a viable program of recreational and cultural activities for residents in the entire community. In order to meet the demand for these programs, the department utilizes city, school and private facilities. Refer to the Appendix for a comprehensive list of current programs.



## Maintenance

The Department of Public Services, with review and approval by the City Manager, prepares maintenance and development schedules for the fiscal year in accordance with the development of the City budget and Capital Improvement Program. Maintenance operations are the primary assignment of the Parks Maintenance Division under the supervision of the Public Service Director. These operations include routine, recurring work, repair work, minor construction work and supervision of contractual/maintenance work. The intent of these operations is to maintain high-quality standards in all city parks, recreation facilities, cemeteries and public ground areas.

## Commissions and Advisory Boards

The city relies on citizen participation on many advisory boards and commissions to help serve the community. The citizens serving on the advisory boards and commissions provide the talent and experience needed to meet the diverse challenges facing the community. The recommendations from these groups assist the City Council and Administration in making decisions regarding parks and recreation. These groups include the following:

- Arts Committee
- Bicycle Advisory Committee
- Environmental Board
- Historic District Commission
- Park Board
- Planning Commission
- Senior Citizens Advisory Board
- Youth Advisory Commission

## Portage Arts Committee

A new Arts Committee has been formed under the Portage Park Board to assist in expanding the arts in Portage. Members of this committee will have opportunities to be part of public art concept reviews and participate in art exhibitions, events, workshops, and festivals, as well as collaborate with other area artists.

The City of Portage has plans to expand its opportunities for arts in Portage and is currently working on a public art mural program, expansion of exhibitions and festivals, and outdoor sculpture projects. The committee will meet approximately two to three times a year for feedback from members on programs, initiatives, and member ideas to further the arts in Portage.

## Bicycle Advisory Committee

The Bicycle Advisory Committee is an ad hoc committee to the Portage Park Board. This committee provides citizen input for planning bicycle transportation infrastructure improvements and promoting bicycling initiatives within the City of Portage. These initiatives have included programs, events and other efforts to promote bicycle education and safety. The committee reports directly to the Park Board, which submits recommendations, program concepts and reports to the Director of Parks and Recreation.

## Environmental Board

The Environmental Board is a nine-member board tasked to advise City Council on matters pertaining to the environment and the protection and enhancement of the groundwater resources of the city. The Environmental Board is available to ensure the appropriate consideration of environmental and groundwater issues as determined necessary by the City Council.

## Historic District Commission

The commission is charged with reviewing plans and applications for the construction, alteration, repair of historic properties. The commission also maintains the roster of established and potential districts, may initiate district modification procedures and reviews proposed exterior changes to properties within the Portage Historic District. The Historic District Commission is governed by the Michigan Local Historic Districts Act (PA 169 of 1970) in conjunction with Section 38 of the Portage Code of Ordinances.

### **Park Board**

The Park Board is a nine-member board established for the purpose of advising the City Council regarding the provision of adequate park and recreation programs and facilities for the enjoyment of all citizens. This board promotes recreation programs and recommends planning and operating policies for city parks, as well as managing the City Adopt-A-Park program.

### **Planning Commission**

The Planning Commission is authorized by Michigan statute and consists of nine members appointed by the Mayor with concurrence of the City Council. The Planning Commission has as primary responsibilities the preparation and adoption of a Comprehensive Plan that guides decision-making related to future land use, community development and capital investments, and making recommendations and advising City Council on land use, zoning and related development matters of importance in the community.

The Planning Commission was created under the Code of Ordinances of the City of Portage and was established for the purpose of planning in the city under the State of Michigan Municipal Planning Act (Public Act 285 of 1931) that was in effect at the time. Public Act 285 of 1931 was repealed in 2008 and replaced by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Public Act 33 of 2008). The Michigan Planning Enabling Act, together with the local ordinance, established the responsibility on the Planning Commission for creating and adopting a Comprehensive Plan for the physical development of the municipality. The Recreation and Open Space Plan is an integral element of the Comprehensive Plan as it functions as an important component to the land use and community facilities sections. The Planning Commission responsibility in this regard is exercised through the review and adoption of the Recreation and Open Space Plan as an element of the overall Comprehensive Development Plan of the City of Portage

### **Senior Citizens Advisory Board**

The Senior Citizens Advisory Board consists of nine or more members who are at least 50 years of age. This board advises the City Council regarding the establishment and provision of services to aging persons in the city, and the board encourages, promotes, assists and safeguards the rights and abilities of older people to maintain maximum health, well-being and independence. This board recommends programs, activities and policies for the operation of the Portage Senior Center.

### **Youth Advisory Commission**

The Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) consists of up to 30 high school youth representatives and is tasked with providing input to the City Council and City Administration regarding programs, services, projects and issues. Topics addressed by past Youth Advisory Committees include:

- Drug abuse and underage drinking prevention
- Summer Youth Activities
- Environmental Awareness

The Youth Advisory Committee is very active in the community and organizes several city-wide events. Examples include the annual Earth Day festival, Snow Party and Public Safety Movie Night. Among other items, the YAC also participates in Sticker Shock which is a program designed to discourage under-age drinking, volunteers at the Portage Community Center and learns about the role of local government.

### **Role of Volunteer**

The City of Portage understands the growing importance of volunteer resources. Volunteer services are prominently promoted on the front page of the city website. A majority of the volunteer opportunities requested on the website relate directly to the Parks & Recreation Divisions. Once volunteers contact the city, the Human Resources Department provides the necessary intake and works with the Parks & Recreation Divisions on specific project needs.

Volunteers also contact the department directly to coordinate projects. Examples of volunteer services include:

- Community Beautification Projects - Church groups, corporate citizens and service organizations often provide much-needed manpower for important beautification projects in the city. Projects range from park cleanup, park shelter upgrades, cleaning buildings at Celery Flats and other projects.
- Eagle Scout and Girl Scout Gold Award Projects - City staff work directly with individual Eagle Scout and Girl Scout Gold Award candidates to design a service project that matches your skills and ambitions.
- Event Staffing - Volunteers are often utilized to staff recreational and special events. Jobs include everything from event set-up, staffing ticket booths and concession stands to crowd control and parking assistance.
- Department Staffing - City departments often use the help of volunteers, particularly the Office of the City Clerk and the Portage Senior Center. Among other tasks, volunteers assist with election activities, assist with special events at the Senior Center and drive the Senior Center van.
- Advisory Boards and Commissions - The Portage City Council relies on community volunteers for a variety of services and periodically asks Advisory Boards and Commissions to review programs developed by the City Administration and make recommendations. Meeting times and responsibilities of each of the Boards and Commissions vary.

### Adopt A Park

The Adopt-A-Park Program provides an opportunity for individuals, volunteer groups, neighborhood associations and businesses to take an active role in the maintenance, improvement and beautification of local parks, trails and green spaces for all to enjoy. Neighbors and community groups volunteer their time to

improve their assigned park. Adopters can work on a variety of projects including planting and maintaining flower beds; maintaining trails and paths; painting and caring for park structures; cleaning up litter; planting and mulching; and generally making sure the park is in order. Currently all Portage Parks have been adopted.



**PORTAGE PARKS  
FOUNDATION**

### Portage Parks Foundation

The Portage Parks Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization formed to support parks projects in the city. The Foundation provides an opportunity for individuals, volunteer groups, neighborhood associations, and businesses to take an active role in the improvement, maintenance, and beautification of local parks, trails and green spaces for all to enjoy. The Foundation is managed by a board of directors that help guide the Parks Department with vision, leadership and strategic direction. The mission of the Foundation includes the following:

- **Promote Portage Parks:** Provide support and volunteer opportunities for Portage residents to assist with park projects and events that benefit and promote the Portage Park system.
- **Create Awareness:** Increase the community's quality of life and create awareness of the City's natural park assets.
- **Develop Funding:** Develop funding programs for projects in the Recreation and Open Space Plan.

## Budgeting and Funding

Budgets for parks, programs, services and maintenance are located in the Appendix of this document. The budget includes Operation and Maintenance, Capital Improvements, and Programs and Services. The basic sources for funding to support the operating and capital improvements budgets of the Parks and Recreation department are the following: taxes, fees and charges, government grants and gifts or bequests.

Taxes – Consisting of local real estate or property taxes; they are derived by assessing industrial or residential property within the borders of the municipality at a given rate.

Grants – Park development has benefited from a variety of grants as shown on the Grant Summary (Figure 3.3).

Fees & Charges – Consisting of monies collected for program participation and facility rentals. Fees and charges are reviewed annually to assure an equitable system to offset departmental operating costs and provide value to program participants and facility users.

Gifts & Bequests – Included are gifts that come from private sources such as foundations, business firms or individuals. These are solicited when accompanying stipulations are such that the gift would be determined beneficial to city responsibilities for the provision of park and recreational services.

**Figure 3.3 - Grant Inventory**

The City of Portage has been successful in obtaining grants from numerous sources for several decades. The following tables identify the city's grant history (MDNR Grants are highlighted).

Year	Project Title	Funding Source	Grant Amount	Local Match	Project Total
1970	Lakeview Park	Land and Water Conservation Fund	\$18,000		\$18,000
1975	Shrier Park	Land and Water Conservation Fund	\$50,000		\$50,000
1978	Percy Matteson Property (West Lake)	Land and Water Conservation Fund	\$61,000		\$61,000
1979	Ramona Park	Land and Water Conservation Fund	\$30,000		\$30,000
1983	Westfield Park	Land and Water Conservation Fund	\$32,000		\$32,000
1987	Portage Creek Bicentennial Park Gift Book	Donations from area individuals, business and organizations	\$45,000	-0-	\$45,000
1987	West Lake Nature Preserve Phase 1	Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund	\$100,000	\$40,000	\$140,000
1988	Portage Community Bandshell	Gilmore Foundation	\$100,000	\$80,000	\$180,000
1988	Celery Flats Interpretive Center	Michigan Equity Fund	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$260,000
		Upjohn Company	\$100,000		
		Kalamazoo Foundation	\$110,000		
1989	South Westnedge Park Improvements	Quality of Life Recreation Bond	\$70,000	\$30,000	\$100,000
1989	West Lake Nature Preserve Phase II	Quality of Life Recreation Bond	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$100,000
1990	Portage Creek Bicentennial Park Phase I	Land and Water Conservation Fund	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$100,000
1991	Ramona Park Improvements	Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund	\$150,000	\$80,000	\$230,000
1992	Hayloft Theatre	Gilmore Foundation	\$75,000	\$150,000	\$295,000
		Kalamazoo Foundation	\$30,000		
		Upjohn Co. Foundation	\$30,000		
		Dorothy Dalton Foundation	\$10,000		
1994	Stuart Manor Portage Creek Improvements	Kalamazoo Foundation	\$300,000	\$50,000	\$350,000
		Inland Fisheries	\$10,000	\$18,000	\$28,000
1995	Celery Flats Amphitheatre	Michigan Equity Fund	\$25,000	\$40,000	\$75,000
		Upjohn Co. Foundation	\$10,000		
1995	Ramona Park Improvements	Kalamazoo Foundation	\$128,500	-0-	\$128,500
1995	Bishops Bog Development	Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund	\$150,000	\$50,000	\$200,000
1996	Portage Creek Implementation	Inland Fisheries	\$7,000	\$20,915	\$27,915

Year	Project Title	Funding Source	Grant Amount	Local Match	Project Total
1998	S. Westnedge/PCBP Bikeway Connector	Kalamazoo County Infrastructure Fund	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$100,000
1998	PCBP North Trail Development	MNRTF	\$113,000	\$112,000	\$275,000
		Kalamazoo County Infrastructure Fund	\$50,000		
1999	Shaver Road Bikeway	T-21	\$165,710	\$70,000	\$235,710
1999	PCBP Trail	Clean Michigan Initiative	\$220,000		\$220,000
2000	PCBP II	CMI	\$225,000	\$100,000	\$325,000
2000	Lakeview Park Development	Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund	\$200,000	\$150,000	\$350,000
2000	West Lake Interpretive Center	Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund	\$500,000	\$290,000	\$790,000
2000	Harbors West Park Development	Land and Water Conservation Fund	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$200,000
2001	Lovers Lane Bikeway	T-21	\$90,000	\$38,100	\$128,100
2001	Cultural Equipment	Dorothy Dalton Foundation	\$10,000	-0-	\$10,000
2002	NW Portage Bikeway	T-21	\$276,000	\$180,000	\$456,000
2002	Bishops Bog Preserve	Kalamazoo Community Foundation	\$10,000	-0-	\$10,000
2002	South Westnedge Park Improvements	Land and Water Conservation Fund	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$300,000
2003	South Westnedge Park Improvements	Kalamazoo Community Foundation	\$10,000	-0-	\$10,000
2004-2005	South Westnedge Skatepark Imp.	Various Donors (in-kind gifts)	\$74,000	-0-	\$74,000
2004-2005	South Westnedge Skatepark Imp.	Various Donors	\$7,000	-0-	\$7,000
2008	Ramona Playground	MRPA - Access to Recreation	\$140,000	\$60,700	\$200,700
2010	NW Portage Bikeway Extension	TEA	\$200,000	\$199,800	\$399,800
2012	Westfield Park Playground Renovation	Recreation Passport	\$45,000	\$20,000	\$45,000
2016	Portage South Central Trail Development	Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund	\$291,500	\$20,000	\$291,500
2016	Overlander Bandshell / Celery Flats Programming	Irving S. Gilmore Foundation	\$23,000	-0-	\$23,000
2017	Overlander Bandshell / Celery Flats Programming	Irving S. Gilmore Foundation	\$19,000	-0-	\$19,000
2017	Overlander Bandshell / Celery Flats Programming	Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo	\$5,000	-0-	\$5,000
2021	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Park	Dorothy Dalton Foundation	\$15,000	-0-	\$15,000
2021	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Park	Irving S. Gilmore Foundation	\$75,000	-0-	\$75,000
2022	Overlander Bandshell / Celery Flats Programming	Irving S. Gilmore Foundation	\$20,000	-0-	\$20,000
2022	Archery Center	USA Archery	\$5,000	-0-	\$5,000
2022	Lexington Green	Land and Water Conservation Fund	\$500,000	TBA	TBA

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# Recreation Inventory

Portage is known for its diverse, high-quality parks, open space, and recreational facilities. From large scale waterfront parks such as Ramona Park, to unique multi-faceted parks that draw visitors regionally, such as Celery Flats, the residents of Portage have many options to choose from when looking for recreational or leisurely activities.

To understand Portage's park and recreation system, we first completed an inventory and analysis of existing park facilities. The intent of the analysis is to evaluate the character, performance, and accessibility of the diverse spaces in the park system, and provide a comprehensive perspective of the opportunities and challenges of the existing recreational facilities the city has to offer its citizens. The inventory is based on feedback provided by city staff and stakeholders, site inventories and accessibility reviews carried out by VIRIDIS Design Group (project team) in the summer of 2022, and a review of the 2018 Recreation and Open Space Plan.

## Park and Recreation System Inventory

The park and recreation system inventory establishes a baseline understanding of the quantity, type, location, and quality of all park and recreation facilities in Portage. The project team visited each park facility and recorded its amenities, accessibility, and condition. The site inventory was supplemented by an aerial survey and verified against the city's GIS database. Overall, 20 parks and open spaces, as well as school sites were inventoried through this process.

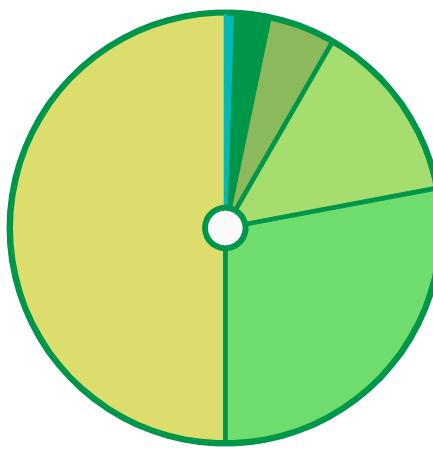
Portage has a variety of park spaces and other public recreational trails and facilities. Numerous county, private and non-profit facilities are also found within the community and county and are highlighted as part of the inventory. The Portage Parks and Recreation Department controls and manages over **1,000 acres** of land which include developed parks, undeveloped land, natural areas, and recent acquisitions (Refer to Figure 4.1).

The NRPA has established generally recognized standards for classifying types of parkland based on size and function which provide a means for determining the primary purpose or use of existing facilities in a community. These designations have been adopted by the MDNR; and provide one method of defining the purpose and use of facilities.

Typically, smaller open spaces address localized needs, while larger parks and open space draw users from farther away for destination activities. The uses offered at a park vary by category. Mini Parks are specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population of specific groups. Neighborhood parks are considered the most critical for local, walkable park access and community health as these types of parks provide a range of playground amenities and recreational opportunities for residents. Community parks are larger in size and often feature a greater concentration of sports fields and other recreation amenities to meet demand for a broader area. Large urban parks serve a wider area than community parks and focus on meeting community based recreational needs as well as preserving unique landscapes. Natural resource areas are lands set aside for preservation of natural resources. These sites are typically

unsuitable for development but can support recreational activities at a level that preserves the integrity of the natural resource. Special use parks are areas for specialized or single purpose recreational activities.

Approximately half of Portages' park acreage is held in four natural resource parks totaling 427 acres. Three neighborhood parks comprise 34.7 acres, six community parks add 138.2 acres, three large urban parks add 267 acres, three special use parks add 5.4 acres, and one mini park adds



<span style="background-color: #c8e6c9; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px;"></span>	Natural Resource Parks: 427 acres
<span style="background-color: #90ee90; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px;"></span>	Large Urban Parks: 267 acres
<span style="background-color: #90ee90; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px;"></span>	Community Parks: 138.2 acres
<span style="background-color: #90ee90; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px;"></span>	Neighborhood Parks: 34.7 acres
<span style="background-color: #336633; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px;"></span>	Special Use Parks: 5.4 acres
<span style="background-color: #0070C0; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px;"></span>	Mini Parks: 0.54 acres

another half-acre to the park system. Per the NRPA guidelines, park and recreation categories include associated service areas for each park type that indicate a minimum standard for geographic balance and availability of each park type in the park system.

Classifying parks ensures the entire community is served by a wide range of park and recreational activities. Service areas for park types include:

**Mini Parks: 1/4 mile or less**  
**Neighborhood Parks: 1/4 - 1/2 miles**  
**Community Parks: 1/2 to 3 miles**  
**Large Urban Parks: varies based on use**  
**Natural Areas: varies based on availability**  
**Special Use Parks: varies based on use**

### MINI PARK



- 1 Mini Park
- Under 1 acre
- Address unique, or specialized recreation needs
- Typically clustered in urban or dense areas
- Complement neighborhood parks in dense areas

### NEIGHBORHOOD PARK



- 3 Neighborhood Parks
- 1 -10 acres
- Located in neighborhoods with family activities
- Walkable for residents
- Can provide active and passive uses

### COMMUNITY PARK



- 6 Community Parks
- 10-50 acres
- Meet broad community recreation needs
- May contain specialized recreation facilities
- Contribute to a connected system

### LARGE URBAN PARK



- 3 Large Urban Parks
- 50-75 acres
- Serve a broad purpose
- Focus on meeting community recreation needs
- May preserve unique landscapes/ open space

### NATURAL RESOURCE PARK



- 4 Natural Resource Parks
- Acreage varies based on availability
- Preservation of significant natural resources
- Typically unsuitable for development
- Supports passive recreational activities

### SPECIAL USE PARK



- 3 Special Use Parks
- Acreage varies based on use and location
- Single or specialized recreation activities
- May contain historic or cultural uses

## Barrier Free Accessibility

Federal and State laws require all areas of public service to be accessible to all persons including those with limited sight, hearing, mobility, and comprehension. Developed park facilities must comply with barrier-free design standards. Park facilities in the City of Portage have been reviewed to understand the need for improvements relating to barrier-free accessibility. In addition, as park development is considered in the future, barrier-free accessibility is a significant priority item to help ensure that recreation can be enjoyed by all residents and visitors of the city. Following is a ranking system in accordance with MDNR standards:

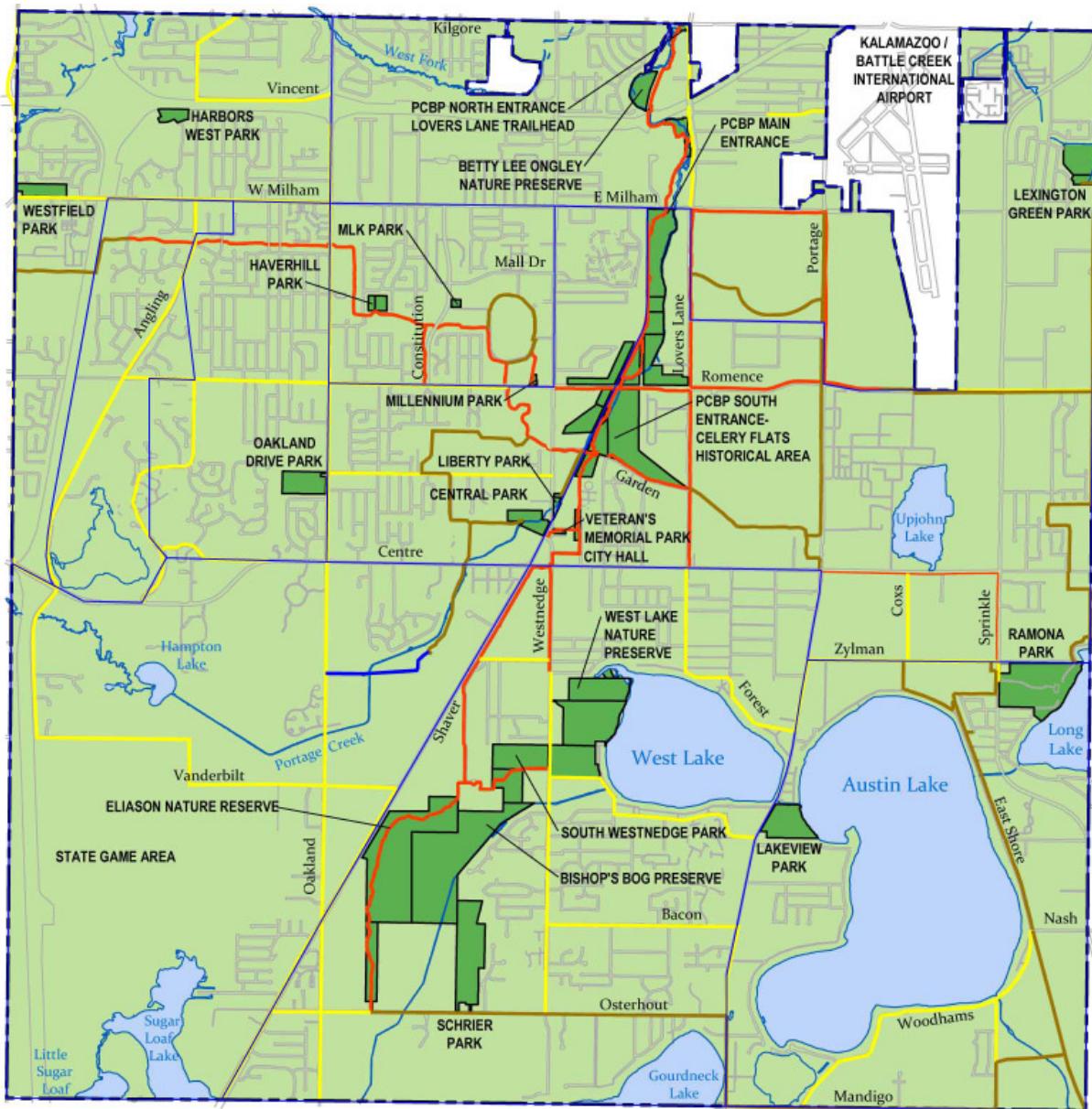
- 0 = Completely undeveloped, no paved surface, left in a natural state.
- 1 = None of the facilities in the park meet accessibility guidelines.
- 2 = Some of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines.
- 3 = Most of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines.
- 4 = All of the facilities meet accessibility guidelines.
- 5 = Universal design guidelines were used to design the entire park.

## Existing Parks

As part of the methodology of determining present-day and future needs of the Portage residents, the existing park facilities were examined. This combined with current trends, comparison to park standards, and community feedback (discussed later) will help the parks department anticipate and plan for future user needs. The project team visited each park to observe existing facilities to understand defining features, quality and condition of existing facilities, quantity of amenities, and level of accessibility. This field analysis was completed during the summer months on 2022.

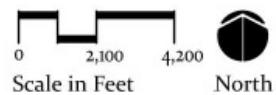


Figure 4.1 - Recreation Areas and Facilities Map

**LEGEND**

<span style="background-color: green; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px;"></span>	PARKS PROPERTY	<span style="border: 1px dashed black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px;"></span>	CITY BOUNDARY
<span style="color: red; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px;"></span>	MULTI-USE TRAIL	<span style="color: yellow; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px;"></span>	PROPOSED TRAIL
<span style="color: yellow; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px;"></span>	PAVED SHOULDER BIKEWAY		

**City of Portage**  
**Recreation and Open Space Plan**  
**Recreation Areas and Facilities**



# Betty Lee Ongley Nature Preserve

Location:	350 East Kilgore Rd.
Size:	11 Ac
Accessibility:	0
Park Type:	Natural Resource Park

## Description

The Betty Lee Ongley Nature Preserve property was donated to the city by Claudette Reid and Richard Krass in 2017 and is named after the city's first female mayor who was a well-known community activist and volunteer. The vacant, wooded property is bounded by Portage Creek on the south and west side, the Grand Elk railroad on the east, and city owned property to the north. The preserve is also adjacent to the Portage Creek Bicentennial Park and trails, but does not have public access yet. The preserve will allow the city to maintain the natural features of the site and provide residents the opportunity to enjoy the flora and fauna of the site.



## Park Features

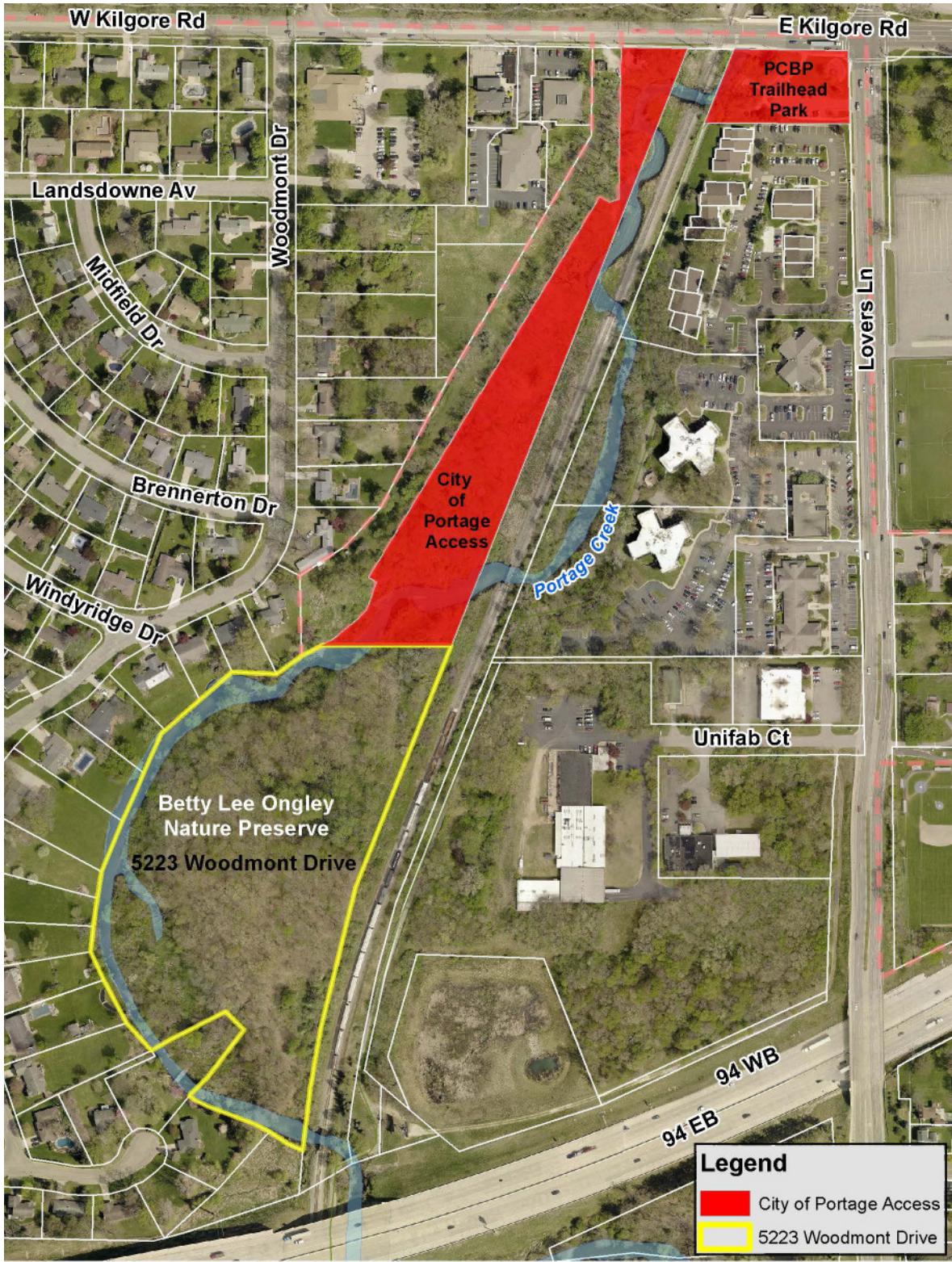
- Natural areas
- Nature viewing
- Hiking
- Named after first women mayor



## Opportunities

- The preserve contains undeveloped natural areas that should remain undisturbed. However the addition of additional trails, boardwalks, and nature viewing decks could be added.
- Addition of entry parking area and signage.
- Pedestrian bridge.
- Nature based programs.
- Interpretive / education signage

# Betty Lee Ongley Nature Preserve



## MDNR Grant History

- None

# Bishops Bog

Location:	9920 South Westnedge Ave
Size:	152 Ac
Accessibility:	2
Park Type:	Natural Resource Park

## Description

This natural park is located northwest of Schrier Park and south of South Westnedge Park. Named for the original Bishop family that settled in this area of Portage, the land was donated in the early 1980's by Jake Dekkinga and Jack Jansma. Bishop's Bog, the largest "relict" bog in southern Michigan, has been registered with the Nature Conservancy. A "relic" bog is a wetland displaying conditions that existed immediately following the glacial retreat. It is uncommon for this type of bog, which harbors a number of rare plants, to be found in southern Michigan. A linear trail connecting Bishop's Bog to South Westnedge and Schrier parks allows for nature study without disturbing this unique environment.



## Park Features

- Multi-use recreational trail
- Wood chip nature trail
- Floating boardwalk
- Nature viewing
- Rare and protected flora and fauna
- Parking at South Westnedge Park



## MDNR Grant History

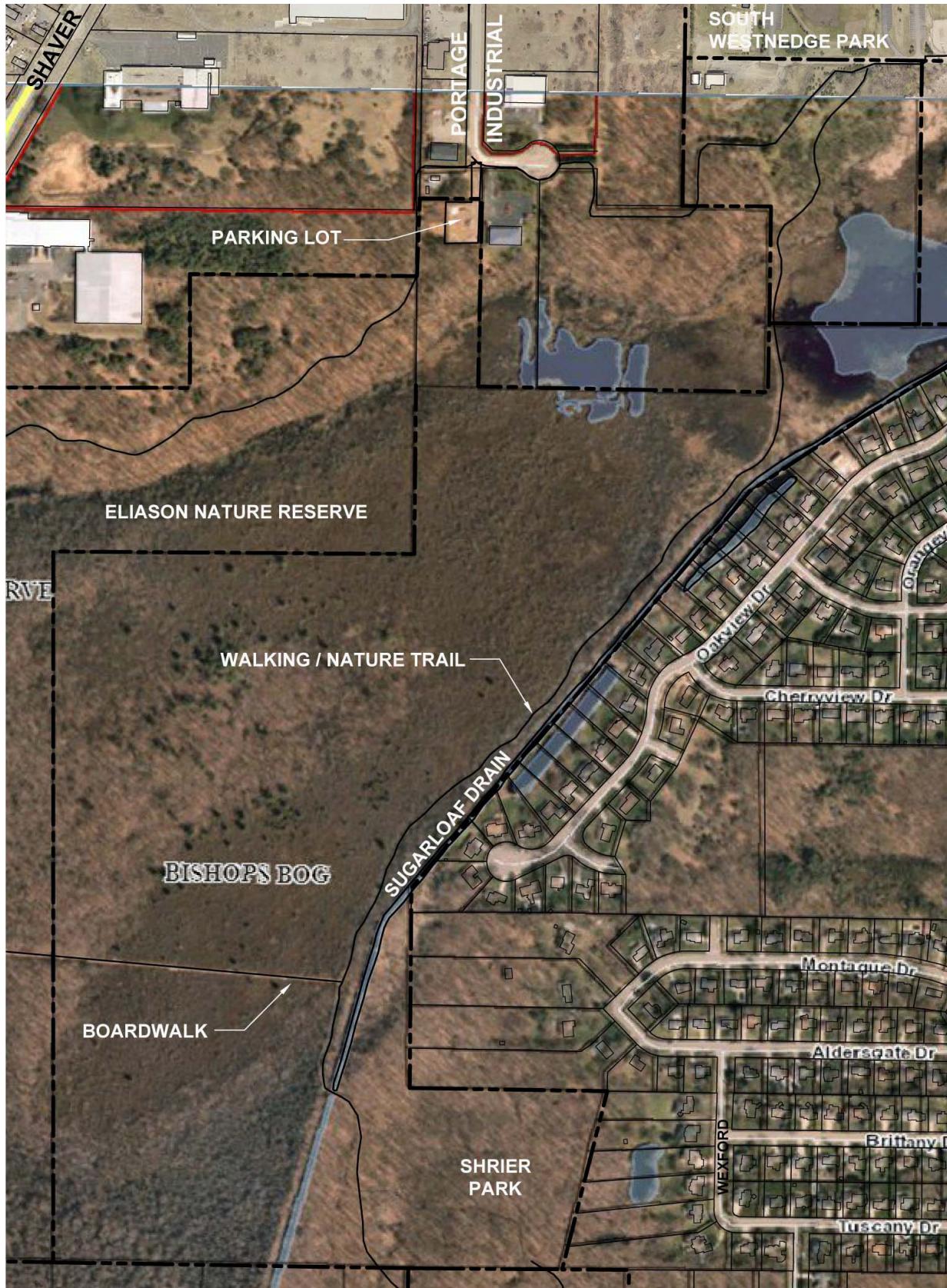
- 1995 Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund  
- \$150,000
- 2002 Kalamazoo Foundation - \$10,000.



## Opportunities

- Replace floating docks with new decking system.
- Additional nature trails.
- Nature based programs.
- Interpretive / education signage.
- Barrier free parking.

## Bishops Bog



# Celery Flats Historical Area

Location:	7335 Garden Lane
Size:	86 Ac
Accessibility:	4
Park Type:	Large Urban Park

## Description

Celery Flats was named after the city's rich celery farming heritage, which began in the 1860's and significantly enhanced the growth of Portage. Established in 1988, the Celery Flats Historical Area was developed to preserve the waterway of Portage Creek, provide diverse recreational opportunities, and highlight Portage history. The first structure built was the Celery Flats Interpretive Center in 1988, which was replaced with a stone pavilion in 2019. Other historic structures, displaced by development, were moved to the area, including the District #8 One-room Schoolhouse, Grain Elevator, Hayloft Theater, and Stuart Manor.



## Park Features

- Multi-use recreational trail
- Picnic Areas
- Restrooms
- Pavilion
- Historical Buildings
- Amphitheater
- Grain Elevator
- Hayloft Theater
- Stuart Manor
- District #8 Schoolhouse
- Pond
- Parking

# Celery Flats Historical Area



## Opportunities

- Continued maintenance.
- Parking for south side of site.
- Site furnishings.
- Lighting.
- Landscaping.

## MDNR Grant History

- 1988 Michigan Equity Fund - \$25,000
- 1988 Upjohn Company - \$100,000
- 1988 Kalamazoo Foundation - \$110,000
- 1992 Gilmore Foundation \$75,000
- 1992 Kalamazoo Foundation - \$30,000
- 1992 Upjohn Foundation - \$30,000
- 1992 Dalton Foundation - \$10,000
- 1994 Kalamazoo Foundation - \$300,000
- 1994 Inland Fisheries - \$10,000
- 1995 Michigan Equity Fund - \$25,000
- 1995 Upjohn Foundation - \$10,000

# Central Park

Location:	7800 Shaver Rd
Size:	12 Ac
Accessibility:	3
Park Type:	Community Park

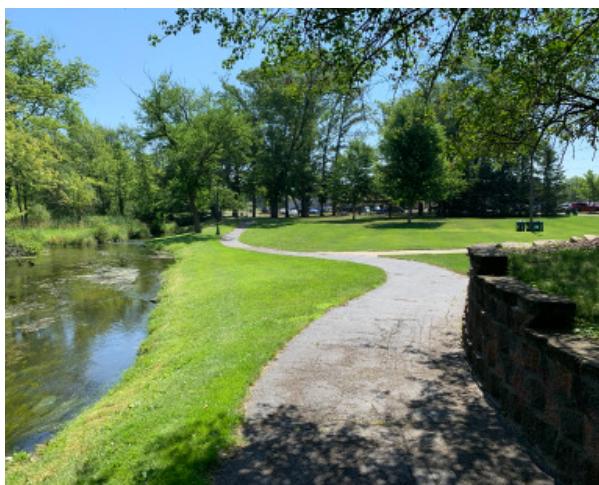
## Description

Nestled in a bend of Portage Creek behind the City of Portage Public Safety complex, Central Park is a hidden jewel. Central Park is home to the Overlander Band shell which hosts several outdoor concerts throughout the summer season. Portage Creek also winds through the site offering passive recreational opportunities.

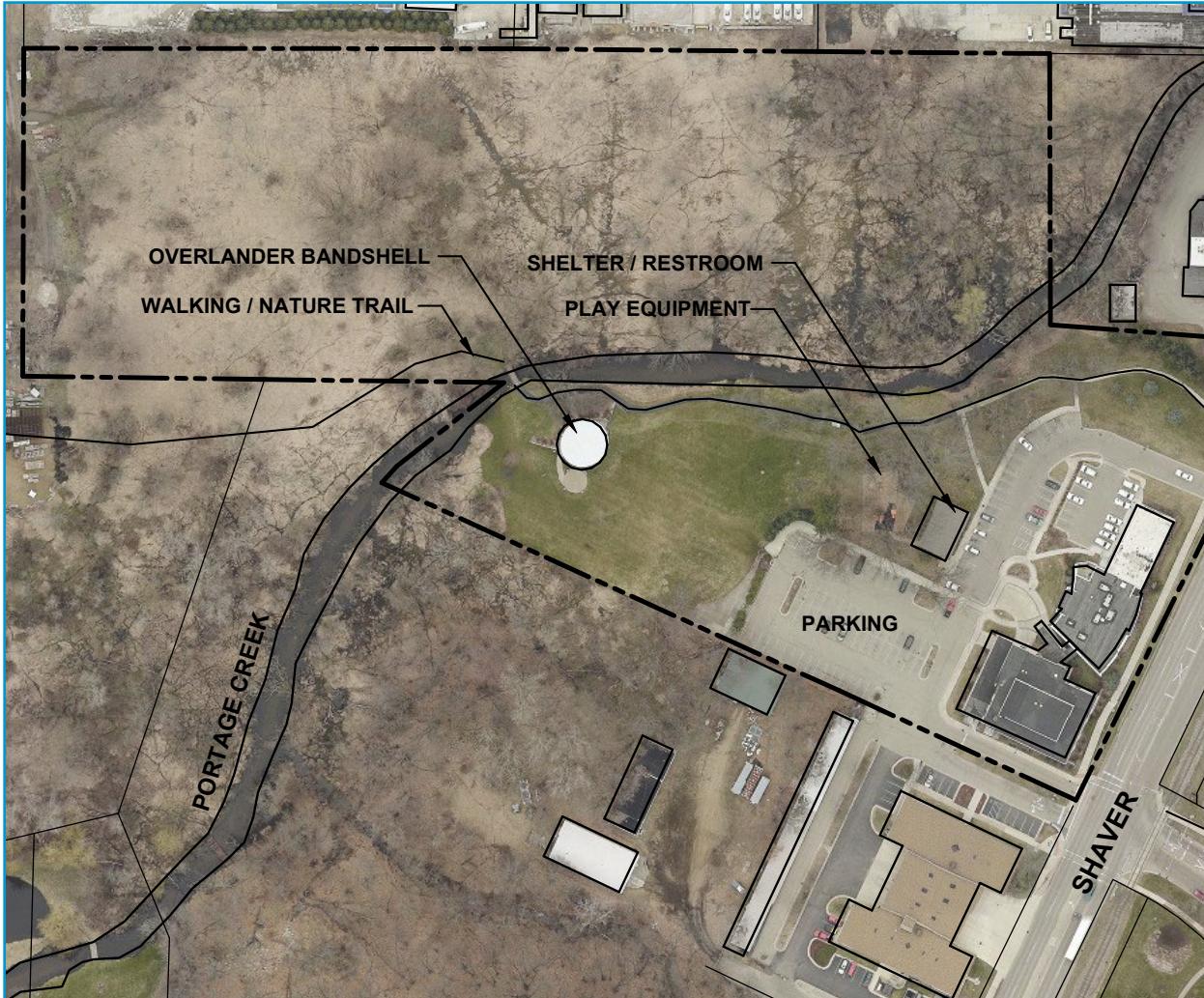


## Park Features

- Multi-use recreational trail
- Band shell
- Playground
- Picnic shelter
- Restrooms
- Footbridge
- Parking
- Open free play space
- Nature observation
- Fishing



# Central Park



## MDNR Grant History

- None

## Opportunities /

- Some grills and benches are not barrier free.
- Updates to the restroom / picnic pavilion
- Trail maintenance.
- Consider adding overlook deck.
- Develop north side of property.
- Extend paved trail from pedestrian bridge.

# Eliason Nature Reserve

Location:	1614 West Osterhout Ave
Size:	145 Ac
Accessibility:	3
Park Type:	Natural Resource Park

## Description

In 2011 Linda Eliason donated 123 acres to the city as a memorial to her late husband, David J. Eliason, former president of the Eliason Company. In 2013, another 18 acres was purchased to provide for access to Osterhout Avenue. The property is a combination of upland and wetland ecosystems and contains a large segment of Bishop's Bog, bringing a majority of the bog under city ownership. The first phase development was completed in the summer of 2016 when a 1.6 mile recreational non-motorized trail was completed, linking Osterhout to the existing network of trails at Portage Industrial Drive. The Reserve boasts a rich diversity of wildlife species including butterflies, grasshoppers, mound building ants, and numerous grassland birds.



## Park Features

- Multi-use recreational trail
- Pavilion
- Bike repair and air fill stations
- Nature Observation
- Parking
- Connections to Bishop's Bog and Schrier Park

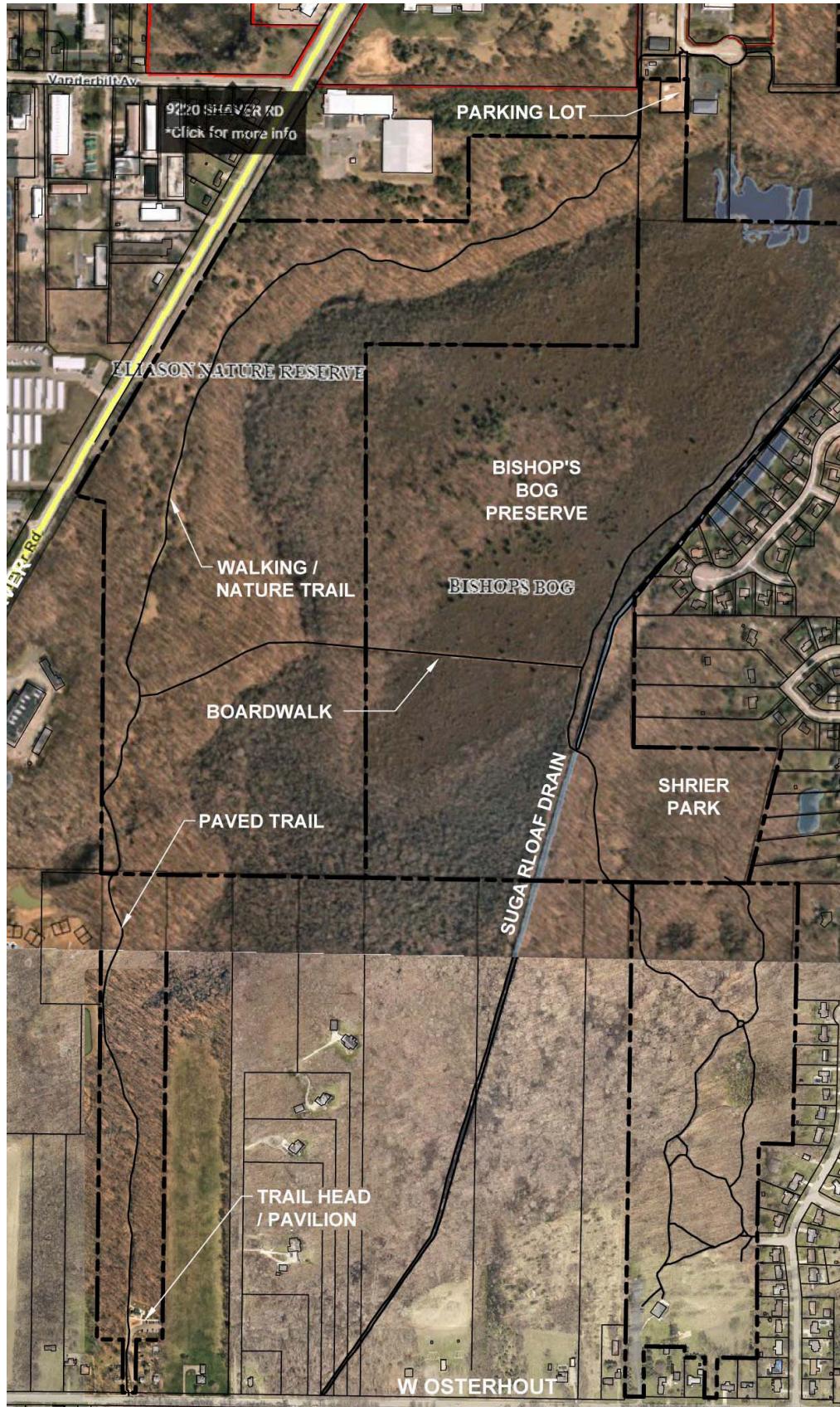
## MDNR Grant History

- None

## Opportunities

- Consider the addition of trails, boardwalks, and nature viewing decks could be added
- Additional nature trails
- Invasive species program
- Interpretive signs
- Nature based programming

## Eliason Nature Reserve



# Harbors West Park

Location:	3458 Summersong Path
Size:	6 Ac
Accessibility:	3
Park Type:	Neighborhood Park

## Description

Harbors West is located north of Milham Avenue, just west of Angling Road in the Harbors West neighborhood. Harbors West Park features play equipment, volleyball and two basketball half courts, a restroom/picnic shelter and a youth in-line hockey rink. An asphalt walking trail system and open play spaces are also provided. The park is popular for family events and youth team activities. The park services the adjacent neighborhood and is heavily used.



## Park Features

- Multi-use recreational trail
- Restroom / pavilion structure
- Sand volleyball court
- Basketball courts (2 half courts)
- In-line hockey
- Playground equipment
- Grills
- Picnic areas
- Open space for free play
- Parking



# Harbors West Park



## Opportunities

- Add accessible paths to the sand volleyball courts and grills.
- Resurface parking lot.
- Update playground equipment.
- Add benches along walking paths.

## MDNR Grant History

- 2000 Land and Water Conservation Fund - \$100,000.

# Haverhill Park

Location:	6577 Hampton St
Size:	5.7 Ac
Accessibility:	3
Park Type:	Neighborhood Park

## Description

Nestled in the beautiful, oak-lined Haverhill neighborhood, this park offers basketball and tennis courts, open play areas with picnic tables, playground facilities, pickle ball courts a youth in-line hockey rink and restrooms. Haverhill Park is adjacent to Haverhill Elementary school which provides additional recreational space for this heavily populated portion of Portage. Directly connected to the Northwest Bikeway trail, Haverhill Park is a popular stopping point for trail users.

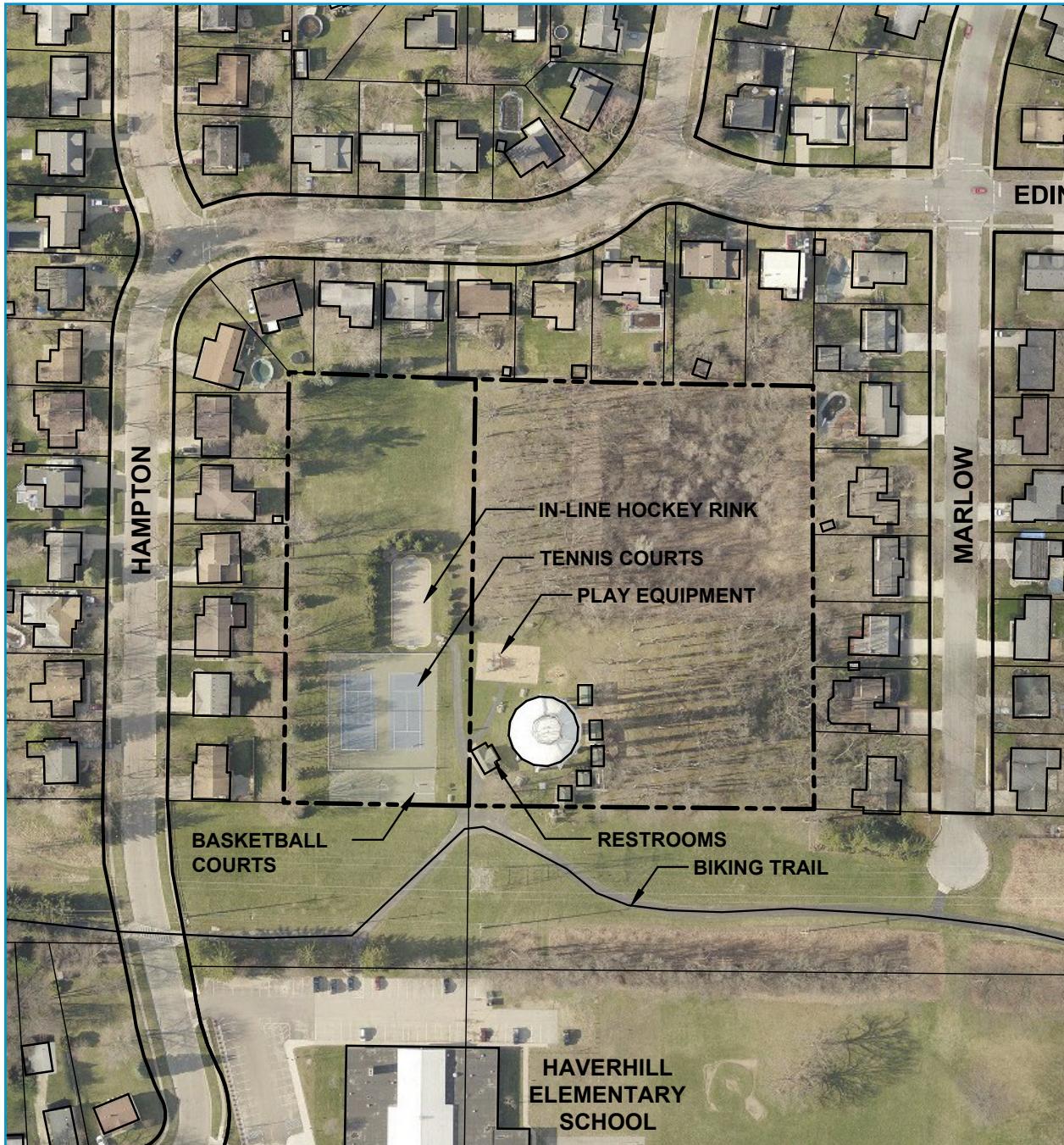


## Park Features

- Multi-use recreational trail
- Two tennis courts (also lined for pickle ball)
- Restroom building
- Basketball courts (3 half courts)
- Playground equipment
- In-line hockey
- Picnic areas
- Parking at the adjacent school



# Haverhill Park



## Opportunities

- No designated barrier free parking spaces.
- Add accessible paths to grills
- Update playground equipment
- Utilize undeveloped portions of site

## MDNR Grant History

- None

# Lakeview Park

Location:	9345 Portage Rd
Size:	26 Ac
Accessibility:	4
Park Type:	Community Park

## Description

Lakeview is a scenic park with 1,200-feet of shoreline along the western shore of Austin Lake and is a popular location for picnicking as well as family reunions, birthday parties, and other gathering occasions. The park was established in 1970 and is one of the oldest parks in the City. Fishing piers provide access to anglers of all abilities and the interior trail system provides a variety of options and routes for exercise or relaxation. In addition, multiple active recreational facilities provide opportunities for all age groups to enjoy. Lakeview Park also offers a large rolling open area with walkways and a wildflower meadow for passive enjoyment.



## Park Features

- Multi-use recreational trail
- Baseball / softball field
- Two playgrounds
- One tennis court
- Four pickle ball courts
- Two sand volleyball courts
- Two picnic pavilions
- Two basketball courts
- Restrooms
- Boardwalk
- Two overlook decks
- Fishing
- Grills
- Picnic areas
- Parking

# Lakeview Park



## Opportunities

- A new master plan has been developed for the park which includes expanded parking, sledding hill, an amphitheater, and many other improvements. The city plans to begin implementing the elements from the master plan with a four phased approach that may begin in 2023.

## MDNR Grant History

- 1970 Land and Water Conservation Fund - \$18,000
- 2000 Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund - \$200,000.

# Lexington Green Park

Location:	4750 Pittsford Ave
Size:	23 Ac
Accessibility:	3
Park Type:	Neighborhood Park

## Description

Lexington Green was established in 1975 and is located in the northeastern area of the City. The park is surrounded by the Lexington Green neighborhood and is heavily used by the adjacent community. The park is also accessible with parking from both Pittsford Ave and Belard St. The park is adjacent to Davis Creek, which is a major urban tributary to the Kalamazoo River and provides passive recreation opportunities around the lush forested and wetland areas.



## Park Features

- Multi-use recreational trail
- Baseball / softball diamond
- Basketball courts (2)
- Tennis court
- Pickle ball courts (2)
- Bicycle skills course and pump track
- Picnic shelters (2)
- Restrooms
- Playground equipment
- In-line hockey
- Nature trails
- Open space for free play
- Picnic areas with grills
- Parking



## Opportunities

- Accessible path to the ball field is needed.
- Many benches, picnic tables, and grills are not accessible.
- Updated restroom facility.



# Lexington Green Park



## MDNR Grant History

- 2022 Land and Water Conservation Fund - \$500,000

# Liberty Park

Location:	7647 South Westnedge Ave
Size:	3 Ac
Accessibility:	4
Park Type:	Special Use Park

## Description

Liberty Park is located in the Portage City Centre, and was the result of an environmental and economic development initiative undertaken by the City of Portage. The park area cleans polluted storm water runoff from the South Westnedge Avenue drainage area and prevents pollutants from entering Portage Creek. This urban park features floral displays, a boardwalk and water features. A deck area overlooks Portage Creek and is a perfect spot for natures study.



## Park Features

- Multi-use recreational trail
- Nature trails
- Boardwalk
- Fishing
- Shelter
- Wildlife and nature viewing
- Landscaping



## MDNR Grant History

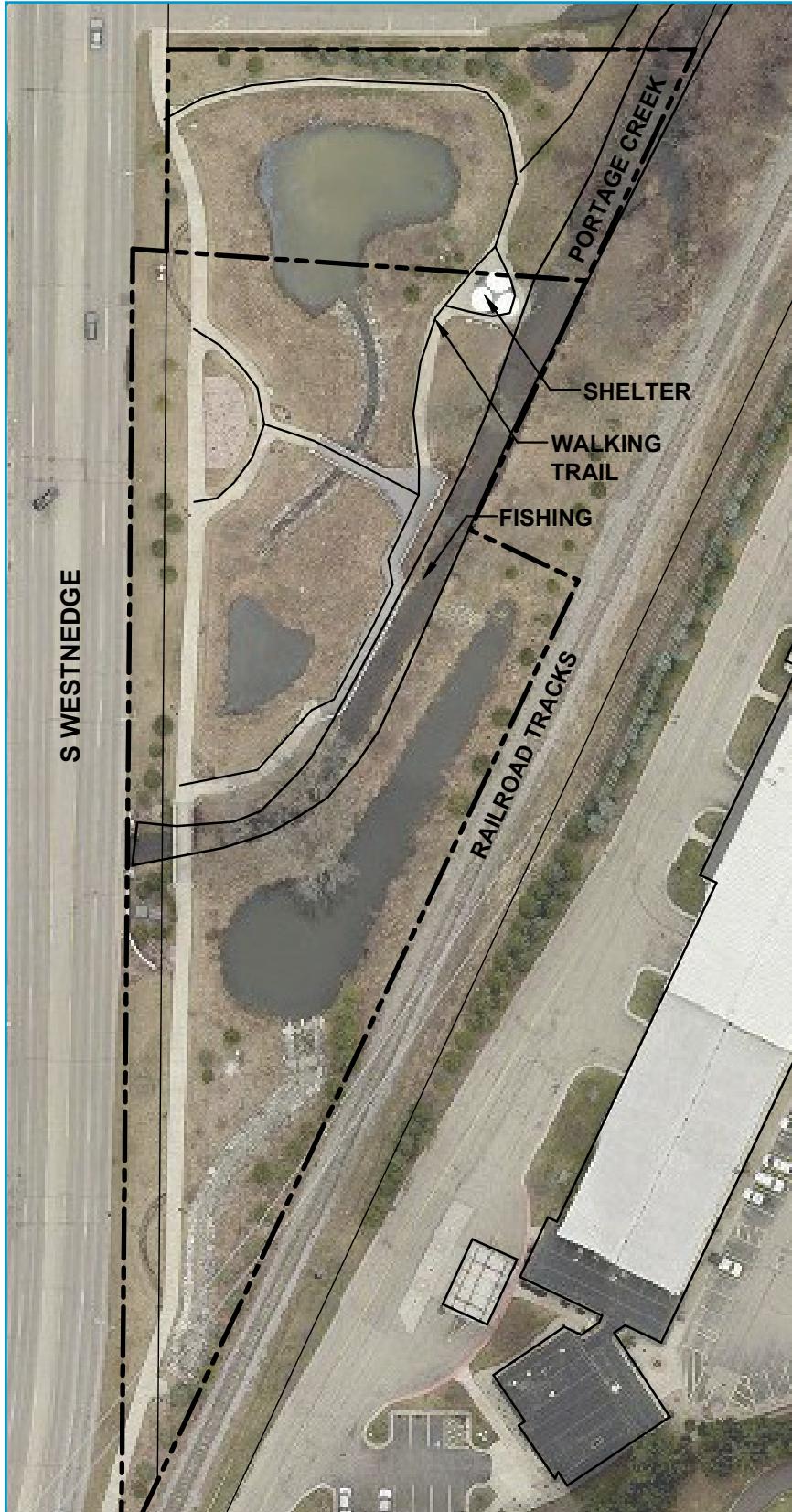
- None



## Opportunities

- Invasive species program.
- Continued maintenance.
- Interpretive signage.
- Nature based programming.

## Liberty Park



# Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park

Location:	1000 Martin Luther King Jr Dr
Size:	0.54 Ac
Accessibility:	4
Park Type:	Mini Park

## Description

One of the city's newest park developments, MLK Park is a mini park that celebrates the life and contributions of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Located at the intersection of Constitution Blvd and Martin Luther King Dr, this urban park provides the community with an opportunity to learn and reflect on the impact of this great leader. The park design was guided by a design committee which included members who marched with Dr. King when he visited Western Michigan University in December of 1963 as part of the "Conscience of America" lecture series. The park features sculptures by a local artist including a bust of Dr. King.



## Park Features

- Sculptures
- Gardens
- Parking
- Seating areas
- Lighting
- Walking paths
- Interpretive signage
- Digital informational kiosk

## MDNR Grant History

- None.

## DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR PARK INFORMATION:

*This park was made possible by the efforts of the Park Design Committee: Sydney Davis, Dr. Monifa Jumanne, Donna Odom, and Dr. Romeo Phillips.*

*Thank you for working to bring this park to life.*



### PARK FEATURES:

- ① **FIVE BRONZE SCULPTURES** highlighting Dr. King and his messages, created by local artist Brent Harris:
  - 1a - Dr. King
  - 1b & 1c - Unity Arch
  - 1d & 1e - Children Are The Future
- ② **GARDEN OF HOPE** rose and flower garden, reflecting the *I Have A Dream World Peace Rose Garden*:
  - Pink roses representing Mrs. Coretta Scott King's continuation of Dr. King's work;
  - White roses honoring the special bond and similarity of peace movements between Dr. King and Mahatma Gandhi;
  - Red roses honoring all African Americans and their contributions to the history of the United States and the World.
  - Clusters of other flowers, such as hydrangeas, iris, coneflowers, and daylilies symbolize the nations of the world and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s messages of peace through non-violence.
- ③ **BEACON OF LIGHT** landscape starburst corridors paying tribute to the brilliance of Dr. King's ideals

## Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park



# Millennium Park

Location: 280 Romance Rd  
Size: 1.3 Ac  
Accessibility: 4  
Park Type: Special Use Park

## Description

This high profile one-acre site on Romance Road is home to the first refrigerated outdoor ice skating rink in southwest Michigan. The city provides a staffed skate rental concession and warming house during the winter season. In the spring the park is transformed into a reflecting pond. Easily accessible by bicycle, Millennium Park is located in the heart of the shopping district.

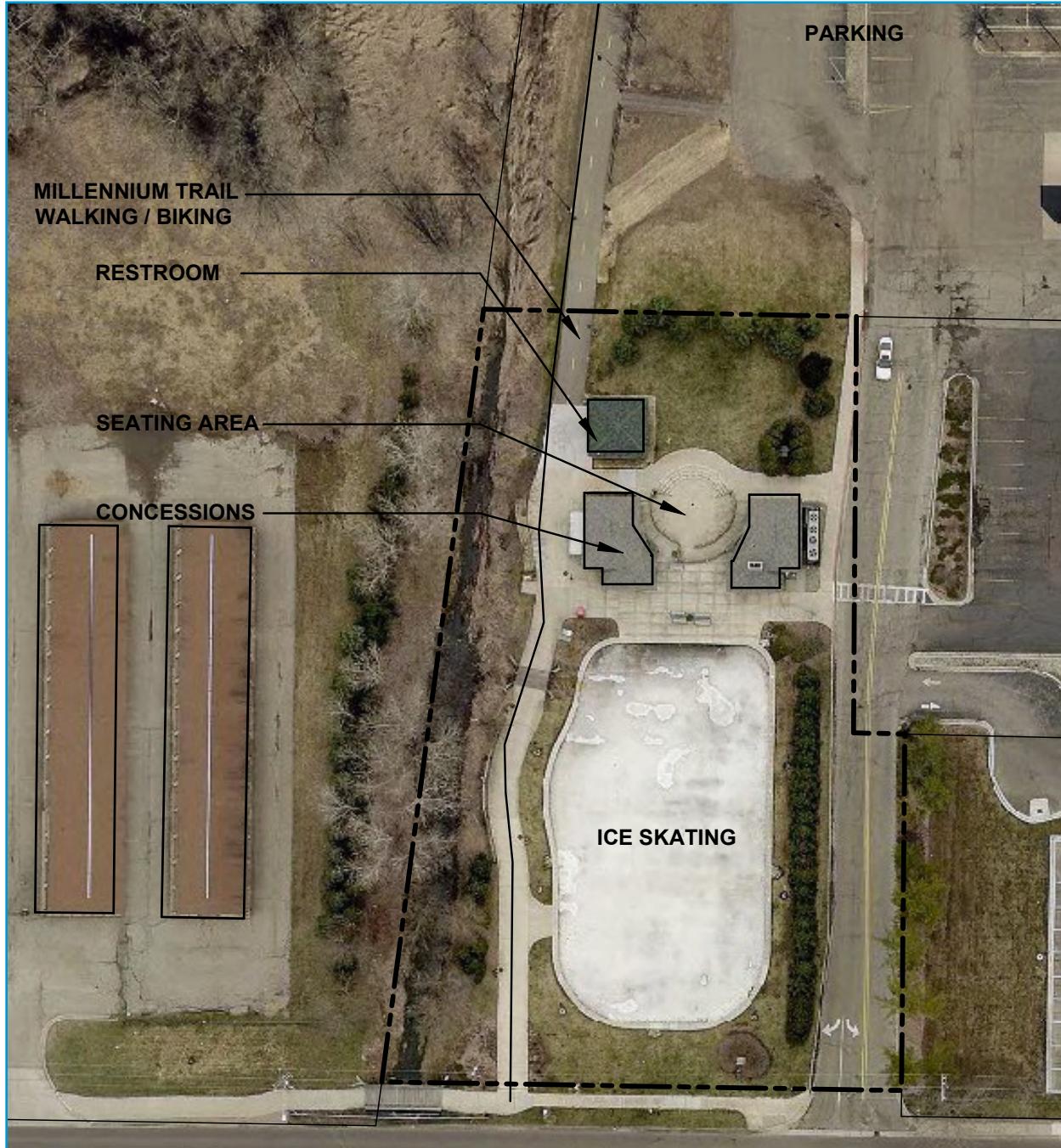


## Park Features

- Ice rink
- Ice skating and skate rentals
- Concessions
- Restrooms
- Warming house
- Bicycle trail
- Reflecting pond
- Parking



# Millennium Park



## Opportunities

- Barrier-free parking spaces are not delineated.
- Reopen concessions.
- Summer activities.

## MDNR Grant History

- None

# Oakland Drive Park

Location:	7650 Oakland Dr
Size:	19.2 Ac
Accessibility:	3
Park Type:	Community Park

## Description

Situated among mature wooded areas, Oakland Drive Park is a heavily used park that provides a diverse array of passive and active facilities. The park is located on Oakland Dr, approximately one-half mile north of Centre Ave. The meadow and woodlot provides opportunities for passive enjoyment and nature study, and the fields, courts, and play equipment provide opportunities for active recreation. The park also features a sledding hill which provides the community with activities in the winter.



## Park Features

- Playground equipment
- Baseball/softball diamond
- Basketball courts (2)
- Restroom / pavilion structure
- Soccer fields (2)
- Tennis / pickle ball courts (2)
- Sand volleyball court
- Sledding hill
- Picnic areas with grills
- Nature trails
- Nature viewing
- Parking

# Oakland Drive Park



## Opportunities

- Add barrier free paths to the sand volleyball court, soccer fields, or baseball field.
- Resurface parking lot
- Update playground equipment
- Update restrooms

## MDNR Grant History

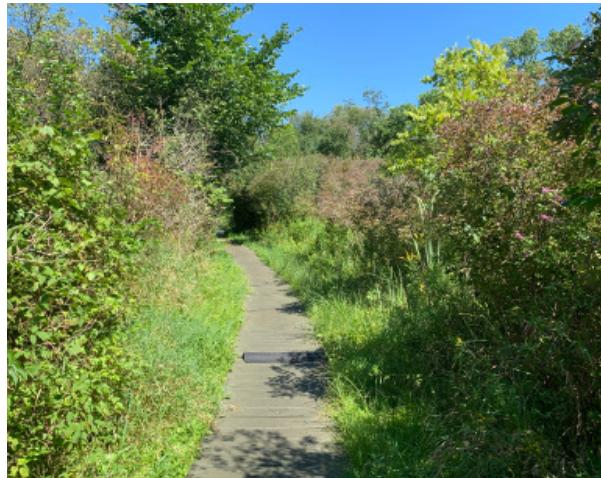
- None

# Portage Creek Bicentennial Park

Location:	910 East Milham Ave
Size:	114 Ac
Accessibility:	4
Park Type:	Large Urban Park

## Description

The “backbone” of the Portage park system, Portage Creek Bicentennial Park (PCBP) was the official city project to honor the nation’s 200th birthday. Spanning over 100 acres, PCBP is a linear facility that runs between the City Centre Area and the northern city limits at Kilgore Road, connected by a 3.5 mile multi-use trail. In total, PCBP has over 8 miles of hiking and biking trails with several opportunities to view scenic Portage Creek. The park is also served by a trail head facility at Lovers Lane to the north, and is connected to the Celery Flats Historical Area at Garden Lane to the south. The park protects the sensitive environment of the Portage Creek basin and offers residents many opportunities to enjoy the creek - from overlook decks to kayaking.



## Park Features

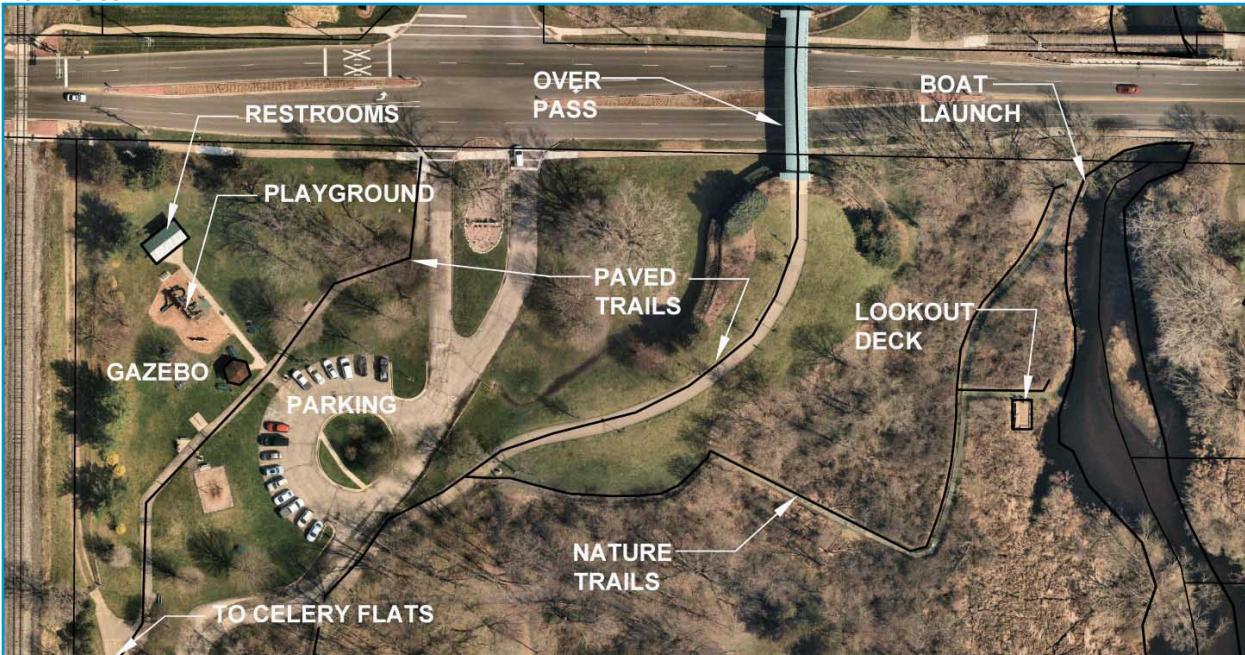
- Multi-use recreational trail
- Air filling station
- Restrooms
- Playground equipment
- Boat launch
- Boardwalk
- Nature trails
- Overlook deck
- Nature viewing
- Gazebo
- Trailhead with restrooms and gazebo
- Fishing
- Picnic areas with grills
- Parking

# Portage Creek Bicentennial Park

## Trailhead Site



## Park Site



## Opportunities

- Replacement of floating docks with new decking system.
- Additional nature trails.
- Paved trail maintenance
- Canoe Launch Repair

## MDNR Grant History

- 1987 Private Donation- \$45,000
- 1980 Land and Water Conservation Fund - \$50,000.
- 1998 Kalamazoo County Infrastructure Fund - \$50,000
- 1998 Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund - \$113,000
- 1999 - Clean Michigan Initiative - \$220,000
- 2000 - Clean Michigan Initiative - \$225,000

# Ramona Park

Location:	8600 South Sprinkle Rd
Size:	67 Ac
Accessibility:	3
Park Type:	Large Urban Park

## Description

Ramona Park was established in 1968 with the purchase of land from Therese Remine, who had inherited the property from Henry and Carrie Waruf. The park gets its name from the title character of Helen Hunt Jackson's immensely popular novel "Ramona" which was published in 1884. The park was once home to the Ramona Palace which was popular for music and dancing until the 1940's. The park also was previously used as a storage space for ice blocks cut from the lake. Ramona Park is located along the shore of Long Lake and features the city's only beach area. Ramona is used for all types of recreation and is a popular location for family events and gatherings. The park can host parties for large groups of over 150.

## Park Features

- Multi-use recreational trail
- Baseball / softball diamond (2)
- Basketball courts (4)
- Playground equipment
- Tot lot
- Beach / swimming
- Fishing pier
- Soccer fields
- Picnic pavilions (2)
- Shade gazebo
- Beach house with concessions and restrooms
- Tennis court
- Pickle ball courts (12)
- Sand volleyball court
- Picnic areas with grills
- Nature trails
- Parking



# Ramona Park



## Opportunities

- Update baseball fields.
- Pickle ball facility.
- Waterfront improvements.
- Barrier free improvements to waterfront and picnic areas

## MDNR Grant History

- 1979 Land and Water Conservation Fund - \$30,000
- 1991 Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund - \$150,000.
- 1995 Kalamazoo Foundation - \$128,500
- 2008 Michigan Recreation and Parks Association, Access to Recreation - \$140,000

# Schrier Park

Location:	850 West Osterhout Ave
Size:	42 Ac
Accessibility:	3
Park Type:	Community Park

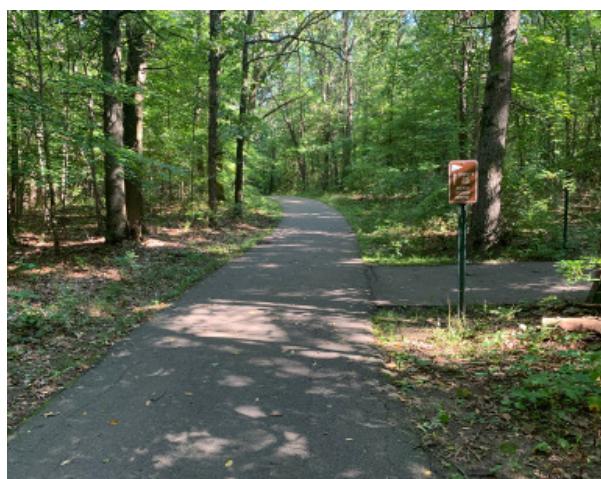
## Description

Schrier Park was named in recognition of Alice Schrier, whose generous estate provided the funds for a park in 1968 and made the acquisition of the park land in 1974. Located on Osterhout Ave, Schrier is the southern terminus of the South Central Greenway complex of five park facilities that include Bishop's Big, Eliason, South Westnedge, and West Lake. The park features an indoor park shelter with a fireplace that is a popular for year-round group rental; and several trail loops of varying lengths that offer peaceful hikes through natural areas as well as cross-country skiing in the winter.

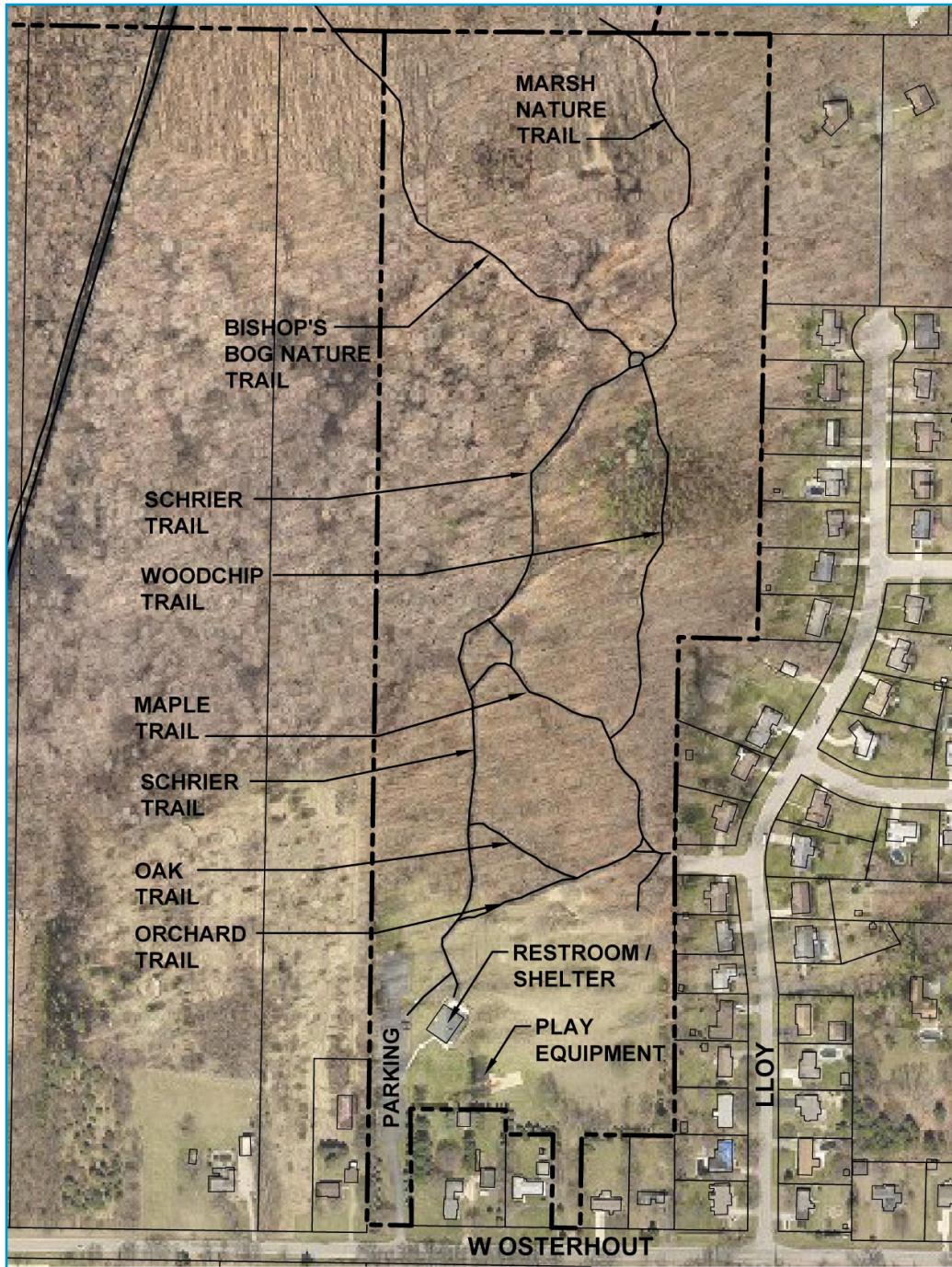


## Park Features

- Multi-use recreational trails
- Nature trails
- Indoor park structure with a fireplace
- Picnic pavilion
- Playground equipment
- Restrooms
- Picnic areas with grills
- Nature viewing
- Cross-country ski trails
- Parking at South Westnedge Park



# Schrier Park



## Opportunities

- Grills and picnic tables are not accessible
- Invasive species management.
- Nature trails
- Nature based programming.

## MDNR Grant History

- 1975 Land and Water Conservation Fund - \$50,000

# South Westnedge Park

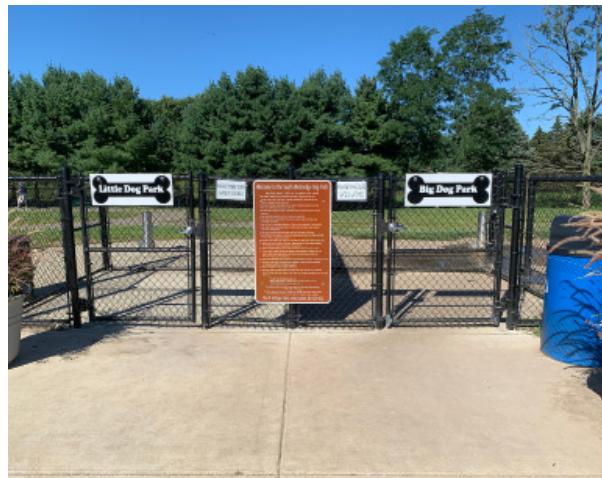
Location:	9010 South Westnedge Ave
Size:	27 Ac
Accessibility:	3
Park Type:	Community Park

## Description

South Westnedge Park is known as the premier softball complex in the region and is the largest field complex in the Portage park system. The park is home to adult softball leagues and tournaments between April - September and features the only lighted fields in the city. This park also features the only skate park and dog park in the city park system. The skate park is "street plaza" style and has become a popular destination for active youth and young adults. The dog park includes 2.5 acres of separate fenced in areas for both small dogs and large dogs and includes run areas, trails, water and waste stations, and seating areas. Thirteen acres to the south have been purchased for future development of an Archery Center.

## Park Features

- Softball fields (6)
- Dog park (both large and small)
- Skate park
- In-line hockey rink
- Bicycle trails
- Restrooms
- Picnic pavilion
- Picnic areas with grills
- Concessions
- Soccer field
- Trail connections to Bishop's Bog
- Parking



# South Westnedge Park



## Opportunities

- There are no accessible paths between the central parking lot, the lower softball fields, and the upper levels of the park.
- The existing stair case is not accessible.
- Picnic tables and grills are not accessible.

## MDNR Grant History

- 1989 Quality of Life Recreation Bond - \$70,000
- 2002 Land and Water Conservation Fund - \$150,000.
- 2003 Kalamazoo Foundation - \$10,000
- 2004 Private Donors - \$74,000
- 205 Private Donors - \$7,000

# Veterans Memorial Park

Location:	7801 South Westnedge Ave
Size:	1.1 Ac
Accessibility:	4
Park Type:	Special Use Park

## Description

This Veterans Memorial Park was created with the assistance of local Veteran Organizations, which provided the resources to construct the veterans memorial for commemorative ceremonies. The park was dedicated on November 11, 2005 and features five separate stones, flagpoles and displays the emblem of the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy. There are also stone engravings of quotes honoring those who served in the United States Military. The park also features a brick walkway with an estimated 1,100 engraved bricks honoring the names of veterans.

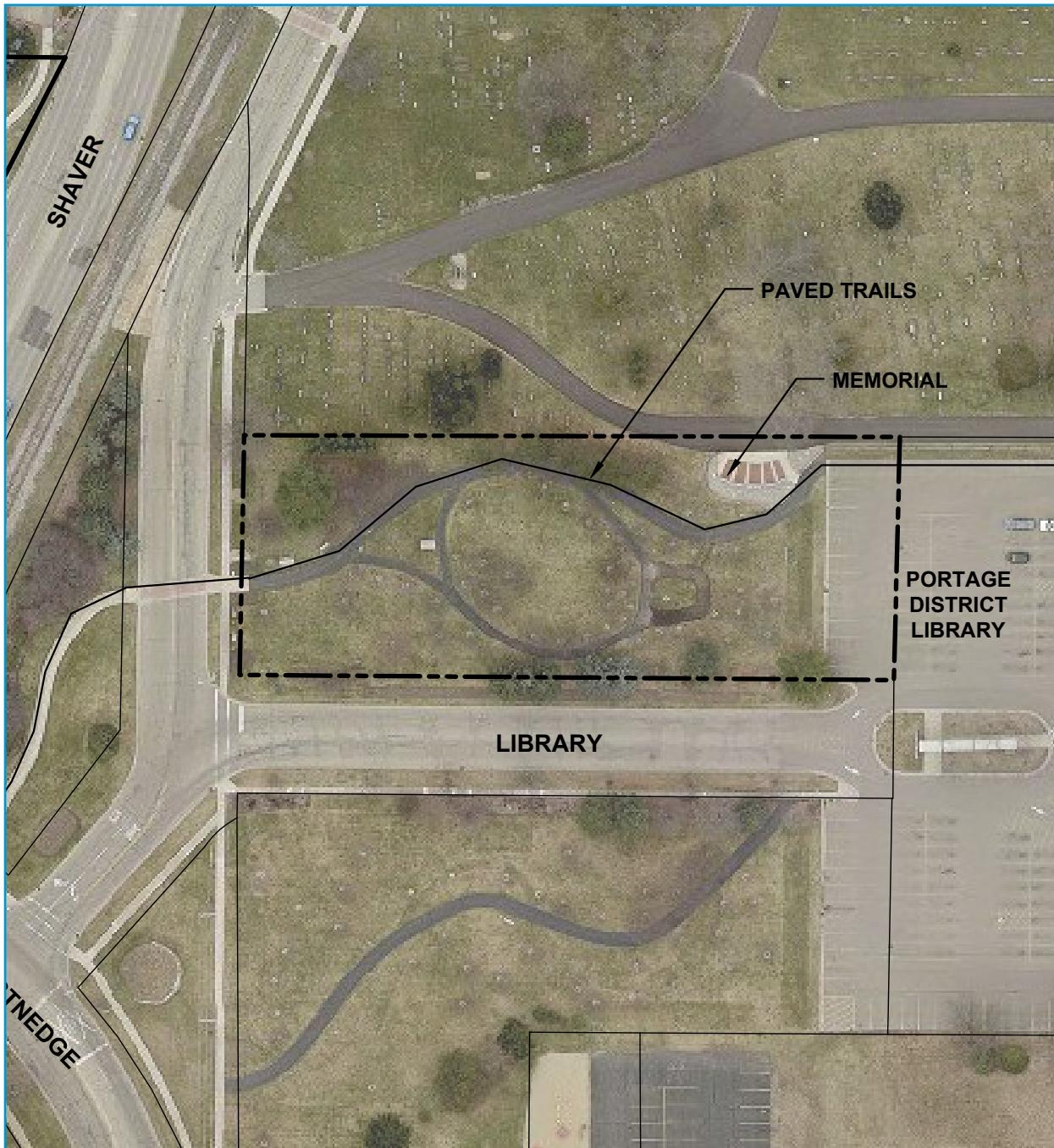


## Park Features

- Paved pathways
- Flagpoles
- Lighting
- Bicycle trail connections
- Memorial stones with engravings
- Landscape and hardscape features
- Parking at the adjacent library



# Veterans Memorial Park



## Opportunities

- Site furnishings.
- Historical programming / education.
- General Maintenance.

## MDNR Grant History

- None.

# West Lake Nature Preserve

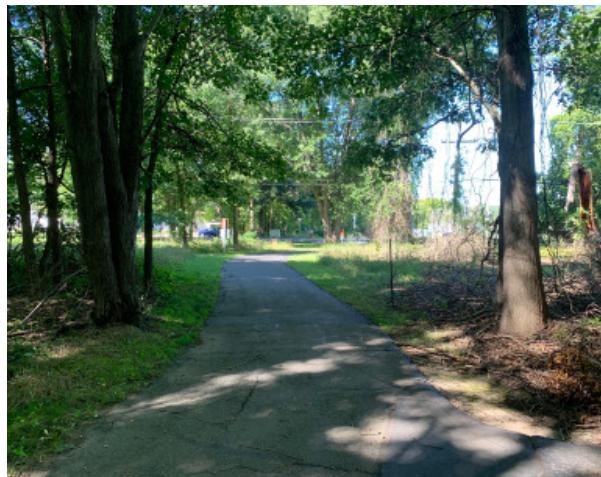
Location:	9001 South Westnedge Ave
Size:	110 Ac
Accessibility:	3
Park Type:	Natural Resource Park

## Description

West Lake Nature Preserve is a wetland bog that features 1,400 feet of frontage along West Lake and is within close proximity to the City Centre. The park features 2 miles of nature trails that wind through the shaded lowland forest, and overlook decks that offer panoramic views of West Lake. The park balances excellent recreational opportunities with the thoughtful preservation of the fragile ecosystem. The initial 80-acre parcel was purchased in 1979 from the Percy Matteson family; an additional 28 acres was acquired from Robert and Opal Peck and the remaining acreage was acquired from the MDNR in 1992. The park is a favorite spot for bird watching with a large variety of both resident and migrating species.

## Park Features

- Multi-use recreational trail
- Wood chip nature trail
- Floating boardwalk
- Viewing decks
- Bird watching
- Playground equipment
- Picnic shelter / restroom building
- Fishing
- Picnic areas with grills
- Unique plant species and animal habitat
- Upland, woodland, and sensitive wetlands
- Parking



# West Lake Nature Preserve



## Opportunities

- Replacement of floating docks with new decking system.
- Benches and grills are not barrier free.
- Playground does not have a barrier free ramp entrance.
- Invasive species program
- Nature / educational programming / signs

## MDNR Grant History

- 1978 Land and Water Conservation Fund - \$61,000
- 1987 Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund - \$100,000.
- 1989 Quality of Life Recreation Bond - \$50,000
- 2000 Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund - \$500,000

# Westfield Park

Location:	4500 West Milham Ave
Size:	12 Ac
Accessibility:	3
Park Type:	Community Park

## Description

Situated in northwest Portage at the intersection of two major thoroughfares (Milham and 12th St), Westfield Park serves a heavily populated segment of the community. Westfield is a very popular park for all ages due to the variety of active recreational opportunities it provides.

## Park Features

- Multi-use recreational trail
- Baseball / softball diamond
- Basketball courts (4)
- Sand volleyball court
- Picnic shelter
- Restrooms
- Playground equipment
- Picnic areas with grills
- Soccer fields (2)
- Tennis courts (2)
- Open free play
- Parking

## MDNR Grant History

- 1983 Land and Water Conservation Fund - \$32,000
- 2012 Recreation Passport - \$45,000.

## Opportunities

- No accessible path to sand volleyball
- Update playground equipment.
- Update restrooms.
- Resurface parking lot.



# Westfield Park



## Inventory Summary Table

Table 4.1 summarizes the inventory of public-owned parks located within the City boundaries.

Mini Park (M), Neighborhood Park (N), Community Park (C), Large Urban (LU), Special Use (SP), Natural Resource (NR)

## Lake Areas

Seven lakes are located either entirely or partially within the city's jurisdictional boundaries, providing opportunities for water-related activities not generally found in an urbanized setting. Most water bodies within Portage are suffering the effects of over-development. Not only has extensive development impacted the quality of many lakes but also limited the number of public access points. At present, three lakes have improved public access sites: Austin Lake, Long Lake and Sugarloaf Lake, all state-owned facilities. Gourdneck Lake is inaccessible except through a very narrow channel running from Hogset Lake, which has a public access through Prairie View Park. Hampton Lake has no developed public access; however, because of its limited size, a developed public access is believed unwarranted. (See Figure 4.2)

Three lake areas in particular are of prime importance with respect to the provision of future recreational opportunities. Bordering on Austin Lake, Lakeview Park holds substantial potential for development of additional public access facilities. A seawall/boardwalk and permanent fishing platform have been constructed to enhance the view of the lake and provide additional opportunities for passive recreation.

West Lake Nature Preserve provides similar recreational opportunities to the city. Being the only remaining undeveloped area bordering West Lake and an environmentally sensitive area, several concerns have been met with the acquisition of this property. Appropriate preservation and development projects associated with this property have been initiated.

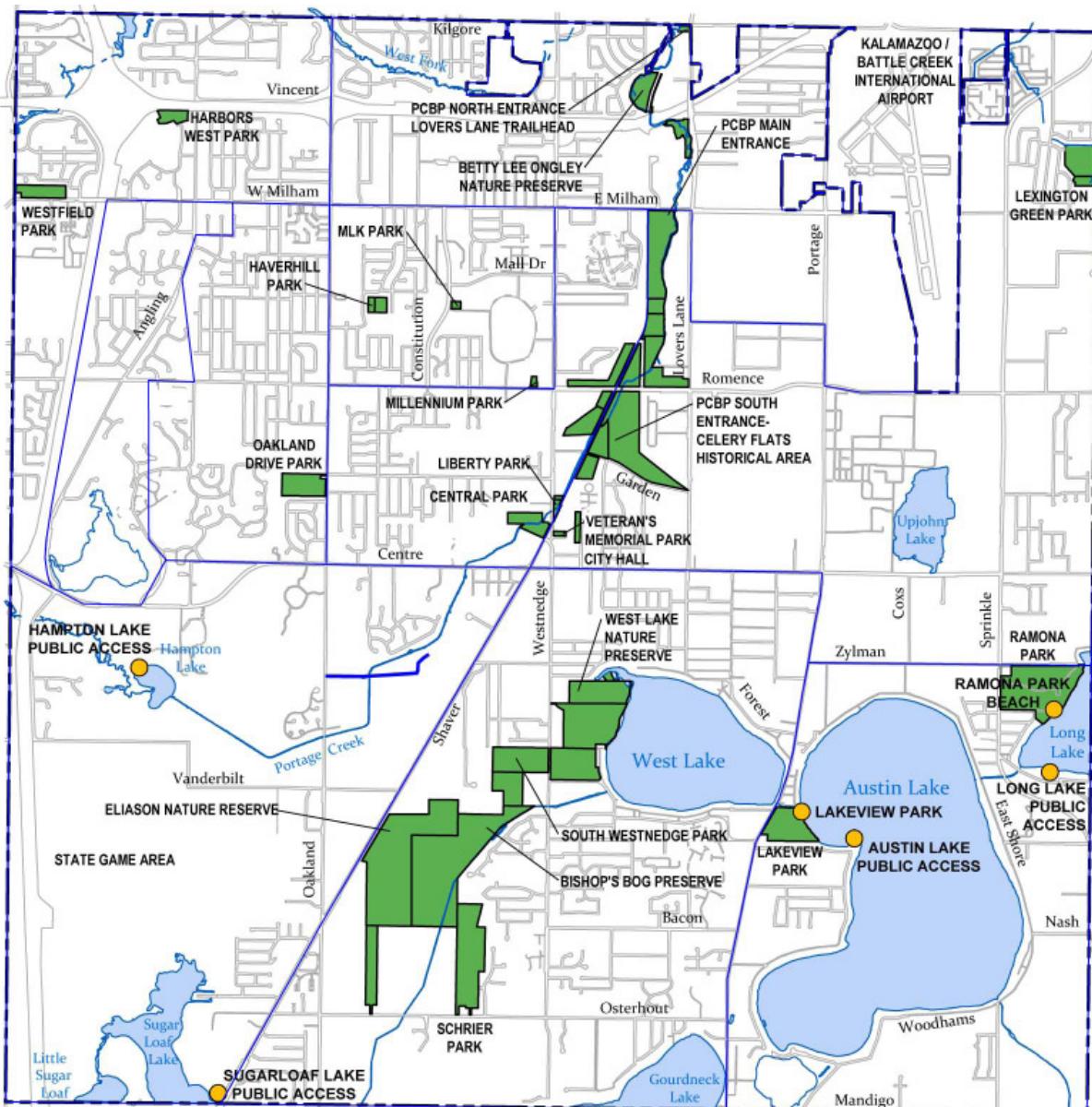
The increased popularity of fishing, boating and swimming activities being experienced throughout the region is indicative of the need for additional areas for water-related activities. In addition, the preservation of city-

wide water resources is of the utmost concern. Therefore, projects designed to both increase public utility and relieve the lake areas from existing or further developmental pressures are of high priority.

Through acquisition of lake-front and/or floodplain properties, the city may more adequately guard against new development. Reserving these areas for passive recreational activities or designating them as conservation areas will aid in improving the environmental quality of the city and the region.

In general, areas having severe development constraints or which have been identified as flood-prone through the Land and Water Resources Section of the Portage Comprehensive Plan have been designated as open space. The 100-year Floodplain has been utilized to



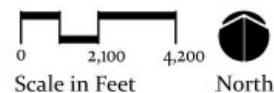
**Figure 4.2 - Public Lake Access Map****LEGEND**

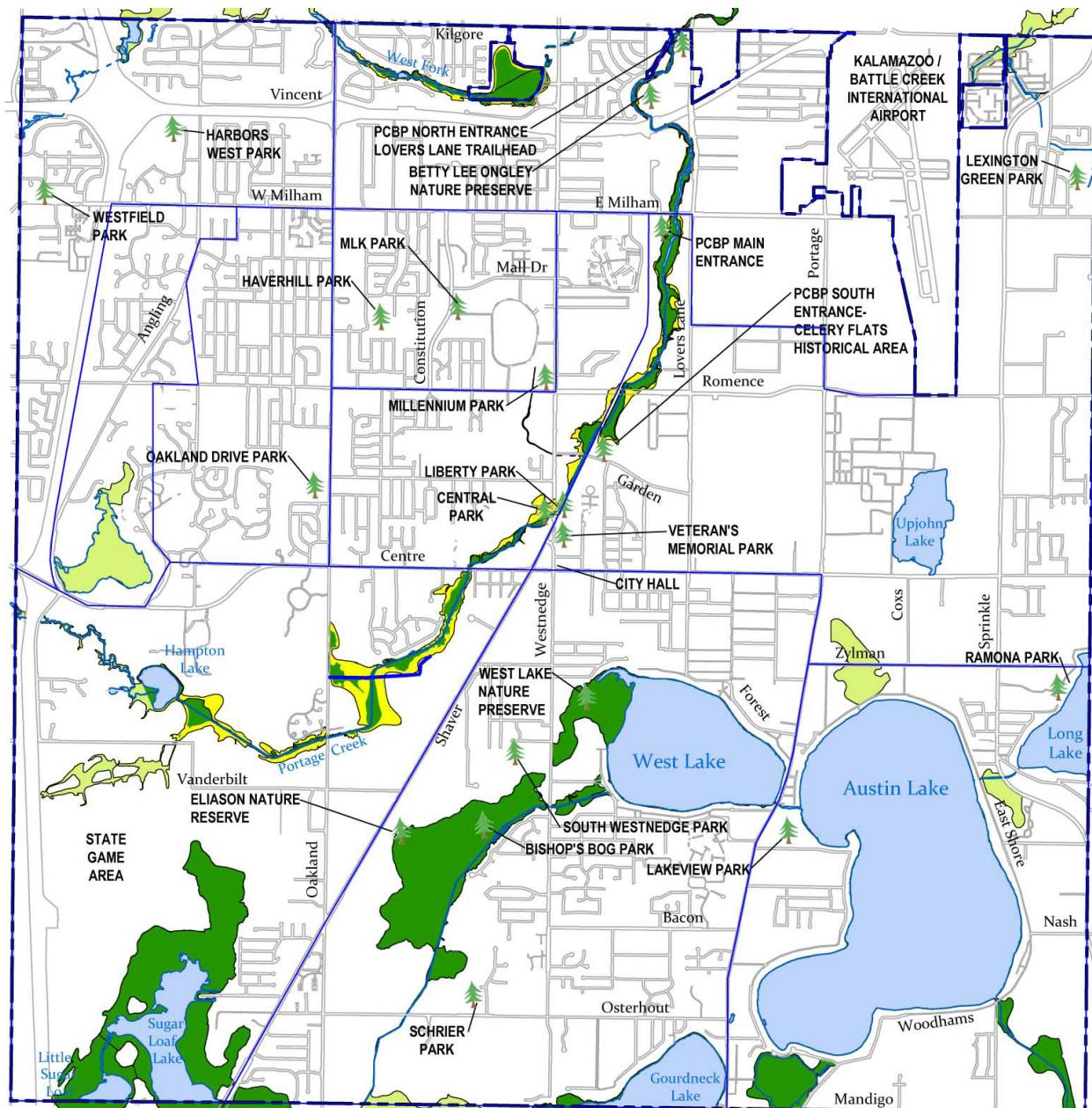
— — — CITY BOUNDARY



○ PRAIRIEVIEW  
COUNTY PARK

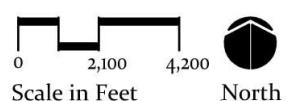
City of Portage  
Recreation and Open Space Plan  
Public Lake Access Points & Lake Properties



**Figure 4.3 - Flood Prone Areas Map****LEGEND**

<span style="background-color: yellow; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px;"></span>	500 YEAR FLOODPLAIN
<span style="background-color: lightgreen; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px;"></span>	A - 100 YEAR FLOODPLAIN
<span style="background-color: darkgreen; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px;"></span>	AE - 100 YEAR FLOODPLAIN WITH ELEVATION
<span style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px;"></span>	X - OUTSIDE OF FLOODPLAIN

**City of Portage**  
**Recreation and Open Space Plan**  
**Flood Prone Areas**



define flood-prone areas, as identified by the Portage Creek Flood Hazard Analysis<sup>1</sup> and the Department of Housing and Urban Development Flood Hazard Boundary Maps (See Figure 4.3).

### Open Space and Preservation Areas

Although no specific standards exist for the evaluation of open space areas, the preservation of natural areas is of prime importance in any urbanizing region. As indicated in the land and water resource sections of this plan, many existing open space areas in the city are experiencing pressures of urbanization. Maintenance of these areas in their natural state offers significant benefits to the community at large. If planned wisely, these areas may serve a variety of functions from recreational to flood control. If neglected, pressures of increased urbanization could result in their degradation and destruction. Neglect of these open spaces and natural areas may also result in exceptional monetary costs to the public for the provision and maintenance of necessary facilities to support their development. Protection of these areas should, therefore, be prioritized in future development and budget considerations.

Portage Creek Bicentennial Park (PCBP) does much in terms of preservation for the environmentally sensitive creek basin area of the city. The park has been designed primarily along the floodplain areas of Portage Creek. The park currently extends south from I-94 to approximately the Shaver Road/South Westnedge intersection. Portage Creek is a natural drain for major portions of the city. As the development of the city progresses, ever increasing amounts of runoff will be carried by the creek. PCBP preserves a portion of this drainage-way and serves to prevent severe environmental degradation. By preserving lands along the creek, a filter of vegetation and space for control facilities can be maintained and the Consolidated Drain and STEP projects aid in this endeavor.

### Southcentral Portage Wildlife Corridor

The establishment of the South Central Greenway links West Lake Nature Preserve, South Westnedge Park, Bishop's Bog Preserve and Schrier Park via five miles of hiking and interpretive trails. The Greenway was recently expanded with the donation of the Eliason Nature Reserve and protects over 400 acres from development and environmental degradation in the rapidly growing South Westnedge residential corridor and Shaver Road business corridor.

The Portage Wildlife Corridor stretches from West Lake Nature Preserve through Bishop's Bog, Schrier Park and Eliason Nature Reserve to Osterhout Avenue. This range allows wildlife, whether they run, swim or fly to move along these routes without development barriers.

Combined the 110-acre West Lake Nature Preserve, 152-acre Bishop's Bog Preserve, 52-acre Schrier Park, and 13-acre South Westnedge Park, and 141-acre Eliason Nature Reserve provide a total 468-acre wildlife corridor in south/central Portage.



## Community Senior Center

Established in 1979, the Portage Community Senior Center is the first Center in the State of Michigan to earn the National Senior Center Accreditation from the National Council on Aging. It is a vital, busy place offering a variety of services and activities that change with the needs and desires of its members. The Portage Senior Center provides programs and opportunities that promote personal growth, health, friendship and independence for adults aged 50 and over.



## Portage Farmers Market

The Portage Farmer's Market started in May 2016 and is currently located in the City Hall parking lot with 24,794 visitors during the 2021 season with strong growth from 5,000 in 2016. The Farmer's Market implements five state and federal food assistance programs including SNAP, Double Up Food Bucks, Eat Smart Live Strong, WIC, and Senior Fresh. There are plans for the Market to move to its own location. The current site is limited to approximately 30 vendors; however, the city has demand for up to 70-80 stalls. A new facility would be built to add vendor space, expand electrical capacity for vendors and food trucks, easting areas, music facilities, additional parking, and access for large agricultural and refrigeration trucks. Ideally the new facility would be constructed to also accommodate craft fairs, art festivals and other public events.



## Cemeteries

There are four (4) cemeteries located in and maintained by the city, totaling approximately 28 acres. The two active cemeteries are Central Cemetery located near Portage District Library on South Westnedge Ave, and South Cemetery located at the intersection of South Westnedge Ave. and Osterhout Ave. The oldest of the cemeteries include Dry Prairie, located on West Milham Ave. and Indian Fields, located on East Milham Ave. both of which contain grave markers dating back to the early 1800s.

## Archery Facility

In collaboration with the MDNR, Portage Public Schools, Discover Kalamazoo, and USA Archery, the City of Portage has purchased land for a public archery facility. This facility will feature an outdoor tournament shooting range, indoor shooting range and field target area. The Archery Facility will serve the general public, hunters, and students, as well as house the city's archery instructional programs for all ages, as well as tournaments.



## IdeaWorx

IdeaWorx is a business development incubator that will assist the community in transforming their ideas into reality by participating in workshops and services at the Portage IdeaWorx located at the Portage Parks and Recreation Department office located at 320 Library Lane. This new facility will focus on food (i.e., restaurant/cafe, cottage food/farmer market, food truck, catering), arts (visual and performing), and science (nature and technology) ideas and help turn them into new business ventures. Classroom and a rentable commercial kitchen (coming soon) will offer a variety of programs in collaboration with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Western Michigan University and MSU Extension. A variety of topics to help launch new businesses or grow existing small businesses will be held throughout the year including Starting a New Business, Marketing Plan Development, Cottage Food Law, Marketing Basics, Food Safety, Social Media Tools, Website Development, and Financial Management.

## Facility Rental Program

The Parks & Recreation Department has 36 facilities for rent by the public in which there were 748 rentals in 2021 from May through September. These facilities include:

- » Five buildings at Celery Flats Historic Area (Hayloft, Grain Elevator, Schoolhouse, Amphitheater, and Stuart Manor)
- » One building at Schrier Park
- » Nine Picnic Shelters (Lakeview Park-2; Westfield Park-1; Ramona Park-3; Schrier Park-1; South Westnedge Park Concessions-1; Central Park-1)
- » One Band shell at Central Park
- » Four Football Fields at Ramona Park
- » Four Soccer Fields (Westfield Park – 1; Ramona Park – 3)
- » Ten Softball Fields (South Westnedge Park-6; Ramona Park-2; Westfield Park-1; Lakeview Park-1)
- » Two rooms in the Parks and Recreation Office at 320 Library Lane

## Public Art Program

The city is identifying locations and will conduct a call for artists for a variety of art projects including sculpture and murals along the parks and trail network. Many of the works-of-art will also focus on the history of Portage located on sites from historical events. Additional, themes will include an outdoor focus on the city's focus on cycling, fishing, and water.

## Bike Rental

The City of Portage installed its first bike share rental station with 10-bikes in the fall of 2021 at Celery Flats Park. This program, named "Bike Portage", proved successful quickly with plans to install additional stations in other parks around the city.

## Portage School Facilities

Public school facilities, including playgrounds and sports fields and courts, can add tremendous recreational value to a community. Elementary school sites constitute a portion of the neighborhood parks and playgrounds in the city. Since these areas are beyond the jurisdiction of the City of Portage, no detailed account of playground utilization is available. The eight elementary school sites, however,

are used extensively for community recreation as creative or updated playgrounds are now in place at all elementary schools. These eight sites are also used intensively for youth soccer, softball, baseball and football practices throughout the spring and fall seasons.

## Other Public and Private Recreation Facilities Within the City

The MDNR owned Gourdneck State Game Area provides many acres of land and several lakes and ponds that support a variety of wildlife and warm water game fish. Sugarloaf and Hogsett lakes have boat access sites and Hampton Lake has a walk in access off Centre Avenue. Access to Hogsett Lake is limited to May through December due to seasonal trail closures. Trails throughout the Game Area are used for hiking, jogging and skiing.

### Private Recreational Facilities Within the City

#### Golf Courses

Moors Golf Club  
Golf Performance Academy

#### Health Clubs / Fitness / Wellness

Airborne Adventure Park  
Anytime Fitness  
Burn Boot Camp  
Courthouse Athletic Center  
Cross Fit Azo  
Curves for Women  
Family Fitness of Portage  
Finesse Yoga  
Fit Zone for Women  
Hotworx  
Intentional Yoga  
Just Move Fitness and More  
Orangetheory Fitness  
Planet Fitness  
Portage Family Healing Center  
Portage Fit Body Boot Camp  
Pure Barre  
Raw Strength  
Title Boxing Club

Walker's Tae Kwon Do Academy  
YMCA - Portage Facility  
Yoga Ahimsa

#### Bowling Lanes

Airway Lanes

#### Entertainment

Jungle Joe's Family Fun Center

#### Skating Centers

Great Skate Roller Rink

#### Soccer Facilities

Kingdom Soccer Center (Indoor)  
Portage Community Soccer Complex  
Soccerzone (Indoor)

#### Gymnastics / Dance

Academy of Dance Art  
Kids Gym  
The Little Gym of Kalamazoo  
Mosaic Hall and Dance Center  
West Michigan Dance Center

#### Portage Little League

Portage Little League is made up of two separate leagues, West Portage and South Portage. Although the Little League is a separate entity from the Portage Parks Department, they provide recreational services to the youths of the community from ages 4-16 for both baseball and softball. South Portage plays at the privately held



Kounelis Complex which is located on Centre Ave and contains four (4) softball fields, four(4) baseball fields, and two (2) large baseball fields. West Portage Little League utilized the fields located at the 12th Street Elementary School which includes 16 fields used for baseball and softball. Both facilities also include concessions, storage buildings, batting cages, and practice areas.

## Regional Facilities

There are a wide range of regional recreational public and private facilities available to City of Portage residents outside the city but within close proximity. The following describes available regional facilities (see Figure 4.4).

### Public Recreational Facilities

Fulton State Game Area is comprised of 670 acres for the purpose of hunting and trapping and is located in Wakeshma Township in southwest Kalamazoo County. The habitat for the park is dominated by wetlands centered along Bear Creek and provides hunting opportunities of small game, waterfowl, and deer. The wetlands range from open marshes to flooded timber and provide excellent habitat for a variety of waterfowl species.

Kalamazoo County Parks and Recreation provides a variety of large public park spaces in close proximity to Portage residents including Coldbrook County Park, Prairie View County Park, Scotts Mills County Park, Expo Center and Fairgrounds, River Oaks County Park and Markin Glen County Park.

Kal-Haven Trail State Park is a 34-mile crushed limestone path connecting South Haven and Kalamazoo for walking, bicycling or cross-country skiing. Some areas adjacent to the trail are also available for equestrian use. The trail meanders through wooded areas, past farm lands and over rivers and streams. Trail highlights include a camel back bridge and covered bridge.

Kalamazoo River Valley Trail is a paved asphalt trail that is 12-feet wide and is designed to generally follow the course of the Kalamazoo River. The trail will connect Battle Creek's 30-mile Linear Park in the east to the 35-mile Kal-Haven Trail State Park in the west and the 40-mile Portage Creek Bicentennial Trail to the south creating a total trail network of approximately 130 miles.

Texas Drive Non-Motorized Trail is an eight-foot wide paved multipurpose trail that starts in Texas Corners, traverses east and north to Texas Drive Park and continues along Texas Drive to the entrance drive of the Al Sabo Preserve Parking lot. From there it traverses through the Preserve, crosses through a Consumers Power property to 12th street and heads north on 12th Street and connects to the round-about. There is also an eight-foot side path that connects the trail along Texas Drive that travels south to the Rudgate Subdivision, and there is a second eight-foot side path along 12th Street that travels south and connects to the 12th Street Elementary School site. The total length of the trail is approximately 4 miles. This trail provides a safe non-motorized connection from downtown Texas Corners to the City of Portage trail system.

### Private Recreational Facilities

#### Archery Centers

Brooks Archery  
Potawatomi Bowmen

#### Auditorium/Arena

Cheney Auditorium  
Miller Auditorium  
Kalamazoo State Theater  
South County Players  
Vicksburg Community Auditorium  
Wings Stadium

#### Boating

Austin Lake Boating Access Site

Barton Lake Boating Access Site  
Eagle Lake Boat Ramp  
Hogset Lake Boating Access Site  
Jg Marine  
Long Lake Boating Access Site  
Portage Lake Boating Access Site  
Sugarloaf Lake Boat Launch

### **Bowling Lanes**

Continental Lanes  
Eastland Bowl  
Revel & Roll

### **Camps / Campgrounds**

Camp Rota-Kiwan (Boy Scouts)  
Cold Brook County Park  
Fort Custer Recreation Area  
Indian Lake Nazarene  
Kline's Resort  
Markin Glen Park  
Nazarene Camp  
Oak Shores Resort  
Pioneers Point  
Pretty Lake Camp  
Sherman Lake YMCA

### **Community Parks**

6th Street Park  
Mayor's Riverfront Park  
Milham Park  
Prairie View County Park  
Spring Valley Park  
Texas Drive Park

### **Clubs**

Kalamazoo Curling Club  
Kalamazoo Go Club  
VFW Post 1527

### **Golf Courses**

Angel's Crossing  
Grand Prairie  
Indian Run  
Kalamazoo Country Club (private)  
Milham Municipal Golf Course  
Olde Mill

Prairies Golf Club  
Red Arrow  
States

### **Gymnastics**

Greater Kalamazoo World of Gymnastics  
Branch Gymnastics Center

### **Health Clubs**

Borgess Health and Fitness Center  
Bronson Athletic Club  
Curves for Women  
Endurance Fitness Centers  
Kalamazoo County YMCA  
Powerhouse Gym  
Strength Beyond Fitness  
West Hills Athletic Club  
YWCA

### **Nature Areas**

Al Sabo Nature Preserve  
Kellogg Forest  
Kellogg Bird Sanctuary  
Fulton State Game Area  
Fort Custer Recreation Area  
Kalamazoo Nature Center

### **Museums**

Air Zoo Aerospace and Science  
Kalamazoo Institute of the Arts  
Kalamazoo Valley Museum  
Vicksburg Historic Village

### **Skating Centers (Roller and Ice)**

Rollerworld  
Wings Stadium  
Lawson Ice Arena

### **Skiing Resorts**

Bittersweet  
Timber Ridge

### **Tennis Courts**

Stowe Stadium - Kalamazoo College  
West Hills Athletic Club  
YMCA - Main Facility

## Recreational Programs

The Department of Parks and Recreation develops a comprehensive leisure service program. Activities include youth and adult fitness and athletic programs, cultural arts programs, outdoor education, aquatics and a wide variety of special events for all ages. In addition, the Department operates the Celery Flats Historical Area and the Millennium Park Ice Rink facilities for public benefit.

Through Senior Citizens Services management of the Portage Senior Center, a wide range of services, recreation, and evidenced-based fitness programs for adults 50 years of age and older are offered. These programs include chair volleyball, table tennis, pool, community educational opportunities, and a wide variety of health, safety, and fitness classes.

A list of programs is provided in the appendix.

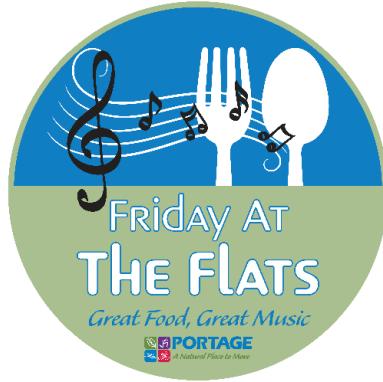
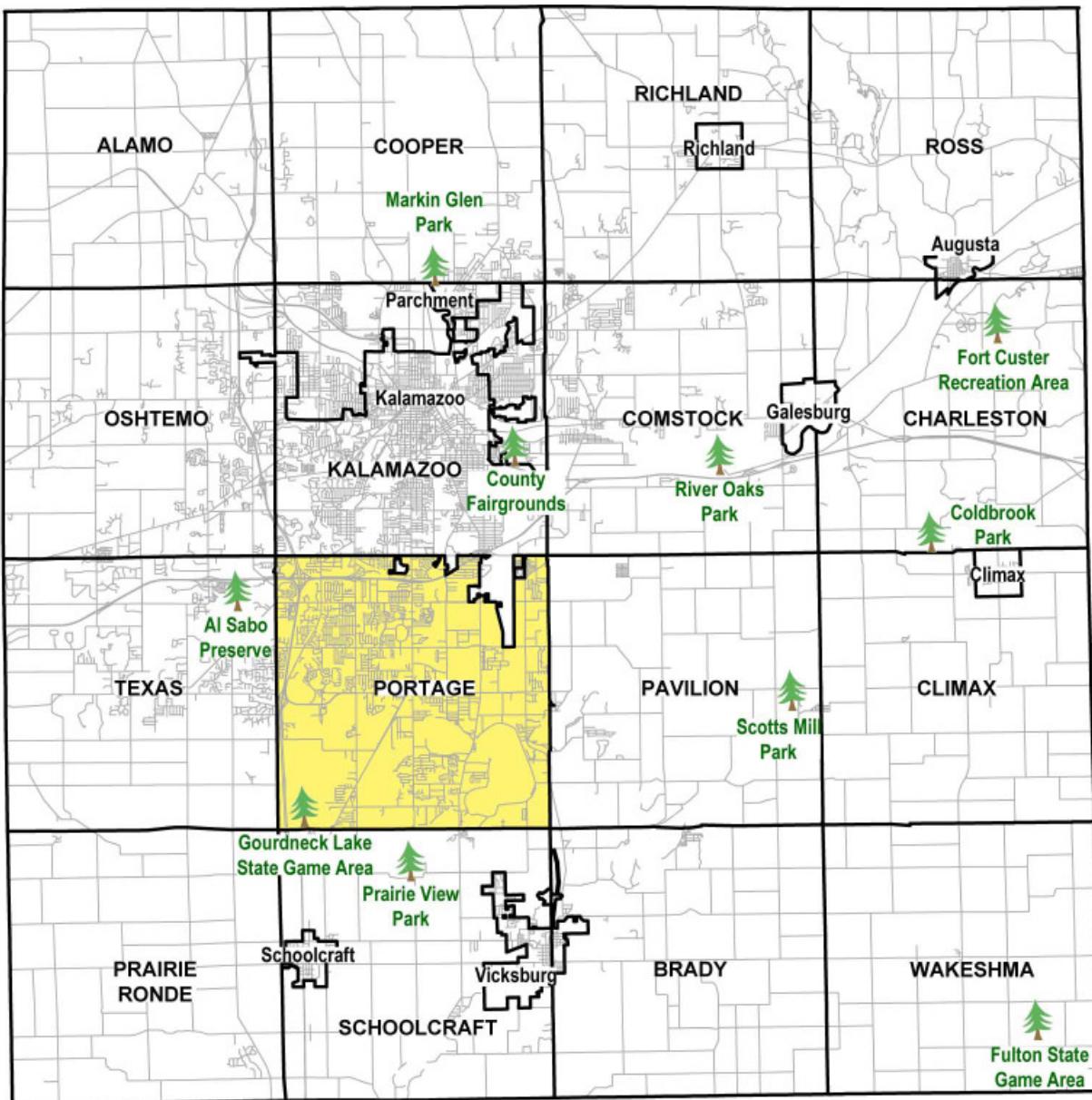


Figure 4.4 - State and County Open Space



## City of Portage Recreation and Open Space Plan State and County Open Space

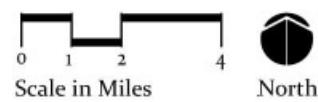
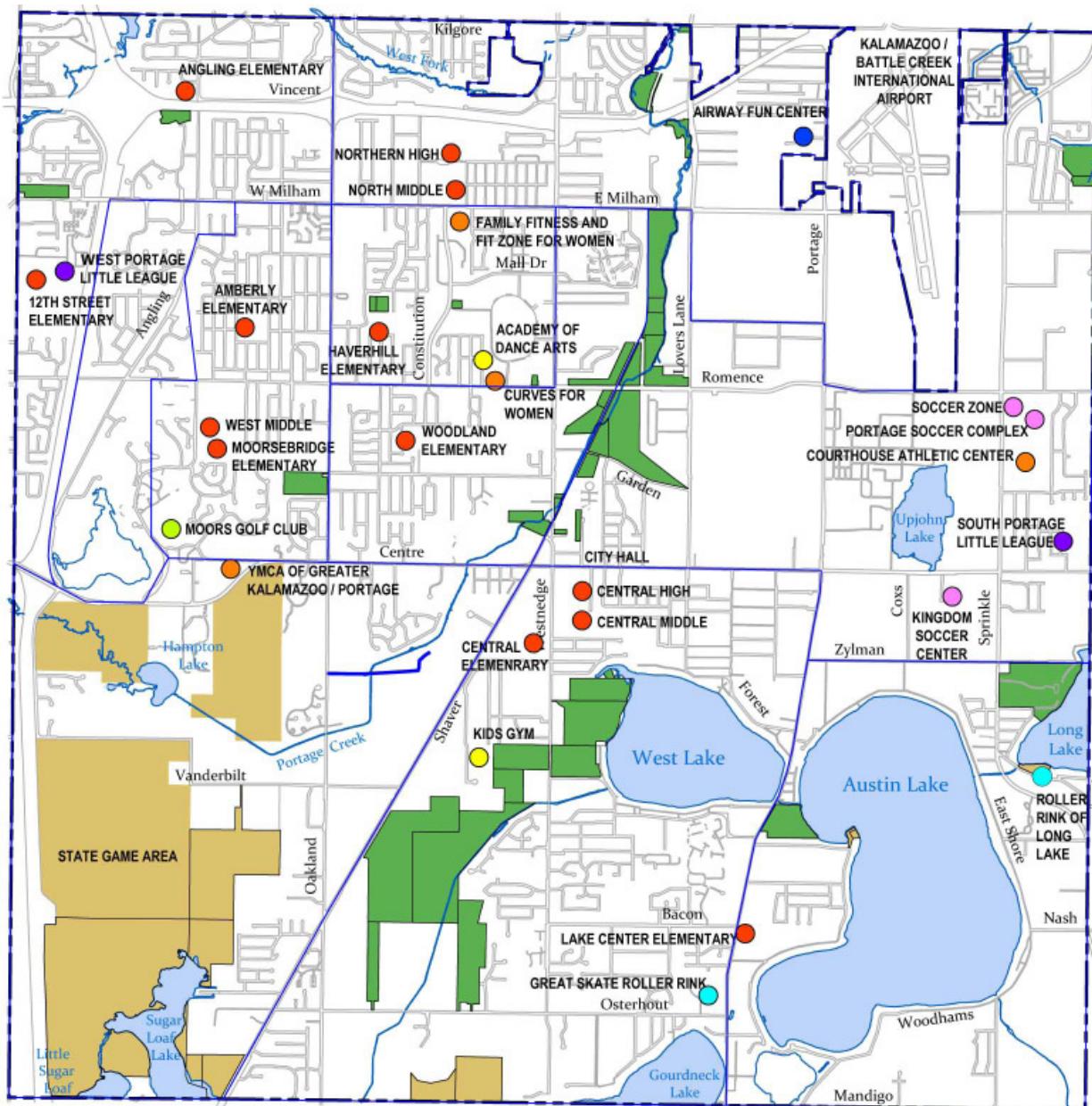
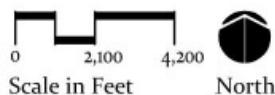


Figure 4.5- Other Recreation Areas &amp; Facilities

**LEGEND**

PARKS PROPERTY		CITY BOUNDARY		DNR OWNED PROPERTY	
<span style="color: red;">●</span>	SCHOOLS	<span style="color: purple;">●</span>	SOCER FACILITIES		
<span style="color: yellow;">●</span>	GOLF COURSES	<span style="color: purple;">●</span>	LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL DIAMONDS		
<span style="color: blue;">●</span>	BOWLING LANES	<span style="color: cyan;">●</span>	SKATING CENTERS		
<span style="color: yellow;">●</span>	GYMNASTICS	<span style="color: orange;">●</span>	HEALTH CLUBS AND COURT SPORTS		

**City of Portage**  
**Recreation and Open Space Plan**  
**Other Recreation Areas and Facilities**





## Parks Environmental Management

As part of the greater ecological system, parks can play a significant role in promoting biodiversity and mitigating the negative impacts of climate, air, and water pollution. Parks serve as areas that can encourage biodiversity, a crucial element to the overall health, sustainability, and resilience of our ecosystems. With their vegetation and tree canopy, parks also help reduce the heat island effect for nearby houses, which will become increasingly important as average temperatures are projected to rise. Trees in parks and along city streets sequester carbon and remove pollutants from the air, serving as a form of filter, while open space provides permeable surfaces to absorb and filter stormwater before reaching nearby water bodies. These environmental benefits of parks all correlate to future cost savings for the city, such as reducing the cost of managing stormwater.

The development of the Portage landscape has significantly modified existing habitats, soils, and plant communities that characterized its ecosystems. While restoring pre-development conditions is not feasible, by identifying the defining characteristics of the City's pre-existing landscape, we can create a framework that can raise awareness of the City's ecological diversity in the public eye and inform decisions on the City's park system and larger regional landscape.

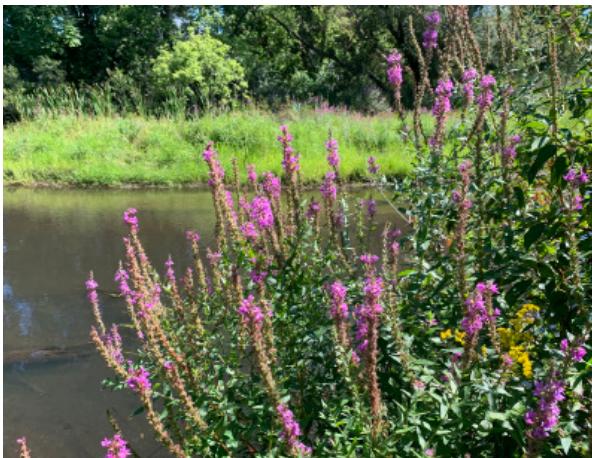
### **Creating a Natural Footprint**

The natural environment is one of the primary reasons people move to Portage and maintaining this asset is a main focus for the city. Creating or maintaining natural shorelines for clean water and wildlife habitats, planting pollinator gardens, and removing invasive species are some of the ways the city is working to create a natural footprint in Portage.

The combination of Portages' topography, hydrology, and historic vegetation communities creates a framework of distinctive ecological zones that can be used as landscape typologies to inform and diversify the parks of Portage. With this framework, the parks system can reveal and celebrate the natural habitats of Portage. The ecological framework, a potential legacy for the park system, can inform future design, maintenance, and environmental education in the park system. The city is developing the following initiatives to help the community build the framework to continue the natural legacy for the future.

### Shoreline Landscape

Portage is home to a diverse number of ecosystems which we are all stewards to protect. One of these environments are the 11 lakes and wetlands in the City of Portage featuring 48.52 miles of shoreline. Shorelines are important for attracting and providing habitats for butterflies, fish, frogs, and turtles, in addition to limiting erosion and creating healthier lakes and streams.



Natural shorelines also discourage geese and other waterfowl to lawns since they typically choose property that has easy access to a large open lawn that also can't hide predators. The city has resources to help residents choose plantings to beautify their yards naturally, develop rain gardens, and prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.



### Promotion of Native Plant Gardening

The city is promoting the development of specialized gardens within parks including native plantings to attract pollinators, songbirds, monarch butterfly, and Hummingbirds. The city is also promoting deer resistant, shoreline buffer, and woodland gardens.

### Wildlife Management

The city has recently coordinated with Michigan State University on a Turtle Survey in Bishop's Bog and West Lake Nature Preserve. The city is also collecting data to publish a Deer Resistant Plant List.

### Invasive Species Management

The city has completed an Invasive Species and Land Management Plan in collaboration with the Kalamazoo Nature Center for all of the parks in the city. As a result, Cardno/Stantec has been retained for a five-year contract to remove invasive plant species with a focus on Bishop's Bog, Eliason Nature Reserve, Schrier Park, and West Lake Nature Preserve. The city also organizes seasonal invasive pulls of Garlic Mustard and Purple Loosestrife with the public and in collaboration with the Portage Advisory Board. These initiatives have resulted in significant removal of invasive populations throughout the city, and will lead to a restoration plan that will be designed in 2023/2024.

### Public Eliason Oak Savannah Restoration

Efforts have begun with Michigan State

University and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources on identifying plant species and planning for restoration efforts over the next few years.

### **Mosquito Surveillance Project**

Coordinating on a project with Michigan State University and the Kalamazoo County Health Department to monitor mosquitoes for any diseases such as Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE).

### **Bird Friendly Community**

The city is working on becoming part of the Kalamazoo County Urban Bird Treaty, and identifying efforts to include birdwatching and other bird oriented conservation, recreation, and educational programs.

### **Tree Canopy Management**

As part of its Climate Action Plan, the City of Portage is working on various initiatives to sustain our natural environment for future generations. One of these efforts is monitoring the city's tree canopy which is the surface area of city land that is covered by the combined leaves, branches, and trunks of all standing trees. According to a national analysis by the U.S. Forest Service, a 40-60 percent urban tree canopy is attainable in forested states. Portage currently is estimated at a 45% tree canopy, which is the level the city would like to maintain as its minimum tree coverage. Planting more trees will help maintain and hopefully increase our tree canopy in the future. The tree canopy is important for summer cooling; improves air quality by filtering pollutants; reduces greenhouse gases; helps to manage stormwater and flooding; improves water quality; suppresses soil erosion; supports wildlife populations and enhances recreational opportunities.

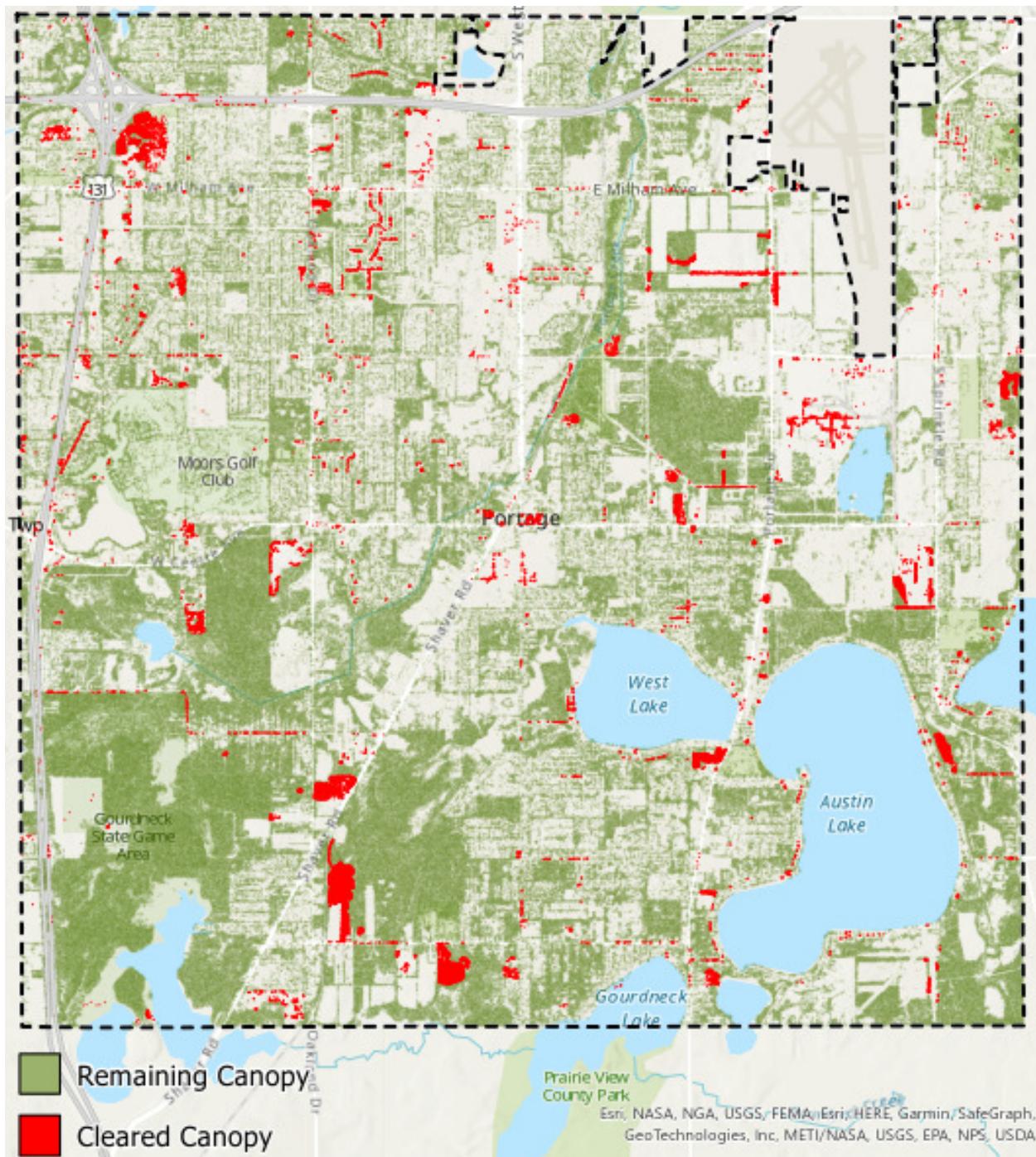
### **Fish Management**

The city is developing various fish management projects including the Eliason Dam Restoration project, promoting Muskelunge registration on Austin Lake with the MDNR, and fishing and kayaking on Portage Creek, one of the few cold water brown trout streams for fishing in southwest Michigan.



Figure 5.1 - Tree Canopy Map

## Tree Clearing 2015-2021



Since 2015, it is estimated that Portage has lost 2.8% of its canopy.

Tree clearing based on 2015 LIDAR derived tree locations and 2021 Aerial Photography



## Non-Motorized Trail and Bikeway Transportation Plan

Non-motorized transportation, with facilities designed primarily for pedestrians and bicyclists (paved shoulders, bike lanes, and shared use paths), is a critical element of an integrated parks and recreation system. A connected system of non-motorized facilities will help promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles, relieve traffic congestion, reduce air pollution and fuel consumption, and improve quality of life. Trails, greenways and park systems provide important, carbon-free transportation options and link residents to popular destinations and to one another. As the city acquires new parkland and invests improvements to existing park spaces, coordination with other city initiatives and departments, such as Community Development and Transportation and Utilities, is crucial to ensure access to all community members.

### 23 Miles Off-Road Trails      41 Miles Bike Lanes

The City of Portage recognizes the benefits of bicycle and pedestrian travel and aspires to provide accessible non-motorized facilities to its residents and visitors. Through many initiatives, including the city's Complete Streets Policy and the "Move Portage" program, the city has been working to establish a connected local and regional non-motorized system. The city's "cycling vision" includes designing cities that support active living through improving non-motorized infrastructure, facilities, accessibility, local business support, community support, and programs and education.

## Infrastructure

Making improvements to infrastructure that focus on providing safe routes is a high priority for the city. The city is focused on the following concepts to improve user safety when using the non-motorized system:

- Promote trails as a pedestrian transportation network
- Combination of non-motorized trails and bikeway lanes
- Safe routes to work, schools, residences, parks, and shopping areas
- City-wide connectivity
- Developing Celery Flats as a non-motorized transportation hub
- Increase separation and protection of bicyclists based on motor vehicle speed and volume
- Explore a system of bicycle boulevards, speed limit reduction, traffic calming, and road diets to help create an attractive, convenient, and comfortable cycling environment.

## Facilities

Ridership increases as safer non-motorized routes are developed. Currently less than 1% of the city population commutes via non-motorized facilities. The city is focused on the following improvements to existing non-motorized facilities to help increase ridership:

- Adding bike racks around the city
- Water bottle filling stations
- Hand towels
- Bike repair stations
- Tire air filling stations
- Wayfinding signage
- Destinations (parks, attractions, shopping)

## Availability

In order to promote non-motorized transportation, the city must have adequate available facilities. The city currently maintains approximately 64 miles of trails and bikeways within the city and is currently planning multiple

additional routes. The city has recently been recognized by the League of American Bicyclists for its efforts to provide high-quality non-motorized facilities with receipt of the silver-level Bicycle Friendly Community Award.

## Business Support

The city has developed the new **“Move Portage”** initiative which is designed to promote cycling culture, reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and create a health-focused program for the community. The city is collaborating with local businesses to offer amenities to cyclists to assist in their travels in an effort to create a more bike-friendly environment for the community. To become a “Move Portage” bike friendly business, each business submits an application to the city and is evaluated based on their bicycle amenities and cycling advocacy. If accepted the business is provided with a “Move Portage” decal which can be displayed by the business to signify their participation in the program. Examples of bike friendly businesses include:

- Convenient and secure bicycle parking
- Water bottle filling
- Encourage employees to bike to work by providing showers, lockers, and other amenities
- Supporting local and state bicycling opportunities and events
- Advocating for the bicycling in the community

**We are a ...  
Bike Friendly Business**



**MOVEPORTAGE**

## Community Support

Examples of community support initiatives that the city is promoting to encourage more residents to cycle include the Driving Change Program, bicycle friendly driver education, creation of bike to work week and bike to school week, and development of annual and signature public bike riding events.

## Programs and Education

In September 2021, the city launched the **“Bike Portage”** bike share rental program. Through this program, users download the Movatic app and rent a bicycle from the bike station on the Portage Creek Bicentennial Park Trail, just north of the Celery Flats Pavilion. After the app is downloaded, users create an account then follow the prompts to pay on the app and unlock their bike. Once the bike is unlocked, they are free to explore the Portage park trail system on two wheels! Bicycles must be returned to the rental location by park close each day.



Portage also promotes the **“Share the Road”** initiative which is designed to educate cyclists and motorists about bike safety and road safety in Portage. The program is modeled after the League of American Bicyclists “five rules of the road”.



## Non-Motorized Facilities

There are a number of different types of trails that can provide both transportation and recreation opportunities. Trails may be located within parks, on an independent right-of-way, or within the road right of way. Connector Trails are defined as "multipurpose trails that emphasize safe travel for pedestrians to and from parks and around the Community" (J.D. Mertes and J.R. Hall, Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, 1995). These trails are generally located within the road right-of-way and can be divided into two types. Type I has separate paths for different user types, such as pedestrians and bicyclists. Type II has mixed uses and is suited to lighter use patterns.



Portage has 23 miles of off-road trails and 41 miles of bicycle lanes. In addition to multiple trail systems within park facilities, the following major connector trails are managed by the City of Portage.

Portage Creek Bicentennial Park Trail - 3.5 miles from Trailhead at Lovers Lane to the Library

Northwest Portage Bikeway - 4.7 miles from McGillicuddy to Romence Road

Millennium Trail - 1 mile from Garden Lane to Romence Road

Garden Lane Trail - 1 mile connecting to the Bicentennial Park trail from the east and west.

Romence Road Trail - 1.75 miles between S. Westnedge Avenue and Sprinkle Road.

Shaver Road Bikeway - 2.3 miles from Library Lane to S. Westnedge Park.

Lovers Lane Bikeway Trail - 2 miles from Milham Avenue south to Centre Avenue.

East Centre/Sprinkle Road Bikeway Trail - 1.5 miles from Portage Road east to Sprinkle Road and Sprinkle Road south to Zylman Road

East Milham Bikeway Trail - .75 miles from Lovers Lane east to Portage Road.

Bicentennial Trail - 3.75 miles from Kilgore Road to Centre Avenue.

Eliason Nature Reserve - 1.6 miles from Portage Industrial Drive to Osterhout Ave.

Portage Rd Trail - 1.1 miles from Ramona Ave to Centre Ave.

Figure 6.1 - Trail and Sidewalk Map

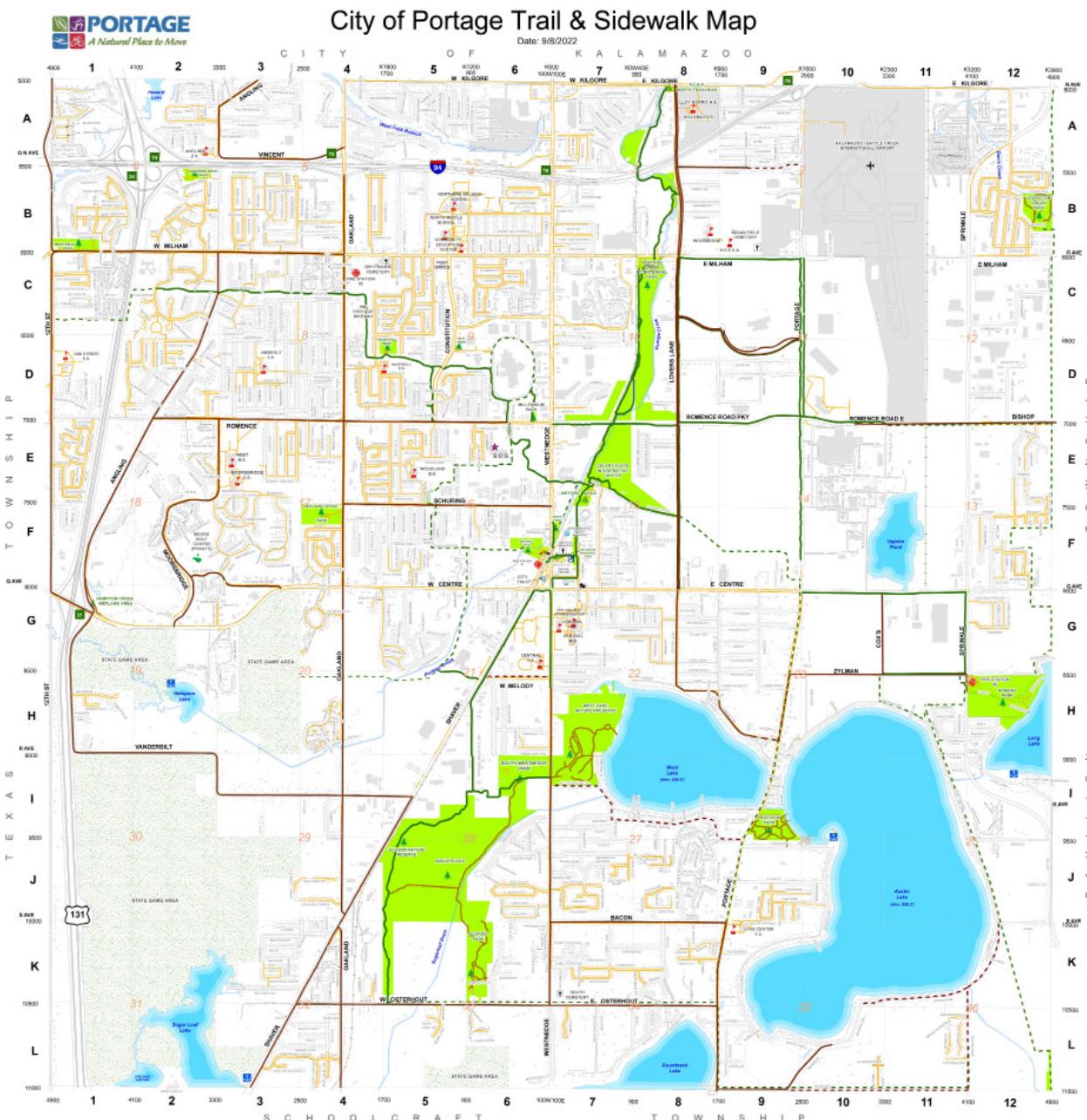


Figure 6.2 - Trails and Metro Bus Stop Locations

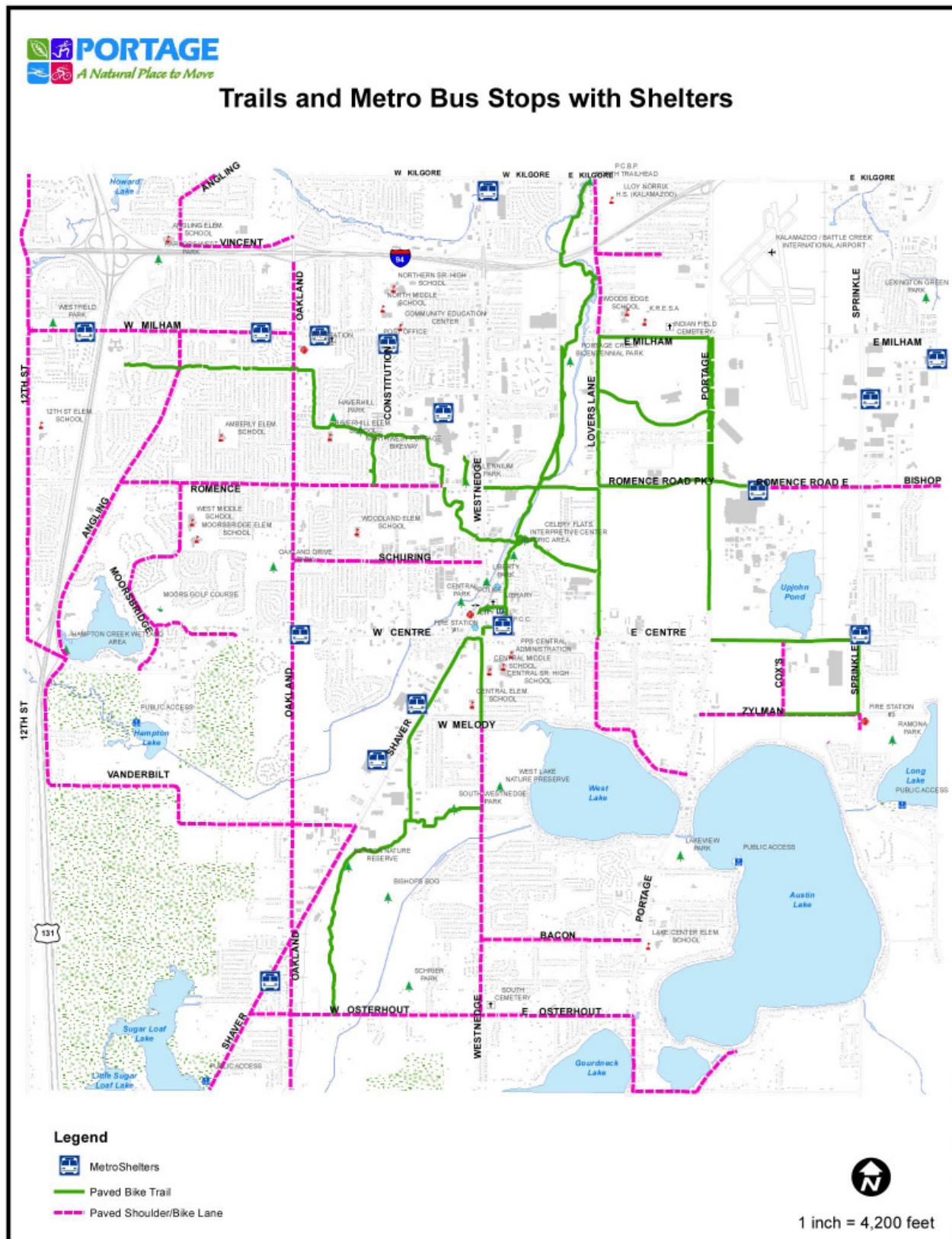


Figure 6.3 - Non-Motorized Coverage

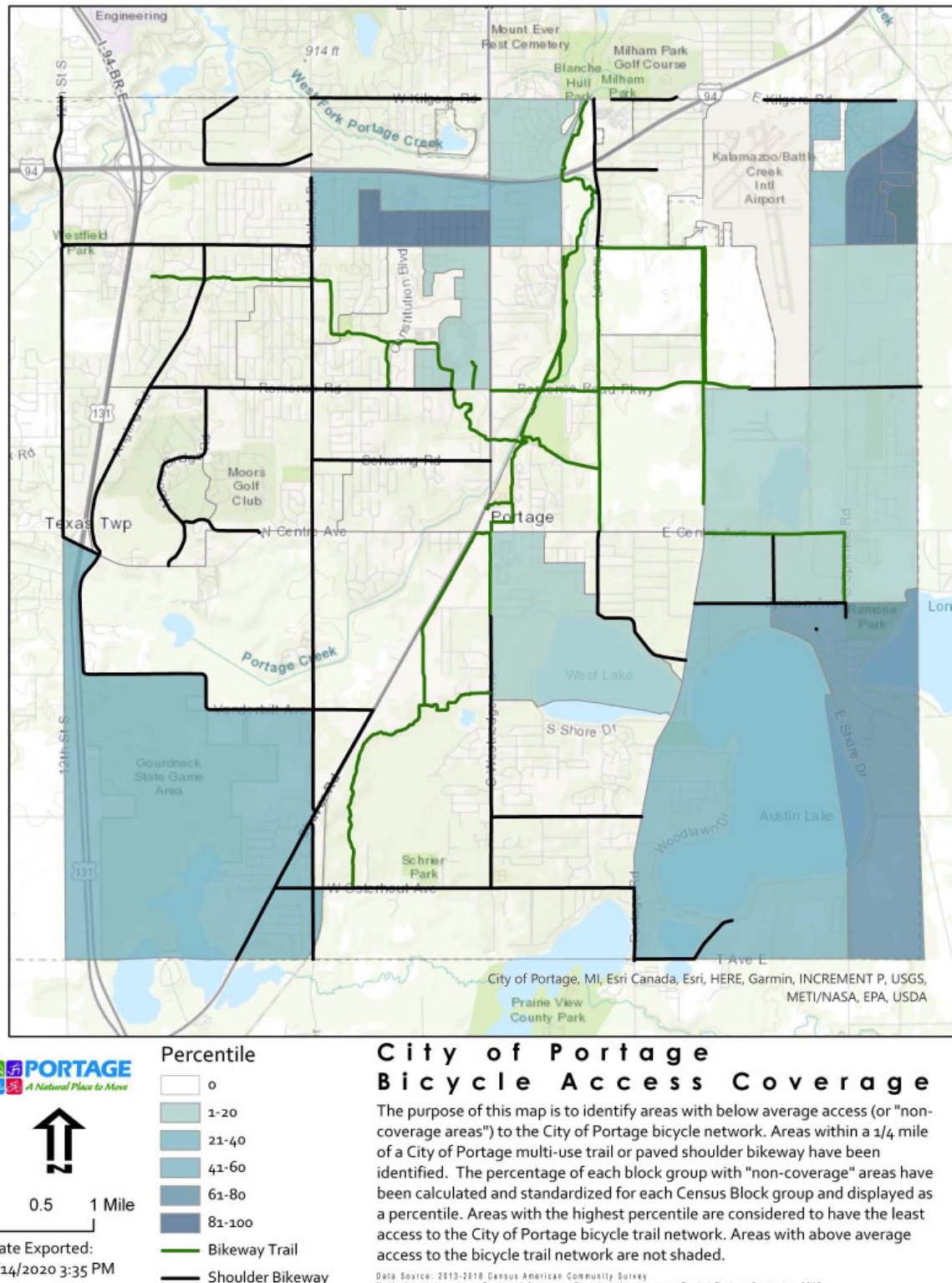
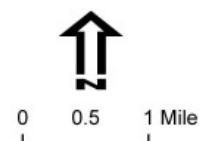
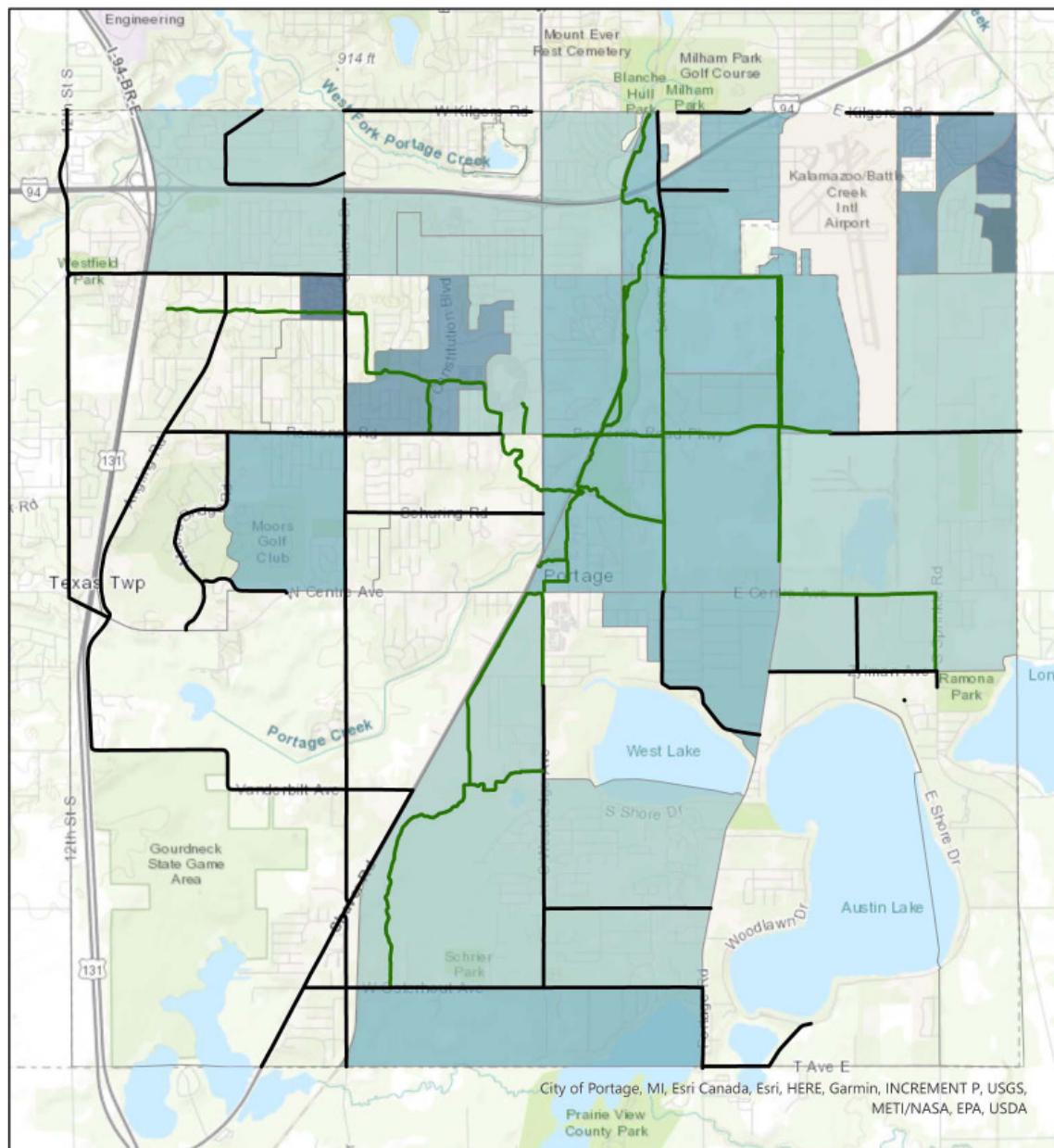


Figure 6.4 - Non-Motorized Equity Map



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#### Layer

##### BEI

- 0-20
- 21-40
- 41-60
- 61-80
- 81-100

— Bikeway Trail

— Shoulder Bikeway

#### Bicycle Equity Index Map

The purpose of this map is to identify disadvantaged areas that would benefit from access to the City of Portage bicycle network. Using 2018 Census estimates, a Bicycle Equity Index (BEI) is a composite measure that uses common indicators of disadvantage including age/race/ethnicity/income and vehicle ownership. A BEI value has been calculated for each Census Block group and displayed as a percentile. The higher the percentile, the higher the level of disadvantaged groups within each block group.

Data Source: 2013-2018 Census American Community Survey  
Methodology based on: Equity of Access to Bicycle Infrastructure, Rachel Preisig, September 2015



## Description of the Planning Process

During the early phase of the planning process background data was gathered from site investigations and available reports in order to develop a current snapshot of the city and a comprehensive understanding of the needs of the community. This chapter looks to assess community need for parks and recreation facilities against facility availability and program offerings. There are a variety of methods for accessing community need for recreation services. This Plan uses the combination of the following methods to identify the recreational needs of the city:

1. Location and distribution of park space throughout the city
2. Quantity of park acreage and amenities
3. Analysis of demographic trends

### Level of Service Analysis

Level of Service Standards are guidelines that define service areas based on population that support investment decisions related to parks, facilities, and amenities. Standards may change over time as demographics, program life-cycles, and needs of the community change. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) maintains a data base of park system data in the U.S. which, combined with a yearly agency performance review report, has taken the place of outdated park standards. Our team used information from the NRPA Park Metrics database as well as the 2022 NRPA Agency Performance Review to understand national trends and metrics in park and recreation elements and to benchmark Portage with comparable cities. The NRPA Park Metrics and Agency Performance Review help inform

conversations and policies about the role of parks and recreation planning, land acquisition, and development of park, recreation and open space property at the local level.

Building on data from the park and recreation system inventory, Portage was compared to similar systems (cities in the range of 20,000 – 49,999 people) in the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA)'s park metrics database. The NRPA database contains self-reported information from parks and recreation departments across the country. This comparison allows the project team to benchmark the level of service in terms of park acreage and amenities per capita between Portage and mid-sized peer cities nationally to evaluate the relative adequacy or inadequacy of the city's recreation system. It should be noted that these comparisons are to be used as a guide and should be interpreted according to local needs, trends, and current situations. The purpose of recreation planning is to address the specific needs of the community, based on its own particular resources and resident preferences/demands so that the plan best suits the community's desires for recreation.

### Service Area Analysis

NRPA guidelines classify parks, open space, and greenways in accordance with their size and the role they play in the overall park system. They also include associated service areas for each park type that indicate a minimum standard for geographic balance and availability of each park type in the community. Classifying parks in the system ensures the entire community is served by a wide range of park and recreational facilities. Figure 5.1 delineates the service area for each park in the City of Portage park system and Figure 5.2 delineates park proximity to Portage Neighborhoods. Service areas for the parks types include:

- Mini Parks 1/4 miles or less
- Neighborhood Parks 1/4 to 1/2 miles
- Community Parks 1/2 to 3 miles

### Evaluation

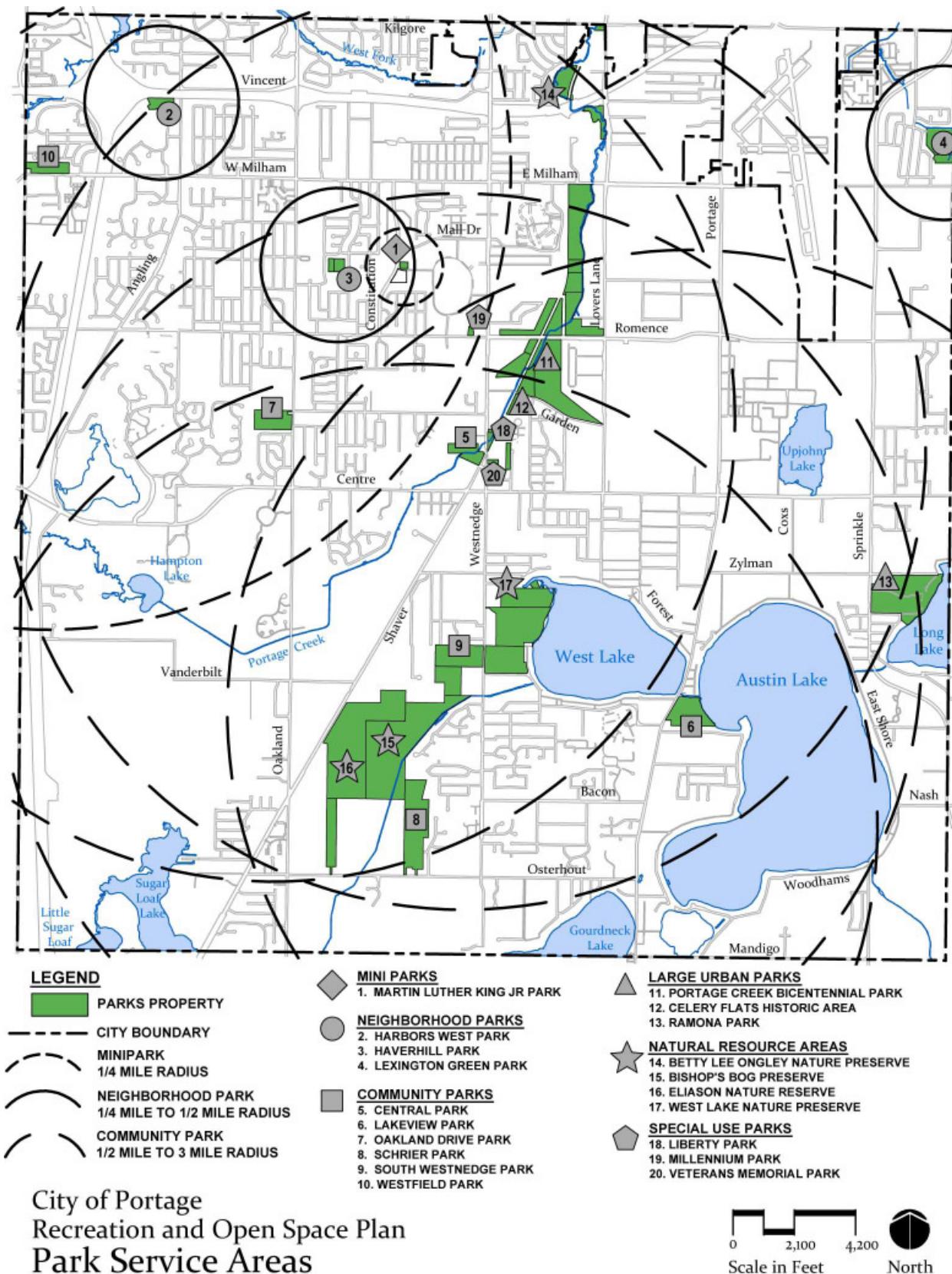
Analysis of the geographic distribution of park facilities throughout the city reveal that while overall park coverage is good, the city should consider addressing the following:

- Overall coverage is good and all residents have access to some type of park
- All neighborhoods in the city have access to Community parks
- Natural resource area parks are mostly clustered in the south side of the city.
- The north side of the city has access to neighborhood parks
- Several special use parks are located in the core of the city.
- The city is in need of more mini parks.
- There are no neighborhood parks in the southeast area of the city.
- The northwest side of the city does not have a natural resource park.

### Needs

- Addition of mini parks in the higher dense neighborhoods.
- Addition of neighborhood parks in the south side neighborhoods.
- Expand natural resource parks along the Portage Creek on the west side of the city.

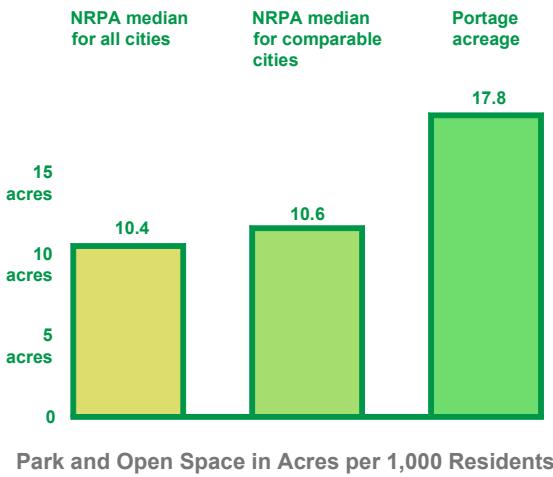
Figure 7.1 - Park Service Areas



## City of Portage Recreation and Open Space Plan Park Service Areas

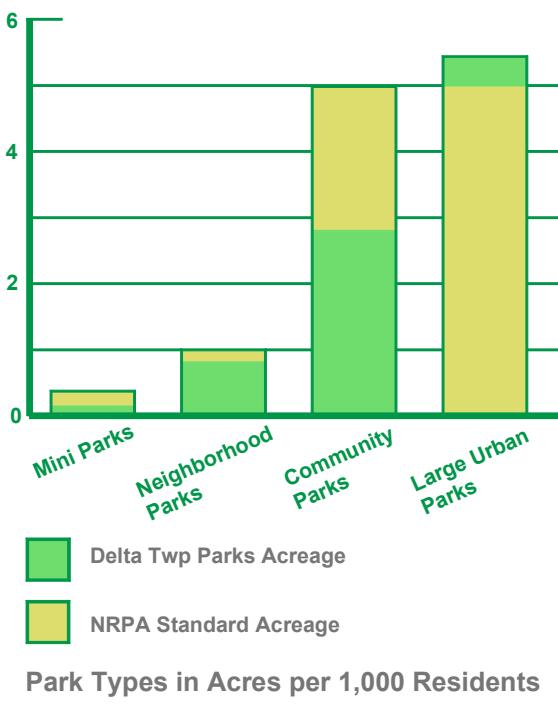
## Park and Open Space Acreage

A basic measure of the level of service is the amount of park and open space acreage available per resident. In this Master Plan, the analysis begins by considering “accessible”, usable acreage, which excludes golf courses, cemeteries, undeveloped sites, and school sites. The analysis showed that “accessible” park acreage per capita in Portage exceeds comparable cities. The NRPA database demonstrated a median of 10.6 acres per 1,000 residents in similarly sized cities, while Portage measures at 17.6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. Portage also exceeds the NRPA database median of 10.4 acres per 1,000 residents for all cities of all sizes. This positions the city well with capacity for additional population growth. This also demonstrates an opportunity to expand park facilities within the city’s own holdings, upgrade existing facilities, and improve general park maintenance.



In addition to overall acreage, NRPA metrics recommend a certain number of park acres per units of population for different types of park classifications. NRPA standards state that per 1,000 residents, 0.25 acres of mini parks, 1 acre of neighborhood parks, and 5 acres for community and regional parks is needed to meet the needs of the community. Portage is below the standard for three park types. It should be noted that these standards are to be used as a guide and interpreted according to local needs, character,

trends, and current Department capacity, and the demand may be greater or less than the national standard.

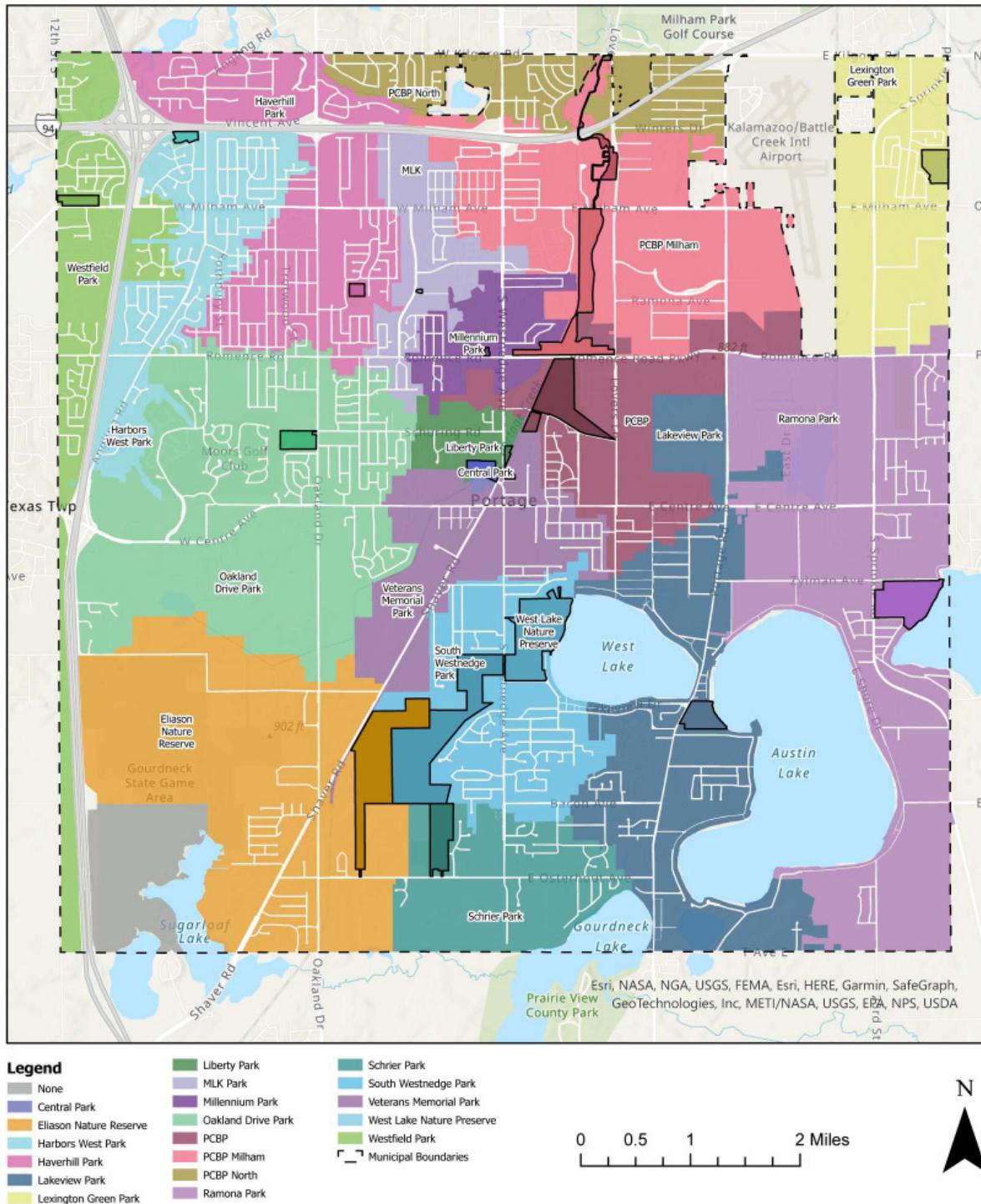


## Park Amenities

Park amenities are the built elements within Portages’ parks that support various forms of recreation. Passive recreation and active recreation are the primary types of recreational uses. Passive recreation includes less intense activities that are more quiet and non-exertive for a limited numbers of users. Active recreation requires space and facilities capable of accommodating exertive activities. Examples include: sports fields, play apparatus areas, open areas, special facilities, such as pools and court areas, and areas for organized activities. Recreation areas must provide for both types of use and preferably include a variety of opportunities for each to respond adequately to a wide range of interests and age groups. For many users these are crucial components that help them feel welcome and safe. It is critical that Portages’ parks supply the right number and types of amenities to meet the needs of their users. As the demographics of Portage

Figure 7.2 - Park Proximity

# Portage by Closest City Park



changes over time (race, age, population, etc.) park amenities need to be assessed for their relevance to the changing user groups. To understand gaps and surpluses among amenities in Portage, Level of Service metrics from the NRPA benchmarking database were used. The analysis showed that in Portage's "basic" park amenities per capita, in categories with comparable NRPA benchmarks, are on par with comparable cities, without major gaps in service by number or by geography, although there are minor deficits in the total number of playgrounds, tennis courts, and soccer fields. Still, amenities that should serve a walkable population, such as playgrounds, are fairly equitably-distributed across the city.

While the NRPA benchmarking analysis is limited by the availability of amenity categories in the database, focus groups during the engagement process, revealed community interest in more specialized amenities such as a farmers market, splash pad, and art installations.

The combination of the benchmark analysis and public input give clear direction for the city. The city has done a good job of providing basic park amenities across the community. There is a desire for new, innovative and specialized amenities to add diversity to the system. At the same time, the community has demonstrated need for more trails, access to natural areas, and gathering spaces. Focusing on walking and biking trails within the system would provide the greatest benefit for the largest number of residents within the City of Portage. Respondents indicated they were very supportive of upgrading and expanding walking and biking trails and the community has also voiced that indoor facilities for fitness and sports are high priorities for the future. (Additional detail on public engagement is discussed within the following chapter).

**Figure 5.4: Park and Recreation Facilities - Population per Facility**

Facility	NRPA median for all agencies	NRPA median for similar population	City of Portage
Tennis	5,608	5,000	5,432
Playground	3,750	3,111	3,760
Baseball	7,000	4,858	4,074
Softball	11,339	8,509	4,074
Basketball (outdoor)	7,403	6,839	2,573
Volleyball	18,232	14,807	6,984
Soccer	7,382	5,011	6,111
Football	26,493	19,351	24,445
Dog Park	48,586	28,000	48,891
Recreation Center	31,239	24,601	-
Swimming Pool	53,025	31,230	-
Community Center	29,036	26,668	-
Amphitheater	68,181	30,745	48,891
Pickleball	14,714	8,143	2,573
Skate Park	53,708	32,335	48,891
Senior Center	59,603	32,075	48,891
Outdoor Ice Rink	16,887	13,123	48,891

## Trends Analysis

A number of recent reports and surveys exist regarding parks and recreation participation patterns within the United States. Inferences can be made about the city parks and recreation program and service needs by cross referencing the research data with Portage population demographics.

According to the *Outdoor Participation Topline Report 2022*, by the Outdoor Foundation, 54% of the U.S. population, ages 6 and over, participated in outdoor recreation in 2021, which in Portage would equate to 26,401 people. In addition, the report states that the Midwestern region of the US, which includes Michigan, has the second highest rate of outdoor participation in the Country. Of those who participate in outdoor recreation nationally it is split 53.5% males and 46.5% female. This report also found the following trends:

- Since the COVID-19 pandemic was declared in March 2020, the number of new outdoor recreation participants has increased by 26%.
- The most popular outdoor activities by participation rate include hiking, camping, fishing, running, and biking.
- The number of kids participating in outdoor recreation is up, but they are participating less frequently.
- The number of participants 55 years and older increase more than 14% since 2019.



- The most popular team sports include basketball, baseball, soccer, softball, and football.
- The number 1 reason for participating in outdoor recreation was to get exercise.

According to the *2022 Participation Report* by the Physical Activity Council, 76% of the U.S. population ages 6 and over are active on some level which in Portage would equate to 37,157 active people. The Participation Report also found:

- Interest in outdoor recreation is on the rise due to people wanting to experience nature, join fitness classes, and participate in team sports.
- Fitness sports (67%), outdoor sports (54%), individual sports (42%), and team sports (22%) show the highest participation rates.
- Racket sports (14%), water sports (14%), and winter sports (8%) show lower participation rates.
- Participation in fitness sports and outdoor sports are trending up over the last 5 years.
- Participation in individual sports, team sports, and water sports are seeing declining rates over the last 5 years.

According to the *2022 NRPA Americans' Engagement with Parks Report 1* in 5 Americans ride bikes to parks. Gen Xers are more likely to walk to a park while Millennial's are more likely to ride a bike to parks. The report also indicates that 62% of respondents visit parks to be with family and friends while 54% visited parks for exercise.

Taking these use patterns and transferring them to Portage, the following activities would capitalize on trends as they relate to outdoor recreation and population in Portage:

- Look for non-motorized/walking trail opportunities to connect parks. This aligns with desires noted in the on-line survey.
- Consider adding fitness equipment in parks.
- Consider expanding team sport activities.
- Consider providing camping and fishing activities.
- Consider developing adventure sports such as BMX biking and cross-country skiing.

Age also plays an important role in recreation as it relates to activity and participation. According to the 2022 *Participation Report* by the Physical Activity Council, the most active group (82%) is those 18 and under, followed by those 18-34 (76%), those 35-49 (72%), and those 50 and older (67%). The report also found the following:

- Outdoor sports and team sports have the highest participation rates for those 18 and under
- Fitness sports and outdoor sports have the highest participation rates for those 18-34 and 35-49, however the younger group is more likely to participate in water sports.
- Those 50 and older prefer fitness activities, particularly low impact activities such as walking, cycling, or aquatics.
- The 18 and under group are growing up in the age of technology. Nationally, the use of technology while engaging in outdoor recreation is high in this age group. Recreation participants in this group are more likely to use smart phones and other devices to engage in outdoor recreation.
- The top three factors that motivate youth/ families to participate in outdoor activities and visit recreational facilities are to be with family and friends (61%), participate in organized team sports (59%), and to experience excitement/adventure (46%).
- The top three factors that hamper youth/

families from participating in outdoor recreation are lack of time (38%), lack of interest in available activities (20%), and safety concerns (17%).

- Most participants under the age of 18 are visiting parks with parents/families, and relying on family to get to park facilities.
- Those in the middle aged group are more likely to visit parks to be closer to nature and for fitness exercises.
- Those in the 23-43 age group are more likely to visit parks to experience excitement and adventure. Family oriented recreational facilities will also be important to these groups.

The largest population group in the city is the 50 and older group (34%). The second largest group is the 18-34 group (22.9%), and the third largest group is the 18 and under group (22.9%). These three groups make up most of the population.

The following activities would capitalize on trends as they relate to these age groups:

- Develop programs and facilities that support adventure recreation.
- Continue to develop youth sports programs.
- Offer technology focused activities as an integral component to recreation programs and facilities.
- Offer fitness based programming and park amenities including team sports.
- Provide opportunities to experience and enjoy nature by providing nature trails, interpretive signage, boardwalks, and other passive based recreation.



## Description of the Public Input Process

The City of Portage encourages its residents to take an active role in planning for their community's recreational opportunities. The city appreciates the fact that recreation planning plays an important role in maintaining the quality of life in a community and therefore tries to be responsive to citizen needs and desires for parks and recreation. Community outreach is one way of obtaining a perspective on the needs and desires of the community and engaging in a process that includes; developing realistic alternatives; formulating goals, policies, and recommendations for public and private decisions; developing criteria to measure change; and involving people in the planning, design and decision processes.

In order to ensure that the city's parks and recreation offerings are aligned with the needs of the community, and to understand the community perception of the level of service being provided, the city engaged in a public input process.

### **Community Outreach**

The community outreach process included the following: an on-line survey, staff and park ranger input meeting, a Park Board workshop, a public input workshop, a 30-day public review period, and open public hearings. In addition, city stakeholders and the Youth Advisory Committee were provided with input worksheets to complete. The input and opinions received at these meetings helped the administration and facilitator provide the basis for revising the goals and objectives from the previous plan.

## On-Line Survey

In August of 2022 the city developed an on-line survey to solicit input and ideas from its residents regarding current use and future needs of the city's parks, recreation and programs, services, maintenance, and facilities. The survey was conducted over a 60-day period using an on-line survey tool (Survey Monkey).

The survey was promoted to the community using a number of methods including: publication in the city monthly newsletter, posting at City Hall, standard press release notification, and through social media platforms including the city website and Facebook page. One-hundred (100) individuals elected to fully complete the survey. Respondents were 56% female and 37% male (7% chose not to answer). Seventy-eight (78) percent of the respondents were city residents. About 43% of the respondents were in the 25-44 age group, and 42% were in the 45-64 age group which indicates the results may focus on family and senior recreation. See Figures 6.1 through 6.3 for more detailed results of selected categories. The Appendix contains the full survey results.

## Public Input Workshop

The city understands the importance of meaningful citizen input and is committed to using this input to assist in evaluating trends and forming goals and actions. Prior to development of the plan, the city solicited input and participation from the residents of the city through a public input workshop. The workshop was intended to develop a general consensus among the participants as to the current issues, needs, desires, and deficiencies regarding parks and recreation in the city.

VIRIDIS Design Group led the workshop and facilitated the discussions. The workshop took place on September 8th at 6:00 pm at City Hall, with 25 people in attendance. The meeting followed a typical format to ensure a productive

outcome, but encouraged an open and informal atmosphere. Attendees were encouraged to engage in the process to provide perspective and to think about the big picture, in other words the attendees were asked to dream big.



The public workshop was an open house style meeting which allowed participants to come and go during the allotted time. Three interactive stations were set up and participants were able to move through the meeting at their own pace. Upon checking into the meeting, each participant was provided with a leave-behind worksheet, poling dots, post-it notes, and comment cards. The first station included a map of the existing city park system and participants were asked to provide feedback regarding the existing park system. Questions such as "what is the city doing well" or "what could be done better" were posed to participants. Station 2 was the poling station, where images of park amenities, programs, and activities were displayed and participants were asked to place dots on their top priorities.

**Figure 6.1: Demographics of Survey Respondents**

Gender	Survey Respondents
Male	37%
Female	56%

Live in the City Limits	Survey Respondents
Yes	78%
No	22%

Age	Survey Respondents
0-17	3.05%
18-24	4.05%
25-44	43.4%
45-64	42.4%
65-84	7.1%
85+	0%

**Figure 6.2: Patterns of Park Use**

Top Facilities with Most Importance	Survey Respondents
Nature Trail	77%
Walking/Jogging	73%
Biking	48%
Playground	36%
Swimming	27%

Top Ranked Needed Facilities	Survey Respondents
Walking/Nature Trails	57%
Farmer's Market	50%
Bike Path/Trails	48%
Restrooms	38%
Splash pad	35%

Highest Program Participation	Survey Respondents
Food Trucks	38%
Attended None	33%
Holiday Events	26%
Summer Concerts	25%
Run/Walk Comps	17%

Top Ranked Needed Programs	Survey Respondents
Fitness Classes	55%
Nature Based	42%
Holiday Events	40%
Kayaking	33%
Special events	30%

Park Visits	Survey Respondents
Weekly	51%
Monthly	19.4%
Daily	12.3%
<Every 6 Months	11.2%
Every 6 Months	6.1%

Reason Preventing Park Use	Survey Respondents
Lack Awareness	42%
Program not Offered	27%
Too Far from Home	23%
Time/day not convenient	18%
Maintenance / Cleanliness	11%

**Figure 6.3: Satisfaction Levels**

Benefits of parks	Survey Respondents	Top Maintenance issues	Survey Respondents
Preserve Open Space	82.5%	Lighting	48%
Improve Health	69%	Clean Restrooms	43%
Quality of Life	69%	Park Safety	43%
Reduce Stress	67%	Beach/Waterfront	36%
Reduce Crime	60%	Barrier Free Access	32%

What to focus on for next 5-years	Survey Respondents	Overall Appearance of Parks	Survey Respondents
Farmer's Market	47%	Excellent	20%
Non-Motorized Trails	42%	Good	40%
Land Acquisition	36%	Fair	10%
Cleanliness	35%	Poor	5%
Safety	34%	Unsure	25%

The third station posed a series of questions regarding the future of park facilities and participants were asked for feedback on what is important to them to add to the park system. Refer to Figure 6.4 for a summary of public workshop feedback.

#### WELCOME!

Your feedback is important. As we envision the future of Portage public parks and natural areas, your participation and input will inform the vision and improvement priorities for the park system. Please use this sheet to tell us what you are excited and concerned about. After you visit each station, return your notes to check-in.

Please check the top 3 recreational activities you would like the Parks Department to invest in:

<input type="checkbox"/> Walking/Nature Trails	<input type="checkbox"/> Pickleball
<input type="checkbox"/> Bike Trails/Paths	<input type="checkbox"/> Court Games (tennis, basketball, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Playgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/> Art Exhibitions / Sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> Picnic Shelters	<input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Performance Space/Amphitheater
<input type="checkbox"/> Sports Fields	<input type="checkbox"/> Historical/Cultural Exhibits
<input type="checkbox"/> Water access (swimming, boating, fishing, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Splash Pad
<input type="checkbox"/> Winter activities (sledding, ice skating, cross country skiing etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe)
<input type="checkbox"/> Restroom facilities	

What excites you the most about future improvements to City parks? What's your biggest concern?

Let's dream big! What is important to you in terms of long-term, system-wide improvements to our parks and natural spaces? Check all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/> Redvelop/upgrade existing parks to support a broader range of activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide additional recreational programs and activities
<input type="checkbox"/> Acquire land for future parks and open space	<input type="checkbox"/> No additional parks or changes to current facilities
<input type="checkbox"/> Focus effort on better maintenance of existing facilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe)
<input type="checkbox"/> Develop additional non-motorized trails	

Please use this space to share additional feedback and comments. To complete our full online survey, scan the QR code with your smartphone or visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VQJ63C>



VIRIDIS  
SUSTAINABILITY

#### Staff and Ranger Input Meeting

In addition to resident input, the city also sought and received input from its Parks Department staff as well as the team of park rangers that are tasked with patrolling the parks. VIRIDIS also facilitated a workshop style meeting with this group on July 28th, 2022 and posed a series of questions to solicit input. The group provided great feedback that was recorded by the facilitator. Feedback was focused on improving maintenance of facilities, increasing staff to keep up with demand, safety and security of the parks, and communication and awareness of what the park rangers do for the parks. When asked what was important to them in terms of new park facilities the top responses included: adding a dedicated farmer's market site, tournament level disc golf course, splash pad, regional trail connections, and a large rentable event venue.

#### Park Board Workshop

On September 7th, at a regularly scheduled public Park Board meeting, VIRIDIS facilitated a work shop with park board members, members from the Art Council, Bike Committee, and Park Foundation, and community members.

**Figure 6.4: Public Input Workshop Summary**

What are three ways the City can improve the parks and recreation system?	What new amenities should the City consider adding to the park system?
Trail connections between parks	Wildlife viewing
Dedicated Farmers Market site	Winter activities
Splash pad	Outdoor music
Nature based activities	Nature based activities, programs, trails
Water based activities / water access	Accessible boat launch
What new programs would interest you?	What are three long term goals the City should focus on related to parks and recreation?
Nature education / invasive species removal	Maintain what we have / cleanliness
Habitat restoration	Security / safety (lighting, cameras)
Holiday activities	Trails - connect to other communities
Water based activities	Art based facilities
Fitness based	Concerts / special events

Participants were posed a series of questions related to their opinions of the existing park system and what was important to them regarding new park facilities and programs. When asked how the existing park system could be improved, the top themes that were discussed included: environmental and financial sustainability, trail connections between parks and other communities, providing an equitable park system and resources, public awareness, and improved safety. When asked what new facilities would be most important to them, the top responses included: urban farms, healing space, splash pad, cultural based recreation including historic and art themes, trail connections, tracking trends, and engaging in partnerships with other agencies. Lastly, when asked what long-term goals the city should invest in, the common themes discussed included: land acquisition including the Gourdneck State Game Area, an east/west non-motorized trail system, farmer's market site, centralized large event facility or amphitheater, and consideration of the impacts of climate change.

**30-Day Public Review**

Once the draft Parks and Recreation and Open Space Plan was complete, citizens were provided with a 30-day period to review and comment on the plan. A copy of the plan was made available at Portage City Hall, the Portage Library, and on the city's website for review by the public on November 3, 2022. To notify the residents that a draft of the plan was available for review, a notice was published on the city website, posted at the City Hall, and noticed in the local newspaper, describing the purpose of the 30-day review period. A copy of the notice that was published/posted is included in the Appendix.

**Public Hearings and Meetings**

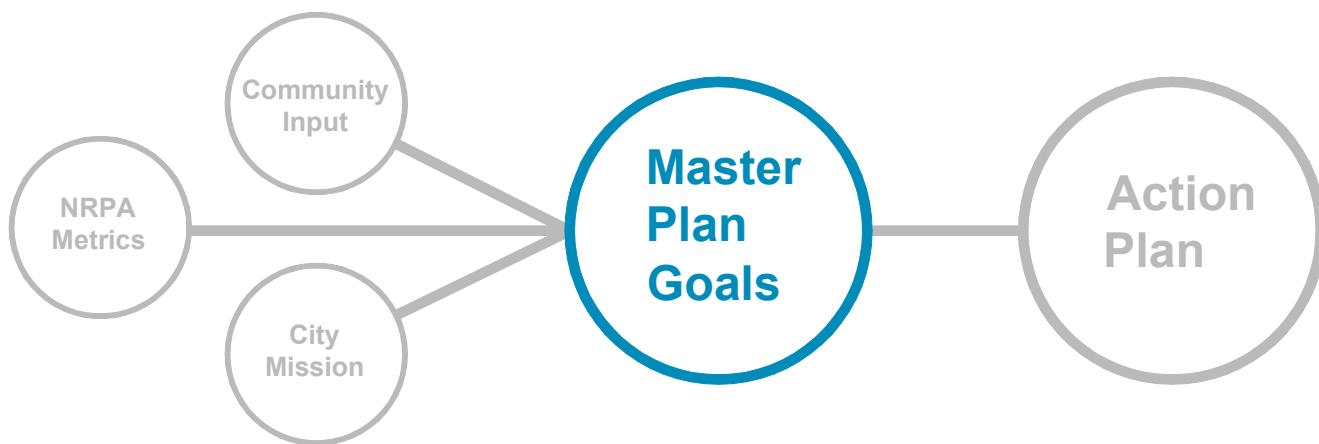
A series of public hearings were held for review of the Recreation and Open Space Plan. These meetings were held at regularly scheduled meeting dates and provided the public with additional opportunities to review the plan, ask questions, and make their opinions heard. These meetings were all publicly noticed to inform the public that the Open Space Plan would be discussed. On December 7, 2022 the Portage Park

Board held a public hearing to review the plan and recommend approval to City Council. On December 15, 2022, the Portage Planning Commission held a public hearing to review the plan and recommend approval to City Council. On January 10, 2023 the Portage City Council held a public hearing to review and adopt the plan. Copies of the meeting announcements, resolution of adoption, and meeting notes are located in the Appendix.



# Goals and Objectives

As a result of the recreation inventory, public input, survey results, and trends, the City of Portage has developed the following goals and objectives in order to guide the management and development of recreation opportunities for the next 5 years. Goals and objectives are meant to guide the intent of the actions to be taken, but flexible enough to reflect changing attitudes and opportunities. A degree of flexibility is essential for the city to be responsive to its citizens. The goals are long-range in nature and intended to be broad in scope to accommodate future change. The objectives are short-range in nature and intended to direct specific program and development decisions to be made in the next five years. The goals are listed in no particular order.



**GOAL 1**

Enhance existing recreation facilities to provide a high quality, accessible, and safe recreational experience at all city parks and facilities.

- Provide access to all users by meeting or exceeding barrier-free standards.
- Update existing playgrounds to meet current safety and ADA guidelines.
- Evaluate security measures such as emergency call boxes, security systems, lighting, and park visibility.
- Work with enforcement agencies and community organizations to provide a safe environment for park users.
- Maintain park facilities by providing adequate staff, equipment, and response systems.
- Incorporate low maintenance products and equipment that save energy, reduce wear, reduce environmental impact, and reduce demands on st

**GOAL 2**

Preserve, protect, and improve historic, natural, scenic, and environmentally sensitive areas for appropriate public use and enjoyment and habitat protection.

- Develop management / maintenance strategies for natural areas including eradication of invasive species.
- Identify land acquisition opportunities to preserve environmentally sensitive areas including land along Portage Creek.
- Provide programs and facilities that educate the public about the environment.
- Provide programs and facilities that support the conservation, protection, and preservation of the natural environment.

**GOAL 3**

Expand the diversity of recreation facilities available at new or existing recreation facilities to offer year-round opportunities for individuals of all ages and abilities in order to meet current and future demands.

- Identify new innovative equipment and/or facilities.
- Provide playground equipment for toddlers.
- Provide wide range of active and passive recreation facilities and programs with four season activities for all ages.

**GOAL 4**

Encourage community partnerships and joint ventures with groups and organizations that have a supportive relationship.

- Identify organizations with similar goals that can be collaborative and share costs for activities and events.
- Collaborate with local agencies, adjacent municipalities, and other public organizations
- Coordinate with local school district and non-profit organizations to identify synergistic programs and activities.
- Explore opportunities to partner with private organizations to encourage philanthropic investment in city park and recreation facilities.
- Facilitate partnerships that support venues for cultural, sports, and recreational activities.

**GOAL 5**

Provide non-motorized and way finding connections between parks, neighborhoods and community facilities, and municipalities.

- Identify potential opportunities for regional non-motorized trail connections to adjacent communities.
- Provide non-motorized connections to connect users with facilities throughout the community.
- Develop a way finding system to assist users locate facilities more easily and locate their proximity within the park system.
- Explore opportunities for easement acquisition for future trail connections.
- Explore opportunities to connect trail systems to local businesses.
- Develop a funding mechanism for long term trail maintenance.

**GOAL 6**

Acquire property as it becomes available to ensure recreational opportunities keep pace with the needs of the community.

- Plan for long-range needs to develop existing city owned land, expansion of existing park facilities, and acquire new park property.
- Provide a geographically balanced park system throughout the city.
- Encourage new residential projects to include parkland and/or open spaces to serve future residents

**GOAL 7**

Increase community awareness of available park facilities and programs through communication, promotion, and branding.

- Promote volunteer opportunities and other methods of citizen support for programs and parks.
- Encourage public engagement in park facility development and programs through community out reach projects, stewardship programs, and interpretive programs.
- Continue to publicize park events, facilities and programs through social media, newsletters, press releases, web site, promotional events, and other media outlets.
- Increase resident awareness of the city's park goals, events, and accomplishments to get the community involved in programs and increase use of park facilities.

**GOAL 8**

Promote healthy and active lifestyles through park and recreation facilities and programs.

- Promote awareness of fitness programs that support healthy lifestyles.
- Provide four season recreation opportunities.
- Provide recreation facilities that encourage healthy habits.
- Target programs for specific age groups based on current trends.

## GOAL 9



Explore sustainable funding opportunities for future park development and maintenance.

- Explore partnerships with local corporations.
- Develop a fundraising arm or friends group for trail maintenance.
- Continue to seek funding opportunities from grants, foundations, millages, and donations.

## GOAL 10



Identify opportunities for place making and public space development

- Integrate technology into parks and public spaces.
- Provide space for public art display.
- Provide for the display/use of sustainable technologies in public spaces.
- Use public space to promote the branding and identity of the park system.



## Action Plan

While the Master Plan sets out an ambitious vision for the future of Portages' parks and recreation system, realizing this vision will require a carefully considered implementation plan with clear, actionable steps. The Action Plan and Capital Improvement Plan of the Portage Recreation and Open Space Plan states the proposed course of development or improvement that will be taken over the next five years. The Goals and Objectives, from the previous section, serve as guidelines for the development of the Action Program. The Capital Improvement Plan which follows will focus on the needs identified in the Action Program and will project potential expenditures for the five-year action period on a park by park and project by project basis. The five-year period will begin in 2023 and extend through 2027. This time period will not be sufficient to accomplish all of the goals and objectives, but begins to prioritize those projects that may be achievable within the initial five years.

The Action Plan focuses on reduction of deficiencies, and expansion and improvements of facilities in a manner that not only meets current needs, but also diversifies the type and quality of recreational opportunities within the city. These needs were identified during the public input process and were identified during the review and comparison of park standards and demographic/population trends.

The Action Plan describes specific priorities to be taken to address these needs; and the Capital Improvement Plan specifically itemizes those projects which will be most feasible during the next five years. The proposed schedule will allow for flexibility as funds become available and as opportunities are presented.

The priorities and action plan items for the 2023 Recreation and Open Space Plan are as follows (not listed in particular order):

### **Action A: Expansion of Non-Motorized trails**

Projects that include non-motorized transportation/recreation trail planning and development are a priority including projects that enhance greenway corridors, connect parks and lakes, support existing trail extensions, eliminate barriers, and enhance the overall trail system. The city has scheduled a number of trail projects in their CIP plans for the next five years and have a number of trail projects pending. Projects listed in the CIP as high priority are approved for CIP funding; as medium priority are pending CIP funding; and as low are to be determined.

#### Bike Trails

Portage continues developing its trail system to connect neighborhoods along a safe non-motorized route, encouraging a healthier lifestyle. Currently, additional trails are planned to connect the east side of the city to the main trail system including the Sprinkle Road Bypass, Portage Road Interconnect, Austin Lake Nature Trail, and the Garden Lane Trail to provide neighborhoods with safe, bike and pedestrian friendly routes to area parks and enhance trail recreation to all parts of the city. In the future additional trail developments focus on connecting the south and west sections of the city, including Osterhout Trail, Mandigo Marsh Trail, City Centre Trail Connection, and West Gourdneck Trails.

### **Action B: Improvements to existing facilities**

The most efficient use of city resources is to focus on projects that improve existing facilities and maximize the potential of city-owned property. Projects that renovate or re-use existing facilities are considered a high priority. This may include improvements that eliminate barriers to increase accessibility for all users, renovations and upgrades to existing equipment and features to ensure modern and clean facilities, and redevelopment or expansion of existing parks to eliminate redundancy and maximize the potential of the site.

#### Betty Lee Ongley Nature Preserve

This 11.5 acres of forest land, surrounded on three side by Portage Creek, was dedicated in honor of Betty Lee Ongley, former City of Portage Mayor. The entrance will be off Kilgore Road as an extension on the Portage Creek Bicentennial Park trail. This park will feature wood chipped walking paths, a pedestrian bridge over Portage Creek to access the park for wildlife viewing.

#### West Lake Overlook

This beautiful viewing area overlooking West Lake is planned to include limited parking, with a variety of seating, landscaping, and public art.

#### Celery Flats

Development of Celery Flats as an entertainment district with the features such as an amphitheater, movie screen, zip line, canopy walk, additional parking lots and trail connections. This area is centralized to the city and a half mile from the City Centre District, with trail connections to the Lake District.

### Schrier Park

This park is a popular destination for weddings, receptions and other family gathering requiring renovation to meet current needs including, a small warming kitchen, patio, updated floors and restrooms and trail modifications for facility connections.

### Ramona Park Renovation

Renovations of Ramona Park would include a fully ADA Playground, sand volleyball, beach expansion, parking lot improvements, ADA boat dock, landscaping, beach front deck, lake boardwalks, camping facilities, non-motorized trail extensions, and future additions to the beach house including facade improvements.

### Lakeview Park

A master plan has been completed for Lakeview Park which include the following planned enhancements: construction of a boardwalk along the canal and lake shore, bike and pedestrian trails, sledding hill, amphitheater, pavilion/restroom/storage building, flex lawn, kiosks and rentable roof deck, pier improvements, memorial gardens with pergola, sculptures, walkway entrance arches, parking lot / drop-off improvements.

### Millennium Park Renovation

This one acre park could be activated for warm weather use with the addition of game tables around the fountain, creation of a small café with tables on the patio, and offer concessions with coffee and bagels in the morning and light lunch in the afternoon. Other programming could be developed including enhancement of public Wi-Fi connectivity.

### Eliason Nature Reserve

The final phase of the Eliason Nature Reserve development could feature drive in access at the northern section of the trail off Industrial Drive. The enhancements could include picnic shelter, restroom facility, parking, playgrounds and extending the nature walking paths.

### Bishop's Bog and West Lake Nature Preserve

Enhancements at both locations could include replacement of the plastic floating decking with a new decking system that is slightly elevated thus reducing time it is impassable due to flooding and allowing vegetation growth underneath.

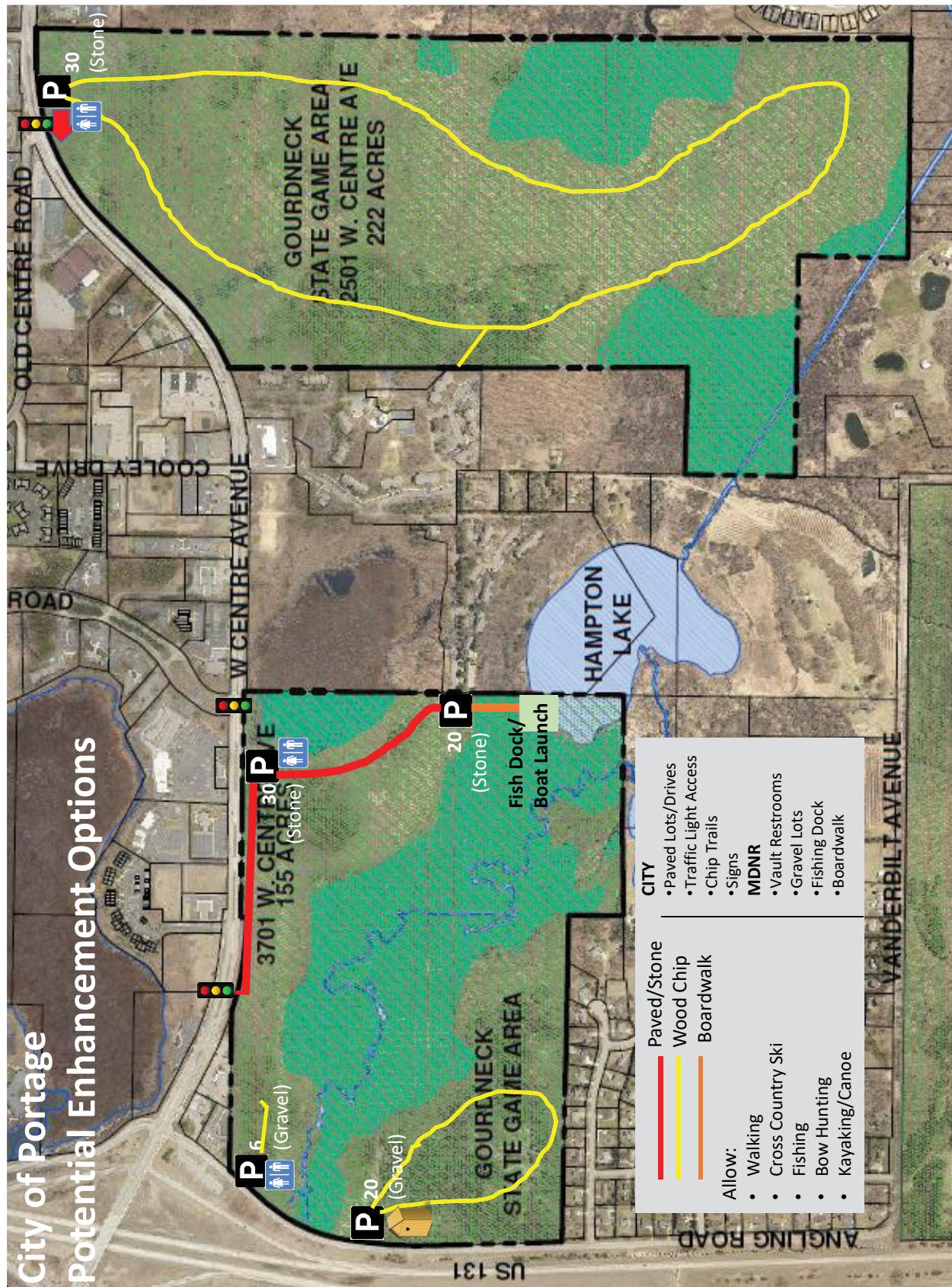
### Lexington Green Park Renovation

The existing 23 acre park could receive a renovation to include family friendly activities for the northeast part of the city. Renovations may include: enhance wooded walking paths and track; increase the size of the playground and locate near the restroom; remodel current restroom and construct a second facility to the north.

### Bike Share Rental and Amenities

Expansion of the popular 10-bike rental station to additional parks throughout the city including Eliason Nature Reserve, Portage Creek Bicentennial Park, Lovers Land Trailhead, Ramona Park, Lakeview Park, and Haverhill Park. Other amenities would include bike repair stations at each park

Figure 10.1- Future MDNR Collaboration



### Public Cultural Arts

The city has a history and focus on arts that can be incorporated into murals, sculptures, and other media for public art interpretation. These public art works can also be developed into self-guided and guided history tours of the city and park system.

### **Action C: Reduce or minimize operating costs**

With budgets getting tighter and grants becoming more competitive, projects that can help reduce operating costs are a priority. Examples include: projects that increase efficiency in operations and reduce maintenance, removal or replacement of equipment or features that are costly or inefficient to maintain, projects that consider the use of alternative energy sources and use of recycled materials, and projects that could generate revenue.

### **Action D: Conserve, preserve, and enhance natural features and environmentally sensitive areas.**

During the community outreach process, the community expressed a strong desire to further utilize and protect the city's extensive natural areas and features, and to implement environmentally sustainable maintenance practices. This includes invasive species management, nature programming, additional trails including soft trails, use of native species, interpretive signage, using recycled materials and alternative sources of energy, and employing environmentally sustainable design and maintenance practices.

### **Action E: Planning for future parks and recreational needs**

As the community continues to grow and change over time, the city continues to dedicate themselves to improving recreational offerings for the community. The city understands that in order to continue to ensure that park and recreation offerings adapt to and meet the needs of the growing community, they must be willing to continually invest in and look for new opportunities in parks and recreation programs, facilities, and services. This makes planning for future parks and recreation facilities a high priority. This is reflected in projects that spark or are a part of economic development, projects that seek opportunities for land acquisition, and the pursuit of additional funding mechanisms. The following are examples of projects the city is considering to meet this focus:

#### Land Acquisition

The city will look for opportunities to purchase additional land for recreational or preservation purposes as it becomes available within the or adjacent to the city limits. Future land acquisitions are planned to grow current parks and trails for neighborhood connections to recreation and natural areas. Other land acquisitions may be located near Portage Creek where possible to facilitate additional use of the waterways for recreational opportunities.

#### Farmers Market

Provide a dynamic space to expand food vendor space from 30 to over 70 kiosks with farm vehicle access to stalls. The market could include space for entertainment, dining, and outdoor cooking classes. The market could include a section that can be enclosed in the colder months for small retail venues for more permanent market vendors. On off days when not used for the farmer's market the area could be used as a festival site.

### Winter Recreation

The public feedback indicated that winter recreation is a high priority for programs to add to the city park system. Such activities include cross-country skiing, sledding, ice skating, and snowmobiling.

### Celery Flats Historic Area

Celery Flats Historic Area could be enhanced as land becomes available to allow for a circular path through the park without going onto Garden Lane for horse carriage and/or vintage car rides. The enhancements could also include additional historic structures including potentially a baggage car behind the grain elevator, train switching station, wigwam, and other identified structures. Historic oriented programs, tours, demonstrations, exhibitions and speaker series could be offered to enhance Portage's Sense of Place.

### Archery Facility

An archery facility is planned for a recently purchased a 13-acre parcel as an expansion for South Westnedge Park. This facility will feature indoor and outdoor ranges and field ranges for student and adult target practice, tournaments, hunting workshops and archery classes.

### Community Gardens

Community Gardens would be in different parts of the city in connection with a local park. The Garden would have a volunteer committee, hold programs on gardening, food sustainability, and other garden and food related topics.

### South Westnedge Park

Continued development, renovation, and expansion of South Westnedge Park to accommodate new facilities for programing to meet future needs.

### Splashpad

A splashpad would be designed for children and adult recreational use with accessibility in mind.

### Bocce Court

Bocce is an emerging activity and space would be allocated for the installation of a court with development of clinics, leagues, and tournaments.

### Ice Skating Loop

An ice-skating loop would encircle a park facility during the winter and converted to a walking trail during the warmer months. A small ice rink would be featured as well for those wishing to stay closer to a warming house.

### Mountain/BMX Biking

A mountain bike course would feature a woodland setting with ramps and rugged terrain with a variety of skill levels.

### Cross Country Skiing and Cross Country Running

Trails for cross country skiing and cross country running courses would be developed and designed for a multiple skill levels and featured training programs and competitions.

### Dog Park

An additional dog park would be developed in a larger area with a wooded section for human/dog outings. The park would feature a large and a small dog area with restrooms and other canine amenities. Space would be allocated for events and programs oriented to dogs and their owners.

### **Action F: Develop diverse, balanced, and innovative park facilities**

Given that the city's park system is a mature system, developing diverse park facilities and incorporating exciting new park features is a high priority for the city. This is also important given the city's highest population group is those under 18. The following are examples of projects the city is considering in response to resident needs:

#### Outdoor Amphitheater

A focus will be placed on enhancing Celery Flats as the Portage entertainment district, by conducting a feasibility study to increase music facilities. The plan for the area could reflect development in the wooded setting and possibly enhanced with a sculpture garden tucked among the surrounding forest area.

#### Elijah Root Sawmill Trout Fishing Area

Historic site of the 1830s Elijah Root Lumber Mill, which is located on Portage Creek along the Bicentennial Trail. Development of this area could include historical markers commemorating the site and elimination of a portion of the dam to revitalize brown trout fishing on Portage Creek. This site would be used to provide educational opportunities on Portage's past, and restore Portage Creek as a premier trout fishing creek with access to the only cold water trout fishing creek in southwest Michigan.

#### Cultural Center

As part of a collaborative effort between area organizations, and the Portage Parks & Recreation, a cultural center exhibition area could be created to enhance history and cultural opportunities in Portage. This center would be located along the existing trail system and feature exhibitions, presentations and potentially art, classroom and gallery space.

#### Kayak Livery / Waterways

Visitors to Celery Flats Recreation Area will be able to glide right though the scenic beauty of the Bicentennial Trail with a new livery and revitalized waterway system. The project includes construction of a livery by the kayak launch, with visitor information, kayak and fishing equipment rental, as well as removal of fallen trees blocking the creek to ensure safe passage.

#### Edible Trail

Creating edible forest landscapes of fruit and nut trees, berry bushes, and more along the trail to encourage stops along the route to pause and enjoy nature, while enjoying some of what nature provides. The Edible Trail project could provide learning opportunities on nurturing the ecosystem while increasing access to local, sustainable food.

#### Outdoor Gym

An Outdoor Gym could be developed in the public park including fitness equipment available all year

for adult, children and the disabled. This fitness area may be set with a forested area and encourage stretching and strength exercises to accompany walking and biking experiences.

#### Botanical Gardens

A themed garden area could be developed as a place of beauty and serenity to reconnect with the outdoors and provide good stewardship of the land. Educational opportunities may be built into all garden exhibits and events, and foster appreciation of native plants of southwestern Michigan. Programs could focus on plant education, gardening, and the environment.

#### Sculpture Garden Park

To enhance cultural experiences in the parks, sculptures may be used to guide visitors along walkways in a peaceful setting. Many of the sculptures could have a nature and/or local history oriented theme and use the park setting as the backdrop.

#### Native American Interpretive Area

Future park expansions are planned to include Native American cultural education interpretation, events, exhibitions and other activities. The interpretation is planned in collaboration with the local Potawatomi tribe.

#### Disc Golf Course

Development of an 18-hole Disc Golf course will enhance Portage and Kalamazoo County's attractiveness to hold large tournaments and attract professional players from a wider area. Disc Golf is also growing as sports programs increase in area schools.

#### Camp Site

Plans include development of camp sites/facilities to align with current trends for those ages 37 and younger, which consists of 44% of the population in the City of Portage, that desire camping as one of their top five outdoor recreation activities. Camping also aligns with the many activities found in the park system including biking, fishing and trail walking/hiking.

#### **Action G: Continue to provide a diverse slate of programs for all ages and seasons**

In addition to providing cutting edge park facilities, it is equally important to provide exciting programs and activities. This need was discussed during the community outreach process and the city recognizes the need for diverse programs that cover all ages and seasons.

#### **Action H: Coordination with Development Projects**

Recommendations for development projects in which land will be located next to park property or an existing or future planned non-motorized trails include:

1. Any walkways/paths/trails connecting to city park land or trail should be constructed as a 10' wide asphalt surface with 4' of shoulder on each side and have a bollard installed at the park end to restrict access to only allow non-motorized traffic.
2. When development is near a wetland area, a 6" depth aggregate/crushed stone 10' wide path may be requested by the Parks and Recreation Department instead of asphalt for environmental concerns.
3. Any development with land along a roadway with a future non-motorized trail route planned or

to provide connectivity from the development to a park or trail, should install an asphalt 10' non-motorized trail with 4' mowing shoulder on each side, and provide an easement to the City of Portage Parks and Recreation Department for future maintenance.

4. Trail developments along a road or drive should have a minimum 10' green buffer area between the trail and road/driveway.
5. All path and trails should minimally conform to ADA and AASHTO requirements for slopes, curves and other design elements, unless stated above.
6. Trails should have cross slopes through driveways to meet ADA acceptable grades.
7. All asphalt trails and paths should be a 3" minimum HMA depth required in 2 lifts with a 6" aggregate base, and testing for density of base within 24 hours of paving and during paving operations.
8. All non-motorized trail drawings, specification, and asphalt mix designs to be reviewed and approved by the city prior to posting for bids.
9. Storm water drainage design plan with required calculations may be required.
10. A development should provide an easement to the City of Parks and Recreation department for any future access from the development to an existing trail or future trail route.
11. A minimum 20' buffer of vegetation including trees, with species approved by the Portage Parks and Recreation Department to ensure proper understory and species variation, should be erected along any development running along a park or trail to provide separation between the property and City park and/or trail.
12. Any vegetation planted by a development should be native plant species. Deciduous trees should be a minimum 2.5" caliper size; evergreen trees a minimum 6' in height; shrubs a minimum of 36" in height, and perennials in 1-gallon pots.

## Capital Improvement Plan

As stated in the Action Program, improvements and development will occur as funds and opportunities evolve. Assistance will be solicited from all available sources and will include both physical and financial support. Local businesses, service organizations, land developers, and governmental agencies will be solicited for monetary and material support. The city will also seek funding assistance from all available sources such as trusts, charitable foundations, and all Federal and State funding programs. The Capital Improvement Plan shows a breakdown of the anticipated projects, priorities, estimated costs, and projected funding sources for the next five years. All projections are based upon year 2022 costs and will be refined as the program progresses. It should be noted that changes in the program may occur if projected funding levels increase or decrease, but it is anticipated that the changes would be related more to adjustments in the time schedule rather than specific projects.

## Potential Funding Sources / Resource Partners

A variety of funding sources and resource partners may exist to assist with the implementation of proposed recreation projects. A summary of the primary sources are listed below:

### Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund

The MNRTF can provide assistance for the city's outdoor recreation projects, including land acquisition and physical development of park facilities. This assistance is intended to bolster existing facilities, protect critical natural resources and establish new parkland. Development project grants may range between \$15,000 and \$300,000; there is no limit to acquisition requests. The minimum required local match is 25%.

Figure 10.2- Capital Improvement Plan

City of Portage Recreation and Open Space Master Plan						
2023 - 2027 Capital Improvement Program						
	Project	Cost Estimate	Relates to		Priority	
			Action	Goal		
<b>TRAILS</b>						
East Central Trail	Portage Rd to Lovers Lane (2023)	\$700,000	A	1, 5	High	
Multi-Use	Trail System Improvement (2023 - 2027)	\$936,000	A	1, 5	High	
Austin Lake	Trail around north & east side of Austin Lake (2023-26)	\$3,350,000	A	1, 5	Medium	
Bishop Road Extension	Sprinkle Rd to Lexington Green connector (2024-27)	\$700,000	A	1, 5	High	
Sprinkle Road Bypass North	Romence Rd/Bishop Rd to Lexington Green (2024-27)	\$2,265,000	A	1, 5	High	
Sprinkle Road Bypass South	Center Ave to Romence R/Bishop Rd (2026-28)	\$354,000	A	1, 5	Medium	
Northwest Trail Extension	Engineering (2026-27)	\$200,000	A	1, 5	Medium	
Bikeway Improvements	Various locations (2023-27)	\$150,000	A	1, 5	High	
<b>PARKS</b>						
Elijah Root Mill	Dam Removal and remediation (2022-23)	\$5,000,000	D, E	2, 3	High	
Lakeview Park	Park Renovations (2022-26)	\$6,495,000	B	1, 5	High	
West Lake Nature Preserve	Trail Improvements (2022-26)	\$3,130,000	A, B	1, 2, 5	High	
Schrier Park	Park Improvements (2022-23)	\$442,000	B	1, 2, 3	High	
Ramona Park	Waterfront Improvements (2022-23)	\$150,000	B	1, 2, 3	High	
Ramona Park	Pickleball Facility (2022-23)	\$120,000	B	1, 3	High	
Haverhill Park	Court surfacing and repair (2022-26)	\$437,000	B, C	1	High	
Celery Flats	Park Improvements (2022-26)	\$1,135,000	B	1, 3, 7	Medium	
Various	Art Displays (2022-28)	\$180,000	E	3, 4, 7	Medium	
South Westnedge Park	Achery Facility (2024-26)	\$1,110,000	B	1, 3	Medium	
Ramona Park	Park Renovation (2023-2025)	\$395,000	B	1, 3	Medium	
TBD	City Marketplace and Farmers Market (2023-2028)	\$550,000	E	9, 10	High	
Various	Playground Improvements and Amenities (2023-28)	\$685,000	B	1	High	
Lexington Green	Forest Trail (2023-24)	\$150,000	B, D	1, 2, 3	Medium	
MDNR State Game Area Land	MDNR Collaborative Project (2023-25)	\$250,000	D, E	2, 4	High	
Millennium Park	Ice Rink Improvements (2024-25)	\$125,000	B, C	1, 8	High	
Various	Restroom and Shelter Improvements (2023-28)	\$710,000	B, C	1	Medium	
Celery Flats	Historic Area Improvements (2023-25)	\$308,000	B	1, 3	Medium	
Various	Parking Lot and Walkway Improvements (2023-26)	\$488,000	B	1	Medium	
Various	Lighting Improvements (2023-28)	\$740,000	B, C	1	Medium	
Various	Picnic Support Equipment Improvement (2023-27)	\$291,000	B, C	1	Low	
Ramona Park	Sports Field Improvements (2023-24)	\$234,000	B	1	Low	
Ramona Park	Softball Field Improvements (2023-26)	\$469,000	B	1	Low	
Central Park	Perimeter Fencing Improvements (2023-26)	\$225,000	B	1	Low	
Betty Lee Ongley Nature	Park Master Plan	\$335,000	B, D, E	1, 3	High	

### **Michigan Natural Resources Passport Grant**

The Passport grant fund program is primarily focused on renovating and improving existing parks, however the development of new parks is considered eligible. The Minimum grant request is \$7,500 and the maximum grant request is \$150,000. The minimum required local match is 25%.

### **Land and Water Conservation Fund**

The LWCF is similar to the Trust Fund grant described above, in that it is meant to help fund land acquisition and park development. The minimum grant request amount is \$30,000 and the maximum grant request amount is \$300,000. The minimum required local match is 50%. Natural feature preservation has historically been the primary award criteria; and as such, this opportunity should especially be taken into account when planning for new passive recreation facilities. In addition, the LWCF now places emphasis on trails, "green" technology in outdoor recreation, universal design and coordination among recreation providers.

### **MDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)**

The TAP fund is a grant program that funds non-motorized paths and streetscapes that enhance the community's intermodal transportation system and provide safe alternative transportation options. The program uses federal funds to promote walkability, alternative transportation options, and place based economic development to improve the quality of life for communities. The minimum required local match is 20%.

### **City Funds**

The general fund, a special millage, the parks budget, bonds, and the parks capital improvement account are possibilities to help fund new and improved facilities in the Township.

### **Park Millage**

A special millage can help the city generate funds for development, acquire park land, or to use as leverage for grant applications.

### **Donations & Foundations**

Residents, property owners, businesses, and organizations will frequently contribute to causes that improve local quality of life. While these contributions are often pecuniary, they may also include land donations, volunteer services, or the gift of equipment or other facilities.

### **Clean Michigan Initiative Local Recreation Grants**

The program provides funding for the development and renovation of indoor or outdoor public recreation facilities and infrastructure. The goal of the program is to enhance or develop recreational opportunities by improving or replacing an existing public facility, by meeting the recreational needs of the local residents, or by attracting tourists. Grants are awarded for non-acquisition projects in amounts between \$15,000 to \$750,000, based on the need for the project, capability of the local community to operate and maintain the improvement, and quality of the site and project design.

### **Michigan Natural Resources Tree Planting Grants**

Through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), there are two tree planting grant programs that will assist in funding park landscape enhancements and reforestation projects. Applicants

must provide at least 50% of the total project cost.

- Arbor Day Mini-Grants. This mini-grant program is designed to provide information and technical assistance to municipal governments and volunteer groups for urban and community forest activities related to Arbor Day. Applications are due in July with maximum grant request of \$20,000.
- Urban Community Forestry Program. This program provides the same services as above plus management plans, inventories and maintenance activities. These activities do not have to be related to Arbor Day. Applications are due in July with maximum grant requests of \$20,000.

### **Wetland Program Development**

The goals of the Environmental Protection Agency's wetland program and the Clean Water Action Plan are to increase the quantity and quality of wetlands in the U.S. by conservation and increasing wetland acreage, and improving wetland health. State, tribal, and local governmental agencies, interstate, inter-tribal, and local government associations are eligible to receive grant funds. Applications are due in the fall with a required 25% minimum local match. For more information, visit their website at: [www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/grant](http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/grant) guidelines.

# Appendix

- City Budget
- City Programs
- Documents from Public Hearings and Public Meetings
- On-Line Community Survey Results

# **Operating Budget**



## 2022-2023 Budget

### General Fund

#### General Fund - Overview

The General Fund accounts for governmental activities that are not reported in other funds. In the City of Portage, these functions include the Legislative (City Council and Human Services), City Manager, Finance and Purchasing, Technology Services, Public Information, City Assessor, City Attorney, City Clerk, Human Resources, Parks and Recreation, Senior Citizen Services, Public Works, Public Safety, Community Development, and City-Wide Services activities.

Budget Overview: Public Safety expenditures account for 53 percent of the total General Fund operating expenditures, which reflects the city's commitment to providing high-quality public safety services. In addition to this commitment and furthering the Council's mission statement of 'promoting the highest level of quality of life in all aspects for all residents', the next highest General Fund expenditure category is Community Development at nearly seven percent of the budget.

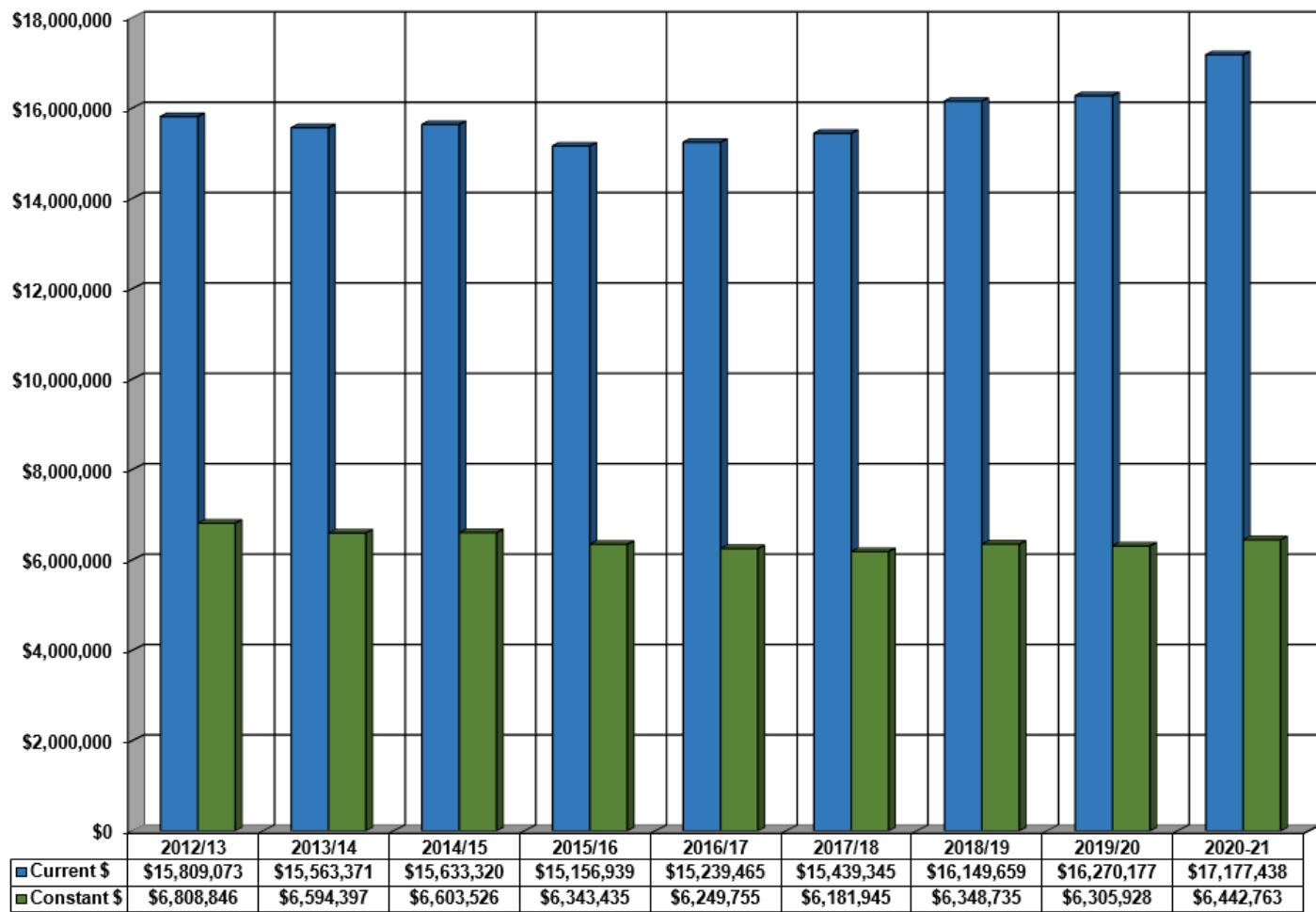
The fund balance on June 30, 2022, is expected to exceed 24 percent of fund expenditures and transfers out.

#### General Fund Overview Chart

	20-21 Activity	21-22 Original Budget	21-22 Amended Budget	22-23 Approved Budget
<b>Revenues</b>				
Property Tax	\$17,177,438	\$17,263,901	\$17,263,901	\$17,898,518
State Shared Revenue	\$4,566,603	\$4,428,478	\$4,428,478	\$5,079,483
State Revenue	\$3,218,207	\$1,646,075	\$1,646,075	\$1,808,394
Charges for Services	\$1,446,107	\$1,565,000	\$1,565,000	\$1,549,646
Use of Fund Balance	\$0	\$1,473,236	\$1,473,236	\$1,620,560
Fees and Permits	\$999,130	\$1,049,500	\$1,049,500	\$1,464,435
Other Revenue	\$1,471,796	\$599,860	\$599,860	\$592,065
Interest and Rents	\$201,694	\$390,500	\$390,500	\$454,000
Federal Revenue	\$1,091,205	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Transfers In	\$215,000	\$233,000	\$233,000	\$268,500
Other Grants	\$110,917	\$106,307	\$111,107	\$124,600
<b>REVENUES TOTAL</b>	<b>\$30,498,097</b>	<b>\$28,758,857</b>	<b>\$28,763,657</b>	<b>\$30,863,201</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Expenses	\$24,793,798	\$28,118,840	\$28,257,099	\$30,085,334
Capital Outlay	\$543,792	\$640,017	\$491,785	\$565,320
Debt Service	\$0	\$0	\$212,547	\$212,547

	20-21 Activity	21-22 Original Budget	21-22 Amended Budget	22-23 Approved Budget
EXPENSES TOTAL	\$25,337,590	\$28,758,857	\$28,961,431	\$30,863,201
REVENUES LESS EXPENSES	\$5,160,507	\$0	-\$197,774	\$0

**GENERAL FUND PROPERTY TAX REVENUES**  
(in Current \$ and Constant \$)



Formula:

For property tax revenues in constant dollars

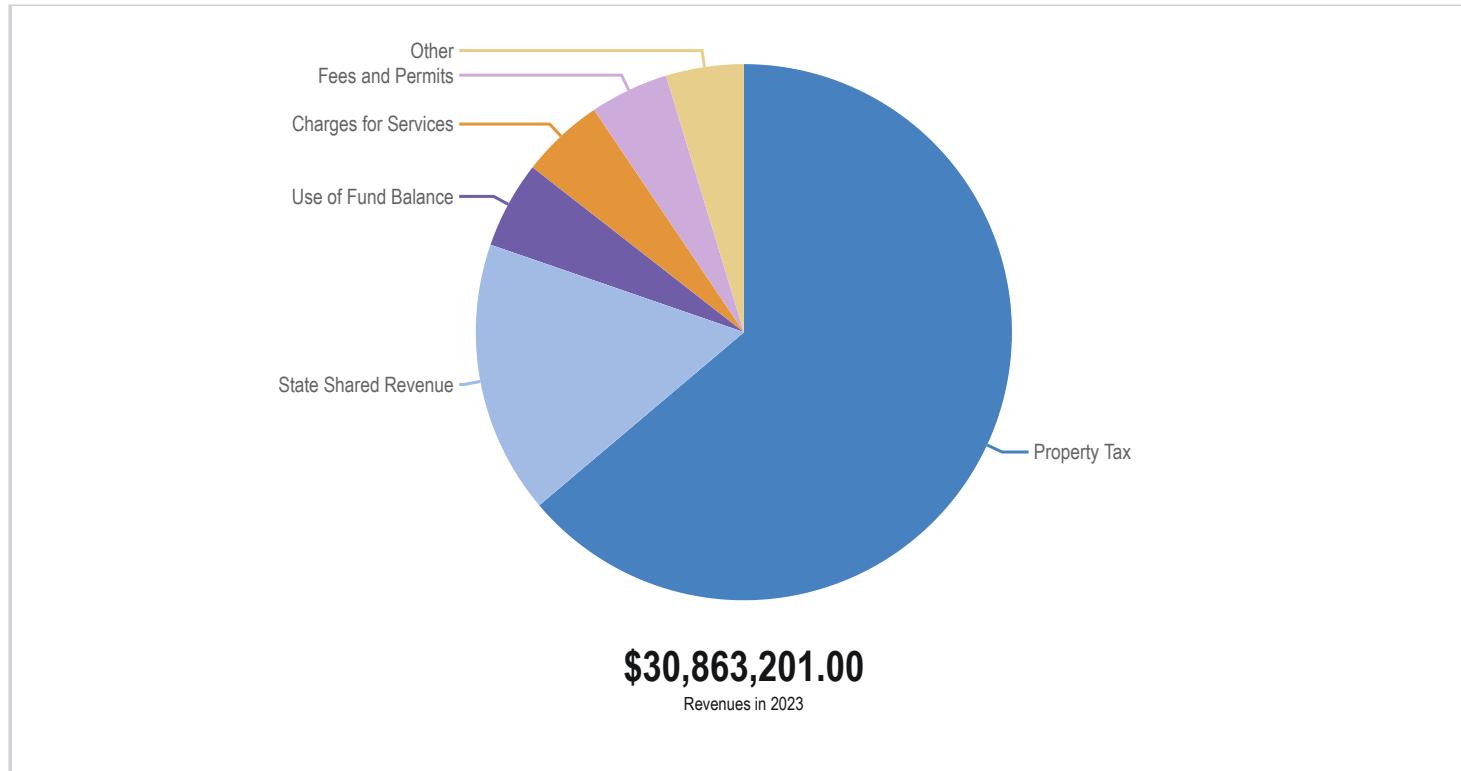
$$((\text{Property Tax Revenues in Current \$}) / (\text{CPI}/100))$$

Note: Property tax revenues include all property taxes from the regular tax roll, the abatement tax roll, administrative charges, and late fees.

**Description:** Property tax revenues are considered separately from other revenues because the City relies heavily on them. A decline or diminished growth rate in property taxes can have two primary causes. First, it may reflect an overall decline in property values resulting from the aging of buildings, a decline in local economic health, or decline in the number of occupied dwellings causing depression of the housing market. Second, it might reflect inefficient assessment or appraisal of property. The

county government reimburses the city for the amount of delinquent property taxes, then collects the delinquencies itself. A rising trend of residents failing to pay property tax would be a warning for the city and overlapping governments. While the delinquent real property taxes are not a current issue for the city, continuing increases in delinquents would eventually affect the county and all local governments.

**Analysis:** As the chart indicates, General Fund property tax revenue in constant dollars has fluctuated between \$15.1 million and \$15.8 million until 2018-2019 when it exceeded \$16 million. The state's Local Community Stabilization Authority began making reimbursement payments in 2016-2017, offsetting tax base declines due to personal property tax losses. Improvement in the tax base has been strong over the last three years as several large industrial projects were completed. The Assessor's estimate of future taxable values anticipates approximately 2 percent increases annually for the next several years.



#### General Fund Revenues by Source

	20-21 Activity	21-22 Original Budget	21-22 Amended Budget	2022-23 Approved Budget
<b>Property Tax</b>	\$17,177,438	\$17,263,901	\$17,263,901	\$17,898,518
<b>State Shared Revenue</b>	\$4,566,603	\$4,428,478	\$4,428,478	\$5,079,483
<b>State Revenue</b>	\$3,218,207	\$1,646,075	\$1,646,075	\$1,908,394
<b>Charges for Services</b>	\$1,446,107	\$1,565,000	\$1,565,000	\$1,549,646
<b>Use of Fund Balance</b>	\$0	\$1,473,236	\$1,473,236	\$1,620,560
<b>Fees and Permits</b>	\$999,130	\$1,049,500	\$1,049,500	\$1,464,435
<b>Other Revenue</b>	\$1,471,796	\$599,860	\$599,860	\$592,065
<b>Interest and Rents</b>	\$201,694	\$390,500	\$390,500	\$454,000
<b>Federal Revenue</b>	\$1,091,205	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
<b>Transfers In</b>	\$215,000	\$233,000	\$233,000	\$268,500
<b>Other Grants</b>	\$110,917	\$106,307	\$111,107	\$124,600
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$30,498,097</b>	<b>\$28,758,857</b>	<b>\$28,763,657</b>	<b>\$30,863,201</b>

## Revenues budgeted by department

Fees and Permits – Increases in building permit and development fees and marijuana fees are expected.

Other Revenue – A decrease in Senior Center trip revenue is expected as trip delays due to the pandemic continuing.

Other Grants – An increase in revenue from the recently levied county senior millage revenue is projected.

## Revenues not budgeted by department

Property Taxes – The increase in tax revenue stems from a projected increase in taxable value.

State Shared Revenue - Increase expected in the constitutional and statutory state revenue sharing from sales tax.

Interest and Rents – Projections of increased interest revenue are expected due to changes in the investing market.

Use of Fund Balance – Surplus fund balance in excess of the 24% target is utilized.

## General Fund Revenues

### Property Taxes

The City Charter authorizes property tax levies up to 7.5000 mills for general municipal purposes. The proposed millage rate for 2022-2023 is consistent with prior year at 7.3560 mills. This revenue is calculated based on actual data for the upcoming year.

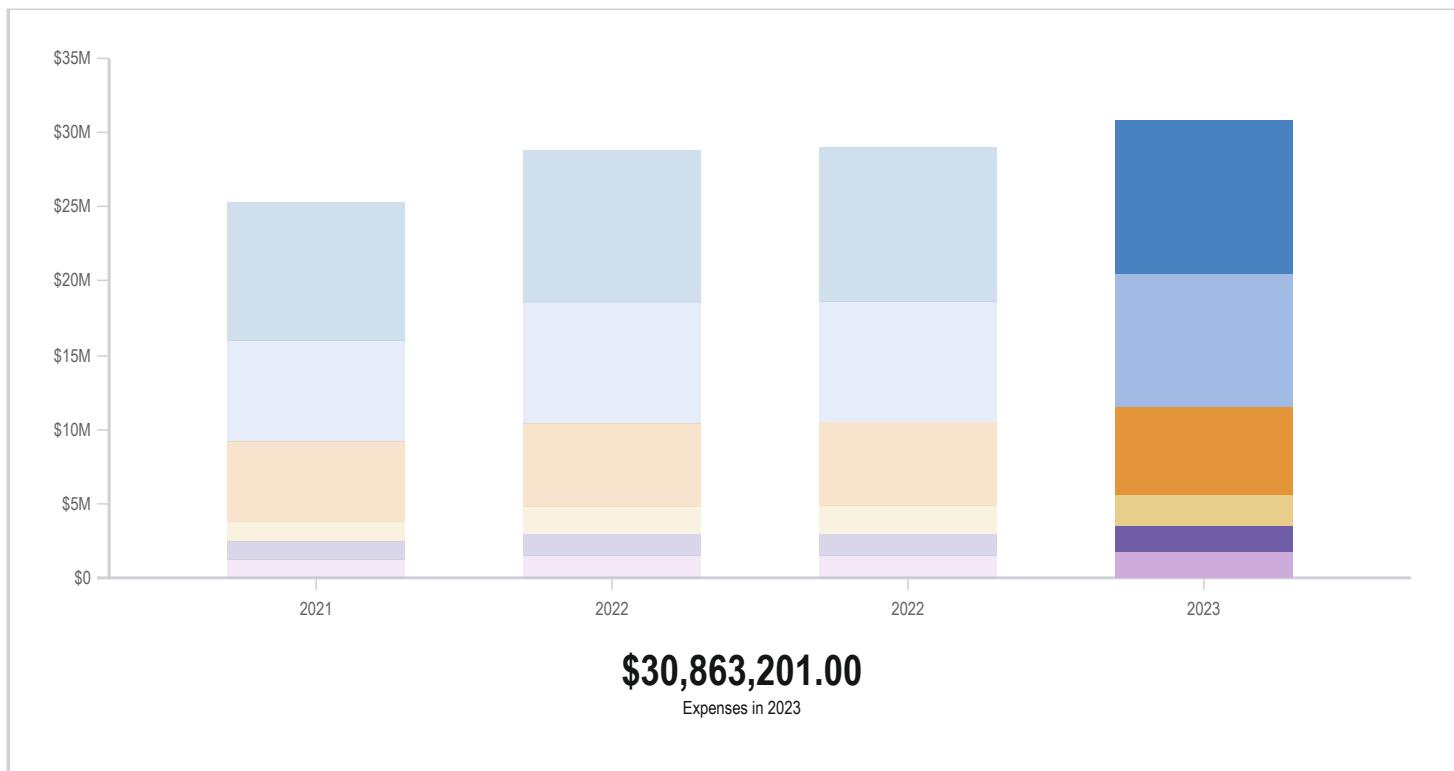
A property tax administration fee is charged for tax collection and assessing services (provided for by State statute). This fee helps offset the costs of the Assessor's Office plus the printing, mailing, and collecting of semi-annual property taxes, and the distributing of revenues to the various school systems and governmental units by the Treasury office. An administrative fee is also charged on special assessments petitioned and requested by boards, associations, and other entities when billed by the city to cover Treasury Office costs plus printing, mailing, collecting, and distributing of the revenues.

### State Collected - Locally Shared Taxes

In July 1993, a law was passed eliminating property tax paid for schools, cutting 64 percent of the then \$10 billion statewide school budget beginning with the 1994-1995 year. Following that move, school funding was restructured by Proposal A, passed in March of 1994. The proposal created a state education tax, and school districts began receiving per-pupil payments from the state known as the "foundation allowance." The proposal altered the funding for school districts, establishing a basic level for districts with the lowest funding to reduce the financial disparity between districts. Along with the 6 mill state education tax levy on all property was a .075 percent transfer tax on real estate, also going to the state school aid fund, and an additional 18 mill levy on non-homestead properties assessed at the local level. The state sales tax was increased from 4 percent to 6 percent, with the additional 2 percent supporting a school aid fund.

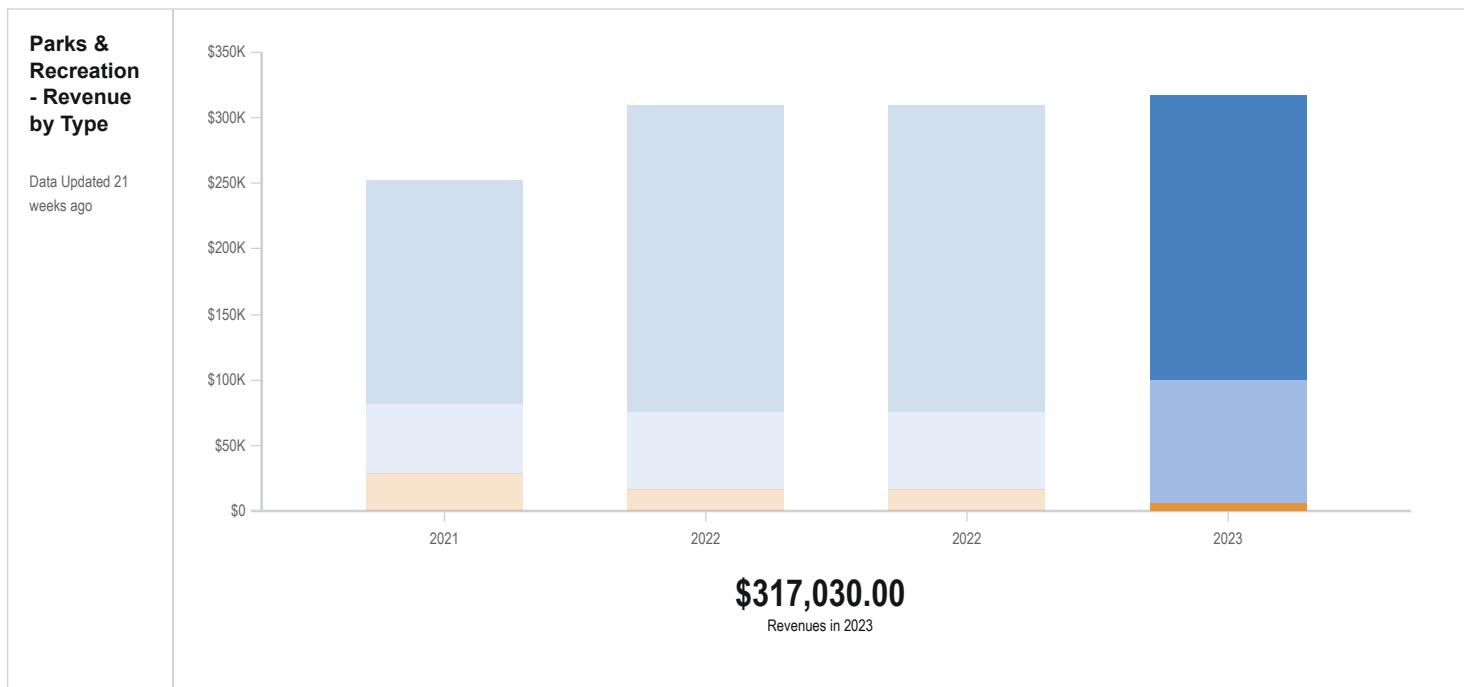
The major changes affecting local governments were the restriction on allowing taxpayers to vote to tax themselves to fund school operations, and the capping of taxable value increases, now limited to the lesser of 5 percent or the rate of inflation.

Proposal A significantly altered the state's distribution of revenues to local units of government. What used to be a fairly stable and easily predictable estimating process has become more uncertain, as funding is now partially subjected to the state legislative allocation process. The city generally relies on revenue sharing projections as issued by the state for this revenue estimate.



#### General Fund - Expenditure by Department

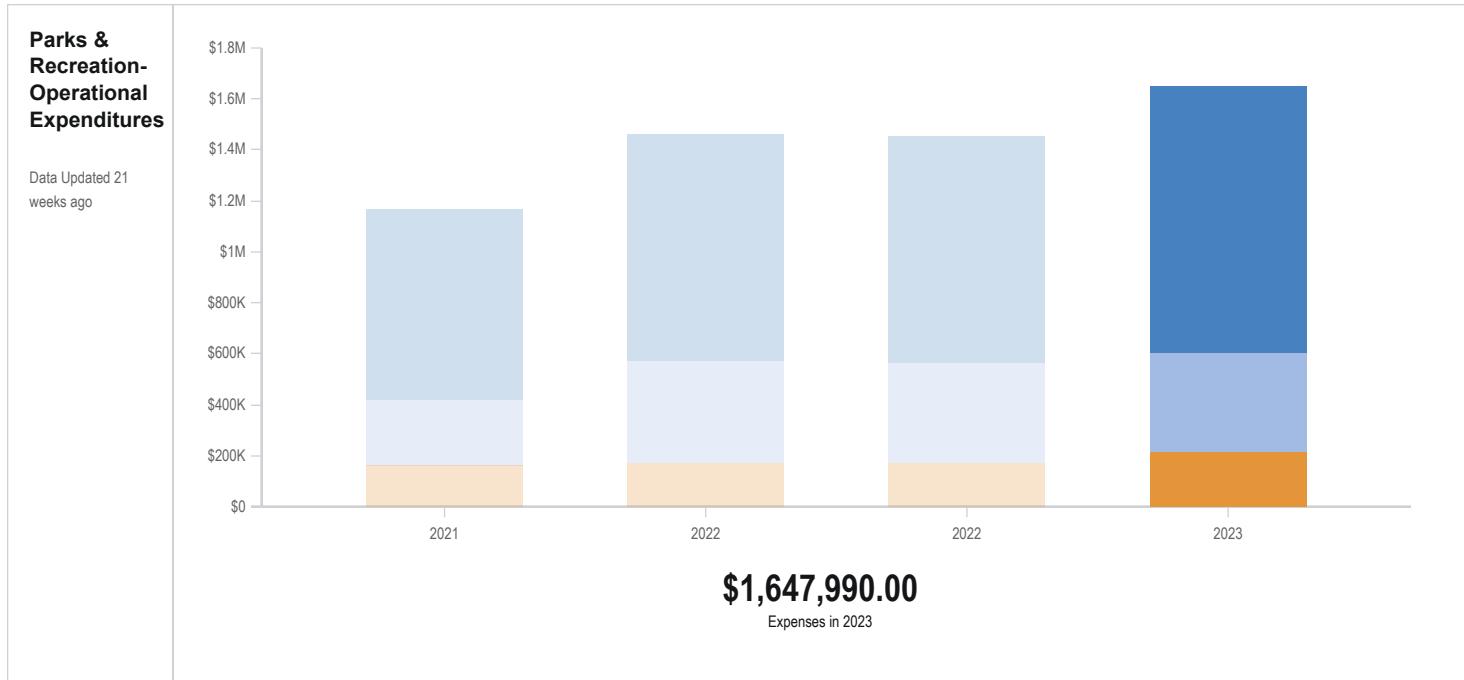
	20-21 Activity	21-22 Original Budget	21-22 Amended Budget	2022-23 Approved Budget
Police	\$9,402,161	\$10,242,764	\$10,300,887	\$10,434,214
Fire	\$5,311,523	\$5,568,505	\$5,680,348	\$5,934,840
Community Development	\$1,352,921	\$1,840,044	\$1,857,952	\$2,112,709
Public Works	\$1,258,400	\$1,492,084	\$1,492,084	\$1,745,019
Parks and Recreation	\$1,187,595	\$1,479,735	\$1,483,135	\$1,699,990
Transfers Out	\$617,000	\$1,159,354	\$1,159,354	\$1,212,733
Technology Services	\$777,400	\$946,701	\$946,701	\$1,133,862
City Manager	\$845,896	\$902,011	\$902,011	\$903,615
Finance	\$725,926	\$899,545	\$899,545	\$894,911
City-Wide Services	\$826,139	\$696,100	\$696,100	\$750,636
Senior Center	\$373,478	\$761,711	\$766,511	\$1,057,456
Human Resources	\$624,571	\$700,204	\$700,204	\$749,857
Clerk	\$538,817	\$495,903	\$495,903	\$591,262
Assessor	\$501,911	\$509,884	\$509,884	\$560,198
Public Information	\$423,584	\$433,537	\$433,537	\$452,661
City Council	\$252,225	\$272,350	\$278,850	\$277,827
City Attorney	\$226,078	\$251,000	\$251,000	\$235,723
Purchasing	\$91,965	\$107,425	\$107,425	\$115,688
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$25,337,590</b>	<b>\$28,758,857</b>	<b>\$28,961,431</b>	<b>\$30,863,201</b>



**Parks & Recreation - Revenue by Type**

	20-21 Activity	21-22 Original Budget	21-22 Amended Budget	2022-23 Approved Budget
Charges for Services	\$171,107	\$233,980	\$233,980	\$217,230
Interest and Rents	\$53,127	\$58,500	\$58,500	\$94,000
Other Revenue	\$28,223	\$16,500	\$16,500	\$5,800
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$252,457</b>	<b>\$308,980</b>	<b>\$308,980</b>	<b>\$317,030</b>

## Expenditures



### Parks & Recreation- Expenditures by Type

	20-21 Activity	21-22 Original Budget	21-22 Amended Budget	2022-23 Approved Budget
<b>Expenses</b>				
Personnel Services	\$746,121	\$889,457	\$889,457	\$1,047,166
Operations & Maintenance	\$256,307	\$391,925	\$395,325	\$386,135
Admin Expenditures	\$163,303	\$174,353	\$174,353	\$214,689
<b>EXPENSES TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,165,731</b>	<b>\$1,455,735</b>	<b>\$1,459,135</b>	<b>\$1,647,990</b>
<b>Capital Outlay</b>	\$21,864	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$52,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,187,595</b>	<b>\$1,479,735</b>	<b>\$1,483,135</b>	<b>\$1,699,990</b>

### LOGOTYPE



[Return to Table of Contents](#)

# Programs

# Portage Parks & Recreation Spring & Summer Activities

<b>April</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Page</b>
1 . . . . .	Exhibition: What's In A Name? . . . . .	City Hall Lobby . . . . .	9
1 . . . . .	Geo Mystery Tour: See It To BeLeaf It. . . . .	Portage Parks . . . . .	21
10 . . . . .	Ranger Hike: Spring Fever. . . . .	Eliason Nature Reserve . . . . .	7
13 . . . . .	Portage Culinary Academy . . . . .	Stuart Manor . . . . .	10
14 . . . . .	Junior Ranger Earn-A-Badge: Science . . . . .	Schrier Park . . . . .	6
23 . . . . .	Kids Fix-It! Bike Workshop & Ride . . . . .	Celery Flats . . . . .	16
<b>May</b>			
1 . . . . .	Garlic Mustard Pull . . . . .	Ramona Park . . . . .	8
1 . . . . .	Green-A-Thon & Sneak Peek Farmers Market . . . . .	City Hall . . . . .	18
5,7,14 . . . . .	Kalamazoo Bicycle Club Bike Camp. . . . .	Portage Senior Center . . . . .	16
6 . . . . .	Exhibition: History Of Portage Pioneer Families. . . . .	City Hall Lobby . . . . .	9
7 . . . . .	Garlic Mustard Pull . . . . .	Lexington Green Park. . . . .	8
8 . . . . .	Farmers Market Opening Day . . . . .	City Hall . . . . .	18
15 . . . . .	Garlic Mustard Pull . . . . .	South Westnedge Park . . . . .	8
15 . . . . .	Ranger Hike: Migration Station . . . . .	West Lake Nature Preserve . . . . .	7
18,25 . . . . .	Brooks Archery Classes For Adults . . . . .	Schrier Park . . . . .	17
19 . . . . .	Junior Ranger Earn-A-Badge: Arts . . . . .	Schrier Park . . . . .	6
21 . . . . .	Garlic Mustard Pull . . . . .	Bicentennial Park. . . . .	8
21 . . . . .	Mayor's Ride . . . . .	Bicentennial Trail. . . . .	20
21 . . . . .	Lanterns On The Lake . . . . .	Ramona Park . . . . .	20
22 . . . . .	The Disc Golf Experience . . . . .	Ramona Park . . . . .	13
26 . . . . .	Beginner Pickleball Clinic . . . . .	Ramona Park . . . . .	11
27 . . . . .	Ramona Beach Opens . . . . .	Ramona Park . . . . .	5
27 . . . . .	Friday At The Flats . . . . .	Celery Flats . . . . .	19
31 . . . . .	Pickleball: Session 1 Begins. . . . .	Ramona & Lakeview Park. . . . .	11
<b>June</b>			
1 . . . . .	Geo Mystery Tour: Fantastic Forage . . . . .	Portage Parks . . . . .	21
1-2 . . . . .	Pickleball: Session 1 Begins. . . . .	Ramona & Lakeview Park. . . . .	11
7,14,21,28 . . . . .	Paddlesports Sampler . . . . .	Ramona Park . . . . .	14
8 . . . . .	Breakfast With A Biologist . . . . .	Gourdeck State Game Area . . . . .	8
9 . . . . .	Summer Concert Series: Denise Davis & The MCS. . . . .	Overlander Bandshell. . . . .	22
11 . . . . .	Scalin' Up For Summer: Presented By SUEZ. . . . .	Celery Flats . . . . .	21
13-16 . . . . .	YMCA Youth Tennis Camp . . . . .	Oakland Drive Park . . . . .	12
14 . . . . .	Kids Try-It! Sports Begins . . . . .	Oakland Drive Park. . . . .	12
16 . . . . .	Junior Ranger Earn-A-Badge: History . . . . .	Schrier Park . . . . .	6
18 . . . . .	Bike-Opoly . . . . .	Celery Flats . . . . .	17
20 . . . . .	Intermediate Pickleball Clinic . . . . .	Ramona Park . . . . .	11
20-23 . . . . .	Little Lunkers Fish Camp . . . . .	Ramona Park . . . . .	15
24 . . . . .	Friday At The Flats . . . . .	Celery Flats . . . . .	19
24 . . . . .	Movies In The Park: Jumanji: The Next Level. . . . .	Celery Flats . . . . .	19
25,26 . . . . .	Great American Campout. . . . .	Schrier Park . . . . .	20
27 . . . . .	Adult Fall Softball Registration Begins. . . . .	Online. . . . .	14
<b>July</b>			
1 . . . . .	Exhibition: Annual Photo Contest. . . . .	City Hall Lobby . . . . .	9
6,13,20,27 . . . . .	Brooks Archery Class For Beginners . . . . .	Schrier Park . . . . .	17
11-14 . . . . .	YMCA Youth Tennis Camp . . . . .	Oakland Drive Park . . . . .	12
11,13,18,20,25,27 . . . . .	Swim Lessons For Beginners . . . . .	Ramona Park . . . . .	14
14 . . . . .	Summer Concert Series: HairMania. . . . .	Overlander Bandshell. . . . .	22
14,21,28 . . . . .	Stand Up Paddleboard (SUP) Yoga . . . . .	Ramona Park . . . . .	13
16 . . . . .	Ranger Hike: Moonlight Expedition . . . . .	Schrier Park . . . . .	7
18-21 . . . . .	Cool Casters Fish Camp . . . . .	Ramona Park . . . . .	15
21 . . . . .	Junior Ranger Earn-A-Badge: Service . . . . .	Schrier Park . . . . .	6

<b>July</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Page</b>
22 . . . . .	Friday At The Flats . . . . .	Celery Flats . . . . .	19
22 . . . . .	Movies In The Park: Raya And The Last Dragon . . . . .	Celery Flats . . . . .	19
23 . . . . .	Ramona Beach Bonfire. . . . .	Ramona Park . . . . .	8
23 . . . . .	How To Ride The Pump Track . . . . .	Lexington Green Park. . . . .	16
26-28 . . . . .	Pickleball: Session 2 Begins. . . . .	Ramona & Lakeview Park. . . . .	11

## **August**

1 . . . . .	Geo Mystery Tour: Myths & Legends . . . . .	Portage Parks . . . . .	21
1,3,8,10,15,17 . . .	Swim Lessons For Beginners . . . . .	Ramona Park . . . . .	14
3 . . . . .	Breakfast With A Biologist . . . . .	Gourdneck State Game Area .	8
3,10,17,24,31 . . . . .	Kingpins Drumline . . . . .	Schrier Park . . . . .	10
6 . . . . .	Kids Fix It! Bike Workshop & Ride . . . . .	Celery Flats . . . . .	16
8-11 . . . . .	YMCA Youth Tennis Camp . . . . .	Oakland Drive Park . . . . .	12
8 . . . . .	Fall Softball Begins . . . . .	Portage Parks . . . . .	14
11 . . . . .	Summer Concert Series: Jeffrey Cavataio . . . . .	Celery Flats . . . . .	22
11,18,25 . . . . .	Stand Up Paddleboard (SUP) Yoga . . . . .	Ramona Park . . . . .	13
13 . . . . .	Ramona Beach Bonfire. . . . .	Ramona Park . . . . .	8
15-18 . . . . .	Advanced Anglers Fish Camp . . . . .	Ramona Park . . . . .	15
18 . . . . .	Junior Ranger Earn-A-Badge: Endurance . . . . .	Schrier Park . . . . .	6
25 . . . . .	Paw Prints. . . . .	South Westnedge Dog Park .	18
25 . . . . .	Cornhole League Begins . . . . .	Schrier Park . . . . .	12
26 . . . . .	Friday At the Flats . . . . .	Celery Flats. . . . .	19
26 . . . . .	Movies In The Park: The Iron Giant . . . . .	Celery Flats . . . . .	19
28 . . . . .	School Of Fish: Fishing With Rangers. . . . .	Lakeview Park. . . . .	15

## **September**

7 . . . . .	Kingpins Drumline . . . . .	Schrier Park . . . . .	10
8 . . . . .	Summer Concert Series: First Call . . . . .	Overlander Bandshell. . . . .	22
10 . . . . .	Peacock Strut. . . . .	Celery Flats. . . . .	23
11 . . . . .	Ranger Hike: Monarchs On The Move . . . . .	West Lake Nature Preserve .	7
15 . . . . .	Junior Ranger Earn-A-Badge: Survival . . . . .	Schrier Park . . . . .	6
16 . . . . .	Exhibition: Portage Community Art Award. . . . .	City Hall Lobby . . . . .	9
18 . . . . .	Fall Festival . . . . .	Celery Flats . . . . .	23
23 . . . . .	Friday At The Flats . . . . .	Celery Flats . . . . .	19
28 . . . . .	Portage Culinary Academy . . . . .	Stuart Manor . . . . .	10

## **Upcoming October Events**

22 . . . . .	Monster Mash: Monsters Inc . . . . .	Ramona Park . . . . .	23
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## **For more information on these community events, contact:**

Portage Parks & Recreation

7900 South Westnedge Avenue · (269) 329-4522 · [mypark.portagemi.gov](http://mypark.portagemi.gov)

## **Program Accessibility**

The City of Portage encourages all individuals to become involved in these community activities. Reasonable accommodations will be made to allow individuals with special needs the opportunity to participate in parks & recreation activities. Please call Portage Parks & Recreation at (269) 329-4522 for more information.

To reserve a facility or register for park activities, visit [mypark.portagemi.gov](http://mypark.portagemi.gov) and click on the purple Recreation Activities & Facility Rentals button.



# Portage Parks & Recreation Fall & Winter Activities

All events are subject to change or cancellation due to COVID-19 restrictions

<b>Month</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>October</b>			
1 . . . . .	Photo Contest Begins . . . . .	Virtual . . . . .	9
3,10,17,24 . . . . .	Farmers Market . . . . .	City Hall . . . . .	16
3 . . . . .	Fall Festival . . . . .	Celery Flats . . . . .	16
6 . . . . .	Portage Culinary Academy . . . . .	Stuart Manor . . . . .	11
6 . . . . .	Ping Pong Leagues: Session 1 . . . . .	Portage Senior Center . . . . .	14
10 . . . . .	Ranger Hike: Dirt & Dead Things . . . . .	West Lake Nature Preserve . . . . .	8
12 . . . . .	Kingpins Drumline . . . . .	Schrier Park . . . . .	13
21 . . . . .	Junior Ranger Earn-A-Badge: Arts . . . . .	Schrier Park . . . . .	7
29 . . . . .	Last Day: Community Art Award Exhibition . . . . .	City Hall . . . . .	10
30 . . . . .	Monster Mash . . . . .	Ramona Park . . . . .	16
<b>November</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Page</b>
3 . . . . .	Portage Culinary Academy . . . . .	Stuart Manor . . . . .	11
8 . . . . .	Holiday Card & Tree Walk Deadline . . . . .	Public Works . . . . .	17
11 . . . . .	Painting In The Park . . . . .	Schrier Park . . . . .	12
14 . . . . .	Ranger Hike: Fall Colors . . . . .	South Westnedge Park . . . . .	8
18 . . . . .	Junior Ranger Earn-A-Badge: Service . . . . .	Celery Flats Pavilion . . . . .	7
20 . . . . .	Critchlow Alligator Sanctuary . . . . .	Schrier Park . . . . .	7
<b>December</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Page</b>
2 . . . . .	The Ice Rink At Millennium Park Opens . . . . .	The Ice Rink at Millennium Park . . . . .	4
3 . . . . .	City Hall Exhibition: Winter Holidays . . . . .	City Hall . . . . .	10
4 . . . . .	Traditional Holiday . . . . .	Celery Flats . . . . .	17
4 . . . . .	Gingerbread House Workshop . . . . .	Schrier Park . . . . .	18
11 . . . . .	Portage Holiday Market . . . . .	Portage Senior Center . . . . .	17
11 . . . . .	WMU Skating Club Holiday Program . . . . .	The Ice Rink at Millennium Park . . . . .	5
14 . . . . .	Ranger Hike: Winter Solstice & Candlelight Vigil . . . . .	Schrier Park . . . . .	8
16 . . . . .	Junior Ranger Earn-A-Badge: History . . . . .	Schrier Park . . . . .	7
17 . . . . .	Ugly Sweater Party . . . . .	The Ice Rink at Millennium Park . . . . .	5
18 . . . . .	Santa Skate . . . . .	The Ice Rink at Millennium Park . . . . .	5
22 . . . . .	Kid's Night Out: Holiday Party . . . . .	Portage Senior Center . . . . .	15
31 . . . . .	New Year's Eve Skate . . . . .	The Ice Rink at Millennium Park . . . . .	5
<b>January</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Page</b>
4,11,18,25 . . . . .	Heritage, Lineage, Ancestry, Genealogy . . . . .	Virtual . . . . .	12
4,11,18,25 . . . . .	Kingpins Drumline . . . . .	Schrier Park . . . . .	13
5 . . . . .	Portage Culinary Academy . . . . .	Stuart Manor . . . . .	11
5 . . . . .	Ping Pong Leagues: Session 2 . . . . .	Portage Senior Center . . . . .	14
7 . . . . .	City Hall Exhibition: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr . . . . .	City Hall . . . . .	10
9 . . . . .	Ranger Hike: Animal Tracks . . . . .	South Westnedge Park . . . . .	8
11,18,25 . . . . .	Skating Lessons . . . . .	The Ice Rink at Millennium Park . . . . .	6
14 . . . . .	Team Spirit Rally . . . . .	The Ice Rink at Millennium Park . . . . .	5
15 . . . . .	John Ball Zoo: Animal Adaptions . . . . .	Schrier Park . . . . .	9
20 . . . . .	Junior Ranger Earn-A-Badge: Endurance . . . . .	Schrier Park . . . . .	7
29 . . . . .	Mascot Madness . . . . .	The Ice Rink at Millennium Park . . . . .	5
29 . . . . .	Winter Wonderland Family Camp . . . . .	Schrier Park . . . . .	15
30 . . . . .	Ski & Snowboard Lessons . . . . .	Timber Ridge Ski Area . . . . .	14
<b>February</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Page</b>
1 . . . . .	City Hall Exhibition: Ten Little Known Facts . . . . .	City Hall . . . . .	10
1 . . . . .	Skating Lessons . . . . .	The Ice Rink at Millennium Park . . . . .	6
5 . . . . .	Black History Month: Shoshana Johnson . . . . .	Air Zoo . . . . .	18
5 . . . . .	Winter Snow Party . . . . .	Oakland Drive Park . . . . .	18
6,13 . . . . .	Ski & Snowboard Lessons . . . . .	Timber Ridge Ski Area . . . . .	14
9 . . . . .	Portage Culinary Academy . . . . .	Stuart Manor . . . . .	11
10 . . . . .	Painting In The Park . . . . .	Schrier Park . . . . .	12
13 . . . . .	Ranger Hike: Winter Homes . . . . .	West Lake Nature Preserve . . . . .	8
14 . . . . .	Valentine's Day Skate . . . . .	The Ice Rink at Millennium Park . . . . .	6
17 . . . . .	Junior Ranger Earn-A-Badge: Survival . . . . .	Schrier Park . . . . .	7

<b>February</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Page</b>
19 . . . . .	Critchlow Alligator Sanctuary . . . . .	Schrier Park. . . . .	7
22 . . . . .	Adult Softball Meetings. . . . .	Virtual/Portage Senior Center . . . . .	14
27 . . . . .	Winter Blast Half Marathon, 10k & 5k . . . . .	Loy Norrix High School . . . . .	19
<b>March</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Page</b>
2 . . . . .	Portage Culinary Academy. . . . .	Stuart Manor. . . . .	11
4 . . . . .	City Hall Exhibition: What's In A Name . . . . .	City Hall . . . . .	10
10 . . . . .	Painting In The Park . . . . .	Schrier Park. . . . .	12
13 . . . . .	Ranger Hike: Winter Tree Identification . . . . .	Schrier Park. . . . .	8
17 . . . . .	Junior Ranger Earn-A-Badge: Health. . . . .	Schrier Park. . . . .	7
19 . . . . .	John Ball Zoo: Animal Senses . . . . .	Schrier Park. . . . .	9
26 . . . . .	Sixty-Second Family Shenanigans . . . . .	Schrier Park. . . . .	13



## Scholarships Available!

Through a partnership between the Portage Community Center and the City of Portage, youth ages 18 and under residing in Portage and living in a household meeting established income guidelines may be eligible for financial assistance with any of the following winter recreation programs:

- » Downhill Ski or Snowboard Lessons
- » The Ice Rink at Millennium Park Skate Card
- » Gingerbread House Workshop

Contact the Portage Community Center at 323-1942 for more information.

**FOLLOW US  
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To reserve a facility or register for park activities, visit [mypark.portagemi.gov](http://mypark.portagemi.gov) and click on the purple Recreation Activities & Facility Rentals button.

Are you interested in sponsoring a community event? Please contact Portage Parks & Recreation at 329-4522.

**Recreation Activities  
& Facility Rentals** 



**CityofPortageMI**

# **Documents from Public Hearings and Public Meetings**



## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
August 30, 2022

Contact: Kathleen Hoyle, Director  
Parks & Recreation  
(269) 329-4522

### **Invitation for Input: Parks 5-Year Recreation and Open Space Plan**

The City of Portage has initiated a planning process to update the Parks 5-Year Recreation and Open Space Plan. The public is invited to a community Open House on Thursday, September 8, from 6 – 8 PM at Portage City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue) to be part of this community-driven, participatory design process. The purpose of the meeting is to gather community input for future improvements to our public green spaces and trails.

Attendees will be asked to share their vision and ideas for enhancements to the Portage park system and programs. Landscape Architects will be present to facilitate the discussion and answer questions. Input received at this workshop will be used to help formulate goals and objectives for the plan. If you cannot attend the workshop, please send your comments via email to [john@virdg.com](mailto:john@virdg.com).

In addition to the public meeting, an online survey will be available through September 30 for residents to provide feedback on the park system and submit ideas for the future. To complete the survey, visit [portagemi.gov/207](http://portagemi.gov/207).

For more information, call Portage Parks & Recreation at (269) 329-4522.

#####

# Parks 5 Year Recreation & Open Space Plan

## September 2022 Portager Article

### YOUR BACKYARD IS BIGGER THAN YOU THINK

#### Summer Concert Series

**First Call**

Combine an extremely talented front quartet with a funky, highly experienced back line and you've got **First Call**. The band is dedicated to fun performances and memorable events. Their song list includes hits from Tina Turner, Marvin Gaye, and Michael Jackson to Taylor Swift, Justin Timberlake, Rihanna, Bruno Mars, and more! Bring a chair or blanket and leave a little room for busting a move. Admission is FREE to the Summer Concert Series thanks to our series sponsor, the Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo!

- » Thursday, September 8, 7 PM
- » Overlander Bandshell (7810 Shaver Road)
- » FREE (No registration required)

#### Peacock Strut Walk/Run - 10K & 5K

The 10k & 5k courses of the Peacock Strut wind through the beautiful Portage Creek Bicentennial Park Trail. Proceeds from this event help support the Portage Community Center, a private non-profit community center providing human services to area residents. Awards will be presented three deep in each five-year age category from ages 15 through 80. Separate categories presented for "14 & under" and "80 & over." View complete details and to register, visit <https://runsignup.com/Race/MI/Portage/PeacockStrut>.

- » Saturday, September 10, 7 AM Registration
- » Grain Elevator (7328 Garden Lane)
- » \$30 per person (Registration required)

#### Ranger Hike

**Monarchs On The Move**

Look for these orange beauties as they prepare to fly south for the winter. Discover how to give monarchs a head start for their long migration. Participants are encouraged to dress appropriately for the weather.

- » Sunday, September 11, 2 PM
- » West Lake Nature Preserve (9001 South Westnedge Avenue)
- » FREE (Registration required)

#### Junior Ranger Earn-A-Badge Workshop

**Survival Badge**

The Junior Ranger Club is a fun way to learn more about the Portage Park system and to earn an official Junior Ranger shield as a park steward. The Junior Ranger Club is an activity-based program offering eight different badges

### Portage Parks & Recreation Events, Camps & Classes

#### 1,000 Acres. 18 Parks. One City.

To find out more and register online, visit [mypark.portagemi.gov](http://mypark.portagemi.gov) and click the purple Recreation Activities & Facility Rentals button.

#### Recreation Activities & Facility Rentals

that can be earned by completing specific activities: arts, endurance, health, history, nature, science, service, and survival. Need a little help with finishing your Survival badge? Bring an adult and together, work on badge activities. This program is free, includes supplies, and is led by Parks staff. Space is limited, so do not wait to register!

- » Thursday, September 15, 6 - 7 PM
- » Schrier Park (850 West Osterhout Avenue)
- » FREE (Registration required)

#### City Hall Exhibitions

**Portage Community Art Award**

Exhibitions are featured in the lobby at Portage City Hall throughout the year and focus on local arts and history.

In collaboration with the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts' West Michigan Area Show, the Portage Community Art Award exhibition will present an array of works from this year's winning Portage artist, Nancy Vandenberg titled "British Birds" whose work best represents the theme, *A Natural Place to Move!*

- » September 16 - October 28, Monday - Friday, 8 AM - 5 PM
- » City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue)
- » FREE (No registration required)

#### Fall Festival

Enjoy a fall day full of wonderful things to do! A horse-drawn hayride will connect the Portage Farmers Market at City Hall to Celery Flats Historical Area. After a visit to the Farmers Market, watch a cooking demonstration at Stuart Manor for new ideas on how to cook your fresh produce at home. All Celery Flats historical buildings will be open with crafts and historical demonstrations. Don't miss this opportunity to celebrate fall in a scenic setting with fun things to do for the entire family.

- » Sunday, September 18, 10 AM - 2 PM
- » Celery Flats Historical Area and City Hall
- » FREE (No Registration required)

#### Friday At The Flats

We are bringing the taste of Portage to you! Friday at the Flats returns to the Celery Flats Pavilion. Join us for dinner and experience a wide range of food trucks and live music. Seating is limited, but lawn space is plentiful, so bring a blanket or chair. Connect with your loved ones at Celery Flats through food and fun.

- » Friday, September 23, 4:30 - 8:30 PM
- » Celery Flats Pavilion (7335 Garden Lane)
- » FREE (No registration required)

### Yoga 4 Life

Join personal fitness trainer, Josie Morlorg for this six-week yoga class. Yoga is an excellent way to relax, refocus and improve your strength, balance, and flexibility. This class is open to adults 18 and over with all levels of experience. Students must bring their own yoga mat, water, and wear comfortable exercise clothing. Maximum of 20 participants per session. Registration required by September 30.

- » Tuesdays, October 4 - November 8, 7 - 8 PM
- » Parks & Recreation Building (320 Library Lane)
- » \$75 per person for 6 weeks (Registration Required)

### The Disc Golf Experience

Don't miss your shot, during the Portage Disc Golf Experience! Learn how to throw a variety of discs, the art of putting, and everything you need to know to get started as a disc golfer. Additional skills will be taught to returning or experienced disc golfers. All ages are welcome to participate in this program.

- » Saturday, October 1, 12 - 2 PM
- » West Lake Nature Preserve (9001 South Westnedge Avenue)
- » \$15 per player (Registration required)

### Monster Mash

**With a Special Viewing of Monsters, Inc.**

It's scarin' time at Portage Monster Mash! This themed event will include trick-or-treating, inflatables, a spooky hayride through the forest, merry not scary shows, on-site pumpkin carving demonstrations, and much more. Don't forget to stick around for a "drive-in" style movie viewing of *Monsters, Inc.* in the park beginning at dusk. Parking for the movie will begin at 5:30 PM and will be first come, first served.

- » Saturday, October 22, 3 - 7 PM
- » Ramona Park (8600 South Sprinkle Road)
- » FREE (No registration required)





### Seeking Input for Parks 5-Year Recreation and Open Space Plan

The City of Portage has initiated a planning process to update the Parks 5-Year Recreation and Open Space Plan. The public is invited to a community Open House on Thursday, September 8 from 6 - 8 PM at Portage City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue) to be part of this community-driven, participatory design process. The purpose of the meeting is to gather community input for future improvements to our public green spaces and trails.

Attendees will be asked to share their vision and ideas for enhancements to the Portage park system and programs. Landscape Architects will be present to facilitate the discussion and answer questions. Input received at this workshop will be used to help formulate goals and objectives for the plan. If you cannot attend the workshop, please send us your comments via email at [john@vrig.com](mailto:john@vrig.com).

In addition to the public meeting, an online survey will be available through September 30 for residents to provide feedback on the park system and submit ideas for the future. To complete the survey visit [portagemi.gov/207](http://portagemi.gov/207).

For more information, please contact Portage Parks & Recreation 329-4522.

*A Natural Place to Move*

### Plant Trees to Secure Our Tree Canopy

As part of a Climate Action Plan, the City of Portage is working on various initiatives to sustain our natural environment for future generations. One of these efforts is monitoring the city's tree canopy which is the surface area of city land that is covered in a combination leaves, branches, and trunks of all standing trees.

According to a national analysis by the U.S. Forest Service, a 40-60 percent urban tree canopy is attainable in forested states. Portage is estimated to have a 45% tree canopy, which is the level the city would like to maintain as its minimum tree coverage. Planting more trees will help maintain and even increase our tree canopy in the future.

The tree canopy is important for summer cooling, improves air quality by filtering pollutants, reduces greenhouse gases, helps to manage stormwater and flooding, improves water quality, suppresses soil erosion, supports wildlife populations, and enhances recreational opportunities. MSU Extension offers a tool to help you choose the right native trees and shrubs for your landscape at [anr.msu.edu/newsheets\\_native\\_trees\\_and\\_shrubs\\_for\\_your\\_michigan\\_landscape](http://anr.msu.edu/newsheets_native_trees_and_shrubs_for_your_michigan_landscape). September is a great time to plant trees and keep Portage as *A Natural Place to Move!*

### Fall Produce at the Farmers Market

In September, you can expect to find a variety of fall produce at the Portage Farmers Market. Michigan grown apples and pumpkins will be in season. In addition, our market features locally produced meats, cheeses and ice cream. The market also features locally made soaps, candles, and body care products like lip balm and bubble bath bars.

Market patrons have access to several types of food assistance while at the market including SNAP/EBT cards, Double-Up Food Bucks, and more. Children who visit the market can take part in various enrichment activities such as learning about compost, participating in a seasonal food scavenger hunt, or making giant bubbles. On September 11, 18, and 25, enjoy the music of local musician Mike Talbot.

The Portage Farmers Market is *Fresh, Rain or Shine* every Sunday through October 16 from 9 AM - 1 PM at the Portage City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue).

For more information, email [farmmarket@portagemi.gov](mailto:farmmarket@portagemi.gov) or call 329-4522. Follow us on Facebook @PortageMarketMI or Instagram @PortageMarket for updates.

PORTAGER Newsletter | SEPTEMBER 2022

August 30 to September 30 – Parks & Recreation Web Page

## Community Input Session - September 8

**JOIN US!** The City of Portage Department of Parks & Recreation is updating the 5-Year Master Plan vision for the Portage park system, and we want to hear from you! Come help us identify community needs and offer suggestions for future improvements to our public green spaces.

Drop in to our open house anytime between 6-8 PM to be a part of this community-driven, participatory design process.



### COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION September 8

OPEN HOUSE 6-8 PM  
PORTAGE CITY HALL  
7900 South Westnedge Avenue  
Portage, MI 49002

Want to contribute but can't attend the input session? Take our online survey!  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VQLJG3C>



Survey available  
online through  
September 30, 2022



The City of Portage has initiated a planning process to update the Parks 5-Year Recreation and

## City of Portage Web Page & News Flash/Mobile & Email Alerts



Home > News Flash

**News & Events**

Posted on: August 30, 2022

**Invitation For Input**

**Invitation for Input: Parks 5-Year Recreation and Open Space Plan**

The City of Portage has initiated a planning process to update the Parks 5-Year Recreation and Open Space Plan. The public is invited to a community Open House on Thursday, September 8, from 6 – 8 PM at Portage City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue) to be part of this community-driven, participatory design process. The purpose of the meeting is to gather community input for future improvements to our public green spaces and trails.

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For more information, call Portage Parks & Recreation at (269) 329-4522.

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Starting On \*

Start Time

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Invitation For Input

**Link**

Web Address

Open in new window

Link item, image, read or

**Lead in**

**News Flash**

You have the option to notify subscribers to this category that you have published a new Post. Add any additional comments.

**Subject:** City of Portage News Flash Invitation For Input

**Send:**  On Start Date  Immediately

**Comments:** The City of Portage has initiated a planning process to update the Parks 5-Year Recreation and Open Space Plan.

888 Characters Remaining

**Mobile Text/Push Message:** City of Portage News Flash Invitation For Input

102 Characters Remaining

Include link to item

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The City of Portage has initiated a planning process to update the Parks 5-Year Recreation and Open Space Plan.

---

August 30, 2022

## Invitation For Input



The City of Portage has initiated a planning process to update the Parks 5-Year Recreation and Open Space Plan.... [Read on](#)

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## Social Media on August 30

Facebook (*City of Portage Mi & Portage Market*)

 The City of Portage MI 

Published by Mary Ruple  · 34m · 

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For more information, call Portage Parks & Recreation at (269) 329-4522.

We look forward to your ideas at the Open House!



## Instagram



The City of Portage MI  
Government organization  
City of Portage, Michigan | portagemi.gov | A Natural Place to Move | A dynamic living environment and quality of life unmatched in the region.  
[www.portagemi.gov](http://www.portagemi.gov)

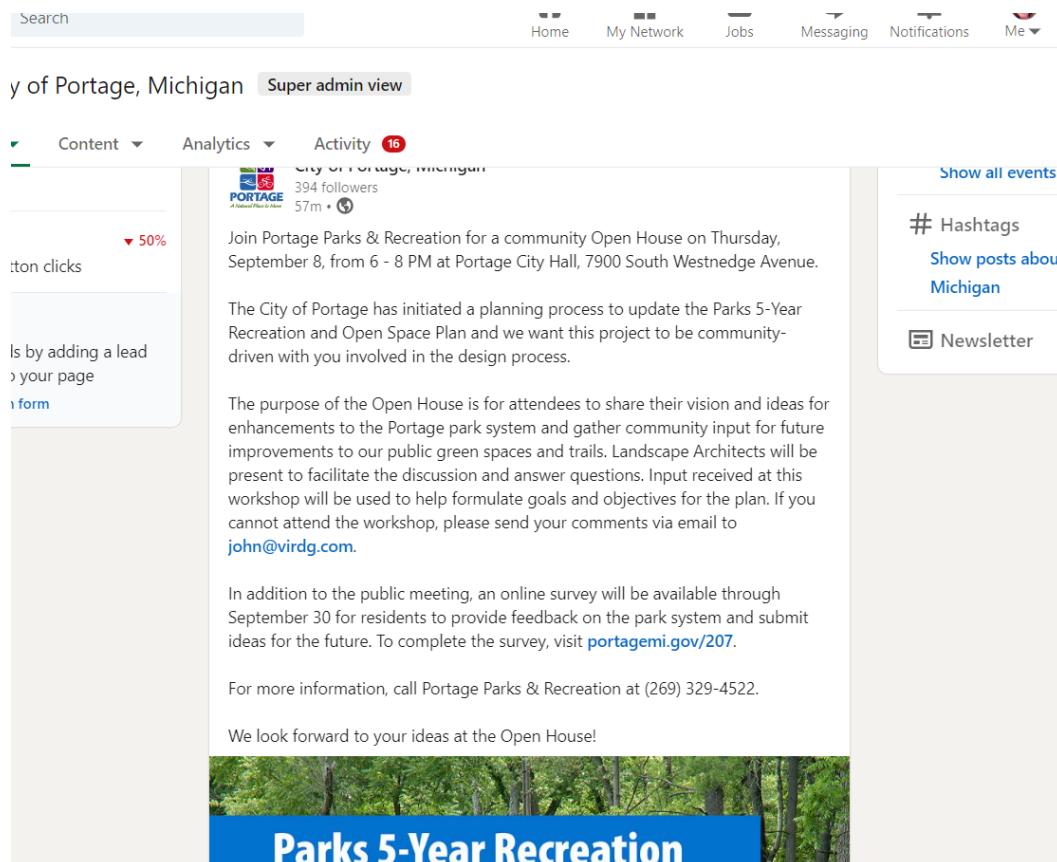
POSTS SAVED TAGGED

**Parks 5-Year Recreation & Open Space Plan**  
Two people rollerblading on a paved path in a park.

**Michigan Homeowner Assistance Fund**  
A person using a calculator next to a small house model.

**CITY OF PO Weekly Meeting**  
Human Services Board Meet September 1, 6 PM Portage City Hall, Conference Room  
Planning Commission Meet September 1, 7 PM Portage City Hall, Council Chambers

## LinkedIn



City of Portage, Michigan Super admin view

Content Analytics Activity 16

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**Parks 5-Year Recreation**

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The City of Port...  ... 

### Home

Everyone 

The City of Portage has initiated a planning process to update the Parks 5-Year Recreation and Open Space Plan and the public is invited to an Open House on Thursday, September 8, from 6 – 8 PM at Portage City Hall. Visit [portagemi.gov/207](http://portagemi.gov/207) for more information and a survey.



Search Twitter

### What's happening

News - Last night

Beto O'Rourke has been diagnosed with a bacterial infection, spokesperson says

 HuffPost  - Last night

Here's How Quickly You Can Get Infected With BA.5 After An Exposure

Trending

Goebbels

12.5K Tweets

 Axios  - Last night

Before and after Pakistan satellite photos show the enormity of the flooding devastation

Trending

Scott Baio

Show more

### Who to follow



SFII 

## Social Media on September 5 & September 8

Facebook (*City of Portage MI & PortageMarket*)



## Instagram



cityofportagemi  ...

cityofportagemi  Join Portage Parks & Recreation for a community Open House this Thursday, September 8, from 6-8 PM at Portage City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue.

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[View insights](#)



cityofportagemi  ...

cityofportagemi  Join Portage Parks & Recreation TONIGHT, September 8, for a community Open House from 6 - 8 PM at Portage City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue.

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LinkedIn

Posted by Mary Ruple • 9/8/2022 • ...

 City of Portage, Michigan  
398 followers  
1h • 

Join Portage Parks & Recreation TONIGHT, September 8, for a community Open House from 6 - 8 PM at Portage City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue.

[...see more](#)



**Parks 5-Year Recreation  
& Open Space Plan**

## Twitter

**JOIN US!** The City of Portage Department of Parks & Recreation is updating the 5-Year Master Plan vision for the Portage park system, and we want to hear from you! Come help us identify community needs and offer suggestions for future improvements to our public green spaces.

Drop in to our open house anytime between 6-8 PM to be a part of this community-driven, participatory design process.

# COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION

# September 8

OPEN HOUSE 6-8 PM  
PORTAGE CITY HALL  
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Portage, MI 49002

Want to contribute but can't attend the input session?  
Take our online survey!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VQLJG3C>



Survey available  
online through  
September 30, 2022



**The City of Portage Parks and Recreation Department is updating their 5-Year Master Plan and your input helps us identify community needs for future improvements to our public green spaces.**

The purpose of the 2022 Master Plan is to provide a logical framework for guiding decisions concerning improvements to park and recreation facilities, public open space, and natural areas. This strategic planning method maps the path the City takes from why the Parks Department exists (mission), to what we want to become (vision).

## MISSION

Through a unique, vibrant and well-managed public park system, we promote environmental stewardship through public awareness and participation in engaging activities

## VISION

To connect people to each other and to the natural world.

Your suggestions today determine priorities for how we support a healthy and vibrant park system.



The community-based report builds public support and buy-in, and allows the City to apply for additional grants and fundraising for neighborhood parks projects.



## PROJECT PROCESS

### 1. PROJECT INITIATION

Collection of Background Information & Recreation Inventory

JULY - AUGUST 2022

### 2. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Online Survey  
Public Open House Input Session

ON-LINE SURVEY AUGUST - SEPTEMBER  
SEPTEMBER 8 OPEN HOUSE

### 3. DRAFT REPORT

Community Needs Assessment  
City Review  
Public Review Period

PARK BOARD MEETING - 11/2/22

30-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW & COMMENT - NOVEMBER 3 - DECEMBER 3

### 4. REPORT FINALIZATION

Report Revisions  
City Approval  
Submittal to Michigan Department of Natural Resources

PARK BOARD PUBLIC HEARING - 12/7/22

PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING - 12/15/22

COUNCIL APPROVAL - 1/10/23

SUBMITTAL TO MDNR - JANUARY 30, 2022

# WELCOME!

Your feedback is important. As we envision the future of Portage public parks and natural areas, your participation and input will inform the vision and improvement priorities for the park system. Please use this sheet to tell us what you are excited and concerned about. After you visit each station, return your notes to check-in.

**Please check the top 3 recreational activities you would like the Parks Department to invest in:**

- Walking/Nature Trails
- Bike Trails/Paths
- Playgrounds
- Picnic Shelters
- Sports Fields
- Water access (swimming, boating, fishing, etc.)
- Winter activities (sledding, ice skating, cross country skiing etc.)
- Restroom facilities
- Pickleball
- Court Games (tennis, basketball, etc)
- Art Exhibitions / Sculpture
- Outdoor Performance Space/Amphitheater
- Historical/Cultural Exhibits
- Splash Pad
- Other (please describe)

**What excites you the most about future improvements to City parks? What's your biggest concern?**

**Let's dream big! What is important to you in terms of long-term, system-wide improvements to our parks and natural spaces? Check all that apply.**

- Redevelop/upgrade existing parks to support a broader range of activities
- Acquire land for future parks and open space
- Focus effort on better maintenance of existing facilities
- Develop additional non-motorized trails
- Provide additional recreational programs and activities
- No additional parks or changes to current facilities
- Other (please describe)

Please use this space to share additional feedback and comments. To complete our full online survey, scan the QR code with your smartphone or visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VQLJG3C>





# Kalamazoo Gazette

## LEGAL AFFIDAVIT

AD# 0010474102

Total

\$280.60

State of Michigan,) ss

County of Kalamazoo)

Nancy Block being duly sworn, deposes that he/she is principal clerk of MLive Media Group; that Kalamazoo Gazette is a public newspaper published in the city of Kalamazoo, with general circulation in Kalamazoo county, and this notice is an accurate and true copy of this notice as printed in said newspaper, was printed and published in the regular edition and issue of said newspaper on the following date(s):

**Kalamazoo Gazette 10/23/2022**

Nancy Block

Principal Clerk of the Publisher

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 24th day of October 2022

Teasha R Payne

Notary Public

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OCT 28 2022

PORTRAGE  
CITY CLERK

TEASHA R. PAYNE  
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COUNTY OF MECOSTA  
COMMISSION EXP FEB 24 2026  
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### CITY OF PORTAGE 5 YEAR PARKS RECREATION & OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN UPDATE

#### NOTICE OF PLAN AVAILABILITY FOR PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT

A draft of the 5 Year Parks Recreation & Open Space Master Plan Update for the City of Portage will be available for public review and comment for 30 days starting on November 3 at noon. Any interested residents may review the plan and send comments.

Written comments may be sent to The City of Portage, Parks & Recreation Department, 320 Library Lane, Portage, Michigan 49002.

Email comments may be sent to [hoylek@portagemi.gov](mailto:hoylek@portagemi.gov)

Copies of the plan are on file at the following locations:

- City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge, Portage, Michigan 49002.
- Portage District Library, 300 Library Lane, Portage, Michigan 49002
- Portage Parks & Recreation Department, 320 Library Lane, Portage Michigan 49002

The plan is also available for viewing online at: [www.portagemi.gov](http://www.portagemi.gov)

For more information contact:  
Parks & Recreation Department  
269-329-4522

10474102-01

Texas Township. Sackett's website says her priorities are to restore parental rights in education and empower parents, grow the economy, keep neighborhoods safe, protect seniors and veterans, strengthen small businesses and restore public trust. Her website says Sackett organized an effort to keep schools accountable when

demic. Gov. Whitmer proposed the long overdue investment of \$1.5 billion into our water infrastructure to upgrade systems. That large investment will not be enough, so I will continue to advocate for funding to ensure a safe water supply for generations to come. I support the state's efforts at working with energy companies to increase green energy investments and plan for a coal free system.

**Sackett:** We need prioritize Michigan's children and seniors before spending on others who come from other countries. It's time to put Michigan's children and seniors first.

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## KALAMAZOO

### Basement fire extinguished

Firefighters put out a fire last week in the basement of a Kalamazoo home, the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety reports.

At 5:27 p.m. Oct. 16, Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety officers responded for a report of a basement fire in the 1900 block of Vanzeze Street.

Officers located heavy smoke coming from the basement of the home. The fire was brought under control within 20 minutes. There are no reported injuries, police said. The Kalamazoo Public Safety Fire Marshal is investigating the incident.

The Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety asks any-

one with information about the incident to call them at 269-488-8911 or Silent Observer at 269-343-2100.

### BATTLE CREEK

### Police ID mother, son found dead

Police released the names of a mother and son who died Oct. 15.

Teresa Osborne, 51, and her son Kaiden Osborne, 14, were found dead at a home on South Minges Road in Battle Creek, police said.

A violent act did not appear to cause their deaths and police do not believe anyone else was involved, according to the news release from Battle Creek Police Department.

Deputies are not searching for any suspects. No cause of death was released for either person. The medical examiner's report will have additional information.

Kaiden was a student at Lakeview High School. "Police request the community's respect and kindness for the Osbornes' family and friends as they work through this tragic loss," the release said.

### PORTAGE

### Recording device found in locker room

A recording device was found in a locker room at Portage high school.

The device was found in a Portage Northern High School locker room, the district said in a statement. It was found the week of Oct. 3, and reported to Portage Department of Public Safety, which is investigating, Chlier Nick Arnold said.

Two juvenile students are involved, Arnold said. The students and the parents have been contacted as the investigation is ongoing.

"The incident is a student matter and any subsequent discipline will follow the student handbook," Arnold said. *MLive.com* reports

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Email comments may be sent to [bschmidt@portagemi.gov](mailto:bschmidt@portagemi.gov).

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For more information contact: Parks & Recreation Department 269-329-4322

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## KALAMAZOO COUNTY

## Despite winter storm warning, people line up for tacos



Despite the cold, some people camped out starting at 4:30 a.m. to make sure they were among the first 100 in



Diners eat tortilla chips and chat at Condado Tacos newest location. The eatery can seat 252 people.

*Condado Tacos opened Thursday and held a promotion called "Year of Yum," which allowed the first 100 customers to get one free taco a week for a year.*

Gracie Smith [gsmith@mlive.com](mailto:gsmith@mlive.com)

OSHTEMO TOWNSHIP — Amid freezing temperatures and a winter storm warning Thursday, dozens of people stood in line outside. They gathered and waited in line for hours for a chance to get free tacos.

Condado Tacos had the grand opening for its newest location on Thursday at 1750 S. Drake Road. Condado was founded in 2014 in Columbus, Ohio, and now has 39 locations across seven states.

As part of the grand opening ceremony, there was a promotion called "Year of Yum" that allowed for the first 100 customers to receive one free taco a week over the next year.

When the doors opened at 11 a.m., some people had already waited in line for hours. Natalie Samdal and Julia Fish got to the restaurant at 4:30 a.m. and camped out until the doors opened.

Originally from Grand Rapids, Samdal said they went to that Condado location all the time. One of the times she had gone to the restaurant was on her birthday last year.

"I'm actually 22 today, so it's my birthday today," Samdal said. "And I like, it's opening a block away from my apartment, I have to come and celebrate."



People wait in line Thursday morning at Condado Tacos in Oshtemo Township. The restaurant held its grand opening and gave free tacos for a year to its first 100 customers. Photos by Gracie Smith, MLive.com

wrapped in blankets, had been waiting since 9 a.m.

"Tacos are my favorite food, so why not?" Bell said. "A hundred is a good number, so I wouldn't have cared if I was 99."

Before the store opened, Condado Tacos' employees handed out numbered tickets to keep track of who was among the first 100 customers.

"When I got here at 7 o'clock this morning, there were people in tents outside and by 8 o'clock there was a small line," said Josh Krane, the general manager for the new Condado location. "Now our line is going all the way around the entire building."

Krane hadn't expected a big turnout to the grand opening.

He heard that other locations had lines for their openings as well, but he just thought they were hyping it up.

"I honestly didn't expect this many people," Krane said. "Especially with the snow, I thought there would be a short little line, if that."

This is first Condado Tacos in Kalamazoo County, but the sixth location in Michigan.

The Kalamazoo County location will

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**PORTAGE**  
A Natural Place to Move

**CITY OF PORTAGE NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING & MEETING**

A Public Hearing & Meeting by the CITY OF PORTAGE PARK BOARD is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, December 7, 2022. The location of the hearing and meeting will be the PORTAGE PARKS AND RECREATION OFFICE, 320 Library Lane, Portage, MI 49002.

The purpose of the public hearing is for the public to express any comments on the 2023 Recreation and Open Space Plan Update. Copies of the plan are on file and may be viewed at the following locations:

- Portage City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue, Portage, MI 49002,
- Portage District Library, 300 Library Lane, Portage, MI 49002,
- Portage Parks and Recreation Office, 320 Library Lane, Portage, MI 49002.

The 2023 Recreation and Open Space Plan Update is also available for viewing online at [www.portagemi.gov](http://www.portagemi.gov).

The meeting following the public hearing will focus on events for the upcoming year.

For more information contact the City of Portage Department of Parks and Recreation at 269-329-4522.



# Kalamazoo Gazette

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AD# 0010499275

Total

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County of Kalamazoo)

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Kalamazoo Gazette 11/20/2022

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Sworn to and subscribed before me this 21th day of November 2022

Notary Public

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ACTING IN COUNTY OF Hent



### CITY OF PORTAGE NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING & MEETING

A Public Hearing & Meeting by the CITY OF PORTAGE PARK BOARD is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, December 7, 2022. The location of the hearing and meeting will be the PORTAGE PARKS AND RECREATION OFFICE, 320 Library Lane, Portage, MI 49002.

The purpose of the public hearing is for the public to express any comments on the 2023 Recreation and Open Space Plan Update. Copies of the plan are on file and may be viewed at the following locations:

- Portage City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue, Portage, MI 49002;
- Portage District Library, 300 Library Lane, Portage, MI 49002;
- Portage Parks and Recreation Office, 320 Library Lane, Portage, MI 49002.

The 2023 Recreation and Open Space Plan Update is also available for viewing online at [www.portagemi.gov](http://www.portagemi.gov).

The meeting following the public hearing will focus on events for the upcoming year.

For more information contact the City of Portage Department of Parks and Recreation at 269-329-4522.

10499275-01

## Portage Park Board Meeting Minutes

December 7, 2022

**Board Present:** Tara Gish – Chair, Dawn Smith – Vice Chair, Eleanor Riley – Secretary, Angelique McGuire – Treasurer, Dustin Black, Tim Young

**Board Absent (Excused):** Charles Mosser, Jen Gomes, Kandarp Patel

**Board Absent (Unexcused):** N/A

**Guests:** Kathleen Hoyle – Director of Parks, Recreation, and Senior Center Services

Meeting was called to order at 6:32 PM by Chair Gish

### I. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

1. Jan Ryan - Portage resident
2. Mary Westerville-Prange - Portage resident
3. Irene Mayfield - Portage resident

### II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

1. Motion to approve by Riley
2. Second by Young
3. Motion passes

### III. APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER PARK BOARD MEETING MINUTES

1. Motion to approve by Riley
2. Second by Black
3. Motion passes

### IV. ACCEPTANCE OF OCTOBER BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

1. Motion to accept by Riley
2. Second by Young
3. Motion passes

### V. COMMENTS FROM GUESTS

1. Irene Mayfield is present to learn more about the proposed plans

### VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. 5-Year Recreation & Open Space Plan Public Hearing
  - a. Mary Westerville-Prange is interested in the proposed bikeway near Austin lake. She is concerned that the medium priority will not actually place it into the 5-year plan. Interested in the connection with Vicksburg for cyclists and animals. She is concerned that the land will be crowded by homes instead of being used for the proposed trail and emphasizes the city should develop the trailway if possible. Asked what "medium" priority means. Hoyle responds that High means the project has all the funding it will need. Medium still has outstanding issues. In the case of the trail near Austin Lake they are working on property acquisition.
  - b. Jan Ryan read through the West Lake nature preserve plan re: invasive species management. She has concerns about the invasive species treatments. She has seen

signs notifying the public that a treatment has been applied, but is concerned that there is no information as to what chemicals are used and if they are dangerous to the public and their pets for any period of time. Signs were posted recently and have a space for a phone number but no number was on the sign. She requests information be posted at the pavilion that shows what plants are being treated as well as safety data. She is interested in volunteering at West Lake / coordinating a volunteer group to manage invasive species management. Hoyle responded that the Parks Department is starting to coordinate groups to do Garlic Mustard pulls. Ryan also asked about the boardwalks which are closed at West Lake and Bishops Bog. Hoyle responded that Bishop's Bog is being replaced / repaired this winter and spring.

- c. Irene Mayfield - lives near the West Lake preserve. Concerned about softball fields being removed. Hoyle responded that they are seeing the use of fields going down, and they are trying to redirect use to South Westnedge park.
- 2. Financial Report – McGuire
  - a. Nothing to report
- 3. Park Department Report – Hoyle
  - a. Finished Eliason north entrance
  - b. Dr. Martin Luther King park - awaiting sculptures. 3 slated for January and final 2 by the end of May. Park will be officially open on Juneteenth
  - c. Working on Federal Grant applications
  - d. Elijah Root dam - working on funding / grant applications
  - e. Lexington Green grant approved and project will go ahead
  - f. RFP for Lakeview, East-Central trail
  - g. Traditional Holiday was a big success
  - h. Program Book is being finished up and will go to print soon
  - i. Added more detail about invasive species plan into the 5 year plan.
  - j. Community Development worked with the Park Department to add information regarding what can be built surrounding and adjacent to parks including buffer zones, storm water runoff, vehicular traffic restrictions, etc. Located on page 136 of the proposed 5 year plan
- 4. Bicycle Advisory Committee Update – Black
  - a. Board did not meet
  - b. Additional bike friendly business applied - Roundabout Caffe
  - c. "I Can Bike" program helps special needs children learn how to ride a bike and is coming to Kalamazoo. Bike committee is hoping to gather volunteers to help coordinate and volunteer at this event. Tentatively planning for June 2023. Volunteer list should be open in January.
- 5. Portage Arts Committee Update – Hoyle
  - a. Committee first meeting. Six artists in attendance. Many ideas were brainstormed for ways to get arts more involved in the city.
  - b. Next meeting will be February

6. Youth Advisory Committee Update – Metzger
  - a. Not present to provide report
7. Portage Parks Foundation Report – Gish
  - a. Discussed fundraising ideas and opportunities, Amazon Smile, Oktoberfest
  - b. Oktoberfest - October 7, 2023
8. Individual Park Reports
  - a. Young reports Lexington Green northwest gate (by the ball field) is always closed
9. Subcommittee Reports
  - a. Traditional Holiday December 3 – Gish
    - i. Well attended, lots of cookies, lots of milk
    - ii. Next year will cater the beverages out to prevent a deficit / surplus
10. 2023 Calendar of Events
  - a. Removal of events - sneak peek Farmer's Market @ Green-a-thon
  - b. Great American Campout - removed from schedule
  - c. Board Members reviewed picnic in the park dates and times
11. 2023 Meeting Locations
  - a. Board Members reviewed meeting locations

## VII. SUMMARY ACTIVITY

1. Board Members reviewed summary activity

## VIII. COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

1. Happy Holidays and Happy New Year - Riley
2. The Open Space plan is great & Happy Holidays - Smith

Meeting adjourned at 7:52 PM

Next meeting is on January 11, 2022 at Portage Parks Office

Respectfully Submitted,

Elanor Riley  
Park Board Secretary

*Kathy H. / 1/26/23*  
CERTIFIED:  
PARKS & RECREATION DIRECTOR  
DIRECTOR.



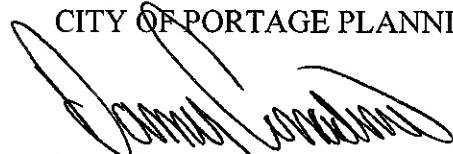
## Department of Community Development

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council  
**FROM:** City of Portage Planning Commission  
**DATE:** December 20, 2022  
**SUBJECT:** 2023 Recreation and Open Space Plan

At the December 15, 2022 meeting, the Planning Commission reviewed and discussed the latest version of the proposed 2023 Recreation and Open Space Plan. Kathleen Hoyle, Director of Parks & Recreation, provided an overview of the major changes from public comments period, which have been incorporated to the latest plan update. No public comment was received at the Commission meeting. The Planning Commission determined no further discussion was needed and voted to close the public hearing.

The Planning Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to recommend to City Council the approval of the 2023 Recreation and Open Space Plan Update.

Sincerely,

CITY OF PORTAGE PLANNING COMMISSION  
  
Dan Corradini

Chairman

Attachments: December 15, 2022 Planning Commission meeting minutes.

## RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE 2023 RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN BY THE PORTAGE CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of a regular meeting of the City Council for the City of Portage, Michigan held on January 10, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at the City Hall in the City of Portage, Michigan.

**PRESENT:** Brayton, Knapp, Ledbetter, Pearson, Randall and Urban.

**ABSENT:** Burns.

The following resolution was offered by Councilmember Pearson and supported by Councilmember Ledbetter.

**WHEREAS**, the City of Portage has undertaken a 5-Year Recreation and Open Space Plan that describes the physical features, existing recreation facilities and the desired actions to be taken to improve and maintain recreation facilities during the period of 2023-2027; and

**WHEREAS**, residents of the City of Portage were provided with a well-advertised opportunity during the development of the draft plan to express opinions, ask questions, and discuss all aspects of the recreation and natural resource conservation plan, and

**WHEREAS**, the public was given a well-advertised opportunity and reasonable accommodations to review the final draft plan for a period of at least 30 days, and

**WHEREAS**, a public comment session was held December 7, 2022 at the Parks and Recreation Building to provide an opportunity for citizens to express opinions, ask questions, and discuss all aspects of the Recreation Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Portage developed the plan for the benefit of the entire community and to adopt the plan as a document assists the city in meeting the recreation needs of the community; and

**WHEREAS**, after the public hearing held on December 15, the City of Portage Planning Commission voted to adopt the Recreation and Open Space plan;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the City of Portage City Council hereby adopts the City of Portage 2023 Recreation and Open Space Plan as a guideline for improving recreation for the residents of the City of Portage.

All resolutions or parts of resolutions are, to the extent of any conflict with the resolution, rescinded.

**AYES:** Brayton, Knapp, Ledbetter, Pearson, Randall and Urban.

**NAYS:** None.

**ABSENT:** Burns.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** January 10, 2023

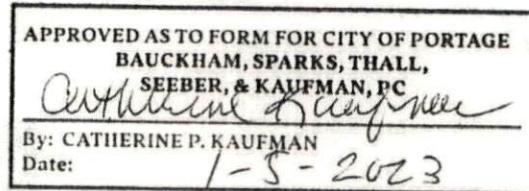
**CERTIFICATION:**

STATE OF MICHIGAN )  
) ss

COUNTY OF KALAMAZOO )

I, the undersigned, the duly qualified and acting City Clerk of the City of Portage, County of Kalamazoo, State of Michigan, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a resolution adopted at a regular meeting of the City Council of said city, held on the 10th day of January, 2023, the original of which is on file in my office.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereto affixed my official signature this of 10th day of January, 2023.



*Erica J. Eklov*  
Erica L. Eklov, City Clerk

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Office of the City Clerk

**CITY CLERK'S CERTIFICATE**

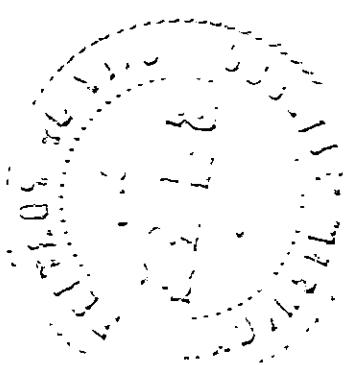
I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate copy of the approved minutes of the City of Portage City Council meeting held on January 10, 2023.

Erica L. Eklov  
Erica L. Eklov, City Clerk

01/27/2023  
Date

SEAL





## CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM JANUARY 10, 2023

11

Mayor Patricia Randall called the Regular Meeting to order at 07:07 PM in the Council Chambers at Portage City Hall.

**ROLL CALL:** Councilmembers Lisa Brayton, Lori Knapp, Victor Ledbetter, Terry Urban, Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson, and Mayor Patricia Randall were present.

**ABSENT:** Councilmember Chris Burns.

**ALSO PRESENT:** City Manager Pat McGinnis, Deputy City Manager Adam Herringa, Deputy City Manager Michael Carroll, City Attorney Catherine Kaufman, and City Clerk Erica Eklov.

At the request of Mayor Randall, the audience observed a moment of silence to reflect on inclusivity in the Portage community. Following the moment of silence, the City Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **PROCLAMATIONS:**

**2022 Christmas Light Display Contest Winners:** At Mayor Randall's request, City Manager McGinnis presented the first, second, and third place awards for the inaugural City "Decked Out" Holiday Display contest, sponsored by Consumers Energy.

**National Day of Racial Healing 2023:** Emily Olivares, Co-Director of the Kalamazoo Foundation, read the National Day of Racial Healing 2023 proclamation. At the invitation of the Mayor, Ms. Olivares spoke regarding the National Day of Racial Healing and the Kalamazoo Foundation's plans for the event. Councilmember Ledbetter thanked the Kalamazoo Foundation for its work in the community.

**CONSENT AGENDA:** Mayor Randall shared where the public can access the meeting agenda and asked if any Councilmember or anyone in the audience would like an item removed from the Consent Agenda. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson removed Item A.6. Councilmember Urban removed Items A.3 and A.8. Motion by Pearson, seconded by Ledbetter, to approve the Consent Agenda, as amended. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Ledbetter, to approve the City Council Meeting Minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 20, 2022. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

**Accounts Payable Register:** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Ledbetter, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of January 10, 2023, as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

**Consolidation and Contamination Risk Reduction Grant:** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Ledbetter, to approve a Consolidation and Contamination Risk Reduction grant agreement in the amount of \$525,969 between the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy and the city and authorize the City Manager to sign all documents related to the project on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

**Approve Bond Council and Financial Advisory Service Provider Contracts:** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Ledbetter, to approve a ten-year contract (one base year and nine option years) with Dickinson Wright for Bond Counsel services, as well as a ten-year contract (one base year and nine

option years) with MFCI, LLC for Financial Advisor services, and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents related to these actions on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

**2023 Recreation and Open Space Plan:** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Ledbetter, to adopt the 2023 Recreation and Open Space Plan Update for submittal to the MDNR in accordance with their grant requirement guidelines. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

**City Council Priorities for FY23-24:** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Ledbetter, to approve the City Council priorities for Fiscal Year 2023-2024. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

**Minutes of Boards & Commissions:** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Ledbetter, to receive the Minutes of the Planning Commission of December 1, 2022. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

**Materials Transmitted:** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Ledbetter, to receive the Materials Transmitted of December 20, 2022. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

**Calendar of Meetings:** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Ledbetter, to receive the Calendar of Meetings as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

**PETITIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS:** None.

**REGULAR BUSINESS AGENDA:**

**Appointments to Boards and Commissions:** At the request of the Mayor, City Clerk Eklov read the following appointments into the record: reappoint Patrick Buckley, Carol Eddy, Keith Hearit, Leonard Lamberson, and Orville Smith, as well as appoint Amanda Bengston, as members of the Board of Review with terms ending January 31, 2024, with the designation of the panels to be determined by the City Assessor; appoint Carol Dunleavy-Chandler to a term ending December 31, 2025, to the Historic District Commission; appoint Sue Beasley to a partial term ending October 1, 2023, and appoint Bridget Lane to a partial term ending October 1, 2024, to the Human Services Board; reappoint Paul Sommers to a term ending October 1, 2029, as well as appoint Sean Malone to a term ending October 1, 2029, to the Local Officers Compensation Commission; and, reappoint Lynn Haddow, and Lena Jomaa to terms ending February 28, 2026, to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Motion by Knapp, seconded by Ledbetter, to appoint individuals to the Historic District Commission, Human Services Board, Local Officers Compensation Commission, Board of Review, and Zoning Board of Appeals as noted by the City Clerk. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

**Preliminary Condominium: McConley Cove Planned Development, 1075 Bacon Avenue:** Councilmember Urban explained he had concerns about the proposed plan, some of which had been answered earlier but others remained. He noted the proposed continuation of the street curb to remove the pending street extension at Hillberry Drive and Chaucer Avenue, creating a small outlot at the location requiring future maintenance clarification. Councilmember Urban also noted a desire to ensure the continuation of the sidewalk along Hillberry Drive and Chaucer Avenue once the future street development section was closed.

Motion by Urban, seconded by Brayton, to grant tentative approval of the Preliminary Condominium Plan for McConley Cove Planned Development, 1075 Bacon Avenue with the addition to the proposed plan of connecting the sidewalk at Chaucer and Hillberry Drive. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

**Austin Lake Invasive Weed Management - 2023 to 2027 Special Assessment:** Mayor Pro Tem Pearson requested additional information regarding the item. He further noted the absence of an October 17, 2022 report from the consultant in the agenda. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson stated the document had been provided to him shortly before the meeting at his request and asked that all of the Council receive the document. Transportation & Utilities Director Kendra Gwin noted there had been

an amended report by the consultant in October that included a supplementary recommendation to include mechanical harvesting in addition to chemical remediation. Director Gwin confirmed that both reports could be provided to the Council. Councilmember Urban stated his shared concerns with the need to review all related documentation in the absence of a governmental lake board and the reliance on the Council as the deciding body on the process. He noted the urgency of the timing of beginning the process so the project could benefit the upcoming summer season. Councilmember Urban also highlighted the variance of species entailed and legal requirements pertaining to each species, as well as the noted costs entailed in the project as additional funding would potentially be needed. He clarified with the City Attorney that Resolution #1 did not entail amounts, but requested the City Administration confirm dollar amounts before notifying homeowners.

Motion by Urban, seconded by Pearson, to adopt Resolution No. 1, accept the City Manager Report, and request preparation of Resolution No. 2 for the Austin Lake Invasive Weed Management Program Special Assessment District No. 023-A. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

**City Manager Employment Agreement - Relocation Expenses:** Councilmember Urban expressed concern's about modifying the existing Employment Agreement with its cap of \$20,000 to the newly requested amount, which would double the cap. At the request of the Mayor, Deputy City Manager Adam Herringa provided background costs entailed with the \$20,000 amount detailed in the agreement, noting that costs for housing sales and the Council's desire to have the new City Manager relocate within the City of Portage, resulted in greater costs incurred. He stated that the \$20k capped amount could easily cover moving and relocation costs; however, the home purchase and realtor expenses in the current market proved more expensive.

Motion by Knapp, seconded by Brayton, to amend the City Manager Employment Agreement to increase the allocation for relocation expenses from \$20,000 to \$40,754.61. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

**COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS:** Councilmember Knapp provided an update on the Portage Community Center Board of Directors, including information from the holiday programs and events. She noted the upcoming golf outing fundraiser slated for May 2023, as well as a national recognition of the Portage Community Center Youth Program staff. Motion by Urban, seconded by Brayton, to receive the Council Committee Reports as presented. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

**STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS:** Robert Williams (10930 South Westnedge Avenue) expressed concerns about the need to ensure the resurfacing of the South Westnedge roadway, specifically South Shore Drive to Osterhout Avenue. Councilmember Urban noted his proximity to South Westnedge Avenue and shared his concerns about the road quality. Mayor Randall confirmed the City Administration would review the matter.

**STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER:** Councilmember Brayton noted National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day on January 9th and recognized the service of those in the Portage Department of Public Safety.

Councilmember Ledbetter thanked the Kalamazoo Foundation for the proclamation, citing the upcoming holiday for Martin Luther King, Jr. Councilmember Ledbetter noted recent issues with education mandates excluding Dr. King from the school curriculums in the State of Virginia.

Councilmember Knapp thanked the applicants and members of the City's Boards & Commissions, encouraging new applicants and remaining applicants to get involved.

Councilmember Urban extended his apologies for his absence from the earlier Board & Commission Interview session.

City Manager McGinnis asked members of the Council to promote the ongoing Master Plan update survey.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson asked the City Administration to review citizen comments on social media regarding issues with the Master Plan survey platform for mobile devices.

Mayor Randall discussed upcoming budgets. She then highlighted the upcoming city recognition of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day the following week, as well as the Chinese New Year holiday.

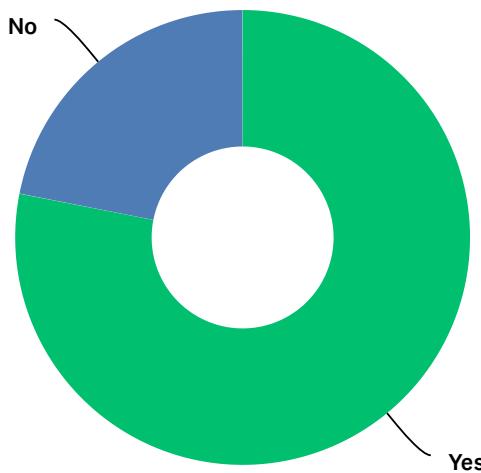
**ADJOURNMENT:** Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting at 08:04 PM.

Erica L. Eklov  
Erica L. Eklov, City Clerk

# **Community Survey Results**

## Q1 Are you a resident of the City of Portage?

Answered: 105 Skipped: 0



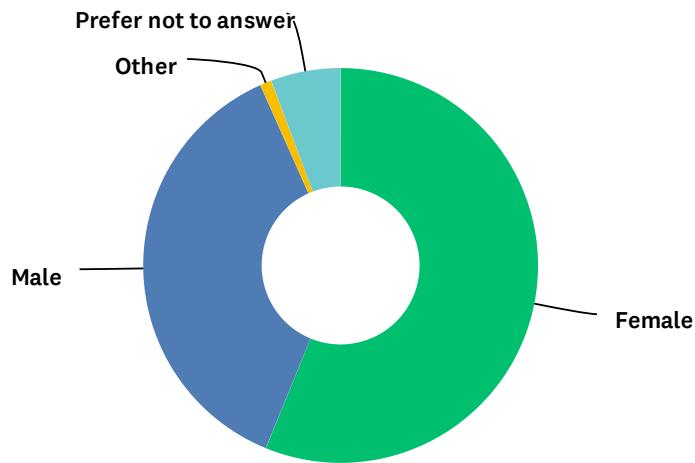
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	78.10%	82
No	21.90%	23
TOTAL		105

#	IF NO, WHERE DO YOU RESIDE?	DATE
1	Cooper Township	9/27/2022 9:58 AM
2	Schoolcraft	9/22/2022 11:27 AM
3	Texas Township	9/21/2022 3:56 PM
4	Vicksburg	9/20/2022 10:33 PM
5	Mattawan	9/20/2022 11:34 AM
6	Richland	9/20/2022 10:47 AM
7	Kalamazoo	9/20/2022 10:42 AM
8	Plainwell	9/20/2022 8:46 AM
9	Plainwell	9/19/2022 10:12 PM
10	Richland	9/19/2022 8:48 PM
11	Kalamazoo	9/19/2022 5:39 PM
12	Richland	9/19/2022 5:02 PM
13	Kalamazoo	9/19/2022 4:55 PM
14	Texas Township	9/19/2022 4:54 PM
15	Allegan	9/13/2022 7:37 AM
16	Texas Township	9/12/2022 3:53 PM

17	Texas Township	9/12/2022 2:02 PM
18	Three rivers	9/11/2022 11:19 AM
19	Vandalia, MI	9/8/2022 7:53 PM
20	Fulton, Mi	9/8/2022 7:23 PM
21	Scotts	9/4/2022 5:45 PM
22	Illinois but have home under construction in Portage	8/30/2022 1:50 PM

## Q2 What gender do you identify with?

Answered: 105 Skipped: 0

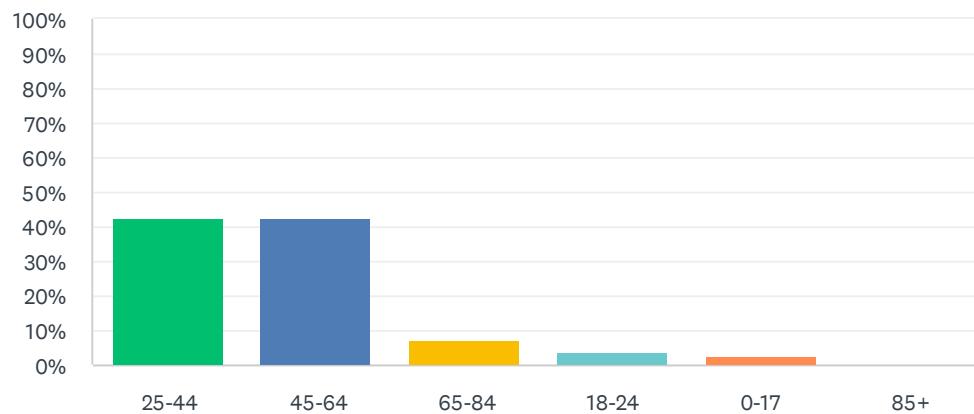


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Female		56.19%	59
Male		37.14%	39
Other		0.95%	1
Prefer not to answer		5.71%	6
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>105</b>

#	PREFER NOT TO ANSWER	DATE
1	None of ya	9/22/2022 11:27 AM
2	prefer not to answer	9/17/2022 9:15 PM
3	None of your damn business. Should not be anything other than male,female or prefer not to answer. Biological choice is male or female not what I feel or identify with. QUIT TRYNG TO MAKE EVERYONE HAPPY AND DO WHAT THE MAJORITY WHAT!	9/5/2022 12:10 PM
4	n/a	9/4/2022 11:57 AM
5	No comment.	9/2/2022 8:25 AM
6	Answered as a couple	8/31/2022 6:22 AM

## Q3 What is your age?

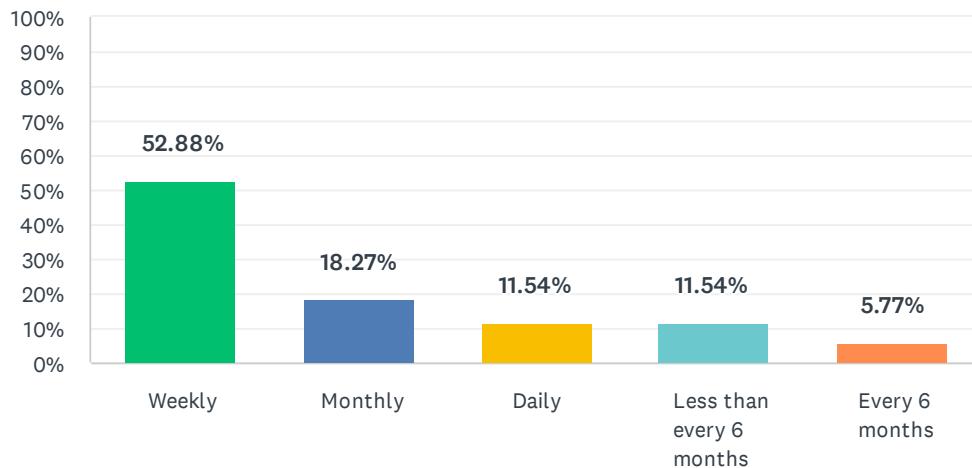
Answered: 105 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
25-44	42.86%	45
45-64	42.86%	45
65-84	7.62%	8
18-24	3.81%	4
0-17	2.86%	3
85+	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 105		

## Q4 How often do you or your family members visit a park in the City of Portage?

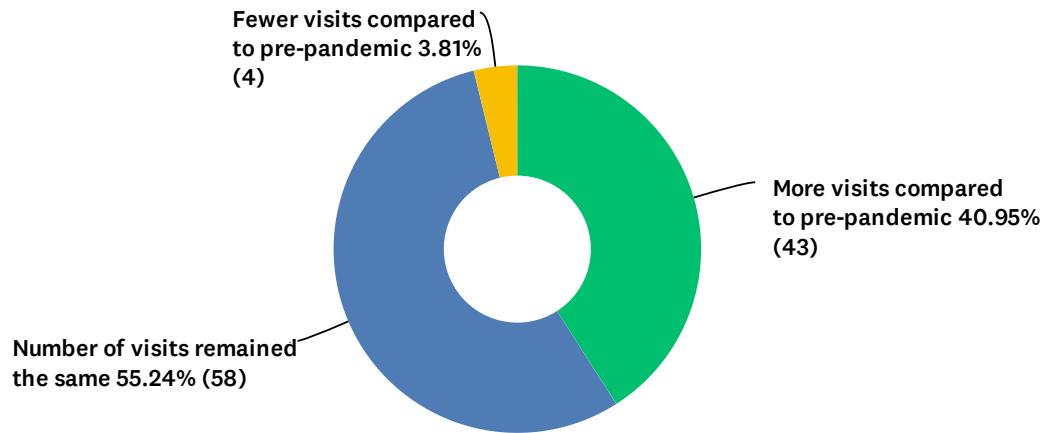
Answered: 104 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Weekly	52.88% 55
Monthly	18.27% 19
Daily	11.54% 12
Less than every 6 months	11.54% 12
Every 6 months	5.77% 6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>104</b>

## Q5 How would you rate your frequency of park visits during the pandemic?

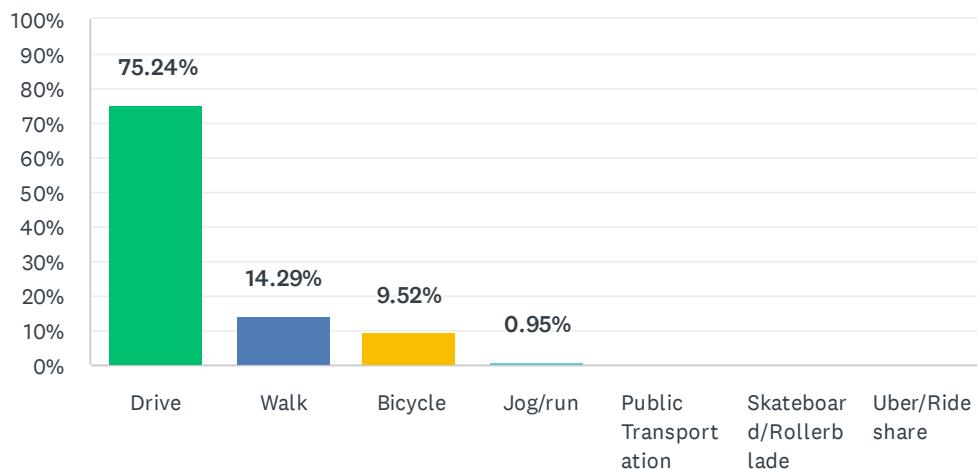
Answered: 105 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
More visits compared to pre-pandemic	40.95%	43
Number of visits remained the same	55.24%	58
Fewer visits compared to pre-pandemic	3.81%	4
TOTAL	105	

## Q6 What is your primary way of getting to a park?

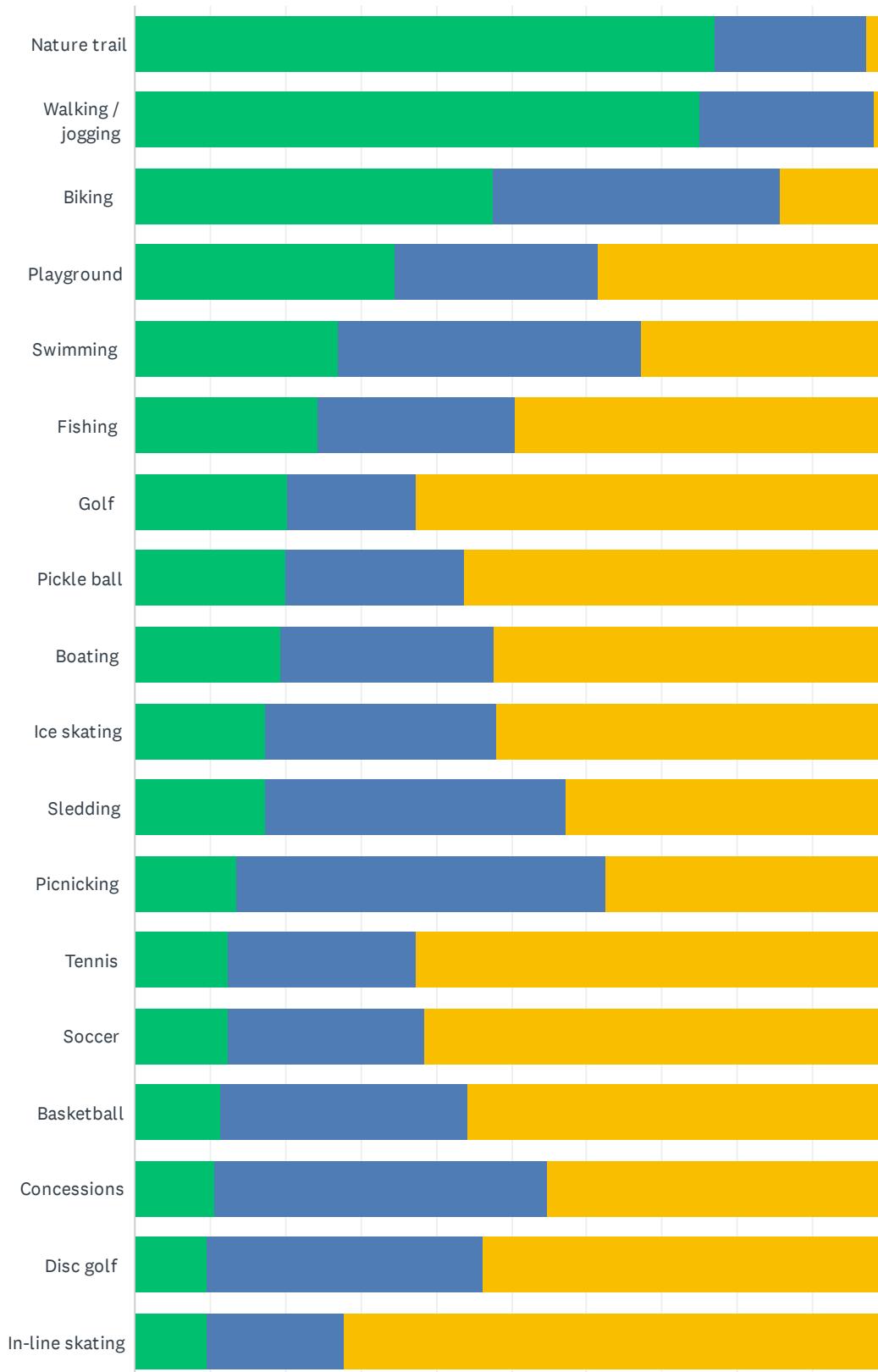
Answered: 105 Skipped: 0

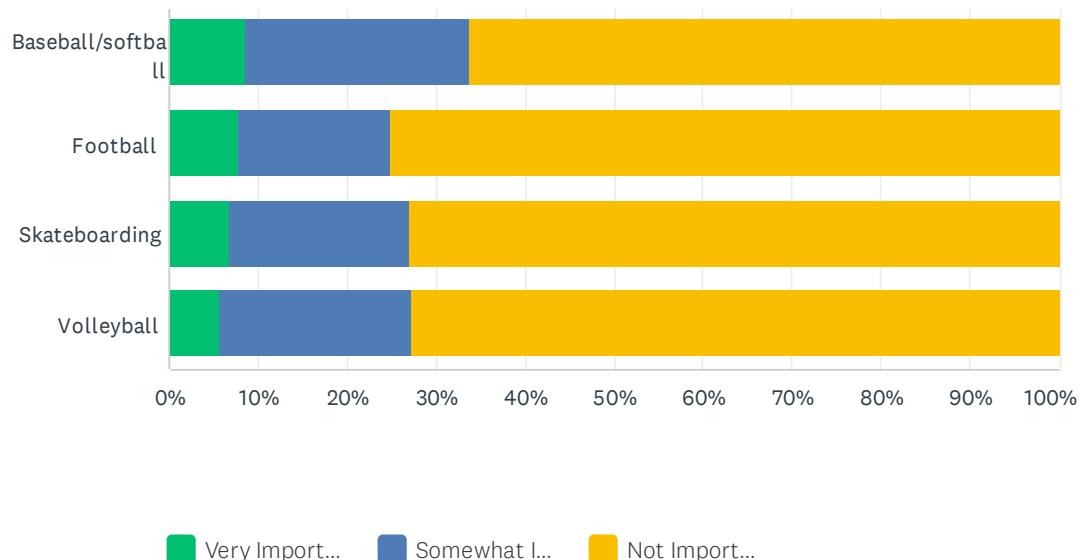


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Drive	75.24%	79
Walk	14.29%	15
Bicycle	9.52%	10
Jog/run	0.95%	1
Public Transportation	0.00%	0
Skateboard/Rollerblade	0.00%	0
Uber/Ride share	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>105</b>

## Q7 How important are each of the following recreational facilities to you or members of your household?

Answered: 105 Skipped: 0





	VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Nature trail	77.14% 81	20.00% 21	2.86% 3	105	2.74
Walking / jogging	75.00% 78	23.08% 24	1.92% 2	104	2.73
Biking	47.62% 50	38.10% 40	14.29% 15	105	2.33
Playground	34.62% 36	26.92% 28	38.46% 40	104	1.96
Swimming	26.92% 28	40.38% 42	32.69% 34	104	1.94
Fishing	24.27% 25	26.21% 27	49.51% 51	103	1.75
Golf	20.19% 21	17.31% 18	62.50% 65	104	1.58
Pickle ball	20.00% 21	23.81% 25	56.19% 59	105	1.64
Boating	19.42% 20	28.16% 29	52.43% 54	103	1.67
Ice skating	17.31% 18	30.77% 32	51.92% 54	104	1.65
Sledding	17.48% 18	39.81% 41	42.72% 44	103	1.75
Picnicking	13.46% 14	49.04% 51	37.50% 39	104	1.76
Tennis	12.50% 13	25.00% 26	62.50% 65	104	1.50
Soccer	12.50% 13	25.96% 27	61.54% 64	104	1.51
Basketball	11.54% 12	32.69% 34	55.77% 58	104	1.56
Concessions	10.58% 11	44.23% 46	45.19% 47	104	1.65
Disc golf	9.62% 10	36.54% 38	53.85% 56	104	1.56
In-line skating	9.62% 10	18.27% 19	72.12% 75	104	1.38
Baseball/softball	8.65% 9	25.00% 26	66.35% 69	104	1.42
Football	7.69% 8	17.31% 18	75.00% 78	104	1.33
Skateboarding	6.73% 7	20.19% 21	73.08% 76	104	1.34
Volleyball	5.83% 6	21.36% 22	72.82% 75	103	1.33

#

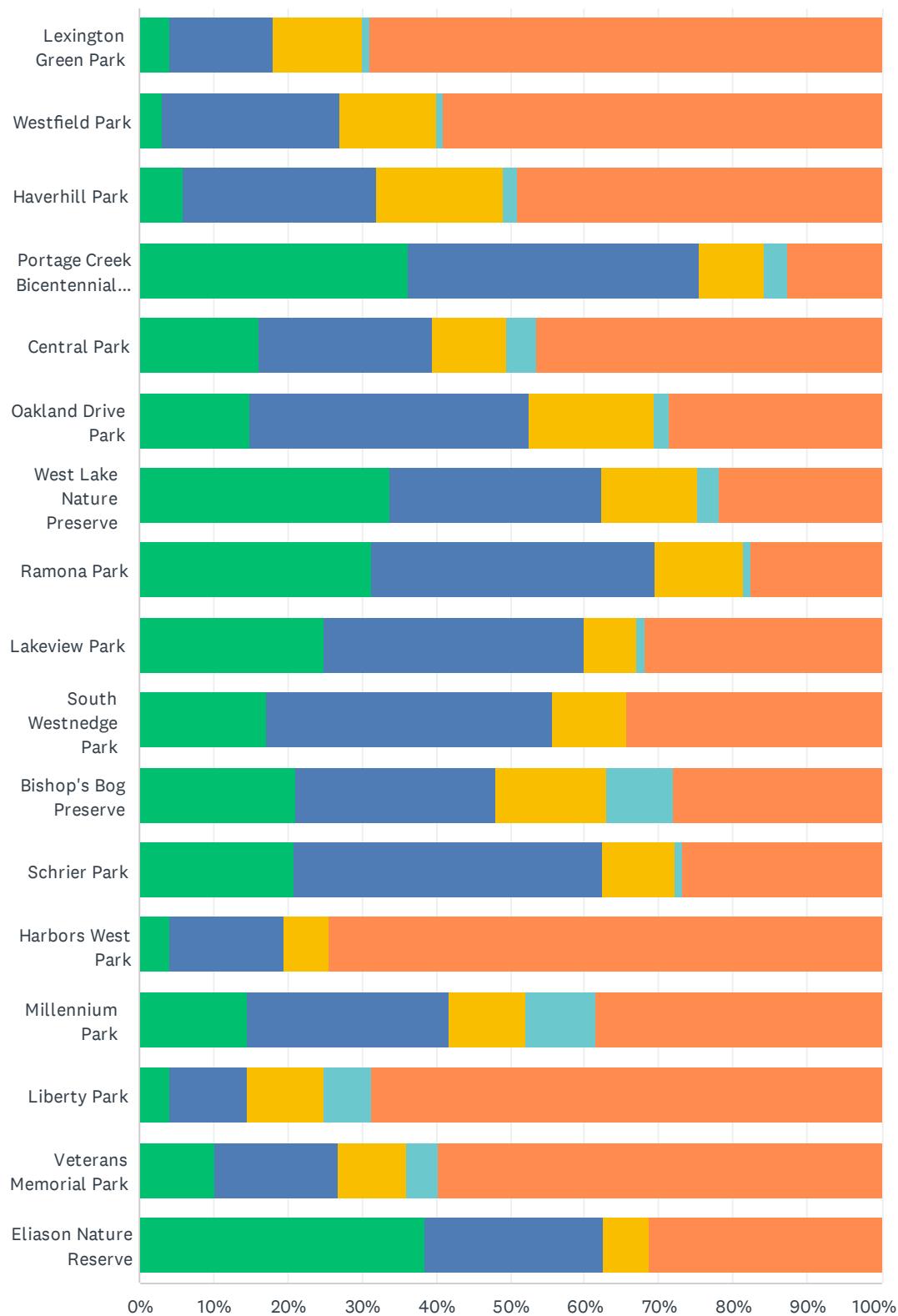
OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)

DATE

1	Bike paths off the road EXTREMELY IMPORTANT	9/27/2022 10:53 AM
2	Flower Gardens	9/27/2022 9:58 AM
3	Dog excercise	9/22/2022 3:57 AM
4	Cross-country skiing - very important	9/21/2022 11:50 AM
5	Canoeing	9/20/2022 10:33 PM
6	Dog Parks	9/20/2022 9:38 AM
7	monthly/weekly events - very important	9/20/2022 6:35 AM
8	kids water play	9/12/2022 2:02 PM
9	Baby swings and HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE AREAS FOR KIDS	9/11/2022 8:13 PM
10	dog parks	9/11/2022 5:34 PM
11	bathrooms	9/11/2022 10:15 AM
12	Too many bike paths that no one uses!!!!	9/5/2022 12:10 PM
13	RESTROOMS!!!	9/4/2022 5:45 PM
14	X-country skiing	8/31/2022 6:22 AM

## Q8 How would you rate the overall quality of existing park facilities in terms of amenities provided (restrooms, playgrounds, etc.)?

Answered: 103    Skipped: 2

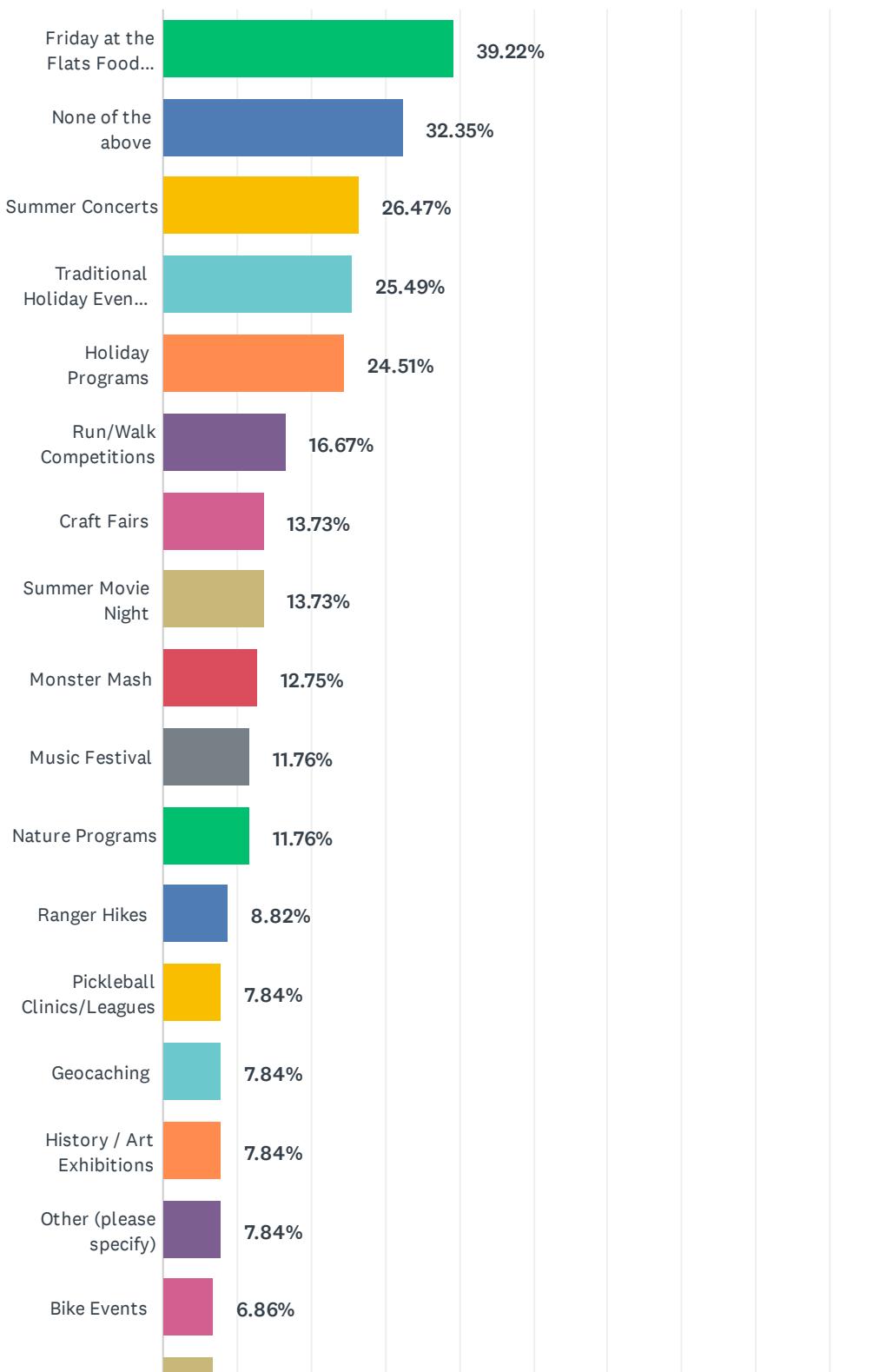


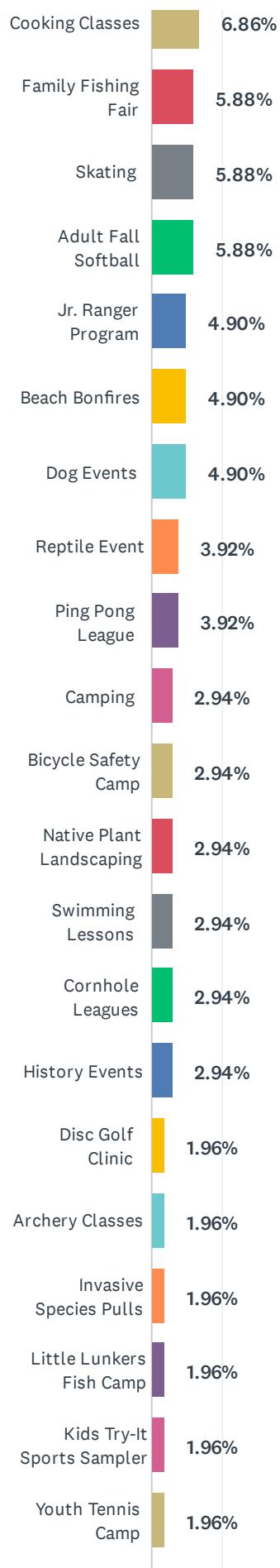
█ Excellent    █ Good    █ Fair    █ Poor  
█ Not Visited

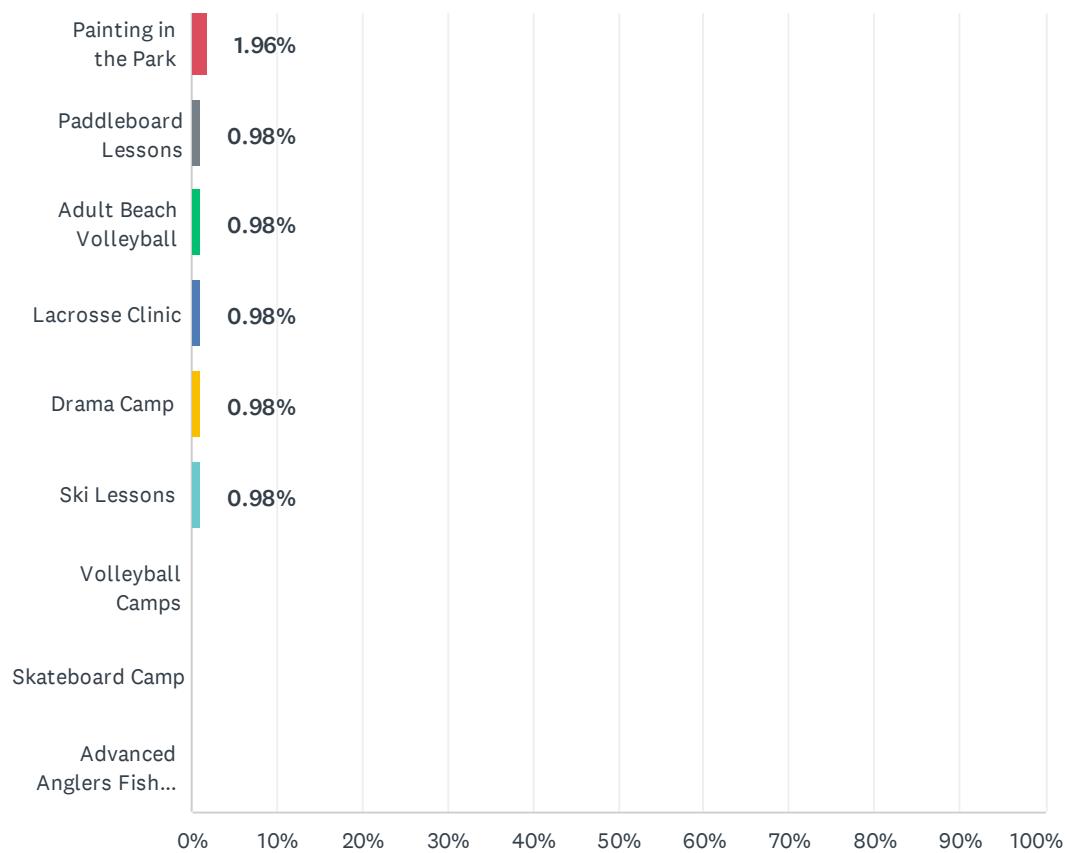
	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	NOT VISITED	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Lexington Green Park	4.00% 4	14.00% 14	12.00% 12	1.00% 1	69.00% 69	100	1.83
Westfield Park	3.00% 3	24.00% 24	13.00% 13	1.00% 1	59.00% 59	100	2.11
Haverhill Park	6.00% 6	26.00% 26	17.00% 17	2.00% 2	49.00% 49	100	2.38
Portage Creek Bicentennial Park	36.27% 37	39.22% 40	8.82% 9	2.94% 3	12.75% 13	102	3.83
Central Park	16.16% 16	23.23% 23	10.10% 10	4.04% 4	46.46% 46	99	2.59
Oakland Drive Park	14.85% 15	37.62% 38	16.83% 17	1.98% 2	28.71% 29	101	3.08
West Lake Nature Preserve	33.66% 34	28.71% 29	12.87% 13	2.97% 3	21.78% 22	101	3.50
Ramona Park	31.37% 32	38.24% 39	11.76% 12	0.98% 1	17.65% 18	102	3.65
Lakeview Park	25.00% 25	35.00% 35	7.00% 7	1.00% 1	32.00% 32	100	3.20
South Westnedge Park	17.17% 17	38.38% 38	10.10% 10	0.00% 0	34.34% 34	99	3.04
Bishop's Bog Preserve	21.00% 21	27.00% 27	15.00% 15	9.00% 9	28.00% 28	100	3.04
Schrier Park	20.79% 21	41.58% 42	9.90% 10	0.99% 1	26.73% 27	101	3.29
Harbors West Park	4.08% 4	15.31% 15	6.12% 6	0.00% 0	74.49% 73	98	1.74
Millennium Park	14.58% 14	27.08% 26	10.42% 10	9.38% 9	38.54% 37	96	2.70
Liberty Park	4.17% 4	10.42% 10	10.42% 10	6.25% 6	68.75% 66	96	1.75
Veterans Memorial Park	10.31% 10	16.49% 16	9.28% 9	4.12% 4	59.79% 58	97	2.13
Eliason Nature Reserve	38.38% 38	24.24% 24	6.06% 6	0.00% 0	31.31% 31	99	3.38

**Q9 In which recreation programs offered by the City of Portage have you or members of your household participated during the last 12 months (select all that apply)?**

Answered: 102 Skipped: 3







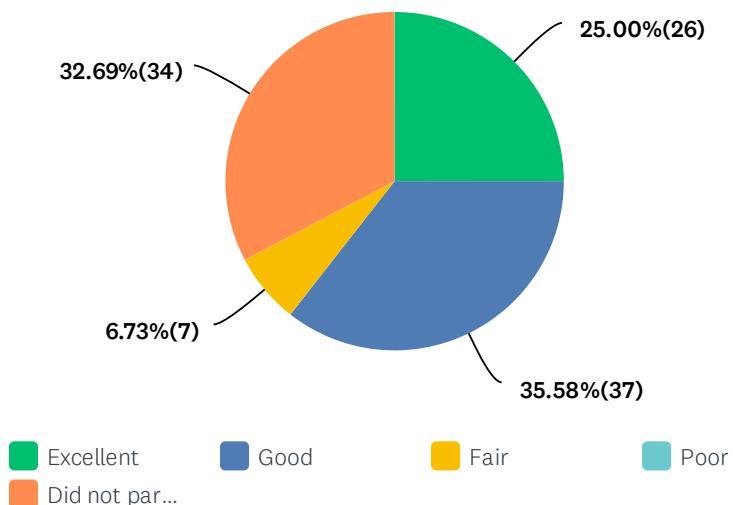
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Friday at the Flats Food Truck Event	39.22% 40
None of the above	32.35% 33
Summer Concerts	26.47% 27
Traditional Holiday Event (December)	25.49% 26
Holiday Programs	24.51% 25
Run/Walk Competitions	16.67% 17
Craft Fairs	13.73% 14
Summer Movie Night	13.73% 14
Monster Mash	12.75% 13
Music Festival	11.76% 12
Nature Programs	11.76% 12
Ranger Hikes	8.82% 9
Pickleball Clinics/Leagues	7.84% 8
Geocaching	7.84% 8
History / Art Exhibitions	7.84% 8
Other (please specify)	7.84% 8
Bike Events	6.86% 7
Cooking Classes	6.86% 7
Family Fishing Fair	5.88% 6
Skating	5.88% 6
Adult Fall Softball	5.88% 6
Jr. Ranger Program	4.90% 5
Beach Bonfires	4.90% 5
Dog Events	4.90% 5
Reptile Event	3.92% 4
Ping Pong League	3.92% 4
Camping	2.94% 3
Bicycle Safety Camp	2.94% 3
Native Plant Landscaping	2.94% 3
Swimming Lessons	2.94% 3
Cornhole Leagues	2.94% 3
History Events	2.94% 3

Disc Golf Clinic	1.96%	2
Archery Classes	1.96%	2
Invasive Species Pulls	1.96%	2
Little Lunkers Fish Camp	1.96%	2
Kids Try-It Sports Sampler	1.96%	2
Youth Tennis Camp	1.96%	2
Painting in the Park	1.96%	2
Paddleboard Lessons	0.98%	1
Adult Beach Volleyball	0.98%	1
Lacrosse Clinic	0.98%	1
Drama Camp	0.98%	1
Ski Lessons	0.98%	1
Volleyball Camps	0.00%	0
Skateboard Camp	0.00%	0
Advanced Anglers Fish Camp	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 102		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	FARMERS MARKET	9/13/2022 7:37 AM
2	Snow Party	9/12/2022 7:03 PM
3	Farmers Market	9/12/2022 3:53 PM
4	Police/Fire Kid Event; Winter Kids Group event	9/12/2022 2:02 PM
5	Farmers market	9/11/2022 11:19 AM
6	Some of these events we tried to get into but they have consistently been full	9/10/2022 9:12 AM
7	Sundays farmer market	9/8/2022 7:23 PM
8	Portage Farmer's Market	9/4/2022 5:45 PM

## Q10 How would you rate the overall quality of the recreation programs in which you or members of your household participated?

Answered: 104 Skipped: 1

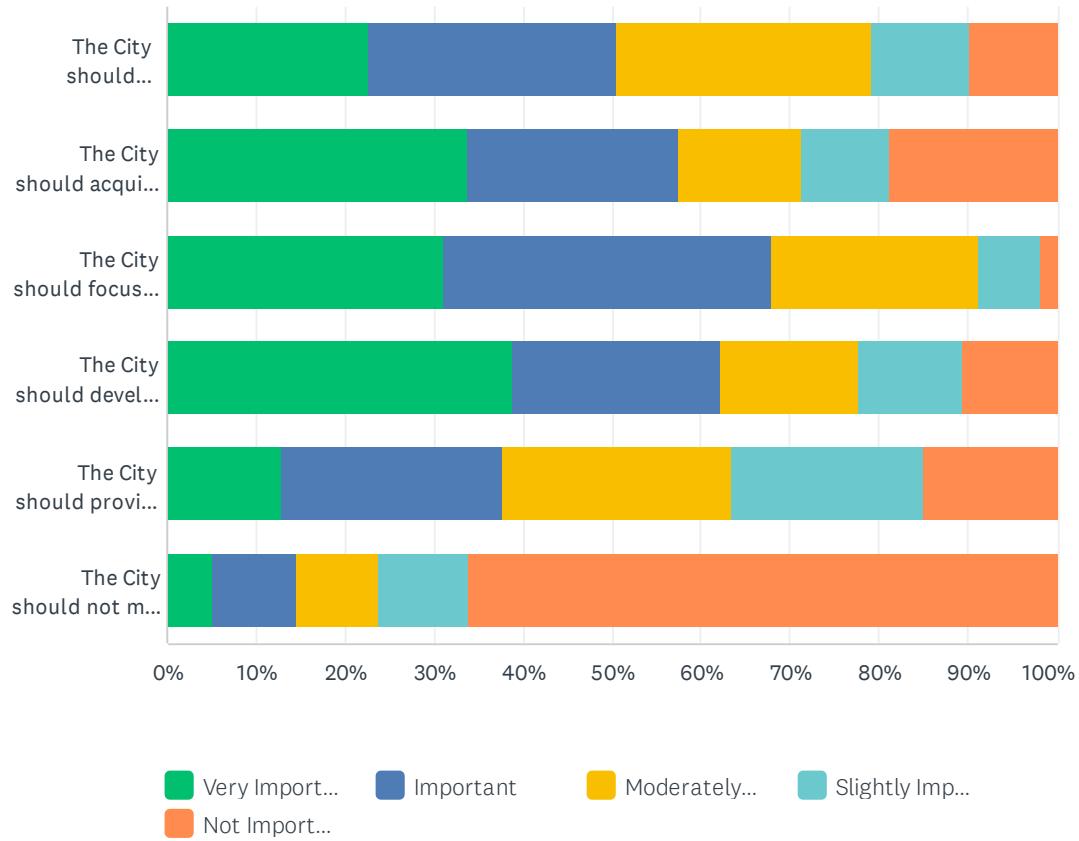


	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DID NOT PARTICIPATE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	25.00% 26	35.58% 37	6.73% 7	0.00% 0	32.69% 34	104	2.80

#	PLEASE DESCRIBE REASON IF POOR RATING PROVIDED	DATE
1	Not a lot of Vendor choice at the Friday Celery Flats; but probably because it was new	9/27/2022 10:53 AM
2	I do not live in the city, only work	9/20/2022 8:46 AM
3	They are good, but some could be better.	9/13/2022 10:26 AM
4	Needs more food trucks, stronger promotion, more consistent management	9/11/2022 11:19 AM
5	NO restrooms other than portalet!!!	9/4/2022 5:45 PM
6	Not participating in group activities during covid	9/4/2022 11:57 AM
7	Holiday event (tree lighting) needed better sound. We could not hear a thing. Also, extension cords everywhere for kids to trip on.	8/30/2022 9:49 PM

## Q11 Indicate your opinion with the following to improve the Portage park system.

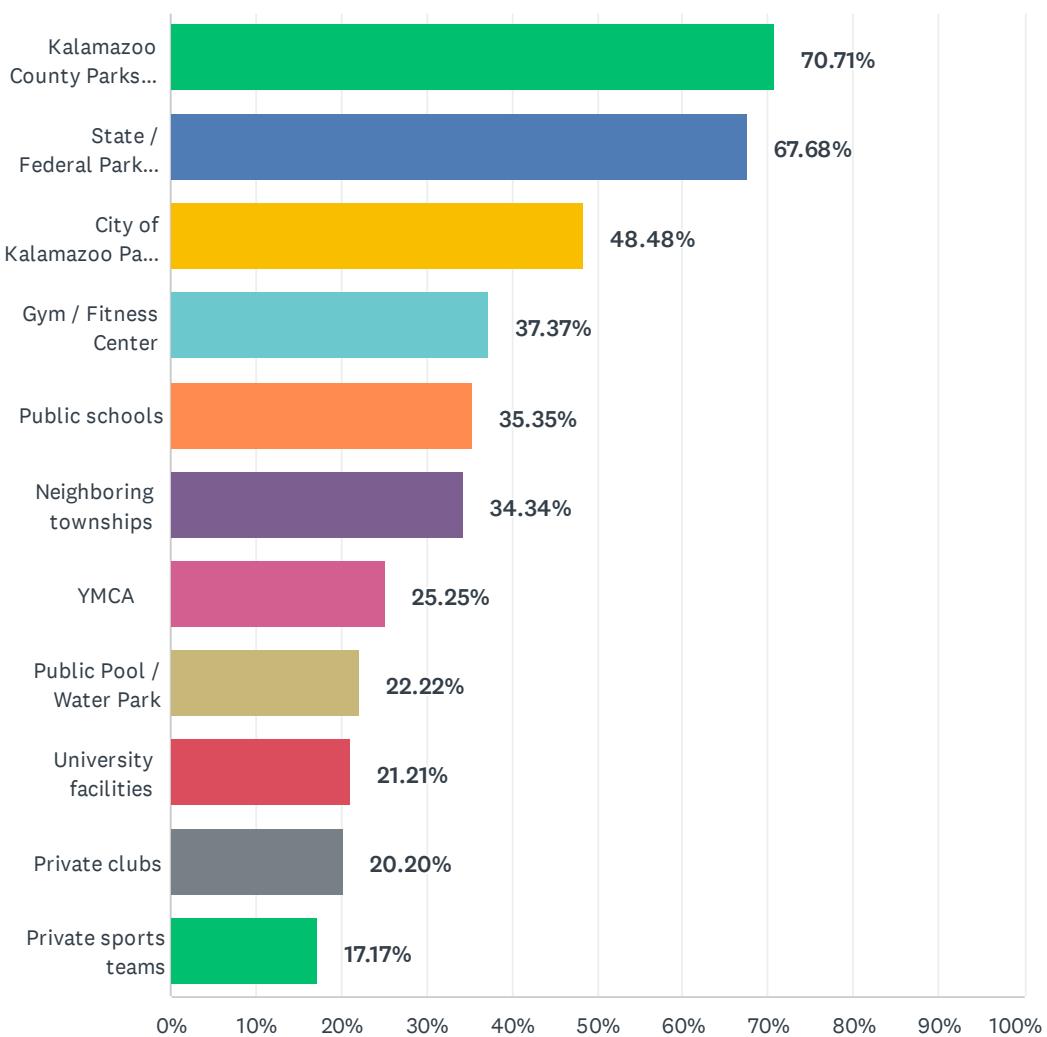
Answered: 104 Skipped: 1



	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
The City should redevelop/upgrade existing parks to support a broader range of activities	22.77% 23	27.72% 28	28.71% 29	10.89% 11	9.90% 10	101	3.43
The City should acquire land for future parks and open space	33.66% 34	23.76% 24	13.86% 14	9.90% 10	18.81% 19	101	3.44
The City should focus effort on better maintenance of existing facilities	31.07% 32	36.89% 38	23.30% 24	6.80% 7	1.94% 2	103	3.88
The City should develop additional non-motorized trails	38.83% 40	23.30% 24	15.53% 16	11.65% 12	10.68% 11	103	3.68
The City should provide additional recreational programs and activities	12.87% 13	24.75% 25	25.74% 26	21.78% 22	14.85% 15	101	2.99
The City should not make additional parks or changes to current facilities	5.15% 5	9.28% 9	9.28% 9	10.31% 10	65.98% 64	97	1.77

**Q12 What public/private recreational facilities outside of the city of Portage have you or members of your household used during the last 12 months?  
(select all that apply)**

Answered: 99      Skipped: 6

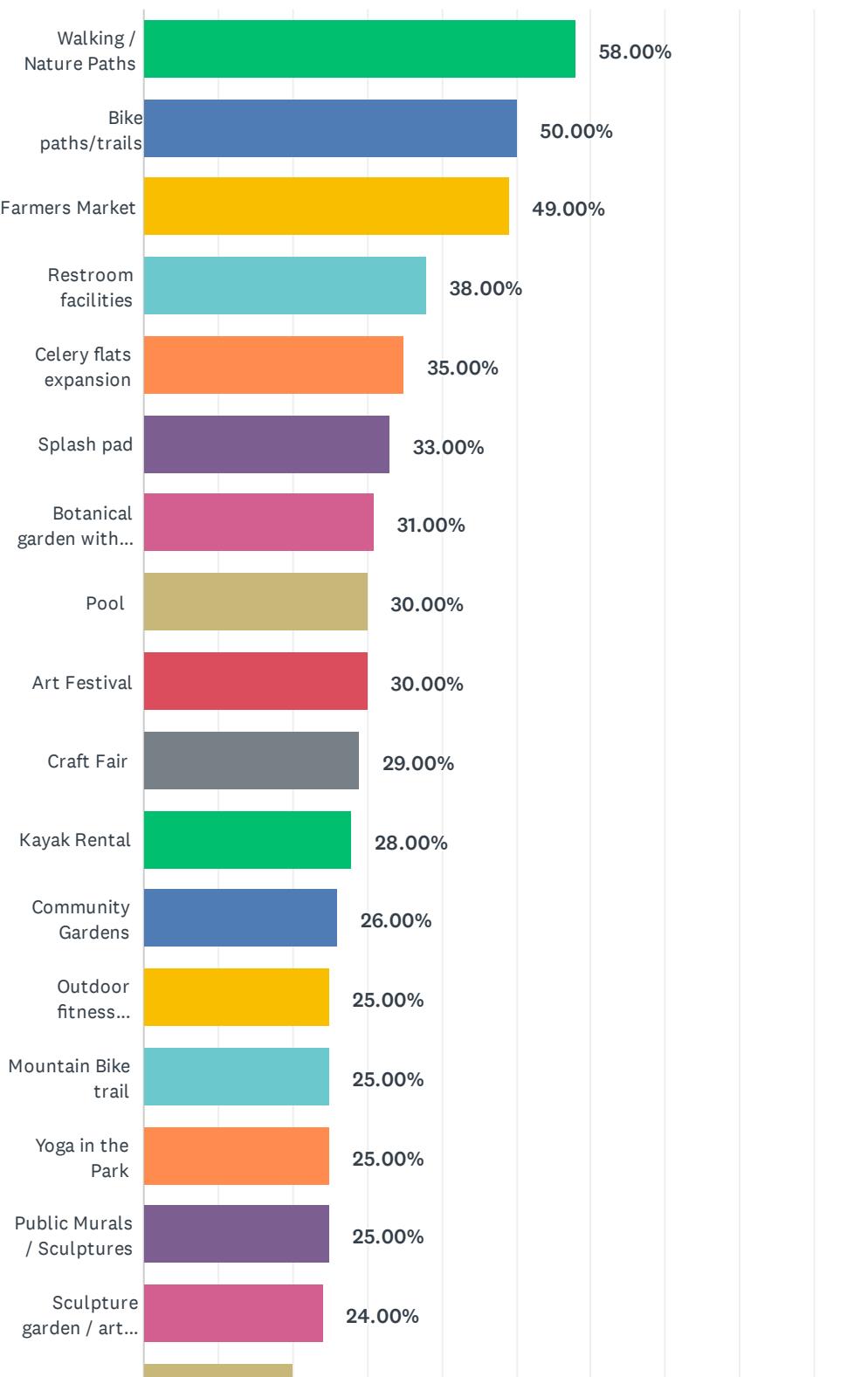


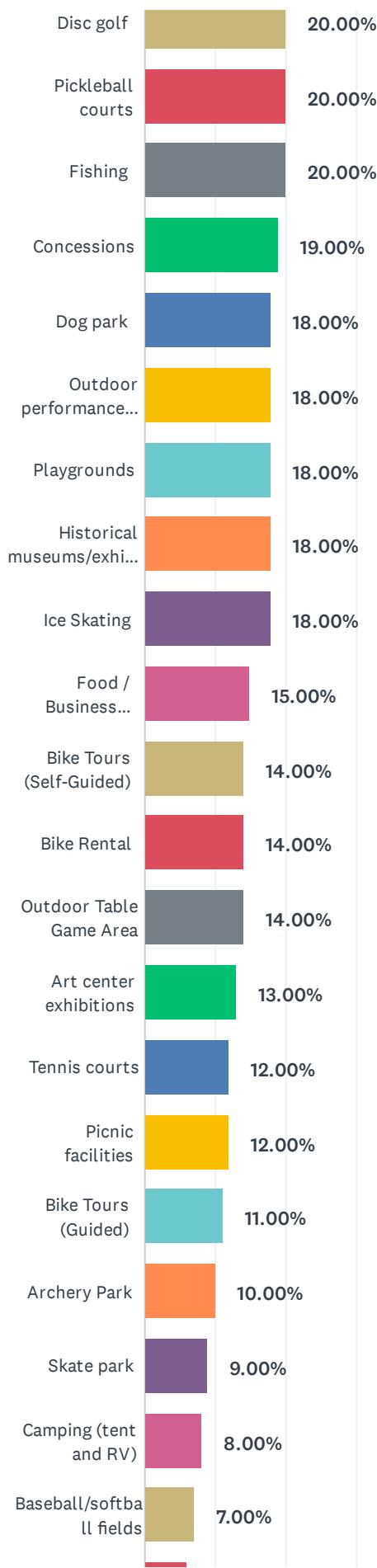
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Kalamazoo County Parks / Trails	70.71% 70
State / Federal Park Land	67.68% 67
City of Kalamazoo Parks and Recreation	48.48% 48
Gym / Fitness Center	37.37% 37
Public schools	35.35% 35
Neighboring townships	34.34% 34
YMCA	25.25% 25
Public Pool / Water Park	22.22% 22
University facilities	21.21% 21
Private clubs	20.20% 20
Private sports teams	17.17% 17
Total Respondents: 99	

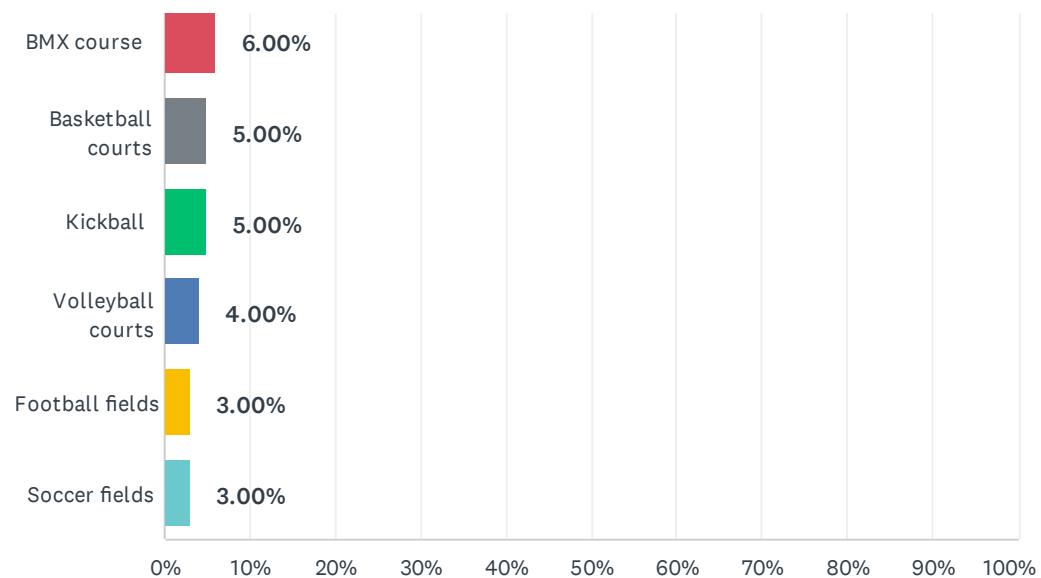
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Need OFF ROAD biking trails; NOT on the roadway	9/27/2022 10:53 AM
2	Portage Senior Center	9/21/2022 11:50 AM
3	Local parks, golf, swimming/boating at nearby inland lake	9/20/2022 8:46 AM
4	Splashpad	9/19/2022 5:02 PM
5	Parchment park	9/5/2022 12:10 PM
6	Kalamazoo Nature Center	9/4/2022 11:57 AM

**Q13 What are recreation facilities you would MOST LIKE TO SEE more of or added in the city to meet the needs of the members of your household? (select all that apply)**

Answered: 100 Skipped: 5







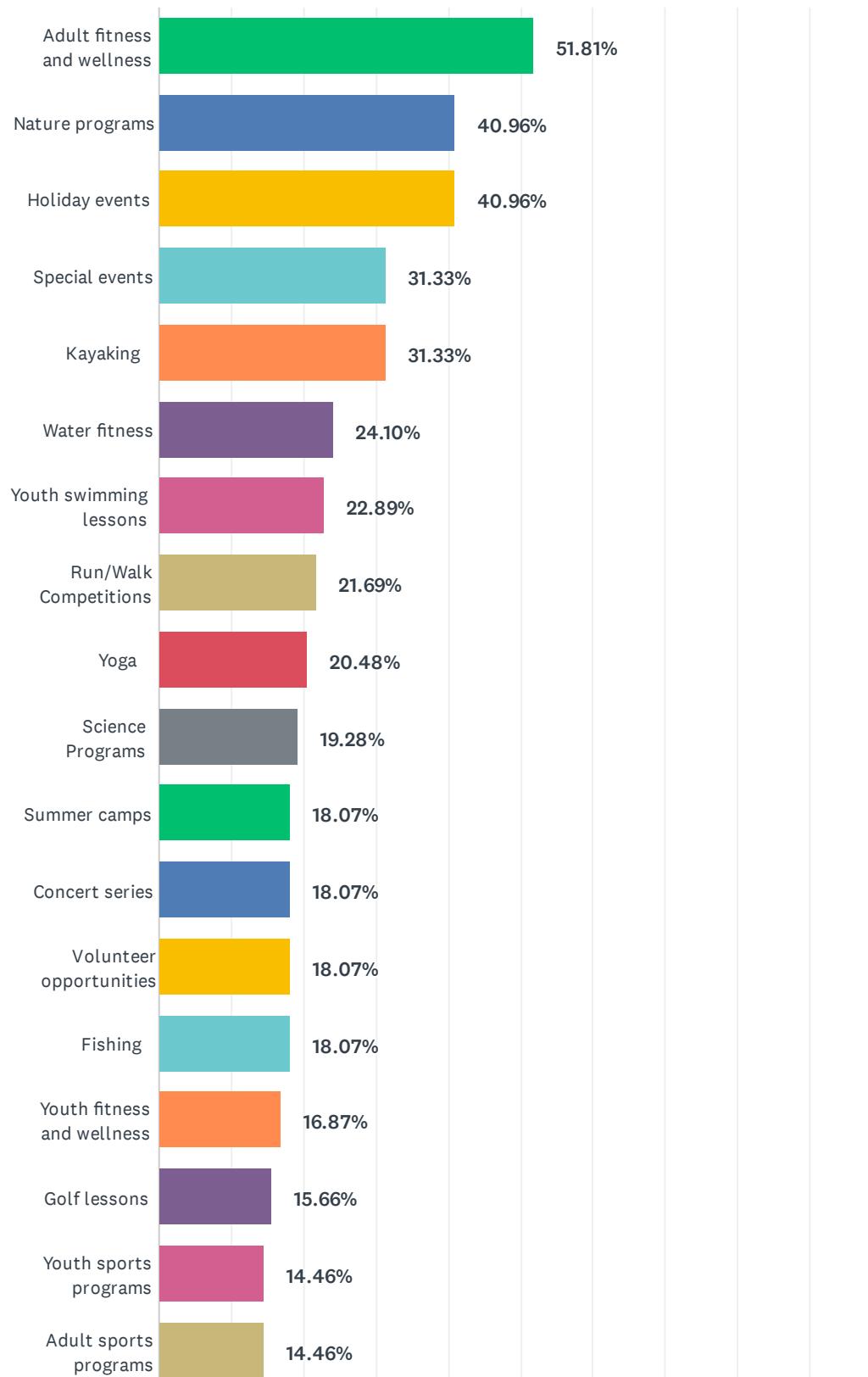
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Walking / Nature Paths	58.00% 58
Bike paths/trails	50.00% 50
Farmers Market	49.00% 49
Restroom facilities	38.00% 38
Celery flats expansion	35.00% 35
Splash pad	33.00% 33
Botanical garden with sculpture park	31.00% 31
Pool	30.00% 30
Art Festival	30.00% 30
Craft Fair	29.00% 29
Kayak Rental	28.00% 28
Community Gardens	26.00% 26
Outdoor fitness facilities	25.00% 25
Mountain Bike trail	25.00% 25
Yoga in the Park	25.00% 25
Public Murals / Sculptures	25.00% 25
Sculpture garden / art in the park	24.00% 24
Disc golf	20.00% 20
Pickleball courts	20.00% 20
Fishing	20.00% 20
Concessions	19.00% 19
Dog park	18.00% 18
Outdoor performance space / amphitheater	18.00% 18
Playgrounds	18.00% 18
Historical museums/exhibits	18.00% 18
Ice Skating	18.00% 18
Food / Business Start-Up Classes	15.00% 15
Bike Tours (Self-Guided)	14.00% 14
Bike Rental	14.00% 14
Outdoor Table Game Area	14.00% 14
Art center exhibitions	13.00% 13
Tennis courts	12.00% 12

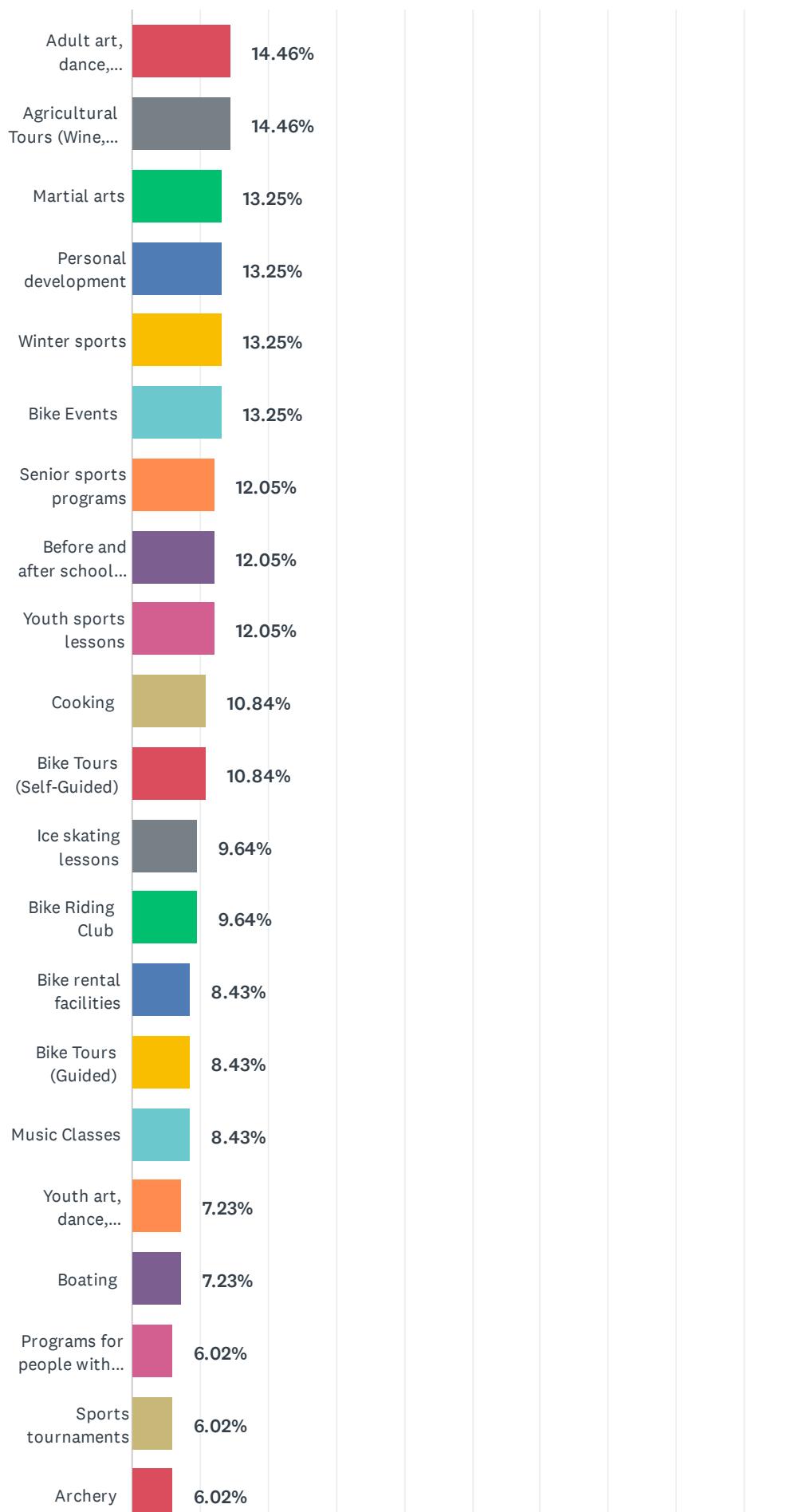
Picnic facilities	12.00%	12
Bike Tours (Guided)	11.00%	11
Archery Park	10.00%	10
Skate park	9.00%	9
Camping (tent and RV)	8.00%	8
Baseball/softball fields	7.00%	7
BMX course	6.00%	6
Basketball courts	5.00%	5
Kickball	5.00%	5
Volleyball courts	4.00%	4
Football fields	3.00%	3
Soccer fields	3.00%	3
<b>Total Respondents: 100</b>		

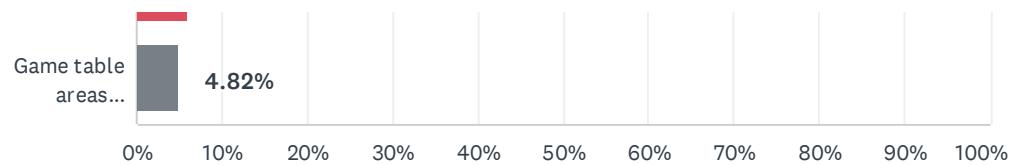
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Celery Flats Bike/Walk/Jog/ALL USE paths should replace sidewalks since no one rarely uses the sidewalks for 'walking' & they are in poor condition anyway. Keep Bikes OFF THE ROAD!!!! If the City Mission is to 'Move' then move people SAFELY outside of motor vehicles. Putting them on the roadway puts them in harms way!!! If you look at the statistic; Municipalities who have expanded 'off road' all use trails have also created new business opportunities! People do not want to be on the roadway with vehicles today; LOOK TO THE FUTURE!!!	9/27/2022 10:53 AM
2	Big walk raised up so it can be used.	9/27/2022 12:14 AM
3	public pool for Portage residents - north/west Portage - not close to Ramona park	9/20/2022 8:31 AM
4	Golf Course	9/13/2022 10:26 AM
5	Structure for farmers market	9/13/2022 7:37 AM
6	Please put in more baby swings and kids swings and handicap areas for special needs children. A love of parks start in childhood.	9/11/2022 8:13 PM
7	Disc golf	9/9/2022 5:47 AM
8	Focus on maintaining what we have!	9/8/2022 8:59 AM
9	Informational Tea parties at Sturat Manor and community theater. Better use of historical buildings	9/8/2022 6:29 AM
10	Too many bike paths no one uses!!	9/5/2022 12:10 PM
11	More nature. Portage has too much cement! Why do we allow developers to get a building permit if they clearcut a wooded area rather than just removing trees that interfere with their project?	9/3/2022 9:58 AM
12	motocross park	8/30/2022 11:07 AM

## Q14 What recreation programs does your household have a NEED for? (select all that apply)

Answered: 83 Skipped: 22







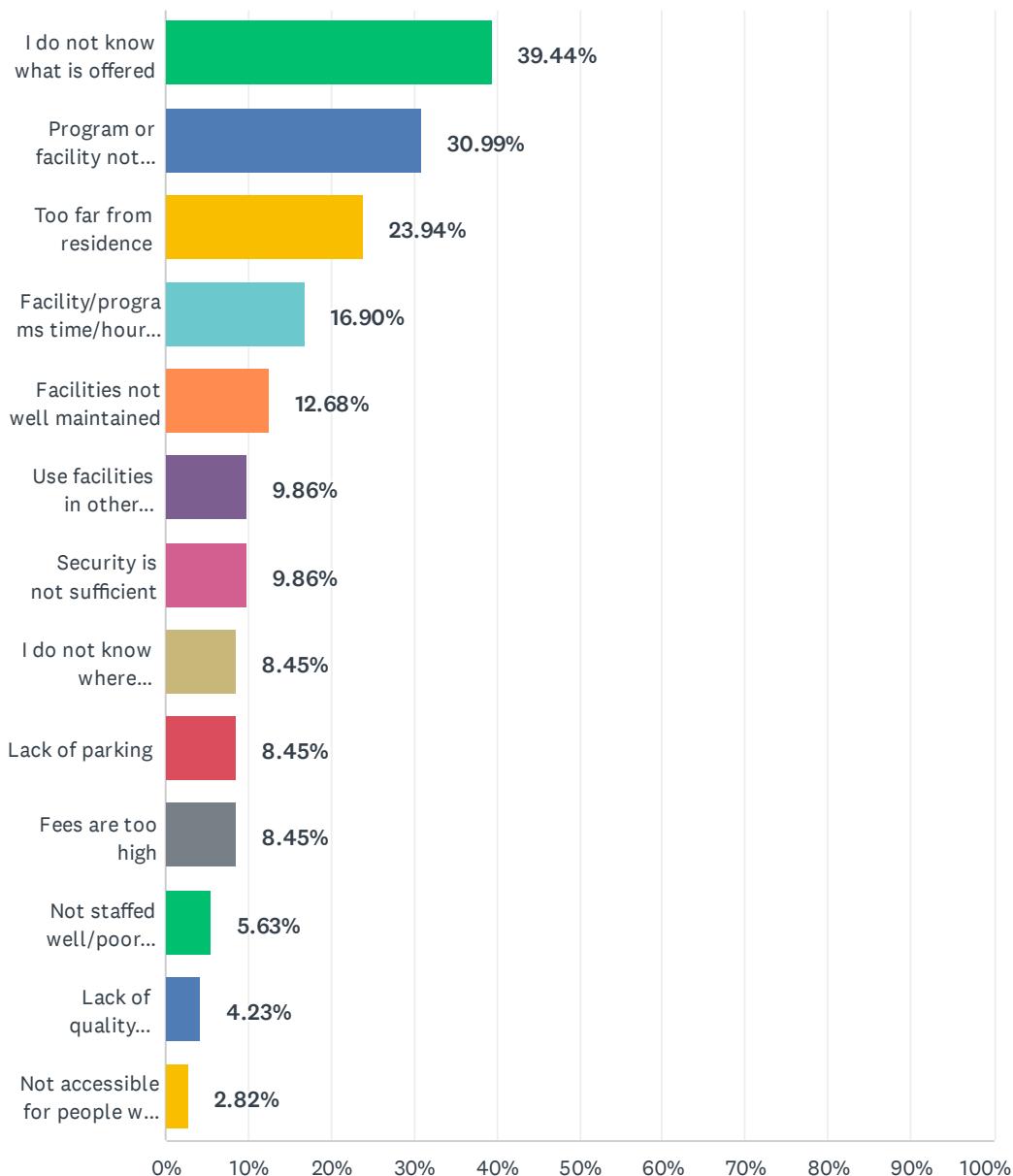
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Adult fitness and wellness	51.81% 43
Nature programs	40.96% 34
Holiday events	40.96% 34
Special events	31.33% 26
Kayaking	31.33% 26
Water fitness	24.10% 20
Youth swimming lessons	22.89% 19
Run/Walk Competitions	21.69% 18
Yoga	20.48% 17
Science Programs	19.28% 16
Summer camps	18.07% 15
Concert series	18.07% 15
Volunteer opportunities	18.07% 15
Fishing	18.07% 15
Youth fitness and wellness	16.87% 14
Golf lessons	15.66% 13
Youth sports programs	14.46% 12
Adult sports programs	14.46% 12
Adult art, dance, performing arts	14.46% 12
Agricultural Tours (Wine, U-Pick Farms)	14.46% 12
Martial arts	13.25% 11
Personal development	13.25% 11
Winter sports	13.25% 11
Bike Events	13.25% 11
Senior sports programs	12.05% 10
Before and after school programs	12.05% 10
Youth sports lessons	12.05% 10
Cooking	10.84% 9
Bike Tours (Self-Guided)	10.84% 9
Ice skating lessons	9.64% 8
Bike Riding Club	9.64% 8
Bike rental facilities	8.43% 7

Bike Tours (Guided)	8.43%	7
Music Classes	8.43%	7
Youth art, dance, performing arts	7.23%	6
Boating	7.23%	6
Programs for people with disabilities	6.02%	5
Sports tournaments	6.02%	5
Archery	6.02%	5
Game table areas (chess/checkers)	4.82%	4
<b>Total Respondents: 83</b>		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Art Fair	9/27/2022 9:58 AM
2	Cross-country skiing	9/21/2022 11:50 AM
3	Pickleball year round - indoor leagues PLEASE PLEASE	9/20/2022 6:35 AM
4	None of the above	9/19/2022 4:55 PM
5	Year round farm market	9/8/2022 7:53 PM
6	Tea Parties	9/8/2022 6:29 AM
7	Nature trails	9/3/2022 9:58 AM
8	Please expand your summer pickleball leagues	8/30/2022 12:50 PM
9	Car show similar to GR 28th street rally	8/30/2022 11:55 AM

## Q15 What are reasons preventing you or members of your household from using parks, recreational facilities or programs more often? (select all that apply)

Answered: 71 Skipped: 34



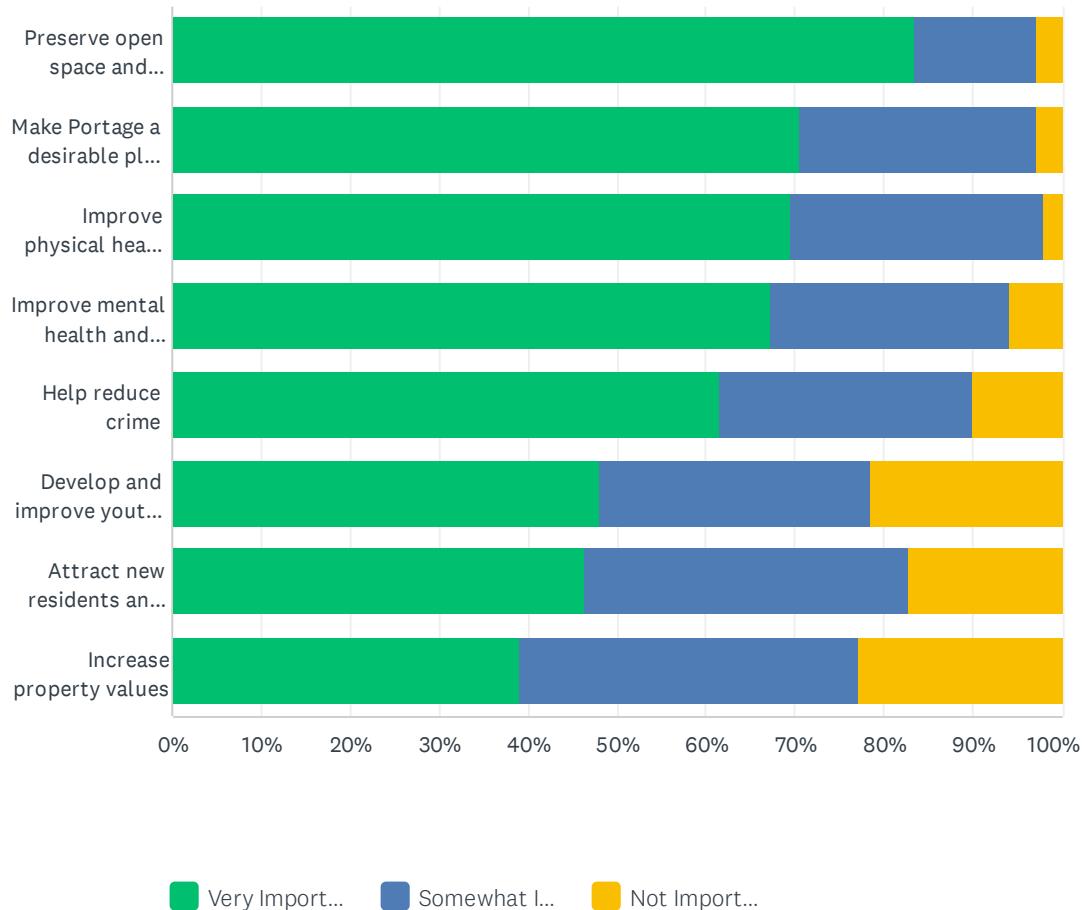
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I do not know what is offered	39.44% 28
Program or facility not offered	30.99% 22
Too far from residence	23.94% 17
Facility/programs time/hours of operation not convenient	16.90% 12
Facilities not well maintained	12.68% 9
Use facilities in other municipalities	9.86% 7
Security is not sufficient	9.86% 7
I do not know where facilities are	8.45% 6
Lack of parking	8.45% 6
Fees are too high	8.45% 6
Not staffed well/poor service	5.63% 4
Lack of quality programs	4.23% 3
Not accessible for people with disabilities	2.82% 2
Total Respondents: 71	

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	no non-motorized access	10/1/2022 11:11 AM
2	lack of curated spaces	9/27/2022 7:08 PM
3	None	9/27/2022 10:53 AM
4	None	9/22/2022 1:43 PM
5	My personal schedule is too busy	9/21/2022 3:56 PM
6	convenience - do not live local	9/20/2022 8:46 AM
7	indoor pool for lap swimming	9/17/2022 9:15 PM
8	Not all are accessible by the bike path system.	9/14/2022 8:51 PM
9	It's difficult to take my children to the park as often because generally I could put my 1.5 year old in a swing while watching my other child play. If there are no baby swings (Central Park has 0 swings, 0) then I have a hard time keeping my little one entertained. Please for the love of parks please make sure there are two baby swings and two regular swings at each park. Kids like to swing together. I swear I don't know if any of the park designers have kids.	9/11/2022 8:13 PM
10	time restraints of life	9/11/2022 10:15 AM
11	Too full. Programs we like especially summer programs are full or I'm unable to find activities for all three kids at the same time due to ages or space	9/10/2022 9:12 AM
12	Ramona Park has too many sketchy people.	9/9/2022 10:15 PM
13	Facility doesn't exist	9/9/2022 5:47 AM
14	Busy with other things	9/8/2022 8:59 AM
15	None. We use the parks	9/5/2022 5:08 PM
16	Na	9/5/2022 12:11 PM
17	Trails not well maintained. Broken/sunken or sinking platforms, etc	9/4/2022 11:57 AM

18	I am afraid to walk trails on my own after my daughter was accosted.	9/3/2022 9:58 AM
19	bicyclists/skaters/electric scooters do not respect pedestrians	9/2/2022 8:25 AM
20	Nothing. We are in a Portage park at least 2-3 times per week not including use of trails!	8/30/2022 9:51 PM
21	Lack of tome	8/30/2022 1:50 PM
22	Was shut out of summer pickleball leagues--you need to expand	8/30/2022 12:50 PM
23	Extremely difficult to cross Portage Road	8/30/2022 11:43 AM

## Q16 Rank the benefits of parks, trails, and programs that are important to your household.

Answered: 103    Skipped: 2

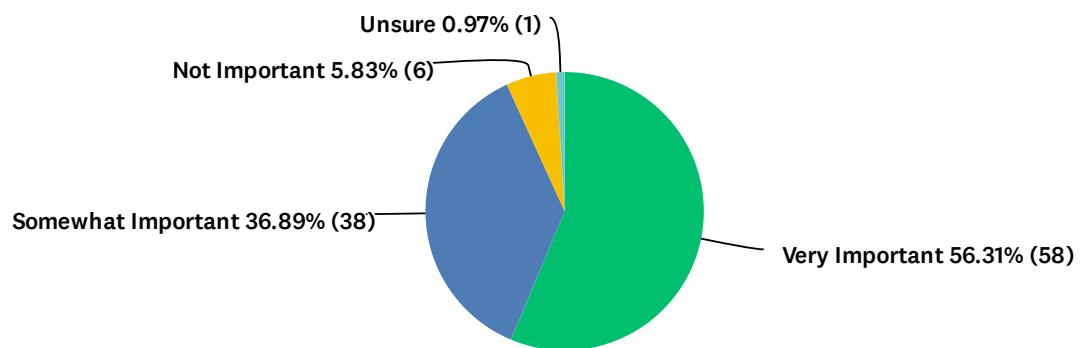


	VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Preserve open space and environmental features	83.50% 86	13.59% 14	2.91% 3	103	2.81
Make Portage a desirable place to live	70.59% 72	26.47% 27	2.94% 3	102	2.68
Improve physical health and fitness	69.61% 71	28.43% 29	1.96% 2	102	2.68
Improve mental health and reduce stress	67.33% 68	26.73% 27	5.94% 6	101	2.61
Help reduce crime	61.62% 61	28.28% 28	10.10% 10	99	2.52
Develop and improve youth social skills and self-image	47.96% 47	30.61% 30	21.43% 21	98	2.27
Attract new residents and businesses	46.46% 46	36.36% 36	17.17% 17	99	2.29
Increase property values	39.00% 39	38.00% 38	23.00% 23	100	2.16

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	SAFE trails not on the roadway like Celery Flats, Stryker trail, Elias Trail, etc. Putting bikes on the roadway increases potential for severe injury/deaths!	9/27/2022 10:53 AM
2	Not really sure I understand this question or that it applies to me??	9/19/2022 5:02 PM

## Q17 How important is to you that the city provide quality recreation programs, events and services to citizens?

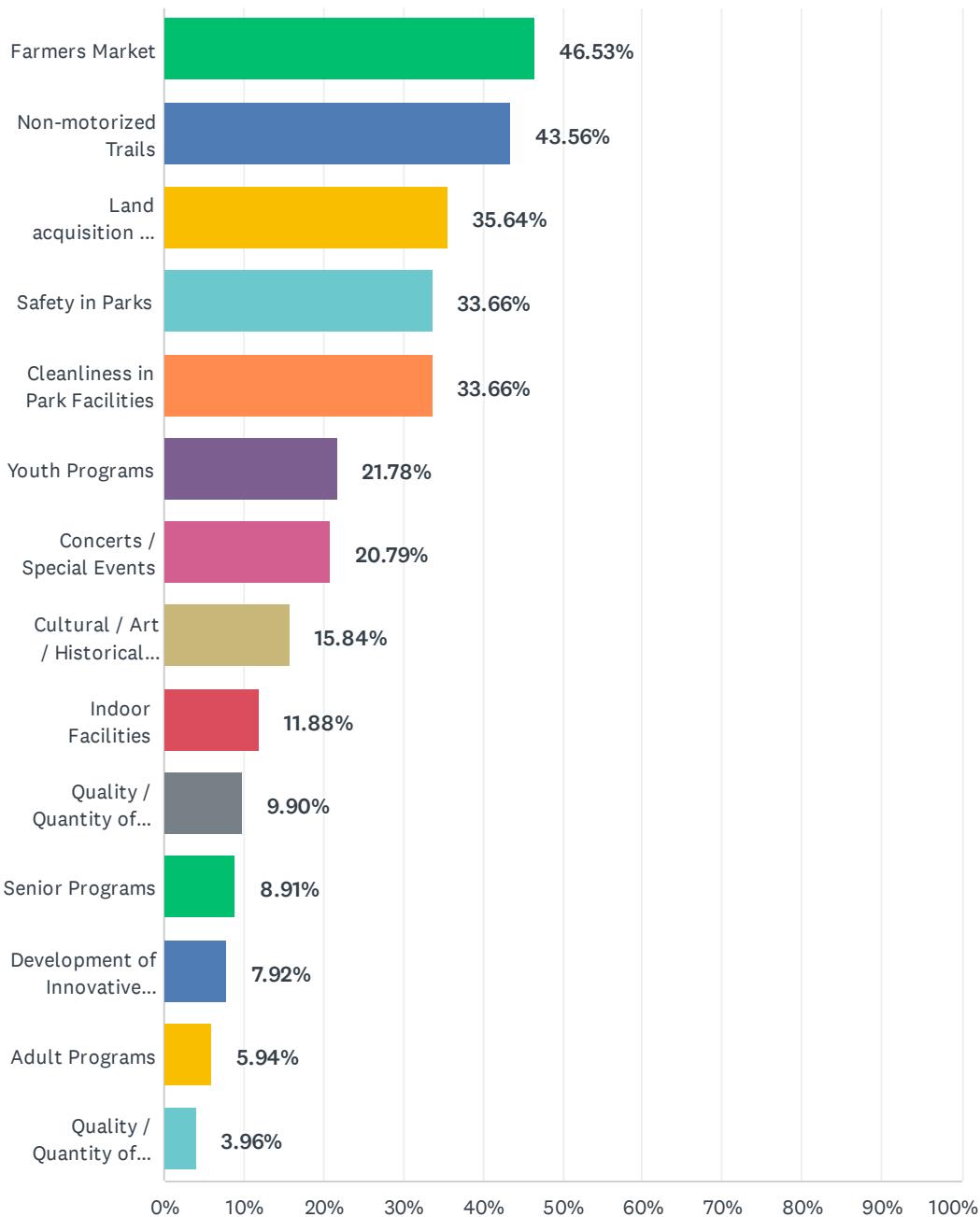
Answered: 103    Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very Important	56.31%	58
Somewhat Important	36.89%	38
Not Important	5.83%	6
Unsure	0.97%	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>103</b>

## Q18 Choose the top three items below in which you believe the city should invest in during the next five (5) years (select only three).

Answered: 101 Skipped: 4

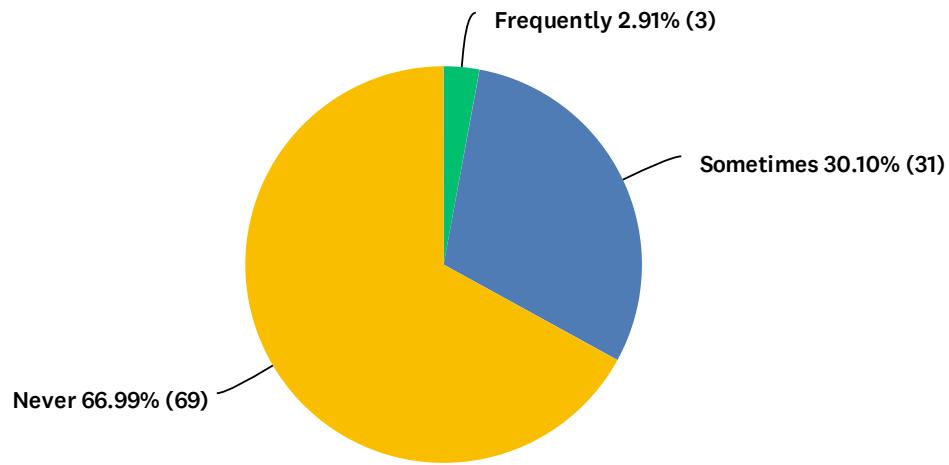


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Farmers Market	46.53%
Non-motorized Trails	43.56%
Land acquisition / Park expansion	35.64%
Safety in Parks	33.66%
Cleanliness in Park Facilities	33.66%
Youth Programs	21.78%
Concerts / Special Events	20.79%
Cultural / Art / Historical Facilities	15.84%
Indoor Facilities	11.88%
Quality / Quantity of Court Facilities	9.90%
Senior Programs	8.91%
Development of Innovative Facilities	7.92%
Adult Programs	5.94%
Quality / Quantity of Athletic Fields	3.96%
Total Respondents: 101	

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Trails that are NOT on the roadway; utilize current poor sidewalk conditions to be replaced with off road 'all use' trails which keeps with your mission and keeps families SAFE!!	9/27/2022 10:53 AM
2	Splashpad :)	9/19/2022 5:02 PM
3	Farmers market in location with parking you don't have to cross street to get to.	9/5/2022 12:10 PM
4	Please add land acquisition/park expansion. Parks should provide access to nature rather than more urbanization.	9/3/2022 9:58 AM
5	Upgrading current restrooms to be more modern.	9/2/2022 8:43 PM
6	Portage should focus on maintaining what we have and improving it	9/2/2022 8:25 AM
7	Acquire Gourdneck State Game Area	8/30/2022 12:50 PM

## Q19 How frequently do you buy from concessions in Portage parks?

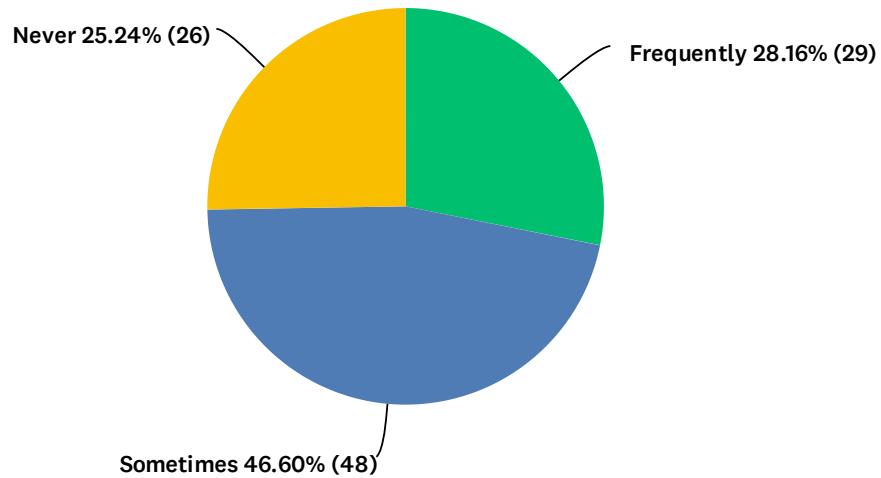
Answered: 103 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Frequently	2.91%	3
Sometimes	30.10%	31
Never	66.99%	69
TOTAL		103

## Q20 How frequently do you bring food to park facilities?

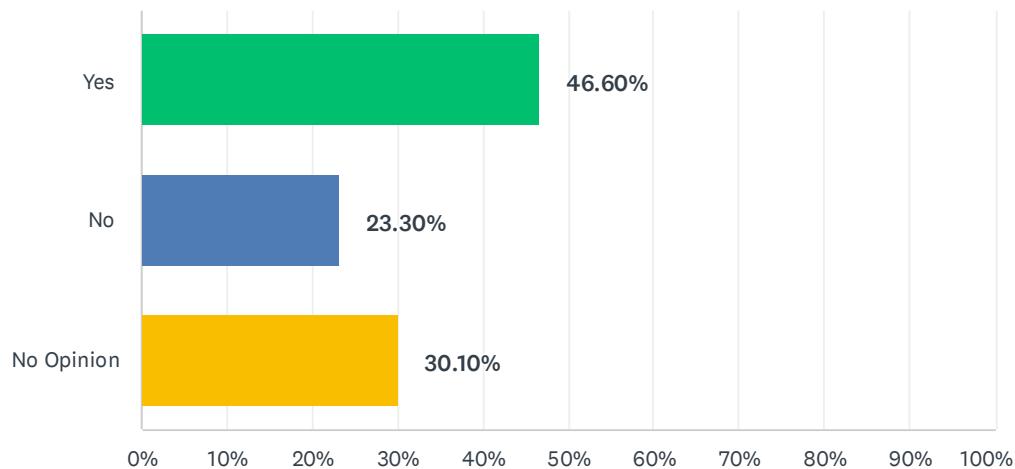
Answered: 103 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Frequently	28.16%	29
Sometimes	46.60%	48
Never	25.24%	26
TOTAL	103	

## Q21 Would you visit a park more frequently if coffee / breakfast or lunch in a cafe setting was available?

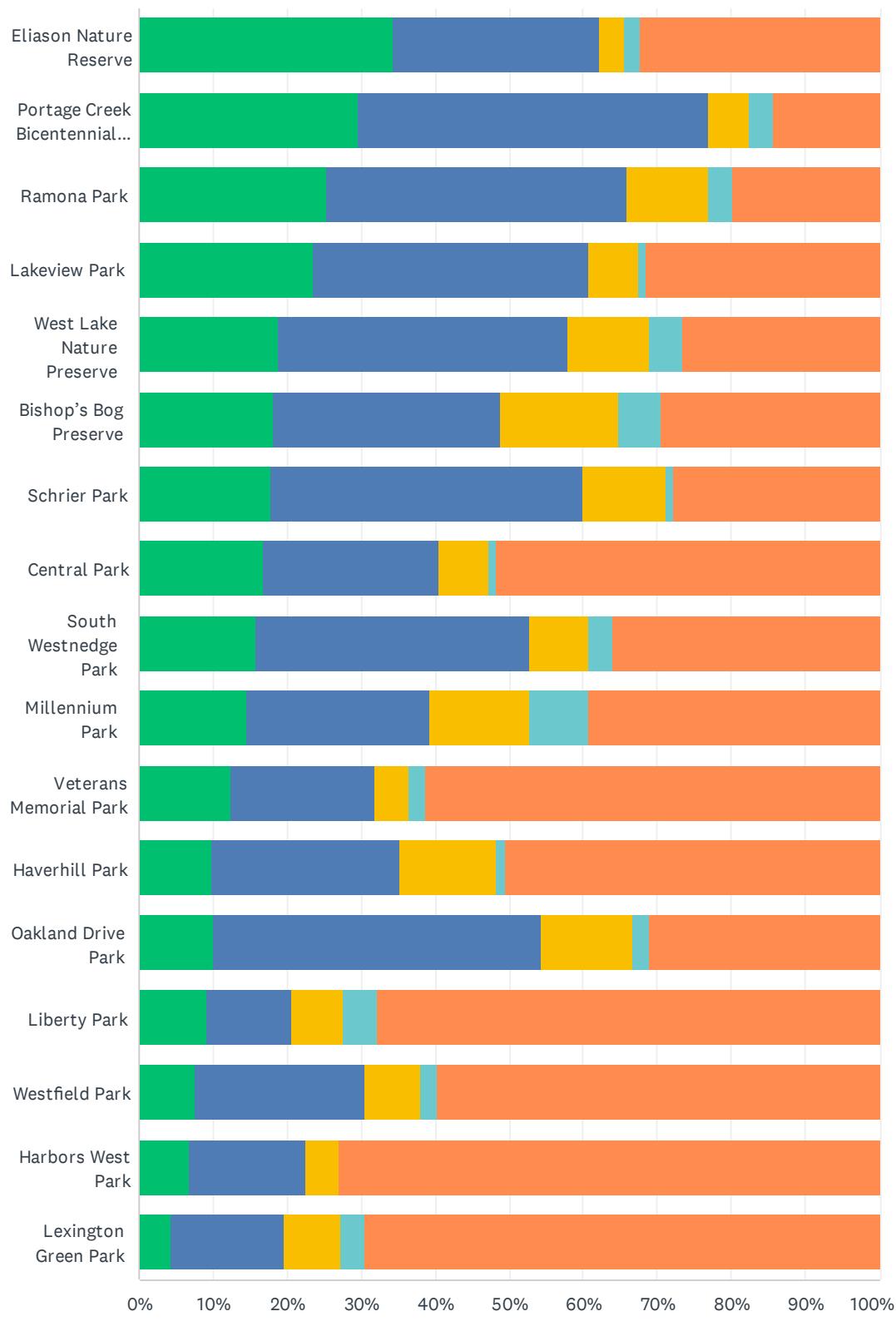
Answered: 103 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	46.60%	48
No	23.30%	24
No Opinion	30.10%	31
TOTAL		103

## Q22 How would you rank the appearance, maintenance and cleanliness of existing Portage park facilities?

Answered: 95    Skipped: 10

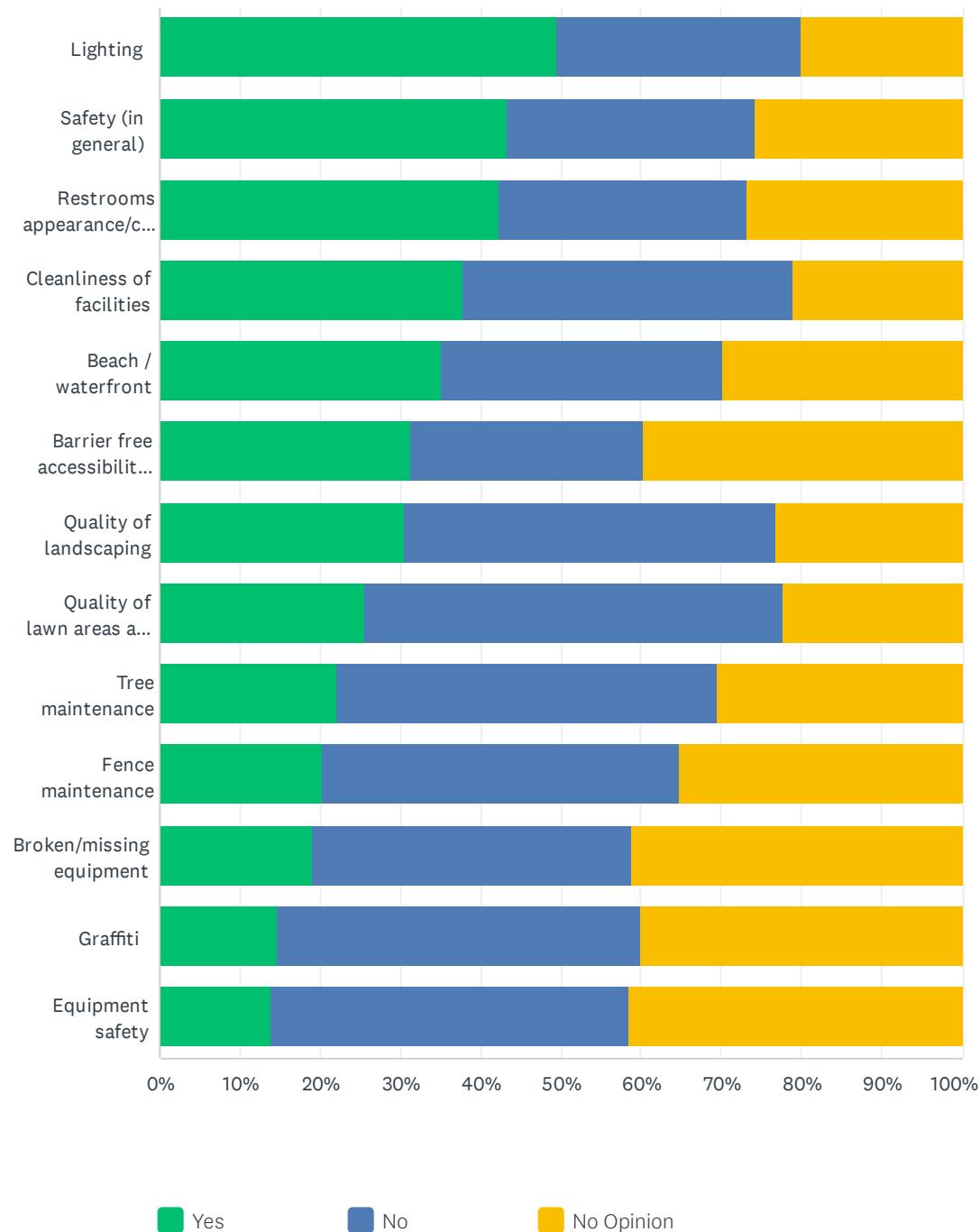


█ Excellent      █ Good      █ Fair      █ Poor  
█ Have not vi...

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	HAVE NOT VISITED THIS PARK	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Eliason Nature Reserve	34.44% 31	27.78% 25	3.33% 3	2.22% 2	32.22% 29	90	2.30
Portage Creek Bicentennial Park	29.67% 27	47.25% 43	5.49% 5	3.30% 3	14.29% 13	91	2.75
Ramona Park	25.27% 23	40.66% 37	10.99% 10	3.30% 3	19.78% 18	91	2.48
Lakeview Park	23.60% 21	37.08% 33	6.74% 6	1.12% 1	31.46% 28	89	2.20
West Lake Nature Preserve	18.89% 17	38.89% 35	11.11% 10	4.44% 4	26.67% 24	90	2.19
Bishop's Bog Preserve	18.18% 16	30.68% 27	15.91% 14	5.68% 5	29.55% 26	88	2.02
Schrer Park	17.78% 16	42.22% 38	11.11% 10	1.11% 1	27.78% 25	90	2.21
Central Park	16.85% 15	23.60% 21	6.74% 6	1.12% 1	51.69% 46	89	1.53
South Westnedge Park	15.73% 14	37.08% 33	7.87% 7	3.37% 3	35.96% 32	89	1.93
Millennium Park	14.61% 13	24.72% 22	13.48% 12	7.87% 7	39.33% 35	89	1.67
Veterans Memorial Park	12.50% 11	19.32% 17	4.55% 4	2.27% 2	61.36% 54	88	1.19
Haverhill Park	9.89% 9	25.27% 23	13.19% 12	1.10% 1	50.55% 46	91	1.43
Oakland Drive Park	10.00% 9	44.44% 40	12.22% 11	2.22% 2	31.11% 28	90	2.00
Liberty Park	9.20% 8	11.49% 10	6.90% 6	4.60% 4	67.82% 59	87	0.90
Westfield Park	7.61% 7	22.83% 21	7.61% 7	2.17% 2	59.78% 55	92	1.16
Harbors West Park	6.74% 6	15.73% 14	4.49% 4	0.00% 0	73.03% 65	89	0.83
Lexington Green Park	4.35% 4	15.22% 14	7.61% 7	3.26% 3	69.57% 64	92	0.82

## Q23 Do you think improvements are needed in any of the following areas regarding Portage park facility maintenance?

Answered: 98 Skipped: 7



Yes

No

No Opinion

	YES	NO	NO OPINION	TOTAL
Lighting	49.47% 47	30.53% 29	20.00% 19	95
Safety (in general)	43.30% 42	30.93% 30	25.77% 25	97
Restrooms appearance/cleanliness	42.27% 41	30.93% 30	26.80% 26	97
Cleanliness of facilities	37.89% 36	41.05% 39	21.05% 20	95
Beach / waterfront	35.11% 33	35.11% 33	29.79% 28	94
Barrier free accessibility (parking/paths)	31.25% 30	29.17% 28	39.58% 38	96
Quality of landscaping	30.53% 29	46.32% 44	23.16% 22	95
Quality of lawn areas and green space	25.53% 24	52.13% 49	22.34% 21	94
Tree maintenance	22.11% 21	47.37% 45	30.53% 29	95
Fence maintenance	20.21% 19	44.68% 42	35.11% 33	94
Broken/missing equipment	18.95% 18	40.00% 38	41.05% 39	95
Graffiti	14.74% 14	45.26% 43	40.00% 38	95
Equipment safety	13.83% 13	44.68% 42	41.49% 39	94

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Overall all very good; however, need to have crossing signs/ with pedestrian signals that can be pushed to alert traffic. Not available near most parks/trail crossings. Again, keep with your mission to 'move' but invest in doing it SAFELY!!	9/27/2022 10:53 AM
2	Design and water facility at dog park. Always have to walk through water to enter and exit	9/22/2022 3:57 AM
3	Can't really say... but for sure the fountain at Millennium looked like it could use some TLC! That used to be my favorite location.	9/19/2022 5:02 PM
4	Farmers market structure and bathrooms for market	9/13/2022 7:37 AM
5	keep all restrooms open year-round	9/11/2022 10:15 AM
6	Oakland Drive Parks play area should be updated. The sledding hill is tons of fun but this park gets tons of visitors and could use more swings we love everything else about the park but noticed a broken area on the fence line along the trail. No one sees it though.	9/10/2022 9:12 AM
7	Deck and walkway maintenance	9/8/2022 8:59 AM
8	I have been accosted at Lakeview Park. Please figure out a way to increase security.	9/3/2022 9:58 AM
9	Fix the floating path at West Lake.	9/1/2022 6:15 PM

## Q24 What type of community events, programs, and festivals would you like to see in Portage?

Answered: 60 Skipped: 45

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Social events - BBQ, Hobby shows, swap meets, science project competitions, etc.	10/1/2022 11:11 AM
2	Art, cultural, nature/preservation	9/28/2022 7:14 AM
3	things that provide a combination of entertainment and vendors to help not only entice individuals to attend but hopefully stick around and build the community feel	9/27/2022 7:08 PM
4	Farmer Markets on different days throughout fruit/veggie season (we are in the 'Fruit Belt' and should be supporting buying local) , Food Truck/Music community events, Meet the neighbors events	9/27/2022 10:53 AM
5	Jazz Festival, Oldies Concert, Art Fair	9/27/2022 9:58 AM
6	Biking event	9/22/2022 1:43 PM
7	Art fairs, more accessible farmer's market with a dedicated site, community gardens	9/22/2022 11:27 AM
8	Cultural events, more contemporary jazz/smooth jazz	9/22/2022 9:32 AM
9	Let's host a pickleball tournament!	9/22/2022 9:24 AM
10	More concerts, cooking classes, art classes, social gatherings	9/21/2022 3:56 PM
11	More kids programs for older kids (pre teen age range)	9/21/2022 10:46 AM
12	live music events; pickleball tournaments, corporate olympics, triathalons, mountain biking trail events	9/21/2022 9:48 AM
13	More concerts in the park. Bring back canoeing	9/20/2022 10:33 PM
14	Music arts	9/20/2022 10:42 AM
15	Ethnic Festivals	9/20/2022 9:38 AM
16	craft fair, youth sports lessons/camps, beer or wine festival	9/20/2022 8:46 AM
17	Indoor pickleball courts/gym/workout facility.	9/20/2022 6:35 AM
18	Indoor events for when activities are limited during the winter.	9/19/2022 8:48 PM
19	Expand farmer's market	9/19/2022 5:39 PM
20	I have no opinion	9/19/2022 4:55 PM
21	n/a	9/19/2022 4:53 PM
22	Bike to Work Day celebrated with a coffee stand along the trail somewhere.	9/14/2022 8:51 PM
23	Golf related events, permanent structure for the Farmers Market, more Art activities/classes such as glass blowing, pottery classes, stained glass art, etc.	9/13/2022 10:26 AM
24	An update to the Portage YMCA. Family events or concerts that are fun for kids and adults. I'd enjoy being able to have an adult drink while the kids get to have a good time too.	9/12/2022 10:43 PM
25	Run/ walk competitions	9/12/2022 7:03 PM
26	movie nights in the park	9/12/2022 4:39 PM
27	Something more accessible to lower incomes. Whether it be different activities for families I, individuals or groups of people.	9/12/2022 4:00 PM

28	cultural events	9/12/2022 3:53 PM
29	More climate change/green programs.	9/12/2022 2:02 PM
30	you already have a great selection, more than we take advantage of. Great job coming up with good ideas! I'd love an expanded farmers market, on Saturday instead of Sunday, right when many people are in church services, therefore cannot make it to the market	9/11/2022 10:15 AM
31	Outdoor ballet concerts, symphony concerts that play during a movie like Star Wars or wizard of oz, more activities during winter, real igloos in the park could be fun for an event and then leave them up or professionally done giant snow sculptures during winter events but then leave them up More sledding and ice skating areas with warming stations. For a community snow fest. Cross country ski trails and snow shoe trails. For guided hikes.	9/10/2022 9:12 AM
32	During Covid restrictions, summer concerts were moved to Ramona Park, which is a much better venue than the Overlander bandshell. Parking is so much better, and there is no traffic to battle.	9/9/2022 6:40 PM
33	Holiday events	9/9/2022 5:17 PM
34	Big name concerts	9/8/2022 7:53 PM
35	A pavilion and permanent location for the Farmers Market	9/8/2022 7:23 PM
36	Yoga in the park, bring your dog events,	9/8/2022 10:37 AM
37	I think it would be really cool to have more things focused on the arts and community art, especially in the parks (like the holiday cards). I'd love to see more walk/run events showcasing the fantastic trails we have.	9/8/2022 9:11 AM
38	It's enough as is	9/8/2022 8:59 AM
39	Informational Tea Parties, Yoga in Parks, outdoor roller rink, fitness, big band dance event, how to clinics. (home repair, business plan, health etc...), Community theater program, fishing events for adults/seniors, senior programs especially on weekends. Senior social events	9/8/2022 6:29 AM
40	Community Art. Craft fairs. Farmer's Market Events.	9/6/2022 8:29 PM
41	Art festivals. Bike events. Running races.	9/5/2022 9:02 PM
42	We love the ones there are already. I can't think of any additional needed	9/5/2022 5:08 PM
43	More culturally diverse groups hosting events	9/5/2022 3:18 PM
44	A farmers market space	9/5/2022 1:08 PM
45	Roller hockey: more outdoor pools for summer. Outdoor ice rink	9/5/2022 12:23 PM
46	None. Just more green space. No jet skis or amphitheaters	9/5/2022 12:11 PM
47	Better space for Portage Farmer's Market!	9/4/2022 5:45 PM
48	No idea, but I do enjoy festivals. We need better parking arrangements or cops directing traffic for events at the Overlander Bandshell or Portage Farmers' Market. Crossing Westnedge is dangerous.	9/3/2022 9:58 AM
49	Outdoor theater for younger people Art festival Music festival Food truck rally	9/3/2022 7:57 AM
50	Dedicated farmers market with indoor area similar to Lansing perhaps.	9/2/2022 8:25 AM
51	Better location for farmers market	9/1/2022 8:09 AM
52	Nothing that isn't already being offered.	8/30/2022 9:51 PM
53	Events for youth not only focused on holidays. The farmers market needs a better location and more vendors. We will not be like Kalamazoo's market and that's okay but we need better than the city hall parking lot. A parking lot is great for accessibility so maybe PC parking lot or their athletic complex parking lot along Shaver with the "upper" area as on-site parking?	8/30/2022 9:49 PM
54	Art and craft festivals, food trucks	8/30/2022 8:51 PM
55	Food trucks, live music, youth programs,	8/30/2022 7:29 PM

56	A fall festival like Apple Fest used to be at Schrier. Was well attended and great fun.	8/30/2022 12:50 PM
57	Running, swimming, triathlon for youth.	8/30/2022 12:38 PM
58	Car show like GR 28th street rally	8/30/2022 11:55 AM
59	Local musicians, open mic events	8/30/2022 10:59 AM
60	Continue with summer concerts, Friday at the flats.	8/20/2022 9:36 PM

## Q25 Please add any additional comments below.

Answered: 37 Skipped: 68

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	There are a lot of focused activities at the parks, but I think the largest gap is a place to "just hang out". There aren't many nice areas with benches and tables. The best example would be celery flats. If there were more places like that along with potential cafe options I'm sure we would see more individuals gather. A private business example is the new Steinspark beer garden which has an amazing, intimate outdoor space serving concessions. If we could recreate more pockets of atmosphere like that, that would be amazing!	9/27/2022 7:08 PM
2	PLEASE stop making bike paths on roadways (this is 'old school' thinking). You do more harm than good by putting bikes on the roadways! No one wants their children on roadways; and for the very few number of 'major cyclists' (majority is family/leisure biking) they/cyclists are adults and can decide to put themselves in harms way for their sport if they do not want to slow down for other people utilizing an 'all use' path and prefer the roadway. It is like 'sky diving'; do at your own risk, but stop taking away roadway lanes for vehicles which impedes traffic flow and frustrates citizens. It is NOT SAFE for anyone! No one uses the bike lane you put in by the Lake Center Elementary school; a waste of city tax dollars that went to put children in 'harms way' as well as has caused numerous accidents due to the traffic flow disruption at Osterhout/Portage Road. A very good example of what NOT TO DO, and yet, you put in a bike lane on Lovers Lane next to a BIKE PATH — seriously, people need to be held accountable for these types of poor decision making that cause more accidents and put people on the roadway. A vehicle will always win against a person/bike.	9/27/2022 10:53 AM
3	What happened to all the great music concerts that used to be held at the Overlander Bandshell back in the 80's? I remember going to a Golden Earring rock concert and a Micky Dolenz concert.	9/27/2022 9:58 AM
4	The Bog walk should be raised so it can be utilized and people can walk on it and not have their feet soaked	9/27/2022 12:14 AM
5	Overall the parks are excellent. I would like to see the city continue to acquire green space to expand the parks before Allen Edwin puts up ugly, boxy houses with no personality or landscaping everywhere. Community gardens and a dedicated space for the farmer's market would be amazing.	9/22/2022 11:27 AM
6	We love Portage parks! Thank you for seeking our input to make them even better.	9/22/2022 9:24 AM
7	We love Portage Parks. You're doing a great job. Keep up the good work!	9/20/2022 6:35 AM
8	N/A	9/19/2022 4:55 PM
9	Would like to see more invasive species spraying along centennial trail. Utility company did some this year, but there is still a lot (like tree of heaven) out there and it chokes out native species.	9/15/2022 4:32 PM
10	Please add a splash pad at Westfield Park.	9/14/2022 8:51 PM
11	Really would like to see the Ice Rink re-open.	9/13/2022 10:26 AM
12	Portage has a population to support a farmers market that's much larger than it is. A permanent structure to house the market would help tremendously. As a farmer at the market, we feel this is extremely important.	9/13/2022 7:37 AM
13	Would like to see pickleball courts on the west side of town. I live northwest of Oakland and Romence. My closest pickleball court is Lakeview Park.	9/11/2022 5:34 PM
14	In this survey it would be very helpful to include the address of some of the parks. Many of the park names are not related to street names, which makes it harder to identify or even find them if you aren't familiar with them	9/11/2022 1:39 PM
15	Some more ideas: Outdoor Exercise equipment Suspension bridge park like the Dow Gardens	9/10/2022 9:12 AM

Outdoor play kitchen Playhouse Outdoor roller rink Giant slide Flower gardens Maze made out of evergreen bushes Park near a restaurant so we could stay longer and eat Extremely long monkey bars Balance beams Sculptures you can play on

16	Portage parks should *not* have closed during the pandemic.	9/9/2022 10:15 PM
17	My primary use for the parks is the trail system, whatever we can do to maintain, increase, and connect the trails is a win in my book. Thanks for reading!	9/8/2022 9:11 AM
18	Bishops bog and west lake floating docks are never open, always under mud and water. Focus on fixing what we have vs. making new things. The trail way also needs replacing in some areas around town as many cracks exist. Potentially add a bike overpass at the corner of south westnedge and Centre street to connect the bike bath to be safer for kids here.	9/8/2022 8:59 AM
19	Use existing historical buildings more effectively. Amphitheater is never used and others seldom used.	9/8/2022 6:29 AM
20	Return the land back to the Potawatomi people	9/7/2022 12:28 AM
21	Would love to have a public pool or lap swim options at portage high schools	9/5/2022 9:02 PM
22	None	9/5/2022 3:18 PM
23	Make portage have more/ better "downtown area"	9/5/2022 12:23 PM
24	Do not add another amphitheater or jet ski rental on West Lake. DISAPPOINTING that you bought land for \$400k on West Lake. Waste of my tax dollars	9/5/2022 12:11 PM
25	Too many bike lanes/path that no one uses. Quit try to make a few people happy and service the majority	9/5/2022 12:10 PM
26	We are losing open space at a high rate. Please stop developers from planting blocks if Barlett pears! We need to keep our nature growth trees as much as possible rather than removing them all for development. Parks are nice, but most of the beauty or lack of it is experienced as we drive around going to the grocery store, etc. lovers Lane between Romence and Centre is turning especially ugly. I understand the need for industrial buildings, but why haven't they planted any trees? You need to expand the list of acceptable plantings to include native hardwoods. There is lots of room between the industrial buildings and the roadway of Lovers Lane to accommodate hardwoods. As the area around Zylman is developed please require that a natural buffer is maintained between the toad and the development. Please do not allow them to clearcut that beautiful forest.	9/3/2022 9:58 AM
27	I would like more non-paved trails and more natural nature trails.	9/3/2022 7:57 AM
28	It seems that park maintenance has taken a back seat over the past five years. Fences removed and not replaced. Disrespect toward pedestrians by other users. Not enough ranger staffing to close gates on schedule, allowing rif-rif into the parks. Just not what it used to be.	9/2/2022 8:25 AM
29	Would be nice to kayak or float from celery flats to milham park on the portage creek. Restoration of fishing habitat on the portage creek and removal of old dam that restricts water flow and would improve fishing in the area.	9/1/2022 8:09 AM
30	Portage parks are amazing! One of the reasons we live here!	8/30/2022 9:51 PM
31	Na	8/30/2022 8:51 PM
32	I would love to see a splash pad put in	8/30/2022 7:29 PM
33	Parks are major reason we are building in Portage	8/30/2022 1:50 PM
34	Try harder to have ice rink open. It was closed all last year and we missed it. You might consider putting roof over it and creating a new warming shed like you used to have.	8/30/2022 12:50 PM
35	Repave celery flats trail and continued improvement and expansion of celery flats trail. Outdoor picnic area by library. More youth events at celery flats area, Brian penny magician was excellent a few years ago.	8/30/2022 12:38 PM
36	City should look into a Waterpark, Rv park and investing in a community Rec center that offers indoor and outdoor recreational activities for kids...we did it for seniors, it's time for the youth.	8/30/2022 11:07 AM
37	keep more bathrooms open in the winter. improve bike trail maintenance (i.e., fix	8/20/2022 9:36 PM

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holes/cracks/damaged asphalt, grind off bumps from tree roots, trim back shrubs, trees).

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